



# Signs & Portents

33

**WARGAMER**

## **PASSING IN THE NIGHT**

*Starship Troopers Scenario and  
Battle Report*

## **K9 ASSAULT SQUADS**

*A Mobile Infantryman's Best Friend...*

## **MINBARI TACTICAL MANUAL**

*Getting The Most Out Of The Minbari in ACTA*

Plus... Origins of the Mongoose, more Scenic Mayhem, Dilgar vs. Drazi  
ACTA scenario, the return of Design & Conquer and lots, lots more!

S&P Wargamer 33

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Ahoy hoy,

'Half a pound of tuppenny rice, half a pound of treacle, that's the way the money goes, pop! goes the weasel, up and down the City Road, in and out the Eagle, that's the way the money goes, pop! goes the weasel!'

Like many nursery rhymes, there is a story behind 'Pop goes the Weasel'. It seems that it's a commentary on the poverty in London in the Victorian era. A man has spent his weeks wages on rice and treacle, but is still short of money. Therefore, he must pawn his coat (in old fashioned Cockerney-type talk, 'pop the weasel' apparently means to take a coat to a pawn shop). Likewise, a second man has spent all his money in the pub (the Eagle Tavern, which is a pub in Hackney) and is forced to pawn his coat to make ends meet.

So, not a song about exploding rodents at all, then.

Likewise, Humpty Dumpty was a big howitzer that stood on the walls of Coventry during the English Civil War. This was eventually knocked down (along with the wall) by the Roundheads during a siege, and proved to be beyond the ability of the Cavaliers to repair. The egg theme seems to have been added at a later date...

Matt

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# EYE ON MONGOOSE

*Coming This Month*

## MOBILE INFANTRY COUGARS



The Cougar is the lighter of the two M4 Exosuits and it is a common misapprehension that it was developed first. This is not the case, however, and the Grizzly was in fact the original M4. The Grizzly's array of weaponry was considered excessive in some tactical situations, as well as being expensive to maintain at a platoon level, and so the Cougar was developed as an alternative, sacrificing the Grizzly's Atlas Rig and heavy weaponry in return for increased mobility.

The Cougar has the most sophisticated jump jets of all the armoured suits in use by the Mobile Infantry, giving it phenomenal speed and jump capability. Combined with the Cougar's array of sensory equipment and the user's rigorous training, the jump jets do not only allow great leaps but can be used incrementally in numerous situations, providing greater balance, the stability to fire when moving and the ability to react at lightning speed. Despite their swiftness, Cougar's are phenomenally strong. At full strength, a trooper in Cougar armour is capable of overturning a Marauder. Cougar troopers are notorious for their daredevil antics and only the most reliable are entrusted with the even more lethal Grizzly suit.

This box set contains 4 Cougar Exosuits, including weapons options.

## SKINNIE VENERABLES



Regarded as the elite among Skinnie warriors, venerables are drawn from the ranks of soldiers and the guard, individuals who have distinguished themselves in some way during battle. Most are veterans of many fights, hence the name, but a few are far younger, having gained their position by acts of incredible heroism or sacrifice. Becoming a venerable is a mark of distinction in Skinnie society and marks an individual for greatness later on, be it as a potential leader of the tribe or representative within the Council. Venerables have access to the very latest in technology and sport highly advanced power suits with deadly weaponry. They have no real equivalent within the Mobile Infantry.

This box set contains 8 Skinnie Venerables, complete with full weapons options.

## SKINNIE LORD



Having served the Hegemony and tribe as a soldier, the Lord has risen through the ranks by dint of hard work and proven ability. The veteran of a hundred or more battles, he has progressed through the ranks of the elite venerables and now stands at the head of his tribe, the undisputed leader. Possessing both great tactical cunning and ownership of the finest warriors and technology the Hegemony has to offer, there are few armies that can stand toe to toe with his force. Though rarely seen far outside Skinnie held systems, a Lord will always be present at the head of an army for campaigns which the Council deems critical.

The Lord is equipped with an Advanced targeting array, boneshard rifle, two disruptor gloves, a dual laser, and light neural beamer.

# RANK AND ORGANISATION

BUILDING A MOBILE INFANTRY COMPANY

MATTHEW SPRANCE



The Starship Troopers rulebook gives plenty of information on various ranks within the Mobile Infantry, along with a general idea about its structure – but how can you equate this with what you see on the tabletop? How do you build a legitimate platoon, as it might really appear on some far-flung battlefield?

The army lists are a good guide as to what is possible but, by their nature, they can be a little misleading in terms of what constitutes an ‘official’ Mobile Infantry platoon. Instead of locking you into standard squad and platoon sizes, the army lists are intentionally variable in terms of what may appear in a platoon. In effect, they allow you to field a platoon that has already seen action and therefore has plenty of veterans within its ranks, as well as gaps created by casualties.

## RANKS AND THE REAL WORLD

Of course, in the real world, Sergeants do not command squads. Instead, they occupy the same slot as Senior Sergeants do in our trooper platoons. So, why have we ignored the traditional way of doing things in this game?

Well, there are a few reasons but the most pertinent is that, for whatever reason, there is a strong theme in science fiction for Sergeants leading squads. Where did this come from? Maybe it was Apone in *Aliens*; perhaps there are just too many Space Marine armies in the world for it to be otherwise. Regardless, we followed this structure because it was what miniatures gamers were used to.

However, we ensured that ‘purists’ could have their day too. You can take the army lists as they are and simply change names to better for the real world, if you so wish. Corporals become Lance Corporals, while Sergeants become Corporals. Senior Sergeants are just Sergeants. Lieutenants can stay as they are.

You are more than welcome to do this – the Mongoose Gaming Police won’t be breaking down your door if you start renaming ranks!

Going in the other direction, the army lists also allow you to 'beef up' a platoon, creating a reinforced structure that has been supplemented with squads donated by other platoons (or, more likely, by the survivors of platoons who are no more).

So, what makes a 'standard' Mobile Infantry platoon?

## POWER SUIT PLATOONS

The standard, just out of boot camp squad size for power suit platoons is eight men, consisting of a Sergeant, a Corporal and six Privates. Incidentally, there is no such thing as a 'special weapons' trooper – every trooper expected to be competent with all support weaponry, from the Morita Long to the Javelin (and, yes, Reliants too) when they first join a platoon. Woe betide the trooper who fails to live up to his Sergeant's expectations in this matter.

Four squads make up a standard power suit platoon, led by a Senior Sergeant and a

Lieutenant. Most platoons will organise their squads so each unit has a reasonable chance of tackling any battlefield task assigned to it. Some, however, will specialise their squads for maximum effect in one area of the battlefield. So, you may see one squad equipped with two Morita Longs or two Hel Flamers, rather than a mix. This is usually a personal choice of the Lieutenant, in close consultation with his Sergeants.

Pathfinder platoons follow the same principles as power suit platoons in terms of



organisation, with three normal Pathfinders squads and one K9 squad. Some very specialised platoons will swap additional Pathfinders squads for K9 squads.

## MARAUDER PLATOONS

Though much smaller than power suit platoons in terms of raw manpower, Marauder platoons are organised in a similar way. A standard Marauder platoon consists of three squads, led by a Lieutenant and two Senior Sergeants. The Senior Sergeants are, in theory, equal in rank, though most platoons have a system of seniority between them based on length of service or, more rarely, the number of combat drops made.

Each squad consists of one Sergeant, one Corporal and one Private. As is readily apparent, this makes the command structure of Marauder platoons extremely solid, a key feature when deploying armoured battle suits worth more than the training of the trooper piloting them. It is also worth noting that troopers lucky enough to





– this has the benefit of not tying down the M8's manoeuvrability, while keeping a solid firebase on the battlefield.

M8C Bigfoots and M9B Nighthawks are still relatively rare and tend to appear as just single examples within other squads. Lucky Lieutenants may find they are able to field complete units of Bigfoots or Nighthawks, giving them either solid mobile artillery support or total aerial defence in their area of operations.

## LIGHT ARMOUR PLATOONS

Though the similarity between power suit and Marauder platoons is obvious, Light Armour

get assigned to a Marauder platoon can expect to rise in rank at a relatively fast rate, as well as benefiting from a lower death rate on the battlefield – competition for open slots is therefore fierce, leading to only the best and the brightest being selected (which is, of course, precisely what SICON was aiming for when they created this platoon structure).

The mix of M8 and M9 hulls are often more a result of luck rather than judgement, based on how effectively the Lieutenant can make good any losses he suffers in the field. The standard Marauder squad features two M8 Apes and one M9 Chickenhawk, though many Lieutenants will automatically reorganise this into two squads of Apes and one of Chickenhawks



platoons have a different mandate altogether. The whole point of a Light Armour platoon is to deploy as many trained troopers as possible in one tightly packed and well-led unit.

A Light Armour squad therefore officially has ten troopers when it leaves boot camp, consisting of a Sergeant, Corporal and eight Privates. However, there is a great deal of variation in this figure, even fresh from boot. Squads twelve strong are not uncommon by any means and embedded FedNet reporters always seem to be present to add another body to a squad.

Five squads will make up a standard Light Armour platoon, led by a Lieutenant and Senior Sergeant.

## EXOSUIT PLATOONS

A new addition to the Mobile Infantry's armoury in the fight against the Arachnids, Exosuit platoons are never recruited directly from boot camp. However, they are generally formed far behind the lines where extensive training and analysis can be performed, so a newly commissioned Exosuit platoon is likely to begin with the 'standard' number of troopers, though replacements are notoriously hard for Lieutenants to requisition.

The basic Exosuit squad consists of one Sergeant, one Corporal and three troopers. Four squads go to make up an Exosuit platoon, led by a Lieutenant and Senior Sergeant.

A newly commissioned Exosuit platoon will feature three squads comprising Cougars only, and one of Grizzlies. However, the reality of the battlefield often means this organisation rarely survives more than two or three battles, and mixed squads are a fairly common sight.



## REINFORCED PLATOONS

Earlier, we mentioned reinforced platoons – this is simply a platoon that has more troopers and squads on its roster than the standard organisation normally permits. This most often occurs when one platoon has suffered heavy losses, reducing it to a single squad. Instead of rebuilding the platoon, the squad is instead passed to another Lieutenant, thus keeping them active and in the field.

Sometimes, a reinforced platoon is created intentionally. This is usually done to fulfil a specific assignment within a campaign but also occurs if the company the platoon is assigned to has a history of fielding larger forces.

A platoon can be reinforced in a number of ways, though the most common is to simply add more

squads to the roster. Some reinforced power suit platoons, for example, may field up to six squads, while some Light Armour platoons can field up to nine squads. In these cases, a second Senior Sergeant is almost always present to keep the command structure intact during battlefield conditions, much as Marauder platoons do as standard procedure.

Marauder and Light Armour platoons also tend to add more troopers to each squad in order to create a reinforced platoons. A Marauder platoon that increases its squad size can deploy as many as 18 Marauder suits, which represents an impressive amount of firepower. In their own way, Light Armour platoons that have been reinforced in both squad size and squad count can seem even more impressive. A platoon featuring nine squads of twelve troopers apiece will be taking 111 men to the battlefield!



## COMPANY LEVEL

It is at company level that the differences between platoon types begins to standardise. Every company will feature four platoons and this rarely changes on anything more than a temporary basis (if one company takes a single surviving platoon from a shattered company, for example). If reinforced units are required, they are normally done at platoon level, rather than simply adding more platoons to an existing company.

About half the companies within the Mobile Infantry comprise the same type of platoon throughout their structure. A Marauder company, for example, will have four Marauder platoons, while a Light Armour company (or, to give it its proper name, Invasion Company) will have four Light Armour platoons. Other companies are described as 'Mixed' though there is a strong movement within SICON to standardise these formations, likely as much to do with the ease of calculating the effect each company has on the battlefield as any real tactical benefit. Mixed companies will feature platoons of varying types and so it is not uncommon to see, for example, a company of three power suit platoons fighting alongside a Marauder platoon.

The two exceptions to this are Light Armour troopers and the Pathfinders. Light Armour platoons are rarely found in Mixed companies unless battlefield conditions have led to one being adopted by a power suit or Marauder company on a temporary basis (usually due to losses), with the Lieutenant then petitioning for their permanent assignment – this has happened only a handful of times. The reliance of Light Armour troopers on Fleet assets often renders them incompatible with other platoons.

While Pathfinder companies do exist on a technical level with platoons sharing a common Captain and home base, they are rarely deployed

as such on an operational basis. This being seen as an overkill, they are instead either deployed individually or loaned to Mixed companies on what is, more or less, a permanent basis.

Regardless of their composition, Mobile Infantry companies are led by a Captain, assisted by a Sergeant Major. Many companies will also have a Colour Sergeant, whose role will be junior to that of the Sergeant Major. One of his duties will be to carry the company colours (standard) during parade, though some companies have a tradition of taking their colours to the battlefield. Though this is regarded as a high honour within such companies, the life expectancy of a

Colour Sergeant carrying a flag into battle is conspicuously short.

## SUPPORT

Even at platoon level, the Mobile Infantry has the ability to field a wide variety of supporting units and equipment at the discretion of Military Intelligence agents within SICON. This is normally done on an operational basis, when there is a clear requirement for specialised equipment to achieve certain objectives – this is normally how CHAS units are deployed, for example. Fleet assets are added in the same way.



*Cap Trooper Rank Insignia - Private*



*Cap Trooper Rank Insignia - Corporal*



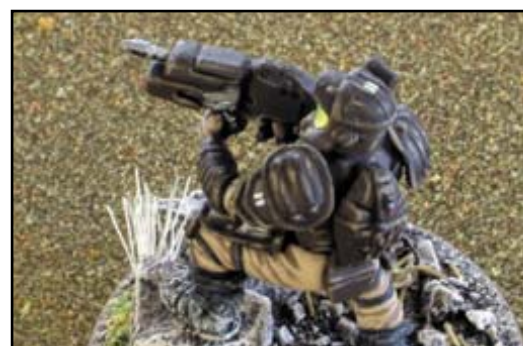
*Cap Trooper Rank Insignia - Sergeant*



*Cap Trooper Rank Insignia - NCO*



*Cap Trooper Rank Insignia - Lieutenant*



*Cap Trooper Rank Insignia - Captain*

Other support elements can be found within platoons on a more permanent basis. A Lieutenant may develop a gift for fast strikes, and so be granted a permanent assignment of Sprite skimmers or WASP packs for one of his squads. Some platoons (and, sometimes, entire companies) are commissioned with such operations specifically in mind, with every trooper mounted on a Sprite or WASP pack. Those on Sprites are sometimes called Reconnaissance platoons, while those using WASP packs are called Assault platoons. In reality, however, they are simply variations of the standard power suit platoon.

## RANK AND INSIGNIA

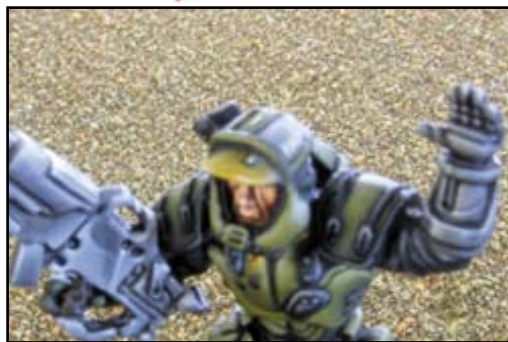
So, by now you likely have lots of ideas on how you are going to build your platoon (or, if you are even more ambitious, your company). Once your models have had their first lick of paint, you are going to want to ensure they are all properly decked out with the correct rank and insignia – after all, if you don't know which trooper is doing what, how is your Lieutenant supposed to know?

## RANK

Rank is the easiest insignia to paint onto your models and, given the way the command structure works for the Mobile Infantry, it is also the most essential. Rank appears as a number of chevrons,



*Cap Trooper Name Insignia*



*Lieutenant Razak*



*Cap Trooper Platoon Badge*



*Grizzly Exosuit Rank Insignia*



*Chickenhawk Marauder Rank Insignia*

applied to the top of the helmet and the left shoulder pad. In most cases, this will be a very deep yellow, though where camouflage makes rank unclear, black will be used.

Painting the rank of Private is a relatively easy task even for the most artistically challenged of us. However, as the number of chevrons grows with rank, so too does the difficulty of squeezing them all in. Fortunately, there are some quick and easy cheats, as shown here.

Officers are easier than Sergeants and Senior Sergeants. As we have not yet published rules for ranks higher than Captain, you will be simply painting one bar or two, depending on their rank. These bars are always in silver.

## OTHER INSIGNIA

If you are feeling really daring, there are other types of insignia appropriate to a trooper in the Mobile Infantry. The most famous, of course (if you have been watching the *Roughnecks Chronicles* on DVD), is the name of the trooper on the left side of the helmet. This is also repeated on the left breast though, thankfully, this will normally be covered by a Morita rifle.

You can see the work on Studio Painter Adrian Walters on the *Roughnecks* to demonstrate this. Sickening, isn't it? If, like me, you are a mere mortal when it comes to painting, you have a choice here – either ignore it altogether (not so

good) or simply draw a thin, squiggly yellow line where the name will be. When you stand up and away from the wargames table, you won't be able to tell the difference. . .

There is of course another drawback to painting the names onto your Cap Troopers' helmets - you will need to think of names for every single member of your Mobile Infantry force...

Finally, every trooper also has his platoon badge on his right breast. There are some examples of these on page 4 of the Mobile Infantry Army Book and, as you will quickly see, only the truly dedicated will do more than a rough design. However, it is worth the effort on character models and, for the rest, most badges will (again) be hidden by a Morita rifle.

Once again, you can 'cheat' here though, using just two or three colours to give the impression of a platoon badge, rather than trying to fit every detail in.

## MARAUDERS

These large battle suits sport the same insignia as their power suit brethren but the placing is slightly different. Ape Marauders feature rank insignia on the left shoulder plate and on the flat surface of the torso just to the right of the cockpit. The platoon badge will be found on the left hand side of the torso, just below the Derringer.

Chickenhawks and their variants will only have the rank insignia painted on the left side of the cockpit, with the platoon badge on the right (there is a little plate mounted there specifically for the badge). As a rule, no Marauder carries the name of the trooper inside on its exterior.

## LIGHT ARMOUR TROOPERS

The troopers of the Light Armour platoons are the easiest of them all to paint. Platoon badges are rare and names are never present on their uniforms. Therefore, all that is left is rank, which is displayed only on the front of the helmet. The standard yellow chevrons and silver bars are used.

## LOW-VISIBILITY INSIGNIA

Given their role on the battlefield, Pathfinders often eschew the standard practice of marking their armour, going as far as abandoning name plates and, sometimes, even platoon badges. Rank insignia are retained but are often painted in faded colours that clearly denote a trooper's rank but do not give away his position at range.

## GO PAINT!

So, there you are - a complete guide to organisation and insignia for Mobile Infantry platoons! It is important to remember that the Mobile Infantry has a huge structure and variations are often the rule, so if your army is a

little different from this, don't panic. The chances are that some platoon, somewhere within the vast reaches of the galaxy, is adopting your scheme. The guidelines here are designed to demonstrate the 'standard' but this should never be a substitute for your own creativity.

We are hearing tales of some very large Mobile Infantry forces out there - if you have a complete company (please don't tell me you already have Regiments out there!), we would love to see them. Send some pics to the address on the contents page, and we'll print the best of them in a future issue. Fame and glory could await your troopers!



*Some Veteran Troopers customise their armour*

# Death, Walking

## The Battles of the Dilgar War, Part II

Greg Smith

**Approximate Date:** April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2230.

When Dilgar spies learned of the Abbai/Drazi mutual defence agreement, the Dilgar War Council decided that they must attack both races together. While fighting a war on two fronts flew in the face of conventional strategic wisdom, the Dilgar were confident they could overwhelm both species' forces with superior numbers. With assurances from the Narn that they would not intervene in any attack on the Drazi, the Dilgar war machine prepared to fight their most dangerous foe yet.

Dilgar invasion fleets were launched from Omelos, targeting Drathun and Balos, aimed at Hilak. Surprise gave the Dilgar the advantage and the assaults were successful. Buoyed by their easy victories the Dilgar moved on to Fendamar – which they found to be heavily fortified. The world was the site of an important research project and the Drazi had protected it with a fearsome network of orbital defences. The Dilgar were unable to mount an assault against the massed firepower of the Drazi armed satellites and so retreated.

Instead the Dilgar fleet headed for the vital world of Latig. Rich in Quantum-40 and other minerals necessary to the Drazi war effort, Latig was host to a large Drazi mining colony, and the Drazi fleet were prepared to fight for it. The Dilgar knew they did not have the forces to subdue the Drazi on the planet and conquer the world so Warmaster Jha'Dur ordered a change of tactics – they would use biological warfare.



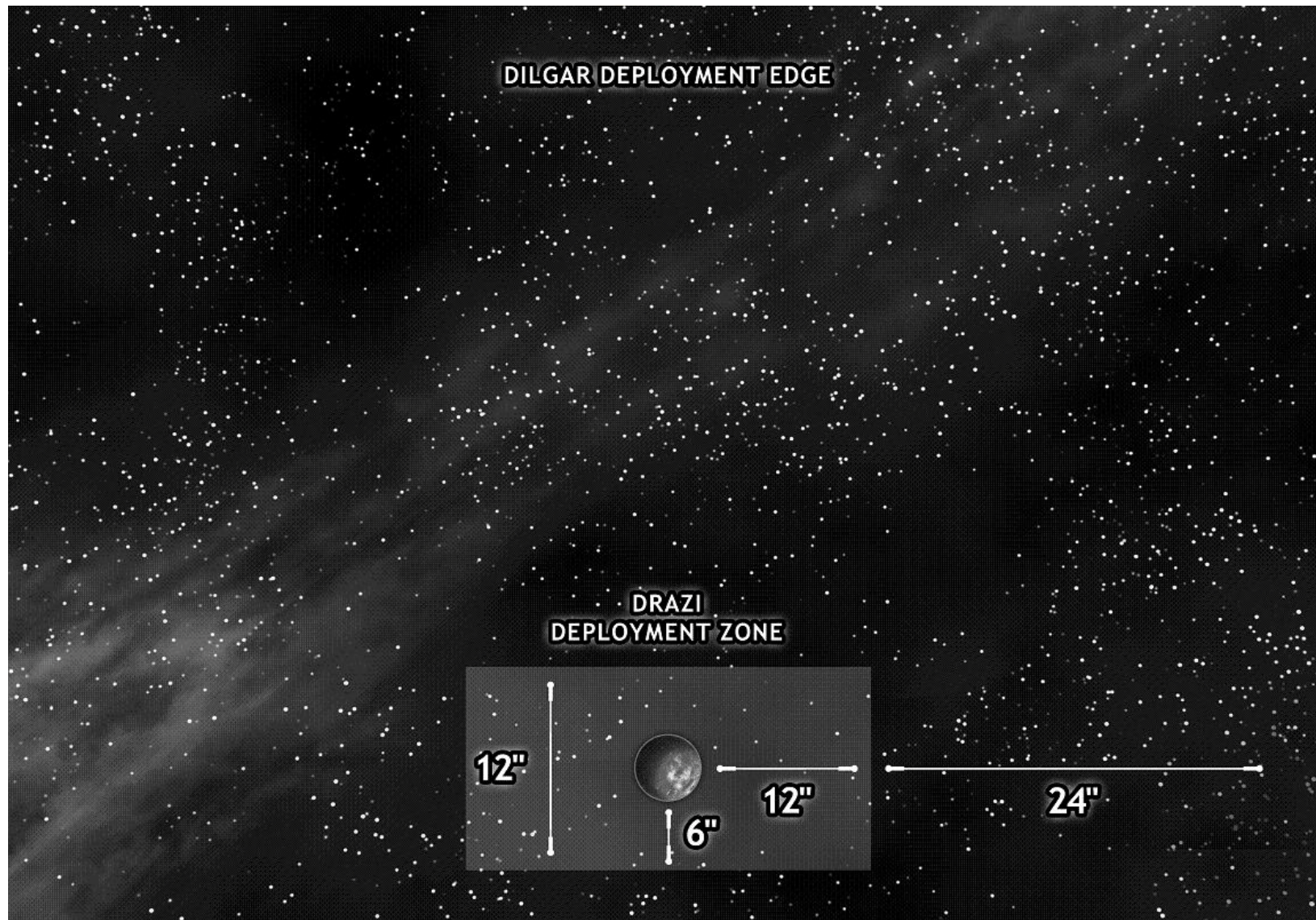
**Historical Note:** The Drazi fought to the last being to defend their world but they failed. The Dilgar ships dropped their virus bombs from orbit and the entire Drazi population was wiped out by the lethal Stafford's Plague.

**Dilgar Imperium Fleet:** one Mankhat dreadnought - the *Devastator*, one Garasoch heavy carrier, two Rohric assault ships and two Omelos light cruisers. The *Devastator* has a Crew Quality of 5 and is commanded by Warmaster Jha'Dur (see below). Roll for the Crew Qualities of all of the other ships.

**Drazi Freehold Fleet:** Six Sunhawk battlecruisers, three Darkhawk missile cruisers, two Jumphawk command cruisers, three Strikehawk battle carriers

and four Star Snake light attack fighter flights. Three Shodrama armed satellites protect the planet. The Jumphawks have Crew Quality 5 and all other ships have randomly determined Crew Quality.

**Pre-Battle Preparation:** Latig is a small lifeless planet close to its sun. A single small planet template is placed on the map as shown. Other stellar debris is generated randomly but any result that indicates another planet or moon should be re-rolled. The Drazi fleet is placed in its deployment zone, close to the planet. The Dilgar player moves his fleet onto the table from his deployment edge in his first turn. Initiative is rolled normally.



**Scenario Rules:** Instead of concentrating on destroying emplacements and troop formations, Warmaster Jha'Dur is intent on wiping out the Drazi mining colonies. There are five colonies to destroy and each has a Hull score of 4 and 10 Damage points. These can only be attacked with Virus Bomb Racks but otherwise follow the normal rules for attacking Emplacements described in *Sky Full of Stars*.

**Game Length:** Until one of the victory conditions has been met.

**Victory and Defeat:** The sole goal for the Dilgar is to decimate the Drazi colonies with their deadly virus. If they succeed in destroying all five colonies, they will have achieved a major victory. If two or more of the colonies are destroyed, the Drazi will have a chance to evacuate uninfected colonists and sabotage their mines before they fall

to the plague, but the Dilgar will still have still have won a minor victory. For the Drazi to score a minor victory, they must stop the Dilgar from destroying more than one colony. If no colonies are destroyed before the Dilgar fleet is wiped out, the Drazi will gain a major victory. In truth, if a single virus bomb successfully hits a Drazi colony, Stafford's Plague will spread rapidly throughout the populace and any Drazi victory will be a pyrrhic one.



## Warmaster Jha'Dur

Jha'Dur was the youngest member of the Dilgar War Council when Dilgar scientists discovered that their sun was on the verge of exploding. She was involved from the very beginning in the planning of the war that would bring so much carnage to the galaxy. However, it was her execution of the Imperium's strategies that would bring her infamy.

Before her race was threatened with extinction, she had been a scientist – a biologist and geneticist. With the advent of war she turned her skills toward the destruction of Dilgar's enemies. She is known to have developed the strain of Stafford's Plague that wiped out the Drazi on Latig and is held responsible for the eradication of all life on Mitoc II as well as the devastation of Tirolus, Comac IV and Malax. She earned the nickname 'Deathwalker'.



### Using Warmaster Jha'Dur in A Call to Arms

To include Warmaster Jha'Dur in a scenario, use the following information.

#### Fleet Lists

Jha'Dur may be used with a Dilgar Imperium fleet in any game. When placed in a ship, she adds one Raid level to it for scoring and cost purposes.

Jha'Dur may be placed in one of the following ships. Variants may be used if you wish to include them in your games.

#### Dilgar Imperium

- Kahtrik assault ship
- Mankhat dreadnought
- Mishakur dreadnought
- Wahant heavy assault ship

#### Jha'Dur in Battle

A ship with Jha'Dur as one of its officers gains the following benefits in battle.

**Command:** So long as Jha'Dur's ship is on the table and not Crippled or reduced to a Skeleton Crew, the fleet gains an extra +1 bonus to its Initiative rolls. This is not cumulative and may not be added to the bonus granted by ships with the Command trait.

**Death Walker:** Jha'Dur is an expert at firing on planetary targets to cause the maximum devastation to civilian population. Any ship Jha'Dur commands may re-roll any Attack Dice from Mass Drivers and Virus Bombs that miss when firing on emplacements.

**Harsh Mistress:** The crew of any fleet Jha'Dur leads will be far more afraid of what she would do to them if they disobey her orders than if they simply die because of them. Any ship within 12 inches of her ship receives a +2 bonus to their Crew Quality checks for trying to perform Special Actions.

# K9 ASSAULT SQUADS

## K9 SQUADS FOR POWER SUIT PLATOONS

**MATTHEW SPRANGE**

Up to now, the use of complete squads equipped with Neodogs has been the sole preserve of the Pathfinders, using the specially modified canines to aid their exploration of bug tunnels and act as advanced sentries on the flank of an advancing army. Now that power suit troopers have access to the advanced Mk II Neodog, a few well-supplied platoons have begun to experiment with fielding entire squads of K9 handlers.

These rules are designed to allow you to use all the K9 troopers in the recently released box set within a normal power suit platoon. They are not intended to be 'tournament legal' but you have our blessings to give them a whirl in friendly games. Send in your comments or swing by our forums to tell us what you think, and we may make them an 'official' addition for the Starship Troopers miniatures game in the near future.



## K9 ASSAULT SQUAD

Whereas Neodogs in the past have been used sparingly, to avoid the expensive and traumatic loss of both canine and trooper, who become tightly bonded at an emotional level, the introduction of the Mk II Neodog heralded a shift in policy for SICON. Though the Mk II is far harder to grow and train, it is a far more capable combat unit on the battlefield, with the introduction of the Trench Sweeper laser and advanced composite armour guaranteeing a far greater rate of survivability. When assembled into assault squads, K9 troopers are tasked with spearheading fast attacks on enemy held positions, allowing the Neodogs to range ahead and engage the enemy in tightly packed terrain, tying them up long enough for the rest of the force to advance. This is sometimes carried into the tunnels of the Arachnids where the Mk II shows its superiority over previous models.





**K9 ASSAULT SQUAD****0-1 PER PLATOON****295 POINTS**

You may have one K9 Assault Squad in the platoon.

Type	Value	Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Save	Kill	Traits
Cap Trooper	25	1	4"	D6	4+	4+	7+	Jump/12"
Cap Corporal	50	1	4"	D6	4+	4+	7+	Jump/12"
Cap Sergeant	95	1	4"	D6	4+	4+	7+	Jump/12"
Mk II Neodog	20	1	8"	2xD6+1	4+	5+/2+	6+	Retaliate

**Unit Size:** Every K9 Assault Squad consists of one Sergeant (unit leader), four troopers and five Mk II Neodogs.

**Weapons and Equipment:** Each trooper and the Sergeant is equipped with a Morita assault rifle with underslung G/L and Lizard Line. Each Mk II Neodog is equipped with a Trench Sweeper laser.

**Special Rules**

K9 Assault Squads are subject to the following rules.

**Caleb Bond:** Neodogs can function at twice the usual command range of the squad (usually 12" from the unit leader). One trooper can make an Alert Status reaction for every Neodog that has an enemy complete an action within 10" of it. If a Neodog is removed as a casualty, roll a D6. On the roll of a 6, one trooper of your choice in the squad is so traumatised that he is removed as a casualty too. If a trooper is removed as a casualty, one Neodog of your choice must be removed as well.

**MkII Neodogs:** The Neodogs raised for use in squads have many experimental adjustments made to them that may one day be seen as standard in other Mobile Infantry platoons. A unit with at least one Mk II Neodog may react normally to

Tunnel Markers. In addition, if a unit containing at least one Mk II Neodog takes a Ready action, all Camouflaged Tunnel Entrances within 6" of a Mk II Neodog will be revealed.

**Options**

K9 Assault Squads may purchase the following options.

**Go Career:** The Sergeant may be bought heroic traits up to a total value of +25 points.

**Unit Options:** Up to three extra troopers may be added to the squad for +25 points each. One trooper may be promoted to Corporal for +25 points. One extra Mk II Neodog may be purchased for +20 points for every extra trooper purchased. You may not have more Neodogs in the squad than troopers.

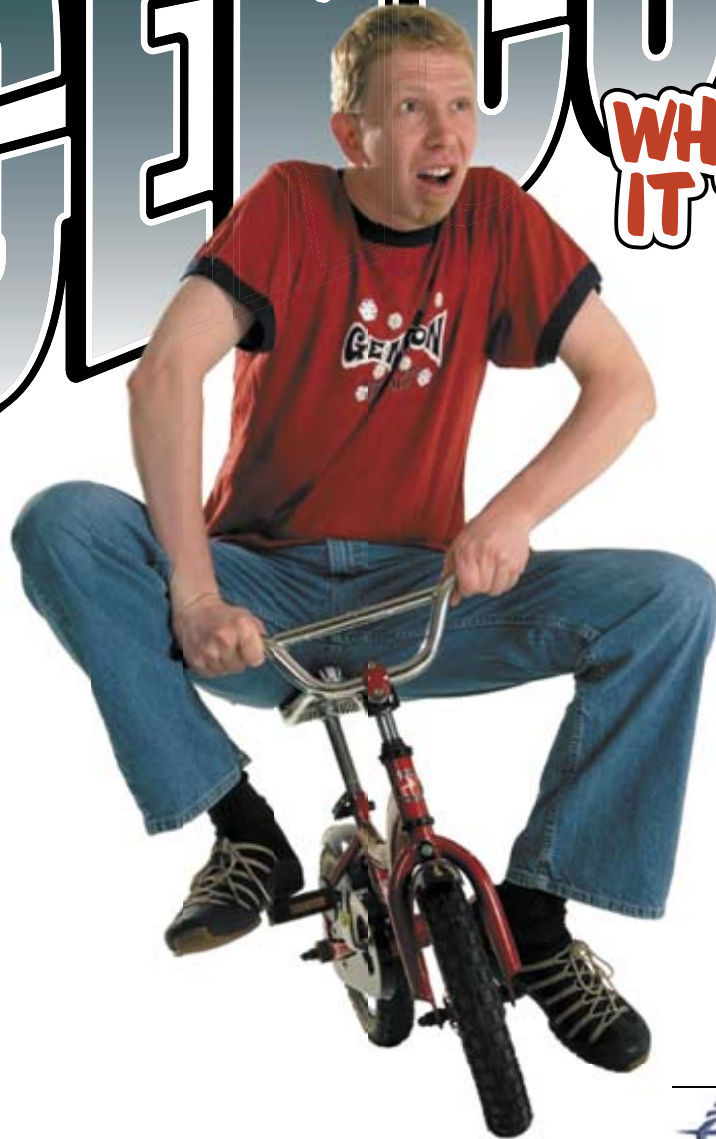
**Weapon Options:** The whole squad may be equipped with Frag Grenades for +5 points per model. Any model can be equipped with a Shock Stick for +5 points per model.

One model may replace its Morita assault rifle with underslung G/L with one of the weapon choices below:

- Hel Infantry Flamer for +10 points.
- Triple Thud Grenade Launcher for +20 points.

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# Basic Tactical Manual

## Strategy and Tactics for the basic game of A Call to Arms

Alan Oliver

### Part III: The Minbari

**O**bviously the first thing you should do when using a Minbari fleet is read Matthew Sprange's article on how to combat them, knowing what the enemy will be doing to try and hurt you is always helpful. There are some things that you can do to counter these tactics.

He will be trying to close on you to knife fight and get within 10" to help him on the stealth front. So you want to deploy a good distance away from the enemy. Heading should be to keep the bulk of their fleet on the divider between forward and port/starboard arcs. This will enable you to use your long-range weaponry at the closing ships, and will bring fusion cannon into effect as he closes before his secondary weaponry. It also allows you to either turn in onto the enemy or turn away to evade contact. This 'oblique approach' should be standard for the Minbari.

Speed should remain low as you approach, to keep the enemy under your guns for as much time as possible. At the point that you want to break contact turn away, possibly coming about, and accelerate away on the next turn to open the range. With high priority ships you will have rear firing Neutron lasers to fire into their faces as you pull away as well, a nice bonus. This sabre dance will be familiar to certain players of another long running ship combat system.

Obviously stealth is your friend, and he will be trying to negate it any way he can. On the scout front the EarthForce Oracle scout is the heaviest scout around other than your own, and it is only a raid priority ship. This means that the scouts that he will be using to negate your steal are likely to be small ships that resemble tinder boxes when targeted by the neutron lasers of the Minbari fleet. You should aim to gut his scouts on the first turn of engagement if possible. Then at least their efforts will have only negated the stealth bonus from range.

Fighters can also be used to lower your stealth capability, however they need to get within 4" of your ships which makes it a suicide mission for the fighters, as they will be within anti-fighter range of the mini-beam fusion cannon. That does not stop them performing their mission. To do that you need to dogfight them, which is also a very good way of killing them in any case, Nial fighters are good quality dogfighters, especially if backed up by a fleet carrier.



His third option is to jump his fleet into the middle of your fleet to get to close range. Fortunately, most fleets do not have advanced jump point capability - therefore, they will be in the middle of your fleet without operational weapons on the turn that they enter. Make them pay for their mistake.

There is little that you can do about his choices for his own fleet, such as which ships have more fighters, or what the hull value of his ships are. You just deal with what he throws at you. Unless he throws the whole wad of his fighters at you

at the same time, you will be able to dogfight or fusion cannon his fighters OK. If he does use the wad, then divert the firepower from his ships to sweep the skies clear of his fighters, accept that you'll take a few unanswered lumps this turn and make sure his fighters are gone by the end of the turn.

As for the ships that they choose by hull value, take a look at their fleet list and see what specialist ships they have that have a lower hull value. For example the Centauri scouts are only hull 4, and their fleet carrier is hull 5. If he keeps to hull 6 ships, he will have no scouts to counter your stealth, or carriers to counter your fighters. If he does take these specialist ships, remind him why Mr Sprange told him not to and neutron laser him to oblivion.

## Fleet Strengths

First and most important strength of the Minbari fleet is obviously stealth. Some of your own ships have better stealth than others and you should use these ships to draw enemy fire where appropriate. But remember you should not select your fleet only on the basis of their stealth scores.

The Nial fighters are the most potent fighters I have yet seen, lets face it a single flight of them is equal to a patrol priority ship. Between stealth and dodge, non anti-fighter weapons will have a very hard time taking them out, and even anti fighter weapons will have difficulties. They have the dogfight capability to engage any other fighter, and the firepower to attack ships. They are particularly good against Shadow and Vorlon ships due to the way ancient ships take damage. Four flights of Nial will take down a Shadow ship, and it can do little to stop them.

Technology, again here you have the edge over most other fleets. You have flight computers on all ships, which helps resist damage. You



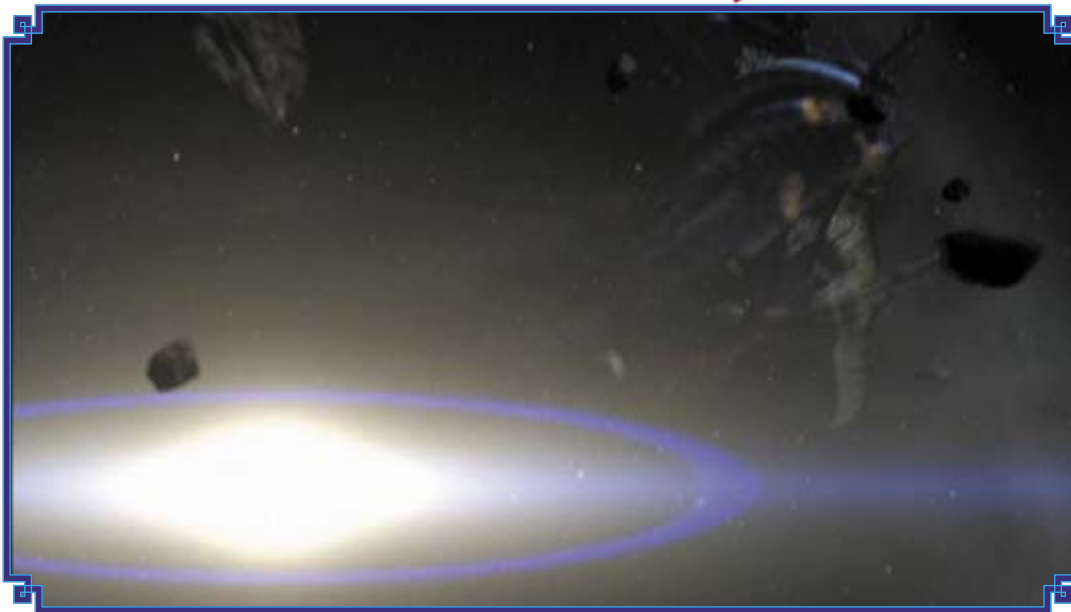
have superior weapons; the neutron laser is the most potent beam weapon outside of ancient technology ships with full arcs, excellent range and the precise special trait over other ships. The Fusion cannon is also a superior secondary weapon compared to those of other races, with around double the range, AP and the mini-beam traits making it particularly potent.

Advanced jump point is another example of advanced Minbari technology. You have this on all ships, which means you can bring your reserves in far more effectively than other races. It also opens up another tactic, which is the use of Torotha assault frigate jump points to directly damage the enemy fleet. Again the Minbari use of jump points to attack enemy ships was mentioned by Mr Sprange, but the Torotha is the ship of choice to use for this. They are cheap in high priority battles, are fast enough to escape from the enemy fleet after their arrival, and of course when the enemy does blow them up, they will be in among his own ships so their honourable death

will do the enemy more damage. For example, at war priority you get four of these ships per point, so in an eight point battle you could use 25% of your points for eight jump point attacks, and no end of hassle to the enemy. Alternatively, open the jump points to do the damage to the enemy, and then just sit in hyperspace and let the jump point close. Three turns later you can do it all over again, and your ships will never be in danger. Think of them as the Minbari equivalent of off map artillery.

## Fleet Weaknesses

Firstly you have more fragile ships than most fleets, both in terms of the hull values and their overall damage capacity. At first this makes your ships seem weak, but bear in mind that for races like the Narn the high hull and damage values are their only defence, and you have stealth on your side. You do have to sabre dance your ships, pulling damaged ships away from the fight and drawing the enemies fire with fresh ships.



You are not so well equipped at low battle priorities. You have no patrol priority ships, and only a single skirmish priority ship. This limits your options at low levels, so you want push the priority level upwards when possible. You are more comfortable at raid, battle and war priority. Even if at a lower priority you should consider sinking your points into a larger ship where possible.

### Patrol Priority Options

You only have fighters available at this priority, which puts you into the same class as the ancients. Even then, your fighters are even more expensive than shadow or Vorlon fighters. If you are stuck with taking fighters then go for a mix of flyers, which are cheaper, and Nials. The Nials are better against enemy fighters, while the flyers are as effective against ships, and you get twice as much firepower per point spent on them.

### Skirmish Priority Options

Again you are short on options at this priority, only having the Torotha assault frigate. Fortunately the assault frigate matches up well against other ships at this priority; unfortunately other races have more options and can select ships suitable to fight you. You are faster than most other ships, and as agile as any of them. Your



weaponry is not especially impressive, although not weaker than other ships; you do not have the normal Minbari advantage in firepower.

### Raid Priority Options

You have two options here, however only one of them is a 'line warship', as the other is the Leshath heavy scout.

The Leshath heavy scout is as heavy as the heaviest scout in any other fleet, the EarthForce Oracle, and heavier than the other scout ships out there. This makes it a useful addition to any fleet, not just because of the scout capabilities. It is relatively fast and agile for a ship of this priority, which means it can re-deploy within the Minbari fleet to cover weaknesses, draw fire or kill fighters. Weaponry is limited to fusion cannon, but this makes it a suitable escort ship. It uses its fire to kill enemy fighters trying to counter stealth or attack ships, freeing the weapons of other ships to hit the enemy. For a specialist ship its firepower is quite respectable, but not up to a line warship.

The Tigara attack cruiser is the line warship at raid priority level. It is as fast and agile as any raid priority ship, but it lacks the long-range firepower of neutron lasers. If supporting larger ships that are performing an oblique attack, it will be at point to intercept lighter ships attempting to break the Minbari formation. If the capital ship of a smaller squadron, then it will be using its speed to close the range to bring the potent but short ranged molecular disruptors to bear on the enemy.

### Battle Priority Options

Three options at this priority, this priority is much more within the

Minbari comfort zone. You have two line warships and a single specialist ship available.

The Morshin carrier is the specialist ship in the mix. This is the only command ship in the Minbari fleet and should only ever be at the heart of a Minbari fleet. As a warship its firepower is definitely weak for a ship at this priority, just about sufficient to fend off enemy fighters when escorted by other ships. However for the same price you could not get as many Nial fighters if you bought them separately. Even at skirmish priority, where you would have to spend four points to buy the Morshin, those four points would only give you eight Nial fighters, the same as the Morshin carries. And those fighters would not benefit from the fleet carrier rules, which are very useful if used correctly. The Morshin itself must avoid direct combat, while maintaining the capability of getting within 30" of the enemy when its fighters do their attack run. In addition to the fleet carrier capabilities, it is also the only Minbari ship with command capability. Some might think having a command ship on a battle

priority hull is a bad thing. However command ships should never be in the front line, and that is exactly where war priority ships belong. The Morshin is an ideal command ship as its other duties keep it from the heat of battle anyway.

Not a ship to be taken in numbers, but a ship that deserves its place in any serious battle or war fleet. It will need escorts or to fight from the heart of a Minbari fleet, but is a worthy command ship.

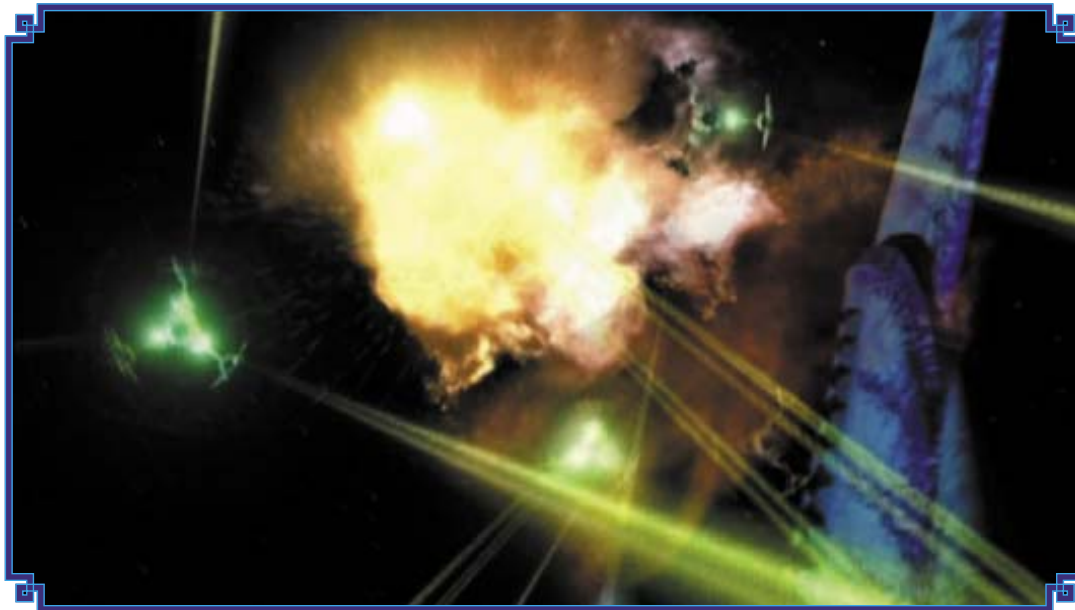
The line warships are the Tinashi war frigate and the Troligan armoured cruiser. Both ships mount neutron lasers and fusion cannon with the ranges to operate an oblique attack. The Tinashi has the advantage in speed, agility and a slight edge in

firepower, while the Troligan is the tougher ship in terms of damage and crew, and carries its own Nial flight. The decision must be based upon whether these will be the biggest ships in your fleet or will you have war ships present. If the capital ship of the fleet then the Tinashi will be your better bet as it has a slight edge in firepower. Also if leading smaller ships then its speed and agility will also be useful.

If supporting war ships then the Troligan will be a better choice. Although less firepower than the Tinashi, it can take damage better and will make a good screen to the war ships it is supporting. Its speed and agility more closely match the war ships and if put onto the leading edge it will draw enemy fire and take it on the chin.

### War Priority Options

Two line warships available at this priority, both of them potent. The Neshetan gunship has only the one advantage over the Sharlin warcruiser, which is the hull rating of six. All the other advantages are with the Sharlin. For a start it carries 4 Nial flights and a flyer as standard, the equivalent to four and a half patrol slots. It has slightly higher damage and crew ratings, it has greater fusion





cannon firepower to the flanks and rear and best of all a higher stealth rating.

All of this may make the choice a bit of a no-brainer, however there are occasions where you may need a Neshetan gunship. There will be occasions when either the scenario or the tactical situation will require a ship to fly into the heart of the enemy fleet, and the Neshetan is better for that role than the Sharlin. The higher hull rating will be more useful than the better stealth at avoiding the massed fire that will result.

Most of the time you will want to stay with the Sharlin warcruiser as your war priority ships. But occasionally you should include a couple of Neshetan gunships in order to shake up your opponents' expectations.

## Enemies of the Minbari Federation

Most races have learned to leave the Minbari Federation alone, however occasionally 'things happen' and the Minbari get involved in combat.

However the warrior caste believes in being prepared, so it always helps to know your potential enemies.

### The Centauri Republic

The Centauri are the next most advanced race among the younger races, and share many of the same advantages as you do. For example their prime weapons are their battle lasers, which have the full forward arc, and are equal to neutron lasers apart from lacking the 'precise' trait.

Their Senti fighters are equal to Nial flights in a dogfight, unless you have a Morshin carrier to co-ordinate your fighters. If they counter with the Centauri carrier, the Balvarin, it is a smaller ship and can be taken out either with an independent Nial strike or long-range neutron lasers.

The Centauri have little in the way of fighters defences, so Nial attacks will be valid, assuming you can get past their Senti fighters.

Their scouts are only patrol ships, which means they will take little fire to clean them from your skies to preserve your stealth. A single good hit from neutron lasers should kill a Corvan scout

with one shot. Being patrol options, however, there might be as many as four or six of them if he invests heavily in them, depending on the priority.

Overall you should keep the priority high, engage obliquely, have a Morshin carrier to give your fighters the edge they will need and concentrate on the largest Centauri ships, which will have the longer range firepower.

### The Earth Alliance

The EarthForce fleet is up against some serious challenges facing the Minbari, but they do have some useful ships. The Poseidon super carrier is without doubt the most powerful carrier in the game, with almost twice as many fighters as the Morshin. The only bright side to that is that it takes a war priority slot. They will definitely want to be using their fighters to counter your stealth, so have your Nial flights ready to dogfight any starfuries or thunderbolts on scanners to full. Attack runs even from t-bolts are unlikely to be particularly threatening. You should concentrate the Nial on dogfighting those fighters on scanners and leave the others to be shot up by the ship mounted fusion cannon.

EarthForce ships carry a lot of additional fighters, but they take time to deploy and if sent into action as soon as they launch they will be attacking in small groups, which is ideal for you. If he holds his fighters back to mass them before sending them in, try blowing up a small ship close to them, should do the trick.

Much of the EarthForce fleet mounts boresight weapons as their heavy firepower, which means they will be flying straight towards you to get their boresight weapons active and close the range to counter stealth. Again if at a high enough priority an oblique approach can be used, forcing them to continually manoeuvre to bring the BS weapons to bear. This prevents him putting all power to

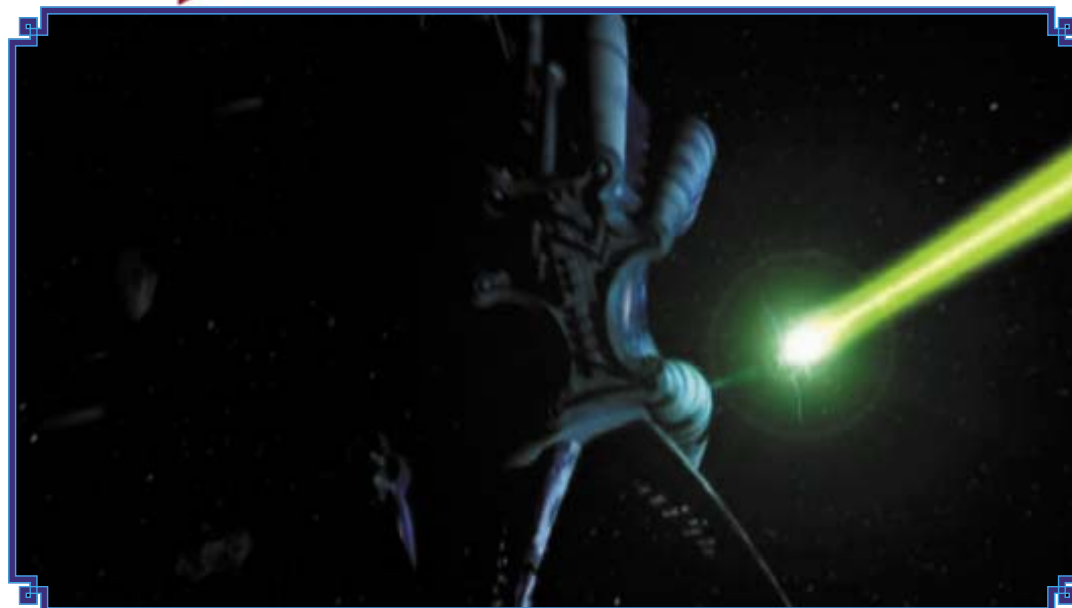


engines or concentrating all firepower, both of which work to your advantage.

Their scout is a raid priority ship so more difficult to kill, especially as it has good anti-fighter weapons so an independent Nial strike would be difficult. The only upside is that there will be few of them, probably only one or two, and if the EarthForce player is napping, there will not be any.

EarthForce ships have interceptors; this will not be a major problem for most of your forces, but be aware that the few ships with non-beam weapons will lose some firepower.

Be aware that the Warlock advanced destroyer has advanced jump point technology so can pull off the same jump point attacks as you can. This would involve committing a war priority ship to a close assault on the Minbari fleet. This might be done to distract the Minbari fleet so that the rest of the EarthForce fleet can close in. Having a Neshetan gunship lurking in hyperspace to

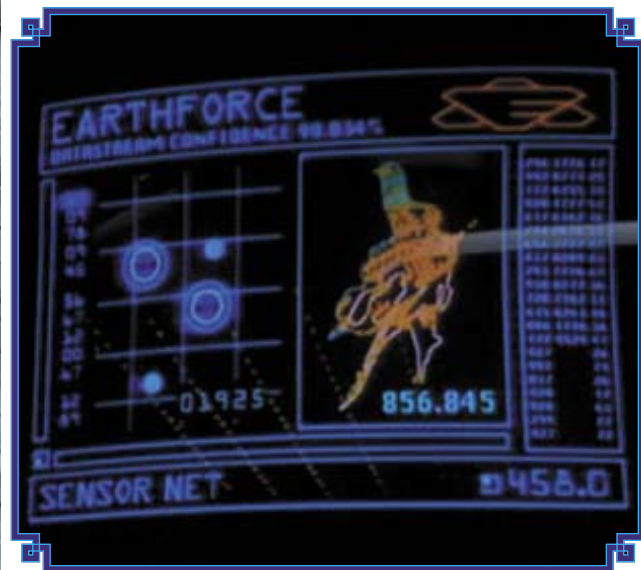


counter this possibility might be a sensible precaution.

Overall, normal Minbari tactics should be sufficient to defeat EarthForce ships. Fortunately the source material is quite definite that the Minbari fleet is superior to the EarthForce fleet.

include a scout, so they will have serious troubles with your stealth.

The Falkosi fighters are definitely inferior to your Nial, and the Brakiri carrier, the Brokadod, is an inferior fleet carrier than the Morshin. It does carry more weaponry, but as discussed above, the



## The League of Non Allied Worlds

Obviously the League has a selection of different ship styles from which to select their forces, and if they do the job right, they can select to counter your advantages. However the selection of ships available to the starting League commander (those found in Book Two of the box set) does not





command ships are not supposed to be on the front line, so weaponry is less important.

The Brakiri ships make up the bulk of the high priority ships available to the league, and they feature large, tough ships but the weaponry is a lot less sophisticated than the Minbari ships. Particularly against the ships with slow loading weapons, lure him into firing them at a range over 10", so your stealth will be most effective, and when he takes the bait this will give you the next turn free of his heavy weapons fire.

Drazi ships will be easy meat for your fighters, certainly the small ones. His anti fighter weapons are all forward firing and fighters move after ships, which means you can attack from the flanks and rear and rip him apart. They pack a reasonable punch for their size, so kill them quick.

Vree ships are the best anti fighter ships in the League, and are agile enough to get themselves into the heart of your fleet or among your fighters.

Keep the fighters away, and use ship mounted weaponry to destroy the Vree, their ships are not that tough.

The Abbai ships have strong defences but are lacking in offensive punch, so are difficult to kill and do not affect the battle that much when you succeed. Therefore kill the more warlike races first and the Abbai will see the sense of a diplomatic solution.

Obviously with a full fleet list for each of the races, the league becomes a more serious threat, but that is a discussion for another time.

### **The Narn Regime**

The Narn ships are low technology, and have a lot of trouble against some races, but it is this lack of technology that makes them more effective against your ships. There are three of these low technology advantages.

The first is the lack of advanced defences on Narn ships. Instead they rely upon tough hulls and high damage ships, which is actually the best defence against your weapons, more effective than interceptors.

The second is their lack of decent fighters, which led them to develop a weapon to counter enemy fighters, the energy mine. This weapon bypasses your stealth, but is not particularly dangerous to your ships, as they cannot cause critical damage. However they will destroy all your expensive fighters very, very easily.

The third is their lack of excellent weapons, which leads them to rely upon massed firepower from assorted weapons. This actually helps them against you, as they have more weapons to roll for against stealth, which means they will make more of the dice rolls.

However you still have the advantage in some areas. Narn ships are slow and do not manoeuvre that well, so you can generally gain positional advantage over them. As many of his ships rely upon boresight weaponry for his beam weapons, their movements will be predictable and their firepower avoidable.

Overall this makes the Narn one of the greater challenges for a Minbari commander; fortunately historical battles against the Narn are rare.



# Monty's Offer of the Month

## Buggruppe 999 Hopper Flying Wing

This month Monty has taken pity on Ian Barstow's arachnid army for his Offer of the Month. The Old Bear, as anybody who reads his battle report activities will know, has had a few problems getting his hopper bugs right. His latest plan is for the Flying Wing, massing as many hopppers as he can get his hands on. So why not take this great opportunity to try out the Buggruppe 999 Flying Wing for yourself! For this month only you can pick up 9 hopper bugs for just \$50/£30 post free! Just print out the coupon and send it in!



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# PASSING IN THE NIGHT

A SNEAKY SCENARIO FOR STARSHIP TROOPERS

MATTHEW SPRANCE

A veteran Mobile Infantry force is passing through the sector, trying to penetrate enemy lines in order to launch a devastating raid. Unfortunately, the Arachnids have the same idea and the two forces meet in no-man's land. Both are pushed for time, as the main attack is about to start and their respective raids could swing the battle across the entire frontline if they occur without a hitch. This will be a quick and desperate fight as both sides try to preserve their energy for the next part of the mission while trying to stop the enemy in its tracks.

## MOBILE INFANTRY BRIEFING

The Captain is depending on you. The bugs are gathering their forces and an attack is imminent. If your force can break through their sentries, you will be well placed to hit them in the rear, disrupting their assault and allowing the main body of the army to pound them back into the ground. As you make your way to the last waypoint, everything has been quiet but now one of your squads has reported an enemy force lying in your path. Deal with them quickly and get into position.



- You have 1,000 points to spend at Priority Level 1.
- You may not choose any Fleet Assets or Marauders.
- Roll a dice before the game begins – if you roll higher than the Arachnid player, you may choose to either deploy first and go first, or deploy second and go second.

## ARACHNIDS BRIEFING

The Mobile Infantry's hold in this sector is shaky and it will take just one more massed attack to break them. Their defences are formidable, however, and so a small force has been dispatched to launch a diversionary attack on their rear lines. Get into position on time, and the humans will not know what hit them as bugs erupt gather all around them. However, it seems like they have the same idea and your small raiding force encounters a small platoon with similar orders.

- You have 1,000 points to spend at Priority Level 1.
- You may not choose any tunnel assets or ambushes, as you have not had time to prepare a functioning tunnel network in this area.
- You may not use the Air Phase as your force is trying to avoid detection by the Mobile Infantry.
- Roll a dice before the game begins – if you roll higher than the Mobile Infantry player, you may choose to either deploy first and go first, or deploy second and go second.

## MISSION LENGTH

The battle will continue for 7 turns.



## VICTORY CONDITIONS

Mission Points are used to determine the victor of this mission. Each side gains Mission Points as follows; the full value of any enemy unit reduced to less than half strength, and the full value of any friendly unit (regardless of casualties) that is moved off the table in the enemy's deployment zone before the end of the game.

## VARIANTS

One side can be swapped out for Skinnies, of course – a force led by a glory-seeking Lord or gallant Warchief would make for a very good option to try this sort of attack. Alternatively, you could swap the Arachnids for a Light Armour MI platoon, playing them as rebels from a troubled colony...



# Origins of a Mongoose

**The Start of an Semi-  
Regular Series of  
Articles on the Birth of  
Mongoose** Or...

**How Do You  
Start a Games  
Company?**

**Part One: A Long Time Ago, in a Pub...**

**Matthew Sprange**

**I** all began, nearly six years ago, in a pub. Which, if you live in England, is pretty much where all Big Ideas live. The pub in question was the Wheatsheaf, in Swindon, and the Big Idea in question was the formation of a new games company.

Near Christmas 2000, I was travelling to the pub with an old friend of mine, Alex, whom I had known since Primary School. He had been rising rapidly through the ranks of the British Army (got to Captain, rank-seekers), and was wondering what to do when he left, an event that was imminent. My suggestion that everyone seemed to be a Captain and that he should stay until he hit Colonel at least was ignored. He seemed rather keen on joining, what was then, the 'new wave' of 3G communications. For my part, I was working as a Field Engineer for a small computer firm based in Oxford, though my territory was officially 'anything below Birmingham'. And sometimes above.

I had another idea. What about starting a games company? We knocked about a few ideas, and settled on the idea of a fantasy miniatures game. Quite why we decided upon this, I cannot remember because, looking back, it was faintly ludicrous. And I'll show you why...

Alex was not amazingly convinced so I spent the next couple of weeks on an information gathering exercise. I contacted printers for quotes, figured out how much savings Alex and I had to invest (to be fair, Alex had the lion's portion there, something about not having to spend money while in

the army), and began to page through other fantasy miniatures systems to see what had and had not been done before. I even started to sketch out a background and rules system for this game.

We got back together (another pub meeting) and went over the various facts and figures. I was up for it but Alex remained unconvinced. He had just been offered a job with a 3G firm and was lured by the promises of wealth, fame and fortune across the world as a jet setter. I pointed out that such a high-flying company should not be requiring him to buy his own laptop, but my pleas went unheard. The fantasy miniatures game, up to that point called Strata, was shelved. I was consigned back to engineering and Alex undertook his new career. Strata would never see the light of day – though, funnily enough, one of the features that made the game distinctly different will be making its way back into a new fantasy game from Mongoose. But I am getting ahead of myself.

## **Fast forward Six Months or so**

Alex had become well and truly cheesed off with the 3G industry. Reams of information had to be poured through, incomprehensible meetings endured and, while there was the odd trip to Israel in the offing, it seemed clear to him that the company and industry as a whole was on a hiding to nothing. On top of all that, he had had to buy his own laptop.

By this time, D20 had been around for nearly a year, though I had been on the periphery of roleplaying for a while. At this time, I was involved with a lot of writing for Games Workshop (having worked on the likes of the Armageddon campaign, the Fleshtearers chapter of Space Marines, and all sorts of tactics articles and bits for Battlefleet Gothic), and had even tried to lever a job out of them. Regrettably (or not, as it happens), I have never interviewed well...

Still, I studied the D20 rules and licence and a thought began to percolate. We had knocked Strata on the head because a big hardback was too expensive and miniatures were a complete no-no – and we had enough sense back then to realise that a miniatures game without miniatures would never fly. But D20 products? Hmm, there might be something in that. We sat down and discussed various options, and even had some facts and figures to kick around, as I already had quotes for 32 page books.

Alex was looking for a way out of his job, I had been doing the same for nearly a year. This time, things looked good. So, we decided to look into producing... a new range of scenarios!

Oh yes, that was *just* what the D20 market needed at that time! Yes, we were planning to release three scenarios and they would all be great. We just knew it. The one problem we had was that no one would tell us how many to print. 1,000? 5,000? 10,000? By now, we had got hold of some of the main distributors (Alliance in the US, in particular – note to anyone starting a new games company: start there), but while they were expressing an interest, they were very tight-lipped as to how much a typical new D20 product would sell.

Fortunately, we had also been phoning around in the UK and managed to track down James Wallis, who was then the head of Hogshead Publishing, then producing the range of Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay books. He welcomed us as potential entrants into the industry and offered to invite us down to his office in London to chat about the industry. All it would cost was lunch. Which seemed fair.

So, off we went, to have lunch in what must have been the worst French restaurant in London. Maybe even Europe. James talked long and hard, while we questioned and prodded. The memory of that meeting, however, was not one of great wisdom being passed down, as Alex and I had already done a lot of research. We already knew where we would be printing our books, where to advertise, which distributors to approach and how. Don't get me wrong, James is a great guy and always has time for new people coming to the RPG industry, even if he is no longer (sadly) a part of it. That said,

he did say something that I can remember to this day and it was the defining moment for our new start up. It was the one thing that convinced us to go ahead and give things a try. He said;

'Any idiot can sell 3,000 copies of something.'

Now, the follow up to that was that not every idiot can sell 3,000 of something a second time but this fixed two things in both my head and Alex's as we travelled back home along the M4. First off, we weren't idiots (we didn't think – remains to be proved), so we felt we could have a reasonable crack at things. Second, we now had a solid figure for print runs. 3,000.

This figure we plugged into the huge spreadsheets that had been constructed to show the projected cash flow of the company over the first 12 months of its life (a vital part of any business plan). And things looked good – so good, in fact, that we made the decision to proceed. We knew that the £12,000-odd we had to invest between us (I finally chipped in a few pence) would be enough for us to print three books, one per month. This strategy, it would turn out, would be a vital key.

## So, on to Work!

How do you go about starting a business? It is remarkably easy, really, involving nothing much more than telling your bank you are forming a partnership with your mate, and then getting an accountant on board. The latter was a piece of cake, as my family has been running businesses since the year dot, and so the regular accountant was drafted in (though Alex had the sense to check out the rates of others in the area). The second thing to do was choose a name for the company.

This was more problematic as, predictably, Alex and I failed to agree on anything initially. A huge list was drawn up (in the pub, naturally), completely covering a side of A4 with all sorts of words and combinations. We could well have been called Bitter Tart Games or Cosmic Mongoose. We started playing around with our own names and initials. Finally, after a great deal of debate, we settled on Mongoose Publishing.

Why? Well, there are a few reasons. We went for Publishing rather than Games because, well, we had aspirations, even back then! We wanted an animal, because that would be an easy logo. Why Mongoose? Well, and understand that I am not proud to admit this (this is actually the first time I have told anyone, so keep it to yourselves – all 30,000 of you...), we always had an in-joke that Games Workshop acted like a cobra, hypnotising its prey

and forcing them to buy things. We were out to kick everyone's collective butt in the gaming industry so we would be the mongoose to their cobra... see the follow through line there? Well, a lot of beers were involved (actually, I think it was Snakebite in those days, coincidentally enough), and that is all I will say on the matter.

## On to the Real Work

Well, we had money, we knew what to print and where to print it. All set to make a glorious entry into the games industry. Alex would very quickly learn how to lay books out in PageMaker, while I would get cracking and actually write the blinking things. Now, this is where things get tricky.

You see, up to this point, Alex and I had *zero* knowledge or experience of publishing. Nothing. Nada. Zilch. The closest I had ever come was visiting Games Workshop for a day to talk about new articles for White Dwarf. The closest Alex had come was having lunch with James Wallis.

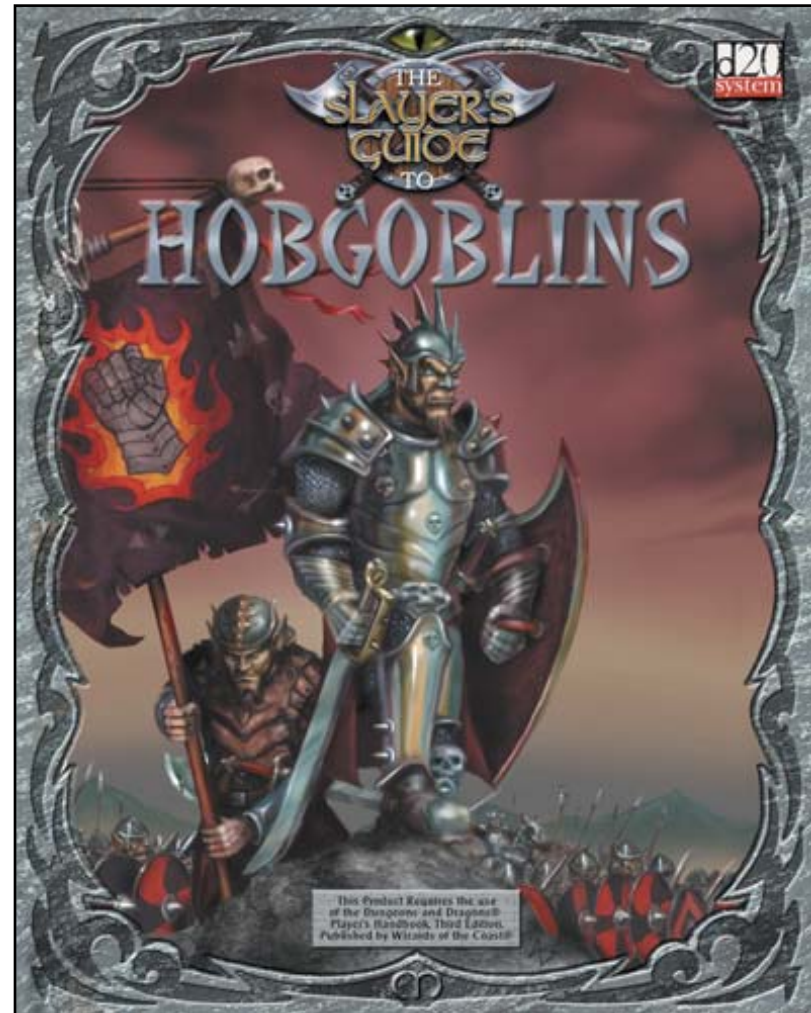
In our favour, we weren't stupid and we knew the benefit of being prepared. Before anything else could happen, we needed to do three things – write the books, get some art done for them, then lay them out ready for print.

## Problem One

Scenarios have never been my forte. Never. That is why I (now) get other people to write them. However, something else had been troubling me for a while now. I had drawn up a great big chart of all our potential competitors, every other publisher (announced or actually in production) who was doing D20 projects. And there was, near as dammit, a hundred of them. Seriously. And they were all doing scenarios.

Well, the burgeoning business mind lurking somewhere in the darkest recesses of my brain started to churn over. Surely, I thought, if everyone else is doing a scenario, should we not be doing something, well... different?

That gave me a problem. Scenarios were 32 page books. So it had been written, so it was done. Supplements and sourcebooks were bigger. So it had been written, so it had been done. We could not afford bigger books, not unless we were going to do less than three books on our budget, and that smacked of putting all our eggs in one basket – when you are preparing to throw your one and only twelve grand bank account around, you are understandably reluctant to go down that path. So I wracked my brains...



Then I recalled the Ecology series in Dragon, each article looking at one monster in depth. Something sparked and I realised that, if you picked the right creature, you could easily get 32 pages out of a single monster type. I flicked through the Monster Manual and drew up a short list of creatures that could work in this fashion. Oozes were out. Ogres were a possibility.

The one that really grabbed my attention was the Hobgoblin. The artwork in the Monster Manual was extremely well done and the description (go and read or re-read it – you'll see what I mean!) made them just perfect for foes with a bit of depth, if you get me. Gnolls and Centaurs (because we wanted



a change from evil races) were soon added to the list. Again, we had a whole bunch of names we could call the series but, in the end and with a nod to Buffy, we called them the Slayer's Guides.

## Problem Two

A 32 page book is, near enough, about 18,000 words (or it was for us, back then). The next problem, one that Alex never got to hear about, was that I had never written anything that long before. Ever. My published work was for White Dwarf and other Games Workshop publications which had never run to more than 5,000 words. I had been working on a short story for Inferno, but even that did not top much more than 7,000 words. Here I was, seriously contemplating writing something that was 2 or 3 times larger than anything else I had done before. And I was still working as an Engineer at the time!

Sometimes you cannot avoid problems – you have to face them. So, I drew up a chapter list, started on page one and went through the whole lot. Much was written at my favourite table at the Wheatsheaf – in fact, I had become something of a Writing Fixture at that pub. Some chapters were written in a lay-by, somewhere off the A34 as I pinched a few minutes (or the odd hour) from work. A month later, it was done (A month! Ha! I do this amount of writing in 3 days now!)

This small Slayer's Guide actually exhausted me and I remember being relieved it was finished. Still, I went through it time and again before it was due for layout, ironing out mistakes – though I was, perhaps, just trying to put off doing the Slayer's Guide to Gnolls...

Finally, it was finished!

## Problem Three

Now, you cannot have an RPG book without artwork. Can you guess the issue we would have here? Yes, you have it – neither Alex nor I can draw to save our lives.

Alex had one idea here. He knew some people from his LARPing (yes, I know...) who were bona fide artists. They even liked him enough that they would discount their prices for him – one of them, Anne Stokes, still does material for us from time to time. I was thinking more laterally about this and had already twigged that Alex's friends would either not be able to do

everything we wanted or would charge too much if they could. So, I thought, we needed cheap artists. Artists who were good... but did not charge much. Why would an artist not charge much? Because they needed to get their work out and about perhaps? Where would such artists be?

Swindon Art College, of course!

For the first few months of Mongoose, the Art College would be a staple of art recruitment for us. We quickly weeded out the worst ones (you could see why they needed education in art) and grabbed the ones with obvious potential.

Meeting with them every week in the pub (yes, the Wheatsheaf, with some of them walking a few miles to greet us each time), we soon noticed that one of them was bringing his girlfriend. She took an interest in the art everyone brought along but remained quiet. One week, Alex started a proper conversation with her and, it turned out, she was an artists too. However she could never bring her artwork along, oh no, it just wasn't good enough. Well, we encouraged her to try some Centaur art and, reluctantly she agreed. Next week, she brought along 'a few quick sketches.' To quote a cliché;

Oh. My. God.

This was the *best* artwork we had seen up to this point, by *far*. Needless to say, we snatched Anthea Dilly up rather quickly...



*Succubus, by Anne Stokes*

## Problem Four

We had no idea how to lay books out. None.

This problem, I'll have to draw veil over. By this time, Alex and I were both still working full time in our jobs and had very much our own sides of the not-a-business-yet to handle. He spoke to printers a lot about formats and studied the manual hard. There, done.

A week after I had given him the text for the Slayer's Guide to Hobgoblins, we had properly laid out pages and it was starting to look like a real book.

## The Final Touches

What happens next is something of a whirlwind as we were both still working our real jobs (not that they knew) and a lot of things happened at once. Alex was working from home, I was working from my car or the pub. The Slayer's Guide to Hobgoblins went off to print at a local outfit in Swindon (who we would stay with until they tried to force us out of business, but that is a tale for another time), I was writing Gnolls and then Centaurs, Alex was arranging solicitations (the announcements to distributors that tell them a book is about to be released) and, generally speaking, all our ducks were getting put into a straight line.



*Amazons, by Anthea Dilly*

My Father swung down to the pub one day, saw what we were doing and was mightily impressed. Impressed enough, in fact, that he gave us a cheque, no strings attached, for £8,000. Cheers, Pops. That went straight into marketing (aside from shouting, we *had* no marketing up to that point), and we booked several months of full page, full colour advertising in Dragon magazine.

One thing more was to put a spanner in things before we could properly launch, and I have been debating whether I should relate this part of the tale or not. Ah, hell with it, here goes...

When the Slayer's Guide to Hobgoblins came back from print, we were understandably excited. This quickly turned into horror as we opened the first box of the (rather large) pile. The covers had a very 'odd' finish to them. Not smooth and glossy like you are used to with RPG books, but rough and with a satin-like finish. We looked at one another, the books and then back to one another again.

'Umm, mate, what do we do now?'

Well, we should have sent them back to the printers, right? Maybe, maybe. However, these books had already been promised to distributors on both sides of the ocean by a certain date and we did not want to appear like complete muppets on day one. We wanted to have something of a reputation, you know?

So we called them Limited Editions, first print run only. We rolled the dice and let the 'market' decide whether we were to be stuffed or not.

## Off to Market

After all the problems, all the hard work, the Slayer's Guide to Hobgoblins (Satin Edition) was on a boat to the US and held in our warehouse (a coach house belonging to Alex's Father – see how we drag family members into this?), ready for the UK market. We then started phoning distributors up and badgering them for orders.

It soon became clear that James Wallis' idea that any idiot can sell three thousand was a tad off. We were selling more. A lot more. In fact, we were blowing through the first printing of Hobgoblins like they were going out of fashion, and orders for Gnolls had already passed the point by which we had to increase the print run.

A month on from this, Alex quit his day job and started to run Mongoose full time. A month after that, I (thankfully) joined him.

Against all the odds, it actually looked like we had a proper, honest-to-God business on our hands. Local boys make good!

As for what happened next, well, there were many, many more problems lurking up ahead. But there were also some distinct victories as well. That will be a tale for another time...





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# Monty's Modification Module

## Converting Miniatures the Mongoose Way

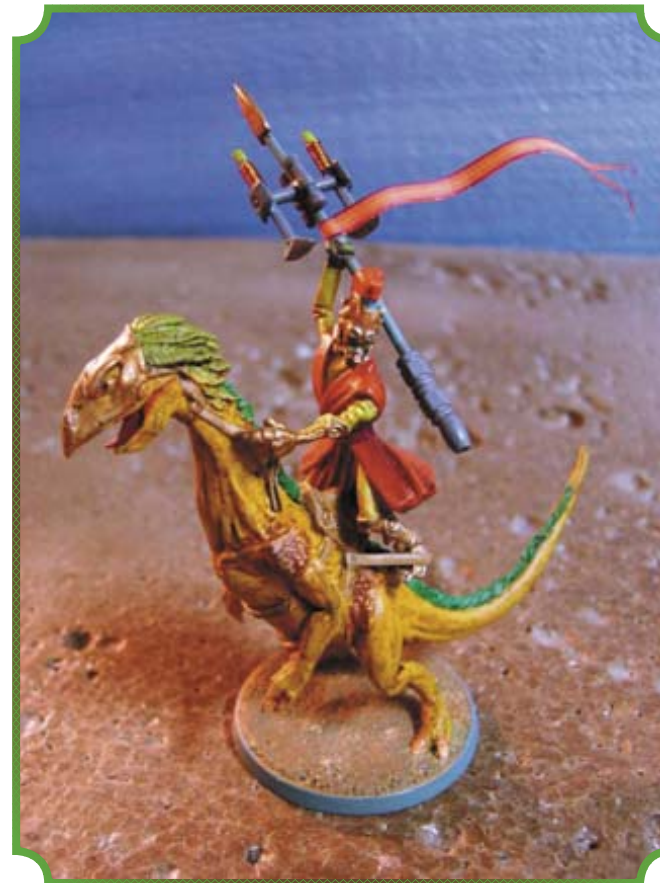
### Part I: A 'Leg-up' for the Warchief

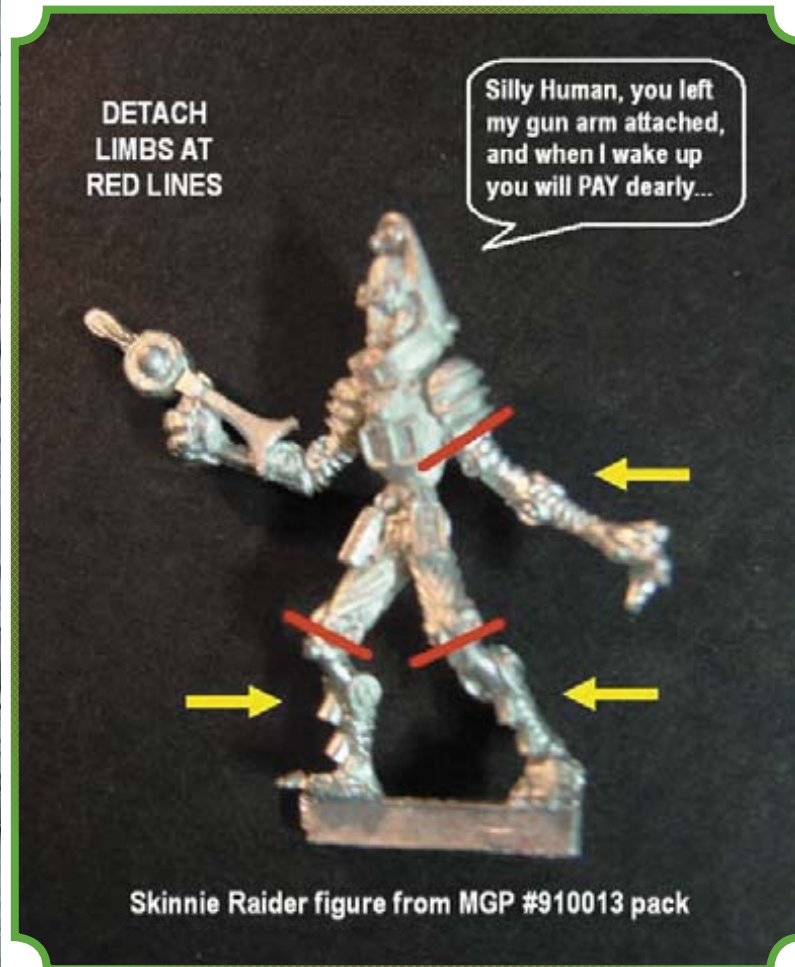
Constructing a figure mod of the new Skinnie Warchief for Starship Troopers Miniatures

Darell C. Phillips

While Mongoose Publishing's new Skinnie Warchief (MGP 910051) is a great miniature as-is, sometimes it is fun to think of things that can be done to vary the look of a figure. In analysing the Skinnie figures thus far, including the first release of the Militia and Raiders in pewter, I did find a few differences in sculpting styles in the figures. The Skinnie Militia (MGP 910012) and new Skinnie Warchief have a more traditional (by traditional, I mean human-looking) appearance in the form of their feet/boots. The Skinnie Raiders however, both in metal (MGP 910013) and the newly released boxed set of plastics (MGP 910014) have larger feet, with the toes splayed into a wider stance. This can be explained away by assuming that the Skinnie Hegemony has a varying physical foot style amongst its citizens, with the latest development being towards a narrower and smaller 'footprint' (can I say this?). The other extreme of this variance would of course be called a 'Brute', and they are just 'Big' all-over! Since the Skinnie Brute with a large body style is an established asset of the Skinnie military, differences between some of the other more 'civilised' members of the Hegemony might be accepted.

Now, after establishing why a Skinnie Warchief can have high-top cavalry boots, I'll explain what led me into this conversion. I have a small computer store, and have been devoting a portion of it since last year towards tabletop gaming supplies. In unpacking a case of





the new blister packs, I noticed that one of the cards had become detached from its blister, but the case still contained the parts of the miniature. Well, all but one of the parts, anyway. I know that Mongoose would have replaced it, but I wanted to paint one of these new Warchief beauties up. Instead of opening yet another blister, I decided to 'fill in' the missing arm by having one of my unpainted metal Skinnie Raiders 'donate' it. Now I wasn't quite ready to nickname one of my Raiders 'Stumpy', or have him steal a spare arm from Lt. Jean Razak (like *he* was going to let *that* happen), so I decided to increase the body part donation to include two legs, as well.

Besides, what was left of 'old Stumpy' could always be painted up as a battlefield casualty. Arachnid Warriors are downright notorious for providing 'limb detachment services'.

Now that I had a 'volunteer' for the operation, I went to work. Using a set of small side-cutting pliers, I detached the left arm at the armpit and severed the legs of the Raider just above the kneecaps. With nippers still in hand, I picked up the Warchief figure and cut just at the top of the boots. The right leg was more work, as it was cast flush to the battle robes. Using a file, I trimmed up the ragged ends of the cuts.

Using Pacer® gap-filling super glue (Zap-a-Gap™ CA+), I attached the Raider legs to the Warchief; attempting to follow the same orientation as the sculptor did on the original legs. Some experienced modellers will notice a lack here of mention about green putty. I was quite able to achieve a seamless look by just using the CA glue. Part of that is having Pacer® accelerator and using it skilfully to solidify the glue in the gaps before it has a chance to drain off (and maybe glue something else together, like your fingers). The left arm was attached to the figure only when I dry-fitted the Warchief on his mount so that he would reach the bridle harness.

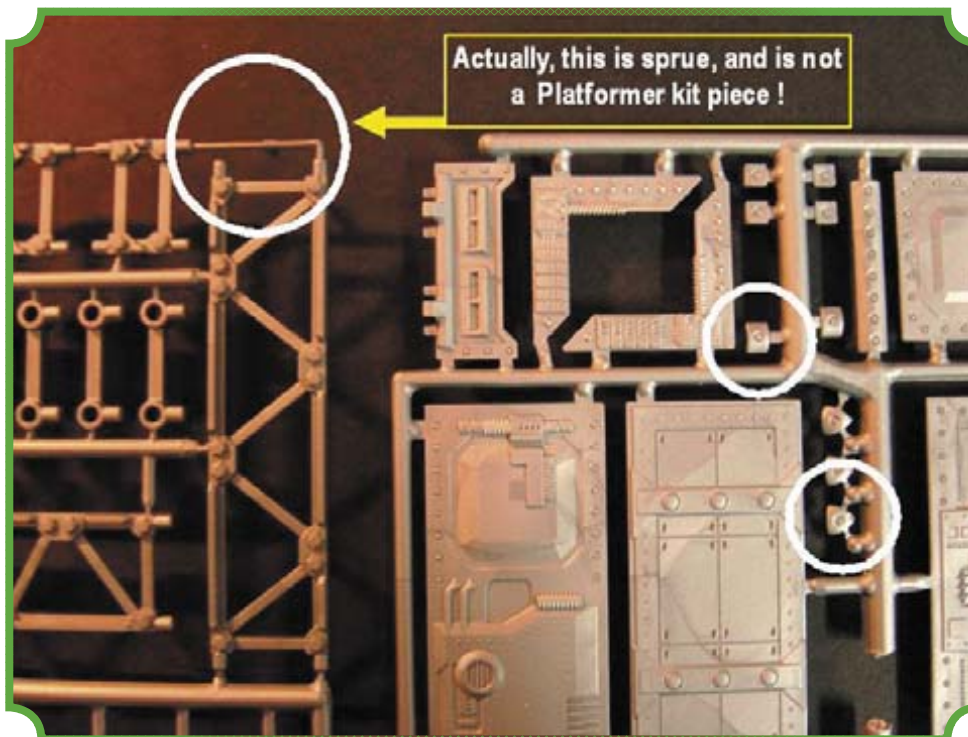
At this point, he could have been considered a finished mod, but I took a gander at what else could be done 'for the fun of it'. As a mount, the pecadon is an imposing beastie. To give a small boost to the appearance of the rider keeping in the saddle, as it were, I cut some small strips of paper and just looped them from the saddle harness around each foot and back to the saddle. Soaking it CA glue and hitting it with a dose of glue accelerator made it complete. This does help the look of the Warchief in adding to the appearance of him standing up off of the saddle, supported by the stirrups. A little paper goes a long way for appearance's sake. Since the original left arm of the Warchief had a length of leather streaming from it, I added an additional paper strip to his new left hand.

With the mid-area of the figure mod explained, I'll now cover the extreme bottom. As there is a bit of metal in this figure (or is it figures, plural?), there is a chance that any glue used to mount it to the base

might not hold, especially if used for gaming. I decided to use a pin vice, and drill holes into the bottom of the feet of the peccadon. I used two very small short screws and attached the figure to the base, from underneath. This gave great strength, and for balance I set the feet towards the rear area of the base circle.

I painted the figure after priming, using a selection of vinyl acrylic paints that I like. I've mentioned this before in previous articles, but the paint is real cartoon paint, sourced from California (the home of Mickey Mouse). So when I am critiqued by a real tough painting critic and I hear 'That's a real Mickey-mouse paint job you have there', I can proudly say 'Thanks for the compliment!' To finish the figure, I used a wash of diluted artist's ink for weathering and protected it with a matte clear sealer.

In looking over the new Skinnies Army Book, in the material covering the Skinnie Warchief, I noticed that the weapon he holds is called a Shock Lance. With a little prodding from a few members of the MGP on-line forums (you know who you are...) I decided what could be done to give a 'high-tech' look to the lance. While there are many ways to add some 'fiddly bits' to the shaft, I wanted to do something that might be reproduced by those that saw my version for themselves. I looked at some trees of the Platformer kits that are often used by me and others for game table scenics for ideas. What I came up with was two shapes that are used to fill joint gaps when the Platformer kit pieces are attached to each other (fillers that most don't use, including me). There is also a piece that you can use for the 'antenna' shaft on either side of the lance, but it is actually part of the tree sprue, to assist in the casting of the kit. 'One person's garbage is...' well, you know the saying. I glued the energy shafts to either side of the main pole, and then added the Platformer filler pieces. In a last idea after painting the Shock Lance, I wound some very small gauge copper wire to the forward ends of the sprue pieces, upping the look of it as an energy weapon. I did set this 'tech' assembly back a bit from the spear end of the shaft, giving the ability of this nasty hand-held thing to be



used as a blunt force spear. It's made to plunge into its target, 'snugly' making a proper connection for the 'shock' part of its functionality.

Some have noticed that the weapon arm of the figure seems to be in a slightly awkward position, holding the lance. I don't see this very small critique as anything that can't be fully explained by reading the Skinnie Army Book (go and get one if you don't have it already, now). You see, Skinnie physiology isn't like ours. They are omni-jointed, so I wouldn't play 'Twister' with one at a party. The Skinnies 'own' at Twister, heh. Lastly, because the Warchief is a quintessential cheerleader for the Skinnie Hegemony, I added a pennant streamer which was drawn easily with a computer and printed.

So here I present the Skinnie Warchief, ready for action with (or against) the Arachnid menace and with (or against!) the Mobile Infantry. The Skinnie Warchief, to be sure: a new definition for 'Shock and Awe!'

## Part II: Flash and Thunderfire

Matthew Sprange

There are, of course, many different miniatures manufacturers in the world. The trouble is, when it comes to science fiction, most models are created to fit into a specific universe and so when placed alongside those from other games; they can appear a little 'odd'. Nowhere is this more apparent than with Warhammer 40,000 miniatures from Games Workshop. Great looking miniatures but they tend to be heavily gothic in tone, with eagles and purity seals galore.

Sometimes, however, you see a model and just think 'Yes! I can use that!' So it was as I passed through Forge World's (a specialist division of Games Workshop, concentrating on resin models) web site the other day. The new Sabre defence platform had just been released and the pictures of

the heavy stubber variant screamed 'Twin-Fifty' to me. Furthermore, it did not seem to need much conversion to fit into the Starship Troopers universe.

The model itself is currently selling for £18, but it is quite a large model and you can no doubt sell the Imperial Guard crewman for a Pound or two on eBay when you are finished. Aside from the Sabre, you will also need a Mobile Infantry crewman (Gunner 2, to be precise) from the Reliant box set – a snip at just \$2/£1.25 if you use the Parts Service on our web site.

### CONVERSION

As conversions go, this really could not be simpler. Build the platform as per the instructions but before you mount the heavy stubbers, remove the eagle from the ammunition boxes. This can be done very quickly with a sharp craft knife, making small cuts flush with the main part of the ammunition box. If you are left with any rough edges, a quick file will leave you with a smooth surface.

After that, mount the crewman behind the weapons assembly – you will find the handle he holds mates nicely with the rear of the platform.

And that is it, all ready to paint!

### PAINTING

Once again, this could not be any easier. Undercoat the entire model black and, when dry, drybrush the entire weapons platform a dark metallic silver. The crewman is drybrushed first dark green (or another colour,



if you have gone for a different scheme in your army), followed by a softer drybrush of a lighter green.

You can then pick out details as you see fit. I painted the trooper's face before mounting a visor, then added the rank markings of a Private. I then picked out the tips of the shells going into the guns in dark red and painted a number on the front of each ammunition boxes. As a final touch, I gave the base of the platform a brown ink wash, to suggest it was well used and had endured the feet of many, many troopers since it was first deployed. The wash was also applied to the tips of the barrels to suggest overheating (all too likely when the bugs are coming).

The whole process, from opening the box to setting aside the model to dry took perhaps an hour. All I needed now were some rules so it could be used in a game!



## THE THUNDERFIRE WEAPONS PLATFORM

Typically seen around semi-permanent forward bases, the Thunderfire is a heavy weapons platform intended to deliver heavier defensive fire than a Reliant with less dependence on its crew. A single trooper can operate the platform effectively, as the ammunition stores are far more copious than those of the smaller Reliant and less prone to jamming under heavy use.

The Thunderfire is, in theory, a mobile platform that can be erected before battle but its complicated structure and heavy weight often relegates it to secondary lines rather than forward areas of battle, where the Reliant is more common. However, once the Thunderfire acquires a target, few will criticise its effectiveness. Just one well-placed Thunderfire is capable of holding off an entire swarm of Warrior Bugs should they try to approach its position openly.

The Thunderfire is an Emplacement Asset. Up to 2 may be purchased per platoon (Light Armour platoons may double this as normal). A Thunderfire requires one trooper to act as crew in order for it to be used.



## THUNDERFIRE WEAPONS PLATFORM

110 POINTS

Name	Material	Size	Target	Kill	Hits
Thunderfire	Steel	3	6+	10+	5

**Weapons:** Two Twin-Fifty autocannon.



More than fact • More than fiction

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Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2006	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

**MISCELLANEA**

**Reconnaissance Report**

**Diary**

Spread the word about your event and make sure of your entry on the diary and calendar by contacting the editor.

**2006 Miniature**

We and the other team have been very busy with the 2006 Miniature. The new edition and complete overhaul for the end of the 19th Century to 1918, and onwards, will be published in the next issue.

**New Hobby**

Miniature Wargames magazine has been added to the list of magazines published by the hobby press. It is a new addition to the hobby press.

**2006 Miniature**

The date is this edition is a bit of a surprise. It is not the date you see on the cover but the date of the first issue. It is the date of the first issue.

**2006 Miniature**

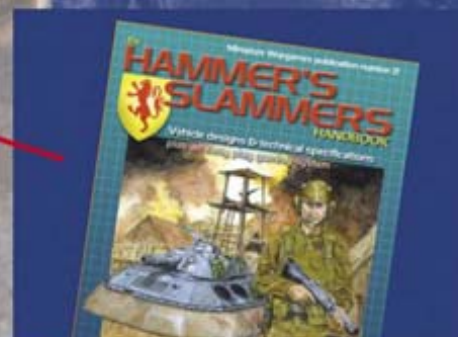
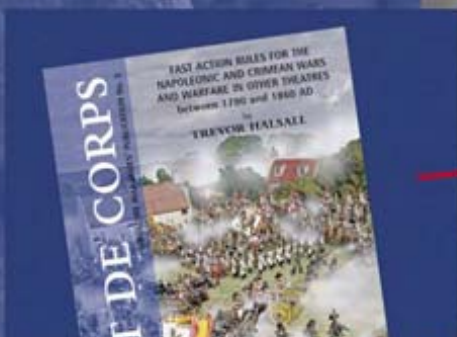
Following a successful issue in the past, the 2006 Miniature will be published in the next issue of the magazine.

**Book & Rule Reviews**

**1745-1763: The Men, The Battle, The Storm**  
By Ian Haywood & Paul Hogg  
London: Osprey, 2005, 128 pages, £12.99

**English Civil War Artillery 1642-53**  
By Chris Bates  
London: Osprey, 2005, 128 pages, £12.99

**The Atlantic: An Illustrated History**  
By George Brown  
London: Osprey, 2005, 128 pages, £12.99



# Scenic Mayhem

## A BRIDGE TOO FAR... FROM EARTH

### Constructing a 'Bug Country Bridge' for battles of Starship Troopers

Darell C.  
Phillips

It was in series one episode three of *Roughnecks: The Starship Troopers Chronicles*, called 'Handle with Care'. Humans were on Pluto. Humans were on Pluto fighting giant Bugs, called Arachnids. Memory recalls a quote from 'Doc' LaCroix: 'Hey, we're fighting giant bugs on freaking Pluto, man! We're all insane!' That wasn't the end of it, though. The humans that were on Pluto fighting these giant bugs were given an assignment to capture a live infant Plasma Bug and transport it over a bridge of frozen water (this is Pluto, remember?) through enemy lines with the baby's *very* adult parents in hot pursuit and deliver it to the R&D people back on Earth. Now *that's* an impossible job, right? That's why they assigned it to Razak's Roughnecks. So after all of that, what is the problem of believing there should be a man-made bridge over a frozen river on Pluto? I'm not hearing any guff, got it? Besides, before you have a good laugh, in a rather spooky sequence of 'life imitating art', didn't we just find out recently that a moon of Saturn named Enceladus has a south pole that is 279 degrees hotter than it should have been, and is tossing several hundred pounds of water ice per second into its magnetosphere? Well, the Cassini probe sent us the movie of it, so that's no longer in the science fiction category, now is it? So let's get on with building that bridge, shall we?



A big consideration in having a nice, strong bridge for tabletop gaming is to not spend a great deal of time making it from scratch. If we spent all of our time building things, while that's fun too, we'd never have the time for gaming. In keeping with a goal of saving some time with bridge materials, here is what I came up with. A new plastic kit, available from Pegasus

Hobbies, just happens to have recently hit the market. It is labelled as being made in 28mm scale, as that just suits me fine and dandy for our purpose. It is named a 'Technobridge', and comes with four bridge sections and eight pieces of railing. The kit is priced at \$12.99 US, is a nice kit, and doesn't even need glue to hold it together. For the more 'battle-damaged' minded of us gamers, that portends a possibility for disassembly as well as assembly <insert smile here>. Additional kits can be bought that can have battle-damaged sections with gaps in them that can be added as a game proceeds, trading out good sections for bad. I suppose a collapsed bridge from Plasma fire isn't out of the imagination, for some of you, I'm sure. For this project, however, I'm not going to spend the funds for damaged parts (yet), as this can be done at a later time. The reason I seemed a bit cheap is about to be forgotten very quickly, as I am

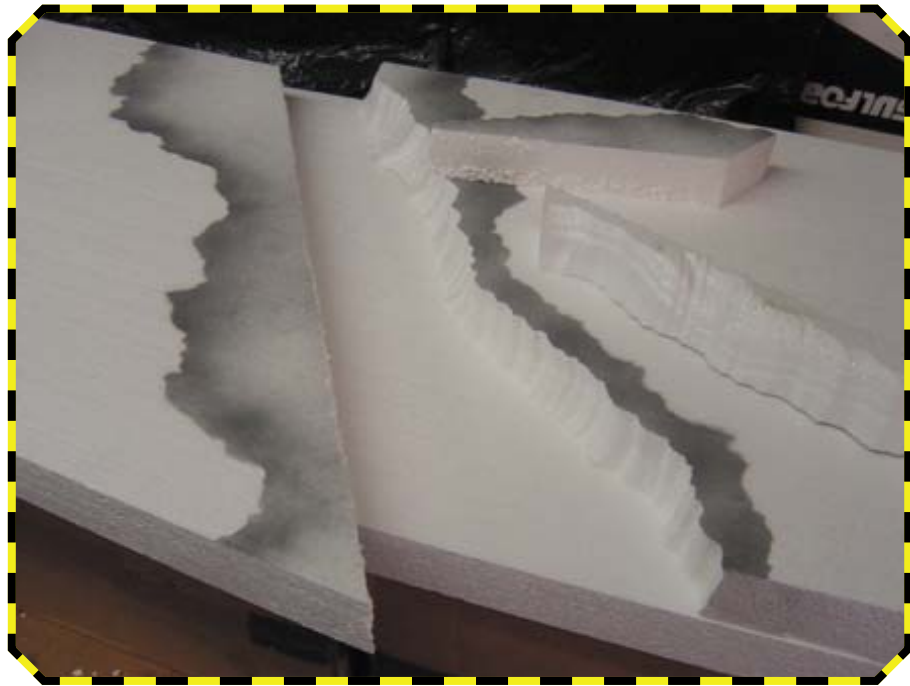


combining five of these kits together to form a gaming bridge that will be three feet long. Nice bridge, eh? Of the four bridge sections that come with this kit, two are 'middle' spans and two are tapered to be end pieces. Each piece measures three inches 'long' and is 6-1/2 inches 'wide' (seven inches including the rails). All but two of the total end pieces from the five kits need to be set aside. Don't discard these, as I have plans for them in a later project (several plans, as it happens!). Waste not, want not, as some poor broke chap once said. But let's not cross that bridge, I mean *project*, until we come to it (maybe next month, ok?)

A decision needs to be made of just how deep our little ravine or canyon is to be. For ease of construction, I picked up a quantity of two foot by four foot Styrofoam panels at a local building supply store. The thickest of

the lot was a two-inch panel, and I decided to use a series of these, carved at a sweeping S-curve angle through the middle of them. The first part of this stage of the project was to have a bottom channel curve its way through the middle area of a 2-inch panel. I used a pencil, and made a sweeping path of two lines across the sheet about three inches wide, but varying a bit. Deciding that I wanted the total gorge to appear deep enough to justify a bridge, I ended up with a decision to make it a depth of six stacked panels. The total depth would thus be ten inches, with a bottom panel left un-carved. The panel we sketched onto will become the second panel from the bottom.

Now a small amount of planning is needed, to end up at a height later of ten inches with about a 28" horizontal gap in the top of the board. This allows for each side



of the chasm to have a flat area to support the bridge ends. To keep the ends of the three-foot bridge from being placed too close to the extreme end of the long side of the Styrofoam board top, I made the decision to place the bridge diagonal, pointing to two of the non-adjacent corners of the top panel. Artistically, it appears less mechanical and has a more random look to the display by not being parallel with the long sides. This makes for a great stand-alone playing board, as well as possibly fitting with other terrain boards. To think for a minute about matching a board this deep to other tabletop panels, you would need to be able to 'sink' the board next to a table, flush with the tabletop that you already use. Either that, or use a low table and 'build-up' the adjacent thinner panels up to the height of the new bridge board. This sounds like a good use for those encyclopaedias or perhaps the many phone books that

we never seem to get around to recycling. Also, think about building a light weight hollow 'cube' out of foam core board, as vertical filler. If you ever do something like this, be sure to create a vertical 'X' piece inside for added strength. Now to do some additional 'ground work'.

After making your 'river' path sketched onto the panel, it's time to cut the panel in two. In order to sculpt a finished edge to these, I first needed to separate the board into two halves. I used a metal straight edge and a 'zip' knife (a retractable, disposable knife) to make a cut on the top, and straight down each 2-inch edge. I then laid the board over a desk edge and broke it along the score line. This allowed me to access the raw edge and sculpt it with a foam-cutting tool. I have an electric powered tool, but a simple one powered by batteries can



be bought for around \$10.00 US. Holding the tool at an angle which I varied between 45 degrees and nearly vertical, I used the 'coffee jitters' method of cutting a path along the board edge. This makes for a gorgeous edge to the board (get it? 'gorge-ous?'). Forget it, ok? (Nobody appreciates real humour these days, you know...)

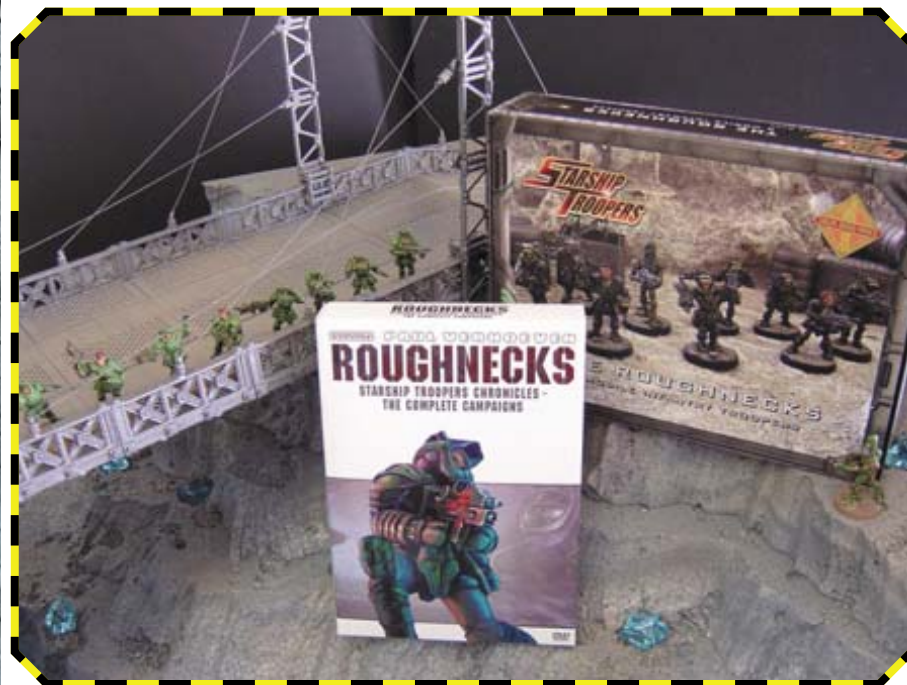
When you trim both sides of the gorge (well... let's call it a crevasse, ok?) it's time to move up a level and repeat this. The only change is to begin to spread the opening or gap between the pieces at each level. You can use my photos for guidance to see what to gauge for, but it really does depend on what look you are going for. The more levels there are to the finished board, the more you will crowd yourself toward the ends of the top layer. In order to scale the cost back if you wish, you can omit levels

to the finished board. This will also let you have a narrower gap and use far less bridge kits than I decided upon. I really wanted to make a splash with this bridge however, so I wanted it to be a structure that was imposing on the game table. Then I remembered it's hard to make a splash when your river is frozen (sigh). I really shouldn't try to follow my inspiration to such a degree of detail on other projects you know. For example, in reading in a Signs & Portents Wargamer article today that Claudia Christian had played her old Babylon 5 character in an 'Open Day' RPG session with the gang at Mongoose (as detailed over in *Se&P Roleplayer 33*), I'm glad I wasn't there to try to get her to recall that dream Ivanova had about going to work in the station in the buff. Hey, it was in the script! It's not my fault! Great episode, that was... Alright, I lied about *not* wanting to be there at Open Day, but I digress. I don't want to burn my bridge, so to speak, before I even finish building it. Face it; you saw that one coming didn't you?



There was a point where I reached the ability to make four pieces from a single 2-foot by 4-foot board. The top four inches of the total board is made from a single piece of two-inch stock. It was a close thing, but I saved wasting another board. Maybe it is a good time to mention here that the Styrofoam I used was only costing about \$6.00 US per sheet, so counting five pieces set me back about \$30.00 US for a six-layered scenery board. That is one of the things I like about the material. A negative point that most of you already know about is that it is a softer material than the 'pink' or 'blue' sheet stock that is available. That 'negative' is however a redeeming feature when you wish to texture it and add some roughness and crater pits. I'll mention that step in a short while, but before I do we need to decide what to glue together and what *not to glue together*.

While there are many ways to assemble the sheets together, I decided on a modular approach for this bridge board. One thing that I wanted was to be able to break it down for easy transport. As long as I was doing that, I thought about making it modular for another reason in addition to transportability. If I wanted a flat board that had an end that rose into a high plateau, I could leave off one end of the terrain and the bridge and be able to use it as a mountainside. Using spray Styrofoam adhesive, I glued the top five layers of each end of the terrain together, making sure the edges matched vertically, flush to each other. I decided to leave the bottom full 2-foot by 4-foot layer as a separate piece. I even finished it as a stand-alone terrain board, to be used with one of the end pieces as I mentioned before. The full-sized board ended up with a full texture and colour effort. If used as a bridge support base piece however, very little would ever show up of that work.



With the bridge support terrain shaped and glued, the texture and 'personality' of the surface of it was the next step needed in the project. I seem to have gotten noticed for the detail that I have in my terrain boards. Some would describe the boards as having 'personality'. I simply call it 'acetone' <insert snickering smiley here>. While easily found at paint and building supply stores, don't take this stuff casually. Read the label and follow directions. Make sure that your work area is well ventilated and use protective gloves. As far as the technique I've developed, it's a bit like doing a blessing with holy water on something unholy, using a natural bristle brush. Well, since I used that analogy, let's carry it a bit further. It's like using liquid sunshine on a vampire (*it was also often used to kill off Cybermen in 1960s Doctor Who – Doctor Editor*). You get the idea.

If you use too much, you'll be buying more Styrofoam. Think of the Wizard of Oz movie where Dorothy douses the Wicked Witch of the West with a bucket of water, ok? ('I'm melting, melttiinnggg...') I suggest getting the hang of it by practicing on some of the scrap left over from the previous cutting of the Styrofoam. I use a little acetone in a junk ceramic cup, and flick the brush using an overhand delivery method. If you use a cup, please be sure to mark it well with, oh say, 'POISON. DO NOT DRINK!' A little goes a long way for texturing Styrofoam. It will sound like bacon frying and evaporate within a few minutes if you use the right amount. Be sure after you are done to carefully pour the unused acetone back into its well-marked factory container and keep the cup with its warning markings for future use. If it is not important to you to do this texturing step, you can save all of the cautions that I've just thrown at



you and proceed to paint the board. Remember from a safety perspective, that sharp knife that you used to score the sheet of Styrofoam could be used improperly as well and cut you severely. Be sure to use proper precautions with any possibly dangerous materials. And look twice before you jaywalk, silly.

As to colour, I kept the main theme of the terrain a variation on tints of grey, since this was a moon-like theme. In a previous Scenic Mayhem article, you might remember several boards that I did on a lunar theme. Well, there are a lot of moons in solar systems I suppose, and except for frozen water and other stuff Pluto should be like a moon (that's a planet). I sure wish they'd vote on that whole 'what is a planet' thing and stick to it. Golly. You should know by now that I use Krylon H2o™ (hint- it's not 'H-twenty'). It is a latex spray



paint, and is available in a variety of colours. To increase the colour range, try adding a secondary colour while the primary coat is still wet. The two (or more) colours will blend into a nice variable scheme. For this terrain board specifically, I also added some splotches of khaki colouration so that I can also match up my desert boards and the grey areas can be said to be exposed rock. If players notice that the bridgeboard is a little too much grey sitting next to the desert boards, I'll tell them that it is the remnant of a moon that crashed into the planet billions of years ago. So there.

If you did indeed skip 'the Dip' acetone texturing method earlier, you are free to choose from stronger Styrofoam materials. If you did opt for the white stuff, it now needs some added protection and sealant. I do not believe that the latex paint gives quite enough



protection from the application of hydrocarbon-based clear sealers (yes, they have acetone in them!), so a water-based clear sealer is still suggested. I've used a water clean-up craft sealer called Mod Podge (matte), but have just picked up a quantity of Minwax® water-based Polycrylic® clear satin. This looks like good stuff to armour my boards with, and is brushed on. The really nifty thing about this coating is that it dries very quickly between coats. I'm looking to possibly add even more protection, as a leaning 'giant's' palm (from a gamer) can leave a dent in your board. The good points about using Styrofoam (easy texturing and light weight) offset possible damage because of its makeup. Maybe I'll find a way to get my new Starship Trooper miniatures Stalwart Field Generators to actually work so they can defend my terrain as well as my Mobile Infantry (heh). Interestingly, I've tested my terrain at a few conventions

and have come away clean, which says a lot about the chaps who play the game. Then again, there was that mention of using electricity...

Let's see, are we done? What? A bridge, you say? Hmm. This part can be amazingly quick to tell, if done simply. Buy some Pegasus Technobridge kits, and snap them together in order to get across the gap in the middle of the terrain. I had been making this more like a diorama every time I went back and viewed the Roughnecks episode for still screen shots of the 'Bug Country Bridge'. In many ways, the plastic bridge kit is not unlike the bridge in the episode. The televised script had the CG studio design the bridge support with two vertical wire-supported structures at either end. I decided to make use of some Platformer kit gantry pieces and make them rise up and cross over the bridge ends. Since I did that,



I super-glued some very small super-magnets along the bridge railing as well as on the support gantry. I then cut some very strong pieces of .016 gauge steel wire and attached the wire to the magnets. It gave the appearance of a cable-supported bridge. Again considering safety, I bent the wire back at the ends so that they couldn't find their way somehow into someone's eye. In the end, the wire ends themselves were attached to magnets, bent back on themselves and covered with super-glue. While they add a sense of additional detail to the model, I knew they would not photograph well, tending to instead disappear into the background. One reason I made these wires detachable is to later be able to remove bridge sections and replace them with battle-damaged versions or 'collapse' the bridge into the rift. While not necessarily needing it, I painted the bridge with Krylon Fusion (for plastics) in a metallic colour called Textured



Shimmer Graphite. After drying, I added a diluted wash of black artist ink for weathering.

Again, because I had researched the series episode and wanted to have a frozen river at the bottom, I picked up some blue plastic 'cubes' made for dry flower arrangements. Instead of placing these in a vase, I sprinkled four small bags of these into the river path, and added a few random pieces on the slope of the gorge. For gaming, this is very optional, and the bridge doesn't have to be on Pluto every time I use it. A removable piece of felt can be inserted for a more terrestrial river. I'll probably paint some whitecaps over a blue felt for a raging river effect.

The cost of this project can be broken down into the following parts. I used five sections of two-inch 2-foot by 4-foot Styrofoam at \$6.00 US each. That's \$30.00 US so far. Five Technobridge models at a full retail of \$12.99 US would be about \$65.00. I used only a small part of a Platformer kit, so figure less than \$10.00 US there. I had the wire already, but it's really quite optional. A roll of duct tape was used to protect the sides you'll notice, so about \$5.00 US there. That's \$110.00 US total, without considering the river cubes at \$8.00 US and the paint only partially used that I already had. Since I was going for the episode diorama look, I found a Matchbox Mega Rig toy that I'll use for the 'Pluto Shuttle', which is the flatbed that lugs the Plasma Bug around the desolate fields of Pluto. For a baby Plasma Bug, I just picked up a Galoob Starship Troopers Plasma Bug

off of E-bay, for possibly running a recreation scenario of the Roughnecks mission. You certainly do not need these to enjoy games of Starship Troopers miniatures, but you just might want a great bridge though. If after all of this however you just can't fathom a bridge over a river of frozen water, you can always call it a bridge over a chasm with a large vein of quartz at the bottom. But then with my tongue firmly entrenched in my cheek, I insist that you call it 'The Bridge on the River Quartz', for a bridge can have a toll of a sort imposed with its use. Now go looking for that bridge kit. Remember, it's not 'Pegasus Bridge' silly, it's a bridge *offered* by Pegasus Hobbies...



# PASSING IN THE NIGHT (AGAIN)

A BATTLE REPORT FOR THE STARSHIP  
TROOPERS MINIATURES GAME

MATTHEW SPRANGE  
AND IAN BARSTOW

Well, with a scenario appearing in Signs & Portents, we could not let things slide without a battle report showing you all how *we* got on with it. So, wandering over to Ian's desk I issued the traditional Mongoose Challenge (a slap round the face with a wet Turbot) and the fight was on! I rooted for the MI, while Ian would give his bugs a try once more. This is what happened...

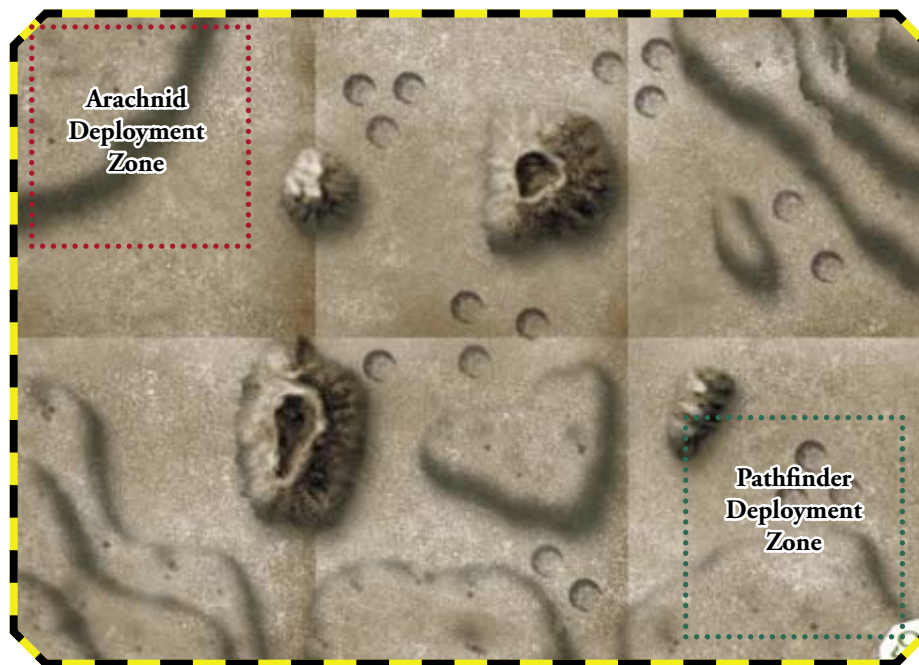
## DEPLOYMENT

### PATHFINDERS

Well, predictably, I lose the roll for setting up and Ian forces me to deploy first. After checking that any lurking hoppers would not be able to assault me in the first turn, I set up as far forward as possible, ready to send the army to one flank or the other. Then I waited to see what Ian would bring.

### ARACHNIDS

Hoping this would be a sign of things to come, I rolled a 5 against Matthew's 2, giving me choice of first or second setup and move. I decided to deploy and move second. With my amount of bugs in an 18-inch square area it was going to be like a car park anyway, and this way I could see what Matthew had selected. It was quite a surprise when I saw an all-Pathfinder force facing me. This meant a small number of models that could be kept in a contained area. It also meant I would have the majority of the board to control.



Deployment Map

With that in mind I decided that I would use my hoppers on a wide sweeping move around the left flank, with a unit of warriors behind whose sole intention was to get off the table and score me 150 points. Hopefully enough hoppers would survive for them to do a hit and run and joining the warriors, giving me an extra 300 victory points. That was the plan, anyway. The rest of the warriors were to pressurise the Pathfinders and allow the blaster bugs to get into place to fire. As for the cliff mites...well, my first aim was to move them onto a cliff – it's what they would

want. After that, I'd have them in the backfield ready to delay the Pathfinders to stop them getting any troops of table. Seven turns might seem like a long time but I had a feeling they would go very quickly.

## TURN ONE

### MATTHEW

Well, the army I faced could have been worse. Lots of warriors were expected but I quickly

## 1<sup>ST</sup> COMPANY, 4<sup>TH</sup> PLATOON – MARLOWE'S MOLERATS

Those of you who pay close attention to our website forums may have seen a post I made a short while ago announcing that building an entire Company of Mobile Infantry was not enough for me (the first company was complete a while ago...), and that I was now working on a complete Battalion! Well, I had given the final lick of paint to Marlowe's Molerats, my Pathfinder platoon, and I was eager to give them a whirl!

With a 1,000 points at Priority Level One, you won't have a huge choice of tactical options for an expensive army like the Pathfinders – two squads and an NCO will be par for the course, though there is plenty of variation still available.

I briefly considered using a Neodog squad, but given that the mission demanded a fast paced trek across the battlefield, quicker moving units would be the order of the day. There was no way I could resist taking a full complement of Shredders in one of the squads (ever seen what they can do to a swarm of warriors?), and if you take that many Shredders, you need Armourer training for the squad Sergeant. The second squad would contain a mix of weaponry – two Flamers (I knew we would be getting close to bugs at some point), a Triple Thud and a Javelin. One of the Pathfinders in this squad would be a Veteran Trooper, allowing the unit to soldier on even if I had a catastrophic failure of command. Both squads would also sport a Corporal to make them rock solid when the bugs came charging in.



The army was rounded off with an NCO, whom I gave the Jumpball Player! trait, always a fun option.

### MARLOWE'S MOLERATS

<b>Senior Sergeant Turk</b>	130 points
Jumpball Player!	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Squad</b>	405 points
6 Pathfinders, Corporal, Sergeant with Armourer, 3 Shredder Squad Support Cannon	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Squad</b>	460 points
8 Pathfinders, Corporal, Veteran Trooper, 2 Hel Flamers, Triple Thud G/L, Javelin Missile Launcher	
<b>Total:</b>	995 points

## THE ARACINIDS

My first thoughts when looking over the Passing in the Night scenario were that there probably wouldn't be much in the way of passing and plenty of fighting! That said, I was determined to actually go through with the spirit of the mission and attempt to get some troops off the table. With that in mind I decided to utilise my 1,000 points to field as many units as possible while still giving them a reasonable chance of survival.

In a Priority Level One engagement expect to see warriors – lots and lots of warriors. I knew Matthew would be expecting them but I didn't want to disappoint. After all, these guys are what being a Bug is all about. I tend to prefer my warriors in big groups so I selected three units of 10 warriors to start off with. I also wanted to fast assault troops, so against my better judgment I took a unit of 6 hopper bugs. Me and hoppers don't generally get on. Perhaps they are just too fast for my steady style of play, but when I use them they generally underperform. Still, here was a great chance to remedy that!



So, I've got 30 warriors and 6 hopper bugs, but I could also use some firepower. At PL1 I'm really faced with using either blister or blaster bugs. With these guys you pay your money and take your choice. Longer range and the trade off for less power won out and I went for blaster bugs, 5 to be precise. Held towards the back I was hoping they would be able to snipe at the Mobile Infantry who would hopefully be distracted by my warriors.

All this left 100 points to play with. I looked down my options and at the tabletop, and it became obvious – with all this high ridges I needed cliff mites! Yes, they aren't exactly powerhouse fighters, but with a tight cap on points I can spare 25 for a unit of 5 of these guys, leaving 75 points to spend on another small unit of 5 warriors. All-in-all, a nice little force to massacre the hated humans. Once more Buggruppe 999 takes to the field!

## BUGGRUPPE 999

6 x Hopper Bugs	300 points
3 x 10 Warrior Bugs	450 points
1 x 5 Warrior Bugs	75 points
1 x 5 Cliff Mites	25 points
1 x 5 Blaster Bugs	150 points
	Total: 1,000 points



*Mobile Infantry Deployment*



*Arachnid Deployment*

deduced that the 'high value' targets were the hoppers and blasters. The former would also have the greatest potential to hammer my small force, so I would have to treat them with respect. As for the cliff mites, well, I guessed that Ian had some spare points during army selection and was being his usual frivolous self...

I sent two squads down the left flank; one sending a Firecracker missile towards the leading warrior bugs but no damage was caused. The NCO I sent to the other flank – a fairly suicidal move, possibly, but it would give Ian something to think about and, in the very least, would ensure he did not have a completely smooth ride if he threw units in that direction.

### IAN

Well, unsurprisingly all the Pathfinders jumped forward and happily for me missed their missile fire. I did notice one trooper detach himself and move across toward Matthew's right flank. Clearly this was his commander. Thinking I might pick up some cheap points I sent out my hopper

bugs (who were going that way in any case) while carrying on with my aforementioned plan of encircling the Pathfinders and toasting them with blaster bugs. Having been lucky not to lose casualties while stacked up in the deployment zone I also wanted to spread out a bit.

### TURN TWO

#### MATTHEW

During this turn, the heat started to creep upwards and I had the chance to start nailing bugs with an opening salvo. The two squads continued their bounce along the left flank but, regrettably, the Shredders were still not in range. The other squad



*Turn One - The two armies surge forwards!*

had better luck and starts hitting warrior bugs though, again, the Firecracker missile fails to score a single hit – that is 12 dice it has rolled now and not one has scored above 4!

Ian's hopper move was canny, as it forced the NCO to vacate the area immediately. Unfortunately, he could not bounce out of range far enough, and things looked bleak – had I just handed Ian 130 easy points? The NCO leapt as far as his jump pack could take him but I placed him very strategically, well within the hoppers' own hover range but also in such a way that guaranteed any flying bug fancying its chances would trigger reactions from the shredders (who were Readied, and able to re-roll misses) and flamers of the two squads. A 130 point model in exchange for a 300 point one? Bargain, even if it did cause command difficulties later.

## IAN

I guess it was too much to expect the Pathfinders to completely miss two turns in a row. That said, things could have been a lot worse, and just 3



*Turn Two - The Pathfinders wait in ambush*

warriors dead wasn't too bad a price to pay. I decided to leave the hoppers until last as I wasn't quite sure whether to risk flying into the two Pathfinders in range and risk all that readied reaction fire. In the meantime I moved the cliff mites up the nearest cliff path. That was very important, of course! The warriors began encircling the Pathfinders and the blaster bugs loitered in front of the enemy advance. I was hoping to drive Matthew across the table a move or two earlier than he might have planned and the presence of the blasters as key to that. Other than that, my move was complete.



*Turn Two - Weren't we supposed to be doing something....?*

## TURN THREE

### MATTHEW

It was about this time that Ian started telling all and sundry in the office about how real wargamers play. This was a sentiment I could readily agree to, especially as his rant had distracted him from the game and led to him forgetting to move his hopper bugs!

I was not sure whether to be pleased or dismayed. True, I

would not have to suffer their wrath but my clever trap would not be sprung!

The Javelin trooper finally earns his weekly pay as two warrior bugs fall to his fire and those armed with Morita rifles also score some hits, either dropping warriors or at least forcing them backwards. All pretty routine, but I can see that Ian has surrounded me on two sides and retreat is not an option in this scenario. The next turn will get very interesting...

### IAN

Gah! I can't believe I forgot to move the hoppers! I did mention that me and hoppers aren't on the best of terms but this takes the biscuit. It wasn't a disaster that they didn't charge in on turn two, particularly with the Pathfinder squad ready and waiting, but I would have liked to move them into a better attack position. I rashly decided to compensate for this by steaming them into action right away, spurred on by the sight of the enemy





*Turn Three - The Pathfinders earn their pay*



*Turn Three - Will Buggruppe 999's envelopment work?*

NCO still being in range. I knew Matthew would have a few points tied up with this guy and I really wanted to bring him down, especially as I'd just lost 9 warrior bugs during Matthew's turn. It was payback time!

Except it didn't quite turn out that way. I should have guessed by Matthew's smug grin that he had something special lined up for me, although I admit I did not foresee what it was. Just as my ravenous hopper was about to impale the NCO Matthew revealed that he had the Jumpball Player! heroic trait. With the added +2 to his dodge save, the Pathfinder commander easily leaped out of the way of the flailing hopper, blowing it apart with reaction fire just to rub it in. Two other hoppers managed to rip apart a single Pathfinder trooper who had strayed out of formation, but in return reaction fire left the hoppers with just two survivors. Not much to show for my plans.

No other bugs managed to get within range so we all hovered just outside the Pathfinders' 12"

reaction range and waited for the inevitable hail of fire on turn 4.

## TURN FOUR

### MATTHEW

Every now and again, something very cinematic happens in Starship Troopers. I could just see my NCO relying on skills learned during his Jumpball days, backflipping from one rock to another as a hopper dove in, blasting it apart with his Morita as they were both in mid-air!

Ian was setting himself up for a final charge that (he hoped) would wipe me out, a critical time in many games of Starship Troopers. The balance here was my ability to wipe out enough bugs to break the back of the attack versus Ian's ability to time his units approach to give the maximum weight to his attack. And it seemed that Ian had positioned his units very well.

I had three major problem areas. First, the two remaining hoppers – with their movement, they could hit any of my troopers and then leave without triggering reaction fire or they could head for the exit point and still give Ian 300 points despite the casualties they had already taken, effectively evening things up. There was also a large swarm of warriors who looked set to crash through my ranks and those blasters had finally moved into strike range. I knew they could hurt.

Once again, flamers took easy care of the hoppers, and sustained fire from both squads, now entrenched as they tried to hold back the attack (thus losing the Mobile in Mobile Infantry, a tactic that has cost me games before), gave the warriors a healthy hammering. However, there were still enough warriors left and only one blaster fell to missile fire.

Even the most optimistic could see that this was simply not enough...

**IAN**

Well, that hurt. The Pathfinders' fearsome weaponry really did their work this turn. My main attack was turned into diced bug meat in a few dice rolls, although two of my warriors did use their Countercharge reaction to get in amongst the Pathfinders and kill three of their number, including the hated master sergeant, whose Jumpball career was now on permanent hold! Just for a moment things were looking good. I had warriors in amongst the Pathfinders, with a second swarm coming up as planned and the blasters, escorted by two surviving warriors looking threatening in front. With the cliff mites now back down on solid ground to stop the Pathfinders getting off table without interference and two sneaky warriors making their way to my exit area, things might just work out.

This of course is where dice can let you down. The two warriors failed to even hit any of the Pathfinders they were amongst and got blasted to pieces by reaction fire, as did the back-up swarm who failed to kill the sole Pathfinder they could reach, my three D10's coming up 1,2 and 3! Matthew happily blew them all to kingdom come, leaving it to the blaster bugs to restore some pride.



*Turn Four - Hey, where the bugs at?*

Needless to say their training had clearly been targeting things larger than a barn door, for all but one missed, and Matthew maintained his impressive run of mid-game saving throws by shrugging off the hit.

This was not a good turn to be a bug, I can tell you!

**TURN FIVE****MATTHEW**

Hey! I think I did more damage to Ian in his turn than I did in mine! Just goes to show, the wheel can turn very quickly in games of Starship Troopers.

Ian had caused some serious problems and the loss of the NCO meant my command range was now 3" and some Pathfinders had been out of command. Fortunately, some judicious uses of Beat Feet during Ian's turn brought them back into command and I could proceed pretty much unhindered.



*Turn Four - warrior bugs mass to attack*

The bugs had been given a bloody nose and now it was time to break the back of their assault. Electing to hold my ground once again in return for increased firepower, all but one blaster fell along with more warriors.

The way was clear to the exit edge!

## IAN

Well, not much left to do really. The cliff mites were feeling a mite lonely (sorry about that) guarding the exit corridor. Things certainly weren't looking too bright for them, and the last blaster bug managed to miss again, leaving me cursing my increasingly bad dice luck. My only serious movement was to rush the two surviving warriors towards the table exit, hoping Matthew couldn't kill them both before they escaped. I was not holding out too much hope though, given the way things had gone thus far.

## TURN SIX

### MATTHEW

Now was time to start moving again. I was not going to be able to get off the table and thus earn (even more) points but I had done enough damage to the bugs that victory was in the bag.

A moment of cruelty led me to hurl a missile at the warriors trying to sneak off the table behind my force, though only one died, allowing Ian to collect points for the remainder. The last blaster fell to fire on the bounce while the ragged line of cliff mites that were stretched in front of my force in an attempt to hold the line (!) took a hammering.

## IAN

With a rather pathetic shout of triumph I moved my surviving warrior bug off table. I guessed that he wasn't going to be carrying out much of a devastating raid all on his own. That left two



*Turn Five - And then there was one!*

cliff mites on the table, who I moved back rather pointlessly, just to prove I was still there. I feared for their safety.

## TURN SEVEN

### MATTHEW

Well, by this time the battle had been well and truly won. The remaining cliff mites were dispatched and we shook hands.

Ian immediately started claiming that I had actually failed the mission as my Pathfinders were not in position to mount their diversionary raid. I pointed out that a single warrior bug may not prove to be a significant distraction in itself in the wider scheme of the war.

So, a tactical win, if not a strategic one.

## IAN

Nothing on the table means nothing to move. Easy really.

## CONCLUSION

### VICTORY POINTS

Marlowe's Molerats: 1,000 points  
Buggruppe 999: 285 points

## MATTHEW

I expected the best and I got the best – you have to love Pathfinders! Though they are significantly more expensive than other power suited troopers,



*Turn Seven - Victory for the Mobile Infantry*

their access to superior equipment is a real eye opener, particularly in these smaller scale scenarios. It can be a case of putting eggs into one basket but, this time at least, it paid off.

My biggest error was sending my NCO off on his own. As soon as I made that move, he was doomed, though his Jumpball training did score some dividends for a while. I always seem to treat my officers as tough heroes which, in Starship Troopers, is just not the case. Heroism works differently in this game, and they are always far better off holding the line alongside other troopers – they are simply not capable of holding off a swarm of any bug species by themselves, never mind something as powerful as hoppers.

Ian's biggest error? Well, the cliff mites did absolutely nothing except march up and down

a cliff, when they could have been running alongside the warriors and adding more pressure to the Pathfinders – you never know, just that little extra might have been enough for him to break through my line. The biggest problem, however, were the hoppers and Ian forgetting to move them. Granted, they would probably have been slaughtered had he moved them in a turn earlier but the delay caused Ian to rush them in the turn after and suicide runs are just not the hoppers' forte, especially in a small game where they form a high proportion of an army's points value. Better to creep them in while the warrior have it out with the Mobile Infantry, before launching a sweeping attack that takes them out of cover, beheads a few troopers, then flies them *back* into cover. There is very little the Mobile Infantry can do about that without changing position, which is not usually an option when warriors are very close.

That said, Ian's timing for his other units was spot on and he did have some appalling luck with the dice at the most critical point in the game.

Still, that is the price you pay for being a bug, I always say!

## IAN

Drat, another battle report defeat! I'm sure I've won a game at some point in my life but I'm beginning to wonder when that might be. Looking back on the game it's clear that for a start I wasn't expecting Pathfinders. As well as their excellent equipment, the extra 2" reaction range is quite a feature. My plan was pretty sound, I think, although execution – especially forgetting to move the hoppers on Turn 2 – was less impressive.

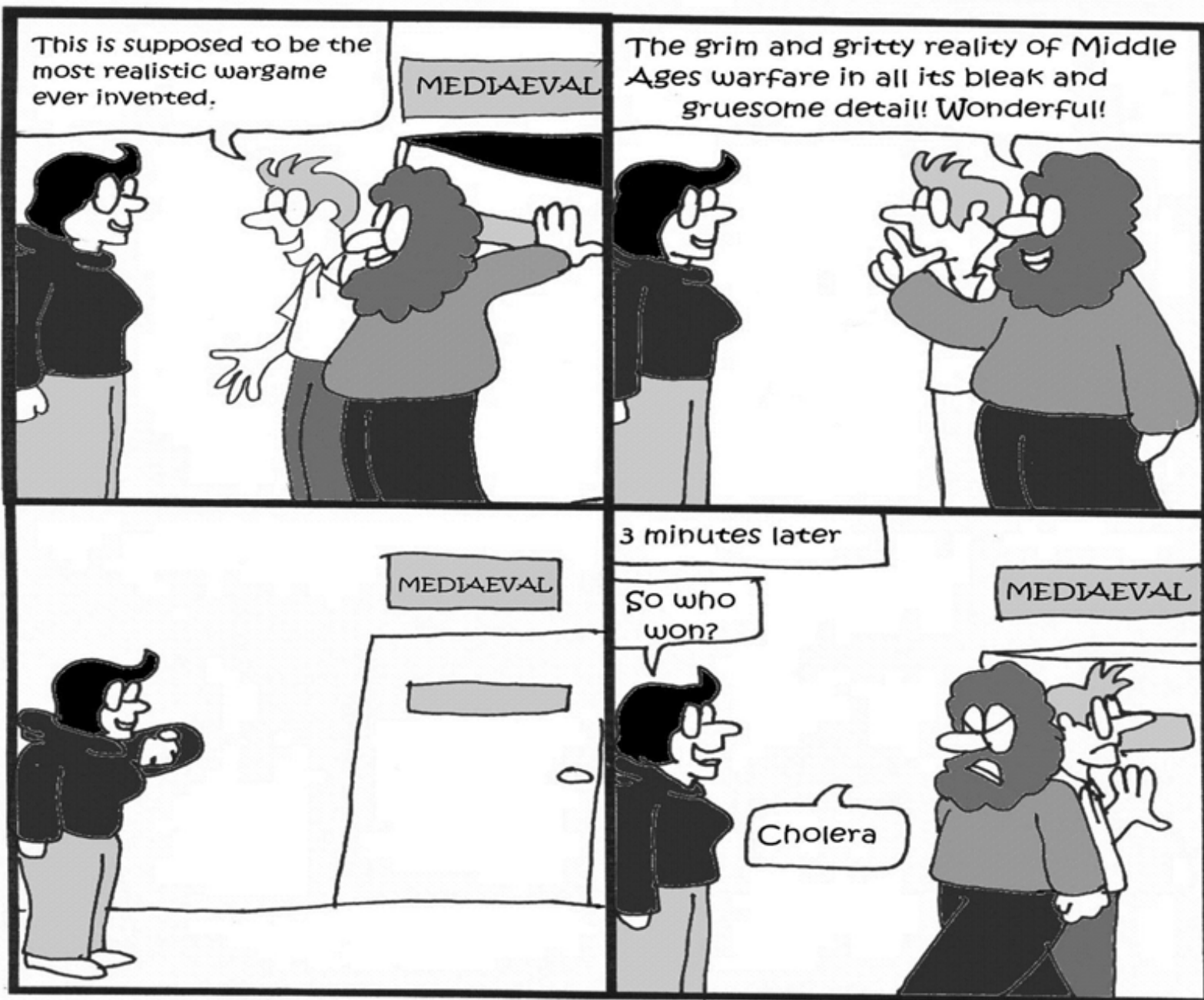
There was a moment at the start of Turn 4 when I thought we might still turn it around, but the dice picked a fine moment to desert me, and a string of poor attacks coupled with Matthew throwing saves like they were going out of fashion condemned us to defeat.

I am of course going to point out that we did at least get one warrior bug out of our exit area, unlike the Pathfinders, so although my raid would be pitiful, it's arguably better than the Pathfinders who were too slow to raid at all. Not really much of a compelling argument though, and my pathetic run with bugs continues. It would be churlish of me to mention how well I did in our last Starship Troopers tournament but will anyway, just to prove that on occasion I know what I am doing, even if it was with the Mobile Infantry!



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