

SCENARIO: DEFENCE OF PALONIOUS

Hive Hades had been destroyed and the defences that surrounded the hive had been broken by the ferocity of the Ork attacks. Despite this, Imperial forces still held the vital Averneas forge complex. The factories and workers struggled to produce the weapons and ammunition vital to the defence of the planet. Situated to the southeast of the ruins of Hive Hades the forge complex was a choking mixture of noise and fumes generated by the forge's manufactorums. Added to this was the horrific din of battle as Ork warbands threw themselves at the Imperial defences trying to breach them and carry the battle to Palonious itself.

Imperial forces had a precarious hold on the city of Palonious. The city was a critical element in the defence of the forge complex. At the city's outskirts were elements of the 141st Armageddon Steel Legion regiment. The regiment had been on its way to reinforce Imperial units guarding the northern approaches to Avernus at the Eumendies Bridge when elements of the Blackskulls came flowing from the Diablo Mountains to the west.

The Guard troops had suffered almost continuous attacks from the Blackskull Tribe since then. Only their tenacity and the extensive fortifications ringing the city centre had stopped the Ork onslaught. However, the once proud 141st had been reduced to a fraction of its initial strength and their ability to hold out against continued assaults was in doubt.

Vastly outnumbered, the tattered remains of the 141st waited for the next Ork attack. Night fell and the evening was punctuated with bursts of bolter fire and explosions. This was the crisis point. If Palonious fell then Averneas would surely fall with it. The proud members of the 141st

knew that they had to hold. Defeat was not an option as the defenders of Armageddon needed the material produced from Averneas' manufactorums. Regional commanders also knew that the situation was critical and reinforcements in the form of elements of the Salamander Space Marines were dispatched to brace the defence of the city and hold Palonious at all costs.

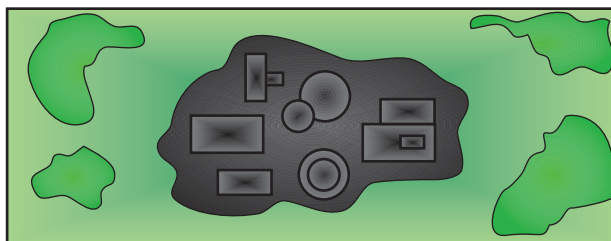
Forces

The Imperial Guard and Space Marine players split their point allocation evenly. The Ork player gets 25% more points than the joint Guard/Marine points total.

The Space Marine and Guard players are not allowed to use the Planetfall abilities of any units they purchase. They can still purchase units with the Planetfall ability but simply cannot take advantage of the ability itself.

Set up

The table should be set up with primarily buildings, ruins and fortifications in the centre of the table. Hills and forests (or other terrain types) can be placed around the outside edges of the table but the centre of the table, stretching to the Space Marine player's table edge, should be urban terrain and fortifications.



Objectives

Starting with the Imperial Guard player, the Ork and Guard player each place an objective in the Guard Set Up area. These are the only objectives in the game. Objectives must be placed in cover.

Deployment

Imperial Guard forces set up first in the Guard Set Up area. Ork forces then deploy next. All Ork forces must be placed on-board within the Ork Set Up area. No Ork units may be placed in reserve unless they are aircraft or units deploying via the Planetfall rules.

Once the Ork units are all deployed the Space Marine player places all his units in reserve on his table edge. The Space Marine table edge is the entire length of table and not just the area bordering the Imperial Guard Set Up area.



Special Rules

If the Ork player purchases any spacecraft they will always be affected by the Slow and Steady rule.

The Imperial Guard and Space Marine player make one joint roll for initiative at the beginning of the turn using the Space Marines' Strategy Rating. Guard and Space Marine formations use their own Initiative values when rolling to activate a formation. The Guard and Marine players 'share' a turn. During the Imperial player's turn the Guard or Marine player can make an activation. Either player's formations can choose to retain the initiative. So, if the Guard player activates a formation and is successful the Marine player could choose to retain with one of his formations as part of the same Imperial turn.

Only one player, either Guard or Space Marine, can purchase a Supreme Commander. The Supreme Commander is able to use his re-roll ability to re-roll activation checks for formations from both Guard and Marine formations.

Victory Conditions

The game lasts four turns. At the end of the fourth turn count Victory Points as per the Tiebreaker rules in section 6.1.7 of the Epic rulebook. Players also get Victory Points for controlling one or more of the objectives. The player that has the most unbroken units within 10cm of each of the objectives in the Guard Set Up area is said to control it.

Each objective is worth 50 points for every 1,000 points of the total cost of the Ork army. So, if the Ork player had an army worth 4,000 points then each objective would be worth 200 points; if the Ork army were worth 5,000 points then the objectives would be worth 250 points each.

In order to be considered the winner of the game a player needs to beat their opponent by more points than the Victory Point value of a single objective. So, if each objective were worth 200 points then a player would need to score at least 200 points more than their opponent in order to win the scenario. Any other result would be considered a draw.

Historical Outcome

As if understanding that they had only a single chance remaining the Blackskulls, and one of their few remaining functional Gargants, attacked the earthworks surrounding Palonious en masse at dawn the next day. Marines from the Salamander Chapter had only just arrived and were quickly rushed to critical points in the line to try and push back the waves of Orks attacking the 141st.

As the morning wore on a breach in the southwest area of the line was attacked by a mob of Stompas, Ork Dreadnoughts and the personal retinue, if one can use

the word, of the Ork Boss Magzthrull. Salamander Captain Su'than personally led a counter-attack and dispatched the Ork Boss in one-on-one combat in the ruins of one of the 141st's forward observation posts. Magzthrull's skull still adorns the captain's armour to this day.

The loss of their leader wasn't enough to dissuade the Orks and they managed to push Su'than and the Guard defenders back, taking the observation post and over-running the nearby medical facility and reserve staging area. The casualties were tremendous and reports of the Ork advance travelled through the lines, striking a severe blow to the morale of the defenders.

Captain Su'than saw that the situation was critical and took command of local Guard forces. Unfortunately, this required the dispatch of one of the 141st's Commissars who disagreed vehemently and (one has to think) rather stupidly with Su'than's plans.

Guard forces in the southwest were quickly withdrawn while reinforcements were moved in to either side of the Ork advance. The overzealous Ork forces pursued their opponents almost to the centre of Palonious where Su'than and Major Istevus had cobbled together an armoured reserve of Lemman Russ tanks and a hastily repaired Baneblade Super-Heavy tank.

It was against this iron fist that the Guard troopers formed and turned to attack their pursuers. Once the onrush of Ork forces was stopped, Storm Troopers and dedicated Assault Pioneers from the 141st's reserve were through against the base of the Ork assault.

The tactic worked. The breach in the lines was sealed and the Ork forces inside Palonious were quickly mopped up by Guard armoured elements supported by Salamander Marines who used their melta weapons to great effect in the vicious, short ranged battles at the core of the city.

As night fell, the Blackskulls retreated back into the Diablo Mountains and plans were made to reinforce the city with fresh troops. Palonious and the southern approaches to Averneas were safe but the 141st had ceased to exist as an effective fighting force. It was eventually merged with remnants of the 252nd regiment and saw battle again at the defence of Hive Infernus.

Authors

Zak is forum moderator on the Epic forums at our Epic website, he's online most days so feel free to go pester him (but don't tell him we sent you!).

Further Information

The Epic Space Marine range is widely available. Contact your nearest Games Workshop or visit the website for details. (See the How to Order pages on page 94).

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