BEER & PRETZEL SPACE MARINES

This is a down-and-dirty shoot-em-up centered on the actions of an intrepid squad of grunts surviving the best they know how (which usually means blowing things up...) against a host of galactic nasties in a variety of settings. It was designed with solo play in mind with the player (or perhaps a pair of players cooperating) controlling the Marines (the Good Guys) facing off against a mindless horde of enemies (the Bad Guys), so the rules are slanted towards Marine success: an hour or two of pleasant bug-squishing is the objective.

Requests by gamers for adversarial scenarios led to the creation / inclusion of smart Bad Guys to allow two players to battle each other --but the game is by no means (or intent) a representation of future squad-level combat. The mood is purposefully light and the action fast and furious. This is very much a "make up an answer and/or roll the dice and keep moving" type of game --thus the "Beer & Pretzel" moniker: it's supposed to be quick fun, nothing more. While properly executed small-unit tactics will pay dividends players need not be fluent in such knowledge, and time-consuming ponderings will rarely yield benefits worth their cost.

...like the Sarge says: "Don't think...SHOOT!"

The standard Factory disclaimer on fun applies most strongly to this game which has retained its off-the-cuff flavor to this day: I continue to make up stuff all the time, and the rules should be viewed only as vague guidelines for producing the gaming fun that was their purpose on creation. While I include some statistics and such for the figures I use, it is assumed that each individual stock of available stuff will dictate the color / flavor of the local games. The extra layers / levels made necessary by the presence of unique weapons or vehicles or creatures should, however, be kept to a minimum and bent to fit into the basic system (as opposed to modifying the system to accomodate the greater complexity) if the original beer-and-pretzel style of "let's roll some dice and have fun for an hour or so" -game is to be preserved. There are plenty of "serious" small-unit SF games out there if that is what is desired, and I don't recommend trying to twist this "just for laughs" game into fitting that bill.

CONTENTS

PIECES-PARTS

PLAYING SURFACE
Movement allowances, weapon ranges, and terrain effects are defined by spaces, so the gaming surface should be laid out with some sort of grid that will accomodate one figure per space: I use hexes for outdoor terrain and squares for indoor encounters (ships or tunnels). A grid-less setup that uses inches or centimeters or whatever could, I assume, also work --though the B & P spirit / mood of the game may be ruined if measuring becomes exacting and/or time-consuming.

FIGURES
Anything goes. Figures should be based so as to be moved individually, though I can easily imagine mulitple-figure basings used for "swarm"-type tiny bad guys (like cat/dog -sized bugs or other such creepy-crawly nasties...or maybe Evil Space-Munchkins?).

Each figure will have a starting number of Points that can be used for movement or actions, and determine how many wounds a figure can take. The standard Marine / human figure has three Points: more or less than this baseline allocation is determined by a figure's size, vulnerability, and/or combat capability.

DICE
Unless specifically called out as something different, dice used are all 6-sided. When the rules call for 1/2d or 1/3d, round up to achieve the intended "1, 2, or 3" or "1 or 2" result. When the rules call for 2d or 3d, roll multiple dice rather than multiply the result of a single die roll.

TURN SEQUENCE

Each turn is IGoUGo in which the Good Guys make their moves and resolve actions, and then the Bad Guys do the same.

A turn begins with the adjustment of any timing device or the movement of any terrain effect (such as spreading fire or closing doors) or the resolution of any non-figure-controlled action (such as bomb detonation) specific to the scenario. All figures are assumed to have their full, starting complement of Points restored (minus any wounds).

During the Good Guys phase, the player(s) proceed by moving one figure and resolving one action by that figure. An action taken by a figure ends that figure's turn --no movement is allowed after taking an action. Player(s) may move the figures in any order, but each figure must complete its move / action before another figure is allowed to move: if another figure is moved or takes an action any previously moved figures may not make any further moves or actions. Once all the moves / actions have been made, any Good Guy reinforcements allowed by the scenario are determined and placed. These new figures may not move, but they may take actions (if possible) in whatever order the player wishes.

When the Good Guys are done, the Bad Guys make their moves / actions in a similar one-by-one manner. As in the Good Guy phase, after all figures have moved any Bad Guy reinforcements allowed in the scenario are placed and these new figures may take actions.

MOVEMENT

Movement is done by paying the Point cost for each adjacent space a figure wishes to move to -- this is typically one, but the requirement may be adjusted by figure type or terrain.

Only one figure may occupy a space at a time, though a figure may move through / over friendly figures. (Possible exceptions: Scenario may allow carrying of other figures or restrict moves through other figures due to terrain conditions such as tight halls / doorways.)

There is no facing (except for cover fire in certain scenarios).

COMMAND POINTS
These are extra movement points that are held / used by certain leader figures to augment another figure's own Points for movement purposes. They must be used during a figure's move --they may not be added on after an action or after another figure has moved. Like Points, Command Points are restored at the beginning of each turn, but the total is reduced by any wounds on the leader.

ACTIONS

ATTACKS
A hit is made by rolling greater than or equal to a weapon-specific target number on two dice. The target number for ranged weapons is based on the range in spaces. The common, baseline weapon (typically the standard grunt-rifle) will have a target number equal to the range, and others will have modifiers to reflect their lesser or greater accuracy. Some figures may improve the target number by spending any remaining Points as Aim Points (see below).

A natural two (snake eyes) is always a misfire no matter the target number.

Misses have no effect (Possible exceptions: grenades, bombs, and other HE / shrapnel weapons).

LINE-OF-SIGHT
Ranged attacks must have a clear Line-of-Sight from the shooter to the target.

For hexes, L-O-S runs from center to center and is blocked by any occupied hex (includes friendly and enemy figures as well as terrain features). L-O-S for squares runs from nearest corner to nearest corner (if equal, take best for firer), and is blocked as above. All L-O-S tracings / rulings should be made to be most favorable to the firer.

When the L-O-S traces along an occupied hex or square border line, it is blocked only when two such hexes or squares lie on opposite sides of the L-O-S.

ATTACKS (cont'd)

AIM POINTS
These are Points that are not used in a turn for movement that a figure can use to improve the target number of a ranged attack that turn. The effect of Aim Points varies by figure type --see specific troop statistics for exact amounts.

DAMAGE
If a hit is scored, the weapon-specific damage effect is rolled. It is possible that when armor or terrain modifiers are applied, a "0" damage result could occur. A figure's available Points are reduced by the number of wounds taken --once the number of wounds equals or exceeds the starting number of Points the figure is killed and removed from play.

COVER FIRE
At the end of any movement, a figure may spend a Point in declaring cover fire (see scenario for specific target areas). Additional Points may be spent as Aim Points to improve the target number. Certain weapons may have further Point costs associated with them.

There must be a clear L-O-S to the target area as in normal shooting. There can be no figures in the target area for cover fire to be declared. Unless specified in the scenario, the target area for cover fire must be at the most extreme range within the figure's L-O-S (ie: a closer range may not be chosen to improve a shot's target number --the target area must be at the point when the enemy first comes into the covering-fire-figure's L-O-S).

If during the subsequent enemy phase a figure moves into the target area an attack may be made. If a player chooses to fire, they must shoot the first figure that arrives in the target area. If, however, two or more figures have cover fire on the same area the order in which they attack is determined by the player, and if the target is killed by the first fire the second may choose another, later target if desired. A figure using cover fire may not fire at enemies that appear outside of its declared target area. Wounds inflicted by cover fire reduce the target figure's Points at the point of the attack, and are applied immediately to its movement allowance.

OTHER ACTIONS
Possible scenario-specific actions can include: welding a door, arming or disarming a bomb, picking up or dropping an object, communicating to off-board elements, or... ? The Point requirements (if any) and any other special characteristics of the action should be determined / agreed upon before play and / or detailed in the scenario description.

APPENDIX A: TROOP TYPES
(Examples of statistics for various figures / weapons)

It should be pointed out that in all cases the figures came before the statistics, ie: a figure was found / dug-out / purchased / created and then the numbers were made up to fit the miniature.

GOOD GUYS (the ones that are supposed to win...)

MARINE = The standard Grunt-trooper (modeled roughly on the Colonial Marines in "Aliens")

Points = 3 (Leaders have 3 Command Points)

Attacks = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 7. damage = ½ d. cost = 0 Points
PISTOL: target number = range +3. damage = 1/3d. cost = 0 Points
RIFLE: target number = range. damage = 1d. cost = 0 Points
GRENADE: target number = range +2. damage = 2d, plus 1d in adj. spaces. cost =1 Point
SMART GUN: target number = range. damage = 2d*. cost = 0 Points
FLAMETHROWER: auto-hit at range < 9. damage =1, 2, or 3d*. cost =1 Point / die damage

* may split fire / damage (in 1d increments) between adjacent (side-by-side) spaces
or "blow-through" damage into spaces in line behind target

SNIPER RIFLE: target number varies by target figure type: vs. Fuzzies = range -10,
vs. Bugs = range -4, vs. Bots = range +1. damage = kill.
Special restrictions: Sniper may not move and fire in the same turn, and
no Aim Points may be used by a Sniper figure.

Aim Points = Reduce target number by one if 1 AP used, three if 2 AP used, and six if 3 AP used.

SHOCK MARINE = Armored trooper

Points = 3 (Leaders have 3 Command Points)

Attacks = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 7. damage = 1d. cost = 0 Points
PISTOL: target number = range +3. damage = 1/3d. cost = 0 Points
RIFLE: target number = range. damage = 1d. cost = 0 Points
SMART GUN: target number = range. damage = 2d*. cost = 0 Points
HAND-FLAMER: auto-hit at range < 4*. damage = 1 or 2d*, cost =1 Point / die damage

* may split fire / damage (in 1d increments) between adjacent (side-by-side) spaces
or "blow-through" damage into spaces in line behind target

Aim Points = Reduce target number by one if 1 AP used, three if 2 AP used, and six if 3 AP used.

Armor Bonus = Subtract one from each damage die rolled from any hits suffered.

BAD GUYS (nameless hordes run by the player as automatons)

BUGS: Generic, hive-mentality creatures that resemble Doritos
(Crunch all you want, we'll make more...)

<u>BUG WARRIOR</u> = Typical nightmare-induced bad-ass that specializes in ripping off faces...

Points = 5

Attack = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 6. damage = 1/2d. cost = 0 Points
(two attacks per turn --both must be against same target)

<u>BUG LEADER</u> = Bigger, badder bad-ass that turns you inside out and *then* rips off your face...

Points = 6 (no Command Points)

Attack = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 6. damage = 1d. cost = 0 Points
(two attacks per turn --both must be against same target)

<u>BUG SHOOTER</u> = Ranged-weapon threat to spice up a scenario...

Points = 3

Attacks = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 7. damage = ½d. cost = 0 Points
PISTOL: target number = range +4. damage = 1/3d. cost = 0 Points
RIFLE: target number = range +1. damage = 1d-1. cost = 0 Points

Aim Points = Reduce target number by one if 1 AP used, three if 2 AP used, and six if 3 AP used.

FUZZIES: Screaming primitives that refuse to acknowledge superior weapons
(Your raygun may be pretty, but so is your spleen...)

<u>FUZZY WARRIOR</u> = His clothing is made from the skin and bones of his enemies...

Points = 2 (Leaders have 2 Command Points)

Attacks = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 6. damage = ½d. cost = 0 Points
RIFLE: target number = range +2. damage = 1d: 1-2 = 0, 3-5 = 1, 6 = 2. cost = 0 Points

Aim Points = not allowed.

Movement = Double Points for movement purposes.

SMART BAD GUYS (foes to be run by another player)

BOTS: Evil Cylon-ish forces bent on Galactic domination
(Get in line...you know the drill: Resistance is futile)

<u>BOT WARRIOR</u> = Toaster that shoots...

Points = 4

Attacks = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 7. damage = 1d. cost = 0 Points
          RIFLE: target number = range. damage = ½d. cost = 1 Point
          SMARTGUN: target number = range. damage = ½d per Point spent*. cost = variable

          * may split fire / damage (in ½ -die increments) between multiple spaces

Aim Points = Reduce target number by two for each AP used.

Movement = Pay 1-½ Points per space. Ignore rough terrain effects.

Armor Bonus = Subtract one from each damage die rolled from any hits suffered.

<u>BOT SCOUT</u> = Toaster that flies *and* shoots...

Points = 3

Attacks = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 7. damage = 1d. cost = 0 Points
          PISTOL: target number = range +3. damage = 1/3d. cost = 1 Point

Aim Points = Reduce target number by two for each AP used.

Movement = Pay ½ -Point per space when flying. Taking off costs one Point, landing is done at no extra cost. Flying Scouts may pass over terrain with no penalty. Flying Scouts are considered to be at level 1 terrain height when determining L-O-S.

Armor Bonus = Subtract one from each damage die rolled from any hits suffered.

<u>BOT LEADER</u> = Toaster that thinks...

Points = 6   Command Points = 6

Attacks = HAND-TO-HAND: range = 1. target number = 7. damage = 1d+1. cost = 0 Points
          PISTOL: target number = range +3. damage = 1/3d. cost = 1 Point

Aim Points = Reduce target number by two for each AP used.

Movement = Pay 1-½ Points per space. Ignore rough terrain effects.

Armor Bonus = Subtract one from each damage die rolled from any hits suffered.