

THE Ancible

Your portal to Sci-Fi and Fantasy Gaming

It's been
Aeons since
we have
seen any-
thing so
strange

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Ron &
Bones

Conan Adventure
Part 4

Warmachine
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Strange Aeons

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View from the Command Deck

After last issue's slight bump in the road we are all feeling a bit fragile around the office at present. It is never a pleasant thing to tell people that something they love will not be available to them in the form they are used to. However we must look on the positive side of things and say a big thanks to all those understanding people who have decided to come with us as we take a slight detour down the publishing road. We will try not to disappoint and it is still our hope that the market for a hard copy sci-fi and fantasy magazine will re-emerge.

There is so much to do that everyone is looking around like they are caught in the headlights of a large oncoming truck. Jez does not know what day it is, Cookie is confused by all the shiny things in the office and Simon doesn't know what to start painting. All the time Ian is head down dealing with articles and contributors. We continue to be amazed by the number of games that are out there that need discovering and we are just the people to do it. I get disoriented sometimes when Jez says we are playing something new and I still try and use some of the rules from the previous game (old age creeping in).

On the suggestion front I know a number of you want to know what the miniatures are that we feature and I have to confess that it has been my fault that the captions with the photographs have been overlooked. I have been kicked all round the office, up and down the stairs so hopefully in this issue they should all be there. I'm sure you will let me know if I have missed any.

We had planned to go to Gencon this year but unfortunately we were just unable to make it, but hopefully next year will see the team head out on an international road trip. I look forward to seeing all the pictures from this year's event and I am hoping that some of the readers (you know who you are) will be good enough to write a review for the next issue.

I am still going to plug the forum as I feel that we could do with some more people in there. The feedback we are getting is really useful and we like to think that we listen, so if you are not already a member then go to <http://www.the-ancible.com/forum> and get registered. We look forward to seeing you there.

Last Issue Life was never stopping and we certainly didn't know what was round the corner. I was rather hoping that someone out there could put in a good word for a quieter month on the crisis front to allow us to get organised and find even more interesting things. All I know is we will continue to soldier on in various scales.

So, off you go and dive in – the gaming is lovely and, as always, we are keen to hear what you think.

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

Kenny R

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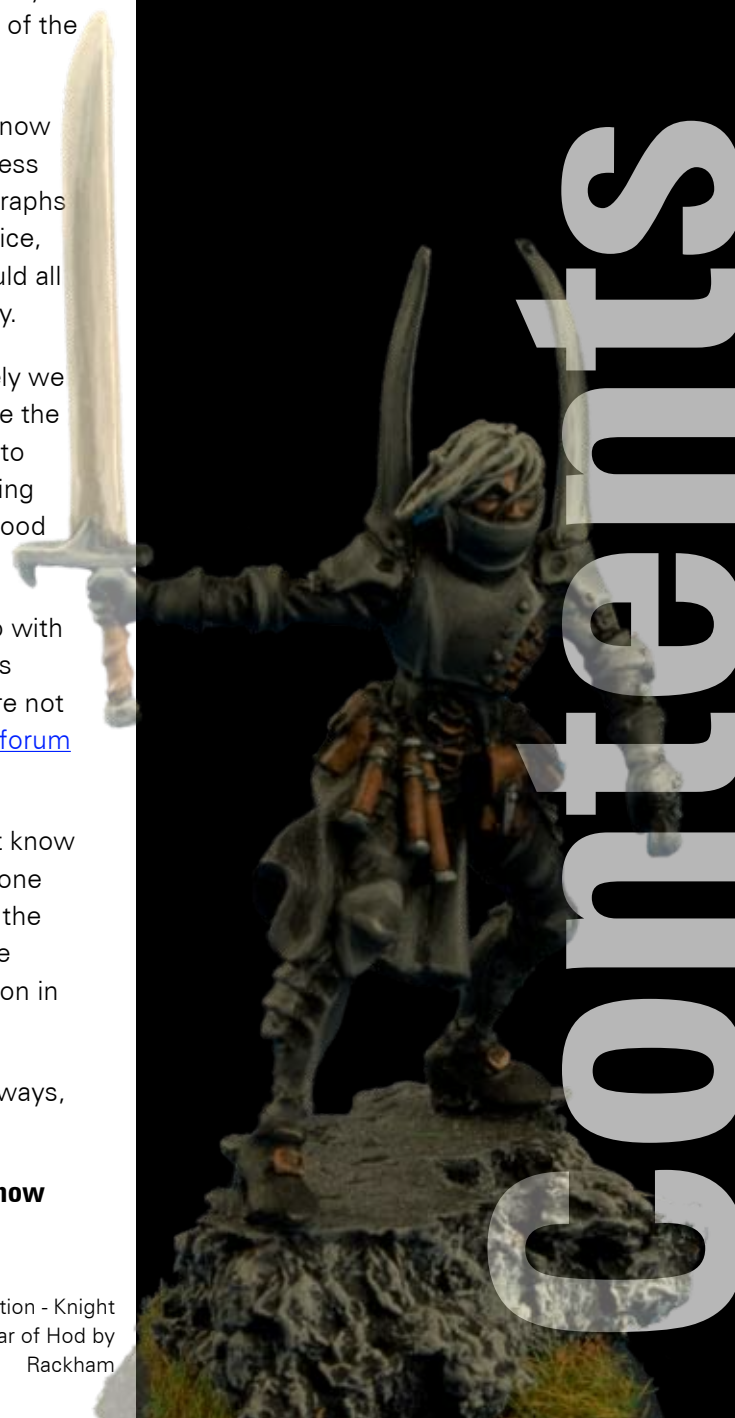
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Article Submissions

The team welcomes ideas for articles and in the first instance you should contact Ian Barstow (ianb@the-ancible.com) for some handy hints on submission. Please note that while every care is taken with your submitted material we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage that may occur.

Artwork Submissions

Are you a budding artist or are you already established? You should contact Ian Barstow (ianb@the-ancible.com). We will take every care with any work you send us but unfortunately we cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage that may occur.

Reviews

Manufacturers and publishers are invited to send in samples of their products for our team to review in the magazine.

Miniatures

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PULL UP A SANDBAG

WITH UNCLE BOMBER

What Time is War?

When is a Wargame not a Wargame? This is the question that keeps me up at night, none of that world peace rubbish.

I played Claustrophobia the other night. There I was with my small band of miniatures, several dice and my Faith and Action cards, ready to plunge into the New Jerusalem underground in search of Daemons, when one of the team made a comment. "Isn't this a board game?" Crikey, I thought. I don't actually know and this got me to thinking, and for a while the question brought up some interesting opinions amongst everyone there. The discussion went on for a good 20 minutes and eventually we found ourselves split into two camps. The 'it's a board game' and 'it's a wargame' camps, with Ted Chang being indecisive as normal and switching between camps every time someone raised a valid point [Let's be honest here; Ted told you to go and boil your head which is why you are grumpy – Ed]. So was it a board game? Let us examine the facts.

I had several figures to make use of, but then again, so does Monopoly. Okay, the metal dog or hat in Monopoly wouldn't be of much use against the daemons I was about to face, but that's by the by. Actually, the dog's a Scotty so the chances are it would turn out to be quite useful but I digress.

I was also using terrain tiles; again board games also use a terrain tile, granted it's often one big tile, although these days younger folk inform me that they often come in sections, but regardless it's quite an integral part of the game.

I was using dice to represent the random twists of fate but, and it pains me to say this, so does Monopoly, and many other board games.

Aha! I had this one; I had the use of two different decks of cards; cards that would either help me or hinder me,

depending on the dice roles – a true wargames feature, if ever I've seen one. What! What did you say? So does Monopoly... Dammit!!

Okay, I will admit the lines have become blurred; I love wargaming, the age old battle of wits between two people, whose only goal is the total destruction of the forces arrayed against them, with the use of superior tactics, strategy and cunning. Now there will be some out there who may think that to play Monopoly you don't need any of these things, but I refer the right honourable gentleman to the last time my family played Monopoly – we still have the blood stains on the walls to prove it, and my youngest son still won't give the pretend money back.

So which game system crossed the line first? For me it wasn't the board game; they have always stuck to what they do best: a board, a few dice and a box, the bread and butter of what they are.

It was the wargame which decided to blur the line first, I submit. The first wargame I remember playing using a board game format was Hulks in Space, or whatever it was called, and for the wargamer it provided another dimension to the game – it introduced suspense. How can you plan your deployment when you don't know what the next tile looks like, not counting the extra scenarios it opened up. Let's see how your small band of figures survives a journey across the entire board, especially when the opposition can keep resurrecting their dead. Who cares if you have the biggest gun, when the gribbly with the big scary claws is just around the corner, ready to eat you in its turn?

Now it may have been the wargamer to first blur the lines, but the board game hasn't been slow in grasping an opportunity with both hands when its sees one. Games like Incursion and Brutal spring to mind. With the emergence of quick-fire skirmish gaming using a small

number of models designed to be played to a conclusion in a couple of hours, the required table space has slowly shrunk to sometimes only needing a two-foot by two-foot board. It didn't take Albert Einstein to figure out that a commercial wargaming product all bunged together in one box, playing area included, was a good idea.

These days we are seeing more and more blurring of the lines which, on the surface, appears to be a good thing. I

can't help thinking though that something isn't right. Pre-painted models, pre-made terrain... what next? Somebody to play it for you? Some of you younger types may not even have played a real wargame – you know, where you actually had to put some effort in. No, we are in a full-on consumer society now and we all want our games good to go.

So when is a wargame not a wargame? When it's a board game, I guess. Oh, and KLF is going to rock you.

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



BREAKING NEWS

Faction Wars

TRIAL RULES

If you visit the FW web site , you can download a Quick Start version of the rules. This is a 40 page, reduced version of the main FW rulebook, but still contains enough to be able to play a game. The purpose of this downloadable PDF is to help new players to get their first game going, and to allow potential players to evaluate the game before buying the book.

MINIATURES

We have started work on producing our own range of miniatures. We have two sculptors working for us, Martin Baker and Darren Edwards, and are looking forward to posting up pictures of their work soon. Peter Laycock, who produced a lot of the artwork for the rulebook, has provided us with some new concept art too. You can see samples and a photo of the first green up on the FW web site.

Are there any particular characters or factions that you would like to see sculpted first? Drop me a line at darryl@factionwars.co.uk and let me know.

NORTH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTOR

We have been in discussion with a distributor that supplies 350 gaming stores in the USA and Canada. Before they stock Faction Wars they want to gauge the level of interest from the retailers. So if you are based in North America, or know someone who is, give your Friendly Local Gaming Store a call and ask them to enquire about Faction Wars with their wholesaler.

Further details can be found at:
<http://www.factionwars.co.uk>

Subscriber Give Away



Following on from last issue's subscriber give away it gives me great pleasure to announce that the winners of the 3 AT-43 Oni Battle box sets are

Troy Davis (Australia)
Curt Webber (US)
Robin Wellum (UK)

Congratulations. Your prizes are on their way to you and may you all have many happy hours gaming. For those who didn't win don't panic, there are more give aways coming.



RON & BONES

BY
KENNY
BLACKHEART
ROBB

Everyone loves a pirate game and we at The Ancible are no exception. Usually when anything with a pirate theme is played the normally sensible team descend into cries or “Arrrrr” and “Shiver me Timbers” and similar ridiculous faux-piratical drivel. So it was with great anticipation and just a little trepidation that I cracked open our copy of **Ron & Bones** by Tale of War and suggested to the team that we sit down and calmly play a game. As suspected the entire team started talking like they had just walked off the set of *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

Before we delve into the contents just a quick note on the packaging. The game comes in a large, square, solid box with an eye-catching image of a lock in the shape of an eerie pirate head with crossed swords. This is going to be good, I thought.

Looking at the Game

Opening the box we were faced with a thick layer of foam designed to keep everything safe inside and stop it rattling about like a bucket of bones. Keep on digging... what comes next is

a vast array of things: cards, miniatures, rulebooks, dice, a right proper haul of gaming treasure, me hearties! I think at this point for everyone’s sanity including mine I will stop with the pirate talk [not before time – Ed].

So let’s have a look in a bit more detail at what is in the box. You get two rule books, so there is no fighting over them (they come in English/

Spanish). This is no doubt quite handy if you are playing with your Spanish friend. Also, given the theme of the game it seems quite apt as most of the pirates of old were indeed English or Spanish. As well as those there are the various cards you require to play the game, four miniatures, two D8’s and the all-important game board which is in the shape of a pirate ship.

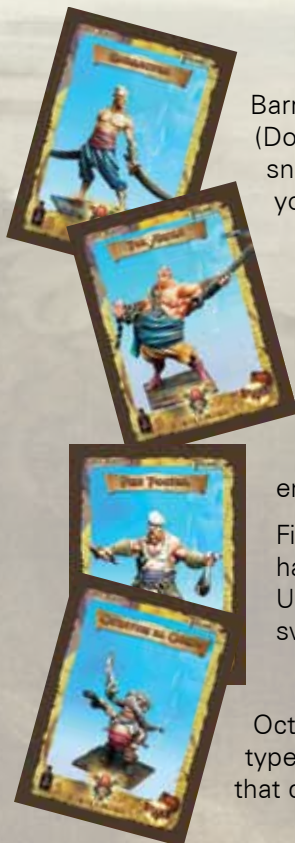
In our review set we also got some of the stat cards for the other characters in the game and another couple of blisters with extra miniatures.



First up, the rule book. It is small, compact, soft covered and 92 pages, but before you all start to panic, half of that is English rules and the other half Spanish. The rulebook looks good and as I said is compact so carrying it about with you won't be an issue. The design fits well with the theme and is made up of a number of drawings, pictures, diagrams and images of the miniatures and tokens used to play the game. If I was being critical at this point I might mention that the text may be a bit on the small side for those of us getting on a bit in years, but from a design point of view I still think that the rulebook fits in well and looks very good.

When I first read the rules I have to say I struggled a bit with the translation in some places. This is by no means a serious criticism – if I had to translate something from English to another language I sure I would struggle a lot. I would guess though that the translation was not done by a native English speaker. It is not the first time we here at The Ancible have come across this and I have to say we would be a lot less fulfilled without the English translations. I also have to admit that we in the English speaking part of the world tend to be a bit more critical of our language when translated from something else. Still, don't let this put you off. It is still very readable and through the use of diagrams you won't be left wanting for explanation.

The aforementioned four characters with the boxed set are as follows:



Barracuda – A clean living (Doesn't require rum) sneaky rascal. Looks like your square jawed fighter.

Pol Ancla – Large, brutish type who swings an anchor as his weapon. Pretty sure you don't want to be on the receiving end of that.

Fish Poguer – The cook (I have a vision of the movie Under Siege) who has a sword and a fish.

Octavius el Canijo – Officer type, small guy with a hat that can fight.

Each character has their main stat card, their gear card and a number of Row Cards (which we will come onto later). There are lots of details in the rules as to what each stat means. There are also a number of what can only be described as Token Cards. You are meant to cut these out and use them to equip your crew with pistols, knives, cutlasses and clubs.

The final set of cards are the Critical Damage Cards. If you manage to inflict any critical damage then these cards are used to determine which part of the body takes the hit and what the damage actually is. All the cards are vibrant and well laid out though I would be inclined to make sure that they went into card protectors (as I do with all games that have cards – saves any coffee or beer-related accidents that do tend to happen).

The game board comes as three tiles that lay out to form a pirate ship over 30 inches (75cm) long.

The miniatures are, as expected, very detailed. It is easy to go wrong with pirate miniatures but in this case I think that Tale of War have managed



to pull off something quite special. The entire range looks like they are a joy to paint with enough detail to challenge the casual gamer and serious painter alike. They

are brightly packaged and they just scream at you: "paint me". I can imagine that some people will just collect them in order to get all the crew. Whatever you favour you can find some sort crew that will suit your style.

Right, that is the box emptied and we are ready to go.

Playing the Game

What's the basic concept of the game?

That's easy. It's a pirate skirmish game where you play a band of pirates who are fighting other bands of pirates.

As far as I can see there are no real limits to the number of

players in a game. All you need is a bigger playing area. As you would expect the characters can move, shoot and fight however there are other things that make the game a bit more interesting. Throwing things is allowed as is tripping over obstacles, throwing insults, intimidation and all of this is made more interesting by the fact that as a pirate you may have had a rough night last night and may still be drunk. This adds such a random aspect to the game, as you may have the strongest band of pirates but if they are drunk then it's a great leveller.

The first thing you have to do is pick your band. You have to pay for your crew in gold doubloons and rum [just like at The Ancible then – Ed]. The costs of each character are detailed on the cards and the scenario that you are playing will determine the amounts of each that are available for use. If you are creating your own scenarios then there are some guidelines in the rules as to how you decide on these for your own one.

The next thing is to setup the playing area. Details of the fixed obstacles are in the rulebook but you add extra obstacles or elements of scenery that you have like barrels, boxes or cannons. Each obstacle is deemed to take up 1 square and characters can interact with them, such as hiding behind them, jumping over them, throwing them (I'm sure you get the idea). The setup of the playing area may be



defined by the scenario that you have agreed to play or you may get the opportunity to place them randomly.

There is a section on setting up the cards that relates to the character so that, in a sporting manner, your opponent can see the stats of your band and what they are armed with. The Critical Damage deck of cards should be set aside so that it is available and not confused with the other cards.

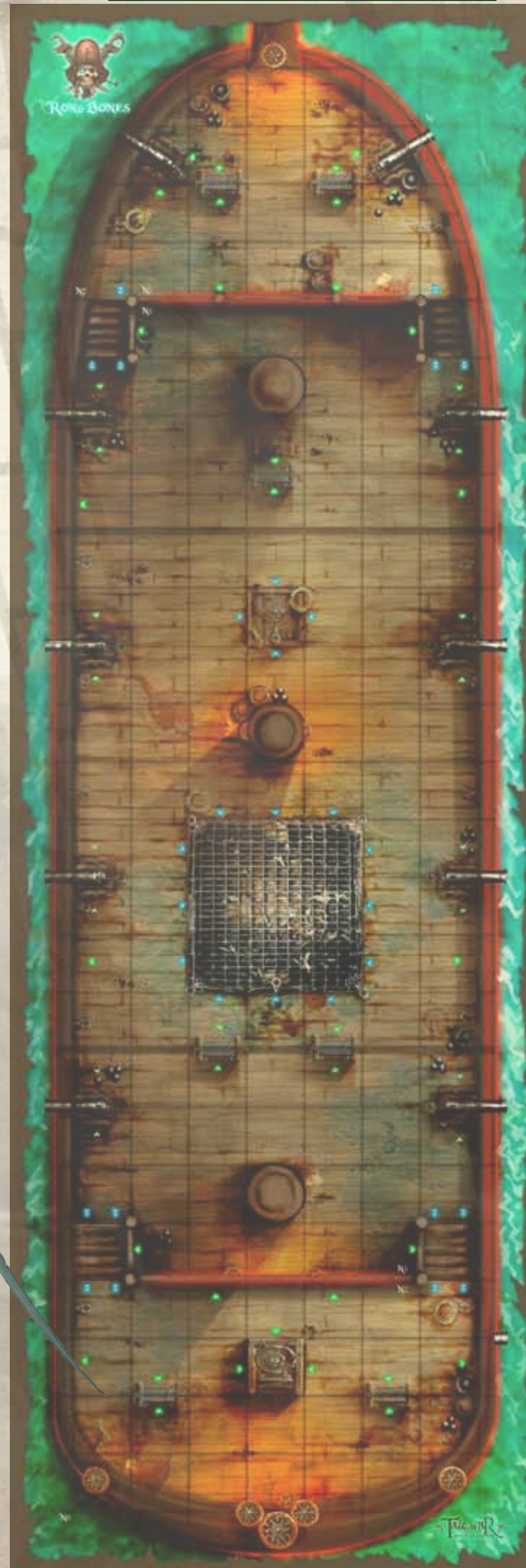
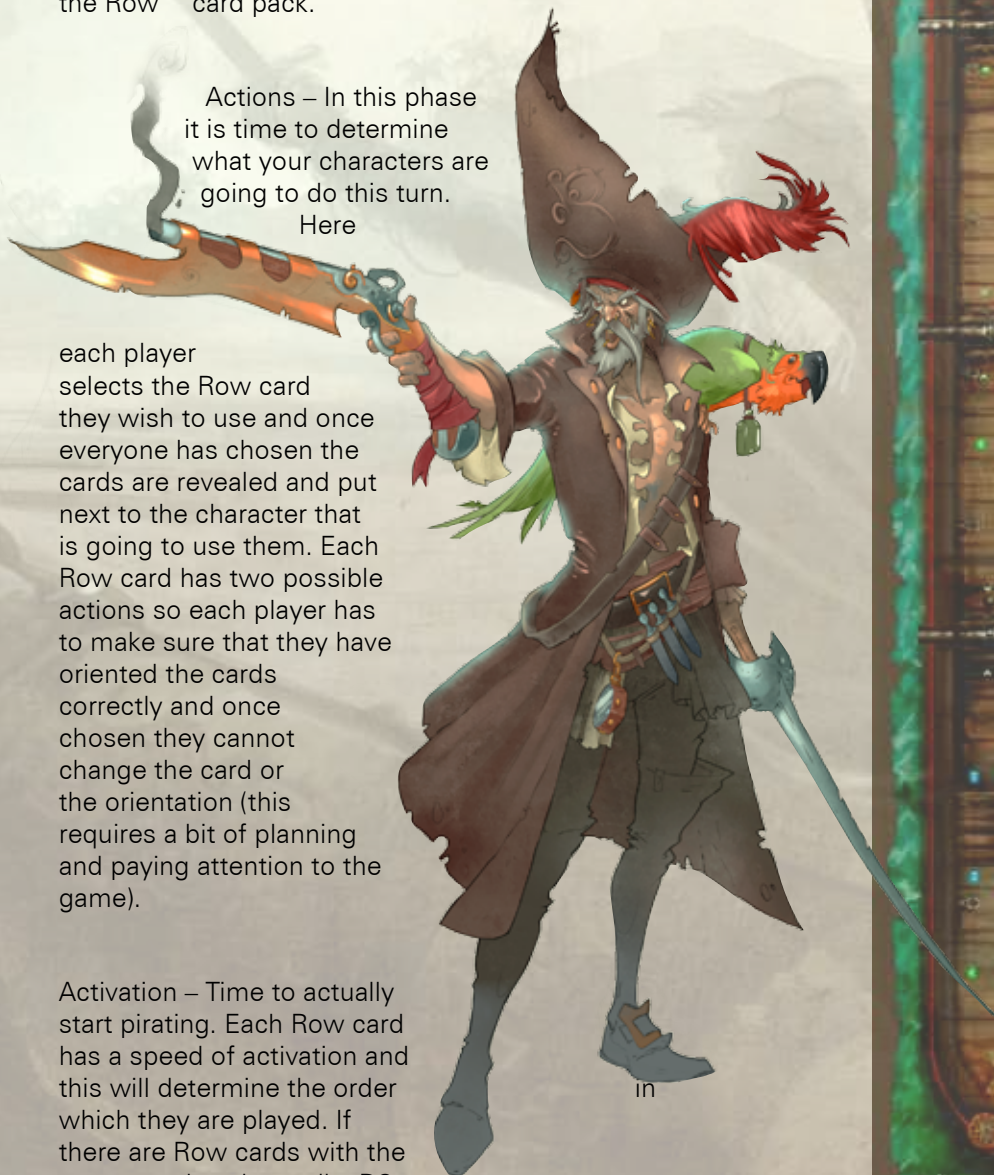
The bands are then deployed in accordance with the rules of the scenario and the fun begins. Each turn consists of three phases:

Events – In this phase the special rules are resolved like drunkenness, explosions and such like. You may find each player has several of these to resolve but they are resolved simultaneously. If any Row cards have been used in the previous turn then they are returned to the Row card pack.

Actions – In this phase it is time to determine what your characters are going to do this turn. Here

each player selects the Row card they wish to use and once everyone has chosen the cards are revealed and put next to the character that is going to use them. Each Row card has two possible actions so each player has to make sure that they have oriented the cards correctly and once chosen they cannot change the card or the orientation (this requires a bit of planning and paying attention to the game).

Activation – Time to actually start pirating. Each Row card has a speed of activation and this will determine the order which they are played. If there are Row cards with the same number then roll a D8



and add to the VET score of the character to decide who goes first. Each character must resolve all the actions on the Row card before moving onto the next character.

There are numerous explanations of how these Row cards work and what you can do with them in the rulebook to give you an idea. The Row cards say that the character can move 1 or 2 steps and then attack an opponent who is in one of the three squares in front of him with one of his three different close combat attacks.

A Row card can also provide advantages to your character so do not remove it once it has been played as it may prove useful for the rest for the turn. The character he is attacking may have a Row card that says move up to 5 steps and parry any blow, for example.

When we get down to resolving the attacks we find the usual array of tables and stats that add this to that and take away the other, and based on the attacking weapon will then deal damage. These tables are self explanatory. The only thing to be aware of is the Critical Damage deck we talked about earlier. If a critical hit is scored then the player will draw from this deck and implement the outcome of the critical hit. These will cause various types of damage, some temporary and some permanent for the rest of the game.

The terms of ending the game are described in the scenario and these will mean attaining some sort of objective.

Conclusion

In conclusion Ron & Bones by Tale of War is a fun game which has some very unique features. As I said the only slight criticism I have is with the translation but then again maybe I have to be thinking 'pirate' as I am reading the rules. It could possibly be improved slightly by a quick-play guide that would demonstrate through examples how each of the phases work without having to read through the whole of the rule book, or am I just being lazy? Probably not, in retrospect. Most modern games systems are replete with detailed examples of how to play and this is a benchmark we are now coming to expect.

There is a lot of support and further information on the web site <http://www.ronandbones.com> or <http://www.taleofwar.com> and they have an online community where there are lots of enthusiastic people who are playing the game and developing more scenarios, and where you can find the team behind the game taking part in all the online fun and games.

I think that one of the most interesting things about the game comes pretty near the end of the rule book and it says...

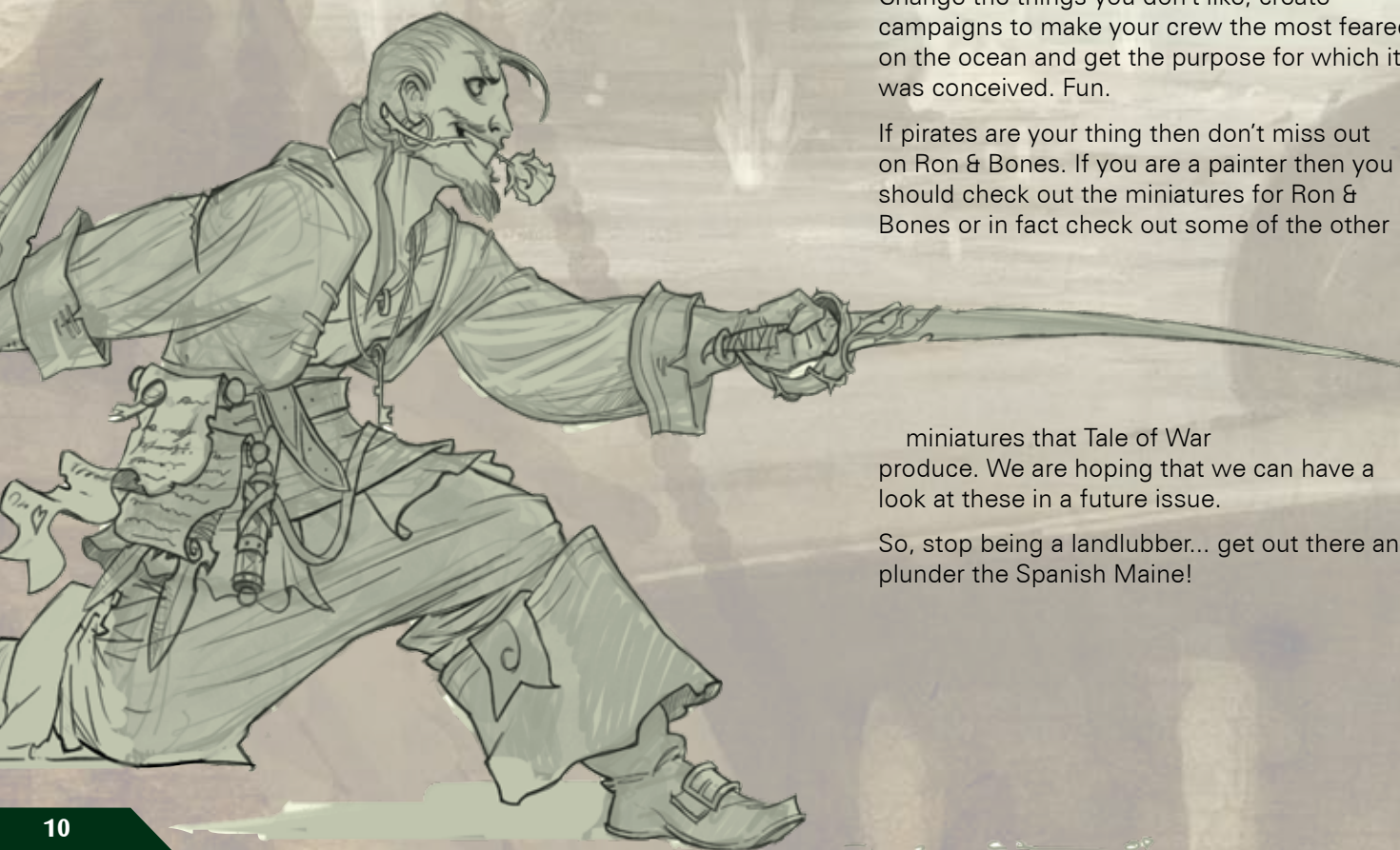
Be a Pirate.

This is possibly the most important rule of the game. The main feature of a pirate is not following the rules. Therefore amend it, use your imagination and takes the game beyond its limits, as a true pirate knows no bounds. Change the things you don't like, create campaigns to make your crew the most feared on the ocean and get the purpose for which it was conceived. Fun.

If pirates are your thing then don't miss out on Ron & Bones. If you are a painter then you should check out the miniatures for Ron & Bones or in fact check out some of the other

miniatures that Tale of War produce. We are hoping that we can have a look at these in a future issue.

So, stop being a landlubber... get out there and plunder the Spanish Maine!





THE WAY OF THE LAZY GAMER

THE LAZY GAMER'S GUIDE TO PAINTING MINIATURES

BY IAN BARSTOW

What is a Lazy Gamer? Are you one? Do you like putting out painted miniatures but hate the time wasted on painting? If so, then like me you are a Lazy Gamer. Some people like painting – if so, move on for you are not a Lazy Gamer and their nothing for you to see here. Some people happily put unpainted or part painted miniatures on the table – you can stay, because although you aren't a Lazy Gamer yet this first in an irregular series of articles on the subject may just make you one of us.

The Lazy Gamer wants to play with painted miniatures on attractive terrain using quality rules products. He's lazy, he's not a skinflint. Being a Lazy Gamer isn't just a state of mind – it's a way of life, and I'm here to spread the word that the goal of the Lazy Gamer can be achieved.

There are many problems along the path of The Way of the Lazy Gamer, but undoubtedly the worst is painting. The Lazy Gamer is not a crap painter – he's a lazy painter. Do you see? As such the Lazy Gamer wants to put out good looking minis, but not at the expense of years of wasted time doing it. Why is it wasted time? Because you could have been gaming, dopey, that's why.

I had been a professional miniatures painter for several years around 1990 (back when there was no EBay and you could practically name the few pros that existed). The trouble with pro painting (and how many times do you smirk with amusement when you read that on EBay – pay tax, do you? That's a professional, you donkey) is that you just don't feel like doing anything for yourself afterwards. It actually destroys the pleasure, especially if you are a budding Lazy Gamer and didn't know it. Yes, back in 1990 I didn't know what I was. In fact, I was lost at sea, and for a decade after I quit painting for others I painted less than 100 miniatures. Sure, I had plenty already so I wasn't exactly going without gaming, but the Lazy Gamer is truly no different to the rest of his less-enlightened brethren – he likes buying toy soldiers and knows with complete certainty that the next period/subject is always greener than his current fascination.

What's that? You read the word 'period' and we aren't in a women's magazine, are we? That's right, fantasy and sci-fi types. I started as a

historical gamer. Most people over 40 did. Sure I had dabbled in games from They-Who-Cannot-Possibly-Be-Mentioned-Because-One-Use-of-Their-Name-Will-Have-Them-Checking-The-Whole-Article-For-The-Slightest-Challenge-To-Their-Intellectual-Property, but back then it was almost like a new historical period, what with the detailed background and prescribed army lists. I didn't even feel weird or anything.

Anyhow, I digress, and it probably won't be the last time, so bear with and the way to enlightenment will be yours too, my padawans.

With the advent of the internet I discovered that people were using a varied and slightly unnerving selection of household products and varnishes to

get effects on their miniatures.

This interested me but did not open up the One True

Path. Why is that? Well, firstly I pay good money for my toys and I'm not taking my life in my hands by trying to undercoat using Mr Sheen (Google it if you must) and



varnishing using a combinations of Fisons Evergreen 40 and something made by Ronseal. That is akin to wargaming's version of Russian Roulette.

Luckily for there were others out there who clearly thought much as me, as well as having a good eye for a business opportunity. I'm taking about The Army Painter. It turns out that it's basically a couple of enlightened Scandinavian blokes called Bo Penstoft and Jonas Faering, both of whom used to work for They-Who-Cannot-Possibly-Be-Mentioned-Because-One-Use-Of-Their-Name-Will-Have-Them-Checking-The-Whole-Article-For-The-Slightest-Challenge-To-Their-Intellectual-Property. These two smart guys must be Lazy Gamers. Actually, Jonas is a very experienced painter himself so it may be that he either doubled in the dark arts of vinyl floor polish as a varnishing medium or he too became a Lazy Gamer. The romantic in me hopes it's both.

It is likely that others trod this path before Scandinavia's finest, but it was they who opened my eyes to a bright new Lazy Gamer future. The Army Painter is a simple concept – put attractive models on the table ASAP. No mucking about. When I read about it for the first time I wondered if it could be true.

A complete set of products that only needed paints, brushes and miniatures adding.

I ordered some, and a year or more later this is my story...

STEP 1 – UNDERCOATING

The time was, you got to choose between matt white or black car spray paint for your undercoating needs (some people didn't even bother but I think most of them have been burnt as heretics by now). The Army Painter produce an array of colours, including red and yellow. Why do I mention these?

You shouldn't even need to ask. Who

amongst us hasn't cringed at the thought of applying yellow or red to a black undercoat? How many coats will it take? How much appalling waste of time? And if you have a large area you had to bite the bullet and go back to a white undercoat and that meant serious brushwork to get a hint of shading – oh yes, you can go without shading, but even Ray Charles would have squirmed at the results.

Suddenly now I can undercoat in red or yellow. At least I think I can, for I hadn't at that time tried it and, I confess, I was scared. Not being related to the Rothschilds or Vanderbilts I have to buy my own toys and one false move in the painting process can be catastrophic for the Lazy Gamer, as it means he will have to put in extra effort, and that is unacceptable.

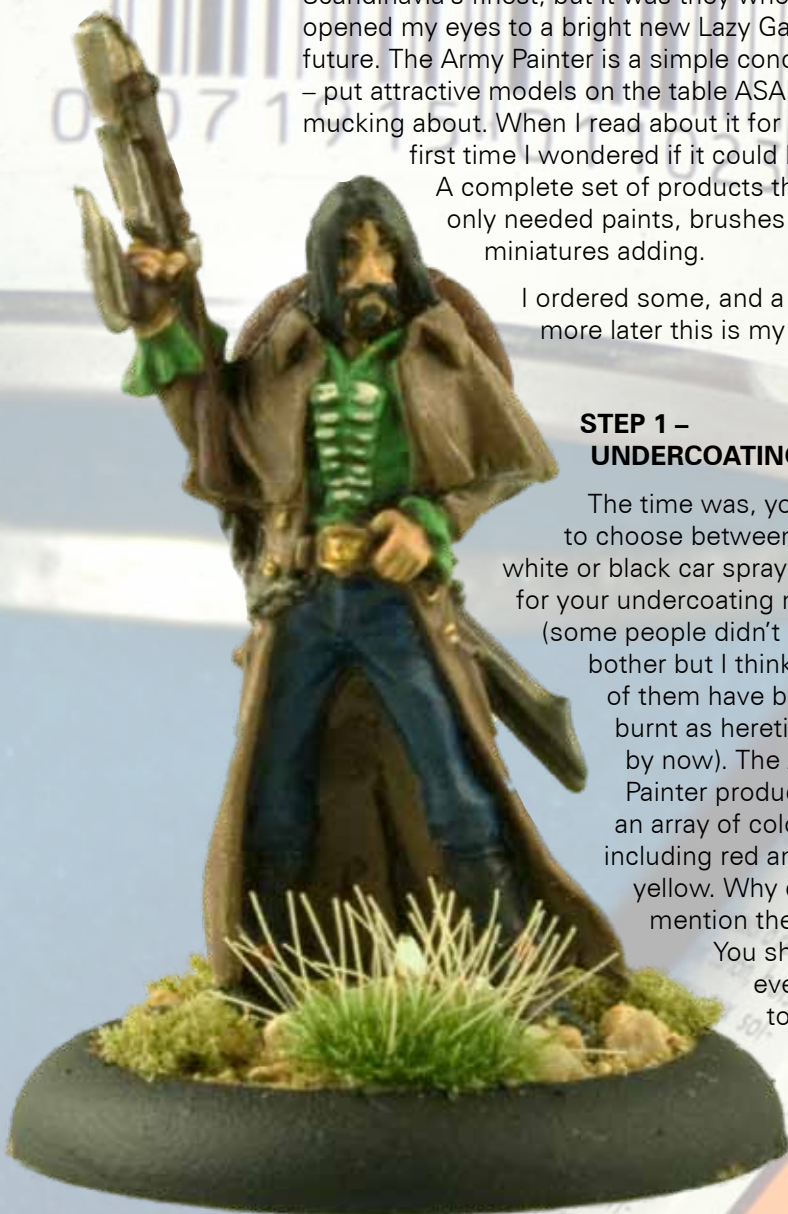
So anyway, cutting to the chase, I discovered The Army Painter – we've established this, have we not? They produce a variety of undercoat colours designed to be painted over (I use mostly Vallejo but I do like the metallic colours from They-Who-Cannot-Possibly-Be-Mentioned-Because-One-Use-Of-Their-Name-Will-Have-Them-Checking-The-Whole-Article-For-The-Slightest-Challenge-To-Their-Intellectual-Property) and this sounds good to the Lazy Gamer.

STEP 2 – PAINTING

Sadly this bit is still unavoidable. At least however it is slightly more enjoyable now as the stress has been taken out of it. In fact, go back to painting like you did when you started. Just paint one flat layer of each required colour. Going back to this can cause some initial psychological traumas, but more of that anon. Just use good paints and brushes. This is not the moment to be thinking about cost cutting. It's also of benefit to the Lazy Gamer. A selection of decent brushes with good points makes the experience rather more bearable and the results happen faster, because you make fewer mistakes. Remember, even when you aren't being paid for it your time is money. It's time you will never get back, and as such it has an intrinsic value (and as you knock on a bit that value ramps up considerably).

STEP 3 – SHADING

This is where it really gets good – and seriously scary the first couple of times. I'm talking dips (although note that I don't actually dip). Again, others paved the way but frankly nobody had enough marketing talent to convince the Lazy Gamer that this was kosher. The Lazy Gamer



admires marketing, knowing it for what it is. It won't make the blind see or make you rich, but marketing done well is not a distasteful creature, but rather a sign of effort and commitment. The blokes at The Army Painter even produced little videos about how to do this. Now that's what I'm talking about. I want to be dealing with professionals, because amateurs just waste your time and that's not a good thing for the Lazy Gamer, as I'm sure you are grasping by now.

Shading has suddenly become straightforward and pain free. I used to hate it, but while you could get away with using the black undercoat as the shade on a 15mm model, it looks awful in 28mm and above. They even produce three different strengths of the dips of which we will now speak, and each has its uses, so read on. The idea is brilliantly simple in concept – having painted your miniatures you just stick them in this stuff and they come out shaded! How can this be? He is the Kwisatz Haderach! Something like that anyway. I will talk more later about how to actually make use of the dips, but suffice to say they work!

STEP 4 – BASING

It is at this seminal moment in the article that I move away from The Army Painter products. Not that they don't do basing materials, but rather I have found a cheaper and lazier alternative. Of course the Lazy Gamer theory still holds true – namely, impressive effects delivered as easily (and in this case as cheaply) as possible. You'll find out all you need to know in the Lazy Gamer tutorial that follows.

STEP 5 – VARNISHING

This is, quite literally, the last phase, and is equally easy. There are two options and I have used both. The Army Painter produce their own Anti-shine Matt Varnish, which generally works pretty well but can be prone to clouding towards the end of a tin. My own personal preference is for Testors Dullcote. In simple terms this is the best varnish available today in the Lazy Gamer's humble opinion. Not only does it absolutely flatten out the glossy shine of the dip, but it gives the model a strangely pleasant tactile feel. Also, to date, it has never once clouded on me. Now that Testors is legal over in the UK again (something about chemical contents – for those of us too stupid to understand it's not for snorting) I get mine from

Maelstrom Games, who are highly recommended as a source for all The Army Painter gear as well. Free postage and regular discount offers mean I'm a regular customer!

Once that's done you should have some pretty impressive miniatures, so let's take a look at just how it's done. We will look at how to paint individual 28mm skirmish miniatures and then how to do a 15mm sci-fi armoured force, just to show that this will work for any scale and both vehicles and men. Note that most of the in-work photos are taken in my painting 'studio' which also doubles up as where the ironing gets done – just so you don't go getting all excited.

PAINTING 28mm MALIFAUX ORTEGA GANG

When the mob from The Ancible decided we were going to get into Malifaux, naturally The Way of the Lazy Gamer kicked in and I studied the different crews to see who best fitted my requirements:

1. Must have an overall uniform colour fitting in with one of The Army Painter undercoats – it makes undercoating easier.
2. This colour should be as predominant as possible because if it's already sprayed on my work is partly done.



It did not take me long to spot the Ortegas.

These guys are portrayed in Malifaux as effectively being Mexican bandits and wearing a lot of brown. I like Mexican bandits and Leather Brown is an undercoat colour that I have in quantity. I looked through the rest to see if anything else came near but I nabbed the Ortegas whilst I had the chance!

The miniatures themselves needed very little cleaning up so I took them into the garden (do you really need to be told not to spray inside?) and gave them their undercoating. One word of advice about this – be careful, but generous. For much of the model we of the Way of the Lazy Gamer intend this undercoat to be it, so treat it like a top



coat,

but make sure not to clog.

Recommended distance is 20cm using long, strong bursts. Here's the result...

Once this is dry then it's a matter of digging out the required paints (always looking for the opportunity to use the paint on as many miniatures as possible, because it saves wasting life on changing paint pots. This amounts to only 30 seconds or so per pot but I estimate that over the years I am in fact two years younger than I should be thanks to this method, so think on.

As previously mentioned, you just paint the models like a 10 year old with a good eye. See the results which at this stage are less than awe-inspiring. However it is time for a stout heart, because we are not at the end of our journey yet. Here's an important tip while I think about it. In my previous incarnation I spent ages with individual colours making sure I painted neatly and didn't overlap. This technique is the opposite of the Way of the Lazy Gamer. The only colour that has to be super-tidy is the top one. If you leave even small gaps between colours the dipping will find you out.

So, you are looking at a row of figures that look like your kid painted them and wondering if this was such a smart move. Well, your time has come, my padawans. Shake the tin of dip and open the lid. The technique with using the dip is inherently messy, and the stuff smells a bit, but this needs to be done indoors. I have seen videos of people actually dipping models in the pot but my test results were abysmal, and the idea of then having to find a spot to shake the excess dip off is clearly contrary to the Way of the Lazy Gamer. The answer is to use a brush. You need a fairly soft fellow and one that you will only use for this purpose from now on. Don't be tempted to use any old rubbish, because this is the key stage in our work. For 28mm miniatures I use a size 3 or 4 brush. You want to get this stuff on fast so that you can achieve consistency of coverage – but fear not, this comes rapidly and easily. The trick is to bung plenty on. The dip (or Quickshade,

default shade,

only one, then buy Strong) you then, using the same brush, just make sure it's not gathering too deeply. 'Too deep' for me means that actual gaps between legs and arms and suchlike are blocked. Other than that let things settle where they will, and fear not at this stage.

You should be able to see from the pictures that a monumental change is already taking place. With 28mm models my biggest fear was getting flesh tones right. Perdita's cleavage and exposed waist would have given me nightmares in the past, but look how well it has come out (you already did, didn't you? It's okay, admit it). The best bit is that the better the sculpt, the better Quickshade will make your work look. How cool is that?

Only two stages are left, and one is the heresy that is my basing system, so be prepared to find out the terrible truth. And here it is... essentially it comes down to liking the 'modern' basing style of brown(-ish) bases with green flock added. For me this gives a really pleasing effect, however on the surface it appears to require considerable effort – this is clearly not on.

to give it the proper title) comes in three shades: Soft, Strong and Dark. I have all three and despite the price being around £16 per tin it's worth every penny.

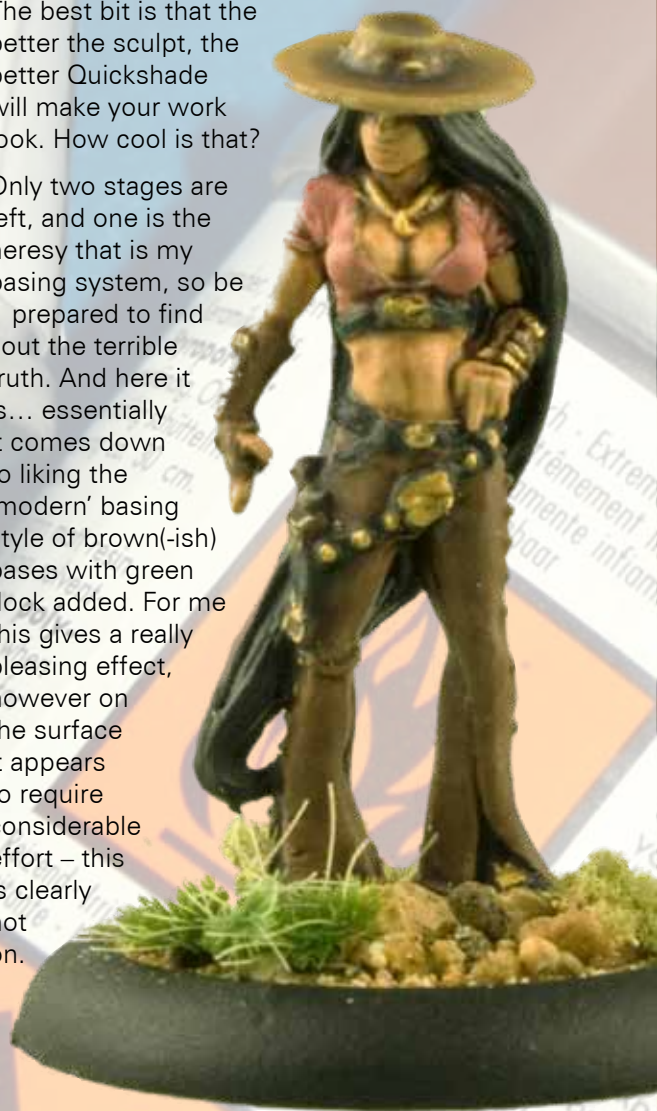
So, having painted the Quickshade on (I chose Strong for the Ortegas, which is kind of the

and if you are buying

only one, then buy Strong) you then, using the same brush, just make sure it's not gathering too deeply. 'Too deep' for me means that actual gaps between legs and arms and suchlike are blocked. Other than that let things settle where they will, and fear not at this stage.

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The Way of the Lazy Gamer teaches us that we strive to attain an acceptably high percentage of the target effect but at a commensurate saving in time and effort. First off is the base itself – well, for the Ortegas that was easy as they came with



these new-fangled recessed slotta-bases, so no need to make my own base. Instead I simply need to use my usual basing technique straight onto the base.

The core of this method is the actual material used to sprinkle onto the base and achieve a highlighted, uneven (but no so that it looks like a small portion of the Alps) effect. This can be achieved any number of ways, including expensive model railway ballast and by mixing sand with Tetraon (or whatever filler exists these days). Other people use green flock straight on but this is not effective enough although in other respects it does fulfil most, if not all, of the Lazy Gamer's criteria.

Enough of the waffle. My secret ingredient is painfully simple. Sharp Sand. You can get bit for next to nothing from any DIY store with a garden centre, in a bag big enough to outlast your own lifecycle unless you are under 30. It provides the perfect mix of fine sand and larger stones, as you can see from the photographs. With the Ortegas I hadn't fully refined my system and I was still painting the dried sand (you glue it straight to the base with PVA glue) a sand colour and then highlighting it before adding flock and grass tufts. You will see from the section on the 15mm models that things have moved on. However, where you have been able to cut corners on the sand, you must do the opposite with the flock – buy the best you can find, because it's the flock which will be doing the work for you in making the basic sand look attractive.

For the Ortegas I used Woodland Scenics Fine Turf in Burnt Grass colour, along with judiciously placed 2-Colour Grass Tufts from Continental Models Railways and Scenics. However, whilst I still use the



same grass tufts the turf has been replaced as you will see. Regardless, the turf is applied using Medium-thickness cyanoacrylate glue from the local model shop. This is basically modelling superglue and you get 50 grams of this stuff for the same price as 3 grams of Loctite. You simply deploy some glue randomly to the base in selected areas and bury the base straight into the turf. Then shake off and find a likely spot for your grass tuft, and glue it on with the same stuff.

This works well in a number of ways for the Lazy Gamer – first, it's dead easy and involves minimum work. Secondly, it is dry almost immediately meaning that you can get straight on to varnishing, thus finishing the models that much more quickly. The Lazy Gamer will often base and varnish a matter of hours before a game, so such time constraints are important to consider and account for.

The final varnished models are now shown, and personally I'm damned pleased with them and the minimal effort put in to get this level of success.



PAINTING 15mm GZG STARGRUNT ISLAMIC FEDERATION

Don't tell anyone but I quite like playing with 15mm World War 2 tanks – terrible, I know. However to date I've bought all my armour pre-painted from the ever-popular EBay. So when we received some sample models from GZG I thought it an ideal opportunity to deploy the Way of the Lazy Gamer on them and showcase the results, for good or ill.

To give you a mini-review won't be tricky as pictures do, in this case, say a thousand words. It is worth talking about construction though. These fellows arrived in a pleasingly un-flashed condition, meaning that I had minimal filing to do before the real work began. I don't know about you but I hate having to spend ages preparing a model prior to painting. The infantry were almost devoid of flash, and there were only one or two irregular bulges on the vehicles, mostly around the tracks of the tanks, and nothing to get me irate.

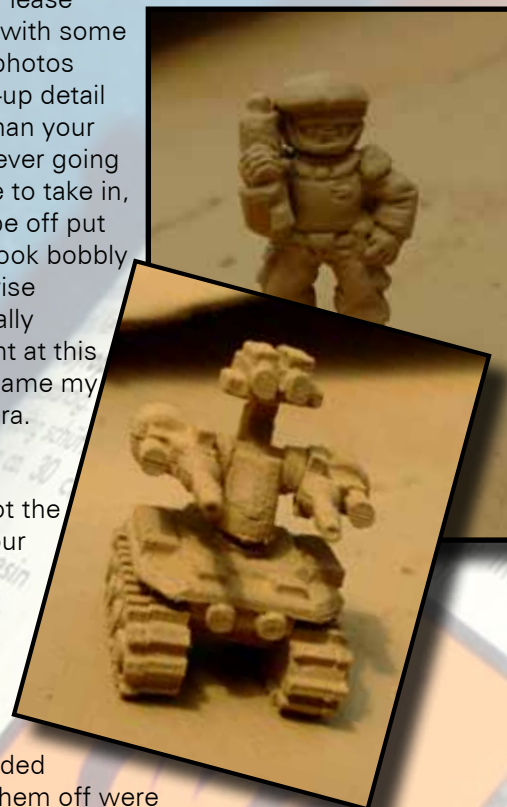
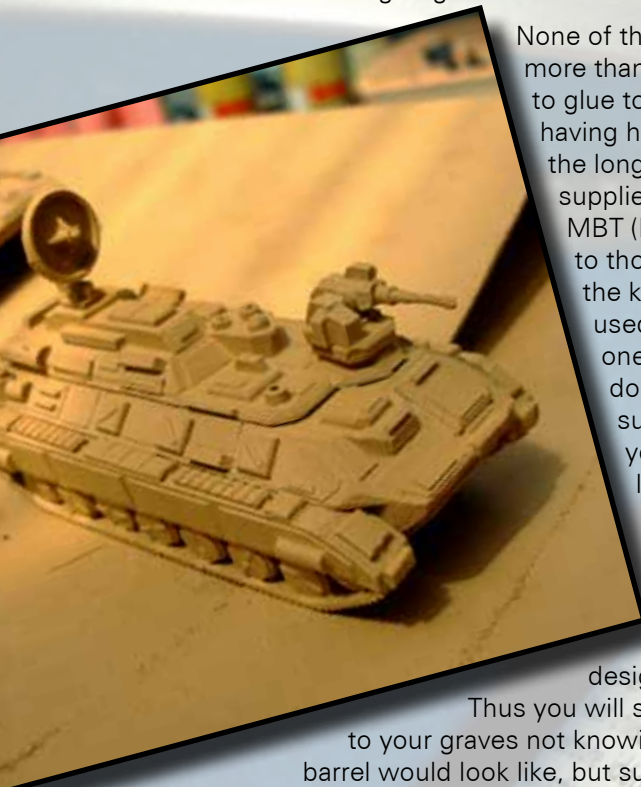
None of the vehicles had more than three or four parts to glue together, although having had two goes with the longest of the three supplied barrels on the MBT (Main Battle Tank to those of you not in the know) I gave up and used the two shorter ones – the Lazy Gamer does NOT pin. Pinning suggests to me that you either intend to lob your models around the room like an infant or that the model's design is not fit for purpose – designers take note.

Thus you will sadly probably go to your graves not knowing what this longer barrel would look like, but such is life.

I had a dozen vehicles of various sizes glued together in about an hour, which is acceptable for me, especially as my plan for painting was so audaciously simple as to be borderline insulting. The Army Painter produce a spray called Desert Yellow. Oh yes. My plan was to spray both infantry and vehicles Desert Yellow and then apply the absolute minimum amount of additional colours in an attempt to get these blokes table-ready in record time.

Having done the majority of the 'hard' work on this project without breaking sweat, I looked at what I had accomplished to date, and was pleased. Please note that with some of these photos the close-up detail is more than your eyes are ever going to be able to take in, so don't be off put if things look bobbly or otherwise aesthetically unpleasant at this stage – blame my ace camera.

Having got the main colour done and dusted, I decided that what the models really needed to finish them off were guns, flesh and, in the case of some of the models, Arab headscarves. I decided on gunmetal for the guns and white for the scarves. They-Who-Cannot-Possibly-Be-Mentioned-Because-One-Use-Of-Their-Name-Will-Have-Them-Checking-The-Whole-Article-For-The-Slightest-Challenge-To-Their-Intellectual-Property provided the paint which I feel safe



referring to as B**tgun Metal, and Vallejo provided the white and flesh. The metal did a selection of weapons on the vehicles plus tracks, along with all the infantry weapons and the visors which appeared clearly on their helmet. All this took about another hour and before I knew it I was at the stage you see in the photos here.

The next stage was basing. I decided not to base any of the vehicles, because it's not necessary and I'm not here to waste my time, as you know. I chose to mount my infantry on 40mm x 40mm square bases, with four to a base. They will most likely be used with the Future War Commander rules set and the nice thing about these rules is that as long as base sizes are consistent, you can go with what you fancy. The Lazy Gamer picks a

only want gentle shading. Unless models are individually based I always mount them before painting on the dip, regardless of scale. This has a couple of benefits, not least making it less mucky on the hands, but also it shades around the feet of the model, which sometimes has a nice effect when it comes to adding the sand. See for yourself...

Since finishing the Ortigas I had my Turf Epiphany Moment – in other words I have found the ultimate turf to complement



pre-coloured brown card from the local art shop, because then any patches the sand does not stick to will not look out of place, although these will in any case be minimal and are the areas to target with the turf.

However, before sand is sprinkled on it's now time to apply the Quickshade. Because the Desert Yellow is a light colour, I chose to use the Soft tone which is the lightest of the three options. This will work best with lighter colours like yellow, white, light browns and suchlike, or where you



The Way of the Lazy Gamer.

It is Green Blend blended turf by Woodland Scenics. Not only is the colour vibrant enough to stand out without looking naff, it actually seems to 'puff up' when varnished to look even more like clumps of grass. My other epiphany with regards to basing was deciding that the sand itself didn't need to be painted. I just glued it on followed by the turf. It's not quite as nice as Parky's fully painted bases, for example, but mine get done in about a quarter of the time and still look great on the tabletop, so no worries!

My last act before actual varnishing was to 'edge' the bases in Vallejo Middlestone, which looks better than the white card, and the final results are as you see.



And that is The Lazy Gamer's Guide to Painting Miniatures. I hope that you have picked up a few tips along the way and that if you are yourself a Lazy Gamer then you will embrace the Way yourself. We can never have enough converts!

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Outpost Assault

War of Attrition Scenario - 1

An AT-43 Campaign Scenario by Bryan Steele

This planet was nothing before the corporations came and found its treasures. They blasted through the planet's crust and found everything they ever wanted – turning this place into a war zone. Everyone saw something here they could use, from the underground crystal caverns coveted by the Karmans to the silica-rich hills now dotted in Therian nanogenerators. The greedy corporations opened Pandora's Box and now the planet is a jigsaw puzzle of territories, war zones and battleground staging areas.

War is hell...and hell just came to this planet.

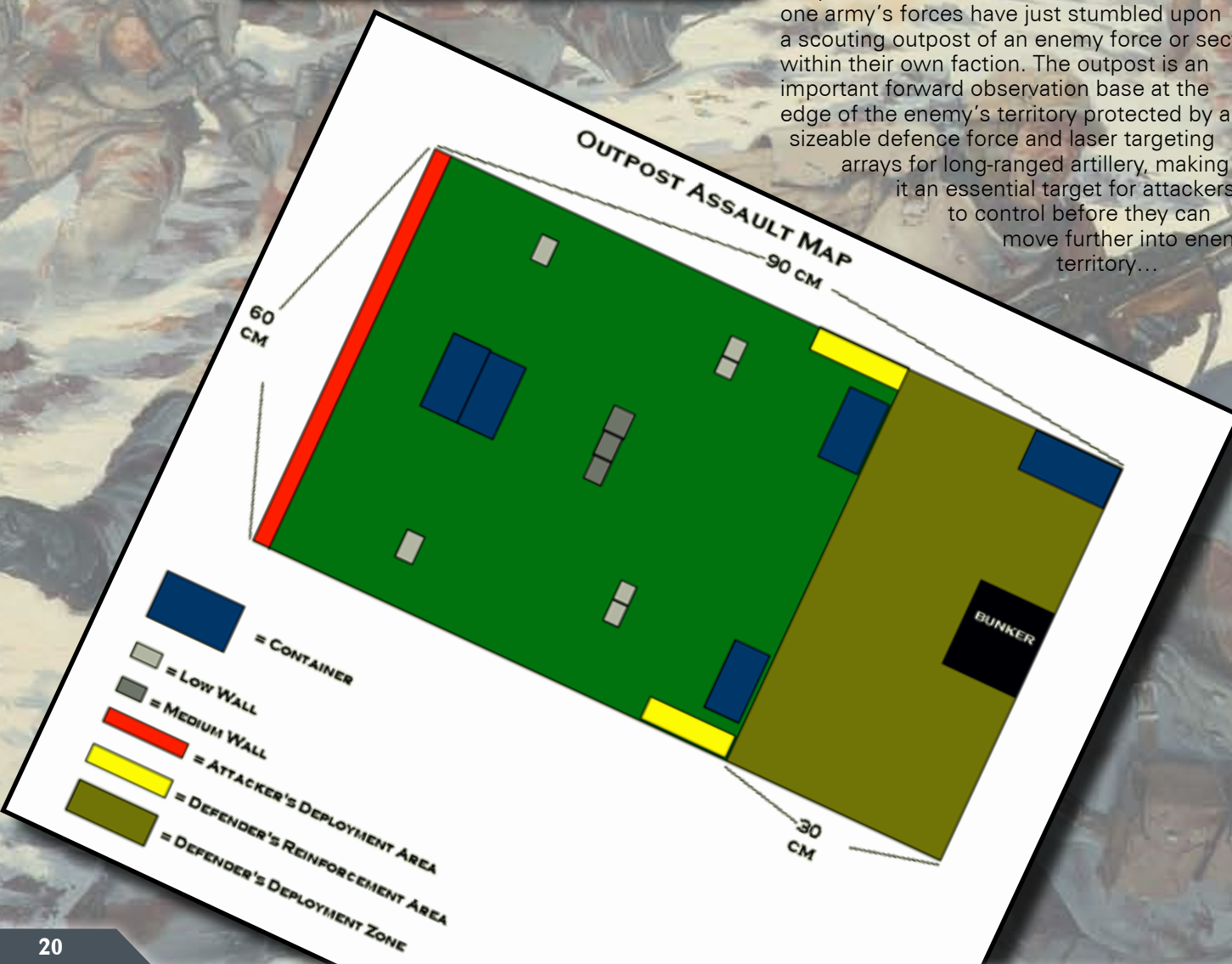
The War of Attrition

This article is the first in a series of AT-43 battle scenarios that come together to form a linear campaign of linked battles – the War of Attrition. The players of each battle gain special benefits for their next battle in the campaign, showing the growth of the forces' abilities and asset management based on their wins and losses throughout the campaign.

Over the next several issues of The Ancible, the War of Attrition will unfold for AT-43 players all over the world.

Outpost Assault

The first scenario in the War of Attrition, Outpost Assault is based on the idea that one army's forces have just stumbled upon a scouting outpost of an enemy force or sect within their own faction. The outpost is an important forward observation base at the edge of the enemy's territory protected by a sizeable defence force and laser targeting arrays for long-ranged artillery, making it an essential target for attackers to control before they can move further into enemy territory...



Forces Available

This mission opposes an attacker and a defender. The attacker's company is composed of 1250 A.P. of assault units and up to 750 A.P. of reinforcement units. The defender's company is composed of 1000 A.P. of assault units and up to 500 A.P. of reinforcement units; with one free Artillery Strike (see special rules) each round.

Tactical Positions

See the map...

Primary Objectives

- Destroying the Bunker: 10VP*
- Capturing a Single Container: 2VP*
- Capturing the Double Containers: 5VP**
- Capturing the Medium Wall Line: 3 VP**
- Destroying an enemy unit beyond the Medium Wall Line: 3 VP**
- Destroying an enemy Infantry unit: 2 VP
- Destroying an enemy Armoured Fighting Vehicle unit: 4 VP

*Attacker only **Defender only

Secondary Objectives

- Capturing a Low Wall Line: 100 RP
- Capturing the Medium Wall Line: 150 RP
- Controlling a Single Container: 100 RP
- Controlling a Low Wall Line: 50 RP

Special Rules

All In: All the assault units enter the battlefield in the first round. They cannot be left in reserve. The attacking player moves onto the board from his designated table edge in the first round; the defender must set up all assault units in his designated deployment area. Up to one Infantry unit can be set up inside the bunker, measuring its ranges from any edge of the bunker (it is assumed to have firing ports).

Artillery Strikes: The defender adds a unit card for an Artillery Strike into his activation sequence each round. When the card comes up for activation, the defending player may measure an attack with the following profile from any unit officer or hero.

	Accuracy	Attack	Area	Damage
Long-Ranged Artillery Strike	5+	5/0	2	9/1

The Bunker: The defender's bunker has 8 SP and Protection 14. If the SP of the bunker falls to 0 while a unit is inside, every model suffers a damage 10 hit while trying to escape the demolition. A unit inside the bunker cannot be engaged in close combat.

Cease Fire

The game ends immediately when one of the players reaches 15 VP or eliminates all enemy forces from the table. Whoever reaches either of these cease fire conditions first is the victor of the scenario.

War of Attrition Campaign Effects

Outpost Assault can be played as either a single mission event by two players, or as the initial bout in the extended War of Attrition campaign. Players that have fought this scenario's battle will take with them a special benefit for their next battle in the campaign, win or lose. These are called "Campaign Effects" and they are varied based on whether the player was the winner or loser of the scenario and their role as attacker or defender.

Attacker (Winner): The victorious faction has overtaken the forward outpost and managed to get a good foothold against the enemy, allowing for additional supplies to come with any future forces. In the next War of Attrition battle against the same opponent, this player may add one free soldier to any two Type I or single Type II Infantry units (up to squad maximums) for free.

Attacker (Loser): The thwarted attack on the outpost has taught the faction something useful about tactical restraint. In the next War of Attrition battle against the same opponent, this player may place an additional 250 points worth of their assault units into a special reserve that will deploy automatically in the second round of the game.

Defender (Winner): The victorious defending force has managed to hold the line against the assaulting army, giving them excellent intelligence on how to be ready for any new engagements with them. In the next War of Attrition battle against the same opponent, this player starts with 100 RP already accumulated to buy reinforcement units.

Defender (Loser): The uprooted force from the lost outpost has returned to base with tragic tales of lost comrades and destroyed equipment. This causes the higher command to dispatch more helpful medics and mechanics to mitigate some of the damage caused by this tragedy. In the

next War of Attrition battle against the same opponent, this player may add one Medic or Mechanic specialist to any one squad capable of normally acquiring them for free (in addition to normal specialists).

Outpost Assault Battle Report – Cogs vs. Red Blok

"There they are, those cloned freaks. For Supra!" the paired Colonels Odin and Manon shout over their loudspeaker as Urod stomps out of the deployment vessel. "Let no Cog live to tell of our arrival!"

This battle took place on a chilly afternoon between the

Supra forces of the Red Blok commanded by Steve Blaske and the enigmatic C-Naps Cogs commanded by me for their sins.

Red Blok – Supra Faction

Steve's Red Blok force, the attackers in this scenario, were as follows:

Assault Units

Colonels Odin 0-1 & Manon 0-2, in Urod (570 A.P.)

8 Dragonov Kommandos, incl. Sniper, Medic, Electronic Warfare Specialist and Sergeant (245 A.P.)

3 RPG Kolossus, incl. Sergeant (435 A.P.)

Reinforcement Units

9 Spetsnatz Kommandos, incl.
2 Flamers, Medic and
Lieutenant (330 A.P.)

2 Zvezda, incl. Sergeant
(415 A.P.)



Cogs – C-Naps Faction

My Cogs force, the defenders in this scenario, were as follows:

Assault Units

2 Hunters led by C-Naps G36 (485 A.P.)

6 Sharpshooters, incl. 2 Snipers (425 A.P.)

Long-Ranged Artillery Strike (Free)

Reinforcement Units

4 Warmongers, led by C-naps G45 (390 A.P.)

Round One

Considering the serious Leadership difference between the Red Blok and the Cogs factions, it was no surprise that Steve and his Supra forces won the initiative in the first round. As the attacker he chose to start things off with the great and mighty Urod plodding onto the field and levelling his massive cannons at the Sharpshooters – who I foolishly left set up outside of the bunker (hindsight being as good as it is, I should have known better). The result was two smoking dead Cogs and a terribly durable armoured walker headed right at the objective of the whole mission!



My response was easy. The Hunters and G36 leaped up and into the heat of battle, spending his LP on calling down some support in the form of a brand new Prowler. This would prove to be the best way to boost a Cogs force

quickly; something that any C-Naps player should really remember when they battle more heavily-armoured forces. Doing this while taking a nearby low wall, the squad was ready for their next turn.

Steve countered the new arrival with his Dragonov Kommandos, blasting at the Hunters while advancing up into their own low wall objective. Thankfully for the heavily armoured Cogs, the sniper was the only real threat – a shot that was deflected by the cover between them and the target.

The sky exploded with the arrival of my first artillery strike, centred perfectly on the Dragonovs. While several members were thrown to the ground by the blast, three would not be heading back to the assault ships after the medic saved one of his friends' lives.

The round ended with the advance of the RPG Kolossus unit to the nearby low wall, claiming it for the Red Blok and adding reinforcement points to Steve's tally.

Round One Totals: Red Blok (300 R.P.) vs. Cogs (150 R.P.)

Round Two

Steve won initiative again, allowing him to try and do something about the Prowler generation that G36 is capable of. After picking up several of the Dragonovs, the sniper (who was outside of the artillery blast, unfortunately) takes aim on G36 and manages to inflict a deadly wound – which was saved by the pockmarked wall in front of him!

In a bright and shining moment for the Cogs, G36 and his Hunters moved up to claim the medium wall and let loose with their rockets at Udon – to no avail. G36 decided to burn a pair of his Leadership Points for an additional 100 RP (the C-Naps faction benefit).

Angered by the insolent Cogs scratching their paint – and nothing else – Odin and Manon



leveled their guns at the Prowler and turned it immediately to shards of polymer and machine parts. Steve's smirk told me that he was pleased with this outcome, and the 4 Victory Points did not hurt.

The Cog response to losing one of their artificial intelligence walkers was well-timed. The Sharpshooters, snipers and medic included, let loose with a hail of quantum rifle rounds – killing the remainder of the Dragonovs. Their medic could not do enough good and the Cogs take the lead with 5 Victory Points.

Striding into better range, the RPG Kolossi took aim at the Hunters and launched their rockets. One of the Hunters collapsed despite its thick armour, leaving G36 with only one unit-mate and therefore only one ablative wound to keep itself alive.

The round ended with the artillery landing squarely on top of the RPG Kolossus squad – not inflicting even a single wounding hit. It would seem that the Red Blok was in a good position to make a strong move on the bunker next round – especially with the end of round reinforcements.

After gaining both sides' requisite reinforcement points for controlling low or medium walls, Steve decided to spend 330 R.P. on the Spetsnatz Kommandos, leaving his Zvezda unit still in reserves. I spent my points on my only reinforcing squad, the Warmongers and C-Naps G45.

*Round Two Totals: Red Blok (20 R.P. / 4 V.P.)
vs. Cogs (10 R.P. / 8 V.P.)*

Round Three

With the Red Blok taking the initiative yet again, Udon walked forward enough to eliminate any cover the remaining Hunter and G36 would have had – and turned both of the loyal clones to a meaty paste on the backside of their medium wall. 2 Victory Points to the Attacker.

The Warmongers then tried their best to put some kind of hurt on the huge walking devastator, with only G45's rockets having much of a chance. The shots hit home, but Udon's armour was too thick and the activation was a waste.

The RPG Kolossus unit walked closer, thinking about taking shots at the bunker but pushed into a run instead in order to get better shots on it next round.

Seeing the RPG armoured suits walking into range and line of sight, the Sharpshooters let loose with their weapons yet again, dropping

one of the waddling enemies at the cost of a Leadership Point to activate.

The Spetsnatz Kommandos arrived and ran as far forward as they could into cover, prepping their medic to save any unfortunate allies that might get caught...

...in the artillery strike that fell immediately after their arrival. After the medic did his best to stitch up the wounded and the burned, three of his friends were dead and most of the squad were picking themselves up off the ground.

*Round Three Totals: Red Blok (170 R.P. / 6 V.P.)
vs. Cogs (10 R.P. / 8 V.P.)*

Round Four

Things were looking grim for the Cogs as the Red Blok forces moved in on their bunker – and won initiative yet again (sensing a trend?). The two remaining RPG Kolossi launched their rockets and felled only a single Sharpshooter – unfortunately due to the angle, it was the medic.

The Cogs' high command dropped another artillery shell on the Spetsnatz, not managing to kill anyone due to the efforts of the tired but highly competent medic.

Odin and Manon, seeing that the infantry forces had everything well in hand, moved forward and took aim at the bunker. The Cog structure shook with the blows, losing 2 Structure Points. Things were truly beginning to crumble for my side.

Having realised that their weapons were nearly useless against Udon, the Warmongers turned their quantum pistols and G45's rockets upon the recovering Spetsnatz Kommandos. Their shots did well, and two more of the Red Blok infantry twisted away with giant bloody holes in their corpses.

Having picked themselves up off the ground and returned fire, the Spetsnatz forced G45 to patch up one of his Warmongers but inflicted no true casualties.

The last few Sharpshooters saw the incoming threat of Udon and knew they could do very little to stop the monstrosity, so they fired a volley at the RPG Kolossus unit instead – coming up completely empty and merely reminding the Red Blok of my force's seeming lack of anti-armour potential.

*Round Four Totals: Red Blok (220 R.P. / 6 V.P.)
vs. Cogs (10 R.P. / 8 V.P.)*



Round Six

The final round began as every other had – with a Red Blok initiative win. Putting the final nail in the Cogs' proverbial coffin with Udon's round six activation. The heavy walker planted its shots into the already damaged bunker and dropped its last two Structure Points – ending the game with a solid and demonstrative Red Blok victory.

Round Six Final: Red Blok (370 R.P. / 16 V.P.) vs. Cogs (10 R.P. / 8 V.P.)

Closing Thoughts

Bryan's Final Thoughts – "Today I learned a new synonym for hatred. I'm going to call it Udon."

Steve's Final Thoughts – "Leadership is key to winning this game... or at least initiative every round."



There is not much to say about how the game went down. It was rough on the Cogs early on because of my strange decision to leave out any major anti-armour capabilities, but the Red Blok is a straightforward and tough force to deal with. Next time I will be ready for them with perhaps a few Trackers, Gunmen or a Marauder.

Everyone should think very hard on using the map and the reinforcement units of this scenario to their advantage. I think that is where the Cogs went wrong here and my force suffered because of it.

Next time, the War of Attrition continues...

Round Five

Another Red Blok initiative win put the Spetsnatz Kommandos into firing positions again and the Warmongers are required once more to be saved by the medical prowess of G45. Not having to leave their cover, they snapped back down into position when they were done, knowing the quantum return fire would be heavy.

I chose instead to then activate the Sharpshooters, trying to stop the RPG Kolossus unit from inflicting any more damage upon the bunker. The results of their quantum rifle and sniper shots were relatively pleasing, with another dead Kolossus. This forced the unit to take a Morale test, which could have been debilitating for a Supra unit (they are removed as casualties if they are ever Demoralised)... but Steve saved and was still coming on as if nothing had happened.

The last RPG Kolossus stalked forward, taking a low wall and changing up his target – levelling his rocket launchers at my uncovered Warmongers! The shots went wide, but the round was not over yet.

What would turn out to be the last of the Cogs' artillery shots landed in the Spetsnatz unit, inflicting only a single casualty that was undone by the medic immediately. It knocked a few of them to the ground as well, but I had hoped it would do much more.

Udon walked even closer to make sure his shots were on target and sent heavy shells tearing through the side of the bunker yet again, inflicting another 4 Structure Points, bringing it to a total of 6 SP missing.

The Warmongers took their shots at the remaining Spetsnatz and were perfectly on target. The quantum energy pulses would have torn the squad to shreds... if Steve's dice had not given him EVERY cover save possible to end the round with the Red Blok solidly in control of this battle.

Round Five Totals: Red Blok (320 R.P. / 6 V.P.) vs. Cogs (10 R.P. / 8 V.P.)

FAITH VERSUS PRIDE

WARMACHINE MKII

By Marijn Bierhof & Fokke van der Molen

Sometimes change is needed. Although Warmachine and Hordes were great games, they needed to be streamlined and reworked. The rules became too bloated and some model interactions became strange and very powerful. Fortunately Privateer Press saw this too and they came up with Mark II (MKII). After an extensive field test where players could send in their input, we now have a new rules set. Time to test it!

Warmachine and Hordes have always been our favourite miniatures games. The rules offered both casual and competitive gameplay and were easy to learn, but hard to master. Unfortunately, in Mark I Warmachine (MKI) warjacks did not function as well as infantry units. This led to less warjacks on the field and more infantry, thus giving rise to the nickname 'infantrymachine'. This combined with some powerful units (Idrian Skirmishers for example) and tricky rules interactions made people walk away from the game. Privateer Press acknowledged this problem and developed the second version of Warmachine. Players could send in feedback on the temporary rules and the guys at Privateer used this to make the final rules set. The new book was released in January and it really is a beauty. So now we are in a new era of Warmachine and we thought it would be nice to show the new rules in a battle report.

So what are the major changes? First, warjacks got a boost. In MKII you have to destroy the machine entirely to take it out of

the game. In addition, destroyed systems (like weapon arms or its movement) now give a penalty to the model, instead of hampering it enormously. This makes warjacks hard to take out and even a damaged warjack can still hit like a sledgehammer.

Second, warjacks and warcasters can 'shake' effects that knocked them to the ground or made them stationary (like Sorscha's feat which turned you into an icicle). Warcasters and warjacks can spend a Focus point to remove such an effect. It makes them a lot more lethal and harder to take out or slow down.

One of the biggest changes concerns the points values of all models and the games. In MKI the regular games were played at the 500 or 750 points level. Most warcasters cost between 60-90 points and heavy warjacks between 100-130 points. In MKII the game will be mostly played at 25, 35 or 50 points. As you can guess, this means that all points values of models have been revised. Heavy warjacks are now at 6-13 points, for example. To ensure the game didn't need any point fractions, units can be fielded at either minimum size (mostly 6 models) or maximum size (mostly 10 models). This is annoying for players who have a lot of units of eight men as they need to buy two extra models as they cannot choose the middle road anymore. The upside is that building a force by head is much easier now! The change that was most revolutionary is that warcasters actually don't cost any points anymore. That's right;

the most important model of your army is free! In addition, warcasters yield you "warjack points". These free bonus points can only be used on their warjacks. Warcasters who have excellent synergy with warjacks have few warjack points, and vice versa. This makes sure that most players will bring along at least one warjack as it can be free or fielded very cheaply. By adjusting the points values and entering bonus points, Privateer Press has upped the game size somewhat. Although players tend to compare a MKII 35 points game with a MKI 500 points game, it mostly is closer to MKI 600 points. Fortunately, the game can be played at 25 points for people who dislike the slightly larger games.

Next, the unit formation rules were simplified a lot. Now a unit is in formation if all of its members are within a distance, equal to the 'Command' value of its leader in inches. MKI had three types of formations and these gave weird rules interactions and were hard to get right. MKII makes this easier and more forgiving.

Finally, a lot of special rules are gone. Models were simplified to streamline the game a lot. Privateer has introduced symbols to denote general abilities, like 'Stealth' or 'Fearless'. This makes sure the cards aren't cramped with text in microscopic font sizes!

In this battle report we hope to show you the new rules and also the new tournament pack, Steamroller 2010. In January, Privateer released these rules with ten scenarios. Although the 'Kill the warcaster' objective works well, it's often a lot of fun to introduce a new scenario. For this battle report we chose the 'Capture the Flag' scenario. We're playing a duel with 35 points to spend on our forces. This is an ideal size for relatively quick games that demand tactics and strategy.

Capture the Flag

Both players own a flag (40mm base) which stands 6" from your deployment zone. The goal of the game is to either control a flag or to kill the opposing warcaster. Models can control flags if they end up in base contact with the flag (and the rest of a unit within 3" of it) and there are no opposing models within 3". If a player controls a flag for two turns, he wins the game.

Deus Vult!

Fokke: When Marijn invited me to do a battle report for Warmachine MKII, I did not hesitate. It would be a match between his Khadorans and my Protectorate of Menoth. We have a long history of fighting it out between us, and especially with these factions. The theme of the Protectorate is that of an army on a holy war. The mission is an ongoing crusade for the true belief in Menoth, against all heretics. In this battle Menoth's holy fire will cleanse the Khadorans from the face of earth!

The warcaster I chose is the High Executioner Servath Reznik. In MKI he was a prime choice for casual games, but he wasn't really a tournament-worthy caster. In MKII fielding him still seems like a lot of fun, and with the improved MKII warjacks a warjack-heavy army should scare most opponents. Reznik himself is a melee monster who gives a boost to warjacks in his army with his various spells and I am especially relieved that Reznik kept his ability to excruciate slain enemies and place them on the wrack!

The rest of my army would consist of at least two heavy warjacks and one light warjack. I need the ability to hit the Khadorans like a truck. Khador traditionally has a lot of strength and resilience and their thick armour will be hard to penetrate. I will show today the Protectorate of Menoth warjacks are able to crush the thickest armour with ease. Reznik will support them with spells; the Choir of Menoth will chant their songs and the Vassal will tag along. For this goal I picked one of the best warjacks in the game, the Avatar of Menoth. It now is an improved version of the old MKI avatar. The other two warjacks in my army are the Crusader, the cheapest heavy jack in the arsenal of the Protectorate, and the Revenger, which has access to a useful arc node.

Even though warjacks are significantly better in MKII, a good army still uses solos and infantry as well. You need cannon fodder and Swiss army knives in war as well. Because we're playing 'Capture the Flag', I wanted cheap infantry which would be able to hold their own for a while: a good distraction for the enemy. The Holy Zealots are ideal for this. With the Monolith Bearer unit attachment they can use 'Greater Destiny' and become near invulnerable for a round. I also

want to field a great toolbox solo and found it in Eiryss. She can snipe away enemy infantry, disrupt warjacks and warcasters and has the speed to catch the flag if Marijn isn't careful. The last piece of my army puzzle is Rhupert Carvolo, the piper of Ord. In MKI Menoth players used him so often, that he earned the nickname 'the piper of Menoth'. I'll put this to the test in MKII.

My battle plan is fairly simple. My warjacks will move forward, with the choir and the vassal as support nearby. This will make the warjacks near immune to shooting and an ideal screen for Reznik to hide behind. The zealots will tie up a flank and hopefully still prove to be extremely hard to mop up. I worry a little about the Khadorans' feat of the butcher. That will be a world of hurt and I hope to crush at least a Khadoran warjack or two before Marijn can use it. In this match up I miss good ranged options (those zealot fire bombs can only be thrown so far), so I will have to march quickly to victory.

Victory will be mine today. Menoth wills it! Deus Vult!

Deus Vult

High Executioner Servath Reznik (6 warjack points)

Revenger (6)

Crusader (6)

Avatar of Menoth (11)

Vassal of Menoth (2)

6 Choir of Menoth (3)

10 Holy Zealots & Monolith Bearer (8)

Eiryss, Mage Hunter of Ios (3)

Rhupert Carvolo, Piper of Ord (2)

Total: 35 points



For Hammer and Sickle!

Marijn: Okay, MKII has come and brought a new rules set for Warmachine. Time to show Khador in a battle report. Once I decided to play Khador, I knew I had to pick the Butcher of Khador as my warcaster. Not only is he the ultimate Khadoran in Immoren, he has also changed a bit in MKII, which is nice to show. MKI Butcher wasn't considered a very good warcaster. That said, he was a lot of fun to play in casual games. MKII Butcher has been revamped and brings new tricks to the table. His 'Full Throttle' spell makes you want to bring a couple of warjacks along. Combine this with beat sticks like Juggernauts, Kodiaks or Beast 09 for maximum damage. Warjacks become even more appealing if you consider the Butcher has six warjack points. Now that is good news.

So next up are some warjacks to use Full Throttle to full effect. I decided to pick a Kodiak and Juggernaut for their melee prowess. A Destroyer gives me some ranged support. With the Butcher's feat (one extra damage die on all attack damage rolls) these machines can really bring the hurt.

As I already mentioned at the end of MKI the game was often named 'Infantrymachine' because units were more effective than warjacks. Although warjacks have improved significantly, infantry is still needed. The first choice was to include a War Dog. This loyal pet really helps your warcaster, especially if you want to have him in melee. Next up, I wanted to have some ranged support to kill infantry from a distance. A unit of Widowmakers and a Winter Guard Mortar Crew should give me some suppressing power. Next, I wanted to include some melee specialists. I chose a Manhunter and the Great Bears of Gallowswood.

The Manhunter is a great one-shot missile that can hit really hard (and then usually dies). The Great Bears hit like a ton of bricks and are hard to take out. With support from the Butcher they can take anything apart. Finally, I chose a Koldun Lord. This solo allows me to give one Focus to a warjack, which is very handy if you are fielding three! His Frostbite and Ice Cage spells are also useful against the enemy.

Fokke is playing Menoth, a faction I have played countless games against. Although I know his army very well, MKII makes it all new and different. I know I have to take out his support units ASAP. The Vassal and Choir must be destroyed as soon as I can. Without them, the warjacks are far less dangerous. I must also take note of the scenario and keep an eye on Eirys if I can't take her out. Her speed means she can easily grab my flag if I'm not careful. I will try to take his flag with my Great Bears or Manhunter if I can.

Khadoran Anvil

The Butcher of Khador (6 warjack points)

Juggernaut (7)

Kodiak (8)

Destroyer (9)

War Dog (1)

Manhunter (2)

Koldun Lord (2)

Widowmakers (4)

Winter Guard Mortar Crew (3)

Great Bears of Gallowswood (5)

Total: 35 points





Deployment – Fokke

I won the die roll and chose to go first. My preference to go first stems from the MKI days where going first was the best way to land an early strike on the opposing army. This is no longer true in MKII, since models with 'Advance Deployment' can now deploy up to 6" further, instead of the previous 12" further. I also like to place protective spells on my models and use terrain defensively, before my opponent can attack. Obviously, the disadvantage is that your opponent can place his anti-infantry directly before your infantry and his anti-warjacks before your warjacks. This is what Marijn did: his Widowmakers and Destroyer were facing my Zealots after his deployment and his heavy warjacks and heavy hitting solos were aligned in front of my warjacks. This would be tough to deal with! I advance deployed Eiryss behind the forest. Marijn placed his Manhunter in front of Eiryss, but far enough away to prevent me from killing it.

Deployment – Marijn

As Fokke said, deploying second gives me a nice advantage in choosing the opposing units. I deployed in a tight group, with the Winter Guard Mortar Crew in the middle. This way they had a good view of the field and they were relatively safe from Eiryss' dreaded bolts. I deployed the Kodiak on my left and the Great Bears on my right. These are good flankers, especially since the Kodiak can run without a focus point due to his Heavy Boiler. The Juggernaut and Butcher formed my centre. The War Dog stuck close to his master and the Koldun Lord was positioned centrally, so he could go either side. I deployed my Manhunter in front of Eiryss. Due to his Stealth ability, all attacks made beyond 5" automatically miss. This makes him an ideal harasser for the elf. The Widowmakers deployed on my left flank in front of the Zealots. I hoped they could do some damage and they were too far away from Eiryss to be threatened by her. The Butcher roared his battle cry and the game began!

Turn 1 – Fokke

Reznik needs 5 focus to cast his two upkeep spells (Ignite and Iron Aggression). Ideally, you want to cast your essential upkeep spells in the first turn, so you will have spare focus in your next turns. Accordingly, I placed one focus on the Crusader and Reznik kept the rest for his spells. The Avatar received 2 focus from his Holy Vessel ability. Without the focus-receiving ability of the Avatar, I would not be able to use two heavy warjacks and one light effectively, but the Avatar can take care of his own requirements very well.

I activated Rhupert and let him put Dirge of Mist on the Zealots, granting them +1 Defence and Terror. This would make it a little harder



for the Widowmakers to hit them. My Zealot Priest recited the Prayer of Warding, making them immune to most spells and then they ran and spread out as much as possible, to prevent multiple troopers succumbing to a single mortar shell from Marijn's Destroyer or Winter Guard Mortar Team. I have learned to fear the Khadoran artillery shells!

In MKI you couldn't spread troopers more than 3" away from each other and large artillery templates would kill multiple troopers in one fiery blast. In MKII the only limiting factor is the command range of your unit leader. This gives far more

flexibility. I also used terrain to my advance, blocking line of sight as much as possible. Without a good amount of terrain placed on the battlefield, I wouldn't dare to use a close combat orientated army.

My warjacks moved 6" forward. The limiting factor in my jack movement was the speed of the support models: the Vassal and the Choir of Menoth. To prevent the Khador artillery from using Arcing Fire and shooting over my warjacks and kill my support models, I have to keep everything close to each other. Arcing Fire only works if models are placed more than one inch from each other. So, by advancing my warjacks a small distance, the Choir and Vassal could stay tightly behind them and use the jacks as a screen that block line of sight. On top of this the Choir sing the Hymn of Passage, which means Marijn can't shoot at my warjacks. This way I can move forward in a brick which is immune to shooting. The Khadorans will have to deal with my force in melee!

Reznik placed Iron Aggression on the Avatar, turning it into a killing machine that doesn't need focus for power attacks and boosting all of its melee attacks. He also casted Ignite on the Crusader, improving the damage output of the jack significantly.

Finally, I move Eirys a little into the forest (for extra defence bonus, because of her Camouflage ability), hoping this will bait the Manhunter into running forward towards her.

Turn 1 – Marijn

Fokke's first turn was rather straightforward and this made it easy for me: advance! The Butcher allocated a focus to the Juggernaut. I started out with the coolest part of my turn: firing the mortar. The Winter Guard targeted the Zealot between the two big rocks. It was well beyond the mortar's range, but I hoped for a good deviation roll. This went as I hoped and one Zealot was obliterated. FIRST BLOOD! The Destroyer moved

forwards and tried to do the same, but his shell hammered the large silo without effect. Both Kodiak and Juggernaut ran forwards and made sure they had good charging lanes.



The Widowmakers moved along the house on my left. The new formation rules let them spread out, making them very flexible. They both targeted Zealots, but both snipers missed. The Butcher casted Iron Flesh on the Great Bears, giving them +3 Defence (but -1 Speed) and Fury on the Kodiak. Fury gives +3 to melee damage, at the expense of 1 Defence. The Kodiak would be a monster in melee if he could charge, so beware Menites! The Great Bears ran forwards in a triangle and huddled together for bonus armour, due to their Defensive Line ability. The Manhunter moved forwards, into the forest. It was tempting to engage Eirys, but also pointless. Fokke's warjacks would kill the Manhunter without affecting his plans a lot. The Koldun Lord ran forwards and stayed close to his large metal friends. The War Dog ran close to the barrels in front of my line. Now I had to brace myself for the horde of Zealots that were sure to swamp my lines. I have played a zillion

times against them, but each time they still worry me. So throw your bombs and get it over with!

Turn 2 – Fokke

Marijn drew first blood, but only one Holy Zealot was killed in action. His first turn went pretty well for me. Unfortunately our armies were still far apart. Basically, the only thing I can do now is move forward again. Fortunately I have a trick up my sleeve: the Greater Destiny ability of the Zealots. In MKII the Zealots are a bit more vulnerable (when one dies you now only receive a bonus of +4 Armour, but no longer a Defence bonus) but Greater Destiny is no longer a special action. So I can use this powerful ability and then run full speed forwards. This will tie the Khadorans up and threaten their flag. I might even force the Widowmakers to flee, because the Dirge of Mist song from Rhupert gives them Terror. And indeed, a unit of crazy fire-bomb-wearing maniacs that run screaming towards you should strike fear in your heart!

I started the turn with upkeeping Iron Aggression and Ignite and I gave one focus to the Revenger, with Reznik keeping the remaining 3 focus. This way, I can let the light warjack run and use its arc node to channel an offensive spell against either the Manhunter or the Great Bears. Rhupert moved forward and piped Dirge of Mist, the Zealot Priest recited Prayer of Warding and the Monolith Bearer used Greater Destiny and I let them run



forward as far as possible, placing them in melee with the Widowmakers. The plan worked! The Widowmakers fail their Command check and flee in terror. Menoth be praised! The Avatar of Menoth ran forward a little and the Crusader

he will lose a valuable solo next turn. One of the Great Bears, Yarovich, has three wounds left. This is an excellent opportunity for Eiryss to shoot a death bolt that just happens to deal three damage points! Fortunately for me the attack succeeded



moved forward as well. I let the Vassal move in base contact with the Crusader (this gives it a bonus of +2 Defence and +2 Armour), and the Vassal used its Enliven special action. This means my Avatar can move away from combat after it suffers damage, making the jack extremely hard to destroy. The Choir moved along and performed the Hymn of Passage again.

I then let the Revenger run forward and activated Reznik. After some pondering I decided my best option was to use the offensive spell Perdition against one of the Great Bears. If I deal damage with Perdition a warjack in my army can move towards the closest enemy model. The attack succeeded and I moved my Revenger into melee range with the Manhunter. This means Marijn probably will throw both the Great Bears and the Manhunter against the Revenger, otherwise

and I hit one of the Great Bears. Marijn failed the Tough roll (on a 5+ they survive with 1 wound) and Yarovich perishes.

This turn went excellently for me, with all my die rolls succeeding and Marijn's already screaming in frustration!

Turn 2 – Marijn

Drat, the first Great Bear is already gone! I had hoped Fokke would miss one attack roll, but alas. In addition, my wimpy Widowmakers decide to run away from the scary Zealots. The Kapitan was killed by a Zealot, but the second in command managed to flee unscathed and he took over the lead.



Okay, time to deal some damage and show true Khadoran might. The Butcher let Iron Flesh on the Great Bears go. The -1 Speed stops them from charging, and they need to chop up that Revenger. Instead he moved to his right (but stays within 3" of the flag), casting Fury on the Great Bears and also casting Full Throttle. Now my warjacks can perform at full capacity without using focus. Excellent. The Winter Guard Mortar tried to shoot the Vassal and I rolled an '11'. Normally, that would be a dead Vassal, but due to his bonus Defence, the shell missed and scattered on top of the Avatar without inflicting damage.

The Manhunter moved aside and swung his axe into the Revenger. The axe does some damage and then the Manhunter is pushed aside, due to the Repulsion effect on the shield. The Great Bears roared their war cry and charged

the Revenger. They made sure to stay within 1" of the Revenger so they could make their two attacks each. Kolsk swung twice and hit the Revenger hard. He was then pushed 2" back due to the shield. Volkov stepped in and finished the warjack in two strikes. One down, two to go!

The plan with the Avatar was to slam the Kodiak into it. This will probably slam it into the Crusader. Although both warjacks can shake off the knockdown effect, this costs focus and they won't be able to hit back effectively. But there was one lousy Zealot in the way and it must be killed. Due to Greater Destiny they can only be killed by spells, but the Prayer of Warding prevents me from targeting them with spells. Darn. Fortunately I have the Koldun nearby. The wizard moved behind the Kodiak and sprayed a freezing Frostbite over it and the Zealot. By

targeting the Kodiak I can hit the Zealot without targeting it – sneaky! I hit both models and the Zealot dies. The Kodiak then slammed for free due to Full Throttle and hit the Avatar with its shoulder. The holy warjack is flung back into the Crusader. Crash! Both warjacks were knocked down and the Avatar suffered light damage. That will change Fokke's plans somewhat.

I know the Juggernaut must take out Eirys. If I don't she will surely target the Butcher with a Disruptor Bolt and this will take his magic away for a round, which is terrible. The Juggernaut charged with boosted attacks, due to Full Throttle. The Elf is cleft in two by the enormous Ice Axe. Juggernaut 1, Eirys 0. Finally, the War Dog and the Destroyer engage the Zealots to make sure they won't be harassing my lines with fire bombs.

The Widowmakers rally and they can do their thing again next turn. That's nice. Now will come a nasty turn. I must hope Fokke can't take out both warjacks and the Zealots won't do too much damage. Otherwise I will have a very hard time to pull off a win.

Turn 3 – Fokke

Well things still looked quite good from my side. I certainly did not expect Marijn being able to slam down my Avatar, but with some creativity he was able to kill a Zealot with the Koldun Lord. The Great Bears already showed their potential with their charge on the Revenger. Fortunately he also decided to kill Eirys with a heavy warjack, allowing me to destroy two Khadoran heavy warjacks which are close my main force. For this plan to work, I have to roll well enough for focus with the Avatar. Fortunately he receives 3 focus. 4 would be ideal, but 3 will do.

I give the Crusader 3 focus and upkeep my two spells. Reznik keeps the remaining focus point.

Previously, I would be in terrible trouble with two of my heavy warjacks laying knocked down on the ground. In MKII you can use focus to shake effects like knocked down, after which your warjacks can activate normally. So, both the Crusader and the Avatar shake, stand up and keep two focus. My Zealots activate and it's time to use the fireworks! The Priest recited the Prayer of Fervour, granting the Zealots a bonus of +2 to attack and damage.

To effectively throw bombs against the Destroyer, two of them break away from melee (Otherwise the warjack would have a large defensive bonus against ranged attacks). Of course, those two Zealots die from free strikes, but it's all for the greater good. Their souls will rest in Urcaen.

I keep one Zealot in melee range with the War Dog, to prevent the poodle from counter charging. The Zealots kill the Koldun Lord and set the Destroyer on fire, but don't deal much damage against the warjack. In the MKI days this would be different as they would surely have damaged the Destroyer. However, the Zealot in melee range with the War Dog tried to hit it with his mace and succeeded wonderfully! The War Dog was killed by a zealot in close combat! Pretty hilarious, one doesn't expect this from fragile guys in robes.

I continued my turn with the Choir of Menoth this time performing the Hymn of Battle, greatly increasing my warjack potential in melee. Time for the climax! The Avatar charged the Juggernaut nearby. This freed up a charge line for the Crusader towards the Kodiak. Charging doesn't cost focus because of Iron Aggression and because of the Choir my Avatar can now strike the Khador jack with MAT10 and boosted attack dice. Only triple ones would mean a miss. I have always liked the amount of buffs the Protectorate of Menoth can deal out, almost assuring you hits.



On top of this, the Avatar struck with a P+S 21 sword and a P+S 15 shield. With a total of 4 attacks the Juggernaut should be finished... right? Well, no. After the dust settles the Juggernaut was still standing with 3 damage boxes left! This was a serious blow to my plans, because a functioning heavy warjack will still deal quite an amount of damage!

But first it was time for the Crusader to strike. He moved towards the Kodiak and can land three P+S 22 strikes (the bonus from Ignite and Hymn of Battle) on the warjack. However, what should have been crushing blows weren't. The Kodiak survived the onslaught and also stood functional in front of me. Its left arm and movement were disabled, but it was still standing. This wasn't looking good at all! Fortunately I could let one of my warjacks make one more attack with the Vassal. I chose to use this ability on the Avatar and finally turn the Juggernaut into a smoking wreck. Reznik couldn't do much and ran forward, close to the front line.



whacked his pet. There! He then cast Full Throttle to make sure the Kodiak will do a lot of damage on the Kodiak and the Destroyer can hack a Zealot apart.

The Widowmakers turned around and plugged two Zealots. The freshly promoted Kapitan shot the Monolith Bearer and did 4 damage points to the cross bearer. The Mortar Crew then fired a



Turn 3 – Marijn

I knew I had to endure a lot of damage and fortunately the Kodiak survived! The Zealots killed my poodle... the Butcher roars in fury. PAYBACK TIME! The Butcher upkept Fury on the Great Bears, allocated two focus to the Kodiak and activated his feat, giving all models within 12" a bonus die to their damage rolls. He moved forwards and killed the Zealot who

big shell at the Choir of Menoth. If I don't take out the two warjacks, it will be nice if I can kill their support. The shell missed and scattered back, right on the Crusader and Kodiak! Drat! The shell damaged both the Crusader and the Kodiak, disabling the Cortex of the Kodiak. It immediately lost its two focus points. What a dumb move by me! I should have used the Kodiak first, so it could have used the focus.

Ah well, at least we had a good laugh from the situation. The Kodiak activated and hit the Crusader twice. First with his mangled fist for some damage and then with his functional fist for some more damage.

The Manhunter stalked through the forest and hacked the Avatar twice with his axes. The machine suffered quite some damage and the big hairy man actually took off the shield. That lowered the armour of the machine, so the Great Bears would have an easier time taking out the warjacks. The Great Bears charged into the Avatar and Crusader. With their Weapon Master ability (one extra damage die), Fury, the Butcher's feat and Backswing (they can make two attacks each) they can do $15+5D6$ damage on the charge and $15+4D6$ damage on the second attack. Yes, this is completely insane. The two Khadoran legends chopped and sliced and after their furious attacks, both warjacks were utterly destroyed. They will probably die at Reznik's hands, but they acted like real heroes of the Motherland.



Turn 4 – Fokke

Sigh... all my jacks are gone and I have just two Zealots and the Priest remaining. Man, those Great Bears are brutal with the Fury spell and the Feat of the Butcher. What a slaughter!

There's now only one man who can try to achieve victory for Menoth and that's my warcaster, Reznik. Of course, I let him keep all his focus. Time to kick some ass! Reznik casted the spell Engine of Destruction, making him a one-man army and he advanced forward. With two blows he first destroyed the Kodiak and now turned his rage towards the Great Bears. His sword Purgation gave him boosted attack and damage rolls against models with an enemy upkeep spell on them. Time to erect a wrack and let Volkov repent his sins!

Of course the attack hit with ease, but Volkov made his Tough roll, so he survived with 1 hit point remaining! Damn! This means I have to use a precious focus to strike him again. The next time he did fall though and is duly placed on the wrack. With my last focus I kill Yarovich. If Volkov had failed his Tough roll, I would have another attack left for the Manhunter. Now I have a deadly thorn in my side and I am curious how this will end.



Finally, the Destroyer charged the Monolith Bearer and due to Full Throttle it managed to kill the annoying unit attachment. That was an excellent turn for me. I killed some more Zealots and I destroyed his important warjacks. This basically leaves Reznik standing, which was good for me. Now let's hope he can't kill a warjack and three hairy men in one turn.



forwards, unholstered their blunderbusses and shot at a Zealot and Rhupert. Both missed though. The Manhunter moved into base contact with Reznik. He needed to roll sixes to hit on two dice. I rolled two fives. Oh well.

Before the Butcher could reach Reznik, the wrack must



be destroyed as it's in the way. The Destroyer moved from melee and shot at the wrack. Although the attack automatically missed, due to the Suffering's Prayer ability, I knew this and therefore I moved close by. A missing shot with a template can only deviate up to half the distance shot. So if I moved within 4", the template could only scatter 2" and automatically hit the wrack with the explosion. I boosted the damage and the wracked Volkov had his final rest. As soon as the wrack was destroyed, it exploded in a big fiery blast. Reznik is caught by the shrapnel and suffers 7 damage. Ouch! Endgame! The Butcher rounded the rusty barrels, raised his axe and finished Reznik in one all-killing swipe. Game over!

The Zealots made their last action of the game, moving forward and killing all three Widowmakers in a blast of fire. At least this felt satisfying!

Turn 4 – Marijn

Time to end this. I eyed the scene and estimated Reznik should just be in range of the Butcher's axe. First things first. The Butcher kept all focus. The Mortar Crew moved



Aftermath – Fokke

When I saw that the Butcher could reach Reznik, I knew it was over. That man is a monster in melee and it would just be a question which of the two warcasters would be able to land the first blow. But Menoth gives and takes as He pleases.

I have learnt a lot this battle, not least to respect the Feat of the Butcher. This means not only Khadoran jacks are pretty scary when they come to kick ass, but also solos like the Manhunter and especially the Great Bears. It's hard to neutralise all these threats and the Butcher will usually keep something deadly to use with his feat.

However, there were opportunities for me to win this battle, nonetheless. A bit more luck when trying to destroy the Khadoran jacks in turn 3 would mean a lot and in the final turn I should have kept Reznik more backwards and let him use the focus of the wrack he erected to kill the Manhunter. Then there would be no direct threats, he would not suffer blast damage from the wrack and the Butcher would not have been able to reach him. With Reznik having the greater speed of the two (with Engine of Destruction) who knows how it would have ended? This is what attracts me to this game, there are always opportunities and you keep thinking you will do it all right next time.

I am also pretty relieved the Zealots still are a solid unit to use. They aren't overpowered any more as they were in the MKI era, but are a solid unit, and that's how it should be. This battle ended as it usually does between Marijn and me: with a caster kill. However, playing 'Capture the Flag' was interesting nonetheless. It means you always have to keep something nearby to protect your own flag and I am pretty sure it was a major reason for Marijn to kill Eiryss as soon as possible. It adds a great strategic layer to the game.

Well, this was a lot of fun to do. I hope you enjoyed the read as much as me playing this battle!

Aftermath – Marijn

That was one cool game. Both armies clashed together like two trains at top speed. The warjacks crushed on each other and had a lot of impact on the game. In MKI I would have taken out Fokke's battle line by knocking down his warjacks. Fortunately, shaking makes them a lot more competitive. In addition, my Kodiak survived the onslaught because warjacks have to be destroyed entirely. In MKI, the Mortar Crew would have scrapped it with their deviating shot. How odd!

Apart from the warjacks, we saw how easy and great the new unit formation rules are. They are much easier to work with and it makes them harder to handle with templates. MKI formations often were odd and felt clunky. Now the unit behaves much more realistic. Really nice.

In hindsight I wouldn't have changed my force a lot. It works well this way and there is a lot of synergy between the models. Next time I will use my Widowmakers a bit more defensively. My first turn with them was dumb as they were too easy to stop in turn 2. Fortunately for me they could still have some revenge in my turn 3. The Great Bears performed beyond my expectations. I have rarely seen so much damage dealt by only two models. The way Kolsk and Volkov worked their way through three warjacks was inspiring and awesome to behold.

Although I didn't win by scenario, it did have impact on the game. Both Fokke and I had to keep our warcasters near the flag, to be sure it wouldn't be controlled by the opposing player. I also had the opportunity to send in the Manhunter and Great Bears in my third turn. Then again, destroying two warjacks is much more satisfying.

All in all I am very happy with MKII Butcher. He is much more competitive now as Warjacks finally perform really well near him. Full Throttle combined with the improved Khadoran warjacks are nasty. Add some Fury and the Butcher's feat and you can destroy anything.

I hope we have shown MKII has made Warmachine a lot better game than MKI was. It is built on the strengths of MKI and removed its flaws.

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Som...somebody there...?

Strange Aeons

By Marijn Bierhof

IA! IA! F#TAGN!

With trembling fingers I opened the envelope. Inside it was the dreaded tome I had obtained. It had taken me many months searching for it. Finally it was mine, all mine! With longing I opened its pages and I slowly drowned in its evil. The ancient pages told of strange beings and cosmic horrors that threaten our very existence. As I worked my way through the tome, I knew humanity was condemned. Yes, the stars seem to be right and it is strange aeons indeed...

In the summer of 2009 I heard that Uncle Mike Worldwide (UMW) would be releasing a horror miniatures game, called Strange Aeons. The game focuses on the Cthulhu mythos which was created by the famous writer H.P. Lovecraft and it uses elements from other horror-related stories and legends. Although I was enthusiastic about the release, I was also sceptical. There aren't a lot of rules sets in this genre and I was curious whether this game would grasp the feel well. So when I received a copy to review I began reading in earnest. As I worked my way through the book, I read it with a smile. During my first read, the rules appealed to me and I was interested enough to try them out. I played several games with two of my friends so we really got a good feeling about the game, its strengths and its weaknesses. In this review I will explain what Strange Aeons is, how a campaign works and what I think of the miniatures and the game itself. Keep your Elder Sign nearby, or else you may be lost.

The Forbidden Book

The book itself looks really good. It is a spiral bound rulebook and is between A5 and A4 sized. The size and binding is really good for gaming, but does not look appealing in a book case. Being a gamer, I didn't really mind. I prefer a book that stands up to some handling. I know some people really dislike spiral bound books, so it is a good thing to know beforehand.

The book is 80 pages long and printed in full colour. Mike and his crew really went for style here. Each page is designed as if you're reading a bunch of old documents. The Courier font enhances the look and gives the impression that it was typed on a typewriter. It's a small thing, but adds to the genre. There are numerous drawings and photos that show the many creatures and heroes and they add to the total look. The photos were edited so they resemble old and weathered pictures. Although they are dark and are kind of hard to see well, they do give that menacing look to the book. It also adds contrast to the light pages. The drawings are mostly sketchy. Some will like them and others may think they are too simplistic or too vague. Sometimes a fancy book may detract from readability, which can be annoying. Fortunately, UMW's design is appealing and very easy to read. On to its contents...

Threshold Agency

In Strange Aeons one player controls the agents from the Threshold agency. The agency was created in 1920 by President Woodrow Wilson. This secret organisation seeks out evil cults and threats to humanity and destroys them. It recruits all kinds of agents, from wise scholars to trained commandos. Each agent has his place in the organisation and each brings his own type of expertise to the field. Many of them work secretly undercover and try to find the agents of darkness.

Whenever the organisation finds a new cabal or a new cult, they send in a team to neutralise it. Led by an experience agent, they will fight their way through crazed cultists, hungry daemons and the mindless dead. If they are lucky, they might survive and eradicate the evil Lurkers.



The protectors of Humanity

New Recruits

In the game the Threshold player builds a list of agents. He has 15 Build Points to spend on all models and their equipment. One of them has to be a character, the leader of the group. usually you will start with three or four models and give them some extra equipment, like a shotgun, a bolt action rifle or maybe even some dynamite. All models, except civilians, start the game with a free skill. The skills let you personalise the Threshold members. For example, an agent with two pistols and the 'Double Fisted' skill can shoot both pistols simultaneously. There are enough skills to make the game interesting, but there is the possibility to 'power game' by maximising certain attributes. Although this is hard to avoid in games where you can tweak the models, it is something to consider within your gaming group as it can lead to awkward situations. My mates and I avoided this by creating diverse Threshold models, so they could take on all kinds of situations without frustrating the Lurker player a lot.

If the Threshold player has built a list, both players decide which scenario will be played. This can range from a simple 'last man standing' to a 'treasure hunt'. The Threshold can also use map pieces to play special scenarios which allow for more interesting trophies. I will explain how map pieces work later on in this review. Players can photocopy character sheets from the rulebook, but fortunately they are also available to download from UMW's website. You can find sheets for the Threshold and for the Lurker lists. This helps you keep your book in good shape.

After the scenario is decided, the Lurker player can build a list. The player can spend the same number of points as the Threshold list. This gives a balanced game. Some scenarios have

special requirements that let you only field certain models or only a single model. It is good to note the Lurker can tweak most models by buying skills and extra weapons to make them more interesting and challenging. It allows the Lurker player to pick whatever bad guys he wants and makes sure games will be varied. Once again this system can be abused by players who really want to win.



Ia! Ia! Cthulhu Fhtagn!

There are a lot of Lurkers in the main rulebook, from simple Cultists and Ghouls to the more exotic Snakemen and Night Gaunts. A lot of the daemonic and undead Lurkers have skills to set them apart and become real scary on the field. The Lurkers are quite varied, but I would have liked to have seen more otherworldly, Lovecraftian

creatures, things like spirits and vampires. On the plus side Mike has been adding some monsters to UMW's website as free downloads.

The Mechanics

Once both players have built their lists and a scenario, it's time to play the game. The players setup the terrain to their liking and then roll a six-sided die (D6). The player with the highest score deploys first and starts the game.

During a turn, a player can 'nominate' one of his models. This model can activate and perform two actions. Models which weren't nominated do nothing, but are Alert. This means they can fire one shot at an enemy which moves within line of sight and 10" of them. This is a nice way to place models on guard at certain points, without having to nominate them. The nominated model has several types of actions: move, charge, attack, other.

A model that moves can move its Movement value for one action. If it moves into base contact with an enemy, it counts as a charge and he gets a free attack on the enemy. If the model already is in base contact or wants to shoot, it can make an attack action. Finally, it can take another action to do things like setting a detonator on dynamite, or picking up equipment. A model that wants to shoot with a ranged weapon rolls as many dice as the weapon allows. A



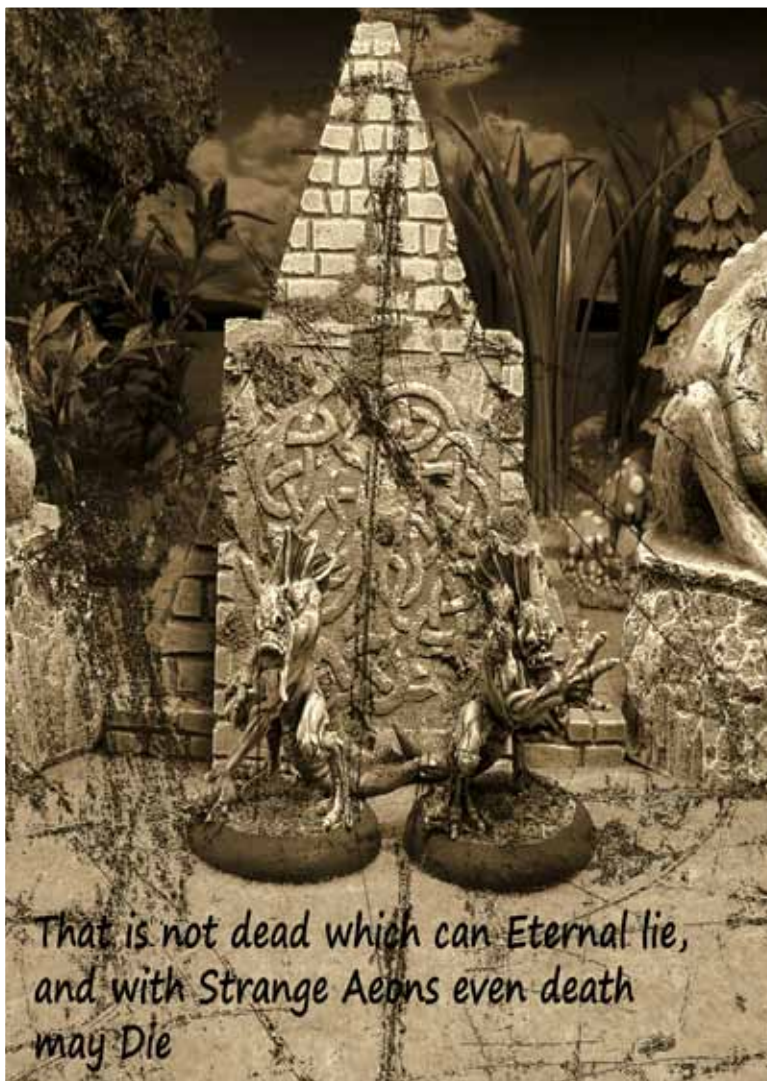
Shotgun lets you roll one attack die and a Tommy gun a whopping three dice. If the enemy is beyond the weapon's range, the shot automatically misses. If in range, each attack die that equals or beats the attacker's Dexterity value lets the model hit the enemy. For each hit, roll a die and apply modifiers to the roll. Compare this with the model's Constitution. If the roll equals the target's



Constitution, one wound is caused. For each point above the model's Constitution, the target suffers one extra wound. If this is more than the target has, this difference is used for the next roll.

After ticking off the last wound, the attacker rolls two dice and adds the difference between Constitution and the rolled total to this roll. This determines what kind of wound is caused. Models can become face up (lightly wounded), face down (stunned), taken out without any permanent injury or taken out with a permanent injury. Models that are face up can fight back at a penalty and must first spend an action before doing anything else. Models that are face down are automatically taken out in melee and must first spend two actions before doing anything. Cover gives the target an unmodified save against incoming shots. Handy when facing a madman with a Tommy gun.

For example: Jim shoots with a shotgun at a Cultist. He hits the Cultist, rolls a D6 for damage and adds the Shotgun's +2 modifier. He rolls a 5 for a total of 7. The Cultist has a Constitution of 5 and only one wound. Since Jim shot off the last wound, he now rolls two dice and adds +2 to the roll (the difference between 7 and 5). He obtains a total of 11, enough to take the Cultist out of the game!



Melee combat works slightly different. Both players roll dice equal to the combatants' Attack value and apply modifiers to the scores. The player with the highest total score on a single die wins the combat and now rolls to wound. Wounding works the same as for shooting.

As you can see, combat is quite simple and works well. This really speeds up the game and lets you finish most games within an hour. That said, players who want more depth and detail in the game will probably dislike the mechanics as they may be too simple.

After the dust has settled

Once one player has won by objective or by eliminating all enemies, the Threshold player checks if any model that was removed from the game suffers any permanent injuries. This can lead to physical injuries, phobias or even certain death. After this phase, the player checks if he finds any map pieces. He rolls a die for each Threshold model still on the field at the end of the game. For each 6, you'll find one map piece. Map pieces can be used to hire special agents (like snipers, medics or a demolitions expert) or to play certain scenarios. The special agents only stay for several games and then disappear off to other assignments. The scenarios often give access to other interesting trinkets or magical scrolls. These scrolls can be translated into magical spells, which give your agents more magical support.

In addition, all Threshold models still on the field at the end of the game can pick one new skill. This will make your Threshold models more interesting and deadly, but also more expensive. The thing is, the base cost of the models and their skills cannot exceed 15 build points. Whenever this happens, you'll have to "promote" agents away from your list. This means the more experienced your group becomes, the smaller it gets. In the end, your character can end up all alone in the dark...

The points system with Build Points and Base Points can be quite confusing at first. It took us several games before we saw how these work and what this really means for the Threshold list. Some reading at the Strange Aeons section on the 'Lead Adventure Forum' (see Ancible #1) helped us understanding it.

Strange Aeons works best when playing several games after each other. This way you can play a campaign where the Threshold models gain new skills, new weaponry, sustain injuries and lose agents. There are a lot of Lurkers and scenarios to play, so it'll be a while before you've seen it all.

At first the game may seem hard for the Lurkers. Threshold starts out with a powerful character and reliable agents. This can lead to lopsided games at first. Fortunately, this isn't bad at all. If Threshold performs well, the player gets access to new skills and more special agents. The total value of the good guys will also increase, allowing the Lurker to

pick more interesting models and skills. So basically it is a win-win situation.

The Miniatures

UMW has released miniatures for a lot of the Threshold and Lurker models from the main book. They are cast in resin and are often single piece models. To be honest, they are not my favourite sculpts. Most of them, especially the human sculpts, are a bit too simplistic for my taste and I prefer alternatives from RAFM, Pulp Figures or Artizan Designs. The faces and hands on Strange Aeons' sculpts are a bit too simple and soft for my taste. In addition, some detail looks soft and not as precisely sculpted as by other manufacturers.

That said, there are some very nice miniatures in the line-up. The Scrawny Ones are my favourites. They are strange daemons with pot bellies and Cthulhoid heads that have to be summoned to a pentagram by a blood sacrifice. The miniatures are well priced, but note the website has them in Canadian dollars and not in US dollars. This makes them look expensive, while they are not really.



Arms, Legs and one big mouth... What more does Evil really need?



Concluding

Strange Aeons is a nice quick game to play with your buddies. We have played several games in the afternoons. This lets you play a campaign with several games, one after the other. The horror/X-Files setting is very original

and allows you to paint some excellent and unworldly miniatures and scenery. Fortunately Strange Aeons only requires a handful of miniatures, so it is easy to start and very addictive once you get going. Recommended for the sane and insane!

The first expansion, Shocking Tales of Madness, was released a month ago. It allows for more insanity and diversity, but that's something for a later Ancible!

Before ordering the rulebook right away, I must note again the game is not perfect and has some issues. If players tend to maximise their chances to win, this game may not be the best one to get. It's not hard to create a character which is hard to take out. In addition, the rules are very simple. The upside is it speeds up game play and reduces the amount of rules discussions. The downside can be you think it's too simple and games tend to play out similarly quickly.

... was filled with a sort of viscous and semi-liquescient substance, quite opaque and of a sooty color.... [T]he center swelled as if with the action of some powerful yeast [and] an uncouth amorphous head with dull and bulging eyes arose gradually on an ever-lengthening neck ... Then two arms — if one could call them arms — likewise arose inch by inch, and we saw that the thing was not ... a creature immersed in the liquid, but that the liquid itself had put forth this hideous neck and head, and [it was now forming arms] that groped toward us with tentacle-like appendages in lieu of claws or hands! ... Then the whole mass of the dark fluid began to rise [and] poured over the rim of the basin like a torrent of black quicksilver, taking as it reached the floor an undulant ophidian form which immediately developed more than a dozen short legs.

—Clark Ashton Smith, "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros"

If you think Strange Aeons sounds interesting and you're craving some sanity-reducing fun, I'd suggest you visit the game's website (<http://www.strange-aeons.ca/>) and download the quick play rules. This allows you to play a quick game and try out the basic rules.

FIRESTORM

ARMADA

SPACE COMBAT IN A WAR TORN UNIVERSE

BY SPENCER D TAYLOR

If there are two things that have always been of interest to me it's naval combat and giant space ships, but as a gamer there hasn't really been anything to fill that void in my life. There have been a few games that cover space combat over the years, but none that really caught my attention. There's, the now obsolete and not supported, Battlefleet Gothic by Games Workshop, Ground Zero Games' ever popular Full Thrust, and a few others here and there. But what happens to those who aren't captured by those settings or the rules? Well, Spartan Games has decided to come to the rescue with their new space combat game called Firestorm Armada.

Looking at the rulebook for Firestorm one will notice something very striking, namely the size of it. It seems tiny at only 94 pages, but it's a nice departure from the massive encyclopedias that Games Workshop has been putting out (the 40K rulebook is 304 pages by

comparison). But despite the book's seemingly small size it manages to get a lot of rules across at the same time, and even with all the rules it still doesn't sacrifice the story. There's a small, seven page section at the beginning of the book giving the basics of the setting and a brief look at the currently established races/fleets, and then each fleet has a section near the back with the stats for their first four ships (Battleship, Cruiser, Frigate, and Carrier) along with some more background as well as some tactics for using each fleet.

Another thing that sets this book apart is its use of vibrant colour diagrams and pictures throughout. The only pictures in the book that aren't in full colour are the renders of some ships, although I don't see why these couldn't have been coloured. There's only a few renders in comparison to the diagrams and photographs so it isn't too disrupting, but adding some colour would have given the pictures more appeal.





FADF01 - DINDRENZI STARTER FLEET

What sets Firestorm apart from games like Full Thrust and Battlefleet Gothic are the rules. The rules use the same basic premise as Spartan Games' fantasy naval combat game, Uncharted Seas, so if you've ever played that then Firestorm will seem very familiar to you. The basic rules are quite easy to get a hang of, but they can seem a bit daunting if you attempt to read the book cover-to-cover. Having sat down and read the book all the way through and even play tested it with some proxy models, I can say that the rules aren't all that complex in execution. The only part of the rules that keeps me going back to check the book is the rule for linking fire between ships in the same squadron. The rule basically allows you to have a squadron of ships (we'll say there's three in this squadron) to link-fire their weapons of a similar nature (turrets, broadsides, torpedoes, etc.) to cause more damage to an enemy ship. So if you have three Cruisers in a squadron and they link-fire with their broadsides then you nominate one of the ships to act as the focus point of the attack and it fires at full strength and for each other ship in the squadron eligible

for the linked fire you add half their power to the focus ship's attack. So with your three Cruisers (let's say they're Terran) linking their broadside attacks at, say, range 2 then you would get a total 13 attack dice (7 for the focus ship, and then 3 from each of the other two since you round down) to unleash upon an enemy ship. It is a bit more than just that, to be honest, but to go into the real details of it would require going over ranges and attack dice and positioning. But other than that, the rules are really fairly simple [in fairness to the system we at The Ancible have been playing Uncharted Seas for some time and the linked fire rule comes naturally pretty quickly – Ed].

The book even has rules for other types of things that give space combat a



very distinct edge over land combat, meaning all the neat stuff floating around out there in the big, black, stellar sea. There are rules for various obstacles like asteroids, planets, space stations and gun platforms. There's also a neat rule where you can have ships make a jump into hyperspace (called a shunt in this game) to either appear on the table instead of starting on it, or you can have badly damaged ships (if you're playing a campaign or something similar) shunt out of a combat area to avoid being destroyed. There are also distortion fields which, if a ship flies into them, can cause it to shunt and vanish from the game. These are little things that give the game a nice touch of long term playability. The shunt action really gives the sense that one could build campaigns (something I would love to do) of galactic conquest and be able to save ships or bring in reinforcements if needed. There are also rules for boarding other ships and space stations, and even ramming. In a nice touch the rule book even states that no sane ship captain would willingly ram another ship, but that if things get to the point of no return then they really have nothing to lose. Even though the rules do highly discourage such insane tactics they are possible, even if near impossible to execute.

One thing this game relies on is positioning and tactics; since different weapons can only fire in certain arcs (fore, port, aft, starboard) while some (like turrets) can fire in pretty much any direction. While it does seem a bit weird that in the distant future naval combat will still be determined by bringing broadsides to bear on the enemy, it does seem the most logical way to go about it in terms of trying to make an accessible game [It worked in Star Wars – Ed].

That's the one thing that this game, like all others of its ilk, will always suffer from: it can't truly capture the feel of fully three dimension combat in space. Space naval combat miniatures games will always be acted out on a two dimensional plane because it's simply impossible to create one that occurs in three dimensions. This isn't a huge knock against the game, but more a knock against the entire genre. It's the one thing that has kept me from most games along the same lines as Firestorm (except my short lived run with Battlefleet Gothic), and it's the one thing that will continue to plague them. Does this mean that companies shouldn't make games in the genre? Not even close; if anything we need more awesome space combat games on the market. What this does mean, though, is that you have to go into this game, or any others like it, with a more open mind since they won't live up to hard science expectations.



Also included in the game is an

optional set of 52 cards that can be used with the game



for some extra strategy tossed in. These cards allow for things like adding more attack dice, or allowing ships to move outside your turn to avoid being shot. They aren't necessary for play, and the game runs very smoothly without them, but they are a nice little extra option that Spartan Games didn't have to include at all.

If nothing else I've said so far has sold you on this game then you need look no further than the models. The ships look absolutely fantastic with great details, and they're quite simple to assemble too. Even without all that they're still quite impressive, if for nothing else than their simply massive size. These are some of the biggest models I've ever seen, and that size makes them truly feel like massive space ships blowing each other into little bits in the void. I have yet to get my hands on any of them personally but have seen many pictures of these things next to comparable models, and they are impressive to look at. To give you an idea of their size the Terran battleship, called the Razorthorne, comes in at an impressive 17 centimetres (nearly seven inches) long. Even the smallest ships available for the Terrans, the frigates, measure just shy of two inches each. The smallest available model is the Aquan Prime frigate at 4.6cm. Each ship is made of resin, white metal, or a combination of the two.

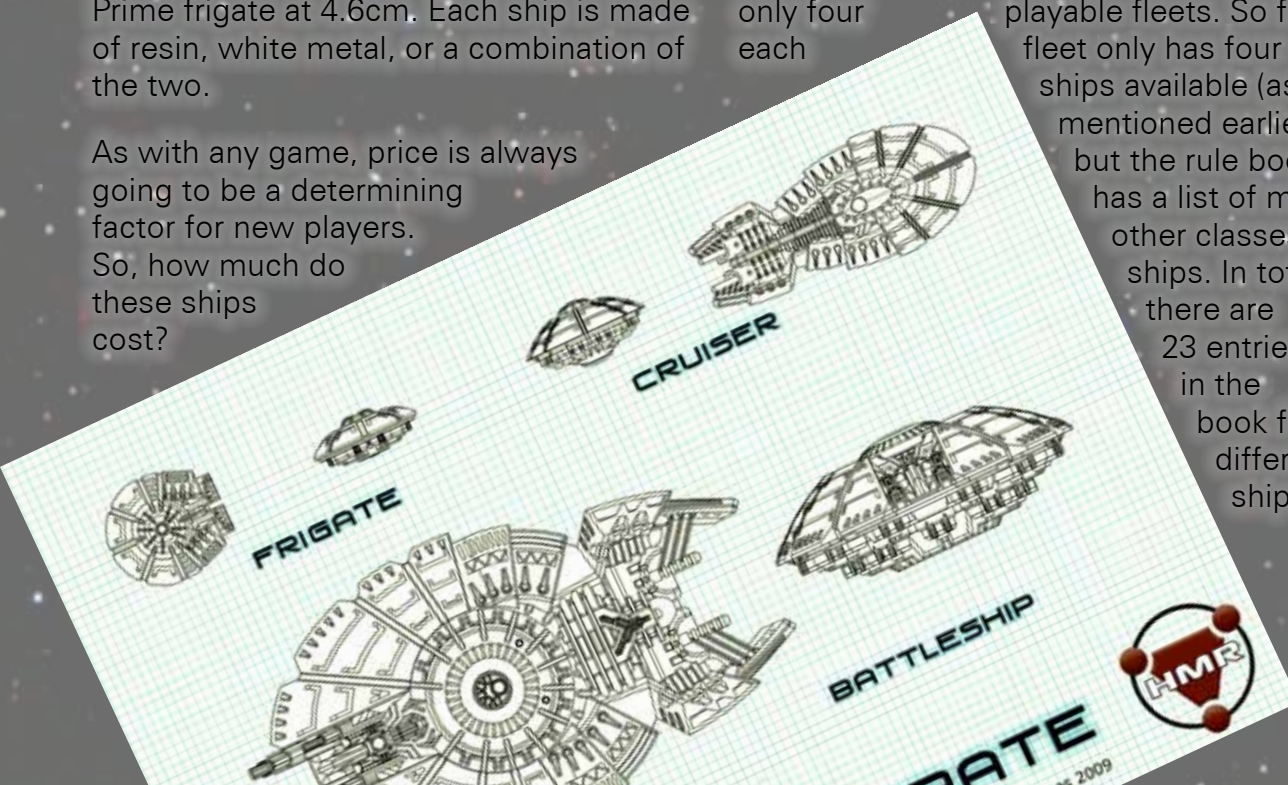
As with any game, price is always going to be a determining factor for new players. So, how much do these ships cost?

Well, the battleships are \$20USD each, which is a fantastic deal when you consider the materials and the size of them.

Two cruisers will put you out \$15, six frigates \$20, and a carrier will cost a little under \$17. Each of the four currently available fleets (Terrans, Dindrenzi, Sorylian, and Aquan) have a starter fleet available that contains 10 ships (battleship, three cruisers, and six frigates) which retails for \$70USD and gives you roughly 500 points depending on the fleet you pick. Each fleet starter box also comes with stands for the ships, a token set, and a Fleet Information Guide with the stats for the ships included and their points costs.

One encouraging thing about this game is the amount of stuff we can expect in the future. Spartan Games have already confirmed two upcoming fleets: The Relthoza (who I'm personally looking forward to) and the Directorate. Both of these fleets have the stats for the same four ships as the currently available fleets, which is a very nice touch as far as assuring us that there will be more than only four each

playable fleets. So far fleet only has four ships available (as mentioned earlier), but the rule book has a list of many other classes of ships. In total there are 23 entries in the book for different ship



classes. Granted some of those are things like fighters and bombers which are represented via tokens, but that's something like 18 different classes of models we can hopefully expect. What makes this even more appealing is

that there is a class of ships called



was smart enough to catch them and release the documents before the book hit shelves so that people buying it would

have advance warning [As an editor I am somewhat less impressed, and in these days of high quality productions it's about time the text got a little respect as well – Ed].

You can also download a quick play sheet with a basic outline of the rules so you can play without having the book handy, the stats for the four available fleets, assembly guides, and even three cut out fleets (Terran, Dindrenzi, and Directorate) so you can try the rules before buying the actual models(which is exactly what I've done). These are more nice little touches, and I have to give kudos to Spartan Games for thinking ahead as much as they have.

The book itself also has templates for explosions, asteroids, two small planets, the tokens for various effects on ships and the smaller craft (single-person craft like fighters and bombers), and the template for moving ships. It also has a removable laminated critical hit chart.

Overall I think Firestorm Armada is really good with a solid set of rules, impressive models, and a very bright future ahead of it. I'm looking forward to getting in even deeper with this game, and I really can't wait for the new ship models to come out because I really want a Leviathan!

Leviathans, and they're listed as being massive scale (as opposed to battleships which are listed as large scale). This means we can expect ships even bigger than the already huge battleships available, and this is something I find extremely pleasing. I'm a big stickler for game companies focusing on the games instead of the modeling and painting, and Spartan Games are going down the right path in my eyes.

Having the rule book in hand there are a few problems, which Spartan Games were smart enough to catch. On their site are an errata and a clarification document. These are, mostly, just clearing up typos and other minor things that aren't too big of a deal (I guess as a writer I should be more upset about not proof reading, but I'll let them slide), but I have seen a lot of people complaining about this saying that the company can't even write their own books without mistakes. I would just like to say that the mistakes are pretty minor, and that Spartan Games

CONAN

THRESHOLD OF DARKNESS

By Eric K. Rodriguez and Vincent N. Darlage

Screen shots by kind permission of Paradox Entertainment

Part 4

CHAPTER 6 DEMONS RUIN CONTINUED

Note for Games Masters: The witches can be anywhere you deem appropriate. Areas F and J seem suitable at this junction. However the witches should not just be sitting around, they know the Player Characters are coming. Mkali wants the dreaming character for a spell, but the others can be killed or captured as seen fit. The witches will likely have maximum power points when they finally face the Player Characters. They should not just be sitting around a fire, ignorant of the Player Characters' arrival. They will likely set up an ambush. No matter what else happens, the Games Master should engineer things so that the Ngil Master dies in this scene at the hand of the Witch and her master. When the master demon appears, the Player Characters will likely want to flee. Madam Amica knows a secret way out. This way out is not on the map so that the Games Master can freely place the exit where it is convenient. The secret passage will lead out to the Darfari village in the south part of the ruin. The Darfari should find the Player Characters (they are being directed by the master demon or commanded by a surviving witch) and chase them into the swamp for the next section of the adventure. Madam Amica will want to go into the swamp, for she knows a way to kill the demon – and that way lies in the swamp.



Mkali THE DARFARI WITCH

Medium Darfari Woman Scholar 16

Hit Dice: 10d6+6 (41 hit points)

Initiative: +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 18 (+6 level, +2 Dex)

Parry Defence: 18 (+6 level, +2 Str)

BAB/Grapple: +12/+14

Attack: Club +15 melee

Full Attack: Club +15/+10/+5 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+2/x2/AP 4

Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)

Special Attacks: Bite, +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls with any bludgeoning weapon

Special Qualities: Darfari Traits, new sorcery style x6, advanced spells x14, bonus spells x4, +4 power points, increased maximum power points (quadruple), acolyte background, knowledge is power, scholar, one free defensive blast (master, aid me!), iron will, darkvision 30 feet.

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +15 (+13 vs. Terror)

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 20

Skills: Craft (alchemy) +20, Craft (blacksmith) +7, Craft (fetish item) +22, Craft (herbalism) +20, Heal +14, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (nature) +19, Knowledge (rumours) +19, Perform (dance) +4, Perform (drums) +21, Perform (ritual) +21, Survival +7

Feats: Hexer, Focused Magical Link, Permanent Sorcery, Poison Use, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice

Code of Honour: None

Reputation: 25 (in Darfar)

Leadership: –

Allegiances: Demon master (Neshenu Khennu)

Base Power Points: 11 (4 base, +3 Wis, +4 bonus, +4 Obsession (the girl), -4 Obsession (the Dreaming Player Character); 44 maximum)

Magical Attack: +13/+15 (+8 level, +5 Cha/+2 bonus to Curses)

Sorcery Styles: Summoning, Divination, Curses, Nature Magic, Hypnotism, Immortality

Spells Known: Animal ally, astrological prediction, children of the night, demonic pact, domination, doom of the doll*, draw forth the soul, dream of wisdom, entrance, eternal youth*, greater demonic pact, greater summon beast, hypnotic suggestion, lesser ill-fortune, master – aid me! (defensive blast), ranged hypnotism, summon beast, summon demon, sorcerous news, summon water elemental, unnatural strength*, vampire transformation*, visions, weapon curse (defensive blast), witch's vigour*

Corruption: 11

Insanity: None

Possessions: Porcupine quills through her nose, fetish doll (with six magical links to the dreaming Player Character(s)), copper wire wrapped around her left arm from wrist to elbow, seven golden rings, two ivory rings, three necklaces made from plaited grasses with beads, small animal hoofs, teeth, small skulls, severed fingers and colourful beans hanging from them, club, fetish wand, a pouch of dried crocodile jerky.

* Spell from Conan: Scrolls of Skelos

Mkali is an old woman with porcupine quills through her nose. Due to a stroke in her past, only half of her face is really mobile – the other half droops. Her body is covered in white chalk paint. Her fingernails curl round and round, long and rough. The Corruption poisoning her soul has manifested itself in glowing red eyes. She is constantly wracked by physical pain and coughs up black phlegm. Her spittle is also black, and often drools the dark liquid from

the droopy side of her face. Her front teeth are filed to points. She walks with a slouched gait and her breasts hang flat and wrinkled nearly down to her knees. Other than her jewellery (listed under Possessions), she disdains clothing and is nude. On her head, her hair is shaved (including eyebrows) except for a long top-knot that hangs to the ground. The top-knot is stained red from the liberal use of cow urine.

She is centuries old, having prolonged her life through her immortality spells (see Conan: Scrolls of Skelos). The Player Character the witch is obsessed with is the reincarnation of an old lover who once jilted her and sent her on this lonely path of sorcery and demons. Having blamed this lover for so long has made her long for revenge, so she has summoned the reincarnated spirit of her lover (the Player Character) to her lair so she can drain him (or her) of blood and complete her Vampire Transformation spell (see Conan: Scrolls of Skelos). Her demon has acquired six magical links that she has incorporated into the fetish doll she created (giving her a total of a +8 bonus to magically attack that character).

Mkali, like most Darfari, has a taboo food. Her taboo is crocodile meat. While she would never eat her taboo food for sustenance, for a sorcerer, the taboo food becomes magically powerful. She gains 2 power points while chewing crocodile meat.

Mkali the witch also has an animal ally, a huge Stygian crocodile.

DAJAN

Huge Animal (Crocodile)

Hit Dice: 18d8+90 (171 hp)

Initiative: +18 (+3 Dex, +9 Ref, +2 Lightning Reflexes, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 25 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +12 natural); **Damage Reduction:** 9 (leathery hide)

Base Attack/Grapple: +14/+32

Attack: Bite +22 melee (2d8+17/ 19-20 x2/ AP 13) or tail slap +22 melee (1d12+17)

Full Attack: Bite +22 melee (2d8+17/ 19-20 x2/ AP 13) or tail slap +22 melee (1d12+17)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved grab, savage roll

Special Qualities: Hold breath, low-light vision, link, evasion

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +16, Will +8

Abilities: Str 33, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 4; **Skills:** Hide +6*, Listen +9, Spot +9, Swim +21

Feats: Alertness, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Hide) **Environment:** Warm marshes

THE ACOLYTES OF THE DARFARI WITCH STAAJABU

Medium Darfari Woman Scholar 8

Hit Dice: 8d6-8 (20 hit points)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 14 (+3 level, +1 Dex)

Parry Defence: 14 (+3 level, +1 Str)

BAB/Grapple: +6/+7

Attack: Club +8 melee

Full Attack: Club +8/+3 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+1/x2/AP 3

Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)

Special Attacks: Bite, +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls with any bludgeoning weapon

Special Qualities: Darfari Traits, new sorcery style x4, advanced spells x6, bonus spells x2, +2 power points, increased maximum power points (triple), acolyte background, knowledge is power, scholar, one free defensive blast (master, aid me!), iron will, darkvision 30 feet.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +10 (+8 vs. Terror)

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 16

Skills: Craft (alchemy) +13, Craft (blacksmith) +4, Craft (fetish item) +13, Craft (herbalism) +13, Heal +6, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (nature) +13, Knowledge (rumours) +13, Perform (dance) +6, Perform (drums) +12, Perform (ritual) +14, Survival +6;

Feats: Hexer, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice

Code of Honour: None

Reputation: 10 (in Darfar)

Leadership: –

Allegiances: Mkali, demon master (Neshenu Khennu)

Base Power Points: 8 (4 base, +2 Wis, +2 bonus; 24 maximum)

Magical Attack: +7/+9 (+4 level, +3 Cha/+2 bonus to Curses)

Sorcery Styles: Summoning, Nature Magic, Curses, Immortality

Spells Known: Animal ally, animal intercessor (defensive blast), children of the night, command weather, demonic pact, greater ill-fortune, greater summon beast, lesser ill-fortune, master – aid me! (defensive blast), summon beast, spirit of the land, summon demon, witch's vigour*

Corruption: 11

Insanity: None

Possessions: One silver ring, two necklaces made from plaited grasses with beads, teeth, small skulls, severed fingers and colourful beans hanging from them, club, fetish wand, goat-skin skirt.

* Spell from Conan: Scrolls of Skelos

Staajabu is Mkali's oldest acolyte. Due to cranial binding when she was an infant, her head is grotesquely heart-shaped. She shaves her head except for a long top-knot. She has a medium python as her animal ally. She sometimes wears a goat-skin skirt, but just as often just goes around nude. Her lips have three ivory rings through them. Her taboo food is female human flesh. She is apt to summon animals and/or demons to aid her when preparing for a fight.

ZUWENA

Medium Darfari Woman Scholar 6

Hit Dice: 6d6-6 (15 hit points)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Ref); Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 13 (+2 level, +1 Dex)

Parry Defence: 13 (+2 level, +1 Str)

BAB/Grapple: +4/+5

Attack: Club +6 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+1/x2/AP 3

Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)

Special Attacks: Bite, +1 racial bonus to all attack rolls with any bludgeoning weapon

Special Qualities: Darfari Traits, new sorcery style x3, advanced spells x4, bonus spells x1 +2 power points, increased maximum power points (triple), acolyte background, knowledge is power, scholar, one free defensive blast (master, aid me!), iron will, darkvision 30 feet.

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +9 (+7 vs. Terror)

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15

Skills: Craft (alchemy) +11, Craft (blacksmith) +3, Craft (fetish item) +11, Craft (herbalism) +11, Heal +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +11, Knowledge (rumours) +11, Perform (dance) +4, Perform (drums) +11, Perform (ritual) +11, Survival +4

Feats: Hexer, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice; Code of Honour: None; Reputation: 8 (in Darfar)

Leadership: –

Allegiances: Mkali, demon master (Neshenu Khennu)

Base Power Points: 8 (4 base, +2 Wis, +2 bonus); 24 maximum)

Magical Attack: +5/+7 (+3 level, +2 Cha/+2 bonus to Curses)

Sorcery Styles: Summoning, Divination, Curses

Spells Known: Astrological prediction, channel demon, demonic pact, doom, greater ill-fortune, lesser ill-fortune, master – aid me! (defensive blast), mind-reading, visions

Corruption: 10

Insanity: None

Possessions: Two golden rings, one ivory ring, four necklaces made from plaited grasses with beads, small animal hoofs, teeth, elephant tail bristles and colourful beans hanging from them, club, fetish wand.

Zuwena has been an acolyte for several years, but not as long as Staajabu. She is apt to channel a demon when preparing for a fight. Her taboo food is cheese made from goat's milk.

LALAMIKA

Medium Darfari Barbarian 1 / Scholar 2

Hit Dice: 1d10+2d6+3 (15 hit points)

Initiative: +4 (+2 Dex, +2 Ref)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 13 (+0 level, +2 Dex, +1 racial dodge)

Parry Defence: 13 (+0 level, +3 Str)

BAB/Grapple: +2/+5

Attack: Club +6 melee

Full Attack: Club +6 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+3/x2, AP 4

Space/Reach: 5 ft (1)/5 ft (1)

Special Attacks: Bite attack, Sorcery styles

Special Qualities: Darfari Traits, Fearless, Versatility (-2 penalty), Scholar, Lay priest Background, Base Power Points, Knowledge is Power, +1 Power Point

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Bluff +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Knowledge (nature) +1, Knowledge (religion) +1, Perform (dance) +4, Perform (drums) +10, Perform (ritual) +2, Survival +2

Feats: Persuasive, Ritual Sacrifice, Skill Focus (perform (drums)), Track ^{bonus}

Code of Honour: None

Reputation: 4

Leadership: –

Allegiances: Mkali

Base Power Points: 5 (4 base, +1 bonus, 10 maximum)

Magical Attack: +1 (+1 level, +0 Cha); Sorcery Styles: Curses, Nature Magic; Spells Known: Lesser Ill-Fortune, Summon Beast; Corruption: 6

Insanity: None

Possessions: Rings of ivory in nose, club

Lalamika is heavily tattooed with a mixture of ashes and blue ink from mushrooms; the tattoos are in a repeating arrow-head pattern over her nude body. Lalamika is Mkali's most violent acolyte, and also her newest.

NESHENU KHENNU OVERTHROWER OF OTHRA

Medium Outsider (demon)

Hit Dice: 20d8+20 (110 hp)

Initiative: +15 (+3 Dex, +12 Reflex)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 28 (+3 Dex, +15 natural)

Damage Reduction: 20 (partial reality)

Base Attack/Grapple: +20/+30

Attack: Slam +31 (1d6+10/ 19-20 x2/ AP 15)

Full Attack: 2 slams +31 (1d6+10/ 19-20 x2/ AP 15)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, spells, bring into nightmare, possession

Special Qualities: Invisible, fuelled by fear, weakness, manifest

Power Points: 57 (base 50, +7 Wis)

Magic Attack Bonus: +20 (+10 natural, +10 Charisma)

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +15, Will +21

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 24, Wis 25, Cha 30

Skills: Balance +26, Bluff +30, Climb +13, Craft (alchemy) +30, Craft (blacksmithing) +30, Craft (herbalism) +30, Decipher Script +30, Intimidate +33, Jump +33, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (history) +30, Knowledge (religion) +30, Listen +30, Perform (ritual) +33, Sleight-of-Hand +26, Spot +30

Feats: Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Critical (slam), Weapon Focus (slam), Iron Will

Neshenu Khennu is a destructive bull spirit, a storm-demon of old, known as a protector of temples but also as a destroyer of man and bringer of nightmares. He enjoys convincing people to rebel against those they love. He usually takes the form of a winged bull with a bearded human head. He nearly always wears a conical crown. In ancient times people sacrificed their daughters to him, but the texts are unclear whether these were blood sacrifices or for his sexual use. He often claims to have children still in the world.

Bring Into Nightmare (Sp): With a successful grapple, Neshenu Khennu drags a person's mind into the dream realms. This has the same effect as a visions of torment and enlightenment spell (see Conan the Roleplaying Game), except the damage (or possible enhancement bonus) is doubled. The character will return from Neshenu's nightmare realm in Tothra in 20 minutes (unless possessed), although warding and other methods may awaken the character earlier.

Fuelled by Fear (Su): If anyone fails a Terror of the Unknown check against Neshenu Khennu, he gains 20 hit points immediately (up to a maximum of 180 hit points).

Invisible (Su): Neshenu Khennu is normally invisible, but he does leave tracks in his wake if there is anything to leave tracks in. When angered (or in other states of high emotion), his outline can be seen in various shades of red.

Possession (Su): Any character subject to Neshenu Khennu's bring into nightmare power may be possessed by the demon. The character makes a Will save (DC set by Neshenu's magical attack roll). If the save fails, Neshenu passes into the character and takes control of his body, suppressing the nightmare-shrouded mind of the victim, ejecting its spirit into the dream-realms. Those possessed by Neshenu Khennu take on a corpse-like pallor and their eyes turn completely milky-white. The possession can be ended at will by Neshenu, or he can be forced out with various counterspells. For every day the demon remains in possession of the body, the spirit of the victim wandering in the dream-realms may become lost. If Neshenu Khennu retains control of the body for 1 day for every two points of Wisdom possessed by the victim, then the spirit of the victim is forever lost. When Neshenu leaves the body after that point, the victim's body is effectively in a coma.

Spells: Although Neshenu Khennu, as a demon lord, can teach any sorcery style, he can only cast spells from Divinations, Necromancy, Prestidigitation and Weather Witching (from Conan: Pirate Isles) styles. He knows all the spells from those styles for which he meets the prerequisites (he is considered a 20th level scholar in regards to prerequisites).

Weakness: Neshenu Khennu is compelled to follow the dead. If he sees a corpse move (whether it is dragged or animated), he must follow it until it stops moving. Madam Amica knows this weakness.

Ruined Governmental Offices: This is the site of a village of corrupt Darfari who have devoted themselves to demon-worship. Walking through a Darfari village can be a disconcerting experience for an outsider. Quantities of human and animal intestines can usually be found strung

out to dry on sticks throughout the town, human bones can be found in fire pits and decapitated heads and skulls hang above all the doors. All the Darfari in this village have a Corruption score of 1d12. Their skin takes on crocodilian aspects over time. For those with Corruption over 10, their flesh-coloured crocodile scales give them a +1 bonus to natural DR.

INTO THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Darfari warriors chase the characters into a swamp – pushing them toward quicksand. The Darfari know where the quicksand is and stop around its outskirts and shoot at the characters trapped within with their bows and arrows.

Quicksand: Patches of quicksand present a deceptively solid appearance (appearing as undergrowth or open land) that may trap careless characters. A character approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace is entitled to a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in, but charging or running characters do not have a chance to detect a hidden bog before blundering in. This patch of quicksand is 30 feet in diameter; the momentum of a charging or running character carries him or her 1d2×5 feet into the quicksand.

Effects of Quicksand: Characters in quicksand must make a DC 10 Swim check every round to simply tread water in place, or a DC 15 Swim check to move 5 feet in whatever direction is desired. If a trapped character fails this check by 5 or more, he sinks below the surface and begins to drown whenever he can no longer hold his breath (see the Swim skill description in Conan the Roleplaying Game). Characters below the surface of a bog may swim back to the surface with a successful Swim check (DC 15, +1 per consecutive round of being under the surface).

Rescue: Pulling out a character trapped in quicksand can be difficult. A rescuer needs a branch, spear haft, rope, or similar tool that enables him to reach the victim with one end of it. Then he must make a Strength check (DC 15) to successfully pull the victim, and the victim must make a Strength check (DC

15) to hold onto the branch, pole, or rope. If the victim fails to hold on, he must make a Swim check (DC 15) immediately to stay above the surface. If both checks succeed, the victim is pulled 5 feet closer to safety.



DARFARI WARRIORS

Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 1)

Hit Dice: 1d10+2 (7 hp)

Initiative: +3 (+1 Dex, +2 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 12 (+0 level, +1 Dex, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 13 (+0 level, +3 Str)

DR: –

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +1/+4

Attack: Club +5 melee

Full Attack: Club +5 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+3

Special Attacks: Bite attack

Special Qualities: Darfari traits, illiterate, track, fearless, versatility (-2 penalty)

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0 (-2 vs. Terror)

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 6

Skills: Bluff +2, Hide +5, Intimidate +2, Move Silently +5, Perform (drums) +1, Perform (ritual) +2, Survival +4

Feats: Fighting Madness, Improved Unarmed Strike

Reputation: 1 (Cruel)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: None; Allegiances: Games Master's

Discretion: Possessions: Loin-cloth, sandals, cudgel

Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 3)

Hit Dice: 3d10+6 (23 hp)

Initiative: +4 (+1 Dex, +3 Reflex save)

Speed: 40 ft.

Dodge Defence: 14 (+2 level, +1 Dex, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 14 (+1 level, +3 Str)

DR: –

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +3/+6

Attack: Club +7 melee

Full Attack: Club +7 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+3

Special Attacks: Bite attack

Special Qualities: Darfari traits, illiterate, fearless, versatility (-2 penalty), bite sword, crimson mist, trap sense +1

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1 (-1 vs. Terror)

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 6;

Skills: Bluff +2, Hide +7, Intimidate +4, Listen +1, Move Silently +7, Perform (drums) +1, Perform (ritual) +2, Spot +1, Survival +6

Feats: Endurance, Fighting Madness, Fleet-footed, Improved Unarmed Strike, Track

Reputation: 3 (Cruel)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: None

Allegiances: Games Master's Discretion;

Possessions: Loin-cloth, sandals, cudgel

Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 1/Thief 3)

Hit Dice: 1d10+3d8+8 (27 hp)

Initiative: +6 (+1 Dex, +5 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 13 (+1 level, +1 Dex, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 15 (+1 level, +4 Str)

DR: –

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +3/+7

Attack: Club +8 melee

Full Attack: Club +8 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+4

Special Attacks: Bite attack, sneak attack +2d6/+2d8, sneak attack style (club)

Special Qualities: Darfari traits, illiterate, track, fearless, versatility (-2 penalty), trap disarming, trap sense +1

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1 (-1 vs. Terror)

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 6

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +5, Hide +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Knowledge (local) +4, Move Silently +8, Perform (drums) +4, Perform (ritual) +2, Survival +4, Tumble +4

Feats: Eyes of the Cat ^b, Fighting Madness, Improved Unarmed Strike, Sneak Subdual

Reputation: 2 (Cruel)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: None

Allegiances: Games Master's Discretion; Possessions: Loin-cloth, sandals, club



Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 5)**Hit Dice:** 5d10+10 (38 hp)**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Reflex save)**Speed:** 40 ft.**Dodge Defence:** 15 (+3 level, +1 Dex, +1 Dodge)**Parry Defence:** 15 (+1 level, +4 Str)**DR:** –**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +5/+9**Attack:** Club +10 melee**Full Attack:** Club +10 melee**Damage:** Club 1d8+4**Special Attacks:** Bite attack**Special Qualities:** Darfari traits, illiterate, fearless, versatility (-2 penalty), bite sword, crimson mist, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, mobility**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1 (-1 vs. Terror)**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 6;**Skills:** Bluff +2, Hide +8, Intimidate +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Perform (chant) +1, Perform (drums) +1, Perform (ritual) +2, Spot +3, Survival +7**Feats:** Endurance, Fighting Madness, Fleet-footed, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Track**Reputation:** 5 (Cruel)**Leadership:** –**Code of Honour:** None**Allegiances:** Games Master's Discretion; Possessions: Loin-cloth, sandals, cudgel**Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 3/Borderer 3)****Hit Dice:** 6d10+12 (45 hp)**Initiative:** +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex save)**Speed:** 40 ft.**Dodge Defence:** 16 (+3 level, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge)**Parry Defence:** 16 (+2 level, +4 Str)**DR:** –**Base Attack Bonus/Grapple:** +6/+10**Attack:** Club +11 melee**Full Attack:** Club +11/+6 melee**Damage:** Club 1d8+4**Special Attacks:** Bite attack, Darfari subdual combat style (no attack penalty for non-lethal attacks)**Special Qualities:** Darfari traits, illiterate, fearless, versatility (-2 penalty), bite sword, crimson mist, trap sense +1, favoured terrain +1 (swamp or forest)**Space/Reach:** 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)**Saves:** Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +2 (+0 vs. Terror)**Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 7;**Skills:** Bluff +2, Hide +13*, Intimidate +4, Listen +4*, Move Silently +13, Perform (chant) +1, Perform (drums) +1, Perform (ritual) +2, Spot +4*, Survival +9* (* character gains +1 bonus to these skills when in his favoured terrain)**Feats:** Diehard, Endurance, Fighting Madness, Fleet-footed, Power Attack, Skill Focus (survival), Stealthy, Track**Reputation:** 6 (Cruel)**Leadership:** –**Code of Honour:** None; Allegiances: Games Master's Discretion; Possessions: Loin-cloth, sandals, cudgel



Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 3/Thief 3)

Hit Dice: 3d10+3d8+12 (42 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+2 Dex, +6 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 15 (+3 level, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 16 (+2 level, +4 Str)

DR: –

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +5/+9

Attack: Club +10 melee

Full Attack: Club +10 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+4

Special Attacks: Bite attack, sneak attack +2d6/+2d8, sneak attack style (club), crimson mist

Special Qualities: Darfari traits, illiterate, track, fearless, versatility (-2 penalty), trap disarming, trap sense +2, bite sword

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +2 (+0 vs. Terror)

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 7

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +5, Hide +10, Intimidate +6, Jump +7, Knowledge (local) +4, Listen +1, Move Silently +10, Perform (drums) +4, Perform (ritual) +2, Spot +1, Survival +4, Tumble +5

Feats: Endurance ^b, Eyes of the Cat ^b, Fighting Madness, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Sneak Subdual

Reputation: 4 (Cruel)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: None

Allegiances: Games Master's Discretion

Possessions: Loin-cloth, sandals, club

WITCH DOCTOR

Medium Humanoid (Darfari Barbarian 5/Scholar 5)

Hit Dice: 5d10+5d6 (45 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+2 Dex, +5 Reflex save)

Speed: 30 ft.

Dodge Defence: 17 (+4 level, +2 Dex, +1 Dodge)

Parry Defence: 14 (+2 level, +2 Str)

DR: –

Base Attack Bonus/Grapple: +8/+10

Attack: Club +11 melee

Full Attack: Club +11/+6 melee

Damage: Club 1d8+2

Special Attacks: Bite attack

Special Qualities: Darfari traits, illiterate, fearless, versatility (-2 penalty), bite sword, crimson mist, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, mobility, sorcery style x3, scholar, background (acolyte), base power points, knowledge is power, +1 power points, advanced spell x3, bonus spell

Space/Reach: 5 ft. (1)/5 ft. (1)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +10 (+8 vs. Terror)

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 17

Skills: Bluff +7, Concentration +5, Craft (herbalism) +7, Craft (fetish) +5, Hide +9, Heal +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (any) +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Perform (chant) +8, Perform (drums) +8, Perform (ritual) +14, Sense Motive +8, Spot +6, Survival +10

Feats: Endurance, Fighting Madness, Focused Magical Link, Hexer, Iron Will, Performer, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, Track

Reputation: 13 (Cruel)

Leadership: –

Code of Honour: None

Allegiances: Games Master's Discretion

Magic Attack: +6 (+3 level, +3 Cha); +8 when casting curses (+2 Hexer)

Power Points: 8 (4 base, +3 Wis, +1 bonus; 16 maximum)

Sorcery Styles Known: Curses, Divination, Hypnotism; Spells Known: Entrance, greater ill-fortune, hypnotic suggestion, lesser ill-fortune, psychometry, savage beast, shamanic ecstasy

Corruption: Up to the Games Master

Obsession: Up to the Games Master

Possessions: Loin-cloth, sandals, cudgel, body paint, fetishes, fetish-stick



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Space Vixens From Mars

Episode 25E 'Divine Wind: Horswell Common'

by Gary Mitchell

The story so far... It is 2537, a dark time for the Galactic Coalition. Having helped recover the stolen soccer World Cup in 1966, the Space Vixens are attempting to return to their own place and time when...



"Oh no – not again!" Sita Desai moaned as all seven Vixens fell two feet from nowhere onto a patch of rough heathland, a copse of trees in the near distance the only foreseeable cover.

"Where we are this time?" collecting herself Shona M'Benga wondered.

"Smells and feels like Earth" Marie-Clare Lacroix exclaimed in surprise as they all scrambled to their feet.

"Looks deserted," leader Melody Jackson noted the sound of light artillery on the horizon. "But someone's around – and sounds like combat."

"The question is, 'when' and 'where'?" Hannah Windsor adjusted her straw hat.

"Judging by these dresses and – ouch! – corsets", observed Yoko Kurosawa, "sometime in the 1800's!"

"Maybe the same universe as when we were on Victorian Mars? We need to find out where and when – and quickly!" Helga Von Schliecher was concerned as, from behind some trees, a walking tripod ambled past, its heat-ray spewing plasma in the general direction of Woking.

"Get down!" Melody shouted, louder than an East European in a Seventies disco. Just in time too! With a whine of Doppler-shift a 'whizzbang' – an explosive shell – came hurtling in to strike the unearthly machine a death-blow, causing the three-legged device to topple and crash like a pole-axed android.

"Sacre bleu!" Marie exclaimed as the Vixens brushed dust from themselves.

"I've got a bad feeling about this," Shona said, searching her dress for a weapon.

"Oh dear!" Hannah felt her knees go weak as she fell to the ground. "I think I'm having another one of my visions..."

Indeed she was! As her friends faded from view her patron saint – St Kylie of Mars – appeared before her.

"Hail Hannah, mother of Arthur, once and future King of Earth!" the haka greeted. "Blessed are you amongst women! This time you and your friends must ensure the Martian assault is checked at Manor Farm, so that all you have achieved in this timeline's future may rightfully unfold."

"Isn't that an illogical order?" Hannah questioned.

"The Supreme Being moves in mysterious ways," the saint cryptically responded. "There will be an answer, let it be – for all things must pass if we are to give peace a chance! Once again you must fix a hole where the rain gets in..."

Background

By now you've all guessed this is Wells' 'War of the Worlds'. Well, it is Jim, but not as we know it. Wells' original novel is still in print, but amazingly has been made into an authentic 'Victorian' movie just once, in 2005 by 'Pendragon Pictures'. And who can't fail to remember Jeff Wayne's iconic LP from 1979? The classic story – poison gas, aerial bombardment, marauding vehicles and civilian mass panic – presaged the horrific real wars of the twentieth century. As an historian I often wonder if the unknown German officer who in 1915 decided to use poison gas for the first time got the idea from Wellsian sci-fi...

But I digress. This is an alternate, alternate 1880, and

the Martian invasion is not all-powerful; it is the last throw of the dice by a dying race of cephalods, the once dominant species on the Red Planet who can no longer maintain their tech. It sets in train a

sequence of events that will lead – within nine years – to a vast acquisition of high-technology by humans; to a reverse colonisation of Mars by Earth's great powers; to an unholy alliance between the cephalods and the dastardly French.

Would you like to know more? – there's a Vixens RPG campaign called 'Mars Alternum' in my PDF 'Space Vixens From Mars – Book 7'. 'Space 1889' is another popular VSF gaming system, and there's a whole range of miniatures and rules out there for fielding steam tanks, Earthers, aliens and whatever. For larger scale gamers (as in 'more miniatures on the table') I heartily recommend the excellent 'Martian Empires' by Mike Lewis, a system that enables the Martian incursion and Earth's counter-invasion to be gamed. Yes, it's all out there for the Victorian science fiction (VSF) cum 'Steampunk' adventure-world fan! So ride the aether to Mars not as it is – a cold barren world – but as we'd like it to have been!

The Rules

'Space Vixens From Mars – The Adventure Game' is designed to be simple and fast to play, ideally suited (we think) for 'adventure' skirmishes in that 'grey area' where wargame and RPG overlap. The main points and stats for play fit onto a double-sided A4 photocopy, with character details provided on a separate sheet.

Basically, each character has a certain number of Strength Points that are reduced by combat and at zero they are incapacitated or killed. In the case of Heroes and Main Characters this means they return next episode (possibly played by a different actress who asked for less money), while in the case of grunts they are simply eliminated. Deader than Debbie Gibson's career.

We also give each character a set number of Actions, the number of things



a character may do each turn. Heroes get 3, all others 2 because – as in all good adventures – Heroes are better, aren't they? Some characters also have Special Skills which enable them to modify their die score and function as if a Hero at that particular task. For example, an ordinary grunt could be a Marksman so should shoot more accurately than a fellow Tommie. Likewise Heroes can also have special skills to give a cumulative score. How many times did Captain Kirk ever miss?

As with many games dice rolls can made against skills and abilities. We also favour and use an Enable Test system whereby characters make a simple, weighted dice roll to achieve an unusual action; Heroes and those with Special Skills at that particular task adding one to their score (it saves pages of rules and hours of argument). Main Characters differ from 'ordinary' ones in that – like Heroes – they always re-appear next episode, which is why I've said 'incapacitated' rather than 'dead'. One thing we prize is lack of complication and arguing. 'Space Vixens' is first and foremost a fun game – not a maths test or an exercise in judicial procedure!

As suggested above, the rules utilise an Initiative Point system (IP's) to control various phases of each game turn. Each side receives one IP per Hero, plus five if you have at least five characters of any type in play, four IP's if four characters, etc. IP's are then allocated by players to phases of a turn (Movement, Firing, Hand-To-Hand and Any Other Business). Whoever wins the allocation by bidding the most points chooses who takes their phase first. Put simply, if you win you usually get your opponent to move first so you can see what they do, then you move; by winning Firing you shoot first to eliminate them before they can shoot you. It's a game of bluff and guile, rather than pure numbers. Lose a Hero – lose an IP. Fall below five characters on the table and you lose an IP. It works well. A few Heroes can leave loads of grunts flat-footed, just like the movies – but superior firepower will out if you're not

sneaky and able to think ahead. If there is a tie of IP's simply make a straight die roll for holding initiative.

The Scenario and Special Rules

To become a playable conflict the Earth forces have to be able to fight back against the heat-rays and black smoke of the Martians. Thus their rifles should have a range of 12", compared with the Martians' hand heat-rays which have only 8", and pistols 6" (these are effective ranges – see below). All heavy weapons (e.g. cannon and heavy heat-rays) should have a standard range of 24". Also, the Martians will be suffering from the adverse effect of terrestrial gravity so will suffer an additional 5 IP's deduction each turn.

We allow weapons to fire at ranges of up to 50% more than their maximum, but deduct 3 from any accuracy dice score as well as the usual modifications (a 4 or above on a D6 hits). A rifle or revolver will cause a base 2 damage points, a hand-held heat-ray 3 damage points, a heavy heat-ray or artillery piece 8 damage points and affect all heavy weapons within a 2" burst area of impact. To dice for effect add 1D5 score and deduct 1D5 score from the base damage points.

So, give the players the above briefing before showing them the terrain. Set up a large area of Horswell Common, with the odd isolated tree and scrub, and with Manor Farm at one end for the incognito Space Vixens and brave Tommies to defend.



As this is set in 1880 British troops could be in their historic red or be in khaki – it all depends on what figures you have. That's the nice thing about VSF – you can easily crossover to (and from) traditional colonial warfare using the same miniatures.

Victory Conditions

Quite simply the Brits must beat off the Martian assault, while the Martians need to capture Manor Farm in order to prove to these puny Earthlings that all resistance is futile.

Forces

BRITISH

Posing as a group of adventurous gentlewomen – graduates of the prestigious St. Glenmoor's Finishing School, the armed and incognito Space Vixens have offered their assistance to the beleaguered garrison.

Their VSF cover identities are:

LADY HANNAH SMITH

STRENGTH: 2.

INTELLIGENCE: 2.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS:
Revolver. DIPLOMACY, ETTIQUETTE.
7 pts. MAIN CHARACTER.

Hannah will play herself – the Victorian-moralled English gentlewoman!

COUNTESS HELGA VON
SCHLIECHER,

COUSIN TO H.I.M. THE GERMAN
KAISER

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS:
Revolver. TECHNOLOGY. 10 pts.
HERO.

Helga will play the tough Teutonic Valkyrie.

MISS MELODY JACKSON,
AMERICAN STEEL HEIRESS

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS:
Revolver. SCIENCE. 10 pts. HERO.

Melody will play the 'bluff frontierswoman' for all its worth.

H.E. SITA, THE RANI OF DESAI

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS:
Shotgun. COMBAT. 10 pts. HERO.

Sita will play the assertively superior Brahmin princess in this Bollywood epic.

MADemoiselle MARIE-CLARE,
COMTESSE DE LACROIX, SISTER
OF THE LATE PRINCE IMPERIAL

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS:
Revolver. PILOTING AND DRIVING,
HEALER. 10 pts. HERO.

With the Bonapartes in exile from
the French Republic – and with the
Prince Imperial dying in 1879 in
British service in Zululand – Marie-
Clare's guise will elicit sympathy,
rather than suspicion, from the
British.

PRINCESS SHONA M'BENGA,
NIECE OF KING CETSHWAYO

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium. EQUIPMENT/
SPECIAL SKILLS: Shotgun.
COMBAT. 10 pts. HERO.

Shona will play the non-nonsense
Zulu warrior maiden.

MARQUISE YOKO KUROSAWA,
NIECE OF H.I.M. THE MIKADO OF
JAPAN

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium. EQUIPMENT/
SPECIAL SKILLS: Revolver. HAND-
TO-HAND COMBAT. 10 pts. HERO.

Yoko will play the inscrutable oriental
lady.

The soldiers of the Queen garrisoning
Manor Farm:

CAPTAIN RUPERT BLAIR, 24TH FOOT

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 2.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS:
Revolver, binoculars, sword. 10 pts.
HERO.

Having participated in seeing off
the Zulus at Rorke's Drift you have a
decided sense of déjà vu defending
Manor Farm against the Martians. This
group of adventurous gentlewomen
are clearly not the damsels in distress
they would first appear – yet your
honour as a British officer and
gentleman demands you protect them
from defilement by alien creatures.
You yourself attended their brother
academy, St. Winton's, so feel a
personal obligation...

SGT. BLUNKETT,
24TH FOOT

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Bolt
action rifle, bayonet. 9 pts. HERO.

'Martians Sir, to the south-east. Tens of
'em!'

5 x TROOPERS 17TH LANCERS

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 2.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Bolt
action rifle, lance. 8 pts.

5 x GUNNERS ROYAL ARTILLERY

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 2.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Bolt action rifle, bayonet. 4 pts.

'You got the instruction manual for this new gun, then?'

5 x BLUEJACKETS, ROYAL NAVY

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 2.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Bolt action rifle, bayonet. 4 pts.

'Don't worry you Pongos – the Navy's here!' A landing party from HMS Thunderchild.

10 x PRIVATES, 24th FOOT

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 2.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Bolt action rifle, bayonet. 4 pts.

'Strewth Chalky. This is a tough one and no mistake'.

HORSE #1

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 1.

ACTIONS: 1.

MOVE: Fast.

EQUIPMENT/SPECIAL SKILLS: N/A. Carries 1 rider. 2 pts.

They don't like it up 'em, them Martians.

4 x GUNNERS ROYAL NAVY

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: 2.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Bolt action rifle, bayonet. 4 pts.

'We got one tripod – let's get another!'

1 x RIFLEBORE BREECHLOADING GUN, ROYAL NAVY

STRENGTH: 10.

INTELLIGENCE: N/A.

ACTIONS: N/A.

MOVE: N/A.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: 90mm. 15 pts. Positioned in sandbags, can't be moved, 3 x Crew to fire.

Heavy gun. Goes bang and lobs big shells.

1 x RIFLEBORE BREECHLOADING GUN, ROYAL ARTILLERY

STRENGTH: 8.

INTELLIGENCE: N/A.

ACTIONS: N/A.

MOVE: N/A.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: 75mm. 10 pts. Needs 4 x crew to port, 2 x Crew to fire.

Rushed into service – the new experimental Duckworth-Lewis quick-fire recoil gun.

5 x CEPHOLODS 'ELDERS'

STRENGTH: 2.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 3.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Heat-Ray gun (counts as blaster carbine). 9 pts. HERO

The 'big ones'. The ones in charge of the attack that will shatter the Earthlings with 'shock and awe'.

1 x BLACK SMOKE GENERATOR

STRENGTH: 3.

INTELLIGENCE: N/A.

ACTIONS: N/A.

MOVE: Fast.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: 1 x Black Smoke Generator (range 16" – counts as standard chemical weapon burst range 2" – all within burst must roll a '6' to survive). 30 pts.

1 x TRIPOD WALKER

STRENGTH: 15.

INTELLIGENCE: N/A.

ACTIONS: N/A.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: 1 x Heat-Ray Cannon (counts as blaster cannon). 50 pts.

1 x BLACK SMOKE GENERATOR CREW

STRENGTH: 2.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: None. 3 pts.

1 x TRIPOD WALKER CREW

STRENGTH: 2.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: None. 3 pts.

1 x MOBILE HEAT-RAY

STRENGTH: 2.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Fast.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: 1 x Heavy Heat-Ray (counts as heavy blaster). 10 pts.

1 x MOBILE HEAT-RAY CREW

STRENGTH: 2.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: None. 3 pts.

10 x CEPHOLODS 'TROOPERS'

STRENGTH: 2.

INTELLIGENCE: 3.

ACTIONS: 2.

MOVE: Medium.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Heat-Ray gun (counts as blaster carbine). 9 pts. HERO

The 'small ones'. The grunts doing the fighting.

5 x OCTASAURS

STRENGTH: 2.

INTELLIGENCE: 1.

ACTIONS: 1.

MOVE: Fast.

EQUIPMENT/ SPECIAL SKILLS: Can carry 1 x rider. 2 pts.

Martian 'horse' – allocate as required.

are from Wargames Foundry, Black Hat Miniatures, my own SVFM range and from other manufacturers I've acquired from who knows where. Oh and the tripod I scratchbuilt for sixpence (don't say you didn't notice!)

I'm told by Kenny Space Vixens is like Marmite – you either love it or hate it! Well, if you love it have a look at <http://homepages.tesco.net/mitchellsmith/gazsv.html> to find out more. If you hate it, well, I guess you looked at the heading of this article and turned over to the other channel.



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BY JEZ FAIRCLOUGH

Beyond miniatures, scenery or terrain (call it what you wish) is another area that keeps many a people busy. It's all well and good having some nicely painted miniatures but if the table you play on is just some books and a can of pop it takes away some of the fun of it all. A lot of us will always have a go at scratch building what we can, but at times it never takes the place of something done professionally, although these days some of it can come very close.

One of the most popular mediums for scenery is resin, not least because it's relatively cheap over all and can be reproduced very quickly.

Quantum Gothic's (<http://www.quantumgothic.co.uk/>) range of scenery is something I've seen more than once on Tabletop Gaming News (<http://www.tabletopgamingnews.com/>) which is one of my frequent online haunts, as regular readers will by now know. It picked up an Editors' Choice Award in 2009 as well, which shows it's not just me!

Taking the opportunity to meet Roberto Cirillo, the man behind Quantum Gothic, I asked him a little bit about the company to get an understanding of how they work.

So, how many people make up Quantum Gothic?

Contrarily to the impressions we have been giving to the tabletop gaming community (thanks to our very high standards in dealing with customers and care towards our products) we are actually a fairly small company. You'll find primarily me, head of Creative Design,(3D) Sculpting and Mastering plus a handful of people who greatly help (some part-time) on those and several other more practical tasks like production, manufacturing, packing...etc.

Where do the ideas come from?

All around us! We do tend to follow an established path/schedule and direction in developing our ideas, however when a cool idea jumps on the table it gets our absolute attention and priority. I usually generate a series of written ideas, roughs and illustrative sketches from which a few are selected for the next stage: study and mastering (how to make the real thing). Once all is planned out we get to the next stage: 3d prototyping.

How big are you hoping the range will get?

The Quantum Gothic range started with a well determined and defined idea which was and is to deliver high quality scenery kits to truly enrich sci-fi battlefields in a modular and intelligent way. While we have literally hundreds of ideas, roughs and sketches on modular scenery constructs awaiting to be developed we are also opening new doors to new construct categories: weapons, vehicles and other similar categories intended for the hardcore tabletop gamer. So, in short, the range will get very big and very exciting, and all very soon too.

Quantum Gothic were very kind enough to send us along a couple of pieces to look at and review, we got a Communication Dish (COM2QG), Generator Kit (PWG8QG) and Missile Launcher (AMLC1QG). Looking at these one of my first comments has to be that the resin was finished to a really good standard. In the pieces they sent us I didn't have a single bubble at all. I have to say that's great as I've had to send pieces back before to companies that have been doing this on a bigger scale and for a lot longer.

Let's look at each piece in turn.

Communication Dish



(COM2QG)

The Communication Dish, like most of the Quantum Gothic kits, is multipart, made up of nine pieces. It's a very solid piece and the instructions supplied are more than enough to help you put it together, though without them you shouldn't have too many issues either. The whole thing looks very nice and it's well detailed and gives that very gothic feel that just makes me enjoy the pieces. I know it's designed for a static piece but you could really use this on the right vehicle to give it some real wow factor. If you don't glue the main dish to the support system you can also keep it rotating for extra show.

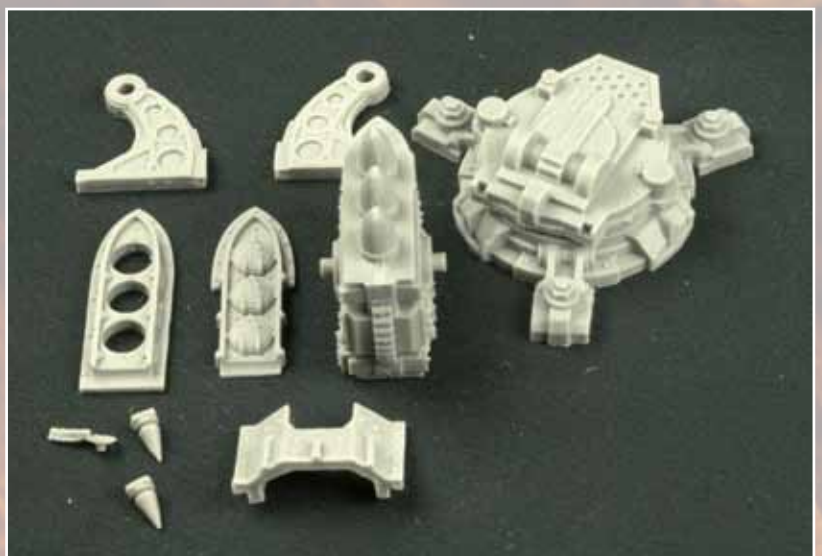
Generator Kit (PWG8QG)

The Generator Kit is a relatively simple construct, only having seven pieces,



four of which are rivets. As with other elements in the range it fits in with so many different Sci-Fi genres and shouldn't just be pigeon-holed as being for a certain game (I'd say the game but we'd lose pages to disclaimer text). It goes together very easily and looks like it will be easy to paint. This could easily be used as an objective piece, though it also just fits in as something on the battlefield.

Missile Launcher (AMLC1QG)



The Catalyst Missile Launcher is one of the first pieces I remember seeing from Quantum Gothic. It's a very rugged piece chocked full of character, from the exhaust vents on the main body to the spikes and such that you can add. This is the model that won them the TTGN 2009 Editor's Choice Award for Best Terrain or Accessory and it's easy to see why. Like the Dish I'd love to see this mounted as a pair on the back of something. It would look just amazing.

The whole style of the miniatures fit well together and the theme keeps on going even up to the newer stuff like the Quantum Cannon and Sentry guns. The prices are in line with pretty much everything else resin-wise on the market today but they are a lot cheaper than a certain resin company I could mention (sorry, there's that disclaimer thing again!). Highly recommended.

Infinity Miniatures Review

by
Jez
Fairclough

New releases



Moblots (Rifle, Panzerfaust)

Moblots (Rifle, Panzerfaust). The fast and versatile Merovingian Heavy Infantry is back! Now in a female version armed with the powerful Panzerfaust to provide heavy support to Ariadnan forces. This figure is the perfect match for those players who want to create a Moblots Infinity Fireteam. The Moblot girl is a sure choice for any Ariadnan player!



Sin-Eater Observants (Sniper)

Sin-Eater Observants (Sniper) New release! The military tasks of the male counterparts of the Reverend Moiras are to cover the advance of Observance troops by providing support fire and to protect Nomad settlements. The Sin-Eaters will stand out during your enemy's active turn, when you can take advantage of their Neurocinetics Special Skill, allowing them to shoot the complete Burst of their weapons. A single Sin-Eater Observant can become the key element of any Nomad defensive tactics!



Armboats: Peacemaker and Auxbot

Peacemaker Armboats. (PanOceania) New release! The PanOceania assault Remotes have been created to engage an enemy swiftly, damaging it in the first stage of the battle. Thanks to their advanced deployment capability, the Peacemaker Armboats are the most suitable choice to do so. These assault Remotes will coordinate attacks with their Auxboats, laying down an unceasing barrage to totally obliterate any hostile force.

Garuda Tactbots (HMG)

Garudas. (HMG) (ALEPH) (Blister containing 1 figure). Death from above! The Garudas are the airborne troops of the Special Situations Sections. There is no more fearsome enemy than this combat robot which can land behind your lines armed with its rapid-fire heavy machine gun. Raining death from the clouds means ALEPH has come to the battlefield!



Djanbazan (Rifle+Light Shotgun)

Djanbazans. (Rifle+Light Shotgun). Taken from the old Haqqislam Starter Pack, now discontinued, the basic Djanbazan is released separately for all those new Haqqislamite players, and also any veterans who want to build up a Djanbazan Infinity Fireteam, taking advantage of the Link Troops rule. The Djanbazans are a special operations unit, experts in Search and Destroy actions, using their Multispectral Visors to find hidden enemies.

Kill 5 Minutes Online...

...and Learn Something New

By Jez Fairclough

So, another issue of The Ancible and more ways for people to waste time online. Not that most of us need new sites as I'm sure we all have our favourites and if you do please let me know. You can spam my email address jez@the-ancible.com and I look forward to the ideas.

Okay, the first out of the bag is more a general website that's good for rules. A lot of companies now have decided that they will give the rules for their games away for free – you can normally buy the book as well but it does mean you can have a read first. Or, if you have a decent printer you can just print them off and save the money for more miniatures. Free Wargames Rules (<http://www.freewargamesrules.co.uk/>) as a site has been around for a long time. The look and feel of the site has changed over time but its content has just expanded. Here you'll find all sorts of genres catered for from those budding people looking to have a go at creating their own game system.



The next place is a nice Blogspot area, Shotgun and Grapple (<http://shotgunorgapple.com/>). It has a lot of information on it and links to a lot from other sites as well. It's run by a keen and dedicated bunch of gamers who some of the team met up with at Games Expo recently, and their manic brand of fun comes highly recommended! The only little thing I'd say is that the look of the site is great, very crisp and such, but hey, let's have it a bit more wargame-looking. I like the

blatant thing slapping me in the face. But that is just me so feel free to ignore me – Uncle Bomber does.



As the site expands it's going to have lots of information and it'll be great little site for the future. Remember, we all have to start small and the more you support them, the stronger they will get.



My last site for this issue, but by no means the bottom of the list, is Free Speculative Fiction Online (<http://www.freesonline.de/>). Whilst more a collection of links to free stories it's still a great little place. It does lack some graphic design but like many sites it

doesn't really need them for what it does. I would like to see maybe a blog area but it does at least collect reviews so you can find out what others think. It's certainly one way to while away those spare minutes we all have when we're not trying to take over some world or another.

So that's it for another issue, please keep your ideas coming and we'll be visiting more cool sites in the next issue. As always any submissions, comments can be thrown my way at jez@the-ancible.com.

Issue 6

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Your portal to Sci-Fi and Fantasy Gaming

To Infinty
and
beyond

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ISSN 2042-7727