

# WHISPERS OF THE WOOD



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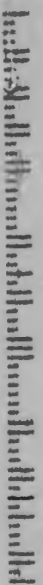
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## WORDS FROM THE WOOD

Summer's on its way and that means picnics on the beach, volleyball in the sand, ants in the food, sunburn on the skin, annoying beachniks (hey, it's my column, I can use words like beachnik if I want) guzzling beer and crushing the cans against their foreheads, Charles Atlas-like bullies kicking sand in your face, the wafting scent of coconut oil, sweat and testosterone, packs of kids, free from school, yelling and screaming their way through malls and 84-theater multiplexes, family vacations in station wagons with stops at every local flea-bitten tourist trap, and heat. You just gotta love it!

Now that summer is near, there is some good news--namely, convention schedules! GSI will be appearing at 3 conventions this summer--Origins, GenCon and AndCon. We will be holding seminars at all three conventions, so if you're in attendance, be sure and stop by. They're always informative and fun. Our schedule is as follows:

7/7-7/10 Origins - San Jose CA BOOTH # C-17

7/8, 8:30 PM - GSI seminar - Pete and Bill will answer questions about ME-PBM, game mechanics, new scenarios, Middle-earth in general, including a special session to help new players fill out their turnsheets, and general strategy hints for new and old players alike.

8/18-8/21 GenCon - Milwaukee WI BOOTH #22

8/19, 8:00 PM - GSI seminar - as above

9/15-9/18 AndCon - Cleveland OH BOOTH #401

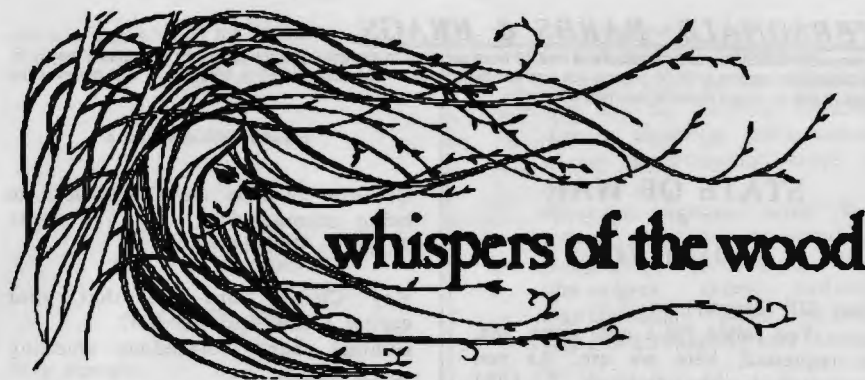
[date-time unknown] - GSI seminar

It seems that the new free-faxing and free-E-mail services are a big hit. However, with literally hundreds of players submitting turns via those mediums, many different formats are being used. This makes our data entry and verification much more difficult. Since our data entry staff are accustomed to the normal turnsheet, other formats result in much more time being expended to enter and verify orders as well as a greater chance of errors. Please be sure that, if you must/want to use something other than our pre-printed turnsheet, you still must follow the normal format layout of that pre-printed turnsheet as closely as possible: including your name, game and player number, due date, and security code. Characters must be in alphabetical order, two orders each, side by side with the required information directly beneath each order, and with a blank line in between each pair of orders. For faxes, leave at least a 1 inch margin around the document to prevent loss of data during transmission. For E-mail turns, send a copy to yourself first to see that the format you are using comes in to you (and likely GSI) looking much like our normal turnsheet. The repercussions of not complying with all of this will dictate the eventual need for additional charges and/or increased errors for some or all players--again something we all want to avoid. Thanks for your help and cooperation.

GSI is proud to announce that we now have an agent in Australia to run ME-PBM! It seems the game is truly becoming an international phenomenon. That agent is Strategic Fantasy Games of Australia. We'd like to welcome them aboard and wish them well in their running of ME-PBM. We hope they have as much success and fun running the game as we do.

Some of you may have noted the new turnsheet/resultsheet format changes. This is being done to try and improve the quality of the product that you, the player, receive. We would like to make one note, however: The number in the upper left hand corner is an internal player id number (to be used by GSI) and is NOT a replacement for the security code number that changes with each turn. When calling GSI to discuss your turn, please use the four digit code on

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## whispers of the wood

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WHISPERS OF THE WOOD is a monthly publication primarily for the use and enjoyment of GSI players of STATE OF WAR and ME-PBM™. Subscription rates: \$15.00 for one year (12 issues) or \$25.00 for two years (24 issues). Individual issues cost \$1.75. GSI reserves the right to change these prices without prior notice of any type.

### Credits

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 Publishers..... Pete Stassun & Bill Feild Jr  
**Editor's Note:** GSI neither confirms nor denies the accuracy of any figures or the efficiency of any strategies published herein.

This Month's Cover: "Battle Fury" by Glen Godard

Volume XI Issue # 3  
 Published by GAME SYSTEMS INC  
 June 1, 1994  
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## PERSONALS: BARBS & BRAGS

Every current GSI player is entitled to a free 40 word personal in this column each issue, for each game they're in. Submissions require a \$2.00 charge for each additional set of 40 words (41-80 is \$2.00 etc.). GSI reserves the right to edit or refuse material deemed unsuitable.

### STATE OF WAR

#### GAME 84

Dear SJF (Sammy),

You called for a new game, and, as requested, here we are. As you requested in the October 1, 1993 *Whispers*, we have joined! We see you've grown wiser by not choosing 1515 as your capital. Maybe our list is working. Now that the harsh Massachusetts winter is over, we hope to be knocking on your front door real soon.

Hope to speak to you again. Will call soon.

Yours truly,

Your most feared adversaries,  
The Arrogant Ones (Virginia, uh, I mean Texas, no, wait, Nebraska . . . )  
PS--Attention all Beeler-heads, Gooseheads, and users of the Bruce-ness . . . Well boys, the real ones are here and we will "Win"!!!

Middle-earth™  
PBM

#### GAME 13

The Dunlendings are now led by Bosimyta Reval!

Let the Dark Ones Tremble.

#### GAME 35

With Minas Ithil back in the hands of the Dúnedain, the final invasion of Mordor can begin. After 50 turns, the end of strife in Middle Earth is here.

Baaltroc the Hostage

\*\*\*\*\*

Q: How close is the Cloud Lord to being eliminated?

A: Pretty darn close.

Hey Cloud Lord--was that your capital I just squished flat? Goblins make horrendous smelling speed bumps.

#### GAME 66

Recent Gondorian In The Street surveys found that 99.8% opposed socialized medicine and unilateral disarmament (except for our enemies). The favorite spectator sport was dwarf tossing. A majority, however, preferred Umbarian wine to beer.

Saerol

Press Secretary to Prince Celdrahil

#### GAME 70

The end draws near; soon Sauron shall hold sway over Middle-earth. Dwarves and men make a stand, brothers, in the final hour. You'll not soon forget us, Dark Ones; we'll spill rivers of blood before this is over . . .

#### GAME 77

The tide of Darkness grows ever deeper as the nations of Light fall one by one. But the remaining few will be faithful to the very end.

#### GAME 80

Surrounded on all sides by overpowering forces, the greatly feared Witch Ork Asdurbuk Zalg observes his foes. "They sure suk, but

there is a @&\*%#\$ lot of 'em!

The Crimson Toad

Witchy Guy

#### GAME 84

Hello!!!!!!!!!!!! Anybody out there?????

The Crimson Toad

The Wild Dun-Boyz

#### GAME 89

Hey Freeps:

Give up already, you're beaten.

Don't you get it?

Game over, dude. Game over.

#### GAME 94

The cowardly assassinations of Vinyaran and Caranthir will be avenged! This I swear on the graves of the Lords of Gondor!

Telumentar

\*\*\*\*\*

The bedraggled scout reported to his commander:

"Sir, I have scouted all of the roads west of Mordor . . . I saw nothing! No relief columns from our western allies. Sir, I fear we must hold awhile longer."

\*\*\*\*\*

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Ji Indur devises most efficient national debt and maintenance reducing solution.

First: Put all your troops in one army, thus allowing one order (#435) to train everybody at once.

Second: Do not' guard army commander.

Third: Do not place a second character with command skill with the army (as hinted on pg. 61).

Fourth: This is quite optional--wait for an assassination or kidnap,

but if pressed use order #740 to retire your commander.

This ingenious plan has the following immediate and far reaching benefits:

-Lower character maintenance  
-Army maintenance drops to zero.

-Foreign armies with help reduce population maintenance.

-Last but not least, those obnoxious army orders--transferring food, making/upgrading weapons and armor.

\*\*\*\*\*

My, you Dark players are quiet. Are you still taking your service turns?

Argeleb III

#### GAME 100

Uvatha, the Last of the Nine:

As your last city crumbles, know that we of the Rohirim will dance upon your grave. Prepare to meet thy maker . . . in Failure.

Uirdiks

#### GAME 103

#### Note at the ruins of Sarn Lothduin

Beoraborn,

Stopped by to say "hello" and remind you you're at war, but you were out. I'd wait for you here but I've got to go lay siege to Buhr Widufiras.

General Skargnakh

#### GAME 105

The Free have taken much punishment since the war began, yet the survivors have fought on. Now, however, there is new hope as a new Free power rises in the South.

The Quiet Avenger was first.

Manowar

### GAME 107

Night has passed. The spring brings life and hope to every corner of the land. The forces of Darkness become but forgotten terrors as the new day dawns. All rejoice as the Shadows of Yesterday hide from the Light.

Icarus

### GAME 109

How many Harad mumak riders does it take to destroy Kal Nargil? 301. One to frighten away the soldiers and 300 to leave their dung and make it uninhabitable.

### GAME 114

Mûrazôr,

The aid of the Warlord will avail you naught. He has been sighted, targeted and slated for execution. The north is free and will remain so.

The Free People who are in the game.

### GAME 115

Haruth Ramam,

The Servants of Sauron want your aid but don't want you in the Top 3. That was a nasty surprise for your surprise attack. Let other nations be warned not to trust the Dark Ones.

Celdrahil of Gondor

### GAME 116

A Dragon Lord dude called Duran Moved out of the woods hunting Man.

But the Dwarves came along,  
And some Sinda in song,  
And gave him a kick in the can!  
Anonymous Sinda poet

### GAME 117

Dendra Dwar runs like a dog,

Uvatha falls in a hopeless cause,  
Now Murazor cowers behind his troops

The end is near, Dark Servant Fools.  
The Pointy-Ear Bard

### GAME 118

The Harad fleet is no more. Proving again that the Black Fleet is supreme on the seas. I congratulate Lady Zimraphel on her daring victory. I wish the miserable people of Umbar would allow me greater foes.

Sea Wolf, Angamaitë

### GAME 119

"My liege, 'tis folly to ride into enemy lands. We know what forces he commands."

"Better we meet them in his cities than ours. We ride to war; the only certainty is that someone will die. Ready my horse."

### GAME 120

Greetings Amroth, Bain and Thranduil,

As you noticed, I managed to carve an empire from the holdings of a prematurely fallen foe. If you believe you'll be able to take my holdings or even stop the spread of my empire, you're wrong--

YOU'RE IN FOR A DOGFIGHT!

Bulrakur

PS. The 4029 Elves and 11050 Dwarves were a great appetizer, where's the main course?

### GAME 121

The end is near. SAURON'S might gathers and the land is cast in shadow. The FREE PEOPLES are broken and scattered. All that remains is snuffing out the last few pockets of resistance.

Zarendarger (13)

### GAME 122

Greetings Arfanhil,

Thank you for your hospitable invitation to sojourn west of the Misty Mountains. So far all I have seen are the Ruins of Rhudaur. Is Angmar more interesting? What's a tourist to do?

Elrond

\*\*\*\*\*

The hounds were fast asleep, it was supposed to be a time of peace, but the sound of stealthy little Elf feet awoke them. The sneaky Elves tried to run, but the hounds were mine, dreaded Dwar, and they were caught. Ohtar, you should have let sleeping dogs lie.

Oh-oh Mr. Grakius! A Free Person with teeth??? Let's see 'em, by all means!

The Crimson Toad  
Dog Lord

### GAME 124

Vinyaran,

Thanks--nothing like a walkover to get the troops fired up! Now, while their blood burns for more slaughter, time to hurl them against the walls of Osgiliath . . . too bad Veantur didn't cross the bridge in time!

Flamebringer

\*\*\*\*\*

Argeleb sat stoically upon his destrier as he watched the vile dragon wolf down the remains of his warriors. An angry storm glittered in his eyes as he looked towards Carn-Dûm and cursed.

"Touché, noble adversary, but I'll be back very soon."

\*\*\*\*\*

Ensuing power vacuum,  
A toppled leader dies  
His body fuels the power fire,  
And the flames rise in the sky  
One side of his face a kiss,  
The other genocide  
Time to pay with your butt,  
A worldwide suicide

MMEûgraadzeôtrh

\*\*\*\*\*

Heard in the depths of Mordor:

"Should we now begin Master Akhorahil?"

"Hahahaha . . . . ."

### GAME 125 CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS

Why do the FREE PEOPLES dislike Kurgan? Maybe it's because they know Kurgan can defeat them one at a time. Better yet, Kurgan has the spine to fight back when attacked. My minions aid Kurgan in his just struggle.

Zarendarger (15)

\*\*\*\*\*

Bloody Toad,

Uklurg decided to hang out with Veantur and his gang after the skirmish, but they didn't like the way he looked. So here are his eyes back; however, we'll keep the helm and sword. Thanks.

Grendel I

\*\*\*\*\*

All Dark Servant attempts at expansion have been halted. Now comes the siege of Mordor.

\*\*\*\*\*

Ren addresses the Nazgul Council for world conquest:

He waits for the laughter of Dendra's elf joke to die down. "Now I

understand that you guys have yer own projects and all, like Hoarmurath's not having any troops because of his plan to build a goblin kiddies zoo resort, etc..., but could you guys consider helping me out a little with these ten little nations called the Free Peoples?" Again he is forced to pause for laughter . . .

The Crimson Toad  
Dirty Ren

#### GAME 126

TWIMC--

This isn't a team . . . but a group of players who miss turns, go bankrupt, are hard to reach (guilty!), and have little enthusiasm--playing against five players who live together!

My apologies to my Free allies, especially Rhudaur, but I'm loading the ale wagons and heading for the hills. My thanks to the Dark for ten fun turns. For the sake of all concerned, may this debacle end quickly, so those actually interested in playing can find situations more to their liking. For myself, sticking to small-group and individual entries seems wisest, so I shall. I've enjoyed this roller coaster, but it's time to sit back, hoist a cold one, and get on with other games.

Dwarves

#### GAME 129

Hey Gothmog--

Did you get lost in the woods or do you just fight pop centers?

\*\*\*\*\*

Listen to that nice Dwarven song:

Blood that makes the grass grow,  
Killing makes the blood flow,  
Kill, Kill, Kill

Isn't that just lovely? I wonder if the Dragon Lord thinks so?

#### GAME 130

Celdrahil,

The magnanimous Ji Indûr may grant you your life for paltry gold, but my master is made of sterner stuff. Dread Uvatha has ordered your execution for this crime. Make your reservation in the morgue.

Din Ohtar

\*\*\*\*\*

Be it known that Lord Argirion of Southern Gondor has been slain by the Lady Shabla in personal combat. This will be the fate of all who attempt aggression on our nation or our allies, the Corsairs.

Haruth Ramam

#### GAME 132

Big talk for cowards. 6 Free thirsting for my blood. What kind of military genius does it take to find the result? Answer: Chicken IQ.

Eoder, I shall now make time for you

...

Pungy, nice army.

Khamul

\*\*\*\*\*

Murazor,

Your kingdom is in flames, your armies have been routed and now Lord Arfanhil has unleashed his hordes upon you! Surrender immediately or we shall put every man, woman and child in your kingdom to the sword!

King Argeleb II  
of

Arthedain (4)

#### GAME 133

"Quiet One."

"Yes, my Master."

"My minions seem to have lost sight of their goals. This cannot continue or

else all I have done will be for nothing!"

"What is your will, Master?"

"You all must use the special gifts I have bestowed upon you, and keep your focus true to my mission, else all will be lost. Go now and inform my cadre I grow weary of their scuttle; they are to work together to meet my ends and see that darkness reigns again. Go now!"

"Yes, my all powerful Master, as you wish.

#### GAME 134

Lord Ohtar,

We realize you must have been disappointed at the lack of mooring facilities, but that's no reason to loiter like an uninvited guest at a wedding. Come inside, Lady Adunaphel has . . . a taste for things elvish.

Lord Fuinur

#### GAME 135

Let it be known that I, Urzahil, Mouth of Sauron, do hereby issue a challenge to any of the assorted Free riff-raff to meet me in combat. As the remnants of the Eothraim armies flee Rhovanion, I find that Mahrcared and whatever few other beaten survivors still follow him are lacking in a number of vital areas, such as pride, courage, will and desire. Seek your backbone, fools, for Sauron will have your souls. The Maiar Lord of the Balrogs, Sauron's Warlord Gothmog, has claim on your heart. I will slake my thirst on your very essence, basking in the mindless void of your darkest fears. Seek me in your dreams, in the dark and shadowed corridors of your minds, for it is here that I thrill to the hunt. And pray to your alters and trees, for I am the Reaper, The Slayer of Hope.

\*\*\*\*\*

Overheard in the Ice Queen's nightly prayer:

"But, Lord Sauron, it's no fun when they don't fight back."

#### GAME 136

The battles have been bloody. The game has been challenging--but is the end near, so soon? I hope not! Good gaming to all. I wouldn't mind a rematch when this is all over.

Mowbray--Captain of the 12

#### GAME 137

Tarondor,

The ashes that blow on the east wind are not dust, but the remains of the people of Ithilien you abandoned. I've burnt ten for every league of the Anduin I control. Why? Because I can.

Ren the Unclean

#### GAME 141

The virus that affected him has left The sickness that plagued him has gone

The sanity that cursed has fled  
All welcome the new and improved Ice King.

The Master will be pleased.  
The Gondors won't.

\*\*\*\*\*

Has the northwest fallen to me completely?

Noldo, Dwarves, Arthedain, Cardolan?

The Witch-king  
I shall crush you anyway.

#### GAME 142

Lackey: Sire, our emissaries report that both sides of the great conflict have applied minimal efforts to sway our great nation.

Overlord: How interesting . . . What of our requests?  
Lackey: Nothing yet, milord.  
Overlord: Hmmmm . . .

#### GAME 143

. . . And in those last moments of Minas Ithil, Celdrahil's eyes glazed. All of Mordor had emptied, the Dark Lord's host thrice his; he was the Black Prince of a doomed army.  
"The Last Stand of the Black Prince"  
Author Unknown

#### GAME 148

The plague at the Eothraim capitol will continue until Thuringwathost is liberated.  
Täl Korak

#### GAME 149

The only resistance we have faced is at the Black Gate, so I have come . . . And soon resistance shall cease . . . **EVERYWHERE!!**  
And Darkness unending shall cover the land.

Akhôrahil, Gate Smasher

\*\*\*\*\*

Surprise on me . . . NOT!!! My surprise is bigger than your surprise. Ha Ha Ha! Typical opening moves, Mmmm . . . Good, for us Dark Servants Typically WIN!!  
Your Lord and Master  
Er-Mûrazôr

\*\*\*\*\*

TWO Gondor armies file through the pass to Minas Ithil, with Tarondor at the head--nothing is heard. A third Gondor army is led up the steep slopes by Vagaig--silence again. A glassy-eyed Tarondor stumbles into Osgiliath with two others--he has nothing to say. Finally, the Eagles

report: the flag of Ren-the-Bloodwashed flies over Minas Ithil.  
Fire-Side Chats  
with the King

#### GAME 150

Angamaitë:  
Wisdom was never a strong suit of the Corsairs. The lands of the Duns are not open to your piratical Imperialism.

Ozzymodo  
Scribe of the Duns

#### GAME 154

##### Luglûrak

Ancient parchments swirled around him as Gastmorgath began warping the forces of nature around him.

"Snarvel," hissed the fading figure, "tell Akhôrahil that I have found the key and gone as he commanded . . ."

"It will be done, my Lord."

\*\*\*\*\*

##### Ode to Tarondor

I'm a little king who wandered into Mordor  
Daylight come and me want to go home.  
Now I can see the orcs and da trolls now  
Daylight come and me want to go home.  
Daaaaay-o I see daaaaay-o  
Daylight come and me want to go home.  
Delaaaaay-o? I can't delaaaaay-o!  
I wet me pants and me want to go home.

The Scarlet Pumpernicle

#### GAME 156

Ozzymodo rides . . . and there is blood on his blade. The goals are simple. Disrupt and kill. Argeleb, I'm coming to get you . . .

#### GAME 157

5 Free, 5 Evil  
5 Neutral  
5 Morons, 5 Cheaters  
5 Deceived, 5 Enlightened  
5 in the Middle  
5 Greedy, 5 Needy  
5 Unknowing, 5 On Top  
5 shall decide  
5 will fall, 5 shall perish--  
WHICH ARE YOU!?

Delphi

#### GAME 159

Welcome Dark Servant allies  
and most honorable Neutrals. Time to

put the Free Peoples in chains.  
Coordinate and conquer.  
Let the Dogs feed!!  
Dendra Dwar

\*\*\*\*\*

Oh yes, I'm in this one too . . . .  
The Crimson Toad  
Gothmog

#### GAME 160

fIRE kInG . . . WItCh kInG . . . ICe kinG  
. . . FiRE buRN wItCh . . . fIRE mElT iCE  
. . . mE NuMBER oNe kInG!!!  
nAUrMegIL tHe UNclEan

## Strategy & Tactics: The Dragon Lord

by  
Brian D. Mason

### 1. The Big Problem

The following are the expected revenue from the population centers given at the start of the game at a 70% tax rate and the expected gold production. Also, is the expected total production of commodities as well as expected stores. These are computed from a previous article in "Whispers of the Wood" (Population Center Development, Table 1). Rather than take the expected values for mild, I have taken them to be cold in mountain and far north population centers and mild elsewhere.

Table 1. Expected Dragon Lord Production

	le	br	st	mi	fo	ti	go	tax
total	143	247	113	010	921	203	036	3421 21000

There is no substantial production of any quantity to equip troops on a regular basis with good weapons or armor ( i.e. bronze & steel) or to equip mounts (i.e. leather & mounts). Also, there is not sufficient timber production to make a substantial number of war machines or to improve existing fortifications (with the exception of Lag-auris, which is probably not worth fortifying because it is SO vulnerable). It might be possible in the long term to improve fortifications at some locations (e.g. Goblin Gate, if still held, to more securely hold the pass across the Misty Mountains, or Lug Ghurzun to make it more secure). The most effective use of production would be to sell them for additional revenue.

So, even with a significant tax increase, the Dragon Lord is in significant financial difficulties. Also, one of his revenue generating locations is very vulnerable: Nahald Kudan.

## 2. A Radical Idea

A way to deal with the issue is the following strategy. It is ( at least to me) a radical strategy.

It has been stated that against a united front of the Sinda, Dwarves, and Woodmen that Dol Guldur and Goblin Gate cannot be held without substantial intervention from Mordor. Taking this as a given, what is the best course of action, as you cannot count on the aforementioned intervention?

Table 2. Expected Costs

descriptor	gold
Fortifications	5000
Armies	12900
Characters	12200
Total	30100
Deficit	-5679

If we take as a given that the Dragon Lord power base in Mirkwood cannot be held, what remains is to re-establish himself somewhere else. I recommend that Khamul name four emissaries and that these do nothing but work on establishing the backup nation (and what will eventually be the Dragon Lord's main holdings).

There is nothing on the Dragon Lord map which is not seen on maps of the Northmen, Sinda, and Woodmen. Building a backup nation anywhere on the Dragon Lord map is inadvisable. However, the area in and around Lug Ghurzun is a good location. Examine the following:

In the first series of six hexes (3821-3921, 3722, 3922, 3823-3923) surrounding Lug Ghurzun we have four mountain and two hills & rough hexes. Developing those six hexes to towns would cost 72,000 gold, although in most realistic cases this would take at least six turns (turns one & two: create three camps each turn, turns three & four: improve three camps to villages each turn, turns five & six: improve three villages to towns each turn). As seen below, four emissaries are committed to this undertaking. All of this assumes that the creations and improvements occur all the time with no failure. This is probably not realistic, but will serve as a starting point for the analysis. The orders below assume having three emissaries to execute them, even though there are four. This is an attempt to compensate for emissary failure. The following cost analysis considers the six population centers to be developed as a separate cost. Expenses are given and net costs are given considering development and revenue from these six hexes only. Consider the following:

Turn one: Create two camps in mountain hexes, one in hills & rough. Cost: 6000 gold. These are anticipated to produce 2491 gold per turn total. Net cost: 6000 gold.

Turn two: Same as turn one. Net cost 6000 gold from turn one + 6000 gold - 2491 gold from turn one camp is 9509.

Turn three: Improve three camps to villages. Cost: 12000 gold. These, at 70% tax rates will produce 5250 gold per turn. Net cost 9509 from turn two + 12000 gold for village improvement - 4982 gold production is 16527.

Turn four: Same as turn three. Net cost is 16527 gold from turn three + 12000 gold for village improvement - 5250 from turn three village taxes - 4982 gold production is 18295.

Turn five: Improve three villages to towns. Cost 18000 gold. These, at 70% tax rates will produce 10500 gold per turn. Net cost is 18295 from turn four + 18000 gold for village improvements - 10500 from turn four village taxes - 4982 gold production is 20813.

Turn six: Same as turn five. Net cost is 20813 from turn five + 18000 gold for village improvements - 15750 from turn five village and town taxes - 4982 gold production is 18081.

At current revenue rates, this total cost for all six turns of 18081 is minimal. On turn seven this is paid back, with 7901 gold to spare. These costs do not include the associated character costs, the 20000 gold to get the four emissaries, the 2400 gold per turn minimum maintenance fee for the emissaries, etc. Substantial selling of resources along with possible grants from other Dark Servants may be necessary.

However, an additional side benefit will be the emissaries themselves. There are a total of eighteen emissary orders, each allowing for increases of 1-10 points. Dividing these eighteen emissary orders among the four emissaries (five for the first two emissaries to arrive, four for the others) and assuming standard improvement, the projected emissary ranks are: 49, 49, and 54. This will make a very effective company (coupled with a commander) to move into and begin influencing enemy population centers.

## 3. General Strategy

So, while these new emissaries are developing a new base of operations what should the Dragon Lord forces do? If Mirkwood cannot be held, then go into a scorched earth plan of attack. The place for greatest gain is in Lorien against the Sinda.

Turn one: All three of the good mages (with the exception of Khamul) should learn reveal population center and prentice magery. The army at Goblin Gate should add 400 hi and move toward Lorien. The two armies at Dol Guldur should combine after adding 400 hi and move towards Lorien. Khamul changes tax rate and names an emissary. Lhachglin improves (GrdLoc and PreMgy). Increase in costs: 3200 gold per turn (hi), 600 gold per turn (new character), plus 5000 gold character startup costs and costs associated with improving characters.

Turn two: All three of the good mages above learn reveal population center (if unsuccessful on turn one) or prentice magery and then move and join one of the two armies. The army from Goblin Gate moves onto Cerin Amroth while the army from Dol Guldur moves onto Caras Galadon. Khamul moves and

joins an army as Lhachglin improves again. Emissary #1 names emissary #2. Increase in costs: 600 gold per turn (new character), plus 5000 gold character startup costs and costs associated with improving characters.

Turn three: The two armies attack whatever armies they have facing them. The mages cast combat spells and reveal the population centers. Lhachglin improves again. Emissaries #1 & #2 name emissaries #3 & #4, then begin moving south. Increase in costs: 1200 gold per turn (new characters), plus 10000 gold character startup costs and costs associated with improving characters less costs due to army losses.

Turn four: Caras Galadon and Cerin Amroth destroyed. Armies move back towards Dol Guldur and Goblin Gate to hold them as long as possible. The mages move to population centers to learn teleport and locate artifact true. Lhachglin improves once more. Emissaries #1 and #2 reach the backup nation area, emissaries #3 and #4 reach halfway. Increase in costs: costs associated with improving characters less costs due to army losses.

Turn five: Armies back at Dol Guldur and Goblin Gate. Mages continue researching spells or begin casting them. Emissaries #1 and #2 begin build-up. Emissaries #3 and #4 reach backup nation region.

All of these moves are "idealized". That is, the moves take place with no armies or other obstacles getting in the way. This is probably not realistic, but it serves as a beginning. What the Dragon Lord most needs is gold. Lhachglin might need to move to the capital to execute a sell order every turn to fund continuing expenses as well as the population center buildup in the south.

#### A Final Word

There is a rumor, thus far unconfirmed, that the Dragon Lord can recruit any dragon recruitable by Dark Servants by simply stating your name. If this is so, it makes for a significant play balancer.

## The Defender of Balost

by  
Erik Ker

Captain Earnil, in command of Cardolan's only navy, was anchored in the Suduri. The captain had the three new heavy infantry sub-commanders, the three new archer sub-commanders, and the two mercenary lieutenants in his command tent to discuss the past month's recruiting. The two mercenary lieutenants sat behind the others, smiling quietly as Captain Earnil explained how to set up in standard formation and what would be necessary to practice this formation.

"When will we have our first maneuvers, Captain?" asked Sub-commander Rorimac.

"Not for another month or so," replied the Captain. "I have requested a commander or captain to come from Metriath and serve as my back-up. I have not received a response to my request at this time. I plan to spend another four weeks recruiting, then I plan to put the entire army on maneuvers. In the mean time, it is important that each of you sub-commanders familiarize your selves with the different combat postures we might assume. The troops will be looking to you for guidance. You need to at least *look* like you know what you are doing."

Just then a messenger arrived from Metriath and interrupted the meeting. He handed Captain Earnil a wax-sealed scroll and stood back to one side. The six new sub-commanders glanced at his calm assured military bearing and knew that they had a lot of work to do, both for themselves and for their troops. *How could he look so crisp after the ride from Metriath?* they thought.

Captain Earnil laid down the parchment and looked up at his command staff with weary eyes. "You may return to Metriath in the morning and assure them that I will locate and destroy this camp. Dismissed." The messenger snapped off a salute and left the command tent.

"Gentlemen," the Captain began, "word has come from the diplomatic staff that the Corsairs have planted a camp on the southern tip of HinHiriath. If it is true, it can only mean trouble. You will assemble your troops and prepare them to march out at first light. Double the parameter guard tonight and every night until I say differently. Our orders are to march south to the southern tip of HinHiriath to locate and destroy the camp that the Corsairs reportedly have planted there. Dismissed."

"Captain?" asked Sub-commander Rorimac.

"Yes, mister."

"What about more troops and maneuvers?"

"The plans have just changed. You joined the army to see some action. Well, we are going to see some sooner than you or I expected. I will try to arrange maneuvers on the march. Dismissed, mister."

All of the sub-commanders filed out after Sub-commander Rorimac. The lieutenants stood up behind them and gave Captain Earnil a knowing smile as they left.

Lieutenant Eregion spoke quietly to Lieutenant Charudhrus as they walked to the mercenary section of the camp, "Let us show these green regulars something about military discipline!"

Quickly they gave orders to their men. Within two hours all of the mercenaries were packed, in formation and prepared for march. After standing this way for thirty minutes, watching the green archers and heavy infantry slowly prepare their tents for travel in the morning, the Lieutenants released their men to sleep in the open, with their equipment at hand, as those ready to do battle at once. The regulars looked on in amazement while the sub-commanders glowered and continued preparing their men.

So Captain Earnil left his ships behind at Suduri, and with 600 green troops and the 200 additional experienced mercenaries, marched in search of the Corsair camp. While they marched, word reached them that Commander Marendil of Rhudaur had marshaled 2400 mixed infantry against Argond and took that town.

For an entire week Captain Earnil and his troops searched for signs of a Corsair camp; it was nowhere to be found. Again he called his staff into his command tent. As Captain Earnil pored over the reports from the Cardolan Intelligence Service, and thought about the kind of man Captain Marendil was, he believed that Captain Marendil would seek to take Balost, situated along the west bank of the Grayflood River. Some peasant reports had already placed him three days march east of Balost already. Quickly, he had marshaled his green troops and marched to Balost, arriving just before Captain Marendil. There he took command and manned the defenses.

A quick scouting of the enemy revealed what he had known in his heart. He could not defeat this army, but he could make their assault on Balost more costly. After sizing up the situation, Captain Earnil had decided to attack. "It is better to weaken them so they cannot threaten any other of Cardolan's fair towns, than to allow them to leave and strike again." He spent several hours placing the archers and other troops in their positions, preparing an ambush, trying to make the best use of the tower of Balost.

With sadness that morning he addressed his sub-commanders. *Not likely that any of them will see the dawn tomorrow*, he thought. CIS reports suggested that Captain Marendil would likely try to capture Balost rather than destroy it. Captain Earnil had counted on that when he set his ambush. *If we deny them the town, the loss of these lives will have been worth it.*

After placing many of the troops in their positions himself, the Captain met with the Town Council and reviewed the defense plans. "I do not believe that any of these young men under my command today will live to see the dawn, yet we are here to defend Balost and we will. Ready your militia to defend your walls after we have failed. It is almost certain that we will fail, yet we may well weaken them enough that they will fall to you." Then, leaving the Council, he returned to lead the ambush.

Captain Earnil, his sub-commanders and lieutenants surveyed the weather. The high winds would limit the effectiveness of the archers, but the day looked like a good day for an ambush. The officers moved among the troops before battle. It cheered Captain Earnil's heart to hear the bets these troops placed over the division of the spoils. *Could it really be that they do not know their peril?* he thought. He looked at the mercenaries and their eyes revealed that they were more serious. *They do know their peril*, he thought.

As the Rhudaur army marched closer, the Captain waited until they were within bow shot and then gave the order. Ambush them!

After the initial volley of arrows, Captain Earnil looked with horror to his right. Captain Marendil had breached his flank. *They out flanked me, I must go stem the breach!* he thought as he jumped into the fray.

From upon the top of the tower the council surveyed the scene below. After the enemy hit their flank, Captain Earnil's army was overrun in a few hours, yet Captain Marendil's army also suffered severe losses. Captain Marendil gathered together his remaining troops, plundered Cardolan's baggage train and marched away to the north-east.

The next morning the Council sent out searchers to learn if there were any survivors. The searchers came back by noon bearing the body of Captain Earnil, a dozen arrows buried in his chest, though no sword had marked him. The great bells were rung in the tower to mourn for the loss of this great Captain and his troops. No shops were open in the market that day.

(continued from inside front cover)

your turnsheet--not this new number. This is for your protection and we do not want to compromise the confidentiality of your turn. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

As you know, ICE is coming out with a new line of MERP products which could be useful source material for playing ME-PBM. These products can be ordered through GSI and a complete price list will be available when we receive it. We do have some of the old products, however, some of which were utilized in the design of ME-PBM. For any of you who are interested, the following is a list of ICE MERP products that are in stock. If you desire any of these sources, simply drop us a line and ask for the product. It would further streamline the process if you could ask for the product by name and stock #.

\$18	Minas Ithil	8302	\$7	Rogues/Borderlands	8014
\$9	Calenhad	8203	\$10	Ghost Warriors	8016
\$14	Nazgul Citadel	8205	\$6	Perils/Sea of Rhûn	8110
\$7	Mouths/Entwash	8011	\$6	Denizens/Dark Wood	8111
\$7	Warlords/Desert	8012	\$6	Hazards/Harad Wood	8112
\$7	Necromancers/Lt	8113			

Once again, it's time for New Game needs! We are in need of both Dark Servant and Free People teams of 3-5 players. We have a number of teams on both sides pending and could use more to help fill those games. We also are waiting for a Free People grudge team to fight against Sauron and his minions. Any believers in the Light should contact us. A 3-week game is currently filling, so any of you looking for a slower paced game should get your materials in to us so as not to miss the boat. A new State of War game just recently started, for those rebels among you. We are still accepting setups for State of War, so if this interests you, let us know. Lastly, we need a whole bunch of neutrals (1-2 players) for all kinds of games. Those of you interested in these challenging and potentially crucial positions can contact us about joining a game. This is probably the quickest way to get into a game.

Once again, it's time to bid adieu to you faithful readers. Until next month, fight well.

*Stuart*

## The Hall Of Heroes

Game #83 - The Dark Servants: #25, #10 & 17

The armies have retired, the dogs of war have been recalled and all that remains are the scavengers, picking the rotting flesh from the Free corpses that litter the battlefields. In Mt. Doom, Sauron's servants lounge in the glory of their victory for their Dark Lord. Final standings are as follows:

#25 Easterlings - 2000  
#10 Noldo Elves - 1600  
#17 Quiet Avenger - 1333

Top Free People: #10 Noldo Elves - 1600

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Mûrazôr/Witch-king: 233  
Highest Net Commander Rank - Hoarmûrath/Ice King: 123  
Highest Net Agent Rank - Himmler/Long Rider: 124  
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Angûlion/Witch-king: 122  
Highest Net Mage Rank - Mûrazôr/Witch-king: 166  
Most Mithril - Fire King: 1478  
Most Artifacts - Noldo Elves: 39  
Most Kills - Cloud Lord/Ice King: 12

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

Game #88 - The Dark Servants: #22, #17 & #11

The Lidless Eye, gazing over a Middle-earth which stands ravaged and torn asunder, decimated by his faithful minions of destruction, laughs and screams his defiance at the hated Valar. Vengeance is served and his agents stand tall in their Master's glory. Final standings are as follows:

#22 Haradwaith - 2150  
#17 Quiet Avenger - 1800  
#11 Witch-king - 1717

Top Free People: #1 Woodmen - 850

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Maben/Dragon Lord: 180  
Highest Net Commander Rank - Drurgandra/Long Rider: 146  
Highest Net Agent Rank - Dîn Ohtar/Long Rider: 140  
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Eimer/Fire King: 92  
Highest Net Mage Rank - Maben/Dragon Lord: 141  
Most Mithril - Haradwaith: 3268  
Most Artifacts - Dragon Lord: 22  
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 24

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

## The Hall Of Heroes

Game #93 - The Dark Servants: #13, #19 & #20

Sauron's lieutenants assert their dominance over the mewling babes who dared oppose their rightful place as Lords of Middle-earth, bringing terror and destruction to those foolish enough to resist. Final standings are as follows:

#13 Dog Lord - 2267  
#19 Long Rider - 2217  
#20 Dark Lieutenants - 1917

Top Free People: #10 Noldo Elves - 1000

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Elrond/Noldo Elves: 198  
Highest Net Commander Rank - Gothmog/Dark Lieutenants: 160  
Highest Net Agent Rank - Dîn Ohtar/Long Rider: 112  
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Urzahil/Dark Lieutenants: 97  
Highest Net Mage Rank - Elrond/Noldo Elves: 154  
Most Mithril - Dog Lord: 2177  
Most Artifacts - Long Rider: 22  
Most Kills - Cloud Lord: 4

Congratulations to the Dark Servants!!

Game #101 - The Free People: #22, #10 & #7

Sauron and his minions join Melkor in the Void as the combined efforts of the Free obliterate any and all taints his corruption left in Middle-earth. Final standings are as follows:

#22 Haradwaith - 1867  
#10 Noldo Elves - 1800  
#7 Southern Gondor - 1750

Top Dark Servant: #11 Witch-king - 667

Interesting Notes:

Highest Challenge Rank - Mûrazôr/Witch-king: 203  
Highest Net Commander Rank - Ashdurbuk Zalg/Witch-king: 142  
Highest Net Agent Rank - Dîn Ohtar/Long Rider: 122  
Highest Net Emissary Rank - Angûlion/Witch-king: 100  
Highest Net Mage Rank - Mûrazôr/Witch-king: 170  
Most Mithril - Dwarves: 1429  
Most Artifacts - Witch-king: 24  
Most Kills - Dwarves: 6

Congratulations to the Free People!!