

Slammers Scenario – Weed of Gold

Introduction

It is year 342 of The Way and the people of the Sokol system are fighting for domination. Sokol itself has a large moon which, aside from being used as a transfer port, has an impressive effect of the seas of the mother planet which – while not being large (covering less than a third of the planet) – do have tremendous tidal range. A particularly valuable plant is harvested from the shoreline of most of Sokol: the vegetation is a form of filtering weed known locally as 'Kelp'. Whilst the Kelp itself is not that useful as more than a fertiliser, the material it filters from the sea – with prodigious efficiency – is. Heavy metals, particularly precious ores such as gold and uranium, are washed down from the mountains of Sokol and into the sea.

These metals could be extracted electrochemically from the sea water but the Kelp plants – some of which must be thousands of years old – having been doing a fine job themselves and – for the last few decades – the inhabitants of Sokol have been doing a fine trade: the Kelp is farmed and processed. The remains are turned into nitrogen rich soil enhancers and transported away onto the fields. But the money's in the metal. Sokol has been living high on the proceeds of selling its metal reserves transporting them off planet, but the kelp reserves are running low.

Situation Report

The Kelp Farmers of Krechet can see their livelihoods slipping through their fingers like so much seaweed as the market-driven government in the capitol city of Buran orders ever more intrusive, low tide farming. Fighting broke out. The government sent in their best troops and the farmers cooperative were almost crushed. They fought back in the only way they could: they hired a mercenary force and – being a generally Slavic population – they rented the Zaporoskiye Brigade.

The Zaporoskiyes pushed the government forces right back to Buran but – at the very moment they thought they had victory within their grasp, the Buran forces were suddenly and unexpectedly reinforced. The Sokol government had hired Colonel Alois Hammer's armoured mercenary regiment – the best in the business: Hammer's Slammers.

You are Colonel Hammer and your job is to break the Farmers Alliance forces and their Zaporoskiye Brigade employees from their strongly defended position at the processing plant on the outskirts of Krechet.

The Plan

The Slammers plan a sweeping attack against the processing plant using two detachments. They have a pair of detachments arriving from the southwest and southeast. They plan to draw the locals and their mercenary forces into a killing ground in front of the processing plant by forcing them to engage. If they can destroy the FA troops, they suspect it may take the fight out of the mercenaries, and so will try to engage them if they can. Their alternative will be to call an artillery strike on the plant, which will destroy both the plant and any forces within the facility, although this will not please their employers who want the plant intact.

Forces

Slammers: To the southwest is a platoon of 'blower' tanks – the 170 ton, iridium M2A2 hovertanks that the regiment uses. There are 4 tanks in the platoon, 3 regular tanks and a command tank. In addition to these tanks, the detachment has four squads of Infantry on Skimmers – one-man hover bikes. 8 Tactical Units (TUs) all together.

The second detachment arrives from the southeast and has a platoon of Combat Cars – the M9A1. These are also hover vehicles but rather less massive than the tanks and each carry three tri-barrels. There are 4 combat

cars, a command car (a boxier command variant with only one weapon) and an infantry squad on Skimmers plus two jeeps, also armed with tri-barrels. 8 TUs all together.

The Slammers – classed as Elite - have a Captain 8 in charge of the Combat Cars (and in overall charge), a Lieutenant 6 in charge of the tanks, and two Sergeants 4 in charge of the two infantry squads. If the captain is killed, control passes down the line in the usual way. The Slammers are fielding 16 TUs as two detachments.

Unit Information – see standard play cards within the Hammer's Crucible

The Opposition: There are three elements – the Farmers Alliance (FA) irregulars with (mostly) stolen, ex government equipment (light hover vehicles); their mercenaries the Zaporoskiye Brigade (who use heavy tracked vehicles) and some sub contractors... The Zaporoskiyes often buy in anti-artillery support from another mercenary company called The Firelords, who use large wheeled vehicles.

The Farmers Alliance have one detachment of 15 TUs of irregulars – 10 infantry and 5 AFVs. The infantry count as Green but the AFV crews – who are actually disaffected government personnel – count as Trained. The AFVs are light hover APCs each of which can hold two TUs of infantry. All Infantry should start the scenario in their vehicles in the compound at the processing plant and may be armed according to the FA players wishes with the one proviso that no more than 6 units may be Anti Tank units.

Unit Information – see included cards.

The Zaporoskiye Brigade has a two detachments: a heavy platoon (10 TUs – all vehicles) using 4 Sabre tanks and 3 Chiorny Skorpion tank destroyers and 3 Oriol light tanks. It also has an Engineers platoon of 2 tracked APCs (plus 1 command track) with 7 TUs of Combat Engineers. These may be deployed in the APCs or elsewhere in the complex or the vicinity. All Zaporoskiye TUs are Veterans and the two platoons fight as two detachments. No fewer than 4 TUs of Combat Engineers must be armed with just standard assault rifles.

Finally there is a single detachment of Firelords. These have just 4 TUs as vehicles – one each of a railgun armed Guntruck (for protection) a calliope, an MLRS system and a Command vehicle with 6 TUs of Infantry with assault rifles. The Firelords are Veterans and will deploy within the complex.

The Zaporoskiye Brigade are in overall control with a Major 8 in charge of the heavy detachment and a Captain 6 in charge of the Engineers platoon detachment in the command track. The Firelords detachment have a Captain 6 in the Command vehicle and the Farmers Alliance have a Captain 4 in charge of one of the APCs. The opposition forces amount to 30 TUs of mercenaries and 15 TUs of irregulars making 45 TUs in total.

Unit Information – see standard play cards within the Hammer's Crucible

Deployment

FA - point A

Zaporoskiye – points B, C and or D

Firelords – points A, B, C and/or D

Slammers – tanks W, others E

Things to bear in mind

The FA light hover APCs and the Slammers Combat Cars, Skimmers and Jeeps may all cross water but the heavier Slammers Tanks, along with all of the Zaporoskiye and Firelords vehicles may not.

Special Rules:

The Farmers Alliance are by no means the strongest units on the map but without them, the Zaporoskiye Brigade and Firelords will be less willing to fight. If the FA flee or are destroyed, make an immediate **Quality Roll** for both mercenary forces (if they still remain). If either fail their QR then there is no effect – they will carry on fighting using standard rules. If both fail, they will surrender to the Slammers.

If the Slammers lose one of their detachments they may call in one artillery strike (6 Heavy tubes, FP 5/6) at any point on fixed coordinates (counts as observed) – the target will be the plant complex and the TU's within it. Rather than the buildings, TUs will be targeted by the seeker warheads of the incoming shells (Slammers player's choice). This strike is the only one available and will not depend on the allocation of leadership points. It

may be intercepted (to some extent) by the Firelords Calliope, if that is still available. There will be inevitable damage to the processing plant.

The bridges are too well constructed to be destroyed without prolonged artillery bombardment (so not within the confines of the game).

Game Duration

The game lasts for twelve turns or until one side concedes, or until the artillery strike is called in, whichever comes first.

Victory Conditions

Victory Points are awarded as follows:

Breaking a Slammer detachment:	5pts for the FA
Breaking an FA detachment:	2pts for the Slammers
Breaking the Firelords detachment:	4pts for the Slammers
Breaking the Zaporoskiye detachment:	5pts for the Slammers
Slammers have to call in artillery strike:	5pts for the FA

Highest points wins

Terrain

Krechet has a processing plant set on an island surrounded on all sides by water. To the shore (west) this is shallow (no more than 4m deep) but the sea stretches to the east. Lightweight homesteads and other heavier buildings are scattered across the map. The terrain is flat with clumps of bush and trees at irregular intervals blocking line of sight in all directions.

Tactical Thoughts

The Slammers: It should be obvious – numbers wise – that the Slammers have a fight on their hands, but you are the best and get paid well to do the heavy lifting. If you lose a detachment then you have to work out if you can destroy all of your opposition without using the artillery. If you use the artillery and there is any opposition left, you will lose on points.

The FA: Concentrate on breaking one of the Slammers detachments with your mercenary forces if you can. You should consider making the FA themselves hard to hit and protecting them to avoid the morale test that losing their employers tends to have on paid mercenaries... If you succeed in protecting the FA then that may at least force the Slammers hand into calling an artillery strike which – if you have any forces left on the field – should mean that you win on points, even if it's a pyrrhic victory.

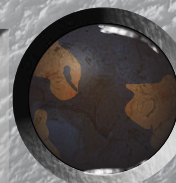
Playing the game

This represents a big game in 28mm. It's easier to field in 15mm scale (the advantage here is that the vehicles and figures are almost all available in both scales from both Old Crow and GZG) and I have to admit that not everyone has the resources to do this in 28mm. However, the reality is that it represents no more than two (or maybe three) forces that any single player might own in that scale. If you have bought a load of Slammers 'blowers' but have bought *other* forces than the ones listed here as opponents - that is you (or your mate!) have invested not the in the Zaporoskiye and Firelords but in some other mercenary company - it would be fairly easy, using the rules with it's example detachments, to substitute other mercenary groups.

The locals – the Farmers Alliance – could be, in reality, any bunch of guys you have on almost any vehicles: use what you have – it's not like they'll be featuring in many campaigns after this!

The mercenaries are another case, though, when it comes to swapping out. For example you could use The Lightning division backed up by a detachment of Foster's Mercenaries. Or replace them all with three detachments of the Thunderbolts, the Waldheim Dragoons or even Ander's Legion in their heavy armour suits. You could even substitute Broglie's Legion for the Slammers itself: the background supplied with the game gives a wealth of opportunities for mix and match scenarios, and Drake's books suggest a whole universe of gaming opportunities, which is probably why they're so popular with gamers.

PROCESSING PLANT COMPLEX



↑ SOKOL

