

BLIND FIGHTING

FIGHTING IN THE SHADOWS OF THE UNDERHIVE

By Andrew Stickland

This venerable article originally saw the light of day way back in 1996, in Journal 14. It was reprinted in *Battles in the Underhive* the following year, but since then it's been unavailable, and I think that's a shame. As *Spyrers* and other such dubious characters have been on my mind of late, I decided that more shadows for them to hide in would be a good thing so I dug it out again and here it is.

Even in the darkest depths of the Underhive, where sunlight is nothing but a memory to some and little more than a myth to others, the inhabitants still try and live their lives as if they were ruled by the rising and setting of the sun. They spend their 'days' under the constant dull glow of powered lighting whenever they can find sufficient energy, or by torchlight and the flickering light of fires. Later they like to set aside a few hours when the lights can be dimmed, or sometimes even switched off completely, in order to allow them to get some much-needed, though probably somewhat restless, sleep. And strangely enough, this period of rest, known as 'Lights Out', coincides almost exactly with the rising and setting of the sun in the world outside.

And just as the people still seem to be affected by the movements of the sun, so too do some of the inhabitants appear to be affected by the phases of the various moons which orbit their planet. Wild beasts and monsters crawl out from their dark hiding places in order to hunt for easy prey, strange ghost-like figures are seen out of the corner of the eye, only to vanish as soon as they are noticed....

It goes without saying that even when it's pitch black and you can barely see past the end of your lasgun, the average Underhive gang fighter is always ready to fight. Over the years the gangs have learnt that the darkness can not only be a dangerous enemy, but also a valuable ally, and they have devised various new weapons and items of equipment to help them deal with what they call 'blind fighting'. And of course, if they can't see the enemy, presumably their enemy can't see them - or can they...?



BLIND FIGHTING

By and large, the fighters of the Underhive are already well-versed in fighting in conditions of poor light. However, poor light is still a good deal better than no light, and even the most battle-trained veterans think twice before venturing out to fight in an area of total darkness.

Pits and craters, broken walkways, rubble strewn about across the ground – all these and more are potential disasters waiting to happen for a fighter trying to run when he can't see more than a few feet in front of him. And what use is a long-range weapon when you can't even see what you're trying to shoot at?

In order to try and recreate these problems, the following rules can be used if any scenario is being played in conditions of total darkness. This will happen either by rolling a 'Pitch Black' result on the Treacherous Conditions Table (see later in this issue), or by playing one of the two following scenarios (Escort and Monster Hunt) which are specifically designed for these conditions.

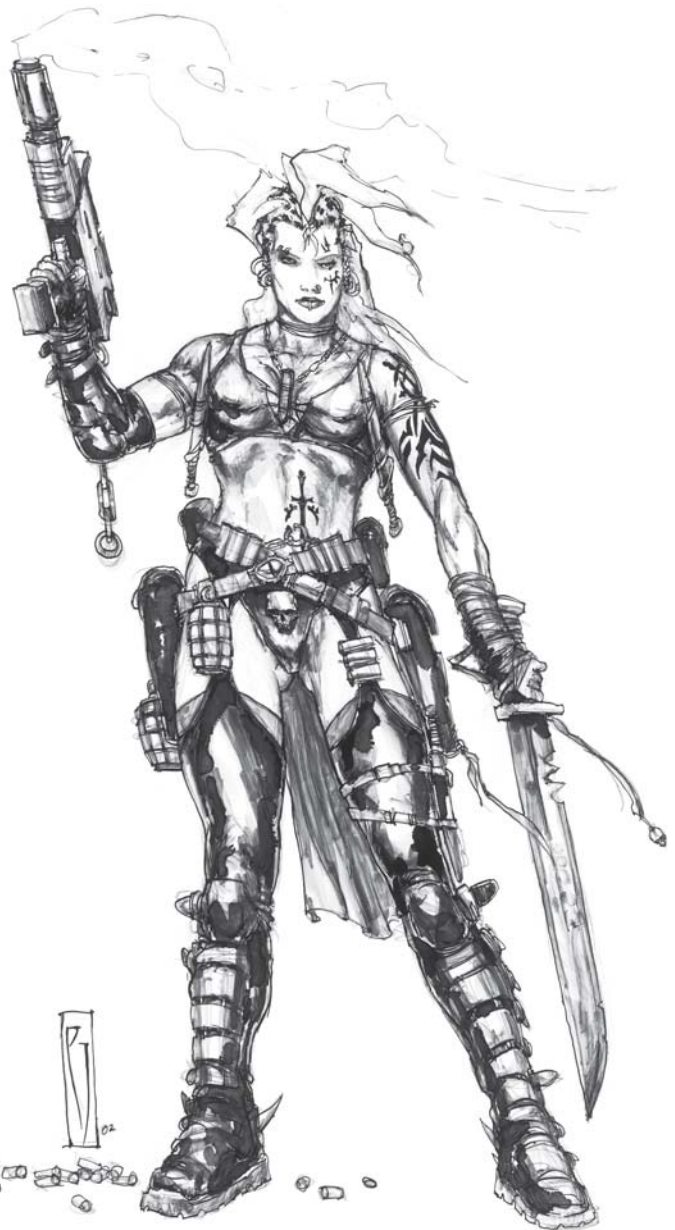
MOVEMENT

Whenever a fighter runs or charges, there is a chance that he might trip up on some unseen piece of debris along the way. To represent this, once the figure has completed its move, roll a D6:

- 1-2 **Oops!** The fighter has lost his footing and taken a tumble. Roll a further D6 and place the figure on its back that many inches from its starting point. If the number rolled is more than the total distance travelled, (for example, if the fighter was charging an enemy 4" away and rolled a 5 or 6), then he manages to stay on his feet after all and may fight as normal.
- 3-6 **Made it!** The fighter has managed to avoid any unseen hazards and may continue as normal.

A fighter who trips and falls in this way may do nothing else for the remainder of the turn, but may then clamber to his feet in the recovery phase as if he had been pinned.

Models equipped with infra-goggles will never trip and fall while running or charging. Those wearing photo-visors or contacts will only trip and fall on a roll of 1.



SHOOTING

When fighting in pitch black conditions the visibility for shooting is reduced to 8" and spotting fighters is so difficult that models may not use the shooting skills Fast Shot, Rapid Fire and Marksman.

Models equipped with infra-red goggles or sights are unaffected by the darkness, and may fire as normal. Models with photo-visors or contacts can see at double range (16").

Any weapon fitted with a red-dot laser sight may still fire up to its normal range, and will still be at +1 to hit. However, the darkness will make it much easier for the potential victim to spot the dot and so he will be able to avoid the hit on a roll of 4-6 on D6.

NEW EQUIPMENT

ROCKET FLARE

The rocket flare is a one-off, self-contained missile. Once fired, it will shoot high up into the air and then drift slowly back down to the ground on its own tiny parachute, burning with a dazzling white light as the chemicals contained inside it react with the surrounding air. The light given off by a rocket flare is so bright that all penalties for fighting in the dark will be negated for as long as the flare continues to burn.

To use the rocket flare, a fighter must be standing in a position from which he can fire the rocket directly upwards into the air (so he may not fire the rocket if he is standing beneath any piece of scenery, for example). The rocket flare is treated in the same way as a basic weapon, so a fighter may not run, or fire another weapon, during the turn in which he fires the rocket. When the rocket flare is fired, roll D6.

- 1 **It's a Dud!** The rocket fires, but the flare fails to ignite and no benefit can be gained from it. However, this is treated as a failed Ammo roll, so any relevant saving throws will apply, (eg, Auto-repairer, Weaponsmith, etc). For gangs with an Armourer, the rocket flare will be taken as having a 6+ Ammo roll.
- 2 **Fizzle, Fizzle.** The flare works, but only for a short time. The light will fade at the end of the opponent's next turn.
- 3-6 **Let There be Light!** The flare works perfectly and will continue to burn until the end of the player's following turn.

Special

If a fighter becomes desperate, he can use the rocket flare as a weapon, though a player must remember that it can only ever be fired once.

Range		To Hit		Save	Ammo	
Short	Long	Short	Long	Str.	Damage	
0-6	6-12	-	-	2	1	
					Mod.	Roll
					-	Auto

Note: The rocket flare may only be used in scenarios that are fought in open spaces, and so will be unsuitable for the Shoot-out scenario or any battles fought in a confined space (inside a mine or drinking hole, etc).



TRACER BULLETS

This type of ammunition can be made for most automatic, projectile-firing weapons at a relatively low cost and is used to help show the weapon's user where he is firing in conditions of poor light. Each fifth bullet fired is actually a tiny flare which burns during flight, thereby creating a visible trail in the air along which the fighter can aim.

Fighters using tracer bullets in Pitch Black or Grim Darkness conditions may fire at any target within the weapon's usual range limits, but must suffer a -2 penalty to hit on top of any standard range penalties. In conditions other than these, tracer bullets will have no added effect and the weapon will be fired as normal.

BLUE LIGHT

A blue-light is a small torch designed to be attached to the side of a fighter's weapon, thereby enabling him to see and keep both hands free for shooting at the same time. The light it produces is a soft blue colour and will only light up the few feet directly in front of it (so it will not help pick out targets for the fighter to shoot at). It will, however, enable him to see where he's going and avoid many of the trip-hazards along the way.

Fighters equipped with a blue-light will only trip and fall on a roll of 1 when running or charging in conditions of total darkness.

PRICE CHART

Item	Cost	Availability	Ammo Roll
Blue-Light	5	Common	-
Rocket Flare	20	Common	Auto
Tracer Bullets:			
Autopistol	5	Common	4 +
Bolt Pistol	15	Common	6 +
Autogun	5	Common	4 +
Boltgun	15	Common	6 +
Auto-cannon	20	Common	4 +
Heavy Bolter	35	Common	6 +
Heavy Stubber	15	Common	4 +



SCENARIO 1: ESCORT

From time to time, the Houses of Hive City send representatives down into the Underhive on 'business'. When this happens, they will usually contact one or other of their gangs, paying them to act as bodyguards until their mission is completed and they can return to Hive City. Of course in the Underhive, rumours spread faster than jag plague, and it's not uncommon for other Gangs to hear about such missions and realise that snatching these agents would do much to boost their own reputations and possibly provide a nice little bounty along the way.

NIGHT

This scenario is designed as a night-time mission and should be played in Pitch Black conditions. Other treacherous conditions may still be rolled for as normal.

TERRAIN

Each player takes it in turn to place a piece of terrain, either a ruined building structure, a connecting walkway or a barricade.

GANGS

Each player rolls a dice and the highest scorer chooses which table edge he will begin with. His opponent will begin with the opposite edge.

Important note: Neither side may use tunnels or vents in this scenario.

The attacker sets up first, deploying 2D6 randomly chosen members of his gang to represent all the fighters that could be found for the attack at short notice. The attacker must deploy all his fighters within 8" of his table edge.

The defending gang may choose any four fighters to act as the escort. In addition he must take a model for the House representative. The agent has the following characteristics:

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Agent	4	2	2	3	3	2	3	1	8

Weapons: The agent carries a laspistol and dagger and cannot be given any other weapons.

Armour: The agent wears mesh armour.

Special: The agent will only shoot at targets within short range (8") and may never choose to charge an enemy.

STARTING THE GAME

The game begins with the defender's models moving onto the table top.

ENDING THE GAME

The only way the attacker can win is if the defender chooses to bottle out, or if all four of the defending fighters go out of action.

The defender wins if the attacker fails a Bottle test or chooses to bottle out, or if the agent escapes off the attacker's table edge.

As the defending gang's reputation is on the line, it never has to make Bottle tests. However, if the defender chooses to bottle out at any point and the agent has not gone out of action, he will be abandoned and automatically captured by the attackers.





EXPERIENCE

- +D6 Survives:** If a fighter survives the battle then D6 points are earned, even for fighters who are wounded and taken out of action.
- +5 Per Wounding Hit:** A fighter earns 5 points for each wounding hit he inflicts during the battle.
- +10 Winning Gang Leader:** The gang leader of the winning side earns an extra 10 Experience points.
- +D6 Gotcha!** If the agent is killed, all attacking fighters who survive gain an extra D6 points each.

SPECIAL

If the defending player wins, the agent is so impressed with his escort that he will give them a huge reward. Work out income from territory as normal, but then multiply the total by D3+1 before working out expenses and hire fees, etc.

If the attacker wins, then the agent will either have been captured or will have gone out of action. If he was captured, the defending gang must pay the ransom in order to free him. They may not attempt the Rescue mission and they may not allow the agent to be sold to the Guilders as a slave. The ransom is 2D6x10 creds.

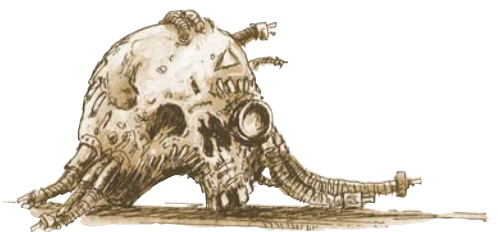
If the agent went out of action, roll D6.

D6 Result

- 1-2 Captured:** (see above).
- 3-5 Close Shave:** The agent makes it back home in one piece, but is none too pleased with his escorts and so does not feel the need to repay them in any way.
- 6 Dead:** The agent is zombie-food! Each surviving attacker receives an extra D6 Experience points as noted above.

NOTES

It is possible for the defending player to win the battle, but still end up with agent being captured or killed. In this case, follow all the above rules, but the gang leader will not get his +10 points bonus.



SCENARIO 2: MONSTER HUNT

Occasionally in the Underhive, a particularly vicious beast turns up, hunting for food in an area just a little too close for comfort for the surrounding gangs. When this happens, gangs are forced to swallow their pride and work together in order to defeat the creature and keep their settlements safe. Large Guilder rewards are usually offered for killing such creatures, but no amount of creds can stop most gangs from turning against their allies at the first possible opportunity...

NIGHT

This scenario is designed as a night-time mission and should be played in Pitch Black conditions. Other treacherous conditions may still be rolled for as normal.

TERRAIN

Each player takes it in turn to place a piece of terrain, either a ruined building structure, a connecting walkway or a barricade. The tabletop represents an area of no-man's land in which the monster has taken up residence. To decide what type of area it is, roll a D6:

D6 Area

- 1-3 Old Ruins
- 4-5 Mine Workings
- 6 Spore Cave

GANGS

Each gang may send as many fighters as it wants to hunt for the monster. Write the name of each fighter present on a separate piece of paper and place them in a cup. Each player then rolls D6. Starting with whoever scores highest, the players take it in turns to nominate a specific point anywhere among the scenery (including positions above ground level) and pick out one of the pieces of paper from the cup. The chosen fighter is then placed in the chosen spot. This continues until all fighters are placed, at which point all the names are put back into the cup.

STARTING THE GAME

The player who chose last during the set-up now picks out another name from the cup. This is the fighter who is first attacked by the monster. Place a miniature to represent the monster beside the fighter. It is assumed that the creature has leapt out from the darkness and is now engaged in hand-to-hand combat.

PANIC FIRE

As soon as the monster reveals itself, the fighter lets out a desperate scream which draws the attention of all the other fighters. Turn all the figures so that they are facing the monster, even if they cannot actually see it from their position.





At this point, all the fighters with line of sight to the monster will shoot at it, regardless of distance or modifiers for cover. The nearest fighter will shoot first, followed by the next closest, and so on, until all those with line of sight have fired or until the monster has been killed. The fighter who is in contact with the monster may not fire.

Note: All fighters will be firing at models in hand-to-hand combat so any hits will only hit the monster on a 4-6. On a 1-3 they will hit the other fighter instead.

If both the monster and the fighter survive, they now fight their hand-to-hand combat. The monster will not receive a charge bonus for this attack.

THE BIG FIGHT

At this point, regardless of what is happening with the monster, all the wild shooting convinces both gang leaders that they have been set up and the whole thing is just a trap. A gang fight breaks out.


Both players may now move any or all of their fighters up to 4", though they may not shoot or charge into hand-to-hand combat with any opponents (including the monster). Decide randomly who will move first.

Once this is done, the monster will take its turn. If it is in contact with another figure, it must fight it in hand-to-hand combat, otherwise it will charge towards the nearest fighter and attempt to attack. Resolve any hand-to-hand combat if necessary and then each player rolls D6. The highest scorer will take the first turn.

From this point on, the game will proceed as a standard Gang Fight, and all rules for that scenario will apply. However, the monster moves and fights after each player's turn, and will continue to attack all fighters until it is killed or until both gangs have bottled out.

ENDING THE GAME

As with Gang Fight, the object of the game is to force the opposing player to bottle out. However, a player cannot win the game unless the monster is also killed (by either gang).

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More Necro	<i>Why not try the Treacherous conditions article on page 62 of this issue, or even try hunting in the dark with a Spyrer gang. Rules for Spyrers can be found in issue 2 or available to download from the website.</i>	
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EXPERIENCE

Fighters who take part in Monster Hunt earn Experience points as noted below.

- +D6 Survives.** If a fighter survives the battle then D6 points are earned. Even fighters who are wounded and taken out of action receive experience for taking part.
- +5 Per Wounding Hit.** A fighter earns 5 points for each wounding hit he inflicts during the battle. Note that any flesh wounds inflicted against the monster do count as wounding hits for this purpose.
- +10 Winning Gang Leader.** The gang leader of the winning side earns an extra 10 Experience points.
- +10 Monster Bonus.** The fighter who eventually kills the monster receives a bonus of 10 Experience points.

SPECIAL

If the monster is killed, the winning gang may claim its stalking ground as a new territory. Whichever area was rolled for at the start of the game will be added to the winning gang's list of territories.

Also, there is a substantial reward offered for defeating the monster. However, regardless of who actually killed the monster during the game, the winning gang will be the only ones in a position to retrieve the carcass, and so may take it to the local Guilders who will pay them 100 creds which should be added to your income before working out expenses!

THE MONSTER

The monster is one of an as-yet unidentified species and is known only as the Night Crawler

	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld
Monster	5	5	-	4	4	1	6	2	10

Weapons The Night Crawler fights with its two powerful claws.

Special The Night Crawler can never be pinned, and will never suffer a down result. Each time it suffers a wound, roll D6:
1-5 Flesh wound (WS -1)
6 Dead

Psychology The Night Crawler is immune to all psychology. It never tests for fear, terror, or any of the other psychological factors described in the Necromunda: Underhive rulebook.

