



# STEAM POWERED MINIATURES COMBAT

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When we sat down to decide which battle reports to include in this issue of Fictional Reality IK: Warmachine was already pretty firmly planted in my mind. Between the figure reviews and the demo rules that were published in the previous issue and the new artwork that I've seen (some of which is in this issue's Concept Art section) the deal was pretty much sealed and all I needed was an opponent. Knowing that Brian had a set of miniatures, thankfully it was the opposite set of one that I had, I set out to secure what I expected to be a pretty enthusiastic "yes" at the proposition of playing in a game of IK: Warmachine.

### Brian's Initial Thoughts

When Mark asked me to participate in a battle report for IK: Warmachine I jumped at the chance. I had gotten my hands on a set of the **Protectorate of Menoth** models: one warcaster (High Exemplar Kreoss), two light warjacks (Repenter and Revenger) and two heavy warjacks (Crusader and Vanquisher). I thought the models looked pretty spiffy and the quick start rules seemed functional. Most of all, doing a battle report gave me incentive to put paint to model.

The first thing I did was sit down and compare my **Protectorate** forces to the models that Mark would be playing: **Cygnar**. I didn't have to worry about what models Mark could bring, as the Cygnar force was comparable to mine: warcaster, two light warjacks and two heavy warjacks. After looking at the profiles for the **Cygnar** warcaster and 'jacks I was a bit disconcerted. The Cygnar group fielded more ranged weapons as well as having longer ranges than my **Protectorate** 'jacks. The advantage was further increased by a spell (Snipe) that increases the range of shooting attacks. To make matters worse this spell can only be used by a **Cygnar** warcaster. Another problem I noticed was that, for the most part, the Cygnar models had a higher rate of movement than did my force. A minor problem would be that Mark's models were slightly harder to hit than mine.

So, what did I have going for me? First: I have a ranged attack that has a 4" area of effect. Second: **Protectorate** models can do more damage in hand-to-hand combat. Third: My guys are sturdier, with a higher Defense characteristic and/or more structural boxes. Fourth: My warcaster has one more point of Focus than his **Cygnar** counterpart (7 as opposed to 6 for the **Cygnar** 'caster). This extra Focus looked to be my biggest asset. It would allow me to control my 'jacks from farther away, assign more Focus points and cast

more spells over the course of the game than Mark would be able.

How to take advantage of my advantages? I would deploy my models apart from each other to keep Mark from hitting more than one if he used Arcane Blast. Arcane Blast is a spell with a 3" area of effect. The rest of my plan was fairly simple: cast Blur (-3 to hit with ranged attacks) on 3 of my four warjacks and try to get into close combat with the **Cygnar** 'jacks as quickly as possible. I especially wanted to watch for Mark getting 2 or more of his warjacks close together. This even would allow me to make use of the Flame Launcher (range: 9", power: 13, AoE: 4") or the Blazing Star (a morning star that can hit multiple targets in close combat). All that was left to do was see if my plan would come together.

### Mark's Initial Thoughts

When we agreed on where and when to play I certainly did take a look over the stats that will make up Brian's models but I didn't sweat it too much. I'm not saying that Brian's concerns were unjustified, just that it didn't bother me as much that the two sides of troops were not "even" across the board. If I wanted that I would just play with two groups of the same models. Many times I take the approach of seeing how it works in the game before worrying about it. Brian is usually quite smart in trying to get some of that worry out of the way ahead of time and can try to compensate for what happens during the game a bit more easily. Ah, I'm really looking for an excuse to play with what are some of the best looking miniatures I've seen in a very long time and see if the demo rules for IK: Warmachine warrant moving on to the full-blown release of the game.

Since it was all that was available at the time we played this battle report game using the Menoth and Cygnar armies as presented in the IK: Warmachine demo rules.

I expect to do marginally better with shooting than in hand-to-hand combat, but I doubt that the game will be decided anywhere other than close up and dirty, with oil spewing and sparks showering.

We played on a 4' x 4' table with several rocky hills to climb up and onto, but most of the Warjacks had at least some kind of visibility over them due to the height of the models.



The map to the right details our deployment and then the first three turns of the game. After that each turn is on its own map.

## TURN 1

The game started off in a fairly predictable manner with both of us jockeying for position before heading in to smash stuff to smithereens.

### Brian

No assigned Focus

Crusader Moved up 4"  
 Repenter Moved up 5", even with the Crusader  
 Revenger Move up 5" by a rock formation  
 Vanquisher Moved up 4"  
 Kreoss Ran 10" over by a rock formation to get a bit of cover in case shots started to get fired early

### Mark

No assigned Focus

Defender Moved up 5"  
 Charger Moved up 6"  
 Lancer Moved up 6"  
 Ironclad Moved up 5"  
 Stryker Moved up a onto the rocks to get a better view of the oncoming 'jacks

## TURN 2

### Brian

No initially assigned Focus

Repenter Moved up another 5"  
 Crusader Ditto, but only a 4" move  
 Vanquisher Moved up 4" onto a rock formation  
 Revenger Also headed onto the rocks with the Vanquisher  
 Kreoss Took off on another run back towards the left and some more rocks

### Mark

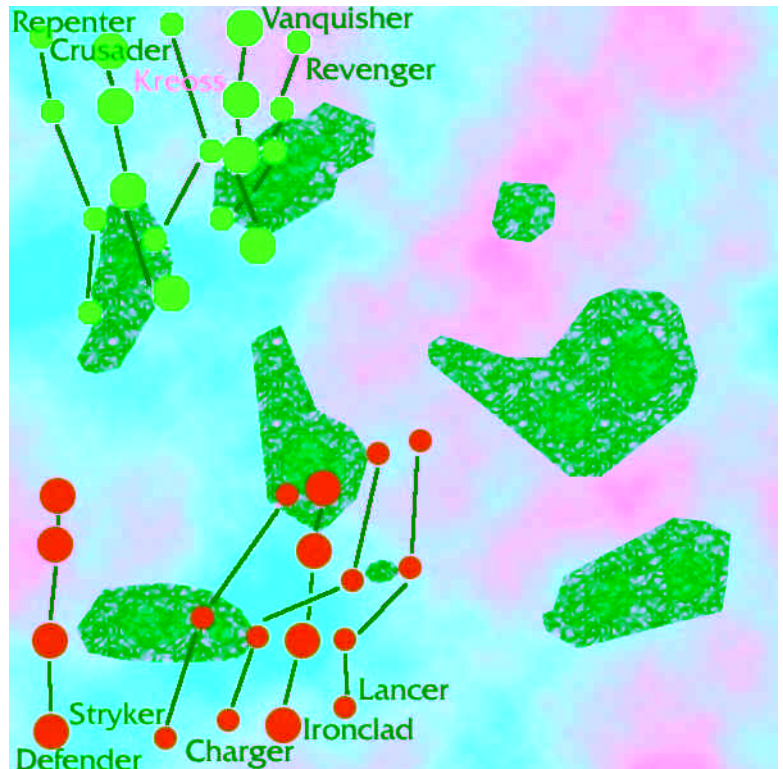
No initially assigned Focus

Defender Headed 5" forward, determined to close the gap between itself and the Menoth 'jacks  
 Stryker Stood where he was, not wanting to expose himself to too much of the enemy yet  
 Ironclad Headed right up the middle towards the hill...and the enemy  
 Charger and Lancer – Sort of grouped up and went towards the right side of the board to see if they might be able to get a jump on someone from the side

## TURN 3

### Brian

No initially assigned Focus



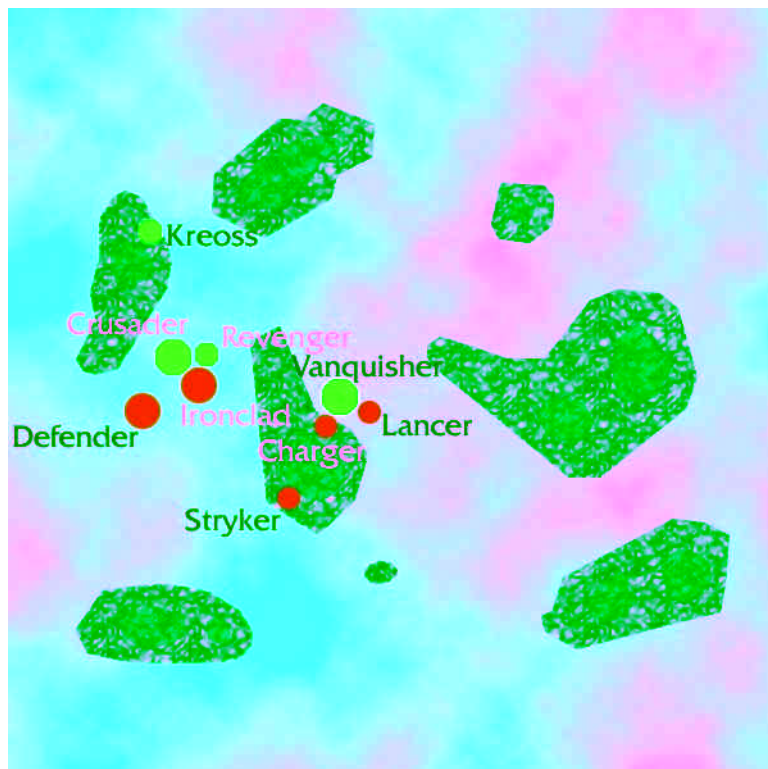
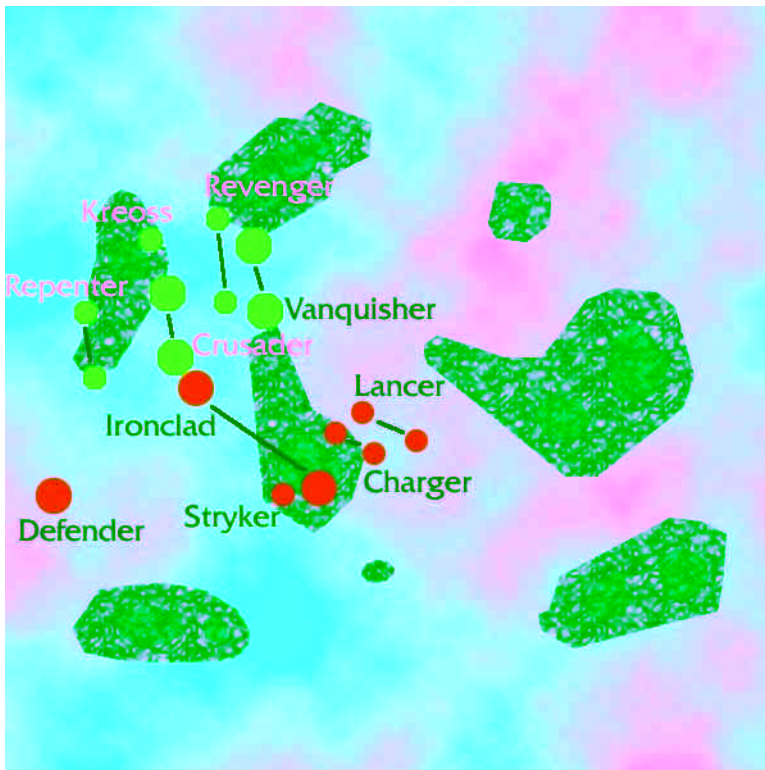
Vanquisher Moved up 4"  
 Revenger Moved up 5"  
 Repenter Moved up 5"  
 Crusader Moved up to the edge of the rocks that it was on  
 Kreoss Cast Blur (using 2 Focus for each casting) on the Vanquisher, Repenter, and Crusader

### Mark

1 Focus assigned to Defender  
 Kreoss Moves and casts Sniper on Defender  
 Defender Moved up 2" and fires at Repenter (-3 to hit him because of Blur) but gets to fire using 3d6 instead of 2 because of the assigned Focus die but misses anyway  
 Ironclad Moved up hill ready to charge in and pound something  
 Lancer Continued to move up around the side  
 Charger Moved up and took a shot at Kreoss, but missed him

It took us three turns to get into a position where I expect charges and lots of shooting to start taking place next turn. Even with logging each action for the battle report these turns went pretty quickly and the more we learn the game the faster they'll go.

Initial assignment of Focus wasn't too much of a concern in these early turns, but that started to change on turn 3 and I can see it becoming much more of something to consider as we close into butt-kicking range.



#### TURN 4 (end of turn on top-left map)

##### Brian

No upkeep paid on Blur and they all come down

1 Focus assigned to the Vanquisher

1 Focus assigned to the Repenter

Vanquisher Moves 4" and shoots Flame Launcher at the Charger. Shoots with 3d6 instead of 2 due to the Focus but misses. The deviating flame blast goes

blast goes 5" to 11 o'clock of its intended target and scorches the ground

Repenter Moves 5" and fire his Flame Cannon at my Defender. It also uses 3d6 instead of the standard 2 but misses

Revenger Moves 5" towards an open piece of ground

Crusader Moves 4", also in the area where the Revenger is heading

Kreoss Channels Arcane Blast spell through the Revenger, which hits my Charger and causes 2 points of damage to its Cortex

First blood, err, first oil to Brian.

##### Mark

1 Focus allocated to the Charger

Defender Shoots at Repenter with its Heavy Cannon and hits it for a whopping 10 points of damage ( $14 + 2d6 [12] - 16$  for its DEFense) which does plenty of damage including destroying its Flame Cannon.

Stryker Casts accelerate on the Ironclad.

Ironclad Puts the pedal to the metal and charges the Crusader. It hits it for 4 points of damage to the legs (movement)

Charger Shoots 2x (using the Focus assigned to it) at the Revenger and hits with both shots but both shots bounce off of its tough plating

Lancer Moves a bit more over on the flank

#### TURN 5 (end of turn on bottom-left map)

##### Brian

1 Focus allocated to the Vanquisher

Repenter Moves up to the Ironclad and takes a swing, but misses

Revenger Charges the Ironclad and hits for a whopping 12 points of damage Ouch!!!

Crusader Sits right where it is and hits the Ironclad for 8 more points of damage Double Ouch!!! And damn lucky to still be standing at all.

Kreoss Casts accelerate on the Vanquisher and then successfully casts System Shock on the Ironclad, channeled through the Revenger

Vanquisher Moves up to the Lancer and Charger and starts swinging around the Blazing Star. It uses the Focus to add to his 'to hit' roll with the Blazing Star and hits both enemies, the Charger for 8 points and Lancer for 5

### Mark

Ironclad Sits around doing nothing because of the System Shock it got hit with

Defender Charges the Repenter and hits for 12 points of damage. Its other arm and movement are now gone and it's effectively out of the game

Lancer Hits the Vanquisher for 1 very piddly point of damage to its Cortex

Charger Sees how pathetically the Lancer did and tries to show him up by hitting the Vanquisher for 4 points of damage to the left arm

Stryker Nails the Vanquisher with System Shock and then tries to cast Arcane Shield on the Defender, but the 'Jack is out of the spell's range

### **TURN 6** (end of turn on top-right map)

### Brian

2 Focus allocated to the Revenger

2 Focus allocated to the Crusader

Revenger Hits the Ironclad with bonus 1d6 to hit and damage (from Focus) for 2 points of damage

Crusader Moves to the Defender and takes a swing, also with a bonus 1d6 to hit and damage from Focus, and hits for 6 points of damage to its movement

Kreoss Runs 10" and casts Arcane Shield on the Vanquisher (+3 to its DEF)

Vanquisher Does nothing as it's system shocked

### Mark

2 Focus allocated to the Ironclad

2 Focus allocated to the Defender

1 Focus allocated to the Lancer

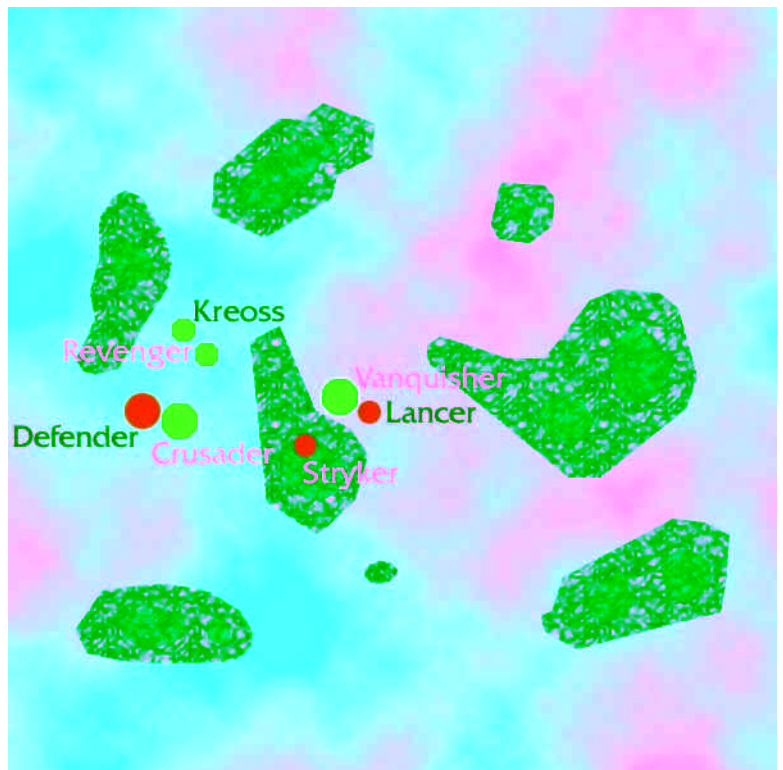
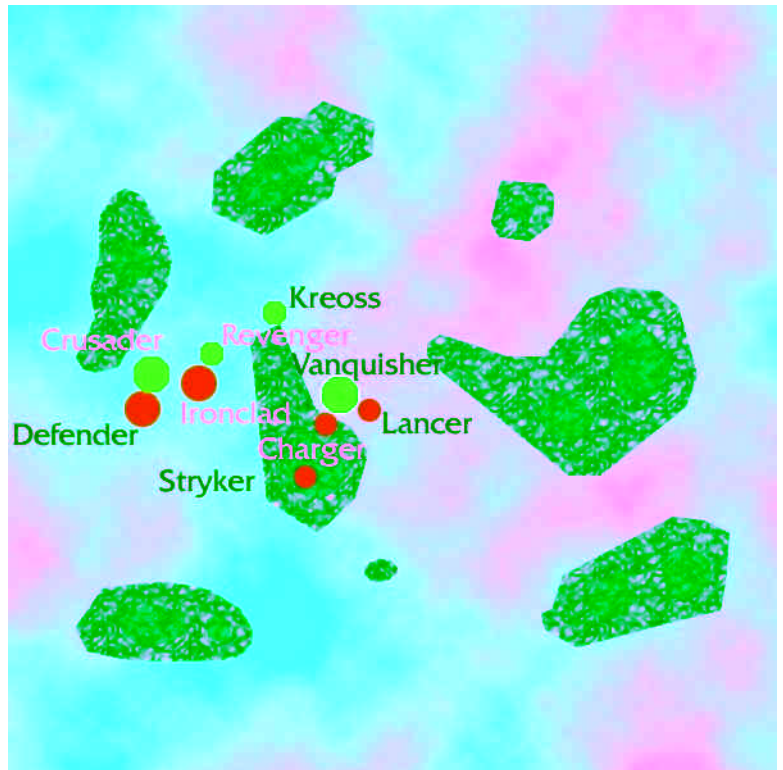
1 Focus allocated to the Charger

Ironclad Smacks the Revenger (+16d to hit and damage from Focus) for 5 damage to its Cortex

Defender Does the same number on the Crusader for 8 points of damage

Lancer Hits the Vanquisher, but for 0 damage after the Arcane Shield is considered

Charger Also hits the Vanquisher, thankfully for at least 1 points of damage after Arcane Shield is considered



### Turn 7 (end of turn on bottom-right map)

### Brian

1 upkeep F for Arcane Shield on Vanquisher

2 Focus allocated to the Vanquisher

2 Focus allocated to the Revenger

2 Focus allocated to the Crusader

Vanquisher Swings his Blazing Star at the Charger and Lancer. It misses the Lancer but nails the Charger for a huge 12 points of

damage spread across several areas.  
Oh, so disabled

Crusader Swing at but missed the Defender

Revenger Hits the Ironclad for 8 points of damage

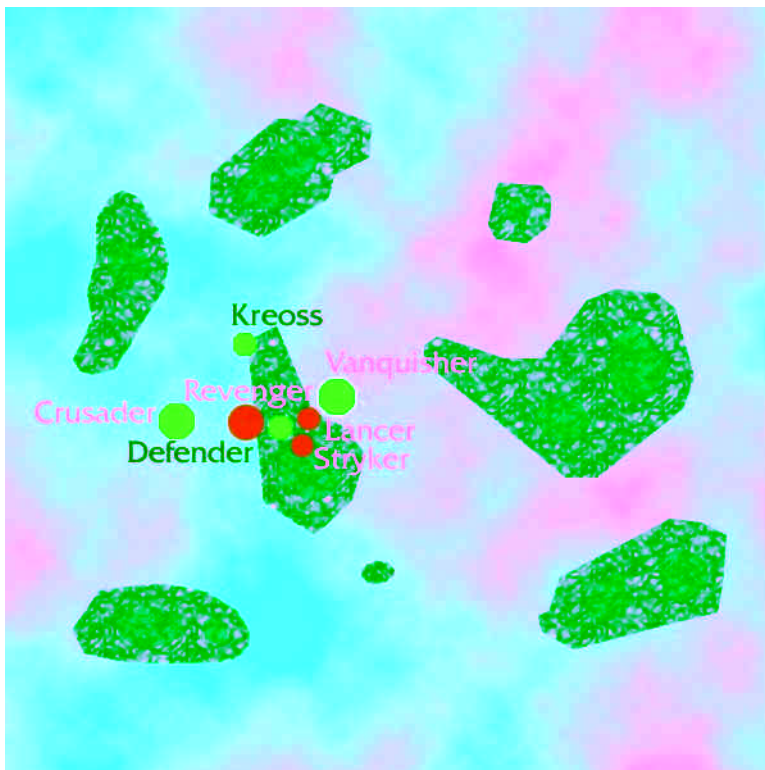
Kreoss Moved to avoid showering debris

### Mark

2 Focus allocated to the Defender

2 Focus allocated to the Lancer





## TURN 8 (end of turn on top-left map)

### Brian

Maintains Arcane Shield on Vanquisher

1 Focus allocated to the Crusader

2 Focus allocated to the Vanquisher

2 Focus allocated to the Revenger

Vanquisher Hits the Lancer 9 damage points of damage

Revenger Charges Stryker (yikes!) but misses

Kreoss Moves and then casts acceleration (1") on the Crusader

Crusader Backs up and performs a Slam attack on the Defender. It hits and pushes the Defender back 1" but causes no damage

### Mark

2 Focus allocated to the Defender

1 Focus allocated to the Lancer

Stryker Casts accelerate (3") on the Defender and takes another shot at Kreoss that misses

Defender Moves to the Revenger and hits it for 10 points of damage

Lancer Also heads over to the Revenger and hits for 3 points, destroying its Cortex

## TURN 9 (end of turn on bottom-left map)

### Brian

Upkeep on Arcane Shield

2 Focus allocated to the Crusader

2 Focus allocated to the Vanquisher

Vanquisher Moves to the Lancer and uses focus bonuses to hit it for 9 points of damage and disables the Warjack

Revenger Attacks the Defender and hits for 4 damage

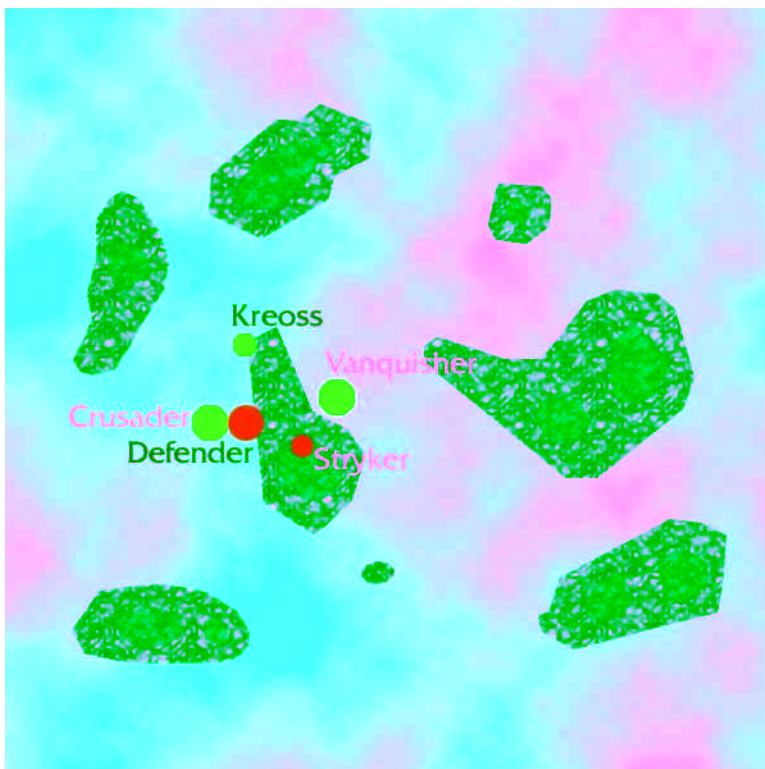
Kreoss Casts Accelerate (2") on the Crusader

Crusader Does a Slam attack on the Defender, hits it for 2 damage and pushes it into the Revenger

### Mark

Defender Hits the Revenger for 8 points and disables it

Stryker Charges the Crusader (say what!) and hits it for 1 point of damage



## TURN 7 (continued from previous page)

Defender Hits the Crusader for 9 points of damage and both arms are now gone

Lancer Hits the Vanquisher for 1 point of damage

Stryker Moves and takes a desperate shot at Kreoss but misses

## TURN 10 (end of turn on next page)

### Brian

Maintains Arcane Shield

2 Focus allocated to the vanquisher

Kreoss Casts Arcane Blast at the Defender and hits it for 2 points of damage

Vanquisher Charges the Defender and hits for 6 damage

Crusader Backs up a bit

## Mark

Defender	Moves back and shoots at Kreoss and hits for 9 damage
Stryker	Shoots at Keoss but misses

## Brian's post-game Musings

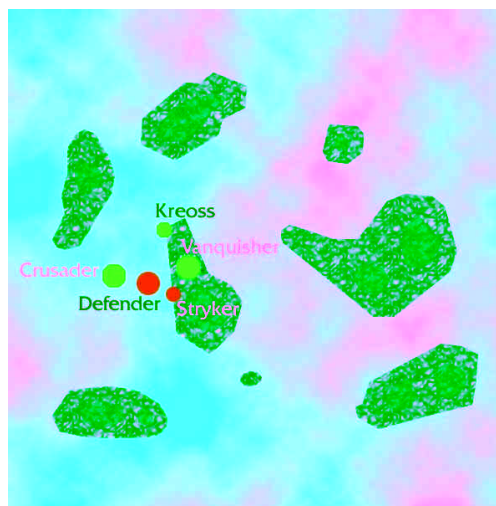
Praise Menoth! After a 10 turn game more Protectorate of Menoth models were still walking the battlefield than Cygnar models. What did I learn from this experience? No matter how many times you read the rules to a new game you are going to screw something up. But, after a couple of turns of getting past the learning curve of the rules, the game moved along quite steadily. My plan, as simple as it was, seemed to work out well. Despite some hatred from my dice I fared well. I weathered Mark's initial shooting and was able to move into hand-to-hand without taking much damage. My shooting was terrible. I didn't burn anything except some patches of grass. The Vanquisher, armed with a Flame Launcher and the Blazing Star, was my *Most Valuable Jack*. He was able to close with 2 **Cygnar** 'jacks, early, and beat the bejeezus out of them. Another important lesson: don't discount that extra point of Focus on the High Exemplar Kreoss. That single extra point allowed me to pay upkeep on Arcane Shield (+3 to Defense) for Vanquisher for the last four turns of the game. Arcane Shield: don't leave home without it! One slight bit of disappointment: I never rolled a critical hit with the Inferno Mace carried by Crusader. A critical hit with that weapon sets the target on fire. Also, my Repenter wasn't allowed to do much. He had a severe beating put on him by the **Cygnar** Defender.

The **Protectorate of Menoth** fared better than I expected. I expected to get pounded by ranged fire then finished off in close combat. But, the extra defense and extra structure boxes saw me through to the slugging-it-out part of the game. A few bad rolls almost had me in a lather. Rolling two 4s in a row on three dice when trying to hit is frustrating. As is rolling a 9 then a 10 on four dice when checking for damage. Some days the wheel of karma just runs you into the ground.

Overall I had a very enjoyable time. This game has whetted my appetite to see the full version of the rules when they come out. Between Mark and myself I believe we covered everything from the quick-start rules in our game. We shot at each other. We whomped each other upside the head. And we voodooed each other many of the spells supplied with the trial rules. If you have a chance to pick up some of these slick models, do yourself a favor and grab them. Talk a crony into doing the same thing and y'all give these quick-start rules a try. You will not be disappointed.

## Mark's post-game thoughts

I definitely have to give the nod to Brian. At the end of the game he had me beat, but it was close. During the game things could, and did, move back and forth a bit and it really could have ended up with either of us walking away the victor.



We picked up the game pretty easily and this 10-turn game could be played in under two hours if we had not been taking notes and working up diagrams for the maps. I do like the fact that we spent the first several turns moving into position instead of being stuck in immediately and

have the game over in around four turns. It was a slugfest and was great fun.

I see IK:W being suited for between 5-10 models since each has their own damage profile to keep track of. This can be done on a single sheet of paper and really won't take up any more room than a standard army list. I can't wait to play again. This was a great start to what should turn out to be a wonderful game.

Also, just as a point of reference, we used the first edition of the IK: Warmachine demo rules for this battle report.

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# BATTLE REPORT

## HUNDRED KINGDOMS

By now you've seen a Standing Orders article and reviews of lots of 100 Kingdoms miniatures in the pages of Fictional Reality so the time has come for a battle report. Chris and I decided to sit down and play a small game that will hopefully give you some insight into this new game from Black Orc Games. We went with a 500-point game that was to be played on a 4' x 4' table with sparse terrain (like you can see at the 100 Kingdoms website). All of the rules from the most up to date online rulebook (as of early FEB, 2003) would be used and any of the published army lists were fair game, but Chris and I went with what we had models for, which meant that I would be laying down some mad-monkey kung fu on his short order Chinese cooks.

## Anata no gosenzo sama ni kao o awase rare masuka!

### *Get ready to meet your ashamed ancestors!*

When planning a battle report for a new game, there is always an element of the unknown. What looks good on paper does not always work for in practice. Going into this game I did a bit of studying of the Bushido army list. The imagined sight of ranks of samurai always makes me smile. I have been a fan of Japanese feudal games for some time and another chance for the honorable warriors of the Emperor to see combat is truly a good day. I really liked the Wuxia Warriors and the Samurai Ogre's special rules. I found what I considered to be one of the drawbacks of the Bushido army, their expensive individuals with the command ability. In a 500-point game the mandatory Emperor is 86 points. Now granted he does cast spells, but this does not change that he is taking a sizable chunk out of this small army. This leaves me with 414 points left to spend. Ashigaru units are 28 points for ten men, and they negate the charge bonus when charged from the front. These bullet sinks should hopefully tie down the Simian foot troops while the samurai maneuver into place. Two units of Ashigaru come to 56 points, but with a CA of 6 I do not expect anything spectacular to come from these homely peasants but the pile of bodies tripping giant monkeys in armor. A unit of Samurai is a whopping 65 points though. For more than twice the cost of Ashigaru you get 2 wounds per model and a CA and DR of 8. They also have 2 attacks apiece making a unit of ten hitting roughly 8 times per activation while in hand to hand. Two units of these put me back 130 points for a total of 228 points ... halfway there. Looking at my

number of units (5) and my number of commands (3) I quickly made the choice to take a battle wizard. Besides having a whopping 12 spell points these versatile characters can also give commands. Many of the Bushido spells will enhance my current troops. A 2-point bonus to a unit's CA makes a big difference. The ability to unleash a huge chain lightning hitting every model in all enemy units within 12 inches with a MV attack of 12 is huge!! This wizard cost me 55 points and gave me two more command points. With a 173 points left to spend I took a greater look at the Simian army list. The Simian have an insanely high DR and all of their troops have more than one wound. Their weaknesses appear to be their slow movement (3 inches versus my 5 inches) and a very low LD value. Simian are immune to leadership checks caused by casualties, but have to take fear checks and checks caused by magical means as normal. My new tactic....scare 'em. The Samurai ogre's noxious ability causes units within 3 inches to take a retreat test. Two of these will set my army back a mere 28 points. Although immune to casualty checks, the Simian slow movement makes them very susceptible to missile combat. A unit of Bushido Bowman has a 20-inch range and put me back another 31 points. A unit of mounted archers and their scoot and shoot ability allow me to maximize my maneuverability and save those much-needed commands. This unit moves 10 inches and can fire at targets 20 inches away. A great buy at 43 points. With 71 points left and a severe deficiency in commands another battle wizard is in order. More of the above-mentioned firepower always helps as well as the total of 7 commands to give ever turn. 15 points left gives me a third samurai ogre or a hamoi priest. The hamoi priest has a little bit of magical punch (enough to enhance a squad), and can rally fleeing troops, an obvious pick in my opinion. A total of 499 points gets me 12 units with 7 commands. This definitely appears to be a difficult army to wield, but hopefully an effective one.

Christopher

## "You've got a monkey?"

Kingpin

If you haven't seen the movie, Kingpin, go out and rent it and you'll get it. Kids, get your parent's permission 'cuz I don't think it's exactly rated G.

Anyway, I have lots of monkeys, Simian troops to be specific and today was the day to march them onto the field of battle and make Chris' Bushido squeal like little

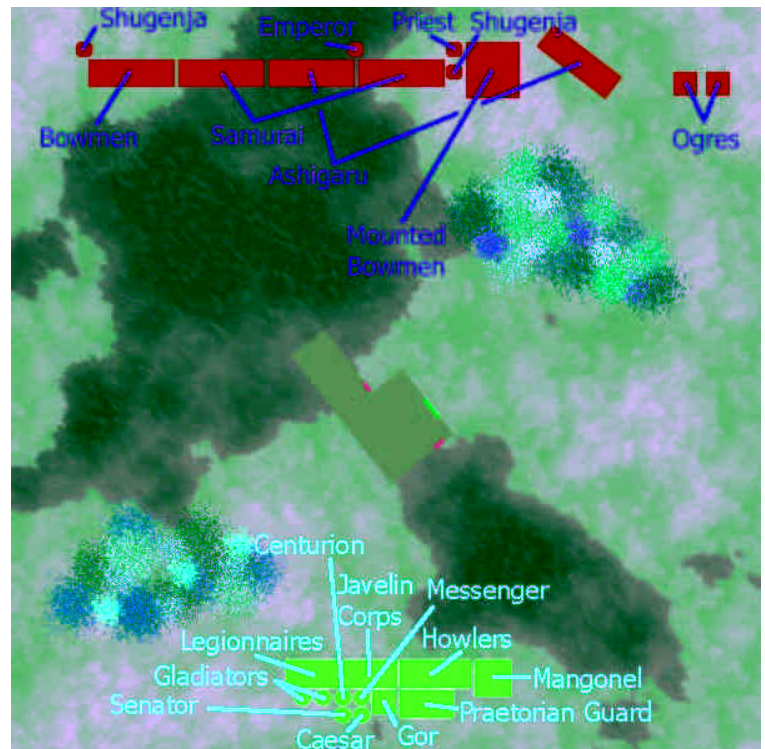
girls. Now, of course, that is easier said than done but since I have to start with a battle plan that will be it. I don't think that I can expect to lay down the same drubbing as in our Chronopia game last issue, but I can try.

In 100 Kingdoms, rules and army lists available for free on their website, you buy units in pre-set sizes (which differ from army to army) and individuals and monsters that come as single models. Siege equipment may have loaders and other attendants but these don't count as troops. In looking at the army list I quickly said to myself, "Just take one of everything!" which didn't seem like a bad idea especially for my first game of 100 Kingdoms. I would, in theory, be able to try out various tactics and also be flexible enough to deal with what Chris brings. My "one-of-everything" strategy gave me a unit of Legionnaires (6 models-26 points) and Javelin Corps (6 models-27 points) for my basic troops. With 2 hit points each and the 'No Retreat' special ability they make up a very tough core for the army. The missile range of just 10" for the javelins might be a bit short, but they have an Attack Value of 10, which is 4 higher than the puny arrows that Chris will be tossing around.

In the area of Veterans I'll have a unit of Praetorian Guard (6 models/68 points) and Howlers (8 models/102 points). The Praetorians are just insanely tough with 3 hit points and two attacks per model. When they hit something I expect it to go away, messily. The Howlers are the ultimate anti-cavalry troops and are one of only two troops in my army with any real speed behind them. They also have two attacks each and will be looking for some horse as a mid-battle snack.

The Giant Gor, a gorilla that probably weighs in at around 8,000 pounds is my other fast-mover and just needs to wade in and smash things like he's a strung out rock star. To make up a bit for my less than spectacular missile weapon troops I also have a Mangonel that can rain down four shots per turn at a range of 25" with an attack value of 12. Just like monkeys to be throwing poop around and I'll be tossing big giant steaming piles of it!

All right, on to characters. Caesar Octavian is really a "gotta-take" even though other models can fill in as the Warlord of the army. He's not super manley (apely?) but his command is needed. A monkey messenger will help with my rather low movement (in non-combat situations) and a Senator will fill in as my Warlord if Caesar meets with an untimely fate. A Centurion and Gladiator round out my "one-of-everything" strategy and they are both bad mo-fo's! I find that I still have points left over, oh joy. I toyed with the idea of extra messengers, but instead went with another Gladiator who will be called upon to put the sword to any Bushido that didn't bring me any Moo Shu Beef!



Above you can see our deployment and map layout. Chris won the Leadership roll and took the role of the 1<sup>st</sup> player for set-up and the rest of the game. We have a centrally located building and two section of forest (we agreed on half-move and obstructed LOS for the forests) and patches of grass broken up by large areas of flat dirt.

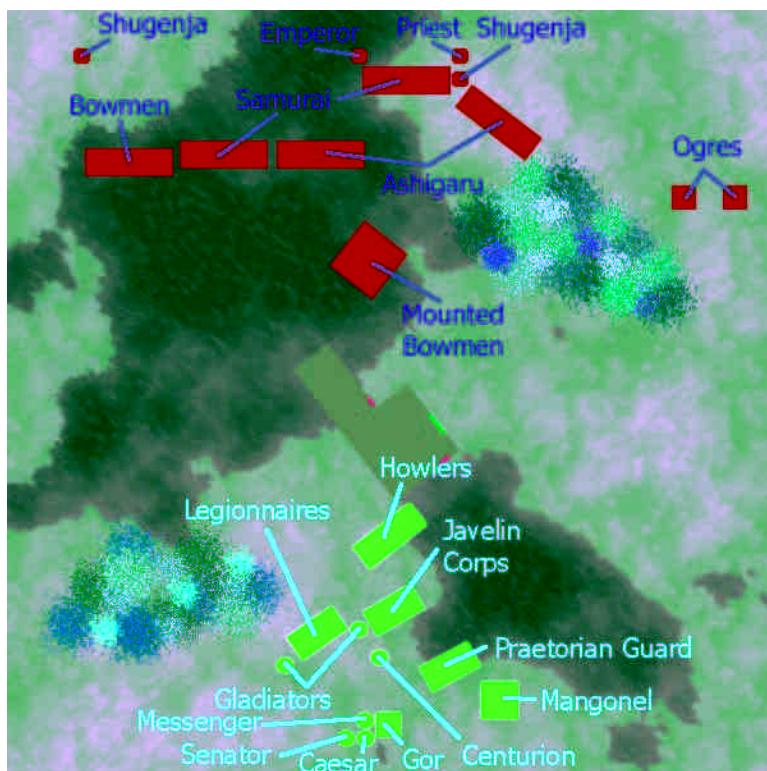
The Bushido were in much more of a standard line formation while my Simian were bunched together in an incredibly tight group. I decided early on that taking just a single messenger was definitely worse than taking two or three and might even work out worse than taking none at all. If I wanted enough units to benefit from Marching Orders I'd have to start using orders to run the monkey up with the other troops and still keep them relatively bunched together.

I was also starting to doubt my army selection at this early stage of the game. Being our first time playing 100 Kingdoms I decided to try the one-of-everything approach and hope to be able to adapt to a variety of situations. Working at a command point deficit (to be fair so was Chris) was already not sitting well with me and we hadn't moved a model yet. Of course, there's nobody to blame for that but myself so I'll see how I can make the best of the situation that I've created for myself.

## TURN 1 (next page-top)

With seven orders each and a ways to go before we got close enough to spit at each other I expected the first couple of turns to be a lot of movement and not too much else. Here's a rundown of our orders...



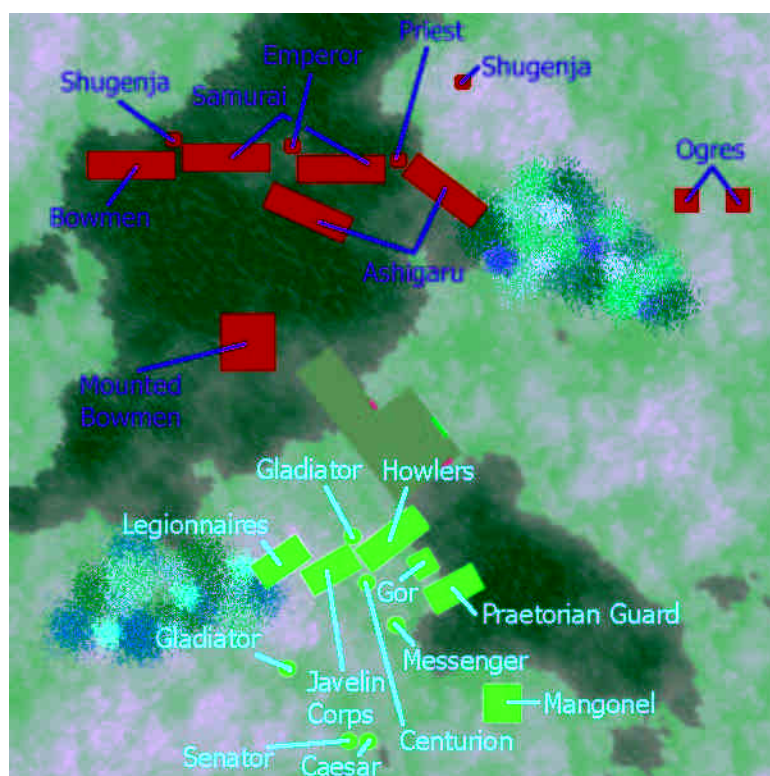


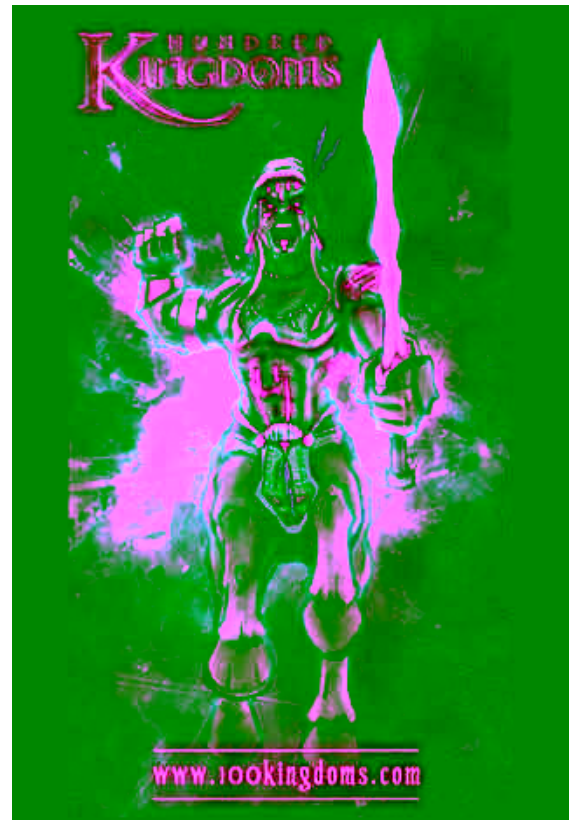
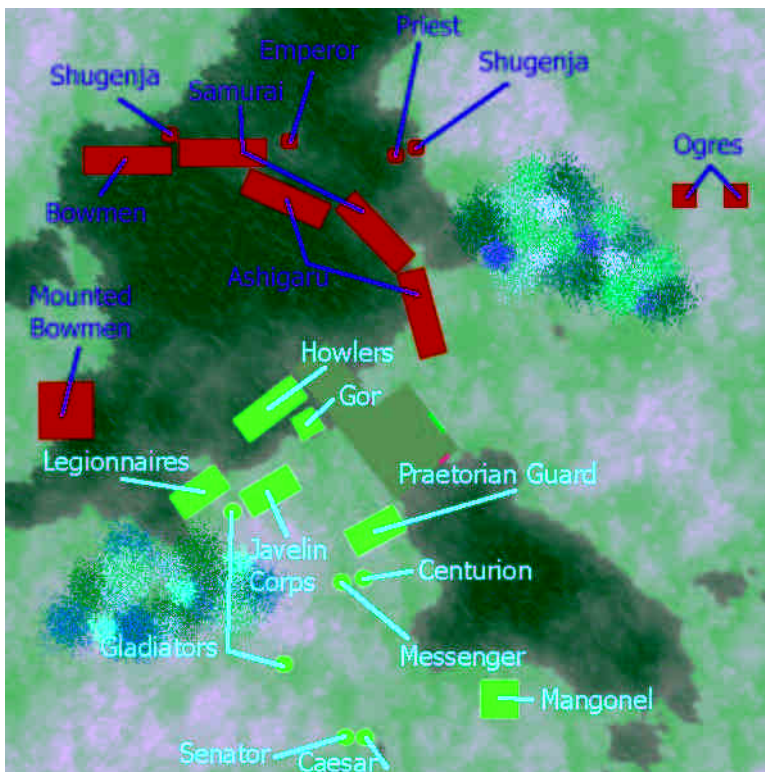
## TURN 2 (below)

- Order 1  
Chris The eastern unit of Ashigaru advances 5"  
Mark The Giant Gor has had enough standing around and runs up 12" under Marching Orders
- Order 2  
Chris The Shugenja on the west side advances 5" between the Bowmen and Samurai  
Mark The monkey messenger runs up 7" carrying important orders for the others
- Order 3  
Chris The second unit of Ashigaru advances 5"  
Mark Under Marching Orders the Praetorian Guard advances 5"
- Order 4  
Chris The Bushido Priest moved up 5" closer to the coming fray  
Mark Now back under Marching Orders the Legionnaires advanced 5"
- Order 5  
Chris The Mounted Bowmen run ahead 10" and shoot at the Howlers, scoring 3 hits but all 3 saves are made  
Mark Ordered to march the Gladiator advanced 7" along with the others
- Order 6  
Chris The Samurai in the center moved up 5"  
Mark With the messenger back in range the Javelin Corps marched ahead 5"
- Order 7  
Chris The Emperor moved ahead 5" between the two Samurai units  
Mark The Centurion moved up 5" into a position behind the Javelin Corps

- Order 1  
Chris One Ogre moved up 7"  
Mark Using Marching Orders the Javelin Corps advanced 5"
- Order 2  
Chris The second Ogre also moved up 7"  
Mark Also under Marching Orders the Simian Legionnaires advanced 5"
- Order 3  
Chris The Mounted Bowmen galloped up 10"  
Mark With the aid of Marching Orders the Howlers increased their movement to 12" and surged forward
- Order 4  
Chris The Bushido Bowmen marched up 5"  
Mark Like those before them the Praetorian Guard marched up 5" with the aid of Marching Orders
- Order 5  
Chris One group of Samurai advanced 5"  
Mark The first Gladiator headed up-field 7" with Marching Orders
- Order 6  
Chris The first unit of Ashigaru advanced 5"  
Mark The second Gladiator followed the same orders as the first.
- Order 7  
Chris The second unit of Ashigaru did also  
Mark Towards the impending fight he advanced

The first two turns went about as I had expected. A lot of movement and very little combat and that was ineffective bow-fire from the Mounted Bowmen. The command point deficit hasn't really impacted either of us yet so might not prove to be as bad as I thought.





### TURN 3 (above)

- |         |                                                                                                      |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Order 1 |                                                                                                      |
| Chris   | The turn started with a 5" Ashigaru move                                                             |
| Mark    | The Messenger ran up 5" to give more orders                                                          |
| Order 2 |                                                                                                      |
| Chris   | The Mounted Bowmen fired at the Howlers again (hitting twice and causing 1 wound) and then moved 10" |
| Mark    | Under Marching Orders the Legionnaires advanced 5"                                                   |
| Order 3 |                                                                                                      |
| Chris   | One Shugenja moved 5"                                                                                |
| Mark    | The Javelin Corps, also under Marching Orders, moved up 5"                                           |
| Order 4 |                                                                                                      |
| Chris   | A simple shift for one unit of Ashigaru                                                              |
| Mark    | Gladiator                                                                                            |
| Order 5 |                                                                                                      |
| Chris   | Following the example of the Ashigaru above a unit Samurai also just shifted                         |
| Mark    | Getting closer to the enemy the Howlers advanced another 12"                                         |
| Order 6 |                                                                                                      |
| Chris   | The Bushido Bowmen fired into the Howlers and hit three times with two wounds resulting              |
| Mark    | The Mighty Giant Gor ran up, still in range of the Messengers orders, 12"                            |
| Order 7 |                                                                                                      |
| Chris   | The other Shugenja cast Quicksilver on the already speedy Mounted Bowmen                             |
| Mark    | The Praetorian Guard continued their steady advance under Marching Orders                            |





Again, lots of movement with a little missile fire sprinkled in. This time around the Howlers didn't fare as well and are starting to feel the effects of pointed stick being sent their way.

#### TURN 4 (top-right)

Order 1

Chris Mounted Bowmen fire at the Howlers again (2 hits and 2 wounds) and then move 15"

Mark The Messenger needed to catch up to yell out more orders and moved up 7"

Order 2

Chris The Bushido Bowmen fired at the Howlers and score a couple of more wounds causing them to break

Mark The mighty Mangonel moved over 3" to get into firing position on the Mounted Bowmen

Order 3

Chris Ashigaru advanced 5"

Mark The Simian Legionnaires were only able to move up 3"

Order 4

Chris A Shugenja let loose with a Lightning Bolt that fries the remaining Howlers

Mark The Javelin Corps, the only ones under Marching Orders this turn, ran up 5"

Order 5

Chris A unit of Samurai do a quick shift over

Mark The Gladiator to the rear of the board moves up 5"

Order 6

Chris The other Shugenja moves over 5"

Mark The Praetorian Guard, out of range of the Messenger's orders, advance only 3"

Order 7

Chris The Priest does the same as the Shugenja above

Mark The Centurion plods ahead 3", now out of range of the Messenger's orders

**My grand blunder for the game came on turn 4. Moving the rear Gladiator forward gave Chris an almost free run towards the Senator and Caesar with his Mounted Bowmen. I fear that it will cost me the game.**

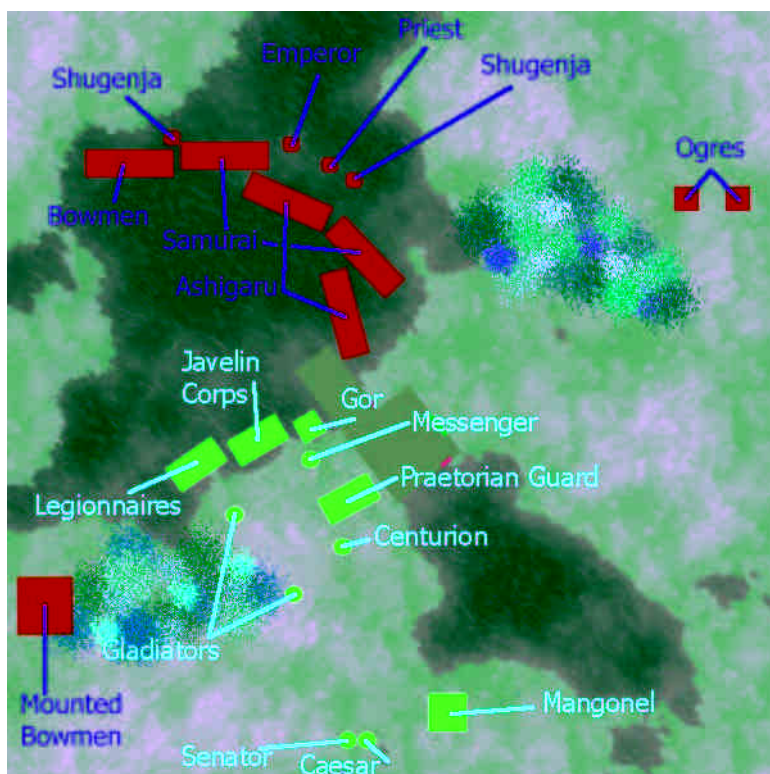
#### TURN 5 (bottom-right)

The Howlers take off for my deployment zone.

Order 1

Chris The Bushido Bowmen fire into the Javelin Corps and hit 3 times, causing 2 wounds

Mark Trying to get the most out the Marching Orders the Messenger shifts over a bit

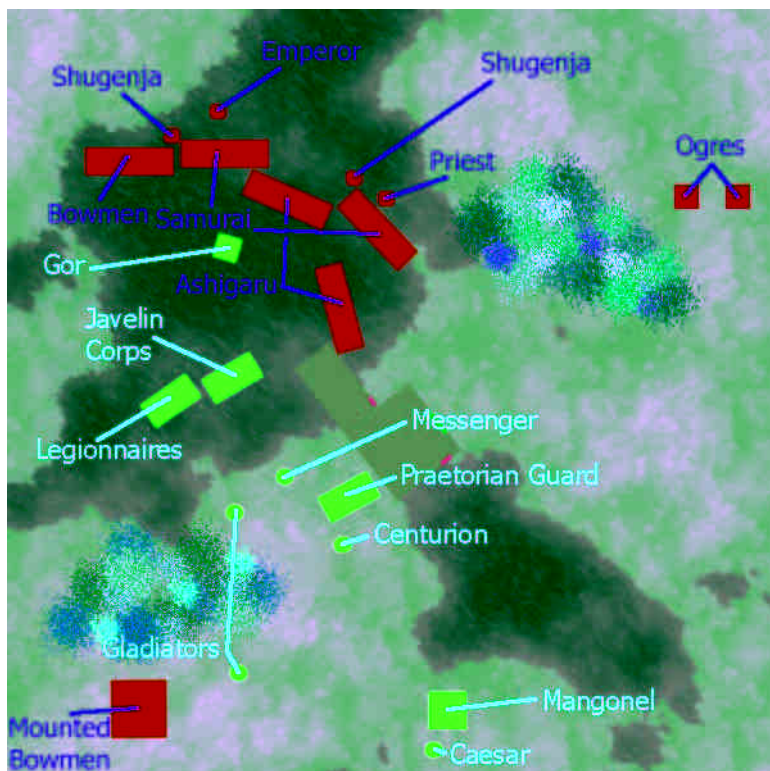


#### TURN 5 (continued)

Order 2

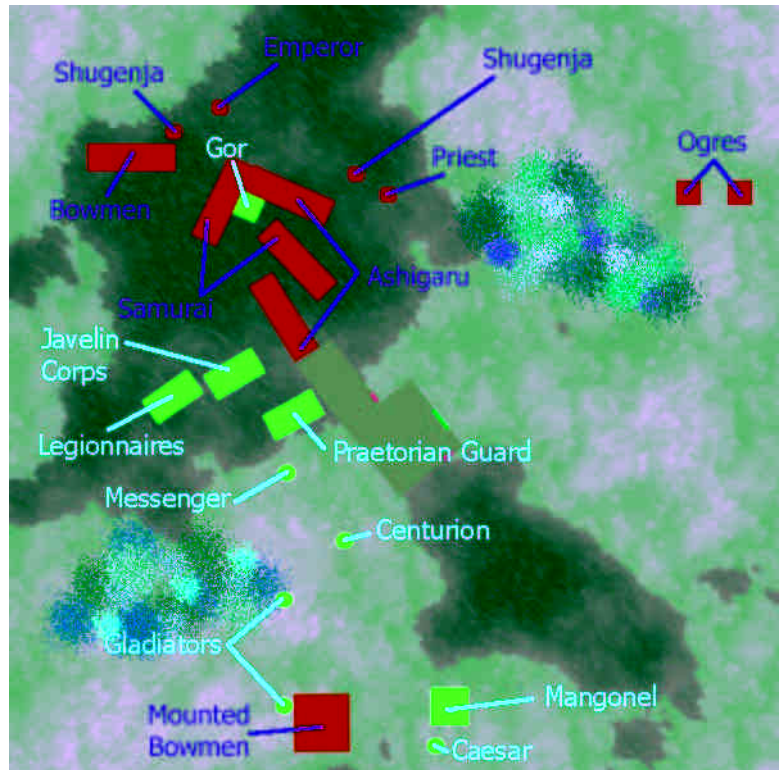
Chris The Mounted Bowmen head towards the Senator and let fly killing him on the spot

Mark The Mangonel tosses over huge piles of Great Gor poop at the Mounted Archers and kills one of them  
Yuck! What a way to go



## TURN 5 (continued)

- Order 3  
Chris The Priest took a 5" move  
Mark Beating feet, Ceasar moved 5"
- Order 4  
Chris One of the Shugenja backed up a bit away from the advancing Simians  
Mark Under Marching Orders the Legionnaires advances another 5"
- Order 5  
Chris The Emperor moved 5" towards the eastern edge of the battlefield  
Mark Running back to assist Caesar, a Gladiator ran 7" under Marching Orders back towards his own deployment zone.
- Order 6  
Chris A simple shift by a unit of Ashigaru  
Mark The Javelin Corps, also under orders, marched up 5"
- Order 7  
Chris The other Shugenja unleashed a Lightning Bolt into the Javelin Corps and caused ten hits and five wounds  
Mark The Giant Gor advanced another 12" towards the Bushido ready to smash 'em up



- Order 6  
Chris The other unit of Ashigaru move over a bit  
Mark None, with the Senator dead I'm down to just 5 orders per turn
- Order 7  
Chris The other unit of Samurai move up close to the Giant Gor  
Mark Ditto Order 6

## TURN 6 (top-right)

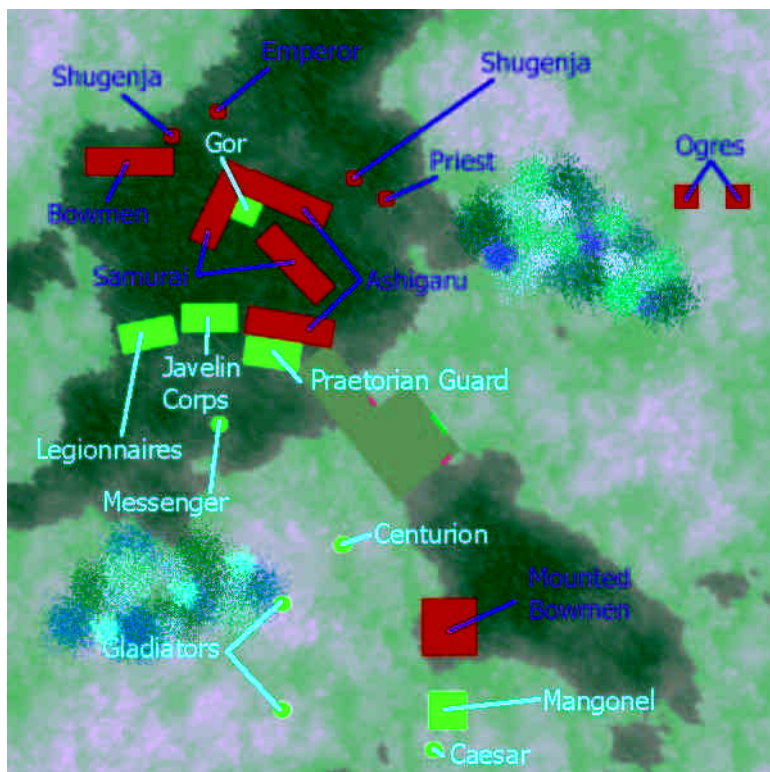
- Order 1  
Chris The Mounted Bowmen make a play to end the game and fire on Caesar but don't hit him a single time  
Mark The Gladiator nearest the back line charges the Mounted Bowmen and kills one of them
- Order 2  
Chris A unit of Ashigaru try to charge the Giant Gor, but cannot overcome their fear of the beast  
Mark Amused, the Giant Gor charges into the Ashigaru and pounds three of them into jelly
- Order 3  
Chris The Javelin Corps are peppered by the Bushido Bowman with 4 hits, but manage to save three times  
Mark The Praetorian Guard advance 5", ready to get into the fight
- Order 4  
Chris Samurai overcome their fear and charge the Gor causing 13 hits, but only 2 wounds on the beast  
Mark The other Gladiator heads back towards the engaged Mounted Bowmen
- Order 5  
Chris The other Ashigaru move over a bit  
Mark The remaining Javelin Corps shoot at the Ashigaru and spear one through the chest

**Well, things are certainly not going well for the monkeys. With the Howlers decimated and now the Javelin Corps taking serious numbers of wounds I'm not faring too well. And that's the good news! Out of sheer stupidity I left my Warlord, Caesar, wide open to attack by the Mounted Archers and I would not have been surprised at all if the game had ended on the first order of this turn.**

## TURN 7 (next page-top)

- Order 1  
Chris The Mounted Bowmen successfully disengage from the gladiator  
Mark The Giant Gor does his impression of a spoiled child and stomps around. Both units of Ashigaru and the Priest blow their tests, while the other nearby Bushido units are ok
- Order 2  
Chris A Shugenja tries to cast Dragon Fury on a unit of Samurai, but fails  
Mark The Messenger moved up to get more of the Simians into range for his Marching Orders





## TURN 7 (continued-above)

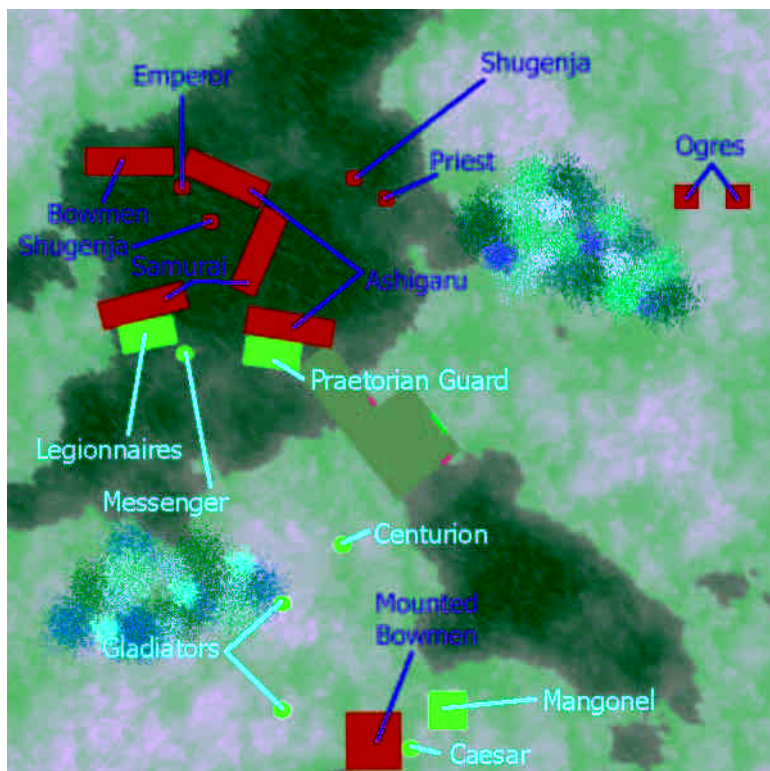
- Order 3  
Chris The Samurai that previously charged the Gor strike him for 8 hits and 2 wounds, the monster now quite wounded
- Mark The remaining Javelin Corps move up 5" under Marching Orders
- Order 4  
Chris The Javelin Corps are struck for 2 wounds by the Bushido Bowmen
- Mark A 5" move by the Legionnaires, also under Marching Orders, brings them closer to the Bushido
- Order 5  
Chris The second unit of Samurai try to charge and finish off the Giant Gor, but fail their fear test
- Mark Still getting closer, the Praetorian Guard march up another 5"
- Order 6  
Chris The Emperor auto-rallies a unit of Ashigaru
- Mark Still down to 5 order per turn
- Order 7  
Chris A unit of Ashigaru charge the Praetorian Guard and cause a single wound
- Mark Ditto Order 6

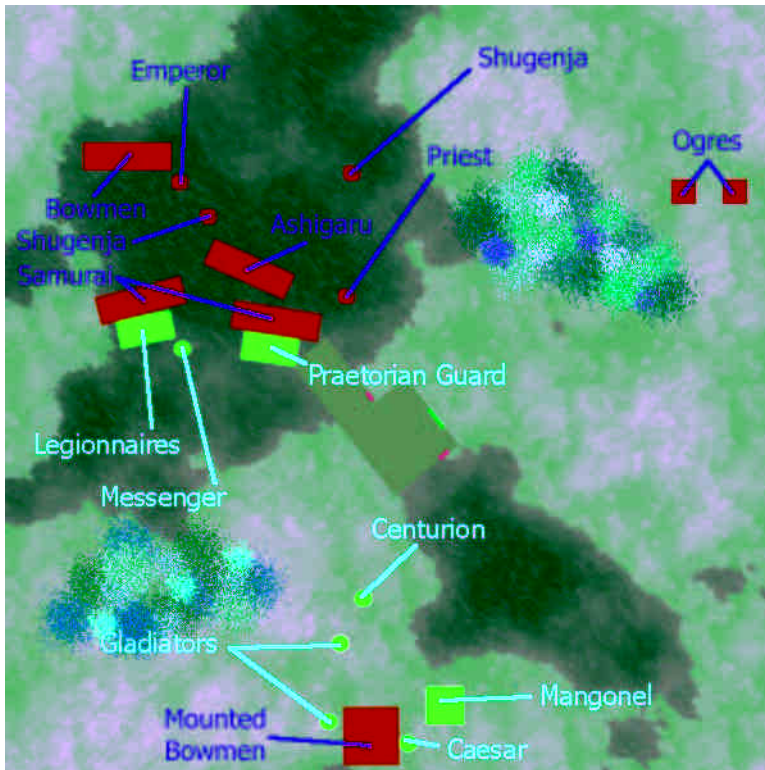
## TURN 8 (bottom-right)

- Order 1  
Chris The Bushido Bowmen finish off the Javelin Corps with a hail of arrows

- Mark The Praetorian Guard tear into the Ashigaru causing 7 wounds but they hold their position
- Order 2  
Chris The unengaged Samurai charged the Gor and caused 6 hits, only one of which wounded but it was enough to fell the beast
- Mark The Messenger monkey moves up yelling at the others to, "do something!"
- Order 3  
Chris The Samurai turn and charge into the Simian Legionnaires, causing 13 hits and 5 wounds
- Mark The Mangonel lets fly against the Mounted Bowmen and kills another with a mighty splat
- Order 4  
Chris The Mounted Bowmen take more shots at Caesar hitting and wounding once
- Mark Simian Legionnaires charge a unit of Samurai but cause no wounds out of their two hits
- Order 5  
Chris A simple move of 5" by one Shugenja
- Mark The Centurion charges into the Mounted Bowmen and hits once for a wound

- Order 6  
Chris A move-up by the Ashigaru
- Mark None
- Order 7  
Chris A move-up by the Emperor
- Mark None





Order 7

Chris The Ashigaru follow suit and advance 5"  
Mark None

**TURN 10** (no map needed)

Order 1

Chris The Mounted Bowmen take care of Caesar and end the game  
Mark Howl like mad monkey and then cry like a sad monkey

## Post-Game Thoughts

**Mark**

Alrighty then! Boy, oh boy did the sisters take a liking to me or what? [Shawshank Redemption reference] That did end up being a righteous beat-down, but not without some significant mistakes on my part. Oh, I'm not trying to downplay Chris' role in the pleasantries that ensued because without an opponent that can take advantage of your mistakes you probably won't learn what not to do next time.

**TURN 9** (above)

Order 1

Chris The Mounted Bowmen are able to disengage from the Centurion and move to a more advantageous position  
Mark The Praetorian Guard finish off the Ashigaru they are fighting, but I fear it's far too little, way too late

Order 2

Chris The Emperor blasts the Praetorians with a Lightning Bolt and while it lights them up with 7 hits, none are wounded  
Mark The Legionnaires prove ineffective against the Samurai and cause no hits or wounds

Order 3

Chris On the other hand, the Samurai nail the Legionnaires for 7 hits, causing 4 wounds  
Mark The first Gladiator takes chase after the Mounted Bowmen

Order 4

Chris Trying to better the Emperor a Shugenja launches his own Lightning Bolt at the Praetorians and hits 8 times for 5 wounds  
Mark The second Gladiator also takes chase

Order 5

Chris The other unit of Samurai slam into the now softened up Praetorians and hit them 13 times for 5 wounds  
Mark The Centurion tries in vain to close the gap between himself and the Mounted Bowmen

Order 6

Chris The Priest, now very confident in the outcome, moves up 5"  
Mark None

To begin with my army selection was flawed and I really did not take enough time to examine the potential of each of my units and how they could best work together. Taking one of everything really helped to point out the need of having an army whose units can compliment each other in battle. In hindsight I think ditching the Howlers and picking up another unit or two of Legionnaires and definitely more Messengers would have been a better way to go.

The lack of magic didn't bother me too much. Oh hell yes the Lightning Bolt can 'love you long time' but it can also fizzle. Also, it hurts that much hitting anyone, not just my guys so everyone gets equally pan-fried by it. On my end I actually did not mind one bit not having a magic user of my own. Like Forest said, "one less thing to worry about".

I definitely didn't take the lack of command points seriously enough. Working with a built-in deficit made my 'slow' army slower. If I had purchases my army more sensibly and had more command points and messengers I could have overcome the inherent lower movement of the Simians and had more flexibility. Going for the 'lets be able to do everything' approach just did not work and I should have seen that.

OK, so where do we stand? Rebuild the army and try again, of course! I like very much that the guys at 100 Kingdoms are open to suggestions and rule changes and I can see the game continuing to evolve over time and become more refined. Considering that changes and additions are likely it's very good that the rule are given away for free on their website.

**Saru mo ki kara ochiru – Even monkeys fall from trees!!!**

Well that game was interesting. I really expected to move around a lot more and use flanking maneuvers. I expected to see the Simian army move much slower. The inclusion of the monkey in the army list makes up for this shortcoming. I felt bad for Mark when I became apparent by turn three that I really did not need to move a whole lot. I expected him to be a bit more defensive, but my superior amount of missile fire, both normal and magical, would have slowly worn down his army.



What about my army list worked? Well I absolutely love the scout and shoot ability. My mounted archers were definitely worth their points in annoyance value alone. Bringing 2 wizards was a bit over the top, especially since the Emperor is also a magic user. The reason I did this is simple, for 15 more points I get the same command as the mounted Daimyo and a helacious amount of spell points. Proper use of spell points allowed me to unleash huge amounts of ranged attacks, and still have leftovers to augment my Samurai. Speaking of Samurai, they are another unit that rocked. Rolling twenty dice at 10's on the charge is awesome, and it is even better when you have augmented them with a spell. I feel that the strength of the Bushido lies in the sheer amount of dice they get to toss on the table. Very few of their stats are exceptional, but if you give monkeys enough time with a typewriter eventually you get a copy of Hamlet. Actually that isn't proven yet, but there is research money and typewriters that have been trying to prove this for years...

What didn't work? Well as I believe Mark will probably also mention running at a huge command deficit is not a very good idea. I would have been better off dropping the Samurai Ogres and buying a mounted Daimyo instead. As for the Samurai Ogres...well I should have read their rules better, as their cool ability does not work on almost all of the Simian army. I was also disappointed in the ashigaru. I realize they are cheap and are supposed to be poor, low ranking soldiers, but their stats are SOOO poor that they really are there as a bullet sink. Another unit of mounted bowmen or mounted samurai would have helped a lot.

My opinion of the game is that it is still a work in progress. The game designers have made several alterations to the game since its conception. I think there are a few fundamental problems that I ran into that bothered me. The first is the premeasuring of ranges. It allowed me to ALWAYS be right outside of Mark's charge ranges and still be able to shoot. The initial dice roll at the beginning sets the tone for the whole game. In a turn-based system this works, but in an alternating game, I would prefer to see this roll happen at the beginning of every turn. I also had a problem with way several of the spells worked. I was hoping to capitalize on the low leadership of the Simians by casting mind altering spells only to discover that they used their DR stat (very high for the Simians) and not their leadership. There is only a 30% chance that you can cast Confusion (a four-point spell) on a unit of Praetorian Guard.

In conclusion, I really like the quality of the miniature produced by this company. I think their sculpts are exceptional, and that the 100 Kingdoms strives for originality. I believe that the core rules are fine, and believe that in time this rule set will catch up to the high standard of its metal counterparts. I look forward to the day when the rules are finalized, and remain impressed that this company REALLY DOES listen to the opinions of those that play their game and buy their products. The strength of having a living document for a rule set is that it is always being polished.

[WWW.100KINGDOMS.COM](http://WWW.100KINGDOMS.COM)




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 **ARCHANGEL GAMES** 

# GAME REVIEW

by Brian E. Ahrens



**Basics** – Spaceship Zero is a new science fiction role-playing game from Green Ronin Publishing. What makes Spaceship Zero different from all of the other sci-fi role-playing games on the market these days is that the game is set in a 1950s style sci-fi genre. If you have seen any of the old Flash Gordon serials/movies or movies like Forbidden Planet or Robinson Crusoe on Mars then you will have a good idea of what the universe of Spaceship Zero “looks” like. This “look” makes sense since the game is based on radio plays from the 1950s and the German television remake that was filmed in the 1970s. So, be prepared for atomic rayguns and rocket belts.

The premise of the game: the player characters are crewmembers aboard Spaceship Zero, in the year 2035, a rocket equipped with the newly developed (and untested) B.T.L. (Better Than Light) Drive. As is wont to happen with new-fangled gizmos the B.T.L. did not function quite the way it was expected. When the test drive is activated, instead of travelling “better” than the speed of light, Spaceship Zero, instead of moving, gained infinite mass (I only have a vague idea of what that might mean. I was out sick the day that was covered in high school physics). Thus, the entire galaxy is destroyed as it collapses around Spaceship Zero and it’s occupants. Luckily for the crew the spaceship isn’t obliterated. The crew figures out that the ship needs to travel to what would be the center of Milky Way (the galaxy, not the candy bar) so that Spaceship Zero can be the center of a second “big bang”. So, the intrepid explorers enter their Deconstitutor (it atomizes your body and stores it for a set amount of time) and set it to revive them in 10

billion years. The theory is that the galaxy will re-evolve exactly as it did after the original “big bang”. Guess what, this theory does not come off much better than the B.T.L. Drive. Universe Two is not *quite* exactly like it’s predecessor. This is where the fun begins.

**Presentation** – Spaceship Zero is a 190 page, perfect bound, soft cover tome. Extensive background has been culled from the old radio programs and the television series and provided to give players a good idea of what they are in for when playing this game. Unlike many of the games being published these days, Spaceship Zero is **not** a D20 based game. It has a unique game system based on the percentile. Players choose an archetype on which to base their characters. A person may choose to play such things as a Captain, a Robot, a Slave Girl (scantily clad) or a Super-Intelligent Monkey, as well as a host of other equally colorful characters. Speaking of color, the black and white artwork inside this game is some of the best that I have seen in a Green Ronin publication. My personal favorite is the Super-Intelligent Dog in a space suit. I would have said the (scantily clad) Slave Girl, but my wife hit me in the head for making that choice.

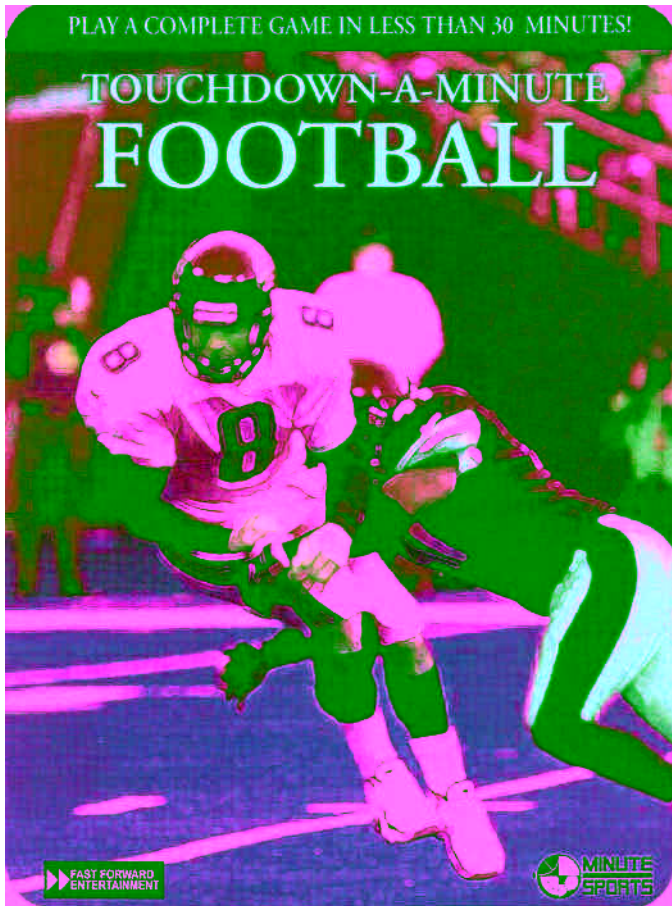
The layout of Spaceship Zero is nicely done. Not only is there a table of contents, but an index is also provided. Any game that includes an index gets bonus brownie points from this reviewer. Also, there were no noticeable typographical errors. So, not only did this book get run through a spellchecker, someone actually read it and made any other needed corrections. That is a step that seems to be left out of a lot of rulebooks in recent history.

**Value** – Warning: I have a hard time being unbiased when it comes to science fiction games. I buy a lot of them. Spaceship Zero comes in with a MSRP of \$24.95. That’s a fair price for a normal-sized, paper back game book of this volume. You get an original game system, a wide variety of character types (variety is good) and a very interesting game background. There are, what I would call, three bonus areas in Spaceship Zero (other than the aforementioned index). One: a listing of science fiction slang from the 1950s. If you’re going to play the game you might as well speak correctly. Two: the ever important, and much needed, introductory adventure. Last but not least, a complete episode guide for all three seasons of the television series. Lots of adventure ideas can be found in this guide. If you happen to be a fan of obscure science fiction then you may want to pick up this game just for the episode guide. So, strap on your rocket belt and grab your trusty atomic raygun and get a copy of Spaceship Zero. If you have even a passing interest in science fiction role-playing games then this is one you will definitely want to add to your collection.



# GAME REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



## BASICS

Touchdown-A-Minute Football is Fast Forward Entertainment's foray away from role-playing games and into the world of sports games. Here's the blurb from the site...

Three yards and a cloud of dust... America's favorite game is presented here in this Minute Games second release. A full game for less than \$15.00, everything you need to play is offered in this Micro Box game. You decide how to run your offense. You set your team, control the quarterback, the ends, the receivers, the front line - and pit them against a defense that is ready for anything, and determined to bring you down! Touchdowns, Point After Attempts, Field Goals, penalties and more are all in this amazingly fast dice game. You pick from a set selection of dice that have different faces on them to give your team the best chance at beating your opponent. This fun game is full of surprises as the game progresses. Play a full season, or start up a league, it's all part of the game.

John Madden not included.

It has a retail price of \$14.99 USD.

## COMPONENTS

Inside the box you'll find 12 blank dice (4 red, 4 blue, and 4 white), a sheet of stickers (to place on the dice) a set of rules and a card to keep track of score, yardage, etc... I'd have liked imprinted dice better, but the stickers went on easily

enough and took just a few minutes to take care of. The rules were very easy to read and the examples were all clear and easily understood.

## GAME PLAY

The outcome of each play is determined by rolling all four white (Play) dice one red (Offensive) and one blue (Defensive) dice. Each offensive die has a different play call (Run Inside, Run Outside, Long Pass, and Short Pass) as do the defensive dice (Nickel, Stop Run, Blitz, and Dime). All six dice are thrown and the results are compared. Each one marked TK (tackle) allow the defensive player to eliminate one marked GN (gain) and there are also special dice that could indicate an Interception or Fumble under some circumstances. As an example if the offensive player chooses to Run Outside and the defensive player chooses Blitz the dice may come up as follows: GN3, GN3, TK, CP1, CP4, and BP. On a run play the CP (caught pass) and BP (blocked pass) are ignored so we are left with one tackle and two gains. The defensive player can choose one gain to get rid of and drops one of the GN3 dice. The play results in a 3 yard gain for the offense, 2<sup>nd</sup> down with 7 yard to go. Regular plays go pretty easily and even special circumstances like fumbles or interceptions are resolved with nothing more than a roll of the dice. Is it a bit light on strategy and heavier on luck? Well, yeah but I see this game as trying to be more of a game that anyone can pick up and play. Each quarter last for thirty plays and with each roll of the dice and resolution of the roll taking just a few seconds the statement on the cover, "Play a complete game in less than 30 minutes!" is absolutely reasonable.

## VALUE

I see Touchdown-A-Minute Football as a very good way for Fast Forward Games to make a move into the mass market retail arena. I could easily see it on the shelves of the local Toys R Us, Walmart, Target, etc... At about fifteen dollars the game is inexpensive enough to be picked up as a spur-of-the-moment purchase or could just as easily be sought out by a sports/game fan that's looking for something new. This is definitely not Statis Pro Football, but it's not trying to be either and that's just fine. This is a quick, easy to play football game that anyone can pick up and play. It's easy to learn and could be easily added to your standard "family" boardgames. I played the Red Zone CCG several years ago and while they are different types of games I'd have to say that T-A-M Football is probably more fun and I can guarantee that I spent way more money on Red Zone, a game that I have not even touched in a long, long time. I'll be playing T-A-M Football instead of Yatzee! or Monopoly once in a while and it's especially suited to pick-up games while waiting on your whole group to arrive for a game of whatever else you might be playing. Also, with no real set-up or tear-down needed this is a game that won't intimidate non-gamers. All in all it's an easy, fun game that simulates the game of football in a very easy to digest rule set. I am looking forward to seeing how the Inning-A-Minute Baseball game turns out, hopefully just as well.

[WWW.FASTFORWARDGAMES.COM](http://WWW.FASTFORWARDGAMES.COM)

# GAME CO. INTERVIEW

## WAR MACHINE

by Calvin Daniels

Take a healthy dose of high fantasy, blend in the arrival of steam powered mechanics and add a darker feel to the world itself and you have a pretty good understanding of the Iron Kingdom. Iron Kingdoms is a fresh new fantasy Role Playing Game (RPG) designed by Privateer Press, which has already spun into a miniatures war game under the title War Machine.

"The Iron Kingdoms world, first off, is a property, not a d20 setting, or married to any other specific game vehicle," explained Matt Wilson of Privateer Press in an interview conducted via email. "It exists outside of any game system, and is intended to transcend multiple media platforms, whether they be role playing games, video games, comic books, etc.

The decision to incorporate the steam mechanics and multi media approach was made because that's what gamers seem to be looking for today, said Wilson. "The Iron Kingdoms taps into what people seek out in their fantasy settings these days," he said. "Tolkien will always be honored as the great god of Fantasy, and certainly the new trilogy is testament to that fact, but the contemporary trends in fantasy are moving further away from something that looks like Medieval Europe with elves and dwarves to environments that are much more inclusive and original.

"The Iron Kingdoms attempts to bridge the traditional fantasy with contemporary trends. We've got elves, but the elves carry black powder guns. We've got wizards, but they build magical brains for steam powered robots.

"For the record though, we don't have gnomes. We all hate gnomes."

The people at Privateer Press were players before they became game developers.

"Everyone at Privateer has been in the game industry in some capacity for a long time," said Wilson. "Part of what gets you into this industry in the first place is a love of games, so naturally, making games is part of that."

"We all enjoy the creative process that it takes to build worlds and design the inhabitants and histories and such."

The result of the creative process that occurred at Privateer Press brought about a unique world with numerous options available to the role player.

"The Iron Kingdoms is an ancient world of magic that has entered an era of industrialization. Steam power, firearms, and clockwork are growing technologies," said Wilson. "Magic and science have fused to create mechanika - magically powered and enhanced machinery. The pinnacle of which are the mighty steamjacks - steam powered automotons with magical brains, used for a variety of roles including heavy and dangerous labor to the vanguard of a military force.

"The nations of the Iron Kingdoms have enjoyed a long tradition of violent warfare. Born in conflict, they continue to feud to this day, ever escalating the power level, and ever increasing the stakes for which they war. In our present day, new forces are making their presence known, such as the mysterious Skorne invaders from the unexplored east or the mechanikally enhanced undead legions from the island of Cryx. Cygnar, Khador, Llael and Ord, stand fast as the human kingdoms, fighting with each other while holding off the encroaching threats. Traditional fantasy races - the elves and dwarves - also play significant roles in the IK as both allies and enemies to the more populated human kingdoms. Within the kingdoms, but without territory of their own, roam the goblins, ogrun, and trollkin - non-human races who have become civilized enough to begin to integrate with human society, albeit most often on the fringe at best.

"The Iron Kingdoms challenges the notions of traditional fantasy while still placing you in a world full of magic and danger. You will not find generic sword and sorcery here. The world has been meticulously designed, and feels, breathes, and lives like a true world unto itself.

For those wanting the first taste of the exciting new steam RPG world, Privateer Press has released *Monsternomicon*, a book detailing the monsters and denizens of the Iron Kingdoms. While some might look at releasing a book of monsters before other game play rulebooks as backwards, Wilson said it was a conscious decision designed to ensure the core rulebooks are done right.

"We want to make the Campaign Guide as good as it possibly can be. Some folks might see our approach as backward, and others might get impatient at waiting for what they feel is the critical information necessary to play in the IK, but we have been committed since the beginning to creating the best gaming environment available, and that means taking time to do it and not rushing a product to market just to grab a few dollars before there's no room left on the band wagon," said Wilson. "We started with a story - the Witchfire Trilogy - and our world grew from there, one piece at a time. We are publishing the background, the setting, etc. as we have it. Monsters came together before the world setting, so we put out the *Monsternomicon* first. It makes sense to create your inhabitants before you create your geography, your religions, etc. or else you end up with holes. We create with the character as the center point - the most important aspect - of the world. From there, the setting grows around it, unfolding, and supporting the characters that are the focal point of any story."

Wilson does ensure more is to come to flesh out the RPG world for players.

"Actually, the next product out is: *Lock and Load: Character Primer*," said Wilson. "Lock and Load is a series of short books that Privateer will publish on an irregular basis. The first Lock and Load will include race, class, and religion information, geared towards allowing players to create characters and begin playing in the Iron Kingdoms with the basic knowledge



of any IK inhabitant. This will pave the way for the Campaign Guide, coming a few months later, that will greatly expand the information for the world, giving in depth history of the IK, descriptions on the environments, politics, cultures, weapons and gear, and what is to come in the future. However, the Character Primer will contain a full color foldout poster map - for once, each player can get his or her own road map. Everybody knows that gamers love maps."

As for developing both an RPG and miniature game on an almost parallel course, Wilson said that was always the plan, hinting more is yet to come.

"As for plans for doing an RPG and a miniatures game - yes, that's always been the plan," he said. "But, we've barely scratched the surface of what you'll see from the Iron Kingdoms."

The idea for Iron Kingdoms to spin into War Machine as a miniatures-based game, an approach which initially came quickly but has taken time to flesh out into a product to offer gamers.

"We knew from the beginning of creating the Iron Kingdoms that it would make a fantastic environment for a miniatures game," said Wilson. "The concept came to us very quickly, but we have been working on it now for well over a year, and it'll be nearly two years by the time the game releases."

Helping take War Machine from an idea to reality was the arrival of Mike McVey to the game development team.

"The biggest factor was finding Mike McVey. There's no way that War Machine could be made without him," said Wilson. "He's a brilliant sculptor who has the ability to do fantastic technical and straight line sculpting, perfectly suited for something like a steamjack."

The miniatures for War Machine create the miniature game environment, but also create role playing game options using the same miniatures.

"The miniatures are being produced for War Machine, though there is a great deal of crossover in the factions to RPG relevant subject matter," said Wilson. "For instance, very early on you will see mechanithrall, the Iron Lich, and Satyxis. Character types such as Menoth Paladins, Cygnar Riflemen, clerics and assassins will also appear. So, while the miniatures are being designed expressly for the purpose of their roles in the wargame, much consideration goes into them to make many viable additions to an RPG collection as well. Nyss, trolls, and several other monster types will be forthcoming as well, though further into the future."

Wilson said without quality people a small company entering the competitive world of RPG and miniature gaming would have a difficult time getting its foot in the door.

"We've attracted a number of people to our projects, all that are extremely talented individuals," he said, adding the ideas for Iron Kingdoms and War Machine helped attract good people. "I believe we did this by making good products, and doing so with integrity. "Everyone wants to be part of something that they can believe in and be proud of, and Privateer offers that opportunity to the people that have joined our cause."

That being said there have still been hurdles through the development stage.

"Of obstacles, there are many," said Wilson. "Time, finances, manpower \$ those are all major obstacles."

"As a small company, our resources are not vast. We're able to do what we do because we all have a variety of skills that contribute to creating a product. But we have the highest standards in quality, and for that reason, there is never enough time, money or manpower."

While manpower may be an issue at times, it hasn't stopped the company from planning an aggressive schedule of releases on the War Machine miniatures side of the equation. "War Machine is a full size battle game and will feature a complete compliment of troops such as riflemen and cavalry," said Wilson. "There are also plenty of specialists, such as snipers, mechanics, spell casters, etc.."

"However, armies are built around your warcasters and their warjacks, making army composition very different from traditional wargames."

With a full size battle game on the horizon, fans can expect to see a lot of minis coming down the pipe in the near future. "It's pretty aggressive, actually. The four armies will all release at the same time, ready to play in small groups," said Wilson. "Four weeks later, the main rulebook will release, along with a slew of individual blistered figures. Releases of four to eight blisters/month are planned after that, and those releases will grow over time as our capacity increases." In the end it will be the gaming public which determines the success of the new world setting and the games that spring from that setting. So far gamers seem to like what they see, said Wilson.

"The reaction was overwhelmingly positive," he said. "The figures look great, which is easy to see. But people also loved the game. They'd sit down for a 20 minute demo and walk away talking about how much fun they'd had. "It's not just a pretty game, it's a fun, fast, dynamic experience that gives you opportunities to do things in a miniatures game that might not have happened before." Beyond gaming opportunities, Wilson said he hopes the quality of the miniatures will also be a positive with players. "For one, the quality of the miniatures is absolutely superb across the board," he said. "There are no crappy minis, and we won't sell any that are - ever!"

"We've also tapped into a genre that hasn't been explored in miniatures games yet - the steam powered fantasy world. Six ton magic robots and steam powered armor - that's the stuff of War Machine."

"So we have something new to offer. The game itself is fun. It's fast, dynamic, and easy to learn without being overly simple. It rewards great strategic skill because of the unique resource management mechanic, and at the same time gives so many different options that your tactics can change in every game."

"Oh yeah, and the miniatures are freakin' great! Did I already say that?"

*Interview by Calvin Daniels*