



CALL TO ARMS

A Gang Wars Report

By Terry Maltman, Ian Davies & Nik Harwood

They arrived from all points of the compass. Some crossed the sea. Some made the arduous journey from the Deep South where strange creatures roam, fetid of odour and communicating only in guttural snarls (hello Somerset!). Other more hardy souls braved the chaos known as Friday night rush hour in Nottingham. But arrive they did.

So it was that Harrald, Ian, Nik and Terry assembled in the hallowed halls of Warhammer World (ok, ok, Bugman's Bar if you want to be specific). It was the night before Gang Wars, the GW Mordheim Campaign weekend, and there was much plotting to be done. Strategies needed to be drawn up, tactics thrashed out and practice games, er, practised. And maybe we'd grab a quick drink to sharpen us up.



So... several quick drinks later we were all feeling as sharp as a newt. Unfortunately we'd managed no games at all although, on the strategy front, we had successfully managed to talk Balrogs for most of the evening. Ah well, there was always good old-fashioned luck to fall back on the following day.

The campaign started in earnest on Saturday morning with the traditional coffee and doughnuts (so now you know why we are so keen). Ian and Nik, having carelessly found themselves locked inside a local Nottingham pub the previous night, were particularly keen on the coffee aspect. Ian was noticeably less enthusiastic about the prospect of an early-morning doughnut though, presumably more a result of that reassuringly expensive lager than any last-minute health-drive on his part.

A total of eight players assembled for the Mordheim campaign. Joining the four of us, and looking decidedly more fresh-faced, were Michael Simpson, green-haired Al from Bedford, Bryan the Possessed and Terry's son David.

The objective of the Mordheim campaign was to accumulate as much wyrdstone as possible over 9 games

while trying to resist the gold-draining lure of the shiny trinkets and Hired Swords on offer from Busty Gwen, non-nonsense landlady of the Stoa & Pitcher. The warband that had amassed the most wyrdstone by the end of the weekend would be the winner.

Between the eight players it turned out we had seven different warbands:

Terry: Middenheimers

Nik: Kislevites

Ian: Dwarves

David: Orcs & Goblins

Harrald: Skaven (led by the infamous Oldclaw)

Brian: Possessed

Al: Skaven

Michael: Witch Hunters

Before the games began we were allocated a further 100gc to spend on equipment and Hired Swords. The Hired Sword and equipment cards were provided by Busty Gwen and sold, first-come-first-served, at The Stoa & Pitcher. We were not allowed to recruit new warband members then or later, but we could re-hire to replace losses provided we didn't go above the starting number. After-game injuries, income and trading were done as normal.



A preliminary game in the Pit Fight arena...

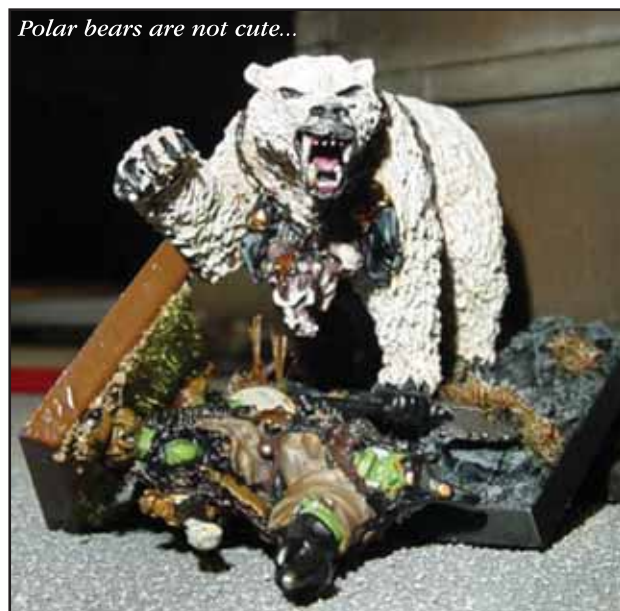


We could choose one of three strategies before each game with the player posting his slip first achieving his chosen strategy. We could (i) "Ambush" a nominated warband and play Defend The Find, (ii) "Pick a Fight" and play Chance Encounter or (iii) "Scavenge" and play either Hidden Treasure or Wyrdstone Hunt as directed by the GW crew.

Over the course of the first day many shards of wyrdstone were found and lives lost. The match of the day was almost certainly the title unification bout between current EuroGT Mordheim champion Harrald Faessen and current UK Mordheim GT champion Nik Harwood. The Dutchman claimed the spoils on this occasion with a cagey display of ratfinkery and outstanding dice-rolling. Of course, there's the old excuse about everyone wanting to ambush Rodion the Bear, which led to him being parked in a central building for six games in a row...Still, there's always next year's EuroGT and Call to Arms to defend the honour of Blighty. Mind you, Nik was following England's long and proud history of inventing games, exporting them abroad and then being thrashed soundly at them by all and sundry....

By the time we reached Bugman's Bar on Saturday night Michael's Witch Hunters, The Seekers, were strongly placed having won their first four straight battles. Unfortunately for them, by Sunday morning, following the iniquities of a night at Bugman's Bar, Sigmar had forsaken them, resulting in them losing every battle of the final day.

Somewhat unfairly Ian and Nik, having later become unluckily locked inside the same local pub for the second night running, were to fare far better on the second day. Clearly Grungni and Ulric have very different standards from Sigmar.



The Fall Guy

One of the great aspects of Mordheim is its never-ending capacity for dramatic comedy moments. This event was no exception. Picture the scene...

Gilbert Fettlesmith, the esteemed if somewhat creaky Dwarf Engineer, has positioned himself on the upper storey of a ruined inn that his warband are intent on defending from the clutches of a demented Cult of the Possessed warband. With its enhanced 36" range, Gilbert's crossbow is proving troublesome for the encroaching Cultists.

However, their leader, an evil Magister, has a plan. Without warning he casts Wings of Darkness and is suddenly propelled upwards and into base contact with Gilbert whereupon he proceeds to land a ferocious attack on the startled Engineer. Surely the Magister will finish off the now-prostrate Gilbert during the following turn.

But no. Gilbert, being adjacent to a low wall, fails his Initiative test and tumbles over the edge. He lands in a crumple at the bottom but, being of hardy Dwarfen stock, merely dusts himself down while muttering to himself, "Now what was I doing? Ah yes, I remember" he chuckles as he raises his trusty crossbow to take aim at the ever so slightly miffed Magister, now staring bemusedly down at Gilbert from the second storey of the inn.



Another full day of diving charges, crucial Armour Saves and general belligerent wandering followed. The moment of the day was undoubtedly Rodion, the Kislevites' Bear, attempting a diving charge against a disbelieving Orc Boss. Despite having an Initiative of only 2, the Bear successfully pulled off his charge, soared majestically from the first floor, arms and legs akimbo and roaring for all Kislev, to land emphatically on top of the startled Orc leader and end up with a "look-at-my-impression-of-a-carpet" grin on his furry face.



A welcome face over the course of the event was that of Fanatic's "Mr Mordheim" Jake Thornton. Jake spent much of the weekend chatting to the gamers and answering questions (we're a demanding lot us gamers!). In fact he took the time to specifically schedule in a Q&A session on Sunday afternoon in which he waxed lyrical about the future of both Mordheim and Necromunda. No doubt Jake's plans have been covered in other editions of this magazine, but suffice to say that everyone was very impressed with both his vision and his enthusiasm.

As mentioned earlier, the ultimate winner of the campaign was to be the warband that managed to accumulate the most wyrdstone. Apart from the need to replace those warriors who perished along the way there were also Busty Gwen's wares to resist, temptingly displayed to separate those less disciplined warbands from their hoard.

To those who resisted the lure of these trinkets the glory would fall. And no one is better at hoarding treasure than Dwarfs. By a remarkable display of tight-fistedness, Morgan the Moon's Stag Party managed to accrue an astonishing 51 shards of wyrdstone over the two days.

Impressive displays of meanness were also shown by Harrald's Skaven and Terry's Middies who finished second and third respectively.

Quick Save

So we're playing Defend The Find. Terry's Middenheimers need to have more of his men standing than mine, at the end of my turn, in order to win the game. At the start of my turn he has four more Middies than Dwarfs on their feet. I have one crossbowman ready to shoot, with Lord Broad, Spike the Slayer and Cloth Thomas, a lowly Beardling, involved in close combat. The mathematically endowed will have calculated that each of these four warriors needs to down an opponent, with themselves remaining standing, to save the game.

OK, deep breath, here goes. Morgan the Thunderer pings off a crossbow bolt, hits his man and sends him sprawling to the ground. One down, three to go.

Spike the Slayer charges. He's got two attacks. They both hit. The Middie's a goner. Two down, two to go.

Lord Broad's charges too. And he's got two pistols! Blam, blam! Three down, one to go.

So it's all down to little Cloth Thomas. Now unfortunately poor old Cloth, being a Dwarf, is not the quickest off the mark. As a result he needs to survive two attacks from his opponent before he even gets a chance to have a go himself. Terry rolls his two attacks, one of which hits. I comment "if this wounds then the game's over". Unperturbed by my attempt at Alex Ferguson-style psychology Terry promptly rolls a 5, winning the game. As I proffer my hand, trying to put a brave face on things, Terry suddenly remembers "Oh! It's a dagger. You've got a 6+ save". And, dear reader, you've guessed it. Cloth Thomas promptly produces a big fat juicy 6 and so deflects the attack.

Now all he has to do is wound his opponent. Having been given this most unlikely of second chances Cloth Thomas doesn't blow it, despatching his foe with aplomb the cheers of his comrades ringing in his ears. And the game continues. Legendary stuff.



More bear action...

Nordheim Nightlife

It has to be said that you can't keep a good gamer down. What do you do given a spare few minutes? You get the miniatures out and improvise a game.

First we enjoyed a team pit fight in the arena. Later the same arena was used for the traditional Old World game of "Flying Monkey Poo" – you know, the one where fantasy warriors dash around a fighting arena trying to avoid the, abem, waste products of a demented flying monkey – always granny's favourite.

Then, as Bugman's Bar has a chess table, we decided to use that whilst the others were finishing a Mordheim version of British Bulldog.

Between us, Michael had Al's Rat Ogre and Nik had Rodion, his now infamous bear (if there had been an award for the character of the tournament the bear would have won paws down). Terry whistled up an Ogre Hired Sword from the bottom of his model case. Although the Ogre doesn't normally suffer from stupidity we assumed that he had taken a few too many blows to the head (suggestion – "...we assumed he had partaken of too many glasses of Bugman's XXXXXX"). So the plan – what plan? In the best tradition of improvisation we made it up as we went along. Each turn the models had to pass a Stupidity test to act or react. If they failed they either stood drooling or shuffled off.

Of course that meant the Ogre with his great weapon tested to attack then waited whilst his opponent tested to strike first. Confused? The Ogre certainly was. Having stunned the Rat Ogre he was in a position to take it out of action. No he didn't – he chose that moment to forget the plot and wander off humming a little tune. Not once, of course. Not even twice. He performed that trick no less than three times. No wonder we called it the stupid pit fight. In the end no one could even remember who had won. We were all so busy laughing at the antics of our gladiators that the result didn't matter.



An honourable mention should also go to Skaven player, Al. Despite never having before fielded a ratboy warband this didn't stop him from collecting a prestigious award. Unfortunately, as the poor fellow had finished the wrong end of the rankings, the award was a not-so-subtle hint in the form of a Necromunda rulebook, received in the same good spirit that he had played all his games.

All-in-all we had a great weekend, with a great deal of camaraderie in evidence between the players. As Jake commented, no one plays to lose – that would have been silly – but there were still plenty of smiles when things didn't quite go according to plan.

We'll certainly be keeping our eyes open for future events. So if you fancy meeting up for some limb-removal related activities interspersed with a healthy dose of talking Balrogs, munching doughnuts and ducking from flying monkey poo then we'll see you there.

And finally, having collected enough shards over the weekend for the Dwarfs to triumph, only one problem remained... what to do with all that wyrdstone when they got back home? Well the Slayers are already looking forward to a two-week break in the Chaos Wastes, Lord Broad is looking forward to his Gucci-designed gromril armour and there'll soon be a luxury swimming-pool for the Beardlings to enjoy. On second thoughts, better make that a paddling pool.

Al uses Wyrdstone based shampoo



We're not sure what's going on with Jake and Ian here ...

Closing Time At The Stoat & Pitcher

For the final games of the weekend we thought that we should go out with a blast. So with a quick bit of improvisation it transpired that the final round would consist of multi-player games, with two pairs of allies per table. With the approval of Event Organiser Nick Appleby, alliances were quickly drawn up. It was decided that my grumpy, bigoted Dwarfs would be the perfect partners for Michael Simpson's grumpy, bigoted Witch Hunters. Together we would vanquish the twin foulness of David Maltman's Greenskins and Bryan's Cult of the Possessed. Well, perhaps.

From the top storey of a central inn, the crossbows of Engineer Gilbert Fettesmith and his son Morgan had the north-west section of the board covered. Now by a happy coincidence the north-west section of the board just happened to contain the Cultists. Unfortunately the Cultists had a brilliant plan to counter the Dwarf's ballistic prowess – they mooched around in the shadows.

Seeing this impressive level of self-preservation, the Dwarfs and the Witch Hunters promptly devised "Plan B". This entailed quickly ganging up on David's Orcs, lurking in the south-east corner, before the skulking Possessed could come to his aid. Brilliant! Nothing could go wrong. It would take an inspired and heroic effort for Orcs to hold-out against our two full-strength bands.

So one inspired and heroic effort later, our twin-pronged attack had become completely buckled. At one stage, two skilled-up Troll Slayers charged simultaneously into a nearby Troll (well it would have been rude not to) only for both of them to end up prostrate at its feet before the round was out. Oh the shame!

It wasn't long before both Dwarf and Witch Hunter warbands were completely mashed by the Greenskins with the Cult of the Possessed arriving just in time to apply the coup de grace and, naturally, claim all the glory.

Still, as they say, it's not all about winning. No sir, it's about grabbing most of the treasure.



Settling the Grudge



Jake: Having watched the fun and carnage at Gang Wars I thought that it would be a good idea to carry on some of that story in a battle report. In a moment of rare cunning, I decided to also use this opportunity to introduce a couple of members of the Mordheim Rules Committee to all you folks out in the Big Wide World. So here they are: Terry Maltman and Ian Davies, veteran Mordheimers, wits, raconteurs and all-round gentlemen about town.

The following report is mostly in Terry and Ian's own words, though I've butted in every now and again for clarity's sake. At least, that's my excuse, and I'm sticking to it...

Terry: When Jake invited me to take part in a Mordheim battle report for Fanatic Magazine I was delighted to find that my opponent was my old friend and fellow member of the Mordheim Rules Committee, Ian Davies. Now Ian and I have been chatting about Mordheim for several years through the Mordheim Yahoo e-mail list, but as I live in the Midlands and he in the West Country we rarely get to play each other, so this was a great opportunity to get together for a bash. As we are *ahem* mature gamers, Jake left us to develop the continuing story between our warbands and decide upon a scenario based on that.

Our last encounter over the gaming table had been at the Gang Wars campaign weekend. My Middenheim warband had defeated Ian's Dwarfs who were 'Defending the Find'. Now if I know Dwarfs they wouldn't let something like that go ignored, so to give them an opportunity to settle the grudge we agreed to play 'Surprise Attack'. I would be the defender and Ian would ambush me...

The innkeeper threw another log on the fire. The log looked suspiciously like a wooden leg, but nobody cared to remark on it. Most of the customers in the Stoot & Pitcher were used to minding their own business. Young Kurt squirmed on his stool; he would have to do something about the fleas in his wolf cloak. He could never figure why the others didn't have the same problem. Trying to distract himself from being slowly eaten alive he turned to Heinrich, the leader of their band, and leaned towards him. "That Dwarf keeps staring at us", he said in a controlled whisper as he could manage in the noisy taproom.

Heinrich would have looked quite distinguished if someone had trimmed his beard and given him a good scrub. Even so he had a quiet commanding air. "If you had been paying more attention lad, you'd have noticed that he has been following us for the last two days." The leader gave Kurt an indulgent smile like an uncle to a favourite nephew. He wasn't, of course. Nobody actually knew who Kurt's father was.

"But why?" blurted the youngster.

Dieter, Heinrich's second in command answered for him, "Don't you remember back in spring we found a house being defended by Dwarfs? We drove them out, but it took some doing. There were good pickings to be had there. We made plenty of gold." Dieter looked after the warband's purse.

Kurt looked surprised, "That was months ago. So what is their problem?"

Heinrich intervened, "You have much to learn about Dwarfs lad. They never forget a slight or an insult." He shook his head slowly. "That is one of Broad's warband. A lord he calls himself - I don't know the truth of it. We had best watch our backs from now on." The big Middenheimer drained his tankard and slowly stood up turning to his companions. "Drink up lads. I think you will need a clear head tomorrow". When he turned back the Dwarf had gone.



	NAME	TYPE	EQUIPMENT	SKILLS, INJURIES
LD	Lord Broad	Noble	Pair of Dwarfs axes, brace of pistols, helmet, Lucky Charm	Leader 6", <i>Resilient, Master of Blades</i>
GF	Gilbert Fettesmith	Engineer	Sword, hammer, crossbow, Lucky Charm, rope and hook	<i>Quickshot</i>
R	Razor	Trollslayer	Mace, hammer	<i>Masterslayer</i> , immune to psychology
S	Spike	Trollslayer	Two axes	<i>Step Aside, Thick Skull</i> , immune to psychology
M M	Morgan the Moon	Thunderer	Club, crossbow, rope and hook	<i>Quickshot, Nimble</i>
T	Tecwin	Beardling	Spear, dagger	
M	Maldwyn	Beardling	Spear, dagger	
C	Cloth Thomas	Beardling	Spear, dagger	
G	Gwilym	Beardling	Spear, dagger	
J B	Jack Buckbarrow	Halfling Thief	Sword, dagger, throwing dagger, rope and hook	<i>Infiltrate, Pick locks, Cutpurse</i>

"Good to see you again my old friend. It's been too long, Pipe?" said Gilbert Fettesmith, the esteemed engineer, as he welcomed his guest into his study.

"Don't mind if I do", replied the guest, Lord Broad of Karak Thron. "Now then Gilbert? Tell me more about this expedition?"

Gilbert slid a brimming bowl of pipe-weed along his desk. "Well, first of all, thank you for agreeing to come along on this barebrained venture. I'm afraid that young Morgan is as stubborn as I am. He won't take advice from his father on this. He's going on this trip with or without me."

"What especially troubles me is that the whole scheme has been conjured up by Morgan's best friend Spike Gnutteson the Slayer, no doubt assisted by his equally unstable brother Razor."

"Other than that the party will consist only of Morgan's friends, the Beardlings Gwilym, Maldwyn, Tecwin and young Cloth Thomas. Barely shaving, the lot of them" he growled.

"Pab! Not one of them has so much as a hammer or an axe about them.

Instead they'll each be bringing a spear." He spat this last word.





	NAME	TYPE	EQUIPMENT	SKILLS, INJURIES
HTW	Heinrich The Wolf	Captain	Hammer, light armour, buckler	Leader 6", Wyrystone Hunter, Horrible Scars, Hardened, Bitter Enmity
CA	Crazy Albrecht	Champion	Sword, axe, light armour	Mighty Blow, Resilient, Lightning Reflexes, Step Aside
D	Dieter	Champion	Two-handed weapon, axe, buckler	Strongman, Resilient
K	Kurt	Young	Bow, hammer	Broken leg, Step Aside
M	Maria	Young	Two hammers	Mighty Blow
W	Wolfgang	Warrior	Two-handed weapon, sword	
H	3 Hammerers	Warriors	Hammers	
DF	3 Drakwald Hunters	Marksmen	Long bow, mace	
T	2 Thugs	Warriors	Hammers	
N	Natasha	Kislev Ranger	Sword, bow, Hunter's cloak	Heart Strike, Seeker, Loner



"Apparently it's all the rage with the under-80s these days."

"So you see, old friend, these young fellows could use our experience to guide them through what could prove to be a challenging trip. Again, thank you for agreeing to accompany us. I'm sure a couple of old warhorses such as ourselves can show these youngsters a thing or two."

"Not at all" smiled Lord Broad. "It's been too long since I was last involved in this kind of escapade. I'm looking forward to seeing if I can remember a few of my old tricks."

"But you haven't yet told me Gilbert, where is our destination?"

Gilbert Fettesmith hesitated. "A city by the name of Mordheim. You may have heard of it. Morgan hasn't stopped talking about it since the plans were drawn up. He tells me that the streets of the city are completely wild. Apparently most visitors are slaughtered within hours of arriving at the gates."

Lord Broad raised a quizzical eyebrow. "Mordheim?" he chuckled, "I suppose that's what you get when you ask a Troll Slayer to organise your stag weekend."



Scenario rule amendments

This battle took place midway through the 2004 Mordheim Rules Review. One item that was on the agenda for the review was looking at balance of the Defend The Find scenario (which is notoriously hard for the defenders), but given the combined history of the two warbands, this seemed like the most appropriate scenario to play. Rather than shying away from it, we decided to take this as a good opportunity to try out some of the proposed scenario modifications.

For several years Ian's group had made the simple change of allowing the defender the first turn. This allows the defenders the opportunity to regroup, hide or maybe just to say their prayers before the action begins. In addition to this, Terry and Ian also allowed the defenders to roll for reinforcements on the first (rather than the second) turn. On the other hand, to prevent the balance from swinging too far in favour of the defenders, Terry sportingly suggested that the newly arriving defenders shouldn't be allowed to charge in the first turn.

The above changes are what were played on the day. The final version of any changes will be presented with the full report of the Rules Committee in a later issue of this magazine, and on the website.

The Middenheimers' Plan

Terry: 'Surprise Attack' is generally considered a very difficult scenario for the defenders to win. They start with an average of half their warband off the table, and those who are on it are scattered over a wide area. In contrast, the attackers will all come on together and can pick off the defenders one at a time. As we were using experienced warbands we thought that there were a number of factors that would help even the game up. My Middenheimers outnumbered the Dwarfs 3 to 2 and with their superior movement should be able to regroup quickly once I knew where the Dwarfs would arrive. We also agreed that contrary to the scenario the defenders would take the first turn but any reinforcements who arrived that turn would not be able to charge. One final addition, we were both allowed to use one of the new Hired Swords from the Fanatic Studio collection. I chose the Kislevite Ranger (see Fanatic issue 6) as she seemed to go with the wild and hairy men of the north better. She is a good all-rounder and a bit of a monster killer.

So how do you formulate a battle plan when you don't know how many men you will have on the table and you don't know where the enemy will come from? What's more, your men have to be scattered at least 8" from each other. I need then to be ready to be attacked from any side, and will therefore place whatever bow-armed men are available to cover as much of the table as possible. The scenery has been set up fairly densely with a lot of

walkways and multi-level buildings – just how I like it. The other warriors will fill in the gaps between the shooters and consolidate once I know where the enemy is. Hopefully I will get a good proportion of my men on the table from the start.

Dwarf Cunning

Ian: My plan against most warbands would be to avoid hand-to-hand combat for as long as possible in order to maximise the Dwarfs' innate advantages in a firefight. However, I am very aware that the Surprise Attack scenario places the defender at a big disadvantage initially. Not only does he begin with, on average, half his warband elsewhere but he also has to contend with the serious headache of his men being scattered over the battlefield. All of this means that as the battle develops more and more Middenheimers will appear on the streets. As well as this I expect Terry, a seasoned old warhorse, to do all he can to gather his existing troops together. The chances are he'll try to avoid combat until he has a decent number of warriors on the table.

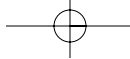
If I'm to make the most of my initial numerical advantage I therefore want to initiate combat as quickly as possible, concentrating if possible on four isolated models – just enough to force a Rout test.

Deployment

Terry: As the defender I get to deploy first. I have to roll for each Hero and Henchmen group and on a 4+ they will turn up. I'll roll again for the remainder at the beginning of each subsequent turn. The warriors that I can place on the table are Crazy Albrecht, Wolfgang, young Kurt, Natasha the Kislevite and the two 'Thugs' (you have to hire whoever you can in Mordheim – however unsavoury). The others must still be chatting up Busty Gwen in the Stoa & Pitcher Inn (see the Gang Wars report).

That doesn't exactly give me many bowmen to form a guard around the others who are busy looting. Hopefully the Drakwald Hunters will turn up soon. I place Natasha on the top of the central tower where she can target the widest area of the table. She has the shooting ability Heart Strike which can kill large creatures, but as the Dwarfs don't have any that is not much use. However, her Hunters' Cloak will allow her to hide and shoot without being automatically spotted (as usual I promptly forgot about this for the rest of the game). The other two Heroes and two warriors are distributed evenly over the table around the central tower. Did I just hear a pistol being cocked?

Ian: My plan is to get into combat and take out as many as possible of Terry's men before his reinforcements arrive. The problem is that, with my limited movement of 3",



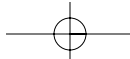
Terry's troops would likely be able to keep far enough away if they chose. In this case, my best hope would be to try to corner his men. This could take some time, perhaps six or seven turns to run to full length of the board. However, if I could start along the centre of my board edge then I might be able to pin some unwary Middenheim warriors against my left or right edges within, maybe, three turns. If this is to work my Dwarfs will need to fan out into a wide "net". With this in mind I placed my hand-to-hand combat troops centrally along my table edge and the maximum 8" in. The Heroes are concentrated slightly to the left, Henchmen slightly to the right.

I've noticed that the Ranger, Natasha, is positioned at the top level of a central building. While I don't fancy my Dwarfs' chances of scaling that building in a hurry, I do fancy my chances of out-shooting her in a firefight. I place both crossbowmen, Gilbert the Engineer and his son

Morgan The Moon, on an elevated walkway which will allow them to freely target the Kislevite Ranger. I'll keep them close to the main group though as their numbers may be needed at a later stage.

While I'm considering the possibility of using Jack Buckbarrow's Infiltrate skill to get in an early attack, I decide against it. With a mere T2 it's important not to let him become isolated and thereby allow the Middies to claim a cheap scalp. Instead, I place him within a reasonable proximity of the hand-to-hand fighters. He can try some sneaky knife-throwing and if the enemy begin to get a bit too close for comfort he can dash back to the fold for protection.

It will be interesting to see where the Middenheimers' first wave of reinforcements arrive.





Turn 1

Terry: As we have tinkered with the scenario I have the first turn. This, in my opinion, is one of the strengths of Mordheim. If you don't like something then just agree with your opponent to change it. The Dwarfs have arrived close to the two Thugs, but well away from Albrecht and Kurt. They are going to have a long run to get into combat. First though I need to see who is going to enter the fray this turn. Rolling a dice for each gives me the remaining three Heroes – Heinrich the captain, Dieter and Maria the other Youngblood. Much to my relief the three Drakwald Hunters join them. At least now I have a decent amount of both combat and shooting power. The final dice roll brings the reinforcements on right behind Ian's Dwarfs. The ambushers become the ambushed.

As I can't charge this turn (as per the modified scenario) after positioning the new arrivals, I just back the Thugs off. Next I try my luck at shooting. My Huntsmen already have a Ballistic Skill advantage so they are pretty good at hitting their target, but I know that Dwarfs are notoriously tough. Natasha the Ranger tries to prove that her eye is as keen as the men from Middenheim, but just misses Morgan the Moon by a whisker. The first two Hunters prove that they are no better by missing Razor the Slayer and Gwilym the Beardling. The honour of the Drakwald hunters lies with the last shot. A cheer goes up when he hits the Beardling Tecwin and kills him. First blood to the Middenheimers! Then Ian reminds me that Dwarfs are 'Hard to Kill' and a roll of 5 is only stunned. Bah! Still, it is a start.

Ian: Ah, I see. So we have six Middenheimers suddenly appear right in amongst my warband. If I don't react quickly, the Middies could quickly charge me before I've decided what I'm doing. I could easily find myself three Dwarfs down in no time and thus on the dreaded Rout test.

I need to regroup my Dwarfs and gain the charge wherever I can. My hastily modified plan is now to target the six models who have suddenly appeared behind me. This strategy will have the added bonus of shifting the combat marginally away from Terry's already deployed men, which should help keep them out of combat for that little bit longer.

With this in mind Lord Broad and his Troll Slayer retinue, although they can't yet charge, will move as close to the newcomers as possible.

Jack Buckbarrow doesn't seem to be under any immediate threat so he can chance a thrown knife from his lofty position.

Another important consideration is that Tecwin is already stunned from bow-fire and so is very vulnerable. I must get him as far away from the enemy as possible. He will also need his Henchmen friends to come to his rescue. There are two Middenheim Henchmen in the immediate vicinity that need tying up. One of these can be charged by Cloth Thomas. The other is not reachable, but I can still try to tempt him away from Tecwin by placing Maldwyn and Gwilym within his charge range – their spears should help them survive any resulting charge.





Dwarfs turn 1

The biggest decision of all is what to do with the crossbow-toting Dwarfs up on the walkway. The sensible option may simply be to make use of their Quickshot skill by having them stay put and fire. Then again I could seize the initiative and have them attempt unlikely diving charges onto the pair of Middenheim Heroes right below. There would be several advantages to this. It would get more bodies into the thick of combat, which is always a good plan. If successful, it would allow me to gain the charge – a rare treat for a Dwarf. Then there's the cat-amongst-the-pigeons effect. I doubt very much that Terry would be expecting this and so may be thrown off his stride.

While each of these is a worthy consideration, the one thing that's really swaying my decision is the preposterousness of two Dwarfs flinging themselves off a walkway. That settles it. Banzai!

Jake: To nobody's great surprise the Dwarf tumblers aren't entirely unscathed by their acrobatics and Morgan ends up on the floor. Gilbert, on the other hand, steams into combat against young Maria. His attacks are ineffective, but her return blows are only saved by his lucky charm. Meanwhile, Cloth Thomas charges up to Dieter and slips a dagger between the Middenheimer's ribs. He goes down too.

Turn 2

Terry: The loss of Dieter to a sneaky dagger attack was a blow. His Strongman skill combined with a double-handed hammer and a basic Strength of 4 means that given the chance he can crush skulls without trying. Sadly he never got the chance. I am rather more proud of Maria. Although only a Youngblood she has learned a lot whilst in Mordheim (14 Experience Points) and managed to fend off the Dwarf Engineer. She would have wounded him if

not for his lucky charm. Meanwhile, Heinrich is creased with laughter at the groaning Dwarf lying at his feet. I will have to do something about the Jack Buckbarrow, the annoying Halfling. He is in a position to keep throwing daggers and sooner or later he may actually hit me.

My remaining warriors (The Hammerers) finally turn up. Now I have my entire warband to play with. The bad news, however, is that they have come on from the far table edge. They will need at least another four turns to get to where the action is. I suspect too much ale in the Stoot & Pitcher. Seeing Maria being assaulted by the Dwarf Engineer, Heinrich charges in to help her. He tries to take care of her like the father she never knew. So he says anyway. The Thugs don't seem keen to get involved in the fighting just yet. They are waiting for some of the others to join them before getting stuck in. If I am to make any impact on Ian's Dwarfs I had better be lucky with the shooting this time. Natasha the Ranger moves across the top of the tower for a better view, (very thoughtful, and much appreciated by the onlookers below). In response



Middenheimers turn 2





Middenheimers turn 2



to his rude gestures she shoots at Tecwin and hits him, but the arrow just bounces off his tough skin. The Hunters also try their luck and hit without wounding. I start to strongly suspect that I have been sold a batch of rubber arrows. There is just one combat to resolve this turn. Heinrich charged Gilbert FettleSmith, the Dwarf Engineer and then Maria will get to strike with her faster reactions. My top man hits Gilbert, who makes a vain attempt to parry the blow with his Dwarf axe. Heinrich is frustrated though as even with Strength 4 his hammer fails to injure the Dwarf. Can a mere Youngblood do any better? She hits with one of her hammers and with her Mighty Blow skill sends the Toughness 6 Engineer Out of Action. She may look sweet and innocent, but this is the wrong lady to mess with.

Ian: Note to self: Dwarfs aren't renowned for their diving charges. Must get more practice in future games.

There are a few missiles flying my direction but for now I'll ignore them, placing my trust in my tough hide and the Hard To Kill rule.

I'm slightly nervous that Jack could become an easy target. He is at least protected by his elevated position. If anyone comes for him he can dash away, but I mustn't leave that too late. Until then though he can chance another thrown knife.

I'm somewhat disconcerted by Gilbert the Engineer going Out Of Action so early. The good news is that Lord Broad, Spike and Razor are now in a position to back up the outnumbered Morgan The Moon. This is essential. I've also managed to take the Henchman, Dieter, Out Of Action putting the casualty score at 1-1. I'd ideally like to target another three Middenheimers this turn if I'm to make Terry face Rout tests. Let's see...

Tecwin has just got back on his feet and so can't charge. He'll move a little towards his buddies for comfort while bracing himself to receive the inevitable charge. Lord Broad and Razor will charge Captain Heinrich. This will result in a leader versus leader confrontation, which always adds spice to a battle. Spike can back up Morgan The Moon against the deceptively strong Maria. Further afield, Maldwyn, Gwilym and Cloth Thomas can gang-up on the nearby Hunter.

Some good charges in this turn and Terry could be looking at an early Rout test.

Jake: The game goes into its 'brawl' phase in earnest and the results are well in the Dwarfs' favour. The lone hunter, Maria and the Captain all end up sprawled on the floor in various states of disarray as the Dwarfs gang up on their foes. It looks like Ian's (hastily revised) plan is working.

Turn 3

Terry: Ouch – three of my models Out of Action and my Captain stunned in the same turn. If Ian can get one more then I will need to take Rout tests. Heinrich is on the floor and surrounded by enemy models. He will recover to Knocked Down this turn which will help, but it looks bleak for him. My only chance to save him is Wolfgang. If he can join the fight then Ian will be forced to fight him instead. Unfortunately, Wolfgang proves to be out of range so his charge fails. I thought that it was going to be close, but I had to risk it. Albrecht at last is close enough and charges Tecwin, risking the Dwarf's spear which will strike him first. Kurt is also getting closer, but he is not yet near enough to join in. Over on the far side of the table the Hammerers are still slogging along.

Shooting once again demonstrates the rubber arrow syndrome, but this time a shot does succeed in wounding Spike the Slayer. That'll teach him to run around half





naked in Mordheim. Better still (for me) the Injury roll is a 6 so the Slayer achieves his doom and goes Out of Action. Ian has lost two now, so one more and he will need to take Rout tests. Close combat starts poorly with Crazy Albrecht getting stunned after running onto Tecwin's spear. It was always a calculated risk. Next the inevitable happens and Lord Broad takes my Captain Out of Action whilst he is down. I thought that these Dwarfs were meant to be honourable?

Ian: Following an excellent set of charges in the previous turn I now have Terry on Rout tests. Unfortunately my cunning plan to laugh off his missiles has resulted in Spike going Out Of Action. One more casualty and I too will be facing Rout tests. I'm feeling nervous.

Tecwin, with the Thugs bearing down on him, is looking particularly vulnerable. I'm sure Terry will have noticed this too and will be



concentrating all his charges on the little fellow. Even if Tecwin ignores the prostrate Albrecht at his feet and leaves combat he'll still be within the Thugs' charge range. He may as well put Albrecht out of his misery and set his spear to receive the charge.



Morgan The Moon can try to reduce the threat to Tecwin by pinging off a couple of crossbow bolts at one of the Thugs. Lord Broad, if he shifts his position slightly, can fire a pistol at another Thug although he'll have to incur a penalty for having moved. If my shooting is true Tecwin may yet avoid being charged.

Wolfgang the Middenheim Warrior, having failed a charge the previous turn, is now within spitting distance of my Hero group. In situations like this the best form of defence is attack. It's charge or be charged, and so Razor will duly oblige.



Dwarfs turn 3

The remaining Beardlings are all out of charge range. Instead they can be moved forward, to a position out of sight of the sniping hunter, and form a spear wall just short of Tecwin's position. This will set them up nicely for the countercharge in the following turn.

Jake: Lord Broad and Morgan stand back-to-back to face off against all-comers and it looks good, but the Middenheimers are nowhere near. Most of the rest of the Dwarfs either move to help Tecwin or shoot in his support. Everyone misses, but in the Close Combat phase Albrecht is taken Out of Action and the Slayer stuns Wolfgang.

Turn 4

Terry: Now it looks grim. I need to take a Rout test and my leader is gone. I can, however, test on the next highest model's Leadership. This is Wolfgang, the promoted Henchman, with a Leadership value of 9. He is actually better to test on than Heinrich and this could be a cause of friction in the warband later. If I can hang on the Thugs will charge Tecwin again and even if one is injured, then with any luck, the other one can take him out – then Ian will need Rout tests as well. Amidst hushed expectation I roll my first Rout test of the game – double 5. My warband cuts its losses, turns tail and runs amid jeers and catcalls from the triumphant Dwarfs.

Middenheimers turn 4
The last roll of the game.**Post-Battle Events**

Terry: One of the important features of Mordheim is the after game events. By carrying over injuries and Experience from game to game the warband develops a character of its own. I have four Heroes and a Henchman Out Of Action. All apart from Heinrich, my Captain, make a full recovery no worse for their injuries. Heinrich rolls 14 for his serious injury which the table tells me is dead – the permanent variety.

The protocol in these circumstances is that the Hero with the highest Leadership can take over as the new warband leader. Wolfgang is ahead of everyone else with a Leadership of 9 so he gets the job. Maybe he deliberately failed that charge?

With two surviving Heroes I can roll 2D6 for exploration getting a total of six nets me two shards of wyrdstone. A poor return for the loss of my leader, but then I have plenty of the green glowing stuff left after Gang Wars.

Ian: The party promptly searched for loot and managed to find a total of four shards of the green stuff.

Jack Buckbarrow rolled the Ignorance Is Bliss result, meaning that he forgot to charge for his services. Or perhaps, given his totally inept performance with the throwing knives, he was too embarrassed to ask.

Now for the Serious Injury rolls...

First the good news. Gilbert Fettesmith, following his slightly embarrassing meeting with young Maria's hammers, simply dusted himself down while muttering to himself something about rabbit-holes.

Spike the Slayer didn't get off so lightly. He came round long after dark to find that his brand new two-handed axe had been borrowed by an opportunistic passer-by. He also discovered a cracked rib which would reduce his Toughness to a humiliating (for a Dwarf) 3. Worse still, he found himself with a limp caused by the arrow-head embedded in his left thigh. His Movement is now a mere 2"! It took him an awful long time to make his way back to camp. His big concern now is whether he'll ever be able to fulfil his Slayer oath. Any battle is likely to be over before he can get there.

Should I retire him? Not a chance!



Musings

Terry: The sudden departure of my warband to an unlucky Rout test belies how exciting the game was. Although I had lost more than twice as many models as Ian it still could have gone either way (honest!). With hindsight I would have done one or two things differently. We had changed the scenario rules to even it up a bit, but if we played again we would not allow reinforcements to come on until Turn 2. If we did that it wouldn't be necessary to ban charging on their first turn. Tactically I should have held back until more of my men could group together. If I have a consistent fault it is lack of caution. The growing pile of dead (or my "reserves" as Jake keeps calling them) at the side of the table each game is a testament to my recklessness.

Ian's exquisitely painted Dwarfs were a joy to play against. Each one has a distinctive character that adds to the atmosphere of the game. I encourage everyone to name at least their Heroes. That way they seem a lot more personal and individual rather than just a nicely painted model. There were numerous great moments during the game. Morgan and Gilbert's diving charges were almost doomed to failure. Dwarfs are not meant to fly. Only Gilbert's ludicrously high (for a Dwarf) Initiative saved him from landing in a heap on the floor. The fun part was that Ian was prepared to give it a try. In return Maria, my Youngblood, took out the Toughness 6 Engineer; he's harder to wound than a Rat Ogre! Natasha the Kislevite Ranger proved less useful – I think that I should have deployed her at ground level and got her into combat. She is a good shot with her composite bow, but the curse of the rubber arrows (or was it the hard-nosed Dwarfs?) ensured that she didn't score any kills.

It may be a bit of a cliché to say that it doesn't matter if you lose, but in a good game of Mordheim it really doesn't. Ian and I had taken the trouble to weave a story based on previous events and I had volunteered for a difficult scenario to suit that story. As we were playing out the story the outcome didn't matter so much. That is not to say that we weren't playing to win, but losing is no big disaster. Well played to Ian. I'll get you next time.

Ian: Another fine game against a worthy and noble adversary. Although the final Out Of Action count was 5-2 in my favour, the battle was a lot closer than those figures suggest.



It's all pleasant smiles and handshakes on the surface...

By the end I was feeling particularly nervous. If the Middenheimers' bottle had held for another turn they could easily have taken out young Tecwin during their next turn and subsequently have me face Rout tests as well. My fate would then have been in the lap of the gods.

I had expected Terry to have his men flee initially, before mustering and launching a consolidated attack against me at a time of his choosing. With hindsight it seems that Terry's "luck" in having six reinforcements arrive in Turn 1 – and right on top of me – actually worked in my favour. It meant that I was able to quickly gather most of my warband against these newcomers before the rest of his band could arrive. With those numbers, the odds were in my favour.

I suppose Terry could have had these reinforcements attempt to run around my Dwarfs en route to his chosen muster point, but it would have taken an awful lot of swallowed pride to have his fierce Middenheim Captain blatantly flee from my little guys, especially in full view of his men. In the end perhaps it was pride that swung the battle for me. I suspect that same pride will lead to a bloody rematch in the not-too-distant future. Bring it on!

Jake: And there we have it – the Dwarfs get their revenge. I suspect that we haven't heard the last of this little disagreement though. Certainly, there are new scores to be settled now. Until next time...

