AURORA

THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

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DREAM POD 9

From the Editor...

Space, the final frontier. In the solar system of the Jovian Chronicles there are hundreds upon thousands of spacecraft. Some are small, some are bred for speed and war, some are workhorses and others take their journeys slowly propelled by the solar wind, while the largest are home to millions of inhabitants. It's easy to forget, but the colonies themselves, upon which most of the population of the solar system inhabit, are spacecraft as well. Even the dwellers on Mars and Venus, while anchored to soil and not adrift in the cosmos, are spacecraft of sorts as well built with strong walls that protect the people within.

If our context for life was that of living on a spaceship, how would we behave? Would we have a different outlook on our everyday lives, would we do things differently? Reading the various treatises from the Mercurian perspective (who's spacing and trading guilds are legendary), or looking at the lives of those living at the frontiers on Martian soil, we can get some idea. There is your little cylinder, and then assured death beyond. When that's the base condition, you better darn well take care.

It is an idea that is drilled into the children of the solar nations from an early age. 1 – You are living in a closed system. 2 – You are living in a finite system. Whatever you use needs to be replaced. Whatever you put into the ship stays on the ship, gets re-circulated and persists. You need to respect the ship, for without it you are a gonner. It must be maintained and treated with care. Your actions impact every single person on the ship. A single mishap can cause mayhem, hardship, or worse. Death is a heartbeat away.

Those who violate the sacred trust of the spacer's code are not treated lightly. They are spoken to in very strict terms. There are few loners in space. A careless airlock handle could mean disaster. Introducing a pathogen or pollutant could poison the whole ship.

Within this context would come great respect, not only for others but also the ship itself, the very life support system itself. You couldn't be careless or flippant about what you do, you'd be aware of every action you take, aware of the immediate and even the non-immediate repercussions. The delicate balance would be part of your everyday world, as much as the weather is part of ours here on earth; it couldn't NOT be. Even letting coolant from a shuttle spill onto the floor could cause endless problems: it won't just go "away", it could get into the ventilation system and toxify a whole ship. You would watch what you do, and you'd probably even develop things that were safe even in the case of accidents. You wouldn't take chances.

It's a fun thought experiment, and just plain fun to imagine (space travel is, by its very definition I think, cool). Go ahead and picture it.

We just celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 lunar landings, to which everyone at the Pod commemorates excitedly. It was Apollo 8 however, launched on the 21st of December in 1968, that brought to us the iconic images of our world, the "blue marble" hanging out in space: our very own not-so-personal spacecraft.

> "There are no passengers on spaceship earth.
> We are all crew."
>
> -- *Marshall McLuhan*

Welcome to Issue 3.5 of Aurora, your in-flight magazine as you hurl through the cosmos.

Oliver Bollmann
Aurora Magazine Editor

OFFICIAL-DP9

Only articles stamped "Official" are considered to be from Dream Pod 9 for Tournament or similar reasons. Some official material will be noted as optional, and are therefore treated as "Officially Optional". Said another way, consider the material in Official articles the same though published in a DP9 book.

TEST DRIVE

Articles stamped Test Drive indicates that the rules being presented are in testing. The rules are not official -- yet -- and being considered for later publication as Errata or are products in development. DP9 would appreciate feedback on their use, but they are not to be considered official. Note that they may change at any time or never be seen again.

HOME BREW RULES

Anything not so marked is a fan submitted rule not regarded as official and does not change the games or the DP9 game-universes as written in the books. Optional rules should only be used if all players agree upon their inclusion before play.

Brad Bellows (bradley.bellows@3web.net) -- *The Cangames 2009 Experience*
A former nuclear engineer who now works with sewage; Brad lives in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada with his wife, three kids, mortgage and car loan. A fan of Heavy Gear and Jovian Chronicles since the days of Mekton and Mecha Press, he currently spends his spare time playtesting new tactics and building new and improved army lists for Heavy Gear Blitz!

Dimitri Achminov (achminov@hotmail.com) -- *Northern Toolbox*

Daniel Hinds-Bond (007@007design.com) -- *How to Make Sand Dunes*
Daniel Hinds-Bond is a graphic designer / web designer / programmer / geek of all trades who isn't truly happy unless he has a half dozen projects demanding his attention. He lives in Pennsylvania with his very understanding wife.

Greg Perkins (gregoryperkins@gmail.com) -- *Illustrations p11*
Greg Perkins occasionally works freelance for Dreampod 9 on top of the plethora of other things that consume his time and interests from architecture, to graphic design, painting, illustration, photography, and layout.

John Bell (jakarnilson@magma.ca) -- *Alfie's Tenners and Cover Image*
He gets labeled a "walking-talking encyclopedia." He draws what goes through his mind. He builds what he can't afford. He walks what others would take a lift for. He'd probably trade in his bike for a real, working Ferret; but then again, who wouldn't?

John Buckmaster (dp9.rules.support@gmail.com) -- *Messages from the Pod*
John Buckmaster is DP9's head rules monkey and line developer. He's one of the masterminds behind the whole Blitz thing, and has been a Heavy Gear fan forever.

Marcus Lindner (LindnerMarcus@t-online.de) -- *27th Heavy Artillery Strider Regiment*
Unit Logo by : Christian Noak

Oliver Bollmann (kannikcat@hotmail.com) -- *EDF: Foundation*
It all started in a hobby store one day twenty odd years ago with an odd box containing something called Top Secret. Sicne then games have just become a big part of his life. He's been in love with the DP9 universes since the first HG release and began his direct involvement with the Pod crew a couple of years ago.

Sean C Callaway (paradox_zero_one@yahoo.com) -- *Web of Deception & 27th Heavy Artillery Strider Regiment*
Sean, Paradox 01 at the forums, is a medic in the US Army currently deployed to Iraq. While he has yet to play a single game of HGB!, he enjoys painting the miniatures, tooling around with army lists, and reading up on the history of Gear development. He's also a Northerner at heart.

Wunji Lau (wunjilau@hotmail.com) -- *Ashtaroth Combat Mount*
Wunji Lau gets bitten by the Pod bug every so often. Sometimes he writes a book or two. Mostly, he just makes munchkin-bots.

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"Something's fishy here. This project was a bad idea from the start, but the result...this thing is only marginally within our reqs, and Hakkar would make more money just selling us repackaged Meggidos. Why spend all this effort on a mount that's just going to sit in Gomorrah all the time? My recommendation? Cancel any purchases, restrict further parts sales, and start an investigation. I dunno. Maybe I just don't like the look of them."

Production Evaluation from Dina Keller (deceased), to NEC Colonial Board (deleted, unread)

The Ashtaroth is a dedicated battle mount, combining Hakkar and CEF technologies (under a limited parts-purchase agreement) in a military-grade chassis. Ostensibly developed for sale as a close-support unit for GREL and battle frame units, the new combat mount is superficially effective in its role, and is a competitive entry into the increasingly active CEF military market.

Keeping largely in line with Caprician naming and design conventions, the Ashtaroth makes use of climbing equipment and vectored thrusters to increase its mobility and close-combat effectiveness. The basic chassis is a heavily reinforced Moab skeleton, armored with advanced composites and equipped with numerous shielded cameras and sensors. A tungsten alloy prow and armored legs allow the Ashtaroth to break through most Gomorran walls and barriers, an effective (if unsubtle) means of reconfiguring an urban battlefield to circumvent ambushes and surprise dug-in opponents.

It is, however, no accident that the Ashtaroth's weapons complement is more effective against infantry and light armor than against the enhanced Gears and Striders fielded by the Terranovans, and the CEF would no doubt be interested to learn that many of the Ashtaroth's testing simulations focus on urban hunter-killer missions against GRELs and Battle Frames. Indeed, without the aid of CEF sympathizers during the design and prototype stages, the Ashtaroth project would probably not have passed CEF administrative reviews.

SERVICE HISTORY

Ashtaroths are currently a rare sight, kept confined mostly to standby duty and training runs in Hakkar facilities like the Venarow Hub and Hauser Trench. The mounts' rare forays beyond the Hakkar complex have been in the company of GRELs and Battle Frames. A few units have shown up in arena duels, but actual combat time has been limited.

Offworld sales of Ashtaroths to the CEF have been tied up in red tape, much of it covertly encouraged by Hakkar itself. While publicly protesting the delays, Mazir de Souza is quite happy to keep his new weapons close to home, perfectly placed to defend the Hakkar arcology and retake Gomorrah, should the need arise.

DESIGN NOTES

The Ashtaroth is a fairly simple kitbash, based purely around the desire to have, with the minimum amount of effort, a mount with jump jets and paired sponson-mounted rotary guns. Aesthetics came first; everything else, including fictional background and game stats, was secondary.

It's basically a modded Moab mount, using parts from two Apheks, jump jets from a Meggido, and gatlings from CEF frames. The main carapace, forward verniers, ankle reinforcements, and shin-guards came from a Kotobukiya Armored Core weapons pack (~$10 on hlj.com); I cut off the top of the Moab torso, giving it a diagonal forward slant. The backpack and spike guns came from the bits box, but those are fairly basic-looking pieces that can be easily substituted (or even scratched using styrene and putty). The relatively drab grey paint job reflects the unit's role as an urban combatant; it would not look out of place crouching in a shadowed trash heap.

UNOFFICIAL HG BLITZ L&L DATA

Addition to Caprician Heavy Mount Group (Corporate only):

- One Moab may be swapped for an Ashtaroth for +45 TV.

- Any Ashtaroth may swap both HAACs for two HGLCs (T, no Reloads, Linked) for +10 TV.

Note: Asharoths are not available as an army choice for the Black Talons.

ASHTAROTH COMBAT MOUNT

Ashtaroth Combat Mount

	ATT	DEF	EW	LD

	M	SPEED	STOP	CBT	TOP
DEFENSE	W	5 / 10	-4	0	+1
DEFENSE		/			
ATTACK			+2	0	-3

ACTIONS	SIZE
2	9

DETECT:	2
SENSORS:	0
AUTO COMM:	3
COMM:	0

ARMOR AND DAMAGE

ARMOR: 24 ☐ ☐ ☐

DAMAGE: S L H C
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Backup Sensors, Reinforced Armor (F) 3

PERKS/FLAWS:
Climb. Eq., Imp. OR, Arms, Sensor Dep., LSP1

AUX SYSTEMS:
Ram Plate (F), Jump Jets (3), Sensor Boom

NAME	ARC	ACC	RANGE					DAM	SPECIAL
HAAC	T	0	5 /	**9** /	18 /	36 /	72	x12	AA
HAAC	T	0	5 /	**9** /	18 /	36 /	72	x12	AA
LGL	T	-1	2 /	**3** /	6	12 /	24	x15	IF, AE2
LGL	T	-1	2 /	**3** /	6	12 /	24	x15	IF, AE2
APGL	T	-1	2 /	**3** /	6	12 /	24	x4	IF, AI, AE3
HSG		-1						x14	M, AP
CR		0						1	M
Physical								0	M

Datacard courtesy of Daniel Hinds-Bond's DP9 Datacard Maker
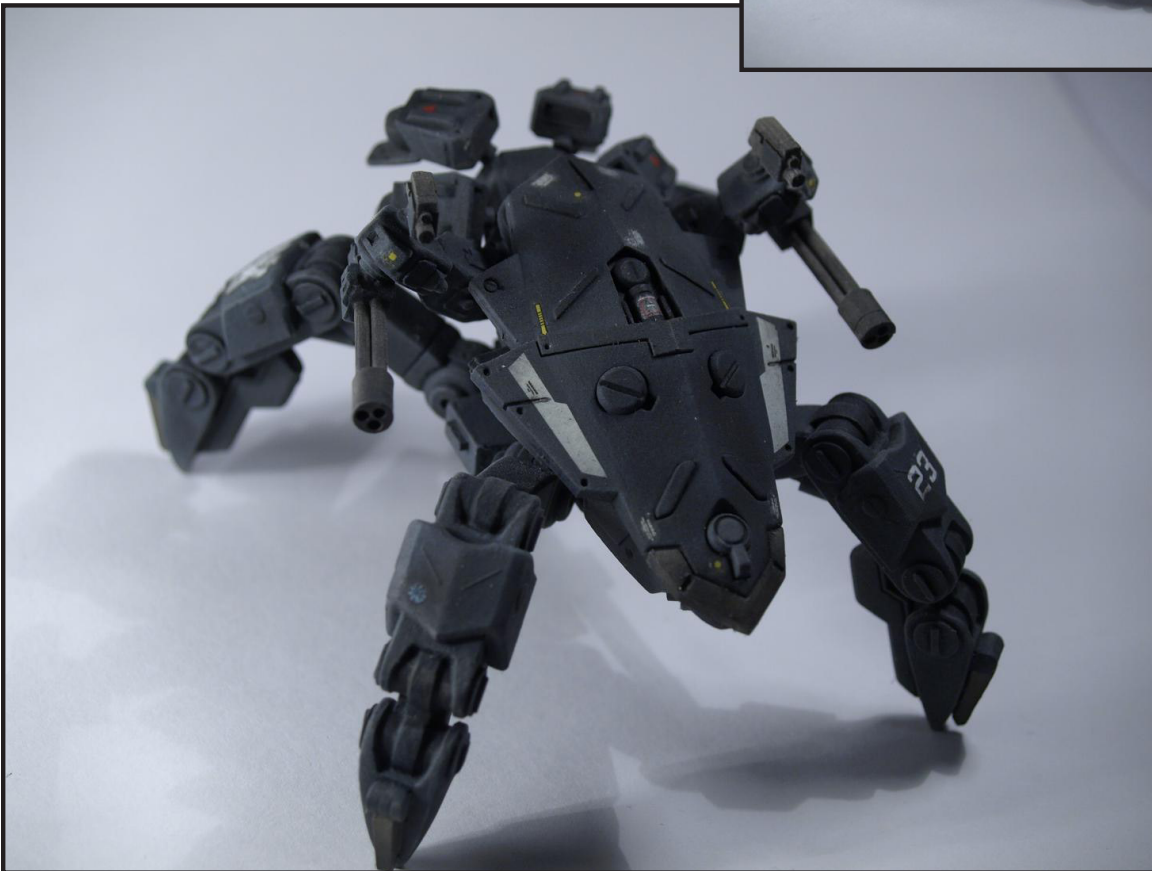
Ashtaroth Combat Mount photos by Wunji Lau

WEB OF DECEPTION

SEAN C CALLAWAY

"Hit me."

"What?"

"I said hit me."

Chapter One
Callway Trench, Caprice
LC 278, 2213 local time

"What on Caprice for? Look at your hand."

"Yeah, so?"

"Now look at mine."

"Fine, I see it. Now hit me."

"You're an idiot."

Jak turned another card face-up in front of Frank. A ten.

"Busted."

"Is that good?"

"Idiot."

"Maybe I should stick to poker," Frank complained.

"Maybe you should stick to coloring books. I think something as advanced as counting to twenty one might be little out of your league." Jak started sweeping up the cards.

Frank glared at him, the corners of his mouth turning down in a snarl. "Maybe you should quit picking on me before I bust you in the chops," Frank threatened.

Jak paused before answering his partner, straightening the cards into a neat pile then putting them away in a small pocket secured to the outside of his calf. "Frankie m'boy, it'd be a shame if I…"

"It'd be a shame if I had to shoot the two of you," a third voice said. "Not that I'd lose much sleep over it. I'm sure the CID would give you two a nice burial."

Frank and Jak looked over at the other man sharing the apartment with them. He hadn't looked up from the binoculars he was staring through when he spoke. Now he slowly turned around and faced them.

"We're here to do a job. That job is not to teach your friend how to be a pit boss at the local casino."

"Hey, easy, pal," Jak replied. "Don't get all bent out of shape just because the rest of your outfit is off gallivanting around Caprice while you're stuck here staring at a warehouse with us." Jak picked up the money from the table he and Frank had been using to play cards and started sorting it before shoving it into another pocket.

"Yeah," said Frank. "And don't forget, Konraad, you need us. We know the neighborhood, it was our contact that made this whole operation possible." Frank looked at Jak for confirmation.

"That's right, buddy. You tell him."

Konraad's eyebrows came a little closer together and his eyes narrowed as he replied. "I'm beginning to think your 'contact' couldn't find his ass with both hands in his back pockets, because we've been sitting here for two days without a hint of our target." Konraad turned back to the binoculars and continued watching the building three blocks away. "That's the problem with HUMINT. It's largely unreliable."

"What the hell is 'hyoomint'?" asked Jak. "Sounds like a candy bar."

"It's short for 'human intelligence', and it stands for intel you get from people," Frank answered. Konraad and Jak whipped their heads around to stare at Frank in surprise. He looked back and forth between the two with a worried look on his face.

"What?"

"Nothing, Frank, it's just…nothing." Jak looked over at Konraad and raised his eyebrows as if to say, *"Whaddya know?"* Konraad just shrugged his shoulders and turned back to the binoculars.

"Hell, even a broken clock's right twice a day."

Jak stood up and stretched his slender frame, then worked the kinks out of his back by bending over and touching his toes. "Speaking of broken, my bladder's about to burst. I gotta hit the head."

"It's all that caff you drink," Frank said. "You should lay off that stuff, y'know." He got up from the table as well and walked towards his backpack sitting on the room's single couch. Jak patted his shoulder as he passed him on the way to the bathroom.

"That 'stuff' keeps me going, bro. This job is so *booo*ring. Wesley has the easy part. All he's gotta do is sit in his comfy command seat and press a button." His voice started echoing off the walls as he entered the tiny latrine.

Konraad chimed in again. "You'd be bored out of your skull sitting in your Mount for two days, Jak. I don't want to even think about how you'd pass the time."

Frank snorted. "He's in love with his gunner," he whispered. Digging through his backpack, he finally found what he'd been looking for, and then sat down heavily on the couch. He wasn't a tall man, but his frame was packed with muscles, and the couch groaned in protest.

"Well, I wouldn't get stuck with a job like this in the first place," called Jak from the bathroom. "My Mount's designed to get up close and personal, like. And even if it wasn't, I'd get loads of sleep." The toilet flushed and Jak came back into the living room wiping his hands on a towel. Frank snorted again, and Jak threw the towel at him. "Are you reading that damn book again?" he asked Frank.

Frank swiped the towel off his head and threw into a corner of the room. "Gross! You're a pig, man. And yeah, I'm reading 'that damn book' again, so what?"

"Well, it doesn't have any pictures in it, for one. Oh, and you've only read it about *thirty times!* Can you believe this guy, Konraad?"

Konraad replied without looking away from the binoculars. "What the hell are you babblin' about now?"

Jak took his seat at the table and said, "Frank's read that book at least thirty times now. I keep buying new chips for him, but he never reads 'em. Says he'd rather read an actual paper book, can you believe it? I mean, what's the difference, am I right?"

Konraad sighed. "Jak, what's the difference between ignorance and indifference?"

"Huh? Um…"

"Don't know, and don't care."

"Oh ha, ha, funny guy." Jak sat up straighter in his chair. "Listen, I've had just about enough of you…"

"There he is," Konraad interrupted. Jak looked over at Frank, who quit reading and looked back at Jak. Tossing his book back into his backpack, Frank got up and quickly walked across the room to the window at the same time Jak stood and joined Konraad. Frank took a knee and began pressing buttons on a black, rectangular box set up on a tripod in front of the window next to the binoculars. The lower right corner of the window had been broken so that there was a hole in it about a foot in diameter.

"Is that your contact?" asked Konraad, passing Jak the binoculars.

Jak put the binoculars up to his eyes and focused on a man standing in front of the warehouse the team had been sent to watch. "Yep," he said. "That's Uncle Jon."

"How's he look?" Frank asked as he continued working on the box.

"Good, actually, looks like he's lost some weight. Aunt Gerta must be working him hard."

Konraad looked up at Jak with a puzzled look on his face. "Wait. *Uncle Jon*?? You're *related* to the contact?"

Frank had finished setting up the box and began looking out the break in the window through eyepieces built into the back of the unit. "Yeah, he's our uncle."

Konraad looked down at his feet and put his hands over his head. "Great. You're brothers. I just hope stupidity skips generations."

"What was that?" Jak asked.

Konraad went back to looking out of the window. "Nothing. What's Uncle Jon doing?"

"He's sending us the code. Shut up and let me read it. 'Convoy moving…five vehicles…two minutes."

"No, he said four vehicles and one minute," Frank argued.

"Are you sure?" Jak asked. "It looked to me like he said five vehicles and two minutes. Wish he hadn't lost a couple fingers in that mining accident."

"Whatever," Konraad interrupted. "We know they're coming and we know it's soon. Frank, how's the laser?"

"Powered up and ready to go, Konraad."

"Fine. I'm sending the transmission now." Konraad turned to the team's portable radio and turned it on. After changing the setting so it would transmit in burst mode over an encrypted channel, he spoke into the handset. "Southpaw, Home Plate. Target three minutes out. Stand by for call." Setting the hand mike on the window sill, he held his hand out to Jak and said, "Make sure we're ready to boogie. Gather up our gear."

Jak handed the binoculars to him. "I'm on it." Jak turned and walked around the room, policing up the few pieces of equipment and gear the team had brought with them. It wasn't much, because the men knew they might have to leave in a hurry. He put his own backpack on and grabbed Frank's as well. He walked over to his brother and set the bag next to his foot.

"Thanks, bro," said Frank without taking his eyes away from the viewfinder. "There goes Uncle Jon. He's clearing out." Jak walked back to the table they'd been playing cards on and reached underneath for a small, black tote bag. Setting the bag on the table, he withdrew three submachine guns and ammo clips. After loading the weapons, he set one next to each man at the window along with a couple spare magazines and kept one for himself. "Man I love these things," he said as he clipped his SMG to a loop secured around his shoulders then put his overcoat on over it. "Fully silenced, eleven millimeter, holographic sight…what I wouldn't have given for one of these beauties back when I was a bartender."

Jak's reminiscing was interrupted by Konraad, who was still looking through the binoculars. "Alright, I've got one, coming down the street from the north. You see it, Frank?"

"Got it," Frank replied. "Two more from the east."

"I see them."

Three dark, armored cars began converging on the warehouse from different directions. This far down in the Callway Trench, there was very little vehicular traffic so they were easy to spot. The cars stopped and eight men got out wearing suits and ties. While four of them opened the door to the warehouse and walked in, the other four began looking at the buildings around them.

"CID agents," said Konraad. "Half of them are sweeping the building while the other half secures the outside."

"I've got eyes on the target." Frank had been watching the eastern approach to the warehouse. A long, black limousine pulled up to the curb in front of the warehouse. Each agent in the security team still on the sidewalk opened the door of one of the cars. Twelve people in expensive suits got out in all, and they all walked toward the open doorway.

"Those are definitely corporate big-wigs," said Frank. "Look at those suits. Just one of them costs more money than I made in a year working the mines."

"Yeah, but the rest work for the Commonwealth Intelligence Directorate," said Jak. He had pulled out a rifle scope and started scanning the group's faces. "I think the blonde one is Captain Bronislav. Man, if we manage to take him out, we'll set the CID back four years. He's been on the Legion's trail since I joined up."

"And there's our target," Konraad added. "Maxine Lourda. Hope your next of kin don't expect an open coffin, Madame Chairperson." Konraad watched the corporate executives enter the building, then put the binoculars down and grabbed the small radio's handset again. "Southpaw, Home Plate, stand by for target." Looking over at Frank, he nodded and said, "Hit the building first, then the center-most car."

"You got it." Frank put the holographic crosshairs over the warehouse on a spot six feet above the doorway and pressed a button on top of the designator. "Target lit!"

"C'mon, baby, c'mon," said Jak, looking out the window. Five seconds after Frank turned on the laser, a whitish streak flew in from the east and smashed into the warehouse. The anti-tank missile blew right through the thin wall and detonated inside. The explosion lifted most of the roof off and fire blossomed out of the windows, spraying glass and debris for thirty meters, and sent the intelligence agents still outside tumbling to the ground. Frank was already aiming at one of the armored cars.

"Target two lit!"

Another missile streaked in seven seconds after the first. One of the agents was just beginning to get his feet under him when the car in front of him disintegrated. He disappeared along with the car in a ball of fire. The two cars parked closest were picked up and tossed away from the center of the explosion.

"Hit the building again," commanded Konraad.

"Target lit."

Another short wait and a second missile hit the building. This one caused two of the walls and what was left of the roof to collapse. "Hit it again," Konraad said.

Frank finally pulled his head away from the designator. "But Konraad, look at it. The building's toa…"

"*Hit it again, I said!*" yelled Konraad.

Frank flinched away from the other man's anger, then leaned over behind the designator again. "Target lit," he said, this time in a much quieter voice.

Konraad looked back out the window in time to see the fourth missile race in over the rooftops and hit what was left of the warehouse. The building was now nothing but a pile of burning rubble. "That's it, let's go."

As Jak started helping a subdued Frank pack up the designator into its carrying case and strap it onto the bigger man's back, Jak spoke into the radio's handset again.

"Southpaw, Home Plate. Game over, thanks for the extra innings. Out." Konraad then stuffed the radio into his own backpack and stood, turning away from the window. "You two ready?"

"Ready," replied Jak.

"Yeah, ready," mumbled Frank. He was still smarting over the vehemence in Konraad's voice earlier.

"Alright, let's go. I lead, then Jak, Frank, you cover our six. Remember, keep your weapons out of sight until we need them. Quiet in, quiet out."

The other two men nodded.

"Follow me," said Konraad, and the three men headed for the door. Konraad opened it a crack and peeked down the hallway. They had set up their observation post in a mostly deserted apartment building for two reasons. One, it had a good view of the warehouse where the meeting was to take place and two, the top three floors were empty. Squatters had claimed a few of the apartments, but they were content with sticking to the lower levels. "Clear," Konraad reported.

The three men left the room and proceeded down the hallway towards the stairway. Taking the stairs two at a time, they were able to make it to the first floor quickly. Konraad halted the group just before they walked into the lobby and turned to the other two men.

"Remember, the explosions will bring out the locals, so we blend in with them and *walk* out. You guys ready?"

"Hell yeah," said Jak. "I know I for one will be glad to get out of these clothes and take a bath for once." The team had dressed in torn, raggedy clothing so they could blend in with the local populace during this phase of the operation.

"I'll be glad once you take a shower, too," added Frank with a small smile.

Jak was glad to see Frank's sense of humor starting to return. Frank was one of the toughest men he knew. He had to have been to go through what the brothers had while growing up here in the Callway Trench and survive. That toughness was what made Frank an outstanding infantryman and one of the most valuable members of their cell. Point Frank in the direction of the enemy and he was absolute mayhem. Heavy weapons, small arms, knives, fists, a bar stool; it didn't matter the weapon - or lack thereof – in Frank's hand, the target was going down and *staying* down. His one weakness, however, was that the disapproval of his superiors absolutely crushed his spirit. All Frank needed, thought Jak, was for someone to follow him around for the rest of his life saying "Atta boy" and he was set.

Jak gave Frank a light punch to the shoulder and said, "Hey, maybe I'll see if Gloria will help out with that, huh?"

Frank returned Jak's grin and rolled his eyes. "Yeah, *that'll* happen."

Konraad had been watching the building's lobby through a small window set in the door and saw people start to leave their apartments and congregate in front of the building. "Okay, looks like enough people, let's move."

The three men entered the lobby and immediately began chatting about the explosions and wondering aloud what could have caused them. They left the lobby and turned right down the sidewalk, following a few people to the intersection where they could get a better look at the warehouse down the street. There was already a good sized crowd there, and the team hung out at the back of it. Once they were sure no one was paying them any special attention, they turned and began walking south.

As they strolled down the sidewalk, they gave furtive glances all around them checking to make sure they weren't being followed or singled out. There weren't many locals in this part of the Trench, but the few that chose to call this area home were looking out their windows and coming out to the street in front of their apartments to gab with their neighbors. The streets were alternating pools of light and shadow, as most of the lights didn't function and what businesses operated in the area were closed for the night. The team was just about to turn down a side street when they heard a sound from back at the intersection.

"You hear that?" Frank asked.

The team slowed their pace a bit as they listened closely to the sound, trying to identify it. Konraad was looking back towards the apartment building they had just left. Suddenly, a VTOL slid into view back at the intersection, giving the team a view of the rear of the craft. The two thruster pods on either side of the craft whined loudly in the quiet night.
"It's a Mitzraim," said Konraad. "If it's CEF, you'd better believe it's packing some serious heat."

"Yeah, and I can guarantee it's after us," replied Jak. "Though how the *hell* did it get here so fast?"

Frank turned to Konraad. "What do we do now, boss?"

Konraad turned to answer him, but just then the group was bathed in a high-intensity spotlight. They were buffeted by the downwash of four vectored thrust engines as a second Mitraim VTOL descended almost right over the team.

"*Run*," said Konraad.

WIDOW'S LEGION artwork by Greg Perkins

27TH HEAVY ARTILLERY STRIDER REGIMENT

SEAN CALLAWAY & MARCUS LINDNER

During the War of the Alliance, the self-christened Mad Bulls were instrumental in preventing the CEF advance towards UMF territory. Waging an artillery guerrilla war from the heights of the Westride Range, the Mad Bulls helped stall the advance of the invading forces for nearly two seasons before being forced disengage due lack of supplies.

The broken, rocky terrain made it almost impossible for the CEF to utilize the speed and mobility of their hovertanks, and even the hovercycle-mounted GRELs had difficulties closing the distance quickly. The improved off-road capabilities of the Red Bull Mk Is, on the other hand, made it possible for the Regiment to fire salvo after salvo at the slowly advancing Earth forces then quickly change position, severely hampering the effectiveness of the CEF's counter-battery units. The 8th Fleet's air wings had greater success against the Mad Bulls, however. The Regiment's lack of anti-air weapons meant that the TAAF-54 trans-atmospheric fighters could make multiple strafing runs with little fear of reprisal.

The biggest enemy the Mad Bulls faced, however, was the low rate of supply. The same terrain that worked in their favor when fighting the CEF made it difficult for supply convoys to reach the Regiment. Coupled with the fact that the Mad Bulls were constantly on the move and the ever increasing distance between them and Peace River, Paxton Arms were hard-pressed to get the Regiment vital supplies such as food, water and ammunition. Eventually, it became impossible for the Regiment to receive supplies from home.

To overcome this, the Mad Bulls began to improvise. Weapon systems that were either damaged beyond field repair or suddenly useless due to a lack of ample ammunition were swapped out for weapons easily obtained through local contacts throughout nearby Badland communities and even the beleaguered Western Frontier Protectorate. Heavy rocket packs and smaller caliber field guns were among the most common swaps, but the Mad Bulls even used captured and destroyed CEF equipment to supplement their own. The most famous alteration was to Captain Gardawsky's Red Bull Mk I, where both Paxton Arms 75mm GE-86 Howitzers were replaced by two Heavy Particle Accelerators that had been salvaged from CEF hovertanks.

By the time the Mad Bulls were able to finally link up with supply and refit convoys from Peace River, the War of the Alliance was nearly over. They were tasked with mopping up any remaining CEF forces in the area but didn't take part in any major battles for the duration of the War.

After the War of the Alliance, the Mad Bulls were incorporated into the new PRDF as one of the few Artillery Regiments. Their extensive use of the Red Bull Mk Is made them the prime candidates to receive the first batch of the new Red Bull Mk IIs. At first, the Mad Bulls tried fielding the newer marks alongside the older Strider. They soon realized, however, that although they were both artillery platforms, they had such different mission profiles that it didn't make sense to keep both within the same battalion. As the Regiment received more of the newer Mark IIs, the older Mark Is were slowly phased out. The Mad Bulls do still maintain two batteries of the Mark Is, but they have been relegated to rear area support, whereas the Mark IIs are able to operate much closer to the front line.

COLOR SCHEME

The Mad Bulls uses mainly Desert and Montain Camo, dependent in which environment they operate. For parade and showcase duties the Mad Bulls uses a bright dark red for the main bodies and black or dark brown for knees and arms. The Squad Leaders paint the Head of their Red Bulls white. Many Pilots like it to paint smoking nostrils on their machines, especialy the Red Bulls. Some pilots even add a nose ring on the front of the Red Bull to make the Red Bull appear more like a Bull as it normal looks.

Christian Noak: 27th Heavy Artillery Strider Regiment -- UNIT LOGO

REGIMENT CONSTRUCTION

The Mad Bulls are based on PRDF armies with following changes:

Artillery Striders:
The Mad Bulls maintain a contingent of the older Red Bull Mk I Artillery Striders which they still put to good use. If Light Artillery Strikes are chosen as a Support Option, a Mad Bull army may call in up to two of them at the same time. These may be fired at two different targets or at one single target. If both are aimed at the same target, the strikes count as Linked. A Mad Bull army may take Heavy Artillery strikes only at PL 3 or higher.

Heavy Strider Force:
The Mad Bulls are primarily a Heavy Artillery Strider Regiment and so have good access to Red Bull Mk IIs, but they lack the ready access to other squad types which are normally standard for the PRDF. They also specialize in operating in rough, mountainous terrain, so they tend to limit their use of wheeled vehicles.

For the Mad Bulls, the PRDF Squads have following Combat Group Types:

Core:
Support Tankstrider Squad, Infantry Platoon, Patrol Squad

Auxiliary:
G.P. Squad, Anti-Rover Squad, Fire Support Squad

Specialist:
Light Tankstrider Squad, Cavalry Squad

Elite:
Strike Squad, Special Forces Squad

Tampered Striders:
The Mad Bulls have a long history of tinkering with their Red Bulls to make them more effective. Their long, on-going battles against the CEF during the War of the Alliance forced the Regiment's techs to get creative when the lack of supplies meant that many units ran out of ammunition for their primary weapons. Weapon systems from damaged or destroyed Gears or other vehicles were often cannibalized and mounted on Red Bulls in place of their Light Field Guns.

The conflict also taught the Mad Bulls two valuable lessons; the importance of reliable means of communication and protecting their Striders from counter-battery fire. The Regiment has begun adding ECCM suites to the Striders of their squad leaders, and with the PRDF nearing the completion of its testing of a reliable antimissile system the Mad Bulls have been eager participants in field trials.

This and the reduced availability of Gears change the option List for the Support Tankstrider to following options:

Options
- One Red Bull Mk II may swap its LFGs for two HRP/48s (T, ROF 4, Linked, no Reloads) for -35 TV.
- Add a MAC (F, no Reloads) to any Red Bull Mk II for +5 TV.
- Swap the Red Bull Mk II's MAAC for 2x VLRP/128s (T, ROF 6, Linked, no Reloads) for +10 TV.
- One Red Bull Mk II may swap its LFGs for an ATM Launcher (T, no Reloads) for +15 TV.
- One Red Bull Mk II may swap its LFGs for a single HFG (T, no Reloads) for -5 TV.
- Add a Hunter-Killer drone to any member (max one drone per Model) for + 5 TV.
- Add a Recon drone to any model (max one drone per Model) for +10 TV.
- Upgrade any member's EW skill by 1 (to 2) for +10 TV for a Red Bull Mk.II and +15 TV for a Command Red Bull.
- Any CGL in a Red Bull Mk II may add ECCM (2) for +5 TV if it is not in a Command Red Bull.

Veteran Options
- If the squad leader is chosen as the Army Commander, you may upgrade the Commander's Red Bull Mk II to a Command Red Bull for -20 TV.
- Add one additional (max three) Red Bull Mk II for +160 TV.
- Upgrade any member's Attack skill to Level 3 for +10 TV for a Red Bull II, +15 TV for a Command Red Bull.
- Add an AMS to any Red Bull for +15 TV, if it has no AMS.
- Two additional Red Bull Mk IIs (max three) may swap its LFGs for an ATM Launcher (T, no Reloads) for +25 TV.
- Two additional Red Bull Mk IIs (max three) may swap its LFGs for a single HFG (T, no Reloads) for -5 TV.
- One Red Bull MK II may swap its ATM Launcher for an HATM Launcher (T, limited ammo 6) for +65 TV
- The Command Red Bull may add Anti-Personal Charges for +5 TV

HOME
BREW
RULES

HOME BREW RULES

COMMAND RED BULL (RED BULL MK II VARIANT)

One thing the War of the Alliance taught the Mad Bulls above all others was the importance of dedicated command platforms within an artillery regiment. During the War, they acknowledged this need by adding EW suites to the Striders of unit commanders. These were field refits, however, and problems arose when the unit's technicians tried adding ECM and ECCM generators to Red Bull Mark Is. The more advanced communications gear just wasn't completely compatible with the older Striders.

With the advent of the Red Bull Mark II, however, the technology was finally available to allow the Regiment to increase the Command, Control and Communications capabilities of its field commanders. Instead of adding EW suites, more powerful communications gear and better Fire Direction Control computers to existing Red Bull Mark IIs, they decided to start from the ground up.

Using the basic Red Bull Mark II chassis as a starting point, the Command Red Bull loses its Paxton Arms 120mm Field Guns and replaces them with twin 35mm "Flyswatter" autocannons. Experience has taught the Regiment that commanders need to focus on multiple tasks, none of which should be lobbing artillery shells at the enemy. Instead, the Command variant adds improved automated systems from the older Red Bull Mk I to the Red Bull Mk II chassis. This allows the commander to focus on coordinating fire for his battery without the drastic changes to the layout of the Strider's command compartment a third crewman would dictate. The advanced targeting computers of the Flyswatters are more than capable of holding off enemy aircraft. Command Red Bulls have become an invaluable asset for the Mad Bulls, because artillery pieces (whether they're mounted on Striders, Gears or even more traditional howitzers) are often high-priority targets for enemy aircraft.

Swapping out the field guns for the smaller autocannons gave the unit's techs loads of room to work with. Additional high-powered communication antennas were added along with a satellite communications pod. An electronic counter-countermeasure suite was also installed, giving the commander the ability to punch through enemy jamming. This ensures clear communications when attempting to coordinate indirect fire (something every Infantryman can tell you is vitally important).

An Aegis 20mm anti-missile system and smoke launchers round out the Command Red Bull's defensive package.

Command Red Bull

HEAVY GEAR BLITZ

	M	SPEED	STOP	CBT	TOP
DEFENSE	W	3/6	-5	-3	-2
DEFENSE	G	5/9	-5	-2	-1
ATTACK			+2	0	-3

DETECT	5	ARMOR 40 SIZE 12
SENSORS	+1	DAMAGE
COMM	0	S L H C
AUTO COMM	4	

ARMOR PERKS: BACKUP SENSORS

PERKS/FLAWS: LSP (3), WEAPON LINK (HAAC), IMP. OFF ROAD, SNSR DEP.

AUX SYSTEMS: ECCM 3, AMS, Sat.Uplink, Smoke(10)

NAME	ARC	ACC	RANGE	DAM	SPECIAL	ROUNDS
HAAC	T	0	5/9/18/36/72	x12	AA,RoF 3	
HAAC	T	0	5/9/18/36/72	x12	AA,RoF 3	
PHYSICAL ATTACK (KICK/RAM)				S	M	

MADBULLS

DUE TO PROBLEMS BEYOND OUR
CONTROL, THE CURRENT EPISODE OF
ALFIE'S TENNERS
WILL BE DELAYED
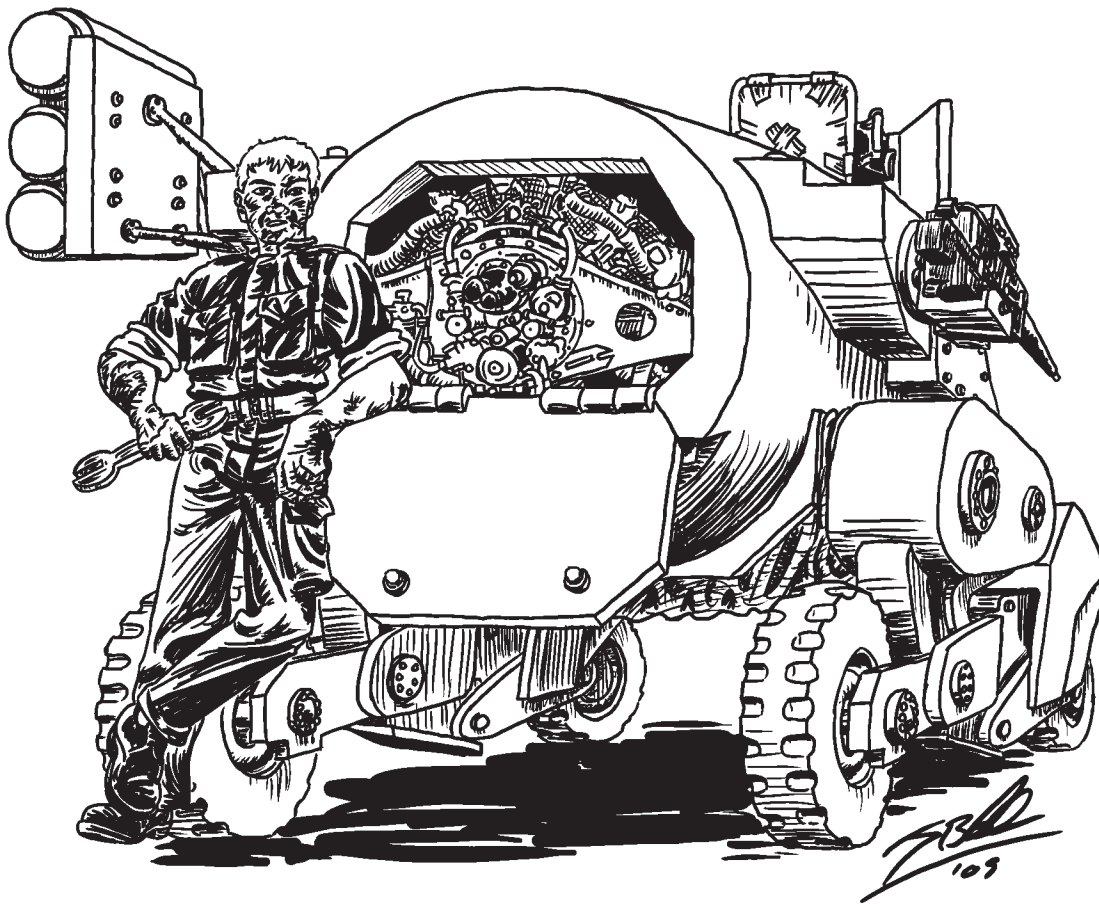
DON'T WORRY, WE'LL BE BACK IN
THE NEXT ISSUE OF **AURORA**,
THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE!

HOW TO MAKE SAND DUNES

DANIEL HINDS-BOND

For when you absolutely, positively, have to hide behind something...

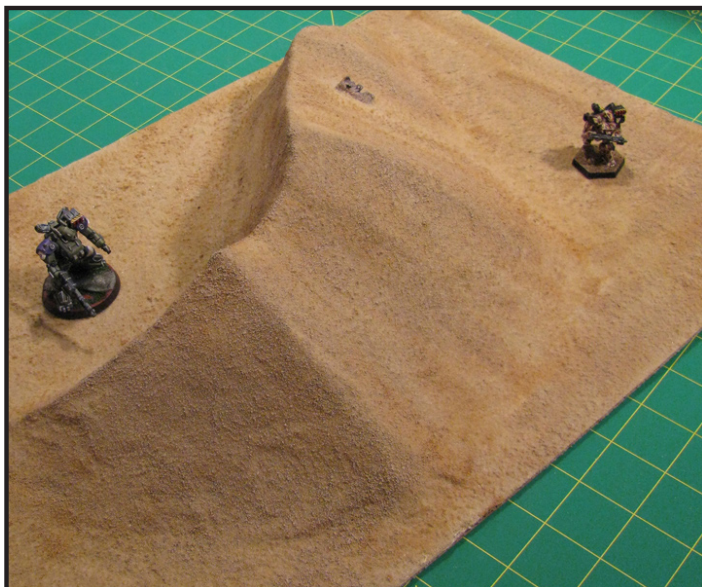So says Wikipedia: In physical geography, a dune is a hill of sand built by aeolian processes. Dunes are subject to different forms and sizes based on their interaction with the wind. Most kinds of dune are longer on the windward side where the sand is pushed up the dune, and a shorter "slip face" in the lee of the wind. The "valley" or trough between dunes is called a slack.

On the battlefield dunes offer interesting terrain, being visually impressive, an obstacle, and a great place to find cover


Materials:
Cardboard or Balsa for a base
Cardstock
Knife
Masking Tape
Spackle (aka Filler)
PVA Glue (aka White Glue)
Sand
Spray Sealant

First, you'll want to decide what you want the crest of your dune to look like. Will it have one high point, two with a dip in the middle? Also, how long are you going to make it? This will determine how many fins you need and depend on how big a base you have. Trace the fins that you'll need onto the cardstock and, this is important, be sure to draw a line perpendicular to the bottom of the dune and directly beneath the tip of the crest. Cut out the fins. Also, cut a long thin strip of cardstock, about a quarter-inch wide. Now, cut out a small sliver of the bottom of each fin on the line that you drew. You're making slots for the long strip to fit into so be sure to make them wide enough and tall enough for it to fit. Starting at the middle of the strip and working to either side, attach the fins to the strip with tape, spacing them about an inch apart.
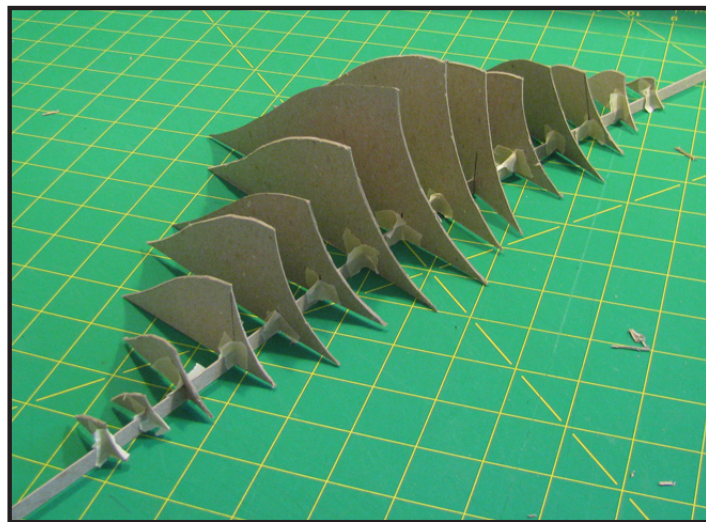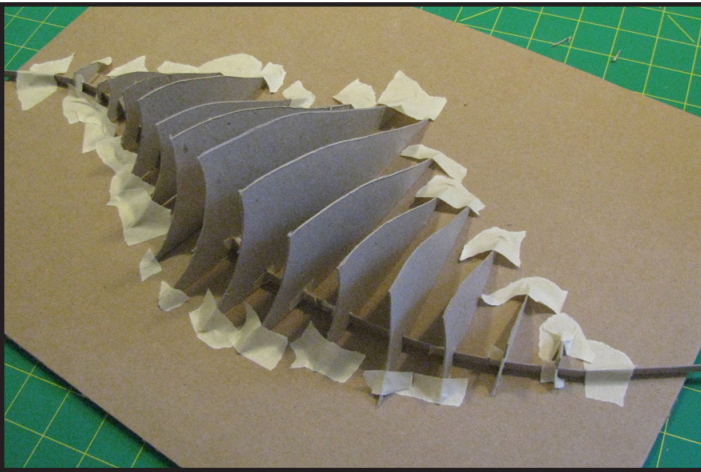

Ok, this is the fun part. Place the taped fins on the base and move the strip around to make your dune have a nice sinuous curve. When you've got something you like, tape down the ends of the strip and then tape down the ends of each fin. Pay special attention to the angle of each fin in relation to the ones next to it, you want to end up with a nice smooth slope all the way across.

Next, take your masking tape and cover the entire thing. It's best to use smaller, thinner pieces and tape each fin to the one next to it rather than one big piece all the way across. You want to be sure that dips created by the smaller fins don't get smoothed over with tape going from one big fin to another.

Once you've got everything taped off it's time to spackle. Spread the spackle in a thin, smooth layer over the entire dune paying special attention to giving the crest a nice edge. It's very much like icing a cake (in fact, I use a cake spatula). Don't worry if you can't get all the stroke lines out at first. As the spackle dries it will become easy to just smooth them down with your finger.
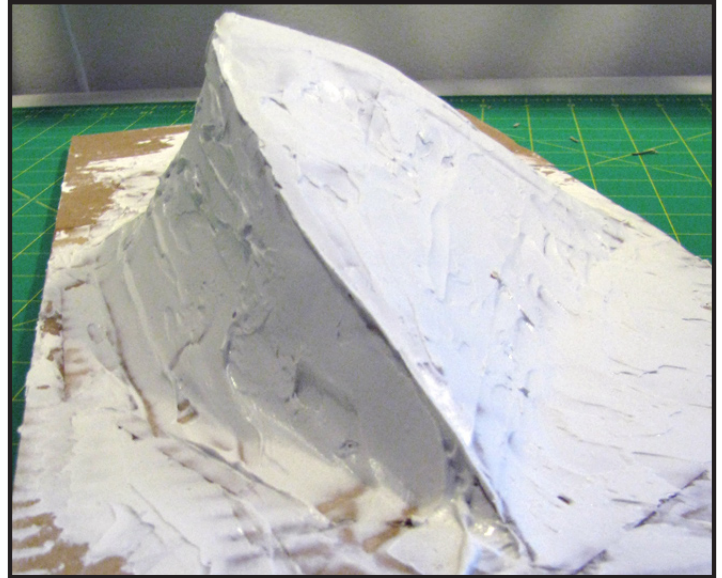
Let the dune dry overnight. It may develop some cracks and crevacies. That's ok, fill them in with a little more spackle and just use your finger to smooth them out. Now, I give the whole dune a generous brushing with watered down PCA glue to seal it. Let this dry a bit and in the meantime, paint up any little bits of metal or destroyed models you want to have poking out of the sand (drilling bullet holes gives a nice effect).

When the sealant layer has dried, go ahead and paint the entire thing, dune and base, a sandy, tan color. When the paint is dry, give the dune another generous coat of glue and then pour on the sand. Be liberal and pack the sand down lightly with your hand against the base and up the sides of the dune. Let it sit, covered in sand, for a while to give the glue a chance to dry and then shake off the excess. If I find that a spot here or there didn't get quite covered, i spray the area with spray glue and pack on some more sand.

Finally, glue down any wreckage or other bits and give the whole thing several generous coats of sealant. For added depth, and to make it really stand out, when it's good and sealed (so the sand doesn't fall off) dry brush the entire thing using darker colors in the dips and lighter ones along the crest and ridges. Take your time and make sure you wipe off as much paint as you can before brushing the sand. You just want a light dusting, you don't want any blobs of color. An airbrush would also work excellently for this but I don't have one.

Don't let it intimidate you, it only seems like a lot of work. Most of your time is spent waiting for stuff to dry and in the end you've got some sweet Terra Novan dunes.
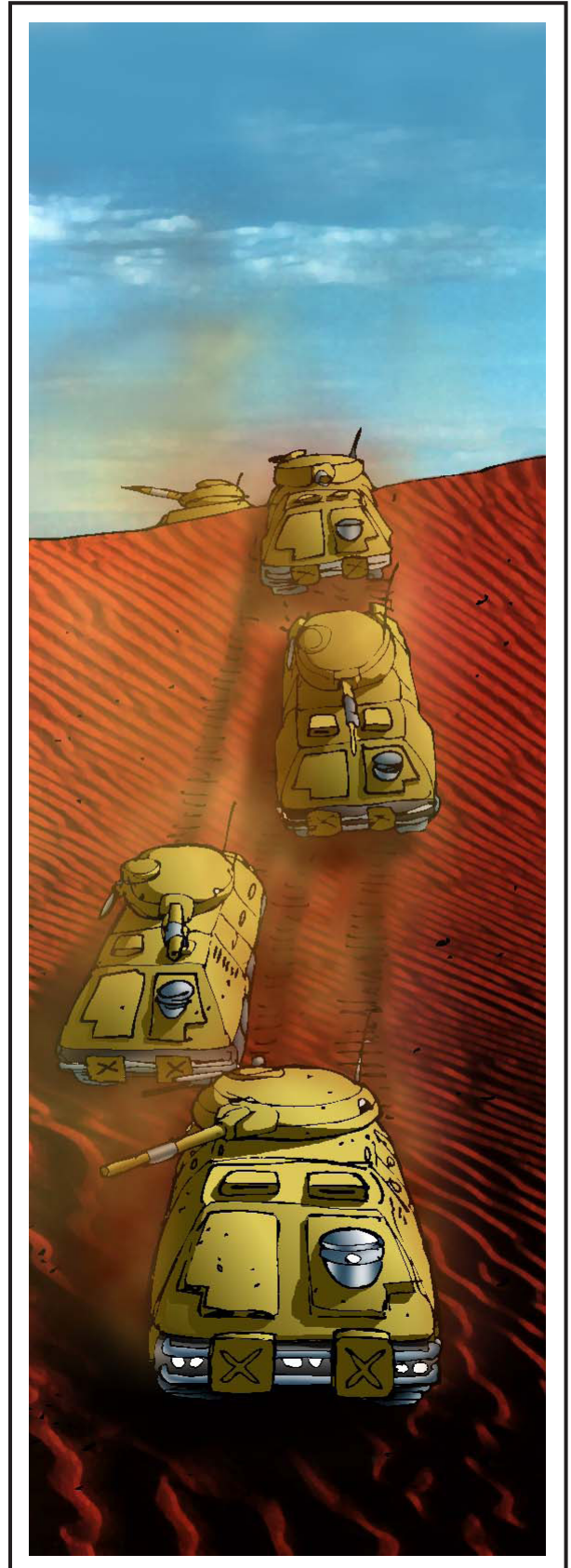
Southern Armoured Column on the Advance…

Something new hit the e-bookshelves this month! World at War: Gear Krieg is meant as a supplement to Mongoose Publishing's core Battlefield Evolution: World at War rulebook and all of A.D.Publishing's Vehicle Compendiums. Now you can take your favourite pulp-full and superscience game and plug it into your WW II gaming experience. To celebrate this great new collaborative effort, Aurora Magazine sat down with the author of this new book, Agis Neugebauer.

Aurora Magazine - To get the gear rolling, please introduce yourself and your involvement with *Battlefield Evolution: World at War*.

Agis Neugebauer - Well, I am Agis Neugebauer from Berlin, Germany. I am 48 years old, married and an IT project manager in my real life.

For the last 20 years I was also deeply involved in tabletop wargaming. You can see the scope of my hobby interests when checking out my website. I was involved in testing and / or developing of games like *Warhammer 40k, Lord of the Rings, EPIC: Armageddon, Battlefield Evolution, Victory at Sea, Supersystem, Chaos in Carpathia, Secrets of the Third Reich* and *Incursion*. In 2008 I authored my first big published ruleset: *Battlefield Evolution World at War* which was soon followed with the *Pacific War* book also for Mongoose Publishing. I got even paid for it!

Battlefield Evolution: World at War started as an in-house project of Ian Barstow (a former Mongoose employee) in January 2007. He needed playtesters and I was one of them. The playtesting soon ran out of steam and no real testing was done over long periods of time.

Ian and I kept on working on it. Over the year 2007 I became more and more the driving force behind the project adding all the army lists and many WW II specific rules.

At the end of 2007 Ian was let go by Mongoose and many game mechanics Ian and I had agreed upon were suddenly obsolete as Matt Sprange jumped in and put everything on a short leash. His idea was a good one in retrospect: write one set of core rules that can be used on all Battlefield Evolution games, be it *Starship Troopers*, *World at War* or *Modern Combat*. The period specific rules will be handled in separate sections of each rulebook.

The published book was a big success for Mongoose and I got also contracted for the follow up book about the *Pacific War*. At the same time Mongoose released their Logo License concept (like the OGL for D20 RPGs) for Evolution games, which enabled me and Dave Robotham to found A.D.Publishing, our small 2 men game company. Since November 2008 we have published 6 pdf books via the Wargames Vault, one of them is Gear Krieg.

AM - Clearly something about Gear Krieg grabbed hold of your interest with an iron walker grip – what was it that struck you?

AN - 3 reasons: At the core it was the incredible good design, the very good background and a strange feel of political correctness.

The Gear Krieg walker designs look believable and carry a lot of the visual appeal of the armoured fighting vehicles of the WW II era. Just look at the Walküre and compare this walker design with a SdKfz 251, or the Uller compared to a Tiger tank. You can see that a lot of thought was put into these designs. These are not some Manga Mechs with German crosses over the hull, these are well researched and designed vehicles that really fit into WW II.

As far as the background is concerned… Gear Krieg was the first of the weird war settings that are now so on vogue and in my opinion is still the best setting. I bought every Gear Krieg book as soon as it came out, so call me a fan boy! To now be able to add a bit to this wonderful game universe is both a blessing and a real challenge to me. All of the A.D.Publishing books are a true labour of love, but this book is even more special to me.

Now to the political correctness: For most Germans WW 2 is the forbidden era to play. It is OK for an American to play an SS army, in Germany you can not even buy SS minis. They are cleverly disguised as "German Elite troops" etc. FoW has to cover all Swastikas in their publications, the list goes on... And to honest, it is perfectly OK when looking at the known historical facts. To play WW 2 you have to add a twist of unrealism, a twist of weirdness or pulpy super-science. It takes away the seriousness and suddenly you are more comfortable with it.

AM - Very nifty. Was there a specific impetus for you for taking the world of GK and implementing it in BE:WaW?

AN - As said above, I am a Gear Krieg fan at the core. I had some more unassembled walkers lying on the lead pile and suddenly an idea struck me: Why not write a rule adaptation for Gear Krieg? I approached Robert DuBois of DP9 and was amazed how forthcoming and positive he was about the idea. Soon the deal was fixed and I was writing away on the book.

AM - Ideas that pop up like that are great... Was it a pretty 'easy' thing to incorporate the new elements of GK into the BE:WaW system?

AN - OK, this may sound boastful or arrogant, but it was very easy.

To start the project I re-read my Gear Krieg library. I wanted as much info as possible to get a feel of the walker capabilities. Soon it became obvious that Gears are not invincible fighting machines. They are crude walkers that can reach combat zones that are normally only accessibly for infantry, but they are not tanks on legs.

The Gears are cramped, rely on crude computators and are difficult to maintain. However, their unique capabilities also gave them a unique role on the alternate history WW II battlefield. I needed some new traits to cover the unique abilities of combat walker. Soon the Multiple Movement System and Walker trait were created and testing could begin. The more we played the more everything fell into place.

The Battlefield Evolution system again proved flexible enough to represent even these units. A Ready Action to change Movement System, increased size to get better Movement in difficult terrain, no Multifire to represent the effect of the very small walker crews, walker assault for close quarter fighting etc. etc.

All in all, I am very happy how these units look and feel on the table while using the Battlefield Evolution system. Hopefully, these units give you a lot of fun and enhance your Battlefield Evolution: World at War experience.

Oh and I am already working on new traits like Overheating weapons, Guided rockets, Haywire rays etc.

AM - Do you have a favourite thing about using GK material in your typical BE:WaW game?

AN - I just love to see the DP9 miniatures next to "serious" real life units. I like the contrast, the weird feel.

AM - Indeed! The real and the unreal, as it were, acting together as though all was normal. Was there anything you couldn't fit into the GK supplement that you wish you could have?

AN - Not really, I am quite happy was we covered in the first book. As said above I re-read all my GK books. With a good feel of what these walkers can do and can't do, I had to decide about the scope of this book. It also became clear that it was not possible to squeeze every vehicle that is mentioned in Dream Pod 9's books into one supplement, especially "Fighting Vehicles of the Modern Age" is full of additional vehicles, too many for this supplement.

So I decided to start with the core units of the Gear Krieg rulebook. Units for which Dream Pod 9 also produce miniatures! This makes a lot of sense to me since we want to play with these cute little walkers!

But we already have a healthy discussion about the next releases on the DP9 forum.

AM - Given that some might think GK crosses a line beyond the traditional wargaming foundation of historically accurate units, what's your pitch to inspire people into playing GK or the GK BE:WaW expansion?

AN - The main reason for me is the above mentioned "political correctness" and the possibility to play "What If?" games. You are not forced to replay the invasion of France for the n-th time with the same units over and over. You can do something new! In addition: The game is very easy on your wallet. Get yourself 2-3 walkers, 1 infantry platoon and some tanks and you have a decent army to start!

AM - The GK expansion book looks fantastic – a fine continuation of the graphic design standards of DP9 books. How did the look and layout come about?

AN - Thanks! 98% of the praise has to go directly to Dave Robotham.

He is in charge of the layout. We wanted a layout the would be recognizable as a Gear Krieg book but also keep the feel of our previous publications. So we took a serious look at all DP9 books and our layouts in the Vehicle Compendium books.

Let me explain it when looking at the cover of our Gear Krieg book: All DP9 GK books had the black background, the red frame and at least one walker or vehicle on the cover. All our books have the used paper look and at least 1 tank on it.

So we decided to keep the red frame on top of the used and wrinkled paper. We added a walker (the Thor), but used a photo and not a drawing. Since the book is not only covering German walkers we needed something for the other nations in the book. As an homage to the original art we used the Longstreet drawing and two real life medals to put something British and Soviet on the cover.

So all is a mixture of original material and our new input. Worked for me!

AM - With all of this work you do, what's your current gaming schedule like?

AN - 1 game per week! IMO the biggest mistake a game designer can do is to not play his games. The rest of my quality spare time goes for research, writing, painting the minis and photographing everything needed for the books.

AM - I would agree that playing games is vital. Anything else you'd like to put out here and let everyone know?

AN - Historical gamers can be incredible "rivet counting" and detail obsessed gamers. You can't believe how often I was flamed because there are no stats for the XXX (insert manufacturer of your liking) SMG or the lack of Grenades in the game! People are often overlooking that Battlefield Evolution is first and foremost a game and not a simulation. The abstraction level is pretty high.

I would like to see a more laid back attitude to gaming. It is our hobby and should not be a reason for bitching, yelling and heated discussions.
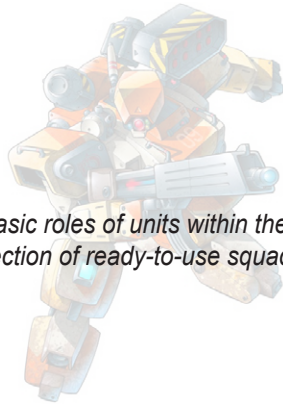
Each to his own and me to pulpy super-science gaming!

AM - Thanks a tonne for the interview, and for a great product that expands the bredth of GK!

You can find Agis' work at:

http://www.agisn.de/html/gear_krieg.html

My explanation of the basic roles of units within the Northern army, with a selection of ready-to-use squads.

GP

Role ?

In an army that's made of specialists, a jack-of-all-trades is in an awkward position. The GP provides numbers however, as well as a defensive buffer and can also be used to mop up after your hard-hitters.

Composition ?
- Vanilla : CGL, 4 Hunters, 2 weapons. One of the base Hunters can be swapped for a Cheetah, which will make for an excellent spotter. 215-265 TV
- El Cheapo (WFPA) : CGL, 4 SD Hunters, 2 weapons. Same role as above, the Cheetah can be swapped for a Ferret or a Bobcat instead. 155-200 TV
- Fire teams : CGL, 5 Hunters, 2 weapons. Divide the squad into two 3 gear mini-squads, each with one weapon upgrade, usually SC. This works quite well with the sub squads rule. 255 TV
- Recon (NAF) : CGL, up to 4 Cheetahs. 250-300 TV
- Tigers (UMF) : CGL (Sabertooth/Jaguar), 2 Hunters with MAC, 2 Tigers. This is the only GP than can field that many MACs without using veteran upgrades. 270 TV
- Weapon squad : Same as Vanilla, but uses a veteran upgrade to get 4 weapons instead of 2. 225-240 TV

Equipment ?

Depending on weapon upgrades, the GP will be able to fill different purposes.
- MACs are pretty much the standard upgrade, giving you better firepower than LACs without altering roles. You will need to be careful about range if you want to stay competitive with southern LBZKs, however.
- SCs are very specialized weapons that turn the GP into a dedicated anti-tank/close range squad, as well as a priority target.
- FGCs perform worse than LACs unless you're absolutely point-blank (2"), but HHGs are downright nasty. This can make for powerful grenadier squads if you combine El Cheapo and Weapon squad GPs, but you might as well take a Dragoon squad then. (Coincidently, Dragoons are WFPA core choices...)

CGL ?

Headhunter by default, can be swapped for Jaguar (or Sabertooth if UMF). There's little point in upgrading weaponry, since your CGL will be mostly busy with coordinating fire and staying alive. Jaguar provides better defense (and offense), while the Sabertooth provides better communications.

Recon

Role ?

The Northern Recon squad, fully fitted, is the most powerful EW squad of the game. Its roles includes spotting, electronic superiority and command point generation, but it can also fight well if equipped properly.

Compositions ?

The compositions below are really just guidelines, feel free to mix and match, so that the squad fits your needs. Recon squad Gears have no reason to stay grouped.
- Vanilla : CGL, 4 Cheetahs. Excellent for jamming and spotting, but expensive. 345 TV
- El Cheapo : CGL, 4 Ferrets. Same role as above, but much cheaper. Little ECM capability. 215-235 TV
- EW superiority/CP spamming (Veteran only, UMF recommended) : CGL (Thunder Jaguar), 2 Wild Ferrets/Weasels and 2 White Cats (or Weasels if UMF). Spread the ECCM gears around to make sure they can offer assistance where needed. Alternatively, keep 'em safe in the rear and spam 5 Command Points a turn. 225-305 TV
- Force recon (NAF recommended) : CGL, 3 Ferrets Mk IIs with MRFs, 1 Wild Ferret. For a cheaper squad, or if not NAF, swap the Ferret Mk IIs for SD Hunters. Better ranged firepower than a GP, for a similar price. (Coincidently, Recons are NAF core choices...) 190-235TV

CGL ?

Unless you're fielding force recons, your CGL isn't going to have to coordinate fire, so a Thunder Jaguar is an excellent upgrade since it'll be able to use its satellite uplink freely.

Strike

Role ?

The Strike squad is a powerful, straight-forward direct-fire killer. It has little AE/IF capability, and requires an elite slot (unless you've chosen UMFA), but its ability to field unlimited MBZKs makes it an excellent all-rounder, efficient against everything up to medium tanks. Not that heavy tanks should feel safe either...

Composition ?

- Vanilla : Jaguar CGL, 4 Gears with MBZKs. The more Jaguars you can afford, the more powerful the squad becomes. Avoid mixing in low-defense models such as Grizzlies/Kodiaks, so as not to provide your opponent a visible "weak-link". 350-450 TV
- "Tag you're dead" (NAF only, veteran recommended) : swap Hunters for Cheetahs, equip Jaguar(s) with AGM. Designate, tag, kill. Excellent anti-gear capability. 350-400 TV
- Bear Pack (Veteran) : Jaguar CGL, 3 Grizzlies with HBZK and IRPs, 1 Kodiak with HBZK. Due to low defense mods, this squad is only viable with the 1940+ upgrades, but otherwise, it provides a strong anti-tank capability. 400-440 TV
- HRP spam (WFPA only, veteran recommended) : Jaguar CGL, up to 3 Peacemaker Razorbacks. This changes the squad's role to fire-support. Quite stylish, but not necessarily the most optimal use of 300 points and a veteran elite slot. About 300 TV

Fire Support

Role ?

The name says it all, but the FS squad's sole purpose is to provide long-range indirect firepower, with HGMs. It can also be equipped for anti-tank, medium/short-range fire support, and demolition. While you can equip Grizzlies with MBZKs, if you want direct firepower, a Strike is more appropriate (and you should give a look at the 1940+ upgrades).

Composition ?

- Vanilla : CGL, 2 Hunters, 2 Grizzlies. The Grizzlies provide fire support with HGMs, while the Hunters provide defense and spotting. Recon drones allows the Hunters to tag targets, but the squad benefits greatly from NAF rules to field Cheetahs instead. You can link the MRPs for better firepower up close, but keep in mind you're supposed to stay at range and use HGMs. Alternatively, you can equip the Hunters with MBZKs and split the squad in two, the Grizzlies stay behind, while the Hunters and CGL go hunting. 295 TV
- Deluxe (Veteran only) : CGL, Cheetah, 3 Grizzlies. Same role as Vanilla, but better concentration of firepower. 360-400 TV
- ATM (Veteran only) : Same as Vanilla or Deluxe, but the Grizzlies are equipped with ATMs instead. Do not make the mistake of thinking this is a cost-saving measure, as it changes the squad role. It is my opinion that Klemms make better ATM platforms, but you have the advantage of integrated Cheetah support, especially if playing NAF. 270-350TV

- MRP (WFPA) : Same as Vanilla or Deluxe, but swapping the Grizzlies for Bears and linking MRPs. You lose your long-range firepower, but you maintain a strong medium/short-range firepower for a much lower cost. 250-350 TV
- Demolition (NAF recommended) : CGL, 3 Hunters with demolition drones, 2 Grizzlies. Split the squad in two, the CGL spots for the Grizzlies, preferably with a recon drone, while the 3 Hunters go hunting. This squad becomes much more expensive, and a lot scarier, if you swap the Hunters for Cheetahs with the NAF option. 350-450 TV

CGL ?

See the GP section above. If you don't expect your CGL to perform a front-line role in a veteran FS squad, you might want to deploy Thunder Grizzlies with comm upgrades. Seriously expensive, but so stylish.

Dragoon

Role ?

"The Prophet's Blessing". A truly multipurpose squad, the Dragoon is the real GP of the North and can be set up as a Strike, a Fire Support, or a GP squad depending on equipment. Even more than the Recon, there's too many possibilities to list, so don't assume the following list is set in stone or even remotely exhaustive.

Compositions ?

- "GP" : Many configurations of the Dragoon squad allow you to replicate (or come close to) GP setups, especially if you swap the cheetahs for SD Hunters. Whether it's worth taking a Dragoon for that, or you should simply take a GP instead, I will not debate, but it's worth noting that GP and Dragoons each have a different priority status... 200-250 TV
- Close Assault : CGL (preferably Jaguar). Jaguar with SC, 3 Hunters/SD Hunters with FGC/HHGs. This squad has virtually no long-range capacity, but trades that for serious close range firepower. 230-260 TV
- Grenadier : CGL, 4 Gears with FGC/HHG. Get up close and personal. Even Southern players are going to wince. 195-225 TV. Up to 300 TV if using Jaguars/Cheetahs.
- "Fire support" : 3 Rabid Grizzlies with HGL, 2 SD Hunters. The firepower of 3 MFMs is brutal, and units that manage to get closer will still have to endure 3 HGLs. The SD Hunters act as spotters and bodyguards (HHGs make for some nice deterrents). You could always keep the Cheetahs, but the squad is expensive enough as-is. About 350 TV with SD Hunters.
- "Strike" (Veteran only) : Jaguar CGL, 2 Jaguars with AGMs, 2 Cheetahs. Pick a target, tag it, kill it. 335 TV
- "Strike"[2] (Veteran only) : Jaguar CGL, 2 SD Hunters, 2 Jaguars with linked MRPs. About 300 TV

- Cheetahs (NAF only) : CGL (Jaguar recommended), 4 Cheetahs. Or 4 Strike Cheetahs. Or 4 Cheetahs with HHGs. 275-350 TV

CGL ?
The default CGL is a rather poor choice, so whenever you can, upgrade your squad to veteran to be able to swap it for a Jaguar. Rabid Grizzlies are otherwise good machines, but they make very poor CGLs. If you can't do that, keep your leader hidden behind cover and have him provide fire support for your squad instead of designating targets as usual.

Ranger

Role ?
Infiltration, assassination. Rangers can also perform recon duties, but lack the EW capabilities of the much cheaper Recon squad.

Compositions ?
- Sniper : Jaguar CGL, 2 Jaguars with HRFs, 2 Cheetahs with MRF and Paratrooper. Stealth is an excellent upgrade to both defensive and offensive capabilities, and just like the Strike squad, you can upgrade your Gears to skill 3 without using a veteran slot. Alternatively, you can go veteran and swap the cheetahs for Black Cats with HRFs. Just be very careful when going stationary. 350-450 TV.

CGL ?
You can upgrade your leader to a Thunder Jaguar without using a veteran slot, but keep in mind you might not always have an action to spare, since the CGL is going to be designating targets most of the time.

Airborne

Role ?
Infiltration, assault. The Airborne squad shares many characteristics with the Strike squad, but with better AE capability. Like the Recon and Dragoon squads, you can customize loadout extensively, although you can't really change the squad's role. Avoid equipping Hunters with MBZKs, as Jaguars are much better in this role.

Composition ?
- Vanilla : CGL, 4 Hunter Paratroopers. In its basic configuration, the Airborne is a decent short-range squad, although upgrading one or two Hunter to Jaguars (with either MBZKs or MRPs) can greatly enhance firepower. 300-400 TV

- Veteran : CGL, 4 Hunter Commandos. Same as Vanilla, but with increased anti-gear and area saturation capacity, at the cost of stun ability. Swapping one Commando for a "specialist" can expand your squad's role. Recommended choices are Commando with EW package (ECM/ECCM), Cheetah/Jaguar with LGL (Stun ability), and Jaguar with MRPs (saturation fire). 350-400 TV
- "Strike" : CGL, 3 Jaguars with MBZKs, 1 LGL gear. Use it as you would use a Strike squad, for direct fire with one gear providing AE/stun capability. To avoid providing your opponent with an easy target, pick either a Cheetah Paratrooper or a Jaguar with LGL as the support unit. About 380 TV

Striders

Just don't.

Northern striders look good on the shelves, and that's it. Klemms are better than Mammoth in all aspects, and Tyburrs, Hardy Allers or even field guns are good Thunderhammer replacements.

If you really want to deploy them, make sure they stay completely hidden at all times, use smoke launchers, and a keep a squad nearby as a screen against infiltrators. They might survive a couple of turn. Maybe.

Light tank

Role ?
Depending on vehicle chosen.

Compositions ?
There's little possibility for creative squads here, just make sure you field vehicles that complement each other.
- Klemms are excellent ATM platforms and work fine on their own. While they've suffered with L&L, you can still tag your target with a recon drone, designate for coordinated fire, and shoot in the same turn. Make sure to shoot directly if you can, so as to maximize damage with ATMs.
- Bandit Hunters are cheap skirmishers. Low firepower, but they're inexpensive and survivable. They make good spotters/bodyguards within a fire-support tank squad.
- Tyburrs aren't a good deal anymore. If you're looking for LFGs, a Field Gun section is much cheaper for the same firepower. Stormhammers still pack a mean punch, though.

- Jaxons are nothing more than moving, armored HRPs. They can only perform one task, but they perform it very well. Park them behind cover, and as long as they don't run out of ammo, they will be able to saturate whole areas with HRP fire.

Heavy Tank

Role ?
Either the most powerful direct fire gun of the game (Aller), or the most powerful indirect fire gun of the game (Hardy Aller).

In L&L, due to a combination of low volume of fire and high cost, Allers aren't a very good deal despite their extreme single-shot lethality. You're better off with light tanks or Gears, which will provide you much more bang for your buck. If you really want to field some, put them in cover, pick a single target, and kill it dead. Just remember they're more vulnerable than they look, especially the Hardy Aller.

"And STAY down!"

THE CANGAMES 2009 EXPERIENCE
BRAD BELLOWS
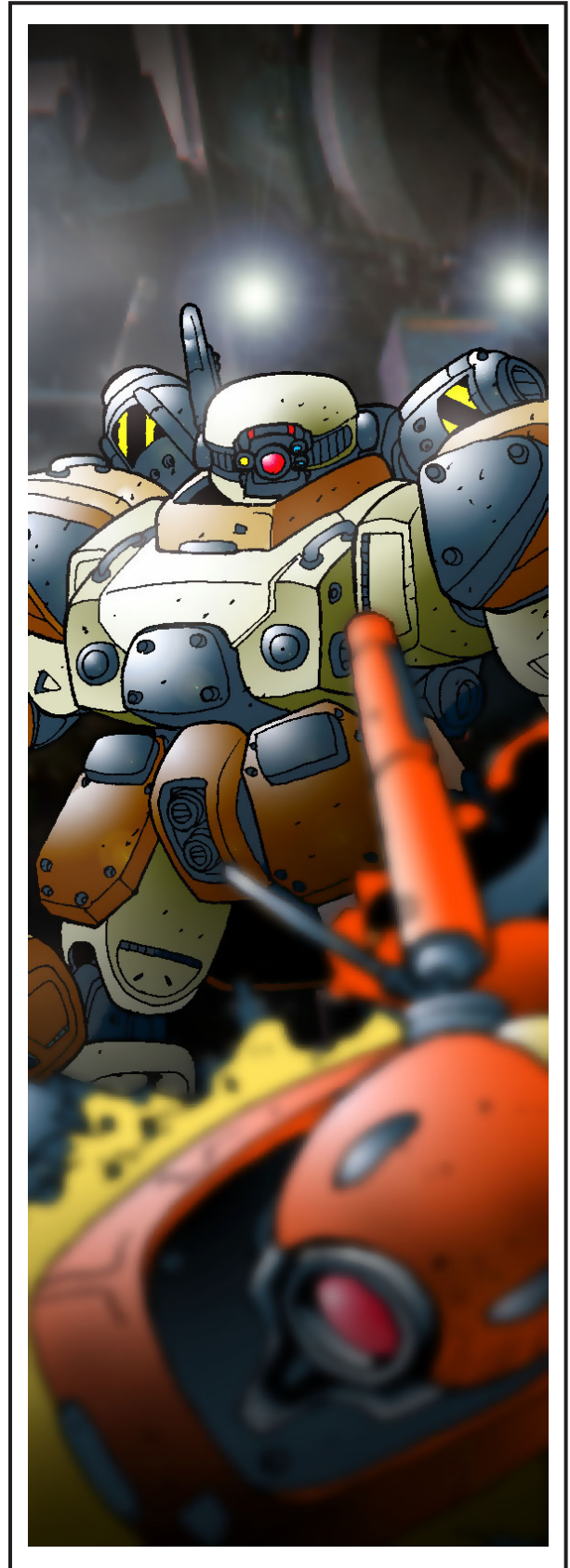
The Northern Commander reviewed the strategic plan with a dispassionate eye, half listening to the Chaplain giving one last rousing sermon to the troops. Over the past two years of joint field exercises, the South had edged out the North in performance results. This year, High Command charged his regiment with reversing the trend of Southern victories. As the Chaplain closed the service, the Commander disagreed with the benediction's wording, but embraced its sentiment.

"May the Heathen feel the scourge of retribution."

As another CanGames approached, I felt a desire to give back something to the game that provided me so many fun moments over the past few years. I decided to run an additional tournament using the lightning rules I developed to allow new players to get a taste for the game. I also decided to play in the Canadian Championship tournament and the Battle for Terra Nova scenario. I soon realized I bit off more than I could chew, as this led to many, many late nights assembling and painting miniatures and I suffered from a chronic lack of sleep for the two weeks leading up to the Convention.

The Lightning Tournament was covered in an earlier article. This article chronicles the adventures of my Northern Forces over the convention weekend.

700TV Canadian Championships

My main goal for this year was to create a winning Northern Army. I heard numerous complaints on the forum boards that Northern armies were at a disadvantage against other factions due to their army building constraints. I wanted to prove this was not the case.

FORCE RATIONALE

The switch to the Locked and Loaded rule-set required a change in thinking. The special modifiers that applied to indirect fire proved to be very effective during my games over the past year, so I filed that in my head as a possible key to victory. The changes to the Area Effect trait eliminated the ability to destroy squads through repeated attacks, but the new stun trait open up other possibilities that I thought I might be able to exploit.

Since last year, I had also played with calculations to determine how well an army would perform on the field. I call these my Army Potential Effectiveness (APE) equations, which focused on the areas of actions, number of units, number of combat groups, and the overall mobility of the army. I wanted to maximize these characteristics to give myself as much of an edge as possible over any opponents I might face.

Having the most combat groups was still useful, but offset by the fact that you would be giving Command Points and an initiative bonus to your opponent to make up for any combat group disparity. I figured that having more combat groups than your opponent must still be a big advantage, or else the designers would not have gone through the trouble to penalize it so heavily. Since most factions could create an army that had 3 combat groups, I tried to create an army that would have at least one more combat group than my opponents. That way I would always have the last activation in a turn.

I also wanted to have more units than my opponents. Based on my experience, the more actions and units you are able to throw at an enemy, the faster you can wear him down through attrition or other means. I also wanted most of my units to be mobile, as I would probably need to move quickly to reach various objectives before time was called.

My combined army of Northern models I used at CanGames 2009

NORLIGHT ARMED FORCES (NAF) ARMY [700 TV]

4 Combat Groups, 15 Units, 17 Actions

Recon Squad
(Jaguar, 2 Ferret MkII, Wild Ferret, Weasel) (345) (Core) <Veteran>
Options:
• Swap 4 Cheetah for Ferret (-120)
• Swap 2 Ferret for Ferret MkII (+10)
• Swap 2 Ferret MkII LAC for MRF (0)
• Swap Ferret for Weasel (+5)
• Swap Weasel LAC for MRF (0)
• Swap Ferret for Wild Ferret (-5)
• Swap Wild Ferret DPG for LRF (0)
• Swap Jaguar MAC for HRF (0)
• Add Level 3 Defence to Jaguar and Ferrets (+15)
• Make Jaguar a Chaplain (+20) 270 points

Dragoon Squad
(Jaguar, 4 SD Hunter) (305) (Specialist) <Veteran>
Options:
• Swap Rabid Grizzly for Jaguar (-30)
• Swap 2 Hunter for Cheetah (+50)
• Swap 4 Cheetah for SD Hunter (-160)
• Swap LAC/HGs for FGC/HHGs to 3 SD Hunter (+15)
• Add HPZ and HMG to 3 SD Hunter (+15)
• Swap Jaguar LRP for AGM (+10)
• Add Level 3 Attack and Defence to Jaguar and 2 FGC/HPZ SD Hunter (+30)
• Add Level 3 Leadership to Jaguar (+10)
• Jaguar is Army Commander 245 points

Infantry Platoon
(4 Squads) (60) (Core)
Options:
• Add 3 Light Mortar (+45) 105 points

Light Tank Squad
(BH Klemm) (160) (Specialist)
Options:
• Swap Klemm for BH Klemm (-80) 80 points

Support
• Fighter Air Strike [2], OR
• AA Turret [1], 2 x Medium Artillery Strikes [1]

By that point I knew in my mind what I wanted to do, but it still took me over 20 revisions before I finally settled on the army shown to the left.

TACTICAL DOCTRINE

As a tactical theme, I chose to focus on the effectiveness of indirect fire in the Locked and Loaded ruleset. The infantry Light Mortar is ideal for its relatively cheap cost and its ability to stun any unit smaller than a Mammoth within a 3-inch radius. If I could stun my opponents at the start of a game, they would be at an immediate disadvantage, as they would have to decide to use their actions to remove stun counters or accept the stun penalty when firing at my units.

My general battle plan invariably followed this sequence for every game:

For deployment, I would place the infantry, Bandit Hunter Klemm, Recon Squad and Dragoon squad in that order. The Light Mortar Infantry would be stationary in cover where possible, and the remaining units would be at top speed.

First, I would activate the Infantry and maneuver the lead squad to Forward Observe a target and indirect fire two of the Light Mortars to generate stun counters and hamper enemy deployment. I would place the remaining Light Mortar on "Standby for Coordinates" (SfC).

Next, I would activate the Tank Squad at combat speed, usually spending actions to use "We're in Trouble" (WiT) or moving top speed to improve my defense modifiers and pop smoke to provide obscurement before putting its remaining action on SfC.

The order of the next two Combat Groups was interchangeable, but the Recon Squad would slow to combat speed and either snipe or forward observe enemy models for the units on standby to target. The Light Mortar would stun first and then the Bandit Hunter Klemm's Medium Rocket Pack would follow up to maximize damage. The Weasel and Wild Ferret would either save their actions for Electronic Warfare support with their ECM/ECCM or Command Point generation with their satellite uplinks.

The Dragoon squad would roar in at top speed towards their target, slowing to combat speed once in position to destroy enemies or achieve objectives. The Fragmentation Cannons were used against gears and infantry while the Heavy Panzerfausts were used against slower, heavier targets. The Heavy Hand Grenades provided additional firepower to stun

and damage other units. The SD Hunters were also tasked with attacking high-performance enemy gears in melee to tie up their actions and movement.

For Support Points, I had an AA Turret for an initiative sink and a pair of Medium Artillery Strikes available in case I needed them. But in the tournament, I used a fighter airstrike in all my games to hit weaknesses in the enemy battle-line.

ARMY CONSTRUCTION

This would be the first army I would have to paint from scratch since my 750TV Southern Army back in 2007. I wanted to adequately portray the Northern character, and so I added a Chaplain to the Recon Squad to provide Mamoud's comfort to the troops in the stressful times ahead.

For modelling, I used most of the miniatures I had won in the last two years of tournaments to build what I hoped was a winnable force. But I did end up purchasing a blister of Weasels and two blisters of Stripped Down Hunters to flesh out my Recon and Dragoon Squads.

Taking a page from Stephane "Tekrat04" Boyer's PRDF army, I also purchased two hundred rare earth magnets 1/16" in diameter and between 1/32" and 1/16" in length. Prior to assembly, I drilled small holes through the hands and shoulder hardpoints and inserted the magnets, using crazy glue as a fastener. I then attached magnets to the grips of the gun and missile weapons for quick interchangability. This step probably doubled the assembly time required for my models, but the results were very satisfactory.

After assembling and priming the models, I had to decide on a paint scheme. I wanted to make the North visually distinctive from the South on the table, yet still look like the army was using some sort of camouflage. I decided on a base coat of Burnt Sienna, which had a really nice consistency. Then I gave the gears a dark wash that made them too dark for my tastes, so I lightly re-applied the Burnt Sienna.

As I worked on this army concurrently with my 1000TV army for Sunday's battle, I wanted to work in a camouflage scheme that might be used by airborne troops. To that end I found a Tamiya colour called Sky that had an almost green tinge to it. I painted both shoulder blocks on all my gears that colour and proceeded to dry-brush it on to highlight my gears. I added a light-blue highlight to the shoulders and after detailing I had a decent looking force. To denote my Chaplain, I highlighted the Jaguar's shoulders and head with burnished gold to try to mimic a halo effect.

Then I had to set aside my completed army paint the remaining gears in my lightning armies. I only managed to get one midnight playtest in versus my Visigoth-centred Southern army from CanGames '07. The North defeated the South in that engagement, so I felt comfortable that my army was competitive.

T-DAY – SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2009

The morning found me frantically trying to finish off the miniature armies for the Lightning tournament I was running the next day. I arrived at the convention with less than 20 minutes to spare and hurriedly got my minis prepared. I didn't see too many of the players around this time until just before the tournament started. We had the same number of players as last year, but with a couple of new faces. Players who participated last year sent their regrets, but had work commitments that superseded play. Robert Dubois and Phil LeClerc ran the tournament this year while John Nguyen ran the DP9 booth.

The organizers called everyone together and explained the scenarios before pairing us off with our first round opponents. The biggest change this year was the switch to the Locked and Loaded ruleset with their objective based scoring. All games were played in daylight with no additional effects. The size of the boards was doubled from last year to 3 feet wide by 4 feet long. Each game was given 90 minutes to complete 5 turns.

Game One: Desert Map, South Side, Wide Deployment
Opponent: Bryan "BryanR" Rombough
Army: Leagueless (Standard Squad [Kodiak, 3 Hunter], Standard Squad [Spitting Cobra, 3 Jäger], and Standard Squad [Jaguar, 3 Hunter]. Support: 2 Command Points

Objectives:
North - Seize Central Pillar (2VP); Survive Recon Squad (2VP)
Leagueless - Seize Central Pillar (2VP); Survive Jaguar Standard Squad (2VP)

Bryan wasn't scheduled to play in the tournament, but got pressed into service at the last minute to cover for an uneven number of entrants. Bryan has been the local Ottawa Pod Squad representative for as long as I can remember and has played Blitz even longer than I have, so his tactical skills demand respect.

The play area was interesting, with tall rock columns blocking line of sight on the west side of the map and the east side relatively free from obstructions. I was told the columns stretched heavenward to infinity so I couldn't place any of my units on top of the rock formations. We both deployed across a wide front, with my Infantry and Klemm huddling in the cover of the mesas

with the Dragoons clustered around the only cover on the right side of the map. My Recon Squad spread out across the length of the board to make the Recon objective as difficult as possible. Bryan deployed one squad each in the centre and left and right flanks along his edge.

On Turn 1, I used CPs to launch multiple rounds from my infantry light mortars and stun the majority of Bryan's squads. My Recon squad rolled east to stay out of killing range of Bryan's heavy standard groups. The Dragoons moved towards their Standard Squad objective as both combat groups pelted out of cover at top speed, quickly eating up the range between them. Other than a couple of light damage results from the mortars, weapons fire of both sides was mostly ineffective.

<< Insert CG09-Game1-SuddenDeathBR.JPG in this section of the report, where ever it best fits.>>
<<Caption for photo: "Sudden Death – The Dragoons complete an objective. Photo by Bryan Rombough.">>

The killing started on Turn 2 as the Jaguar Standard Squad activated, slowed to combat speed, and threw grenades on top of the Dragoon gears. One Jäger's grenade deviated badly and ended up damaging his squad-mates. One of the SD Hunters activated out of sequence to attempt a ram on the Leagueless Jaguar at top speed, but missed. In the meantime, the remaining Dragoon members each pumped a round from their Frag Cannons and AGMs at point-blank range into the rear of their chosen targets, overkilling the entire squad to complete their objective.

As the fighting escalated on the east flank, the infantry and Klemm fired more mortar rounds and medium missiles onto the remaining Leagueless units, destroying a couple of stunned Jägers. The Kodiak Squad moved closer to engage the infantry platoon, but only managed to wipe out two bases of the surprisingly tenacious units. The Cobra went stationary to fire its HRP indirectly at the Klemm and knock off its sturdy box. The Klemm used its remaining action to call in a Fighter airstrike, which damaged the Kodiak before banking behind the Cobra to overkill it with a light autocannon from point blank range.

On Turn 3, the Leagueless closed ranks as the gears of the Kodiak Squad shredded an infantry team. The Kodiak closed with the Klemm and heavily damaged it, but reaction fire from the Klemm pummelled the assault gear into the ground with an MRP salvo. The Dragoon Squad rushed the objective and overran the remnants of the Cobra Squad. At this point, the game was called on time. Little did I realize this would be a regular occurrence.

Final Score: North – 3 VP [Recon - 2 VP, Seize - 1 VP]; Leagueless – 0 VP
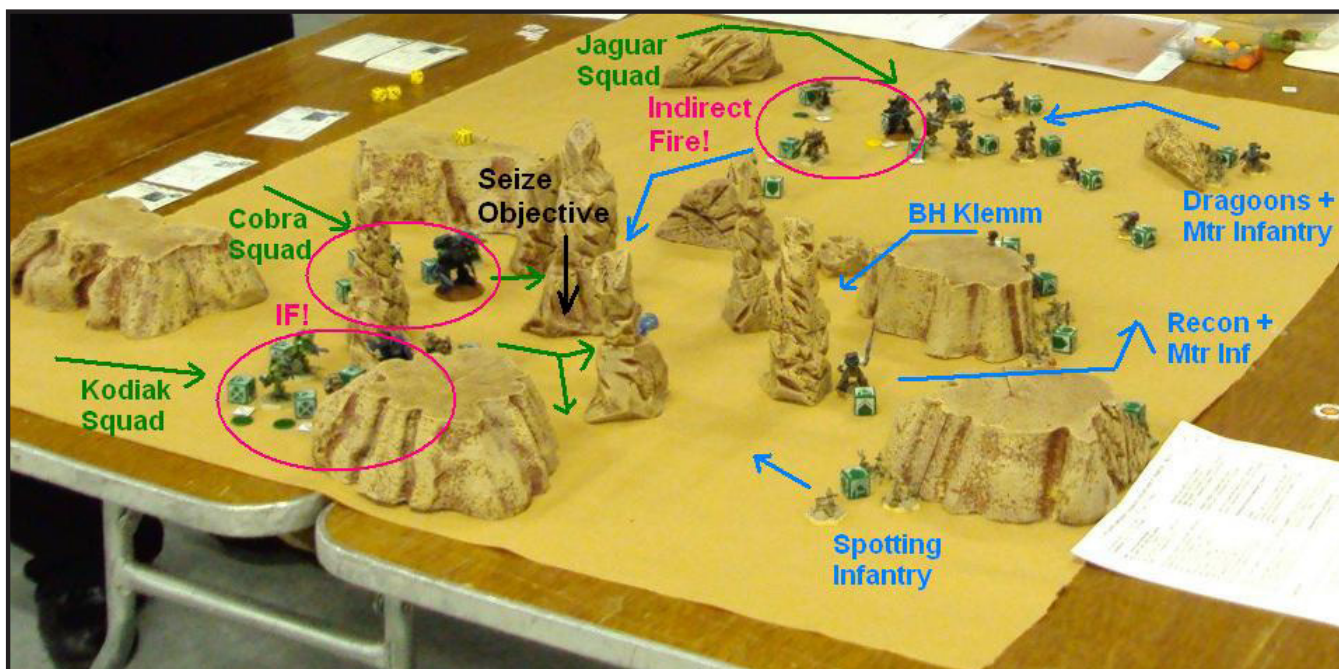
Game 1 Annotation. The Leagueless get flanked. Photo by Robert Dubois.

Game Two: Military Base Map, South Side, Narrow Deployment

Opponent: Paul "Attila of Terra" Nemeth

Army: Eastern Sun Emirates with CNCS ties (Northern Heavy Tank Squad [Aller], Strider Cadre [Naga, Long Fang Naga, Sagittarius]). Support: Fighter Airstrike.

Objectives:

North – Breakthrough Enemy Deployment Zone (2VP); Seize Communications Tower (2VP)

ESE – Protect Naga (1VP); Assassinate Recon Squad Jaguar (1VP); Hold Communications Tower (2VP)

I had been looking forward to this next game for about 3 years. Paul is DP9's military advisor and architect of the Colonial Expeditionary Force's second invasion of Terra Nova in Return to Cats Eye. I knew I would have to bring out my 'A' game if I was to have any chance for victory. Thankfully, he handicapped himself in that he was playtesting a strider army for DP9's game designer, John Buckmaster. I faced additional pressure when Robert ambled over and said I was probably going to lose, based on the way he saw Paul dismantle his last opponent. Fortunately, I have lots of experience fighting both with and against heavy armour, so I made a plan to exploit the almost 4-to-1 numerical disparity between our two armies – the Terra Novan equivalent of a Zerg Rush.

The map consisted of two parts: A military base on the northern side and an open south side with very little cover. I set up my infantry, Klemm and Recon Squad Jaguar behind whatever scrap of cover I could find so the Aller's Heavy Railgun couldn't target them. I did deploy one of my infantry squads and the Dragoons at top speed out in the open to entice the Emirate forces to target them instead of the more mission-vital units of my army. The first thing I did was activate my Bandit Hunter Klemm, spend an action on WiT, pop smoke on top of itself and the Recon Jaguar to provide cover from airstrikes, and put my last action on standby.

Paul activated his Striders, advancing his Sagittarius towards the barrier fence and settling his Long Fang Naga to fire indirectly. His Commander's Naga rounded a building and Forward Observed one of my SD Hunters. I immediately spent a CP to activate the gear out of sequence and move it out of the killing zone at top speed. The infantry activated and the lead squad Forward Observed the Long Fang. The Aller wanted to pop spoke between the two units to break line of sight, but the tank could not launch the smoke close enough. Three infantry mortars crashed into the artillery strider, reducing it to flaming wreckage in seconds.

Seeing what happened to his stationary ally, the Aller opted to move from behind a building and set up a fire lane down the main road leading into the base and wait for my approach. The Dragoons and most of the Recon squad rushed the fence at top speed, keeping as much cover between themselves and the Aller as possible. The Aller targeted the Ferrets with its HRG and Light Pulse Laser Cannon, but the distance was great enough that both shots missed their mark.

Then both of us called in our airstrikes. Since I had covered his assassination target with smoke, he decided to use his fighter in an intercept role against my fighter as it bored down towards the rear arc of his Commander's Naga. As I closed on the Naga, he declared snap-fire with his fighter, forcing me to fire my LACs at short range, only damaging the strider instead of destroying it. As both fighters streaked off the map, we were flabbergasted
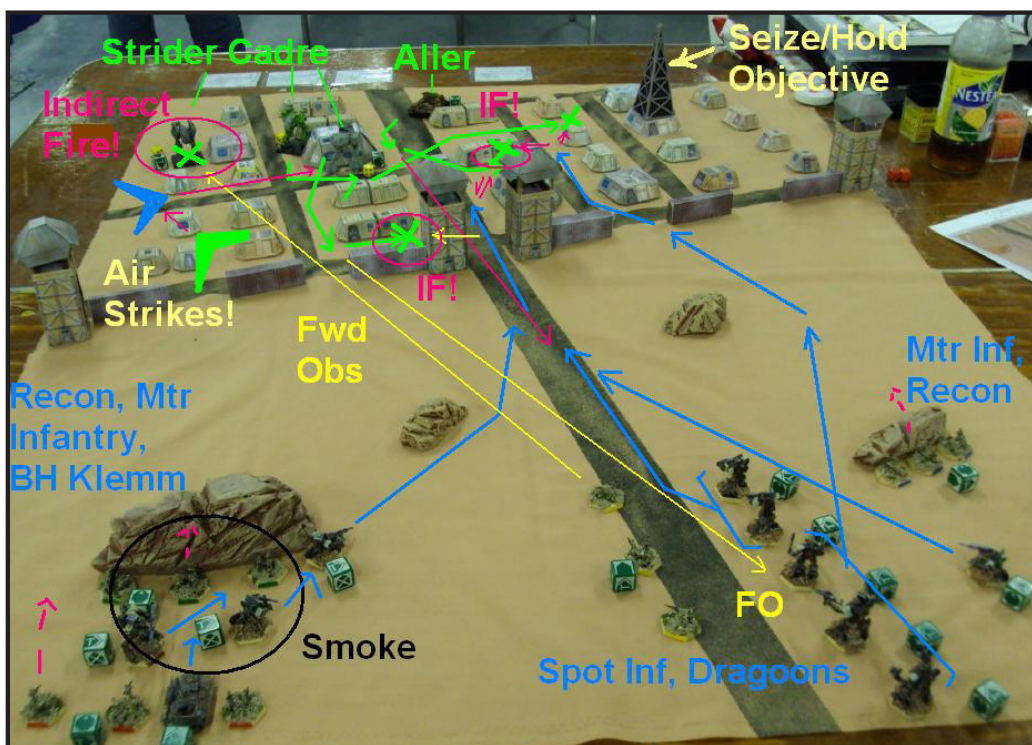
Game 2 Annotation. The ESE gets overrun.

to find out that it took us an hour to play through our first turn. It was here that I realized my lack of sleep was catching up with me as time dilation set in.

After a short pizza break, we started our second turn more quickly than the first. The Sagittarius held its ground, crab-walking sideways as it fired its ABM at my lead infantry squad, stunning them. The infantry retaliated by Forward Observing the Aller and using CPs to rain down Light Mortar rounds on the tank's position, whittling away at its armour until it had heavy damage. Both the Aller and the Naga tried to move closer to the communications town to set up a defensive position, but the Northern gears had already penetrated the perimeter. The Ferrets took advantage of the road to move at combat speed into the base. The first Ferret Forward Observed the Sagittarius, which was smashed by indirect MRPs from the Klemm. The second Ferret closed with the Aller, who declared snap fire. The Ferret crippled the tank with its Medium Rifle, and the tank's return fire with the LPLC only did light damage to the Ferret.

At the start of Turn 3, the Dragoon Jaguar activated first and spent a CP to fire an Anti Gear Missile point-blank at both the Aller and the Naga, wiping out the entire ESE army and leaving the NAF in complete control of the base. Unfortunately the game was immediately called on time before the rest of the forces could move in, with the closest northern gear a tantalizing ½-inch out of range of the seize objective.

Final Score: North – 2 VP [Breakthrough – 2 VP]; ESE – 0 VP

Game Three: City Bridge Map, North Side, Narrow Deployment
Opponent: Ryan "Henshini" Henshaw (SRA Strike Cadre [2 Black Mamba with HGLCs and Field Armour, Black Mamba with HGLC and VLRP, Jäger], GP Cadre [2 Iguana, 2 Jäger], GP Cadre [Sidewinder, 3 Jäger],
Support: 2 Command Points.

Objectives:
North – Escape BH Klemm (2 VP); Protect Recon Squad Jaguar (1 VP); Assassinate Army Commander Iguana (1 VP)
SRA – Wipe Out Recon Squad (2VP); Hold Statue (2VP)

By this time, my lack of sleep the previous week was catching up with me. I played against Ryan last year and he proved to be the toughest opponent I faced. This year was no different. At this point, my late nights and intense games were taking their toll. I completely forget that I had an airstrike available and was taking several minutes between moves as I kept forgetting what my objectives were.

I had to break out across a bridge in order to win, and try to keep Ryan's army away from my Recon Squad and their seize objective. I set up my infantry and recon units behind buildings and deployed my Dragoons and Klemm to rush the bridge. Meanwhile, the SRA deployed with their forces lined up along the roads like the ducks in a shooting gallery. The Dragoons and Klemm pelted across the bridge at a combination of combat and top speeds, with the Klemm popping smoke to provide cover. The veteran SD Hunters roved ahead of the force to secure the exit from the bridge. The South maneuvered their units to block the escape route and line both sides of the route to catch my squads in a lethal crossfire. Meanwhile, I used the Recon squad to spot for the infantry mortars, which were contested throughout the game by the ECM from the Iguanas and supported by ECCM from the Weasel and Wild Ferret. The Infantry stunned most of the SRA units with mortar fire, but not much else.

Seeing the exit closed on Turn 2, the Klemm decided discretion was better part of valour, taking a stun counter to about-face, drop smoke to cover most of the Dragoons, and run back to the safe side of the bridge. The Mambas of the Strike Cadre used their autopilots to remove their stun counters and hosed down the two leading SD Hunters with their Heavy Gatling Laser Cannons, obliterating one and heavily damaging the other. The infantry tried to suppress the advancing south with their mortars, damaging some of the units. Unfortunately, the damaged SD Hunter became victim of friendly fire as a scattered Light Mortar round overkilled it. Luckily the Dragoons were able to take advantage of the autopilots' Level 1 Defence skill to overkill the HGLC Mambas with a combination of Heavy Hand Grenades and a pair of AGM strikes from the Jaguar. The remaining units took pot shots at each other and used EW for CP denial.

The NAF preparing to charge. Photo by Robert Dubois.

Turn 3, the Dragoon Jaguar spent a CP to activate out of sequence and used the AGM to overkill the remaining Mamba with the Heavy Grenade Launcher before it could shut off its autopilot. This was a mistake on my part, since I should have used my Fighter airstrike to kill it last turn and use AGM against the Iguana assassination objective. Flamers, Bazookas and Autocannon fire criss-crossed between the two armies, downing units on both sides as the Klemm, seeing a hole in the enemy line, turned around and set up for an end run from the end of the bridge to freedom.

At the beginning of Turn 4 we were told we had three minutes until the game was called. The Klemm spent a CP to activate out of sequence and try to exit off the SRA edge of the map. The only unit that could stop it was a Jäger toting a Light Bazooka. As the Klemm barrelled past, Jäger declared reaction fire. Had I been thinking, I should have popped a smoke canister between the two units or spent an action to add a die to my defence roll. Instead I let him take the shot and fumbled my defence roll, blowing the Klemm and half my victory points sky-high. In retaliation, the stationary Recon Jaguar killed a damaged FlammJäger from 22 inches with a Heavy Rifle round through its back. All the remaining units scrambled to try and close with the seize objective, but when time was called the Recon Ferrets were the closest units to the objective, denying the south a VP.

Final Score: North – 1VP; SRA – 0TV

TOURNAMENT AFTERMATH AND ANALYSIS

The tournament was a Swiss-Style format this year, which had the players with the same amount of wins playing against each other. The Locked and Loaded Rules and objectives meant players would have to move quickly to complete a game. All the games were finished on time save mine. However, I was the only player in the tournament with 4 Combat Groups. If I had to postulate a rule of thumb for tournament round length, I would have to say add 15 minutes to the game for every combat group in play.

These were the following results from the tournament:.

Player	Wins	VPs	Actions	Units	CGs	APE
Brad (Gambit) Bellows	3	6	17	15	4	0.99
Ryan (Henshini) Henshaw	2	7	12	12	3	0.75
Mike (mike a) Abbot	2	7	14	14	3	0.82
Paul (Attila of Terra) Nemeth	1	4	9	4	2	0.44
Bryan (BryanR) Rombough	1	3	12	12	3	0.75
Ben MacKinnon	0	0	12	12	3	0.75

While reviewing the players' armies, I noted that all armies were relatively close in terms of Army Effectiveness values save Paul's strider army. My experiences have shown me that having an Army Potential Effectiveness (APE) value greater than twice that of an opponent of equal skill just about guarantees victory. I recommend for players to have at least three combat groups to ensure more balanced games.
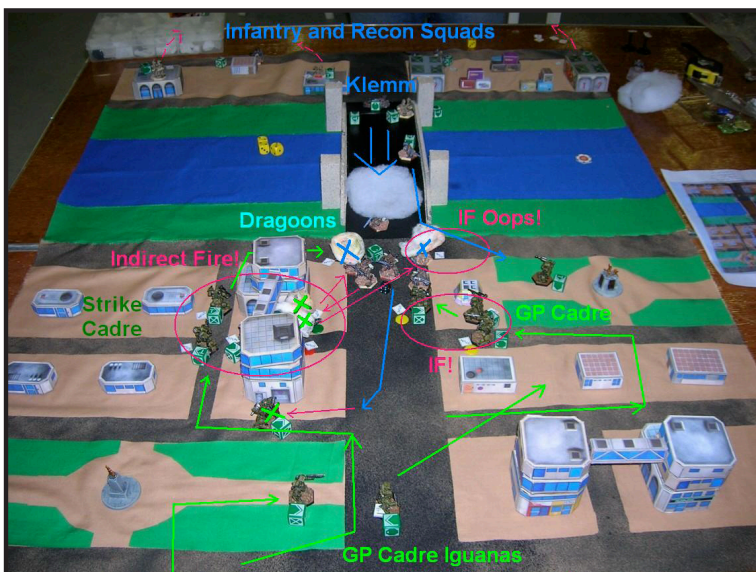
Game 3 Annotations. Running the SRA Gauntlet. Photo by Ryan Henshaw.

Ending positions as the game is called. Photo by Ryan Henshaw.

After all the games ended, Robert gathered all the players together and announced that both Mike Abbot and Ryan Henshaw were co-winners with 7 Victory Points each. Much applause followed. Then Robert announced that we all had given each other excellent scores for sportsmanship so we all rolled a die to determine the winner of that prize. Bleary-eyed, I stumbled back home, packed away my now-dry minis for the Lightning Tournament the next day, and collapsed in bed.

1000TV Battle for Terra Nova

I awoke the next morning feeling much better and went back to the Convention site to set up and run the Lightning Tournament. After cleaning up from the tournament, I prepared for the big battle and assembled my minis for review by the organizers.

ARMY CONSTRUCTION

When designing this army, the only limitation I knew of was the projected size of the board. Six feet by eight feet is a lot of ground to cover, and I definitely wanted the ability to reach out and touch someone no matter where they tried to hide. Sticking with my Northern theme, I decided to build an artillery battery from the United Mercantile Federation.

FORCE RATIONALE AND TACTICAL DOCTRINE

This army was set up to take advantage of the indirect fire rules and the ability of the stealth and recon units to provide forward observation. My plan was pretty simple: keep the artillery units out of line of sight and rain down indirect fire on any units that were in range. I tried to activate the Recon last and use them to screen the IF units, Forward Observe targets for Indirect Fire, use Electronic Warfare and/or generate additional Command Points with their Satellite Uplinks. I added Medium Rifles to the Weasels because that effectively increased the accuracy of the platform by +1 as MRFs have twice the range of LACs.

The Airborne squad was meant to be a hard-hitting unit, using the Light Grenade Launchers of the Hunter Paratroopers to stun opponents while the Medium Rocket Packs from the Hunter Commandoes saturated their positions. The Medium Bazooka on the Jaguar was saved for the coup de grace on damaged units. The airstrike was meant to eliminate specifically designated targets with surgical precision.

UMFA FORCE (PL3, 6VP, 5SP, 5CP) [1000 TV]

5 Combat Groups, 18 Units, 22 Actions

Airborne Squad
(Jaguar, 2 Hunter Paratrooper, 2 Hunter Commando) (295) (Auxiliary)
<Veteran>
Options:
- Swap Jaguar MAC for Paratroop Rifle for MBZK (+10)
- Swap 2 Hunter Paratroopers for Hunter Commandos (+20)
- Add Level 3 Att/Def to Jaguar and Hunter Commandos (+30)
- Add Level 3 Leadership to Army Commander Jaguar (+10) 365 points

Recon Squad
(Jaguar, 2 Wild Ferret, 2 Weasel) (345) (Auxiliary)
Options:
- Swap 2 Cheetah for Ferret (-60)
- Swap 2 Cheetah for White Cat (+10)
- Swap 2 White Cat for Weasel (-60)
- Swap 2 Ferret for Wild Ferret (-10)
- Swap 2 Wild Ferret DPG for LRF (0)
- Swap 2 Weasel LAC for MRF (0)
- Swap Jaguar MAC for HRF (0) 225 points

Infantry Platoon
(4 Squads) (60) (Auxiliary) <Veteran>
Options:
- Add 3 Lt Mortar (+45)
- Add Stealth to Lead Squad (R2) (+5)
- Add Demo Drone to Lead Squad (+5)
- Add +1 Armour to each Stealth Squad (+5)
- Add Level 3 Infantry to Lead Stealth Squad (+10) 130 points

Field Gun Section
(2 Field Gun) (35) (Elite)
Options:
- Add Field Gun (+35) 70 points

Light Tank Squad
(BH Klemm, Stormhammer Tyburr) (160) (Specialist) <Veteran>
Options:
- Options: Add Klemm (+160)
- Swap Klemm for Bandit Hunter Klemm (-80)
- Swap Klemm for Tyburr (-75)
- Swap LFG/HMG for HFM/APGL (+35)
- Add +1 Leadership to Stormhammer (+10) 210 points

With my Support Points, I chose the following:

- Infiltration for the Infantry, to provide better sightlines for Forward Observation
- Reserves for the Airborne Squad, to drop on top of objectives or hit the enemy where it was vulnerable
- A Fighter-Bomber Airstrike, to eliminate specific targets with surgical precision and hit weaknesses in the enemy battle-line.

Once I decided on a plan, all I needed to do was find the right models. Fortunately, my use of magnets made it easy for me to quickly reconfigure my Championship Tournament army and some of the models from my Lightning Tournament armies. The only additional units I had to purchase were the Hunter Commandos and Hunter Paratroopers. I painted them in the same colours as my Championship army.

THE BIG BATTLE – SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2008

Having actually slept well the previous night and energized from running the Lightning Tournament, I was ready to get down to business on the board. The map itself was large, with a lot of small buildings grouped together in a settlement. One interesting rule was that the "Weird but Tasty" franchises were all considered solid terrain and could not be fired at or through (armies travel on their stomachs, after all). We rolled for deployment and my forces ended up on the southwest corner of the board. Immediately to my north, Paul set up his PAK force of Hovertanks, GRELs and a Support Squad of Bears and Ferrets. I figured he would be itching for payback for yesterday's tournament battle, so I set up my units mostly facing his direction in a hedgehog defensive pattern. Ben MacKinnon infiltrated his Mekong Dominion General Purpose and Strike Cadres into a defensive square in the middle of the settlement with two Nagas set up along the middle northern edge. In the northeast corner Bryan Rombough deployed his classic Northern Guard section with a GP Squad along the main road, Recon Squad close to

The Battle for Terra Nova Annotated. Photo by Robert Dubois.

the Nagas, and Fire Support Squad covered by solid terrain in an inverse wedge formation. In the southeast corner Mike Abbot's ESE with Mekong Dominion ties army deployed his Strike Cadre as far forward as he could, with his Fire Support Cadre hunkering down in cover behind a rock formation while his two GP Cadres acted as a screen.

Turn 1

Paul kept his GREL platoon along with its attached HPC-64s in reserve and I did likewise with my Airborne Squad. Ben infiltrated both his Strike and GP Cadres into the centre of town, and I infiltrated my Infantry Command Platoon into one of the higher buildings where their stealth and surrounding buildings made them invisible.

In order to keep the game moving, all players rolled for initiative and the highest roll got the choice to activate first. Activations then moved around the table clockwise until the turn was complete. Ben won the initiative roll and immediately moved his Nagas at combat ground speed along the local roads to end up next to his infiltrated Cadres.

I mulled the implications of Ben's move as both Bryan and Mike activated a combat group and deployed them at top speed towards the settlement. Almost all of Ben's forces were within a 4-inch radius circle. It was simply too good an opportunity to pass up. I activated my Infantry and used my infiltrated squad to Forward Observe the Jäger right in the centre of his formation. I fired two infantry light mortars indirectly on top of the Jäger, then used a Command Point to activate the Stormhammer Tyburr out of sequence and rolled a six to land a Heavy Field Mortar round dead on target. When the smoke cleared, the barrage had overkilled or destroyed 2 Nagas and 3 Jägers, damaged a Jäger and 2 Black Mambas, and stunned all remaining units save one Black Mamba that was not inside the kill-zone.

Paul and Mike mentioned afterwards that was point where they decided my units had to die. To expedite that end, Paul's light hovertanks roared at top speed towards my formation. Taking a page from Nigel Shirow's playbook from his battle with the

CEF in Return to Cat's Eye, I held my fire until his Command HPC sped into view. I immediately declared reaction fire with one of my field guns and overkilled the Model from 28 inches away. Paul retaliated by overkilling one of the Field Guns with a Light Particle Accelerator and raining down mortar fire from his stationary Bears on top of my Bandit Hunter Klemm. Sensing an opportunity, I activated my Recon Squad and had them replenish my Command Points with their Satellite Uplinks and call in my airstrike as they tried to hug cover.

While the UMFA braced for a PAK assault, Ben's Peacekeeper units scattered out of their defensive positions and shook off their stuns as best they could while Bryan's Northern force advanced along the roads to close the range while the South was reorganizing. Mike's Southern Strike and GP Cadres moved out from their deployment zone while his Fire Support Squad remained stationary behind cover. The Strike Cadre tried to active detect and take out my infiltrating infantry with indirect fire, but only destroyed 2 bases.

Then my Fighter-Bomber streaked onto the board, flashing past the Hovertanks and zeroing in on his Bears. They used the AA drone for tracking, but the aircraft maneuvered into their rear arc and they had already used their actions to fire their LGMs. The aircraft fired linked Light Autocannons with the Rate of Fire put into both Area Effect and damage, which overkilled both units.

PAK Hovertanks assault the Mercantile positions as the shattered SRA formation attempts to regroup.
Photo by Robert Dubois.

Wanting to share the pain, the Redjacket cruised down the board and fired an Anti-Gear missile point-blank into the rear of one of Bryan's top speed Grizzlies, annihilating it. The aircraft then made one additional (and later-discovered illegal) turn and arrowed towards Mike's forces. Its final act was to target its last AGM point-blank against Mike's VHAC Cobra that was parked partially behind solid cover, converting it into plasma as the missile blew through the engine and hit the fuel tank.

Turn 2

After recovering from the Shock and Awe, Mike won initiative and moved his Strike squad close enough to my damaged infantry platoon that he was finally able to kill it. I was a little preoccupied by the PAK assault to retaliate right away and so I just activated the remaining infantry and fired one Light Mortar at the Hovertanks to stun them and put the remaining infantry on standby. Paul slowed his LHTs to combat speed and blazed away at my Klemm, stunning it and knocking off a sturdy box. I reaction fired my remaining field gun at another LHT in retaliation before it was destroyed by another LPA shot. As the CEF penetrated the UMFA defensive line, they flushed out the Stormhammer, who spent a Command Point to activate out of sequence and bolt away at top speed to put some distance between itself and the Earther weapons.

In the meantime, the remains of the Peacekeeper force steered away from the developing western clash and faced east to meet Bryan's approaching Northern charge, moving gears along either flank as the GP Squad charged up the middle. The ESE's GP units pecked away at both forces from their flanking position. I activated the Recon Squad next and used some of the units to regenerate the CPs I was burning through at a prodigious rate. I tried to spread out my forces to leave as no spots where Paul's GRELs could airdrop into my formation. Then one of the Weasels noticed it could see down a side street clear to the other end of the board, where the ESE had parked their Fire Support Cadre. The EW gear sent Forward Observation co-ordinates to the infantry units who fired two rounds to an extreme range of 71 inches. Both shots scattered,

but one round only deviated an inch off target and caught a Cobra and the combat group leader in its Area Effect. Facing away, the two stationary gears never saw what overkilled them as they both fragmented across the landscape.

Meanwhile, the Hovertanks continued to pound away at the Bandit Hunter Klemm as they advanced, eventually knocking it down to light damage. The Klemm rumbled out of the protecting woods and returned fire for no effect as the Ferrets took pot shots at the Mercantile gears and provided EW support for the LHTs. In the meantime, the Peacekeeper and NG forces clashed in the downtown district as combat devolve into a house-to-house action, with Gears popping out from cover to spray their opponents before ducking back again. Several gears were damaged on both sides, but there were no further kills recorded. The ESE discovered that the main fighting had passed them by and struggled to catch up to the fronts.

Then the reserves came knocking. The Airborne Squad dropped behind the two lagging hovertanks and poured grenade and missile fire into their positions, overkilling one of the tanks and crippling the other. Their victory was short lived, as a blanket of GRELs dropped behind the Airborne and proceeded to demolish one of the Hunter Paratroopers with fire from the HPCs.

As the PAK and UMFA clash in the background, North and South reacquaint their old enmities.
Photo by Robert Dubois.

Unfortunately, the game had to be called at this point because we spent 4 hours going through 2 turns of combat. Robert said they would look at finding ways to speed up the game, possibly by having armies on opposite sides of the board activate simultaneously. It was really too bad because the PAK assault on the UMFA position was just getting good, with the ESE being a possible wild card in the mix as they approached both the PAK-UMFA and MD-NG conflicts. There were no prizes awarded in this game – it was all about having fun and making things blow up real good. Everyone agreed it achieved both objectives.

SUMMARY

Much fun was had over the course of the weekend. Seeing the latest minis, talking about what future products are coming out later this year, and talking face to face with the players you otherwise only meet on the forums, my inner Gear Geek was satiated for at least another couple of months. The Pod People ran a great tournament and provided excellent food, drink, and prizes. It was good to see familiar faces sprinkled in with some new blood. Without a doubt, the Blitz community is growing.

I look forward to seeing everyone again next year to try and reclaim the championship. If you are from the United States, we invite you to come on up and experience our Canadian hospitality. Ottawa is only an hour's drive north of the closest border crossing and roughly 10 hours from anywhere in the Northeastern States. International players, feel free to fly over as well. If you encounter any difficulties, your embassy is minutes away to assist you!

Until next year…

The end of game positions. Both the NG-MD and PAK-UMFA are involved in pitched battles as the ESE vainly tries to play spoiler. Photo by Robert Dubois.
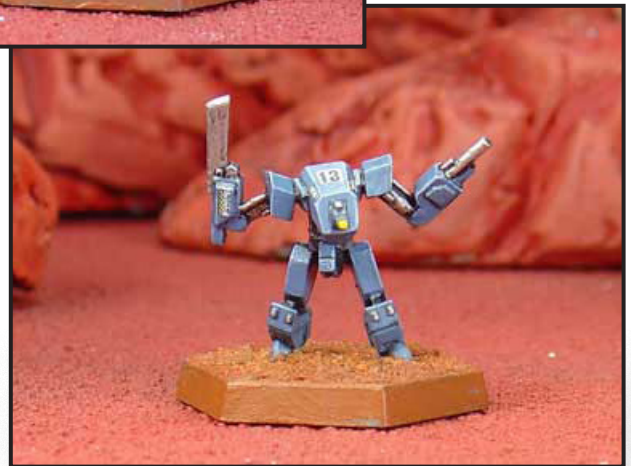
From the rules monkey...

An amusing assortment of items this issue, including some basic vroom-vrooms (we all need our first set of wheels, right?) and a gaggle of Flails, both alone and with others for scale comparison.

Wait... those Mordred Flails... it's like I've seen those already somewhere else this issue... curious...

Article Guidelines

The Aurora Magazine focuses on the worlds created by Dream Pod 9. As such, we are primarily interested in, but not limited to, articles dealing with SilCore and Blitz rules (variants, additions, explorations of the rules) and on fiction, mechanized designs, equipment and the like that draw on established DP9 universes. This does not mean, however, that articles that are generic in nature or that do not deal with unique or original material, only that the focus is on exploring Silhouette and it's attendant universes.

Any article that is a promotion piece for another product, be it an excerpt or a lead-in to another product, must be clearly defined as such within the article body.

No articles will be accepted that use another's Intellectual Property or Copyrighted material without an included signed permission to use said material.

Fiction may be a one-off or serial based, as desired. Please note that long works of fiction may be split into multiple pieces over multiple issues for length reasons; if you are writing a long story it is best to indicate breaks in the story (chapters, for example) that allow us to chose the best point to split the story, if necessary. In keeping with the nature of the magazine we ask that fiction be accompanied by Silhouette CORE or Blitz! rules detail of some kind, be it stats for characters or equipment in the story, game scenarios, mechanized designs, new rules or explanations of how to simulate aspects of the story using the Silhouette/Blitz rules. This is not a hard requirement, and you may request that another contributor be asked to create the rules support based on your story.

Aurora is also looking for original artwork. Art may be used to accompany the article and/or for the cover of the APA. Please see below for copyright information regarding images.

Submission Guidelines

All work for Aurora should be submitted in an .rtf (Rich Text Format) file. The text within should be in Arial 10pt font, and single-spaced. Hard returns should be used only to separate paragraphs (with a double hard return) or with bullet points and list items. Do not indent paragraphs. You may use italics, boldface or bullets where deemed necessary.

Tables may be included in the submission. Preferably, tables should be created with minimal lines between cells, instead using background colour and/or cell spacing for clarity. Tables may also be included in courier-font/fixed-formatting. Identify these kind of tables with the following: <<<Table>>>

The article's title should be clearly noted at the beginning of the file, followed by a short (less than 75 words) introductory text. This introductory text can either be a synopsis, a quote, story, etc. It will be used at the beginning of the article to 'set the stage'.

The file should end with the Author's name(s), contact information (if desired) and a short bio (optional). This information will be placed on a Contributing Author's page in the magazine.

Please spell check and proofread your article. English or American spellings may be used as desired.

Photos, drawings or images should be accompanied by photo credits as well as a brief description/caption for each photo (optional). Indicate within your article where the images are to be included like so: <<<Image_Filename.ext>>>. Images should be sent at a maximum of 150dpi for greyscale or colour images, 300dpi for black & white images (1-bit). Given the size of a page, images should be no larger than 7 by 7 inches (18 by 18 cm). If we need a higher resolution image, we will contact you. Images should be compressed with an appropriate method; please check the quality of your images before sending. If by including images the submission would grow over 2 megabytes in size, please place the images on an Internet-accessible server where we will download them (don't forget to tell us where they are located).

Copyright Guidelines

Quotes or information that are attributable to other sources are permissible in appropriate quantities, and should be identified/cited (including page numbers), preferably within the article. Be sure that each quote is written exactly as it appears in the original source.

If you wish to include photos/drawings/images with your article, please provide the photo credits (artist/photographer/illustrator and subject if applicable). You may only submit images for which you have obtained permission to include in your article.

All articles and images used by Aurora remain in the copyright of the original submitters. You, as the author, must consent to release the article for publication by Aurora, with the knowledge that Aurora will not provide any compensation other than what has been listed above, and that Aurora, as an online magazine, will be downloaded by third-parties in a PDF format. All work for Aurora is volunteer-based. Should DP9 decide at a later time to compile and sell articles within a contract will be negotiated with the author at that time.

The End Print

Please send all submissions to the following email address:

auroramag@gmail.com

Thank you everyone for your interest, and we look forward to seeing your submissions soon!

Deadline for Submissions for Issue #3.6: October 15th 2009

Historical Articles

Under this broad category are pieces meant primarily for illuminating or detailing something within the game universe. This can be truly historical in nature (describing history), detailing a region, the language, customs, architecture, technical systems, corporations, social structure, music, and more, to name a few. Articles may either be written from a neutral point of view (impartial observer from above) or written 'in character', that is, in the manner such information may be presented if it were available in the game world. See the Historical Accuracy note, below (especially important for this category).

Fiction

Any story (narrative with characters) that takes place within the established DP9 game worlds falls under this category. See the Historical Accuracy note, below, and also see the submission guidelines for further requirements.

Modules

Also known as adventures, a written collection of plot, character, and location details used by the gamemaster to manage the plot or story in the DP9 RPGs. All manner of modules are open for submission, from espionage to social to military to a combination of all three. Module submissions must be detailed enough for the GM to run the entire adventure, including descriptions and dispositions (where applicable) of major NPCs, locations, accessories and story/plot. See the Historical Accuracy note, below.

Scenarios

These are the tactical equivalent of modules, an encounter between two (or more) factions set up for combat. A complete scenario will detail the background of the encounter (the why), the forces engaged (the who -- what physical units at a minimum, regiment and designations to go the full way), the map and terrain (the where) the victory conditions (the how) and any special rules or conditions (the what). Scenarios should be designed to be balanced for each side, either via the types/numbers of units or through special circumstances or conditions. If the scenario is not balanced this must be mentioned in the background. See the Historical Accuracy note, below.

Note: Historical Accuracy

Aurora is committed to accuracy within the established DP9 worlds. All articles that take place 'within' the game world should be checked for its accuracy within the established timeline, faction dispositions, available equipment, etc. Submitted articles will be run by the game world historians, so check your work! You may, however, submit your article clearly marked as "Alternate History" and if published the article too will bear this mark. Be sure, if you submit this way, to provide in the background all that is necessary to describe what has changed.

Designs

New mechanical designs/vehicles/ships for use in the DP9 worlds. Designs must be legal and use either the latest SilCore rules (including all errata and the FAQ) or Blitz rules. Please indicate which design rules were used. Mechanical designs should fill a void that is not already covered by another unit. Background and a description must be included with the design, while artwork is optional and preferred. See the Historical Accuracy note, above.

Artwork

Aurora accepts all artwork for consideration, no matter the media type (rendering, sketch, painting, etc) within the rules set herein. Miniature photographs will also be accepted (dioramas encouraged!). Artwork must relate to an established DP9 universe and be easily identified as such. Artwork with nudity, racial undertones, sexism or sex will not be considered. See the submission guidelines on how to submit images.

House Rules

Original rules for the Silhouette/Blitz! system and modifications to existing rules. All rules submittals must include an explanation of the rule's purpose, the rules themselves clearly written, and an example of the rule in play.

Note: Blitz! Rules

House Rules covering existing Blitz! Rules will be limited. New Rules covering areas of the game not explicitly contained in the existing rules (as found in the Blitz! line of books) may be submitted freely. House Rules that modify or replace the written Blitz! ruleset (as found in the Blitz! line of books) will be forwarded to the line developer for review and comment. They will then contact you if the idea may proceed forward. Note that this applies only to the Blitz! line -- rules may be freely submitted for any other SilCore game.

Tactics

Have you won countless battles? Have a strategy you would like to share? Write a tactics article. Usually this type of article will be in a step-by-step (or turn by turn) format to illustrate the tactic. An introduction and conclusion is required to create a complete package and to convey to the reader where the tactic is applicable and how it came about.

Miniatures/Modeling

Any article on preparing miniatures, painting, terrain making, sculpting, foliage techniques, etc will be accepted. Photographs and/or diagrams are strongly encouraged.