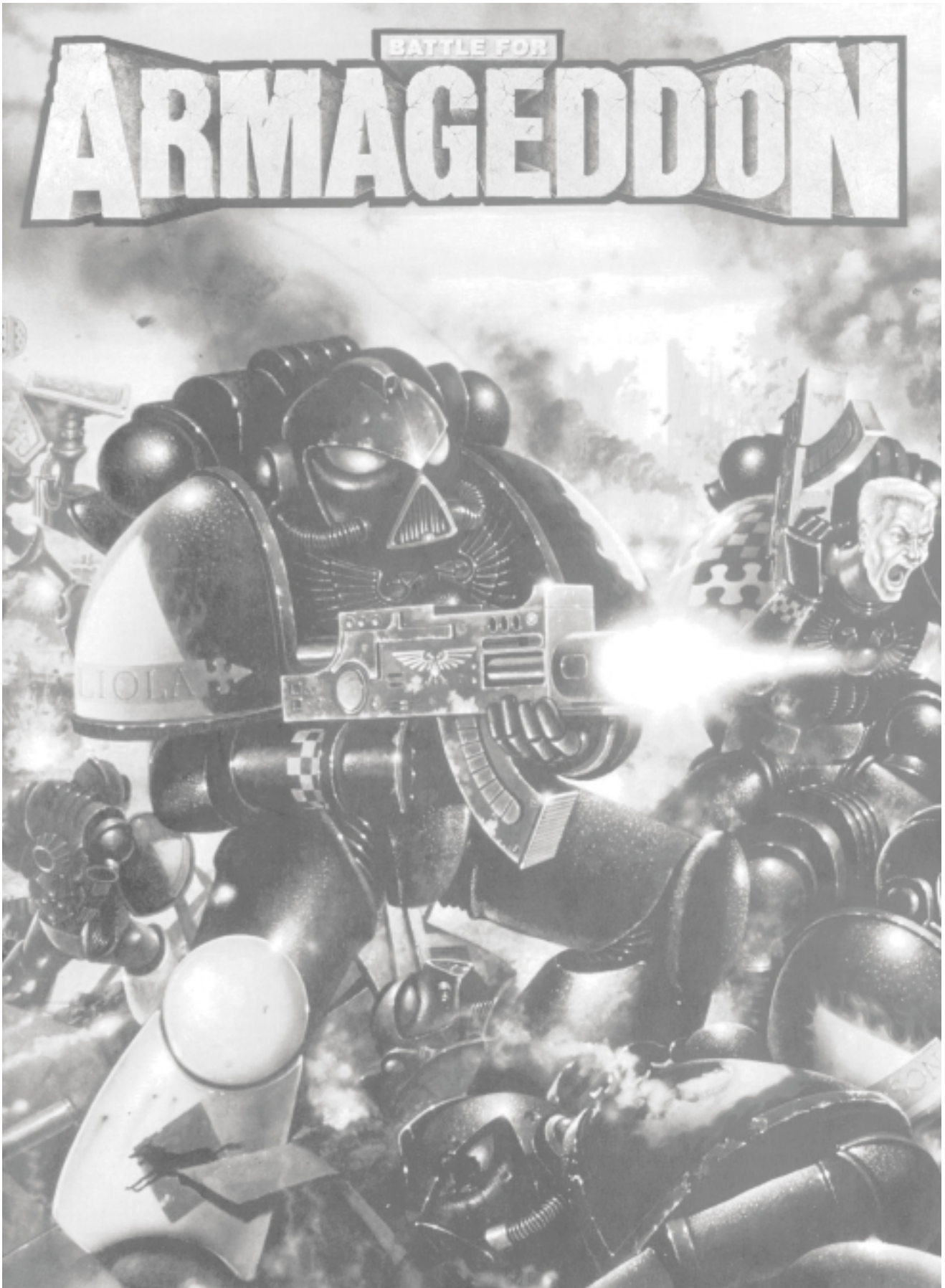


BATTLE FOR ARMAGEDDON



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INTRODUCTION

Battle for Armageddon is a strategic wargame that simulates the conflict between Orks and the Imperium for control of the Imperial hive world Armageddon.

The war involved tens of millions of combatants and took two decades to resolve. By its end, the lives of countless millions of Ork and Imperial warriors had been lost.

Armageddon is a tough place where little value is attached to human life, while air, light and food are precious and rare commodities. The surface of planet has been plundered of all resources and reduced to little more than an ashblown desert. Scattered across the planet are huge cities called hives, which are home to the millions upon millions of people that make up the planet's population, and which provide the planet with its vast manufacturing capability. The hives and factory cities of Armageddon produce arms and weapons that equip fighting units for hundreds of light years in every direction, and its loss would be a serious blow to the Imperium's ability to defend this sector of the galaxy.

The game concentrates on the campaign fought for control of the vital Armageddon Secundus area of the planet. The vast factory hive cities on this continent produced over 80% of the planet's industrial wealth and were vital for the Imperial war effort. If Armageddon Secundus were conquered, the Imperial forces would be starved of ammunition and equipment, and the planet would fall to the Orks. The Orks decided to use three whole tribes, over half their entire invasion force, to capture the continent. The resulting campaign lasted for almost two years and was one of the bloodiest in Imperial history.

The initial Ork offensive caught the Imperial forces almost completely by surprise. Ork spearheads punched through Imperial lines and pushed deep into Imperial territory. Furious counter-attacks failed to stop the Ork advance, and it looked as if all was lost. But in this dark hour, salvation was at hand. First, the heroic defence of the Hades hive against almost impossible odds slowed and then halted the Ork blitz. Then the arrival of three entire Space Marine Chapters - the Salamanders, Ultramarines and Blood Angels - turned the tide of battle in the Imperium's favour.

Although the Orks' initial attack had been stopped, the campaign was by no means over. Seesaw battles of attrition and manoeuvre engulfed the continent, and the fate of Armageddon hung in the balance. Finally, however, the Orks were decisively defeated at the battle of Tartarus hive. The shattered remnants of the once mighty Ork tribes retreated back to the original border, and the campaign for Armageddon was over. Although the war for the rest of the planet carried on for more than a dozen years, the Orks' defeat in this campaign marked the end of any hope of Ork victory.



MARK COBBINS

SUMMARY OF PLAY

The game begins at the start of the campaign, with the three Ork tribes poised on the border of Armageddon Secundus, and all hell about to break loose! One player takes the side of the Orks and the other of the Imperium. Cardboard counters represent the military units that make up the huge armies. Each counter is printed with a name and picture to show what type of unit it represents, and the three numbers at the bottom rate how good the counter is at attacking, defending and moving.

The game is split into eight turns, each of which represents about three months of the actual campaign. At the start of each turn you decide on a plan for your army to follow by picking two strategy cards and placing them in a stack in front of you. The cards list what you may do when the card is revealed. If, for example, you had a 'movement & combat' card, you can move and then attack with your pieces. Once both players have chosen their strategy cards, they each roll a D6. Whoever scores highest wins the initiative and goes first, flipping over the top card in his stack of strategy cards and carrying out the two phases listed on the card in the order shown. His opponent then flips over his top card, and so on, with the players taking it in turn to reveal a card and carry out the phases.

Victory is determined by the number of hives you control at the end of each turn. The Ork player must attempt to capture as many Imperial hives as possible, so as to fatally undermine the Imperial war effort. The Imperial player must desperately defend his hives, and attempt to recapture and rebuild those that fall into Ork hands.

THE GAME RULES

SETTING UP

Before you start, it's a good idea to read through these rules at least once so you get some idea of how the game works. They aren't complicated, and reading them won't take very long. Once you've done this, clear a large space on a table and set up the board. Place the **build points counter** on the '20' space on the **Imperial build points track**, and the **turn counter** on the '1' space on the **turn track**. One player takes all of the Imperial counters and cards; the other player takes all the Ork counters and cards.

HIVE AND FACTORY AREAS

The Hive and Factory areas printed on the game map represent the vast industrial complexes for which Armageddon is famous. The larger hives are picked out by having their name printed in their area (Acheron, Hades, Tartarus, Hellsreach and Infernus). Both types of area are *called industrial areas* on the Terrain Effects Chart, and have the same effect on movement and combat. However, only hive areas are used to determine who has won the game.

The Imperial army is set up **first**. The counters that make up the Imperial army at the start of the game are shown on the reference sheet, as are the instructions telling you where to place them on the map. Sort out the starting counters and set them up, but be careful not to break the stacking rules described on this page. The remaining Imperial counters are placed to one side for later use.

After the Imperial player has set up, the Ork player may set up his army. All three Ork tribes are set 'up in full' at the start of the campaign - in other words the Ork player gets every single Ork counter! The land the Orks occupy is called **Ork territory** and runs along the northern edge of the map; areas in Ork territory have dashed boundary lines. The Ork player may set up his counters anywhere within Ork territory, subject to the stacking rules.

Finally both players sort out their **special cards**. Shuffle your own deck of cards, deal yourself two cards at random, and place the remainder near at hand. The two cards you dealt out make up your starting hand of special cards. When each card may be used, and what effect it has on play is written on the card itself. However, you may only use one special card per action segment, and you must discard the card after you have used it.

Once you've both set up, you're ready to start the first turn of the game. Good luck!



THE SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Battle For Armageddon is played in a series of game turns, each of which is divided into six segments. All activities may only take place in the correct segment, and each segment must be finished before the next can be started. What you do in each segment is described below and explained in the rules that follow.

1. STRATEGY SEGMENT. Both players secretly choose two strategy cards as explained below, and then each player rolls a dice. The player who scores highest has won the initiative for the turn. Finally, both players draw a new special card.

2. FIRST ACTION SEGMENT. The player who won the initiative reveals his first strategy card and carries out the two phases shown on the card. He must then check to see if any of his counters are out of supply.

3. SECOND ACTION SEGMENT. The player who lost the initiative roll reveals his first strategy card, carries out the two phases, and checks to see if any of his counters are out of supply.

4. THIRD ACTION SEGMENT. The player who won the initiative reveals his second strategy card, carries out the two phases revealed, and checks to see if any of his counters are out of supply.

5. FOURTH ACTION SEGMENT. The player who lost the initiative roll reveals his second strategy card, carries out the two phases, and checks to see if any of his counters are out of supply.

6. VICTORY SEGMENT. Check the victory conditions printed on the reference sheet to see if either player has won.

STACKING

When you have more than one counter in an area, they must all be placed on top of one another in a single neat pile called a stack. With the exception of the counters listed below, you may never have more than three counters in a stack. The Ork player suffers from the additional restriction that he may not stack counters from different tribes together. The central band of colour shows the tribe that an Ork counter belongs to on the counter. If you break the stacking rules and your opponent spots the mistake, then he may choose which counters you have to destroy to make the stack 'legal'.

Some special counters do not count against the stacking limit, and may be included in a stack in addition to the three counters you are normally allowed. These counters are Warlord Ghazghkull, Commissar Yarrick, Space Marine Commander Dante, Fortifications, Factories and Hives.



FIRST TURN SURPRISE

The Orks' attack caught the Imperial forces almost completely by surprise. To represent this, the following rules apply on the first turn of the game:

1. The Ork player always receives the initiative on the first turn.
2. The Ork player receives a +1 bonus to any attacks he makes on the **first** turn. This bonus only applies if the Orks are attacking, not if they are defending.
3. The Imperial build point total is halved in any Imperial build phases taken on the first turn of the game.

THE STRATEGY SEGMENT

Each player has a hand of 6 **strategy cards**. In the **strategy segment** you must select any two cards, placing them in a face down stack in front of you. The order that you stack the cards in is very important, as it determines the order in which the cards will be revealed. The top card in the stack is always revealed and carried out first, as explained below.

Once both players have chosen their strategy cards, each player rolls a D6. Whoever scores highest wins the initiative and takes the first action segment.

Finally, each player may draw a new **special card**. Take the top special card from the deck and add it to your hand of special cards. You can have any number of special cards in your hand. If the deck is exhausted, shuffle any discards and draw your card from the new deck.

ACTION SEGMENTS

Each strategy card has two action phases listed on it. These two phases must be carried out in the order shown on the card; you are not allowed to move on to the second action phase on the card until you have finished the first action phase. How you do this is described on the next page in the rulebook.

The players take it in turn to reveal their strategy cards in the action segments. The player with the initiative goes first, flipping over the top card in his stack of strategy cards, carrying out the two phases listed on the card in the order shown, and finally checking to see if any of his counters are out of supply. His opponent takes the second action segment, flipping over his top card, carrying out the action phases in the order listed and then checking supply, and so on.

THE VICTORY SEGMENT

At the end of each and every turn you must check to see if either player has won. If neither player has won by the end of the 8th turn, the game is a draw. The two sides have their own set of victory conditions:

The **Ork** player wins by capturing any three of the five Imperial hives. A hive is considered to be captured by the Orks if it has been flipped to its 'smoking ruins' side and it is stacked with an Ork counter in the victory segment.

The **Imperial player** wins if he is in control of all five of his hives and the Warlord Ghazghkull counter has been removed from play. The Imperial player is considered to control a hive if it is face up, or if an Imperial counter is stacked with its smoking ruins in the victory segment.

ACTION PHASES

Three different types of action phase can be carried out in an action segment: **movement phases**, **combat phases** and **build phases**. You may move your counters when you have a movement phase, attack with your counters when you have a combat phase, and build new counters when you have a build phase. Exactly how you do this is explained in the rules that follow.

MOVEMENT PHASES

In a **movement phase** you are allowed to move any or all of your counters. The number of areas a counter may move is shown by its move value (the third number on the counter). You may move as many of your counters as you wish: all, some or none.

A counter may be moved a number of areas equal to or less than its move value. It may be moved in any direction or combination of directions, as long as it does not enter a Sea or Mountain Area, or enter an area occupied by an enemy counter of any type (including special units).

Counters are moved one at a time, and you must finish a counter's move before you move another one. Once you have started to move another counter, you may not change a previous move, no matter how much you want to!

The stacking limits described earlier only count at the end of the movement phase, so while you are moving you may

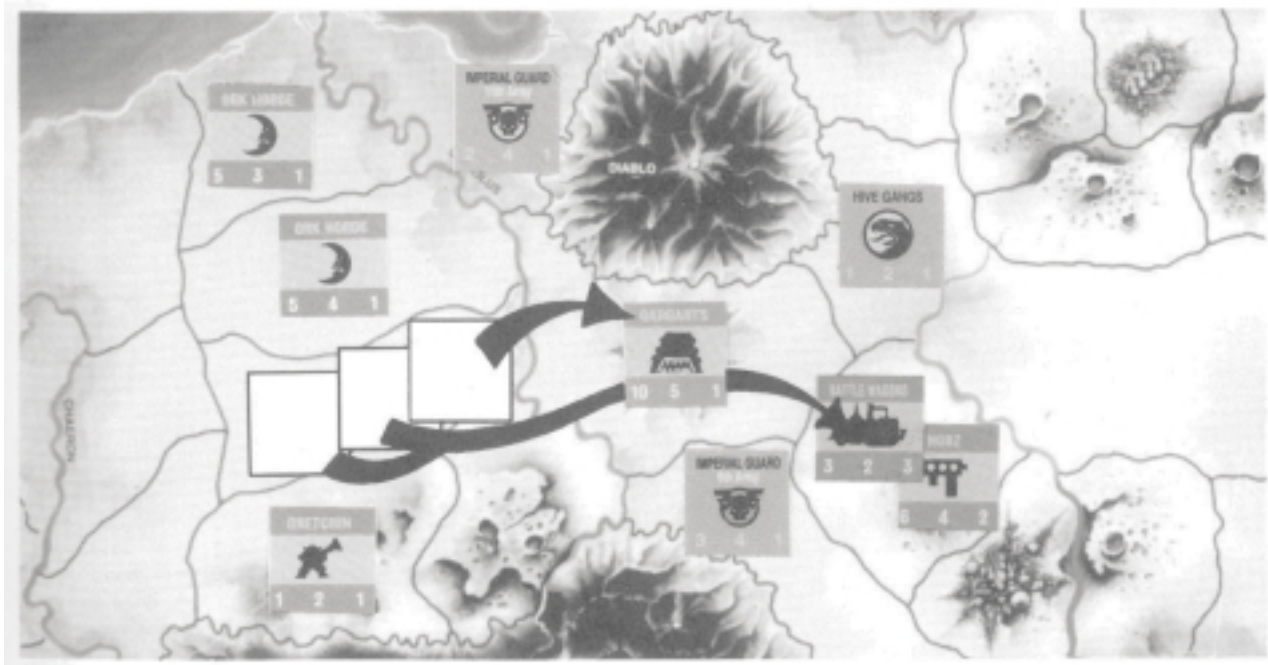
WHICH COUNTERS HAVE YOU USED?

With so many counters in the game, it is very easy to forget which counters have moved or fought during a phase. To help you remember. Flip the counters over or turn them through 180° as you use them. Then turn all of the counters back round at the end of the phase,

over-stack. For example, you can move a counter through an area which already has three counters in it, or you can move a counter into an area with three counters, and then move one of those counters out. However, your opponent is allowed to choose which counters are eliminated if you end up with more than three counters in a stack at the end of the movement phase.

COMBAT PHASES

In a combat phase each of your stacks is allowed to make one attack against an enemy stack in an adjacent area. Note that attacks are made by and against stacks, not individual counters. If one of the counters in a stack makes an attack, then all of the others must take part in that attack as well. Similarly, you are not allowed to pick out one enemy unit in a stack and only attack that one, you must attack the whole stack.



EXAMPLE OF MOVEMENT

It's the start of the Ork movement phase in the second turn of the game. The Orks have blown a hole in the Imperial lines and are now ready to exploit the gap they have made.

The Gargant Big Mob moves first. It only has a movement value of 1 (Gargants aren't noted for their speed), so it moves one area across the Diablo river to occupy the smoking ruins on the other side.

The Nobz move second. They have a movement value of 2, so they can move 2 areas. The Ork player moves them into the area with the Gargants and then onto the ash wastes just beyond. From here the Nobz threaten to outflank and surround the 6th Guard army.

Finally, the Ork player moves his Bad Moon battlewagons. These move 2 areas to join the Nobz. Although they have a movement value of 3, they have to stop here, because a unit must stop moving when it enters an ash waste area.

It's up to you in what order you make your attacks, but you must finish one attack before you are allowed to move on to the next one. In addition, you are not allowed to attack the same enemy held area more than once per combat phase. If you don't get it the first time you have to wait till your next combat phase!

You are allowed to make combined attacks where two or more of your stacks attack the same enemy stack, just so long as all of the attacking stacks are adjacent to the stack being attacked. The only exception is that Ork stacks belonging to different tribes may not attack together.

Attacks are resolved by using the Combat Results Table printed on the reference sheet. To resolve each attack you must follow this simple 5 step procedure:

1. 'Re attacker adds up his counters' attack value.
2. The defender adds up his counters' defence value.
3. The two are converted to a ratio by dividing the attacker's total by the defender's total, rounding any fractions down. Some examples of how to work out odds ratios are shown in the box to the right on this page. The ratio determines which column is looked up on the Combat Results Table.
4. The attacker rolls a D6 and the score is cross-referenced with the odds ratio to determine the outcome of the battle. Sometimes modifiers are applied to the dice roll (-1 for attacking across a river for example). However, the dice roll can never be modified above 6 or below 1.
5. Look up the result under the Combat Results Table and follow the instructions there. Note: On results that call for 'one counter' to be eliminated, the player who controls the counters is allowed to decide which is removed

WORKING OUT ODDS RATIOS

Working out the odds ratios may seem difficult at first, but you'll very quickly get the hang of it. Here are a few examples to get you started:

Assume the attacker has 12 points and the defender has 4 points. 12 divided by 4 is 3, so the odds ratio is 3 to 1.

If the tables were turned and it was the attacker who had 4 points to the defender's 12, then the odds would be 1 to 3 instead of 3 to 1. If the attacker only had 11 points to the defender's 4, then the ratio would be 2 and a bit to 1, which is rounded down to 2 to 1.

RETREATS

Several results on the Combat Results Table call for one player's counters to retreat. Retreating counters are immediately moved one area by the player that controls them. They may move into any area that they could enter using the normal rules for movement. Counters may not retreat into an area if this would cause over-stacking.

If the counters cannot retreat for any reason, then they are eliminated instead. Note that this means that pieces with a movement value of 0 are destroyed if forced to retreat, as they are not allowed to move.

Sometimes a counter that has already retreated will **find** itself in an area that is attacked later in the same combat phase. If this happens, then any counters that have already retreated are treated as having a defence strength of 0, may not be used to satisfy combat losses, and will be destroyed if forced to retreat a second time.



EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

At the start of an Ork combat phase the situation is as shown on the first diagram. The Ork player has decided to attack the 3rd Guard Army and the 2nd Brigade of Rough Riders with the Goff units shown, led by Ghazghkull himself. He can't use the Bad Moon hordes as well, because counters from different Ork clans are not allowed to combine to make an attack.

The two defending Imperial counters have a combined defence value of $2+4=6$, while the Orks have a combined attack value of $6+5+6+6=29$. 29 divided by 6 equals 4 and a bit to 1, which rounds down to 4-1 on the Combat Results Table. If the Ork player had been able to scrape together just 1 more attack point to bring his total up to 30 points he would have had a combat ratio of 5-

The Ork player rolls the dice and scores a 2. No modifiers apply to the dice roll (the -1 modifier for a river only applies if all the attackers are coming across a river). A roll of 2 at 4-1 odds is an EX or Exchange result, which means that both the attacker and the defender must lose a counter from each stack, and then the defender has to retreat. This is just about the worst result the Orks could have got, so the Ork player decides to use Ghazghkull's special ability to reroll the dice. This time he rolls a magnificent 6 and gets a DE or Defender Eliminated result. This wipes out both the Imperial counters, and the Ork player can now advance into the area with any units that have a movement value of 2 or more. He decides

BUILD PHASES

In a **build phase** you are allowed to add new counters to your army. If you don't have a build phase, it is assumed that your workers are being used to make extra supplies to cover the extra combat phase(s) you will be taking, instead of making tanks and guns to equip new units.

IMPERIAL BUILD PHASES

The Imperial player uses **build** points to buy new counters, or to rebuild counters that have been destroyed. The number of build points is recorded on the **build point track** on the gameboard, and depends on how many hives and factories are still intact. Each hive or factory produces a number of build points equal to its defence value (the second number on the counter). Whenever a hive or factory is reduced to smoking ruins, move the marker on the track down a number of spaces equal to its defence value. When a hive or factory is rebuilt, move the marker back up.



The number of build points it costs to build each counter is shown on the reference sheet. If a counter is not included on the reference sheet, like the Space Marine Chapters, then it cannot be rebuilt. You can choose which counters to build from those lost so far, or from any that were set aside at the start of the game. Although counters of the same type have different combat and movement values, they all cost the same number of points to build. For example, if you built an Imperial Guard counter, you could choose to take the 1st Army (a 4-5-1) or the 20th (a 2-3-1) - I know which one I'd choose! Any build points that you don't use are lost, so you should try to use them all up if possible.

Once you've selected all the counters you want to build, place them on the production track on the game board in the space marked with their name. Next you must move all the counters on the production track one space to the right, towards the 'ready' box. Any counters that are moved into the 'ready' box can be transferred to the game map. Note that you move all of the counters on the track, including those that you have just built; this means that Hive Gangs are placed on the map on the same turn that they are built. New counters must be placed with a hive or factory, subject to the rules for stacking. If you can't fit all of the counters onto the map, then any excess must stay on the production track.

ORK BUILD PHASES

The Ork player may rebuild one counter for each two smoking ruins he controls. A smoking ruin is controlled by the Orks if it is stacked with an Ork counter. For example, if you control five smoking ruins, then you could only rebuild two counters; the fifth smoking ruin is not part of a pair and does not entitle you to another counter.

You may choose which counters to return to play freely from those lost so far, apart from the Warlord Ghazghkull counter, which may not be rebuilt. The counters may be placed on a garrisoned smoking ruin or an Ork supply area, subject to the rules for stacking.

SUPPLY

In order to keep your armies fighting you must supply them with food, ammunition and fuel. After you have completed both of the phases listed on your strategy card, you must make sure that your counters can trace a **supply line** back to one of its own side's supply areas.



Imperial Supply Area



Ork Supply Area

Supply lines are traced along a path of areas from the counters back to the supply area. The path may be of any length but may not enter a) an area occupied by enemy counters, b) a mountain area, or c) a sea area. Supply lines can be traced through ash wastes.

Counters that are out of supply are destroyed, unless they are in a stack that includes a hive or fortification. If a stack does include a hive or fortification, then it is only destroyed on a D6 roll of 1-3. If a stack includes both a hive and a fortification, then roll the dice twice, and the stack is only eliminated if you fail both rolls. Note that you roll for the entire stack, not for each counter in the stack.



EXAMPLE OF SUPPLY LINES

The diagram shows the situation at the **start** of the Imperial player's turn. The two Hive Gang units are out of supply, as they cannot trace a route to a supply area that does not pass through areas occupied by enemy units. Because of this they will be eliminated at the end of the Imperial player's turn unless he can **open** up a supply line to them. Note that the units in Helsreach are in supply, because Helsreach is a supply area itself (it was a "major port and supplies could be brought in by ships and submarines).

BATTLE FOR ARMAGEDDON

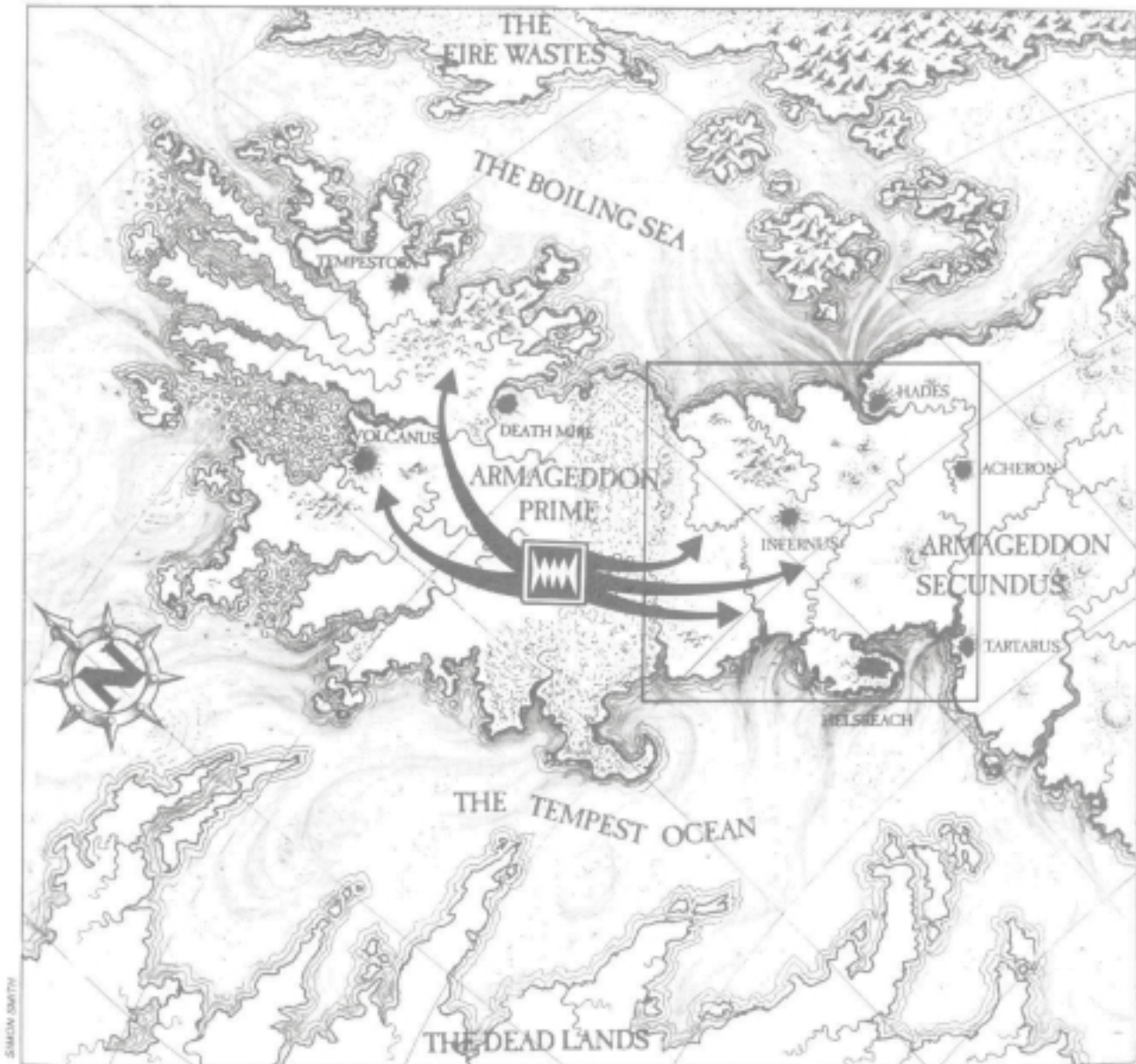
CAMPAIGN HISTORY

On the day of the Feast of the Emperor's Ascension, 40,941, the massive Ork assault on Hiveworld Armageddon began. System ships from space hulk Alveus Alpha Alpha Sextus smashed through the orbital cordon of the planet, annihilating the obsolete orbital monitors completely. A massive space drop swiftly overwhelmed most of the western continent of Armageddon Prime. Lightning assaults by the highly mobile Ork forces encircled hive after hive. Tens of thousands of Ork Boyz blasted through the hives' outer defences and massacred or enslaved the populations within. Soon lines of communication were cut and vital supplies started to run out.

Across the continent the forces of humanity were driven into retreat. Due to criminal negligence on the part of

Overlord Von Strab (cross-reference to Administratum file: Armageddon 40004, Prosecutions for war crimes), the ill-prepared human forces were nearly swept away under the green tide. Divisions of the Planetary Defence Force were sent out piecemeal by Von Strab only to be outflanked and destroyed by the enemy.

Endless columns of Ork war machines, raised plumes of dust hundreds of metres high as they raced across the ashwastes. The voices of a hundred thousand Orks roared their brutal cries of victory. Reports came in from battlefield after battlefield where the blood of brave human warriors stained the multicoloured sands. It became obvious that Von Strab had seriously underestimated the cunning and strategic ability of his foe, Ghazghkull Thraka, Overboss of all the Goffs, Prophet of the Waaa!



Interrogation of Ork prisoners by elements of the Inquisition has enabled us to piece together a picture of this remarkable individual. Ghazghkull started his career as a common Ork trooper on the backwater world of Urk. During the course of a raid a bolter shell pulped a large area of his cranium and he suffered extensive brain damage. An Ork Painboy called Dok Grotznik replaced part of his cerebellum with a bionic device. It may be that this device somehow triggered latent psionic powers or it may be that Ghazghkull simply suffered from delusions, but, for whatever reason, he claimed to be in contact with the Ork's so-called deities, Gork and Mork.

Some dark power certainly favoured him, for his rise to prominence among the Orks of Urk was meteoric. He swiftly fought his way through the ranks till he achieved the position of supreme planetary boss. Orks are simple, brutal creatures, respecting little other than courage and battle prowess. It cannot be doubted that Ghazghkull possessed both these qualities in abundance. In addition he had something that most Orks conspicuously lack: he had vision. He stirred the Orks with impassioned speeches telling them it was their mission to conquer the galaxy, to force all others to bow the knee and pay tribute. He gave them a common purpose and an overwhelming sense of destiny.

All of this might have gone for nought had not two other things occurred near simultaneously. The first was that Urk's sun started to flicker and die. The second was that by some malign chance, or design, a space hulk drifted into the Urk system. Ghazghkull told his followers that the first was a sign from Gork and that the second was a gift from Mork. Those who wanted to follow Thraka on his grand crusade could board the hulk. Those who wished to disobey their gods could remain behind to die. To an Ork they chose to follow Thraka. To an Ork they followed him down to Armageddon, abandoning their hulk to drift out-system. The Orks stranded themselves on Armageddon. They would conquer or die.

If Ghazghkull was remarkable for his battle skills and his single mindedness then his opponent was equally remarkable for being his opposite. Herman Von Strab, youngest son of Luthor Von Strab, was quite simply incompetent. He was typical of a decadent planetary aristocracy who had acquired power by assassination and intrigue and who retained it by fear. Although personally fearless and ruthless to the point of insanity, he had little

HIVE WORLDS

Hive worlds like Armageddon are planets that were settled thousands of years ago, often before the time of the Imperium. Their huge population far outweighs the planet's ability to feed or support it. They are tough places where little value is attached to human life, while air, light and food are often precious and rare commodities. The surface of the planet has been plundered of all resources and has been reduced to little more than an ashblown desert. The massive hives and factory cities that sprawl across the land give the planets their distinctive character and their collective name of hive worlds.



understanding of the magnitude of the threat to his world or how to deal with it. Long before the invasion occurred omens predicting disaster were rife: the Imperial Tarot gave the same consistent message in reading after reading; Navigators on incoming freighters warned of great disturbances in the Warp. The Statue of the Emperor in the great shrine of Helsreach wept bloody tears. Von Strab ignored all warnings.

When the hulk drifted in system he refused to dispatch any ships to investigate. He said that no mere piece of cosmic flotsam could threaten his ancestral world. He complied with the standard instructions of the Codex Ministorum and notified the Administratum of the sighting but that was all. His investigative procedures were extra-ordinarily lax. Only after the first Ork ships had landed was a distress call to the Imperium sent out, and that was only because one of Von Strab's subordinates, Commissar Yarrick, had the presence of mind to dispatch it. Even then Von Strab refused to take the threat seriously and had Yarrick banished to the southern continent of Armageddon Secundus. He would not trouble the Imperium with any requests for aid; he would triumph over the Orks himself.

Despite having such a terrible commander the forces of humanity fought bravely. They rallied to protect their home hives and dug in to fight a brutal last-ditch defence against the Ork invaders. Shattered armies fled across the wastes to reform and regroup round the core hives. Columns of refugees tens of kilometres long sought succour in the last bastions of humanity on Armageddon Prime. In the South Commissar Yarrick organised shuttle



runs to supply the embattled North. Courageous pilots ran the Ork orbital blockade, skipping out of the atmosphere and back in again before the Orks could intercept them. This was an extremely risky technique and many shuttle captains perished with their crews, the half-melted remains of their ships plunging from the sky.

Even with these supply runs it looked as though the North would fall. Von Strab hastily commandeered a ship and relocated his headquarters to Tartarus Hive in the South. Kurtiz Mannheim, Princeps Prime of the Iron Skull Titan Legion temporarily stationed on Armageddon, warned that soon the storm would blow south. He urged Von Strab to prepare for an invasion. Three of the great Ork tribes were unaccounted for in the North. The overlord ignored him; they were being held in reserve, he said. They could never cross the impenetrable jungle separating Prime and Secundus. Now he would assemble a mighty counterattack and liberate the North.

Two days after Von Strab made his proclamation the Orks invaded Armageddon Secundus; the true battle for Armageddon had begun. It started in the Season of Shadows, when the volcanic mountains of Armageddon erupt, sending great clouds of smoke and dust swirling across the turbulent blood-coloured skies.

Massive armoured columns smashed through the thinly held Imperial border positions. War buggies raced across the blazing sands towards the human lines. A howling mass of green-faced devils overran the hard-pressed human defenders. By the flickering light of the Palidus Mountains, as Mount Eschatus itself erupted and lava bubbled and hissed down its slopes, man and Ork fought and died. Bolters thundered relentlessly. Gargants lumbered forward, dwarfing fleeing human warriors, myriad turrets spitting death. The Orks punched holes through the human lines and drove south. Two tribes swept east of the Palidian range heading towards Hades hive. The remaining Ork tribe struck out west towards Port Helsreach.

Despite the protests of Princeps Mannheim, Von Strab ordered his most powerful mobile forces to stem the tide. Mannheim argued it was better to wait and fight a holding action until reinforcements from the Imperium arrived. Von Strab screamed that he needed no help. Under oath to

THE EMPEROR

The Imperium of Man stretches across the galaxy from rim to rim, encompassing over a million worlds and untold billions of people. It is the largest empire that has ever existed in the history of humanity. The Imperium is ruled as it has been for the last 10,000 years by the Divine Champion of Man and Protector of the Human Race, the Emperor of Mankind. The Emperor is a godlike being with psionic powers that are incomprehensible to ordinary humans. Without the Emperor the Imperium would collapse and human unity would be destroyed, leaving the remaining pockets of civilisation isolated and vulnerable to the alien creatures that seek to destroy or enslave the human race.

obey his overlord Mannheim could say no more. He put on his best dress uniform, thanked his staff for their loyalty, said goodbye to his wife and children and then climbed into his Titan, Steel Hammer.

Following Von Strab's orders he led his legion against the strongest concentration of Ork forces while the first tank division attempted to ambush another Ork force. Greatly outnumbered, the Legion was cut down. Steel Hammer managed to destroy three Ork Gargants before it was blown to pieces. Mannheim refused to evacuate; instead preferring to take his crippled Titan right into the heart of the Ork formation as its reactor melted down. His crew chose to remain with him. Mannheim was posthumously awarded the Emperor's Star.

Overwhelmed by sheer force of numbers and superior Ork firepower, the Imperial forces were broken. The shattered remnants of human divisions fell back to establish a defensive line along the boiling river Stygies in the West and by the rust-red banks of Diabolus in the East. Beaten men limped across the wasteland, readying themselves to sell their lives dearly in defence of their homeworld. Filled with triumph the Orks advanced to meet them.

As the Season of Storms broke, blowing the clouds from the sky the Orks' drive south continued. They punched through the pitiful improvised defences the human survivors had built along the riverbanks and swept round the Palidus Mountains to Infernus hive. Demoralised by continuous news of defeat, with no faith in the promises of the planetary overlord and dismayed by the sheer size of the mechanised Ork hordes, the Governor of Infernus surrendered without a fight. Bike-mounted Ork outriders harried the hundred kilometre long refugee columns that fled the city, herding them back to Infernus and slave labour in the factories.

Given the fact that the Orks measured senior citizens, women and children against their own inhuman standards of toughness, hundreds of thousands were to die in captivity.

Soon Hades hive cluster was besieged and the site of the heaviest fighting yet seen during the campaign. Commissar Yarrick supervised the defences. In those dark days he seemed to be everywhere, supervising the welding shut of the great blast portals, personally negotiating treaties of allegiance with the hive gangs and inducting them into the army, raising the spirits of a people demoralised by starvation and defeat with his own unquenchable belief in ultimate victory. Amazingly he welded together a ragtag army capable of standing off the Orks. At Hades they halted.

One can only imagine what it must have been like. The hundreds of kilometres of earthworks hastily thrown up by the Ork siege engineers, the giant Gargants blasting away at the distant hive spires, guns thundering like the laughter of mad gods. Hundreds of thousands of red hate-filled eyes glaring at the prize, so near and yet so unreachable. The human population scuttling through the shadows of the hive, endless kilometres of corridor darkened from the need to save power. Thousands starving or eating rats and roaches. Who knows what feats of heroism and horror took place in that place, at that time? Those who survived do not talk much about it, save to praise the bravery of Yarrick.



HIVE GANGS

There are many different types of armed band on Armageddon, including clan warriors, bands of ash nomads, mutant bands from the undercities of the hives, outcast groups of fugitive psykers, unruly brat gangs from the upper hive layers, as well as professional bounty-hunters, guards and retainers, and many, many others. In times of great peril these unruly warriors are banded together to fight alongside the more organised and disciplined Imperial forces. Although looked down on by the regular Imperial troops, hive gang armies often spelt the difference between victory and defeat in the Armageddon campaign.

Overlord Von Strab announced that he possessed a secret weapon that would win the war for the humans. To the horror of his generals he revealed that one old legend was true. His family did indeed possess a stock of ancient virus bombs from the time when Armageddon was first colonised. These millennia-old devices, mounted on antique missiles, were hastily pressed into service. Unfortunately they were so old that many malfunctioned, rockets refused to fire, detonators refused to arm and the virus itself had lost potency over time. The missiles wreaked terrible havoc among the Orks but not on the scale hoped for. The Ork advance was not stopped. Von Strab retired to his fortified bunker to sulk.

In the West the defenders of the port of Helsreach, heartened by the resistance in Hades, put up a brave fight. They defended the dockyards and refineries bravely. Street gangs using improvised weapons ambushed the Orks at every turn. Hastily converted armoured supertankers were pressed into service to evacuate non-combatants. There was not enough room to take everyone so lots were drawn for berths on the ship. Weeping families parted knowing that they probably would never see each other again.

Once the last ship had sailed the defenders knew there was no refuge for them; each member of the assembled Hive Defence Units swore a mighty oath to sell his life as dearly as possible. Driven by hate and rage they fought the Orks with the fury of a berserk rhynodon. Suicide bombers leapt amid Ork patrols and detonated their chest bombs. The corridors of Helsreach ran with blood. The drivers of the great loading cranes in the harbour welded themselves into their vehicles and attacked Gargants. Wave after wave of Ork attacks were repulsed until even the Ork generals began to doubt the wisdom of their attack. Messages of hope from Helsreach were broadcast over the com-net in Hades hive.

It was the people of Helsreach's darkest hour when the port finally fell. Defeat, when it came, arrived from a most unexpected quarter. Ork Weirdboyz summoned a psychic storm. Waves of pain burst into the minds of the hive's defenders. Some went mad, some died of shock, the heads of some exploded. Under cover of this storm the Orks entered Helsreach and wiped out the defenders to the last man. When word of the fall of Helsreach reached Hades Commissar Yarrick ordered an hour of silence and then locked himself in the Emperor's Chapel to pray. Some say that the old man communed with the deity and found fresh inspiration. Those who knew him well say he wept.

Ghazghkull himself arrived to supervise the siege of Hades. He had heard tales of bitter human resistance and thought he'd better oversee the defeat of Yarrick personally. For weeks a long duel was fought out under the dreadful yellow sky. Ghazghkull tried every stratagem that Gork and Mork told him. He feigned assaults on one part of the hive while the main strength of his troops attacked elsewhere. He airdropped elite kommando units onto the peak-- of the hive spires and ordered them to seek entrance through the ventilation system. He ordered his Mekboyz to build him mighty siege engines, enormous towers with huge jackhammers, modified Gargants with earthmoving blades and great scoops, giant earthboring drills that sought to eat through the surface of the hive.

For every strategy implemented by the Orks Yarrick found an answer. Mobile reserves used the hive's transport infrastructure to respond to the feints. The kommandos were met by volunteer cadres of tunnel fighters, drug-crazed madmen chosen from the depleted ranks of the cities' maintenance engineers, many of whom had lost all their loved ones during the siege. These men slipped into the maintenance shafts stripped naked, armed only with bolt pistol and knife and an extensive knowledge of the system that enabled them to lay traps and ambushes. These men fought a lonely and unsung war in the terrible darkness but they did their job. Not a single Ork kommando was ever found. Suicide squads from the Hive Defence Force snuck out at night and sabotaged the siege machines.



THE FIGHTING FORCES OF THE IMPERIUM

SPACE MARINES

The Space Marines are the finest warriors in the entire Imperium. They are divided into about a thousand different Chapters, each a small independent army with its own spacefleet and everything it needs to function. The Chapters are scattered throughout the Imperium so that wherever danger threatens their will always be Space Marines nearby. As the highly mobile elite of the Imperium the Space Marines are often used as a primary strike force, holding the situation while the larger and less mobile formations of the Imperial Guard are being transported to the warzone. On other occasions the Space Marines fight alongside troops from the Imperial Guard or Titan Legions, adding their considerable might to the combined forces of the Imperium.



IMPERIAL GUARD

The Imperial Guard is the most important and by far the largest fighting force in the Imperium. War is a fact of life in a hostile universe, so the Imperial Guard is constantly active throughout the galaxy defending human worlds, attacking hostile aliens, and battling for possession of newly discovered planets. The effectiveness of the different Imperial Guard armies varies depending on the quality of their officers, their training, and their traditions and history. The 1st Armageddon, for example, has a proud history stretching back to the colonisation of the planet, and therefore has the pick of any new recruits, while the 19th Army was raised from criminals under death sentence, and has a very poor reputation indeed.

TITAN LEGIONS

Titans are the largest and most powerful of all the gigantic war machines in the Imperial forces. Titans are usually human shaped with two legs and arms, an armoured torso, and a head where the command bridge is located. Each vast war machine requires a substantial crew to control its movement and the firing of its mighty weapons. A Titan Legion has hundreds of these huge machines, and is an army in its own right, with its own types of support infantry and tanks. Although it is not as fast and mobile as a Space Marine Chapter, the sheer firepower of a Titan Legion makes it one of the most awesome weapons in the Imperial arsenal.



While the siege of Hades continued Ork columns rolled south from Helsreach and Infernus. They were heading for Acheron and what appeared to be the last bastion of human resistance. It was the beginning of the Season of Fire and temperatures outside the hive cities had started to soar. The hardy Orks and the specially equipped human military didn't have to worry but the refugees who had escaped the Orkish net began to die in droves.

The Acheronians steeled themselves for battle. They knew their time had come. Looking out through their hive's ocular monitors they could see the endless ranks of Orks approaching. Horn-helmed bikers, kustomised war buggies and great siege engines stretched out to the horizon. The only promise of support they had was from Overlord Von Strab. It consisted of his personal good-wishes and twenty of his elite personal bodyguard who had displeased him.

With an earthshaking roar the Orks advanced, the air itself vibrating with the thrum of thousands of powerful engines. They swept through the outer hives of the cluster and laid siege to the core hive itself. Poorly provisioned and inadequately armed as his forces were, the Hive Governor refused to surrender. "We will fight to the last man," he announced. "And then our ghosts will come back to haunt the Orkish scum."

The Orks charged, confident of victory. Suddenly great holes were torn in their ranks. Mighty explosions tossed their vehicles into the air like chaff. The inhabitants of Acheron looked on in amazement as the orbital bombardment continued. Great ships filled the sky and Imperial Thunderhawks dropped earthward, delivering advance squads of Space Marines. Taken by surprise the Orks reeled back. The Space Marines continued to pour forth from their landing craft, bolters spitting death. The hive defenders rallied and emerged to aid their saviours. For the first time since the campaign started the Orks tasted defeat.

The Space Marines swiftly established a beach head. Despite a strongly worded protest from Von Strab the expeditionary force leader, Commander Dante of the Blood Angels Chapter announced that he was taking over as Supreme Commander of all Imperial Forces on the planet. Acheron was to be his temporary field headquarters. He issued orders for Von Strab to be placed under house arrest pending trial for assassination, murder and gross negligence of duty in the face of the enemy. Vowing he would never submit to the judgement of his inferiors Von Strab managed to shoot his way to freedom and escaped into the desert. His wrecked landspeeder was later found but his body was never recovered.

Perhaps if more Ork forces had been thrown south the Space Marines might have been stopped before they could mount a counter thrust but Ghazghkull had made one of his rare mistakes. In the area surrounding Hades cluster more and more Ork units assembled in preparation for the final assault. Ghazghkull was taking no chances. He was gathering sufficient troops to annihilate the humans at a stroke. Within the hive, in spite of Yarrick's careful husbanding of its meagre resources, food finally ran out. Now shuttles carried food from North to South, in a reversal of the war's former pattern. A mood of fatalism and despair hung over the entire population and not even Yarrick's example could lift their spirits. It was as if the whole population had a premonition of doom.

THE ORKS

Orks are a tough, brutal and remarkably successful race. They rank amongst the most powerful warriors in the whole galaxy and they control a significant part of known space. However, this sprawling territory is divided among thousands of individual Warlords who are fiercely competitive and spend much of their time fighting each other. Were Orkdom ever to unit against the Imperium it is unlikely that humanity would survive very long.



ORK TRIBES & CLANS

All Orks belong to a clan. There are six main Ork clans, each of which is noted for its particular way of life and fighting. An Ork Warlord will command Orks from many clans using the best of each to form a powerful army called a tribe. However, the Warlord's clan will usually make up at least half of the tribe's strength. A tribe may be settled or nomadic, it may have an empire of its own or be just a migrating horde of pirates and raiders. In any case, the tribe adopts a special name for itself, often incorporating the name of their leader, such as Waa-Chargerz-Ugulhard, or "We are Ugulhard's Chargers".

WAA-ORK

The Waa-Ork is a sort of crusade when the Orks stop fighting each other and decide to stomp somebody else instead. When a Warlord gets really powerful other Orks sense it and flock to join him, increasing his power and encouraging more and more Boyz to join the growing Waa-Ork. Within a Waa-Ork there may be many tribes, all united under the command of one charismatic leader. The Waa-Ork is a time when tribes come together, a time of great works, migrations, wars and conquest.



EVIL SUNZ CLAN

The Evil Sunz are strangely and uncontrollably attracted to fast vehicles and loud noises. Actually this is true of all Orks, but in the case of the Evil Sunz the attraction is especially strong. Because of this the Evil Sunz clan has more vehicles than any of the other clans. It is especially famous for its Bikeboyz, who are always at the forefront of any Ork advance, and often go on raids deep behind the enemy's front line. Evil Sunz like to wear red, a colour which the Orks associate with speed.

GOFFCLAN

Goffs are the most aggressive of all the Orks - which is saying something! They pride themselves on being the most Orky of all clans - carrying the most destructive weapons and fighting harder than the rest. Goffs like to get where the fighting is as quickly as they can and attack their enemies at close quarters. They prefer to wear black, which is the only proper Orky colour as far as they are concerned, sometimes with a red trim or with black and white checks.

BAD MOONS CLAN

Orks quite sensibly use their teeth as currency, and as the Bad Moons' teeth grow faster than anyone else's they are the richest of all the clans. The other Orks don't think that this is an unfair advantage, after all if you're hard enough you can always bash a Bad Moon over the head and steal his teeth. Bad Moonz have a wide variety of the best and most elaborate weapons and vehicles. They flaunt gaudy and colourful clothes in vivid yellow and black patterns.

Even as the final assault began a relief force headed by the Salamanders, the Ultramarines and the Blood Angels raced north in an effort to relieve Hades hive. Just as the Space Marines broke through the Ork front lines, Hades fell. Stor.mboyz scoured the corridors, the last blast doors were cracked and fighting raged through the former homes and work places of the people. In the last few hours the fighting was deadly and virtually hand to hand as battle raged through the last secure areas of the Hive. Commissar Yarrick was one of the few survivors. His terribly wounded body was found in the ruins, dozens of Ork bodies heaped at his feet. Fortunately for the Imperium this exceptionally brave warrior lived to fight another day.

In the West a new wave of Ork reinforcements had arrived and a massive push against Tartarus hive began. The Imperial lines had been stripped bare in order to mount the ill-fated relief operation on Hades hive and the Orks easily broke through and pushed on south to besiege Tartarus hive. Ghazghkull himself took personal command of the assault and launched his last desperate attempt to win the war. For days everything hung in the balance. If the Orks could take Tartarus they could break the back of Imperial resistance, devastating the South's industrial base to the point where the war would become unwinnable. It looked for a while as if he might succeed as headlong assaults swept over the city.

In a desperate gamble Dante's men returned to their ships. The Space Marines descended by drop-pod behind the main body of the Ork spearhead, cutting off an entire Ork tribe. Dante himself led an assault on Ghazghkull's headquarters but the lightning raid failed to capture the Ork Chieftain who was touring the front lines at the time.

Now the final and most bitter battle of the war began. The Orks had nothing to lose; it was fight or die. The Imperial forces knew that the fate of the world lay in their hands. No quarter was asked, no quarter was given. The second battle of Tartarus was a bloodbath from start to finish. Savage hand to hand fighting raged through the thoroughfares of the hive. Giant set piece battles were fought over its surface. Space Marine strike forces sowed terror and confusion behind Ork lines. Time after time the embattled Orks attempted a breakout. Time after time the Imperial forces beat them back by the slimmest of margins. In the end, the Orks simply ran out of food and ammunition and still they refused to surrender. They fought on with knives and thrown rocks till they were eradicated almost to the last Ork.

It is said that Ghazghkull himself fell, a bolter shell piercing his mechanical brain as he tried to rally his fleeing ladz for a desperate last stand. No-one knows for certain. His body was never found.

With the Ork leader dead and half their army wiped out at a stroke, the war was now to all intents and purposes over. It raged on for another six months with invaders slowly being pushed back into the northern jungles but from the moment Tartarus was relieved Imperial victory seemed assured. And so it turned out to be.

GARGANT BIG MOBS

At the very core of Waa-Ork lies the construction of gigantic machines known as Gargants. Each Gargant is a titanic, mechanical, fighting, fire-belching idol built in the image of the Ork gods of war. At the start of the Waa-Ork the tribe's Mekboyz, the mechanics and engineers of the Ork race begin to start building these huge fighting machines. Each Mekaniak tries to outdo his rivals by building the largest, shootiest Gargant, so that soon each tribe has dozens of these monstrous machines to group together to form a Gargant big mob.



BATTLE FOR ARMAGEDDON

CHRONOLOGY

Date	Events	Date	Events
-8 years	Ghazghkull Thraka suffers a serious head wound. He wakes up with a stainless steel skull, psychic powers, and the knowledge that he is on a mission from the gods (Gork and Mork).	Turn 2	The Orks crash through the new Imperial line. Sweeping round the Palidus mountains, Ork forces surround Infernus hive, which surrenders without a fight. Ork columns reach the outskirts of both Hades and Helsreach hive clusters. Hive gangs are conscripted and formed into polyglot armies that are hurled into the front line. Overlord Strab unleashes his <small>SECRET</small> supply of virus bombs, but they are largely ineffective against the hardy Ork hordes. An Ork assault on Helsreach, aided by a psychic storm created by Ork Weirdboyz, smashes its defences and the hive falls. However, an assault on Hades commanded by Ghazghkull is turned back, largely thanks to the efforts of Commissar Yarrick. The warp storms end and communication with the Imperium is re-established.
-2 years	Ghazghkull has fought his way up to being the leader of his whole tribe. He is doing his best to start a Waa-Ork, but is finding it difficult to convince the leaders of the other four tribes on the planet that they should do what he says.		
-1 year	The sun around which the Orks' planet orbits starts to die, and an absolutely huge space hulk appears in system. Ghazghkull convinces the other Orks that this is a sign from the gods, and that they should unite under his leadership - the Waa-Ork is now on!		
-9 months	The five Ork tribes and all the Wildboyz on the planet board the space hulk and set off into the warp. During the journey the space hulk's power fields fail and it is attacked by all kinds of horrible warp creatures, but Ghazghkull and the Ork Weirdboyz beat them off.	Turn 3	Ork forces consolidate their positions round Infernus and Helsreach, and start moving south. An offensive is launched towards Acheron hive, but is turned back by the timely arrival of the Space Marines. Hades is surrounded, but continues to hold out, supplied by specially adapted shuttles. This resistance proves to be vital, as more and more Orks are drawn into the siege, allowing Imperial forces elsewhere a vital breathing space.
-7 months	The space hulk arrives in the Armageddon system, and starts to drift towards the planet. Armageddon's system defence craft attack the space hulk in a futile effort to destroy it, but they fail and are wiped out. Distress messages are sent calling out for help. The only readily available force, three Space Marine Chapters, prepares to move out.	Turn 4	An Imperial offensive, spear-headed by the Space Marines, is launched to relieve Hades hive, but it falls to a huge Ork assault just three days before Imperial relief columns break through the Ork lines. Commissar Yarrick survives the fighting. In the west, large numbers of Ork reinforcements reach the front lines, and the Orks launch a new offensive towards Tartarus hive. The Imperial lines, stripped of units to aid fighting in the east, can't hold the Orks who break through and plunge deep into Imperial territory.
-6 months	The space hulk reaches the planet and the Orks invade. The initial invasion blows the Imperial forces out of the way and Armageddon Prime is quickly overrun. A serious warp storm erupts, cutting off the planet from Imperial assistance.		
-3 months	Two Ork tribes strike north, away from Armageddon Secundus. Imperial forces manage to hold this attack. Herman Von Strab, Imperial Overlord of Armageddon, is convinced that the other three tribes are being held in reserve to reinforce this attack, and says it is impossible for the Orks to move through the thick jungle that separates Armageddon Prime and Armageddon Secundus. Commissar Yarrick is banished to Hades hive for daring to oppose this view. Armageddon is still cut off by warp storms.	Turn 5	In the east Imperial forces start to push the Orks back past the Diablo Mountains. Ork units form a new line on the Diabolus River. In the west, the boot is on the other foot, as the Ork forces reach the river Skeletus and launch headlong assaults on Tartarus hive. Tartarus holds out - just - and the Imperial forces launch a devastating counterattack. The Space Marines use their drop pods to land behind the Ork spear-heads and succeed in cutting off an entire Ork tribe. Desperate attempts by the Orks to break out are to no avail. Lacking food and ammunition, the tribe is virtually destroyed. In one fell stroke almost half the Ork army is destroyed.
Turn 1	Three Ork tribes smash into Armageddon Secundus' border defences, catching the unprepared defenders completely by surprise. Ork armoured formations penetrate deep into Imperial territory. Two tribes go east of the Diablo mountains, while the third goes west. 111 conceived and poorly co-ordinated counterattacks, ordered by Overlord Strab, are crushed. Shattered Imperial forces fall back to the Diabolus and Stygies rivers, and attempt to form a new defensive line, but are stretched very thin indeed. The warp storms continue.	Turns 6-8	The defeat at Tartarus hive spells the end of any hopes of an Ork victory. They are pushed back all along the line. Helsreach and Infernus are recaptured by the end of turn 8, and the battered Ork survivors retreat into the jungles to the north. The Armageddon campaign is over.

BATTLE FOR ARMAGEDDON BIOGRAPHIES

HERMAN VON STRAB

Herman Von Strab, fourth son of the Overlord of Armageddon Luthor Von Strab, climbed to power in the customary way by assassinating his brothers, the other claimants to the throne. A brutal man possessed of low cunning and considerable charisma, most of his brothers considered him too stupid, too violent or simply too unsophisticated to take seriously as a rival. They underestimated him to their cost. His methods may have lacked the polish so admired by the sophisticates of the hive cities but they were effective. A bomb at a banquet eliminated his eldest brother Anton and three hundred and twenty two guests, including the Imperial Representative. Otto was killed by a hit and run driver. Vilhelm was found in his room, his body riddled with bolter shells. Herman was found standing over his brother's corpse with a smoking weapon in his hand. He pronounced it the worst case of suicide he had ever seen. The investigating officers were too scared to contradict him. Herman's father, already ill, died of a combination of grief and spidervenom poisoning. Shortly thereafter Herman became Overlord of an entire world.



WARLORD GHAZGHKULL THRACA

Ghazghkull Thraka had half his head blown off by an enemy bolter shell, and was lucky enough to have his brain rebuilt by a talented Painboy called Dok Grotznik. The bionic device activated Ghazghkull's latent psychic powers, and he became an Ork with a Mission, convinced that he was in communication with the Ork deities, Gork and Mork. Ghazghkull saw himself as the leader of a great crusade for Orkishness across the universe. He was a masterly opportunist and a great tactician, ever ready to exploit any weakness an opponent might present. His only real flaw as a commander was his respect for particularly courageous or cunning opponents. He was often known to spare their lives and offer them positions on his staff.



SPACE MARINE COMMANDER DANTE

Blood Angel Commander Dante had a reputation for being stubborn and the strictest of disciplinarians. He prayed to the Emperor every dawn, he was never heard to raise his voice or shout. He always spoke the truth whether it was diplomatic or not. His men respected him rather than loved him. As a supreme commander he undoubtedly had his flaws, but as a wartime general only one thing needs to be said: he was never beaten. Utterly fearless, full of drive and initiative, he was always up in front where the battle was fiercest. If his opponent made a mistake, Dante was on to it like a flash. When it came to choosing a leader for the Armageddon intervention, the commanders of the other two orders unanimously asked for him to be placed in command.



COMMISSAR YARRICK

Commissar Yarrick was an old man when the siege of Hades hive began. He had a long career of distinguished service in the Planetary Defence Force behind him and was scheduled for retirement on the Feast of the Ascension. Yarrick had a reputation for being utterly loyal to the Imperium and an inspiring leader of men. In his youth he had learned the language of the Orks from a captured Ork raider and he was an expert on the way the Ork mind worked. A better leader than Von Strab would have paid more attention to what he said, but instead Von Strab grew angry with the old man for daring to contradict his views of what the Orks planned to do. Herman could not have Yarrick killed, as he knew an investigation would reveal his crime once the Emperor's representatives arrived. Instead he dispatched the old man to Hades hive to keep him out of the way. As it turned out, this was one of the few wise decisions that Von Strab made during the campaign...



DESIGNER'S NOTES

I can still remember the first board wargame I ever bought. I was fourteen years old, and I'd found a stack of simply produced boxes of board wargames tucked away in a corner of a military bookshop. I was already a keen tabletop gamer, and my attention was immediately caught by these board wargames. Everything you needed to play was included, and there was such a large choice! I walked out of the shop the proud owner of a huge and sweeping wargame based on the battle for Kursk, a campaign from WWII that featured the largest tank battles the world has ever seen - and that includes Desert Storm!

Over the next few weeks I played the game again and again, either with my friends, or 'solo' taking command of both sides. Numerous strategies were tried, only to be countered by cunning new plans from the opposing side. Entire tank divisions were hurled into battle, only to be turned back by mammoth airstrikes and massed anti-tank guns. I was hooked!

Over the years my collection of board wargames grew and grew. Although they were not the only types of game I played - I was still primarily a tabletop gamer - they provided me with hours of enjoyment. At this time there were many enthusiastic board wargamers and countless different games were available. Some were produced in cheap, unglamorous packaging by fellow hobbyists, while others were professionally produced and colourful. New games were coming out all the time, and my friends and I used to go down to our local games store and study the new releases, trying to decide which would be the most fun to play.

So what exactly was it that appealed to me about these games? First of all, as I mentioned above, a board wargame was complete, with everything you needed to play included in the box. What's more, you could have it set up and be playing a game within a couple of hours of tearing off the shrink-wrap. With a bit of thought it was possible to come up with cleverly conceived plans that would help win you the game a bit like chess openings or gambits. However, the plans would usually only win you the game *once*, because by the next time you played your opponent would have come up with a counter-strategy! I spent many happy hours playing my board games 'solo', trying out new strategies for one side, and then trying to counter it from the other half of the board. Only when my plans had been fully tested in solo play were they put to test in the white heat of face to face contest!

What particularly appealed to me was the sheer size of the battles offered by a board wargame. Most of them dealt with conflicts that were simply too large to be played out as a tabletop game: battles that featured not hundreds or thousands of men, but tens of thousands or even millions. And the games weren't just about land battles. You could get games about the huge naval battles in the Pacific that involved dozens of battleships and destroyers, or the aerial battles that took place between hundreds of planes during the Battle of Britain. There were games that allowed you to re-fight the whole of the Napoleonic Wars, or try to better Hannibal by actually conquering Rome. And there were even science fiction games where you led huge space armies in an attempt to conquer the galaxy. Only with a board wargame did you get such variety, or the opportunity to command a really huge army and fight campaigns in which the fate of entire planets would hang in the balance!

Board wargaming reached a peak of popularity in the late

longer available. However, I've still got a soft spot for those old wargames, and I've been a bit sad to see their steady decline. This was why I was so pleased to be asked to design a game in the style of the board wargames. Here was my chance to combine my love of big wargames with the rich Warhammer 40,000 background. What was more, it would give us a chance to show how really large scale campaigns **are** fought in the Warhammer 40,000 universe.

The first step in the designing **Battle For Armageddon** was to decide on the background for the campaign. One side obviously had to be the Imperium, as it would be unthinkable that the game should not include those champions of humanity, the Space Marines. Their opponents were more of a problem, but in the end we plumped for the Orks, as they could be guaranteed to give the Imperium a good straightforward fight. On the basis that history repeats itself, our campaign started out as an amalgam of three historical campaigns (see if you can guess which!). However, it quickly developed a life of its own as the huge amount of background work we've done on the Warhammer 40,000 universe started to suggest things that should be added to the game.

The next step was devising the basic game rules. We wanted to create an enjoyable game that still included all of the most important elements that make board wargaming so much fun. We quickly decided to use areas on the map rather than lots of ugly hexes. As you can see, Mark Gibbons has created one of the most attractive maps we've ever produced! Most of the games mechanics, such as the combat results table and attack/defence/move values for the counters, were included in the game right from the start, and have undergone remarkably little change.

The strategy cards, on the other hand, were not added till fairly late in the design. Before then the game had a more rigid sequence of play, but we found this led to very predictable games. The inclusion of the strategy cards solved this problem while also adding an important element of planning to the game, and allowing the possibility of major breakthroughs taking place if you managed to out think your opponent.

The final step in the design process was to play the game again and again to make sure that both sides had an equal chance of winning. After many a hard fought game, I feel we've got play balance about right now. Although some players felt that one side or the other would always win, there was just about a 50/50 split on which side this was, which must mean that the game is fairly even!

Originally I was going to finish these notes off by giving a few hints and tips about how to play the game, but on consideration I've decided not to do this as working out strategies and tactics for yourself is very much part of the **fun** of playing a game like Battle For Armageddon. Instead I'll simply say that you should study Bill King's background story very carefully, and then try to avoid the mistakes that were made in the historical campaign by the side you are playing. And if your first plan turns out to be comparable to Von Strab at his best, don't worry - you can always go back to the drawing board and start again. Good Luck!

Jervis Johnson

