Signs & Portents
WARGAMER

45

Death In The Cursed Earth part 2

More Judge Dredd Goodness Inside!

The Zapasnovan War part 3

Final Part Of Series Of Linked Battlefield Evolution Scenarios

The League Strike Back

New ACTA Vessels For Your Delectation

Plus. . . Battlefield Evolution and Mighty Armies battle reports, more on the mysterious Forth, ACTA scenarios and much, much more!

First off this month I have a couple of apologies to make. Number one is that the Surcouf stats should have been credited to David Manley. My apologies to him. Secondly, we are still waiting on the missing patrol boat details from 'Victory in the Narrow Seas' in S&P42. Rest assured that we haven't forgotten this, but my valiant Assistant Editor asures me that this isn't the sort of thing that you can just cobble together.

Other than that, I have mostly been busy with my new job as Mongoose's Events & Promotions Manager. This basically means I'm the guy you will most likely see at the sharp end of our UK conventions team. I look forward to meeting many of you guys in person.

I've also been busy working with the growing band of Mongoose Infantry demo guys, in this case sorting out the new (and very snazzy looking) polo shirts which will soon be adorning shows and conventions across the world. Be careful to check the backs as well - a select few will be marked Studio Staff, and those are the guys you can really bug about past, present and future products.

We'll see you again next month.

IAN

Signs & Portents Wargamer

Contents

EYE ON MONGOOSE

This Month's Releases and Gaming News

Abbai Juyaca Dreadnaught

The Juyaca was designed and constructed solely as their first utterly offensive vessel in response to the calling of a holy purge, or juyaie, of the Drakh – after they virus-bombed Earth. It was such an overwhelming wish for the ruling council of the Abbai to somehow stop the Drakh from harming the galaxy that these powerful vessels were placed at the forefront of every construction yard and spacedock capable of building them.

The full rules for the Juyaca can be found in this issue of *Signs & Portents*.

Convention and Events Diary

Saturday 2nd - Sunday 3rd June 2007
UK GAME EXPO 2007
The Clarendon Suites, Stirling Road, Edgbaston,
Birmingham, UK.
http://www.ukgamesexpo.co.uk

Saturday 9th - Sunday 10th June 2007
Vaticon 2007
Student Centre, UCD Belfield, Dublin 4. Ireland.
http://www.ucd.ie/gamesoc/vaticon/

Friday 22nd - Sunday 24th June 2007
Q-CON XIV
Queen's University, Belfast, Ireland.
http://www.q-con.org.uk/

Saturday 23rd - Sunday 24th June 2007
Game '07
New Century House, Manchester, UK.
http://www.game07.eu/

23rd June
Phalanx 2007
Sutton Community and Leisure Centre,
St. Helens.
http://www.phalanxshow.co.uk/

30th June/1st July
Attack
Devizes.
http://www.ddwg.org.uk

Friday 6th - Sunday 8th July 2007
Summer Stabcon 2007
Britannia Hotel, Stockport
bookings@stabcon.org.uk

Saturday 7th - Sunday 8th July 2007
Ludicrus '07
Rushmere Sports Centre, Ipswich, UK.
http://www.ludicrus.org/.

7th/8th July
Battlegroup South
The Tank Museum, Bovington
http://www.battlegroupsouth.org

Friday 13th - Sunday 15th July 2007
AmberCon UK 2007
Renaissance Hotel, Reading, UK.
http://www.ambercon.org.uk/

15th July
Sentry
Stoke

29th July
To The Redoubt
Eastbourne

9th-12th August
Britcon
University of Manchester, Manchester
http://www.bhgs.co.uk/Nationals/IntroPage.htm

Friday 10th - Sunday 12th August 2007
Recombination
New Hall, Cambridge, UK
http://www.recombination.org.uk/

12th August
Whiff of Grapeshot
Woolwich

Thursday 30th August - Sunday 2nd September 2007
Gen Con UK 2007
University of Reading, Berkshire. UK.
http://www.horsemenevents.com/

Saturday 15th - Sunday 16th September 2007
Confess 2007
The Southern Hotel, Sligo. Ireland.
http://www.flatearthsoc.com

15th/16th September
Colours
Newbury Racecource, Newbury
http://www.colours.org.uk

Saturday 29th September 2007.
CONcrete Cow '07½.
Old Bath House, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, UK.
http://www.mk-rpg.org.uk

6th/7th October
Old Glory World Wargames Championships
University of Derby, Derby
http://www.worldwargames.co.uk

Thursday 18th - Sunday 21st October 2007
Spiel 2007
Messe Essen, Essen, Germany.
http://www.merz-verlag.com/spiel/e000.php4

Sunday 21st October
SELWG 07
Crystal Palace Sports Centre
London
http://www.selwg.com/selwg05.html

Saturday 20th - Sunday 21st October 2007
Furnace 2007
The Garrison Hotel, Sheffield. UK
http://www.rpgfurnace.com/

Sunday 28st October
Fiasco
Royal Armouries Museum
Leeds
http://www.leedswargamesclub.org.uk/index_files/FIASCO.htm

3rd November
Crisis
Antwerp
Belgium
http://www.tsoa.be/

17th/18th November
Warfare
Rivermead Leisure Centre
Reading
http://www.readingwargames.co.uk/warfare.asp

24th November
Parade Ground
Stockton Sports Centre, Talbot Street
Stockton on Tees

24th November
Reveille II
The Downend Folk House,
Lincombe Barn
Overndale Road
Downend, Bristol

Saturday 1st December
Recon
Pudsey Civic Hall
Pudsey
Leeds

BRITISH ARMY SAS SECTION

The most famed and renowned special forces unit comes to Battlefield Evolution!

This SAS section contains some of the toughest and most capable soldiers to take to the battlefield. Each fire team is equipped with a Minimi Para MG (swappable for a Barrett M109 sniper rifle), while every other section member has an M416 with underslung grenade launcher. Once dug into cover, the SAS section is almost impossible to root out, while their Stealthy special rule will allow them to simply bypass many enemies on their way to an objective. Furthermore, the SAS are masters of well-timed ambushes, and can lie hidden on the tabletop for the perfect moment to unleash a devastating attack. There is no finer unit of infantry in the game.

PLA COMMAND SQUAD AND FAV

The Command Squad is a strong component for any PLA force, with its officer keeping a careful eye on the battlefield, formulating tactics on the fly. His presence can mean the defeat for an enemy with a more ragged command structure, and a Command Squad as a whole acts as a useful force multiplier.

The NORINCO FAV grants the PLA a fast-moving strike capability, for it can cover rough ground quickly and yet packs enough firepower to deal with both light vehicles and aircraft. The combination of both MG and 23mm cannon gives this light vehicle a strong punch that can defeat other light vehicles or root infantry out of cover as desired.

This box set contains one PLA Command Squad and one FAV.

MEA 2S6 TUNGUSKA

Purchased from the former Soviet Union, the Tunguska provides a serious frontline anti-aircraft capability for the MEA. Typically used by government led forces of the Middle Eastern Alliance, rather than militia groups, the Tunguska requires a great deal of specialised skill to maintain and operate effectively.

In battle, the Tunguska provides a comprehensive umbrella against air attack, with a combination of cannon and missiles. However, it is more commonly used in anti-infantry roles, where the heavy weight of firepower from its cannon are supremely capable of annihilating or suppressing hordes of troops, be they in the open or within cover.

USMC FORCE RECON TEAM

The special operations force of the USMC, this squad is highly specialised yet capable of handling a wide variety of missions. Equipped with the Land Warrior combat suite, the Force Recon Team combines the finest hardware with the best training in the US Military. Armed with SCAR-L assault rifles (with underslung grenade launchers) and Mk46 MOD 1 MG, there are few infantry forces that can withstand an attack by Force Recon.

This box set contains a complete Force Recon Team.

STARSHIP TROOPERS SALE

Have you done your part?
If not, now is a better time than ever to join the fight.

EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 12TH THE RETAIL PRICE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WILL BE REDUCED BY 25%

PRICE REDUCTIONS WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT ONLY UNTIL THE RELEASE OF STARSHIP TROOPERS EVOLUTION LATER THIS YEAR

MGP 9100 STARSHIP TROOPERS MAIN GAME
MGP 910001 MOBILE INFANTRY CAP TROOPER SQUAD
MGP 910002 ARACHNID WARRIOR BUGS
MGP 910004 ARACHNID TANKER BUG
MGP 910007 MARAUDER APE SUIT
MGP 910008 MARAUDER CHICHENHAWK SUIT
MGP 910009 ARACHNID HOPPER BUGS
MGP 910014 SHINNIE RAIDERS BOXED SET
MGP 910019 ARACHNID BLISTER/BLASTER BUGS
MGP 910020 ARACHNID PLASMA BUGS
MGP 910026 ARACHNID RIPPLER BUG SWARM
MGP 910048 ARACHNID WARRIOR BUG MEGA SWARM

UNOFFICIAL

Soul Hunters

Rules for this Mysterious Race in A Call to Arms

Derina Ramsey

"There are beings in the universe billions of years older than either of our races.
Once long ago, they walked among the stars like giants, vast, timeless."
- Delenn of the Minbari.

All of the advanced races of the galaxy in that era were near or past the threshold of immortality, as their understanding of medical science had advanced to the point where life could be prolonged indefinitely. However, all races save the Speakers had come to there immortality through artificial means, whereas the Speakers had been born naturally immortal. Now, the next generation of the Speakers were found to be aging and dying like any other sentient life forms.

A race thought to be the Mindriders created a new race of sentient life forms from the DNA of the Speakers in an attempt to keep and preserve the wisdom, the power of there genetic progenitors. This experiment failed, but did create the Soul Hunters.

The Soul Hunters go from world to world collecting the souls of great poets, war leaders, visionaries just before death to capture there souls so they can live on in spirit form, and listened to in the whisper galleries, a fleet of

Soul hunter ships were present during the Earth Minbari war when the great Minbari leader Dukhat head of the legendary "Grey Council" was killed when the Humans opened fire on the Grey Council's Sharlin cruiser when the Minbari advanced on the Human scout fleet with there gun ports open.

The Minbari piled the dead to keep the Soul hunters away from the great leader Dukhat. Ten years after the Earth Minbari war, Delenn was appointed to the last of the Babylon stations to keep an eye on Commander Sinclair who saved Delenn's life when a Soul Hunters ship was brought aboard Babylon 5

when it came through the Jump Gate partly shot away and out of control going to ram the station. The soul Hunter was deemed mad by another of his order who came through the Jump Gate, the other told Commander Sinclair that he was going to take out he Soul of Delenn before her time as the first failed to get Dukhat's soul during the Earth Minbari war ten years ago.

Although we see the Soul Hunters in the first season "Soul Hunter" the television movies briefly seen in "In the Beginning" and "River of Souls."

Soul Hunter Transport

Speed: 10
Turn: 2/45°
Hull: 5
Damage: 25
Crew: 1
Troops: 4
Craft: None

Special Rules:
Advanced Jump Point, Adaptive Armour, Stealth 4+, Self Repair 1D6, Flight Computer, Breaching Pod, Atmospheric GEG 3
In Service: Unknown

The innocuously-named Soul Hunter Transport is effectively a heavily armed and armoured giant boarding pod, bringing fear and terror whenever it appears.

Note: The Troops rating of this ship has been inflated to represent the chaos aboard any ship where a Soul Hunter is suspected to be hunting for their unfortunate target.

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Advanced Plasma Stream	20	F	3	Super AP, Triple Damage, Precise

The Soul Hunter Transport follows the same special rules as the Shadows and the Vorlons.

Soul Hunter Transport

Soul Hunters have an Initiative Value of +4

Soul Hunter Construction Guide

First of all make sure that your painting area is clear as you don't want to have any cuts...

The parts you need are:

3x Centauri Sulust fin (Ref 1133621701)
1x Drazi Warbird Hull (Ref 1133651001)

First of all clean the parts with a 1/2 round needle file to remove the mould lines and with a pair of snips take off the wings from the Warbird hull and then file down the rough edges,

Remove the rear of the Warbird hull (about 1/3 of the length) - you can round off the rear of the new hull with a file or smooth it over using modelling putty.

Attach one Sulust fin to the top of the Warbird hull with the tip pointing backwards, the other two are at ninety degrees - one on the port side and the other to the starboard side also pointing backwards; you will need to make small incisions into the hull to create the best join for the fins.
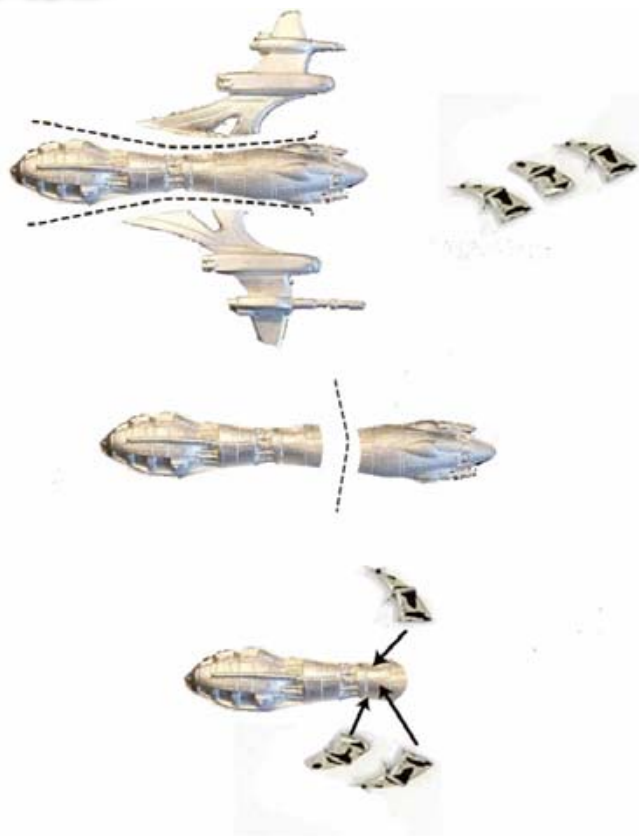
Taking Dukhat's Soul

This Mission takes place July 12th, 2245 just as Captain Michael R Jankowski has retreated from the Minbari Valen'tha (See page 27 of *Earth / Minbari War*)

Pre-Battle Preparation

The Valen'tha and her single escort "Sharlin" Class are in the centre of the Map. 10 Soul Hunter Transports jump in the map.

All of the Valen'tha's Nial fighters and Flyer Flights are in the "air" the Valen'tha has suffered at least one "Vital systems" critical hit, as are the other Sharlin has its fighters in the "air" as the Soul Hunters arrive on the seen and try to get into base to base contact for three turns in an attempt to take great leader Dukhat's Soul.

Victory Conditions

The Soul Hunters win if they can move any ship into contact with the Valen'tha for three turns. The Minbari win if they can prevent this.

Soul Hunter Jump Zone

6"
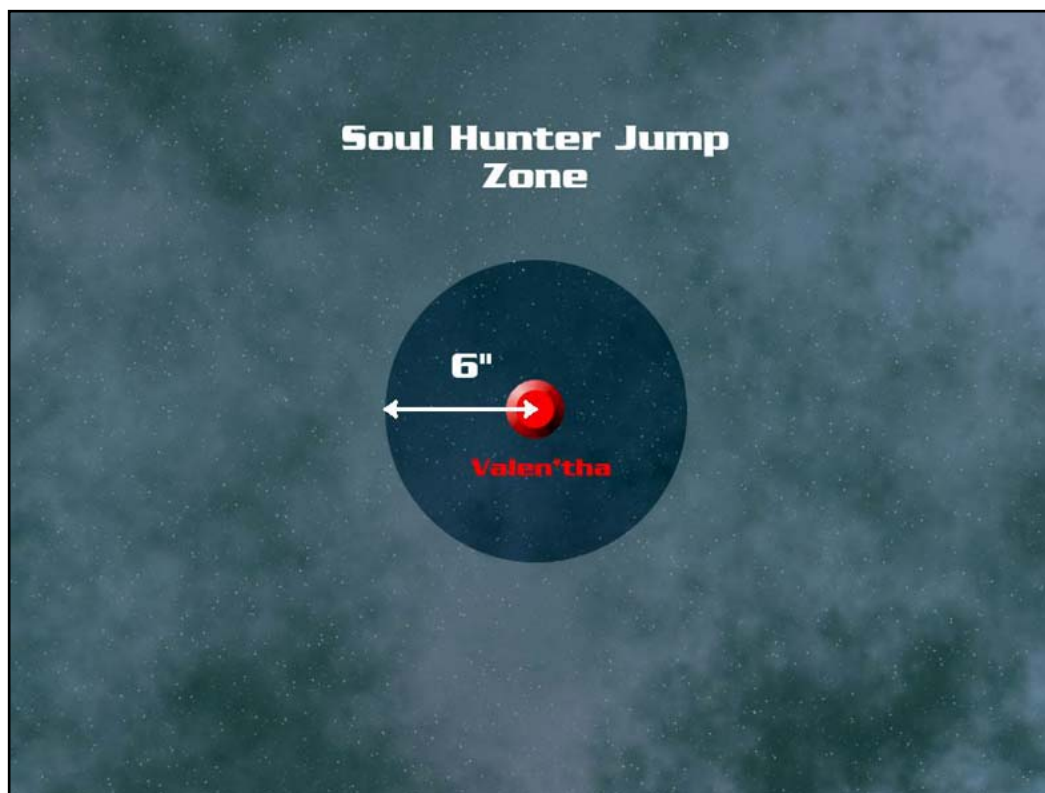
Valen'tha

Historical note

The Soul Hunters never made it onto The Valen'tha and thus were unable to take the soul of the great leader Dukhat.

Write for the Mongoose

Want to write for your favourite gaming publisher? Want to get paid for it? Got a great idea for an article? If the answers to these questions are 'yes', then Signs & Portents Wargamer wants to hear from you.

Where to Start...

We will need a brief synopsis of your intended article, no more than one page long. Also include a paragraph or two of your actual writing style, so we can see whether you have what it takes and any samples of previously published work. If we like what we see, we will commission a first draft from you and you will be on your way to becoming a Mongoose contributing writer. And every article we publish will be paid for…which is nice.

Things to Remember

Provide your full details, including name, address and email address if available.

Supply articles via email or on disc. We can read most formats, although MS Word is always a safe bet.

You will be provided with a style guide when we commission your article. Make sure you read it!

Subject Matter

First and foremost, the article has to be based on one of our product lines. That is not as limiting as it sounds, however. With Starship Troopers, A Call to Arms, Gangs of Mega-City One and Mighty Armies all well established, you already have plenty of options. Do not forget miniatures for other gaming lines. We already have Lone Wolf and Paranoia miniatures, so why not come up with some cross over rules? If you have ideas for any of our games we want to hear them.

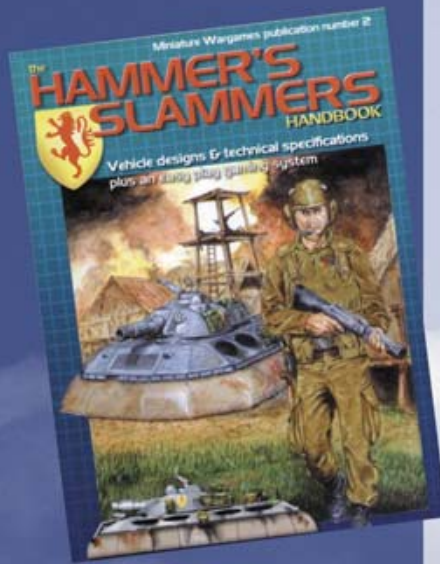So, you have chosen your game, but what do you actually write about? Scenarios are good. In fact, we love them. Give me a scenario to edit and I am a happy camper. Perhaps you want to discuss the philosophy of a game. That's good. We encourage intellectual thought process around here. If you have something meaningful to say, then try us out. If we don't like it, we *will* tell you. Think hard before you try humour though. With guys like Jonny Nexus about, you will need to be sharp if you want to break in. If you think you have what it takes, though, then feel free to try your hand. Just be prepared to be told you may not be as funny as you think you are.

If you want to write new rules for a game, then be our guest. We cannot promise that we will like what you have done, but you will get constructive criticism in return, and not just a terse one-line rebuff.

Editing

It is a painful fact that whatever you write, it will get edited. That is why editors exist, after all. Even this passage will have been edited. If you can get over this hurdle you are well on your way to attaining the mentality needed to be a writer. It will help if you can handle criticism as well. Take it from us – writing is a tough business. Just ask any author doing the rounds looking for a friendly publisher.

We have various house styles that we use and you do not need to know them. As long as your submission is literate and tidy, we will do the rest.

Little Details

If you are not sure how long your article is, assume around 800 words fit on one page. Do not use the word processor's page counter as a guide. By the time it has been edited, laid out and had artwork added, it will look nothing like that screen of text in front of you.

Remember to run the article through a spell checker before you send it in. It will still get proofread, but it shows willing. Anything not spell checked will be rejected straight away.

Legal Requirements

Be aware that to work for Mongoose Publishing, you will have to sign a contract with us. There will also be a commissioning form for each specific story. Any work which you then generate specifically for Mongoose Publishing under the terms of that agreement will belong to Mongoose Publishing, together with all the publishing rights.

Who do I write to?

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Swindon
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SN2 8AF
UK
 email: ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com

Mine!

Andrew Granger

An unclaimed planet in neutral space is found to have vast amounts of mineral wealth, and the various powers rush to put their mark on the world. Ships are dispatched and the space around the planet fills with the deadly strength of opposing sides.

Fleets

Players have five Priority Level Raid Fleet Allocation Points and may choose their ships freely.

Pre-Battle Preparation

Place an Earth-Like world in the centre of the map. All players should roll for initiative. The player who rolls highest may place his ships first. Players should deploy their ships no closer than 24 inches from the planet and no closer than 12 inches to another player.

Scenario Rules

Players must attempt to land troops on the planet. In the event that two players land troops on the planet in the same turn, the player with the higher initiative will be considered the defender and attack first. If troops are already on the planet, they are considered the defender.

Deployment Zone (shared)

24"
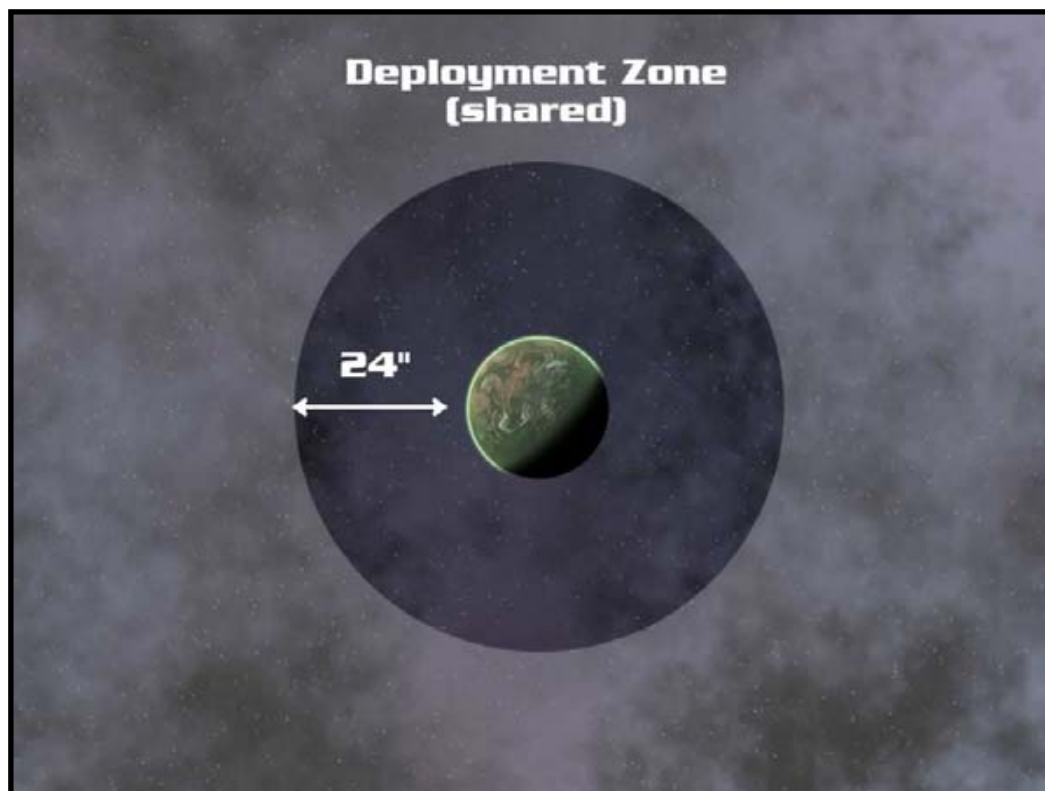
Game Length

10 turns.

Victory and Defeat

The player with troops on the planet at the end of 10 turns is the winner. In the event that two or more players have troops on the planet, Victory Points should be used to break the tie.

THE ZAPASNOVAN WAR

The Concluding Part of Our Series of Linked Scenarios

Matt Thomason

SCENARIO ELEVEN – WHO DARES, WINS

The continuing conflict saw the arrival or reinforcements for both the EFTF and PLA forces. The PLA established a forward base inside Zapasnovan territory, and EFTF forces immediately drew up a plan to remove the threat.

EFTF BRIEFING

A number of PLA patrols have been sighted in the area. Speed is of the essence here - you must eliminate all opposition before they can raise the alarm. This will allow the main EFTF force to move through the area towards the forward PLA base.

Units
One British Army SAS Patrol (both teams)

PLA BRIEFING

Your infantry squad has been assigned to patrol this area. EFTF forces are known to be operating in the vicinity, so be on alert.

Units
One PLA Infantry Squad (all three teams)

SETUP

The PLA player may set up the table as they see fit. The EFTF player may then choose a 12" deployment zone on either long table edge to deploy from, with the PLA player deploying on the other.

SPECIAL RULES

Once the first EFTF shot is fired, the EFTF have four turns to win the game through standard shattering rules. If they fail to do so, this is a PLA win.

SCENARIO LENGTH

The scenario plays for four turns after the first EFTF shot is fired.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each player may spend up to 200 points on any units they wish.
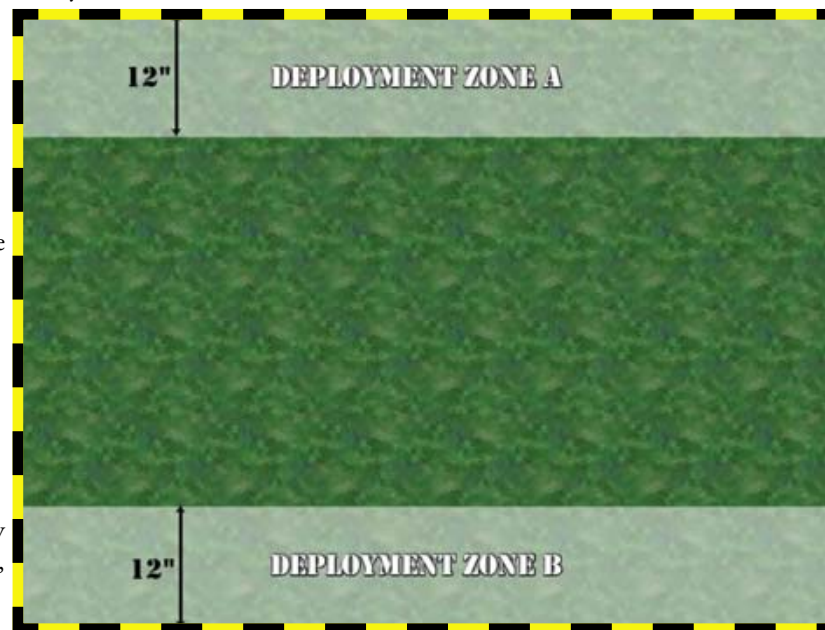
SCENARIO TWELVE - DISTRACTION

While the more covert assault was taking place to the east of the PLA forward base, a heavily armoured EFTF column was approaching from the west, in the hope of drawing out PLA forces and distracting them from the main part of the assault.

EFTF BRIEFING

Your objective is to engage any PLA forces in the area and attempt to eliminate them.

Units
One British Army Infantry Command Section
One British Army Warrior APC
Two British Army Challenger II MBTs

PLA BRIEFING

An EFTF force has been sighted heading for the forward base. Your force has been assigned to intercept and destroy the attackers.

Units
One PLA Command Squad
One PLA FAV
Two PLA WZ-551 IFVs
One PLA Infantry Squad (all three teams)
One PLA Type 99 MBT

SETUP

Players take turns at adding one piece of scenery to the table until one player decides there is enough. Forces deploy in 12" deployment zones on opposite long table edges.

SPECIAL RULES

There are no special rules for this scenario.

SCENARIO LENGTH

The scenario plays until one player has been defeated.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each player may spend up to 1,000 points. The only restriction is that the EFTF player must spend at least 50% of their points on armour units.

SCENARIO THIRTEEN - INFILTRATION

During the two-pronged assault on the PLA forward base, a handpicked SAS squad was assigned to destroy PLA command assets.

EFTF BRIEFING

A number of PLA patrols have been sighted in the area. Speed is of the essence here - you must eliminate all opposition before they can raise the alarm. This will allow the main EFTF force to move through the area towards the forward PLA base.

Units
One British Army SAS Patrol (both teams)

PLA BRIEFING

Your infantry squad has been assigned to patrol this area. EFTF forces are known to be operating in the vicinity, so be on alert.

Units
One PLA Command Squad
One PLA Infantry Squad (all three teams)

SETUP

The EFTF player should lay out the table to match the map as closely as possible, given available scenery. The PLA player then places six command assets (these may be models of satellite dishes, radar installations, etc; or simply counters). The PLA player deploys in a 6" radius in the centre of the table, while the EFTF player may deploy up to 6" from any table edge.

No command asset may be placed closer than 12" to any other command asset.

SPECIAL RULES

The EFTF player wins if they can destroy at least four command assets. This is accomplished by moving any model into contact with a command asset and then taking a ready action. The PLA player must eliminate the EFTF forces before they can complete this task.

SCENARIO LENGTH

The scenario plays until one side is victorious.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, The EFTF player may spend up to 225 points, and the PLA player up to 300 points. The EFTF player is only allowed to buy squad units.
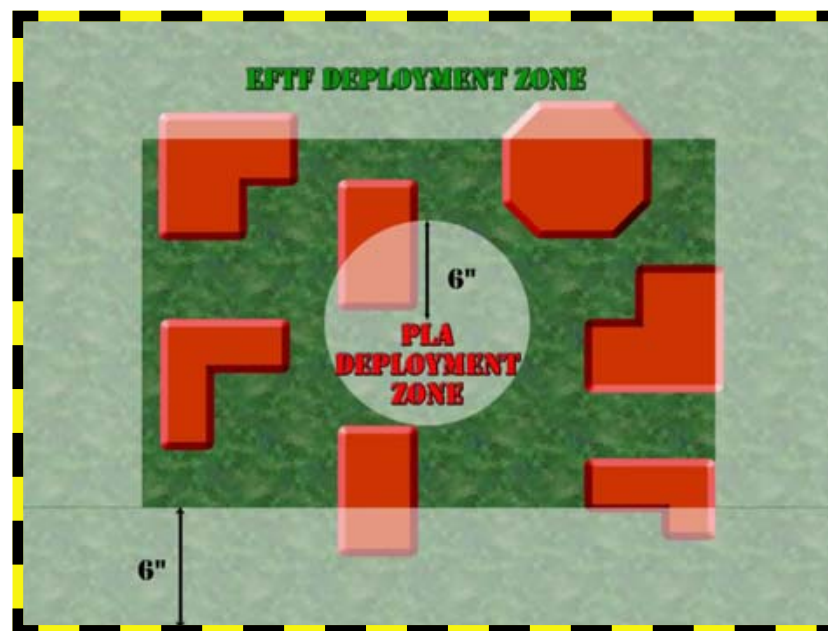
SCENARIO FOURTEEN – STRIKING BACK

With the majority of their forces committed to the attack on the PLA forward base, the EFTF were unprepared for an PLA assault on one of their own command posts.

EFTF BRIEFING

A PLA force is assaulting this command post. You must hold out until reinforcements arrive.

Units
One British Army Infantry Command Section
Two British Army Infantry Sections (both teams)

PLA BRIEFING

Your strike team has been ordered to assault an EFTF command post, in the hope of temporarily disruptiong the chain of command for this area, as well as the possibility of obtaining valuable intelligence.

Units
One PLA Command Squad
One PLA Infantry Squad (all three teams)
One PLA WZ-551 IFV

SETUP

The table should be set up with two or three small buildings in the centre, representing the EFTF command post. The EFTF player may then add as many wooded areas as they wish across the rest of the table. The EFTF player deploys in a 6" radius in the centre of the table, while the PLA player may deploy up to 6" from any table edge.

SPECIAL RULES

There are no special rules in effect for this scenario.

SCENARIO LENGTH

The scenario plays until one side is victorious.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each player may spend up to 400 points. The EFTF player is only allowed to buy squad units. The PLA player may only buy squad and support units.

SCENARIO FIFTEEN – TAKING TRIZIK

Before the final assault on the PLA forward base could begin, the EFTF had a secondary objective - the town of Trizik stood on the southern face of a hill overlooking the PLA positions, and would provide the perfect tactical advantage for the upcoming battle.

EFTF BRIEFING

The town of Trizik is currently unoccupied by enemy forces, but PLA troops are expected to intercept your assault force once your approach is detected.

Units
One British Army Infantry Command Section
Two British Army Warrior APCs
One British Army Infantry Section (both teams)
One British Army SAS Patrol (both teams)

PLA BRIEFING

Your strike team has been ordered to assault an EFTF command post, in the hope of temporarily disruptiong the chain of command for this area, as well as the possibility of obtaining valuable intelligence.

Units
One PLA Command Squad
One PLA FAV
One PLA Infantry Squads (all three teams)
Two PLA WZ-551 IFVs

SETUP

The PLA player should place a number of buildings interspersed with trees, walls, hedges, and undergrowth. The EFTF player then chooses a short table edge to deploy on with a 12" deployment zone. The PLA player then takes a 12" deployment zone on the opposite table edge.

SPECIAL RULES

There are no special rules in effect for this scenario.

SCENARIO LENGTH

The scenario plays until one side is victorious.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each player may spend up to 750 points. Neither player may buy armour units.
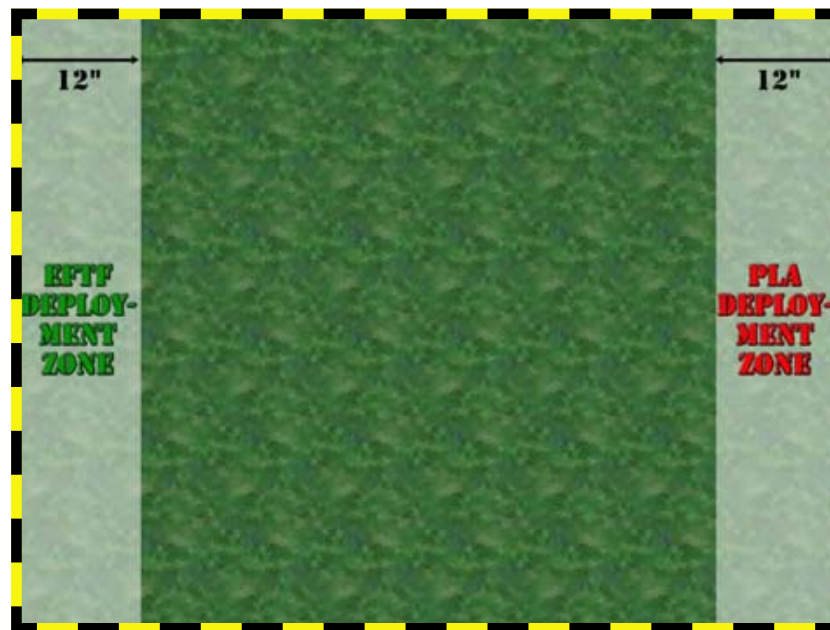
SCENARIO SIXTEEN – THE DECIDING BATTLE

The deciding battle in the Zapasnovan war was faught over the PLA forward base. If the EFTF forces could push the PLA out of Zapasnova then reinforcements currently en-route could easily hold the border against further attacks. However, if the PLA could hold the base, their own reinforcements would have a route in and could overwhelm the remaining EFTF forces just as easily.

EFTF BRIEFING

A PLA force is assaulting this command post. You must hold out until reinforcements arrive.

Units
One British Army Infantry Command Section
One British Army Warrior APC
Two British Army Infantry Section (both teams)
Two British Army Challenger II MBTs

PLA BRIEFING

Your strike team has been ordered to assault an EFTF command post, in the hope of temporarily disruptiong the chain of command for this area, as well as the possibility of obtaining valuable intelligence.

Units
One PLA Command Squad
One PLA FAV
One PLA Infantry Squads (all three teams)
Two PLA WZ-551 IFVs
Two PLA Type 99 MBTs

SETUP

The EFTF player should set up the table as they see fit, with the PLA player choosing any long table edge to deploy on in a 12" zone. The EFTF player takes the opposite table edge. The table does not have to resemble the PLA forward base, as the battle may be faught just outside or nearby.

SPECIAL RULES

Total up the number of wins in all the previous scenarios. If the EFTF player is ahead, they gain an extra Warrior APC for this battle. If the PLA player is ahead, they gain an extra WZ-551.

SCENARIO LENGTH

The scenario plays until one side is victorious.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each player may spend up to 1,400 points.
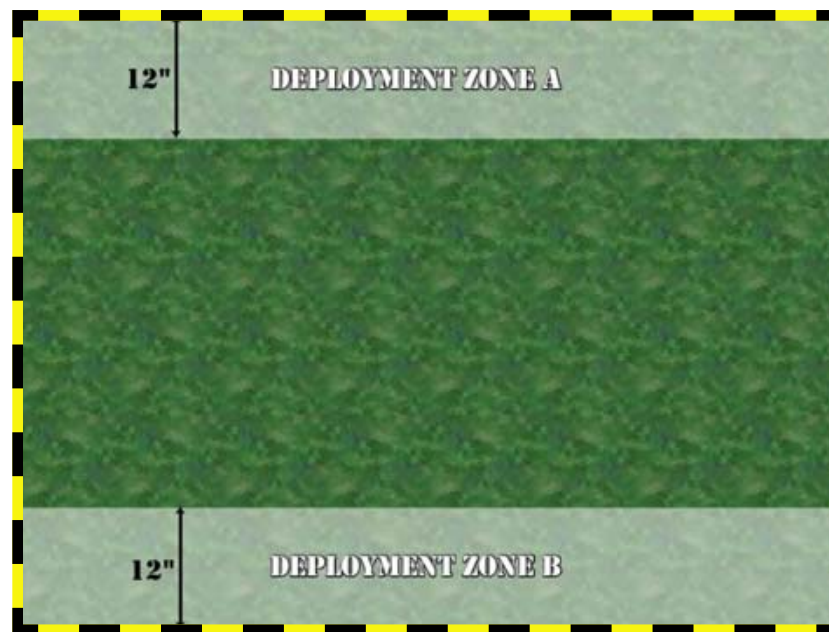
DEATH IN THE CURSED EARTH

TAKE YOUR GAMES OUTSIDE THE MEGA-CITY : PART TWO

Gary Berner

> **Continued from S&P Wargamer 43...**
>
> Where we introduced the basic rules for Cursed Earth Gangs. This month presents campaign rules and more specialists.

Cursed Earth Specialists

Such a unique environment brings with it a selection of rather unique specialists.

In addition, the following specialists from the *Gangs of Mega City One* rulebook and *Death in the City* supplements are also available:

Ape Mobster
Futsie
Klegg Mercenary
Robodoc
Robodog
Skysurfer

Exiled Judge

Exile to the Cursed Earth is but one of the possible sentences for a Judge who breaks the law. In addition, a number of Judges who take the Long Walk are eventually driven mad by lonliness, radiation exposure, or perhaps just a nasty bump on the head. Whatever their reasons, the Exiled Judge can be a valuable member of a Cursed Earth gang.

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Required Reputation	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	3+	7	3D	3	2+	30	20,000cr	15

Equipment:
Boot Knife, Lawgiver, Respirator, Street Armour, Stumm Gas Grenades

Traits
Nerves of Steel

Dredd exiled? Yes, even he's been in and out of the Cursed Earth!

Cursed Earth Desperado

Willing to fight only for gangs with the largest reputations, the Cursed Earth Desperado represents the toughest, meanest individuals that can be found in that hostile arena.

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Required Reputation	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	4+	6	3D	2	2+	30	10,000cr	12

Equipment:
Every Cursed Earth Desperado has their own personal individualised taste in weapons, and may buy from the equipment tables as normal gang members. In addition, reputation requipments do not apply for items they are purchasing for their own use. Note however that items bought for their use may never be traded to another model or sold.

Traits:
Accurate, Ambush Tactics, Knife Fighter

Combat Awareness:
The Cursed Earth Desperado gains a parry against every model it is fighting in close combat, no matter how many there may be!

Reactivated War Robot

President Booth's Atomic War left the United States in ruins, along with complete armies of his War Robots, designed to protect the country from invasion. Legions of these robots lay in ruins in the Cursed Earth, and by salvaging parts and a little know-how it is quite possible to piece together a working combat droid...

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Required Reputation	Recruitment Cost	Rep
4"	5+	7	2D	2	2+	*	9,000cr	1

Equipment:
Spit Gun (built in, cannot be disarmed or removed)

Traits
Accurate

Inorganic
Robots are ummune to gas and are unaffected by hypo dart guns and medipacks.

* "Purchasing" a Reactivated War Robot requires that the gang have a Boffin on their payroll.

Ron the Warbot...

Cursed Earth Turfs

The following table should be used in place of the normal Turf list when playing Cursed Earth campaigns.

3D	Turf	Turf Rep Bonus	Credits
3-6	Cursed Earth Settlement	+2	+1D3x1000cr
7	Ruined Block	+0	+1D3x1000cr
8	Smugglers Route	+2	+1D3x1000cr
9-10	Farm	+0	+1D3x500cr
11-12	Garbage Dump	+1	+1Dx750cr
13-14	Helltrek Route	+1	+1Dx500cr
15-16	Slave Labour Camp	+0	+1Dx500cr
17	Trading Post	+2	+1Dx750cr
18	Abandoned Bunker	+3	Special

If you have access to the *Death on the Streets* supplmeent, note that rackets are not used.

Cursed Earth Settlement

Turf Rep: +2
Credits: 1D3x1000cr

A small town or village with a number of inhabitants either pays regular tribute to the gang in return for protection, or can be easily raided for supplies.

Ruined Block

Turf Rep: +0
Credits: 1D3x1000cr

As per the regular rules, but this block lays in an abandoned (and probably irradiated) sector now outside the Mega-City walls, or possibly in one of the older ruined cities.

Smugglers Route

Turf Rep: +2
Credits: 1D3x1000cr

As per the regular rules - this represents the opposite end of the route to that within the city, and the gang is assumed to be working with another gang inside the city walls.

Farm

Turf Rep: +0
Credits: 1D3x500cr

Not the most lucrative of turfs, but it does provide a somewhat safer source of income to most opportunities within the cursed earth, drawing far less attention.

Garbage Dump

Turf Rep: +1
Credits: 1Dx750cr

In years past, waste was simply piled into landfills rather than the 100% recyling rate we know today. All manner of useful items can therefore be salvaged by those with a keen eye. The garbage dump of yesterday becomes the treasure trove of today.

Helltrek Route

Turf Rep: +1
Credits: 1Dx500cr

Bored citizens from the Mega-City take trips into the Cursed Earth. These organised Helltreks are heavily armed, but can provide a source of income for those brave enough to attempt to raid them.

Slave Labour Camp

Turf Rep: +0
Credits: 1Dx500cr

Usually a mining operation or quarry, this camp is run completely on slave labour, providing the gang with valuable resources that can be easily sold to those in need.

Trading Post

Turf Rep: +2
Credits: 1Dx750cr

Even the people of the Cursed Earth need to buy, sell, or barter for goods, especially those hard to come by exports from the Mega-Cities. A gang that controls a trading post can make an easy profit... for as long as they hold it.

Abandoned Bunker

Turf Rep: +3
Credits: Special

An abandoned military installation from yesteryear, full of ancient equipment long fallen into disuse. With a little work, however, some of it may be pressed back into service...

Instead of gaining credits, this turf yields a random piece of equipment during the credit collection phase. If the gang has a Boffin on the payroll, they may make two rolls. This equipment can be assigned to a model as if purchased, or stockpiled for later use. However, the repair job looks a little shoddy so if you instead choose to sell it you will only make a quarter of its value.

3D	Item
3-5	Antique Revolver
6	Handgun
7	Laser Pistol
8	Spit Pistol
9	Double-Barelled Stump Gun
10-11	Spit Gun
12-13	Stump Gun
14	Hand Bomb
15	Heavy Spit Gun
16	Laser Rifle
17	Missile Launcher
18	Missile Defence Laser

Items gained through the Abandoned Bunker have no reputation requirement.

To Be Concluded...

Next month we'll have a selection of Cursed Earth scenarios, example gangs, psyker rules, vehicles, and some miniature conversions.

The League Strikes Back

Five New League Ships for Your A Call to Arms Games

Matthew Sprange

Continuing our run up to the new edition of A Call to Arms in August, we proudly present five new ships, all of which are likely to interest League players.

The Courami dreadnought marks the Brakiri as a serious power to be reckoned with, now having the ability to go toe-to-toe with the greatest warships of the major races. Constructed purely as a means of purging the galaxy of the Drakh menace, the Juyaca gives the Abbai some serious offensive capability. The Drazi, meanwhile, get a revised cruiser, but don't expect subtlety. Finally, there is the Hurr Gunship. While the Hurr are technically not part of the League, thus relegating this ship to one-off games and special scenarios (unless we get inundated by requests to see the Hurr as a stand alone fleet!), the pak'ma'ra have a special interest in this ship, and their fleets often sport modified versions.

Brakiri Corumai-Class Dreadnought

Speed: 6
Turn: 1/45°
Hull: 5
Damage: 97/18
Crew: 99/22
Troops: 5
Craft: None

Special Rules:
Command +1
Interceptors 3
Jump Point
In Service: 2226+

Using additional gravitic engine drives to fuel its terrible banks of graviton beams, the Corumai can summon staggering recycling rates from otherwise slow-firing weapons. If the banks of deadly beams do not dissuade an enemy from drawing near, the rows of supercharged graviton pulsars will. Little can withstand the focussed fire of a Corumai, and if the first volley does not finish them, the second will.

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Graviton Beam	24	F	6	AP, Beam, Double Damage, Slow-Loading
Graviton Beam	24	F	6	AP, Beam, Double Damage, Slow-Loading
Graviton Pulsar	12	F	20	AP
Graviton Pulsar	12	A	6	AP
Graviton Pulsar	12	P	16	AP
Graviton Pulsar	12	S	16	AP
Gravitic Bolt	3	T	6	Anti-Fighter, Weak

Corumai Dreadnought

Drazi Firehawk-class Advanced Cruiser

Speed: 12
Turn: 2/45°
Hull: 5
Damage: 28/8
Crew: 32/10
Troops: 1
Craft: None

Special Rules:
None
In Service: 2241+

The Firehawk is an advanced-science attack cruiser that combines the success of the contained fusion bulb of the Stormfalcon with the speed of the Sunhawk. Packing a surprisingly small number of weapons systems for an 'advanced' Drazi vessel, the Firehawk instead relies on 'quality over quantity' in the fact that its weapons can fully bisect a ship in seconds. Not quite the same size as the multi-talented Stormfalcon, the advanced cruiser has but one purpose – to bring its weapons to bear on a single target and eliminate it.

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Solar Cannon	18	B	4	Beam, Triple Damage, Slow Loading, Super AP
Particle Cannon	15	B	4	Beam, Super AP

Firehawk Cruiser

Abbai Juyaca-class Dreadnaught

Speed: 5
Turn: 1/45°
Hull: 6
Damage: 72/14
Crew: 80/18
Troops: 3
Craft: 2 Kotha flights

Special Rules:
Command +1, Interceptors 8,
Jump Point
In Service: 2235+

The Juyaca was designed and constructed solely as their first utterly offensive vessel in response to the calling of a holy purge, or *juyaie*, of the Drakh – after they virus-bombed Earth. It was such an overwhelming wish for the ruling council of the Abbai to somehow stop the Drakh from harming the galaxy that these powerful vessels were placed at the forefront of every construction yard and spacedock capable of building them.

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Quad Bolters	12	F	10	AP, Double Damage, Twin-Linked
Quad Bolters	12	A	6	AP, Double Damage, Twin-Linked
Quad Bolters	12	P	10	AP, Double Damage, Twin-Linked
Quad Bolters	12	S	10	AP, Double Damage, Twin-Linked
Combat Laser	15	F	4	AP, Beam, Precise
Combat Laser	15	P	3	AP, Beam, Precise
Combat Laser	15	S	3	AP, Beam, Precise
Comms Disruptor	15	F	3	Super AP
Comms Disruptor	15	P	3	Super AP
Comms Disruptor	15	S	3	Super AP

Juyaca Dreadnaught

Hurr Gunship

Speed: 9
Turn: 1/45°
Hull: 5
Damage: 52/6
Crew: 54/7
Troops: 5
Craft: None

Special Rules:
Interceptors 4
In Service: 2263+

Another class of ship that varies from vessel to vessel, the Hurr are not restricted to hull chassis designs when they decide to build their naval warships. From jagged edged corvette-esque runners to cylindrical horrors that sail through the Republic's small borders, the term 'gunship' is the only thing appropriate to title them all. Bristling with ammunition-wasting ballistic cannons, the Hurr are happy to live uncomfortably and dangerously within these ships if it means they can put just a few more guns in the finished product.

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Heavy Ballistic Array	8	F	12	Triple Damage
Heavy Ballistic Array	8	A	8	Triple Damage
Heavy Ballistic Array	8	P	8	Triple Damage
Heavy Ballistic Array	8	S	8	Triple Damage
Ballistic Cannon	15	F	6	Double Damage
Ballistic Cannon	15	A	3	Double Damage
Ballistic Cannon	15	P	3	Double Damage
Ballistic Cannon	15	S	3	Double Damage
Point Defence Cannon	2	F	6	
Point Defence Cannon	2	A	4	
Point Defence Cannon	2	P	4	
Point Defence Cannon	2	S	4	

Hurr Gunship

* Fleets with nothing but Hurr vessels have a –2 penalty to Initiative.

Pak'ma'ra Hurr Gunship

Speed: 7
Turn: 1/45°
Hull: 5
Damage: 52/6
Crew: 54/7
Troops: 1
Craft: None

Special Rules:
None
In Service: 2265+

A rare sight in pak'ma'ra fleets, the gunships of the Hurr are expensive, and feature primitive power sources that can be extremely difficult to marry to modern weapon systems. Nevertheless, the brute force one of these vessels brings to a defensive fleet allows the pak'ma'ra to maintain control of their most lucrative trade routes.

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Plasma Torpedoes	25	F	6	AP, Slow-Loading, Triple Damage
Heavy Plasma Cannon	15	F	12	AP, Double Damage
Heavy Plasma Cannon	15	A	12	AP, Double Damage
Heavy Plasma Cannon	15	P	12	AP, Double Damage
Heavy Plasma Cannon	15	S	12	AP, Double Damage
Plasma Beams	4	F	4	Anti-Fighter
Plasma Beams	4	A	4	Anti-Fighter
Plasma Beams	4	P	4	Anti-Fighter
Plasma Beams	4	S	4	Anti-Fighter

Pak'ma'ra Hurr Gunship

* This ship follows all the normal pak'ma'ra fleet rules.

THE COMING OF THE FORTH – PART TWO

Continuing Our Look at a New Race for Starship Troopers

Matthew Sprange

The race designated as the Forth by SICON are an ancient people, alien beings who have learned to temper their violent impulses towards one another and emerge as a true democracy spread across a small empire of systems. Though insular and content to leave other races to their own ends, the Forth were always a potential force for galactic union, a measure of what peace and harmony could achieve among the stars.

The Coming of War

The battles between other races have been witnessed by the Forth ever since more primitive aliens were able to cross the gulf of space that separated them from their neighbours. They watched as the Skinnie Hegemony grew, enslaving weaker races in its path. They observed the Arachnids spread from Klendathu, annihilating whole planets in their mindless need to consume. Few Forth worried about such things, as wars were something that took place many light years away and no nearby race could seriously challenge the technological superiority of the Forth. Even though the Forth possessed no standing army or fleet, it was widely known that a military could be built within a very short space of time – but it was not something to be dwelled upon. Overall, the Forth found the idea of warfare to be extremely distasteful, and were happy to rely on the automated defences that had long stood on the borders of their empire.

For their part, few races even knew about the Forth. Those that did realised they could never challenge a race whose technology was so far ahead of their own, while others simply wondered why ships sent to certain systems never returned. Even the Arachnids seemed to instinctively avoid their area of the galaxy.

This was all to change in a very short period of time, and it started with the rise of another empire in the galaxy, one that was to expand rapidly across many stars and call itself the Federation. The Forth had been aware of humanity for many centuries and their early explorer ships had even visited Earth on occasion, as man slowly crawled to technological achievement. However, official contact with humanity was quickly rejected, on the basis that the primitive race was inherently violent and had little of interest to offer anyway.

What came to surprise the Forth was the speed in which humanity managed to conquer its nearby stars. After the first stumbling attempts at space travel, mankind was soon to rapidly reach across the galaxy, sending huge colony craft to establish a foothold on any system in reach, no matter how minor. Within just a few centuries, the Federation which governed the humans spanned one of the largest empires the galaxy had yet seen. In itself, this did little to worry the Forth for while humans seemed adept at colonising lifeless systems or

stealing worlds inhabited only by primitive creatures, they were still far from the Forth. However, as time went on and studies into the Federation continued, three things began to alert the Forth to a possible danger among the stars, a threat that could potentially change their whole way of life.

First, humans multiplied at an astounding rate, a pace only exceeded by the Arachnids. Moreover, humans were able to sustain this rate while producing true individuals, rather than the mere drones that make up much of the Arachnid population. This meant that humanity could not only stake a claim to the star systems they travelled to but, within a few years of arriving, have a burgeoning population on those worlds, ready to expand further into deep space.

The second problem was that while humans had been technologically hindered throughout their history, their progress often curtailed by their own self-destructive nature, as a society they seemed to have developed beyond this. In addition, they seemed very adept at observing the technology of other races and quickly producing something very similar. It would begin as being a poor imitation but rapid advances within their own sciences would quickly refine the technology until they could justifiably call it their own. This led many Forth to believe that any sustained contact with the Federation would allow the humans to quickly rise to the technological level of the Forth – and then exceed it.

Finally, the Forth began to learn of the nature of the Federation, and even of SICON. Both organisations worried them, as they were the primary forces in dictating what humanity would do with its empire. Through the Federation, humanity seemed to feed on war. Contact with alien races was often made through the barrel of an overheated gun, and yet humanity only grew stronger through this conflict. When the Federation launched a seemingly suicidal strike at the Arachnids, the Forth observed, waiting for humanity's demise when the bugs responded. Instead, the humans were able to hold the line against the Arachnids and, incredibly, grew stronger in both scientific and military perspectives. In fighting an enemy that had already destroyed many races far more advanced then humans, humanity had only become better.

Humans seemed incapable of focussing on a single objective, and the Forth were watching again when they started striking at the Skinnie Hegemony, stealing worlds and slaughtering entire populations. Again, humanity fed on lessons taught to them in battle by the Skinnies. New weapons of war were devised and turned not only upon the Skinnies themselves but also taken to the other side of the Federation, to be used against Arachnids.

Engaging in far-reaching statistical analysis and prediction, the Forth quickly came to understand that no race could sustain the type of galactic conquest than humanity seemed intent on. Truly, the light that burned twice as bright would burn half as long, and detailed simulations quickly proved that either humanity would one day encounter a race so vast and terrible that they would be overcome before they could adapt, or that they would simply be fought to a standstill by the races currently bordering their Federation, in which case it was an inevitable certainty that the Arachnids would finally overwhelm them within two hundred years.

However, all of this would take place long after the Forth themselves had been destroyed – by the Federation's continued march to domination, by a flanking move by the Arachnids, by the opportunistic Skinnies, different simulations showed a different end for the Forth. None, however, demonstrated the Forth had any possibility of survival if no action was taken immediately. Mankind's War of the Species had destabilised the entire galaxy, and the Forth were soon to pay the price.

That action had to be taken was obvious. As one, the Forth bent their minds to the task and debated the relative merits of evacuating the area for unknown regions of space or adopting, at least in part, the old ways of violence and destruction. It was into this debate that a new face among the Forth rose, an individual calling himself the Prophet.

The Rise of the Prophet

Just as the Prophet arose thousands of years go to steer the Forth onto the path of co-operation, compassion and intellectual discovery, so it seems a newcomer has arrived to deliver the entire race in their time of need. But this time, his message is very different.

As one, the Forth debated and cast votes as to the composition of their military, what resources would be turned from healthier pursuits to fund it, and how their new fighting machines would be deployed. With information passing between individual Forth, cities and colonies, a consensus was soon reached on all these points and an overall plan of battle established. The automated defences on the borders of the Forth empire would be strengthened with the addition of ships and fighting machines, forming an impassable bulwark that could resist any threat. Occasional sallies would be made against the Hegemony, Federation and Arachnids where pre-emptive action could be shown to save lives later but, above all, the Forth would rely on their superior technology and remote location to hold back their innumerable enemies.

Though this agreement had been made among the Forth empire, some disagreed with this course of action – naturally enough, as there is inevitable dissent in any true democracy, and the Forth had long ago learned that the individual would rarely have everything his own way. However, one voice of dissent rang louder and clearer than the others. Rumours started to spread among the colonies of a mysterious individual whose intellect surpassed all others. It was said he had divined the true future of the Forth and knew they were on a course of doom. Gradually, a name was given to this Forth as he began making public speeches and rapidly rallied others to his cause. Soon, every Forth was talking about the Rise of the Prophet.

The message of the Prophet was clear. He had been born into the current generation, much as his predecessor long ago had, to change the path the Forth followed. Before, the discarding of the old ways had been necessary for the Forth to progress into a technological civilisation. Now, a return to violence as a way of life was an absolute necessity if the Forth were just to survive.

He advocated building a huge military, not merely a defensive force but one that could be launched across the stars, carving out a huge empire that would eventually see the Forth dominate the entire galaxy. He said the War of the Species, started by the humans, was not something to be feared or resisted. They had to embrace it. Only one race would win this war, whereas all others would be exterminated. For the sake of galactic peace and civilisation, the victor *had* to be the Forth – after all, they were the superior race. Anything else would lead to galactic anarchy and the destruction of everything the Forth had so far created.
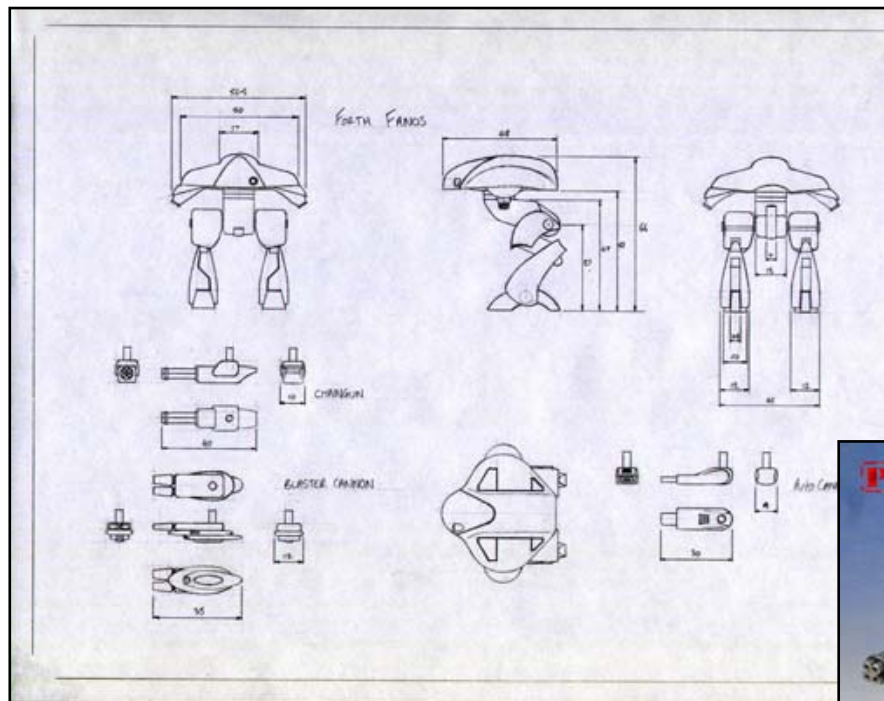
Schism in the Military

While the majority of Forth elected to uphold the values of their democracy, many saw value in what the Prophet had said. For the first time in a thousand years, the Forth no longer spoke with one voice. This was to have a divisive effect on the new military, with the Prophet actively courting those training on fighting machines to heed his words.

The standard military structure functioned as pretty much every other organisation in Forth society. Resources were allocated by popular vote, and individuals could even become involved in the specific deployment of units. Though the pilots of the fighting machines fought as individuals, their common training and the ability of their battle computer systems to instantaneously link with those in other fighting machines meant they could gather as an effective army in one location, fight a battle, then instantly disperse and reform a dozen other armies elsewhere. This could take place within just a few hours, with Forth pilots instantly adapting to their allies in a way that would seem utterly alien to the Mobile Infantry or even the Skinnies. Unit morale and cohesion was never a factor for the Forth, as their society had always encouraged them to work together, acknowledging that each had a valid voice.

Adrian Walters' design schematics for the Forth Fenos and the final prototype.

add the Sign of the Prophet to the hulls of their fighting machines, an outward sign that they took his words to be a singular truth and that they were prepared to lay down their lives if it meant the empire would go on.

To begin with, the military ignored these pilots, as a few dotted here and there could be left to believe as they wish – so long as they followed orders when the time to fight came. In other outposts, the Word of the Prophet spread faster and his sign was soon emblazoned on many fighting machines. Where they significantly outnumbered their more traditional counterparts, these pilots would sometimes hijack a ship and head into alien space, keen to be the first to take a star system in his name. Elsewhere, the two sides balanced, effectively paralysing the outpost into inaction.

The Prophet disagreed. There had to be strong leaders within the military, individuals of rare character and tactical flair that could take a strike force deep into enemy territory, fight a series of battles, and capture entire star systems, likely without any possibility of reinforcement. Simply shuffling units around on the border to stem the tide of an incoming enemy was a relatively simple procedure that could indeed be left to the democratic principles of their empire. What the Prophet proposed would require a far more formal militaristic approach.

Where the Word of the Prophet was at its strongest, whole colonies fell under his sway, and they created entire armies ready to serve as he directed. Within established military units, already stationed on the border, the Prophet's teachings were received with less relish but even so, several pilots began to

As news of the first victories of the Prophet's forces trickled back to the empire, more Forth were persuaded as to the righteousness of his cause, and the Sign of the Prophet became an increasingly common sight on fighting machines everywhere. Worlds on the far flung borders of the Federation were the first to feel the scourge of the Prophet, but the Arachnids and Skinnies would feel the effects of this new Forth army soon enough.

The traditional military still holds sway within the empire, maintaining the bulwark against alien raiding forces. However, the Prophet's message grows ever more persuasive to many Forth and it cannot be long before their fighting machines are seen on a hundred different worlds throughout space.

Science Fiction

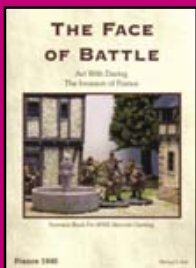|	
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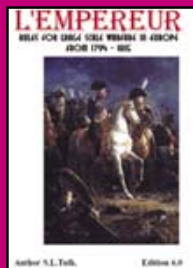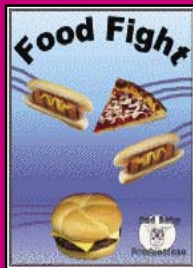
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I Surrender!

Andrew Granger

At times of increased Raider activity, convoys mean safety for the many civilian captains transporting the materials that make the galactic economies move. Finding his ship alone, even the most experienced captains may panic. The sight of a warship sometimes brings about absolute terror or relief, and the captain is more than happy to surrender to gain protection. When more than one ship arrives, things could get interesting.

Fleets

Players may choose one ship from their chosen fleet lists at a randomly determined priority level.

Pre-Battle Preparation

Place one Civilian Trader at the centre of the map. Players should then roll for initiative. Players should deploy their ships not closer than 24 inches away from the Civilian Trader in order of initiative. This scenario uses no stellar debris.

Scenario Rules

Players must move to with in 10 inches of the Civilian Trader and perform a "Stand Down and Prepare to be Boarded" Special Action. The Civilian Trader has a crew quality of 3. If the capturing ship moves further than 10 inches from the Civilian Trader or is crippled or skeleton crewed, the ship is no longer considered captured and may be captured by any other player who makes a successful "Stand Down and Prepare to be Boarded" Special Action.

Game Length

12 turns.

Victory and Defeat

The winner of this scenario is the player who is in control of the Civilian Trader at the end of 12 turns.

Extinction Protocol
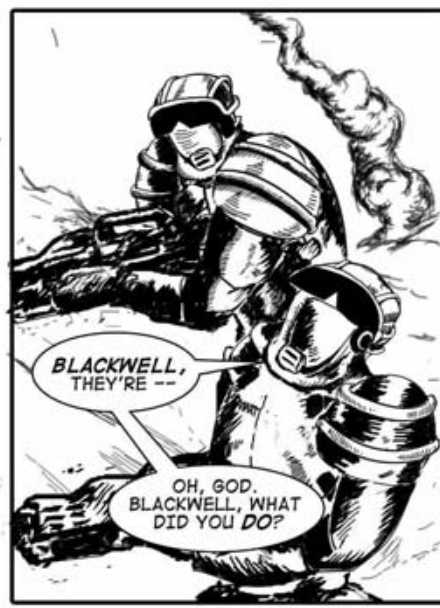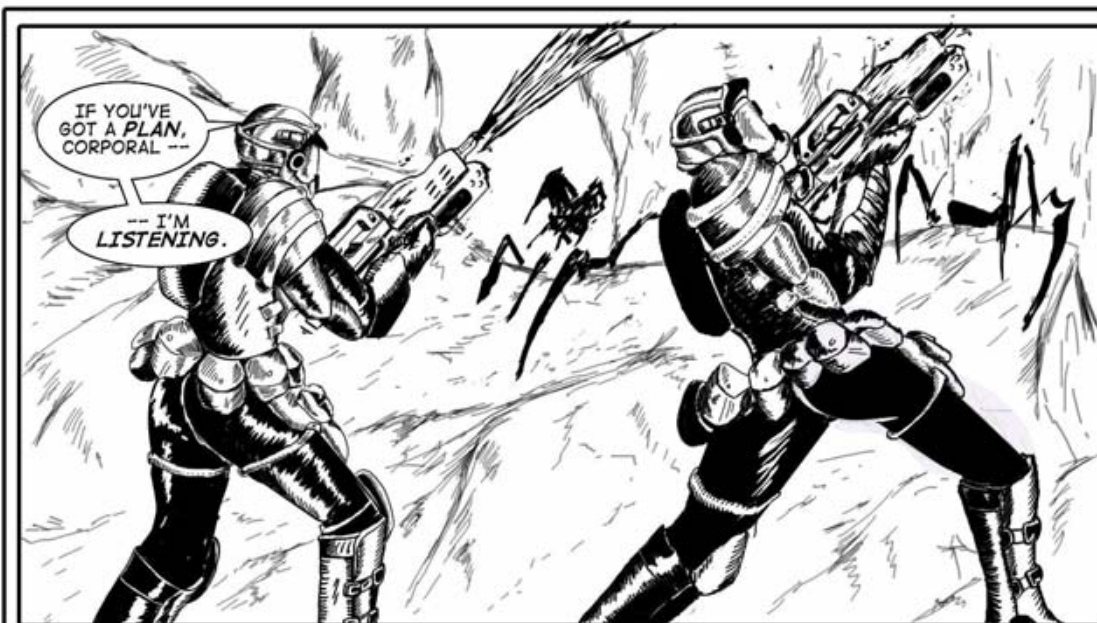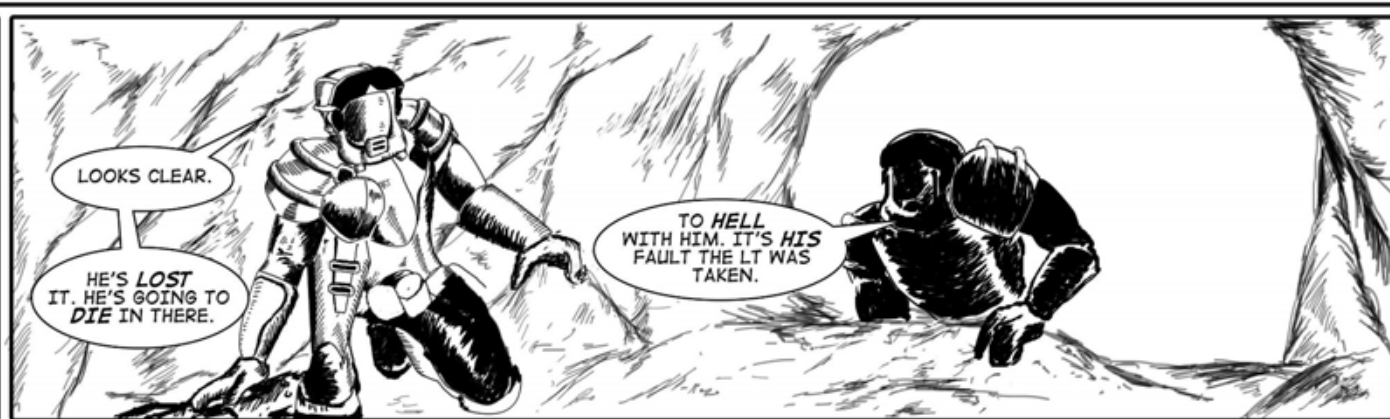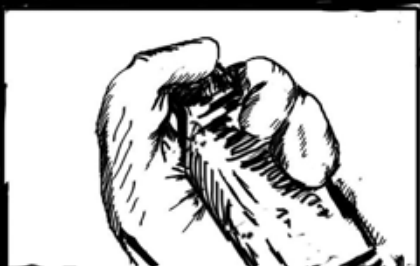
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MAELSTROM IN THE MID-WEST

Alex Fennell and Richard Ford Fight out the European Invasion of the United States... as related by Ian Barstow

This battle report is between the forces of the USMC and the EFTF, and features the new Sabotage scenario from the Battlefield Evolution Advanced Rulebook. To make it interesting we decided to set it in the United States following an EFTF invasion.

As you will see from the Sabotage mission details attached at the end of this report, this is a small mission focussing on a single elite squad for the attackers against a 500 point garrison for the defenders. Once more determinedly leading his crack team of SAS troopers is Alex Fennell, up against Richard Ford and his USMC supposedly in a peaceful part of the country, guarding a communications bunker. Little do they know that the EFTF is planning a sweep into this very territory and the removal of satellite communications for even a few hours could make all the difference.

As well as the standard sentries that come with the scenario, Richard chose two squads of USMC (one with Team 2 dropped) plus a squad of the deadly Force Recon with the option to upgrade a second rifleman to a Mk46 lmg. Having these guys around might be more than the SAS can handle!

Sergeant Bisley looked through his hi-power monocular, studying the configuration o the US marines patrolling the perimeter of the compound. Actually 'compound' was a particularly grand term for what was basically an old beer factory with a partially concealed bunker guarding the entrance to an underground satellite communications facility. Only two days ago another SAS team had stumbled across information about the base following the assassination of a US Air Force general. The discovery had been fortuitous, as a major offensive was planned within range of the satellite envelope controlled by this base. Bringing down communications for even a short period of time would disrupt the Americans' ability to not only communicate, but track the advancing EFTF forces, making this assault a top priority mission.
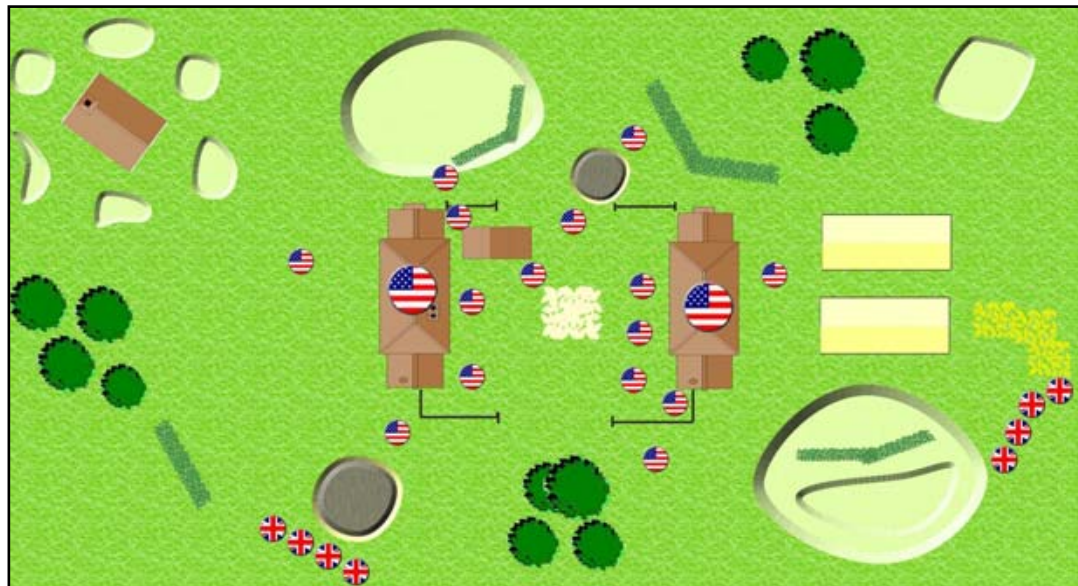
Deployment

USMC compound guard

SAS assault patrol

Knowing all that, it was still pretty irrelevant to Bisley. He was here on a mission and nothing mattered outside accomplishing it. He left such concerns to the guys with scrambled egg on their shoulders. Bisley turned to his second in command, Corporal Watkins, smiling.

"Going round like little robots, Dave," he said, a wolfish grin on his unshaven face.

Watkins lowered his own monocular sight and nodded. He was a man of few words, like most SAS troopers. They believed in actions.

"Looks pretty straightforward. The grunts on guard aren't expecting anything. We take them down with the Barretts and then you provide fire support while my team goes in to take out the bunker."

Watkins nodded again, already gauging distances and which sentries to take first. With their new Mothman silencers that bit should be a doddle. The danger would be with the assault itself. No way to tell what was inside the buildings. As usual with British troops, heat and motion sensors had not been available, so there would be no hi-tech assistance there. Still, what did it really matter? The job needed doing even if an armoured division had decided to have a day trip to the brewery.

* * *

Inside the eastern part of Schaeffer's Brewery, Sergeant Weathers was thinking about stowing his gear and crashing out early. As a member of the USMC's crack Force Recon, he was used to far less comfort than was available at this place. The remainder of his small team were busy going

through the familiar drill of weapons maintenance while grabbing a bite to eat. They had turned down the opportunity to eat in the marine mess on the base. It wasn't just that they were tired after a long period on active service – they had an image to maintain, and in an elite unit image counted for a great deal. Since their arrival the regular jarheads had kept their distance, a few nodding politely but otherwise behaving like the governor of Kansas had shown up for a flying visit.

Still, it was nice to be in the backwoods for a while, and a full night's sleep would be a pleasant change.

Outside the sentries tramped round in a pattern made familiar by weeks of monotonous duty. As was the nature with such mundane duties, they had almost completely switched off, the operational procedures slackened by weeks of tedium. Nothing was going to happen here, after all, so they maintained their distance, checked in on the hour as required, but otherwise took things easy.

PFC Winkelman, one of the late evening sentry squad had even taken to sneaking out his MP9 player to alleviate the boredom. It was against regulations, of course, as it meant taking out his comms ear piece but nobody came out to check any more, so what was the harm? As he made his rounds Winkelman switched off, thinking about anything other than the boring chore of sentry duty.

In this state, listening to the music on his miniaturised MP9 player, Winkelman was easy meat for the SAS sniper tracking him. He did not see the body of the marine sentry ahead of him, taken out a few seconds earlier. Minutes later all of the patrolling marines were dead, taken down by the SAS snipers and their silenced Barrett M-109 rifles. The way was clear for the SAS assault.

their C and C," Bisley instructed, referring to any officers and NCOs on view. He was met by brief affirmatives from both his snipers and within a few minutes two marine sergeants lay dead in the compound. This now left the SAS with a difficult decision. If they hold position attending to any visible marines then the odds were that sooner or later, even in the quickly fading light, the alarm would be raised, which would surely render the attack a waste of time.

As a result, Bisley made a decision. "Alpha team initiate assault. Bravo team, cover us."

The USMC deployment, with sentries out, a fire team of marines in the near building and the deadly Force Recon at rest in the far building

POINT OF ORDER

In the Sabotage mission the sentries follow the patrol route shown in the scenario map. It is assumed that the bodies of previously killed sentries are concealed by sneaky members of the assault force. Because they follow a set route Alex decided to take the time to eliminate them all before risking infiltrating the site.

POINT OF ORDER

In the Sabotage mission, all the attackers' rifles and carbines are assumed to be suppressed, allowing for a greater degree of stealth than usual.

*   *   *

Sergeant Bisley tapped his throat mike and instructed his two teams to hold their positions. Despite the patrolling sentries being eliminated he could see movement inside the compound and the experienced SAS NCO knew that these troops would be harder to get past.
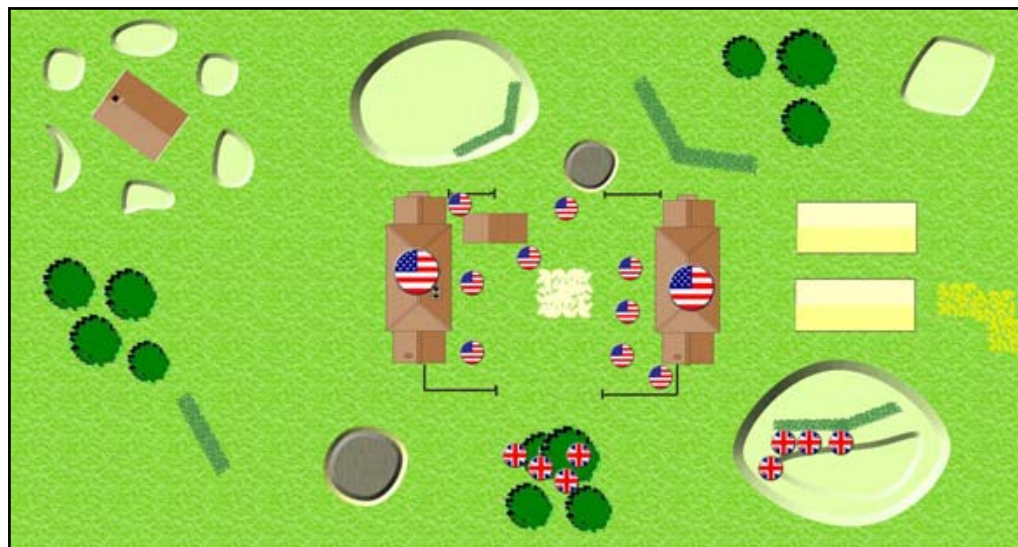
Two marines very near the boundary of the compound were quickly eliminated. "Take out

Having eliminated the sentries the SAS move up to begin taking out other available targets

* * *

Sergeant Weathers and his Force Recon team were still quietly and efficiently maintaining their equipment, now double checking their Land Warrior combat gear. They all knew the extreme value of this hi-tech gear and keeping it in prime condition was the key to their combat edge.

Suddenly, alarm sirens began blaring all around the base. Weathers looked up and without speaking made a series of rapid hand gestures, scrambling his team into action. He had no idea if this was a genuine alarm or a drill, but Force Recon didn't take chances. That's what kept them alive.

POINT OF ORDER

Eventually Alex's good fortune was bound to run out and he rolled a '1' with one of his snipers, missing an obscured shot into the compound and thus raising the alarm.

A few seconds later sporadic automatic weapons fire from outside told Weathers all he needed to know. It was good luck that their Land Warrior equipment was ready for use on their bunks. It meant that they would be fully equipped within a matter of moments saving valuable seconds which Weathers knew could be the difference between life and death. The Force Recon sergeant knew that his enemy could have no idea of his existence, giving his team a massive advantage in the crucial first seconds of action.

* * *

Bisley barely had time to curse his bad luck. Rushing towards the compound and taking advantage of any available cover, he thought

With the sentries down, the troopers of Bravo team survey the compound looking for fresh targets

they were doing pretty well. He quickly signalled for the Bravo team sniper to take out a marine approaching the barricades to their front, but to his consternation the silenced bullet missed its target, ricocheting into a metal oil drum with a hideously loud clang.

The marine gestured to a comrade not visible to Bisley and they both opened fire into the bushes concealing most of Bravo team. Although the chances of hitting any of the SAS troopers was remote, fortune was with the marines and the sniper who had missed his target paid with his life, killed by a random burst of fire.

POINT OF ORDER

No matter how good you are, a '6' is never a good thing to see when you are the target, and Alex followed up having his Bravo team sniper shot by rolling a '1' for his Armour save!

As the alarm sounded Bisley was left with no alternative but to order Corporal Watkins and Bravo team to create a full diversion, drawing fire in an attempt to allow Alpha team to enter the compound. He knew it might be a death sentence for his troop mates, but he did not hesitate, nor did Watkins' response. They all knew that their mission was paramount.

As Brave team put out a stream of automatic fire, Bisley's team rushed the compound, hoping that the distraction would be enough to shield their presence a little longer. Suddenly to his right he caught sight of movement, and had to quickly bark an order to hold fire. It was the hardest decision of his military life, because he at once recognised the distinctive shapes of fully equipped USMC Force Recon. Had he opened fire, he might well have taken down several of the elite marines at the cost of giving away his position. Choosing not to do this exposed Bravo team to these most dangerous

of opponents, fully trained and equipped to take advantage of the very decoy work Corporal Watkins and his men were making.

* * *

Weathers saw the wall of fire raining down on the compound and was secretly relieved. Clearly not Special Forces, he determined. Not firing so wildly. His team took up firing positions and seconds later engaged the distinctive muzzle flashes on the hill in front of them, not stopping until all return fire had ceased.
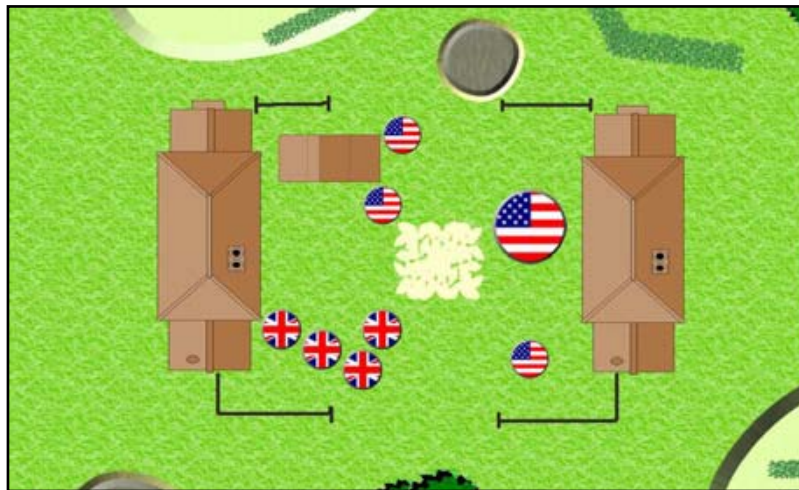
POINT OF ORDER

Alex's use of Bravo team as a fire base attracted Rich's attention, and he drew return fire by using Bravo team before Alpha team and hoping Rich would bite – which he duly did. Remember, each unit may only react once per turn.

Something wasn't right, though. Irregular burst of fire from the marines in the compound told Weathers there were other troops still about, close by. Suddenly three figures appeared in sight, running at a low crouch and heading towards the currently unprotected bunker entrance. "Enemy right!" he shouted, and his men turned to engage the new target, contributing to two of the targets falling. The third, however, kept on coming…

* * *

Bisley was alone now, within spitting distance of his goal. All three of his team were down scattered across the compound, the latter two taken out by the withering crossfire accidentally created by the fortuitously placed Force Recon team. With his target in site, Bisley opened his satchel charge and activated the impact setting on the trigger unit. It meant that whatever happened now, the charge would go off under a decent impact. Standing Orders said never to use this option except in the direst of circumstances. Had he had the time, he would have smiled – if this wasn't dire, he didn't know what was.

With Bravo team down, Alpha team storms the compound as the USMC Force Recon emerge from the right-hand building

Suddenly a marine appeared directly in front of him, his M16A4 rifle pointed at Bisley's chest. So close…

POINT OF ORDER

In gaming terms, Rich managed to shoot all of Alpha team except the sergeant who successfully saved twice in succession to keep the mission alive!

How the marine missed he did not know. It was harder to miss than to hit, but it had happened. It gave Bisley a vital few seconds and he turned the corner of the bunker, facing the open entrance. Once placed in the doorway, the massive charge, with its EMP core, would decimate any electronic equipment inside the bunker, even below the ground. He place the charge and even considered the possibility of escape.

* * *

Sergeant Weathers was as surprised as anyone to see one of the enemy raiders still alive, appearing back into view beside the bunker entrance. He saw the distinctive shape of an explosive charge in his hands and instantly fired, hitting his target and driving him through the open entrance way.

Seconds later their was a huge explosion, throwing Weathers and all the other American troops in the compound to the ground with its force. Then the sirens died, as did Weathers' Land Warrior equipment. In fact, it appeared that anything electronic was suddenly not working.

POINT OF ORDER

As per the scenario rules the attacker must move into contact with the bunker and then make two ready actions in order to detonate his explosives. My use of the term EMP is strictly for effect and is not a specific part of the rules. I just thought it sounded cool!

The bold Sergeant Bisley was also not technically in the entrance, but in fact screened by the bunker, meaning Rich had to move into position instead of shooting him, instead only killing the SAS man with Reaction fire during his second action (in the heart of the moment Rich critically forgot to React on Alex's first Ready action – such can be the narrow margin of victory in Battlefield Evolution!

"Damn, EMP!" cursed Weathers, taking time even in the face of the setback to admire the fearless courage of the soldier who had selflessly sacrificed himself for his mission. Looking at the collapsed mess that had been the entrance to the bunker, he knew that it would be some time before the engineers could dig their way in and recover the valuable communications equipment. First though, he had to make some distance away from the electro-magnetic pulse so that he could get a message out.

"Goddammed lucky there aren't any Euros in the neighbourhood," he muttered.

CONCLUSION

A tight but undoubtedly gratifying win for Alex. Sabotage is a hard mission to pull off unless you are quite experienced at Battlefield Evolution. Alex's timing was spot on and had Rich not been so lucky with his Reaction fire the SAS might have got out with a Major Victory.

As Alpha team storm the compound the USMC Force Recon appear...

Against all the odds Sergeant Bisley makes it to his objective!

SABOTAGE

Satellite surveillance and on-the-ground reconnaissance have unveiled a fortified site of critical importance – a command post, ammunition dump or communications relay. With heavy defences guaranteed to inflict heavy casualties should a direct assault be attempted, a small but highly skilled special forces team has been dispatched to destroy the site.

Attacker's Briefing

Stealth and infiltration is the order of the day. You must bypass the enemy's perimeter, avoid the defences and destroy the target. Safe extraction thereafter is not essential but will be appreciated by your superiors.

- You may select any one infantry unit from either Squad or Support categories. This will be your entire army. You may freely take any relevant options or upgrades.
- It is assumed your weapons have been suppressed and so making attacks will not necessarily raise the alarm (see below). Only rifles and carbines may be suppressed in this way – other weapons will automatically raise the alarm if fired.
- You deploy second and take the first turn. You may place your unit anywhere no more than 6" from any edge.

Defender's Briefing

While others have been on the front line, earning awards and promotions, you have been assigned to guard this worthless site. Some brass from above says it is vital to the war effort, but you just don't see it. Still, at least you are unlikely to run into any serious trouble.

- You have 500 points to select your army, and may only select up to 5 units from the Squad, Support, or Command categories.
- You receive a single small bunker for free, which is placed as shown on the map. You may not purchase any other emplacements.
- You also have 6 sentries, who follow the patrol routes shown on the map, no more than 6" outside the deployment zone.
- You deploy your entire army first.
- You may not take any actions other than to move your sentries until the alarm has been raised.

Scenario Rules

The scenario will last until the Victory Conditions have been met. The defender may not take any actions (other than to move sentries, as described under More Advanced Rules) until the alarm has been raised. The alarm will be automatically raised if any model of the attacker completes an action within 10" of a defender's model. It will also be raised if the attacker makes an attack on a defending model, and fails to destroy it.

To destroy the small bunker, the attacker must move into contact with it (he need not move inside) and perform two Ready actions to set the explosives.

Victory Conditions

If the attacker's unit is destroyed, the defender may claim victory. If the small bunker is destroyed, the attacker may claim victory. If the attacker manages to destroy the small bunker and leave the table from any edge, he may claim a major victory and bragging rights.

Defender's Deployment Zone
18"
24"
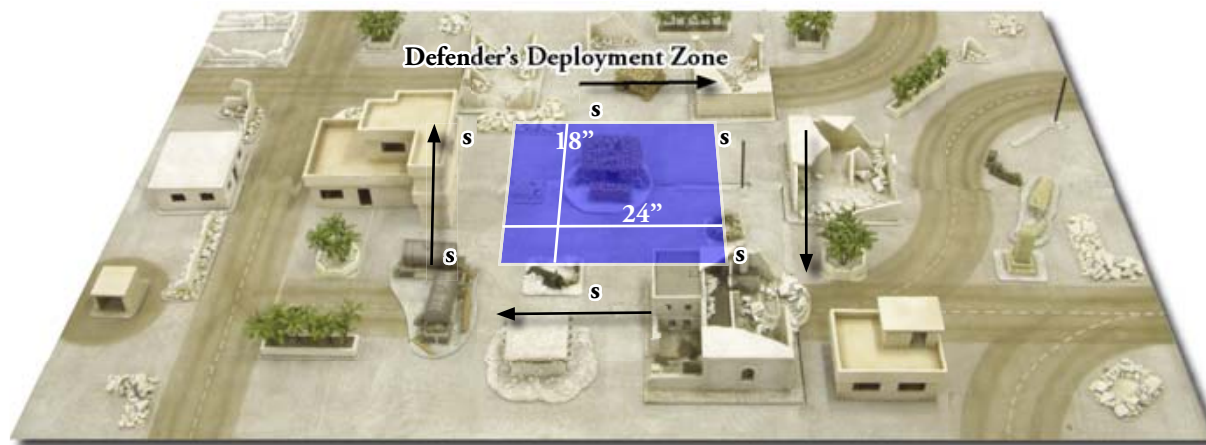
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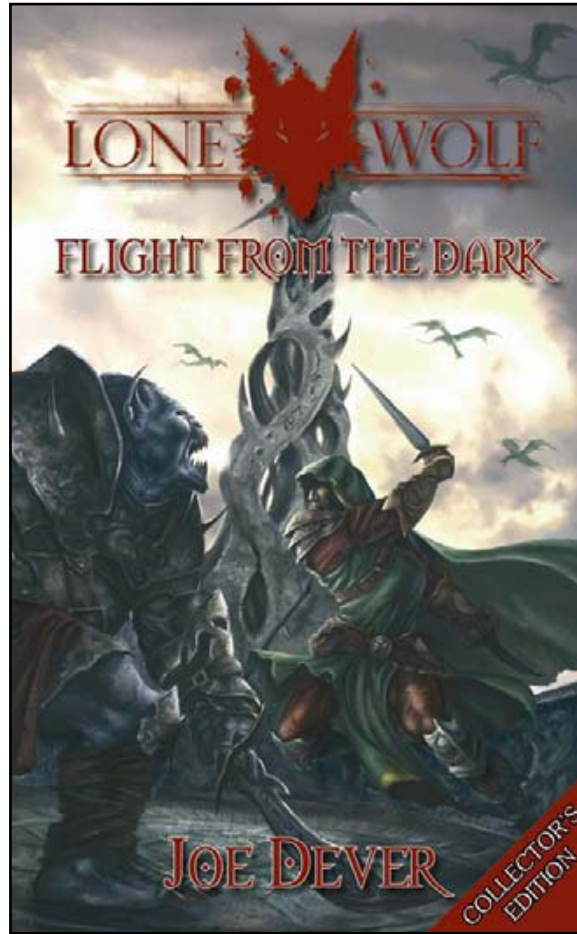
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'For more information visit the Mongoose web site at www.mongoosepublishing.com… or else!'
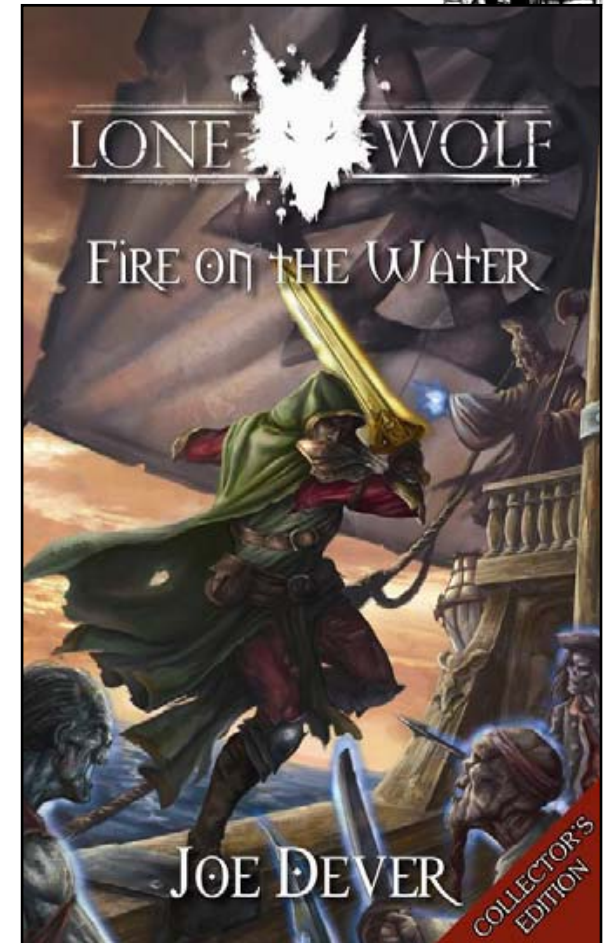
THE MONGOOSE INFANTRY

Ian Barstow, MI Coordinator

Up and coming news is that once the conventions at the start of June are sorted I will be continuing work on the new online demo system for all you hard working MI.

Hopefully from July 1st you will be entering the results of demos straight into the web site meaning that at long last we can get the database fully up to speed.

At the same time I will be reinstituting the ranks system. The bad news is that you all get busted back down to Trooper. Promotions will be based on demo time served with various bonuses and priviliges based on current rank, so start planning those future demos right away!

Mongoose Infantryman Will Baker at Recon 2007 (Will's the one in the forage hat)

Monty's Offer of the Month

Mighty Armies BOGOF!

This month Monty has decided that you need to BOGOF! That's right. Buy One, Get One Free! OK, enough sounding like a double glazing advertisement. This is the deal: Buy any Mighty Armies box set and get another for free. No postage to pay either. What's more, there's no limit, so for every box you order under this deal you get another free. Just print out the coupon and send it in!

✂ cut here

Signs & Portents Wargamer

COOPER'S LAST STAND

A Battlefield Evolution Scenario... and we've even Given you the Scenery!

Matt Thomason

Captain Francis Cooper of the United States Marines Corps found his position overrun by invading MEA forces. Although victory was no longer within his grasp, he and his squad vowed to give their lives and to make the enemy pay in their own blood for every inch of American soil they took.

Falling back to a ruined farmhouse, Captain Cooper and his squad took up positions and attempted to hold off the enemy for as long as possible...

USMC BRIEFING

A number of PLA patrols have been sighted in the area. Speed is of the essence here - you must eliminate all opposition before they can raise the alarm. This will allow the main EFTF force to move through the area towards the forward PLA base.

Units
One USMC Infantry Squad (three teams)

MEA BRIEFING

Your infantry squad has been assigned to patrol this area. EFTF forces are known to be operating in the vicinity, so be on alert.

Units
Three MEA Infantry Squads

SETUP

Each player takes a short table edge. Set up the ruined farmhouse model (see following pages) on the USMC side of the table, within 24" of the table edge. Place any trees, hills, hedges, and walls you may have as you see fit. Players deploy their forces within 24" of their table edge.

SPECIAL RULES

Whenever an MEA team is completely destroyed, it redeploys in the MEA deployment zone.

Standard shattering rules do not apply - this scenario ends only when every USMC model has been eliminated.

SCENARIO LENGTH

The scenario plays until the USMC have been wiped out.
Once this happens, players should switch sides and refight the scenario - the player who survives the longest number of turns as the USMC side wins!
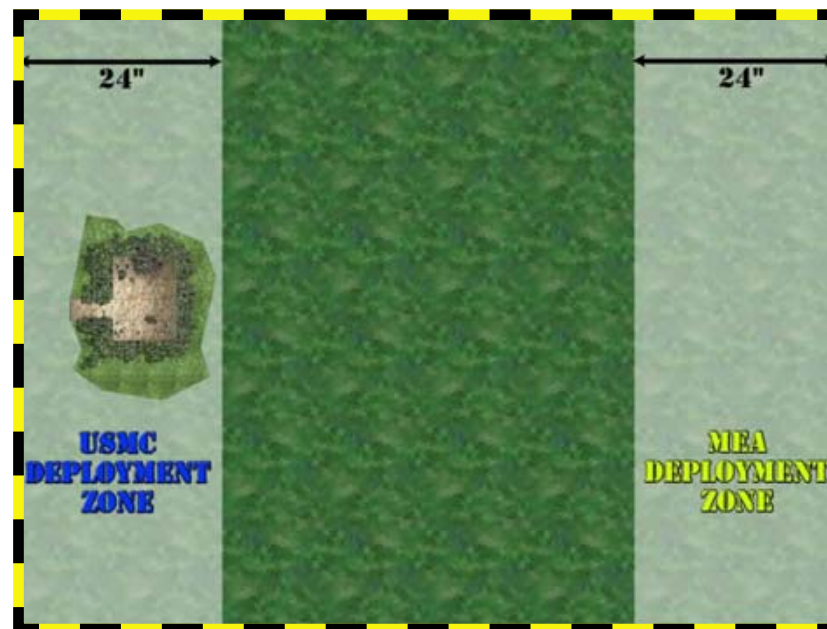
Scenic Mayhem

CaBil PDF Scenery on CD

The CaBil has provided the Ruined Farmhouse scenery piece that is part of the scenario in this issue of Signs & Portents. CaBil have a whole line of CD PDF scenery products that cover the spectrum of miniature game player interests. All of their products are CDs packaged in DVD-style cases available at your local retailer. But miniatures players who want to be able to stop arguing about line of sight in games should also check out their laser pointers, to be able to prove what can be seen or not seen.

For players who are interested in modern settings, there is the Dirt Cheap Cityscapes CD, which contains the high rises, streets and cars of any city's downtown, while Twilight Streets is the seedy side of the city along with the corner stores and other buildings you would find in neighborhoods. These can be used in CMGs for heroes and villains to battle in and over, or the streets where soldiers fight block by block.

For players more interested in fantasy settings, CaBil also have Dirt Cheap Keeps and Vyllage-on-the-Cheep vols. 1 and 2. Dirt Cheap Keeps gives you all the tools to construct a castle of any size - just add more building pieces to make it either a small keep or a castle that has a whole city inside its walls. For that city, Vyllage on the Cheep provides an array of buildings, both commercial and residential, that can be used either as part of a city or more along the lines of a lonely village at a crossroads that has the misfortune of being where two armies met.

The CaBil Ruined Farmhouse is part of the Ruins of Riverside Farm CD set. The Ruins of Riverside Farm contains the plans of how to assemble a farm and ruins that are located near a bridge, making it a strategic goal in a setting of any genre.
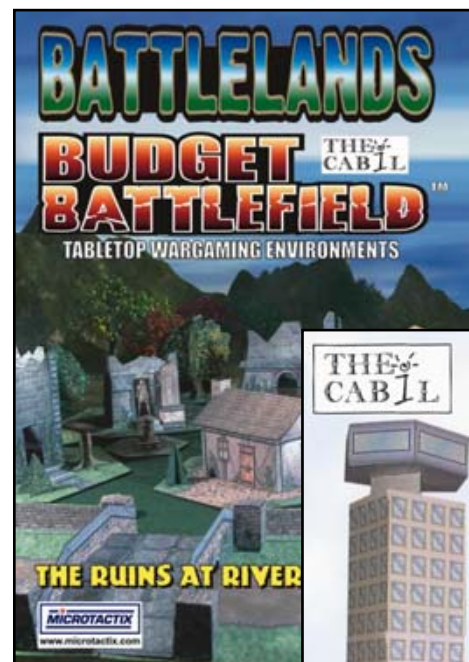
These are just some of the CaBil products that may interest miniature players. Since Signs and Portents is aimed at players of Mongoose games, some of the scenery would be immediately useful. Both Dirt Cheep Cityscapes and Twilight Streets can be useful for players of Battlefield: Evolution, Gangs of Mega-City One and could be used for some of the worlds under attack by the Bugs in Starship Troopers. Vyllage on the Cheep vols 1 and 2 could be used to represent some of the scattered settlements of Starship Troopers, the rural areas of the world for Battlefield Evolution, the Cursed Earth of Gangs of Mega City One or be used in Lone Wolf: Evolution. Even the Dirt Cheep Keeps could represent a EFTF unit seizing an ancient castle for modern warfare and the Ruins of Riverside Farm could find its place in almost any game.

So please ask your local retailers about CaBil products, or check out our website for more information (http://www.cabil.com/miniatures.html)

CIL 0604 MapAid: Laser Pointer $5.95
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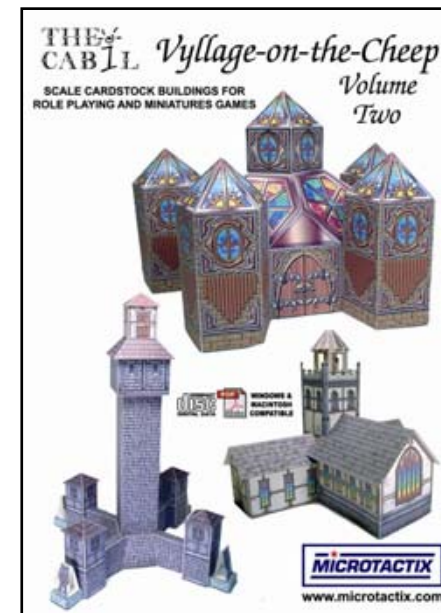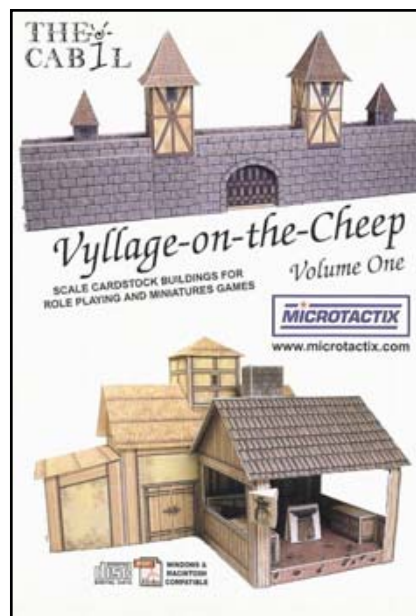
DISCLAIMER

We have made every effort to make sure that all parts fit together properly, but sometimes tolerances are tight and mistakes do happen. Test fit all pieces before applying glue. Some trimming may be required.

Before photocopying or printing these pages on cardstock, you may wish to assemble a test copy on plain paper to better understand the construction. A minimum of 65# cover stock is recommended for constructing the final models. Regular 20 lb. bond paper can be used, but these items were designed for a heavier stock for extra durability and coloring.

Tools Required:

Scalpel or sharp-bladed hobby knife
Metal ruler or straight edge
Cutting surface - a self-healing cutting mat is recommended, but a sheet of corrugated cardboard or even heavy poster board will work as well.
Glue - white glue, glue stick or wax stick. Double sided cellophane tape also works well. Rubber cement can be used, but will sometimes stain the cardstock or discolor colored inks and cause them to run.

A Note About Using White Glue

White glue contains a good deal of water. Too much glue will warp the card stock so that its almost unusable. Warping may also cause the parts to fit together incorrectly. If you use white glue, put a very thin coat on the glue tabs - the thinner the better. You can use a cotton swab or your finger to spread the glue thin. Remember to keep a damp paper towel handy to remove any excess glue.

PLEASE NOTE:

Each item has been marked with a series of Grey Lines that are an indicator that these lines are Fold or Score lines. All Tabs which are to be glued to hold the structures together are marked with a capital letter (G). Unless otherwise noted, all Glue Tabs fold inwards to the structure.

NOTE: It is recommended that the terrain base be mounted to a heavy piece of cardstock, cardboard, illustration or foam board for the construction of this model. Cut out the base and glue to a sperate piece of heavy cardboard and allow to dry. When dry, cut out the terrain base as set aside to dry. Each of the 3 walls in this package will assemble the same way. Cut out both sides of any particular wall as a solid block. Score along the grey horizontal line and fold the piece in half. Glue the two sides together and allow to dry. To insure a good bond and to make sure the wall sections dry flat, lay each piece out on a table and place several books on top of the pieces until dry. Once dry, cut out each wall from the block. Cut out all window sections at this time.

NOTE:The blank rectangle on the outside left facing wall is not to be cut out. This is a glue area for the chimney. When all the pieces have been cut, fold up the glue tabs (the ones on the outside walls with the grass and weeds texture), and glue each wall to the base so that the glue tab overlaps the undergrowth textures on the base. The cutout for the chimney hearth on the inside left wall should line up with the hearthstone at the left side of the inside textured area of the house. After setting the back wall in place, fold over the 2 glue tabs at either ends of the wall and glue these tabs to the edges of the left and right side walls. Set this section aside to dry.

To assemble the chimney, cut out the front and back sections as a solid piece, fold in the middle and glue together. When dry, cut out the bottom area marked CUT OUT. Do not cut out the white area above this section as it will be used as a glue area for attaching to the house. Cut out all white areas around the chimney as well as the broken stonework at the top. The cutout and the walls with the creeping vine texture will form the outside. Fold the chimney piece into a long box shape and glue the tab (located on the inside) to the opposing inside wall. When this piece is dry, attach the chimney to the outside left wall by applying glue to the white area above the cutout space and setting into place. See the photograph below for a completed view of the ruined house.

Included in this package is one small pine shrub. To assemble, cut out each block containing 2 sections of the shrub. Score each along the horizontal gray line and fold in half. Glue the 2 sides together and wait until dry. Once dry, cut out the shrub from the block. The pattern was designed as such that the cutting need not be exact and some variation is expected. Once the shrub has been cut out, cut along the vertical grey line in each half of the shrub. Fit one half of the shrub down over the other and spread out to create an "X"
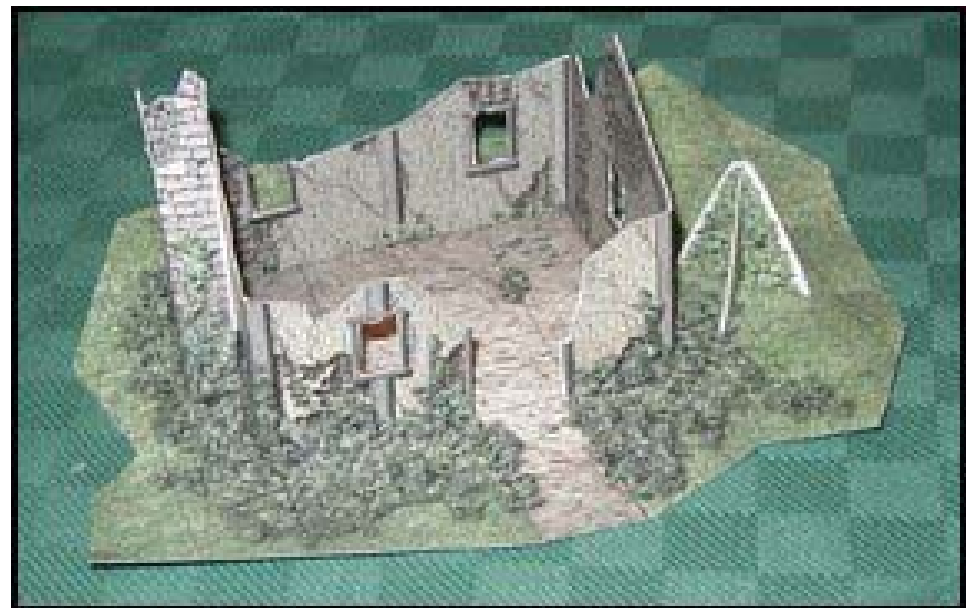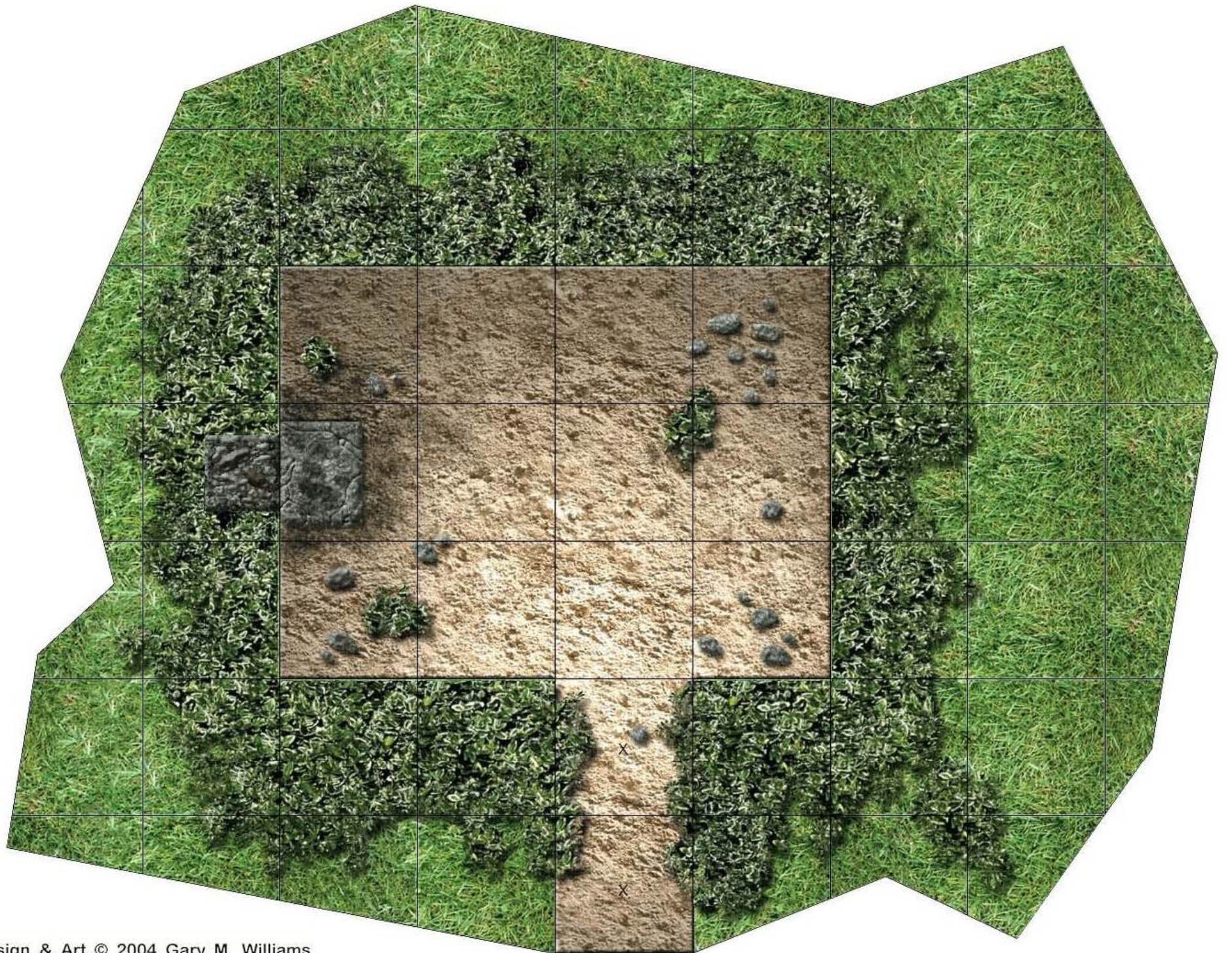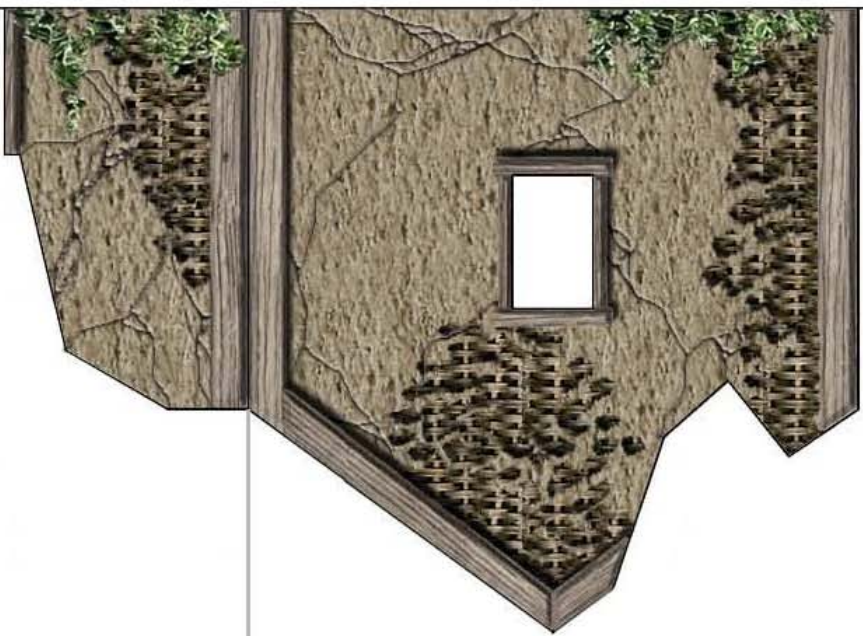
This Side Faces Out

Right Side Wall and Front
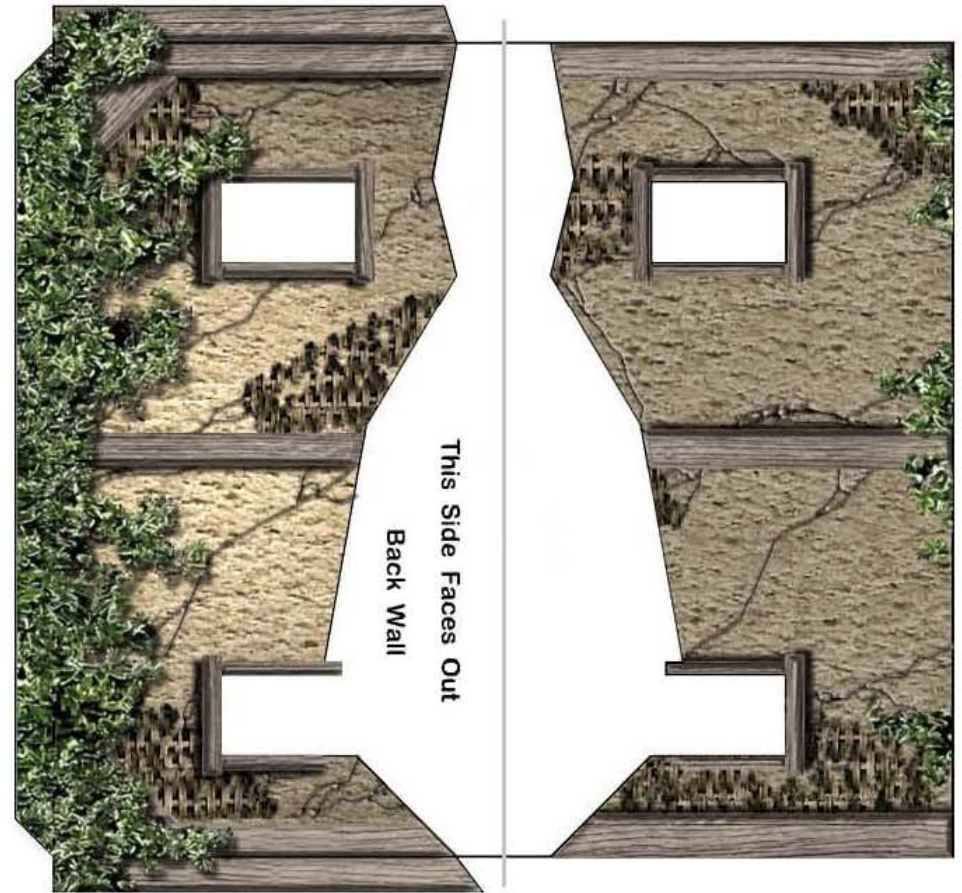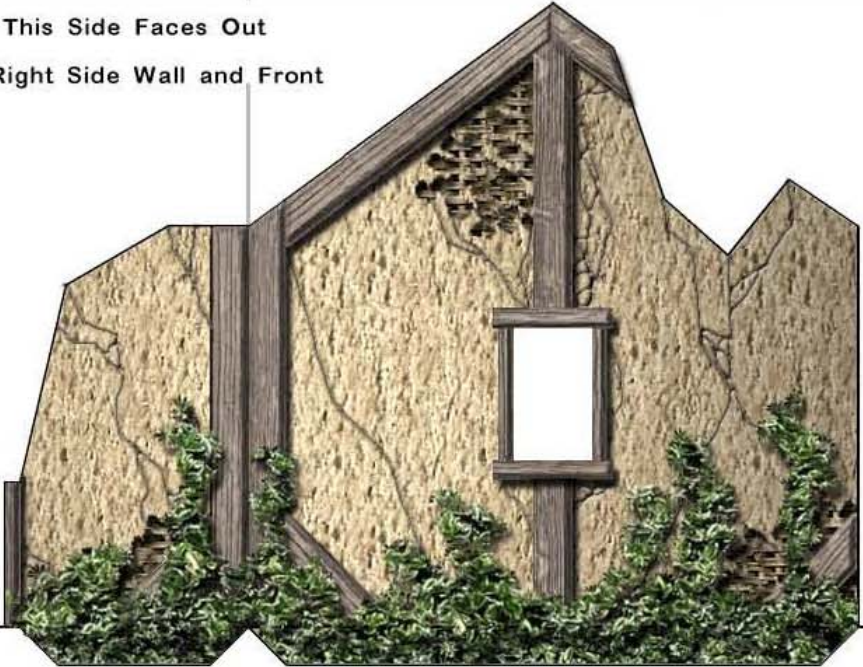
This Side Faces Out

Back Wall

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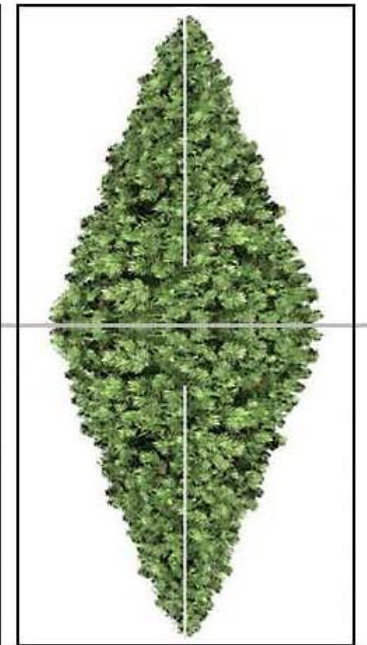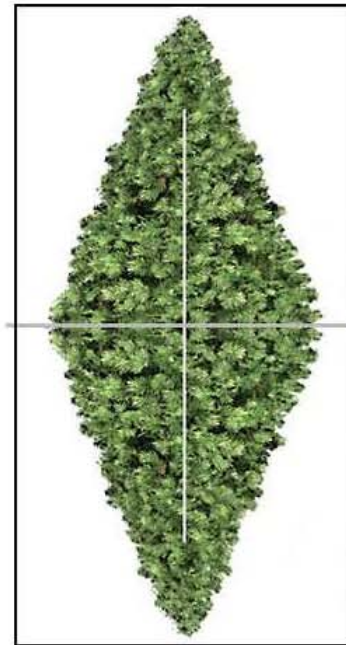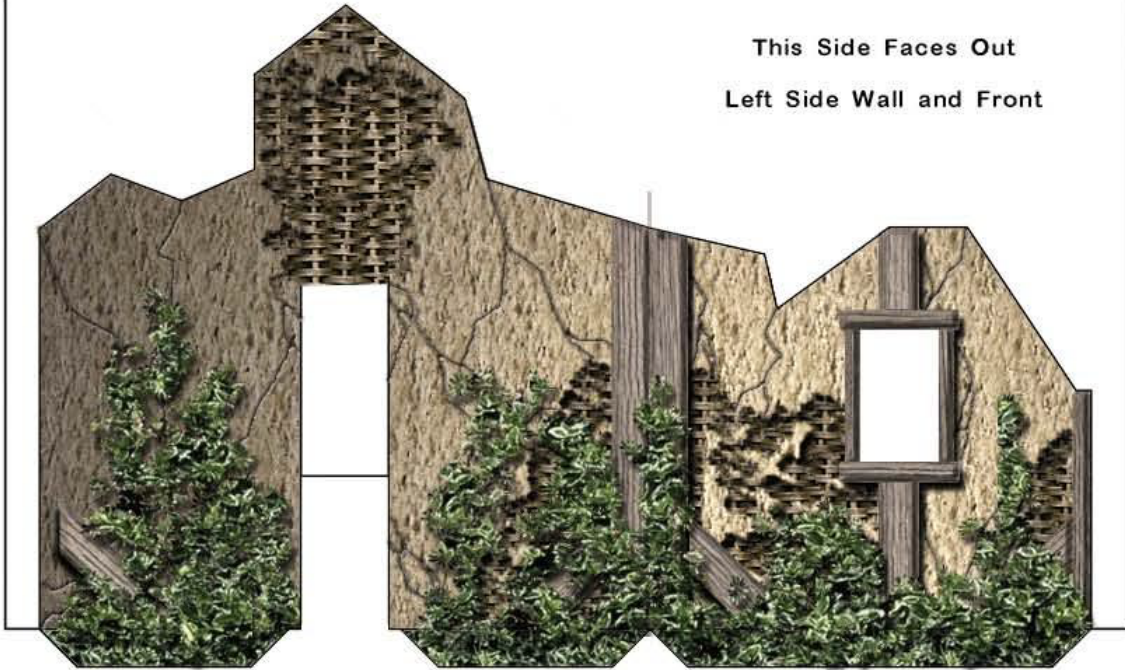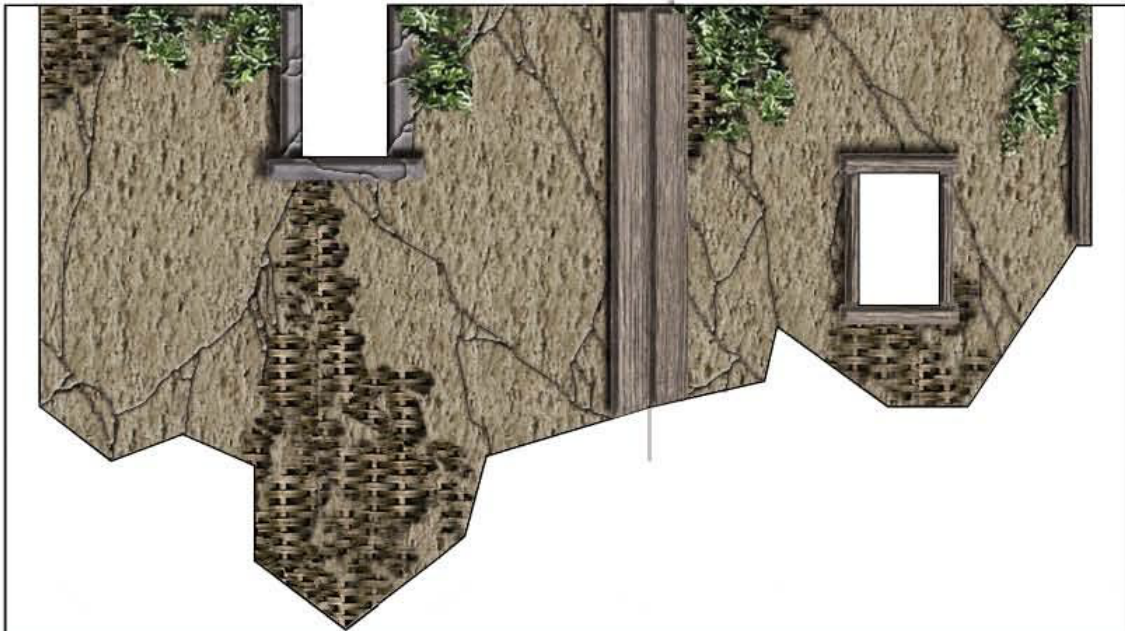
This Side Faces Out

Left Side Wall and Front

CUT OUT

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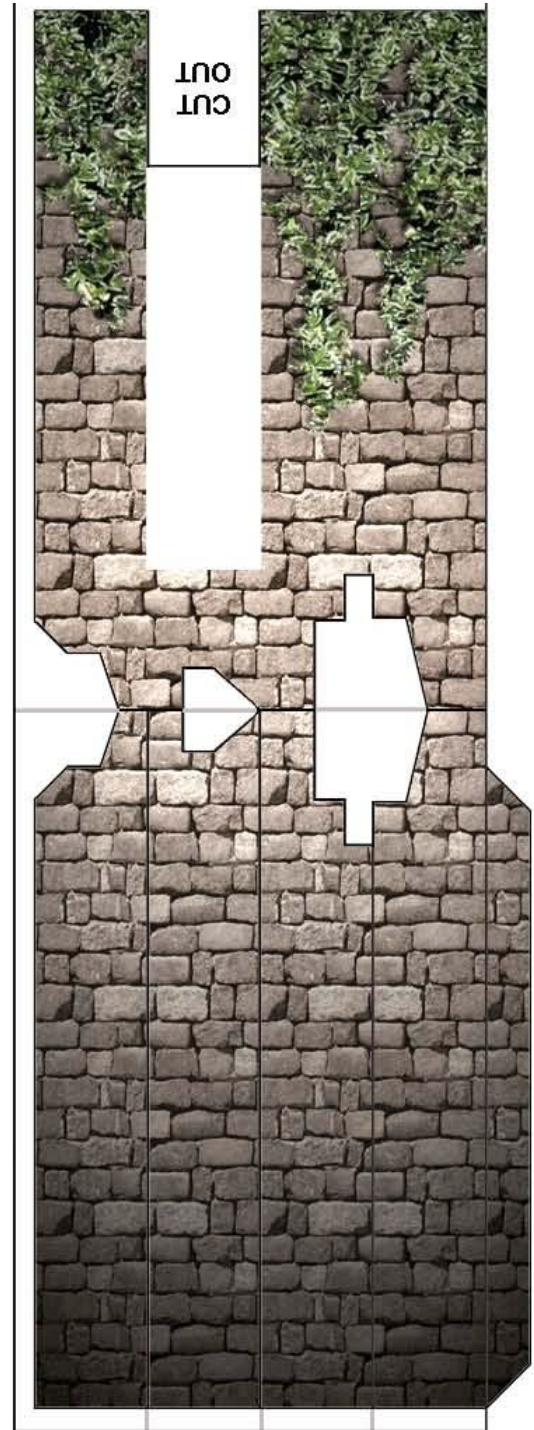
The Battle for Femur Lake

A Mighty Armies Battle Report

Matt Thomason
and Keith Donner

As a newcomer to Mighty Armies, I felt it'd be a good idea to write an introductory game battle report from that standpoint - rather than jumping in with extra rules and units. Keith and I sat down with a just the contents of two boxed armies - no additional units, no special rules, nothing "advanced" whatsoever. Then, in order to get the feel just right for the battle report we threw ourselves in at the deep end with only a cursory look at the rules beforehand.

Matt's Orcish Horde

★	Warlord		Goblin Wolf Riders (2)
☆	Shaman		Black Orcs (2)
	Orc Horde (3)		Orc Archers (2)
	Goblin Horde (2)		

Keith's Wild Elf Host

★	Lord		Spearmen (5)
	Archers (4)		Forest Horsemen (2)

Warlord Grokk squinted into the distance. The elven settlements were somewhere nearby, but they had this annoying way of hiding in the forest until you were practically on top of them. Grokk truly hated the forests.

Frowning, he turned to his shaman. "Veruk, advise me."

"This most humble shaman pales into insigificance before Mighty Warlord Grokk, what possible use could such worthless advice be to one who knows everything?"

Grokk brought the flat of his hand up with surprising speed for such a hulking brute. The resulting slap from connecting with the back of his shaman's head caused a flock of blackbirds a mile away to startle in fright.

"Arrrrghhh! Erm, on the other hand this humble shaman is ever Warlord Grokk's servant and will as always give answers without delay. As our quarry is so elusive in their home, I would suggest taking territory they have a dependence on, and forcing them to come to us. There is a lake half a mile to the south, and no other source of water closer than a days walk in any direction - surely they must feel the need to drink some time..."

Grokk grinned. "Ready the warband. We move on Femur Lake."

Setup

We used a fairly simplistic scenery layout - a lake, a hill, and a clump of trees. Basically, whatever any beginning player could probably cobble together using paper, card, and a pile of books. We also decided the lake was deep and impassable.

Orc Deployment

I lost the roll for deployment and had to deploy first. Not really wanting to sit and study unit statistics before the game I deployed my Warlord in the most logical position - the centre, along with the Shaman.

The orc horde I split into two groups of two units, covering the left and right flanks. The goblin horde were deployed in front of the warlord and would likely act as a throwaway shield.

I deployed the orc archers behind the hill, with the idea of getting them a good vantage point over the battlefield, while the goblin wolf riders were deployed ahead of the warlord and his goblin bodyguard - I wasn't quite sure where they were going yet but I meant to charge them across the battlefield early to take out whatever was causing the most threat. Finally, the black orcs were deployed on the lake side of my lineup - mostly because there was an empty gap to fill there!

Elf Deployment

With less choice in units than the Orc force, I felt I had some kind of tactical advantage over Matt in that I had less new unit types milling around in my head to work out how to use. I deployed my elven lord in the forest, along with the forest horsemen - these were the elite of my force and wanted them in cover until I knew what was going on.

I went for a more traditional approach with the rest of my force, with the spearmen lined up just ahead of the archers. Perhaps an old-fashioned march across the map in ranks would work out well?

Yes, this also meant I'd ignored my archers scouts ability - but being a traditionalist I wanted them with the bulk of my army.

The runner was out of breath by the time he reached Lord Qael'itha, pain showing obviously on his features.

He just managed to blurt out a single sentence before gasping for breath. "My lord, Orcs!"

"What?"

The runner's face was pale, and he struggled to take a deep breath

"Orcs!"

"Imbicile, be silent and tell me what you mean!"

The runner sank to his knees, a puzzled look crossing his face as he tried to work out how to tell Qael'itha what was going on while still remaining silent. Eventually desperation led him to open his mouth again.

"Femur Lake. Orcs. In force."

"Ah. So it appears our old foes are once more upon us. So much for living peacefully in the forest, being at one with nature, and generally not having to risk life and limb in unnecessary battles. Well, I suppose we'll have to assemble the army. Runner, go to the outlying villages and inform them we are in need of troops.... Runner? Do you not hear my command! Rise to your feet and fetch me my army!"

The runner lay prostrate at Lord Qael'itha's feet, blood seeping from the black arrow embedded in his back.

"Damn it all. Somebody remove this mess, and fetch me another runner!"

Orc Turn One

This time I won the roll, so I got to move first. Rolling again, I found myself with four move points.

We had read about the grouping rule in the rules sheet, but it wasn't clear at the time whether units could begin grouped or not - we both agreed that they could, or the first couple of turns were going to consist of nothing but grouping up units.

I'd made eight groups at the beginning of the game - and was regretting the decision already. I may have the flexibility of moving units around individually, but I'd managed to cripple my movement rate from the very beginning.

Two of my movement points went into advancing my Orc Hordes down the flanks. Another was used to advance the archers up the hill into a firing position, while the last was used to move the shaman up behind them.

Elf Turn One

I was in a far better position than Matt when it came to groups - I'd already formed my army into three groups plus the lord on his own.

With three movement points I could move all but one unit. I first opted to move my lord towards the right flank - away from the orc archers and casters. The other two points were spent on advancing my wall of spearmen and archers.

While this left my cavalry unused, I was quite happy to keep them in reserve, safe in the trees. I'd also ensured that Matt's ranged units were going to be of no use whatsoever in the immediate future, and had to suppress a chuckle at this.

Elf Turn Two

Things were certainly going my way. With another three movement points at my disposal, I decided to push forward a little with my forest horsemen - not enough to get into shooting range, but enough that I may be able to choose to do so next turn.

Again I pushed forwards with my spearmen and archers with the other two points - it appeared that conflict would be inevitable next turn!

As luck would have it, my archers were now within shooting range...

Consulting the shooting rules, however, I discovered that it wasn't possible to fire through my own spearmen. The most basic of mistakes, and I should really have read up on it before wasting my archers in that formation - D'oh!

Orc Turn Three

Five movement points - things were looking up at last.

My black ord/orc horde group advanced into the waiting elven spearmen. We would find out shortly if the sounds of elven bones being broken I was imagining was a premonition of things to come or just wishful thinking.

My shaman moved into a better position for observation, alongside the orc archers.

Orc Turn Two

One lousy movement point...

Feeling more than a little cheated, I moved my black orcs up to support the orc horde on my left flank.

The goblin wolf riders, unused so far, started to charge down the middle of the battlefield. I was hoping to use them as shock troops more than anything else, and distract Keith from the real threat. The only problem was I hadn't quite decided what the real threat was going to be yet... but the plan was certainly a work in progress!

Finally, my orc warlord and his accompanying goblin unit followed behind the wolf riders - at a slightly slower pace, of course.

Another basic mistake had been made here - my black orcs, by far the better fighters, were at the back of the group and were not in base contact with the enemy. At least they were able to lend their higher support stats to the close combat roll, though.

With modifiers, my close combat roll came to 17. Keith got a 10. I got to wipe out one of his elven spearmen units, but the other three survived. Consulting the rules again, it appeard the survivors would be driven back... and without space to do that (the archers behind them were in the way, as were the lake and table edge) the entire group was destroyed!

Elf Turn Three

Eek! My entire regiment of spearmen had disappeared, just like that. I could only afford to lose another three units before I automatically lost the game.

With three movement points, all of my remaining groups could be moved. However, I was pretty happy with the position my archers were in and used the third point to instead cast *Lightning* on the oncoming wolf riders. Alas, my roll of 1 failed to do anything.

Meanwhile my archers opened up on the orc horde units in front of them, and one went down to the hail of arrows.

The forest horsemen also drew their bows to bring down a volley of arrows on the orc archers, removing both units from the battlefield.
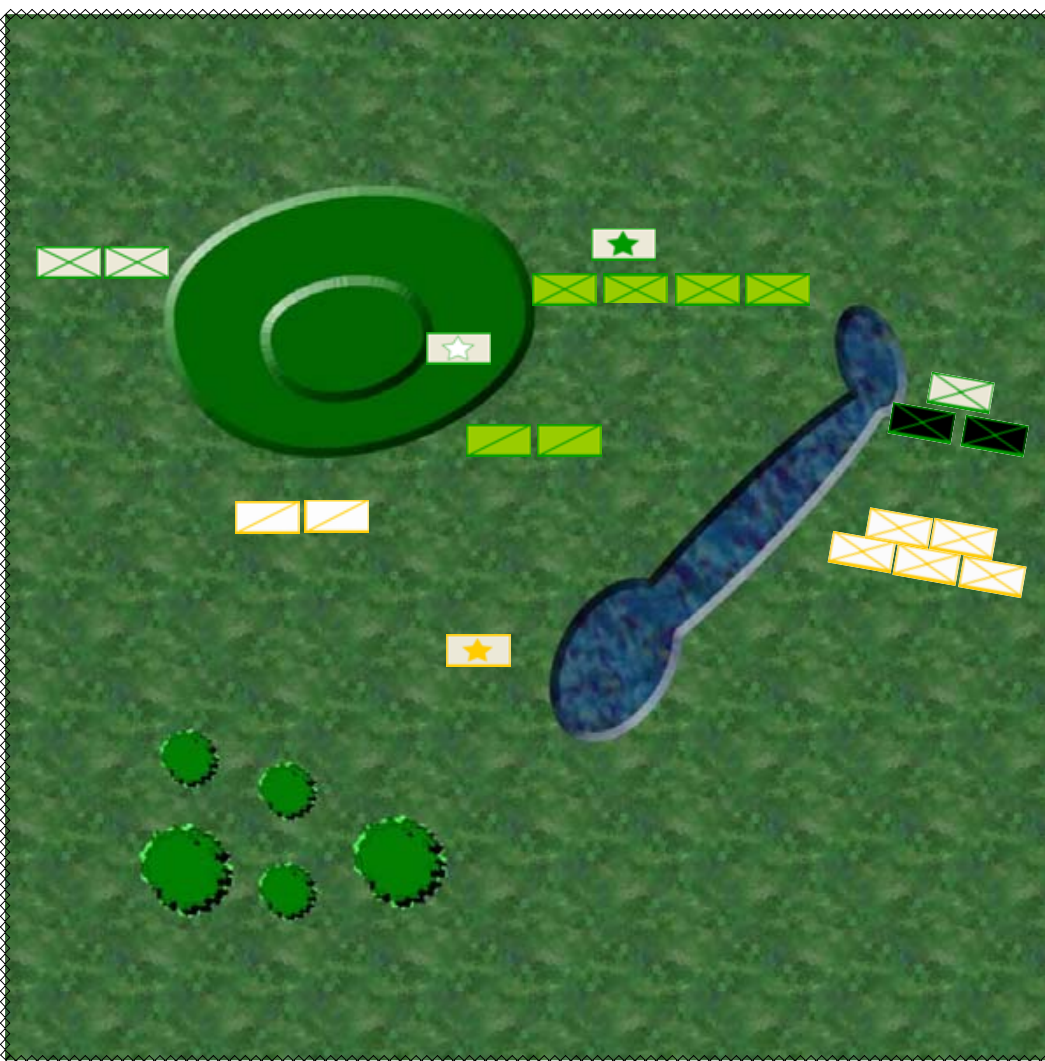
Orc Turn Four

Three units down, but I was close to winning now. A lucky six gave me what I thought would be all the MPs I'd need to finish off Keith's elves.

My shaman opened up by moving to the top of the hill and raining lighting down on both forest horsemen units (for a total of 3MPs used), killing one unit.
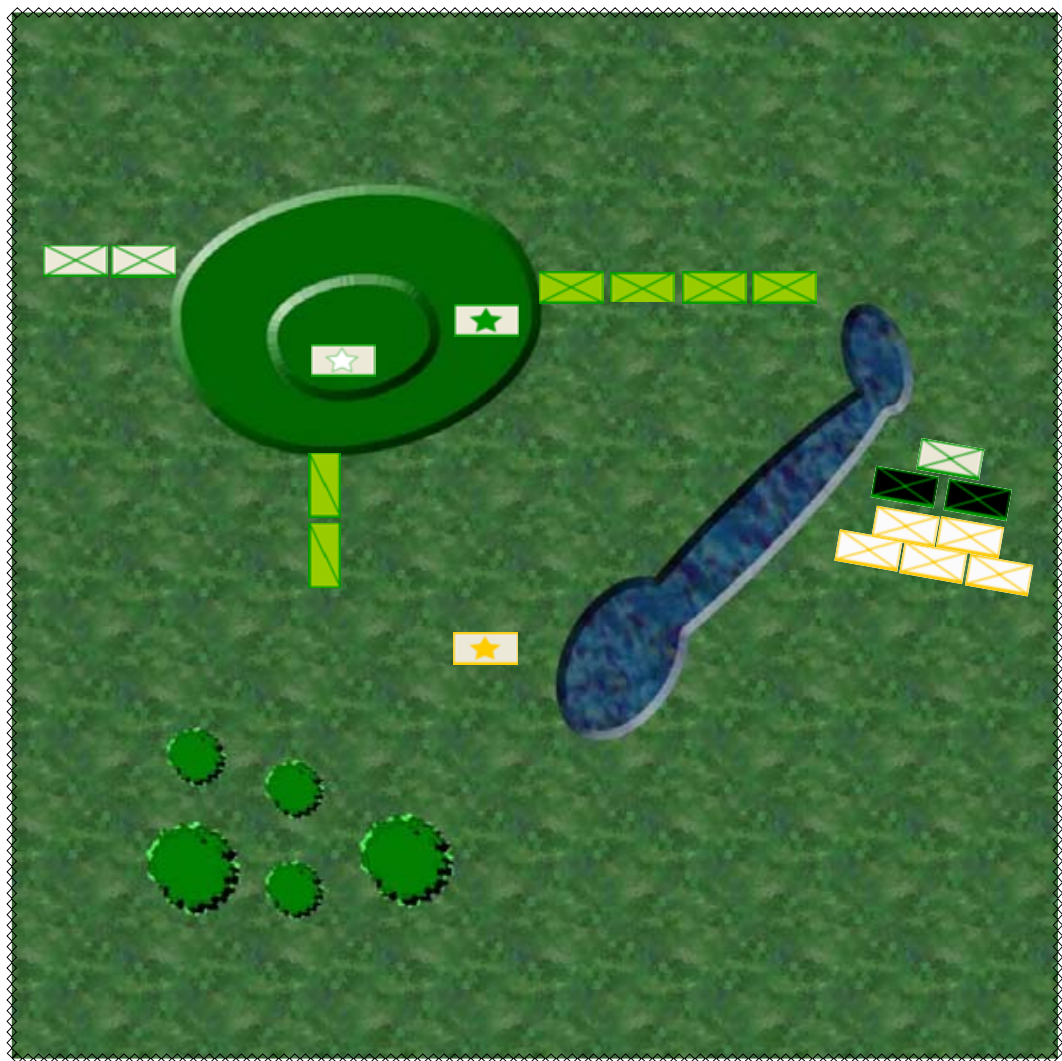
The wolf riders charged the remaining unit of horsemen, hoping to eliminate them in close combat.

The black orcs and orc horde charged into the elven archers.

Finally I moved my warlord onto the hill, hoping to skirt around the goblins and engage the elven lord if necessary next turn.

Another lucky six saw my wolf riders score 10 in close combat, while the surviving forest horseman unit got just a 4, seeing his removal from the table. Only one more kill and I'd win the game.

Black orcs and orc horde scored a 13 against just a 10 from the elven archers - giving me the one last kill I needed.

Conclusion

A fast-paced, fun, easy-to-play game. Some silly mistakes that could have been avoided if we'd actually bothered reading the rules properly before starting the game, but they were tactical rather than rules errors - We were both impressed by how easy the game was to play from zero knowledge, and couldn't wait to arrange a rematch and try out different armies!

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