HIDE & SEEK

House rules for concealed set-up
By Andy Hillier

THEY SEEK THEM HERE...

So Games Day has been and gone, and what a great time we all had. Whilst discussing the finer points of our most favourite of games with some of the lads in the Fanatic cave they persuaded me to put pen to paper to air my views. So here we go – see what you think...

For some time I have been really 'obsessed' with wargaming and the mechanism to produce the final result. At the advent of Warmaster my heart quickened as it is what it says – the ability to play much larger games and take a general view. I have played Warmaster since its inception against numerous players with different armies and varying abilities.

In wargames, players benefit from having the 'Eye of God'. In other words, we can see the whole of the battlefield, behind all of the terrain and all of the enemy's troop positions. We accept this because it makes gameplay a lot easier. But, for the obsessive like myself I want a little more realism to my games. I want to create that 'Fog of War' element that is lacking from the game. I want to make provisions for hidden troops deployment, possible ambushes and create an atmosphere of uncertainty.

The most exciting games are those played with quite a lot of scenery: villages, castles, woods, etc. These all offer in real terms the opportunity for an advancing army to be ambushed or for a defending army to conceal troops.

Try, to begin with, laying out terrain as you would perhaps with Warhammer, consecutively placing pieces or using the simple terrain generator. This will, within a few turns, produce a number of items on the table. Agree beforehand the size of the terrain item as the edge to edge dimension of the piece on the table.

Don't roll for who goes first but for who defends and who attacks. Whoever wins the roll may choose to either be the defender or attacker.

Defender: Can place their units initially 80cm apart. May use any piece of terrain and can conceal up to 30% of the army within the initial half of the table. Therefore, as most of us play on the standard 6' x 4' table, visible deployment would be within approximately 1' of the table edge. However, concealed deployment has an area of 6' x 2' (see deployment map below). The defender must deploy first.
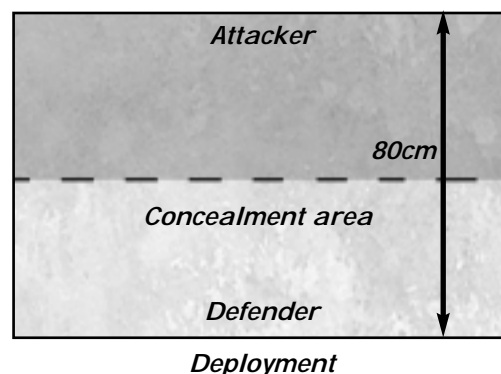
Deployment

Attacker: May choose which side to deploy from and has the first turn. This will give a balanced view with regard to placing terrain and teach the Generals to be aware of the lie of the land. The attacker will have to be careful in his deployment for fear of the defender's troops suddenly appearing from dense terrain close to his battlelines. The attacker may conceal troops within terrain in his own deployment area.

The defender is assumed to have the greater knowledge of the land – after all he is defending it! It is for the attacker to determine that the troops he is facing consist of the total enemy force or just part of it. He must consider which parts of the battlefield could conceal enemy troops and

which parts are strategically important to them. This will hopefully produce a more reserved and calculated game, relying upon tentative probing rather than rash charges across open plains.

CONCEALMENT

The mechanism I have developed to achieve this is as follows – the defender, after surveying the battlefield, determines where to deploy his army. If he decides to conceal a unit within a terrain piece (whole units must be hidden, not individual stands) then the whole of the unit must be able to fit onto the base of the terrain piece. The size of the terrain piece (wood, village, castle, etc) will determine the displacement of the troops. The defender must make a note as to the formation and direction the unit is facing (see map below).

Unit concealed within woods

The defender must be allowed private access to the battlefield (get the attacker to stand outside or go into the kitchen and make tea!) so that he can measure terrain pieces, see how many units will fit, etc. He must then mark down all of his concealed units onto an accurate map of the battlefield so that he is aware of their positions and can show this to the attacker later.

As hills and large woods have always had strategic value in important battles, by offering generals the opportunity of hiding their troops behind them, I thought that this element should be considered here. Therefore, Cavalry and Chariot units (cannot enter such terrain) are able to conceal themselves behind terrain such as this but only if the enemy does not have a line of sight to them. If at any point enemy troops get into a position where they would realistically be able to see troops concealed behind terrain then the concealed troops must be deployed (c'mon defenders let's be honest here!).

So when does the fun start? This usually is entirely down to the defender. His troops lose their concealed status as soon as they move (usually by charging enemy that have lumbered too close to their position), shoot with missile weapons or enemy stands occupy the terrain piece that they are occupying. If any of the aforementioned situations arise the previously concealed troops must be deployed on the battlefield.

As you can see this really makes for a very tense and exciting game of Warmaster and forces the Generals to think a lot more about their actions.

OVERVIEW

• Dice for Attacker/Defender. Attacker – goes first and determines which edge to play from. Defender – Has the ability to place units into concealed areas up to 50% of the battlefield.

• Start Game – Units that are concealed are left off the table and a note of their position is made on the defender's map.

• These units are brought onto the table if,
  1. They move
  2. They fire
  3. The enemy moves onto the terrain piece they occupy.

Ensure that concealed units may be deployed in or behind said terrain.

• Foot units can be concealed in any terrain

• Cavalry/Chariots can only by concealed behind hills, large woods and buildings according to the line of sight rule.

• Artillery can be placed into any terrain. It is assumed that the general has placed his field artillery in strategic areas. However if placed hiding they cannot be moved. We again assume they have dug in and are not easily moved.

• Flyers do not go into hiding, as there is no benefit for them.

• Roll Dem Bonez**!**