Your portal to Sci-Fi and Fantasy Wargaming



lt's war but not as we know it.



Khador v Cryx

# The Ultimate

We profile the awesome work of Adrian Walters

Urban War

ISSUE

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#### **View from the Command Deck**

elcome to The Ancible for the first time! I have to say that creating this first issue of the Ancible has been a bit of a journey of discovery for me. I'm not talking about the creation of the fantastic content, I leave that to the many talented people who have been kind enough to send me stuff. What I'm talking about is the idea of an independent Science Fiction and Fantasy magazine.

It all started with a spark of a thought... I like to find new and interesting games to play. I've been able to travel around to find these games at various conventions and trade shows. I'm lucky. What about those not in that position? How do other people discover new games to play? The answer is fairly simple, they don't. People get introduced to new games by those of us who go searching. So, with the usual male attitude to problems I thought to myself "How do I fix it?"

I thought long and hard and looked at the various publications out there to see what the current state of play was. As I did more research it became clear that historical wargamers and model makers were well catered for, but there were a lack of publications covering the Sci-Fi and Fantasy genre. Now before you get all argumentative with me, there are other very fine publications out there in the genre but they just don't cover the things I love so I decided I would try and pull something together that did.

So, enough of my rambling what I bring you is independent reviews of Sci-fi and Fantasy table top games. Boldly going where no self respecting editor has gone before. Hopefully covering stuff you'll enjoy and find interesting. We won't always love everything, we won't always agree. The important thing is we keep exploring. The team here are always open to new ideas and always on the lookout for new talent in any of the various areas of the hobby. So if you want to tell us about a game you play just get in touch.

Our aim is to introduce **YOU** to the games you don't yet know

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 $\Lambda$  s we wend our way through the roads and Aleafy country lanes of life we find that times will change and technology will move on. People, however, in general will always stay the same. Our needs are simple, we all like to be around like-minded people, to have a good time and be valued by those around us. We all need to belong to something, to be part of something bigger than us.

I think that gamers have a different set of needs to non-gamers. We have a need to conquer and crush our enemies. As a great man once answered to the question "What is best in life?" "Crush your enemies; see them driven before you, and to hear the lamentation of their women!" He had a gamer's outlook on life did Mr Conan.

Once or twice a week, depending on how lucky we are, we all gather at our clubs or around friends' dining tables; we say hello and comment on what we have seen or heard since last we came together, but this is just a façade; what we really want is to get our invincible armies and navies onto the table and begin the next chapter in our bid to be the greatest gamer ever to walk between the tables of our clubs.

But we gamers are not all of the same ilk, are we? Oh no! There are those, and I count myself in this group, who play for the pleasure of it. We genuinely enjoy the company of our opponents and if we win, then great; if we lose it's not so great, but we don't let it spoil an otherwise great evening away from the distractions of our wives and kids, and those other things in "real life" which generally get in the way of our true love – Gaming.

Then there are those who can blend into the first group. You never notice them during play or in general chat during the evening. You notice them when the game is over and you have beaten them, and you notice them even more if their invincible army or navy should have won because in general it was better than yours. They will sit there for a while blaming their figures and the dice for what happened. It's never their fault. It was, after all, a stroke of military genius to leave their general alone on that hill so he had a better view of the battlefield. The fact that you were able to charge him with your biggest, toughest unit in the first turn wasn't his fault. Now I mustn't complain too much about these people, I have over the years bought many a cheap army from someone who claims they are rubbish or unplayable, only to thump them with it the following week.

The next gamer type is amongst the most annoying of gaming's brothers and sisters. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you the Rules Expert. This person will know all the rules... He does, honest. He told me so. A situation will arise at some point during the game when you will need to refer to the rule book; we all have them it's just one of those things. Most of us, after all, are fallible. When this situation rears its ugly head most people will have a rough idea of what should happen and it's resolved using the dying art of Common Sense or the D6 method, top half I can see your guy sort of thing.

Now the Rule Expert will tell you what should happen, and to back up his claim will then spend the rest of your precious gaming night with his head in a rule book (probably yours because he just happens to have left his copy sat home) trying to find the correct page so he can show you he is right, and when he triumphantly finds the page, it tells you what Common Sense would have told you 30 minutes ago.

# **PULL UP A** SANDBAG WIIH **UNCLE BOMBER**

Even so the Rules Expert is not the most annoying of them all. That honour goes to the Overly Competitive Gamer. and we all know at least one, I suspect. If you know more you have my profound sympathy. Their annoyance meter is governed by how important the game is to you. On a usual gaming evening they are just mildly annoying, only stopping every so often to check the line of sight to every figure on the board and pointing out every so often that you have moved a figure a fraction of an inch too far. They come into their own at a tournament. Here, in their natural habitat, they will argue every rule and every dice role; they will measure every distance and woe betide if there is even a hint that your figure cannot reach his figure, because out will come the micrometer or some similar contraption they picked up at a DIY store (that's a hardware store to you American types) which measures precise distances, just so you can be sure. It will be the same if there is a figure behind a wall, if it's his figure you won't be able to see it because in real life a sniper wouldn't stand that way, he would be invisible to all your troops. But if it's your figure behind that wall he can see it because your cloak is just visible to his figure. These people will also have a large portion of smug, and will joyfully point out all your shortcomings after the game, sometimes accompanied by his Happy Dance. As I said he has an overactive smug gland. Not seen the Happy Dance? That's the worst, and indeed most embarrassing, of the lot, and is reserved for the biggest pillocks of all.

There is a very rare sub-class of gamer and I have been reliably informed that there is one at my club. I have no idea who he is but everybody else tells me that it's not them and that if I want to know who it is I should go and look in the mirror. Not sure what they mean but I will describe him anyway. This harmless and usually devastatingly attractive player (did I say they are also very charming and generous?) will, in his own head at least, be at least one turn ahead of everyone else and at times several turns ahead. This will manifest itself in a number of ways: as you finish rolling your dice and before you have worked out the result he will be moving his figures ready for the next turn. He will also be rolling the initiative dice ready for the next round. Now these attractive, charming, slim people with full heads of hair can be easily controlled with a swift dice thrown at their head. At least that is what I have been told.

The next class can only be spotted by the most observant of us, and you may go years without spotting one, but rest assured they are out there. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you the Cheat. Now we don't cheat in our club, honest we don't... at least I have never seen any. After being in the company of these gamers for many years now, I know them well enough and they know me well enough

that we don't need to cheat, we know each other's styles so well now that we almost know what each other will do before they do. Well almost. We all play in a relaxed, friendly environment, we don't measure every distance. We all have a healthy dose of common sense and can tell if something is around an inch or eight inches away so we don't make our opponents measure every distance.

I once knew a gamer who knew exactly how long his forearm was. He would lean on a table and point at things. I forget who first noticed him doing this but one day someone saw him measure his forearm and then reach out and point at a figure before declaring that he won't be charging it after all.

There is, of course, a whole world of gamers out there. Some whose entire life is centred on gaming and who find it impossible to talk about anything but gaming. These are the people who cannot fit into normal society and who wear robes at the weekend and role dice when asked to make a decision. "Would you like ketchup with that sir?" "The dice say no, and now I will banish you to the fifth circle of hell." Well you get the idea; these are the people who give the rest of us a bad (or at least sad) reputation.

I haven't really mentioned the role players. It is something I have done from time to time and to be honest I really do enjoy a good game of Paranoia. But for me the guys and girls who spend their lives creating scenarios and worlds for their friends to live in need an equity card and not a gaming membership card. For all their obvious talent and imagination they are actors in a play they have created.

There are also the people who collect the figures to paint, then enter competitions and proudly display their talent in magazines for all of us to enjoy. But for me if you don't use your figures you aren't a gamer, you are a collector. It would be like having a cloned copy of Kelly Brook in your bedroom and only using her to hang clothes on - it's just not right. Don't get me wrong – some of these folks are genuine artists but for me they still aren't really gamers.

There are more types of gamer than I have mentioned here today, and maybe you can put pen to paper about the different ones you know. Of course all of these are my point of view and in no way reflect the views of the management, as they say. I consider myself incredibly lucky that I am a member of a club with some great people, and over the years I have met other great people, and I would like to thank you all for putting up with this attractive, charming, slim person with a full head of hair. I'll be back in my sandbagged bunker next issue and, God willing, we'll meet again before we have to go over the top

If you have any comments you would like to make or if you have a subject that you feel Uncle Bomber should tackle then please send your emails to unclebomber@the-ancible.com





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o quote the blurb from the rulebook: The 162-page soft back book is primarily divided "Secrets of the Third Reich is a 28-32mm miniatures game that explores the dark corners of a world war without end." Read down a bit more and you see the words "and here be zombies".

In short, SOTR (for convenience) is one of the seemingly ever-increasing sub-genre of Weird War II rules systems springing up, tapping into two of gamers' big love-ins - World War Il and zombies. It's pretty easy to buy into the evil Nazis going a few steps further and

> creating zombies, werewolves.

vampires and such ike, and with the Soviets on hand as well it means you have another optional baddy to play. The attractions are obvious, but what, hear you is the

ask, game like?

into four main sections, being a background to the current date, which is set in 1949, where the war, needless to say, never ended. Following that are the actual rules themselves, split into infantry and vehicle rules as is common in ordinary historical rules for the period. After a colour section of generally impressive pictures of miniatures come army lists and finally a section on scenarios.

Secrets of the Chird

Taking these a section at a time, the game postulates that as a result of widespread use of chemical weapons along with some pretty dodgy genetic and scientific experiments, primarily by the Nazis, of course, the battlefields of 1949 are brutal wastelands where huge armoured walkers line up alongside historical and semi-historical vehicles, and soldiers weighed down by breathing apparatus and new-fangled automatic weaponry.

The intro also throws in some references to Ragnarok and Gotterdammerung, adding to the mystical feel of the thing, hinting at the possibility of hell and demons. The Germans have developed V-Gas which when used kills the living and animates the dead, which is where the zombies come in, of course.

The Americans have dropped an atomic bomb on Berlin and the Japanese may have captured an atomic bomb in the aftermath of Hiroshima. The Russians in the meantime have been working on a range of super-powered subhumans, as is their want, and somewhere along the line fall out with the other Allies, ending up at war with the USA and Britain. America gets a taste of V-Gas as well via the Japanese, making sure that there is no respite anywhere from this interminable war.

Reading on we discover that Hitler is still alive and kicking, and the German war machine is in fair shape considering the circumstances, while the Americans have recovered a UFO near Roswell and in Britain Churchill is dead having been in London when the Germans hit the city with an atomic bomb of their own in 1947. Stalin's Russians are their usual grim and unpleasant selves, suffering for Mother Russia while their leaders have their usual disdain for human life.

All of this stuff is fairly entertaining and put together in a plausible, if simplistic way. There isn't very much that isn't immediately obvious and familiar, and as such if you are looking for something original you will be disappointed. However if you want a straightforward background to put your tabletop gaming in context, then this will do just fine.

Now, on to the rules themselves. The game is split into five phases, these being: Turn Initiative, Maintenance, Command, Action and Close Combat.

Turn Initiative: at the start of each turn players roll for initiative which will determine order of movement and activity for each phase that turn, with the winner of the die roll deciding who for more focussed goes first.



Maintenance: This is to resolve the effects of events from previous turns, with monsters and reinforcements arriving, as well as recovering 'Down' models, a game mechanism to simulate hits that don't necessarily kill outright.

decision making.



By lan Barstow

Command: During this phase units and individuals can be given special orders such as Regroup, Assume Overwatch, Call Off Board Strike and Hold Position. Some of these require a dice roll to achieve while others are automatic. Overwatch in particular is a popular rules mechanism and it is good to see its inclusion here. All the orders available make sense and give the gamer something to do by way of decision making, a pet love of mine. They are not intrusive and are easy to keep track of.

Action: In this phase players alternate activating individual units and resolving all movement and shooting for the unit chosen. This works well, and gives a flowing feel to the game, rather than the more traditional move-shootmelee approach. This approach also makes



Players do not get a respite at the end of movement to then decide who to shoot at and then engage in melee. Units may carry out a double move, hit the dirt, assault the enemy, hide, sneak or just move normally. Terrain is handled in a straightforward manner, and there is provision for almost any type of battlefield terrain that one might envisage.



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Shooting procedure involves determining a target priority for the firing unit and then allocating shots from the firing unit, which neatly resolves firing at troops in a variety of cover and ranges. It does become a bit clumsy at this point, with a number of dice stacked near each target model, waiting to be thrown. These will likely differentiate the various

weapons being used. I can't say I particularly like this, but it's not too different to the markers you see in games like Warmachine. Rolling to hit is based on a single D6 per shot with base requirement of 4+ to hit. This is then modified for cover, range and various other options, although not so may as to be annoying. To determine wounds or penetration another D6 is rolled per hit on a slightly user-unfriendly chart to ascertain whether the hit causes no damage, kills the target (called a Goner in the rules) or necessitates a Man Down! Check on another D6.

Overall the firing system works fairly well, and after a couple of turns the hardest thing is to cross-reference to the afore-mentioned confusing table. There is also a special suppression fire system, which I like. With suppression fire you don't kill anybody but pouring on firepower from an LMG or HMG can seriously disrupt your opponent's plans. Units that take casualties must also make a Cool test which may cause the unit to become disorganised and possibly flee.

Close Combat is a somewhat bloody affair, and all combats are resolved after other actions are completed, so they break sequence with everything else. I'm not entirely sure about why this should be and on reflection I would rather see assaults incorporated into the sequence of other actions. Close Combat is of course primarily the domain of zombies, vampires, werewolves and their ilk, as well as certain heroic character types.

The stats for the weapons involved range from pistols to anti-mech rifles. Most have no limit to range due to the scale of the table, although pistols and SMGs have a maximum range of 24", and the short range for rifles is 24". As such all this is happening at very close engagement ranges, and that makes terrain on the table an essential component, because once exposed to the view of the enemy things get extremely bloody. Games like Disposable Heroes and Rules of Engagement treat historical WW2 in a similarly brutal way, and it does make the game quick. It does mean that anything less than a 6' be of various colours to x 4' table can make things feel a little too close for comfort.



Rules are present for flamethrowers, RPGs, snipers, grenades, mortars and explosives, and I have not yet come across a weapon I wanted to use that wasn't catered for. You can also use smoke, which somewhat helps to compensate for the long weapon ranges. There is also a short section on special equipment, including body armour and infrared gear.

There are special rules for infantry as well including splitting squads into fire teams along with a selection of nasties for the monsters in the game. Things like Uncanny Resilience, Bulletproof and Horror give plenty of options to vary the basic unit and there are enough different ideas to give a good degree of variety in the game. Zombies in particular are good fun, and mercifully shamble around in the George Romero style rather than the Usain Bolt zombies of the remake.

As mentioned before vehicles have their own section and include rules for flyers and the dreaded mechas.

do they know?

Overall vehicle combat is handled in a similar style to infantry, with another annoying userunfriendly table to scan through. I like the vehicle penetration charts though, with a variety of damage results harking back to early Warhammer 40K – yes, I'm that old. Overall the vehicle rules are comprehensive and efficient, and are as good as many sets of historical WW2 rules.

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This would be my first bugbear with the rules or background. West Wind have been unable to resist combat walkers, which for me make no sense. I rather think they have been put in because they are 'kewl', but the justification for their existence is not convincing. The problem is that in this style of game it's almost more difficult to leave them out, and they do look good on the tabletop. I just don't like the whole concept. The rest of the guys at the Lyneham Group disagree with me, of course, but what

# WEAR YOUR MASK Bann

The army lists are limited but effective, with forces being selected to a set number of RPs, with core units, support units and characters. You can upgrade platoon experience and equipment, and in truth if you've seen one army list you've seen them all. There are some RP ratings missing from certain units and you will have to go to West Wind's web site to get the Q&A. Having worked for a gaming company I know all about this and I'm not too quick to criticise, although it should have been picked up during proof-reading. There and Russia.



The final section covers playing the game, and gives a few ideas for random game effects like minefields, V-Gas contamination and random zombie infestation. There are only three basic scenarios, however, and in truth this section feels like filler to top up the page count. There are no table diagrams and you have to rely on text to determine set-up. Considering the amount of artwork padding out this section I feel this is somewhat remiss. Finally, there is a section for designing your own mechas as well as lists of vehicle stats, which are decently comprehensive for the late war period.

So, what did I like and not like? The actual core rules are pretty efficient, and could stand alone as a historical set with minimal work. I particularly like the orders available and the turn sequence, which keep the game ticking over while ensuring both players remain involved throughout. I've already said I don't like mechas, and I think they are there just because. The monsters are okay and thus far nothing particularly out of the ordinary has appeared. What I really don't like are the special characters. The back cover has an overly-endowed American female soldier wearing clothing more suitable for Mad Max. Fashion simply didn't advance that far by 1949 and the background setting does not justify this acceleration in clothing styles. There are a couple of bondage-style German girls that fit into this category as well. Like the mechas, I suspect special characters are in for fear of leaving them out. Modern fantasy-sci-fi games have a certain template, and heroic characters are orders of battle for USA, Germany, Britain are a central part of that. It goes back to the days of Warhammer Fantasy, and I'm sure I'm



not the only one who has sat and looked in despair at some uber character laying waste to entire units with seeming invulnerability.

The book itself is relatively well laid out, although with the spare pages at the back of the book taken up with product lists, an index would have been a better use of the space and of considerably more value. There's no quick reference sheet either, which is slack. Proofing is pretty good, other than the missing RP details in the army list. None of these are game-breakers, though.

In short, if you are into Weird War 2 this book is recommended.





GRINDHOUSE



For further detail about Secrets of the Third Reich or any other Westwind Products. url: www.westwindproductions.co.uk Email: mail@westwindproductions.co.uk



USAF Nellis Classified Document

are has been anecdotal evidence of visitations to the Earth by alien civilizations r many years. As war engulfed the Earth in the 1940's, these sightings became more equent. In both the Pacific and European theatres, "Foo-fighters" - metallic spheres, alls of light, and other shapes that followed aircraft, were reported and on occasion notographed by Allied and Axis pilots, but were explained by scientists as St. Elmo's Fire or illusions. These illusions became frighteningly real on February 25, 1942, when the U.S. Army detected multiple unidentified aircraft both visually and on radar over the Los Angeles, California area. These sightings triggered a massive anti-aircraft artillery barrage that lasted for several hours.

The incident was front-page news along the U.S. Pacific coast, and earned some mass media coverage throughout the nation. One Los Angeles Herald Express writer who otwerved the incident insisted that several anti-aircraft shells had struck one of the objects, writing the next day "I was far enough away to see an object without being able to identify it ... I would be willing to bet what shekels I have that there were a number of direct hits scored on the object." Despite those observations of direct hits from the massive barrage, no wreckage was known to have been found

Afterward, multiple explanations were offered for the incident, most ascribing it to misidentification of weather balloons, sky lanterns, and Japanese fire balloons or plinps. These stories covered-up the reality that the craft observed were in fact extraterrestrial vessels, and that more than one were damaged and downed by the barrage. These were quickly recovered by the Army and removed to a secret facility at Nellis AFB in the remote salt flats near Las Vegas, Nevada for study

Given the absolutely secrecy which was required, early study and reverse engineering of these craft proceeded very slowly. After the V-Gas attacks of 1944 and the rise of the walking nightmares that followed, it became clear to the US Government that the need to extract useful technology that could be weaponized outweighed the need for absolute secrecy. Dozene of the US's brightest engineers, physicists, and other scientists not already claimed by the Manhattan Project were shipped to the dusty corpse of the dead Lake Groom. Beneath its dry salt bed, they began the frantic process of trying to make sense of technology which man could not invent himself for possibly a century yet.

The results have been mixed. US teams have managed to reverse engineer many items though in most cases it is a matter of knowing that a thing works, but not precisely why it works. But in the desperate world of 1949, understanding is not always deemed necessary.





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by Chris Duncan

nyone that has wargamed for a few years will recognise a skirmish game in Urban War. From the original Warhammer 40k which became Necromunda to World War 2 skirmish games, platoon type games can be a lot of fun and tactically challenging. With a wide choice of troop types in a small group of miniatures these type of games are appealing to many gamers. For the gamer who is not keen on the painting side of the hobby, it means only a few models need to see a wet brush before you have a full force to field.

Urban War falls into this category very nicely, with enough factions to appeal to most players and plenty of choices within the faction, Urban Mammoth have managed to create an enjoyable game to play. There are a few things that make this game unique in the sphere of science-fiction skirmish games which we will be exploring a bit later on.

So let's look at the backdrop of Urban War. The scene is set in the future of mankind, who have moved into the stars and colonised thousands of planets. One of these planets is called Planet Kyklops, an oceanic world with only one significant land mass, a double continent which eventually became known as Iskandria. This area, over a long period of time, became one sprawling metropolis. At the time of Urban War this huge man-made jungle lies in ruins as a perpetual war rages between the many factions within the sphere of man.

However a greater threat exists within the waters of Kyklops, an alien race called Koralon found its biosphere ripe for colonisation. Seeding the waters with its spawn, the creatures of Koralon have now ventured onto land, assimilating humans they come into contact with, creating a strange mutated hybrid of alien sea creature and mankind. This is a most dangerous time to be a citizen of Iskandria and many have fled, and just as many seek shelter and hiding amid the ruins of the once glorious Metropolis.In this troubled world seven factions, both man and beast fight

for control simply or survival. Each has its own unique features and there are alliances drawn all of which will become apparent. The Junkers from

The VASA hail from an ice planet called Vacillus. From here the VASA's power stretches as far

**Created and Produced by Urban Mammoth** 

a home world called Ironglass are controlled by a ruling Senate. An aggressive and militaristic power the Junker Empire presents a united force in the face of other powers. The legions they command, which comprise the bulk of their armed

force are made from vast reserves of convicted individuals. This force is almost endless as even the most petty of crimes within the Junker Empire results in a sentence of servitude within the ranks of the legions.

The Gladiators are an arena force which originated from within the Junker Empire, where every major city contains a gladiatorial arena, as combatants entertain and occupy the general populace. When the Koralon invasion started to claim areas of Iskandria and the Syntha forces started their slaughter the Junkers Empire let loose their dogs of war - The Gladiators. Very soon after being released by their masters the Gladiators started to follow their own interests.

as mankind's furthest reach into the depths of space. They have set themselves up as controllers of vital gravity wells from which inter-stellar travel is possible. Policing these areas is funded by taxes for such travel. On Iskandria the VASA tried to desperately retain the image of neutrality by investing in the use of their allies the Triads. These so-called allies, like the Gladiators soon shuck of their masters shackles and began to follow their own ends, thus the VASA finally had to take direct action, confirming for some that the VASA was a dangerous and oppressive peacekeeper.



The Triads can trace their origin far in the distant past, with ancient traditions and ways. The fact that their means of profit are still centred on criminal activities does not stop the Triads from their pursuit of wealth and power. Their Clans have 'family' values; each rivals the rest in a bitter struggle for supremacy, revered for their martial prowess and disregard for personal danger. These forces where persuaded by the VASA to engage in operations within the central free parts of the city, where all the fighting s centred. Once released within the city the Triads soon gravitated towards their own goals and pursuits.

The Syntha are unique in their outlook; more machine than human, they favour technology and advancement of science. They are governed by an Artificial Intelligence known as Prime, which is located on a world of the same name. Syntha forces are a mix of robotic androids and biomechanical cyborgs which are grown. Why, after the Koralon infestation, the Syntha broke forth slaying any humans they found is not known. But this act is what prompted the other great human factions to venture into the city central sectors.

The Viridians hail from a home planet called Viridia, which is the hub of a vast empire.

Built on free trade and commerce, the Viridians' fervent belief in capitalism and democracy mean they will defend their way of life vehemently. The Viridian forces have a preference for superior force of arms and firepower. Losses to Viridian forces are not popular back home. Against all they stand alone, no allies to call upon, they are the last chance for all they hold dear.

The Koralons in their purest form are a terrifying force to behold, having alien technologies that are the equal of anything mankind can offer. These beings from the unknown swell their numbers with mutated creatures from the various worlds they have consumed and altered. If mankind can unite, settle their differences and ally against the common enemy they have a chance. If not, all we can look forwards to is a doomed fate beyond most people's comprehension.

#### **Game Mechanics**

So what about the game mechanics themselves I hear you cry? All of the dice used are ten sided dice, also known as D10. Below is a breakdown of the stat line all models in the game possess.

This is a typical troop choice from the example in the rule book, a Colonial Marine from the Viridian force. Heading codes shown are as follows:

- AS = Assault. (Close combat)
- **SH** = Shooting. (Ranged attack)
- **ST** = Strength.
- **T** = Toughness.
- **W** = Wounds. (How many hits the model can take)
- **CD** = Command.
- **SZ** = Size. (Some sizes add or subtract modifiers)
- $\mathbf{MV}$  = Movement. (In inches)
- **CAL** = Calibre. (The quality of the troops and their experience)

To succeed with most tests in Urban War you are required to equal 10 or better using the relevant stat and a D10 roll. For instance using the Command (CD) above of 4, you would need to roll a 6 or better on the D10. The majority of rolls that use this system are from AS, SH and CD rolls.

The effect of these different levels of CAL lead on to the second unique thing in Urban War, the game markers and action lists.

For each model per turn a player will place face down one of three markers, Over-watch, Snapfire, or Lock-fire. Depending on what has been put down will determine what actions the model can perform, when they can perform them and what effect CAL has.

In Over-watch a player can choose disruption shot, evade, counter charge, fight or break off. All but fight require a command check (CD) to be able to attempt the action, each one has an increase of +1 per point of CAL, so a CAL 1 marine trying to evade would normally have a CD of 4, as a CAL 1 the CD is raised to a 5.

In Snap-fire a player can choose snap shot, move & snap shot, reaction shot, evade, charge, counter-charge, fight or break off. The benefit of CAL 1 or more is different for this list. For each point of CAL the player can attempt to carry out a second action from the list by rolling a Command check (CD).

In Lock-fire the player is attempting something requiring a little more patience or time. The model can rush (double move), aimed shot, evade, counter charge, fight or break off. This time if the player was using aimed shot, each level of CAL will give a +1 to shoot ⋖ (SH) on a successful CD check. Using rush each point of CAL on a successful CD check will gain the model an extra half-normal movement to add to the rush.

There are two other things that are unique to Urban War, the use of Calibre or CAL is one. Most models can have a range of CAL. On the back of the card for each model is a cost per CAL level. The marine stat above can be added to your list as a CAL 0 (20 pts), CAL 1 (26 pts) or CAL 2 (33 pts).

So as you can see having some models in your army with CAL 1 or higher is very important and a neat game mechanic giving almost every

model a possible boost as long as the player is happy to pay the costs. There is also a set of restrictions for each faction which is explained in the rule book.

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The next thing worth focusing on is the weapon stat line.

The example on the right is again from a Colonia Marine. CC indicates a Close Combat option. Short to extreme ranges are in 12" increments. Under each one is two boxes. The left-hand box is the modifier at the range to the SH roll. The right hand box indicates the strength of the weapon if a hit is successful.

Once a hit has been confirmed there is a Strength versus Toughness chart and when indicated is required on a D10 roll to wound.





#### **Publications**

Rule book

With this brief idea on the basic mechanics of the game explained we can move on to the rule book itself and the accompanying gaming equipment.

The rule book for Urban War is a glossy 110 page print with a stunning piece of artwork folding over both covers. Inside is a comprehensive contents list allowing the reader to quickly locate the relevant rule or statement. There is a particularly nice graphic of the city of Iskandria including the locations each faction controls.

As you navigate through the rest of the book, the expected pages reveal themselves, such as basic gaming needs to play the game and instructions on movement, firing and such. Throughout the book there are a rich sprinkling of quality line drawings of some of the combatants and equipment they use, each clearly marking what they are.

Each option available in the three phases of a round is carefully explained, and just about every eventuality possible is dealt with. Towards the back of the book is a list of skills that are printed on the faction cards and repeated in the faction section of the book, along with an explanation of their place within the game.

Page 41 explains the basics of organising a force, known in Urban War as a Strike Team. It also explains what extra influences in the game your designated leader will have.

From pages 42-43 the faction forces are listed starting with the gladiators. In each section you will find out exactly what you can and cannot field to make a legal Strike Team.

For instance as we have been using the Viridians as examples throughout this review, below are the restrictions for a Viridian force:

Your Strike Team must contain at least four, in any mix, of the following models: Colonial Marines, Saurian Riders.

Your Team cannot contain more CAL 1 models than it does CAL 0.

Your Team cannot contain more CAL 2 models than it does CAL 1.

Your Team cannot contain more CAL 3 models than it does CAL 2.

If your Team doesn't contain any command models, then if present, a Sergeant must be designated as commander.

This ensures a sense of balance, but like any sheet and fast play sheet is £1.50. wargame if both players agree such restrictions can be altered to suit their games.

Within each faction section you will find all current models available with their costs, stats and equipment choices. This is all repeated on the faction cards available separately; however all you need is in the rule book.

There is a section after the factions area for Militia; these hardy citizens of Iskandria have taken up arms and will support your faction at a cost. They will fight for any of the human factions. They will not fight for the Syntha or the Koralons. For each Militia soldier added to your force, random equipment and skills are rolled for. This means that each Militia fighter can be different, well-equipped and motivated, or equipped very basically and maybe just a little psychotic.

The next section, the Armoury, covers all weapons carried by any of your forces. Here you will find their stat line, description and extra rules. This section is alphabetical so it should be reasonably easy to find the specific weapon your model is carrying.

After this section is a portion of the book dedicated to a series of scenarios explaining all the requirements for each one along with a

PDF format.

is £1.50 a pack.

for that.

deployment diagram. Victory conditions and any special rules are also listed for each scenario.

The last area of the book is dedicated to fast play sheets, blank rosters, templates and tokens. If you don't want to cut up your book, you can buy the items separately and there are plastic template sets available along with some excellent tokens.

Urban Mammoth also has a download section on their website. In there you can pay to download the rule book, each set of faction cards, the tokens, templates and play sheets in

At the time of going to print the book retails at £15 or £2.50 as a download.

To buy the cards is £6 a pack or to download it

To buy the tokens and templates is £9 for the templates, and a small pack of 20 quality tokens is £7. To download templates, tokens, roster

If you are on a budget, it is hard to find better value than this. Not many game companies offer this kind of service to their customers and this is a big plus, so kudos to Urban Mammoth





### FELDHERR MINITURE CASES REVIEW by Simon Parkinson

some very memorable poses and interestingly detailed clothing. For me I have to like a range of models first; if I like the models I will probably buy some, paint them and maybe also start playing the game. Not everything in the range appeals to me, but my friends are very happy with the factions that are not to my taste and I still find myself with four factions which are very much to my liking, so the game has plenty more to offer me. With the use of CAL the options for a Strike Team are almost endless. And to further increase use of the models certain factions can be allied on the table. Gladiators and Junkers can be seen shoulder to shoulder. VASA and Triads also join forces on the battlefield as and when it suits both parties.

Only the Viridians, Syntha and Koralons stand alone. And stand they do. Once the ability to throw in some Militia has been added, this game has plenty of options to fill a figure case.

The quality of the models is stunning, with The size of table space needed is very minimal for Urban War, 3 foot by 3 foot is more than enough for demonstrations, and rarely do you need more than a 4 foot by 6 foot tabletop. What is especially useful in this game is scenery, the more the merrier, allowing for a much more tactical battle, rather than the standard tableedge fire fight across a nearly empty terrain containing one hill and a tree.

> For maximum pleasure and entertainment as much scenery as possible will ensure that your Strike Team can weather a storm of fire while tactically moving forwards to take up firing positions of their own.

> In short, Urban War is a surprising, exciting revelation of a sci-fi 28mm skirmish game. It will be on top of my list of games currently played for some time.

As someone who plays a lot of skirmish games I find that the cases are just too big or cumbersome to carry my meagre forces around. As such I have been looking for better ways of carrying my miniatures to and from venues and tournaments.

I may have found the perfect answer...

#### Intro

While scouring the internet looking for new cases I found a company called GWINDI GmbH based in Berlin, Germany. They have 6 different ranges of cases that have multiple internal configurations available. Andreas Nickl, MD of Gwindi has provided The Ancible with Feldherr MINI, MINI-Plus and Backpack products for this review.

The backpack actually contained not only the Feldherr Mini and Mini-Plus, but two blocks of Raster foam as well (Raster Foam is the squares type that you pluck out to create your own unique spaces for miniatures). I must say that I am very impressed with the design and quality of these products at first glance.

#### **Products**

Let's talk about the Mini first. The case measures 300mm x 200mm x 90mm, so guite small really. It holds 32 miniatures in compressed 25mm foam trays. There are two trays in the sample we received which are comparable to other manufactures and are of good quality foam. There are options on the website to change the inserts of your Mini but the maximum depth you can go to is 60mm. Good quality black materials are used on the outside and the inside is red with a Greco-style helmet pattern. It is well padded and is

For further detail about Urban War or any other Urban Mammoth Products... url: www.urbanmammoth.com Email: info@urbanmammoth.com



manufactured to a high standard. The zips have the stylised "F" on them from the Feldherr product name which is a nice touch as well as a colourful shield design logo sewn onto the front. There is also a small window on it so that you can write what the case contains or who it belongs to on a piece of card. Personally I must say that for me there is little call for the Mini if you are a serious gamer as it lacks versatility although its small size enables you to secrete it within a rucksack, which could be seen as a considerable plus for those travelling a lot with a small force.

The Mini-Plus is effectively

a more grown up version of the Mini. It shares the same features as its little brother, except it has a small carry handle and holds 64 miniatures. The dimensions are 300mm x 200mm x 160mm. It can take a wide range of half-sized trays and like the Mini there are many options on the website though I wouldn't try and put more than 125mm total foam inside. This case is a must for tournament players who play skirmish games with 25-50mm based miniatures. Lots of versatility and again its small size allows you to secrete it within rucksacks.

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#### The Backpack...WOW!



There is a nice balance of design, functionality and aesthetics in this product. Like the Mini and Mini-Plus the whole product oozes quality. It has the same zips but the logo is in black. The Backpack can hold 192 miniatures. The whole thing has been designed so that it can be carried while on a motorcycle or bicycle, which is a clever nod to the younger gamer who might make his way to his gaming club on two wheels. The straps and back are well padded and provide ample comfort for the wearer. The rest of the pack isn't padded except for the front. It has a very sturdy fabric carrying handle which is covered with a rubberised grip. The right hand shoulder strap has a phone/MP3 player pocket also another nice touch. There are two compartments on the Backpack; the front one is for personal items and it has a nice little elasticated mesh area within it. The main compartment is just superb. It has a zipped mesh area to stow templates and other items, it has a collapsible ridged bottom to provide support for the trays when they are in place as well as a collapsible ridged compartment to stow rules books and suchlike. The main compartment holds the half-sized trays of miniatures and opens to a 60° angle for ease of access.

# FELDHERR

#### Prices

These can vary due to what you put inside. Let's look at the basic product prices that carry the maximum amount of miniatures. (Prices do not include post and packaging)

Feldherr Mini	£19.99
Feldherr Mini-Plus	£24.49
Feldherr Backpack	£80.99

Overall I think that the price for Mini is too much for what it is. However I would gladly pay £24.49 for the Mini-Plus as I think it is worth its weight in gold. Now I know what you are going to say about the Backpack and I agree; that's a lot of money especially considering that the Feldherr Maxi holds 180 miniatures. The Backpack is a classy item and provides a great deal of versatility. I think it's a luxury choice rather than an essential one, like the Mini-Plus, but it may well tick the boxes that you require.

#### Conclusions

Overall the range and options are excellent. The Mini case is ideal for stowing a small 25/30mm based skirmish army in. It will fit in your rucksack along with your sandwiches, rulebook and related bits, or to carry to a friend's house, but it is very limited otherwise. The Mini-Plus is more versatile as it carries twice the amount of 25/30mm based miniatures. Again it will fit into a rucksack like the Mini but due to the fact you can put a wider selection of foam in it I would say that this would be the my choice for skirmish tournaments. This leaves the Backpack... I want one! There's no other way to put it; sure it's pricey, but boy is it sweet. Other items from Feldherr to consider are the Medium which holds 108 miniatures, the same as a GW case and costs £31.49, and the Maxi which hold 180 miniatures and costs £44.99. Even though we didn't have access to the Feldherr Medium or Maxi if they are similar to the products we have seen they should be at the top of your wish lists.

I would like to thank Andreas Nickl of Gwindi GmbH for the samples.

Further information on this range can be found at:



K customers: p://www.figurecase.com/



SA and Canadian Customers: tp://www.us.feldherr.org/



## An Introduction to Future War Commander By Alan Oliver

uture War Commander (FWC) is a fast-paced tabletop wargame that provides rules for fighting battles with an assortment of different figure ranges. Not only does the single rulebook cover dozens of different armies of commercially available figures, but it also includes rules for creating your own units and putting points values to them.

I'll look at the game mechanics first, and then discuss what makes the game so much fun to play.

#### **The Game Mechanics**

The whole game system is designed to produce a fast play game style that isn't going to get too bogged down in rules questions and debates, excessive record keeping or long and involved decisions.

#### Deployment

Often overlooked, deployment in any wargame is very important. There are several options in FWC for how to deploy forces. Static deployment is the classic wargame approach, deploying forces on opposite sides of the table. However there are rules for mobile deployment, where forces enter onto the table as an action. This has the advantage that the troops involved cannot be attacked till they have acted. There are also rules for deploying via teleportation, tunnelling vehicles, dropships, etc. Everything you would expect from a Sci-Fi wargame in fact.

#### **Turn Sequence**

The game uses alternating player turns, with the active player moving and attacking while the defending player does little except wait for a target of opportunity. If the active player moves units in front of the enemy, they will get shot at. A kill is unlikely, but due to the clever damage player's plans.

#### Orders

# FUTUREWARCOMMANDER Fast-Play Tabletop Wargame Rules For Combined-Arms Operations, The Future



system it may be possible to keep them out of action for the current turn, disrupting the active

In most wargames units will perform a set amount of activity during a turn, typically moving a certain distance and firing their weapons once. But FWC is not like the others. Command units must successfully issue orders to units to get them to do anything in a turn. This can leave units sitting doing nothing for a turn if the dice roll badly. However because a successful command unit can keep issuing orders to the troops under its command, you can get sudden bursts of activity. A tank column might cross the entire battlefield to threaten the enemy's rear or a dug-in infantry company might blast away at the oncoming alien horde and vaporise them all.



Under a single order most units can either move their standard distance, or fire once. Deploying troops from any kind of transport requires an order. Stabilised units are particularly useful, as they can fire and move under the same order. Artillery spotters can call in barrages on enemy positions, air controllers can call in airstrikes and troops that can teleport can redeploy from one end of the battlefield to the other. All assuming you make that vital command roll.

#### Movement

Movement is simple. Each unit has a stat listing how far it can move and what sort of movement it is. Units can move in any direction and end up facing in whatever direction they wish. The movement type determines how the unit interacts with terrain.

It is the order system that makes movement interesting, as you cannot predict how far the enemy are going to move with any accuracy. It can range from nothing to four or even six times their movement stat, depending on how the dice roll. The same is true of your own troops of course, as you cannot rely on them getting to where you want them to be when you need them there.

#### **Firing and Damage**

Again this is done from a single stat, which determines the range of the unit's weapon,

and how many attacks it brings to bear. The chance to hit is based on the cover that the target is in. This can be modified by some weapons and protective systems, but for most situations it is very straight forward. Damage inflicted from these attacks is then saved by armour, determined by the stats of the target unit. If the attack has done more damage than the target has capacity to absorb, then the unit is destroyed. Different units can take different amounts of damage, determined on their stat lines again.

If insufficient damage is done to kill the target, then the attacker gets to try and suppress it instead. Suppression is a major factor in the game, at least against some armies. A suppressed unit can neither move nor fire, and is vulnerable to further fire from the enemy and assault.

One of the most significant points is that damage doesn't carry over from one turn to the next. If a target is not destroyed during this round's firing, it will be back to full strength next turn. This not only removes record keeping almost completely, but also creates interesting tactical choices. Do you concentrate fire to kill a few units or spread fire around to suppress many, knowing that the damage done will disappear next turn.

#### **Artillery and Air Support**

Both of these are off-map assets that are called in by specialist command units. Both work on an area of effect, applying their attacks to all units within that area. This fire zone is centred on the enemy unit that they targeted, however in most situations there is a chance for the fire zone to scatter off target. The greater the range between the command unit and the target, and the lower the tech level of the army, the further the fire zone is likely to scatter.

Artillery can either cover a large area with a small amount of fire, or concentrate on a smaller area but with more firepower. Air strikes either hit a small area hard, or a single target very hard. Because of the different types of attacks they are useful against different targets.

Artillery is most effective against infantry caught in the open. A heavy artillery barrage against a company of infantry caught moving across open ground could easily kill them all. Artillery is less useful against tanks of any sort or infantry who are inside buildings or fortifications. Artillery is also difficult to stop, although not impossible. Artillery units can counter-battery fire against enemy artillery; although the chances of actually destroying an artillery piece are relatively low, it may suppress them for a turn. The only other way to stop artillery is to kill the artillery spotters that call it in.



Air strikes are as effective against infantry as artillery, although they hit a smaller fire zone. They will also have difficulty hitting infantry in buildings or fortifications. They are much more effective against armour than artillery, and a pin-point attack against a tank can often destroy even an undamaged heavy vehicle. However air strikes are easier to stop. Firstly, you can kill the command unit that calls them in, just like killing artillery spotters. Secondly, air superiority can drive off or destroy the attacking aircraft before they even get to the battlefield. Thirdly, anti-aircraft units on the table itself get to fire at aircraft performing an air strike anywhere within their range. This will, if it hits, either destroy the aircraft or weaken its attack.

Some aircraft can hang around on the battlefield, either after performing an air strike or deployed on the table from the start. Dropships can deploy troops to any part of the battlefield, and then hang around to provide cover, while gunships cruise above the battlefield raining death on enemy units from above. Most ground units don't have the weaponry to target dropships and gunships, so these units are difficult for the enemy to kill once they are in play, it is only AA units and commanders who have weapons capable of hitting them.

Then you have orbital bombardment. This cannot be stopped at all, there is nothing that the enemy can do about it other than hope the order roll fails. However orbital bombardment is expensive. Instead of buying the supporting unit, you have to pay for each individual shot when selecting your army. An orbital barrage is cheaper than the artillery or aircraft that could provide that many attacks, the difference being that artillery will fire practically every turn, and airstrikes will happen most turns, while the orbital barrage is one shot.

#### Victory and Morale

Battles do not go on until there's nothing left – most of the time. Armies have a breaking point beyond which they will no longer fight. For most this is determined by the casualties taken. Once casualties reach a certain level the morale of the army starts to break. A good commander might hold the army together for another turn or two, depending on their command rolls, but the end is certainly near.

In a simple battle victory is based on breaking the enemy formation while not being broken yourself. However there are a number of scenarios in the rules that set different victory conditions, and the rules are flexible enough for you to create your own scenarios and victory conditions easily.

#### Why Play Future War Commander?

Three main reasons come to mind. First, there is the Fog of War element to the game, second is the fast pace of play, and third, the game's flexibility.

As to how FWC has come about. It is the third game produced by Specialist Military Publishing, following on from Blitzkrieg Commander that covered World War II, and Cold War Commander that covered from then on to the present day. This effectively makes FWC a third edition of the game, with plenty of development and feedback from the players. The rules have been polished till they shine.

#### **Fog of War**

This is mainly brought about by the orders system. At first this may seem like the biggest drawback of the game and a source of endless frustration. In other wargames you can always rely on your units to do what they are told, but in FWC there isn't that certainty. And yes, it can be frustrating when the dice are against you and half your forces sit and do nothing while the enemy stomps all over you. However this is a good thing, as it makes the nature of the game less competitive and more narrative in nature.

The game becomes less about winning and more about the unfolding story of the battle itself. Why have your crack troops spent half the battle hunkered down in that building, what have they found in there that is so interesting? Was it because you've failed to successfully issue an order to them for three turns, or have they found a hidden store of vital military intelligence? Why have your artillery units suffered from weapon misfires for the last couple of turns? Was it because you've rolled command blunders twice in a row, or was it because enemy saboteurs have gotten to your ammo supplies?

Fog of War also takes the pressure off, and means you can just relax and enjoy playing the game to see what happens, rather than pushing so hard for victory that neither your opponent nor yourself gets any fun out of it. Those players who are only interested in winning may not take to the game. The unreliability of their troops making it impossible for them to achieve the success they crave. But they should still give it a try. Some of the most competitive gamers I know took to the game precisely because it wasn't competitive and so they could take their hunger for victory off the hook for once.

The order system can work the other way as well. Sometimes the luck is with you and a formation will race off across the map, blasting away at the enemy as they go and completely turning the course of the battle. This potential to do something impressive is inherent in every unit in the game, which means that every unit remains important. Three stands of infantry may not seem like much. But at the

right time and place, and with a good set of order rolls, they can do far more than anyone would expect.

#### **Fast Play**

The game is quick to learn and quick to play. The mechanics of the game are simple to grasp and use and most of the units in the game are covered by a single line of stats, sometimes with a few additional notes. This makes it easier to keep in mind the capabilities of troops which makes playing the game easier.

The game requires virtually no record keeping, with damage being marked on the table by dice, using different coloured dice to indicate suppression. As such there's no need for huge amounts of paperwork cluttering the table, wasted hours spent leafing through record sheets or anything of that nature.

Also because there is less pressure on the players to win, due to the whole fog of war factor, players will typically not spend ages over tactical decisions. Instead there is generally more of a 'get stuck in and see what happens' approach to playing the game.

#### Flexibility

For me personally this is the final nail in the coffin for all other game systems. FWC not only covers a large number of figure manufacturers in the rule book, but with the unit generation system you can stat up any forces of the appropriate scale and use them against anything else. Most of us have old epic armies sitting in the loft, and this is a chance to dig them out and use them again, which is good in its own right. But it doesn't stop there. As now you can put the Imperial guard against a force of Battletech mechs, or have a duel of the ancients between the Eldar and Kraytonian armies. Or how about putting together a zombie horde and using them against space marines, Battletech mechs, even Ogrethulhu. Everything is compatible, within reason. Using 15mm and 6mm scale armies against each other could be done, but would look more than a little odd. But who's to say that one army isn't a race of giants?

Then you have the force construction rules. Each unit has a points value, and while there are some restrictions as to the number of certain units that you can field, these limits are not generally that intrusive. For example power marines, aka GW Terminators, cost 240 points each, and the limit is a maximum of four per thousand points. Not going to be difficult keeping to that limit. The point is that you can build your battlegroup pretty much

however you want it. Either going for full strength companies of infantry and squadrons of tanks, or a more ragged and chaotic veteran force, with units under strength and unusual assets

#### **And Finally**

attached.

The last and possibly best thing about FWC is the man who's brought it into being. Peter Andrew Jones has not only produced an excellent series of games, but he is also a nice guy. There is a forum on the website www.futurewar-commander.com where he regularly answers rules questions. Not only that but there is other useful information on the website including alternative army lists, rules suggestions, tactical discussions and everything else you would want to support a thriving wargame.

- 41 well presented army lists covering the miniatures from 15 different manufacturers • 11 scenarios for simulating combined-arms warfare of the future • suitable for solo, two-player & multi-player games at home, at the club, or in the garden! • no supplements - all you need to play in one book



For further detail about Future War commander or any other Specialist Military Publishing Products. ..... url: http://www.blitzkrieg-commander.com/ default.aspx?Area = FWC



- Future War Commander is an exciting wargame that allows you to re-create battles of the future using miniatures on a tabletop. Command anything from a platoon right up to a division and get a result in 2-3 bours without becoming bogged-down in detail. Suitable for any scale miniatures from The main features of the game include: • command system that emphasizes the fog-of-war in a simple but effective manner

- the same mechanism for casualty resolution throughout • rules for future technology, including shields, plasma weapons and cryonic weapons • examples of play using colour pictures of miniatures "in-action" to illustrate the game
- unique points system that allows for unequal forces but an equal chance of victory
- minimal set-up time simply assemble your forces and play



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## Written by Chris Duncan Pictures by Wayne Clack

Joel wiped the dust from his eyes; peering over the edge of the jagged window frame he watched movement through the ruined city block across from his position. Counting five men, he estimated it was a forward scouting group. How often he had seen such manoeuvres from both sides Joel couldn't remember, enough to have forgotten how many times.

Sighting along his rifle Joel took a measured breath, slowly releasing as he applied pressure to the trigger. Only a split second after the snap of his rifle the lead enemy slumped to the rubble. When the second the shot rang out they all dove for cover, two to a side; they were good, he would have to admit, to have reacted so fast. Joel was prepared for this. Before they could consolidate he reached forwards and grasped the trigger lying beside his gear and squeezed. An eruption of debris and dust rocketed up leaving no doubt that only two scouts remained. And if they followed their standard military doctrine, they would go no further, but retrace their steps carefully.

Joel slid away backwards from his concealed position, his work done. He displaced to a new hunting ground, with grim determination continuing his effort to survive and inflict losses, until he could get back in contact with his lines. Taking stock he knew he was running low on explosives, but he still had three clips for his rifle. Luckily there was an abundance of discarded weapons from both sides, although reaching one without an enemy sniper taking you out was another thing. They were a firm favourite for an unsuspecting grunt to find themselves in the sights of a high powered rifle. And if you did dodge a sniper, they could well have been booby-trapped.





Smiling to himself, Joel considered his chain of thought. It was amazing what the human mind could accept as normal, in this hell hole that was damned right.

Night would soon be upon the city, a dangerous time to be exposed. Crawling through litter and waste he made his way slowly to a place already scoped out. It didn't stop Joel from sweeping it a second time – caution favoured the living. With the perimeter secured he sat down in the filth of a city drenched in perpetual battle. Gathering rags and debris around him Joel became part of the ruins. Knowing supper would be a cold affair again, he ate in quick, practiced mouthfuls. A cold, wet night lay ahead, how many had it been? Four, he thought, although without any accurate idea of the day Joel had no real idea. He estimated he'd been out of contact with command for two weeks, but again that was a guess. The last man he had seen from his unit was lost three days ago. Others may have made it back to their lines, if anyone even knew where the lines were anymore.

He considered his state, wondering if anyone would even recognise whose side he was on. Rubbing the stubble gathering on his face he doubted even he would recognise his own reflection. War does that, it changes you, never to be the same again, and you carry those changes for the rest of your life, however long that could be. Tomorrow... god, what would tomorrow bring? More death, dirt and, no doubt, rain. As safe as any could be in his situation Joel slipped into a fitful sleep.

The next morning didn't exactly present itself to the world; rather a slow lightening of the smoky gloom indicated somewhere it was dawn. Joel felt a moment of panic, always the same, each morning when he opened an eye cautiously for the first time he thought it would be the last time. As his eyes became accustomed his fears were not fulfilled.

He waited, maybe fifteen minutes, he couldn't tell but it felt like a lifetime. Nothing stirred, no noise reached his ears. In the distance the staccato of small arms fire, such a familiar sound, could be heard. But for now his area was void of violence. With care he moved the rubbish away from himself. Tonight if he was still alive he would need to strip and clean his weapon. Shouldering his kit he crept to the edge of the rubble he was in, making sure he didn't provide a silhouette. Reaching his goal, Joel surveyed the kill-zone forwards of his position. Looking for any movement, a glint of metal in the gloom, or something out of place, he could see none. Joel took a quick moment to glance at his map. On it he could see the positions of his forces and the enemy's, but even if the Intel was correct when they got it, it was surely out of date now. He had no real-time data uplink which in his world made you a blind man.

Across the demolished street was an old foundry, a site that would be good for another ambush. Slowly Joel crouched, crawled and scurried his way across the street, using every piece of debris to hide his movements. By what he guessed was mid-morning, Joel reached the ruined wall of the foundry. Picking his entrance carefully, he stepped through. The light was worse in here, if such was possible, so he found a dark corner, concealed himself and waited for his eyes to adjust. All the time his ears were seeking out any betrayal of activity, anything that might signal a threat to his existence, such as it was.

Suddenly there was a roar and the ground shook. A familiar noise filled the ruins as a dark shadow swept across the street. This was followed by an explosion in the distance, not far enough away to stop the ground shaking, but certainly no danger to him. Someone had managed to get some aircraft up, friend or foe, Joel could not guess, it wouldn't matter anyway, on the ground they all looked alike. Pilots could not distinguish targets within the morass of ruins thanks to the polluting cocktail of chemical vapours which interfered with the FoF technology, and it was always better to fire first and ask questions after.

Using the noise of the aircraft to mask his movements, he ran across the remains of the factory and slid inside an opening between giant machinery, so much scrap metal now, rusty and ruined. From this vantage point he could see a great location for an ambush with two exit possibilities. Making his way slowly and carefully, in a half-filled crater he came across a body. Streaked with mud and blood it looked like a thousand others, rotten and broken; only this one stirred, not much, but enough. Taking his combat knife Joel slipped into the darkened water. Taking the man in his arms, he cradled him while sliding the knife across the exposed throat. The body sighed with the man's last breath. Only after checking the body did Joel recognise the uniform. It was the same as his. He took solace that it was a mercy to put the man out of his misery and pain. It was small comfort.

As he slithered out of the crater another noise reached him. It was a gut-wrenching sound of metal grinding. Somewhere close by a tank was navigating the city ruins. With support it was a deadly enemy. With support so was Joel, and in urban areas the infantryman was king. However alone it was better to evade. So he made his way quickly and as silently as possible to his selected ambush spot. The little noise he made across the rubble was masked by the grinding of the nearby tank.

Settling down he could now hear voices; the tank was not alone. Across the foundry he could make out changing light and shadows. Slowly, almost as cautious as Joel himself, figures appeared in the gloom. Moving from cover to cover, the way they protected each other's movement sent a chill through his body. These were veterans to be feared, not to be tangled with while alone. It took every ounce of his self control to stay where he was and observe them. Two squads were now sweeping the foundry floor, occasionally checking the upper spaces from their position. Then with a heart stopping jolt, Joel remembered the crater. They were closing on it, two of them only feet away. The fresh blood in the pit's stagnant swill would indicate fresh activity. That one moment of mercy might have cost him his life.

Time appeared to be slowing as he waited for the inevitable shout and hurried activity. Darting across his place of concealment with his eyes, Joel checked his two escape routes one more time. He might have to use one rapidly. They were at the crater, one of them cautiously checking the body covered in fresh, bright blood. Indeed they were veterans, their first concern being a booby-trap. After a brief survey they began ransacking the corpse. No shouts of alarm. Then Joel realised – the body was one of ours, no suspicion was raised. To them it was just another dead enemy. Some of their forces, they assumed, must have been through earlier that day. These dirty, drawn veterans then made a mistake. They assumed their forces had cleared the building and began to move on, back towards the far side of the building and out from numerous ruined sections of the wall.

It wasn't until he heard the squeal of the tank moving again that Joel realised he had held his breath. Sighing heavily he took stock. Was he behind an enemy advance? Were there more troops all around him? There was only one way to find out. Carefully he removed himself from his position, making his way the twenty feet on his belly to the gap in the wall on his side of the building. Cautiously with rags covering his head and face he edged closer to the pile of rubble that reached even this far up the building, connecting it at this level to the next manufacturing plant in the complex.

Nothing stirred. That in itself wasn't unusual; the only life that existed in this shadow of a city was the rats and feral dogs, neither of which would show themselves in this gloom that passed for day. Just before he was about to move off he noticed movement in the plaza area that fronted both buildings. Between the car wrecks, figures moved quietly. They were going in the same direction as the foundry visitors. They were not his. He was alone.

A decision needed to be made; he could tail the advance and when it encountered his army he could slip through. He could try and slip through first, head in their direction hoping to find his force and warn them, or he could sit tight and wait for a moment of opportunity to end some straggler's life.

There was no choice really, he must try and pass by them, in the night he hoped, and warn his comrades. It was his duty. He considered for a moment using the sewer system and various service tunnels under the city, but he knew from experience it was an option to be considered when all others were exhausted. Making his way forwards and down the slope of the rubble, Joel was



careful to make as little sound as possible. With all the noise around, bullets flying, shells falling, it didn't seem necessary, but old habits die hard.

He could see ahead that the force he was behind had moved forwards. He estimated at least a company in the plaza and at least a platoon with tank support on the other side of the building he was clinging to. It was important to keep tabs on his quarry, for Intel and for self preservation. By their garb they were a line unit, no sign of any special ops troopers. That did not mean they were not there, and their absence made Joel subconsciously huddle even tighter as he made his way across the edge of the plaza.

As he looked ahead, from within the gloom rising like a dead edifice, the next building forward of the foundry appeared. It seemed to be the remains of an assembly plant, in times gone by it probably constructed the results of the building he had just come from. It seemed to be almost complete, rising six levels and it screamed danger to him. With so many windows on so many levels it would be an ambush haven. Joel fought an inner battle; his rational side said they were advancing past him, and buildings ahead would be checked and then cleared. The irrational side spoke of hidden units, snipers and rearguards. Despite the validity of the irrational side, he moved on, duty and a sense of impending doom spurring him on.

Coming to the gap between both buildings, Joel slowed his advance. This was a crucial point. Observing both ways now was as good a time as any. Darting across he made it to a burnt out wreck. Did anyone see him? Are they waiting for his next move? Such thoughts can cripple a man into inaction. After months of fighting in this city, Joel was on the edge between listening to the unspoken questions and moving on. Glancing quickly he crawled from the wreck and very carefully made for a ruined wall attached to the building. So far he had made slow progress, but he had not been seen as far as he could tell. Tonight his progress would be quicker.

Most of the day had been taken making little gain, however in a professional manner bred from constant training he had memorised all of the troop movements he had seen and their direction. Getting his map out he added the information.

The gloom, if possible, was darkening. Night was falling and soon a damp, awfulsmelling mist would descend, driven by all the rotting corpses and damaged systems, sewers and chemical factories ripped open by earth-shaking explosions. All added to the night-time mist. Sometimes it was just a wisp of smoke dancing on the currents of the daily heat. But on occasion it was difficult to see your own hand. Tonight Joel was not going to be that lucky, for even as the light failed, ghostly thin smoky mists started to drift among the jagged ribs of ruined buildings.

Foul things occur in the night, things man could not imagine during the day. At night primal instincts lead to man descending into bestial actions. Enemies slaughter in the most heinous ways. To be caught at night was to face the worst of deaths. Leaders of both sides long since stopped trying to end the atrocities. The morning's mutilated bodies were testament to the savagery of the previous night's encounters.

Joel quietly moved round the wall to observe any movement. He was met with stony silence and no movement. For now the enemy had settled down and placed their piquets. These were the guardians of the night Joel must survive and evade if he was to make it to his lines. It wouldn't be easy; they had methods of feeling into the night.

Before setting off, Joel made one more check of all his gear and weapon, to make sure nothing was loose, nothing could rattle, creak or jingle to give his movements away. Even out here sloppy soldiery cost you dear, in and about this rotting death and destruction, smoke and ruin, the basic skills a soldier learns keeps him fighting.

Happy that he would make no sound, Joel stepped forwards, only his feet, or his silhouette, could now give him away. Stepping precisely between the rubble and debris he made his way along the wall of the assembly building. Keeping as low as possible and using every inch of cover, he made a lot of ground. Before the light had truly faded Joel had made it to the end of the building without giving him<mark>self away</mark>. Now with the darkness as an ally he made his way forwards. Beyond the building he had so much feared was an open section of roadway, strewn with burnt out vehicles, both civilian and military. Having spent the last few days in and about this area Joel knew that beyond the dead ground was a ruined church, not even the spire had survived the onslaught.



Joel watched, listened and waited. The only sound was of rats scurrying about, looking for anything that would sustain their ever increasing population. It was amazing that as mankind dwindled between the ghosts of this city, the rat population experienced an explosion. Stepping forwards with his foot he began to negotiate the car graveyard. Although his moves were swift his eyes had become accustomed to the lack of light, and they darted from left to right, looking for trip wires, booby traps or mines, any of which would halt his gallant effort to warn his fellow soldiers of their impending doom.

Then a metallic crack to his left froze the very blood in Joel's veins...

To be continued...

# **DVD Review: P3 Modelling and Painting Volume: 1 COPE TECHNIQUES** by Jez Fairclough

I have always classed myself as a confident painter, which tends to mean I am confident I can pick up a brush, select a colour and apply it in some sense to a miniature normally of my choice. I wouldn't say that what I turn out is anything amazingly spectacular but it's more than fine for gaming at my local club or events. I'm not going to walk away with any awards for guite excited about seeing what new skills this DVD could teach me.

Privateer Press's Formula P3 is a range of tools, paints and washes designed to pretty much see you right through the process of preparing, painting and finishing gaming miniatures. The DVD we are reviewing here is essentially an instructional support for this range of products. It retails at about \$29.99 though carful shopping around will allow you to find it a bit cheaper.

The DVD comes in a sturdy plastic box, with some handy extras on assembling miniatures and a very handy colour chart and is broken up into the following chapters:

Tools of the trade - getting to know your brushes & blades

Getting it together preparing & assembling the figure

Way of the brush – the four fundamentals of painting

Start to finish – painting the Ironclad

Start to finish – painting Warcaster Sorscha

Start to finish – painting the Raek ►



In certain parts of the DVD Ron Kruzie, the studio director at Privateer Press will give a little talk about what's coming up in the following chapter or about how painting can make the games you play better. However, his isn't the main voice of the DVD which is done by a very professional-sounding Female American Voice Pro. I guess it's what Privateer thought would be best but for me I'd have loved Ron's enthusiasm all the way through.

As a whole the contents of the DVD are very good for someone getting into painting or who feels that they seem to just throw paint at a mini with predictably haphazard and inconsistent results. It shows the actual consistency of the paint or wash you need to use which can sometimes be easier than the normal 'as-thickas-milk' guidance you read in a lot of magazines. The first chapter explains a little on what you are going to need, how you set up your table and some basic principles of painting. This is clearly entry-level stuff but if you are anything more than a beginner then you probably aren't viewing this expecting to discover some hitherto unknown secret about your painting arrangements.

The second chapter presses on showing you best advice for assembling miniatures including how to remove any mould lines left by the two part casting system which they also show and explain. There's a very handy tip for pinning which uses Blue Tac and I must admit it's one I didn't know so it shows that there is something for everybody.

The third chapter gets down to some of the fundamental painting skills, covering the

aspects of dry brushing, base coating, washing and layering. Each element is covered in enough depth to make sure you fully understand what vou're doing. There are also nice tips and tricks explained throughout the DVD to help you make fewer mistakes and so in turn improve your confidence with painting.

During this chapter you get to see how the skills vou will learn are applied, first against a Cygnar Ironclad, which uses all the techniques, especially layering and dry brushing, a Khador Sorcha and then finally a Horde Raek. The Raek has some good elements showing a good use of the washes that have been explained. All of them show work carried out to completion so include very simple ideas for basing the miniature as well.

Overall the DVD is well done, with plenty of graphics and information to really get over the points being explained. As I've said a few times though it's for the beginner, although I do feel that those who have just moved from this stage could benefit from some of the items as well. The voiceover is extremely crisp although you feel she could just as easily have been talking about cake-icing – one of the fascinating guirks of gaming is the enthusiasm it engenders, and for me more of Ron and less of the Ice lady would have been good. That said, she is crystal clear and when it comes down to it perhaps clarity is the most important thing. Here's hoping they continue the series and I avidly look forward to the next one



#### Introduction

These house rules have been in use since the 1980s, although Battletech has come and gone as the wargame of choice a number of times over that period. That a game from the 80s is still playable despite all the changes that have happened along the way shows how good the initial design of the game was. These house rules just shift the game slightly to suit my style of play more, and are in no way meant to suggest flaws in the original game.

#### **Heating Things Up**

So, you are piloting your clan Nova, and have just unleashed an alpha strike of lasers on the enemy mech. They have burned or boiled off tons of armour, vaporising half the internal components of the mech in the process. But they haven't managed to warm it up in the slightest. Does that sound right to you? No, me neither. So here is a simple set of rules to cover weapon hits doing heat as well as damage to enemy mechs.

#### Game Mechanics

Different weapons do different amounts of heat to the enemy. Weapons are divided into five different bands; flamers, lasers, Particle Projectors, explosives and gauss.

Flamers inflict one heat per point of damage done to the enemy.

When a mech is hit by a weapon, not only will it take damage as normal, but it will also take additional heat over and above the heat it generates itself through movement, weapons fire and damage. This heat doesn't take effect till the end phase, but each mech will need to keep track of the heat caused by weapons fire during the turn.

Lasers inflict one heat per three points of damage done to the enemy.

> Particle projectors, that's PPCs and ER PPCs, do one heat per five damage.

Explosives include all missile types and autocannon rounds, and do one heat per ten damage to the enemy.

Gauss weapons only inflict heat through friction when they hit, so each gauss round does one heat, whether it is a light, standard or heavy gauss round.

Heat inflicted will generally only need to be accounted for to within one decimal place, so an inner sphere medium laser will do 1.6 heat, while a clan ER medium laser will do 2.3 heat. Experience shows that it doesn't make any significant difference whether you keep a total of the different damage types done over the turn then calculate the heat they generate in the end phase, or calculate the heat as you are going along.

#### **Game Implications**

THE ANCIBLE ISSUE 1

The most significant implication of this is that heat becomes much more important in the game. Without this most mechs will only ever suffer from heat problems if they choose to over-fire their weapons, or they take some critical damage that wrecks their heat system. With these rules a perfectly functioning mech that isn't deliberately risking shutdown can take sufficient fire to cook off, not because of what it's done, but through enemy action.

Because no mech can be certain of how much heat damage it will take it is impossible to finesse your position on the heat scale, one flamer hit could bump you over the line. Players will be more cautious about how much heat they generate on their own mechs, in case they are going to get a heat spike from enemy fire.

Even if not using a real time damage system, firing at a mech before it has fired and causing it a lot of heat will reduce how much it is willing to fire, especially if there is ammo involved. This makes the order in which units fire that much more important, creating interesting tactical decisions.

It will also have an effect on mech design. Existing mechs that have insufficient heat sinks already will suffer even more under this system, while those mechs that had an excess of heat sinks will now make more sense. Omnimechs will be packing more heat sinks than before, so will have fewer weapons. But with greater heat capacity they will be able to function in combat more easily than hot-running mechs.

Overall using this rule will change the nature of play, but in my experience this change is for the better.

#### **Tactical Implications**

Firstly, choice of weapon becomes more complicated as there is another factor involved. Flamers are no longer a useless weapon to have on a mech. Lasers are great on mass for cooking the enemy. Equally missiles and autocannon are good because they generate less heat when used than the energy weapons do, making for cooler running mechs that are better able to survive the heat of battle. The old inner sphere PPC is suddenly looking better compared to the newer ER PPC simply because it does the same damage for two-thirds the heat generated when fired. Unless you need that extra range, of course!

The alpha strike becomes even more effective than before, especially if using an energy weapon-heavy force. Massed lasers and PPCs will soon overheat all but the coolest running mechs, even if they haven't destroyed it. Even apart from the alpha strike, combining the fire of several mechs against a single target is more likely to concentrate the heat problems in one place. This gives the inner sphere forces a slight edge against clan forces that are fighting honourably. But then honourable clan forces are likely to be in Omnimechs, which can be configured to handle more heat anyway.

Jump jets become useful as a way of getting out of trouble when suffering major heat issues. Jump range is not reduced by heat, and ignores terrain and turning thus giving the greatest chance of getting to cover. This does take the mech out of the fight for a turn while it cools down, however typically a mech in that situation will die if it stays put anyway.

#### **Simultaneous Movement**

When moving mechs alternately, it is often the lightest and least effective mechs that are moved first so that the heavier mechs can react and get into the best firing positions. This is obviously slightly unrealistic and we find this system to be more realistic than alternate

movement. It actually gives a small advantage to fast moving units, but as these tend to be light and fragile types that are otherwise weak they need all the help that they can get.

#### **Game Mechanics**

The basic premise is that instead of alternating mechs, you move everything together one hex at a time.

Everything declares how fast it is moving as normal. Then you move everything its first hex of movement, either moving a hex, starting to enter a hex if it will take several movement points, or turning in place. Once everything has done its first move, you do the same for the second movement point, and so on till everything has moved its full distance. Torso twists are declared after all movement has finished.

Units will be reacting to each other, and in some cases a mech will want to abandon a partly completed move into another hex to do something else instead. It can do so with no penalty other than the loss of the movement points already expended. Units remain in the hex they are leaving until they have spent all of the movement required to enter the new hex.

For example a mech is trying to enter a heavy forest hex one level above it, for a total move cost of four movment points. For the first three movement points it remains in the lower hex, and if on the fourth movement point it chooses to turn rather than move into the higher hex it can do so, but the three movement points expended towards entering that hex are lost.

For the most part it is not going to matter what order mechs move in. However there may be times where it will make a difference. Each player should have a list of the units they are using, giving the order that they will move in. When there is a conflict, simply look at the list and whichever unit is higher on the list moved first. If they are units from two different players, then take both lists and compare, and the unit higher on either list moved first. Above all apply logic and common sense. If one mech is moving out of a hex and another is moving into the hex, the order of movement doesn't matter, they simply move past each other.

#### **Game Implications**

Firstly, this makes faster units much more likely to be able to get around into the blind sides of larger, slower units. This makes them more effective and worthwhile using in a force, whereas normally light and fast mechs were almost always ineffective.

Secondly, everything can react to everything else, even if the slower units can't turn quickly enough to keep the light units off their rear, they will at least be able to adjust their movement a little in anticipation of their movement.

Thirdly, games just make a lot more sense and have a more realistic feel to them.

#### **Tactical Implications**

Tight terrain like the Hot Gates become useful. If filled with a solid wall of mechs, no light mech on foot will be able to get past them to attack the rear. However jumping mechs will still be an issue.

Deception is possible due to the nature of a hex map based game. An approaching mech can appear to be going towards one side of you, then with a single turn cut across in front of you to get onto the other side. This might enable it to get in on your back exposed when you turned towards the side you thought it would be on.

#### **Real Time Damage**

So you get lucky and take the Victor's arm

Destroyed mechs should be removed from the movement list. Also the movement order list is useful to make sure you don't forget to move a mech in a large and complicated battle.

Keeping light mechs out of your rear arcs is now more of an issue, especially fast units that carry heavy firepower, such as the Blitzkrieg, which are a nightmare to deal with. There are very few mechs that can shrug off an ultra AC20 on their rear armour. To counter this threat mechs need to be deployed in depth, so a light mech that gets in behind the front rank is directly in front of the second rank, where it will not last long.

off before it can fire it's autocannon, a lucky critical hit blowing it off at the shoulder. But without a real time damage system, it will still get to fire that autocannon, possibly straight in your mech's face.

#### **Game Mechanics**

THE ANCIBLE ISSUE

There are few game mechanics involved, other than determining the order of initiative.

Whichever side has the initiative will select a mech and conduct all firing from that mech. The damage caused by this firing takes place immediately, so if its fire takes out an enemy mech, that mech will not get to fire at all. Once the firing mech has finished, the other side get to select a mech and conduct all firing from it.

The order in which mechs fire is not fixed, as this becomes a tactical choice as to when to fire the most powerful mechs.

Initiative should include a random element, combined with some reference to the relevant forces strategic capabilities. If playing in conjunction with mechwarrior, player character skills should also be included. In many cases which side gets to fire with a mech first will not make that much difference; however there are times when it will be critical.

#### **Alternate Initiative System**

This is only of use if using real time damage. If all damage is simultaneous then it doesn't matter if elite pilots get to fire first or not.

Each mech is given an initiative bonus based on the skill of the pilot. Subtract the piloting and gunnery skills from six each, and this total is the mechs Personal Initiative Bonus. Mechwarrior characters should get to add in half their Tactics skill to their PIB. If not using mechwarrior characters, officers should get a bonus depending on the size of unit they command. Then each turn roll one dice and add this to the PIB for each mech to get their initiative order. Mechs then fire in strict initiative order, starting with the highest total.

The disadvantage of this variant is that it removes the tactical decisions from the player as to which mech to fire next. The advantage is that it makes elite pilots that much more dangerous, as not only are they good pilots and gunners, they will also be firing early in the turn.

#### **Game Implications**

The biggest implication is that you have to pay attention to the order in which you fire mechs, and react to the actions of the enemy mechs. If a mech is critically damaged but can still fire, it becomes a much higher priority to fire next before it is destroyed. The order mechs fire in becomes a tactical decision, whereas without real time damage it doesn't matter. This is a good thing if you want your games to be based on tactics more than just rolling lots of dice.

Lucky hits will become more significant, taking a mech or mechwarrior out before they can act rather than after.

Getting a light unit into a position where it can fire on the rear of the enemy becomes more risky, as they will try and kill it before it can fire. However as an Ultra AC20 up the rear will often prove fatal, you will want to fire that Blitzkrieg early anyway to stop the mech it's firing at from firing itself.

#### **Tactical Implications**

It is natural to want to fire on a unit before it can fire itself, in the hopes of doing sufficient damage to it to reduce its fire. Therefore units that fire early will not only get their damage in first, but are also likely to take less damage over the turn than those who fire late. This can be used to direct the enemy's fire towards units that will be more difficult to hit, such as those in cover or slightly further away.

Mechs and units that are supporting other mechs, such as a C3 master system, will become choice targets, as the destruction of the C3 master will prevent the remaining mechs on the system from gaining its advantage.

#### In Conclusion

Firstly, a thank you to the FASA guys for producing a game that I've enjoyed for at least a couple of decades, and to the guys at Fanpro for keeping up the good work.

I hope other people will get some enjoyment out of these rules. They have served me well over the years and have seen a lot of playtesting over time. They do work and they do make for fun games.



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from the many minions



n this world we inhabit there are many unsung heroes. I'm not talking about the characters and models we all create for our armies but the people behind the games and figures that inspire us to collect and play the games. In this series of articles I would like to focus on some of them. Some you may be familiar with, some you may not, but hopefully their skill, innovation and

So the mission began. Many long painting sessions, many failures but all the time driven by the desire to paint miniatures just like the 'Eavy Metal Crew whose work he was now tracking so earnestly. After nine months of effort his spirits were high and he thought he had cracked it.



Workshop and Adrian was no exception. He fell in love with the figures as soon as he saw them and, to coin a phrase, was hooked. As he stared at the stunningly painted models displayed within the pages of White Dwarf he thought to himself that this was something he could aspire to do.

The miniatures were looking good and it was time to go along to Games Day and win the Slayer Sword. In Adrian's own words, "It was probably one of the most sobering days of my life!"



Having been working so hard on improving his skills on his own, Adrian had never seen top flight miniatures in the flesh. When he saw them laid out before him, in particular Neil Thomason's Wolf priest (which won the Slayer Sword '96) he realised that the pictures in White Dwarf did not do them justice. The handpainted banners were just out of this world and the models looked so real. It was a salutary I mean. Luckily Adrian was inspired.

lesson to Adrian and he made a conscious decision not to fall into the same trap again. After picking his jaw up from the floor and taking a couple of weeks to regroup and refocus Adrian decided that it was time to up his game and get serious about painting. Inspiration comes in many forms and sometimes you don't recognise it when it kicks you in the...Well you know what

He started displaying his work in the GW store in Bristol, and it as so often happens it coincide with a vacancy which arose on the 'Eavy Metal painting team at Games Workshop. Word of Adrian's work had been spreading quickly thanks to his in-store exposure and in 1997 Adrian was offered the opportunity to join the GW 'Eavy Metal team in Nottingham.

Moving to the Midlands, Adrian worked as an 'Eavy Metal Painter for a year with his work featuring in White Dwarf 216-228. This was by no means the end of the development process; in fact it was just the beginning of what turned out to be intensive learning in the company of some of the greatest painters of the time. Painting every day with the likes of Ben Jefferson, Torben Schnoor, Neil Green,





Gaul 100BC...





Matt Parkes and Jakob Nielson really hones your brush skills and it seems like it was a bit of a blast as well, though when pressed Adrian refused to comment any further. Say no more.

All good things must come to an end and after leaving and moving back to Bristol Adrian felt it was time for a change and turned his eye to historical figures. To give you some sort of idea of the dedication that you need he spent around a year just learning how to paint flesh tones and how to light source a model. Now that he was doing it for pleasure inevitably he joined a local modelling club and started attending events and shows throughout the country and it was only a matter of time before he entered and won his first competition. He enjoyed this so much that he could be regularly be found at these shows not only entering and winning but also giving budding young painters tips and hints on how to improve their own techniques.

So successful was Adrian that in 1999 he won a Gold medal at Euromilitaire (the historical model show). It is the model titled 'Gaul 100 BC'. This is one of Adrian's most prized possessions and I was lucky enough to be allowed to photograph it, though he did look on like the proud parent just to make sure that no harm came to it.

Gaul 100BC... Elite Miniatures, sculpted Raul Garcia Latorre. This miniature got me into painting historical models back in 1999. For me this sculpt has no equal, it's my all time favourite.





In 2001 he won a second gold in Euromilitaire. This time it was a model titled 'Maximus'. Unfortunately this model was bought by a collector so we couldn't photograph it but if you would like to see a picture of it then you can on Adrian's web site www.chaos-child.co.uk.

Fresh for a new challenge, Adrian met lan Barstow, then Studio Manager at Mongoose, who was on the lookout for a miniatures painter to join the studio team he had put together. It was 2005 and Mongoose were working on a top secret license which turned out to be Starship Troopers. Adrian recalls that the two met in a dark and dingy corner of the Salute wargames show, where Adrian attempted to show lan a succession of his finest miniatures. Despite the poor light lan knew a talented painter when he saw one and he decided Adrian was the guy he wanted to paint Mongoose's display miniatures.

Andrea Minatures: Horthak the Black Crow...

My only thought was 'He's been a Gladiator'

'Soon as I saw him I wanted to paint him!

Adrian's involvement may have initially been only that of a painter but lan very quickly discovered he could sculpt and was also a very accomplished graphic artist and designer. Before Adrian knew it he was sculpting spacecraft for Babylon 5 and working with artists on designs and concepts for new Starship Troopers races and equipment.

Adrian was also at the forefront of the design process for the initial and, as it turned out, highly controversial, Battlefield Evolution game. Adrian recalls the excitement of developing a game from scratch, facing the challenge of working closely with a Chinese company on developing and producing one of the first lines of prepainted miniatures to directly support the game which was set in about 2015. As such most of

the equipment and vehicles required would need to be realistically portrayed from real-world sources, and Adrian spent many days poring over schematics of vehicles like the Chinese Type 99 MBT and the British Challenger tank.

Hell Dorado

It is clear from interviewing Adrian that the Battlefield Evolution experience has left bitter as well as good memories. He smiles recalling how he would photograph members of the studio team in actual combat poses holding various airsoft weapons to try and get the most lifelike poses possible, but then he cringes as he describes the shock of seeing the paint quality of the first wave of releases. These were nothing close to what had been received as samples and it was a salutary lesson to him. It also really marked the beginning of the end for the Miniatures Division at Mongoose.

Following the poorly received Battlefield Evolution Mongoose decided to get out of

**Games Workshop** Terminator Cantain Modelled and painted fo myself in classic 'Eavy Metal style. Being, slightly eccentric I just wanted a figure I could introduce as 'The Master of the Deathwing' as it sounds so cool!

> miniature production and Adrian decided that it was time to go and do his own thing. After careful consideration of a job offer as creative director with an American-based fantasy wargames company Adrian decided to stay in the UK and use the skills that he had developed to become a freelance painter.

maestro can create.

#### Adrian Walters is On the Spot

Samurai girl... Hasselfree Miniatures, one of my favourite all time sculpts.



Life, of course, has a funny way of pointing people in a certain direction and Adrian soon found himself back working for Spartan Games, a small games company based in the south west of England where he paints, sculpts, occasionally makes tea and continues to hone his skills. What new and exciting projects Adrian will find himself involved in are as yet unknown, but we all look forward to seeing what new miniature wonders this artistic





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#### Review by Ian Cook

aturday the 12th of September 2009 was a good day; the sun was shining and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. I had withdrawn all of my secret stash from its cunningly concealed hiding place and filled up my wallet, fellow gamers, for all of us have, or have had, a secret stash at some point, and these are vital in protecting our loved ones, for they would only worry that we spend too much money otherwise and that would be cruel.

I was fully equipped with everything I would need to survive the ordeal ahead of me: rucksack (To contain any purchases), note book and pen (So I could share with all of you what happened to me) and, most importantly, wallet. Of course I cannot speak for anyone else, but when I have money in said wallet, I feel an urge to constantly check it is still with me, although I have never fully understood why it's always in the last pocket you check though. It does lead to something of an embarrassing nervous reaction throughout the day of suddenly and almost involuntarily jerking my hand towards said pocket, clearly identifying it for any stray pickpockets operating in the vicinity.

So here I was in the place the Gods of Gaming had conspired to place me, in the company of the Grand Vizier of the Ancible Kenny Robb and the semi-legendary Ghurkha wargaming guru, Ted Chang, all of us looking up at the magnificent grandstand at Newbury Racecourse, three floors jam-packed with everything a gamer could possibly need: participation games, stalls, places to eat and plenty of toilets. Never underestimate the need for plenty of toilets, especially when

the previous evening's gourmet entertainment consisted of beer, pizza and crisps.

The journey there had been equally as memorable, as my wife had kindly agreed to my spending the weekend staying in the West Wing of the Grand Vizier's palace in Swindon. For me there are few things as satisfying as the company of good friends, beer, pizza and the only topics of conversation being gaming or subjects relating to gaming. Although the down side was my wife telling me that it would be a cold day in hell before I had earned enough good behaviour credits to have another weekend away from her and my wonderful children.



On Saturday morning I was woken by the sounds of the palace servants bustling around, preparing our breakfast feast and getting the things ready for the expedition to deepest, darkest Newbury, and after everyone was fed and watered we began the long journey that would see us safely through the jungle surrounding the Grand Vizier's estates, including what I think may have beer rivers full of crocodiles but I couldn't be too sure, and I wasn't getting off the elephant to find out.

After transferring to a more practical form of transport we began the journey proper. The trip to Newbury was a painless one, situated as it is next to the M4 and A34; getting there was easy and it didn't get any more difficult when we entered Newbury proper as we quickly picked up the signs for the racecourse - you cannot miss them, big brown signs are placed at every major road into the town, so no one should have had a problem finding the venue, and it is apparent that this is obviously a town that's used to receiving large volumes of people on race days.



It is even easier if you choose to travel by train, the station is not only right next to the racecourse, it is right next to the venue itself and the car parking was also painless; the racecourse has more car parks than you could shake a measuring tape at, and I for one was impressed with the volunteer stewards who directed the traffic, who managed to remain smiling and polite as they directed people to the relevant car parks. The arrangements for the traders and various clubs running demos were equally good; they were all able to park right outside the main building itself, ensuring that the transit of gear from van to display table was as short and painless as possible.

Colours, which is organised by the Newbury and Reading Wargames Society, was spread over the three floors of the grandstand, as previously alluded to. The ground floor held the bulk of the traders, the first floor held the restaurants and bar, demo tables and more traders, and the second floor held more demo tables, more traders and a decently large Bring and Buy stall. Warhammer 40K was also represented on this floor, the Starsmash tournament being very well attended; in particular I did notice there was one guy who had six Obliterators in his army - I wouldn't have wanted to face him across a table although Ted suggested a simple means of beating him, but I always feel dentistry should be saved for actual dentists.

Back to the ground floor coming in from the main entrance, there were traders to the left of





me, traders to the right of me, and right in front of me was the stall of Simple Miniature Games. It was at this point that I saw his offer of 'Buy 3 Get 1 Free', and I heard the voice of Police Chief Brody whispering in my ear "Your gonna need a bigger rucksack". The offer covered everything on Simple's stand and by the end of the day I had purchased several boxed sets of the Infinity miniatures produced by Corvus Belli, choosing the Nomad faction; I liked them, and although they don't have access to the biggest and baddest tech, they do have the ability to shut down tech being used by the other factions. How annoying would that be to face on the skirmish field?

I also picked up a Malifaux box set, a new character-based skirmish game produced by Wyrd Miniatures; this time I chose the Neverborn faction, which for me is a bit of a change of direction as I usually choose the good guy armies or gangs, for I have always been the Luke Skywalker to the opposition's Darth Vader. However, this time I had to go to the Dark Side; the figures were amazing and the background to the Neverborn was very appealing – creatures that were born from dark magic and the nightmares of the people of Malifaux: yes please, say I. Of course the fact that there is also a big, evil teddy bear ready to rip everyone limb from limb in the Neverborn forces had nothing to do with my choice at all. Well, maybe a bit. All I have to do now is assemble them, paint them and a review of the two games followed by a few battle reports will be forthcoming.

The rest of the ground floor contained such a range of suppliers and manufacturers that I didn't know where to look first. A special mention has to go to the Wattle and Stone stand though. Their buildings were achingly good, all of them hand-made and the only issue I had with them was that the owner was in the process of making a medieval building by hand through much of the day, and the inconsiderate crowd jostling in front of the stall stopped me getting a clear view of her. I did see Kenny talking to her though, and here's hoping we will see an article from her in the future, as I for one would love to know how she goes about making those buildings.

Antenociti's Workshop also had a stand there, offering the wide range of terrain accessories for which the company has become rightly famous within wargaming circles, although I am led to understand that there was an issue at one point regarding the jar of sweeties which they generally have open and on offer to passing customers. Of course I for one am never going to turn down free sweeties and I come from that





age group of people who think that a little mud and worm-eating as a sprog toughened you up for the future, but Health & Safety seemingly disagreed, with the consequence that the goodies had to be withdrawn from offer. Such is the world we live in.

I was next drawn to the stand of Stafford Games & Vendel Miniatures, and this was the only stall I found selling Uncharted Sea's box sets; I have an Imperial Human fleet right now, although looking at the box I think I see a Bone Griffon Fleet at some point in my future. I also noticed they had tins of Armypainter Quick Shade for sale.

Ted Chang had previously told me about this miracle product designed for people like me who are, let's say, talent-challenged when it comes to painting. It's not that I can't paint - I can - it's just I really am not very good at it, so for me this Quick Shade may well be the miracle product. In essence having given your miniature a base paint job with no shading, you either dip the model into this stuff or paint it on and shake away the excess, leaving it not only shaded but also with a layer of gloss varnish in place. They also have an increasing range of undercoat colours available, including plate mail and bare flesh, and I think these are really handy, especially when you have a model with one dominating base colour. Ted really does swear by these and the recent output from his grubby, gnarly paws suggests there's something in it.

I spoke to Roland, the owner of Stafford Games, as I wanted a second opinion, and Roland confirmed all that Ted had told me (no offence intended to Ted, but since he told me that super glue could be used as a nasal spray I tread warily), so I bought a tin, which at £18 seemed expensive, but you never use very much of it, so it should last all but the most prolific of painters a very long time. I will also be reviewing this at some point in the future. I have an idea for my Infinity miniatures I want to try out.

I have to say I found Roland to be a very patient and approachable person, and he was full of excellent advice and recommendations. I also like a man with a full beard; it suggests he has



better things to do of a morning than waste time shaving. It was as I left Roland's company that I came across the Dreadnought 3000 game on the Kallistra stand. I have to admit that I have always had a soft spot for games with space ships, so I couldn't resist picking up an Earth Empire fleet and an Altaran fleet, which at £12.50 for 8 lead-free pewter ships in each fleet pack seemed good value. I guess I am going to have to review these figures and rules at some point as well; who needs sleep anyway?

The first floor is where we made our camp; we came across Chris Duncan and the UKCORD demoing team doing a sterling job of converting the unwashed masses to Spartan Games' Uncharted Seas, I had a quick go as I

> find Uncharted Seas to be a very good game, quick to learn and easy to follow; the rules also allow you to utilise a race-specific set of cards, although they are not vital and you can have a great game without them, but it is very satisfying to see your opponent place a devastating card down, only to have the smirk wiped off his face as you counter it. My thanks to



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Chris for a fun time. They were also positioned immediately adjacent to the restaurant, so they were the logical choice to look after our bags while we all went off to explore the show. No coincidence of course that you will see Chris's name elsewhere in this issue, he being another of the erstwhile Ancible Gang.

Ted patiently told me that historical gamers have for years been fighting what they call 'disguised battles', in an attempt to see whether historical outcomes could be obtained without hindsight. Clearly such a clever notion can't be wasted on historical gamers alone. Space Marines and Orks for Rorke's Drift, anybody?

It was on this floor that I came across the most unusual game there. What seemed, to the casual observer, to be a Warhammer Fantasy Battle going on, with High Elves locked in a life and death struggle with their dark cousins from Naggaroth, actually was something rather more. It wasn't until I commented to one of the players that his High Elves looked to be in trouble, that he turned to me, and with a straight face, explained that they weren't High Elves, they were Confederate troops reenacting pickets charge, and yes the Union troops did have the upper hand.



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Also on the first floor I came across the Fieldworks stall. They are a small, two-person set-up making terrain and they have a wonderful collection of 19th and 20th century buildings and ruins. All of the buildings were constructed



to a very high standard and at scales from 10mm to 28mm, they covered every game scale I could think of, many of the buildings had removable roofs, and with the bigger multistorey buildings, you could split them down to get even more value from them. They were also very reasonably priced and I will be picking up a few of their 28mm buildings in the future. I think they will work nicely with the Infinity figures I now have.

A few minutes later as I was admiring the various demo games I came to the appalling conclusion that I didn't bring enough money. In fact I didn't earn enough money. That isn't a testament to the prices of what I was looking at; it was a testament to how many of them I wanted to buy. I had found the K&R Multi Case stall – I love Kaiser Rushforth carry cases – and I especially love the double-depth black aluminium cases. I willingly concede that there may be cheaper carry cases out there, but nowhere have I seen better quality ones (that is merely my opinion by the way) and if your budget, like mine, will

not run to the aluminium cases, they also do hard-wearing card cases, and various sizes of canvas covered cases, all of which come with shoulder straps and carrying handles. It has long been a dream of mine, to find one of these aluminium cases, wrapped neatly underneath my Christmas tree. Fingers crossed for this year - are you reading this, dearest?

The first floor was also home to the restaurant area, although there were not too many tables available. However it didn't matter, as the weather was so good everyone was taking their food out onto the terraces which allowed panoramic views across the racecourse and Newbury itself. The food provided was fairly good quality and reasonably priced considering the venue; bacon and sausage baps were the order of the day in the morning, and at £2.50 they were very good, although Ted says they are only £1 at his rugby club - I pointed out that the cost of living in Nepal is considerably less and then I ran off quickly. The lunchtime menu consisted of lasagne, sausages and various pies and sausage rolls all served with chips and salad; the chicken and mushroom pies were my personal favourite, all for the princely sum of £5.00 - cheaper at Ted's gaff, no doubt, but I didn't bother to ask him. There were also sandwiches and crisps for sale for those who wanted them, although if I had one complaint it was the drinks; £1.60 for a smallish bottle of water was, I felt, a little expensive.





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Colours 2009

# ndverlive in



There was also a bar, and many a person could be seen sitting out in the sunshine enjoying a well-earned beer. Not for me though – I needed a clear head, plus I couldn't bring myself to drink away valuable figure money.

As already mentioned the third floor contained a few more traders as well as plenty more demo tables. I looked in again at the Warhammer 40K Starsmash tournament here as well and I can still see the face of one of the competitors now; on placing his three tanks onto the board he looked quite happy, and then his opposition placed the aforementioned six Obliterators down. Poor man, I couldn't stay and watch.

This was just as well because, had I stayed, I would have missed the jewel in the crown of this year's Colours event, the Angels and Demons participation game. This masterpiece of the show was hosted by Keith Wilson, Ivan Brooke, Robert Warren and Adam Parsons of the Wednesday Night Warriors.



The terrain was breathtaking, around 6 feet by 3feet, and it was a scene from Hell itself, rivers of lava crisscrossed the terrain, more lava was falling from the higher levels and black cotton wool had been cunningly placed in the gaps between the connected boards to give the effect of smoke rising from the depths while at the same time concealing the joins. Rubble and rusted ladders had been strategically placed to allow the angels Raphael, Nathaniel, Gabriel, Michael and Uriel to make their way to the trapped souls held in demon-guarded boxes on the higher levels of the boards, and when I say demon-guarded boxes, I mean Demon Guarded; the angels were outnumbered over 20 to 1, and the boxes were guarded by demons



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Despite trying to get a game of this all weekend, with only five angels and a game that could take a little while to play it was a matter of being lucky with your timing as to whether you got to have a go; the queue just kept defeating me.

I did get lucky and managed to have a very brief chat with Keith Wilson about the game, and I must say for someone who was being harassed from so many directions for a chance to play the game, and to be the angel who killed the most demons and freed the most souls, he was a very patient and understanding GM; I am not sure I would have been as patient in his place and I'm fairly certain Ted would have had his service Webley out pretty sharpish.

The angels all had roughly the same abilities, it's just that they came into play under different circumstances; Raphael gained bonuses when attacking a certain type of demon, a different demon to the other angels, who got their own bonuses when attacking a specific demon type. They could also earn manna as they







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went, which they could use to boost attacks and such as they proceeded through the game; the only angel with a different ability to the rest was Uriel, who had the ability to heal himself or other angels, all for the sacrifice of some manna. I didn't see too much of the latter when the game started to get close towards the end though; that's the trouble with angels, the selfish devils. It was during one of my attempts to play the game that my own angel appeared. There I was with sore feet and aching back, disappointed again that I didn't get to have a go, wondering if life was worth living, okay, I exaggerate a little, but I swear there is nothing so uplifting as being tapped on the shoulder by a member of the racecourse staff, and being asked if I would like a cup of tea. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, Colours had tea ladies! Everywhere they went with their tea trolleys became a little island of calm in a chaotic maelstrom of shopping and gaming, and it was the best cup of tea I have ever tasted, or so it then seemed, almost making up for not being able to play Angels and Demons... almost.

Finally on to the Bring and Buy; it was the Bring and Buy that cast a very small shadow over my weekend. I myself had decided to bring a few things to sell, not that I didn't like my unopened boxed sets of Nurgle marines, or the three unopened blisters of more of Nurgle's Children, but I felt that after all these years at the back of the cupboard at the club, it was time someone else had a chance to enjoy them.

I want everyone reading this to understand, I do not blame any of the stewards who were manning the Bring and Buy – they do not have eyes in the backs of their heads, but someone duly made off with the three blisters I had for sale: not really a big deal, but disappointing all the same. The poor steward who tried to find them for me when I came to cash up was mortified, and the chap couldn't apologise enough, but as I said to him then, I say again now, it wasn't his fault; some people are just born bad. It shouldn't be any surprise - gamers are, like everybody else, human, and Ted repeatedly tells me all people are bad until proven otherwise. He may be right or just a sociopath, but either way it comes as a disappointment to find out first hand.



# Aheible





So, how did I think the show went? I would have like to have played Angels and Demons obviously, and I must remember not to leave things until later in future. I could have had a game early Saturday, but thought I could come back later on for a game, silly me.

But come Sunday at 5 o'clock, my feet hurt, my back ached, I was thoroughly worn out and my wallet was empty, but I had a great time, I had met up with old friends I hadn't seen in a few years, and I had made some new ones, which is always a good thing. As to which games did I think were hot this year? Well I saw AT-43 being snapped up, so that has to be a contender, but for me Infinity and Malifaux seemed to have the most people talking, and if I had to pick one of them I would say Infinity, and I look forward to getting my figures ready for a game at the Lyneham club.

I would like to end by thanking all the members of the Newbury and Reading Wargames Society for organising a very well-run show; parking was plentiful, the food was hot, filling and reasonably priced, and a special mention must go out to the ladies manning the tea trolleys; ladies I salute you, and I will see you all next year.

BACCUS



## Privateer Press's Warmachine

Players Jez Fairclough and Simon Parkinson

into life.

'Cryx, Kommandant. Two heavy Helljacks and some Mechanathralls.' 'And the commander?' 'Gorshade, Kommandant.'

Nodding, Sorscha said nothing. How dare these Cryx be in this area? This had been the third runin with small forces in as many days but this was the first time the opponent had been worthy in Sorscha's eyes.

With her words the hearts of two Khador Heavy Warjacks sparked and hissed as their engines raged

Feeling the slight chill in the air Sorscha smiled. Another fight and they would all end like the last, her enemy scattered at her feet.

'So?' Kommandant Sorscha looked at her Shocktrooper Captain. She never wasted words where they were not needed.

'Ready your men, we go to war.'

#### **Jez: Khador Army**

THE ANCIBLE ISSUE 1

For the first Battle Report in The Ancible we had decided to play the Privateer Press game, Warmachine. This is a great system that pits Warcaster vs Warcaster with the aid of Steam and Magic-driven hunks of steel. We decided on a relatively small engagement so agreed to pick up to 350 points each.

Normally I tend to play mercenaries in whatever game systems we try out and although there is not really a specific merc faction but there is just about enough to get by so that you can create one. However as they are not fully painted I'd decided to borrow some of Kenny's Khador for this report. His tips were to "get them in and hurt them". Should be easy then, I thought.So looking through Kenny's models I decided on the following:

Kommandant Sorscha	71 pts
Unit of Man o War Shocktroopers	67 pts
Marauder Heavy Warjack	109 pts
Juggernaut Heavy Warjack	105 pts
Total	352 pts

This put me two points over the agreed 350 points for the game but no matter what combination we tried this was the only way to sort it out. The closest Khador come to the light warjacks of other armies is their Shocktrooperstyle troops and Kenny only had the three of those.

The style of the army was very much up close and in the enemy's face. Only the Shocktroopers had any ranged capability and that was limited to a paltry 6". So I had to try and get to the enemy and hope to knock him silly before he got a firm grip of the game. Though as I was playing Si I knew that would be a challenge. We often play against each other as the rest natter on like old wives so it's always a challenge and normally we batter each other's army into submission. So I wasn't planning on it being an easy game by a long shot.

#### Simon: Cryx Army

As opponents go Jez and I are very similar so I knew that the battle would go to the wire. Armed with this knowledge I knew that there was only one real choice for me in this battle. As such I decided to use my tried and trusted Goreshade-led Cryx Army (Sometimes called the 'Ming Army' by fellow club members). Jealousy aside with only 350 points to spend **Total** Goreshade is real value for money in smaller games; this is of course merely my opinion. The main reason for taking Goreshade is his feat of calling up a unit of Bane Thralls (I use my Bane Knight Models in games as I prefer the sculpts). He has very rarely let me down and most of the time I walk away with a draw at worst. I knew that Jez would bring his Mercenary Army or a variation of the theme, so Goreshade it was, as I have had happy times against Jez's Merc's with Goreshade .... Boy was I wrong! The surprise for me was that Jez had chosen to use Khador, not his usual bag.... This was a whole new ballgame as I have never played against Khador although I was familiar with their reputation.

With this new information I faltered initially and I was no longer quite so confident in my ability to win. Casting all signs of doubt aside I stuck to my guns and Goreshade and his minions took to the battlefield, let the killing commence...



For my 350 p Goreshade t Slayer, Hellj Seether, He Mechanithra

points Cryx Army	chose:
the Bastard	80 pts
jack	110 pts
lljack	119 pts
alls (6)	39 pts
	348 pts



The die were cast and Khador won the right to go first, and as such my Cryx army set up first followed by Jez's Khador.

#### Khador Turn 1

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JEZ: Well, Fate looked like it was going to be on my side, winning the initial Command Roll, and accordingly I let Si deploy his Cryx first but decided I'd go first. I prefer to force my opponents to react to me rather than the other way around.

As my Khador army is designed as an in close and, to be honest, very personal force I decided my best approach was to cover the distance as quickly as possible using Focus to get both the Juggernaut and Marauder up the feed towards those nasty Cryx.

As I was still well out of range for any spells or shooting I had Focus to spare which I always hate. Never enough when you really need it though.

back opening strategy - if in doubt advance like there's no tomorrow! The problem with that tactic was that my Seether, bless his little soul drive, didn't want to do as he was told and refused to budge. After a little gentle persuasion, using additional Focus and me shouting at it,





#### **Cryx Turn 1**

SIMON: The terrain is against me here so it didn't take me long to decide to adopt my fall-

he decided to slowly bumble forwards. I'm not really one of those touchy-feely wargamers. I thoroughly believe if you shout at your models enough they'll get the message eventually.

#### Khador Turn 2

JEZ: Much the same as Turn 1 for the Khador, namely, get closer to the enemy. The way I could see it going was we'd end up running both lines into each other and it would be a mess. I was hoping that Sorscha wouldn't let me down with her spells when her time came. Moving Sorscha last I fired off Razorwind at one of the Mechanithralls hoping to reduce the model count in the unit. But typically I was well off on my range and the spell stopped dead. I was hoping the Cryx couldn't get close enough in their turn to worry me overly yet, but hopefully they would be just close enough for me too start the fun in my next turn.



SIMON: Sorscha firing that spell off gave me the perfect measurements; I knew that my forces were out of charge range so decisions had to be made. Tactically it can be very useful to have your opponent make this sort of error, allowing you to effectively discern how far away from the enemy you are.

That said, this was looking a little bit scary for me, with lots of heavily armoured monsters facing me down. Then I recalled the nature of my army: Hang on, I'm dead already what's the problem, Man Up! said the little voices. Obviously it's best not to let your opponent know that you are getting messages through from your models but all the guys at Lyneham know my little foibles by now so this isn't likely to be any sort of revelation. I decided to move my minions into positions of ambush, just out of range of Jez's Khador but well within my own charge range. The Seether must have been feeling suitably chastised as even he obeyed orders with no worries. I saw an opening for Goreshade to use Consumption for 3 Focus on



#### Khador Turn 3

Khador could do.



JEZ: I decided that with the Cryx now well in range it really was time too see what these

First up was the Marauder and using one of its allocated Focus I slammed it across the battlefield into the Slayer. Better to charge than be charged I say. Though I only managed to get a single hit in, which I'd boosted using another point of Focus for a paltry 8 points of damage to the 4 area. I was hoping for an arm ideally, but that was not to be. Also with the Mechanithralls close buy I might have taken a bit of a risk.

Slaver wound locations



Deciding it was time Sorscha earned her very expensive pay packet from the Khador Army I decided time to reduce the Mechanithralls a little. Dropping Tempest on them I managed to destroy four of them, forever sealing them in an icy doom. Although things had started well I made sure I kept calm and didn't count any chickens so early in the game. I've lost count of the times I've thought I was well on the way



to certain victory when in fact it was just a prelude to another beating!

With that in mind I then used my Shocktroopers to fire some shots at the Seether but it didn't result in anything more than some chipped paint. eether wound locations



#### Cryx Turn 3

SIMON: Ouch! Four iced Mechanithralls wasn't what I was expecting. That wasn't very nice Jez, time to remove the gloves...

Moving my two remaining Mechanithralls into combat with the Marauder they both decided to combo strike; the first missed but the second one planted 3 points of damage to area 5. Next up came my Slayer; with only two points of Focus I had to box clever here. I decided to return the favour to the Marauder, hitting once with each fist and caused a total of 1 point and 4 points of damage to areas 5 and 6 respectively. I also achieved 1 critical hit causing Corrosion on the first hit. The head butt also hit but unfortunately failed to score any damage. Using my additional Focus I made one additional attack with each fist with my missing with one and scoring 5 points of damage in the 5 with the other, which I thought was not bad.



Next, Goreshade decided to cast a little more Consumption on the Juggernaut, this time scoring 7 points of damage in the 4 again, my luck was holding and the Juggernaut's Cortex was fried! Sticking to the Faint Heart rule I cast my feat, and six of the Eldritch's Bane Thralls appeared in a cloud of pestilence and crying souls. The rules allow Bane Thralls to charge immediately upon their arrival (one of the reasons some consider this army somewhat Mingy) and accordingly two of them charged the stricken Juggernaut whilst I allocated a pair to two of the Shocktroopers. In the following melee the two Bane Thralls attacking the Juggernaut only managed to cause 4 points and 1 point of damage to areas 3 and 6 respectively, pitiful considering that they both



had four dice for damage. Against the Shocktroopers I fared better, killing both my targets.

ugger wound locations

The remaining Man O War took a morale check for losses and stood fast, which was brave but not very wise as the Seether, smelling blood, bayed and charged him, subsequently ripping him to shreds; it was over so quickly we can't remember what exactly happened.

The Juggernaut lumbered into one of the Bane Thralls and finished it off though I had left myself rather too close to the Seether for comfort. I'm hoping he gets charged rather than Sorscha who, although she can hold her own in a fight, could find a rampaging Seether more trouble than she wants.



#### Khador Turn 4

JEZ: Well, the end of Turn 3 hadn't quite gone as planned. Goreshade had used his feat to summon his free unit of Bane Thralls that had slammed into my line. I'd lost my Shocktrooper unit to them and the charging Seether. Goreshade had also managed to inflict enough damage on my Juggernaut that its Cortex had popped. As such I can't allocate it any Focus, which reduces what it can do - no charging, boosted attacks or damage, or even additional attacks. It was effectively reduced to having to try and mop stuff up where possible.

I was starting to think it was all going a bit grim for me and I really needed my troops to pull something special out of the bag or it could be curtains for my Khador. Deciding that I needed to really get going I activated Sorscha's feat, Icy Gaze. With that in place I knew the Cryx couldn't move and it would also reduce their defence due to being immobile.

She then called up Tempest on the Bane Thralls destroying four of their number.

Focus though to beat previous turn.



**Slaver wound locations** 

As I was still in combat with the Slayer I decided the best thing to do for the Marauder was for it to use its special Piston attack which pushed the Slayer back 5" and the damage was enough to destroy its Cortex as well. I didn't have enough

the Mechanithralls that were pulling bits off me in the

#### Cryx Turn 4

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**SIMON:** Double whammy – all troops stationary due to Sorscha's feat, five Bane Thralls dead and my Slayer knocked out of combat with no Cortex.

fury as I completely missed with the first attack! I decide to play it safe and on the second by boosting the damage, inflicting 7 points of damage to area 4. The third and fourth attacks also failed to hit but the damage had been done; the Marauder lost its left arm and its Cortex.

## "Your going down for that, Sorscha"

Goreshade yells in his guttural Eldritch tongue.





gair lot s Sors Mar cou the prol Crys Unf the didr lool The as to 1 Not

I gave the Seether two points of Focus and kept the rest on Goreshade. I then combo attacked with the two surviving Mechanithralls for a dire 1 point of damage to area 1. Goreshade played sneaky and cast Soul Gate; with a blast of souls crying out in pain one of the Mechanithralls disappeared only to be replaced by the Seether! Still enraged by the bits of Man O War covering him the Seether set to work on the Marauder in a cloud of fury. As it turned out this was blind



#### **Khador Turn 5** JEZ: Okay, turn 4 wasn't what I was fully hoping

for with Goreshade using Soul Gate on his Seether to place him right next to my already battered Marauder. It was pretty much do or die this turn and I sensed it was going to be lots of dying.



Starting with the Juggernaut I engaged the last of the Bane Thralls, thankfully sending him back from whence he had come. It was a small VP gain but I had a horrible feeling I'd be losing a lot soon.

Sorscha decided to help the beleaguered Marauder by trying to reduce the opponent count. He had the Seether on him, plus the last Mechanithrall and the Slayer could probably charge back in as well during the Cryx turn, although he was a little battered. Unfortunately for me it took two attempts to kill the Mechanithrall and an attack with Razorwind didn't cause it any worries at all – it wasn't looking good.

The Marauder, now missing an arm as well as its blown Cortex, couldn't really do much to the Seether and its attack didn't even hit. Not unexpected, but even so the extinction of my last faint glimmer of hope was still a disappointment. Now I could only hope for Si's dice to turn on him.



#### Cryx losses 4VP Khador Losses 11VP A solid victory for the Cryx.

#### Cryx Turn 5

SIMON: The Seether was now covered in bits of Man O War and Mechanithrall, and frankly it's not impressed! With the three allocated Focus I did a combo strike and boosted the damage on the Marauder causing 10 points of damage, and smashing the tusks in with the last Focus for a damage boost caused the Marauder to split and explode as the server damage finally takes its toll.

L	L	M	C	RRC	R

Narauder wound locations

Sensing victory I moved the Slayer away from the battle area so as to conserve VP -

not very Cryx-like, I confess, but I was overcome with a ruthless desire to win.

Seeing the last of his beloved Bane Thralls crushed, Goreshade then proceeded to charge the exposed back of the Juggernaut. His brutal flurry of attacks caused the already battered Juggernaut to completely shut down.

#### Game Over

Seeing the horrific losses, Sorscha decided enough was enough. She was now facing a Seether Helljack almost intact, a badly beaten Slayer Helljack and a Warcaster. No contest, and Jez extended the hand of surrender to Simon.



#### Conclusion

'I will inform command of the failure of their Troops'

JEZ: Okay, Khador aren't my normal army. I'm a merc by trade as already mentioned and I know the good and bad parts of them so I don't was lucky. Jez is a good tactician and the terrain think I did the Khador the justice they deserve. They are a very hard-hitting army but you do need to get them into action pretty quickly. I'd have been better off using my Shocktroopers to keep the Mechanithralls at bay, though they are tasty in combat against anything, if they can get there, that is.

Sorscha did well and she caused some damage but I wonder if I protected her a little too much instead of getting her in the thick of things and mixing it up. She could well have killed a lot more stuff and that would then have been better for the army overall. However that's something I'll have to wait to find out next time, I hope.

Both the Jacks did decently, but I'm not sure I used them to the best of their abilities. I think maybe teaming them up to take down one enemy Jack and then the next will be a better tactic for me next time. But you always have to credit Si for his good tactics though I do plan on kidnapping Goreshade at some point when he's not looking.



with me!'

SIMON: There is no doubt that Goreshade is just a nasty piece of work in small battles, but I was horrid. My plan from the start was to use groups - the Slayer and Mechanithralls, and the Seether plus the summoned Bane Thralls, to take the Jacks down. Goreshade could easily have dealt with the Shocktroopers, I think.

I love the brutality of this game, but I can also see that there is a glaring hole when it comes to troops. I seriously think that there should be some more stringent restrictions on selection of troops. The game is called Warmachine but it is the troops that dominated, and to be honest that isn't the first time we have seen this at the club. Thankfully as a group we like to squeeze as many warmachines as we can into the game. Yes, I know contradicting myself using Goreshade and his free troops but that's why I took him!

I better secrete my soul back to Schardes and keep my head down for a bit as everyone hates me and Goreshade when I play him.

#### 'Toruk and the Lich Lords will be pleased

Thankfully Jez didn't keep his Jacks together and I took full advantage of his inexperience with the army. Both armies hit well in that the damage was similar but what I lacked in armour and hit points I made up in defence and MAT.

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# **A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO AT-43** By: Spencer D. Taylor

**T**-43 takes place in a dim future in AI an undisclosed part of the galaxy in the far future. The planet Ava has been attacked by the relentless Therians, and now the war is spreading across the stars as more and more races join the fray. The heroic United Nations of Ava (UNA), the collectivist Red Blok, the Therian nano-machines, the gorillalike Karmans, and the clone army of the Cogs all fight an intergalactic war for power and knowledge.

The game, produced by French company Rackham Entertainment, is fast paced, brutal, and full of interesting tricks. Like any other miniature wargame, players use models to represent individual fighters and squads on the field of battle. In addition to accompany the basic infantry into battle are a wide range of vehicles, from the Karmans' retro-styled rocket buggies to the UNA combat striders. Each army has its own unique style, both aesthetically and play-wise. The UNA are a very jack-of-all-trades type of army, as opposed to the Cogs who rely on very specialised units.

Before the start of a game the players have a set amount of points to spend on units. The points are then split between Assault and Reinforcement, Assault being units that come onto the table at the start of the game and Reinforcement units staying in reserve until called in later. The standard size game is 2500 points, consisting of 2,000 Assault and 500 Reinforcement. Of course you can play with as many points as you like, but the more common these days, at least when I play, is 3000 points to accommodate the larger vehicles.

Purchasing units is done very differently from most tabletop wargames, in that you pay for entire units instead of single models. Instead of paying X amount of points for a UNA Steel

Trooper, you pay X points for an entire squad based on the number of models (listed as standard strength and maximum strength) and various types of special equipment.



**UNA Steel Troopers** 

Players build platoons using pre-set layouts in their army's respective army book, with each army having a base platoon pattern and four subfaction platoons. The sub-faction patterns have unique advantages and disadvantages to give them more flavour, and to add a bit of variety to the armies. Each platoon pattern consists of five slots to run different types of units in, such as basic infantry or vehicles. These slots are listed as, for an example, "Infantry/Support Unit(\*/\*\*/\*\*\*)". The stars represent the unit "type" allowed, as described below. Different platoons will favour different play styles so picking the right one, in conjunction with the aforementioned advantages and disadvantages, can either win or lose the game for you, plus of course good or bad dice rolls can, as would be expected, impact that as well. A good example of this is the UNA's M.ind platoon, a particularly tricky platoon that I almost never run. M.ind allows the player to give all their vehicles the ability to repair themselves each turn, which is a huge thing to have when the big guns come into play. The major downside is that if all your vehicles are destroyed, you lose the game. Also, it's a bit tougher to run something like this in lower point games because vehicles cost a good chunk of points. Once you've built your list your highest ranking officer will become your company commander, and in the case of a

tie you pick one. So, if you have a platoon with there's always a way to counter even the two Captains in it, you pick one of them to act as your commander. The company commander is used to determine leadership points and authority, which I'll get into more when we actually start running down the turn.

Infantry and vehicles are divided up into types, each corresponding to a slot in the platoon patterns. Type one is the most basic, weaker than the others but generally more affordable and numerous. These are units such as UNA Star Troopers and Cog Warmongers.



**UNA Star Troopers** 



#### **UNA Cog Warmongers**

Type two represents the more elite troops and heavier vehicles, equipped with better weapons but generally more expensive and running in small units. Examples of this type are Therian Assault Golems and Red Blok Dragonov Kommandos. Type three are the big guns, battle suit clad infantry and giant war machines loaded out with enough firepower to wipe out entire armies. While it may seem like a great idea to take the biggest and most powerful units in your army at every chance,



**Dotch Yaga King** 



biggest threat. Examples of type three vehicles are the Red Blok's infamous Dotch Yaga or the Karman's King Mammoth tank.



Each unit has a corresponding statistic card, containing all the info needed to actually play the unit. This keeps the book keeping down a lot, and makes it easier to keep track of everything. Each model has the same basic stats, while other have additional stats based on whether they are an infantry officer or a vehicle. At the top of the card is the name of the unit, a star to indicate their type, and a symbol to show if they are considered infantry or vehicle (although there are two types of vehicle symbols, vehicle and combat strider). Along the left hand side of the card are the unit's actual stats, and on the right is a picture to give you an idea of who's who. Each model has four basic stats, displayed from top to bottom of the card: Movement, Morale, Protection and Combat. Movement, represented by the arrow, indicates how many centimetres the model can travel in a normal move, but they can double their move by giving up their shooting to run. Morale, the little flag, is, you guessed it, used to take morale checks, about which I'll go into more detail a little later. Protection, the suit of armour, indicates how hard it is to wound that model in ranged combat. Combat, the little knife symbol, is how hard that unit is to hit and wound in close combat.

Officers, who can be added to units for an extra cost, have a few additional stats listed on their cards. The first is their Numbers bonus, which allows higher ranking officers to have additional soldiers in their squads, again for a price. The next is their Authority stat, which adds to your authority roll to see who goes first each turn. Lastly they have their Leadership stat, which is used to determine leadership points in the game. These points are spent to issue combat drills, activate units without an officer, or use special abilities. Vehicles also

unit's card, and each weapon has its own four stats much like the basic infantry. In AT-43 weapons don't really have a maximum range (except for flamers), instead they have the first stat; Accuracy. This adds a neat element in that it's easier to hit a target up close than it is at a long distance, so one could crunch the numbers to figure out a weapon's maximum range based on their accuracy but that really does you no good. The next stat is the Rate of fire/re-roll statistic, which tells you how many dice you get to roll when using this weapon and

weapon makes when using the template. This is used for things like grenades and mortars, the number corresponding to a number on the blast template. The last statistic for weapons is the Penetration/damage score. I'll get into a lot more detail about how to calculate penetration and damage once we start talking about actually shooting stuff. To put it into the simplest terms, this stat tells you how hard the weapon hits and how many points of damage the weapon does each time it penetrates armour. For the most part, small arms will have lower penetration

placed, a total number of victory points must be determined to win the game. Players gain victory points (VP) by capturing primary objectives and killing enemy units, but in certain scenarios VP can be earned by completing other objectives (such as getting models to a table edge). Players can also capture secondary objectives to gain reinforcement points to call in models that were placed in Reinforcement. This can be beneficial in the late game, as it can bring in much needed infantry to capture objectives when you seem hopelessly outnumbered. Victory and



have small white boxes on their picture which represent their structure points. There are three types of structure point: Propulsion, Frame, and Weapon. When these reach zero different things happen: no propulsion means the vehicle is immobilised, weapons get destroyed, and if the frame reaches zero structure points then the vehicle is destroyed.

Weapons are very different in this game compared to something like Warhammer. Weapon stats are listed at the bottom of the

then how many times, if indeed at all, you can re-roll your misses. So let's say we're using a gun that has a Rate of fire/re-roll stat of 2/1, and we have 10 soldiers in the squad with this gun. This means for each model you get to roll two dice, so 20 dice to attack with, and each one of them can re-roll their misses once. Generally speaking, weapons with high rates of fire, like machine guns and other heavy weapons, won't have re-rolls. The next stat is the Area of effect; this tells you how big of an explosion this

and do one Damage, as they're designed to reinforcement points are gained each turn you kill infantry who only have one wound anyway. Something like a missile launcher, however, will have penetration/damage listed along the lines of 14/2, since they're built to punch through heavy armour and light vehicles.

The goal of the basic game is to capture and hold objectives, which can only be done by infantry unless otherwise stated in a model's rules, to gain victory points. Before each game starts, but after terrain and objectives have been

control an objective, which means you have more models within 10cm of said objective. This whole capture-and-hold idea really gives the game some added strategic depth that I feel is missing from other games. Of course the biggest one is Warhammer 40K. In 40K's "capture and control" mission, you just have to have control over more objectives by the end of turn 5 to win. This usually ends up with both armies just blasting away at each other with

little to no care about the objectives until the last possible second, unless you're like me and your first instinct is to run units at the objectives and try your best not to be obliterated. By having to hold the objectives to gain the points to win the game, AT-43 forces players to play a little smarter. Your first priority is to capture the objective and hold it for the glory of your army; getting to shoot a laser through the skull of a power armour-wearing Gorilla is just an added bonus!

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Once we get into the turn itself, things change from what most miniature wargamers might be used to. The turn is played out quite differently to say a game of Warhammer, but it's done in a way that's both fast-paced and always full of surprises. Players are issued leadership points based on their company commander. This is calculated by taking the company commander's leadership stat and adding one for each unit in your army. Thus in my 2000 point Cog army, my commander has a leadership of nine and I have a total of four units, and adding that all up I have 13 leadership points at the start of the turn. If a unit is wiped out entirely, then my leadership points will drop by one. Therefore at the minimum I can have 10 leadership points to work with at any given time. You also need leadership points to activate units that don't have an officer.

Players can also wager certain amounts of leadership points to increase their chances of winning the authority test to see who goes first. After calculating up your leadership points you lay out your activation sequence. This is done by taking the cards that correspond to your units and placing them face down, from left to right, in the order you wish to activate them throughout the turn. The authority test is actually a very simple and straightforward mechanic. You simply roll a d6 and add your company commander's authority stat to it. So let's go back to my Cog army real quick, and say we are rolling authority and that neither of us is wagering (I hardly ever do anyway). If my company commander has an authority of 6 and my opponent has an authority of 8 we would each roll a d6 and add our authority to the roll. If we both rolled a four, for example, and add our authority to that roll, my total would come to 10 (6 + 4) and my opponent would have a 12 (8 + 4)

4). So my opponent wins the authority test and gets to pick which of us goes first. Each player then goes about activating a unit, flipping the card face up to show their opponent. That unit then acts, performing various actions depending on what they can do. Units can move, shoot, be issued combat drills (such as taking cover or going into overwatch) by spending leadership points, and engage in close combat. Some units, such as medics and mechanics, also have other abilities that can be used during their activation. After one player completes a unit's activation, the next player activates their next unit in the same fashion. The turn continues on in this way until all units have been activated, and then the turn starts anew. This style of gameplay keeps the battle moving quickly, and since you never know what your opponent has next in their activation it adds an element of surprise. You have to think ahead, otherwise you'll get caught off guard by some big guns and that 300 point unit will be gone in one turn.

## GAMEPLAY

To give you an idea of how this all flows together, and to demonstrate how combat works, we're going to use a hypothetical scenario between the UNA and the Cogs. Let's say the UNA has a unit of Star Troopers holding the primary objective, and it's a 12-man squad with two machine guns, a Sergeant, two medics, and the UNA's Triple-Lens Helmet piece of equipment (gives them a + 1 to accuracy and the ability to see stealth units). Facing them we have a unit of Cog Sharpshooters who intend to take that position, or at least try and contest it. We'll give the Cogs a full unit of Sharpshooters, namely a six-alien unit with a medic and two snipers. It's the Sharpshooters' turn and they want that objective, but they'll need to clear out those UNA troops in order to get to it safely. Assuming I'm playing the Cogs for this example, I would pay one leadership point to activate them, since they lack an officer (a weird Cog rule that I won't get into here) and then decide to open fire on the Star Troopers. The first shots will be from my Sharpshooters with their dual quantum rifles, which they are dual-wielding. To do so I measure from my squad leader to the Sergeant of the Star Troopers, since he would be the squad leader on that squad - that's how





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you determine ranges. Rackham makes a tape

measure for this game, with centimetres on one

side and what are called "range bands" on the

other. These range bands are 10 centimetres

each, so 0-10 is range zero, 10-20 is range

one and so on. Using the tape measure I flip

it over to the range side and see how far the

two squads are apart, so let's just say they're

at range four. Now I look at my Sharpshooter

card and see their quantum rifles have an

accuracy of seven, and two shots with a re-roll

each (that means each Sharpshooter rolls four

dice and can re-roll two of their misses - did I

mention they are dual-wielding?). So we would

take the accuracy of my guns and subtract the

range, resulting in a three (7 - 4). To determine

what I need to roll we consult what is called

the Universal Table of Resolution (UTR); this is a

chart with various numbers that tells you what

you need to roll. So we'd look at the UTR and

look for three, and once we find it we can see

that it says I need a three or better to hit. Had

it been a negative three I would have needed

fives or better to hit. Now that I know what I

require I can start rolling and with four of my

six Sharpshooters being armed with rifles (the

other two have the sniper rifles) I get to roll 16

dice plus re-rolls. As a result 13 of those shots

hit the unit after re-rolls are accounted for. In

order to determine damage we do much the

same as we did to determine how to hit, but

now we subtract the Star Trooper's armour (a

value of four) from the weapon's penetration (in

this case a five). In this case we come up with

one, and once again consult the UTR. The result

is that we now need fours or better to actually

kill anything, so we roll those 13 dice and hope

for the best. Say we rolled eight wounds; the



from death, including each other. That leaves six casualties. Eliminating casualties is done by removing models closest to the firing unit, so you remove the models in the front of the squad instead of being able to pick those guys at the very back.

I still have my two soldiers armed with sniper rifles available to fire, so we go through it all again. The range is still four since I haven't moved yet, but the sniper rifle has an accuracy of 11, meaning we get a result of seven, and again we consult the UTR. Now if you look at the UTR where it says 6+, there's just a smiley face instead of a dice. This indicates that it's an automatic success, because it basically succeeds on a one or better on the dice roll. So it's two automatic hits from this range. Next you calculate damage as before, with the sniper rifle having a penetration of eight versus the Star Troopers' armour of four, thus 8-4 results in four. Consulting the UTR we need twos or better to wound. Each sniper rifle has two shots, so now I roll four dice to see how many I wound. All but one of my shots wound, and the medics' ability can only be used once a turn so they can't save anyone else. That's three more dead Star Troopers, and a big ego boost for this general. What's more now I can move my Sharpshooters towards the objective, hoping to capture it, and I duly move them their regular speed of 18 centimetres. After all this it's the UNA player's, turn. Putting on my UNA hat, those same Star Troopers happen to be the next card in my activation, so I activate them (and we'll say the Sergeant survived the horrible onslaught from the Sharpshooters). All that's left in the squad is a medic, the Sergeant and one of your machine guns. The Star Troopers are a type one infantry, and the rules state that when their numbers drop to three or less they have to take a morale test. To do this you take your unit's morale, a four in this case, and roll against an eight. This is done the same way you roll for combat, so 4-8 results in negative four. The UTR shows that on a negative four you need a six or better, a tough roll. Taking d6 in hand I roll and get a five. That's a failure and as a result the unit is now considered to be disorganised and can therefore not act this turn, and on their next activation I will need to roll for morale again. If they succeed they're fine, but if I fail a second time they rout and are removed from the game.

Close combat works much like ranged combat, but you'll be seeing a whole lot less of it. This game really does focus more on shooting than on mêlée – I guess they understand how to use guns in this universe. Returning to our UNA versus Cogs match here, let's say we have some UNA Steel Troopers engaged in close combat with some Cog Warmongers. The Steel Troopers are armed with knives, so they can fight in close combat. They do have a missile launcher, though, and since this guy's weapon is so big and bulky he cannot participate in the combat. The squad of six Steel Troopers are fighting four Warmongers. In order to engage an enemy in close combat you have to be considered "engaged", which really just means within one inch of an enemy model. All the Steel Troopers, discounting the aforementioned missile launcher trooper, are able to engage since the Warmongers have larger bases, so the Steel Troopers have five models that can actually participate in the combat and the Cogs have all four of their soldiers. To hit you take the accuracy of the close combat weapon and in this case the Steel Trooper's knife has an accuracy of four, and subtract the target's combat stat. The Warmongers have a combat stat of four, so we get an end result of zero. According to the UTR the Steel Troopers need fours or better to hit getting five attacks, and thanks to some lucky dice, all of them succeed. To see if they wound we take the knife's penetration against the Warmonger's combat stat. The knife has a penetration of three, so we get a total of negative one, resulting in fours or better to kill, and good fortune continues as all but one hit their mark. Suddenly the clones are down to one single soldier. On that squad's next activation he'll have to take a morale check - makes me wish warmongers had medics.

At the end of the turn points are calculated based on objectives, with the players seeing who has more models within controlling distance of objectives and awarding VP and RP, respectively. At this point you can also spend your RP to bring in any units left in Reinforcement, so long as you control a secondary objective. The unit is placed on the table within 10 centimetres of the reinforcement point you control, and their card is placed into your activation sequence as you choose. Then the next turn starts; calculating leadership points, setting our activation

sequences, rolling for authority, and blasting the enemy into oblivion.

## CONCLUSION

The main draw of the game is the fact that its models are all pre-painted plastic miniatures, meaning you can just take a unit out of the box and play. This has been a source of contention in the gaming community, but it really does make things a lot easier. I say this as someone who plays both this and Warhammer 40K, and this game is a lot easier to just jump into and go. There's no assembling, no painting, just open the box and have at it. I have most of my Warhammer Fantasy army (High Elves) still unpainted because it just takes time I don't tend to have. Both AT-43 and 40K have their ups and downs and they are both enjoyable games, but for ease of access AT-43 wins out comfortably.

If you do decide to look further into the game you can purchase the "Operation Damocles" starter box, which outlines the basic rules. It comes with two small forces, Therians and UNA, and is a great way to get into the game. Rackham have also released army boxes, pre-built 2000 point armies, for the Red Blok and Cogs, with the new ONI faction appearing in late 2009 and the Karmans slated for early 2010. The "Operation Damocles" box currently retails for \$80 USD, and the army boxes retail for \$70 USD. So it's not exactly the cheaper alternative to 40K (unit boxes run around \$30 USD retail), but you are paying for the convenience of just being able to purchase and play all at once. The army boxes (of which I have the Cogs and had the Red Blok) are amazing deals, as they each come with the army's type three vehicle that normally retail for \$60 alone. The army boxes also contain a rule sheet detailing

the units contained within, and it's in five different languages. They also come with faction-specific tape measures, dice, some terrain bits (a factionspecific container and some walls), all the cards you need for the units in the box and a nifty battle map you can use if you want. They really are fantastic deals when you consider the price of buying all the products inside separately. All you really need to buy after that is the appropriate army book and the main rule book, and of course more models if you want to build your army up.





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# ...and Learn Something New By Jez Fairclough

We all browse the internet, don't we? For gaming, I meant, please do keep up and focus. How often have you spent ages trawling through pages of Google hits looking for that one inspirational page that will open the door to that game that you know must be out there but has to date eluded you?

So with the internet being such a busy place I thought I'd share a few of the places I tend to haunt. If you'd like too see us mention your site then feel free to contact me at jez@the-ancible. com and I'll take a look at the site and hopefully we'll see its name in lights here very soon.

Normally one of the first places I check on my rounds is the Steve Dean Painting Forum



(http://www.sdean-forum. co.uk/phpBB2/index.php).

I confess that my input there might be pretty simple, along the lines of saying "amazing" or "oh my word how did you do that?" However, the joy of the site over say, CMON, is that people are a lot friendlier and with the addition of the Critics Corner area you know you're going to get good, honest information and ideas from some very talented people. The group also is very willing to share links or information which on some sites sadly isn't the case.

Another of my favourite sites for all things painting and odd game-related item is the Lead Adventure Forum



(http://www.leadadventure.de/).

This site covers from Sci-Fi to Horror and Victorian Steam Punk, to just name a few of its many subjects. Much like Steve's forum the place is a treasure trove of people offering up miniatures advice on any era you are looking for and I've found this aspect alone to be of great use when I'm totally lost for where too start.

Okay, last place for this issue and I guess I have too put it as it's a site I helped to get going. The United Kingdom Conf-Federation of the Red Dragon or UKCORD for short



#### (http://www.conf-federation. org.uk/forum/index.php)

originally started as the UK Support for Rackham's Confrontation game. With Rackham's change in direction a few years ago the forum community decided a change there was in order as well and the boards now support players interested in Historical periods through a large selection of Fantasy and Sci-Fi games with new areas being added as new games grab people's attention. It's a good community that always tries to help and support new game ideas and new people getting into the hobby.

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