



News From Bree

Middle Earth PBCD Newsletter - Issue 15, June '02

"Strange as News
from Bree..."

The Lord of the Rings, chapter 9

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Gunboat Rules

Economics in Middle Earth

by Jason Bennett

Clausewitz once wrote, "War is politics by other means." If he had played Middle Earth, he might have said, "War is economics by other means." While it is impossible to attain a purely economic victory (as other wargames allow), it is equally impossible to project military and character power without being able to manage a nation's finances. While some nations' economies tend toward equilibrium or profit, many others require careful nurturing, especially to avoid an early exit. Still other nations, namely the economically powerful neutrals, can be a powerful force upon joining an alliance if they are managed properly in the early going. This article will try to address all of these concerns, and give pointers on how to make your next nation an economic force to be reckoned with.



Generally speaking, there are four different types of economies in Middle Earth:

1. Gold debtors
2. Gold stable
3. Gold donators
4. Gold-rich neutrals

Each of these types requires a different play style and needs to be handled differently by teammates. If you play the Woodmen like the Noldo, you'll quickly go bankrupt. If you do the opposite, you'll deprive your team of the powerful armies and characters that they need. Most nations, however, are capable of being in any of the first three categories, depending on the current military and market situation. The important thing is to recognize your current situation and act appropriately. Remember: you can lose instantly on any turn if you mismanage your money bad enough. If you bankrupt your nation, you are out of the game with no recourse. Ignore your money at your own peril.

First, we'll examine the gold stable nations. These countries can cover their expenses through their gold

income and market sells with no problem, and can name new characters and recruit new armies with reasonable management. Nations in this situation need to stay out of the way (economically speaking)! Manage your money well, do everything you can to avoid asking your team for money, and look for ways to continue to improve your situation, e.g., improving pop centers, planting camps, and removing useless fortifications, harbors and ports. If your team is organizing buyouts, contribute what you can. It will only improve your economy in the long run, and help you turn a perpetual profit.

Gold donators need to be generous, above all else. Remember what was said earlier: there's no such thing as an economic victory in Middle Earth. You might be sitting on a dragon-sized gold stash that puts you in first place in the victory points, but it's useless if your teammates are going down in flames around you. More than

once, I've lost a game with too much gold, as I slowly lost my ability to use it through character attrition. Fund nations that need to name characters, plant camps, or who are on the front lines. Put your money where it will make the most effect. While that might seem obvious, you will need to make choices as to where you put your money, as your teammates might not have the same understanding of the situation as you do. Make sure not to donate yourself into oblivion! Better to give a little less one turn than to find yourself in a hole scrambling to claw your way out. Leave enough in reserve so you don't have any problem meeting your own obligations.

Many gold donators are such because they are far enough behind the front lines that marching armies to the front is an exercise in frustration. If that is the case, make sure to make yourself part of the action. Give your extra gold away so front-line nations can recruit your share of troops as well. Recruit expensive cavalry in your pop centers for an easier march. Trade several pop centers in safe locations for a large one on the front lines, then recruit from there. Spend the money to plant a new pop center toward the front and improve it to a major town or city with fortifications. Above

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.

Battle of the Five Armies (Bofa)

[Game 4]

2week turnaround

Veteran or Beginners game - (Vet: ALL 1650 orders available): 1 Nation taken but all nations available.

1650

[Game 135]

1week turnaround

Waiting List. Upto 2 nation game. 24 nations available.

[Game 37]

2 week turnaround

1-7,9-15, 17-22, 14 available (1 nation "any" in addition taken)

Gunboat

[Game 36] 1650 variant

3 players needed (10 nations). Waiting List, 2 nations game. See page 10 for rules.

2950

[Game 236]

2 week turnaround

Email game. Waiting List. 23 nations available.

1000

[Game 147]

2 week turnaround

We have 8DS 7 or 8 FP and 7 or 6 Neutrals taken so far. No more DS needed at present the rest (4 positions) 1 or 2 FP and Neutrals please. The game is provisionally a Normal one but we'll be in touch when we get to 25 if there are clashes of interest (as per norm).

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: GM team (12), Ulrik (12)

Last Alliance: Marcus C team of 12

2950: None / GM team (12 players)

1000: None

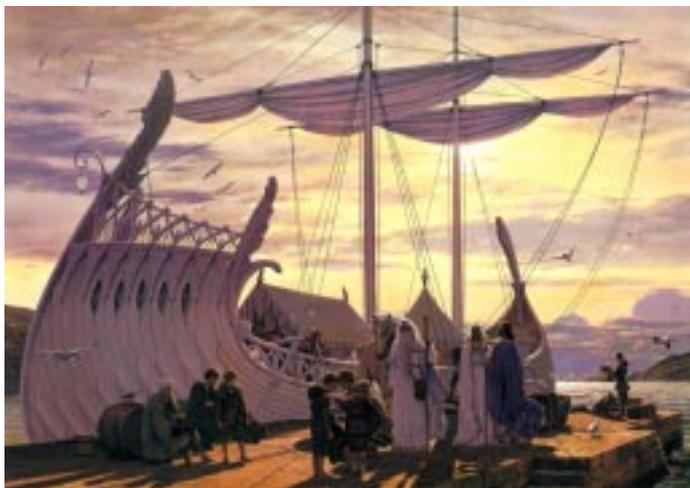
WoTR: None

Last Alliance: None

World Championship: None

all, use your money. He who dies with the most toys is still dead.

Gold debtors tend to live on the economic brink. They cannot afford to recruit new characters, raise new armies, or possibly even afford the armies they have for long. Without outside assistance, they cannot afford to contribute to the war effort, and instead must focus on stabilizing their own economy. Make sure to speak up! While it's better for your teammates to recognize your need on their own, make sure to ask them for a specific amount each turn. That way, your teammates can plan among themselves how best to fund you, and you will know exactly how much you are going to be able to spend for the next few turns. If you don't speak up, you can't guarantee getting the gold you need. Given that these nations are so heavily funded from the outside, they have an implied contract with the rest of the team: the team will fund you, if you use the money wisely to help the team and stabilize your economy. There's nothing worse than sending a poor nation tons of gold, only to have it raise steel/steel heavy cavalry instead of naked heavy infantry or naming useless characters. If you borrow money from a friend, don't spend it on a big-screen TV. Gold debtors need to spend their money on planting and capturing pop



centers, and giving back to the team in terms of military and character impact.

Gold-rich neutrals are a special breed of economy. These nations tend to not be on the front lines, have the luxury of waiting a few turns before declaring, and can align themselves so they do not have to engage in heavy combat on their home turf. If you want to be a Gnome of Zurich, do everything you can to maximize your gold reserves before choosing an alignment, and then pour it into that team. The best way to maximize your economy is to plant new camps like mad while selling to the market limit every turn and minimizing army expenditures. It can turn a team around to have (for example) the Duns pour several hundred thousand gold into the Woodmen and Eothraim. Obviously, this is a poor strategy to pursue if you align yourself into a military situation (Duns go evil, Corsairs and Harad split alignments, etc), in which case these neutrals are more like general donators or gold stable nations.

In this article, we've explored the four general types of economic situations in Middle Earth: donator, stable, debtor and gold-rich neutral. Each of demands a different strategy for handling your money and interacting with your teammates. Know what situation you're in and deal with it. The nations with well managed economies are in the best position to make a difference in the game.

From out of the West

VAT necessitates MEPBM price rise

Lots of new computers to replace the rather slow machines that invariably crash half way through (now they only crash 1/3 of the time!) so Sam has had a bit of a nightmare week.

I like to share bad news as well as good news - unfortunately it looks like we're going to have a big tax (VAT) bill this year due to changes in some of the rules for digital exports. We're still thinking about this and the impact it will have but this means a price increase.

£4.50 for UK

\$6.80 for US

(This is in exception to the recent discussion about Automagic and Meow - we're pondering this at present). I am very sorry to have to do this - we have no choice I am afraid. As it is it's going to be rough for us.

Price increases will be brought into play on the Monday 27th May.

Projects are coming along well - including a very snazzy new map editor - available for all to use. We'll keep you posted as to when and where it comes out

for general release. I am wondering about doing a new World Championships - teams of 6 players per side - maybe 1wk format, double elimination (ie you can lose once without being knocked out from the tournament). It's still in the pondering stage at present though.

As you might well be aware I am now the proud father of Taliesin Joseff Paul Oldridge, a very cute little boy. So I am taking off some time from work to help out. The impact this has on work means that I will not be available in the evenings to catch up on work and answer queries for the foreseeable future.

Finally, can I stress that we're pondering what we are going to do with AM/Meow as concerns prices. The price changes above have nothing to do with the AM/Meow potential changes to prices. We're still pondering what we are going to do as concerns that, partially because the MEOW program (being developed by two separate programmers at present) is still in the creation stage. When we know that it works we can sort out some feedback on that. We'll keep you posted.

Clint

A Game Day in the life of a MEPBM Enthusiast

Ents

It is now confirmed that Ents will in fact play a role in the movies, and will be created fully by WETA's digital effects team. According to spies who were on the set, Ents will "look more tree-like than human-being-like but somewhat transform from tree into walking being." In Jackson's original interview with *Ain't It Cool News*, he stated that the films would contain scenes of the Ents storming Isengard. In addition, John Rhys-Davies, who portrays Gimli in the films, will also provide the voice of Treebeard.

Shelob

E!Online's "Insider" column reports that "New Zealand wildlife is a little short on giant spiders, so Shelob will be completely computer generated. Elijah Wood (Frodo) and Sean Astin (Sam) performed their scenes with the evil eight-legged against a blue screen." No information has been made public regarding the actual character design of Shelob, however.

Changes

It seems that the hobbit's encounter with Shelob will also take part in the third film - the second film will concentrate more upon events in Rohan. *The Two Towers* will intercut back and forth between the adventures of Sam and Frodo and the happenings with the other characters in various locations, instead of being divided down the middle like the structure of the novels. The important thing to remember is that literature and film are two entirely different mediums of storytelling, and that changes are inevitable and necessary in order to translate the written word properly to the structure and flow of film.

DVD Releases

The first DVD release of Fellowship is set for August. However there will be another release in November which will have additional material including an additional half hour of film.

Here in America, most of us receive our turn results early in the morning. Here's an account of game day for this MEPBM addict:

- 1 Wake up early to blaring alarm, and actually don't resent it
- 2 Urinate (optional)
- 3 Brush teeth (optional)
- 4 Stumble downstairs and hit the power button on the laptop
- 5 Let dog out
- 6 By then, laptop should be up and running; double click to open email
- 7 Fill coffee cup with coffee, insert in microwave and start nuking
- 8 Insert phone cord into laptop
- 9 By then, email account should be open, click "send and receive"
- 10 For a few seconds, threaten computer with violence if network doesn't work or .pdf isn't here yet
- 11 By then, computer should be ready to receive log-on sequence. Do that.
- 12 Retrieve coffee cup. Being drinking.
- 13 Let dog back in
- 14 Sit back down. If no .pdf on screen by now, beat dog, or alternatively train him to behave as goblin wolf-mount. Return to 14.
- 15 If network is down, terrorize dog, or alternatively force him to dress up as orc warg-mount. Return to 15.
- 16 Receive email with .pdfs
- 17 Save .pdfs to hard drive
- 18 Light cigarette; the tension is too great. Breathe deeply and perform relaxation exercises before proceeding.
- 19 Read turn results
- 20 Check email every two minutes in the obsessive hope that another ally's turn report is in by now
- 21 Obsess over my and other people's turns for hours, or days; begin plotting destruction of world.
- 22 Begin composing first of 300 messages to team.
- 23 At some other point, get around to other minor tasks such as taking a shower, putting on clothes, using the restroom, getting something to eat, going to work, talking to people who don't know Middle Earth jargon.
- 24 Repeat the following week!

Note: No animals were actually harmed in the writing of this (only partly fictional!) article.



Hall of Fame

Game 48 - Fourth Age

by Alan J.

Not long ago Battle Of the Five Armies game 7 finished. The result was a notso resounding draw, we think. I played the Dwarves, Bernd Luhrsen the Elves and Scott Latham the Northmen.

Looking at the way things stood at the beginning I felt a little isolated and needed to form a strategy. One that to be effective would have to be adhered to religiously. The one thing I didn't want to do was waste orders and send my initial forces out into the wilds and end up being nowhere. Besides if the Gobbos attacked my homeland then I'd be up the Khyber. So, I plumped for the offensive. Take the fight to the enemy and let him worry about what we were going to do. After a stop off to recruit the great army of Dain II marched towards Goblinia, that place where gobbos are, to kick some royal a**. With nearly 4000 troops nothing was going to stop this steamroller. The other characters had made the trip form Lonely Mountain and would start recruiting some troops to replace the inevitable losses.

The Dwarven economy is brilliant having all fortified pop. centres so no downgrades despite high taxes. A massive 5-6000 troops can be sustained in the field at one time. The Gobbos had a few pitiful armies guarding their Major Towns but as I knew they weren't enough. Bolg's army was overrun as a second army a few turns later with over 2000 troops came up to support. A free VC thank you very much. We eventually had armies numbering 4500 troops on the Gobbo capital. After this there would be only one left. Buggre haven't got enough gold to buy 2 turns worth of food. So the Gobbos ended with 1 MT at the end and I shouldn't have. Who's a lucky little smelly greenskin then? The village next to that certain MT was taken by the Northmen. I said he could but I changed my mind the turn after, see even omnipotent ones such as I make mistakes. All in all though it was a hard fight and a great game. I'd like to extend my thanks to Bernd and Scott for being staunch allies. Well done to the DS for a game well played. Once I've figured out which nation I want next I'll be playing again.



who's who A look at the major characters in the LOTR: #6 Arwen

Aliases: Evenstar
Date of Birth: TA 241
Race: Peredhel
Date of Death: FO 121
Parents: Elrond, Celebrian
Spouse: Aragorn
Date of Marriage: TA 3019
Children: Eldarion, and several daughters

Physical description: She was said to carry the likeness of Luthien



Biography: Arwen lived in Rivendell and Lorien for roughly 3000 years in contentment, until she met and fell in love with Aragorn. After the War of the Ring, Arwen and Aragorn were married on midyears day, and Arwen became Queen of Gondor. In FO 120, Aragorn passed, and Arwen journeyed to Lorien, where she died the following winter.

"...For mine is the choice of Luthien" "both the sweet and the bitter, but when my time comes, you shall go in my stead, Ringbearer."



Liv Tyler as Arwen in the Fellowship of the Rings film.

News From Bree
welcomes all
endgame reports!

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Beginner's Guide - part 2

A player/GM viewpoint

Economic goals

A team's economic goals must include supporting the economically disadvantaged nations, consolidating natural resources and engaging in economic war against the enemy. In order to support economically disadvantaged nations, the team will have to take stock on a turn-by-turn basis of which particular nations are in danger of being unable to implement their part of the overall team strategy. This may be due to losses of population centres, unlucky production, or the need to support large armies or skilled characters. Teams will have to decide 'How do we keep so-and-so in the game?'

Generally the answer is in the form of direct cash transfers of gold. However, any product can be sent, and there will be times when sending a load of food may be better than a straight gold transfer. At other times it may be advisable to swap some population centres around. The idea of this is that while front-line nations do battle, the more protected nations can create and improve population centres, with a view to transferring them to the front-line nations. This links with the consolidation of natural resources. Do the

Northmen need bronze, steel and mithril to toughen their armies against the invading Long Rider, Blind Sorcerer, Dog Rider and others? In this case, mineral-rich nations should be transferring bronze, steel and mithril to the Northmen's army recruiting centres. Similarly, it is common for the Dark Servants to purchase and send timber to the Dragon Lord and Witch King.

Merely keeping team mates in the game and active is only half of the economic battle. The team must decide how it will use the market place to help defeat the enemy. You may decide to keep buying out a particular product to increase its price, or your team may decide to buy out a product to deny the enemy access to it. This can be devastating! If you are about to invade an enemy who is lightly fortified, imagine the shock if you buy out the entire stock of timber so that the foe cannot build any walls to keep you out!

Finally, your team may decide to spend as much gold as they can each turn to keep market prices low, or to hoard as much as they can to inflate market prices. Hand in hand with this, it is essential that some planning is put into where the team should

place new population centres. A quick look at the map shows even the novice that the Dark Servants have only limited room to grow in Mordor. A Dark Servant team that divides up the available hexes at the start will find their emissaries give far fewer wasted orders as they try to place camps. Alternatively, stealing certain hex locations for your team, such as the Gap of Rohan, prevents enemies from exploiting them for themselves.

In summary therefore, at game start your team needs to decide what part economics will play in your campaign. Thought needs to be given to developing the resource-poor nations and to keeping the enemy from fully using the marketplace. Finally, an allocation of building sites should be undertaken.

Military considerations

Your nation will start with a number of armies. Typically these are made up of a mixture of troops. Give careful consideration where to send these armies. In establishing military targets, the team must understand what resources they can bring to bear where. Careful analysis of the various player maps, together with recon reports of enemy troop movements is critical to successful planning. Classically, North Gondor can expect the Dark Servants to do everything they can to take Minas Ithil and Osgiliath - both are just too central and too close to Mordor to allow

North Gondor to keep them! Similarly, the Witch King has to expect that by around turn 6 or 7, both Mount Gram and Mount Gundabad will be assaulted by every Free People army available.

This is probably the area that teams focus on the most, as it is the most obvious method of winning the war. However, you should also be discussing whether the team intends to use a 'scorched earth' strategy (attempting to destroy enemy population centres), as opposed to an 'occupation' strategy (attempting to control enemy population centres). Finally, good military strategy will include a discussion of other aspects of warfare such as what areas to fortify, what harbours and ports to drop, what bridges to hold.

When it comes to recruitment, it is important to realise that your initial armies will not last forever. In almost all circumstances you must begin to recruit new armies as soon as possible. Don't worry about any of the various troop types except heavy infantry and heavy cavalry - none of the others are really worth the money or resources.

The initial team moves should be to consolidate military power at points where it can be further projected against the enemy. As an example, look at the map of



Bree artwork

News from Bree would like to acknowledge the work of **Ted Nasmith** - this issue's featured artist.

A native of Goderich, Ontario, Ted Nasmith (1955 -) spent much of his young life on the move and lived for three years in France. An artist prodigy, his talents were nurtured throughout his early years. He was introduced to J.R.R. Tolkien's works as a teenager when his sister gave him a copy of *The Fellowship of the Ring* - the effect was immediate, and shortly afterwards he began making a series of drawings based on the book.

Drawings led to paintings, and in 1986 Ted's efforts to illustrate Tolkien's world were rewarded with the publication of four paintings in the 1987's Tolkien Calendar. More appeared the following year, with full calendars of his art following in 1990, 1992 and 1996. In addition to his career as an architectural renderer, Ted has now firmly established himself as a renowned Tolkien interpreter, with his paintings appearing on Tolkien book covers, card games and collectable china, and the commission to illustrate *The Silmarillion* represents for him a dream fulfilled.



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.

Middle Earth. For all practical purposes, the Witch King in 1650 is fairly isolated - and in 2950 there are even fewer Dark Servant population centres west of the Misty Mountains. A common strategy for the Free Peoples is therefore to concentrate on reducing the power of the outlying Dark Servants while the more front-line Free Peoples (eg North Gondor) operate a holding action. If the Free Peoples are successful in Angmar (and quickly) this frees up a lot more forces to swing south towards Mordor. Similarly, the Dark Servants will classically look at taking the Rhun Sea area out of the hands of the Free Peoples. Once taken, The Dark Servants can easily project their military might into the forests of Mirkwood, possibly even into the Misty Mountains and beyond ...

Characters

At game start you have eight characters. However, you may immediately name up to four more - and you should aim to do so as soon as possible. Remember, more characters equals more orders! What sort of characters you name will vary according to your position, inclination and the needs of the team. However you should probably consider naming at least one 30-point emissary and a similarly skilled agent - if not two of each. More characters will become available as you progress through the game.

Intelligence gathering

Many teams have problems establishing an effective intelligence gathering strategy. This is unfortunate because it is the linchpin that holds together the other strategies. *Any* information learned about the enemy is *good* information. For example, learning that the Dwarves desire to own artifact 60 at game end may give the team a method of tracking dwarfish characters. To design and implement an intelligence gathering strategy, the team needs to dedicate mages to learning artifact and character location spells. Other characters need to be trained for recon and scouting orders. Finally, a prioritization of targets is necessary so as to avoid duplication of efforts. Once again, good early communication is the key.

Your team will need to examine the Artifact list carefully and decide which to go after. Although details of artifact powers are not listed in the rules, there are lists commonly available from the various websites (or one of your team-mates). It is not unusual for both sides to be searching for the Ring of Wind on turn 1, for example. Most teams probably go first for the so-called 'agent artifacts', followed by the artifacts that allow access to Spirit Mastery. As to agents, teams will probably use scouting and recon in the early game to find out what basic military strategy the enemy is attempting. Are the South Gondorians loading up ships to attack the Quiet Avenger? Does the Dragon Lord have sufficient troops to protect Goblin Gate? Finally, many teams completely neglect the use of Palantir as an information gathering tool. This is a foolish waste of a unique resource!

Espionage and counter-espionage

Teams need to have a good espionage and counter-espionage strategy. They need to decide whether to have starting agents steal from team mates in order to train more quickly. Further, what enemy nations will the team try to steal gold from and in which enemy nations will the team try to assassinate characters? The team needs to contemplate what steps will be taken to get a company of mages with



the 'curses' spells together, and where to send that company each turn. Additional consideration must be taken of where the team should send highly skilled emissaries to try to influence away enemy population centres. And of course, the strategy is not complete until the team decides on ways to deal with the enemy's agents, mages and emissaries. For example, many Neutral players forget that unless they have their relations DOWNGRADED with another nation, all of their population centres are vulnerable to emissaries, regardless of whether there is an army in the hex or not. It is critical to the mid and end games for teams to be working on a good espionage and counter-espionage strategy. Players should look at what steps are necessary to build up a number of good agent companies and emissary companies quickly. Further, the long slow process towards forming a curse squad (a company of mages, all of whom have learned various Spirit Mastery spells) needs to start early on.

Nations' goals

Just as each team needs a strategy for success, so does each nation. Upon receiving the initial setup sheet, you should carefully evaluate what resources your nation can bring to bear, as well as what resources are lacking. Itemize the spells that were randomly selected for mages, as well as random character starting locations. Determine how many characters can be devoted solely to the team effort and how many must be reserved for the day-to-day running of the nation. It is also important to decide whether the nation can be consolidated by ignoring outlying population centres, placing new ones centrally, pulling characters in from single locations and unifying them in armies and companies, and massing resources at one or two population centres. Decisions need to be made both in terms of what the nation needs to do immediately, but also where it needs to be in the future. Should armies be raised, moved or abandoned? Are certain starting characters just dead weight? What are the immediate military and character goals? Once these questions are answered (or at least guessed at), the orders necessary to run the nation successfully will be much easier to select and you can run your realm with confidence!

*This article first appeared in **Flagship**, issue 94, and is reprinted here by permission.*

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Check out the websites (above)
for more information.



shelob's web

*This time we concentrate on
Tolkien-based web games ...*

[http://www.lordofrings.com/
noflash/quiz.asp](http://www.lordofrings.com/noflash/quiz.asp)

There are 111 questions divided
over 6 levels corresponding
with the 6 books of The Lord of
the Rings. You have to play
through each level to ultimately
reach the end and destroy the
One Ring. The top difficulty
levels are, well, difficult!

[http://www.barrowdowns.com/
thangman.htm](http://www.barrowdowns.com/thangman.htm)

Hangman Hobbit style. For
every letter you get wrong, the
Black Rider will hang a hobbit.
It's fun trying to lose ...

[http://myprecious.co.uk/
precious.htm](http://myprecious.co.uk/precious.htm)

Three simplistic but fun
webgames: Hob the Hobbit,
Gollum Trivia, and Bounce-a-
Baggins. The site is rather fun
to explore.

What If ...

A literary phantasia on what might have been

One of the cult novels of the 1970s turned out to be Lord of the Rings. Written by one of the unlikeliest of best-selling authors, it affected a large number of people, not least of them being those people now saddled with names like Galadriel. How would this book have turned out had it been written by someone else?

Ian Fleming

Aragorn placed his hand on the cool, ivory hilt of his 6.38 Anduril sword, half-holding it in as casual manner as possible. His eyes swept the room of the Prancing Pony, eyeing up the potential threats. He took out his pipe, made from the warmed heartwood of a mature oak. In the palm of his left hand, he unwrapped his leather tobacco pouch filled, as he preferred, with Gondorian Silk Cut. Aragorn preferred it to the harsher, stronger Numenorian blend...

PG Wodehouse

"Sam, I've decided to go and overthrow the Dark Lord by tossing his jewellery into a volcano."

"Very good, sir. Should I lay out your crazy adventure garb? I presume that this will pose a delay to tea-time. I would remind your Hobbitship that your Great Aunt Lobellia Sackville-Baggins is expected for tea."

"Blast! I say, bother! How can a chap overthrow the Dark Lord? I suppose I'll have to delay my campaign."

"Very good, sir. I believe you will be free in about a decade."

"I'll do it then. Make a note, Sam."

Bernard Cornwell

"God save Rohan, we ye look at all those orcsies," said Sergeant Eomer, looking down the slope near Helm's Deep. "Thousands upon thousands of them, and not a single guard."

Aragorn looked at the multitude. He was a professional soldier, born and bred in a hedgerow, good only for war and fighting. Unlike the other officers, he didn't come from the Nobility, and was looked down by most.

'Nosey' Gandalf had given him his commission, and his sword, for saving his life in battle. "You're right, Sergeant Eomer. Let's see what we can do with these Numenorian bows"....

Oscar Wilde

"He bested me in a riddle contest."

"A riddle contest?"

"It was so. And he cheated."

"To cheat in a riddle contest is a riddle in itself, and is therefore not cheating, but just another riddle."

"He cheated and asked me what he had in his pockets."

"He picked and pocketed a pretty prize, performing perfidious behaviour."

How very noble, so like our own Lords and Masters"....

"Yes, Dark Lord", by Lynn & Jay

"Ah, Lord Sauron. I have here the draft of your speech to the Nazgul Committee on Running Water."

"Still waters run deep, Sir Grishnakh?"

"Er, with respect, Dark Lord, if waters are still, then they can't run at all, deep or shallow."

"Thank you, Bernard. Where would we be without you. What's the gist of my speech?"

"Essentially, Lord Sauron, that the policy of the Dark Lord Administration is to avoid having a policy, and that the absence of a policy does not betoken a lack of policy, but a policy of policy limitation, limiting policy initiatives to initial policy outlines, without precluding disparate policy initiatives within the policy outlines."

"Pardon?"

"You'll tell them they can do what they like, Lord Sauron."....

Rudyard Kipling

I went round to an elven inn, to buy a glass o' beer

The owner looked at me long-nosed, "We don't serve your kind here"

The elf maids giggled fit to die, pointing out my height
But I swim in booze whenever there is Evil in the Night.

Yes it's Gimli this and Gimli that

And go away you brute

But its To the Front, our faithful friend

When the bows begin to shoot.....

Raymond Chandler

"Frodo Baggins?" said the old man in the doorway, rain dripping from his oversized hat with all the ease of a dwarf burrowing after gold.

"That's the name on the door. Guess I'm gullible enough to believe what it says about me."

The old man came in a dripped water on the earth floor. Added a touch of class, so I didn't complain.

"Frodo, you've got a problem."

"I pay my taxes, and I'm clean with the Rangers. What's my problem?"

"Bilbo shafted you with that heirloom. Gold ring? Gold ringer, more like."

"A dud, huh. Can't say I'm surprised."

"If it was a dud, you wouldn't have a problem. Your problem is that this little heirloom has a history, a history with a pearl-handled stiletto in the back. It goes back all the way through the biggest string of mugs you find as wallpaper on Minas Tirith's finest. Goes all the way back to Night-Time Sauron....."

George Lucas

"Did you ever wonder who your father was, Frodo?"

"Uncle Bilbo was my father, Obi Gan Dalf."

"Your Uncle is a fine man, but he is not your father. Your father was a fine warrior and a great captain, strong in the Force. He was called Sarumann the Wise, and he was a good friend."

"Was? Is he dead?"

"He is no more. It is your destiny to avenge his death, young Baggins."

Dylan Thomas

I whistled defiantly as I walked down the streets of Under Mount Doom. Auntie Grima was baking orc bread, and the smell wafted over the streets like a miasma of wonderment. She was a dried-up woman,

the secret Diaries

The Secret Diary of Boromir, son of Denethor

Day One:

Went to Council of Elrond. Aragorn acting all superior as usual. He thinks he's so great because he's shagging that bit of elf crumpet on the side. I mean just because someone has a broad chest, firm, defined muscles, an outdoorsy tan and loads of manly stubble doesn't mean that...what? Got distracted there for a bit. Seem to have agreed to go on some sort of mission while distracted by Aragorn's enormous...rudeness. Ooops.

Day Three

Stupid Ring, stupid Quest, stupid Fellowship.

Day Four

Frodo dropped Ring today. Picked it up, but Aragorn made me give it back. Arrogant bastard. Wonder how he'd feel with Horn of Gondor shoved right up his... Stupid Ring.

Day Four:

Is obvious that Aragorn is strangely attracted to Frodo. Ha Ha! Ha! Sam will kill him if he tries anything.

Day Six:

Aragorn still into Frodo. "Boromir, give the Ring back to Frooodoo." "Boromir, let *me* carry Frodo up Caradhras." "Boromir, quit trying to cut off Frodo's head while he's asleep so you can get at the Ring." Blatant favoritism most annoying.

Day Ten:

Why isn't Aragorn into me?

Day Eleven:

Carried Frodo out of Mines of Moria. Kind of liked it, actually. Hope am not turning into pervy hobbit-fancier like Uncle Windermir. Not after what happened to *him.* Merry and Pippin are cute little things, too... In other news, Gandalf died.

Day 30:

In Lothlorien. Galadriel quite a babe. Feel sure she was attracted to my rugged yet unwashed manliness. Legolas took a bath in her fountain. Got in trouble. Ha. Ha. Big elfy git. Am quite sure he dyes his hair. Also, he has spot on his nose. Aragorn suggested we take baths as well. Only realized in nick of time he did not mean with each other. Stupid Aragorn.

Day 33:

Frodo being all weird about the Ring. Won't even let me look at it. Must admit I had a bit of a tussle with him trying to get a gander at it. Rolled around on him till he went invisible. Resisted urge to have a little cuddle (made easier when he punched me in the face.) Aragorn would be jealous. Ha!

Day 35:

Killed by orcs. Stupid orcs.

who cursed everytime the pit was mentioned, that death-dealing, life-giving pit. It was precious to us even though it killed us, our precious it was, but we didn't care

about it as much as we cared about the grilled human ears we had for tea.

"Dopey!" called my friend across the street to me, his voice echoing around our brown fields. "Dopey, you going to see the game?" There was always a game on. We didn't watch it, we devoured it, and when it was over, we played it out again and again, with a ball instead of a captive's head.

Grishna was always Garth Lliwams, and I was always Jaypeeare. He was magic, and when we finished, we would go home and dream of Nazgul....

George MacDonald Fraser

I never could stand that Boromir. Stuck up and arrogant. Still, I fixed him

good in his turn. I remember thinking, when the halflings rushed off, that's yours, Boromir. But I'm getting ahead of the story. It all started back in Rivendell. It was all Gandalf's fault, of course. Nearly every disaster of the Third Age was. But this time he outdid himself. His idea of a good plan was to take this wonder weapon we had chanced upon, and throw it away. Couldn't even throw it away in the sea, like any sane chap. No, his plan was to take it all the way into the middle of enemy territory, where there were millions of orcs and others, and throw it into a volcano knowing that the d...d thing will explode. There was a long silence, and Gandalf then said "Volunteers only, of course." Then everyone looked towards me....

Meatloaf

It was a hot summer's day in the Marsh of the Dead. There was fog crawling over the swamp. I could listen to the screams of the Dead Men Calling. I could see their empty eyes and the candles blowing in the wind. You were licking your finger. With the Ring of Power and I was dying just to ask for a taste. We were dancing together up on the Crack of Doom. And no-ones gonna know what we've done.

Bagenders (a London-based soap opera)

Gaffer Gamgee was relating the doings of the Baggins down at the old Green Dragon. "I tell you, they ain't proper Bagenders, with them noses in the air, not like our Samkin, who can turn up a turnip pretty as you please. Now Lobellia, she's all right. Nah, she is. But Bilbo? Remember that business with the Old Dwarfs? And what did that Bilbo give me on his eleventy first? Wine. I asks you. Do I look like a

wine drinker? Yeah, I knows I drunk it, but that's not the point..."

Christopher Martin-Jenkins (A celebrated cricket commentator)

"It's a lovely summer's evening here in the Paths of the Dead. Aragorn has won the toss, and has decided to bat. Interesting decision, and Jonathon Agnew has some news on that, so I'll pass you over to Jonathon while Fred cuts me a slice of that delicious orc cake sent in by Mrs Galadriel of Lorien Wood. Thank you Mrs Galadriel."

"Well, Chris, I've just been speaking with Eowyn, who said that she had recommended that Aragorn should send the other side in to the Paths of the Dead first. It seems that opening in there can be nasty. Bit of an uncomfortable pitch. The green slopes of Pelenor Fields are much more suitable to the opening pair of Aragorn and Eomer. Ragers seems keen to play a Captain's innings



today. I gather the bearded wonder has some statistics for us?"

"According to my records, the last time anyone went in on the Paths of the Dead, it was a sticky wicket."

"I wonder if we'll see that again today. Well, Ragers has come out, and I must say, his new sword looks a lot better. Reforged, I hear. Fred?"

"I don't know about forged or reforged, but he'll need to show more application than he has done. Treated his sword like it were broken."

"That's true, but he has done some remarkable running between the countries. Oh dear, it looks like they're going in for the day. Yes, they're definitely going in to the Paths of the Dead...."

Andrew Lloyd Webber

Don't cry for me, Numenor
The truth is, you never sank down
Beneath those wild waves
Those deep sea wild waves
You never left from
This Middle Earth

Gene Roddenbury

"The Halflings, cap'n, they will na take the strain"
"Strider, we've got to get out of this snow. Legolas, did you get a reading on that creature?"

"Fascinating, Captain. It appears to be an unknown creature that lurks in the pool waiting for passing strangers. Ecologically implausible, captain."

"Do you know what it is?"

"I believe I said it was unknown, Dr Gimli. Logically, if I knew what it was, then it wouldn't be unknown."

"Cap'n, we're in some sort of temporal warp, stretching and deforming the plot. The snow should take place a day before our encounter with this beastie."

"Captain, what are we going to do."

"Boromir, put on that red armour..."

Itana surveyed the battlefield. Much had happened, only six fortnights into the war. The Long Rider had lost his two villages and his mountain town. Now the armies of the Khand had burned the town of the Blind Sorcerer and were at the chokepoint of eastern Mordor. The slave fields of Nurn lay before them and a motley rabble of dog lord troops were all that stood in their way. A falcon flew in with news. It appeared that the Blind Sorcerer had hired an army in Urlurtsa Nurn - a desperate attempt to stall the inevitable. The war council was convened. Kionid spoke first: "Should we battle the dog lord? If we do not they may hold us here. Sooner or later those fools will send their cursers to battle our armies instead of picking off heroes in our capital one by one while their homeland burns! Some day they will realize that the Khand are made of sterner stuff than they can imagine; with every fallen leader two rise to replace them!"

Itana paused. "They will rush us, and the forces of the Blind Sorcerer will march along the Sea to delay us. We will ignore the rabble and march through the desert. We are on a mission of vengeance now." As the Dog Lord troops swarmed towards them the Khand warlords raised their scimitars and rode into battle. A scant fortnight later they stood at the walls of the Blind Sorcerer stronghold of Urlurtsa Nurn. A grinning scout reported back. "It is empty. They have left to chase us!"

Itana roared with laughter. "Burn it!" Another falcon came in, and the news was good.

Minas Morgul lay in ruins. Urig to the south stood poised over the Adunaphels major town, soft and vulnerable with a scant few defenders. And the Northmen stood ready to sack the mountain stronghold of the dragon lord to the east. Mordor was in flames, and all that remained in eastern Mordor were scattered camps. The heart of the kingdom of the Dark One surrounded them, ripe for the torch. And the mighty fleet of the Corsairs had more than met its match from the brave sailors of Southern Gondor.

Onwards men! The Easterlings will repay the debt from their mistakes in earlier ages!

Oh to be in Kala Dalakurth now that Spring is here!

A dramatisation of an incident in game 228

by Richard Devereux

Blobrog, commander of the Kala Dulukurth militia, pulled the moth-eaten bearskin rug back over his head and reflected through his hangover that it didn't matter what season it was in this godforsaken outpost, it was always bluggy freezing. If you could see the Grey Mountains to the south, it was going to snow; if you couldn't see the Grey Mountains, it WAS snowing.

Blobrog cursed feebly and wondered, not for the first time, what in Middle-earth the distillers put in the ardent spirit they called Dragonbreath. As usual, he decided that given the scarcity of natural ingredients in this part of the world, he'd rather not know. It tasted foul but generated an inner glow and dulled the senses. You needed that when you'd been on this bluggy posting as long as Blobrog. Blobrog doubted if anybody knew he existed - except the miserable citizens of Kala Dulukurth.

Kala Dulukurth. What a dump. In ages past, the town's shafts and passages had been delved out of the frozen rock in a vain search for mithril. The debris was used to build a defensive wall - not that anybody would want to attack such a bluggy-hole, it was just something to do with the stuff. The builders didn't need mortar, the blocks of stone froze to each other as soon as they touched. Now the little community survived by mining a little copper and tin which they made into bronze. If they were lucky they found the occasional nugget of gold. Whatever they found, the Witch-king took it to pay and equip his armies. By way of thanks to his frozen, starving citizens, the Witch-king imposed exorbitant taxes too.

Blobrog tried to yell for his slaves, but all he could manage was a mouth-like-the-bottom-of-a-birdcage croak. Cursing, he swung his legs out of bed, then cursed some more as his bare feet landed on the icy stone floor. Eventually, dressed and booted, he took a long swig of water from the chipped pitcher next to the brazier. The brazier had died but luckily there had not been time for the water to freeze again.

There was a scabbling noise at the door and a scrawny goblin slave poked a cautious head around it. "Breakfast, sir?" "Blugg off!" snapped Blobrog, purely for the satisfaction of having someone to swear at. "Get back here, you putrid maggot!" roared Blobrog. "What the blugg is there for breakfast?" "The usual, sir. Fried rat, crispy cockroach, that's about it."

Stores of conventional food had long gone. They'd even eaten all the maggots. Blobrog wondered where the relief column had got to - according to the crebain it had been due six weeks ago. Foul weather would not stop a column of orc troops - indeed

nothing short of death would stop them obeying a command from Murazor. Blobrog had only met Murazor once, and he shivered at the memory, not from the cold. Surely the column could not have been wiped out by those wretched Dwarves? Dwarves were the only other people hardy enough and stupid enough to try to scrape a living out of such terrain and in such a climate. Surely not. But then - why had the column not arrived?

There was a knock on the door and an orc, clutching a spear which identified him as one of the militia, entered. "Sir, there's a column of troops approaching from the south." He might have been smiling, but it was difficult to tell with orcs. "Excellent," exclaimed Blobrog, spitting out the bits of cockroach which even a troll could not ingest. "I'll come at once."

As he followed the militiaman towards the gate, Blobrog tried to work out why he was so pleased. If the column was carrying food, it would be for the proper fighting troops of the column, not the militia. Blobrog might be able to beg or steal a few scraps if he was lucky. The column commander would certainly outrank him and bully him in his own town. So why was he pleased? Was it just the novelty of a visit, showing that Murazor maybe DID care about Kala Dulukurth? Blobrog's head started to hurt again, and he realized that trolls shouldn't think too much, it was dangerous.

"Dwarves!" yelled the lookout. "It's not our lot, it's blugging Dwarves!" Blobrog peered at the column and laughed. "Dwarves they may be," he sneered, "but there's only a few hundred of them. They must've run into our relief column and suffered a good few casualties. We'll see 'em off easily. Get to your posts, you bluggers!"

Blugg, blugg blugg, thought Blobrog. No relief column, not even the smallest chance of any extra food, just see off these few Dwarves, and then back to the frozen, starving tedium of garrison duty. Blobrog wondered if it were possible to die of these things. Death would be preferable to another year of this.

"Dwarves!" yelled another voice. "Dwarves to the north!" Blobrog trotted as fast as he dared along the slick, icy wall-walk to the north wall. He didn't know how many Dwarves there were in this new army, because he couldn't count, but he could tell instinctively that the two Dwarf armies between them were more than capable of storming Kala Dulukurth. Every troll, orc and goblin would die - the Dwarves would show no mercy to their ancient foes and had no use for prisoners.

Blobrog's spirits rose, uncomplicated now. "Fetch me a mug of Dragonbreath," he snapped at his slave. When it arrived he drained it in a single gulp. As the Dwarves swarmed over the walls, Blobrog laughed as he led the doomed counter-attack.

face to face games

UK Game: We're planning a Cardiff game **July 26th (Fri) - 28th (Sun)** Clint writes ...

Okay, I have 24 players and have allocated nations as per requests. On the day if players want to swap nations that is fine with me. I have now taken the deposit from your account. So with that in mind unless there is anything else I will see you in July... I have 12vs12 1650 game.

US game is a no go though - can't get enough definites or replies so better than flog a dead-horse I'll bury it for the time being. Maybe we can resurrect it as a different version or have a team of 12 play across the Atlantic over a w/end? Would anyone be interested in that?



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]
P = Postal and Email game,*

BoFA: Veteran NM - c

1000: One

2950: Dwarves (m-P), Quiet (e - P), Fire (e-P), (e - P), Long (e - P), DarkL (e-P), Rhun (e-n), White (e-n)

1650: Witch-king [1 - 1w], Dark Lieutenants (e), Rhudaur [e - N], Dunlendings [e - N], Dog Lord [m]



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
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MEPBM Order Companion

Part One: 175 - 375

by Brad Brunet

In this article, I will attempt, in sequential order, to enlighten the newcomer to how the game works. I will refer to orders, or sections of orders that I feel require some clarification or further exploration. Everything in-between would include those that are either self-explanatory, or those that I have inadvertently left out.

The most important thing to realise is that the program runs the game IN SEQUENTIAL order. Thus, combat (200's) comes before recruiting (400's) which comes before movement (800's).

Where this is of crucial importance will be expounded upon below.

There ARE situations where order number does not necessarily show exactly how the game works.

You will notice, as you play, that many different sets of related orders are intentionally ordered to ensure that you can't get too much out of one turn! For example, Creating Camps (555) is AFTER Improving Population Centre (550), so you can't have a group of emissaries on a hex and create and "instant town" or so. Similarly, you can't

Improve a Harbour to Port (530) the same turn you Add Harbour to population centre (535). Careful study of the rules will enable you to understand exactly how the game works and enable you to plan more effectively. Be aware that the rules are often quite subtle; a general understanding is more than enough to get going, but careful study of all related issues will sometimes be necessary to ensure the success of each order you issue.

Another thing to mention: Difficulty levels. Orders and spells are rated as "Easy", "Average", or "Hard", and the rules provide a rough guide of skill level required to perform them. Unfortunately, there are many things that can have an effect on these orders, not the least of which is the fact that the games runs on percentages and randomised results. A 95% chance of succeeding means you have a 5% chance of failing, so don't be surprised when that happens.

And last of all: re-read the rules. In fact, until you are certain (through experience) it's useful to read through all sections of the rulebook related to your orders. Many sections of the book, and rules themselves, are quite subtle. Be careful that you are certain of what you are reading...

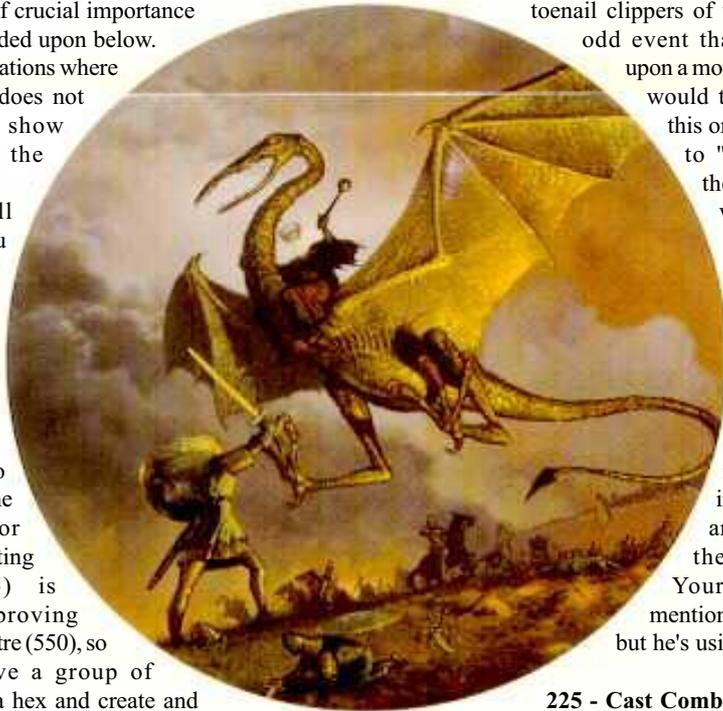
175, 180, 185 - Change Allegiance or Relations

These orders are crucial to ensure your characters/nation are/is effective. Virtually every order that involved another nation/character/army has a relations modifier of some sort or another. They are also listed as "easy" orders, but commanders below 40 do NOT have good track records.

205 - Use Combat Artefact

After many times issuing this order, some kind veteran on my team tactfully pointed out that my characters were always "using" their swords/staffs/toenail clippers of woe... Only in the odd event that they happened upon a more powerful artefact would they have to issue this order, one time only, to "switch" between them. The character will automatically carry the item into battle, and is always gaining its benefit during challenges or encounters.

Note: Every battle report only mentions primarily involved characters, and only mentions them ONCE each. Your mage may be mentioned casting a spell, but he's using his sword too.



225 - Cast Combat Spell

All combat spells affect the First round of combat ONLY. This can be quite important when deciding which spells to Cast or Research. If you are heavily outnumbered, you may prefer to cast an Offensive spell to do as much damage as possible before you're to be wiped out. Similarly, if you heavily outnumber the enemy, or it is close, you may prefer to cast a Defensive spell to ensure you maintain the largest possible surviving army. Thus, if you're going to stampede across the board with huge armies, defensive spells can keep them that way. Or, if you're primary military endeavour is to send out blocking, defensive armies, Offensive spells may be your best choice to better whittle away at your attackers.

240 - Defend

Mostly useful to designate tactics if you are attacked. The Standard tactic automatically used is not so bad that it's worth wasting a precious command order to "Defend". If you have the extra order and are just planning on sitting there, you'd still be better off issuing a recon...

270 - Destroy/Capture Ships

While you may just do your enemy a favour by reducing his maintenance costs, destroying ships on the

gunBoat rules A 1650 Variant

We're running another Gunboat game 36 - same sets of nations as before. I will create a list of players that you CANNOT talk to about this game when we get to filling the game. No discussing with potential team-mates nations before hand please... [-:-]

*2 nation game - you must play 2 nations. Nation combos are below - no Easterling nation.
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+14 Fire King+Cloud Lord, 20+24 D.Lieut+Rhudaur, 16+19 Ice King+L.Rider, 11+15 Blind + Witch K, 17+13 QA+Dog Lord, 12+21 DragonL +Corsair (Note change to normal)*

Rules for this game: Players are allowed to take offensive actions against unknown characters upon their OWN population centres. In other words, if Elrond, Erester and John Smith appear on the Cloud Lord capital the latter is now a legitimate target for challenge, curse etc by the Cloud Lord even though the nation of the character is unknown.

List of Dropped nations once every two turns. List of players who are playing but not nations nor side. No Diplomacy - under ANY circumstances [-:-]

Note Game ENDS (then and only then are the players names revealed) after 50 turns - highest total team victory points wins (unless within 10% - then draw declared) - Or one side has a greater than 4 to 1 player advantage.

Drop outs can be filled - but we will be discrete.

Individual victory points at end of game = average of your two nations (dead nations = 400)

Nations (normal WChamp rules except 21 +22 swapped around, Fort on 1910 & 4217, Easterling Capital with a camp - not to be affected by Players). If you are playing nations 21-24 you will have a character called: Lead a-d these are there for you to 175 (correct allegiance) and 740 - no other orders allowed.

Trust the players not to try and find out who their team mates/oppo are - and not to diplomate even if they come by such knowledge - it being deemed unsportsmanlike. You are not allowed to use camp or character names to exchange information.

No influencing, stealing, cursing etc on or from or to your team. No influencing, stealing, cursing etc on or from or to your team. No ass/kid if you do not know the nation of the character if you are not at your own PC. If you think it is forbidden by the rules it probably is so don't do it (ask us for clarification BEFORE the event). If you can provide feedback that would be very useful - the first game is going very well so we hope to make this one better.

beach is much more effective than during combat. If you're up against a naval nation, you'll want to find his ships sitting and get them, relegating him to land options. The Long Rider, for example, has only the one large recruiting centre on an island. Destroying his ships on shore keeps him out of the military game, and keeps you in it...

285 & 290 - Reaction to Encounter and Investigate Encounter

There are different kinds of encounters. Some are "fixed" in certain hex locations. Hidden valleys, for example. When a character receives an Encounter Message, it either gives a choice of Reactions (use 285), or the encounter says something or other "can be investigated" (use 290). If an encounter is fixed in a location, any character can "investigate" it at any time until it is solved. Some encounters can be "investigated" successfully over and over again. Similarly, there are encounters that can be "reacted" to again and again also. Other encounters wander the land, staying in a hex for only that turn or so. These can still be Reacted to or Investigated by Any character in that hex. For example, if one member of a company of 5 gets the encounter message, any one of them can issue the encounter order. Who gets the message and who gets to "react" to it if more than one issue the 285 or 290 order is not known.

DRAGONS. This is the order used when one meets a Dragon (and the above applies...). If the correct response is given to recruit the dragon, then: The dragon shall join the army led by the character with the highest sum of all skill ranks, artefacts included. Not straight command rank, Not Challenge rank... Once dragons are plentiful, you can manipulate where they go by transferring artefacts around in order to ensure the dragons join different armies! Subcommanders and other characters travelling with the army make no difference.

300 - Change Tax Rate

Use this order wisely! Taxes and loyalty are directly related. Every tax rate change WILL have a random effect on the loyalties of all your population centres: raise the taxes, loyalty decreases, and vice versa. The loyalties of every population centre can change randomly each and every turn, based on the nation's tax rate. Taxes of 39% and less will incur either an increase in loyalty, or no change. Taxes from 40% to 60% (inclusive) result in loyalty changes of -1% to +1%. This occurs randomly per population centre. 60% is thus the highest tax rate that gives a net zero change. Taxes of 61% will cause either a decrease in loyalty, or no change (thus, a net decrease).

Raising taxes is almost always necessary in the game. But, there are situations when lowering taxes is a viable option. Lowering taxes also affects loyalties: by increasing them. Higher loyalties make it easier to improve population centres, and provide defensive bonuses during combat. I've heard about a player who would continually lower his tax rate the turn before someone was trying to attack him in order to get the huge defensive bonus that high loyalties provide.

300 THROUGH 375 - Maintenance and the Economy

When your nation goes bankrupt, you are out of the game! Watch your economy very closely and make sure you plan at least 2, if not more, turns ahead! Your maintenance costs are projected on your turn

sheet. Sometimes you get more money, other times you get less. The order is as such:

300 - Taxes

You will earn tax money from all your population centres (not camps) that are still existing and not under siege at this point. Thus, any pop centres you LOST during combat (250, 255) you do NOT earn taxes from. Any population centres you GAIN during combat (255) you do NOT earn taxes on because they are Under Siege that turn. Any population centres that you have that had combat at them last turn are listed as Under Siege in your turn report are NOT included in your Economic Projection, but you DO gain the tax income from them. This is because they WERE under siege at the time your turn was printed, but no longer are come the 300 order... You will receive tax income at the rate that exists AFTER this order: if you increase your taxes, you will receive the increased amount.

Note: the expected revenue listed on your turnsheet also includes gold production. Doubling your tax rate will NOT necessarily double that expected revenue.

310, 315, 320, 325 - Buying and Selling from/to Caravans

You have now received tax income and can use it to purchase as much steel and leather as you like, or, more commonly, sell all you have for more coin! NOTE: the tax money is there, you can use it...

330 - Cast Conuring Spell

Note this comes after buying and selling. If you plan on conjuring mounts, you will not be able to sell them in the same turn.

340, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 357, 360, 363, 370, 375 - Various Transfer Orders

Read each transfer order carefully, and keep the Order Sequence in mind at all times. The 355 order can transfer troops from one army to another, but does not transfer anything from the baggage train with them. The 357 order can transfer ships to another army, but if giving your ships to another nation, you must have friendly relations with them. If you transfer food from an army to a population centre, you will not be able to sell it in the same turn. If you transfer an artifact from one character to another, the new holder of that tool will only benefit from it using orders after this point. Etceteras...

Note: 363 - Transfer Hostages to Character

Commanders will often capture enemies during combat, but all the orders dealing with hostages are Agent orders, so this order would then be used. Hostages get a random shot at escaping every turn. This is variable depending on the Hostage's agent rank, and the agent rank of the person Holding them. Thus, an agent has a much better chance of keeping hostages. Holding hostages has many advantages. Agents can interrogate them for information, not common but may be useful towards the end game... Hostages, whether captured during combat, or kidnapped by agents (order 605) are still considered characters. The nation they belong to has to pay for them, and cannot replace them like they can a dead character. It's a good idea to keep hostages whenever possible, but agents may injure their keepers when they escape.... It's all a delicate balance...I've had my nation's leader held hostage one game for 27 turns. There was much rejoicing when Celdrahil returned to Dol Amroth after a year away!

[To be continued ...]

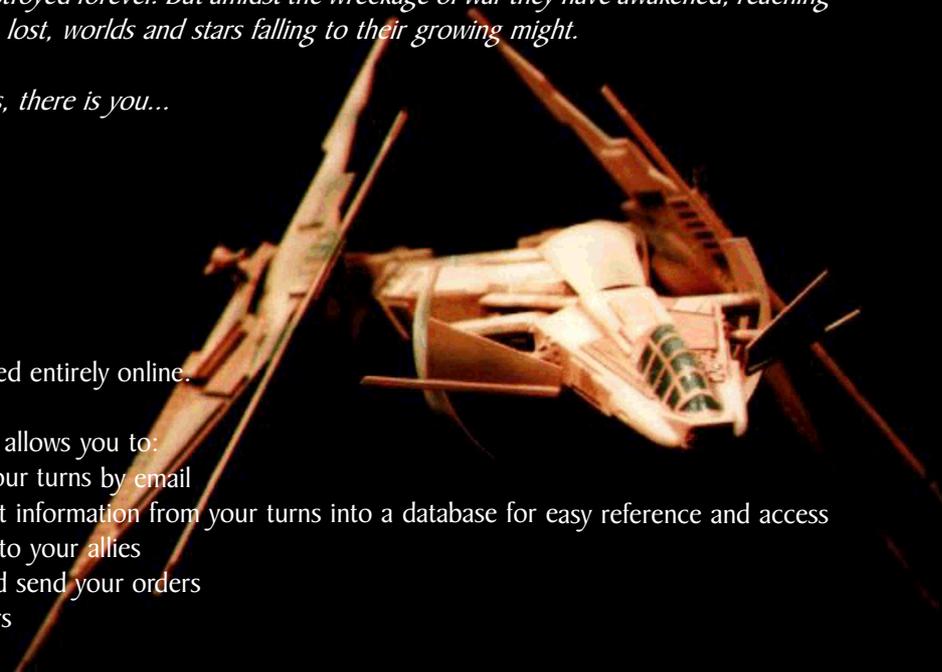
STAR QUEST

THE AFTERMATH

A galaxy devastated by centuries of war, where the very stars themselves were counted among the casualties. On worlds where spires and stations of numinous beauty once reached for the stars, now there are only broken bones and homes of twisted metal and glass and stone. Where once civilisations spanned worlds and stars, now shattered factions struggle for survival, alliances born of need and broken in desperation. And where flights of ships once leapt in cascading dance across the night of space, now worn and war-torn ships limp and inch, bearing those fleeing dying worlds.

Yet even as the dust settles, the remaining clans struggling for space and survival amongst the debris of a dying galaxy, there arises once more from its own ashes the empire of the Overlords. Once their regime was thought destroyed forever. But amidst the wreckage of war they have awakened, reaching out to regain what was lost, worlds and stars falling to their growing might.

And amongst all of this, there is you...

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