

THE ANTARES INITIATIVE



ARTICLE BETA 0.01 / SEPT 2016

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PLANET: DEFOR

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LOCATION: DETERMINATE



BEN KOCHSKAMPER



ISORIAN COMMANDER

I was quite shocked when I heard from Ben that we got selected as one of the groups to participate in the Gate of Antares Initiative. So first let me give a big thanks to you guys at Warlord Games for this amazing opportunity! I am so excited to give this game a go. For the last 15 years or so, I have been playing games in the realms of fantasy and I'm really looking forward to playing something from a sci-fi setting.

As soon as I found out that we had been selected I went straight to the Warlord Games website and did a little research; at first I had no idea what I wanted. Without reading any of the fluff I couldn't decide between a couple of races: Ghar, Isorian and Boromite. I was initially attracted to the Boromite rock riders and the Ghar Battle/Assault squads. Bensome put a stop to my first selection of Boromites (he was dead set on that army) but that was ok as I had selected another two forces. From here I decided to do a little more research.

The first place I looked was YouTube to see if anyone had recorded any battle reports. Not only did I find battle reports, I found the "How to play" series by Rick! These videos were so easy to follow and gave me a good understanding of the basic mechanics of the game, that after watching these I was so pumped!

Without even reading the rules I thought that Beyond the Gates of Antares had quite a bit of depth. I subsequently watched a few battle reports (some were easier to follow than others) and whilst I didn't understand everything that was going on, I was sort of getting the idea on how the game worked. There was also a video called 'Beyond the Gates of Antares - Faction Overviews' which gave me a little bit of background about all the races and a bit about the setting. Very cool.

My second source of information come from a podcast "The Freeborn Shard". After listening to both the Ghar and the Isorian episodes (as those were the armies I was interested in) and having a look at the miniatures, I had finally decided. My selection was the Isorians.

My choice was also influenced by a couple of other things other than the fluff and the minis. The first influence was from my younger table top gaming days from 2nd and 3rd edition of Warhammer 40k; I liked the Chaos Marines and Tyranids. The second influence was from a video game called "Crysis". The idea of humans mixing with alien technology was just too great an opportunity to pass up.

So without having read a lot of the rules, I picked what I thought to be a somewhat balanced force. A command squad to keep the army unified, a phase squad to unleash a bit of fire power and a targeter probe shard. This was the core of my army.

I also picked a phase sniper to pick off big threats from a distance and to round out the force, a unit of the coolest models in the army thus far, the Tsan Ra.



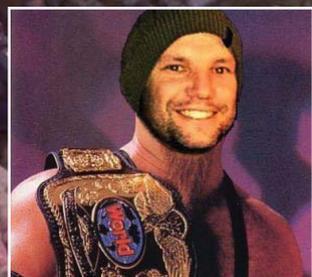
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MAT SELLICK



GHAR COMMANDER

The life changing choice was offered to me to select a Gates of Antares force after a one minute debrief from Bensome. The mighty Ghar were emphatically described to me as “Monkey like humans that can wear big battle suits”. I’m sure you all agree after this description, I realistically had no choice but to select them, how anyone could say no is beyond me.

Upon further research about the game/army rules and subsequently viewing the models for the first time, I was attracted to the smooth lines and clean surfaces of battle suit models but also the grunt like appearance of outcasts which contrast the units well.

As with most veteran gamers with few decades of gaming experience across various different game systems, my brain went immediately into army build mode understanding different weapon types and potential ‘in game’ scenarios that I will face.

I loved the idea of having a large battle Squad unit flanked with a couple of outcast units, all supported by a unit of sneaky tectorists to maximise my shooting. While I admit this will be a bit slow initially, visually it appeals to me. The epic sight of watching a Battle squad dominantly moving forward across the battlefield, scourer cannons spitting plasma towards the enemy like a herd of angry llamas with the outcasts darting cowardly from cover to cover offering as much (or as little) support they can.



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HUW EVANS



CONCORD COMMANDER

Hello fellow Antares adventurers! Huw here, giving you the goss on why I chose the mighty PanHuman Concord for my part in The Antares Initiative.

I've been playing tabletop wargames now for about 17 years and in that time I've played my fair share of different factions. Rightly or wrongly, that bitter experience informed my choice this time around. Traditionally, I prefer to play the "fringe" factions if you will. I'm that guy in the group that likes to prove how smart he is by creating wacky off-the-wall lists for rarely seen factions and making them work. I would rather hear: "How did he do so well with all-infantry badgers?" than "Huw is so highly skilled when it comes to wielding the latest beardy netlist!" I would also favour those kind of factions that specialise heavily (usually for flavour reasons), such as the glass cannon prancing pansies or the hard-as-nails, but unmanouverable rock tortoises. While this attitude has largely served me well over the years, it has also started to render me somewhat jaded. I have found that all infantry space-badgers look cool, but can be

frustrating to play with at times. Not only do these kind of armies often struggle in certain matchups on the tabletop, they also tend to suffer from games developer neglect. I have waited no less than eight years for an "army book" for my favourite faction, subsisting on semi-functional magazine scraps in the mean time, only to be served up a plate of hot garbage, when I could have sworn I had ordered the steak sandwich. I'm sure some of you out there know what I mean. It's a real kick in the gamer-gonads. Am I right?

With Antares I was determined from the outset that this time things were going to be different! I was going to pick whatever I deemed to be the "main faction" and by God they were going to be a functional all-rounder that I could tailor to any situation! Furthermore, they were going to be the protagonist in the story... or the antagonist, it's all good. No more justifying why my Wood Elves are fighting on the moon! Needless to say, The PanHuman Concord were just the ticket. Lastly, it has to be said that playing as the "basic humans," or the equivalent thereof, has a certain appeal. They tell stories that make sense and have characters that feel real and relatable. And so, the general for the common man I shall be!

In hindsight, having read the rule book and the latest "Battle for Xilos" expansion, my fears (at least in terms of the developer neglect bit) are probably unfounded in this case. Warlord have chosen to release each faction bit by bit as part of an overall game expansion in each book, as opposed to the older "army book" style of releases. This rightly seems to be the modern trend with TT games and I love it.

Anyhoo, onward I strove with my panhuman holmies. When it came to writing my first 500 point list I naturally wrote about a dozen alternatives before making a decision. List writing is one of my favourite parts of the hobby after all and I wasn't going to let the fact I didn't have a clue about the game get in the way! I found the restrictions placed on the Concord in terms of how many tactical options were required, limited options and so on, meant that the most functional list almost wrote itself. That is; strike troop command, a few units of strike troopers, x-launcher and a bunch of accompanying drones. This was a little too bland for me however, I was determined to shoehorn in some jetpacks! I mean, who doesn't love jetpacks?



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HUW EVANS



CONCORD COMMANDER

As it turns out, if you take nothing else and no upgrades whatsoever, you can fit in two units of drop troopers and a drop command in 500 points. Again however, this was too boring so I dropped one of the drop trooper units for a basic strike trooper squad and managed to lever in an X-launcher and a targeter drone shard to boot! This left me with very minimal points for upgrades so I was forced to leave out all the spotter drones and ammo types I would have liked to include. I figured it would be easier not to over complicate things while I learnt the game anyway. My commander would of course have a jetpack and he shall be named... Lieutenant Teflon (because you know... He's a Panhuman). Just like that I had it - 500 points of win! Or at least 500 points of jetpack and pew-pew. Plus I still got to maintain my delusion that I'm a special little flower.

As we progress forward with The Antares Initiative my plan will be to introduce many more things that float. We'll be talking about it some more in the next article, but suffice to say for now, the planet that Rick has kindly written up for us to battle on is very inhospitable. I feel like walking around on the ground too much might be a bad idea for the lads! Hopefully I can get ahold of a troop transport down the track and really turn these grav-boosters and jetpacks into a theme! You know what they say though, "no plan survives contact with the enemy."



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BEN RANTALL



BOROMITE COMMANDER

An finally we come to me and my Boromites or as i like to call them, Bro-mites. These ugly little buggers grabbed my full attention the moment I laid eyes on them. Away with you and your armour covered, tech-reliant humans and similar: give me lava monsters! Add to that the idea of a miner-based workforce turning their working equipment into weapons of war, I was sold; no need to look any further.

When it came to force selection, I wanted to skip over as much 'normal' dudes with guns as I could and prefered to go the monster-mash of Lavamites and Rock riders with the inevitable expansion with the Matronite Brood Mother (when it becomes available). After reading and discussing how good these lava critters were though, I decided to reign it back a bit and include a couple more standard choices with long range firepower.

What I ended up with was a couple of units of lavamites and a micromite probe shard then rounding out the force with a couple of work gangs, mag light support and an x-launcher. This gives me about a 50 / 50 split between monstrous goodness and regular pew pew. In hindsight, this also would provide me with more stragegy and viability than "run up and chomp your face" kind of gameplay.

I plan on inculding rock riders and it's corresponding overseer unit when I can / when the group expands into higher point games and perhaps some hatchlings.

As for theme, I was thinking of my Bro-mites having lived on the planet for quite some time but living underground for the most part (given that the Melbourne clubs were placed on the inhospitable planet of Defor, surface dwelling didn't seem right). Their tech would be limited as Defor is a fringe planet and not considered worth it's salt until very recently. This means that my choices of bitey-mites making up the bulk of my forces fit quite well - with little access to trade, the rounding up and goading of beasts would be a viable alternative to use as defensive weapons against the invading pan-humans.

I also feel like they might have more of a relationship with the Deforan natives; unusual crystal beings. Perhaps the Bro-mites have found a use for the natives, perhaps they understand what they are and choose to defend them, or perhaps they think that the crystals are valuable and don't want to give them up without a fight.

Either way, the other Wednesday Night Wargamers have to consider they actions on Defor with much thought.



The Drone Scenario

Our next task was completing the drone scenario, Ben had only just received the starter box and had been assembling like a mad man so we could play the mission. This was to be our introduction to Antares, everyone was super excited! As there was only 3 of us available to play (Huw was , at the time overseas), Ben played the concord and Matt played the Ghar, I (Spoon, Ben K) was the lucky one that got to be the 'dice bag man', ruining everyone's dreams.

So we read the scenario and the boys got setup and ready to go. Following the scenario sheet, the game flows quite well; we like the way it simplified the game so that a beginner can have a go without being completely overwhelmed by a huge rule book.

After a couple of turns we were all following how the game moved structurally, it was really quite cool! Ben was quick to activate the drone with one C3 squad, however the other C3 squad took quite a beating in valiant attempt at trying to defend the central objective.

After the drone was activated, Ben was trying his best to put some pressure on Matt and his Ghar, but couldn't manage to put through any damage. The game ended up resulting in a draw.

After getting through our first game we were all pretty impressed with how the game worked. Even though none of us had read the full rule book, the reference sheet was enough to get us through the first game. There were a few mechanics we really liked:

- * First up the order dice mechanic. It can really catch you off guard if you're not careful!

- * Secondly, and our favorite mechanic, was the pinning system. We loved the way that the pins affected the target units command and weapon accuracy and that the target unit, all of a sudden, had to check to see if they could complete their order.

After seeing the game in action, you start to see depth in the game which has gotten us super hyped for future battles.

Over the next couple of months, i'm sure more of the Antares depth will reveal itself as we learn the rules in more detail and as a result, different strategies will open up to us.

That being said we did have a few slip ups with rules, but as this is a new game system we're learning, it was bound to happen. Getting used to the idea of lower dice rolls being a 'good thing' tripped us up a couple of times, seeing we've played games for many years where a higher dice roll is generally better.

We are all really excited and eager to continue reading the rule book and get our head around this new and fresh ruleset. We're also looking forward to getting our forces fully assembled painted. Construction has begun, basing styles are being negotiated and the time to put paint to miniature is fast approaching. Such excite!

