

NEW ADVENTURES

HORIZON WARS: KILLING YOUR SOLDIERS BEFORE YOU DEPLOY THEM SINCE 2016

The Adventures tables in the *Horizon Wars* rulebook are fine. They work, barring a few minor corrections. But they do have their flaws. Some missions, for example, are much easier than others. And some match-ups lead to very short, decisive games. Also, some missions naturally favour or penalize certain styles of army.

To an extent, this is as it should be. Let's be clear: Adventures will never be "balanced" in the sense that each side will have a statistically equal chance of success regardless of their army design choices. But as *Horizon Wars* matures as a game and its players develop a consensus on how they like to play, I hope to respond in kind by giving them a shared way of playing that meets more players' needs and expectations.

These rules don't replace the ones in the core rules- like I say, technically, they are fine. But this one is shaped more to the expectations of the game's community.

With that in mind, then, a version of these rules will be available on the Precinct Omega website for as long as possible and will be a "living" document: one I update as needed, based on player feedback and suggestions.

WHAT ARE ADVENTURES?

The term is, from the perspective of a soldier, darkly humorous. When a routine mission encounters the enemy in a form more numerous or more powerful than it was expecting, and the plan goes out of the window, it's "an adventure". Since classical times, generals have known that, in order to secure victory with certainty, a commander must enjoy numerical, tactical and strategic advantage. That is, he (because it has, so far, always been "he", although we look forward to the change in that pronoun that the future will bring) needs to have more soldiers in greater force, in a better position and with better support than his enemy- not merely by a slim margin but by a factor of at least 200%.

In game terms, though, such "realistic" encounters are likely to be quite dull. Set-piece battles do their best to capture this asymmetry by introducing complications that make victory harder for the numerically-superior side, but fighting against a force with three times one's own strength is never going to be very entertaining for the outnumbered commander, if only because they have fewer miniatures to push around the table!

Hence, adventures. These pit roughly-equal-sized forces against each other under circumstances in which neither side was really expecting to encounter resistance or opposition, so they aren't ready or prepared for the conflict that suddenly befalls them.

BEFORE YOU START

To begin with, it's a good idea to know whether an Adventure is what you're after. *Horizon Wars* isn't a complicated game to play, but it does like to front-load its complexity into things that happen before battles, and Adventures are a good example. There is a certain amount of book-keeping to be done between turns, too. So if you're looking for a more straightforward encounter, perhaps a set-piece battle would be more appropriate.

Adventures, however, are an excellent test of commanders' ability to manage scarce resources and think tactically about how to allocate and use them towards a goal in the face of stiff competition.

Having decided that you definitely want to go on an Adventure, then, before starting the battle, commanders should agree on the size of the battle they want to play, using the guidelines in the *Horizon Wars* main rulebook, and the size of the table they want to play on.

MOMENTUM & VICTORY

Adventures use the rules for Momentum described in the main *Horizon Wars* rulebook, including momentum damage.

If, at the start of any turn, one commander has zero (or less) momentum, and the other has at least one momentum,

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the commander who still has momentum left has won the battle. The margin of victory is determined by the amount of momentum the winning commander has left as a proportion of his or her starting momentum.

Momentum Left	Margin of Victory
≤10%	Pyrrhic
10-25%	Marginal
25-50%	Decisive
≥50%	Utter

If commanders end a turn with both battlegroups on 0 Momentum, the battle is a stalemate, and each will carefully disengage back to safer territory.

MUSTERING

Having decided to go on an Adventure, the commanders should then muster their forces, before knowing what their Situation and Mission will be. Each force should be built to an agreed force cost (FC), and each commander should also take note of the final force presence (FP) of their battlegroup, as this will affect the next step: intelligence.

INTELLIGENCE

A battlegroup's intelligence rating (IR) is based on the difference between their FC and their FP (before applying any losses that arise later from the Situation). To get a battlegroup's IR, divide its FP by its FC, subtract the result from 1 and multiply by 10, rounding to the nearest whole number, or

$$10 \times (1 - (FP/FC))$$

Example: Stefan designs a battlegroup with FC 15, and FP 24. $10 \times (1 - (24/15)) = -6$, so the battlegroup's IR is -6. John designs a battlegroup to face Stefan with FC 15 and FP11. $10 \times (1 - (11/15)) = 2.67$, rounding up to 3, so the battlegroup's IR is 3.

Rating	Quality	Effect
-6 or less	<i>Very poor</i>	Your opponent places half your terrain (rounding up) and places your deployment space(s). You are poorly-disposed.
-5		
-4	<i>Poor</i>	You are poorly-disposed.
-3		
-2	<i>Good</i>	You play as normal.
-1		
0	<i>Very Good</i>	You are well-disposed.
1		
2 or more	<i>Excellent</i>	You are well-disposed. You get an additional deployment space.

Intelligence in linked battles

Intelligence can also be used in leagues or campaigns in which it will be good for the results of one battle to influence the conduct of the next. Winners may gain bonuses to their IR from securing certain objectives. You can also use intelligence as a handicap system. New players start with a natural advantage such as +3, which reduces with time and victories towards a "scratch" handicap of 0.

Design Note

A feature of *Horizon Wars* and the Adventures system in particular is that forces that may be equal in FC are nevertheless far from being equal in FP. For example, I've been able to design battlegroups, each costing 15 points, that end mustering with FP as widely spaced as 11 and 24. High FP battlegroups have already been penalized by momentum damage, but as low FP battlegroups suffer from less momentum – when they are already usually pretty slow – there's not been any good reason to take such low FP battlegroups before. But now IR gives commanders a good reason to consider them, as having very good or excellent intelligence gives commanders a substantial advantage in the early game.

SITUATION

A battlegroup’s Situation is the bigger strategic picture in which the battlegroup sits. The Situation tells you how your battlegroup is feeling, how supported the commanders are by their immediate superiors, how large the advance force is, what reserves the commanders have at their disposal and how familiar they are with the terrain around them.

Loss

This column shows the reduction in Force Presence (FP) commanders take in this Situation. Remember: a battlegroup’s starting Momentum is equal to its FP, minus the P of any losses suffered.

Disp(osition)

This shows whether the battlegroup is well or poorly disposed. This isn’t an indicator of how amendable they are feeling to a cup of tea and a biscuit, but a question of how well-prepared they are for the coming battle. Well-disposed forces have anticipated the possibility of conflict and taken precautions to ensure that they have reserves at hand, intimate logistical support and a strong ORBAT (order of battle). Poorly disposed forces are in the opposite Situation.

The effects of disposition are shown below:

Well disposed	Available from Turn...
Air reserves	1
Deep deployment reserves	2
Other reserves	2
Indirect fire from reserves	1
Poorly disposed	
Air reserves	3
Deep deployment reserves	4
Other reserves	3
Indirect fire from reserves	2

The effects of Intelligence take priority over the Situation result.

Adv(ance Force)

This shows the maximum proportion of the battlegroup’s FP that may deploy at the start of the battle. Multiply your force’s FP by the decimal, rounding to the nearest

whole point.

Res(erve Force)

This shows the maximum proportion of the battlegroup’s FP that may begin the battle in reserve. Calculate as for the Advance Force.

Terrain

This shows the number of terrain pieces you may deploy from your collection. Each commander takes it in turns to place and define terrain until each has placed items equal to the value in this column. Either commander may place fewer terrain items if they wish. If both wish to place more, then when both have placed and defined the items up to the amount given in this column, they may start



Extra-dimensional entities will ruin anyone’s day

“Listen up, dirt-maggots! I won’t lie to you. We’re in it up to our necks. We are outnumbered and surrounded, we’re low on ammo and I don’t think one of us has slept in seventy-two hours. But we’re the children of Venus Apophis. Allah doesn’t want us and Shaitan’s too scared to take us, so let’s do them both a favour and not die out there. Got it?”

-Acting Prelator Leandra Portillo

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Roll	Situation	Loss	Disp	Adv	Res	Terrain
1	All's quiet... This was supposed to be another boring day. The enemy was supposed to be miles away and no trouble expected. So what the heck...?	0	P	0.50	0.75	6
2	Storm in a teacup The higher-ups are flexing their muscles to look good and, as usual, you're the one who gets to stand in the crosshairs.	0	P	0.75	0.50	5
3	Opening salvos Hard times are a-coming, but right now it's just scouting missions, testing the water. Isn't it?	0	P	0.40	0.85	4
4	Open warfare This game has kicked off, but it's too early to say which way the cards are going to fall. One way or another, you plan to win.	-1	W	0.55	0.70	3
5	High intensity The conflict is on a knife edge and everything could hang on your success or failure. No pressure, then.	-2	W	0.40	0.85	2
6	Winning! Reports from the front are positive and it seems that the enemy is falling back in disarray before your might, so what's this?	0	W	0.50	0.075	2
7	Losing Things are not going your way and your whole side is on the back foot. Is this a chance to restore the balance?	-1	W	0.75	0.50	3
8	Tactical Withdrawal You've been forced to abandon your position and move back to an alternative location.	-1	P	0.85	0.40	4
9	Full Retreat All around you, your allies and comrades are abandoning the conflict for whatever safety they can find. Don't you owe it to your soldiers to follow suit?	-2	P	0.90	0.35	5
10	Beaten Your side has been decisively crushed and the enemy is now mopping up. Your force is intact but dispirited. Is there any coming back from this?	-3	P	1.00	0.25	6
11	Insurgency The war is over, but you won't give up. At every turn you will fight the invader, and this looks like a perfect opportunity!	-2	W	0.25	1.00	7
12	Everything's under control! You know exactly what's going on around here. Pick one of the contexts above.	-	-	-	-	n/a

Roll	Action	Effect (from the start of turn 2)	Deployment
1-3	Advance Press forward rapidly and let nothing stand in your way.	Measure the distance between your table edge and your effective element furthest from it. For every full 8", reduce your opponent's momentum by-1 to a maximum of-4.	6" x 6"
4-6	Hold Stand firm and let none pass.	For every two effective elements you have on the battlefield, reduce your opponent's momentum by-1 to a maximum of-4.	6" x 18"
7-9	Patrol Assert your presence in the area by moving widely.	At the end of each turn, measure the distance between your two effective elements that are the furthest apart. For every full 12", reduce your opponent's momentum by-1 to a maximum of-4.	6" x 12"
10-12	Withdraw Move back in orderly fashion to prepared locations.	At the end of each turn, measure the distance between your table edge and your element nearest to it. For every full 8", reduce your opponent's momentum by-1, to a maximum of-4.	12" x 12"

Roll	Purpose	Effect
1-3	Destroy Enemy forces in the area must be killed or captured.	For each enemy element reduced to A0, increase your momentum by +2.
4-6	Protect Interfere with enemy forces' ability to fight.	For each enemy element destroyed or reduced to F0, increase your momentum by +1.
7-9	Fix Prevent enemy forces from being able to manoeuvre.	For each enemy element destroyed or reduced to M0, increase your momentum by +1.
10-12	Disrupt Force the enemy to deplete their logistical resources.	For each enemy element that suffers 4 or more damage in that turn, increase your momentum by +1.

alternating placing terrain again up to the same amount.

MISSION

The mission is what the battlegroups were doing before their day was ruined by another battlegroup turning up in the middle of it. But the inconvenient appearance of a sizeable enemy force doesn't mean the mission stops. The commanders' masters expect them to press on with their mission, regardless!

A Mission consists of two parts: the Action and the Purpose. The Action is what the battlegroup is doing. The Purpose is why they are doing it. Fulfilling your Action will degrade your opponent's momentum, whilst fulfilling your Purpose will sustain your own.

The Effect on Momentum

All fighting forces will eventually run out of momentum. The object of an Adventure is to reduce your opponent to zero momentum before they can do the same to

you. A principle of military momentum is that erosion is inevitable. The actions and decisions of a commander can slow the effect, but cannot entirely prevent it.

Momentum is calculated at the start of each turn. The effects of commanders' Actions and Purposes are applied from the start of turn two. The effects of Actions are cumulative - the more turns you can sustain an Action effectively, the greater the impact it will have.

By contrast, the bonuses received from achieving one's Purpose last only for the turn in which they were achieved.

Example: At the start of turn 2, a commander with the Mission "Patrol to Destroy" has her two most distant effective elements 24" apart, so her opponent suffers -2 momentum. She has also destroyed one element, so she gains +1 momentum herself.

At the start of turn 3, her two most distant effective elements are now 36" apart, so her opponent suffers -3 momentum on top of the -2 suffered the turn before. She has also destroyed another enemy element, so she gains another +1 momentum, but gains no benefit from the element she destroyed in the previous turn.

Deployment

A battlegroup's Action also dictates its deployment space. This is a square or rectangular space orthogonally adjacent to the commander's home table edge (so it must have one edge completely touching the table edge) and the size described in the table below. Commanders have one deployment space for every 10 elements in their

armies, from a minimum of 1. Battlegroups with between 1 and 19 elements will have only one deployment space; battlegroups with between 20 and 29 will have two, etc. Deployment spaces may touch, overlap and/or be separated by any distance as long as each is orthogonally adjacent to the table edge.

Reduction Modifiers

The effect of losing -1 momentum on a battlegroup with only 9 momentum to start with is much greater than the effect of losing -1 momentum from a battlegroup with a starting momentum of 35. As a result, smaller battlegroups will run out of momentum far more rapidly than larger ones. This is intentional: a small battlegroup will give you a short game; a large one will give you a longer game. But if you want smaller games to last longer, and larger games to be shorter, you can easily tweak the impacts of deductions. For longer games, reduce the maximum reduction a commander will suffer from completed Actions or increase the benefit of the Purpose. For shorter games, increase the impact of achieving Actions.

For example, if I'm playing a 9-point Adventure, but want the game to last more than three turns, my opponent and I might agree that the maximum possible deduction from a completed Action will be -2 rather than -4.

Design Note

This supplement is a living document and will be subject to revisions and updates based on continuing player feedback.