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Dredd Gets Paranoid

Battlefield Evolution

Find Out About The Armies!

Plus. . . Denmark Strait and Battlefield Evolution Battle Reports,
Mighty Armies, Gangs Of Mega-City One and lots, lots more!

Well, it's been another busy month of preparing the ground for Battlefield Evolution as well as playtesting Starship Troopers Evolution, and you can probably tell from my chirpy manner that things are going pretty well. If you take a look at the Battlefield Evolution article starting on page 6 you will see just how well things are developing. the first wave of PLA releases (that's the Chinese People's Liberation Army to you) are back and complete, and you can see the Infantry Squad and the Type 99 MBT in all their glory, along with the first of the Middle Eastern Alliance forces. I'm particularly proud of the MEA leader model, as it was one of the designs I came up with. Best of all, before anybody thinks he's not realistic, he's based on an actual photograph!

I'm sold on the idea of pre-painted miniatures as well. many of my gaming group were surprised when I told them about this, as they expected an old hand like me to be against such 'modern' schemes, but the idea of being able to get an army right out of its boxes and start playing seems such a great idea that I can't work out why anybody hasn't done it at this level before. The trick of course is getting great models painted to a really good gaming standard, and I think you'll agree from the photographs that we are on the right track!

Right, enough talk. I'm of to flatten Nick the Greek's MEA with my heroic Brits!

Ian

Signs & Portents Wargamer Contents

Features

Regulars

EYE ON MONGOOSE

Coming This Month

MI LIGHT ARMOUR SPECIALS

Containing one Longbow missile launcher, one sniper, one Fednet reporter and one Comms trooper, this set of Light Armoured Mobile Infantry specials. Recruited for the massive Klendathu Invasion campaign, the Light Armour Companies of the Mobile Infantry lace great reliance on the few highly trained specialists available to them.

If you are looking for extra heavy weapons to support your MI or just the comforting presence of a Fednet camera, then this blister set is ideal! Contains four miniatures.

SKINNIE GUARD HEAVY WEAPONS

Skinnie Guards are the elite cadre troops of many Skinnie tribes, specially selected for their martial qualities and years of combat experience. The armour of the Skinnie Guards is the best that Skinnie technology has to offer, combining light weight with excellent durability. They are comfortable either engaging at distance with their Boneshard Rifles or taking the fight directly to the enemy with devastating Shock Sticks.

Like other Skinnie combat units the Skinnie Guards use a variety of terrifying weaponry, exemplified by the Constrictor Cannon and Neural Beamer, which the Skinnie Guards deploy to lethal effect.

This blister set contains two Skinnie Guard with Constrictor Cannons and two with Neural Beamers

BABYLON 5: ARMAGEDDON
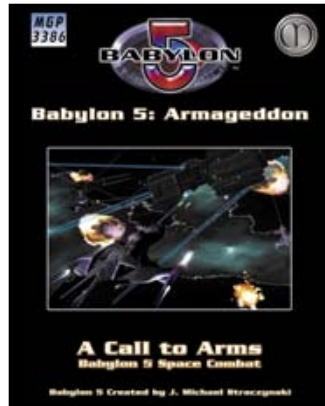
EA NEMESIS ADVANCED DESTROYER

THE ANCIENTS FLEET BOX

EA MARATHON ADVANCED CRUISER

ISA WHITE STAR CARRIER

CENTAURI ADIRA ROYAL BATTLESHIP

ISA WHITE STAR GUNSHIP

ISA WHITE STAR FIGHTERS

This month sees the release of a selection of the new ships detailed in Babylon 5:Armageddon, plus the book itself. Some of the mightiest ships in the galaxy will be placed at your command, allowing you to alter the course of any battle in your favour. Can you cope with such power?

THE ARMIES

Matthew Sprange

ANOTHER PREVIEW OF THE FORTHCOMING GAME OF NEAR FUTURE WARFARE

Battlefield Evolution represents an advance in the wargaming hobby on several levels. Not only is it based on the Origins Award-winning Starship Troopers rules, suitably tweaked for modern-era warfare, it also features a range of pre-painted models of the highest quality possible with today's technology.

The game itself focuses on real world armies and their projected capabilities five to ten years from the current timeline. This means that you will have the opportunity to try out the very latest in military hardware long before it gets the green light for field use.

In this preview, we showcase some of the stunning infantry models that will be available for Battlefield Evolution in January, and go on to have a look at the different armies and the units that will be released in the first few months.

EUROPEAN FEDERATION TASK FORCE

With the ability to draw upon the armed services of every constituent nation, the European Federation Task Force is one of the most diverse military forces in the world, and it grows every year as new member states join the Federation and its economy rockets ever higher. Friction between the personnel of different European nations is by no means uncommon but some of the oldest and most accomplished armies to have taken to the battlefield can be found here. Once reliant on the United States for many technological advances, a Federated Europe has proven it has all the resources to develop and build a credible 21st Century military machine by itself.

Infantry

We'll be kicking off with various units from the British Army, to form the foundation of the European Task Force – don't worry though, fans in other EU countries will be getting their forces soon enough!

The British Army of the near future is taking full advantage of FIST – Future Infantry Soldier Technology, a complete suite of electronics and communications carried by individual soldiers. As well as linking each man in to a cohesive command structure, FIST also carries other benefits such as weapon-mounted cameras and enhanced optics

that permit soldiers to reduce the effectiveness of cover when fighting hidden enemies, and take to the battlefield at a far greater dispersal range.

The basic infantry squad (called a section in the British Army) has eight men, split into two teams, each armed with a Minimi Para for squad support and a single underslung grenade launcher for the L85A2 rifle for more tricky enemies.

After the release of the Infantry Section, you can expect to see a Command Section and SAS Patrol (for sneaky covert ops that will have your enemies running in fear!). We have also heard rumbles of a Gurkha Section. . .

Vehicles and Armour

Whenever armchair strategists start to debate which tank should be considered the best in the world, the Challenger II always marches into the conversation – which is one reason we were only too happy to include it in our line up, especially as we can feature the new, improved Rheinmetall L55 main gun.

Beyond the Challenger II, you can expect to see the Warrior (with upgraded 40mm cannon, part of its forthcoming Lethality Programme), and armoured vehicles from other European countries, such as the Leopard 2 140mm MBT, and the Leclerc. If you want to stage your own armour duels, the European Federation Task Force can hold its own against pretty much anyone.

Air Power

The presence of air power in Battlefield Evolution will never win you a battle in its own right, but the right strike at the right time can certainly swing things in your favour. The EFTF will be getting a variety of air units throughout 2007, starting with the Future Lynx of the British Army, but rapidly swelling to include the Tigre, Typhoon II and

others. Whether you want to dominate the skies above the battlefield or hunt down the enemy with a gunship, the right tools will be available!

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

The United States Marine Corps is a flexible organisation, capable of dealing with most threats with or without direct support from other military services and allies. Its role has grown in recent years and whereas it has traditionally lagged behind the US Army when waiting for new technologies to spread through its ranks, the USMC is now regarded as the leader in many areas of development, though it still has to fight for the funding required for this research. Though still regarded as the weakest of the services, it has access to many support elements that other nations can only supply through different branches of their armed services,

Infantry

Like the British Army with its FIST programme (and the French with FELINE, Germany with IdZ, and so on), the USMC has its own plans for updating the equipment marines carry onto the battlefield. However, the USMC benefits from a tight command and control system that can link many units across the battlefield to give them a tactical advantage over other armies.

As well as the basic infantry squad, expect the ranks of the USMC to swell with command and Force Recon squads, as well as sniper and Stinger teams.

Vehicles and Armour

The backbone of USMC armoured units is an updated M1A2 Abrams, but there are plenty of other toys to look forward to, from the Stryker to the Shadow RSV-T, all of which will carry your

marines into tactical positions in relative safety, important in missions where speed and directed firepower are key.

Air Power

While we have no plans to support the USMC in this game with B2 stealth bombers (!), the fight for the air will hot up when America joins battle. The Super Cobra will hunt down enemy armour and infantry holed up under cover, while the JSF will keep the gunships safe, though JDAMs give it a dual role. If you fancy something a little more. . . remote, we would humbly suggest you try the MQ-1 Predator UCAV, slated for an October release.

MIDDLE EASTERN ALLIANCE

The people of the Middle East have a long and proud history, riddled by the predations of other countries. While possessing little home-grown military technology of their own, they have never lacked for support and if sheer strength of will counts for anything on the modern battlefield, they may be unbeatable. The average Middle Eastern fighter lacks the training, equipment and support of his Western counterpart but is fiercely dedicated to his way of life and when cluster bombs start falling upon his town, will prove to be an intractable enemy.

Infantry

Perhaps it is an English thing to support the underdog, but the MEA have gained a lot of support in our office. There is just something about the hopelessness of under-equipped militia facing the might of modern militaries that gets you rooting for them on the tabletop.

That said, you can be pretty sure you will never be outnumbered as an MEA commander, and when the RPGs start flying (standard in every infantry squad), even FIST-equipped soldiers

had better duck! As well as the standard infantry, the MEA will have access to elite Fedayeen troops (equipped with SVU sniper rifles and AT-14 anti-tank weapons, generously supplied by their backers), detached snipers and for those who want a bit more discipline, government troops.

On the other hand, if you want a bit *less* discipline, the rioting mob may be your thing. Many playtesters have already started adding the Revered Leader to mobs to give them a bit more direction in battle, though others prefer him to join the Fedayeen.

Vehicles and Armour

We have to give thanks to the BBC, whose web site has provided us with many superb images from the world's hotspots, allowing us to accurately gauge what may be used in the near future. The first vehicle the MEA receive will be. . . the Toyota Hilux truck! Fans of Top Gear TV show will already know this vehicle is practically

indestructible (how many Challengers or Abrams would survive a drop from a tower block under demolition, and then drive away?), making it the perfect mode of transport across the battlefield, especially once a PKM has been bolted onto the flat bed.

As with the infantry, however, as the leader of an MEA force, you will also have the option to use direct government support in the shape of Desert Iris FAVs, Zulfaqir tanks and Tunguska anti-aircraft platforms (also works well against enemy infantry. . .).

Air Power

It has to be said, air power is not the MEA's forte and 2007 will see little in the way of serious aerial support for this force. All is not lost though, as you have the ability to load your squads up with short-ranged anti-aircraft missiles or have

Tunguskas on your backline, all of which can provide solid air cover. And if the enemy is ever foolish enough to fly helicopters low and slow over the battlefield, the sheer amount of RPGs in your army will see off even heavily armoured gunships.

There is, however, one aerial unit due for release into MEA forces – the Mirad-1 UAV. Granted, it looks like something you might find in your local radio-controlled aero club but, packed full of explosives, the operator and his team can guide it unerringly down onto any high value target you choose to attack.

PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

The Chinese People's Liberation Army remains the largest armed force the world has ever seen,

numbering over three and a half million in times of war, and readily expanded further still. In the past, the PLA has always lacked the technological edge of the Western powers, relying on the knowledge that it would take a determined nuclear attack to wipe out its army, with a promise of reprisal in kind. However, recent economic developments within China have allowed it to leap ahead with its own designs, effectively permitting it to skip a whole generation of equipment to produce hardware that is very close to Western standards in capability. Though even China is unable to provide this equipment as standard across the entire PLA, it nonetheless has access to virtually unlimited manpower, combined with cutting edge technology in precisely the right areas.

Infantry

Whereas the EFTF and USMC have the technology, and the MEA have the numbers, it is fair to say that the PLA is somewhere in-between the two. Able to field massive amounts of infantry, a PLA commander can also bring to bear units that are the equal of their Western counterparts – ignore them at your own risk!

The basic infantry squad in the PLA is perhaps the most versatile in the game, as it comes equipped with both machine guns and a (relatively weak) anti-tank weapon. Most core squads get one or the other, not both. Added to this, you will find elite SOF squads, command teams to provide a solid tactical structure to your entire force, and snipers to keep the enemy off balance.

Vehicles and Armour

Unsurprisingly, of all the armies featured in Battlefield Evolution, it is the PLA that is the most difficult to obtain solid information on. It is relatively easy to find out what the PLA has been

using or is using now, but figuring out what will be in their ranks in ten years time and beyond is a little more difficult. Nevertheless, the Mongoose Intelligence Team has been beavering away, and we have gathered a wide range of possibilities that look extremely likely.

The Type 99 main battle tank continues to give some ground to the other tanks in the world but, like much of the PLA's equipment, it has effectively skipped a generation of development, allowing it to compete on a more even level. Add to this that PLA forces can usually afford to field more than other armies, and perhaps USMC and EFTF commanders should not be so cocky.

The PLA will also be receiving a variety of IFVs and an effective air defence system consisting of the TY90 missile system mounted on an EQ2050 truck. Very cheap, and very deadly (just two of these completely flattened my Typhoon II and Future Lynx in a recent game we played in the office, a superb return on points!).

Air Power

The PLA will make their presence felt in the air as much as on the ground. The J-12 multirole fighter will provide top cover and perform fast bombing runs, while the WZ-10 gunship ensures that China can compete both on the ground and in the sky.

FUTURE FORCES

There is a lot planned for 2007 that I have not covered in this brief article, and we have some truly incredible models planned that will look good whether you keep them on display on your shelf or have them front and centre in your army. Beyond the initial releases for Battlefield

Evolution, we are rather spoilt for choice, as the constant progress of military technology ensures we will never run dry on ideas for new units, for all the featured armies. In fact, we are planning (from time to time) to allow fans to vote on our forums to decide which new units should be made for their armies as time goes on, so you will have the chance to personally shape the form and direction of your favourite army.

There are, of course, many different armies in the world aside from the four we have started with (and two of those are fictional!). The European Federation Task Force can continue to grow almost indefinitely as we move from country to country – we have already had requests for Irish forces! We are planning multi-lingual support for

Battlefield Evolution, so if you live in Europe and there is a great deal of interest in your country for the game, you might well find your military forces featured sooner rather than later.

We are not, at this time, planning any new armies in 2007 for Battlefield Evolution, as we want to properly flesh out the existing ones before starting to spread our gaze elsewhere. That said, we have already sketched out lists for Russian and IDF forces, and the idea for an 'African Warlord' army has also been raised. Whether we proceed with these ideas or not will be pretty much up to you, so be sure to log in regularly to our forums and make your voice heard when we start asking for comments on the game!

Tactical Manual

Shadows and Vorlons

By Alan Oliver

Firstly it must be said that this is entirely based upon the fleets found in the basic A Call to Arms game, and does not take into account the later supplements. There are only a few additions to the fleets in a sky full of stars, bases for both fleets, Vorlon fighters and Shadow hunters. The most significant of these are the Vorlon fighters, without which the Vorlon fleet is troublesome to use.

This series is also not intended to be the last word on tactics, and doesn't claim to cover every way of doing things. The intention is to give those new to the game a way of doing things that has a chance of working, start them on the road to tactical success, not carry them all the way.

The Ancients: Shadows and Vorlons

The ancients operate very differently from the younger races mainly due to the way that they take damage. This is a combination of several factors, first of which is the so called damage resistance of ancient ships. Don't be fooled by the name, this is actually a damage multiplier, as each attack dice will at a minimum do one point of damage, and has as much chance of doing six damage. The lack of critical effects does mean that a ship will not be taken out of the fight by a lucky hit, but the ship will simply be worn away by incoming fire. One advantage of this is that you can more accurately judge how much damage it will take to kill a ship, however your enemy can do the same to ensure that they can apply sufficient firepower to kill these ships.

The advantage of this 'damage resistance' is that the ancient ships retain full capabilities till the moment that they die. They do not suffer from the gradual erosion of capabilities that the younger races suffer from critical hits, nor are they at risk from crew loss.

Secondly is the self repair ability found on all ancient ships. This is not sufficient to allow ancient ships to wade into the heart of battle and repair all the damage that they take as they go along. However over time it can allow a ship that is near death early in a battle to come back into the fight in the endgame in better fighting condition, should you be able to pull it out of the fight. It is more significant in relation to the enemies choice of targets. If the ancients enemy targets and damages every ancient ship then the amount of damage that will be negated by the self repair is obviously magnified.

To illustrate; five Vorlon destroyers are targeted by the enemy, and a single destroyer takes all the damage, it will take massive damage and only self repair two points. If the damage is spread across all five destroyers, the individual damage will be less, and across the force they will self repair ten damage, or 20% of a destroyers starting damage.

Obviously the ancients therefore want to spread out damage across as much of the fleet as possible to ensure that no ship takes massive damage and their self repair capabilities are used to their maximum. While those fighting against the ancients should concentrate their firepower on one ancient at a time till it dies, before moving on to the next target.

In campaigns the self repair is an obvious blessing, as any ship that survives one campaign turn will be back to full strength for the next turn without drawing on the fleets resources. Of course this is balanced by the increased cost of reinforcements for the ancients.

Another advantage common to both fleets is their increased ability to lock on to ships with stealth. In general this is most of use when fighting against the Minbari, but can be a nasty surprise for the scouts of other races when they find themselves a target. The bonus is not so great as to make stealth irrelevant, however it does make it less of an issue.

A last advantage to the living ships of the ancients, although only a small one, is that they do not explode when they die. This allows you to keep your fleet in tight formation in you need to, and even have your fighters operating in and among your ships, something which if one of the younger races do is normally an invitation to blow up a small ship to do damage to those around it. This is more likely to be used by the Vorlons than the shadows, due to the way the respective fleets operate.

The Shadows

Fleet Strengths

The Shadow fleet is best described as like fighting with a rapier, a fragile weapon that if correctly placed can run the enemy through with pinpoint accuracy. If you get carried away by images of the TV series and think that you can just fly headlong into the enemy and sweep them all from the skies, you will find out just how quickly your ships wither and die in space. Instead the shadow fleet is a fleet of subtlety and evasion.

The greatest strength of the Shadows found across the entire fleet is the superb manoeuvrability of all shadow ships. This is at the core of fighting with the Shadows, using this manoeuvrability to avoid the firing arcs of enemy ships while using the turret arc of the shadow ships to carve up the enemy. The essence of a shadow fleet is that it is elusive and difficult for the enemy to bring to battle, slipping away to strike at vulnerable targets rather than engaging in a head on clash as their enemies would prefer.

Another area that the shadow fleet dominates is initiative, the shadow fleet has a massive +6 which is unmatched by any other fleet, even taking into account the use of command ships by other fleets, nobody can match this. The best the other races can manage is a +5 for the Centauri and Minbari. This is from the Centauri using the Octurion battleship and Minbari with the Morshin carrier. On top of that you are likely to have more scouts than the enemy, as one of your two ship options is the shadow scout, so you are likely to have several. This means that you should be in control of deployment and order of movement.

That all of the shadow ships can just slip from hyperspace into realspace where ever they choose is also an advantage. In battles where you have the option of keeping part of your shadow fleet in hyperspace, you should certainly consider keeping as much of the fleet as possible in hyperspace. This enables you to bring your forces into the battle exactly where they can both do the most damage and also take the least return fire. That the fighters can themselves enter real space on their own is a great advantage. Where possible

they should be kept in hyperspace till they are needed to intercept enemy fighters, then bring them in to jump the enemy with little they can do in response.

The fighter dispersal tube is an interesting tool that may find a use some of the time, however there are several limitations on it that make it of minimal effectiveness. Firstly the shadow ship itself cannot fire, which means it's only of use when the ships are out of range. Secondly the fighters themselves cannot attack or move on the turn that they are launched, so they are left at close range to the enemy without being able to do anything other than be shot at. There are times when it might be useful to be able to put a clutch of fighters anywhere within a 60" diameter sphere, but if given the choice I would keep them in hyperspace till required, and if that wasn't available I would have them on the table at start. This is of course an option with the shadow fighters, as you have to buy them separately
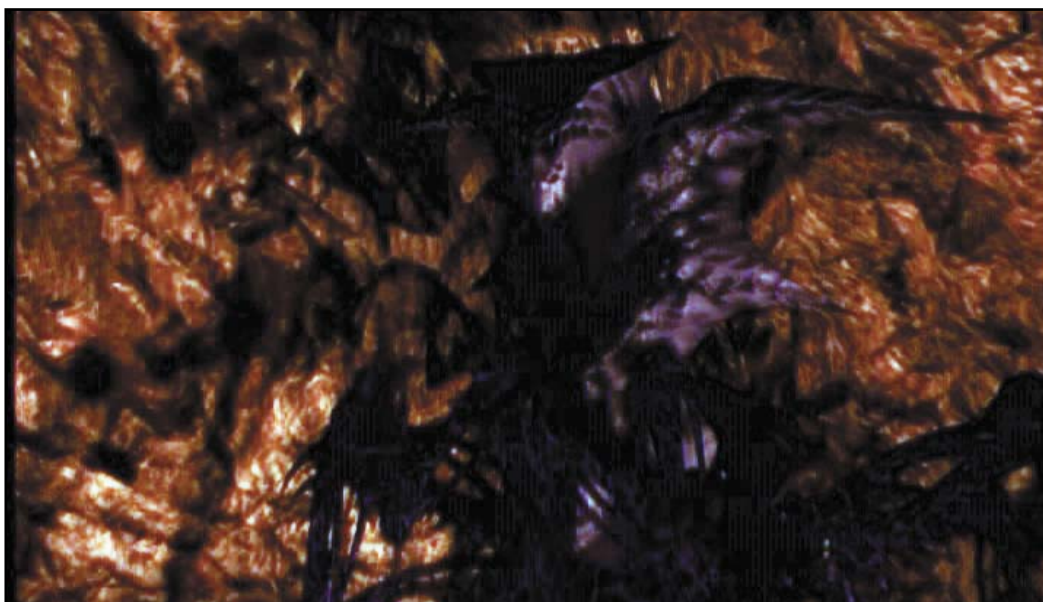
from your force allocation points, they are never required to be carried on the shadow ships and can start deployed.

The jump point disruptor is a potent weapon, however it does have an unfortunate side effect on the way your enemies will play in that they will tend to fight more as if there is no tomorrow even in campaign games. This is because escape is that much more difficult and means that your own fleet is going to be running away more often than the enemy is. In a one off battle this will make no difference and the disruptor is unlikely to see any use anyway. But in a campaign it does give you an element of control over the course of the campaign. As the enemy is committed to the fight and cannot easily withdraw, you will have the choice of either giving the location to them and pulling out your forces, or staying to destroy the enemy and hold or take the location.

Also be aware that if the enemy do open an escape jump point within 30" of your forward half you can reach it to disrupt it if you choose to. This is of course due to the superb manoeuvrability double speed after a turn option.

Of course there is another strength to the shadow fleet, although it is one that will only affect a few battles. This is the psychological effect of going up against the shadows for anyone who has seen the series. They will enter their first battle against the shadows with fear in their belly and expecting to be handed their head. Over time they will learn that the shadow fleet is balanced against the younger races, if not a little weak due to it's limitations, and this psychological advantage will pass. Unless you can manage to crush them every time anyway of course, in which case it's not the fleet intimidating them but the player.

Fleet Weaknesses

To some it might seam odd that a race who've been fighting for thousands if not millions of years have any flaws with their war machines, but they do and there's no point worrying about it. Besides if they were completely unstoppable nobody except a few masochists would want to face them in battle.

Firstly there is the extremely limited range of ships available to the shadow fleet, two ships and a single type of fighter make up the entire inventory of the shadow war machine. While these might be good ships it does put some constraints on the flexibility of the fleet.

Secondly there are no special actions available to the shadow fleet. Admittedly the movement special actions are more than covered by the superb manoeuvrability rule. However shadow ships cannot gain a re-roll through concentrate all fire, have no way of improving their self repair capabilities or even use their fighters to counter Minbari stealth.

Shadow ships are especially vulnerable to massed attack dice, as they lack the adaptive armour of the Vorlons to cut this damage down. For example the scouts damage rating is really only 17, while the shadow ship only has 43 damage points. That is how many attack dice need to hit to kill the ships, assuming average dice rolls. Once double or triple damage weapons become involved, that damage will mount up very quickly.

All shadow ships are easy kills for fighters, so much so that if a shadow ship is caught in a duel with a Sharlin war cruiser the shadow ship is best off running for hyperspace quickly. Four Nial heavy fighter flights and a flight of flyers are more than up to the task of killing a shadow ship even

without the help of the war cruiser. The fighters will do an average of 18 damage a turn while the shadow ship will be doing better than average to kill a flight of fighters every two turns. Shadow scouts may have the anti-fighter trait on their only weapon but if they are the only target then they will never get to fire at the fighters as they will always be out of arc. However a scout does make for respectable anti fighter cover for a shadow ship if placed so that it's forward arc covers the entire area where fighters would have to be to attack the shadow ship.

And of course there is the whole telepath problem. Well actually this isn't that much of a problem for the most part as telepaths are not available 'off the shelf' to buy with allocation points as part of a fleet but are only available in campaigns where they get a lucky roll on the seldom used crew duties table. This means that you'll only be facing a ship with a telepath very occasionally, and when it happens you just have to be gracious about it, then blow the ship to bits the first chance you get.

Patrol Priority Options

Although options isn't really the word to describe this, as the only option available are the shadow fighters. Now the shadow fighters are not terrible, they are not the worst fighters in the galaxy, but they aren't very good either. Speed is average, comparable to the EarthForce Starfury, but lacking in it's afterburners, or the Centauri Sentri. It's slower than the Minbari Nial or the Brakiri Falkosi and only faster than the Narn Frazi or the EarthForce Thunderbolt, but that again has afterburners.

Hull is only 4, which is comparable to the Narn Frazi or the EarthForce Starfury, weaker than the EarthForce Thunderbolt but better than the Centauri or Minbari fighters.

It has a pathetic dogfight rating and can be out fought by any fighters other than the Frazi, a situation only made worse by the fleet carriers used by the younger races further improving their dogfight ratings. This is probably the killer flaw for the Shadow fighters, as the race is vulnerable to fighters anyway and need to use their own fighters to kill the enemy.

It has a dodge at 3+, which makes it twice as vulnerable as the top line fighters of other races. The top fighters have a dodge of 2+, and of those on 3+ the EarthForce Thunderbolt has a massive hull of 5, tougher than some warships. The Frazi is in the same boat, and it is generally regarded as a poor fighter too. Ok, the Minbari flyer has a terrible dodge of 4+, but then it does have stealth at 5+ before it even needs to dodge.

Lastly we have it's weapons, which overall don't come out too badly compared with the other races, with two attack dice at 2" range, with armour piecing and double damage traits, this is superior to any other fighters out there. Not by much compared to the three armour piercing attack dice of the Minbari Nial or flyer, but still has the edge.

So you don't want to be dog-fighting with the shadow fighter, but will probably find that you have to anyway to deal with enemy fighters. By preference you want to be using those double damage attack dice on ships, hoping for a critical that will do something significant, or finishing off damaged or crippled ships after your capital ships have gutted them.

Skirmish Priority Options

Sorry, is there a priority between patrol and raid, I never realised.

Raid Priority Options

You do at least have an option at this priority, and that is the Shadow scout.

Speed and manoeuvrability are definitely in the bag as the ability to move eighteen inches anywhere in the forward half, or to anywhere within nine inches and face any direction easily surpass any other raid priority ship, even the high and mighty white star cannot match this.

Hull five is a weak average for a raid priority ship, there are a few weaker ships out there, but they are not front line warships, whereas the Narn Regime and Centauri Republic both have hull six ships at this priority.

Damage at first seams good at 58, but in reality this is only 17 due to the way ancients take damage, and 17 is very light for a raid priority ship. Even the white star has an effective damage rating of 20. This fragility is of course compensated for by the stealth systems on the ship, at least to some extent. However these ships are fragile and will crumble under a concerted attack.

Weaponry at first glance seams totally inadequate for a ship of this priority. A single weapon system, with only six attack dice, only in the forward arc and only to eight inches range. This is definitely sub standard. However the most important trait of the weaponry is the anti-fighter trait that makes them an ideal consort to the shadow capital ships. Beyond that role, they are quite efficient cripple killers, but are not made for front line combat against other ships of this priority.

However when fighting at priorities that are too low to field a shadow ship, the scout and fighters will face a difficult battle.

Battle Priority Options

There are rumours that the shadows do have an option at this priority, however you will need a sky full of stars for that.

War Priority Options

This is the priority where the shadows get their fun toys, sorry toy, the shadow capital ship is a monster that if used correctly should be able to handle any other ship out there.

In speed and manoeuvrability there isn't another ship at it's priority that comes close. In fact the next most manoeuvrable ship out there is the Brakiri Tashket advanced cruiser, which can manage two turns of forty five degrees. Not only that, but on the straight it is a whopping 50% faster than the next fastest war ships.

It has the hull of six that you would expect of a war priority ship, which is coupled with an amazing 150 damage, which makes the ship seam invulnerable. However that damage rating is only 43 once modified for ancients 'damage resistance', which is significantly lower that any other war priority ship. Suddenly the shadow ship doesn't seam quite so invulnerable. Obviously the two dice of self repair will help with this, but only if you can keep the ship alive long enough for it to mount up.

The fact that the shadow capital ship has to pay for the fighters that it can carry, which is something that is forced on no other fleet out there is a harsh blow, and means that many shadow ships will be fielded without fighters. In fact given the choice of eighteen fighter flights or a single shadow ship, most of the time I would be tempted to go for the shadow ship.

Weaponry suffers from the common problem of ancient ships, which is only having a single weapon available. While the molecular slicer beam is as good as you could wish for, there is only the one per ship and it only has eighteen inches range. It does have five attack dice, which is more than the Vorlon heavy cruiser lightning cannon, but the shadow capital ship has no secondary weapon systems.

Overall the shadow capital ship has the capability to take apart any other ship around, possibly in a single turn, but needs a scout as consort to avoid bleeding to death from a thousand pinpricks inflicted by enemy fighters.

Enemies of the Shadows

Basic tactics are going to be similar whoever the shadows are facing. The bulk of their allocation points will be spent on shadow capital ships if available, with a few shadow scouts to provide anti fighter cover, and possibly some fighters although at high priorities they should be considered optional.

I've also included some advice for each race on how to counter the shadows. One obvious point is that if you fight at low priorities then the shadow fleet will be very limited. However that is universal and doesn't need repeating.

The Centauri Republic

Shadow capital ships should make up the bulk of your force, and you need to be less concerned with fighter defence against the Centauri Sentri flights, although a few scouts will be useful. Shadow fighters will be at least moderately effective against those Centauri ships with blind spots, and will be more useful at lower priorities, which is where fighters belong anyway.

Against the Shadows

Two options, one is to keep the priority low and use massed small ships to overwhelm the shadow ships, which with only one weapon system per ship cannot handle being swamped easily. The alternative at high priority is the battle laser fleet, which will have the firepower to concentrate on a single enemy ship each turn and potentially kill it before it even has the chance to regenerate like some zombie ship.

Sentri should certainly be used against the shadow capital ships if given the chance, each flight will do 1.75 damage to a shadow capital ship each turn. Not a massive amount, but will soon add up if left unchecked.

The Earth Alliance

By offering different ships for the EarthForce fleet to target with their boresight weapons each turn you can ensure that your damage is spread across different ships, making the most of your self repair. Once it gets into a general melee you may be able to stay on the ships flanks and avoid them entirely. If this forces the EarthForce fleet into breaking formation then you've already disrupted his plans, and you simply pick off the ship that will do you the most damage each turn with the molecular slicers.

You will need scouts to protect against the massed fighters that his ships carry, but you can cut down these numbers by blowing up Nova dreadnoughts first and Omega heavy destroyers second, hopefully taking some of their fighters with them. If he takes a carrier, especially a Poseidon, blow it up early and you'll do yourself a major favour.

Fighters will be useless for attacking his ships, their anti fighter defences are too strong, and against his fighters you'll be hard pressed as well, so the fighters may not be a worthwhile addition.

Against the Shadows

Dedicated carriers will be too vulnerable, their low hull score will make them likely to pop while still having fighters on the deck, especially if the shadows have reserves waiting in hyperspace.

Although low hull ships like the Hyperion cruiser and Nova dreadnought will take massive damage from molecular slicer beams, you will be getting three or four of these ships for each shadow capital ship. Between them I would favour the Hyperion as it has a good heavy laser cannon which will do serious damage against a shadow capital ship. Also the Nova with hull five and four fighters on board will be too juicy a target for the shadows to ignore.

The bulk of the fleet should probably be Omega heavy destroyers, which are tough enough to survive one molecular slicer beam and still function, on average, maybe two and still fight. They also carry fighters which will be very useful against the shadow ships. Concentrate on the Thunderbolts, with a few Starfuries to clear away shadow fighters.

The League of Non Allied Worlds

Even assuming you are facing a mixed fleet, optimised to fight against you, this will not be a challenge. Concentrate on shadow capital ships, you shouldn't need scouts for fighter defence, but having one allocation points worth of scouts to dominate the initiative will be useful, and for early movement to draw out his big guns. Avoid the big beams on the large Brakiri ships with your capital ships on turn one, but give him long range shots at your scouts instead. If he takes the bait he'll be firing at a ship with stealth 5+, and even if he hits a kill isn't certain, and if it survives it can slowly self repair. If he does fire, your capital ships can close in without worrying about the big beams on the next turn, giving them greater freedom of movement, and by turn 3 you should be in amongst them and better able to pick and choose your position to avoid his fire.

Fighters will not be a worthwhile choice as the Vree and Brakiri both have good dedicated anti fighter weapons, the Abbai have massed firepower all round and the Drazi also have anti fighter weapons, although only in the forward arc.

Against the Shadows

The big Brakiri ships will struggle against the shadow capital ships, and the slow loading weapons will be difficult to bring to bear. In fact even at higher priorities you are likely to be better off using raid and skirmish ships, Vree battle saucers and Drazi warbirds may be the best way to go. The Vree saucers are almost as manoeuvrable as the shadow ships, while the Drazi ships are cheap and tough to kill with a hull of six.

Your only way of getting fighters is to take the Brakiri carrier, the Brokados, and while the ship looks cool, the fighters it carries are weak, there aren't enough of them and the carrier itself is a poor choice of ship.

The Minbari Federation

You will definitely need at least one scout per shadow capital ship, possibly even a spare or two. You will need to keep in position as the Minbari fighters can quickly take considerable bites out of your ships. At least if they go for the scouts the stealth will cut down the rate at which the scout will die. Without the stealth 4 flights of Nial or flyers would destroy the scout in three turns on average rolls, with the stealth it will last six.

As for the Minbari ships, you will want to close the range for once, as if your in range for the molecular slicer beams, your already in range for both the neutron lasers and fusion cannon. Therefore there is no reason not to close to within 10" to cut down the effectiveness of the Minbari

stealth. Combined with the use of your scouts you should be able to get lock even on the mighty Sharlin on a 3+.

Against the Shadows

You want to have a Sharlin for each of his shadow capital ships, and you should definitely consider the Morshin carrier for the additional fighters that it brings, not to mention giving you a decent shot at matching the shadows on initiative. One or two Leshath heavy scouts to help get lock on to the shadow scouts may be useful.

If the Shadow fleet have to start on the table, you want to approach them slowly, even simply stopping to let them come to you, to give you more chance to use the big neutron lasers, which with precise and double damage will do an average of 10 damage per dice that hits. If the fleets set up and are more than 30" apart you should definitely stop, as if you don't move the shadow ships will either have to sit and wait outside of weapons range or charge you, giving you an unanswered shot with the neutron lasers as they come in. Obviously you should look to set up as far away as possible, so that more fighters can be launched before you engage. Starting the engagement 60" apart is good, you should be able to get a good percentage of your fighters launched before you engage.

The Narn Regime

With Narn Frazi being less of a threat, you need to devote less of the fleet to fighter defence, although a few scouts will still be useful. Shadow fighters would also be useful against the Narn fleet except for the energy mines that their ships carry, which would quickly remove them as a threat. On this basis your fleet should be shadow capital ships with a few scouts in support.

Narn ships are tough and will take some killing, however they are slow and lack in manoeuvrability which will allow you to control the engagement to some degree. Against the Narn you want to stay as far away as possible to avoid their massive banks of secondary weapons, massed attack dice will make short work of your ships. Using precision movement to sit 16" to 18" away from the target ship and slowly working through the Narn fleet that way is the best course to take. At that range you will still have a number of weapons to worry about, energy mines, which don't do too much damage against you. Then there's bore sighted heavy lasers, some of which you will be able to avoid. There are also mag guns and ion torpedos on some ships, which will hurt and are generally forward arc.

Against the Shadows

Taking Dag'Kar missile frigates will be a waste as the shadows are unlikely to take many fighters, if any, and against their scouts and capital ships energy mines are not massively impressive.

The Bin'Tak dreadnought is going to be essential at the core of your fleet, several of them if you can manage it. They have sufficient long range firepower in the forward arc that the shadows will be desperate to get onto your flanks, which may enable other ships, G'Quan heavy cruisers for example, to close and use their massive all round secondary firepower.

Around the solid core of Bin'Tak dreadnoughts and G'Quan heavy cruisers an array of skirmish ships to close and hose the shadow capital ships may be effective. These ships will be too small for the shadow capital ships to bother will, and some of them still pack a considerable punch.

The Vorlon Empire

Against the old enemy you will not need massive numbers of scouts, as the Vorlons have no fighters to defend against, and no scouts to contest your scout superiority. Shadow fighters, however, should be taken by the bucket load, as the Vorlons have no defence against them, and will quickly bleed to death from the thousand cuts your fighters will inflict. Half your fleet should be shadow capital ships, the other half should be a couple of scouts and the rest as masses of shadow fighters.

The Vorlon lightning cannon slightly out ranges your molecular slicer beam, but the Vorlon ships are slow and cumbersome and only mount weapons in the forward arc, which makes avoiding them relatively easy. As the iconic battle of the Babylon 5 universe, this one should be in the bag for the shadows.

In Conclusion

The shadow fleet is definitely lacking in warship options, with only a single warship available to them. However they do at least have a scout and fighters which does make them a functional fleet that with hard work and a touch of brilliance can win against the fully rounded fleets of the younger races. They really shine against their old enemies, the Vorlons, when they should be able to win without difficulty.

The Vorlon Empire

Fleet Strengths

If the Shadow fleet is like a rapier, then the Vorlon fleet is like a chainsaw. Big, slow and cumbersome, but insanely dangerous if you get in front of it.

Any enemy ships that get caught in front of a full Vorlon battle group will face a difficult choice, melt, vaporise or just plain explode.

Firstly your ships are tougher than the shadow ships, having the adaptive armour that halves the damage that you take from enemy weapons. This helps to balance the 'damage resistance' weakness of all ancients, but doesn't counter it entirely. It does mean that your heavy cruiser has an effective damage rating of 57, high than the shadow capital ship.

Secondly, compared to the shadows you have a wider range of ships available, and can field something at every priority level except for patrol. However you don't have fighters or a scout, which is something of a drawback.

Thirdly you have excellent weapons, all weapons are beam, which means the younger races that use interceptors to protect their ships will be more vulnerable to your weapons than they normally are. They are all forward arc, which compared with a fleet with boresight weapons is definitely a blessing, but doesn't measure up to the turret arc of the Shadow capital ship. Lastly range on your ships is generally fairly good, although shorter than the big guns of the younger races.

You have advanced jump drives on all your ships, and these operate as normal jump drives which enables you to make jump point attacks against the enemy.

Fleet Weaknesses

Your ships are not especially agile or fast, and although they are not especially worse than other fleets, this makes the lack of weaponry on Vorlon ships even more of a problem. All Vorlon ships have good firepower in the forward arc, but

Patrol Priority Options

WE, THE GREAT VORLON EMPIRE DO NOT ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXISTENCE OF THIS PRIORITY LEVEL.

Seriously, in the basic game the Vorlon's patrol priority option, fighters, is definitely missing. If you are seriously considering using the Vorlons regularly, you will need sky full of stars for the Vorlon fighters.

Skirmish Priority Choice

At Skirmish priority you get the smallest of the Vorlon ships, the transport.

Speed is somewhat sluggish for a skirmish priority ship although there are a number of other ships at the same speed, there are none slower.

Manoeuvrability is actually quite good, if you take a single ninety degree turn as being equal to two turns at forty five degrees. The only ship that can out turn the Vorlon transport is the Vree saucer, and we all know that those frizbees will turn on a dime.

Hull four is disappointing on a Vorlon ship, but there are other skirmish ships that are as weak in hull terms, so it's not the weakest of the bunch, just among the stragglers.

With an effective damage rating of twenty the transport is actually quite respectable for the size class, especially as it doesn't suffer from crew problems or critical hits.

Although it does have self repair, this is minimal and will only really have a significant effect in a

nothing to the flanks or rear and if the enemy get past the forward arc the Vorlons are in trouble.

The Vorlon fleet is especially vulnerable to fighters, several factors combining to make this weakness acute. Firstly the interaction of damage resistance and adaptive armour means that pairs of dice, as typically found on fighters, are the most effective way of applying dice. Three pairs of dice will do more minimum damage than six dice will. Secondly the low hull on the larger Vorlon ships makes them more vulnerable to fighters, which can otherwise struggle to damage battle and war priority ships. Thirdly the lack of flank or rear weapons on Vorlon ships means that fighters can easily move into the blind spots to attack safely. Fourthly even if another Vorlon ship is place to cover the ship being attacked by the fighters, the Vorlon fleet have no anti-fighter weapons, which means that a great deal of firepower is required

to kill each flight of fighter. These four combine to make fighter heavy fleets, especially those with powerful fighters like the Minbari and EarthForce fleets, a nightmare for the Vorlons to face.

However there is a solution to the fighter problem, which is to blow up the enemies carriers before they launch their fighters, turn one is generally good, and then to blow up other enemy ships if they are close to clusters of enemy fighters.

With no scouts and the limitations on special orders, there is no way for Vorlon ships to improve the accuracy of their firepower. Nor can they do anything to counter the stealth of enemy ships other than closing the range to under 10". However against they do at least get the ancient technology bonus.

campaign where a troublesome transport can come back again and again to trouble the enemy fleet.

The main weapon on the transport, actually the only weapon on the transport is quite respectable for a skirmish ship, being a precise double damage beam weapon. Only being armour piercing and not super armour piercing is a problem and limits it's usefulness against high hull targets. I wouldn't fire a transport against a hull six target unless it had nothing else to fire at. Also the weapon is quite short ranged at 12", but that is a problem common to all skirmish ships.

Raid Priority Choice

At raid priority you get the Vorlon destroyer, which has a nice advantage of being easy to mistake for a transport, which can give the enemy a nasty surprise if they don't clarify the issue to start with.

Speed of only seven inches is starting to look sluggish at this priority, but the presence of white stars and shadow scouts kind of distorts the spread at raid priority. Manoeuvrability is again fairly good at this priority, although the destroyer cannot compete with the white star or shadow scout, compared with the younger races, a single ninety degree turn is still very respectable.

Hull is at five, which is as good as it gets for the Vorlons, so you cannot complain with the destroyer. It's effective damage rating is 29, which while by no means the weakest out there, is starting to look a little on the fragile side. However the higher hull does mean that a destroyer is still probably more survivable than a pair of transports. A destroyer can be expected to survive at least two hits from the main heavy laser cannon of an Omega heavy destroyer and still be alive, although probably not

in great shape. The self repair on the destroyer is too small to play a part during the course of a battle, but is invaluable in a campaign.

The 'discharge gun' on the destroyer is a longer ranged and slightly more powerful version of the Transports weapon. The extra range is particularly nice, as it typically allows the Vorlon destroyer to engage on the first turn of battle, when the transports are still out of range.

Battle Priority Choice

The Vorlon Light cruiser is a powerful ship intended for one purpose, killing enemy capital ships.

Speed is at best adequate and manoeuvrability is no better. However compared to other battle priority ships there are very few that are any more agile than the Vorlon light cruiser. The Narn Var'Nic and the two Minbari ships, the Tinashi and Morshin, are the only ships that are more agile at this priority. More ships are faster than the Vorlon light cruiser though.

The hull of five is weak for a battle priority ship, but not criminally so. The light cruiser has an effective damage rating of forty, almost as much as the shadow capital ship, which does make it reasonably tough. The ships of other races can take more damage, but have crew problems and are susceptible to critical hits that can degrade their performance.

The self repair on the light cruiser is better, enough to make the difference over the course of a game if you get good rolls.

The main, sorry only, weapon of the light cruiser is the fearsome lightning cannon. Now the only flaw with this weapon is the relatively poor range

of 15". Other than that this is as potent a weapon as you will find on any ship. Even without critical hits this weapon is still likely to do a dozen points of damage and crew to a hull six ship, and once critical hits with triple damage start landing, ships can go down very quickly.

With the presence of the lightning cannon the light cruiser is generally going to be a better choice than two destroyers, however there will be times when you will need more shots against weaker targets so this isn't a forgone conclusion.

War Priority Choice

The Vorlon Heavy cruiser is a war priority ship in any fleet, and is capable of killing nearly any ship out there in one volley if the dice are kind.

Speed and manoeuvrability are not going to be impressive on a ship of this size. While the same is true for all war ships, the heavy cruiser is the only war ship out there that only has weapons in 25% of it's arcs, making it somewhat vulnerable to flank attacks.

Hull five on a war ship is criminal, and is one of the more serious flaws with this ship. It has an effective damage rating of around 57, significantly better than the shadow capital ship, however the shadow ship has a hull of 6 so will be taking half as many hits. Compared to the war ships of other races, this is definitely the weakest of the ships on both counts. This is somewhat countered by three things, the lack of crew problems on a Vorlon ship, the lack of critical damage and the two dice of self repair.

Weaponry is impressive, being the only Vorlon ship to mount more than one weapon is a great leap forward. Unfortunately they are still both in the same arc, but you can't have everything.

The lightning cannon on the heavy cruiser is no more powerful than the light cruiser, but does have nearly twice the range. This is supported by a discharge gun that has the same range and 150% the firepower of a destroyer. Whether this makes the heavy cruiser the equal of two light cruisers is a debatable point.

Enemies of the Vorlon Empire

Overall tactics will remain similar.

The fleet should be divided into three elements, each of which has a different role to play. This assumes a fairly high priority battle where the full range of Vorlon ships will be seen. It also assumes that the entire Vorlon fleet is starting the battle in realspace.

The cruisers make up the meat grinding core of the fleet. They should be formed up into a tight formation, I've found a wedge works well. Their job is to destroy every enemy capital ship in range, concentrating on the hull six warships with the lightning cannon. The heavy cruisers discharge guns should be used on weaker ships where they should do significant damage.

The destroyers job is to hunt down and kill the hull five and weaker ships in the enemy fleet. They should look to be between the cruisers and the enemy fleet. They are also there to draw enemy fire and take damage, being tough enough to absorb a couple of turns of fire, especially if they are able to spread that damage across different ships.

The transports job is to protect the cruisers from fighters and to finish off any crippled ships that the core unit leave unfinished. In addition should light and fast ships get in among the squadron to get onto the cruisers flank or rear, the transports are there to intercept and engage these targets. While the transports are not well suited to anti fighter duty, there is no better ship for the job in the Vorlon fleet.

Comments on fighting the Vorlons will be included at the end of each section.

The Centauri Republic

The Centauri were agents of the shadows, they need to be purged.

The Centauri fleet will often feature a lot of light and fast ships that will have the potential to get onto the flanks and rear of the Vorlon cruisers. The balance of the Vorlon fleet should be shifted slightly away from cruisers and slightly towards destroyers and transports to counter the Centauri wolf packs.

The Centauri battle lasers will also inflict a lot of damage on the Vorlon fleet, so the cruisers should definitely be looking to kill off Primus battlecruisers quickly. Pairs of light cruisers are going to be more useful in general than single heavy cruisers.

Against the Vorlons

You will need battle lasers to do significant damage to the larger Vorlons, while Darkner and Vorchan will perform excellently for flank attacks on the Vorlon cruisers. The destroyer screen can be engaged by the Sentri fighters, which will save your heavy ships firepower for the cruisers.

An alternative is to take nothing below battle priority, and base your entire fleet on Primus battlecruisers and the occasional Octurion battleship. This will leave the Vorlon transports and destroyers with no effective targets, as using discharge guns on hull six ships is almost a waste of time.

The Earth Alliance

Another shadow puppet, purge them!

The EarthForce fleet will have a lot of fighters to worry about, but they have poor initiative so try and make sure that they deploy first. If they do, make sure you can reach the ships with the most fighters on board, preferably a carrier, on turn one and blow it up before it can launch all it's assets. If your lucky the carrier will try and do something cleaver to get out of the way, preventing it launching fighters this turn and you can kill more of them.

Hyperions are just about the right size to blow up to take out any fighters nearby. With a damage rating of only 24, they are big enough to produce a full ten dice explosion, and small enough with hull five to be destroyable in a single volley.
Nova dreadnoughts are another good ship to blow up early, as they are again only hull five and also carry four flights of fighters.

Against the Vorlons

Thunderbolts all the way, crammed into every last hanger space you can find. Don't take a Poseidon, every time the Vorlons see one they blow it up on turn one. An avenger is likely to have a similar experience. Core of the fleet should be warlock advanced destroyers, obviously just off the production lines, and Omega heavy destroyers. Each one gives you four fighters and a powerful beam weapon that will chew through Vorlon hulls, although slowly.

If you can keep them from being destroyed then Sagittarius missile cruisers with super armour piercing precise missiles can deal a lot of damage to Vorlon ships from long range. However if they are caught by the Vorlon fleet, the destroyers will be more than up to the task of taking out the missile cruisers.

The League of Non Allied Worlds

Pawns of the shadows, we must purge them.

Fortunately for you the league is decidedly lacking in fighters, and the Brokados carrier is distinctive enough to be an easy target for your cruisers should you want to make the point. This means you can cut back on the transports to some extent, and go for more destroyers instead. In addition the might of a heavy cruiser will be less necessary, and against the tough Brakiri ships more light cruisers will be more useful.

As for targets, your cruisers should be destroying the bigger ships as they come into range, which are going to be the Brakiri, while the destroyers will have to deal with the Drazi and Vree. The Abbai are unlikely to be a major factor, as their massed interceptors will be of no help to them against your purely beam firepower. Cruisers might have to divert firepower into the Drazi warbirds if they put in an appearance, as a hull six skirmish ship may complicate your plans considerably.

Overall the League fleet is as lacking in some areas as your own, and doesn't have the big hitter ships to be a threat. Your fleet is likely to be based on light cruisers and destroyers, with the heavy cruisers and transports cut right back but not disappearing entirely.

Against the Vorlons

The Big Brakiri guns that can have problems should be able to find targets among the Vorlon cruisers, making the Brakiri Avioki a valid choice.

The Abbai Bimith will not be able to rely upon it's interceptor screen, however a broadside from it into a Vorlon cruiser should do respectable damage, say fifteen or sixteen points. If you can get it into the middle of the Vorlon wedge to get both broadsides firing, you can double that. While it's likely the Bimith won't come back as a single lightning cannon could cripple it and two have a fair chance of destroying it, it would certainly draw Vorlon fire and do some damage if it got in there.

Drazi and Vree ships in large packs are likely to be your best bet, as they are fast and manoeuvrable to get in onto the flanks of the Vorlon cruisers where they can cause some serious damage.

The Minbari Federation

They were our students, now they turn upon us, regretfully they must be purged.

You will need plenty of transports to cover the core of your fleet, as Minbari fighters will be difficult to kill. Heavy cruisers over light cruisers for the extra range as if you can kill the Minbari carriers early that will take some of the fighters with them.

However there is another approach against the Minbari. Because the Minbari do not operate hull six ships, the lightning cannon of the cruisers are not as essential as they are against other fleets. This means that a mass fleet of destroyers and transports may be effective. Denying the Minbari targets for their big guns to carve up or their fighters to mass on may well disrupt their plans. The shorter range of the transports is less of a problem as you will be looking to engage at ranges below ten inches anyway. It would also give you the more manoeuvrable fleet as well, something of a rarity for the Vorlons.

Against the Vorlons

Although as an ancient they have a natural bonus against your stealth, the Vorlons have no fighters to put their scanners on full, and no scout to counter your stealth, which means that your stealth protection should remain fairly intact. If you can keep the range open as well, then the range bonus will negate his ancient bonus and you are onto a winner.

Obviously high stealth ships with lots of fighters will be good choices against the Vorlons, two come to mind. Firstly there is the mighty Sharlin war cruiser, which has five flights of fighters, a stealth of 5+ and a massive battery of neutron lasers which will really hurt Vorlon hull five ships, especially when the precise trait starts to bite.

The next obvious choice is the Morshin carrier, again it has stealth at five, and carries even more fighters than the Sharlin, especially when you can buy two of them for a single Sharlin.

Tinashi warships should be able to easily clear away the Vorlon destroyer screen, however their lower stealth means that closing with the Vorlon fleet will be a risky move for them.

The Narn Regime

The Narn were victims of the shadows a thousand years ago, oh what the hell - purge them!

As the Narn ships are generally tough, relying upon good hull and high damage capacity over fancy defences that you can ignore, you will need the bigger guns to deal with them. In addition they have weak fighters, so fighter defence will be less of an issue, and if their fighters do swarm you then your tight formations will work for you, as the Narn will not be able to use their energy mines without clearing your ships of his fighters

for you. On the basis of this, a cruiser heavy fleet is probably the way to go.

A destroyer screen will still be useful to draw his early boresight shots, but there are unlikely to be many ships for the destroyers to engage, so you'll need less of them than normal. As for the cruisers, the more lightning cannon you can bring to the party the better, so light cruisers should dominate.

Against the Vorlons

Fighters and energy mines will be mutually exclusive here, you will not be able to use both against the same targets. In fact given the choice the fighters are probably the more effective weapon, due to the weakness of energy mines against ships normally, combined with the adaptive armour of Vorlon ships, they are likely to do little damage. Frazi on the other hand attack with four dice, and could easily be kicking out three to seven damage a flight to the Vorlons.

As for ship selection, you will need the big guns and lots of secondary guns to deal with the Vorlons. G'Quan heavy cruisers are always the base line to start from with the Narn fleet. Add a couple of Bin'Tak dreadnoughts to give the fleet some backbone, a few Rongoth destroyers to soak up damage and blunt the nose of the attack, or plunge into the heart of the Vorlon fleet to die gloriously firing in all directions, and you should be pretty well sorted.

The Shadows

Shadows, it's time to clear the board for another game.

It's chainsaw vs rapier time. If you can keep the shadow ships in arc, you should have the advantage

as you have greater range on your heavy cruisers and your ships are tougher. However the shadows are not going to be playing nice and keeping them in arc will be a struggle. Be prepared for a lot of come about orders as you swing from one side to the other to keep tracking the Shadow capital ships.

Then you have their fighters which while not the best fighters in the galaxy are certainly capable of savaging your ships. You will need to use your transports for anti fighter duty.

Your destroyers will be less useful as they will only be needed to hunt shadow scouts, which are unlikely to be present in any numbers as they will not need them for fighter cover. Light cruisers are going to be your best bet, the traditional ratio of two light cruisers per heavy cruiser is probably the way to go.

One advantage that you have is that you can make jump point attacks when you bring on reserves, which the shadows cannot, and this can be used to sweep away large clusters of fighters if they are already in realspace. As neither side has ships that explode, it's the only way of affecting a large area of space and clearing away the fighters.

In Conclusion

The Vorlon Empire is rightly feared, it has the capabilities to destroy anything it encounters. However it is also deeply flawed in some respects and success with the Vorlon fleet depends on how well you can cover those flaws while maximising the damage output of the Vorlon war machine. Some of the battles will be harder than others, and against their old enemies things will be a little tough, but there are no battles that the Vorlons cannot win. As with any battle remember preparation, deployment and concentration win more battles than anything else.

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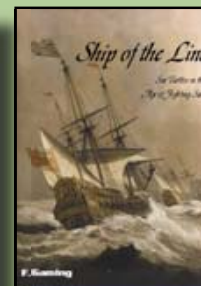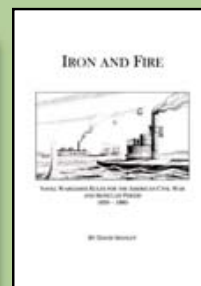
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Beach Head

A Distinctly Unfair Scenario for Starship Troopers

Matthew Sprange

War is hell, as they say. It is also usually unfair, as real life commanders do not have to worry about points values and whether their forces are tournament legal. Battles are often won before they even start, though the combatants often do not know it.

The following scenario features just one such kind of battle. Inspired by actions such as the D-Day and Gallipoli landings, this scenario makes things very hard for the attacker, to the extent that he is not expected to win. Sound unfair? Probably. The point, however, is to illustrate just how hard this sort of action can be, especially when the enemy is armed with the kind of weaponry available to forces in Starship Troopers. The aim is to see just how far you can get before your forces lose momentum. Who knows? You might even succeed!

It is up to you what forces are used in this scenario, though we recommend the Mobile Infantry be used as attackers, for best effect. You'll see what we mean once you start playing!

Attackers Briefing

The main offensive has begun! The enemy lies in wait and though you know this will be a tough battle, final victory cannot be far away. All you have to do is create a beach head and beat the defenders back hard enough for your reinforcements to start their own landings. Fight hard, for if you do not create enough room, the reinforcements will have no choice but to abort, leaving you stranded!

- Decide on a points value of the battle with your opponent. Divide your force into four equal quarters.

- One quarter of your force will move on to the battlefield from your deployment edge on the
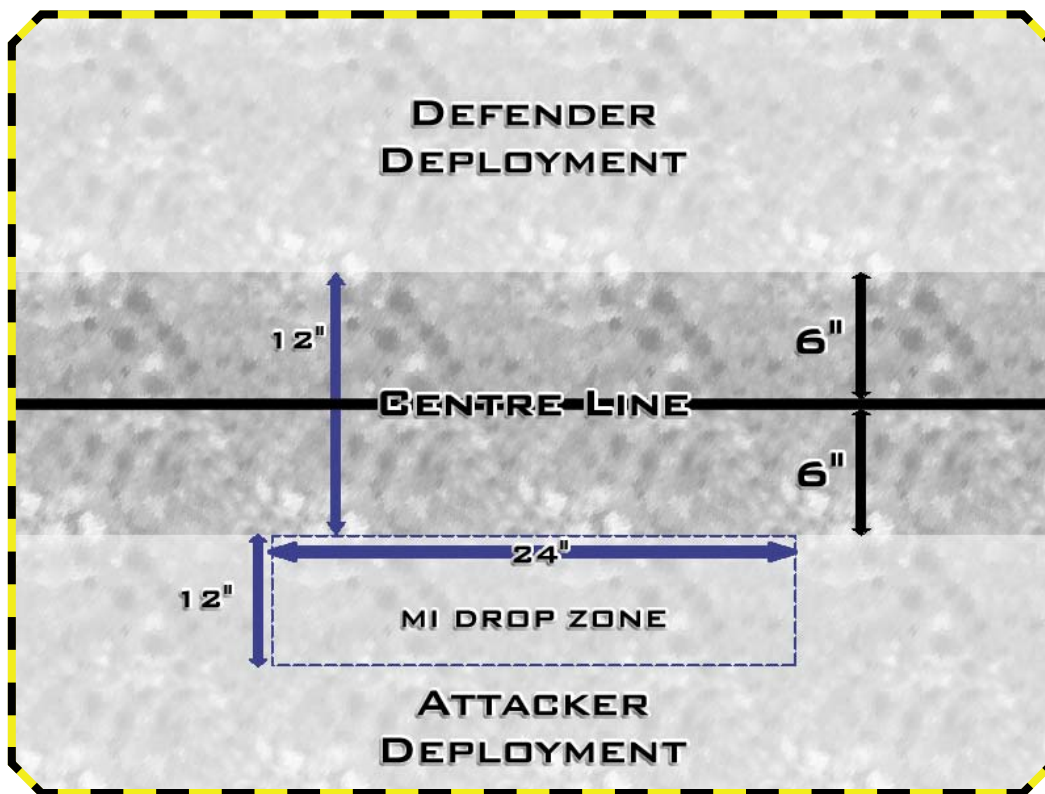
first turn. The second quarter will move on in the second turn and so on. You may not use reserves beyond these quarters.

- If your force is Mobile Infantry, you may deploy using drop capsules. However, you may still only bring on a quarter or your forces in every turn, and you must deploy them within the drop zone noted on the map.

- After your opponent has deployed his forces, you may add a dozen pieces of Size 1 terrain no larger than 2" by 4". This represents craters, tank traps, a small mounds that your troops may be able to hide behind.

- You have the first turn, moving one quarter of your forces on from your deployment edge.

Defenders Briefing

The enemy has been building up for a final assault for sometime now, and they have a fearsome arsenal at their disposal. However, you have also had time to begin constructing your defences. The simulations predict that a heavy invasion by the enemy will be halted in its tracks within minutes. Now all you have to do is prove those simulations right. . .

- Decide on a points value of the battle with your opponent. You may also add 500 points worth of emplacements for no extra cost. Arachnid forces may add 500 points of Tunnel Entrances, Nest Entrances and Bug Central.

- You may deploy terrain on the table as you see fit, as your forces have prepared the area to accept an invasion – yes, you may put lots of heavy terrain in your deployment zone

and give nothing for your opponent to hide behind!

- You may not use reserves.

- You deploy first and go second.

Mission Length

The battle will continue for eight turns.

Victory Conditions

The defending player will win if no more enemy models are on the table by the end of turn eight. The attacking player will win if either he has models on the table after turn eight, or if he can clear a corridor through the defender's deployment zone at least 24" wide. This corridor must be aligned to the long table edges, it may not be 'bent' at an angle. If such a corridor is clear at the end of any turn, the attacker will win.
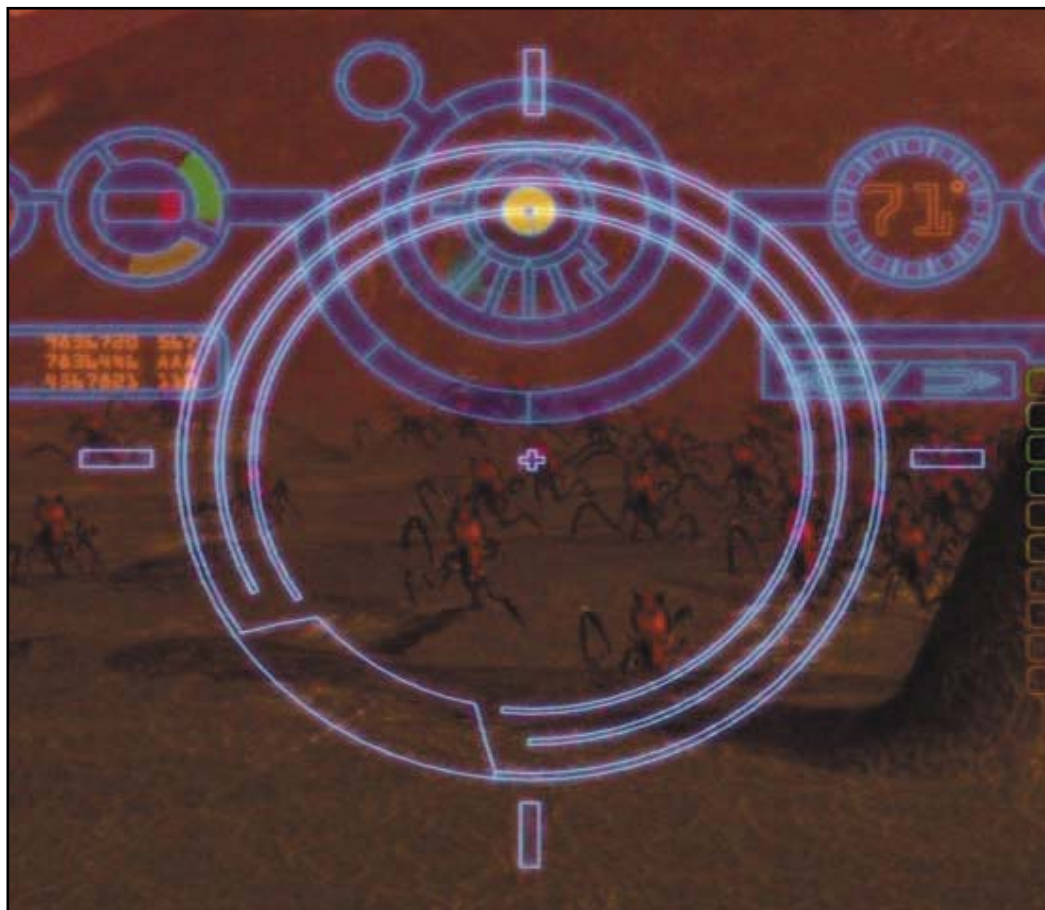
The Battle of the Denmark Strait

A Victory at Sea Battle Report

Matthew Sprange

Fans of World War II naval combat (and we know there are a lot of you, from the response we had in our initial articles) will be pleased to know that development on Victory at Sea is full steam ahead. So to speak.

The plan is to release Victory at Sea in November, as a hardback book with perforated counters inside, allowing you to play pretty much any battle you like straight away, with no need for miniatures! Like A Call to Arms, Victory at Sea is not scale dependant and you can use any models or counters you wish – you can even have opposing fleets at different scales, though it might look a bit odd!

There is still a fair bit of work to be done on the game but it mostly involves refining the campaign system, fleshing out the fleet lists and double-checking our facts in the historical sections. The rules system as a whole looks pretty solid – we even have the torpedo rules sorted out.

As a little celebration of our progress, we have therefore decided to demonstrate one of the

historical scenarios that will be included in the rulebook, the Battle of the Denmark Strait, where the Bismarck has broken out into the Atlantic and only two Royal Navy ships stand in its way. Historically, of course, the *Bismarck* was able to

escape after sinking *HMS Hood* with a lucky shot – but would history repeat itself?

Hefting the wet turbot, I challenged Alex to a match, hoping to overcome my shame from our previous Starship troopers battle.
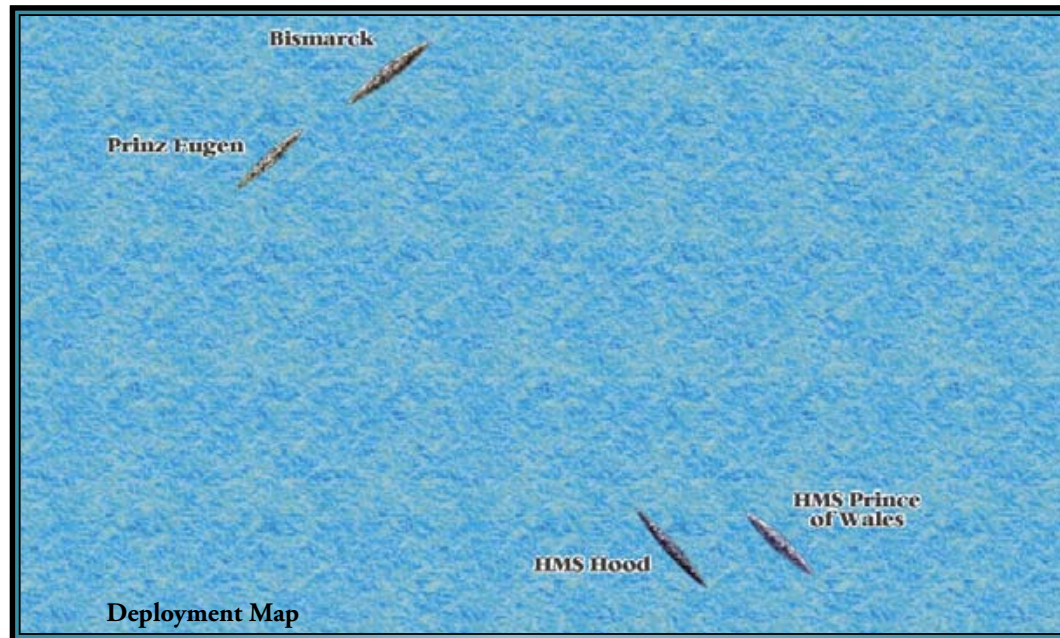
Deployment Map

Royal Navy Fleet

HMS Hood (Hood-class Battlecruiser)
HMS Prince of Wales (King George V-class Battleship)

Kriegsmarine Fleet

Prinz Eugen (Prinz Eugen-class Heavy Cruiser)
Bismarck (Tirpitz-class Battleship)

Turn One

The deployment is dictated by set maps in historical scenarios, so it was on to turn one straight away. The Royal Navy, confident in its Imperial arrogance, sailed ahead steadily, not breaking formation, while the German vessels began a slow turn to face the newcomers. Both British ships concentrated their initial long-ranged fire on the Prinz Eugen and, with shells arcing down onto the cruiser's deck, crippled it almost immediately, blasting B turret off its mounts in the process.

One difference between Victory at Sea and A Call to Arms is that you now have to roll to hit a target before rolling an amount of Damage Dice as appropriate for the weapon. What happened here was that I was very lucky in my initial shots as the *Prinz Eugen* is a relatively small target and it was at long range – if its beam had not been facing my two ships, most of my shots would have missed.

The trade off here is that while ships at long range are harder to hit, they are easier to damage, as the shells arc downwards onto the deck armour – a modification to the original rules that was requested by a great many of you!
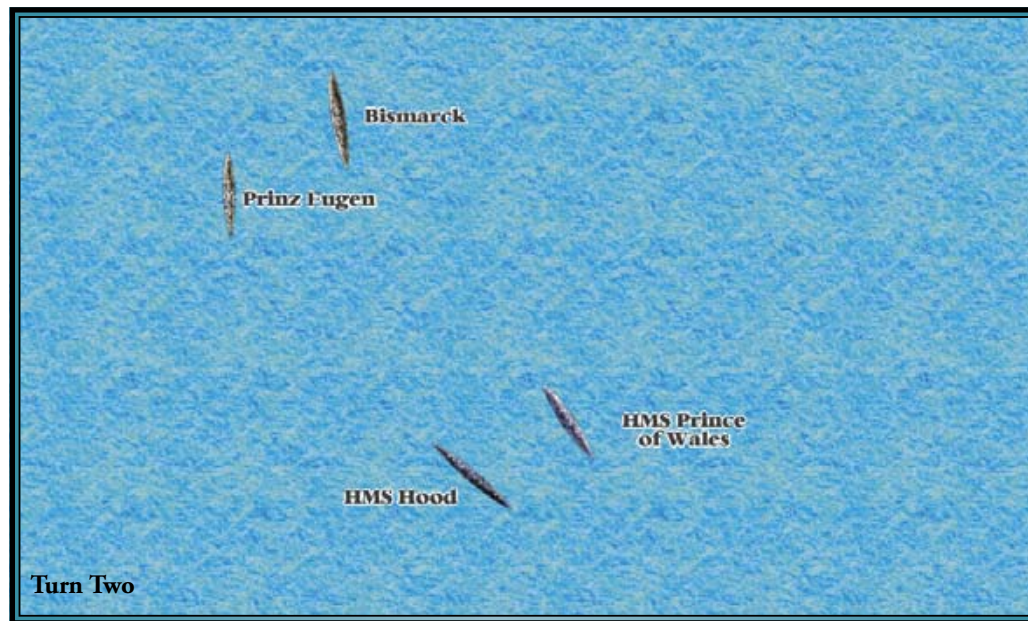
Back to the fight, the German ships concentrated their fire on the *Prince of Wales*, causing only

light damage, though minor critical hits saw the secondary weapons and turbines affected, slowing the battleship down.

Turn Two

Holding their formation as they ploughed through the waves, the British ships watched as the two Germans turned to face them, the *Prinz Eugen* barely moving. The *Hood* and *Bismarck* trade fire and the latter scores a critical hit – my blood ran cold at this point as there is an entry on the critical hit table that pretty much reflects what happened to the *Hood* in real life. Fortunately, only its props are damaged. The *Prince of Wales* trades fire with the *Prinz Eugen* (seems appropriate, looking back) but the exchange is inconclusive, the latter proving deceptively small while the armour of the British ship resisted the weak attack. In the End Phase, the *Prince of Wales* manages to repair its turbines.

Turn Three

Making a bold move, the Royal Navy splits its formation, with the Hood turning to give the *Prinz Eugen* a healthy broadside, while the *Prince of Wales* continued to sail to the *Bismarck*. A change of heart in the Attack Phase, however, saw the *Hood* opening up on the *Bismarck* itself – the full broadside was just too sexy to pass up, and I was keen to take advantage of arcing shells in penetrating its armour.

The *Bismarck* suffered an absolute savaging in this attack but gave far better than it took when it responded. In the twinkling of an eye, the *Hood* was crippled and lost three main turrets, effectively removing it from serious contention in the fight.

Seeing this, the Captain of the *Prince of Wales* decided to split his fire, with the rear turret swinging round to engage the *Prinz Eugen*, while the forward guns tried to do anything they could

Turn Three

Turn Four

Well, it was now two against one but the *Hood* was badly damaged and had no real escape route. The *Prince of Wales* tries to divert the attention of the *Bismarck* by sailing ever closer, its guns starting multiple fires on the battleship's decks. However, with typical German efficiency, it instead concentrates its turrets on the Hood, eventually sinking it.

Turns Five and Six

Quite a surreal moment now, as the *Prince of Wales* and *Bismarck* adopt a 'pirate' style of attack, passing one another very slowly, guns blazing as they stand just a few dozen yards away from one another. Needless to say, this tactic proved to be fairly suicidal for both ships.

The *Bismarck* unloaded with every gun it possessed, until one shell penetrated a critical armour belt and struck an auxiliary magazine,

against the mighty *Bismarck*. The spine of the *Prinz Eugen* broke under this terrible onslaught and she listed, beginning to sink. The *Bismarck*, meanwhile, merely soaked up the damage with no noticeable effect. Just when the smoke was beginning to clear, a crewman on the *Prince of Wales* shouted a warning – torpedoes in the water! Too late though, and the spread caught the *Prince of Wales* dead on, causing multiple explosions that began to affect the fuel supply to its engines, reducing its speed to a crawl.

Those of you who have been following Victory at Sea in these pages will be glad to know that, with help from a few of our playtesters, I have finally sorted torpedoes – you may remember that I said I was not happy with them when they first appeared in Signs & Portents. Now, we just place a torpedo spread counter next to the target ship and resolve the effects of the salvo in the End Phase. Simple, no moving counters around needlessly and we can still do funky things like model the Long Lance (basically by increasing range and allowing it to attack in the *next* End Phase.
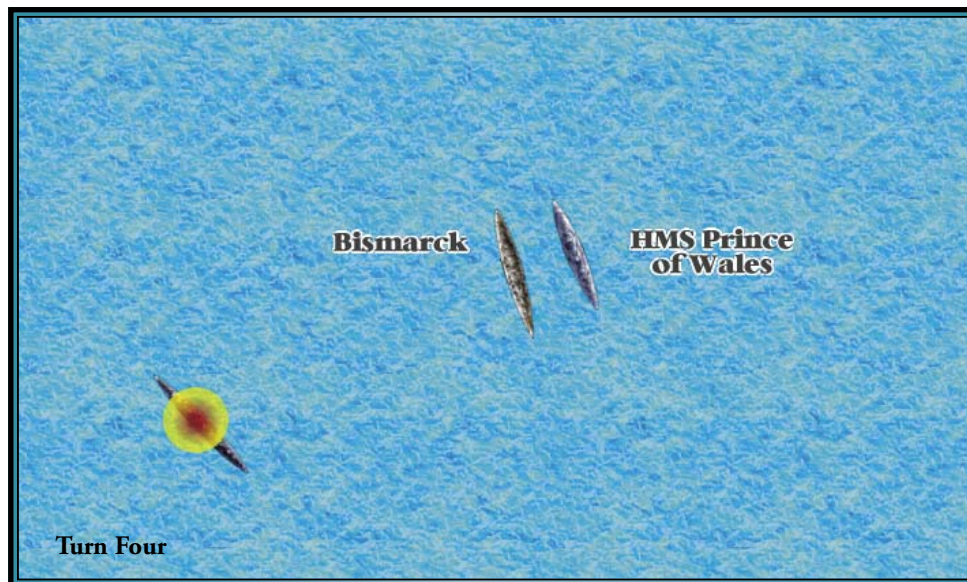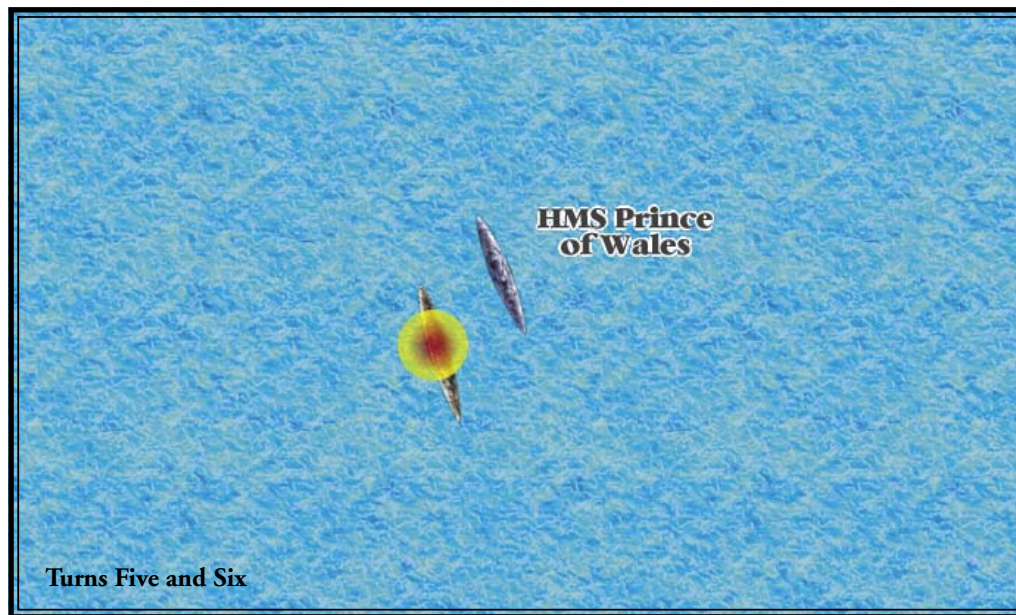

Turn Four

HMS Prince of Wales

Turns Five and Six

detonating it immediately. The explosion wrecked a huge portion of the *Prince of Wales* but, more importantly, also caused its firing to falter. This allowed the *Bismarck* to fire another salvo before the British ship could respond, almost crippling it. Fortunately, the *Prince of Wales* rallied admirably and began firing once more. With the damage dealt in the previous turns, the *Bismarck* finally rolled over and sank.

Victory!

We are still getting to grips with the actual game system, as it has been changed a fair bit since its original inception well over a year ago. However, I think I can safely say splitting my formation was not a good idea, as it removed the possibility of my ships supporting one another in their attacks, and it placed the *Hood* squarely in the broadside of the *Bismarck*, which I should have known was too tempting a target to ignore. Concentrating on

the *Prinz Eugen* in the first turn was also perhaps not wise, as I could have perhaps instead sunk the *Bismarck* a turn earlier and saved the *Prince of Wales* from a battering.

Still, the Royal Navy did better here than in real life, so who is to complain?

And Defeat. . .

I'm trying to work out how the Germans won this one first time around, with the initiative going to the British in the first turn and the

resulting savaging taking the *Prinz Eugen* out of the equation almost from the start. Turning the *Bismarck* to face the Royal Navy was probably a mistake, since the ship is so large staying side on would not have made much difference but importantly would have allowed the battleship to fire both sets of turrets at the British rather than limiting the firing to the forward turrets only.

Conclusion - Mechanics

This is the game that finally convinced me that ships were too easy to hit, something that I had suspected ever since the rules system was first laid out – there were a couple of turns where all the guns of the *Prince of Wales* and *Bismarck* struck home accurately in a single salvo, which is just not on at any sort of decent range.

All the statistics of ships in Victory at Sea have been constructed by a series of formulae, that allow us to accurately portray the relative differences between ships from their real world characteristics. In terms of size, for example, all ships longer than 800 feet have a Target score of 2+ - and this is where the problem was in this particular match. However, as everything is based on these formulae, they are also relatively easy to fix. A quick re-jigging of Target scores on the larger ships, some more playtesting, and this fault should be fixed!

STORMING THE DINNER TABLE

Using GoMC1 to Resolve Combat in the Judge Dredd RPG

Marc Farrimond

As it stands the Judge Dredd Roleplaying game is a great system, but given the very nature of the d20 mechanics it can make combat a very long and laborious task for the Games Master and Player alike. A simple combat between two judges and four perps can be over in a matter of moments, but if those perps are of a high enough level or even Player Characters then the whole thing can seem to go on forever before a resolution is met.

There are of course a couple of ways to get around this problem, ways that will speed up game play greatly and give both the Games Master and Player alike a wealth of new options.

One simple way to get around this combat problem is to readdress the way that characters hit points are allocated and make them more in line with other games from the Mongoose stables such as Babylon 5. Characters with fewer hit points will often think twice about getting involved in an often deadly gun battle, taking more care when they go into combat and thinking through every option. Of course this still means that the combat uses the same mechanics as before, only trimmed down. What really is needed is a whole new outlook on combat for the roleplaying system. Enter Gangs of Mega-City One and a fresh new look on combat and even mass combat!

From Roleplaying Game to Table-top

Converting your characters from the Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game to Gangs of Mega-City One may sound like an epic task but it is actually relatively simple to do and can ease the strain on the Games Master immensely. It makes little actual difference if your character is a street hardened criminal, a law abiding citizen or a veteran street judge, all classes are easy to convert regardless of if you are playing a citizen or judge based campaign.

Back to Basics

The first thing we need to think of when we change from a roleplaying system to that of a miniature combat one is the very basic of all elements inherent in both systems, the stat line. Using the mechanics found in the d20 system its quite easy to see that all the Player Characters are a step above the more mundane and in some cases are on par with Olympic athletes. Changing the basic attributes from your JDRPG character to that of GoMC1 shouldn't really take too long.

Strength: Every characters rating in the Strength attribute allows them to perform feats of strength that sometimes seem almost superhuman. The characters ability modifier is used to generate the Resilience (Res) score rating, added to a base of 4. The higher the characters Strength ability modifier , then the higher the Res score in the miniatures game. Characters with a Strength of less than 13 will find that they need to rely on armour to protect themselves or their wits.

Example: Vivian Barstard is a wannabe Top Dog of the Spung Ones and is a level 4 punk with a Strength of 18, when converted from the roleplaying game to Gangs of Mega-City One we use his ability modifier of +4 added to the base of 4 to give a total of Res 8.

The Str attribute is also used to determine exactly how many CC dice you get in close combat. Characters with a Strength of 13 or higher gain a +1 CC for every point in their ability modifier, added to a base of 1D CC. The higher the modifier the more dice the character will use in close combat

Example Vivian has a Str 18 and therefore has a CC rating of 5D, 4D from his modifier and 1D base.

The maximum modifier a character can add is +4. Characters with a Strength rating of 20+ will not benefit from the extra increase.

Dexterity: Used to measure how fast you can move, dodge, shoot and a whole range of other actions in the roleplaying game, the Dexterity score is used to generate your characters Agility score in Gangs of Mega-City One. As with the Strength rating, every point of ability modifier is used to generate your Ag score, but unlike the Strength score it is minuses from the final score, rather than added to it.

Example: Vivian has a Dexterity rating of 15 which gives him an ability modifier of +2. All characters start with a base Ag score of 6, with the Dexterity ability modifier subtracted from this, leaving Vivian a total Ag score of 4. Regardless of the ability modifier, no character can have an Agility score of lower than 2.

Also characters who have a Dexterity rating of 18 are exceptionally fast and may add 1" to the Spd (Speed) score.

Constitution: In the Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game the Constitution attribute is a key factor in determining your characters hit points, and likewise it is used to determine how many hits your character has in Gangs of Mega-City One. Every Player Character starts off with 1 hit when they convert their character over to the miniature combat game, and gains +1 hit for every point they have in their Constitution ability modifier.

Example: Vivian has a Constitution of 11 so only has 1 hit in the miniature game. His lieutenant Rick (with a silent P) has a thicker frame and a Constitution of 18 and begins the game with 5 hits (+1 basic hit, +4 for his ability modifier).

Willpower: Willpower is a very important attribute in d20 and can mean the difference between standing your ground and fighting for what you believe in, or turning tail and running

away at full speed. Characters with a high Willpower are more likely to be unaffected by seeing a friend or fellow ganger fall to a hail of bullets and are apt to stick around even if the judges are on the scene. All characters begin the game with a Wtf (Will to Fight) rating of 5 from this you subtract one point for every point the character has in their Willpower ability modifier. Regardless of their ability modifier no character can have a Wtf score lower than 2.

Example: Vivian is brash and crass and thinks that he is the toughest punk in Cliff Richard con-apts and rightly so. He has a very high Willpower rating of 18, giving him a Wtf score of 2+ when he is on the table top.

Feats: All characters in the Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game have a number of feats that set them apart from average citizens in the Big Meg.

Feats give the character special characteristics and as such they are represented in your games of Gangs of Mega-City One by Traits. Each character in the basic game needs to gain traits through experience, though characters in the roleplaying game gain their basic feats for free when they start, as such we convert the number of feats the character has in the roleplaying game into a number of traits. Each character can chose three traits from the list provided in the core rule book and gains one extra trait for every three feats they possess in the roleplaying game.

Example: Vivian is a level 4 punk and has four feats. The Player chooses three traits for Vivian in the table top version of the game from the list and picks Duck and Weave, Heroic Rush and Scout from the list. Characters must still meet any prerequisites before they choose traits.

Some traits will increase the Res score or add extra hits and these may still be taken as long as they don't take the character over the maximum. Also please note that no character may have more than 10 traits no matter what level their character is, or how many feats it may have.

Movement and Speed

Movement still remains more or less the same for the conversion from the roleplaying system to the tabletop with each character having a base Spd rating or 5". Some exceptions to this rule are detailed below.

Fatties: Each fatty character will have a base Spd of 4" no matter how high their Dexterity ability modifier is. They are huge hulking frames, and though they may have fast reactions they still have to exert a lot of power just to keep up with your average ganger.

Skysurfers: In Gangs of Mega-City One, Skysurfers have a base speed of 15" per move action and this remains the same for Skysurfers converted from the roleplaying game. However a Skysurfer who is not actually on his powerboard at the time of combat must be treated as if he had a Spd of 5", though this to can be increased by having a very high Dexterity ability modifier.

Batters: Batgliders are treated in the same fashion as Skysurfers and are assumed to have a Spd rating of 10" when in the air, or 5" when on foot, again modified by the characters Dexterity ability modifier.

Actions

Every Player Character will of course take actions during combat and as such all Player Characters are treated in the same way that judges are handled in the core rules and will act out of turn with any other gang members they may be currently with. If you have a number of Player Characters then simply have them perform their two actions in order of Initiative. Player Characters will always act independently of each other and any other gang member/ judge patrol they are attached too.

Prestige Classes

During the course of a Players Characters life it will have one or possibly many chances to change the path it is going and choose a new prestige class. Prestige classes allow for the character to access a whole set of different feats and skills that they normally wouldn't be open to and as such any character who has a prestige class may choose one extra trait or increase/decrease one attribute by 1 for every prestige class they currently have. Also characters are naturally assumed to have any basic traits for their prestige class as detailed in the core Gangs of Mega-City One rulebook.

Example: Jertzy is a level 5 fatty who runs with the Spung Ones and although the started out as a punk, his Player Character is currently following the fatty prestige class (as detailed in The Rookies Guide to Crazes). The Player controlling Jertzy chooses to give his character an increase in hits, bringing his total up to 4. The Player also gives the character the Bellywheel Charge and Tough trait as per the example found in the Gangs of Mega-City One rulebook (Page 76).

Weapons and Equipment

Every Player Character will have a large wealth of both weaponry and equipment that they can fall back upon. It is best to allow your character to keep whatever they normally use in the game as long as you as a Games Master don't feel it will tip the balance to much. Judge Player Characters will of course have access to their Lawgiver and Lawmaster as per the roleplaying game. No matter what the class of the Player Character the model they use to represent them on the table top should follow the What You See rule found on page 7 of the Gangs of Mega-City One rulebook.

Reputation

Reputation is highly important to gangs and as such each character beings with a reputation equal to their current level in the roleplaying game, added to a base of 3. This will have characters rep ranging from 4 to 15 or higher.

Vivian Barstard

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hits	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	4+	8	5D	1	2+	n/a	7

Traits: Duck and Weave, Heroic Rush, Scout.

Weapons: Spit Gun, Knife, Handgun

Equipment: Medipak

Combat

Follow the basics given in the Gangs of Mega-City One core rule book for both ranged and close combat. Simple!

Characters who are reduced to zero hits during combat are not treated as dead, but must roll on the injury table on page 24 of the Gangs of Mega-City One rulebook, but are allowed at the Games Masters discretion to reduce the total rolled by -2 (nobody wants to play a game and have their character killed off really!).

Busted

Any Player Character who is in combat against a judge patrol and is captured will of course spend some time in the cubes, unless of course they have a pretty good excuse to get out of imprisonment. Though it is down to the Games Master , it is suggested that any Player Character who is captured by the judges may be allowed the chance to escape or follow the rules for arresting characters as found in the Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game.

Scenarios

It is down to the Games Master to choose an apt scenario to fit the current situation his characters are facing, though a sample scenario is given below.

Using these simple conversions it is possible to make even the longest winded combat a simple matter of rolling the dice and playing the game.

FACE OFF

Sometimes it just comes down to you and a few mates against overwhelming odds. It seems as if the whole world is out to get you and living in Mega-City One that could just well be the truth.

Set-Up

The Player Characters and their gang/patrol may deploy first up to 10" in from the edge of the table. They may opt to have their opponent gang/patrol set up first and act accordingly 10" in from their edge of the table. Either way the Player Characters will act independently from the other members of the gang/patrol they are with and act as a group each turn.

Victory Conditions

If the Player Characters manage to destroy or reduce the opposing models to a third of their starting strength, it is assumed that the Player Characters have won the battle. If all the Player Characters are reduced to zero hits it is assumed that the opposing gangers/patrol have won the battle.

Panel 1: HURGH!
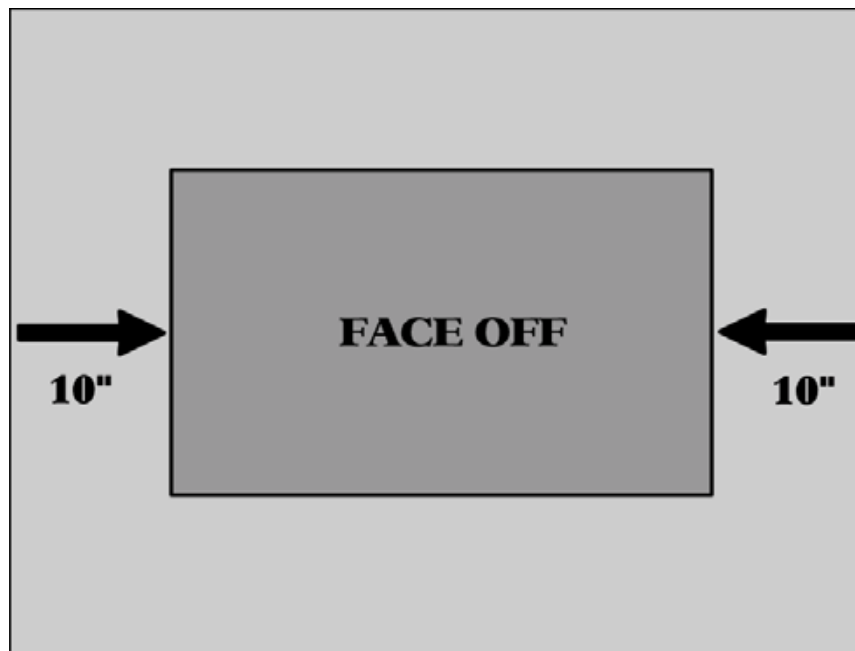
Panel 3: JUST DOING MY PART, LT

I THINK I BIT MY TONGUE...

Panel 4: OKAY, PEOPLE. THAT FIREWALL BUYS US *TWO MINUTES* AT BEST. TELL ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

FLEET'S A NO-SHOW ON AIR COVER, BOSS. THE JASPER MASKELYNE'S BROKEN FOR HIGH ORBIT AND WON'T ISSUE A GO ORDER UNTIL THOSE PLASMA BATTERIES ARE DOWN.

THERE ARE FOUR SQUADS ON THAT RIGHT NOW.

IT... DOESN'T LOOK GOOD FOR THEM.

Panel 5: GET OFF ME...

GET *OFF* ME...

GET OFF ME...

Panel 6: SWEET ZOMBIE JESUS, DID YOU EVER HAVE ONE OF THOSE DAYS?

RAMART, GIVE ME SOME BETTER NEWS.

YES, SIR. WE'VE NAILED THE FACILITY'S MAIN ENTRANCE AND IT'S A PRETTY SHORT HOP FROM HERE. THERE ARE NO UNITS CURRENTLY REPORTING ENGAGEMENTS IN THE AREA.

Panel 7: OKAY, THAT'S MORE LIKE IT. *SADDLE UP, TROOPERS* - WE'RE BACK ON THE CLOCK.

SIR!

Panel 8: JESUS!

Panel 9: THE OTHER END'S GOT *BULLETS* IN IT, CORPORAL.

OTHER THAN THAT, *NICE WORK*

EXTINCTION PROTOCOL: BAD DAY ON BLACK GLASS 1.5 WRITER: CY DETHAN ARTIST: NIC WILKINSON

Panel 10: I'VE GOT LIEUTENANT *VICENTE* FROM THE 55TH ON THE HORN. THEY'RE HITTING THE *PLASMAS*

THEY'RE DOWN TO FOURTEEN FROM THIRTY-TWO, WITH A CLASS-TWO SUBTERRANEAN MASS INBOUND.

Panel 11: *TANKERS* ON *THIS* SLAG-HEAP? WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY PROTECTING OUT HERE?

NOT OUR PROBLEM, CORPORAL.

SERGEANT, TAKE TOZIER AND MAXWELL OUT TO DELTA RIDGE AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO WHATEVER'S LEFT OF THE 55TH. LET THE LIEUTENANT KNOW YOU'RE BRINGING A *MEDIC*

EVERYONE ELSE, ON THE BOUNCE. WE'RE HITTING THE INSTALLATION.

NOT FOR NOTHING, LT, BUT ISN'T BLACKWELL A LITTLE *LOW-SPEC* FOR UNDERGROUND WORK?

HE'S LIGHT ON COMMAND SKILLS, BUT HE'S A *THINKER* AND HE TRUSTS HIS *INSTINCTS*. IT'S RARE TO FIND A TROOPER WHO HASN'T HAD THAT BEAT OUT OF HIM.

BESIDES, TELL ME YOU CAN TAKE THAT RIDGE WITHOUT TOZIER.

OKAY, I WANT TO SEE BOUNDING OVERWATCH IN A TWO-BY-TWO COVER FORMATION. *NAKAGAWA*, YOU'RE WITH *BLACKWELL*. *RAMART*, YOU'RE WITH *BOWDEN*.

MAN, THIS PLACE IS *WRECKED!* ARE WE SERIOUSLY LOOKING FOR *SURVIVORS* HERE?

POINT TAKEN.

YOU HEARD THE LIEUTENANT. *MAXWELL*, PREP YOUR MED-GEAR AND RADIO AHEAD. *TOZIER*, LOAD UP FOR HEAVY ASSAULT. *LET'S MOVE!*

I GUESS THEY JUST THREW DOWN FROM ORBIT 'TILL THE TUBES RAN DRY

CALLING A STRIKE ON YOUR OWN POSITION — THAT'S PRETTY *HARDCORE*.

TRACK FOR MOTION, TROOPERS. IT'S MY ASS HANGING OUT HERE AND I DON'T NEED ANY *SURPRISES* UP IT.

The Lands of Zatariel

A setting for your Mighty Armies Games

Jeff Rogers

The World of Zatariel

Deep in the cosmos, the planet Zatariel spins upon its axis, uncaring and unknowing of the continuing conflicts upon its surface. To the casual observer it is as if time has stood still for the past five hundred years – for Zatariel is a land of unending conflict. It is a land of wars that see no victor, of ceaseless battles and of perpetual skirmishing. There is little time for the civilisations upon this planet to develop, for they are in a constant struggle for their own survival against their foes.

How and why the peoples of Zatariel first came to blows is lost forever in the mists of time. Those few that have the inclination to investigate such things have found that the cities they dwell in are built upon the ruins of older cities, and those upon even older settlements – the people of Zatariel live in a constant cycle of destruction and rebuilding. Every effort that on other worlds would be concentrated on improving life for the inhabitants instead focuses upon taking the lives of their enemies.

There is little in the way of safety for the peoples of this world – those that do not serve in the armies of their leaders live under the constant threat of attack by their neighbours. Were you to question a Zatarian about their life expectancy, they would simply reply that they do not expect to live.

A hostile, aggressive, violent world, Zatariel is the perfect location to set your games of Mighty Armies.

The Necromantic Wars

Hundreds of years ago, Kaleth was a mighty Elven kingdom. Vast cities shone with magical light as the elven race went through a period of growth, and the Elven peoples were at peace with both their Dwarven neighbours and the peoples of Nalria. Built around the ancient pyramid of Zalgrath, the resting place of sorcerers throughout the ages, the nation flourished.

Then came the Necromantic Wars – a number of elves along with renegade humans from Nalria researched the forbidden laws of Necromancy. While many were truly searching for a way to stave off death, the movement's leaders had a more sinister purpose in mind – raising an army of the dead in order to secure their own power base. By the time they were discovered, these few had secretly built up enough magical and military power to resist any attempts to stop them. The kingdom of Kaleth was torn apart by the ensuring wars, and many great discoveries were lost.

Finally the master sorcerers of the Elves joined with their counterparts from Nalria to combat the Necromancers on a magical level, for their undead legions continued to rise in number with every battle they fought. The Dwarves of the Metoah Range also joined the battle, reluctantly admitting that once the Elves and Humans were defeated they would surely be the next to suffer.

The Necromancer Elrizan, regarded by most of his peers as the most powerful of their number, recognized the threat that they faced and – realizing the futility of fighting the Sorcerers directly on the battlefield - prepared to take the war to yet another level.

During Elrizan's studies of ancient works in the Pyramid of Zalgrath, he had discovered the means to open a conduit to the very lands of the dead themselves. Simply creating this portal would doom every mortal on Zatariel, and being one of those mortals this was something he was not prepared to do. Instead he adapted the magics to draw upon the energies of that world to unleash them onto the lands of his enemies in directed storms. The cities of Nalria were destroyed by the powers he controlled, driving the surviving humans towards the Metoah range. The Elven kingdom of Kaleth was shattered. The Elves and Humans headed to what they believed to be the safety of the Dwarven stronghold of Kalek Vel – but Elrizan's reach extended even there, ripping the very stone from the fortress.

With his enemies scattered, Elrizan claimed the Pyramid of Zalgrath for his own. Gathering his forces to him, he cast one more mighty spell.

Kaleth Wastes

The
Obelisk

Pyramid of
Zalgreth

Kalek Vel

Metoah Range

Haleb

Lanalei

Kalek Gar

Siloria

Liandal

Tenek

Ar-Mallaren

Nalaren

Kalek Jev

Illarn

Aij Desert

Drawing once more upon energies from the lands of the dead, he directed his power at the core of Zatariel itself, causing a shift in the planet's axis. Where once was the fertile lands of Kaleth, a polar icecap began to form, ensuring the land would remain inhospitable to its former inhabitants and solidifying his hold on the kingdom.

The people of Zatariel would never be the same.

The Kaleth Wastes, Home of the Undead

The Necromantic followers of Elrizan soon reshaped their new home to their own requirements. The cities of the Elves were allowed to crumble, while the few living Necromancers moved into the immense necropolis that had been built beneath to house the dead. The peaceful slumber of the deceased was abruptly ended as they raised anything they could find as Spectres, Wights, and other even more disturbing forms.

Now an icy wasteland, Kaleth is inhospitable – the only time anyone willingly travels there is when an army is raised to attack the Undead host.

The aforementioned Pyramid of Zalgrath is the main inhabited area, although some Necromancers have split from the main group after a number of disagreements, and have travelled hundreds of miles west to start their own settlement – an area of catacombs marked only by a single above-ground feature known simply as "The Obelisk". Relations between the two groups are indifferent at best, and often outright hostile – however they still have many common enemies – pretty much every other race on the face of Zatariel.

In recent years, the Necromancers have discovered the enormous skeletons of Giants deep in the catacombs under the Pyramid of Zalgrath – their arcane knowledge has allowed them to raise a number of these as hideous undead bone giants.

The defeated forces of Nalria also serve their new necromantic masters now as terrifying Death Knights. Summoned back to Zatariel from the lands of the dead, these once mighty warriors are still capable of dealing huge amounts of damage on the battlefield.

The Barbarian Lands of Siloria

The Silorian Plainsmen are mostly nomadic, with just the capital city of Haleb and the trading post of Tenek being the notable exceptions to their drifting nature. These barbaric wanderers are descendants of the great civilisation of Nalria, a human nation that stood where the Nalaren forests now grow. When their cities were destroyed in the Necromantic Wars they fled through the pass of Kalek Gar to the plains of Siloria. The survivors had only what they could carry, and life was harsh for the first few generations – the lands of Siloria were unable to support their crops, and the humans were left to move from area to area as they depleted the native livestock of Siloria.

With their civilisation gone, the human plainsmen found less and less time for arts and crafts, each generation losing a degree of the skill of the previous generation. Today they survive as nomadic Elk herdsmen, moving their cattle around the plains as they feed on and exhaust the few grasses that grow there.

The barbarian city of Haleb has grown out of the need for somewhere to slowly rebuild civilization. Lacking many of the amenities of the cities of their forebears, it is a rough and unrefined place, but does provide at least some shelter for members of the community. There is also a degree of sea trade with lands further to the west.

Tenek, meanwhile, is somewhat less crude as many traders bring their wares here for trading amongst the other plainsmen. Occasionally a Dwarven caravan from Kalek Gar arrives with ores and metal from the mines, but often hostilities with the Dwarves prevent this, and the Barbarians are forced instead to raid them for the materials with which to forge new weapons.

A number of tribes of plainsmen have abandoned the concept of nomadic life, and have handed down memories of their previous lands through the generations. They have vowed that they will one day rebuild the great cities of their ancestors, but first the Wild Elves must be driven out of Nalaren.

Some herdsmen have dared to venture far into the north, to the very edge of the Metoah range. From the old frozen polar area even further north, huge Mammoths have roamed south since the polar realignment caused in the Necromantic Wars. These giant beasts have been farmed both for their meat and for their use as giant beasts of war.

The Elk farmed for food are occasionally also used in war as well – a small number of plainsmen in the trading post of Tenek have taken the principles they have learned from observing the Dwarf trading wagons and built mighty Elk-drawn war chariots.

Some of the tribes have devolved to the point of being almost feral – these berzerkers can speak only a broken form of their language, and understand only the simplest of instructions. However they are always willing to put themselves into the forefront of any battle.

The Orc Hordes of the Aji Desert

As Zatariel's axis shifted after the Necromantic wars, Kaleth was not the only area that was changed. Far to the south, the lands that was once home to the Orcs was moved into the equatorial belt. The resulting increase in temperature began to kill the vegetation. Soon the animals were unable to feed, and they too began to die.

With their lands inhospitable, the Orcs began the long journey northwards to their current home in the Aji desert. The migration of the Orcs took many generations, with the journey taking it's toll on their numbers.

The Orcs of Aji are not by nature this itinerant, but have had the lifestyle forced upon them. Repeatedly they make attempts to enter Nalaren and Siloria to claim for their own, but they are constantly beaten back into the desert. Only through raids upon the more civilised lands can they survive, as the desert allows nothing in the way of self-sufficiency.

Expert huntsmen and carnivorous by nature, the Orcs were once hunter-gatherers in their own lands, living off the wildlife that prospered there. Now they are forced to kill whatever they can find in order to feed – sometimes the animal life of Nalaren and Siloria, and sometimes the more intelligent beings that live there. A hungry Orc does not care where the meat it eats has come from, and indeed many have developed a taste for human or elven flesh.

At least two permanent encampments have been constructed in the Aij – the Orcs however feel no need to name them. The smaller of the two is in the eastern reaches of the desert, just south of the Nalaren forests. The other, far larger, is situated south of Siloria. From these two settlements raids are often launched upon the other inhabitants of Zatariel – there have even been reports of Orcs finding entrances to the dwarven tunnels in the south of the Metoah Range.

Using their powerful trebuchets, the Orc raiding forces threaten even the most strongly-built cities. When fighting on the open battlefield, their tame Hydras are a terrifying sight to behold.

Nalaren, the Forests of the Wild Elves

Formerly the lands of Nalria, the Nalaren forests are home to the elven refugees of Kaleth. After being driven from Kalek Vel in the Necromantic Wars, the surviving elves used great magics to call forth the power of nature to claim the open lands, and create forested areas in which they could hide from their enemies until they could rebuild their civilisation.

Over the hundreds of years since, each generation of elves has grown more comfortable in their surroundings, to the point that the elves of today have evolved a somewhat tribal nature – no longer the city builders of the past, the Wild Elves are at one with the forest around them, able to move out of sight in the blinking of an eye, and without the cultural leanings of their forebears.

The treaties of their ancestors forgotten, their magical knowledge a shadow of its former glory, and with a racial memory insisting they do everything to survive in and protect their new home, the Wild Elves are distrustful of everyone, and hostile towards anyone entering their lands.

The Elven city of Lanalei is situated in the northern forest, and it is from here that the Elven leaders meet in council to hold off the attacks from the Undead of Kaleth. They also plan constantly to attack their former home – not to take it back for themselves as both they and it have changed considerably since their previous residence there, but because they still remember the power that can be found in the Pyramid of Zalgreth. The Elven council realise that denying this to the Necromancers would reduce their power base considerably.

Two smaller settlements are also worth mentioning – Illarn is situated in the southern forest, and is home to the more radical members of Elven society. Where some would be content to destroy the Necromancers' power base, they would prefer to take it intact for their own purposes. Meanwhile Liandal is home to the Elven craftsmen – those who fashion the clothing, weapons, and tools for the rest of their kind. Elven craft has a natural feel to it – the craftsmen prefer to work in conjunction with natural form rather than bending it to their will – elven tools and weaposn will often be made of pieces of wood that has been sought out to be naturally the precise shape and size for that needed, with minimal carving and cutting. While this gives them a somewhat backwards look and feel, these craftsmen are skilled at seeking out natural forms that are as good as if not better than manmade ones.

Ruins of the old human cities line the eastern coastline. All manner of creatures find refuge here, from wild animals to wandering Orcs and even rogue undead from Kaleth whose Necromantic masters have died and left them unbound to any command.

When fielding their forces in battle, the Wild Elves often call upon their sorcerers to animate the very

forests themselves as gigantic Treemen, capable of sweeping their way through any opposition. They have also been known to field devastating chariots capable of rolling through infantry or peppering them with arrows from the bows carried for use by the crew.

The Dwarven Halls of Kalek Gar

The dwarves of Kalek Gar are probably the only one of the races on the northern continent still in their ancestral lands after the Necromantic war.

The Dwarven tunnels run under almost the entire Metoah range, all the way from the southern outpost of Kalek Jev to the ruined dwarven city of Kalek Vel in the north.

Kalak Jev is a military outpost, charged primarily with defending the southern tunnels against Orc incursions. Occasionally they also have to fight off Barbarian raids.

Kalak Vel was once the Dwarven trade city – a point from where they used to interact peacefully with their Elven and Human neighbours. Trade with the Nalaren Elves and the Silorian Plainsmen still occurs, but now so do hostilities as well.

When they are not at war with their neighbours, the Dwarves provide a valuable source of metal and ores from under the Metoah Range. The tunnels to Kalak Vel have mostly been blocked, to prevent the Undead from using them to gain access to Kalak Gar, but a few of the older tunnels still lie open and forgotten.

Mostly keeping to themselves, the Dwarves occasionally launch counter-attacks against the raiding Silorian Plainsmen. They also hold a long grudge against the Elves of Nalaren whom they blame for the Necromantic Wars, and occasionally a brash group of Dwarves will attack an Elven settlement out of spite.

Organised expeditions to Kalek Vel leave once or twice a year, attempting to reclaim the ancient city – inevitably they are attacked by the undead legions of the Necromancers and either driven back or destroyed.

Dwarves are master engineers, and their technology is far ahead of any other race on Zatariel – great machines driven by steam are now used to mine where masses of Dwarves with pickaxes once laboured. This technology has also been utilised to develop the mighty Dwarven war engines.

From the ancient lore obtained from the Elves before the Necromantic war, they also have a knowledge of crude gunpowder – seen utilized on the battlefield in the form of the potent Dwarf Great Cannon.

Ar-Mallaren, Isle of the Sorcerers

After the Necromantic wars, the civilisation of Nalria was ruined, its people scattered. Many fled through the pass of Kalek Gar to the lands of Siloria, but the sorcerers that survived the battle had their own contingency plan. Pooling their mighty powers, they moved the entire town of Ar-Mallaren from Nalria to a nearby island. The sorcerers, humiliated by the display of power of Elrizan, turned their frustration on the townspeople of Ar-Mallaren and forced them to become their servants.

Without access to the mighty libraries of magic in the pyramid of Zalgrath, the Sorcerers realised they would be a dying people – with each generation more and more magical secrets would be lost. The Tower of Lagara was built upon the island – now named after the transplanted town – and would be the location of their new library. Lacking a means to combat the Necromantic magic of their enemies without the high magics of Zalgrath, they turned to a new art – one which promised great power for very little investment of energies. Granted, there were risks attached to tapping the extradimensional energies they had discovered, but the risk was one they were willing to take. The Sorcerers of Ar-Mallaren turned their studies to Demonology.

The Sorcerers raid the mainland frequently for magical components, and slaves. The other races often attack the island in the hope of destroying the Sorcerers and/or stealing their secrets. Occasionally the Sorcerers even venture into the frozen wastes of Kaleth in attempts to secure magical texts from their rivals, the Necromancers.

Often supported in battle by covens of witches, the Sorcerers field a potent magical force, but one that relies on summoned demons to make up for the numbers they lack. The most powerful sorcerers can summon enormous demon avatars to do their bidding.

The Western Lands

Detailed above are only some of the lands of Zatariel – to the west are many more feuding realms. These include the sister-civilisation to the humans that once dwelled in Nalria, who send armoured knights into battle against their foes, and the vicious Snakemen, driven from their southern lands at the same time as the Orcs. There are rumours of even stranger races that dwell even further westward.

The East

In the days of old Nalria, sailing vessels would leave eastwards, in an attempt to discover what – if anything – lay in that direction. So far the easternmost point of land discovered is that of the isle now called Ar-Malloren. No ship that has ventured any further than this has ever returned.

"Hole, Sweet Hole"

Several methods for making custom large Bug Central terrain for the Starship Troopers Miniatures game

Darell C. Phillips

There is nothing wrong with using the six inch template for Bug Central, as it is very functional and works well with the rules. Sometimes however, you just want to "see" something ugly enough to inspire your SICON-issued Mobile Infantry dice to higher levels of performance. If you are playing the Arachnid Host, sometimes you just want to impress your opponents that their chosen task of wiping out your Bug Central is seemingly impossible to accomplish, and their goal was indeed a bad choice on their part (heh). In other words, the only thing better than victory are the taunts and propaganda thrown at your friends- I mean implacable enemies.

A while ago on the Mongoose forums, I saw a player that wanted a larger representation of the Bug Central than the template that was "only one inch larger" than a standard bug hole template. One way to "stretch" a terrain creation intended to display the six inch Bug Central template is to read the rules, and stretch the template without leaving the rulebook behind. The rules say "Bug Central is a main entrance, 6" in diameter, to a nearby massing point or brood chamber, obvious even from the surface and a primary target. These places crawl big time!"

OK so far. You could make a terrain piece that is based upon the 6" template and raise it to a height of about six inches. I've shown an example of this in a previous terrain article, and it looks very useable for the purpose. But let's read the rules a bit further for a bit of additional enlightenment, shall we? "Arachnid units emerging from a Bug Central can be placed up to 5" from the edge of the template, to represent them using the nexus of tunnels surrounding it."

Ah, so we can now expand the radius of the border an additional 5"? If we double this radius into a diameter extension of 10" to the 6" base template diameter, we arrive at a very expandable footprint that will cover a diameter of 16"! This footprint will allow us to create an impressive piece of terrain that also keeps us within the rules framework. For example, even though I made my Bug Central expansion piece out of a sheet of 2" styro, it really doesn't add any height if placed under a separate 6" bug tower piece. "Yes it does", one might say. "It adds two inches to the total height, making the tower too high for the rules, without cutting down the inner tower." Nope. The built-in abstract intent of the rules that were included to speed up play will save us from picking any nits here. Remember this? "All units in the Starship Troopers universe are assumed to be able to traverse up or down slopes without appreciably reducing their speed." In other words, adding this 16" wide by 2" high "pizza" should not be used any differently than if you only had a 6" diameter Bug Central template all by itself centred there. Just consider

that the inner tower is sitting on top of a 2" high hill, not that the structure is 8" high by 16" wide. If you looked at it this last way instead, it would change the intent of the rules. Simply building the extension and superimposing the tower on the top will give the visible impression desired, but still work perfectly within the rules. The nexus of tunnels is still really under the surface, but adding our new "16-inch pizza" adds an impressive visual (and nasty) appearance to the table top. It's just what we wanted to have, and it does not violate the rules.

I began this project by cutting a 16" diameter circle out of 2" open cell Styrofoam. Some may decide to use higher quality closed cell material. I have my own reasons for using this base stock and because I have explained them several times in the past, I don't think you really need me to do it again. Using a bendable wire foam cutting tool, I flared the outside perimeter down flush to the table top, but not so much as to make the edge excessively breakable. I also made sure to

leave a flat central area that my separate inner tower could be fitted easily onto. As I have also already discussed in a past Scenic Mayhem article about how to build the Bug Central 6" terrain piece, I'll leave that to you to either research from that previous article or to just recycle one that you may have already constructed! I certainly hope that some of what is read here helps you make usable terrain instead of just a way to pass the time utilising your reading skills, eh? Besides, if I revisit that particular article, I might be forced to endure my blissful ignorance again of a certain October holiday. Hmm, actually it's October in America and the first day(s) of November in… forget it (wicked smile expressed). We silly Americans do however spend probably more on it than any other nation: $6.9 billion US. So there.

Using another styro cutting tool, one that looks suspiciously like that of a wire soldering tool, I used it to create "worm holes" into the surface around the perimeter. Even though some might say these holes are only the size of Size 1 Control

Bugs and Chariot Bugs, remember this piece is a tabletop decoration, and any visible holes are abstract representations of the tunnel nexus exits. If you want to design your own piece to more represent proper-scaled perimeter exits, go for it. This is what I thought would look good ("good" meaning ugly of course). Beauty is in the eye of the bug-holder, you know.

Now that I have this relief carved into the styro, I need to paint it, or match it to any previous bug tower model. What I did to add texture material to the surface as well as structural reinforcement was to add coloured hobby sand of various colours over the wet coating of non-aggressive spray latex paint by Krylon called H2o™. My still-preferred method for colour variation is to use two or more

different cans of earthy colours and apply them while wet. This mixes the different colours into a random blend that I really like. After drying thoroughly, I added a sealer coat of white glue and craft sealer, spreading more amounts of craft sand. Lastly, I added an additional coat of water-based floor sealer (yes, I've mentioned this before as well in past issues). This varied mixture of paint, sand and multiple water-based clear sealers does give a nice protective and decorative finish.

While this is certainly one way to make a "different" rendition of the game's Bug Central template, I was also inspired by a flash of imagination when I recently constructed my first jungle terrain board for miniatures gaming (well, for SST at least). As I was building the third panel measuring 2'x4', I

made note that for various reasons that the adjacent panel was a thickness of 4". I hadn't dropped any levels, or terraced the edge down to the next board level. As I had decided to add a water feature to each of the three panels, I made up my mind that the last board was going to have a pool of stagnant water with steep sides to it. To more easily paint the flat water surface, I did not end up laminating the 1" lower panel to the 3" upper piece. I decided after completing the water effect that I would make the bottom piece be optionally repositionable to 180 degrees in relation to the higher level terrain slab. Flipping the lower 1" thick panel portion hid the painted water that was normally lined up under my 3" deep hole in the top board layer. What I thought of to "trade" for the lake optionally was a sinkhole version of Bug

Central. While not specifically allowed for within the rules, this might be saved for a future scenario where the troopers need to find a subterranean entrance to a vast tunnel network. Even before the first Tanker model was publicly released last year, I had constructed one of my first terrain boards for Starship Troopers. It was a vertical board that resembled an ant farm, and I wanted an optional access path from some of my flat table top boards (in this case, jungle) into the dark depths, as it were. Although the holes were not perfectly lined up, it could certainly serve as a conduit proxy to the nether regions of the other board. I didn't really even need it, as the vertical board could be hung over a table edge, flush with and adjacent to a flat board. It was just one of those flashes of imagination that made me want to make up an experimental feature. So I went to it.

The "experiment" began by carving a worm-hole relief into the surface area precisely where the upper panel hole would display the terrain detail. I "cheated" here by tracing a line where the upper hole would be. After burning a "buggy" relief into the surface using the foam tool that resembled a soldering tool, I painted it with a dark brown earthy colour. I wanted to come up higher from the flat area that I had just carved, but I couldn't allow myself to permanently attach anything, due to the board's dual use panel. What I did next was to try to form an overlay of sorts that had additional texture, and that helped to define a more regular 6" circle than the hole was first displaying. Trying a new material instead of using HYDROCAL® for this, I bought a can of wood filler, called rock hard water putty. Sometimes an article you read will help you use a successful idea or product, but I also think it's important to include products and ideas that didn't turn out so well. This is such a product. I starting with great results and found that I could form it before it dried into the shape that I wanted. This was so good, so far. Next,
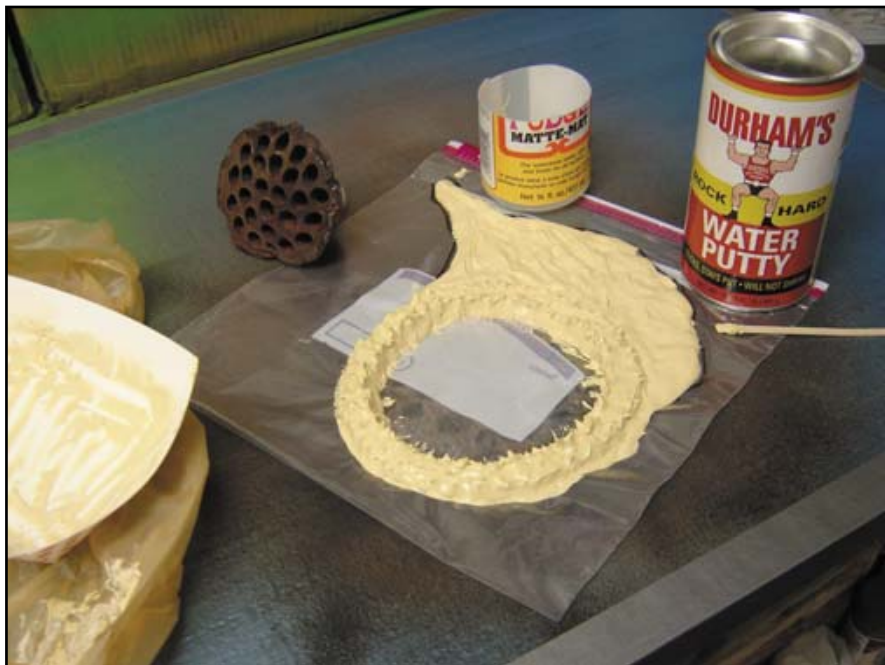
I was very pleased as it solidified that I was able to pick at the upper surface with a toothpick to create a prickly texture, not unlike coarse hairs. It began to look exactly like what I wanted, so I let it dry overnight. The product was indeed "rock hard", but by the time I was done positioning it a few times, I found it was brittle and I had to keep repairing cracks in it with superglue. So much so, that I had to reinforce it with repeated applications of glue. Like I have said before, superglue fixes everything. Two-part epoxy would have worked as well, but now I had a part superglue and part wood putty bug terrain artefact that sat defiantly on my carved styro sheet. My intent was to create a modular assembly that I could nestle into the shape of the water hole, and have it feature a 3D layered effect. The last piece of my "bug puzzle" was to fit something I had discovered in my trips to the local craft shop. If you find the dried flower area, you will discover some very interesting dried pods that can be used, oh shall I say, creatively. The dried flower pod that fit into my project (and indeed inspired it in the first place) is called a Lotus pod. Using long-nose pliers and carefully removing any remaining seeds in order to reveal all of the holes, I was able to countersink the bottom of the pod into a centred central hole in the styro. To give the pod a flat bottom to balance on, I attached a plastic cap. Thus, when reversing the bottom layer of the 1" lower panel to reveal my subterranean bug access and dropping in a raised fitted 6" template and Lotus pod, an alternate use can be created for a stagnant water hole. I consider this to be a "one-off" construct, but lessons were still learned about what worked and what didn't in its construction. Overall, I found my skin crawling a bit when completing the finished look of my "Bug Sub-Central". But when it comes to Arachnids as the subject matter, some would consider that to be a successful experiment.

I wanted to point out that in following in the path of the construction of my jungle board and making it reconfigurable, I kept the part of the 1" laminated layer that I trimmed off of the laminated top piece. This 3" laminated piece consists of a 2" middle section with a 1" contoured piece glued to its top. Instead of discarding it, I textured and finished both sides so it could be used on either side. For example, I can replace it where it was cut, and cover the bug hole, mostly. Where the lake's water source is at can be used as a ground entrance, and even additionally covered by a rock formation. By carving out part of the underside,

this can be used as a surface cave entrance. Some might use it as "real" camouflaged tunnel entrance, for a special scenario. Imagine the look on the face of the MI player when after finding the cave entrance and fighting off the surface guards, you reveal the underground complex by removal of the 1" ground filler section. This would be the ultimate camouflaged tunnel entrance, just maybe. Some may notice the crack along the surface, next to where the ground filler and rock formation is located. This is easily explained as a fault line (and it's his fault if he gets close to the line!).

An afterward comment to this project is to not take dried flower pods for granted in considering your terrain options. I have some ideas forming that include using entire clusters of Lotus pods as above ground "hive nest mounds" that should look great (great if you are a bug that is). Also, I will try to sneak in some newly found alien "trees" in the future, made from dried Mahogany pods. These have a woodsy, mottled look that will make (in my humble opinion) stunning alien forests on my jungle boards, as well as my desert Klendathu-style boards. There is just something about the word pods in science fiction that gets my skin crawling (but in a good way).

TROUBLESHOOTING THE MEGA-CITY

PARANOIA Troubleshooters Invade Mega-City One

Matt Thomason

Yoo-R-GON-2 looked at the dead bodies scattered around the room. He wasn't really sure what a Commie looked like, but he hadn't expected them to look like this. Still, Friend Computer was never mistaken about such things – if he had believed them to be Commies, then Commies they were. They had not gone down without a fight, either, but he was a part of the best Troubleshooter squad in Alpha Complex (well, that's what their Briefing Officer had told them when they asked why they had been chosen to do this), and they had won with only two losses on their part. Mike-R-GON-1 and Burn-R-ENT-4 had fought bravely, and they would be remembered with honour – until their replacement clones arrived anyway.

Their Happiness Officer, Jane-R- TOR was busy dosing the injured Norm-R-GEN's up with personality stabilizer drugs – there was still blood pouring from his wounds, but at least now he didn't appear to care any more.

Yoo looked over at the team leader, Not-O-LOT-4, who was strangely unconcerned with their recent success. Apparently he was more interested in the case containing the X-167 prototype given to them by R&D during their earlier briefing.

"You're not seriously thinking of opening that, are you?" he asked.

"Why not?" replied the team leader, a glint appearing in his eye, "Are you perhaps implying that this device is unsafe? That perhaps Friend Computer would erroneously have provided us with substandard equipment?"

"Ah, no. No, not at all – after all those would be thoughts worthy only of those who defy the mighty Computer and brand themselves traitors – traitors fit only for immediate termination. No, I'm sure its perfectly safe… but… "

"But what?"

"But… well… do you mind if I just step back a bit before you open the box? For observation purposes, so as to better describe the effect in my report, obviously. I'd like to ensure that whatever happens is within my entire field of vision." Beads of sweat began to trickle down Yoo's face.

Not sneered back at him. "I'm sure you can describe it far better if you come closer. In fact, from further away your report would just be vastly inaccurate, and would potentially result in your filing false information. Obviously I would be required to report this during debriefing. Perhaps I should even…"

"No, no, you're quite right. I'll come closer to observe." The sweat began to trickle faster.

Yoo-R-GON edged closer, nervously eyeing the large case as Not-O-LOT flicked open the catches. Miraculously, the case opened on its hinges without exploding. Not-O-LOT pulled out a strange looking device, resembling a ray gun from a historic documentary about space travel Yoo remembered watching a couple of years back. The documentary had been called "Flash Gordon", and told of one of the many attacks on Earth by alien races before Alpha Complex had been built.

Not-O-LOT turned the device around in his hand. "We were instructed to field test it… lets see what it can do. The dead commies will make good target dummies."

Just before he could pull the trigger, there was a loud plopping sound, accompanied by a hatch in the ceiling opening, and two bodies falling onto the floor face first.

Dusting themselves down, Mike-R-GON-2 and Burn-R-ENT-5 picked themselves off the ground.
"Looks like we won, then, " stated Mike-R-GON, "I wasn't sure we were going to once they pulled out those cone rifles – looked like they had napalm ammo too."

Burn-R-ENT-5 turned off the mini recorder hidden in his belt buckle, with a mental note to file this as evidence that Mike-R-GON questioned the ability of the Computer's most trusted servants – which in turn was obvious proof of his doubts that the Computer could reliably choose said servants. He watched sadly as a cleaning bot dragged away the charred corpse of Burn-R-ENT-4 – there were some interesting

clips hidden in his shoe of Yoo-R-GON-2 staring at a locked door – positive evidence that he was some form of psychic mutant with the ability to see through solid items. Most likely those clips would be found when the body was checked over, but now they would just be used as evidence of his traitorous mutant nature and not for the blackmail purposes he had originally intended.

Not-O-LOT pointed his strange device at one of the dead Commies, and pulled the trigger.

Burn-R-ENT looked on in horror. "Don't tell me he just activated that R&D prototype…."

There was a blinding flash, followed by billowing green smoke, followed by a deafening howl as two different atmospheres were temporarily in contact with one another.

Yoo-R-GON lay on his back on the ground, looking up at the ceiling. Or where the ceiling should be, anyway – it seemed to have turned a shade of blue and was now far further away than it should be. He rubbed his eyes as they adjusted to the strange light coming from the sun.

Except that the sun was on The Outside, wasn't it? It was always on The Outside on the old tapes. He looked over to where the others had been thrown by the force of the explosion – at least, he assumed there had been an explosion – there usually were when R&D devices were involved. Burn-R-ENT and Joan-R-GAL were nowhere to be seen.

Not-O-LOT was staring at the device – which was still in his hand, and still intact. What was even more surprising was that his hand was still attached to the rest of him.

Suddenly there was a loud ripping sound, and a hole appeared in the sky. Jane-R-TOR fell

through and landed at Yoo-R-GON's feet. He helped her up, making sure to swap her [scanner device] for his own as he did so – he was certain she had caught a shot of him the other day when he was making a report to [insert traitors here]

Yoo-R-GON took in their new surroundings – they appeared to be standing in some kind of crater. All around them stood huge, strangely-shaped structures, linked by roads and pathways suspended in mid-air. A crowd of people was gathering by now – people wearing strange combinations of colours in blatant disregard of their security clearances.

There was a loud roar, and the blast of a siren as a motorcycle made its way through the crowd, who quickly parted to allow it through. Riding the motorcycle was a stragely-uniformed man with a helmet covering the upper half of his face. The gold badge on his chest gleamed brightly, so much that the word "DREDD" could barely be made out upon it. As he began to speak in a commanding tone, Yoo-R-GON hoped he would be able to tell them what happened and get them back to Alpha Complex where they belonged. The whole thing with the sky was freaking him out. He listened intently to the words being spoken.

"You are under arrest. The sentence is five years for damage to the Esther Rantzen Pedway, one year for obstruction, six months for incitement for unlawful assembly… per person in this crowd. In total that comes to …"

There was another loud ripping sound, as Burn-R-ENT fell from another hole in the sky, landing on top of the uniformed man.

Not-O-LOT turned to the others. "Quick! Run!"

Introducing Troubleshooter Gangs

Your Troubleshooters may have arrived in Mega-City One the same way as our hapless examples above, or alternatively you may have an even more creative method in mind to transplant them. However they managed to get there they are now residing illegally within the Mega-City with no way home, and no way to earn money to survive. Naturally, they have little choice other than to turn to lives of crime until they can find some way of returning to Alpha Complex – of course over time they may even find they prefer life in the Big Meg and not bother attempting to return.

One of the first things they will discover is that despite being cut off from everyone they previously knew, the bored inhabitants of the Mega-City will be all too happy to adopt the Troubleshooters' culture as their own, providing a source of new recruits for the gang. These citizens are known as "Alphites", being those who view the hallowed Alpha Complex as the promised land and worship The Computer with a religious zeal.

Miniatures

By some miracle of coincidence, the Paranoia Troubleshooters boxed set provides a perfect source for miniatures to represent your lost Troubleshooters. You can use them as-is or make conversions – the plastic gang boxed set is perfect for spare parts.

Troubleshooters and Troubleshooter leaders should wear outfits appropriate to their security clearance (see the **PARANOIA** rulebook for details). The minimum clearance is Red. The leader should have a higher clearance level than the others, naturally -for those without access to the Paranoia rulebook, assume Orange[1].

Alphites can be represented by standard gang member or Troubleshooter miniatures wearing black outfits (representing the security clearance INFRARED).

Creating A Troubleshooter Gang

A Troubleshooter gang is created in much the same way as a normal gang. You get the Team Leader (who replaces for all intents and purposes the Top Dog) for free, along with 10,000 credits to purchase other gang members and equipment.

Two other types of gang member initially available – Troubleshooters and Alphites – these should be treated as Punks and Juves respectively (including giving the Punk trait to an Alphite to allow them to become a full-fledged Troubleshooter).

Team Leaders are automatically armed with a free X-167 Prototype (see below).

New Troubleshooter Specialists

Once Alpha Complex troubleshooters made their way into the Mega-City, they could be found anywhere. Some with unique skills and abilities can be found working for other gangs as well as with Troubleshooter gangs – these new specialists are detailed below.

Loyalty Officer

The Loyalty Officer ensures that everyone in the team remains true to the mission, and is ever-watchful for traitors, Commies, and any other treasonous activity.

Traits: Terminate the Traitor

Equipment: None (whatever you want to buy them)

Terminate the Traitor: If any friendly model the Loyalty Officer has line-of-sight to fails a WtF check, they are obviously a Commie Mutant Traitor and must be terminated. The Loyalty Officer must spend every action they are in LoS with this model shooting at them. If they are out of LoS, they must move directly towards the closest LoS possible. If they have no ranged weapons, they must move towards the target and charge once they are close enough. In short, they must make every possible attempt to kill the traitorous scum – if the opposing player can point out a shorter route to the target they are entitled to do so and the player must make that move instead. Once the model is dead, *all* other models on the Loyalty Officer's team receive a bonus of +1 to all WtF rolls for the remainder of the scenario.

Hygiene Officer

The job of the Hygiene Officer is to ensure that everyone on the team is clean and tidy to the point of obsession. They also come in rather useful for cleaning up crime scenes and carry a potentially lethal "Skin Core Sampler" device.

Gang Member	Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
Team Leader	5"	4+	6	2D	1	2+	Free	5
Troubleshooter	5"	5+	6	2D	1	3+	1,000 cr	1
Alphite	5"	5+	5	1D	1	4+	500 cr	0

Traits: None

Equipment: Skin Core Sampler, Sanitation Spray, plus any additional items you wish to purchase

Skin Core Sampler: Although the words "Hygiene Officer" do not immediately bring to mind someone effective in gang conflicts, most people often forget the Skin Core Sampler they carry. A typical product of Alpha Complex technology, this was originally intended to take small unobtrusive skin samples for analysis at a depth of five to one hundred molecules. The Hygiene Officer has made some modifications to the device, however, so that instead of measuring the size of its sample in molecules it now works in millimetres, stripping entire lumps of flesh from the bones of its target.

In game terms, the Skin Core Sampler is a close combat weapon that does 1D+4 damage whenever the Hygiene Officer wins a close combat (representing them grappling with their opponent and strapping the device onto a limb) – the Skin Core Sampler is sharp enough to strip pretty much anything from anything, and therefore is just as effective on armoured targets and even robots as it is on humans.

Specialist	Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Required Reputation*	Recruitment Cost	Rep
Loyalty Officer	5"	4+	6	2D	1	2+	14	3,500 cr	4
Hygiene Officer	5"	5+	6	2D	1	3+	15	4,000 cr.	3
C&R Officer	5"	5+	6	2D	1	3+	15	5,000 cr	4
Equipment Guy	5"	4+	7	2D	1	3+	22	18,000 cr	8
Happiness Officer	5"	5+	6	2D	1	3+	16	6,000 cr	3

* the required reputation is only for non-Troubleshooter gangs to recruit these specialists. Troubleshooter gangs may recruit from the above list as if their reputation were double its actual value.

Sanitation Spray: Use of the Sanitation Spray allows the Hygiene Officer to ensure that incriminating forensic evidence simply dissolves away from members of the gang. When members of the gang are arrested (as per P89 of the rulebook) their Reputation is halved when determining their sentence.

Communications and Recording Officer

Also known as the C&R officer, their original task was to record the (usually traitorous) activities of the team for The Computer. With communications with Alpha Complex no longer possible, they now use their skills for the benefit of the team… mostly. They still maintain a record of evidence ready to submit to The Computer once they finally return home – whenever that is.

Traits: Scout

Equipment: Multicorder, plus any additional items you wish to purchase.

Multicorder: This device can be used to record the activities of the enemy gang during battle. Through the ingenious use of filters, the C&R officer can ensure that the recording contains *only* the enemy gang and not his own, perfect for sending evidence anonymously to the Judges next time you call them in against an enemy gang…

Every time you fight another gang, the C&R officer earns one recording point for that gang. Keep a note of these – each individual C&R officer should have a separate record of recording points for each individual enemy gang you encounter. Whenever you call the judges against an enemy gang you may spend any number recording points you have for that gang – for each point spent the judges gain one additional Justice Point.

Should a C&R officer ever be killed, captured, or arrested, any recording points they have earned are lost as their recordings are destroyed.

Equipment Guy

Every good Troubleshooter team needs an Equipment Guy. They can also be pretty useful to other gangs as well.

The Equipment Guy's main task is maintaining all of your weapons and other equipment.

Traits: Heavy Weapons, Lightning Reload, Armour Penetration, Sourcing

Equipment: Laser Pistol, plus any additional items you wish to purchase.

Sourcing: The Equipment guy can source items far easier than anybody else – by hunting through scrapyards and buying defective equipment he can often piece together whatever items you need far easier than finding them on the black market. For every Equipment Guy you have in your gang, you may count your reputation as being 5 points higher than it really is when determining whether you may buy equipment.

In addition, the Equipment Guy is pretty handy at reprogramming bots. If you own the *Death on the Streets* supplement your gang may recruit Rogue Robot Punks at a cost of 1200cr each. These robots have either been reprogrammed by the Equipment Guy or have joined the gang to take advantage of his repair skills.

Happiness Officer

Where the Loyalty Officer can instill the will to fight through fear, the Happiness Officer can do it through medication.

Traits: None

Equipment: Personality Stabilizer Drugs

Personality Stabilizer Drugs: Feeling down? Depressed? Maybe even scared? Not to worry, because your Happiness Officer is here with the solution (well actually a pill, but we're working on one that will dissolve). Sub-Standard Morale is a thing of the past – just pop one of these PSDs and you'll be back in the mission in no time.

Any models within 4" of the Happiness Officer will automatically pass any WtF checks as the Happiness Officer dishes out Qualine to them. The Happiness Officer knows just how dangerous this medication can be, though, and will not take it themselves (and therefore cannot benefit from an automatic WtF pass).

Weapon	Range	SD	Dam	Cost	Required Reputation	Special	Rep Bonus
Cone Rifle	30"	1D	2D+1	32,000 cr	40	Heavy, Ready	+36
High Explosive*	"	"	2D+6	2,000 cr	42	Explosive	n/a
Armour Piercing*	"	"	2D	2,000 cr	42	AP 1	n/a
HEAT*	"	"	2D+6	5,000 cr	45	AP 2	n/a
X-167 Prototype	12"		Special	n/a	n/a	See Below	+2

* - Alternative ammunition types for the Cone Rifle provide enough for one fight

New Weapons and Equipment

Alpha Complex technology arrived in Mega-City one along with the Troubleshooters. Mega-City scientists, with help from a Equipment Guy or two, have reverse-engineered a number of items and these are now available to the general public. As long as the general public don't mind being arrested for illegal possession of weapons, of course.

Cone Rifle

Despite the misleading name, this is nothing less than a hi-tech bazooka. A variety of alternative ammunition types are available, including High Explosive, Armour Piercing, and HEAT (High Explosive Anti-Tank). Luckily for the Mega-City, attempts to replicate Tacnuke shells have been unsuccessful.

X-167 Prototype

The product of Alpha Complex R&D, nobody is entirely certain exactly what the X-167 is supposed to do, but that doesn't prevent Troubleshooter leaders from trying it out when they need to get out of a tight spot. The weapon's unpredictability

means it really is a last-ditch emergency measure, however.

Whenever the X-167 is fired, nominate the target and then roll a D6:

D6	Result
1	The weapon backfires, causing 1D damage to the firer
2	The weapon functions as a 1D weapon causing 1D3 Damage
3	The weapon functions as a 1D weapon, but heals the target for 1D damage instead of hurting them.
4	The weapon functions as a 4D weapon – if it hits the target is not damage but instead is moved 6" in any direction of the firer's choosing.
5	The weapon functions as a 4D weapon causing 1D+3 Damage
6	The X-167's firing computer takes over, causing an automatic hit for 1D+6 Damage.

The X-167 counts as a pistol weapon for purposes of determining how many items may be carried.

[1] Although in most **PARANOIA** games the team leader would start off at Red clearance, it's a lot easier to tell them apart if they're a different colour.

Army Updates

Army List Additions for Starship Troopers

Matthew Sprange

The War of the Species continues and every race is constantly adapting to new ways of battle. Armies evolve and changes spread through every force to enable them to fight the enemy far more effectively. This section looks at some of the ways war has changed and provides alterations for the army lists of the Starship Troopers miniatures game. All these additions can be considered 'official'.
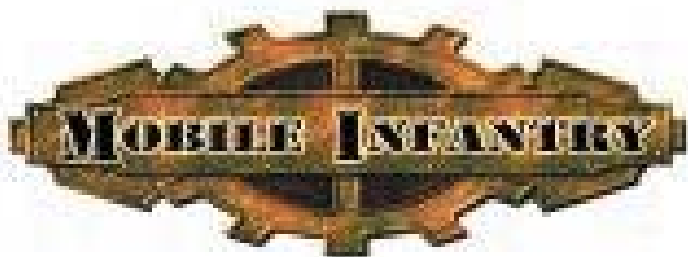
Mobile Infantry

The following updates apply to all Mobile Infantry platoons where relevant.

Morita Long Sniper Rifles

It was with great regret that SICON withdrew the famed 'bunker-buster' ammunition from squads equipped with the Morita Long.

Morita Long sniper rifles may not use their Accurate trait against structures.

Smoke Grenades

Though of limited effect against Arachnids, the rise of other races in the War of the Species brought about a change in policy within SICON, and smoke grenades were once again made available to troopers on the front line.

Any officer or squad in a Power Suit, Pathfinder or Light Armour platoon may be given smoke grenades for +10 points per model. Smoke grenades are used with a Ready action and give the model a 4+ Dodge save against shooting attacks only until the start of its next turn. The model may not perform any Shoot actions itself while under the effects of a smoke grenade.

Exosuit Platoons

The following updates apply to Exosuit platoons.

Atlas Rigs

The faults in the Atlas Rigs of Grizzly suits have now been resolved, allowing the unleashing of their full firepower.

A model equipped with an Atlas Rig may fire up to two weapons in a single Shoot action.

Light Armour Platoons

The following updates apply to Light Armour platoons.

Longbow Missile Launchers

While cheap to manufacture in vast quantities, the long reloading time of the Longbow missile launcher has, on many occasions, left troopers defenceless as the enemy approaches.

Troopers that are purchased a Longbow no longer swap their Morita rifle to do so, and may choose which to use in every action or reaction.

Marauder Platoons

The following updates apply to Marauder platoons.

Marauder Officers

As new tactics of the Arachnids continue to take a toll on the officers of Marauder platoons, new directives from SICON allow a more flexible deployment structure for these units.

You may include two Marauder squads for every officer in a Marauder platoon.

Bigfoot and Nighthawk Marauders

As the factories of far-flung colonies go into overdrive while producing Marauder hulls, the availability of specialised variants, such as the Bigfoot and Nighthawk, make it more practical for officers to make use of them.

An M8 Ape Marauder NCO, Lieutenant or Captain may be upgraded to an M8C Bigfoot Marauder for +100 points. They use the equipment of the Bigfoot Marauder found on page 32 of the Mobile Infantry Army Book and retain their usual options. They have the statistics listed opposite.

M8C Bigfoot Marauder

Type	Value	Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Save	Kill	Traits
M8C Bigfoot NCO	310	3	4"	2xD10	7+	3+	11+	Hits/4 Independent Jump/8" Piercing/1
M8C Bigfoot Lieutenant	325	3	4"	2xD10+1	7+	3+	11+	Hits/4 Independent Jump/8" Piercing/1
M8C Bigfoot Captain	345	3	4"	3xD10	7+	3+	12+	Hits/4 Independent Jump/8" Piercing/1

M9B Nighthawk Marauder

Type	Value	Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Save	Kill	Traits
Nighthawk NCO	260	3	5"	D6+1	6+	3+	9+	Hits/3 Independent Jump/10"
Nighthawk Lieutenant	275	3	5"	D6+1	6+	3+	9+	Hits/3 Independent Jump/10"
Nighthawk Captain	295	3	5"	2xD6+1	6+	3+	10+	Hits/3 Independent Jump/10"

An M9 Chickenhawk Marauder NCO, Lieutenant or Captain may be upgraded to an M9B Nighthawk Marauder for +50 points. They use the equipment of the Nighthawk Marauder found on page 33 of the Mobile Infantry Army Book and retain their usual options. They have the statistics listed opposite.

Pathfinder Platoons

The following updates apply to Pathfinder platoons.

Drop Capsules

It has been reported on FedNet recently that SICON has lost its legal battle with the United Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Neodogs may no longer be placed in drop capsules.

Plasma Munitions

Having lost the political battle to grab development of Reaver technology for use in TAC Fighters, Fleet admirals successfully curtailed production of the Pathfinders improved plasma munitions, diverting it to much larger warheads for the purpose orbital bombardment.

Plasma munitions are no longer Command Assets for Pathfinder platoons. Instead, any officer or NCO may be given one for +25 points. They use the following statistics.

Type	Range	Damage	Type	Traits
M-908P Plasma Munition	Placed, Thrown 10"	2xD10	One-Shot!	Flame LZ (2") Persistent Piercing/3 Remote (if placed)

Underslung Grenade Launchers

SICON's current drive to standardise equipment across the Mobile Infantry has led to Pathfinder platoons now being supplied with the same underslung grenade launcher rounds as Power Suit platoons.

Pathfinders now use the statistics on page 48 of the Mobile Infantry Army Book for their underslung grenade launchers.

WASP Packs

Once the preserve of highly specialised Pathfinder squads, entire platoons are now being equipped with WASP Packs, with officers gaining access to them alongside their men.

A Pathfinder NCO or Lieutenant may be given a WASP Pack for +10 points.

Power Suit Platoons

The following updates apply to Power Suit platoons.

Power Suit Squads

Though stipulated by SICON, the under-sized five man 'combat' squad of troopers has proved unpopular with Lieutenants in the field, to the extent that they ignored it altogether.

You may purchase up to three extra troopers for Power Suit squads, at +25 points each.

Arachnids

Arachnids

The following updates apply to Arachnid armies.

Burrower Bugs

The queen bugs have seen the value of burrower bugs in allowing non-subterranean sub-species to be transported underground, and so have invested greater resources into breeding an improved bug that is capable of moving faster in tunnel networks.

The following special rule is added to the burrower bug.

Subterranean Assault: Burrower bugs moving through tunnels have a Move score of 6". They revert to 3" as normal when on the surface.

It should be noted that, being Independent, burrower bugs are fully capable of being detached from units they lead, allowing them to rampage on their own when finally surfacing, for example.

Skinnies

Skinnies

The following updates apply to Skinnie armies.

Lords

Several impostor lords have been removed from the ranks of the Hegemony, mere tyrants and warchiefs who lacked the special training required to use venerable suits. When fielding a lord now, you can be sure you are getting the real thing!

The lord gains the Lock and Load special rule, allowing him to fire up to two weapons in every Shoot action.

Orbital Bombardment

The Hegemony has withdrawn the original safety protocols for the use of orbital bombardment, allowing leaders to call for strikes almost directly on their own positions.

Ignore the normal rules for minimum range of artillery fire for orbital bombardment.

THE BATTLE FOR CRICKLADE ROAD

A PLAYTEST BATTLE REPORT FOR BATTLEFIELD EVOLUTION

Matt Thomason and J. Madison

This was a 1000 point game played with units from waves one, two, and three. Armies were independantly chosen without any reference to the other side's force. The table was declared in advance to be a city environment.

BRITISH (MATT THOMASON)

With the ever-growing number of available units, it would be interesting to see what kind of mix could be bought for this game - while I wanted to retain some semblance of normality to represent a player under standard cirumstances, I was also diverted somewhat by wanting specifically to try out some new units.

Thankfully I was able to take one of everything and just be 5 points over (against the strict letter of the rules but we decided to let it go for playtest purposes)

PLA (J. MADISON)

The PLA units are thankfully relatively cheap and therefore it was easy to simply take one of everything and still have points left to spare -

which went into a second infantry squad (with team 3 dropped) for a total of 980 points.

With just a 25 point difference in the points values, everything was ready to go.

SETUP

The table was laid out in to simulate a city area within Britain, with the premise that the PLA were the invading force and had taken the city the night before in a daring moonlight raid. The British forces have mobilised quickly and are

moving in to liberate it, with the battle being fought over a key area of great strategic value to both sides.

To this end, ground intelligence (my thanks to forum regular LBH for furnishing this), and aerial photography were obtained in order to fight the battle over a real-world area.

DEPLOYMENT

BRITISH DEPLOYMENT

The British lost the roll for setup and had to deploy first.

The Command Section was deployed in the middle of the British edge, mounted inside the Warrior to allow them to get into position quickly - they would be kept in reserve for fighting purposes as their extra action ability would be more useful.

The SAS squads were deployed in the middle and to the right, where they could take advantage of cover to advance on the enemy.

DEPLOYMENT MAP

BRITISH ARMY INFANTRY COMMAND SECTION
Lieutenant w/L85A2, Rifleman w/L85A2, Radio Operator w/L85A2
Warrior w/40mm Cannon and Chain Gun
225 Points

BRITISH ARMY SAS SECTION
1: Sergeant w/L85A2, 2 Riflemen w/L85A2, Gunner w/Minimi Para
2: Corporal w/L85A2, 2 Riflemen w/L85A2, Gunner w/M109
195 Points

BRITISH ARMY CHALLENGER MBT
425 Points

BRITISH ARMY INFANTRY SECTION
1: Corporal w/L85A2, 2 Riflemen w/L85A2, Gunner w/Minimi Para
2: Lance Corporal w/L85A2, 2 Riflemen w/L85A2, Gunner w/Minimi Para
160 Points

PLA INFANTRY COMMAND SQUAD
Lieutenant w/QBZ95, 2 Riflemen w/QBZ95, Radio Operator w/
QBZ95, WZ-506
175 Points

PLA WZ-551 IFV
175 Points

PLA TYPE 99 MBT
350 Points

PLA INFANTRY SQUAD "WHITE"
1: Sergeant w/QBZ95, 2 Riflemen w/QBZ95, Gunner w/PF-89
2: Corporal w/QBZ95, Rifleman w/QBZ95, Gunner w/QBB95
3: Corporal w/QBZ95, Rifleman w/QBZ95, Gunner w/PF-89
170 Points

PLA INFANTRY SQUAD "RED"
1: Sergeant w/QBZ95, 2 Riflemen w/QBZ95, Gunner w/PF-89
2: Corporal w/QBZ95, Rifleman w/QBZ95, Gunner w/QBB95
110 Points

The Challenger was deployed over to the left, near the more open area, in hope of moving it into a position where it could take out enemy assets early on.

The two Infantry teams were deployed into supporting positions where they could move where needed early on

PLA DEPLOYMENT

The PLA Command Section followed the British lead, finding a position in cover they could stay in for as long as possible.

Both teams from Red squad started in the WZ-551, aiming to gain advantageous positions early on in the game.

Seeing the area covered by the Challenger's starting position, PLA positioned their Type 99 behind a building to avoid getting shot at right from the beginning of the game, but close enough to the main road that they could pop out and hopefully loose off a shot at the Challenger with the main gun.

White Squad's teams were deployed across the PLA edge in various positions of cover.

And with that, the game was on.

TURN ONE

BRITISH TURN ONE

"We shall fight on the roundabout. We shall fight in the pizza restaurants. We shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the supermarkets."

TURN ONE

The Challenger rumbled towards the roundabout to gain the best possible field of view from the southern side of the map, obvious to the direction the road system required civilian traffic to move in.

The Command Section in their Warrior likewise moved at full speed towards a suitable position to disembark. Infantry fire teams followed the Challenger and Command Section to provide support if needed (note: it was at this point I realised my first mistake in not mounting fire team 2 in the Warrior with the Command Section to take advantage of the extra seats in the transport)

Both SAS teams advanced as well, with team two taking advantage of the extra 6"given by the Fire Zone to target the leading members of enemy team white two - all three damage dice rolled scored a hit, but unfortunately there were only two targets within the fire zone to take out. The surviving PLA chose not to return fire, instead using their reaction to move ahead ready for their own turn.

PLA TURN ONE

"The British are Coming! Move out and secure checkpoint Somerfield"

Eager to defend the territory they had taken the night before, the PLA forces headed east towards the advancing British troops.

Under cover of trees team white one crept towards the Challenger, eager to test out their PF-89's anti armour capabilities.

The Type 99 rolled out from behind cover to target the Challenger itself, scoring a mighty hit (with a natural 10) that left the British armoured vehicle nothing but a smoking wreck.

With the major enemy threat gone, the Command section raced to a strategic area from where they could get on with commanding and not have to do any.. well.. fighting, and disembarked from their WZ-506.

White two moved forwards to take up position behind a Somerfield supermarket.

Red squad's transport headed forwards, with red two bailing out to take up defensive positions.

White three, down to just two men, opened up on SAS team two with both actions. Only the PF-89 did any real damage, taking out the lead rifleman.

SAS two responded in kind, killing the last two members of white three outright.

Not a good turn for the British - the mighty Challenger sat burning on the roundabout, leaving them with the option of either running from the Type 99 and hoping to take out enough infantry to win the battle, or to bring their remaining anti-tank weapons into the fight.

TURN TWO

BRITISH TURN TWO

"White one, tactical withdrawal."

Faced with the impossibility of shooting at the Type-99, White one retreated north through the alley in the hope of finding something easier to shoot at. SAS one returned east, into the cover of tree. Yes, that is tree, singular.

With their Warrior's 40mm cannon one of the few remaining British weapons with a chance against the Type 99, the Command Section disembarked outside a strange office building and split their vehicle off. to head back southeast.

White two moved up to cover the front of Safeway from the alleyway opposite, and SAS two moved in behind a row of shops. All in all an action-free turn for the British spent moving into cover.

PLA TURN TWO

"British forces going to ground, seek and destroy."

White One continued their advance eastwards, gaining a field of view covering the southern end

TURN TWO

of the British side of the table - the PLA plan now to push the British forces together in the centre of their board edge. The Type 99 moved to cover two main roads, effectiving cordoning the British into the northeastern quadrant of the board.

Red two's move took them to the corner of a row of shops, cutting off the northern exit for the British. White two meanwhile rounded the edge of the Safeway store and took up firing positions amongst a group of trees. The WZ-551 parked outside a post office to allow Red one to disembark and reinforce the PLA line that was controlling the British movement. Meanwhile the WZ-506 belonging to the Command Section was split off to attack the British's team one and SAS one. The 25mm cannon spat, and team one's two riflemen fell. With no weapons left that could damage the 506, the survivors retreated behind the closest building.

TURN THREE

BRITISH TURN THREE

"We may have lost this one, chaps."

With PLA closing in on all sides, the British were in a fighting retreat, and being pushed ever closer together. Attempting to turn the tide, SAS one advanced westwards towards the WZ-506 and opened up with both UGLs - it was a slim chance (requiring a natural six to target the 506), and one that failed.

Squeezing through a narrow alleyway between buildings, the Warrior turned and opened up with it's 40mm cannon on the WZ-506, ripping through the armour of its counterpart. Using a bonus action granted by the Command Squad, it then turned and drove back the way it came, safe from the advancing Type 99.

Continuing their new offensive, the British moved team two forwards to open fire on white two with their UGL and Minimi - taking out a rifleman with the Minimi, and the squad corporal who got caught in the grenade explosion! In addition the enemy unit was suppressed due to the number of damage dice rolled (counting the Minimi as four dice instead of two for suppression purposes - white two lost their chance for a reaction.

Finally, SAS two popped out from behind the row of shops to open up on red two, their combined fire wiping the enemy unit out completely

PLA TURN THREE

"They dare to fight back?"

Not intending to let the British fight their way out of their corner, the PLA WZ-551 rounded the corner and blasted away at SAS two with 25mm Cannon and MG, killing the remaining SAS rifleman and the corporal. The surviving M109 gunner hit the deck and was pinned the by suppressive fire.

Red one rounded the corner to open fire on fire team two, taking out the lead minimi gunner in

revenge for the attack on white two, and causing the survivors to run for cover.

The Type 99 rolled down the street, turning its weapons on SAS one. Luckily for them, they had a reaction move to make and used it to move out of sight. Finally, white one advanced quickly with the aid of a bonus action from their Command Squad, to allow them to open fire on fire team one and SAS one who had believed themselves safe behind a building. While bullets missed their targets, the PF-89 did not, and the SAS gunner and corporal were blown apart by the explosion. The British return fire was wide of its target, leaving white one without even a scratch.

TURN FOUR

BRITISH TURN FOUR

"We are at our most dangerous when cornered."

After the successful hit-and-run tactic with the Warrior last turn, the British tried again - this time targetting the dangerous Type-99. Extremely lucky hits penetrated the armour and left the Type-99 immobile and useless. With the enemy tank destroyed, the Warrior kept in place and kept the bonus action for a better use.

Fire team two used their single action (due to suppression the previous turn) to take out three members of Red one. The time had already come for the British bonus action, which they used to finish off the surviving member of that squad. The one surviving member of SAS two was unable to do anything, due to the effect of suppression from the previous turn combined with losing his unit leader.

With a single action due to losing their unit leader as well, SAS one opened up with their UGLs on white one. Two concurrent grenade explosions left nobody standing. This left the way open for fire team one to move west through an alleyway towards the enemy lines to take the fight to the PLA.

PLA TURN FOUR

"No, this cannot be!"

Just one model short of being shattered, the PLA had to inflict as many casualties as possible on the British in the race to win.

The WZ-551 made short work of the surviving member of SAS two, and advanced to threaten the British Command Section - using the PLA bonus move they then opened fire on them, slaughtering them outright.

Coming out of their reserve position, the Command Squad moved to threaten fire team one, killing both with some extremely accurate QBZ95 fire.

Having had a chance to regroup, white two moved out of cover and opened up on fire team two - only one shot hit home, and that was ineffective due to the British force's body armour. The unarmoured

PLA were not as lucky, as return fire from the British took out the last rifleman in white two.

It was the end of turn three, and the end of the battle - the single casualty taken when fire team two reacted was enough to shatter the PLA army.

DEBRIEFING

BRITISH ARMY DEBRIEFING

Once again the British forces were outnumbered, but once again superior equipment and training wins the day.

The UGL especially proved to be useful for evening up the odds once the two sides closed to a range it could be used. The Command Section's special ability to grant any unit a bonus action made it possible to use hit-and-run techniques - popping out from behind an obstacle to open fire, then retreating back again afterwards.

The surprise unit of the game was the Warrior, which managed to take out the Type-99 in a single hit, and evening the playing field up after the early loss of the Challenger.

PLA DEBRIEFING

This was somewhat of a learning exercise for the PLA - this game proved that each faction has its advantages, and that they need to be played differently.

The biggest mistake the PLA made was to close in, the same as the British were doing - at a closer range the UGLs of the British forces became the deciding factor.

In retrospect, a better tactic would have been to keep moving around at a distance, and hit the British with long-range fire.

On the other hand, the PLA were also extremely unlucky - after taking out the Challenger early on it looked as if they had the upper hand, but the unexpected loss of the Type-99 to the British Warrior took away their armoured advantage.
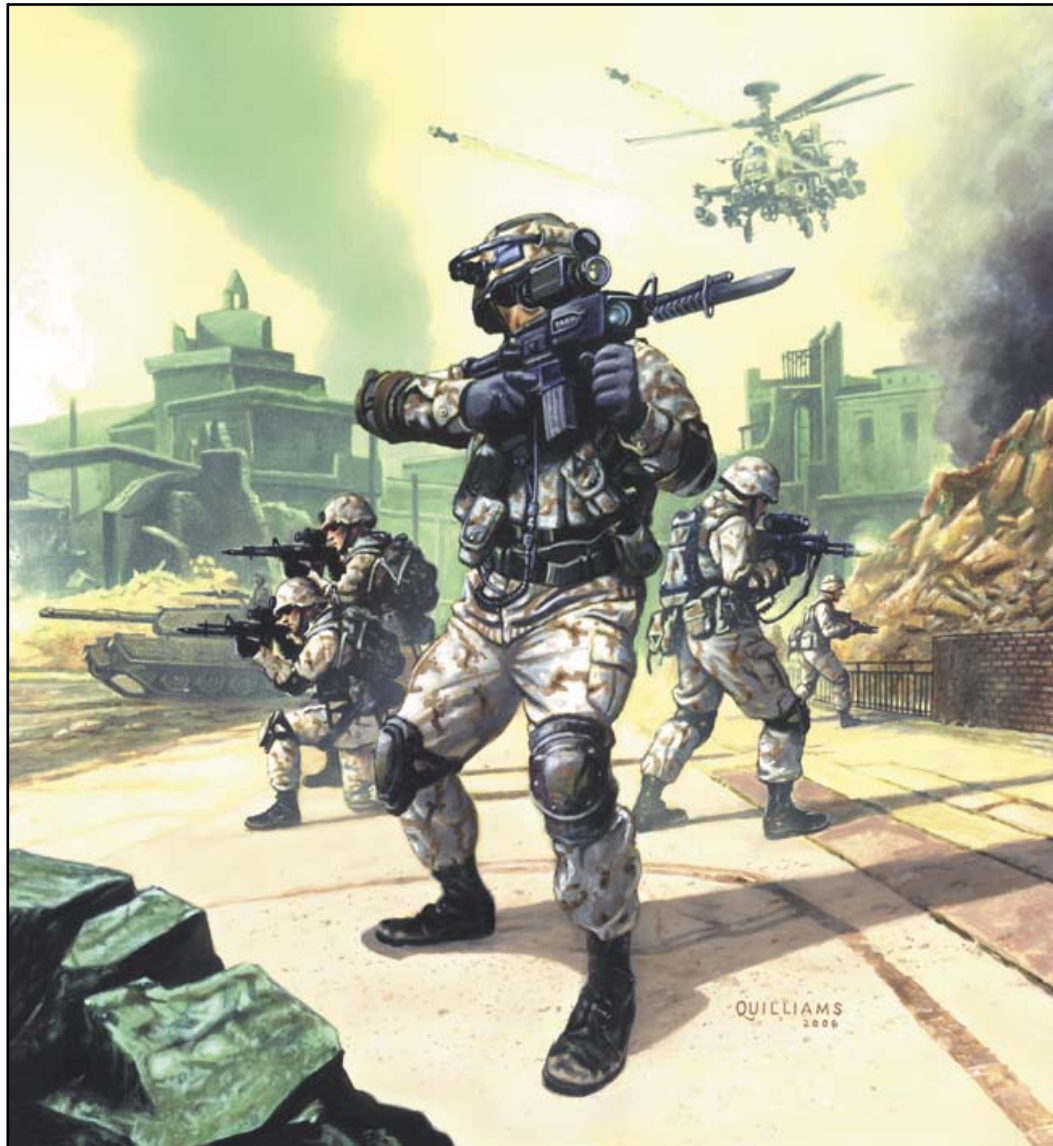
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A Gathering of Armies

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