

# WARMASTER

# Ships in Warmaster

By Matt Keefe

Wanting a pair of sea legs and fed up of being called a 'lazy land-luvver' from Captain Krelle at the neighbouring desk, Matt has looked into expanding the ship rules from the Warmaster book.

Ships are often a vital part of most generals' strategies when on campaign. Without such vessels, a leader's forces would find themselves faced with frequent arduous marches and so would lack the ability to cover great distances with any real speed. On occasion, ships will find themselves with a role in the battle itself, perhaps having to navigate a river to deploy troops directly to the battlefield, or attacking a heavily defended beach. Sometimes, whole battles may even be fought out between entire fleets of ships, though that is rather beyond the scope of Warmaster. For our purposes, the prime role of ships is transporting units over open water or down rivers, which can be done using the following rules.

## SHIP UNITS

A ship is assumed to be a single unit, complete with its own captain and crew, regardless of its size. Size will, of course, vary from vessel to vessel, with ocean-going ships or trading vessels being about 120mm longer. Smaller

vessels could be any size down to about 20mm or 30mm in length – anything smaller than this really represents a simple small boat, which are covered by their own separate rules.

## HITS

Each ship has a number of hits, equal to 1 hit for every 2cm of length, or part, of the ship. For sake of ease, the greatest number of hits a ship may ever possess is 6. Some common sense will need to be applied when measuring a ship's length – don't count overly long prow spikes or figureheads, for example. The size of a ship, and thus its number of hits, are used to work out how many stands the ship can transport, how much damage from shooting or combat it can suffer and so on.



## TRANSPORT CAPACITY

A ship can carry a number of stands equal to one per hit the ship begins the game with. The chances are that entire units won't fit in your ship model unless you are very careful. Don't worry – it is sufficient to place one stand inside to show that the entire unit is being transported, or simply make a note and indicate to your opponent that the unit is being transported. All the stands comprising a unit must be transported by the same ship, though a single ship may transport multiple units if its size permits. A ship may also transport any number of character models.

## ORDERS

Just as each unit must be given an order to move, so too must each ship. While it might seem strange to think of giving 'orders' to a ship, we can instead imagine this to represent orders hastily bellowed by the captain as his crew race up the rigging to bring in the sails, dash to the forecastle and quarter deck in preparation for imminent boarding actions, take the helm in desperate attempts to change course and so on.



## CAPTAINS & COMMAND

Unlike other units, ships do not receive orders from characters within the army, but rather from their own captains. Each ship is assumed to include its own captain, whose Command value is determined at random by rolling on the table below before the start of the game. Make a note of each ship's Command value on your army list, since you will need to refer to this throughout the battle.

D6 Roll	Captain's Command Value
1 or 2	7
3, 4 or 5	8
6	9

## ISSUING ORDERS & TAKING COMMAND CHECKS

Obviously, some of the rules for issuing orders to units don't really work for ships (having a captain stay in place while his ship sails ever further away on successive orders would be a little odd, it's fair to say), so orders are issued a little differently for ships.

Ships issue orders and move in the Command phase, just as units of troops. Orders can only be issued to a ship by its own captain – no other captain and no other character in the army may ever issue orders to a ship. Command checks are taken as normal – by rolling two dice and comparing the total score to the captain's Command value. Ships do not suffer from the command penalties listed in the Warmaster rulebook for issuing orders to units of troops. Instead, ships are subject to the modifiers listed over the page.





back by missile fire, though could be confused (thus preventing them from disembarking or being launched in boats in a subsequent turn).

### SHOOTING FROM SHIPS

Units aboard a ship may shoot as normal, though not all the stands can necessarily fire. All stands of artillery or machinery can fire, but only half of all the remaining units (rounding up) may fire. The owning player may choose which half of the stands fire, since it is assumed that stands make way for the best shots to take up the best firing position. Only stands capable of missile fire count for these purposes, so you couldn't have stands of Halberdiers making way for Crossbowmen, for example – add up the number of missile equipped stands then halve this number and choose this many stands to shoot.

## COMBAT

For the time being, we'll assume that combat is only going to occur if a ship is docked, and attacked from there by enemy ground troops. A ship in harbour might be boarded, leading to a fight between units on board and attackers. Line the attacking units up against the side of the side. The number of stands on board which may fight back is equal to half the ship's starting number of hits. The defending player may freely choose which stands these are.

Combat is fought as normal, except that supporting stands are ignored. However, the ship's crew are able to offer support to the defender, who receive support total to the ship's starting number of hits (representing larger crews aboard larger ships).

If the defender's lose, they are driven back, pushed overboard and destroyed.

If the defender's win, the attackers are pushed back as normal and the defenders then have the option of pursuing as normal. In this instance, the first stands to be moved into contact must be those which actually fought the attackers. Secondly, any stands from the same unit as those engaged in combat are moved up into base contact with the remainder of their unit until a normal combat arrangement is arranged.

### DESIGNER'S NOTES

Obviously, these rules are a little more complex than those presented in the Warmaster rulebook, though not overly so, and do rely on many of the same rules mechanisms as ordinary units of troops from the game, so experienced players shouldn't find much difficulty in their use. Hopefully, the additional usefulness of ships under these new rules should make up for any additional complexity. The use of ordered movement for boats makes them both more useful and more flexible, with the ability to cover longer stretches of water – no longer will an opponent be

able to predict their steady, 20cm a turn advance. The new rules for damage make ships a little more durable (and hence, again, more useful), though should also prove more interesting, with genuine differences between ships of different sizes. Other changes create real tactical differences between ships with oars and ships with sails.

The combat and shooting rules are rather more detailed, though certainly not yet comprehensive, and in the future we hope to add rules for weapons mounted aboard ships themselves, boarding actions between two ships, and so on.

That said, these rules are certainly not entirely foolproof (or should that be watertight?), and ships remain an interesting curiosity best used in specific scenarios. The basic rules presented here aren't really able to take account of the fact that some races find ships more useful than others, and doesn't present any guidelines for providing ships with a points cost, how to include them in a fair and balanced army and so on. All of these factors must still be dealt with by the particular scenario. We certainly don't want it to remain this way for long, and hopefully the basic rules presented here will provide a sturdy basis for expanding the role of ships in Warmaster. In the not too distant future we'll hopefully be able to develop points cost for different sizes of ship, perhaps even with special descriptions and profiles for some of the most famous vessels of the Warhammer world such as Elf Dragonships, Marauder Longships and others. Some rather esoteric ships, like the Dwarf Nautilus or other mad designs are certainly not inconceivable either. To do this properly though, we really need to get a good idea of which parts of the current ship rules are popular and fun, which aren't, which bits work, which bits don't and so on. Play a few games with these rules and let us know what you think, either by writing to us at the usual address or visting the forum at [www.warmaster.co.uk](http://www.warmaster.co.uk) where you will also find the Warmaster Vault. Any new developments relating to these ship rules (or indeed to Warmaster in general) are always posted in the vault for players to download and try out, so keep your eyes out for more ship-based fun there.

#### Author

*Matt Keefe is the Head of System for Warmaster, which means he has a really good sounding job title for somebody who has to do whatever Rick tells him. He is currently nagging Rick to finish a second edition of the Warmaster rules.*



#### Further Information

*The other Warhammer campaign packs have also been updated. Check out back issues of Warmaster magazine.*

#### More Warmaster Website

*Turn to page 46 for Tears of Isba.  
[www.Warmaster.co.uk](http://www.Warmaster.co.uk)*



**COMMAND PENALTIES**

Just as with units of troops, the ability of a ship to move will be hampered by a number of factors, such as loss of crew, physical damage which might make it harder for the ship to turn, or which may have damaged its oars or sails and so on.

**Each successive order to the ship.....-2**  
 If a ship has already been issued an order during the command phase then there is a Command penalty of -2 each time the captain gives a further order. This accounts for the fatigue of the oarsmen, the difficulty in drawing extra speed from sails and so on. This penalty is cumulative so a unit's second order is at -2, the third order is at -4 and so on.

**Loss of Crew .....-1**  
 If a ship has lost any crew as a result of hits from shooting or combat (as explained later) a -1 Command penalty applies. This penalty is not cumulative, so further loss of crew does not inflict additional penalties.

**Damaged Sails/Oars.....-1**  
 If a ship has suffered any damage to its sails or oars as a result of hits from shooting or combat (as explained later) a -1 Command penalty applies when moving under the damaged sails or oars. Obviously, ships with both oars and sails can use undamaged sails instead of damaged oars or vice versa, and thus avoid the penalty. The penalty only applies when using the damaged oars/sails for movement – ie, a ship does not suffer a penalty simply for bearing such damaged locations. This penalty is not cumulative, so further damage to sails or oars does not inflict additional penalties.

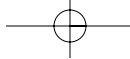
**Sail Moving Against the Wind.....-1**  
**Sail Moving With the Wind ..... +1**  
 In the case of ships equipped with sails, it is necessary to establish wind direction at the start of the game. This can be done by spinning a pencil so that it faces in a specific direction or, if you have one, by rolling one of a Scatter dice.

Sailing vessels moving with the wind in their front 90° arc suffer a -1 Command penalty to represent the increased difficulty and reduced speed these vessels suffer when sailing against the wind.

Sailing vessels moving with the wind in their rear 90° arc benefit from a +1 Command bonus, to represent the increased speed by gained by all that extra wind filling the sails.

**Vessel Moving Upstream.....-1**  
**Vessel Moving Downstream ..... +1**  
 As with the wind, it is also necessary to determine the direction or current of any courses of water on the table. You can decided this in any sensible manner you wish, though obviously if the table includes any coastline, all rivers on the board should run towards the sea. Alternatively some rivers can be designated as slow moving, and thus ignore the upstream/downstream modifiers and provide neither a Command penalty nor a bonus to ships traversing them.

Any vessel moving upstream (ie, in the opposite direction to the river) suffers a -1 Command penalty to represent the strong current running against it.



Any vessel moving downstream (ie, in the same direction as the river) benefit, from a +1 Command bonus, representing the increased speed the vessel gains with a strong flow of water pushing it along.

A captain always moves with his ship – he is an integral part of it. Each time the ship receives a successful order and moves, the captain is assumed to move along with it, so ships will never suffer any penalties for distance to the character issuing orders. You will notice that the penalty for issuing successive orders is increased appropriately to take this into account.

**BLUNDERS**

Just like characters on the land, it is possible for a ship’s captain to so completely fail in his attempts at leadership that some great mishap befalls his unfortunate vessel. If a Command check rolls a double 6 (ie, a natural score of 12) the order is failed and the ship suffers a blunder. Roll a dice on the following table to see what has occurred.

**1.....Mutiny**

The captain issues an order considered to be nothing less than madness by his crew, who promptly mutiny and refuse to obey it. Whether the unfortunate oaf survives to tell the tale or is hastily replaced by a plucky subordinate is down to the mercy of his crew, but either way, the ship suffers a permanent -1 penalty to its captain’s Command value. This penalty is cumulative, so a ship could potentially have its Command value reduced several times if successive mutinies break out.

**2 .....Tangled Rigging**

In an attempt to bring the ship about, pickup speed or some other apparently straightforward action, the crew manage to completely bungle a change of tack, snaring the rigging, dropping the wrong sails and generally creating all manner of havoc about the ship’s masts. The ship suffers a ‘Sails Damaged’ result, as explained in the rules for damage. Ships equipped only with oars can ignore this result, and instead simply do nothing.

**3 or 4 .....Wrong Turn**

A poorly understood order leads to the ship tacking in the wrong direction, or the oarsmen on one side giving up the stroke entirely, allowing the boat to spin awkwardly to one side. The ship does not move, but is instead turned 90° to the left if the blunder was a 3, 90° to the right if the blunder was a 4.

**5 or 6.....Becalmed**

The ship’s sails fall pitifully limp, or else the oarsmen lose all sense of time and their oars flail and clutter into one another hopelessly. Either way, the ship is becalmed by a temporary loss of control brought about by their captain’s inept and contradictory orders. The ship may not move again this Command phase, as normal for a failed order.

**MOVEMENT**

Ships have a maximum permitted move distance of 20cm and a half pace move of 10cm. As with units of troops, ships may move once up to their full distance for each successful order received. No penalties apply to this distance – any difficulties in movement or other hindrances are instead taken into account by the command system and thus reduce a vessel’s chance of successfully receiving an order.

No vessel can move into a river or stream which is too narrow to allow it to pass, nor over rapids, waterfalls, weirs or other similar features that would prevent its passage. Again, some common sense must be used in determining whether navigation is possible by a particular ship.



**TURNING**

Ships are rather more cumbersome than units of infantry or cavalry, and so cannot freely turn during their movement. Movement must be a straight line, with only a single turn of 90° permitted. Where this turn can be made depends upon whether the ship is moving under sail or oars.

**SAILS & OARS**

Ships with oars can make their turn anywhere along their move, and can reduce to half pace to make a single 180° turn if they wish. Ships with sails may make their turn anywhere along their move as long as they have first moved at least 10cm. Ships under sail may not turn when moving at half pace.

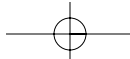
**EMBARKING & DISEMBARKING**

During the Command phase, a unit can embark onto a ship by moving into touch with it.

A unit on board a ship can disembark either by using its initiative to charge or by being given an order. Units are in irregular formation whilst on ships or in boats, and will therefore move at half pace unless charging.

A unit cannot embark and disembark during the same Command phase.

Units can embark and disembark as brigades where required. Up to four units on the same ship are automatically considered to be a brigade.





## LAUNCHING BOATS

Instead of disembarking its troops directly, a ship can launch boats during the Command phase. A successful order is required, after which any number of units currently on the ship instead make a single move as a unit of boats, starting from the ship's current location. The same order cannot be used to move the ship, though subsequent orders can be issued to both the boats and the ship, just as if a brigade had been split up during movement. Remember that units are in irregular formation when aboard a ship, and the difficulty of clambering into boats and escaping the larger vessel's considerable wake means that the first move by the boats will be at half pace when launched.

## SHOOTING

Ships are sturdy, but their crews and sails are all too vulnerable. Despite their size and solid build, we assume that any missile armed troops can attack ships by raining arrows down onto the crew as they scurry about the deck, tearing holes in sails with their shots or even launching flaming arrows into the boat's vulnerable wooden hull. A ship counts as a fortified target, and so 6s are required to hit. Ships can never be driven back by missile fire.

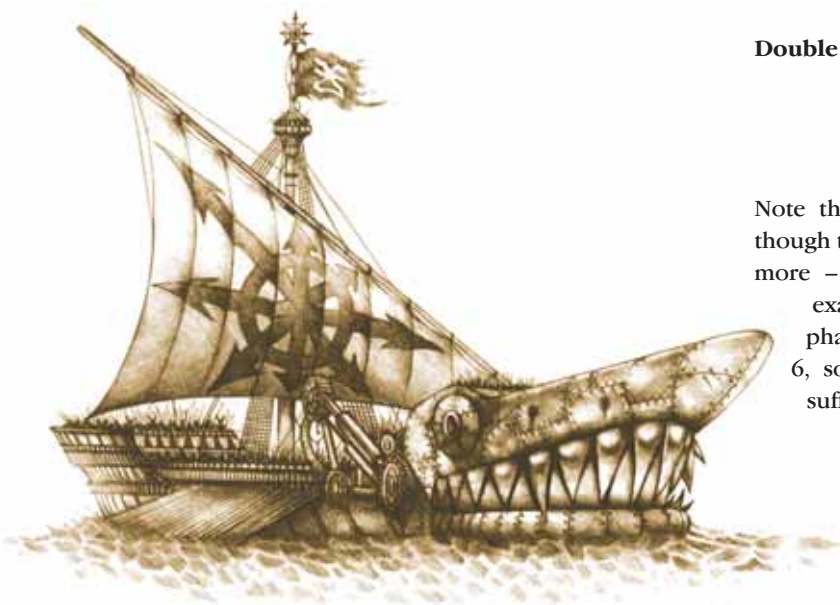
Hits from shooting do not immediately affect a ship, and you should instead keep a note of the number of hits which strike the ship during a particular Shooting phase. At the end of each Shooting phase, take one dice for each hit the ship has suffered and roll them all. Pick out any dice which score doubles or trebles. Any double which is greater than the ship's number of remaining hits sinks the vessel and any units on board are lost. Any double which is equal to or less than the ship's number of remaining hit instead inflicts the effect shown on the table to the right.

Score	Effect
<b>Double 1</b>	<b>Batton the hatches!</b> The sudden deluge of fire causes much panic on board as crew rush from their posts to seek cover. The ship can only move at half pace next turn.
<b>Double 2</b>	<b>Oars/Sails Damaged.</b> Several of the ship's sails are torn apart by the hail of arrows or else some of the ship's oarsmen are slain. This will hinder future Command checks, as described earlier.
<b>Double 3</b>	<b>Crew Slain.</b> The shots kill many of the ship's crew as they scurry about the deck. The amount of support the ship's crew provide in combat is reduced by -1 (so they will provide support total to the ship's remaining hits, minus one). Support from crew is explained in the rules for combat later.
<b>Double 4</b>	<b>Hull Damaged.</b> A few particularly thunderous shots smash into the hull, small fires catch from fire arrows striking the timbers, or perhaps mishaps onboard are responsible for the damage. Either way, the ship's number of hits are reduced by 1 permanently.
<b>Double 5</b>	<b>Captain Slain.</b> The captain, or perhaps a number of his most trusted aides, are slain by the shots. The ship suffers a permanent -1 penalty to its Command value. This result is not cumulative, so further results of Captain Slain have no further effect.
<b>Double 6</b>	<b>Below the Waterline Hit.</b> The shots hole the ship, springing a series of leaks and causing the ship to take on water. The ship sinks and any units aboard are lost.

Note that we've referred to these results as 'doubles' though they could quite easily be trebles, four of a kind or more – all have the same effect upon the ship. For example, a ship suffers 5 hits during the Shooting phase, so 5 dice are rolled. These score 1, 2, 2, 3 and 6, so a result of Oars/Sails Damaged (double 2) is suffered.

## SHOOTING AT UNITS ON SHIPS

An enemy can shoot at units on board a ship instead of targetting the ship itself (though must declare which he is targetting before rolling any dice) and counts as firing at a fortified target (6s needed to hit). Units on ships are never driven



# THE BATTLE OF HELMSGARTE'S DROP

Returning from the Border Princes, the campaigning army of Baron Maximus von Helmgarte crossed Black Fire Pass before turning westward for Nuln, from where the expedition had departed some years previously. Leaving the Old Dwarf Road, Baron Helmgarte led his expedition along the route of the Upper Reik. Nearing Nuln, the army passed the meeting of the River Sol and the Upper Reik before being ambushed by an Orc horde sweeping down from the Grey Mountains. Having already crossed the Reik from west to east, and leaving much destruction in its wake, the burgeoning Orc army heavily outnumbered Helmgarte's own beleaguered following. With nothing but wilderness to their back, the Empire army was forced to fight, though not before Baron Helmgarte cunningly despatched messengers northwards. The Orcs crashed into the Empire army as Helmgarte's men began building crude fortifications from the gargantuan baggage train which had accompanied the army for the entire expedition. The Orcs proved just as ferocious as their numbers suggested, and Baron Helmgarte's army looked surely doomed. Until, that is, three great warships of Nuln sailed into view on the broad Upper Reik...

This battle was fought between Baron Maximus von Helmgarte's Empire army and an Orc horde of the Grey Mountains. The battle can easily be re-fought between any two armies, but its key feature is the shipborne reinforcements who arrive to aid the beleaguered defenders.



The battle is fought along the western bank of the Upper Reik. The Upper Reik thus runs down the western short table edge, no more than 30cm from the table edge itself. The Reik is both fast and deep, and cannot be crossed by any means except ships or boats (the Orcs have crossed it some days previously with a mixture of crude rafts, small boats pulled by River Trolls, inflated Squig skins and other such Orcish improvisations). The remainder of the table can be set up in any mutually agreeable manner. Both armies set up within 20cm of their own table edge (Orcs on the northern edge, Empire on the south). No units can be deployed east of the Upper Reik. The Empire must be divided in half (in terms of number of units) with only half the army deployed at the start of the game – the remainder will hopefully arrive as reinforcements sent from Nuln during the battle.

The armies are setup alternately, one unit at a time with the Orc player deploying the first unit. Once the entire Empire army has been set up, the Orc player continues to deploy one unit at a time. After each Orc unit is deployed in this manner, the Empire player may do one of the following:

**Send Messengers:** Keep a note of the total number of messengers sent out – it will decide the chance of reinforcements arriving.

**Erect Fortifications:** Place a single piece of fortifications no more than 60mm wide and no more than 20mm deep to represent the stockaded baggage train.

Once the Orc army is completely deployed, the Empire player may not send out any further messengers, or deploy any further fortifications. The Orc player then takes the first turn.

At the start of each of his Command phases, the Empire player may roll two dice and add the scores together (just like taking a Command check). If the total score is equal to or less than the number of messengers sent out by the Empire player before the start of the game, then their frantic marathon has proven successful and the warships of Nuln arrive. As many ships arrive as are required to transport the remaining half of the Empire army – you can make the ships different sizes, so the army could arrive on one huge ship or a collection of smaller ships or whatever combination you like, but you may only send ships with enough capacity to transport the Empire troops. Place the warships on the northernmost point of the Upper Reik. They may function as normal from the turn on which they arrive. If the score is more than the number of messengers, the ships do not yet arrive, but the Empire player can roll again next turn, adding +1 for each failed roll so far.

The game continues for a random number of turns (or an agreed number of turns if you and your opponent prefer) or until one army withdraws. The Empire army's break point is calculated for the whole army, so it is possible that the army deployed at the start of the battle could be completely wiped out before the army 'withdraws'. This simply represents Helmgarte's bloody resolve to hang on in the hope of reinforcements.

## VICTORY POINTS BONUS

No bonus Victory Points are awarded in this battle. Both armies already have their own counterbalancing impediments to overcome, so Victory Points determined in the normal manner are used to determine the winner.

# THE BATTLE AT THE SHORE OF BONES

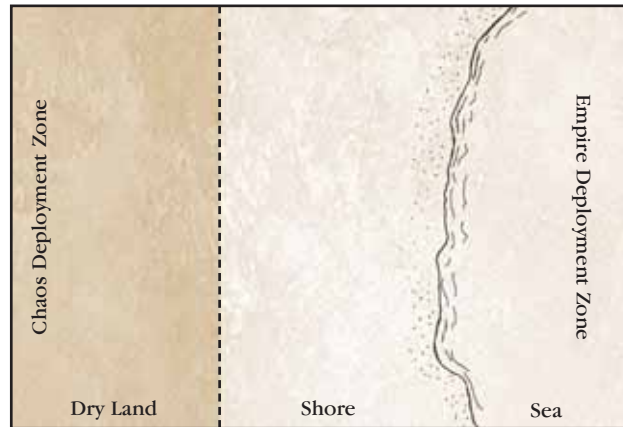
The Shore of Bones covers an area some hundred leagues north of Erengard, in the Troll Country. The area is a bleak, inhospitable coast, through presents a far safer landing point for journeys northwards than the Norscan shore, where Marauder longships constantly prowl the coastline, ready to attack and kill any would-be expeditionaries. In the Imperial year 2365, the famous Warrior-Priest Vitriucz von Palle led one such expedition, intent on journeying north and taking his own Sigmarite quest into the heart of Chaos itself. Von Palle would ultimately vanish out of history forever, his fate unknown, but the Battle at the Shore of Bones was a great success in which von Palle's fleet made successful landing and drove off the Marauder tribes which attacked him there. None ever returned to bring news of von Palle's victory, but for some fifty years after his departure the city of Erengard found itself largely free from the predations of the Marauder tribes which had long dogged it, a fact always attributed to von Palle's presumed triumph at the Bone Shore by the grateful Kislevites.



This battle was fought between the Empire army of Vitriucz von Palle and a Chaos army made up of various Norse tribes. The battle could easily be fought between any two armies, the key feature is that the attackers (Empire) arrive by boat and land on the shore before attacking the defenders (Chaos).

Divide the table into thirds lengthways. The first third represents the sea itself, the second third is the shoreline while the final third is good old fashioned dry land. Scenery can be set up in any mutually agreeable fashion, subject to these distinctions (so no trees in the sea, etc).

The attacking army is transported by as many ships as are required for the entire army, no more, no less. You can make the ships different sizes, so the army could arrive on one huge ship or a collection of smaller ships or whatever combination you like, but you may only send ships with enough capacity to transport the Empire troops. All attacking ships are deployed first, anywhere on the sea edge of the table. After this, the defending army deploys anywhere on the solid ground portion of the table. The attacker then takes the first turn.



Once an attacking ship lands on the shoreline, its troops may attempt to disembark, either by using initiative, or by being issued an order. However, the sandy, waterlogged and infirm shoreline presents rather more difficulty for disembarking troops than would be the case if they were simply hopping off onto a well prepared harbour. Disembarking onto the shore leaves the unit(s) in irregular formation, so the first move by a disembarking unit will be at half pace (unless disembarking by initiative, of course).

## VICTORY POINTS BONUS

No bonus Victory Points are awarded in this battle. The key feature of the battle is the Empire army attacking from the sea, so the battle will work out rather differently than most though victory should still be determined in the normal manner.

