

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY and HMGS

By Rick Egtvedt with introduction by Mark Robinson (NHD Communications and Development Manager)

National History Day (NHD) is not just one day, but a yearlong education program that makes history come alive through educator professional development and active student learning. NHD engages students in grades 6-12 in the process of discovery and interpretation of historical topics. Students produce dramatic performances, imaginative exhibits, multimedia documentaries and research papers based on research related to an annual theme. These projects are then evaluated at local, state, and national competitions. National History Day has received the National Endowment for the Humanities Charles Frankel Prize for public programming. At the core of the program is a national contest where students in grades six through twelve conduct extensive research on U.S. and world history topics related to an annual theme, and present their findings in the form of historical papers, exhibits, performances and documentaries. This year's students have focused on the theme "Rights and Responsibilities in History." To learn more go to www.nationalhistoryday.org.

Over the last two years, HMGS-East first explored than adopted National History Day as it's official secondary school outreach program to support the study of military history while introducing history students to the historical miniature wargaming hobby (many thanks to Bill Frye who first recommended the NHD program). To recognize excellence and to ensure that "everyone who participates is a winner"; NHD allows organizations to sponsor special prizes on specific historical topics. The HMGS is proud to have it's Military History Prize among the latest national level NHD prizes. The HMGS Military History prize promotes an understanding of military history by rewarding outstanding and accurate research, which explicates the role of military institutions, strategies and conflicts in shaping military operations or national interests.

Last years military history prize effort allowed HMGS to reach out to almost 350 secondary school students from throughout Maryland. Our FY03 special prize has already allowed us to reach out to over 320 students from the Baltimore, MD and Lancaster, PA regional areas. In addition to supporting these two regional/district competitions, we are currently working to support both the Maryland and Pennsylvania State History Days (26 April and 14-15 May) were we expect to reach out to as many as 1,100 participants. Finally, our National Military History Prize (15-19 Jun at the University of Maryland) should allow us to reach out to approximately 2,100 secondary school students from across the nation. Thus, after accounting for winners who rise from the regional and state competitions to the national one, our FY03 program should allow HMGS to touch/ introduce our Society to over 3,300 middle and high school students. Where do we go from here -- that will be the topic for a planning session at HISTORICON 03.

With at least forty students from 22 regional level projects directly competing for the HMGS Military History prize so far, the actual winners have all produced outstanding projects. Senior division level winning projects included an individual paper on cryptology and spying (I did not judge it) and a group exhibit (two students) on the Military Heroes of Lancaster County. Junior division winning projects included an individual exhibit on Black Soldier contributions during the ACW and an individual performance entitled, "From Prisoner to Patriot: The Story of a Japanese-American Soldier in WWII". As you can tell from just the winners, the depth and detail of these projects was great, but you might ask what our winners receive. To this point, regional winners have received a \$50 cash prize amongst several other items. In accordance with the NHD goal that "everyone who participate is a winner", all regional program participants were given a free family pass for entrance to HISTORICON 03 while all special prize contestants also received a copy of the recent Osprey Supplement on Modeling and Wargaming.

While the prizes for the State competitions are not yet final, they will include at least a \$150 cash prizes for each State Division (middle and high school), an Osprey Supplement, and a free entrance pass for HISTORICON 03. The National competition prize will likewise include at least a \$1,000 cash prize (per division), the Osprey supplement and a free entrance pass to H03. Other prizes are being worked/ considered (please drop a line if you have other ideas). If this programs potential excites you as much as it does me, there are several things you can do to grow this effort.

Your free time can be key to recognizing excellence and/or introducing students to the historical miniature gaming hobby! Whether you serve as an HMGS State/Regional History Day Chairman or Staffers (judge, award presenter, and/or "Recon"/information desk volunteer); or as a NHD Judge, Registration Volunteer, Room Monitor or Volunteer Runner, there are many vital contributions you can make to encourage youthful understanding of both military history and our hobby. To help you understand potential History Day related service opportunities, the following position descriptions are provided for your consideration:

- **HMGS STATE or REGIONAL HISTORY DAY CHAIRMAN:** Coordinate all HMGS activities (including prizes) with appropriate History Day Contest Coordinator and HMGS Education Committee. Select, schedule and manage all HMGS Military History Special Prize staffers.
- **HMGS JUDGE:** As competitions require, review and score all (or by division) Military History projects to select those which best fulfill established HMGS special prize criteria. Report details of all winning participants to the HMGS State, or Regional, History Day Chairman for presentation.
- **HMGS AWARD PRESENTER:** Provide appropriate comments during History Day awards ceremonies and recognize superior student performance. Underscore the importance of Military History and provide an explanation of what HMGS is all about.
- **HMGS "RECON"/INFORMATION DESK VOLUNTEER:** Provide hobby display(s); distribute pamphlets or other documents; or field HMGS, hobby and/or Special Prize related questions with students, teachers, parents, observers and/or History Day officials.
- **NHD JUDGE:** Volunteering as a local, state or national contest judge is a great way to get involved with National History Day and to support students. Whether you have a background in history or just an interest, this is a great way to get directly involved in the students' History Day experiences. NHD staff will match new judges with experienced judges, including a historian. You will judge projects in one of the four categories: exhibits, performances, documentaries or historical papers.
- **NHD REGISTRATION VOLUNTEER:** Students and teachers will pick up registration packets before they set up their projects. These volunteers will have a chance to meet and greet students and teachers and hear about their exciting research. These volunteers also have the chance to see some of the student projects after registration is complete.
- **NHD ROOM MONITOR VOLUNTEER:** These volunteers help judges keep to schedule and facilitate all traffic in the judging rooms. Room monitors control access between judging sessions and act as ushers for new groups. Monitors are able to see a variety of student projects in this role.
- **NHD VOLUNTEER RUNNERS:** Runners help the NHD Contest Coordinator keep judges on track and make sure that the awards ceremony set-up is complete. Runners go to different judging rooms to inform judges of any rules or sequence changes. Runners are vital to the smooth operation of the contest. Runners will have opportunities to watch/see a variety of projects and will be required to interact with a variety of participants, teachers, parents or officials during the contest.

Whether you can offer some precious free time or not, please don't forget that you can also make tax deductible contributions to the HMGS Education Fund to facilitate a quicker expansion of our State History Day effort and related programs (as defined in the HMGS-East Contract for History). Any dollar amount is acceptable and all monies will count towards our Education Fund's (not operating fund's) still developing giving program. If you want to offer your time and/or money, please contact me at HMGSeastsec@juno.com (see newsletters HMGS-East Board of Directors listing for other details) or forward your questions/desire to any other Board or non-voting HMGS officer. Bottom-line, if you know and like our conventions, now you can help our future citizens to better understand both military history and our hobby. Your actions can and WILL make a difference!