

This is the concluding part of two battle reports covering the initial stages of the Uruk-hai assault on Helm's Deep. In the first part the Uruk-hai were thwarted by the valiant defenders – will they succeed this time?

Earlier in this book we featured the first part of this linked battle report. Here we present the second and concluding part of the assault on Helm's Deep with Scenario Six: Defend the Gateway.

As you will now know from watching the film, the siege of Helm's Deep is one of the most stunning sequences in *The Two Towers* and we wanted to do it justice as well as demonstrating the new siege rules.

DEFEND THE GATEWAY

The concluding part of our linked Helm's Deep battle report

Matthew Ward will again take control of the defenders and try to hold off Rowland Cox's assaulting horde of Uruk-hai.

As the game starts Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli are rushing along the battlements from the Deeping Wall in order to get to the fight in time, and they will join the combat in Turn 6.

Unfortunately for Matthew, Haldir was shot from the walls by a flurry of

crossbow bolts in the previous game and so won't be joining the heroes this time. But, that's not all! Gimli and Aragorn are both low on points of Might and Aragorn has suffered a wound.

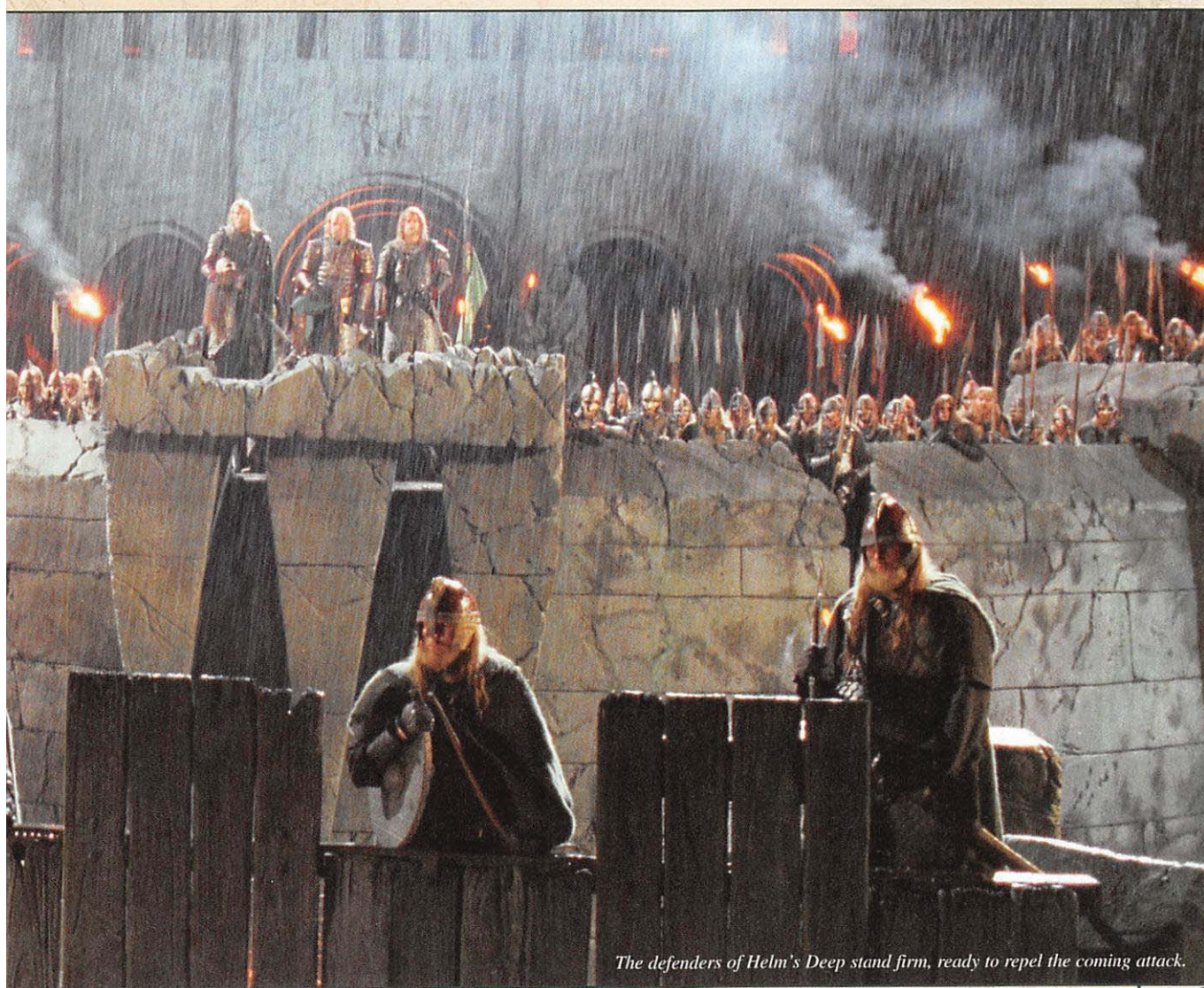
Many of the scenarios in the *Two Towers* rules manual are entirely suitable for linking like this and it can make for some very exciting games.

Now, the opposing forces are lined up and ready to do battle...





Aragorn and Gimli's heroic fight behind the Deeping Wall.



The defenders of Helm's Deep stand firm, ready to repel the coming attack.

SCENARIO 6 – DEFEND THE GATEWAY



WE COME TO KILL, BY SUN OR MOON

Rowland Cox:

This game carries straight on from the last scenario, The Deeping Wall. The Uruk-hai continue

their assault against the old fortress, Helm's Deep, this time trying to take the gateway. If the Uruk-hai can batter the gateway down then Saruman's forces will be triumphant, and the fall of Middle-earth inevitable. Of course, Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas might have something to say about that...

A veritable horde would be assaulting the defenders, outnumbering them almost 4 to 1. I had plenty of my favourite troop type, Uruk-hai Berserkers, to throw over the walls. These were handsomely supported by scores of heavily armoured Uruk-hai and a brace of Captains. Even better, this time I had two war machines to hoist up siege ladders and speed up the assault. And of course, the battering ram. This little beauty would keep Matthew worried throughout the game!

Looking at the defences, I decided to avoid the south wall as that was where the heroic reinforcements would appear from. Instead I decided that I would concentrate on the gateway and the northern wall. This would give me the maximum time to assail the defenders without Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas interfering. I knew as soon as they arrived it would be very difficult to get more Uruk-hai over the walls. In order for my forces to stand a chance on the ramparts I had to get as many ladders up as possible and keep the

pressure on the defenders. Whereas the passageway to the gateway was relatively easy, if somewhat narrow, the rocky route to the northern wall would take much more scaling. This is where the Uruk-hai war machines would come into their own, shooting ladders up against the northern wall ignoring the treacherous terrain, and launching Berserkers against dismayed defenders. As in the previous game I would be sending in the Uruk-hai captains over in the first wave so to best exploit early gains. I would put a strong contingent against the gateway, backed up by crossbow-armed Uruk-hai, and, of course, the battering ram.

The battering ram would hopefully be my ace card. If I could take down the gateway doors my Uruk-hai could pour through and overpower the defenders; thus winning the game. I would attach the maximum six Uruks to the battering ram, and make sure there were plenty of others nearby in case of shooting casualties. With no blasting powder this time, opening the gates was my best chance of victory and so I had to keep the defenders fully occupied. Although I wanted to avoid the likes of Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas as long as possible, I knew I would eventually have to pin them in combat to allow my forces to breakthrough.

I was confident that I could seize Helm's Deep, especially after wearing down the Heroes in the last game, although I was painfully aware of what damage Aragorn could inflict. If the dice gods smile kindly I might get revenge on a particular Dwarf, and snuff out the Gimli bomb once and for all. Surely victory for the forces of Evil is at hand...



TO THE BATTLEMENTS

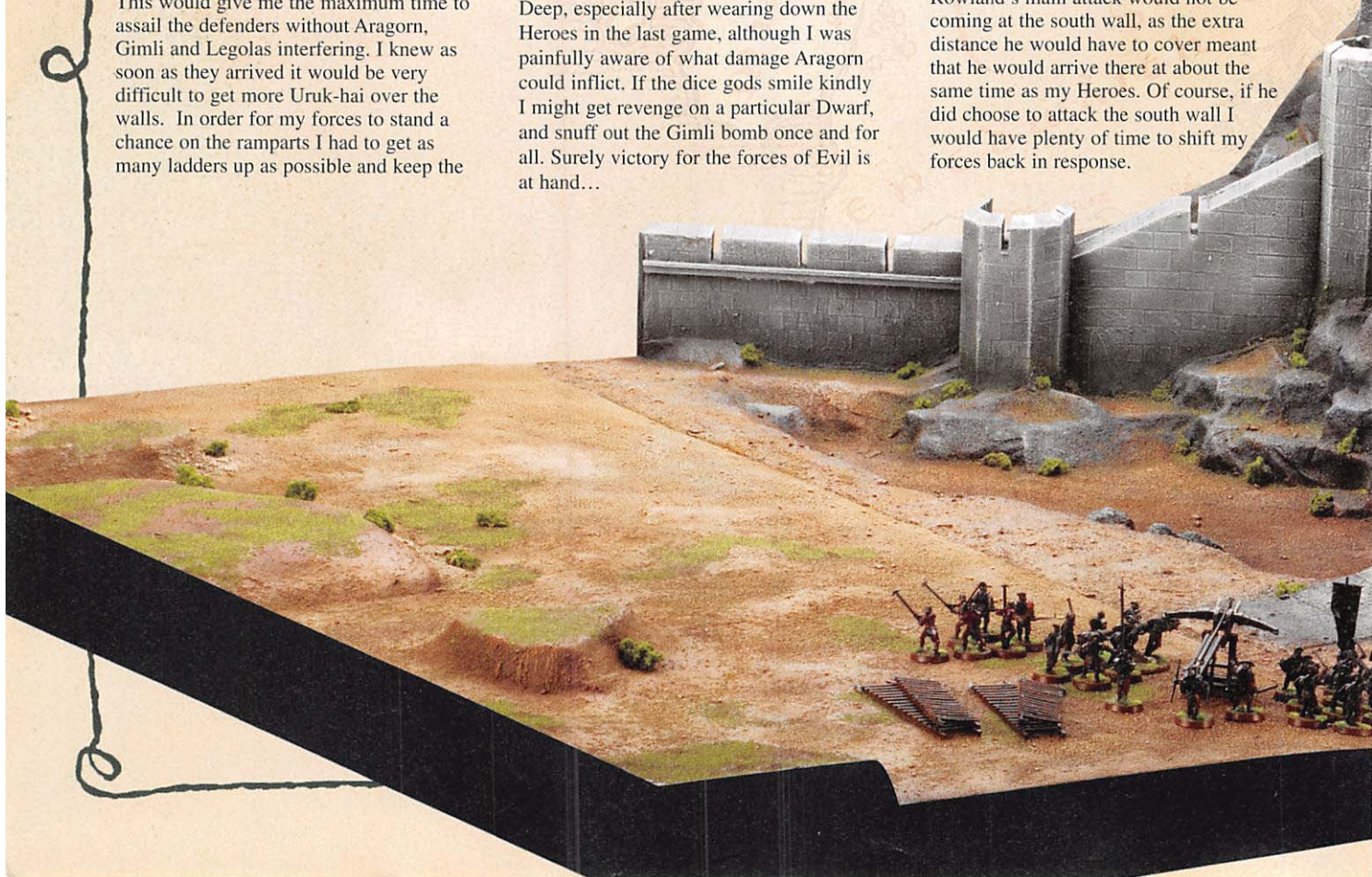
Matthew Ward:

My triumph from a successful defence of the Deeping Wall was to be short-lived it seemed, as I was now to be thrown back into

the fray to defend against the assault on the main fortress of Helm's Deep. Between the tougher Uruk-hai, less numerous defenders, and my now sadly depleted store of Might, I had no illusions that this was going to be a difficult battle to win, especially after losing Haldir on the Deeping Wall.

Looking on the bright side though, I could still probably count on getting my cadre of heroes into action before it became too late. The battering ram quickly became the key issue for me; if it broke through the gate too early I would almost certainly be scuppered, as hordes of Uruk-hai poured through the gates and over the wall. As in the first Scenario, I would just have to see what devious schemes Rowland hatched and react to them as best I could and hopefully tot up enough kills to break the Uruk-hai force.

With this in mind I yet again placed my defenders at even spacings atop the northern wall with Gamling atop the gatehouse. I had little doubt that Rowland's main attack would not be coming at the south wall, as the extra distance he would have to cover meant that he would arrive there at about the same time as my Heroes. Of course, if he did choose to attack the south wall I would have plenty of time to shift my forces back in response.

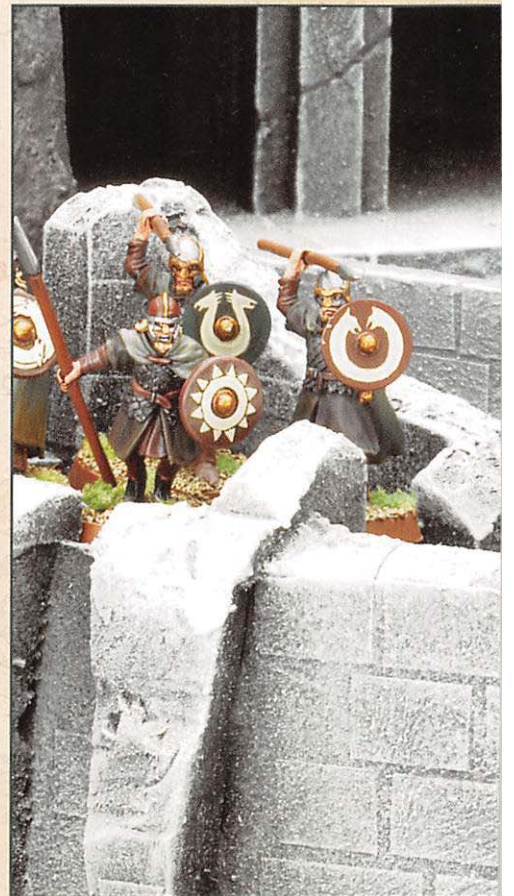




THE FIGHTING URUK-HAI

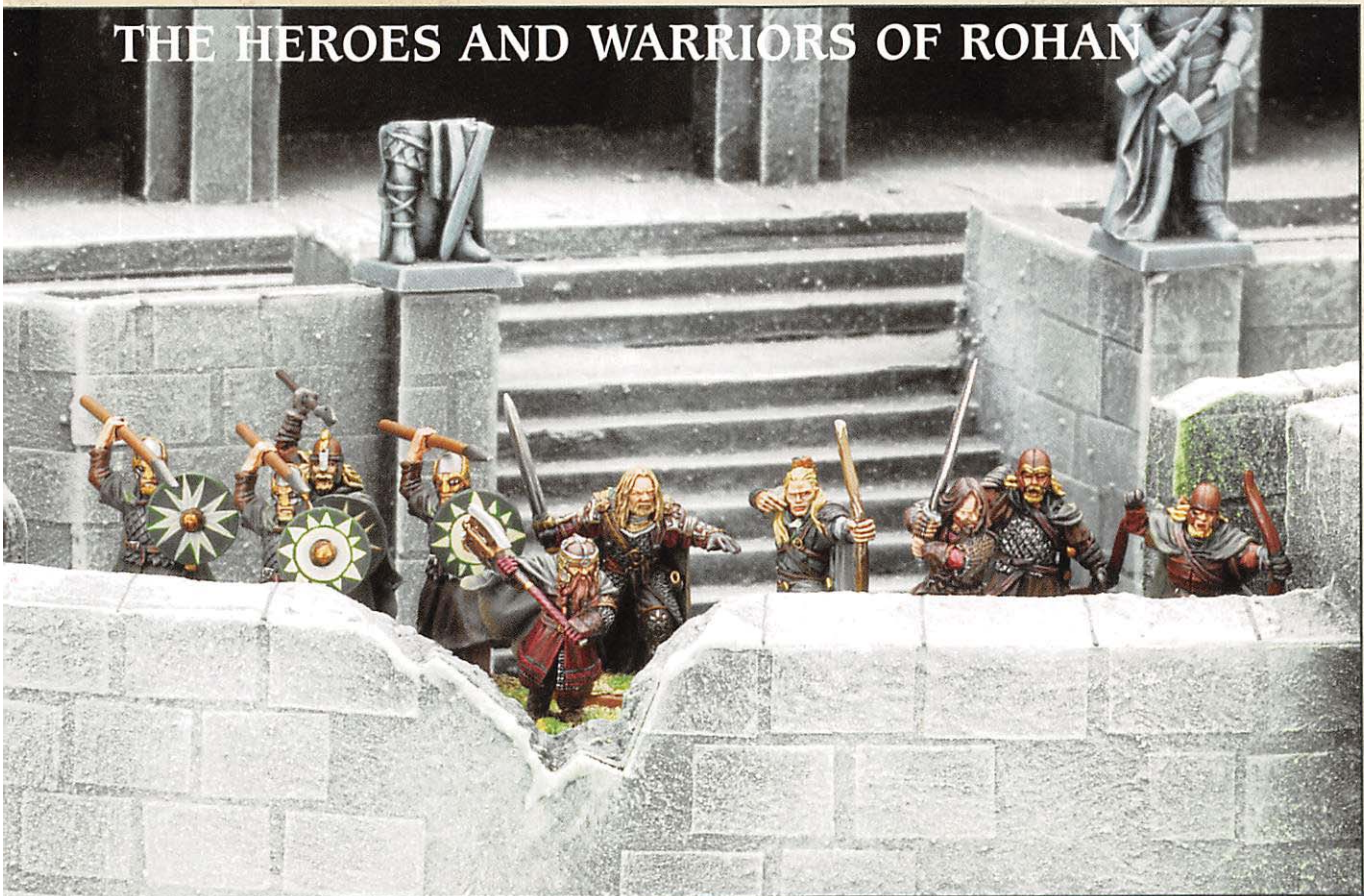


An Uruk-hai battering ram in action.





THE HEROES AND WARRIORS OF ROHAN





The Uruk-hai sweep up to the walls of Helm's Deep.

TURNS 1-3

With Gamling and the handful of Rohirrim lying down out of sight of the enemy marksmen, the first few turns were dominated by the relentless advance upon the fortress. One force headed towards the north wall whilst a second force of equal size accompanied the battering ram towards the mighty gate. The assault began proper during Turn 3, as Gamling and a single Rohirrim got to their feet to guard against the imminent threat of siege ladders being propelled into contact with the fortress walls. This foresight proved to be well founded, as the siege engine succeeded in grappling the nearest ladder to the crenelated gatehouse and Gamling suddenly found himself in a desperate combat with an Uruk-hai Captain. Fortunately for the Rohirrim, Gamling bested his snarling foe and the Uruk-hai had to scramble furiously to keep his grip on the battlements.

TURN 4

Rowland managed to secure priority this turn and whilst the crossbowmen prepared to sweep unwary defenders from the battlements, most of the Uruk-hai doubled forward, eager to lay their long ladders against the fortress walls. Meanwhile, the battering ram ended its move a stone's throw away from the gate. A bold Rohirrim warrior charged forward to join Gamling's defence against the Uruk-hai

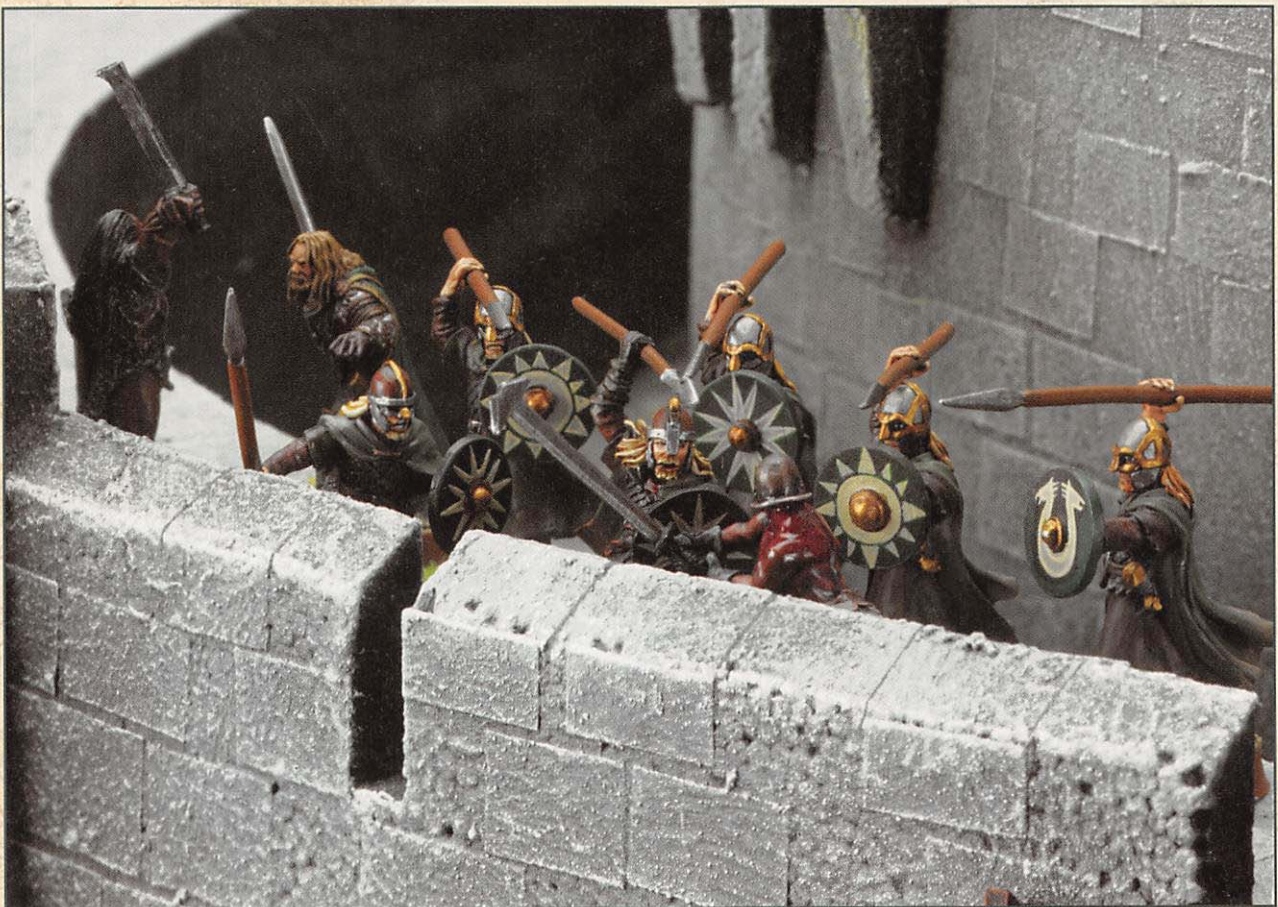
Captain on the gatehouse wall. Knowing that the main wave of the assault was imminent, the remaining Rohirrim warriors got to their feet and prepared to repulse the attack. Unfortunately, in doing so they presented themselves as all too tempting targets for the Uruk-hai below and accompanied by a roar of victory from the attackers, one of their number on the gatehouse was slain by a black-feathered crossbow bolt. Again, one of the siege engines managed to land a shot on the walls and another ladder was winched into place, launching a screaming Berserker towards an unoccupied section of battlements. During the Fight phase, the Uruk-hai Captain beat back Gamling and slew his other opponent to triumphantly take his place on the battlements.

TURN 5

Once more, Rowland managed to win priority and the Berserker swung himself onto the wall of the gatehouse proper. Unable to see a target to charge, he prepared to defend himself as his comrades swarmed up the ladder behind him. Accompanied by a succession of rattles and dull thuds, a total of four more ladders were laid against the fortress wall, as the bulk of the Uruk-hai force gathered in the shadow of the northern wall. Still threatened by Gamling, the Uruk-hai Captain on the gatehouse charged the experienced fighter as another crazed

warrior mounted the battlements behind him. Far below, the battering ram finally made contact with the gate. With the situation starting to feel more than a little tense, the Rohirrim mustered their defence and one of their warriors charged the Berserker on the ramparts, hurling his spear as he went. The spear struck home, fatally wounding the Berserker and the Rohirrim redirected his charge to combat the Uruk-hai who had followed his Captain on the gatehouse.

On the north wall the valiant defenders managed to push two of the siege ladders away from the walls, and with both siege engine shots flying wide Rowland was unable to get them back in contact his turn. The Rohirrim cast their spears into the mass of Uruk-hai at the base of the north wall, but though their aim was true, the armour of the creatures deflected the deadly missiles. In the Fight phase Rowland managed to keep his hold on the captured ground by fending off the attacks of both Gamling and the lone Rohirrim warrior on the gatehouse. Even using both points of Might in an attempt to win the combat, Gamling could not defeat the Uruk-hai Captain who drew upon his own reserves of Might to win the combat and push the aging Rohirrim back. Finally, the iron-shod tip of the battering ram shook the fortress gates to their very core and, with a scream of wrenching timbers, succeeded in dealing a point of damage.



The Uruk-hai Berserker finds himself fighting for his life.

TURN 6

With priority finally returning to the Good side, Matthew managed to capitalise on his fortune by casting down the two remaining ladders on the north wall of the fortress, whilst other Rohirrim ran to assist Gamling on the gatehouse. Gamling and his fellow defender steeled themselves and charged once more into combat with the Uruk-hai Captain and the warrior who had defeated them last turn, while the two Archers moved out of the shadow of the inner wall to add to the defence. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli arrived hotfoot from their defence of the Deeping Wall, filling the defenders with fresh hope. Bellowing with frustration as the battlements were temporarily denied to them, the besiegers slammed their ladders once more against the northern wall, whilst the single Berserker on the ramparts charged into combat with a Rohirrim warrior.

In the Shoot phase the air once more hissed with Uruk-hai crossbow bolts. Four shots found targets, but their force was spent and not a single defender fell. The fighting at the gatehouse erupted once more and although a single warrior was able to hack down the gallant Rohirrim defender, Gamling managed to beat his opponent back towards the ladder and another Rohirrim was able to fend off the crazed blows of the Berserker. Below the gatehouse, the battering ram beat against

the gate once more but the sturdy doors to Helm's Deep held firm.

TURN 7

The Evil force won priority once more, and a veritable tide of Uruk-hai swept up the ladders on the northern wall, although fortunately for Matthew it would be another turn before they could attack the defenders. Atop the gatehouse the enemy Captain once more charged Gamling whilst the other Uruk-hai moved in preparation to engage the defenders on the northern wall. The Rohirrim defenders rushed to the ladders and with a mighty effort managed to heave one away from the battlements, two Uruk-hai falling unhurt to the ground below. The Heroes surged forward with Legolas hanging back in an attempt to take out the unengaged foe on the battlements. Both siege engines missed once more, and with no unengaged targets within sight of Uruk-hai crossbowmen, the Shoot phase was disappointing for Rowland. Conversely Legolas' deadly skill plucked the unengaged attacker from the battlements, his hide pierced with two elven arrows. Combat raged once more about the gatehouse, with Gamling managing to wound the Captain only to be cheated of his victory by a Fate roll of 6. Along the north wall, the Uruk-hai were denied a foothold on the battlements as the

Rohirrim warrior elected to shield rather than attempt to strike blows. In the process his opponent lost his footing on the ladder and fell roaring to his death. Below the gatehouse, the Uruk-hai battering ram once more failed to make an impression on the sturdy gate.

TURN 8

Winning priority, Matthew was able to pin the Uruk-hai Captain on the gatehouse against the wall by charging him with Aragorn and Gimli, whilst Legolas advanced and awaited a target to present itself. Gamling moved to cover the north wall, whilst the defenders there managed to heave another ladder away, two of the Uruk-hai on the ladder plunging to their deaths. The Uruk-hai laid their ladders against the north wall once again, with yet more of the foul creatures charging up the established ladders to assault the defenders, and yet more Berserkers spilled onto the gatehouse. Once more, only the musical hum of Legolas' bow garnered any kills in the Shoot phase, one deadly arrow piercing a Berserker despite the cover of the gatehouse wall.

Caught between Aragorn and Gimli, the Uruk-hai Captain had no chance to defend himself and was stilled forever by the mighty swing of Gimli's axe. Meanwhile on the north wall a single Rohirrim fended



Boooooom! The battering ram starts to demolish the gate.



The Uruk-hai start to swarm over the walls.

off a savage Uruk-hai with his shield, knocking the creature clean off the ladder and to his death far below. The vicious combat continued on the next ladder along, and an attacker managed to beat two Rohirrim defenders, but failing to slay one of them could not mount the battlements. Beneath the gatehouse, and to Rowland's mounting frustration, the battering ram failed once more to cause any damage.

TURN 9

Priority once more remained with the Rohirrim, but before they could use this to their advantage, Rowland declared a Heroic action with an Uruk-hai Captain who had newly come to the top of the ladder last turn. Seeing the danger, Aragorn also declared a Heroic action, and winning the dice roll Matthew charged the Uruk-hai Captain with Gimli and a lone Uruk-hai with Aragorn. Although unable to move himself, the Captain's action was enough to propel a single attacker into action and he leapt a section of wall to land in combat with Aragorn. With so many ladders against the north wall it became difficult for the remaining Rohirrim to defend the wall and to also guard against the Uruk-hai already spilling over it. Gamling charged into combat with a Berserker and was joined by another Rohirrim.

Remarkably, in the Shoot phase, the deadly skill of Legolas could not deal a fatal wound, as even expending a point of Might he could not pierce the armour on his target. On the gatehouse, Aragorn easily dispatched his foes, his blade

hacking through a weak spot in the armour of the creatures. Gimli fared worse, losing his combat with the Captain, although fortunately his armour saved him from harm. Further along the battlements, Gamling was driven back by the savage attack of the Berserker who turned to dispatch his other Rohirrim opponent with one cut. Further along the walls the defenders fared better, hurling one Uruk-hai to his doom on the rocks below and fending off a second. Once more, the battering ram failed to do any substantial damage to the gate.

TURN 10

With priority on his side once more, Matthew charged his Heroes forward with Aragorn engaging one Uruk-hai, Gimli again attacking the Captain, and Legolas charging a Berserker. Even covering as many ladders as they could, Rohirrim losses were starting to tell and several determined besiegers managed to mount the battlements. Two Uruk-hai charged Legolas and a Berserker charged Gamling. Deciding that things were getting desperate, Aragorn initiated a Heroic combat with his opponent and cutting the Uruk-hai down, he used his free move to assist Gamling against his crazed opponent. Gimli succeeded in heaving his opponent away from the wall, but unfortunately the Uruk-hai Captain survived his ignominious fall. Meanwhile, superior skill and a point of Might allowed Legolas to defeat his three opponents and a further point of Might helped him to slay the Berserker. Once more the Rohirrim on the north wall managed to fend off the foes attacking up

the ladders, and upon the wall itself a gallant Rohirrim was able to beat back his Uruk-hai opponent. Trapped in the press of bodies, the Uruk-hai could not stave off the rain of blows and perished. Unfortunately for the forces of Good, even the prowess of Aragorn could not save Gamling from the maddened Berserker, and with two vicious cuts the aged warrior was slain. Several feet below his ruined body, the battering ram ineffectually beat once more upon the fortress gate.

TURN 11

Finally reclaiming priority, Rowland moved the remnants of his northern force back up their ladders once more. With very few Uruk-hai and several defenders remaining on the north wall he would have to get the gate open to let the rest of his force into the fortress if he was to have any chance of winning. With that in mind, all the Uruk-hai already on the fortress walls engaged the defenders with a vengeance. Aragorn managed to cut down a Berserker and an Uruk-hai, driving his final opponent along the battlements to avoid a similar fate. Elsewhere, Gimli was forced to use both Fate points and his final point of Might to survive the feral onslaught of a Berserker. Legolas fared no better, with only a Fate point standing between him and a serious wound, while a short distance away, a Berserker swung his great blade in an unstoppable arc to slay another Rohirrim. As even the battering ram managed to score a point of damage on the fortress gate, hope seemed lost for the defenders.

TURN 12

Priority once more proved fickle and the defenders were able to reassault the Uruk-hai on the battlements. Realising that every defender counted, Matthew charged his Heroes forward to engage as many Uruk-hai as possible; Aragorn engaged three Uruk-hai warriors, but Legolas and Gimli were only able to engage a single foe each. Three Rohirrim engaged the beset Uruk-hai from the north whilst the remaining Archer covered the only ladder with Uruk-hai still on it. With all his models on the battlements pinned in place, Rowland moved some of his crossbowmen onto unoccupied ladders in the hope that should Gimli be slain by the Berserker, yet more Uruk-hai would be able to swarm onto the walls. It was not to be however, as during the Fight phase, the tenacious Dwarf easily cut down the maddened Berserker. Aragorn continued the success,

effortlessly slaying another two maddened creatures, but Legolas was unable to kill his single foe. The three Rohirrim managed to hold their ground against the Uruk-hai, but only just, whilst the Archer on the north wall managed to shove a snarling attacker off the ladder, and although the creature survived, the two that he swept off as he fell did not. The battering ram again failed to do any damage to the gate, but the onerous pounding seemed to underline the desperation of the defender's position.

TURN 13

With the defenders now down to the three Heroes, two Archers and two Rohirrim warriors, the handful of Uruk-hai remaining on the battlements was more than sufficient to pin them into combat, as priority returned to Rowland. Aragorn

found himself beset on all sides by snarling warriors and every other defender was blade to blade with either a Berserker or an Uruk-hai warrior! As the battering ram pounded weakly on the gate below, Aragorn used a point of Might to slay one opponent while elsewhere Legolas was unable to even penetrate the guard of his opponent. Rather than face the fury of Aragorn, one of his surviving opponents jumped down the inner face of the wall, miraculously surviving the fall! Gimli's victory at the head of the gatehouse ladder failed to translate into wounds, but as his opponent fell from the wall he swept off all five Uruk-hai on the ladder behind him, two of which did not rise again from the ground. The remaining four Rohirrim warriors had mixed fortunes: two won their combats but the only wound inflicted was when a Rohirrim warrior backed too hastily away from his opponent and tumbled off the battlements to his doom.

TURN 14

Priority was once more in the hands of Rowland and he moved quickly to pin the defenders. Thus engaged on the battlements, none of the defenders were able to try and intercept the Uruk-hai behind the walls who started to run for the gates. Although in the resulting combats Aragorn managed to kill another two Uruk-hai, the odds against Matthew's forces increased as an Uruk-hai beat down the remaining Archer. Gimli and Legolas, fighting side by side managed to win their combats, but fatigue was obviously beginning to tell as neither managed to kill their opponent. Below, the gate stood firm and the sonorous beat of the Uruk-hai battering ram continued.

TURN 15

With Matthew regaining priority, he first needed to take Courage tests as the defenders were now under half strength, but Aragorn passed with ease, and his example kept the remaining defenders fighting. Horribly outnumbered, the remaining Rohirrim warrior retreated to the stone causeway. Gimli was left to hold the battlements by himself as Aragorn and Legolas jumped off the ramparts in a desperate attempt to stop the Uruk-hai from opening the gates. Ignoring the Rohirrim, Rowland concentrated on attacking Gimli and opening the gates. The Uruk-hai managed to get as far as the gate and was outside of Aragorn's charge range and so would certainly open the gate in the following turn. As the final blow, attacked on all sides by two Uruk-hai, a Captain, and a Berserker, the valiant Gimli was overmatched and died at the head of the battlements he had tried to protect. With no troops left to defend the battlements and the gate certain to be opened at the start of the following turn, Helm's Deep had fallen!



Aragorn and Legolas arrive too late to stop the gates being opened!



THAT DIDN'T GO VERY WELL

Matthew: Actually, I exaggerate the case somewhat and for a long time there it looked like I was going to be able to

do it. Alas, the numbers of the Uruk-hai were too great. Early on, the efforts of my gallant Rohirrim were superb, especially given that they were overmatched in almost every aspect by the stronger and better-armoured Uruk-hai. That said, Gamling proved to be a bit of a disappointment (I don't think he actually killed anything during the entire battle) and just couldn't hold his section of wall against a determined Uruk-hai Captain.

One thing I did discover was the wonderful effectiveness of shielding in a fight like this. The ability to roll an extra dice in combat really helped my overmatched humans when they were defending the walls. Normally this can be a fairly desperate tactic as your warrior cannot strike if he won the fight by shielding, but when your opponent is on a ladder there is a 50% chance that he'll lose his grip and fall, certainly taking him out of the fight and quite probably killing him (and some friends if you're really lucky).

At the end of the day though it was the collapse of the gate that caused my downfall, as by this stage I just couldn't hold the battlements and was still well shy of breaking the Uruk-hai force. In hindsight I was just lucky that Rowland didn't barrel his Uruk-hai off the back of the wall earlier and force me to abandon the defence to hunt them down. Still, that was well won by Rowland and I look forward to taking my revenge sometime in the future with the 'Theoden Rides Out!' scenario. Look out for this rematch on the web site!



KING OF THE CASTLE

Rowland: The might of the White Hand has conquered the ancient fort of Helm's Deep. Saruman is

triumphant, and the assault on the rest of Middle-earth can begin! Matthew put up a stoic defence, and came within a whisker of repelling the attacking horde of Uruk-hai. His downfall came not from the battering ram as I originally thought, but instead from a lone Uruk-hai who fell off a wall, and managed to let the whole evil army through the gates



Sorry Matthew, I think you'll find that I'm king of the castle!

whilst no one was looking. He'll definitely get a double portion of man flesh for supper!

Concentrating my forces on just the gateway and northern wall proved to be successful. I managed to avoid the Heroes until Turn 8, when Aragorn and Gimli finally charged my Uruk-hai Captain on the gatehouse. By leaving the south wall uncontested I was removing an avenue for attack, but I knew that unless I concentrated my effort the evil forces would be repelled. An attack on both the south and the north walls would have permitted Matthew to take out my forces piecemeal, and would have allowed Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas to enter the fray more quickly. Instead I managed to gain a foothold that Matthew could not break.

Make no mistake, winning as the besieger is hard work, and Matthew almost kicked my Uruks into touch. Between Turns 6 – 10 I only gained priority once, and this allowed Matthew to keep me on the back foot. However by maintaining constant pressure on his defenders I did manage get over the northern wall eventually. I didn't make it any easier for myself by stacking both my Captains on one ladder. By the time the first one had been killed by Gimli and Aragorn, the only thing the second one got to do was get thrown off his ladder! I would have been better placing him against the north wall. In many ways the biggest let down was the battering ram. I thought it would smash through

the gates, instead it just provided a background rhythm for my Uruk-hai to hit Rohirrim to!

Crucially I was able to gain priority on Turns 4 and 5, essential as this was when my assault began in earnest. Getting an Uruk-hai Captain over the wall at the gatehouse was vital, as much of the fighting happened around this vital position. It helped draw attention away from the northern wall, where I struggled to get over for many turns. However by keeping the pressure on several fronts, and constantly pressing at the defenders, I managed to get a sizeable force of troops on the northern wall. The highest praise should go to Berserkers who were truly magnificent in this game, felling Gamling, overpowering Heroes and dispatching Rohirrim with gory abandon. Matthew very wisely dispatched them with throwing or bow weapons where possible. However the greatest asset a besieging commander has is to take advantage of opportunities when they appear. When the lone Uruk-hai fell off the wall and survived, I was presented with an opportunity to open the gateway uncontested. No one had been left to guard it! Admittedly I'd killed most of the defenders by then...

Pleasingly though, not only did the Uruk-hai triumph but revenge was had against Gimli, who with Aragorn had been a force to be reckoned with. Well all that's left to do is give the big pot of man flesh a stir, and perhaps add a few Dwarf dumplings.