From Wilderland To Western Shore

GEOFFREY CHARLES GEDDES

A Hidden Movement System for the Character Game of "War of the Ring"

'From Wilderland to Western Shore, from Northern Waste to Southern Hill, through Dragon-lair and Hidden Door and Darkling Woods he walked at will.'

WAR OF THE RING

Hidden movement plotting chart.

GAME TURN	Group 1.	Group 2.	Group 3.	Group 4.	Group 5.	Group 6.	Group 7.	Group 8.	Group 9.
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									

S.P.I's War of the Ring has become a best seller and firm favourite of game-players. Even players who normally frown on fantasy games can enjoy War of the Ring. The character game, in particular, is fast moving and fun and is easily played in a normal gaming evening. In fact the game is a refreshing and light-hearted change from the latest generation of complex and demanding simulations. Nevertheless we still demand 'authenticity', even in our fantasy games, and in this respect the game has several fatal flaws. The character game, in particular, suffers from the old gaming problem of perfect intelligence. Compared to Tolkien's 'Dark Lord', the dark power player in the game is bombarded with information. In 'The Lord of the Rings', Sauron has only rumour and the reports of Nazguls and spies to rely on, and only the vaguest notions as to the strategy of the fellowship. In the game, the dark power player knows the destination of the fellowship, knows that the purpose of the fellowship is to destroy the one ring and can even see the position of each group of characters on the game map. Therefore the decision as to the optimum time to retreat to Mount Doom and await the fellowship is firmly in the hands of the dark power player. In many games that friends and I have played, all the subtle manoeuvres and careful strategy of the fellowship have been for nothing, as luck is the ingredient needed to win the inevitable battle on Mount Doom.

A good analysis of these problems appeared in 'Could the One True Ring be Brass?' by Neil Randall, in Moves Issue 40. The fundamental problem of hindsight (the Dark Lord knows the objective of the fellowship) is insoluble, but something can be done to make the approach to Mount Doom more of a tense, exciting contest. Neil Randall suggests in the Moves 40 article that a hidden movement system is needed. I have evolved what I believe is a workable and reasonably simple-to-use hidden movement system which gives War of the Ring much more of the flavour of Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings'. Now you can "walk at will through darkling woods".

The Rules

Crucial errata which affect the balance of the game was given in Moves issue 40.

1. Change
The results of a search (that is, being spotted) remain in effect until the end of the game turn in which the search occurred. (Thus, no more hiding in the next County.)

2. Clarification
Search in Mordor (i.e. Gorgoth and Num) is automatic in that the Sauron player need not draw a card to search in Mordor (spotting is still a die roll result).

This errata should be used in conjunction with the hidden movement rules. All standard game rules are in operation except where obviously superseded by hidden movement rules. Most of the new rules are in the form of additions to the standard rules. Changes in the search procedure and the introduction of sighting rules are designed to balance the obvious advantages the fellowship player derives from hidden movement.

Additions to rules Section D –
Character game sequence of play.
The sequence of play in the hidden movement game is similar to that of the standard game, with the addition of a 'sighting phase' at the beginning of D3 Search Phase and throughout the D4 Fellowship player turn and at the end of the D5 Dark Power player turn.

Additions to Section F -
Movement of the Characters
In the hidden movement game, Fellowship-controlled characters do not appear on the game map unless they are spotted. However, if any group of characters is 'sighted', information as to their position may be revealed to the Dark Power player. The concept of 'sighting' is new to the game of War of the Ring and a new rules section detailing its use is given in more detail later in these rules.

F8 (New Section) Plotting Hidden Movement
The Fellowship player keeps track of the off-map movement of groups of characters on the Hidden Movement Plotting Chart (at left). This chart is kept hidden from the view of the Dark Power player. Honesty and trust between the players is

therefore a prerequisite for successful play of the hidden movement game. Examine the Hidden Movement Plotting Chart. The columns labelled Groups 1 to Group 9 allow the fellowship player to record the movement of various groups of characters off the map. Any combination is possible, from one group of nine characters down to nine groups of one character. The fellowship player should note the names of all characters in a particular group at the head of each column in use. On each numbered turn of the game, he should note in the respective column the destination hex of each group, taking care to compute carefully all terrain costs. He should also note the name of the province in which the destination hex is located as this greatly facilitates the search procedure. If groups split, or combine or change their position in any way, the current status of each group must be amended on the hidden movement chart.

Players are advised to photo-copy the hidden movement chart and to laminate it with clear contact or keep it in a transparent folder. Water-based felt-tip pens can then be used to record moves and amend the current status of the group columns. After each game, the chart can be wiped clean and used again. It is also advisable for the Dark Power player to use a similarly treated chart to record sightings and keep track of information gleaned from turn to turn.

Additions to Rules Section G —
Individual combat.
G.6 In the hidden movement game, if the Fellowship player instigates any combat with the Dark Power forces during the Fellowship player turn (D.4) characters involved are automatically spotted for the remainder of that game turn. Since the Fellowship player must announce his intention to instigate combat, the characters revealed remain so even if Nazguls present exercise their right to retreat before individual combat. (See Section E.13)

New Rules Section —
Sighting in the Hidden Movement Game.

1. Sighting by Dark Power Forces in the Fellowship Player turn.
1:1 Nazguls E.13
In the hidden movement game, Nazguls have somewhat different powers than in the standard game. Each of the nine Nazguls has a 'sighting Zone' consisting of the six hexes surrounding the hex it occupies. In these hexes, any group of Fellowship characters is automatically sighted, and runs the risk of being spotted. Groups of characters sighted in this manner can be challenged by any Nazgul exerting a sighting zone on the group.

Procedure is as follows:
During the course of his movement the Fellowship player announces that a group of his characters has entered the sighting zone of a Nazgul (or group of Nazguls) though he need not at this point give any details as to the composition or number of characters in the group. The Dark Power player now rolls a die to attempt to spot the characters and on a roll of 3, 4, 5, 6 may move, without expenditure of shadow points, to the hex containing the character group. If more than one Nazgul (or more than one group of Nazguls) is exerting sighting zones from different hexes, each Nazgul (or group of Nazguls) must make a separate die roll in order to move to the sighted hex. Once in the hex, normal spotting procedure is commenced *with the fellowship player now stating how many characters are present*. If, as a result of a search, Fellowship characters are spotted, they are immediately placed on the game map (in accordance with the standard rules). They remain spotted until the subsequent game turn.

1:2 Saruman and the Mouth of Sauron E.10, E.15
These two characters have additional powers in the hidden movement game: they have a sighting zone similar to that of Nazguls, and both may be used to sight and spot during the Dark Power search phase. The Dark Power player should note that since neither character has the Nazguls' right of retreat before combat, they become susceptible to ambush in the hidden movement game.

1:3 Orcs
Since orcs are only in play as a result of captures or during the search phase, their powers are described in the sighting during search section. (New rules Section 4 - 4)

2. Limitations on sighting zones.
2:1
Sighting zones only extend into the following hex types — (a) Clear Hexes (b) Clear Hexes containing rivers, roads, bridges and fords.

2:2
Dark Power units cannot 'see' into any other types of terrain. Special care should be taken to determine if mountain hex sides block observation of otherwise clear hexes. Dark Power units can always see into a clear hex *along* a hex side which contains mountains, they cannot see *across* hex sides which contain mountains.

3. Sighting as a result of movement through map terrain.
3:1
During the course of hidden movement, Fellowship-controlled characters may pass through hexes on the map which cause them to be sighted and news of their movement reported to the Dark Lord. These special cases are in addition to the normal sighting and search procedures of the hidden movement game.
The Fellowship player must announce to the Dark Power player that a group of characters has entered a particular hex during the course of his movement phase. He need not reveal at which point in the turn characters entered the hex. He must state the *number* of characters present but need not be more specific as to the composition of the group. The special circumstances are as follows:

3:2 Town and Port hexes
Groups passing through the most friendly of towns will nevertheless be reported by spies and informers to the Dark Lord i.e. they will be sighted.

3:3 Friendly (Fellowship) Citadels
The arrival of groups at friendly citadels will be relayed to the Dark Lord, as will their departure. Therefore the Fellowship player must inform the Dark Power Player of the numbers of any groups that arrive at or leave a citadel, which must be named. The Dark player must be informed even if the party enters and leaves the citadel during the course of the same movement turn. If some members of a group remain while others leave, exact numbers must be specified.

3 : 4 Enemy (Dark Power) Citadels
All Citadels controlled by the Dark Power, including citadels captured by citadel reduction, have an intrinsic sighting zone (See rule 1:1). This sighting zone exists even when no Dark Power forces are within the citadel. Any Fellowship group which enters the sighting zone of a Dark Power citadel is sighted. This sighting is subject to rule 2:1 Limitation on sighting zones. Note that the Citadels of Durthang (East Map hex 0727) and Minas Morgul (East Map hex 0729) do not have sighting zones as they are completely surrounded by mountain hex-sides. Citadels have no intrinsic capacity to search.

3 : 5 Magic hexes
The possession and use of magic will attract the attention of the Dark Lord. The Fellowship must declare the number of characters in any group entering a magic hex. Note — special attention must be paid to the rules concerning the three Palantir (Section L4).

3 : 6 Servant of Sauron hexes.
News of a great fight is sure to reach the Dark Lord. Frightening rumours could be the result of the presence of a servant of the Dark Lord. The Fellowship player must declare the number of characters entering a servant of Sauron hex. Details of champions selected to fight the Servant must be announced but the name need not be revealed. Of course, the Dark Power player can make deductions as to who it might be.

3:7 Roads, crossroads and junctions.
As numerous incidents in The Lord of the Rings confirm, travel by road is likely to lead to meetings with patrolling Dark Power forces. Therefore Fellowship groups which utilise road travel run the risk of being sighted. Note that no risk is entailed while using trails or mountain paths. Groups which merely pass across hexes containing roads are not subject to this rule. For every turn that one or more groups of characters use roads for some part of their movement, the Fellowship player must inform the Dark Power player. He does so by stating — "a group (or groups) of characters have used road movement." The Dark Power player then

rolls a die for each group stated to be using road movement. On a roll of six the group has been sighted and the Fellowship player must state the number of characters in the particular group and specify the number of one of the hexes that the group has entered during the course of the turn. A similar procedure is used when groups enter road junctions and crossroads, but since these are even more likely to be watched, a die roll of 5 or 6 will cause the Fellowship group to be sighted. The Fellowship player must announce to the Dark Power player that a group or groups has used road movement *and* passed through a junction or crossroads. The Dark Power player will then roll with the crossroad advantage. Crossroads and Junctions on the maps are located at the following hexes.
West Map 1815, 1614, 1413, 1114, 3132, and 1513.
East Map 0726, 0528, 0529, 0532, 0637, 0827 and 0928.
All other crossroads and junctions are located in hexes already covered by rules 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 3-5 and 3-6.

4. Sighting during the search procedure. (Addition to Section J)

4:1
The search phase is carried out in the hidden movement game in the following manner:- A search card is drawn in the normal manner and the Fellowship player checks his Hidden Movement plotting chart to see if he has any character groups in provinces that the Dark Power player is entitled to search. If he has, he announces to the Dark Power player the number of groups revealed in each province, but not the location, composition or number of characters in any group.

4:2
Initial sighting is now carried out by the Dark Power player. He places searching Orcs and Nazguls in hexes he suspects contain Fellowship groups.

Orcs and Nazguls are placed subject to all the rules of the standard game with the following changes and additions:

4:3
Nazguls have all the new powers outlined in New Rules Section 1:1. During the search phase, Nazguls do not need to roll a die to see if they can move into a sighted hex. This is an automatic right and costs no extra shadow points.

4:4 Orcs
Orcs have more limited powers than Nazguls but are still used in a somewhat different manner than in the standard game. Each group of Orcs placed as a result of a search card may sight in their own hex and in *one* of the six adjacent hexes, as chosen by the Dark Power player. Sighting is limited as in New Rule Section 2: Limitation on sighting zones. The single hex nominated by the Dark Power player constitutes the sighting zone of the Orc band. Orc bands also have the automatic right to move into sighted hexes without the expenditure of additional shadow points.

4:5 Limitation on Orc placement
Orcs are placed for searching purposes subject to the following limitations — No one band may contain less than two strength points of Orcs. Unlike the standard game, the cost of placing Orc bands is *two* shadow points, but any number of bands may be placed for this fixed cost, subject only to strength points available and the two strength points rule.

4:6 Fellowship response to initial sighting.
The Fellowship player watches carefully as the Dark Power player places his searching Nazguls or Orcs. If any initial sightings are successful he informs the Dark Power player of any groups of characters in a hex with Dark Power forces (Nazguls or Orcs) or in the sighting zone of Nazguls. When Orcs are searching, he notes which hex the Dark Power player has specified for the Orcs to be sighting into and informs the Dark Power player of any revealed groups.

The Fellowship player now tells the Dark Power player the number of characters in any group that has been sighted by Orcs or Nazguls. He need reveal no further information as to the composition of the group.

4:7 Spotting.
Normal spotting procedure is now carried out subject to all standard rules. If the result of the standard search fails to reveal the group of characters, the Fellowship player need not place them on the map. Of course the Dark Power player will note the sighting for future reference. If groups are revealed, they are placed subject to all standard rules and remain spotted until the next turn, when they can be removed from the map again.

5. Sighting and Search During the Dark Power Player Turn
5:1
During the Dark Power player turn, as a result of movement, Dark Power characters may move into hexes which put groups of Fellowship players in their sighting zones. With even more luck (or skill) they may even be stacked in the same hex with Fellowship characters! The following rules cover these eventualities:

5.2 Fellowship characters in sighting zones.
Fellowship characters which at the end of the Dark Power player turn chance to be in sighting zones need not be revealed. If, however, the Fellowship player remains in a sighting zone after his next player turn he must reveal the presence of a group of characters.

5:3 Fellowship characters stacked with Dark Power characters.
Fellowship characters which at the end of the Dark Power turn chance to be stacked with Dark Power characters have the following choices:

(a) Lie Low choice
The Fellowship player does not reveal the presence of his character group to the Dark Power player but may not move until the Dark Power player moves his character (or characters) out of the hex, or for a minimum of three game turns. (Fellowship player's choice.)

(b) Accept Search choice.
The Fellowship player reveals the presence of a group and the number of characters in the group and accepts an automatic search. The search is successful on a die roll of 1, 2, 3 regardless of the number of search points the Dark Lord has available in the hex. In addition the group remains spotted for the whole next game turn. If the group is not spotted, it may employ hidden movement the next game turn in the usual manner.
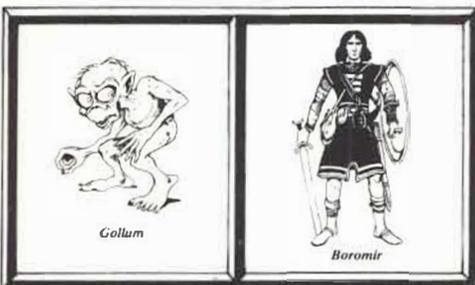
5:4
At no time during the Dark Power player turn may the Fellowship player initiate individual combat (which might result in accidental stacking).

6. Effect of Hidden Movement on Certain Event Cards
6:1
Most event cards are played in the normal manner but certain cards must be used in a particular way.

Gollum

Boromir

6:2 Gollum attempt to seize the Ring N16
If Gollum is successful in an attempt to seize the ring, and if the Dark Power player is in control of Gollum during the attempt, Gollum immediately appears on the map in the hex where the combat took place. If Gollum is controlled by the Fellowship or is neutral during a successful attempt to seize the ring, he does not appear on the map. The Fellowship player who carries out the seizure attempt (even if Gollum is at the moment neutral) need not inform the Dark Power player of Gollum's success until control passes to the Dark Power player or Gollum becomes a ringwraith, in which case Gollum appears on the game map. Changes in the control of Gollum have the following results:
Fellowship control — hidden movement.

Fellowship to neutral — hidden — remains in place where last left by Fellowship.
Dark Power to neutral — open — remains in place where last left by Dark Power.
Dark Power control — open movement.

6.3 Boromir Attempts to seize the Ring N15
If Boromir attempts to seize the Ring, a similar procedure is adopted as in an attempt by Gollum. Again, the fellowship need not inform the Dark Power player of a successful seizure of the ring until such time as Boromir becomes a ringwraith. Note that any Fellowship character that becomes a ringwraith instantly appears on the game map.

6:4 Elven Boats 66, 67
The Fellowship player merely has to state that he is using the card, he need give no details of its use.

6:5 Escape from Orcs 80, 81, 82
All escapes either in the Fellowship escape phase or by the play of an escape card result in the instant removal of the escapee's counter from the map.

Game Notes
I hope players will find these rules workable and complete. I believe that they help capture the spirit of Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings'. In particular, Nazgul now have the powers that they have in the book:

Fellowship characters must travel slowly through poor terrain or run the risk of the open highway and more direct route. To counter these advantages the Dark Lord is presented with a far greater challenge as a result of hidden movement — he must use intelligence and deductive logic to track down and destroy the Fellowship. The chance of a surprise dash for Mount Doom is now a very real possibility.

The success of search is now dependent on two main factors — the size of the province to be searched and the nature of the terrain within the province. As in the 'Lord of the Rings', the going gets rough for the Fellowship in the open terrain and exposed approaches to Mordor. It seems fair to assume that a Nazgul flying over open country has a good chance of 'sighting' groups from some distance. Nevertheless, in the Fellowship game turn, character groups have a chance of going to ground even if they have to pass through Nazgul sighting zones. There is less chance of avoiding being spotted by Nazgul in the search phase since the Nazgul are assumed to be more actively searching for character groups. Orcs can now be used in a more realistic way, forming picket lines across likely routes of approach. As in 'Lord of the Rings', the Dark Lord is receiving a steady flow of information at various levels of usefulness:

Level one An undetermined group of characters are known to be in a certain province. (Result of search card.)

Level two A group composed of three characters has been sighted at a given location. (Result of Fellowship player moving groups through sighting zones or specific types of terrain.)

Level three This group has been identified as — for example — Legolas Gimli and Boromir. (Result of successful search.)

A clever Dark Power player can use this information to deduce the likely strategy of the Fellowship — though he can still be surprised! New rules as to the usefulness of Citadels make them more valuable and give the Dark Power player a valid reason to attempt citadel reduction. All of these changes make for a tense and exciting contest of wits which I hope you will enjoy.

Reference:
(1) J R R Tolkien 'The Lord of the Rings' Book One ... The Fellowship of the Ring. Page 374.

Published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Twelfth impression 1962.

Mention the date of 28th November 1899, and I would be surprised if anyone knew its significance, after all it's not as if anything special happened. Some folk would probably guess that the Boer War had opened, further to that, nothing. However for some of the great British regiments such as the Coldstream and Scots Guards and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders it will be a date well worth trying to forget!

The British 1st Division, under the leadership of Lord Methuen, was marching to the relief of Kimberley. Ahead lay the Modder River in a small canyon. Resistance was expected, but only a token opposition. Consequently most of the troops were in a column spaced out over a few miles with some artillery pieces to the front. Methuen's information was so poor that he was totally unaware of a side river, the Riet to his right, or the fact that two Boer armies lay entrenched along both rivers and in command of the canyon heights. As the British marched up to the river they came under a withering fire from the Boers. The Boer artillery proved very effective as they had placed whitewashed stones on the opposite banks of the river as range markers. The Division was pinned for the rest of the day. During eight hours of vicious fighting the 1st Coldstream Guards charged, to discover they were attacking the Riet and not the Modder. On the left the North Lancashires managed to cross the Modder, but fell back under artillery fire from their own batteries! After the eight hours of fighting the Boers left the trenches, completely unknown to the British who attacked the enemy trenches the next day only to find them empty. The whole affair had been a delaying action, but the relief column had taken a beating with 466 dead and 393 wounded. The Boer casualties seemed insignificant in comparison, 60 dead and 300 wounded.

This then is the scenario for a new firm to board wargaming, Yorkshire Games. The whole package comes zip-locked and has counters, a 16 page rule book and a map sheet measuring 18 x 25 inches approx. The map is colourful, marked with rivers, roads, buildings and a railway; Boer units are set up in the trenches, British units are stacked in areas with name plates. Around the edge is a number and letter sequence to define artillery fire hits. However, the most striking features of the map are the grid of squares instead of hexes and the fact that it is plastic coated which makes it extremely durable. The counters are of a high standard, and again are plastic coated. A variety of colours is used; the British are in blue of which there are 69 counters to represent the infantry regiments, lancers and gun batteries. Boer units are in different colours to cover both armies; orange for the 23 Orange Free State (OFS) counters, red for the 24 Transvaal counters. Counters in green are provided for marking pinned units and there are also artillery chits for hit/miss effects. Additional counters of all colours are provided. Another unusual feature is that the two numbers on each counter read as movement allowance and then combat strength, the opposite to the usual practice.

There are twelve turns in all, each turn having the following phase sequence: movement, unit recovery, artillery fire, melee and two rounds of rifle fire. In the movement phase the British player moves first, giving the Boer player a chance to see where units are intending to attack from. Using squares instead of hexes causes no problems as a counter has a definite facing and moves forward or diagonally (which costs slightly more per square). This tends to make movement, especially for the British, very rigid and nicely simulates the effect of regiments forming into line. One added feature of interest is that all units of a regiment must be within two squares of a unit of the same regiment; there can be no intermingling.
This ruling is of importance in relation to disruption. During a turn some units will be disrupted and therefore unable to move or fire. Since the recovery phase takes place after movement, forward attacks by the British become very slow as they must wait for the disrupted sections to re-organise. Recovery from disruption is automatic. However recovery from pinning is dependant upon die roll and enemy proximity; the closer the Boers are the less likely recovery from pinning becomes. Pinning can result from artillery fire, excessive loss during rifle fire or voluntarily, it only affects the British.