

Attack on Star Port Alpha

The following report covers a battle played in 25/28mm of *Hammer's Slammers: The Crucible* at the SELWG club in London, 30/07/10.

At the end of this article, tactical points will be discussed.

Rules:

Hammer's Slammers: The Crucible

Scale:

25/28mm

Models used:

Old Crow and GZG vehicles. Copplestone and GZG figures

Additional Rules and options:

Optional rules: *Separate Detachments*; *Overkill*; *Courage Under Fire*; *A Leader of Men*; *Rapid Fire*.

Each of the two sides' two detachments shared a leadership pool, but not leadership points. That means that one detachment could pass points to another of the same team in a communal pool. Although neither team amassed enough to pay for an artillery strike, they used the pool to pay for a sniper that they each shared and to employ optional rules such as **Rapid Fire** (page 127).

Players:

Steve McGuire, Paul York (**Zaporoskiye Brigade**),

John Magill & Kevin Dallimore (**Division Légère**)

John Treadaway (**Umpire and press**)

Objective:

To take and hold the Space Port

Forces

The battle was between two full strength detachments of the Zaporoskiye Brigade and one full strength, and one slightly over strength detachment of the Division Légère. The Division Légère's inferior armour was mitigated to some extent by having superior command ratings and one slightly over strength detachment.

Zaporoskiye Brigade

Heavy Detachment

1 Captain

1 Uhlan Tank Destroyer

2 Eagle Light Tanks

3 Skorpion Assault Tanks

2 Sabre Tanks

1 Gecko + missiles

1 Molniya Armoured car + missiles

Engineers Detachment

- 1 Lieutenant
- 1 Missile truck
- 3 APCs
- 6 Infantry (1 with buzzbombs, 2 as mine clearing regular infantry)

Division Légère

Medium Detachment

- 1 Major
- 2 Panthère Medium Tanks
- 3 Hadès Tank Destroyers
- 2 Hadès II Tank Destroyers
- 1 Cochon 21cm Artillery
- 1 Porc-épic mixed Calliope
- 1 Épée APC command

Light Detachment

- 1 Capt
- 3 Gorille Jeeps + 3 Babouin ATGW units
- 3 Épée APCs
- 6 Infantry (2 with buzzbombs, 1 as mine clearing regular infantry)

Both sides had shared control over a Sniper. Each detachment could chose to use the sniper allocated to their force for that whole game turn when the opportunity arose, but the sniper couldn't be used twice (sure they could have had one sniper per detachment but they didn't). The sniper didn't start in a good location as neither team were defending a position but both used lots of leadership points (using the 1-2-4 rule) to get the sniper to a hidden position of advantage. The Division Légère managed to get theirs to a hill top while the Zaporoskiye Brigade got theirs up a tower at the Star Port itself. Both achieved these positions in the first turn.

The Game

Initially it went well for the Francophiles: An early success was claimed by the Division Légère as they knocked out the main gun and the transmission of the Zaporoskiye Brigade Uhlan Tank Destroyer, the most dangerous and heavily armoured vehicle of the battle. It was vital to knock out this behemoth early, as it had a very good position on raised ground with an excellent field of fire and would have wreaked terrible damage. The Uhlan was taken down with a combination of laser designation from a well sited sniper/spotter enabling light ATGW missiles to be launched from the Babouin remote launchers without line of site, a difficult trick but worth a gamble to take out this monster.

This heavy loss did, however, galvanise the Zaporoskiye Brigade into firm action. The Zaporoskiyes took out the sniper/spotter with concentrated aimed gun fire, thus rendering many of the Légère ATGW forces much less effective as they could no longer "see" a target vicariously but had to achieve line of site (or at least a secondary line of site via remote controlled Babouins).

As the Zaporoskiyes started to move up to the Space Port they began to receive fire from the two Hadès II Tank Destroyers, who had trouble finding the target. The Division Légère however was in possession of faulty intelligence (!), being told the main guns of the Panthère Mediums and Hadès Tank Destroyers couldn't penetrate the front of the Zaporoskiye Sabre heavies (rule number one: study thine enemy – in advance...). This lead to some high risk shots being taken

with the Hadès IIs, both of whom were then lost to main gun fire from the Zaporoskiye Sabre and a heavy ATGW strike.

In addition, the Zaporoskiye had positioned their spotter/sniper well, who began to rain more heavy ATGW strikes on the Légère, causing much consternation and cries of “someone get that bloody sniper!” and the loss of one of the Panthère Medium Tanks. However before the spotter/sniper could be dealt with he called in another heavy ATGW on the Légère Porc-épic Calliope, a Légère vital asset. In spite of the fact that the Calliope did not move and seemed to be a sitting target, the Zaporoskiye had failed to reckon with the awesome AA firepower of the Légère Calliope and it evaporated the heavy ATGWs as they came over the horizon: exactly what a calliope is designed to do, after all...

By this time the Zaporoskiyes were well advanced into the outer edge of Space Port Alpha but the Légère were also pushing up their infantry on the left flank, the charge led by the Gorille Jeeps and Babouin ATGW units, followed by the Épée APCs. This part of the field was heavily mined using various types of mine (light, medium and heavy) and a ration of 1 – 6 dummy counters and live ones. The Babouin's were driven through one mine field to find a safe path for the Jeeps and APCs, which they did. Both Babouin's were later lost in combat, but this unique weapons system proved its worth with light ATGW's from the Babouin's, guided by the operators in the Jeeps, knocking out one of the Zaporoskiye Sabre heavies, which gave the Brigade commander pause for thought, as he cried “shoot those damned little launchers!”

The Jeeps themselves also performed valiant service in taking down the Zaporoskiye spotter/sniper with a combination of ATGW fire at the building housing him (blowing a hole in it and suppressing the sniper) and direct fire from the Gorille Jeep's support weapon at the sniper himself. The Zaporoskiye however were advancing steadily in the face of concentrated fire from the Légère and started to surround the Port.

With all the Babouins and Gorille Jeeps now gone, the Légère advanced their Épée APC's and - stupidly - one went straight over a mine, which went off! Luckily damage was slight, and the vehicle was just stopped temporarily (no doubt the driver had to nip out and gaffer tape the hover skirts...), however the troops inside got out, double quick! Ironically the troops in this Épée were specialist mine clearing engineers: they were probably not best pleased.

With the loss of more Légère armour, things were starting to look bad for the Division. The Zaporoskiyes had moved lots of their infantry into the Port now, and despite these taking heavy losses - principally from the remaining Panthère Medium Tank and Hadès Tank Destroyer support weapons and main guns - they managed to hang on with enough force to deny it to the Légère, who, now having suffered catastrophic losses, began to withdraw, giving final and full victory to the Zaporoskiye Brigade.

The Zaporoskiye Brigade suffered from very unlucky leadership from their Captain, matched only by the very unlucky shooting from the Division Légère Major!

Tactical analysis

If ATGWs are used in your force, it is always worth thinking about scenarios with snipers. They can be swapped out at cost of one infantry TU for a sniper but, points cost, are double the most expensive infantry available (*see page 121 of the rules*). Snipers can, of course, fire independently but – as every time they fire or designate – they run the risk of being spotted and then fired upon, they must either have a tremendously secure firing perch or be considered expendable. Their main advantage, of course, comes in to play when using them to designate for ATGWs or spotting for mortars and artillery (the latter two items being risk free in terms of being detected by the enemy, which aids their longevity). The ability, via snipers, for other units to let loose ATGWs without the firing vehicle or infantry TU revealing itself to counter-fire is a major advantage.

The Division Légère used their superior speed to good advantage in this game – *fast* and *medium* hover vehicles (and even *very fast* for the remote controlled Babouins) – but they had to: they had more ground to cross to get to the objective. The Légère also had to be careful with the speed of their remote controlled vehicles: it was important that their superior speed did not lead to the Babouins outstripping the control radius from their commanding jeeps.

The Zaporoskiyes used less speed – they had fewer LPs (via inferior commanders) and slower vehicles - and relied on their thick armour to defend them. They also had more powerful anti-armour ATGWs than the Légère but tended to have less luck with them, especially after they lost their sniper/spotter. They tried to hit the (always dangerous) Légère calliope and targeted it with two ATGWs but, of all the targets to pick - a weapon system for which the *raison d'être* is ripping incoming projectiles out of the sky – this was probably not the best decision to make... But then while the calliope was doing that, it wasn't hosing down the Zaporoskiye pioneers that were deploying from their APCs so who is to say what the best target is? Sometimes it is simple a target of opportunity that presents itself.

The mines restricted access a little – forces were nervous of investigating the mine fields but – of the four marker counters driven over - only one was live so, as in reality, mine fields mainly exist to slow down and entangle an enemy, channelling them into other areas that may – or may not – be set up as killing zones.

Conclusions

Using the optional rules such as *Leadership Pots*, and *Rapid Fire* and unusual weapons like *mines* and *snipers* adds more depth to any game and – with a fast system like *The Crucible* – it still means that a game in a large scale (with around 30 vehicles and over 50 infantry, four players - three of whom had little or no experience) can be completed in an evening including set up and pack away.

It made for a very satisfying game.

Thanks to all for playing and to John and Steve in particular.

Kevin Dallimore

Additional material by John Treadaway

Photos of this game are available [here](#). They include pictures of the table layout and vehicles in use.