

News From Bree

Middle Earth PBCD Newsletter - Issue 13, March '02

"Strange as News
from Bree..."

The Lord of the Rings, chapter 9

Automagic!

The Future of MEPBM

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We are delighted to announce the release of Automagic, arguably the most important new development in Middle Earth since its conception, or indeed since sliced bread.

It is an Excel-based program which allows you to write your orders, helps to validate them and check for mistakes, then sends them back by email to MEPBM Games. You can also print or save your orders to email to team mates. In addition, the program contains several information sheets and calculators, which we intend to add to over time with features such as databases to allow you to collate information, etc. However, if you do not have, or do not wish to use, Excel, fear not, for, not wishing to let the cat out of the bag too soon, MEOW is coming – read on for details.

Mike Mulka created the basic help sheets and files last year, and some of you may have used them, but in the last months, with assistance from MEPBM Games and several enthusiastic play-testers, these sheets have had a huge overhaul, so becoming Automagic.

Automagic prevents you from doing two skill orders with a single character, warns you if you are doing a capital order and not in your capital, reminds you about the which extra additional are required for each order, and also checks to see if your character has the correct skills to perform an order. It wakes you up in the morning with a cup of tea, it reminds you when it's your wedding anniversary, and it will shortly achieve artificial intelligence and end world hunger.

Once you have completed your turn, you can press the send turn button which will automatically create an email in your default mailer (Outlook, Eudora, etc.). This mail will contain all the data that MEPBM Games require, in the perfect format for us!

Please visit the Automagic page on our website to download the program, view the FAQs, and gain access to other resources.

MAIN - the Middle-earth Auto Input

Once we have received your email, we will be able to use our new MAIN software to automatically input your orders into the computers. There will no longer be any possibility of our GMs making a mistake when they input your orders!

MAIN was written by Colin Payne, whose impeccable credentials include writing the Rune Power Lister player aid for Legends, so need we say more? To ensure the smoothest transition from the current system to MAIN, we will not be using it for all games immediately, but we expect to be using it for the majority by May 1st 2002.

MEOW – Middle Earth Order Writer

We are also working on another program which we call the Middle Earth Order Writer. This is being coded by Graham McPhee of GSFGames, who previously coded Battle of the Planets, and worked on Middle-earth under Allsorts. MEOW will allow you to

write your turn using a series of mistake-proof menus. It will be a stand alone product, not requiring Excel, and we hope to release it in the Summer.

What will all this cost me?

Nothing! Nada! Zip! Not a penny! We're not asking for five pounds, we're not asking for four pounds, we're not asking for three or two pounds, no, not even one pound, Euro, or dollar!

In fact, at our annual price review in April turn costs will probably rise. However, players using Automagic or MEOW to send in turns who also receive results by email will be able to continue playing at the current costs. We expect that the turn fees will rise to £4.50 or \$6.70. This means that using Automagic or MEOW will actually save you around 15% on your turn fees!

Hmm, I'm still not sure...

So it is free, will improve the accuracy of your turn writing, will save you time, and has more features than you can shake Gandalf's stick at. Still not sold? Well, if you have any queries or doubts, please get in touch and we will happily answer any questions you may have.



new games

Waiting List: When I get all 25 (or 24 for Gunboat) nations into the game I will allocate you your choice of nation from the list of nations that you have sent me - please send multiple nation choices. Upto 2 nation game: You can play one or two Aligned nations, or one Neutral nation.

Gunboat

[Game 18] 1650
2week turnaround
Waiting List game - NO diplomacy - 2 nations per player. See page 7 for a fuller description. 14 nations taken.

Battle of the Five Armies (Bofa)

[Game 3]
2week turnaround
Veteran or Beginners game - (Vet: ALL 1650 orders available): 2 nations taken.

1650

[Game 133]
1week turnaround
Waiting List, Upto 2 nation game. 24 nations filled so far. Need one FP [Game 19]
2 week turnaround
1-6, 8, 10-25 available (2 other nations taken)

Last Alliance

[Game 145]
Send a list of 5 nations. Upto 2 nation game. Ask for details. 18 nations so far. Waiting List.

2950

[Game 234]
2 week turnaround
Postal & Email game. Waiting List. 4 Nations taken. Prisoners allowed to play (not necessarily playing)..

1000

[Game 146]
2 week turnaround
We have 1 SK, 1NK, 1 DS, 2 FP nations in. 21 nations available. I might make this a 2 nation game (FA games take 6-10x as long as normal games of 1650 to fill - around 3-4 months).

Note please ask for variant games we can try to get you opposition for them if you are interested - mostly Grudge teams though - if I get 10 players for any single type of game then I will put it up for general availability below and push it.

Grudge Games we need opposition for:

1650: 1 World Championship team, Tommy (1wk), Mike B (1wk), Mike W (2wk), Guy R (1wk), Steve J 12 play (Any side)
2950: Steve J 12 play (Any side)
1000: Mark Seward
WoTR: None
Last Alliance: None

Richard Devereux writes on behalf of the victorious Dark Servants ...

ME29 was a 2950 variant entitled War of the Ring. The chief difference was that the number of pops was boosted to the same level as a 1650 game so that we had the best of both worlds: 1650-sized armies and economies along with all the wonderful characters from the LoR trilogy: Galadriel, Saruman, Aragorn etc. I ended up playing Ice King and Long Rider so my report will reflect this.

North Gondor began to pour armies across the Anduin in a very aggressive way, intending to attack the Witch King capital.

Unfortunately for him, when repulsed, the FP failed to take down the bridge, and a determined DS counter-attack stormed Minas Tirith and soon afterwards his backup capitals, putting him out of the game.

As DS armies poured across the Anduin and fought their way across South Gondor, the Freeps, ably marshalled by Mark Seward, tightened the economic screw and quite suddenly the tide turned. The supply of reinforcements to the DS armies dried up, and in a single turn both Dog Lord and Fire King went bankrupt. The Dragon lord player quit for reasons unknown, and the Long Rider player quit following a personality clash with a team-mate. I picked up the Long Rider position and the ex-Fire king player picked up the Dragon Lord so we continued with minimal disruption but one nation down.

We persuaded Khand and Corsairs to join DS but Rhun and Duns went FP. The White Wizard rebuffed our advances; I don't know if he ever joined the FP but at some point he quit (maybe something to do with the way we hammered his position!). For a long time the pendulum of war swung back and forth, but at last we killed off South Gondor and the FP lost their inspirational captain Mark Seward.

I believe that was the turning-point in the game. Although the FP "fought like tigers" to quote one of my team-mates, our agent, emissary and curses superiority gradually told. Slowly we gained economic superiority and were able to put more and better armies into the field to back up our characters. Although the FP too had powerful companies hitting our centres every turn, they were not enough to deflect us from our purpose. Eventually our good intelligence

War of the Ring

Two Views on this New Scenario



work paid off: we caught the company containing Elrond with a curse squad and slew him. Well, the guy shouldn't walk around Middle-earth with a target on his back!

With Elrond's death the FP lost their last chance of finding the One Ring and ending the game that way. They surrendered with good grace after a long and hard-fought game. All credit to all of them for putting up such a good fight. All credit to my team-mates for working as a team (most of the time!) but special kudos to Laurence Tilley who devised our Winning Plan and kept pulling all the threads together despite occasional mistakes and/or deviations by individuals!

All the players in this game who expressed an opinion said how much they enjoyed it, so a few kudos to me(!) for a successful design, and lots of kudos to all at Harle who did the boring work of changing so many stats.

Most of the victorious DS team are looking for a rematch, with us playing FP this time, so if you are interested (on either side or as a neutral), please let Harle know you want to play the next game of War of the Ring!

Marc Pinsonneault reports on behalf of the Free Peoples ...

I ran the North Kingdom in the Last Alliance game; it was an interesting scenario and I think that it could definitely be an enjoyable variant once people get used to the difference from normal ME PBM. Here is a thumbnail sketch from the free side. We had a good team that worked well together; thanks to a lot of folks for making a strong effort. Mark Jaede (Silvans) and Richard (Woodmen) put together a strong free agent effort and the Dorwin/SK players kept on slogging even after they got slammed in the initial going. The Mirkwood free did a nice job of pouring troops into Mordor at a merciless clip, with a significant assist from

allegory

Lord of the Rings as an allegory for the PhD?

The story starts with Frodo: a young hobbit, quite bright, a bit dissatisfied with what he's learnt so far and with his mates back home who just seem to want to get jobs and settle down and drink beer. He's also very much in awe of his tutor and mentor, the very Senior professor Gandalf, so when Gandalf suggests he take on a short Project for him (carrying the Ring to Rivendell), he agrees. Frodo very quickly encounters the shadowy forces of fear and despair which will haunt the rest of his journey and leave permanent scars on his psyche, but he also makes some useful friends. In particular, he spends an evening down at the pub with Aragorn, who has been wandering the world for many years as Gandalf's postdoc and becomes his adviser when Gandalf isn't around. After Frodo has completed his first project, Gandalf (along with Head of department Elrond) proposes that the work should be extended. He assembles a large research group, including visiting students Gimli and Legolas, the foreign postdoc Boromir, and several of Frodo's own friends from his undergraduate days. Frodo agrees to tackle this larger project, though he has mixed feelings about it. ("I will take the Ring", he said, "although I do not know why.")

Very rapidly, things go wrong. First, Gandalf disappears and has no more interaction with Frodo until everything is over. (Frodo assumes his supervisor is dead: in fact, he's simply found a more interesting topic and is working on that instead.) At his first international conference in Lorien, Frodo is cross-examined terrifyingly by Galadriel, and betrayed by Boromir, who is anxious to get the credit for the work himself. Frodo cuts himself off from the rest of his team: from now on, he will only discuss his work with Sam, an old friend who doesn't really understand what it's all about, but in any case is prepared to give Frodo credit for being rather cleverer than he is.

Then he sets out towards Mordor. The last and darkest period of Frodo's journey clearly represents the writing-up stage, as he struggles towards Mount Doom (submission), finding his burden growing heavier and heavier yet more and more a part of himself; more and more terrified of failure;



the Duns and North Kingdom; the east side players developed and fielded huge armies and used them well.

The free start with 12 nations including both the South Kingdom (roughly a combination northern/southern gondor) and the North Kingdom (think arthedain + cardolan); there is a sea of rhun nation (dorwinian, effectively equivalent to the 1650/2950 northmen) and the northmen/dale are centered in the iron hills and northern mirkwood. The Duns are also free. The dark side nations are all in mordor (including the dragon lord and witchking), with the exception of the three southern neutrals (roughly harad/corsairs/easterlings) and the QA.

The free chose to apply maximum pressure on all fronts. Strategic pop center swaps were used to get all of the major towns close to mordor as recruiting bases; all nations but the noldo were able to recruit at least 800 troops/turn. The north kingdom was recruiting 800 HC/turn from two bases and 800 HI/turn from two others that were used to funnel a series of large navies. The relative security of the northern nations allows them to hire lots of agents and emissaries. The emmys pushed the camp limit hard, while the agents fanned out and picked a deadly strategy of massive gold thefts from the dark to keep them poor.

The dark had some initial success in sacking most of gondorland and hitting the sea of rhun, but ran out of steam on both fronts as the free had a massive assault on Morannon that took and sacked it. For instance, the blind sorcerer apparently disbanded his initial army rather than bringing it to the sea of rhun, and the easterlings hired infantry rather than cavalry armies that got to rhun too late.

The dark agents were tossed at morannon in a (mostly) vain attempt to stop the free armies early with agents; this didn't work because of the lack of agent artifacts on the dark side. By the midgame the free had developed some deadly agents and were taking out dark armies, while the south kingdom had recovered and reopened the ithil pass front. On the east side free armies had sacked all of eastern mordor and were pressing into the central region. On the final turn the market had also collapsed.

Is the scenario balanced? I think it could be with some tinkering. The dark side has its usual strengths - characters and SNAs - but it lacks dragons, curses, and agent artifacts which makes it very challenging. The dark side needs to be able to play for time while they develop their agent assets, and they probably need more economic muscle than originally designed to survive to the stage where they can reverse the free juggernaut.

First, as designed it is really a survival test for the dark rather than a contest where one side or the other will run rampant. The free should not be permitted to InfOthr Barad-Dur, and they should either capture it or lose by turn 26.

Second, there are some flukes associated with using a 4th age engine. In a normal game starting pop centers get a production bonus and there is a pretty large camp limit. In this one the extra pop centers had normal production and were subtracted from the new camp limit. Since the free got *lots* of new pop centers and the dark pop centers were small, this had the effect of giving the dark few opportunities for new camps and low starting production.

In addition the starting loyalties were low - in 4th age your loyalties are equal to the highest emissary rank, which was 30 for most nations; this made it tough for the dark to get by with tax increases. I'd put in a fanatical-devotion-to-Morgoth provision that gave the dark high across the board loyalties, or increase the base production of their camps, or make their starting camps into villages. If it is possible to change the camp limit I think that increasing it would be useful as well.

Finally it could help to derandomize at least a few starting agent artifacts, make their numbers known by both sides, and allow the dark to have at least some chance of early agent action. In LA44, for instance, the free got the ID of the ring of wind through sheer dumb luck (it appeared as a victory condition - the nation of the dwarfs needs to own the ring of wind #xxx!)

With these changes the game could be a lot of fun; the dark servants have some tremendous strengths and I'd run a game as a dark servant without hesitation. For a more balanced game I'd suggest that some of the above ideas be synthesized into a revised setup.

plagued by the figure of Gollum, the student who carried the Ring before him but never wrote up and still hangs around as a burnt-out, jealous shadow; talking less and less even to Sam. When he submits the Ring to the fire, it is in desperate confusion rather than with confidence, and for a while the world seems empty.

Eventually it is over: the Ring is gone, everyone congratulates him, and for a few days he can convince himself that his troubles are over. But there is one more obstacle to overcome: months later, back in the Shire, he must confront the external examiner Saruman, an old enemy of Gandalf, who seeks to humiliate and destroy his rival's protégé. With the help of his friends and colleagues, Frodo passes through this ordeal, but discovers at the end that victory has no value left for him. While his friends return to settling down and finding jobs and starting families, Frodo remains in limbo; finally, along with Gandalf, Elrond and many others, he joins the brain drain across the Western ocean to the new land beyond.



CREDIT payments

Payments to **Middle Earth PBM Games** not Harlequin. 5% charge for UK Credit card payments & you can pay directly through our website (World Pay [WP] will appear on your statement). You can also set up a monthly payment with us for a SET amount taken from your credit card at the beginning of each month. Ask for more details if interested. If your account is low funds there will be an administration charge of £1 for the first turn, and 50p for subsequent turns on Low funds.

Note that CC payments are accepted in the following currencies: UK£, US\$ & AU\$ as well as some other currencies.

Player Rating System

A proposal for this controversial subject

by Brad Brunet

The interest in a Middle Earth PBM Player Rating System has proven to be quite extensive over the last year and a half or so. Various ideas have been discussed ever since Laurence Tilley's original email on the mepbmlist some time ago. I have since then been in discussion with Clint and Laurence regarding a system that I have devised which takes into consideration most of the main areas of concern. I will attempt to outline that system, with some discussion, below.

Laurence's original idea was based on 1) players completing games and 2) team victories. Players would be awarded a simple 1 point if they completed the game, and another 1 point if their team won. Another concept that has maintained its popularity is the game end voting idea. Vote for the game MVP (Most Valuable Player). Many other players have argued for the continued inclusion of the Victory Points currently being calculated automatically. One method of standardizing victory points, as proposed by both myself and Marc Pinsonneault, was to find the Average Victory Point total for each nation. The player would then have his/her game end VP total compared to the average for that nation. The player who ended with a higher VP total compared to the nation's average (not the rest of the players in the game) would then be considered the victor.

From these threads, I have created a relatively simple formula that combines, into a single value (Rating), the following 4 items:

- 1) *Games Completed* - Expressed as a percentage, this initial concern of Laurence's will show who sticks it out, and who runs from stormy weather.
- 2) *Team Wins* - Expressed as a percentage of Games Completed. Theoretically, better players find themselves on the victorious side of Middle Earth more often than not.
- 3) *MVP Titles* - Can be expressed as a percentage of Team Wins. With the implementation of a Game End Player Vote, the peer-chosen MVP gets rewarded.
- 4) *Average Standard Deviation Difference (ASDD)* - Expressed as a number that ranges from -3 to +3 at its most unlikely extremes. Based on the statistical Bell Curve, the Standard Deviation (SD) is calculated as the average variance about the Mean (Average) for a value. In ME terms, say, of all the Woodmen to have completed games, their overall average VP score is 625. If their SD is 55, that means that 66% of all Woodmen VP's scores ever would fall between 570-680, or 625 +/- 55, or 1 SD about the Mean. A Woodmen player who scores 735 would score a Standard Deviation Difference (SDD) of +2. This measures the player's performance against his nation, not against his Noldo ally who scored 1100 VP's! The Noldo could very well have a Mean VP over time of even more than that, so this Noldo's SDD would actually be negative! Over a number of games, the players Average SDD (ASDD)

would be calculated and maintained on the Player Roster table. (For a more detailed explanation of this concept, or any other, email myself privately at pbmnoot@yahoo.ca or on the mepbmlist@yahoogroups.com. I'm keeping it brief here to save space!)

By taking these 4 values, with weighted importance to Games Completed and Team Wins, I have been able to devise a formula that converts them into a single value. That Rating has a range of 0-100, with an approximate average of 50. The formula is basically as follows:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \% \text{ Games Completed} \quad X \quad A \\
 + \quad \% \text{ Team Wins} \quad X \quad B \\
 + \quad \% \text{ MVP Titles} \quad X \quad C \\
 + \quad \text{ASDD} \quad X \quad D \\
 \hline
 = \quad \text{Player Rating (out of 100=Perfect)} \\
 \text{Where A, B, C, and D, are simply multipliers that convert the decimal} \\
 \text{percentages into values from 0-100.}
 \end{array}$$

This Rating is expected to be merely one column of a Player Roster that details Number of Games Played, Completed, Won, MVP titles, ASDD, etc. Assuming the table is on the net and we are able to sort it by whichever column we choose, players will be able to peruse the data set, looking at whichever aspect of their ally or enemy they personally feel is most important.

Just as our current Victory Points utilize 4 areas of nation development, this Player Rating utilizes 4 areas of play. Each is inexplicably linked. Fabulous scores in one alone will not rank a player highly: the Builder who plays to the end will not necessarily win the majority of his games, and certainly won't gain many MVP votes from experienced players! Thus, while he completes a high percentage of his games, and most likely has a high ASDD, his other failings will keep him rated average to low, right beside the frequent winner who shines (MVP's...) against poor competition, but drops out of the tough games...

How to rate highly: Finish your games, play to win, play a team game. By doing that consistently, your ASDD will be a good, positive number!

What is required?

- 1) Game End Voting System
- 2) Past game data to calculate Means and SD's
- 3) Definitive guidelines on what constitutes a "completed game"

What Can You Do?

Input! Comment! Criticize! But Please: No malicious spam! Which do you feel is more/less important? Why? Would you support this public Player Roster or prefer to opt-out? Etcetera!

Best Regards and Continued Good Gaming!

Brad Brunet
Aka LBear

Name	GP	Comp	Won	MVP	ASDD	Com%	Won%	MVP%	Player Rating
Leader	20	18	15	3	1.20	90.0%	83.3%	20.0%	82.33
Excellent	20	18	15	0	0.54	90.0%	83.3%	0.0%	72.93
Builder	20	14	5	0	2.00	70.0%	35.7%	0.0%	55.62
Average	20	16	8	1	0.00	80.0%	50.0%	12.5%	55.13
Brad	8	5	3	0	0.50	62.5%	60.0%	0.0%	52.33
Loser	20	12	3	0	-0.72	60.0%	25.0%	0.0%	29.20

Sample Data Table with %'s Calculated and the Player Rating Calculated, Sorted by Rating

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for more information.



sheLOB's web

*Just click any of the links (whilst
online) to take you to the site!*

Official LoTR Film site
www.lordoftherings.net

**LoTR Character test: Which
are you?**
[www.zovakware.com/tests/
lordoftherings.htm](http://www.zovakware.com/tests/lordoftherings.htm)

**Middle Earth board game: no,
not that one, another one!**
[http://flyingmoose.org/melkbrad/
mbother.htm](http://flyingmoose.org/melkbrad/mbother.htm)

LoTR Fanatics site ...
www.lordotrings.com

Want to learn Elvish?
www.elvish.org/
[www.dcs.ed.ac.uk/misc/local/
TolkLang/pronguide.html](http://www.dcs.ed.ac.uk/misc/local/TolkLang/pronguide.html)

[www.forodrim.org/daeron/
md_home.html](http://www.forodrim.org/daeron/md_home.html)

www.grey-company.org/
[http://freespace.virgin.net/
m.poxon/silme-hp.htm#menu](http://freespace.virgin.net/m.poxon/silme-hp.htm#menu)

... or Black Speech?
[www.dcs.ed.ac.uk/misc/local/
TolkLang/articles/
Appleyard.BlackSpeech](http://www.dcs.ed.ac.uk/misc/local/TolkLang/articles/Appleyard.BlackSpeech)

The Tolkien Society
www.tolkienociety.org/

The Hall of Fame

Game winners, losers and honourable mentions

Game 119 - Dark Servant Victory!

Congratulations to **Paul Roberts**, Dog Lord starter who picked up the Quiet Avenger after our original player left under ... odd ... circumstances. Dealing with a Free Corsairs (who bankrupted himself with a huge army about to break into Mordor) and then our 3rd Harad who tried to go Free, Paul managed the QA like a shrewd pro and brought them up to end with 2000 well earned victory points! Most of the time, the VP Leaders on my pdf drive me to fits of frustration that selfish, uncommunicative builders get some sort of reward or recognition, but there's no disputing the results for this game!

Duns and Easterlings joined the DS also, combatting a free Rhudaur. **Ulrik Bisgaard's** Easterlings rolled up much of the Rhun, Rhovanon, and even Mirkwood, extending Ovatha's domain up to Goblin Gate.... My Duns were dismembered in a most unneighbourly way, surviving only due to the largesse of Paul Robert's Dog Lord. Mordor DS held the fort where **Mike Bateman's** Ice King played a key leadership role, while **Brian Medus's** Witch King never left the North and his Long Rider spent the game killing all comers! Excellent game all! Thanks to **Scott Nolan** and **Scott Strickland** for their inspired Gondor opposition!

Game 70 Report

by Brendan McGoldrick

Khamul looked out from the tall tower of Dol Guldur and smiled. The war was less than a year old and already the victory was near complete. All organised resistance to Sauron's will had collapsed, the Elves were racing for the Havens to escape Sauron's revenge, the Men nation were begging Sauron's mercy and the dwarves were virtually homeless. He went back to his desk and began writing.

Journal of Khamul and Account of the War G70 Initial turns

Things began well/average for the DS. Only one character started with LA, Maben who promptly learnt LAT and found the ROW. Khamul beat Erester to the race and retrieved it for the DS team. This was handed over to Ji Indur. NorthWest In the NW efforts to get Rhudaur to join the DS did not go well. The WK was just about holding off the 1st wave of Arthedain and Cardolan. However, when the 2nd wave landed on his capital on turn 5. On turn 6 it got burnt and Rhudaur went free around turn 5-6....thus ending any designs of the WK staying in Angmar. He started the move to Mordor. The WM, NM and Dwarves all combined to take 2305 around this time as well.... not a dragon in sight for the WK. So the WK gave up Angmar and went back to Mordor. He disbanded everything and left. However it still took 3 nations another 6 turns to finish him off....all without a single WK character in Angmar. the Duns dropped or were knocked out very early. Mirkwood The Sinda towns at 2608 and 2709 both fell early. An attempt to burn 2711 failed with the NM coming to the rescue of the WM. A early DrgLord sortie into Lorien destroyed a Sinda army prior to it becoming too large. Goblin Gate fell around turn 4 to the dwarves. In-

stead of moving onto Dol Guldur, this army headed north to take out 2305 (as previously mentioned). After capturing 2709, the remains of the Goblin Gate army moved onto 2809 to continue recruiting. However they were followed by the Sinda and which destroyed this army. However their attempts to reveal 2809 failed with Ringlin getting a blade in the back from Ji Indur.

The first of several failed attempts to take 2715 began on turn 9. A small Eothraim army and a Sinda army were on 2715. I had 900HI with 2 dragons. All they needed to do was both attack and my army plus dragons would have disbanded. Instead one attacked and the other tried to seige 2715. The results was the DrgLord army had 137HI surviving with 2 dragons on turn 10 facing 5000 Noldo troops. Death flames and many elven heads were taken in the following battle. Agents ensured that very few free characters left 2715 alive. Dol Guldur remained in Khamul's hands. I sent 2000HI east into the plains to attack the NG towns at 3116 and 3316. This met up with the Easterlings steam-roller.

Sea of Rhun and Plains

The LR enjoyed very early success. Din Ohtar killed 2 characters at the NM capital on turn 2 and the LR cav captured 4217 and 3028 on turn 2 as well. The cav army got stopped at around turn 3 or so by the Iron Hill dwarves. The other cav army managed to take 3026 before it was destroyed. Eothraim moves were a little strange. Instead of moving en masse onto 3120, they move piece-meal which allowed us to destroy the huge Eothraim threat little by little. Instead of attempting to capture 3120, they tried a threaten (failed) and moved onto Morannon. Moves like this allowed us to destroy the Eothraim cav without having to worry about the loss of any pop centers. By turn 5, all of the Eothraim starting cav was destroyed.

Then on turn 8-10, the EAsterlings joined us. His attack was devastating and in conjunction with myself he had taken over the Sea of Rhun and was attacking the Eothraim pop centers. The NM only had 1 MT left at 3109.

Ithil Pass

FK was able to take Minas Ithil on turn 2 unopposed. This set the momentum of the rest of the game with no free armies ever moving onto 3224. NG seemed more intent on trying to threaten the IK town at 3123 than defend the critical MT at 3124. He lost his king to the CL and all of his command artefacts early as well. The SG arrived and made life difficult for us. By the end of turn 6 this had been beaten back. However by the end of turn 10/11, we had got 3024 was taken by threat (with the help of Taronder's command artefacts). The CL and LR started laying seige to 2924 with agents. Lots of deaths here by the CL. However disaster struck when Ji Indur was assassinated losing the ROW and several other artefacts.

The South

We managed to persuade the Corsairs to join our side quite early. On turn 5-6 he landed on the Sinda MT. In response the SG landed at 2135, capturing the QA MT and also 2137. A huge naval battle occurred at 2135 around turn 7 or so with mutual destruction being

Bree articles

Thanks to everyone for wiring endgame reports - keep them coming in! However it would be nice to have some articles on Military strategy, camp placement, and / or suggested plans to optimize character development for various nations.

I would be very interested in hearing from players re: playing "frontline" nations - Dragon Lord, Witch King, Dog Lord, North Gondor etc

At least one player has contacted me asking for views on bridges. Is it better to destroy them early in the game and how does this impacton FP and DS teams.



sending in ORDERS

- 1: Always send orders by **post** or **email** if at all possible. Faxed orders are much more prone to errors since inevitably there is a loss of clarity and definition.
- 2: Ignore the fact that the GM won't process the game until the morning after the deadline printed on the order sheet. **Send your orders in on time** and you'll find a large proportion of obvious errors you may make (eg confusing 605 and 610 orders) will be picked up by the GM, who will then contact you to clarify the matter.
- 3: Please **always put the game number and nation number in the subject line of your email**. Also please make sure that the main body of the email has your name, account number, game number, security code and nation number. If you are sending a diplo we only require this information in the subject line and information as to what you want to send on to the recipient. It speeds things up for us if you can include as much detail concerning your question or problem. We very much appreciate this.
- 4: **Format of orders:** Please send your turns in by email in a plain format or using an attachment such as .txt. Please don't use any html or .xls formats. We can accept some .doc files, but experience shows that many mailers interact with the format to make it hard to read, so we only accept the simplest formats. We do not accept other formats. If you are not sure how to send your turn in such a manner, please get in touch and we'll help.



the result. We nearly lost the QA to bankruptcy here but thankfully he stayed in.

Mid-End Game

The Easterlings completed the conquest of the Rhun by around turn 10 or so and started moving against the EoPlex. In conjunction with some DrgLord and DogLord troops he had succeeded in capturing all of the Eothraim MT's and knocking him out of the game within 3 turns. At the same time a DrgLord army moved onto 3109 to burn it and hopefully knock out the NM. Luckily for the NM, 3109 got hidden the same turn that the DrgLord army arrived...otherwise both the Eothraim and Northmen would have been out on the same turn.

In Mirkwood the 2715 saga began again. With Dwarf, Cardolan, Sinda and Woodmen troops all being involved. Thankfully this time again the free did some mistakes and allowed my armies with dragons to survive. Also DogLord and Easterling cav arrive at 2715 to save the day as well. My tiny armies with dragons destroyed several armies (and the CL/LR killing many commanders) and thus Dol Guldur was saved again. Also at this time, the death of Ji Indur was avenged with Khamul sticking the knife in the back of the free agent. The question that the DS keep asking was where was Rhudaur? Why wasn't there hordes of Rhudaur men charging across the Misty Mountains to finish off the DragonLord? Only the free can answer that one....but it never happened.

After beating off the attack on 2715, we went on the offensive in Mirkwood. 2514 had been xferred to the Cardolan at this time. It was revealed and captured by the DogLord and Easterlings. 2711 was burnt by a DrgLord army. 3109 was revealed but the NM managed to find enough troops to fend off the DogLord army. At the same time as this 2212 was revealed and besieged with agents and emi's. Harad joined the DS at around this time and to be honest he wasn't really welcome. He spent the first 15 turns neutral gather-

ing points and then the winning side at the . He did manage to take 2927 and destroy some Noldo fleets. But what he did the most was to get in the Corsairs way. He never upgraded with Corsairs thus there armies kept blocking each other!

In the Ithil Pass things got delayed quite a bit with the Dark Lts SS'd for 3 turns. This was picked-up by the CL player and in conjunction with the IK, FK and Dark Lts made another drive for the NG capital. Huge armies with dragons landed at 2924. However, the Arnor nations finally made an appearance with around 4000 Arthedain troops appearing to save 2924

for a few turns.

The last turn of the game saw the WM capital, dwarf capital and NG capital all fall. There were 3 armies on the revealed Sinda capital (with 2 dragons). The DogLord was about to launch 2000HC at the rest of NG when the game ended as well and the Easterlings were about to take the last NM MT.

Victory went to the FK in the end which was thoroughly deserved. His amount of pop centers was amazing. I lost count of how many towns and village he had upgraded at the end.

Thanks to everyone for a superb game. That would be an interesting stat to know.how many games have finished with the Dragon-Lord still in possession of 2715? Not too many I would think.... :o)

*Khamul, DragonLord
2nd Nazgul*

Master of Mirkwood and Lorien

Game 61 - DS win

As the Dark Lord looks upon the breadth of his domain he smiles. The key areas of battle lie in Mirkwood where his stronghold of Dol Guldor maintained by the second is situated and at the Gap of Isen where the West attempted to penetrate. It is in these areas that his powerful lieutenants and his newly found Easterling and Harad allies crushed the free of Game 61 after sweeping the Dunedain of Gondor and the Horse Lords before them. With the death of many of the Noldo's greatest heroes and other powerful lords of the west including the kings of the Dwarves, the Sinda Elves, and Gondor, the carnage reaped in these regions have made him smile. Those pitiful few remaining will now pay homage to Sauron, the Dark Lord of Mordor.

*Thanks,
Lucas Cuccia
Cloud Lord Game 61*

Endgame reports are always welcome! Please send them directly to the editor (colin@timewyrm.co.uk).

Bofa 111 GOBBOS strike!

A rowing howl of glee rose from the masses of trolls gathered at the plains at the northeastern edge of Mirkwood as they roam the dwarven corpses littered before them, scavenging for food.

Looking out over the thousands of dead dwarves, mixed with a far lesser amount of his own troops, the commander of the successful goblin nation could but grin savagely at the prisoner before him. "Kneel!" With a swift kick to the ribs the dwarven regent is brought down on his face. "Not so great now, are you Dain!

Howling your challenges even as our armies flanked you on all sides. You are fool! And you'll soon be supper for my lieutenants! For word has come from our master that Beorn has been captured while trying to infiltrate our capital, and with him the hated Bear Claws!"

Turning around to watch his armies, even as they pull into marching order and set out to the south and east. "Soon we be wearing dwarven steel and decorating your mountain holes with proper goblin art. Take this scum away, and prepare the pots, tonight we feast on dwarven meat!"

Øystein, Gobbo overlord



artists

News from Bree would like the acknowledge the work of Abe Papakhian - this issue's featured artist.



gunBoat games

You play a duo of nations choosen from the list below. Eg SG+ Wo. Pre-aligned 12vs12 game.
NO diplomacy allowed!

4+22 Arthedain +Harad, 6+23 N Gondor +Duns, 7+1 S Gondor +Wood, 8+2 Dwarves+North, 9+5 Sinda+Cardolan, 10+3 Noldo+Eothraim.

18+17 Fire King+QA, 20+24 D.Lieut+Rhudaur, 16+19 Ice King+ L.Rider, 11+15 Blind + Witch K, 14+13 Cloud+Dog Lord, 12+21 DragonL +Corsair

Nations of Middle Earth

What shall we do with a Drunken Mumak-rider?

The flagship and pride of the Haradwaith fleet sails past. Her sleek curves cuts through the waves as she waddles out to sea. Tremble with fear, as even the most harden harbour bar cannot withstand the fearsome drinking binges of her thirsty crew. Where she will call to port, nobody knows. Least of all her intoxicated Captain, Ulfac's van Flatulence.

But when the crew is sober enough to row, there is little that dockside bars and brothels can do to weather the coming storm.

"A what?" said Argeleb, scion of the house of Isildur.

"A barrel, my lord. A beer barrel."

"And it sails? On the sea?"

"Not well, my lord, for it's sail is small. But the crew is fearsome, if sober."

"And what of these mumakil, the oliphants? Do they ride in this barrel?"

"So it would seem, great king."

"Very well then. We must have these drunken rogues on our side, lest the Dark One discover their spirit-laden secrets. We have sent them two tuns of our best Old Warg, made by the periannath and carried by Cardolan's sailors. Now if only the Harad captain is sober enough to recall who sent them."

All was quiet in the fair city of Pelargir. The citizens believed that the city's strong walls and stout hearts of the defenders could protect them from all harm. Also, the hundreds of kegs, delivered to Pelargir from all the Free Peoples, had been sent south as "gifts" to Harad.

They could not be farther from the truth.

For unbeknownst to the fair citizens of the city, the law firm of Tarondumb & Celdradim had impounded the kegs of beer on the docks in lieu of payment for legal fees. For the firm claimed that they had "gotten" Haruth Ramam off the pesky charge brought forward by the Umbar Temperance Union involving a Mumak and a fishing boat. However, their lawyers had not even begun to work on the case when the key prosecution witnesses disappeared when under the guard of Shabla. With no witnesses, the charges were dropped.



And there they laid, the kegs of "Old Warg" from Arthedain, Deep Chasm from the Dwarves, the fine rum from Rhudaur. Promised, but never delivered.

Suddenly, on the horizon, a strange shapes appeared floating up the river towards the city. As they drew closer, the distinctive shape of the War Kegs of Harad were identified. Then, a runner approached from the direction of the bridge.

"My lords Dribduda and Duinhir, a large force of Footmen, Mercenaries, and Mumakriders is crossing the river!"

The city convulsed with panic, for the fierce reputation of the drunken Mumakriders of Harad were well known in the south. Mothers screamed for their children, Men turned pale at the news and hid behind women's skirts".

"Why are they here?" demanded Oribduda "Didn't they enjoy the fine ale we sent them?"

"Sir, the kegs are still on the docks" replied his adjutant. And with that, the adjutant had to speak very quickly to explain the reason for the delay in delivery to avoid decapitation. Riders were dispatch to parley with Haruth Ramam to avoid a horrible confrontation. On the back of one of the horses was a keg to show good intentions.

An hour later, the riders returned and their news filled the city with dread. Apparently, the beer had gone flat (skunky), and the riders had made the fatal mistake of giving a pint to Haruth Ramam without testing the beer themselves.

Haruth Ramam has vowed that "For allowing good beer to go to waste, Harad will undertake a hostile takeover of the Gondor's brewing centres! Never will the Gondors be allowed to brew another pint!"

Feel Inspired? Want to write for Bree? Then contact the editor:
bree@timewymr.co.uk

Letters

I'm a newly returning US player (2 yrs off) currently in my 4th game (1st under Harley). I hadn't seen Bree back when I was playing under GSI in '98-'99, and I like it very much. Specifically, I enjoy the strategy articles. I've read most of the them, as well as most of those out on the major MEPBM sites, and they have been quite helpful in formulating general strategies. I had noted, however, that most of them are fairly old. That may be due to the fact that, comparatively, the game hasn't changed much in recent years. But I would love to see some fresh ideas (if they're out there of course).

Chris Wolf



Riddle competition!

I set you riddles one plus three.
What is their secret mystery?
The answers lie in just one tome.
Pick the right one and you're home
And dry, my preciousss!
Have a go and be tenacious!

1)
In the shadows, I've been a thief.
Of calamities, I've seen the chief
From whose unassailable wealth
I stole a jewel which I kept by stealth
And kept secret till direst need
To keep it safe from Dwarvish greed.

2)
Beneath grey skirts I do hide
Amidst the spurs that do not ride.
Atop a mound of treasure golden
By shadow-thief I was stolen.
I came unto my final rest
On the breast of he who loved me best.

3)
I rise alone, no company
Save for he who dwells within me.
From my skirts he does arise
When he requires a sacrifice.
My flanks are spurred, but I travel not.
Desolation surrounds this spot.

4)
Beneath the skirts that cover all
Dwell I in my conquered hall.
Of calamities the greatest,
Wearer of the diamond vest.
My armour's like a tenfold shield.
That's the last clue that I yield.

Send your answers to the editor (bree@timewyrm.co.uk) and remember to include your real name! There will be a prize for the winner - details to be decided.

The Hall of Fame

The Dark Sun, issue 25

**VICTORY! WAR ENDS IN TRIUMPH FOR THE FORCES OF SAURON!!
ELVEN CONSPIRACY UNRAVELS, LEADERS FLEE TO WEST!!!**

The end was inevitable, it is true, but the speed of events even surprised this correspondent, as the nations of "the Free" at last admitted defeat and surrendered to the mercy of the One True Lord, SAURON the Benevolent! Let me summarise for you all the events of this last week;

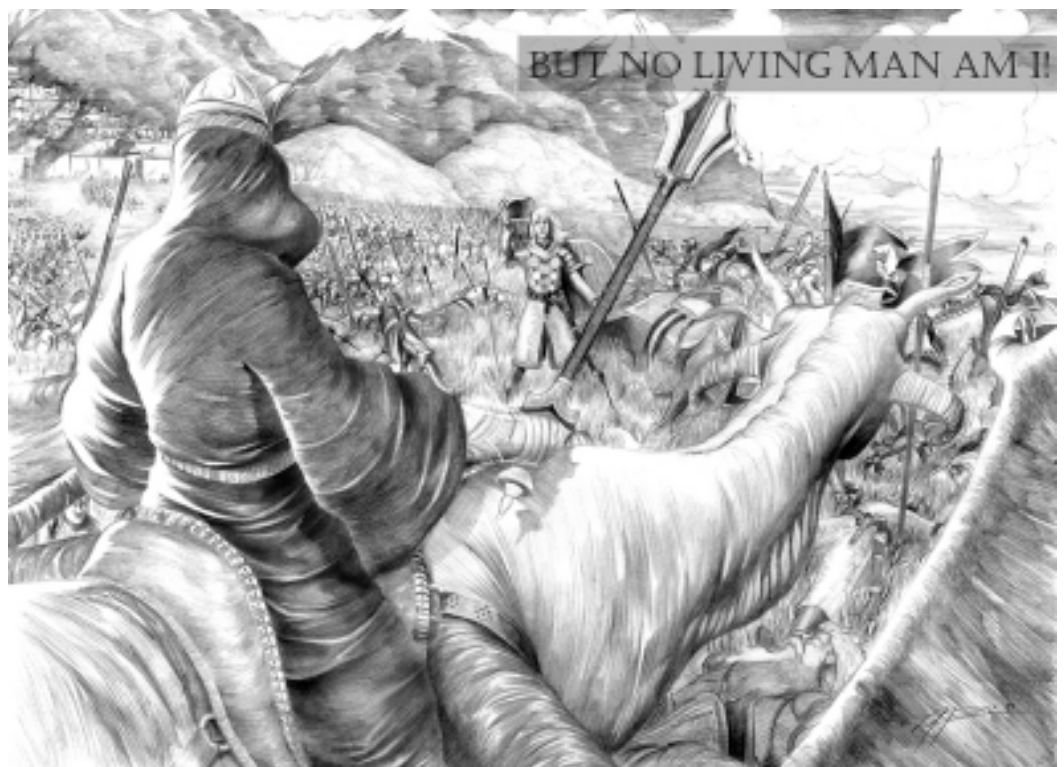
From the realm of Sangarunya [Hermann Brauch]; A worthy place as the leading nation of the Dark Servants and indeed Middle-Earth, his strength and many victories were worth more than the 1600 points awarded. He ended with 43 population centres, supplied all with resources and was never slow to help with his armies/characters. Furthermore, he never went out of his way to fulfil personal victory conditions! At 2220, Bragolmaite challenged the miraculous ASCARNIL to a duel and slew him. Later a battle between his forces and Ascarnil's back-up Valandil saw a pyrric victory for the vanquished pointy-eared Noldo. Has Yayb [2833] was taken back from the cheeky Duns. At 2632 some 5800 troops were readied to board ship bound for South Gondor! Vargaelas already had some 1600 troops in the field there and another army was roaming north of Mordor!!!

From the realm of Angulion [Kevin Bond 500points]; An expected party continued long into the night at Khazad-Dum. It's been going on for some six weeks now and the dwarven spirits are in danger of running out. Several Freep characters have now been interned there for "their own safety". Rogrog moved his small

army deeper into Ranger territory [0707] having failed to threaten 0907, with the despairing ELBORON on his tail. Kevin is to be commended for rescuing this position after it was surprisingly dropped, and for being a thorn in the freeps side in the north!

From the realm of Ji Indur [David Murray 850 points]; My first game as Cloud Lord was very much enjoyed. We managed 33 kills in 27 turns, but i think i was just warming up! CIRDAN, ELROND and GALADRIEL were taken into custody at 3627. They will face trial as War Criminals. Gufauq the Vague held both Colovaere [Northmen] & Dis [Dwarves] as hostages at end of the War. Araudagul followed up his PC's on BILL FERNY & MORAIZA with another cheeky one on SOIL NANAW. Killing her and claiming the Voice of the Dark Tower from the corpse. At 2527 a WW Town SIRION the ICEY with 1400 troops took on UGLUK's 300 and wiped them out, killing the WW commander in the process. BETHESDA THE FOOL executed AERANDIR and stole 8k of gold at 2717. JI INDUR moved into 2717 to help the assembled company there with their bloody work...SHOGLIC played his part in one of the two active CURSE Squads of the DS.

From the realm of Akhorahil [David Murray 1042points]; Another first try. Nice combination with the CL. Led three large mixed nation companies to great affect. MAGURGOTH's emmy squad was working on 2717. VULMEK led a party of CL agents and LEARDINOTH a mixed band of cursers. Retrieved many artifacts, but handed a lot off to the needy. Much expense was put into the formation of a HC army at 4126 [eventually numbering 1500 it headed into Rhun] under ETHACALI this week it helped in the liberation of 3713 from the



face to face games

Two Face to Face events are planned ...

UK Game: We're planning a Cardiff game July 26th (Fri) - 28th (Sun) So far we have 18 (+ 4 possibles) players for that. For those that that can't make the Friday it's fine to have turns run by someone else for the Friday. (Start early Friday afternoon). A deposit of £15 is needed per position. Turns cost £2.90 for the 1st position and £2.50 for the 2nd position per turn.

US Game: Venue to be arranged. One in Minneapolis (very likely) and one in Washington DC/Las Vegas OR Chicago Date 14-16th June (Fri-Sun) and 8-10th June (Sat-Mon). Same format as below. 67 players interested. \$4.10 or \$3.50 for the 2nd position, with \$50 for flight and \$25 deposit. (I estimate around \$125 for US players for the w/end plus whatever expenses you have). I'd expect to run 18 turns.



stand-by positions

Drop-outs available - don't forget you get a free turn for taking these up...

*E [Early] = 0-10 turn,
M [Midgame] = 11-20,
L [Late game] = 21+.
[A = Aligned if a Neutral, N = not aligned if a Neutral]*

1000: None
2950: None
1650: Blind (L)



news from Bree

My thanks to everyone who has sent articles. I am still looking for more though! Please try to keep your articles to about 900 words (or shorter), otherwise I may have to edit you severely!

Editor: Colin Forbes,
2A Guinea Street, Exeter, Devon
bree@timewyrm.com

renegade Rhun nation and captured it with the help of Khand forces under URDRATH & ULFANG against inferior troops under JYGANOTH & QUILSAL. Jyganoth was captured in the process. BS emmies also recaptured Minas Morgul & Barad Perras in response to the Freeps somewhat effective emmy blitz strategy. 3 BS cursers helped cast spells on CELEBORN & LOTHIRIEL this turn. Ethacali also injured SELOOT in his ill-fated assassination attempt. Leardinoth's cursers moved to cover ANGRENOST this week and Vulmek's agents into the Dwarven capital at 3707! Kindly Rhun left 3000 mounts and LOADS of leather at 3713, woulda made invasion of M i r k w o o d fun!!!

From the realm of Hoarmuruth [Alan Gourlay 400 points]; The Ice King never really recovered-financially-from the early, unlucky loss of his first emmy. Was on the backfoot throughout and picked upon by enemy agents/emmies. Only started to pick up recently, though his own agents were much to the fore! Hoarmuruth led his motley crew of agents into Angrenost for a party, but only received the cities surrender instead! Khathog helped curse CELEBORN.

From the realm of Adunaphel [Chris Soar 1600 points]; What can you say about a rookie who equalled the lead in points at game end? Set about fulfilling personal victory conditions early, made effective relations with neutral nations nearby and built decent characters. Did many necessary scouts and provided gold for the needy on several occasions. Was just building a base in South Gondor when the game ended! Also retrieved several powerful and much needed artifacts from sea-hexes! Had huge stashes of gold and product [80k food, 12k leather etc] at the end. Was making a 5k profit. Who else can claim that?

From the Dark Lts [Alan Gourlay 1550 points]; Flexed their military might throughout. Gothmog rampaged through the Gondors and Rohan and was headed for Angrenost when the surrender came through. Ably supported by top agents too. Took Edoras, Minas Tirith, Imdorad & Osgiliath. This week BOLROG headed out of Barad-Dur to 3017 with 1200HC bound for Mirkwood, but never got to see action. Gothmog was mustering his troops [with the aid of conjurers] at Edoras, where he had 3300 troops ready. Gothmog challenged and slew MINOHTAR this week. At Osgiliath the forces of the Fire King [Robin Durham, unknown points. Another pick-up position that has just turned around of late, despite heavy Freep emmy/agent pressure. Thanks Robin!] under UKLURG were involved in a battle of mutual destruction with the Dunadan [1200HC] thanks to the presence of LAMTHANC on our side! CARROG assassinated

NIENOR of the WW [bad last turn for that nation]. URZAHIL helped in the cursing of LOTHIRIEL.

From the realm of Ovatha IV [Kevin Bond 1517 points]; The former neutral that became a military powerhouse and took the War to the Rhun and Northmen! Owned 20 pop.centres at game end, including ALL that bordered the Sea of Rhun [though they had a bit of help there!], they were ready for the invasion North when the War ended. Still had 3600 troops in the field [in 9 armies] despite large battles last turn. CURUBAND challenged and killed VEANTUR at the northmen capital. NARKGA killed GUNDOR of the northmen in a

PC and UL CATHUR killed ULBAR of the northmen at their capital too! At 4013 combined forces of K h a n d [OVATHA] and the Long Rider [MORNADAK] defeated an army led by H A M M A N there, and later took the capital from the N o r t h m e n . Hamman was captured. Elgaer [4415] was also



captured by ULGARIN from the Northmen. Rof Paku of Rhun was also captured by URDRATH in the battle for 3713 [Ilanin].

From the realm of Uvatha [Hermann Brauch 1275 points];

Another pick-up position which went on to make decisive agent and military victories! As mentioned MORNADAK helped in the liberation of Shrel-Kain and was prepared for the push into Mirkwood or north of the river running. DARK QUEEN Stole the listening helm #53 at 2212. LR emmies began the work to reclaim 3822 from the enemy. LOMELINDE assassinated ELLADAN and took artifacts from his body at Khazad-Dum. UVATHA assassinated FORLIEL. Many more Freep victims were in place at Khazad-Dum, but the surrender saved them from the knives of the Long Rider!

All in all it was a comprehensive victory for the Darks, though the War could have been drawn out much longer, perhaps surrender was the best option. Both sides had problems with players dropping, but the Darks coped better even though the emmy/agent offensive of the Freeps had us on our heels for a few turns...we decided to abandon large-scale defensive measures and go back on the offensive ourselves supporting the military advances in the Gondors. Hopefully we'll open our group for public scrutiny soon for those who are curious. Last turn pdf s should also be there. Freeps welcome to post theirs to us!

*Wrigol Perrit, Prophet of Sauron.
[David Murray]*



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