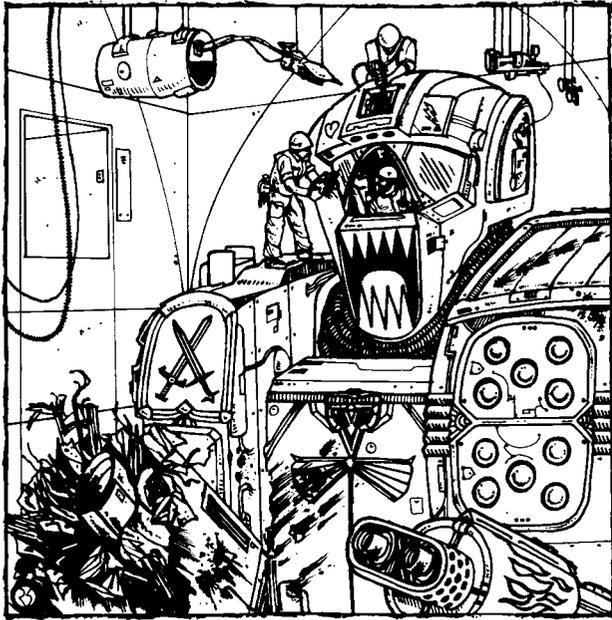


Advanced Gaming Enterprises
Presents
THE BEST OF THE COMMAND POST
Issues #55-#181



Issue #55

PLAYERSTRATEGYCORNER

The Joys of Incinerating
(Strategy Tips from J.J. "Shake-n" Baker)

It seems there are fewer and fewer Incinerators being used in the Arena, and I think that it's a dirty rotten shame. Sure, they have their limitations, all Bots do. But if you use a little common sense, and restrain yourself from using the Particle Beam every single phase, it can be one of the most enjoyable Bots to run in the Arena.

The INCIN-8R is described as a short range support Bot. The general idea is to Heat up a target for a turn or two and then finish him off with your Particle Beam. DON'T try to use the PBC at first. Use your Lasers! Use your Flamers! The Lasers will hit more often than your Particle Beam and will not raise your own Heat as quickly. After your target is up to High or even Critical Heat (it will happen a lot faster than you think, if you can get in a couple of Flamer shots) you can turn to the PBC.

There is a strategy to make up for the INCIN-8R's five sector range. Try to stay BEHIND something for the first turn or two. Heavy Buildings or Ridges-3 work nicely. Also, remember that you can "Move Toward" a specific Friendly Bot as well as a Hostile. Stay in place for the phase or two in turn one (to be sure you're behind, and not in front of, your teammate) then use "Move Toward Specific Bot", specifying the nearest Friendly Bot's number in the Move Option. The idea is to get behind him, then just follow him for the rest of turn one.

In turn two, depending upon your scanner, you can stay behind your teammate or break towards a Hostile. I prefer Ravagers as targets, since they have no Fists or Particle Beams and start with fewer Action Points than the INCIN-8R. Or, you can opt to support your teammate (who might appreciate it after being used as a shield) helping to Heat up his chosen target so it's easier for both of you to hit. Use Flamers and Lasers through turn two.

In turn three or four, whenever your target hits High Heat, start using your PBC. I like to use it only on phase four and/or five of a turn at first. By that time, your target has already used most of his Action Points for the turn.

To summarize, here are my ideas of an Incinerator's strategy:

1) Use your Lasers and Flamers at first. Especially your Flamers, as they will increase your target's Heat more quickly. Later in the game, use the Lasers since they'll do more damage (ie. victory points) than the Flamers. Initially, it's important to raise your target's Heat as quickly as possible.

2) Everyone knows that an INCIN-8R has a range of five. You're not fooling anyone when you step into the Arena. Don't hesitate to stay behind terrain until the Hostiles are within range. You won't score a lot of points at first, but they shouldn't hit you either. Your PBC against a High Heat target later will make up for the first two turns.

3) Use your Particle Beam sparingly. It's not the world's most accurate weapon. The PBC, combined with the INCIN-8R's scant 60 tons, will make a nice rating at the game's end.

Try a little excitement in your life. Try an Incinerator!

Issue #67

RULECHANGES

Engineers employed by the Council of Nations have excitedly announced a new development. They have devised a method of linking the Targeting Computers of a team's CP with those of its allied Bots, utilizing a previously unused communications channel. The resulting communications link allows allied Bots to gain a partial (50%) benefit of the CP's targeting computers. Thus if your team's CP has 2 Targeting Computers (worth +10% bonus for the CP) you get a +5% targeting bonus as long as the CP and its Targeting Computers remain operational.

The effects of this breakthrough in technology are unclear. On the one hand there is now an additional benefit in defending your own CP (beyond denying your opponent Victory Points). On the other, there is now even greater incentive to destroy the enemy CP as quickly as possible — by destroying the enemy CP you immediately degrade the performance of all of its allied Bots.

Issue #73

PLAYERSTRATEGYCORNER

ASK AUNT HONEY

Hang on to your Bots boys and girls, this is the issue you've all been waiting for! Your favorite aunt reveals the secret strategies and tactical tricks of the BIG TEAMS!

First off, a few disclaimers. 1) This info pertains to 2-Sided battles. Although some tricks might be used in 4-Sided contests, three Bots aren't really enough for any involved tactics, and everyone knows those games are only warm-ups for beginners or those without the ball bearings for REAL combat. 2) This info was acquired through my own spies and android Pilots, but without assistance from Arena officials, who take no responsibility for the form or content of this column. 3) You may think I've left something out; that you have the ultimate paladin pulping ploy. You may be right, but I'll never tell (HA!). Besides, look at the title; they ask me, not you!

Several classic battle strategies have survived to the 22nd century, among them the simple phalanx and retarded center advances. Enfilading, or sweeping up one side of the Arena, remains popular, and even the outdated retrograde attack has seen some success versus mindlessly aggressive opponents. The use of terrain features has always been a basic tactic in Arena combat at any level. However, the concerted use demonstrated by some large teams has evolved this tactic to support strategic goals. These are all facilitated by coordinated movement and fire rarely seen among independents or small group alliances. Of course some elementary strategies, like the all-out CP attack (aka the Lunatik Charge) don't really need team coordination, but certainly require consent.

Switching the positions of Bots (the Walt'z-n-Bots), and the Banzai Blind (advancing the lead Bot behind tall terrain features) are two of the earliest tactical innovations introduced to take advantage of the Bot's control system for targeting fire. Both confuse sensors by anticipating standard firing orders (specific targets or nearest Bot), leading to canceled attacks. Also among the first Arena tactics is the Dyna-cream Scheme, hammering a single Bot with most of a team's fire power over several turns. The last of the popular core tactics is the 42nd SaCrificial Lambot; sticking some poor soul (usually a new Cadet) out in the Arena's center to absorb punishment until they die or eject.

The more advanced strategies usually capitalize on new technologies or knee-jerk responses to well known tactics. Sprinting through an opponent's line to attack from behind (the Becirke Gambit), and the Sliding Sister technique (kneeling behind light woods or buildings) are classic examples of the first type. Avoiding the use of obvious terrain (the Damage Dodge), and the Blade and Fade variation of concentrating damage (new targets each turn) are typical demonstrations of second generation applications which take advantage of a Pilot's tendency to assume opponents will operate from cover when hammered, respectively. One of the latest tactics plays on fears of Pilot mortality; Gun the Old Guy has some success against veteran Pilots, especially those greedy (or crazy) enough to opt for Light Bots.

Lake breaking news flash! Mon Zadar is the first to put a price on your aunt's head for spilling the beans. Who will be next? How high will it go? Stay tuned for more details. Same Bot time, same Bot channel! Until then, it's my laughing hour (HA!) Qapla'!

Issue #92

WHAT'SNEW

By popular demand we have added a new Pilot option to allow you to customize the appearance of your BOT VISUAL SIGHTING DISPLAY (BVSD). Currently the BVSD shows all the terrain visible to your Bot, but some feel that including the Open-1 is unnecessary and clutters the BVSD map. However we feel that it is important to include the terrain of all sectors spotted for clarity and to avoid confusion, particularly for new players. Therefore, to address both concerns it is now possible to select by PILOT (not by Bot or Player) whether the BVSD will SHOW or HIDE Open-1 terrain features. Since to SHOW the Open-1 terrain type is the default, nothing need be done if you wish your BVSD to remain the same as it has always been. If you choose to HIDE the Open-1 terrain just drop us a note with your next turn and tell us which of your Pilots (you MUST include the Pilot Name and Pilot Number) to change and we will update our records. The change will remain in effect until you ask us to change it back, if ever.

Special thanks to Terry England and Matthew Wessel for their help in developing this new game option.

Issue #98

WHAT'SNEW

Bowing to pressure from Pilots' Unions, the managing body for the Council of Nations' Supreme Council of Arena affairs has agreed to some software changes to help reduce needless Pilot deaths. As a result Engineers for the Council have begun a systematic upgrade of all Bot software (including those Bots currently in games) that will allow the following effective JANUARY 1st 1996:

- 1) A kneeling Bot may now eject. Previously only standing Bots were authorized to eject.
- 2) A Bot that has fallen may now proceed directly to a kneeling position. Previously, a fallen Bot would have to Stand Up before doing anything else.

Issue #104

IMPORTANTREMINDERS

1) Setups must include a second Bot choice and it must be of a different Bot tonnage. The second choice is only used, when necessary (a very rare occurrence), to balance the team tonnages. If no second choice is included or the second choice is not of a different tonnage then the GM will select one for you.

2) When making up your own turn sheets (for example, with use of a fax modem) your turn sheets must follow the AGE format. You should include everything as printed on the normal turn sheet. The only things you can really exclude are the Direction Key and the Weapons Chart (though both are used by the GM to correct errors that may crop up) and the Address (which is helpful if you mis-key the phone number and somebody else gets the fax). Be sure you use a reasonable size font! Too small and you increase the chance of error.

3) When sending a traditional fax be sure to print clearly! Also, avoid writing a formal "1" and instead just use a simple vertical line "l". Its hard to miss the vertical line one but the formal one can be confused with a "7" (because of the serif). Because fax machines are not known for their great resolution (though our machine supports 300 dpi if the data is transmitted at that density) it is not uncommon for sharp edges to gain a more rounded appearance thus it is best to write an "open top" 4 rather than the more formal "closed top" to avoid confusion with a 9.

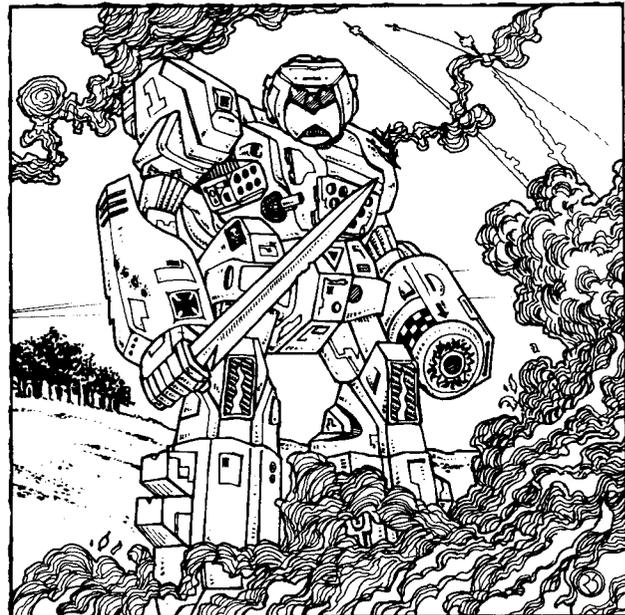
4) If you want your team name mentioned in the write up for your new game in the newsletter you must mention it on the setup form.

Issue #120

RULECHANGES

The Engineering Department of the Council of Nations, Arena Combat Division have been making brilliant new calculations with their slide rules and abacuses (budget cuts you know) and have devised some new low cost technology to improve the performance of existing Battle Bots. The following changes take effect for all turns processed AFTER October 31st 1997:

1) Improved munitions increases the base damage value of all Lt. and Hvy. Machine Cannon rounds by 1 point. That is, the Light Machine Cannon now has a base damage value of 6 (same as a



Heavy Laser) and a Heavy Machine Cannon has a base damage value of 8 (same as a Mega Missile S-Pack). Remember the base damage value is just a guideline for determining the approximate damage inflicted on the target and Victory Points earned from scoring the hit. Your actual damage may vary due to random factors and damage to the firing weapon.

2) By downloading new subroutines to the Battle Bots' computers, a way has been discovered to use the leg actuators to better compensate for the vibrations caused by weapon firings resulting in less random variations in damage caused by successful attacks. Previously these random variations to a weapon's base damage value could result in anything from +40% to -40% (ie. a PBC with a base damage value of 10 could inflict anywhere from 6 to 14 points of damage though ten would be the most common). The improvement reduces the random variation to approximately 30% (ie. a PBC can cause from 7 to 13 points of damage though 10 would still be the most likely result). Note: Damage to the weapon would, of course, reduce these values.

3) By reprogramming the stride and leg motion subroutines it has become possible to allow Bots to Sprint more efficiently, reducing the Heat buildup and the loss of Action Points during such maneuvers. Previously Sprinting would create twice as much Heat and cost twice as many APs to move as would have occurred during normal Move Forward maneuvers. [Ed: that's per SECTOR. In effect it was four times the cost since it was double the cost for each of the two sectors moved through.] The new routines reduce the strain from 2x per sector to 1.5x per sector, a 25% improvement. This change will obviously be of greatest benefit to Light Bots allowing them to Sprint more frequently and to dodge more effectively after such maneuvers.

Issue #125

IMPROVEDTURNRESULTS

In an effort to provide Pilots with more information (to better defeat their foes) and make the Turn Results more useful and easier to read we have made some very minor changes to the VISUAL SIGHTING DISPLAY (after Bot number) and SCANNER REPORT (after the elevation number in the location section). Here we have added a simple one-letter code to denote whether the Bot is 'S'tanding, 'K'neeling, 'F'allen and, for the SCANNER REPORT only, 'X' for destroyed. Since most of the codes are not applicable for Command Posts only the 'X' code will appear for them when appropriate. To some, this may seem like a very trivial change but it can be very useful. For example, knowing that a Bot has fallen or is kneeling means that they cannot change sectors (move) or change direction (facing) on the first phase of the coming turn because they will have to stand up first. Also, when a Bot is off the Visual Sighting Display but shows up on the Scanner Report you can get a better idea of the terrain they are in because you clearly know if they have fallen or are kneeling rather than trying to guess if perhaps they are standing in a Lake or Crater. This change is effective with all turns processed on or after 3/9/98.

Issue #126

RULECHANGES

The Engineering Department of the Council of Nations Arena Combat Division has been hard at work on research and development projects and are pleased to announce some exciting new developments:

1) By reconfiguring the particle emitters on the standard PBC we have been able to not only increase its efficiency but its accuracy as well. Effective for all turns processed after 4/2/98 the damage inflicted by the PBC is increased by 10% (base damage rising from 10 to 11) and its accuracy is increased by 5%.

2) Beginning 4/2/98 a new Internal System is now available to Bot designers — the ECM Pod. This marvelous piece of equipment confounds enemy Targeting Computers and Sensors, reducing their chance of hitting the Bot equipped with the ECM Pod by 3%. Unfortunately the effects of multiple ECM Pods are not cumulative and the maximum benefit is 3% no matter how many Pods are available. Beginning with Arena #308 all CPs now come equipped with an ECM Pod as standard equipment.

Issue #132

RULECHANGES

In response to player suggestions we are pleased to announce the following changes to the game system to take effect beginning with turns processed AFTER October 31st, 1998:

1) We are introducing our first new Move Order in more than seven years: #24 TURN AROUND. What this order does is it allows you to turn 180 degrees to face in the opposite direction. Why would you need to do this when you can just use Move Order #11 to face in a specific direction? Well, TURN AROUND allows you to face the opposite direction in mid turn when you don't necessarily know which direction you are facing. When would this be useful? Let's say, for example, your front torsos are in bad shape and you want to keep them away from the enemy to either use your rear facing weapons or to run (Sprint) away. First you use Move Order #13 (or #12) to face toward the enemy and then you use #24 to face in the opposite direction. That way no matter how your opponent has moved or how the tactical situation has changed you can still turn your back to the enemy. Special Thanks to Will McLaughlin for making this suggestion.

2) Now a Kneeling Bot can use Move Order #22 Turn Right and #23 Turn Left. Previously Kneeling Bots could not turn at all and were limited in options to Standing Up and Ejecting. This provides great tactical flexibility to the Kneeling Bot, avoiding the awkward Stand-Turn-Kneel sequence but still keeping the Kneeling Bot at a disadvantage when compared to a standing Bot (ie. a standing Bot can Face Specific Bot, Face Specific Direction, Face Nearest Enemy Bot, etc.). Why do we limit a Kneeling Bot's options at all? In part, to keep the game mobile. A fluid battle emphasizing maneuver is more exciting than a static battle. Special thanks to Jim Frediani (and others) for making this suggestion.

Issue #141

RULECHANGES

The Engineering Department of the Council Of Nations Arena Combat Division has been hard at work on research and development projects and is pleased to announce some exciting new developments that take effect 7/1/99:

1) Continuing development work on the ECM Pod has increased its effectiveness from 3% to 4%, improving performance by a third. More importantly ECM Pods can now be linked allowing several to be wired together for even better performance. For example, 4 ECM Pods would decrease your chance of being hit by an incredible 16%! Remember, ECM Pods ONLY counteract the effects of enemy Sensors and Targeting Computers.

2) Sensors now report "Secondary Explosions" when Engines are destroyed in an opposing Bot (CPs have only one Engine so it simply blows up). As always, "Internal Explosions" indicate damage to Weapons or Internal Systems (Sensors, Cooling Units, etc.).

3) Command Posts now provide more detailed reports to allied Bots such as when they suffer Internal Explosions, when they inflict Internal/Secondary Explosions and when they destroy a section of an enemy Bot. While this change does not make a CP more effective it does help improve the effectiveness of allied Bots by providing them with more useful information. [Ed: Knowing when a foe's Torso is blown out can be VERY useful!] Note: This change was suggested by Jim Frediani among other people.

Issue #146

WHAT'SNEW

In an effort to increase the emphasis on PLAYER skill over Pilot Experience or Bot selection we have made a small but important change to the formulas for calculating whether a Bot/CP is hit. As you know, a weapons Optimum Range is the EXACT range at which that weapons has the best chance to hit. Using the weapon at ranges that are longer or shorter than the Optimum Range decreases your chance of hitting the target. While this has ALWAYS been the case, now the effects are more dramatic. Thus, for

example, while it is still possible to score a range one hit with Mega Missiles, it is now less likely to happen than before. However, you ALWAYS have a chance to score a hit, no matter how bad the shot (unless it is blocked, out of range, etc.) but now, more than ever, you need to be careful to pick the best weapon for the anticipated range. This change went into effect 12/1/99.

Issue #147

WHAT'S NEW

In response to the growing "back-to-nature" trend the Operations Staff of the Arena Management Council will be removing the climate control systems from all CTF games beginning with Arena #343. This means that Pilots will have a new factor to contend with: WEATHER.

In all previous games the weather was basically Moderate-Dry, which means it has no effect on play. The new system will feature three temperature levels: Hot (slightly increasing Bot Heat), Moderate (no effect) and Cold (slightly decreasing Bot Heat), and two terrain conditions: Dry (no effect) and Wet (increased chance of falling). All Arenas will continue to be held in clear weather (no rain, snow, fog, etc.) for optimum spectator viewing. In most cases the weather will remain as before, Moderate-Dry.

While this change is not expected to have a great impact on play, the clever Pilot will take into account the effects of weather when planning his/her actions and will use this to his/her advantage.

Issue #154

WEBHELP

If you have checked out our website (www.ageforfun.com) you will have noticed that we are very fond of PDF files. However, it has come to our attention that some of you aren't familiar with the PDF format. So here is a quick explanation.

PDF stands for Portable Document Format. It is basically a way of creating files (like copies of our newsletters) that look identical no matter what system you are using (Windows, Mac, Linux, whatever). You can view the files onscreen or print them. The current versions also compress files nicely making for quick downloads. To open PDF files all you need is a viewer. Where do you get a viewer? Check our LINKS page and we will take you right there! Just download Adobe Acrobat Reader for your system and you are all set.

Issue #158

RULECHANGES

As mentioned in previous issues of The Command Post we have been considering a number of changes to the game system. We have been getting quite a bit of feedback on the proposed changes and some excellent new ideas as well. We will be making a number of changes/enhancements over the coming months but the first will be the most popular and least contentious — NEW MOVE ORDERS!

The following new Move Orders will be available for all turns processed AFTER December 31st, 2000:

Move Order #26 MOVE FORWARD, TURN RIGHT: This is largely self explanatory. Your Bot Moves Forward one sector and then makes a 45 degree turn to the right. This is a companion to Move Order #2 Turn Right Move Forward. The difference between the two is WHEN you make the turn, before (MO #2) or after (MO #26) movement.

Move Order #27 MOVE FORWARD, TURN LEFT: Again, this is largely self explanatory. Your Bot will Move Forward and then make a 45 degree to the left. A companion to Move Order #3 Turn Left Move Forward, the difference being whether the turn comes before (MO #3) or after (MO #27) movement.

These can be very powerful orders as they allow Pilots to move their Bots around blocking terrain and get a shot with a much larger field of fire (+90 degrees). Now you may ask what happened to Move Order #25. This has been reserved for future expansion (it's a good one, but far from ready). Special thanks to James Jennings and Jim Frediani (and probably others) for suggesting these new orders.

Issue #171

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2002

We have a host of new additions to help kick off the new year!

1) NEW WEAPON: The RAIL GUN. Though weighing in at three tons it is almost as effective as an LMC (though without the explosive armor piercing rounds). A great new Short/Medium Range weapon.

2) NEW INTERNAL SYSTEM: The SHIELD GENERATOR. This item creates an electromagnetic field that can help deflect some of the energy from an incoming hit. Each three ton Shield Generator has a 15% chance of deflecting one point of incoming damage (ie. if deflected, a five point of damage hit becomes effectively four points for damage and scoring calculations).

3) NEW BATTLE BOT: The PATRIOT. Designed specifically to take advantage of the new systems the 70-ton Patriot contains a Rail Gun in the Left Arm, a Battle Fist/Flame Cannon in the Right Arm, a Medium Laser in the Head and a Mini Missile L-Pack and a Mega Missile L-Pack in the Front Torsos.

Taking advantage of all the latest technology the Patriot has two Shield Generators (30% chance of absorbing one point of damage per hit, an average of about 15 points per game), two ECM Pods (reduces the chance of being hit by 8% resulting in an estimated four hits per game), two Targeting Computers (increasing the chance to hit by 10% or an extra five hits per game), one Gyro and one Sensor. With the maximum Armor the Patriot should be a tough Bot. Its major disadvantage is its paltry 40 Action Points, making the Patriot the slowest of the currently available 70-ton Bots.

Issue #175

WHAT'S NEW

We recently made some programming additions to enhance the turn results and the entertainment value of play.

First, when Shields effectively deflect part of a hit (reducing the damage inflicted) a text report will now appear as part of the turn results.

Second, the Game Information part of the turn results has been reworked a bit and now includes a report on the best Individual Victory rating for each team which is especially handy in a 4-sided contest. This is quite useful as you can find out how the race for the Best Individual Rating is going on a turn by turn basis without having to wait for the newsletter.

