

Free Hack

The Ganesha Games Free Irregular Webzine

Issue Four, July 2011



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Compiled by Andrea Sfiligoi with enormous assistance by the Song of Blades Yahoo Group Members



<http://www.ganeshagames.net>

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editorial & News

Hello guys and welcome to the new issue of Free Hack.

We are sorry for the long wait but, as some of you may know through my Facebook or blog posts, I am hit by a bad case of carpal tunnel syndrome, so the new products that were announced have been delayed, and putting together a new issue of free hack has gone to the bottom of the to do list. I am waiting to be operated, but unfortunately the hospital is in the midst of a move.

I am dictating this through a software called Dragon NaturallySpeaking 11. I hear you say "does it work?". Well, yes and no. It works just fine in my native language, but unfortunately in English, probably because of my Italian accent, sometimes it doesn't. Anyway, I think it is worth the 300+ dollars it cost me because nothing compares to being able to write without feeling pain and numbness in my fingers. And if you are reading this, it means it works well enough... Sure it makes mistakes, but learns from its mistakes, you can teach it new words, and it gets used to your way of pronouncing them. I hope you won't mind the occasional typos or wrong words that will creep up in my dictations.

While I am in this condition, I can not do any design work. I tried to do some cover sketches and layout, but that means using a lot the mouse and my Cintiq tablet (which becomes very hot during prolonged work, so that's a no-no with carpal tunnel).

Luckily Dale from the Yahoo group has stepped in and volunteered to do the design work on this Free Hack and the next... So if you have ideas and materials for free hack, just send them in.

Ganesha Videos on youtube.com

The first two videos about our games have appeared on YouTube. Dave "Grubman" Bezio posted a hilarious review of Familiars and the fine blokes at DreamSpirit Wargaming posted a full demo of *Song of Blades and Heroes*. We have to open a GG Youtube channel, methinks.

New Website

As you might know, Ganesha games is working on a new website. It will remain at the old address, so you don't have to do anything at the moment, but we are moving on to a much better server, and setting up a true OS commerce shopping cart, so the days of having to e-mail rules will go, with all the problems they caused (such as Gmail inbox crashing every time a new book is available, files being eaten by spam filters, and people complaining because they apparently did not receive the file they paid for...). This will also leave me more time to do what I really want to do, which is spend much time designing games. Initially the site will be bilingual (it ones in English but you can switch to Italian) and we will maybe add other languages if anyone volunteers to do the translations :-)



On the new website, we will also be selling magazines in PDF and games from other publishers we like. Also we will certainly not be a serious competitor for the PDFs selling sites we already use, we hope that a few additional sales resulting from this will at least pay the bandwidth and site design costs. At the moment of writing this, I know we will stock issues of Dadi&Piombo, Wargames Soldiers and Strategy, and Battlegames. If you are curious about these wargaming magazines or are just looking for modeling inspiration, I suggest you check them out when the shopping cart goes live.

New Blog

Ganesha also started a new blog on 6sided, a UK-based blogging network. I think 6sided is a brilliant idea because it connects wargaming blogs only, and it gives you a chance to make some little money from affiliate links when a PDF game is sold. You will not get rich by doing this, but it is nice to think that your time spent writing, taking pictures and talking about your favorite games is somehow compensated.

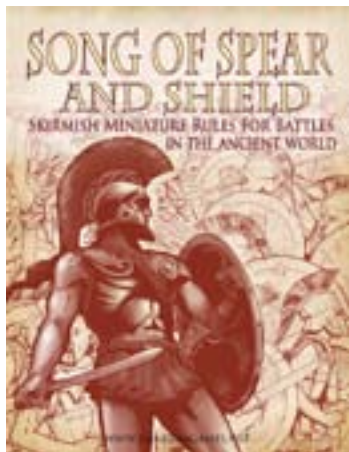
6sided is powered by Wordpress. It was a bit confusing for me at first, because I'm more used to blogspot, but it's just a matter of learning where the important buttons are. Do not forget to share the blog posts on your Facebook, Twitter or whatever (it's easy, just press the small icons under the blog post). We get more traffic, which brings sales, which ensure new games are made and bills are paid.

Ganesha products available on Karwansaray's website

We are just starting a collaboration with Karwansaray who publish three amazing magazines: the above mentioned WSS, Ancient Warfare and Medieval Warfare. Our PDF games are available in their store.

What games are we working on?

As usual, we try to work at the same time on many different projects. The real difficulty in being a one-man operation is getting enough playtest time with your friends. There are certain things in every rule sets that need to be tested with the designer being present, so sometimes even if I'm doing it this full-time, I am not sending the first draft of the rules to external playtesters (by external, I mean people I do not meet face-to-face) until I had the chance to test them with local players. Unfortunately, my local group is very small, and people fail to show up because of other commitments or just want to play other games. I can just wait for better times... This seemingly random rambling is just to explain why sometimes it takes so much time to publish a game.



We spent a lot of time working on *Song of Spear and Shield*, our skirmish ruleset for the ancient times. This has been mostly thanks to the availability of Massimo Moscarelli (whose blog you can read at <http://www.massimomoscarelli.it/leadaddicted/>) who has gone much beyond the call of duty traveling 100 miles every time to play a game with me. The main difficulty in

this rule set is to allow for both very small games of up to 10/15 figures per player, AND for the monster games with up to 80/100 figures per player most ancient players seem to prefer. This will be at 64 pages full-color rulebook and will have all rules needed to play any sort of ancient skirmish battle. We will not have a lot of space for all the profiles of all the ancient peoples of the world, so we will add them later as free downloads. If there is enough demand, I will write supplements for specific historical periods. The PDF will also have an inksaving version included in the download.

I am also working on a revised version of *Song of Blades and Heroes*. This would be a 48 page book, in full-color with an ink saving version included in the download (so it won't eat up your cartridge if you want to print it). It is including some of the additional special rules from the supplements, lots of new profiles, and lots of clarifications and game examples. After four years, I consider that the introductory

price is no longer needed (so I can start actually making a profit from the rulebook!) so the new edition will be sold for eight dollars like the others games. If you bought a previous version, of course, you can request a free PDF copy.

Song of Arthur and Merlin is also receiving a substantial rewrite with scenarios and rules added. It is now a standalone book, meaning it no longer requires other books from the song line. It should be available soon after this free hack comes out.

Andrew Boswell has done a very good job in my opinion on his upcoming *Flashing Steel* rulebook, a set for playing musketeers and pirates. I was impressed with his work so I asked him to write a full set for larger Renaissance battles, *Song of Pike and Shot*. *Flashing Steel* is with a volunteer layout designer right now, so it should be available for the customary eight dollars as soon as a manager to paint a cover for it.

Ben Boersma's *GhostRangers* supplements for fear and faith is likewise almost ready, it just needs me to finish painting a cover and do some internal illustrations. It's a very fun campaign, scenario-based, for those guys you're gonna call when the town is full of spooks.



Song of Void and Stars is also shaping up very well, and is just waiting for me to give another playtesting spin. It's our ruleset for space fighters/spaceship combat using LOTS of special rules allowing you to stat-up any kind of starship in no time.

John McBride is working on both a supplement for *Song of the Splintered Land* and a standalone Robin Hood "Song" book. Both are based on David McBride's Splintered Light Miniatures lines. Enough said!

Sergio Laliscia has been working hard on his Napoleonic large battles rule set. I played it several times and am really impressed. I'm not saying this because he's a friend or because I publish his rulesets. It's just innovative in many subtle ways, and works very fine with historical battles. For example, he found a way to avoid "geometrical messes" (the complicated rules, exceptions and what-nots resulting from troop type A recoiling into troop type B, or being attacked at the same time by different units from different directions) through a simple "proximity rule". And he came up with a combat resolution which uses multiple dice yet it is not the usual "buckets of dice" approach, but uses the differ-

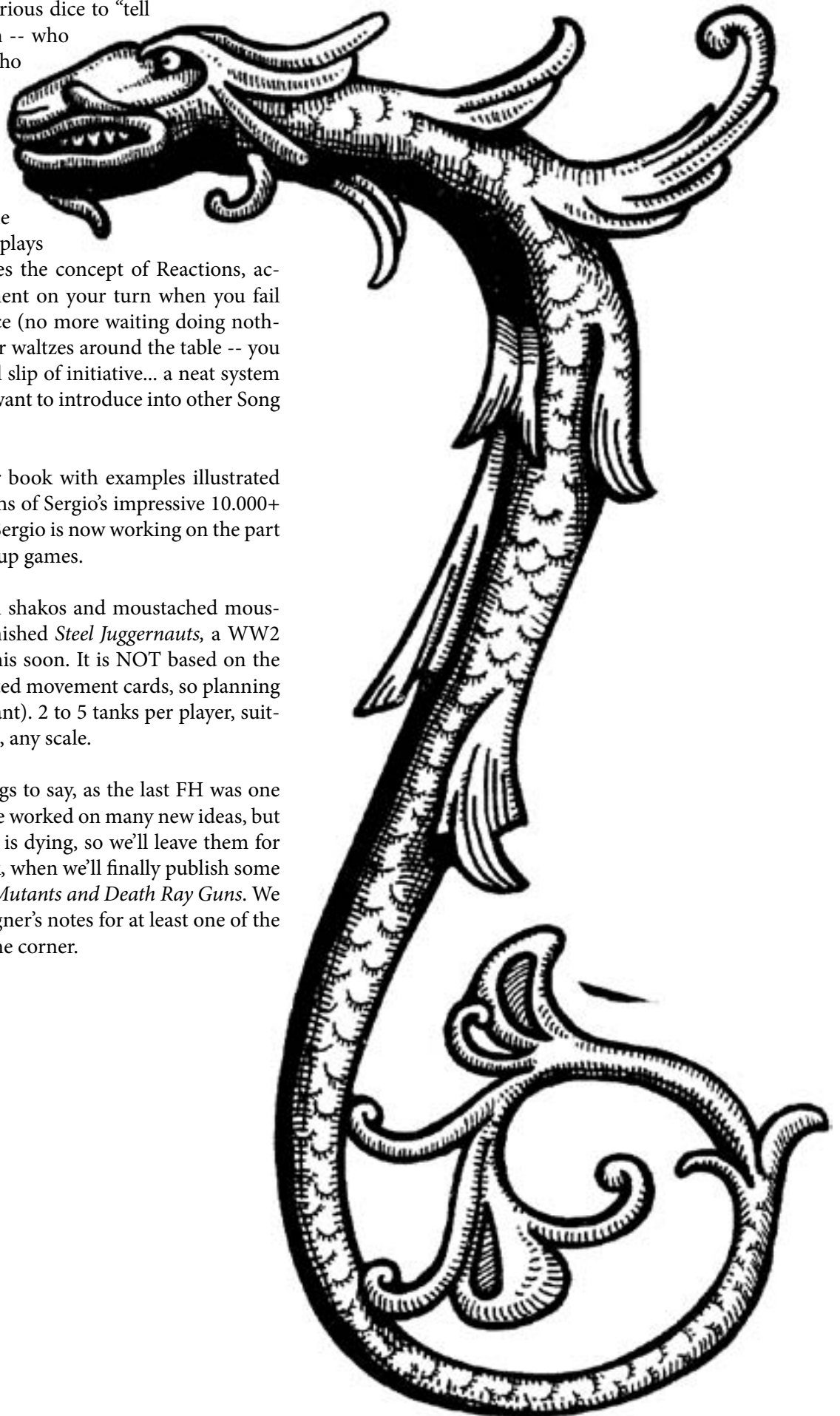
ent scores rolled by the various dice to “tell you the story” of the clash -- who won, and at what cost, who inflicted more casualties, who was forced to recoil, whether the attacker gave pursuit or not, and all that stuff... all with a single opposed roll of the dice. That’s elegant and plays very fast. It also introduces the concept of Reactions, actions played by the opponent on your turn when you fail one or more activation dice (no more waiting doing nothing while the French player waltzes around the table -- you react NOW at his minimal slip of initiative... a neat system I’m sure many of you will want to introduce into other Song games).

SDSLB will be a full color book with examples illustrated through colour photographs of Sergio’s impressive 10.000+ 15mm models collection. Sergio is now working on the part of the book aimed at pick-up games.

For a change of pace from shakos and moustached mousketeers, Sergio has also finished *Steel Juggernauts*, a WW2 Tank game. More about this soon. It is NOT based on the Song engine (it used inverted movement cards, so planning ahead will be very important). 2 to 5 tanks per player, suitable for multiplayer battles, any scale.

There are many more things to say, as the last FH was one year ago and meanwhile we worked on many new ideas, but my bluetooth microphone is dying, so we’ll leave them for the next issue of Free Hack, when we’ll finally publish some long-awaited materials for *Mutants and Death Ray Guns*. We might hopefully have designer’s notes for at least one of the new rulesets just around the corner.

Keep on gaming!
-- Andrea Sfiligoi



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q: Sorry if this has been addressed elsewhere but I just can't seem to get my mind (be it what it may) around this: "If movement passes through any sort of difficult ground such as a marsh or wooded area, the model's speed is reduced by one category (Medium movement becomes Short, Long becomes Medium and Short needs two actions to move)."

A model has two actions and medium movement per action. Model wants to move through a wooded area. The area is less than one full Medium movement from the model. Model moves into the woods. Now that? I can see that the second move would be reduced to Short (from Medium) while in the woods and on the turn the model exits- but what about the remainder of the initial Medium movement that put the model into the woods? When does the reduction 'kick in'?

A: Reduction kicks in if any part of a move is in the difficult terrain. So if a move ends, goes through or begins in any difficult terrain, the move is reduced.

So in the example above: the model moves Short on his first move because he has to enter terrain at a certain point - you move Short OR - if it would be better for you, you move UP TO THE EDGE of the difficult terrain. IF his Short move is not enough to clear the difficult terrain, his second move (let's say exiting the woods) is Short as well.

Q: Solo playing my new copy of the rules, I'm a little unclear about modifiers for an archer shooting at a 'downed' target does he get the same +2 bonus that a hand-to-hand attacker receives?

A: In SBH there is no modifier (see p.9 of the SBH rules in Ranged Combat Modifiers). The attacker has a Quick Kill - that is, the downed target is killed even if beaten by just 1 point.

In MDRG there is no modifier if the fallen target is up to 1 Short away from the shooter, and a -1 if he is more than 1 Short away. In any case, the target is quick-killed if beaten (see MDRG p.20).

Q: My MDRG HtH specialist rolled sharpshooter as an advance following the last game. Do they cancel out, does he get +1 to both melee and ranged combat, or is this a case of reroll because it's just not allowed?

A: Reroll as per MDRG p. 32



Q: In MDRG if one of your minis is knocked back into another one of your own and one of them is Wretched, is the non-Wretched one required to roll against the disease (assuming they are vulnerable)?

A: Yes.

Q: In the rulebook there is a brief (one paragraph) description of 'falling down damage' (SBH p.16). As I understand, that's for unwilling falls i.e. a 'pushed' result of a combat takes the miniature to a border so it falls, or something like that.

If my miniature WANTS to jump down an elevated position, and is doing it of his own volition and has enough actions to try it, how would this work? Does the mini have to use the same rules as a falling model?

A: It really depends on the type of the fall. As a general guideline, a jump down that is the height of the figure is automatic. If the distance fallen from the jump is greater than the height of the figure, use the 'falling damage' rules. In many cases, a jump down can be treated as climbing an obstacle.

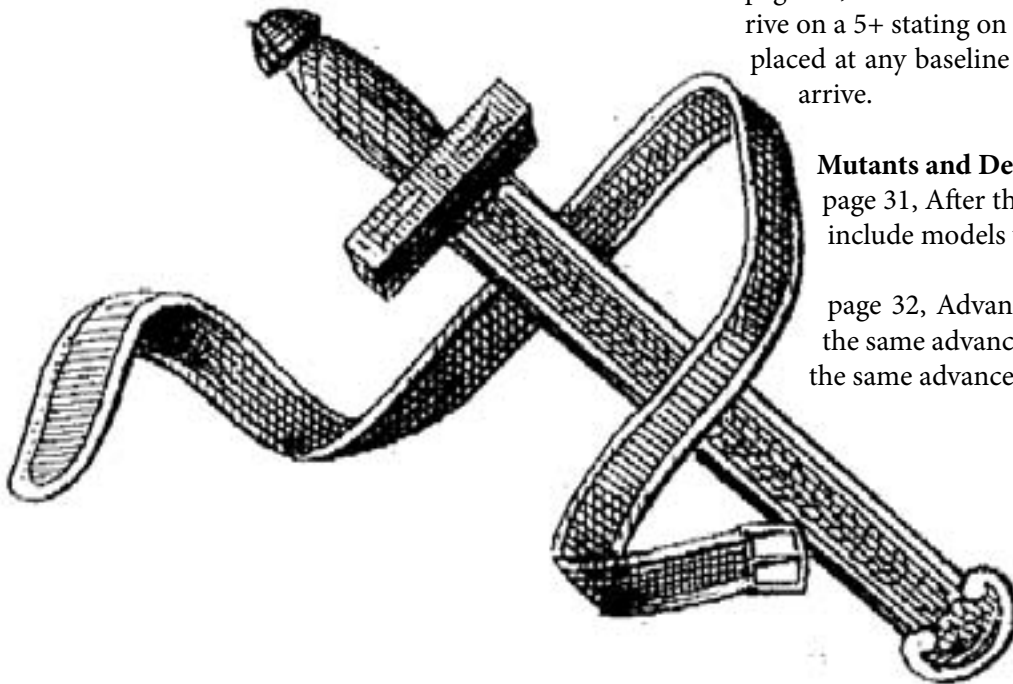
Q: I'm playing Aztecs. I wanted to plumb your thoughts for the best way to handle 'live capture' in a game. Promotion in the Aztec military was based on how many captives the warrior had taken. I'm looking for a way to handle taking captives in combat for the purpose of campaign play. The Conquistadors may not have cared for captive taking, but the Aztecs fighting them were still keen on it.

A: I suggest that a successful 'power blow' that would normally be a kill result act as a stuns/knock out result. Alternatively, in a realistic historical game, any infantry who gets knocked down while in contact with 3 or more opponents is automatically caught. In both cases, I'd rule that the model is captured if carried off the table (Short movement, maybe, to represent victims who are still resisting capture).

Q: I was going through the 61 65 rulebook and I noticed that the maximum squad size was 8. Is there a particular reason this limit was set? Would it effect game balance if I played with 10 man squads?

A: If you design your own scenarios, no problem at all. You should just keep the proportions in the Appendix 1 and in the Army lists. Bear in mind that the game will be quite longer with 10 man squads, so maybe you should lower the breakpoint to 33% instead of 50%.

The reason is historical. On paper, a company was made of 100 soldiers, but in reality companies were quite often made of about 80 men, divided in 8 squads each with a corporal. 2 squads made a section, 2 sections a platoon. If you add sergeants (6) and Officers, you'll see that 8 men is a good approximation.



Q: From what I read in 61 65, the command figures are the Leaders (Captain, LTs), NCOs (Sergeants) and Corporals. How do they contribute to the fighting abilities of the squads?

What happens when a Leader or NCO takes direct command of a Squad? I understand that the Squad gets a +2 modifier in melee, but does the commanding character count for the Squad size regarding the firing modifiers? Also, can an attached Leader or NCO be removed as a casualty just like a Corporal?

A: Leaders and NCOs do not fight directly. They don't shoot (they have no weapons listed) and don't fight in melee.

Corporals are part of their parent Squad, so they have the same weapons of their comrades and count for the Squad size regarding the firing modifiers (a Squad with 6 soldiers and 1 Corporal is a "Big Squad" having 7 figures).

The commanding Leader or NCO model does not count toward squad size (they just give the bonus.) Leaders that are attached to a unit in close combat make a survival test as per rule on page 7 (loss of a leader).

updates & errata

Song of Blades & Heroes (version 4.3)

Heavy Armor cost is reduced to 3 points. The javascript warband builder has been updated to reflect this change. Affected profiles will go down by 1 or 2 points.

Song of Wind and Water (version 4.0)

page 23, In "Howl of the Werewolf", reinforcements arrive on a 5+ stating on the hunter player's turn, and may be placed at any baseline and activated as normal when they arrive.

Mutants and Death Ray Guns (version 1.1)

page 31, After the battle: "eliminated" models do not include models who died a *gruesome death*.

page 32, Advances: replace "no model may receive the same advance twice" with "no model may receive the same advance twice in a row."

SONG OF ROOKS AND PAWNS



A Song of Blades and Heroes variant
by Daniel Mersey

Introduction

This isn't an adaptation of chess, it's a chess-themed Song of Blades and Heroes variant accessible to anyone who has a chess set and the basic SBH rulebook. Along with a handful of normal six-sided dice, that's all you need to play the game unless you want to play with more terrain. Song of Rooks and Pawns came about for three reasons:

- I was fed with losing at chess, so I thought I'd get more wins in a game involving the luck of dice!
- I love the Isle of Lewis chessmen and wanted to work them into a game somehow.
- I wanted a gateway game of SBH, allowing me to introduce non-miniatures gamers without intimidating them. Most people are familiar with chess pieces, which is a good start.

I think the result gives quite a balanced game, and the playing pieces retain some of their character and purpose from the original game of chess. See how you get on with it and please report your games on the Yahoo group.

Setting up the game

Your first choice is to decide if you'd like to play the game using chess pieces as figures on normal SBH terrain, or if you'd like to make the game feel more chess-like by playing on a chess board. I'd recommend trying the latter with non-gamers (who I've often found intimidated or confused by the 'move where you want' concept of miniatures games) or if you're looking for an alternative version of SBH with more of a board game feel to it.

Playing on a gaming board

This is just a straightforward game of SBH, but using chess pieces as your models. Move as normal, and add whatever terrain you like. When I've tried this, I've themed my board to suit the fact that I'm using chess pieces: instead of trees and hills, I've used uncovered piles of books to represent hills, left the gaming area as an ordinary tabletop rather than putting a sheet over it, and added pencils, big dice, and other 'gamey' objects as scenery. Give it a go – it's a very different looking game of SBH to the settings you'll usually see.

To play Song of Rooks and Pawns in this way, use the rules as written in the basic SBH book without any adaptation. Rosters for the pieces are shown in the later section 'The Pieces'.

To deploy at the start of the game, choose the attacker and defender as normal (giving the attacker the white pieces), and then deploy within 6" of your baseline following the rules for deployment within SBH. Make sure you've selected any options and pawn exchanges before deploying (but after deciding who will attack and defend), with the exception of the Bishop, whose option you can choose after deployment but before the first move is taken.

Playing on a chess board

I've added a section explaining the best way to play SBH on a chess board in a dedicated section later on. Read that to see how I've handled the adaptation to a gridded board.

To deploy, choose the attacker and defender as normal (giving the attacker the white pieces), and then alternately place one piece in any square along the two rows of the board closest to your baseline. Make sure you've selected any options and pawn exchanges before deploying (but after deciding who will attack and defend), with the exception of the Bishop, whose option you can choose after deployment but before the first move is taken.

The pieces

Unlike a standard game of SBH, there are no points values; both sides start with the same choice of models, and points costs aren't considered when deciding who has won the game (see the next section). If you wish to use them in a different SBH setting against non-chess warbands, points costs can be worked out using the online generator.

At the start of the game, each player has:

1 King: The King is a bit of a plodder, but you have to keep him safe. The good news is that he's quite hard to kill.

King		
Points (na)	Quality 4+	Combat 2
Special rules	Tough, Short Move	

1 Queen: The Queen is the real power behind the throne! She can order lowly minions around, and flits in and out of combat and around the battlefield with ease.

Queen		
Points (na)	Quality 2+	Combat 3
Special rules	Leader, Free Disengage	

As a variant when playing on a chess board, you may limit the Queen's Leader special rule to only allow her to order Group Activations (so she doesn't grant +1 Quality due to proximity); this prevents her from becoming too powerful on the small board. If she is killed, friendly models still take a Morale test.

2 Bishops: The Bishops are not great fighters, but their raging sermons and threats of godly wrath can make even the most powerful warriors curl up into a ball of fear, no longer willing to fight.

Bishop		
Points (na)	Quality 4+	Combat 2
Special rules	Lethal vs Rook OR Lethal Pawn (choose), Short Move	

2 Knights: The Knights can move quickly around the battlefield on their horses; being mounted gives them a useful combat advantage too.

Knight		
Points (na)	Quality 3+	Combat 3
Special rules	Mounted, Long Move	

2 Rooks: The Rooks are the King and Queen's champions. These are proper hard men, and can cleave down most opponents with ease. Slow moving but deadly!

Rook		
Points (na)	Quality 4+	Combat 4
Special rules	Steadfast OR +1 Combat (choose), Short Move	

Before deployment, make sure you've chosen special rules from the alternatives above and written them down. If a special rule is chosen for one model, it applies to all models of that type (for example, if you decide to choose Lethal vs Rooks for a Bishop, this applies to both Bishops in your warband).

You may also choose to visit the pawn exchange; this allows you to swap a Bishop, Knight, or Rook for 2 pawns. You may swap up to 4 pieces for pawns (meaning that you can choose 0, 2, 4, 6, or 8 pawns).

0-8 Pawns: The Pawn is a lesser warrior; although not individually a threat, moving in groups can overcome far more powerful opponents.

Pawn		
Points (na)	Quality 5+	Combat 1
Special rules	Gregarious, Short Move	

As a variant, you may choose to raise Pawns to C2 but all non-Pawn pieces cause the Pawn Terror.

There are plenty of other special rules you could give to the different playing pieces, but I've found the ones shown above to be fairly balanced, retain some of the pieces' original use in chess (meaning familiarity for new players), and you only need the basic game to play this. But if you have them, experimenting with additional special rules from the supplements is worth trying.

Winning the game

There are only two ways to win in Song of Rooks and Pawns:

- Kill your opponent's King, or make that model flee or recoil off the board.
- Kill every other model of your opponent, or have them all flee or recoil off the board; this forces your opponent's King to surrender.

Warband advances

Song of Rooks and Pawns is really intended as a one off game rather than being suitable for a campaign. To make things more interesting, you might like to give both players a Warband Advance at the beginning of the game. If one player is a more experienced SBH player than his or her opponent, you might try giving the less experienced player this advantage and the more experienced player no advance.

To keep things fresh, roll for the warband advance:

1	Retain the Initiative
2 or 3	Courageous
4 or 5	Combat Masters
6	Tough as Nails



Changes when playing on a chess board

Using the square grid requires a few changes to the standard SBH rules, but not as many as you might imagine. Even if you're more interested in playing with the board, please give this version of the game a go, as it makes you think in a very different way. I also think this makes the game work better as a gateway game for people who haven't played many miniatures games before. The familiarity of chess pieces and the board is a good way to get would-be gamers interested.

Movement

Pieces may only move forward, back, or to the side – no diagonal moves are allowed. However, fighting may still take place diagonally, and distance for Morale checks and special rules also counts diagonally. 1 square diagonally equals just one square of distance – to keep things simple I've not gone for the 1.5-2 squares of diagonal distance some rules like to use. Pieces with Short move can only move 1 square per action; Medium move pieces may move 2 squares per action; Long move pieces may move 3 squares per action (which means they can move like a chess Knight if they wish!).

Recoiling

If a piece has to recoil, it should move one square in a direction chosen by the owning player (but not diagonal). If this square is adjacent to an opposing piece, remember the Free Hack rule (this rule will apply often in Song of Rooks and Pawns). If a piece cannot recoil as described, the piece will fall down as described in the SBH rulebook for models unable to recoil. If a piece recoils off the board, it counts as having fled.

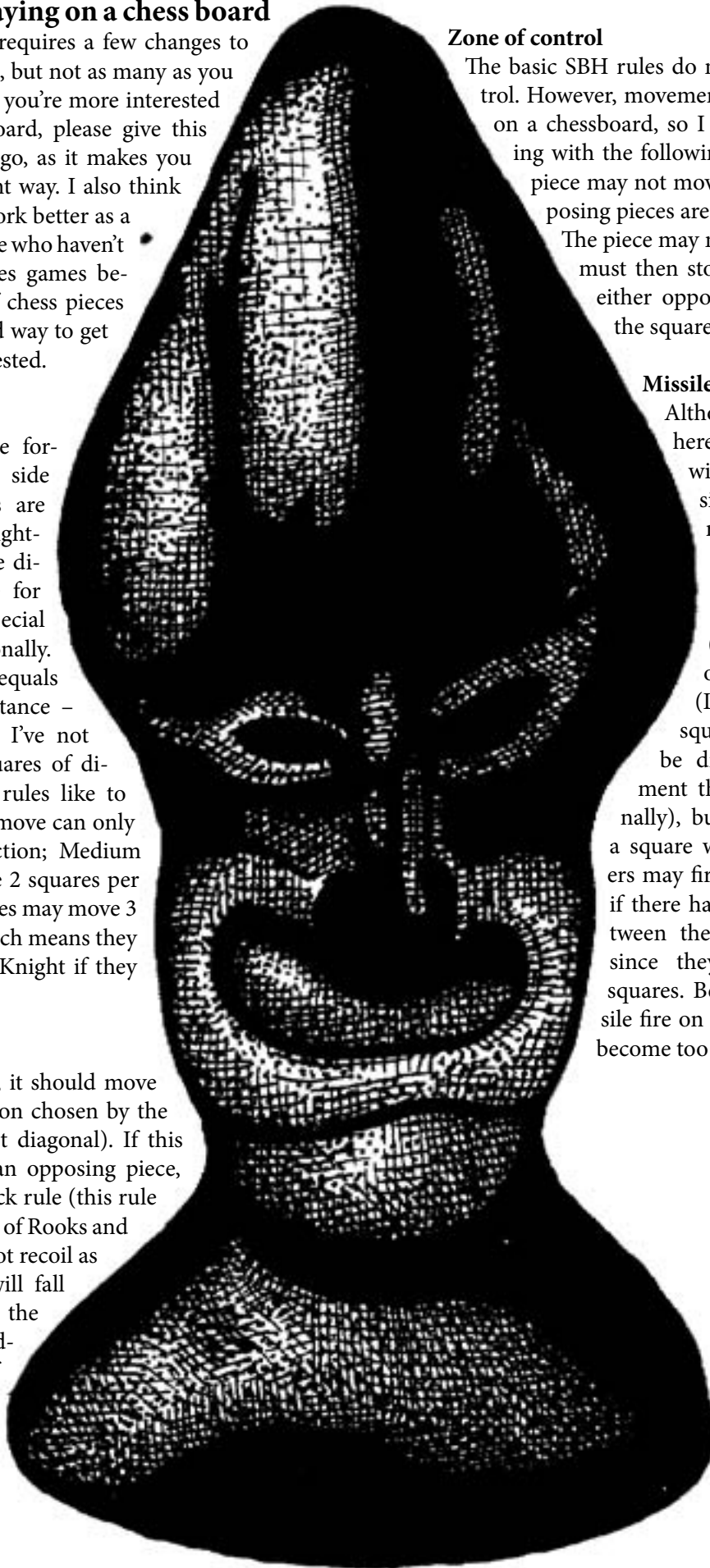
Zone of control

The basic SBH rules do not include zones of control. However, movement can get pretty cramped on a chessboard, so I recommend experimenting with the following zone of control rule: a piece may not move through a square if opposing pieces are either side of that square.

The piece may move into that square, but must then stop. This does not apply if either opposing piece is diagonal to the square.

Missiles

Although the rules outlined here don't include any pieces with the ability to fire missiles, your own variant rules might do so. In this case, Shooter (Short) models fire in distances of 1 square, Shooter (Medium) in distances of 2 squares, and Shooter (Long) in distances of 3 squares. These distances may be diagonal (it's only movement that can't be made diagonally), but may not pass through a square with a piece in it. Shooters may fire into an adjacent square if there has not yet been melee between the shooter and the target since they moved into adjacent squares. Be careful with using missile fire on the chess board, as it can become too powerful very quickly.



elfsepa Large Creatures



Points: Personality: 183 (82%) Warrior: 39 (18%) Total: 222 (300 if using 3 Ogres)

Morlak the Minotaur - Personality

Points 118 Quality 3+ Combat 4

Special Rules Big, Heavy Armor, Leader, Savage, Tough

Grogga the Ogre

Points 39 Quality 4+ Combat 4

Special Rules Big, Fearless

Using three Ogres, you can create a mini warband of heavy hitters for a total of 300 points who can be a real pain in the neck.

Imgru the Troll - Personality

Points 65 Quality 4+ Combat 4

Special Rules Big, Long Move, Slow, Tough

Special Rules:

Big - SBH pg. 12; Fearless - SBH pg. 13; Heavy Armor - SGD pg. 8; Leader - SBH pg. 13, 16; Long Move - SBH pg. 14; Savage - SBH pg. 14; Slow - SBH pg. 15; Tough - SBH pg. 15;

Rulebooks:

SBH - Song of Blades & Heroes; SGD - Song of Gold & Darkness; SWW - Song of Wind & Water; SAM - Song of Arthur & Merlin; SDG - Song of Deeds & Glory;

To buy the *Song of Blades and Heroes* rules, visit www.ganeshagames.net

The Joy of Painting

by John Acar

Introduction

So you want to get into miniature gaming but you don't want to spend a lot of money. Well, have I got a deal for you. That deal is 1/72 scale plastic miniatures. In recent years, with the escalating cost of metal, plastics have become more and more viable for wargame figures. Often called "true 25s", these figures typically stand about 24mm tall from the sole of the foot to the top of the head. Why buy plastic figures?

- Very inexpensive. On the average, you could buy one 28mm figure (\$1.50) or three 15mm figures (50 cents each) or seven to eight 1/72 scale figures (21 cents each).
- Better visual impact. 1/72 scale figures are larger and give a better feel for skirmish gaming. They are small enough to paint easily but still look great on the game table.

You are probably thinking that this is too good to be true. There must be a down side. There is.

- Plastic figures are hard to handle when it comes to assembly and prepping. These figures are usually made out of a kind of plastic called Polyethylene. Paint and glue just won't stick to this kind of plastic. Fortunately, there are some special primers and glues that alleviate these problems.
- Choices can be limited. If we equate the 1/72 scale plastic figure industry to a life span, I would say it is an adolescent. There are lots of choices out there but some of the ranges are conspicuously missing. Only recently, for instance, has anyone bothered to make Fantasy Figures. Caesar Miniatures has a rather nice range now.
- Quantity of purchase. You have to purchase in somewhat sizable numbers. Boxes typically come with 48 infantry or 12 cavalry. Perfect for massed battle games but not so much for skirmish games.

Have I scared you off? If not, read on!

Prepping and tools

This is my first serious foray into the world of 1/72 scale plastic figures. I have not painted these figures in a long time (perhaps since 1975!) and even then it was only to get

the faces and belts painted on. Back then, we were always bummed about how our hard work would flake off after a few days. It was a very real problem with figures made of polyethylene plastic.

Today, there are several new tools and methods for getting around the problems associated with plastic figures. So before we begin the prepping process, let's discuss what tools to use.

- Sprue cutter. You will need a sprue cutting to remove the figures from the sprues. I have a pair from Games Workshop. They are a little bit expensive at about \$20 but they only need to be purchased once.
- Hobby Knife. Often called an X-acto knife, this item is nothing more than a surgeons scalpel. I use a straight triangle blade not a curved one. This is important. The narrow point is useful for getting into the hard to reach places of the figure. The knife will be used to remove the mold lines and excess flash.
- Primer. This is a special kind of paint that is used to prep a surface to receive regular paint. I use Val-spar plastic primer. It is clear so I also use a white primer. Mine comes from Armory. There are plenty of brands to choose from. You only need regular primer if your plastic primer is clear. Krylon also makes a white plastic primer. I could not find it in my area but you may have better luck.
- Plastic Glue. I found, in the United States, that the only plastic glue that can be used on Polyethylene plastic is Loctite All Plastic Super Glue. It is essentially a primer stick and a glue tube. You primer both surfaces to be glued with the primer stick. Then you apply glue to one of the surfaces and hold together for 15 seconds. I've had good luck with this product.

Files are a common tool that is used on metal and even hard plastic figures. They are not good for the softer plastic figures though. Filing soft plastic figures will only shred the surface and cause more harm than good. It is best to avoid files.

Now it is time to prepare the figures to be painted.

First, I cut the figures off of the sprue. I'll be painting one sprue of figures at a time so I don't get bored from repetition.

Next the figure needs a bath. That's right. Some hot soapy water is needed to remove the mold release agent. I soaked my figures for about an hour and then rinsed them under cold water for 5 minutes.

The figures need to have the mold lines and flash cut away. If you see any mold lines or flash, simply and gently scrape the lines off with the hobby knife.

Then I added a 20mm square base to each figure and glued on any shields that needed to be attached. The plastic glue does work equally well on metal surfaces with plastic.

Now I am ready to prime. I spray on the Valspar® primer first, making sure every surface is covered. This requires turning the figures on the sides to get underneath. After the Valspar® primer dries, I prime again with Armory® white primer. I let the figures dry overnight.

So far the primer and paint bends with the soft plastic and none of the paint cracks. The plastic primer is holding. So far so good.

Painting

Now that we have cleaned and primed the model, we are almost ready to paint!

Before we start, here are a couple of basics.

None of the painting techniques I do are really difficult. If things are not exactly perfect and straight, don't worry. You are usually looking at a model from 3 feet away or more. You won't notice the imperfections.

I will be using a base color, a shade color and a highlight color on all parts of the miniature.

Base colors are the general color of the object being painted. You need only cover the whole object with the base color. Pretty simple really.

The shade color is either a darker version of the base color or a premixed color from a paint system like GW, Vallejo, Foundry, Armory, Reaper or others. The idea is to paint the color into the folds of fabric or low points of the model to help bring out the detail.

The highlight color is the opposite of a shade color. It is lighter than the base color. The idea is to dry brush or paint it on the high points of the folds and details. This will really make the detail "pop".

For small objects like faces, I will usually paint the whole thing a shade color and build it up with a base color followed by a highlight color. For larger items such as cloaks or tunics, I will paint a base color first, then paint in the shade color and dry brush on the highlight color. If the highlight does not come out strong enough, I will paint on the highlight (not dry brush) in small areas to make it even stronger.

Dry brushing is a technique where you dip a brush in a highlight color and wipe as much of it off as you can. Then you gently paint the high points of the object in question. I usually wipe the brush by pulling it out of a paper towel. I do this 10 times. That will remove most of the paint. Make sure you are using an old brush. I use a flat brush about 5-7mm wide for this technique.

Watering paints down helps with the flow. Sometimes, you might need a couple of coats to cover the area with thinned paint but usually the results are worth it.

Well...enough theory! Lets get painting!



From left to right: the finished face, the finished tunic, the cloak with a base coat, the cloak with shadows and highlights.



From left to right: adding the leggings and shield, blacking the metals, highlighting the metals, additional detailing.

1) First I will paint the face. I use GW paints. For the face I used Dwarf Flesh for the shade, Bronzed Flesh for the base color and Elf Flesh for the highlight. Given the small size of the model, I might have been better served using dark flesh for the base to bring out the detail of the face. Then I could have used Bronzed Flesh and Elf Flesh to do the raised surfaces.

2) Next I will do the tunic. As this is a Roman officer, the tunic should be Dark Red. I used Scab Red for the shadow, Red Gore for the base and Blood Red for the highlight. Why oh why does GW have to be so violent with their names?

3) For the cloak, I decided to make it a rather common color. I used Bubonic Brown for the base color. For the shadow I used Snake Bite leather. For the highlight I used Bleached Bone.

4) Now it is time to color the leggings and shield face. I used Bleached Bone and Skull White for highlights. I figured since they are such flat surfaces, no shade color was needed.

5) Next, I painted the metal pieces. I used Chaos Black to blacken the metal and Bolt Gun Metal to make the iron pieces a dark silver color. I used Shining Gold to hit the frame of the Spangle Helm, the belt end and the hilt of the sword. I was careful to let some of the black show through to dark line the more regular edges of the equipment.

6) Finally, I used Snake Bite Leather for a base color of the shoes and Bubonic Brown for a highlight. Again, not so much in the way of detail here but I could use a line of Scorched Brown to liven up the belt.

7) At this point I have a completed figure. I added a couple of interesting features. First, I added a white stripe to the hem of the Officer's tunic. It was a simple thing to do but added some character. Next, I added a cross to his shield.

Not just any cross but a form of the Chi-Rho, which is a Latin Christian cross, a popular shield device in the Roman military of the time. I used Blood Red, Chaos Black and Skull White. The black is painted on first giving the general shape of the device. I used the Skull White as a primer to paint red. This gives a nice bright shield device.

8) Now it is time to finish the base of the figure. I used medium strength dry wall compound (plaster) that I had left over from a home project...that's still not done. I mixed some brown craft paint with the compound and spread it on the base. After the compound dried, I painted the figure's base the same brown color as I mixed in with the plaster. I then glued on some pea gravel and static grass using a little PVA glue.

9) Finally, I sealed the figure with Krylon® Crystal Clear followed later by Krylon® Matte Finish. Once this was dry, I dry brushed some Golden Yellow on the grass to make it a little less boring.

Some Lessons Learned

I am using 1/72 scale figures for two reasons. First, they are inexpensive. Each figure costs less than a 15mm figure by half or more. Second, the visual impact on the table is almost as nice as the more expensive 28mm counterparts. However, several things I do to paint 28mm figures just don't translate well to 1/72 scale figures.

Highlighting and shading generally work with 1/72 scale figures but some of the smaller objects on the figure require a stronger/darker shade color. With the example figure in this article, the detail colors on the face just don't pop out as well as they should. I might try experimenting with dark flesh as the shade instead.

There is a technique for quick shading with a 'magic wash'.

It is something that you can make yourself. The stock, depending on who you talk to, is made up of a small amount of Future® floor polish and water. I mixed mine with 1 part Future® to 4 parts water. Others will swear by a 1 to 1 ratio. Both seem to work well. Mix about 10-15 drops of stock to 1 drop of paint or ink. Then paint this over your figure and, hopefully, the ink will seep down into the details of the figure leaving the high points light. You can do this over a figure painted in only base colors with good results. I use this method on my 15mm armies when I want to get a lot of figures painted in a relatively short time. I paint a base color on all parts and finish it all off with a wash.

I have not tried this method on 1/72 scale figures as I don't think there would be a lot of benefit. Plastic figures in this scale tend to have soft detail and the ink may not flow correctly into the cracks and crevices. I may experiment at some point, but for right now, I will stick to highlighting and shading.

In Conclusion

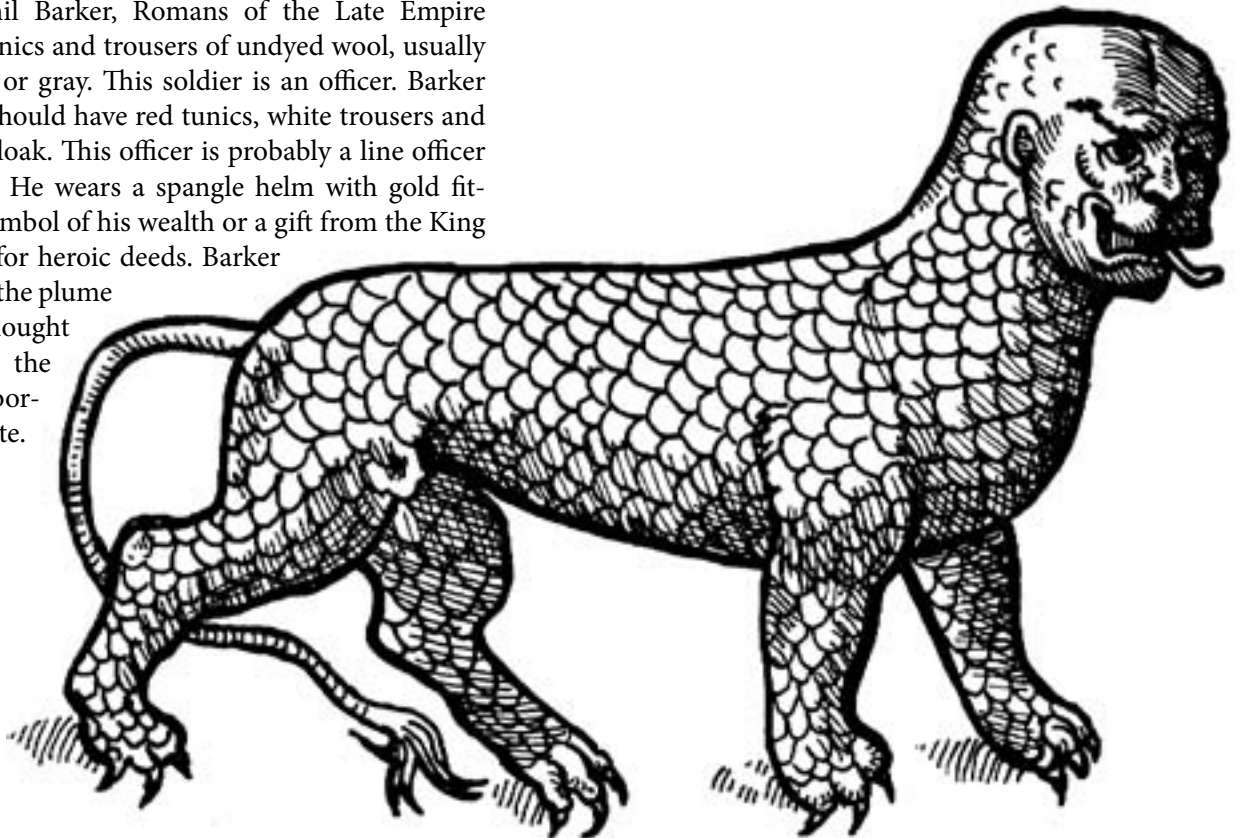
I have found that 1/72 scale figures are very easy to paint. With very little effort, I was able to paint a very inexpensive figure with a durable paint job. These figures will be a nice addition to anybody's gaming table. If you are on a budget and want miniatures for your games, perhaps 1/72 scale figures are for you.

About our subject

According to Phil Barker, Romans of the Late Empire wore off-white tunics and trousers of undyed wool, usually brown, off-white or gray. This soldier is an officer. Barker believes officers should have red tunics, white trousers and mustard brown cloak. This officer is probably a line officer of some renown. He wears a spangle helm with gold fittings. This is a symbol of his wealth or a gift from the King whom he serves for heroic deeds. Barker also believes that the plume should be red. I thought that might make the figure look a bit boring so I left it white.



The figure complete with shield device and finished base.



hobgoblins & housecats

A Setting for A Song of Blades and Heroes
by Andy Frazer

In the dead of night, when all the house is sleeping, scampering shapes flit lightly through the dappled moonlight.

The figures dance and dart in search of precious trinkets and tasty treats, for they are hobgoblins... tiny, mischievous faeries who delight in shiny things and sugary delicacies.

Clad in their pointed caps and curly-toed boots, they sneak into the kitchens of those asleep, to sate their appetites for cake crumbs and marzipan... but their nightly raids are fraught with danger, for the people who bake such delicious titbits, as would tempt a nocturnal hobgoblin, also house creatures that would consider a hobgoblin no more of a snack than a mouse... cats!

This is a game of mischievous faeries and the shadowy felines that hunt them. One player controls a group of scampering hobgoblins, while the other controls a number of cunning Housecats.

These hobgoblins are out to steal sweets, cavort and generally have fun, while the cats intend to torment and ultimately make a snack of as many delicious little goblins as they can... for eating all that sugar makes hobgoblins particularly scrumptious...

The General Rules

Hobgoblins & Housecats [H&H] uses the rules engine of the Songs of Blades & Heroes [SBH] system. Any of the special rules available in the SBH family of games can be transferred to H&H. However, players should decide between themselves, which rules they are going to allow, before starting a game or campaign.

As some special rules are not entirely suitable for H&H, to help you out, a list of appropriate rules has been included at the end of this article.

What's Unique about this Setting?

H&H has a number of distinctive rules that set it apart from the typical SBH game ... well as different as a game about tiny goblins and cats can be, I suppose!

Here are a few terms that might help with this section:

Raid: A confrontation between Housecats and Hobgoblins... or even two groups of rival Hobgoblins.

Victory Points [VPs]: The number of points scored in a raid. The player with the most VPs at the end of a raid is declared the winner.

The Man-in-the-Moon

The Moon gazes down upon all the happenings of the night, serenely lighting the Earth with his shimmering countenance. He cares not a jot for the fates of Cat or Goblin, but his luminous face casts a dappled glow on their nightly antics.

Despite happening at night, we do not worry about the effects of poor light or a lack of illumination; the Man-in-the-Moon provides enough light for Cats and Goblins to see by, although there are still plenty of deep nooks and darker crannies in which a sneaky Hobgoblin might be concealed.

Regarding Hobgoblins

The Quest for Crumbs

Hobgoblins live for crumbs... well... that is to say; they live on crumbs; and any other bits of tasty food they can steal from the kitchens of unsuspecting sleepers.

Locating Crumbs is the reason for the Hobgoblin's nightly raids. In general, a Hobgoblin can only carry 1 Crumb and if they are able to take it to the edge of the game table, this wins the Hobgoblin raiding party 1 Victory Point.

A Hobgoblin needs to spend 1 action to pick up a Crumb and stuff it into the little sack that all Hobgoblins carry with them on their nightly raids.

In an emergency, a Hobgoblin may also eat a Crumb to get a boost of sugar-powered energy. Eating a Crumb they are carrying doesn't cost a Hobgoblin any actions, but grants the Hobgoblin a +1 bonus to Quality and Combat rolls until the end of their activation.

In addition, a Hobgoblin under the affect of a Crumb increases their movement distance by one step, to a maximum of a Long distance.

Hobgoblin Armaments

Hobgoblins are tiny, averaging between four to six inches in height. While this makes them a perfectly sized snack for a hungry Housecat, it also means they have to be creative when trying to defend themselves against their furry adversaries.

Hobgoblins arm themselves in the most unlikely ways. At their scale, a darning needle becomes the equivalent of a stabbing rapier and a butter knife becomes a fearsome two-handed blade!

Not only can these items be found strewn around the kitchens the Hobgoblins invade, but (for a price) a Hobgoblin can even bring one with them to a raid.

Scampering

Hobgoblins prance and leap as they skip over salt cellars and around puddles of spilled milk. Their supernatural quickness and feather-light form allows them to take all the hazards of the kitchen in stride.

If a Hobgoblin spends two actions it can make a single Long move that ignores difficult terrain.

Ailurophobia

Hobgoblins fear very little, their lives consist of one long party in the realm of the Faeries, interspersed with the odd foray into the human world to search for crumbs and other treasures to bring back to their Faerie Realm.

However, no Hobgoblin knows what happens when they die, and that scares them... even worse Hobgoblins can't imagine what happens when a huge furry monster from the Human world eats one of them... and that boggles their little minds!

For that reason, the sight of one of these fuzzy demons terrifies their curly-toed sock off!

Regarding Housecats

Pounce

Despite the way that people regard them, Cats are perfectly adapted hunting beasts and a terror to those beasts smaller than them... of course this also includes delicious Hobgoblins! Cats have perfected the art of pouncing on smaller creatures and knocking them to the ground... as to many Hobgoblins have found

out...

When a Housecat attacks a Hobgoblin while it has an Ambush or Charge bonus to its hand-to-hand Combat roll, any recoil result it rolls is considered to be a fall result.

Playing with your Food

Cats love to torment their victims. They will bat them here and there, back and forth, until they become bored or something more exciting catches their attention. Hobgoblins should beware trying to sneak past a Housecat... even one engrossed in teasing one of their fallen companions...

When a Housecat scores a fall or kill result against a Hobgoblin, they cannot leave that model until they roll at least two activations on their activation dice. The Housecat does not need to spend any actions, they just cannot leave their victim alone until they roll more than one die to activate.



ELFSERA ADVENTURERS

Game Stats for Song of Blades and Heroes

Points: Personality: 147, Warrior: 153 (51%)
Total: 300



Hargalf the Wizard - Personality

Points 63 Quality 2+ Combat 2
Special Rules Magic-User

Fidorn the Ranger - Personality

Points 84 Quality 3+ Combat 4
Special Rules Forester, Leader,
Sharpshooter

Technically, these 300 pts are not a "legal" warband because they exceed the 30% rule on Personalities, but players may agree that they represent an experienced band of adventurers and just use them as they are...

Roldo the Halfling

Points 27 Quality 4+ Combat 2
Special Rules Forester, Free Disengage, Shooter: Short, Short Move, Stealth

Daldylas the Elf

Points 80 Quality 2+ Combat 3
Special Rules Acrobat, Forester, Sharpshooter, Shooter: Long

Gimradd the Dwarf

Points 46 Quality 3+ Combat 4
Special Rules Heavy Armor, Short Move, Traps

Special Rules:

Acrobat - SGD pg. 7; Forester - SBH pg. 13; Free Disengage - SBH pg. 13; Heavy Armor - SGD pg. 8; Leader - SBH pg. 13, 16; Magic-User - SBH pg. 14, 9-10; Sharpshooter - SWW pg. 19; Shooter: Long - SBH pg. 14; Shooter: Short - SBH pg. 14; Short Move - SBH pg. 14; Stealth - SBH pg. 15; Traps - SGD pg. 10;

Rulebooks:

SBH - Song of Blades & Heroes; SGD - Song of Gold & Darkness; SWW - Song of Wind & Water; SAM - Song of Arthur & Merlin; SDG - Song of Deeds & Glory;

To buy the Song of Blades and Heroes rules, visit www.ganeshagames.net



eternal challenge

A Song of Blades and Heroes Variant
by Fredo the Erratic

This variant is the fusion of two things that I find very interesting: old arcade games and the fate of my models killed in battle. Do you remember the old arcade games from the 80s? Simple, single player games with simple goals: survive against aliens, ghosts, robots and score points, beat the best times or survive for more time than your friends. This simplicity of gameplay is making a comeback in the videogame world. More and more games are now offering a survival mode or a time challenge mode.

Today everything is online, but back then, old school players used notebooks to keep track of scores and best times, like we do today for our warbands and rosters in miniature games. Speaking of miniature games, I always wanted to know what happened to my models killed in battle. The possibilities are endless: Heaven, Hell, Valhalla, final rest or huge afterlife battlefields. In this solitaire mode, your dead models are still fighting!

The Idea

Your warriors are dead, but the Gods are cruel and bloodthirsty. Instead of resting after a glorious death in the battle, the warriors are forced to fight endless waves of creatures for the amusement of the laughing Ancient Gods!

The Game

This game variant is played on a single arena. If you're playing with the measuring sticks, the arena will be a circular battlefield with a radius of 250mm for 15mm models and 370mm for 25mm models. If you're playing with hexagon grids, the battlefield will be hexagonal, with opposite angle-hexes separated by 55 hexes, or a single angle-hex separated from the central hex by 27 hexes.

When starting the game, you will place 6 scenic items anywhere inside the battlefield. For every scenic item, roll a D6:

1-2: Pillar - impassable, even for flying models also blocks line of sight.

3-4: Broken Wall - gives cover to the target of ranged attacks if the line of sight passes through it, and is considered an elevated position in hand to hand combat for the model standing on it.

5-6: A Hole - gives cover to the model inside for ranged attacks, but any model on the edge of the hole attacking a model inside the hole is considered to have an elevated position.

At the very center of the battlefield there will be a single banner or similar object. Mark the North, South, East and West of the battlefield. This is a solitaire game and the enemies will move like the Dungeon Dwellers in the solitaire version of Song of Gold and Darkness.

Waves, Challenges, Levels, and Ranks

This is a survival game. Your warband will fight until the last enemy wave or the warband is killed. Your warband will start the game in base contact with the banner at the center of the arena or in the hexes around the central hex, and it will be 6 models maximum.

The enemies will enter the arena anywhere along the edge of the battlefield, in base contact with the edge. When the enemies enter the arena, roll a D6 for each model:

1	Enter from the North
2	Enter from the East
3	Enter from the South
4	Enter from the West
5	in contact with the last model placed at edge of the battlefield
6	in contact with the edge of the battlefield, near the warband model closest to the edge

If the arena is hexagonal, assign a number from 1 to 6 to each hex point and roll a D6 to find out where each enemy model will enter the battlefield. If the same number is rolled more than once, place the model in a hex nearest the point along the edge of the battlefield.

Each battle will be called a Challenge, and every Challenge will have Levels: Normal, Hard, and Hell. In Normal your warband will fight a total points of enemies equal to the warband points cost plus one quarter; in Hard, plus half rounded down; in Hell, double. For example, a 300 point warband would be fighting a force of 375 points in Normal, 450 in Hard, and 600 in Hell.

Challenges will also have Ranks. At rank 1, the enemy force will have no Personalities, at rank 2 will have a quarter in points of Personalities, and at rank 3 will have half the points in Personalities.

The enemy force of a Challenge will be divided in 3 waves, starting with the models with lower points costs. They will

enter the arena and fight, die or escape, if and when Morale rolls are failed, outside the border of the battlefield (they will be considered killed). When a wave is killed or the last enemy model has escaped the battlefield, there will be a free turn for the warband to try to regroup and recover fallen models, then the next wave will enter the battle.

If and when the warband's Morale rolls are failed, they will move in the direction of the banner, and stop when in base contact, if they fail another Morale roll while in base contact with the banner, they will fall. The warband will win when the 3rd wave is killed or the last enemy model has escaped the battlefield.

The score will be 1 victory point for every 20 points of killed enemies and you can compare scores with your friends even if you can't complete a Challenge .

Recruiting, Improving and Titles

You can build new warbands to face the Challenges, but another way to play the game is to use your dead models. You can keep a notebook with the names and values of your models killed in regular battles against live opponents and call it, for example, "Scroll of the Fallen" or "Annals of the Forgotten". The dead model will lose his experience points when killed, but will keep the abilities, quality and combat value. From now on, they will never face a new live opponent, but they will fight in this solitaire variant.

This variant can also be played as a campaign. If you win a Challenge, you can spend the victory points and experience points to improve the models using the simple campaign system in Song of Blades and Heroes. You can keep experience points, but every victory point not used to upgrade will be lost.

Since the models are already dead, models killed during a Challenge will come back for the next Challenge keeping every upgrade, but with zero experience points (before trying a new Challenge, spend every single experience and victory point!). You can't buy new models for the warband.

If you lose a Challenge, the warband will not be able to upgrade, every experience point of every model will be lost, and the warband will remain the same. If you can't beat a Challenge, you can replay completed Challenges to improve your models only if you're playing by yourself, but if you're playing this mode in a tournament with friends, you can't replay Challenges.

The progression in the Eternal Challenge will be from Normal Rank 1 to Hell Rank 3, for 9 Challenges. When you beat a Level you will receive a title for the warband: Veterans

after the 3 ranks of Normal, Masters after the 3 of Hard and Champions after the 3 of Hell. You can't lose a title, even if your warband is wiped out. Keep a record of your scores and completed Challenges for bragging rights!

Final Challenge

When you've finished the 9 Challenges from Normal to Hell, you will fight the Last Challenge, or Challenge 10. This will be the End Level Boss Battle. It will be exactly like Hell Rank 3, but with unlimited points for Personalities! Everything is possible, and when and if you beat it, your warband will receive the title of Eternal Champions. From this point on the warband will not be able to upgrade anymore, no experience or victory points to spend, but you can still use it to replay the Challenges to beat your high score.

Optional Rules

Here you will find some optional rules. When using the optional rules, always remember to use an understandable format. For example, if you are using rules 1, 2 and 5 in a Hard, Rank 2 Challenge, write "Challenge Hard - Rank 2 (1-2-5)" on a notebook.

1) You can divide the enemy force of a Challenge in 6 waves instead of 3.

2) You can use some of your dead models (or dead models of your friends!) not in your warband as enemies in the waves.

3) You can update the point cost of every model in your warband during the progression from Challenge to Challenge, after winning and upgrading, to give you a more difficult game (for example after spending 3 experience points for Shooter Medium, the cost in points of your model will be increased, the total cost of your warband will be increased and the enemy force will be more difficult to fight), using the point calculators.

4) If you have smaller tables or battlefields, you can make the arena a little smaller and use (or create) only models with Short Move and Shooter Short. If, when creating new models for the Challenges on smaller battlefields, you use the guidelines from Song of Blades and Heroes, you can give the created models 3 special abilities as long as one of them is Short Move.

5) During the free turn of the warband, place a broken wall like the one described above anywhere in the arena. This will represent the warband building barricades with spears and shields from the killed enemies!



6) Hot Seat and Time Challenges: If there's no time to play a Challenge campaign, you can challenge your friends in Hot Seat mode or Time Challenge. Hot Seat will see your warband and the warband of your friends fight the same Challenge, at the same rank and level, with the same waves, in the same map to find out who has the highest score. Fight the battles one at a time. In Time Challenge the winner will be the one fighting for more turns before dying, and in this mode you can decide to skip the free turn (or more free turns) in a Challenge to have a better time than the others. You can then keep a record in a notebook for Hot Seat and Time Challenge, with a drawing of the map and the rank, level, high scores and best times for that particular Challenge. Hot Seat and Time Challenge will be Endless game modes, when you kill the last wave of a Challenge, restart from the first wave and fight in this way until your warband is dead, then keep track of your points and number of turns to compare them with your friends. You can't upgrade your models in these modes.

7) Scavenging. The arena is a place of death and is covered with the remains of many battles. After a battle your warband will search for valuable items to use in the next Challenge. Roll a D6, on a roll of 6, they will find a single Magic Item. Roll on the Magic Item table on page 19 in Song of Blades and Heroes to find out the item, then give it to one of your models.

8) The game mode will use the Solo Dungeon rules from Song of Gold and Darkness, for enemy movement. In addition, you can choose to use only models (or created models) with the Magic User, Shooter or Opportunistic Special Abilities. Models without a ranged attack, will seek cover if not able to reach the closest warband model with their moves, and models with a ranged or magic attack will move until they can attack a model within their range (not double or triple range), and seek cover if unable to shoot or cast spells. Models with a ranged or magic attack will attack normally, but they will not attack a fallen model (after all, they will probably think he's dead).

Suggestions

Build a fantastic arena! You will fight many battles in it, so make it a unique piece! Also, when modeling new units for this game mode, try to remember that they're already dead! Maybe one member of a warband is missing the right arm, or he's carrying his head in the left hand! The arena is also a place out of time and space, so you can model the warband with weapons and items from different time periods, to give the warriors a timeless look (for example a knight with a sword and a laser gun!). This mode can really be used as a testing ground for all your crazy ideas! The same can be done with the enemies, for example every Challenge can be a battle against a single God and that God will use his crea-

tures as waves: plants, demons or undead warriors. Maybe the God you're entertaining with your battles is the God of Mountains, and all of his creatures are Rock monsters and Elementals.

Final Words

That's it, I hope you enjoy this little game mode. I'm having fun playtesting this, and I'm currently at Challenge Hell Rank 1, playing with a new warband of 260 points, and my current High score is 25,5 victory points (or 510 total points of killed enemies). Have fun!



Painting a WWII United States Infantryman

by Luke Addison

This method of painting is neither the most detailed nor award winning. However, this simple method uses only a few basic colors and can produce a respectable finished model in a short amount of time. Nearly all the paints used in this article are Vallejo Model and Game Paints, and they are:

- Beige
- Bronze Flesh
- Chainmail Silver
- Elf Flesh
- Ivory
- Olive Green
- Plague Brown
- Silver
- Terracotta
- Your choice of “flat” spray sealant (not glass or satin!)

I always start the painting process by cleaning the model. Flash and mold lines should be carefully removed with a sharp knife. Some people prefer to file down mold lines, but the soft plastic that Revell uses will become rough when filed and will look “fluffy”. Any rough spots will be very noticeable when the model is painted, so be filing may not be the best option.

Once the model is cleaned of any flash or mold lines, I always paint a basecoat (usually black) with spray paint. Us-



The “flash” on the weapon is circled above.

ing spray paint is important because the soft plastic of the model doesn't accept paint readily so a coat of spray paint helps prime the model. Make sure the spray paint is made for plastics, however, since some spray paint will chip off easily.

The Jacket and Leggings

I began with a solid, even coat of Beige as a base. Next, I mixed a 1:2 ratio of Ivory to Beige, and with a fine brush, carefully painted a highlight over the high points. I then painted a further highlight of a 1:3 ratio of Ivory to Beige over the initial highlight, being careful not to obscure too much of the two colors underneath.

The Pants

Just as with the jacket, I started with a base color of Olive Green. Next I painted a highlight of 1:2 ivory to Olive Green, and then a final highlight of 1:3 Ivory to Olive Green on all the high spots.

Belt and Baggage

I painted the belt and bags to match the Jacket with the same base color and highlight mixes.

Skin

The skin began with a solid base of Plague Brown. I then painted Bronze Flesh liberally over the high points of the face. I then painted another highlight of Elf Flesh over that.

Boots

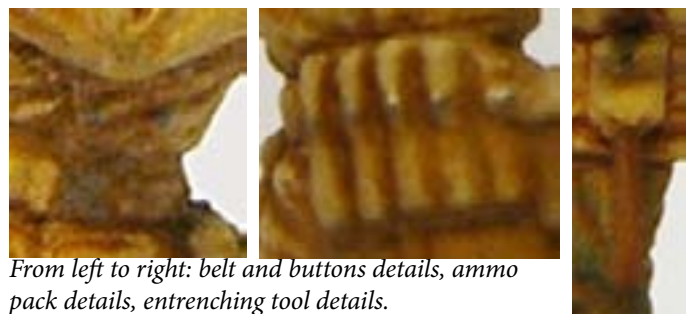
The boots started with a base color of Terracotta, and then I painted a highlight of a 1:2 mix Ivory to Terracotta on any raised portions. I next painted a second highlight of 1:3 Ivory to Terracotta.

Belt Buckle, Buttons, and Metal Details

I carefully painted any small metal details using Silver with a fine brush.

Entrenching Tool

The fabric case was painted the same as the jacket, and the actual entrenching tool can either be painted Silver to match the gun, or Terracotta to match the boots. When I painted it, I made it match the boots, but you decide which look you want.



From left to right: belt and buttons details, ammo pack details, entrenching tool details.



Details of the Thompson gun.

Thompson (Metal Components)

I began painting the Thompson with a layer of Chainmail Silver, then highlighted the upper portions with Silver.

Thompson (Wooden Components)

I painted the wooden stock and grip the same as the boots with a base color of Terracotta, and then a highlight of a mix of 1:2 Ivory to Terracotta as well as a second highlight of 1:3 Ivory to Terracotta.

Helmet

The helmet was painted with a solid coat of Olive Green. To re-create the effect of wear and chipped paint I painted patches of Silver around the rim of the helmet.



Details of the helmet.

Wash

After I paint the entire model, I like to paint a Terracotta wash over the entire model. I usually use about a 2:1 water to paint ratio for the washes I use, and then I apply it liberally over the entire model. The wash will sink into the crevices of the model, while preserving the other colors on the model. Allow the wash to dry thoroughly. Afterwards, the wash will intensify the shadows and add a layer of “grime” to the model which provides a nice, realistic effect. Also, the wash will “correct”, or more precisely, “cover up” most small mistakes on the model, giving it a cleaner overall look.

In Conclusion

Although this method is not going to win any competitions, it is relatively fast and easy. With just a few colors and a little creativity it is possible to have some very reputable looking models for your next WWII game.



The Choice

A zombie scenario for Fear and Faith
by Andrea Sfiligoi

Zac, a survivor and a weapon smuggler, was supposed to bring you a crate of grenades. But he has just become zombie food. Your team rushes to the area to collect the grenades. It won't be easy as the area is crammed with Zs and more are coming, attracted by the sound of explosions – evidently, Zac defended himself.

The moment you arrive there you hear some cries for help – a bunch of kids are trapped in a metal sheet ramshackle hut. The hut is surrounded by zombies – it's a matter of seconds before they break in.

You have a few seconds to decide – save the kids, or go for the grenades.

The Forces

The survivor player has 300 points to build his party, with NO grenades.

The zombie player has 600 points of models from the Zombie list to start with. In addition, use the zombie reinforcements rule from Zombie Infestation scenario in FF.

Play Area

This scenario is played on a roughly square table (3'x3' in 25/28mm, 2'x2 in 15mm) representing an outdoor/countryside scene. Roads and cultivated fields are modeling possibilities, based on the terrain you have available. In any case, treat all terrain as regular terrain.

There's a hut in the centre of the table, no more than 1Short x 1Short. An upturned, damaged vehicle (a van, car, lorry or whatever you have available) must be placed at 1xLong distance from the hut. There must be 4-6 obstacles on the board, each big enough to give cover to at least one human figure and block line of sight, and each at least 1 Long away from any other terrain feature including the vehicle and the hut.

The survivor sets up the terrain but the zombie player places the vehicle.



Deployment

The survivors deploy on any side of the board, then the zombies deploy as follows:

- up to half of their models in contact with the hut
- up to half of their models in contact with the vehicle
- up to 1/3 of their models within 1 Short of any board edge excluding the survivors' baseline.

Bringing Down the Hut

At the beginning of the zombie player's turn, if at least 4 zombies are in contact with the hut, roll a die. On a 6, a wall gives way. Add +1 if there are 6 zombies banging on the walls, +2 if there are 10 or more zombies.

If the hut is taken in the blast area of a grenade, the wall automatically gives way. All models in the hut are attacked by the grenade but enjoy a cover bonus.

The Kids

There are 4 kids in the hut (you can use counters if you wish). They are completely helpless. Treat them as Q5+ C0 Short Move models. The kids will NOT move unless they are adjacent to at least a survivor. A survivor dragging a child has a maximum move of Short. Kids will not attack.

Getting the Grenades

A model adjacent to the vehicle – as long as he is not adjacent to any zombie- can spend one action to open the vehicle, one action to drag out the crate of grenades, and one action to open the crate. Once the crate is open, any survivor may spend one action adjacent to it to pick up a grenade. There are 10 grenades in the crate. The crate is heavy and any model carrying it loses one category of movement. If the crate is caught in the blast area of a grenade, roll a die, on a 3+ all grenades will explode (roll separately for the effect of each grenade for each model caught in the blast).

Victory Conditions

The zombie player scores 5 points per kid eaten, +1 per every 20 points of survivors killed.

The survivors score 1 point per grenade they manage to move off table (through their baseline). Grenades used in the scenario do not count! They also score 5 points per kid successfully moved off the table (through the survivors' baseline).

Fear Tests

If a kid is killed by a zombie, any survivor in line of sight must make a Fear Test at -1.

More Zombies

Every time the survivor player rolls a turn over, the zombie player receives d3 extra walking dead models. These “reinforcements” can be placed on any board edge, including the survivors’ baseline. The zombie player can keep them grouped or divide them in any way he sees fit.

Campaign Consequences

If you are playing a campaign, the survivors get to use half (round down) of the grenades they collect in this scenario (the others are given to other zombie hunters in their community).



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Game Stats for Song of Blades and Heroes

*Points: Personality: 147, Warrior: 153 (51%)
Total: 300*



Hargalf the Wizard - Personality
Points 63 Quality 2+ Combat 2
Special Rules Magic-User

Fidorn the Ranger - Personality
Points 84 Quality 3+ Combat 4
Special Rules Forester, Leader,
Sharpshooter

Technically, these 300 pts are not a "legal" warband because they exceed the 30% rule on Personalities, but players may agree that they represent an experienced band of adventurers and just use them as they are...

Roldo the Halfling
Points 27 Quality 4+ Combat 2
Special Rules Forester, Free Disengage, Shooter: Short, Short Move, Stealth

Daldylas the Elf
Points 80 Quality 2+ Combat 3
Special Rules Acrobat, Forester, Sharpshooter, Shooter: Long

Gimradd the Dwarf
Points 46 Quality 3+ Combat 4
Special Rules Heavy Armor, Short Move, Traps

Special Rules:

Acrobat - SGD pg. 7; Forester - SBH pg. 13; Free Disengage - SBH pg. 13; Heavy Armor - SGD pg. 8; Leader - SBH pg. 13, 16; Magic-User - SBH pg. 14, 9-10; Sharpshooter - SWW pg. 19; Shooter: Long - SBH pg. 14; Shooter: Short - SBH pg. 14; Short Move - SBH pg. 14; Stealth - SBH pg. 15; Traps - SGD pg. 10;

Rulebooks:

SBH - Song of Blades & Heroes; SGD - Song of Gold & Darkness; SWW - Song of Wind & Water; SAM - Song of Arthur & Merlin; SDG - Song of Deeds & Glory;

To buy the *Song of Blades and Heroes* rules, visit www.ganeshagames.net

chromeknight's guide to SONG OF BLADES AND HEROES PROFILES

by Chromeknight

This is a distillation of the superb work Andrea Sfiligoi has already done. It also includes thoughts from the excellent Yahoo group which discusses all the Song Engine games. But mostly it's written to help you grok the profile system as it is included in the Song Engine, and to help you get a profile for whatever models you pick up.

There are over 480 profiles already published in *Song of Blades and Heroes* and the expansions, *Song of Gold and Darkness*, *Song of Wind and Water*, and *Song of Deeds and Glory*. With that many profiles, your first step should be to see if someone has already done the work for you and written a profile for your model. Odds are they have.

Still need a new profile? Here's what you need to know.

Sketches And Prompts

Song of Blades and Heroes is a very simple skirmish games ruleset. It's optimized for battles using a handful of models on each side, played on a dining table sized area. It's easy enough to teach pre-adults and deep enough to provide a tactical challenge in each game.

The simplicity of the rules is driven by the simplicity of the profile system for each model. As you should know already, each profile only has 4 boxes: Cost, Quality, Combat, and Special Rules. Since cost depends on the other three and isn't actually used in play (beside initial warband composition, the point cost of a figure is only used in for the magic-using types who summon creatures, and in a specific case of the targeting rules, where a shooter may ignore an available target worth less than half its own cost), really there are only three boxes. Moreover, Quality is a number between 2 and 6 and Combat a number between 0 and 6. Simple math should show you that there are only 35 basic stat pairs of Quality/Combat. Of course, the addition of Special Rules takes the possibilities into the millions.

Why say all this? Well, since the profiles are so bare, they are little more than sketches, simple line drawings that represent the detailed model you have in your hands. And like sketches, there are multiple ways to get the job done. There is no one 'right' profile which matches your model.

Due to the simplicity of the rules, models with different profiles will often still play the same in the game, depending on various factors. Sure, profiles are important, but they're only a prompt to what a model can do, not a straitjacket.

This brings us to the most important rule when making profiles. And that is...

Figure first, stats second.

Really. I mean it. Yes it is possible to write profiles first, tweak them to fit a particular cost to fit into a hypothetical warband. But at that point you're edging close to something that gets called all sorts of rude words. *Song of Blades and Heroes* isn't about power gaming. It isn't about twisting the rules to 'win'. Seriously. Games are for fun, especially this one.

Don't read any further unless you have a model in hand. Better yet, skim through the 480+ profiles already written again, just to double check that you can't use a profile already written. Don't be fussy about it, remember it's a sketch, not a straitjacket.

Races

Most models are bipedal creatures of some sort, with hands and weapons and armour. They may be an animal. But it's probably a sentient being: it thinks, makes plans, and acts. (If not, what's it doing on a battlefield?)

Description	Cost	Q	C	Special Rules
Ape Man	32	3+	2	Forester, Clinging
Centaur	62	3+	3	Big, Long move, Savage
Dark Dwarf	34	3+	4	Evil, Short move
Dark Elf	30	3+	3	Evil
Dwarf	34	3+	4	Short move
Elf	38	2+	3	
Frogfolk	36	3+	3	Amphibious
Gnome	15	4+	2	Short move, Traps
Goblin	15	4+	2	
Hobgoblin	27	4+	3	Evil, Gregarious
Human	30	3+	3	
Hyena man	26	3+	2	Savage
Kobold	15	4+	2	Short move, Gregarious
Lion Man	46	3+	4	Fearless
Lizardman	52	3+	4	Amphibious, Tailslap
Merman	27	4+	3	Amphibious
Minotaur	52	3+	4	Big, Savage
Orc	23	3+	4	
Ratman	27	4+	3	Gregarious
Snakeman	36	3+	3	Poison
Wood Elf	36	3+	3	Forester
Halfling	11	4+	2	Short move

The model in your hand can probably be described as belonging to a race. And I mean that in the fantasy sense, where there are all sorts of races, humans just one of many. Just like most humans are (generally) the same (two arms, two legs, head, about the same height), other races have similarities that outweigh the differences between individuals. Work out which race your model is and scroll down the list to find that race's basic profile.

Can't find it? Choose something close and work from there. Really can't find it? Go back over the published profiles; is there anything remotely similar? Modify that...

By now you should have a model in one hand and a possible profile in the other.

Basic Competence, Minimal Difference, and Interchangeability

These race stats represent a member of the race who has been given training in combat. One you'd expect to see on the battlefield, who is basically competent. For this reason, it's common for stats to go down, representing an untrained or otherwise unwilling warrior, rather than go up. Only the truly exceptional will have stats better than the basic level. Even then, it'll only be by a point. And it will be rare to lose the racial special rules even if they're negative.

Now the model in your hand might not be a basic warrior. He might be a specialist of some sort. For ease of use and to preserve racial identity (i.e., An Orc is an Orc even if he's got a bow rather than a cleaver), it's better to add only one or maybe two special rules. Think carefully about changing Quality or Combat. If your model is untrained, the stats will go down, if he's heroic they might go up, but probably only one step.

The key idea here is that the stats of, say, the Orcs in an Orc warband should be minimally different. It's not necessary to make big changes in a profile to represent different specialists in the band.

Also, remember I said above that there was no one 'right' profile for your model. Equally, the same profile can be applied to different models. Especially if the variations are really just cosmetic. Three Orcs, one with a cleaver, one with an Axe and the other with a hammer can really all use the same profile. Keep warband profiles simple, choose models that are complex and characterful!

Quality

What is Quality all about? To quote the rules "this is an overall indication of the model's willingness to fight, reaction speed, initiative and morale. It is the number to be rolled on a die to activate the model, so the lower the number, the better."

What's the difference between qualities then? Have a look back at the race chart above. Most warriors of most races are quality 3 or 4. They have average initiative. Elves, to represent their superior speed and morale, are Quality 2. Often models that are not combat trained have lower Quality, they're less willing to fight.

To help get a handle on Quality, Here is a chart of what kinds of models have different qualities. From the basic rulebook:

Q	Examples
6+	Human Children, Plants and blobs, Zombies
5+	Human Adults, Mummies, Trolls
4+	Giants, Gnomes, Golems, Goblins, Halflings, Hobgoblins, Kobolds, Mermen, Ratmen, Undead Skeletons, Swarms
3+	Apemen, Centaurs, Dwarfs, Elementals, Frogfolk, Giant animals, Humans, Hyena men, Lion men, Lizardmen, Minotaurs, Orcs, Snakemen,
2+	Smilodon Catmen, Adult and Ancient Dragons, Old Dwarves, Elves, Medusa

Think about your model. Is it like a well trained and well armed human who is properly motivated? If so, it's a Q 3+ model. If it's missing any of those qualities, try 4+ or lower. If it's much better trained, armed and faster in combat it might be a 2+, but be sparing with Quality 2+, there are other ways to differentiate Quality.

Quality is used primarily for activation and morale, and there are a handful of special rules which affect each. Gregarious is for low Q models who like being in big groups, Hero is for well motivated individuals, and Leader improves the Q of all models within 1x Long range from the leader. Similarly Steadfast improves morale rolls, Fearless means less morale tests, Terror causes the enemy more morale tests. Consider using these instead of just a better Q.



Combat Score

This is the other number, a measure of how well the model fights. Bigger really is better here, but be realistic, since the number is added to a dice roll and there are many ways to modify combat score, nothing is ever certain in combat. So what combat should you assign to the model in your hand?

Here's another handy chart culled from the basic ruleset.

C	Examples
0	Swarms, Children, Peasants, Halfling magic users
1	Ghosts
2	Goblins, Hyena men, Halflings, Kobolds
3	Mermen, Ratmen, Humans, Elves, Orcs
4	Lizardmen, Lionmen, Dwarves, Minotaurs,
5	Vampires, Dwarf Dragonslayers, Steel Golems
6	Ancient Dragons

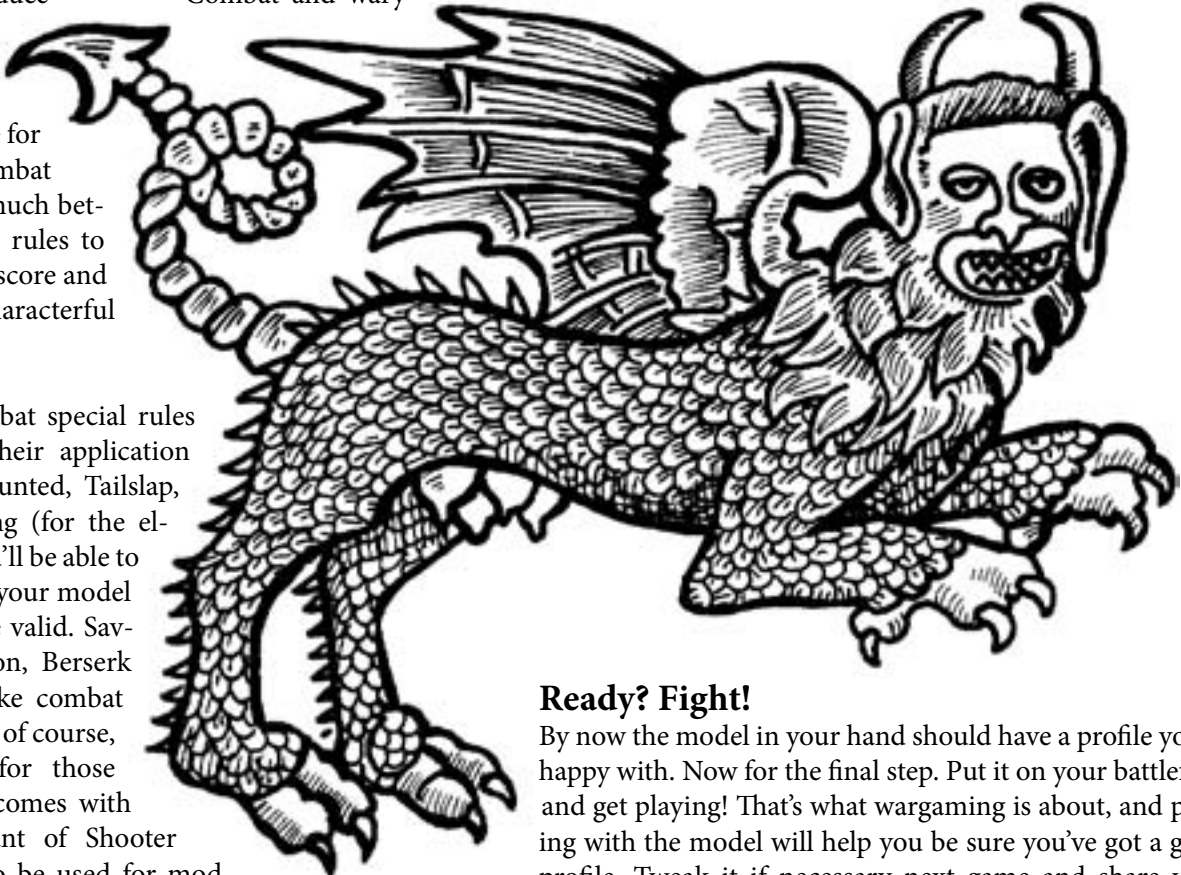
Of course, these are for warriors. Archers, magic users, skirmishers and lightly armed warriors have a lower combat, some heroes might have a higher combat. As with quality, be willing to reduce Combat and wary about increasing it. As you can see, Combat 5 is for things that live for fighting and Combat 6 even rarer. It's much better to use special rules to alter the Combat score and there are many characterful ways to do that.

Some of the combat special rules are obvious in their application – Big, Huge, Mounted, Tailslap, Clinging or Flying (for the elevated bonus) you'll be able to tell by looking at your model whether these are valid. Savage, Lethal, Poison, Berserk and Dashing make combat more deadly. And of course, ranged combat for those armed that way comes with Shooter. A variant of Shooter (short) could also be used for models with long polearms that can attack but will be out of reach to be attacked back, just limit it to one range band.

Special Rules

By now your model has Quality and Combat and probably has a few Special Rules also, depending on how the model is armed. For the rest of the special rules, it's generally easy to determine whether to apply them or not. Think of them as "sometimes" rules and "always" rules. Remember the race chart above. Every merman is Amphibious, every dwarf has Short Move (unless riding a bear!). Moreover, these rules always apply to every move the model makes. Other "always" rules describe creature types, like Animal, Artificial, Swarm and Undead. Every Swarm will have Swarm and nothing that isn't a swarm will have it. If a model looks like it should have an "always" rule (such as short legs!) then apply the rule, especially if it's a racial trait or creature type.

Other rules are "sometimes" rules. Particular models might have the rules, and generally the rule changes some actions. For example, all the Magic-User types provide extra possibilities, similarly Flying and Forester change movement options. It's less of a deal if the model looks like it might have one of these sometimes rules but doesn't have it.



Ready? Fight!

By now the model in your hand should have a profile you're happy with. Now for the final step. Put it on your battlefield and get playing! That's what wargaming is about, and playing with the model will help you be sure you've got a good profile. Tweak it if necessary next game and share what you've discovered with others. Game on!



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