

IRRESISTIBLE *force*

Issue 2 - May 2003

Bi-Monthly Warhammer E-zine



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This issue of Irresistible Force sees the inaugural running of the "Spot Itchy" competition. Everyone's favourite shaman has been hidden in a picture in the magazine. If you spot him, send in the location (page number and description of picture) to editor@irresistibleforce.net. The first email received will be announced in issue 3!

Editorial



Well if getting the first issue of Irresistible Force published was a great relief, releasing the second issue gives me an immense sense of pleasure and pride. The e-zine has really gained momentum over the last few months and I must put out a HUGE thank you to everyone who has sent in their thoughts and well wishes. The support has just been amazing to say the least and has really spurred me on to making Irresistible Force as good as it can be.

Issue 2 sees some superb contributions from many talented gamers once again, but the highlight for me is definitely the Warhammer comic created by the extremely likeable Javier Centenera: "Asharr – Chaos Dwarf Sorcerer". I look forward to bringing you the continuing adventures of Asharr in coming months and a big THANKS to Javier for his huge effort! How Javier managed to fit time in to create the comic with his very busy Karaoke schedule is beyond me. ;)

I have to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to Andrew Bishop. The amount of work that "Bish" puts into his articles and the support he has given me throughout the process has been invaluable. Along with "Bish", regular contributor Mike Allen returns with his "Remain In Play" opinion article and Matt Lubbock comes through with another superb tourney report.

The other Ferris (Ken) has tried his hand at a fiction piece, carrying on from where Evan left off, and I must say I found the continuing exploits of everyone's favourite vampire, Louis d'Montforte, very enjoyable once again.

I am definitely having withdrawal symptoms of late being unable to play any regular Warhammer games, and it has taken its toll. I fly out to Japan for the Touch World Cup this week, so upon my return I should find myself with some more time to dust the models off and get them out on the battle field in the near future.

Hopefully I will get the chance to pit my Savage Orcs, or Dwarfs, or Dark Elves against you!

Until then, happy gaming.

Cheers,

Andrew Galea
Editor

Warhammer Tactics

By
Andrew Bishop



It struck me a while ago that there have been countless “tactics” articles written for Warhammer Fantasy Battles (WFB) over the years, but none that really cover the subject in a generic way. Instead they tend to be more “specialised”, players writing articles on the tactics to use with their favourite particular race or army. There are also articles on how to use a specific troop type (eg. fast cavalry), but not on how to put together a general plan to win a battle using all troop types.

Whilst these articles definitely have their place, I normally find that such “tactics” are simply lessons on army composition aimed at getting the right combinations of special weapons, troop types, or magic items to obliterate their enemy. Tactics can however be covered in a more generalised but hopefully also “realistic” fashion. After all, armies in the real world do not concentrate on how to defeat the enemy with just light infantry (or any other arm), but aim to combine all arms and troops at their disposal to win with a coherent battle plan.

As a personal note on my motivations for writing this article, I have always been interested in ancient and military history, as well as the fantasy worlds in which our games are based. As a student of ancient history and also a member of the military, it often strikes me how little *actual* tactics are used in games of Warhammer. There are plenty of “gamey” ruses to maximise aspects of the rules and game mechanics, but not much real tactical planning and manoeuvre. This need not be the case - tactics should, and can work!! I have noticed that the best Warhammer players *do* apply tactics to their games (whether they know it or not), and often have a working knowledge of “real-world” tactics. It is this knowledge that often gives them the edge over their opponents. I hope to impart a little bit of this kind of knowledge in this article.

The article is spread over two parts. The first covers general tactical principles and deployments and formations. The second part covers principles for attacking and defending (*See Issue #3 – Ed*).

Why tactics?

As much as many players like to deny it, our beloved Warhammer is based in history. It should therefore follow that some knowledge of how battles were fought throughout history is beneficial. The weaponry, formations and style of combat used in the Warhammer World are all based in our own world’s ancient through to renaissance periods of warfare. Many WFB weapons and troops types are quite markedly “borrowed” from history. For example it doesn’t take much historical knowledge to know that Bretonnians are “borrowed” from Feudal France, Empire from Renaissance German (Landsknecht), or Khemri from New Kingdom Egyptian. Others are less obvious in their historical inspiration, but are still noticeably similar to many ancient or medieval armies. For example, Orcs and Goblins could be loosely based on many barbarian races and Elves on a conglomerate of many “advanced” civilisations. The way these races are armed and fight is roughly equivalent to their historical counterparts.

Like in real life situations, there are many tactical deployments, formations and plans that can be used on the Warhammer battlefield. Some of the points to consider in formulating a successful plan and enacting it on the Warhammer battlefield are tactically based. With a general concept of tactics, even the most hopeless of Warhammer players can start to trouble their opponents on the gaming table a bit more. Tactical principles have been developed over several millennia for a good reason. They are the distillation of the triumphs and disasters of many generals and armies. Why can we not put them to use in a fantasy game, which should in theory follow the same principles? Give it a try anyway and it might help you out.

General Tactical Principles:

Know the Troops

Perhaps the main key to Warhammer is knowledge of the troops – the strengths of your own army and the weaknesses of your opponent's. Relative strengths could be based on such things as the troops' arms, armour, morale, numerical superiority, fighting quality, physical strength, resilience (i.e. toughness), speed, manoeuvrability,

firepower or range (amongst many other possible aspects). The deployment of your troops should aim to capitalise on your strengths and the enemy's weakness, whilst at the same time attempting to minimise your own vulnerability to the enemy.

The best Warhammer players always know their own troops really well and more often than not also know the stats, abilities and other characteristics of their opponent's army. Linked with this in a game like Warhammer is a working knowledge (or at least a "gut-feel") of statistics and probabilities in order to give you a fighting chance when relying on the accursed dice.

Another key aspect of "knowing your troops" is the ability to keep track of their abilities and capability throughout the game. You should have an idea at the start of the game what type of enemy each of your units can expect to take on and beat. This mental picture should be updated throughout the game – mentally tracking losses and changes in spell casting ability, hitting power and unit strength for example. A unit of chaos knights six models strong could be expected to defeat some units at the start of the game, whereas after a few casualties the same unit at only three models strong cannot be expected to beat the same units – its capability needs

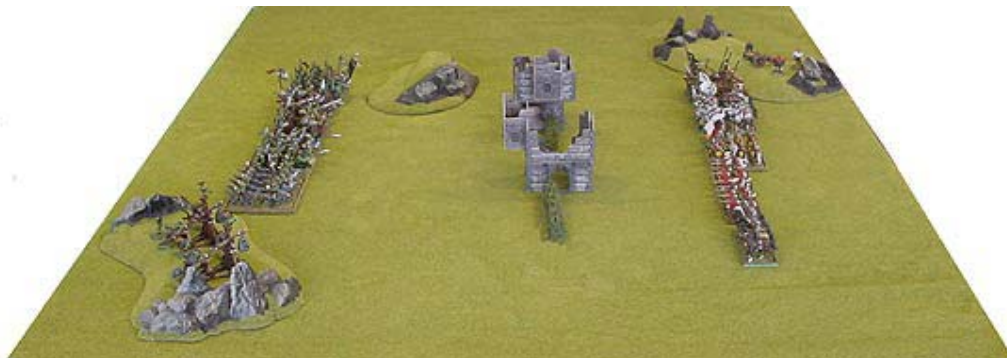
to be rethought and factored into your plans.

Consider the Terrain

Terrain can play a major part in how the battle will unfold. Consider how the troops will move across the battlefield. Where will they be unobstructed, impeded or channelled by the terrain? Where will they be forced to slow down or change formation? Can the terrain be used to stop, delay or assist the enemy?

Try to visualise the line of sight on the battlefield. Some terrain can provide approaches that are covered from view to the enemy's battleline. Alternatively it can be used to help break up the coordination and timing of the enemy's attacks. Use the terrain to your advantage and attempt to use it to the enemy's disadvantage. Line of sight will play a particularly significant part if one (or both) of the armies are reliant on missile weapons, war machines, or magic. Use the terrain to assist or impede this factor, as necessary.

Overall, never discount the terrain. It will play a part, even if it is totally open, but especially if it isn't.



Use Suitable Deployment

This is where some knowledge of historical tactics and terminology can be handy. Study some of the great battles to see how history’s great generals defeated their enemy (many times “against the odds”). Often the game is won in deployment before a single die is thrown. If the enemy can be induced to deploy his forces incorrectly, chances are that many of his best troops can be kept out of the game until you are ready to defeat them. The best deployment for your army will rely greatly on the strengths and weaknesses of your troops.

Some ideas for tactical formations and deployments based on historical examples and basic principles are below. All friendly deployments are in **blue** and the enemy in the traditional **red**:

Continuous Battleline (Fig 1).

This is simply where you deploy your forces in a long extended battleline of the units to attempt to simultaneously engage and overwhelm the enemy’s units. It is useful if your army is markedly superior numerically, but should be managed carefully to avoid exploitable gaps from appearing in the line. It is also useful to avoid being outflanked by the enemy. Being a simple and unsophisticated formation for fighting, it was used by many barbarian or “untrained” armies historically, and is suitable for many “horde” armies in WFB that can sometimes be unwieldy or unreliable, like Orcs & Goblins or Skaven.

“Echeloned” Line (Fig 2).

In this formation, your battleline is “echeloned” back from the enemy. It is not simply a

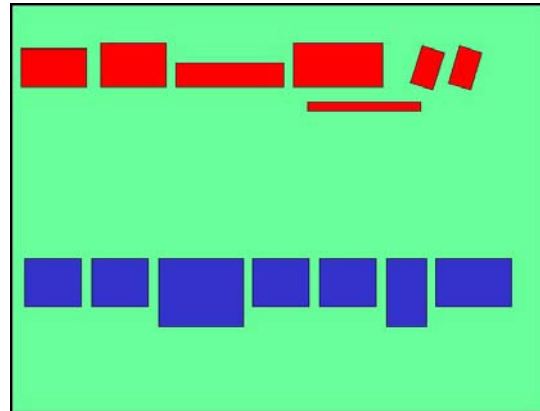


Fig 1: Continuous Battle Line

straight diagonal battleline, but a “staggered” line where units are trailed behind other units. (See Fig 2).

This formation is very good for armies that are numerically weaker than their opponent. The key fighting units are placed in advance of the rest of the line to defeat the key point of the enemy line, whilst the remaining units of the army are echeloned back.

These units protect the flank of the key units by threatening flank-charging units with themselves being flank-charged and by threatening to engage the remainder of the enemy army at any possible point.

This formation can be used in defence or attack. It was historically used by the Thebans at the battle of Leuctra in the first major defeat of the Spartans in Classical Greece, as well as several major defeats of the Persians by Alexander the Great.

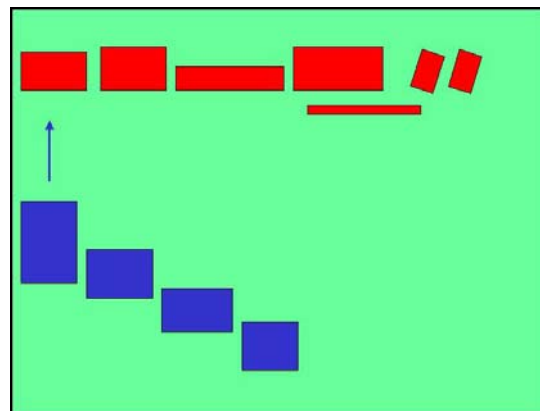


Fig 2: Echeloned Line

“Chequerboard” formation (Fig 3).

The Chequerboard formation was heavily used by the ancient Romans, who called it the “Manipular” formation (after their units or “Maniples” of which it was comprised). The deployment works better with a larger number of small units.

In this formation, deploy your units in several lines that are staggered and offset, so that the second line of units can charge

through gaps between the first line of units. In this way, the second line can plug gaps in the first line, can charge in support of the first line in successful areas, and can protect the first line from flank charges by threatening charges in the flank of enemy units attempting this.

The formation is useful in attack, but is particularly suitable for defence. A solid second line of counter-charging infantry or cavalry can ably support defending war machines in the first line.

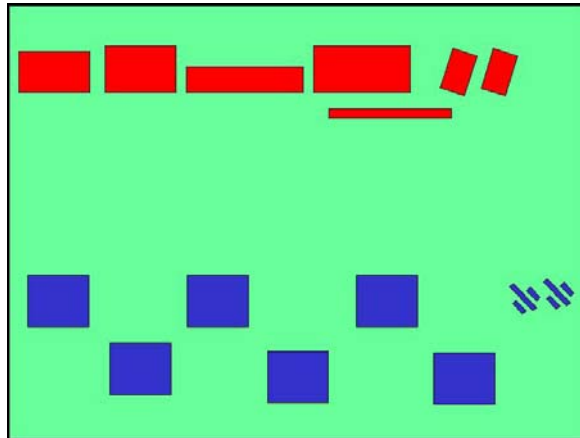


Fig 3: Chequerboard

battleline can be affected. Other units should be echeloned back on both flanks of the wedge to protect the flanks of the lead unit, and subsequently charge units attempting to close the breach, or to exploit the initial success of the breakthrough unit(s).

Wedge (Fig 4).

This formation is a very effective one for attacking, particularly with small elite armies of hard-hitting troops. The formation relies heavily on momentum and winning on the initial charge, because if the formation “bogs down”, it can be outflanked and overwhelmed from the flanks and rear by the numerically superior enemy.

The most hard-hitting unit should be at the point of the wedge and aimed at a defeat able enemy unit where the “break-in” to the enemy

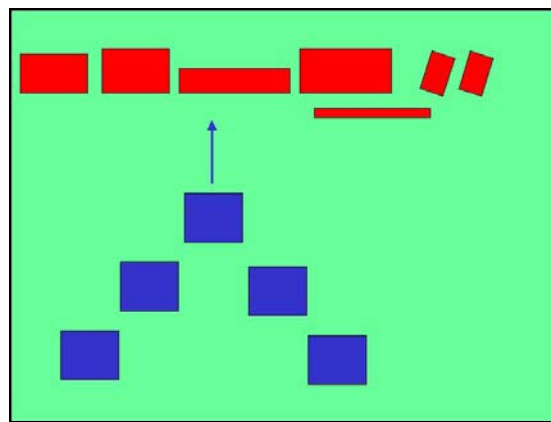


Fig 4: Wedge

Refused Flank (Fig 5).

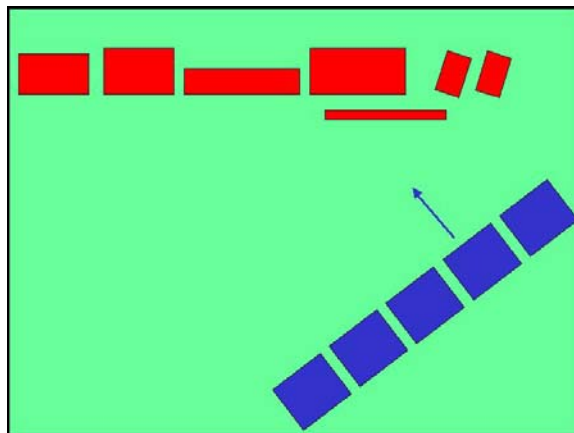


Fig 5: Refused Flank

Many armies that are numerically inferior or lack the mobility of their opponents use a refused flank. Terrain can be used effectively to guard (i.e. refuse) a flank if the terrain is such that it is impassable to the enemy (or would at least take an inordinate amount of time to negotiate the terrain).

The other easy way to refuse a flank is to deploy so that the battleline is at an oblique angle to your opponents. In this way,

the furthest (“refused”) flank is too far for the enemy to effectively engage immediately, yet it is still able to act as a deterrent to enemy flanking movements.

This is a particularly strong defensive formation for steady infantry armies (eg. dwarfs), as it is very difficult to outflank, and negates a large component of the enemy numerical strength.

Flanking attack (Fig 6).

The flanking attack is where one or more units are sent down one flank to try to move around one of the enemy’s flanks and attack from the flank or rear of their battleline. The best flanking units are fast cavalry or fliers, but infantry are able to be used if the remainder of the enemy line is engaged simultaneously to the front to prevent units from turning to face the flank threat.

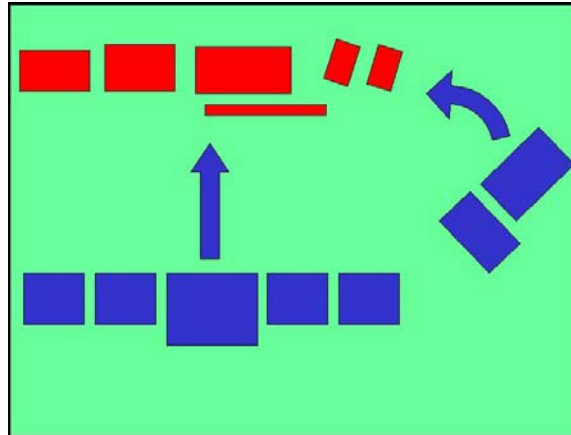


Fig 6: Flanking Attack

The flanking attack is a good offensive deployment, but can also be used in defence. In defence, the solid and more immobile troops from the majority of the line and can either await the enemy battleline, or move slowly forward. Meanwhile more mobile and hard-hitting troops can be sent around the advancing enemy’s flank to try and interfere with his attack or destroy his units from the vulnerable flank or rear. In this way the mobile troops are also not forced into a defensive, waiting role for which they are not well suited.

Encirclement/Pincer (Fig 7)

This is a plan best adopted by mobile and fast troop types, since most infantry will not have the speed to enable them to complete the manoeuvre before the enemy negates it and punches through your thinly spread forces. In WFB, fast cavalry troops are best for this manoeuvre.

This is predominantly an attacking deployment, although an advancing enemy can be encircled if the defender has sufficient fast troops to move out and around the flanks of the advancing enemy battleline.

Small armies of high points-cost troops are often vulnerable to encirclement without a wily deployment of their own. Even slow infantry armies can encircle such armies, however the key is holding the enemy centre, which will invariably be pushing forward with some potent combat troops to try and win the battle before encirclement is achieved. The defender’s centre in such a case will need to be held with decent combat troops or unbreakable troops, or the centre can gradually be pulled back, drawing the enemy further into encirclement.



Now this is what I would call a refused flank! - Ed

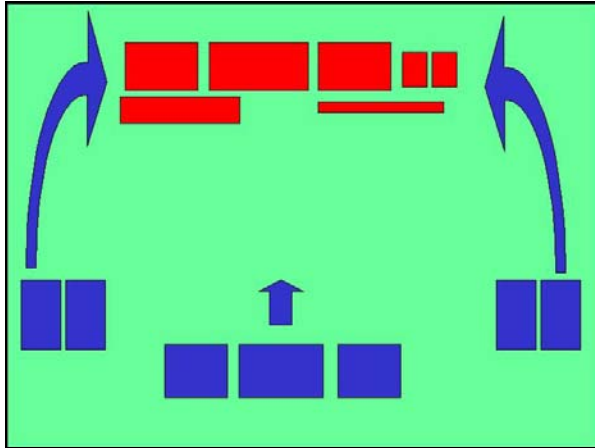


Fig 7: Encirclement/Pincer

Stick to the Plan!

Once you have considered the enemy army and your own, considered the terrain, decide on a deployment and plan, and stick to it! Do not abandon your plan as soon as the enemy moves, and start reacting to him. He should react to your plan, not vice-versa.

After all, your plan is a well thought through, well-reasoned approach to defeating the enemy!



*Byshe the Putrid –
famous for making brilliant tactical plans ... and then abandoning them ...*



Andrew Bishop or “Bish” as he is known to most gamers has been playing Warhammer Fantasy Battles since 1988 (3rd edition) and has collected a number of armies over the years. He is a regular tournament goer, where he represents his club, The Dogs of War Warhammer Club.

Stay Tuned for Part II of Bish’s tactica article in the next issue of Irresistible Force! - Ed.

WARGAMER AU
 Presents:
The MAIN EVENT
III
Warhammer Fantasy
Rogue Trader
Tournament 2003

The Tournament will be held at the Granville RSL Club, Memorial Drive Granville Sydney, NSW on the 7th, 8th & 9th June 2003. Each day doors will be open at 9:00 am with the first game starting promptly at 9:30am. Finish time will be at approximately 5:00pm. Eight games will be played over the course of the weekend. *(Please note same location as last year)*

The Granville RSL Club is a licensed venue with bistro available. Minimum dress standard is collared shirt and no offensive clothing.

Once you have completed your army selection you must submit your army list **by Friday 23rd May**. If you do not make this deadline you will have points deducted and if you fail to submit an army list prior to the start of the tournament you may even be disqualified from the event. **Everyone will have a compliant Tournament Roster signed by the Event organiser!** Your army list may be E-mailed to Stan Veneros or sent via snail mail with your registration.

Contact Stan Veneros on 0402 45 8052 between 7pm & 10pm (Sydney time) or E-mail zeus@wargamer.au. If you wish to mail us by post then we can be contacted at: WargamerAU 2003, 4 Berry Grove, Menai NSW 2234.

Take care and happy gaming!

WargamerAU HQ



Remain in Play

Warhammer Opinion Column by Mike Allen

I reflected recently that those of us who regularly play Warhammer are entering an interesting stage in the life of our favourite game. Have we reached the “high water mark” in the popularity of the game or will things just keep getting better? I think there are indicators that show if nothing else we can expect 2003/2004 to be a time of continuing change.

The tourney scene seems to have increased in strength with tourneys now appearing in far flung outposts such as SA and WA! However in 2002 there was some interesting debate on the nature of tourneys and their size. With previous versions of Warhammer Fantasy tourney organisers were obliged to generate long lists of rules to keep armies reasonable and introduced points for sportsmanship and composition to further generate what was deemed a reasonable gaming environment. Since the 6th edition there has been an interesting drift back towards less tourney rules. On one hand the discarding of the often enormous (I can remember a Cancon list of rules and exceptions being around 20 pages long) sets of rules are a very good thing indeed. On the other, I remain undecided as to whether we are drifting backwards. Points (and therefore prizes) being heavily influenced by factors other than game results, has been a major reason for tourney growth in the last 4 years. The idea being, that whether you are first or last in a tourney you should have a good time regardless. After all even with the most generous of tourney prize lists only

around 10% of participants walk away with a prize. The current trend to decrease the amount of points for non-game play (sportsmanship/painting/etc.) and remove composition rules could be an adjustment to recognise a maturing of the gamer community. However there is also a risk of drifting back to the “bad old days” or at least giving the perception of doing so. I think it is important for all tourney organisers to listen to ALL of their players, not just the most successful ones and to avoid change for its own sake. By my reckoning we have the balance about right at the moment and if we want to keep getting “golden eggs” we better remember to look after “the goose” (or is that geese: honk!)

Though tourneys get a lot of coverage, particularly online, the majority of players of Warhammer don’t play in tourneys. So their view of the hobby tends to be formed by what’s happening in the local GW shop and in games with their mates. So what is happening? Well a lot and not all of it good. The good is the continued flow of better than ever figures and army books, the bad ...

Recently GW Australia announced a range of price rises that impacted throughout the Asia/Pacific region. Now it’s been around 3 years or so since the last price rise so some increase was to be expected. Of course nobody wants the price to go up, but with inflation at around 3% a rise of around 10% would have been reasonable.

I think everyone was shocked, if

not surprised, when some items rose around 25%. Naturally people got quite vocal about this and some vowed to not play the game, buy no more armies etc; the usual response. The effect of this price rise will mean that some gamers won't buy that new army for a while but overall the key market for GW, adolescent boys, will still be leaning on mum or grandma to buy the latest 40K "megawhatsit" for \$95! But leaving that aside, was the rise fair? Is the company struggling? Are they about to go the way of Ansett and HIH and deal a crushing blow to our hobby? This got me thinking that most of us have no idea about GW the company so I found some interesting things on their web site that you might like to know.

Often you hear that the US is the big deal in GW but the numbers don't actually support this. 76% of the stores are in UK/Europe and they derive 58%+ of the sales from the same source and only 26% of sales from the US. GW had a turnover of £108.5 million (around \$A275 million and around double of 5 years ago) in 2002 with a retained profit after taxation of £8.6 million. This is a solid if not spectacular performance. More interesting is their 5 year performance which shows a slump during 2000 and 2001 with current earnings being in line with 1998 on a per-share and net profit basis. What is a very good performance in the current flat world economy is that in 2002 there was a 17% increase in turnover, a 20% increase in operating profit and a 23% increase in shareholder dividend payments. There's a lot more information on the GW website under "investor", but for me whatever caused the substantial price rise this year it wasn't the financial state of the company. Sure I'll still be playing

Warhammer, but I'm one of the grey beards who's new armies are likely to be someone else's figure range (or at least that's what I tell myself ... arghh!! the new beastman range, resist, resist ...)

I'll let you decide whether the hobby is getting better or GW pricing is fair, I'm just the messenger ☺. 'till next time.

Mike

Plastics Fantastic

By Ming Chang

I love plastic miniatures!

I still remember the first plastics GW brought out way back when. In a box the size of present day GW plastic sets. You got 60 figures: 10 Goblins, 10 Skaven, 10 Orcs, 10 Wood Elves, 10 Dark Elves and 10 Dwarves. They were really well sculpted minis too, sculpted by the Perry twins.

I think I managed to collect over 100 of the Skaven over the years from these fantasy regiments sets and they form the bulk of my present day slaves and "emergency" plague monk figures. All my armies are made up of a majority of plastic figures from Bretonnian knights to Stormvermin. They are just so handy to make up and convert.

I've recently plunged into the world of the various plastic soldier sets and was impressed with the range and interchangeability of the minis. The fact that you construct each figure from bases, arm and head positions makes each figure a conversion project. I went a bit crazy with my first regiment, mixing the zombie, empire militia and skeleton sets to create my Grave Guard.

Because you have so much freedom to personalise each miniature, they all ended up looking like character models. It looks like a bit of a mess at the moment so I'm hoping the painting will bring it all together. Eventually, all the core and elite troopers in my undead army will be good old plastics.

One good thing about the plastic sets is all the bits you get. From spikes to bones, arrows and spare weapons, it's really handy when you want to add that little extra detail. I also find plastics to be more durable than the metals. Paint rarely chips off them because they are on a softer surface. Plastics are also less prone to breakage when they are dropped because they are more likely to bend than blow apart like metal miniatures. I've stored all my Skaven slaves in a plastic bag at the bottom of my tackle box for years and there's not a scratch on them.

And of course there's the price. Although the price per figure of plastics has gone up, they are still a cheap and easy way to build up a big army. A few people still deride the idea of 'placcy' miniatures in their army seeing them as a 'cheap and nasty' alternative to metal miniatures. There are a few sets that fall short of the grade like the blocky High Elf spearmen and the Skaven with oversized hands and feet. They are the exceptions though.

Metal miniatures will always lead the way in the amount of detail you can put into a miniature but plastic miniatures are now right up there in terms of sculpted quality. It's hard to tell a well painted plastic apart from a metal miniature on today's battlefields. When plastics first came out, the differences were quite obvious.

Every mini looked the same and areas of fine detail, like faces and hands were blockier looking. Today, with the variation you can get from plastics, identical units on paper will be easily distinguished from each other on the battlefield. The metal minis will always be there for characters and elite units but it doesn't take much skill to convert analogous plastic figures to fill those choices too.

Ming

Ming's latest undead horde is a fantastic example of what can be done with plastics. We aim to feature Ming's army in the next issue of Irresistible Force! – Ed



Do you have pictures of your miniatures that you would like to have shown in Irresistible Force? Then send them in to editor@irresistibleforce.net

Try to get the best resolution you can and make sure they are either in JPEG or GIF format.

We are always on the lookout for pictures of finely painted miniatures and/or great conversions.

So get them in! - Ed

2003 Australasian Warhammer Player Rankings (as at 10th May)

A few years ago I devised a rankings system which I used to publish players and their rankings in the various categories of Warhammer Fantasy tournament play. With so much on my plate my fledging rankings system was placed on the back burner but not before it had aroused some keen interest from my fellow gamers.

Andrew Bishop has taken up the baton and set about reviving an Australasian rankings system. "Bish" has a few ideas up his sleeve with the rankings system, so stay tuned for further updates in Irresistible Force. Here is Bish's spiel on his rankings system. Enjoy! - Ed

The ranking system is a simple one:

- This ranking is a summary. It is intended as an indicator only of a player's consistency across a "Tournament Season". Please think of the rankings in this way – a bit like a "form-guide" and not the hard and fast definition of how good players are. Every system will have flaws, but I have settled on what I thought was the fairest and most indicative method of showing player form.
- Only Players who have results recorded in two or more tournaments are displayed. This is done to display consistency of position within multiple tourneys. If you do not see your name, it is still recorded in the overall database, which has results for some 237 individual players. Even some players who have placed 1st in tournaments are not recorded in this summary if they have not played at two or more tournaments.
- The following Tournaments have been recorded in the rankings to date this year: Dogcon (82 Players), Arcanacon (16 players), Cancon (60 Players), Brisbane GT (42 players), Sydney GT (40 players), SPAWN (40 Players), Conquest (18 players), Natcon NZ (40 Players), Auran Big Weekend (45 players), Valleycon NZ (12 Players).
- All tournament results provided to me have been used. Tourneys below an arbitrary numerical cut off have not been excluded. If organisers wish their past or future tournament to be included, please email the overall player's tournament rankings to me at: bishbec@bigpond.com
- The Oz WFB Tourney Rankings are based on Player's overall ranking at each tournament. Tournaments of all points' values (ie. 1500, 2000, 2500 points) have been included. Since the results are based on overall rankings, point's difference or competition rules variations between tournaments do not matter.
- Players ranked 1st overall in a tourney are ranked higher overall than those that placed 2nd etc. Within rankings, tie-breaks for overall rankings are given to the player with that ranking in the larger tournament (in number of players). So if 4 players all have a 1st place result, their ranking within the 1st place getters is determined by which tourney was the largest. In the event of tourneys being the same size, the higher ranked player will be the one highest placed in second and subsequent tourneys.
- I will continue to update the ranking system throughout the remainder of 2003 (and plan to continue into subsequent years). Hopefully Andrew will continue to publish the ranking summary for everyone's interest sake in subsequent issues of Irresistible Force. *(We will definitely publish it! – Ed)*
-

Rank	Player Name	Results					
		Best	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	Tourneys
1	Charles Black	1	2	2			S, D, B
2	Don Riddick	1	4				D, B
3	Matt Lubbock	1	5	8			Co,S,D
4	John Robinson	1	5	10			Bi,B,C
5	Reid Pittams	1	5				N,D
6	Keith Williamson	1	7	22			Sp,S,D
7	James Whitehead	1	10				A,Co
8	Andrew Goodman	2	2				Co, A
9	Stuart Robinson	2	4				V,N
10	Jeff Traish	2	6	8			S, D,Sp
11	Brad Peel	2	10	11	18		Bi,S,Sp,B
12	Jeff Galea	2	15	16			Sp,D,S
13	Mike King	3	3	14	36		N,V,B,D
14	Bill Edwards	3	3				D, B
15	Michael Fair	3	3				C,S
16	Chris Wilcox	3	7	21	40		Bi,B,S,C
17	Andrew Bishop	3	9	16			Co,S,D
18	Ken Ferris	3	10				Sp,D
19	Paul Witterick	4	6				Co,A
20	Lachlan McWhirter	4	8				S,B
21	Richard Shepherd	4	18	33			Bi,S,B
22	Todd Robinson	4	28				V,N
23	Laurie Goodridge	4	39				Sp,D
24	Trent Denison	5	8				Bi,S
25	Kent McIntosh	5	15	73			N,S,D
26	Wellington Oag	5	20	24			Sp,D,S
27	Sean Ireland	5	27				Co,C
28	Bruce Tobin	6	6				B, S
29	Peter Loft	6	13	18			Sp,S,D
30	Andrew Stanton	6	19				V,N
31	Dino Zanon	7	9				Co,C
32	Lorne Gibson	7	10				Bi,B
33	John OConnor	7	12				D, S
34	Mark Hall	7	18				A,Co
35	Ming Chang	7	27	27			Sp,D,S
36	Gordon Oldfield	7	45				N,D
37	Nick Ashby	8	11	19			Bi,B,C

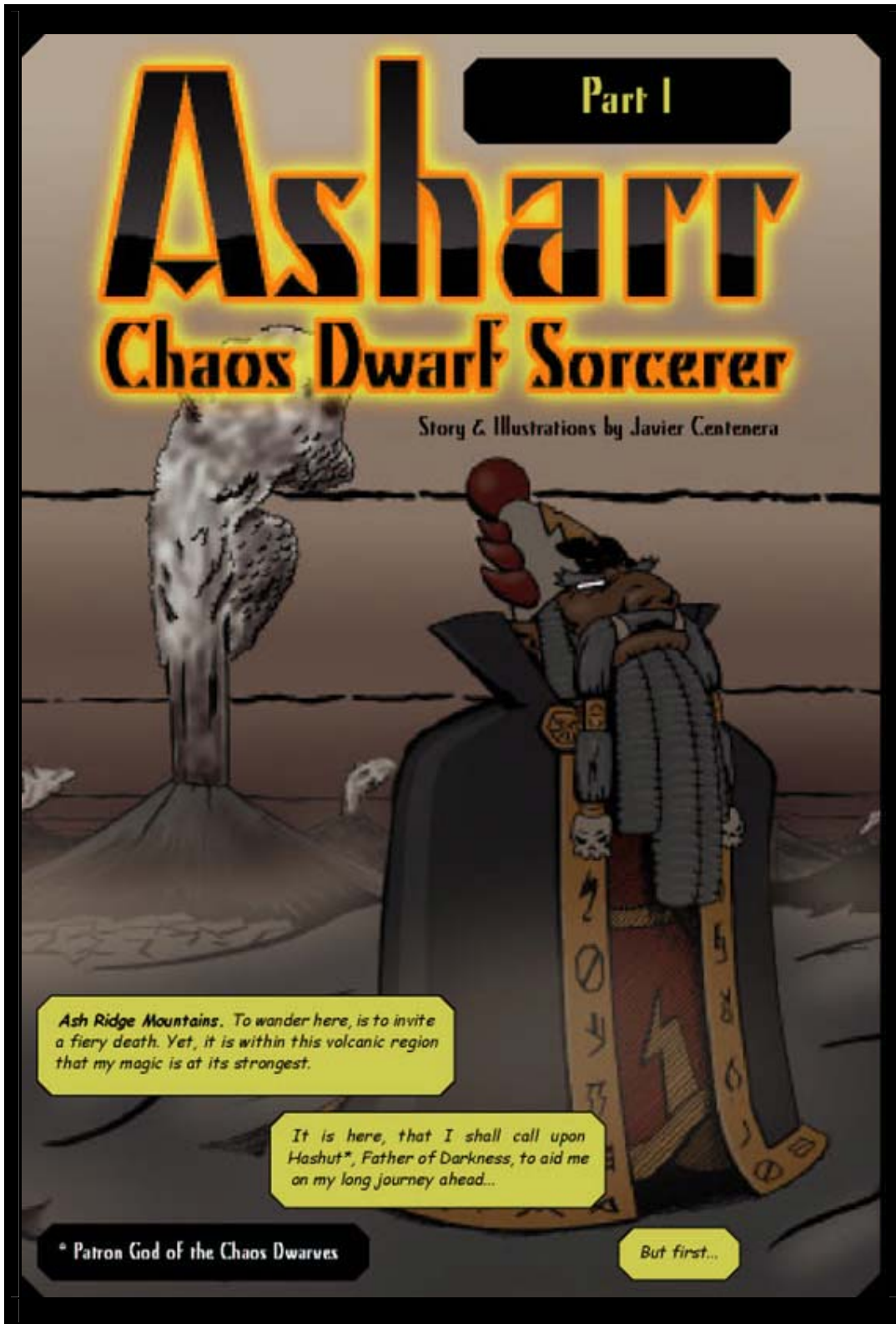
38	Tarquin Murnane	8	17				A,Co
39	Andrew Shepard	8	18				V,N
40	Alex Phoon	8	71				N,D
41	Steve Jones	9	13				Sp,D
42	Jay Calvert	9	18				B,Bi
43	Jason Bury	9	23				D,Sp
44	Alex Sykes	9	27				Bi,B
45	Partha Kamalakkannan	10	41				Sp,D
46	Nathan Burns	10	41				Bi,B
47	Scot Cranfield	11	17				S, D
48	Wade Colpitts	12	36				Bi,B
49	Neil Stehr	13	20				B, S
50	Warwick Back	13	53				Sp,D

Key:

- D = Dogcon (82 players)
- A = Arcanacon (16 players)
- C = Cancon (60 players)
- B = Brisbane GT (42 players)
- S = Syd GT (40 players)
- Sp = SPAWN (40 players)
- Co = Conquest (18 players)
- N = Natcon NZ (40 players)
- Bi = Auran Big Weekend (45 players)
- V = Valleycon NZ (12 players)



An enslaved necromancer is forced to do the bidding of his Von Carstein vampire captors.









Sydney GT 2003 – Tournament Report

By
Matt Lubbock

After having done reasonably well at the January DOGCON tournament with my Khorne Daemon army, I was keen to see if I could do better at the Sydney GT. I also had the added incentive that the army was completed and there would be no last minute rushing that is typical of most armies that I put into the field. As I have a long tradition of forgetting something of import every time I travel to play, I spent my normal rush time carefully packing everything into one case and preparing myself to go. I was in the cab on the way to the airport when I realised that I had left that carefully packed case by the front door. Ten minutes later I was away with the case safely tucked into my baggage and looking forward to some great gaming.



As usual I travelled up from Melbourne with Andrew Bishop. The scan through the bomb detectors was interesting, with me getting stopped just because the woman on the scanner had young kids who played and wanted to see the big flying thing. After checking into our hotel we had some time to kill before we were meeting Lachlan McWhirter at the new Battle Bunker. We decided to while away our time checking out the drinking establishments within walking distance of the Sydney Town Hall, getting to at least 10 prior to registering at the new Bunker. (Warning Gratuitous praise for GW coming up). Upon walking into the basement playing grounds just next to the Town Hall, I was stunned by the space, amount of playing tables and the atmosphere that had been generated by GW in this new flagship for the Australian chain.

What impressed me most was that the Bunker felt much more like a club house than a retail outlet. I could have comfortably settled in for a few pick-up games, without the feeling that I would be rushed out for the next person to have a go. Congratulations to all the guys involved and I hope that it continues to maintain that great feeling. (End Praise)

We headed towards registration and managed to catch up with some of the other GW staff that I had known from my last extended stay in Sydney. (These were the same guys who sent copies of White Dwarf to Egypt for me when I was stationed there with a peacekeeping force, a gesture I will not soon forget). After registering and joining up with Lachy and Al Borthwick, we went out for dinner (which was also the scene of the much lauded Lachy pointing to the bleachers and announcing that not only would he go undefeated, but would also win every game) and then ended up having a fairly early evening, mainly because Bish and I were feeling a little sleepy after drinking from around 2pm.

Well two alarms and a wake-up call later, Bish and I roused ourselves from a drunken slumber and prepared to walk to the venue at the Sydney Town Hall. Being a little bit earlier than anticipated (about 30 mins of wasted sleep) we managed to find ourselves unloading scenery onto tables and helping to move pieces into more strategic positioning for charges by Greater Daemons (that last bit was a joke). When the actual start time rocked around I was happily inundated by the usual hails from the many great friends that I have made during the last couple of years playing. Also as I had had the chance to unpack the furious red guys, I was also getting some very positive comments about how they looked and the feel of the army, something that I take a great deal of pride over. One of the longer conversations I had was with "Daz" from the Denizens of the Coast club, who was then announced as my first opponent for the tourney.

John ‘Daz’ O’Connor (Chaos)

“Daz” had put together a very fast Slaneesh Chaos Warrior army that was looking particularly tough to beat. With a unit of chosen knights and two chariots I was feeling that my lines would have to do well to hold from the initial impact. I managed to get the first turn and made a major mistake straight away, placing the Bloodthirster in a position where a light cav unit could charge him in the flank and he would have to overrun off the board if he won. Luckily “Daz” failed his terror test to charge, and the game got worse from there from his point of view. Whilst I rolled average, “Daz” couldn’t pull a trick, and ended up going down fairly hard. It was over so quick that we decided to have a return match, with me playing the warriors this time. Again the furious reds were in the ascendancy, but the result was much closer this time. John and I then spent the remaining time talking about our next armies, with our conversation being centred on John’s upcoming Tomb King host, an army that I can’t wait to see as the scratch built Sphinx as the Bone Giant looks great.



Dave Palmer (Vampire Counts)

With Dave and I both being in the army, and me out ranking him, I made sure that he called me ‘Sir’ for the entire game and deferred to all my calls on range and rules interpretations. No wonder he won best sport, putting up with gits like me is enough to get 5’s straight away. Dave’s VC army looked fantastic and was well themed, and with a lot of fast expendable units I was expecting to get dragged around by my frenzy for a while. So did Dave, but he then suffered from a case of “You will do exactly as I plan and do nothing out of the ordinary” syndrome. Having gone first I moved my Bloodthirster to a position to charge his big unit of Knights lead by his lord, as well as protecting the flank of the Bloodletter unit that the knights would likely impact. Dave, seeing this, moved a unit of hounds opposite the BT, willing me to charge them and be drawn off. I pointed out to Dave that the big guy could charge over intervening units and he would probably go for the knights. Dave nodded and smiled and then proceeded to give me the knight’s

flank with an overrun into the flank of his grave guard unit! After that it was all over, and all Dave could say was: “He even told me and I still did it, what was I thinking?” Once again we had time for the reverse match and this time the VC’s came out on top, with the Thrall killing the BT in Turn 3, putting me up for my own little prize of killing him fastest in a game.

A fun couple of games that I can’t wait to repeat soon. And also another congrats to Dave for taking out the Sports award. Thoroughly deserved.

Brad Peel (Chaos Warriors)

For those who have not seen Brad's Tiger theme Chaos Warrior Army, you are missing out. The modelling and the composition choices are great, the only advice I would give is to replace the horrors pulling the chariots with more tigers. That being said, Brad certainly knows how to handle this army. He had me on the ropes from the get go, with his hounds drawing my units out and the chariots and knights giving my Bloodletters a good going over. The only chance I had to come back in the game occurred when two of his character laden chariots charged the big guy and failed to produce enough wounds. The resulting splintering timbers allowed me to get back into a drawing position that was secured when my last unit of 'letters broke two light cav units gaining their standards. This was a thoroughly enjoyable game that had me on the back foot and thinking hard throughout. I can't wait for the future rematch!



Well, after five matches in the space of three I was a little bit worn out. I had done fairly well on the first day and was going as per an earlier prediction (that is well and then muff it on the last game). However Lachlan had not been so right in his predictions. The looming threat of Bish's Nurgle Daemons had narrowly managed a win over Lachy, who was now the subject of every second person pointing imperiously off into the distance ☺. A game of Future Risk (whatever the name of it really is has escaped me) was on the cards at Lachy's place, but I was not too dismayed to find out that the places had already been filled by people staying at Casa De Lockjaw. So instead Bish and I had a fairly quiet night by games weekend standards, only having a few beers with dinner at the Pump House in Sydney (fully recommend their pizzas) before retiring at about 10:30. Once again awakening to the sound of multiple alarms I blearily headed towards the shower and another great day of Warhammer.

I usually like to get in a bit early on the second day to be able to setup my army and then spend a fair bit of time checking out the amazing armies that have been modelled up and painted since I was last at a tournament. Once again the standard was simply superb. There are too many great armies to name, but I must single out Lachlan's well converted Slaneesh Chaos Warriors and Ming Chang's fantastic Undead Pirates (*Featured in next issue of Irresistible Force – Ed*). Once he gets the ship modelled up I am sure this army will grace the pages of White Dwarf at some stage. With the beauty pageant over, I was to face a bit of a nemesis of mine, "Doc", who I had never managed to beat in tournament play.



Richard 'Doc' Sheppard (Tomb Kings)

Richard "Doc" Sheppard had taken a "shooty" Tomb Kings army based on the poisoned arrow ability conferred by taking the Asp Queen as a special character. Personally I am not a fan of special characters, but Doc had ensured that he had played to the characters theme in constructing a tough competitive army. I did eventually mark him down in composition, but only for my irrational peeve against special characters.

This game proved to be one of huge emotional and tactical swings for both of us. When Doc's skull chucker misfired on its first shot he looked devastated and looked around for something with which to counter the threat of the Bloodthirster. With no ranked units, I told him he would have to rely on his massed shooting and magic missiles to take him down. I should have shut my mouth, for after two turns of shooting (I had stupidly forgotten to use my Magic

Resistance against the Asp Queens staff, firmly rooting the Bloodthirster to the spot) the big guy was down. After the 10 minutes of Doc doing a victory dance and me informing the hall that he was a casualty (putting Doc into the hunt for quickest kill for the 'Thirster, something I give out whenever I play him) we got down to the rest of the game. I was just hoping that I could get over Doc's Tomb Scorpion and Swarm speed humps in time to get to his main line to get some points back, and due to some exceptional Fleshounds (3 combat rounds with some skellies and Tomb Prince) I did managed to drag enough points back for a draw.

I must say that this had been a great game, with both Doc and I having opportunities to put the game beyond doubt. My prediction was starting to look ominous and I would have to avoid any further silly mistakes if I was going to place well. However, I was feeling fairly happy that I would play Peter Loft, Charles Black or Lachy in my final game due to game score, whilst avoiding one of the armies that I thought I was mismatched against.... Jeff Traish's Skaven. Well as with all good thoughts of mine, this one also proved to be wrong.

Jeff Traish (Skaven)

Well I went into this game with the double despair of my normal performance last game and thinking I had no way to beat the rat boys. As with all negative thoughts, this turned into a self fulfilling prophecy. Jeff played a great game with no mistakes, wielding his rats like the Grey Seer who was his namesake. Many died to setup charges and the warpstone was used to fry friend and foe alike. My stupidest move came when I did not elect to flank charge a ranked unit of clanrats that was in combat with the big guy when I had the chance. Of course he popped in that combat phase and I was pushing against it from that time on. Jeff had conducted himself extremely well; fielding what I thought was a fairly archetypical Grey Seer led force. Sitting on 90/100 battle points at the end of the game he was still saying that he had little chance of placing, something that I was quite confident that he would do. And as one of my predictions had already come true (me fluffing my last game) why couldn't another one?



With one eye on the clock (having a flight to catch home in about 1 ½ hours) I was a little hesitant to stay for the award giving ceremony, but stayed to cheer on all the worthy players (also I was pretty sure that Bish was going to pick up either the Players Choice or Best Army for his Nurgle Daemons). Charles was my favourite for winning and breaking a streak of being the bridesmaid, but he was keen to play down his chances except for getting the Ugliest Generals award again. After a quick turn around time (I think it was about 15 mins after the last game had finished, well done the organisers) the GW guys bounced onto the stage and proceeded to thank everybody for making their life easier. I joined heartily in the applause as I had just had seven terrific games over the two days in a friendly and well organised environment.

As predicted Bish managed to take out the Players Choice award, I think narrowly pipping out Ming Chang who picked up the Best painted award. I was very happy to see that others had enjoying playing Dave as much as I had and to see him pick up the coveted Best Sports Award. However I was thoroughly stunned to hear my name read out for the Best Army award. This is the award after First Overall that I truly wish to gain at some stage. To see this level of recognition for my army is something that is worth more than the award itself. Thanks to all who also thought that even with a Greater Daemon it was still in theme. Finally the overall prizes were given out, with Mike Fair receiving Third with his Lizards and Jeff managing to get onto the podium in Second place. My final prediction had come true however, with Charles Black placing First Overall with his brilliant Fire Chaos Warrior Army.

With a dash and a quick ride across town, Bish and I managed to make our flight home. We were lucky to have my girlfriend, Leigh, pick us up from the airport so we could exchange all the great times we had had over the weekend and regale her with stories of daring do (unfortunately she's not particularly impressed by all my swash buckling tales). I am still pumped after this great weekend and I want to say a big thankyou to all the GW staff that made this a great event, Bryan and the guys you all did a fantastic job. I also want to thank the five players who gave me such great games with no rules disputes or arguments. I can't wait until the Melbourne GT starts.

For those who want to know, the following is my army list:

Bloodthirster

3 x 20 Bloodletters (Musician and Standard)

4 x 5 Fleshounds

Matt

WANTED!

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The Plains of Gildress

Further acts of Louis D'Montforte, Scourge of Brettonia

By
Ken Ferris

Sir Galton, Duke of Merrylas,

Your Duchery is, due to unfortunate circumstance, about to be subjugated to my realm. As the Duke of these lands, you are left with a decision. At best, you can flee these lands, leaving all stragglers of your entourage to be added to my ever-conquering army. Your knighthood will be stripped and your lands forfeit, but alive you shall be. At worst, you will have the honour of bearing my personal standard at the front of my army, proclaiming the ever expansion of my realm.

I understand that you, as the leader of a desperate coalition, are gathering many souls to face me. I appreciate this gesture, and if thou does choose to stand, shall meet you on the plains of Gildress. I expect a pleasant outcome.

Louis D'Montforte

By the flickering light Pieter was examining the map of the surrounding Brettonian provinces. The small manor was quiet now, the odd pig grunted outside, a counter point to the deathly still knights around the manor house itself, standing with inanimate stillness, they would only moved when told to do so.

“I still think we should slip by Galton. There is no need for this ridiculous endeavour. If we enter Durring, it will be lightly defended, and we can bypass the only army between us and Parravon.”

“Ahhhh” Louis gave out a long sigh, then dropped the drained body of the lord of the manor to the ground. “Oh that’s rich; nobility always has that flavour to it, even if Sir Gallus here was well past his prime”.

“Have you had enough?” Pieter snapped “The family on the grounds, those children and the lady, now him, still hungry? Should I fetch one of the pigs for you?”

“Now now, don’t be disgusting Pieter, a family a night is enough to appease me before this confrontation.”

“I remember when you ate pigs Louis, and listened to my

council instead of acting with this foolish disdain.” Pieter stated with obvious frustration in his voice.

“Please, finishing off the entire family is doing them a favour, we wouldn’t want one feeling left out.”

“Shut up, damn it Louis! Concentrate on the plan! Why does evading an army of knights for certain victory rub your addled brain the wrong way?”

Louis’ eyes went flat, the stare directed at Pieter made the hairs on the back of his neck rise. Louis’ necromantic talent had risen considerably of late, and flat hatred was never a good sign on an unhinged individual such as him.

“I’d choose my words more carefully, old man.” Louis had risen but was pacing the opposite side to the table, not glancing at the map. “By destroying ‘brave’ Sir Galton, and the army, we are through the Gates of Parravon before we arrive. Nothing can stand before us, and the closest army would then be weeks away, by that time we would be entrenched in the city. Alternatively, slipping by, we could reach the city, but we

would then be surrounded if the siege takes any amount of time. And I want it to take time Pieter, I want the city to weep in pain before every soul joins my ever conquering army.”



“Yes yes, that’s very enticing” Pieter muttered sarcastically. “But why on the open plain? Armoured knights will cut our army to ribbons.”

“Not when I cut them first. I know their formation, I know the tactics. I am the quintessential knight of the modern era, albeit without the ladies guidance, perhaps that’s why I am superior still!” Louis finished in a crescendo, only to start muttering again, “yes, superior, the best ever, undefeated champion...”.

It was becoming an irritatingly familiar routine; perhaps Louis' grasp on the winds of magic was a little more tenuous that Pieter gave him credit.

"You will defeat a hundred knights single handed? It's impossible. We need more strike power. Yourself, and Philippe are not worth a hundred knights. It's not a one on one duel!"

"Philippe holds his own." Louis said with a smile, turning to the wight at the door. The wight turned to face the 2 occupants, that hideous grin fixed on his face. Pieter wished he hadn't taught him to do that. "Our knights will hold their own, don't you worry"

"But that's one unit! Where's the rest? The infantry don't have your rage, or skill. Your will power can animate them yes, but you are not yet skilled enough to turn them into a half decent fighting force. You lack concentration in combat."

"I? I lack concentration? I lack will power? I am the supreme vampire of the modern era." Louis struck a pose, and was starting to strut. Pieter kicked himself for setting him off again "I cannot be beaten! A thousand knights couldn't".

THUNK, the dull sound of a wooden bolt hitting flesh caused Pieter to whirl around. A crossbow bolt was imbedded in Louis' stomach, the tip poking out his lower back. Shock was written all over Louis' face, and he fell to his knees.

The door was open, Philippe had been knocked

over and not willed to rise. A wild eyed man was diving at Louis, crossbow raised to bludgeon the vampire.

"Murderer, evil fiend" the crossbow descended...

With a spoken word Pieter knocked the man flat across the room, crashing into the wall. Louis pulled the bolt out of his body with a sharp intake of breath, then collapsed on the floor in pain at the action.

"Focus Louis, for god sake you aren't dead, heal yourself, and stop that whining." Pieter crossed the room slowly towards the intruder. He grabbed the man, and tilted his head back. "A peasant. The mighty D'Montforte felled by a peasant, albeit a crazy one." The man was struggling against the pressure Pieter was placing to keep the man on the floor, but the man was assuredly insane. The look in his eyes reminded him of one thing, a zealot he saw as a youth, crazed into fervour.

"Lets stick a bolt in you, and see how you react old fool" on his feet, Louis looked no worse for wear. Anger flashed before him. "What is this peasant's last wish."

"Thou art damned" The man spat.

"Probably" Louis agreed.



"My wife, my children, my lord here, all gone, for that, you are damned!"

A look of disappointment crossed Louis' face. "She wasn't the Dukes wife? That takes all the fun out of it." Louis paced back the other way. Pieter thought him pouting,

muttering about lowering his standards.

"Speak more man, for this is your last. What grips you now" Pieter increased the pressure his boot had on the man's neck.

"Thou slay my family. I sought the ladies advice, like I have every morrow, but she still deserts the common man. So it's time for a new prayer. I told the lady where to shove her nobility. The world art damned with the foulness of you in the world, so kill me, or I'll kill you, thou art just a man. Like any other, and people like you are an abomination on this world."

"Actually, I resent that" Louis crossed the floor, and knelt, his face a mere inch from the peasant. "I am not a man at all, more a nightmare of creation. And if the lady doesn't help you, then the world is damned without my influence, is it not?"

"There is no lady, no god, no ever-after. Just life and death. I'll be the judge of what does what." The Peasant rose sharply, tried to bite or grab Louis.

"Oh, he is feisty, all right. A lot of rage. So much rage." Jumping back, Louis was laughing. "I think we could use him."

"You're not serious. This peasant is crazy. Beyond crazy. He could never amount to anything; surely you jest at your misfortune Louis, and talk irrational once again."

"You wanted more strike power. He's strike power. You want tactics, he's a tactic. We throw him in the middle of some knights, tell them they follow the lady, and then we sit back and watch."

“You’re a fool Louis, you will rue this day, I swear.”

“I’ll be the judge of that” Louis jerked the man to his feet, and bit deeply into his neck. But his left hand slashed itself along the blade of the still immobile Philippe, obligingly having raised his weapon.

“Drink deep crazy one, you’re about to be used, and provide us all with some entertaining abilities” and the peasant attached himself to the arm of Louis d’Montforte.



Nothing to do with the story, but what a miniature! – Ed

Darkness shrouded the road and plains, as Pieter Von Drak journeyed down the road towards Merryllas, trees blacker than black across the sky.

“I can’t believe you called him Mannfred”

Louis put on a look of fake shock. “But, Von Drak, you knew Mannfred was my favourite character. All those stories of vampire’s histories, the night, the exploits, Walash in the tower, Vlad at Altdorf, you knew Mannfred was my hero, even if he was of different blood than I. So what’s wrong with naming after your favourite story, people do it all the time. How may children get named after

the king? The duke of the area, or some Sigmar spin-off in your fancy empire.”

Pieter just shook his head. “He’s completely mad. Damn this, damn that. Look at him for god sake. He’s your surprise tactic?”

Mannfred was writing ‘Damning’ slogans on the standard for his unit of knights. Since being given half of them to lead, he was taking time to individualise every dead knight in the unit with a special message of his own crazy concoction. At least they couldn’t hear his ramblings.

“He is a weapon Pieter, you saw him fight. I will keep teaching him the art, in two days time he may make or break us. Or you might as well, or both. Even Philippe may play a role. So hows about you try to encourage our newest member in the ways of vampiric ness, as you have with I, look at how I have turned out.”

“Somebody save me” Pieter whirled, only to stumble into the smiling Philippe, as Louis thought; he tilted his head, and whirled a little crazily. Pieter swore as he stormed off.

No sense of humour that crusty old man. Takes everything personally. Louis sent out his will, sensing the army’s presence, ordering a stop to its march. The skeletons stood in their place, waiting for the next command. They had reached the plains of Gildress. Nothing now but to wait for some people to kill.

“He is on the other side of the plain, my Lord, he numbers many dead knights in two formations, standard flat, and ranked skeletons, as the scouts who came back confirmed. We found Fredrick dead and Whilhelm stiff with fright, he will no longer squire effectively, he has no spirit left for fighting the horrors of this world.”

Galton nodded at hearing this, As the stirrups were tightened, the armour checked by the knight reporting. Young Sir Francis, new to his spurs,

showed such unbelievable promise for one so young. A fine knight as he controlled his flights of fancy.

“The men are being prepared for what we face by their Sergeants, the unit Champions have prepared the knights. Wedge formation, those dead skeletons cannot stand up to our charge is the opinion of our noble knights”.

“Perhaps.” Galton spoke rarely; he preferred to act with his sword. Words were to be easily tampered with. “Pray the Lady sees it that way.”

Francis was nodding in agreement, before starting with more reports on the men, but Galton raised his hand. “Inform all the knights not to break the battle line without support. Make it known honour will leave those that do. Start with the Errants, their foolish impetuous acts could cost many lives, we deal with a dread foe today, and mistakes will only aid his cause.”

Staring at the army arrayed across the plain, Louis understood Pieters concern. There were 5 units of knights of the realm easily identifiable, plus fool errants, and several contingents of the noble’s squires and men at arms. Louis made out Galton, leading the largest unit of the realm knights. His personal banner was large and impressive, not all that unfamiliar from one he remembered from a life long ago.

Glancing to his own army, he smiled. Mannfred was clearly eager; he was reminding Louis of a warhorse champing at the bit to run free. Philippe was in his unit of dead knights, smiling at the enemy,

Louis altered the face to something more suitably menacing. The ranks upon ranks of skeletons were in several contingents, his own unit looked very...well, dead, as did the other blocks. Pieter interestingly looked totally at home surrounded by the bones and rusty weapons.

Closing his eyes, Louis focused, connecting to the winds of magic, taking more control over those moving from his spell. Then, he started the advance.

Galton moved cautiously, glancing left and right, while trying to remain focussed on the figure of dread in front of him. d'Montforte looked totally calm, armoured and ready, shield and sword, glinting unlike the rest of the army. Dark pulses seemed to emanate from him and occasionally from the crusty

old man further down the line. The sorcerer who accompanied him, Galton had heard he was as dangerous, and just as devious. Rumour was he had absolutely no sense of the correct way to make war, unlike the thing that had brought us to the field today.

Behind him, he heard Johanna muttering, praying and could almost feel her gesturing, the Lady had blessed her with magics that matched her beauty, and the men took comfort from her presence as much as from her connection to another world. Secretly, Galton knew this was no place for a lady, no matter her abilities.

Pieter was saving himself, but had been trying to help Louis' focus through the march; he still did not have total control. The Vampire's unit was close to the first units of Knights, the men at arms were racing to catch up. Galton knew that Louis can only be on one battle line at a time, if he was caught away from a

unit, it would crumble and Pieter's Vampire would surely be lost. Pieter swore and hurried his own unit accordingly.

Galton suddenly cursed. That idiot Damel had broken the line! Sir Damel's host, chanting and boasting, seemed unable to follow his order, and raced towards the dread vampire. Knights splayed out behind him in an impressive wedge. A foolish move. He whipped back towards d'Montforte. A smile played out across the thing's lips, as he halted his unit, and advanced a little out before the animated bones around him, to take on the knights by himself.

Louis swayed out of the way of the point knight's lance, and swung low, taking out the legs of the horse. As the momentum went past, his



backhand swing cleft the second knight's stomach apart. He continued to pirouette, the swing connecting behind the vampire with the fallen point knight, taking his head from his shoulders. Louis' turn continued, catching the third man in the torso.

Halting his momentum, and reversing the grip of his blade, Louis rammed it reverse into the back of the passing knight skewering him. The movements of the vampire were but a blur, and carnage resulted from his every move. Carved flesh, splintered bone and pain.

The lance of a knight in the third rank of the wedge narrowly missed Louis' helmet but the vampire swung his shield around to connect into the face of the horse in a mighty blow, stunning the beast, and as it fell Louis' blade held true once again, came down in a massive overhand arc and cut through the knight from neck down past the sternum.

Wrenching the blade free, a side swipe cleaved the next man through, and spinning, Louis was crossing the rank, again taking out the horse's legs before the reverse swing came back through the armoured knight like a knife through butter. The whirling vampire caught the following lance on the shield, deflecting its momentum while thrusting through the face mask of the trailing knight, using the units own momentum to be their undoing.

It almost appeared as if they were small explosions, the human knights simply seemed to be erupting, torn apart from the fury of the vampire's attack. Pieter was shocked at the sheer violence Louis was unleashing on the knights. Riderless horses were careering into the skeleton

formation, the will of their animater was so focused however that they barely moved, the horses smashing through the bones in a panic.

The army of bretonians appeared to have halted, stunned by the decimating attack. Armour and flesh splayed out, a trail of destruction seemed almost traceable through the unit, the vampire's quickness made the carnage like a moving entity of blood and metal.

The carnage unleashed by the vampire was too much for even their upbringing of honour to face, and the remaining knights broke and ran, unable to stay and fight what appeared as certain death. Louis merely paused, licking the blood of his sword. He suddenly spoke and pointed as Pieter had taught, and dark energies burst out consuming the remaining four fleeing knights just before they reached their own army. They screamed in agony, and withered before their comrade's eyes. Stunned nobles steadied themselves as much as their mounts, hearts cold with fear, would allow. But the peasants broke and ran, unable to face the horrors they had just witnessed. Louis roared in triumph, shouting his challenge across the battlefield. The men were unable to take their eyes of the supernatural terror, which was another fatal mistake. Manfred and his entourage of mounted dead crashed into the Errants on one side of the battlefield. Lances down, tearing armour apart, Manfred hewed left and right in a frenzy. Bone and metal rained upon the ground, as the young nobles broke and ran, only to be ripped apart by Manfred's zeal. Philippe followed, and the mounted dead were swinging around the bretonian force.

Galton was at a loss, the fiends

were cleaving his army apart, his men were about to break. "Francis" he roared.

"My Lord, the dead have broken the realm knights, the men at arms are fleeing, the archers..."

"We ride! On my signal take the unit, turn to face the dead knights. Hold them to allow the infantry to escape back to Merryllas. I'll hold the vampire for as long as I can. Follow me, and then swing, we must catch them off guard."

"But Sir!" Francis began to protest, but the rest of what he was trying to say was drowned out as the Duke reared and hit a dead run, straight towards the Vampire. Francis and the unit had no choice but to follow.

"Face Me, Galton of Merryllas" The Vampire roared. Pieter was tiring, advancing the army. Somewhere out there a mage was slowing down the spells as he cast them, only every other one got through. It was all he could do to keep the knights moving, let alone try to catch his unit up to Louis'. The knights ahead suddenly broke formation; Galton careered towards Louis, his knights wheeling towards the sweeping unit of mounted dead to the left. Pieter swore again, he had to try and turn Manfred and his entourage, before the knights surprise move hit.

Again Louis swung low, taking out the warhorse as his shield deflected the blow of the Duke. But Galton appeared prepared, his legs already free of the stirrups as he leapt from the saddle and landed sword in hand facing the dread vampire. Galton caught the vampire's blow across his own shield, its grail shining akin to the Dragon on d'Montforte's.

"You are learned, Galton of



Merrylas, you noticed the previous mistakes, and adapt. Perhaps this will be interesting.”

The banter of d’Montforte did not distract the movement on the swinging blades back and forth. Galton desperately avoided the viper blows, deflecting with sword or shield, each one a little closer to his armour. The vampire seemed to glide from stance to stance, pirouetting, a flurry of slashing blows flicked across Galton, some stopped, some whistled past his nose, one caught the shoulder and smashed the armoured plate.

His return thrusts were easily deflected. The Vampire seemed to merely rock left or right letting his blade whistle past his head, leaving Galton frantic in defence as the return swing

raced towards its mark, narrowly caught by his shield, leaving the shield arm of the vampire to swing like a battering ram into his side. The blow of which almost knocking him from his feet. Galton desperately tried to keep his balance against the onslaught of the vampire, ducking a head sweep and catching an overhand blow a mere inch from his helmet crest. It seemed such attacks could not possibly descend so quickly in that order.

Thrusting out, d’Montforte again easily avoided the blow, and spoke an ancient language, dark power emanated from the dread being, only to dissipate, knocking the vampire back slightly. Seeing the surprise flicker across the vampire’s expression, Galton tried to capitalise on the strange

advantage, but it was gone as quickly as it appeared, the vampire’s blade slicing across his chest, tearing rent across the breastplate.

“Give over fool human, I cannot be defeated. I will drink of your blood, and your people will join my ever conquering army, your lands are mine.”

The blows seemed to becoming incredibly faster, sweat was drenching Galton; he did not have the focus to respond to the Vampire. Another blow swung past, Galton leaned back to avoid it, and struck back. The vampire swung his shield to meet the blow, hitting the blade so hard that it knocked Galton sideways, arms swinging back subconsciously to maintain balance. The vampire’s blade descended, biting deep into the

left shoulder of Galton, through armour and flesh into bone.

Galton screamed in agony, falling to one knee. The dread vampire followed him down turning the blade to cause maximum pain. “Its over, fool human. Give my regards to the Lady when you meet her.”

“You first” Galton gasped, in a last desperate act, swinging his blade with all his strength at the vampires head. d’Montforte’s own sword arm moved in to perform a simple block, only to find the blade wrenched in the arm socket of Galton, caught in a twist of bone and metal. Shock crossed its face as the blade whistled, he rocked back out of the swords path but the duke’s blade caught a glancing blow across Louis’ temple. d’Montforte’s eyes rolled up in the back of his head. The Vampire fell.

Elation flicked to shock across the face of Pieter Von Drak as the blade swung round, Louis twisting but catching the flat blade across the temple. In an almost mimic movement behind the vampire, Pieter saw half the dead knights of Philippe’s unit tumble from their saddles, and he knew his skeletons were doing the same. Seeing their commander fall, the remaining knights of the realm were galloping flat out towards the spot, Galton was on his knees, drawing a knife from his belt, in agonising slowness. Muttering the ancient words, Pieter unleashed Vanhel’s will stronger than ever before. Louis’ crumbling skeleton unit seemed to leap into action, moving straight over there fallen lord towards the humans. Knights and crumbling skeletons crashed into each other with a deafening impact. Pieter again cast, moving his own unit to the fallen vampire.

Pieter slung Louis over his

shoulder, but his weight was great for an old man. The bretonian knights were fighting furiously to breach the wall of skeletons who were crumbling at an alarming rate, despite all efforts to animate more.

The dead knights with Mannfred crashed into the realm knight’s flank, pushing them back from the combat line. Mannfred carved a path towards the necromancer, “What old man, these souls do not know they are damned as yet.”

Pieter shoved his short sword into a dead knight, and ripped him from the saddle. Flinging Louis across the steed, he dragged himself up after. “Its over Mannfred, they have the battlefield. The knights will hold the humans for now. We must ride.”

Galton screamed as the vampire’s blade was twisted back, then pulled from his arm by three men. Johanna was on hand, and immediately addressed the wound.

“There is no hope, your Grace. The arm will have to come off; the damage is far too great to heal. The best I can do after stopping the bleeding is leave you an even scar.”

Galton merely nodded his head in acknowledgement, he had suspected as much. First searing pain, then the powers of the lady coursed through his body, and he was finally left with a stump where his arm had once been. Galton tried to prop himself up a little more. He was still on the same spot on the ground, where the two generals fell. He glanced towards the hills where the vile necromancer had spirited the vampire away.

“Hail Galton! Ender of the vampire, blessed by the lady. Slayer of evil most foul, the King would be in awe of thy

feats, Gillies Le Britton himself embodies his acts, for he has come again in...”

“Silence, Sir Francis” Snapped Galton. “Is that what you really think? A third of the Lords of this region lay dead on this field. A full third more will, like me, never take arms again in battle. You think we were victorious here today? So many brave men to fall in return of one dented head? If you, and your scouts cannot catch that vile being before he recovers his strength, this has all been in vain.”

Silence whistled across the plains of Gildress.

With a heave the coffin lid crashed off, startling the bats hanging from the ceiling. As the dust settled Louis d’Montforte sat up with a groan. The first thing he saw was Pieter Von Drak sitting on one of the coffin lids in the crypt, with a sardonic grin on his face.

“So was it worth it?” the necromancer asked.

“Now is not the time old man” Louis clambered out of the coffin and stretched painfully. “I’m weak. I need a human now.”

“Are you sure you wouldn’t like a nice pig? How about a cow? Oh, that’s right, you kill humans now don’t you?”

“Don’t tempt me. Your frail carcass doesn’t have much blood, but I’m sure you wouldn’t want to lose it.”

“Yes oh mighty vampire” Pieter mocked.

Louis walked out of the crypt and looked up at the sky. The moon bathed the surroundings in an eerie silver glow; the small manor at the base of the hill seemed a lifetime ago,

thankfully the small manor village hadn't been visited on his last stay, further down the valley. "Where's Mannfred?"

"Where do you think?" Pieter said distastefully, gesturing off to the right. Louis walked around the side of the crypt, past the cage of emergency ration rats. Mannfred, one of the most fearsome warriors in the old world, a match for any mortal, was squatting down in the mud with the pigs, speaking to them in his rolling oratory style.

"Repent ye sinners, for the end of the world is upon us. Man is weak and has many sins and the gods have found him wanting. The end of civilisation looms closer and the kingdoms of man will be swept away like debris. I know this to be true for the gods have spoken to me and told me to aid them in their destruction of the world as we know it." The pigs ignored him.

"Their just pigs Mannfred, I doubt you can convert them to your cause." Louis said sardonically.

Mannfred turned and looked at Louis with glazed eyes. "Doubt can not exist in the bright light of truth. It is my sacred duty to hasten the world on its path to damnation, and bring the people the news that they are damned."

"But they are not people" Louis began, but Mannfred had already turned back to preach to the pigs.

"He's completely mad you know." Pieter noted, coming up to stand beside Louis. "He was mad before you turned him, now he's mad and he's a vampire. Why don't you just end him?"

"He amuses me. And who knows Pieter? Maybe he's right and you should repent your sins to him."

Pieter stormed off muttering under his breath and Louis turned back to the pigpen chuckling.

"Come Mannfred, There are a number of peasant lasses who needed to be introduced to darkness tonight..."

LOUIS WILL RETURN!!!



Until Next Time...

Well, the second issue of Irresistible Force is complete, and already I have the wheels in motion for issue 3. I hope to publish that in August. So you (yes you!) have plenty of time to get something together and send through to us for consideration. All article ideas will be considered. We want variety in both content and contributors so please do not hesitate to send something through if you feel the urge.

Once again I would like to put out a huge THANK YOU to all the contributors. I look forward to their continued support of the e-zine and hope their efforts can inspire others to do the same.

Next issue I endeavour to have a special feature on Ming Chang's undead pirates. The next instalment of the Asharr comic strip. Part 2 of Andrew Bishop's tactics article, and another tournament report from Matt Lubbock. And finally I am determined to do a full scale battle report, something I have been meaning to do for some time but as yet it has eluded me.

If you have any suggestions, constructive criticisms or ideas, send them through to editor@irresistibleforce.net.

Until next time, take care and happy gaming!

Cheers,
Andrew Galea