

The Drowned Dead



Ye might have heard tell of Bonespit Rock. A more ill-gotten name has never been seen by any stretch of sand from here to Far Cathay. She's no rock, nor reef, neither, but that ten-mile stretch of river sand has claimed more ships than all the coast of Albion combined.

After th' loss of the Prince's ship with all hands, there was a life-station set out there, on that island. Oh, sure and it is a wind blasted patch of frozen sand in the midst of the Great Sea, but even so more'n a half-dozen families took the work. Cold, hard, unforgiving work, to be sure, but work far from any hungry creditor. There was men livin' out at that life-station 'til nearly the last war.

See, thought was that if we can't stop the wrecks, we might stop some from dying. Those families they were to man the light out there, and keep a weather eye open for any ships as might stray too close. Too close in a storm. Too close in the fog. Too close in the night.

And when that lovely little barquentine run aground, well, then it was all men to the boats, wasn't it? Ye'd have to drag one of those long an' heavy clinker-built boats all along that ten mile of sand 'til ye came out a straight line ashore from the wreck. Hard and slogging work on a stormy night, let me tell you. Enough to break a soul, if not a back. But along along, you'd spy her, grinding to shreds and splinters on the sand. Grounded two miles out.

Oh, it's shallow off Bonespit Rock. And a man doesn't swim one mile there in the cold waters, much less two. Water there means death. Frozen corpses washed up on the sand.

Then came the rowing. To pull. Eight men against the storm. To pull for yer life, and for those wrecked, too. To row against the worst wind and wave and water... Water as could come, storm-driven, and smash right up over your bows, drag one of those eight men from where he sits and away over the side. One bare mile from shore, half-way there, and that's exactly what happens.

And then ye've a choice, haven't you? See, there's them out there. You can see them hanging from their rigging, you can almost hear their cries, carried off and eaten by the wind. That dozen men out there, they will die if you don't reach them. If you don't row.

But then there's that man there in th' water, isn't it? He's practically a neighbour or better. You KNOW him. You see him every day. You can hear him shout from where you sit and you know that he will die if you don't turn back.

Oh, it's a very hard choice.

And they made their choice, that night.

They got every single one of them men off that barquentine. They fought against the storm, and got every man off that ship. Got them to shore. Got them fed. Got them clothed. Got them

shelter. Got them warm. Got word back to th' mainland and eventually, six months later, got them home.

Now, if this were some fire-side tale, if this were some lonely ballad sung for a beer, if this were some story told by a prancing noble, we'd here something dramatic like "one year to th' day," or "just before the next big storm."

Nothing like. Nothing so poetic.

Nine months less a week. Nine months less a week - oh, not the next wreck to be sure. There were plenty. No, but the next wreck that is in near about the same place. Heh. Ye look at a chart of Bonespit Rock, and they're piled up on each other there like ninepins. These two could ha' been touching. A lovely brig she was, this one, all in blue.

They dragged out the boat, and they dragged down the beach, and they fought the wind, and they hit the water, and they started to row. They could see those ten men out in the riggin'. And they pulled.

But they were losing.

They were barely half-way there. Bare a mile out from shore, and it looked like the weather would win. Only seven men, now, with the loss the year before. Seven men now, to fight against that wind and wave and water. And seven men seemed not to be enough. Only a mile out, and it looked like they'd have to turn back.

And sudden there is a wet slap, like a split fish thrown down on a dock, and two hands grab hold the gunnels, and pull up from the water. Two boots smash down in the bilge. Two boots filled with the worst, seaweed-crust, stench-gutted, rotted slap of canvas ye've ever

seen in all your life. And THEY all know what's going on, right?

It's OBVIOUS.

He's come back for revenge!

And they're all near for over the side. With certain death in the one mile swim to shore and near-certain death behind with the dead man in the boat--

Near-certain. Near-certain. Maybe that was it. That was enough. Enough to get them to pause. To pause long enough to see, before all men into the drink, that what he'd done, what he'd DONE, see, was picked up his oar, taken his old seat, and started to ROW.

Well, with certain death in th' swim to shore and now less certain death behind (and likely a bit o' liquid courage), they raked to benches, and started again pulling on the oars. And don't let me make ye think it was easy, now, some walk down th' Mordheim Piers, no. It was a hard and brutal fight. But now, but NOW, with eight men rowing, now they made headway. With eight men pulling, now they fought along. With eight men pulling, they dragged their boat out to that little ship, and got all ten men off her, and headed 'em back to shore.

Now I know what you're thinkin'. Those seven men, I wouldn't believe a word they say. There they are, livin' in the middle of nowhere, some of the worst conditions known to man. They're wracked with guilt. Rowin' past the very place they less than a year gone left their own man to die. I wouldn't believe a word they say.

And I don't.

Those ten men they rescued. They brought those seven up on charges. They had them nearly hanged for murder. Because half-way back to shore, only a mile off, one of them rowing stands up, steps over the side, drops below the water and he's GONE. And no matter how hard they argued, how hard they struggled, how hard they fought, those ten men couldn't get these seven men to turn back.

It's not until the trial hit the mainland, oh, a dozen years before the last war, that we got the whole of the story. Those ten are where I heard this story from. Them I might believe.

So watch yourself out there, on th' water.



The water is a hungry and demanding master. Whether the far seas, or the Stir River, she devours ships and devours souls. Knowing this, you still plan to sign aboard?

Very well then. Sign here. Aye, or make your mark as you are able.

No, son, I don't care what you think you are running from. Love, loss, or debts, it makes no mind to me. Once you are aboard, you belong to this ship, see.

I know you'll work, and I know you'll learn. 'Cause if you don't, then we ALL drown, and that, young buck, includes YOU. That's YOUR life hangs in the balance, then. Mark well, learn well. Work well.

Wages? Aye, once we are back ashore. More often in a river-boat than them that put to sea. Fear not. You'll have coin enough to buy drink, and coin enough to buy love.

As long as you live.

As long as you live.



The Drowned Dead

The River Stir.

The city of Mordheim, before the Comet, was a bustling port city that swelled with wealth as the river annually swelled its banks. Vessels from Altdorf, from Marienburg, from distant lands across the far oceans, traveled up and down the river, disgorging wealth onto the docks in Mordheim. “The finest market city in the Empire,” so they said.

Where there is wealth, there are those who would take it. River piracy along the Stir is famed throughout the Empire and beyond, as are those gallant souls who defend the goods they carry against the robbers and thieves who would steal them at sword-point. Vessels both legal and criminal are well armed, on the Stir.

In the nights of the great disaster, as the comet burned in the midnight sky, ships of all sorts continued to load and unload necessities and luxuries. When the city burned, so did they.

The dead do not rest easy in Mordheim.

When the night’s dark shadows devour the ruined city, and adventurers retreat to the secure warmth of a lighted tavern in the settlements beyond the blasted walls, there to trade their meagre findings for ale in which to drown their horrors, there one sometimes can earn a drink or even applause by telling tales of grim sights they

have witnessed among the ruins of the fallen city.

When the night comes, and when fog and mist rise from the fetid river to crawl their languid way along broken cobbles, leaking into shattered manse and meagre hovel, tales of white-wrapped ladies awaiting lost loves, tales of drowned sailors, broken vessels, and the hungry river are as likely to earn a coin as a kick.

Because the river *does* hunger.

special rules

Hired Swords: The Drowned Dead can hire the same Hired Swords as an Undead warband.

Wet Powder. Blackpowder weapons, regardless Ballistic or Weapons Skill and modifiers, can never need less than a 4+ to hit in shooting or in melee.

Drowned. Treat water of any depth as difficult ground rather than as very difficult or impassable (see Lustria, Empire in Flames Rules).

No Armour. Not only is armour rarely worn aboard ship, since it impedes both swimming and clambering among the lines aloft, many of the drowned dead are not completely corporeal. While some may appear to wear armour piecemeal, it is purely cosmetic, and has no practical effect.

Choice of warriors

A Drowned Dead warband must include a minimum of three models. You have 500 gold crowns to recruit your initial warband.

The maximum number of warriors in the warband may not exceed 12.

Captain: Each Drowned Dead warband must have one Captain, no more, no less!

Mates: Your warband may include up to 2 Mates.

Quartermaster: Your warband may include up to a single Quartermaster.

Surgeon: Your warband may include up to one surgeon.

Topsmen: Your warband may include up to 4 Topsmen.

Stevedores: Your warband may include up to 4 Stevedores.

Bloated: Your warband may include any number of Bloated zombies.

Starting experience

The Captain starts with 20 experience.

Mates, Quartermaster, and Surgeon each start with 8 experience.

All Henchmen start with 0 experience.

Drowned Dead Skill Table:

Captain - *Combat, Shooting, Academic, Strength, Speed.*

Quartermaster - *Academic, Shooting, Speed*

Surgeon - *Academic, Speed*

Mate - *Combat, Shooting, Strength*

Drowned Dead Equipment Lists:

Hand to Hand Combat Weapons:

Boat Hook (counts as spear) 10gc

Cutlass (counts as sword) 10gc

Axe	5gc
Hammer or club	3gc
Double handed weapon	15gc
Dagger	1st free/2gc

Missile Weapons:

Throwing Knives or belaying pins	15gc
Pistol	15gc (30gc for brace)^
Duelling pistol	25gc (50 for brace)*^
Handgun	35gc ^
Blunderbuss	30gc *^

Other:

Spyglass	20gc *
Peg Leg	8gc *
Hook Hand	4gc *
Rope and Hook	5gc *
Will o' Wisp	10gc *

*Heroes only.

^ Note the "Wet Powder" special rule for this warband.



1 Captain 90gc 20xp

Profile: M4 WS4 BS4 S3 T3 W1 I3 A1 Ld8

Weapons/Armour: A Captain may be equipped with weapons and equipment chosen from the Drowned Dead Equipment list.

SPECIAL RULES

Leader: Even beyond the grave, the crew look to their captain for leadership. Any warrior within 6" of the Captain may use his Leadership characteristic when taking Leadership tests

Cause Fear: All of the Drowned Dead are terrifying Undead creatures and therefore cause fear.

Immune to Psychology: Undead are not affected by psychology.

Immune to Poison: Undead are not affected by any poison.

No Pain: Undead treat a stunned result on the Injury chart as knocked down.

0-1 Quartermaster 40gc 8xp

Profile: M4 WS3 BS3 S3 T3 W1 I3 A1 Ld7

Weapons/Armour: A Quartermaster may be equipped with weapons and equipment chosen from the Drowned Dead Equipment list.

SPECIAL RULES

Cause Fear: All of the Drowned Dead are terrifying Undead creatures and therefore cause fear.

Immune to Psychology: Undead are not affected by psychology.

Immune to Poison: Undead are not affected by any poison.

No Pain: Undead treat a stunned result on the Injury chart as knocked down.

0-1 Surgeon 40gc 8xp

Profile: M4 WS3 BS3 S3 T3 W1 I3 A1 Ld7

Weapons/Armour: A Surgeon may be equipped with weapons and equipment chosen from the Drowned Dead Equipment list.

SPECIAL RULES

Cause Fear: All of the Drowned Dead are terrifying Undead creatures and therefore cause fear.

Immune to Psychology: Undead are not affected by psychology.

Immune to Poison: Undead are not affected by any poison.

No Pain: Undead treat a stunned result on the Injury chart as knocked down.

Necromancer: The Surgeon's arts are tinged with death, though he still sees to his crew. The Surgeon counts as a spellcaster, and begins with one spell from the Necromancy spell list. All references to "zombies" in that spell list apply to "Bloated" in this one.

0-2 Mate 40gc 4xp

Profile: M4 WS3 BS3 S3 T3 W1 I3 A1 Ld7

Weapons/Armour: A Mate may be equipped with weapons and equipment chosen from the Drowned Dead Equipment list.

SPECIAL RULES

Cause Fear: All of the Drowned Dead are terrifying Undead creatures and therefore cause fear.

Immune to Psychology: Undead are not affected by psychology.

Immune to Poison: Undead are not affected by any poison.

No Pain: Undead treat a stunned result on the Injury chart as knocked down.



0-4 Topsman (I, Acrobat skill) 40gc 0xp

Profile: M4 WS3 BS3 S3 T3 W1 I4 A1 Ld7

Weapons/Armour: Topsman may be armed with weapons chosen from the Drowned Dead Equipment list. Each Topsman is already equipped with a Rope & Hook.

SPECIAL RULES

Acrobatic: Some were exceptionally skilled amidst the rigging in life, others are now



bodiless and ethereal wisps of their former selves. All Topsmen have the Acrobat skill.

Cause Fear: All of the Drowned Dead are terrifying Undead creatures and therefore cause fear.

Immune to Psychology: Undead are not affected by psychology.

Immune to Poison: Undead are not affected by any poison.

No Pain: Undead treat a stunned result on the Injury chart as knocked down.

0-4 Stevedore 40gc 0xp

Profile: M4 WS3 BS3 S4 T3 W1 I2 A1 Ld7

Weapons/Armour: Stevedores may be armed with weapons chosen from the Drowned Dead Equipment list.

SPECIAL RULES

Cause Fear: All of the Drowned Dead are terrifying Undead creatures and therefore cause fear.

Immune to Psychology: Undead are not affected by psychology.

Immune to Poison: Undead are not affected by any poison.

No Pain: Undead treat a stunned result on the Injury chart as knocked down.

Bloated 15gc [zombies]

Profile: M4 WS2 BS0 S3 T3 W1 I1 A1 Ld5

Weapons/Armour: Bloated may not use any weapons or equipment, but suffer no penalties for being unarmed.

SPECIAL RULES

Cause Fear: All of the Drowned Dead are terrifying Undead creatures and therefore cause fear.

Immune to Psychology: Undead are not affected by psychology.

Immune to Poison: Undead are not affected by any poison.

No Pain: Undead treat a stunned result on the Injury chart as knocked down.

No Brain: Bloated never gain experience. They do not learn from their mistakes. What did you expect?

No Skill: Bloated do not use equipment. Though they may still carry those weapons or tools they had in life, those are at best merely used as bludgeons. Bloated do not, however, suffer from being *unarmed*.

0-1 Jolly Boat 120gc

Dragging the ship's boat ashore, the most ragged Bloated are set to pulling it, with a Helmsman aboard, fishing for wyrdstone and the souls of the dead.

Combined profile:

M4 WS3 BS- S3 T8 W4 I3 A1 Ld-

Weapons/Armour: Neither Helmsman nor Bloated may not use any additional weapons or equipment, but suffer no penalties for being unarmed.

SPECIAL RULES

Corpse Cart: The necromantic nature of the Jolly Boat fills the drowned dead with vigour.

The maximum number of warriors allowed in the warband is increased by +3 to 15 (including the Jolly Boat as 1).

Helmsman: The Helmsman comes as part of the Jolly Boat. In fact, more often than not he is physically bonded to the vehicle in some twisted nightmare of twisted bone and blighted wood. He may therefore never dismount from the boat or leave it under any circumstances. In addition, as he is part of the boat he cannot be injured unless the Jolly Boat is destroyed in which case so is he.

Bloated: The two-to-four Bloated which drag the Jolly Boat over land or through the water are permanently pinned there, mounted to the hull, unable to leave.

No Brain: Neither the Bloated who pull it, the Helmsman who steers it, nor the Jolly Boat itself gain experience. They do not learn from their mistakes. What did you expect?

Immune to Psychology: The Jolly Boat and Helmsman are considered undead and no longer know the concept of fear. The Jolly Boat automatically passes any Leadership-based test it is required to take.

Sail the Damned Seas: Unsurprisingly, the Jolly Boat cannot go up stairs or ladders.

Surprisingly, it can be dragged across obstacles such as walls and barriers. The Jolly Boat DOES count as a Large Target, for those who might be shooting at it. If the scenario includes carrying loot of any sort, the Jolly Boat counts as up to four models for the purposes of carrying (chests, shards, corpses, prisoners).

Cursèd Eternal: If destroyed, that is, taken Out Of Action, the Boat, Helmsman, and any Bloating zombies that pull it, suffer the same effects together. Leave the Boat on the table as its wreckage remains an obstacle, behind which warriors can hide, around and over which warriors can clamber. After the game, if the Jolly Boat went Out Of Action, it is only removed from the warband on a roll of 1, rather than the usual Henchman roll of 1-2. On a roll of 2+ it can fight in the next battle as normal.

Special Equipment:

Will o' Wisp 20 gold crowns

The glowing corpse-lights of drowned souls are said to easily lead travelers astray, leading them to a sodden doom.

Concealed Light: Add +4" to the distance from which he is able to spot hidden enemies - but does not give any extra visibility to its carrier for enemy models, regardless the scenario.

Free-Hand: The drifting will o' wisp follows the Drowned, but floats on its own, leaving both deathly hands free for other unsavoury purposes.

Hook Hand 4 gold crowns

Sailors, living or dead, who have lost a hand or arm due to a Hand Injury or Arm Wound can be

fitted with a sharpened metal hook. The wearer of the stylish new device cannot use any two-handed weapons, but will always count as having a close combat weapon in that hand. The hook strikes in close combat in the same manner as a dagger. A new sailor joining the warband, either during initial warband creation or as a new hire, may also start out with a Hook Hand. If the wearer gets a Hand Injury or Arm Wound in further battles, these can be ignored on a roll of 4+ as the hit was taken by the Hook Hand instead.

Peg Leg 8 gold crowns

Any sailor suffering a Leg Wound or Smashed Leg can opt to have his ruined leg replaced with a stout wooden peg leg. This will reduce his Movement (and maximum possible Movement characteristic) by -1, but offers a chance that stray hits will strike the leg instead. This gives him a special saving throw of 6+, which can be taken whenever he fails any other saving throws allowed against any wounding shooting or hand-to-hand hits. This save is not modified, and can be used even if no saving throw is normally allowed. A new drowned sailor joining the warband, either during initial warband creation or as a new hire, may also start out with a Peg Leg. If the wearer gets a Leg Wound or Smashed Leg in further battles, these can be ignored on a roll of 4+ as the hit was taken by the Peg Leg instead.

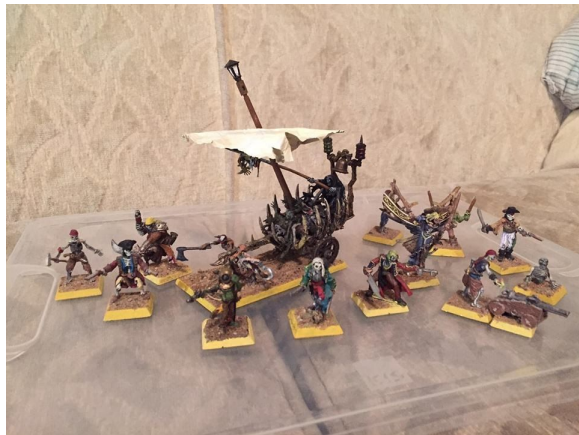
Spy Glass 20 gold crowns

A Drowned crewman can use his trusty spy glass to examine the combat ground, spotting any curs who try to sneak about! At the start of his turn, the owner can try to detect one Hidden enemy model to which he would normally have Line of Sight. On a roll of 4+, the model loses its Hidden status. The spying Drowned crewman can move as normal in that turn, but cannot run or charge.

Models for the Drowned Dead.

There are a host of sculptors and companies producing excellent miniatures for undead sailors - usually marketed as undead pirates. This list should be flexible enough to accommodate most of these excellent miniatures. The only member of the warband which might prove additionally complex is the Jolly Boat, and the only item of equipment which might raise questions is the Will o' Wisp.

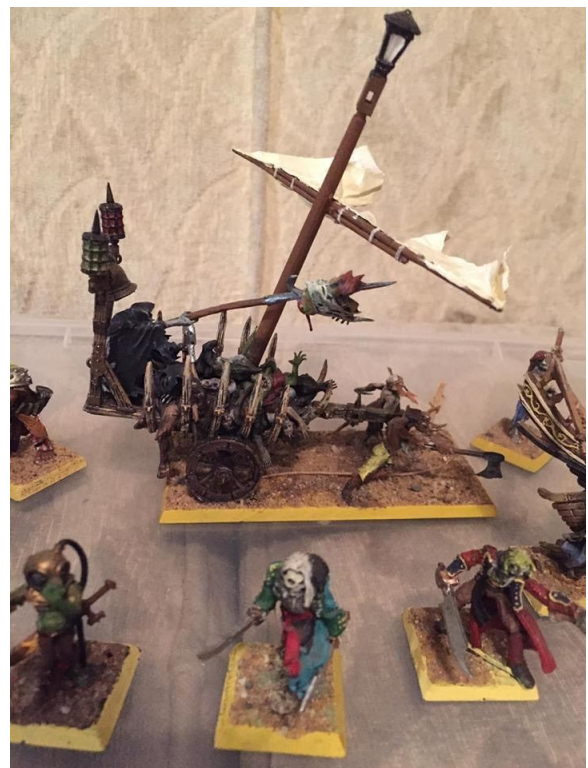
The Will o' Wisp can easily be modeled either on base or separately as a floating, etherically-painted skull; or could be simply painted as eerie Object Source Lighting on the model being followed by it.



As for the Jolly Boat, while it can certainly be scratch built [there are plenty of guides available for scratch-building a small 28mm scale boat, and adding cart wheels and a yoke is simple], an incredibly simple conversion is to add a mast to the Games Workshop *Corpse Cart* model, which is also a lovely sculpting job [Games Workshop sadly no longer advertises the sculptors for most of their miniatures].

Here are a few photographs of my own Jolly

Boat and some of my Drowned Dead, for example or even inspiration.



By choosing the lanterns and boat-hook and bell, and leaving off the cemetery gate piece, the Corpse Cart is already surprisingly boat-like. Two of the zombies for drawing the cart even have a peg leg and a hook hand. Drilling and mounting a mast, spar, and ragged sail is remarkably easy, and carries the conversion home.



As for warband members, there are really no dearth of lovely sculpts available, from a wide range of companies.



The list's requirements are deliberately flexible, easily allowing for representation by skeletal sailors, ethereal pirates, drowned zombies, and more.

