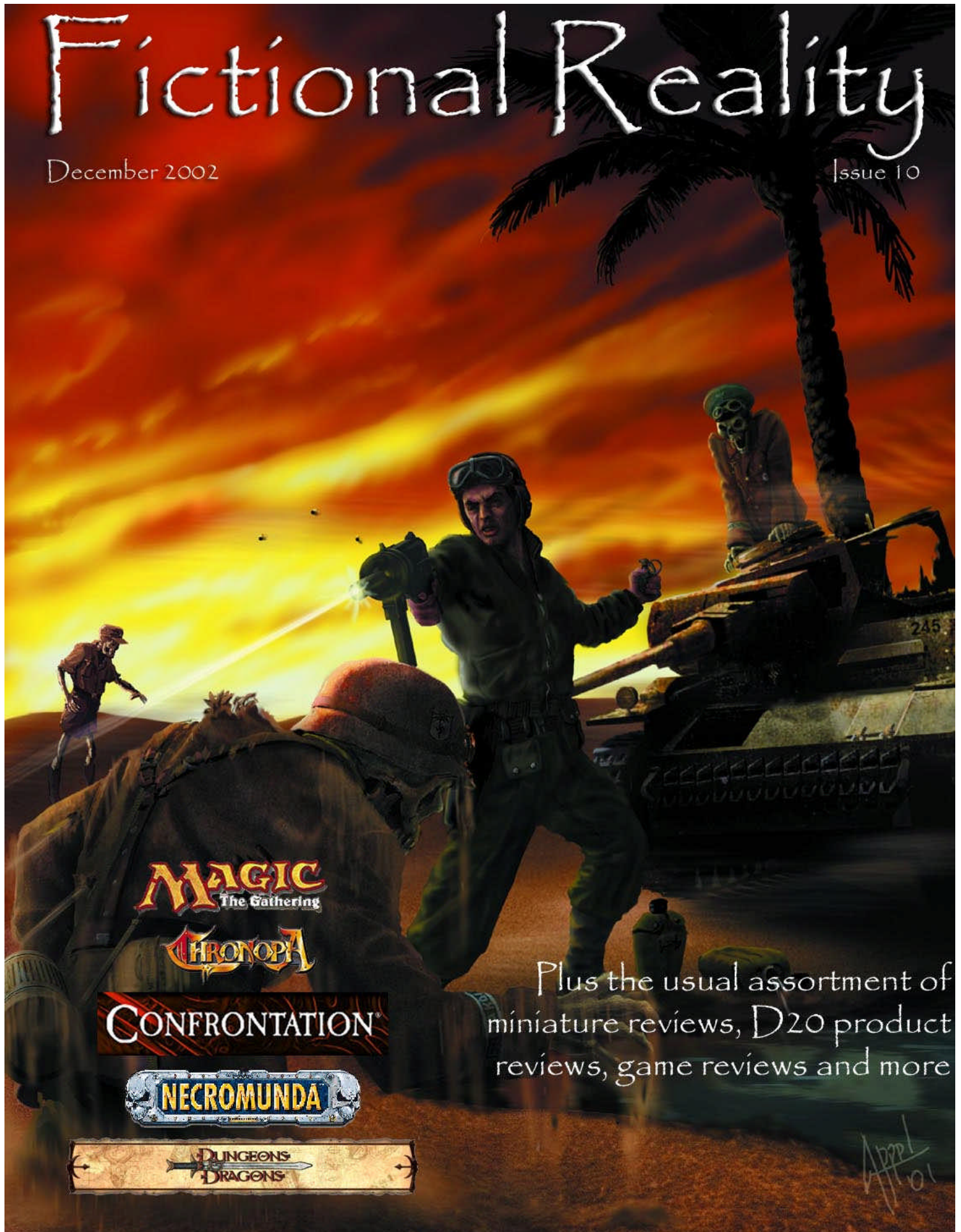


Fictional Reality

December 2002

Issue 10



MAGIC
The Gathering

CHRONOPH

CONFRONTATION

NECROMUNDA

**DUNGEONS
DRAGONS**

Plus the usual assortment of
miniature reviews, D20 product
reviews, game reviews and more

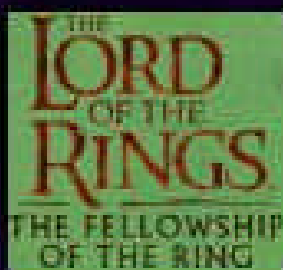
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From the Editor

Holy Cow, the Table of Contents has finally spilled over into the second column and we've surpassed the 100-page mark! Thanks to everyone that has made this possible and I hope to continue along these lines with more articles and larger issues of Fictional Reality.

Ok, so what's been going on? Well, I've been playing some miniature and role-playing games as I have time. Mostly Chronopia and Confrontation on the miniatures side and we've started bouncing between several role-playing games, all still d20 right now, with Judge Dredd and Dungeons and Dragons taking center stage right now, but we're looking at jumping into Feng Shui for a little while.


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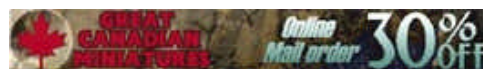
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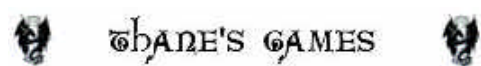
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Plans for Gen-Con next year are already starting to take shape for me and I really hope to see, and get a chance to play with, many of you.

Many thanks go out to Dave Ross at Pinnacle Entertainment Group for providing the artwork for this issue's cover. It's from their Weird Wars Afrika Korpse sourcebook.

Also, just to make sure that we're all still on the same page, and hopefully out of court rooms, I make no challenge whatsoever to anyone's physical or intellectual property. If you own or hold the copyright to any product, game, piece of moon rock, etc... in which there is an article written about in Fictional Reality then you still own it.

Ok, that's about it from me for now. Hope that you have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and be sure to check out the very last page of this issue for a chance to pick up some free toys.

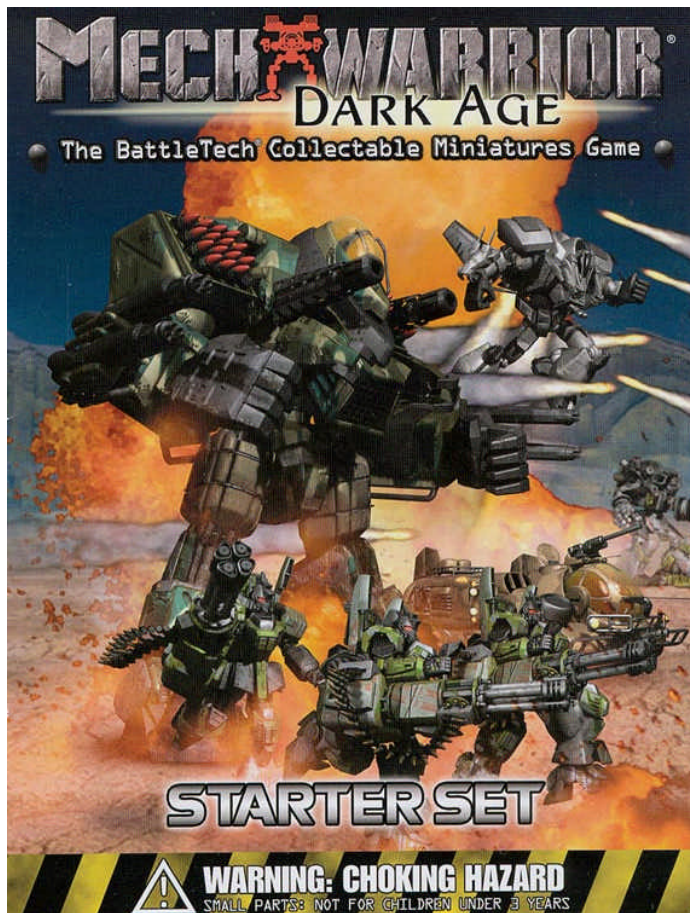
Later,

Mark Theurer

GAME REVIEW

MECH WARRIOR[®]

DARK AGE



BASICS

Mech Warrior: Dark Age is a collectible miniatures combat game by WhizKids. Starter Sets retail for \$19.95 and contain 8 miniatures (1 'Mech, 2 vehicles and 5 infantry stands), a rule book, faction dossier, special equipment card, a ruler, some stickers, and 3d6. Booster Packs will set you back \$9.95 and contain 4 miniatures (1 'Mech, 1 vehicle and 2 infantry stands).

Mech Warrior: Dark Age is the 'new' version of Battletech using the 'clicky' bases made popular with Mage Knight and Hero Clix. It is a game of giant mechanized walking tanks, and the regular futuristic kind, engaging in combat in the 32nd century.

I have to mention that I was very much not a fan of Mage Knight (the 'clicky' bases didn't appeal to me at all and the figures were just not at all what I was looking for). It took a good word from another game manufacturer, that does not work for WhizKids by the way, to get me to pick up Mech Warrior: Dark Age and give it a chance.

THE GAME

The first thing you need to know about MW:DA is that it is not customizable in the way that you are probably used to with miniature games. All of the units come 'as is'. Customization comes in when you choose what specific units will go into your force. The combat dial, or 'clicky' base contains all of the game stats for that figure. 'Mechs generally have two weapons (energy, ballistic or HTH), a speed rating (inches per turn), attack and defense values, a vent rating (for dispersing heat), and a heat dial. Vehicles and infantry are similar, but heat is absent and fewer weapons are sometimes found on them. There are also variants to most units (Green, Veteran, and Elite) which have different stats and there are special Unique units, which you can only have one of in your force. Point values are also listed right on the base.

Standard games are played on a 3' x 3' table (smaller than most other miniature games) and after settling on an army point value you pick the figs you want to use and head off to battle. Based on the number of points you are using you can issue a number of orders each turn. Unless you want to take damage (vehicles/infantry) or increase heat (mechs) you cannot give a unit an order of two consecutive turns. A word about damage is appropriate here. It represents not only you getting smacked around, but also the use of special ammunition, armor being blown off, fatigue, etc... It's used more abstractly and represents more in MW:DA than in other games.

Orders can range from moving, fighting in close combat, charging, shooting a weapon, trying to capture an enemy unit (with infantry), etc. No unit can ever perform more than one order each turn so even though the game has been simplified from its pencil and paper roots

Combat is handled by adding your attack rating to the roll of 3d6. If you equal or exceed the defense rating of your target you do damage related to the weapon you are using. It's pretty straightforward and easy. There is a slightly different way of determining fumbles and criticals in MW:DA. Two of the 3d6 that you roll are white and the other is black. If you roll double 6's on the white dice you automatically hit the target and cause extra damage. If you roll double 1's on the white dice you automatically miss and you take one hit, or 'click' of damage.

I found the combat system pretty elegant and the lack of record sheets actually let us concentrate on playing the game.

THE RACES

In MW:DA there are six different factions of troops, but this doesn't mean as much as different races in other games. You can build your army with units from any faction and the only time you really need troops from the same faction is if you want to form a formation. This allows you to give a single order to a group of units that are in base-to-base contact and have them all act on it. Can this be helpful? Sure, but it's hardly required and there are restrictions on how a formation can act.

THE FIGURES

I have to be perfectly honest here and say that I have not seen a MW:DA unit come out of a box painted as well as I could do, but I also have not seen one that I would not play with either. All of them looked just fine and I'd drop them on to a game table any day. These are a far cry better than the early Mage Knight figures that helped to turn me off of that game. I did have to glue one missile pod back on to a tank though as it must have come off during shipping. Below are a selection of pictures of miniatures from the official MW:DA website.



THEATRE OF WAR

So far, the longest range on a weapon I've seen is 14". This is well suited to the smaller than usual playing area of 3' x 3' but I can see doubling this if you decide to play with lots of units on a considerably larger size table. Each unit has close up attacks, which can range from punch-fests to death-from-above attacks to ramming into your opponent. Most action will take place in the 6-10" area.

VALUE

There are some things that I really like about MW:DA, pretty much everything you've read so far, and a few things that I don't like, which you'll see now. Fortunately, I was able to get over the areas that I didn't like.

I really dislike the collectible nature of the game. As a wargamer I want to play with the toys that, well, I want to play with. I don't want to open booster after booster hoping to get the figure that I want. So, how did I get over this? I decided to think about the game differently.

I know it's marketed as a collectible game and if that's what you're into then more power to you. I decided to look at MW:DA kind of like a board game that's played on my game table and every now and then I'll get some new pieces to play with.

Even with the recommendation of a valued member of the gaming industry I was a bit leery when I picked up MW:DA. I just didn't trust the 'click'. You know what? It actually works very well for this kind of game. Will it make me turn away from traditional miniature games where rosters are kept on paper and you sometimes have to keep track of each bullet shot? No, but I do have to admit that this is not just a 'dumbing' down of Battletech. It's a totally separate game set in the same universe and it works.

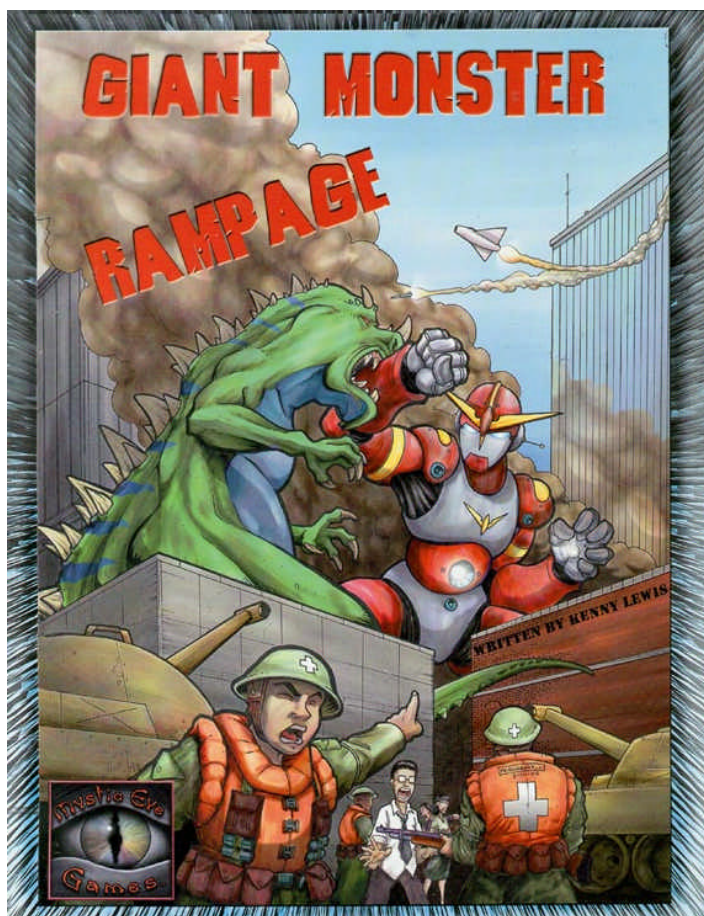
Even though I do like the 'clicky' base I'd also like to have full stat sheets to reference, especially when building my army. It would help to see how certain units degenerate as they take damage because it can vary quite a bit.

I think that the Booster Packs are a better way to go if you're trying to build up a collection of units. Just grab one Starter Pack, even if it's for the group, and then go with Boosters from there. I suppose that you could play the game with just a single Starter Pack but you'd have a 'Mech and a couple of infantry stands versus two vehicles and the rest of the infantry. Once WhizKids decides to put the rule book up on their website then the Starter Packs really become superfluous.

I guess it really boils down to how you think of the game. This is not a hard core number crunching wargame. It is a very fun game that can be a pleasant departure from what you're used to, even if you don't want to get dragged into the collectible aspect of the game. Check it out, I think that you'll like it, especially if you don't look at it as a replacement of your beloved Battletech.

GAME REVIEW

GIANT MONSTER RAMPAGE



BASICS

Giant Monster Rampage (GMR) is a product from Mystic Eye Games that breaks away from their mold of D20 supplements most of which are centered around their own world, *The Hunt: Rise of Evil*. GMR is a 56-page perfect-bound rulebook that details the construction of and combat between giant monsters and robots in a similar fashion to monster movies that we've all seen. It has a color cover and black & white interior art and has a retail price of \$11.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

Inside you'll find four chapters; Introduction to GMR, Kingdom and Creation, Playing the Game, and Other Stuff. The introduction is short and sweet and you could probably guess that a strange mutator has lead to, guess what, giant monsters, and they, guess again, rampage all over the place in a scene that might resemble a mosh pit at a Slayer concert. Yes, I've seen them and yes they are a scary sight to behold! Anyway, back to GMR. Monsters

Are not the only thing you'll be laying the smackdown with. You can build robots, or giant plants, or a dinosaur, or pretty much whatever you like. I finally have a use for my youngest son's Lego BIONICLE toys, yes! You use Monster Points to build your creation. These are used for combat stats and powers. Of course your giant T-Rex needs heat vision! The power list is certainly not as extensive as with say, *Champions*, but it doesn't need to be. You're more likely to be fighting one-off battle royales with GMR. Do you remember video games like *Crush*, *Crumble* and *Chomp*? Basically, that's what you've got here.

Combat is broken up into 6 rounds and how much atomic power your creation has can fluctuate from turn to turn. Combat, ranged and hand-to-hand, is resolved quickly and easily with a d10 roll. There are also special maneuvers like picking your opponent up, flying really high, and then dropping them and watching them go splat! Woe to you if you are the target of a Military Strike though. What did you think, you just had free reign to run amok through the streets of Tokyo or Los Angeles, heck no! You can also heal up at the end of each turn so expect lots of collateral damage as fights could go on for several turns.

VALUE

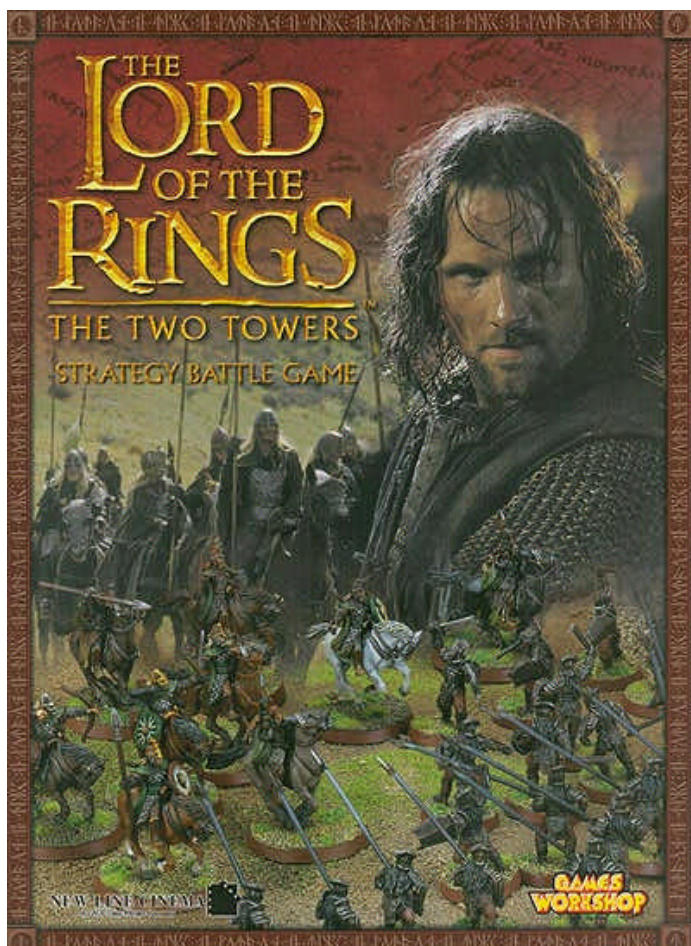
This is not a serious game! And that's good, because sometimes you need to kick back and kick butt for no other reason than to yell, "Run, Go-zirra is coming!" across the gaming table.

Miniatures, yes you need miniatures, but you already have them. I'm sure of it, especially if you have kids. I could probably have a end of the world monster battle with all of the suitable toys that my 8-year old son has. A giant Buzz Lightyear versus Godzilla versus BIONICLE versus Mr. Potato Head versus a Stegosaurus versus a giant mutated Undertaker! I am ready to rumble brotha!

For about twelve bucks, the cost of just a few miniatures, you can have a good old time destroying a large metropolitan city, sending thousands of citizens scurrying away in fear for their lives and beat the living crap out of some giant monsters. I especially like the lighthearted nature of the game and think that Mystic Eye Games has done well with this departure from straight rpg products.

GAME REVIEW

GAMES WORKSHOP



BASICS

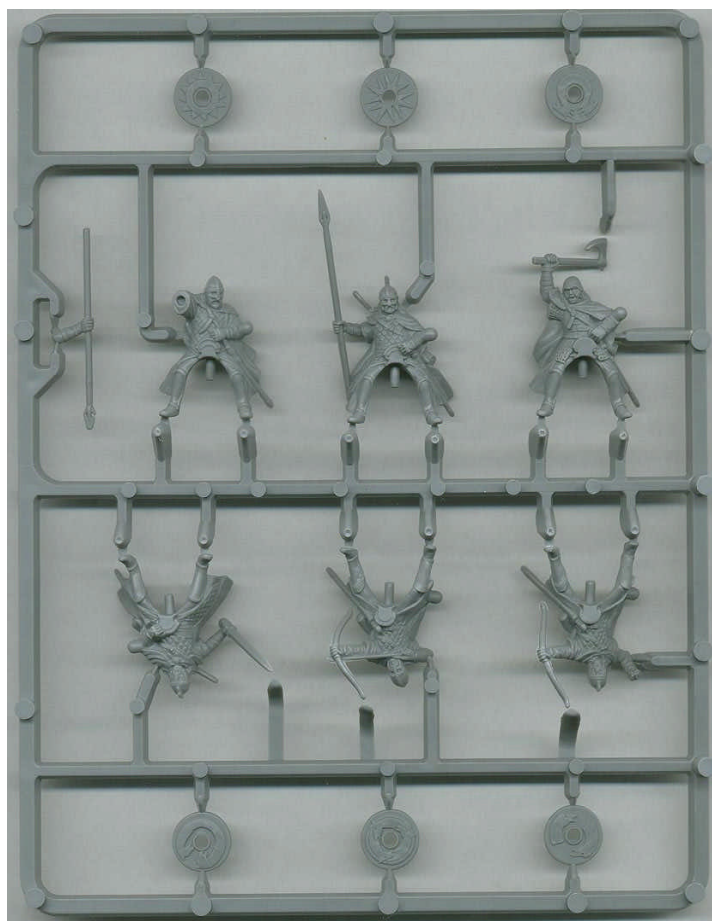
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers is the second game in Games Workshop's line of LOTR tabletop battle games. Inside the box you'll get a full-color perfect – bound 160-page rulebook, 32 plastic miniatures (12 Riders of Rohan and 20 Fighting Uruk-Hai), a small piece of plastic terrain (a ruined building) and dice (4d6). The game has a retail price of \$39.99 USD.

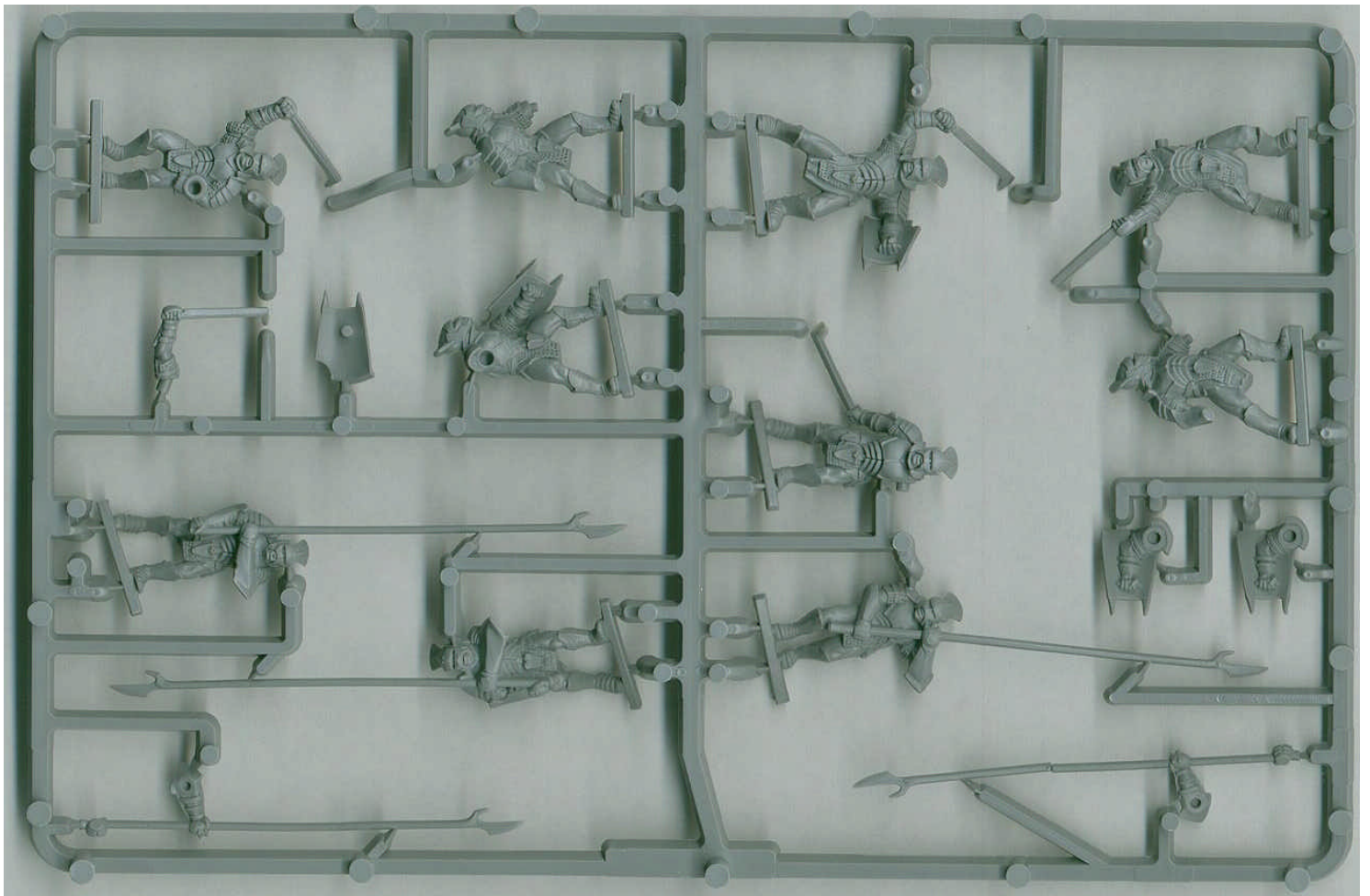
THE CONTENTS

Let's take a second to dump everything out on the kitchen table and take a look at it, shall we? The rulebook will take some flipping through so we'll look at that last. For miniatures you get a total of six sprues (2 of each type) of figures, including horses, the Riders of Rohan that go on top of them and the orcs. They are all great! For the orcs, or Fighting Uruk-Hai (see top of the next page), you get 10 different poses. Some only have slight variations but many let you adjust the arms in several ways. You get the same treatment with the Riders of Rohan (right).

A total of 12 mounted troops, but six of them are completely different figures. Some carry the same weaponry (two with bow, two with spears, one with sword and one with axe), but only half of them will turn out to be duplicates of another model. I loved this. The horses come in two flavors, by the way; galloping with head up or with head down. There is some trim work to do on just about every model as a very thin mold line (a tiny bit of plastic) appears on each model. The plastic ruins are ok, but they're probably more to inspire people to make their own, which is fine. The dice? It's 4d6, add 'em to your collection. You'll also find the usual GW catalogs and pamphlets along with a cardboard ruler (in inches and centimeters).

Ok, now to crack open the rulebook, but just to look at it, not to read...yet. I didn't get to look at the rulebook for The Fellowship of the Ring as that job belonged to Deano C. Ware in his Standing Orders article a few issues back so this was my first peek into one of the LOTR books. Oh my goodness! This is probably the best looking (aesthetically) rulebook that I have ever picked up. Ok, let me think about that for a second. Yeah, I think that it





is. The movie stills are clear. The miniature pictures are brilliant and beautiful. The text was all easy to read and the examples were all well laid out and easy to follow. The binding looks solid and I'd expect it to hold up very well. So far, big thumbs up just on the box contents alone.

THE GAME

Ok, on to the meat of the book. You'll start off a game by choosing a scenario (there are ten of them in the book) and then grabbing your figures. They have pre-set participants, but also allow you to buy forces, with point values also presented in the book, if you'd rather deviate from the 'script'. As in the movie, not all of the scenarios are even. As an example in the 'Deeping Wall' scenario the evil side gets three times as many points to spend on troops as the good side.

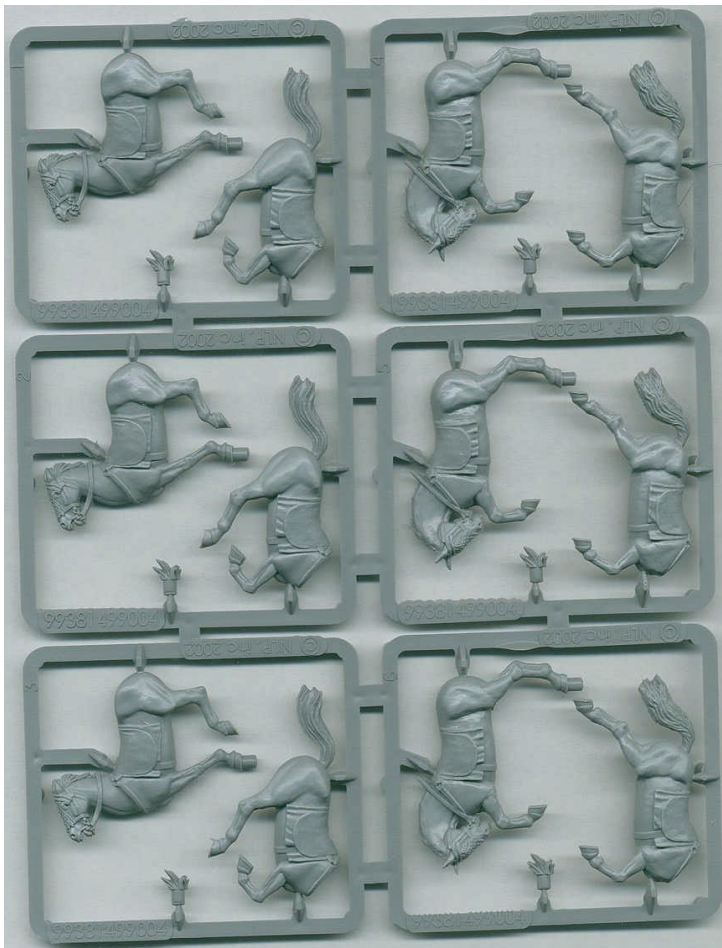
Unlike Warhammer, and 40K, who goes first each turn is randomized every turn, not just determined at the beginning of the game. As the turn sequence continues the game continues to differ from GW's two signature games. Player 1, or the one with Priority, moves first then Player 2. Then we take turns shooting, with Player 1 resolving all of his before Player 2 gets to shoot. Having priority is a very good thing indeed! Determining hits is

Just a look at the model's profile as the number needed, on a single d6, is listed along with their hand-to-hand combat value. Rolling to wound will be familiar to Warhammer players, but here you are comparing Defense to Strength. On to hand-to-hand. The player with priority will decide in what order combats are resolved. One-on-One Combats are resolved by each player rolling a d6 and the highest has 'won'. If there is a tie you consult their Fighting rating and then the one with the highest has 'won'. Losers are automatically pushed back and then you roll to wound, again a Defense to Strength comparison. So, you're saying that a lowly orc warrior has an equal chance of gutting Gimli as he does on the orc? No, not quite. Ok, so let's say that the orc beats Gimli's die roll in the combat and wins. Gimli steps back 1" and now the orc has to roll a 6 backed up by a 4 to wound the stalwart dwarf. If they had tied their combat roll then Gimli wins. If Gimli wins outright, then, err, Gimli wins. Also, Gimli has two attacks so he gets to roll two dice to resolve the combat and pick the highest. The orc just gets to pick his nose. Multiple foes fighting one defender (like a bunch of goblins dog-piling on you) are not the automatic beat-downs that you might expect. Three goblins fighting an elf would result in the greenskins rolling three dice and choosing the highest and the elf rolling his one die. Cavalry are mainly a delivery system for your troops, but

Remember the combat example with Gimli earlier? Well, heroes also have some special powers (Might, Will and Fate) that, well, make them heroes. Might allows you to adjust rolls up or down (Gimli has 3 Might points), Will helps you use or resist magic powers (normal troops generally don't have any Will points) and Fate points give you a 50/50 chance to avoid a killing blow. So, you see, the one lone goblin is really going to get pasted by Gimli. A whole camp of them, that's probably a different story.

Since the forces are often uneven and games are scenario driven each one has an objective that leads to winning the game. The scenario that I referenced earlier 'Deeping Wall' requires that the evil side get 10 or more models on the walls or on the good side of the walls to win and the good side needs to destroy half of the evil force to win.

The remainder of the book has tips on modeling, painting, making banners, terrain, and more. There are also full



Army lists, a blank roster sheet and a condensed set of rules for easy reference while playing.

The miniatures that come packaged with The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers make this game worth picking up. I know that much has been made about the difference in models size between the LOTR figures and standard Games Workshop figures, but I'd use these in any game.

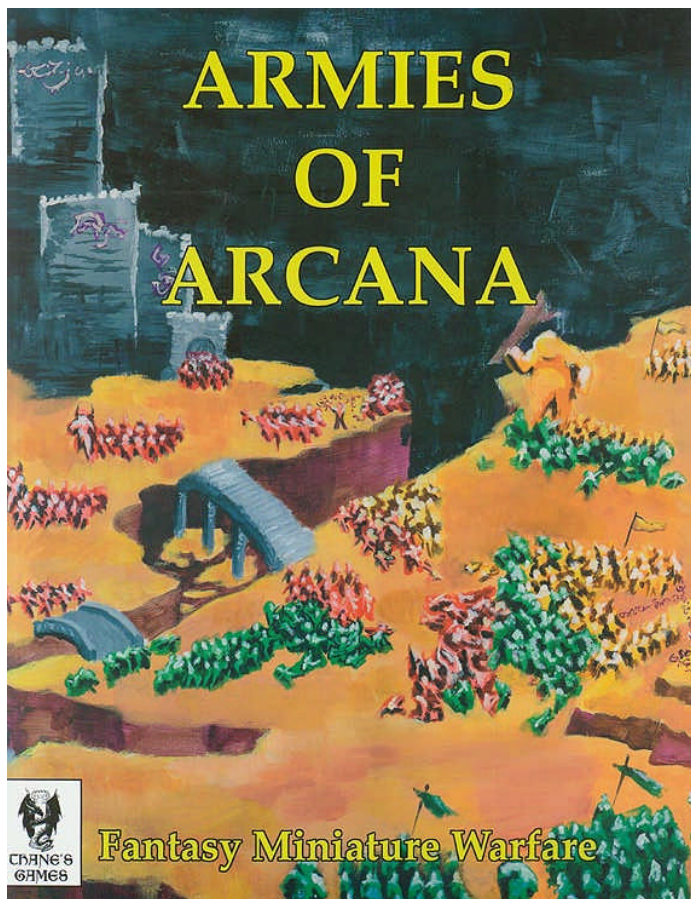
I was very impressed with the quality of the plastics and the rulebook just blew me away. All of the scenarios except one require you to either pick up more figures from the line (not a terrible thing to do as everything I've seen from the metal figures looks quite good), use the point system rules to build your force, or proxy other figures (oh, please like I'm the only one that does that).

In fact, on further contemplation, I think that the rules presented here along with the scenarios from Warhammer Skirmish would make a great pair.

I found myself very happy with The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers and think that gamers just getting into the hobby would have an easy time of catching on and old veterans will not only find a good game, easy to play game, but also lots of models inside the box that can do double duty.

GAME REVIEW

Thane's Games



BASICS

Armies of Arcana is a complete fantasy miniature wargame ruleset in a 90-page perfect-bound soft cover book. The cover looks like a pastel art representation of a battle and all of the interior art, except the counters, are black and white. It has a retail price of \$29.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The first half of the book covers all of the rules needed to play and is broken up into several sections. It starts off with an introduction that explains why Thane Morgan, the author, decided to put together his own fantasy rules and how the game has changed a bit through a few versions. One big commitment that Thane has taken on is stating that all future updates to Armies of Arcana will be free via their website and that once you have the rulebook, and access to the web, you will always have a 'complete' set of rules.

From there we have an explanation of basic principles of the game mechanics and model profiles and then we get into the real meat of the rules. Another important piece of information is that the rules are set up to play with either 15mm or 25mm (which can range from 25mm – 30mm depending on the manufacturer) figures. This, along with Thane's introduction, really give you the feeling that he's out to build as good of a game system as possible.

THE GAME

Many of the conventions (Rank/File formations, skirmishing, wheeling, charging, etc) are present here so it's not like learning a whole new system from scratch. Are there subtle things in the rules that you'll need to get to know? Absolutely, and you know what, they make a good deal of sense. A few things that I found nice were that Rank and File missile units could fire from the first and second ranks of troops and that Rank and File units can use up to ¼ of their movement before declaring a straight-line charge.

The turn sequence is taken care of by six phases (Fleeing, Movement, Magic, Missile, Melee, and Morale) and each player completes one phase before moving on to the next. This is somewhere in between games like Warhammer Fantasy (where I get to do everything before you get to do anything) and Chronopia (where we take turns activating and using each of our units). So, in Armies of Arcana (after the Fleeing Units Phase) I would move all of my units and then you would move all of yours and then we would move on to the Magic phase.

Missile combat is resolved by rolling a d6 against the firer's Missile stat. If, after modifiers for range and terrain, the roll is less than or equal to the stat then a hit has been scored. Models that are hit get a saving throw based on their Armor stat minus the strength of the hit. As with rolling to hit, you'll need to roll this number or less on a d6 or suffer a wound, which results in most normal line troops being removed from the game. Some foot troops have 2 wounds as do cavalry and monsters can get up there in the wounds department. Additionally, some creatures have what are called 'fixed' saves that are not modified by the strength of the weapon that they are hit with.

Melee combat basically works in the same way, but of course with different modifiers. There are nicely detailed examples, with diagrams, of missile and melee combat in the book which will help to make sure that you're on the right track.

The morale rules are quite straightforward and are easy to use with morale triggers that are the same across the board for each army. Some armies have special abilities (Fearless and Berserk) which may keep you in the fight longer, but by no means assure victory.

Magic is also easy to take care of and there are eight different branches of magic (not including general spells which all spell casters can use) each with 10-11 spells of varying levels, power, and usefulness. The Demon army is the only one without spell casters.

Characters are tough, usually benefiting from 'fixed' saves and special abilities, but are pricey with many costing 10-20 times the cost of a very basic grunt warrior. Vehicles and Artillery are also presented and while they can be very effective they can also get way up there in point costs.

Each section of the rules only takes up between one and three pages and each of them are easy to read and understand. If you don't happen to find the army you're looking for in the army lists you can build your own using the 'Creating New Creatures' section of the rules. Of course, you'll need your opponent's permission to use these new troops and I wouldn't expect to be able to use them in a tournament, but sending them in to Thane just might get them built into the game as a standard army.

ARMY LISTS

Almost half of the book is dedicated to army lists. Very little background information is included in the book, but the website provides this information to players free of charge. Backgrounds for about half of the races are available on the website right now. Your standard fantasy armies are presented (Dwarves, Dark Elves, High Elves, Goblins, Lizardmen, Orcs, Undead, and Ratmen) as are several others (Demons, Halflings, Sylvan Elves, and Giants) including a bunch of human flavors (Barbarians, Feudal/Medieval, Macedonian/Greek, Arab, Roman, and Samurai) and Monsters and engines of war.

There are some monsters that will only work for certain armies, but in general all of the armies can bring big nasty creatures onto the field of battle. Here's where things can get very interesting from an aesthetic angle.

Imagine playing with 15mm troops for all of your rank and file warriors and cavalry and then dropping down a 25mm dragon or giant down for a monster. Very cool indeed!

Vehicles, like chariots and howdas, and artillery are handled like monsters, with them being accessible to each of the armies.

You might think that with lots of stuff available to each of the armies that they lose their character, but I didn't find this to be the case. I found enough of a variety in each of the armies to keep them unique without resorting to pages and pages of special rules.

VALUE

Alright, so is *Armies of Arcana* worth your thirty bucks? Yes, I definitely think so. Anyone that plays fantasy wargames right now probably has enough figures, 15mm or 25mm, to play and with all of the rules and army lists right there in the single book you're ready to dive right in.

Finding local opponents will probably be the biggest challenge you face, but I think that this can be overcome by bringing a set of the rules to your next game of [Insert Most Played Wargame Name Here] and seeing if they are willing to give it a whirl.

As for me, I'll be building a whole new army and will be taking the 15mm route. Why? Well, first I'm a sucker for putting together new armies. I currently have more than enough figures from various fantasy games to play several of the armies presented in the army lists, but I just seem to have this addiction to miniatures. 15mm is also the cheaper way to go and it also lends itself well to really honkin' big games with just massive amounts of models on the board. Yes, you can play monstrously large games with 25mm figures, but the table space required goes up and up and up.

I see *Armies of Arcana* as a very good alternative to whatever you may be playing now. It may not get you to ditch your 'other' game completely, but you never know. For me, it's really opened me up to smaller scale miniatures and larger scale battles, which can't be a bad thing. Definitely take a look.

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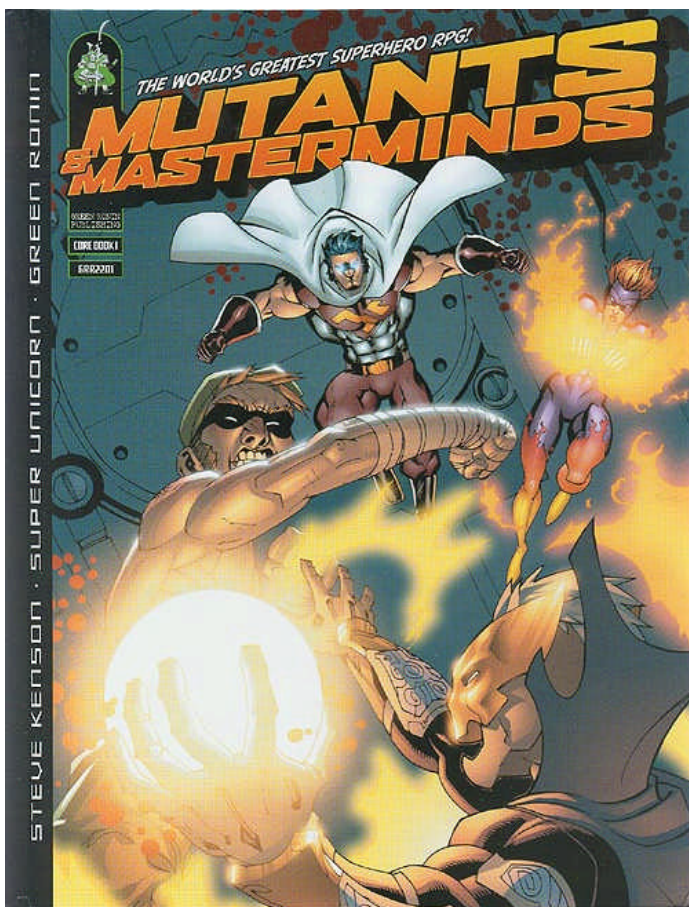
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GAME REVIEW

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS



BASICS

Mutants & Masterminds is a 192-page hardback book from Green Ronin Publications and Super Unicorn design studio that presents their entry into the world of super-hero role-playing games. It sports a full-color cover and a full-color interior featuring lots of comic book artwork and tables on very nice paper. It has a retail price of \$32.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The first thing that you need to do when you pick up this book at your local game store is to flip through it. I was very impressed with the great quality of the interior. All of the artwork is top-notch and in full-color to boot. The text was all easy to read and the tables were also very easy on the eyes.

Another thing that you'll notice is that while you might expect to find a d20 logo floating around somewhere or "Players Handbook Required" someplace, you'll find neither. While Mutants & Masterminds uses the OGL, and a d20 as it's base die, it is not a "d20" game per say.

Once inside the book you'll find 10 chapters, an Appendix and a list of the tables and charts. The back of the book

features an index, fold-up paper "miniatures, character sheets and tables (the kind you read, not the ones to hit people with).

The Introduction does a wonderful job of dropping you right into character creation and gives you 12 archetypes to work with, but you can also go off on your own. All of the standard hero types that you'd expect are here. This chapter also outlines how M&M is different from other d20 games and they are not insignificant (No classes, No alignments, No Attacks of Opportunity, No hit points, etc). The one that probably got your eyes to bug out of your head was 'No hit points'. Yes, you read that correctly. In M&M you have to make a Damage Save when you get tagged in combat. Depending on the result of your roll you could be somewhere between unaffected to disabled depending on how bad you blew the roll and what kind of attack hit you. That is just cool enough to work and reduce bookkeeping too! Level is now Power Level and helps you build your character and also is used as a measuring stick to see, in general, how you stack up to other supers.

Skills and Feats are pretty much as you'd expect with new ones tossed in for the super genre, but powers is what you really need to be, well, super. There are over 90 powers listed and I suspect that you can put together the hero you're looking for or you can build a new power to suit your fancy.

The section on game mastering was informative, but not long-winded and the included adventure, while a bit short at 9 pages in length was a very welcome addition. Any introductory adventure is not just a good thing, but a great thing and you can get right to the business of pounding on bad guys here.

VALUE

At \$32.95 for a book that measures just about 1/2" thick (including the cover) you might think that it's a bit pricey. Not so, at least not in my book. The text font is a bit smaller than in some other books so your word count goes up there and I just found everything here to be really, really great. It's not as complex as Champions, which I do like by the way, which can be a very good thing if you are just getting into the hero genre. Also, it is based around the game system that pretty much everyone is familiar with.

I liked everything about this book and cannot wait to see future releases in the Mutants & Masterminds line.

www.greenronin.com

FICTION

MAGIC

The Gathering

"Trying to pass yourself off as a mere dirt farmer - how pathetic."

The voice was unmistakable. It seemed like forever since he had last heard that voice tinged with hate and anger, yet delivered with an icy coolness. Slowly the man turned from the outdoor pen and its pigs clamoring for feed. He set down the wooden bucket of slop, and looked straight into the eyes of the visitor.

"Mortis Fusarium, what brings you to this simple place on the road to nowhere of importance?" he asked, of the visitor clad in a black robe which barely touched the ground, its dark color matching both the man's hair and eyes.

"D'roc Lacombe of Gloucester you know full well I come for you. There are old debts to pay and today you shall pay in full."

Old debts thought D'roc, there was an irony in Fusarium's words, by the rights of blood it should have been his blood boiling for revenge all these years. Was it not his father's funeral pyre where last he had met Fusarium? Was it not that day that he could see through the facade of mock condolences offered to know that Fusarium was the one whose hand was upon the gold that had paid the assassin whose poisoned dart had felled his father. Such was the way of D'roc's past life. Every door opened, every food tasted, could hold death. It had been the way of the two ruling houses of the neighboring lands for too many generations to tell, leave it to say his father's funeral pyre was not the first for either family. D'roc, himself in a reddish robe surprisingly free of filth given his chores at the swine pen, shook his heads slowly. "I have no quarrel with you this day. That is behind me."

"You may have skulked off in the night to hide here, but it is not behind you. There is the matter of honor for the House of Fusarium."

"Only in your mind. A battle started by our grandfathers and continued by our fathers need not be a legacy we perpetuate."

"Hollow words Lacombe. Is that a shadow of fear I hear?" D'roc smiled to himself. If Fusarium only knew how far from fear it was. At one time he would have gladly gutted the man where he stood, although to soil one's own hand at such a task was beneath his stature as the new leader of his house.

Had he not called for the one known as Argyle, who himself worked within the shadows to bring death. Had he not been prepared to offer him more gold than all but kings could ever dream to see to revenge his father's death? It would have been a blood deal had not he felt a hand upon his shoulder as he counted the golden coins. It was the hand of his Mother still adorned in the veils of three moon phase changes after the fires had taken the spirit of her husband and king to the Goddess. It was that night the feud ended for D'roc. His mother begged his oath that there would be no more revenge, no more death ripping at the fabric of either kingdom. It was time to let the people rest within the castle and without. It was time to live without the constant fear of death's arrival. At the time the words of his oath to his Mother seemed to burn in his throat, almost as if they too were a poison. They burned the tongue as he promised his Mother that he would do no more.

"Have your skills wavered here in the dirt? While mine have been honed in study of the dark ways these last 50 years," snarled Fusarium. "Then you will simply die a dirt farmer D'roc. The man in the dark robes waved his right hand in the air. The ground in front of him turned to muck and mire and from the swampy ooze emerged a dark knight upon a gray wisp of fog, a spear held in gauntlets of steel. The specter's visage mere red embers upon a face of nothingness.

With a reflex Lacombe too weaned his right hand through the air. A flash of red energy burst from a nearby rock face, ensnaring the flying mount, sending it crashing to the ground where it dissipated into nothingness. It was mere reaction for D'roc. The old ways coming back in a flood of energy. He felt invigorated by the flow of power, something he had not felt since he packed a few items of memory and left in the night as his Mother slept. D'roc knew Fusarium would never accept peace with his heart still beating. He knew too there was some dark, twisted honor that had developed in the feud. Never had a women been the target, only the Kings and their sons were considered worthy of death. With him gone in the night, his Mother would rule as Queen and peace would be possible as she so desired.

"Ah, so you recall the simple magic of an earthbind do you Lacombe?"

The farmer turned wizard said no more to the man in black. He could see the hate in Fusarium's eyes, and knew words would not quell it.

"Forgive me Mother," he whispered as his hands waved again, this time a hog with two goblins astride it burst forth and headed toward Fusarium. The swine riders had barely made a step when the hog squealed in terror as if something within its simple mind had ripped forth the most horrific image possible to the simple beast. The pig rolled on its side, dying in obvious agony. Lacombe, did not stop, he called upon the green of his fields and a warthog was stampeding toward Fusarium. The creatures yellowish tusks coated with a frenzied froth. Its spindly tail twisting in the air like some primitive war standard. A knight in black armor, astride a jet black horse, rose from the muck in front of the wizard poised to protect his master. The knight's great shield bearing the signet of a snarling dog set against black and white. The warthog seemed not even to notice the knight's presence. The hog simply waded through the swamp untouched by the knight's sword. Just as the hog reached Fusarium, Lacombe sent forth a green blast of energy, the warthog doubling in size, its now great tusks cutting deeply into Fusarium's left leg. The black knight rushed forward to avenge the wound, but an Orcish farmer with a pig, not nearly as odorous as its keeper, appeared in front of Lacombe.

While not as fierce in appearance as the rushing knight, the Orc and pig proved formidable defenders, grappling the knight from his mount. Both the knight and Orc dying amid mortal wounds inflicted upon each other. Lacombe conjured a herd of frothing Durkwood boars and sent them into the fray. The herd of reddish boars, grunted as they attacked, their white tusks seeming to glisten in the sunlight. It appeared the Durkwood boars would reach Fusarium until more dark energy flowed from the swamp. Suddenly the bald visage of a vampire, blood streaked across his face from lips to pointed ears flew into the path of the boars. In a gnashing of tusk and fangs both boars and vampire died.

Suddenly, a man cloaked in dull greens and grays appeared before Fusarium. The man carried a gleaming dagger dripping some viscous appearing liquid. Ah a assassin of the royal house, thought Lacombe, as he sent forth a bolt of lightning, erupting from a nearby rock face. The assassin burned into nothingness. The warthog attacked again, and while not growing to giant size on this attack, once more slipped through the swamp untouched. They were joined in the attack by a new giant warthog, its eyes flashing blue green as if alive with the very energy of the forest. The giant pig was met bravely by a skeletal guard astride a skeletal mount emerging from the earth, a once brave warrior conjured to once more take up the sword in battle. The skeleton's rusting sword attack doing little to slow the giant warthog's attack. It simply trampled over the skeleton, leaving it in broken pieces, attacking Fusarium with its mighty tusks.

The skeleton's scattered bones came mysteriously back together, ready to fend off yet another attack. The giant warthog turned readying for another attack. It took two steps and froze in mid step, as if paralyzed by the very look from Fusarium. A second hollow specter took shape in front of the dark caster. A burning pentagram appeared behind the specter, and the apparition's arms grew more muscled. It floated over the ground, reaching D'roc above the futile efforts of grounded defenders, its spear finding its mark pushing through the flesh of his left shoulder.

D'roc grimaced at the pain, as the specter turned to attack again. This time D'roc weaned a spell. A whitish, silk spun forward as if shot by some unseen spider. The silk enveloped the still marauding warthog, while at the same time ensnaring the specter, dragging it to its death upon the hog's now bloodied tusks. D'roc, blood running down his arm stared hard at Fusarium, himself bleeding from varied wounds. "It ends now, this day, this moment and forever," said D'roc amid pants of fatigue and pain. Both his arms rose above his head, energies flowing from every rock and stone with 100 yards. The energies of crackling fire swirled into a burning ball between D'roc's hands. In one motion he threw the great fire toward Fusarium. There was nothing the dark mage could do. He pulled his hands in front of his face in futile defiance before being consumed in the fire. Fusarium's charred and smoking body lay on the ground breathless. Then the body burst into mere ashes carried away on the wind. The battle was over.

"Now Mother it is finally over," whispered D'roc. He turned back toward the pig pen, picking up his pail and slipping over the fence to pour the slop into the nearby trough.

DEATH BY PIGS DECK

Building the perfect Magic deck - the one which can not be beaten - is the Holy Grail of most players. We've all toyed with weenie madness concepts. Decks which destroy land, control the opponent with blue spells, or constantly peel cards from their hands.

The debate over which is 'the best' deck will never be answered since every deck concept has a nemesis to which it is susceptible. So, why not take a break from pouring over cards seeking killer combos, and instead have a little fun fleshing out a concept deck. That was my goal as I picked through my monster box of little used common, and ineffective rares. But, what combination would be the most fun as a theme, and still have a chance to win on occasion.

Among the cards I stopped to take a closer look at Orcish Farmer and the pig in the artwork, maybe because I grew

up on a farm where we raised pigs. Then something twiggled, I grabbed four Orcish Farmers and set them aside. Then I flipped through a few more reds and found Goblin Swine Riders. Sure it's not a great card if blocked, but a 2/2 creature for one mana is a good start to a deck. Next I went through my green cards and found just what I needed to round out the creature side of my new deck. Pygmy Razorbacks are boars costing only two mana and while only 2/1 the trample ability creates some interesting game options. Warthogs were next, a swampwalking pig for only three mana. I smiled as I looked at the Orcish farmer's ability to turn a land into a basic swamp. Argothian Swine are 3/3 trample creatures and Durkwood Boars (4/4) provide greater toughness, now aided by the arrival of the Giant Warthog (5/5) in the recent Torment set.

The latest Magic set, Onslaught, adds the whopping big 6/5 Krosan Tusker. The Tusker is costly to play at two green and five colorless mana. More importantly though, it has cycling, a handy special ability in cases where you need to find a certain card in a hurry, and you can find a basic land and put that into play anytime you cycle this pig too. Overall, the range of creatures is good with casting costs of one through five mana. Such range can be critical for early creatures and to have bigger pigs late in a game.

Since 16 creatures in the deck (four of each) are green, when it came to fleshing out the deck with other cards, I limited the green side to two fogs and two hurricanes, the latter addressing the lack of flying pigs (now wouldn't that be a great card).

On the red side with only eight creature cards I fleshed out the sorcery side more. Four fireballs can be useful in defending against creatures or as direct damage. The same philosophy added four lightning bolts to the mix. Giant Strengths are good for the trample. Earthbinds are good anti fliers, and Goblin War Drums can help the pigs find their way through defenses more easily. The deck is surprisingly effective and it's an absolute hoot to remind an opponent they've just been killed by a bunch of pigs ? hence the deck name 'Death By Pigs'.

It might not be the most successful deck I've built, but it's certainly the most fun. So next time you're going through your box of little used Magic cards, take a closer look, you might unearth a fun theme deck in the process.

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DEMONS IN D&D

Our good friend, Christian Selzam, is back with another set of crossover rules for Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay (WFRP) D20. This time around he looks at the stock demons from the WFRP rulebook and their use and application as D20 monsters. Everything contained in this article that references things specific to the Warhammer universe is obviously still property of Games Workshop / Hogshead as is applicable.

Common Demonic Features

All Demons share a specific set of features and traits. They do not belong to the material world and as such they are Subject to Instability. Demons cannot be raised or resurrected, although a *Wish* or *Miracle* spell can restore them to life. Demons killed in the material world are not destroyed totally, but forced to retreat back to their home plane where they regain their health. Since Demons are the servants of deities, a Demon's alignment is that of his ruling deity.

Daemon Types

Scholars and demonologists recognize three types of daemons: Daemonic Servants (Evil Outsider with up to 9 HD), Lesser Daemons (10 to 17 HD) and Greater Daemons (18+ HD).

Subject to Instability (Ex)

Creatures such as Undead, Demons and Elementals or those that do not naturally belong to the real world are subject to instability. Check for instability every 10 rounds by rolling 1d6. A score of 6 indicates, the creature has become unstable. Roll again and use this table:

1d6 Effect

- 1 The creature is trapped in the real world and slowly fades away. Losing 1 point of Con per turn becoming an ethereal creature when Con reaches zero. Do not roll check again for instability. The creature follows the rules for etherealness and is also subject to stupidity from now on.
- 2 The creature is stripped off all his spell-like abilities, supernatural features and spellcasting abilities. It is trapped in the real world with all special powers gone. Do not check again for instability.
- 3 The creature may not move for 1d6 rounds and is confused, causing half damage in combat and receiving double damage from enemies in addition to losing its Dex-bonus to AC
- 4 D6 creatures are instantly sucked back to their home plane, never to return.
- 5 For D6 rounds the creature fights with double its number of attacks (use the same BAB sequence as under the first attack sequence)
- 6 The creature is immune to all types of damage for d6 rounds and causes a +1 alien damage bonus and receives a +1 alien attack bonus for this time.

Alternatively, the creature can make a Will-save (DC 20). If failing the save, roll 1d6 to determine the exact result of becoming instable.

Dealing with Demons - Demonic Summonings

There are some special rules concerning demonologists and their spells.

Initial Summonings

To summon a daemon, the demonologist first must discover the name of the daemon to be summoned. This may be done through research, the name being given by another demonologist, learning the name from a daemon, etc. Failure to learn the name does not prevent the demonologist from summoning the daemon - it just makes it more risky. Next, the caster must prepare a pentagram, taking great care while inscribing it on the floor. To determine whether or not the pentagram has been successfully inscribed, the GM makes a secret Int-check (DC 25). Failure means, the demonologist has a smaller chance of controlling the summoned daemon. Next the summoning spell is cast as per the normal spellcasting rules. Once the daemon appears, the demonologist must attempt to control it by making a Cha-check (DC is the HD of the daemon). Success results in the daemon being willing to serve the caster for 1 hour per caster level and the caster may bargain. If the test fails, the demon will either attack or enslave the caster. If the daemon's name is not known, add +5 to the DC for controlling the daemon.

Daemonic Bargains

All daemons - even those successfully controlled by the caster will refuse to offer aid without gaining something in return - usually souls. This means that characters summoning a demon become bound to the demon's ruling deity in some way, transmuting their minds and body. This degeneration is reflected by gaining disorders and insanity points. Each initial summoning of a daemon causes the permanent loss of 1d4 points of Con. A demonologist whose Con falls to or below zero becomes enslaved by the daemon.

Successive Summonings

Once a bargain has been struck with a daemon, it can easily be summoned again, requiring no pentagram or loss of Con. The caster simply casts the appropriate spell. The caster must still attempt to control the daemon. Failure results in the daemon acting as it wished.

Binding and Dispelling Daemons

There are spells to summon and bind or dispel a daemon and prevent the demon from using any of its abilities or moving. Dispelling sends a daemon back to its hole plane. These spells help to defend against uncontrolled daemons.

Summoning Daemonic Powers

Certain daemonic spells enable the caster to con-jure up forces which can be used to augment the caster's magic. These forces are risky to use at best and alien to the caster's body and mind. Merely learning such spells results in the acquisition of a new disability, and each casting gives the caster +1 IP.

Basic Profiles for Demons

Since all Greater and most Lesser Demons are nearly all individuals, here are listed common stats only. You will find some individual Demons later.

Greater Demon

Huge Outsider (Evil)

HD	18d8 + 216 (297 hp)
Initiative	+4
Speed	60' walk + any individual speeds
Armor Class	19 (+7 natural, +4 Dex, -2 Size)
Attacks	2 Claws +28 melee and 1 Bite +23 melee
Damage	Claws 1d8+12, Bite 2d6+6
Face / Reach	10 ft. by 10 ft. / 15 ft.

Special Attacks

Special Qualities

Saves

Abilities

Feats

Skill points

Climate / Terrain

Organisation

Challenge Rating

Treasure

Alignment

Advancement

Individual special attacks

Cause Terror, Damage Resistance -/+1, Subject to Instability and individual special qualities

Fort +23, Ref +15, Will +15

Str 35, Dex 19, Con 35, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 18

Simple and Martial weapon proficiency and 5 individual feats

216 skill points individually distributed

Any Land

Individual

15

Triple standard

Any Evil, depending on ruling deity

19-38 HD (Gargantuan)

39-58 HD (Colossal)

Lesser Demon

Medium Outsider (Evil)

HD

Initiative

Speed

Armor Class

Attacks

Damage

Face / Reach

Special Attacks

Special Qualities

Saves

Abilities

Feats

Skill points

Climate / Terrain

Organization

Challenge Rating

Treasure

Alignment

Advancement

10d8 + 20 (65 hp)

+2

40' walk + any individual speeds

15 (10 base, +3 natural, +2 Dex)

2 Claws +15 melee and 1 Bite +10 melee

Claws 1d6+5, Bite 2d4+2

5 ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Individual special attacks

Cause Fear, Subject to Instability and individual special qualities

Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +11

Str 20, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 10

Simple and Martial weapon proficiency and 3 individual feats

120 skill points individually distributed

Any Land

Individual or Group

5+

Double standard

Any Evil, depending on ruling deity

11-18 HD (Large)

Individual Demons

The following demons give you an example of basic profile manipulation. All stats were cross-checked with D&D eTools.

Baalrukh (Greater Demon)

A Baalrukh is a Greater Demon with an affinity for fire and fire-based magic. There are believed to be only six of them, and their names a closely guarded secret. Baalrukhs consider themselves demonic nobility and rivalry between them is great. Baalrukhs have muscular humanoid bodies with massive goat-like legs and horned heads. A pair of bat-like wings grows from their back. In addition, they have long, barbed tails.

Baalrukh CR 15; Huge Outsider (Chaotic, Evil); HD 18d8+216 (Outsider); hp 297; Init + 8; Spd 60, Fly, Good 30; AC 19; Atk + 28 base melee, + 20 base ranged; +28/+23 (1d8+12, 2 Claws; 2d6+6, Bite); +28/+23 (1d8+12, 2 Claws; 1d6+6, 2 Hooves); +28/+23 (1d8+12, 2 Claws; 1d6+6, Tail slam); +21 (1d6+1+1d6, +1 Whip Mighty +4); SA: Spells, Breath weapon (Su); SQ: Damage reduction (Su), Immunity: Mind-affecting attacks (Ex); Racial Features: Subject to Instability, Cause Terror; AL CE; SV Fort + 23, Ref + 15, Will + 15; STR 35, DEX 19, CON 35, INT 18, WIS 18, CHA 11.

Possessions:

Weapons: +1 Whip Mighty +4: Flaming (Flame Whip).

Skills:

Bluff + 21, Concentration + 33, Diplomacy + 21, Gather Information + 21, Innuendo + 25, Intimidate + 22, Knowledge (arcana) + 25, Knowledge (religion) + 25, Listen + 7, Sense Motive + 25, Spellcraft + 25, Spot + 6.

Feats:

Exotic Weapon Proficiency: Whip Mighty +4, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip.

Spells Known (SA Spells: Sor 6/6): .

Breath Weapon (Su)

Instead of using another of his attack forms, the Baalrukh can use his fiery breath when not engaged on combat. The Baalrukh breathes a cone of fire, 30 yards long, dealing 2d7+7 points of fire damage against any creature caught within the area. A creature may attempt a Ref-save (DC 28) for half damage. The Baalrukh can use his breath weapon once per round as a standard action.

Cause Terror (Ex)

Baalrukhs inspire Terror within sight. A creature of lower HD or levels must make a Will-save (DC 25). If failed, the creature suffers from the effects of terror. If struck by terror, the character suffers a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls, saves and checks and flees from the source of their fear as quickly as he can. In addition he has a 50% chance to drop what he is holding. If prevented from fleeing, the character cowers. In addition they automatically lose 1 insanity point.

Damage Reduction (Su)

Baalrukhs have DR -/+1

Immunities (Ex)

Baalrukhs are immune to all mind-affecting effects and attacks (patterns, figments, compulsions, etc.) and fear and terror effects.

Spells

Baalrukhs cast spells as 12th level Sorcerers, although they are limited to fire-based spells.

Unbreakable (Ex)

Baalrukhs cannot be forced to leave combat, not by mundane means, nor by magic. It is their very own decision, if they turn their backs.

Blood-Letter of Khorne (Lesser Demon)

Blood-Letter CR 10; Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil); HD 10d8+20 (Outsider); hp 65; Init +2; Spd 40; AC 15; Atk +15 base melee, +12 base ranged; +15/+10 (2d4+5, Bite; 1d6+2, Claws); +7/+1 (1d6+7, +2 Sword, short; 1d3+2, Unarmed); SA: Poison (Ex), Spit (Ex); SQ: Immunity: Mind-affecting attacks (Ex), Damage reduction (Su), Immunity: Spell (Ex), Regeneration (Ex); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +11; STR 20, DEX 15, CON 15, INT 18, WIS 18, CHA 9.

Possessions:

Weapons: +2 Sword, short: Bane; Sword, short (Hellblade).

Skills:

Bluff+12, Gather Information+12, Innuendo+17, Intimidate+15, Knowledge (religion)+17, Listen+17, Sense Motive+17, Spellcraft+17, Spot+17.

Feats:

Dodge, Expertise, Mobility.

Cause Fear (Ex)

Blood-Letters inspire Fear within sight. A creature of lower HD or levels must make a Will-save (DC 19). If failed, the creature suffers from the effects of fear. If struck by fear, the character suffers a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls, saves and checks and flees from the source of their fear as quickly as he can. In addition he has a 50% chance to drop what he is holding. If prevented from fleeing, the character cowers.

Damage Reduction (Su)

Blood-Letters have DR -/+1



Hellblade

This is a +2 shortsword of bane (followers of slaneesh). In addition, with a successful attack the sword drains 1d2 magic levels from a spellcaster, starting with the lowest level spells and 0-level spells counting as 1/2. (or 2d6 magic points if using the magic point spellcasting rules)



Immunities (Ex)

Baalrukhs are immune to all mind-affecting effects and attacks (patterns, figments, compulsions, etc.) and fear and terror effects, except fear and terror inspired by Greater Demons of Khorne (Blood-thirsters). To such fear effects, the Blood-Letters receive a +2 racial bonus to their saving throws. Blood-Letters automatically save against any spell, if a save is allowed.

Infected Wounds (Ex)

Claw attacks have a 25% chance to cause Infected Wounds. The character must make a Fort-save (DC 17 + 1 per 5 points of damage dealt). If failed, the wound becomes infected, swollen and inflamed over a period of d4 hours, during which time, the character Dexterity is

effectively reduced by -6 points. Recovery is 1 point of Dex per day, however, the character must make another save for the last Dex-point. If this save is failed, the last Dex-point is not regained and the character's Dex-score is permanently reduced by 1 point.

Poison (Ex)

Bite, Fort-save (DC 17), Primary and secondary damage : 1d6 Con

Regeneration (Ex)

Blood-Letters regenerate 1 hit point of damage per round.

Spit (Ex)

This is a ranged touch attack with a range of 10 yards which can be used instead of the bite attack. Poison, Fort-save (DC 17), Primary and secondary damage: 1d3 Con

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PULP FIGURES



From the Great White North come some more figures from the Pulp Figures line.

First up is a preview of the Rocket Corp figure. Can you say, "The Rocketeer"? I thought so and I love this figure. It's the first one that I took out of the package and it was already my favorite. He's dressed in pretty regular pants and shirt with race-car type belting around his torso that will keep him attached to the rocket, which comes as a separate piece. He's striking a very suitable pose for an adventurer and while you'll need to introduce a rocket pack into your game is a wonderful figure.



The next two figures come from the Rugged Heroes pack. First up is Lord Mumfred, a stuffy looking brit carrying a revolver and wearing a pith helm. Facial detail is very nice, including a mustache and bits of hair poking out from below his helmet. Other than a button-down shirt and slacks he has a holster on his belt. He appears to be getting ready to take aim at some scoundrel off in the distance.



Skip Barry is wearing an aviator's jacket and carrying a pistol. He also sports a mustache and has his hair parted quite noticeably down the center. He's in a bit more of a relaxed pose than Mumfred, but still ready for action. He's also wearing heavy boots and those baggy aviator pants. Nice touch. As with Mumfred, his facial features are clean and should paint up very well.

The rest of the Rugged Heroes pack comes with Brutus (a bulldog), Carson Smith (an Indiana Jones type character), and Dieter (a bare-chested German carrying two pistols who has obviously seen the Nazi's for the evil thugs that they are and has decided to be a good guy). The pack of five figures has a retail price of \$12.00 USD.



To counter the Rugged Heroes above the next three guys come from the Sinister Spies set and, like the Heroes, has a retail price of \$12.00 USD for which you'll get five figures. The three presented here and two others. First is The Unpleasant Mr. M who is wearing a suit and a tasseled fez. He is armed with a small pistol at his side and a threatening "or else" hand gesture. The mold line was very faint. The facial details are great with lots of wrinkles and thanks to the less politically correct climate back in the 30's he's carrying a cigarette.



Seigfreid Holtz reminds me a bit of Indiana Jones' foil, Beloch from 'Raiders of the Lost Ark', except this one is German and not French. Anyway, he's dressed in an explorer's or archeologist's outfit including puffy pants and a pith helmet and is holding a pocket-watch in his right hand and looking at you like you're wasting his time and it might be better to just shoot you. The mold line, mainly in the inseam of his trousers was a bit more prominent than with the other figures, but really not too bad. No weapons to be seen, but this is the type of villain more akin to use lackeys to bother the heroes.



Our last look is at Bronstein: the 2nd man. He's a large-ish fellow that is wearing a heavy overcoat and hat and is holding a suitcase in his right hand (almost certainly containing plans to destroy the world which the heroes must get from him) and a pistol in his left hand. A left-handed villain! I'll bet he has beady eyes too! The beard looks very good, but what I think really makes this figure shine are the glasses. I know he has beady eyes, I just can't see them.

The other two figures in this set of bad guys are Jasper Gutworth: international scoundrel (a rotund gangster-looking guy in a three-piece suit) and Count Stransky (quite likely a Russian that is dressed for winter and carrying a pistol). You can check out all of the full-color pics of the above miniatures at the Pulp Figures web site.



We end our look at heroes and villains of the pulp era with U.S. Gunboat Sailors, which can either be looked upon as 'the cavalry' coming to save the player character's bacon when things are too rough or as 'bullet magnets' to keep the PC's from getting shot to pieces, but the story still calls for a high body count. They also run \$12.00 USD for the pack of five and for that price you get five different figures. Below you can see the fully painted set courtesy of the Pulp Figures website. These guys were

free of defects and cleaned up very quickly. A good set and at less than \$2.50 per figure a good value also.

In addition to being quality figures at a very good price, the line of Pulp Figures recently became a whole lot more useful too. Call of Cthulhu, which is where we've had the most use for them, is one choice, but now with the release of Forbidden Kingdoms (Otherworld Creations) and Weird War II (Pinnacle Entertainment Group) you can get a lot of use out of them. Of course, we cannot forget Pulp Figures' own game, Rugged Adventures, that is available as a free download from their website.



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MINIATURE REVIEW

WARMACHINE

This issue we get a first look at the miniatures from Privateer Press' foray into miniature games with figures for IK: Warmachine.



First on the block are what will form the leadership of your IK: Warmachine army, the Warcaster. Part magician, part warrior, part leader, and completely necessary. Above is the Cygnar Warcaster and he comes as three pieces (body, sword, and head) and stands on a plastic slotta-base that is slightly larger than those you're probably used to. Both hands are holding the sword and it fit into place perfectly and while it took a little bit of careful cutting to separate the head from the casting tab is dropped between the shoulders just fine. He is wearing some heavy plate armor from the waist up and what looks like reinforced leather down below. In addition to his sword he's also armed with some sort of pistol, which hangs to his right side, and there is a moderately large mechanical device on his back and shoulders with a long coat coming out from underneath. The detail on the armor plating is very nicely done with the hoses and rivets making up some nice details. I especially liked the head and the glasses add a nice touch to the figure. Being a three piece model meant that some extra cleanup and prep time was needed, but mold lines were very faint and he went together with no trouble at all. If you're not playing IK: Warmachine he also has several uses in other games. My first thought would be to use him as a fighter/sorcerer in Dungeons and Dragons but he could also find work as a Chronomancer in Chronopia or as the leader of a group of 2-handed swordsmen in Warhammer or some other wargame. Great figure with lots of versatility!

Next (top right) is another Warcaster, this one from the Protectorate faction. He also comes as a three piece model (body, weapon, and steam pipes). The weapon is a two-handed staff with a chain and a spiked

ball on one end. It got a little bit bent during shipping but is thick enough to be able to easily bend back into place without breaking. He's wearing long flowing robes and considerably more armor plating than his

Cygnar counterpart. The mold line was mostly visible on the armor plates, but it was really not too bad and this figure cleaned up quickly. He also has fewer of what I'd call mechanical parts than the Cygnar Warcaster. He also has a lot of versatility outside of IK: Warmachine as I could easily see him fitting in as a cleric or paladin in Dungeons and Dragons. He has a little less, well, character than the first one but is still a good looking figure.

The last of the Warcasters that we'll look at in this issue can be seen below. He's the Butcher of Khardov (below) and he is massive. He even comes with a base that is almost twice the size of the other Warcasters. He's also a three-piecer (body, armored fist and big freakin' axe) and while he needed the most attention during cleanup he went together very easily. I didn't see the need to pin any of these three figures and didn't see any of the joints as being excessively weak. Super glue should hold up just fine with them. As you can see he's wearing a huge amount of plate armor and has a very heavy reinforced leather coat on top of that. Man, he must get hot underneath all of that! He has about as much technological gear as the Cygnar Warcaster in the form of



Undoubtedly, your Warjacks (see below) will take some damage during a game so you'll need Mechanics to fix 'em up. For \$9.99 USD you'll get the three fixer-uppers shown below. Two gobbers and a human make up the crew and they are not really armed with anything, but are carrying various tools, like a monkey-wrench and rivet gun, and one has a Warjack hand strapped to his back. I can see the middle one scratching his head and wondering how he ended up with extra parts after putting some broken Warjack back together. They all have either pouches or extra tools hanging from their belts and the middle gobber also has a set of dog tags hanging around his neck. The human mechanik is wearing a heavy apron, probably to protect him when he has to do some welding. Cleanup time was really minimal with all three figures as the mold line was either very faint or just not visible and there was really no flash at all to speak of. You will notice in the color picture that their bases are a bit larger than standard slotta-bases. Uses outside of IK:Warmachine include dropping the gobbers into an Ork army in Warhammer 40K, and all of them could be used in a Necromunda gang.



Protectorate of Menoth Crusader

Ok, on to the real meat, err, Iron now. The next four pictures are all of the first four Warjacks from the Menoth faction.

First (left) is the Crusader and he is pretty darn large! He comes as six pieces (Head, Upper Torso, Legs, Right and Left arms and Steam Pipes). I was pleasantly

at the lack of cleanup that was needed on such a large model (around 60mm tall). Yes, there were some visible mold lines but they were very faint and flash was at a bare minimum. The Crusader went together very easily and while I chose not to pin him you might want to at least entertain the idea. With such a wide set of shoulders and massive steam pipes the model looks a bit top-heavy, but it's remarkably stable. The stability of the model is certainly helped by the large base that it's on. The Crusader is a 'heavy' Warjack and all of the heavies have arms that fit into round slots on the shoulder/upper torso piece. This allows them complete 360 degree rotation and gives you a few more assembly options. The Crusader is armed with an Inferno Mace in his right hand and a battleship's worth of iron armor.

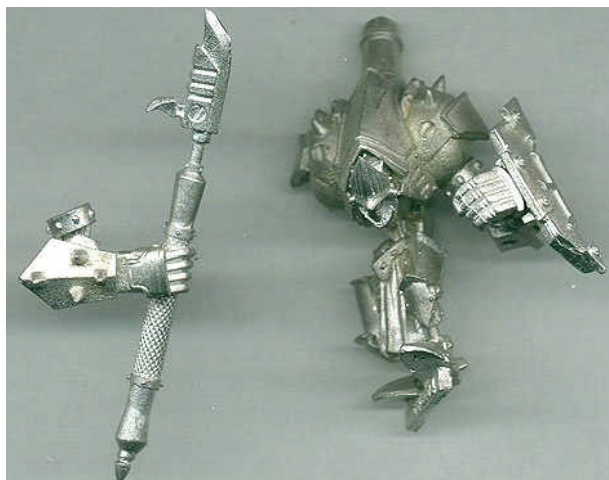
Next (upper right) is a 'light' Warjack, the Repenter. It stands about a quarter taller than a standard figure and is considerably bulkier. It comes as four pieces (Body, Head, and right and left arms) and is armed with a flail

and a Flame Cannon. There was even less of a mold line on the Repenter, in fact none of the light Warjacks needed much attention at all on the mold line. Assembly was very easy and while I thought to mention to you about pondering the use of pins on the heavy Warjacks I really don't think it's necessary at all on the light ones.



Protectorate of Menoth Repenter

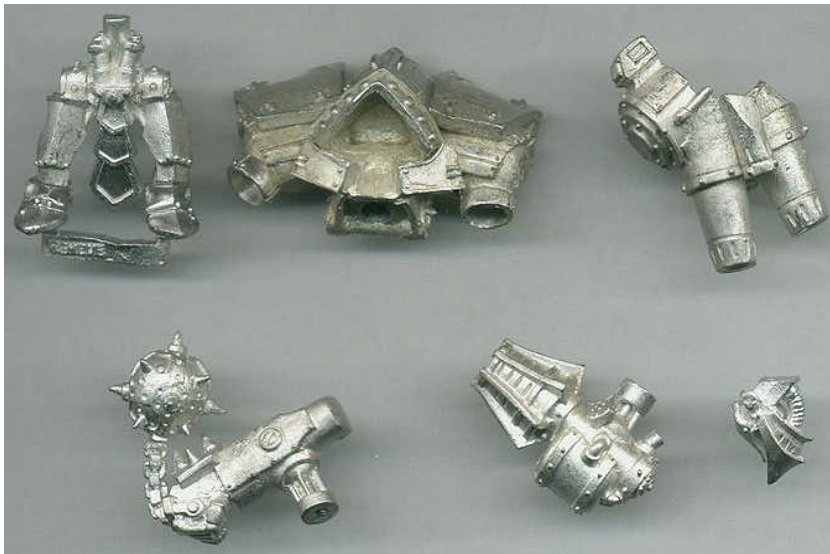
You get even more assembly options with the arms on the light Warjacks as they fit together is a joint similar to a ball-and-socket joint. This allows for almost unlimited rotation of the arm when putting it together. The only thing about this figure that I would have changed would be to have the chains / spiked balls on the flail to be



Protectorate of Menoth Revenger

individual and bendable. This would have lead to them being much more breakable though.

The last of the light Warjacks of the Menoth faction for now is the Revenger (bottom-previous page). It is armed with a halberd, a shield, and an arc node that is used in conjunction with magic spells. It comes as a six piece model (body, head, right and left arms, shield, and arc node) and had a little bit of flash that needed cleaning on the arms but it went together easily. Having a long pole arm and shield along with the rotation of the arm joints lets you put him together in many different poses. The head of the halberd might end up being a bit heavy for the thinner pole section between it and the rest of the weapon so I'd try to avoid bending it.



Protectorate of Menoth Vanquisher

Above you'll see two views of the Vanquisher, another 'heavy' Warjack. As you can see it comes as a six piece model consisting of the upper torso/shoulders, legs, head, steam pipes, a morning star in its right hand and a Flame Launcher replacing its left arm.

It went together very easily and like with the Crusader I had to dedicate very little time to cleaning it. If you plan to bend the chain on the morning star just be careful not to weaken the joint.

If you didn't get a chance to pick up the IK:Warmachine figures during their debut at Gen Con you really missed out. They should be available with the regular release of the game. I would expect that the prices will remain the same as before, but in no way am I guaranteeing that so don't come looking for me if they went up.

The Butcher of Khardov had a price of \$8.99 USD, The Vanquisher went for \$14.99 USD, and a set (top-left) consisting of the Menoth Warcaster, the Crusader, the Repenter, and the Revenger went for \$29.99 USD.



The Warjacks have an obvious use, outside of IK:Warmachine of course, as Golems or Shield Guardians in Dungeons and Dragons. If you are playing in the Iron Kingdoms setting then their use in your campaign will be even more prolific. All of the Warjacks are also supremely useful as robots or dreadnoughts in Warhammer 40K or other sci-fi games. I can certainly see them stomping across the board in Inquisitor also. Overall, they are really, really nice figures that have a myriad of uses.

I'm really hoping that the IK:Warmachine line of figures is just that start of things to come from Privateer Press. Almost everything in the Monsternomicon (see review on page xx) would be great if made into miniatures.

MINIATURE REVIEW

HUNDRED KINGDOMS

Last issue we got a good look at the new game Hundred Kingdoms in Deano C. Ware's column, Standing Orders. This time around we have a bunch of figures for that game to take a look at.

We'll start off with the Simian Empire and some of their standard line troops, the Legionnaires. There are a couple of things that you'll notice with these guys immediately. First, they come on a molded base, not all Hundred Kingdoms figures do, that is pretty much the same size as a standard slotta-base. Second, they are massive! From the bottom of the base to the top of their heads is about 2" and that does not include the sword raised above the head.

As far as I can tell they are dressed in pretty standard Romanesque clothing and armor and look the part of a front line warrior. Each is armed with a sword and shield and they come as single piece models two to a pack for \$7.50 USD. This is actually quite cheap when you consider how large these guys are.

Below are Praetorians, also from the Simian empire. On average they are a smidge taller than the Legionnaires and come with separate shields. They are also in heavier armor and have longer swords. They run \$8.00 USD for a pack of two, but like the guys above they are a very good deal. Singly, they are almost as big as some other companies Ogres.

All four of them did require some cleaning time. Mold lines were almost invisible, but there were some tiny bits of flash that needed attention and the bottom of the bases had to be leveled off.

Usually I'm a major non-fan of figures without a slotta-base but the ones that these guys come attached to are so close to the same measurements that it's really not an issue for me.

I know that I made mention of it earlier, but good gosh are these guys huge,



especially when you consider that they will be slamming into (mostly) standard sized troops fielded by your opponents.

What do 800-lb gorillas do? Absolutely whatever a whole squad of them wants to do!

Last, for this issue, from the Simian Empire is a Centurion. He has come up through the ranks of the Praetorians and is probably well known for kicking his share, and someone else's share, of enemy butt.





Being a gorilla, you guessed it, he's also rather massive just like the troops that he tells what to do.

His helmet makes him taller than the others and he is also quite a bit bulkier.

On first sight I thought that the thinner part of his helmet might be a weak point, but it's plenty thick.

As you can see he also comes on a metal base, but his right hand is a separate piece. His mold line was more prominent than with the Legionnaires or Praetorians and required a bit more work. He'll set you back \$7.00 USD and comes one to a pack.

I was very impressed with all of the Simians. Their fur was well done and facial features were very clear and should look super when painted. Absolute thumbs up for all of them. Uses outside of Hundred Kingdoms might be a bit slim, but I can see them being used in D&D as a race or, well, intelligent apes.

Above and to the right are two Wuxia Warriors from the Bushido Empire. They are wearing just about nothing in the way of armor. The mold line on these was very faint, but each had a little bit of flash the needed to be cleaned.

They come with standard plastic slotta-bases but also have an attachment to convert it into a flying base and each figure has a notch in a pretty inconspicuous place so you can make them running on the ground or in the middle of a leap. This is cool and adds some visual flavor to the army on the battlefield.

Faces on these were good and each has a goatee and either a hat or a headband. I like the one with two swords the most out of the set, but there is nothing at all wrong with the other. A blister of two will run you \$5.50 USD.

Last we have a Mounted Paladin from the Kingdom of Avalon. He comes one to a blister and has a retail price of \$6.00 USD which is very good for an all-metal mounted



Figure. The fit of the rider in the saddle was a little bit awkward and looked to me like he was doing more standing, rather than sitting, in the saddle. The horse needed more cleaning attention than the rider, which had just a tiny bit of flash.

Once glued into place his cape gives the figure a very nice feel of movement, like it's flapping in the wind behind him as he rides towards his enemy. All told, a very good mounted figure made better by being all-metal and not a strain on the wallet.

I really liked the first round of figures from Hundred Kingdoms. They were all of good quality and the Simians are unique and that alone drew me to them as the army to play in the game.

I hear that a some kind of zombie army is next in line and can't wait to see what kind of rotting monstrosities dig themselves out of the ground.

If the guys at Hundred Kingdoms are able to keep up with their projection of one new army released every six months then we're in for a whole slew of well done and affordable miniatures for a long time to come.

www.100kingdoms.com



MINIATURE REVIEW

CONFRONTATION®



Above you'll see the cards for the new Alahan Cavaliers. The set of three lancers comes as a boxed set and has a retail price of \$29.99. For your thirty bucks you'll get three all-metal and very detailed cavaliers for your Alahan army. When you crack open the box you'll need to take account of all of the pieces. Each horse comes as three pieces (right side, left side and head) and each rider comes as either four or five pieces depending on their pose.

With all of these pieces you'll be spending some quality time with your hobby knife. Pinning was not needed as they hold together just fine with super glue and the pieces did not have any large gaps that required the use of putty.

Each rider is wearing heavy plate including a helmet and two are armed with shields. Each is armed with a lance and a longsword for use after the charge. Echoing their riders plate armor the war horses have heavy plate barding for protection.

I'm not really sure of the color scheme on the cards, but it fits in pretty well with the standard Alahan army look. The armor and weapon detail should look very nice no matter how you decide to paint these guys.

Thirty dollars is not bad at all for this set of three lancers. If you don't play Confrontation (shame on you,

just kidding) they also have many other uses including as characters, or enemies, for Dungeons & Dragons or you could pick up a few sets to build a whole unit for a Bretonian army in Warhammer Fantasy.



MINIATURE REVIEW

REAPER MINIATURES



We get a look at two more of Reaper's Warlord range of figures and two others from the Dark Heaven line. The Justicar (left) is a single piece model that is armed with a spear and sword in a scabbard. He's wearing heavy armor and is just screaming to be a player character in an RPG or a leader of a group of spear-

men. He did take a little bit of time with a hobby knife to get rid of the mold line. It wasn't thick, but it was everywhere. Facial detail is excellent and you'll find buckles and belts and clasps all over the place. A truly marvelous figure.

An Anti-Hero (center) is next and he comes as two pieces (the main figure and the left arm/shield). He actually needed a bit more time than the Justicar for cleaning as he had some flash that needed trimming along with the mold line that needed attention. He's wearing all of the plate armor that he could find and a chain skirt is the only thing that isn't plate. He is a walking tank! I know that he's billed as an Anti-Hero, but there's nothing overtly evil about this figure and he would work well as a standard fighter. I would have no problem using him as a paladin either. He's armed with a longsword in his right hand and has a short one (or a long dagger) on his belt. On first look I thought him to have somewhat of a flat pose, but after adding the shield arm he comes to life a lot more.



Being from the Warlord line means that each of the figures above comes with a separate square metal base, which just fills me with happy joy-joy feelings. They will both set you back \$4.00 USD.

Next up (top right) is a medusa that comes as a two piece figure. We're back to the standard Reaper bases so that means that I'm back to trying to work her onto another base. Luckily, she will fit perfectly on a standard plastic cavalry base so no worries there. You will notice that her 'naughty bits' are showing so you might want to keep your 'Disney-watching' kids out of the room when you whip her out. Just a heads up. I found her facial



detail to be a step down from the Justicar and the snakes on her head are just a bit thick. I think they would have looked better if they were a little thinner. She's armed with the typical weapon for a Medusa, a long bow and is really not worried about catching an axe in the head because she'll just turn you to stone. She took a few minutes to clean up as the mold line and some flash needed taking care of. This is a figure that any DM can use in their monster collection and come to think of it, it's probably time that I dropped one of them on my party of stalwart adventurers. She has a retail price of \$4.00 USD which is quite good for a cavalry-sized model.

Last up this time is a Bugbear Shaman. This was probably my favorite out of this group, but also needed the most cleaning and prep work. His left arm is attached to the base as a semi-separate piece and he's holding a staff in his right hand. The fur and facial detail on this figure is excellent and he will fit in perfectly with the rest of the Reaper Bugbears. His helmet is actually the skull of a ram and is tied around his chin with a leather strap. I have my base issue again with this figure but I managed to get all of the other Reaper Bugbears, and Gnolls on to standard 25mm plastic bases so I should be able to work with him also. He also has a retail price of \$4.00 USD and is definitely worth it.



www.reapermini.com



MINIATURE REVIEW



Knight-Terror is a new fantasy game with a host of miniatures for us to look at. In addition to the figures presented here you can also take a look at some artwork for the game in the Concept Artwork articles later in this issue.



Up first are two fighters from the Highland Empire faction from the game. These two barbaric warriors both carry heavy swords and shields, but wear very little in the way of armor. The first thing that you're drawn to is their helmet/mask. It's very interesting and unique. It adds a lot of flavor to what could easily have been a couple of semi-naked figures with swords. The mold line on them was evident and needed to be cleaned along with a small amount of flash. The pose of the male (above) is a bit more dynamic than the female (side) but with some very careful bending I was able to rotate her shield and sword to add some more movement to the piece. Below are some painted examples of the Dark Highlanders from the Knight - Terror website.



The Were-Panther (right) is one of my favorites of the whole group of figures. He did need some cleaning, but his fur looks very good and all-around this is a very nice figure. He's carrying two daggers, one in each hand/paw with their scabbards being tied to his back. If not used in Knight - Terror this would make an excellent Rakshasa.



Werepanther from Knight Terror Games



The Ore Golem (below) comes as a single piece model that is between a quarter and a third again taller than most regular troops. There were no flaws but a little time with the hobby knife was needed to clean up some of the mold lines.

This is a good figure, just not a great one. There are two small things that kept it from moving up in my book. First, the ore deposits on his back are kind of rounded and look a bit like eggs. Now, if you wanted to freak out your opponent you could paint the rocks on his back like Easter eggs, but I doubt this is the case for most of us. Second, his mouth is just kind of hung open. Ok, I don't



better than anyone else what the mount of an Ore Golem should look like, but I just think it could look better. If you're thinking "Earth Elemental" as a possible alternate use for this figure then we're on the same page, scary ain't it?

The Bramble Demon (right-painted and below - pieces) comes as a four piece model that did not require a lot of cleaning or attention before assembly.

The model is really brought to life with the paint job and the difference between the model when it is just assembled and when a final paint job is on it is huge.



out being sunken or emaciated.

There was a bit of flash that needed to be cleaned but this was mainly on the edges of the swords. The mold line was also visible but was not excessive and was easily taken care of.

Even though he's not in an action pose this is a very nice figure that could double for a PC in Dungeons and Dragons or could even find work in an elf army because his pointy ears are clearly visible.



Without taking into consideration the height of the model's arms the assembled Bramble Demon stands a good deal taller than regular troops, but he does not tower over them.

There was virtually no flash on the model and it required almost no cleaning as the mold line was just about unnoticeable.

Taking a look at the two pictures you'll notice that the one that I was sent had two of the 'hook' arms and was missing the one with the 'hand' made up of branches. I'm sure that this was a simple mistake, but I found that with just a bit of putty the model could work just fine with the two 'hooks'. Another good model.

Last up for Knight Terror is the Catlord (right). He's as tall as a regular human figure but has a much more slight feel to him. In reality the figure is no more thin than others of his size, but I think his facial features and the way that his robes hang gives this impression.

He's carrying two rather ornate short swords, but nothing in the way of armor except two shoulder pads that are probably more ceremonial than intended for combat. The robes are very nice and the fur on his cape was very neatly done also.

Facial detail is also very nice and is slender and thin with-



For a comparison on how close the finished models came to their concept art be sure to check out the Concept Art article for Knight Terror figures that starts on page xx.

You'll see the artwork for some of the figures presented here plus future releases.

www.knight-terror.com

MINIATURE REVIEWS

Celtos



Some new Celtos models showed up on my doorstep and we begin with a look at some Flesh Eaters from the Fir Bolg undead army. These guys (left) come three to a pack for \$7.95 USD. Each figure needed a little bit of cleaning (either the mold line or a bit of flash) but it was not too serious at all and there were no defects on the models. All three of the poses are good and each has an emaciated look, but still has enough undead muscle to tear into their enemies and then feast on their flesh.

Each is wearing a long tabard, boots, and a vambrace or two. Each also has at least one medium length sword at the ready or in a scabbard. Facial detail is very good and all three have sunken cheeks and eye sockets and one of them looks like he's had his scalp peeled off and then re-attached. Obviously, these would serve to bolster any Fir Bolg force in Celtos, but would also serve as very good zombies in the services of a Vampire Count in Warhammer Fantasy or as Unliving in a Sons of Kronos army for Chronopia.

Below are three Sirens from the Fomorian army. These are some bad girls! Each is armed with a short bow (two of them have quivers for arrows) and a short sword. I don't think that you can call them armored, heck you can barely say that they are wearing clothes! Yes, two out of three of these hoochies are very proud of their "assets" and have no problem displaying them for all to see. Each also has some little horns on their head and a tail. One also has a little set of bat wings.



Cleaning was not bad, but each did need a little attention. There were no defects at all though. Even though they are more revealing than most other miniatures these girls are not really "top heavy" if you get my meaning. They have a more balanced look than a lot of female figures.

At \$8.95 for a set of three they are a touch more expensive than the Flesh Eaters, but between \$2-3 USD per figure is really not a bad price. I think that their use is a bit more limited though just because of how revealing the figures are. Would I use them with my group of adult war gamers? Yes, absolutely. Would I use them as monsters or characters in the D&D game that my 13-year old son plays in (with the same adult war gamers above)? No, not likely at all. With that said you'll have to make up your own mind as to their use, but they are very good figures none the less.



Last up is Brennus Iron Spear who will set you back \$11.95 USD. The horse that he is riding is like a friggin' Clydesdale and is no dinky war pony. I like the additional spears that fit onto the side of the horse. They needed to be bent back into place but were thick enough to keep from breaking. Cleanup did take a few minutes, but that's really normal for a multi-piece model. Just under twelve dollars is not bad for a full-metal mounted warrior, especially with a horse this big. I would have liked some more pose-ability with the rider, but that's really not a gripe, just an observation. Very, very good figure.

MINIATURE REVIEWS

EXCELSIOR entertainment

Take a gander to the below and you'll see the 'green' of a Soul Golem for Chronopia. Judging from the size of the miniature in relation to the casting tab that will sit in the plastic slotta-base I'd say that the top of its scythe may reach as high as 3". As soon as I get an actual model in-hand I'll give you a more detailed review, but this looks like one rather large and nasty undead that could have several uses in addition to being a heavy hitter in the Devout army for Chronopia.



To the right are the pieces that make up the mighty Blood-Bone Blood Totem from the Dwarf army. It comes as a thirteen, yes you read that right, piece model and is all-metal! It is freakin' massive. The upper torso comes as two hollow pieces that fit together well, but there was a bit of a gap along the spine that will need



some putty work. The head fit on to the body easily and is holding fine with just superglue, but you may want to go ahead and pin it into place just to be safe. The legs fit easily into the lower torso piece and did not require pinning, but again, you may want to go ahead and take the time to do so. There was some putty work needed where the upper and lower torso pieces fit together. The arms and horns fit into the sockets on the upper torso and head with no problems. The three claws (not pictured) fit into their slots on the left arm just fine. There was about thirty minutes of prep time that was needed to clean up mold lines and flash, but with a metal model of this size I was expecting it. The Totem comes without a base, but I decided to mount him on a large round plastic base. The finished Totem is in a pose where he appears to be running on all fours, but with his left arm extended slightly so his claws can cleave some poor sap. The model also comes with a Dwarf Keeper model. At \$29.95 USD he's not cheap, but it is a massive model that would feel at home in a Dwarf army or as a monster in D&D or some other fantasy RPG. I was impressed with and liked this big fella very much and am looking forward to more new large creatures soon.



To the left is a picture of the final 'green' of the Blood-Bone Blood Totem. This is the final pose of the metal version of the model.

To the right is a size comparison with a dwarf warrior. You can get a feel for the bulk of the creature from this picture. It is bigger than big!





The assembled Totem



To the left is the new Elf Yellow Lotus Eater. It's a one-piece model that looks significantly different from the other Lotus Eaters and other than painting them differently I like very much that not only are all of the Lotus Eaters going to be different sculpts, but that they will all also have a different look to them. He appears to be wearing heavy plate and leather armor and

has a large flowing cape that surrounds him. It looks like there is a spellbook tucked under his right arm and a small pouch on his belt. The staff keeps up with the elven glyphs that we're accustomed to with Chronopia. There was some cleaning needed with this guy, but the mold line was very faint. His cape and face are the highlights of this figure.

Below and to the right is a Firstborn warrior that I can't quite put my finger on. He's dressed in clothes that remind me of a swashbuckler more than anything else but is also wearing a chain shirt and is carrying a sword and shield. Facial detail here is very good, including a scar across his right eye that goes from his eyebrow to his cheek, nice touch. I found all of the detail on this guy to be very well done. His cape is long but not quite as flowing as the elf, which suits him fine. Not everyone needs a cape with a life of its own. Great figure that could walk into just about any fantasy game, but I just can't nail his Chronopia use just yet.



To the right is a new Devout individual and by the looks of him I'd say that he's some kind of Warped Lord because of the horn that he is carrying. The model normally comes as three pieces, but mine arrived in four as the sword-hand is somewhat of a weak joint and it broke in transit. It glued together easily enough though. His cape is similar to the Lotus Eater in that it is very full and flowing, but even more so than the



elf. The back banner fit into the grove on his back easily but will require just a tiny bit of putty to completely smooth over. His belt is adorned with pouches, a skull and the aforementioned horn. Other than shoulder pads and his helmet he's not wearing any armor, but he's either bad enough to not need it or plans to do lots of spell casting and avoid hand-to-hand. Clean up was very quick and I think that he'll paint up very nicely. I might drop the large round part of the sword pommel as it seems just a bit too big. Otherwise I like this guy very much and he's useable in lots of different games.



To the left is an alternate head for the Blood Bone Blood Totem. I took the picture without the horns but you can see he's got his mouth open ready for a snack.

Now, on to some new figures for Warzone. These just make my mouth water in anticipation for the Ultimate edition of Warzone.

I'm going to guess that the guy to the right is a member of the

Capitol Free Marines. A new trooper for this unit will bring a smile to my son's face. He's in a pose ready to trash someone but with his arms out like that they could be carefully bent into other positions if you like. He was just about perfect upon arrival and needed just a tiny bit of mold line cleanup. He's dressed like the rest of the Free Marines meaning he has shoulder pads, knee pads, and a breastplate to go along with his piss-poor attitude. Facial detail, in fact the whole head, is very good. He's sporting a mohawk, but the stubble on the sides is visible and he's really letting loose with some kind of verbal ass-



ault, to go along with the physical one he's about to lay down. Great figure with tons of uses outside of Warzone if that ain't your thing.



Oh great googley moogley, a new Cybertronic figure! I just about wet myself when I saw this guy and I don't even play with the People's Republic of Computer Chips. He did require a little cleaning on the mold line and there was the tiniest bit of flash on one hand. At first glance the pose seems a little flat, but the ammo belt and the bend in his knees gives

the figure more depth.

I had heard about this next guy from someone at either Origins or Gen Con and could not wait to actually see the Golden Lion carrying a Nimrod Autocannon. Cripes, he's cool! Besides carrying a freakin' massive gun that could shoot through a building he is also smoking a stogie and is wearing an eye-patch. Kind of reminds me of Nick Fury, Agent of Shield a little bit. A little more cleaning here, especially around the gun, but nothing drastic. Another great figure.



I would have to guess that the two figures below are additions to the Mishima army and are likely to be very stealthy, sneak up behind you and chop your head off kind of models. They are both wearing skin-tight bodysuits and area carrying a katana and pistol with what are probably silencers and flash suppressors. Muscle de-



tail can be seen beneath their suits in several places and you could really freak out your opponent by painting them with the translucent painting techniques presented later in the Slave Pit. These were both very clean models that did not require any cleaning.



I don't think that I'm going too far out on a limb by saying that we have a Samurai Grenade Launcher on our hands here. I am really glad to see the amount of work that is being done to flesh out the figures for already existing troops in Warzone. He'll fit right in with the older models and nobody

would look twice, except to see that he's actually carrying a grenade launcher. The sealed face mask looks very good and after a very little bit of cleaning to the mold line he's ready to go.

Ok, who set the way-back machine? The Praetorian Stalker below is one of the original from back in the Mutant Chronicle days and then in 1st Edition Warzone. I had figured that the molds had gone up in smoke but if they are available again then that is just very cool.



The newer ones are just fine, but these are old-school and that's a good thing. I hope that his twin that is carrying the large machine gun with a bayonet is also available. He had no cleaning issues and was ready to drop on a base and undercoat right off the bat.

Last up this time around is what looks like a Ducal Militia rocket launcher specialist for the boys from Bauhaus. He comes as a two-piece model with the rocket launcher and right arm separate from the rest of the model. He's built up with extra armor plates like the Ducal machine-gunner and I like the consistency of the heavier looking armor for the guys carrying around the big guns in the Militia. He also has a couple of pouches and grenades on his belt and a pistol in a boot holster in case someone gets too close to shoot at with the rocket launcher. The mold line was visible and required filing, but this is a very nice figure.



Looks like things are picking up steam over at Excelsior and I can't wait to see more gaps filled in and other new troops start to emerge for Ultimate Warzone.



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BATTLE REPORT



THE AWFUL TRUTH

The room was brightly lit, a bit too brightly for most humans. Here amid the Chronomancers tower Albinar Ran studied his prisoner carefully. After hours of raging against its bonds and the accursed lights no doubt burning its lidless eyes, the great fiend had slumped down into an exhausted torpor. No doubt the days of prodding and experimentation had helped reduce its infernal resiliency as well. He knew its stamina could not last forever.

"What secrets you must hold, trapped beneath that mouth plate." The Chronomancer thought aloud.

He had been assigned to escort the supply train through the Lowridge Highlands, across the Valkin River to the Garrison at Helmsford, a simple enough assignment were it not for the Devout besieging Helmsford at the time. His retinue would serve as relief and resupply to the beleaguered garrison who had been suffering hard under the Devout attack. Their carriages and wagons rode for days, resting only briefly before setting out again. Time, the Chronomancer knew, would not work against them.

For the young Chronomancer this had been a dream come true. He had studied hard for his many years of training, been tested by the Council of Twelve and passed and had served as one of Cassian Moladi's apprentices for five full winters. His time as a Chronomancer had been exciting and mysterious all at once. The study of the Great Weave was all he could think about, often to the chagrin of his masters who cautioned against seeking too much knowledge too quickly.

"What secrets shall you share with me?" he thought as he looked at the barely alive Shadow Stalker.

The battle at Helmsford had been decisive, their convoy reaching its walls during their darkest times. Their knights, fresh from their ride broke the siege lines of the Devout and sent them scattering. Their victory would have been flawless had it not been for this very fiend.

There amid the chaos of the battle the Shadow Stalker emerged and slew Sir Davit Loran, a Repulsar Knight and friend to Albinar. He watched painfully as the mortally wounded Davit collapsed weakly in his arms and gasped out his desire to be avenged. The knights' managed to hold off the skulking fiend long enough for Albinar to lay Davit down and summon up his power. Killing this fiend

was too easy; he would make it pay. He would learn its secrets.

Drawing on his powers the young Chronomancer froze the fiend in place where the knights could subdue it. It had taken all of his commanding ability to keep his men from killing the fiend that had dropped their leader. None-the-less he managed to do so and the fiend was captured and not killed. With Helmsford resupplied, Albinar was anxious to take his charge back to Tower Misanthis where it could be studied. He sent word ahead to his Master Cassian that they had obtained a live specimen and that they would be returning with it directly.

It was no small feat that a Shadow Stalker had been actually taken prisoner. To his knowledge such a thing had not been done before. He was proud and his men were proud. Davit's death would not be in vain. In fact, Davit's death could help to disprove an abhorrent story told to him winters earlier by an Elven Commander from the House of Helios that he had fought along side.

"Shadow Stalkers are an abomination, a tortured soul" he could remember the Commander saying in that dispassionate Elven way. "Unlike the other servants of the Dark One who for reasons petty chose to serve his cause, the Shadow Stalker is a traitor, a Firstborn Knight who, in dire peril, forsook his pledge to the One King and offered his arm to the Devout's Dark Master. He is the lowest of creatures and is punished to never be able to renounce his new oath by having his mouth sealed. He may never shirk from the evil he now does as his eyelids are removed. Pity it not for it is a traitor to your kind and the lowest form of villainy."

That story had bothered Albinar for many winters. Yes, the Dark One had ways of seducing many Firstborn to his evil cause, but to cast aspersions on the integrity of a Firstborn Knight was too much for him to bear. The smug indifference the Elven Commander had shown was palpable, though now he he was surprised he could not even remember his name. He hated the Elf Commander from that point forward and shed no tears when, as the tide of battle turned in their favor, he found himself stuck in time and beset by Dusk Realm Warriors, another unfortunate casualty of the war at Belois. That story had burned at Albinar since that day. Now, amid the tools of his art he would have his answers and that bastard of a Commander could eternally choke on his aspersions.

The Shadow Stalker hung limply on the great disc that was the Anthuse, a device of ancient design and great power. Here he would shed the veils of time and glimpse at the truth that spawned such a fell beast. The ritual had been exhaustive, but images of Davit and the Elven Commander spurned him on through the laborious process. He was now ready for the final spell.

Master Cassian entered the room as Albinar went through the final preparations. He was an older man of some years who still managed to appear vital and strong. Such were the benefits of mastering time.

"You have proceeded in this thing I see Albinar," he said calmly, "I thought I was clear that we could learn nothing from this beast. It is simply an animal trained to walk as a man."

"Perhaps Master Cassian, but I have my reasons. When the last veils of time are removed I will be able to see for certain the power that has created this monstrosity and know its origins. There, in the fullness of time it will tell me what I need to know."

With that Albinar incanted the ancient verse and activated the Anthuse. There, spinning on the great wheel the years seems to meld away and the beast began to transform. Leathery hide began to flicker with human flesh and the repulsive appearance of the creature began to resemble more of a human as the spell wore on. Cassian and Albinar peered closely as time dropped away and the being bound to the Anthuse was a fiend no longer but a human.

Albinar reeled. The damned Elf was right! The human wore the regalia of a nobleman, a servant to the One King. How could this be? The pain was more severe now and Albinar quickly realized it was not the stress from the spell but something more real. The Shadow Stalker again took on its vile appearance as the spell was released. Albinar, clutching his back found only a bloody mess to his touch.

There, two feet back Cassian stood with a drawn and bloodied dagger, the poison mixing obscenely with his blood. He could not concentrate as the poison had worked too quickly.

"Master why?" he uttered before his throat seized up with blood and the ground rose to meet him.

"Because there are simply some truths not meant to be shared, some realities we must never admit to."

Cassian leaned over the young Chronomancer brushing the hair from his eyes. On the Anthuse the Shadow Stalker did not move. While it betrayed no signs of wakefulness Cassian knew it was listening. With a gesture

the bonds slid away from the center of the circle drawing the fiend up to its full size.

He leaned over his former charge and locked eyes with him. "You were a bright student Albinar and your death will bring a new truth. You will serve the One King better next time."

Cassian moved to the Shadow Stalker and gestured again. The plate sealing its mouth glowed and strained against its flesh. If it could look worried this was as close as it could get. Cassian smiled.

"The secrets this creature holds are not for you my young apprentice." Cassian said as he intoned his powers and reached through time to loosen the plating. "What has your Master planned?" he questioned.

As the mouth plate tore free a cloud of blackness and flies filled the room. Cassian was consumed by the torrent of death and amid the screams of the Chronomancer a faint and distant laugh could be heard.

"I plan for you to join me in Hell" was what could be heard amid the screams.

The Shadow Stalker would never renounce its oath to the Dark One; in fact it would bring others to his Master who wished to hear his vile oath. As the Shadow Stalker decomposed, it's disgorged trap abating, young Albinar laid silent, a smile upon his lifeless face.

by G. Thantos

"But I thought this was supposed to be a battle report?" I can hear it before you say it faithful readers. This is a battle report. Or more accurately, it will be one with just the turn of a page.

We decided to base our first battle report of the second edition of Chronopia on a piece of fiction sent to us by Thom Talamini at Excelsior Entertainment.

After reading the story you've probably already figured out that we can't very well do a report representing the battle that took place that lead to the capture of the Shadow Stalker. What if the Firstborn were not able to catch it? You would know at least part of the outcome of the battle, if not all of it, before it even took place on the table and even if the outcome matched the story it would seem at least a little bit contrived.

So, what we've done is work up a plausible scenario to take place after the events in the story.

The Shadow Stalker was also a conduit for information as well as a trap. An Arch-Necromancer had been in contact with it the entire time and not only succeeded in killing Cassian, but also probed his mind for weak locations in

Firstborn defenses. Several Devout strike teams would be sent out to test various points of defense in preparation for an all out invasion.



The Devout

I decided to go with something completely new, new to me anyway, for a Devout army. I've played Devout against Chris for some time and figure that he'd expect me to go with my usual plodding army of lots of Risen backed up by a few demons and overwhelm him with sheer numbers once the bulk of my force finally got into contact. Instead I'll be trying a fast attack army with hopes of getting in quickly with some shock troops and then backing them up with some foot troops. I have a feeling that this will work really well or very poorly. I don't see much middle ground here, but what the heck.

The first part of my fast attack army will be made up of two warbands and an Individual. The warbands will come from the ranks of the Demon Wings, 4 strong, and Blood Hunters, 4 plus a leader, and the Individual will be my personal favorite of the Devout army, the Soul Flayer. That's 705 of my 1000 points already soaked up. I added a full warband (4 modes) of Dusk Realm Warriors. At this point I have to decide to go without something. It could be a spell-caster, missile weapon troops (even though the Blood Hunters can pitch their javelins they are not counted as a Missile Weapon Warband) or another warband. In the end I chose to eschew all of those options and went with another Soul Flayer (Yes, I do have two models) and came out to a total of 994 points.

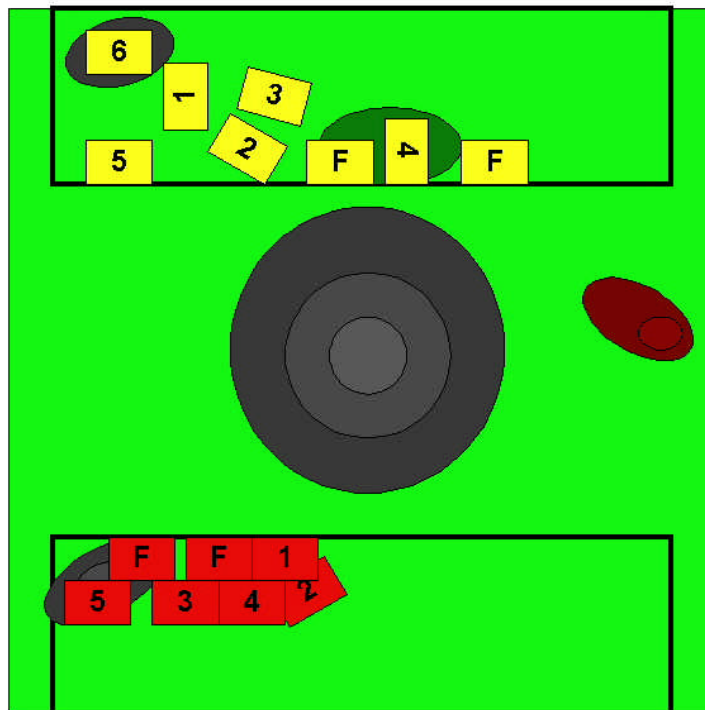
I expect Chris to lose control of his bowels at the sight of two Soul Flayers, which would be worth losing the game badly if that's how things go. I really don't expect him to see me using this kind of army with the Devout so it should be a pleasant surprise for at least one of us.

The Firstborn

I have been eagerly waiting for the new edition of Chronopia, and when Mark asked me to participate in this battle report the question was an immediate yes. 1000 points on the nose was chosen to be the army size. I was eager to take advantage of some of the new rules. The first rule being that the standard bearers could all take magical standards and standard bearers give you the added benefit of extending your command radius by an inch. This would have to wait as I picked the characters for my army first. My first selection was the (almost) compulsory Chronomancer. I originally left him free of spells until I got to my last 100 points spending 85 points. The Repulsar Knight was my immediate second choice. Besides being a bad man in his own right he enhances multiple troops within command, but his ability to cause fear will be wasted given mark's army. This choice brought me to 177 points spent. One more character to go and I can start on my squads. In the last editions chariots were very weak things. The ability to toss a mere swamp goblin in front of it and stop it while the riders and horse hack it to pieces relegated many a chariot to the shelf. Not so now, the Firstborn chariot has trample and a HUGE base to use it with. Moving onto the squads I had 731 points left to spend. My first squad was the ever-flexible squad of swordsmen. Wanting them to be able to absorb a decent amount of damage and still be viable, I made this a large squad. Seven Swordsmen, a leader, a Greatswordman, and a standard bearer put me back another 225 points. In large squads the standard bearer is very important as in the new edition the standard bearer increases your command radius by an inch. This helps you spread out your troops and not let them clump up as much. The Macemen in the last edition were largely ignored, but they were polished up and improved in Chronopia second ed. with the addition of the group attack ability. Another large squad was chosen to take advantage of their group attack, and six Macemen, a leader, a Greatmaceman, and a standard bearer were purchased for 230 points. With enough points for one more squad and spells I languished over the choice between archers and Crossbowmen, and saw the Crossbowmen's ability to shoot their crossbows in hand to hand. Ummm....yes please!! Six of these suckers and a leader cost a hefty 234 points. Off to choosing spells I picked the ever popular accelerate and setback. My goal was to accelerate the Crossbowmen or the chariot, and set back any big critter that Mark had up his sleeve. With ten points left I chose the standard of striking for the swordsmen. 1000 points on the dot. As far as strategy goes I plan on shooting the devout troops that actually accept arrows in the chest, and the trample over those things that are immune to missile fire. Big stuff can hopefully be setback while I deal with the rest of the army, and accelerated Macemen surrounding it should tear it down.

We started the game with a completely blank game table, devoid of any terrain. I won the first roll and dropped a large hill into the center of the board. We then alternated placement until the rather sparse set up you see to the right was complete. Each deployment zone contained a smaller hill and the North DZ also had a small wooded area. The East end of the board had a medium-sized rock formation.

Next came deployment of Unit Cards. They have been numbered on the map so you can see how deployment played out. Of course, we only saw the backs of the cards and did not know what each other put down until it was revealed.

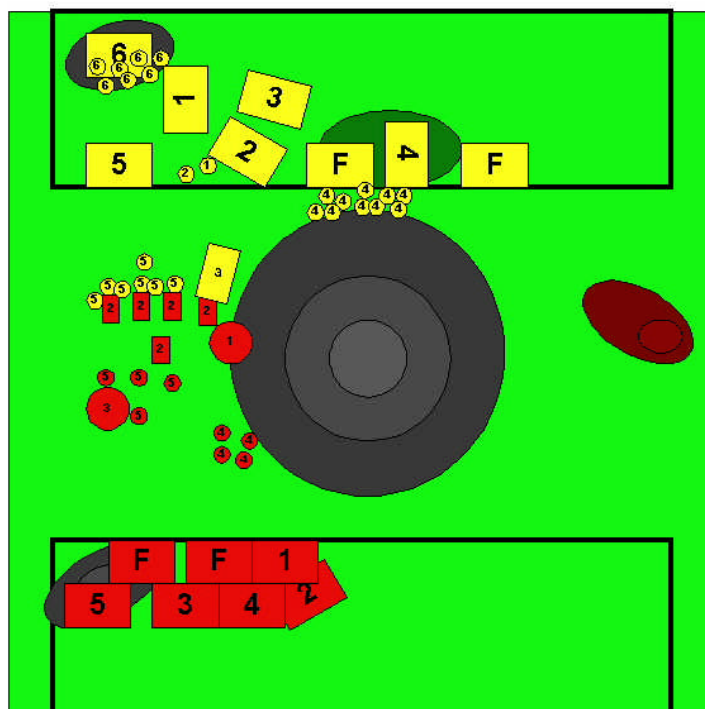


DEPLOYMENT

My plan was to concentrate all of my forces down one side of the table and kill whatever enemies happened to get in the way. From the looks of how the cards were deployed, remember we did not know what was under each other's cards yet, I figured that Chris would have to shift at least part of his army to meet my oncoming wall of demonic flesh. My running lane was pretty open, which would mean less maneuvering would be needed, but it also opens me up to more potential missile fire.

Turn 1 began with me winning the Initiative roll and opted to have Chris go first. The following is the order of our activations and you can take a look to the right for the map at the end of turn 1. We left the cards on the table to mark starting positions and for reference. The circles and rectangles represent the figures after they have been activated for the first time. If, after the end of turn 1,

you no longer see a circle or rectangle 'model marker' on the map it's because the model in question is dead, dead, deadsky.



END OF TURN 1

FIRSTBORN ROSTER

1. Chronomancer
2. Repulsar Knight
3. War Chariot
4. Swordsmen (7 + Standard with Standard of Striking + Leader + Great Swordsman)
5. Macemen (6 + Leader + Great Maceman)
6. Crossbowmen (6 + Leader)
- F. False Lead

DEVOUT ROSTER

1. Soulflayer
2. Blood Hunters (4 + Leader)
3. Soulflayer
4. Dusk Realm Warriors (4)
5. Demon Wings (4)
- F. False Lead

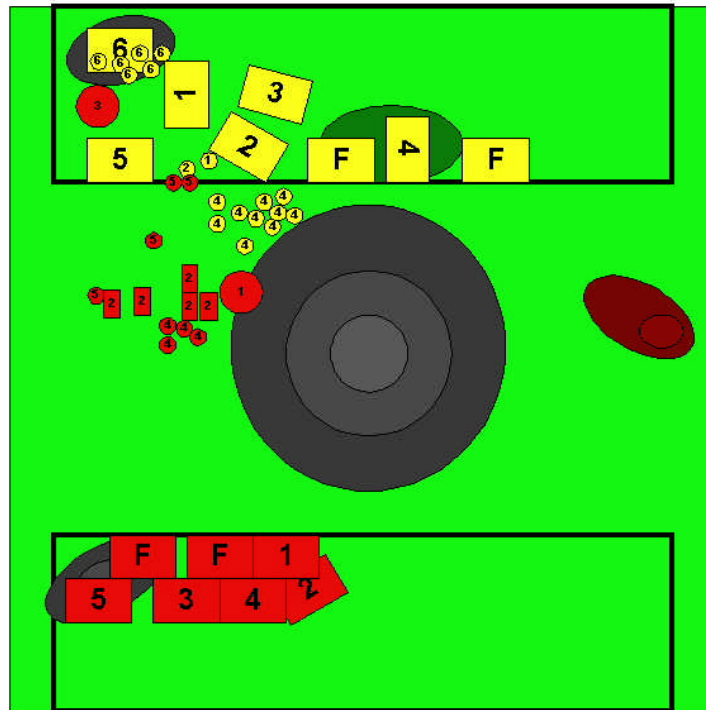
Firstborn: False Lead
 Devout: False Lead
 Firstborn: Repulsar Knight
 Devout: Dusk Realm Warriors
 Firstborn: Crossbowmen (Fired at Dusk Realm Warrior)
 Devout: Blood Hunters
 Firstborn: Macemen (Charged Blood Hunters and caused 1 wound)
 Devout: Demon Wings
 Firstborn: Chronomancer (Concentrated and tried to 'Set Back' the Demon Wings but failed)
 Devout: Soulflayer
 Firstborn: Swordsmen
 Devout: Second Soulflayer
 Firstborn: False Lead
 Devout: False Lead
 Firstborn: War Chariot (Charged Blood Hunter and caused 1 wound)

At the end of turn 1 I had a very good feeling for the battle. I was able to make a rather large advance on the table with significant support for my big girls, the Soulflayers. Unsupported they have a tendency to get pulled down by mobs of enemy troops, but I have a good feeling about their current position.

Once again, I won the Initiative roll and went right to work. The more centrally located Soulflayer screeched at the Blood Hunters to follow her into combat and the War Chariot was broken into splintered wood and twisted metal. Horse, it's what's for dinner! My Soulflayer moving up caused several Dread tests, but the Firstborn soldiers stood their ground. The Blood Hunters also did a fine job on the Firstborn Macemen, leaving just a few standing. Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on your point of view, the Macemen passed their Leadership test and did not panic. Besides foaming at the mouth at the major destruction that just took place Chris responded by using his Chronomancer to 'Accelerate' his Firstborn Crossbowmen in the hopes of shooting lots of small pointed sticks into my beasties.

Next, my Demon Wings swooped in and helped to finish off the remaining Firstborn Macemen and one even managed to cause a wound to the Repulsar Knight. The Knight must have been mighty pissed off because he promptly fumbled and stood there impotently.

Big Nasty Dominatrix #2 (aka the other Soulflayer) swept down by the Crossbowmen and scared the bejezzus out of them! They promptly failed their

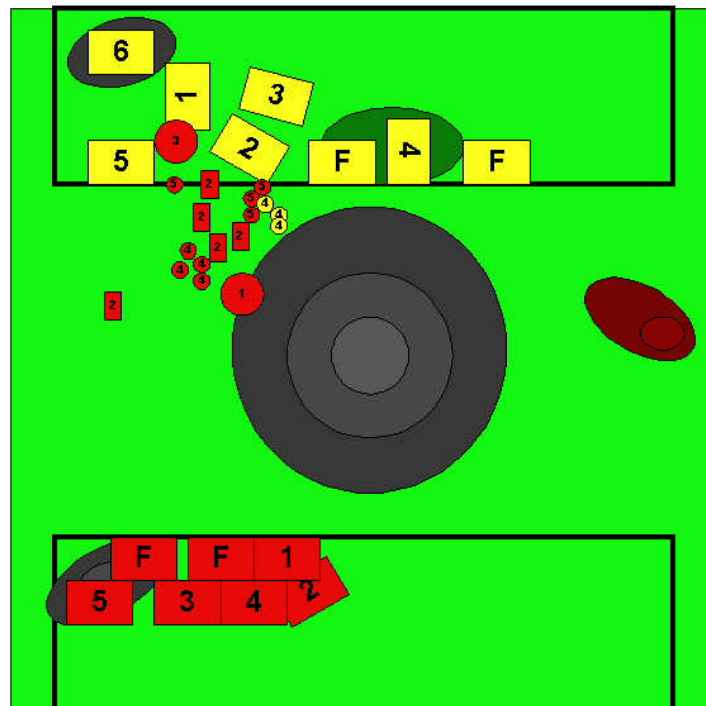


END OF TURN 2

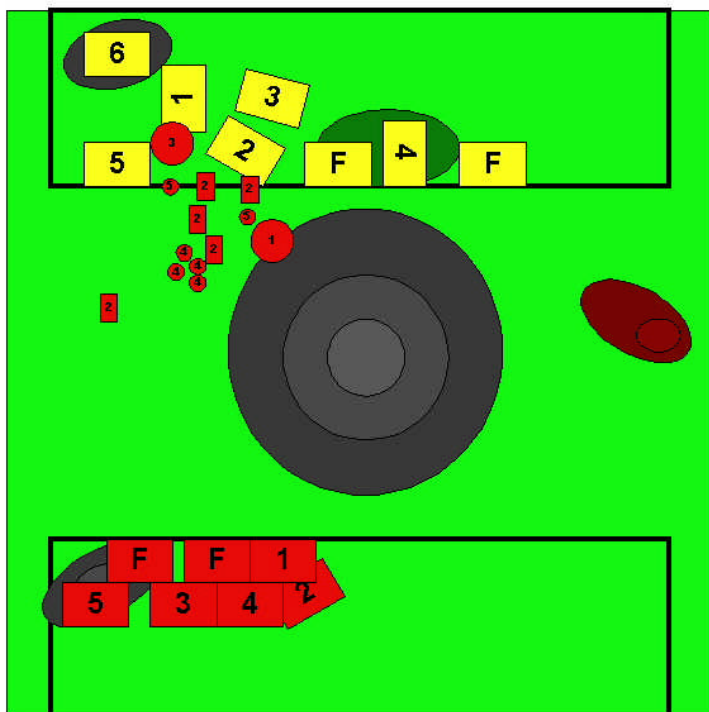
could do no wrong. Their reason to live was to kill and man were they doing it well. The battlefield must have looked like the floor of a slaughterhouse. The only thing missing were the flies, but they hadn't had a chance to get here yet.

Turn 3 started in pretty much the same fashion as the previous one with me winning Initiative and wading in deeper with the Soulflayer and Blood Hunters. Swordsmen die in droves and while the Chronomancer tried a valiant last stand by interrupting the Devout (he managed to cause a wound on one Blood Hunter) he was also cut down.

The Crossbowmen again tried to shoot at the rampaging Soulflayer, but to no avail. She responded by spiting gout of Bale Fire on to them and watching five of them die in burning green flames. The remaining one was cut down by her mighty Bone Cleavers and then she got the Repulsar Knight in her



END OF TURN 3



END OF TURN 4

sights and went over to help ruin his day. The final standing warband of Firstborn, the Swordsmen, fought with the Blood Hunters and managed to pull one down and the Demon Wings assisted the Soulflayer by finishing off the Repulsar Knight and killing the Swordsman that was carrying the Firstborn Standard. It was quickly stained with mud, blood, and gore. Again, bringing up the rear were the Dusk Realm Demons, doubtful that they would be able to cleave man-flesh this day.

As you can see by the map turn 4 was really nothing more than mopping up. Chris did manage to kill off two of the Demon Wings before the rest of his army was driven into the ground.

The Devout Rejoice

Ouch! Man that was one royally brutal beating. My flying wedge worked as planned, but things could have turned out differently. I think that Chris suffered from four things in this battle.

- 2) Having to re-learn Chronopia 2. Things don't always work the same in this edition as they did before. I think that Chris learned some hard lessons and I think that he will be back in his old winning form soon.
- 3) Playing an unfamiliar army. This was the first time that Chris took the field with the Firstborn and it showed. Again, I think that experience is the best teacher and we've already talked about the better use of some of the Firstborn units.

- 3) Tactical Mistakes. There was one that really stood out in my mind. Accelerating the Crossbowmen to make up for their somewhat low ROF instead of giving the War Chariot one more action which could have been used to dig deep into my line via trample. I figure that it would have done some good damage, but it would have been out there on its own without any support and it's quite likely that it still would have died right around when it did.

- 1) Bad dice. Ok, nobody has control over this, but I had much better than average die rolls and Chris just couldn't catch a break. Having his Repulsar Knight fumble didn't help matters either and Dread is just great all day long.

I also think that using a completely different army from what Chris is used to seeing from me with Devout helped my cause tremendously. Expecting a slow, ponderous mass of skeletons and being confronted with what is essentially a fast-attack cavalry army is enough to make you want to puke. I really like the new deployment system that uses the unit cards. It definitely adds an element of uncertainty to the game. It also ensures that the first turn of the game will likely be the longest as you'll have to deploy your models after the cards are flipped.

The Lamentation of the Firstborn

Ouch that hurt. I haven't been old schooled like that in about as long as I can remember. Let's take a look at my mistakes and try to salvage some learning from this. First off for those of us who were big fans of the last edition of Chronopia, enough has changed in the game points wise and rules wise that we need to play a few games to learn the strategies that work now. I separated my swordsmen from the rest of my army and it simply took them much too long to get into the fight and by that time it was over. I should have held off on that initial charge of the chariot. Tossing it out there was a gamble that I lost. Missile fire less powerful in this edition and missile troops do not rule the game like they used to. My deployment on the hill put them so far back that they could not hit squat. The Chronomancer has been toned down a lot by taking away the ability to give orders when he interrupts a turn. As for Mark's army list all I can say is ouch. Two Soulflayers are rough. In tandem they can fly throughout the battlefield yelling, "Say my name!". This edition heavily favors the mobile armies. Fast troops become faster with the running rule, and armies with squads of mounted troops can run circles around the footsloggers. I also found that big squads are generally not as effective as two smaller squads. In hindsight I would have chosen two squads of swordsmen and one squad of macemen. Oh well, hats off to Mark on such a rough army list. It truly showed his devotion to the corrupting influence of the devout.

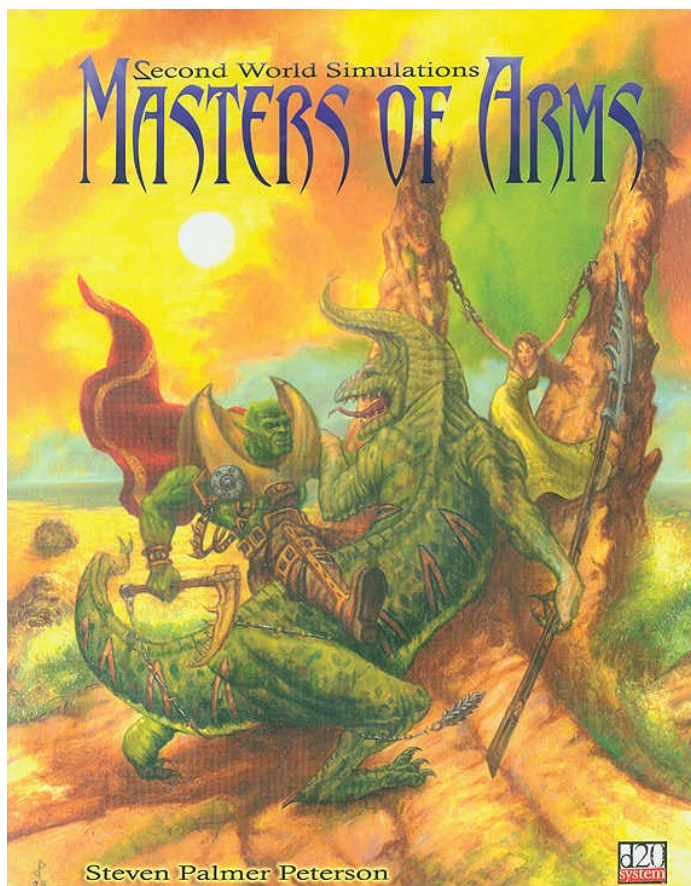
KICKED ANY UNDEAD ASS LATELY?



DEADLANDS CLASSIC AND DEADLANDS D20
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AND AT BETTER GAME STORES EVERYWHERE.

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Masters of Arms is a 96-page perfect-bound book by Second World Simulations that brings you a new way of adding flavor to your D20 combats and a whole slew of new prestige classes. It retails for \$18.95 USD. It sports a color cover and all interior artwork is black and white. Most of the interior art is of at least comic book quality, with a few exceptions which fall a bit below that grade.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The book is divided up into five sections (Maneuvers, New Weapons, Combination Maneuver Construction, The Masters of Arms, and Combo Maneuver Templates). Since the book introduces a new way for some characters to fight the first part of the book give you an explanation of this. Here's the basics, if you have the right Feat you can combine multiple attacks into what is called a Combination Attack. Here's one example from one of the Prestige Classes in the book. If you are using a Mace (or Morningstar or Hammer) and you have the *Fatiguing Strikes* feat, which requires the use of three attacks to try

and pull off this combo, and all three of your attacks hit your foe they must make a FOR save (DC 12 + your STR bonus) or become fatigued for one minute. So, basically, you just beat the crap out of them with a blunt implement of destruction until you knock the wind out of them. One chapter in the book really made my head hurt. It's the one where they explain how to build your own combos. This is great information to have, but would have been better placed in the rear of the book where it would have been easier to digest after getting to look over all of the pre-made combos that come in the book.

You get 36 new Prestige Classes, each devoted to mastery of a specific weapon. A few are the Bashing Master (mace, morningstar, and hammer), Greatsword Master, Scythe Master, and Dual Sai Master. Some are very cool, but a very few seem to be stretches. I could have done without the Rod of Lordly Might Master. Each PrC has ten combos that are bought as feats when they advance levels and yes that makes for lots of new feats, many of which are suitable for use outside of the particular PrC that they are designed for. I plan on designing a few villains for my D&D campaign around some of the master PrC's.

You might think that this is just a book full of new PrC's, but it's really more than that. The combat maneuvers, or combinations, are really the meat of this meal. Do you want to sacrifice your first of two attacks to get +3 to hit and possibly cause 1d6 DEX damage with your second hit? It's called Knee-Capping and the Bashing Master does.

VALUE

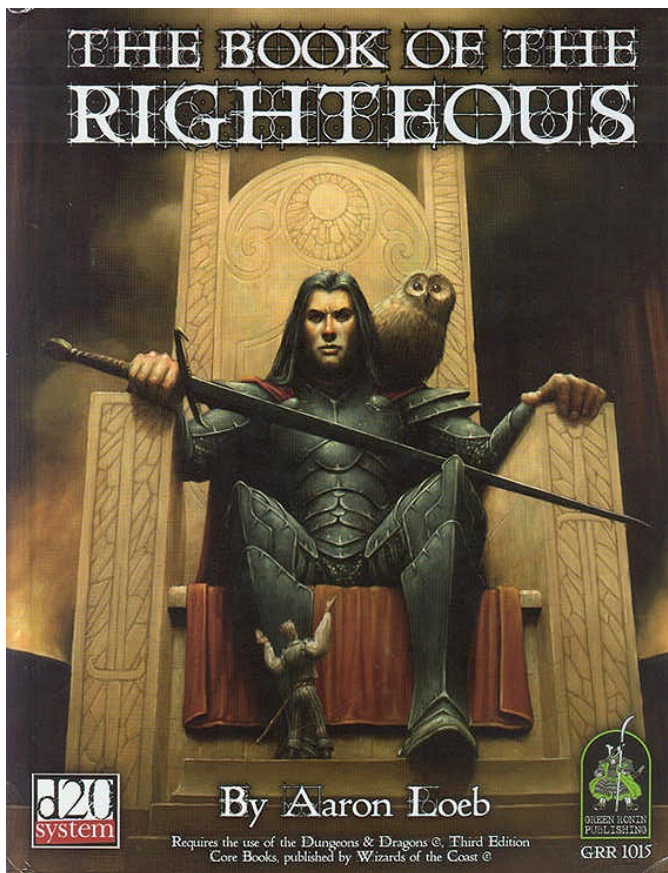
If you are running a very combat oriented campaign then I think you'll find a lot of use in this book. Even if you're not, but want to add a lot of flavor to your weekly beat-downs then you're also in luck. Even with that said this book is really for fighter-types and rogues (Dagger Master or Cloak Fighting Master) and not so much for the other classes. Will I use it? As a DM, sure. Will I let my players use it? Absolutely!

This is my first look at a product from Second World Simulations and I liked it. I think that the artwork can use a boost and in the future I'd move the brain-numbing stuff to the back of the book, but it's definitely worth a look and a gives you lots of new and wonderful ways to leave a pile of corpses in your wake.

www.Second-World-Simulations.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

The Book of the Righteous, published by Green Ronin Publishing, is a rather massive 320-page hardback tome that introduces a very strong base for religion in any D20 fantasy campaign. The cover features a full-color illustration and all of the interior artwork is black & white. All of the text was easy to read, even while being a slightly smaller font size than lots of other books. I suspect this was done to keep the page count from growing even larger. The paper is of pretty heavy stock and the binding looks very sturdy. The Book of the Righteous has a retail price of \$39.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

Opening the book and scanning the Table of Contents you'll see that eleven chapters and three appendices await you. The chapters are as follows:

- Introduction
- The Mythology
- Practicing the Faith: The Great Church

- Practicing the Faith: The Old Gods
- Practicing the Faith: The Gods of the Tree
- Practicing the Faith: The Gods of the Womb
- The Three Sisters
- Putting Your Faith in Evil
- Campaigning
- Do it Yourself
- Additional Rules

The first chapter does a good job in detailing what you'll find in the book and if you really need to pick up the book. Very early on the author tells us why they went with a completely new pantheon and not just a re-write of real-world myths and religions. It was done to facilitate an easier 'fit' into the fantasy world and so that all players start off on the same footing, meaning that you don't run into the problem of (their example here) "someone at the table who's read more of the real-world mythology than the person playing the religious expert. There's nothing worse than playing a cleric with a 22 Knowledge (Religion) skill mod and having the dwarven fighter constantly correcting you about your gods." I have to say that it makes a lot of sense. Yes, the cleric player should take the time to get to know about the deities that he'll be dealing with, but this way takes that real-world knowledge out of the picture.

Chapter 2 sets up the basics of the mythos, how the universe came to be, the birth of the gods, etc. It's fairly short (9 pages), but did a good job of providing a base to work from.

Chapters 3 through 8 go into much detail about each of the gods, their churches, their clerics and servants, holy days, etc. There are also over a dozen new religious Prestige Classes presented, not quite one per deity and a new base class, the Holy Warrior. The Holy Warrior is similar to a Paladin, but different enough to work in the game.

The evil deities are not given as much press as the good ones and I'm really ok with this. I know that some people enjoy playing in evil parties, but it's not for me. You are certainly given enough information on them to flesh out enemies of your PC's though.

Chapter 10, which only 9 pages long, is probably one of the single most useful chapters in the entire book. The first time I opened up the book and started reading I thought that it was jam-packed with cool ideas and rules to make religion and clerics stand out and be something

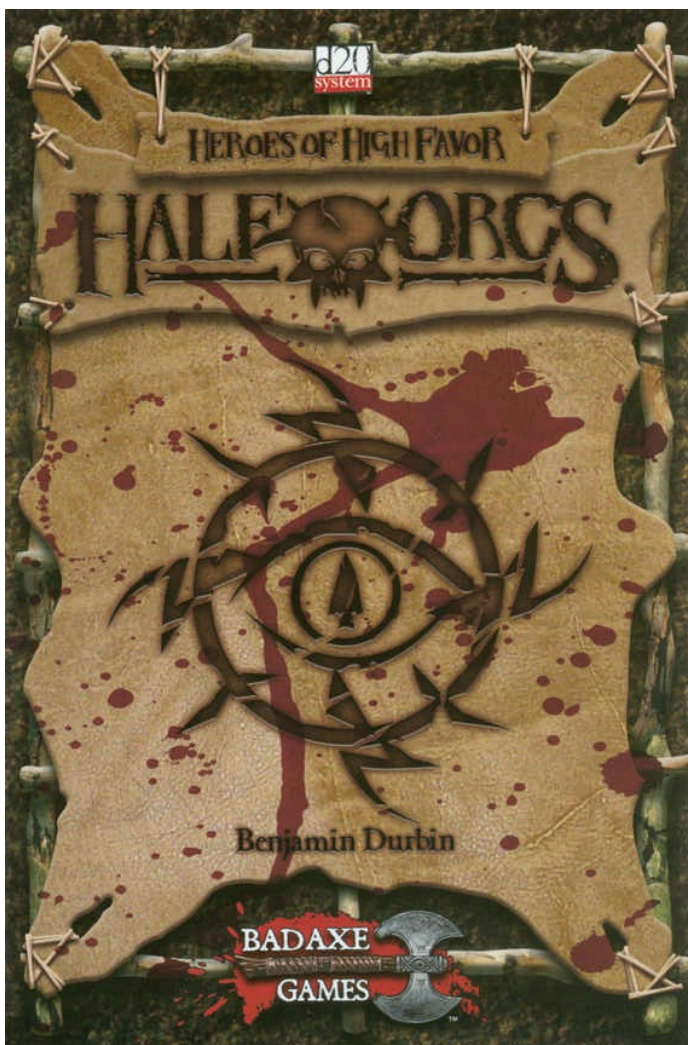
more than combat medics. I also thought, incorrectly until I hit chapter 10, that while this book would serve perfectly in that function for a campaign that was just starting it would be of limited use or difficult to incorporate into an existing campaign. Guess, what? The guys at Green Ronin thought of that too and give DM's quite a few ways to make the jump in an existing campaign.

In addition to the Holy Warrior there are also almost a dozen new feats in chapter eleven, Additional Rules. Most are, duh, either especially useful to clerics or exclusive to them. Attached Soul, which is not exclusive to clerics, is particularly cool for the wade-into-combat type cleric as he can be reduced to -15 hit points before being killed. Nine new domains and seven pages of new spells also populate this chapter. There are only three pages of new magic items, but this includes a new type, Enchanted Stoles. These are long scarves worn over the shoulders and take the place of a magic vest that you might be wearing, so they don't throw a monkey-wrench into the number of magic items that can be worn. There is also a handful of new creatures, all of which have some sort of religious or spiritual significance.

All three of the appendices are useful (A Treatise on the Divine, Gods and Races, and Religion Reference Guide), but the first one is what will really get characters, particularly clerics, druids and paladins (and of course Holy Warriors) immersed into the mythos. It is a history of the gods, but it is presented as if it was written by someone passing it down to future generations.

I found the main mission of the book was to make religion matter as much as combat. Not only does it succeed, but does so very well. Ok, so do you need this book? Well, that's really up to you and your players, or your DM if you're the player of a divine character class. What is your campaign focused on? Does magic (divine) and religion have as a significant place at the table as combat or is it relegated to the kiddie table at Thanksgiving dinner? Do you want it to? If not then your forty dollars will be better spent elsewhere. If so, then The Book of the Righteous fits that bill perfectly.

www.greenronin.com



Heroes of High Favor: Half-Orcs, like Dwarves before it, is a 62-page half-size perfect-bound D20 supplement, which delves into the playing of a half-orc character. It has a retail price of \$9.95. Inside you'll find ten new Prestige Classes (based on basic class combinations), new feats and skills. The Totem or Tribal focus is a nice new perk for half-orcs, which gives them skill bonuses for following a certain path in development.

The Prestige Classes are all fine, but what would have been really unique would have been to present ways for the half-orc to overcome his less than ideal lineage. Indeed, half-orcs have Barbarian as their favored class, but breaking the mold and making the half-orc the protagonist or hero instead of just giving him more ways to express his brutish nature would have been very welcome.

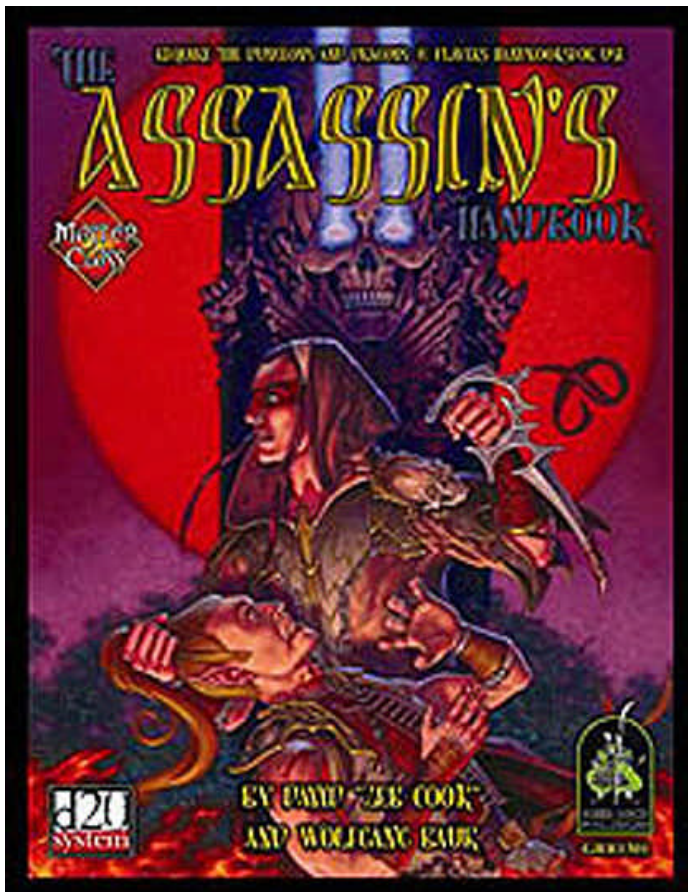
For a neutral or evil party, everything presented here is right on the money and can very easily be used for a party of orcs also. If you're looking for new ways to separate your opponent's head from his shoulders then you'll do well to check it out.

Next up, around Christmas, is Heroes of High Favor: Elves which I hear will contain lots of arcane goodness.

www.badaxegames.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Christopher Carr



At first glance...

Upon picking up The Assassin's Handbook one can rest assured that the usual quality of the Green Ronin Publishing continues. This 64-page soft back resource book is priced at \$14.95. The high gloss, full color cover is graced with artwork (An assassin killing an elf in front of a pillar with a skull) that belies the dark tone of the book. As if the title and the subject matter is not enough. This book has attempted to bridge the gap between the rogue class and the assassin prestige class. Many players groaned about the multiple levels it took to become an assassin. This handbook presents DM's and players the opportunity to utilize the assassin as a core class.

Okay what's really in it?

As we delve into this sourcebook keep one thing in mind. It is only about assassins and their prestige classes. There is only one core class in this book, not two or three...just one. The assassin core class losses a lot of the rogue's nifty tricks, but gains the ability to use spells at higher levels much in the same way as the ranger core class. There are a total of three prestige classes to branch off from the core assassin. Fifteen new spells are listed for the assassin to learn. Many of these spells are spells of misdirection and escape to assist the resident assassin in doing his job. As with all sourcebooks new feats are included. The folks at Green Ronin Publishing have ensured that most of these are pretty useful, without being over the top. All self-respecting assassins employ the use of poisons to carry out their work. This book has four pages devoted to the use of poisons. The sourcebook then goes on to give two differing types

of assassin motivation. These motivations are fleshed out into two very different story based cultures, the cold calculated assassin for hire, and the fanatical religious zealot.

What impressed me...

Unlike any other D&D stuff that I have read today (It's not a whole

as a role-playing book can be based on today. The poison chapter goes into real poisons and toxins in real life, as well as in a fantasy setting. The poisons work either through ingestion, inhalation, or injury, and will do varying amounts of damage depending on the method of poison. This level of realism in the mechanics and descriptions really appeals to me. This book also provides with the ability to use drugs in their campaigns. Performance enhancing drugs are good. More realistic than a bandoleer of potions, the player assumes the risk of addiction for the price of realism. The background sections go into the historical significance of the assassin, and discusses the differing opinions of the western (European) and eastern (Middle-east and Asian) cultures on the art of assassination. The assassin is a role-players character. It is not a hand-to-hand machine or a sneaking lock pick. Many of the poisons take hours to begin working. Many feats apply to disguises and other non-combat oriented skills. With this in mind the assassin is definitely not a beginner's character. It will take someone with experience to add depth to the assassin and keep him from becoming a homicidal or very flat and stale party member. I am currently playing a rogue character that is a zealot, and wished that I had this book when I created him. It would have matched what I had in my mind's eye better than the combat oriented rogue.

Nothing is perfect...

I will preface this paragraph with the statement that I really do like this sourcebook, but with all things it has its drawbacks. The Assassin's Handbook's major shortcoming is its lack of classes and prestige classes. I understand that this sourcebook is about the assassin class specifically, and only provides one core class, but three prestige classes is very thin. I think the potential exists for another three or four prestige classes without a whole lot of overlap. While the history lessons and motivations that drive assassins were discussed, I did not particularly care for the storyline background. I think it came at a time when many people are just not interested in the religious zealots doing everything in its power to kill the infidels. Prior to the current events that have shape our nation I think this background would have been better received.

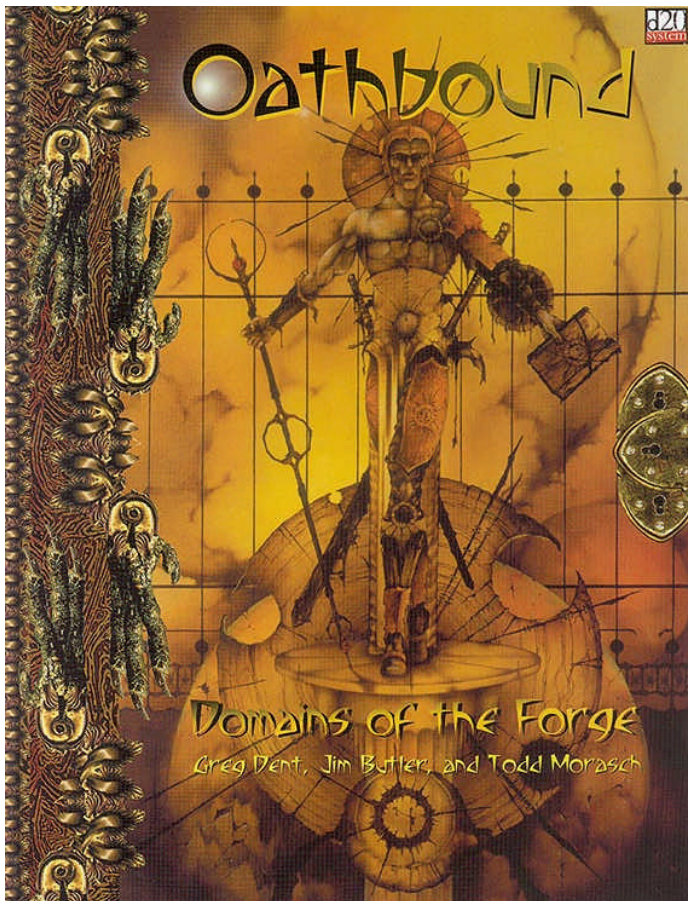
And the overall impression is...

As noted above I really did like this book. Green Ronin Publishing did a much better job capturing the feel of the assassin better than the feeble prestige class of WOTC. They have succeeded in giving players enough information to add breath and life to a character class that is often misrepresented as "the ultimate killing machine". Assassins are very good at extinguishing life, but it is done from the shadows, with poisons and stealth. The poisons and drugs can allow for a more gritty and realistic campaign and should be considered if a GM feels the players are getting to comfortable in their settings. For \$14.95 you get what you pay for, a solid sourcebook that tackles a difficult class head on.

www.greenronin.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Oathbound is a huge 352-page hardback book by Bastion Press that introduces a new campaign world for your Dungeons and Dragons, or other D20 fantasy game, campaign. As has become customary for products from Bastion Press it has a full color cover and full color interior on high quality paper. The binding appears very well done and should hold up well, even with continued use. The interior artwork is reminiscent of earlier Bastion Press products, like Arms & Armor and Villains, and while I like it a lot for character and monster portraits I don't think it works as well for the maps found in the book. It has a retail price of \$39.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

Ok, so what's the deal with this new campaign world? Oathbound: Domains of the Forge, or just The Forge, is a place for rugged heroes to really be tested. In fact, The Forge draws in powerful heroes from every conceivable plane of existence to adventure in this new realm. As it looks for heroes of more than average caliber to seek

adventure on its shores it is recommended that characters be at least 7th level before coming to The Forge. That doesn't mean that this is nothing more than a big hack-fest because there is plenty of political intrigue and role-playing possibilities here.

The book is broken up into an introduction, nine chapters (Arrival, Inhabitants of the Forge, Matter of Prestige, The Seven Domains, The Black Flock, City of Penance, The Bloodholds, The Hub Tavern, and Dark Welcomes), three appendices (Rules, Monsters, and NPC stat blocks), a Glossary, and lots of tables, maps and sidebars of information.

The chapter on Arrival was informative and gave details on the different daylight/night structure (two suns here), the days of the week/months of the year, and gifts. Each outsider coming to The Forge receives a new power or ability when they get here. Just The Forge's way of saying, "Welcome, and enjoy this little perk as we're about to kick your ass."

The second chapter is great as it gives you twelve new PC races, including an upright walking kitty cat (actually very cool), a humanoid canine race and more. There is also a bit of info about the flora and fauna of the Forge and a recipe for something called "Oasis Alorak Polenta Casserole". The recipe is given a full page in the book, along with real world substitutions for ingredients which just don't exist here. I have not tried it, but being somewhat of an adventurous cook I might just have a go.

You'll get six new Prestige Classes in chapter three along with Prestige Races. What are these you ask? Well, they are really kind of cool. They are kind of an evolution of your character's base race. Let's say that you come into The Forge as an Ogre Barbarian and you want to get even more massive without going to Mexico to score some steroids. Take the Focus of the Body Prestige Race. Trade in some experience points, actually a lot of experience points, and you'll soon (ok, maybe not so soon) have +2 Con, Immunity to disease, +6 bonus versus poisons, +2 Str, +1 hit point per level, double move rate, +2 Dex, and +1 standard action per round. If your eyes just bugged out of your head just hold on a second. All of the benefits above would take 30,000 experience points, you would get part of them at 9th, part at 11th and the rest at 13th level. There are thirteen different Prestige Race Foci that you can choose from and in this world they fit right in.

There are seven continents or domains that make up The Forge. These regions were constructed by seven great beings and were made to push "everything to its absolute limit, hoping to drive a mortal to achieve the power of a god." Yes, there is more to The Forge than just that, as if that's not enough, but it's really for DM's eyes only.

The next four chapters describe, in quite abundant detail by the way, the people, major locations, the politics, laws, NPC's, and much more of The Forge. It's a lot to digest but is quite interesting.

A 66-page adventure rounds out the book's chapters. It's scaled for a party of four 7th level adventurers, but gives clear instructions on how it can be increased in difficulty for larger or higher level parties. Some of the encounters are going to be walk-throughs but others will kick your butt. The adventure includes a lot of stuff to do ranging from city exploration to a dungeon crawl and of course interacting with NPC's.

Appendix A answered my questions about contact with Deities. Yes, your divine spell casters still have contact with their deities and get spells normally, but some don't work the same. As an example, you cannot get information about The Forge from your deity and summoning spells have a little glitch that might show up to make their use questionable.

Appendix B has a bunch of new monsters, all of which except for two are CR 7 or higher. Also included are full stat blocks for NPC's that the players are likely to encounter in their travels.

The Glossary is a nice touch that allows quick reference to many terms unique to The Forge.

Finally, there is an index, which is such a blessing.

VALUE

Ok, so should you drop almost \$40 USD on this book? I enjoyed it immensely. Some may argue that it's just a power game min/max sandbox to play in and I'd agree with them to a certain extent. Oathbound: Domains of the Forge is not a place for the meek or mild. It is a place of mighty, and I do mean mighty, heroes fighting powerful villains. Can it turn into a pure hack-n-slash game? Sure, but any game can. This world is for wading through massive amounts of lackeys to get to the main bad guy and then going toe to toe with him and hoping that all of your special abilities and powers can get you through it safely. Basically, it's a high-powered campaign world that looks like a lot of fun to play in.

www.bastionpress.com



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D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer

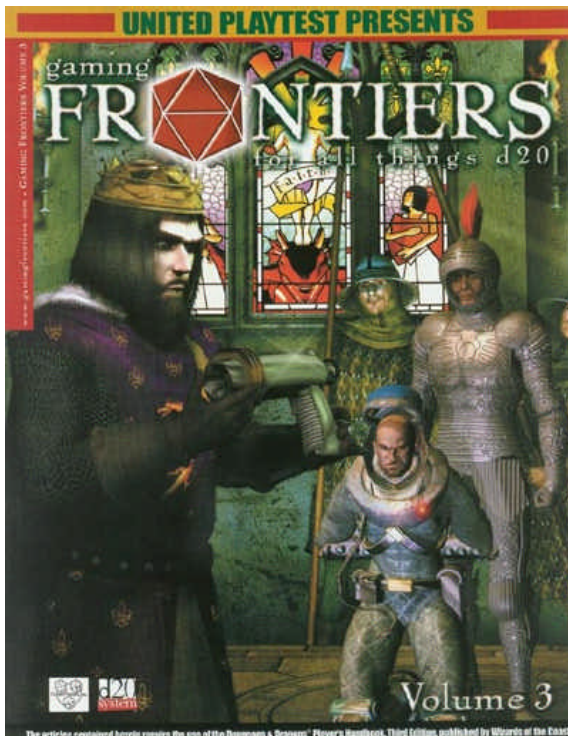


A second volume in the Common Ground series from Bard's Productions and the first thing that I noticed was the increase in page count from 32 to 48 with no increase in price (still \$11.95 USD), way to go! Volume 2 brings you, like the cover shows, Guard Towers, Thieves Guilds, and Private Clubs. Each section gets between 6 and 15 pages devoted to the location, construction and occupants of each of the three kinds of structures.

The NPC section is rally great and can serve to aid in the population of a town or as last minute replacements for dead, incapacitated or missing (no-show players) characters in your adventuring party. The center section is again devoted to maps of the various establishments and most would be easily reproduced on paper or as 3D buildings, except for the underground sections of the thieves guilds which would take some more work.

Several of the extra pages consist of blank worksheets with which to plan your buildings, but the lack of price increase makes this a non-issue. All of the information presented here is something that a GM could work out on his own, but I found it to easily be worth about twelve dollars of my 'time' that I could put to better use.

www.bardsproductions.com



In Gaming Frontiers 3 we find another publication that has undergone a few changes since the last issue. It's dropped in page count (from 160 to 144), increased in price (from \$17.95 to \$19.95) and the interior is now black/white instead of color.

Inside this issue you'll get 6 adventures (each between 5-13 pages long), previews and excerpts from new D20 products, and articles by industry mainstays. This issue really had a lot of fantasy related material inside, probably the most useful being a copy of Monte Cook's article from his website detailing creation of magic items in Dungeons and Dragons. I was very interested in the preview of Validus Populai, a D20 super hero project that United Playtest will be publishing next year. It will be interesting to see if anyone can de-throne Champions, the godfather of super hero games. The intro to BroadSides! (D20 naval adventuring) was also very interesting and will very likely lead to me picking up that book.

The lack of color is less of a concern than the reduction in page count, but some of that has come by way of fewer ads. They have come up with a great subscription offer though. A subscription to Gaming Frontiers will net you between \$150.00 and \$170.00 of d20 products. That is a very good deal and shows a great amount of backing from the producers of the products that are routinely featured in Gaming Frontiers. You'll find plenty of good stuff inside GF and the subscription deal really makes buying it that way the best way to go. Of course, the deal isn't a permanent thing so I am not the one to come talk to if it's expired by the time you get around to looking at it.

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by J. Michael Tisdell



BASICS

Wild Spellcraft is a 71-page soft cover book published by Natural d20 Press and Mystic Eye Games. The front and back covers are full color but the illustrations inside are black and white. The book describes a different way to handle magic for fantasy d20 games. This book adds a random element to the formulaic spell craft that is the norm in d20 games. The wild magic described in this book includes spells, feats, wild arcana, prestige classes, and an example adventure outline. The retail price is \$13.95.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

With this book, magic is not easily controlled. It takes training and talent, or divine blessing, to successfully wield the arcane powers. For a variety of reasons arcane energies can escape the control of the caster. The result can be malevolent or benign.

Various tables are provided for mishaps ranging in severity from minor such as "You [the caster] are struck mute for 1 minute" to catastrophic, such as "You [the caster] become permanently immune to the spell". There are also humorous effects, such as "A programmed image of a stereotypical mother appears next to the target and chides it in its native language for 1 minute".

The first chapter introduces the basics of the wild spell craft template. You can add as much or as little wild arcana as you wish. Limited use results in some humorous side effects and spell fizzles while extreme use can make magic virtually impossible to control.

Chapter Two goes into greater detail on incorporating Wild Spellcraft. Topics covered include: tone of the game, using chaos, reactions to Wild Sorcery, role-playing Wild Sorcery, and a sample world view of magic.

Chapter Three introduces the wild magic items and the chaos field wild magic construct. Some areas of the world are infused with wild magic. These areas have chaos fields that affect normal spells, spell casters, and artifacts. The degree of effect depends on the strength of the chaos field.

Chapter Four lists Wild Spellcraft feats, two prestige classes, and three Non-player characters. Chapter Five lists 38 wild spells and provides spell lists for bards, clerics, druids, and wizards. Sorcerers are included with wizards.

The final chapter provides an outline for an adventure using Wild Spellcraft. Information is provided for encounters of all levels, but it is left to the Dungeon Master to flesh out the adventure. An appendix reprints the important tables listed earlier in the book.

VALUE

From a player's point of view, adding this in makes for more interesting playing – and can give interesting role playing opportunities. But too much can turn the game into a crap shoot. "I'll try to cast a fireball and hope it does something to the ogres."

From the DM's point of view, Wild Spellcraft can provide a good diversion. The simple addition of a Chaos Field can change a normal dungeon crawl into a most interesting and entertaining adventure. But, again, a little goes a long way.

Personally, I will be incorporating wild magic into some upcoming adventures. I will be running the Giant Series from Wizards of the Coast. As these are well known to almost everyone in the hobby, Wild Spellcraft will keep the adventure fresh with out me having to re-write the entire campaign.

www.mysticeyegames.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Brian Ahrens



Basics – *The Depths of Despair* is the first in an upcoming series of adventures for the D20 system. Pinnacle Entertainment Group brings us this installment in their “hostile climes” settings books, conceived by Deadlands creator Shane Hensley. The “Hostile Climes” books will each feature isolated and dangerous environments that can be dropped into any fantasy campaign.

Storyline – The background of the adventure starts 40 years earlier at the climax of a centuries-long war between the underwater races of the tritons and the sahuagin. The tritons tried to use a legendary horn of the Sea God, the *Nautilacrum*, to win their war. The tritons believed that the horn would decimate their hated enemies, the sahuagin, but instead, the ancient artifact destroyed their greatest city and tore open a hole within the very ocean herself. This “hole” being a whirlpool of immense proportions extending from the surface of the sea to its bottom.

Eventually, ships full of surface-dwellers tumbled into the magical vortex atop the triton ruins. One of them, a savage pirate named Galt and his brutal crew, survived, and inside the whirlpool they have created a lair for themselves and others that practice their line of work.

The small number of tritons that survived the devastation caused by the *Nautilacrum* has formed a desperate group of legionnaires to try and reclaim their ancestral home. But to do so they must do battle with savage sahuagin and bloodthirsty pirates, and a dark secret that lurks beneath the waves – the ghost of a dead god.

Presentation – *The Depths of Despair* is a 127 page, perfect bound, paperback book. The double column pages are printed in a typeface that is easy on the eyes.

Both the interior and exterior artwork is of the good quality that one has come to see and expect in most Pinnacle products. The interior artwork is all black and white drawings while the front and back covers of the tome feature color plates.

A nice feature included in this publication is beneficial to a gamemaster wanting to run this adventure: several options on how to get his/her players involved in the story. Around one third of the book is dedicated to background and history material as well as descriptions of the vortex and the pirate town located at its bottom. A chapter gives an introduction and statistics for all of the major non-player characters that the players might encounter. My personal favorite tidbit included in this book is the very last item in the publication: an index. An adventure of this size definitely needs one of these. It was a very pleasant surprise when I found it as an index is quite uncommon in adventures.

Value – The MSRP of \$22.95 may seem a bit steep for a D20 adventure. But, you get what you pay for in this book. You receive a quality adventure from a quality company. Pinnacle has a reputation for publishing superior gaming products over the last several years. Among the new items included in your price are a new character class, new feats, new equipment, new weapons, new major items and some new creatures. This tome is chock full of new things that can be used outside of this adventure also. Last but not least there is a much-needed section on underwater combat. So grab your eye patch and your parrot and enjoy *The Depths of Despair*.

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

As you can surely guess by the title, *Monster Manual II*, is the second compendium of creatures from Wizards of the Coast for *Dungeons & Dragons*. The full color cover features what I thought was some kind of fish when I first saw it on-line, but now I really have no idea. I do know that I don't want to stick my hand in there to grab that glowing sphere. All of the interior artwork, except a few pictures, are also full color and there were only one or two that were not quite up to the very high standard of the rest. *Monster Manual II* is 224-pages long and has a retail price of \$29.95.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The book starts off with a 21-page introduction section that explains monster's stat blocks, special abilities and attacks and more. Then you get to the monster section, why you picked this up in the first place, and it didn't disappoint me at all. Inside I found many of my old favorites (which I had looked for in the first

Monster Manual) and many new monsters that I discovered for the first time (I had been out of RPG'ing for some time until the new edition of D&D dragged me back in).

I had been expecting almost nothing but medium-high and high level creatures, but was glad to see that low and medium creatures were still well represented. I have nothing against the big guys, in fact we did need some more, but I don't think to the exclusion of the rest. About half of the entries are of CR 9 or above, topping out at CR 28.

You'll find new demons and devils, creatures 'ported over from *Chainmail*, variants on other creatures (new giants and golems) and other new creatures of all types. From my old personal favorites list I was very glad to see the Catoblepas, Water Weird, Ixixachitl and the Thri-Kreen. I especially liked the sections on *Monsters of Legend* (creatures imbued with powers by a deity and then set out to complete some task) and creating *TITANIC* creatures. "That Gelatinous Cube is how big?"

There are also more dinosaurs and dragons with the latter being classified by gem type rather than color or metal. They have some interesting breath weapons ranging from a sonic blast to a cone of dehydration. The dragons are all well and good, but what really peaked my interest was the Linnorms. These are giant (at least Huge or larger) dragon-like beings that might best be described as feral dragons. There are three varieties of Linnorm; Gray (small, that means HUGE, and very aggressive), Dread (the largest and has two frickin' heads), and the Corpse Tearer (old, smart, and vicious).

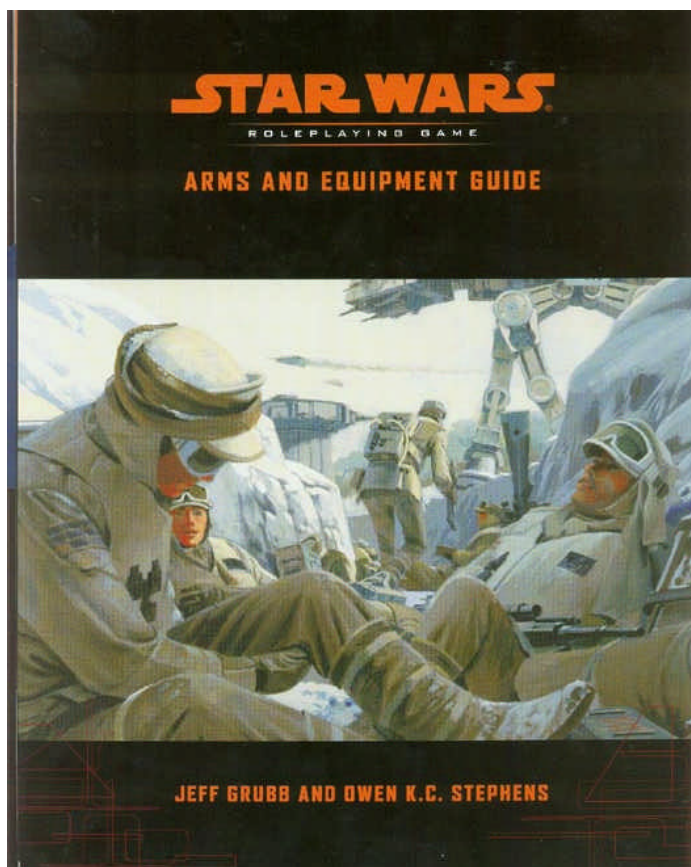
VALUE

All told I liked *Monster Manual II* very much. It's another very high quality book from Wizards of the Coast and any Dungeon Master will get lots of use out of it. I found it to be a great addition to my *Dungeons & Dragons* collection.

Watch out for the Myconid ambush!

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

The Star Wars Arms and Equipment Guide is a 96-page perfect-bound soft cover book that provides D20 Star Wars players with tons of new weapons, armor, equipment, droids, vehicles, and more. The covers feature color drawings from the planet Hoth and all of the interior artwork are black and white pictures from the various Star Wars movies or drawings of the items being described. It has a retail price of \$21.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The book is broken up into five chapters (Weapons, Protective, Gear, Droids, Vehicles, and Equipment) and an introduction.

The Weapons chapter centers more on missile weapons than melee weapons and has something to fit the bill for whatever you have in mind. If you're into running a more combat-oriented campaign then this is the place to be. With all of the laser blasts and slugs being

tossed around you'll need something to help keep you alive. The armor section, while not nearly as long as the weapon chapter, will help you accomplish this. Armors range from simple vests to full-blown powered armor and the style of your campaign will dictate what the players use and encounter. These two sections really made me want a new Star Wars miniature battles game.

Chapter 3 includes several dozen droids for just about any application that you'll have a need for. Each has a description, including common uses, and a full stat block including cost, availability and in which era(s) they can be found.

The vehicle section starts off with some easy rules for customization that will help players turn their personal land speeder into a unique piece of machinery. There is a pretty decent split between one-man vehicles like speeder bikes and those that an entire party of adventurers can benefit from, such as a speeder truck or an aquatic speeder. These are not star ships though so don't look for any here. This chapter fleshes out planetary transportation very well though.

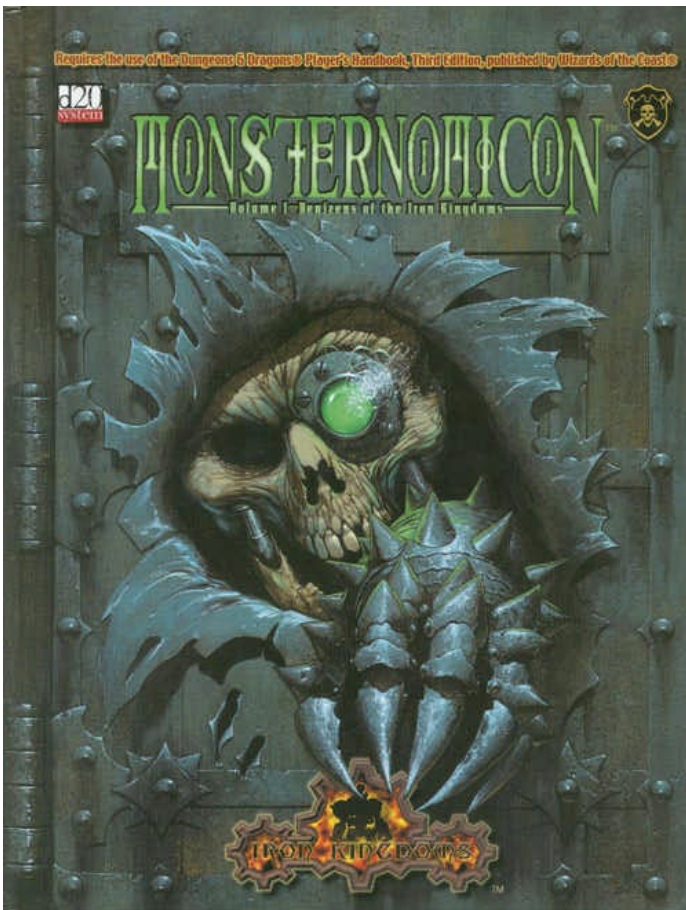
The last chapter of the book, Equipment, gives players about seventy new toys for their characters to play with ranging from breathing devices (for when you've landed in the belly of some giant space worm) to medical equipment (when you get shot up with all of the weapons from chapter 1) to communications equipment (to use to call for help when a trash compactor is squeezing the life out of you).

VALUE

My first impression of this book was that it's kind of thin and maybe not quite up to snuff. That turned out to be completely wrong. This book is all meat. It is jam-packed with information useful to players and GM's alike. Each item is really described well and there is no wasted space in the book. It's an absolute must-buy for D20 Star Wars players.

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

The Monsternomicon (Volume 1 – Denizens of the Iron Kingdoms) from Privateer Press is a 240-page hardback book that gives you over 100 new monsters that populate their campaign world, The Iron Kingdoms. You will also find new templates (Quickplates), Prestige Classes, and PC races within these pages. The cover is full-color and all of the interior art is black & white. Retail price is \$29.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

Each creature in Monsternomicon is given at least two pages of space and some get as many as four and the narrative about each monster is written as if it came out of old book. In the space given you'll find the standard stat blocks, combat and treasure sections, but also much more. The first thing that I noticed, and really liked, was that you get a little drawing of the monster in question standing next to a human. Sure, we can all picture (and look in the PHB) how much bigger a large creature is from a medium one, but this shows you how much bigger

(height and width) a Black Ogrun is from a standard human. A very cool idea. I liked all of the interior artwork and it being done in black and white really didn't take away from it as it's done in a very dramatic style. Each entry also features a Legends & Lore section where DM's can give out information ranging from Common to Obscure (with associated skill checks) about each monster. There are also adventure hooks that will help get your party to the task of encountering these baddies asap.

You'll find a few re-writes of standard Dungeons and Dragons monsters, like trolls and goblins, but they are done to bring them into the Iron Kingdoms setting. Also, since the book is really all about the monsters that you'll encounter in the Iron Kingdoms you will also find several magic/mechanical monster hybrids and constructs like the Animatons, Deathjack, Iron Maiden, and Mechanithralls to name a few. Yes, there are dragons in here and boy are they rough customers. There are three unique dragons presented that range in CR from 49 to 66 and they will mess you up! They are suitable for wrecking the country and having a band, probably a large one, of heroes go and trash them.

The Quickplates are put together like the more standard templates, but will add a special flair to a monster, like a leader, and do so quickly. If you have a pack of werewolves menacing your party just drop the Alpha Hunter Quickplate on to the leader and they're in for a little (not earthshaking, but nice) surprise.

Before you get to the Prestige Classes there is an NPC entry for Viktor Pendrake, the author of the Monsternomicon. Yes, the guys at Privateer Press wrote the book, but Viktor Pendrake is the name assigned to the narratives in each entry. A nice touch of character here. The three PrC's (Adventuring Scholar, Bone Grinder, and Monster Hunter) could easily fit into another campaign world.

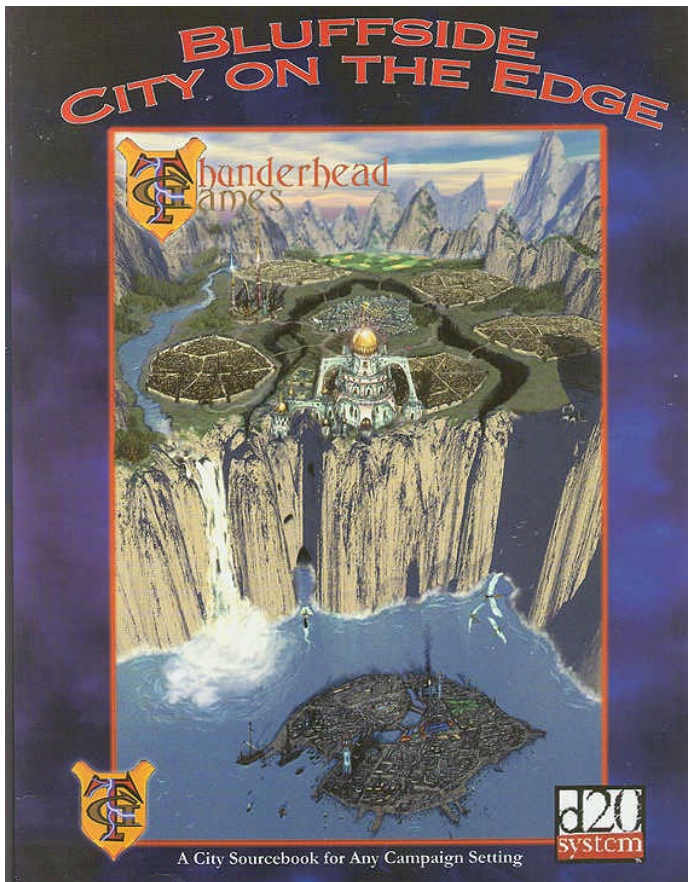
VALUE

Absolutely two thumbs up here. I loved this book! If your party has not adventured in the Iron Kingdoms then this is a perfect way to drop something completely different into their laps. Since this book was labeled Volume 1 I hope that another tome is in the works.

www.privateerpress.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Bluffside: City on the edge is a D20 fantasy game supplement from Thunderhead Games who are now working as part of Mystic Eye Games. It is a 144-page perfect-bound book that has a color cover and a black and white interior. It has a retail price of \$22.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

As you can guess by the title of the book Bluffside describes and details a city for use in your campaign. One of the first things that you'll notice is that the City of Bluffside is rather huge in size. In fact, It could make up eight cities, each of pretty good size.

The book is broken up into several chapters (Introduction, History, Timeline, Population, Power Structure, Bluffside Proper, The Undercity, Sordadon, Guilds, Secret Societies, Outside Bluffside, Religion, an Appendix and (yes!) an Index).

Bluffside has been designed with the intent of being generic enough to use in any fantasy campaign, but still retail a lot

of unique flavor. I found it to be easily drop-able into just about any existing campaign world.

The History, Power Structure, Guilds, and Secret Societies chapters are a good read and not only give you some insight into the workings of Bluffside, also lend themselves well to a DM cooking up adventure hooks.

If I had to pick out a single thing that really makes Bluffside shine it's the Places of Interest (POI). These are places in each district of the city that your PC's will want to visit to do business, rest for the night, get into a fight, do research, etc. Even if you already have a home-base for your party and don't need a whole new mega-city for them to check out the POI's can be dropped into whatever city you're currently using. A rather amusing entry is *The Bleeding Elf*, which is run by an albino half-orc and is reputed for actually serving elf in their dishes. Reminds me of a Chinese restaurant that was next door to an animal hospital. Another is *Baths and More*, where you can hop into the large pool-like bath and wash off or, err, I'll let your DM explain the rest of the services that are offered there.

The book does not end just inside the city limits of Bluffside though. The surrounding area is described and between the farms, burial mounds and orc fortress there's plenty to do here also.

The NPC section is really big and has complete stat blocks for many unique people for you to meet. Alternately, the NPC's could be used for new players entering the party while they are on a break in Bluffside.

There are also five new character races presented here (a humanoid reptile, a half drow elf, an aquatic humanoid, a winged humanoid, and Steam Gnomes) along with four new Prestige Classes (Bluffside Mountain Ranger, Cat Burglar, Explorer, and Tunnel Fighter) and a couple of pages of new spells.

VALUE

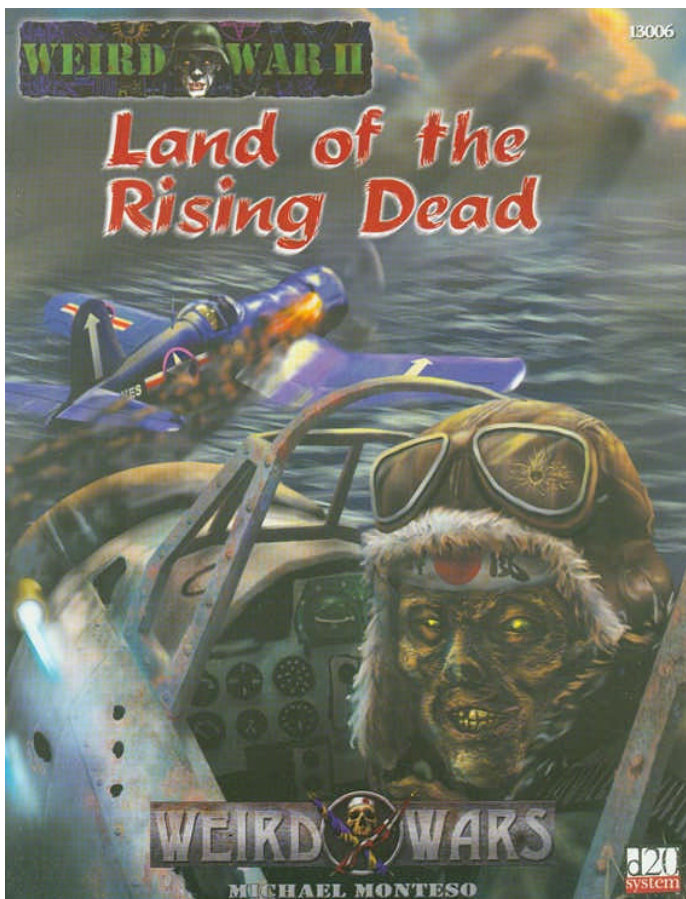
Even with the smattering of stuff for players this is definitely a book for the Dungeon Master. If you don't need a brand new city it's still worth checking out just for all of the 'filling-in' that can be done with the material here. Also included with the book is a multi-panel map of the city proper which will help your party get around.

I liked this book very much and find that it would be extremely useful for any campaign that has a decent amount of goings on in a metropolitan area.

www.thunderheadgames.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Land of the Rising Dead is a supplement for Weird War II, and we've moved out of the European theatre of war and now find ourselves in the South Pacific. It is a perfect bound soft-back book that is 144-pages in length with a color cover and black & white interior. It has a retail price of \$25.00 USD and you'll need the first Weird Wars book, Blood on the Rhine and the PHB (to play) and DMG (to run the game) to use Land of the Rising Dead.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

Inside you'll find seven chapters (Welcome Aboard!; Equipment, Vehicles, & Ships; Naval Combat; History; War Master's Secrets; Bestiary; and Here Be Dragons).

The introduction to the book does a very nice job of painting you a picture of the hell of war in the Pacific, but also the hell of fighting the undead and even beside the undead. This theatre of operations for WWII was really not my favorite (that sounds kind of weird, having a favorite theatre of war) as I was not a big fan of **The Thin Red Line**, but am thoroughly hooked on **Band of Brothers**. Anyway, the story did help a lot to interest me in the setting.

Chapter 1 brings you a new class (Sailor) and variations on the Grunt to so your players can be Marines of various flavors. Also included are the Navajo Code Talkers, Naval Commanders and Naval Aviators. As you'd expect the new skills and feats are either naval or jungle related, which fits in with the setting. The Prestige Classes are cool and include Navy Frogmen, OSI Shaman and others. A short section on life in the Pacific during the war ends this chapter and will help players and WM's flesh out their campaign.

Chapters 2 and 3 introduce a handful of new weapons, but focuses on aircraft and ships. Naval Combat is given what I feel is the proper amount of space, just a couple of pages, as I don't see a whole lot of combat between carriers going on. An adventure aboard a carrier or a sub, now that's a different matter entirely.

Chapter 4 is also relatively short at 10 pages, but has enough detail regarding the history of the period to jump-start your campaign and keep from leaving players in the dark.

Chapter 5 has many ways for the WM to run the campaign (Sea, Island, Air) and is loaded with fully-fleshed out NPC's. Like the Nazi's in Germany the Japanese have their own dealings with the super-natural and the OSI is also here for the allies.

The Bestiary gives you nine new monsters and while that's not a lot, the authors were wise enough to give you some hints at using existing aquatic creatures that you already have available to you in the Monster Manual. No need to reprint them here and they saw that.

The seventh chapter is something that I think is just about a necessity in any campaign setting book, an adventure. It doesn't have to be an epic save-the-world kind of thing, just something to help acquaint the players (and the WM!) with the setting and to get a feel for things. Without divulging national secrets (i.e. too much about the adventure) the PC's in Here Be Dragons will get a taste of the water and the jungle and hopefully not die of lead poisoning.

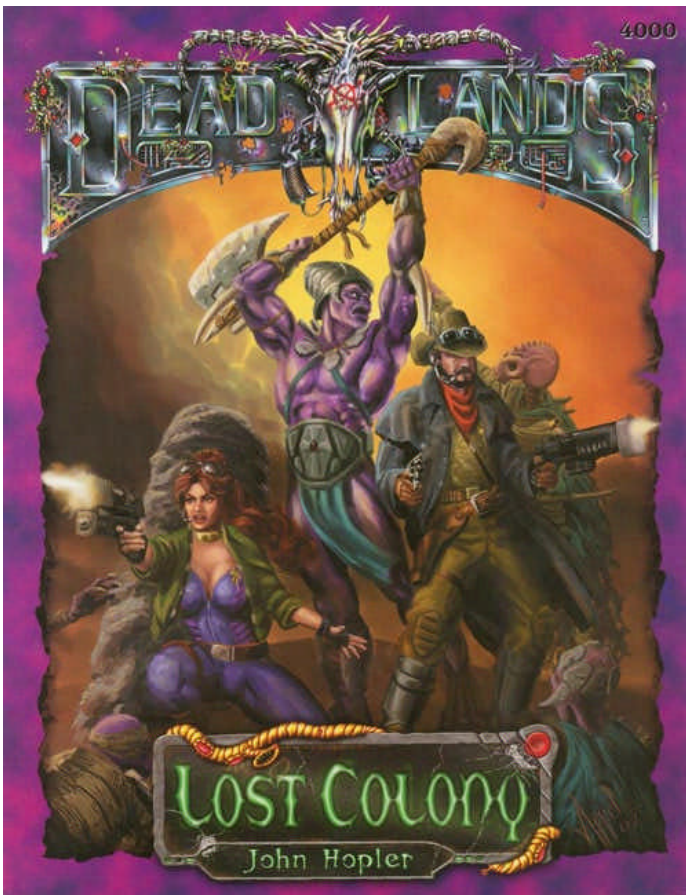
VALUE

My lackluster interest in the general setting was pretty quickly put to rest as it was made very interesting by the authors. The historical photos were excellent, but I found the drawings to be a small step down from Blood on the Rhine. The book is a good addition to the base game, but is not something you need to keep your game for suffering or falling behind. If you want to expand your game and still stay in the Weird War world then this is a very good book to pick up. It's also made more useful in that characters from one theater (Army grunt) can hook up with those from another (Navy frogman) without screwing things up. A good book and I'm looking forward to taking a look at Afrika Korpse soon.

www.peginc.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Thomas Riccardi



Lost Colony is the last of the trilogy of Deadlands books. In this installment the players find themselves on a harsh planet known as Banshee. This world was discovered by means of a Tunnel that was built by Hellstromme Industries. The reason that colonists flocked to this world is that the geologists back on earth knew that ghost rock was becoming in short supply and all of it would be mined in a matter of years so they looked for another planet to colonize, one that was rich with ghost rock.

People were starting to flock towards Banshee as they found out that it was rich in ghost rock deposits. However, the planet was already inhabited by an alien race known as the Anouks and they would fight to preserve their land. Wars between the UN Expeditionary forces and the Anouks broke out and many died in these times as countless numbers of boomtowns sprang up overnight.

During all of the fighting and mining for ghost rock something happened that changed the face of Banshee

forever. The tunnel that connected Earth to the Faraway system and Banshee had collapsed. Now the colonists that are in the Faraway system are stranded because there aren't any ships that are capable of faster than light travel and traveling from anywhere in the Faraway system takes a very long time (and seeing as how the earth is millions of light years away from Banshee it would take decades to reach it with a starship equipped with a sub-light engine.)

The first thing that strikes you about Lost Colony is that it is a sourcebook and not a complete role-playing game (you will need either a copy of Deadlands: Hell on Earth or the Hell on Earth D20 and 3rd edition D&D book to play). That's right folks, Deadlands has officially joined the ranks of the D20 system but that's completely left to the players and GM (Personally, I think the Deadlands rules are far superior than the D20 system).

There are some new characters that can be created on this world and some of the old characters from Hell on Earth can be used on Banshee. However, some of the characters from Hell on Earth cannot be used on Banshee and they are Doomsayers, Templars, Junkers and Toxic Shamans and the reason for this is that these characters would not be suitable for use in a Lost Colony adventure. But there are some new professions including the Ex-Marine, Pilot, Colonial Ranger and the Mute.

Also covered in this section of the book are new aptitudes and edges as well as some new rules on dealing with Zero Gravity and Space. Suit Breaches, Zero G Maneuvering and Explosive Decompression are some of the wonderful things that you can look forward to in the depths of space. Some of the old edges, hindrances and aptitudes have been reworked to make more sense in a Lost Colony campaign and there are some new ones available such as Born Spacer or Veteran of the Way out West (that replaces the Deadlands Hell on earth edge).

The Mute is a very special type of character as the player's body is inhabited by thousands of nano-machines and contained in his brain are the plans for whatever package he selects (there are packages for weapons, aircraft, etc.) Once the Mute has the blueprint of what he wants built in his head all he

needs to do is to gather up the necessary materials and then transmute them into whatever it is he wishes (providing he makes the necessary rolls.) Another section of the book is devoted to the race that inhabited Banshee before man spoiled it. The Anouks are a proud race of warriors and shaman that reflect the old Indians of the Wild West. This section tells all about this race and also gives us two character classes that you can use in the Lost Colony setting. The wise Anouk Shaman not only heals the sick and wounded but also keep a history of the clan and will do anything to protect the planet of Banshee from anyone. The brave Anouk warrior is the protector of the clan and he is trained to fight any enemy with the weapons that he has. What the Anouks lack in high tech weaponry they make up for in ferocity, as they never back down when their clan is threatened.

Every adventurer should have enough gear to get him through the harsh wastelands of Banshee and that is what the next chapter of the book covers. There are many different types of weapons, armor and vehicles to choose from but whether you can get it or not is another story. Seeing as this world was cut off from Earth, no new supplies are coming in and people have to scrounge for whatever gear that they can. Your character may have a great assault rifle in his possession but will he be able to find bullets for it when he runs out? Also covered in this chapter are vehicles from regular speeder bikes and other ground vehicles to hover tanks and gorgon APCs. Space vehicles are also covered from the lowly shuttle to the feared Green Dragon assault transport there are various ways the characters can travel across Banshee in style.

The last section of this book is for the Game Masters eyes only as it deals with critical information that the players shouldn't know while exploring around the Faraway system and Banshee. Without giving too much away this chapter goes into specifics on the different organizations that are on and around Banshee and some stats for the key characters. Hellstromme Industries, The Rangers and EXFOR (the UN Expeditionary force) and the Reapers are some of the people profiled in this chapter. Rounding out this chapter is the various nasty critters that inhabit the various areas of Banshee. From the giant Rex (which looks like an ancestor of the ancient T-Rex) to the vicious Teeth (balls of fur that roll around and attack unsuspecting adventurers with vicious teeth).

Art and layout are always a key factor to any of the books that I buy and both of them are done with style in this book. The way that this book is laid out makes it very easy to read and also engrosses you in the story.

From the first chapter that gives you a little background on what's going on in the story to the later chapters dealing with character creation and such it is all broken up and very easy to read. The art is also exceptional and captures the lush jungles and harsh wastelands that are on Banshee as well as the various creatures and monsters.

The only problem that I have with this book is the addition of the D20 material. I know that there is a Hell on Earth D20 book available but I can't understand why? The original Deadlands system is good as it is and I would have loved to see all the D20 stuff cut out of the book in favor of either getting this book for less or having more core material added to this fine book. Also there are some very small typos in this book but those can be overlooked (they only occur in the creature feature section as some letters are included after the creatures name in the D20 profile).

If you are a fan of the Deadlands series then I strongly urge you to go out and get a copy of the final installment of this great series. It has enough core material and ideas to make you want to start running a campaign on Banshee right away. For those that are not familiar with this universe and are interested in this book I strongly urge you to get and play Deadlands: Hell on Earth first so you can get a feel for the game and the universe. Remember that this is a sourcebook and not a complete role playing game so you will need the HOE rulebook to play it.

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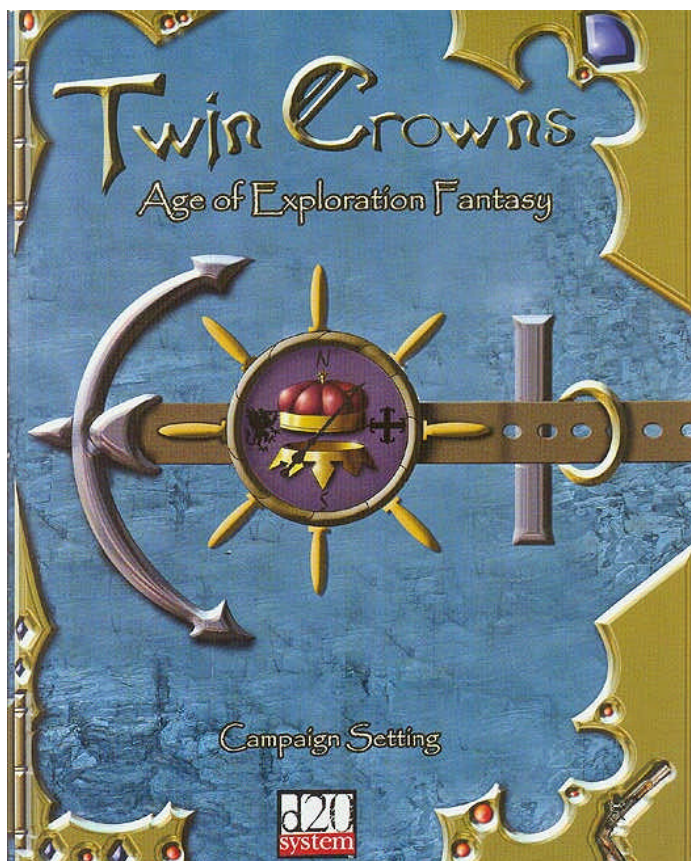
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D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Twin Crowns is a d20 campaign book, published by Living Imagination, that has much of its focus on exploration and adventure. It is a perfect-bound soft cover book that weighs in at a hefty 304-pages with a color cover and black & white interior with a retail price of \$24.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The book is broken up into the sub-books (Player Section, The World, and GM's section). This was a good approach and helped to define the sections of the book. The player section is devoted to lots, and lots, of stuff ranging from new races (there are six new ones with three flavors of elves, a mish-mash mix of halfling and gnome, an aquatic race, and a humanoid feline race) to new classes (Arcane and Divine Ritualists, Diplomats, Privateers, and more) to Naval Combat (woo hoo!). Of course, you will find new skills and feats. By the way, many of the feats are on the powerful side and most are Divine Feats that will somewhat limit their use to non-Twin Crowns characters. The section on naval combat was pretty easy to follow and will make for nice lead-ups to full blown boarding

actions. Religion and Magic, mostly religion, gets you in touch with the deities of Ptalmanar while the chapter on Spells drops a serious number of new spells in your lap. As with Feats, there are a decent number of spells that might not do so well in a non-Twin Crowns or non-Naval campaign, but they feel right at home here. Rituals really turn up the volume on spellcasters (arcane and divine) by giving them access to an increased number of spell-like effects. Rituals are a bit more involved than spells, requiring skill checks, skill checks, and appropriate scrolls, but they have some interesting abilities. Again, lots of them are tied to specific Ptalmanar deities.

The full history of Ptalmar and its known regions runs around 100 pages. Man, I hope there's not a test! The authors really spent a lot of time here and while it's not necessary for players to commit it all to memory it sets a good base for the game world and is worth your players reading.

The third sub-book starts off really well in defining what really drives a campaign in the Twin Crowns setting. These are religion, exploration, and Korba (wealth and power in the form of a magical powder). Ok, not bad hooks for adventuring and if one is not to your liking you'll probably be ok with the other two. You'll also find some new magic items and monsters in this section, but no starting adventure (mini or otherwise) to get you going.

The Appendix section contains maps, a calendar, a couple of timelines of events to assist with the history lesson that we got back in that section and lots of charts, reprinted here for easy access. And yes, there is an index!

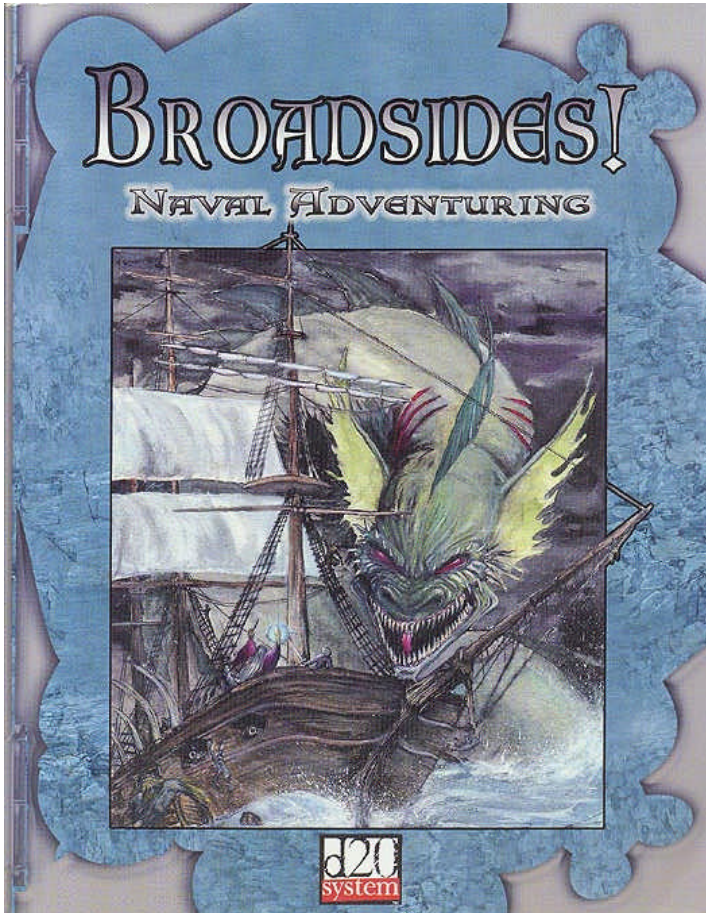
VALUE

The price of this book alone should make you perk up your ears. All of the text was clear and easy to read and the setting will make for a very nice heroic adventure campaign on the high seas. My only real gripe is with the interior art. While some of it is good most of it is just so-so. Had there been a \$40.00 price tag associated with the book then this would have been a more significant problem, but at about \$25.00 this can easily be overlooked, especially when you consider the rather large volume of game information that you are presented with. Another perk, can't say how long it will be around so I'm not making any promises here, but Living Imagination will ship Twin Crowns post-free in the US if you grab it from their website.

www.livingimagination.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Broadsides! is an expansion to the fantasy naval rules found in Twin Crowns but can also be used in any D20 fantasy system on its own. Like Twin Crowns, Broadsides! is published by Living Imagination. It is a perfect-bound soft cover book with color cover and black & white interior art. It has a retail price of \$19.99 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The first thing that I noticed about Broadsides! is that most of the interior artwork has taken a nice step forward in quality. I was quite pleased with this and took it as a sign of a good start.

The book encompasses thirteen chapters, an appendix, glossary and index (good job). Chapter 1 (Navigating & Piloting) covers new nautical skills and equipment and many of the challenges of sea life (and we're NOT even talking about monsters yet!) such as the weather, wind, and puking your guts up all over the deck. There is also a

small section on flying ships which I found to be a very nice extra as I was expecting nothing more than water vessels. Chapter 2 details a ship's stats and how they work in the game. They don't get long-winded here and these rules can easily be inserted into most games with ease. There are also over 30 pre-generated ships presented. Chapter 3 (The Voyage) is a pretty short and to-the-point method of plotting a voyage and, again, is not too long-winded and is easy to follow. Chapter 4 (Naval Combat) is a little more involved and a full-blown engagement might be better kept to just once in a while.

Chapter 5 (Underwater Adventuring) is pretty interesting and it could be very useful if your party went off in search of Kua-Toa treasure. Chapter 6 (Nautical Equipment) gets a little bit into gunpowder, weapons, repair equipment and more stuff that should have been on board the SS Minnow. As you might expect, chapters 7 (Feats) and 8 (Prestige Classes) relate mostly to marine endeavors, but many also have applications to land-based adventuring. The spells and rituals from chapter 9 are very centered on naval adventures and more difficult to use in a land-based campaign.

Chapters 10 (Nautical Magic Items) and 11 (Sea Creatures) cover, as you might guess, magic items and things to kill. Almost everything in these chapters is exclusively useful to naval campaigns, but then again, that's what they are for. Come on, how many times are you going to run into a ship's Captain while walking down the street that you need to skewer with your Cutlass of Captain Slaying? Probably never. That's why you get on a ship and set sail looking for one to slay.

The Nautical Organizations in chapter 12 will help to fill in your campaign, but chapter 13 (Adventuring) is really the best part of the book in terms of jump-starting a nautical campaign. It has sample encounters, NPC's, tactical combat scenarios, and a short naval adventure.

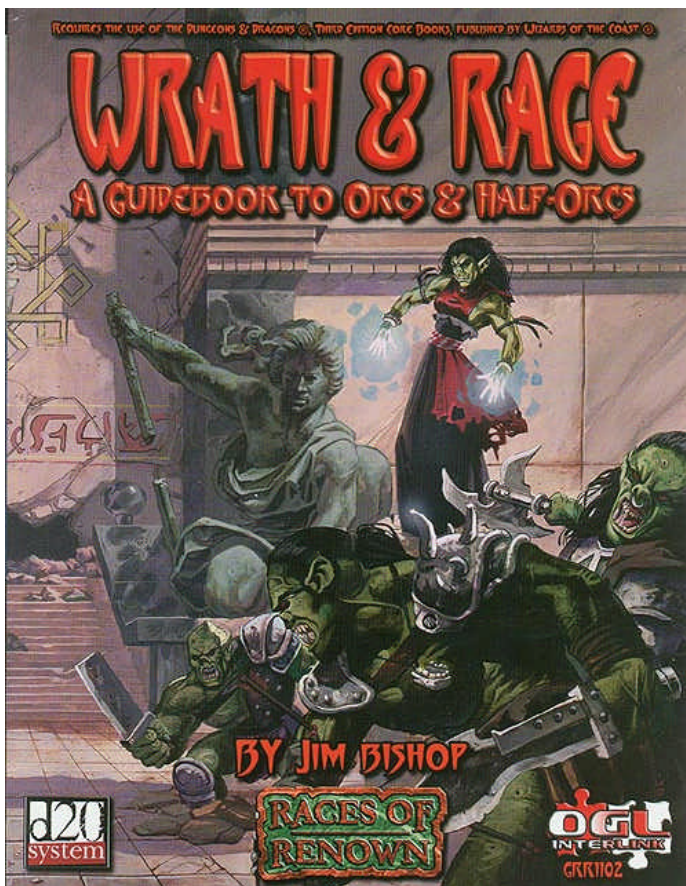
VALUE

This is a good and useful book if adventures in the deep, and also not so deep, blue sea are on your horizon. I was pleased to see the artwork get better and hope that it's a trend that continues. If you never plan to hit the water then you'll want to pass, but if you're looking to get your feet, and probably the rest of you, wet then give Broadsides! a look.

www.livingimagination.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

"Wrath & Rage" is an 80-page racial sourcebook that picks up with Orcs and Half-Orcs where "Hammer & Helm" left off with Dwarves. It sports a full-color cover, which is actually part of a larger painting, which can be seen on the back cover. The second half of the painting looks like it will be the cover for an upcoming look at elves. All of the interior artwork is black and white and most of it is of good quality. There is one particularly gross picture of an orc giving the Kiss of Life to some poor lass, yuck. "Wrath & Rage" has a retail price of \$16.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The introduction of the book sets the stage for us to take a deeper look at the rather bestial (stereotypical) side of orcs and half-orcs. This initially said to me that we weren't going to break a lot of new ground, but it did indicate that some answers would be given as to why these green (and sometimes gray) skinned bastards are just so mean and nasty.

After the introduction we move on to seven chapters (The Way of the Scar, Feats, Prestige Classes, Creatures, The Gods & Their Servants, Spells & Magic, and Equipment) and an appendix of NPC's.

I found the first chapter to be the most interesting of the book. I was very glad to see that while the main focus of the book was in dealing with the prototypical fantasy orcs an attempt was made to dig a little deeper and give players either something else to do other than bash in skulls or at least a different reason to bash them in. A couple alternate concepts, like the savage orc, on the base creature are presented and they can liven things up for players if they are expecting run-of-the-mill orcs as enemies.

As you might expect, many of the 57 new feats are related to making things more dead, but some are very interesting and quite humorous, like Brain Damage (which makes you immune to Mind-affecting spells and also drops your Int and Wis to the floor) and Runt (which drops your size by one step).

Of the seven Prestige Classes presented two require an evil PC and the others that don't aren't exactly heroes, well let me take that back. To 'standard' orcs the Cutthroat, Rage Smith, and Soul Gorgor probably are looked up to.

In the Creatures chapter I found the most interesting sections to be the rules on creating other types of half-orcs. As orcs are less than discriminating on who they mate with this made perfect sense and the rules on rabid animals, which you can imagine would be present in an orc encampment or as part of a war party.

The chapter on orc gods was a good read and would prove a welcome addition to the standard D&D pantheon or could easily replace it. Spells & Magic gives you new divine domains, all of which fit in nicely with the orc theme. Blight, Murder, Breeding, etc...yeah, all orcish and appropriate.

In the equipment section you'll find not only new mundane items, but also new magic items and several new goodies like combat drugs like Pain Killers (extra temporary hit points) and new special abilities for arms and armor. The 'Runt Glider' reminds me a bit of the Doom Divers in Warhammer Fantasy, but they would be too cool not to use the next time some greenskins ambush your player characters.

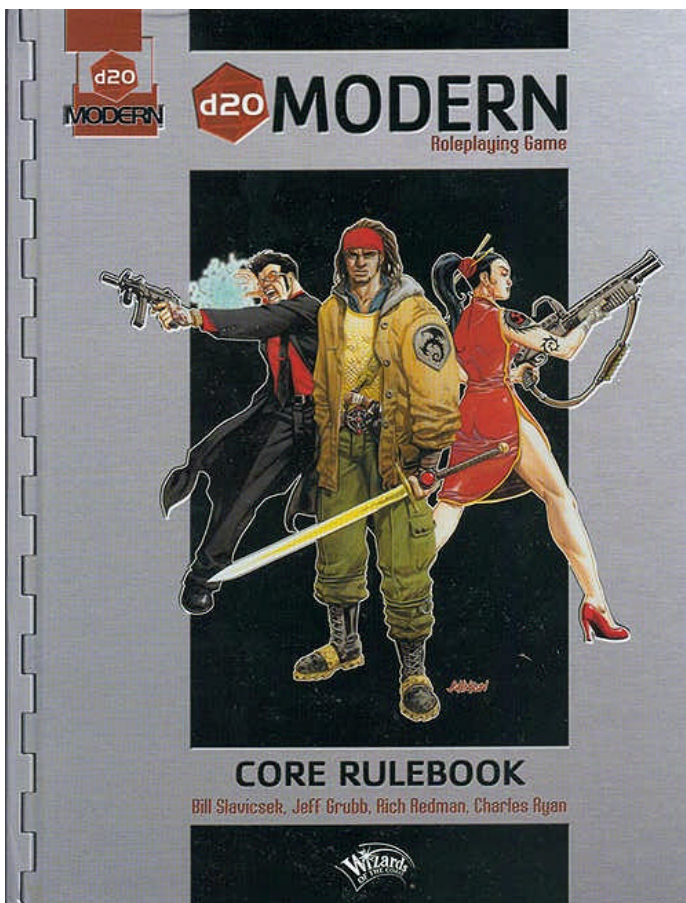
VALUE

I think that this book will have slightly less appeal to players than the previous dwarf book. It helps present material that makes green/gray-skins more playable as PC's, but I think that the subject (Orcs and Half-Orcs) is just a tough nut to crack. The extra info on breaking away from the mold was appreciated but unless you're itching to play a lean, mean, green (or gray) fighting machine you might not get a whole lot of use out of "Wrath & Rage". Although, if you are of that mindset then you're definitely in the right place.

www.greenronin.com

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

d20 Modern is a 384-page hardback tome published by Wizards of the Coast that provides rules for modern-era role-playing games using the now-familiar d20 system. The cover sports a full-color picture of three adventurers and all of the interior pages are on very good quality paper and in full-color. The interior artwork has sort of a graphic novel feel to it and it works very well for this setting. It has a retail price of \$39.95 USD and does NOT require the Player's Handbook or Dungeon Master's Guide to use.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

First off, let me state that I am not a fan of Buffy, the Vampire Slayer, only watched Sliders a handful of times, have enjoyed X-Files when I happened to be flipping channels and it was on, but do enjoy James Bond films immensely. Does that put me out of the realm of the target audience of this book? No, I don't think so, but it did make me think of the other settings in which I could make use of d20 Modern.

The book is divided into ten chapters, an introduction, a sample character sheet, an index (Yes, thank you!), and a listing of where you'll find various tables inside the book. The introduction gives you a quick crash course in the background and the basic mechanics of the system. I do like that the game defines the player characters as heroes and has done away with Alignment. You are the good guys, and that's that. Of course,

you could be a poor tortured soul trying to keep your evil ancestry from taking you over, but you are still a hero. Basic classes are different types of heroes (Strong, Fast, Tough, Smart, Dedicated, and Charismatic) and have benefits as you would expect by their name. Heroes get feats and skills as in D&D, but also get to pick Talents (stuff like Increased Speed, Linguist, and Captivate) as they go up in levels. Some more changes from D&D are Action Points (+1d6 to your d20 roll), Allegiances and Personality (to me this is kind of like building your own Alignment), and Reputation (as you'll probably end up on TV or in the news at some point). I particularly liked the Wealth system which allows you to buy and sell goods and know your character's living standards without having to keep track of each dollar spent or earned.

The section on guns and is nicely detailed you'll come to find that not everything you want is available for purchase, even if it's sitting on the store shelves. Combat is similar to Call of Cthulhu d20 meaning that you can get dead real quick. Armor works like in D&D, providing a bonus to your Defense (AC), but you can't go buy heavy duty SWAT armor at the corner store. There are twelve Advanced Classes (Soldier, Martial Artist, gunslinger, Infiltrator, Daredevil, Bodyguard, Field Scientist, Techie, Field Medic, Investigator, Personality, and Negotiator) and all of them be qualified for by the time you're mid-level. There are also two spell-casting classes, the Mage and Acolyte, which are tweaked crossovers of Wizards and Clerics. Spells are now called FX Abilities.

The section for the GM is really a split between the DMG and the Monster Manual. Monsters? Yup, if you want to run a modern fantasy game it's all here for you, with Bugbear security guards, Gnoll pimps, Kobold guerillas, and more, which is all very cool. I said that I didn't like Buffy, not modern fantasy. You could also run a 'straight' modern game in a spy setting or a mix of the two like with X-Files. Since the setting is modern and not future you'd have to write up some of your own rules to run a Cyberpunk or Shadowrun type of game, but this would be easy. I found that the 'net aspect of those games tended to slow down the rest of the action so tossing it entirely would work ok for me.

There are three campaign backgrounds, and some more classes for each, presented in the book and each would make a great jumping off point for your campaign. Each background has three adventure seeds, but no full-blown adventure. They are good starts, but I'd have rather had one regular, or even mini, adventure in the book. My favorite aspect about the world background is that we're already living about 90% of it. As a GM all you have to do is fill in the last 10%. It's not like building or learning a whole new fantasy world from scratch. Want to find out what happened in the world today? Read the newspaper. Of course, that won't tell you the real story that the press doesn't know about that your GM will toss you headfirst into.

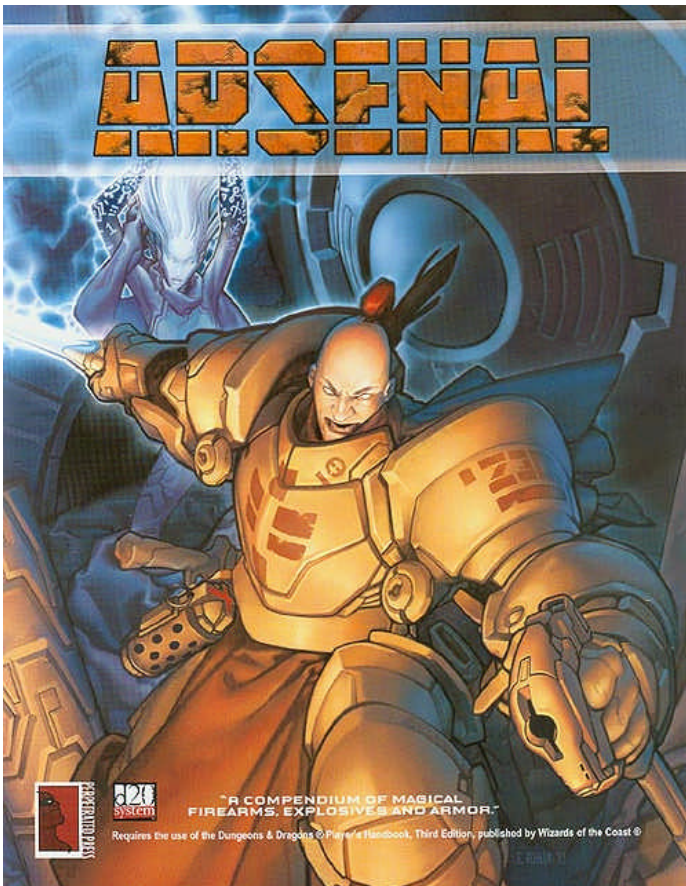
VALUE

I would highly recommend this book to anyone wanting to play in a modern day rpg. Two thumbs, way up!

www.wizards.com/

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



BASICS

Arsenal is a 128-page perfect bound soft-cover supplement for Dungeons and Dragons that throws you into the far future where ray guns and power armor are commonplace. The cover art is in full color and all of the interior art is black and white with the weapons being clear drawings and the comics (yup, comics) and character drawings are very gritty, but cool. It is published by Perpetrated Press and has a retail price of \$19.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The first few chapters (Introduction, Campaigns, and Balance Issues) of Arsenal deal with getting started in a space-fantasy Dungeons and Dragons game. The Campaign section gives several different genres in which to run their game and I was very pleased to see the chapter on Balance Issues as they will inevitably come up when you mix spell-casters and hand-to-hand killing machines with blaster rifles and power armor. Keeping things from getting out of hand is still the DM's job, but this small section helps them out a bit. Good job here. From there we move on to Classes, Skills, Feats, Spells, and Prestige Classes. Again, the guys at Perpetrated

looked ahead to see how wizards/sorcerers could likely suffer with all of these new ranged weapon flying around and try to give the DM some suggestions to bring them up to speed. Also, base class is looked at in how it would work in a sci-fi fantasy setting. As you would expect, the new Skills, Feats, and Spells are based mostly around the new toys that your players will be using and those that will be used against them. Yes, those Gnolls are packing heat! Prestige Classes are kind of light with just two (Sniper and Gunman).

The Combat and Equipment section is where Arsenal really shines. The author has seen fit, and wisely so, to include a variant on the standard AC rules. Here, you earn an AC bonus based on class and skill and armor now provides damage reduction (DR). As an example, using the standard AC system and wearing Hazard Armor your AC would be +10. Using the DR system your AC would get a bonus based on your class and level, +3 for a 5th level fighter, and you would now have 6 points of DR. Weapons are based around the different types of magical damage (fire, cold, electricity, etc) that you can suffer from and CAN be dispelled because they are techno-magical devices. This helps out mages a bit also and is a nice tweak on just saying there are now guns in D&D. The number of shots that a gun can fire before being 'out of ammo' is dealt with by using batteries (re-chargeable) and charges. Each gun has a base damage that is done for one charge. You can also crank the dial and do multiples of the base damage for multiples of charges. So, your Concussor Assault Rifle (that does Force damage) does 1d6 damage for one charge and up to 5d6 if you want to burn five charges (the max for this weapon).

A very nice touch is the Morale rules. Not every battle has to be to the death and it's nice to see these. Basically, as the EL of the bad guys gets reduced from casualties they have a chance to run away. I'd love to see a pack of gun tottin' Ogres break like a bunch of girl scouts.

VALUE

I liked Arsenal very, very much. If you're already playing D&D and want to jump into sci-fi (with a twist) without going into a new game world then I really think this is the book for you. Heck, with this and your existing D&D books you could play a Warhammer 40K role-playing game with just about no problems at all.

D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Brian Ahrens



Basics – *Hell on Earth: D20* is Pinnacle Entertainment Group's second foray into the transforming of their popular *Deadlands* line of role-playing games to the D20 system. Fred Jandt has done a very nice job in taking Shane Hensley's *Deadlands: Hell on Earth* and transforming it into a completely different set of game mechanics.

Hell on Earth: D20, like its previous rules set, is set thirteen years after the end of The Last War, in 2094. Along with the destruction caused by supernatural thermonuclear weapons the world received a visit from The Reckoners. The Reckoners, also known as The Four Horsemen (yes, the same ones talked about in *The Bible*), rampaged across the Wasted West, decimating the survivors of the apocalypse, then mysteriously vanishing across the Mississippi River to parts unknown. Since then, humanity has struggled to rebuild. The major cities are covered by howling ghost rock storms left by the explosion of supernatural weapons of mass destruction, leaving only the wastes to the mutants and other scavengers who remain outside

Presentation – This edition of *Hell on Earth* is a 205 page, perfect bound, soft back book. Personally I would prefer a hardback format for a core rulebook of a game system. A main rulebook takes a hefty beating as players and game masters are constantly opening and closing it when needing to look up an obscure rule. Hardback books have a longer life span than their soft covered brethren do.

The D20 version brings us a number of conversions of the character archetypes included in the original *Hell on Earth* role-playing game. The ones that made transition are the Doomsayer (wielder of nuclear powers), the Junker (creator of weird science), the Ravenite (a Native American with guns), the Syker (mentalist), Tale Teller (a post-apocalyptic news reporter) and the Templar (a paladin-like person that goes around the Wasted West assisting those folks that "deserve" to be helped. These classes are the ones that gave the original *HoE* its flavor. Also, included are the Scavenger and the Waste Warrior. The Waste Warrior looks to be an amalgam of the old archetypes of the Gunslinger and the Road Warrior. A Scavenger is one of the nutters that face the horrors and the radiation of bombed out cities to try to recover useful items.

Hell on Earth: D20 includes three prestige classes. The Law Dog (a base archetype in the original edition): a police officer of the devastated future. The Librarian: a historian trying to preserve knowledge for the future. Last, but certainly not least, is the Deader. The Deader is not really a prestige class as such. It is a character alteration. The best way to describe a Deader is your character develops a terminal case of lack of oxygen to the brain (i.e. you die) but your doesn't know it's not supposed to keep on walking and talking. After death an evil spirit possesses your character. The Native Americans call these evil spirits manitous. The gamemaster gets to enjoy the battle of wills between the spirit of the character and the evil that has become an unwanted tenant in the character's skull. If the character can stay in control everything is peachy. When the manitou wins the battle of wills the gamemaster gets to run the character and some Mr. Hyde moments are going to happen. On the positive side the Deader has access to some pretty nifty powers and since he/she is already dead they are very hard to put down and keep down.

The only real (very small) disappointment I felt in the reading of this book was the lack of color pictures. The original *Hell on Earth* had thirty-one color plates while the D20 edition only has color pictures on the covers. The black and white pictures throughout the book are of a superior quality even though quite a few of them seem to be recycled from original version of the game. Still, they give a good visual representation of the life and times in the Wasted West.

Value – *Hell on Earth: D20* comes in at a fair price of \$25.00. I would willingly pay more for color pictures and hard covers, but that's just me. For your money you get a VERY entertaining role-playing game with a rich and interesting background. One benefit for those of you jumping into this game for the first time; there are plenty of supplements out there for the original edition that can be used with this D20 version. Be advised, the *Hell on Earth: D20* book is not a self-sufficient game. Players will also need a copy of the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* from Wizards of the Coast to play this game. I volunteered to write this review of *Hell on Earth: D20* because I have extensive experience and enjoyment with the original edition of the game. Overall I found the transformation of this very enjoyable game to the D20 rules set to be quite acceptable. So, if you're a D20 fan and you are looking for something completely different from anything else you might have played, pick this up and give it a whirl.



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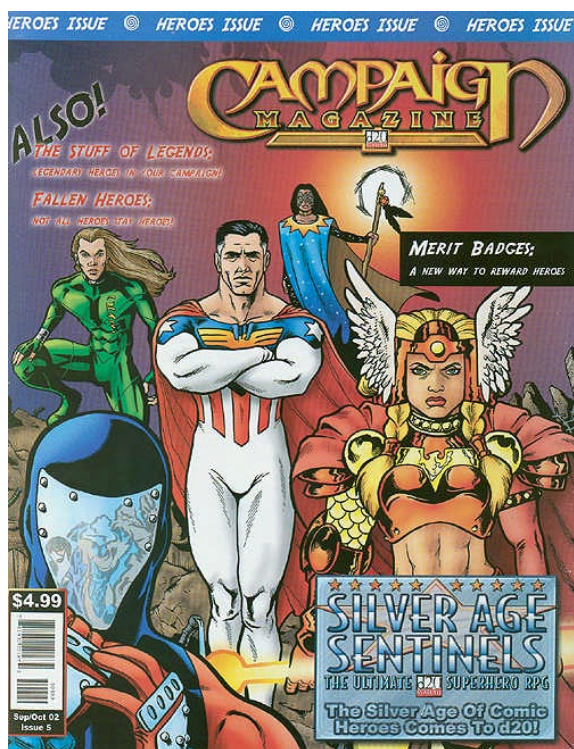
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D20 PRODUCT REVIEW

by Mark Theurer



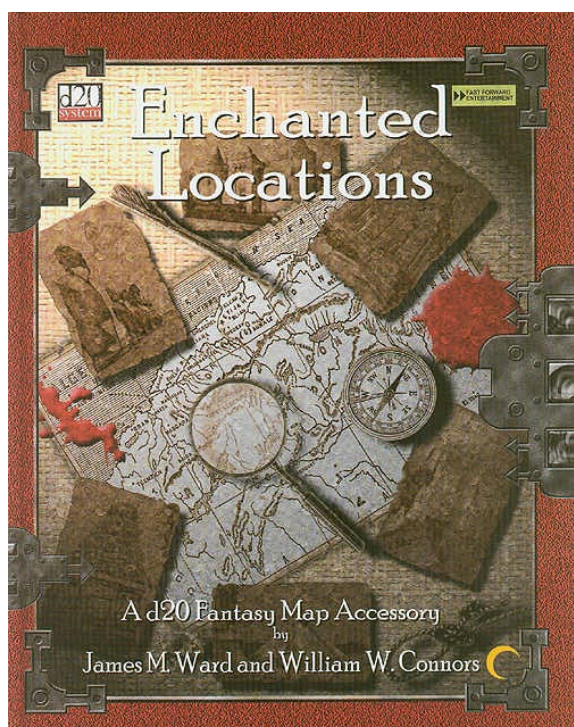
Campaign Magazine is a bi-monthly d20 magazine published by Fast Forward Entertainment that retails for \$4.99 USD. The issue (as are the other two that I've been able to pick up) is 80-pages in length with a color cover and black & white interior art. Starting with issue #2 each issue had a theme, but did not completely overpower it. As an example, issue #5 is the "Hero" issue and while you get a preview of a new d20 Super Hero game, but it's more of a spotlight on it and not one issue devoted entirely to the super hero genre. You'll also find stuff for fantasy and pulp d20 games and articles and news from the d20 community along with a mini-adventure and a city that could both be plugged into any fantasy campaign. You'll also find several game/supplement reviews that range from a few paragraphs to a complete page in length. I've enjoyed each issue of Campaign Magazine that I've read and it's absolutely worth five bucks every other month.

Enchanted Locations is a 160-page hardback supplement for Dungeons and Dragons that describes 75 different locations for DM's to use in their adventures. It is published by Fast Forward Entertainment and has a retail price of \$29.99 USD. Along with the locations there is a map, two creatures to beat down and treasure to pick up. Before you get to the maps there is a very interesting introduction that talks about the different styles of play, including treasure distribution and monster use.

Ok, on to the maps. They are arranged in order of Encounter Level, starting with EL 2 and moving up to EL 21. The maps are in black and white, each take up a full page and you are encouraged to photocopy them for use in your games. They range in scale from a half-inch equaling 50 feet to one where a half-inch equals 500 miles.

The maps form really good bases for not only a single encounter, but can also be used as for a full-blown adventure. As an example, we'll look at the "Mansion of the Emerald Enchantress", which is an EL 11 map. The map is clearly of her house and has three floors with multiple rooms. You get a write-up of the Enchantress (her spells are not listed and this would have been nice), a second creature that is walking around the house, and two treasure listings (one standard and one for finding ancient goodies). The map contains 20 locations so as the GM you'll be tasked with building the background for why the party is coming here and stock the rest of the rooms, but a very nice base has been put together for you. With a little brain-power you could use this one book to start 75 different adventures.

The text is all clear and easy to read and the maps are all nicely done. Color maps would have been nice, but I fear that it would have pushed up the price dramatically. Thirty dollars for a whole lot of adventure seeds might seem a bit pricey, but it is a hardback book which is a major plus in my book and it really has done quite a bit of work for you as the map, the main creature/enemy, their treasure and another enemy has been put together for you. You're left with putting together the story and the rest of the encounters. It's usefulness to you depends on how you run your game. If you play exclusively in pre-made adventures then you could use the locations here as plug-ins for some variety, but the GM that this will benefit the most is the one that builds all of their adventures from scratch and is already putting in the many hours that this takes. At least a few of these hours have now been saved and you can use those to play more. At less than \$0.50 per encounter I'd say that you have a very good deal here.



www.fastforwardgames.com



by Bryan Steele

The good, the bad, and the truly disgusting...

Don Scaberelli clacked his jagged talon-like fingernails together in a dull snapping motion. The Scavvy boss sat in a rusted throne scrap welded together from the remains of sewer pipes and floor gratings, his matted black hair arranged in a thick mop atop his leathery scalp. One bright orange eye stared out over his "throne room", the other a lifeless red glow stuttering out of his stolen bionic eye. A mob of mutated and gnarled once-humans gathered into small conversation groups, and a few of the Scavvies stood alone in shadowed alcoves or corners. This was the home of the Mutant Mafia, the most notorious pack of horrifying Scavvy degenerates ever to crawl out of the Underhive. Even though they looked like a throng of walking mistakes, they were an effective machine of terror and criminal instinct. At the sound of his snap the two hulking Scalies that towered on either side of him snapped to attention.

"Moose! Rocko! Fetch me our *guest*," the Don hissed. The monstrous twins set their rickety spear guns down and lumbered out of the room, careful not to step on the decaying floorboards that would snap under their girth. They disappeared between the lengths of chain that served as a doorway, only to return a few moments later with a battered and bruised man dragging behind them by his wrists. He was well-muscled man covered in gangland tattoos, and his head was crested by a green-dyed mohawk. A typical Goliath ganger, this *guest* looked like he could've chewed bullets and spat buckshot before the Mutant Mafia gave him a once over. Now he looked like a broken shadow of his former self. Moose and Rocko dragged him to the center of the room, onto the rotten floorboards, and dropped his wrists. He looked like a forgotten rag doll crumpled up, and the Don laughed at him with a sneer.

"Every time your kind runs down here to hide from the Watchmen, every time those Guilders put credits on your heads, you and your prideful friends...you roam around *our* wastelands like you own the place! You ganglanders, you hivers...you act like it was manifest destiny that brought you down here," the Don flung himself out of the throne and leapt with inhuman grace to land in a crouch hovering over the beaten Goliath. "It is time to show you who truly rules this hell, ganger...and it isn't you." The Scavvy boss stood to his full height, and raised his voice to a booming echo. "Open the hole!"

The mob of Scavvies cheered and howled as the two Scalies stepped forward and hauled the Goliath off of the floor, setting him lazily aside while they effortlessly drew the sections of floorboard up out of their filth-encrusted hinges like two gigantic trap doors. As the ambient light from the candles and weak elecralights shined down into the dark recess found underneath a mass of groans and growls, animal sounds, seeped up out of the splitting darkness. One by one shapes entered into the hole from unseen tunnels and cracks deeper inside, and soon the hole was brimming over with nearly a dozen or so withered humanoids. They clawed and scratched at the duraplast walls and each other, trying to get at the warm-blooded Goliath just a few feet away from the out-of-reach edge. The Scavvies drew a little nearer to the zombie pit, leering down into the mass of plague-ridden flesh. The Don walked back over to his throne and plopped onto its hard seat almost dramatically.

"The Underhive has its price! May no hiver live that does not pay it!" the Don shouted, drawing his autopistol and brining it to bear on the Goliath. The rusted barrel rattled off a single shot that echoed throughout the chamber, ending in a wet thud in the fallen ganger's upper thigh. Dark red blood ran thick and dark onto the moldy floor, and the Goliath groaned slightly but was too injured to react physically to the impact. "Feed the Hive," the Don hissed.

Moose and Rocko lumbered forward and each grabbed an arm. They dragged him to the edge of the zombie pen and made to toss him in, but a shot rang out and spun Rocko like a top. A throng of hulking brutes wearing spiked leather jackets and crowned with brisling mohawks burst through the hanging chain doorway, waving boltguns and chainswords around them menacingly. One had expensive looking armor on, probably stolen or stripped from the Hive authorities. He was obviously the leader, and he had balls breaking into the Mutant Mafia's home unannounced.

"Dat's our boy, and your gonna let 'im go," the Goliath leader spat, his eyes wild like that of a Spur addict.

"Oh really?" the Don smiled, showing his rotten fangs/teeth. "I applaud your tenacity to come into our home uninvited, but if Rocko there is seriously hurt...your *boy* is the last of your worries." The Don stood up slowly, leaving his autopistol on the arm of his throne to ease the trigger-happy gangers. "You see, the Mutant Mafia

doesn't like seeing one of their own men go down without a fight."

"One of your own *men*? You call that," the Goliath pointed the tip of his chainsword at the groaning Scaly on the floor, "a man? Looks more like what a milliasaur leaves behind after a morgue binge!"

"You shouldn't say such things about your hosts. It isn't polite," the Don said as he sat back down in mocked frustration. "If he dies..."

"So what if he does? Who's gonna care?" the leader laughed.

"The Farelli Brothers for starters. He's their uncle. And we take family *very* seriously down here. You'd learn that if..."

"If what?" The Goliath gangers held their weapons in shaky hands as the room's lights flickered, probably from a local brown out elsewhere in the level. They never even heard the shots.

"If you were going to live that long." The Don clacked his filthy nails together and the Farelli Brothers dropped from the rafters. The Brothers were actually a two-headed mutant that was born to Rocko's sister nearly twenty years ago, and followed in his heavy footsteps at an early age. Many speculate that they were to be twins, but due to the constant radiation and malnutrition throughout the Underhive, one brother must have partially absorbed the other. Putting the prowess and drive of two very mediocre Scavvies into the body of one made for a very skilled Scavvy assassin.

The Farelli Brothers landed in a crouch behind the farthest two gangers, stolen plasma pistols pointed upward at the mohawked men. Time seemed to slow down after the first two sprays of white-hot plasma streaked up through the gangers' necks, erupting their surprised faces in clouds of vaporizing blood and bone. Their bodies hadn't even slumped to the floor before the rest of the shooting began.

The Goliath leader charged at the Don with his bolter blazing, but the Scavvy sidestepped the fatal projectiles. Scavvies from either side of the room grabbed planks of wood or piping and ran in at the gangers, preferring a lynching to a possibly dangerous and wasteful crossfire. One Goliath emptied two barrels of buckshot into a charging Scavvy, but another body slammed into him...taking them both toppling into the pit of zombies. The sounds of their painful deaths were barely audible over the cracks of gunfire and the guttural battle cries of the degenerate Scavvy warriors.

One Goliath raised his chainsword to chop downward into Rocko, ending any possibility of his recovery. In a splash of gore he lowered his arm to strike, but only succeeded in spraying the fallen Scaly with blood erupting from his severed wrist. Moose growled his satisfaction, and the shocked ganger clutched the stump as he turned to face the monstrous creature. Moose wielded an enormous piece of plasteel cut in the shape of a chopping sword, currently streaked with the Goliath's blood. The ten-foot Scaly took one step forward to engage, and the ganger's primal instincts kicked in. His bladder gave out, his bowels emptied in his dirty denim jeans, and he screamed as shrill as a child before turning to run. The Goliath did not get very far, as Rocko grabbed his ankle and twisted it like a green sapling. The injured Scaly stood to his full height, one hand holding the puckering bolter wound and the other trying to control the flailing ganger. Moose laughed, and Rocko hissed...dipping the bleeding human into the zombie pit headfirst like a giant meat teabag. Rocko grunted twice as he fought the frantic pull of the zombies, and after a second or two of satisfying screaming, he dropped what was left of the body to the mass of plague victims.

The Goliath leader swept his massive whirring chainsword back and forth, chopping at the Don with limb-severing force. The Scavvy boss had drawn his own wicked looking blade, coated in the venoms and secretions of a dozen or more Underhive animals and fungi, and wielded it confidently. All he needed to do was scratch the Goliath and the fight would be over in a series of spasms and hallucinations. But House Goliath was known for their savagery in close quarter combat, and someone tough enough to lead them into the lands of lawlessness was to be feared. The Don ducked and weaved, trying not to parry with the poisoned blade to ensure an envenomed attack when the time was right. Around their duel, the room became calm and quiet. The mass of Scavvies had killed or restrained the invaders, and had become a full circle around the fight. The Don and the Goliath leader danced their deadly waltz a few dangerous steps away from the edge of the pit.

"You can't beat me freak!" the leader bellowed as he sliced the air where the Don's neck was a moment before.

"Maybe no, but I figured I'd just let you give yourself a heart attack trying," the Don laughed, dodging another killing blow.

"I will kill each one of you, one by one if I have to!"

"You probably could," another duck and sidestep, "if we fought you like you want us to." He dodged backward and seemed to slip and fall, landing prone on his back and dropping his sword. The Goliath smiled, showing his broken teeth, and stepped forward to execute the unarmed Don.

"And how exactly is dat like?"

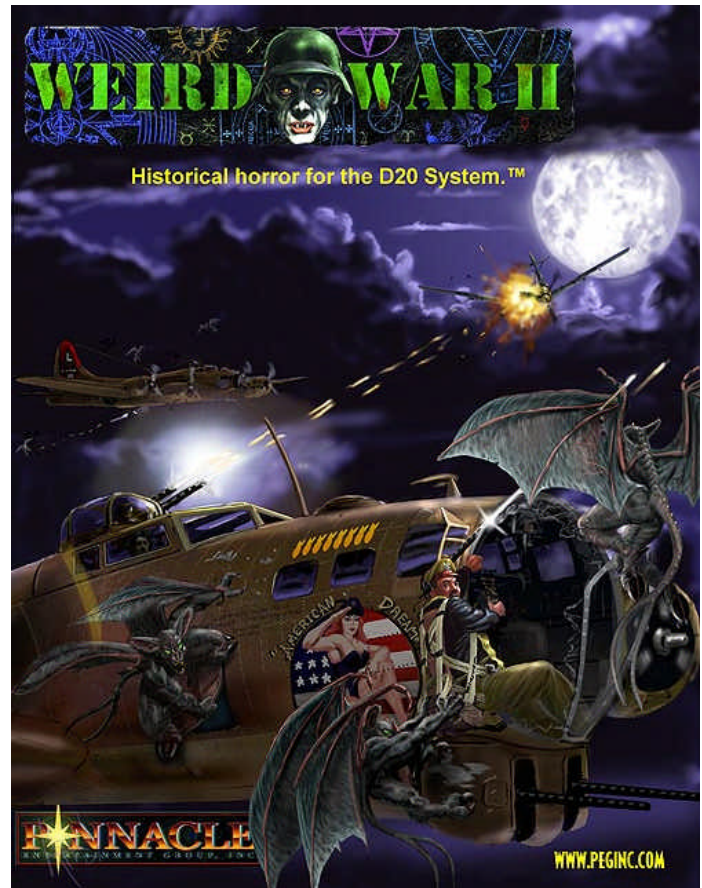
"Fair," the Don smiled wickedly as the shots began.

The look of shock on the leader's face lasted just long enough for the first shotgun slug or buckshot pellet to tear out of it from behind as the entire Mutant Mafia opened up with their assorted weaponry. In seconds the Goliath was reduced to a pool of chunks and bits, splattered over the floor, throne, and the Don himself.

The Don carefully picked himself up, and wiped bits of ganger out of his living eye and off his bionic lens. He sucked the gore from his finger and looked out over his gang, and let out a bellowing laugh.

"This worked well. Tomorrow we go and snatch more *bait*. Tonight, we eat like kings!"

Bryan Steele



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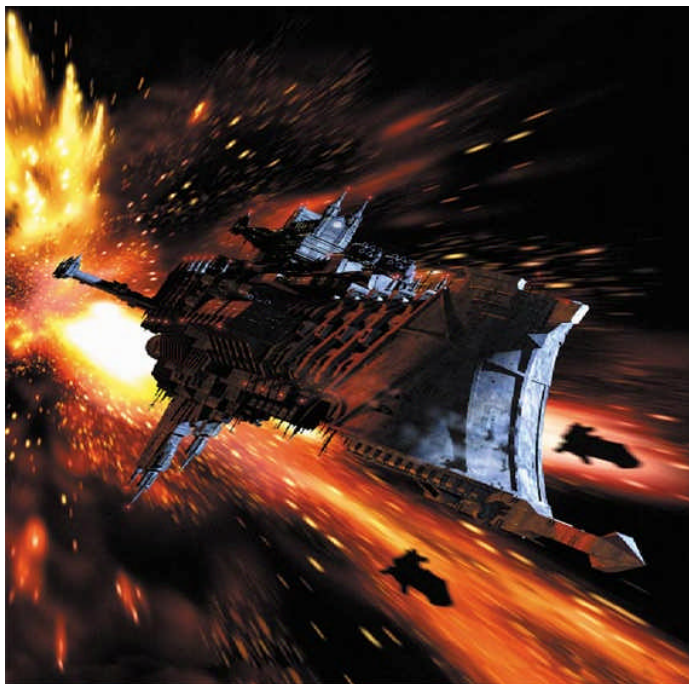
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PRESS RELEASE

GAMES WORKSHOP



Games Workshop Announces Launch of *Battlefleet Gothic*, the Game of Spaceship Combat

The battleships of the Emperor maintain constant vigil over the Imperium of Man. Powerful Chaos fleets travel through space and seek to expand the influence of their Dark Gods. Eldar Corsairs vie with Ork Pirates over the most lucrative warp channels and the wealthiest planets to pillage. The nefarious fleets of the Tyranids, Necrons, and Dark Eldar encroach on the known areas of space to advance their own mysterious goals. In the nightmare future of the 41st millennium, space is no longer still. Carefully preserved from the Dark Age of Technology, great weapons stand ready to wreak havoc on enemy ships. Inside their hulls, boarding parties desperately fight their way to vital areas in hopes of destroying crucial systems or carrying out insidious assassinations. Now is the time of mighty spacecraft and death among the stars. Now is the time of noble heroism and base treachery. Now is the time of Battlefleet Gothic!

Games Workshop is proud to announce that *Battlefleet Gothic*, the game of Spaceship Combat, will be returning to our galaxy this September. The game will be relaunched along with a full complement of ships for all fleets in the game *Battlefleet Gothic* is the exciting game of spaceship battles in the dark future of the 41st Millennium. Huge fleets of enormous starships engage in ship to ship com-

bat amongst the darkness of the galaxy in a struggle for the domination of the Gothic Sector, a vital part of the galaxy.

Players command either a valiant fleet of the Imperial starships in the name of the Emperor of Mankind or an insidious horde of Chaos heretics whose only purpose is to subjugate and destroy all they encounter to sate the dark desires of their foul gods. There are also other races for players to select from as well, like the mysterious Eldar and the crude and brutal Orks. Whatever force is chosen to command, the player is in control of millions of tons of awesome, Warpdrive-powered fury cutting through the void of interstellar space!

Forces are represented by models from the Citadel Miniatures range that you paint and assemble yourself. There are plenty of ships included in the boxed game to get players started and the hardworking Citadel Miniature Designers have got an entire range of incredible Battleships, Cruisers, Frigates and Gunships available to be deployed for battle. Fans can also expect new ships to cover the ancient Necrons and the cruel Dark Eldar, plus the ravenous Tyranid Hivefleets. *Battlefleet Gothic Magazine* will continue to support the game with new rules, scenarios, hobby tips, and more. Special sets of fighters, bombers, mines, space stations, assault ships, and more will also be coming out as part of the launch.

The game comes complete with rulebook and 8 plastic multi-part Imperial and Chaos Cruisers which can be assembled into a variety of different spaceship types. It also includes dice, rulers, counters to represent celestial phenomenon, weapons fire, torpedoes, fighters and bombers, labels for naming your ships, fleet registration sheets, and everything else needed to get playing right out of the box.

Battlefleet Gothic is also supported with a new supplemental booklet called *Invasion*. *Invasion* contains new scenarios for *Battlefleet Gothic*, painting and scenery tips, fleet listings. It also has new *Warhammer 40,000* missions such as boarding actions for so you can link results from one game to others. This booklet will appear the same day as the game itself, September 21st. "The new scenarios in *Invasion* and the others to come in *White Dwarf* and the Games Workshop Website are very important for *Battlefleet Gothic*," says Lonnie Mullins, *Warhammer 40,000* Brand Manager. "They not only give players some great new ideas for *Gothic* play, but also firmly tie the game into the *Warhammer 40,000* Universe

by linking these games into games of *Warhammer 40,000*."

Right after the release of *Battlefleet Gothic*, each week will see new releases as multitudes of spaceships launch from the warp and into your local store! Within two months, there will be several dozen ships and other gaming related releases for *Battlefleet Gothic* available in stores, so that players can easily and quickly assemble their fleets for play.

The head of Specialist Games, Jervis Johnson, is extremely excited about the launch of *Battlefleet Gothic* in the USA. "It's a great game, and it's fantastic to see it being supported so well. Now that the game is back for good, the Fanatic Team is busy with plans for new models including Possessed Chaos ships, Ork Battleships, and we've started preliminary work on the Tau Warfleet."

Battlefleet Gothic will be the first of many classic Games Workshop games being relaunched. In coming months, games such as *Mordheim*, *Inquisitor*, and *Warmaster* will be back into production and into stores with new box sets and blister packs. This marks a major focus on these Specialist Games Range products as they are put back into normal production and sold regularly through hobby stores throughout the country. Veteran players of these



One of the new Boarding Action tables & figure sets, ideal for tying games of *Warhammer 40,000* into *Battlefleet Gothic* scenarios.

games will once again be able to find everything they need at their local store for these popular games, and new players will be able to find out what made them so great to start with.



The spectacular *Battlefleet Gothic* in-store demonstration set (above), complete with 2 opposing fleets, scenery, and full-color plexiglass playing table. Over 250 stores throughout the USA will get these sets along with the Boarding Action table (complete with figures) to run introductory games of *Battlefleet Gothic* and *Warhammer 40,000* for players.

For more information, visit the *Battlefleet Gothic* section of the Games Workshop website:
<http://www.games-workshop.com/40kuniverse/battlefleetgothic/battlefleetgothic.htm>

PRESS RELEASE

PINNACLE

Official Statement on Pinnacle and Fast Forward Deal

"Fast Forward Entertainment, Inc. and Pinnacle Entertainment Group, Inc. are pleased to announce that they are entering into a distribution agreement, with Fast Forward handling all of the sales, marketing, distribution and invoicing for Pinnacle product effective immediately.

"We couldn't be happier to be working with Pinnacle Entertainment Group," said John Danovich, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Fast Forward. "They have consistently produced quality product that has not only sold well, but been a critical success, too. While they have forged a fantastic customer base, with players all over the world, they have gone through several different arrangements that didn't work out. We are looking to add a solid sales and marketing effort to their line, and let them produce the products that they are famous for." This new arrangement is very much like the one forged with Sovereign Press and FanPro. Distributors will order all Pinnacle products through Fast Forward, who will handle fulfillment and invoicing.

"With Fast Forward handling our fulfillment, we can stop packing boxes and unloading trucks and spend more time on our actual products," stated Shane Hensley, President of Pinnacle. "This is a very good thing for us as it allows us to concentrate on making great games and keeping up with our demanding production schedule."

James M. Ward, President of Fast Forward added, "This alliance of our two companies allows us to share important resources. Our two magazines, Games Unplugged and Campaign offer excellent product exposure, and our web site www.fastforwardgames.com will soon offer the Pinnacle line as well. Of course, people can still go through the Pinnacle web site for product and information, but they can also order many different lines through our site if they can't find it locally at their game retailer."

Pinnacle Entertainment publishes game products, novels, and produces game accessories for Deadlands, The Last Crusade, Weird Wars, The Great Rail Wars, Savage Worlds and d20 products.

Fast Forward Entertainment publishes a variety of d20 products, including Orcfest, the Dungeon World series, the acclaimed Treasure Quest series, as well as its own Metamorphosis Alpha RPG, Inning A Minute Baseball, and coming soon, 1492:Conquista del Magico alternate history fantasy role-playing game and setting.

Effective immediately, please direct all sales inquires and orders for Pinnacle products directly to Fast Forward Entertainment:

(262)728-6501 phone, (262)728-0488 fax
or jdanovich@charter.net.

John Danovich / VP Sales & Marketing
Fast Forward Entertainment
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PRESS RELEASE

WARMACHINE

PRIVATEER PRESS UNLEASHES WARMACHINE THIS FEBRUARY

November 18, 2002 (Seattle, Wash.) –Privateer Press, makers of the award winning d20 series The Witchfire Trilogy™ based on their Iron Kingdoms™ campaign setting, has released more details regarding the prime release of their NEW miniatures game WARMACHINE.

Privateer Press' highly anticipated miniatures battle game of metal-on-metal combat is scheduled for it's initial release this February. WARMACHINE is a fast-paced 30mm tabletop miniatures battle game, where players take on the role of elite soldier-sorcerers known as a Warcasters™. While the Warcasters are a formidable force on the battlefield, their true strength is in their ability to magically control and coordinate the mighty warjacks™– massive steam-powered combat automatons that represent the pinnacle of military might in the Iron Kingdoms world.

In WARMACHINE the players field a war host representing one of the four powerful nations struggling for dominance in the Iron Kingdoms:

- **Cygnar:** Possessing the most advanced magic and technology in the realm, the Kingdom of Cygnar fields a well-rounded force that battles for the good and just King Leto Raelthorne. Caught between it's old nemesis Khador and the newer threat of the fanatical Protectorate of Menoth, Cygnar will need every ounce of ingenuity and bravery to survive the coming onslaught.
- **Khador:** This vast kingdom to the north has had a rivalry with Cygnar for centuries, opposing



Cygnar's magical and engineering skill with unearthly toughness and brute force. Though Khador's methods are often thought of as unsophisticated and brutish, they possess a martial skill notorious in the Iron Kingdoms for its tenacity and unrelenting strength.

- **The Protectorate of Menoth:** This nation was once part of Cygnar, but split off from the homeland as the result of a religious civil war. The Protectorate is a strict theocracy dedicated to the worship of humanity's ancient patron; Menoth. Primarch Hierach Voyle seeks to cleanse the Iron Kingdoms of the infidels and heretics by spreading the righteous fire of Menoth's teachings.
- **Cryx:** Across the dark and broken straits, from his remote island fortress, the Dragon Lord Toruk plans his ruthless conquest of the Iron Kingdoms. Fleets of black warships and legions of necromantic horrors are being assembled under the undying gaze of Toruk's Lich Lords-and soon they will come calling on the mainland, marching in the shadow of the wyrm himself.

This initial release of WARMACHINE will feature four (4) different Battle Group box sets and four (4) character blister packs. The Battle Group box sets are the perfect way for a new WARMACHINE player to dive into the game and experience the flavor of one of the four warring nations:

Cygnar, Khador, The Protectorate of Menoth or Cryx! Each box set contains enough WARMACHINE miniatures to field a complete Battle-

Group and includes a basic game play and hobby guide, with assembly and painting instructions. The character blister packs provide a way for the player to boost their Battle Groups strength by adding additional Warcasters.

For a look at some of the miniatures in the WARMACHINE line check out: www.ikwarmachine.com. The site will be updated frequently with additional photos, so check back frequently!

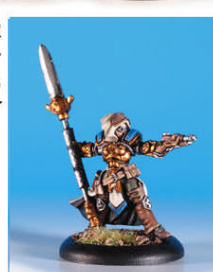
February's release will be followed by four to six additional blistered WARMACHINE miniatures released monthly. Privateer Press will also be releasing the complete WARMACHINE rulebook in March. With over 125 pages the rule book includes an in depth look into the world behind WARMACHINE, detailed army lists, rules for special characters & troop types, a full color hobby & painting guide (written by Mike McVey) this tome has everything a dedicated WARMACHINE player needs to obliterate his adversaries. Clearly this will be an indispensable tool for all WARMACHINE players!



MENOTH
BATTLEGROUP BOX SET
(ABOVE)
SCRUTATOR
(RIGHT)



CYGNAR
BATTLEGROUP BOX SET
(ABOVE)
CAPT. HALEY
(RIGHT)



Cygnar - Battle Group box	1 Cygnar Ironclad(HW), 1 Cygnar Charger(LW), 1 Cygnar Lancer(LW) & 1 Cygnar Warcaster	PIP 21001	\$39.99
The Protectorate of Menoth - Battle Group box	1 Menoth Crusader(HW), 1 Menoth Revenger(LW), 1 Menoth Repenter(LW) & 1 Menoth Warcaster	PIP 22001	\$39.99
Cryx - Battle Group box	1 Slayer Helljack(HW), 2 Ripper Bonejacks(LW), 1 Defiler Bonejack (LW) & 1 Cryx Warwitch	PIP 23001	\$39.99
Khador - Battle Group box	1 Khador Juggernaut(HW), 1 Khador Destroyer (HW), & 1 Khador Warcaster	PIP 24001	\$6.99
Menoth Warcaster - blister	1 Menoth Warcaster (Scrutator Severius)	PIP 32001	\$6.99
Khador Warcaster - blister	1 Khador Warcaster (The Butcher of Khardov)	PIP 33001	\$8.99
Cryx Warcaster - blister	1 Cryx Warcaster (Malakhov Spyer—Iron Lich)	PIP 34001	\$8.99

PRESS RELEASE

FAST FORWARD ENTERTAINMENT

Fast Forward and R.A. Salvatore join forces

New York Times Best-Selling author Robert A. Salvatore and Fast Forward Entertainment, Inc. are joining forces to produce a line of d20 role-playing game sourcebooks based on Salvatore's *Demon Wars* saga of fantasy novels. What is unique about this arrangement is that Fast Forward will be producing the game sourcebooks that are being written by Fast Forward's stable of talented writers along with close input from Salvatore and his sons.

"I cannot believe the amount of talent, dedication and pure love of gaming that Fast Forward has been able to put together," said Salvatore, "and I'm so thrilled to be a part of their journey as they step to the forefront of the gaming community. As with CrossGen, this new partnership is a wonderful match, with the right people working toward the common goal of putting out a quality product."

According to Fast Forward President Jim Ward, the first product will be a 128-page hardbound book priced at \$24.99. "The first product, *Demon Wars Campaign Setting*, will introduce character classes and the magic of the *Demon Wars* saga," he said. It's planned for launch in April 2003, and Fast Forward hopes to release a total of four new *Demon Wars* products each year.

Not only will this be a great partnering between a major fiction writer and a major game publisher, but added to this mix is the cross-promotion and close working environment that has been set up between Salvatore and CrossGen Comics. *Demon Wars* is also going to be a comic series from CrossGen's Code Six imprint, and Fast Forward will be working with CrossGen to make the game products have the look and feel of not only the novels but the comic as well.

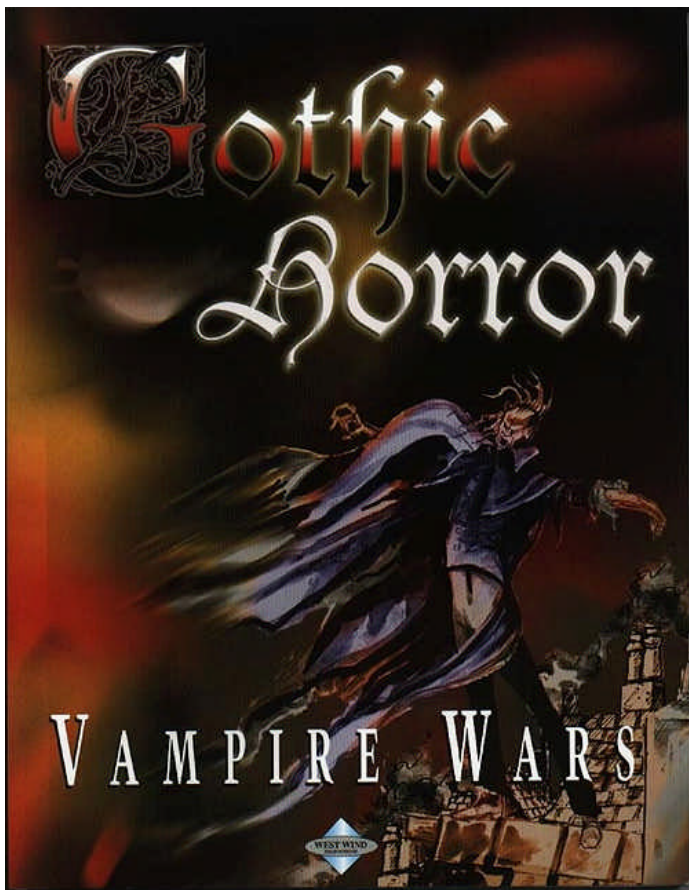
Additional information on this license and Fast Forward can be found at www.fastforwardgames.com.

For additional information on R.A. Salvatore, please go to www.rasalvatore.com. For additional information on CrossGen, their website is www.crossgen.com.

Fast Forward Entertainment publishes a variety of d20 products, including Orcfest, the Dungeon World series, the acclaimed Treasure Quest series, as well as its own Metamorphosis Alpha RPG, Inning A Minute Baseball, and coming soon, 1492: Conquista del Magico alternate history fantasy role-playing game and setting.

Please direct all sales inquiries and orders directly to Fast Forward Entertainment: (262)728-6501, (262)728-0488 fax or via e-mail at jdanovich@charter.net.

STANDING ORDERS



Welcome to another installment of *Standing Orders*. Well another Christmas Season is upon us and I'm sure many of you will be looking for new miniatures and miniature games to add to your wish list this year. That being the case, in this installment of *Standing Orders* I am going to profile a relatively new game with an all new line of miniatures to play the game.

Gothic Horror

Vampire Wars

"The time is the early 1900's; the place is the Balkans, or one of many other dark places in Europe, the British Isles, or even the United States. You must choose to either defend mankind or attempt to conquer it. But whether human or Vampire, beast or wolf, the only objective is the survival of your race and the elimination of all others." **VAMPIRE WARS** is one of several new themed games from West Wind Productions. **Vampire Wars** was the first in a series that now includes such titles as **SAMURAI WARS**, **COWBOY WARS**, **GLADIATOR WARS**, **BERLIN OR BUST**, **NAM**, **SUPERFIGS** and **COBALT-1**.

You can check out any of these other themed games at the West Wind Productions website at <http://www.westwindproduction.co.uk>.

This month we are going to profile their Victorian-Era horror game, **Vampire Wars**.

What You Get -- The **Vampire Wars** rulebook is approximately 110 pages long but the rules themselves only take up 22 pages. So you get a lot of background information, a complete army list for each party in the game and some very good scenarios (at least one for each faction). The last few pages of the book also consist of a character sheet and a brief listing on the inside back cover of selections from their miniature line including the stock number for each figure pack you may be interested in.

What You Need -- Obviously you will need the miniatures AND an assortment of dice from D6 up to a D20. Actually because **Vampire Wars** is such a unique game with such a unique setting you really will need to purchase the miniatures for each party to really capture the feel of the game. There are some races that can be proxied, like the Blessed Mother Church party and maybe even the Werewolves but the miniatures for these parties are so impressive I wouldn't recommend using any proxies. Finally, if you use their recommended initiative method you will also need a deck of playing cards.



What You Are Told -- The best description I can give you of the game is that provided by the American Vampire Hunter known as 'The Librarian' aka Laird Stewart Tett, a former Oxford Dean and scholar of ancient mythology. According to The Librarian: "Gothic Horror is a game of combat against the Children of the Darkness, Vampires and Werewolves, and is set in a world beset by these terrors. The game uses groups of individual figures, with an open scale for time and movement, and can be used for small or large battles."





The game is designed for quick play and the system is flexible and adaptable to suit the level of enjoyment for the gamer(s). A player can choose to be one of the Defenders of Mankind, standing against the Children of the Darkness, or they can choose to lead the Children of Darkness against Mankind in a battle for domination of their enemies and the survival of their own kind. You may choose to be the leader of a

party of Vampire Hunters, Wolfen-Jaeger (hunters of the Werewolf), or holy warriors of Blessed Mother Church. These defenders of mankind seek their enemies in battle to cleanse the world of great evil and protect the defenseless and the innocent. You may choose to oppose Mankind as a Master leading his dreaded Nosferatu (a race of natural vampires) or Vampire Lord (the classic vampire), leading his servants and slaves against mankind's defenders, or a Loup Garou, leading his pack of Werewolves and wolves, serving the cycles of the moon and his bestial calling. Even the Mad Doctor, Frankenstein and his evil assistant Ygor are here, with his horrible creations, bringing terror to the night. You can attempt to raise the Mob, the local townspeople and farmers against the terror. Or seek out the Gypsies, who possess ancient secrets and special potions and talismans to aid you in your battles against the Children of Darkness. There are several different parties of Vampire Hunters, Werewolf Hunters, and servants of the Church to choose from, as well as the Nosferatu, Vampires, Werewolves, the Mad Doktor, and even Gypsies."

What You Will Discover -- The first thing I must tell you about **Vampire Wars** is it takes some getting used to. At first everything about the game will seem to go against all of your traditional notions of miniature gaming: the rules, the dice, the setting, the scenarios and even the miniatures will require you to leave your miniature gaming comfort zone - where only those wars fought on level battlefields are worthy of re-fighting on the wargames table. **Vampire Wars** is about another kind of war - the most universal war of all - the war between Good and Evil. The soldiers are humans on one side and every dark terror of myth and legend on the other. The battlefields are crypts, and dungeons, cemeteries and mansions. However, unlike what the name of the game may imply this is not a "dark fantasy" game. Some of the images in the rule book are graphic but not "demonic". In fact the game has a certain 'old world' charm to it that makes it almost nostalgic. These are the old late night horror show villains that made it fun to stay up late at night and be scared - because good always triumphed in the end. In fact, the rules do not use any "magic" or spells to speak of. There are potions, artifacts and powers assigned to each party and their members but other than the prepared "curses and spells" some parties can purchase from the Gypsies magic does not feature prominently in the game and there is no spell casting, per se.

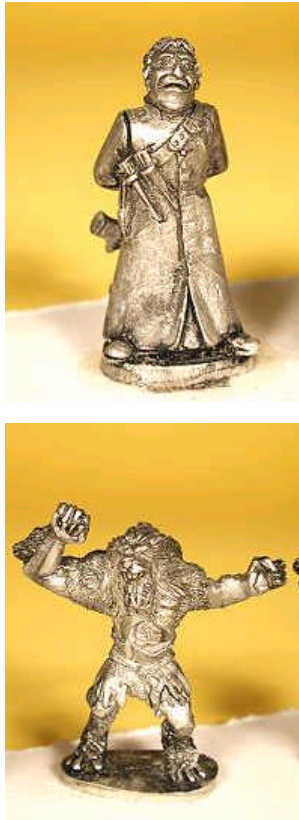
What's Old -- Actually there isn't much in **Vampire Wars** that most gamers will have seen before. There are some familiar rule mechanics but the overall presentation of the material is completely new to miniature gaming. Many of the themes and perhaps some of the scenarios may have taken their inspiration from the role-playing hobby but they are presented in such a unique way in the game that **Vampire Wars** is a completely new and entertaining type of miniature game.

What's New -- There's a lot that is new but here is a brief overview. The game revolves around what is called your "Quality" die or 'Qdie. This is a die from a d6 to a d20 (including the less often used d8). Each character or creature has three statistics: Attack, Defense and Will. Attack is used to hit and shoot but it is also used like 'strength' to open doors, jump or cross obstacles. Defense is used to avoid an attack but is also used like 'agility' to stay in a saddle, hang onto a vehicle or grab things. Finally, Will is used for resisting mental/magical attacks but is also used like 'bravery' for carrying on after a wound or the loss of a leader. Next, **Vampire Wars** also features two types of die rolls - "opposed" and "targeted". Opposed die rolls occur in combat with the highest roll winning. Targeted die rolls occur when shooting and the die roll needs to exceed a base number to hit. Right about now most of you are wondering "with only three stats, how do you know how many wounds or hit points your character has?". Well that's something else new about **Vampire Wars** there are no wounds or hit points. Most characters will have a SAVE number listed in their army list in each scenario. If the character is hit or wounded, he must either save or die. If he does save he will still suffer a -1 modifier in combat for EACH wound he has sustained. So while there is no set limit to the number of wounds a figure can take, because of the modifiers, any figure that gets too wounded will soon become combat ineffective anyway. Once you get a good understanding of these core concepts the rest of the game is best learned by playing it, which brings up another new wrinkle. The only meaningful way to play **Vampire Wars** is in a scenario. Even though there is a point (cost) system in place, the game does not lend itself well to set piece battles. The good thing is there are plenty of scenarios to play included in the rulebook and they are all pretty good.

What's Familiar -- Many of the characters featured in their miniatures will be familiar to anyone older than twenty five. There are your classic Vampires (i.e. Dracula and his concubines) and then there are your natural vampires (called Nosferatu). Similarly there are your classic Werewolves (i.e. wolf man) and then your natural werewolves or Loup garou. However, there is also a Dr. Frankenstein and his monster set, a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde set, and even an Island of Dr. Moreau and his monsters set.



What's Good -- Speaking of the miniature sets. One of the good things about **Vampire Wars** is that the miniatures are very reasonably priced. You can purchase a set of miniatures in a pack of four (4) for about \$6.00 in the U.S.. Special characters like The Bishop of the Blessed Mother Church are usually packaged individually but also only cost \$6.00. As far as the game is concerned, once you start playing it you will find that it is great fun to play - which always good in any game. The rules make it possible for one player to control ten or twelve people in a party with little or no problem. Best of all there are so many unique and interesting rules built into each party or scenario that you really get into the plot very quickly. For instance, most vampires suffer from what is called "bloodlust" so that if any character gets wounded within 12" of them all of them immediately go toward him to feed from the wound. However, the forces of good also have unique weapons like rifles that fire "wooden bullets", "holy water" and "garlic" that will drive off but usually not kill vampires or werewolves. There are also hunting dogs, molotov cocktails, elephant guns, dum dum bullets, incendiary bullets, cold rolled iron sabres, Holy swords, crosses and healing herbs - to only name a few. Just equipping your party is fun in and of itself.



What I'm Going to Do with These Rules -- I am planning on using these rules as a "supplement" for some of my medieval wargames. They make an excellent side game where you can easily take some of your favorite wargaming characters and play them in a completely new environment while still tying it into your overall campaign (i.e. the Duke has ordered a band of knights to go to the castle overlooking the village and "cleanse" it of the foul vampires and said to be terrorizing the village). However, because of the period you can do this with games from other periods as well such as the Napoleonic, Dark Ages, Western and even as late as WWI. Finally, I have a Battle Report of a solo game I played recently available for free to the readers of Fictional Reality to download right here for a better feel of how the game plays. Just a little "stocking stuffer" from all of us here at Fictional Reality.

Until next issue, God Bless and Merry Christmas!

Deano C. Ware

<http://www.overlandgames.com/VWBattleReport.wps>

"Hark the herald angel sings! Glory to the new born King!"

What's Bad -- The biggest knock you will hear about **Vampire Wars** has to do with the typos in the rulebook. I am not sure if the rules were translated into English but they are replete with typos. Having said that, they in no way make the game unplayable. Most typos are obvious but there are some places where the stats in the rules do not agree with the stats in the tables or charts. According to the official West Wind FAQ "in all cases where the example does not agree with the chart. The chart is correct!" However, you can also download a copy of their official Errata at their website to clear these mistakes up. The other problem with the rulebook is that it is not very well organized. Many of the rules you need for using the special weapons and talismans are located in the back of the book on page 60 in the Librarium Armoricus. This would be okay if "all" of the rules for weapons and special items were back there but they are not. Other special rules are actually located in the "text" of the rules with the background information on creatures like Vampires and Werewolves. This is why it is essential that you "play" the game through a couple of times before making a judgment about it. Once you learn the basic concepts, that will cut down on the different areas of the rulebook you have to refer to and speed your games up considerably. Hopefully, there will be a 2nd edition with a cleaner, much better organized layout of the rules.



FREE GAME

Rabbidgerbal's Biplane Dogfight Game

Put on your goggles and tighten your scarf as you sit in your beloved biplane ready for dogfight action! This article contains the complete rules for **Rabbidgerbal's Biplane Dogfight** game, as well as links to paper models to construct your very own Red Baron tri-plane and find other paper models.

ORDER OF PLAY:

1-INITIATIVE: Each plane rolls 1 six sided die (now referred to as 1D6) for initiative, you want to fly last as you can make better choices to where to aim your plane for that critical shot. The highest score goes first, don't forget your pilot may be able in the advanced rules (see below under pilot) to help the roll.

2-EACH PLANE MOVES: A basic plane can move in inches from nothing (in a stall) to 4 six sided dice. (advanced rules can add more dice such as a larger engine or a dive). Basic movement is 1 or 2 dice in inches. You may choose an aerial trick:

STALL: drop one flight level (there are six flight levels) but move forward no speed.

CLIMB: sacrifice highest single die movement roll to gain one flight level.

BARREL ROLL: gain one die for maneuverability (useful if you think your going to get shot at!)

LOOP: roll 1/2 your maneuverability dice (rounding down or 1 which is ever larger) for a negative movement. plane still travels in direction it originally began.

TURNING: may turn 45% or 90% *after* moving largest single die of movement distance may turn another 45% or 90% after second or more die of movement (if traveling at greater speed) in the advanced rules planes with an extra maneuverability die may choose to turn before moving.

COLLISION?!?

What if planes end up in the same place? When doing all the trick flying and dice rolls planes may actually have a small chance of colliding in the heat of a dogfight. If two planes end up in the same place after moving each rolls a

D6 and on a six that plane takes a damage level. If both roll a six the planes collide violently in air and perish in a ball of fiery soot.

FLIGHT LEVELS: (flight chart)

Use the flight chart at the bottom of the page for each plane. A counter can be placed on current flight level and for each damage level taken the highest number must be crossed off (meaning if six gets crossed off you may not fly at level six) when level one gets crossed off the plane crashes in a heap no longer airworthy.

3-FIRING: each plane is equipped with machine guns (3D6) that is compared to the defenders maneuverability dice when an attack is greater than the total defense an attack is successful.

JAMS: When an attacker rolls more than a single dice with 1 showing per shot the machine guns jam and next round they may not fire. (see advanced rules for more challenge)

WHO CAN FIRE? Using standard planes you may fire at a 45° angle from the front of the plane on both sides up to 9" away. See advanced rules for rear gunner ideas.

BASIC PLANES:

MANEUVERABILITY: 3D6

TOP SPEED: 2D6

MACHINE GUN: 3D6

INITIATIVE (PILOT): D6

4-ADVANCED (optional) RULES

ADVANCED JAMS: Any machine gun roll showing even a single one causes a machine gun jam and may not fire next round.

SUN: determine direction of the sun, if firing into the sun you may not use one of your machine gun dice.

REAR GUNNER: may fire to attacker above, or to rear quarters but not directly behind or below.

STRAFING RUN: If the attacker is one level above defender he may re-roll 1 machine gun die for that shot.

(1)-----(2)-----(3)-----(4)-----(5)-----

IN MY SIGHTS: A direct straight line from the guns model to target between 4-6 inches away, add 1 machine gun die.

CUSTOM PLANES: choose either an extra die of maneuverability OR top speed.

PILOTS: (add to each initiative roll) Ace -2, Veteran Aviator -1, Pilot 0, and Cadet +1

RED BARON: Ace (initiative roll-2) Plus one die to BOTH maneuverability AND top speed.

PILOT HIT: One machine gun rolls where 3 dice roll six enemy pilot is struck and perishes.

SCENARIOS: You must decide several things for initial placement.

A- flight level of each plane (you might have a sudden death barnstorming dogfight at level one)

B- ability of plane and pilot, should the baron ace (-2 to imitative rolls) flying the famous red baron (+1d to both maneuverability and top speed dice take on two weaker craft?

C- Possible starting damage of each plane. What if the baron has just finished a dogfight and the plane is sputtering in damage?

D- Many other factors, direction of sun, cloud cover, if the planes are coming at each other head on or one coming up on the other unaware. Your imagination can make loads of games or even campaigns where a battle might give some advantage to each side when won in the next game. You might want two planes in a squadron to be able to escape unharmed so they may attack a zeppelin.

STAR WARS DOG FIGHTING: To honor (but not challenge ownership) of Star Wars these are rule modifications to play a space battle between x-wings and tie fighters, dogfighters of the space age....

- *- ignore levels of flight for crashing, it's space
- *- give tie fighters two more maneuverability dice but the first damage level they explode
- *- Give X-wings two less maneuverability dice than ties but allow three levels of damage for them
- *- ignore jams and rear gunner advanced rules

Rabbidgerbal's Home Page

hometown.aol.com/rabbidgerbal

Site where you can find plans for folding paper airplanes.

www.fiddlersgreen.net

You can run, but you'll only die tired.



Chronopia: War in the Eternal Realm

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CONCEPT ART

EXCELSIOR entertainment

This issue we have a taste of things to come for both Chronopia and Ultimate Warzone.

The first picture (top-center) is of an Arch Necromancer for the Devout army and if they can get the miniature to look as cool as the drawing then they have a winner on their hands. From the look of the picture the figure will be considerably bulkier than a normal spellcaster due to the bony exoskeleton that he (?) is wearing.

I have no guess as to his stats, but being an 'arch' version of the regular necromancer should mean that he'll be even more adept at bringing more Risen into the game. Never a bad thing for a devout player.

From the looks of the picture I would expect him to come as two, maybe three pieces. One for the body, one for the head, and maybe one more for whatever pointy skeletal thingy is on his back.

Second (bottom-center) is a preliminary picture of a Cat Warrior, which is apparently a new race for Chronopia. If you took a close look at the Chronopia background information from the previous issue of Fictional Reality you probably noticed several new names floating around. I'd expect some to be additions to existing armies and from the looks of it at least one new race entering the game.

A feline-humanoid race sounds interesting and I think that I'd drop them closer to the neutral side of things rather than strictly good (Firstborn) or evil



(Devout). Of course, depending on your view of things you might have those two armies reversed.

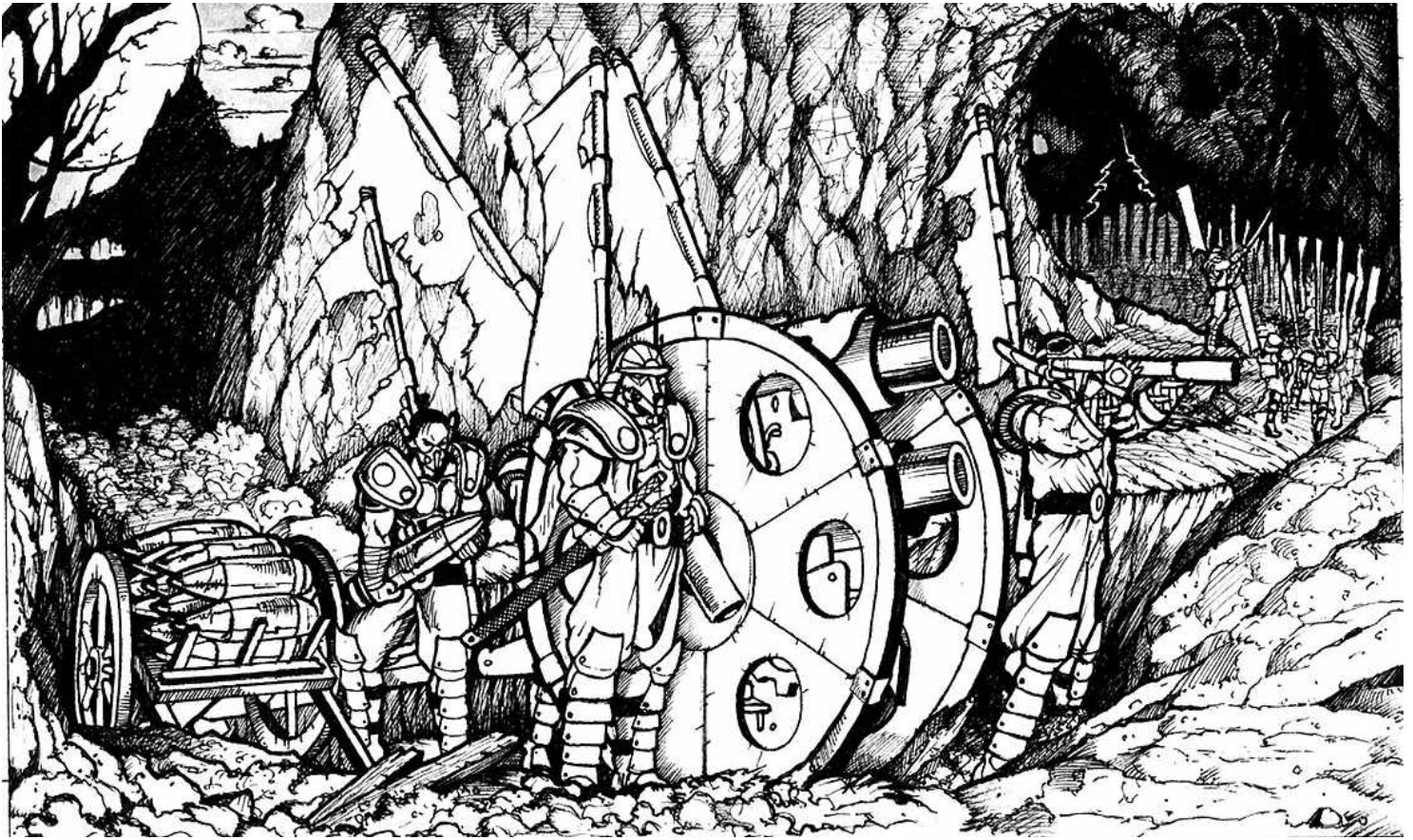
Knowing absolutely nothing about these Cat Warriors I would expect their army to be high in the Movement and Defense categories while quite low in Armor. The crew at Excelsior will have to make sure that they are different enough from the Sons of Kronos who share those traits listed above. I'm sure they are up to the task.

I bet that stealthy approaches and troops with Frenzy could show up and I think that a chariot drawn by giant saber-tooth tigers would be quite a cool site on the battlefield.

On the Ultimate Warzone front we start off with even more artillery for Mishima. Last time we saw the artwork for the Typhoon Rocket Launcher and now (top-next page) a Mishima Cannon. Looks like a crew of three or four (I think there's part of the fourth guy behind the cannon) and enough punch to put a hurting on something as large as a Bio-Giant or Praetorian Behemoth. I'd rather not get hit with it if I'm just a grunt running across no-mans-land!

I'd expect it to be able to fire indirectly also and a selection of ammunition would be a nice touch.

More Mishima goodness follows on the next page with another Monk, of the West Wind this time, and a rather stealthy and deadly looking chick from the Order of the Lotus.



All of the new Monks remind me a lot of 'Big Trouble in Little China' and that's a very good thing. If the guy below is modeled with his cape below him while in mid-jump we will have one sweet figure on our hands.



I figure that the Order of the Lotus (above) are either assassins or some kind of stealthy rapid insertion force with little to no armor, but several special abilities and/or skills. The assault rifle on her back seems a little contrary to their stealthy look, but maybe I'm way off base in that thinking. Like the addition of female troops to the ranks of the Ashigaru this is another addition to the fairer sex in Warzone. I like the athletic build that she has been given over the buxom supermodel possibility. Not that I have anything against buxom supermodels, I just doubt their effectiveness on the battlefield.



The little buggers above are sketches of the new Goblin Spearmen for Chronopia. If you haven't taken a look at Chronopia yet you'll now see the decidedly different look of goblins in this game compared to what you might have expected.

In Chronopia the Blackbloods (Orcs, Goblin, Ogres and Trolls) are still very brutal but they are much more organized and advanced than in 'standard' fantasy fare. They are not tribal in nature, living in huts, grunting out orders (Ok, the trolls probably grunt a bit) and generally being uncivilized bastards.

You will also notice a distinct oriental or middle-eastern flavor to their dress and appearance. They are also not green, but have a medium-dark yellow skin color.

After seeing the new Goblin Archers I expect these to turn out in metal as they look on paper. I think that the Blackbloods need an individual by the name of the Iron Shiek!

Below are new Heavy Spearmen for the Swamp Goblin empire. They also have the medium-dark yellow skin color of their brethren, but they have broken away from the normal Blackblood society and have, as you may have guessed, taken up residence in the swamplands of Chronopia.

My expectation for these models is for them to be as of high quality as the Swamp Goblin Headhunters, which are darn nice models. The upper torso of the Headhunters did a great job of showing off the small, but muscular build of those figures and I fully expect more buff little ankle-biters to come from these drawings.

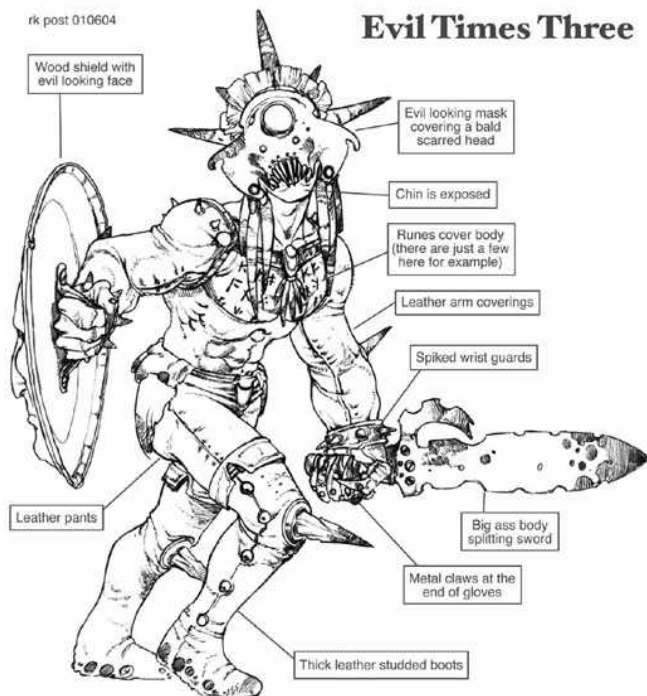
Unlike the civilized Blackbloods the Swamp Goblins are closer to 'old-school' goblins, but not entirely. They are not cartooney bumbling goofs. They are tribal pack hunters that use ambushes and guerilla warfare to the best of their abilities.



From what I've seen of recent additions to the ranks of the Swamp Goblins I would also expect that the helmets, feathers and other ornaments on the drawings will all be replicated on the metal models without any appreciable loss of detail.

rk post 010604

Evil Times Three



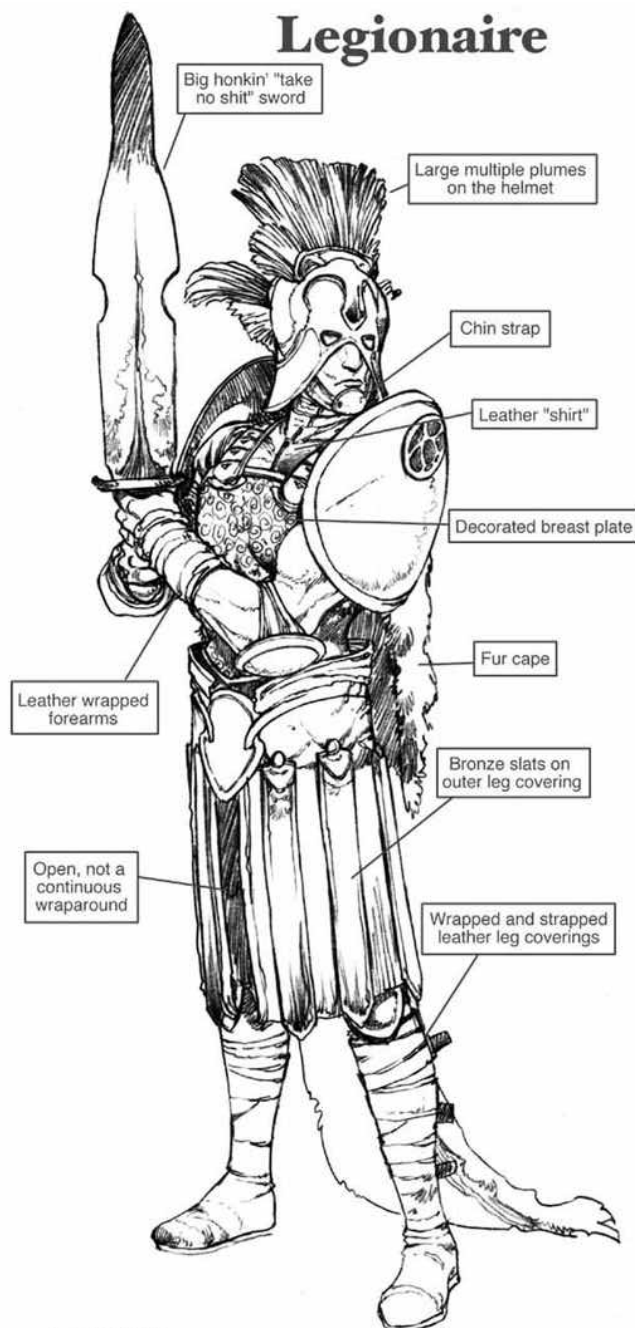
Above is a drawing of one of the Dark Highlanders. You can see the finished product in the Miniature Review section of this issue. I think that they did a great job on not only the concept art but also in the final model. I like it very much and would love to see some more of these barbaric drawings and figures soon.

Below are some Demonic Warriors from the Highland Empire. At first glance they might resemble common rabble, but their horns, facial features and blades give them away. I'd expect these to be low-powered (or low-level) demons based on their dress alone. They don't look much like big muscled kicking ass demons, but maybe they are corrupted humans that fill the role of rank and file troops rather than large monsters. I'll have to wait and see more of these guys to know more.



Below we have a human (?) kitted out in medium armor consisting of a breastplate, helmet, shoulder pads, and leathers. He looks very well proportioned and not cartoony at all. A second pose for this troop type would be very nice, but even with a single pose he would have a lot of versatility.

Legionaire



rk post 010604

Legionaire's Widow



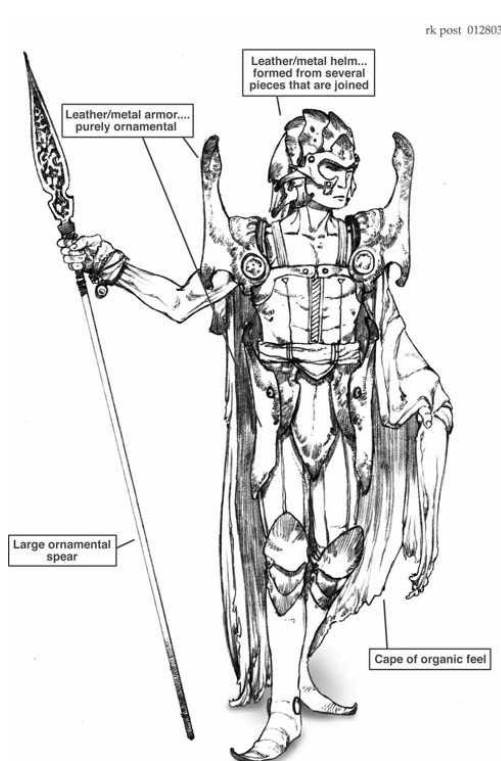
To the left we have a widow of the warrior on the previous page. She looks like she'd have a primary role of a missile troop. Boy, I hope they don't have to fill their ranks with just widows or that would mean a whole lot of dead Legionnaires ;)

I bet that we see two models for this troop type and one in a semi-static pose is ok, but I'd like to see the second in a more action oriented pose. They should come out nicely.

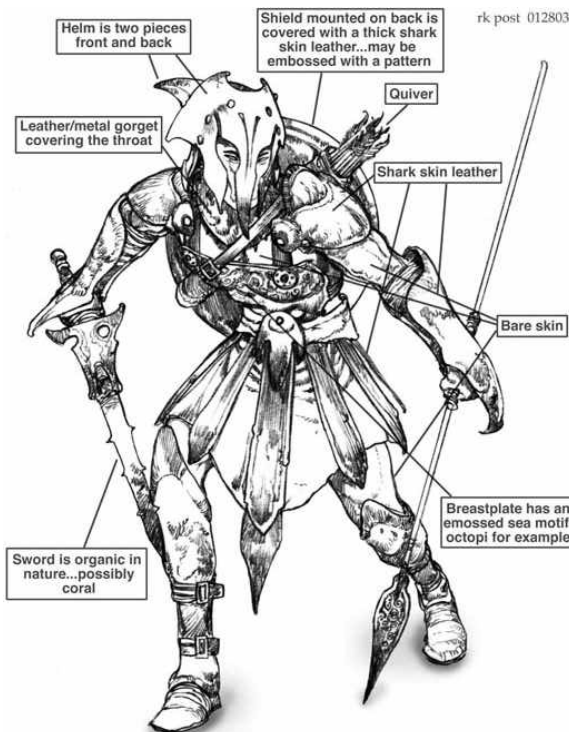
The Cat Lord to the right came out pretty much exactly in the final rendering, the miniature, as it was presented in the artwork.



Below are two different Nautilite warriors. The name makes me think that the army itself has some kind of watery background to it, but I'm not quite sure yet. The guy on the left looks like he'll have to make use of agility and being at a bit of range, with his spear, because he's wearing next to nothing in the way of armor and part of what he is wearing is purely ornamental, not protective, in nature.



Nautilite Noble Light Infantry Specialist



Nautilite Common Warrior Class

The second guy is much more suited so getting stuck in and here's where we get so see more of the water influence of the army with his leathers being made out of shark skin, the decorations on his breastplate and the possibility of a sword made of coral. He seems to be ready for just about anything as he's carrying a sword, a shield, a spear, and a quiver of arrows. Strangely, I don't see a bow.

I do like the look of these and hope to see some models soon.

CONCEPT ART

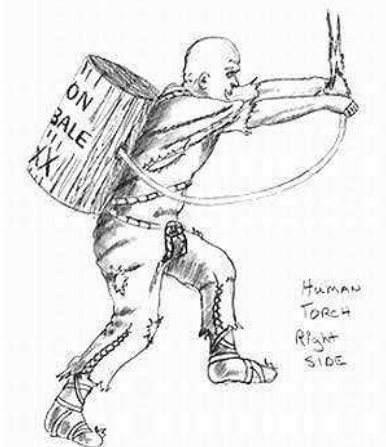
HUNDRED KINGDOMS



Well, my thoughts on the next army for 100 Kingdoms being a zombie army seem to have been a little bit off as The Freak Show army is the next one in line for release. The Freak Show does have some zombie-ish guys in their ranks, but I would also expect several more undead style armies in the future especially since they plan to release one hundred different armies for the game.

The pictures here are rough drafts so some changes could certainly occur between now and the release of the models. The guy above is called Nevermore and has a designation of being a Ring Master, which goes along great with the concept of a freak show or twisted circus. I'd expect him to be the Warlord of your army and maybe even a spell caster too.

Below is a Human Torch that has a barrel of volatile liquid strapped to his back and my guess would be that he lets loose with some kind of flame template. A variant of this model could have a torch in one hand and a bottle of alcohol in the other.



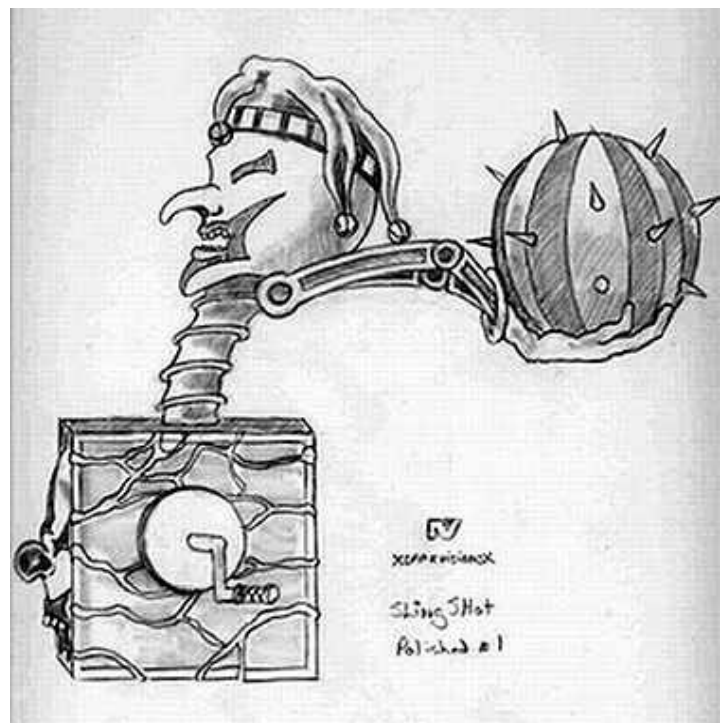
No armor and tattered clothes make sense for this guy. No armor because you're not going to waste it on him as he's likely to blow himself up at some point and he's wearing ratty clothes because, well, he's a freakin' carry!

Below is what I expect is The Freak Show's version of a catapult. A giant jack-in-the-box that pitches a massive spiked ball into the enemy's ranks. Splendid!

Does it look unorthodox, implausible, bizarre and just a little bit goofy? Yes, but I think that's what gives it a lot of character. One thing that I have really liked about 100 Kingdoms so far is that while some of their armies are pretty standard (Avalon and Bushido) others are different (Simian and Panthera) and some are just plain strange (The Freak Show).

With 94 armies left for them to construct I bet that you see more from all three of those categories. The trick will be to keep them balanced, interesting and playable.

From what I've seen of the figures for 100 Kingdoms I expect that all of these will turn out very nice. Several finished models and greens can be seen on the 100 Kingdoms website and while the rulebook for this army is not yet available as a free download (as of this writing) I would expect it shortly.





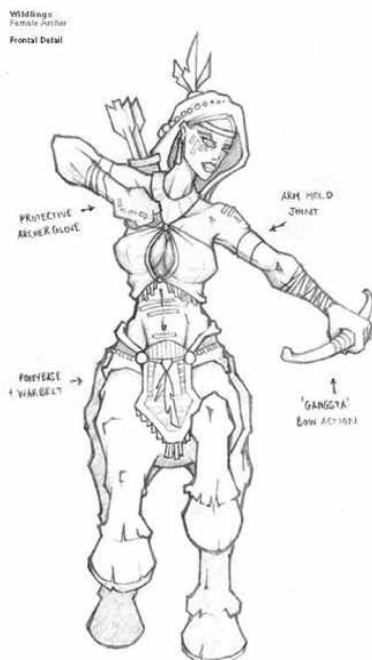
On this page we have six pieces of concept art for another upcoming army for 100 Kingdoms. The army is referred to as the Wildlings and is apparently made up of your typical fantasy Centaurs and stranger quadrupeds like the monster in the top-center that looks like a cross between a bull and a minotaur. Good stuff!!

The two others up top are a Prince (left) and Princess (right) and each appears to be in pretty heavy armor and barding, since they are half-horse after all.

Down below we find an Archer (left), a Swordsman (center) and a Warlord (right). They all look like they will turn into great models and a unit of those Swordsmen

bearing down on you would be a frightful thing to behold. The Warlord has a bit of an Egyptian feel to him while the Archer has a more typical look of a ranger.

As much good stuff that I've seen from the guys at 100 Kingdoms I expect these to kick butt! Whether you play 100 Kingdoms or not I bet that these guys will be on lots of people's "want" lists as they will do great as player characters or monsters in an rpg, can be used in a Keltois army in Confrontation or 'ported over to another miniature combat game. Can't wait.





QUICKSTART RULES

METAL ON METAL ACTION!

Enter the IRON KINGDOMS™, a land steeped in a tradition of violent warfare for nearly three thousand years. Here, war has reached its ultimate evolution—the union of magic and technology known as warjacks, and the powerful warcasters who command them.

Warcasters can not only issue battle commands from great distances, but can channel energy and even spells through their titanic machines. A battlegroup of warjacks places the power of dozens of men instantly in the hands of one leader. These machines and their handlers have revolutionized the art of war.

SUMMARY OF PLAY

A caster and his band of warjacks is known as a battlegroup. While a warjack is generally most deadly in hand to hand combat, they are outfitted with a plethora of wicked ranged weapons and other equipment. Specialized jacks known as channelers are even equipped with a device called an *arc node* that allows the caster to project a spell effect through the warjack itself.

In battle, the caster is in telepathic contact with all of his jacks so long as they remain within his range of control. Jacks beyond this "Focus Radius" are cut off from the caster and can perform only simple tasks.

During the course of a confrontation, the caster will continually draw on his pool of magical energy (called *Focus*), allowing him to boost the individual abilities of a jack or cast powerful spells. The outcome of a battle depends on how the warcaster manages his Focus pool. The warcaster is the tie that binds the battlegroup as well as its weakest link. If the warcaster falls, his jacks are little more than iron shells.

THE FACTIONS

The full WARMACHINE game pits several factions against each other. These quickstart rules will detail only two of them though—the technically advanced Kingdom of Cygnar and the blazing religious fervor of the Protectorate of Menoth.

THE KINGDOM OF CYGNAR

The Kingdom of Cygnar is the wealthiest and most technologically advanced nation in the IK. Cygnar's steamjack foundries produce some of the most sophisticated and reliable warjacks to be found. What they lack in strength and armor, they make up for in speed and skill. They are also equipped with precision weapons that balance range and power with deadly accuracy.

THE PROTECTORATE OF MENOTh

Menoth, creator of man, is a vengeful god whose name strikes fear into any not aligned with his faith. Flame based weaponry and heavy armor make the warjacks of the Protectorate a match for Cygnar.

THE MODELS

Each model has a front and a rear, divided into 180° arcs. Models may only attack targets in their front arc, and there are bonuses to attacking an enemy's rear.

WARCASTERS

The warcaster is a cleric or mage who has the ability to telepathically control a group of warjacks. The warcaster may allocate Focus to an individual warjack, augmenting the jack's abilities. A caster may also channel spells through specially equipped jacks, extending the effective range of his magical powers.

WARJACKS

A warjack is a mechanical construct given autonomy by a magical brain or "cortex" housed deep within its armored shell. A warjack does not possess high cognitive powers, but it is able to execute simple commands and make reasonable and logical decisions in an effort to complete its objective.

MODEL STATS

Speed (SPD)—This is how quickly a model can move across a battlefield in inches per turn.

Strength (STR)—This is a measure of how physically strong a model is.

Focus (FOC)—This is the level of magical power that the warcaster wields. Only warcasters have FOC.

Hand Attack (HAT)—This stat measures the amount of skill a model has in hand-to-hand combat.

Ranged Attack (RAT)—This represents a model's general ability with weapons that are either fired or thrown.

Defense (DEF)—Defense is the model's total ability to resist damage.

HIT—This is the number an opponent must meet or beat in order to hit the model with an attack.

WEAPON STATS

Range (RNG)—This is the number of inches that a weapon can reach.

Weapon Power (POW)—This is the strength of a weapon. See the combat section for more details.

Rate of Attack (ROA)—A weapon's Rate of Attack is the number of times a weapon may be used in a turn. Most ranged weapons will only be usable once per turn. Hand weapons may be used as many times as the model has attacks available.

Area of Effect (AOE)—Some weapons cause damage over a wide area instead of targeting a specific point. The Area of Effect is the diameter in inches that the attack encompasses. A weapon with an AOE of 2" will affect all models within 1" of the point of impact.

FOCUS WEAPONS

Some weapons may have their Power enhanced by the application of Focus points. If a weapon reads '+FOC' under the special column on the record sheet,

then this weapon may add +1 to its POW for that turn for every Focus spent.

WARCASTER DEFENSE BONUS

Warcasters with unused Focus add +1 to their DEF for each FOC point remaining. A cornered warcaster will have to choose carefully—do they blast their way out, or save their Focus to increase their DEF when they come under attack?

STARTING THE GAME

Only six-sided dice are used in WARMACHINE. Most actions, such as attacks, require the roll of 2d6. Other actions will require 1–4 dice to be rolled.

At the start of the game, each player rolls 1d6 and the high roller chooses who goes first. The player who will move first must deploy his battlegroup on the battlefield first. The battlegroup should be deployed within 4" of a table edge, or within a zone pre-designated by the scenario. It is advised that the play field be constructed so that after model placement rival units are at least 20" from each other.

TURN SEQUENCE

Each player's turn is divided into three *phases*. When all players have had a *turn*, a *round* has passed.

I. Maintenance Phase—Clean up expired effects

II. Command Phase—Allocate Focus points from the warcaster's pool to his warjacks.

III. Action Phase—During the action phase, the player activates his models, moves and attacks.

MAINTENANCE PHASE

During this phase, the player declares which of his spells he is upkeeping. Markers for expired spells are removed from the field, as are Focus points which were not spent on the previous turn. Some ongoing effects such as damage from burning will be applied in this phase.

COMMAND PHASE

During the Command Phase, a warcaster may distribute as many of his Focus (FOC) points to his warjacks as he wishes so long as none receive more than three. Each Focus point may be used to give the warjack an additional attack, a special action, or as a boost die in combat rolls. The warcaster may wish to retain some FOC for the purpose of casting spells.

Unspent FOC

Focus points that are not spent by the caster actually add to his defense (DEF) until the beginning of his next turn. For instance, a warcaster with 7 Focus points may distribute 4 of them, leaving 3 to add to his defense.

Focus Radius

A caster's ability to communicate with his warjacks is limited to his Focus Radius. The Focus Radius is twice the caster's Focus in inches. A caster may only allocate Focus to warjacks within his Focus Radius, though he need not have line of sight to the warjacks to do so.

Leaving the Focus Radius—Any warjack leaving the Focus Radius of its caster is "Out of Focus." It may finish its current action, but immediately loses any remaining Focus points that were allocated to it.

ACTION PHASE

During a turn a model may move, attack, and take special actions such as casting spells.

Activating a Model

A player can choose any of his models to work with, in any order. Once a model is "activated" it must com-

plete all of its tasks before the player may use another model. It is not possible to alternate actions between models during one's turn. In team play, teammates are free to determine which order they will activate their models in.

SO, WHAT CAN A MODEL DO?

Each model may take one *Move Action* and make one *Combat Action* on its turn. These are abilities inherent to all models. A model that has Focus allocated to it may spend Focus points in order to do other actions, however. The strategic allocation of Focus is one of the keys to succeeding in WARMACHINE!

ORDER OF ACTIONS

The order in which actions must be executed is:

1. Movement Actions
 - a. Basic movement
 - b. Changing facing
 - c. Special attacks that use movement
 - i. Charge
 - ii. Slam
2. Combat Actions
 - a. Ranged Attacks
 - b. Melee Attacks
 - c. Special Attacks
3. Special abilities and Spell Casting

TYPES OF ACTIONS: MOVE ACTIONS

Move—Once per turn, a model may move up to his Speed (SPD) in inches. A model may only move once per turn. A model may change his facing as many times as the player wishes during its move.

Note that some attacks, like Charge, include a move component and are considered move actions.

Run—As its move action, a model may run, moving up to twice its speed (SPD) in inches if it takes no other actions in that round. A model is subject to all terrain penalties for movement while running. Warjacks cannot run.

Change Facing—If a model changes its facing but does not move, this is considered its move action. If a model is moving, it may change facing as often as desired.

TYPES OF ACTIONS: COMBAT ACTIONS

Ranged Attack Action—Any model equipped with a ranged weapon may make a ranged attack at any other model within the weapon's attack range and within the attacker's front arc. A model gets one attack action on its turn, but if it has Focus allocated to it it may spend Focus for additional attacks up to the weapon's Rate of Attack.

No matter the what, a model may not attack more times than the Rate of Attack of a weapon. A model may not change its facing after it has attacked, and a model may not make a ranged attack if it is engaged in melee.

• **Aiming Bonus**—If a model takes no move actions on a turn, it may add +2 to all ranged attacks made that turn.

• **Rolling to Hit**—A model's ability to hit with a thrown or fired weapon is determined by his Ranged Attack (RAT) skill. The attacking model rolls 2d6 and adds the number to his RAT. If the total is equal to or greater than the target's HIT, he successfully hits the target. A roll of all 1's on the dice automatically indicates a miss regardless of the model's ranged attack score or the number needed to hit the opponent.

• Ranged Attack 'To Hit' modifiers

- +2 To Hit at Point Blank range (bases are within 2")
- +2 To Hit if attacking a target model on its rear arc
- +2 To Hit if the attacker has not taken a move action

- 2 To Hit if the target model is concealed
- 4 To Hit if the target model is behind cover

• **Doing Damage**—Once a target has been hit, the attacking model checks to see if it has inflicted damage. Damage is determined by rolling 2d6 and adding it to the POW of the weapon. If the number exceeds the Defense (DEF) of the target, the target is damaged. The amount of damage is equal to the difference between the attacker's total score and the target's DEF. For each point of difference, the target will record one 'x' on its damage grid.

Hand Attack Action—A model within 1/2" of another model (2" for models with reach weapons) may make a hand attack if the target is within its front arc. Focus can be used for more attacks if available, at a cost of one Focus per attack. Hand weapons can be used as often as desired; by contrast, ranged weapons are usually limited to one shot per turn regardless of how much Focus one may have to spend.

A model may not change its facing after it has attacked. A model may attack multiple targets within its front arc if it has the ability to make more than one melee attack and the targets are within the reach of its weapons. A model may not make a melee attack if it has already taken a ranged attack.

• **Rolling to Hit**—This is done as for ranged attacks, but the HAT stat is used instead of RAT.

• **Hand Attack 'To Hit' modifiers**

+2 To Hit if attacking a target model on its rear arc

• **Doing Damage**—Damage is determined by rolling 2d6 plus the attacker's STR plus the POW of its weapon. A bare fist has a POW of zero.

• **Weapon Reach**—When a model moves so that its base is within 1/2" of another model's base, both models are considered engaged. Models with reach weapons such as spears or halberds have a reach of 2". Literal base to base contact is not required to enter melee combat in WARMACHINE.

A model may not move freely within an enemy's reach. As soon as an enemy's reach is entered, the models are considered engaged. The moving model may push through an enemy's reach and continue moving, but the enemy model gets a free out of turn attack. No Focus can be used during any out of turn action.

Casting Spells—War casters have the unique ability to cast spells. Each spell requires an expenditure of Focus (FOC). A warcaster may cast as many spells as they have Focus for, and they may cast at any time while the model is activated—though they may not split their movement into multiple parts.

Channeling—A spell may be relayed through a warjack equipped with an *arc node*. The warjack becomes the point of origin of the spell; the warcaster does not need LOS to the target or the warjack doing the channeling, though the warjack must be within the warcaster's Focus Radius.

If the spell is offensive, the channeling warjack must have LOS to the target, just as if it were firing a weapon, and the target must be within the warjack's front arc.

• **Magic Attacks**—Spells that are fired directly at a target have their own to-hit test. A *magic attack* is conducted as a ranged attack, except the caster's FOC is used instead of RAT or HAT. Spells with an area effect make an *area attack*, where the HIT is the range in inches plus 5.

Spells projected through an arc node always use the warcaster's stats and Focus—the warjack is a passive relay that must simply be facing the target.

Warcasters can boost the to-hit and damage rolls of their own spells if they have reserved the Focus to do so.

Feedback—If a spell relayed through a channeler is boosted a feedback check must be made. After the spell effects are applied, total the Focus used and roll 1d6. If the result is less than or equal to the Focus value, the warjack's arc node takes 1 box of damage in its first available location.

• **Recharge Warcaster Armor**—Warcaster armor is actually a sophisticated mechanical construct, and it protects the wearer with a potent magic shield. A player can recharge this shield at a cost of 1 Focus per box during the warcaster model's activation.

BOOSTING ABILITIES WITH FOCUS

Focus allocated to warjacks may be spent to buy additional attacks or to boost attack or damage rolls by 1d6. So, instead of 2d6 for an attack, a jack using Focus for boost rolls 3d6, adding all three die scores to his attack skill. Both attack and damage rolls may be boosted, but each boosted roll requires the use of one Focus. Note that only three Focus can be allocated to any warjack.

A boosted roll must be declared and the Focus (FOC) spent prior to the roll. Only one Focus point can be used to boost an attack or damage roll—under normal circumstances 3d6 is the most a player will roll—but a warjack may use boost repeatedly during its turn so long as it has Focus to spend.

USING THE DAMAGE GRID

The damage grid is divided into six columns of boxes. Within the grid are the unit's critical systems, numbered 1–4. When a model has been damaged, the attacking player should roll 1d6 to determine the column to apply damage to. At the topmost empty box of the column indicated by the die roll, the victim marks an 'x.' Continuing down the column, mark an 'x' in every open box for every point of damage taken. If a column is filled but more damage remains to be recorded, begin again at the next open box in the next column, wrapping from column six to one if needed. Damage is always recorded from top to bottom, and columns are changed from left to right.

Disabling a Model—If all of the areas of a system are completely filled with x's, the warjack loses the use of that system. Disabled Movement reduces the model's SPD to 1" and its HIT by 3, and a disabled Cortex means the model is permanently *Out of Focus* and may not be allocated Focus thereafter. If any three systems are completely filled with x's, then the warjack is disabled and can no longer function. Warcasters are disabled when all their boxes are checked off.

WINNING THE GAME

When a player's warcaster is disabled or flees the playing field, the player's remaining warjacks become disabled and the player is eliminated from the game. Scenarios may impose additional victory conditions, but the warcaster must *always* be protected!

MOVEMENT & TERRAIN

Movement over the battlefield is measured in inches. A model may be placed facing any direction at the end of its movement. A model cannot move between other models or obstacles if there is not sufficient room for its base.

For the purposes of Warmachine, there are three types of battlefield terrain: open, rough, and impassible.

Open terrain is moved on without penalty. It

includes dirt, sand, grass, paved ground, etc.

Rough terrain is anything that will slow a walking model down, such as mud, rocky ground or shallow water. Rough terrain is moved over at $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal rate. Models may not run over rough terrain.

Impassible terrain is terrain that cannot be moved through, like lava, deep water or sheer cliffs.

OBSTACLES

An obstacle is a terrain object that is 1" tall or less. Obstacles can be crossed, though it takes 2" of a model's movement to do so, or 4" if the model is running. Models that have less than 2" of movement available cannot cross obstacles. Models must cross an obstacle at right angles, not diagonally.

An object taller than 1" is considered impassible terrain. All players should agree on which terrain objects are classified as obstacles or impassible terrain before play begins.

COVER & CONCEALMENT

Cover is a "hard" object that can block fire, such as a building or stone wall. Concealment is "soft cover," like a bush. Any model making a ranged attack against another model behind cover suffers a -4 penalty to hit, or -2 for concealment. For a model to receive the advantages of cover or concealment, it must be within 1" of the terrain feature and any portion of the model's base must be obscured from the attacking model's view. To benefit from areas of concealment, such as woods or clouds of smoke, the model must be at least one inch inside the area's outer edge.

SPECIAL MANEUVERS

WARMACHINE will have a host of combat maneuvers to choose from, but these Quickstart rules will detail only Charge and Slam.

CHARGE

If a model has not moved or taken any other actions, it may make a *charge* attack. The model must be at least 3" from the target, with a clear LOS, as well as a straight path of movement without obstacles or terrain interference. When the model charges, it rushes into hand to hand combat, moving up to its SPD + 3". It then makes a Hand Attack with free boosted damage (3d6+STR+ weapon POW). Warjacks equipped with reach weapons may end their charge 2" from the target.

A charge must be declared before measuring the distance of the charge. If the distance is too great for the warjack to cover, the jack is moved its maximum movement plus 3" and the charge fails, preventing any further actions from the warjack on this turn. If the distance charged is less than 3", the warjack does not gain the benefits of the charge and attacks as normal.

SLAM

If a warjack has not moved or taken any other actions, it may make a *slam* attack at a To Hit penalty of -2. The attacking model must be out of its target's reach, and at least 3" away, but within its speed (SPD) range. Like a Charge, the attacker must have a clear LOS with no obstacles or obstructing terrain, and it must be able to move directly toward the target in a straight line. The distance may not be measured prior to declaring the slam attack.

When the attacker executes a Slam, it spends a Focus point for the special action and rushes forward towards its target, slamming the defender with the full force of its body. The attacker is first moved to $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the target, and then rolls a normal attack with 2 dice. If the attack hits, the defender is pushed back in the

exact opposite direction d6 inches.

Damage is rolled as Fist damage (POW 0). If the target is pushed back into any hard obstacle, such as another warjack, or a wall, one additional bonus damage die is rolled to damage, and the target does not get pushed back any further. Both the attack and the damage rolls may be boosted if the attacker has sufficient Focus points.

A slam attack may be made after a move action, but a move action may not be taken after a slam attack. The attacking model does not follow through as the target model is pushed back. If a smaller model slams a larger model, the distance of the slam is reduced by $\frac{1}{2}$, rounding down, but with a minimum of 1".

SPECIAL TERMS

KNOCKDOWN

Certain spells and abilities can cause a model to be knocked to the ground. Special attacks like Slam and Throw, automatically cause a knockdown if they hit successfully. A downed model counts as a stationary target until it rises. A model that has been knocked down may only rise on its turn and must give up either all of its movement or all of its actions for that turn. A model may face any direction when it rises.

STATIONARY TARGETS

A stationary target is an inanimate object on the battlefield or a model that has been knocked down. Stationary targets are automatically hit by hand attacks. An action point must still be spent to hit them, but they are always hit, regardless of any spells or other advantages they may possess. A stationary target has a HIT of 5, for any ranged attacks made against it.

DEVIATION

Area of effect weapons and magical area attacks are subject to deviation. If the attack roll misses its target point, it may still affect the battlefield. Roll a d6 to determine the direction of deviation, designating the direction of the target as 'Number One' and going clockwise in a circular pattern for the other numbers. Then, roll another d6, and measuring from the center of the original target, place a hit marker that number of inches from the center of the target in the direction indicated by the first roll. This is the point of impact. Then, measure the area of effect from the new point of impact. An attack may not deviate further than the distance of the original attack. In other words, if the attack was made from 4" away from the target, then no matter what is rolled as distance on the deviation roll, the attack will land a maximum of 4" from the designated target.

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WARCASTER SPELLS

ARCANE BLAST

FOC	RNG	POW	AOE	UPKEEP
4	10"	12	3"	No

A magical blast of energy, radiating out from a central point. Warcaster or channeler must have line of site. The warcaster makes a magical area attack, and the blast affects every model within the area of effect.

SYSTEM SHOCK

FOC	RNG	POW	AOE	UPKEEP
4	8"	—	—	No

The warcaster may prevent the opposing caster from communicating with a jack for one full round. The spell is cast on a Warjack. The caster or channeler must have line of site to the target. A magic attack is made to determine whether or not the spell takes effect. A successful attack indicates that the link between the target warjack and its caster has been severed for the opponent's next turn.

ARCANE SHIELD

FOC	RNG	POW	AOE	UPKEEP
2	8"	—	—	YES

Arcane shield creates a magical barrier around the target model, increasing its DEF by +3 for the duration of one round. If the model is attacked, the arcane shield will convey its bonus for only one successful attack, after which time the shield will cease. The shield will not function for subsequent attacks.

BLUR

FOC	RNG	POW	AOE	UPKEEP
2	6"	—	—	YES

Casting blur on a model gives all opposing models making ranged attacks against this model a To Hit penalty of -3. Only one Blur may be cast on a model at any one time.

ACCELERATE

FOC	RNG	POW	AOE	UPKEEP
1/INCH	8"	—	—	No

The caster may add 1" of movement to a warjack for each FOC spent. The warjack may only spend the extra movement during this turn's movement action. Unspent movement is lost.

SNIPE (CYGNAR ONLY)

FOC	RNG	POW	AOE	UPKEEP
1/INCH	6"	—	—	No

For each FOC spent on this spell, the caster may increase the range of one of his warjack's ranged weapons during this turn. Snipe does not effect pole weapons.

ANTI-MAGIC PULSE(PROTECTORATE ONLY)

FOC	RNG	POW	AOE	UPKEEP
-----	-----	-----	-----	--------

3 CASTER ONLY — FOCUS RADIUS NO
Anti-magic pulse dispels all spell effects within the focus radius of the warcaster. All spells cast on warjacks or other models, terrain altering spells, etc. are immediately removed from play, including any on the warcaster's own models. This spell cannot be channeled.

SPECIAL WEAPONS

The following weapons have special abilities. Some are usable during any attack, and others are activated only when scoring a critical hit.

Critical Hits

Any two matching die rolls in an attack roll, except double 1's, indicates a critical hit, so long as the attacker actually has a total score high enough to hit the target. If a critical hit is scored, apply the effects of the corresponding weapon below. Any attack roll containing all 1's is an automatic failure, no matter what score was needed to hit the target.

QUAKE HAMMER

RNG	ROA	POW	AOE	SPECIAL
—	—	6	4"	TREMMOR & CRIT

Critical knockdown—If an attack with a quake hammer causes a critical hit, in addition to the damage received, the target will be knocked down. Subsequent attacks on the target will be made as if the target were stationary.

Tremor—In lieu of a direct attack, the warjack may strike the hammer against the ground, causing a tremor around it. The attacking warjack rolls to hit each model, friend or foe, within a 4" area centered on the warjack. Any model that is hit by the attack is knocked down. No damage is dealt by this attack.

SHOCK HAMMER

RNG	ROA	POW	AOE	SPECIAL
—	—	5	—	CRIT

Critical Cortex Damage—Before rolling for damage after a critical hit, the target should immediately record one point of cortex damage, then regular damage should be rolled. The extra damage done to the cortex is not affected by boosts.

INFERNO MACE

RNG	ROA	POW	AOE	SPECIAL
—	—	6	—	CRIT

Critical Burn—A critical hit with the Inferno mace will cause the target to ignite and remain on fire. Models on fire must check for additional damage done to them once during their maintenance phase each turn. During the controlling player's maintenance phase, roll a d6; a roll of 1 or 2 indicates that the fire has gone out, 3 or above and the model continues to burn. Burning models must then check for damage by rolling 2d6 and adding this to the fire's STR of 12. Damage is applied normally. The fire will burn indefinitely until it goes out on its own by rolling a 1 or 2 during the maintenance phase.

BLAZING STAR

RNG	ROA	POW	AOE	SPECIAL
—	—	5	—	MULTIPLE HIT

Multiple Hit—By swinging the blazing star on its length of chain, the attacker may hit every opponent in base to base contact with each attack. Individual to hit rolls are still made against each opponent, as well as individual damage rolls. However, only one boost point needs to be spent to boost all attacks and only one boost needs to be spent to boost all damage rolls for those attacks. Opponents may be hit in the front or rear arcs.

WAR SPEAR

RNG	ROA	POW	AOE	SPECIAL
2"	—	3	—	—

Spear is a long reach weapon, allowing the model to engage in melee attacks from 2" away. Charge attacks made on models equipped with a spear suffer -3 to their attack roll.

HALBERD

RNG	ROA	POW	AOE	SPECIAL
2"	—	4	—	—

Halberd is a long reach weapon, allowing the model to engage in melee attacks from 2" away. Charge attacks made with the halberd get +2 to the attack roll, suffer -3 to their attack roll.

CYGNAR

BATTLE ROSTERS

COMMANDER COLEMAN STRYKER

CYGNAR WARCASTER

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	FOC	CMD	HIT	DEF
6	5	5	5	6	5	15	14

WEAPON	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE	SPECIAL
MAGE SWORD	-	-	7	-	+1 POW/FOCUS
HAND CANON	12"	1	10	-	

SHIELD + ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ -



CYGNAR IRONCLAD

CYG. HEAVY WARJACK

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	HIT	DEF
5	10	6	5	12	18

DAMAGE GRID	1	2	3	4	5	6
SYSTEM						
1 LFT ARM						
2 MOVE		1			4	
3 CORTEX	1	1	2	3	4	4
4 RT ARM		2	2	3	3	

WEAPON	LOC	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE
QUAKE HAMMER	LFT	-	-	6	-
FIST	RT	-	-	-	-

CYGNAR CHARGER

CYG. LIGHT WARJACK

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	HIT	DEF
6	8	5	6	13	16

DAMAGE GRID	1	2	3	4	5	6
SYSTEM						
1 LFT ARM						
2 MOVE		1			4	
3 CORTEX	1	1	2	3	4	4
4 RT ARM		2	2	3	3	

WEAPON	LOC	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE
DUAL CANNON	LFT	12"	2	12	-
BATTLE HAMMER	RT	-	-	4	-

CYGNAR LANCER

CYG. LIGHT WARJACK

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	HIT	DEF
5	8	6	3	12	18*

DAMAGE GRID	1	2	3	4	5	6
SYSTEM						
1 LFT ARM						
2 MOVE		1	A	A	4	
3 CORTEX	1	1	2	3	4	4
4 RT ARM		2	2	3	3	
A NODE						

WEAPON	LOC	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE
SHIELD* (+2 TO DEF)	LFT	-	-	-	-
WAR SPEAR	RT	2"	-	3	-

CYGNAR DEFENDER

CYG. HEAVY WARJACK

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	HIT	DEF
5	10	5	6	11	19

DAMAGE GRID	1	2	3	4	5	6
SYSTEM						
1 LFT ARM						
2 MOVE		1			4	
3 CORTEX	1	1	2	3	4	4
4 RT ARM		2	2	3	3	

WEAPON	LOC	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE
HEAVY CANNON	LFT	10"	1	14	-
SHOCK HAMMER	RT	-	-	5	-

PROTECTORATE OF MENOTH

BATTLE ROSTERS

HIGH EXEMPLAR KREOSS

PROTECTORATE WARCASTER

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	FOC	CMD	HIT	DEF
5	5	5	2	7	4	14	15

WEAPON	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE	SPECIAL
HOLY FLAIL	-	-	8	-	+1 POW/FOCUS

SHIELD + ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ -



MENOTH CRUSADER

PROT. HEAVY WARJACK

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	HIT	DEF
4	11	6	3	10	19

DAMAGE GRID	1	2	3	4	5	6
SYSTEM						
1 LFT ARM						
2 MOVE		1			4	
3 CORTEX	1	1	2	3	4	4
4 RT ARM		2	2	3	3	

WEAPON	LOC	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE
FIST	LFT	-	-	-	-
INFERNO MACE	RT	-	-	6	-

MENOTH REPENTER

PROT. LIGHT WARJACK

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	HIT	DEF
5	9	4	6	12	16

DAMAGE GRID	1	2	3	4	5	6
SYSTEM						
1 LFT ARM						
2 MOVE		1			4	
3 CORTEX	1	1	2	3	4	4
4 RT ARM		2	2	3	3	

WEAPON	LOC	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE
FLAME CANNON	LFT	8"	1	14	-
BATTLE FLAIL	RT	-	-	3	-

MENOTH REVENGER

PROT. LIGHT WARJACK

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	HIT	DEF
5	9	5	3	12	19*

DAMAGE GRID	1	2	3	4	5	6
SYSTEM						
1 LFT ARM						
2 MOVE		1	A	A	4	
3 CORTEX	1	1	2	3	4	4
4 RT ARM		2	2	3	3	
A NODE						

WEAPON	LOC	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE
SHIELD* (+2 TO DEF)	LFT	-	-	-	-
HALBERD	RT	2"	-	4	-

MENOTH VANQUISHER

CYG. HEAVY WARJACK

SPD	STR	HAT	RAT	HIT	DEF
4	11	5	5	10	19

DAMAGE GRID	1	2	3	4	5	6
SYSTEM						
1 LFT ARM						
2 MOVE		1			4	
3 CORTEX	1	1	2	3	4	4
4 RT ARM		2	2	3	3	

WEAPON	LOC	RNG	ROA	POW	AOE
FLAME LAUNCHER	LFT	9"	1	13	4"
BLAZING STAR	RT	-	-	5	-

M u t a n t C h r o n i c l e s

WARZONE

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BATTLE REPORT

CONFRONTATION

We hadn't played Confrontation in a while so Michael and I dusted off some of our figures and decided to throw down. I'm not a huge fan of the scenarios presented in the Confrontation rulebook so we pulled one from my new favorite source of scenarios, the Warhammer Skirmish rulebook. We decided to use the 'Twilight of the Dead' scenario and map for our game. We decided to keep the map and forces the same as in the Warhammer scenario and see how things would work out. You can download the actual Warhammer scenario from their Warhammer Skirmish website located at <http://www.games-workshop.com/warhammerworld/warhammer/skirmish/scenarios/twilightdead/synopsis.htm>

I've said it before and don't want to sound like a broken record, but the Warhammer Skirmish booklet, and website, is one of the absolute best bargains around for scenarios that can be used in just about any skirmish sized miniatures game.

Michael is partial to Griffon so the normal role of a Count's Champion (with Great Weapon), a Marksman (with Repeater Handgun), three Empire Handgunners, and three Empire Swordsmen will be played by a Griffon Inquisitor (32 points), a Hunter of Darkness (34 points), three Griffon Musketeers (57 points) and three Griffon Spearmen (39 points). I would have the zombies, 24 in the original scenario, which cost 19 points each.

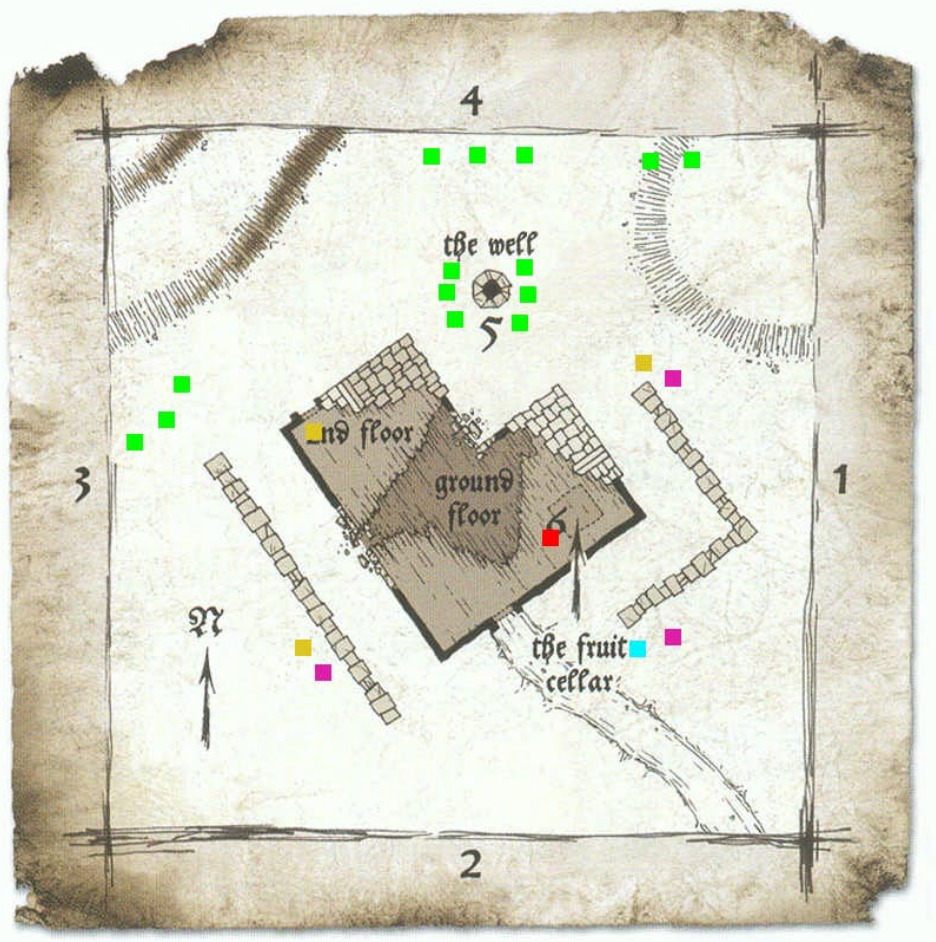
That has Michael playing with four cards to my eight (more when zombie reinforcements start showing up)! The Warhammer scenario has the Empire troops being outnumbered on points 85 to 144, and that's before reinforcements start showing up. Using Confrontation 2 point costs we ended up with the Griffon at 162 and 456 for the undead, a ratio of 0.35 to 1.00. To keep the ratio close to the original (0.59 to 1.00) we decided to drop the number of original zombies from 24 to 14. This brought my total points down to 266 (a ratio of 0.60 to 1.00, much better) and left me with five cards instead of eight. We also thought that reducing the number of reinforcement zombies was also in order so we decided to roll a d3+1 to determine how many would appear on

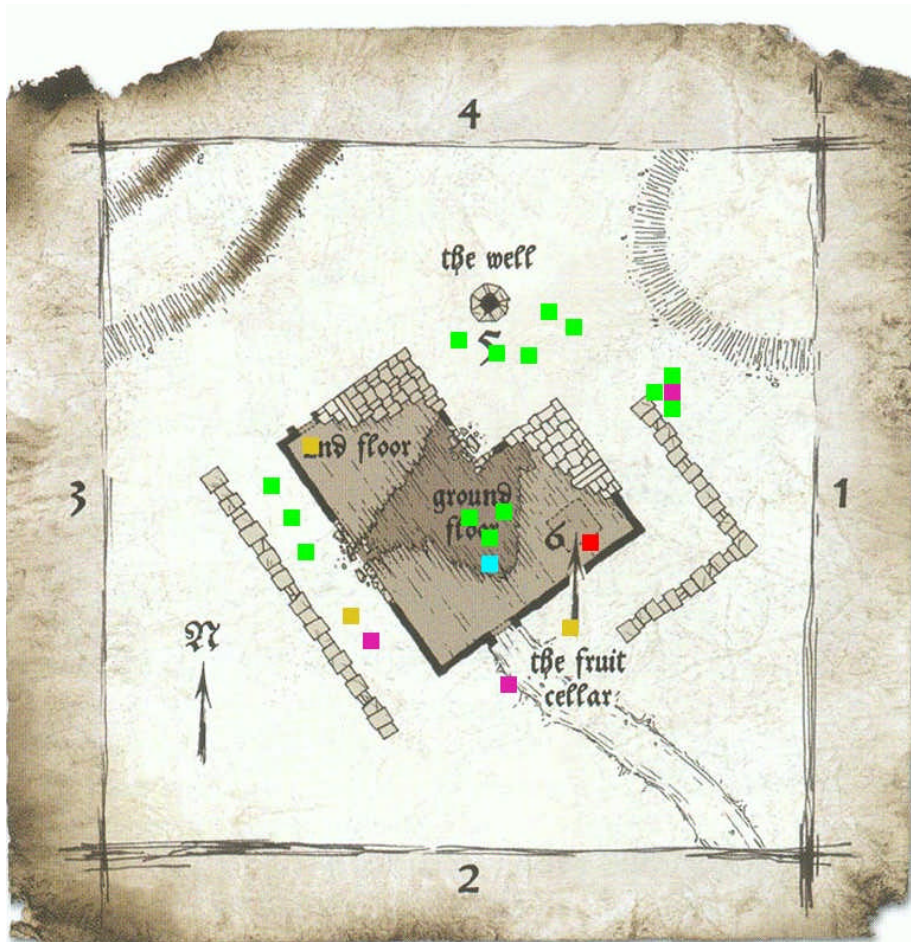
rounds 5+ instead of going with a flat 4 per turn. The maximum zombies on the field was also reduced from 24 to 14.

The rest of the special rules (Running, Zombie Reinforcements, Undead Sense, and Brain Feast) will be used but the 'Zombies are Dead' rules will not as we'll be handling combat using the standard Confrontation 2 rules. The battlefield (24" square), objectives (Michael staying alive through turn 10) and deployment will be as in the Warhammer Skirmish booklet. In the original scenario the Empire player gets to go first, but we had to change this to more closely fit the Confrontation 2 rules. We settled on Michael being able to pull any single card of his out of the initial shuffle and would consider this to be the first card 'drawn' for the first turn of the game.

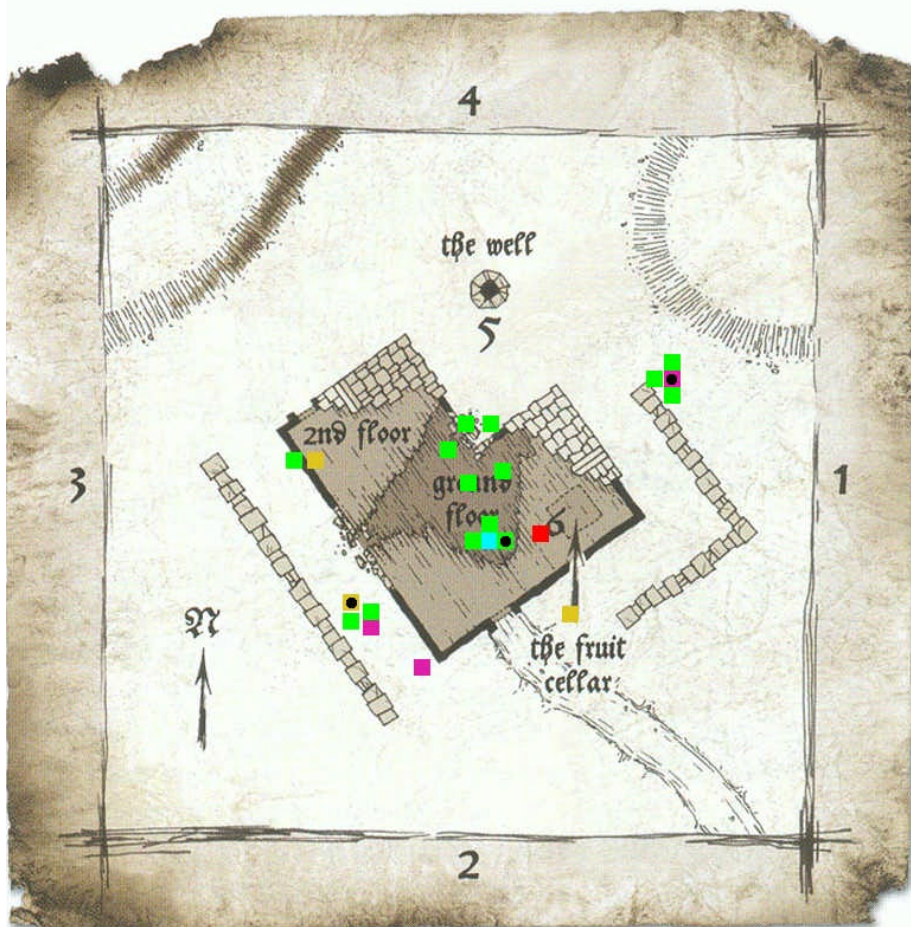
And with that we're off...

Initial Deployment of troops can be seen on the map below.



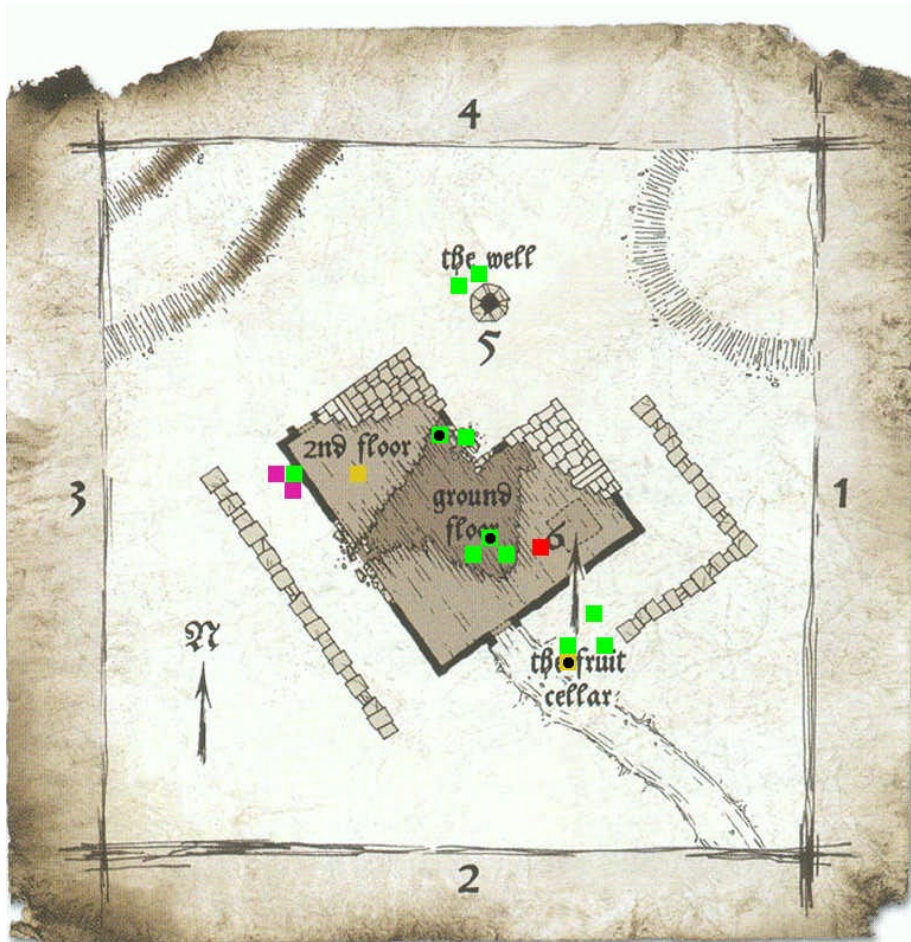


Turn 1 (upper left) went off easily with the zombies shambling towards, and into, the ruined house. One Fusilier made a run around the house and ended up leaving his Spearman friend to be charged by three brain-crazed zombies. The Inquisitor headed straight into the house to make a stand against the undead horrors while the Hunter of Darkness moved over a bit to get a better shot. Shots rang out from two of the Fusiliers and each struck the same Zombie blowing off chunks of an arm and some innards. The Hunter of Darkness shot twice and hit a single Zombie with both shots, once in the arm and once in the leg. Since the undead would not have any shooting at all Michael would be aiming before all shots since the reduction in Initiative would not penalize him at all. The three Zombies trying to take a bite out of the lone Spearman were somewhat successful as they caused multiple hits and bumped him up to a critical wound with a bite to the head. He missed on his return blow and the turn ended with no regeneration on the part of the Zombies and no fatalities for the Griffon...yet.

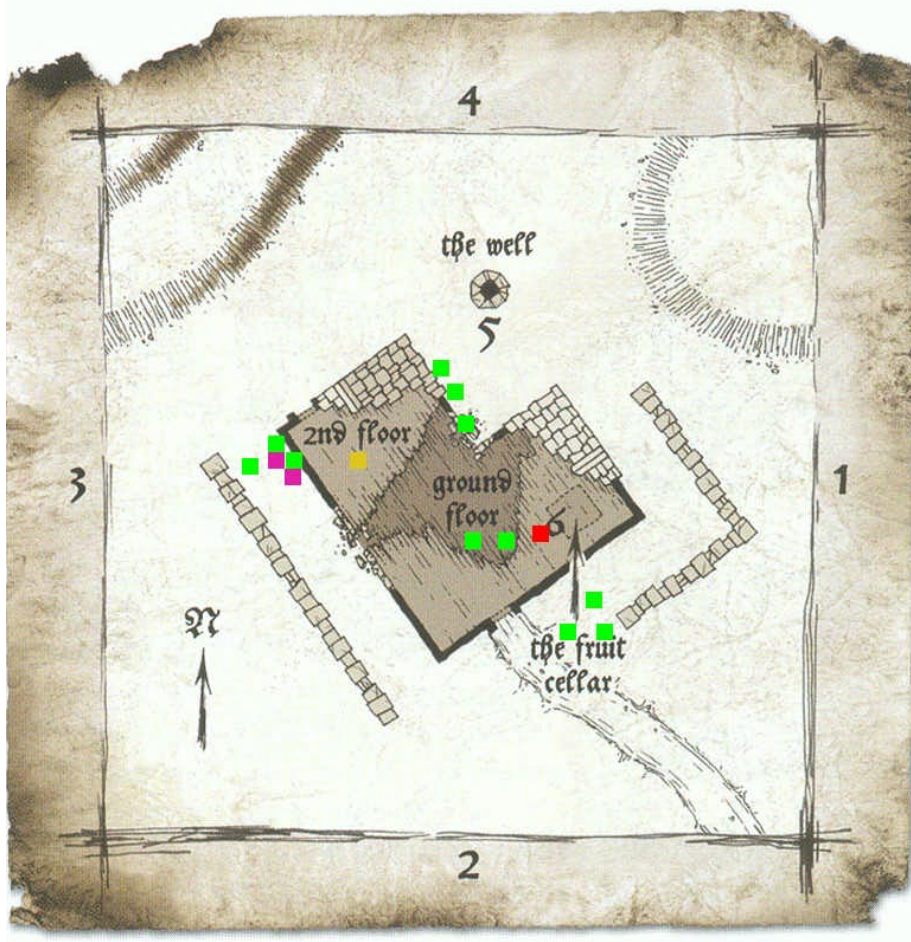


Turn 2 started with Michael keeping the Discipline (I would only get it if he rolled a 1 and then I would have to keep from rolling a 1) and had his Inquisitor charge into one of the Zombies that was closing in on him. His two shambling comrades closed in to make it a party of four. More zombies moved into the wrecked of the house and one started to climb the West wall trying to get at a Fusilier. Two others charged another Fusilier and a Spearman on the Southwest side of the house. The Hunter of Darkness took aim at a Zombie that was fighting the Inquisitor and blasted his rotten brains all over the floor while the two unengaged Fusiliers each hit Zombies in the legs for light wounds. The Zombie vs. Spearman fight went first with the undead hitting, but the Spearman saved and struck back for a critical wound to the head. The Fusilier didn't fare as well as his head was removed from his shoulders and the victorious zombie moved towards the Spearman. The tow fighting the Inquisitor saw lots of bloodshed as each of the zombies were wounded (critical and serious) and the Inquisitor was left with a light wound to his arm. Three zombies regenerated, two to unhurt levels and one went up one level. I was surprised to have won the Initiative in three of the four fights. Mmmm, Brains!

A hand-drawn map of a castle layout on aged parchment. The map shows a central building with a "2nd floor" and "ground floor". A "well" is located above the building, and a "fruit cellar" is below it. The map is divided into four quadrants by a cross, labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4. A compass rose indicates North (N) is towards the bottom-left. Various colored squares (green, yellow, red, pink) are placed on the map, likely representing different types of terrain or features. The map is framed by a double-line border.



Turn 5 (top-left) brought two Zombies crawling out of the stagnant well and by some stroke of luck the undead won the Discipline roll. Actually, Michael blew the roll and I managed to not roll a 1. Except for the Fusiliers who moved to try and get better shots the Griffon stood their ground and faced the hoard. A very poor bit of climbing was going on by three Zombies, one being poked in the butt by the Spearmen (This town needs an enema!). The Fusilier on the South end of the building must have been caught off guard by the three Zombies coming around the house as one of them made contact and took a huge chunk out of his head. All three of them took turns using his skull for a fondue pot. The poking in the butt with pointed sticks that was going on over on the West side of the building must have left the Spearmen quite frustrated as they could still not wound or dislodge the Zombie from his attempts to climb into the second story window of the house. Another turn of non-regeneration went by, where's Herbert West when you need him?!?!

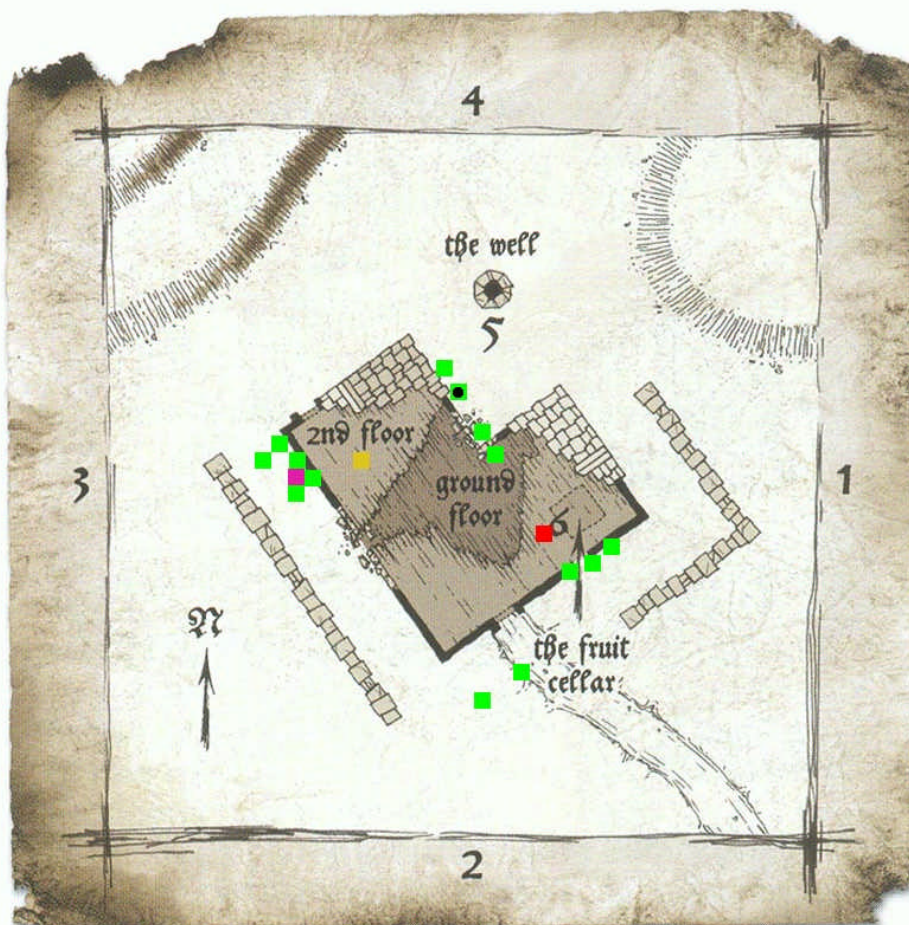
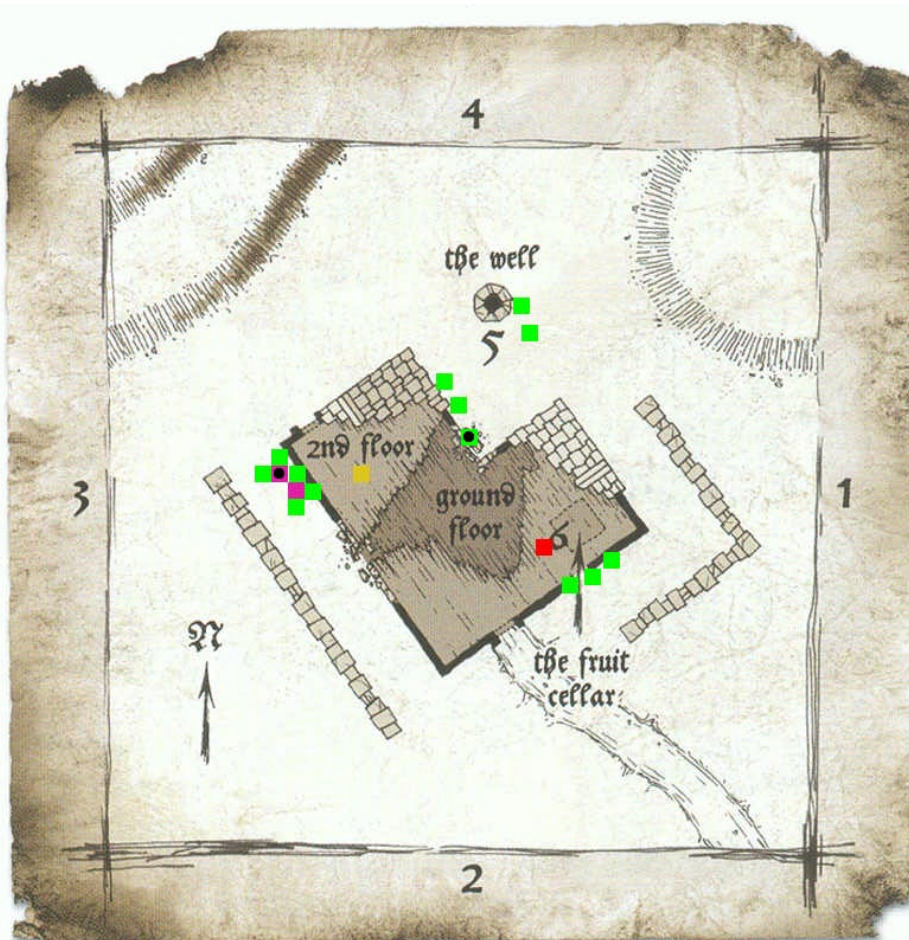


Turn 6 (bottom-left) had two more Zombies come in from the West side of the board and they quickly (as quickly as they could) make tracks for the Spearmen. One was able to make contact. The two from the well (last turn) headed towards the walls, hoping to climb and find food. Between the feeding and other attempts to climb the only fighting that was going on this turn was the Hunter of Darkness shooting, but failing to destroy, a Zombie, the last Fusilier shooting one that had made it part-way up a wall and the two Zombie fighting the last two Spearmen (also the last of the Griffon outside of the house and on the ground). That fight ended up as a stalemate with neither side giving any ground. Being on the ground with over ten Zombies could not have sat well with the Spearmen and they had to know that their time was running short. Again, no regeneration on the part of the smelly dead and we moved on past the halfway point in the game. Was that the glow of the sun starting to appear on the horizon? Still too damn long until daybreak!

On turn 7 (top-right) two came onto the board from the North edge and the two in the center of the house decided that the Spearman on the ground were appetizing prospects and made their way to the buffet of man-flesh. Those not fighting tried their hand at climbing the walls and some were starting to make some progress. The Fusilier and Hunter of Darkness were not safe, but the higher they got the harder they would hit the ground if they fell, which was an entirely possible prospect. The Hunter of Darkness was able to pick off one of the crazy climbers with two well placed shots (arm and leg) and the Fusilier shot one, but only for a light wound to the arm. There were two fights going on, one between a Spearman and two Zombies and one between a Spearman and three Zombies. The one against the two Zombies actually fared worse as he was killed with his cracked open skull spilling his gray matter onto the ground and into the waiting mouths of his killers. A little bit of regeneration was seen with one Zombie recovering one wound level, but that was all.

Turn 8 (bottom-right) brought not only 2 more Zombies onto the board, but also a bit of hope to the Griffons. The Hunter of Darkness hit one of the foul creatures twice and bumped it up to a Critical wound and the Fusilier finished it off with a shot right between the eyes. Even being set upon by three Zombies the Spearman refused to go down and while he was now suffering from a Serious wound he was still alive...for the time being. Maybe this group of rotting pus-buckets liked their meat tenderized a bit before eating it. The glow on the horizon was slowly intensifying, but for now it simply encouraged the Zombies to get to their meals as quickly as possible because they certainly knew that with the rising of the sun also came the salvation of their enemies.

Turn 9 (next page top-left) saw two Zombies strolling up the walkway to the house like it was a take-out Chinese restaurant (for that it would have to be a ruined animal clinic, not a farmhouse). Lots, and lots of climbing attempts were made with a little progress bit of progress and one Zombie falling off and cracking his skull open being the result. The Griffon will take Zombie casualties any way they can get them at this point.

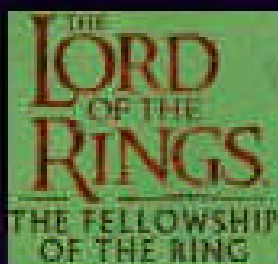




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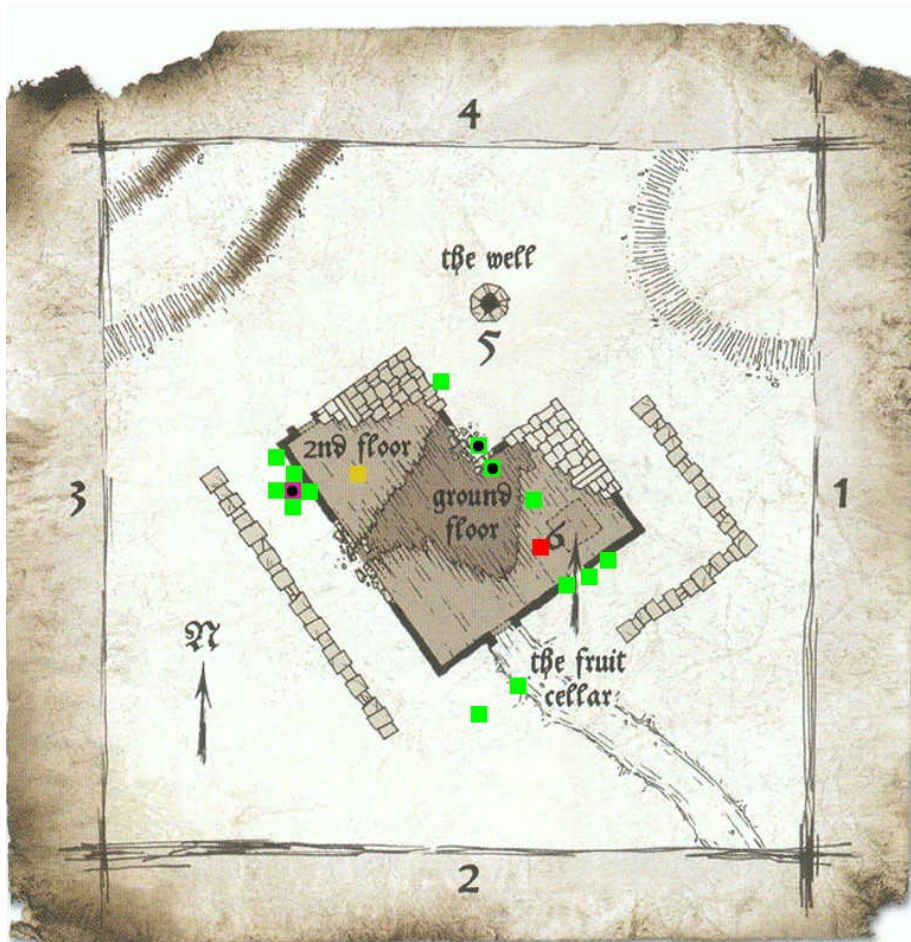
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More gunfire erupted from the second story and another of the undead lay motionless on the ground. Unfortunately, the Spearman that was now surrounded by four of the hellish creatures could fight no more and they tore him limb from limb and began to feast. Griffon, them's good eatin'!

As turn 10 (bottom-left) came so did the sun and the Zombies knew that the all-you-can-eat feast was coming to a close. Still, those that were not already feasting on the dead made last ditch efforts to get to the second story of the house. One managed to crest the wall by the Inquisitor, but was met with a bullet to the skull just as he took sight of what he thought would be a tasty meal. The sun rose, marking the end of this night's horror and a victory for the Griffon who managed to hold off the evil dead.

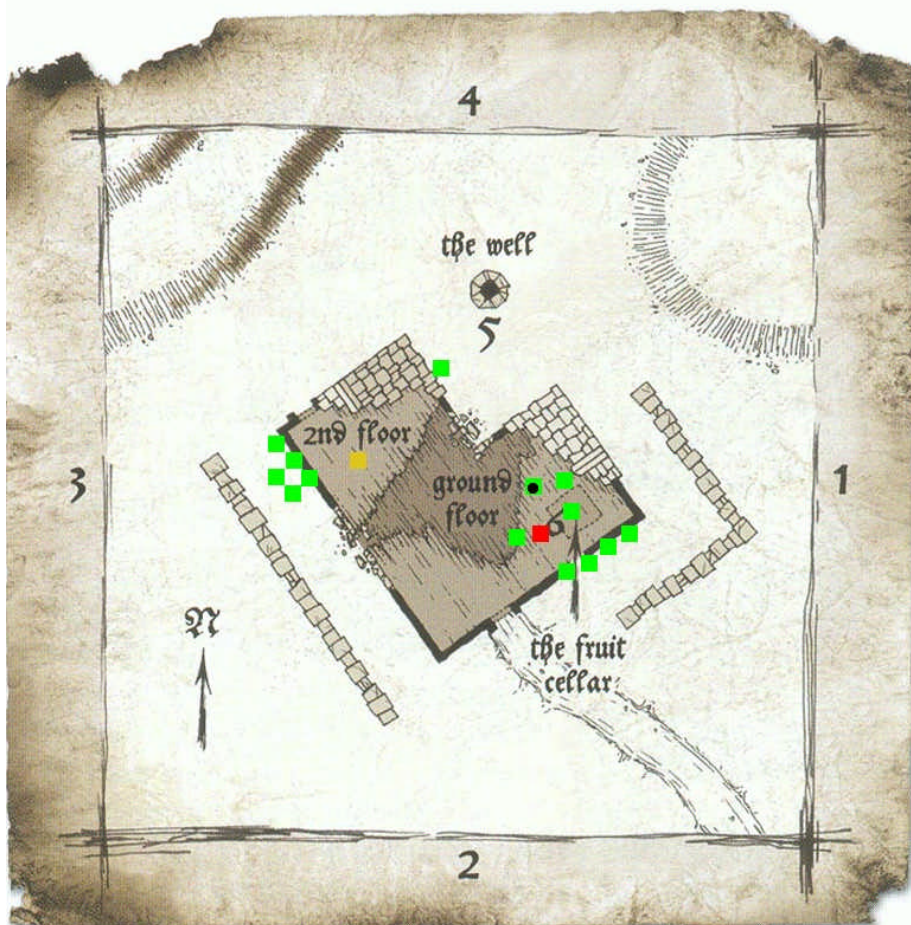
Well, that went about as well as could be hoped for, a nail-biter until the end.

Going in, my plan was simple - shoot lots. The big advantage of my force is the guns. The Fusiliers will always be in short range and, by keeping my movement to a minimum, I should hit the Zombies on a roll of 2+. The Hunter of Darkness doesn't have the range of the Fusiliers, but given that the zombies will be coming to me, this won't be a problem. Plus the Hunter's ability to shoot twice will be a definite advantage.

The Fusilier and Hunter of Darkness in the building were able to pick off the climbing zombies while the other troops sold their lives dearly. The fact that all the zombies succumbed to their hunger for brain salad meant that the even in death, the Griffon troopers slowed the unholy advance.

I was disappointed that the Inquisitor didn't survive longer, but then I didn't get a chance to support him. As the game wore on, and Mark got more unit cards in the stack, my maneuver chances were curtailed. Not that any of my troops were going to move much in the last five turns as they kept getting charged.

Thinking back, I made a mistake in the deployment. Splitting all the models outside the ruins into pairs just gave more targets for the Undead to attack. If I would have



lumped all six in one block on the side away from the well and the cellar door, they would have survived longer. The mutual support would have kept my troops from getting outnumbered and pulled down.

In the end, I'll give "man of the match" to the Hunter of Darkness. He was a regular zombie killer with his two pistols - a performance that reminded me of John Woo's movies.

We found that The Warhammer Skirmish scenarios are perfect for Confrontation, but you've got to modify them to work with a different game. For example, in Warhammer Skirmish, once a model fails his armor save, he's toast. In Confrontation, he can still hang around for a few turns because of the wound severity rules. This means models tend to stay on the board longer in Confrontation than in Warhammer Skirmish.

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Well, almost. Man, that was a very fun game.

Right from turn 1 it struck me that the guys that started the game inside the building on the second floor were really going to be my nemesis (go watch *Snatch!* If you're old enough for a rightly vicious definition of nemesis.) and I would have to spend lots of turn trying to climb the walls with a good portion of my Zombies who were in nowhere near the right shape to be attempting something like that. But the Zombies should suck at climbing and it should be nerve wracking, for both me and Michael, when one is getting close to the top and either falls off or just makes it up. They should die like flies to gunfire, and mostly they did, and they should just rip the guts out of whoever is unlucky enough to get mobbed by them. Some stairs in the ruined house or maybe just one that is really rickety and might collapse beneath the weight of more than one model would have made the game even more interesting (it was plenty interesting already though) and probably would not have unbalanced things.

Well, as far as starts for the Living Dead I guess you'd have to say that there were none or it was all of them. Having just one type of troops could be looked at as limiting or kind of bland, but it's more the scenario at work here rather than either army list. This game was driven by what was going on not necessarily by the models that were used. Yes, having specific troops types (ranged weapons) on the Griffon side helped them, but that's what they needed to make the game competitive. Being able to buy your forces as you please and just playing 'around' a ruined house would not have been the same game as what Michael and I sat down to.

We outlined at the beginning of the battle report some changes to rules that were made when translating the scenario over from Warhammer Fantasy Skirmish over to Confrontation. We even had to consider climbing, but remembered that the rules for climbing are in Confrontation and we should just use them 'as is'. While I am still a very big fan of the scenarios presented in the Warhammer Fantasy Skirmish book (and those on the website) I just don't think that the Warhammer systems works really well for small skirmish games. I think that this game would have also worked well in several small scale miniature games like Chronopia or Chainmail, but whatever system you choose to play these skirmish scenarios in be sure to take a look at what rules exist, or maybe don't exist, in the game system you will be using and how they will impact the original feel or intent of the scenario.

Also, be very sure to look at the forces that are present in the original scenario and how they stack up in the new system. Had we left the Zombies with 24 instead of reducing them to 14 I think that I would have run roughshod over Michael and the game would have ended much sooner and with a not so good taste in either of our mouths. In this game it was easy to see that the Zombies were the force that needed adjusting. Zombies in Confrontation are not only much tougher than their Warhammer cousins they are also significantly better in hand-to-hand combat and are likely to do more damage when they hit an enemy. The game would also have not been the same if we had adjusted the number of Griffon upwards. There would have been too many of them running around in too tight of a space and we would have also lost the feeling of the outnumbered defenders just trying to survive until dawn.

Try and match up troops with similar capabilities when you cross over. Michael has an affinity, and a full-blown army, for the Griffon, but the game could have also worked with the Lions and maybe a couple of other Confrontation armies, but certainly not with the Keltois and probably not with the Dwarves. The game was not supposed to be a hand-to-hand army or an army with cannons fighting off the Zombies.

Without too much prep work you too can find all sorts of uses for the scenarios in the Warhammer Fantasy Skirmish booklet and to those of you out there that might cry out that we can't go mixing systems like this all I can say is that you just don't get to have as much fun as we do.

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THE SLAVE PIT

by Xavier Plasencia

PAINTING TRANSLUCENT CLOTHING

Translucent:

1. Transmitting rays of light without permitting objects to be distinctly seen; partially transparent.

The Dry Science

There are currently three characteristics that describe the interaction of light to any material. They are Opaque, Transparent, and Translucent. Opaque materials absorb all of the light. Those light waves that are not absorbed are reflected off of the surface of the material, thus making it possible for the human eye to see this object. With a transparent materials no light is absorbed so the light travels through the material unaltered. Since no reflection or re-emitting of light occurs this object is not visible to the human eye. For those skeptics that are thinking right now, glass is transparent and I can see it. Well the answer is simple. There are lots of impurities in glass bubbles, surface distortions, even dirt particles on the surface. These all allow our eye to detect the glass. A Translucent medium has both opaque and transparent properties. The result is that the light that travels through the medium has been altered. This alteration occurs because the light that is incident on the medium has had some interaction with the light (see the section below Natural and Fabricated Translucent materials for more information). The opaque attributes of the translucent medium are what give the medium its color. For example, a translucent green material absorbs all colors except green. So all objects that are viewed from the green material will only show up as green only. Again this is because translucent material absorbs all of the wavelengths except for the green waves thus changing visual effect the light that travels through the material. Furthermore if you shinned a light that did not contain green, say a red light source, to the objects that are viewed through the green material no objects behind the green material will be seen since all of the red light is absorbed. A bit complicated I say.

In the Dark

The astute artist might be thinking right now, ah that makes sense, but can you explain why objects that are seen behind a translucent material are always darker than if observed through a transparent material. The reason for that is twofold. First the amount of light that is allowed to travel through the translucent medium is significantly reduced because of absorption. Thus the final light that travels through the medium is no longer 100% of the original light source. The second reason is that the object behind the translucent materials absorbed and re-emitted the incident light back to the observer. Thus depleting the light source even more. Here is a rule of thumb when trying to find out how much light is depleted from a reflected surface. Pure bright white, the most reflective pigment / color, reflects

approx. 80% of the incident light. The average color, such as blue, green, or red reflects, about 60% of the incident light source. Thus in the best case the observer sees a 20% intensity reduction when looking at a white surface, and a 40% reduction when looking at average colors. Now if we add a translucent layer to the surface a further reduction occurs. Thus the light is redirected back to our eyes but the direction the light has now undergone two methods of depletion. The loss that occurred from the translucent material plus the light absorbed from the opaque medium behind the translucent layer. The last reason is that the light has to return through the translucent material, yet again absorbing even more light. By the time the light source of the object has reached our eyes the amount of light reduction has been seriously depleted. However our eyes excel at picking out contrast so we are still to make out the objects fairly well. They are just quite darker than under normal conditions.

Natural and Fabricated Translucent Materials

Nature has made translucent materials, gems and crystals are examples of such materials. These materials are pure in their form. Yet their crystalline structure naturally absorbs certain color wavelengths so that the color of light is altering when light travels through these objects. Man and nature however have also created translucent materials. These can be created by applying impurities to a translucent medium. A great example is water. Water in its purest form is clear and transparent. Add a little cool-aid and the color changes, but one can see through it. Another way to fabricate a translucent medium is by altering the surface area of a transparent object. Once the light source enters the medium, the contour of the surface area changes the direction of the light wave forcing it to exit in many different directions, where normally the light would have had a straight path. Examples of this medium can be seen in shower doors or windows.

Further Pontifications:

As miniature painters we often focus our skills on tricking the eye. The extremely small canvas we paint on forces us to get very creative with our illusions. The small resolution of miniatures does not grant us much room to play with illusions. They must be concise, accurate, and without error.

However, the vast majority of miniature painters perform rudimentary techniques to simulate the illusion of flesh lying underneath. Usually applying flesh tone colors then covers the flesh tone with thinned down layers of the clothing paint.

With this figurine, I decided to take this a step further and intertwine science and illusion to enhance the effect. The science was in the dress color, which was to be green. See, green is known to contain more information than other light sources, with the exception of natural white light. Science

has proven humans are more adept at seeing green than any other color. Ever wonder why on TV those night vision goggles always show green. Or for those that have Digital Camcorders with night vision always record with green only? The answer is because our eyes can see differences in green much better than any other color.

So with that in mind I thought that this mini should show more detail than regular translucent dresses. Here we would actually see muscle curvature details would stand out where the body was pressed tightly by the garment. Such as the thighs, hips, abdomen, and breasts. The knee that was pressed up against the dress as the figure moved forward would show through the dress with little aberration.

Instead of applying a blob of flesh, color I decided to paint the body on the dress as it would appear if the dress was 100% transparent. The thickness of the dress would be simulated by making the dress completely opaque wherever there was no skin pressed up against the dress.

Remember the greatest illusion is the one not detected. The casual observer will have no notion of all the thought that has gone in creating a translucent dress, however the illusion of a thick translucent dress is embedded deep in their mind.

Well enough of that, lets get to work.

HOW-TO

Required Material:

3 shades of flesh (Dark Brown, Tanned Flesh, Light Flesh)
Translucent paints or Translucent Mediums.

When painting translucent clothing using translucent paints with translucent material yields the best results. Though you can use regular opaque paints with translucent materials, however the brilliant colors are somewhat lost. However if you're going with muted colors you will not notice a difference. In this project I used Reapers' "Elven Green" color which is opaque.

You can use water as a form of translucent medium, however specialized mediums such as Liquitex Gloss Medium, Liquitex Matte Medium, Magic Wash, etc... translucent the paint without making them runny. This keeps the paint flowing nicely and keeps it evenly distributed. Magic wash is a very popular mix, which consists of "Future Premium Floor Finish" by Johnson and water. I personally do not like this Magic Wash and preference is Liquitex Mediums. The main reason is that Liquitex mediums allow the artist to get very high levels of translucent paint without making the paint thin and runny. That said I will be using Liquitex Matte Medium for this project. In the section below I refer to making a translucent mix of 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, and 90%. I primarily use Liquitex Matte Mediums to create dilute my solutions. So the recipe I am giving expects the user to use opaque paints and Liquitex Mediums. To get a 50% translucent mix add equal amounts of opaque paints and translucent medium. The other measurements, I must admit aren't so exact, but approximations of how much paint to medium I applied. As a reference, note that the 90% translucent medium will be very thing and primarily be

medium.

Miniature preparation:

Remove any flash, clean the miniature, usually a good scrub with an old toothbrush and soap. The cleaning helps remove some of the grime and oxidation the minis has accumulated. Dry now and apply the primer. The assumption for this article is that white primer is used.

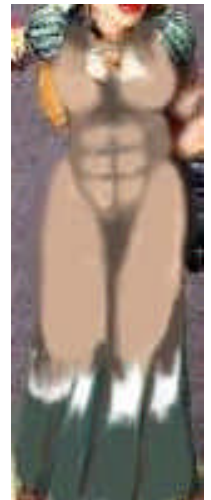
Step 1: Paint Flesh

I wanted the character to have a very light complexion. For this I used a very light flesh tone as her base color. Apply this base color to all of the visible flesh.

Step 2: Inverted Tan Line

The concept of the "Inverted tan line" is a combination of mixing sections "In the Dark" and "Further Pontifications". From the section "Further Pontifications" I stated that I would be painting the body of the female figure on top of the clothing. Now if we recall the discussion in section "In the Dark" we should remember that the visible skin behind the dress should be considerably darker than that of the exposed flesh. Therefore the base color for the flesh should be darker than that of the exposed flesh. When done applying the skin tones the figure will look like she has an inverted tan line where the darker skin tones are those that lie beneath the dress.

See Fig 1 (right) for a visual example of a flesh tone comparison and the drawing of the flesh. Note since the dark flesh was computer generated it is not the actual flesh tone I used. Note at this stage the green bottom of the image has not been added.



First apply the flesh color to the exposed skin, such as the face, arms, upper chest area. Next paint the area underneath the garment, (A.K.A the Inverted Tan line) To darken the flesh I recommend using a dark brown-orange mix. You can use mars black/chaos black, but you have to keep the ratio very low to keep the flesh color from getting dark too quickly

Step 3: Apply paint on dress.

Add opaque part of dress first. Once again refer to the image. Notice how the opaque green does not touch the flesh. Some white is left to space was left for blending. The layers of translucent green and translucent flesh will soon fill that space. Darken the green with black and apply in the recess of the folds. I used a very dark color, mixing 3:1 of black to green. The layers of translucent green will bring back the green hue, yet keeping the contrast high. Apply dress paint, at 90% translucent mix. all over the dress are. This includes the flesh, white and green areas. You will not that the overall contrast does not really change. However adding the 90% translucent layer ties all of the colors together by given them a very small amount of green tint.

The next step is to build up the layers between the opaque

(bottom part of the dress) to the skin (about the knees). We start this process by first applying a solution of 50% translucent green in the white region. Leave a very small gap, of white, between the 50% and the skin. Now apply a mix of 60% translucent green from the opaque region to the skin. Do this process each time increase the translucency and the length of the application, e.g. the 70% translucent green should go beyond the kneecap. The final step is to apply two layers of 80% translucent green all over the dress. This step is important. The shade of green layer that is applied will tie all of the different background colors (skin, green, white) together. As their color shifts towards a more green pigment the illusion of a translucent dress gets stronger and stronger.

Step 4: Apply Flesh highlights

The down side to the previous steps is that the green layers have greatly darkened the colors and really mask the details that were painted in the 2nd step. In this step we will add some highlights to re-emphasize the detail that we want to show through the dress. The highlights that we want to emphasize are the in the areas that have no gap between the clothing and the body. (Hips, breast, stomach). See FIG2 (right) for a visual example. Note that there are some areas on the dress that not only have the skin pressed tightly to the dress, but have direct sunlight incident on those curves. Here we will add extra highlight to make those parts stand out even more (keep these highlights to a minimum). I've applied these highlights to the knee, abdomen, the breast, and shoulder.



Step 5: Apply Dress coat again.

The last step now is to apply several layers of a 90% translucent green mix to the highlighted areas. This will shift the skin colors applied in step 3 to a more green color. The nice thing about the 90% translucent green wash is that it has a greater affect on the flesh. It will quickly change the color to green while minimally changing the other green areas. Note that several layers of 90% translucent green will be needed to shift the highlights, from the previous step, back to the green hue. Remember to wait until the last layer is dry before applying any successive layers.

Well that is all there is to translucent painting. If you have any questions drop me a line.

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