

BEER AND PRETZEL SPACE MARINES

SPACESHIP SCENARIO A

While investigating a distress beacon from a drifting freighter, the squad finds signs of battle but none of the crew. At the far end of the hanger deck they come to an elevator that is stuck on a deck above. Suddenly, a klaxon sounds a warning blast and over the intercom the ship's computer announces:

WARNING. THE SHIP'S AUTO-DESTRUCT SEQUENCE HAS BEEN ACTIVATED.
ALL PERSONNEL HAVE 20 TURNS TO EVACUATE THE SHIP BEFORE DETONATION.

The Sarge knows that it took around 15 turns of no-nonsense movement for the squad to get this far, so there'll be no time for souvenir hunting on the way back to their transport ship. Then one of the Marines monitoring a sensor reports "Sarge, I've got movement above us" and she knows that getting back to the transport safely has more than time to fight..."Marines, we are *LEAVING!*"

GOOD GUYS: Marines = Sarge (with rifle), Smart Gunner, Flamethrower (w/ 20 ammo tokens), and 7 Rifles (with grenades).

BAD GUYS: Bugs = Warriors (infinite supply).

SET-UP: The Marines are placed in pairs in the hallway farthest from the hanger bay. One pair must be adjacent to the elevator shaft, and no pair may be adjacent to another. All doors are closed.

TIME LIMIT: Set a counter to 20 and decrease it by one at the beginning of each turn. When it reaches 0 the freighter goes "boom!" and anyone not inside the Marine's transport is dead.

BUG REINFORCEMENTS: Roll 2d to determine how many (halve the roll, rounding up). Roll 1d for each figure to determine its location. If more than one figure arrives at the same spot, they are considered to be lined up behind the first.

CHECK YOUR SIX: Until a Marine crosses the yellow line in the middle of the ship, any Bug reinforcements that appear on spot 6 are placed in the elevator shaft instead.

MOVEMENT: Figures may move diagonally when there are squares on both sides of the move. Bugs may not move through other figures.

DOORS cost one point to open from an adjacent square (not diagonal). Marines may close doors during their move from an adjacent square at no cost --however, this closing counts as movement and so may not be done after an action. After all figures in a phase (either Marine or Bug) have moved, doors without adjacent figures are closed.

AIRLOCKS can have only one door open at a time. A Marine inside an airlock may operate either door.

ACTIONS: In addition to attacks or declarations of cover fire, Marines may weld doors.

WELDING DOORS may be done from an adjacent square: place one point of weld per 2 Points spent. A maximum of four weld points may be placed on a door. Airlock doors may not be welded.

A Bug will attack a welded door (though it must know the door won't open, ie: it has an unspent point when it reaches the door), removing 1 point of weld per turn (2 points for Leaders). Once all the weld points are gone, the door is removed from play.

LINE-OF-SIGHT: Doorways block L-O-S for all figures outside the line of squares directly in front of a door. A figure in a doorway has L-O-S to squares in the adjacent room within a 45-degree arc, but blocks all other L-O-S through the doorway. L-O-S up into a ventilation shaft may only be traced from an adjacent square (Exception: grenade-fire need not be from an adjacent square.).

COVER FIRE: Examples of target squares would be doorways, corners, ventilation shaft openings, and other spots where a previously unseen Bug would come into view.

GRENAD CONCUSSION may knock figures down: All figures must roll less than or equal to their distance (doubled for Bugs) from the impact square on 2d6 (closed doors block the blast). Figures in front of a wall subtract two from the roll, those in corners subtract four. If they fail the roll, they are knocked down (the Sarge loses the ability to give Command Points). On its next turn (the same or following, depending on if it's moved before the grenade shot), a figure must roll to stand up, using ½ d points, before continuing with its normal move.

GRENAD MISSES hit somewhere: Determine random direction from target square (d8), then place impact at a distance equal to the difference between the hit number required and the roll made, and resolve any damage made.

MORALE CHECKS: If at the beginning of the turn a Bug is 1 or 2 squares away from a Marine the Marine must roll 1d: on a result of 1 or 2 the Marine freaks out and fires at the Bug. This counts as that figure's move and action for the turn. If the Bug is killed other Marines need not check morale.

NEVER LEAVE YOUR FRIEND'S BEHIND: During the game no Marine may ever be more than 2 turns' movement away from the next nearest Marine. Command Points may be used to calculate the distance, but any wounds must also be taken into consideration. This rule is intended to prevent abandonment (called "heroic stand" in the posthumous award citation).

PLAYING THE BUGS: The Bugs will move toward/attack the nearest Marine regardless of tactics, closed doors, or deadly cover fire. Whenever choices present themselves to a Bug (eg: movement direction or target to attack) roll a die to determine which it chooses.

SO YOU THINK YOU'RE TOUGH, EH?

Add any number of the following optional rules to make the scenario more challenging:

BUG LEADERS: If 5 or 6 Bugs are called for during reinforcements, one of them will be a Leader (up to two may be on the board at any time). Leaders are smarter than normal Bugs: they know everything any Bug on the board sees/knows, and may direct the other Bug figures in tactics (such as surrounding, avoiding known cover fire, bypassing known sealed doors, or directing --or killing-- wounded Bugs out of the way). They're still Bugs, though, and must move to attack: treat them as intelligent berserkers. If a Leader is in play, reinforcement rolls may be modified to either "low or high" (only spaces 1,2,3 or 4,5,6 are used) or "odds or evens" (only spaces 1,3,5 or 2,4,6 are used).

DOORJAMS: Marines can't move through a door if another is in one of the two door squares.

STUFF IN THE WAY: Place console/equipment blocks in rooms. Short blocks may be climbed at no cost, tall ones for one extra point, and black-topped ones are impassable. All count as obstacle squares that block diagonal moves. Squares with short blocks count double for firing range, and give 2-points of protection for figures immediately behind them (subtract from damage roll). Tall and black-topped ones block L-O-S completely.

SPACESHIP SCENARIOS - BOARD

There have been four different ships used over the years for these scenarios. The latest version (pictured below) is a cardstock / tagboard affair using wall and floor patterns from "First Light" :



The rooms are all separate pieces so that I can make different arrangements (This is the setup I use to run a "best game during the Con"-contest.) and the wall thickness is minimal to allow assembly of, say, two rooms on one side of a hall and three on the other: thus the rather feeble, wobbly look (made no better by a humid basement...).

Whatever setup is used for the game should have lots of routes / choices available for the player, and my personal feeling is that most (if not all) rooms should be small enough for a Bug to reach any point in the room in a single move: nothing like having the Bad Guys in your face to create the proper claustrophobic terror that is the hallmark of these sort of games.

Adding consoles and/or equipment clutter can turn a cakewalk into a real challenge.

Here's a sampling of what I use:

I went for simple, easy-to-game-with block-pieces --the artwork is also from First Light.

