



Mat Ward traces the inspiration for *The Battle of the Pelennor Fields* from Tolkien's novels and Peter Jackson's movies to the tabletop wargame.

As with *Siege of Gondor*, the intention of *The Battle of the Pelennor Fields* was to pick up where the film left off. As fantastic as the film is, it leaves some areas of the story unexplored. Being gamers, we all want toy soldiers to fill in the gaps. We already knew that many of the planned releases were focused squarely on the forces of the Haradrim. Accordingly, we wanted the content of book to concentrate on them. We'd already covered Pelennor Fields in great detail in the main *The Return of The King* rules manual. Thus, focusing on the Haradrim seemed like a very good direction to take and would open up all kinds of possibilities that we could explore. While *Siege of Gondor* relied heavily on the film, *The Battle of the Pelennor Fields* draws much of its inspiration from elsewhere.

When we committed ourselves to this path, we were aware that we were setting ourselves a rather large challenge. What Tolkien wrote about the Haradrim can be written on the back of a postage stamp (in big letters). Nonetheless, we committed to this course. *Siege of Gondor* and *Shadow & Flame* concentrated on grey areas dotted here and there in the main texts of the book, and there were literally chapters of reference material where Tolkien had gone into vast degrees of detail. Pelennor Fields, on the other hand, is a very different story indeed. Even in his extended works, Tolkien never truly explored the land of Harad. In essence, he left it as a great big, fuzzy, grey area. Naturally, this vagueness doesn't make for incredibly interesting reading. Thus, we needed to piece together everything that we could. From offhand text references to obscure mentions in the "Tale of Years," we knew that we had to let nothing escape us as we tried to re-create the history of Harad from what few scraps we had. Even with this reconstruction done, we were left with an awful lot of gaps to fill. For a start, everything that we had found was from the point of view of the traditional enemies of the Haradrim and thus was likely to be colored by their own biases. Thus, we set out to build Harad from the ground up. Of course, there's always a risk involved in creating such a large swathe of material, but it's been a real labor of love. As Tolkien wrote in so little detail, we had the freedom to create more or less as we wanted

Continued overleaf.

THE BATTLE OF THE PELENNOR FIELDS

*Ride now. Ride to ruin
and the world's ending.*
Theoden, *The Return of The King*



THE CHALLENGE OF THE MÛMAK

Alessio Cavatore: Writing the rules for the Oliphaunt was not easy. I knew from past experience that such a huge and different gaming piece was bound to create trouble when it came to writing its rules (do the words "Steam Tank" mean anything to you?).

I was aware that it was impossible to please everyone with these rules, but still it was such an exciting project that I couldn't resist taking that responsibility myself. It had to be mine! My own! My Precious Oliphaunt!

The challenge was great. Just by looking at the mock-up, it was evident that, for example, an oval base like the Mûmak's was unique in the entire game system and presented an entire new set of problems. You see, round bases have the great advantage of allowing maximum freedom of movement, as they don't suggest any polarity to the movement (i.e., there's no front or back). An oval base is different. People immediately feel that forward and backward moves should track the longer axis of the ellipse, and rightly so. If we required players to point the base in the direction of movement, the problem would be in rotating the base without gaining or losing movement in the process. Thus, I asked for a round base or at least one that had a hole in the center to allow players to spin it around with the center fixed in place. In the end, I had to agree that a round base would have been too large – the size of a small pizza ("And what's wrong with that?" said my Italian blood) – and that the base Alan Perry had sculpted looked so spectacular that ruining it with a hole would have been a great shame.

We did come to a

compromise, however, and you will notice that the center of the base is conveniently marked by a Rohirrim shield. Players can place a finger on it to achieve an almost clean spin and at the same time get a model that is worthy of a space on the mantelpiece!

I haven't completely given up on the hole in the base, however, as you will see later in a future *White Dwarf*.

Once the dynamics of movement were sorted, the rest of the rules followed easily. It was just natural that such a huge beast should trample models as it moved, and it was just a matter of tailoring the Strength and number of hits inflicted to make it hard but not invincible. The aim was that any normal trooper caught by a charging Mûmak should stand very little chance of surviving but that a great Hero should, on the other hand, be able to take its charge and fight back (at least as long as he or she is still fresh).

I tried to keep the rules as easy as possible, but because of the very nature of the Mûmak, they could not be too simple. After all, we are talking of the biggest plastic kit ever made by Games Workshop! It's a model that is far larger than anything else in the game. The Balrog's body is more or less as big as the Mûmak's head! Plus, the Oliphaunt transports up to 13 other models in a wooden tower on its back. I'm sure you understand that, with such a model, the temptation is to add a lot of rules to cover every detail of the many complex situations that it could trigger. This complexity would result in a very heavy set of rules, and eventually, I forced myself to stop at a certain level of detail in favor of playability. Already, as they stand, the rules for the Mûmak are more complex than those for any other single model in the game, and I really didn't want to make them even more complicated.

To give you an example, I'd originally written rules allowing Good Heroes to jump on the Mûmak by spending a point of Might (à la Legolas) and then to fight in the howdah. This concept was very cool, but it was such a huge can of worms that begged so many questions and needed so much explanation that I eventually decided to drop it. Keep your eyes peeled, however. You never know what might appear on the pages of *White Dwarf*.

I hope you agree with my choices of what to include and what to leave out for the sake of slick play. I also hope that you have endless fun using your Mûmak to stomp those Good guys very, very flat!





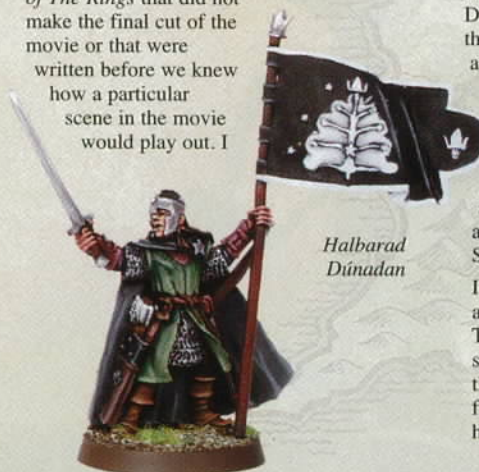
The Haradrim fight in earnest to drive the Men of Gondor from their lands.

Graham McNeill: Working on *The Battle of the Pelennor Fields* was a great opportunity for me to get involved with *The Lord of The Rings* game. Working on Codexes for Warhammer 40,000 has kept me pretty busy over the last few years, but I'd always had a hankering to try my hand at a supplement for *The Lord of The Rings*. I came to the project fairly late in the day, Mat having already penned most of the first half of the book. So I was tasked with writing the second half of the book, which dealt with Halbarad Dúnadan, the Rangers of the North, and several scenarios that reflected moments from *The Return of The King* (but owed more of a debt to the text of the book itself).

In terms of the text, Halbarad is a fairly minor character, his primary claim to fame being that he carries a banner crafted by Elrond's daughter Arwen Evenstar. After rereading the parts of the book he appears in, it was clear that these Rangers were a cut above your average human, what with having the blood of Númenor coursing through their veins. I wanted Halbarad to be a fairly tough character, but not too tough, given that he meets a rather perfunctory end during the battle (we only learn of

his death in a list of those who will never make it home!). I also decided to give him a slightly higher Will value (again, to represent his Elvish blood) and made Arwen's Banner something that would help in the desperate struggle of battle – especially in the final stages of the battles on the Pelennor fields.

The scenarios I wrote for the book represented pivotal moments from *The Lord of The Rings* that did not make the final cut of the movie or that were written before we knew how a particular scene in the movie would play out. I



Halbarad Dúnadan

to, which made us all the more determined to ensure that what we were writing fitted in with what had gone before. As we started to pull everything together, we were left with a series of notes and ideas, not only for the history of Harad, but also for elements of its language and culture. Wherever we could, we tied what we created to elements that Tolkien had written. As a result, there are very few places where we out-and-out constructed something entirely new. In fact, many good ideas were discarded early on, not because they weren't any good, but because they didn't quite fit with what Tolkien had written about Harad. What we were left with was a huge resource of what, why, when, where, and who – as a matter of fact, too big a resource for a 64-page book. Sadly, many elements had to go or became condensed for want of space, but you'll be able to see most of these concepts in the forthcoming issues of *White Dwarf*.

THE HARADRIM

With the stage now set, it was time to move on and decide what to do next. As we'd already covered the Battle of the Pelennor Fields itself in *The Return of The King*, we didn't want to simply duplicate the scenarios we'd already explored. Accordingly, the first chunk of *The Battle of the Pelennor Fields* is dedicated to the northward journey of the Haradrim, set many days before the siege of Minas Tirith begins in earnest. To re-enact this journey, the forces of Harad needed to be mustered. Though Harad isn't quite the barren desert that it is sometimes portrayed as, it is an arid and inhospitable place. Its warriors needed to reflect this environment. Haradrim tribal warriors mainly carry only a spear or a bow. This armament is very much a result of how they live – a shield is more a

had particular fun with the Eomer's Rage scenario and threw in as much as I could from the book. It was also fun to include such a large number of Good Heroes, as I think that moment is fantastically dramatic – as represented in both the film and the book. I think that Eomer's Rage was the most complicated of the scenarios I wrote. It was certainly the one that took the most playtesting, but I think it's worked out well and makes for an interesting and fun game. The Glory of Dol Amroth is also a challenging scenario that makes the Good player work hard for a win, but the tactical considerations the Evil player has to make to prevent his opponent from winning make for an interesting game. The last scenario I wrote was a good old-fashioned cavalry charge: Theoden against the Serpent Lord, with loads of angry horsemen charging at one another. Simple, but fun – a bit like me.

It was great fun to work on this book and actually write stuff for *The Lord of The Rings*. The book has a wealth of scenarios and background to keep even the most ardent *The Lord of The Rings* fan happy. Oh, and it also has a frikkin' huge elephant!

burden than a help in the heat of their land, while metal is so rare that only individuals of the highest status can afford to carry a hand weapon. To represent the mainstay of the Harad army, this supplement is accompanied by brand new plastic warriors – in my opinion, the best that we've yet seen in The Lord of The Rings range. Of course, the Haradrim are capable of mustering as varied an army as anyone, and it was important to represent this versatility as best we could. Accordingly, the Evil player can also muster Haradrim Raiders (also known as Serpent Riders), fast and deadly horsemen armed with lance or bow. To represent the unusual political situation in Harad, the Heroes each represent a different faction. First of all are the regular Harad chieftains who command the warriors of their tribes and whose loyalties are generally to their followers and whomever they see as being their commander. The second group of Heroes are the Hâsharii, the ruthless overseers and enforcers of the land of Harad. The leftover remnants of a cult of Sauron's creation, these men are dedicated to the corrupt lords of Umbar. Last but not least is the commander of Harad's armies at the end of the Third Age of the sun, Suladân, the Serpent Lord – a man who wishes to free his people from the control of Umbar (but not necessarily for the good of all). Should the ruin of Gondor be the price of freedom for Suladân, he will gladly pay it. The final addition to the Evil forces introduced in this book needs very little in the way of introduction – the Mûmakil (see, I didn't forget them). If there's one thing that sticks in your mind from *The Return of The King*, it's probably this 30' tall rampaging war-elephant (or possibly the Witch-king, but that's just me). Alessio talks about this critter here, so I'll not go into any detail about it, but never fear, the size of the model (and the way it behaves on the table) more than does justice to its presentation in the film. With three different Hero classes, two distinct types of Warrior, and a big beastie of mammoth proportions (sorry – couldn't resist), the Harad army is very much a going concern and a fitting force for new and experienced players alike.

THE JOURNEY NORTH

With the principal players of the Evil side in place, all that remained was to give them a foe to oppose them who was worthy of their mettle. Who better to do so than Imrahil and the Knights of Dol Amroth? For me, Imrahil remains one of the more memorable



Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth



The Knights of Dol Amroth charge the Haradrim.

characters in the book. Imrahil tirelessly encouraged the flagging spirits of the Warriors of Minas Tirith even as their citadel was brought under siege. Sadly, he had no part to play in the film, but the opportunity to bring him to the fore could not be missed. Thus, it is under Imrahil's leadership that the defenses of South Gondor are held against the advancing Southrons. Imrahil and the Knights are everything that should be expected from the pinnacle of Gondor's military tradition but are few in number and rely heavily on the more common warriors of Gondor. As for their struggle, the seven scenarios that make up the *Harad* section of the book follow not only Imrahil's defense of Harondor but also Suladân's bid to gain control of Harad so that both Good and Evil players can feel that they have something concrete to aim for over the course of their games. I've tried to create scenarios with a slightly different twist to them without compromising playability. The scenarios range in size from a handful of models, all the way up to complete army battles, but all can comfortably be played in less than 2 hours. As in *Siege of Gondor* and *Shadow & Flame*, the scenarios in the first half of the book all tie together into a campaign that brings the various characters to the forefront of the action.

THE PELENNOR ITSELF

The second half of the book, penned by Graham McNeill and Adam Troke, deals much more with the meat and bones of the Battle of the Pelennor Fields itself. Adam's scenario is a prologue of sorts, recounting Faramir's ambush of the Haradrim army, as told in *The Two Towers*. Though we covered this battle in *The Two Towers* rules manual, it seemed only fair to replay it with the historical participants. In the remainder of the book, Graham weaves the key events of the Battle of the Pelennor Fields into a series of scenarios, from the desperate sally of the Knights of Dol Amroth to Eomer's final stand by the Harlond.

So there you have it – *The Battle of the Pelennor Fields* in its entirety: 11 new scenarios, over 10 profiles for new Warriors and Heroes, painting and modeling guides (and that's before you go into the maps and background information), and more. The battle has begun!