

## After Action Report: Muwufa, Banipal – February 2019

When a couple of the guys dropped by for a game recently we had to decide what to play. We had recently completed a *LaserGrenadiers* campaign game that lasted nine campaign turns and resulted in a victory for the Stellar Confederacy on the planet of Purna. Since we wanted to restructure all of our forces and add new units before the campaign moved on to the next planet, we were not ready to begin a new campaign yet. Looking around for ideas we agreed to the suggestion that we pull out the “convention box” and use those forces in a scenario from *Wargames Illustrated* #365 titled “Best Laid Plans” by Mike Bradford. The scenario involves two forces moving in to capture supplies. As the game progresses, one of the adversaries will receive reinforcements, but this is determined randomly. The victory conditions are such that both sides have to take the capture of supplies seriously, but also have to be ready to bail out if the enemy gets the reinforcements – which can enter anywhere except their opponent’s entry table edge.

The game was played using the *LaserGrenadiers* rules. We made the following alterations to the scenario to suit our gaming preferences:

- the battle area is 5x10 feet instead of 4x4,
- we would play for nine turns instead of 60 minutes,
- the first reinforcement check would take place after Turn 3,
- the second reinforcement check would take place after Turn 6,
- colored tokens would be drawn from a bag to determine which side received reinforcements (instead of using playing cards).



Muwufa seen from the north. Little remains of the town, but rumors circulate regarding abandoned military supplies.

**Background** - The action at Muwufa was triggered when reports circulated in the military intelligence communities of both Ashurraq and Mullahstan that valuable military supplies had been abandoned in the small town. Although devastated by several skirmishes and repeated shelling and bombing, Muwufa suddenly became a target of interest. Both sides became aware that the enemy had received

the same information so they quickly planned to send small battlegroups to secure and search the area. Within days the forces were advancing.

The opponents fielded two equal forces using Space Rangers figures, old Ground Zero Games resin vehicles (now available from Daemonscape), a Kryomek resin vehicle, and wardrones created from Games Workshop models. Many of the vehicles were modified by the addition of weapon turrets from Iron Wind.

Randy commanded the Ashurraq forces in gray, and Roland commanded the Mullahstan forces in tan. Each side had 20 powered armor infantry with jetpacks (divided into two squads), a 120mm mortar section, three light armored vehicles and a wardrone. The vehicles on each side included a scout vehicle, an armored car, and an APC. All of the vehicles had light armor and would be considered third-rate compared to the AFVs of major stellar nations. None of them were impervious to any of the weapons fielded by the infantry or other armored vehicles. Ashurraq's vehicles were mainly hover vehicles, while Mullahstan mainly had wheeled vehicles. Each side had one grav vehicle and one vehicle with an enhanced detection system. The reinforcements consisted of an additional squad, a light scouter (armored scout car) and a light tank.



The Ashurraq forces enter the field from the west.

**Turn One** – The Ashurraq force consisted of two squads of the 37th Stormers supported by a Djinn light wardrone, a Lancer light grav armored car, a Sultan light hover APC and a 120mm mortar. The Mullahstan forces entered the field soon after from the east. The force consisted of two squads of the 25th Stormers supported by a Djinn light wardrone, a Dagger light wheeled armored car, a Nomad light wheeled APC and a 120mm mortar. The Ashurraq APC spotted and reported an enemy Stormer to the battlenet, but when the 120mm mortar fired indirectly at the target point it missed and caused no casualties.





The Mullahstan forces approach Muwufa from the east.

**Turn Two** – As opposing fireteams of the Ashurraq and Mullahstan 1st Squads entered the town they began to search for the supplies. A fireteam of the Mullahstan 1st Squad discovered a crate of explosives in the southeast end of Muwufa. The opposing 2nd Squads of both sides entered the woods: Ashurraq from the west and Mullahstan from the east. Both commanders saw this approach as a way to outflank the town from the north while moving in concealment.



Mullahstan Stormers in eastern Muwufa, supported by a *Dagger* light wheeled armored car. They have discovered a crate of explosives.

Moving up to support the infantry, the vehicles on both sides began to trade fire as they came within range, but it was mostly ineffective. On the southern side of the town the Ashurraq APC was hit by autocannon fire from the enemy wardrone, degrading the APC's damage control system.

**Turn Three** – Despite the amount of cover and concealment available to the troops in the ruins of Muwufa and in the woods to the north, the opposing infantry began to score hits and eliminate any enemy troopers who were unwary or made a misstep. An Ashurraq trooper who spotted a Mullahstan trooper firing a heavy laser rifle from the edge of the woods was able to hit and eliminate him. Another Ashurraq trooper stepped out from behind the cover of a tall concrete barrier at the western edge of town to bring the enemy armored car under fire. He was spotted and targeted by his counterpart on the enemy side and felled by his enemy's heavy fusion rifle. Responding to target coordinates called in to the Ashurraq battlenet, the 120mm mortar crew fired an HE round that caught three Mullahstan troopers in its blast, killing a corporal and stunning two other troopers. As the action flared, troopers of the Mullahstan 1st Squad spotted a crate of medical supplies just outside of a building ahead of them, while Ashurraq troopers discovered a crate of small arms and ammunition in the northwestern quarter of the town.



The Ashurraq *Lancer* light grav armored car and a trooper of the 37th Stormers occupy positions at the northwestern corner of Muwufa.

Sitting in more open ground the opposing vehicles began to take a toll on each other even though they were still firing at long range. The Ashurraq wardrone targeted the enemy armored car with *piercer* rounds that damaged its weapon system and enhanced detection system, putting them both out of action. The Mullahstan wardrone opened fire on the enemy APC with *piercer* shells, damaging its targeting systems and overloading the vehicle's systems, shutting it down temporarily. The crew of the Ashurraq armored car spotted the enemy APC lurking near the edge of the woods in the distance and opened fire with their twin heavy ray rifle at long range. One of the two rays penetrated and knocked out the APC's turret. The crew of the APC quickly pulled back farther into the woods and engaged their damage control system, but failed to make immediate repairs. On the southeastern side of the town Mullahstan troopers engaged the immobilized Ashurraq APC with their heavy laser and hypervelocity rifles, further damaging the APC's targeting systems.



## Administration

At this point in the game it was time to make the check for reinforcements. The brown token drawn from the bag indicated that Mullahstan would receive reinforcements and spring a trap on the Ashurraq forces.

**Turn Four** – The first indication to the Ashurraq forces that they were in serious danger was when an enemy Corsair light grav scouter sped into action behind them from their right rear and opened fire. The Ashurraq grav armored car immediately pulled away from town and moved west in pursuit of the enemy scouter, but its twin ray rifles failed to penetrate. Keeping up the pressure on Ashurraq, an enemy Scimitar light wheeled tank entered the action. (Although the vehicle shares an identical chassis with the Dagger armored car, Mullahstan considers it a tank due to its larger weapon and turret.) The vehicle action quickly heated up with the Mullahstan armored car and APC suffering serious damage.

The entry of the 3rd Squad of Mullahstan Stormers confirmed that the flank attack was more than a raid by a couple of enemy vehicles. The Mullahstan troopers opened fire destroying the Ashurraq wardrone with bolt, fusion and laser rifle fire. On the Ashurraq side it was clear that they were caught in a trap and the only option was to get out as fast as possible. All squads and vehicles were alerted to withdraw. The military supplies they found were no longer a priority. Realizing the enemy could escape the trap, Mullahstan pressed its troops to move aggressively. In the woods, the first fireteam of the Mullahstan 2nd Squad decided on a bold move. Instead of continuing to plod through the woods they would use their jetpacks to move up and over the trees directly to the west landing in any clearing near enemy troops and engaging them. Although they made the move successfully they only saw one retreating enemy trooper and failed to bring him down. In the meantime, the retreating Ashurraq troopers began to take a toll on their opponents, eliminating three men of the enemy 3rd Squad who had arrived with the flanking force, eliminating two troopers of the 1st Squad in the town, and damaging the weapon system of the Scimitar tank. (The ease with which weapon systems were damaged on Mullahstan's armored vehicles would later be the subject of an investigation.) In the town, Mullahstan's forces were in control, but their quarry was escaping.



Turning their backs on Muwufa, the surviving forces of Ashurraq retreat as their *Djinn* wardrone burns.

## Administration

When the players rolled for initiative at the beginning of Turn Five, they both rolled the same number. The group decided it would be interesting to apply the Uncontrolled Events optional rule. In this case when Ashurraq won the initiative their forces received off-table artillery support from a battery of three 100mm howitzers. The howitzers are in radio contact. All three may be directed to fire at the same target point, or may be given separate targets. The howitzers are firing *hammerhead* shells at long range, and the artillery support is available for two consecutive turns. This was something the Mullahstan player was not pleased to hear!

**Turn Five** – With artillery support on call the Ashurraq commander's first priority was to get target coordinates. When a trooper in the ruins of Muwufa called in the coordinates of the enemy armored car, Ashurraq command used the information to plot a spread of three target points across the eastern half of the town. The resulting fire hit and damaged both the armored car and the Djinn wardrone, but did not eliminate any enemy infantry. While their comrades in town were getting pounded the crew of the Mullahstan light tank completed the repairs to their weapons system. Armed with only one weapon in the turret, the crew chose to target the enemy grav armored car rather than an infantryman. They hit the target squarely but the beam failed to penetrate. The retreating Ashurraq 1st Squad and the flanking Mullahstan 3rd Squad traded mostly ineffective fire, but one Mullahstan trooper was eliminated.

In the woods, the sergeant of the Mullahstan 2nd Squad led his fireteam forward and caught up with the second fireteam of the Ashurraq 2nd Squad from behind as it retreated. The sergeant personally gunned down the enemy corporal as he led his troopers out into the garden plot beyond. Breaking out of the woods the Mullahstan troopers eliminated two more enemies. The two surviving Ashurraq troopers used their jetpacks to retreat to safety, but one of them managed to turn and fire, dropping a Mullahstan trooper. The Mullahstan 1st Squad advanced cautiously west through the southern half of the town, securing the medical supplies but not encountering any enemy forces. Still determined to eliminate all the enemy forces before they could retreat, Mullahstan command pushed forward its remaining reinforcements, the other fire team of the 3rd Squad. The first trooper to enter the battle zone was cut down by the laser fire of an enemy trooper. Two other troopers hunkered down in reaction and only the sergeant and laser riflemen entered the field, firing ineffectively as they advanced. In Muwufa advancing troopers of the second fireteam of the Mullahstan 2nd Squad moved into the northwestern end of the town and secured the crate of small arms and ammunition.

**Turn Six** – Ashurraq won the initiative and began the turn by rushing a retreating fireteam at the flanking enemy infantry. Firing on the move as they jettied west, their fire eliminated an enemy sergeant and damaged the Scimitar tank. Another fireteam bracketed the Mullahstan scouter with fire as they retreated off the field, damaging its targeting, weapon and damage control systems. As the Scimitar tank rotated its turret to target the Lancer grav armored car, the Lancer fired first with its twin ray rifles, degrading the tank's damage control system. The Scimitar's response was a direct hit with its laser cannon, but the weapon failed to penetrate the enemy's armor. The Lancer then sped off the field. The fireteams of the Mullahstan 2nd Squad jettied forward hard to catch up with the retreating second fireteam of the Ashurraq 2nd Squad, but they pushed forward so fast their fire was wildly inaccurate. At this point the second round of Ashurraq long-range 100mm artillery support hit the target coordinates on the eastern edge of town. One round shredded the tires of the Nomad APC, immobilizing it. Seeing their chances of crushing the enemy slipping away, a fireteam of the Mullahstan 2nd Squad advanced into the southwestern end of town to target the enemy APC. Their fire knocked out its medium pulse rifle and damage control system. With its mobility systems undamaged the hover vehicle moved away at full speed. As it retreated an Ashurraq fireteam shot up the enemy scouter and tank, destroying both vehicles. At this point Mullahstan called off the pursuit

due to the heavy losses its forces had suffered. They had captured the supplies in the town, but these seemed almost worthless in the face of 60% losses and the failure to trap and destroy an inferior force. The trap had been sprung too soon, the enemy had escaped, and it had cost the Mullahstan battlegroup dearly. Fearing counterattack, the Mullahstan forces would collect the captured resources and soon retreat from the town.



Hollow success: Mullahstan forces in Muwufa.

**Result** – Based on the scenario guidelines, the side that did not receive reinforcements would win the game if it managed to exit at least half its force from its own table edge, regardless of any other victory conditions. Mullahstan had captured all three supply objectives, but Ashurraq had extracted its forces with only 29% losses. **Ashurraq victory!**