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www.excelsiorentertainment.com

GAME SUPPLEMENT

SUBPLOTS AND BATTLEFIELD CONDITIONS IN CONFRONTATION

Like many wargamers, I enjoy playing scenarios more than playing simple "total annihilation" battles in which the objective is to wipe the enemy off the table. This is especially true of skirmish games such as Confrontation. Scenario battles tend to be more tactically demanding and also give players more of a story to work with, which makes the game much more dramatic and engaging. However, a good story has more than just the plot (i.e. the scenario) and a cast of characters (i.e. the players' armies). A good story also generates an interesting atmosphere and contains subplots to help spice things up.

After having played numerous Confrontation battles of both the "total annihilation" and scenario variety, I began to search for ways to add some additional variety to my games. I wanted to find something that would let me add that extra "spice" to battles without upsetting game balance, so I looked to other tactical games I played for inspiration. I found part of what I was looking for in Dream Pod 9's Heavy Gear and Gear Krieg tactical games. Both of these games include an optional system for "Subplots," little twists that add extra wrinkles to the battle to help make it more interesting. Inspired by Dream Pod 9's games, I decided create Subplots for Confrontation.

With subplots taken care of, all that remained was generating atmosphere, and what better way to vary the mood of a battle than with weather and other special battlefield conditions? After all, movies and novels often use weather to set the mood, so why not apply the same principle to Confrontation? I soon assembled a small collection of interesting battlefield conditions and weather effects, some of which (including Heavy Rain/Snow, Thunderstorm, Holy Ground, Fateful Battle, and Forsaken Place) were generously contributed by an associate on the Official English Confrontation Forum, Ryan "Caern" Machan.

The following rules for Subplots and Battlefield Conditions are the final product of all this brainstorming. They can help make battles more interesting by adding unexpected events, new tactical situations, or environmental conditions that can help or hinder the armies involved in a battle and can make even a "total annihilation" game a bit more interesting!

USING SUBPLOTS AND BATTLEFIELD CONDITIONS

Subplot and Battlefield Conditions each affect the game differently. Battlefield Conditions affect both armies and usually represent the effects of weather or a special battlefield. Subplots affect only one army as indicated in the Subplot's description. Players should agree to use either one Battlefield Condition for

the game or one Subplot for each army. While it is certainly possible to have both active in a game, managing their effects can become a bit cumbersome.

If players agree to use a Battlefield Condition during the battle, a single Battlefield should be randomly selected before the Approach and its effects applied as explained in its description.

If the players decide to use Subplots, a random Subplot should be selected for each army before the Approach. Some Subplots affect the army of the player who selected the Subplot, while others will affect that of his opponent. If a Subplot indicates that it cannot affect a particular type of figure, figures of that type should not be included when randomly drawing reference cards to see which troops the Subplot affects. If the affected army does not contain any figures to which the Subplot may be applied, another Subplot should be drawn.

Subplots and Battlefield Conditions are no good unless they can have a potential effect on a battle. If a Subplot or Battlefield Condition's effects will have no influence on the battle, it should be discarded and another randomly selected in its place. For example, if a player gets the Subplot "Mana Stock," but that player's army contains no magicians, a new Subplot should be selected.

Since the Subplots and Battlefield Condition rules were made for Confrontation, I recommend using cards for random selection. A complete set of Subplot and Battlefield Condition cards can be found below and on the next few pages.

Written by Cory "DJ Gasmask" Gurley

VENDETTA

It is not uncommon for warriors to develop deep grudges. Regardless of whether these grudges originate on or off the battlefield, they can cause undisciplined soldiers to ignore all else until the grudge has been settled.

Randomly select one of your reference cards and one of your opponent's reference cards. All troops represented by your card gain the Bane and Personal Enemy Abilities against all figurines represented by your opponent's card. If the grudge-bearing figures have an opportunity to Charge or Engage any of the figures they hate, they must take it. even if it means attempting to Disengage from another combat.

BATTLE FATIGUE

Troops at war do not always have the luxury of resting between battles. Sometimes warriors are forced to move from one fight to the next without any time to lick their wounds and recover from their exhaustion.

Randomly select one of your opponent's reference cards. All troops represented by this card have recently come from another battle and have not fully recovered. Roll D6 to determine the exact effects:

1-2 Wounded – The troops have not yet recovered from the wounds they suffered in their last battle. They each begin with a Light Wound. This effect may not be applied to troops with Regeneration – roll again if this is the case.

3-4 Exhausted – The troops are worn out from too much fighting. They suffer a penalty of -2.5 cm to their Movement characteristic.

5-6 Fatigued – The troops are badly fatigued and therefore suffer a -1 penalty to Initiative.

DRUNKARDS

Men who live and die by the sword tend to be fond of strong drink. Some are a bit too fond of it and come to battle drunk.

Randomly select one of your opponent's non-character reference cards. The troops represented by this card have imbibed too much wine (or whatever intoxicating substance they prefer) and arrive at the battle inebriated. They suffer a penalty of -1 to INI, ATT, DEF, and AIM rolls, exactly as though they Stunned for the entire battle. However, if the affected figurines possess a Courage rating, it is increased by one for the duration of the battle.

This Subplot cannot affect Constructs, Elemental Beings, or the Living Dead.

ELEMENTAL SUFFUSION

For some reason, the area in which the battle is taking place is suffused with a greater than average concentration of elemental energies. These energies permeate the landscape, making it easier to tap into the power of those elements.

Randomly select one element from those being used by the magicians participating in the battle. Because of the concentration of elemental energies, mages find it easier to recover mana gems of that element's type. On Mana Recovery Rolls made to recover such gems, 1's do not count as failures and mages may treat 5's as 6's (and may reroll them as such).

FATEFUL BATTLE

The battle occurs at a time and place that is imbued with a great destiny. Though the significance of the battle may not be apparent, to the mortal who meet and fight in this skirmish, all can sense that Fate has a hand in the battle and its outcome.

The battle occurs at a time and place that is imbued with a great destiny. Though the significance of the battle may not be apparent to the mortals who meet and fight in this skirmish, all can sense that Fate has a hand in the battle and its outcome. Beings of Destiny, Selenites, and Faithful belonging to the Paths of Destiny treat their Courage (or Fear) as if it were 1 point higher. Miracles cast by Faithful belonging to the Paths of Destiny no longer fail Divination rolls on a 1.

Special Credit: This subplot was adapted from special condition rules written by Caern from the English Confrontation Forum.

FOG

An eerie fog blankets the battlefield, reducing visibility and causing combatants to become disoriented.

Roll D6 to determine the thickness of the fog:

1-2 Light Fog limits visibility to 30 cm and adds +1 to the difficulty of all shooting.

3-4 Moderate Fog limits visibility to 20 cm and adds +1 to the difficulty of all shooting. All Tactical Rolls suffer a penalty of -1 to the die roll due to disorientation. Commanders with the Consciousness Ability are not concerned by this last effect.

5-6 Heavy Fog limits visibility to 10 cm and adds +1 to the difficulty of all shooting. All Tactical Rolls suffer a penalty of -2 to the die roll due to disorientation. Commanders with the Consciousness Ability are not concerned by this last effect.

FORSAKEN PLACE

The battle occurs in a place that was once the site of a great evil that to this day still lingers in the shadows.

Beings of Darkness, Living-Dead, and Faithful of the Meanders of Darkness treat their Fear (or Courage) as if it were 1 point higher. Miracles cast by Faithful belonging to the Meanders of Darkness no longer fail Divination rolls on a 1.

Special Credit: This subplot was adapted from special condition rules written by Caern from the English Confrontation Forum.

GALE-FORCE WINDS

Only fools wage war in hurricanes and tornados with winds strong enough to tear down trees, but many are the fools who fight and die in the battles that decide the fate of Aarklash.

Gale-force winds render combat nearly impossible. All shooting and Incantation rolls suffer +3 difficulty. Bows and thrown weapons are impossible to use; all shots with such weapons fail automatically. All Physical Feats are at +2 difficulty. Flying is impossible; any models with the Flight ability must remain grounded. All other movement is halved since models must struggle against the wind and must devote effort to remaining on their feet. Finally, there is a chance that warriors will be hit by flying debris. At the end of each turn, each player draws one of the opposing player's unit cards at random (include familiars and summoned creatures for this draw). One warrior associated with the drawn card (owning player's choice) must make a Defense roll against a difficulty of 6 or be hit, suffering a Damage Roll at a Strength equal to a D6-1

HEAVY RAIN OR SNOW

Heavy rain (or snow) severely reduces visibility. Most commanders are loathe to engage in battle in such weather, but sometimes it is unavoidable. A wise commander uses the weather to gain an advantage over his enemies.

Heavy rain (or snow) severely reduces visibility. During a heavy rain or snow, all shooting is at +1 difficulty, and the maximum distance any model can see is equal to 30 cm. Furthermore, all Movement is halved and all Physical Feat tests are at +1 difficulty due to water- or ice-slick surfaces, snowdrifts, puddles, or slippery ground.

HOLY GROUND

The battle takes place on land consecrated to one of the benevolent gods. Here their presence can be felt like energy in the air before a storm.

Beings of Light, Hyperians, the Righteous, and Faithful who follow the Way of Light treat their Courage (or Fear) values as if they were 1 point higher. Miracles cast by Faithful belonging one of the Ways of Light no longer fail Divination rolls on a 1.

Special Credit: This subplot was adapted from special condition rules written by Caern from the English Confrontation Forum.

SANDSTORM OR BLIZZARD

Sandstorms are frequent events in the deserts of Syharhalna. Blizzards often rage during the cold winter months elsewhere on Aarklash, and torrential hailstorms sometimes occur during warmer seasons. Any of these storms can spring up suddenly and without warning, trapping opposing forces in a tempest of sand or ice.

The ranges of all shooting during a sandstorm are increased by one range band, and models cannot see more than 20 cm. All Physical Feat Tests are at +2 difficulty. Furthermore, the stinging sands tear at clothing and exposed flesh (during a blizzard this represents the stinging ice and biting cold). Each turn, all models on the Battlefield take an automatic Damage Roll at Strength 0. However, treat any result above a Light Wound as a Light Wound. Furthermore, if the final result of the Damage Roll is less that 0, the model suffers No Effect.

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STRONG WIND

A good, strong wind can make it difficult to hit targets at range, especially with bows or thrown weapons. The strong breeze also makes it harder to cast spells since the spellcaster finds it harder to perform the correct gestures or to manipulate spell components

All shooting and Incantation rolls are at +1 difficulty. Shots with bows or thrown weapons, which tend to catch the wind more easily, suffer an additional +1 difficulty (for a total difficulty modifier of +2). Finally, flying models may not move a distance greater than their Movement characteristic, as some of their movement allowance must be devoted to maintaining control in the hazardous winds.

THUNDERSTORM

A thunderstorm rages over the battlefield, making combat even more hazardous than usual. The dark skies and rain limit visibility and dampen spirits, and the lightning seems drawn to the struggle below as though it too wants to participate in the carnage.

Because of the dim lighting and rain, all shooting is at +1 difficulty. In addition, there is a chance that lightning will strike one of the combatants each turn. At the beginning of each turn, before the Tactical Roll, roll a D6. If the result is a 1, the figure represented by the first reference card drawn is struck by lightning and suffers a damage roll of Strength 20. If the reference card represents multiple figures, randomly determine which is hit.

Special Credit: This subplot was adapted from special condition rules written by Caern from the English Confrontation Forum.

CLEAR AND SUNNY

The good-aligned people of Aarklash enjoy sunny weather, for the warm sunshine raises their spirits and helps drive away the darkness that lurks in the shadows.

The clear weather improves long range visibility. All shots made at long range are at -1 difficulty. Furthermore, the bright sunshine makes fearsome creatures seem less frightening. All Fear-causing figures treat their Fear as one point lower.

WAR BUDDIES

Troops who have fought together for a long time learn to coordinate their movements in combat. Each compliments the other so well that they become nearly unstoppable when they fight side-by-side.

Choose two of your non-character figures. These figures are old war buddies who have fought together on numerous occasions and have therefore become coordinated in battle. If these two models are ever in the same fray after frays have been split, they both gain a +1 bonus to INI, ATT, and DEF.

COWARDS

Until a soldier has been proven in battle, there is no way to know if he can summon the courage to face the enemy.

Randomly select one of your opponent's non-character reference cards. All figures represented by this card are cowardly, green troops who have yet to see battle. If the randomly drawn reference card represents troops with a Courage rating, then these troops treat all enemies, even those with a Courage rating, as Fear-causing and must therefore make Courage tests according to the rules for Fear. Enemies that already cause Fear count their Fear as 2 points higher against the cowardly troops.

If the reference card represents troops with a Fear rating, then these troops are no longer immune to the Fear caused by enemies and must test for Fear as though their Fear were instead Courage. These troops still cause Fear in their enemies, however. This subplot may not be applied to Constructs, Living Dead, or models with the Bravery or Possessed abilities.

CRUCIAL BATTLE

The outcome of this battle is extremely important to your army. Your troops are motivated to win at all costs, heedless of danger.

All of your troops gain the Bravery ability for the duration of the battle. If a figure already has the Bravery ability, its Courage increases by 1 instead. Fear-causing troops do not gain Bravery; instead, they add 1 point to their Fear to represent the horrific fervor that overcomes them.

DEATH WISH

When a warrior has lost everything, even hope, all that remains is death. With nothing left to live for, such warriors throw themselves into battle seeking only to die.

Randomly select one of your own non-character reference cards. All troops represented by this card gain the Desperate ability for the duration of the game. This subplot can only affect troops with a Courage rating.

FAULTY RECONNAISSANCE

The enemy scouts were unable to locate your army or misreported your force's location and numbers. As a result, you have been able to outmaneuver the opposing force as you close for battle.

After all normal troops have been placed during the Approach Phase, but before Scouts have been deployed, you may reposition up to 20% of your side's A.P. in troops.

HERO IN THE MAKING

Sometimes even a rank-and-file soldier has the potential to become a great hero. It is up to the soldier to prove himself in battle and become the hero he is destined to be.

Randomly select one of your own non-character reference cards. *One* of the figures represented by this card has the potential to become a hero. The figure gains the Incarnation Ability for free. It becomes a character with all of the advantages that implies.

HOLY CAUSE

The armies of Aarklash are often divinely inspired by the holiness (or unholiness) of their causes. Faithful who fight for a cause they deem sacred may draw upon the unmitigated strength of their followers' faith in order to help them in their struggle.

Each of your Faithful treats his rank as though it were one level higher for the purposes of determining the number of figurines necessary to generate a point of Temporary Faith. If your army does not contain any Faithful, randomly select a different Subplot.

MANA STOCK

When a magician has extra time to ready himself before a battle, he can make sure he arrives well-prepared. This can be extremely important if he needs to cast several spells early in the battle, before the enemy can respond.

All of your army's mages begin with their full compliment of mana gems (twice their Power ratings). If your army does not include any mages, draw a different Subplot Card.

MEANINGLESS BATTLE

The battle's objectives are not very important to the enemy, and their troops know it. Lack of motivation saps the morale of the opposing force.

All enemy troops suffer a -1 penalty to Courage (or Fear) for the duration of the battle.

POOR WEAPONS

Due to lack of maintenance, a drunken weaponsmith, or just plain bad luck, some of the enemy troops are carrying weapons of inferior quality.

Randomly select one of your opponent's non-character reference cards. All troops represented by this card are armed with flawed, poor-quality weapons. If a figure affected by this subplot rolls a natural, unmodified 1 on any Attack or Aim roll, its weapon breaks (1's caused by wound penalties do not count). A 1 on an Attack roll reduces the figure's Strength by 3 (to a minimum of 1). The weapon also breaks if the figure rolls an Exceptional Wound for damage in hand to hand combat. If the figure rolls a 1 on an Aim roll, its ranged weapon breaks and is rendered useless. The figure can no longer make ranged attacks.

For creatures and other troops without weapons, this subplot can represent disease, injury, fatigue, or other effects that might have weakened the figure.

REINFORCEMENTS

Although your army faces a difficult fight, you take comfort in the knowledge that reinforcements are on the way...

All non-character figurines in your army that have an A.P. value of less than 50 gain the Reinforcement Ability. Any troops that already have the Reinforcement Ability may instead add +1 to the Reinforcement roll to see if they return to the battle.

SHODDY ARMOUR

Either due to a supply mix-up or poor maintenance, some of your enemy's soldiers have been forced to go to battle with inadequate armour.

Randomly select one of your opponent's non-character reference cards. All troops represented by this card are armed with substandard armour. These troops suffer a -2 penalty to Resilience (to a minimum Resilience of 1) due to their shoddy armour.

For troops that do not wear armour, this subplot can represent disease, injury, or other effects that might reduce a figure's Resilience.

TRAITORS

Every nation or army has its turncoats, people who are willing to sell out their brethren for wealth or power. These traitors can cause chaos among their own armies by sabotaging battle plans and selling secrets to the enemy.

All troops represented by your opponent's lowest A.P. value reference card are traitors who are secretly working for your army! At any point during the Confrontation, you may take control of the traitors and control them until the end of the game. If your opponent has more than one reference card with the same lowest A.P. value printed on it, randomly choose the one to which this subplot applies.

This Subplot cannot be applied to models with the Righteous or Loyal abilities, nor can it be applied to a mage's Familiars.

MINIATURE PREVIEWS

Thom Talamini of Excelsior Entertainment was good enough to send us a whole bunch of preview pics of upcoming models for Chronopia and Warzone. Without further delay we'll give them to you.

CHRONOPIA

First up is the mount for the Devout Blood Hunters. If you've kept up with our Chronopia battle reports over the years you'll know that the Devout are one of my staple armies and I have, along with every other Devout general out there, been waiting on these cavalry nightmares for quite a long time. From the looks of things these will be pretty large models when you combine the rider and mount. All I can say is gimme, gimme, gimme!

The Dwarves also have three new figures coming up, all of which should make any vertically challenged general pleased. That would include me as I also run Dwarves in Chronopia. In fact, I absolutely hated dwarves in miniature games until I started playing Chronopia when it first came out. The Tunnel Fighter looks big and bulky like he would easily plug up a hole that a bunch of goblins were trying to pass through.

The Wolf Clan gets two figures, the first of which is an Axeman (Axe-dwarf?). I don't think that you could call his pose a 'running' one but it does have some movement to it like he's either leaning into a downward stroke of the axe or he's moving in for a killing blow. I'm happy either way. The face looks really good from here and a unit of these should prove popular with players.

Last up in the Chronopia batch for now (as you've probably already seen newly painted versions of the Devout Forgotten, Firstborn Repulsar Lord and Elven Crusher up on the Excelsior Entertainment website, and if you haven't shame on you. Get over there and check them out.) is a Wolf Clan Scout. The picture below obstructs his face but leaves his helmet in plain view. The axe has nice detailing to it in the head that's engraved onto it. All three of these would make spectacular character models if you are running a dwarf PC in pretty much any fantasy role-playing game, but Chronopia fans should also be very happy with these and other recent additions to the line of miniatures for that game.

WARZONE

If you've been waiting patiently (or impatiently as the case may be) for mounted troops like the Blood Hunters I bet the same holds true for many of you when it comes to the Lutheran Cavalry for Warzone. Yes, I'd be counted in that group also. There are two greens (actually blues in this

case) that we got a look at. First is a Heavy Cavalier (below). You can see that the horse still wears the gasmask that you remember from the first pics of these guys years ago and the Heavy Machinegun that he is armed with is very plainly visible. The second of the Lutheran Cavalry, Cavaliers (immediately below),

can be seen riding a horse that's slightly rearing up with the rider swinging his right arm over to the left side to blast away at someone. The right-most picture gives you an idea of how these cavalry models will shape up against regular foot troops. From the look of both of these guys I'd guess that they are going to be single piece models. Except for maybe the Cavaliers right arm and his cape. Of course, that's my untrained eye looking at them so I could be totally off base. Now, if I was greedy I would already be asking for the sons of Rasputin cavalry also, but I'll be content with these for quite a while as I'll have lots of pretty ponies to paint!

The last thing that we'll take a look at from Excelsior is the Tekron Warmaster. You may have seen some pics of the Tekron on the Excelsior Entertainment website but I had not seen these that Thom recently sent us. It shows two new views of this unholy creation of Algeroth. Both pictures include a Cybertronic People's Volunteer to give you an idea of the size of this creature. In the picture at the top of the page you get a good idea that this model will take up a fair amount of real estate on the game board. At the bottom of the page you see a top-down photo where we can guess that the footprint of this model is in the neighborhood of 3" square, not counting the various spiky bits and choppers that are sticking out on things that remind me of Dr. Octopus from Spiderman.

This is one model that looks like it will take some careful assembly and painting but Dark Legion players must be drooling already. Since Algeroth generals can take one of these bad boys per squad of troops I'm betting that you'll be seeing more than a few of them wreaking havoc on a Warzone battlefield near you.

Written by Mark Theurer

MINIATURE REVIEWS

Magnificent Egos

Balthazar MEO1020 $5.99
Sculpted by Jason Engle

Balthazar is from ME's Uncommon Characters line. He is a draconic fighter figure composed of four parts and a metal slotted base. Balthazar is large for a 28mm figure, as fits a draconic fighter. The four parts include the body of Balthazat, two wings, and a tail. The last three pieces are cast on a single sprue. The body of Balthazar is sculpted with his sword held out to his right side. This gives the body a very flat appearance - I strongly suggest gently bending the arm or removing and repositioning the hand to give the model a more natural pose.

The body has lots of detail on the armor and sword - the latter has scrollwork in relief on the front side of the blade. This scrollwork is repeated on the tabard and grieves of the model. The armor plates and the head are cleanly sculpted. The casting of this piece left a lot of flash between the right forearm and the body. There was a little flash between the left arm and body. Finally, the sword itself was bent back, but this appears to have been the result of rough handling in the package.

The other three pieces, attached to the sprue, have the same level of detail as the body. They also have some flash - especially at the end of the tail and the points of the wing. The mold lines along the wings are not noticeable. The wings and tail have lugs which fit into depressions in the back of the body. The tail fits snugly and requires very little filler in the gap. The wings have different sized lugs so that the fit into the correct holes. Like the tail, the wings fit snugly and require little if any filler. The base included with the figure is the standard ME slotted metal base.

Toyota ME10024 $6.99
Sculpted by Jim Johnson

Toyota is a two-piece model of a large, very large, sumo-style fantasy fighter. The main part of the model is the character himself and the other piece is a set of two back banners set on wooden poles. Toyota is standing slightly squatted with his arms bent at the elbows with his hands open. He looks to be in a pose that's ready to answer a threat, but not so much of a threatening one. Heck, for all I know he could be signaling to bring him more food at some all-you-can-eat inn. He's wearing bits and pieces of armor, but has a lot of his flesh showing and boy is there a lot of it. There were some tiny bits of flash around his feet and the mold line was visible along his thighs and across his back on his armored shoulder plates. These lines were not too prominent and cleaned up easily.

Toyota carries a jug (of sake I would guess) and a pair of chopstick around the back of his belt which is a nice and appropriate addition to this figure. Most of the detail on this figure is raised and should make for an easy paint job. He has a pudgy face, much larger than an ordinary face, to go along with the rest of his big self. His back banner had a few barely visible mold lines and fits easily into the holes in his back. If you'd prefer you can fill the holes with some green putty and do away with the banners. This is an easy procedure and one that I've done before with models that have back banners or wings that I didn't want to use. My only gripe with this figure, and it's really not with the figure anyway, is with his base size. While he's not exactly ogre-sized this is a big boy and I plan on cutting off the tab that would go into the slot on the base and then dropping him onto a 40mm square or round plastic base. Like I said, this is not a problem with the figure at all and is more one of personal taste.

Felric, Anatomist & Skeletal Servant MEO1022 $9.99
Sculpted by Todd Harris

Felric looks to be an elf, the large pointy ears give him away, that is eager to get out into the field to find some bodies to cut up. He carries a pair of shears in his right hand and a rounded cutting tool in his left. He wears an apron that holds many more smaller tools. His clothing consists mainly of leathers and regular clothing as opposed to adventuring gear. He also has a small dragon perched on his shoulders. The dragon's wings come as a separate piece that fit well onto the model. Felric had a bit more flash than some of the other figures that we took a look at this time around and his mold lines were also easier to see. He ended up needing a bit more cleaning time than the others.

Felric has a lot of detail, especially his tools and lots of little belts and clasps. He'll take a bit more time and a steady hand to come out at his best but I think it will be worth it. His assistant is a short skeleton, probably dwarf or gnome sized, that is

UNCOMMON CHARACTER

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

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carrying all the stuff that Felric couldn't get onto himself. His head/skull is a bit oblong and still has some hair on the back of it. He's wearing boots and a vest with lots of pouches and belts to help his hold on to everything that he's carrying. You can see a bedroll, shovel and cauldron but there's certainly more tucked away in those pouches. There was a bit of flash that needed attention but the only mold line that I found was across the top of his head and it was faint.

Bloody Rose with Nik Nak MEO1015 $9.99
Sculpted by Drew Williams

Bloody Rose is a rather buxom female dancer or entertainer. At least she looks like an "entertainer" to me. She's carrying a fan in her right hand and is striking a pose that shows off a lot of leg and her very low cut top shows off a lot of her, well, top. Ok, maybe she's an assassin that waits for the right moment to stick it to you?!? This one piece figure had very little flash but did have some mold lines on the inside of her cape that were a little difficult to get to. She has some nice raised detailing on her dress including frilly bits on her cuffs and the laces on her boots and on her corset.

Nik Nak is a short, taller than a halfling and leaner than a dwarf or gnome, character dressed up in a jester's outfit. He carries a spiked club in one hand and holds a mask in front of his face with the other. He's standing on one foot in somewhat of a dancing pose. The costume looks superb and while it will take a skillful hand to really make it come out great I'll be taking a stab at painting him very soon. He would make a great bard whose talent is telling jokes or doing slapstick comedy. Ok, he'll probably meet with a rather grizzly end, but it will be fun while it lasted. There was some flash on the figure but even with all the bits going off in various directions on his costume they were at a minimum and the only mold lines that I had to take care of were on his hat. I think that I actually prefer Nik Nak to Bloody Rose just from how much he stands out to me.

Dover MEOB002 $6.99
Sculpted by Jason Wiebe

Dover is cast in two pieces, one pieces being the main body, legs and torso, while the second piece is the weapon with the two forearms attached. The model comes with a square solid metal slotta base. While putting the two pieces together I encountered some issues with the right forearm not fitting into place. The mating surfaces of the arms are not pinned or keyed in any way, so getting them both into the correct position is problematical. However, if you are willing to get you fingers coated in super glue it's nothing that can't be done. Flash and mold lines, though present, where not enough to detract from the very nice detail in the model. The weapon Dover carries is a doozy, with blades at booth ends and huge hand guards. It actually looks like it's more than the "not so beefy" Dover can handle. Dover's attire is very nice in its detail and in my opinion the strong point of the model. The piece is well balanced with no discernable weak points. Even the long shaft of his weapon is relatively rigid and appears that it will be resistant to casual damage.

Greater Helping Hand MEO3002 $6.99
Sculpted by Clint Staples

This figure is from ME's Artifacts and Dweomers line. This line of figures is intended to show manifestations of magic spells when using miniatures with the various fantasy RPGs. Other figures in this line are the Flaming Sphere (MEO3004), Levitating Disk (MEO3019), and the Ghost Weapons (MEO3010). The Greater Helping Hand comes is a single piece that comes with a square 50mm metal base. The figure is sculpted as a column of smoke that coalesces into a hand. The hand is about an inch from thumb to pinkie and is sculpted in a reaching attitude.

The figure has some flash and mold lines between the fingers where it is hard to clean. Other than this, there is little flash. The smoke column hides the mold lines well - so be sure to look closely to find the small flash. This is rather a bland figure - simply a large hand and a cloud pillar. However, there is quite a bit of detail on the hand. The lines on the palm are well defined as if the sculptor used his own left hand as a model. The big disappointment with this figure for me is the base. It is cast as a single piece of metal with a dimple where the lug on the cloud pillar is to be inserted. The dimple needs to be drilled out and the lug needs to be shortened so that it fits into the base without sticking out below. The metal base itself is malformed - the surface is warped and it doesn't sit flat on the table. All the ridge detail is present on the base, so the deformation is not for a lack of metal. I think that the base warps during the cooling process.

Asherake MEOB001 $7.99
Sculpted by Chaz Elliott

This model comes in seven different pieces (not counting the base). There was a fair amount of flash (more than the usual for Magnificent Egos), but the good news is that the mold lines where slim to nil. All the pieces go together very nicely and are well formed so that after gluing them together most of the joints were well hidden. Two of the pieces are wings, and they fit into pre-drilled holes perfectly. In fact the entire assembly process was made easy due to the pieces being well molded and well planned. By looking at the piece, you might think that there is a weak joint prone to snapping where the wings attach to the torso. However, due to the pre-drilled holes, the wings are quite sturdy. In fact the entire piece is well balanced and durable. In addition, the tail (another of the pieces) provides a third point of support to the base. I did discover to my chagrin the disadvantage to the Magnificent Egos base. Mind you that I think their slotta bases are my favorite base to date with their look and feel. However with this model, the only thing that was not a perfect fit was the tab on the bottom. It was significantly larger than the slot. On the base, being solid cast metal, it was no easy thing to widen the slot and the tab was no easier to file down. Needless to say it took some work. Luckily the detail on the piece makes the work worth it. It's an impressive piece sure to make any character coming up against it to look twice.

Reviews by Mark Theurer, Clay Richmond and J Michael Tisdel

Hasslefree Miniatures

Eve the Archeologist HFA001 $6.99

Billed as an archeologist I immediately thought of Lara Croft when I saw Eve. I'm sure you did too. She comes in three pieces (right and left arms and the rest of the model) which cleaned up very quickly and her arms glued right into their sockets at her shoulders. She's dressed in tight fitting clothes and has a good athletic build to her without being unnatural looking. The mold line was virtually undetectable and I had to look hard to find it. I think that I could have pretty easily primed and painted over it. There were some tiny bits of flash on the separate arm pieces and down by the tab but that's all. She has a few pouches around her belt and each hand holds a pistol. Her really long hair it tied in several places and hangs down her back with her face mostly exposed. Her facial features are almost a bit oriental-looking to me and they are clean and well done. Great figure for a modern game!

Sparr HFH002 $5.99

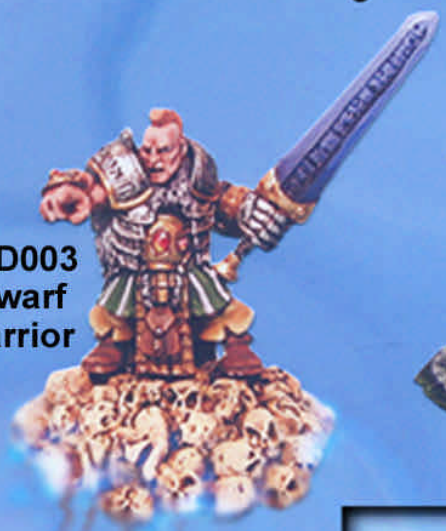
Sparr is an angry little goblin that is carrying a bottle in one hand and a mace in the other. Either he's an angry drunk that just happens to be wearing a kilt or he's really pissed that someone is making him wear a skirt and he's looking for someone to bonk on the head. I'll go with option one as he's also wearing a beret style hat, has a mean pair of sideburns and has a very angry look on his face, which is the focal point of the model. I think that he'll fit in great alongside my goblin bodgers in my Cygnar army for Warmachine. He'll be the drunk co-worker that you can't get rid of because of his union connections. There was a bit of flash around his feet and the mold line was barely visible on his hat. Other than that he was ready to be based and primed. A fun little figure that has good player-character possibilities or could also fit in as a leader of a unit of goblins in mass-combat game.

My Hero HFH007 $6.49

Actually two figures that fit on a single base, My Hero depicts a mullet-haired barbarian with a rather appreciative female friend. At first I was concerned that the tab at the feet of the figure would not fit into the slot on the base but it did so with about a millimeter to spare. There were several bits of flash close to the bottom of the figure, mostly around their feet, but also on the axe that the barbarian is holding. The mold line was pretty clearly visible on this figure and was present just about everywhere. I'd guess that it's primarily due to the casting process of putting two figures into the mold, along with all of their curves and crevices, where you'd usually just have one. It did require a few minutes of work to smooth out. The barbarian is wearing some leather pants (or maybe paint them up as blue jeans for that 80's rocker look), boots and a belt and the female is wearing a skimpy little g-string thingy and a smile. Her top is base and very visible so consider the kiddies that might be at your gaming table when picking up this figure. The musculature on the male is very well done and is nicely defined without being cartoonish. The rest of his detail is also good, right down to the laces on his boots being clearly visible. His right hand is strategically placed on one of her butt cheeks grabbing a cheap feel while she is nuzzling up to him. I guess if your choices are to be sacrificed to some loony cult or to be groped by a muscle-bound rescuer you really only have one way to go. The girl is skinny without much muscle tone and is not unnaturally heavy on top.

Fantasy

Sci-fi



HFD003
dwarf
warrior

HFH002
paladin

HFG002
grymn
sergeant

Hasslefree Miniatures

dwarf
princess
HFD004

HFH005
outsized
axewoman

dwarf
warrioress
HFD002

HFC004
shaolin
monk

armoured
ogre
HFM002

28mm scale
figures sculpted by
Kev White

www.jenova.dk/hassle/front.htm
email: hfpromo@hotmail.com

winged
demonette
HFX003

Sebastian HFH008 $5.99

Sebastian is an aging paladin. Actually, that's incorrect. He's an aged paladin whose glory days are probably far behind him. He's wearing plate armor and carries a torch and sword. The sword bears some rules that can be brought out with a simple wash after painting it. He's stooped over in a posture that you'd expect for a senior citizen. The mold line was very hard to detect on him and I only found a few places where it needed cleaning. There were just two small bits of flash on the figure. One on his sword and the other at the base of the torch. He is bald-headed with a good aging face that has "old man" written all over it. The face is really what will make this figure stand out and if painted well it should draw attention. I see main uses for Sebastian either as an npc or if you have a player who really likes characters that a story can be built around (and isn't afraid of incurring some stat penalties for an older character) this would be a good model for them. Maybe Sebastian is coming out of a nice retirement when he has a chance to right a wrong that has eluded him for decades.

Lab Tech HFN001 $5.99

This is the first in a line of civilians that Hasslefree is doing and I can immediately say that I hope it's not the last. I hope that sales are strong enough for him (I'd expect mainly from Call of Cthulhu players but other modern and even sci-fi gamers could use him.) so they continue the line with more models that fit into a modern (modern-ish or sci-fi too) world that would work well as characters and/or npc's but are not necessarily totting around big guns or chainsaws or whatever. Not that I have anything against models carrying those things around but a change of pace is nice once in a while. The lab tech is dressed in normal office attire and also has on an overcoat and there is an ID badge around his neck on a chain. Nice bit of detail here that could have easily been omitted or overlooked, but I'm glad it wasn't. His has is an absolute mess and his face has a bit of a sour look to it like he's been looking at growths in Petri dishes for too many hours on end. The mold line was mostly visible up each side of his legs but it was not bad. There were a few bits of flash that needed to be clipped off too. The clipboard in his right hand also lends authenticity to this figure and as an added piece of detail the paper on the clipboard is slightly raised from the board itself to make it easier to paint. Uses may be more limited than that of fantasy figures but I'd like to see more of the same kind.

Vadim, Orc HFO001 $5.99

Vadim is a solid cast model that comes in two pieces (sword w/ hands & Torso) with a plastic slotta base. Once assembled, he stands about an inch and a quarter tall (a little over three cm). There was very little in the way of flash and mold lines and the features on this little guy are very sharp and well defined. I really like the attention to detail on the model and the cleanliness of the cast. It's not always easy to come up with original looking model of a common figure, but I think this model does an admiral job. The stance and the obvious bestial scream issuing from this guy make him a little more unique than usual, while still fitting in with any conventional army of orcs. His armor and his nasty looking sword are pretty normal fare for the classical Orc, but with his yell and obvious enthusiasm I think he would make a great leader for a war party or warband.

Barman HFV007 $5.99

This model is a single piece model that is solid cast and comes with a smaller than normal plastic slotta base (measures about three quarters of an inch across rather than an inch). I think it's funny how often models like this are overlooked when playing RPG games when then are probably the most commonly reappearing non-player characters that reappear from adventure to adventure (not necessarily as the same person of course, but at least in the same role or function). This model is a nice simple cast of human bar keeper carrying a large tankard. The model is very clean with no flash and only a hint of a mold line in the hair. As appears to be normal for Hasslefree, the detail is well defined and it's nice and sharp. Normally, a model with this small of a base might be prone to falling over, but since the model is not in what I would call an action stance, and it is well centered with no limbs jutting out, the smaller base does just fine to keep this guy in the vertical mode.

Harem Girl HFH006 $5.99

This is another single piece model that is solid cast. The title of the model is Harem Girl, but from her attire (a couple shackles and maybe some toenail polish) she appears to better fit the roles of a slave girl, though I'm sure there are those that would argue that there is little difference. The piece was nearly completely free of flash, and only a hint of a mold line on one leg. She is well done with very clean and sharp detail like the other Hasslefree models.

By the look of her, the floor she is sitting on must be a little chilly. And oh yeah, she is anatomically correct. Behind her back there is a stack of fancy pillows. These appear to be the one thing that might lend credence to the title of harem girl. She might not be great as a dungeon crawling adventurer, but I'll bet

she turns an eye or two in a tavern, throne room, or other appropriate encounter.

Poledancer HFH009 $5.99

The first figure was a single-piece 25mm female pole dancer Wearing nothing more than boots and a smile, this figure is everything you would expect it to be. The figure had some air hole extrusions at various points, but the only flash present was between the pole and the dancer's stomach. In fact, the space between was almost completely filled. This took a bit of work with a triangular X-Acto blade to clean out. The difficulty is in trying to remove the flash without marring the body.

The figure was well sculpted - the body and hair are very smooth and there is just enough detail to show that she was indeed nude. This was definitely a model that benefits from careful skin-tone painting. The model was supplied with a small, round, plastic slotted base.

Gymnast HFH010 $5.99

Dressed in a similar manner to the Poledancer, the Gymnast was a single-piece 25mm figure wearing only a thong. This figure had less air hole extrusions and the same amount of flash. On the Gymnast, all the flash was on the tab base. Unlike the Poledancer, this figure has noticeable mold line the ran the length of both legs. This was easily removed with a hobby knife with out marring the figure. Like the Poledancer, this figure is well sculpted and has a very dynamic pose. The hair obscuring the face is a nice touch. Like the other figure, there is enough detail to show that the woman is nude and it will benefit greatly from careful skin-tone painting.

Reviews by Mark Theurer, Clay Richmond And J Michael Tisdel

2861 Abram Duskwalker $3.99
Sculpted by Bob Ridolfi

As the casual observer might notice, this guy is not your “run of the mill” kind of figure. Armed with a sword (with a spiked pommel no less) in one hand and a hefty hammer in the other, this pilgrim looks like one that could ruin your whole day if he decided he didn’t like you. The Reaper web site says that he is a witch hunter, which fits with his looks. However, I don’t think he bothers with the burning at the stake routine. He is a single piece, solid cast model with the base attached. There was little to no flash, but a visible mold line ran most of the way around the figure. All his extremities are sturdy, so there is no real danger of casual damage. Due to the exotic nature of the figure, he will definitely be best suited for a custom made setting unless he comes in as a garish NPC. He is well sculpted with all his detail sharp and distinct, even down to the set of keys he has dangling from his belt. For some reason I picture this guy as the outspoken sheriff of a small magic hating town, and oops, your party has lots of magic. I’ll let your imagination take it from there.

2862 Nimrah, Blackguard $4.29
Sculpted by Adam Clarke

Nimrah comes as a single piece solid cast model with its own attached base. He is sturdy with no unduly weak spots. There was no flash and a few minor mold lines that where in easily accessible places so clean up is a breeze. Blackguard is a good description of him as he has a distinctive evil look to him. To start things off, he is heavily armored with plate mail and shield. But then we get into the good stuff with chains being used for his belt and adorning his shield and his left shoulder. His sword and belt buckle sport trendy depictions of a human skulls and his helmet finishes the image with a pair of beastly horns. His cloak looks to be a pelt of a very large wolf. If I where to come up with a criticism for this guy, it would have to be that his arms look a bit disproportionately small to the rest of him. Besides that, it’s a very nice model that would do well as a bad guy NPC, or as a character in an evil party.

2863 Female Werewolf $4.49
Sculpted by James Van Schaik

This is a two piece 25mm figure with integrated base. The second piece, the wolf's tail, was attached to the base by a bit of sprue. Some air-hole extrusions were attached to the end of the wolf's figures but there was no noticeable mold line. The model

had a little flash on the tab of the tail (i.e. the bit that goes into the socket on the back of the model). Speaking of the tail, the tab and a bit small and doesn't fit tightly into the slot on the back of the miniature. However, the tail does fit into the model almost seamlessly - no putty is required. The sculpt is fairly dynamic, but the upper arm could do with a little repositioning. I put more bend in the elbow to reduce the tow-dimensional appearance of the figure.

2864 Shadow Dragon $17.99
Sculpted by Sandra Garrity

This five piece model is one of the small dragons by Reaper. The pieces consists of the body and integrated base, tail, head, and wings. There is little flash on any of the pieces, only the head has a noticeable amount and that is air hole extrusion from some of the teeth. The body itself includes the neck and lower jaw. There is a lug where the head fits in. This lug allows the head to be positioned with the mouth slightly open. The head fits snugly, but a bit of putty is required around the cheeks to smooth the transition of the two pieces.

The tail has a lug that fits into a slot on the end of the body. Either the lug is too long or the slot is too shallow. About 3mm had to be filed off the end of the lug for the piece to fit. A bit of putty was required to smooth the join. The lugs on both the left and right wings were too narrow for the slots on the body, but a bit of masking tape fixed this. Some putty was required to smooth the joins on the two wings.

After reading all of the above, you might think that this is a terribly cast figure. However, that is not the case. This is a very good dragon - the description above are normal for any multi-part all metal model. Taking a little time with assembly and puttying will produce an excellent model. Though small for a classic dragon, this makes an excellent young dragon, or a real Nemesis for a 15mm game.

2865 Flesh Golem $5.49
Sculpted by James Van-Schaik

We have a one-piece model of a stitched together monstrosity here. The upper body is noticeably out of proportion with the lower and with a flesh golem that's perfectly acceptable and probably the look they were going for. The mold line was quite faint but there were several pieces of flash on the hands that neede to be cleaned up. The only clothing that he's wearing is a pair of torn up pants held up by a belt made out of a length of rope.

There are stitch marks all over his body, including a nice "Y" incision on his chest so I'd expect that his internal organs were also donated from other sources. The flesh is somewhat drawn back and sunken, especially on the face and back. This gives even more of a creepy appearance to him. In fact, his lips and nose are missing entirely and two bolts "Frankenstein style" are set into his neck. There also appears to be some residual damage from a piercing weapon on the left side of his chest. This flesh golem is noticeably bulkier than their other one (Reaper 02595) but I think that the two could easily be used together and cause your players some real nightmares. Superb figure!

2866 Ivan, Vampire Wizard $3.99
Sculpted by Werner Klocke

Ivan is a single piece solid cast model that comes with its own attached base. I found no discernable mold lines, and the only flash was on the base. There is a support between the base the corner of the cloak flipping out to Ivan's right side (the cloak is quite sturdy, so this support is probably not really necessary) that needs to be removed. The top of his staff I had to bend forward a bit, though it too seems sturdy enough for normal use. He is a very distinctive looking model and his facial features really stand out as one his strong points. His staff, which is another part of the model that

looks like extra effort was put into it to good effect, looks like it could easily be used as a deadly weapon in its own right. His cloak and clothes look like they have seen better days as it looks like he has not bothered to change them for a decade or two. Even though the cloak looks dilapidated, it is still decorated with some very nice detail both front and back. I think that this model could be more than a little impressive with a nice paint job. He would make a very imposing arch villain or a great character in an evil party and/or a vampire party. He also strikes me as a great figure for a diorama.

2867 Matthias the Twisted $4.29
Sculpted by Bobby Jackson

This one-piece model reminded me very much of a Nosferatu-style vampire. If it wasn't for the head you could take him for a skinny old wizard but his bared fangs, pointy ears and emaciated appearance give him away. The hands and face here are really well done but there is some flash on the fingers. The mold line was only visible on his cloak where his arms are and was otherwise undetectable. The clothing on this figure is superb and has lots of detail. A heavy coat of paint will likely obscure lots of it so he's worth taking your time with. His cloak, although frayed at the ends, has some nice clasps and his shirt has a diagonal criss-cross pattern and his boots are also engraved with very light details. A longsword hangs from his belt. His familiar is also present and while it would have been easy to toss a bat or quasit on his shoulder they went with what appears to be a rat instead. There are also two more rats down by his right foot. He'd work well as an npc villain or could also be a PC in an evil party.

2868 Eldritch Demon $12.99
Sculpted by Jason Wiebe

I could hardly wait to tear open the blister and get a better look at this model. It comes in four pieces (head, body and two wings) that need to be glued together. The wings have tabs that fit into voids on the back of the upper torso of the model and they need some trim work to fit into place perfectly. You might also need a bit of putty in a few small areas like where the wings meet the body and around the neckline. The head is a mass of warts and tentacles with two reptilian eyes set on the sides. It had some bits of flash at the ends of some of the tentacles and there was a small portion of the mold line that was visible on the back of the head. The mold lines on the body were very hard to detect and I could only see them on the inside of one of the legs. The claws each had a tiny bit of flash. The body has a reptilian look to the skin and bears several mystical runes. The belly is stretched away from the body a bit and is smoother than the rest of the skin. Each hand has several suckers on the palm side and claws stick out from each of the three fingers. The wings have a decayed leathery kind of appearance to them and have several tears in each one. The mold lines were more visible on them than any other part of the figure and you'll want to check where the tears are for additional mold lines. He'll need a bit more work than a simple one-piece model but once he's done and painted it will be well worth it. This model has uses in just about every genre. In fantasy, modern, or horror games it could be a demon or other summoned creature, and yes it has Call of Cthulhu written all over it.

2869 Elise, The Witch $4.99
Sculpted by Werner Klocke

Mama mia! It's like we stepped into "Miniatures Gone Wild!". Ok, that's an exaggeration, but Elise is definitely not your stereotypical hunched over ugly witch with a wart on her nose. She is sitting on a large jack-o-lantern that has a huge smile on his face (gee, I wonder why) and what she's wearing (which ain't much) appears to all be leather. Her boots come up to just below her knees and then she has leggings on that end mid-thigh and have a very small skull on them. Her gloves come up to her elbows and a g-string and bustier round things out, except for the large pointy hat. Ok, I guess that's a stereotypical piece of witch clothing. She's sculpted in a provocative pose but is really not offensive in any way. The face is well done and her upper torso is not exaggerated as would be easy to do. Her hair is long and the strands really stick out on their own. The mold line was visible on most parts of the model but it was thin and easily taken care of. There was a bit of a metal web between her right hand and thigh so be careful when trimming it so you don't mar the figure. Her broomstick was slightly bent when I took her out of the blister so be careful when bending it back into place so you can keep it on a straight line. A great figure for a diorama and also one that could be used as a PC.

2870 Familiar Pack VI $8.99
Various Sculptors

Just in time for Halloween, well about a month after Halloween for all of you reading, is a pack of seven new familiars. They come on three metal tabs of two, two and three models. The first two consist of an angry looking jack-o-lantern with a wide mouth and evil eyes. It also has a couple of places with stitching, but not around the top in a circle where you'd expect it. The second looks like a small were-creature that's holding a pumpkin that's yet to be carved. Its head is facing up towards what I'd expect to be a full moon. No flash or mold lines to speak of on these two. The next two are a cookie

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SCULPTED BY JIM JOHNSON

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Model Painted by Anne Foerster

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that will remind you of the gingerbread man in Shrek but this one has had its head torn off and is holding it in its right hand and has a small rolling pin in the left. The other is a sock or hanky-puppet that is made up to look like a small ghost. It has a mouth and eyes stitched into the head and both of these also came cleanly out of the molds with really no cleaning needed. Two out of the last three familiars could actually be used as PC models. The first could pass for a small female goblin or imp that is standing behind a jack-o-lantern that looks a little more tame than the earlier pumpkin. She is wearing a dress with a frilly collar and pointy boots and has a little nub of a tail sticking out from under the back of her dress. The mold line on her was visible across her head and needed just a tad of trimming. The next is a large rat that's wearing a cloak an the third is a small doll-faced creature with tiny pointed ears that barely stick out from under her hair, angelic wings and a demonic tail that holds a sword behind her back. She wears a dress that spills out onto the floor past her feet and also carries a small purse in the shape of a coffin with a cross on it. She would make an excellent model for a pixie PC. They all would be good as familiars (duh) but could also be used as animated objects in a spellcasters house or dungeon.

4424 Hiruma, Crab Clan $4.49
Sculpted by Bob Murch

This is a single-piece 30mm figure of a samurai advancing with a katana. The figure is sculpted in a knees-bent, advancing stance with his sword to the right. The figure has quite a lot of detail on its armor. This is the typical rough-textured samurai armor which will play the cat and banjos with your brushes. This figure's weapon is longer than the model is tall - it looks very strange. I gather that the character has a special weapon. Like Doji Hoturi, the figure's weapon came out of the package bent. Given its size, this is to be expected.

4425 Kakita, Crane Clan $4.49
Sculpted by Jim Johnson

This is a single-piece 30mm figure of a nobleman with a fan. A plastic slotted base is included. The model has quite a bit of detail in his robes and headdress - which has a wading crane in relief. There is little a little flash between the end of the bottom of the right sleeve and the right leg. There was also some flash at the bottom of the tab. The model has a very flat pose, but given the amount of detail and the fan, this is not noticeable. This is a well done miniature - both in sculpting and production.

4426 Doji, Crane Clan $4.49
Sculpted by Brad Gorby

This 30mm figure is of a samurai warrior with a glaive posed ready to strike. The model is two piece, the second being a katana which is attached to the base tab by sprue. The model also includes a square plastic slotted base.

The figure has very little flash; the most notable is off the handle of the katana and between the end of the glaive and the left thigh. There is no pronounced mold line, most of it is disguised by the texture of the armor. Care must be take when cleaning up the line to not mar the details. This is a well-sculpted model. The armor details are very clean and the face and hair are not out of proportion. The only problem is with the packaging - the blister is just barely large enough to contain the figure. As a result, the glaive was bent when I received the pack. Straightening out the narrow weapon took quite a bit of work.

4427 Bayushi, Scorpion Clan $4.49
Sculpted by B. Gorby

What really drew me to Bayushi is that he's a (or at least looks a lot like it) zombie samurai. I have a thing for zombie miniatures and this just gave me an added bonus. His flesh is much worse off than his armor. His head is scarred in places, sunken eye sockets and gaping maw really say zombie to me. A light base coat of paint and some washes should help to bring out all of the detail on his armor and there is a lot of it. There were a few more bits of flash than usual on him, but I could not find the mold line at all. I plan on using him as the leader of a group of regular zombies

4428 Shugenja, Unicorn Clan $4.49
Sculpted by Jim Johnson

The last L5R figure is also a single-piece 30mm figure which includes a slotted base. Of the four figures, this one has the most flash - between the end of her staff and the base tab. There are other bits of flash at the end of the sleeves. Other than this, the figure is very clean, with hardly any noticeable mold line. The robes are well done and add to the dynamic pose of the figure.

This is the most dramatic sculpt of the four - the figure is holding her

staff aloft and has been captured in the middle of her incantation. This is my favorite figure from the entire LotFR line - I purchased one years ago based on its looks alone. Like two of the other figures, this one has a bent weapon - her staff. However, this does not appear to be the fault of the packaging.

14088 Thuusia, Painmage $5.49
Sculpted by C. Elliot

Thussia is in the service of the Darkspawn army and definitely has a dark-elf look to her even without a lick of paint on her. She also has a very goth feel and I'm half-tempted to paint her with a very pasty white pale skin tone and dark circles around her eyes. She is quite tall for a human-sized model and her dress, from the waist down anyway, is a patchwork of more buckles and claps that I care to count. Man, she's gotta have several slaves to cinch those up for her everyday. Her long cloak flows down from her shoulders to her feet and she has a small coffin shaped box hanging at her side. The collar from her cloak is around her neck, but otherwise she is nude from the waist up. If that offends you then go ahead and pass on this figure. If not, then read on. Her top half is slender and well proportioned without being artificially top-heavy. Perky, yes. Top-heavy, no. Her arms are covered in thin material from the shoulder to wrist and I found a little bit of flash on her fingers that was quickly removed. Her staff comes as a separate piece and it fits onto the right wrist. The staff had more flash than the rest of the figure and take care when removing it as some of the parts are thin and could be damaged. I'm definitely going to go ahead and pin the staff where the wrist meets her hand just to be careful. The joint will end up being kind of thin and I'd like to head off any repairs ahead of time.

14113 Vale Archers $13.49
Sculpted by Werner Klocke

This blister comes with three elven archers (or vale archers) each in a distinctively different poses. One is female, and the other two are male. All three come with the bow and the accompanying hand, detached. Mold lines where mostly contained to the inside legs, and the flash was only found on the detached bows. Each came with a square slotta base and the blister also came with a Warlord data card (a very nice little bonus I might add). As has become common practice for Reaper's Warlord models, the craftsmanship on these models is top of the line. All poses are well balanced and ripe with excellent detail. As you would expect, they are lightly armored, but the leather jerkins they wear are highly decorated with intricate designs. Each model has a quiver of arrows and a longsword strapped to their back, again with no shortage of elegant detail on the quiver and scabbard. Facial features are especially distinctive and are quite recognizably elven. These models could quite easily be used in RPG games as PC's as well as in Warlord.

14119 Vale Guard $13.49
Sculpted by Werner Klocke

This is another blister that comes with three models, all different poses each with their own personalities. As in the Vale Archers, not only is there a mix of poses, but also a mix of genders; two are male, and one is female. All come in three separate pieces, the main torso, Shield w/arm, and Sword w/ hand. These models had mold lines that where a bit more pronounced that normal for Warlord figures, but none that were not easily filed off. Flash was only found on the detached shields and swords. The blister also came with three plastic square slotta bases and a Warlord data card. I believe the data cards are a new development that I really like, especially if you are playing Warlord. The armor and outer wear of these models is very similar to the Vale Archers as is the pronounced and "elvish" facial features. Also like the archers, these models could easily be used as elven characters in RPG games. I like the look and feel of the models enough that I think my next Warlord army just might be elves.

14120 Dwarf Breakers $13.49
Sculpted by Werner Klocke

The Dwarf Breakers blister, still listed as Dwarf Swiftaxes on the Reaper website, contains three two-part dwarf figures (body and weapon), slotted plastic bases for each, and a single Warlord stat card. Each dwarf is clad in full armor with a Norman bowl helmet. As fits dwarves, the models have a sizable beard, but not so large as to obscure their chest. The figures are well formed with no flash or air-hole extrusion. There are noticeable mold lines, especially across the smooth helments, but this was easily cleaned up by scraping. The three bodies are all sculpted in various poses with lugs at the end of their wrists where the axes are mounted.

The axes come three to a sprue and are attached to the sprue at one point on the blade. A pair of cutters is required to remove the axes and some filing is needed to remove the tab residue. All three axes have some mold lines and air-hole extrusions. Clean up needs to be done carefully to not mar the finish on the handles. All three axes do fit on each of the models but putty is required to cover the joints. I would suggest that you try fitting all the axes to all the bodies to find the best fit and least amount of putty work. Though designed for Warlord, these figures would make good Hammerers or Dwarf Warriors for Warhammer.

14123 Lunk, Goblin Mage $4.49
Sculpted by Jason Wiebe

This blister contains a single goblin wizard a slotted base, and a paper card with the model's Warlord stats. The figure is very clean, there is no flash or mold lines and only some slight air-hole extrusions are present, mostly from the points of his staff head piece. The model has a decidedly hunch-back appearance, but this is caused by his back pack and bedroll more than his posture. The face has a lot of detail, but is rather flat - the nose is more bat like than the goblins of other manufacturers. Lunk is an average figure and will work well in a war band.

14125 Overloard Bondslaves $9.99
Sculpted by James Van Schaik

This is a three-pack of models that look like they are villagers or peasants with an attitude and a very ugly looking pig sticker. Or perhaps I should say pig basher? The weapon they carry looks like it would do as much crushing and chopping and it would do sticking and slicing. Anyway, each of these models comes in two pieces though the pieces differ slightly. One model is female, and she comes with her weapon and hands detached. The other two are male, and they come with their heads detached. For those of you that are "bits" collectors, this blister comes with three heads, so you can choose which ones to use and have the left over one for a little decoration somewhere. The blister also comes with a Warlord data card and the standard three plastic square slotta bases. For the most part mold lines and flash where held to a minimum, and all three are well sculpted with distinctive features. The two parts of the female figure are not pinned or socketed, but they fit together so smoothly that I don't think in matters in this case as there is plenty or surface area making contact. Besides being used in Warlord, I could see these models as being used as NPC's for an angry mob, thugs, or henchmen (uh… hench-persons?).

14129 Mi-Sher, Dervish Chief $3.99
Sculpted by Julie Guthrie

It's not easy to tell from the picture, or from the name, but this model is a "her" rather than a "him". I only say that because I was a little surprised that I had missed this little detail when first looking at the blister. Now that I look closely at the picture, I can see that it's a female, but it's something you can miss if your not looking closely (or don't have the Warlord core book). The model itself is very well done with fine detail and a pose that definitely brings to mind the "dancing blades". Mold lines and flash where more prominent her than is usual for Warlord figures and they required a bit of work to clean up. She is cast as a single piece which means that there is no work putting her together, so maybe that makes up for it. She comes with a Warlord data card and a plastic square slotta base. Besides her prominent dancing blades, she has a dagger strapped behind her and a lot of flowing scarves and clothes. Her studded leather cuirass, leggings and gauntlets finish off the picture. She looks like she would make a very nice ambidextrous warrior or ranger model in addition to her obvious uses in the game of Warlord.

14131 Elsabeth, Vampire $5.99
Sculpted by Werner Klocke

Elsabeth is the favored of Judas Bloodspire, main-man of the Necropolis army for Warlord, and is also a vampire. She comes in two pieces (left arm carrying a whip and the rest of the figure) and a square plastic slotta-base. The whip had a bit of flash on it and the mold line was visible along the edge of the weapon. She also has a drape that is attached to the leather armor on her left forearm. She has the same thing on her right arm that gives the swooping look of a cape but is more like artificial wings. The arm fit well into the socket and had a little room for rotation, but not a lot. The bottom third of the whip can also be bent if you like just be careful as it's kind of thin. Her right hand holds a long dagger (or short sword if you prefer) and the whole miniature has a sort of sweeping motion to it. There are two places on the tab at the bottom of the figure that you'll need to clip and I'm going to drop her onto a metal base just for some extra weight and stability. I tested her first on the plastic base that she came with and it was fine on a flat surface, but on an incline I'd rather have the weight of the metal base. Maybe I'm just being picky. Her corset is very detailed and I'd go thinner rather than thicker with the paint as to not hide any of it. The face is also very well done and her canines poke out to just be visible. It's either part of her headband or a very cool feature but Elsabeth has these big bat-looking ears poking our from under her hair. They could really be used to draw your eye to the head of the figure if painted just right.

14132 Yagun, Ogre Mage $9.99
Sculpted by Ben Siens

Yagun is a large one-piece ogre spellcaster that is wearing very little in the way of armor, hardened leather, and has a lot of exposed flesh to paint. As one piece you might expect him to be in

a flat pose but he's actually well animated and looks like he's walking forward and using his staff to augment the casting of a spell. The mold line was visible pretty much all the way around the figure but it was not thick and cleaned up easily. There were several small bits of flash also. The real star of this figure is his face and wild mane of hair and beard. He's right in the middle of the verbal component of whatever spell he's casting and his teeth and tongue are visible. As an ogre he's also very well muscled and the definition is very appropriate for his race. Yagun comes with a 40mm plastic square base. Whenever I think of an ogre mage I get blue skin in my head and can't get rid of it. My previous ogre mage (Reaper 02486) has blue skin and I think I'll do the same here. Yeah, his data card has him painted in more tan colors, but I'll follow my old-school roots here.

14134 Ivy Crown Archers $13.49
Sculpted by Bobby Jackson

In this blister you get three human archers, three plastic square bases and a data card. None of the three are duplicates but they are in similar poses, all having either just loosed, or are about to fire, their arrows towards the enemy. They are wearing a mostly leather armor with a few metal plates on one shoulder and each has a metal helmet but only one is wearing it. The other two have it strapped to their belt. Each had at least one tab that needed to be clipped off and the area cleaned. For all of them it was between the bow and their lower torso and there was also a tab between the sword and the figure on two of them. The third had a similar tab on the sword but it connected down to the tab by his feet so it will probably go unnoticed when he's based. Each had a few very small bits of flash that needed to be cleaned up and the mold line was hard to detect. In addition to their bow and quiver each also has a sheathed longsword and a pouch on their belt. Of the two non-helmeted ones the facial detail is very well done and I especially like the one that has a chili-bowl haircut, some rather lengthy sideburns and a goatee. I think that your eye will be draw to the head (or helmet) of these figures more than anything else. I have to admit that after looking at them in the blister for a minute I came to the conclusion that they would make outstanding Firstborn Archers in Chronopia in addition to their obvious use in Warlord.

16501 Necropolis Starter Box $39.95
Multiple Sculptors

This starter army for Warlord is listed on the box as containing ten skeleton warriors, one Warlord (Judas Bloodspire, Vampire), one Necromancer (Malek) and a familiar. In the box that I got there were actually twelve skeleton warriors instead of ten. There were also enough bases for all of the models so I can't be sure if this was a packaging mistake or if the text on the front of the box is wrong. All of the bases you get are 25mm plastic slotta-bases, which is understandable considering the price of the set. If they were going to toss in 13-15 metal bases I'd expect the price to be significantly higher. You also get one d10 and two small d6's along with a stat sheet for the included models. Each of the skeletons needed some cleaning. This was mostly limited to a little bit of flash/mold line cleaning, but every one needed some attention. The familiar is a little winged impish creature that carries a small spear and also wears a backpack and bedroll. It too had some small bits of flash that needed to be cleaned up but the mold line was unnoticeable. The first character is a single-piece necromancer that carries a sword and staff. The sword was slightly bent in the box, but this might not occur in each package. Malek stands noticeably taller than the skeletons, partly due to the many skulls that he's standing on. His robe looks pretty tattered but the rest of his garments look quite well kept. There were some bits of flash around the extremities but I could only see a faint mold line in a couple of places. His breastplate is well done with a skull ornament and what look like jeweled ribs. The sword also has some extra detail with runes along the blade. Judas Bloodspire is a three-piece model with his sword/right hand and cape coming separate from the rest of the model. The blade of the sword is attached to the tab at his feet so be careful when removing it is you could damage it if you rush things. I found more flash on Judas than any of the other figures in this set. The sword was the only piece that I could not see the mold line on, but it also had some flash. He is dressed in plate armor and a frilly neckerchief befitting a member of the undead royalty. His fangs poke out from between his lips but they are not over-exaggerated. Just enough for you to get some paint on. The sword fit easily into place without the need for any putty. If you wanted, you could get right to work on him now and not even put his cape on. All the pictures I've seen of this model have the cape on but it is an option and the figure won't look bad at all. Of course, the cape is made for Judas and you'll need to do some putty work to get it to fit perfectly on another figure. It a large flowing affair that really appears to have a life of its own. I'd suggest painting him without the cape then painting the cape and then attaching it to him. You're saving between $7.55 and $14.29, depending on if it's ten or twelve skeleton warriors that you are supposed to get. Either way you are coming out ahead when compared to buying them in single blisters and this makes a great base to a Necropolis army.

16502 Reven Starter Box $39.95
Multiple Sculptors

This box contains a 750-point starter set for the Reven army. The box includes Varaug the Great, Warlord Ombur Skulltooth, Shaman familiar, Lurgh, Assassin and eight Bull Orc fighters. In addition it includes a d10 and two small d6's. Since this box is a starter set, it also includes a glossy army list under the shrink wrap cover. This list includes the statistics for each of the figures along with their spells, equipment, and magic items. The figures are packed in pinch-out foam, which is fine for packaging but I wouldn't use it for storage. The Bull Orc figures are all 3-part models - head, shield and left-hand, and body. There are three variant heads, one each on a sprue and you get 3 sprues. All three head sprues show quite a bit of air-hole extrusions and there are noticeable mold lines around the crown of the head. All of this

can easily be cleaned up by scraping with a knife. Two of the heads are attached to the sprue by the front of their jaw while the third is attached at the base of the skull. The tab residue will need to be filed down. The heads have small lugs at the bottom that fit into slots on the bodies at the necks. Some of the heads fit snugly while others require a bit of filing to get them to fit flush. In one case, a bit of putty was required to cover a large gap. The bodies themselves come in 3 poses - 3 bodies with axes upraised, 3 bodies with swords half-raised, and 2 with swords upraised. All of the bodies exhibited a mold line along the arms and shoulders and most had a bit of flash on the left wrist. Two of the axe warriors show evidence of a slight misalignment of the mold on their right arms. A bit of filing and putty was required to smooth out this transition. All of the bodies are molded with tabs to fit into 25mm square plastic slotted bases - which were provided in the box. The left arms end at the wrist where the shield hands are to be attached. There is no socket for a lug on the arm but the flat area is large enough to allow for pinning. The axe warriors arms are sculpted close to their bodies and all three required a bit of bending to free up enough space for the shield had to fit. Like the heads, the shield hands come three to a sprue and there are three in the box. Two of the shields are iron-bound wood and the third is all metal. There is no flash and little if any mold lines on the shields. Varaug is also a three-part model consisting of left arm, right hand, and body. The body has some air-hole extrusions and a noticeable mold line along his right arm, but there is no flash. The model is a head taller that the bull orcs and the dreadlocks are a nice touch. The left arm and right hand are provided on a single sprue. There is some flash at the points and a noticeable mold line on the axe handle. The axe was also slightly bent, but it was easily straightened. The right hand has a socket that fits on a lug on the end of the right arm. This piece fits snugly and does not require any putty. The left arm has a lug that fits into a shoulder socket on the body. This is a larger lug and does require putty to cover the joint. The last three figures - Lurgh the assassin, Ombur Skulltooth the Shaman, and the familiar are all single-piece figures Lurgh had a bit of flash between his left arm and his cloak as well as some air-hole extrusions on the tips of his claw glove. The flash on the cloak required a knife to remove due to its proximity to the figure's sword. The Ombur Skulltooth figure has a metal sprue connecting a charm he's holding in this left hand with his left leg. This sprue requires clippers to remove. The only other mold artifacts were some air-hole extrusions at the tips of his staff. Finally, the centipede familiar had no mold lines and only a few air-hole extrusions. All in all, this is an excellent starter set. Some of the figures require extra work to putty and position them, but over all, this is a good boxed set of orcs for Warlord or any other miniatures game.

16503 Crusader Starter Box $39.95
Multiple Sculptors

This box set came with twelve models, Duke Gerrard #14068 (Warlord for the Crusaders), Valandil #14045 (mage for the Crusaders), a familiar (from the #14087 pack), and nine Templar warriors (the box said it came with only eight, so I'm not sure if I just got lucky or not). Included in the box are some dice, two small six-sided dice and a normal sized ten-sided die. Together (with spells) the models in this box will allow a player to field a Crusader army of about 750 points. The sample army they give comes to 752 after spells and extra equipment. Counting just the bodies, the points come to 607 (634 if you get the extra model). For the dollar cost, this pack is definitely worth it. Not counting the dice I calculate the value of the models to be about $53.75 if you where to buy them separately (make that $49.25 if you only count the eight Templar Warriors the box says you are supposed to get) which equates to roughly a %20 savings. As for the models, Duke Gerrard is definitely an impressive model and looks to have more armor on than a tank. He has a big war axe in one hand, and what looks like a two handed sword strapped to his back. He comes in four solid cast pieces that went together quite nicely. He is a heavier than normal model, but nothing on him appears to be sensitive to damage. Being the Warlord of the Crusaders, you would expect some extra effort put in the detail of this model, and in this case your expectations would be well satisfied. This guy simply radiates strength and leadership and could easily fill the role of a warrior king. It's a very well sculpted model. The Templar Warriors I reviewed just last issue so I won't repeat myself talking about them too much (see FR #17) but these guys could easily fill the role of human front line troops in just about any fantasy game of this scale. Valandil, the mage for the Crusaders. Is not your run of the mill mage. Like most of the other Warlord models, this one is well sculpted with a very good eye to detail. He is a single solid cast piece with hardly any flash or mold lines. The reason I say he not like the

normal mage one might imagine is that in his right hand is an eight foot pole arm, and there is a two handed sword strapped across his back. His hair, flowing cape and decorations almost give him the look of a conquistador. He does have a scroll case on his belt which is the only overt sign to his real profession. If all mages looked like this, I might play them more often. The final model that comes with the starter army is a familiar. I don't know if the same familiar comes in every starter army, but the one that came with this one is a little fairy holding open what I'm guessing is a spell book. Again, not your run of the mill familiar, but you will find that the quality of the figure is also a rung or two above normal familiar models. She stands less than half the height of the other models, but even with her diminutive size there is some obvious effort put into her model down to the detail on her wings and the leather binding of the book. I'm not sure about having her as a familiar yet, but the model is excellent. But since in the game of Warlord type of creature a spell caster actually has as a familiar has no real significance (at least that I can tell), the quality of the model is all there is to judge it by.

61023 Crimson Banner Exutioner $4.49
Sculpted by Bobby Jackson

The Crimson Banner Executioner is a single-piece 25mm ninja figure with an integrated base. The figure is dressed in a full ninja outfit that covers his face. He is armed with a sword held down and to his right. The sculpting is clean with minimal flash on the bottom of the base.

There is a noticeable mold line that runs up the left leg, along the left arm, over the shoulder and head and down the other side. The mold line breaks up an otherwise smooth model. Judicious scraping with a knife removed this mold line without damaging the details of the figure. The lanyard on the sword also has this mold line and it required more care when cleaning to not damage the details. This is a rather simple figure which will benefit from a careful paint job.

61026 Slug, Wood Aspect Dragon Blooded $4.49
Sculpted by Bobby Jackson

The next figure is also a single-piece 25mm figure with integrated base. This figure is larger than the other two - bit is more a case of being fatter than being out of scale. Slug is holding aloft a wooden staff in his right hand and is watching it while he appears to be casting a spell. There is some movement in his robes, but not overly much - as if he just raised the staff.

As with the other two models, the only flash present is on the underside of the base. The mold line is on noticeable on the top off the figures right arm. A light filing was sufficient to remove this without damaging the robe's details. This rather portly figure has a very large, cummerbund made of a single wide cloth wrapped many times about his middle - the effect is that of an aspiring Sumo rather than a martial arts expert. This gives the model a humorous air which is only enhanced by his goatee. However, the high collar on his outer robe is a bit much.

61027 Fire Aspect Dragon Blooded $4.49
Sculpted by Bobby Jackson

The Fire Aspect is also a single-piece 25mm figure of a woman in a layered dress with large blousing sleeves with integrated base. The model is sculpted in the moment just after delivering a side-kick. There is very little flash on the figure, only along the underside of the base. There is a bit of sprue connecting the lifted right leg to the base, but this was easily removed. This is a well sculpted figure - the dynamic pose and the flowing of the dress make it appear that the model just completed its kick. The figure's face is turned toward the side, eyeing whomever received the kick. The layers of the dress are well done and the folds look natural. This then server to highlight the oversized and chunky necklace. This piece is definitely out of place. It obscures the neck as if the sculptor meant to not sculpt a neck. I'll tone this down when painting to lessen its impact on the figure.

61028 Village Shaman $4.49
Sculpted by Bobby Jackson

This is a single piece solid cast model with its own attached base. There was some flash and minor mold lines, but most were easily removable. The only thing that took a little care was removing the support that went between the upraised foot and the base. The staff has several branches at the top that are fine and easily bent with a slight touch. Luckily it's a tree branch so you can't really tell if it is in its intended position or not… I mean it's supposed to be crooked right? The other weak point of the model is the ankle of the foot that is still on the base. This however is strong enough to stand up to normal use so it should not be a problem. I won't hazard a guess as to the gender of this model (an insult to whichever gender it is I'm sure, but that's still better than getting it wrong) but it's obviously engaged in some vigorous ritual that involves dancing and chanting. The mass of garments the Shaman is wearing looks to have talismans hanging from it, but besides that, there is little in the way of ornamentation that a painter will have to worry about. That's not to say the model is lacking in any detail, because the garments themselves have a very stark texture giving it a very nice 3-D feel to it that should really stand out with a little ink and dry brushing. I

personally see this model best used as an NPC either as a protagonist or as an antagonist (could work either way).

Master Series Paint Set $2.99 per bottle

We received a sample set of the new Master Series Paint set from Reaper. In addition to the paints it included two models from the Dark Haven line. I'm not sure if all of the preliminary/sample sets came with the same figs but this one included Telmoraine, Elven Warrior (#2875) and Arran Rabin, Conjuror (# 2873), and both are new releases. Arran comes in two pieces, his forward leg being the part you have to attach, and Telmoraine comes as a single piece. Both are good models to use as player characters or NPC's. Arran I especially like because of his out of the ordinary pose (thus requiring the leg to come detached). There are ten squeeze bottle paints that came in the set. This set was not quite through with the final assembly process so a few of them where not yet labeled. The colors that were labeled were: Amber Gold, Antique Gold, Brick Red, Fair Skin, Fire Red, Olive Green and Snow Shadow. The three unlabeled ones where easy to identify as Black, White and Metallic Steel. Mostly, the colors where aptly named, with two exception. To me, the Brick Red was a deeper purple than the name implies, and Amber Gold was more of a "wheat yellow" color (after seeing what the color looks like, after the fact, I can see where the name Amber Gold might come from, but you don't usually get that when first reading the name of the color). The paints are water based with an excellent texture and viscosity. They are considerably thinner and more vibrant than lower quality paints. Some of the colors, the lighter ones as you might expect, needed more thin coats of paint to cover the same area as thicker paints that I've previously used. This was mostly contained to the Fire Red, Olive Green, Amber Gold and White. The Darker colors had less of a problem. The downside to this (if you want to call it that) is that you'll generally need additional coats of the lighter colors but the upside (and this definitely is one) is that you'll be much less likely to cover up detail on your figures and thinning of these paints is pretty much just not needed. I was very favorably impressed with the metallic colors, the Antique Gold in particular. These not only did an outstanding job in covering, but they also had a very nice smooth clean look to them when dry. With the metallic colors, I found that I was able to achieve very nice results with less effort than I would normally expect with other paints. I have very rarely used squeeze bottle paints, so the jury is not completely in when it comes to my opinion of them. I can see that they should have less paint wasted due to drying out since they naturally protect the paint better. But the easiest way to use them is by squirting the paint on a pallet, which by its nature would waste any paint not used. At first look, I thought that the paint wasted on the pallet far exceeds the paint that would be lost due to drying. I did find however, to my surprise, that it is not too difficult to come very close to using it all (if not actually doing so) if you squeeze out small amounts at a time. You quickly become familiar with the amount of paint that is required for a task and the waste ended up being very minimal. So at this point I guess I'm forced to admit that the squeeze bottles might actually be better than the alternative screw-top caps. I however reserve the right to modify this opinion after I see how they perform over an extended period of time.

Reviews by Mark Theurer, J Michael Tisdel and Clay Richmond

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PIP81004 Rutger Shaw, Cygnaran Adventurer $7.99

At first glance Mr. Shaw reminded me a lot of another Cygnar miniature, the Journeyman Warcaster for Warmahcine. In fact, he's in very close to a mirror pose to the first model. Both are pictured below to give you a look at what I saw. Rutger wears a heavy overcoat over some leathers with a few bits of plate and normal clothing. His right hand is down by his pistol holster while his left holds a sword. What has become a signature item in the Iron Kingdoms world, a pair of goggles, sits on his head just above his eyes. Multiple straps, pouches, buttons and studs add to the detail of the miniature. The only flash I found was on the hilt of his sword and it was tiny. The mold line was only visible up around his shoulders and it was faint and easily taken care of. Like all of the other rpg miniatures that Privateer Press puts out, Rutger did not come with a stat card for Warmachine, so don't think it's missing he just doesn't have one. He does not bear the steampack on his back that Iron Kingdoms warcasters do so he's easily usable in any fantasy game of your liking.

PIP81010 Valeria Alvaro, Ordic Pistoleer $4.99

Valeria is in less of an open, dynamic pose than Rutger, but this is a bit of a deception as she has both hands on her pistols ready to lead the lead fly. She is dressed in very light armor, leather at best but likely enchanted, and wears a corset under her jacket that shows off her (non-fantasy enhanced) cleavage. She is not weighted down with lots of adventuring gear, but does have a total of four pistols and holsters, a long scarf and a pair of goggles. I only found the mold line down on the lower half of her legs and there was no flash at all. With guns, she's pretty restricted to either the Iron Kingdoms world or one where your GM has introduced, at least, gunpowder technology but it's a very good looking model that I'd recommend you find a use for.

PIP81003 Taryn di la Rovissi, Llaelese Gun Mage $5.99

Yup, another chick with guns! Taryn comes as a two-piece model with her left hand/gun separate from the rest of the model. The left hand/gun needed just a bit of cleaning on the mold line, but otherwise easily fit into place in the socket that was provided. She wears a bit more in the way of armor than Valeria including a metal bustier. She also has just two pistols and has a cloak that covers most of her head and hair unlike Valiera who'se long hair it tied back in a ponytail but is a very visible part of the model. On the main part of the figure the mold line was mostly visible around her hood and shoulders but this was not much at all. She also had no flash. In fact, all three of these figures needed very little cleanup time at all. In addition to using her as a gun mage

PIP41012 Gorten Grundback Mercenary Battlegroup $44.99

Ok, on to some Warmachine models now. Ever since Michael brought a set of these back from GenCon Indy I've been drooling over them and finally have my own. In this set you get three light Warjacks (Grundback Gunners), one heavy Warjack (Ghordson Driller) and a warcaster (Gorten Grundback). All are multi-piece models and you'll need to devote some time for assembly. The three light Warjacks each have two feet, two legs, a main body and a gun along with a round plastic base. All six of the feet come as separate pieces and about half needed a bit of flash trim or mold line erasure. Each pair of legs comes on a metal sprue so they'll need to be removed and the only cleaning that was needed was long the mold line, which was minimal. The body had a few tiny bits of flash and a few places where a faint mold line was visible, ditto for the gun. These light guys went together very easily once a few minutes of cleanup was taken care of. The Driller will take a bit more time for assembly as it comes with eleven parts. I thought about pinning it together but then discovered that several of the points that need to be glued together have a pretty decent amount of surface area and should hold together just fine with super-glue. The whole upper body, steam vents and one leg is cast as a single piece. It was really well done and I found just one very small, and faint, mold line that needed flattening. The other leg had a small bit of flash but

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it fit well onto the lower part of the torso and you can give it some range of motion instead of just standing flat on the ground. I did need to do a little bit of trimming to get the shoulders to fit onto their sockets on the body perfectly. Maybe a minute or two each, but then they were fine. You can rotate each of them as you wish for some added pose possibilities. The picture has the drill on the right side and the pincers on the left but you could switch these around if you like. There are also two shield plates, one for each arm up around where the shoulder meets the top of the torso of the model. These were on a separate metal sprue and had to be removed and cleaned where they met the tab. The last two pieces of the Driller were the head and belly plate. I plan on assembling the whole model, minus the head and belly plate and then painting all three of these final 'pieces' before final assembly. You could opt not to but I think you'll make detailing the head harder if you put it all together first. I could be wrong but I just have this feeling. Gorten comes in three pieces, two arms you could also get mileage out of this figure as a rogue, albeit one that announces her presence with loud pistol shots unless they are magically silenced, or she would also make a good ranger.

and the rest of the model. He required just about no cleanup at all and his hand that's holding the hammer has some rotation possibilities. He's a bit stockier than a normal dwarf but then again he's wearing a honkin' big suit of plate armor with a power unit and a long chain cape. You can only see his face from the nose up as the rest is covered by his armor, but you can make out his balding head and the very stylish goggles are present. So, you don't play Warmachine? Ok, well not really ok, but you could use easily this set as an armored dwarven spellcaster (providing your dm allows guns and at least some kind of technology in his/her game) and his group of automatons. Great set and not a bad deal when you consider that the Heavy Warjacks alone are in the high $20's and you get a 316 point warband that's ready to play.

THUNDERBOLT MOUNTAIN

Goblin Archers

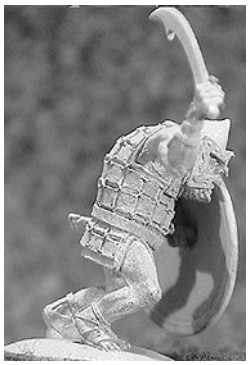
First in Thunderbolt Mountain's line of 30mm goblins that I got to take a look at are four different goblin archers. They are all

single-piece models that come on an integrated base. The base is slightly larger than a 20mm square but there is plenty of unused space on the base that could be clipped away if you wanted to re-mount them for a rank & file mass combat game. Flash was prominent on each of the models but the mold line was just about undetectable on each of them. The flash was mostly on the extremities of the figure, like at the ends of the bows and also down on the base itself. Between the four of them it took me between five and ten minutes to get them ready to prime. These goblins are sculpted in much more of a classical D&D or Tolkien

style. They are not cartooney or exaggerated at all. Their faces are somewhat feral looking and they have long stringy hair that comes down past their shoulders. The are skinny but you can still make out muscle tone on them. In addition to their bow and quiver each also carries a short sword and wears a loincloth. These guys go for $2.50 each or you can pick up six for $10.00. They are also sold in packs of twenty for $25.00, which ends up cutting their price in half so that's a very good way to pick up a unit on the cheap.

Heavy Goblins

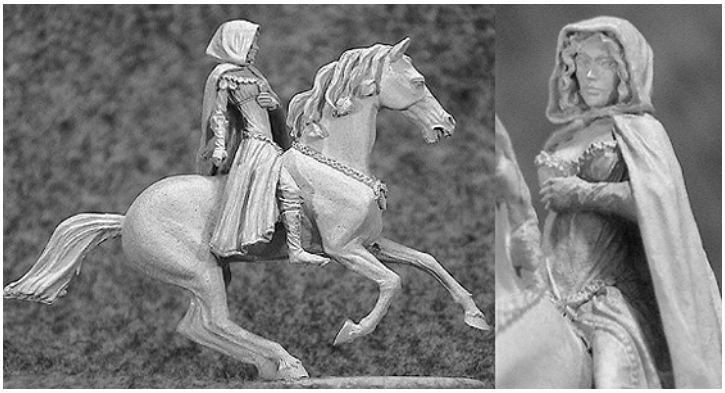
The next four goblins are wearing either chain, scale or banded plate armor. Each figure comes with separate sword, shield and spear, but they come on integrated bases like those above. They all require assembly and cleaning and they had a similar level of flash as the archers, but the mold lines were present but faint. The weapons were undamaged but the spears did get bent in shipping so you'll need to bend them back to being straight. They are made of pretty firm metal and are thick enough that I expect they'll maintain their shape as long as they're not tossed around. In addition to their varied armor they all wear metal helmets and carry a dagger. Three of them also wear sandals while the last is barefoot. You'll spend some more time getting these guys cleaned up and put together than the archers but they can also be easily used for any rpg or fantasy combat game. These guys are priced slightly higher than the archers at $3.00 each or



you can pick up six for $12.00. They are also sold in packs of twenty for $30.00, again dropping their price in half.

Wood Elf Noble Lady in Traveling Clothes

Off of the goblins for a while and back into Thunderbolt Mountain's 30mm range of elves. Here we have a horse and its rider, separate pieces, and the figure on foot. She is wearing very a light and frilly dress with gloves that makes her look more like she belongs in town or in some lofty political or royal position rather than in the middle of a battle, but I think she'd do well as a



cleric type or spellcaster. The foot version of the figure had some flash around the base and her hands but this was very easy to clean and the clean detail on the figure, especially the face, was just perfect. There was no mold line at all and she will fit easily onto a 20mm (or larger) plastic base if you're looking to use her in a rank/file game. The horse had several bits of flash that needed to be clipped around both front hooves and a tiny bit at its tail and chin. The mold line along the back was barely visible. You could move the body a bit to have it rearing up more if you like since neither of the front feet are attached to the base. The seated lady will need to have a piece of metal clipped that attaches to both her feet. Don't try to just bend it off as her ankles are a slightly weak point that you could end up breaking. She had some more flash than either the horse or the lady on foot, but no defects. She also has her hood drawn up over her head unlike her walking counterpart. The detail on her gown is superb and she should paint up very well if you take some time with her. You'll get the set of three figures for $6.00 and can also buy them individually (on foot for $2.50 and the mounted combo for $3.50) or in greater quantity at a discount. Without discernable pointy ears she can pass for an human, elf or half-elf without any trouble and I have been toying with the idea of building a Warhammer Fantasy Battle Bretonnian army and this figure will fit in perfectly with the rest of the Thunderbolt Mountain Arthurian line which I plan to use to the whole army if possible.

Reviews by Mark Theurer

Many of Fictional Reality's French readers have asked for more reviews from European miniature companies and we were lucky enough to hook up with Fenryll to bring you the following reviews. Fenryll produces several kinds of figures (fantasy, sci-fi, humorous, etc) and all of them are done in resin instead of the metal or plastic figs that you are probably more familiar with. The prices posted in this article reflect the Euro prices on Fenryll's website and a recent Euro-Dollar conversion. You local store's prices may differ from those listed here.

The first thing you'll notice with any of Fenryll's figures is that they are drastically lighter than anything metal of the same size. Casting their figures in resin accomplishes this and, as you'll read in the figure reviews below, also allows for the same level of detail to be maintained on the final figure.

FM085 Half-Ogre Paladin €9.50 (about $12.37)

This holy ogre warrior comes in three pieces (ogre, log and hammer) on an integrated base that is a rectangle of about 20mm x 40mm. The hammer in the picture is glued to his side but there is no specific notch for it so you could really put it anywhere you wanted or even drop it onto another figure. There were some faint mold lines on the hammer and these (as well as any that you find on any Fenryll figures) are best taken care of with a very sharp hobby knife and then sort of scraping the mold line to remove it. If you just try to apply pressure and cut it you're more likely to cut into the body of the piece and damage the figure. There were also two molding vents that run from the handle of the hammer to the head. I found the best way to take care of these is to score them repeatedly until you start getting through the resin and then either gently break them off and scrape off any remaining extra bits or just be patient and slowly and carefully keep scoring it until you're all the way through. Patience will definitely pay off here and rushing things will probably not result in you getting done any faster. The log that he carries has a nicely ridged bark with several mushrooms growing on it. The rest of the figure, pretty much 90% of the model, is the half-ogre himself and he's really big enough to pass for a regular ogre too. He wears plate and a little bit of leather from the waist down, along with one bare foot, and very little on his upper half. In some places the mold line was visible, but even where I could find one it was more faint than your average metal miniature. There were a few little bits of resin webbing that needed to be cleaned up along his arms and between his legs. I'll be basing him on a more standard 40mm square base but this figure is easily usable as a PC or just tossed in with the rest of your ogres that need to be killed by a hero. Another use would definitely be as a leader of a unit of ogres.

FM109 Forest Giant €30.00 (about $39.04)

How tall is the Forest Giant? About 5.5" tall from the bottom of his base to the top of the horns on his head. Seven pieces (base, legs and torso, head and horns, right arm, left arm, loincloth and finally the handle for his sword) make up this model and after

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cleanup it was a pretty easy assembly. The base measures about 2.75" across and needed a bit of sanding to get it down to being perfectly flat. If you're not a perfectionist you can do without sanding the bottom of the base though. It really needed nothing else in the way of cleaning and it's littered with tree branches, weeds, dirt, grass and rocks. Just like you'd expect to find on the floor of a forest. On the legs/torso I needed to scrape the bottom of his feet to get them flat. This was more needed than leveling of the base. No mold lines to speak of on the body but there were two venting (or injection?) bits left over that needed to be trimmed down and also a few very thin (you can see through them actually) resin webs that needed to be removed. Once the bottoms of his feet were leveled he fit perfectly into place on the base. Each arm had very faint mold lines and, as with the half-ogre, you'll want to scrape them gently to remove them instead of just cutting. The resin is pretty strong but you can mar it easily if you're not careful. Just two fingers and a thumb on each hand so I guess he can't give anyone the finger, but it does add some uniqueness to the final model. Each arm fit into place, right below the shoulder, without trouble but there is not a lot of room for moving them into other positions. For me, this was not an issue. The head and face look good with a visage that only a mother could love. Actually, I bet his mom is as ugly as he is and probably ditched him after birth. It was a nice change to have a giant that was not basically just a big ugly looking human. He's a big ugly looking non-human, but he'll definitely stand out on the gaming table. The last two pieces (loincloth and sword handle) had to be cut off of a resin sprue (I can't stress enough to be careful and take your time) but they both needed just minimal cleaning and fit into place just fine. A very nice different kind of giant that will make a nice surprise for your players when you set him down in front of them during some wilderness encounter.

FM112 Cave Ogre €7.00 (about $9.11)

Next on the block is a cave-dwelling ogre that comes in four pieces (ogre, shield, large cleaver and base). The base is a 40mm large square base is textured and looks live it's covered in sand or dirt with some patches of stone and moss. Like the giant's base I went ahead and sanded it down to be perfectly level. His shield looks very much like a wooden door that he probably ripped off its hinges and now carries around for protection. The underside appears to have a piece of leather stretched across it and both sides have clean detail that will be easy to paint. His massive

cleaver (with attached hand) didn't have a visible mold line but down at the far edge of the blade there was some extra resin that needed to be removed. I scored it along the edge of the blade until I was almost all the way through and then it snapped off cleanly. Both the blade and shield fit perfectly onto the ogre. He is wearing bits of plate, chain and leather, but also has a lot of bare flesh. The Fenryll artist painted him in a pale flesh color that works well since he's a cave dweller and probably doesn't get much sun. There were three places on the body where a resin "knob" was left that needed to be trimmed and a few very thin resin webs here and there. The bottom of both feet also had resin tabs that needed to be removed so he'd stand flat on the base. In a similar fashion to the giant he is not quite your standard ogre. He has an elongated neck that stretches out away from his body at what is pretty much a 90-degree angle. It's almost 3/4" from where his chest ends to the end of his lips. Nothing wrong with that, in fact, it's another neat detail that makes him stand out from the crowd. Overall detail was quite good on this model with scars here and there and detailed muscles that are not overdone.

RPG09 La Paladine €9.50 (about $12.37)

There are three distinctly different looking female warriors in this blister. All are solid cast plastic model with an attached square base. Two come in two pieces, while the third is a single piece. One of the two-piece models even comes with a choice of two different "bits" to add to the left hand (the choices being either a shield or a second weapon). There is a fair amount of flash that needs to be cleaned off, but no mold lines that I could detect. The armor varies from model to model with one being in full chain, another being in mostly plate, and the third being somewhere in between. I'm guessing from the blister title that these ladies are supposed to be "Holy" warriors, but in truth there is nothing in their attire or equipment that overtly declares them as such. In fact they are all generic enough to function well in the role of any PC or NPC that is a female fighter as well as a pala-

din. For being plastic, the detail on these ladies is pretty impressive.

FM057 Les Hommes Dragons €9.50 (about $12.37)

I [Clay] don't speak French, but I'm guessing the name of these guys means something like "Dragon men" because that is definitely what they look like. Three models come in the blister, all solid cast plastic. Two come with the head of their spear detached. The third model is wielding a big axe that does not have to be attached. All also have two wings that have to be glued on. All have square bases that are a part of the model. The look of these guys is pretty cool and they are not your run of the mill "lizardmen" though without the wings they could probably be passed off as such. The wings of course make these "lizards" a tad more unique. Then again, the horns and dragon scales might also be clues that these are not your standard everyday Lizards. All three models are in different poses, and as mentioned above, not all have the same weapons. As one might expect, they are wearing little armor beyond their natural scales, though there are a couple plates strapped on here and there. One is even wearing a belt, but I have no idea what the belt is holding up. There is a fair amount of flash but no discernable molds lines. These guys will make good unique monster models.

MG02 Chaotic Orc Chariot €19.00 (about $25.25)

The Char Or du Chaos, or Orc Chariot of Chaos, is a multi-part 28mm resin model of an boar-pulled orc chariot. The model comes in 15 pieces, including two boars, the single orc driver, and the multi-part chariot itself. Being a resin model, it has more flash that would a similar sized metal one. Careful scraping and, in some cases, sawing is required to clean the figures. The feet of the orc and the front spar have thick sprue attached which needed to be sawn off. Clippers might crack the resin. The amount of detail on the model is very good - and exceptional for a resin model. The boars are not identical - one has a leather mast and the other a mohawk, but both have an integrated square base. The chariot itself has a cockpit made of wood with horn and leather supports. The front has a large horned skull. The skull has its mouth open and the spar for the yoke fits into the mouth. This required some careful filing to make it fit, and then it required putty to smooth it out. The orc's left hand and its whip are a separate piece that can be just glued. it doesn't have a lug and socket arrangement, so I pinned it for extra strength. When I finish painting the model, I will glue the orc into the cockpit. This model comes with six extra detail pieces. Two scythes to attack to the chariot wheels are on one sprue while three weapons - mace, spear, and flail - are on another. The last extra bit is a round shield. These pieces are not required, but do add character to the model. All in all, this is a very good chariot model. There is more detail to it than comparable 28 mm orc chariots, but, as it is made of resin, it needs special care in assembly. One last thing to keep in mind with all of these resin figures is that you'll want to clean them in soapy water before assembly and priming them.

Reviews by Mark Theurer, Clay Richmond and J Michael Tisdel

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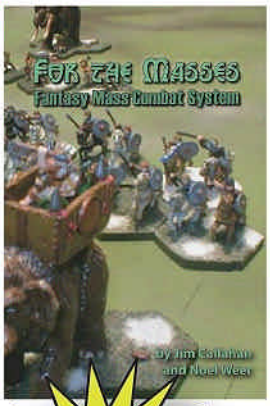

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Hostages HST001 $10.00

Three new sets of figures came in from Tactical Miniatures and this group of hostages if the first for us to look at. In the set you get five modern adults each bound and/or gagged. First is a female that's standing with her wrists bound in front of her. She's slightly stooped over, but for the most part looks unharmed. Her shirt shows off her midriff and is sleeveless. A nice detail is her bra strap that has come down over one of her arms. This could have easily been avoided by the sculptor but it's a nice realistic touch. The face is well done and the strands of her hair stand out well. No mold line nor any flash to be found on this figure. The second figure, also a female, is kneeling with her arms bound behind her back and she is also gagged. She's wearing a skirt, blouse, jacket and boots. All of her clothing is well done and even though all you can see is her eyes and nose there is definitely a panicked look to her. Again, no mold line nor any flash. Number three is an adult male that is dressed in slacks and a short-sleeve shirt. Detail on this figure includes a chain that dangles down from where his wallet would be in his back pocket (I guess the terrorists forgot to lift it or just don't care) and sandals. Put regular shoes on him like everyone else? Nope, and I like that. So far, each of these figures are genuinely unique, except for the fact that they're all hostages of course. His face is very cleanly done and he looks somewhat angry, like maybe he's trying to bluff his way through some conversation as a bad-ass. Next is another male, but he's sitting Indian-style on the ground with his hands tied and a gag around his mouth. He's wearing a pullover shirt and long pants with tennis shoes. He doesn't look quite as nervous as the sitting female. Last in this group is an older male that has his hands tied in front of him. He appears slightly stooped over or maybe a bit frail. His suit is a bit disheveled and his tie is undone. The head is superbly sculpted with a receding hairline, a bald spot, a moustache and a very pained look on his face. Either he's really, really nervous or he has to use the bathroom very badly. I was very impressed with this set of figures. They are all very nicely detailed, devoid of any defects, flash or mold lines and pretty much ready to prime as soon as you glue them to a base. Use of them might be a bit limited but they will work perfectly as hostages, go figure, in any modern setting (horror, action/adventure, even modern fantasy and especially in a superhero game) and could also probably be tossed into a sci-fi setting without too much trouble. I can't see them being used as PCs but for NPCs to get in the way of bullets they are perfect.

Big City PD BPD001 $10.00

So, who's going to save our poor hostages? Well, one set of candidates would be this group of boys (and one girl) in blue. In this group you get two cops armed with shotguns, two with pistols and one with an assault rifle. Each comes in a pretty standard police uniform of slacks and a button-down shirt. Their badge is plainly visible along with patches on each sleeve. Except for the firearm that they are carrying each is similarly equipped. Four out of five carry a flashlight, all have visible handcuffs or a pouch for them, most have pouches for extra pistol clips, all have radios, and a few have a visible pouch for pepper spray. Those not carrying a pistol in their hand have it still sitting in their holster and just one of them carries a nighstick. Just from an equipment standpoint I was very please to see the amount of gear that they were given. There was a bit of flash in a few places on a couple of the figures. One pistol needed a bit of trimming and a few of the arms head tiny bits of flash on them. Nothing terrible, but also not completely flash-free like the hostages. The mold lines were also visible on each of them, but just barely so and it was mostly down on the lower section of their pants. I'd say it took maybe thirty seconds of work on each model to get them ready for basing. Take a bit of care with the guy carrying the assault rifle. My barrel was slightly bent when I got it and had to be bent back into place. Not a difficult job, but I've screwed it up in the past and had to replace a gun barrel with a piece of brass tubing before. The faces here are just great. In the first two sets from Tactical Miniatures (SWAT and High-Tech Crooks) we didn't get a look at anyone's face so I didn't get an idea for how their sculptors would do in that area, but these (like the hostages) are clean and nicely detailed. My favorite is the guy with the shotgun who is very obviously yelling at someone or for someone. Some stereotypical mirror shades might be nice if they do another set of cops. I have plenty of uses for these guys. They can be NPCs in a modern or superhero game or (one of the many campaign ideas that are floating around in my head that I'll probably never get around to playing with) is to use them all as starting PCs in a modern survival horror game. Everyone starts out a cop and then the terrible event occurs and we go from there. Yup, definitely a set with many possibilities and uses.

DEA Agents DEA001 $10.00

Our last set of figs, for now, from Tactical Miniatures is a set of five hardcore law enforcement agents that are ready to kick ass and get some dope off the streets. Four out of five are one-piece models and the fifth (not show in the picture above) is a two-

piece model that is carrying a pistol in both hands. The arms and pistol are a separate piece that fits onto the body at the shoulders. In the picture above (grabbed from the Tactical Miniatures website) the leftmost figure is actually one of the cops from the previous set we looked at. Like the cops these guys are all dressed in a similar fashion but are wearing considerably more (and visible) in the way of armor. Except for the sniper they all wear heavy bullet resistant vest. The sniper carries a pistol, an assault rifle and is currently looking through his scope at a target to drop. Be careful with his barrel in the same way as with the cop with the assault rifle. The rest all have pistol and SMGs with only the two-piece model having the pistol out and ready. The rest are all holstered and have their SMGs ready to spit out lots of lead. Except the sniper, they all also carry extra clips and radios and are bare-headed. Cleanup was about the same as with the cops and that's to say that there was some needed but it was to be expected and was not excessive. Faces are done as well as with the cops and these guys also have multiple uses. Certainly perfect as government agents, but they can also find work as mercenaries or evil agents.

All three sets come with round plastic slotta-bases and with a retail price of ten dollars that's just $2 per figure! These miniatures will fit right in line with other modern lines from other manufacturers and their price is definitely right! I've recently read a bit about a French rpg called Los Angeles 2035, which looks to be a near future police action rpg. These would be perfect for that game. When I can find out more about the game I'll be sure to let you know. Also, be sure to check out the Tactical Miniatures website for some great painted examples of these figs.

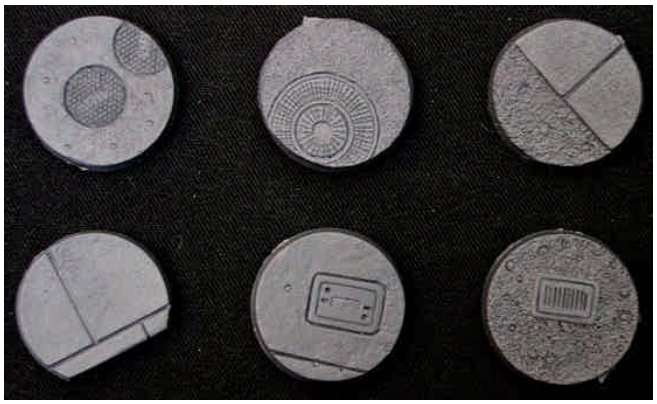
Resin Bases

The last thing we got in from Tactical Miniatures was a set of round resin bases. This set of six different bases has a retail price of $4.00. They are all modern looking but would also work in a sci-fi setting or even in a not-so-modern setting, but they are definitely out for fantasy games.

You'll notice in the picture that five are full circles and one has a flat edge. After examination of the piece I can only come to the conclusion that it was done intentionally, but I can't quite figure out why. Maybe the guy on that you put on the base is right up next to a building?

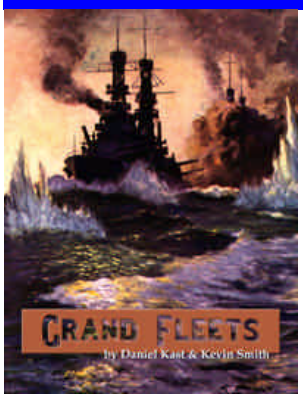
When compared to standard round slots-bases these are maybe 1mm smaller, but this is negligible in my book. Five of them were also the same height as standard bases but one, the one with the manhole cover, was a little bit taller. Each had a little bit of trimming that was needed on the edge. Since they are made out or resin be careful to scrape more than cut like you might do with a plastic base. This will take a little longer but you want to make sure not to damage the base.

The non-round bases still puzzles me a bit but I still like the set and will be mounting my cops on them. Obviously, there is no slot so you'll need to cut off the bottom tab from your figures before mounting them.



Reviews by Mark Theurer

GAME SUPPLEMENT



UNITED STATES NAVY OF WORLD WAR I

Introduction

To some degree, the rise of the modern United States navy paralleled that of the Imperial German Navy. As early as 1897, Theodore Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, had argued that a collision with Germany over colonial territory was almost inevitable. Which nearly happened in 1898 after Dewey's victory at Manila Bay. As such, the ultimate size of the fleet had to be established.

Before World War I, there was no hope of rivaling the Royal Navy, even though Britain was considered a historical rival. The navy of Germany was an entirely different matter, for several reasons. Her navy was smaller, and thus a much more realistic fiscal goal. More importantly, her actions made her a much more likely enemy.

World War I greatly transformed the political situation. America became much more militarily conscious, and as such its priorities changed once it entered the war in 1917. A 1915 General Board mandated a new naval policy of parity with the greatest foreign power. In other words with Britain. By 1916 President Wilson finally accepted this call for parity, and Congress passed a three-year program calling for ten battleships, six battlecruisers, and ten scout cruisers. Although this program was never completed, the demands for parity became standard US policy. The ships included in this article show the results of the program of 1916. While not every ship is included, most of the combatants available to the United States Navy are.

Conversions

The ships presented here in the United States Navy have been converted from real world data in exactly the same manner as all of the ships included in the Grand Fleets game. The books I have found to be the most helpful in doing the conversion work are "Conway's: All the World's Fighting Ships." While I won't go into a lot of detail, I'll give you a brief overview on how I arrived at the numbers on the ship charts.

Hits: The total number of hits is a function of the overall tonnage of the ship.

Hits = (Tonnage)^0.8 / 150

Speed: The speed of a ship is based upon its real-world speed in knots.

Speed = (Speed) / 5

Armor: A ship has three values for armor: belt, ends, and deck.

Belt armor = [(Max. belt thickness) * Armor factor] + 5

End armor = [(Max. belt thickness / 2) * Armor factor] + 5

Deck armor = [(Max. deck armor) * Armor factor] + 5

Guns: With respect to guns greater than 3 inches in caliber, the actual number of real-world guns is used. The gun data was converted to game data (RoF, range, penetration and damage) for game play. The firing arc of each gun was then determined (guessed at) from the profile views in Conway's. Guns 3 inches in caliber or smaller were abstracted into a light gun factor.

Torpedoes: Torpedoes are handled in much the same manner as guns, and are converted from real-world data to game data.

Anti-Aircraft Rating: The anti-aircraft rating is also a function of guns of 3 inches in caliber or smaller.

Damage Track: The damage track is a function of the number of hull hits.

Hit Location Track: The hit location track is also a function of the number of hull hits, as well as the number of guns.

Written by D Anthony Robinson

Battleships

USN *Kearsarge*, USN *Kentucky*
(*Kearsarge* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
12	3	13/10	9/8	7	Medium	+0	3	5	30

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 13"/35 Mk 1	+0	2/4/6	7/3/2	X2	ABCD2[O]* CDEF2[O]**
USA 8"/35 Mk 5	+0	2/4/6	3/2/1	X1	ABCD2[O]* CDEF2[O]**
UK 5"/40 Mk 4	+1	2/4/6	2/1/1*	X1	C[OOOOOOO] D[OOOOOOO]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OO]
USA 18" Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O][O][O]

Damage Track				
Hull Hits	[OOO]	[OOO]	[OOO]	[OOO]
Speed	3	2	2	1

Hit Location								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13",5", LG(x2)	13",5", LG(x2)	8",5", LG(x2)	8",5", LG(x2)	5"(x2), LG(x2)	5"(x2), LG	5", LG(x2)	5", LG(x2)	5", LG(x2)

Notes

*,** = Turrets are hard mounted together. Must fire at same target.

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USN *Alabama*, USN *Illinois*, USN *Wisconsin*
(*Illinois* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
12	3	13/10	9/8	7	Medium	+0	3	5	23

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 13”/35 Mk 1	+0	2/4/6	7/3/2	X2	ABCD2[O] CDEF2[O]
UK 6”/40 Mk 3	+1	1/3/4	2/1/1	X2	AC[O] BD[O] C[OOOOOO] D[OOOOOO]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OO]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O][O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOO]	[OOO]	[OOO]	[OOO]
Speed	3	2	2	1

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13”,6”, LG	13”,6”, LG	6”(x2), LG	6”(x2), LG	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”,LG

Notes

USN *Maine*, USN *Missouri*, USN *Ohio*
(*Maine* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
13	4	12/10	8/8	7	Medium	+0	3	5	21

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 12”/40 Mk 4	+0	3/5/8	8/4/3	X1	ABCD2[O] CDEF2[O]
US 6”/50 Mk 6	+2	2/4/6	3/1/1	X2	A[O] AC[O] B[O] BD[O] C[OOOOO] CE[O] D[OOOOO] DF[O]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OO]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOO]	[OOO]	[OOO]	[OOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13”, 6”(x2), LG	6”(x2), LG	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”,LG	6”,LG	6”,LG	6”,LG

Notes

USN *Georgia*, USN *Nebraska*, USN *New Jersey*, USN *Rhode Island*, USN *Virginia*
(*Virginia* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
15	4	12/10	9/8	7	Medium	+0	3	5	23

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 12”/40 Mk 4	+0	3/5/8	8/4/3	X1	ABCD2[O]* CDEF2[O]**
USA 8”/45 Mk 6	+0	3/6/9	4/2/1	X1	ABCD2[O]* AC2[O] BD2[O] CDEF2[O]**
USA 6”/50 Mk 8	+2	2/4/6	3/1/1	X2	AC[O] BD[O] C[OOOO] CE[O] D[OOOO] DF[O]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOO]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O][O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOO]	[OOOO]	[OOOO]	[OOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12”,6”, LG	8”, LG(x2)	8”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”,LG	6”,LG	6”,LG

Notes

*,** = Turrets are hard mounted together. Must fire at same target.

USN *Kansas*, USN *Minnesota*, USN *New Hampshire*, USN *Vermont*
(*Vermont* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
15	4	10/9	9/8	7	Medium	+0	3	5	29

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 12”/45 Mk 6	+1	3/5/8	8/4/3	X2	ABCD2[O] CDEF2[O]
USA 8”/45 Mk 6	+0	3/6/9	4/2/1	X1	AC2[O] BD2[O] CE2[O] DF2[O]
USA 7”/44 Mk 1	+1	2/4/7	3/2/1	X2	AC[O] BD[O] C[OOOO] CE[O] D[OOOO] DF[O]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOO]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O][O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOO]	[OOOO]	[OOOO]	[OOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12”,7”, LG(x2)	8”, LG(x3)	8”, LG(x3)	7”, LG(x2)	7”, LG(x2)	7”, LG(x2)	7”, LG(x2)	7”, LG(x2)	7”, LG(x2)

Notes

USN *Michigan*, USN *South Carolina*
(*South Carolina* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
15	4	11/9	8/8	7	Medium	+0	3	5	18

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 12”/45 Mk 6	+1	3/5/8	8/4/3	X2	ABCD2[OO] CDEF2[OO]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOO]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOO]	[OOOO]	[OOOO]	[OOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12”, LG(x2)	12”,LG	LG(x2)	LG(x2)	LG(x2)	LG(x2)	LG(x2)	LG(x2)	LG(x2)

Notes

USN *Delaware*, USN *North Dakota*
(*Delaware* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
19	4	12/9	8/7	6	Medium	+0	3	5	x

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 12”/45 Mk 6	+1	3/5/8	8/4/3	X2	ABCD2[OO] CD[O] CDEF2[OO]
USA 5”/50 Mk 6	+2	3/5/8	2/1/1*	X1	AC[O] BD[O] C[OOOOO] CE[O] D[OOOOO] DF[O]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOOO]	[OOOOO]	[OOOOO]	[OOOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12”	12”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”

Notes

USN *Florida*, USN *Utah*
(*Florida* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
20	4	12/9	8/7	6	Large	+1	4	6	0

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 12”/45 Mk 6	+1	3/5/8	8/4/3	X2	ABCD2[OO] CD2[O] CDEF2[OO]
USA 5”/51 Mk 15	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X1	AC[OO] BD[OO] C[OOOO] CE[OO] D[OOOO] DF[OO]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOOO]	[OOOOO]	[OOOOO]	[OOOOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12”	12”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”

Notes

USN *Arkansas*, USN *Wyoming*
(*Wyoming* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
23	4	12/9	8/7	6	Large	+1	4	6	0

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 12”/50 Mk 7	+1	3/6/10	9/4/3	X2	ABCD2[OO] CD2[OO] CDEF2[OO]
USA 5”/51 Mk 15	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X1	AC[OO] BD[OO] C[OOOOOO] CE[OO] D[OOOOOO] DF [OO] EF[O]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	8	-	X5	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12”,5”	12”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”

Notes

USN *New York*, USN *Texas*
(*New York* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
23	4	13/10	9/8	6	Large	+1	4	6	0

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 14”/45 Mk 5	+0	3/6/9	10/5/3	X2	ABCD2[OO] CD2[O] CDEF2[OO]
USA 5”/51 Mk 7	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X2	AC[OO] BD[OO] C[OOOOOO] CE[OO] D[OOOOOO] DF [OO] EF[O]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	8	-	X5	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14”,5”	14”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”

Notes

USN *Nevada*, USN *Oklahoma*
(*Nevada* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
24	4	14/11	10/9	7	Large	+1	4	6	0

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 14”/45 Mk 5	+0	3/6/9	10/5/3	X2	ABCD3[O] ABCD2[O] CDEF3[O] CDEF2[O]
USA 5”/51 Mk 7	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X2	AC[OO] BD[OO] C[OOOOOO] CE[OO] D[OOOOOO] DF [OO] EF[O]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	8	-	X5	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14”,5”	14”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”

Notes

USN *Arizona*, USN *Pennsylvania*
(*Pennsylvania* class battleship)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
26	4	14/11	10/9	7	V.Large	+2	5	7	3

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 14”/45 Mk 5	+0	3/6/9	10/5/3	X2	ABCD3[OO] CDEF3[OO]
USA 5”/51 Mk 7	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X2	AC[OOO] BD[OOO] C[OOOOOO] CE[OO] D[OOOOOO] DF[OO]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	8	-	X5	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOOOOO]	[OOOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]	[OOOOOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14”, LG	5”,LG	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”	5”

Notes

Armored Carriers

USN *Charlotte*, USN *Memphis*, USN *Missoula*, USN *Pueblo*, USN *Seattle*
(*Memphis* class armored cruiser)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
14	4	8/8	7/7	7	Medium	+0	3	5	33

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 10”/40 Mk 3	+0	3/5/8	6/3/2	X2	ABCD2[O] CDEF2[O]
USA 6”/50 Mk 8	+2	2/4/6	3/1/1	X2	AC[OO] BD[OO] C[OOOO] CE[OO] D[OOOO] DF[OO]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOO]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O][O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOO]	[OOOO]	[OOO]	[OOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10”,6”, LG(x2)	6”(x2), LG(x2)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x2)

Notes

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USN *Frederick*, USN *Huntington*, USN *Pittsburgh*, USN *Pueblo*, USN *San Diego*
(*Pittsburgh* class armored cruiser)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
14	4	8/8	7/7	7	Medium	+0	3	5	29

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 8”/45 Mk 6	+0	3/6/9	4/2/1	X1	ABCD2[O] CDEF2[O]
USA 6”/50 Mk 6	+2	2/4/6	3/1/1	X2	AC[OO] BD[OO] C[OOO] CE[OO] D[OOO] DF[OO]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OO]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOOO]	[OOOO]	[OOO]	[OOO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8”,6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x3)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)	6”, LG(x2)

Notes

USN *Charleston*, USN *Milwaukee*, USN *St. Louis*
(*St. Louis* class armored cruiser)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
10	4	7/7	6/7	7	Medium	+0	3	5	37

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 6”/50 Mk 6	+2	2/4/6	4/2/1	X2	AC[OO] BD[OO] C[OOO] CE[OO] D[OOO] DF[OO]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO OOOOO]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OOO]	[OOO]	[OO]	[OO]
Speed	4	3	2	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6”(x2), LG(x4)	6”(x2), LG(x4)	6”(x2), LG(x4)	6”(x2), LG(x3)	6”, LG(x4)	6”, LG(x4)	6”, LG(x4)	6”, LG(x4)	6”, LG(x4)

Notes

Cruisers

USN *Birmingham*, USN *Chester*, USN *Salem*
(*Chester* class cruiser)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
5	5	5/6	5/6	6	Small	-1	2	4	5

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 5/50 Mk 6	+2	3/5/8	2/1/1*	X1	ABCD[O] CDEF[O]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OOO]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[OO]	[O]	[O]	[O]
Speed	5	4	3	2

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5”,LG	5”,LG	5”,LG	5”,LG	LG(x2)	LG(x2)	LG(x2)	LG(x2)	LG(x2)

Notes

Destroyers

USN *Flusser*, USN *Lamson*, USN *Preston*, USN *Reid*, USN *Smith*
(*Smith* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
1	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	4

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OO]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[O][O][O]

Damage Track			
Hull Hits	[O]	-	-	-
Speed	6	-	-	-

Hit Location								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes

USN *Burrows*, USN *Drayton*, USN *Mayrant*, USN *McCall*, USN *Paulding*, USN *Perkins*, USN *Roe*, USN *Sterett*,
USN *Terry*, USN *Warrington*
(*Paulding* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
1	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	4

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OO]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[OO][OO][OO]

Damage Track			
Hull Hits	[O]	-	-	-
Speed	6	-	-	-

Hit Location								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes

USN *Ammen*, USN *Beale*, USN *Fanning*, USN *Henley*, USN *Jarvis*, USN *Jenkins*, USN *Jouett*, USN *Monaghan*,
USN *Patterson*, USN *Trippe*, USN *Walke*
(*Monaghan* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
1	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	4

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[OOOOO OO]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[OO][OO][OO]

Damage Track			
Hull Hits	[O]	-	-	-
Speed	6	-	-	-

Hit Location								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes

USN Beale has 5 light guns

USN *Aylwin*, USN *Balch*, USN *Benham*, USN *Downes*, USN *Duncan*, USN *Parker*
(*Cassin* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
2	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	0

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 4”/50 Mk 10	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X1	ABCD[O] C[OO] CDEF[O]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[OO][OO][OO][OO]

Damage Track			
Hull Hits	[O]	[O]	-	-
Speed	6	4	-	-

Hit Location								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)

Notes

USN *Cassin*, USN *Cummings*
(*Cassin* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
2	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	0

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 4”/50 Mk 10	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X1	ABCD[O] C[O] CDEF[O]
USA 18” Torpedo	-	2	-	X3	[OO][OO][OO][OO]

Damage Track			
Hull Hits	[O]	[O]	-	-
Speed	6	4	-	-

Hit Location								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”	4”	4”	4”

Notes

USN *Cushing*, USN *Ericsson*, USN *McDougal*, USN *Nicholson*, USN *O’Brien*, USN *Winslow*
(*O’Brien* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
2	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	0

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 4”/50 Mk 10	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X1	ABCD[O] C[OO] CDEF[O]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	3	-	X3	[OO][OO][OO][OO]

Damage Track			
Hull Hits	[O]	[O]	-	-
Speed	6	4	-	-

Hit Location								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)

Notes

USN *Conygham*, USN *Jacob Jones*, USN *Porter*, USN *Tucker*, USN *Wadsworth*, USN *Wainwright*
(*Tucker* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
2	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	0

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 4”/50 Mk 10	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X1	ABCD[O] C[OO] CDEF[O]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	3	-	X3	[OO][OO][OO][OO]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[O]	[O]	-	-
Speed	6	4	-	-

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)

Notes

USN *Allen*, USN *Davis*, USN *Rowan*, USN *Sampson*, USN *Shaw*, USN *Wilkes*
(*Sampson* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
2	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	2

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 4”/50 Mk 10	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X1	ABCD[O] C[OO] CDEF[O]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[O]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	3	-	X3	[OOO][OOO][OOO][OOO]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[O]	[O]	-	-
Speed	6	4	-	-

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4”(x2), LG	4”(x2), LG	4”(x2), LG	4”(x2), LG	4”(x2), LG	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)

Notes

USN *Caldwell*, USN *Conner*, USN *Craven*, USN *Gwin*, USN *Manley*, USN *Stockton*
(*Caldwell* class destroyer)

Hull	Speed	Belt	Ends	Deck	Size	Mod.	C&C	C.R.	A.A.R.
2	6	5/5	5/5	5	V.Small	-2	1	3	2

Armament	ROF	Rng.	Pen.	Dam.	Quantity
USA 4”/50 Mk 10	+2	2/4/6	2/1/1	X1	ABCD[O] C[OO] CDEF[O]
Light Guns	+3	1/2/3	1/0/0*	X1	[O]
USA 21” Torpedo	-	3	-	X3	[OOO][OOO][OOO][OOO]

Damage Track

Hull Hits	[O]	[O]	-	-
Speed	6	4	-	-

Hit Location

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4”(x2), LG	4”(x2), LG	4”(x2), LG	4”(x2), LG	4”(x2), LG	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)	4”(x2)

Notes

BATTLE REPORT

With the release of Warlord not too far behind Clay and I decided to sit down and hammer out a game. I knew going into this game that I didn't have a painted Warlord army yet and there was no way I'd have time to get one done so we decided to allow proxies as long as they were painted. Clay really burned some midnight oil to get a mostly-Crusader army painted but I did take the easy way out and busted out my pre-painted D&D miniatures to re-build a slightly dungeon themed army.

Clay's Army Selection

It's always something of an experience when trying to build an army list for the first time for a game you have never played. This time was no exception. After reading the rules through once, I saw that this was going to be a learning experience for me. I also saw that I happened to have a number of the models that just happened to be on the Crusaders Army list. So by default I chose that army to play. Now I'd like to say that I went through some long involved thought process to come up with the following army list, but truth be told I simply looked at the models I had and figured up an army list that used most of them giving me a wide variety of troop types (best way to see what work and what doesn't right?). I also went light on the magic since I was unsure how that would play out and didn't want to give up to many troops to learn if it was effective or not, so the one Crusader model that I have but didn't use was the mage. What I ended up with is the following:

Troop A
Duke Gerard (with Bandage spell), Finari, Halbarad (with Bandage and Bless spells), 2 Templar Warriors and 3 Templar Ironspines.

Troop B
Guardian Angel (with Bandage spell)

Troop C
Sir Conlan (with Bless spell) and 3 Ivy Crown Archers

Troop D
Lord Ironraven, Marcus Gideon (with Bandage spell) and 2 Templar Unforgiven.

Troop E
Sir Broderick and 3 Templar Warriors

Mark's Army Selection

Since I would be building my army from scratch and not using one of the army lists in the book I went with the generic army list in the back of the book and made some additions/modifications based on the troops that I was bringing. After all, a Blue Slaad and an Ogre might both be Large Monsters, but they are not the same large monster. I decided early on that I wanted three 'monsters' in my army running around on their own so that meant at least three units of guys. My troop breakdown was as follows:

Troop A: The Undead
Warlord (Stock, but using a Warforged Fighter model), 9 Warrior Gunts (Added shields, undead and a +2 MAV bonus to make them worthy of being in the Warlord troop. Using various skeleton models), Journeyman Mage (Stock, but purchased 2 Fireball spells, 1 Scare spell and 1 Bolt Spell. Using a Lord Soth miniature) and 1 Ordained Cleric (Stock, but purchased 2 Bandage spells, 1 Hold spell and 2 Bless spells. Using a Lich Necromancer miniature)

Troop B: The Orcs
Captain (Added +1 MAV bonus. Using an Orc Sergeant miniature), 3 Warrior Grunts (Added +2 MAV bonus. Using Orc Warrior miniatures), 3 Polearm Grunts (Added +1 MAV bonus. Using Orc Spearfighter miniatures) and 1 Tank Hero (Stock. Using an Eye of Gruumsh miniature)

Troop C: The Kobolds
Sergeant in Armor (Added shield. Using a Kobold Champion miniature), 6 Polearm Grunts (Stock. Using Kobold Warrior miniatures) and 3 Crossbow Grunts (Stock. Using Kobold Skirmisher miniatures)

Troop D: Ogre
Large Monster (Added Ranger and +1 MAV bonus. Using an Ogre miniature).

Troop E: Blue Slaad
Large Monster (Added +3 MAV and +2 MOV bonuses. Using a Blue Slaad miniature)

Troop F: Fomorian Giant
Large Creature (Added +1 DV and +2 MAV bonuses. Using a Fomorian Giant miniature)

All of the miniatures above are from the WOTC line of pre-painted plastic figures for D&D, but you could pretty easily find most, if not all, of them within Reaper's extensive line of figures.

Pre Game

We decided to use the volcano rules that Clay wrote up as part of his Terrain Workshop that you can find elsewhere in this issue of Fictional Reality. Prior to the game, we came to an agreement that the lava splashes would have an AV of 4, and Boulders would cause an auto wound. We then built up our deck; Mark had six Troops and Tactician for a total of seven cards. Clay had five Troops and Tactician for a total of six cards. After shuffling

cards, the first card was Clay's who chose the West side of the board for deployment. Also, for this game we decided to take pictures and make maps representing the action from turn to turn.

Deployment

Clay deployed with Troop D (led by Lord Ironraven), Troop E (led by Sir Broderick), and Troop B (the Guardian Angel) all deployed together on the North side of the field (Clay's left flank). Troop C (led by Sir Conlan) took up position in the center of the field, while Troop A (led by Duke Gerard) deployed on the right flank planning to go around the south side of the volcano.

Clay's Thoughts

Holy Cow!! I'm hoping his troops are not very good, because he outnumbers me by about %50 and he has three monsters and a magic user to boot. I've never felt so outgunned before the game even starts in my life. I guess it's my imagination getting away from me.

Mark's Thoughts

Ok, just stay on task and collect victory points for the objectives and kill people just for the fun of it. Seriously though, the scenario built into this game demands concentration on the objectives or you're guaranteed to lose.

Mark put his Undead and Blue Slaad on his left flank facing the Crusader Warlord with his own. The center position was taken up by the Kobolds and Ogre, while the Orcs and Giant took Mark's Right Flank on the North side of the field.

Rangers move: Ogre advances to the base of the mountain. Crusaders Archers (Troop C) move up and wheel to cover the mountain and the approach coming from the North. Marcus, decides not to use his free move and stays put.

Turn 1

First Card: **Clay**

The Duke starts off by moving his Troop twice taking up position between the ruins and the southern part of the mountain.

Second Card: **Mark**

Mark moves his ogre twice up the trail on the mountain passing the first temple and getting next to the artifact.

Third Card: **Mark**

The Undead troop takes a move action spreading apart and leaving an aisle down through their middle. The mage then attempts to throw a fire ball at the Duke's troop successfully killing two Ironspines and wounding Finari.

Fourth Card: **Clay**

Troop C, with three Ivy Crown Archers, shift to a position where they can see the Ogre at the artifact. The all let fly but needed ten to hit and all missed.

Fifth Card: **Mark**

Orcs run up (moving twice) the north side of the mountain.

Sixth Card: **Clay**

Sir Broderick leads his troop to the mountain and start up the trail.

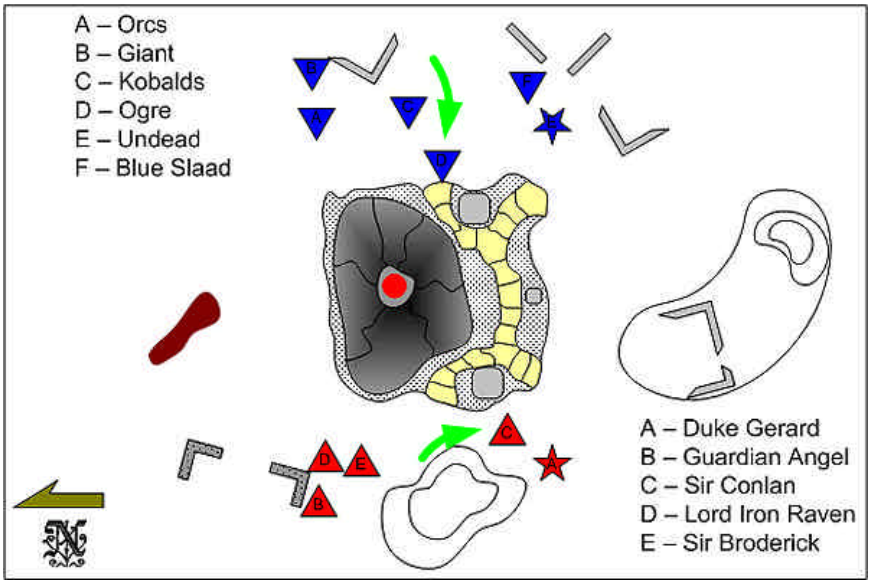
Seventh Card: **Clay**

Ironraven takes his troop to the north side of the mountain to face the oncoming orcs.

Eighth Card: **Mark**

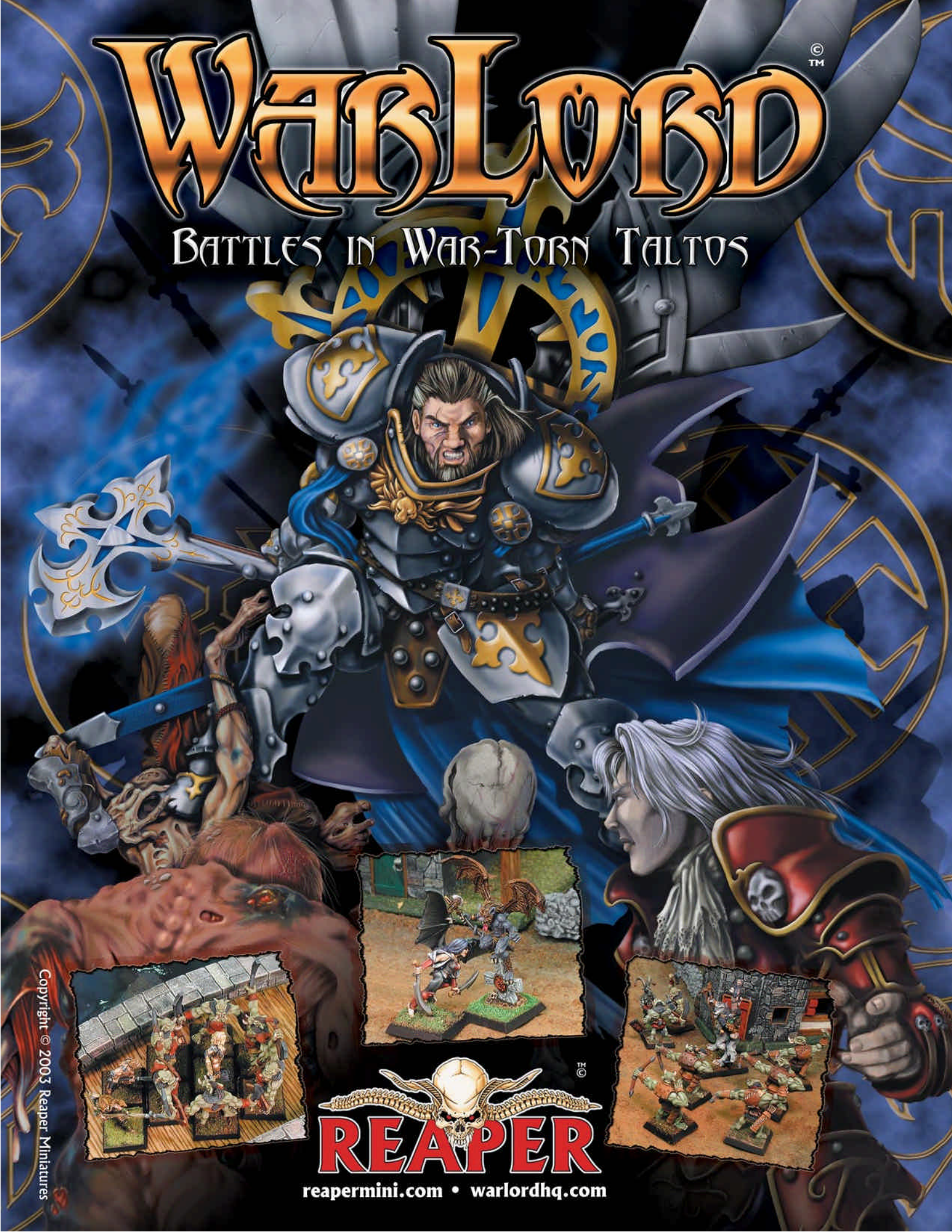
The Giant runs up to support the Orcs.

Turn 0



WarLord ©™

Battles in War-Torn Taltos



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Ninth Card: **Clay**

Clay's final troop, the guardian angel, moves out far to the Left trying to stay out of charge range of the giant, but close enough to support Ironraven.

Tenth Card: **Mark**

Kobolds swarm up the mounting following the Ogre.

Eleventh Card: **Mark**

Mark's Blue Slaad runs around to the far left looking to flank the Duke.

Volcano roll made – volcano remained quiet

Clay's Thoughts

Okay, I guess magic might be worth it and archers might not be. Even with decent line of sight and reasonable range I needed like a 13 to hit (luckily 10's always hit so at least I had a chance). I can see that this game moves fast, and that things will get exciting in about two seconds. I still feel outgunned on all fronts and hoping that my guys pay for themselves. I can see getting that Ogre off the mountain is going to be a pain in the rear. We are playing king of the mountain here and getting that thing up there that fast will definitely pose a challenge for me.

Mark's Thoughts

Ka-boom! You just gotta love when a fireball spell comes off with quality results. I'm slightly concerned with the Ogre occupying the center of the hill all by himself right now, but he has some cover and the Kobolds will be covering his backside. If Clay makes a mad rush for the center of the hill I can see it collapsing and him getting some good footing there.

Turn 2

First Card: **Clay**

Archers let fly again at the ogre. This time they don't need to move and get two shots each with their Marksman special ability. All six shots miss.

Second Card: **Clay**

Duke Gerard moves forward to engage the Undead. Halbarad takes the opportunity to heal Finari using a bandage spell. The skeleton that the lead elements of the troop was uninjured, and its return strike was equally ineffective.

Third Card: **Mark**

The Undead troop takes the opportunity to return the attack and surround Gerard troop with chattering sword swinging skeletons. One Skeleton attacks Finari, and two skeletons attack each of the two leading Crusader swordsmen. Both swordsmen fall in the attack but Finari escapes being wounded. All the crusader defensive strikes miss.

Fourth Card: **Clay**

Sir Broderick, seeing the Ogre was above his troop and figuring that it would likely be coming down to attack, takes up the lead position of his troop. His troop then awaits the Ogre's charge.

Fifth Card: **Mark**

The Orcs charge Ironraven's troop, but only one orc makes contact. Neither the orc nor the defensive strike does any damage.

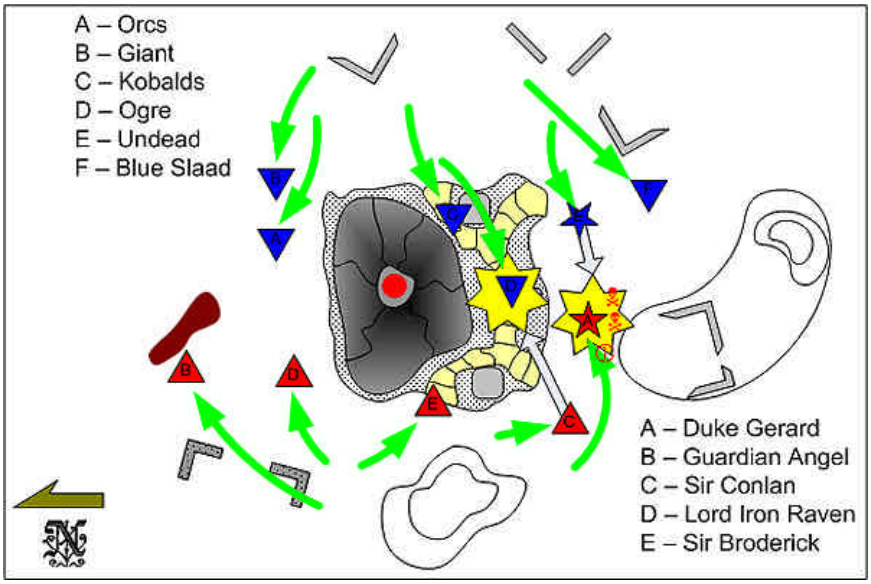
Sixth Card: **Mark**

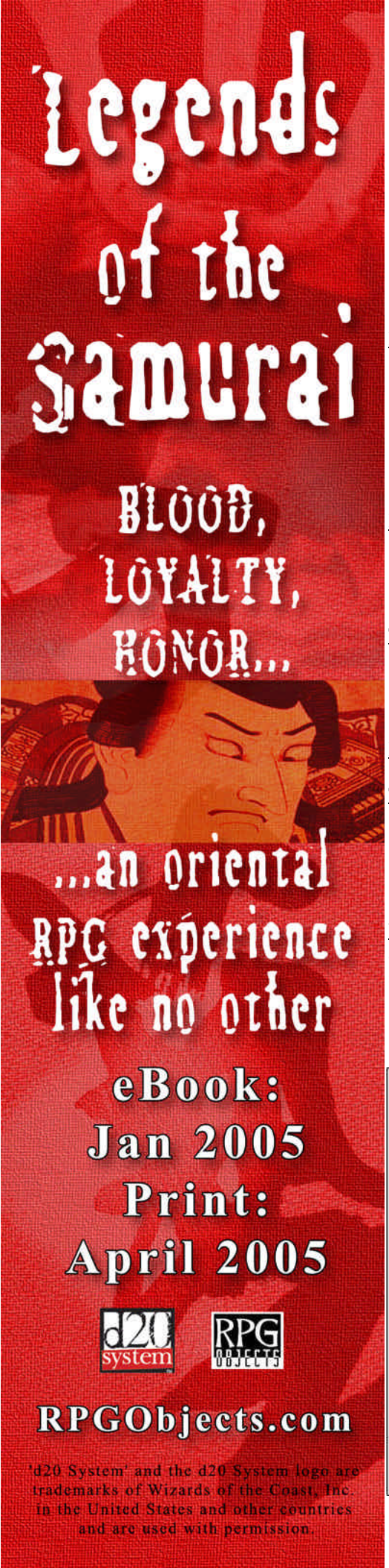
The Kobolds continue to swarm the mountain only slowing long enough to desecrate the temples. Some reach the artifact by the Ogre.

Seventh Card: **Clay**

Ironraven's troop now countercharges the orcs.

Turn 1





The two Unforgiven both miss their targets, and one is killed in return for the effort. Ironraven successfully brings down a spearmen without injury, but Marcus kills his swordsmen taking a wound in return.

Eighth Card: **Clay**

The Angel dives in taking on the Tank Hero in the Orcs troop. The Angel inflicts only a single wound and takes one in return.

Ninth Card: **Mark**

Giant moves up trying to reach the rear of the angel but comes up short.

Tenth Card: **Mark**

The Blue Slaad runs down the side getting past the Duke's surrounded troop.

Eleventh Card: **Clay**

Extra Card, no action.

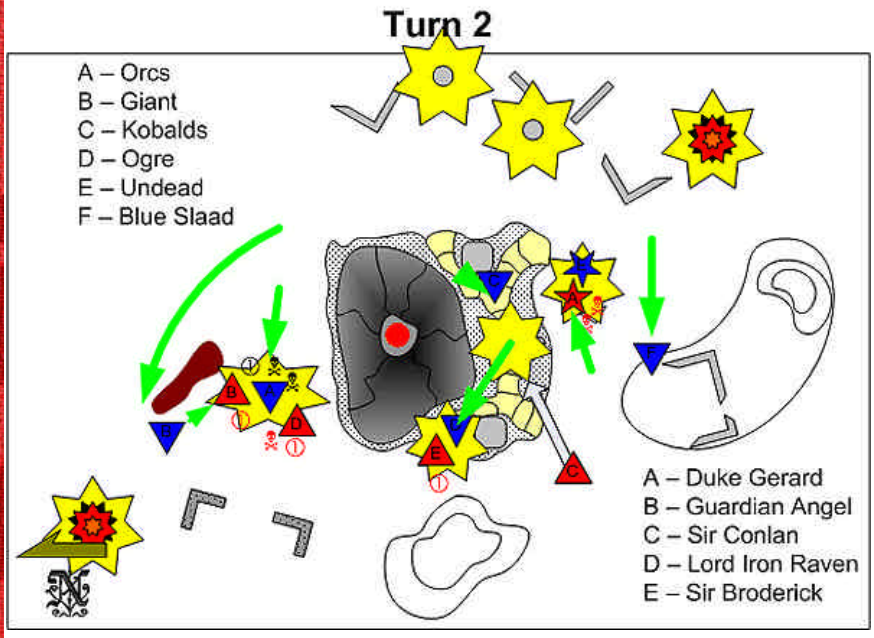
Twelfth Card: **Mark**

Ogre charges down the path and wounds Sir Broderick without getting hurt in return.

Volcano roll made – volcano erupts with lava and rocks, but no one is hurt though most seem to fall on Mark's side of the board.

Clay's Thoughts

Well that turn went about as badly as it could. Not a single one of my non-characters models did any damage to Mark's guys; in fact when they attacked they not only missed but often died for even attempting it. So much for my hope that I had better quality troops… this is not going to be pretty. Guess I could always pray for the volcano to join my side.



Mark's Thoughts

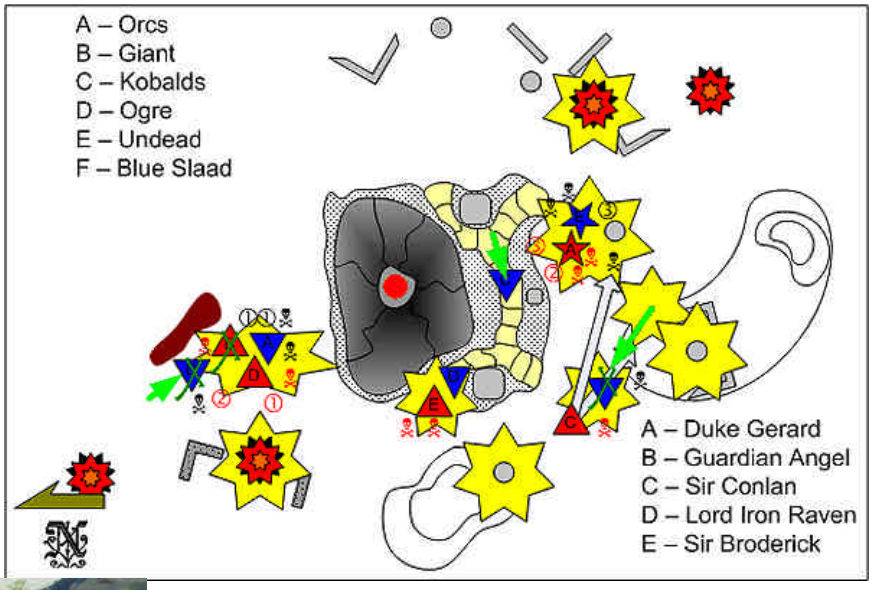
Things are moving along pretty darn well from my perspective. I'm rolling very well and have claimed enough objectives that even if I lose the one that the Ogre is close to and even have some catastrophic die rolls and end up not getting the most kills in the game I should still come out ahead as I hold the remaining two objectives.

Turn 3

First Card: **Clay**

The archers now have a new concern with the Blue Slaad coming on fast. Sir Conlan blesses the Archers who then manage to bring down one of the unengaged skeletons, and wound the Slaad. Sir Conlan then steps up to stand between the archers and the wounded Slaad. Brave guy.

Turn 3

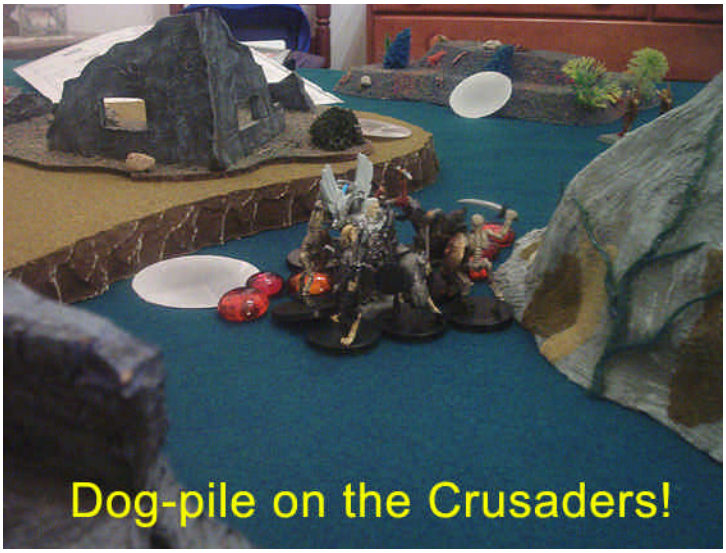


Second Card: **Mark**

The Ogre goes and proceeds to kill Sir Broderick, and taking a wound in the process.

Third Card: **Mark**

The Giant now goes. After making its disciple check, it charges and gives two more wounds to the Angel taking one wound in return.



Fourth Card: **Mark**

The Orcs join in on the fun and attack. The tank hero finishes off the Angel, and Ironraven is wounded giving nothing back in return. The rest of the surviving orcs do nothing, though one dies from a defensive strike.

Fifth Card: **Clay**

The Duke's troop, or rather its survivors, finally get the chance to go with disastrous results. Finari fails to do any wounds to the enemy Warlord, but takes multiple hits in return killing her. Halbarad misses as does the Ironspine, but the Ironspine dies from the counter strike. Only the Duke himself does any damage by taking out two skeletons.

Sixth Card: **Clay**

Ironraven's troop spreads out in an attempt to hold the flank. Marcus attacks and kills the giant, taking another wound in the process. An Unforgiven takes on an orc swordsman and both fall from mortal wounds. Ironraven himself wounds the Orc Captain without injury.

Seventh Card: **Clay**

The crusader swordsmen charge the Ogre but can only get on him one at a time. The lead man fails to do anything but impale himself on the Ogres sword.

Eighth Card: **Mark**

The Kobolds continue in the wake of the Ogre coving most of the volcano now.

Ninth Card: **Mark**

The Blue Slaad attacks Sir Conlan. Though it kills the Crusader, it also fails to survive the encounter. Both fall from their wounds.

Tenth Card: **Mark**

Finally the undead troop goes. First the mage attempts to throw a bolt spell but fails to affect the Duke. Halbarad is wounded twice and Duke Gerard is wounded three times, however the Undead Warlord also takes three wounds in the fight.

Volcano roll made – volcano erupts with lava and rocks agaian, there are some close calls but again no one is hurt

Clay's Thoughts

Seeing that my characters seem to be the only guys that can do anything, this turn was the coup-de-gras. Killing the Blue Slaad at my doorstep was a bit a surprise but it's obvious everything is about to fold up everywhere else. I wonder if I can at least take the nearest temple. It's a long shot but I don't see any harm in trying.

Mark's Thoughts

Damn, that big blue lug got greased right before he could make breakfast out of the Ivy crown Archers but at least he took out their stalwart leader. I think I'll be picking up my mop now to take care of any stragglers on the Crusader's side.

Turn 4

First Card: **Clay**

Archers once again let fly at the Ogre though two need to reposition to do so. The Ogre takes one wound as a result.

Second Card: **Mark**

The undead go finishing off both the Duke and Halbarad. Halbarad's defensive strike fails, but the Duke hits the enemy Warlord as he goes down. The Enemy Warlord makes his toughness roll remaining on his feet. The ill fated Duke is not so fortunate, and goes down for good. The Troop is wiped out.

Third Card: **Mark**

Now the Orcs go doing much the same to Ironraven's troop. Both Marcus and Ironraven are killed and all defensive strikes fail to do any damage.

Fourth Card: **Mark**

The Ogre now activates and attacks the nearest swordsmen. Somehow he misses and falls dead from the defensive strike with a look of surprise forever etched on his face.

Fifth Card: **Mark**

The Kobolds now go and a lone crossbow shot from a distant Kobold miraculously hits and kills the Swordsman that killed the ogre, he too

goes down surprised. The rest of the Kobolds now control both temples and the artifact.

Sixth Card: **Mark**

The final swordsman runs up in a desperate attempt to take the nearest temple but fails to do any damage. Luckily he also survives the defensive strike. He does however successfully deny the victory point to the enemy.

Final

Mark controls one temple and the artifact
Mark scores most kills
Victory points: 5

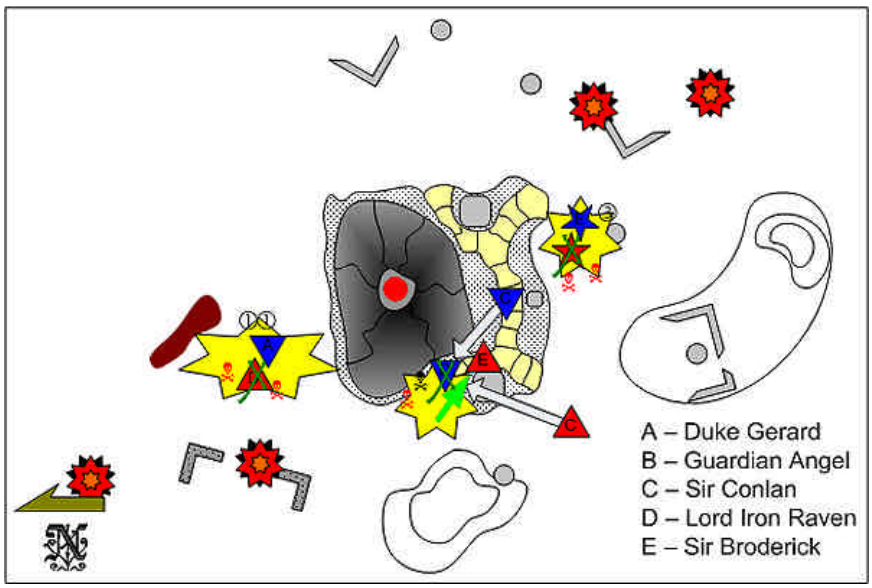
One temple contested, no points to either side

Clay controls no objectives
Victory points: 0

Clay's Final Thoughts

That was quite the beating. I have to say I have never felt so ineffective. Obviously I need to look closer at the rules to see where my force structure went wrong. Off hand I have to say that the Guardian Angel was not worth anything near the points he costs (at least judging by his poor performance here). I'm also

Turn 4



no so sure the archers were worth it since they cost nearly twice the cost of a normal troop, but they did at least give out three wounds which is more than any of my other grunts can say. As far as the game of Warlord goes, I like the speed of the game, it was very fast moving. But the combat system seems a bit to simplified for my taste, it does however make things move fast so I guess there are ups and downs. I also have to think that there are some issues with the point system on troop costs.

Sure, I rolled about as well as a steel plate on a beach, but even if my luck had been better I don't see how I could have held a candle to Mark's army. The combat system naturally makes this game a war of attrition minimizing the importance of who attacks who first, and I simply didn't have the numbers to stand up to that attrition. I also think that increasing the Defensive value may well be worth the points (something I did not do). Hitting your opponent is nice, but surviving their return hit is critical. Now that I've had my appetite wetted, albeit with a does of caster oil, I'm looking forward to doing it again with a better structured force.

Mark's Final Thoughts

I've got mixed thoughts on today's game. First, it's always good to win, but I honestly can't say that the game would have gone my way if I had not enhanced some of my troops. The bonuses given to the Slaad proved largely ineffective, but the skeletons were magnificent and the orcs were not too shabby either. I think that a huge selling point for Warlord is the ability to use the generic lists to build whatever force you like. Most of the time, and always in tournaments, this will come from Reaper's own line of figures but even the army I brought today could be built (well, I'll have to scratch my head a bit for a Slaad replacement) using Reaper miniatures. I think the solution to generic versus pre-built army lists lies in moderation and probably some sort of limit on how many upgrades can be given to each model type.

Clearly, eliminating the enhancements is not in order as not all monsters or troops are identical and I think that a stock generic force would get worked over by a list built from the available armies. On the other hand, allowing any/all enhancements that players want is not the answer either. Putting even low Defense Value bonuses on anything makes it a very tough customer and additions to MAV are also pretty significant. I can't say that missile fire is ineffective as one of the three crossbow armed Kobolds that I took out one of the Crusaders, but I had better than average die rolls all game long and I'd say that I had another slight advantage over Clay in having a few games of Warlord under my belt by the time we sat down to play.

Magic is definitely worth taking even with the high cost (and single casting per purchase) of some spells. Thinning out Clay's Templars before wading in was partly responsible for me coming out on the winning side of that fight. But, I do think that concentrating on the objectives right from the start and then trying to occupy Clay's troops with the rest of my guys paid off big time. Once the Kobolds scurried up the hill I think things were pretty much in hand. I think next time we'll do a straight-up book army versus book army fight. That means I'll have to get my Necropolis troops under the brush soon so I'll quit yapping here and get to work!

TERRAIN WORKSHOP

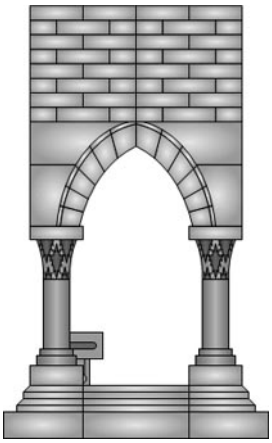
Fantasy Landscapes

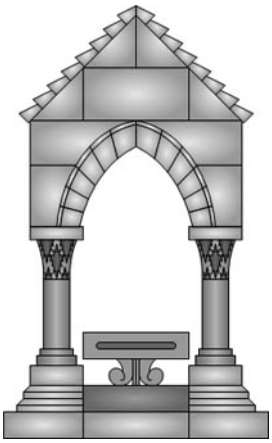
When playing miniature war games, I often enjoy games that are built around a scenario. Although fighting just to slaughter each other has its moments, I personally prefer to have some sort or real objective in mind (though somehow slaughtering the other guy always seems to end up being a big part of most any scenario). I have to say that one of my most memorable games came several years ago, in a tournament setting, when my opponent whom I had pounded into the dirt mercilessly, ended up winning the game although my remaining force was more than twice his. He had kept his eye on the ball the entire game and at the last minute snatched the objectives that won him the game. I on the other hand, was too busy patting myself on the back for annihilating his front line to notice that I had been distracted long enough to lose the game. It was a hard learned lesson. Anyway, in general, scenario games tend to provoke more thought on the battlefield, as well as in the construction of your force. So with that in mind, I set out to build a terrain piece that could lend itself to being the center piece of the battlefield and be well suited to build a scenario around. What I chose to build this time was an active volcano (hereby dubbed Angel Fire Mountain) that would have small shrines located around its slopes.

Angel Fire Mountain

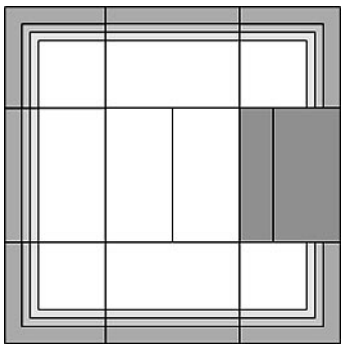
I have built a variety of mountains over the years using a variety of techniques, but to be truthful, it's kind of hard to mess up when you are making something that you want to look like a pile of dirt and rocks. Therefore, the priorities in my mind are 1) profile (i.e., how big/tall/wide do I want this to be and what shape do I generally want it to take) and 2) playability (i.e., where will the models be able to stand and fight while on the piece). For my profile, as I stated earlier, I wanted to have a volcano with at least a few places to be able to put shrines, and the size of the piece I figured should be less than two feet to a side. For playability, always the more difficult of the two issues, I would have to have climbable paths to the shrines, paths where models with a normal sized base could stand and preferable not fall over.

With this in mind, it seemed natural for me to first build my prototype shrine. If you saw my previous articles, you know that when it comes to doing buildings, I really like using bricks made from the molds from Hirst Arts. In fact, the "shrine" I used can be found under his "Tips and Tricks 15" with only a minor change. The only change I made, to what you find on the Hirst Arts page, is that I built the base using the base edging bricks found in mold #62, besides that I think it's pretty much the same. The base ends up measuring 2½" x2½" so this is the area I had to plan to fit onto the slopes of the mountain somehow. On the front edge of the base I put a step using smooth blocks. The arches came from mold #41, and the pillars from mold #45. For the altar I simply used a decorative floor tile from mold #56 and two decorative rail end caps from mold #54. All in all the design is extremely simple and goes together in minutes.



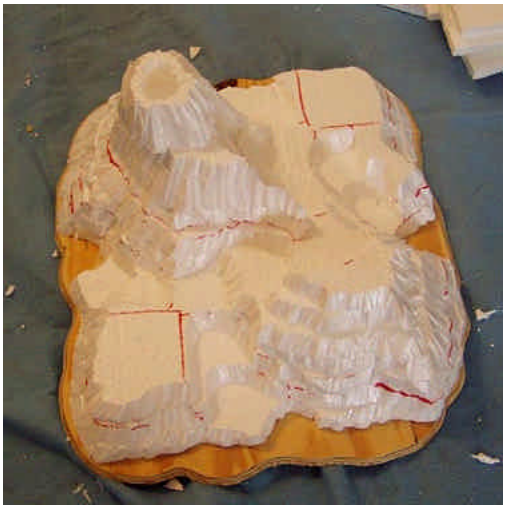


After building the first shrine, I then started playing around with it to check out how it might fit on a reasonably sized mountain. Even being as small as it was, I decided to put only two shrines on the slopes vice the three or four that I had originally envisioned. If I added more than two, it didn't seem to look like I would have enough room to build my mountain and the paths going to the shrines. After knowing the dimensions and deciding on the number of shrines, I could now proceeded with the mountain itself. Building a steep mountain, while maintaining an easy way to allow models to climb it, is something of a challenge. The solution I used for this particular mountain was to build it layer by layer with ½" Styrofoam. The Styrofoam I used came from large flat pieces that came from packaging material. I started by making a base to the



entire piece which I cut a base from ¼" plywood (I normally use hardboard, but happen to have the plywood handy). Then, using a hot wire cutter I went to town. I started by cutting two layers at a time this way the top layer would conform nicely to the bottom layer. The bottom layer would go on to the base as is, while the top layer I would then draw out the cutouts I would need for the next higher layer and then cut it again. After being satisfied, I would then use it as the template for the next layer and start the process over. For the volcano top, I cut it out as a whole piece from a larger chunk of Styrofoam since there I didn't have to worry about having a place for models to stand (we'll save "The Mountain of Virgin Sacrifices" for another project). Not counting the volcano top, I ended up needing seven layers to get the layout that I wanted. This layout allowed me to have two locations for the shrines, two paths going to each shrine, and a single path that went between the two shrines. The volcano of course dominates one end of the piece, where on the other end I ended up with another small area to put some other small ornament if I so choose. Hmmm… I think I could come up with something.

The next step was putting it all together. I put some glue on each of pieces to hold them together, did some trimming where needed and added small pieces of Styrofoam where I thought the mountain slope didn't look quite right. At this point, having perfect continuity between all the pieces is not an issue. Because of the step that follows this one, all you need to worry about is the general form. Small voids (or even large ones) and irregularities can be overlooked as they will be fixed later.



At this point you have a Styrofoam mountain that can be actually be used in gaming. However, it's not too pretty. From this point on it becomes a matter of cosmetics. The first thing I like to do is cover all the Styrofoam with plaster cloth.

Plaster cloth is easy to find in most any craft store and is a fast and east way giving you a textured base on top of the Styrofoam. It comes in rolls so you will need to cut it into pieces (normal scissors do just fine) before you get into it with any water. Once you start with the water, your hands are going to get wet so you won't be able to handle the plaster cloth unless you are going to use it immediately. For this project I ended up using just over one roll.

When cutting up the roll into strips, make sure to give yourself a few different sizes. The large strips are nice to start with, but are harder to work with. After you get a few larger pieces on, then it becomes a matter of filling in the holes and using large pieces for that is wasteful. On the other hand, really small pieces are nearly useless, so don't make any piece too small.

Now comes the fun part. Taking a piece of plaster cloth, dip it into some water and simply drape it over the Styrofoam. When it is in the general position you want, rub it in. The plaster on the plaster cloth has a definite bumpy texture to it, but it smoothes out on touch. How much you smooth out is personal preference of course, but rubbing it in also helps the cloth to conform to the Styrofoam as well.

You will find that this plaster cloth can cover-up a whole lot of deformities or voids in the Styrofoam making everything look natural. In fact I have made terrain pieces from this stuff just by draping it over Styrofoam broken up by hand with really nice results. It does set and dry fairly quickly, so after you are done rubbing it in., go on to the next piece quickly. Don't plan on coming back to a particular piece later to finish it up because in most cases there will be little you can do to change it once it sets up, besides put another piece of plaster cloth over it.

After applying the plaster cloth, I normally like to let it dry for a couple of days. The cloth itself will look dry in a lot less time, but I like to give any water inside on the Styrofoam plenty of time to evaporate before going on to the next step. I know I'm trying to

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make this look realistic, but a crop of mold might just make it too realistic for my taste.

The down side to using plaster cloth is that the cloth is very porous and really needs to be covered up in order to look nice (even with rubbing it in). This means that there is another step involved. This next step involves paining on a layer of Plaster of Paris on to fill all the tiny holes in the cloth, hiding the seams in the cloth, and any other last minute minor terrain modifications you want to make. I like to throw in some black, which dilutes to grey, or brown powdered paint normally. This does two things for me, one it makes it a whole lot easier to see where you have covered, and two it makes it a bit more resistant to gaming damage. What I mean by more resistant, is that when a small chip comes off, you will see a color that should blend in a bit better than bleach white.

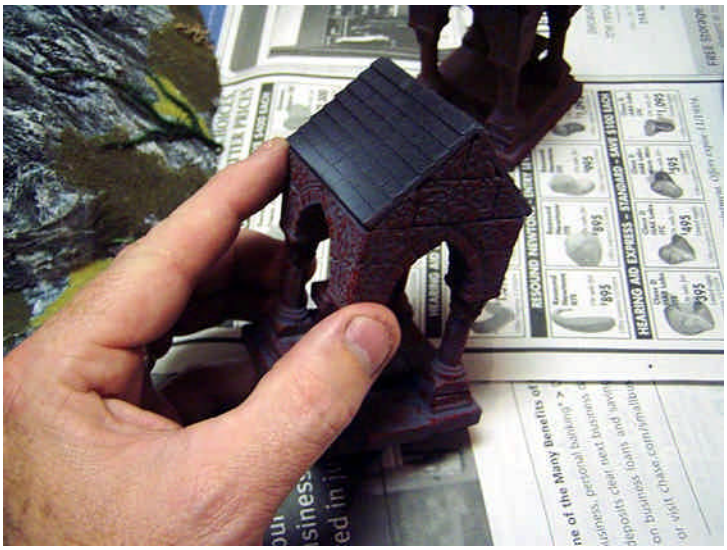
When painting on the Plaster of Paris, mix up a small batch at a time (putting this stuff on takes a few minutes and you don't want it to all set before you have a chance to finish using it) and make it a little bit runnier than you would normally. Oh yeah, and use a sturdy paint brush and one that you don't have a personal attachment too. Your brush should survive the process, but it's going to take a beating. As an added touch on this particular project, I put some of the Plaster of Paris in a squeeze bottle and used it to make lava flows coming from the top of the volcano. Just for kicks, I also put a few marbles inside the volcano cauldron and covered them about halfway with plaster. My intent was to make them look like bubbles in the lava, but my plaster had set too much so it ended up looking more like a churning lava pit than a bubbling one.

Once again, this is a step where you should let the project dry for a while (I personally like to let it sit for a day or two). After a

suitable drying time, it is time to seal it with a coat of paint. For this mountain piece I decided to try something new, and give it a two tone the primer coat. The volcano itself I base coated with a semi-gloss black, and I did the rest in dark gray. After the primer dries, the rest goes pretty quickly. I dry brushed the entire mountain with a light grey and painted the lava flows with a dark red. After that, you just flock and detail to you hearts content. I used two different colors of flocking, and glued rocks, small bushes, and vines in strategic places all around the piece.

Finishing up the shrines was equally easy. I put a primer coat of black on them, and then base coated them in dark gray. For a slightly more volcanic feel, I dry brushed them with red. The shingles I did in a standard dark brown and dry brushed with a light brown.

As a final touch I painted up an artifact, compliments of Magnificent Egos, to place high on the mountain as another possible objective. Angel Fire Mountain is now complete and ready for action.



Battle for Angel Fire Mountain

For a simple scenario, the object is to control the shrines and an artifact. To control a shrine or artifact, a player must have a model within 1" of it, and not have any enemy models within 4" of it. Controlling a Shrine is worth 1 point, controlling the artifact is worth 3 points. The player with the most kills gets 1 point. The game should have a limited number of turns, for our Warlord game in this issue we set the limit at four so the player with the most points after turn four is the victor. Oh, one last thing. The battle is occurring while the volcano is rumbling like it's about to blow its top. Flying creatures cannot come within 6" of the terrain piece due to the ash, steam and superheated gases filling the air. Mounted creatures must make a discipline check every turn that they end while on the terrain piece. A failure means that they have lost control of their mount. Troops on foot are not affected. At the end of each turn, roll on the table below to determine what the volcano is doing.

Roll	Effect
1-5	The volcano is quiet, no additional effects this turn.
6-9	Warning eruption, 1d4 lava chunks
10-13	Minor Eruption, 1d6 lava chunks
14-16	Mediocre Eruption, 1d6 lava chunks & 1d4 Boulders
17-18	Impressive Eruption, 1d6 lava chunks & 1d6 Boulders
19-20	Major Eruption, 1d8 lava chunks & 1d8 Boulders

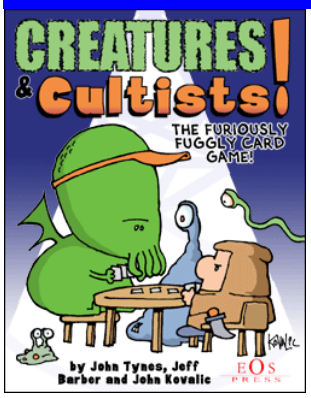
Lava Splashes – use a 2"radius template, and scatter it from the mouth of the volcano 1d20 +10" (11"-30"). Being touched by the template indicates that a model has been splattered with molten lava.

Boulders – Use a 1" radius template, and scatter it from the mouth of the volcano 1d20 +4" (5"-24"). Being touched by the template indicates that a model has been directly struck by a superheated boulder. In addition, any models within 2" of the template must make a save of be knocked to the ground.

The actual damage and a few other details will be game dependent. But I would recommend that lava chucks be treated like a fire weapon, and the boulders cause instant death. I say instant death only because the odds of getting hit are low, and chances of surviving a two ton, 1000° rock dropped from 200 feet are probably not worth calculating. Of course you could always add rules about diving out of the way and such, again dependent on the game you are playing.

Written by Clay Richmond

GAME REVIEWS



It's baaack! The card game of dueling cults is back in all its Lovecraftian glory. Reprinted by EOS Press, with new illustrations by John Kovalic, of Dork Tower fame, this game is sure to please those who remember the original and new fans alike. It retails for $16.95.

The game components include 128 playing cards, 8 cult sheets, rules, and 3d6. Well, supposed to include. My copy had only 2 cult sheets. The rules and all 128 cards were present. Whew! (More cult sheets can be downloaded from the EOS Press website or you can just photocopy them.).

All the old favorite cards are here, including Big Honkin' Truck and the various Cthulhu mythos creatures. The illustrations are humorous and timely - my two favorites are Dodge card, with a cultist wearing the "WWCD" t-shirt - "What Would Cthulhu Do", and the "Mistaken for Terrorists" card with the "Welcome to Guantanamo" sign. Kudos to John Kovalic for his renditions of the Cthulhu mythos creatures. They match Lovecraft's descriptions and are humorous to boot. I particularly likethe "Star-Spawn of Cthulhu" and "Dark Young of Shub-Nigguarth". :)

If you're familiar with this game already - and your copy is a bit worn - then read no farther. Go buy this game. Go on, git! Now!

Right, are they gone? Okay, so the rest of us are those to whom this game is new? Wait, you in the back, yes you with the Yellow sign T-shirt, should you be out buying this game? Yeah, I thought so, shoo!

Okay, so what's the deal with this game? Well, each player takes the roll as leader of a cult - either a real or imaginary one. You then pick a slogan, symbol, and roll 2d6 for each of the skills - Sorcery, Conjuring, and Thuggery.

Each player starts with 6 cards in his hand. These cards are either Mondo, which are played immediately at the start of your turn, Event, which may be played at any time during your turn, Sorcery, which are similar to events, Thuggery, used to attack other players, Conjuring, which are like thuggery but use Cthulhu mythos creatures instead of mooks to attack your enemies, and Defense, which can be used to counter spell, thuggery, or conjuring cards.

At the beginning of each turn, all players roll a d6, re-rolling ties. T heonethatrollsthelowestisthefavoredfortheturnandgetsa+2bonusforallrollsduringtheturn.InCreaturesandCultists,lowerrollsarebetter,sothisbonusisappliedtothenumberyou'retryingtorollunder.

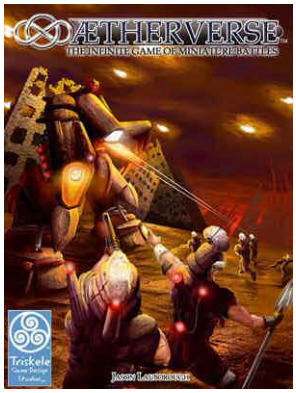
After determining who is favored, all players draw cards to fill their hand out to 6. The player to the right of the favored player goes first and play continues around the circle, with the favored player going last. This completes a turn.

During a player's turn, he can play a thuggery or conjuring card to attack another player, play an event card, discard, or summon your deity (if you are favored by the stars (see above). As you kill your opponent's cultists, you get "Fugly" points, these are spent when you attempt to summon your deity. Successfully summoning your deity or wiping out all the other cults is how you win the game.

There's a lot to this game, both in play style and in humorous cards. For a quick and light-hearted game, with overtones of Lovecraft, this game can't be beat. Go buy it!

If you're still not convinced that you should buy this game, then I'd like for you to have a word with Cecil, my Dimensional Shambler…

Review by J Michael Tisdel



"Aetherverse: The Infinite Game of Miniature Battles" is a generic Science Fiction table-top miniatures game by Triskele Game Design Studios. The system is generic in that it is not specifically tied to any one miniature line. Rather, it is designed for players to use what ever miniatures they may have. It retails for $29.95.

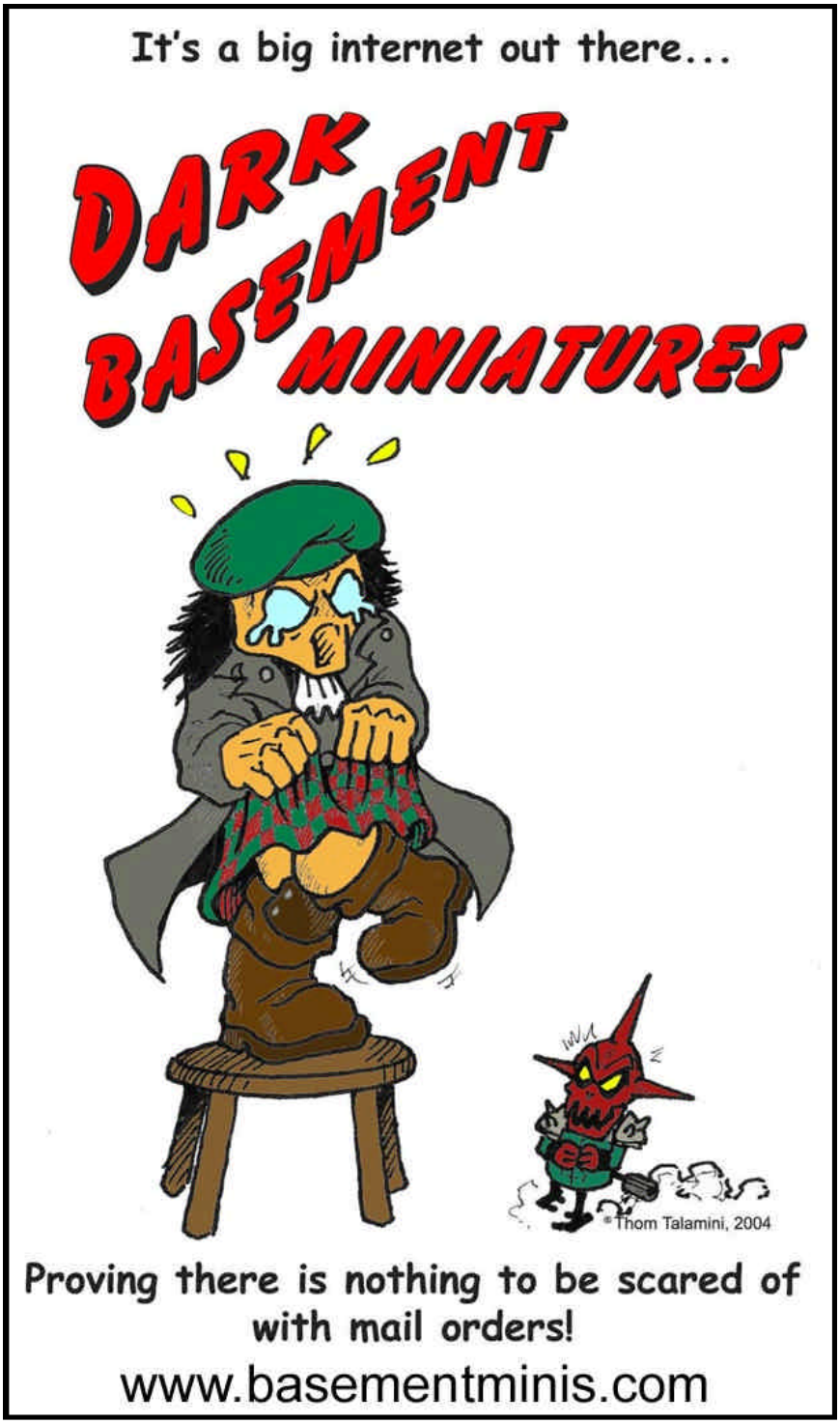
Aetherverse includes rules for formation, maneuver and combat for infantry, animal, artillery, and vehicles. The game comes with seventeen army lists which cover a wide variety of miniature styles and troop types. In addition, there are extensive rules for army design. The game also includes rules for army and unit attributes, magic, as well as fifteen generic scenario types. There are also variant rules for different figure scales other than 28mm.

The rule book starts with a short introduction to the Aetherverse setting, followed by a glossary and then a sample game. All this before the rules even start. I think this is a good idea as it gives the reader an overall view of the game and how it works before diving into the details of the rules.

Aetherverse is set in the 24th century. Temporal and quantum scientists have proved that multiple parallel universes exist and the technology has been developed to move between these different realities. After the portals were opened, commerce began which was soon followed by war. Now various forces cross the myriad ways looking for conquest, riches, and empire.

The game itself is based on d10. A target numbers (TN) is the minimum roll required on a d10 to achieve a result. Positive and negative modifiers apply to the roll.

Each turn is divided into six phases. Two of which - Phase 1, Start of Turn, and Phase 6, End of Turn - are simply bookkeeping hases. The remaining phases are:



Action Phase, Assault Phase, Tactical Moves, and Regroup Phase.

Units activation is handled by a random initiative mechanism. Every unit has a unique chit assigned to it. Before each phase, the chits for each remaining unit are placed into the ubiquitous opaque container (UOC). As the chits are drawn, the corresponding unit is activated. Playing cards can be used by those without chits or a UOC.

During the Activation Phase, each activated unit may move, shoot, charge, move then shoot or charge, shoot then move, or do nothing. Facing is not important for infantry models. There is no penalty for moving and shooting assault or light weapons. Heavy weapons cannot fire if the model moved and if the model fired a heavy weapon, it cannot move.

Shooting is based on the model's dexterity characteristic. The basic TN for shooting is a 10, so a hit is scored when the Dexterity plus the roll of a d10 is 10 or greater. A natural 10 is considered a critical hit and allows you to roll an additional attack. A natural 1 is always a miss and, depending on the weapon, may result in something bad happening to the shooter. Each weapon is rated for the number of shots it fires per shooting action.

Shooting combat consists of the attacker rolling to hit. The defender allocates the successful hits against his models and makes any saving throws he may have. Models which loose all their wounds are removed. In the case of multi-wound models, hits must be allocated to remove a model before being allocated to the next - no spreading the pain around.

A charge is a move to bring a figure in base contact with its enemy. A charge can be combined with a regular move to produce a "double move" charge. Charges must be declared before they are moved. If the target is too far away, the model may not charge it, but it may choose another target. Once all chargers have moved, the models receiving the charge may fire at the charging models if they haven't been activated yet or took a pass activation and pass a morale test with a TN depending on the charging unit's Presence characteristic.

After the Action Phase is the Assault phase. In this phase all close combats are resolved. Both players roll a d10 and the winner of the roll chooses which combat is resolved first. If there are more than 2 players, selection of which combat to resolve goes in decreasing order of the roll. In a given melee, models with a higher Dexterity characteristic strike first. These hits and wounds are resolved before the models with the next higher Dexterity characteristic may strike. The side that scores the most wounds is considered to win the combat - the loser must make a morale test or retreat.

After the Assault Phase is the Tactical Movement phase. Any unit that did not shoot this turn, has not taken a wound, and is at least 24" from an enemy model may take an additional move. This additional move may not bring the unit within 18" of an enemy model.

Following the Tactical Movement phase is the Regroup Phase. Any unit that fell back this turn may attempt to rally. A rallied unit does not continue to fall back in the next turn.

The basic infantry rules are augmented with special rules for animals, vehicles, and artillery. Vehicle movement is different from infantry in that turns cost 2" of movement regardless of how far they turn. Gravity vehicles turn for free while chariots pay double. Vehicle weapons may fire into one of four arcs of fire. All weapons must fire at the same time but need not fire at the same target. Vehicles may overrun (charge) as well as ram other vehicles.

Certain vehicles may also transport troops - those located within 3" of the vehicle's doors may embark. Disembarking troops are also placed within 3" of the doors. A unit may embark even if it has no movement left. Troops within a transport that is destroyed are placed within 3" of the doors as if they were disembarking. Then the effects of the vehicle destruction are resolved.

Aetherverse treats buildings and walls as immobile vehicles - this simplifies fortified structures. Artillery uses a target and scatter mechanism to determine where the shot lands. A d10 is rolled to determine the scatter distance and the direction is given by where the d10 "points".

Aetherverse uses a measured set of cover and line of sight (LOS). Trees and brush provide a saving throw and block LOS over 3". Walls provide a higher saving throw and block LOS based on the size of the wall. An elevated position allows a model to shoot over an obstacle, however LOS is blocked for a distance behind the object equal to its height. For example a 2" high wall blocks LOS 2" behind it for elevated models. An elevated model may only fire on a model at lower elevation if the elevated model is within 2" of the edge of the elevation.

That, in a nutshell, is the basic rules of Aetherverse. Using these rules and the 15 pre-generated army lists, you can start playing the game. The army lists included in the rule book cover a vast array of common army types - modern Roman legion, power armored feline, pulp rocketeer forces, biomechanical specialist forces, medieval stone-men, high-tech samurai with giant robots, technological Egyptians, undead Egyptian, futuristic knights on motorcycles, hive insects, technology dwarves, vikings, megacorp raiders, genetic mutant-machine hybrids, battle droid combined arms, post-apocalyptic raiders, and so-high-tech-its-magic aliens.

If that isn't enough for you, then there's always the force design rules. The army lists in the book were generated with these same rules, so its possible to have a fair fight between them and your own home-grown force. The design rules begin with a base characteristic set for a unit. You pay a set number of points for a characteristic's value. A sliding scale is used, so that a characteristic of 4 costs 4 points while a characteristic of 9 costs 39 points. Then you select the class of the unit (basic, elite, support), buy any attributes and upgrades, finally purchase armor and weapons. The result yields a per-model cost for the unit. Vehicles, artillery, and animals are designed in a similar manner.

After you've designed all your units, it's time to pick the characteristics of the army. Unlike the unit construction, army characteristics have no point values, rather each one has its own advantages and disadvantages which balance out. There are also unit attributes, personality attributes, weapon traits, armor traits, and vehicle upgrades. These do add to the cost of the unit, personality, weapon, armor, or vehicle.

Finally, the game presents a number of generic scenarios - from battlefield Control to Airborne assault. Each scenario gives setup, deployment, fallback, game length, and game objectives.

All in all, Aetherverse is a daring undertaking and one that, for the most part, works. The only down side I see in the game is that the activation system favors horde style armies - the more chits you have in the bowl, the better chance you have to "out activate" your opponent. This problem is not unique to Aetherverse, it also affects Rackham's "Confrontation" and Excelsior's "Chronopia" and "Warzone".

On the plus side, Aetherverse gives you a chance to play with some older figures that may not be supported by existing game systems. It also gives you a chance to experiment and play with your favorite army in different settings - giving you the chance to play game designer and see if that assault unit would be more effective if it could move faster.

I'd recommend this game to anyone with a set of Out of Print miniatures - or to anyone that has become bored with their existing rule sets. The game is flexible enough that it could be used to fight just fantasy battles, if lasers and orbital bombardments aren't your thing.

Review by J Michael Tisdel

RPG PRODUCT REVIEWS

BASICS

Paranoia XP is published by Mongoose Publishing and has a retail price of $39.99 USD. It's a 256-page hardback book for a game that has been out of print for several years now (originally published back in the 80s) but is back to mess with the minds of new players and to rekindle fond memories of groveling and plotting against your teammates.

INSIDE

The Paranoia XP book is broken up into four main sections with multiple short chapters in each one. Before you get to any of these though you'll read through an introduction to both players and gamemasters that will help get you into the Paranoia mindset. This is not your typical cooperative party adventure game where players work together for a common goal. Oh, there's a common goal that's for sure, but it's the working together part that you'll need to get out of your head in a hurry. The game is set in a futuristic society after some cataclysm destroyed life as we know it. There is a benevolent (well, sort of) omnipotent (not really) computer that takes care of all of the citizen's needs. A citizen's position in life is dictated by a color code so there is always an urge to please the computer (bootlicking is good) and move up so you can put the screws to someone else. Oh, it's also good to know that insubordination and treason run rampant and a good way to move up is to root out a traitor and give him what he deserves, a very messy death that will please the computer and the gamemaster. Problem is that everyone is a traitor, everyone is a mutant of some sort or another and everyone is a member of a secret society (very treasonous). The computer sends you and some other citizens off on a mission and while trying to complete it (mission failure is not a good thing) you're also trying to find a reason to blast your cohorts because they are traitors and deserve to die. So do you, but don't let them find out. So, how does the game not degenerate into everyone dead in the first scene/room? Clones. Everyone has clones that will re-enter the game so things can move along.

This is a darkly humorous game that is probably not at all like what you're used to playing. There are also three flavors of Paranoia XP for you to choose from. The 'classic' game presents a game world where everyday life is a blend of bureaucracy and comical destruction. Sort of like a Three Stooges movie, but with laser guns and lots of explosions. The 'straight' version of the game is closer to what you might call a normal rpg. The transport vehicle blowing up is not played for laughs and while everyone is still a traitor that's worthy of being blown to bits you might actually make it through an adventure or two with some spare clones in the fridge. In 'zap' life in Alpha Complex is pretty much a live-action cartoon. Players are killed with alarming regularity just for asking questions that can be twisted into a subversive statement.

Player Section: Here you'll get some more info on the game world itself. One thing you'll have to do early on is to suspend disbelief like you've probably not done since the days when you thought pro-wrestling was real. Clones, secret societies, ray guns, anti-grav technology and all of it with too-bizarre-to-believe (or is that too-bizarre-to-be-wrong) explanations for them would make you nuts and the game not much fun if you demanded a rational reason for them. You start off life as an Infrared (Yup, below red on the ROYGBIV scale of color codes. There's also UltraViolet but don't get your hopes up of getting there.) that will be sent on missions for the computer. Staying alive is all well and good but if you didn't finish the mission boy had you better have some commie (preferably a dead one) to blame things on. In this section you'll put together a character and it won't take too long, which is good because you're not likely to be using the same character again next time you sit down to play. You'll determine attributes, skills, which secret society you belong to and learn the basics of the game mechanics, which are d20 based. No, this is not a d20 game. Paranoia XP is better than every other rpg out there. Why? The computer said so that's why you filthy traitor….zap! Oh, be aware that the rules of the game can, and will be, suspended at any time for story advancement or the sick pleasure of the gamemaster.

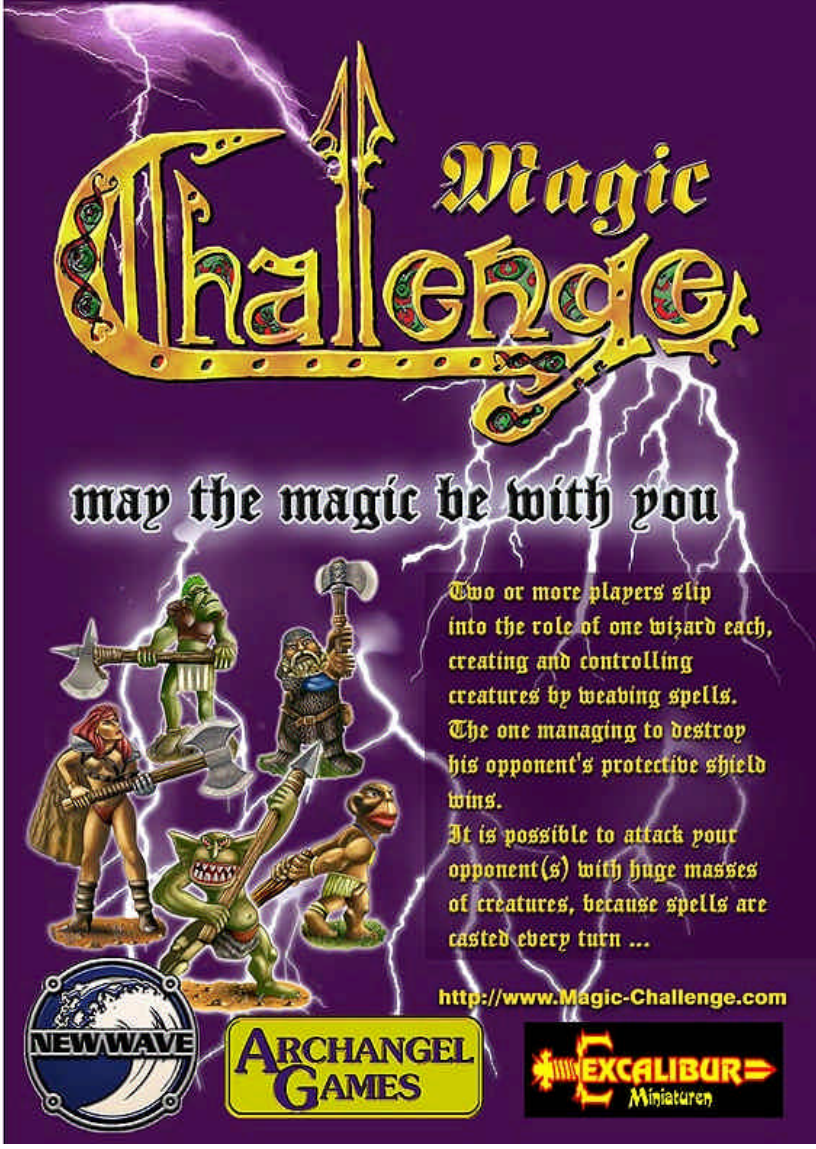
Gamemaster Section: Cleared only for those at the Ultraviolet level so if that's not you please report to your nearest termination center. Here you get to pull back the sheet and see more of what's really going on. The computer is genuinely concerned with caring for the citizens of Alpha Complex but it's more than just a little schizophrenic and paranoid itself. High programmers actually have access to the computer and can alter its programming to suit their own needs. Suggestions for how to role-play the computer and how to get your players into the right mindset is also here. No, you don't need to kill them all they'll do it for you.

Sourcebook Section: Also cleared just for Ultraviolet users but it contains everything you ever wanted to know about Alpha Complex that you were too afraid to ask because the dirty bastage sitting next to you would blow your brains out for being a sneaky commie traitor. Lots more background on Alpha Complex is given from the daily lives of citizens to detailed information on the secret societies (that your players might not know right off the bat), mutant abilities (again, that they might not be 100% sure of how they work from the start) and vehicles that will certainly need to go boom.

Mission Section: Oh joy! An adventure to start us off. I love getting an adventure as part of the rulebook to kick things off. Here you get good info on mission building to make things more than just a frag-fest so you have some kind of continuity between shootouts and explosions. There is also a 24-page adventure included that could have pretty easily been tossed out as a separate product and liberated another ten dollars from your pocket but I'm very glad that it's here instead. It's just the right thing to get everyone ready for whatever nefarious schemes the gamemaster is planning for your second session. Oh, this was of Ultraviolet clearance also so if you're not and you were reading it you know the drill…zap!

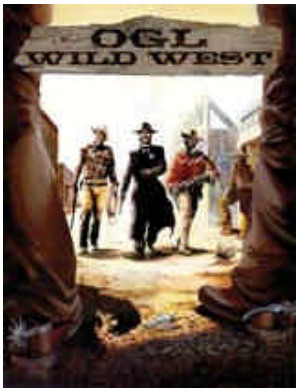
VALUE

I played Paranoia only a handful of times back in the 80s, mostly at conventions, and had a fun (but weird) time. This book



brought back some good memories of playing a game that was nothing like D&D or Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay or pretty much anything else. This is a slapstick (unless you're playing the 'straight' version) game that has some intrigue and betrayal, likely a high body count with plenty of explosions and if done right a whole lot of laughs. It's the kind of game that will make a great departure from whatever your normal rpg session happens to be. I'm not sure if it could really become your normal rpg though. It's fun and satisfying and all but even I can only eat so many glazed donuts before feeling kind of strange. Of course, watching people fall off bikes and getting kicked in the crotch never really gets old so maybe this can be your full-time game. Man, my rpg group has no idea what they're in for!

Review by Mark Theurer



"The cold wind whipped the dust into a light brown torrent down the street of the northwestern town. Inside the saloon, the wind could easily be heard over the slightly out of tune piano and the babble of the patrons. This all stopped when the saloon door opened and in stepped a tall man in a dirty poncho."

"OGL Wild West" is Mongoose Publishing's western RPG. This 240-page hard back book includes all the information you need for a trip to the O.K. Corral or Lonesome Dove, Texas. The quality of the book is up to Mongoose Publishing's high standards as is the research that went into it.

Let me say this right now - if you're a fan of The Man with No Name, Rooster Cogburn, Doc Holliday, Tom Mix, or Kit Carson, then read no further. Go out and buy this volume and dive in. You won't be disappointed.

BASICS

Released by Mongoose Publishing, "OGL Wild West" includes sixteen chapters covering character generation, combat, and Wild West settings. Based on OGL, a large portion of this book is open content; only the stories, character names, character creation and character advancement are not open. Okay, so the game mechanics are not open, but the background research and setting information is open. It has a retail price of $39.95 USD.

The introduction to OGL WW provides a high-level timeline of the old west, a period from the 1850's to the 1870's. Major events, such as Little Big Horn, the assassination of President Lincoln, and the Trail of Tears, are included along with the dates of union for 21 states, from Arkansas in 1836 through Oklahoma in 1907. The introduction also includes basic game information and mechanics, descriptions of the common six ability characteristics - strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence, wisdom, and cha-

risma - as well as the standard ability modifiers.

CHARACTER CREATION

OGL WW follows the standard OGL character creation process. The interesting part, however, is not in the selection of skills and feats, but rather in the selection of Classes. Where you would normally have classes such as fighter, thief, or wizard, OGL WW has the following classes:

- The Strong Hero - a character class for the brawler or farm hand - this is the John Henry type of character.
- The Fast Hero - a character class for those with fast reflexes - the Cincinnati Kid from "Blazing Saddles" is a Fast Hero.
- The Tough Hero - a character class that bulls its way through no matter what - like Marshal Will Kane from "High Noon".
- The Smart Hero - a well-educated hero, probably from back East - more Artemis Gordon than James West in "The Wild Wild West".
- The Dedicated Hero - this is the hero on a mission, this is like Ethan Edwards from "The Searchers".
- The Charismatic hero - this is the hero that is adept at inspiring others; Miss Kitty more than Marshall Dillion of "Gunsmoke".

Each of these classes sets out how your character handles the conflicts that life, in the guise of the Referee, puts in his path. However, this is only part of the picture. The other part comes from the Vocations.

There are over twenty vocations, from Soiled Dove to Gunslinger, and Bartender to Riverboat Man. Each Vocation has a set of prerequisites - for example you have to have Quick Draw and Simple Sidearms Proficiency to be a Gunslinger - as well as vocation skills, reputation bonus, and wealth.

There are also Talent Trees, which are collections of Feats that further refine your character. For example, the Gunslinger has the Quick Draw talent tree and the Trick Shooting talent tree.

Using the classes and the vocations, you can create almost any type of character. For example:

- Smart hero plus Riverboat Gambler vocation would be Maverick.
- Smart hero plus Sheriff would be Sheriff Jason from "Support Your Local Sheriff".

This mechanic is what really gives OGL WW its kick. This ability to quickly generate an archetype or anti-archetype of the historical or Hollywood old West is the strongest part of the game. But there's more! OGL WW uses a modified hit point rule: you get your Constitution score as your starting hit points and then you gain your Constitution Modifier in hit points at each level. In addition, you get a set number of hit points per level for your class.

This hit point rule means that you character does get more survivable as he gains experience, but he can still be brought down by a shot gun. Other systems use more elaborate rules to simulate with stun points and kill points, but this system is much easier on the bookkeeping side. There are other unique aspects to OGL WW. For example, equipment is rated as common, uncommon, or rare. Common equipment can be found almost anywhere while uncommon equipment can only be found in large towns, and rare equipment must be special ordered from back East. There are also rules for trading, based on bluff, diplomacy, intimidate and perform skills.

As this is the Wild West, there is quite a bit of information on firearms. However, the actually myriad selection of calibers, powders, and manufacturers has been simplified for ease of play. There is still plenty of variety, but a good match between variety and playability has been reached.

RULES OF THE WEST

The chapter entitled "Rules of the Wild West" covers the game mechanics necessary to play the RPG. In this chapters are sections on environmental hazards, starvation, surgery, diseases, portage, and movement. In addition, there is a section on Reputation - both good and bad and how it affects the character in the game. Rules are also present for running an outfit - any party of adventures, settlers, or the like. There are morale issues as well as logistics and wealth. Finally, there are rules for chases, drinking, and gambling.

The combat section, yes there is one, is based on the OGL combat system with very few minor changes. There is no armor class, rather a defensive value of 10 plus the character's Dexterity bonus plus any other modifiers. Beat that, and you've shot or stabbed him. The combat rules also include Attacks of Opportunity, brawling and unarmed combat, and mounted combat.

OGL WW also includes Luck rules. Every character starts with 6+1d4 luck points. These can be spent to activate a feat or talent, get a die roll bonus, get a re-roll, reduce a wound type, halve damage, force an attack to miss, establish or change an item or event, or counter another's use of Luck. Luck is regained by the referee handing it out - say as a reward for good role playing - or at the rate of 1 point per level. Or a character can have a quirk - playing the harmonica say, and the indulgent of this will regain luck. As this is the Wild West, the character can also gamble with Luck. The character writes down the outcome to an event he has some affect on and lists his luck wager. At the end of the adventure, if he wins, he gains the luck otherwise, he loses it.

The rest of the book deals with the setting. There are chapters that cover animals in the area, the typical western town, and a list of standard NPC's such as cowboys, settlers, and town dwellers.

For the majority of the book, the point of view is that of the European descendants moving out west. However, there is a chapter on Native Americans which takes a nativist look at the American tribes. Information is given for all the major tribes, such as Apache, Ute, Comanche, and Nez Perce, as well as common customs. There are native vocations, such as brave, hunter, chief, and shaman, so it is possible to play native characters or even a native-based campaign.

Rounding out the games mastering part of the book is a rogue's gallery of famous historical characters, such as Billy the Kid, Kit Carson, Doc Holliday, and (my personal favorite) Judge Roy Bean. Sadly the section does not include the more famous characters from Hollywood - even though both John Wayne and Clint

Eastwood are on the cover of the book! This is the only part of the book that I found lacking - but that may be left for a supplement.

The final chapter covers the art of running a Wild West adventure. It presents story ideas and plot lines which are common to the west. The referee should read this as a true western is not a dungeon crawl, but its own style of adventure - as different from fantasy RPG's as from horror RPG's. There is a discussion of the two types of game - historical, where you a living the nitty-gritty world of post Civil War America, and Hollywood, where you're living in times of The Man With No Name, Tom Mix, and Gene Autrey. Either one has its challenges and its own fascination. Finally, and this shows the completeness of the Mongoose Publishing staff, there's a selection of western jargon and slang. Dropping in this stuff can make the whole story come alive.

VALUE

Well, if you haven't guessed my opinion by now, you should go back and re-read this article. I am very excited about "OGL Wild West". Since the return of Dungeons and Dragons and the creation of the d20 and OGL formats, I've been waiting for a western game. I remember fondly playing TSR's Boot Hill back in the antediluvian days of the 70's - and now I plan to relive them now. The guys in my local group are going to hear "six gun sound, as their claim to fame" by Christmas!

"The stranger said not a word, but walked up the bar. He pointed to a bottle of whiskey and dropped down a coin. The bartender quickly got the bottle and handed it to the stranger. "Thanks," he said as he turned and left the saloon. The piano player started again as the bartender went back to wiping down the bar. That was the fourth stranger this week - it's getting too busy 'round these here parts."

Review by J Michael Tisdel

BASICS

"Imagine a world where computers were developed a century before their time, powered by levers and steam engines instead of microprocessors; a world where the zeppelin never went out of fashion and new technology made it safer and faster; where brave men and women explore a yet undiscovered world to find the wondrous ruins of lost civilizations; where the mysterious age of magic is slowly fading to usher in an age of cynical realism." If that tease appeals to you, then a new book from Mongoose Publishing is right up your alley. This tome is entitled *OGL Steampunk* and the above quote is the apt description that appears on the back cover. If you're familiar with the role-playing game *Shadowrun* then you have a good idea of what a game that combines technology and magic has going for it. The main difference between the two games is the level of technology. There is a whole plethora of interesting gizmos and widgets for player characters to use to save themselves, their friends and maybe even the world from some dastardly fiend. What you will not find is fiber optics, brass tubes and LED's, but brass tubes, wooden handles and incandescent lamps. A character will use a telegraph and not a cellular telephone to do his/her long distance communication. Keep reading and I will do my best to give you the gist of what looks to be a very interesting OGL variant.

PRESENTATION

I will begin my description of the book with two, small, but important items of interest. Granted, the lack of either or both of these things are pet peeves of mine where it concerns gaming books. The first: this book has a reasonably extensive index. I love indexes. In my opinion they are must for any book that is not a novel. Secondly, *OGL Steampunk* is self-contained. Even though it is a d20-based game everything that a player and game master needs to play is included. There is no need to go forth and purchase the *Dungeons and Dragons Player's Handbook*.

There are an interesting variety of player character races in this game. You have the standard D&D races: Human, Elf, Dwarf and Gnome. There are also quite a few non-standard character races for the discerning player to peruse and even choose: Hybrid, Construct, Ghost and even a Vampire. Yep, you read that right. I said "VAMPIRE"! Allow me to elaborate further. The hybrids are something along the lines of escapees from *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. They were produced in an early experiment to create life. There are six different hybrids: bat, bear, cat, dog, elk and rat. Each flavor of hybrid has different racial abilities. For example, the bear hybrid receives a +4 bonus to Strength while the bat hybrid has the Blindsight and Glide ability. You're a smart reader. I bet you can figure out what those do. A Construct or C.o.G.S. (Creations of Generated Sentience) are automatons that through some fluke in their design led to true sentience. Pretty much a Construct is a creature made of brass, bronze or wood, a robot. More sinister ones can even be made out of flesh. Ghosts and Vampires are known as The Revenants. A Ghost is, well…uhm…a ghost. A Ghost-ish character basically has the abilities that one might attribute to ghosts. The Vampire class is not your normal Bela Lugosi / Christopher Lee kind of vampire. They are not full undead, but the curse of vampirism burns within them. They have the vampire's thirst, but they still have a human conscience. Sounds like a David Boreanaz character that I have seen on television. You know what I'm talking about. The Vampire is not nearly as powerful as their undead cousins are, but the trade-off is the ability to survive during the day. This game has quite the eclectic selection when it comes to races from which players can choose for their characters.

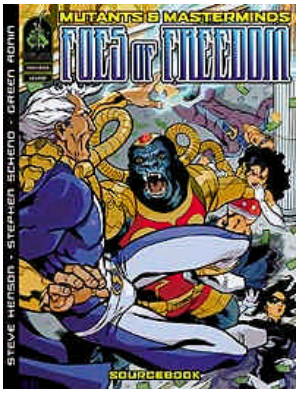
Now, on we go to the character classes. If you thought number of races for characters was interesting, just wait 'til you get a load of the number and variety of player character classes in this game. This game has classes, like *D&D*, but only in the broad sense. There are also sub-classes under each heading that are referred to as Vocations. Each class has four of these sub-classes from which to choose. Here are the main classes (with the Vocations for each in parentheses): The Adventurer (Hunter, Explorer, Combatant and Pilot) The Genius (Inventor, Scholar, Field Scientist and Medic), The Investigator (Constable, Consulting Detective, Intelligencer and Journalist), The Journeyman (Bodyguard, Crewman, Professional and Valet), The Occultist (Ecclesiast, Magician, Medium and Psychic), The Scoundrel (Con Artist, Burglar, Gambler and Thug) and last, but certainly not least The Noble (Aristocrat, Dilettante, Diplomat and Performer). So, if you're like me and love variety in a game, then you will not be able to complain about a dearth of character classes.

There are plenty of rules and guidelines to make all of this steampunky goodness tie together. There are chapters to cover the world of the occult and since this is the steam age, there is a whole chapter called "The Power of Steam." I have only one complaint about this book and if you have read enough of my reviews in past issues you may be able to surmise what. There is no introductory adventure. Now, this is just my opinion, but since I'm the writer of this article I'm supposed to express just that. I believe that every core rule book should have an introductory adventure to get the game master and the players started without having to create a scenario from scratch or go out and buy another item just to be able to play.

VALUE

Well, as you can read you get a book that is just chock-full of role-playing goodness (what's a chock?). As usual, with Mongoose Publishing, you get a pretty good value for your expendable income. *OGL Steampunk* has a MSRP of $39.95. Now, this is a bit higher than a lot of their earlier publications, but all of their OGL line large, hardback books, so do not be daunted by the price. This hefty tome weighs in at a impressive 256 pages. The interior artwork is slightly better than the usual quality that we have come to expect from Mongoose. The cover art gives the viewer a good idea of what he/she is getting into by purchasing this book. There is a female, human that appears to be a mechanic, a cat hybrid with some strange looking firearm and a rather large robot-looking thing. So, if you have any familiarity with the past works from Mongoose Publishing then OGL Steampunk lives up to their high standard and should be well worth the investment of time and money by anyone that has even a passing interest in this genre.

Review by Brian Ahrens



BASICS

Foes of Freedom is a 96-page perfect-bound supplement from Green Ronin for Mutants & Masterminds. It sports a retail price of $23.95 USD and features a full color cover and nothing but full color artwork on the inside. If you're a player in an M&M game please stop reading now as I'll be discussing at least a little about the characters in the book. If you're a GM in an M&M game and have discovered that your players have snuck a peek to get some inside information hammer them, hard!

INSIDE

The book starts off with a brief introduction and then jumps into a section on villain groups. In fact, this takes up almost half of the book. A snake-person cult, *Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign*, gets us going. Most members are in the PL1-2 range with the sorcerers and priest coming in at PL 5 and 8 respectively. I see them being most useful in a medium PL game where you can toss tons of the cultists at your heroes and then a leader just to keep them on their toes. They definitely have a Cthulhu-ish background and feel to them.

The Foundry is a group of sentient robots, constructs to be more specific, that not only manufactures and sells advanced weaponry so humanity can move closer to destroying itself, but also puts together robotic armies (that heroes, of course, need to go out and destroy) to eventually take over the world. Several variants of security robots are presented but there are also a few real villain types that are more than just a collection of nuts and bolts, including a vampric draining android. Overall, they could be a good ongoing foil for your group of heroes.

The Labyrinth is lead by a minotaur named Taurus that is several thousand years old and at PL 17 he's more than a match for a group of heroes on his own. Actually, *The Labyrinth* itself doesn't really exist as a formal group like other super-villain groups. Taurus is a businessman with his fingers in multiple pies and can also whip your ass. The named villains in the pseudo-group range in PL from 7 (evil business men and a crazy doctor with gorilla arms grafted onto his body) to some more 'standard' villains in the PL 10-13 range. The powersets range from absorbers to teleporters to a partial cyborg and a few more too. They might be a bit too powerful if you dump them all on your players all at once but you can have them fight part of the group at the start of an adventure and the others later on. Of course, they'll never really be fighting *The Labyringth* but you, as the GM, will have to work out a cover story or a series of them for the villains that the party is fighting. This is a good group of villains that you can toss together in different variations that all have something in common and then eventually the heroes can find out that Taurus is behind the scenes pulling the strings and then there will really be some hell to pay.

All members, except one, of *Larceny Inc.* are PL 10 so they will make a great heads-up fight for a similar group of heroes. This group of four is more of the property-threatening type than those that would enslave or destroy the world, but they can still be of good use. They consist of a speedster, an elastic chick, a regenerating strongman and their leader, a gentlemanly teleporter. You also get a map of his private digs.

The Mayombe is a voodoo cult that also has bunches of peons that can be tossed at your heroes to slow them down while Lady Mamba, a PL 11 sorceress, her daughter Dahlia (also a sorceress) and Dahlias' brother Silas (a monstrous serpent person). They are at least a little reminiscent of the Brotherhood (above) but that's mainly due to Silas being a serpent person, but these would fit in more with Baron Samedi than The Kings in Yellow. The three main characters here are PL 9-11.

Monster Mayhem is a collection of monsters like a dinosaur, apes from the moon, a living scrap heap and a lightning creature. The apes are PL 4 so you can toss out a handful of them to wreak havoc while the rest (PL 10-14) tear down buildings, short-circuit the city's traffic lights and toss cars around. While they may not form the backbone of an adventure they will make great patsies to distract the heroes while the main villains get down to their business. Gigantosaur (PL14) is the big nasty of the group and a group of PL 10 heroes will need to be creative to subdue him as he has a very decent level of Protection. Going into a straight-up fight with him/it could be disastrous. But, that's for your players to figure out.

The last group is called *The Psions* and while their leader definitely has a propensity for mental powers the rest of the group is

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pretty well balanced. Out of the five remaining members of the group you have two telepaths, a telekinetic, a teleporter and an energy projector. If your party is used to nothing but matching strength and power for the same this group could be a nice curveball.

Part two of the book is for solo villains and you get sixteen of them and one more that really doesn't fall into the same category as the rest. The PLs of the solos range from 10-28 with a lot of 12s popping up in the mix. A slightly changed Dr. Simian makes an appearance and each of the villains has about two pages dedicated to their stats, a picture, their background and suggestions for their use. The last villain entry is a living city called X-Isle which is really more of a plot device or story element rather than an actual enemy for your heroes to fight.

Ending the book is a description and map of Blackstone Federal Prison, its warden, staff and a map of the facility. It would make a great place for a site-based adventure if somehow the doors opened and someone had to come round up all of the rampaging bad guys.

VALUE

If you're a GM in search of new bad-uns to drop into the laps of your players then Foes of Freedom will do you well. For the most part the artwork is up to the usual high standards of M&M products. There were a couple of pics that I was not too wild about but that probably has more to do with personal taste instead of them being bad pieces of work. The pic of Megaladon, a walking giant shark, just didn't thrill me but then again maybe I'm expecting too much from a bipedal shark. I do miss the hardback covers on M&M books and would pay the difference in price. The book is laid out well and is easy to read. It's printed on quality glossy paper and the ink did not smudge at all when I was reading it. Definitely a good book and addition to the M&M universe and also one that GMs of other games could use to as the building blocks to bring in new villains to their world.

Review by Mark Theurer

BASICS

The Red Star campaign setting is a hardcover book for use with the d20 Modern rules. It's produced by Green Ronin and is based on a futuristic comic book. 192-page books has a retail price of $34.95 USD and has a full color cover. The interior is printed on very nice glossy paper and is littered with great full color artwork throughout.

INSIDE

I've never read The Red Star comics and of this setting at GenCon SoCal 2003 while visiting the Green Ronin booth. Coming into the world of The Red Star as a complete newbie I looked forward to the background fluff quite a bit. The artwork throughout the book is great and drew me into the world of high-octane action and epic firefights. The book starts off with a short intro into the world that is not unlike our own history. Imagine the names being changed of our familiar countries (U.R.R.S. instead of the U.S.S.R., the Western Transnational Alliance instead of the United States of America, the Isle of Lions instead of the U.K., The Volksreich instead of Germany…you get the picture) and follow our WWII history, but much more over the top with bigger battles, epic fighting machines, vicious betrayals and more. It started off (and continued as more info is presented throughout the book) as a very interesting background story that set the stage for the army of the U.R.R.S. (United Republics of the Red Star) fighting against the rebels in the land of Nokgorka.

Chapter one (Red Star Characters) introduces character classes native to the setting and quickly takes care of the differences between The Red Star and your normal d20 Modern game. First off, occupations are gone and there's really nine options for character classes with combat prowess being at the forefront of them in the Hailer, an absolute killer on the battlefield that can augment his gun's effectiveness through special abilities. The range of character classes is nowhere near as wide as in D&D where you can't swing a dead cat without hitting a new one, but I don't see that as a problem here as the setting is fairly narrow and concentrated (more on that later). New skills and feats are also here, many combat related to keep you alive when negotiations break down. I expect that to happen a lot. Even with some differences from d20 Modern character creation was simple and should not take experienced players long at all.

Chapter two (Personal Weapons and Equipment) is fairly lengthy and contains lots of guns to make people dead and also equipment to aid in your PC not entering that state. A very cool aspect of The Red Star universe is

that the performance of some guns (along with the right character and spells/protocols) can be enhanced to really turn you into a bad-ass killing machine. Armor will do more than (hopefully) save your life, it's also a status symbol. Just wearing a certain type of armor might make your opponent's bladder fail or it could reinforce their will and make them fight all the harder. Generally, armor in The Red Star will take damage off of any hits that you suffer instead of increasing your Defense/AC, so get used to finding cover and letting the bullets fly. As with magic arms and armor in D&D you can enhance your weapons and armor here and one of the most sought-after things for your players will be Autoshields, force fields that can be activated to soak up damage.

Chapter three (To Fight and Die for the Motherland) is pretty short at about three pages but it details the changes in the combat rules when playing in a Red Star game. Nothing earth-shattering here and your game should not be slowed down when you introduce them.

Chapter four (Red Fleet Vehicles) not only introduces vehicles that you'll be fighting with and against but also those that you'll be fighting "in". Some are so large that they themselves become platforms for fighting.

Chapter five (Military-Industrial Complex) describes how magic (protocols instead of spells) are used. Spellcasting is not automatic as you'll be making skill checks to successfully cast, excuse me, kast protocols and each time you kast one you can expect to suffer some non-lethal damage. Protocols can be boosted (increase range, targets effected, etc…) but doing so can result in more severe side effects to the caster. The new system for magic is easy to grab onto and should not pose a problem for players or GMs after reading through it once. On the other hand, deciding when it's worth it to kast a protocol, or boost one, is another matter.

Chapter six (The United Republics of the Red Star) gets us loads of background info on the U.R.R.S. From the daily life of its citizens to why we're fighting to keep (or break away in the case of the rebels) a rebellious province from truly breaking away from the Motherland. Parts of this section should be required reading for anyone who will be playing a character in this setting. Of course, as a GM, you'll be reading all of it.

Chapter seven (The World) gets you up to speed with the other major nations in the setting but I don't expect them to play a major role in campaigns in The Red Star. Of course, you're likely to have dealings with characters from Al 'Istaan because of their geographical closeness to the U.R.R.S. and you might end up dealing with the WTA, or an agent on assignment, or the Isle of Lions on occasion but I think that these will be more the exception than the rule. Of course, you could throw the whole campaign off-kilter and send your PCs right into the heart of the capitalists, but that's another story. Either way, this section was a good read and while the history is exaggerated it's still familiar enough to easily get into and understand.

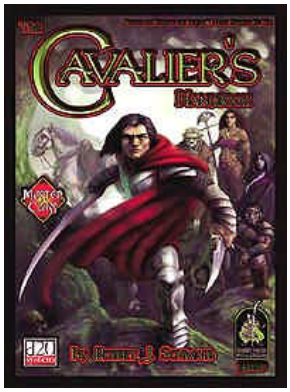
Chapter eight (The Spiritrealm) gives more background information about the setting along with rules for immortals (spirits of once-living heroes) along with skills and feats befitting such entities. Nistaani invocations, for their shaman, are also presented here.

Chapter nine (To the last of us all! – Running The Red Star) was the one that, as a GM, I was looking forward to the most and while it does give some insight into running campaigns in this setting they could have spent some more time on it and it is lacking one thing, in my opinion anyway, and that's an adventure, even a mini-one. Not everyone picking up the book will be as intimately familiar with the setting as readers of the comics and while the book does a very good job of giving you the feel of the world and what's going on it would still have been nice to get a jump-start with an adventure. The most likely campaigns that you'll find yourself playing in, or running, will be either as members of the Red Fleet (a couple of sub-categories of game settings are also possible here) or as resistance fighters. There are some other settings presented but these two will be the easiest to get into, especially for players who have not read the comics.

The book ends with the appendices, which are not only easy to read but are also peppered with incredible artwork. Equipment, NPCs (probably very familiar to any readers of the comic), vehicles and more is here in the back of the book in an easy to find place.

VALUE

Ok, so do you drop $34.95 on **The Red Star**? Well, that depends. First, if you don't have d20 Modern then you'll need that too. Chances are, if you're reading this review and interested in the setting then you probably already have d20 Modern so that's probably not so much of an issue. Are you looking to switch campaigns or start a new one? That's the bigger question in my mind. This is one of those cool settings that could make you and your group drop what you're currently doing or pick this up if you're on a break from another game right now. The setting is epic in scope but somewhat narrow in its focus. I don't mean that there's not a lot going on, because there is (or can be), but what I'm getting at is that this is not so much a world-hopping kind of game like Traveller. It's a fast based, combat oriented game that has room for role-playing and investigation and intrigue, but also lots of gunfights and bodies hitting the floor. It's very playable on its own but I can also see it (or at least its characters) maybe fitting into a game where everyone comes from a different "home" setting or world and adventures trail back to each character's base setting from time to time. Anyway, incredible production values and a slam-bang action shoot-em-up game in a much larger than life world gets The Red Star a thumbs-up from me. Do you have to buy the comics? Well, I'd say that it's not required but I'd highly encourage it. In fact, I'll be doing just that fairly soon.



Review by Mark Theurer

BASICS

The Cavalier's Handbook is a supplemental book for d20 RPG games. It's mostly geared towards fantasy, but wonder of wonders there are even some rules for d20 Modern. This 95 page book is a full sized soft cover book put out by *Green Ronin Publishing*, and written by *Robert J Schwalb*. As is normal for this sort of book, the

cover is full color while the interior is all black and white. The interior art has its ups and downs, but I wouldn't count it as one of the books strengths. But to my mind, that's where the questionable strengths end and the definite strengths start. Overall the book in a concise, well written, well organized, and most importantly, VERY usable resource in a large variety of ways. The book's retail price is $19.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The book starts with a one page introduction, that briefly describes each of the chapters to follow, and is organized into seven chapters. As would be expected, some chapters have more value than others, but unlike many supplemental books of this sort, many of the chapters, or at least parts of them, are usable in a more general sense to non-cavalier characters and GMs alike.

The first chapter covers the Cavalier class. For those wondering what a cavalier might be, the briefest of explanations might be a secular Paladin. In fact, perhaps to the surprise of some, the book explains that notable figures of legend like Sir Lancelot and Sir Gawain were Cavaliers rather than Paladins. That's not to say that cavaliers can't be religious, many can be quite devout. The difference lies in that a Paladin is actually sponsored by and is devoted to his or her god, while a Cavalier's loyalty first lies with his or her liege. After laying out the class features for the Cavalier, and even giving us a few sample NPCs, the chapter ends with giving a couple pages of rules for incorporation of the cavalier into d20 modern.

For most new classes, that's where it ends. But wait, we have not yet begun to see the light. Chapter two now goes into the prestige classes. These obviously are available for all, but are specifically made for the cavalier character. Previously I attempted to briefly describe what a cavalier might be for those not yet "in the know". But just looking through this list of prestige classes should complete the picture. The prestige classes are: Holy Crusader, Knight of Charity, Knight of Infamy, Knight of Quality, Knight of Renown, and Sisters of the Sidhe. With the exception of the last one (a prestige class for female elves) you should now get the picture. Each prestige class comes with one or two sample NPCs (a total of ten more NPCs).

Well, I guess if you are going to go into the prestige classes, you might as well go into the feats too. So a whole slew of feats is what makes up the bulk of Chapter three. A hefty forty feats in all are included here. Something I really liked, being a horse lover, is a new kind of feat they call "Steed Feats". As the name implies, Steed Feats are feats that make your trusty steed better. Six of the forty fall in to this new class. Oh, did I forget to mention that Cavaliers are in their prime when on horseback? Hey, we are talking Sir Lancelot here remember?

Chapter three ends with a couple variants and an "Option". For the detail oriented person, these are just too cool. The first variant gives you an easy system to come up with a Social Class and a general character history (that could actually alter your social class). The system is simple and is the best of its sort that I have ever seen and it's usable for ALL characters, not just cavaliers. The second variant gives some quick ideas for handling non-human cavaliers. I have to admit I got a kick out the visual that a gnome cavalier brought to mind, but hey, it's fantasy right? Finally there is the option of coming up with Armorial Bearings and Coats of Arms using a random generator. This may be getting too much into the weeds, but again, for those who like that sort of detail, it's a simple system to come up with something.

Okay, are we done yet? Nope! That's just the first half of the book. Chapter four goes into retainers and steeds. For retainers there is a section on novices and a bunch of templates for retainers. Cavaliers by their nature will naturally draw retainers, so there is some attention given to the professions a suitable retainer might follow. The section on steeds, gives the profiles of standard warhorses, good warhorses, excellent warhorses, and excellent warhorses. Then, for a price, you can buy any of the above warhorses with added enhancements. You are limited to three enhancements, but this is a cool way to personalize your horse. Of course you could end up with a house that is worth more than your house, but isn't that the way it goes? Finally the chapter ends with another of my favorite parts, ten new beasts usable as steeds to someone brave enough to catch them and train them. Again these creatures are not limited to cavaliers or even player characters.

Now, chapter five starts getting into stuff that any GM will like in any campaign… magic stuff. This chapter has a whopping sixty two entries including things like special abilities for armor and shields, magic armors, magic shields, special abilities for weapons, magic weapons, magic rings, wondrous items and minor artifacts. As a GM I love this chapter.

Chapter six goes into honor (as in specific to cavaliers) and tournaments (as in not specific to any class). The Honor rules is mostly to assist in the role playing aspect of the game giving guidance to the player on how his character should act. The tournament section gives a brief overview of tournaments and a system of jousting. The rules are simple but worth a try.

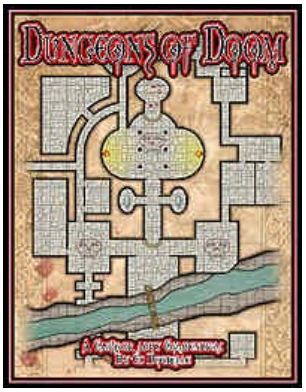
Finally we get to chapter seven, as if the first six wasn't enough. This is another interesting chapter that details how to begin a military order. That's right; we are taking a full blown military order. This is all based around a fairly simple system, and I'm sure will generate a whole slew of adventures all by itself. But I will tell you one thing, getting into something like that looks like a whole lot of fun, but also a whole lot of work on someone's part.

VALUE

As the astute reader might be able to glean from this review, I found the book to be great. Not only do I like the role playing aspect a cavalier will but in any campaign, but cavalier or no, there are a whole lot of stuff in this book that is usable in any campaign. In fact, although cavaliers where in mind when designing the book, most of it is more than usable even if cavaliers are not in the campaign, for players and/or GMs. I think the cover price of $19.95 is a bargain for this book.

Review by Clay Richmond

"Dungeons of Doom: A Compendium of Fantasy Maps" is a 80-page soft bound book of dungeon maps. It is published by Green Ronin and has a retail price of $19.95.This book is a collection of dungeon maps for use with fantasy RPGs.



"Dungeons of Doom: A Compendium of Fantasy Maps" is a resource for frustrated referees who need new ideas for adventures. The book is full of maps - and nothing else. The maps are just that - maps, nothing else. Most of the maps are level plans with square grids. The maps are drawn in an artistic style, as opposed to black lines on graph paper, with watermark illustrations showing features of the rooms. Most rooms are labeled with names rather than numbers or letters.

There are seventy-three maps for the referee and eight associated player handouts. The maps are grouped into related collections: Dungeon Kingdom, The Great Cave Lake, Fire Top Peak, Crypts & Tombs, and Labyrinths. The first three are dramatic collections while the last two are thematic.

The Dungeon Kingdom set consists of sixteen maps that cover an area of caverns and rooms - something like the Underdark from Forgotten Realms or the extensive Drow dungeons of the D1 through D3 Drow adventures. The first map gives an overview of the sections. The named areas are then presented in detailed maps. These range from one page cavern maps like the Tribal Cavern and the Spirit Cavern to underground structures like the two-level Dungeon Keep. The largest of the mapped areas is the Kobold Lair which features 3 levels. Other maps in this set include a fungus farm, a river town, and a cave town. One of the smallest area maps but with lots of interesting illustrations is the water-powered Clockwork Gauntlet.

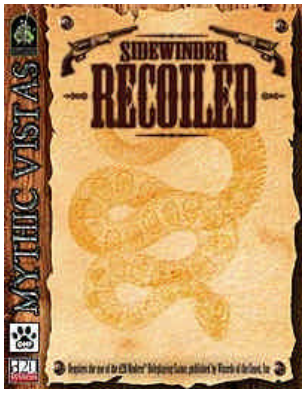
The second map set, the Great Cave Lake, is another large scale underground area. The set covers a very large cavern that is half full of water. Different areas of the cavern have their own maps. This includes the Crystal Domain, an area of large crystals, a fungus jungle, dire eel tunnels, and the city of serpents. There is also a city of spiders, which is composed of a large web area near the roof of the lake. The most interesting part of this set is the Ghoul King's Tower - a twelve-level hollowed out limestone column. The column is surrounded by seven hollowed out stalactite Guard posts.

The third map set is Fire Top Peak - a series of maps that cover the insides of an active volcano. The set includes Dwarven ruins on the side of the volcano's cone and its associated mine workings, a fire-ruby mine, and a fire giant lair set in the primary vent of the volcano. If that wasn't enough, there is a Efreeti temple floating on the top of the magma pool at the bottom of the volcano.

The rest of the maps are grouped by type. The crypts include Pharaoh's Tomb, Royal Tomb, Mage's Tomb, Tomb of the Dwarven Kings, Frost Giant tomb, Goblin Grave Warrens, and Skull Crypt. The last two are cavern maps while the others are finished structures. The labyrinths include a Cave Maze, a classic Labyrinth, a Sundered Labyrinth - pierced by the Tunnel of the World Worm, Maze of the Five Keys, and a Maze of Pools - a series of rooms with pools in the middle that are connected by underwater tunnels.

The book ends with eight player handouts which correspond with some of the maps in the books. The handouts are, of course, unlabeled so to minimize player information. For referees, this book is a joy to read - if read is the word for staring at the various maps. The maps are all well drawn and each has their own interesting areas and hooks. You could spend hours just dreaming how these maps will play. Needless to say, this book succeeds in helping frustrated referees. First it removes the need to draw maps and secondly, the maps provide the inspiration for how to populate them. For the serious referee, this is a must-have reference book.

Review by J Michael Tisdel



"Sidewinder: Recoiled" is a Wild West role playing game that is published by Dog House Rules and Green Ronin. It is based on the d20 Modern rules. The book is a 296-page soft-bound volume published by Green Ronin under its Mythic Vistas line. The original "Sidewinder" game was electronically published by Dog House Rules itself.

The rule book consists of ten chapters, and index, and a character sheet. The first half of the book covers character creation while the remainder is devoted to game rules, creatures, and stock NPC's

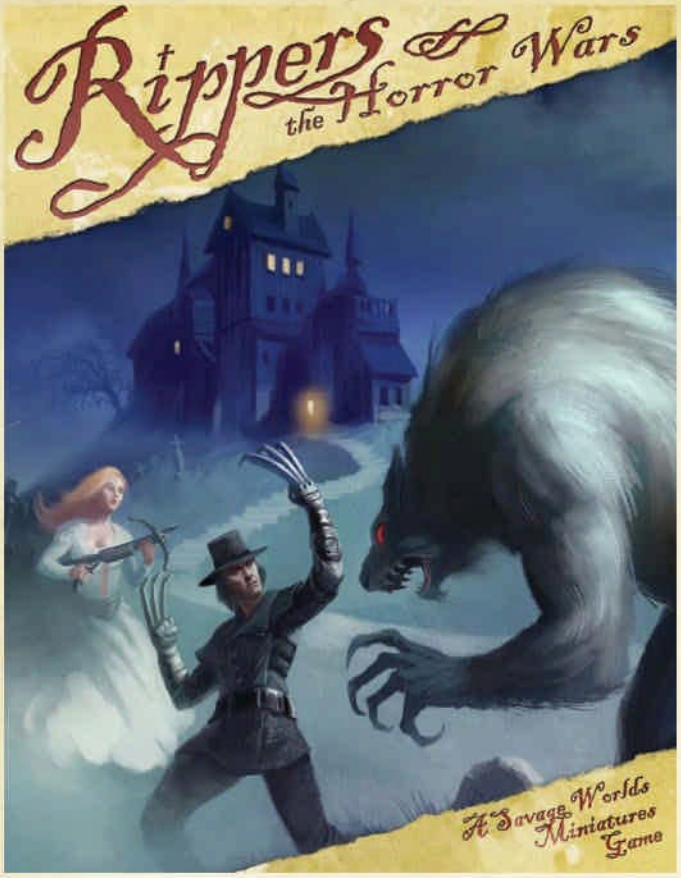
Chapter 1 is an introduction to the game system, providing general information about the setting. This section is written from the point of view of Bat Masterson, who contributes additional background information in the various sidebars.

Chapter 2 presents the basic character creation rules - and the six standard character classes: Strong Hero, Fast Hero, Tough Hero, Smart Hero, Dedicated Hero and Charismatic Hero. The Action Point system is covered as is the two monetary systems. The rules present a modified d20 Modern wealth system as well as a Cold Hard Cash variant that is similar to the gps system of Dungeons and Dragons.

Chapter 3 covers skills - and there are quite a few. Most of the d20 Modern skills are present, but out of the 68 in "Sidewinder: Recoiled", there are 3 of the d20 Modern skills that are missing. Computer Use is obvious; the other two are drive and pilot. The Operate Vehicle skill replaces drive and pilot, and there is not a replacement for Computer Use - though I guess you could create a Difference Engine Use skill for a Wild Wild West type campaign.

Chapter 4 covers feats - and like skills, there are some deletions and changes from those in d20 Modern. There are also 25 new feats. These changes are based on the differences in technology between the settings of the two games (19th versus 21st century).

Now that basic character creation is out of the way, chapter 5 delves into equipment. This section also presents the rules for both the wealth and cold hard cash systems. First and foremost is, as usual, the weapons. The weapons presented include flintlocks, percussion cap, and cartridge fire arms as well as other esoteric



Take Back the Night!

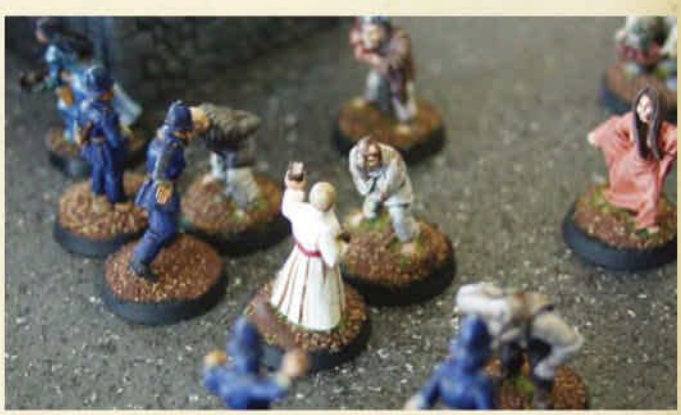
The monsters have lived among us for thousands of years, preying on the weak. The helpless.

But mankind discovered a new weapon to fight the creatures of darkness. "Dr. Jack" developed a way to tear the very essence of these horrors from their undead flesh and graft it into living blood and bones. For many years, the "Rippers" took back the night, and the hunters became the hunted.

The vile fiends of the world were backed into a corner, but under the leadership of Dracula himself, formed a "Cabal" of evil to combat those who hunted them. Their timing was perfect—for the essences the Rippers stole from their prey eventually corrupted the monster hunters. Tthe very men who created the Rippers—Moreau, Frankenstein, and even Dr. Jack himself—went mad and joined the Cabal!

Now Abraham Van Helsing and his mysteriously adopted son, Johann, the Harkers, Witch Hunter Serious Chapel, and a handful of other stout hearts are all that remain of the Rippers. It is their lot to carry on the Horror War.

Rippers: The Horror War is a complete miniatures skirmish game. The *Savage Worlds* roleplaying game is NOT required. Look for miniatures wherever you bought this book, or at www.greatwhitegames.com.



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and archaic weapons. Ammunition for firearms have been simplified; the multiplicity of calibers and manufacturers have been reduced to 5 paper cartridges, 7 metal cartridges, and 3 shot gun shells. Rules are presented for reloading times as well as for weapon modifications such as hair trigger or custom grip. There is also a side bar that relates feats to ranged combat. In addition to the firearms, there is an extensive collection of melee weapons, improvised weapons, armor (yes, armor), as well as general goods and services.

Chapter 6 covers advanced classes, much like prestige classes. The classes presented include Bounty Hunter, Brave, Desperado, Grifter, Gunslinger, Maverick, Mountain Man, Pony Soldier, Preacher, Professor, Pugilist, Rifleman, Rustler, Sawbones, Scout, Showman, Soldier, Tin Star, and Wrangler.

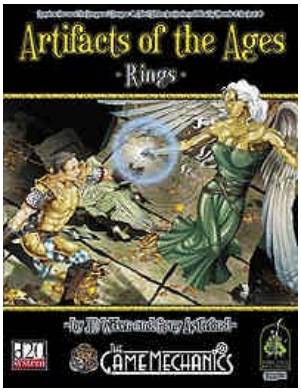
Chapter 7 covers combat. The combat rules presented are the standard d20 modern ones. There is an interesting critical damage rule. During the first round of combat, when everyone is flat-footed, a successful ranged attack is automatically considered a critical threat - a follow up die roll could make it a rather nasty surprise.

In addition to this critical rule, there is the showdown rule for running the shoot out in the middle of the street scenario. The showdown starts out with an opposed bluff check. The loser suffers a -2 to the subsequent Initiative check, -4 if he loses by five or more. These two rules provide a way to easily recreate the High Noon shootout.

Chapter 8 gives rules for the environment of the west including overland movement, weather, diseases, and natural dangers. Chapter 9 covers the various animals present in the west - from rattlesnakes to trained horses. The final chapter gives statistics for NPC's, both townsfolk and a pre-generated outlaw gang.

"Sidewinder: Recoiled" is a well-researched game. There is quite a bit of historical detail modeled in the rules and background - and there is some information for more cinematic settings. These are generic rules and don't focus on any one period or area. The GM will need to fill in quite a bit of information for his campaign. Dog House Rules does publish a campaign setting as a separate volume. If you're looking to role play the wild west, this is an excellent set of rules. However, I really would have liked to have had some famous characters included in the NPC section - The Man with No Name, Judge Roy Bean, and Rooster Cogburn would have been a welcome addition.

Review by J Michael Tisdel



BASICS

Artifacts of the ages –Rings- is a supplemental book for fantasy d20 games. It is written by *JD Wiker and Gary Astleford*, and published by *Green Ronin Publishing*. The book contains twenty-nine magic items, all considered minor artifacts. Each item has its own extensive write-up (extensive considering it's for a single magic item at least) averaging over two pages per item. The book is a full sized eighty page book that is not over stuffed with art work. There is a black and white drawing of each item and little else. In fact besides the drawing of the items, there are only three other pictures. The cover art is a full color drawing of medium quality. All the items are written in a genetic enough way that they can be used in virtually any fantasy setting. The book's retail price is $17.95 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

I was a bit thrown off by the title, *Artifacts of the ages –Rings-*, because not all the items in the book are rings. In fact of the twenty-nine items in the book, only eleven of them are actually rings. On the other hand, it would be hard to use any other name since the rest of the items don't exactly fall into any single category. Most are jewelry or gemstones of some sort, and I don't believe that there are any two pieces of jewelry that are of the same type. But all of the items use the same system, so the authors have generalized everything as "rings" throughout the book, including the title.

There are five chapters, the first introduces the concepts behind the "rings" and the system is presented that will allow characters to grow with the magic item. In fact this concept is one that I found to be very intriguing. The idea is that when you first acquire an item, it has basic properties like any other magic item. But then you can take levels in a prestige class for the item. The items are divided into four categories, Battlerings, Spellrings, Faithrings, and Swiftrings. Each of these four categories is then covered in each of the final four chapters. The layout for each item description is about the same throughout the book. To start with, each item description starts with an extensive history. The history is "compartmentalized" with knowledge checks given for each of the sections. The next sub-section gives the requirements a character must satisfy in order to take prestige levels for the particular item. The format used for these requirements is the same as those commonly seen for prestige classes. Following that is sometimes a section called "Restrictions" which as you might suspect gives restrictions to the item's use or development. This section is not always present, meaning only that there are no restrictions associated with the item.

The next sub-section is Attributes. This is a very short section that details the unique way that this item can be destroyed, the knowledge check needed to know that information, and the value of the item to someone who has not taken prestige levels for the class of item falls in (presumably, the value is "priceless" to someone that has become dedicated to the item). The last sub-section comes with a table. The Section in entitled Special Abilities and this is the meat of the item's description. The table lists the abilities gained at each of the prestige levels taken for the item. Usually there are eleven entries in this table allowing for up to ten levels to be taken with the item (plus the abilities granted if no levels are taken). As normally found for class special abilities, the section then goes into detailed description of each of the abilities mentioned in the table. Some of these abilities are quite powerful and definitely the stuff of legends. These abilities, or the quest for them, are what makes these items worth the dedication a character needs to have towards them.

Now that I've given you the layout of the descriptions, I suppose I should give a brief introduction to the four different categories of items. The first category, Battlerings, is made up of items

meant for fighters, barbarians, and rangers (or possibly for the occasional monk or paladin as the book says). These items are dedicated to creating legendary warriors though not necessarily of the conventional type. Normally it's not too difficult to qualify to take prestige levels for these babies, but they are definitely meant for those whose primary ability is born out in battle. There are nine items in this category.

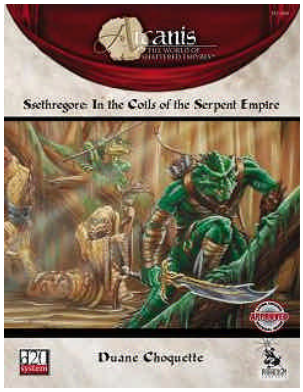
The next category, as adroit readers might guess, is for items meant for arcane spell casters, hence the name "Spellrings". These items are once again quite powerful in the hands of a character that has dedicated his life to it. There are seven items in this class, and one of the requirements for each of them is the ability to cast arcane spells. The category after this is simply the clerical version of the Spellrings, only they are called Faithrings. There are six Faithrings, and like their counterparts, they come in a variety of flavors both good and evil, chaotic and lawful cleric and druid. Reading through many of these rings you will find that in truth not all of items are appropriate for all parties. So if a GM were to use one of these items I would choose carefully which one to use. Deciding which item to give a character or a party randomly would not only be an injustice to the item and the party, but would actually be against the nature of these items as explained in the book.

The final category is "Swiftrings". In general, these are meant for people who depend on swiftness and deftness as their primary claim to fame. In other words, people like rogues, monks, and Bards are the favored targets for these items, and there are seven of them. These items seem to me to be even more tailored to a particular type of individual than most of the other items. In fact a great many of your typical characters might think that the majority of these are next to useless. However, if the right item were to be matched up with the right character, it could really change the face of your gaming.

VALUE

I really like the ideas presented in this book. Having a magic item that grows with a character is a very cool idea and one that could very well prove to be a huge motivating factor in a campaign. One thing that I didn't mention yet is that there are more than a half dozen adventure hooks sprinkled throughout the book as ideas to introduce an item into the campaign. I guess they are thrown in as an extra bonus since they are not part of the standard format. The only point of caution that I can think of, is that a GM should not use these items lightly and throw them into randomly generated treasure. These items would be appropriate to specifically pick out for a party (perhaps even with a particular character in mind) and build an adventure around it. Maybe even using one of the given adventure hooks as a starting idea. If that is something you can see doing, then I think you would enhance your game with one of these items, and the book would be a very worthwhile purchase.

Review by Clay Richmond



BASICS

This book is a supplemental book for Dungeons and Dragons d20. The title, Ssethregore: *In the Coils of the Serpent Empire*, gives you a pretty good idea what you might find between its covers. It is written by *Duane M. Choquette*, and published by *Paradigm Concepts*. The setting is in the world of Arcanis, but as far as I can tell it will fit seamlessly into just about any standard D&D setting. Ssethregore is an empire of advanced reptilian creatures (humanoid for the most part). I avoid the use of "lizardmen" only because calling these guys lizardmen would be like calling all dinosaurs "lizard-animals". The book spans 157 pages and is filled from cover to cover with a whole lot of stuff. There are no "big font" tricks, "wide margin" tricks, or any other common tricks used to make text take up more pages than normal. In fact if anything, there is something of a lack of artwork giving you even more space to fill up. It seems that they used the age old trick of using good ole text to fill up all those pages, and a lot of it. The cover art is full color and very nice. The interior art varies quite a bit in quality from simple silhouette drawings to very detailed and high quality pictures. All are black and white drawings, but many of the pictures are so dark that much of the detail is blacked out. It looks to be an unfortunate

result of the duplication process. In general, the book is very detailed and paints the setting for the Ssethregoran Empire and its inhabitants in all its glory. The book provides everything a GM would need to build an adventure or campaign in the setting, as the book says, all you need is a large tropical forest or jungle. The book's retail price is $24.99 USD.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

The book is broken up into nine chapters that do a pretty good job of covering all the bases. As an added bonus, before you get into the chapters, there is a page that gives a timeline that covers the last 11,027 years of history of the ss'ressen (the name of the race). The timeline is obviously brief, but no worries, Chapter One then takes the next sixteen pages to expound upon it. The chapter is a fun piece to read that covers the history of the world from the ss'ressen point of view. It starts with the creation of the world and the reptilian races, then it takes you through the struggles with various foreign races (eradicating more than one along the way), and is brings the reader all the way up to the current state of affairs. The story does a good job of painting the ss'ressen mindset and the racial motivations. Admittedly the chapter is all fluff, but it is a well written piece of fluff. The chapter ends with the stats for the emperor of the serpent empire. This guys CR is 29, so make sure you eat your Wheaties before taking him on.

Chapter two starts with a two page map, and then spends the rest of the chapter describing the different areas on the map. The map is detailed and well done, but it's a little dark making it somewhat difficult to read. This chapter, like the previous one, is well written and gives a lot of detail. My only beef with it is that cross-referencing the areas being described to the map is very difficult, and it seems that there are some areas described that I can't seem to find on the map at all.

Chapter three, for me, is where the good stuff starts. This is where the races of Ssethregore are described in great detail. In all, there are like twenty-seven races mentioned here. Some are familiar, like troglodytes and such, but most are the various races of the ss'ressen. Also among these are the allied races and slave races. Four of the races include template to create characters, and two write-ups for NPC's. Again these NPC's are no knock-overs, though one of them says it is a CR of 1…. I'm here to tell you … ITS WRONG (obviously a typo). The disappointing thing about this chapter is the lack of actual stats or sample characters. Besides some templates and the two high level NPC's, there is only history and racial descriptions. There is a lot of very good fluff, but little game usable stuff. Another minor issue is that the pictures in this chapter, of the various races, are too dark making any detail very difficult to pick out.

Chapter four gets into the classes you might come across in the empire. The society in general is lawful evil, so as one might imagine they are heavy in warriors. Rogues, Arcanists and Priests also have a major presence. Included in this chapter is a new core class. This class is pretty cool and one that I really like… and oh by the way, the alignment of this class is lawful good/lawful neutral. Makes it interesting in a Lawful Evil society huh? Then there follows a whole slew of prestige classes, fourteen in all, that cover a very wide variety of professions. These prestige classes are in my opinion one of the strongest points of the book and also one of the most usable parts. This chapter is a treasure chest of possible characters of every description. There is a lot of stuff that you can use here even if you are not running an adventure or campaign in the Ssethregore setting.

Next we get into the feats and skills chapter. I'm telling you that if you are short of feats, you need to check this out. Fifty six feats in all are included here! They have feats in the categories of general, Meta-magic, Biological, and Elementalist. There are also four new skills thrown in for good measure. After that follows a chapter on the Religion and Magic of the setting. There are two pantheons that are represented with full descriptions of the deities and the "demipowers" worshiped by the inhabitants of Ssethregore. Magic is broken down into a couple different categories such as Techromancy and Elementalism, and then seven new domains are introduced. Finally a whopping thirty-one new spells finish off the chapter.

Chapter seven goes into the Flora and Fauna of the serpent empire, and though the fluff and descriptions are very nice, and very well done, I was disappointed that no stats are given anywhere in the chapter. Dragons are a central part of the mythos of this society, so the dragon lore is pretty extensive. In fact, draconic beings are divided into thirteen categories where Great Drakes (what humans normally call dragons) are only one. Other categories include familiar names such as Fire Drakes, Wyverns, and Hydra, but there are others that the reader will find new. After the draconic beings, there is a section on Creatures of Service (beast of burden and such) with eight creatures, and a section on creatures of war with nine more. Again, these are all well and good, but no stats accompany any of the descriptions (though stats for some of them are provided in the last chapter).

The last two chapters is where much of the stuff that is directly usable in the game with little or no modification. This includes equipment, magic items, and creatures. Weapons and armor are laid out in separate tables with complete descriptions following the appropriate table. There is no such table for the magic items nor is there one for the creatures, so that leads to some page flipping especially since the creature section does not include all creatures discussed in the book. There are, however, twenty-eight creatures that are included (unfortunately, most without pictures).

VALUE

This book is a very in-depth look at the setting of choice and is bursting with well written descriptions, histories and setting appropriate "flashbacks". In fact a huge portion of the book is devoted to these things. For me, the book was a great read but for the most part did not lend itself to be a resource that could be immediately used in a game. Much that a GM would need to develop a campaign is here, but a whole lot is left up to GMs to work out on their own. To me, the greatest weaknesses are that sample NPC's are in critically short supply, and the monster manual is incomplete. Additional tables and more extensive tables would also have been nice. What the book does do well is provide a vivid backdrop for a GM to develop an in depth campaign in the Serpent Empire.

Review by Clay Richmond

"Dark Legacies: Player's Guide" is a low magic campaign setting for d20 Fantasy RPG's. "Dark Legacies" requires the use of the Dungeons and Dragons Players Handbook. The soft-bound book is 144 pages long and includes a fold out color map of the Dark Legacies lands. It is published by Redspire Press and has a retail price of $29.95.

"Dark Legacies" is a low magic game system. This means that arcane magic is rare - it is even look down upon by society at large - it is the province of demons. What magic is present is more ritual oriented - and skill checks are required. Failure can have catastrophic consequences Magic items are rare, and either holy or unholy. With limited magic, there are more feats and mundane items to make characters competitive. Not only is the usual FRPG magic missing from "Dark Legacies", but the system doesn't use alignments. Players and DM's are left on their own to determine good, evil, and shades thereof.

"Dark Legacies" is set in the far future, while the earth is recovering from a great calamity. Some time in our future, our world slips out of our reality and into a lightless void where the planet is overrun by demons. Our civilization fell and was replaced by a demonic one. After an unknown time, partially returned to our reality - bringing the demons with it. Back in our reality, a new faith arose to unite the humans and fight back the demons. Wars followed and the dark was driven back, and human civilization prevailed. The surviving nations soon fell to infighting and scheming. This is the world where the players adventure.

"Dark Legacies" has its share of non-human races - renamed but otherwise familiar to everyone. There are the Briggs (ogres), Dwerofs (dwarves), Eldrin (elves), Hybrids, and Novags (technically inclined halflings). There are new races as well. The Assar are demon-born deposed rulers of the earth, and the hybrids are half-demon half-eldrin warriors bred as the army for the Assar. The various races all came about during the time the earth was in the lightless void.

"Dark Legacies" has seven character classes, only the Archanist uses magic. The others - Barbarian, Fighter, Lurker, Priest, Rogue, and Soldier - are are mundane. The Barbarian, Fighter, and Rogue are similar to their D & D namesakes. The Lurker is like a Ranger and Soldier is a fighter who excels at fighting in organized groups.

The priest is a non-magical cleric. Devine magic is replaced by skills and the Voice take their place. The Voice is used to influence others, and the power grows as the priest's level increases.

"Dark Legacies" has an extensive list of skills, feats, and equipment - all of this helps compensate for the reduction in Magic. Even with the low magic setting, "Dark Legacies" does have rules for magic and spells - rules for rituals and spell failures. In addition, since magic is related to the demonic powers, there is the threat of taint. As a character uses magic, the chance that he will fall under the demonic powers and be affected by taint. The effects start as minor mental aberrations and eventually lead to the loss of the magician's soul. As if taint wasn't bad enough - there is also demonic possession, as well as a more lethal combat option!

"Dark Legacies" is written as a mature campaign setting - and by mature, I don't mean that there are lots of wobbly bits all around. No, the setting is dark and without a clear definition of right or wrong. There are demons, but those that fight against the dark forces are not saints but souls who in their struggle can become tainted by that which they fight. The setting, writing, and illustrations of this RPG remind me of Games Workshop's Warhammer setting - with out the magic.

"Dark Legacies" is certainly an interesting setting - the low magic and clockwork technology are very appealing to me. The darkness is also a nice change from most "clear cut" settings. The lack of alignment, however, appears to be an exercise of the designer's opinion of this facet of the d20 game system that a real rules change. Most RPG's don't have alignments, but then they do get on a soapbox to talk about it either. So, if you're looking for a low-magic setting w/ sacrificing heroes, I highly recommend "Dark Legacies".

Review by J Michael Tisdel

BASICS

Blood & Relics is an 86-page *d20 Modern* supplement written by Charles Rice and published by *RPG Objects*. The soft cover is in full color and the interior is printed in black and white. It has sparse illustration of varying quality. It contains new allegiances, character classes, skills, feats, spiritual afflictions, secret societies, a campaign guide, new fx items, and creatures. This volume retails for $18.95 and is intended for mature audiences

INSIDE

The introduction provides a short narrative, then gives the read a brief synopsis of the campaign model for *Blood and Relics*, and then gives a Disclaimer stating that it isn't the authors' intention to insult anyone. The introduction tells that reader that the Campaign Model is one of gothic conspiracy. My personal interpretation of it would be an *X-files* type game with the Vatican playing the role of the CIA and Satanists and Demons replacing Aliens. It also mentions that it introduces a new magic system for the *d20 Modern* system, new items based on legendary or real world artifacts, and a secret history of the world to bring the GM and player up to date to the world of *Blood and Relics.*

The second chapter appropriately entitled "Characters" details some new allegiances, advanced classes, skills, and feats. The new allegiances are important as most of the advanced classes require one or more allegiance. The allegiances are what you would expect and include the seven deadly sins as well as their opposing virtues, also included are allegiances to either a higher power or a dark power. The advances classes are a study in opposites for every "good" advanced class there is an "evil" advanced class that mimics it or twists it slightly. It would have been more

efficient to include only a base advanced class and give the differences based on whether they serve a "good" purpose or an "evil" purpose. The only exception is the witch: advanced class that is supposedly neutral. The new skills and feats are mostly related to the magic used in *Blood and Relics*. One particularly interesting feat is the henchmen feat that allows the character to gain followers.

The next brief chapter details various spiritual afflictions that can affect a character. Afflictions include doubt, hate, malaise, and even possession. Some of the afflictions have worsening effects as time goes on, for instance, the Hate affliction begins with irritability, then moves to animosity, then full blown hatred, followed by genocidal mania. The affliction most detailed is possession where a malevolent entity has taken control of the character.

The next chapter helps fill in the world in which *Blood and Relics* takes place, Secret Societies. It details such organizations as the Inquisition (Frater Torquemada), The Catholic Church (The Doctrine), the Knights Templar, and the Teutonic Knights. It includes an advanced classes specifically geared for each secret society.

Chapter four is a detailed campaign guide for *Blood and Relics*. It is in this chapter that we are give a secret history of the world. The reader is told how most major historical events had some special significance in the war between good and evil. This section does a good job of interspersing true historical events with the mythology surrounding the campaign system. This section also includes "Items of Legend" items of power sought by both sides in the war between the "higher power" and the "dark power". Included in the "Items of Legend" section are Tomes which are written works that are wondrous items. The final section of this chapter details the "Servants of Darkness": Caeders (demons), Horsemen of the Apocalypse, and lesser fiends. The final pages of the book include some handy charts for the new feats and the standard open gaming license.

VALUE

I would recommend this book to a game master wanting to run a game based on occult conspiracy. The book provides a lot of detail into those subjects and will give the GM a solid base to run his campaign (setting, characters, items, and even advanced classes). Most of the items and classes would work in a *Blood and Relics* campaign, and would have little worth integrated in to another campaign setting. I would not recommend this book to younger readers or those who have an aversion to occult themes. There is a warning on the back cover that the book is intended for mature audiences, as there are references to bloodletting and other adult themes. The book covers many occult themes and blends them with traditional religious practices.

Review by Gabriel Ratliff

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Somewhere in this magazine is a nice big ad with some cool painted pics of our figures (credits below), but for all of the latest news, gossip, pics & 'heads-up' on future releases then feel free to visit the 'Forum of Doom'
http://www.heresyminiatures.com/forumofdoom/phpbb2/index.php

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PAINTING CREDITS

HFD002. 'Kristian,' male dwarf. Painted by Christian Weiss. www.battlefield-berlin.de/
HFG002. 'Kjaran', male grymn sergeant. & **HFM002. 'Axenarf', armoured ogre**. Painted by Mahon. www.chestofcolors.com
HFH003. 'Tiriel', kneeling female paladin. Painted by Zaphod. www.minipainting-guild.net/
HFH004. 'Anghela', female dwarf. Painted by Saxonangel. www.blackmoor.ca
HFC004. 'Osato', Shaolin monk. & **HFD002. 'Svala, Female dwarf warrior.** Painted by Michael Garcini
HFX003. 'Imogen', Winged demonette with flaming sword. Painted by Mikkel Nyboe. www.headblast.de

A Dark and Stormy Night
Game System: d20 FRP or d20 Call of Cthulhu
EL: 8

Synopsis:
A party of adventurers stumbles upon a dark cult in the middle of a summoning ritual.

Description:
The party has been traveling down a lonely stretch of road for some time. It is now evening and the storm clouds that were gathering all afternoon are beginning to pour rain (-2 modifier to Spot and Listen checks) and a chilling wind begins to blow. Flashes of lightning reveal a small village about a mile ahead.

Coming up on the village, the party gets an uneasy feeling. A successful spot check (DC 10) reveals that there are no lights on in any of the buildings and no smoke coming out of the chimneys. There are no sounds other than the rain. A successful spot check (DC 15) reveals a faded and cracked sign on one building that reads "Dunwitch Village".

The village itself is sizeable, about 40 homes and half that number of businesses. A close inspection of the houses reveal that they are not well kept - some have holes in their roofs while others have rotten timbers. A successful spot check (DC 15) reveal mold and mildew in almost every corner. The businesses - stable, smithy, general store - are not in much better condition. Animals and goods are all of low quality.

In the center of the town is the market. There are a few stalls here, but they are in the same condition as the rest of the buildings. Most are empty save for rotten straw and rats.

As the party enters the market, they notice an inn on the right (east). There is smoke coming out of the chimney, but no lights. Entering into the inn, the party finds the common room dark and messy. Searching the common room reveals bits of food and moldy cheese on each table, as was as half-full tankards and jugs.

A successful spot check (DC 20) reveals a curious sign carved on the wall in the corner farthest from the door. Any one who views this sign must make a Will Save (DC 10) or suffer from a sense of despair. The victim suffers a -1 modifier to all dice rolls until daybreak. A successful Knowledge (Occult) check (DC 20) reveals that the sign is the Sign of the King in Yellow.

There is a fire in the kitchen, but it has been banked and is burning low. Searching the kitchen reveals that there are food stuffs, but nothing appetizing. From the north windows of the inn, the characters can see the guild hall across the market. Unlike the other buildings, this one has lights on inside it.

As the party approaches the guild hall, a successful spot check (DC 10) will show that the building is in better repair than the rest of the village. It is clean and free from rust or mildew. The front of the building sports two large double doors and light can be seen coming from between the cracks.

There is chanting going on inside the guild hall. A successful Listen check (DC 10) is needed to discern what the chanters are saying:

"Ia! Ia! Cthulhu Ftagn!"

Anyone who discerns the chanting must make a will save (DC 10) or suffer despair. A successful Knowledge (Occult) (DC 20) or Knowledge (Religion) (DC 30) is needed to know that the chant is part of a summoning ritual for a server of Great Cthulhu.

Inside the guild hall is but one room (30'wide by 60'long). The near half of the room is barren. There are twenty townsfolk (10 men, 8 women, and 2 children - the women and children will flee if fighting breaks out) wearing black hooded robes and kneeling on the floor. In front of them is a man in a gold trimmed black robe brandishing a blood covered dagger in one hand and a dead babe in the other.

The chanting is loud enough inside the room that the party gains automatic surprise on the cultists.

At the far end of the hall is a large black stone (12' tall, 6' wide, 6' deep) on top of which is a small jade figure of Chtulhu (200 gps). Anyone picking up the figure must make a Will save (DC 20) or suffer extreme nausea (-3 to all die rolls for 1 hour after putting the figure down). The save must be made every time the figure is touched, even if the character has successfully saved before. Note that failing the save by more than 10 will result in the character blacking out for 1d4 * 30 minutes.

Dramatis Personae:
10 Cultists: (Lvl 2 Fighters) Abilities: 15/13/14/10/12/8, HP: 19, AC 17, Init +5, Spd 30, Scimitar +6/1d6+2, F: +5, R: +1, W: +1.

Elanam, Cult Leader (Lvl 4 Cleric) Abilities: 13/8/14/10/15/12, HP: 29, AC 19, Init -1; Spd 30, Spd 20, Morning Star +5/1d8+1, F: +6, R: +0, W: +7, Spellcraft: +7 Concentrate: +9. Spell Limits: 5/5/4. Blur potion, Scroll Summon Dimensional Shambler (x2).

Dimensional Shamblers: HD 3d8+9 (22 hp), Init: +4, Spd: 40, AC: 12 (-1 size, +3 natural), Attack; Claw +7/1d6+6; Reach 10', Improved Grab, Planar Jump, F: +6, R: +3, W: +3. CR 3.

Special Notes:
This one-shot is based upon the first paragraph of the Lovecraftian D&D Campaigns appendix in the d20 Call of Cthulhu book.

If you do not have access to the d20 Call of Cthulhu book, replace the Dimensional Shamblers with Quasits.

Elanam will call for his cultists to attack and then summon 2 Dimensional Shamblers and direct them to attack the party's magic users. Then Elanam will join the fight by casting spells to help

out his cultists. He will cast Bless and then close with the melee. Then he will cast Cure Light Wounds on cultists engaged with party fighters.

An Unplanned Rescue
Game System: d20 Modern, d20 Call of Cthulhu or Forbidden Kingdoms
EL: 8

An Unplanned Rescue

The following EL 5 encounter is suitable for d20 Modern, Call of Cthulhu or Forbidden Kingdoms. It would also work in other games such as Spycraft. It's a mundane (no magic, monsters or arcane effects) so it will fit in to whichever flavor of your game that you may be playing.

The Set-up

The characters will need to already be chasing their quarry into a run down apartment building in a bad part of town. They area able to keep their target in sight but it is distancing itself from them. After running into the main entrance of the apartment building you have a chase that involves losing and gaining sight of their target as the narrow hallways bend at 90-degrees, go up flights of stairs (we end up on the third floor), etc… Eventually, the party loses sight of it (him/her/whatever) for a few seconds and then right before they turn another corner they hear a door slam and then as they turn around a corner they hear an ear-splitting scream coming from an apartment just a few feet down the hallway. A listen check (DC 10) will reveal an unrecognized female crying and begging. The word, "no" is used a lot and then there is an unmistakable sound of the woman being struck hard and her hitting the floor. Her sobs can still be heard after she is hit though. Some crashing of what's probably plates or glasses can also be heard from inside the apartment.

Your players have two choices here. Either assume that what's going inside the apartment has something to do with their current case/adventure or it does not. Even if it doesn't, can they really leave what's obviously some kind of domestic battery situation and do nothing about it? Well, maybe if they are heartless bastards, but that's also assuming that they have some reason to believe that it's an isolated incident that has nothing to do with why they came into the apartment building in the first place.

The Encounter

Assuming that your players don't just up and leave any further listening at the door will provide more of the same female crying and eventually also the high-pitched wailing of an infant. Also, the neighbor's television can be heard getting louder as they are trying to drown the noise out themselves. There is no peep-hole to look through to try and get a look inside, albeit a blurry one even if there was one available. The longer the players wait to do anything the louder and more severe the beating becomes. Were either at pick the lock stage (DC 10, it's not a good lock) or break down the door stage (DC xx).

Either way, when the door opens the player doing the picking/ breaking sees a beaten and bloody white female lying on the floor sobbing. She has a bloody nose and there is a small pool of blood on the floor to go along with the blood that's covering her face and clothes. She's probably in her early thirties, but looks older as she's had a rough life. Chain-smoking and drug use have also not left her looking her best. There is a tough looking white male standing above her that looks over at the character and exclaims, "Oh, so this must be your knight in shining armor." as he points a gun at the one opening the door. The man is Brian "Delivery Boy" Albens and he's here to collect money that the woman, Eliza Gentry, owes his boss. If anyone cares to ask, she owes $2000 and there here to get it out of her one way or another. Yes, things were about to get a lot worse for Eliza before the players decided to make entry into the apartment.

More of the high-pitched crying can be heard from the bedroom at the back of the apartment and Eliza tries to crawl in that direction before being kicked in the ribs and curling up in heap. Obviously, her infant is back there and has awoken from all the noise. As any kind of negotiations get going Brian's associates, Robbie "Carface" Richards and Jim "Dunce" Crosby come out of the bedroom and bathroom where they have been searching for cash or any other valuables.

Ok, so do we just start blasting away and not worry about Eliza or her baby being caught in the crossfire or maybe being used as human shields? Maybe we try to negotiate with the crooks. This will generally have no effect as they are not in the mood to talk unless it involves the players backing out of the room. If this even remotely seems to look like what's going to happen have Eliza look up with eyes full of tears and her hair matted down by blood and sweat and have her plead to the characters to help her and her baby. Yes, gunplay is probably what's about to break out here, or at least some serious fight action. If more than a few exchanges of words go by between Brian and any of the characters he finally has enough and shoots at the nearest one to get things going. As detailed in the section below there will be a good amount of cover in the apartment and getting off a clean shot might not be very easy even though 50' is the longest line of sight that can be traced. Expect a lot of hiding around the side of doors and penalties to hit. Also, the use of area effect weapons should not be taken lightly by the players as there are non-combatants (Eliza, her baby and even possibly the neighbors) close by that could easily be killed.

The Layout

See the full-size map on the next page.

The GM will need to quickly draw in the following items on the map. It was left blank so you can re-use it and re-furnish it as you like in future encounters.

- Kitchen: refrigerator, oven, some counters and cabinets.
- Dining Room: small table, a couple of chairs and a high-chair
- Living Room: a very beat-up couch and loveseat, a crappy television and a wobbly coffee table
- Bathroom: bathtub, toilet and sink
- Bedroom: a queen-size bed, an old dresser, one chair and a baby's crib (which contains little Ricky, a 13-month old that's wailing like a fire alarm)
- Closets: the closet in the bedroom should have some clothes and shoes. The other two smaller closets by the bathroom contain towels and other linens.

Finishing Up

Depending on how long the fight goes on several things can happen. If the fight goes past 6 rounds Robbie and Jim will try to make a break for it. If they are in the bedroom they will try to head for the bedroom, shut the door and go out the window to get away via the fire escape. If in the bathroom or anywhere else close to the front door they will make a break for it and try to get out away down through the hallways and then eventually out to the street. Brian will wait a bit longer, until the 10th round, before heading for the hills. As soon as gunfire breaks out a neighbor will call the police but they will take at least ten minutes to arrive. If your players want to avoid being detained for questioning they'll want to be gone before police arrive. If there are any dead bodies in the apartment the players will have to address that issue. Do they leave and hope that nobody sees them and tells the police (25% chance that a neighbor saw them and told the police resulting in the players being contacted at some point in the future) or try to clean up the mess before the police arrive (basically no chance of being able to do that in the time remaining before they arrive) or do they stick around and try to explain what happened (tying them up for at least a couple of hours). If any of the three assailants escape the characters have inherited a new enemy in the form of whatever gang boss (and his flunkies) that you'd like to drop on them from time to time. If all three are killed and Eliza is alive there is an 75% chance that she leaves town with Ricky to get away from her life that has spun out of control and tries to start over. This is increased by 20% if any of the characters encourage her to do so. If she sticks around town (between a 5%-25% chance) then there is a 50% chance that the rest of the gang tracks her down and she spills the beans about any information she has on the characters. This may or may not be enough for them to become an ongoing nuisance though.

Dramatis Personae

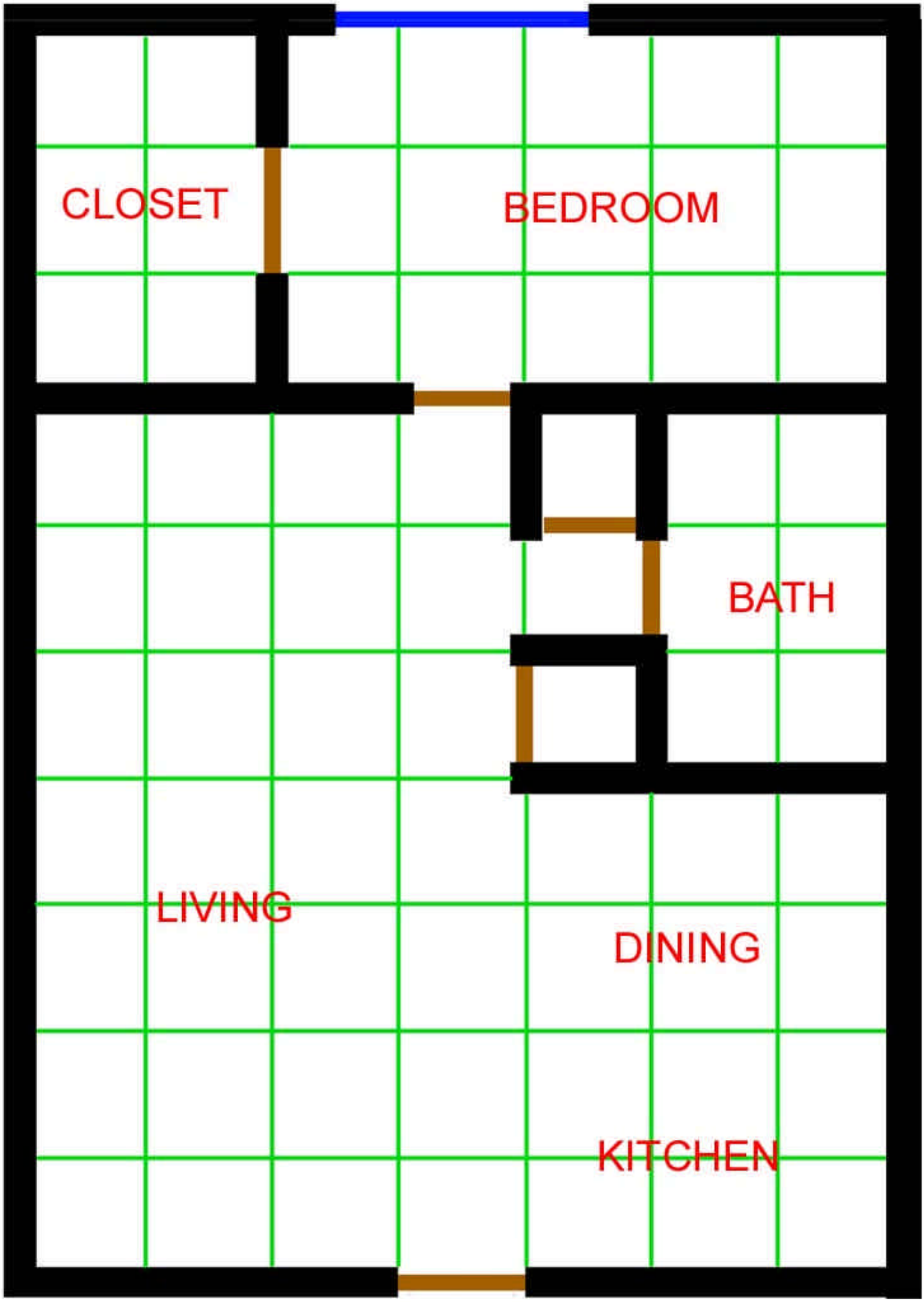
Brian "Delivery Boy" Albens is a mid-level gang member and Robbie "Carface" Richards and Jim "Dunce" Crosby are both low-level gang members. Stats for all three can be found on page 277 of the d20 Modern rulebook. For the sake of simplicity they carry the weapons listed in the default entries in the rulebook.

Eliza Gentry is a low level fast/charismatic ordinary whose stats can be found on page 279 of the d20 Modern rulebook. She has already suffered 7 of her 8 hit points in non-lethal damage. Ricky is a baby, as described on page 271 of the d20 Modern rulebook and has not suffered any damage (lethal or non-lethal) at the start of the encounter.

Rewards

The Wealth Bonus for this encounter +8. Experience points are dependant on the party's level and can be found on page 208 of the d20 Modern rulebook.

Written by J Michael Tisdel and Mark Theurer


CLOSET
BEDROOM
BATH
LIVING
DINING
KITCHEN

PAINTING WORKSHOP

Miniature Painting Basics

A Step by Step Guide

Introduction

Welcome to the exciting world of miniature painting! Whether you've just picked up your first miniature or your 100th, this guide will give you some tips and techniques to help you get the most out of this hobby.

About the Author

I've been painting miniatures for many, many years (too many to admit to!), having started with a box set from Grenadier called, quite simply, "Monsters." Since I was young and inexperienced, I painted those models with Testors enamels. Needless to say, they weren't the greatest work. Since then, I've used a variety of paints, ranging from craft paints such as Delta or Apple Barrel, to Games Workshop, to Vallejo. More recently, I've managed to win a few painting competitions (including several First Place awards at Dragonflight 2000), and have done several commission jobs. I also (fairly) regularly sell painted figures on eBay. About two years ago, I discovered a wonderful resource on the Internet: Cool Mini or Not! (http://www.coolminiornot.com) There are some *incredible* painters in that community, and the wealth of articles, forum postings, and other discussions on that board have really helped me improve my skills. I'd strongly suggest checking it out. Currently, I'm ranked within the top 33% of all painters there—no small feat, considering that this is a worldwide community, with many Golden Daemon winners participating! Enough about me, though; let's get to painting!

Preparing your models

Well, we can't quite start painting yet. Before you apply any paint, you need to assemble and prepare your miniatures. Typically, you'll find miniatures come in one of two materials, a "white metal" (which used to be mostly lead, but is now more often mostly tin) or a plastic. Each of these have their own advantages and disadvantages, which I won't go into in this article.

Washing your models

Regardless of the material used, all models are made through a casting process, in which the material, in liquid form, is injected or poured into a mold. In order for the process to work, the molds must be coated with a "mold release agent," something like an oil or powder. This is important to know, because this agent can also affect the ability of paint to stick to the model. So, it's important that the first thing you do when preparing your models is to get this mold release off. Simply washing them with warm water and mild soap is typically enough; you can use an old toothbrush to scrub them lightly under warm running water.

Cleaning your models

"But I just washed my models, aren't they clean?" "Cleaning" in modelspeak actually refers to removing any bits of extra material (called *flash*) and making sure that any moldlines are removed. For this, you'll need a few, simple tools:

- Needle Files. These can be found at most hobby stores, and you may also be able to find some at a Home Depot or other hardware store. You don't need to get the most expensive, but you will need to get a set that has at least three shapes: Round, Triangular, and Square. The "halfmoon" shape is also a good one to have around.
- Hobby Knives. An XActo knife is a requirement for doing any modeling work, especially if you're working with plastic. Make sure that you pick up one that has a comfortable handle, and you may want to get a few different blade types. Again, you can find these at most hobby shops, and many hardware stores.
- Cutting Mat. You can use a cheap cutting board, or get a nice, selfhealing mat. Any of these is fine, since Miniature Painting Basics the main goal is to give you a surface that you can place the model on without it skidding around, and that you don't mind getting cutmarks all over.
- Small Wire Cutters. A small pair of wire cutters, or nippers, can be very useful for removing larger bits of flash, as well as removing plastic pieces from their frames (called *sprues*).
- Needlenose Pliers. These can be invaluable when you need to reshape a metal piece that's been bent from shipping. Many of these tools also have a small wire cutter near the handle.
- Pin vise. These are basically small, handheld drills. While you don't need one immediately, you'll soon want one. You can drill small holes and insert a bit of wire or paper clip to joins that are a little weak to give them added support (called *pinning*; especially useful on things like wings or long tails). Also, drilling out things like gunbarrels is a quick and easy way to really improve the appearance of your model! You should be able to find these at just about any hobby store, along with a set of microsized drill bits.
- Rotary Tool (Dremel). While not required, these tools can be fantastic time savers if you plan on doing a lot of modeling! The small, cordless variety (like the "MiniMite") are really easy to handle for this kind of work. If you've already got a larger rotary tool, you might consider getting a flexible shaft for working with very small models. There are a ton of bits available for these tools, but the most useful I've found are the various wire brushes and the "fine" grinding bits. These can quickly remove mold lines, and can do simple cutting as well. You can also use these as a quick pin vise.

Now that you've got your tools gathered, it's time to start cleaning up your model.

Removing Flash

First, look over the model to find any *flash*. Flash is extra bits of material that aren't part of the sculpture, but are left over because of the way the molds have to be made. Typically, these look like little tabs or wires. If you're not sure about what is flash and what isn't, it may be helpful to look at a catalog or box photo of the model. To remove small pieces, you can simply use your hobby knife. *Warning! Knives are sharp! Always make sure to cut away from your body. Use of a cutting mat can save your skin (literally).* For larger pieces of flash, use your wire cutters (or your rotary tool, if you have one).

Removing Mold Lines

Now that you've gotten all the flash removed, it's time to inspect

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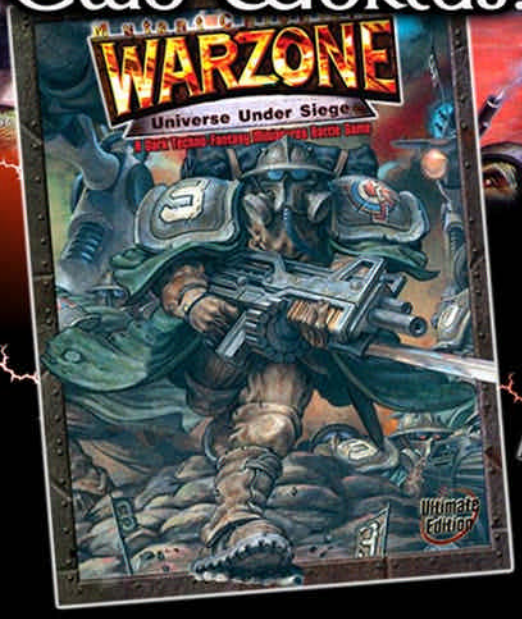

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your model for mold lines. Since molds are made of two parts, you'll often find a small, raised line along the model where the mold fits together. On very well cast models, these lines may be nonexistent, while on poorly cast models they can be incredibly obvious. If the mold lines are fairly large, you can scrape them down with your hobby knife (this is especially useful on plastics). Simply angle the blade at about 30 degrees, and scrape in the opposite direction. For smaller mold lines (which hopefully is the majority), use your needle files or rotary tool to grind down these lines, so that they match the surface on either side. When using the needle files, it's a good idea to apply only enough pressure to grind a little at a time—too much pressure will result in scoring the model (especially true on softer metals and plastics), and may also cut off too much too quickly. If you're using a rotary tool, make sure to wear eye protection and maintain a firm grip on both the model and the tool! For plastics and softer metals, use the lowest speed on the tool.

Assembling your models

Once you've washed and cleaned your models, you're ready to start assembling them. Obviously, many models come in only one piece, and so don't need any assembly, other than sticking it to a base. Others, though, may consist of several pieces, and need to be assembled. Depending on what material you're working with, you'll need different kinds of adhesive. Below are some of the most commonly used.

- Cyanoacrylate (Super) Glue. This works on just about any material. There are several brands available, but the one I prefer is "Zap." In particular, I like the "ZapAGap" formula, which is a little thicker than normal super glue. This allows it to fill any small gaps easily.
- Cyanoacrylate Accelerator. This typically is found as a spray on liquid, and it accelerates the curing time for super glues. It does, however, reduce the strength of the bond, so I'd suggest only using it when you really need the faster drying time (most super glues cure in about 15-30 seconds; with accelerator, this can be reduced to 5-10 seconds). If you're working with plastic, make sure the accelerator you purchase is safe for plastics—some accelerators can cause a chemical reaction on plastic, resulting in toxic fumes or even fire!
- Plastic Weld. Testors makes the most popular plastic cements, and these work pretty well on *most* plastic model kits. I prefer the liquid, brushon type to the goo in a tube. I generally use Microscale's "Micro Weld" for my hard plastic models, since it's a bit stronger than the Testors product, and smells a lot better. The thing to note here is that these welds do not work on "soft" plastics—like the kind you might find in many 1:72 scale figures. For those, super glue is probably your better bet.
- Epoxy (liquid). There are several types of epoxy adhesives around, from the "5 minute" variety to kinds that take a day to fully cure. Even the 5minute epoxies can be a little hard to use on this scale though, since you'll often not be willing to hold the pieces together for that long. For some things, though, this may be the best choice (like if you need the extra working time or have a clamp or vise to hold your model in place).
- Epoxy (putty). Epoxy putties are commonly used to fill in flaws in the model, or to build up areas and add new things to the model (called *conversions*). Typically, these putties come in two parts, which you mix together. Depending on the brand used, you have anywhere from a couple of minutes to a few hours of working time. The most popular is Kneadatite, which comes in several varieties, the most common being "greenstuff."
- Small Clamps. While not essential, small clamps or locking tweezers can be very helpful when assembling parts. Rubber bands may also be useful for particularly odd shaped parts.

Before you apply any glue, it's important to test fit the pieces, and know for sure how they fit together. If the pieces don't fit tightly, you may need to use your needle files or rotary tool to shape the parts to fit properly. A common question is, "Should I assemble the whole model before painting, or paint it first and then assemble it?" The answer is, "It depends." In general, it's better to assemble first and then paint, since this will reduce any joint seams and make sure the colors are more uniform. However, on some models, it may be impossible to reach certain areas after it's been assembled. When you're doing the test fitting, it's a good idea to think about whether or not you can reach everything once it's assembled. For any parts that are easy enough to reach, plan on gluing these on before painting. After you've test fit the pieces of your model and decided on which parts to assemble before painting, you're ready to open up the glue and put your model together. This may seem straightforward, but there are a couple of things to consider.

- Gluing metal parts. Here you'll most likely be using super glue or epoxy. Generally, you will only need a very small amount, especially in the case of super glues. For super glues, apply a small amount on one part, then hold the parts together for about 15-30 seconds. You may also use a small clamp if you don't want to have your hands cramp up. With epoxies, you'll most likely need a clamp or some other way to hold the parts together, since the curing time is much longer for these adhesives.
- Using putties. Sometimes, the parts won't fit no matter what you do. In these cases, you may need to use a bit of putty to "fill" the gap and rebuild the model's details around the seams. Mix up only enough putty that you think you need. It's helpful to have a small container of an oil (mineral oil or even salad oil is fine) to coat any tools you may use to apply the putty—it tends to stick well on clean metal. While the putty is still soft, you can use hobby knives, toothpicks, or dental picks to re-sculpt details as needed. Again, since this putty usually has a much longer curing time, you may need to use clamps or some other kind of props to keep the pieces aligned.
- Gluing plastics. If you're working with a plastic cement or weld, then follow the instructions on the bottle or tube to get the best results. Generally speaking, liquid plastic welds all work the same way: apply a small amount on each part, wait for about 5 seconds, then press the parts together. Plastic welds soften the plastic and cause them to fuse together. Clamps may help, as some welds/cements take a while to fully harden. If you're unfamiliar with the glue and plastic you're using, it's a good idea to try out the glue on a couple of pieces of flash or sprue, just to make sure there's no adverse reaction, and that the glue actually bonds the plastics you're using. It's a good idea to let your model sit for at least a couple of hours before moving on, more if the adhesive you've chosen has a longer drying time. You need to make sure to allow the glues to cure completely, because most of

these adhesives will release fumes while they're curing. If you apply some paint over uncured glues, it may bubble, have a chemical reaction, or seal the glue and prevent it from fully curing. Generally, I leave my models overnight after assembly, just to be on the safe side.

Priming your models

Once any glues have completely cured, there's one last step in preparation of your model for painting. In most cases, you'll need to *prime* the model with an undercoat of special paint. This is highly recommended, as it prepares the surface to hold the paint, and will also help you spot any mold lines or other imperfections that you may have missed. It's a really good idea to rinse off your model prior to priming, since any handling from assembly may leave some trace oils on the model which can cause the primer to not adhere as well.

There are two types of primer that you can use:

- Spray primers. Most hobby stores and hardware stores have a wide selection of spray paints. What you want to look for is something that is called "Primer." You can get primer in several brands, and often in black, white, gray, or even brown colors. The choice of what color of primer to use is discussed more below. As for brands, I personally prefer Rustoleum's Painter's Touch Sandable Primer in white. If you're working on plastic models, you will most definitely want to try out your primer on a piece of sprue—many spray paints are too "hot" for plastics, and will cause it to craze or bubble. There are a few tips to remember when using spray primers:
    - Always, *always*, spray in a well ventilated area, preferably outdoors. Most spray paints are very toxic, and can make you quite ill.
    - It's better to use two or three thin coats rather than a single, thick coat. If you spray too heavily, you'll cause the primer to pool up on the model or run, spoiling the fine details.
    - With spray paint, you should make sure the paint is warm, since it will flow better. You can hold a can under your arm for a while, or you can stick a can of spray paint in a tub filled with warm water for a few minutes. Avoid spraying on really cold days, or days with a lot of humidity.
    - You should hold the can about 8" to 12" away from the model. Also, you want to press the spray button down *before* aiming the can directly at your model, and keep it down until you've moved past the model. Try to use even, straight strokes that start and end the same direction. You may have to adjust this a bit to reach all the areas of your model, but the better your primer coat, the more smooth your finished paint job will be.
    - Many people like to use a "spray booth" when using spray paint. You can make a simple spray booth by taking a cardboard box, and cutting off one side. Sit the box up so that you have a back, left and right side, and bottom. This helps to catch any overspray,
    - and also helps to keep roaming dust particles from getting on your model.
    - A really useful trick that I use all the time is to stick my models on a bottlecap using some "blutac." Then I screw the bottlecap
    - back on the bottle, giving me a nice "handle" to hold the model while I paint it. This also lets me turn the model around, making sure that I get every area primed.

- Brush on primers. Most paint manufacturers also make brush on primers. Most often, you'll find this in white, but there may be some other colors available, too. Most brush on primers are safe for all plastics, but, like for spray primers, it's a good idea to try it out on a piece of sprue just to make sure it doesn't craze the plastic. Some people have also suggested using "glass and tile" medium as a primer for metal models. This is a clear liquid, and it has the same effect of preparing the surface to hold the paint better. I personally haven't tried this, since I like to have a solid color to start painting on, but I'm sure it's quite adequate in surface preparation. Here are some tips for using brush on primers.
    - As with spray primers, it's better to do two or three, thin coats than a single, thick coat.
    - Keep your brush wet, and use a soft, wide brush.
    - You want to minimize the number of brushstrokes on your model with brush on primers, since you'll achieve a smoother finish this way. If you allow the paint to start drying on your brush, you can wind up with small grooves and/or particles on your model, that will ruin the finish of your completed work.
    - Once you've primed your models, it's a good idea to allow the primer to dry completely. A couple of hours is usually sufficient, but I try to allow my models to dry overnight. Once the primer is fully dry, look over the model to make sure you got all the mold lines and flash off, and that any joints are well seated. If you need to do a little touchup, now is the time to do it, not after you've started applying colors! You can do a little touchup priming either with brush on or spray primers after you remove any remaining mold lines or fill any remaining gaps. Once you're happy with your primed model, you're ready to start applying color!

Painting your models

You've washed, cleaned, and primed your model, and gone back over it to fix any imperfections. Now you're ready to start painting, right? Well, almost, but there are some things to think about before you pick up a brush. Paints and brushes In order to paint, you first need suitable paints and brushes. While this may seem obvious, it deserves more than a cursory thought. The quality of paint you use will dramatically impact your ability to paint a nice looking model.

High quality, finely pigmented paints are much easier to work with than grainy, cheap paints. If you're serious about this hobby, it is in your own best interest to invest in good paints. But what goes into making a good paint? Here are some things to look for:

- High pigmentation. Basically, this means that you want a lot of color in your paint, and not so much liquid (called *binder*). Not only is this more economical, but it actually helps a great deal when using very thin paints, as we will be doing throughout this tutorial.
- Water soluble. Generally, any acrylic paint is water soluble.

While some people swear on using oils and enamels, for our purposes, they're more trouble than they're worth. Water soluble paints are easier to work with, and require much less drying time in general.

There are several brands of paint to choose from:

- Games Workshop / Citadel. One of the easiest to find, these are available at almost any gaming shop. The color range is pretty good, but I've found that the paints themselves are a bit too thinly pigmented, and they have a nasty habit of drying out fairly quickly. Also, they're a little pricey.
- Reaper Pro Paints. This line is almost as extensive as the Games Workshop line, and in my experience the paints are a little better pigmented. They are a bit thick, so they require thinning (as opposed to the GW paints, which can be used straight from the bottle in most cases), but this is not really an issue. The browns in this range are very nice, as are the flesh tones.
- Vallejo Model Color and Vallejo Game Color. These paints are widely regarded as "the best" for model and miniature painting. They are extremely highly pigmented, and the pigment grain is very, very fine. The range is huge, with about 220 colors in the Model Color line, and another 60 or so in the Game Color line, along with various mediums and varnishes. The paints come in nifty eyedropper bottles, so they're easy to use if you use a palette. On average, they actually work out to being a bit cheaper per ml than GW paints, though they are a little harder to find.
- Adiken Adikolor. I haven't used these paints, but they come in the same kind of dropper bottle that the Vallejos do, and I've heard that they're pretty well pigmented.
- Craft Paints (Delta, Apple Barrel, etc.). These paints are easily found in most hobby/craft stores and have the advantage of being very inexpensive. However, they tend to be a bit grainy for use on miniatures. Still, because of their cost, they can be excellent choices for doing bases and terrain.

There are undoubtedly others available, but these are the most common. I use mostly Vallejo now; I still have a few Reaper paints and even fewer GW paints, but I'm not planning on purchasing anything other than Vallejos from now on. With respect to brushes, these tools are as important as your choice in paint. A good brush makes painting an enjoyable experience, while a poor brush makes painting an exercise in frustration. When selecting brushes, you can choose either a natural hair (like sable) or a synthetic (like nylon). Generally speaking, good quality sable brushes produce the best results. High quality sables can be a bit expensive (around $10-$15 per brush or more), but they're well worth it. I've also had some good results using the synthetic Taklon brushes, but I still prefer my Kolinsky sables. The most important thing in picking out a brush is making sure that it can hold a point, and that there aren't a lot of stray hairs. See the references section for some links to articles on how to select quality brushes.

Other equipment

In addition to paints and brushes, you'll need a few other things.

- Towels. You can use paper towels, napkins, or scrap cotton rags. An old t-shirt cut into strips works well for a cotton rag.
- Water. Water is really important to have easy access to when using water soluble paints. Generally, I like to have at least two containers available—one for rinsing my brushes out in, and one for thinning paints. Alternately, you can get some dropper bottles and put water in them to use for thinning your paints right on your palette. If your tap water is "hard" (that is, it contains a lot of chemicals and/or minerals, like most tap waters), then you may want to pick up a bottle of distilled water for thinning your paints.
- Flow Aid. Also called water conditioners, these liquids help to break the surface tension of the water in the paints, which helps them flow better. A flow aid is very important when using washes; without one, washes tend to pool up and leave "tide" marks. You can pick up any flow extender from an art or craft store, or you can use a "Magic Wash." Many miniature painters have taken to using Future Floor Finish (which you can find just about anywhere) mixed in a 25% ratio with distilled water as a flow aid. A single bottle of Future should last you a very long time, and it's not as expensive as some of the other flow aids you may find in art stores.
- Lights. You should make sure to paint in a well lit area. You can rely on overhead lights, but you may have some difficulty in seeing the details on your model. I use a pair of small 15w halogen work lamps that I picked up at Ikea, while others insist on using "full spectrum" bulbs which simulate daylight. Of course, if you can afford them, full spectrum bulbs are great. If you have a large window by your painting desk, the best light you can get is natural light (of course, being in Seattle, that rarely happens for me).
- Palette. You'll need something to mix your paints on, and this is generally called a palette. You can either purchase a nice palette from an art store, or simply use an old ceramic dish, plastic plate, or any other nonporous surface as a palette. A really nifty tool is a "wet palette;" this is a special palette which keeps your paints wet while working, and often has a lid so you can seal it up between sessions. You can find these in art stores, or you can make your own cheaply by using a Tupperware container, a sponge, and some parchment or baking paper. Check the references section for some links that describe how to make your own wet palette.

Now that you've got your materials gathered, it's time to think a bit about what colors you're going to use.

Color Theory

Before you apply any paint, it's a good idea to have a plan. You should spend some time thinking about what colors you're going to use, and what kind of effect you're wanting on your finished piece. While this article is far too small to cover color theory in depth, there are a few things I'd like to say about it. Perhaps the most important tip I can give here, however, is to pick up a color wheel. You can find these pretty cheaply at an art supply store. Good color wheels will have movable parts that will allow you to see the effects of mixing colors, and guide you in selecting matching colors (more about this below). However, even a basic color wheel is of immense help.

When thinking about what colors to use, you should keep in mind what the "dominant" part of the model is; for example, a knight may be dominated by the armor, while an alien creature may be dominated by it's scales. It's a good idea to pick a "main" color for the dominant area, and then select additional colors based on simple color theory, as described below.

This combination can give very pleasing results. Shadows and Highlights Now, if you were to just paint your selected colors straight on, you might have a nice looking model, but you'll most likely feel that it looks “flat.” This is because we need to consider the effects of shadows and highlights on the colors we choose.

In life-size objects, this is not so important to consider, but when working in miniature, it's fairly important. Take a look around you; you'll see that most things have various grades of color on them —they're lighter on the areas that are closest to a light source (like a window or lamp), and darker in the recesses and areas that are blocked from the light source. To see the effect more dramatically, look across the room or down the street (if possible). Things get smaller looking as they get farther away, thanks to perspective. Find someone or something that's about the size, relatively speaking, of your model, and look at the way the colors are on them. You'll see that the highlights and shadows appear to be a bit “exaggerated” in comparison to someone sitting next to you. Because we're working in such a small scale, we have to capture this effect using paints—we can't rely on “real” perspective to give us this effect. As a quick guide, we can assume that we'll need four “levels” for each of the colors that we've chosen to use. We'll need the base color, two shadows, and two highlights. You can get more dramatic, smooth finishes by using more colors in between, but this is a good starting point. If you don't have a wide selection of paints, don't worry; you can easily mix the shadows and highlights you need. I'll cover this more in the step by step section below, but it's good to keep in mind that you'll be needing about five colors for each area of color on the model.

Primary, Secondary, and Complimentary Colors

Most people should be familiar with the idea that there are “primary” colors—those that you can make any other color from. Primary colors include red, blue, and yellow. In painting, you might as well consider black and white primary colors, since they're incredibly difficult to mix! So, if you're on a budget, you can start your paint collection by picking up these five colors. Primary colors are spaced evenly apart on a color wheel. In between the primary colors, you'll find secondary colors (and, depending on the wheel, maybe even tertiary colors). A secondary color is an equal mix of two primary colors; for example, green is a secondary color that is an equal mix of yellow and blue. Tertiary colors are pretty much the same thing, but are a mix of a secondary color and a primary color (so you can have a tertiary color on either side of a secondary color and primary color). An example of a tertiary color would be red-orange.

Complimentary colors are colors which are 180 degrees apart on the color wheel; that is, they're directly opposite of each other, such as red and green. The most striking combination of colors you can use is complimentary colors, so if you're wanting a dramatic, vibrant model, try to use complimentary colors. Straight complimentary colors can be a bit powerful for most things, though, and so it's more often to use what's called a split complimentary: a color and the two colors on either side of it's compliment, such as red and blue-green and yellow-green.

Inside out

One last thing to mention before we start painting. When working on models, it's actually easiest to paint from the “inside out.” That is, because it's harder to reach the interior parts of the model without bumping your brush on the outer parts, it's a general practice to paint the interiors first, and finish with the higher portions. This isn't a hard and fast rule, but it does work well do think of “dressing” your model—paint the flesh first, then the first layer of clothing, then the armor, and finally the weapons and pouches and so forth. Following this general tip will reduce the amount of touchup you'll need to do.

Enough theory! Keeping the above things in mind, let's go through painting a model, step by step, to see how to employ these ideas.

A model step-by-step

For this article, I've chosen a Games Workshop ghoul as a test subject. I chose this model for two reasons: first, there's not many extra details to worry about on him, since he's only got a loincloth and a knife; second, because the flesh area is so dominant, it will let me give plenty of

details on the overall technique, without becoming too repetitive.

After cleaning and priming, the model's ready to be painted. The general plan of attack on this model is to use a “wash and layering” technique. This means that I'll be starting each area with an even coat of my base color. Then I will use a wash of my first shadow color, which is followed with a wash of my second shadow color. I will then begin using very thin layers of paint, applying the base color (again) and the two highlights a little at a time.

One way to do this is to do the block colors of your first shadow on all areas of the model, then wash with your second shadow. If you're in a hurry to get something done for gaming, you can take this route; with a quick coat and one wash, you can play with your model, and come back and add the highlights later. I like to work the model on an area by area basis, though, finishing one thing completely before moving on to the next color set.

Step 1: Flesh 1st Shadow

I've mixed up 50% Vallejo Model Color English Uniform and 50% Vallejo Game Color Dead Flesh for my first shadow. It's important to remember to thin your paints to the proper consistency. For doing base coats like this, the best rule of thumb is to have your paint about as thick as milk.

Step 2: Flesh 2nd Shadow

Here, I've thinned straight English Uniform to about 1 part paint to 5 parts “magic wash” (this is easy to measure with the Vallejo dropper bottles). I've used a decent sized brush to go over the whole skin area. It's important to remember to allow this second shadow plenty of time to dry before moving to the next step.

Step 3: Flesh Base Color

While I was waiting for the 2nd shadow wash to dry, I went ahead and painted the blade black, since I'm planning on using metallic paints for this model. In general, metallic paints cover much better over dark surfaces. I also thinned down some of that black (really, just dipped my brush in more water), and did a wash in the mouth and eye sockets, since I want those features to really show up. Starting with the base color of a mix of 75% Dead Flesh and 25% English Uniform, we are now going to layer our highlights. When layering, you want to use slightly thinner

paint than you would for a base coat. Here, my mix was about 1 part paint to 2 parts water, but it will vary a little, depending on what paints you're using. When using paints this thin, it's very easy to “overload” your brush—this will cause the hairs at the end to splay, and your brush won't hold a point. It will also result in a large amount of paint suddenly flowing from the brush as soon as you touch the model. To avoid this problem, after loading your brush, lightly touch the sides of the bristles to a damp cloth or paper towel. This will pull some of the excess water out, so that the paint won't bleed all over the place.

I apply the base color on most of the flesh area, being careful to keep in mind where the light would be coming from on this model. I want to leave the deepest recesses untouched (so that they're mostly shadow color #2), and I want a transition between the base color and the deepest shadows (that is, shadow color #1, which we started with). So, I'll pick out the raised areas on the flesh with my Dead Flesh color.

Step 4: Ow! My eyes!

Eyes are definitely one of the most challenging parts of any model. While there are a few tips that can help you out, the biggest requirement for doing eyes is patience! For my ghoul, I decided I wanted a kinda glazed look in his eyes. To accomplish this, I painted most of the socket with Vallejo Model Color Pale Grey Blue. Here I used a very fine brush, and my paint was very, very thin, about the same (or a little thinner) as you would use for layering. After painting the socket, I mixed in some black with the Pale Grey Blue, and painted a vertical slit on the eyes, trying to make sure they lined up. With they eye colors blocked in, I then used some of the remaining shadow #2 color (I use a wet palette, so my colors stay for quite a while), and repainted the eyelids and the bags under his eyes.

Step 5: Flesh 1st Highlight

Using straight Dead Flesh, thinned to layering consistency, I've gone through and

picked out more highlights. I've not covered as much of the flesh with this color as I did with the previous step—I want some sections of the base color to show. Now he's starting to look pretty menacing!

Step 6: Flesh 2nd Highlight

I've added a touch of Vallejo Model Color Ivory to my Dead Flesh, and have picked out only the most prominent features for highlight. In particular, I wanted to make sure the face was dramatic, so I made sure to pick out the cheekbones, the eyebrow ridges, and the tip of the jaw. If you're finding that your layers are too abrupt, there are a couple of solutions. First, is to use more layers, with smaller changes in color. This is probably the easiest method, while sticking with strict layering. Another option is to use what I like to call the "tweening" technique. Basically, once all of your layers are on, you thin down your colors very, very far (almost to wash consistency; somewhere around the thickness of spilled sodapop), and work at blending the transition lines. This takes a lot of practice, but it can give very remarkable results.

Step 7: Loincloth

The process for the loincloth is the same as for the flesh: base coat with the first shadow, wash with the second shadow, and layering the base color, first highlight, and second highlight. Here's an excellent spot to use a complimentary color—since the model is really only going to have two colors if you don't count the steel on the blade. The dominant color is the flesh, which came out to being a brownish-greenish-yellow. Pretty hard to find that on a color wheel! However, we can see that the complimentary color for yellow is purple, and for green is red, so I'm going to do a deep reddish-purple for the loincloth. I chose Vallejo Model Color Royal Purple for my base color, and added Vallejo Model Color Burnt Cadmium Red (50%) to the base color for the first shadow. My second shadow is straight Burnt Cad. Red, and I mix my two highlights by adding a little Vallejo Model Color Flat Red to the purple. The completed loincloth is shown below.

Step 8: Blade and Teeth

I picked out the teeth using Ivory and a very fine brush. I thinned down some of the remaining Burnt Cad. Red and Royal Purple mix from the loincloth's first shadow color, and very carefully painted the bottom lip; careful here, as too much color will make him look like he's wearing clown makeup! I then drybrushed the

blade with Reaper Steel Plate. Drybrushing is a useful technique that you can use to pick out the ridges on a model. To drybrush, simply load your brush with paint, then wipe it several times on a paper towel, until there's very little pigment left on the brush. Go over the area you want to drybrush in a "dusting" motion. Because this is very hard on your brushes, it's a good idea to use an old brush for drybrushing.

Step 9: Blade highlight and handle

Now we're nearly done. Another, less vigorous drybrushing of Reaper Silver on the blade, hitting only where the light would reflect from, finishes off the blade. I then painted the handle with Reaper Brass. I then went back to my wet palette and picked up some of the English Uniform, thinned it a bit more, and added some "rust" to the blade by dabbing my brush a few times against it. Now we're ready for the final step, which will really set off this model.

Step 10: Blacklining

Blacklining is useful to help separate the different sections of a model. Blacklining entails using a very thin black, or sometimes brown, wash or ink, applied with a very fine brush stroke. The idea is that you only want to blackline where two different parts of the model meet each other. In our case, I've blacklined the join between the loincloth and the flesh, and between the blade's handle and the hand, using Reaper Flesh Shade Ink straight from the bottle.

Basing your models

Now the paint job is finished! The only thing remaining is to do something with that plain base. There's lots of different things you can do with a base—enough for an article on its own.

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Probably one of the easiest things to do is wander down to a model train shop, and take a look at all the "terrain building" stuff there; you'll find various kinds of grass, rock, and even bushes. Be inventive with your base; a well done base can really compliment a model.

I've chosen to be kind of boring on my base for this model, and simply glued down some brown ballast (from Woodland Scenics), and then added some tufts of static grass (also from Woodland Scenics).

Protecting your models

Now that you've created your masterpiece, it's important to protect the paint. If you're planning on simply setting this model on a shelf for display, then you may not need to worry about varnishing it. However, if you plan on playing with it in your favorite wargame, then you will most definitely want to seal it. There are several brands of varnish available, both in brush on and spray varieties. Generally, I prefer to use a spray varnish, though when the weather is bad or I need specific effects, I will use a brush on. Most models will look best with a matte (flat) sealant, but you may want to use a satin or even gloss coat in some cases.

I prefer to use Testors Dulcote, as it's the only spray sealant that I've found that gives a true, dead flat finish. Other brands of matte always seem to have a little more sheen that I like. Browse through the hardware and hobby stores to see what kinds of spray varnishes are available, and try a few different ones until you find one you're happy with. Using a spray varnish is very similar to using spray primer, and most of the same tips apply. With varnishes in particular, though, you want to make sure to only spray on a clear, warm day with low humidity. High humidity and low temperatures can cause varnishes to turn milky white, ruining your hard work!

If you'd rather use brush on varnishes, you can find a wide selection of these at any art or craft store. Vallejo also makes brush on varnishes, and they are quite good (though the matte is still just a touch shinier than Testors Dulcote—though it's definitely flatter than any other spray matte). A quick and easy way to get some really good effects is to use brush on varnishes in certain areas. For example, if you have a model with a gaping mouth and lots of teeth, you might consider brushing on some gloss varnish in the mouth to make it appear "wet."

Conclusion

I hope that this article has provided some useful tips. The main thing to remember is that you will *not* become a master artist overnight! Like any art, miniature painting takes practice. Also like any art, you have to develop your own technique. You may find some ways of doing things that work better for you—if so, by all means, use those techniques! However, before abandoning any particular technique, make sure to practice at it for a while. When I first started using layers, for example, I was convinced that it wouldn't work for me. I stuck with it, though, and now I'm very comfortable with it.

Don't rush yourself. Take the time to learn the techniques, and speed will come with practice. I won't kid you, though: any quality painting will take some time. You won't be able to knock out a Golden Daemon quality paint job in an hour! The more time you spend on a model, generally speaking, the more detail and subtle layering you can do on it. That said, though, it's just as important to recognize when to stop. No piece will ever be "perfect," and pursuing such an ideal will only lead to disappointment.

References and places for more information

Very little of what I've presented above is truly "original;" most of these tips and techniques are widely used in the miniature painting community. Below are some links to various websites that have even more expanded tips and tutorials, or cover some particular aspect of miniature painting in more detail than I have in this article.

Cool Mini Or Not!?
http://www.coolminiornot.com/
This site is one of the best online resources on miniature painting there is. With tons of articles and forum postings, there's not any aspect of miniature painting that hasn't (or won't be) discussed here (some of the articles on color theory and brush selection are *required* reading). The galleries are also fantastic, featuring work from the best painters in the world.

Vallejo Acrylics
http://www.acrylicosvallejo.com/
Vallejo produces what are, arguably, the best model paints currently in production. Their site not only has a complete catalog of their Model Color, Game Color, and Model Air lines, but also is host to an incredible article by Mario Fuentes on painting with Vallejo Model Color (though the techniques apply equally to any acrylic paints). The URL for the article is really long, and it may move, so just look in the Model Color section for a link.

Paintrix Miniatures
http://www.wegotgame.net/jen/main.html
Jennifer Haley is widely recognized as a great miniature painter. Her site, though it hasn't been updated in quite a while, hosts some really good articles. In particular, her article on color theory and painting faces are well worth reading.

Creative Workshop - Confrontation Forums
http://enforum.confrontation.fr/
Mainly a discussion forum for the *Confrontation* game by Rackham, but there are some great suggestions and tips that show up in the Creative Workshop thread. In particular, "Ark's Painting Tips" is a great thread with a lot of great advice from Thierry Husser, a former Rackham studio painter and a completely amazing artist!

Mini-Painting Kicks Ass!
http://minipainting.kicksass.net
This is the author's personal website. (Shameless plug!) I'll try to have examples in my galleries, and post tips and other tutorials like this one from time to time.

Planet Figure
http://www.planetfigure.com
This site, while not really geared towards "gaming" miniatures, still has tons of resources— articles about techniques, paint quality, and just tons of other stuff.

Written by Anthony Robinson