

SEND THREE and FOURPENCE:

Don't fear the Reaper – the Full Q&A

by Conrad Kinch

QUESTIONING CALCULATIONS

I'm not the only chap to have thought about this insurance and death. Peter Riley (author of many *Polemos* rules set) and David Pead (wargame enthusiast) have developed a website called **The Wargamer Collection Calculator**. It's a free web based tool that allows you to catalogue your collection and calculate the value of your lead. It's been very helpful while I was trying to organise my own collection, so I decided to ask the men behind the website.

- I first asked David *"What prompted you to set up collection calculator?"* and his response was illuminating:

"Peter and I met because our children went to the same school. All our children are now grown up, but over the years we have become firm friends. Peter has been a wargamer since his early teens, but for the first five years or so, he never made any mention of it. Eventually, when he told me, I was very curious and he offered to show me more.

"We started going to some wargaming shows, but the idea for Collection Calculator began when we visited Colours, the Newbury Wargaming show, in 2016. We decided to grab a sandwich and a beer and I asked Peter what would be the monetary value of the collections being used on the gaming tables. He admitted that he didn't know and couldn't even really come up with an estimate as some games were basic, some were fantastic looking and some were tailored and full of terrain.

"We identified about twelve tables and split up to talk to the players about how much they thought their collections were worth. Without exception not one of them had any idea of the value of the games they were transporting about the country. This led us to a long conversation on how best to keep a good record of all the elements in a growing collection and how you would go about replacing them if they became lost or damaged.

"Peter is Managing Director of a firm that builds and sells software to local authorities in the UK. The systems he builds manages enormous amounts of data about people applying for social housing, so he is used to specifying and project managing complex software development.

"My background is business to business publishing, starting as a business journalist in 1981. For the last 10 years I have managed to escape corporate life and have run my own small content and marketing company for small businesses.

"We realised we had the complementary skills to build a database that could calculate valuations and launch it on the web. So we created the Wargamer Collection Calculator site to help wargamers to record the details of their collections. As the project developed, we realised the programme could be adapted to also include valuations that would be useful when wargamers wished to sell or insure their collections. You can now also join or create groups of friends to share collection information, manage your directory entry and manage any event advertising."

- I then asked: *Do you have a background in insurance?*

“We don’t have a background in insurance but we are friends with two people in particular that work in the market. They have seen what we have been doing with collection calculator and have been really surprised that the average value we have across the database is more than £3,500 for each personal collection. A number of wargamers have recorded collections in the database valued at more than £30,000.”

“Our two friends have separately talked to us about the need for wargamers to insure their collections as it is unlikely that normal household insurance would cover the collections – particularly if you transport thousand pounds of wargaming figures and materials in your vehicle, or keep them in your loft or shed.

“People will insure everything else but seem to forget their wargaming stuff. Our two friends helped us frame the advice we give on the collection calculator website <https://collectioncalculator.com/insurance> and made sure we did not break any compliance regulations with the comments we made.”

- ***And what are you playing now?***

“We have mainly been wargaming, painting and building terrain for: *The Little Bighorn - Plains War*, *Bunker Hill - AWI*, *Cropredy Bridge - ECW* and *WW2 - Troop Level Armour* and we are working on *WW2 - Platoon Level Infantry*, *The Wars of the Roses* and maybe soon *Ancients 300 to 167 BCE*.

“Over and beyond that, it is worth noting that Peter is a well-known *Polemos Rules* writer and blogger. He has written several sets of *Polemos Rules* and supplements covering the *American Civil War*, *The Franco-Prussian War*, *The Risorgimento* and *Austro-Prussian War*.

“Peter has written our own set of rules for these games. The first was the *Battle of the Little Bighorn*. We decided to turn it into a participation game and took it with our friends to Salute in 2019. Salute is the biggest wargaming event in Britain. We were over the moon to be awarded Best Participation Game at the show ([tps://collectioncalculator.com/news/a-salute-2019-triumph](https://collectioncalculator.com/news/a-salute-2019-triumph))



*Winning Best Participation
Game at Salute 2019*

“Peter has written three more sets of rules and a book explaining how to write wargaming rules for battles. Over the summer, I got the books properly designed and printed and got a Bookstore built on the website where wargamers can buy the rules. We think everything is ready to launch and plan to go live next on November 21st.”

- ***Do you know if anyone has used Collection Calculator to make a claim on their insurance and how did they get on?***

“We don’t know anyone who has used it to make a claim but there is no imperative for them to tell us.”

- ***Are there any tips or tricks you would recommend to someone cataloguing their collection for the first time?***

“The main one is to use the HELP pages, which Peter has written and contain some great little articles on how best to use the database.”

“After entering your first unit I would use the Add & Copy tool it makes life so much easier when adding armies and units also use of the User Defined Price in the Figure Type so you can add your own valuations of your collections,” said Peter. “We have also recently added the ability to add collections via excel spreadsheet templates from customer requests too”.

- ***One situation that I’ve encountered with some older friends is a worry that their collection will go into landfill after they die. Myself I have talked to my wife about where I want things to go and organised my will accordingly. Do you know if anyone has managed to use Collection Calculator to organise their collection for that purpose?***

“No we haven’t, but it’s a good idea: there is a notes box for each collection that could be used or we could add a last wish box where this could be added. We did have one contact from a lady enquiring us to do a valuation for her, she wanted to sell her husband’s collection but without any detail we could not take it forward for her. He may not have even been deceased...”

“We have also had to reassure a number of wargamers that the details on their collection is secure and that we will not reveal the valuation placed on it to the wife or partner. Many have said that their wife or partner would not be “best happy” if they knew how much the wargamer has been spending on the hobby!”

- ***Thank you very much Peter and David.***

LINKS

The Combat Calculator website: collectioncalculator.com.