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# MAN O' WAR

## DEATH ON THE SEA OF CLAWS

By Andy Jones and Jervis Johnson

This month's battle is the report of an exciting Man O' War game fought between an Empire fleet commanded by Andy Jones, and a Dark Elf fleet led by Admiral Jervis Johnson. Over the last year or so, our regular battle reports have become one of the most popular features in *White Dwarf*, but this is our first ever Man O' War game report.

Man O' War has been around for a few months now, and we have been playing plenty of sea battles here at the studio. In *White Dwarf* 161, in the article *The Battle of Death's Point*, we took you through a single turn from one of our battles, highlighting the action as it happened, and explaining some of the tactical implications of the moves that were made. Since then, we have received so many letters asking about our other battles we thought it was time we wrote one up for publication.

Presenting a battle report for a new system like Man O' War raises many new problems. Unlike Warhammer,

Space Marine and Warhammer 40,000, Man O' War games are usually longer than three or four turns - they can be anything up to ten turns or more (through the turns are themselves shorter). Presented as a battle report in the normal turn by turn detail, explaining exactly what each ship did each turn, would take up a whole issue of *White Dwarf*!

Also, Man O' War games have a lot more manoeuvring before battle compared to our other game systems. As the fleets approach each other they jockey for position, taking advantage of wind and tide to outmanoeuvre the



The Dark Elf fleet closes in on the Imperial vessels.

enemy. During these opening turns it is not as important to keep track of each ship's movement, but rather the disposition of each fleet as a whole.

When the first shots are exchanged, a Man O' War battle moves into a new phase, where the preliminary planning, moving and positioning pays off (or not, as the case may be). These turns we have described in more detail, particularly where an especially important or exciting bit of action took place. This is what we showed in *The Battle of Death's Point*: a single turn within a game of Man O' War game that had particularly important moments for the outcome of the battle.

For this battle report we decided to play a straight forward 'fight to the last' battle, without any particular scenario, and stuck with the 1000 points per fleet suggested in the Man O' War rulebook.

We also decided that the battle was to be between the powerful Empire fleet, and the arcane majesty of the Dark Elf Fleet. I would have the honour of commanding the Empire, while Jervis would take the Dark Elves.

## TERRAIN

We set up the game on the 4' by 4' Man O' War table that we have at the studio, following the normal rules from the rulebook to set up the terrain. The result was a fairly uncluttered table, with the wind initially blowing south.

Next we rolled to choose table edge and decide who would set up first. I won, and chose to deploy on the eastern edge, next to the volcano.

At the side of the playing surface we cleared a sizeable area to put our ship templates on, together with their Man O' War Cards, Spell Cards, etc; by doing this, everything is at hand as the game progresses. One of the most important parts of any Man O' War game is to keep track of the damage and status of your ships, so you can take stock of your fleet at a glance.

## BACKGROUND

The River Reik is one of the most important gateways to the Empire. Any trading or military sea-borne traffic destined for the cities of the Empire – or leaving them for far-off realms – must navigate this mighty river.



The Reik is thus one of the Empire's main arteries – a lifeline through which flows the country's lifeblood. Many nations have tried to blockade the Reik in the past, or attempted to subvert the powerful City State of Marienburg to stop the flow of trade, but none have so far succeeded.

The Empire has many powerful fleets of mighty warships, and at least one patrols the waters around the mouth of the Reik at all times, ready to do battle with any enemy vessels that might seek to gain control of these valuable waters. The Empire is also careful to maintain strong ties with the rulers of Marienburg, lest they attempt to prevent them using the river.

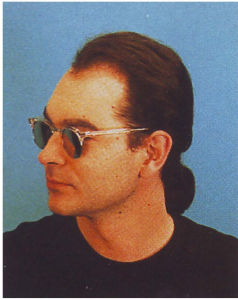
So far the unthinkable has never happened, and the Empire's only access to the sea has remained open.

Now, however, the greatest threat to the Empire's control of the waters around the mouth of the Reik has been perceived by the Wizards of Altdorf. They have seen a black shadow upon the sea, and a great darkness approaching the coastal waters of the Reik. After much deliberation they have concluded that one of the legendary city ships of the Dark Elves – a Black Ark of Naggaroth – has strayed into the Empire's waters. They also know that with it come terrible sea monsters and horrific weapons beyond their understanding. The purpose of the Dark Elves is clear – seize control of the Reik's estuary and strangle the Empire into submission.

With great haste, a powerful Empire warfleet has been dispatched into the Sea Of Claws, to smash the threat before it is too late. Admiral Gustav Von Graaf, aboard his flagship the Karl Franz, has taken his warfleet to meet the terrible foe. The rest, as they say, is history...

## THE DARK ELF FLEET

(Jervis Johnson)



It's been a while now since I've had a game of Man O' War, and so when Andy Jones asked if I'd like to help him sort out a Man O' War battle report for White Dwarf I was more than happy to agree. As Andy wanted to use this game primarily to work out the best format for Man O' War battle reports, we decided to keep

things fairly simple; to this end we decided to limit ourselves to two 1,000 point fleets and not to use any of the flying machines or sea monsters from Sea of Blood (the latest Man O' War supplement).

Next we needed to pick the two races we would use. One side really had to be the Empire – given they are strongly featured in the main game – so Andy bravely volunteered to take command of the Empire's fleet. This left me with a fairly free choice as to which side to take.

After a minute to two's pondering I decided to take the Dark Elves, my choice being influenced by the awesome presence of the Black Ark and Death Fortresses lurking evilly in the Studio's miniature cabinets, and by the fact that I am running a Dark Elf team in the Studio's Blood Bowl league.



Unfortunately I quickly ran into a problem, as it transpired that the Studio's miniature painters had not yet completed enough models to make a 1,000 point Dark Elf fleet! After having arranged for the snivelling wretches to be soundly flogged (their pitiful excuses about "having hundreds of other models to paint" and "already working 23 hours a day" cut no ice with me, let me assure you), I sat down and studied the Man O' War allies article from Sea of Blood.

Many people see allies as a method of 'plugging gaps' in a fleet, allowing it access to troop types it does not normally possess. Personally, however, I prefer to pick allies that compliment the other units in my fleet and enhance their effectiveness, rather than choose disparate elements that are hard to work together.

Before I could pick any allies, then, I had to get a firm picture in my mind of the strengths and weaknesses of the Dark Elf fleet itself. As anyone who has played against a Dark Elf fleet will tell you, its main strength is its ability in close range combat. The Black Ark is the single most powerful ship in any fleet, but it only really achieves its full potential when it is in amongst an enemy fleet and able to fire off several of its Reaper batteries at once while attempting to board enemy ships.

This is also true for the Death Fortress, which is at its most effective in close actions when it can both fire its Reaper battery and the Sea Dragon can attack.

The final 'ship' in the Dark Elf armoury is the Doomreaver that does not have any ranged weapons at all, and relies solely on the Helldrake's vicious attacks. In addition to their combat abilities, all Dark Elf ships are highly manoeuvrable, being able to move 6" in any direction. This makes them even more effective at close range, as they can out-maneuvre just about any other vessel they might meet.

Powerful though the Dark Elf fleet is, it does have two important weaknesses. The first is that both the Death Fortresses and Doomreavers (that make up the bulk of the Dark Elf fleet) have a vulnerable 'Achilles heel' in their Battle Towers. If this location is destroyed the entire model is removed from play, as the Sea Monster that forms the rest of the 'ship' dives below the surface and swims off once its Dark Elf controllers have been killed. Because of this it is vital that the Dark Elf player keeps these vulnerable units out of harm's way for as long as possible by hiding them inside the Black Ark. Care must be taken with this tactic, however, as any ships inside the Black Ark are unable to fire, and may become trapped if the Black Ark is damaged.

This brings us to the Dark Elves second weakness – the Black Ark itself. Although the Black Ark is extremely powerful it can still be sunk, especially if the enemy is allowed to concentrate enough fire upon it. It goes without saying that the loss of the Black Ark can deal a serious blow to any chance of a Dark Elf victory.



# THE DARK ELF FLEET



**1 × Black Ark of Naggaroth**  
250 points



**1 × Wizard Lord**  
150 Points

**1 × Squadron of 3 Doomreavers**  
150 points



## ALLIES

**3 × Death Fortresses**  
100 points each, for a total 300 points



**1 × Squadron of 3 Plaguecrushers**  
150 points

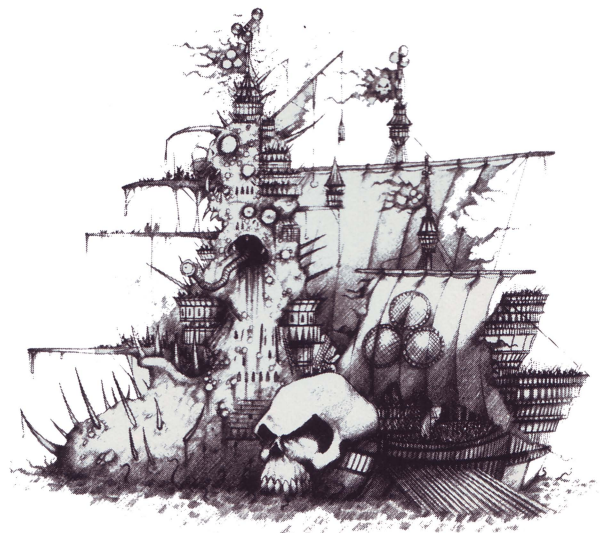


Bearing these points in mind, I studied the potential allies I could draw on from the models available in the Studio miniature cabinets, and was very happy to come across a squadron of Nurgle Plaguecrushers. These would form a perfect 'skirmish screen', stopping Andy taking any long range pot-shots by interposing themselves between the rest of my fleet and the Empire ships, while still allowing the Death Fortresses to make attacks with their Reaper batteries.

Plaguecrushers are also quite tough enough to absorb considerable punishment and keep functioning, and would be able to provide valuable supporting fire once my Dark Elves were directly engaged with the Empire fleet.

Finally, the Plaguecrushers had another, more insidious benefit: any hit from their catapults has a chance of causing Nurgle's Rot, killing the target's crew and making it more susceptible to attack by the Dark Elves in close combat.

*Nurgle Plaguecrusher  
and Deathgalley*



### THE DARK ELF SET UP AND EVIL PLAN

My battle formation was pretty much decided before I even looked at the table, being based on the strengths and weaknesses of my various ships. The Plaguecrushers would be my front line, forming a screen in front of the Death Fortresses. My Doomreavers would be kept safely hidden in the hold of the Black Ark, ready to be unleashed once they came within range of the enemy.

The Black Ark itself would be best kept to one side and slightly back from the Plaguecrushers, ready to swoop round them and attack the enemy fleet at the appropriate moment.

Of course, at this point I didn't know the exact location I would form up this battle line, and on which flank I would place the Black Ark, as both depended on the terrain, the wind direction, and the final position of Andy's fleet.

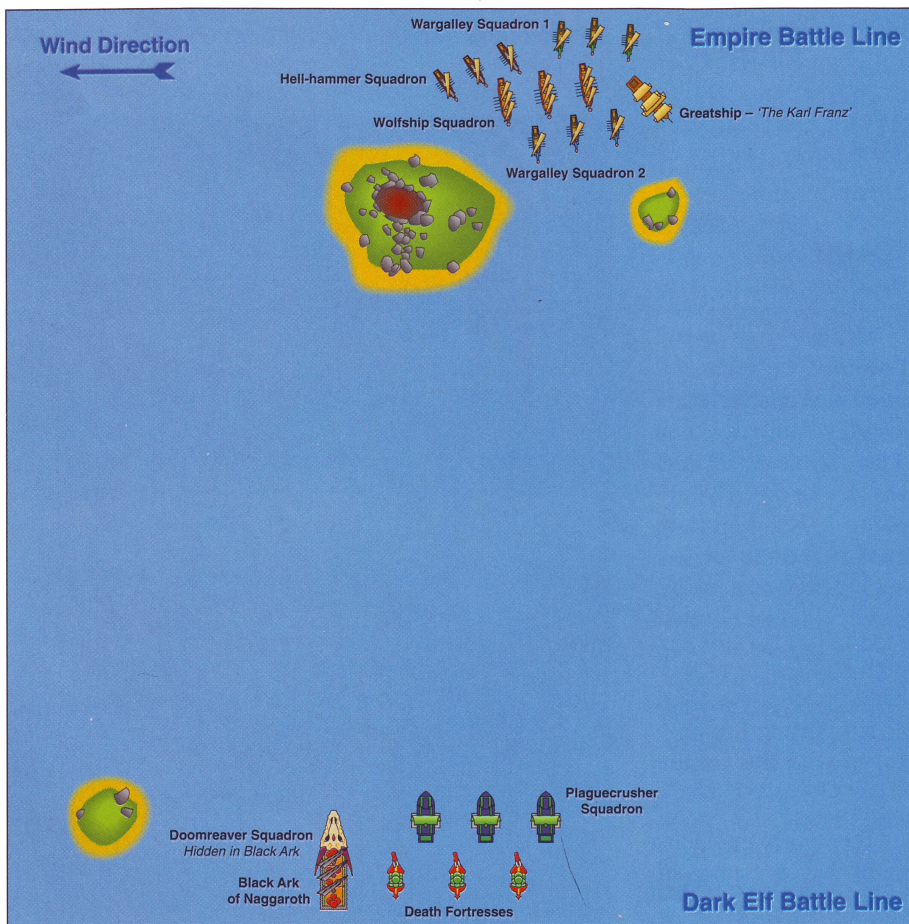
As it turned out, the placement of terrain and the direction of the wind was extremely fortuitous for me. On my half of the table there was very little terrain, which left me plenty of room to set up my battle formation without it getting disrupted by rocks or small islands. Andy on the other hand was lumbered with a large volcano almost in the centre of his set-up zone.

What's more, Andy had to place the first squadron of ships on the table, which meant I would get a valuable clue as to which direction round the volcano he planned to advance before I had to set up any of my ships. If you study the map showing our set-up you will see that Andy decided to take the northern route round the volcano, through the gap between the island and rocks. Although this meant that he couldn't set up his fleet in a line abreast (the best formation for an Empire fleet), it did mean that he kept the wind behind him so that he would be able to sail at full speed.

I was more than pleased with his set-up, as it would allow me to meet his fleet as it emerged through the gap, and (hopefully) before it could deploy into a proper formation. I therefore set-up my Plaguecrushers and Death Fortresses directly in front of, and as close as possible to the gap, so that they would be able to engage the Empire fleet as quickly as possible.

The last model I set-up, the Black Ark, went to the left of my line, where it could swoop round and hit the Empire fleet in the flank as it emerged from the gap, unleashing the Doomreavers as it did so.

My set-up was complete, and my battle plan firmly fixed in my mind. 'Poor old Andy,' I thought, 'he doesn't stand a chance.'



## THE EMPIRE FLEET

(Andy Jones)



In all the time I've spent writing about Empire warships I've very rarely, if ever, played them, normally taking the Bretonnian fleet out to war. Now that the Empire fleet has the added attraction of the Hellhammers, however, I decided to take to the high seas and crush the Dark Elves with an Empire fleet.

The main difference between the Empire fleet and the Bretonnian fleet is that all the Empire vessels, except the Greatship, can move under oars as well as sail, and are therefore not at the mercy of the wind as much. In addition their armament is made up of forward firing cannons, rather than broadsides like the Bretonnians.

Bearing these differences in mind, I now had to pick my fleet. First was the Greatship Karl Franz, for a cost of 150 points including the fleet Admiral. Next I put a Master Wizard aboard the Karl Franz, at a cost of 100 points, bringing my running total up to 250 points.

Then came the other compulsory elements of the fleet – a squadron of three Wolfships and a squadron of three Wargalleys, which at 450 points brought me up to a grand total of 700 points. Now came the hard part – what to buy with the remaining 300 points?

I knew that I wanted either a squadron of Hellhammers or another Greatship, as these would probably stand the best chance of sinking Jervis' Black Ark. Given that you stand a two in six chance per turn of being baffled by the Black Ark's spells and therefore unable to shoot at it, I decided that a squadron of Hellhammers seemed the best choice, as at least I'd then have three chances to get past the Ark's illusions each turn. With a single Greatship, there was a much greater chance of being completely baffled and not firing anything!

That still left me with 150 points to spare, so maybe I could have that extra Greatship after all. The firepower was certainly attractive, but in the end I decided to opt for another three Wargalleys instead as they fitted in better with the rest of the fleet. With a single Greatship, I'd only have one ship to worry about sailing into the wind, and the bulk of my fleet would be unaffected by changes in the wind direction.

### THE EMPIRE SET UP AND CUNNING PLAN

By this time I knew which fleet Jervis had chosen, and the prospect of fighting it was quite daunting. The Doomreavers and Death Fortresses are potent adversaries, as they don't suffer critical hits at all. They are also ferocious in boarding actions, and I didn't really

have anything to match them in that department. On the other hand, they both have single location which if damaged can send them to the bottom of the briny. It seemed to me that the best thing I could do was bombard them from a distance, and try and get a few rams in if the opportunity presented itself. With any luck I'd hit some of those vulnerable locations and send the foul beasts back to the depths they came from before they did too much damage.

The Black Ark is the most powerful vessel in the Man O' War game, being fast, huge, well-armed, and protected by magic. With all this against me, there was no way at all that I would ever think of engaging it in a boarding action. Not only that, but its magical movement means it can quite simply push my ships out of the way – running them aground or causing collisions. The best, and possible only chance I had of sinking the Black Ark would be to choose my moment and hit him with my Hellhammers.

The last element of Jervis' fleet was a squadron of Nurgle Plaguecrushers, chosen using the allies rules from Sea Of Blood. These were a nasty addition to his fleet and put me in something of a quandary. If I tried to stand off and shoot at his Sea Monsters, he could bombard me with plague catapults; if I closed in, his Doomreavers and Death Fortresses could shred me to pieces.

On balance, I decided that the best tactic would be to get into close range as soon as possible, using the multiple guns of the Wolfships, Wargalleys, and Greatship to cause as much damage as early on in the game as I could manage. The Dark Elf fleet is fairly brittle, so the more cannon shot I could pound them with at close range the better. If I could sink a number of vessels and cripple others with rams and cannon, I would be less vulnerable to the boarding actions that the Dark Elves are especially good at.

I wasn't overly worried which College of Magic I drew because casting magic against the Dark Elf fleet is fairly peculiar. I assumed that as they have little or no crew, spells that remove crew counters cause wounds instead. Spells that change the wind direction also prove to be fairly useless against Dark Elves, as they are immune to the wind. My oft-used tactic of using spells to immobilise a squadron's flagship – so that the squadron cannot move far if it wants to maintain formation – wouldn't prove useful against the bulk of the Dark Elf fleet either, as it would have no effect against the Independent Death Fortresses.

All in all, what I really needed was a Wizard with some fiery spells – a Bright Wizard would be great. In another game against the Dark Elves a Volcano spell had worked wonders against the Black Ark, setting it alight from stem to stern. Failing a Bright Wizard, an Amethyst Wizard would do the trick. As it happened, I got a Celestial Wizard.



# THE EMPIRE FLEET



1 × **Greatship 'The Karl Franz'**  
150 points



1 × **Squadron of 3 Wargalleys**  
150 points



1 × **Squadron of 3 Wolfships**  
300 points



1 × **Squadron of 3 Hellhammers**  
150 points



1 × **Squadron of 3 Wargalleys**  
150 points

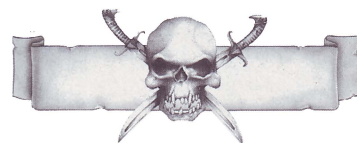


1 × **Master Wizard**  
100 Points

I won the roll to choose table edge, and decided to deploy along the eastern edge of the table. I wanted to get to the open sea as soon as possible, and reasoned that if I let Jervis have the edge with the volcano and the rocks, he'd lurk about waiting for me to get caught in the confined space and be ripped up by his Sea Monsters. The best thing I could do was to get through the gap as soon as possible into open waters where I could better manoeuvre and bring my guns to bear.

I aimed to sail the Karl Franz quickly around the rock, and tack across the face of the wind to get behind his fleet as they approached, from where I could bring my broadside guns to bear. I felt I could afford to get her in pretty close, as she bristled with cannon, had plenty of crew, and her Man O' War Card – Heavy Timbers – gave me a +1 on all low location saving rolls.

To summarise, my fleet was set up bunched tightly together, aiming to move as fast as possible forwards into open waters. I led with a squadron of Wargalleys, who were followed by squadrons of Wolfships, Wargalleys and Hellhammers. Finally, I drew four Spell Cards, and my fleet was ready for battle!





# . TURNS 1 AND 2 . THE FLEETS' APPROACH

**DARK ELF**  
**BLACK ARK OF NAGGAROTH**  
MAN O' WAR
CREW

<b>4</b> <b>FORE MAST</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 First hit has no effect. Second hit destroys mast. Ship speed reduced by 3" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.	<b>5</b> <b>MAIN MAST</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 First hit has no effect. Second hit destroys mast. Ship speed reduced by 3" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.	<b>6</b> <b>AFT MAST</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 First hit has no effect. Second hit destroys mast. Ship speed reduced by 3" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.
<b>BLAZE</b> <b>FORWARD BATTLE TOWERS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Fore reaper battery lost.		<b>REAR BATTLE TOWERS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Aft reaper battery lost.
<b>4</b> <b>BOWS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 First and second hits have no effect. Third hit causes normal critical.	<b>5</b> <b>BATTLE PLATFORMS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Broadside reaper battery lost.	<b>6</b> <b>BEAST-PORTAL</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Roll a dice for each Squadron inside. On a 4, 5 or 6 they escape.
NO EFFECT   NO EFFECT   NO EFFECT   NO EFFECT   NO EFFECT   SINKS		<b>BELOW WATERLINE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 First, second, third, fourth and fifth hits have no effect. Sixth hit sinks ship.
SAIL: 9"(9")   MAGIC: 6"(6") <b>BATTLE HONOURS: 10</b>		

At this range most missed, but one found its target – a Wargalley in the leading squadron – ripping apart her sail, crashing down through her oar deck and then out through her bottom.

The Imperial Admiral winced as he saw the Wargalley crippled. The stricken vessel drifted out of line – one ship immobilised and the rest of the fleet reduced to rowing against the wind through the straits. Meanwhile the Dark Elf fleet surged into battle with the wind in their sails.

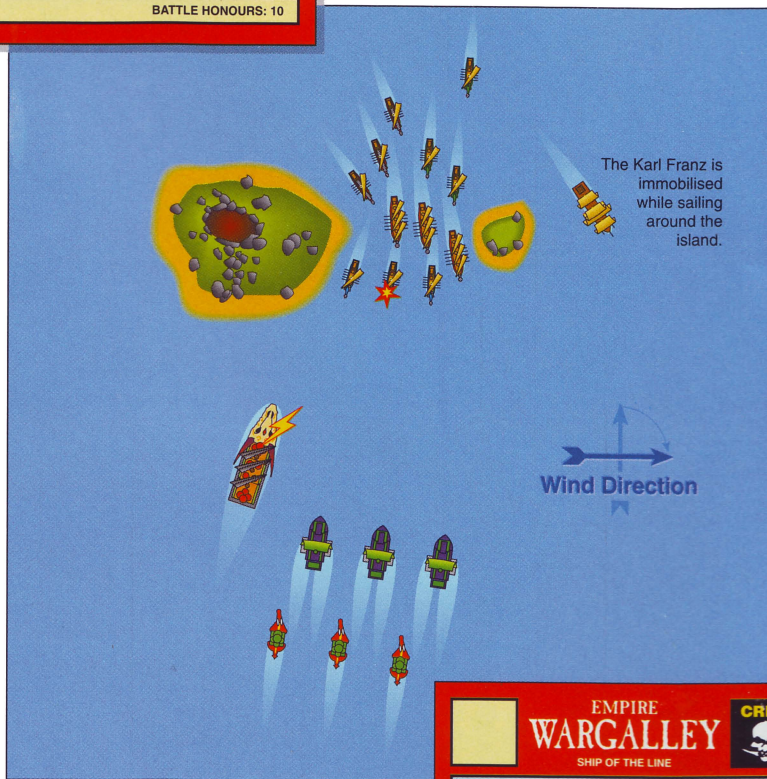
*The Black Ark is set on fire by a Sunblaze spell.*

The Empire Admiral looked out across the water. In the distance lay the dreaded Black Ark, surrounded by raging Sea Monsters and the rotted ships of its Nurgle allies – truly an alliance forged in hell. He knew that bottled up in the straits, he was vulnerable to magic that could run his ships onto the rocks and quickly gave the command to advance as the air around his ship, the Karl Franz, began to crackle with magical energy.

He knew that the Dark Elf Wizard was more powerful than his own, and considered it a good omen when the Sunblaze spell illuminated the Black Ark with leaping flame, destroying its forward battle towers.

As the two fleets closed the gap to firing range, the Dark Elf Wizard retaliated, drawing on the arcane powers of the warp to change the wind direction with his Windmaster spell. Only the skilled seamanship of the Imperial Admiral prevented the Karl Franz from being becalmed, but he was still left out on a limb, stuck behind the island, with the rest of his fleet struggling against the wind.

As the drums beat time for the Imperial rowers, the Nurgle catapults hurled their deadly cargo of slime encrusted rocks high into the air.



*The two fleets close for position.*

*The lead Wargalley is hit by a Plaguecrusher's catapult. Her sail is destroyed, her oar deck smashed beyond repair, and her hull ruptured.*

**EMPIRE**  
**WARGALLEY**  
SHIP OF THE LINE
CREW

<b>DAMAGE</b> <b>MAST</b> Save 5 or 6 Mast lost. Cannot move under sail. Any further hits do not cause critical damage.	
<b>5</b> <b>FORECASTLE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Cannon destroyed. May not fire.	<b>OAR DECK</b> Save 5 or 6 Oars lost. Cannot move under oars.
<b>DAMAGE</b> SINKS <b>BELOW WATERLINE</b> Save 5 or 6 First hit has no effect. Second hit sinks ship.	
OARS: 4"(6")   SAIL: 6" <b>BATTLE HONOURS: 2</b>	

# . TURNS 3 TO 5 . THE CARNAGE COMMENCES!

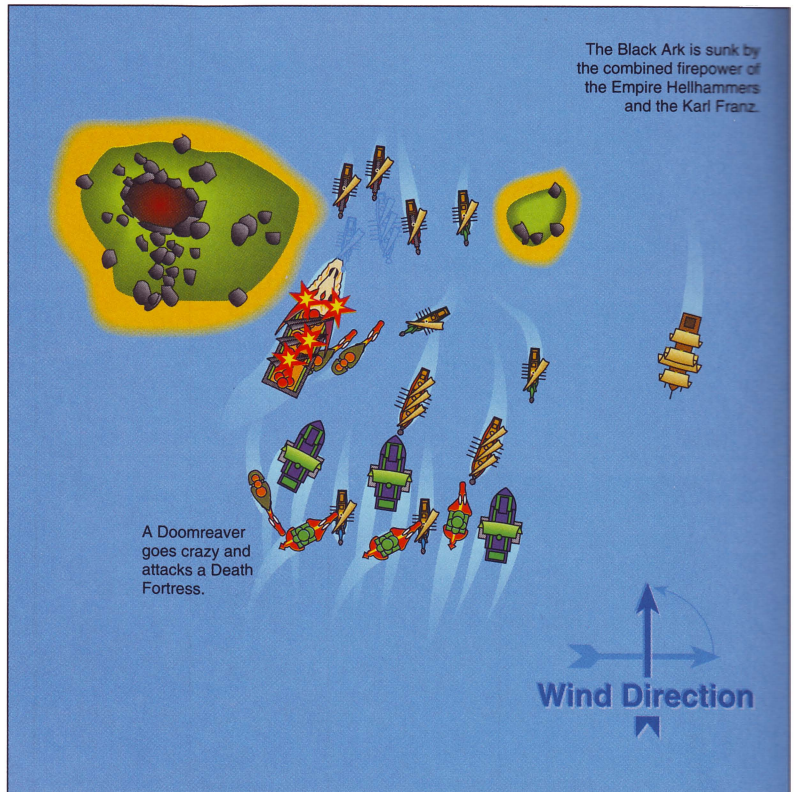
## TURN THREE

As luck would have it, the fickle forces of nature intervened, swinging the wind clockwise so it once again blew south. Meanwhile, the Imperial Wizard failed to ward off a Serpents of Doom spell that immobilised the Karl Franz.

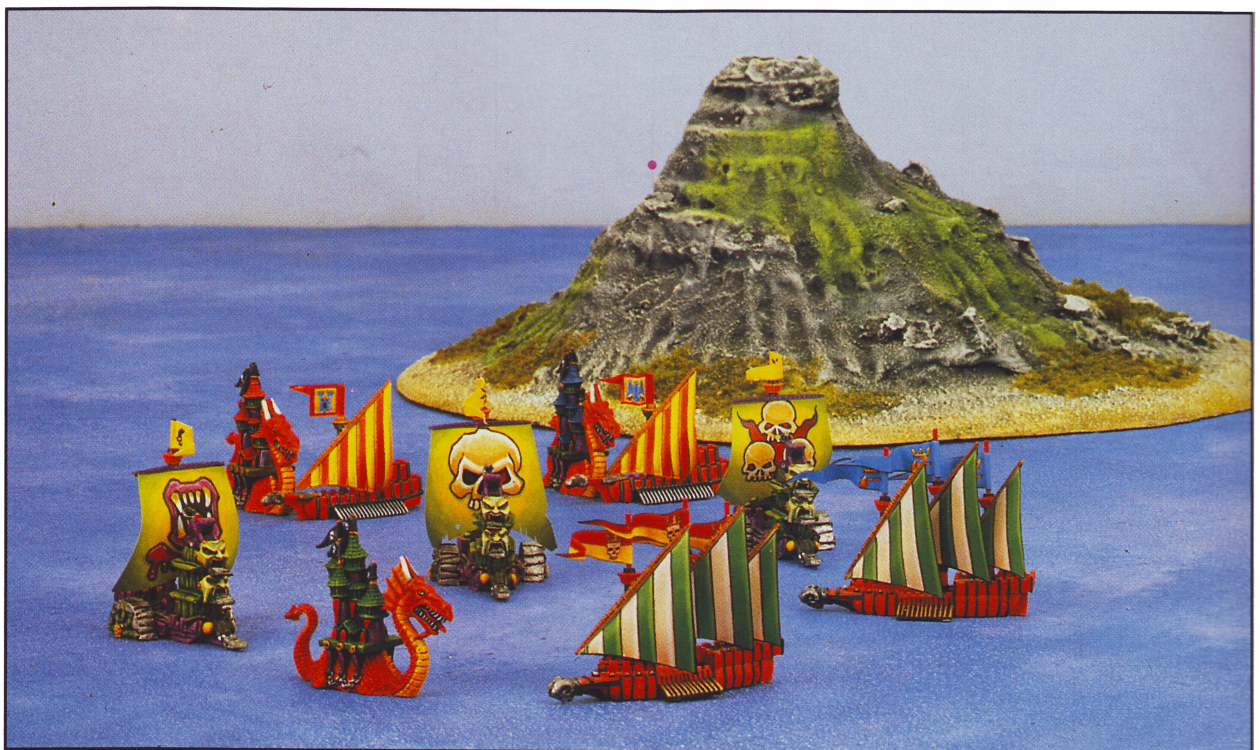
With their most powerful ship out of action, the other Imperial Captains ordered ramming speed, and their ships surged forwards to try and sink the Plaguecrushers in their way.

The usually devastating rams failed to bite deep. The Imperial Admiral cursed as he watched helpless from the bridge of the immobilised Karl Franz. Cannons thundered, their choking thick smoke nearly obscuring his view of the battle.

When it lifted, he was horrified by what he saw: the Black Ark had glided forward, a floating mountain of shadows, its deadly reaper batteries raining a hail of death down onto the Imperial vessels.



*The Empire fleets fails to inflict much damage by ramming, and is mauled by the Dark Elf Death Fortresses.*



*The Imperial Wargalleys crash into the Dark Elf fleet.*



The Black Ark releases the Dark Elf Doomreavers into the fray.

A Wolfship, the Sigmar, was sinking below the waves, smashed by countless Reaper bolts. A Wargalley, the Sollund, broke in two before his eyes. Next to it, mauled by the ravaging attacks of the Death Fortresses, two abandoned Wargalleys drifted on the tide.

Even though the enemy Plaguecrushers had gaping rents in their sails and great chunks torn from their rotting hulls by his own guns, the Imperial Admiral knew it was not enough, and that his Hellhammers had to try and retrieve the situation.

### TURN FOUR

As the Empire fleet reeled under the frenzied assault, the Dark Elf Admiral seized the initiative, though both sides' Wizards failed in their attempts to invoke their powers.

The Black Ark unleashed the fleet's three Doomreavers as it approached. The nightmarish reptiles crashed into the Imperial fleet savaging a Wargalley and destroying a Hellhammer with their brutal attacks.

The third Doomreaver in the squadron rampaged across the waves, incensed into a berserk fury and totally out of control. It smashed into one of the Death Fortresses in a blind rage, tearing the castle to pieces and slaying the Dark Elves within. No longer guided by its Dark Elf masters, the Sea Dragon, and the tattered remnants of the shattered Death Fortress atop its back, dived below the waves and out of the battle.

<b>NURGLE PLAGUECRUSHER</b> SHIP OF THE LINE		<b>CREW</b> 2
<b>DAMAGE</b> CATAPULTS Save 4, 5 or 6 Each hit destroys 1 Plague Catapult.	<b>DAMAGE</b> SAIL Save 5 or 6 Mast lost. Ship cannot move under sail. Any further hits do not cause critical damage.	<b>DAMAGE</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TOWER</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 If tower is destroyed, crew are no longer protected from enemy grapeshot.	<b>PADDLES</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Paddles lost. Cannot move under Paddles.	<b>AFTCASTLE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6
<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>SINKS</b>	<b>BELOW WATERLINE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 First hit has no effect. Second hit sinks ship.
PADDLES: 6" SAIL: 6"		BATTLE HONOURS: 2

Above: a Plaguecrusher has its sails and catapults destroyed by Imperial cannonfire.

<b>EMPIRE WARGALLEY</b> SHIP OF THE LINE		<b>CREW</b> 2
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>FORCASTLE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 If forcastle is destroyed, cannon destroyed. May not fire.	<b>OAR DECK</b> Save 5 or 6 Oars lost. Cannot move under oars.	<b>MAST</b> Save 5 or 6 Mast lost. Ship cannot move under sail. Any further hits do not cause critical damage.
<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>SINKS</b>	<b>BELOW WATERLINE</b> Save 5 or 6 First hit has no effect. Second hit sinks ship.
OARS: 4"(6") SAIL: 6"		BATTLE HONOURS: 2

Left: Typically, the Imperial Wargalley is left intact but abandoned, its crew having been slaughtered by the Dark Elves' Sea Monsters.

In the front-line, a proud Wolfship fell to a fierce boarding action by the foul Chaos Cultists aboard the Plaguecrushers, who then hurriedly scuttled the vessel to prevent its recapture. Another Wolfship had all its crew killed by the merciless onslaught of a Dark Elf Death Fortress, but before it could be scuttled a gallant Wargalley remanned the stricken vessel.

The Empire fleet was being severely mauled, and things looked pretty grim.

<b>EMPIRE WOLFSHIP</b> <small>SHIP OF THE LINE</small>						<b>CREW</b> 3
<b>4</b> <b>FORE MAST</b> Save 5 or 6 <small>Mast lost. Ship speed reduced by 2" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.</small>	<b>5</b> <b>MAIN MAST</b> Save 5 or 6 <small>Mast lost. Ship speed reduced by 2" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.</small>	<b>6</b> <b>AFT MAST</b> Save 5 or 6 <small>Mast lost. Ship speed reduced by 2" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.</small>	<b>2</b> <b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>FORECASTLE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>Each hit destroys 1 fore cannon battery.</small>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b> <b>CREW</b>
<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>5</b> <b>BOWS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>1 fore cannon battery lost.</small>	<b>5</b> <b>OAR DECK</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>Oars lost. Cannot move under oars.</small>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b> <b>STERN</b> Save 4, 5 or 6	<b>4</b> <b>MAST</b> Save 5 or 6 <small>Mast lost. Cannot move under sail. Any further hits do not cause critical damage.</small>	
<b>NO EFFECT</b> <b>NO EFFECT</b> <b>SINKS</b>			<b>BELOW WATERLINE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>First and second hits have no effect. Third hit sinks ship.</small>			<b>6</b>
<b>BATTLE HONOURS:</b>						<b>2</b>
<b>OARS: 4" (6")   SAIL: 6"   BATTLE HONOURS: 2</b>						

The brave crew of the Wargalley re-crew the abandoned Wolfship, leaving 1 crew counter aboard each.

<b>DARK ELF BLACK ARK OF NAGGAROTH</b> <small>MAN O' WAR</small>						<b>CREW</b> 1	
<b>4</b> <b>BLAZE</b>	<b>4</b> <b>FORE MAST</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>First hit has no effect. Second hit destroys mast. Ship speed reduced by 3" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.</small>	<b>5</b> <b>MAIN MAST</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>First hit has no effect. Second hit destroys mast. Ship speed reduced by 3" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.</small>	<b>6</b> <b>AFT MAST</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>First hit has no effect. Second hit destroys mast. Ship speed reduced by 3" (3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.</small>	<b>4</b> <b>BLAZE</b>	<b>4</b> <b>FORWARD BATTLE TOWERS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>Fore reaper battery lost.</small>	<b>5</b> <b>REAR BATTLE TOWERS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>Aft reaper battery lost.</small>	<b>DAMAGE</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>4</b> <b>BOWS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>First and second hits have no effect. Third hit causes normal critical.</small>	<b>5</b> <b>BATTLE PLATFORMS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>Broadside reaper battery lost.</small>	<b>6</b> <b>BEAST-PORTAL</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 <small>Roll a dice for each Squadron inside. On a 4, 5 or 6 they escape.</small>	<b>DAMAGE</b> <b>DAMAGE</b> <b>DAMAGE</b> <b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>NO EFFECT</b> <b>SINKS</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>SAIL: 9" (9")   MAGIC: 6" (6")   BATTLE HONOURS: 10</b>							

The Black Ark is initially heavily damaged by the attacks of the Imperial Hellhammers, and is then finished off by the guns of the Karl Franz.

Then the two remaining Hellhammers surged through the drifting debris and unleashed their deadly cannons at point blank range into the towering Black Ark. The roar of their immense guns blotted out all other sound, and the great cloud of smoke obscured the sun. The Black Ark began to list heavily, great gaping rents torn in its mountainous sides.



The Black Ark is surrounded by the deadly Hellhammers.

Undaunted, the monstrous vessel leapt forward, smashing the remaining Hellhammers apart. As the Dark Elves ran amok on their blood-soaked decks, the Imperial Admiral brought the Karl Franz into the fray, firing a devastating broadside at the Dark Elf Flagship. Expecting to be crippled by the returning Reaper fire, a great cheer went up as the Black Ark turned turtle, and with a groaning of timber and shattered stone sank without a trace.

*The Doomreaver picks up the Dark Elf Admiral and Wizard from the water.*

<b>WIZARD LORD</b>		<b>DARK ELF DOOMREAPER</b>		<b>WOUNDS 3</b>
<b>ADMIRAL</b>		<b>MONSTER</b>		
<b>4,5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>DOOMREAPER</b> Save 5 or 6 The Hell Drake goes out of control, dives, and is removed from play, taking the Doomreaver with it.		
<b>HELLDRAKE</b> Save 5 or 6 Hell Drake takes 1 wound: place 1 wound counter on the wound track.				
<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>DEAD</b>	<b>WOUND TRACK</b> Save Against Rams: 5 or 6 Each wound reduces movement by 2". Third wound kills Hell Drake.	
<b>MONSTER: 6" – May turn freely.</b>			<b>BATTLE HONOURS: 2</b>	



*Even though the Black Ark is no more, the Empire have only five functional ships against the Dark Elves' eight.*

Through his telescope, the Imperial Admiral scanned the debris floating on the waves, and to his horror spotted the unmistakable forms of the Dark Elf Wizard and Admiral clinging to the sinking ship. Although he sent signals to run them down, there were no Imperial ships in their vicinity left to follow his orders. He watched powerless, as one of the Doomreavers picked up the Admiral and the Wizard just as the last remnants of the Black Ark disappeared.

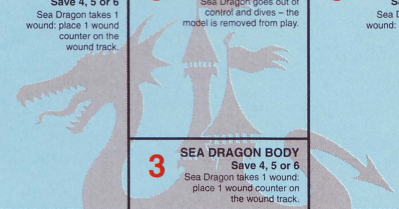
### TURN 5

Incensed by the loss of his flagship, the Dark Elf Admiral redoubled his efforts, goading his crews into a frenzied attack on the remaining enemy vessels. The Imperial ships, pounded and mauled, began to buckle under the continued assault. The Karl Franz sailed into the middle of the fray to try and redeem the situation with her great broadsides, before engaging one of the immense sea monsters in a vicious assault. Her crew streamed across onto its immense body, stabbing at its leathery skin with their swords and halberds, and sending volley after volley of gunfire into its flesh. Soon the crippled beast, howling its agony, was forced away from the fray.

The remaining Imperial ships – horribly outnumbered but undaunted – fought to the last. The sea ran red as the Doomreavers attacked repeatedly, and sharks began to circle the area, drawn by the blood in the water.

By the end of the turn, the only Imperial vessel left was the Karl Franz, with all the other Empire ships captured, abandoned or sunk. The Dark Elves, on the other hand, had abandoned one Plaguecrusher, while one Sea Dragon was horribly wounded and near death.

*The Dark Elf Death Fortress is engaged by the crew of the Karl Franz, who cripple the beast and force it to break away from the combat.*

<b>DARK ELF DEATH FORTRESS</b>				<b>WOUNDS 6</b>
<b>INDEPENDENT MONSTER</b>				
<b>4</b>	<b>SEA DRAGON HEAD</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Sea Dragon takes 1 wound: place 1 wound counter on the wound track.	<b>5</b>	<b>DEATH FORTRESS</b> Save 3, 4, 5 or 6 Sea Dragon goes out of control and dives – the model is removed from play.	<b>6</b>
				
		<b>3</b>	<b>SEA DRAGON BODY</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Sea Dragon takes 1 wound: place 1 wound counter on the wound track.	
<b>WOUND</b>	<b>WOUND</b>	<b>WOUND</b>	<b>WOUND</b>	<b>WOUND</b>
				<b>DEAD</b>
				<b>WOUND TRACK</b> Against Rams: Save 4, 5 or 6 Each wound reduces movement by 1".
<b>MONSTER: 6" – May turn freely.</b>				<b>BATTLE HONOURS: 4</b>

# . TURNS 6 TO 9 . HUNT THE KARL FRANZ

Outnumbered, outgunned and surrounded, the Imperial Admiral realised that victory was now beyond his grasp. Yet again, the Imperial Wizard failed to cast any magic, while the Dark Elf Wizard casts a Spectre spell, slaughtering many crew aboard the Imperial flagship.

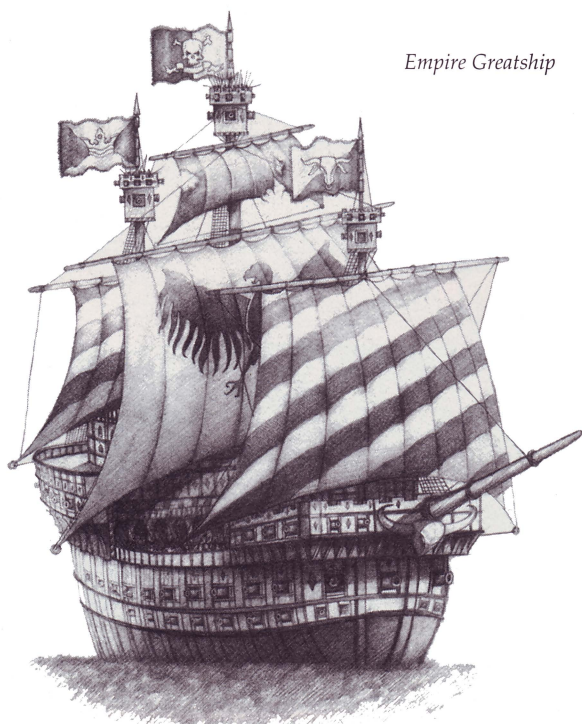
Meanwhile, one of the Plaguecrushers managed to get some Cultists aboard her abandoned sister ship, bringing it back into the fray.

Bombarded by plague catapults, the Greatship's guns were destroyed one by one, until the Imperial Admiral had no choice but to try to escape the battle with his remaining crew. The Karl Franz's gundecks were alight, and the blaze was spreading rapidly.

Manoeuvring to get the wind in his sails, the Imperial Admiral attempted to take the Karl Franz to safety and escape from the relentless pounding of the plague catapults. Infected with Nurgle's Rot, and with the crew sorely depleted, the Karl Franz could not defend herself against a boarding



*Although there are five Empire ships afloat, by this time only the Karl Franz has any crew left to carry on the fight!*



*Empire Greatship*

action by the pursuing Doomreavers and Death Fortresses, so turned tail and fled. The chase was on in earnest, with three Plaguecrushers, three Doomreavers, plus a single Death Fortress pursuing the crippled Imperial flagship. By now the fires were raging out of control below her decks, and the once mighty Greatship did not have a gun left to fire.

Then, a sudden stroke of luck; the Empire Wizard finally managed to cast a spell successfully, causing a torrent of blinding rain to put out all the blazes. The relief was short lived, however, as the Dark Elf Wizard brought forth the power of the Warp to cast a spell to immobilise the Karl Franz.

Closing for the kill, one of the Doomreavers attacked the Karl Franz, hoping to slay the crew and leave the mighty warship abandoned. Enraged to a snarling, slashing frenzy, the beast instead rampaged out of control, attacking and destroying one of the remaining Death Fortresses in a welter of blood and bone. But the remorseless pounding of the Plaguecrushers carried on unabated, and the Greatship was reduced to a ruin – barely afloat yet desperately trying to flee.

# - TURN 10 - THE KILLING BLOW

Now was the last chance for the Karl Franz to escape, but it was not to be. Both Wizards failed to cast their chosen spells – the Dark Elf Wizard attempting to immobilise the Greatship with a Storm Strike, while the Imperial Wizard tried desperately to gain a few yards movement with a Blizzard spell to put him out of range of his pursuers.

This failed exchange of sorcery sealed the fate of the stricken Karl Franz, as the leading Doomreaver finally caught up with her and tore her crew to pieces, leaving yet another abandoned Imperial ship drifting across the seascape.

The battle was over, and all that was left was to count the cost...



*The Karl Franz's crew is killed by a Dark Elf Doomreaver, leaving it drifting, abandoned and shattered beyond repair.*

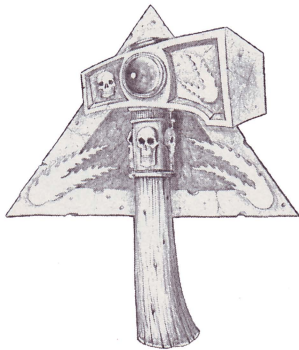
EMPIRE <b>GREATSHIP</b> MAN O' WAR				CREW <b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>FORE MAST</b> Save 5 or 6 First hit has no effect. Second hit destroys mast. Ship speed reduced by 2'(3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.	<b>5</b>	<b>MAIN MAST</b> Save 5 or 6 First hit has no effect. Second hit destroys mast. Ship speed reduced by 2'(3"). Any further hits do not cause critical damage.	<b>DAMAGE</b>
<b>ABANDONED</b>				
<b>2</b>	<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>FORECASTLE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Each hit destroys 1 fore cannon battery.	<b>AFTCASTLE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 Each hit destroys 1 aft cannon battery.	<b>DAMAGE</b> <b>DAMAGE</b>
<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>BOWS</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 1 broadside cannon battery lost.	<b>DAMAGE</b>	<b>GUN DECK</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 1 broadside cannon battery lost.	<b>DAMAGE</b>
<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>NO EFFECT</b>	<b>SINKS</b>	<b>STERN</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 1 broadside cannon battery lost.
<b>BELOW WATERLINE</b> Save 4, 5 or 6 First, second and third hits have no effect. Fourth hit...				
SAIL: 6"(9")		BATTLE HONOURS: 6		NAME: Karl Franz



*The Karl Franz is set upon by a Dark Elf Doomreaver.*

## CONCLUSION

At the end of the day, the Imperial fleet was utterly destroyed at the hands of the Dark Elves, although the Dark Elf fleet took a severe mauling too. One of the Dark Elves floating cities was gone forever but the Admiral and Sorcerer still lived to wreak further revenge on the Empire for the loss of their ancient home.



## THE DARK ELF ADMIRAL GLOATS

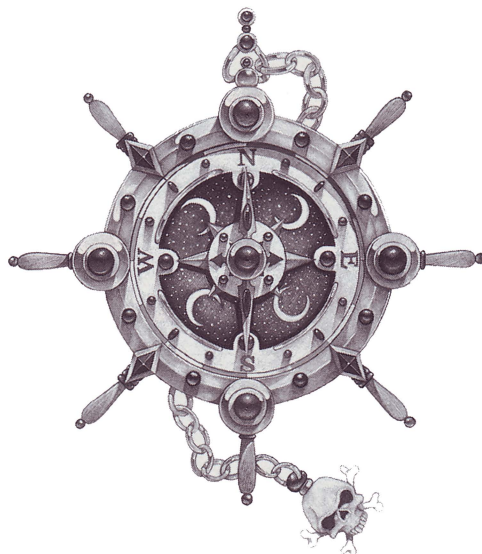
Woe, oh terrible, terrible woe. Losing the Black Ark – the shame of it! How could I have allowed it to happen? Seriously though, as it turns out I was right and Andy really didn't stand a chance in this battle, but he put up a much harder fight than I would have thought possible. At the end of the day, however, the cluttered terrain combined with my Wizard being able to cast the Wind Master and then Mire to blow Andy's flagship off course and then bog it down early in the battle is what caused his doom. The loss of the Black Ark aside, my plan went almost perfectly, and there is very little I would change if I were to fight the battle again. Nonetheless, I did learn a number of valuable lessons.

As I have already pointed out, my Wizard certainly earned his keep, which is more than could be said for the Empire's Wizard. This just goes to show what a difference a +1 dice roll modifier and a couple of extra Spell Cards can make! I think that in future I will stick with taking a Master Wizard, at least if I am using a Dark Elf fleet. The Plaguecrushers and Death Fortresses proved an excellent combination, borne out by the fact that they wiped out most of the Empire fleet with very little help from the Black Ark and Doomreavers. As the battle progressed, it turned out that the Plaguecrushers were even more useful than I had first realised. As Death Fortresses and Doomreavers cannot capture an enemy ship once they have wiped out its crew, many enemy ships end up abandoned but otherwise fairly intact. A wise opponent will re-crew such ships and bring them back into the fray. However, as I discovered during the battle, the Chaos Cultists onboard the Plaguecrushers were just right for scuttling enemy ships that had been abandoned before Andy could re-crew them.

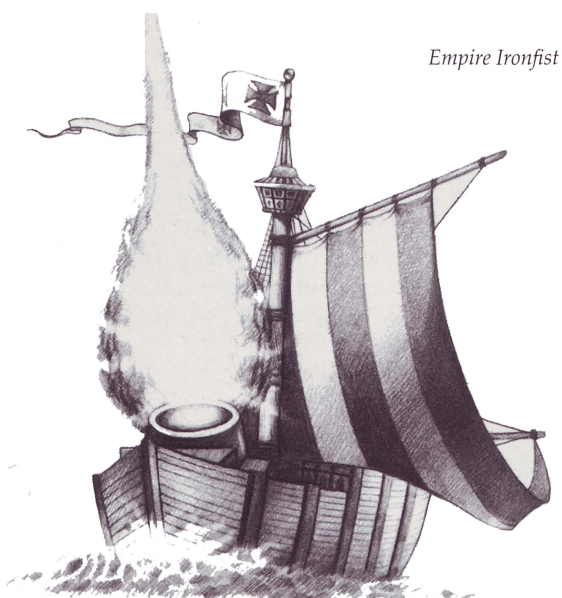
Which brings me to the Dark Elves biggest loss in the battle, the destruction of the Black Ark. Although Andy was a little lucky to take out the Black Ark quite so easily, nonetheless his Hellhammers are extremely potent weapons – especially at close range – and I should have treated them with a lot more respect. What is even more galling in retrospect is that if I had concentrated my Doomreavers against the Hellhammers at the start of turn 4, I would have had the opportunity to destroy them all before they fired a shot! In future I will take more care to protect the Black Ark under such circumstances.

The final lesson I learned also concerned the Doomreavers, and their ability to make a frenzied attack. Although this special attack can be devastating, it is highly unpredictable. As it was, both times I used it the Doomreaver in question went out of control and destroyed one of my own Death Fortresses! What made this even more annoying was that in both cases the Death Fortress hadn't had its turn yet, and so I lost the chance to fire its Reaper batteries and use its deadly close range attack. In future I will make sure that I only goad a Doomreaver into frenzy if it is really worth the risk, and try to make sure that I make the attack at the end of my turn rather than at the beginning.

Turning my attention to the other half of the table, I would have to say that Andy probably paid too much attention to keeping the wind in his sails as opposed to forming a good line abreast formation. I have a strong hunch that this is because Ardy's main experience is with a Bretonnian fleet (with which he has a fearsome and highly justified reputation). The Bretonnians use completely different tactics and battle formations to the Empire, and being powered by sails the wind direction becomes vitally important. In any case, I'm sure that Andy will not make the same mistake the next time we meet, now that he has had a bit of practice using (or should I say losing...) an Empire fleet.





*Empire Ironfist*

## THE EMPIRE ADMIRAL LAMENTS

Well, what can I say? The Empire fleet received a thorough drubbing at the hands of the dreaded Dark Elves, although in retrospect it could have been a lot worse.

I think it's fair to say that I lost the game due to bad planning, bad luck and a Wizard who must have smooth-talked his way onboard ship by pulling rabbits out of hats (he certainly wasn't doing anything else during the game).

My experience with the mighty Bretonnian Armada has left a residual fear of sailing into the wind, and so I set up my fleet taking great care not to leave the Greatship behind. Looking at my set up, you can see that if I had gone round the volcano the other way, the Greatship would have been sailing into the wind almost immediately; as it was, all I had to do was round the rocky outcrop and turn so that the wind was in my sails. Then I would be able to bear down upon Jervis' fleet with all guns blazing – and a Greatship has a lot of guns!

This meant that the rest of my fleet was bottled up in the straits between the outcrop and the volcano, but I manfully set up my ships in line abreast formation, guns forward, planning to get through the gap quickly under sail, spread out and catch the Dark Elves between the hammer of the Greatship and the anvil of the rest of my fleet.

Alas, it was not to be, as right from the start things went horribly wrong. My fear of the wind was borne out as Jervis luckily started the game with the Windmaster spell in his hand, and quickly cast it against me, slowing down my fleet and making things almost impossible for the Karl Franz.

From then on things went from bad to worse. As quite often happens, I gained the initiative for the first few turns as the fleets approached each other; then, in the crucial stages of the battle, I lost the initiative continually, which allowed Jervis to do his worst.

In other games I've been rammed by the Imperial fleet, and know how devastating it can be, but my planned 'ram and smash' attack at the start of the game failed to do anything conclusive. I failed to sink a single enemy vessel, even though I used 3 Wargalleys and 3 Wolfships (12 guns and six rams) in the assault. In fact, all that it did was place my ships in just the right position to be torn apart by the Death Fortresses.

About the only thing that did work in the way I anticipated was the Hellhammers. If you have an Imperial fleet, get some – they are invaluable and saved me from a total disaster!

Actually, a very important lesson that I learnt from the battle was 'know your enemy'. It's been a little while since I put the rules for the Dark Elves together, and it's funny how time muddies your memory. I was under the impression (as stated in my plan) that Dark Elves were more or less invulnerable to spells that kill crew. Not so – they are the spells that can wipe out Death Fortresses and Doomreavers immediately, by killing the few Dark Elves that control them.

I foolishly discarded these spells, going after those that could set the enemy on fire. I should have been going through as many cards as I could, and actively searching for the very spells whose usefulness I had discounted, using them to wipe out the Death Fortresses' and Doomreavers' crews.

In future, I'd perhaps be tempted to have either a 50 point Wizard Champion, giving me an extra 50 points to spend on ships, or a 150 point Wizard Lord. The 100 point Master Wizard fell somewhere between the two, and didn't do anything much at all (though that could of course be attributed to my dismal dice rolls as much as anything else).

*Empire Hell-hammer*

The Dark Elf movement rules also meant Jervis could continually manoeuvre around to my unguarded sides or rear and attack me where I couldn't add my cannons to the defence.

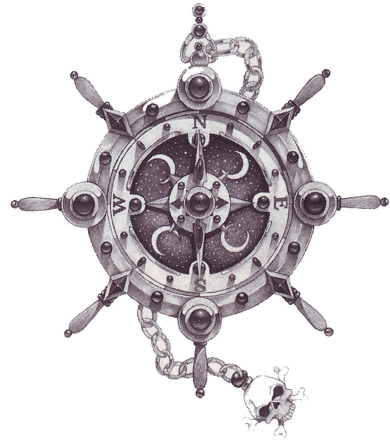
Finally, I was perhaps more scared of the Plaguecrushers than I should have been. I might have been better served if I had set up in line abreast formation in the more open area of the sea on the other side of the volcano, attempting to tack with my Greatship and showering the approaching Dark Elves with cannon fire for as long as possible. Instead, I closed too soon to avoid being bottled up in the narrow straits, and the Empire ship templates show the results: 5 out of my 13 ships were unharmed but abandoned, as Jervis' Sea Monsters did their worse. Many of my other ships had also been boarded and their crews slain before they were scuttled. In a nutshell, it was the boarding actions that were the death of me. The lesson to be learnt here is to keep the Dark Elves at arm's reach!

Still, it was not a complete debacle, and I certainly ruined Jervis' fleet as a viable fighting force. Next time I'll maintain strict Imperial discipline and keep the thin red line together. Let's see how Jervis' Dark Elves like an impenetrable battle line of cannon fire and cold steel!

## BATTLE HONOURS

At the end of the battle, the Empire fleet had gained 18 Battle Honours, while the Dark Elves had gained a massive total of 47 Battle Honours.

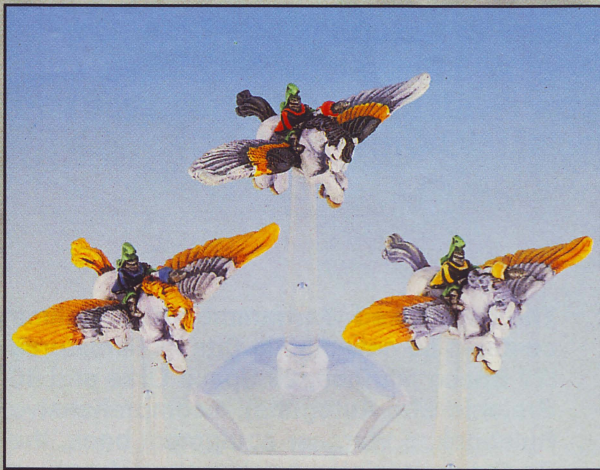
This total is a little deceptive, however, as things could have been a lot closer if I'd only managed to sink the remaining Death Fortress... if only the Dark Elf Admiral and Wizard had died with the Black Ark... if only the Karl Franz had escaped off the table... if only... But next time things will be different, and I will have my revenge!



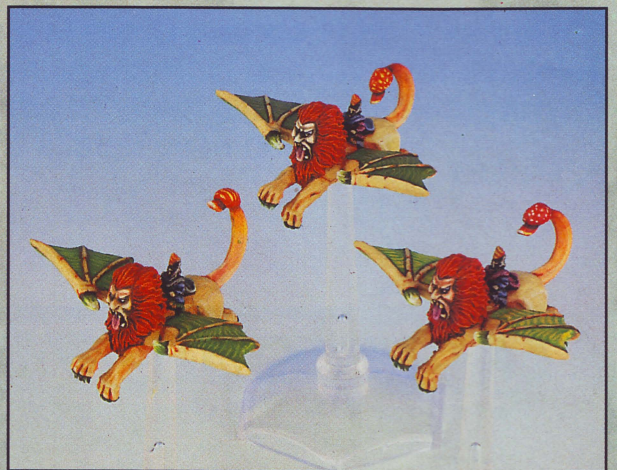
## FLYING CREATURES

The soul-tearing screech of bat-winged Manticores strikes fear in the enemies of the Dark Elf fleet. Ridden by Dark Elf lords, these gigantic beasts soar high above the waters to swoop down upon their enemy's ships. As they dive towards their victim, the Manticore releases a deadly projectile, known as the Doomfist. The heavy barbed sphere smashes into the target, shattering timbers and ripping through the hull, to send the vessel to a watery grave.

Aware of the dangers posed by such attacks from the air, Bretonnian warfleets enlist valiant Knights for protection. Bretonnian Pegasus riders are heavily armoured champions mounted on mighty winged horses. Soaring aloft on these great beasts, they lunge at their foes, piercing them with heavy lances or striking them from the sky with their great swords.



BRETONNIAN PEGASUS RIDERS



DARK ELF MANTICORE RIDERS



A BRETONNIAN FLEET CLASHES WITH DARK ELVES ON THE HIGH SEAS.