Sailing the Wide Accountant Sea

A corporate Laserburn campaign
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Material needed to play

A copy of the Tabletop Games 'Laserburn'. The scenario ideas presented here could also be used for Imperial Commander. A copy of the free supplement 'Forces of the Merchant Barons'- posted on the laserburn yahoo group, would help with background etc.

Background

Each player in the campaign represents the head of a Merchant Baron's black ops section. They have a budget that is allocated at the start of the campaign and must be successful in their missions to be allocated more funds. With their budget, each player must recruit troops and buy equipment. They will send their troops on missions and, if successful, will receive a larger budget allocation because it is the custom of the Barons to reward success.

Set up

At the start of the campaign each player must name their company and decide what the corporate logo and colours are; proper branding will establish the company in the consumer's mind and enhance success in all things.

All players are allocated an initial budget of 8000 credits. This money is used to buy characters and equipment. They do not have to spend it all immediately and it may be wise to save some money for later. Any money not spent is in the bank.

A motley band of hired guns approach their objective

Characters are bought using the characters from the Laserburn rules or from the Merchant Barons supplement. The points cost of the character is equal to the cost in credits to hire them.

The standard rules for purchase of equipment are used. When rolling for the availability of equipment, the availability is rolled once and that result applies to all players in that round of purchasing. E.G. at the start of the campaign Bob wants to buy a job lot of Laser Rifles. He rolls the dice and the result comes up that they are available. This means that all players can buy Laser Rifles at this point, and that none of the other players have to roll to see if they can get their grubby little mitts on them. If Bill then joins the campaign at a later date, he will have to re-roll for availability because he is not taking part in the first round of purchasing.

Missions

Once players have bought their initial forces, the campaign moves on to playing missions. This is how the players earn their keep. Missions are always directed towards enhancing your own company, preferably to the detriment of one or more other companies. When it comes time to play missions, players should pair off and choose a scenario. They then play that scenario and the winner reaps the rewards. Missions are defined in terms of Budget, Objectives and Reward.

Redemption fanatics defend an outpost bunker

Budget

The Budget for the mission determines how much each player is allowed to allocate in terms of troops and equipment to a particular mission.
If a player exceeds the budget, then the difference between the value of their force and the budget is deducted from their Reward for being spendthrift (merchants do not like spendthrift employees!) should they win the scenario.
Conversely, if a player's force is valued at less than the budget, then they will add the difference between their force's value and

the budget to their final Reward if they win, because merchants like employees who can manage their money properly.

Both players choose their forces secretly so that neither will know how much each is actually allocating to the mission. Generally speaking the player whose force is of lower value should be the defender in any scenario.

Objective

The Objectives are the means to winning a scenario. It is possible to set up a scenario with multiple objectives so that both players can have a limited degree of success. Objectives can include killing or kidnapping a specific figure, destroying an enemy installation, hijacking an enemy vessel, destroying enemy facilities, etc. It must be clear at the outset what the Objectives are and the Reward for each Objective must also be defined.

Rewards

This is the value to the winning player of an Objective. All rewards are measured in credits and are added to a player's budget at the end of a mission. They may then be spent on new characters and equipment if desired. A typical reward for winning a scenario could be around 500 credits. If casualties are horrendous in your campaign or you just want to buy bigger and better equipment then you could increase this amount as you wish.

Post Mission Debriefing

After players at a campaign session have played a mission, they will need to record which characters are injured or dead. Dead characters are out of the game. Injured characters are not available for missions until healed. It takes 3 missions to heal a KO, 2 to heal a Serious Wound and 1 to heal a Light Wound. This is also the time to allocate experience to characters so that they can improve through play. All characters gain experience

Any characters that are left alive but wounded on the field of battle are captured by the player that holds the field at the end of the game. This means that it is possible for one player to win the game but to have characters captured by the loser if the objective is to exit the playing area with information or a kidnappee or similar. Captured characters may be ransomed back to their original owner for half their points cost in credits. The money is then allocated to the capturer's budget. The character does not return with their equipment; that must be bought again separately.

Equipment on bodies may be collected by the player who controls the field at the end of the game.

After all bodies have been looted and ransoms paid, it is time to think about how to spend your budget. You may need to recruit more characters or replace broken equipment. As with set-up, availability is rolled only once and all players may buy any equipment that is available.

Winning the Campaign

The player whose holdings (total value of characters, equipment and money in the bank) are the greatest at the end of the campaign wins. The campaign can be played for an agreed number of missions or an agreed amount of time (e.g. 3 months or 10 game sessions). It is always better to actually finish the campaign, so that it does not just fizzle out as that means that players are more likely to return to play another campaign. If you finish the campaign after 3 months, you could still start again with the same forces at a later date.
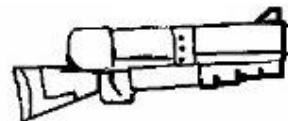
Sample Missions

These are just off the top of my head and are not guaranteed to be balanced in any way.

Raid

 Budget: 1000cr

Objective: Destroy enemy facilities

Reward: 150cr per facility destroyed / preserved

Playing Area: The playing area is set up with half a dozen buildings in its centre and as much other terrain as the players wish. Three of these buildings are designated as tactically significant because they contain supplies, trade goods or valuable bootleg organs. Destruction of these buildings and their contents will hurt the merchant's efforts to establish themselves in this system.

Set-up: The defender sets up anywhere within their own half of the table. They may not move until one of their figures has line of sight to an enemy figure. The attacker enters the playing area on Turn 1 or any time thereafter. Not all of the attacker's figures must enter at the same time.

High Explosive Charges: The attacker is allocated 4 high explosive charges with which to destroy the objectives. These must be placed in the relevant building and the timer set.

Each charge must be given to a character. If that character is KO'd or killed another character can pick the charge off their body.

The character then has that long to exit the building before it detonates. Any figures in the building when it goes off will suffer attacks as if they were in Area A of a high explosive grenade.

Game End: The game ends when the attacker has exited all troops that can move from their own table edge, or when all of the attacker's troops are too badly wounded to complete the mission, or are dead.

Piracy

Budget: Attacker 1500cr
Defender 1000cr (in addition to their normal team, the defender
gets five ship's crew (=conscript/raw recruit) free. They are unarmed)

Objective: Capture the merchant ship

Reward: 500cr for holding the ship at the end of the game

Playing area: A merchant ship. Traveller has many suitable floor plans or you could build one using Worldworks Games sets or Hirst Arts moulds. (There are also some 15mm starship floorplans in the files section of the laserburn webgroup)

Set-up: The defender sets up their figures anywhere in the ship, except for in the airlock(s) or cargo hold. The attacker has breached the airlock and/or the hold of the merchant ship and may set up their figures in those areas as they wish.

Game End: The game ends when one player has complete control of the ship, either by killing or KO'ing the opposing troops, or because the other player has surrendered.

Other Mission Ideas

Kidnap/Rescue: One player must get to a designated figure and escort it from the table.
Convoy: One player is escorting a convoy, when the other ambushes it, with the intention of stealing the cargoes.
Assassination: A designated figure must be killed or protected.

Downed Shuttle: This is a race to recover a data pod with important shipping information from a crashed shuttle in the centre of the playing area.

Espionage: One force must break into the other's compound and spend a turn or two downloading data from a secure terminal there and then get the data home.

There are plenty of other ideas that would fit this background. Be imaginative.