HAMMER'S SLAMMERS
THE CRUCIBLE
Rules Supplement THREE

By John Treadaway

This update features new elements that are entirely compatible with the *Hammer's Slammers: The Crucible* core rules.

"Well, get in and drive, curse you... I don't want to wait around here alone for the Lightning Division!"
Lieutenant Kiley
Hammer's Slammers

Operation Night Crow

The Panavia 'Stealthy' gunship and the attack on Kendrick's spaceport: a scenario with new forces

In the three hundred and forty third year of the way, Colonel Arnold Adler – creator and leader of the mercenary company the Eaglewing Squadron – decided to 'up their game'. He had struggled for almost two decades to create a force that was both cutting edge and innovative, even if he hadn't always managed to retain the very best men in his unit. His plan to ensure that his force was kept fully employed had always been to try and take advantage of the newest technology: he had formed the Eaglewing Squadron to exploit fast moving VTOLs like the Panavia Raven and Black Crow, swapping armour for speed, and mounted his hard-suited infantry either in the Black Crow APCs or on Hinckley jet-bike skimmers, backed up with fast, hover vehicles with mortar and artillery support.

Adler had equipped his Ravens and Black Crows with various weapon fits - podded 5cm powerguns, multi-barrel 3cm powerguns and hypersonic rocket pods under the wings plus tribarrel powerguns in the nose and even rear facing calliopes, mounted 'door gunner' style, on the Hooded Crow variant. In 343TW he had an opportunity to try out a newly purchased vehicle that would, he hoped, make the Eaglewing Squadron near to invincible - it was expensive, but Adler was already, in his own mind at least, counting the money that the new contract he just negotiated would earn him when he victoriously deployed his new super weapon: the Night Crow.

Making a vehicle hard to hit – stealthy, as it used to be called – is an ongoing battle in the third century of the way. One manufacturer devises a special coating, electronic screen or other special gadget, while another manufacturer develops counter measures, so nothing really moves forward: the status quo is maintained. Panavia, manufacturers of the Black Crow flying APC – workhorse of the Eaglewings – have developed some new systems that they believe ought to tip the balance: to gain and then retain an edge. For a little while, at least…

Above and top: A Panavia SR277 Night Crow. Armed with a chin mounted 2cm rapid firing powergun, Brumbar ATGWs, hypersonic missile pods, short range flamethrowers and a rear mounted 2cm gatling rail gun, these shots also show both the shielded engine intakes and a rear observer on the tail door.

What's special about the Night Crow?

Well, aside from being in short supply, the bad news is that the Night Crow is a little slower than the other VTOLs in the Squadron: moving, as it does, at Fast rather than Very Fast it is a little more ponderous but such is the price for 'stealth'.

The good news, though, is that it's armed to the teeth, both electronically and in terms of hardware. It has 'Brumbar' heavy ATGWs under the wings, along with hypersonic missile pods, a powergun in the nose and a pair of flamethrowers mounted along the sides of the rear fuselage.

OPTIONAL RULE

*The Flamethrowers are only short range but effective against infantry, plus they have their 'persistence' factor (see page 118 of **The Crucible** rules). From the rear door the vehicle mounts a 2cm gatling gun more normally found on a light tank. It also has enough electronic systems to fire any three weapon systems in a given turn. Lastly, it has two additional features: 'Stealth' and 'Sniper Pods'.*

Working closely with Panavia, Adler specified – and had delivered – a very small number of these Night Crow VTOLs: heavily armed, hard to hit, packed with AI systems – including targeting systems – and very, very expensive. But, he calculated, it would be worth it if he won the contracts he needed.

So, it's 343TW and Colonel Adler has indeed negotiated a new contract to support a group called the Northern Alliance and attack a military base on Ward's Planet. The Confederation of United Southern States on Ward's Planet have been fighting a short and very nasty war with their northern hemisphere neighbours over mineral rights and have been using mercenaries to support their invasion. CUSS forces with their employees (with the latter doing most of the 'heavy lifting') have taken a Northern Alliance spaceport which is vital to their overall objectives. CUSS forces have withdrawn from spaceport Kendrick and two detachments of Lightning Division mercenaries have been left guarding the base.

The Eaglewing's job is to get in fast to the base, destroy the control tower and any space vessels parked on the ground and get out again: any of the Lightning Division that they have to knock out in the process is a bonus.

Adler decides to send in two detachments of his forces but with two added vehicles: *a pair of Night Crows*.

■ Stealth

'Stealth' and other electronics measures and counter measures. In game terms, for this 'stealth' to be modelled, the vehicle uses the Elite Skill **'Luck'** *(see page 130 of The Crucible rules)*. This Elite Skill allows a limited number of dice rolls for that TU to be 're-rolled' at the player's discretion but, this 'stealth' isn't actually 'luck', this is technology. So instead of bowling a random number at the start of the scenario on a d6 (for a 1 – 6 result) for how many times a re-roll can be forced, the Night Crow gets the maximum: **6** times during the scenario, it may either *re-roll one of its own dice* **or** *force an opponent to re-roll one of his*. That might make the Night Crow deadly in the attack or hard to hit, but only until his opponents get the measure of him…

In addition. the Night Crow has a '**Sniper Pod**'

Optional Rule: *Sniper Pods*

A vehicle TU can be fitted with a Sniper Pod. The 'pod' may actually be a micro drone that floats a short distance from the TU, connected to the vehicle via a short range data link. Alternatively, on, say, a low-flying, NoE VTOL, it may be a mast mount of some kind, extendable above the vehicle to give extra height and visibility. In some circumstances, it might even be a human sniper hanging out of a hatch on the vehicle... They all operate in much the same way: the net result is that the vehicle TU functions almost exactly like having a Sniper TU 'attached' to it.

Positive results for the vehicle TU using a Sniper Pod:

- The vehicle may designate its own ATGWs giving, effectively, 'fire and forget' capability to the missiles it carries – the 'sniper' is always assumed to have line of site on the target as long as it is in sight in *phase 5a*. In addition, it may also designate for other assets – other TUs with ATGWs.

- The vehicle fitted with a 'pod' may fire with a secondary 'sniper type' weapon, if that is appropriate, at a target an *alternative* to other actions. However, as it's not a 'proper' sniper (either it's a drone, a pod or a man standing on a shaky perch with a rifle) it fires not as a sniper but as a **standard infantry powergun**: **Sh 2**, **FP2/2**. *(Effectively, there's a guy, albeit a specialist, hanging out of the vehicle with a machine gun…)*

- It may act as superior spotting for Mortars and Artillery, just as a regular Sniper TU would – (*see page 120 of The Crucible*).

- The 'sniper' may **not be targeted as a separate entity**, nor is there a need for a detection roll from opposing forces: the player using it declares that the vehicle TU so equipped is fitted with a 'sniper pod'.

- The 'Sniper' doesn't cost any LPs to 'move' (it moves with the vehicle TU for free) and only the **single LP to activate** in the usual way a sniper would (*see page 120 of The Crucible*).

Disadvantages and costs for the vehicle TU using a Sniper Pod:

- The cost in points for the Sniper pod is the same as a sniper would be: double the most expensive infantry TU for the force.

- Although it can't be detached or move independently, it still counts as a separate TU. This means that the loss of a vehicle means the loss of the sniper pod and – therefore – the loss of **TWO** TUs. And it's not as if you can hide where the 'sniper' is so it will probably draw fire...

- It costs one **LP** to operate in any mode – extra weapon shot, spotting or designation - just as a regular sniper would.

■ Points Cost

A Night Crow costs 420pts for the ship, 80pts for the Sniper Pod (the cost of a sniper) and 80pts for the Stealth/Luck Elite Skill. 580pts in total.

The Night Crow in a detachment for the operation at Kendrick

For the attack, a standard Attack wing with the Eaglewing Squadron was adapted by Colonel Adler: Two of the Black Crow APCs and its infantry complements were removed and replaced instead with two Night Crows, each with a Sniper Pod each.

This formation – named the 'Night wing' detachment - comprised: 2 Night Crow stealth ships, 2 Raven assault ships, 1 Spooky assault ship; 1 Black Crow APC and 1 infantry TUs (a support TU), 1 Hooded Crow calliope. A Lt (20pts), in one of the APCs or the assault ship.

Total: 3075pts with an additional sergeant at 10pts.

In addition Adler sent in a Fast Assault wing:

3 Black Crow APCs, and 3 infantry TUs (1 regular, 1 support and 1 tank hunters); 2 tank hunter TUs on skimmers; 1 mortar carrier and 1 artillery vehicle. A Captain (40pts) in an APC.

Total: 1220pts with an additional sergeant at 10pts.

All Eaglewing forces count as Veterans.

Above: Emblem of the Eaglewing Squadron.

Below: A standard Black Crow APC of the Eaglewing Squadron follows another at low level.

Below: A number of Black Crow APCs land to deploy infantry.

Below: The nose of a Spooky assault ship with chin mounted powergun and under- wing calliopes.

Opposite page: A Panavia SR277 Night Crow keeps in low "Nap of the Earth" mode.

The Lightning Division

Around Kendrick the Eaglewing's opposition was the formidable Lightning Division.

Under Captain Oliver Haupt, an experienced officer of the Lightnings, their forces deployed in and around spaceport itself.

Detail on the Lightning Division can be found in the Hammer's Slammers: The Crucible rule book and the web site where material on their later development can be found, along with TU cards for all vehicles and infantry for both the Eaglewing Squadron - including the new Night Crow vehicle - and the entire Lightning Division in various scales - 6mm, 15mm and 28mm.

*In addition, a **map** of this scenario is also available on the website.*

The Lightning Division

■ Deployment of the Lightning Division

In the spaceport itself, Haupt deployed his older (and slower) tracked vehicles – a legacy detachment, as he saw it: 4 Kraus medium tanks and 1 Hurrikan anti-artillery tank; 3 Thyssen light tanks, 1 Thyssen reconnaissance car and a Werbelwind AA under a trusted lieutenant (for a total of 2070 points - see The Crucible rules).

They were arranged to take the best cover they could of the few buildings and structures available, including the control bunker of the port itself. Bearing in mind the speed and manoeuvrability of his opponents, Haupt had no idea what direction the Eaglewing Squadron would be attacking from.

On the perimeter of the spaceport where the terrain suggested an expected attack Haupt placed his new tank platoons – the more mobile ACVs and Blowers in two platoons:

5 M2A7 Blower Tanks (including his own Command Tank) and 2 M9A16 anti-artillery calliopes; 1 Crew Car, with, 1 TU of tank hunter infantry and 1 Command car.

Total: 2830pts.

All Lightning Division forces count as Veterans.

Objectives

Even with their new 'Stealth weapon', The Eaglewing Squadron face an uphill battle in a straight fight: 4300pts of men and equipment versus around 5000pts of Lightning Division, including their latest blowers. However, the scenario's not a 'slugfest'. The Eaglewing's primary job is to deny the starport to their enemy and this is reflected in the victory points *(see below)*. Primary targets are the control tower and it's two lower lying annexes – all three substantial buildings with a **DV** of **9** from any angle and - in addition - there are three light space transport vehicles, each robustly built to survive arduous transport missions in hostile environments and with a similar degree of protection against attack (**DV F9, S9, R9, T8**). Tanks are just a bonus...

Of course, while Adler's men and women are destroying space ships and bunkers, Haupt's people will be sitting in a shooting gallery. In short the Lightnings need to take out the Night Crows as a priority but any unit is fair game.

Victory Conditions

Victory points are awarded as follows:

Action	Points
A Space ship destroyed:	**8pts** for the Eaglewings *
A Space port building destroyed:	**12pts** for the Eaglewings *
A Lightning Division Kraus or Blower Tank destroyed:	**4pts** for the Eaglewings *
Any other Lightning TU destroyed:	**1pt** for the Eaglewings
An Eaglewing Night Crow destroyed:	**16pts** for the Lightning Division*
Any Eaglewing Vehicle TU destroyed:	**8pts** for the Lightning Division *
Any Eaglewing Infantry TU destroyed:	**2pts** for the Lightning Division

* Half points for any damage short of destruction

Painting the Lightning Division

This is an article about painting 15mm vehicles and some infantry from the manufacturer Old Crow to represent two detachments of the Lightning Division. I wanted to do an early armoured detachment and a later one (post 340TW) as detailed in the Hammer's Slammers: The Crucible and the web site when this mercenary company went from tracked AFVs to mostly "blower" and hover vehicles.

I wanted to use the *Army Painter* system to speed up the whole painting process, as I had good success with it when I painted the Alaudae Legion (using the Strong Tone).

These Lightning Division models are painted primarily for gaming, not for display, however I still want to do a good job on them, and thought I'd share a few tips along the way.

■ Build

The first thing to do is wash the resin vehicles with warm soapy water and then get them ready to prime. Fortunately I didn't have to do this as John Treadaway both built and then primed them for me! This was a great relief, as I don't like building kits, even ones as good as these. John added some longer gun barrels to the Blowers to represent the different main weapons used by this force (using aluminium tubing) and then assembled the multi-barrelled turrets for the "Hurrikan" and "Werbelwind" AA and Anti-Artillery vehicles using Old Crow weapons and components. He then set them aside to dry.

■ Priming

Referring to the reference material in The Crucible and on the web, John used Army Painter Navy Blue to prime the vehicles (which is rather lighter than what I would think of as a 'classic' navy blue but was just right for this project).

■ Painting

With the primer well and truly dry, I then used my Badger 200 airbrush to spray grey stripes using *Tamiya* XF12 (Japanese Navy Grey) and followed it with another colour - Flat Yellow XF3 - also from *Tamiya*. The colours were quite light and bright but the *Army Painter* dip would tone them down a little and I wanted the quite striking camouflage to still be noticeable.

I followed this with some simple detail painting of tyres, tracks and similar using *Foundry* PP034B - Charcoal Black and followed that a very light dry brushing using *Foundry* PP031C - Granite Light and with another light dry brush using *Foundry* PP061A Peaty Brown to represent wear marks. At this point I stuck the guns to the calliopes with superglue.

■ Army Painter application

Rather than dipping a vehicle as large as a 15mm tank, I used a *Foundry* Utility Basing brush to apply the Dark Tone and then left each vehicle while I moved onto the next one. By the time I'd painted the third or forth vehicle, I would go back to the first one and used the brush to remove any excess where it started to pool. I paid particular attention to areas under barrels and similar overhanging spots and even the vertical sides of vehicles: anywhere it started to sag.

Above: A Kraus main battle tank. This has the blue Army Painter primer applied from a spray can and then the grey XF12 stripes airbrushed onto it.

Below: This Hurrikan anti-artillery variant has the yellow XF3 stripes added.

Bottom of page: A finished Kraus head on

Below: An M2A7 'Kurt' Heavy Blowertank with Army Painter and additional 'dirt' added with an airbrush sitting in gloss varnish awaiting decals.

I then painted another vehicle with the dip and then went back and checked the second one I had painted and so on. Using this process I completed all twenty vehicles. At that point I gave them all a further, additional 'inspection' - a one final check over to ensure no excess pooling of the dip. I then set them aside to dry for 24 hours.

■ Varnishing before decals

My next job was to give the vehicles a coat of Humbrol gloss varnish, brushed on to areas where I know I will be applying decals. This is to ensure that the transfers go down well: the Army Painter dip leaves the vehicles with a semi-gloss finish but I like to ensure that there is no chance of the decals 'silvering' over a matt painted surface and the safest way to guarantee this is a gloss varnish applied before hand.

■ Decals

When the varnish is completely dry (best left overnight), I used the appropriate **Bad Idea** decals for the Lightning Division, applied with **Microsol** and **Microset** decal solutions to both soften the transfers and help them stick. As I wanted to use quite a lot of numbers, I added some WW2 German Turret numbers by a company called **Fantasy Print Shop**, primarily because they came combined into groups of three digit numbers (which made the job of application a lot easier, I find apply three digit numbers when each numeral is a separate decal very time consuming and frustrating, people who design decals please help!)

Below: The Hurrikan with decals and extra dirt sitting in its final matt varnish.

Bottom: Thyssen armoured car with light tank turret finished with matt varnish.

■ Dirtying down

I use the airbrush to add dust and dirt to the vehicles undersides, tracks and skirts. I usually do some of this before applying the decals and some after. I also supplement this where needed (and - specifically - if I can see I've 'missed a bit' and have already cleaned and put the airbrush away!) with weathering chalks, applied with an old brush. I use MiG weathering powders for most of this work.

■ Final finishing

Two stages are used here: first a coat of matt varnish that is airbrushed onto the vehicles (I use **Humbrol** Matt 49 varnish from a tin, thinned slightly with **Humbrol** Thinners, not white spirit). Make this a very light coat don't worry if you have any misses at this point. Let this coat dry overnight. Then give them another coat, keep it light again, but making sure you cover any misses from the first coat.

■ Infantry

I needed one infantry unit at least, so I painted two, to have some choice in what use. Their uniforms were painted in the three shades of COL031 – Granite, with camouflage patterns in PP001B – Lemon and PP021B - Sky Blue. Guns painted in PP034B - Charcoal Black and antitank weapons in the three shades of COL063 – Quagmire. The infantry were then finished with a coat of **Army Painter**, brushed on like the tanks, and then matt varnished

And that's about it; a pair of detachments can be turned around in little more than a weekend to a good standard, ready to start gaming as soon as the paint is dry!

Kevin Dallimore

All photos by Kevin Dallimore

New Optional Rules

Optional Rule: *Follow Me*

This gives a commander the ability the lead their troops from the front and enable those TUs to follow their lead, thereby possibly saving leadership points but exposing the commander to danger.

Rank	Green	Trained	Veteran	Elite
Major or greater	6/4	5/5	4/6	3/7
Capt	6/3	5/4	4/5	3/6
Lt	6/2	5/3	4/4	3/5
Sgt	6/1	5/2	4/3	3/4

Example: *Under standard rules a veteran Lieutenant could spend 7LPs to move a vehicle or infantry TU three times using the 1-2-4 rule (see The Crucible, page 113), then a further 21LPs to move three other TUs to move in the same direction (assuming the commander had sufficient LPs to do this:* ***28LPs*** *in total).*

*Alternatively, assuming all three of these additional TUs are within short range of the Lieutenant's TU he can give them instructions to follow "**Follow Me**": the Lieutenant's TU moves their own TU three times as before (for 7LPs). He then spends 4LPs to activate the optional rule (see chart above) and expends another 3LPs (one for each vehicle or infantry stand) to move the three other TUs which then they move after the Lieutenant's TU for the same number of moves (ie 3 each) and, as long as they stay within short range of him, they are assumed to be following their commander. Result, 4 TUs (including the commander who leads) move three moves each, for 7+4+3=14LPs (as opposed to 28LPs) in total and, providing the 3 additional TUs start and end within short range of their leader's TU, this is perfectly acceptable.*

Note: Paid for 'insurance sergeants' *(see The Crucible, page 80)* act up to the role and so count as the officer they replace for the "**Follow Me**" optional rule.

Optional Rules: *Gun Your Engines! and Charge!*

Any commander of any rank may, for the expenditure of 1LP command up to **an entire detachment of TUs** (either vehicles, infantry or a mix of the two) to increase their speed if possible by one speed band, so *Slow* (and *Infantry*) would increase to *Medium*, *Medium* to *Fast*, *Fast* to *Very Fast* and *Very Fast* would *ADD Medium to Fast (in 28mm that would be 50cm+20cm=70cm, in 15mm that would be 25cm+10cm=35cm, in 6mm that would be 17cm+7cm=24cm).*

If the order is given and the LP spent then ***every TU in that detachment*** that moves in that turn has to perform a Quality Roll at the start of it's movement. Failure means it **stalls** and **stops moving completely**, Success means it moves for that move and any successive moves within that turn at the increased rate. This means that, if a TU is going to move once or twice or even three times using the 1-2-4 rule and it has received an order (at 1 LP) along with its other TUs within the unit to, then - with a successful **QR** at the start of its move - it may make **all** of its moves at the increased rate.

OPTIONAL RULE

What do the blue numbers mean?

*The number **before** of the forward slash is how many LPs the leader needs to spend to activate the "Follow Me" optional rule (the same as their Quality Roll).*

*The number **after** the forward slash is the **maximum** number of TUs within Short Range the commander can instruct to follow. This can be done with either infantry or vehicles or even a mix – an infantry commander could walk in front of a column of vehicles which follow him or a commander in a slow moving vehicle could instruct troops on foot to follow him 'on the double'!*

OPTIONAL RULE

Gun Your Engines! or Charge!

*These are commands costing leadership points to encourage individual TUs to move faster, both vehicle TUs and infantry TUs. For Vehicle TUs this is called **Gun Your Engines**. For Infantry TUs it is simply **Charge**.*

"The remainder of the platoon here will be captured - or killed, it doesn't matter - by the mercenaries of the Lightning Division"
Chamberlain Wolfitz
Kingdom of Gantz

Illustrations below: an M2A7 rail-gun armed 'Blower' and an M9A14 Crew Car of the Lightning Division, post 340TW.

OPTIONAL RULE →

Example: Getting the range

A Trained heavy mortar crew fires on a building that is on-table and observed. They fire at Long range and need a 5+ to hit (5+ for trained, -1 for long range, +1 for observed = +5).

*Next turn they fire again but they fire as **Veteran**: they have the range: 4+ to hit. Next turn they fire at **Elite**: 3+ they are spot on! Until they shift target, if they stay firing at that spot they do so as Elites even if they lose their observer: they have **found their range**.*

Note the following for Gun Your Engines and Charge:

- If it fails the QR it stalls BUT on an individual basis each unit may make a second (and a third) QR roll to try and move, but each unit – also on an individual basis – must use LPs to do this. These are spent using the 1-2-4 rule.

- Movement on a road or other easy going environment still increases speed by a further movement band if possible.

- This could be combined with the Follow Me optional rule, above.

Example: A Commander issues orders at a cost of 1LP to all of the troops of a detachment to Gun Your Engines and Charge. His troops are trained so all 15 TUs may now try and move faster. They require a QR of 5+ to succeed and 5 do, 10 failing. The commander issues order for three of the TUs (including his own, embarrassingly enough) to try again and two – including his own – succeed. This has cost him 3x2=6LPs under the 1-2-4 rule. The result is that – for the expenditure of one initial LP and six further LPs he has achieved higher mobility for just over half of his forces. The disadvantage is that six of them haven't moved at all.

Optional Rule: *Getting the range*

For use with mortar fire and artillery fire, when both on-table and off-table *(using optional rules 'The Big Guns', The Crucible page 123, and 'Steel Rain', Supplement 1, page 6)*. Each salvo against the same location increases in skill level of the firer by one band each time. providing the fire is **observed**.

Left: a Werbelwind AA system with twin railguns and light ATGWs mounted on a lightened tank chassis.

Left: the Werbelwind and Hurrikan replacement: the M9A16 Taifun anti-air/artillery system