

Not to be outdone by Steve and Adi, Nick Davis takes his own stab at building a fortress and some associated siege equipment. Read on for a different take on these hobby projects from *Siege of Gondor*.

**Nick:** I've always enjoyed a good siege game and mustering that last line of defense as the gate comes crashing down or, if the boot is on the other foot, overrunning the hapless defenders as the walls are breached. There is something epic and inspirational about fighting a siege battle on a wargame table.

Of course, to fight a siege, you need a fortress to attack or defend. You can pick up ready-formed walls (e.g., Helm's Deep and the Walls of Minas Tirith), or you can build your own, which is what I did. *Siege of Gondor* has great set of plans in the *Building a Fortress* section.

I decided to build a long wall – much like the Rammas Wall, the series of defenses around the townlands of Pelennor Fields. My wall would feature the normal tower-and-wall arrangement, suggested by the fortress plans from the supplement. I would add a slight twist: a grander gatehouse as a center piece. The only tools you'll need to build a similar fortress are a pencil, craft knife, steel ruler, and white glue. The materials are also easy to come by and cheap: 1/2" foamcore, thin balsa wood, and craft sticks (all of which should be available at your local hobby or craft store).

# A VIEW FROM THE SIEGE LINES

## Middle-earth Under Siege

### THE WALLS

Start with the standard wall template printed in *Siege of Gondor*.

Mark out the blocks on the front wall in 9/16" increments and then score them with a craft knife. Scoring the lines helps define the blocks and adds texture to the walls. Next, assemble the walls.

Fill any gaps in the wall assembly with spackle. Don't worry about being too neat and tidy when applying the spackle or even



when you cut out the crenelations along the wall. Many of the fortresses in Middle-earth are ages old and have suffered over the years. Being a little messy at this stage will simply add to the feeling of age and disrepair.



This broken wall is an example of the state of disrepair of many of the defenses of Middle-earth at the end of the Third Age. This wall has long since fallen into disrepair and will be patched up only when the forces of evil threaten. Use craft sticks to model the planks used in the barricade.

When your castle comes under siege, it's great to be able to replace one of the main walls with a ruined version. Creating a breached wall is simple. Just build a wall as normal and cut a hole in it. Use foamcore off-cuts and a layer of spackle and sand to build up a collection of debris and rubble.



### THE GATEHOUSE

Building the gatehouse may look like a complicated process at first, but after building the walls and towers from the plans in *Siege of Gondor*, it really is fairly easy. Build your gatehouse in three sections: the gate wall (which you can copy directly from the one in the book) and the two guard towers. The two guard towers are really nothing more than L-shapes glued to normal tower walls. Create the gate out of balsa wood and add statues from the Osgiliath ribs sprue.



### PAINTING THE FORTRESS

Paint the entire fortress with textured paint, made by mixing Codex Grey and spackle together. Next, drybrush the entire castle with Ghostly Grey and then more lightly with Bleached Bone.

Drybrush all wood sections with Scorched Brown, then Snakebite Leather, and then very lightly with Bleached Bone.



Above: The Knights of Minas Tirith sally forth into the Mordor hordes.  
Left: The Fortress walls stand firm to protect the town beyond against the Mordor assault.

## SIEGE WORKS

While the Defenders get to stand behind stout and often very solid stone walls, the Attackers are a little more exposed and often have to scurry across a specially cleared killing ground. Attacking a fortress is hard on foot soldiers and especially hard on lightly armored troops, such as Archers and your valuable war machines.

Thus, the Attackers usually build siege works, a series of defenses like wooden barricades, earthworks, trenches, and possibly traps. Siege works are designed to protect the besiegers and confound any besieged troops foolish or brave enough to sally forth from the fortress.

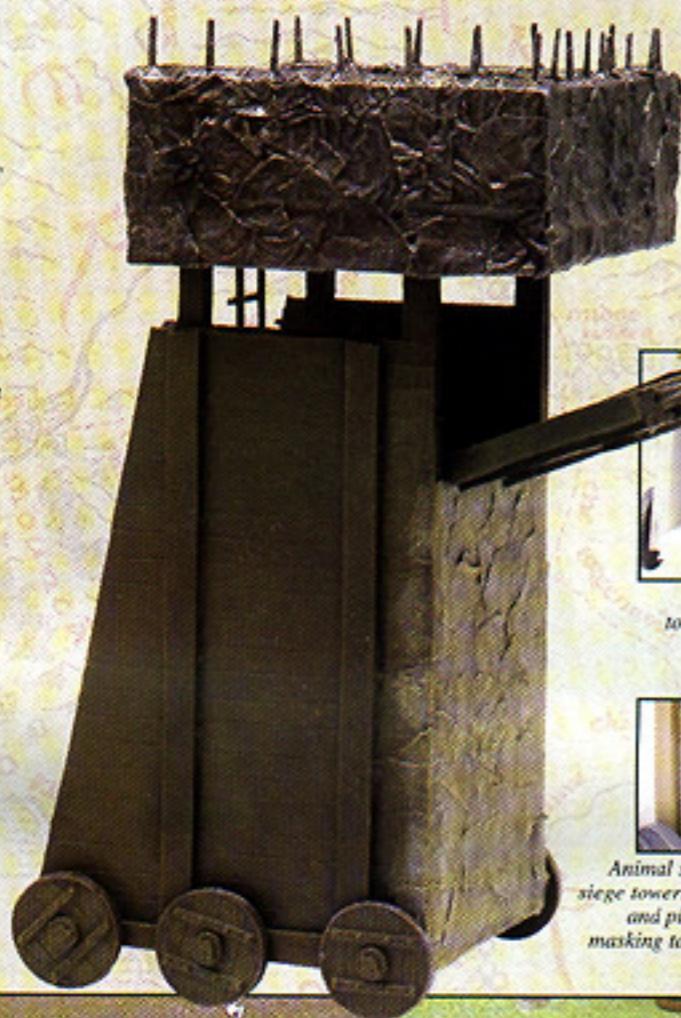
Of course, the Attackers must also build devices to gain access to the castle. This siege equipment could include ladders to scale the walls, battering rams to bring down the gates, and siege towers, huge fortified structures able to roll right up to the fortress walls and deliver a deluge of troops onto the ramparts. Many siege towers also incorporate battering rams and additional levels for Archers to fire missiles at the hapless Defenders.

Thankfully, all of these things are fairly easy to model with simple materials, and the plans for making a siege tower can be found in *Siege of Gondor*.

If you've already built a fortress, you're in luck, as you'll use the same tools: a pencil, craft knife, steel ruler, and white glue. Many of the materials are similar as well: 1/4" foamcore, thin balsa wood, craft sticks, toothpicks, and bamboo skewers. You can also use any unused bits of scenery you may have laying around.

## THE ANATOMY OF A SIEGE TOWER

*Siege towers are huge constructions built to loom over fortress walls. Nick built two siege towers. One was a direct copy of the one detailed in Siege of Gondor. The other was a larger variation with a platform built on top for Archers to fire arrows at the Defenders below them.*



*Build the platform out of foamcore with tin foil glued on top. Stick the ends of toothpicks into the foamcore to make spikes.*



*Create ladders out of flat toothpicks. Score lines into the foamcore "floorboards" to suggest planking.*



*Animal skins are used on the front of siege towers to protect them against fire and pitch. To create this effect, use masking tape torn into small, irregular bits and stick them in place.*

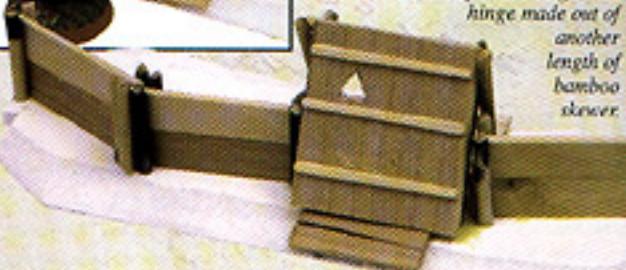
## BARRICADES

*Barricades are used by the Attacker to protect his troops, engineers, and war machines from the Defenders' missile fire. These barricades can also come in handy should the Besieged force sally out to attack the siege lines.*

*Build your barricades by cutting craft sticks to size and then gluing them on top of one another. Create posts from bamboo skewers and attach your craft sticks to them. You can add other pieces to your barricades like Osgiliath rails, other model wall parts, and foamcore "bricks."*



*Mantlets are another form of protection for the Attackers. They can be used as "doorways" in the siege line or as protection for Archers or war machine crews. Start by making two uprights out of bamboo skewers. Attach a balsa wood doorway that swings on a hinge made out of another length of bamboo skewer.*



## EARTHWORKS

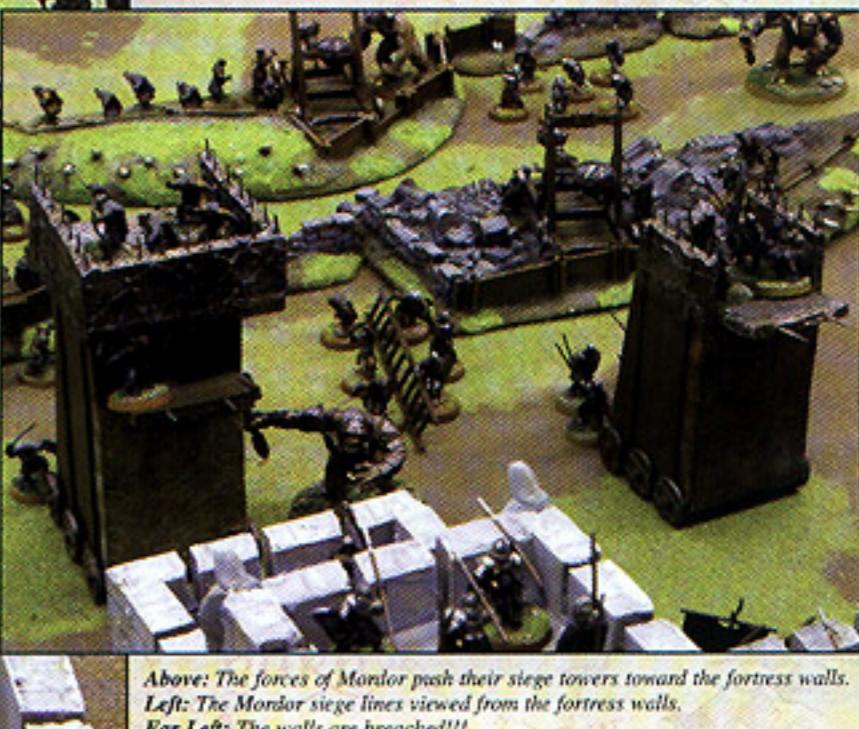
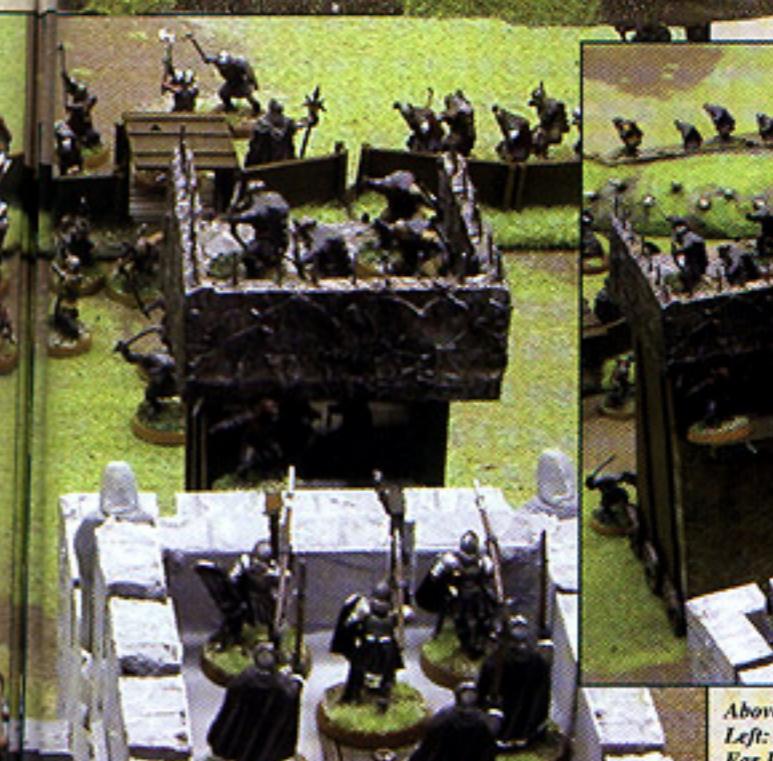
*Earthworks, like barricades, are a vital part of the siege line and form hard points along the line where war machines are normally entrenched. These defenses make for a fun hobby project as well.*

*You can create earthworks in much the same way as you made your barricades. Create your wooden barriers with craft sticks and bamboo skewers. Use a craft knife and sandpaper to shape the earthen rise out of a piece of 1/2" insulation foam. Use your craft knife to*



*sharpen some skewers and stick them into your hill to make spikes.*

*Create rubble from Osgiliath rails, foamcore off-cuts, small stones, and other odds and ends from your bitz box.*



*Above: The forces of Mordor push their siege towers toward the fortress walls. Left: The Mordor siege lines viewed from the fortress walls. Far Left: The walls are breached!!!*