

# THE Ancible

Your portal to Sci-Fi and Fantasy Gaming

Heads you Win, Tales you play



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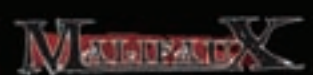
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## View from the Command Deck

**W**e are well into the swing of it now both in terms of the show season and growing the business. Support continues to grow from the industry and we are in the lucky situation that we can start to give something back to you guys. Starting this Issue we have a Subscriber giveaway sponsored by Rackham Entertainment. More about that in the magazine. We have also lined up some more competitions for future issues but you will just have to wait and see what they are as they come along.

The team have been out and about at a number of games shows so far and these have been great fun for us. We all went to Salute 2010 in London and spent a very busy day trying to persuade people that buying the magazine would be a good idea. We met some new friends and swapped gossip with some old ones.

UK Games Expo was the team's last outing and not only did we have a stand but Simon created a game specially for the show and I think that we had more than 60 people play the game over the two days of the show and they all seemed to enjoy the experience. There was a prize for the highest score and the winner of that was Matt Stewart with a score of 120 points which was most impressive. Full results will be posted on the forum as well as photos of the team and the game.

We at The Ancible are getting really excited by all the new games systems and miniatures that are being released and hopefully we can continue to work with these companies, old and new, to bring you guys the lowdown on what's hot and what's not.

To show you how wide our reach is we have managed to secure a brand new scenario for Warheads before the game is even out and we have included that in this issue. The rules are free to download and you should be able to get going as soon as you want.

I will at this point do some shameless plugging. We have created a forum in order to make it a bit easier for communication, so if you are not already a member then go to <http://www.the-ancible.com/forum> and get registered. We look forward to seeing you there.

Life never stops in the office and sometimes it feels like we have no idea what is coming next (obviously in reality we are totally on the ball!) however what we definitely do know is that we continue searching out new and interesting things for you all to enjoy.

So, you know the routine. Get reading and, as always, we are keen to hear what you think.

**Our aim is to introduce YOU to the games you don't yet know**

*Kenny R*

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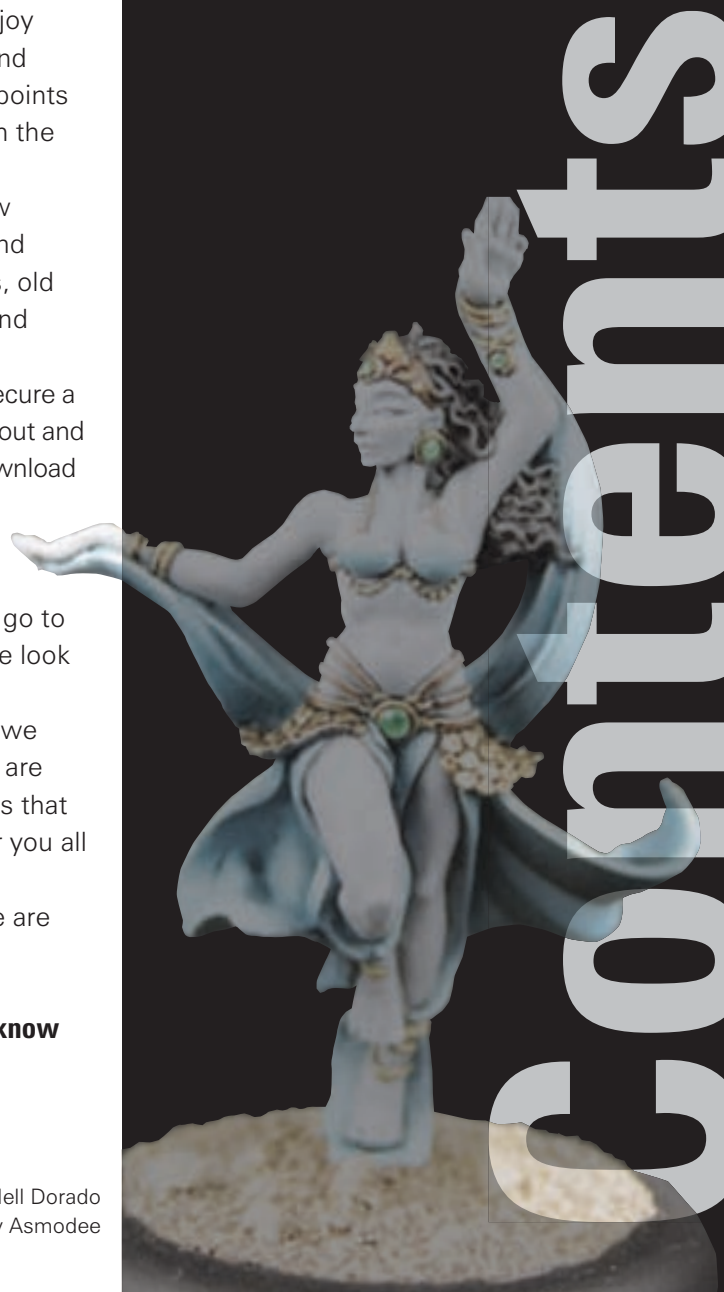
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Secrets of the Third Reich US Battle Suits by Westwind, painted by Kenny Robb

# THE Ancible

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### Subscriptions

If you would like to subscribe to The Ancible then this can be done through our web site at [www.the-ancible.com](http://www.the-ancible.com)

### Article Submissions

The team welcomes ideas for articles and in the first instance you should contact Ian Barstow ([ianb@the-ancible.com](mailto:ianb@the-ancible.com)) for some handy hints on submission. Please note that while every care is taken with your submitted material we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage that may occur.

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### Reviews

Manufacturers and publishers are invited to send in samples of their products for our team to review in the magazine.

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# PULL UP A SANDBAG WITH UNCLE BOMBER

## What happened to manners?

**I don't like Mushy Peas, utility salespeople, soap operas, webley revolvers or people who feel that they have to get involved with things that are none of their business.**

What happened to manners? What happened to common courtesy? What happened to people just minding their own business? Why do some people see two people having a game, enjoying themselves, playing their game and chatting about life and the universe, and feel that it is okay to get involved in the game that they are playing. I know wargaming is a participation event – in most cases you need at least two people. But if I wanted to have a game with them I would have asked them for a game. Why do they feel that they can just get involved in others people's battles?

You all know these people, the ones who come across and start to watch quietly for a while, and then they start to interfere. "Don't move there, his sniper will see you". "Don't use that card, he will be able to attack your character next turn".

I don't know why they feel the need to interfere; do they think that by getting in the way it will make them more popular? Trust me, it won't. Some of these people even seem to enjoy what they do, in some cases they even make a comment and then walk away chuckling to themselves. Do they feel that it makes them look like the master general, without whose input we will never be able to continue the game? Trust me, it doesn't and never will.

Now on a club night, when we all know everyone there, it's not such a huge problem. You all have most likely been gaming together for a long time by now, and you are all aware of the unspoken rules, and if any of us makes a mistake by supplying an unwanted piece of advice to someone it's taken care of with a comment of 'Non Bowlers off the Green' or some other not-so polite statement. Job done, everyone is happy. But there is always someone who doesn't get the message, some master general who thinks he is Sun Tzu and looks down on the rest of us, who thinks that without his prophetic words we will never be able to finish the game.

The most annoying types for me are the ones you meet at tournaments; they may not say anything but you can hear the sighs and tuts from the other side of the room,

The problem is what to do about it? I know what Ted Chang would do; he would wave that rusty old service webley of his around (he would have to wave it; his old hands can't hold it steady anymore) and try and scare them all away.

**If you have any comments you would like to make or if you have a subject that you feel Uncle Bomber should tackle then please send your emails to [unclebomber@the-ancible.com](mailto:unclebomber@the-ancible.com)**

# Games Expo 2010 – A grand day (and night) and day out!

By Ali King

A few months before Games Expo 2010 was due, The Ancible team was approached by Richard Denning. Richard has done a brilliant job over the years pulling the various Games Expos together and on this occasion he wanted to place an advert in the magazine to promote the event (good choice Richard!) I mentioned that The Ancible would be attending to report on the show, one thing led to another, and before I knew it I had a stand.

The Ancible team's first reaction was "excellent, we'll have somewhere to put our coats!" Then the penny

dropped. After some encouragement (and some cake – isn't it amazing how inspirational cake can be at times like this?) we started to draw up a plan. First things first, we checked with domestic control to see just who could be granted a pass and, if so, for how many days. I am sure there are many out there in the gaming world who understand the dire consequences if you don't get these important administrative details confirmed in advance.

Safe in the knowledge that we could come out to play we got stuck into some planning. Stocks of magazines (natch!), a way to display them (tick), oohh lets have a banner (sorted), sandwiches (back to domestic control), cake (must have item) and then the brainwave struck...what would be the best way to interact with people at a gaming convention?... a game of course!

Simon rose to the occasion and created 'Last Living Soul' a zombie-based game where you... actually do you know what? You should have come along and played with us if you wanted to know. It was an exclusive for the show and those that got a chance to play it loved it. Some of them loved it so much it was tough getting rid of them (I name no names but you know who you are). Cookie, Ian and Si umpired back-to-back games from open to close on both days. Most spectacular exit from the board was achieved in 2 minutes 15 seconds (each game was scheduled to last 30 minutes). Highest number of points on the day went to Matt Stewart who has a special prize donated by Rackham coming to him for his efforts. Well done Matt!

In any case we had a blast meeting some great people and doing what we all love to do best,

spending some time around a tabletop in good company. We talked to a lot of folk and got to introduce The Ancible to some new faces. In fact we did so much talking that we needed quite a large amount of liquid on the Saturday evening to quench our poor parched throats... ah, the sacrifices we make for our passion.

Truth be told though there was one big sacrifice. We were so busy introducing people to the game and talking about the mag that we didn't really get a chance to enjoy the rest of Games Expo. Which really is a shame because it's a great event. There were enough games to fill the review pages of The Ancible for the next 12 months at least! There was a reincarnation of Darth Vader and some mischievous Dr Whos, all kinds of gaming groups, and heaps of great 'stuff' to gaze at or spend some hard earned pennies on. So, thanks for the chance to be a part of it Richard, but next year remind me to give myself a lunch break so I can make a better job of the review. Meanwhile, Ancible readers, why not make a date in your diaries to meet us there next year, it's definitely worth a visit... and if you can get it past domestic control, it's a fine night out too!

Finally, here's a complete rundown of the top 10 scoreboard at the end of day two for Last Living Soul (note that ties were decided by best bodycount):

Matt Stewart	120 points
Gavin Moorcroft	75 points
Rob Neild	75 points
Michael Fox	60 points
Darren Harvey	55 points
Jenny Massey	45 points
Jacob Stewart	45 points
Darren Harvey	40 points
Martin Thompson	40 points
Mark Southerd	40 points

Well done to all and again, particular congratulations to Matt Stewart who also broke the all-time record for Last Living Souls which had been held by our very own Simon [what, you mean the bloke who designed the game? – Ed] who took it like a true gentleman, before going off to cry in the toilets after Matt had gone!

## SUBSCRIBER GIVE AWAY

To coincide with the Oni Box Set Review we have managed to persuade Rackham Entertainment to give use some Oni battle forces to give away to some of our subscribers.



So what do you have to do?  
Anyone who is a subscriber to the Magazine by the end of July will be automatically entered into the random draw.

A big thank you to Rackham Entertainment

# INCURSION Review

By  
Simon Parkinson

GRINDHOUSE  
games

In 1946 the Third Reich together with her Ally, Spain, launch an over whelming and aggressive assault on the British forces in their rock fortress Gibraltar. The British were defeated within hours of the assault. For 3 years the German SWD (Special Weapons Division) have been expanding and creating a labyrinth of underground tunnels, making underwater U-boat pens and carrying out experiments the likes of which nightmares are made

of. In 1949 the Allies launch a successful counter offensive, but only partially; Allied forces are beaten back from the underground compound by all manner of unmentionable things from Zombies and Zombies with naval mines to Werewolves and genetically altered Germans. After intelligence confirms that the Germans and the Axis have created a Doomsday device the Allies knew that they must clear these tunnels at all costs; this is Incursion.



Incursion is set in the world of Secrets of the Third Reich (SoTR). Grindhouse Games (USA) collaborated with Westwind Productions (UK) in 2008 to bring us SoTR and now Grindhouse have released Incursion with Westwind fronting the UK side of the market. Those of you that have read Issue 1 will already be vaguely familiar with SoTR and Weird WWII (WWWII).

Firstly it is a board game with card models, for two players that has several missions based on the story line. It sees the Germans and their nightmarish horde of werewolves, zombies and mutants take on Americas' finest, the US Lucky 7th, all dressed up in their APE suits (Armoured Personal Exo-system, not the gorilla kind). APE suits were developed from the "Visitors" crash at Roswell.

### Packaging

The game is presented in a nice box with pleasing artwork and a satisfactorily weighty feeling about it. Upon opening you are greeted by the 24 page rule and mission book as well as a quick play sheet which are well laid out and have a quality feel about them. Next you have the board itself, token/model sheets, model and battle cards, plastic stands and dice. The cards also have that nice quality feel about them, and you know that after a few games these items are still going to perform well and look great.

### Tokens & Models

Before any gaming can begin you need to pop the tokens and models out of the sheets. We initially had a 'phase one' box set which did have a few problems. If you happen to get one of the remaining phase one sets I would caution you to take great care in this process, the card stock used is terrible; also some of the card cutters didn't do their job particularly well because of it. I for one happened to tear the top and bottom layers partially off some of my tokens/models trying to get them out. After contacting Jim from Grindhouse on their forum I was advised to use scissors, a craft knife and ruler to get the remainder out unscathed. This did dampen my enthusiasm quite a bit as it took longer than I wanted to 'pop' them out. I also noticed that there weren't quite enough tokens either but I'll come back to this. The card models and doors have plastic stands that enable you to use stand them up; I however didn't have the 36 pieces that I should have had (this appears to be a one-off and it's just my kind of luck). A quick email to Jim at Grindhouse saw a speedy resolution to this as Wendy at Westwind sent me my missing pieces with no fuss.





In a totally unrelated topic, I don't know about you but those unsightly card edges are something that has may OCD going haywire, so I had to edge them in black. It's something that doesn't need doing, of course.

If you are playing with multi wound models and maximum Command Points (CP) levels you will find that you don't actually have enough tokens for either but you have two too many flames tokens! In an attempt to resolve this I did photocopy some of those tokens, with Grindhouse's permission, and stuck them to spare pieces of card stock. There is also a print problem on the flamer APEs, they have I and II on the front but II and I on the back respectively.

I have spoken to Jim about these minor problems and he has the following statement:

*'The issue is that the cardstock was laminated which was billed to us as an upgrade. The cutter did not make it all the way through the backside in some cases. Everything was already shipped out to all the retailers when reports of the issue started coming in. We have posted about the need to take care and use scissors or a razor on every website and blog we can find. There is no laminate on the second print run.'*

**The Board**

The board is in 6 joined segments that fold out. It has a sturdy feel to it but the phase one boards are made from the same card stock as the tokens. It is double sided to add more variation and is full of little details like dynamic lighting effects, battle damage and has been very thoughtfully compiled to look like an underground bunker.



**The Rule Book**

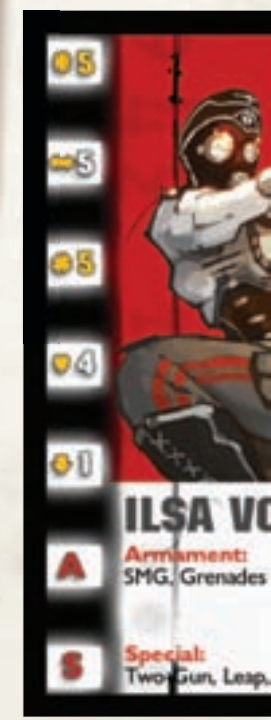
This 24 page booklet contains a bit of fluff about the world Incursion is set in and about the two main forces contained within the box set. It explains how the model and battle cards work as well as the game turns and the weapons/special rules. The actual rules themselves only really cover 4 pages.

I know what you are thinking, only 4 pages for the main rules, but believe me this is still a brutally fun

game. There are 10 scenarios contained within the booklet and these take you through an ever escalating story line. As mentioned previously there is also a handy play sheet with all the main portions of the rules you will need to play the scenarios.

This booklet is well laid out, easy to use and contains some great artwork to whet your appetite for the game as you learn the rules and read through the scenarios.

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## The Game

Missions have a set amount of Recruitment Points (RP) which are linked to the costing on the models' cards. I like this idea because Grindhouse have left the model choice for all but one mission up to you. In this way no two missions should ever play quite the same; the RP also sets the amount of Command Points (CP) you have and this is something that has a very important bearing on how the game pans out.

The system uses 'I go you go' but each turn begins with a maintenance phase which includes bidding. Players bid for turn priority using CP; the CP are also used to enable your troops to carry out other actions. You can force your models to carry out actions beyond their Action Points (AP) limits and to cancel the effects of battle cards so you have to be wise when you bid. Everything you do costs AP, walking/turning, shooting, opening doors, HTH and even turning up. There are some exceptions to some of these rules; for instance, beware of the werewolves – they can turn for free. So there you are thinking these werewolves are quite far away as they only have 6AP and it would take 11AP with turning to get to you but they ignore the AP cost for turning and they can leap over intervening models!



The cards add an unknown element to game play. They can be used on your opponent to create havoc with their battle plan or on your own troops to enhance their battlefield survivability or effectiveness.

The rules are simple but there is enough in it with the battle cards to add a good element of tactics that even the most junior or seasoned player shouldn't get overwhelmed or bored too easily. If you have any problems with rules the SoTR forum is quite a busy place and Jim from Grindhouse is always on hand.

We played the first 6 missions and I sort of GM'd the proceedings to enable us to get used to the rules. We also tried to play with more than one player per side using the same RP limits; this did turn the enjoyment factor up and it got decidedly more tactical as the two teams tried desperately to outwit each other.

## Additional Pieces

These are great; they are full of character and add a great dimension to the board. Sculptors are really clear with very little in the way of flash and the multi-part APEs have spare heads so you can customise them. The MI-13 (the United Kingdom's agency to counter enemy super science) models have just been released and are another welcome addition to the Incursion family. You can download the cards from the Grindhouse website. There are resin objective tokens made by Fenris Games which also add to the overall feel. The separate miniatures have been repackaged recently and if you're a savvy kind of person you will be able to keep your minis in the boxes that they are supplied in as they have tons of foam padding and space inside them.

## The Future

After repeatedly badgering Jim I have the distinct feeling that there are plans to extend the game with new areas to explore and new scenarios to face. There will hopefully be a full review of all the miniatures and a battle report in future issues. We are also hoping that we will be able to print new scenarios in future copies of The Ancible so watch this space.

## Conclusion

Despite the minor issues of phase one boxes we all liked the game and the package as a whole. Now that this appears to have been resolved the future looks good for the Grindhouse team. Recommended.

### Useful Websites:

[Grindhouse Games](http://www.incursiongame.com/)  
http://www.incursiongame.com/

[Westwind Productions](http://www.westwindproductions.co.uk/)  
http://www.westwindproductions.co.uk/

[SoTR Forum](http://secretsofthethirdreich.com/forums/index.php)  
http://secretsofthethirdreich.com/forums/index.php





GRINDHOUSE GAMES PRESENTS:



# INCURSION

It is the year of our Lord, 1949 and the world is in flames. The human race screams in agony as the Second World War rages unchecked around the planet. Nations die and hundreds of millions perish as the thin veneer of civilization is utterly consumed in a global orgy of savagery and rage. The technology of war develops at a suicidal pace as all sides in the conflict seek the weapon that will ensure a final victory.

Dark things lurk beneath the Third Reich. It is a time of monsters and madness and armored behemoths spitting fiery death from their fearsome guns. Though chaos reigns and evil flourishes in this desperate age, it is also a time of heroes. Join us at Grindhouse Games as we journey through the bowels of a hell on earth and fight for the very survival of mankind.

**THIS IS GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG.**

A GRINDHOUSE GAMES PRODUCTION 2009

ARTWORK BY KEITH LOWE • ART DIRECTION & GAME DESIGN BY JIM BAILEY • GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY TEARS OF ENVY  
MINIATURES SCULPTED BY GAELE GOUMON, SETH NASH & DAN PACEY • MINIATURES PAINTED BY ALDEN MIRANDA  
GAME DEVELOPED BY JOHN BAILEY, AGIS NEUGEBAUER & TOM WEISS

[WWW.INCURSIONGAME.COM](http://WWW.INCURSIONGAME.COM)



**GRINDHOUSE**  
games

# ex illis™

## Review

By Jez Fairclough and Kenny Robb

**T**here has been a lot of talk on the grapevine about the new game Ex illis from Bastion Studios (<http://ex-illis.com>) so we just had to go and have a closer look at it and find out what it is all about.

First impressions are always the most important and when you get the 'Integral' box set it seems like you get a lot for your money. What's more to the point, not only is the box substantial in size, but it also has a substantial feel to it. You are not going to be breaking world weightlifting records but it does have a certain sturdiness to it that whets the appetite and causes that gleeful anticipation you have when you know there is something good waiting for you on the other side of the packaging. Bastion have done an excellent design job on this and it is covered in beautiful images from the game and again the quality of construction goes that one step further to saying that what you are about to look at is quality.

Of course the all important moment is the actual opening of the box. The first thing that strikes you is that there is not a lot of space in the box to pack more stuff in. It is full to the brim with gaming goodness. As you look at it you have all the sprues laden down with the models for the game, tucked neatly under them are the instructions for construction and what's this shiny thing...a DVD! What's that doing in here? Well that is the thing that makes Ex illis unique [well, within this gaming genre, DVD's being somewhat more frequent elsewhere - Ed], but we will come onto that later.

Under all of that lot and because it is the 'Integral' set you get scenery, or more accurately a modular playing board consisting of 20 tiles which lock together to provide you with a playing surface. Again the tiles become quite important later once we get onto the actual game play. I like the concept of modular scenery that can be packed away into something portable and it is worth mentioning that Bastion provides the scenery in a self-contained box, complete with carrying handle. Another bit of detail is the racking system used to hold the tiles in place whilst in transit. This consists of some neat little spacers that fit on the corners of the tiles and allow you to make two stacks that neatly fit in the box. That way if you have painted and flocked the tiles they are not going to get damaged in transit. It appears these guys have thought of nearly everything.



The only word I can think of to describe the product is Quality. It is obvious that Bastion have thought long and hard about what gamers like and dislike and they have implemented this well throughout their range.

Depending on which side of the fence you sit in the great debate of it's a game or it's a hobby could potentially skew your opinion of Ex illis.



From a hobby perspective the guys at Bastion have spent a lot for time and effort getting the detail and production of the plastic miniatures just right. The quality on the sprues is excellent and even the fact that the sprues have a stacking system which stops them rubbing against each other while in the box shows the thought that has gone into every aspect of the project. If you examine the miniatures carefully they have hardly any flash and the colour and texture of the plastic that has been used oozes quality.

In having all this stuff in front of me it was difficult to know where to start but I had to start somewhere. I love terrain and always where possible play on painted terrain, so it was there I

started. It didn't take me very long to get the tiles laid out on the patio on a large piece of cardboard and after undercoating gave them a quick highlight using my airbrush. This took about one hour. I then spent the next two hours picking out the details on some of the boards (shields, rocks and other various battlefield stuff) and I also decided to add elements of flock to the tiles just to make them complete. This took a little while longer but these were done two or three at a time waiting for other things to dry.

Next my sights were set on the miniatures. I personally didn't want to deface them by cutting them off the sprues but I needed them and something had to give so, almost wincing, I took my clippers and clipped off one of the chevalier heavy cavalry figures. The model went together very well with no visible gaps and very little flash caused by the two halves of the model being out of line. The extra pieces (knight's body, sword and shield) that had to be stuck on fitted neatly and snugly and once it was all together there was very little tidy up that you need to do, in fact if you were a bit lazy you could simply proceed to the next step without further ado.

I don't intend to go into too much detail about the construction of every miniature but it is worth noting that they all went together with the same ease as the first one. If I have a criticism it would be that there are not really enough variations of pose but I can understand the balance between getting quality miniatures and spending the extra time and effort to make multi-part kits. Maybe it will be something for the future, or maybe

it's just me who is used to individual characters rather than rank and file troops. It does however mean that when you have your full army on the table they look a bit static.

It is also worth pointing out that the character models do offer something for the painters amongst you. I can imagine a few of these turning up in various painting competitions very the next 12 months or so and for the not-so-talented I suspect that these would also lend themselves to the new trend of dipping. I'm not brave enough to give one of my models to our resident dipper to have his way with it [coward! – Ed].

You get enough in the Integral box set to play the game with 2 balanced factions so you can split the game with a friend and Bastion have provided details of the best way to split the set up to give two balanced forces.

You now have your terrain ready, your miniatures painted and ready to go, so what happens next? You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned a rule book yet. That's because there isn't one. What? No rule book? How do we play this game then?

You may have recalled that I mentioned the DVD earlier; well this is where things start to go off in a different direction and it's what makes Ex illis unique. On the DVD is a computer program that you install onto your computer (if you have one of them iPod thingies then there is a program you can download and use those as well). You will more than likely find that you'll need an upgrade as well from the site. To be honest you are better off going to the site and just downloading it from there rather than installing it, then downloading a hefty update which is about 200Mb in size. Once you have it installed you need to go to the Ex illis web site and create yourself an account.

Once you have your account then you will notice a number of options but you won't have anything in there so can't actually do a lot. If you don't install the program though you can't play the game as everything you need is controlled from there.

The game comes with a good amount of information though and you can find more on the website as mentioned already. The Integral box has a nice introduction to the game explaining some of the background and also explaining how each unit works and the abilities they have. Though some of these elements have changed as the game has changed it's still useful to read through this so you know where you're starting from. It also takes you through the game interface as well. I kept that very close to me for the first few games until I became more familiar with it.

On the inside of the Integral box there is a code which you will need to register. Each purchased box has a unique code that allows you to add the units contained in the box to your roster. In the case of the Integral set you get loads of units and once you have registered your units in order to split them up you need to become a 'battle brother' with your friend. At this point you can give him units. Once you have given





him the units then they are his. He can only give them back to you; he can't then give them onto someone else.

Because of the way this system works it does mean you're going to have a few issues depending on what sort of person you are. If you don't have the models you can't play them as the game will only let you write rosters with those models you have registered. You can't even proxy stuff because you need the code to get them into the game. That also means you can't play what hasn't been released yet. Each time a new element is added to the game you're going to have to update the program and then deal with any changes it brings. The rules can be changed in an update and it can mean that you get used to how something works and then it could all be changed, and you need to relearn it. That in itself will undoubtedly annoy some people but it's just using a different media to play a game; it's also not that much different from the fact that some companies add errata, army books or many other things that do the same. The difference with this is at least the changes are sorted and it's free.

So, no rule book can be an issue for some as you don't have a way to check up and work out what is going to really work until you try it and lots of factors can change it – morale, fatigue level and so forth can decide if an attack works and to what degree. But with time and playing like any other game system you'll understand what works against what. Bastion has also put several guides up for the units on the website. These explain some info on the unit, how they advance and so on. They also have a great guide to all the numbers behind the scenes but

for me it was like reading some of the old DBM stuff and as a result I got a little lost and a lot of it was wasted on me. I tend to be the 'get in and play' sort of person. The tactics guide does go into some great depth and it's a must read to understand the game and how your attacks will work, even if the maths involved can appear a bit heavy duty.

When it comes down to creating your roster the game is very flexible and there are no compulsory units. It doesn't mean it's a totally free system as some units will be more expensive depending on your commander and as with anything some units work better with others. But it does mean you have a great amount of flexibility. As you play games and win or lose your units are going to get better, last longer and you can add more skills to them as well. You can still take them back to earlier levels though to help newer players get into the game.

We mentioned earlier that you can give units to other people. For me knowing you can do this worried me slightly as I thought what's stopping people playing loads of games getting a unit really high then sending it on to a friend? Well, the game stops you from doing this in the fact that when you create a 'battle brother' he's fixed for 6 months, you can drop him but you can't create another one. Plus, if I send say a level 20 unit of billmen to a friend whose only level 3 the unit drops to level 3 as well. Your units can't exceed your own level which is tied into the games played. So this stops people buying and selling units on, though it doesn't stop you loaning units to your battle brother.

Okay so what about playing? Once you have your minis sorted and the terrain ready you deploy them to where they are in the game interface. Taking it in turn to do so, certain terrain elements can restrict how many units can be placed in an area. At the moment the only terrain available



are barricades and trees with Bastion promising to add more as the game advances [if they don't the 'table' will get boring pretty quickly – Ed]. Once everything is laid out battle commences. The computer works out which units go when based on fatigue, initiative and what a unit may have decided its actions were the previous turn. It really means you need to keep an eye on things as everything in this game has an effect on something else.

When it comes to what you're doing with your unit it's down to what unit you are using. Infantry move slowly at one space per turn whilst cavalry like the Franc Chevalers can move



three spaces. You also need to decide what the end result will be for your move. As you can see what's coming up on the turn bar you can work out your strategy but who goes when can change from turn to turn so it's a strategy that's going to need rethinking all the time. Each unit has its own skills which will allow it advantages against others on the battlefield. For instance if the previously mentioned Franc Chevalers were the next unit in my army to move I could just move them, keep them out of combat or, if I was feeling more aggressive, I could decide to charge them into combat. Combat in itself brings special abilities, you don't just say x will charge y. You get to decide what ability (if you have one) they will use. For instance the Franc Chevalers could decide to use a wedge charge against a weak unit as it affects morale and can have fatigued units run from the battle or a devastating Ravaging Charge that allows the possibility of a second attack, though weaker in ability. Then again we could just decide on a normal charge, but why do that when you have more choice?



The game mechanics mean that whatever you do on the board you have to replicate on the program, and it can mean that the board and those miniatures you spent time painting could just become expensive place holders. All combats are worked out on screen with you either selecting to just let the battle run or trying to click on the icon you want as it goes by on the screen. What results you have can decide how well the combat goes. It can deal with multiple combats and can also deal with the likes of archers or crossbowmen shooting into melee as well as working out if you accidentally hit one of your own men, though skills gained by ranged units can start to reduce these chances as well. Once it's worked out it will inform you of any casualties and at any point you can look at a unit and see how badly damaged it is or even its fatigue. If it can cast magic it also has a magical fatigue called the veil.



Beyond the units we have heroes that can really tip the balance, such as the Decurion, a winged angel in heavy armour with the ability to heal the unit he's with as well as being capable, through the likes of Vengeful Strike, of taking down even large targets like the Soffrances or



Franc Chevalers. I've found that teamed up with the billmen they make a very effective strike force. Marrenne on the other hand is certainly a more magical character with plenty of spells to help her side out. Regenerate can heal units in an area which is great to protect a defensive position whilst something like Gust will lightly damage all units in an area – really good against those places the enemy has massed up. As with units your heroes advance in level gaining more and more skills and spells to enhance their powers.

The game progresses with the system telling you who can move and you deciding what you do when you move. Serious damage to a unit,



fatigue and other factors can cause it to run and if they have allies in the same area this can cause a knock-on effect. When the game 'feels'

that one side has had enough of a beating, worked out on losses sustained and the general wellbeing of what is left, it will allow one side to surrender. Once the game is up the program will update your account online and you will have points to spend to level your heroes and units. Bastion has also said in time you'll be able to buy extra items or special training as well.

So what's the advantage of an online system? You can't really cheat it, okay you can play lots and lots of games but what you get out might not be all you're hoping for. The reward system doesn't make it one game and you get lots of advances – you need lots of games and as you level up you need more each time as well. When it comes down to tournaments and such no one should need to check the roster over as you can't take what you don't have or haven't earned. A lot of paperwork is lost as it's done for you.

But what's lost? For me it's hard to say I can see the idea of the game. Though I do feel in some ways that the board becomes a little like playing chess, as they are markers for what you're doing so do I need eight halberdiers, why not one with a token that says how many there are? Some of the early games we played we did just that. I also wonder how Bastion plan to deal with the resale of the miniatures, if the code is activated and you pick it up second hand you might have something of no value.

This is certainly a game people will either love or hate. Hopefully with more releases and extra info it'll be the first rather than the second. With this and may other questions in mind, Kenny Robb cornered the guys from Bastion and made the talk:

**“What's been the hardest part of the design process?”**

“The biggest challenge certainly was to balance properly the interaction of the rule keeping software with the physical board. We did a lot of back-and-forth to get this part right and to make sure players would really have the tactical aspect (generalship) on the board while the execution of the orders (soldiers to soldiers) would be streamlined through the software.”

**“Because the game is being constantly added to have you found people get frustrated with this approach?”**

“Quite the opposite actually! Players have been providing excellent feedback about the game and allowed us to make key improvements on the mechanics. On top of everything, this way of creating the game is supported by all the balancing stats we're able to gather. In Ex illis, a balancing tweak is not something based on a few anecdotal experiences but rather by factual data. The community seems to really appreciate this design method and it's great to see that we can get these improvements out to the all players around the world instantly.”

**“How do you guys plan to deal with the resale market, if a code is registered already?”**

“Being players ourselves, we're well aware of the need to exchange/lend/resell miniatures and we're working on key features for that explicitly. The first one was to implement the “Brother in arms” function where two players can link their accounts and exchange their units easily. This works great for people of the same family (father and son, brothers and sisters or husband and wife), or if you have a really good friend you're very at ease with. We're also working on options to lend or sell units. These ones take a bit more time because there is a notion of property involved between the two players (how to sort out a dispute if/when one arise) so we need to get them right.”

**“As a lot of the game is online do you see it has any limits?”**

“I wouldn't say that a lot of an Ex illis game is online! In Ex illis, all the tactical thinking of the battle is on the board, only the execution of orders is in the rule keeping software and the metagaming is online. With this premise well established, it was really clear what we wanted (or didn't want) to do with the online



aspect. Our online metagaming allows players to do things like levelling and specialising their units, making army lists in a quick drag-and-drop format, etc. It also opens up great the possibilities for Organised Play, an economic system (gold, items, trainers, etc.), or maybe even a campaign system one day. I don't know about actual limits, but it's certainly a lot of fun to see all the possibilities to take the wargaming experience to the next level!”

“What came first the world or the actual game?”

“They both came around at about the same time. The tone of the game is a bit different from the usual high fantasy seen in the industry which gives Ex illis a unique ambience. We knew we wanted to create a deep, well developed story which would blend elements of historical realism with fantasy; this influenced both the look of the miniatures and the gameplay balance between units.”

The game is a tie.

Both players earn 4 Battle Points.

Go

**CONCLUSION**

So there you have it, from the horse’s mouth. Some of the older heads at Ancible Towers [that would be me then – Ed] have expressed concerns that the game concept is fundamentally flawed and it may well be that the stringent requirements mean that the game is viewed as an amalgam of a computer and tabletop gaming losing the best of both, as so many amalgams are prone to doing. Suffice to say we will be watching keenly to see how Ex illis develops.



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# Figures In Comfort Case Review

By Ian Barstow and Ian Cook

Figures in Comfort are a UK company who have provided us with two cases to road test, namely the Multi Case which I got my sticky hands on and the enormous Super which we decided would be best evaluated in Cookie's mighty paws – more of that below.

When you order a case you can configure the foam trays as you like from a wide selection of available options. We got what we were given so we can only pass specific comment on these.

## The Multi Case



According to the FIC web site:

'The Multi is 'made from a high quality waterproof fabric which makes it durable and provides a long lasting quality product. The front of the case has a large pocket to hold your rules and army lists. It also has a clear pocket so you can list the contents of your bag.

An adjustable shoulder strap enables you to

carry the bag with ease. This case fits 8 single depth foam trays or 288 28mm figures. The case size is: Wide = 175mm, High = 370mm, Long = 560mm.'

Looking at my case I was immediately impressed by the exterior production quality. Made in a snappy burgundy cloth, it has a carrying strap but unfortunately no handle, as can be seen from the accompanying photograph. Without any instructions and away from the safety net of Google I was left staring at the creature wondering how to open it. The top section was easy to deduce, and after having a stern fight with the Velcro I won the day. It appeared though that as I could only see the sides of the trays I would have to pull them out, which looked a tricky proposition.

Following a moment of clarity I looked for other Velcro traces and sure enough found that the front panel of the case also opens out, to leave the trays on view. This means that the case itself is not a solid construction – it relies on the trays for sturdiness, which, to be fair, works pretty well. The design does take a bit of getting used to though, especially as access to the bottom layers means removing everything above them, but that's no different to some of the KR cases, for example.

The trays themselves are a two-part construction, with a solid foam base layer supporting the upper cut-out sections. The quality of both parts is again first class and makes for the rigidity the box design requires.

So, on to actually bunging in miniatures and taking the Multi on a road test.

Everything seemed fine although it can be a bit of a bind messing around with all the

Velcro and ensuring the top hard foam layer is in place. That's to stop your models flying about – or so I thought. In short, there appears a slight flaw in design, because when I opened it again my top deck of 28mm minis were all over the place. Initially I thought I hadn't tightened the Velcro ups enough, so I did it again and once more the same result. This made something of an irony of the company's name, as my figures definitely weren't in comfort! The answer was to put these trays below the 'bigger' ones, which is a pain as they are these I access the most.

The trays themselves, as mentioned, come in a huge variety of guises, with half-size, full-size and quarter trays. They are graded by 'slot' size. For example, the Multi has 8 slots, 4 high by 2 wide, the idea being you can bespoke your trays to fit. I had standard trays for 28mm minis and various vehicles:

Tray #4: This is the standard 28mm tray. It holds 36 figures with cut-outs sized 51mm by 25mm. Described on the web site as 'ideal for Infantry figures'. No arguments there. This tray takes up 1 slot in a case.

Tray #25: Designed for Flames of War infantry bases, although it can be used for different models. It has 25 cut-outs, 25mm by 40mm by 45mm. This tray takes up 1 slot in a case. Again, does what it says on the tin.

Tray #20: Designed for larger tanks like the GW Landraider, and has two cut-outs of 185mm by 120mm and two cut-outs of 85mm by 70mm. This tray takes up 2 slots vertically in a case. This is somewhat specific and as a non-GW gamer of limited use. I can however see its purpose and would be a good component part of a set of trays put together for a Space Marines army, for example.

Tray #15: Designed (it says on the web site) for the Mongoose Starship Troopers Arachnid figures (now that takes me back!), and can be used for many other larger figures with 10 cut-outs, 77mm by 104mm. This tray takes up 2 slots vertically in a case. This is actually really good for my 28mm WW2 tanks, so hurrah!

Tray #7: designed for chariots and GW style tanks. It has 4 cut-outs, 86mm by 126mm. The tray takes up 2 slots vertically in a case. For me it's larger WW2 tanks, but you get the idea.



## Conclusion

I really like the quality of the components and you need to exert good pressure to open up the Velcro, which is reassuring when the whole construction design is based on this. There is an A4-sized pocket at the front of the case to carry rules and stuff, although I would have liked that to have been bigger to allow for a less snug fit. There's also nowhere to put your dice, markers and tape measure, plus any other assorted bits and bobs, unless you actually pick one of the trays to do the job, which isn't as daft as it sounds, being as there are more than enough designs to fit the bill.

The negatives are that there is no convenient carry handle on top, which means every time you reach for the case you have to mess around sorting out the shoulder strap or pick it up in both hands like a box. I'm a lazy wargamer – I want to grab a handle and swing the case round and be on my way, thank you very much. The other is, of course, the fitting. Discovering that my top deck of models were all sharing bunks came as an unpleasant surprise and could have caused some serious paint chipping. The problem was solved by swapping trays about but suppose you want all 8 slots to be filled with #4 trays?

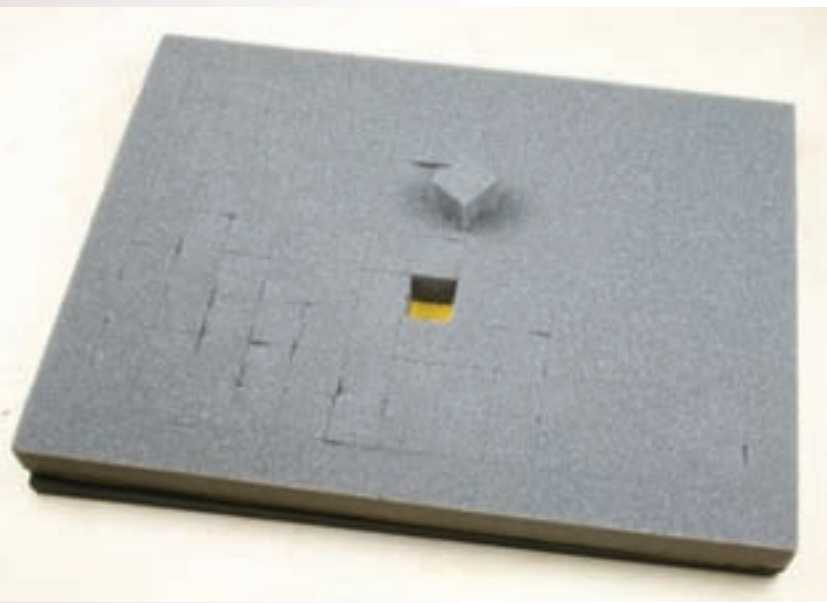
As such I can recommend the case for quality, although at £75 plus the cost of trays, you may want to think hard before you make a commitment.



### The Super Case

There I was minding my own business, it was a club night and I was getting ready to play Simon Parkinson's amazing new game of 'Last Living Soul' when in comes Kenny with a rather large box. It turned out that this box contained one of Figures in Comfort Super Cases, not only that but it was one designed to carry Spartan Games' range of Uncharted Seas fleets.

This was one of those moments that make me believe in Santa; Kenny gave me the case to review, and if he doesn't ask for it back, I won't remind him. So here goes.



This case fits 12 single depth foam trays or 432 28mm figures. The case size is: Wide = 265mm,

High = 370mm,  
Long = 560mm.

The case itself is made from a good quality waterproof fabric and as many of you are aware the British summer is a little damp, so I had ample opportunity to test this, and it never let me down.

There is an A4 pocket on the front of the case which is more than adequate to carry the rule book and card sets that come with the

Uncharted Seas game, along with the various templates and tape measure you need to play the game. The only observation I have is that I couldn't fit my dice bag inside.

Like the Multi that Ian reviewed above, the Super opens at the top and the front and it uses Velcro to secure these flaps. It is not very firm, but rather works on the Velcro being fastened securely over the foam trays.

The case doesn't have a carrying handle and instead has a shoulder strap attached to the sides of the case. I do feel that this case would benefit from a separate carrying handle and that one could be fitted to the front and rear of the case, each one long enough to be held at the top, so it could be carried in a suitcase fashion. It would save me clearing my wife's luckily empty cup of tea from the bedside table as I walked past with said bag on my shoulder.

The six figure trays are formed from two pieces of foam, with the upper layer stuck to a lower 10mm thick base. The adhesive fixing the upper and lower parts of the trays is certainly noticeable, but does not appear to affect the contents in any significant manner.

The trays provided, catered for the Elf 360 x 265 x 70mm, Human 360 x 225 x 80mm, Dragon Lord 360 x 265 x 80mm, Orc Fleet 360 x 265 x 70mm and Dwarf fleet 360 x 265 x 50mm splendidly, each tray had the required slots to complement their respective fleet extremely

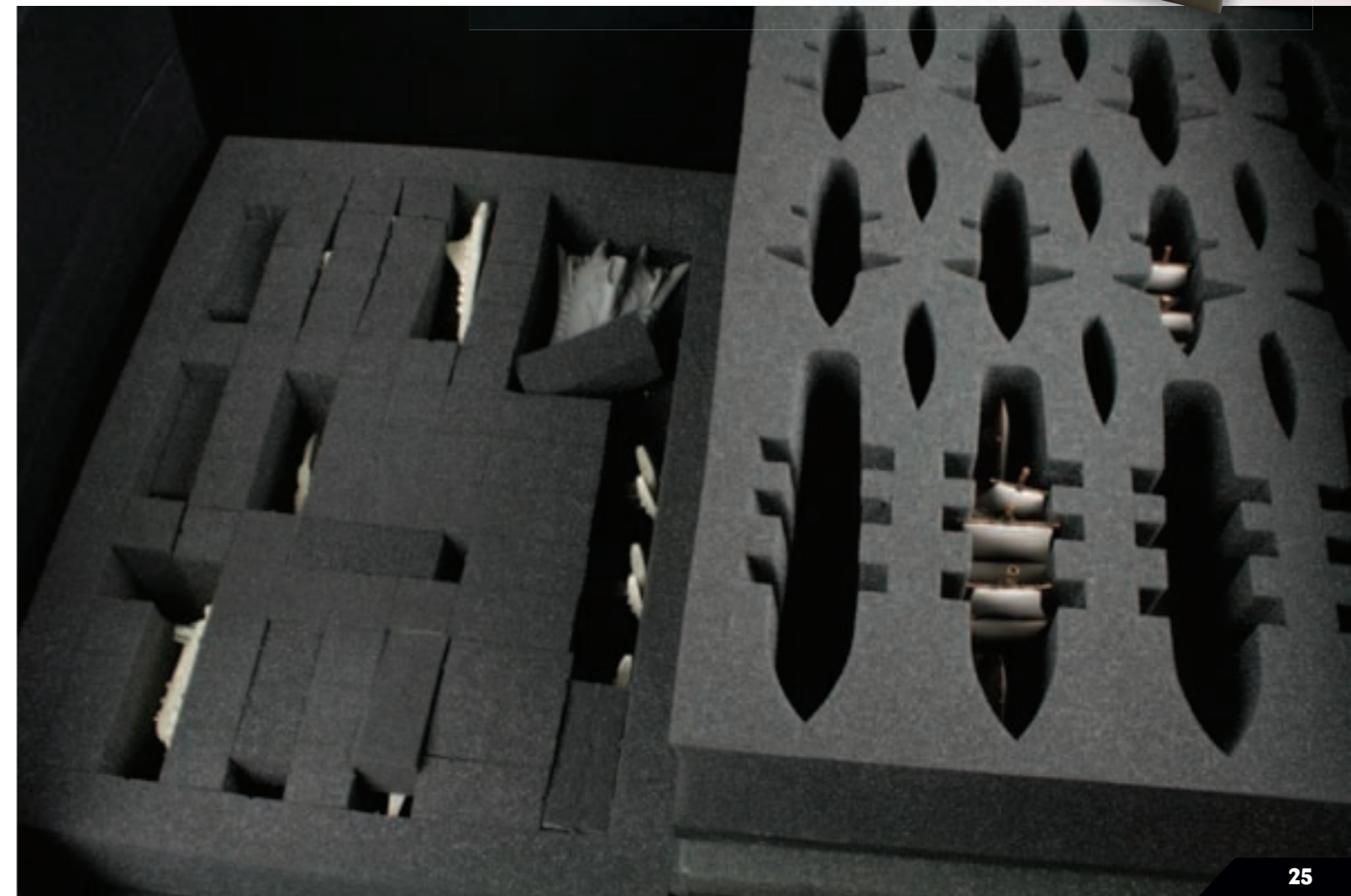
well, with Figures In Comfort cutting out the slots to perfectly hold each class of ship. My only complaint, such as it is, would be that the diminutive frigates had a tendency to disappear into their slots; my large fingers struggled to get some of them out.

There was also a tray of pick and pluck 360 x 225 x 70mm which my son used and found it contained his Shroud Mages and larger Elf ships fairly well; there was also another pick and pluck tray 360 x 225 x 35mm, although I have yet to find a use for this one.

I was worried about the Velcro staying the course, but up until now it has provided a sterling service, and shows no sign of letting me down. The lack of a separate carrying handle is an undoubted negative. Also I feel the Super case is a little too big for the job, I don't have four Human Battleships, and I am unlikely to ever field that many during a game anyway, all of the fleet trays had this problem.

### Conclusion

Would I pay close to £100 for this bag, and in this tray configuration? I have to say no. The quality is good, as you would expect from Figures in Comfort, but it's just too big for the job, and has nowhere to carry my dice bag.



This summer, your worse foe might not be your opponent...

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6<sup>th</sup> day

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will roam the ashes of EDEN....

# THE BEASTS ARE COMING!

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# Eden – Post Apocalyptic Skirmish Game

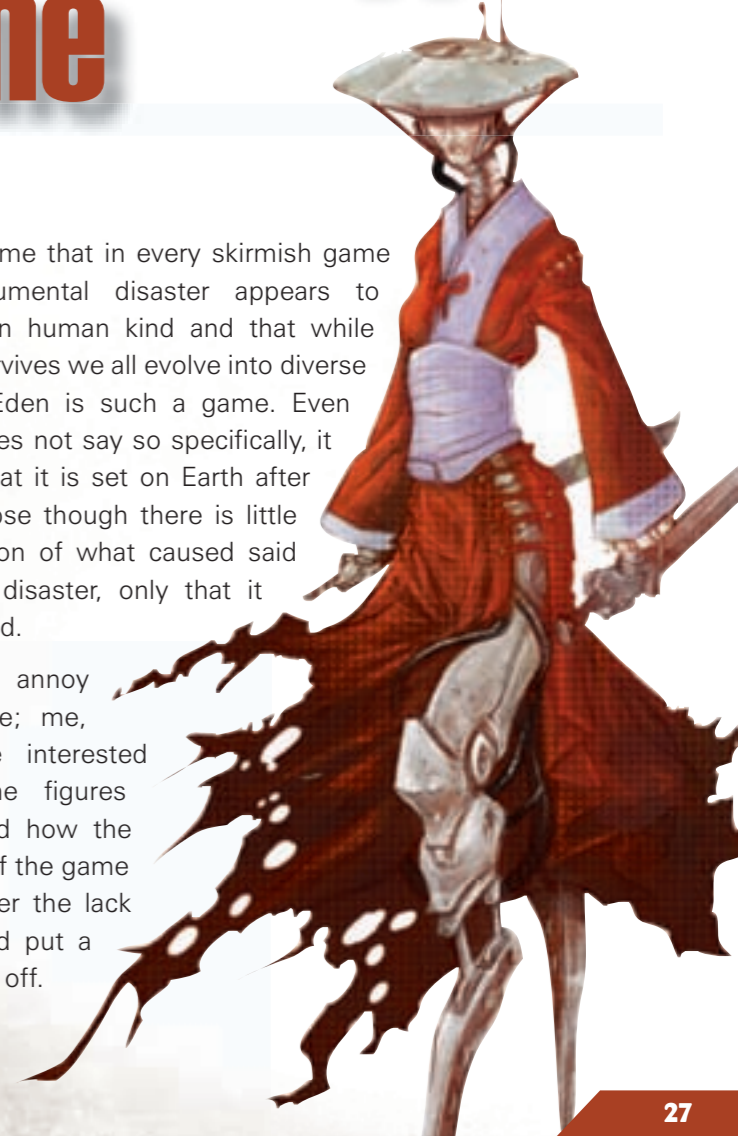
By Kenny Robb

**S**kirmish games seem to be the in thing at the moment. If it's figures that can be used with the myriad rule sets or is one of the aforementioned rule sets then we seem to be able to skirmish to our hearts content in virtually any environment of our choosing.

One of the many offering that I came across at Salute this year is by the French Company Taban Miniatures and is entitled EDEN. Taban are a reasonably new company to the UK and, unlike some of the previous imports from the continent, have started with a set of English rules and accessories for the game, these being mainly cards. Before we get into the mechanics of the game let me start with a bit of background and my initial thoughts on the miniatures and overall design and feel.

It seems to me that in every skirmish game some monumental disaster appears to have befallen human kind and that while humanity survives we all evolve into diverse mutations. Eden is such a game. Even though it does not say so specifically, it is implied that it is set on Earth after the apocalypse though there is little or no mention of what caused said cataclysmic disaster, only that it has happened.

This would annoy some people; me, I am more interested in what the figures look like and how the mechanics of the game play. However the lack of fluff could put a lot of people off.



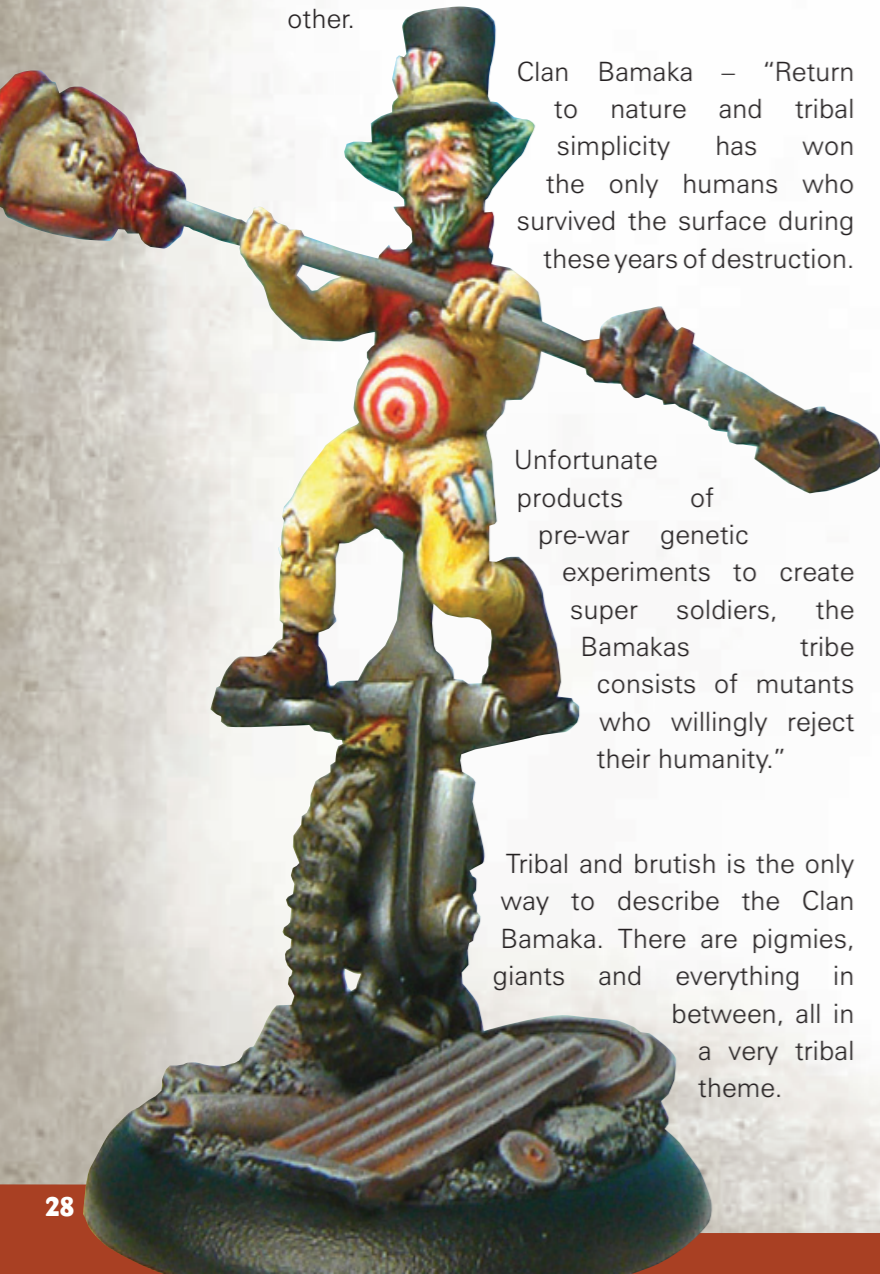


## Races

The initial release introduces us to 4 races:

**Jokers** – “Rejecting any form of political authority, gangs formed out of the shelters. For them the order and society are meaningless and only the strong shall survive. The drugged and demented Clowns of the Jokers Gang led by brothers Yuri and arsonists Vladd, sow terror in the land of Eden by “representations” most often concluded in the blood of the spectators.”

These guys are your demented clowns; road signs, iron bars, Molotov cocktails and flamethrowers combined with colourful clown costumes and face paint making each performance a killer. The possibilities are endless and one of the gang, Vassiliev, rides a unicycle with a balance bar which has a boxing glove on one end and a saw on the other.



**Clan Bamaka** – “Return to nature and tribal simplicity has won the only humans who survived the surface during these years of destruction.

Unfortunate products of pre-war genetic experiments to create super soldiers, the Bamakas tribe consists of mutants who willingly reject their humanity.”

Tribal and brutish is the only way to describe the Clan Bamaka. There are pigmies, giants and everything in between, all in a very tribal theme.

**Matriarchy** – “For The Matriarchy of Sybille, technology and misinterpretation of religion by men are the source of all evils. In the depths, this group of women has forged its own syncretism based on 4 orders Directors, each one following a Horsemen Of The Apocalypse precepts. The sisters and paladines now return to the surface with their slavish troops to extend their influence and ensure that no more male will ever plunge the world into chaos.”

For those of you who like their miniature a bit more risky then the Matriarchy is for you. I’m sure that for the more creative amongst you these will prove to be very popular and that the miniatures will start appearing in many set pieces and painting competitions. Like they say – “Sticks and stones may break my bones but whips and chains excite me.” Need I say any more?

**ISC** –“Lifeless drones, blown from secret shelters, roam the land in quest of the fragments of the past. Their Plasteel hull bears the three lettered icon: ISC.”

**Japanese Ronin Robots** – there is not really much more to say about that. They have captured the styles of the Ronin and made them into robots. Each is clearly identifiable as a Japanese-style character and again I think these will prove very popular with those who like their war band with a more technological theme.

## Models

Each of the starter sets comes in its own clearly labelled and branded box set. Simple yet effective artwork identifies the war band and the games system to which they belong. Inside the box are the appropriate set of cards for the miniatures, counters, an Eden reference card, a small rule book and the models each packed in their own plastic bag, all of which are packed into the box and padded by foam. In short you get everything you need to get started building a war band. You do of course need a friend with another war band before you can have a game but I think that goes without saying.

The tokens do require cutting out with a pair of scissors or a knife and are not the usual push out counters that we have come across in other skirmish games. The cards have a nice feel to



them and would last but if you are like me then you will put them in card protectors or laminate them so you can use dry wipe markers to mark off wounds which we will cover later in the review. Each blister pack comes with the cards required for the model and the actual model.

Onto what some may say is the important stuff. I have, for the purpose of the review, a Jokers starter set and a Clan Bamaka starter set with Vassiliev and Tukwila Blood Fang expansion blisters.

On closer inspection the models are crisp and clean with minimal flash and very highly detailed faces and bodies which will lend themselves to the more adventurous painters out there as they offer loads of opportunities to show off your skills by painting things that are unusual

and characterful. If I have one criticism some of the more human figures that come in multi-part have very thin arms. This has been done to make them anatomically correct but it does not always lend itself well to pinning an arm for extra strength.

From the models I have here and the ones I saw at Salute I have to say that this range is very interesting and has lots of potential. The quality of the sculpts is very typical of what the French are becoming justifiably renowned for capable of and they have a style about them that is highly satisfying. Just to sum up each of the races that have been released to date;

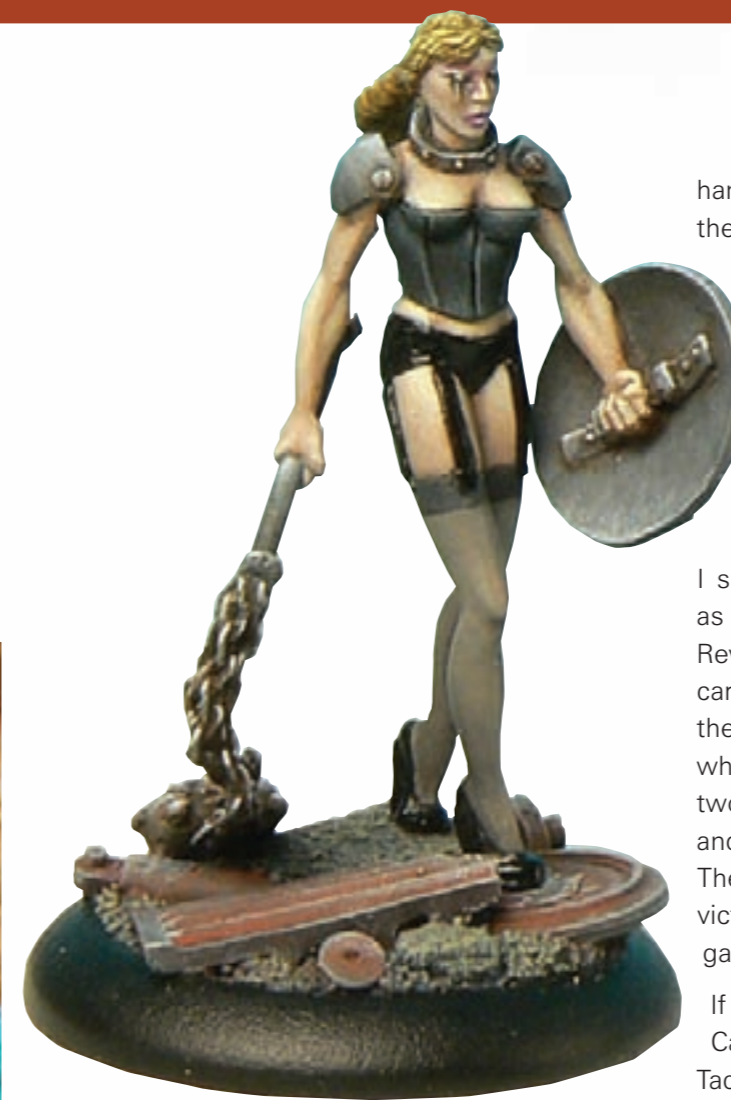


Jokers are just bonkers and a clown with a flame thrower...nice. Clan Bamaka will appeal to the players who want big, bad brutes, the ISC will appeal to those who like robots and some of the models are jaw-droppingly beautiful (in my opinion) while the Matriarchy are just so wrong, they are right (if you get my drift). I think, though you could prove me wrong, that there is something for everyone, even if it is just a single model in this range and I can't wait to see what's coming next.

## Game Mechanics and Stuff

Let's start off by looking at the rule book, available with each box set. It comes in A6 format, hitting 32 pages with the Eden logo and one of the ISC artwork pieces on the front cover.

The first thing that strikes you is that it is a bit small, not necessarily in physical size but in the number of pages. Now don't get me wrong. I like this. Any game that can be explained in a small amount of space and text is good in my



eyes. I can't stand having to paw through 100+ pages of A4 hardback rules trying to figure out what is fluff and what are rules and what are important rules. So it is with excitement that I open the rules. Once past the front cover the rest of the pages are in black and white, which is easy on the eye, and line up as follows:

One page of Basic Introduction

Two pages on Character Cards

One page on Mission Cards

One page on Tactical Cards

We then get into the meat of the rules and by the time you get to page 22 you have covered all the basic rules and you can play. There are also eight pages of optional and advanced rules that you don't need but can come back to later once you have had a few games. I would also like to stress at this point that we are talking A6 which is ¼ of the size of the page that this is written on, so it is not a long read.

To create your war band they recommend that you set a limited number of points, suggesting 100 points as a good start which just happens to be what you get in the box set – now that is

handy. This is where there is a bit of a twist in the tail. You can choose to go with a starter set and pick your war band by faction or you can choose to pick your war band by Stigmata.

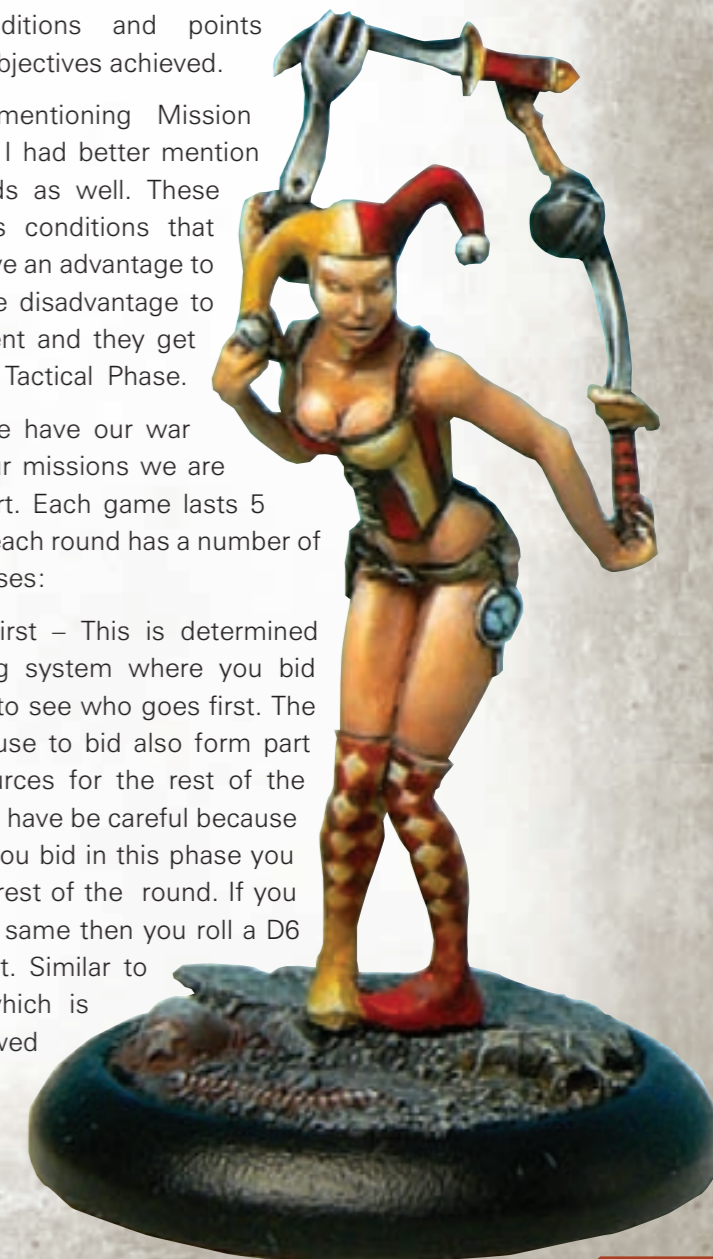
This is a special symbol on the bottom of each card so it is possible to have a war band made up from all the factions who are linked because they all have the same Stigmata. These are Destruction, Order, Protection, Change and Chaos.

I should mention Mission Cards at this point as there are two types; Secret Missions and Revealed Missions, which are detailed on the cards. Revealed Missions are pretty much what they say on the tin – revealed to your opponent while secret missions are not. There are also two types of deployment; Confrontation and Ambush, again detailed on the card. The Mission Cards will dictate the victory conditions and points gained for objectives achieved.

If I am mentioning Mission Cards then I had better mention Tactical Cards as well. These have various conditions that will either give an advantage to you or cause disadvantage to your opponent and they get played in the Tactical Phase.

Now that we have our war band and our missions we are ready to start. Each game lasts 5 rounds and each round has a number of steps or phases:

Who goes first – This is determined by a bidding system where you bid with tokens to see who goes first. The tokens you use to bid also form part of the resources for the rest of the game so you have to be careful because any tokens you bid in this phase you lose for the rest of the round. If you both bid the same then you roll a D6 to sort it out. Similar to Incursion, which is also reviewed this issue.



Tactical Phase – This is where you play your Tactical Cards which can give you an advantage as mentioned above. Activation of Fighters – just as it says; fighters are activated and they get to perform actions. Each player takes turns to activate a model until all fighters have been activated.

Intendancy Phase – This can be looked on as the maintenance phase where players are given a chance to remove wounds, fear, poison and any other things that may be affecting them. It is also in this phase that any non-player fighters are activated. These will do their thing and are governed by the Rules of Infestation in the rule book. There need not be any NPFs but it is an option.

I am not going to go into the combat system in any detail as we will be covering that in a battle report in a future issue but needless to say there are dice rolled against statistics which are explained in the rule book and hits are allocated which in turn will affect a fighter's ability in future rounds.

In summary Eden is a well thought out game and even though it lacks the background in English it seems that the guys at Taban are working on it. I will be passing out the miniatures to the guys in the office and setting them the task of coming up with a battle report in a future issue. In the meantime I will be off to my FLGS to get hold of the ISC for my personal collection!



For further details go to:  
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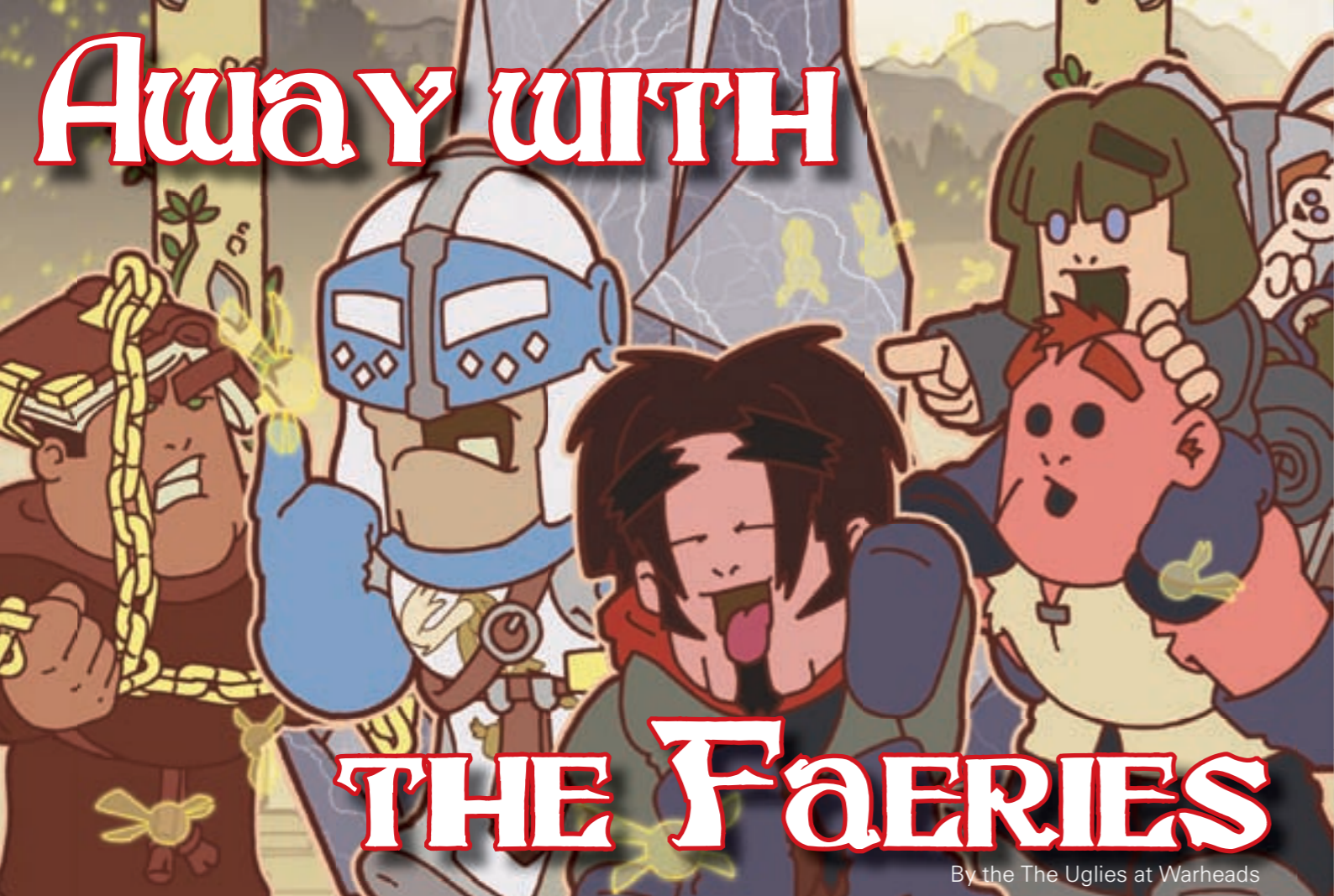
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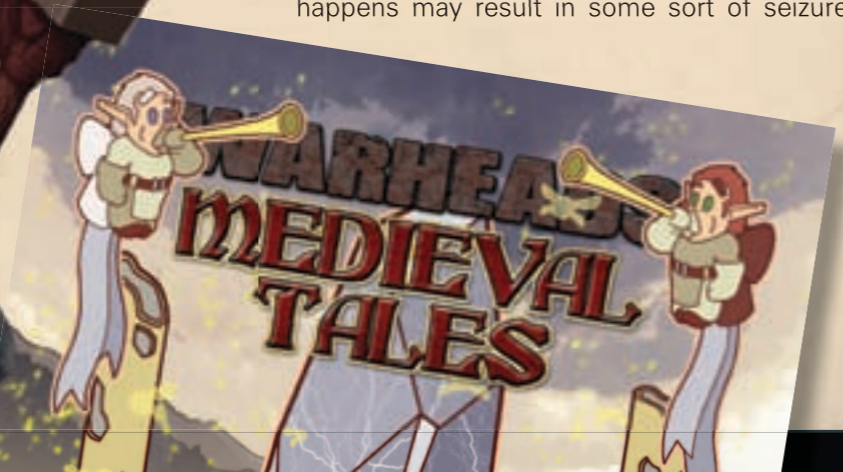
# Away with

# THE FAERIES

By the The Ugliers at Warheads

**T**he following strange events take place between Issues 1 and 2 of Warheads: Medieval Tales. The vague sense of unease and embarrassment that accompanied them has ensured none of the characters involved ever discussed it. They aren't fooling anyone.

You will need a copy of Issue 1 of Warheads: Medieval Tales and miniatures from the Hugo's Heroes and Gui's Gits boxed sets to play this scenario. These can be purchased at your local hobby store or you can place an online order at <http://www.urbanmammoth.co.uk/acatalog/Warheads.html>. The magazine is also available as a free PDF download at <http://www.warheadsthegame.com/game/all-warheads-publications>. Warheads: Medieval Tales is ostensibly a 2 player game, but it can be played with more people if you wish individual characters on a side to be handled by different players. This following scenario is particularly good for multiplayer involvement (nay, even recommended as a single player dealing with the twists and turns of what happens may result in some sort of seizure).



Sudden whip strokes lashed against the shutters and tiles of both Sudemarchie and Deangard, and an ill-wind howled and blasted and rattled around the bastions and planks of the castles. It was a foul, stormy mid-autumn night across the Southern Marches and the Forest of Dean, causing the slumbering inhabitants of the rival estates to jerk their limbs fitfully and mumble complaints into their pillows. Simultaneously at the two castles, particularly violent gusts slammed against the buildings from all sides, as though some deranged artillery captain had decided to pepper them with soggy elephants. The shutters flew wide, and outhouses and barn doors blasted open to the screams of panicked horses and servants. Everyone sat bolt upright in bed and all were instantly blinded and stunned by a terrific flash of lightning...

...Sir Hugo's senses returned slowly. The peal of thunder ringing around his cranium faded to a dull rumble, and then to the sound of a trickling brook, and finally a gently twittering songbird melody. The piercing white glare that filled his eyes resolved; dimmed and blurry shadows emerged as the brightness receded, finally resolving themselves into figures, and a floor of delicate white sand. A cool, refreshing summer breeze brushed over his skin. He was outdoors. His body felt all wrong though, sort of sluggish and bloated and weird, but he attributed that to having just woken up—he'd probably been lying in a funny position or something. Hugo smacked his lips contentedly and focused on the dark shape to his left. He did a double take, and the fellow on the ground next to him boggled back.

It was none other than his half-brother and mortal enemy, Gui le Bâtard! Gui literally snarled at Hugo, baring his clenched teeth and going: "GRRR!", and springing to an alert crouch on all fours, ready to launch himself into the fray. He had his armour on but was helmetless.

"Ah-ha! Cop for this, you swine!" Hugo shouted, as he swung a punch at Gui's angry fizog. Gui dodged the blow easily, demonstrating incredible reflexes in the process, and launched himself upon Hugo. Gui grappled Hugo's arm and actually sank his teeth in. Hugo howled in pain and brought his fist crashing down on top of Gui's head. And what a big fist it seemed to be. Gui made a sort of muffled yelping noise and keeled over on to his back stunned by the blow, his knees and hands raised like a dead fly.

Hugo scrambled to his feet in confusion and took in the scene. He was in a sort of flat, square arena. In the centre stood an ivy-webbed, black marble obelisk, each face embossed with a great oval gem the size of a goose egg. Standing around the perimeter of the arena were a number of marble plinths, all studded with similar gems to the obelisk. The whole arena was enclosed by rows of seating, calling to mind the amphitheatres of Ancient Greece, or the Colosseum of Rome. There was a whiff of faux-classicism about the whole place. Everything was façade, nothing was real. Around the arena, clumsy scuffles were taking place between his friends and members of Gui's band of villains, and then, horror of all horrors, Hugo saw himself on the other side of the arena, grappling with Jack Shady. "What the...?"

Off to Hugo's right Canute the terrier looked round at him and said in a broad Lancastrian accent, "What the bloody hell's going on?"

Sir Hugo looked down at his hands—they were enormous calloused mitts, the size of hams. He couldn't see his feet over his bulging waistline. "Oh my God, I'm Mold," said Hugo, and fainted dead away to the sound of maniacal tittering, going "Eeee-hee-hee-hee! Ooh-ah-hah-hah-ha ha."

"AATTAASHIAOU!!!" When Hugo came round it was with a terrific sneeze, and his eyelids snapped open to reveal that he was still in the arena. His friends

were all there, and his enemies too, with Gui sat on the ground vainly attempting to get his armoured foot behind his ear. A diminutive human-like figure with large delicate butterfly wings flitted away from him, leaving a trail of golden dust in its wake. Hugo wiped at his itchy nose and looked down at a smear of the golden stuff on the back of his clunking great hand. "Still Mold, then," he thought.

The seating area of the arena was now filled with the little winged folk, all pointing and giggling and flitting about the stands. A particularly important one of the creatures (you could tell this because it was wearing a crown) hovered down into the centre of the arena to address them. "Hee-hee. Welcome to the Land of the Eternal Summer, mortals! I am King Obermunch of the Tylwyth Teg, and we've invited you here to entertain my Queen Titanic and I," squeaked the king, and then he indicated an enclosure in the stands, where a distant figure fluttered a sparkly handkerchief and shouted "Coo-ee!"

"You must fight a battle against your enemies for our amusement, but to make things a little more interesting, as the sharper among you no doubt already realise, we've swapped your bodies around. It'll be educational for you to see what it's like to travel in another's shoes for a while, hee-hee. If you can't stand the truth, you can always switch back into your own body by pressing one of the gems in that there obelisk, or there are the plinths around the edge there—well, I'll let you work out what they do. There's a big prize for the winning team. Now get to it boyos, ho-ho!"

And with that, King Obermunch flitted up to the royal enclosure with preternatural alacrity.



This encounter takes place in the arena of the Faery Monarchy, King Obermunch and Queen Titanic. It features a battle pit with an obelisk at the centre, and eight plinths around the perimeter.



**RULES**

Now then, bear with us because this next bit is likely to get messy. Each character's mind has been transplanted into the body of a member of the enemy team by faery magic. The rules for handling this are as follows for any given character:

Use the model representing the enemy into whom the character has been transplanted

The character is equipped with whatever the normal equipment for the enemy character into whom they have been transplanted is normally equipped with

We highly recommend that you don't change anything on your character sheets for this, because there will be more body swapping to come. Just keep the equipment stats at hand and record any damage to items or ammo used on the Stat Tracker sheets

Priests are allowed to use prayers while in the body of another but obviously they don't get the usual POW modifiers for the Scriptures of Saint Clobberus or The Crux

The character uses all its own core stats and skills while inhabiting another character's body (which in many cases means they will find their equipment to be a liability)

**THE OBELISK**

A character that starts his turn in base contact with the obelisk may activate it to return to his own body. The rules are as follows:

- ▲ *The obelisk does nothing if a character in his own body tries to activate it*
- ▲ *The obelisk does nothing if the character's body has been incapacitated*
- ▲ *Otherwise, the character returns immediately to their own body*
- ▲ *The character inhabiting their body is transferred to the body that they have just left behind at the obelisk*
- ▲ *Place an activation counter on both models*
- ▲ *The obelisk may only be used once per turn, so if there are any other models in contact with it, they may not use it on the same turn*

**THE PLINTHS**

The arena has eight plinths dotted around the perimeter. A character in base contact with a plinth can activate it to transfer into a random character. The plinths in the corners transfer a character into a random member of Sir Hugo's Party and the plinths at the centre of the edges transfer a character into a random member of Gui's Party. The rules are as follows:

Roll 2 dice and consult the following table:

Dice Roll	Corner Plinth	Centre Plinth
2	Canute	Toland
3	Friar John	Brother Oswald
4-5	Captain Jenkins	Norman Scum
6-8	Sir Hugo	Gui le Bâtard
9-10	Sir Penhaligon	Sir Beauregard the Black
11	Glynn the Bow	Jack Shady
12	Eck	Mold

If the dice roll indicates that the character should transfer into the body of a character they are already in, nothing happens. Place an activation counter next to the model

If the dice roll indicates that the character should transfer into the body of a model that has been incapacitated, nothing happens. Place an activation counter next to the model

Otherwise, the character transfers to the body indicated by the dice roll

The character inhabiting the body they have transferred to switches to the body they have just left behind at the plinth

Place an activation counter on both models

An individual plinth may only be used once per turn, so if there are any other models in contact with it, they may not use it on the same turn

**XP REWARDS**

As this is all taking place in an alternate faery dream world type thing, no one earns any XP for this scenario.

**CHARACTERS**

Place models in the positions shown on the deployment map at the start of the game. For whatever reason, Oi! and Lucy have not been taken by the faeries, so characters can only use what they are equipped with. If you've based Lucy with Eck or Oi with Mold, that's okay, just place the models as usual but you'll have to ignore the presence of the pack beast for working out LOS, range, combat move distance, etc.

**SIR HUGO'S PARTY**

Sir Hugo's party consists of the following characters.

- ▲ Sir Hugo, who is in the body of Mold
- ▲ Eck, who is in the body of Brother Oswald
- ▲ Sir Penhaligon, who is in the body of Toland the Sexton
- ▲ Captain Jenkins, who is in the body of Jack Shady
- ▲ Glynn the Bow, who is in the body of Sir Beauregard the Black
- ▲ Friar John, who is in the body of Norman Scum
- ▲ Canute the Terrier, who is in the body of Gui le Bâtard



**GUI'S PARTY**

Gui's party consists of the following characters:

- ▲ Gui le Bâtard, who is in the body of Friar John
- ▲ Mold, who is in the body of Glynn the Bow
- ▲ Sir Beauregard the Black, who is in the body of Captain Jenkins
- ▲ Norman Scum, who is in the body of Canute the Terrier
- ▲ Jack Shady, who is in the body of Sir Penhaligon
- ▲ Brother Oswald, who is in the body of Sir Hugo
- ▲ Toland the Sexton, who is in the body of Eck





After issue 1's Raid on the Grain Store scenario, members of Gui's party may have been taken prisoner and, if Gui didn't pay the ransom, they may still be in Hugo's gaol. That doesn't matter in this scenario. There's faery magic afoot, so they can be brought to the fray from wherever they are. Of course afterwards, anyone who came from the dungeons is returned there.

**OBJECTIVES AND REWARDS**

The battle ends when all members of the enemy party have been incapacitated. Everyone is returned to their own bodies and the incapacitated are revived with faery dust. The reward for entertaining the Faery Court is the Horn of Titanic.

Queen Titanic gives the Horn of Titanic to Sir Hugo if his side won the battle, note it in his group equipment roster

Conversely, if Gui won, the queen gives him the horn (silence dogs!), so note it on his roster

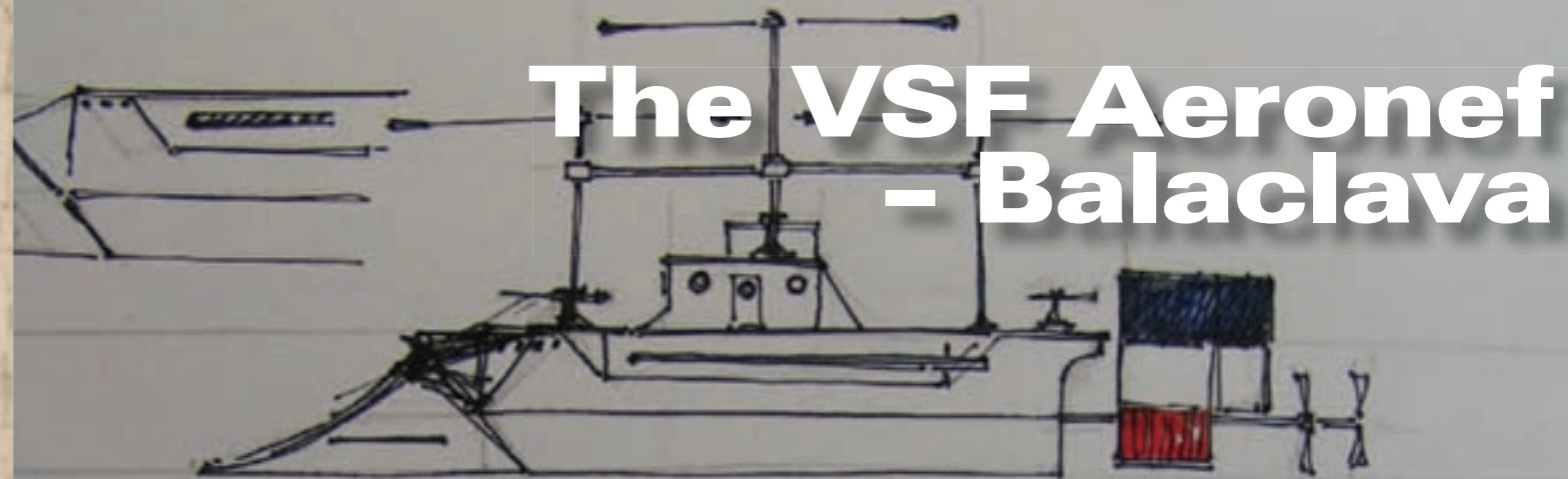
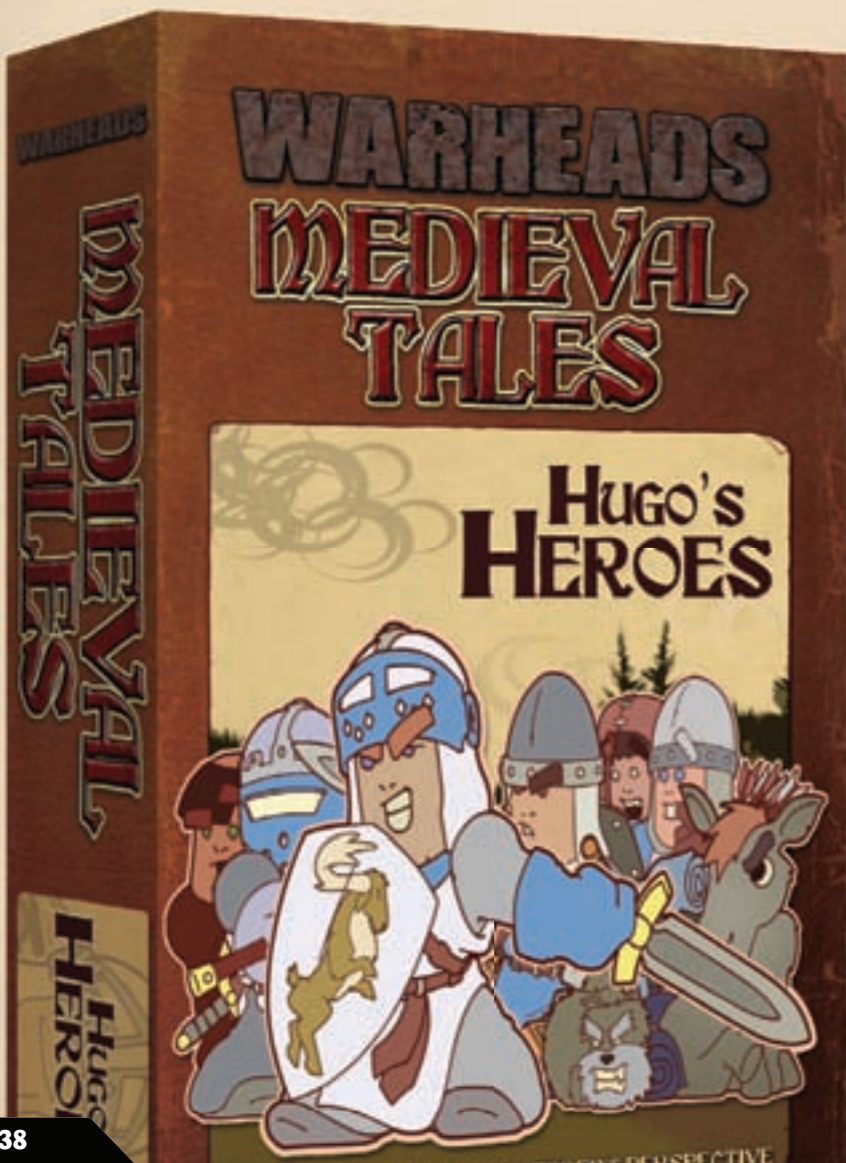
**THE HORN OF TITANIC**

The artefact is made from the horn of a unicorn, decorated with the feathers of birds from the goddess Rhiannon's flock (it is said that faeries ride to and from the underworld on the backs of these birds). The reed is made from the wing of a dragonfly. No-one knows what the purpose of this horn is, but the winner of the contest is given strict instructions by Queen Titanic that they must not use it under any circumstances, until the moment has arrived for it to be blown. When the time comes, she tells the winner, a sign shall be given.

No stats exist for the horn yet and it may not be traded or sold, so look out for instructions on how to use it in a future issue of Warheads: Medieval Tales. When the time comes – you'll know what to do with it.

**AFTERMATH**

Do not record or spend any XP for completing this mission. The characters are all revived with faery dust before King Obermunch clicks his fingers, and each party hurtles through a strange void of time and space, encased in a strange prison that seems to have one less dimension than the material they're travelling through. The following morning all the characters wake up in their respective beds feeling curiously refreshed and alert, and also left with vivid recollections of a very strange dream. Oh, and one lucky winner will find the Horn of Titanic under their pillow!



**The VSF Aeronef - Balaclava**

By Tony Harwood

**Introduction**

Pure scratch-building – in which the modeller produces 100% of all components – is rare. The majority of scratch-built models are actually built using components from kit pieces or other donor materials. I believe that the 'pure scratch-built model' is a great achievement and one that many model makers shy away from in the belief that it is too difficult. In this short article I am going to produce a small Victorian Science Fiction flying ship or Aeronef and hopefully inspire others to try scratch-building some of their gaming models.

The genre Victorian Science Fiction or VSF is epitomised by the great authors, H.G. Wells and Jules Verne, however others such as Michael Moorcock have also produced similarly inspirational works. For me VSF is Space 1889, a complete gaming background by Frank Chadwick, however I use Aeronef, a set of rules by Matthew Hartley and Steve Blease (distributed by Wessex Games) in which huge Victorian airships and dirigibles use lighter-than-air technologies and recoilless guns to fight fantastic air battles over an alternative histories Europe and even Mars, the Red Planet.

I have produced a large range of model Aeronefs which mix and match both Space 1889 and Aeronef. I use the unusual modelling scale of 1/300th or 1mm = 1foot. Choosing such an exotic scale has obviously meant that the models have had to be completely scratch-built.

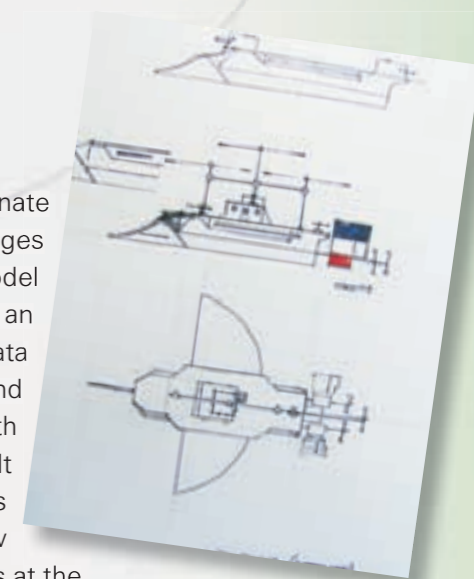
Balaclava is inspired by the small 28mm scale Aeronef designed and built by Marcus L. Rowland and detailed in his gaming resource Forgotten Futures. Balaclava is in turn inspired by the writings of George Griffiths, Jules Verne and other period authors. She is modelled on a small military craft, along the lines of a flying torpedo boat; she takes off vertically with wings retracted, and then extends them for additional lift as she gains forward speed.

With comparatively limited range, lightweight and relatively low powered pneumatic artillery and a heavy machinegun at the stern, Balaclava is at a distinct disadvantage to other, better designed Aeronef craft, however I have wanted to build a model of her for some time and this is how I went about it.

**Construction**

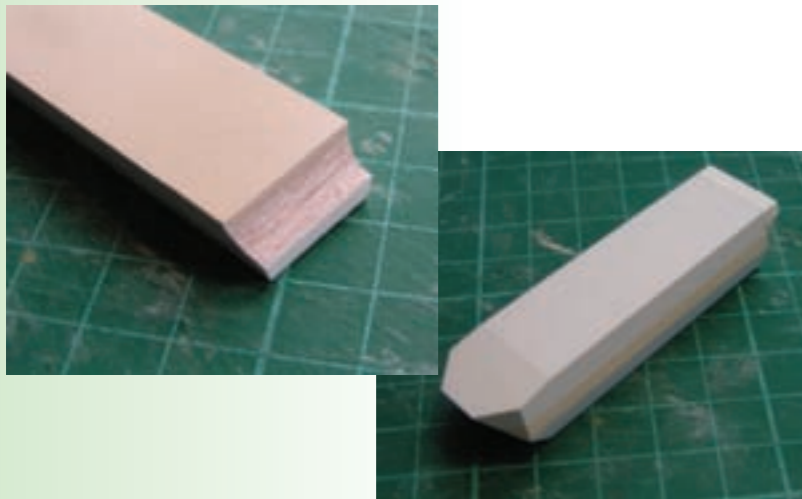
**Step One.**

Some time ago, I was fortunate enough to download images of the 28mm Balaclava model from the Internet. I spent an evening trawling over the data produced by Marcus and sketched out some 1/300th scale plans. The most difficult part of this process was trying to understand how each of the angles and panels at the bow interact!



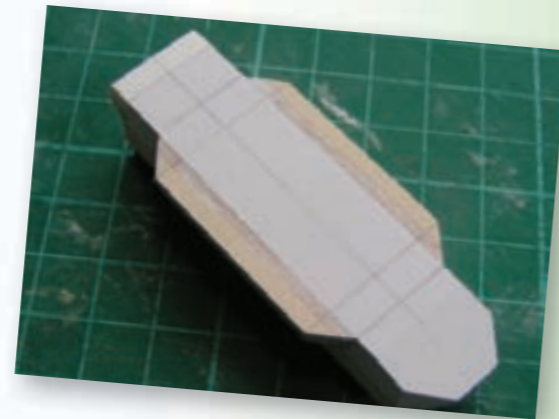
**Step Two.**

The main hull of Balaclava is a 'flattened hexagon shape', 70mm long, 21mm wide and 14mm deep. I have used different thicknesses of plastic card to build up a lower hull (1mm and 4mm) and an upper hull (3mm and 5mm). When 'squared', I used wet-and-dry paper attached to a sheet of hardened glass to do this, I then marked the hull and sanded a taper to the hull sides, when placed on top of one another the 'flattened hexagon' shape is achieved.

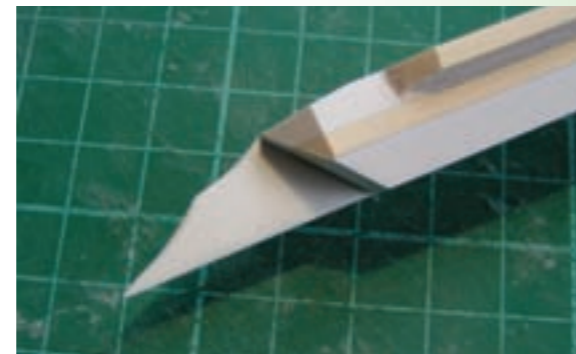
**Step Three.**

Shaping the upper hull meant attaching a 'spur' to the rear (where the rear-facing machine gun is fixed) and modelled by first cutting and sanding the stern flat, and then adding a small strip of 3mm thick plastic card and in-filling the angle with a piece of scrap balsa wood. Once the glue was set, I sanded the top and sides smooth. The front was more complicated and I started by marking the shape in pencil, cutting with a saw or knife and then sanding each surface flat and smooth. At this stage the upper and lower

hulls were still separate, but when the same was done to the lower hull I attached the two pieces with superglue and once again sanded the sides smooth.

**Step Four.**

The design called for two distinct 'outriders', one to each side of the main hull, where the retractable wings attach to the central hull. The shape is once again not easy to copy and so I first superglued a thin strip of over-sized balsa wood to each side, then cut back the balsa to the profile of the hull. I then added 3mm plastic card strips to each side and filled any gaps with plastic filler before cutting the plan profile with a scalpel, being very careful to take small and light cuts so as to not damage the main hull.

**Step Five.**

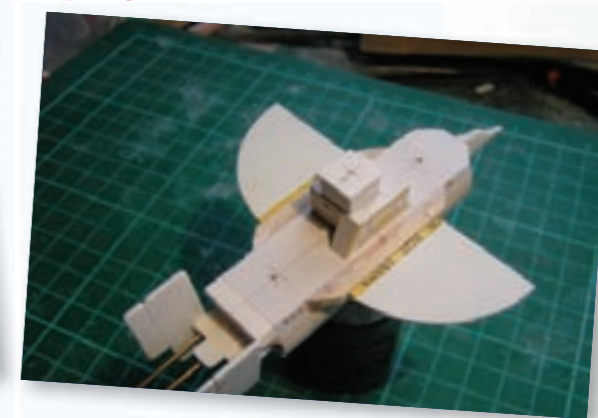
The Balaclava has a vicious, spiked metal ram to the front and this was modelled with plastic card, cut to profile and sanded to shape. It was attached with superglue. Prior to adding the deck detail, I re-marked a centreline to the upper hull and spent some time sanding the hull smooth. I used fine nail files or sanding sticks to produce smooth, flat hull sides.

**Step Six.**

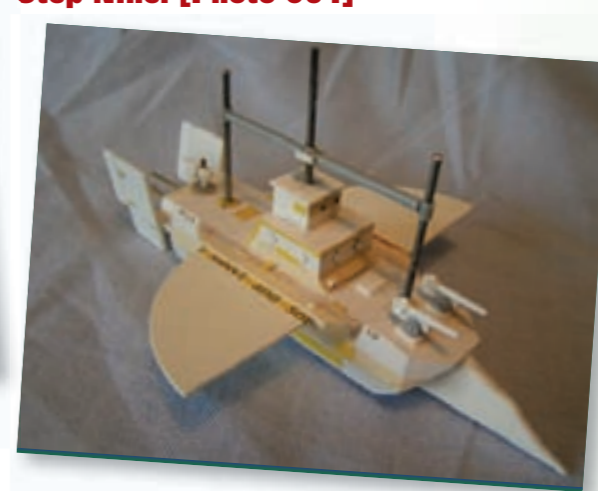
The most prominent feature of the main deck is the square section cabin and upper works. Once again I used layers of plastic card to get the correct depth, then cut and sanded the sides square. I added the small, sloped front from a separate piece of plastic card, cut at an angle and then added a set of steps to the rear. The upper 'secondary works' is produced in the same way – more plastic card. The detail is either sticky-back plastic or a roof of 1mm plastic card.

**Step Seven. [Photo 055]**

The start of the detailing. The cabin has some plastic rod sliver, portholes superglued on and the tail is constructed from an off-cut of Wills clapperboard plastic card, sanded smooth, but still leaving some of the horizontal grooves on the outside. The tail pieces are attached to a rear walkway of 3mm plastic card again using superglue and the walkway has now been drilled to accept the three propeller shafts.

**Step Eight. [Photo 060]**

More detailing and the attachment of the folding wings. Most of the surface texture is sticky-back-plastic, which when painted and highlighted will give the impression of separate panels. The wings are plastic card cut with an OLFA circle cutter and superglued to the main hull with a small strengthening strip of sticky-back-plastic above and below the join. You can also see the three brass rods – the three propeller shafts to the rear. I decided not to add detail to the actual wings, preferring to use paint to show the segmentation of the folding wings.

**Step Nine. [Photo 064]**

One of my favourite parts of building these model Aeronefs is adding more and more detail, knowing that all this work will be rewarded when the model is painted, washed and weathered. Balaclava has three vertical propeller or lifting screws, linked with decorative supports. I used metal rods for the main shafts (to add strength) and plastic rod and tube for the linking arms, thick superglue has been used to strengthen and fill the joints.

I have added more surface detail with sticky-back-plastic and scrap plastic card. There is no set pattern to this detailing, I just add and add until I think it's enough. Given that this is a fantasy model, there can be no right or wrong level of surface detailing.

The three guns were quite easy, if time consuming to make, using various lengths of tapered plastic rod, plastic card slivers and loads of superglue. Once attached I 'flooded' the pieces with thin superglue; it may be a bit over-scale, but past experience has taught me to exchange fine detail for robust workmanship when it comes to such fiddly detail!

The model is now getting very close to being completed – the next step is painting.

The model is 114mm long (front of ram to back of control surfaces) and the main hull is 27mm wide and 48mm tall from bottom of hull to top of the propeller. She is therefore exactly in line with the details given by Marcus in *Forgotten Futures – Balaclava*.

## Painting

### Step Ten.



I use is a spray product called Makes Paint Stick by Rowley. It is a specialised undercoat specifically formulated to be used as a base coat on plastic garden furniture. The 400ml can has lasted quite a while and I can report that in this case, 'it does exactly what it says on the can'.

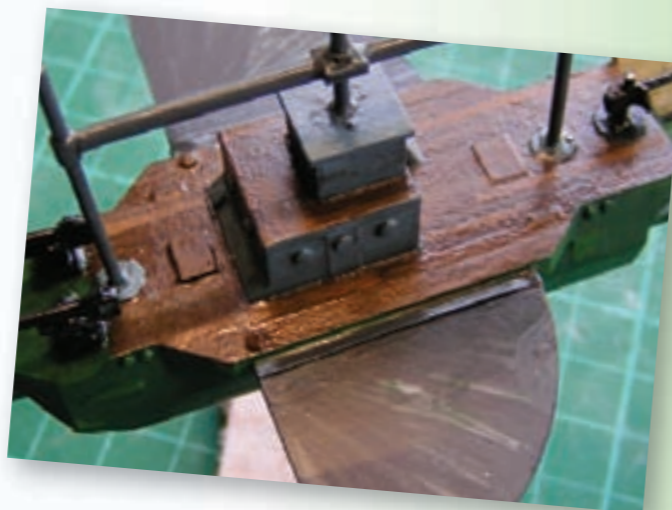
The model Balaclava was given a single, thorough coat and left to dry in the garage; this paint has a very high odour and is not a product I would recommend using indoors.

The first colour applied was a watered-down dark grey, painted on with a large, soft brush to the main hull and superstructure. I use this as a 'filler' coat to test out the surface finish and to fill any joins on the model. When I am happy with the finish, it's onto painting proper!

The 28mm model of Balaclava by Marcus was painted with a dark green hull, teak deck and dark grey superstructure. I intend to paint my model in the same colours.

My usual technique for painting these models is layering, applying a number of thin paint layers, each one lighter than the former. When painting models for myself, this technique can be quite haphazard, for example, the tail or tail markings being fully finished prior to starting the deck. In this step-by-step article I have tried to be more structured.

### Step Eleven.



My next step is to wash the whole model with a watered-down GW Badab Black Wash; the wash tends to darken the base colours and pool around the modeled detail such as portholes, doors and guns. Once fully dry I use watered down base colours to repaint the main surfaces, making sure that I leave a small border and allow the washed areas to remain. When dry I use slightly lightened base colours to start highlighting the same panels and build up the colour in the same way that I would paint a figure. This process can take some time – as four or five lighter layers are the norm.

To blend all of the separate layers of paint I will also re-wash certain areas, this time with even more watered down washes. I realise that this is a very time-consuming technique, but as I am only painting one Aeronef and not a full regiment of Napoleonic Hussars or a party of fantasy Dwarves, I feel that the process is worth the effort.

The hull is painted with Foundry Forest Green 26A, (I had planned on using GW Dark Angels Green, but thought the green was too khaki for what I wanted), the deck is GW Snakebite Leather and Vallejo Game Color Charred Brown, the cabin is Foundry Charcoal Grey 34Band the tail is Citadel Colour Bubonic Brown mixed with Warzone Legionnaire Flesh 12 and a small amount of white.

### Step Twelve.

The colours are built up with lighter coats.

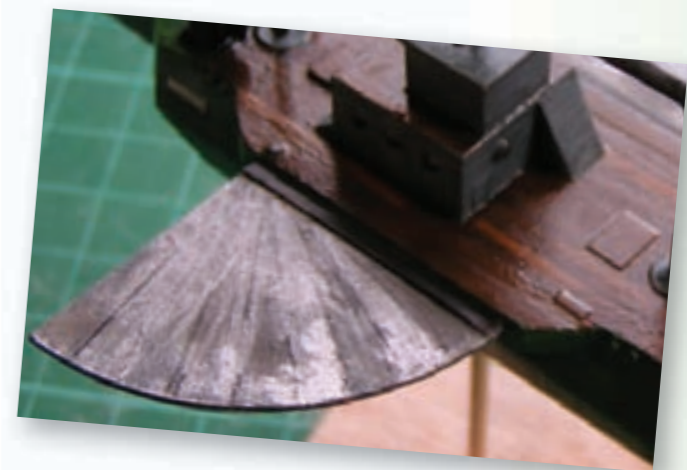
### Step Thirteen.



With all of the lightened layers now nearing completion, I wanted to try painting the French tricolour onto the tail. I first painted a white rectangle, washed it with pale grey and then more pure white, leaving some of the grey in the molded grooves and joins. Then I painted the royal blue section, highlighting with royal blue and a touch of white, before doing the same for the red section. This piece of bright colour helps to identify the 'Nef' as French and also breaks up the dark green/grey colour scheme.

Blue tail; GW Midnight Blue and Coat d'arms Dark Blue, highlighted with White. Red tail; GW Red Gore and GW Blood Red.

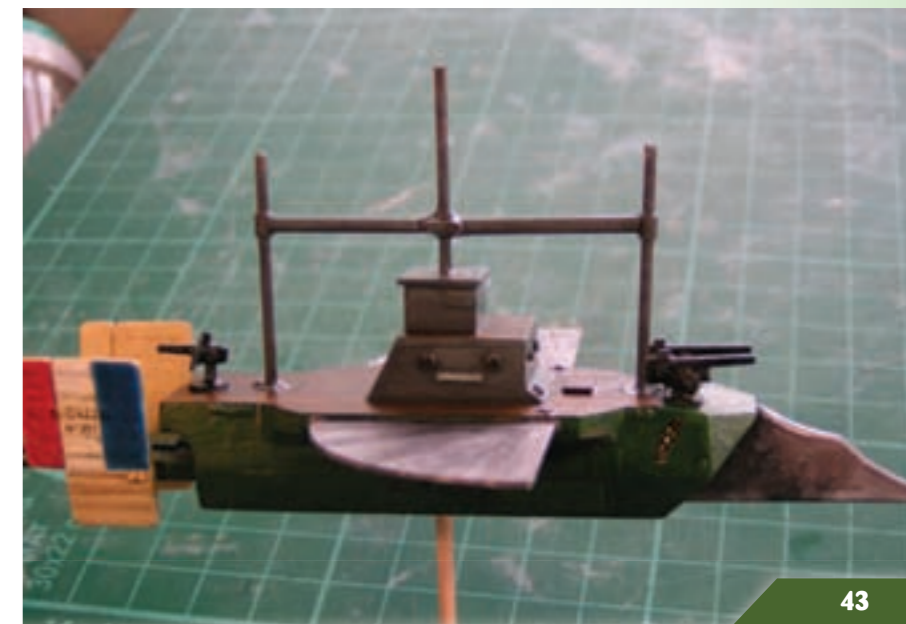
### Step Fourteen.



At this stage I began to doubt my initial decision not to score detail onto the segmented wings. I have already tried to show these segments with different brush strokes, emanating out from the forward swivel joint. I have now applied three watered-down layers of GW Chainmail/Mithril Silver over the base grey layers and the 'metallic sheen' has started to appear. I have used strips of 'post-it' notes to mask off sections for a drybrush of Mithril Silver which define the spines or folds within the wing sections.

I have also applied a set of lettering decals (or transfers) to the central tail section; these were originally from a 1/72nd scale French biplane set, (actual origin unknown) and a beautiful, tiny decal of a lady to the starboard front section of the hull – my Green Fairy. I have no idea where this particular image comes from, but it works perfectly in this setting. Once the decal film was dry, I applied a coat of Klear (Future in the US) over the top of the images.

### Step Fifteen.





Final detailing started with re-painting the retractable wings. I used a watered-down chrome coloured craft paint and a large soft brush to 'glaze' the silver paint over the existing colours. I think this has worked better than the previous attempts, but I am still not sure if a scored folding wing might not have been better!

Other detailing included a green highlight to the hull, the nameplates painted a very light grey and the portholes, first painted dark blue, then progressively lighter blue highlights and finally a very small pure white highlight.

## The Base

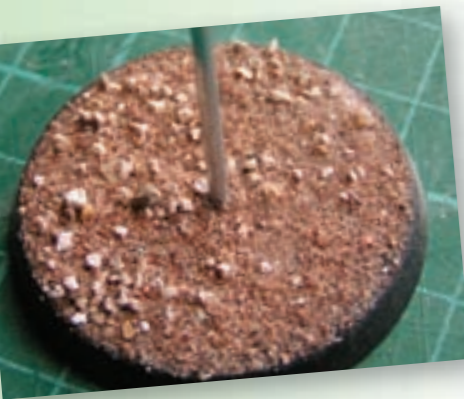
### Step Sixteen.



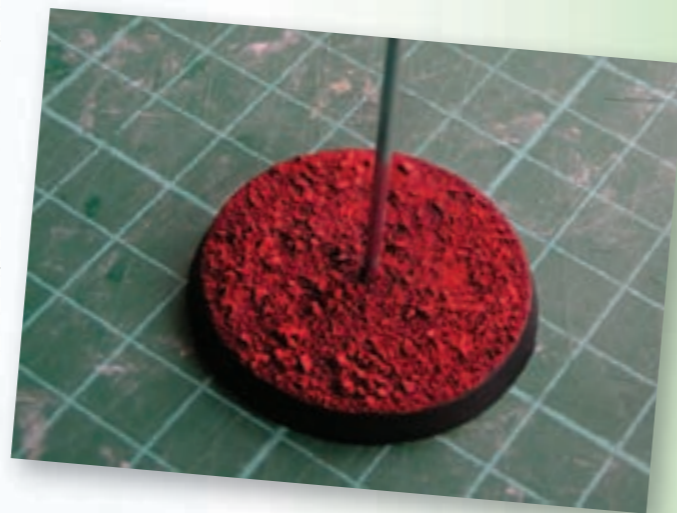
My collection of Space 1889/Aeronef models are all based the same – a weighted, scratch-built [naturally! – Ed] custom flying stand. The materials used are; a 40mm round GW plastic base, a small round metal washer, a chrome plated radio-control actuator arm (cut down to 100mm) and a small plastic rod 'plug'.

### Step Seventeen.

All but the central plastic nipple are cut from the underneath of the GW base. I then superglue the metal washer to the inside and bottom of the base. A small plastic 'plug' is superglued into the central nipple or hole and then a 1mm hole is drilled from the bottom, through to the top. The chrome actuator arm is then glued into the hole and when fully dry uPVA glue is painted onto the top of the base and small stones and sand are added.



### Step Eighteen.



The textured surface is painted a mix of Dark Brown and Blood Red, and then washed with Black and drybrushed with pure Blood Red. The side of the base is painted Black. I am attempting to show a red Martian landscape with my bases.

## Finishing

### Step Nineteen.

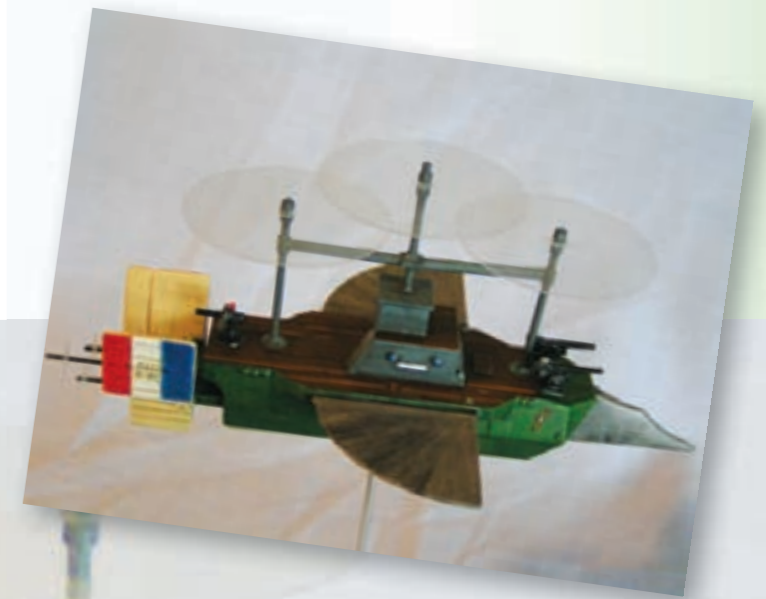


The Balacava is attached to the newly completed base with superglue. I have also varnished the model and base with a custom mix of Galeria Matt Varnish and Tamiya Flat Base X-21.

### Step Twenty.

I have now attached three clear plastic discs to the top of the three lifting screws and three to the rear propulsion screws with superglue. The main lifting screws were cut with an OLFA circle cutter and the smaller propulsion discs were punched out of clear plastic, with the central hole drilled out.

A name plate was drawn-up on the computer, printed onto plain paper and stuck to thin card with double sided tape, before being glued to the finished base with thick filler-type uPVA glue.



Finished Model of Le Fee Verte

## Balaclava

The Balaclava was designed by a group of eminent French scientists following a meeting at the ENAC or Ecole Nationale de l'Aviation Civile in 1889. The design used a number of revolutionary (and at the time, untested) technologies, some of which would later become commonplace, however placing all of these untested features on one design proved difficult. The situation was further complicated when French Corps d'Aerostiers became involved and made quite dramatic changes to the offensive armaments.

The initial design was envisaged as a fast flying torpedo boat, lightly armed and featuring three steam-powered lifting screws, three aft propulsion screws and retractable metal-clad wings which supplemented lift when in normal flight. The design was also one of the very first to feature a fully enclosed hull and cabin assembly.

The main changes to this plan were the huge metal ram which changed both the handling and weight of the design plus the addition of two 4 inch, forward facing, pneumatic breach-loading guns; a single rear facing machine gun completed the offensive armament (but was never truly successful and on more than one occasion did more damage to the stabiliser and rudder assembly than any chasing enemy).

Initial blueprint designs were later destroyed and so speculation on the true size and weight continues. So does the story that Balaclava was to be named la HAWK.

In January, 1891 the newly completed Balaclava conducted tethered flights at a secret location in Northern France, with full flight taking place during the Spring of the same year. On Bastille Day 1891, Balaclava was unveiled to the French public at a fly-past over the Eiffel Tower. The world's press labeled this new Aeronef 'The Shape of Things to Come'. How very wrong they were!

Although seen as a great success and having successfully tested the new technologies inherent in the design, Balaclava was ultimately ahead of its time and is now considered an Aeronef that was adequate in many respects,

but did not excel in any. Balaclava made many publicity voyages across France, but was unable to sustain flight for any length of time and reports of 100 mile-per-hour top speeds were vastly exaggerated. At best, and in level flight, Balaclava achieved 84mph and this only for a short time. French authorities were loathe to admit that this 'white elephant' was anything other than a spectacular success and were constantly making exaggerated claims about her performance. At a time when many in authority were happy to see this 'Nef' condemned to the scrap heap, there was a massive and unexpected change in fortune. A newly established colony on Mars needed a 'sabre-rattling' gunship to quell native unease and in a surprisingly quick decision process Balaclava was partially dismantled, stored in the hull of the huge Astonef La Emper and packed off to Mars.

In 1896 Balaclava landed on Mars and was united with the great and legendary soldier Captain Etienne Gerard, who immediately fell in love with the green hulled Aeronef and promptly renamed her le Fee Verte (The Green Fairy) after an evening of debauched entertainment at the Martian Princes' Summer Palace, where the unsuspecting Martians were introduced to the French experience of Absinthe.

For the next six years le Fee Verte was used as the personal transportation of Etienne Gerard and although always mentioned favorably in dispatches and seen by the native Martians as an example of French colonial supremacy, never once performed a truly heroic or successful action. Therefore the myth of the Balaclava continued.

There were plans for a heavier and better equipped Balaclava Class Aeronef, with a longer hull and four lifting screws, but it is not sure if these plans ever got beyond the drawing board. (However there are at least two photographs of the larger Aeronef in existence and also one of Balaclava without the forward ram. These maybe 'doctored' photos of the actual Balaclava and not separate airships!)

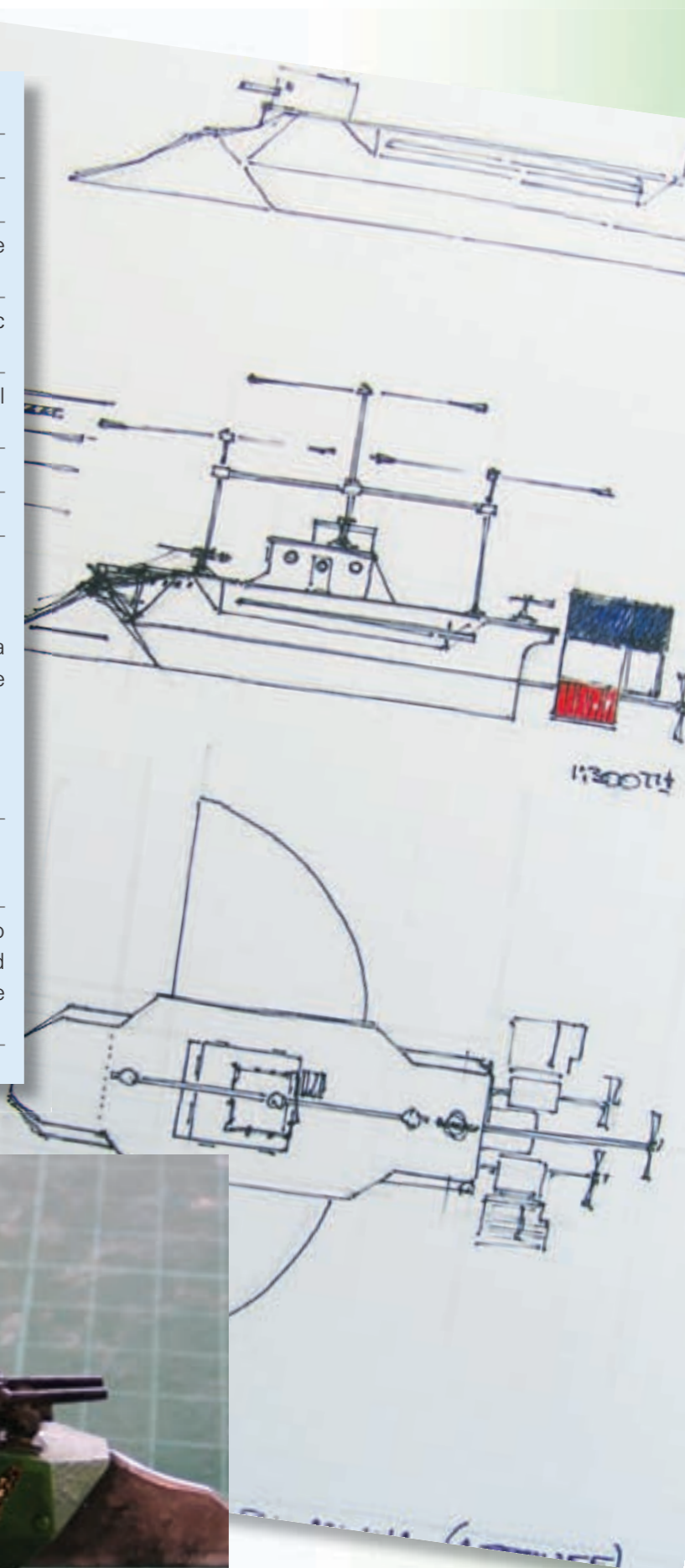
Country	France
Launch Date	1891
Crew	16 (estimated)
Dimensions	114 ft long, 27ft. wide (excluding retractable wings) and 48ft tall
Armament	Two, 4inch pneumatic breech-loading guns, and one machine gun
Powerplant	65HP high-speed, reciprocal steam engine
Performance	100mph (quoted)
Range	Classified

Below I have reproduced rules for using Balaclava in the game Aeronef by Matthew Hartley and Steve Blease:

### Balaclava Class Gunboat

Class	Hull Points	Gun Dice	Bomb Dice	Speed	Turn
3(M)	12	8*	0	12	4

\* Unlike the main Aeronef profiles, Balaclava has no right or left firing arcs, 6 of the 8 gun dice are used for attacks to the Front Arc and the remaining 2 are used for attacks to the Rear Arc.



# AT-43 The Oni

By Spencer D Taylor



AT-43 is a game full of interesting ideas: space communists, killer nano-bots, an army of cloned alien squid-things and Buddhist gorillas in power armor. So how could Rackham Entertainment possibly top all that? Simple: zombies. In power armour. The mysterious ONI Corporation is the newest faction in the universe of AT-43 and they don't pull any punches. To describe ONI in the simplest terms I can think of: they're a mega corporation of mercenaries who use zombies as their basic soldiers. The idea of a company that creates zombies may seem like a bit of a trope since the Resident Evil games, but ONI doesn't give off that 'Saturday Morning Cartoon Villain' vibe like Umbrella Corp did.

The first, and biggest, product to be sent to me, courtesy of my friends at Rackham Entertainment of course, is the Mercenary Forces: ONI army box.

This is a complete 2,000 point ONI army and like all AT-43 products everything contained inside is pre-

painted and pre-assembled. So what units, exactly, comes in the army box? Well, you get: 8 Detonator virus zombies (a type 1 infantry), 3 Alpha TacArms (type 3 infantry), 12 Reanimator Alpha super zombies (type 2 infantry with 2 Zombie Guns, a medic and a zombie master), 1 Heavy Battletank (type 3 vehicle), Shogun Natalya "Bokor" Bokov (type 2 Hero), and a Medium Destroyer (type 2 vehicle). You'll also get the Tactical Manual (in five languages), which tells you the platoon formation and the units' special rules. You also get a basic rulebook, a blast template, six dice, an ONI tape measure, ONI container, six low walls and a battlemat. And let me tell you, for \$70 USD this is a fantastic deal. Like all army boxes (you know, all two of them that were out before this one) everything inside is arranged via two tiers of plastic trays, and it works very well.

As for the miniatures themselves, the level of detail is on a par with other miniatures in the AT-43 line, and the detail with all these wires on the models looks fantastic. I'll admit that I was a little hesitant about all the tubes and wires sticking out from the models being too fragile, but they're surprisingly strong. Not a single wire or tube was damaged during the considerable amount of travel this box went through, which really surprised me. I expected them to be weak and easy to bend, but I was proven wrong. Even sitting here and applying pressure to them they don't bend much at all, which is something

that's a real plus in my eyes. The paint levels aren't exactly what you'll get out of a unit or attachment box, but the little details can really be made to pop with just a little bit of a wash being applied. The TacArms are greatly detailed with little pistons and hydraulics on the arms and legs, and a sickening corpse white with green detailing on the flesh. They really are a sight to behold. The Reanimator Alphas are also littered with detail on their mechanical parts. The Detonator zombies are, in my eyes, the only real disappointment in terms of details, but that could be due their simple design. Really, they're just zombies in cargo pants and bombs for hands. This isn't to say they're bad looking; they're just a bit bland compared to the other units. That's just my personal opinion, though, so take it with a pound or two of salt.

The vehicles are similarly detailed with little things like exhaust pipes and even little tow hooks on the back. They're covered in various hatches (none of which open), rivets and various little windows. All the lights on them are made of translucent orange plastic, and even the barrel of the Medium Destroyer's graser cannon is of the same material. This is a nice touch, and I really enjoy it. The wheels don't roll, but with some simple modding one could, easily, put in an axle and give them some extra punch.

Once you have examined the models the next probable question is: how well they function in the game? I'm going to start at the bottom and work my way to the top, which means we're starting with the lowly Detonator virus zombies. These guys are, to put it simply, cannon fodder. The only weapons at their disposal are their teeth, and the convenient bombs that they have in place of their hands. They aren't meant to be heavy hitters, but instead just a wall of Zombie-Exploding-Doom. With their ability to self destruct they can cause some real trouble, and when you factor in that for each one that explodes the template grows by two centimeters they can take out entire enemy units in one go. Their problem is that they're squishy with a protection of only four, but for 250 points you can get 12 of them and overrun most enemies.

Moving on we get to the Reanimator Alpha super zombie unit. These guys are the main grunts in any ONI force, and they do their job quite well. They have a standard weapon load-out of an Autoshotgun (think the AA-12) and a buzzsaw. Oh, and their weapons are in place of their lower arms. Yes, it's zombies with shotguns instead of hands. They can only take one special weapon, but it's a hell of a gun. The zombie gun may be one of the meanest weapons in AT-43, because





instead of just killing your soldiers it turns them into zombies. Any model killed with the zombie gun is instead replaced with either a Detonator or Contaminator zombie (provided you have the cards and models available), which means that the number of zombies on the field can multiply in a single salvo. The big problem is that these guys are zombies, and thus aren't very good with a gun. Both their shotgun and the zombie gun only have an accuracy of three, so on average they won't be killing many enemies each turn. But that's not their purpose; these are the guys who you use to hold objectives, and they can hold their own with a protection of five and a medic or two in the ranks. They also have a specialist called the Zombie Master, which is exactly what I would nickname myself during the zombie apocalypse. The Zombie Master has a neat little ability that makes him very valuable on the battlefield: he grants everyone in his unit the Contamination ability. So now even their shotguns and buzzsaws can turn the enemy into zombies. This does pose a bit of an odd situation though: why take a zombie gun if you can just take a Zombie Master or two and give all the unit's weapons the same effect? Well, the zombie gun has an area of effect of three, so a single one can do more damage to

a tightly packed unit. Having a full strength unit of these guys (12 models with two special weapons, two specialists, and zero-to-one officer) can really do some major damage to anything that dares to get up close to them. However, once again their poor accuracy will come into play as more accurate enemies can just whittle them down from a safe distance before charging in to take the objective. But be careful with these guys – that full-sized unit is going to cost you 475 points before adding an officer.

Moving on to the next unit in the box we get three Zombie TacArm Alphas. These guys are the heavy hitting infantry in this box, and they do it in a splendid manner. They're just as tough as their UNA TacArm counterparts with a protection of nine, and they carry an equally devastating assortment of weapons. Each one is equipped with a laser gun and a zombie gun. This gives them some true versatility on the battlefield as the laser gun can punch through most light and some medium vehicles with relative ease, and the zombie gun will of course be devastating to any infantry unit that dares to wander too close. Again the zombie gun only has an accuracy of three, so it won't be very effective at long range firefights. This is balanced out though with the laser gun being the long range weapon of choice. They do seem to lack a little compared to the UNA TacArms in sheer strength of fire, if only because the standard UNA TacArm, the Steel TacArm, has dual laser guns. This isn't to say Zombie TacArms aren't good, but having played as UNA they seem a little underwhelming. Their big advantage, though, comes in their pure survivability, and their price – 300 points for a unit of three, plus an extra

10 points for their officer. So for 310 points you get three laser guns and three zombie guns strapped to a body with protection nine. Like other TacArms the only thing that really presents any sort of viable threat to these guys is going to be heavy weapons and vehicles, so they're going to be tough to kill and worth the points.

So for all my complaining about the zombie units there has to be something that makes them worth using beyond the simple joy of zombies with high tech death rays

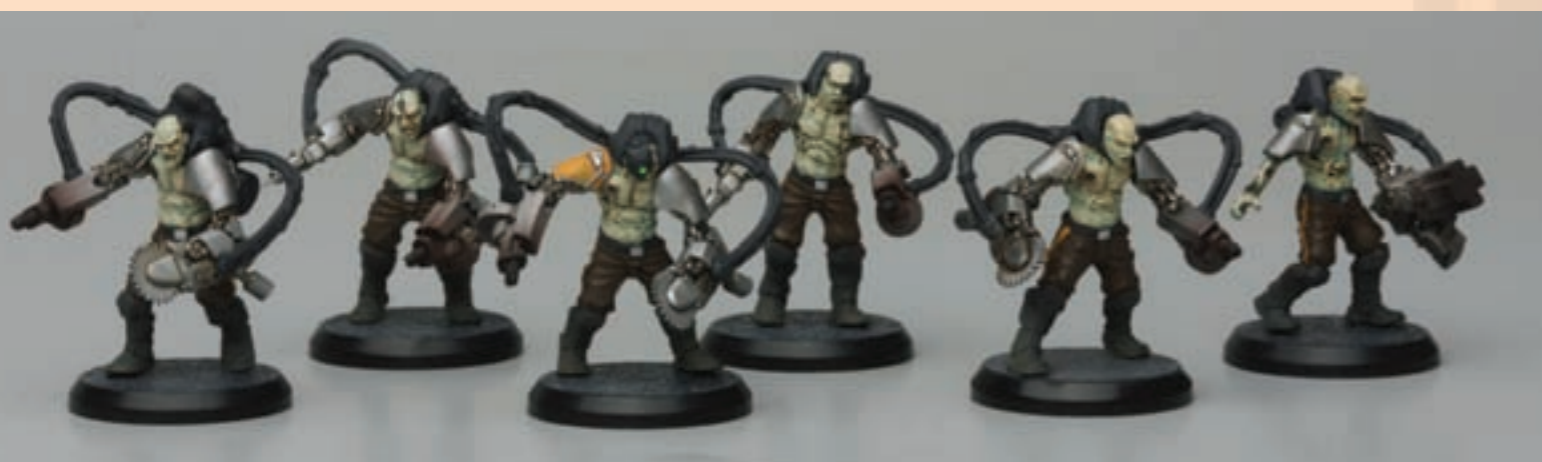


and shotguns, right? Correct. Every zombie unit has a special rule called 'Zombie Syndrome', and it's a bit of a shaky rule. You see Zombie Syndrome means a unit cannot fire on a unit of zombies without spending one leadership point. This means that if you're playing an army that doesn't tend to have high amounts of LP, such as Karmans, in any game under 3,000 points, then it can really be a pain. Thus if your unit of Yetis wants to shoot at my unit of Super Zombie Alphas you have to spend one LP in order to do so, and that means that you're going to have less and less LP to use on combat drills and activating units that might not have an officer. This can be a big thorn in the side of some armies because you can't simply ignore the enemy, but now you have to be very careful with how you manage your LP when fighting against an ONI force. I wouldn't go as far as to call the rule that dreadful term 'broken', but it does seem to lend a big hand to ONI players. Perhaps they should have made it a morale check to attack a zombie unit, sort of like how Fear and Terror work in Warhammer Fantasy (if you're not familiar you make a leadership check if charging or being charged by something that causes fear or terror). Again this isn't a deal breaker, and I'm sure we'll see plenty of



ONI armies on the tables based purely on their aesthetic value, but it will make lower points games really tough for the Karmans and Cogs.

There's one more infantry model, but I'm going to save that for a little later and move on to the vehicles that come in this box. The first vehicle I'm going to talk about is the Medium Destroyer; a type two tank that packs quite a punch. ONI vehicles all have a distinct advantage in combat: they're all very low to the ground. In the one game I played against ONI while at GenCon '09 in August I never once got a chance to fire on any ONI vehicles (it was also a six player team game with two Cogs players, two Red Blok, an ONI and an UNA allied) because none of my striders could even see them hiding behind the terrain. I couldn't draw line of sight to them, and this give ONI's tanks a new level of survivability.



This isn't to say they can't hold their own in a fire fight, not at all. The Medium Destroyer has five structure points in the frame, two in the propulsion, and two in its weapon. Speaking of its weapon, this thing comes roaring out of the gates with a turret-mounted medium graser. Anyone familiar with the game may recognise this weapon as being the same as the 'heavy graser' which is mounted on the UNA's mighty Firecrawler combat strider. The gun packs a good punch, and with a 360 degree arc of fire it can hit everything in every direction. One big advantage, aside from its size, is that the Medium Destroyer can take all five ranks of officers, and thus can take advantage of the extra fighters that certain officer ranks allow you to take. Each extra fighter does come in at 315 points, but in a big enough game it could

be worth it to have a few of these tanks rolling around the table. The medium graser weapon is effective at both anti-infantry and anti-vehicle, making it extra versatile for its price. The only really major downside I can find to this thing is that it only has one gun, but it has the repair ability so it's not like that gun is going to be gone very quickly.

The other vehicle in the box is ONI's type three tank: the Heavy Battletank. It has a chassis very similar to the Medium Destroyer and, indeed, all the other ONI tanks, so it's nice and low to the ground to avoid getting shot on Turn One. The structure points are very similar to the Medium Destroyer, but with a few small tweaks. Six frame, two propulsion and three weapon make this tank just slightly more durable than the Destroyer included with it. Additionally

a protection of 16 is a big help and so is the fact that it also has the repair ability. The part where the Heavy Battletank really shines is in its weapon. This tank is equipped with a heavy maser cannon, and like the Destroyer the cannon is turret-mounted for 360 degrees of destructive goodness. With a penetration of 17 and a damage of 3 this is one of the strongest weapons in the game, but it packs another surprise. The heavy maser cannon has a special ability called the maser effect in which it becomes an indirect fire weapon with an AoE of three. This means it can either fire at a single heavy target or it can drop a shell on the head of some unlucky infantry unit. Like all ONI vehicles this tank does suffer from only having one weapon, meaning it will put out a lower volume of fire each turn compared to its

counterparts in other forces, but its low profile and high amount of structure points more than cover that one flaw.

The last model in the box is the ONI hero Shogun Natalya "Bokor" Bokov. This lady comes arms with a sniper rifle, making her a very deadly enemy. She does have a peculiar rule in that she can only lead a unit of ONI Korps soldiers, meaning she can't lead a unit of zombies as their officer. This means that right out of the box she won't be of any use on foot, but that doesn't mean she isn't useful. With a leadership of 9 and an authority of 7 she's a commanding force on the battlefield, but she's quite frail on foot with a protection of only 5. To counteract this she can take her personal Heavy Battletank; 'Vlad'. Vlad shares the same basic stats as a Heavy Battletank, but with an extra SP in the propulsion. This is where Bokov shines in this box, rolling across the table in her tank and unleashing the monstrous firepower of the heavy maser cannon on anything that dares to cross her. She's also loaded with special abilities and equipment. She has infrared goggles (+1 to accuracy and can see stealth units), Heroic Pilot (ability to eject if Vlad is destroyed), Mechanic (Vlad has the repair ability), and finally Interference (at that start of her activation she can move one card in an opponent's activation sequence anywhere else in the sequence). So she's got plenty going for her, but without more units she can become very vulnerable if Vlad gets destroyed at some point during the game.

As is inevitably the case with all reviews there are negatives as well as positives. I saved this bit for later because I don't like to talk about the downsides of the box, but I do have to mention a few things I don't really like. My Heavy Battletank's gun is far too heavy to stay in its socket and is going to need to be glued down, which is something that doesn't seem like it should be happening. My Medium Destroyer also has a large chunk of glue stuck to the bottom of one of its wheels for some strange reason. My biggest complaint, however, is just how bland the paintjob is on the vehicles. Even in the book they're just a sort of dull grey with a splash of yellow or orange on them for some accent. I understand wanting to go for a very industrial look, but the tanks just look so plain and boring compared to their counterparts in other armies. They lack the appeal of the bright colours of the Cogs and Karmans, the camouflage of the UNA and Red Block, and the pure creepiness of the Therian Golgoths.

So would I have packaged this box any differently? There are a few things I would have done differently, but this doesn't mean this box isn't a really good deal. I would have liked to see maybe the Zombie TacArm Betas (laser gun and sonic gun) instead of the Alphas. I just feel there's far too many zombie guns in this box, and considering you only get eight of the Detonator zombies you won't get to see the full effects of the zombie gun in its true glory without more models. I also would have liked to



see the ONI hero Daimyo John Priest to balance out the army box a little. The reasoning behind this choice is that the Cogs have all three of the C-Naps heroes, and the Red Blok got Odin and Manon. This means that ONI has fewer heroes right out of the box than the other two army boxes currently on the shelves, and it seems like a bit of a disadvantage to them. Daimyo Priest's vehicle of choice is a Medium Destroyer, so it could have easily been accomplished. But other than those two little qualms the contents of the box are great.



In conclusion, if you are looking to get into ONI then this box is, like all army boxes, the perfect place to start your army and the nature of army box pricing means you are going to get more bang for your buck, so you're getting a good deal. With its release you will also be getting other ONI units to compliment your forces if you so choose to expand your army on the futuristic battlefields of AT-43.



## An Introduction to Aeronef

By  
Jez Fairclough

**A** visit to this website: [www.blease.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/WG.homepage.html](http://www.blease.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/WG.homepage.html) along with the blog by Tony Harwood (<http://dampfpanzerwagon.blogspot.com/>) is what really got me interested in VSF (Victorian Sci-Fi). Prior to seeing this game I'd always looked at it as a genre that I like film wise (League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, 20,000 Leagues, etc.) but I'd never looked at it from a gaming perspective. I also have to blame Simon (Parky) as well because if he hadn't repeatedly badgered me to have a look at it, I'd possibly have missed my next addiction – and current – addiction.

Aeronef lets you fight aerial battles against enemies during the VSF era. Using ships held aloft by R-Matter in the case of Aeronef (one of the flying machine types as well as the name of the game), gas for Aerostat (Dirigibles or Digs) or plain flying in the case of aircraft.

The main Aeronef rules have been in print since 1999 with only a few minor changes over that period and as such it's still the same game it was 11 years ago. Not many companies can say the same with many going through at least two or three versions. It's also a game going strong and is a popular purchase on the likes of Wargames Vault and its sister sites.

The book itself isn't that big – a mere 18 pages – and the rules are pretty simple to learn, but it shouldn't be something that people use to drag the game down or belittle how good it is. Those people who remember Hordes of Things (HoT) know that system has very few rules but is a great and very skill-driven game, and Aeronef is the same sort of creature.

The first part of the rule book gives us a very simple timeline charting the game universe from 1852 to 1911. The information is pretty simple and doesn't go into a huge amount of depth but that's really not the idea. It's simply to give some flavour to the game not be a meal in itself. Further reading ideas are listed later in an appendix so if you feel you need more you know at least where to start.

The game, as I've said, is easy to learn but it's not so simple to master. Aeronef breaks the game turn up into two movement phases with ships moving in order of fastest first and so on down to the slowest. All shooting then takes place with ships having full effect to sides and half effect to the front. Then finally we move again – if we can, that is.

So, easy then really? Okay let's break it down a little. Ships come in five classes; 1 being the biggest, the likes of Battleship and other large craft, all the way down to level 5 which are small, fast ships like corvettes or destroyers.



The bigger the ship the slower it tends to be, but the more damage (Hull Points) it can take and the more guns and bombs it'll have as well. The smaller craft tend to have a limited combat capability or, if they do, can suffer in other areas. Of course this doesn't always have to be true and the game comes with a system that allows you to customise the ships to create your own. It's easy to use and understand and no doubt has had some of the min/max brigade busy well into the small hours. For a lot of our first games we just used the rules as they were.

Ships are mounted on hex bases with the points being the front and back which makes it easier to show direction. Turning is based on moving one hex side per turn. As with speed you tend to find bigger ships struggle to turn as quick as the smaller, nippier vessels although you don't often worry when you can outgun them! At any point during a ship's movement it may stop and fire before carrying on. As with many other games any damage sustained is dealt with after everyone has moved. If you decide to go further with Aeronef and its world then Landships,

which adds land forces, suggests dropping the split movement and doing it in one go which is something we adopted ourselves earlier on finding it flowed a little better. Because you can fire at any time you have the subtle ability to bring fast ships in to shoot at larger vessels and then run before they get the chance to fire back. It's not always going to happen but nonetheless it's a sound idea to try out.

All weapons have a range of 30cm and Aeronef uses a simple system of 'if it's a six it's a

hit' or as the guys describe it later Roll a Six to Hit (R.A.S.H.). You can also re-roll any six to see if you do further damage and keep re-rolling as long as a six comes up. Any damage taken removes boxes of hull damage and the loss of a certain amount can start to reduce the effectiveness of a ship, slowing it down, taking weapons offline and even reducing its ability to turn, which in larger craft can be a total nightmare. That lovely class 1 battleship and pride of the fleet is of no use to anyone if it cannot turn to bring its guns to bear and it

just becomes a sitting duck itself. I like the fact ships lose some of their capability as they take damage – it adds a nice element to the game without going past its simple style. This also means housekeeping is kept down a little and whilst might prefer huge damage tables and pages of special damage charts sometimes it can be a bit much to have something moving along with three or four tokens next to it. Players can easily forget what it all means in big games and the tokens invariably have a habit of moving off on their own seemingly unaided.

Ships can take a lot of damage before they go down with class 5 Aeronefs having about 2 – 12 hull points and class 1's having 32 – 40 hull points. Using the design modification system is easy and you can make the ship you need for any role. We found using scenarios made the game work a lot better and having seen a class 5 destroyer fired at with a bucket full of dice and come away with only 2 hits you start remembering how hard it is to throw a six at times.

Mixing your fleet can be fun as well though Aerostats have their limitations, not being bigger than class 3, and they have less hull, guns, etc. You can also add in normal aircraft bringing in fighters and bombers to aid in your missions and though they can be fragile on their own in big swarms they can soften up ground and air targets before the big guns move in to finish them off. It's the sheer nippy speed they have that can make you smile when you have them or groan when you didn't bother.

The rules also have a good bombing system though we found we had to play it a few times and even ask on the forum for help as it seemed a little confusing at first. They have also included very easy to use rules for Anti-Aeronef Batteries (ARCHIES) though we found they didn't stand up to any hammering so made them a bit more capable to withstand a battering.

Overall Aeronef is not that difficult a game to learn (the problems with bombing being an exception) fitting as it does into the style of game that has loads of fun and opportunity to it and it's so expandable. If you're looking to try Aeronef I would suggest picking up the add-on book, The Aeronef Captain's Handbook, which expands the game into space taking your ships

to Mars and beyond. It also modifies a few of the core rules and expands them bringing in a simple morale system that has seen more than one of my ships strike his colours and wave the white flag, and along with rules for ramming and boarding it now has all the elements that many would feel is needed for a naval wargame. Though I wouldn't fancy trying to board an enemy ship while thousands of feet off the ground! At sea I can swim – I'm yet to master solo flight. You also get rules for aerial torpedoes which I have to say are jolly good fun and, in a good salvo, amazingly dangerous. The game timeline is taken onwards to 1911 and brings in the invasion of Earth by Martian forces, and in the book you also get the information for Martians so you can have a go at the invasion or more yourself.

One other little addition is a full run down of the Construction Point system by class by year, so you can play with dated ships to spice up your games or with ships prior to certain advancements as well. It's not a huge addition but it certainly adds to the variety offered by the game.

The other major addition that The Aeronef Captain's Handbook brings is the creation of a tactical game system which allows you to play games over wider areas pitting large squadrons against each other and trying to outwit the enemy. When groups meet you break down to smaller games and fight them out that way. It adds a small-style campaign system but lacks the depth a lot of people would demand of a campaign, although there is, of course, nothing to stop a player adding to the rules. A quick search on the internet will help you find many others who have done the same. Looking on Brigade Games forum will show you a few that have been done as well, including, dare I say, a few by myself and Si [presumably the heavily armed Welsh tugboat is down to Parky then? – Ed].

When it comes to miniatures we have to thank the guys from Brigade Games ([www.brigadegames.com](http://www.brigadegames.com)) who, along with the rules, sent us a couple of starter sets to get us off and running. They produce a wide range of miniatures that cover all the major powers from Great Britain to Japan. Each of the fleets has a good selection allowing you to play games

of pretty much any size or style. Along with the support given by the guys and fans on the forum (okay, I can say I might be classed as one of them) it makes it all very friendly and easy to get into.

Aeronef doesn't come with a points system and for some gamers that could be seen as a big issue. We all like to play a balanced game and instead of points values we found using the CP's (Construct Points) worked to make sure everyone was using about the same strength force. It is also a game very well designed around scenarios and a few are contained in each book, but they are by no means exhaustive and we've tried down bombing raids and patrol encounters to name two. The scope to go onwards is only

limited by the imagination of the players, not but any limitation set by the game. If you're looking for a game that is simple to play and you enjoy the idea of naval combat with a twist then this is a game you should look up. The books themselves and the ships are inexpensive and you can pick up good value fleet starter packs though you can start with one of the smaller packs which is what we did. The ships are simple designs that can be changed and because you can build your own ships you can scratch build these creations – Just look at Tony Harwood's blog or see the fantastic article in this issue Tony has written about creating the Balaclava. See you in the skies folks.





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# Tourna-mental

By Tom Rolland



"Did you say something there pal?!" I growled, scarcely realising that I was already halfway across the table, frothing and glaring like a wild-eyed, ginger maniac. From the shock on my opponent's face, I could tell that he was surprised by my outburst as I was. All sense of reason and decorum had been swallowed by a surge of anger, but I apologise. I'm beginning my recollection in the middle, which is unaccountably bad form.

To place this bizarre snapshot of my life in context, I was in the middle of my third match in a Warmachine tournament (my second one ever, at that point) and was playing against a proper 'millimetre miser' who had upset me no end with his analy-retentive approach to measurement, but again, I digress. What concerned me was that I had just lowered myself to the level of a playground bully who doesn't get his own way. In wargaming terms, I was now undeniably listed under the 'thug' bracket.

Of course I know first impressions are important, so I want to make two things abundantly clear before I continue.

1) I am generally considered by the members of my gaming club and most other one-time adversaries to be an amiable, friendly and altogether accommodating opponent.

2) As a born and bred Glaswegian, I feel it incumbent upon me to make it clear that my outburst was considerably more colourful – and unintelligible to non-Glaswegians – than I deemed it appropriate to share with you in its pure, un-translated form.

Assuming if you believe point 1 above, then you'll believe anything, but – to be fair to myself – in general you could have much worse people across the table from you. Up until that point, in 17 years of wargaming of one form or another I had never EVER behaved in such an appalling manner.

I'm fully aware that some of you reading this article may be thinking "17 years? Pah! I've eaten older pot noodles!" but hear me out. In my time I've met more truly boring, despicable cheats than one person should ever have to and every time I've managed to handle them with some degree of courtesy. Never have I resorted to piques of unadulterated rage and the unspoken – but very obvious threat – of physical violence.

My momentary lapse of sanity now passed, I decided that there must have been some, as yet un-quantified, factor causing me to act in this outrageous manner. I struggled to put my finger on it. Could it have been my previously unknown opponent and his strange, outlandish ways? Something about the setting in which I was playing that day? I was puzzled. I had already won two matches back to back, (one in the second round without firing a shot, but that's another story). My pride was satisfied, as I rarely win at Warmachine, or Hordes, so what had driven me into such a competitive frenzy?

I had obviously experienced a 'Tourna-mental episode'.

Now some of you may be wondering – and quite justifiably so – what the Dickens I'm blathering on about, (Don't worry, I get that a lot) but stick with me and all will be revealed! I'm talking about the

way in which tournament gaming can bring out the very worst in us as players. All of us.

From the most even-tempered of tacticians to the most jovial of generals, we're all at risk of going Tourna-mental, or at least witnessing an episode firsthand at some stage in our wargaming life.

In an ideal world, tournaments would be a place where we could meet others who share our passion for the hobby; test our mettle against theirs; admire and learn from their tactical acumen and – ideally – grind their forces into bloody mush on the gaming table. Unfortunately for we proud few of a sporting disposition, some people have very different ideas.

Naturally we all like to win – never trust anyone who say's they don't want to – but some of us like to have fun in the process and can accept our failures as the learning experiences that they are. Some of us can't and I refer to this sad minority as the 'terminally Tourna-mental'.

Yes, my friends, as for these lamentable souls, playing fair is much like making love to a beautiful woman\*. Most of them have never done it and the rest wouldn't know how if – by some bizarre twist of fate – the stars should realign in such an unlikely pattern that the opportunity actually came up. [\* Obviously if you are female or have other inclinations you can substitute any word of your choice here – Ed]

For ease of classification, there follows a list of these poor, benighted souls according to their personality traits – a term used very loosely – and their strange behaviours; some ludicrously anecdotal evidence of their existence and some advice on how to deal with these potentially explosive situations. In the interests of making this already off-beat article even more contrived, I've given them names to help you identify them at your next organised play event.

Let's start with an annoying, generally harmless, but potentially amusing Tournamentalist; The Kasparov.

I'd just like to point out to the Kasparovs among you:

### **Warmachine is not chess.**

Shouting 'You touched it, you touched it and now you have to activate it!!' at the top of your lungs and waving furiously to gain a judge's attention is entirely hilarious, (and possibly a little disturbing)

for your fellow tournament attendees, but won't help you win the game, or make for many recurring social opponents. The Kasparov is most prevalent in games where order of activation is top of the agenda. Warmachine and Hordes tournaments are the most obvious hunting ground for this elusive creature, but they do show up in Warhammer Fantasy/40K tournaments quite a lot.

In the Kasparov's mind, touching a model/unit, then taking your hand off it somehow communicates that you're 'not going to bother' activating that group of Harlequins and charging them into an exposed Tau ethereal. You'd much rather move onto another model in your force and squander the potentially game-winning opportunity which your foolish opponent has given you.

They are at worst a nuisance and can be quite easily disarmed by a patronising smile, a shake of the head and then continuing your move as though nothing untoward had happened in the first place.

That is, unless, the creature falls into our next category of Tourna-mentalist: The Bruce Banner.

For those who aren't in the know, Bruce Banner is the alter-ego of jade-skinned, angry behemoth 'The Incredible Hulk'. Banner in and of himself is not threatening in any direct, obvious way until anger, fear, or another strong emotional reaction causes him to undergo a horrendous, painful transformation into the rampaging green giant. To that end, it can be very, very unfortunate when a Bruce Banner and other Tourna-mentalist collide in open conflict.

Not every Bruce Banner is necessarily a bad person, or even a cheat. They just have a tendency to lapse into dummy-spitting temper tantrums that would shame most of the spoiled toddlers on Supernanny. The cause of these tantrums? Well, that depends entirely on the Bruce Banner in question and – more often than not – their opponent.

With reference to my brief anecdote at the start of the article; I lost my temper, because the opponent in question accepted my invitation to take back a very silly move that he made during his turn, but did not reciprocate the gesture when I slipped up. You may be thinking 'Ha! Serves you right. Rules are there for a reason.' But he then proceeded to make fun of me. Incessantly. I took

it with good grace at first, but then the desire to smash his stupid, hamster-like face in with a big stick overrode all sense of reason and required an enormous effort of will on my part to subdue. In all fairness, I've witnessed much worse Bruce Banners at work and the results are seldom pretty.

At one tournament I witnessed a fully grown man – who should have known much better – actually grab his opponent's models and rearrange them because he disagreed with how the turn had gone. For one thing, if anyone's going to move your figures around, it should be you and a revision of this kind should be determined necessary by the event organisers in any case. On another note, the models in question had been painted at exorbitant cost by one of the legends in the field, (to identify them would be to subsequently identify the Bruce Banner in question and I'm not out to shame anyone in public. They know who they are and can be ashamed all on their own without my help). Needless to say, lasting bonds of friendship were not formed in the aftermath.

Once a tournament is finished, Bruce Banners should be leaving the venue as quickly as possible, (Preferably to the accompaniment of a melancholy piano refrain, like in the awesome 70's TV adaptation) and start running, always running...

At our local gaming club in Glasgow, we don't have any rules set in stone (unless we do and I just wasn't listening and have subsequently broken them, which is very likely) regarding gaming etiquette, but if we did, one of them would most certainly be:

### **"No Back Seat Drivers!"**

(Another would probably be "No Gingers!" but until they pass that one, I'll be there every week, so deal with it!)

Of all the foibles mentioned so far, this is the one that I hate most of all. I can deal with angry people, stingy people and Kasparovs in a tournament setting, but not Back Seat Drivers. Matching your wits against an opponent under the stressful conditions imposed by organised play can be difficult at the best of times, but that's the whole point, isn't it? The very notion of playing games is driven by an innate, subconscious urge to better ourselves by finding problems and challenges to overcome. For myself, I don't appreciate other gamers coming over mid-match and offering tips, or advice. However, I certainly don't appreciate them helping my opponent's.

Now, if you have a good tournament organiser/judge, or one that isn't run off their feet, then this kind of thing usually won't happen, but even with the best, most well staffed tournament setting, there will always be some clueless idiot wandering aimlessly between the tables dispensing their own brand of tactical insight to everyone nearby, whether they want to hear it or not.

I don't know about you, gracious readers, but I play wargames for the enjoyment of crafting cunning, tactical ploys, long-term strategic traps and hoodwinks, then watching my unwitting opponent wander blithely into them under the gross misconception that I am being soundly thrashed, when in fact I'm bringing them within range of a devious, inescapable pitfall that will leave them so flabbergasted with disbelief and admiration that not only will they name any subsequent children that they produce or adopt after me, but will force any existing progeny to change their name by deed poll to match my own in a vain effort to emulate my greatness!

To that end, how can it possibly be appropriate for some knuckle-dragging, troglodytic, mental-homunculus to saunter over and point out not only the existence of my delicately formed stratagem, but how best to counter it!? And what of my opponent? Things couldn't possibly be more awkward for them had they farted loudly in a lift full of asthmatic nuns after singing, 'listen to this, too good to miss, da na na, na na na!!' Whatever choice they subsequently make will be the wrong one. If they act on the information then they may feel complicit and subsequently guilty. If they don't act on it, then they have to endure what little game time remains to them knowing that they're going to lose. There is another repercussion of this selfish, thoughtless behaviour to consider, however. The recipient of your unsolicited advice might actually be enjoying the challenge of playing the game under their own power.

I don't go to an art gallery with my paint brushes and say, "Oh look, Rembrandt's missed a bit!" By the same token, I surmise that few of you, dear readers, would dream of taking to the stage during a comedy act and doling out the punch-line while the hapless funny person whom you have so rudely interrupted looks on in frustrated rage.

If you're guilty of this heinous crime, then I'm afraid that there is no latitude, or possibility of parole: you're a doorknob without the door. There

is a special part of hell set aside for you and the people who tell you how a film ends before you've seen it.

### **Shame on you.**

Fear not, fellow Anciblers, your long and arduous trek through the murky depths of this tournament outflow pipe are almost at an end. We come now to that most lamentable and repulsive of wargaming wallies; the most obnoxious and opprobrious of toy soldier collecting terrors. Yes my fine friends, I refer of course to every wargamer's living nightmare...

### **...The Beardy.**

We've all met them in the course of our gaming lives. Someone will always, ALWAYS twist, bend, pummel, kick, or seduce (?) the rules and army lists into a different shape in order to better suit their needs. These are the wargamers who approach a jigsaw with a pair of scissors, or show up for monopoly with a credit card and a property lawyer. Outside of the tournament setting, the Beardy is easily dealt with. When they ask you for a game, just say no. However during organised play, do your best to keep your cool and beat the living snot out of their stuff. Then gloat.

Beardies have no interest in fair play, or enjoyment. They care only for victory and in many ways that makes the competitive nature of the tournament their perfect gaming environment. It also makes them the worst opponents. Here are a couple of the things that I HATE to see at tournaments:

### **Warmachine and Hordes:**

Sorscha, Baldur and Goreshade. If you're using these at tournament level, then you're not looking for a challenge, you're just in out of the rain.

### **Infinity:**

Loads and loads of cheap infantry with a TAG and HMG. Once in range with the HMG, Beardies use the order pool generated by their mountain of troops to potentially wipe out the whole opposing force using the TAG and nothing else.

### **Warhammer 40K:**

Playing as Chaos Daemons.

The garden variety Beardy does not exist. They are as many and varied as the multitudinous ways

in which they try to cheat their opponents of a fun, interesting game. They're impossible to spot until their stuff appears on the table and to prove it, here are some important facts about

### **Beardies:**

Some of them have beards.

Some of them don't have beards.

Some of you may be tempted to play Devil's Advocate. "If the Games Developers didn't leave loopholes for Beardies to capitalise on, then they wouldn't be interested in wargaming and might take up fishing, bus-spotting, or stamp collecting and leave us alone to enjoy ourselves." Dream on.

No games system is perfect and anyone who has tried to create a balanced, completely fair one with no room for bias will tell you it can't be done. Beardies will always, ALWAYS find a way to make the system work for them, so beware, you have been warned.

Well people, all that remains is for me to thank you for reading and to remember that tournaments should be fun events that serve no other purpose than letting wargamers meet and generate stories and memories that can be treasured and reminisced about in later years over a pint.

Mine was not intended as an exhaustive list and indeed, I welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, tourna-mental experiences and offers of money which are best directed to the Ancible forum. I don't claim to be an expert on tournaments, or indeed, anything else for that matter. I have only shared my views and observations and hope that if nothing else, they have amused you and made you think.

Right, I've got to get back to work now. I've just discovered that you can field an ACTUAL squad of Reaver Titans in games of 40K Apocalypse and need to get them built in time for the next tournament. Crush you later!

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# Adventures in Cardstock

## Part 2

by Jez Fairclough

**Please, no more card stock you have to make it stop! I've heard that a lot of late but the project is rolling ever onwards.**

As you'll see from some of the images dotted about the article you do need a good amount of bits to make up the terrain. Well you don't really, it's all dependant on the size of what you're doing. The bigger you want it to be the more you're going to need. But that tend to be the same with any project.

Since we started the project WorldWorks (<http://www.worldworksgames.com/>) has also expanded the Himmelveil range now adding buildings (Thoumont) to give you that one last and final level and I have to say in time I'd love to take this project towards that, adding a huge dimension and experience to the games we play. As I've said because of the style and quality of the product it has many uses in lots of different game styles so it's certainly something to look out for. It's also something that is easy to expand or change – you just print off a few more bits and then swap a few things about and you're done. There aren't many systems that make it this easy to do.

Pretty much early on we realised that the best way to do this was in sections, so along with the builder software we broke the floors into sections and made sure we had what was needed to make them, the pegs that hold up the

posts and of course the TerrainLinX elements that hold each board section to another. I had more than once thought about making it a solid base and then only allowing the changes to the walls and such which would still give us loads of options but at times felt if we were going to do it we may as well go the whole nine yards.

Now a lot of people have asked how secure the stuff is once it goes together will it fall over? The answer is: not really. If it's on a flat surface it's very solid, each piece holds the next one in place and that keeps it very rigid. I've seen images of the heights that people have gone to and not worried about putting miniatures on higher levels because they know it's very rigid. If you were really worried about starting the base layer as solid as possible the best advice would be to cut the base boards and mount them on a single sheet of plywood or MDF. If you have the time instead of mounting each board on foam core you could mount them on cut MDF or Plywood. My only concern with doing that is the fact you have to cut between 4 and 8 bits out for the Tabs to slide into so unless you have the right tools and a lot of time on your hands it's going to be very labour intensive and could be expensive if you don't have the materials to hand. Foam core is an easy material to work with and it's more than up to the job as well.

The bases are more than likely some of the easiest elements to sort out. If anything it's the cutting that takes the time but as its card stock you can't expect anything else. I tried to make

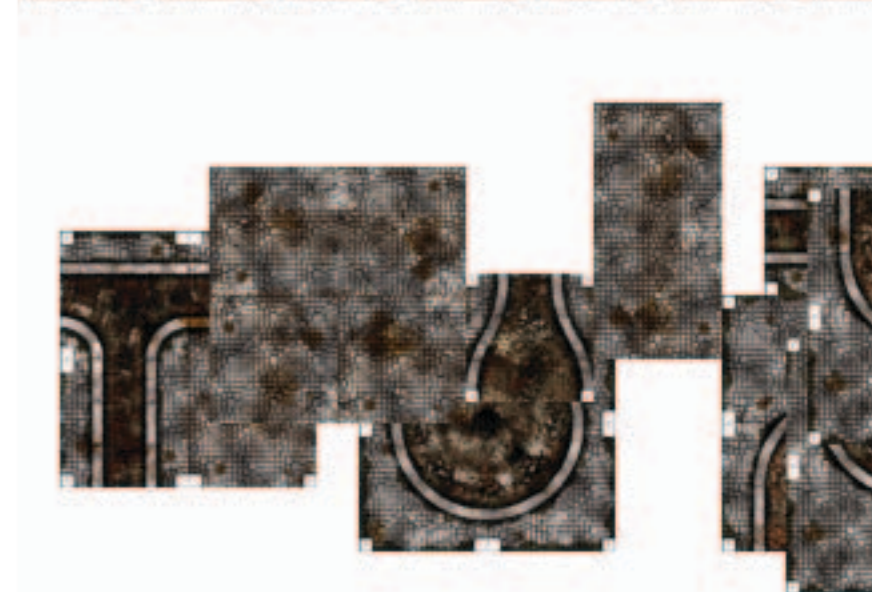
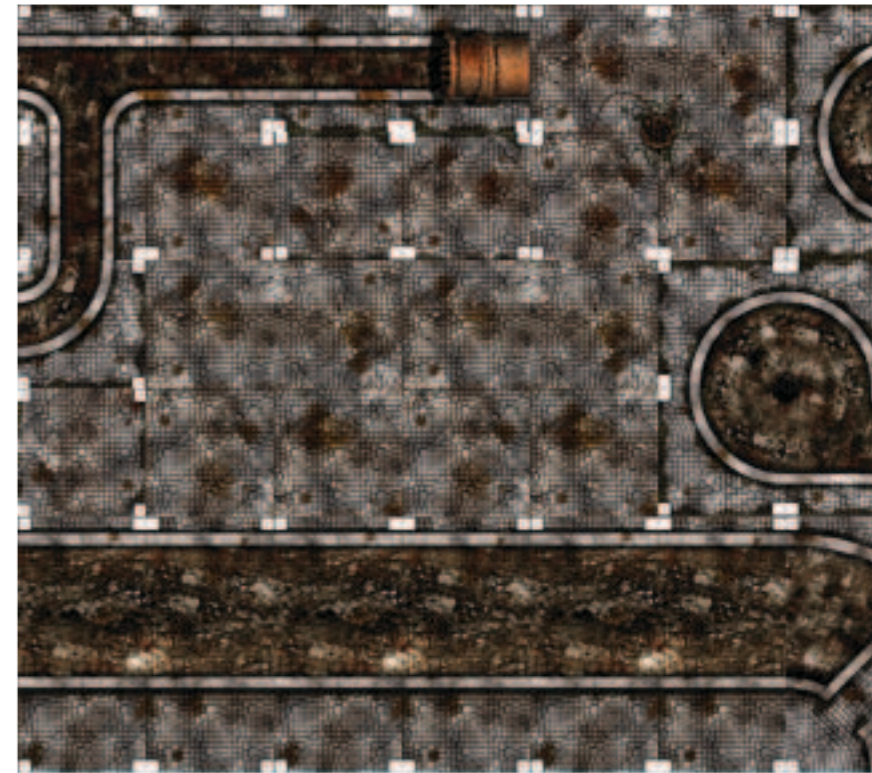
sure I shared some of the work out between the other members of the team but if you're doing it yourself don't just hit print unless you're as mad as we are. You can, as we've already said, buy printers that do the cutting for you and to be honest I keep looking at them and thinking if I'm going to go huge on this project it could save me loads of time. Do like I mentioned earlier – build it up bit by bit, section by section. That way at least you can play as you go. I'd suggest an area of about four of the standard sized boards per section. It's enough to keep you busy but not too much for you to look at with dread. Several reams of printed card stock is something to make even hardened veteran gamers go a bit weak at the knees.

If you are serious about doing a lot with the new TerrainLinX stuff you really should get the planner. We mentioned it in the previous issue but I can't stress how helpful it is. Before you've even printed a single thing you can plan, re-plan and yet again re-plan before you actually decide what you're going to do. For me the way I decided to do it was to drag in the tiles we had and looked at what I could do with them. It then allowed me to decide what extra tiles I needed to print or also work out what extra tiles I would have for expanding the project later.

Okay, so let's explain a few tips that we as a group have picked up as we've been doing stuff.

### Posts

You're going to need a fair few of these to hold it all together and it's good to make sure you do them right. We found that using a good straight edge to bend the straights round meant that we got a nice solid straight line every time. We also made sure that we blacked the edges before gluing them together – it just made it easier and we felt it looks good long term. It's little things like this that make the whole project look good or bad. We used different things to keep the posts together whilst the glue dried. I managed to find a piece of wood that was the right width and that helped with some of the trickier ones like the 8-way post.



## Main Boards

The only real issue with these is getting the edges just right. As with the posts we made sure that any edges were bent around a steel rule to ensure they were nice and crisp. Edges were blackened before gluing as well. When it came to gluing them it was done in two stages. We glued the base board to the piece of card letting it dry before bending the sides round and gluing them. A good strong book sat on top whilst the first part dried help to ensure it didn't curl. Though never be worried about re-checking bits and adding a bit more glue. Better to do that than have an edge lift and look a bit odd.

When gluing the sides I made sure I applied the glue then pushed the side against my cutting board to get it nice and solid, then applied more glue to the bottom tab and doing the same as I was with the sides. For me it was like pulling it nice and tight. It certainly kept it all together and it looks nice once done. It's also one of the easier elements to do.

## Walls

The walls have slide tabs that have to go into the posts. They tend to have a piece that is between the tab and the wall that needs removing. We found that taking this out after you'd put the wall piece together was a lot easier. It just meant you had fewer edges to try and line up and if you get them wrong it looks silly. Doing it after means if you're a little out it doesn't matter because you can simply adjust what you're cutting away a little.

With some of the sets like Himmelveil Streets you'll find that you're not going to need that many walls or other bits so the project can take a lot less time. That said, I love the whole 3D effect when you have the walls because it just looks amazing. You can't fault the amount of stunning detail that has been put into each piece and when you start linking it all up it really does come to life.

So, I hope we've given you enough idea's to break out the card stock and give it a go for yourself. Keep an eye out in future issues for things we've been doing and we might even expose the set to a battle report.



# CONAN

## THRESHOLD OF DARKNESS

By Eric K. Rodriguez and Vincent N. Darlage

Screen shots by kind permission of Paradox Entertainment

Part 3

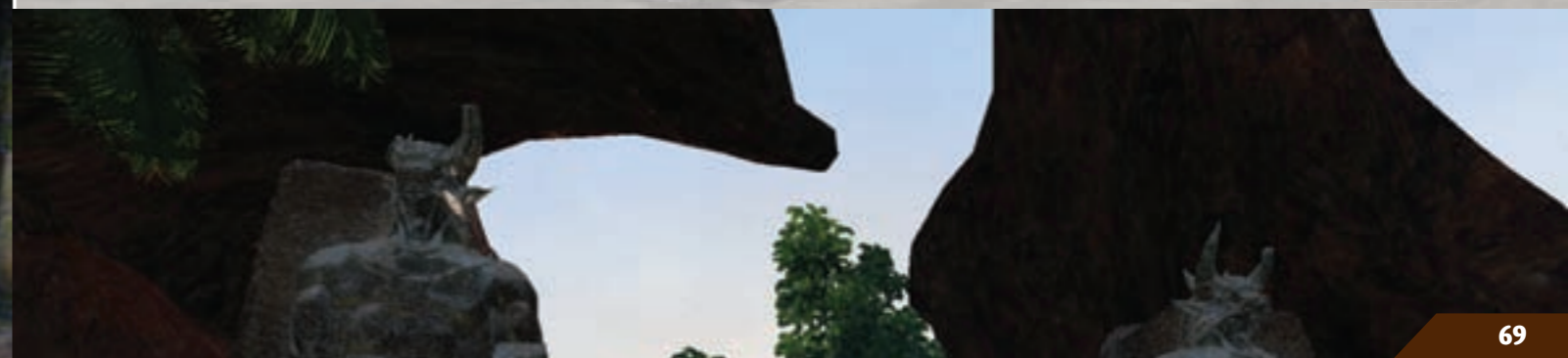
### CHAPTER 6 DEMONS RUIN

Open grasslands and savannas spread out before the characters like the endless landscape of the ocean. Swaying grass and sparse stunted tree's are the only occasional landmarks that remind the characters that they are not in a waking dream. A large black Raven hovers on the horizon. Always in the distance but never close enough to see any details. However many day's and nights of travel begin to play upon the characters waking dreams as well as their night time reverie. Savannas turn into forests of twisted and stunted tree's that seem to express their torturous existence by the very nature of their appearance. Every tree seems to parody a man, tortured beyond sane reason. Night brings forth horrid sounds and shadows that seem to bring to life the very forest around them.

Beyond the demonic forest lie slow moving streams and rivers that meander in a sluggish manner that almost reminds the observer of thick, viscous blood and not the life giving water that the land needs. Passing over or fording through the estuaries is slow and dangerous. Many amorphous like shapes can be seen below the water. Their shadows can be seen gliding under the waterway's but never surfacing. Many day's of travel begin to wear on the adventures and an almost dream like state begins to be shared by all. Night becomes

day and day becomes night. It becomes harder to tell what is real and what is not. Yet still the hazy outline of a Raven hovers in the distance, cawing in its birds voice a sickly sweet sound that at times mimics a woman's laughter.

Eventually after many days of travel the group comes upon the edge of a great swamp. The air is laden with hot moisture; the land becomes soggy with rot and decay. Bent trees with boughs draped in moss look to the observer like weeping women in shrouds. The constant hum of insects and the splashing of unseen creatures seem to be the musical cadence that all creatures of the swamp live with. A small but distinct path can be seen heading deeper into the swamp. Foul smelling carcasses of unknown animals can be seen littering the path, providing for a macabre and noxious journey. After many hours of travel within the swamp a series of stone walls and buildings can be seen in the distance. As the characters move closer to the ruins, a large black Raven can be seen to light upon the tallest of the ruined buildings and disappear into the shadows.



As the characters move closer to the ruins they come upon an open clearing where they encounter a group of sleeping Darfari. No matter what the characters do, the Darfari will not awaken. They are breathing, and obviously dreaming, but no amount of effort will wake them from their dream like reverie. Leaves are gathered about them, and insects are crawling on them. One of the fearsome black warriors has a black cobra coiled up against his body for warmth.

## NESERSERT

**History (Notes):** This ruin was an ancient city built by the Khari during their takeover of the lands of the Giant Kings; it was originally named Nesersert. It was built upon an old fort manned by the Giant Kings. The Khari used the settlement both as an artistic enclave as well as a major trading post for slaves from the south. The Khari nobles were deceitful; they would not conform to Set-worship as their kin in the north were doing. They had their own god, a darksome thing formed from materialised nightmares whom they could see and worship, a thing called Neshenu Khennu. The high priest Bak Neshenu and his son Bak Nekek, who summoned the thing, built a powerful cult. The noble cultists called themselves Nekai ent Neshni. The priests and the demon deceived the people, including the cult members, and convinced them all to commit mass suicide rather than become part of Set-worshipping Stygia. Thus the city was left without people and no one dwelt there.

**Appearance (Notes):** The walled ruin is laid out in a labyrinthine mix of straight, curved and criss-crossing mud covered streets. It is not a large ruin by any means, but it is well-preserved and intact. Built out of reddish stone, the ruin looks like a blood spot on the verdant landscape. It is slowly sinking as the swamp flows into its boundaries during the wet seasons. Some of the lower portions of the ruin are knee deep in mud and peat. Frequently seen ancient middens only add to the aura of decay.

A drowsy, dreamy atmosphere pervades the area, centred on the ruin. At this point, using her Magical Link, the witch will attempt a ranged hypnotism (+21magical attack bonus if she uses her fetish item) on the dreaming character to get him to believe as many of his party as possible should go south into ruined official buildings area, while he (alone or with as few party members as possible) explores the temple complex.

The characters will probably enter from the north near the sinking obelisks; however, they can enter from wherever. Many of the walls have holes in them, or have simply collapsed, leaving several places where entry can be achieved fairly easily. Also, there are other, smaller gates on the east and western sides. The large wooden doors to those gates have long since vanished. Games Masters should try and keep the Player Characters from entering directly into the Temple Complex area, although for speeded play this is certainly an option.

If entering through the north, the characters will pass through a courtyard. The courtyard is mucky and lined with sinking statues of ancient heroes. From here they will climb the steps into the lesser hypostyle hall and into the courtyard of the governor's palace.

If entering from the south, the Player Characters will come into contact with a Corrupt Darfari tribe who have taken residence among the ruins of the noble estates and remnants of ancient official buildings.

**The Governor's Palace:** The governor's palace is completely ruined. Little more than red stone rubble and a few low walls remain. At night, low moaning sounds and occasional shrieks echo throughout the palace. The unearthly feeling of despair hangs like a dark shroud over the entire area. Dead vines and creepers hang off walls and balustrades like the hands of dead giants. A faint glowing green light can be seen to float about the grounds, however whenever a character gets near, the light fades away.

From the Governor's Palace, the Player Characters should move into the Greater Hypostyle Hall, also in ruin. The entire city is lined with a low to the ground fog that seems to seep from the earth like a wound. The mists swirl and move with the characters passing but seem to move back into place once they have passed. Dark shadows and eerie sounds can be heard from all quarters. It sounds as if the ghosts of everyone who died is moaning the fate and forcing their pain upon anyone living.

Moving from there past two great pylons, the Player Characters should be in the markets and storehouses between the Treasury and the Temple Complex ruin. If the Player Characters turn south, they will arrive at the ruins of the noble estates and remnants of ancient official buildings.

**Ruins of the Noble Estates and Remnants of Ancient Official Buildings:** The ruins of the noble estates and remnants of ancient official buildings is where a corrupt tribe of Darfari live. Near the entrance one can find several blackened pits filled with charred bones some of which are identifiable as human. These are the feasting pits where many a hapless soul was murdered and fed upon.

**Temple Complex Ruin:** While within the temple complex, Games Masters should describe strange, shadowy forms lurking just within peripheral vision, vanishing as soon as the eye looks directly upon the shades.

The temple complex is a huge walled enclosure painted with hieroglyphs and uncanny, vaguely disturbing designs. A ramp or stair leads into the enclosure through a colossal gate flanked by two immense towers. Once through the gate, one can see the massive front towers of a great ruin. Great carvings of an ancient king and queen flank the entryway into a ruined hall with a marbled hall that once must have held many tall columns. One can still see portions of the eerie wall paintings describing horrid acts of bestiality and demon worshipping. On either side is courtyard where squat, low pillars made of red mud brick stand in long rows. These were once offering tables for the ordinary people.

Following the haunting marbled hall is a long, narrow court with a shadowy altar with an apish god squatting atop a flight of stairs. On either side of the walkway are squat, low pillars made of mud brick with paintings of grotesque gods and demons on the sides. After the shadowy altar is another causeway leading to another set of lofty and impressive towers.

**The Ghost:** At this point, the Player Characters should encounter a pale, white girl. She is young and wearing a transparent linen gown. She does not appear ghostly and should not be introduced as ghostly to the Player Characters. If pressed for a name, she will say, "Atshesa." She is willing to guide the Player Characters through the ruin, especially the dreamer. She will claim she is here to learn to be a scribe and that her mother is a well-known professional mourner.

She will lead them to another court with more low column-tables for sacrifices and another shadowy altar, this one with an even more bestial god squatting horribly upon it, lusting for sacrifices. The path then leads through another painted gate and set of glowering towers to a third courtyard of columns and another shadowy altar, a bit smaller. At the end of this courtyard is a multi-pillared building that leads to three small sanctuary courts. Pits surround the altar and dark gulfs lead to underground chambers where one can easily imagine unwholesome things lurking in cold slumber, awaiting victims to be thrown down to them.

At the far end of the temple enclosure is the menacing and awesome Sanctuary Temple. However, between the Sanctuary Temple and the Entry Temples is a large courtyard filled with water and mud – and giant Stygian crocodile's. One can also see a reed boat near the entrance to the Sanctuary Temple.

At this point, Atshesa will say she knows a safe way across, and will walk into the water. It is ankle deep for the most part – until she leads the characters to a deep part where the crocodiles feast. They have learned that she brings them food.

## CROCODILE GIANT STYGIAN

## Huge Animal

**Hit Dice:** 10d8+50 (95 hp) 14d8+70 (133 hp)  
**Initiative:** +10 (+1 Dex, +7 Ref, +2 Lightning Reflexes) +17 (+2 Dex, +9 Ref, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)  
**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft. 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.  
**Dodge Defence:** 16 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural) 20 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural)  
**Damage Reduction:** 7 (leathery hide) 7 (leathery hide)  
**Base Attack/Grapple:** +7/+24 +10/+28  
**Attack:** Bite +14 melee (2d8+13/ AP 9) or tail slap +14 melee (1d12+13) Bite +18 melee (2d8+15/ AP 11) or tail slap +18 melee (1d12+15)  
**Full Attack:** Bite +14 melee (2d8+13/ AP 9) or tail slap +14 melee (1d12+13) Bite +18 melee (2d8+15/ AP 11) or tail slap +18 melee (1d12+15)  
**Space/Reach:** 15 ft./10 ft. 15 ft./10 ft.  
**Special Attacks:** Improved grab, savage roll Improved grab, savage roll  
**Special Qualities:** Hold breath, low-light vision Hold breath, low-light vision  
**Saves:** Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +4 Fort +14, Ref +13, Will +6  
**Abilities:** Str 29, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 1, Wis 13, Cha 3 Str 31, Dex 14, Con 21, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 4  
**Skills:** Hide +2\*, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +17 Hide +4\*, Listen +8, Spot +8, Swim +19  
**Feats:** Alertness, Endurance, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Hide) Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Hide)  
**Environment:** Warm marshes Warm marshes  
**Organization:** Solitary or colony (6-11) Solitary or colony (6-11)  
**Advancement:** 11-13 HD (Huge) 15+ (Huge)

Stygian crocodiles are huge, scaly creatures and can be more than 20 feet long. They weigh between 600 and 2,000 pounds. In colouration there is a lot of variance, ranging from a brownish-black to drab green, with a lighter tone on the underside. Like other crocodiles, the Stygian crocodile has its eyes and nostrils placed on the top of the head so they can see and breathe while the rest of their body lies submerged, hidden in the murk of the river.

Stygian crocodiles swim with large, oar-like tails. Their rear feet are webbed and can help with small manoeuvres but are only rarely used in swimming. Their feet however are used when travelling overland and they can even run in a manner similar to rabbits, planting their front feet, bringing their hind legs around the outsides of the front legs and then pushing off the hind legs to replant the front ones again. They can move up to 29 miles per hour in short bursts.

Crocodiles are the most intelligent of all reptiles. Crocodiles can learn by watching the behaviour of animals and men. They know when prey starts using the same stretch of water for drinking or cleaning. Stygian crocodiles also work in teams. Many will form small dams in the Styx to catch fish, each one taking a turn at eating the fish. For larger prey, one will catch the food and hold onto it while another (or several others) tear the prey apart. They also exhibit their intelligence by trapping prey against underwater logs or rocks to help them tear the prey apart – an almost tool-like usage of natural objects.



## COMBAT

Giant Stygian crocodiles lie mostly submerged in rivers or marshes, with only their eyes and nostrils showing, waiting for prey to come within reach. Once prey is within reach, the crocodile launches out of the water with lightning speed, latches onto the prey, and then drags it underneath the water, usually drowning the victim.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a crocodile must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, the crocodile establishes a hold on the opponent with its mouth and drags it into deep water, attempting to pin it to the bottom, often while other crocodiles attack the food. Once prey is held in its mouth it can do a savage roll.

**Savage Roll (Ex):** Crocodiles cannot chew their food so they roll in the water in an action that tears the prey up in a bloody and brutal manner. Crocodiles may perform a Savage Roll if they have already effectively grappled a character. Crocodiles doing a savage roll inflict their bite damage and automatically threaten a critical hit; they do not need to roll an attack but only need to roll for a confirmation of critical damage.

**Hold Breath (Ex):** A crocodile can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 x its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

**Skills:** A crocodile has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. \*A crocodile gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks when in the water. Further, a crocodile can lie in the water with only its eyes and nostrils showing, gaining a +10 cover bonus on Hide checks.

*Note for the GM: You can use the map of a typical temple from Mongoose Publishing's Stygia - Serpent of the South here, but rename it 'Temple Ruin' for the players.*

The Sanctuary Temple is in disrepair, but still radiates an incredible aura of evil. To enter this temple without permission is cause for a Terror of the Unknown check (DC 18). Note that the character who dreams is implied to have permission. Player Characters who fail this may well rather face the crocodiles than whatever lurks within that horrible temple.

*The temple has long since fallen into disrepair and is inhabited by the Darfari witch and her three acolytes. A room by room description of the temple when it was in full operation can be found in Stygia - Serpent of the South. Currently, it is inhabited only by phantoms and spectres. Only a few rooms of immediate interest will be detailed here. Games Masters are encouraged to add more specific flavour to their campaign by seeding these rooms with whatever plot elements will make their game more interesting. Prisoners, arcane items or simply material wealth are all items which could easily be found within this temple. It is suggested that if the party is weak or have been severely depleted during their journey that this would be a perfect opportunity for Games Masters to give them a little aid by providing some sort of item or individual that could help the group.*

Area 11: The witches have hidden Madam Amica here, thinking the characters will go directly to area 14 and completely miss the girl. The witch of Darfar derives a considerable amount of strength from the girl. She is a completed obsession. If the Player Characters rescue her, Mkali loses 8 base power points immediately.

## THE HONOURABLE AMICA MICHAELIS

## Medium Hyborian Woman Noble 5/Temptress 6

**Hit Dice:** 5d8+5d6+10+1 (51 hit points)  
**Initiative:** +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Ref)  
**Speed:** 30 ft.  
**Dodge Defence:** 17 (+4 level, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)  
**Parry Defence:** 14 (+4 level, +0 Str)  
**BAB/Grapple:** +7/+7  
**Attack:** Club +7 melee  
**Full Attack:** Club +7 melee  
**Damage:** Club 1d8+0/x2, AP 2  
**Space/Reach:** 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)  
**Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +1d6, +1 special regional bonus to attack rolls with broadsword, hunting bow, heavy lance and war spear  
**Special Qualities:** Hyborian Traits, background skills (Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate), adaptability (Bluff, Gather Information), comeliness, savoir-faire, title (the honourable), rank hath its privileges, wealth, seductive art +2, dance of desire 2/day, special regional feature +1, poison use, seductive savant (perform (dance)), social ability (social map), binding contract, art of distraction, lead by example +2  
**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +14  
**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 19  
**Skills:** Appraise +7, Balance +4, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +22, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +22, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Perform (dance) +16, Perform (sing) +12, Search +11, Sense Motive +20, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +6, Tumble +8  
**Feats:** Agile, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Investigator, Negotiator, No Honour, Persuasive  
**Code of Honour:** No Honour feat  
**Reputation:** 15 (villain)  
**Leadership:** -  
**Allegiances:** None  
**Possessions:** None, nude



Madam Amica is the third daughter of Viscount Micaelis of Baraccus. As the daughter of a viscount, she is styled as the Honourable Amica Micaelis, but addressed as Madam. Aquilonian by birth, Madam Amica became a beautiful, if amoral, politician in Corinthia before a rival had her kidnapped and sold into slavery in Zamboula. She passed through the hands of several masters and mistresses, all the while learning better to manipulate people. She learned to dance and sing as a slave, and mastered her abilities to read people. She was eventually captured by the Darfari witch.

Madam Amica is a golden-haired beauty with a lot of personal charm. Although quite charming, she sees herself as without morals and a willingness to do whatever is necessary to survive and win. She knows how to get into

the Tomb Beneath the Temple and she knows a secret way out of the tomb. She also knows the weakness of the demon lord of the witch.

She may tell the Player Characters, "The Darfari believe their souls may undertake journeys during sleep and that dreams are the experiences of the soul during those strange trips."

Area 14: Area 14 contains a flagstone on the marble floor that leads to a rock-cut tomb. It is in this tomb that the witches have made their lair. Note that there is no natural light in the tomb. Unless the Player Characters bring light, they will not be able to see. The witches do not use torches as their corruption gives them the ability to see in the dark.

Area A: The first area is a staircase going down into the depths of the earth. The walls are dripping with water and the steps are slick with mud and slime. Moving faster than a walk is cause for a DC 18 Balance check or a fall. Behind the slime of the walls are protective hieroglyphs. At the base of the steps is an arch, a symbolic door into the underworld.

Area B: This area levels off, but has a sloping ramp going deeper on the opposite side of the entrance. Two thick pillars hold up the ceiling. The floor is thick with slime and mud. Broken pottery and rotting mummies lie on the floor here amid the muck (the mummies have already been looted of valuable amulets and treasures).

Area C: This area is dangerous because of the slick muck and slope of the floor. Any combat here falls in the category of being attacked

while balancing (see Balance skill in Conan the Roleplaying Game). Moving faster than a walk here also is cause for a DC 18 Balance check, although the fall will do no damage – just put the person prone. Along the walls are images of priests and priestesses of old. Those who can read Stygian hieroglyphs can identify the main persons depicted here as Bak Neshenu and his son Bak Nekek. The text discusses the use of dreams and dream journeys – and the power of nightmares. Scholars, if the muck is swept aside and can read Stygian, can find spell formulae inscribed on the wall for the Dream of Wisdom and Visions spells.

Area D: This is a steep stairway tucked between two ledges. A great image of Set on the far wall has been defaced to portray a thing called Neshenu Khennu. Slime-encrusted

## The Tomb Beneath the Temple





hieroglyphics adorn all the walls. Those who can read them find they give power to the dead to transform into serpents and/or crocodiles in the afterlife. The ledges hold mummies; on the right, mummified serpents and on the left, mummified crocodiles. The stairway is slick with slime. Water drips along the walls and from the ceiling.

Area E: This area is a steeply sloped passage thick with slime and mud. Again, any combat here falls in the category of being attacked while balancing (see Balance skill in Conan the Roleplaying Game). Moving faster than a walk here also is cause for a DC 18 Balance check, although the fall will do no damage – just put the person prone and sliding down toward the Pit. A statue of a bestial god lurks in each corner of this hall and the walls are decorated with hieroglyphics giving instructions to the priests of the temple on their duties.

The Pit: This pit is filled with slime. There is a bridge that spans it, but the bridge is pulled into Area F whenever the witch passes that way. If the witch is not down here, then the bridge is in place over the pit. The pit is 50 feet deep, but is filled with thirty-two feet of slime, water and mud. If desired, a Foaming Blasphemy (from Conan: Ruins of Hyboria) or a demonic slime-serpent (use Smoke-Serpent stats from Conan the Roleplaying Game and substitute slime for smoke) may live in the muck of the Pit. Otherwise it is just mundane muck and slime.

Area F: Over the entryway of this area hangs a bundle of skulls, a fetish to protect the witch and her coven. If the witch is down here, the bridge over the pit is in this area. This area is dry. The ceiling has not been penetrated by the swamp yet and the sludge from the previous chambers drains into the Pit. In one corner, four round bowls held shut by metal bands have been placed. These bowl sarcophagi may hold a Child of Set in each (see Stygia – Serpent of the South, Conan: Ruins of Hyboria or the Conan Compendium for statistics should the Player Characters open the bowls, or they may hold ancient treasures of the Giant-Kings. Even the witch and her coven leave them alone for fear of what they might contain. Otherwise, the room has been extensively redecorated by the witches.

Grisly fetishes hang around chamber from the roof, the skulls of men, women and children, with the spines still attached. Some are fully-fleshed heads, their bloated tongues distended, their spines dangling beneath them with bits of gore still attached. Four beds, made by side-by-side long poles supported by forked branches, are in the chamber, two on each side of the chamber. A fire pit has been dug in the centre. Stools, bowls, gourds, baskets, hanging shelves, boards and other implements can be found throughout the chamber. Hooked tree branches depend from grass ropes secured to the walls, and these branches hold food and weapons. Bones and skulls hang from these ropes as macabre wind chimes. Poles leaning against the walls have human hands stuck on the upper ends. Several knives can be found throughout the room to cut meat with. Also, there is a hunk of iron in the chamber that the witch uses as an anvil to make some of her tools. Everything is filthy.

Against the back wall, next to the passage to Area K, is a dirty, wooden box covered in obscene carvings of women; the sex of the figure is incredibly apparent and greatly exaggerated. This is the witch's reliquary, which contains the bones of her mother.

Area G: This room was carved to be the tomb of Bak Neshenu. Hieroglyphs identify this city as having the name Nesersert. The room is filled with trashed treasures, long since looted through and, if not made of precious metal, destroyed. The mummy of Bak Neshenu himself lies against one wall, beneath the broken remains of several chairs and ushabtiu figures. There is no mummy of Bak Neshenu as no one was alive after the mass suicide to mummify his body.

Area H: This room was designed to be the tomb of Bak Nekek, the son of Bek Neshenu. It is otherwise in a similar state as the room in Area G.

Area I: This chamber was originally a tomb for one of the Children of Set, but the witch moved the bowl sarcophagus from this room to Area F. It has a magic circle inscribed on the floor in charcoal; otherwise, it is decorated in a similar

manner as Area F. The witch uses this room to summon her master, the demon Neshenu Khennu.

Area J: This room is where the witches perform most of their human sacrifices. Many altars are found in this room, each dedicated to shambling Stygian gods and brutish ancient demons. The floor is heavily bloodstained. Entering the room, unless one has at least one point of Corruption, is cause for a Terror check (DC 18). Ghosts tend to linger in this room, and strange sounds can often be heard.

Area K: This chamber is used as a worship area by the witches. Several crude altars covered in demonic symbols and pictures can be seen. Rough hewn daggers made of obsidian or jade, still encrusted with blood, can be found scattered about the floors of this chamber. A large, deformed statue can be seen against the northern wall, dominating the chamber. The statue is neither male nor female but a combination of both. Several human bones and fetish pieces can be found around the chamber. The ground is covered in dried blood, feces and other unidentifiable items.

Area L: This chamber is now the holiest of holies, the home of Neshenu Khennu, where his shambling form resides when summoned by the witches for worship.



Illustration of Darfari Warriors courtesy of Paradox Entertainment from MMO Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures

# Infinity Miniatures Review

by Jez Fairclough

## New releases



### Chasseurs (Adhesive Launcher)

Chasseurs. (Adhesive-Launcher) Get ready to get into the enemy territory with this sexy Merovingian infiltrator. Her Adhesive weapon can stop any enemy, regardless his size or strength. This French-Ariadnan girl can be a dream or a nightmare, depending if you are on her side or in the opposite, and the High Command is sure she will be the spearhead of all your attacks.



### Knights of Montesa (Combi Rifle+Light GL)

Knights of Montesa. (Combi Rifle + Light GL) New release! Here is the first armoured knight of the year. The Knight of Montesa, thanks to the Mechanized Deployment Special Skill, is the spearhead of PanOceania, always deployed in advance. This figure means a double joy for the PanOceanian players, as they can use this model not only in the Military Order Sectorial Army but too in the Acontecimiento Shock Army!



### Shàng Jí Invincible (Combi Rifle+Light Flamethrower)

Shàng Jí Invincible. (Combi Rifle + Light Flamethrower) Corvus Belli listens to the Infinity community. One of the most expected figures, as it has been called by the fandom, the outstanding Shàng Jí from the Yu Jing Starter Pack, is now released separately. This highly mobile and well protected heavy infantry is equipped with the state-of-the-art powered armour. Specially fitted for the close quarters combat, the Shàng Jí is ready to get into action!

### Hassassin Fiday (Boarding Shotgun)

Hassassin Fidays. (Boarding Shotgun). The Fidays are the destroying angels of the Hassassin Society. This elite assassins are superb impersonators capable to adopt the appearance of the enemy o infiltrate behind his lines and strike with maximum lethality. And the best short range weapon to do that is the versatile Boarding Shotgun. Don't even try to surrender, because this gorgeous Hassassin will not have mercy on you!



### Marut (TAG)

Maruts. Corvus Belli is pleased to introduce a new revolution in Mecha-style miniatures with the Marut, the powerful TAG of ALEPH. Inspired in the most stylized Japanese Mecha tradition, the Marut is a sexy female four-armed war machine. Equipped for close combat and also for long range confrontations, the Marut can detect any hidden enemy who can be on the battlefield. In the Infinity universe, covert and secret armed conflicts threaten the global peace. Onto this stage, as if from nowhere, come the Maruts to protect the human AI and to end the wars.

# Kill 5 Minutes Online...

## ...and Learn Something New By Jez Fairclough

**F**irst off, thanks yet again to everyone who has sent me ideas on places to waste a few minutes online each day. I know that I'll never be able to cover them all but the more that come in the better and I'll try to at least cover the more popular ones as well.

This issue's first suggestion is more of a resource site though it does have content of its own.

### **Æther Emporium**

(<http://etheremporium.pbworks.com/Wiki>) which, although it claims to be a link to all things steampunk,



those who play steampunk or VSF (Victorian Sci-Fi) can attest that the lines are pretty much blurred and it can all be pretty much the same.

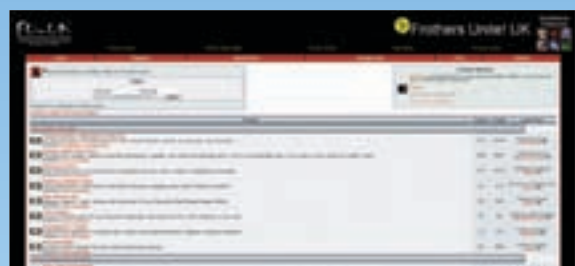
The style of the site/wiki is very simple which makes it pretty easy to use and you could spend a lot of time looking at the links which aren't just game resources, but films, interviews and the like. If you're interested in steampunk or VSF it's really a nice jump point to lots of other very exciting places and we know from personal experience that resource centres are often amongst the most popular websites to visit.

That said, so my next community website should really come with a health warning and any who frequent the place a lot will know what I mean.

So that's it for another issue, please keep your ideas coming and we'll be visiting more cool sites in the next issue. As always any submissions, comments can be thrown my way at [jez@the-ancible.com](mailto:jez@the-ancible.com).

### **Frothers Unite**

(<http://www.frothersunite.com/phpBB2/>) is certainly a community site with a difference; the guys and girls



who use it a lot know what they like and if they don't like it or think what your saying isn't to their taste don't expect them to be polite about it. You'll get both barrels and be in no certain terms where you can go.

So if you plan on hanging around you either need to be thick skinned or able to give as good as you get. Don't say you haven't been warned. The up side though is that you will pick up a lot of interesting gossip and opinion, and the place is well worth a look.

Zombies and spin-offs involving zombies are really popular at present so my last site will undoubtedly get a few people looking. Imagine the world dealing with a zombie outbreak. We use technology to our advantage – armoured walkers or Mechs to the rescue. But what happens if the pilot of one of these becomes a zombie? The answer is that you end up with **Dead Mech** (<http://jakebible.podomatic.com/>).



Currently at 15 episodes this podcast is really cool. I could tell you so much about it, but any spoilers might kill it so why don't you sit down in a dark room and listen. Thanks to Parky in the office for this one as well, he knows the odd things that'll make me go mwahahaha. [It's true. There's nothing odder in the office than Parky – Ed]

In the next issue...

# THE Ancible

Your portal to Sci-Fi and Fantasy Gaming

It's been  
aeons  
since  
we  
have  
seen  
any-  
thing so  
strange



Inside Issue 5

**Strange Aeons**  
**Kraken**  
**Claustrphobia**  
**Ron and Bones**

...Available August 2010

# VISIT THE EYE OF THE STORM

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## EVENTS AT THE EYE OF THE STORM

for more information visit [events.maelstromgames.co.uk](http://events.maelstromgames.co.uk)

Sat 31st July - Sun 1st August

The first anniversary of the Eye of the Storm has arrived very quickly, and we're celebrating it with lots of special offers, discounts and events on the day! It'll be awesome!

The Perfect Storm

Sat 14th - Sun 15th August

Maelstrom 8th Edition Warhammer Fantasy Battle tournament - TICKET ONLY  
Attend the very first 8th edition tournament in the United Kingdom!

Autumn Incursion

Sat 21st - Sun 22nd August

Maelstrom Hordes and Warmachine tournament - TICKET ONLY

Scrap Metal II

Sat 28th - Sun 29th August

The Gaming Club Network's Flames of War Campaign Weekend - TICKET ONLY

GCN Flames of War

Sat 4th - Sun 5th September

Maelstrom Flames of War, all theatres of mid war tournament - TICKET ONLY

Sturm über Europa

Sat 11th - 12th September

The Dragon Slayers are holding two one-day tournaments, Saturday for Warhammer and Sunday for Hordes and Warmachine!

Dragon Slayers Bash III

Sat 18th - 19th September

Epic UK's first tournament at the Eye of the Storm!

Into the Breach



EVERY TUESDAY AND THURSDAY NIGHT  
is wargames night, from 6pm to 11pm!  
all wargaming systems are welcome!

we are open on all other days from  
10am to 6pm, including Sunday!

Maelstrom Games Ltd

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