

Broken heads and broken swords

By Chris Thompson, Warlords.

Come and join the gallant Musketeers as they fight against the Cardinals guards to defend the honour of France, and you could win a great prize.

How many times have I tried to do a game based on the Three Musketeers? Too many - so why have I done it again? And more importantly, why am I doing it at Salute? I can answer the last question simply by saying that the club was short of a game and I had a brainwave! I'm usually wrong so don't all boo at once. The rest I'd better break down into relevant categories.

Figures

Terrain

Rules

Prizes

Figures. I've always been a big fan of the Richard Lester films, so when a set of figures appeared in 40mm from Eureka, I wondered what they would have to offer me that my other collections didn't. My last attempt at gaming the Three Musketeers involved using Redoubt figures, of which I have quite a few. The range is remarkably complete, with all the combatants, civilians, beggars, and even a carriage but one thing always nagged at me, the named characters were only available in full Musketeer dress – each one sported a tabard - whereas I wanted mine without. I also spent a considerable amount of time trying to find the most suitable looking head for each character as these are available separately in the Redoubt range, but I never really succeeded and the figures remained anonymous. On closer inspection I spotted that the Eureka characters bore quite a strong resemblance to the actors portraying them in the films, even the clothing was pretty spot-on. I thought "Oh no, here we go again!" I was saved by the fact that the initial release only featured each of the four Musketeers, four guards and the dastardly Rochefort. This was enough for me to happily ignore them and get back to my regular painting.

The final nail went in when I saw that they had released a second batch with six more figures, a well and even a few geese. Now these I could *not* ignore and promptly ordered them from Fighting 15s, Eureka's UK agent. Just for research you understand, nothing serious. I duly received a package containing the most enormous figures! 40mm came as a bit of a shock, but they were even better in their metal flesh than in the photos on the website, I was delighted. Painting them was an absolute joy, the extra detail is quite marvellous, and it has changed my whole outlook on gaming in a larger scale. Let's hope that future releases will include the scheming Milady and the dashing Duke of Buckingham, other really useful figures would be an innkeeper, a beggar and a sedan chair with liveried servants.....oh well, wishful thinking. Next problem: I had no suitable terrain to go with them, in fact I had no terrain in 40mm at all, but at least some of my trees would do at a pinch.

Terrain. I previously had a serious problem with terrain for the Three Musketeers. Most of the scenarios revolve around buildings, and you need several large structures. I had scratch built a large 2-storey inn complete with stables and kitchens, but this took me ages and the thought of having to make more just contributed to my

dwindling enthusiasm. Add to this the new problem of the 40mm scale and I needed a radical rethink. Then it dawned on me that a couple of years ago I had purchased some of the excellent Master Maze dungeon sets from Dwarven Forge. These contain lots of floor tiles some with walls etc, attached to them. They build into any size or shape of room/corridor that you can imagine, or afford, so why not do a similar thing for the Musketeers? Tile types were restricted to:

Flagstones floors, no walls, for indoor locations,
Flagstones with one wall,
Flagstones with two walls, forming the corner of a room,
Cobblestones, with no walls, for the streets
Grass

Most of the buildings were going to be one storey high but I needed at least a third of them to be 2-storey buildings for scenarios that involved upstairs chambers, etc. Doors would be added where required and windows and balconies where appropriate. I started by drawing a much smaller version onto cardboard squares, and then pieced these together to form the various locations that I dreamt up, adding new tiles when needed, until eventually even the largest location could be made with the tiles at hand. What had started small now amounted to over 50 tiles, half of these are plain with just cobbles or flagstones, which, I kept telling myself, would be quick and easy to make. Yeah, fooled again! The only draw-back that I could see was that the buildings would have to be fairly generic, as they would have to be interchangeable. I decided this was a reasonable compromise considering the alternatives. Having settled on the combination of tile types it was off to the wood yard for one of the weirder conversations I have had there:

“Can I have a sheet of 12mm MDF cut into 6 inch squares please”

“What the hell are you making this time”

“Paris”

“Sorry I asked!”

Future plans for the terrain include making a three storey facade for the palace, this will just depict the corner section featuring a couple of balconies, and will be enough to enact the scenario in which the stolen jewelled studs are returned to Queen Anne during the Ball.

Once again, I would like to thank Keith Warren of Realistic Modelling, for all his help and advice in making the terrain.

Rules. Anyone who has tried to put on a demo game at a show knows that whatever rules they're using need to be simple if you are going to engage the public's attention. Nobody wants to spend ages being told the various ins and outs of the game, they just want to throw a few dice and kill something. I plan to run several games during the day so they will need to be very simple, and nothing I had played so far fitted the bill. Luckily Eureka has a downloadable set on their website, called “And One For All” by Greg Hallam, which had a nice little twist on how to play the game. A brief description follows;

After deployment the two players decide initiative by a straight die role, winner goes first. A figure may move as far as it likes in a single straight line and stops when it reaches an object or anything that would prevent it going further. A player may stop anywhere in-between and their turn ends. On reaching an object, etc, the figure may interact with the object by performing an action. This is one of the areas that I like most about these rules as the actions are only limited by the players imagination, and a decent dose of common sense. Examples of some actions are;

- Dodging a person
- Running up or down a staircase
- Picking up and throwing something
- Leaping onto a table
- Sliding down a banister
- Pulling a rug

The player now rolls a dice, not to see if the action was completed - it was - but to determine if they still hold the initiative. If it was the first action for this particular turn, then they **roll** one die, second action two dice, etc. If the player **rolls** a 1 on any of their dice then the turn ends and the initiative goes to the other side. So why perform actions? Well, some actions will involve the opposition, i.e. you have thrown something at them, in these cases the defending player throws a number of dice in defence equal to their Rating (1-4). Winning these **rolls** doesn't defeat the attacker it only thwarts that action. Other than that, all successful actions earn the figure a swashbuckling dice, the more actions the more stored swashbuckling dice, but also the greater chance of losing the initiative by throwing a 1.

Swashbuckling dice are used to boost the figures Rating dice whilst Duelling. Again Duelling is conducted as an opposed throw against the opponent, highest score wins and the result applied to the loser. These are pushed back, dropped weapon or wounded. It is possible to kill an enemy outright by beating their highest score with several of your own, as each die that wins gets to apply a result. Characters tend to have 3 wounds. So any player that gets their figure to run all over the place, jumping on tables and swinging on chandeliers, before Duelling with their opponent, could do a lot of damage, or they could just lose the initiative at a vital moment while hanging on to the top of a ladder next to a raging fire. There are a few modifiers to Duelling for fighting multiple opponents and being higher up than your enemy, but these are few and easily remembered. As long as the figure didn't throw a 1 in the Duel they may continue to Duel or make more actions until their luck runs out.

If you are controlling multiple characters you may switch between them until one of them throws a 1, thus ending the turn.

This then is the main core of the rules, not too complex is it? so it fits the easy to learn part, and hopefully, the imaginative aspect of dreaming up actions will provide an entertaining day for those of us putting the game on.

When Eureka increased the size of the range a supplement 1 was added to the rules, it contains some optional rules, nothing too complex, but mostly deals with character specific rules for the new figures. These allow the new characters to become "not such innocent bystanders" and influence the play, albeit in minor ways. As most of these allow for more scenario based play it leads me neatly into bigger games.

I am hoping to run numerous small games during the first half of the day consisting of one to one fights. The reason being that these will take about 15-20 mins each and we

are aiming to run two in tandem to cater for as many people as possible. The latter half will be taken up with larger games involving several players who would, hopefully, have played in the morning. These will be bigger, more complex games with a specific mission. This will be decided on the day and will probably be very flexible, so if four friends want to be the Musketeers, we will supply the opposition.

Prizes. Fighting 15s have offered up several great prizes for the day. The first four of these are individual Cardinal's guard figures, and will be presented to any player who can come up with something spectacular, or unusual, as an action. As these are spot prizes they will be awarded there and then. The main prize is a complete set of the all the Three Musketeers figures, this includes; four Musketeers, four guards and Rochefort, Planchet, the Bonancieuxs, two serving wenches and the hired blade. It also comes with a scenery pack containing a table with stools, food and barrels, plus the ornamental well and some geese. That's 15 figures, not including geese, and a bundle of scenery - quite a decent bagful. The only downside with the prizes is that they will be unpainted! but you can't have everything. These will be presented, probably around 3pm, to the lucky winner of a prize draw, entry to which will be available only to those who have played the game during the day. It might also include a simple question as an added qualifier, depends how nasty I'm feeling.

All figures are by Eureka Miniatures. www.eurekamin.com.au
Available in the UK from Fighting 15s. www.fighting15s.co.uk
Painted by myself, Chris Thompson. www.albionminiatures.co.uk
Photos by John Treadaway.
Rules can be found at <http://eurekamin.com.au/andoneforall.php>.