

Dark Magenta

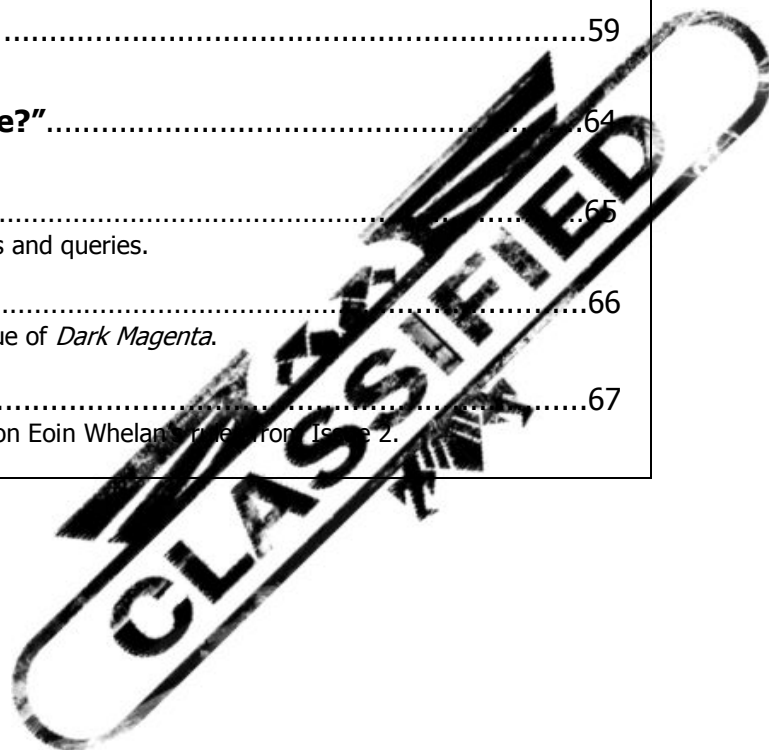
Issue Three

Thought for the Day: Only in faith are we victorious

Winter 2009

Contents

	Page
The Grand Inquisitor Speaks	2
Derek makes confession.	
The Deathwatch	4
Eoin Whelan gives rules for the Ordo Xenos chamber militant.	
I am not a Monster – Part 3	7
Fleshing out the character from Issue 2 – <i>plus</i> win the model for yourself!	
Eldritch Raiders	11
Nathan Dowdell opens up the first part of his enormous Eldar rule-set!	
Pieces of the Puzzle	25
Ruaridh Dall introduces the penultimate part of our on-going campaign battle report.	
The Mercyday Incursion	31
Jez Lowe takes Ruridh and Derek Gillespie on a dangerous mission.	
Modelling Masterclass – Imperial Fist Sergeant Tybalt Andrus	46
The Grandmaster shows off.	
A Riddle in an Enigma	54
Frank O'Hanlon with background and rules for Demiurg constructs.	
The Rites of Regulation	59
Short fiction by Mark Erlight	
"Why Won't Anyone Play With Me?"	64
Robey gets back on his soapbox	
Communiqués	65
Via the astropathic duct come your questions and queries.	
Record of Heresies	66
Biographies of all the contributors to this issue of <i>Dark Magenta</i> .	
Space Marine Character Sheet	67
A special character sheet for Marines based on Eoin Whelan's character from Issue 2.	



The Grand Inquisitor speaks...

Finally, Issue 3 of *Dark Magenta* is upon us! The trials and tribulations of getting our little fanzine out to all of you have taken their toll, but we're here, and we've got lots of good stuff for the *Inquisitor* game. Before I start, you'll notice that Issue 2 never appeared in the same, highly-designed layout as Issue 1 (eventually) did. Unfortunately, the additional time that it currently takes to transform a "plain" copy such as this into the all-singing, all-dancing version we produced for Issue 1 is introducing an unacceptable lag time in getting *Dark Magenta* available. As it takes long enough to gather content of sufficient quality, and to get that material ready for publication, we've taken the difficult decision to run with a simpler page layout for the immediate future, and only return to our more "polished" look if we can guarantee that it won't slow down the production process unduly.

One side-effect of a long production time is that a lot can happen in the community in between me getting to speak to you, so I'll attempt to pick out some of the important news and developments. Games Workshop has now consolidated the Specialist Games range back within the main body of the company, the most obvious result of this being the disappearance of the dedicated Specialist Games website. All SG products, including *Inquisitor*, are now supported through the new-look GW website and online store. This has had some secondary effects; firstly, the vast majority of Fanatic Online articles have disappeared from the website for the moment. While there are certain routes available on the internet to track down these PDFs, for the most part they've disappeared – watch this space to find out if and when they come back online in the future! Secondly, the Specialist Games internet forums are no more. GW has granted permission for the discussion boards to be moved to a new host website and continue in the same vein as before, yet free from official GW monitoring. However, at the time of writing, technical problems are holding up the transfer, so there is currently no official resource for the discussion of the full range of Specialist Games. In this absence, game-specific internet forums have doubtless seen an upsurge in membership.

I'm writing this piece at the very end of 2008, and it was only a few weeks ago that I was at GW Head Offices, attending the 2008 Inquisitor Grand Tournament, organised by our own Robey Jenkins. I don't want to say too much about the event itself, as I'm hoping we'll carry a full report – with pictures and results – in Issue 4, but it was the best-attended event of its type yet, with some wonderful models taking part in fiendish player-derived scenarios, and it also had quite the range of GW celebrity guests dropping by! If you couldn't make it this year, keep a weekend in December 2009 free for the next one – I'm sure you won't regret it...



A teaser from the Recongregator Sourcebook – artwork by Paul Rannard.

Besides working hard to bring you *Dark Magenta*, we're also very pleased to be supporting an excellent fan endeavour. Over the space of 2008 and 2009, we're aiming to produce sourcebooks to cover the remaining major Inquisitorial philosophies, following on from Gav Thorpe's positively-received Thorian sourcebook. The first such book, covering the Recongregator faction, has been written by Dave Knowles, and is available for download right now (visit <http://www.darkmagenta.co.uk/magazine.html>), and contains wonderful background, fiction, rules, models and artwork. I'm sure you'll be impressed if you haven't seen it as yet, and we're hoping to release the next in the series – the Istvaanian sourcebook – around March or April 2009. The others have all been lined up, and will hopefully continue to be released steadily during the course of 2009.

So, this issue of *Dark Magenta* has gone all Xenos, I'm afraid. Our central article is a substantial treatise from Nathan Dowdell that contains a greatly extended examination of the alien Eldar in

Inquisitor, while Frank O'Hanlon gives us a brief look at the mysterious Demiurg. To counter the incursion of alien interlopers, Eoin Whelan returns to give us an addition to late issue's Adeptus Astartes rules, covering the Ordo Xenos Deathwatch in greater detail. On top of all that, we've got more from Inquisitors Goddard and Saussure as they battle across Agripinaa, as well as fan fiction, art and modelling to amuse and entertain you in equal measure.

Finally, I'm going to highlight the just-completed 2009 Conclave Modelling competition, which finished only a short while ago. The standard of entries has been high, and judging (with a highly-important VIP guest!) is underway. Hopefully, the wonder of the winning entries will be showcased next issue. Any comments about anything you read in this issue, feel free to get in contact at the usual address: editor@darkmagenta.co.uk.

Happy gaming!

Derek.

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The Deathwatch

By Eoin Whelan

Following last issue's explosive re-imagining of rules for Space Marines in *Inquisitor*, we asked Eoin to suggest Chapter-specific rules for the various chapters of the Adeptus Astartes. Because we were planning a xenos-related issue, we specifically asked Eoin for rules for the Deathwatch, tireless supporters and elite warriors of the Ordo Xenos themselves.

Also, as a treat for those of you who're converting your Space Marine characters to Eoin's new rules, you'll find a character sheet at the end of this issue, especially designed to keep track of the rules and effects of the Astartes implants your character possesses.

Deathwatch Kill-Teams are elite fighting units drawn from Space Marine Chapters all over the galaxy to form the alien hunting chamber militant of the Ordo Xenos. The Deathwatch are usually spread thin and will frequently operate in small groups or lead units of conventional troops, although the Chapter does maintain a fleet of strike cruisers and heavily-armed thunderhawks for rapid reaction to threats. Only the most dedicated and intelligent veterans are granted the honour of serving a tour of duty with the Deathwatch for it is inevitably perilous: the Deathwatch must be able to act on initiative in desperate situations and yet have the strength of faith to trust in the Inquisition's crusade to preserve mankind at any cost.

Interactions with the Inquisition

Deathwatch are by the very nature intertwined with the Ordo Xenos. Although nominally an autonomous military force, the Deathwatch often operate unquestioningly under the advice of a given Inquisitor. Despite this, Kill Team commanders are painfully aware of the dangerous paths Inquisitors must tread and should the fine line be crossed from radicalism to heresy, action must be taken swiftly and without hesitation. Many fallen Inquisitors have made the mistake of assuming the Deathwatch to be unthinking minions. Far from the doctrines of their parent Chapter, Deathwatch Space Marines often have to confront intense moral decisions: their faith in the Inquisition may be shattered or they may even tread the path of radicalism themselves.

To be selected to serve with the Deathwatch is an honour that also carries with it a stigma; Space Marines that return are rarely unchanged by the experience. Some, exposed to the horrific brutalities of the Inquisition may lose faith that the will of the Emperor is being executed by His servants, leading to a dangerous contempt for Imperial authority. Others find the experience has

opened their minds far beyond the black-and-white sermons of hatred their chaplains preach. Once returned to their parent Chapter, the Marine is treated with respect by his battle-brothers, yet usually suffers some degree of alienation.

Chapters that send Space Marines to serve with the Deathwatch select them for many different reasons. Veterans are often awarded a tour of duty as a mark of distinction and a chance to further serve the Emperor. Promising young warriors are sometimes offered opportunities to serve with the Ordo Xenos in order that they might benefit from the experience. Newly-promoted captains are also frequently selected as their first taste of leadership, returning to assume command of a battle company. Space Marines are not always selected purely as a reward, however. Chapter commanders may use the Deathwatch oaths to rid themselves of troublesome individuals who have displayed great valour yet show undesirable traits such as undue independence of thought or radical ideals. Such dangerous individuals can hardly be punished for their zeal yet their presence can be disruptive to the harmony of the brethren. Hence they are often shipped off to the Ordo Xenos where their ideas can't infect the rest of the Chapter. Should such an individual fall in the service of the Inquisition, he will be buried as a hero by his Chapter, no longer a problem to the Chapter command. Those that do return alive are often moulded by the experience into a force that can shape the entire future of the Chapter, with the potential to be the greatest heroes the Chapter has known – or to drag the Chapter into heresy and damnation.

Not all Space Marines return to their Chapters. Some individuals become essentially permanent members of the Deathwatch, forming the command infrastructure. Others have no Chapter to return to; a number of Scythes of the Emperor brothers have found their way into the service of

the Ordo Xenos where their experiences against the foul Tryanid are most beneficial.

Organisation

As the chamber militant of the Ordo Xenos, the relationship between the Deathwatch and the Inquisition is complex. The Deathwatch maintains its own chain-of-command and individual Marines serve a tour-of-duty with the Chapter, although there is no specified length for a tour, it can be as short as a specific mission or simply until released by the Ordo. Scattered fortresses throughout the galaxy serve as staging-posts for the Deathwatch, who stand ready to assist Inquisitors. While the protocol varies from area to area, most commonly each fortress has a staff of human serfs, astropaths and servitors all utterly loyal to the Ordo Xenos, often enforced by mind-wipes and indoctrinobotomies. Each citadel is overseen by a custodian, who liaises between the Inquisitors and the Librarians of the Deathwatch. Custodians are powerful individuals, often closely associated with a particular Inquisitor Lord of the Ordo Xenos. While it is almost unheard of for an Inquisitor to be denied Deathwatch assistance by a custodian, the request is often brought to the attention of the senior Inquisitors in the area, who may attend the Deathwatch with a full Ordo Xenos strike force under the auspices of an Inquisitor Lord. Such a strike force can be raised in a very short time and lends considerable might to the original Inquisitor – or can form the basis for a conclave should the Inquisitor be found to be unsound.

The organisation of the Deathwatch is necessarily very loose. Individual Marines are routinely dispatched on missions alone or attached to the retinue of an Inquisitor. More commonly, however, Deathwatch are formed into Kill Teams, usually comprising five to ten individuals, although there is no formal size and up to two dozen Deathwatch marines may be deployed. Alternatively, Ordo Xenos units made up from human warriors lead by a Space Marine are sometimes deployed when resources are scarce or to spread the inspirational leadership of the Deathwatch as much as possible. Kill Teams are usually commanded by a distinguished captain, an experienced commander able to draw the Space Marines, often from very disparate Chapters, together as a tight-knit unit. Only in rare cases are the Deathwatch assembled into larger formations, although detachments in excess of company size are occasionally assembled to combat dire threats.

Gene-seed

The gene-seed of a Deathwatch Marine will be of his parent Chapter, which is always of the highest quality. Chapters with inherited flaws will not send unstable brethren to the arms of the Inquisition: members from Chapters such as Space Wolves or Blood Angels are often exemplary and would be very unlikely to have preponderance for any traits such as the *Red Thirst* or *Curse of the Wulfen*. Similarly, Deathwatch Marines from Chapters with extreme ideologies would be among the most moderate of their Chapter. A Deathwatch Marine originally from the Black Templars, for example, might well retain a deep distrust and antipathy for psykers but this would not interfere with his duties in the service of the Inquisition should he have to interact with a sanctioned psyker such as an Inquisitor or Librarian.

Should an Adeptus Astartes fall in the service of the Inquisition, the Ordo Xenos makes every effort to reclaim the gene-seed and power armour to return to the Chapter. To fulfil this need, some Kill Teams include an apothecary to retrieve the gene-seed if possible. Chapters are often reluctant to give up specialists and the Ordo Xenos does retain Mechanicus tech-adepts trained and equipped to extract and preserve the gene-seed in order that it may be returned to the Chapter.

Characteristics

As Deathwatch are recruited from many different Chapters, their characteristics will depend on the gene-seed and training they have received. Deathwatch are usually experienced Space Marines (veteran or commander profiles) although younger battle-brothers with exceptional talent may also be recruited – emphasis is placed on Sagacity, Willpower and Leadership as much as combat prowess.

Appropriate Skills/Equipment

Deathwatch are armed and armoured with the best equipment available. They are often equipped with rare Mk VIII armour and the trademark weapon is a sickle-clip Mk IV boltgun with four additional six-bolt magazines (typically loaded with a variety of specialist bolt ammunition), a shot selector and range-finder targeter. Deathwatch Marines are often equipped with auspexes and other detection devices as well as more exotic equipment such as suspensors. Deathwatch teams have access to a wide variety of special weapons, the most common of which is the heavy bolter, typically equipped with hellfire

shells after their development following the first Tyranid invasion.

Rivalries

The Deathwatch are drawn from Chapters all over the galaxy and this does sometimes cause conflicts within Kill Teams although this is almost always restrained to prideful banter.

Dragonsbreath bolts

Unlike inferno rounds designed to set the target on fire, dragonsbreath bolts spray burning promethium over a wide area, making for a serviceable spray weapon. Dragonsbreath rounds must be loaded singly (taking one action) and

may not be fired on semi-auto. When fired, determine the point of impact as if it were a Blast weapon – instead of working out normal damage, resolve the effects of a hand flamer fired along the line of fire originating from the point of impact.

Vengeance rounds

Utilising rare and unstable plasma-core technology, vengeance rounds were specifically developed to breach the power armour of traitor marines. Firing a vengeance round is a risky action, if failed roll a D6 and consult the plasma malfunction table (see the Inquisitor rulebook for details). Vengeance rounds deal 3D10+2 damage.

The Inquisitor's History Book – The Legion of the Damned

It is inevitable that the Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes come regularly under the intense scrutiny of the Holy Orders. The legacy of the ancient Heresy remains and the effort of concealing the frequency with which Chapters choose to pursue their own agenda is a constant drain upon resources. However, few phenomena cause such concern as the strange case of the “Legion of the Damned”. The precise origin of this mysterious force is subject to debate. It is widely held that it represents the rump of the Fire Hawks, the last chapter of the Cursed 21st Founding, but if this is so then the truth is only more terrible, because sightings of space marines in distinctive black armour, emblazoned with flames and bones dates back at least as far as the Nova Terra Interregnum and fragmentary data has been cautiously dated even earlier.

The apparitions that form the Legion of the Damned possess the same superhuman constitution and powerful weapons as their conventional brothers, yet they also possess the ability to translate in and out of combat by an unknown method of teleportation. They radiate a detectable psionic aura of menace and have proven even more resistant to damage than normal Astartes brethren. A detailed analysis of limited pict-capture data suggests a limited “phasing” ability roughly analogous to that displayed by constructs of the Necrontyr race.

The true nature of the Legion, in all respects, is yet to be explained and efforts to capture one of their number for interrogation and study have, thus far, proven fruitless.



I am not a monster!

Part Three: Character and Profile

As this project has gone along, I've mentioned several times the idea that the model should come first and the character second. I added last issue the caveat to that idea that, as the model forms, to an extent so does the character. I defy anyone to experiment with different weapons and poses for a model-in-progress not to imagine *who* the person is wielding this weapon or pointing dramatically into the distance.

So to that extent, I am happy to say that the two tend to evolve side by side. However, I would add that, however much you might imagine about a character's personality and origins as your build him, that's not the same thing as having a fully-formed character.

Now, I know that many people like to completely design their character, with weapons, equipment, armour, background, profile and abilities, in full before they so much as pick up a catalogue. Others are inspired by a picture of a model and use that to inspire their character design. I just can't do this. The model who's occupied my attention for the last two issues has inspired me in many ways and I have a strong feeling for who he is, but, as I sit down to write this article, I have no idea how strong or fast or smart he'll be. I don't know what abilities he'll have. I don't know where he was born and I don't know what he's doing in the Imperium of Man. He's just a model.

But *at least he's a model*. And, as I've often been heard to say, if you've got a model without a character then you're a lot closer to being able to play a game than you are if you've got a character without a model. So, with that said, let's take a look at him again.

Profile

It may surprised people to know that I start with the profile. But I find it a good way to flesh out the character in some detail without being too specific. It's like a sketch of a portrait, that shows the general outline of the person (or monster) behind it.

WEAPON SKILL – I want him to be competent, but not too competent. That eviscerator will do serious damage to an opponent and if he's too



good, he'll unbalance the game. Moreover, he's a big lad and I feel that he probably relies on his fearsome appearance to give him an advantage over those smaller than he is. So I'm going to give him a WS of 57. That means he's got plenty of scrapping experience, but not much finesse and a properly-trained fighter should be able to avoid his attacks and get a few back at him.

BALLISTIC SKILL – He's got a flame pistol, which suggests that he's not much worried about shooting straight. But on the other hand, I want him to be able to throw those knives! I'm going to give him a fairly high BS. This won't have much affect on his flame-pistol, but it will mean he gets to surprise opponents with a throwing knife and it suggests a deeper level of intelligence that's part of how I've seen this character from the start. His BS will be 68.

STRENGTH – He looks strong and he is strong. He needs a Strength of 75 in one hand to wield that eviscerator, so I'm going to give him a S of 150.

TOUGHNESS – In a nod to his trollish origins, I'm already planning to give him the Regeneration ability, and he needs to be hard to put down – but not as tough as he is strong. So I'm going to give him a T of 82.

INITIATIVE – Those short legs and that sizeable stomach are going to mean he's not your fastest of movers. But I don't want him to a Speed 3



lummoX. 50 is the lowest his Initiative can be and still give him a Speed of 4, so that's going to be his Initiative.

WILLPOWER – He's not a psyker and although he's intelligent, I feel like he's always fighting to escape a mind that's at least part-beast. I've always seen Willpower as the "human side" of a person's brain, though, so I'm going to give him the benefit of the doubt and a WP of 62.

SAGACITY – Like I said, he's smart. But he's not technical. Look at his clothes for heaven's sake! He likes his flamer because it's simple to maintain and use and he probably needs someone else to help him to look after his eviscerator. His Sagacity will be an unimpressive 58.

NERVE – If Willpower is the "human side", then Nerve is the "animal" side. Easily startled by loud noises, even when his reason tells him there's nothing to fear, his Nerve is a paltry 35.

LEADERSHIP – He can call upon deep reserves of experience and discipline to help himself overcome his natural animal nervousness. He's also had experience of leading mutants and other outcasts and will have the *Leader* ability (albeit modified). His natural leadership is 68.

So, what have we got here? A smart leader, hiding his natural cunning beneath an impression of size and strength. But also a mind at war with itself: the human and the beast constantly battling for control. This leads us nicely into the next part...

Abilities

Abilities can make or break not only a character but also a game. I've heard the mournful cry of "oh, I forgot he had..." so many times, be it a forgotten psychic power or a neglected True Grit, if we laden our characters with too many abilities, we'll never make full use of all of them and our games and enjoyment will suffer. So I'm going to pick three abilities for my mutant leader.

The first, obviously enough, is going to be *Leader*. But I'm going to modify it, so that it only applies to other mutants on his side. "Straights" aren't about to be inspired by the example of such a malformed example of the race.

The second has also already been mentioned: *Regeneration*. Apart from anything else, I tend to see this power as conferring a longer-than-natural

lifespan that will allow me to knit his existence in with my other long-lived characters.

Finally, I'm going to represent his animal nature with *Frenzy* but, like *Leader*, I'm going to modify it so that he becomes subject to *Frenzy* only after he is injured. At the start of his turn after any round in which he is injured, he must take a Willpower test, with a negative modifier equal to the total amount of damage he received in the previous round. If failed, he is subject to *Frenzy*. He will recover automatically in the *recovery phase* but must test again each time he is injured.

Equipment

A lot of people think that equipment is obvious. You look at the model, write down what you see and the job's done. But in fact, there can be a lot more to it than that. If a character has a lasgun, what pattern is it? If he has a pistol, does he have any special ammunition? If he has pouches, what's in them? If he's wearing robes, does he have armour underneath them?

But the first part is pretty easy: our mutant has a hand flamer and an eviscerator. I suppose I could just make it a chainsword, but "eviscerator" is such a lovely word it seems a shame to miss a chance to say it as often as possible.

"He's going to attack you with his *eviscerator*!"

Oh, yes.

But he's also got that fuel pack on his belt, so I'm going to double the number of shots he can take with his hand flamer from 4 to 8, although he's obviously not carrying a reload. He's also got his hand flamer chained to his wrist, so he can't drop it in the unlikely event that he's shot in the arm and fails a Strength test.

Then there's that pair of throwing knives. But they aren't regular throwing knives, let's be fair, here. These are Monster throwing knives. So I've amended their Accuracy to -10 and made their Damage 2D6.

Next, there're the grenades and pouches. He's got three frag grenades and two krak grenades, which are pretty standard. But I've decided that the flasks on his belt are a Fabian-style fire bomb and a smoke grenade. Handy! Other than that, I think he's got enough kit, so the rest of his pouches just contain his next meal.

Next, there's his bionic eye. Tempting as it was to include a built-in weapon or gunsight, I just couldn't see some backstreet medic installing something that clever for our renegade mutant. So I made it a plain average bionic eye.

Finally, I took a good look at his clothes and decided that there was no way they could pretend to be armour of any sort. On the other hand, though, he does look like his skin is pretty scaly, so I decided that he'd have 2 armour points on all locations to represent his natural mutant hide.

So he's finished, right? Well, you might think so. His character sheet, which you can find at the

end of this article, is certainly nearly finished. But there's one essential empty field that needs to be filled. But let's put that to one side for the time being and look, instead at his background.

Background

We've already established that he's a mutant leader at war with his inner beast, with a wily cunning and obvious physical prowess. It's also been hinted – through that fire bomb – that he's perhaps got contact with the notorious mutant emissary, Fabian. So with that in mind, let's take 250 words or so to flesh him out:

When the infamous Emissary Fabian vanished from the Baphomet system, it was thought that his threat had been ended for good. But whilst Fabian reappeared again, many light years away, matters on Baphomet had not yet reached their conclusion. A new leader rose up in the wastelands, who led a series of surgical commando strikes against Northern Federation industrial sites, whilst leaving the Southern Congress untouched. Accusations of Southern sponsorship of this new mutant terrorist were quick to rise from the North and the planet's largest continent teetered on the brink of civil war.

Only the intervention of Inquisitrix Kang-Ju Ki prevented open hostilities as she led a lightning raid upon the wasteland headquarters of the outcast terrorists. Her elite team of mercenaries cut the heart from the resistance and Ki revealed the mutants' plans to plunge the world of Baphomet into anarchy.

But the new leader of the mutants eluded capture, apparently disappearing into the depths of Baphomet's unforgiving deserts. Inquisitrix Ki departed and peace – of a kind – reigned on Baphomet once more. But as Ki charted a precisely-calculated course ahead of the bow-wave of Hive Fleet Leviathan, a trend of mutant insurrections was noted by those who monitor such things: a trend that matched with astonishing clarity a similar rise in genestealer cult activity.

No investigation into this phenomenon has yet been authorised, but there are those who say that the unconventional inquisitrix has acquired a shadowy new ally in her risky strategy to divert the path of the ravenous Tyranids...

You'll notice that I like to leave my background deliberately vague and suggestive rather than explicit. This leaves plenty of "wiggle room" for fitting my characters into the on-going plot and crossed paths of the characters of my regular opponents and allows me to flesh out the history and origins in the course of the gameplay rather than before the model even hits the table.

But what's his name!

Well spotted! I'm yet to give my monstrous new mutant a name, of course. But that's where you lot come in, because it's COMPETITION TIME!

Write to the editor at the usual address with your suggestion for our mutant rebel's name. We'll pick the best one and the lucky winner will receive the model and character sheet as a prize! That's right, I'm giving him away! So get brainstorming and write in. One entry per person, please. No correspondence... judges' decision final... etc etc.

CHARACTER SHEET

Name:

	WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld	Speed I/20+1
Starting:	57	68	150	82	50	62	58	35	68	4
Current:										

Ranged Weapons

Weapon	Type	Range	Firing Mode	Accuracy	Damage	Shots	Reload	Weight
Hand flamer	Pistol	(15)	Flame	-	2D6	8	6	25
Throw/g knives	Thrown	E	Single	-10	2D6	1	X	10
Frag grenade	Thrown	E	Area - 3yds	Blast - 4	D10	1	X	5
Krak grenade	Thrown	E	Area - 1/2yd	Blast - 6	3D6	1	X	5

Close Combat Weapons

Weapon	Reach	Damage	Parry Penalty
Eviscerator	3	2D10+2	-20

Special Abilities & Psychic Powers

Leader*, Frenzy**, Regeneration

Equipment, Reloads, etc

Average bionic eye, fire bomb, smoke bomb, three frag grenades, two krak grenades, two throwing knives

Game Record (Shots fired, injury effects, etc)

Damage

Consciousness (T/2): Injury Total: Base Injury Value T/10

41

8

Knockback (S/10):

15

System shock (T/5):

16

96-100
HEAD
Armour: 2
Damage
L H S A C

36-50
RIGHT ARM
Armour: 3
Damage
L H S A C

81-95
CHEST
Armour: 2
Damage
L H S A C

51-65
LEFT ARM
Armour: 2
Damage
L H S A C

Right Hand
Carrying

66-80
ABDOMEN
Armour: 2
Damage
L H S A C

Left Hand
Carrying

01-15
RIGHT LEG
Armour: 2
Damage
L H S A C

31-35
GROIN
Armour: 2
Damage
L H S A C

16-30
LEFT LEG
Armour: 2
Damage
L H S A C

Recovery: Successful Toughness test reduces damage D3 (+1 for every 10 Toughness over 50).

Bleeding: D3 to injury total at end of every turn.

Eldritch Raiders

A Look at the Ways of the Eldar
by Nathan Dowdell

In this, the first and longest part of what we hope will become the seminal treatment of the Eldar for *Inquisitor*, you'll find a detailed background of the race, an explanation of the various sects and racial groups and some starting points for players to give their existing Eldar characters traits and abilities that really capture the essence of this enigmatic alien race.

EXPLANATIONS or 'WHY THE ELDAR ARE THE WAY THEY ARE TODAY'

Authorization Kappa -
Prime Access Xenos 14

Subject 428a-Eld-9x
Recovered from Corsair
Frigate des. "Talon of
Woes"

Notes:

1) Bionic is alien
in origin.
Initial consult
with Archmagos
K_____ confirms
psychoconductive
qualities of the
material used.
Inquisitor R_____
states that item
is primitive by
Eldar standards.

2) Degenerate
decorative im-
plants seen above
and below left eye
may possess sens-
ory enhancement
qualities.

Notes:

3) Facial scarring
conforms to no known
Eldar ritual. Poss.
inflicted in battle?
Trophy of prowess?

Notes:

4) Age of individual
indeterminate, but
Inquisitor R_____ has
suggested in excess of
four of five centuries
from cranial protru-
sions.

5) Ritual tattoo on
forehead poss. "Fire
Dragon"? Indicates
former service with
Eldar expeditionary
forces of unknown
craftworld.

6) Aural jewel of
uncertain application.

Subject was en-
gaged in single
combat in the
course of ship-to-
ship operations in
the region of New
Eden, Vanixis
Sector, Segmentum
Tempestus. Lac-
erations at neck
typical of chain-
sword injury.
Distinctive tear-
pattern suggests
weapon of Inquis-
itor M_____. He
denies involve-
ment.

The Fall of the Eldar

A cataclysm unlike any in all of recorded history, The Fall, as it is simply known, devastated an entire culture in a single night, tearing the Eldar race asunder as a God was born.

For tens of millions of years, the Eldar Empire had ruled the stars, unchallenged by any species. Their long lives were bountiful ones,

yielding great feats of scholarship, art, science and warfare as the Eldar strove to reach perfection in any task or sphere of life. Their minds were keen, their senses sharp, and their lust for fulfilment, and their satisfaction from achieving it, was unmatched by any other race. Across an Empire that spanned the known galaxy, the Eldar could want for nothing, as all their needs were filled by automaton-labourers, leaving them to spend their considerable lifespan doing nothing less

than fulfilling their every desire, mastering every art, delving into the depths of every science, and honing their bodies to every peak of physical ability. For the uncounted millennia after the Eldar Empire reached its peak, no Eldar asked "Why?" Instead, the only question asked was "Why not?"

As time passed, the Eldar pushed deeper into these activities, eschewing the rest of the galaxy in pursuit of personal pleasure. No lore was forbidden, no activity taboo, and the once-utopian Eldar Empire was reduced to a husk of what it once was, filled with the ecstatic screams of the hedonists that now occupied it. Extremes became the norm, and no extreme was beyond reach. The notion of insanity fell into disuse, becoming ancient terminology no longer relevant to the modern Eldar. Amongst this hedonistic maelstrom, voices cried out. Many remembered the old ways, and uncounted thousands decried the ways that had gripped their kin. For some, this may have been a genuine feeling of panic and fear at what their people had descended to, but for as many others it may have been simply another extreme of perception and action. The truth is not known. Regardless, these critics of the new order fled the homeworlds, gathering what ships they could and taking their families to the farthest fringes of the galaxy, seeking the wilderness so they might live lives of honest toil and simple labour, undistracted by the pleasures of the flesh. This event was known as the Exodus, and its participants, the Exodites.

With the Exodites gone, Eldar society became more and more insular, finding greater depths of depravity to experience – for that was the only thing left that mattered: the experience. The act was now irrelevant, so long as it was new and fresh and exciting. Eldar blood ran freely in the streets, gangs and cults formed around concepts and abstract pursuits of enjoyment, and society crumbled further. From the stars themselves, another change came. Immense trade-ships, known as *Kionash*, or Craftworlds, plied their wares across the galaxy, trading with other races and with far-flung colonies and settlements. Such was their isolation that, when they returned home from their journeys, they were horrified at the sight of their worlds in ruins, burning with a thousand fires and stained with blood. As hurriedly as they were able, these Craftworlders gathered up their families and

what remained of their homes, and fled back into the depths of space, seeking to put as much distance between themselves and the insanity that gripped the core worlds. This process took millennia, and happened right up to the end.

In those last days, the galaxy itself felt the effects of Eldar hedonism. The Warp became tumultuous, churning with storms that isolated the previously-spreading empires and fiefdoms of Mankind from each other. The Eldar did not notice, for they no longer cared for anyone but themselves, and travelled across the stars by means of the Webway, an ancient network of warp-tunnels first created by the Old Ones in ancient days, and expanded upon by the Eldar as their Empire grew. But, regardless of what the Eldar knew, there was something sleeping within the Warp.

The Eldar soul is more powerful than that of almost any other creatures, and considerable psychic potential rests within each Eldar mind, requiring only training to unleash. Within the Warp itself, their minds remain awake, conscious of themselves and their surroundings. This potency, combined with the hedonistic tendencies of the Eldar, had forced the souls of the dead to coalesce, gathering around the core worlds like a malicious cloud, dreaming like some slumbering beast. Many Eldar knew of this – a cult had sprung up amongst those more attuned to the Warp's tides, and the Eldar were soon celebrating the birth of a new age; an age in which the Eldar would worship a God crafted in their own image.

As the last Craftworlds arrived and began gathering refugees, the event known as the Final Night started. Mass sacrifices were planned across the homeworlds, as offerings to this new and powerful God they were creating. An event of merrymaking to surpass all that had come before was begun all across what remained of the Empire, revelry to usher in this new age. When it happened, it changed the Eldar forever.

In an instant, their God awoke, and took Her first breath. Countless trillions of Eldar died in a single moment, along with uncounted seers and psykers from other races, as their souls were torn from their bodies and consumed by this new entity as it emerged from a hungry, dream-filled sleep. The mass transfer of souls

being forced into the Warp caused reality to shudder, and where the Eldar were most concentrated – their homeworlds – the strain was too great. Reality collapsed around those homeworlds, tearing like a cloth stretched too far. As reality pulled away, the seething energies of the warp flooded through, forever changing those worlds and all who still remained upon them.

For those that survived, it was little better. The remaining Eldar all watched as friends, family and loved ones dropped to the floor, their eyes dull and lifeless. Those still left upon the homeworlds looked up to see their once-sapphire skies turned crimson as the warp intruded upon the world around them, and they fled. Feeling the hunger of their new god upon their souls, a gnawing, whispering sensation that would forever haunt all Eldar, they rushed into the Webway, seeking respite. It was sufficient to reduce the feeling, but it could not be blocked completely – not there, at least.

No Eldar speaks in any depth about The Fall, and only amongst their own kind do they speak of it at all. It was a time of great strife and destruction, and, paradoxically, they both force themselves to remember it, yet wish they could forget it; for all that it did to them, all that it represents. The legacy left by The Fall is all around them – the shattered remnants of a once-glorious Empire, the haunted looks in the faces of their kin, and the great crimson rent in the fabric of existence that lays where once the jewel of the Eldar Empire stood. That gaping hole is infamous to all beings in this galaxy, and is known now, and forever more, as the Eye of Terror.

The Toil of the Exodites

Of the Exodites, little is told. Their escape was only somewhat successful, as many were slain by marauding Orks, Humans or even the native beasts of the worlds upon which they landed. Those few that survived were in just as poor a predicament, but they endured. Casting aside all notions of their history, the legacies of their ancestors and the luxuries of modern existence, they set about working the land, taming livestock and growing crops. There was an honesty in their new lives, a simplicity that hardened them, made them strong. Written lore was minimal, with knowledge passed down by word of mouth or by apprenticeship, and eventually the Exodite

colonies began to stabilise. What remained of their technology was turned towards the goals of survival, agriculture and defence, but they still relied more on their own bodies and minds than they did on technological marvels.

On many of these worlds, great herds of reptilian animals dwelt within the wilderness, and many of those creatures were traded with neighbouring worlds, until the sight of the Dragon was common to almost all Exodite worlds. Though fearsome in name and myth, the dragons seen amongst the Exodites vary from large, docile herbivores, to swift raptors, to airborne predators. All can be tamed by the Exodites, and they use them as beasts of burden, as war-animals, and as food for their tables.

The Exodites distrust the rest of the Eldar, seeing them as too close in viewpoint to those who caused The Fall. That said, they often accept the aid of, and trade with, the Eldar of the Craftworlds, but no non-Exodite is permitted to linger amongst them for long, for fear of corrupting the younger, more impressionable Eldar with notions of exploration and excitement.

The Intricacies of the Path

Though they were not the first to decide that self-denial would be the salvation of their people, the Eldar of the Craftworlds were those who embraced it most rigidly. The Exodites denied their past, but placed no restrictions upon their future, content merely to eke out an existence upon distant worlds, far from the epicentre of the cataclysm. The Craftworlders established a far more complex, far more restrictive way of life.

In the opening days and weeks after The Fall, many Craftworlds were pulled in to the advancing edge of the Eye of Terror, trapped because they strayed near to the homeworlds too long. Those that weren't, found themselves unsure of what to do next.

A warrior, known only as Asurmen, established a system of roles and castes, referred to as 'The Path', which would define how the Eldar of the Craftworlds lived their lives and explored their bodies and minds. At the centre of the Path system was the Path of Khaine – the Warrior Path, which provided skilled warriors to the Eldar cause in this time of desperation. From this foundation, he

trained five others – Maugan Ra, Jain Zar, Arhra, Feugan, and Baharroth, who each went on to found their own Way within that Path, each choosing to focus upon a different aspect of warfare.

However, the Path itself is not restricted wholly to that of warriors. For every facet of life, there is a Path to accompany it, and within those broad facets are countless specialisations, known as Ways. An Eldar may walk any Path he desires, and any Way within that Path, for as long as he or she wishes it. Once that Eldar has seen, experienced and learned enough from that Path, they turn their back upon it, choosing to walk another Path. In this way, the limitless potential of the Eldar mind is controlled and given structure to learn, while preventing the all-consuming hedonism that destroyed what came before.

The Path is not without risks, however. Once upon a Path, an Eldar may find himself called further along it than most. As time progresses, they find it more and more difficult to consider anything else, and may eventually become trapped, or lost, upon the Path, unable to leave it for as long as they live. The most infamous of these lost are the Exarchs – exemplars of the Path of the Warrior, they cannot choose to be anything less than Warriors, and can no longer view the world through anything but the eyes of a soldier – seeing cover where others see forests, and killing grounds where another might see a flowerbed or field.

As a result, Craftworld life is highly ritualised, and mental discipline is honed to a point where all Craftworlders are able to restrain and separate their darkest, warlike impulses from the rest of themselves. It is through a series of rituals – led and officiated by the Exarchs and Warlocks of the Craftworld – that those impulses are unleashed, allowing the Eldar to engage in battle without remorse or mercy. Key to this transition is the helm, which serves as a subconscious shield between their peace-minds and their war-selves. Foolish Craftworlders have been traumatised by the horrors of battle by merely removing their helm, undoing the rituals that desensitise them to those horrors.

Both Exodites and Craftworlders share one unifying element – *Carracénad*, or Soulstones. Worn upon the breast from birth, Soulstones

represent salvation for these kindreds, a means to avoid the unending torment that would accompany death were they allowed to truly depart from this world. Each stone is bound to its owner, and will capture his soul at the moment of death, imprisoning them in crystal rather than permit them to be devoured. These soulstones are then carried to sacred resting places, where the immortal soul is allowed to commune with others like it – either in the wraithbone Infinity Circuits of the Craftworlds, or in the myriad World Spirits of the Exodites. Without this protection, an Eldar is naked to the warp, unshielded and vulnerable to She Who Thirsts, and no Eldar will relinquish his soulstone under any circumstances.

The Thirst of the Druchii

Those who lingered upon the homeworlds to the last moments were forever changed. Though unable to relinquish their hedonism, so ingrained was it into their psyches, they knew that they could not survive alone, not when confronted with She Who Thirsts. Led by the rallying cry of those too young for The Great Enemy to truly dominate, many of whom had been spared from sacrifice only by a matter of moments, the survivors fled into the Webway, knowing that it was separate from the Warp and would shield them.

Shield them it did, but not completely. Like all Eldar, they would forever feel a gnawing hunger in their consciousnesses that was not their own, a whispering temptation in the depths of their mind, slowly tugging at their soul. Unlike their kin aboard the Craftworlds and on distant Exodite colonies, they did not have the means to create soulstones, and would be forced to exist without their protection. To counteract this, they sunk to depths the likes of which have forever



segregated them from all other Eldar – they began devouring the souls of others.

They discovered that, though their souls would slowly be leeched away from them by She Who Thirsts, they could fill that gaping void with the essences of others, of all species. Raiders were sent out to capture prime specimens from all walks of life and all species. While most would be slain within days, if not hours, of their arrival into the Webway, those who showed particular spirit or were otherwise interesting were spared to be experimented upon, or even forced into the fighting pits that were becoming increasingly common.

Their settlement within the Webway grew over time, the first spires forming the core of what became a vast and disturbing cityscape, forever lacking sunlight or the glitter of stars, bathed in the unnatural twilight of the Webway itself. This dark city became known as Commorragh, and its inhabitants, the Druchii.

As the decades and centuries have passed, Druchii society has become increasingly complex and dangerous. Plots and schemes for supremacy, and thus the vastest banquets of souls and the choicest slaves, are abundant in the upper reaches of the Dark City, while slaughter gangs, drug cults and an assortment of fellowships devoted to all manner of petty indulgences fill the wastes at the bottom. Their raids through the myriad capillaries and tunnels of the Webway lead them to all manner of worlds, and swiftly-dealt death and destruction is wrought, with dozens, even hundreds or thousands of slaves carried screaming to their doom. They even go so far as to war with their own kin, lashing out at the Craftworlders and Exodites in a mixture of misplaced anger, twisted arrogance and hungry lust, for an Eldar soul burns brighter than almost any other mortal soul, and they command a high price in the Dark City.

The Freedom of the Outcasts

Many find the Exodite colonies to be dull compared to the allure of the stars. Others seek escape from the rigid constraints of the Path. Yet more seek respite from the perpetual horrors of Commorragh. All these are known as Outcasts, Eldar unbound to any but themselves.

To the Craftworlders, they are seen as misguided, foolhardy and reckless, willing to endanger themselves and others to selfishly sate their own wanderlust and passion. To the Exodites, they are a threat to their way of life, tempting the inexperienced youth of each colony with notions of adventure and excitement. To the Druchii, they are exiles, betrayers, abandoning their birthright and turning their backs upon the true nature of the Eldar. But in all cases, this distrust, fear or hatred is tempered by a knowledge that Outcasts are useful. They make contact with mankind and other races, finding new grounds to exploit in trade or plunder. They find treasures and ruins lost to their people, reuniting Eldarkind with its ancient legacies. They move silently, striking down the enemies of Eldarkind, acting as scouts, assassins and spies for their kin.

No two outcasts are alike. Each one seeks a different means of expression, or to sate a different desire. Their skills are as varied as their motivations, with many taking to the stars in graceful craft, or moving between worlds through the Webway, surviving on their wits and talents. That isn't to say that there are no specific distinctions, but they are often vague, and the Eldar lifespan is such that many Outcasts may have been counted amongst two or three of these distinct groups.

What does bind them together is their eventual fate. Outcasts end their 'careers' in one of two ways – through death, on some forgotten rock, or drifting in space, or through returning home, and rejoining the lives of their brethren, made wiser and wearier because of their travels.

Of all the known kindreds of Outcast, two are better known than most, perhaps due to renowned examples, or because of their purpose. Rangers, most often former Craftworlders or Exodites, wander away from home, but retain their loyalties, choosing to perform their exile in a manner that benefits their families and friends, seeking lost treasures, hidden enemies and new pastures, or otherwise acting at the behest of the leaders of their distant communities. The most skilled of these regain a measure of their former discipline and stoicism, becoming Pathfinders.

Corsairs, rather than being a singular distinction, are in fact a vague grouping. Any unaligned Eldar who engages in piracy, space exploration, trade or similar spacefaring activities can potentially be seen as a Corsair, not least because such outcasts are likely to be capricious, unpredictable beings, as quick to slay in cold blood as he is to show mercy to his enemies. Some Corsairs are in fact shamed and exiled Fleetmasters and Craftmasters from the Craftworlds, banished for some indiscretion or foolish decision. Most famous of these is Yriel of Iyanden, who was banished for his overzealous and overeager pursuit of a Chaos fleet, leaving the Craftworld vulnerable, only to return in a blaze of glory when the Tyranids assailed his home.

But they are but the tip of the iceberg, and Outcasts are as varied as they are elusive.

COMMON ELДАР TRAITS

Because the Inquisitor rules are written primarily with humans and near-humans in mind, profile adjustments alone will not properly depict the abilities of the Eldar. As a result, Eldar have a number of special abilities which are common to most, if not all of their species, representing those traits that cannot be represented by having a different profile.

Catfall

All Eldar have a natural grace and fluidity of movement that makes even the most graceful human look like a clumsy, awkward oaf. Their smooth, flowing, yet startlingly quick motions allow them to perform feats of agility beyond those of Humans or Orks. Those who choose to hone these abilities can become acrobats of incredible skill, but even the most untried of Eldar is lithe and light on his feet.

All Eldar have the *Catfall* talent, as described in the Inquisitor rulebook. Certain kinds of armour and equipment can encumber their slender frames, however, and prevent them from gaining the normal benefits. This will be noted in the entries of the items in question.

Innately Psychic

The vast majority of sentient beings are, to some degree or another, psychic. In the vast majority of cases – namely humanity – this psychic potential isn't great enough to manifest itself in anything more than occasional luck, being a keen judge of

character, or something equally benign and inconsequential. The comparatively 'blunt' Tau demonstrate fewer and fewer of these traits, and seem to have both a very low natural potential for psychic activity, and a very small variance in that potential.

The Eldar, on the other hand, are all psychic to a degree where it takes only training and willpower to develop their innate gift into a potent ability. Every single Eldar, be they a child of less than a century, or a long-lived warrior of several millennia, possesses the capacity to become a psyker.

In those who do not choose to develop their powers, this capacity manifests itself in minor, but still noticeable ways. Almost all Eldar technology is based on psychic engineering, as a result of this race-wide talent, and most interactive devices operate on mental impulse instead of mechanical input. An Eldar need not pull a trigger, press a button or operate a lever – he merely needs to grasp the control surfaces and will it to act. Beyond that, is their language; a complex, flowing tongue where subtle body language, the tiniest inflection and the emotional presence of the speaker are just as important as the words themselves. Being able to communicate empathically, projecting their emotions onto the environment or into the minds of their comrades is an integral part of this complex language. Indeed, many Eldar would rather use a cruder, simpler language like Imperial Gothic than debase the Lam-Eldannar by omitting parts of it – it would be no different to the act of trying to speak Gothic without using vowel sounds. Of all the abilities possessed by the Eldar, this is the most commonly developed upon, and it is common for Seers and Aspect Warriors to develop it into a lower form of telepathy, allowing them to communicate through mind-speech in a manner similar to the way Humans and Tau use electronic communications devices.

Minor telekinesis is a common enough ability, though far from ubiquitous, and in most cases only operates at distances of a few inches, or with objects to which the Eldar is closely attuned, such as seer runes and family heirlooms.

Most of these have no real in-game effect, except the ability to empathically communicate. An Eldar character can attempt

to project simple concepts – primarily emotional states – to characters they can see who are willing to receive such projected feelings, and who are either other Eldar, or psykers. Over distances, this requires a Willpower test, with a penalty equal to the distance in yards. Projecting these concepts to a touched and receptive ally requires no test. This does not count as a true psychic power, and thus has no risks of psychic overload – the ability disturbs the warp in such minuscule ways that it barely registers to those who can perceive such things.

However, for the purposes of items, creatures and abilities that detect or otherwise interact in specific ways with psychic creatures, the Eldar are considered to be psychic – their power may be restrained and untapped, but it is still there, and it is considerable. Thus, a Psy-tracker (or the Psy-track psychic power) will pick out an Eldar character as being a Psyker, a Psycannon will cause double damage (after deductions for armour), and he could, in theory, wield a Force weapon (though such things are deemed too crude and unreliable for Eldar use – they make use of their own equivalents). He would not be affected by any effect which has a chance of removing a psychic power (such as Psyk-out grenades or the Banishment power), however, as he doesn't actually have psychic powers. Further, such is the potency of the Eldar soul that the soul-sight of Daemons can detect them far more readily than they can the flickering sparks of humanity or the dull light of the Tau. As such, Daemoniac characters gain a +40% bonus on awareness tests to detect Eldar characters.

Examples of how these rudimentary powers can be developed into more useful minor abilities are described below.

Keen Senses

The senses of the Eldar are phenomenally keen. Their eyes can operate in almost total darkness with little disadvantage, and can spot even minute details with startling regularity. Their hearing is such that they can pick out distinct sounds at much greater distances than humans, and their senses of touch, taste and smell can distinguish between far more subtle stimuli than is the case with humans.

All Eldar have the *Night Sight* exotic ability, as described in the *Sons of Khaine* article from

Exterminatus Magazine. Further, Eldar characters can hear sounds from 50% further away than normal (this increases to 100% further with a successful awareness test). For example, a pistol shot can be heard 50 yards away normally, but an Eldar character could hear it from 75 yards away, or 100 yards with a successful awareness test. The remaining sensory acuity of the Eldar is covered with their high Initiative values.

Lightning Reflexes

Just as the Eldar are quick and graceful of body, so are their minds and reactions faster than those of men. The Eldar mind operates at bewildering speed, processing thoughts and stimuli at more than twice the speed of a human mind, and experiencing those thoughts with a clarity and intensity that makes humans look like dullards and simple-minded fools by comparison.

All Eldar have the *Lightning Reflexes* talent, as described in the Inquisitor rulebook. Note that *Lightning Reflexes* is currently under review, so please check with the GM as to which version is being used.

Metabolism

The heart – or nearest equivalent – of an Eldar at rest beats at a rate of between 140 and 160 beats per minute – about twice that of a human. While this may be strictly necessary for their physiology, it does mean that they bleed much faster than humans do. An Eldar suffering from Bleeding (see page 48 of the Inquisitor rulebook) adds 1d6 points to the Eldar's injury total each round, instead of 1d3.

However, a good portion of Eldar physiology is controlled by the Eldar himself – through meditation and concentration, the Eldar can speed the healing of his own injuries. When spending actions to recover from his own injuries (as opposed to the normal recovery attempts made each turn), an Eldar may use his Willpower instead of his Toughness to determine whether or not the action succeeds. Use toughness as normal when attempting to help another Eldar heal his wounds – true Eldar medicine is based on psykers aiding a patient who is in this healing trance, rather than the comparatively crude methods employed in human or Tau medicine.

EXOTIC ABILITIES

Psychic Talents

Mind-Speech

The simplest form of Telepathy and a development of the empathic projections common to most Eldar, Mind-Speech allows the Eldar to communicate more complex concepts than basic emotions. This talent is common amongst both Seers and Warriors – the former using it as a basis for greater development of their powers, and the latter using it in the same way Human and Tau forces use Vox-casters and Commlinks. Mind-Speech itself is required before even attempting to speak many of the more complex dialects of Lam-Eldannar.

This functions in a similar way to the empathic communication described under the *Innately Psychic* ability noted above, but more information can be communicated in this fashion. Over distances, this requires a Willpower test, with a penalty equal to the distance in yards. Projecting these concepts to a touched and receptive ally requires no test. This does not count as a true psychic power, and thus has no risks of psychic overload – the ability disturbs the warp in such minuscule ways that it barely registers to those who can perceive such things. Equivalent information to a sentence of speech (about 5-10 words) is permitted as a single action.

This communication is silent, though the momentary mental link can be sensed by any Psyker within a distance equal to the distance between the sender and the recipient. The *Mind Scan* psychic power – or similar abilities – used on either sender or recipient reveals the contents of the most recent psychic message.

Characters with the *Telepathy* psychic power can engage in Mind-Speech without having to take this talent – the relatively mundane gift of Mind-Speech is almost a parlour trick for a true Telepath.

Minor Telekinesis

Instead of developing further into telepathy, a number of Eldar choose to instead hone their telekinetic potential. While with most Eldar this potential is barely noticeable – with a

range of maybe a yard if they concentrate – those who develop it can call objects towards them from somewhat further distances, and exert mild pressure with nothing but their minds. They cannot cause damage in this way, as the force they can exert is too insignificant to harm someone.

As an action, and with a successful Willpower test, an Eldar with this ability can manipulate an object within 5 yards. This is only light pressure, and is sufficient to call a single, one-handed weapon to his hand, tip a reasonably light object over, push an unlocked door open or shut, press a button, move a lever or switch, or something similarly minor. Depending on how intricate and delicate the task, the GM may choose to impose penalties on the Willpower test (say, if you're trying to pick a lock with this ability).

SKILLS AND TALENTS

The Seer Path

The Eldar have been manipulating the energies of the Warp for aeons, long before mankind ever became aware of their own psychic talents. All Eldar are, to a degree, psychic, and their capacity for use of this talent increases with practise and effort. The Seers of the Exodites, their Witches and Warlocks of the Craftworlds, and the Shadowseers of the Rillietann are all masters of their own chosen disciplines, each of which are based on concepts that have existed for millions of years.

To shield them from the ravaging energies of the Aethyr, the Eldar were taught how to control those energies through runes – tiny psychoreactive talismen that store and focus warp energy – allowing them to avoid dangerous surges and more safely control much greater amounts of psychic power. To this day, those traditions remain, and each seer learns scores of ancient runes before learning to craft his own, allowing him to wield powers more easily through foci attuned to his own mind.

The disciplines of the Eldar are not defined by effect as human powers are. Instead, instinctive groupings of power, referred to here as Aspects, based on the concepts controlled by their gods, separate the distinct powers, and the mindset of the Seer determines which powers come most easily to

him. The groupings represent those powers to which particular mindsets will be drawn.

Casting the Runes

All Eldar Seers will carry an assortment of runes. The bulk of these, irrespective of their shapes and sizes, are simple focus runes, used to aid the Seer in manipulating and directing his powers. The shapes and patterns of the runes are vital to the Seer, as each one keys to a specific emotion or abstract concept, allowing him to gather the 'components' of a power away from himself before combining and unleashing it. In the most potent of cases, this can mean that a power takes a long time to gather and unleash, but the method is far safer than channelling all that energy without aid.

All the Eldar powers listed below follow the same format as those powers listed in the Inquisitor rulebook. The rules for Runecasting described here do not change those, and can be used with any psychic power published using the standard format.

When using a psychic power, an Eldar Seer may choose to divide up the act of concentrating on and using the between a two or more rune clusters. The maximum number of clusters that may be used in this way is equal to the difficulty of the power, and that difficulty is divided between those clusters as the Seer sees fit. Thus, if a Difficulty 5 power may be divided into up to five rune clusters, each with difficulty 1, or into two difficulty 2 clusters and one of difficulty 1, or any combination where the total difficulty in all the clusters adds up to 5. Using a rune-cluster requires that the Seer is stationary for the duration of the casting, and rune-clusters cannot be used if the Seer is in close combat.

Each cluster is resolved as if it was a separate psychic power, applying all other relevant penalties and bonuses as normal. If the psychic test is successful, one part of the power is complete, and the Seer may repeat the process as many times as he requires to use all the rune clusters for that power. Should the test fail, then the effect of psychic overload is vastly decreased; the Seer is merely stunned for 1 turn for every 10% or part by which the test was failed as he loses control of the energies and disconnects himself from the runes, allowing the energy to disperse into the warp. Psychic powers used

in this manner are still risky actions, though the effects of failing such a risky action are also different: the rune cluster explodes, with an Area of 1 yard, a Damage of 1d3 and a Blast equal to the difficulty of that cluster. A seer is considered to be less than 1 yard away from any rune cluster he is using. In both cases, failure means that rune cluster must be restarted.

Once the final rune cluster of a power has been successfully used, the power takes effect. For powers which have effects based on the success of the psychic test, use the average amount by which the tests for each of the clusters were passed. Thus a power with three clusters, which were passed by 31, 18 and 4 have an average of 17.6, rounded up to 18, so the power counts as if it was passed by 18.

Maintaining persistent powers that were cast using runes follows the normal rules – once the effect has been generated, the Seer can maintain it easily.

Should an enemy psyker wish to Nullify a rune-cast power, he must first pass an initiative check to 'lock on' to the Seer's power – rune-cast powers are more difficult to detect, due to being diffuse and separated, as opposed to a single obvious mass as is the case with using a power normally. If this fails, then he may not attempt a nullification. A psyker may attempt to nullify each individual rune-cluster in this manner, so long as he is the target of the power itself.

The obvious benefits of rune-cast powers are that the Seer can choose to take his time over using a difficult power in order to have a greater chance of success, and possibly a greater end result as well, while being significantly safer than using a power normally. The obvious drawback is that using lots of rune clusters takes a long time. This means that an Eldar Seer can, given time, use much more potent powers than he might normally attempt, and use it more safely than a human might if attempting the same power. This makes Eldar Seers very effective in support roles, standing back and casting potent, far-reaching powers, while human psykers tend to be more inclined towards fast, unsophisticated and obvious powers.

Eldar Psychic Powers

In addition to the powers listed below, the Eldar are likely to use a number of powers with effects similar to those described in the core rulebook. In most cases, subtle or relatively simple effects – telepathy, telekinesis and detection are suitable to represent these common talents. Anything more overt or more potent is generally unsuitable, and an equivalent power from one of the following Aspects should be chosen instead.

ASPECT OF ASURYAN

The Aspect of Asuryan contains those powers connected to the concepts of nobility, leadership, resolve and the will to rule. Asuryan was the Eldar over-god, known as the Phoenix King, who was oldest of the gods and ruled them with his wisdom. As is fitting, then, the Eldar prize the qualities of patience, serenity and humble wisdom in their leaders.

The powers of Asuryan are thus ones which inspire, embolden and strengthen the wills of the Seer's allies.

Augment

Difficulty: 10 *Ranged*

The Seer's mind gathers energy from the warp, channelling it into the powers of another.

The Seer's mind gathers energy from the warp, channelling it into the powers of another. Pick another Eldar Seer within sight of the Seer. The target gains a bonus on their next psychic test equal to the amount by which this test was passed.

Embolden

Difficulty: 15 *Persistent*

The seer projects visions of victory and heroism into the minds of his comrades, inspiring them to greater bravery and valour.

This is a *persistent* power. All Eldar within a distance in yards equal to half the amount the psychic test was passed by gain a +20 bonus to Nerve while this power is in effect.

ASPECT OF CEGORACH

Cegorach – the Laughing God – is a being of deception, trickery and cunning, who weaves his plans and schemes across time in an effort to bring about the downfall of his enemies. His servants, the Harlequins, wander the

Webway at his direction, bringing both knowledge, and falsehood, depending on to whom they go.

The Aspect of Cegorach is most commonly wielded by the Shadowseers of the Harlequins, but its powers are known to a lesser degree by other seers. It contains those powers connected to deception and elusiveness, and are thus ones which confuse and beguile enemies.

Misdirection

Difficulty: 5 *Ranged, Persistent*

The Shadowseer reaches into the minds of his enemies, baffling them with psychic messages, preventing them from thinking clearly.

Select one or more enemy warriors within sight. Every additional warrior after the first increases the difficulty of this psychic power by 5. Any and all targets of this spell suffer a penalty to Initiative, Willpower and Sagacity equal to one-third of the amount by which the psychic test was passed, as their minds are bombarded with confusing images that disrupt concentration.

Veil of Tears

Difficulty: 10 *Persistent*

The Shadowseer pulls his presence from the thoughts of his enemies. Though their eyes may see him, their minds are blinded to his presence.

The Shadowseer and all allies within 12 yards of him are shrouded from the gaze of their enemies. While this power remains in effect, anyone attempting to spot or interact with someone protected by the power must spend an action to attempt an Awareness test at -40%, as if their entire bodies were hidden (which, in essence, they are). This Awareness test is modified by range and ambient conditions as normal. Characters with other means of detecting enemies – psychic powers, scanning devices, etc – or who are using senses other than sight to find their enemies suffer no specific penalties when using such devices, but any character attempting to fire blind at where he thinks the shrouded characters are resolves the shot at 1/5th normal BS, cannot benefit from aiming, and cannot score a placed shot.

ASPECT OF ISHA

Isha is the harvest-goddess from whom the Eldar are descended, and she is a powerful figure of mercy, protection and compassion in Eldar myth. The Aspect of Isha is one of healing, protection, nurturing and peace, and the strongest protective powers known to the Eldar come from this Aspect.

Defend

Difficulty: 5 *Persistent*

The seer projects a ward of psychic power, turning aside the attacks of the enemy. When used, this power conjures a shimmering wall of force that blocks incoming shots.

The psychic power creates an invisible wall, 1 yard in front of the Seer, moving with him while the power persists, always within the front arc of the Seer. The wall is 1 yard wide, plus an extra yard for every 10 by which the psychic test was passed, and as tall as it is wide.

The wall does not interfere with movement or line of sight, but it does count as cover, adding armour points equal to one-tenth of the Seer's Willpower score to every location, for any character stood on the warlock's side of the wall – the wall only protects from one direction.

Heal

Difficulty: 15

The seer's will reaches into the mind of a fallen comrade, aiding their recovery.

The Seer must touch the character he wishes to Heal, and may not use the power on himself. If the psychic test is successful, the recipient is treated as having just made a successful recovery action by himself (using his Willpower instead of Toughness if the character is Eldar, as described in the Metabolism rule), with a bonus to his Toughness or Willpower (as relevant) equal to half the Seer's Willpower.

ASPECT OF KHAINE

Kaela Mensha Khaine is the god of war and murder, representing wanton slaughter and violence, and it is from Khaine that all the dark and violent impulses of the Eldar race come. The Aspect of Khaine draws upon the warrior spirit, and contains those powers connected to anger, destruction and violence in all their

forms. Its powers, then, are most commonly wielded by the battle-ready Warlocks, who have already learnt to harness Khaine's anger in themselves, and who wield that wrath and hate as a weapon against their enemies.

Destructor

Difficulty: 10

The Warlock hurls forth a wave of searing rage and anger, made tangible and deadly by his power.

Destructor is a psychic bolt with the following profile:

Type	Range	Rate of Fire	Acc	Damage
Special	(35)	flame	-	3d6+4

Eldritch Storm

Difficulty: 25 *ranged*

The Seer conjures a crackling maelstrom of psychic power, a storm that blasts his foes with lightning and hurls them around as if they were toys.

Nominate a target point; the Storm extends D3+1 yards out from that point. Any character even partially within the area of effect must pass a Strength test (rolls of 96+ automatically fail) or is hurled 1d10 yards in a random direction and stunned for 1d3 turns.

Additionally, anyone within the area of effect suffers d3 hits to random locations, dealing 2d6 damage each.

Enhance

Difficulty: 15 *persistent*

The Warlock links his mind to that of his comrades, strengthening their unity of purpose and allowing them an array of differing perspectives. Because of this, the warriors think more swiftly, the speed of their minds combined by this power, and they become more capable combatants, both as a group and as individuals.

Nominate a number of allied Eldar characters equal to one-tenth of the Warlock's Willpower score, all of which must be within 12 yards of the Warlock. While this power remains in effect, all affected characters use the highest Weapon Skill and Initiative scores from amongst the group, and add +10 to those values. Note that this can increase the Speed of the characters affected.

Mind War

Difficulty: ½ Target's Willpower *ranged*

The Seer sends his thoughts forth, engaging the enemy in a battle of wills and thoughts.

Pick an enemy character within sight of the Seer. The victim suffers one level of injury to the head for every 20% or part that the Psychic Test is passed by. For example if the test was passed by 41%, this would result in three levels of injury to the victim's head – an Acute wound.

Strike

Difficulty: 20

The Warlock unleashes a crackling nimbus of psychic power which hurls around those nearby and wracks their mind with pain and despair. The Warlock's efforts shield his allies from the worst of the effects, but even they are cast aside by the untamed energy that emerges from the Warlock's mind.

Every character, enemy or ally, within 12 yards of the Warlock is immediately knocked prone. Allies suffer no further effects, but enemies are *stunned* for 1d6 turns. Enemy psykers may attempt a Willpower test at the start of their next turn to recover from this power sooner.

ASPECT OF KURNIOUS

Kurnous is the hunter god, who taught the Eldar much of stealth and the hunt. The Aspect of Kurnous concerns itself with powers of precision, concealment and surprise – though many of these concepts overlap with the Aspect of Cegorach, Kurnous' powers are tailored more for ambush than misdirection.

Conceal

Difficulty: 10 *persistent*

The Seer creates an area of shifting mists and dancing shadows which hide the Seer's allies from the enemy.

Any enemy attempting to shoot the Seer, or any ally within 12 yards of the Seer, suffers a penalty on his to-hit roll equal to the amount by which the Psychic Test was initially passed.

Entangle

Difficulty: 5

The Seer's mind reaches out and conjures semisolid vines that reach up from the ground and bind his foes, holding him fast with

psychic thorns and preventing his approach or his escape.

Nominate a point within 18 yards and line of sight. The effect of this power extends 1d3+1 yards from this point. All enemies within this area must immediately pass an Initiative test or be entangled by psychic vines. Any character that was running or sprinting during their previous turn is also tripped over and knocked prone, in addition to becoming entangled, if they fail their Initiative test. Entangled models may not spend any actions on movement for the next 1d3+1 turns.

Executioner

Difficulty: 20 *persistent*

The Seer projects a psychic image of himself, a shimmering doppelganger which fights with his mind. This image lingers only for a short while, striking at the enemy as if it were a tangible creature. Though the image is an illusion, the damage it causes is all too real.

Nominate a single enemy character. The Seer may make an immediate melee attack action against that character, resolved as normal (normal Weapon Skill, normal weapon damage, normal chance to parry or dodge for the target, etc), plus one additional attack action for every full 20% by which the psychic test was passed. Should an attack be parried, and the target make a successful counter-attack, the Seer is unaffected, though the power's effect is ended, even if there were attack actions remaining. Only Force Weapons, Rune Weapons and weapons from the Warlock Weapons list may be used to attack with Executioner, due to their psychic nature.

ASPECT OF LILEATH

Lileath the Maiden was the youngest of the trinity of Eldar goddesses, and her domain was that of dreams and fortune. While the powers of Lileath and Morai-Heg are linked, Lileath is concerned more with luck, and the minor vagaries of destiny. The Aspect of Lileath contains powers which have short-term beneficial effects, of the minor visions and insights that can accumulate. At the whim of a Lileath-seer, laws of probability and reality bend, just a little, in favour of the Seer's allies. Lileath's powers are also the most 'traditionally' psychic, incorporating some forms of both telepathy and telekinesis.

Fortune

Difficulty: 25 *ranged*

The Seer twists the laws of reality and probability in imperceptible ways, granting good fortune to his allies so they might survive to strike telling blows upon the enemy.

Nominate any number of allies. Range is measured to the target furthest away from the Seer, and each targeted ally after the first imposes an additional -10% penalty on the psychic test. If successful, all those affected gain the Dodge and Heroic talents until the beginning of the Seer's next turn.

Guide

Difficulty: 25 *ranged*

The Seer reaches out to his allies, steadying their minds and their senses, helping their shots strike true.

Nominate any number of allies. Range is measured to the target furthest away from the Seer, and each targeted ally after the first imposes an additional -10% penalty on the psychic test. If successful, all those affected gain the Deadeye Shot talent, and benefit from 1 'free' level of aiming (that is, they count as if they had aimed, without needing to spend actions doing so) on all ranged attacks made until the start of the Seer's next turn.

ASPECT OF MORAI-HEG

Morai-Heg was a withered crone-goddess, who cast and bound the fates of mortals within a skin rune pouch. Her domain was the distant and unseen, and she knew how all things would end. The Aspect of Morai-Heg contains powers of knowledge and understanding, allowing a Seer to learn how things will come to pass and why and maybe avoid those events. It is the most difficult to master of all the Aspects, for the results are often vague and confusing, and only Farseers can truly claim to have any command of its powers.

Doom

Difficulty: 40 *ranged*

The Seer reads the myriad strands of fate to find the death of his foes, seeking to find a way to bring it all the closer.

Nominate any number of enemies. Range is measured to the target furthest away from the Seer, and each targeted enemy after the first

imposes an additional -10% penalty on the psychic test. If successful, all those affected are doomed until the start of the Seer's next turn. Against a Doomed character, all ranged attacks are Placed Shots, regardless of the actual attack roll, and all melee attacks are Critical Hits, again regardless of the actual attack roll.

Foresight

Difficulty: 35

The Seer reaches out into fate, looking to see what might be, what will be and what should not be. Armed with this knowledge, he can change the future for the betterment of his kin. This power represents shortterm scrying and divination, as opposed to the centuries-distant prophecies of Farseers, which are beyond the scope of the game.

When using this power, nominate how far into the future (in turns) the Seer wishes to look; visions of next turn impose no additional penalty, while more distant visions impose a -10% penalty on their psychic test for every turn after the first. So, for example, a Seer attempting to divine what will come to pass in three turns time will take an additional -20% penalty on their psychic test.

If successful, the Seer will gain insight into the immediate future. On the turn that the Seer foresaw, the Seer and anyone he has communicated his vision to (this takes three actions of speech, or one action of telepathy, more if communicating with non-Eldar) gain the Dodge talent, and double their chances of parrying melee attacks. In addition, all characters informed of this future may take a free Pause for Breath action during that turn.

ASPECT OF VAUL

Vaul was the smith-god who crafted the weapons and devices of the Gods in ancient days. Though a formidable warrior once, he was crippled by Khaine and chained to his own anvil as punishment for some ancient betrayal. The Aspect of Vaul is one of creation, defiance and resilience, as well as of the binding of souls. It was he who was first able to bind the souls of mortals into objects to give them greater power, and from his forge came the first Direswords, and the first Wraithguard and Wraithlords. The powers of this Aspect are often those able to manipulate the barrier between the physical world and the psychic.

Song of Vault

Difficulty: 15

As some Seers can heal the flesh of mortals, so this Seer can weave and grow the wraithbone and psychoplastics that make up Eldar technology, repairing wraith-constructs, damaged weapons and similar devices.

Primarily, this can be used to mend the substance of constructs and devices, like Wraithguard and Grav-platforms. In these cases, The Seer must touch the construct he wishes to repair. If the psychic test is successful, the recipient is treated as having just made a successful recovery action by himself, with a bonus to his Toughness equal to half the Seer's Willpower. The power's other uses are numerous and highly situational—any situation where the psychoplastics used extensively in Eldar technology are in need of repair is a situation in which Song of Vault may be useful. When, where and how often these situations arise is at the GM's discretion.

Wraithsight

Difficulty: 10 *ranged*

The Seer's mind touches upon the distant souls of his kin, allowing him to see the shadowy soul-realm they perceive, and giving them insight into the world of the living.

If the psychic test is successful, the Seer can see the shifting and ephemeral visions of the dead—this grants him a +30 bonus on any tests to spot any living creature, but reduces his speed by 1 while the power remains in effect as his ability to see anything but thoughts and souls is impeded. If he stands near a Wraith-Construct or other repository of an Eldar soul—within a number of yards equal to one-fifth of his Willpower score—he can grant a degree of his mortal perception to them, adding +20 to their Initiative while the power remains in effect and he remains within that distance.



In the next part of the article, which will be published soon, Nathan takes a more detailed look at the various Eldar Paths and the character archetypes of each Path.

In the third and final part, Nathan will set out in detail a horde of items from the Eldar armoury. Some of these items are referred to in the earlier two parts but, while you're waiting for Nathan's rules, feel free to make up your own!

Pieces of the Puzzle

Ruaridh Dall

Goddard held a delicate silver pin up to the light.

'This,' he began, 'is a pain needle. It's an obvious term, but one that is entirely fitting for the purpose it serves.' He placed the needle back down on the table, alongside a glut of gleaming surgical instruments, dental forceps and vials of truth serums. 'You should know that I am well-versed in the use of all these items. The Ordo Malleus has taught me well, and as you can see from the stains on this apron, I am very proficient at torturing miserable specimens such as yourself.' He paused a moment to let his words sink in. 'That said, I wouldn't say I enjoy hurting people. However, when needs must...'

Goddard took a small hammer from the table and rapped it across the knuckles of the fat man who had sat wholly transfixed as he had addressed him. His name was Kuipers, and he'd been just about the only one they'd dragged out of the Cathedral San Ethusias alive. Or at least alive enough to inflict pain on. That he and the other cultists had been preparing a terrorist attack on the Celestian Gate there was little doubt – the evidence had been everywhere – but Goddard knew they were little more than men on the ground, simple underlings in a much bigger operation. What Goddard needed was access to the big players, the orchestrators of the recidivist movement that had sold out the Imperium as well as their souls to Chaos. With these men removed the insurrection would wither and die, returning order to Agripinaa. Saussure had some evidence pointing to the right-hand man of the Procurator Marshal Cato Ryan himself, and ascertaining if this was true was vital to ending the madness. If the evidence was solid then it meant that the Ryan family, the rulers of the whole world, had turned their back on the rightful rule of Terra, and for what? A shot at immortality? As far as Goddard was concerned, it was only the foolish and the ignorant that embraced Chaos, and for that reason alone, the Ryans would have to be purged from existence, their legacy entirely erased from Agripinaa's records. Goddard had seen it happen before, and he knew it was the only way to prevent the heretics from triumphing. The Ordo Malleus could never shirk from its duty to protect the Imperium from the enemy beyond.

That was precisely why Goddard began the interrogation by breaking each of Kuiper's fingers.



Goddard had come up against a wall. In his experience, it was a normal part of the interrogation procedure: one inflicted pain on the prisoner and broke his first level of resolve, but a man would rarely crack at that point, and it almost always required the infliction of further pain to hear the whole story. The torture techniques the Ordo had taught him on Nemesis Tessera were gauged by their excruciation and effectiveness level, and a stepwise progression through them was often enough to crack a weak willed underling by the tertiary level; the neuro-barrage. This mid-point in the excruciation scale was designed to wrack a body with such insult that nerve endings would be permanently damaged, resulting in numerous disaesthesias, paralyses and even blindness. The tertiary level took pain to a horrific scale as it wreaked its effects and Goddard had seen two fellow Ordo Malleus inquisitors subjected to a tertiary level interrogation confess to daemon-summoning, fratricide and heresies too abominable to comprehend, but despite the undeniable potency of the neuro-barrage, it hadn't broken Kuipers. He was holding out on some key piece of information, but how he had managed to do so as Goddard had infused his system with dolorium and bent him double with the agony Goddard didn't know. Such resolve was unheard of in unaugmented individuals, and Goddard had begun to doubt that Kuipers could possibly know more, but his story had not changed since the primary level of the interrogation. The way he had churned out the same words over and over again reeked of conditioning and a false cover story, but no matter how much Goddard had pressed him the story just would not deviate from its initial telling. The strangest part of it was that Kuipers had almost immediately implicated Cato Ryan in the plan and had given an elaborate insight into his involvement with the Brotherhood and even his travel plans for the next few days. Initially Goddard had been convinced that Kuipers was attempting to lead him into a trap and had challenged him numerous times about the information he'd shared but not once had Kuipers



given a different version of Cato's upcoming schedule. Even as Kuipers had lain blinded, one arm twisted with tetany and a neural-spike in his lumbar vertebrae seconds before he last fell unconscious he had whispered once more that Cato would be visiting one of the Brotherhood's fronts, a chemical plant in Sector Beta Four on Mercyday. It almost certainly had to be the truth.

Goddard knew he should be elated with such a revelation, but his mind was clouded with doubt and apprehension. The ease with which he had attained the information worried him; the Ordo had taught him never to take things at face value, always to dig deeper, but it seemed that there was nothing more to unearth here. Dogma, however, meant that he would not accept that all that Kuipers had told him was the full extent of what he knew, and that meant moving to the quaternary level of interrogation, psychic domination. A trained telepath could rip open a mind, weeding out the inconsistencies in any story and chelating out the truth - no matter how well buried - behind neural blocks, engram implants and psychic shrouds. More often than not such an assault would lobotomise a mind, and quaternary level interrogations were reserved for the most dangerous sorcerers and heretics with the means to shield their minds, but Kuipers had proved himself to be more than a run of the mill recidivist thus far, and it was entirely possible with the Ryans' resources that some surgical or psychic procedure had been performed on Kuipers to conceal some iota of information that the ruling family simply could not allow to become known. There were few secrets that an insurrectionist would wish to keep that were considered more important than their name, and in the current climate there was only one possibility - the Ryans had pledged themselves to Chaos.

Goddard peeled off his surgical gloves and threw them into a kidney bowl on the table. He lifted his comm set and opened the channel to Theobald and Choi. They were both in the room thirty seconds later, Choi standing resolutely to attention three steps inside the doorway, while Lisa wandered over to Kuipers and casually prodded his unresisting form firmly with a gloved finger.

'Any luck?' she asked a second later, breaking her gaze from Kuipers' bloodied face.

'Actually, yes,' Goddard answered. 'Cato Ryan's involved with the Brotherhood, and I have my

suspensions that the entire Ryan family is behind the whole damn insurrection. From what he told me, Cato is running many different segments of the Brotherhood personally, and as the Procurator Marshal, he has the Magistratum supplying arms to rebels all over the planet. Cato even visited the cathedral not two days ago to see how the preparations were going for the attack on the spaceport. If we had been twenty-four hours early we would have had him red-handed. If that wasn't enough, I have Cato's movements for the next three days plotted to the minute, and two of the Brotherhood's fronts.'

'Why do you look so surly then?' Lisa asked bluntly.

'Kuipers told me all of this at the primary level. His story was near enough word-perfect up to the tertiary.'

Lisa raised her eyebrows quizzically. 'So what? I could have a weak-willed fat scum-sucker like him confessing his mother's sins before I'd even start on his teeth.'

Goddard shook his head. 'Maybe so, but my years have taught me that some people will tell you anything to keep one card close to their heart. No matter how much they tell you, even if they confess to being Abaddon himself, there will always be something else. I fear that the Ryans have tampered with Kuipers' mind to keep one truth hidden. I bet even David wouldn't need two guesses to work it out.'

'They have a pact with a daemon,' Choi said swiftly, swiftly touching the Aquila tattooed on his forehead.

'If not a daemon, then Chaos in general,' Goddard responded mournfully. 'I am going to request that Lord-Inquisitor Saussure's telepath interrogate Kuipers, as I feel that a quaternary level may be the only way to drag the truth from his head.'

'Isn't that risky?' Lisa asked.

'If Kuipers' mind must be torn asunder to reveal daemoniac involvement here, then so be it,' Goddard answered. 'For now though, I need you and David to run a reconnaissance, Elisabel. Cato's schedule puts him at the chemical facility in Sector Beta Four on Mercyday, and I think that is the best hope we have of intercepting him. Do you know it?'

Lisa nodded.

'Good. I need tactical mapping, a security sweep and a likely route of ingress for Cato.'

'I'll wake David,' Lisa said, and left the room.

Choi stepped forward.

'I can have the squad prepped and the *Brilliant* ready to deliver them in six hours sir.'

'Thank you Sergeant.'

'If they are in league with a daemon sir, the rest of the squad and me are all ready to lay down our lives for you, the Imperium and the God-Emperor, sir.'

Goddard nodded, and the Sergeant left the room. If Cato really was in league with a daemon then fifteen Stormtroopers would not be enough. It was a sobering thought that despite the firepower at his disposal, he might already be involved in a battle he could not win. He just had to hope that his supposition was wrong and the Ryans had not sold out to some abominable power, but with the madness that had taken this world in the past year and the desolation he had witnessed all over the Sectors Ocularis, it would take a visit from the Emperor Himself for Goddard to even start beginning to believe otherwise.



'You must understand sir; the Lord-Marshal is a very busy man. He can't simply drop everything for every visitor he gets, even an astropath sir.'

It was, Sark had to admit, a fairly unoriginal false identity for a man such as himself. Coupled with some simple psychic manipulation though, it had gained both Durant and himself access to the inner sanctum of the Procurator Marshal's scriptorium bureau with relative ease. Astropaths were a common sight in the extensive Ryan estate, and only the men on the security controls had even bothered to look twice at him. If you'd seen one bald witch with a cowl, dark glasses and a burly, well-armed attendant you'd seen them all. Sark had been required to fall back on his powers of suggestion to get them through the checkpoints, but the weak-willed saps at those stations had been barely more resistant to his mind than children or dogs. That they were of such poor resolve spoke volumes of the

ineptitude of the Ryan family – they entrusted their lives to dull-witted morons with horribly open minds. It was no wonder that Agripinaa was in such a mess. The whole planet was a veritable catastrophe, and Sark was only too glad that he was playing a part in his Lord Saussure's mission to return it to the charge of better men. The Ryans were directly responsible for all the horror that had befallen the world and their disposal could not come soon enough. For now though, Sark had the slight annoyance of the man in front of him to overcome before he could enact his next part in the plan.

'My missives come from the Ordo Hereticus,' Sark lied. 'I do not believe that the Lord-Marshal would want to upset the Holy Ordos of the Inquisition by ignoring a message from them. That's exactly the kind of thing he would try to pin on his underlings should an inquisitor come calling...'

Sark let the clerk make up his own mind on what to do, despite the fact he knew that the worm would bend to his will in seconds if he took hold of his mind. It simply would not have been a challenge, and any Throne-fearing citizen would do anything to avoid the ire of his master and the icy fingertips of the Emperor's left hand. As he had expected, the clerk failed to surprise him with a sudden onset of backbone.

'I'll speak to him right away,' he said, his voice a fear-shrouded whisper.

Sark turned to Durant, and the bigger man gave a grin of broken teeth and barely contained amusement at the clerk's jellyfish-like level of strength of character. Seconds later he returned, head bowed and beckoned the pair past him and through an open adamantium-reinforced door and into the presence of one Cato Ryan, Procurator Marshal of Agripinaa and younger brother of Echinvar Ryan, the planetary Governor and enemy of the Imperium.

'My attendant tells me you have a message from the Inquisition, astropath,' Cato said, to his credit not letting any sign of fear drift into his voice.

'Yes milord,' Sark hissed, sure that that level of formality would suit the situation, no matter how little he personally thought of the "lord" in front of him. 'Though I do not wish to relay the message in such an *insecure* room.' He waved a hand at the open door to carry his point.



'Indeed. I was just about to suggest the same,' Cato replied. 'You,' he pointed at Durant, 'close the door over, and stand guard outside.'

Durant's eyes flicked briefly to Sark for confirmation, and Sark sent the simple message of "do it" back telepathically.

'Sure,' Durant replied, loosely following up with a half-hearted, 'sir,' before leaving the room and dragging the heavy door shut. Sark couldn't quite believe that Cato now stood before him completely unguarded and with nowhere to escape. How he had avoided assassination thus far was a mystery as the man appeared to have nothing other than complete trust in everyone in his bureau. The man's overconfidence was hard to stomach, and it had probably just cost him his life. Goddard believed him to be behind the attempted toppling of the planet and was out for blood. The paranoid Malleus man had believed everything that Sark had said to him through Kuipers and had even asked Sark himself to psychically interrogate him. Of course, there had been no need to exert himself with such an act as all the information he had planted in the cultist's head had found its way to Goddard of its own accord. Sark had simply spent an hour out of sight before informing him that Kuipers had had nothing more to say. All that remained now was to have Cato fulfil his role in the scheme.

'The message man, spit it out,' Cato pressed. 'I don't have all day you know.'

Sark sighed. He could so easily kill the man right now. He could convince him to push his own letter opener through his eye, or have him bite out the veins and arteries in his wrists to leave him bleeding to death on the floor, or simply barrage his brain with screaming voices and leave him catatonic in a pool of his own urine, and how he wished he could. The man did not even deserve the oxygen he was dragging from Agripinaa's already filthy atmosphere. He was a shameful excuse for a human being, and that he commanded real power on what was one of the most important worlds in the Sectors Ocularis was an absolute travesty and a sign of just how pathetic the Imperium had become. But death would not do. Not now anyhow. Saussure needed to have Goddard bring down the whole Ryan dynasty, as there were few more names associated with the wellbeing of the worlds around the Gate than he, and no one would cast doubt on his decision to remove the rulers of one of the worlds ringing the Eye. Saussure needed

Cato to be at the chemical plant in Sector Beta Four on Mercyday, and Sark was the tool to enable that to happen. The telepath looked up at Cato and silently cleaved a path between his cerebral hemispheres, diving deep into his memories and leaving behind one that was not there before. A cache of boltguns for his personal guards was to be picked up from a chemical plant. No one could trust those Departmento Munitorum fools these days to supply the guns he would need to clear the traitors from his world and he had had to take things into his own hands. The gun shops of the lower hive were churning out thousands of arms that were going straight to the hands of rebels – he was perfectly in the right to secure some for himself. He had received word that the first of them were at the sulphur distillery, and he had a space in his schedule that would allow him to personally inspect them on Mercyday.

'The Ordo Hereticus are watching.'

Cato stared at Sark for a few silent seconds, waiting expectantly for him to continue.

'Is that it?' he asked.

'Yes milord, that was all the message said.'

'Get out of my sight,' Ryan huffed and turned away.

'Yes milord,' Sark hissed for the final time.



Goddard stood on the balcony outside his quarters in Saussure's lodge, his eyes gazing wearily into the distance. Fires burned to the south, throwing into silhouette the burnt-out spires of the manufactorum district that had once provided Chimeras and multilasers for the Imperial war effort, and the sound of heavy gunfire, however distant, was always present. Sometimes it had been drowned out, but only by the shriek of jets and the blast of high explosives as Marauder bombers flew sorties against rebel positions and bombed them to dust. But as Goddard watched Agripinaa burn he knew bitterly that he was just one of countless billions of men in the Imperium watching a world fall to madness. This scene was repeating itself for thousands of light years on hundreds of worlds whose skies were filled by the ugly purple stain of the Eye of Terror. How he hated the sight of that cankerous, nauseating tear in real space: it was a

tumour on the face of the galaxy; ugly, unwanted and slowly killing its host. Perhaps it was just an effect of the smoke in the air, but as Goddard looked up at the realm of Chaos he was sure he could see it ripple and pulse, every contraction birthing a horde of unholy affronts to the Emperor's rule. Somewhere, he prayed, a crusade was being mustered to return all the worlds around the Eye to peace.

'May I join you, Tomashek?'

Goddard turned to see Saussure at the window to the balcony, a glass of brandy in each hand. Goddard nodded and accepted one of the glasses without a word, allowing himself the brief warmth of a sip of the amber liquid.

'I fear this is another luxury that will be lost if Agripinaa falls,' Goddard said, holding up his glass.

'Falls?' Saussure raised an eyebrow. 'I thought you had a break in the case. Sark told me that your prisoner had talked.'

'That he did Benedict. Told me just about everything. And that's what worries me.' Goddard paused briefly as another Marauder wing thundered overhead. 'Cato Ryan, and therefore by extension, Enchivar Ryan, are the leaders of the insurrection. The very men charged with protecting this world in the name of the Imperium are the ones that are behind this.'

Goddard swept his arm over the blasted landscape of twisted metal and burnt stone that stretched to the horizon before them.

'You are sure of this?'

'As sure as I can be without the brothers Ryan spread-eagled on the confession racks.'

'I believe then that it is time we considered making a move against them,' Saussure suggested, watching his opposite number's expression closely.

'With the forces they can call upon we would be fools to strike directly at their palace,' Goddard replied swiftly. 'However, the prisoner did give up something that could prove to be my best chance to take Cato before his Magistratum allies can rescue him: Cato is due to visit one of the Brotherhood's fronts on Mercyday. I have Theobald and Burrell scouting it out now.'

'The Magistratum will surely respond swiftly to any attack on their Procurator Marshal.'

'That's why I'll have to make sure an arrest is a lightning quick manoeuvre. I don't have a choice but to go in lightly, smash through any resistance and extract Cato with minimal fuss.'

'That would appear to be the best choice of action considering the circumstances. I will try to provide as much assistance as I can, but my agents are following up leads linked to that water syndicate that brought us together in the first place. Interrogator Kuerten seems to believe that they may have links to Ryan family too.'

'That does not surprise me.' Goddard raised his glass. 'To the Emperor and His glorious Imperium.'

'To the Emperor,' Saussure replied, and drained his glass.



Saussure sat in his quarters, enjoying one last glass of brandy by candlelight. Sat in the chair opposite him, Susannah Ward was pensive and stuck in a moment of reflection.

'Do you understand your orders, Susannah?' Saussure asked.

'Yes, my lord,' she replied simply.

This was the final piece of the puzzle, and on it hinged the success of Saussure's whole plan. Getting Goddard to go after Cato had been difficult, and getting Sark into a position to influence Cato into visiting the chemical plant had succeeded thanks only to the grace of the Emperor and the complacency of Ryan's guards, but without corrupting the logic engine in the facility with a tech-code of lies there would be no evidence with which Goddard would be able to finally implicate Cato. The plan relied entirely on Susannah's natural guile and stealth now. However, the facility was so well covered by image-thieves and guards that Susannah would have an extremely low likelihood of succeeding on her mission without a distraction big enough to draw off the guards, and that meant that she would have to infiltrate the plant while Goddard was kicking in the door. The risk of her being compromised was huge, and Saussure had made it clear that the mission would have complete deniability applied to it. Susannah was entirely



alone on this and would not expect aid or rescue whatever should happen. She had to prepare herself for the worst, and though neither of them had mentioned it, Saussure was confident that she would die rather than be captured. She had been a loyal agent over many years now, but this

was the ultimate test of her devotion to Him on Terra.

'Good luck Susannah,' he said, and handed her the data wand with the malicious tech-code.

The Mercyday Incursion

An Inquisitor Battle Report

Ruaridh Dall, Jeremy Lowe and Derek Gillespie

Derek: So, the third outing in the series detailing the activities of Inquisitors Goddard and Saussure upon the surface of Agripinaa is upon us. In the aftermath of the raid upon the recidivist cell based in the Cathedral San Ethusias, Inquisitor Goddard finds himself in an awkward situation. It would appear that the planetary governor, or at least those very close to him, is not only unable to control spiralling violence upon Agripinaa in the aftermath of the 13th Black Crusade, but is actively turning a blind eye to the troubles in order to further enrich himself. However, Goddard remains not entirely convinced by the evidence he and Saussure have put together, and is seeking

more proof. For his part, Saussure is being forced to expend energy throwing Goddard off the scent, so he can topple the Lords Ryan and install a military council in governance of the planet. This done, he will be content Agripinaa rests safe. However, as there's no way Goddard would countenance such a affair without damning proof, Saussure is having to work hard to make sure the plan all comes together smoothly. Ruaridh, Jez and I have got together for the penultimate time to tell the next chapter in the tale – will Goddard be taken in by Saussure's plan, or will the aged Inquisitor find himself up against one of his own?

Milky blackness surrounded the disused buildings. These streets had teemed with life not too long ago, before the Great Enemy had swarmed across the surface of Agripinaa and war had torn the place to shreds. Doctor Croft had pumped her full of stims before she'd been deployed, but Susannah still caught herself sub-consciously holding her breath as she entered crept through the derelict streets. Some of the most decrepit buildings had obviously never been disturbed since the firestorms that had been unleashed to burn out the taint of the plagued warriors. There were still rumours of the dead-that-walked, and Susannah was acutely aware of how lightly armed she was, given the circumstances. She severely doubted that a plague-ridden undead corpse would be stopped by bolas choking its already redundant wind-pipe.

She had slunk from shadow to shadow, gliding expertly through the shattered remnants of what once had been the homes of Imperial citizens, heading in the direction of the only remaining source of light and activity in this shunned district – the churning towers of the Fritz-Haber plant ahead of her. She watched as armed men patrolled the perimeter, back and forth with weapons held ready. Beneath them, servitors plodded from building to building. The toxic atmosphere was clearly corroding them slowly but surely, which likely explained why she didn't see any workers venturing outside. Either that, or the war had claimed them all, and the plant was effectively defunct, the servitors simply carrying out their instructions mindlessly. It was of no consequence to her assignment, but Susannah found that she wasn't as able to isolate herself from the human tragedies that surrounded Inquisitorial work as she always needed to be. Benedict always seemed to understand that, but she knew it couldn't be a reason for her not to be assigned the work that she was best suited for.

The small data-core lay against her thigh, dangling from the belt around her waist. A solitary light blinked amber, the tiny machine spirit dormant until needed. In the distance, off to her left, she was sure she could hear the noise of an incoming heavy truck. She intoned a quick prayer under her breath, and prepared to take advantage of the distraction if it came her way...



KICKING IN THE DOOR – Ruaridh Dall



Ruaridh: Well, after a year spent writing up the first two battle reports (or so it seemed!) we're back to fight out the conclusion of the campaign. Working out exactly how we were going to wrap things up on Agripinaa was tough, as we needed a logical and exciting end to the story. We decided two more games were necessary; with the first one working out if Goddard uncovers Saussure's nefarious scheme, and then the final one to end it all. The plot of the final game would depend on the outcome of this one, so if Goddard did what was required of him, he'd be on to Saussure's Recongregationist plan and would have words with him before Saussure could put a military council in charge of Agripinaa. If it all goes pear-shaped, then Saussure would have his way and the fate of Agripinaa would be set. We were keen to let Goddard get some sort of revenge though, so had some ideas for an "epilogue" to the story.

So, Goddard's aim in this one is to apprehend Cato Ryan and find out if he is involved with the recidivist movement as Saussure has Goddard believing. Goddard will have Storm Trooper Sergeant Huan Choi back with him after his heroics in the Cathedral of San Ethusias, and Explicator Lisa Theobald is all patched up after taking a couple of bullets in the first game, and is raring to go. David Burrell is being left out of this one, as it wouldn't be fair to drag him into the middle of another fire-fight! I had a straightforward plan for this one: take out the guards swiftly, and then convene on Cato *en masse* so the alleged no-good heretic can't escape.

INSERTION MISSION – Derek Gillespie



Derek: So, we're back, and it appears that there's a spanner in my carefully-laid plans! Inquisitor Goddard has a sneaking suspicion that all is not quite what it seems, and is attempting to get his hands on Cato Ryan and interrogate him himself. Saussure can't afford to have that happen in case Goddard finds the holes in his stories so, having got wind of Goddard's plan, has dispatched a single operative to plant incriminating evidence in a logic engine within one of Ryan's retreats – in this case, one of his business operations. Assuming that Special Operative Ward can get in and out without being seen, then the job's a good 'un and the last nail will be in the coffin!

Playing a game with only a single model is always a challenge, especially on a playing field wherein everyone else has multiple protagonists. Susannah has been selected by Saussure for her speed and stealth, and I'm very much hoping that she can sneak past any trouble – she's not

exactly heavily armed! My real hope is that Goddard and co. are going to get caught up in a really big fire fight and Susannah can simply be in and out thanks to the confusion. If Goddard sneaks in successfully then it's going to be a race against time to get to the logic engine before he does!

AN UNSUSPECTING QUARRY – Jez Lowe

Jez: Well, Derek and Ruaridh have done an excellent job of setting the scene so I'll get into the specifics of my role a little. Alongside all the normal 'GM Stuff' of checking tables and failing Action checks, I would also be providing a 'God's Eye view' of the game. Whilst this might seem run of the mill, given the covert nature of Derek's role in the game I would have to be especially careful of Awareness, Lines of Sight and the pacing of the game. The pacing of the game is likely to be the toughest part. As GM, I have to balance the ease with which Goddard's team should brush aside the 'Red Shirts' guarding the complex with the need to give Susannah a ghost of a chance of having the time to complete her mission. Keeping the timing dramatic for both parties is going to be a real challenge, especially in a game as potentially fatal as *Inquisitor*. None of the characters involved are particularly 'super-human' and that means that one stray roll could see a awkwardly dug-in guard dead in the first hail of gunfire...or could lead to a bout of inconveniently timed incompetence in dealing with what should be nothing more than the briefest of distractions.



My other concern, the Awareness rules, will likely play a very big part - not just in giving Susannah a fair chance at staying hidden but also in allowing the Inquisitorial personnel the chance of inflicting the highly cinematic 'Sneak attack'.

Many moons ago, Derek was involved in a game I was GMing during which his character suffered a Sneak Attack launched by a Eviscerator-wielding maniac. The intricacies of surprising a target whilst wielding an oversized chainsaw had needed delicate handling and, although Derek fondly remembers the event, the rules surrounding such escapades need delicate handling - not least as a Sneak Attack can be deadly!

Those concerns aside, I think this should go pretty smoothly. Only Ryan's Bodyguard is particularly competent and he is limited by the range of his sawn-off shotguns. The Complex Guards may look scary, not least the one wielding the "Elephant Gun", but they really shouldn't present too much of a problem for Goddard's elite team.

It should be an interesting race between the two techniques. Will stealth prove faster than raw power, or will the direct approach cut to the heart of the matter?



The garbage truck David had procured was authentic, right down to the stink that caught the back of Goddard's throat. They sat parked up in an alley two blocks away from the sprawling sulphur distillery that Kuipers had directed them to, with a good view of the cooling towers and, most importantly, the landing pad. Theobald and Burrell's scouting mission the previous day had given Goddard a clear layout of the facility, and there were only two routes in: the front gate that they were covering with the truck, and the landing pad, and Goddard suspected that the Procurator Marshal was exactly the kind of man who would use an extravagant aerial transport. If Goddard was right, their operation was going to be all the harder as Ryan would be able to disappear in the clustered buildings while they were covering the ground from the gate to the first row of workshops and cogitator chapels. It was less than ideal, but with no interceptor available to him, they would just have to do things the hard way.

When he thought about it, their plan here was brutally simplistic: assault the compound, take Cato prisoner and gather any evidence they could find. It was an old formula that the Inquisition had used for millennia, and relied as much on the fear that the forces of the Inquisition were held in as much as it did the firepower available. Choi was an unmistakable emblem of Imperial might with his red carapace, daubed with Inquisitorial insignia, and Goddard hoped that the very sight of him would send the heretics running. Goddard too had his overcoat unbuttoned to reveal his own similarly inscribed carapace breastplate, and he was sure that Theobald would waste no time in letting the guards know who she represented. It would take a brave man to stand up against one of the Emperor's chosen, and most of the heretics that Goddard had encountered were anything but. Aye, an old formula, but a good one at that.

A few quiet minutes passed in the truck's cab, the occasional clatter of Choi's armour plates the only sound as he jostled for room on the bench alongside Theobald in the rear, before the whine of jets turned their heads to the left. An Arvus lighter came banking in from the north, its dark underside spotted with blue lights as its attitude jets fired to steady its descent. It slowed

markedly, and came into land on the flat rooftop to the west of the compound. It was stationary for perhaps only thirty seconds, before it rose up again, and boosted off back the way it had come.

'Time to go, David,' Goddard instructed, and Burrell powered up the truck.



Goddard peeled back a section of loose chainlink fence and beckoned Choi and Theobald through the hole and into the mounds of detritus that sat on the fringes of the compound. He followed swiftly behind, and soon spotted the first guard twenty yards ahead, bathed in light from a wall mounted lamp. The man was facing away from him, and Goddard felt sure he could close the ground between them before he even realised they were there. He activated his shock maul and broke from cover. Theobald took after him, her athletic build propelling her along faster than Goddard could ever achieve. Soon she was at Goddard's shoulder, but the noise of two sets of running feet was loud enough to grab the guard's attention, and he turned to face them. Eyes wide with surprise, he screamed out 'alarm!' and reached to unsling his lasgun from his shoulder, but the double crack of two hellgun shots put him on his back, his head burst open. Goddard looked back to see Choi's gun still aimed at the corpse. The low drone of the plant's alarm system sounded out. Things had just become immeasurably more difficult for them.

Goddard crossed the last few metres to the guard's body, and rifled through his uniform. He found a comm-link in a pocket, and pulled the earpiece from the guard's ear by the wire. Movement caught his eye further into the compound, and instinctively he dived for cover as the guard ahead raised his improbably large double-barrelled rifle and took aim. Like a thunderclap the gun barked twice and the large bore munitions whipped past Goddard and thudded into Choi, the Stormtrooper unfortunate to have been standing directly behind where Goddard had been moments before. Despite his armoured bulk, the rounds spun Choi around and dumped him on the ground.

Jez: The "Elephant Gun"

It's all too easy for mooks to be faceless, characterless cannon fodder for the PCs. But they can (and should) be more than that. Something as simple as their choice of weaponry can achieve just that. For a perfect example, you need only look at John McTiernan's 1987 masterpiece, 'Predator'. Each character

carries a unique weapon that defines him as much as the performance of the actor. Would Jesse Ventura's Blaine be anywhere near as memorable without that minigun?

In this case, the genesis of The Elephant Gun was inspired by Ruairidh's modelling skill. We looked at the model during the prep for the game and decided that it would be a little special. So, with a look through the weapons and ammo in the rulebook we came up with a dirty great rifle that fired both barrels simultaneously for extra stopping power. The downside was, of course, that our big-game hunting guard then had to spend time picking himself up and reloading - a dicey proposition for a mook up against an elite Inquisitorial snatch squad.

From the shadows, a lone figure watched the progress of Goddard's party intently.

"Right on time." The figure pressed a small stud mounted near the top edge of the body-suit it wore, activating a mid-range secure comm-unit.

"Insertion to Hawkwind. Additional personnel have entered the arena. Over."

There was a crackle of static.

"Hawkwind to Insertion. Visual?"

"Insertion, Hawkwind. Visual check confirmed - codename *Interloper*, and associates. Over."

The pause was longer this time.

"Very good. Proceed as before, Insertion. Non-lethal approach. *Interloper* must not be made aware of your presence. Is this possible? Over."

Operative Susannah Ward had the decision wrenched from her by the sound of gunfire. Alarms sounded across the complex. The Inquisitor had just saved her the bother of creating a proper diversion. She thumbed the stud once more. "Affirmative, Hawkwind. In and out. Insertion out."

As soon as the link went dead, she turned herself from the wall, and leapt upwards, her fingers finding purchase at the lip of the wall, and her legs propelling her up onto the low roof. Let the Inquisitor blast his way in - she'd find a quicker route...

Ruaridh: *Inauspicious beginnings*

Not the best start for my guys at all there. Miserable action rolls had brought both Goddard and Lisa up short as they charged the first guard, and the alarm had been raised. Choi had done a good job in taking out the guard, but thanks to some excellent dice rolls by Jez, the guard with the elephant gun had shot down Choi. Best laid plans and all that, I guess...

Goddard looked back in Choi's direction, worried that the Stormtrooper was out of it. Choi was clutching a leg, but he waved Goddard onwards. Confident that Choi could look after himself, Goddard concentrated a second on the comm chatter. Someone was relaying their position to the other guards. There had to be a nest somewhere, where another guard or slaved technomat was viewing security feeds. Goddard swiftly took in his surroundings and spotted a tower on the other side of the compound. Lisa had earmarked it as a likely control room after her reconnaissance mission, and it looked like the most likely suspect for housing the security system. Ready himself to cross the alley down which the gunfire had come, Goddard took a deep breath. He rocked back on his feet and plunged across the gap.



Susannah crouched low atop the roof, listening to the booming retorts coming from the passageway below her. Her lightweight combat shield rested against her back, and she felt the comforting weight of her shock maul hanging from her waist. Apart from that, she only had a few grenades about her person, so she certainly had no intention of getting involved in that firefight if she could avoid it. Taking stock of her surroundings, she could see several likely doorways that could have concealed her objective, but one was much closer than the rest. The tower was a substantial leap away from the end of the building, but she was sure she could make it with enough of a run. Having one last look around and seeing no guards visible, she burst from her cover and headed towards the edge of the rooftop, legs pounding the ground.

Derek: A One-Woman Army

Playing a game with only a single character while those around you have significantly more than that is a great challenge, and usually forces you to think on your feet, unless your lone character is a frothing berserker, uncaring of odds! In this instance, Operative Ward is most certainly *not* a berserker. Armed with largely inoffensive weaponry (shock maul, combat shield, 2 smoke grenades and a frag grenade), she's going to have to rely on guile and agility to get her where she needs to be.

With Choi down, Lisa knew that things were going to be tough. She had gone left after Choi had shot down the guard, and she was now a good twenty yards away from Goddard. With the alarm still sounding, they were sitting ducks, and Cato was probably barricaded away by now, surrounded by heavies. She had to get further into the compound and quickly. Ahead she could see a forklift truck, and a plan began forming in her head. What quicker way to get into the depths of this place than on motorised wheels? She sprinted up behind it, and quickly surveyed the area ahead. There was a sword and pistol armed guard running across the rooftops in her direction.

So much for taking a ride in this thing, she thought.

On the rear of the forklift were two red canisters, obviously its fuel source, and quickly settled on the idea of creating a mobile bomb. She reached down onto the ground and picked up a loose brick and jammed the forklift's accelerator down. It lurched forward, but far more slowly than she had expected, and her eyes shot back up to the closing thug. She barely had time to curse before he had put a pistol round in her leg. He leapt down from the balcony of the control tower and

slashed at her with his sword. It clipped her leg, and she fell backwards into the cab of the forklift. The guard leapt onto the running board of the forklift as it moved off with Theobald struggling to right herself in its cab. He jabbed at her with his sword, striking the metal of the rollcage, and then piercing her inner thigh. Lisa screamed out and desperately tried to blast her assailant with her laspistol, but from her upside-down position, the shots went hopelessly wild. She nudged into the control stick as she struggled, and the forklift turned through one hundred and eighty degrees. The guard struggled to hang on, and Lisa kicked out at him in an attempt to knock him off the vehicle. He scrabbled at the forklift's frame to steady himself and in retaliation stamped at Lisa's throat with his boot. A shot thudded into the guard's backside, and he yelped, looking round to see a man in a grey coat with his pistol raised. The forklift jolted as it hit rough ground, and the guard's attention whipped back to the direction of travel and saw a pile of pipes fast approaching. He threw himself clear and landed cleanly as the forklift crashed into the pipes at an oblique angle and climbed up them, before it turned over and came crashing down onto its rollcage. Unrestrained inside, Lisa hit the ground hard, and was pinned as the wreckage came to rest, barely conscious.



Explicator Theobald gets into a spot of bother.

Vehicular Carnage!

Jez's proficiency with his dice rolls again had ruined Lisa's craftily thought-out plan. We kind of winged it with how the forklift would move, and relied on a good old scatter dice and a D6 to decide in what direction and how far it would move, but initially had lurched forward a mere two yards, leaving Lisa in the open.

The rather useful guard had then shot her and followed that up with a flurry of sword blows. I have to say that it had been very entertaining though when Lisa had fallen into the forklift and the guard had leapt on too. Excitement like that is what games of *Inquisitor* should be about after all! Admittedly, it was a damn shame that Lisa looked to be out of the fight, but at least she'd gone out in a cool fashion!

With a mighty heave of the legs against the metal fencing, Susannah threw herself from the rooftop toward the steel gantry that formed a small balcony in front of the doorway in the tower. As she jumped, she had a brief glance to her left to see the utter confusion reigning below her, but she had no time to absorb what was happening. The balcony loomed towards her, and she landed smartly, grasping the balustrade and vaulting over the edge and back to something approximating safe ground. However, barely had she had the chance to take stock of her new vantage point when a chunk exploded from the wall above her right shoulder. As the rock-crete drizzled from the wound in the building, her head whipped around to see a distant guard, shotgun still smoking, hands reaching for a second shell. Feeling exposed, she threw herself at the metal door, racing against the expected retort of another blast from a shotgun. The metal was unyieldingly locked, so a more direct approach was needed. She dropped prone as a second shotgun blast peppered the wall above her, and freed both shield and maul from their bindings. Not having the time for subtlety, she smashed the shock maul into the locking panel next to the door, causing a cascade of sparks to fountain across her body.



Goddard sprayed pistol fire at the guard as he scampered away from the forklift. He had heard Lisa's screams and come running seconds before to see his protégé being assaulted on the forklift, and had opened fire on the man without pause. He had clipped him once, but he was still a very ready threat. As Goddard tracked him with his

autopistol, one of his shots whipped into the rear of the forklift, and the spark from its ricochet ignited the fuel that had come spilling from its ruptured tanks. The next shot downed the guard, and Goddard ran for the wreckage, desperate to free Lisa before the fuel tanks went up. He holstered his pistol, slipped his maul under his belt and reached into the cage. He put his arms around her chest and bodily dragged her from the cab. Shotgun fire sounded loud in Goddard's ears, and his legs stung as a pair of slugs clipped them. He struggled backwards with Theobald's dead weight, and tried to free his autopistol with one hand to return fire. Then he felt a hammer blow to his chest and a sudden searing pain along his temple. He hit the ground hard and Theobald crashed down on top of him. Through hazy eyes he saw the shotgun-armed guard bearing down on them, and he tried feebly to raise his autopistol. He just about had him in his sights when the forklift exploded, and the guard careened out of sight at the edge of a rapidly expanding fireball that roared over Goddard and Theobald as they lay in the dirt.

Ruaridh: Cruel, Cruel Fate

As if missing the guard with a roll of 98 and Jez ruling that the fuel would be ignited was bad enough, Goddard's heroic rescue of Theobald had then been interrupted by another exceptionally proficient grunt. The guards on show here had been performing so well that I'd been contemplating hiring them! We had pondered a second about the hit to Goddard's head before rolling the damage dice, as nobody (especially me!) wanted to see him die, but in the end couldn't really envisage how Goddard could've avoided the blast, other than Theobald's head being in the way. But, as she had already passed out from her injury total and was bleeding to death, putting the shot on her would have more than likely resulted in a speedy end for her instead! Goddard took the damage in the end (fortunately only 2 levels), and the resultant knockback from the shot to his chest actually pushed the pair of them out of the blast radius of the exploding forklift, which was a very nice blessing!

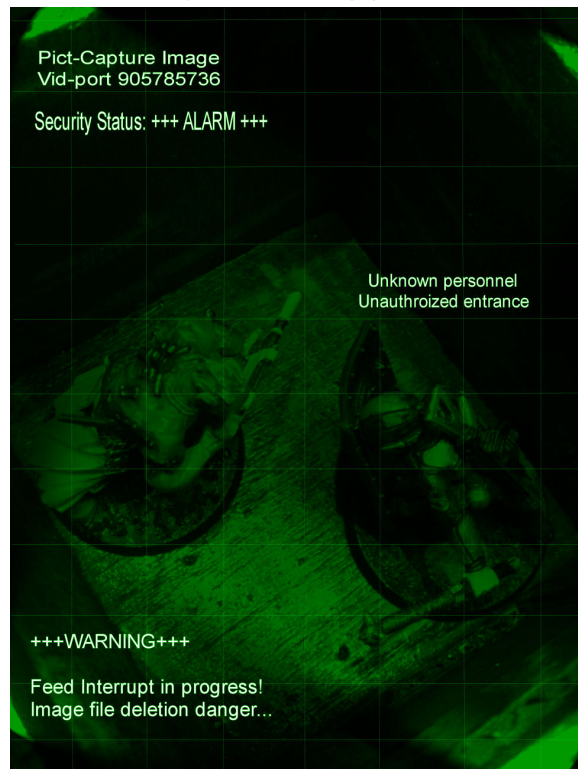
Goddard attempts to pull Theobald clear of the burning wreckage.



The firewash rippling from the ruined truck lapped around the base of the tower beneath Susannah, and the heat assaulted her back, but she was clear from the flames themselves. Quickly, she was on her feet, only to find herself face-to-face with a new assailant. The man came at her from the now-opened door, body-tackling her backwards into the railing, and trying to pitch her over the edge. She struggled, but he was stronger, and her head swam from the glancing blow of the impact. Faced with the fall, adrenaline fuelled her resistance. She slammed a knee into the kidneys of her attacker, making him wince and lessen his hold. Her shock maul swung in a flat arc, and he leant backwards to avoid the swipe, but had to take his body weight off Susannah to do so. Seizing her opportunity, she charged forwards, taking the weight of his body on her combat shield and tipping him off-balance into the tower room itself. He slammed into a machine panel and, winded, was open to a more measured blow from the crackling shock maul. Susannah heard his skull crack, and ceased to worry about him as he went limp.

Quickly, she took stock. The room was some form of control tower, and several monitors surrounded her, displaying pict-feeds from across the complex. She had little time – she was in the wrong place, and at least one guard had seen her fight on the balcony. However, a single monitor revealed her target – she could see an internal vid displaying the data-bank she needed. Knowing where she had to go, all that remained

was to cover her escape somehow. A box mounted on the wall appeared to hold machine parts and accompanying switches. With a silent prayer on her lips, she flicked the switches and ripped the component parts free. Gratifyingly, the lights went out. While she knew it would likely not last long, she knew where she was going, and a few moments of disorientation for the guards would be enough to let her slip past...



Derek: *Fortune Smiles*

Susannah had enjoyed more than a bit of luck here. Stuck on a balcony above the chaos, and being shot at from behind, I'd thought she was in deep trouble when she got charged by the guard in the tower. However, a few tense combat actions went in my favour, and the shock maul in her hands did the business (For once! Anyone else notice an inability to have an opponent *fail* a Toughness test for a shock maul?). Once she was inside the tower, Jez let me ascertain where I was meant to be – inevitably, the other side of the board – without too much hassle but, thanks to a very good pass of a Sagacity roll, he also let me work out how to kill the lights! I'm sure that someone would turn them back on again but, as she had no ranged weaponry to fire back with, being able to get out of the way of Jez's ultra-proficient goons was a serious bonus!

Choi had been out of the fight for far longer than he'd have liked. The wound he'd taken to his leg had been agonising, but the meds he carried had finally started to overcome the pain. From his position in the dirt he had seen Theobald attacked, and had helplessly watched as the forklift had jerked forward out of his line of sight with the guard chasing after it. He had heard the crack of Goddard's gun from that direction too, and had been surprised when the forklift had reappeared. That surprise had turned to horror when the forklift had crashed, and the flames had begun to lap around it as Goddard had frantically tried to pull Theobald out of there. Choi had gingerly got up at that point, and limped across to try and aid them. Then Goddard was down, and the forklift had exploded. Inexplicably, the lights in the compound had winked out and now things were lit only by the burning forklift. Choi had cursed his weakness, but now though he had his hellgun raised to his shoulder and he shot down the two guards that he encountered around the charred remains of the forklift with no remorse as they flapped at the flames that were licking across their bodies. He dropped to his knees beside Goddard, and assessed his wounds. He took bandages from the pouches on his belt, and wrapped one around Goddard's bleeding head. He then took his last injector of pain meds and stabbed it into the muscle of Goddard's thigh. He looked across at Theobald, and saw that she

was far worse off even than Goddard. He took Goddard by the arm and dragged him into cover, and made to return for Theobald, but a hand grabbed his own.

'I'll see to her,' Goddard said, and wearily pointed around the corner. 'Complete the mission Sergeant. Get into the control tower and find where Cato is hiding.'

'Yes, sir, Inquisitor,' Choi replied curtly, discipline and loyalty to his master overriding his concern for Theobald, and went for the tower, head and hellgun scanning for targets in the gloom.

Goddard groggily got to his feet and moved over to Theobald. Her left leg was bleeding badly, and she was ghostly pale. He undid his own belt and looped it around her thigh. Even with a tourniquet in place though, he knew she wouldn't last long. He activated his own microbead.

'David? Theobald needs to be extracted right away. Get over here now!'

Goddard received a muffled affirmative response, and the sound of the garbage truck's meaty engine became audible over the crackle of flames. He looked down at Theobald's peaceful features. 'Hold on Elisabel,' he whispered, 'hold on.'

Ruaridh: *Injury Woes*

I'm not often one to blame the dice, but Choi had spent at least 4 turns doing practically nothing as he repeatedly failed the one healing action a turn I'd managed to roll for. In hindsight, I maybe should have got him up earlier, but as he was at Speed 3 because of his injury effects he wasn't exactly going to be at optimum combat efficiency! With Theobald completely out of it and Goddard not much better either, I now had only one character to rely on to complete the mission. But so did Derek, and he'd been getting on pretty much fine thus far...

Back in the shadows once more, Susannah took a deep breath and assessed her surroundings. She could still see the burning vehicle in the distance, and it looked as though another figure had waded into the combat – controlled las-blasts hit at least one person she could see, and the body slumped

to the floor. Darkness enveloped this part of the complex, but she had had a momentary feeling there was someone nearby. She was sure she'd caught a fleeting glimpse of a silhouette on the rooftops above her as she made her way into cover, which meant she may be being tracked.

However, she needed to get up onto those rooftops herself.

Two smoke grenades rested in the palm of her hand. They would have to provide either sufficient cover or distraction to let her run across the open ground and make it to the data-storage



Unaware she's being watched, Susannah's smoke grenade explodes at her feet.

bank, concealed in an office space nearby. She threw both grenades over the lip of the wall above her. One, she heard roll faintly then burst, the smoke cloud roiling out across the roof. However, in the darkness, the second hit an overhang and fell back at her feet, smothering her in her own smoke screen. Cursing, she leapt up onto the roof and into the first smoke cloud but, disoriented by the unexpected fumble, had to stagger free of the fumes and orientate herself before setting off once more.

Gratifyingly, the door was not locked as Susannah reached it. Glancing behind her, she could see little with the lights still off in the compound. A faint glow from the burning wreck, even though it was out-of-sight, and the lights of the landing pad blinking steadily.

Readying her maul, she softly pushed open the door and began a steady descent downstairs, scanning the room. It appeared empty, and she saw the data-storage bank ahead of her. No sooner had she allowed herself a smile of satisfaction than her world exploded into pain. Four close blasts sounded behind her and she was turning and falling, her body crumpling and her skin in agony. Fighting to avoid blacking out, she landed in a heap on the floor of the office, her previously-unseen assailant holding smoking sawn-off shotguns in his hands as he watched her wounded body. Casually, he began reloading...

Jez: Surveillance pays off...

At this point, all but one of the guards had been engaged. The guard, patrolling the roof tops and landing pad, had initially rushed towards the source of the exchanges of small arms fire. But the explosion of the forklift and the sudden extinguishing of the lights had him worried, very worried, so he had hunkered down on the roof tops, waiting to get the drop on any passing intruder with his shotgun.

It was unlucky timing for Susannah that he spotted her ghosting up to the wall and, although she had gained a reprieve when her wayward smoke grenade had spoilt the guard's aim, he was in an excellent position to radio her position to Skar and put the veteran on her tail.



Susannah feels the full impact of twin sawn-off shotguns

Derek: Brutalised!

Ouch. Poor old Susannah had been doing so well, but her confusion when she stumbled from the smoke cloud had allowed Ryan's personal bodyguard, Arkat Skar, to follow her to the office. Totally unseen, he unloaded all four barrels of his sawn-offs into her back. Three hits, three *Hellfire* effects for the poor

woman. I was extremely fortunate to pass the system shock rolls, but it looked like Operative Ward was a goner unless the situation changed.

Jez: Susannah had done very well up to this point, carefully plotting a way through the warring combatants and dealing with any opposition with brisk efficiency. However, time pressures forced Derek to abandon her usual caution and she was caught out, Skar using both the darkness and the awareness penalties of her helmet against her.

Choi hauled himself up the ladder to the control room. An unconscious body lay on the floor, and the entire security system was down. Someone had been in there and tampered with everything. *But why?* Was there someone within Cato's operation that was trying to sabotage his plans, and had thought they were aiding the attackers by doing this? Whatever the truth was, he needed the system back online to track down Cato. Through guesswork and a couple of quick prayers to the console's machine spirit he was rewarded by light flooding the compound again. The security feeds came online, and immediately Choi's attention was caught by the flash of gunfire in the screen on his right. The inscription in the plaque under the screen read "Office Stairway". Perhaps Cato's people really were fighting amongst themselves. He kept watching as the smoke cleared, revealing the unmistakably gaunt features of Cato Ryan. Choi scanned the other screens until he found the one marked "Office Stairway Roof Access". He knew exactly how to get to Cato.

'Goddard, Cato's in the office building to the north of the compound,' he sent through his comm-link. 'It's the one with the rooftop access.' Choi allowed himself the briefest of smiles. They had him now.



Goddard watched as the garbage truck turned and sped off. Theobald would be safe now. He had received Choi's message seconds before, and with his pistol and maul back in his hands he had a renewed hope that the night was not going to be the complete disaster he felt it had been up until that point. He headed along the road on which the control tower stood, and paused at the corner opposite Choi's position. He poked his head around the corner, and sharply withdrew it as he spotted the double barrels of the gun that had shot Choi down earlier. The guard was aiming up at the control tower's door, and if Choi were to exit the building, he would surely be hit.

'Choi, remain in your current position until I give the all clear,' he sent. 'The door is being covered. I'm going to attempt to flank the gunner.'

Goddard turned on his heel and went back the way he had come, ducking into the alley between the central buildings, moving as quickly and as quietly as he could.



The figure above Susannah, looming in the doorway, halted in his tracks and listened to a message from the wrist-unit he wore.

"This is Arvus lander, returning to position as requested. Prepare for extraction."

Susannah lay as motionless as possible; helpless, but still alive. Her attacker gave her a disparaging glance, evidently deciding she was no longer a threat. He pressed a stud on the same wrist-mounted comm and spoke into it.

"Lord Ryan, I am returning to your side. The Arvus is incoming. We will extract you under fire. Over."

A panicked voice gave some form of reply that Susannah barely heard, then she was alone all of a sudden, abandoned as no longer of consequence. Had she been more fit, then her pride would have been stung. As it was, all she was suddenly aware of was the agony of the wounds in her back, and the blood pounding through her ears. Discarding her weapons, she took the small canteen from her waist belt and doused her wounds with water, emptying the flask in an effort to deal with whatever corrosive substance had eaten into her. She was in such pain, it was hard to know if it had any effect. Tearing the sleeves of her suit, she fashioned the best make-shift bandages she could, and clipped her maul back to her belt. Using her shield to



help, she dragged herself to her feet with a huge effort, and slumped against the data-bank. Her head swam, and she fought unconsciousness. Back from the brink, she unclipped the portable data-core from her leg pouch, and slotted it into the machine that supported her. Lights blinked into life for a few seconds, then the unit fell silent once more. Through gritted teeth, she managed a half-smile, and withdrew the core. Job done, she could focus on her own survival from this point onwards.



Choi watched the screens as Goddard snuck across the open ground to the rear of the gunner's position. The inquisitor was making slow progress, and Choi found himself willing Goddard to move faster. Another screen had revealed that Cato and a bodyguard were ascending the stairs back to the rooftop, and Choi was sure that the distant rumbling he could hear was the returning Arvus lighter. It wouldn't take Cato fifteen seconds to cross the rooftop walkways to the landing pad once he reached the top of the stairs, and Choi was sure Goddard wouldn't have dealt with the guard in time. Choi watched agonisingly as Cato opened the door and stepped out of view on the "Office Stairway" feed. He looked back at Goddard's position, and gritted his teeth.

'Cato's making a break for the landing pad,' he shouted down the commlink, 'I have to act!'

Ruaridh: *Shot in the back!*

Jez's beautifully painted Kal Jerico conversion had more than proved himself to be the man of the match by the time he took aim at Goddard, but still managed to show the inquisitor how it should be done by putting a hellfire shell in his back despite needing something ridiculous like 12 or less to hit. Unsurprisingly, Goddard had failed his System Shock roll and passed out. Things were looking grim.

The Arvus was down on the landing pad, but the twin turbines nestled under its wings had not stopped – this was merely a touch-down and pick-up, and Arvat Skar pushed his charge forward, all thoughts of rank forgotten in the need for speed. The perspiring Lord Ryan stumbled ahead of him, while Skar methodically slipped further shells into the twin barrels of his shotguns. He had a nagging doubt about the woman he'd taken down – had she still been moving? Leaving loose ends was not his style, but he'd had no choice. If Cato Ryan was hurt under his watch, he'd be losing much more than a pay packet. As they got to within ten metres of the Lander, he saw movement off to his left, and quickly assessed the situation. It looked like there

With that, Choi flung open the door, and stepped halfway out of the door. He barely managed to shout at Cato to stop before the overwatch shot struck him in the side of his ribs and sent him back through the doorway to crash into the vid-screens.



Goddard cursed as the guard blasted at Choi, and from the rooftop a shot came shrieking past his head. Goddard charged round the corner, and came upon the guard from behind. He'd heard him coming though, and threw himself aside to narrowly dodge the swing of Goddard's maul. Goddard swung again and again, but the man got the barrels of his gun in the way, sending blue sparks flying as the maul discharged into the metal of the weapon. The guard rolled away from Goddard and brought his gun up to bare. Goddard threw himself down as the barrels boomed and brought his own pistol up, shooting the man in the leg. He yelped and scrambled off. Goddard pulled himself upright, and chased the man into cover with autopistol fire, hitting him at least twice more. Goddard rounded the corner to give the coup de grace, but was knocked to his knees by a shot from behind. The wound burned with an unbearable fire, and the pain overcame him. Goddard fell forward onto his face, unconscious.

was at least one more of the interlopers left, so they weren't quite safe yet.



Painfully slowly, Susannah dropped, or more like slid, down the face of the wall, and nearly crumpled once again as she hit the ground. She could still hear gun-fire, fairly nearby, but had ended up entirely out-of-sight of all those around her. The engines of the Arvus were filling the complex now, but Susannah didn't care whether or not Cato Ryan was apprehended. Her extraction point was still some distance away, but

she had avoided the remaining guards. She thumbed her vox-stud.

"Insertion to Hawkwind. Objective achieved. Request medical evacuation."

She could barely hear the reply, all of her senses dulled by the pain. She staggered off into the



gloom ahead of her.



Choi struggled back to his feet and thrust himself out of the doorway, uncaring for his own safety. He could not let the heretic escape. Cato was making a break for it along the roof towards the landing pad and Choi downed him with a shot to the shoulder that left Cato shrieking with agony. A shotgun barked and Choi felt a round clatter into his shoulder guard. He stumbled back, but stayed on his feet. Turning back to his quarry, he saw a man drag Cato into cover on the roof. Choi had no shot, so in desperation hurled himself across the gap between the control tower balcony and the landing pad. He landed with a clatter, and before he regained his balance he was pitched back off the rooftop by another shotgun blast from the bodyguard. He landed heavily on his wounded leg and cried out. Above him he could see the lighter coming into land. He only had one final chance to stop Cato's escape now by damaging the landing pad to deter the lander, and took a krak grenade from his belt. Whether it had been damaged in the fall, or if it had simply been faulty Choi would never know, but the premature explosion of the grenade left him knowing only pain.

WHEN EVERYTHING FALLS APART... - Ruaridh

Oh dear. I should've known something was going to wrong when Jez said to me pre-game, "I'll make the goons' stats somewhere in the 50s and 60s". With a shocked look I pointed out that my characters' stats were all around that mark, and thankfully he lowered them. That didn't stop him making the most obscene rolls though, and my guys suffered badly. I wonder if leaving the stats in the range of my folk would have meant that he'd have rolled badly all day as well?

Can't really blame the dice though, as they contributed to a cracking game; full of exciting improvisation on all our parts, with an out-of-control forklift, a big action movie-esque explosion and much leaping from rooftop to rooftop. It was great fun.

Of course, it means that Saussure has got away with it all, the sneaky old git. Hopefully when Choi recovers he'll remember that someone had tampered with the security system, and that maybe Goddard's suspicion that there was something not quite right with Kuipers' interrogation will lead to him looking more closely at all the evidence of the Ryans' heresy. But for now, Goddard's injuries mean that Saussure is going to be able to dispose of the Ryans at his leisure and implement a new military council to govern Agripinaa.

As an aside, it's really quite ironic that Choi ended up armless thanks to a krak grenade as I'd described him losing an arm in a piece of fiction I'd put on the Conclave a couple of years ago. At least in that piece he was putting an end to a Relictor with a krak grenade and not simply forgetting to throw the damn thing! I guess he must have been fated to losing it from the start...

BLOODIED YET SUCCESSFUL - Derek

If ever there was a game defined by the sheer jaminess of a GM, it was this one! Though there were signs of it in the last game, this little outing really brought forward Jez's outrageous ability to roll just what is



required on some dice, regardless of the odds stacked against that outcome! Normally, the response this brings is a mildly apologetic grin. I saw that grin rather a lot in this one...

I was rather taken aback by the speed at which Ruaridh chose to go for the direct route at the start of the game, though I expect he rather hoped to take out the first guard somewhat more smoothly than he did! As a result, poor Susannah was forced to try and sneak through a gun fight as opposed to a quiet factory complex. This is, obviously, rather problematic when you don't have a proper gun yourself! I was lucky, though, that Inquisitor Goddard and companions ran into possibly the most frightening goon squad you've ever seen! Cato Ryan obviously only buys the best guards for his property, but the upshot was to really slow Goddard down and give Susannah a shot at getting the job done. Managing to sprint and leap my way into the control tower to kill the lights was a plus, but her ultimate failure to cover her final approach into the control centre was very nearly her undoing. All those Hellfire shells unloaded into her poor back took her to the very brink of being out-of-play but, once again, the commotion caused by Goddard's team as they gamely tried to apprehend Ryan meant that the killing blow was never struck, and she managed to drag herself to her feet and slam the data core home.

I really felt for Ruaridh who, at times, was forced to stare in disbelief as Jez nailed another unfeasible shot into Goddard or Choi. We both had some fairly poor luck, but Ruaridh got it in the neck when it was most important, and even his last dash to get his hands on Ryan resulted in both Goddard and Choi down, and Choi missing a limb! Sometimes, it's not your day.

So, Goddard has failed to uncover sufficient evidence of Saussure's scheme, and will go along with the older Inquisitor when it comes to the deposition of the Lords Ryan as rulers of Agripinaa. Quite how he's going to feel once he eventually gets wind of what might have happened is still to be revealed...

FATE IS A CRUEL MISTRESS - Jez

Wow. What a game! Last minute leaps, vicious hand to hand fighting across out of control vehicles, explosions, ambushes, surveillance, stealth, self-sacrifice, last minute escapes and Machiavellian manipulation... James Bond eat your heart out!

It's certainly a game that will live with me for a long time to come and should stand as a testament to the qualities of Ruaridh and Derek as both masterminds and puppet masters of the plots and protagonists. However, I'm going to take a moment to engage the unblinking glare of hindsight to highlight what I think is a very important lesson.

Ridiculous shots, belief suspending system shock checks and frankly ridiculous action rolls characterized this game as much as anything else - almost all of them on my part. A measure of luck can bring tension to every bounce of the dice and suspense to every action. However, if it goes too far, it can be drastically unbalancing.

In theory, the scenario should have revolved around the race between Goddard's snatch squad and Susannah's stealthy approach, with Cato's capture by the elite of the Imperium a given. However, a series of ludicrous rolls (almost all at Ruaridh's expense) saw Cato escape and the Inquisitorial forces battered and bloodied.

In hindsight, this is where a GM needs to take matters into his own hands. The primary role of mooks (check with previous claims about primary roles of mooks) is to act as enablers for both drama and the main protagonists. During this game, they tried to steal the show. Whilst I am not a fan of 'fudging' dice rolls, I should have played up the effects of the surprise assault, the shock of the explosions and the fear as the lights cut out to make the mooks more hesitant and to have curtailed some of their more 'desperate' gambits (such as the ludicrous long range snap shot that finally took out the indomitable Goddard). A good rule of thumb is that, if an action will only detract from the overall outcome (e.g. the cinematic roof top arrest of Cato), a GM shouldn't take it if another route is open (e.g. Skar making a break for the lander himself).

However, my mistakes aside, Ruaridh and Derek were excellent, both as tacticians and players and their willingness to roll with the punches of fate and still come out smiling was humbling. I would also like to highlight their shared ability to contribute constructive and unbiased suggestions for rulings to cover unusual situations (I'm looking at you, forklift truck) and the ability to accept rulings from their GM instantly and with good grace, no matter what it might mean for their characters. That sort of behaviour makes GMing a real pleasure.

"Lord-General Sakya is en route to Agripinaa as we speak, Benedict. He anticipates entering the system the day after tomorrow. We have received no communiqués from the Administratum as yet, but the Ordo Hereticus has acknowledged the apprehension of Cato and Echinvar Ryan. They await your presence with anticipation, and are ready to commence the sentencing court as soon as we can rendezvous with the Imperial Sword."

Interrogator Kuerten finished his report and stood, awaiting a response from Saussure. The old man nodded, digesting what he's been told, then raised himself from the chair. The leather creaked as he took his weight off it. The Lords Ryan were near-as-dead already. The Stormtroopers of the Ordo Hereticus, aided by the Sisters of the Ebon Rose, had pacified the Ryan family complex within a single hour of combat, and decimated the security detail. Benedict was happy no innocent men of the Imperial Guard had been stationed around the premises – the Ryan's men had grown fat and lazy off the back of their masters' corrupt dealings, and he had no qualms in sending them to judgement in front of the Throne.

"How is Inquisitor Goddard?", he asked.

Kuerten glanced down at the data-slate. "The last information I have says that he's up. Still wounded, and I don't believe his team have left the infirmary yet, but they'll all recover."

"Good. Is Annabelle still with them?" Sending the doctor had seemed like the least he could do. Goddard had insisted on being present while they took the Ryans, but there had hardly been any colour in his face by the time the operation had been completed. However, his name had been on the warrant, and he had wanted to see it himself. Benedict still regretted the part he'd played in those injuries, but it had been a necessary evil.

"She returned this morning, sir. Goddard has arranged for his staff to be transferred off the surface tomorrow evening. I believe he's leaving a representative behind to oversee the situation on his behalf."

"Very good, Richard. Nathaniel has requested that he be allowed to do the same on my behalf. I have agreed. Durant will stay with him, as will Sark. We can collect them in a few weeks, if needs be. The rest of us need to prepare to leave. Let's see Tomashek off first, though. Signal the Angelic to expect us in two days. I trust that's enough time to clean up, here?"

Kuerten nodded. The old man was troubled.

"And summon a car, Richard. I'm going to visit Goddard before he leaves. He deserves our thanks." Saussure turned and headed off into the hallway. The door swung closed behind him, leaving Kuerten alone in the room. He began to collect the scattered data-slates from the tables and the bureau. It was going to take a while for the residue of these last few weeks to leave them all, he suspected.

He reached across and pressed a rune on the side of the holo-sphere. The rotating image of Agripinaa dissolved before his eyes.

Modelling Masterclass

Brother-Sergeant Tybalt Andrus, Imperial Fists 5th

Company

By Derek Gillespie

INSPIRATION & CONVERSION

After *Dark Magenta* published our alternative rules for the Adeptus Astartes in Issue 2, my desire for a 54mm Battle Brother increased massively. I am a fairly staunch Imperialist on the 40K gaming table, and have also painted two 54mm Marines in the past – a “stock” Artemis figure for Games Workshop Edinburgh, and a lovely 54mm Space Wolf conversion (not my own work, unfortunately) for a GW HQ display at Games Day one year. However, those were both several years ago, and I was itching to have a go at one for my own personal use. Eion’s rules in the last issue were just the catalyst I needed, so I dug out an Artemis figure from the dusty box I had stashed away, and looked at what was in front of me.

When it came to deciding what I wanted to do, it didn’t take long to make up my mind. I couldn’t face another Marine painted purely as a Deathwatch member, having already handled two such beasts, but I was very keen to have a 54mm Imperial Fist, to tie him in with my current 40K army. However, as you’ll all know, the Artemis figure has a marvellous Deathwatch shoulder pad. Now, to my surprise, it appears that many gamers don’t like this piece of the kit and do their best to hide it, either by getting hold of a second Artemis right arm and chopping it up to provide a second, plain, shoulder pad, or by slapping a great big Green Stuff cloth over the detail of the Deathwatch pad. I, however, *do* like the Deathwatch pad, so it was staying. Luckily, the Deathwatch background gave me a perfect excuse here, as Marines who have served time with the Xenos hunters are allowed to continue to wear the Deathwatch pad once they return to their Chapter as a mark of honour. With this little detail sorted, I pressed on – hacking, filing and Green Stuffing away until I’d ended up with a Marine I was proud of...

As you may be able to tell, his pose is heavily influenced by one of the classic Space Marine Assault Sergeant models. I realised that, with

only very minor re-

positioning of the legs and a bit of Green Stuff, Artemis’ whole pose could be lifted more upright and, if you didn’t play around with the knees at all, it looked very much like he had just landed from a jump of some sort. The other advantage is that is began to show off the sheer size of a 54mm Marine, which some people

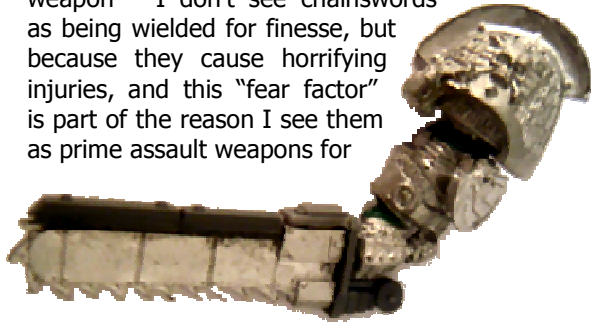
fail to appreciate as Artemis is in a headlong charge at the foe. You may also notice that I look the opportunity to shave the model’s head through judicious application of a file! I like shaven headed Marines, especially for the penitential Imperial Fists, and all it takes in this case is some careful yet forceful filing, followed by some gradual application of Green Stuff to build up a dome on his head once more. As long as you leave the Green Stuff to cure properly, you can then take a file to what you’ve done and smooth everything back into place to give you a neatly-shaven head! The other major areas of conversion note are his plasma pistol and his huge chainsword, so I’ll deal with each of these in turn:

The Chainsword

I decided, fairly arbitrarily, that I wanted my Marine to have a weapon other than a Power Sword. Besides, most Space Marine assault troops, and several characters, make do quite happily with a chainsword, so it was all right by me. However, upon scouring my bitz box, I didn’t have any “stock” blades that were suitable – I



considered using Malicant's Eviscerator, but it was too long and thin when put in the hands of a Marine. I wanted this to look like a butcher's weapon – I don't see chainswords as being wielded for finesse, but because they cause horrifying injuries, and this "fear factor" is part of the reason I see them as prime assault weapons for



the Astartes. So, I needed a weapon of my own choosing.

What I came up with, you can see above. The body of the chainsword is constructed from the Eviscerator you get in the chain weapons booster pack. The teeth have been chopped off along one edge, and this edge "sealed" with a plastic spine created from the top hatch doors from a rogue trader era Marine Rhino. The handle and extended motor unit of the Eviscerator has also been removed with a modelling saw and a new hilt constructed using parts salvaged from the pintle-mount of a 28mm Astartes tank. Once they're all stuck together, I was perfectly happy with the look I ended up with. It's squatter than available chain weapons, but it looks pretty brutal, and is about the right size compared to the rest of the model, in my eyes. You can also see the re-positioning work carried out on the left arm, whereby the arm was sawn through under the shoulder pad, rotated, angled and pinned back in place. Likewise, the wrist was also pinned at a more extended angle that is normally the case with Artemis. Green Stuff was then used to re-build the armour plates and the internal flexible joints.

The Plasma Pistol

There is less to describe surrounding the plasma pistol in terms of conversion. An old colleague of mine, John Nicolson,



once converted a lovely 54mm Khornate Berserker (if you're reading, John, send us a picture!) that had a plasma pistol based on the 28mm Plasma Cannon, and I've wanted one ever since. Taking this as my opportunity, I dived into my bitz box and pulled out just what I needed, which could be slotted into place after Artemis' bolter had been sawn from his hand, and the 28mm Marine hands had been clipped free from the Plasma Cannon.

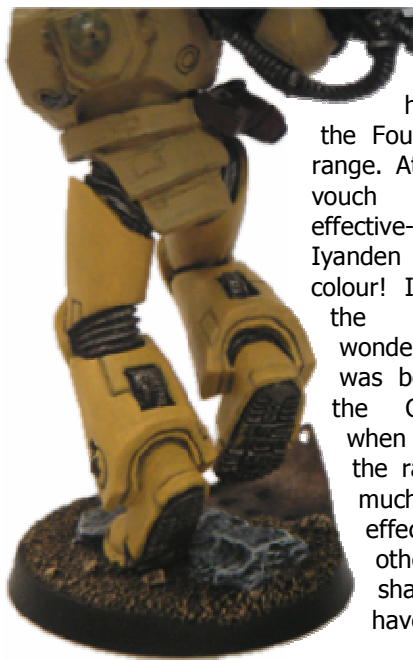
The fit is generally very pleasing as long as you cut away the parts mentioned carefully. One of the most satisfying sections was slowly bending the cables from the Plasma Cannon into alignment with the scanner unit mounted on the Marine's right arm. A small amount of Green Stuff was then used to sculpt on a few extra cables and make the whole thing appear as though the pistol feeds directly into the wrist-mounted monitor unit.

I deliberately held off gluing the whole piece together before painting, so it was easier to get at tricky details without risking dropping the whole thing on the floor. I know from still-hard-to-accept past experience what can happen if you drop an Artemis figure onto a hard surface, and I don't want to repeat the experience. For painting, I left the model in four sections – main torso and legs, left arm, head, and backpack.

PAINTING

A general point regarding the painting – I used a Chaos Black undercoat. Normally, I paint over a Skull White undercoat and, especially in the case of a model that's going to be ninety-five percent bright yellow, I wouldn't think of doing anything else. However, experience at painting 28mm Imperial Fist tanks had taught me that it can be hard to get smooth yellow, so I thought I'd have a little experiment with the Citadel Foundation Paint range, which I hadn't used at the time. These pigment-heavy paints are allegedly designed for even coats over black undercoats, so I thought I'd put them to the test with a yellow model! Also on the general front, my approach to painting a piece such as this – where there is a display element involved – is to base coat the whole model first, then follow up by tackling specific sections of the piece and working on them until they are pretty much finished before moving onto the next section.

The Legs



I must admit to being very happy with the Foundation Paint range. At least, I can vouch for the effective-ness of Iyanden Darksun as a colour! It's not quite the "one coat wonderland" that was boasted of on the GW website when they released the range, but it's much, much more effective than other yellow shades would have been!

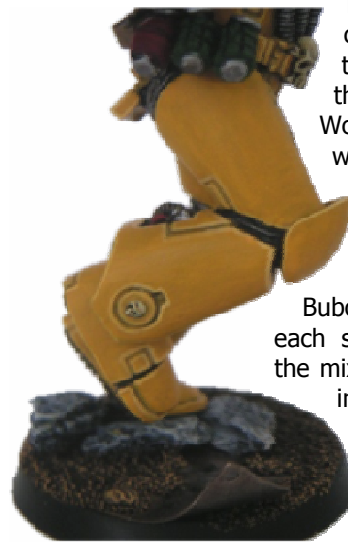
The photos here illustrate start of the painting process as it was followed. The yellow armour was given a basecoat of Iyanden Darksun, followed by successive coats of Iyanden Darksun and Golden Yellow mixtures – the first such coat was 2:1 Darksun:Golden, followed by 1:2 Darksun:Golden, and finally two thin coats of pure Golden Yellow were applied. The right-hand of the two photos illustrates the difference in tones – the left leg is pure Golden Yellow, the right leg is 2:1 Iyanden Darksun: Golden Yellow, while the torso is pure Iyanden Darksun. This results in a rich, buttery yellow, which I think is closest to the original descriptions of the heraldry of the Imperial Fists. It shouldn't burn your eyes out when you look at it, in other words! The



highlights on the armour have been kept to the minority required for definition – I wanted the Golden Yellow to be the primary colour, so highlights were restricted to the edges of the power armour, and were applied in two thin layers – 2:1 Golden Yellow:Skull White, and 1:1 Golden Yellow:Skull White. The completed effect you can see in the next photos.

The other pertinent details on the legs were the belt skull and the grenades. My method for painting ornamental bone starts with a Dark Flesh basecoat, which is then

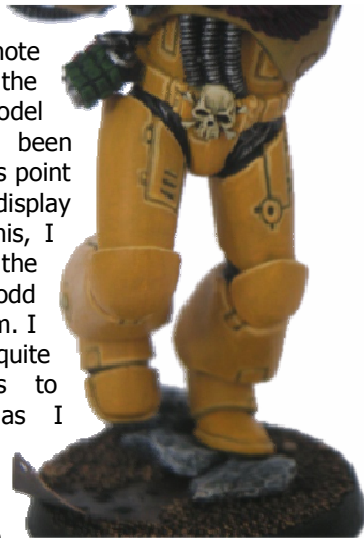
painted with Snakebite Leather and then Bubonic



Brown, in each case leaving only the darker colour in the deeper recesses. Working quickly (or with a wet palette) I then add successive amounts of Skull White into the Bubonic Brown, with each successive layer of the mixture being applied in smaller amounts, and concentrating on the raised areas of the sculpt around the eye cavities, the top of the skull and the teeth. The lightest two layers are "feathered" onto the bone in very faint lines, to give some texture to the section.

There are two types of grenade on the model's belt – green frag grenades (Dark Angels Green basecoat, with 1:1 Goblin Green added as a main colour, and pure Goblin Green edge highlights) and a red krak grenade (Red Gore basecoat with two successive layers of Red Gore/Blood Red highlights). The metallic areas in the joints of the power armour have been drybrushed Boltgun Metal followed by a light drybrush of Chainmail.

The final point of note here is that the base of the model has already been painted by this point in time. On display models like this, I often tackle the base first, as odd as it may seem. I find bases quite messy things to paint and, as I hadn't decided if the Marine was going to have his armour "weathered" or not by this stage, I decided to tackle the base first. The rocks and the disused plate on the base are from the 40K basing kit, and they were then covered with



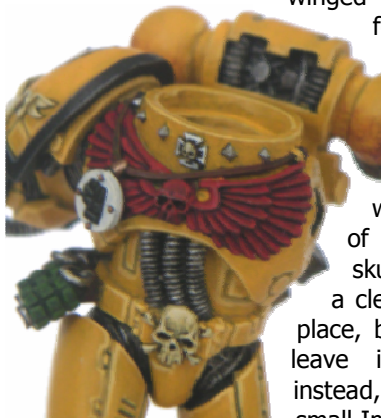


normal sand, all super-glued into place. The earth is painted via successive drybrushes – first with Dark Flesh, then Snakebite Leather, then Bronzed Flesh, then Bubonic Brown, then Bleached Bone. Each successive layer is lighter than the last, and the inclusion of the richer tones, such as the Snakebite

Leather and the Bronzed Flesh, gives a nice, warm, earthy tone that I find pleasing. The final layer – the Bleached Bone – is applied in a faint ring around the edge of the base, which gently frames the piece. The discarded metal was drybrushed with Tin Bitz, Beaten Copper and then a 2:1 Beaten Copper:Chainmail mixture, and the rocks were painted in Shadow Grey before being drybrushed with first 3:1, then 1:1 Shadow Grey:Space Wolves Grey, followed by the edges being picked out with pure Space Wolves Grey.

The Torso and Plasma Pistol

After tackling the legs, I moved onto the torso and right arm of the Marine. The yellow of the armour was tackled in exactly the same fashion as the legs, as you would expect. However, the major feature of the chest plate is clearly the winged skull icon that



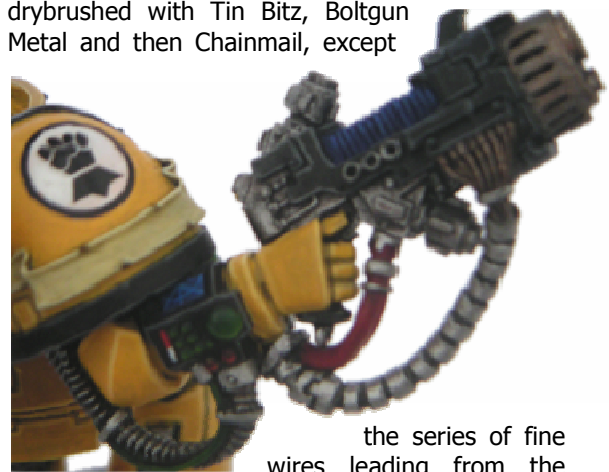
forms the chest "eagle" for the Artemis sculpt. Originally, I had toyed with the notion of removing the skull and sculpting a clenched fist in its place, but I decided to leave it as is and, instead, use one of the small Imperial Fist icons

from the 28mm booster pack as a medallion hanging from the straps around his neck.

The winged skull was tackled in the same fashion as the krak grenade, simply with more layers of

intermediate reds. Starting from the Chaos Black undercoat, a layer of Red Gore was applied to act as the basecoat, and then this was the highlighted by adding increasingly large amounts of Blood Red to the Red Gore. In total, there were five layers of red, with the final layer being pure Blood Red, applied to the very tips of the wings and to the uppermost edges of the central skull. The hanging pendant was painted Skull White over a Space Wolves Grey basecoat, using several thin coats of Skull White. The strap itself was painted using a Dark Flesh basecoat, followed by 1:1 Dark Flesh:Snakebite Leather as the main colour. The very edges of the strap were painted with a 1:2 mix of Dark Flesh:Snakebite Leather, and the bronze detailing was painted with Dwarf Bronze, and then a tiny highlight using 1:1 Dwarf Bronze:Chainmail. Finally, to signify that this particular Marine was assigned to the 5th company, his shoulder pad was given a Chaos Black trim, which was highlighted twice at the internal and external edges by adding small amounts of Skull White to the Chaos Black.

The Plasma Pistol itself had the metal areas drybrushed before the arm holding the weapon was painted, to stop all that metallic paint getting all over the lovely yellow! The metals were drybrushed with Tin Bitz, Boltgun Metal and then Chainmail, except



the series of fine wires leading from the gun, which were drybrushed Tin Bitz, followed by Dwarf Bronze. After the yellow armour was completed, the muzzle of the pistol was weathered by lightly drybrushing some Dwarf bronze over the Chainmail, while the thicker, insulated cable leading from the pistol to the scanner had additional thin layers of Chainmail applied to remove the drybrushed look.

After carefully picking out the individual plates that make up the body of the Plasma Pistol with Fortress Grey, the power coils/accelerator chamber of the gun was basecoated with

Midnight Blue, to which was added small amounts of Skull White to create the highlights. The highlights are initially applied thinly to the top of the coils then, as more White is added, to the sharp edges only, picking out the ribbed surface. The whole section was then given a wash of blue ink to pull all the colours together and give the feel of a gentle glow. I'd also draw your attention to the forearm-mounted unit, to which I added a "scanner" effect using the same blue, painting on fine lines to make the display look active. Most of the lights on the unit are green, so I imagine that most functions of the Plasma Pistol are functioning just fine, but you'll notice the increasing red line to the side of the green lights – I imagined this to be an "overheat" monitor for the Plasma Pistol. Little details like this don't take very much time to put in, but help to add some greater narrative to a figure – you might miss them the first time you look, but they'll reward people who pay closer attention to your miniatures.

Finally, the Imperial Fist chapter marking on his shoulder pad is the smaller of the two Fist icons available from the Space Marine Armoured Vehicles transfer sheet, cut to fit the rounded shoulder pad. To do this, I cut a wedge out of the top of the transfer, placed it onto the model and let it dry, then re-painted the missing detail using a Fine Detail Brush.

The Face

The face of any model is the most important thing you'll paint – it's where our eyes naturally gravitate when we look at a miniature, so you do yourself a lot of favours if you get it right!



I started off painting the face of the Marine using a basecoat of 1:1 Dark Flesh:Snakebite Leather over the whole face, then taking a thin coat of Bronzed Flesh and applying it over the whole

face, leaving the original basecoat showing in only the deepest grooves of the face. A fairly liberal first highlight of approximately 3:1 Bronzed Flesh:Skull White was then applied over most of the face, again leaving the darker colours only where I wanted shading – the sides of the nose, the cheek hollows, the eye sockets and the lines of the face. I then proceeded to add five further layers of highlights – each consisting of Bronzed Flesh:Skull White mixtures in the approximate ratios 2:1, 1:1, 1:2, 1:3 and finally 1:4.



As you will have guessed, each highlight hits successively less of the face, with the final highlight being applied very carefully to only the bridge of the nose, tops of the cheekbones and the ridges of the eyes. It's also worth noting that, after the 1:2 highlight, no more highlights were applied to his bald head! Also, make sure that any highlights you apply to the bald head are very thin, so you don't end up with concentric circles on the head – it needs to be smooth.

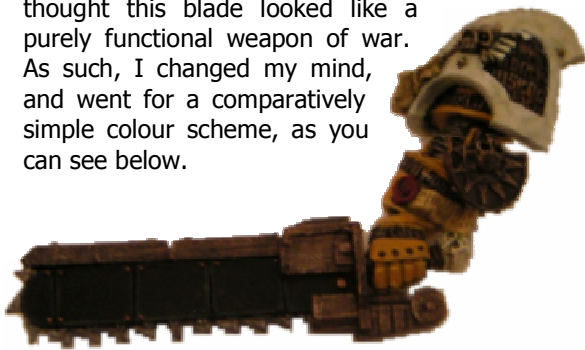


The final head, seen above, looks deliberately knarled, emphasising the veteran warrior nature of the Battle Brother. The sculpt has lots of detail

in the face, and I didn't want that to go to waste. Were I after a more fresh-faced appearance, I would have started from a lighter base colour and softened the contrasts. The eyes and mouth have been carefully filled-in with Chaos Black, and very thin Skull White has been dotted in place for the eyes, and lined-in to define his mouth. After that, the head is ready for mounting on the body.

The Left Arm and Chainsword

Rapidly approaching the finishing line on what had been a long, yet enjoyable, paint job, and I had a dilemma. My initial thoughts for the chainsword and attached arm had centred on a highly-decorative chainsword, and a fairly standard Deathwatch shoulder pad. I even got as far as starting to paint the chainsword with a dark marble or malachite effect, but I scrapped it quite quickly as not quite feeling right at all. Painting the chain weapon in that fashion made it look more like an artificer's work and, as I'd said, I thought this blade looked like a purely functional weapon of war. As such, I changed my mind, and went for a comparatively simple colour scheme, as you can see below.



This new colour scheme simply used Chaos Black to paint the plates of the chainsword, with the edges picked out using Fortress Grey. The hilt and spine of the weapon were painted in a bronze tone made up by drybrushing on Tin Bitz, followed by Dwarf Bronze and then a 1:1 mixture of Dwarf Bronze and Chainmail. After I picked out the rivets with Dwarf Bronze, I was happy with my newer, and simpler, colour scheme for the chainsword. However, I now had to decide what I was going to do with the rest of the arm. I had a good, long think, and decided to take a bit of a gamble. I liked the bronze I'd used on the chainsword, and thought that I could take it through as a good colour to use for all of the Deathwatch detailing on the left arm, including the script on the shoulder pad itself. The gamble involved was that I decided to contrast the bronze not with the normal shining silver of a Deathwatch shoulder pad trim, but instead with a white marbled effect, which I'd never tried on a model before – it had previously been confined to a test run on my painting palette!



Before I tackled the shoulder pad trim, I worked up the yellow armour as before, and carefully

drybrushed all of the sculpted script in bronze as I had done for the chainsword, with an additional (and very light) drybrush with

Mithril Silver across the top of each row of letters, just to pick them out further. The central skull and crossbones I painted in a more deliberate fashion, using several thin layers of Shining Gold that then had Mithril Silver worked into the mix to add highlights along the raised edges. I also took care to differentiate the relatively-warm brown tones of the purity seals (from a Snakebite Leather basecoat worked up to Bubonic Brown with a touch of Skull White for the highlights) from the colder bone of the chainsword hilt (a Bubonic Brown basecoat that was highlighted up to pure Skull White with a thin Bleached Bone wash) – this was particularly important as the purity seal and weapon hilt sit against one another.



For the marble itself, working quickly was the most important point, coupled with very thin paints. I applied a basecoat of Rotting Flesh over the undercoat, and waited for that to dry completely, giving me a sickly grey-green base. I

then watered down the Rotting Flesh until it was almost the consistency of an ink, and proceeded to add Bleached Bone to the mix in around seven separate stages, each with more Bleached Bone, but also more water to maintain the consistency. The first layer was applied across the majority of the Rotting Flesh in "blotches", leaving only a

little of the Rotting Flesh showing. The second layer as then added *quickly*, mainly covering the previous layer but, in some places, covering the Rotting Flesh that was not previously covered. I kept working like this and, as the paints are very thin, the overlapping colour layers build up as solid colour where there are multiple layers, but allow the darker colours to show through where there is a larger tonal difference. This creates a feeling of depth to the "stone", and gives it a pleasing marble effect. Once I was using pure Bleached Bone, I added a small amount of Skull White, and repeated the technique twice more. Finally, I allowed the piece to dry, before finishing it off with a final highlight of approximately 2:1 Skull White:Bleached Bone along the edges of the marble.

I was personally exceptionally pleased with the result, and I hope you can make it out in the photos above! Perhaps taking those particular photos against a black background would have been good? Ah well...

Assembly and Weathering

Now that all of the component parts were completed, I had the comparatively simple task of supergluing all of the parts together, guided by the pins I'd put in place during the conversion stage. Once this was



complete, and I had decided I was happy with everything, I added a single transfer to his greave has an army badge, then proceeded to apply the weathering to his armour.

"Weathering" is applied at the sections of a model where you think there would be a degree of wear-and-tear. It's very much a matter of personal taste if you want to weather a model you've painstakingly painted, and I'd never insist someone adds weathering to an otherwise lovely model. In this case, I imagined my Marine would be relatively proud of his Chapter colours, so I didn't want lots of rust on his yellow armour, but I did decide to add some mud and dust around his boots, and some exhaust and heat damage around his backpack vents. It's not hard to do –

in this case, I gently

drybrushed on successive layers of Bubonic Brown, Snakebite Leather and then Scorched Brown, with each colour having less applied than the last. Where I wanted it to appear as though the paint had been scratched away to reveal bare metal, I drybrushed a very small amount of Boltgun Metal onto the piece, and that was that.

Completed!

So, in all of his completed glory, I proudly present Brother-Sergeant Tybalt Andrus, 5th Company, Imperial Fist Chapter of the Adeptus Astartes.



Once all is said and done, am I happy with him? Well, in general, the answer is very much, "Yes". When I first revealed him on The Conclave, it was pointed out that service studs would have been a

good addition, and I have to admit that I agree. However, I was pleased with his face and I didn't want to risk messing it up once painted, so I didn't go back and add them. I don't *think* that was too much of a mistake.

Apart from the service studs, there's not that much that I'd change. Were I to make another Marine, I'd quite happily paint him up as an Imperial Fist once more, and it would be fun to carry out some more serious conversion work on his stance, as well as most likely using a helmeted

model armed with a boltgun – more of a line trooper as opposed to a Sergeant.

So, I'm very happy, and I hope you like him as well. Should I let Brother Andrus loose on a tabletop any time soon, I'll see if I can give you an update! If any of you have any comments or, even better, photos of your own 54mm Marines, please feel free to send them in to editor@darkmagenta.co.uk – we can feature the best submissions on the Communiqués page next issue.



A RIDDLE IN AN ENIGMA

An introduction to the Demiurg by Frank O'Hanlon

One of the pleasures of the Warhammer 40,000 universe are the wide, open vistas of background that have been broached by the Nottingham Studio but then left as deep and intractable mysteries. Few things generate such discussion on Internet forums, or fire the imaginations of *Inquisitor* players. It is into this category that the topic of the Demiurg falls: existing as models only in ship form for the *Battlefleet Gothic* space combat game, almost nothing is known about these mysterious aliens. However, there can't be many people who've given the subject of the Demiurg the amount of thought that Frank "Xisor" O'Hanlon has.

The article that follows is even more heretical than usual, as it springs fully-formed from Frank's productive imagination. Until the Studio sees fit to tell us anything more about the many and devious plans and strategems of the Demiurg, however, this is pretty much as good as you're going to get.

Enjoy! And remember: everything you have been told is a lie...

Robey

Lord Nemesov,

It is as you feared. This fragment remains intact.

<+MESSAGE BEGINS++>

My lord Nemesov,

It is with great regret I must inform you that our quarry has eluded us once more. However, aboard our vessel we bring the entire remnant catalogue of horrors, heresies and censured works coveted by the heretic Garibaldi.

Curiously, amongst his vaults there were some tomes from authoritative sources. Some were merely compiled accounts from various acolytes of his and of the Ordos in general. It is of some surprise to my fellow Lectors that we found the works of Lord Revic.

We are bound first for Armageddon from whence I shall make for the Corianus sub sector. The Ordo transport under supervision of Scriptor Vallianus shall

<+MESSAGE CORRUPTED++>

The Demiurg, the Bentu'sin, the Starcrawlers. They remain more scarce than the eldar, more unseen than the hrud, more resilient than the ork and arrive as unheralded and unwelcome as the tau. That they are a potent civilisation is not in question. That they possess a civilisation is quite the question.

Since the commencement of my tenure within the vaults of Terra some twenty years ago, I have scoured the darkest archives, the unseen depths. I have fought the guardians, the eradicators and the deletons in the depths of the administratum hives. To put it swiftly: there were very many forces at work ensuring I could not see what that which we desire and we have achieved but a fleeting glimpse at no small cost.

Let us establish the accepted facts:

- That the forces identified in association and pattern to be 'Demiurg' are present across all five segmentae with reports authoritatively stretching as far back seven thousand years, pre-Imperial. [Cref. the Corianus Aexcavation, the Testimony of the Rambhaldrhi Species, the Pacification of Forty-five Eighteen]
- Evidence of interxenos and reprehensive human trade conducted over an indeterminate time period of no less than twelve-thousand years, terran standard.
- With no noticeable change in recording, notation or identification methods retrospective studies of Adeptus Terra archives across the five Bastions of Humanity yield a sharp rise in positive identification over the last millennium. Prior to this an almost constant retroactive identification is indicated across all segmentae save those in the deep Cradle region, as it is colloquially known [Censure: informal tone].
- No biological study has been undertaken.
- Positive-matched tech-specimens match no known technology associated with the Disciples of the Omnisiah. Infiltrative xenos technology identified as compatible with STC artifices on multiple counts.
- Demiurg-identified artefacts indicate xenos origins (unrecognised in revelations of the Omnisiah) [Note: This edict bears the ratification of the High Lords of Terra c.867M32 in addition to the Seal of the Sigilite and upheld by the High Lords of Terra c.442M36].
- Prevailing threat rating: Xenos Majoris. [Note: Acting upon this rating is rare. Battlefleet standing orders acknowledge recalcitrance and hermit-like nature inherent in Demiurg vessels. Few squadrons survive action based upon this rating.]
- Various conclaves [Amtrath, Rasanan and Kreto, notably] are in pursuit of reclassification Obscuro Minoris. [Update 4123992M41: Latest reports from Interrogator Pendrath, acolyte of Inquisitor Whitaker, relay overtures of Isstvanian philosophy attendance at noted conclaves]
- Despite consensus of the Ansamus forum the orthodoxy of the Adeptus Terra accept no substantiation of Demiurg proliferation.
- Technological heresy proves sufficient to outstrip even the Explorator Arks of the Adeptus Mechanicus. [Cref. The Ark Mechanicus Cognitae Nobilis and attendant forge ships and explorator cruisers proved unable to capture identified Demiurg vessel 'Stronghold' during fourteen-year pursuit in the K'tet Sector]
- Demiurg operations, as viewed by means of stealth monitoring units operated mutually by the Ordo Xenos, chambers militant, planetary governors, sector and sub sector ministries in addition to sanctioned conventional Imperial military operations, all report a high degree of automated and sophisticated industry quite in excess of the abilities typically assigned to their parent sources. [Clarification: A vessel of battleship displacement capable of planetary scale industry is by no means an uncommon allusion of the reports.]

What these factors point to is not definable links connecting isolated Demiurg sightings and reports across the galaxy until this millennium. Previous authorities [Kain 344M34, Rebbute 121M37 and Irasis 420M38] yield many theories as to the nature of the Demiurg. The lack of reliable contact with distinguishable individuals of their species casts most doubt upon these theories. Which is: the Demiurg are a reclusive foe possessed of technological capability in excess of our own brothers, the Adeptus Mechanicus. That they would remain unchanged and recalcitrant for millennia is a mystery.

It is noted that a great many, if isolated, occasions involve trade, both within the Imperium and without. In every instance a Demiurg, if present, is posited to reside within an augur-impenetrable protective suit massing substantially less than that of an appropriately armoured sororitas. Indeed, this depiction of such Demiurg is curious in itself. Whilst most reports allude to a xenotype which is indicative of blasphemously human proportions (a dorsal extremity in correlation with the neck and skull, bipedal ambulatory system, twin articulator limbs etc), and that their physiology appears squatted, possessing a low centre of mass and distinctly stocky ambulators is well established, there remain too many exceptions for a rule. Their articulators and nadir-pads are uniformly bizarre. Be they techno-tentacular, force field-manipulators, mechanical force translators or a baffling variety of other items, no visible flesh or biological matter is properly identifiable. The individuals purported to be Demiurg lack an obvious common physiology save this vague, squatted semi-humanoid basis. For this reason it is of little surprise that many outlandish and unsupported, yet essentially feasible, suggestions abound as to the nature of the Demiurg.

This, alongside a lack of indication of any overt desires save trade, seclusion and industriousness leave theorists in a perplexing situation. Insight from the proliferation of various expansive xenos trade empires of the Ultima Segmentum presents new material for study, though this is out with my remit. It is my suggestion therefore that the utter absence of any distant unity between the various pockets we encounter (for they are phenomenally more often than not individual capital-class vessels and attendant ordnance) indicate that the Demiurg are products of a civilisation rather than the core of one.

It is almost unnecessary to state that there are a great many corollaries and attendant assumptions which underlie this conclusion, but my scepticism, after decades in the hallowed repositories of the Imperium, allows me to venture little further by way of hypothesis as to their origins. It is a matter of extreme perplexity indeed.

Another curiosity, another heresy.

Allow me then to progress onto distinctly more tangible matters. The high-inexplicable proliferation of Demiurg technology and artefacts across the breadth and history of the Imperium, of human history itself.

Following is a representative account of the devices catalogued in the Debronian system in orbit of the jovian planet Rellian within fragmentary wreckage and on the planet Klevar IV of the Hellar subsector, Corianus sector.

The most prolific remnants are those termed 'automata'. Few remain intact. Previous encounters corroborate the testimony of traders passing the Debronian and Klevarian systems; that the automata of the Demiurg are specialized creations. The stories tell that the Demiurg are the artificers, smiths, designers, architects and engineers who apply their intellect to the fashioning of their automaton servants. These servants, we are told, exhibit profound independence. Though many tell of mediocre machine-minds capable of specialised tasks and particular duties (largely industrial) some more tell of trade-machines, fashioned in the image (and even capacity) of their Demiurg lords or of their prospective counterparts in trade and negotiation.

To summarise the findings we note that the automata are the recurring (potentially sole) aspect of the Demiurg encountered by other concerned parties. They are often equipped at least in a capacity for self-defence accounting as well for a variety of machine appendages and widgets suited to the completion of varied tasks. These tasks range from mundane transportation of goods to the extraction of precious materials, from the securing of a site of operation to the utter eradication of all potential opposition. That other automata display no overt specialisation is again not in question; the distasteful implication remains that their function is indeterminable given the means at hand to our researchers.

Automata display a marvellous range of aptitudes. Though many are reported to have little independent capacity cases report displays of contingency planning and action as complex organisational-coordinator nodes within an extended network (one hesitates to designate such a conglomeration as a 'team'), there are more troubling allusions.

The accounts of Explicator Asariel Ugana and Lector Fiefus Marr indicate that their attempts to capture a living Demiurg have produced no fewer than thirteen distinct formats of impersonator-drones; each having successfully duped a long series of unwitting (yet heretical and suitably reprimanded) Imperial officials.

Most Demiurg automata are of the size and disposition of common mammalian life forms. The uncommon lower end pairing alongside rodents with the larger forms being akin to ogryn stature, or even that of greater beasts (such as the Grox). Larger constructs appear in more standard mechanical formats being loosely analogous to transportation vehicles, weapons platforms and so forth. Smaller mechanoids identified by the Cult Mechanicus remain under close scrutiny though details remain elusive.

Demiurg automata are rarely fragile and uncommonly durable. Though most exhibit a lack of overt moving parts (save limb- and manipulator-analogues), some remarkable artifacts indicate an incredible grasp of astoundingly complex clockwork mechanisms. Devices, manipulators and tools routinely include projected energy-based technology. Quill-sized devices exhibiting the potency of las-cutters are a commonly reported folklore, though no such device has been observed. The members of the Cult Mechanicus note many indicative patterns in certain aspects; a clear competency with elements exerting control over the fundamental forces is corroborated by the prevalence of gravitic-projector analogues, technologies reminiscent of highly sophisticated electromagnetic manipulation (plasmatic and ionic tools) as well as prolific field-effect devices.

Their physical form varies from the nodular set-up of the intricate manipulator automatons to the disc-like format similar to the drones of the Tau. Barrelled forms are less common, but have still been reported in utility roles. It is not uncommon to find one local pattern of automaton following a rough preference or style only to find automata performing the exact same tasks that look nothing alike.

THE AUTOMATA OF THE DEMIURG

Representative Jev-30L was recovered by the errant Ordo Xenos Inquisitor Cabel Kean as part of the cataloguing process in the Debronian system. Jev-30L, self-identifying as sixteenth subservient machine-overlord was retained off the record. Jev-30L now functions as Kean's rememberer; a bearer of trivial or highly-detailed data and wayward advisor. Kean was announced Heretek Abominatus after being involved in Rebeanakan Librarian Province disaster on the Forgeworld Voss, wherein a full servitor legion became infected with a xenogene malady which induced partial lobotomy reversal; the death toll exceeded seven thousand tech-adepts. The association and involvement of the Jev-30L artifact is suspected by pursuing Inquisitors and Magos Mechanicus.

Equipment: Jev-30L carries two ion wands and an ionic scalpel. It carries two structural disruption charges (function as melta-bombs). Jev-30L's structure incorporates an unknown field-armour weave (counts as AP5 on all locations and affords two points of force-field protection). Its sensory capabilities act as a vox-caster ranging up to surface-orbit power and also as infrascopes implanted gunsights.

Special Abilities: *Mechanoid, Nodular*

Representative Jev-30L

WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
25	51	71	90	35	81	79	39	20

Jev-30L features four distinct manipulators. It is 'handed' prominently in two of these manipulators: one on each side.

Typical Mechanoid

WS	BS	S	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
30	60	65	85	40	50	50	130	20

This sample might have indicated a load-bearing device, a weapons platform or a designated intermediary. Highly specialised combat models may well be available, as may particularly intelligent models, highly competent impersonators or even walking idiot-armour.

Mechanoid

Although Jev-30L is portrayed as a character, there is would be debate on whether such a term is philosophically or technically accurate. As a machine-construct it is immune to most kinds of psychic powers, gases, toxins, etc whilst must pass toughness tests to avoid system shock under effect of, say, haywire grenades.

Nodular

93-00	Jev-30L's central core is hit.	Count as head.
50-93	Jev-30L's manipulators are struck.	Count as arm.
01-49	Jev-30L suffers motivator damage.	Count as legs.

Ionic Items

Damage done by Ionic devices does not cause bleeding (due to cauterisation of wounded tissue)

Weapon	Type	Range	Firing Mode	Acc	Dam	Sh	Reload	Weight
Wand	Pistol	E	Semi(3)-	D6+1	3	<u>2</u>	10	
Scalpel	Pistol	E	Single	-30	3D10	1	<u>4</u>	15

MODELLING THE DEMIURG

Just as there is little official guidance on the Demiurg in the written background material, there's no real steer as to what they look like either! Modelling guru Dave Knowles presents his take on these mysterious denizens of the Warhammer 40,000 universe...

Dave: The main thing I tried to keep in mind when building my Demiurg was that it should be ambiguous whether it's the Demiurg himself, some sort of protective suit, or perhaps even just an automaton. My inspiration for this was the encounter suits worn by the Vorlons in Babylon 5 - a mix of technological and organic components with it not being clear where one ends and the other begins.

Although my Demiurg is obviously humanoid, I was very keen to make him as alien as possible. To this end I decided that his hands and feet should be very different to ours. With his models, Xisor had introduced the idea of 'technurites'. On his first model these were very long and coiled around the torso of the Demiurg, but I preferred the idea of them being short and coming from his wrists to give the impression that his fingers were used for grasping and the technurites were used for more delicate manipulation of objects. In order to further distance the hands of the Demiurg from our own I added a second thumb at the bottom of their hands to give him far more options when it comes to holding things.

As my Demiurg now had six digits and three technurites on each hand/arm, I decided the pattern should be repeated on his feet, and so each foot was given three sets of two toes, and has technurites snaking down from his ankles as if they're reaching down to analyse the soil as the Demiurg passes.



I think the hands and feet worked really well and I was very happy with how the segmented leg plates turned out, so if I were to build a second Demiurg I'd keep those aspects and possibly extend the segmented look to the arms and possibly torso as well. I was less happy with how his face turned out; at the time I liked the idea of it being rather featureless but if I were to build another I'd cover it in lenses and other sensors to give him more of a 'face'.

The tool belt also looks a little too mundane, and if I were to revisit the Demiurg this is another area I'd do differently. It strikes me that a Demiurg should carry all sorts of widgets and gubbins around with him, so his toolbelt ought to be festooned with gadgets.

The Rites of Regulation

By Mark Erlight

'Are you a pious man, brother?' the man asked me in the low tones of someone who wishes to avoid the notice of the governor's Clavigers. 'Do you yearn to be closer to Him on Earth? To be alone, in the rapture of pure thought and hear his voice? I can give this to you. Merely break the seal on this vial and breathe deeply. All I ask in return is a small donation-'

Baptiste, my bodyguard, stepped forward and shoved the man out of the way. There was little of remark about the _Spook_ pusher, save his woven over-robe made from rough, red cloth. He was otherwise typical of proletarian Netherwardians - slightly stooped, pallid of skin and marginally underfed. There is little deference to station or wealth in the Netherward and when they address you with "Sire" or "Lady" there is little feeling in it. It is something they are inexplicably proud of.

We were posing as assessor, assistant and bodyguard. This was a perfect cover as it was exactly what we were, to a degree. I was pretending to be a Second Order, Fortieth Level Imperial Notary of the Haberdasher Regulatory Body. You find such busy little men all over the civilised worlds, cataloguing the mundane in the Emperor's name. I was using the cover to enter the most exclusive shops in the Netherward, taking note on who could afford to have expensive tastes and tracing that money back to its sources.

It was in Fayed's, _Purveyors to the Most August Gentlefolk of the Imperium_, that I first spied Shunpiker Chatterton. My gaze was drawn to him, as if guided by an unseen hand.

'Five and a half feet of nondescript artifice,' as Thatcher Poll, my exactor, described him.

Chatterton was not the name he was using at the time, but it is the pseudonym I think he suited best and I will use it throughout this account for the sake of clarity. He was posing as a gentleman's gentleman and commissioned a _Lonely Godmother_. The device was of exquisite design and I decided the expense of it warranted further investigation. Personages of power are notoriously difficult to access and usually

outside the social strata of my covert personas. I often concentrate my attentions on middlemen and servants. Their actions betray much about those they serve.

I tasked Crosswords Baptiste with following Chatterton. Baptiste returned a short time later and told me that he'd lost Chatterton in the Baker's Bazaar. This was unusual. Baptiste was an adept prier and, although a local and temporary associate, had proven to be reliable so long as his credit account wasn't empty. Chatterton piqued my interest and I invented some pretext for the servants of Fayed to inspect the Gentleman's Armoury workbook. I made a mental note of when Chatterton would be returning.



It was another four weeks before I had to concern myself with Chatterton again and we had plenty with which to occupy ourselves in the meantime. I was simultaneously monitoring the illegal gambling dens of a corrupt Signet Noble and tallying the revenue estimates of a narcotics smuggling cartel. These were typical of my activities in the two years I had spent in the Netherward.

When you mention the Office of Tithing, most people imagine the edifices of the Permanent Offices or the vast Auditor Ships with their army of inspectors. But there is sometimes a need for more subtle assessment. A full Magisterial Audit is a rather dramatic event and tends to induce an amount of paranoia and secrecy in any planetary government. I like to catch them with their guard down. Tithes are calculated according to planetary potential, not actual output. Naturally, that includes any revenues from the black economies.

I have a duty to report illegal activity within a certain timeframe, but this is sufficiently long enough to allow Holy Bureaucracy to run its course. Statistically speaking, the impact of any subsequent crackdown is of limited duration and does not factor into my assessment.



Chatterton returned to Fayed's in the intervening period to expedite the delivery date. We would have missed him if I had not prepared for this ruse. Eight weeks had originally been specified for the procurement of the _Lonely Godmother_, but I had put the minimum Fayed's would need at four weeks and started surveillance at this date. When Chatterton emerged from the premises, we were in place and, working as a team, exercised extreme caution in following him.

The Netherward is an unusual city. Early development included much subterranean excavation and this introduced structural weaknesses in the ground that prevented the construction of taller structures. Even the city spaceport is limited to vessels under a certain tonnage. When the pressures of population expansion grew, there was only one direction to go: down. It is a curious feature of the place that the most expensive buildings are on the surface and the newest constructions are the deepest. The minimal social segregation of the Netherward allows any man to travel freely to almost any district, something Chatterton's many guises took full advantage of.

'He's got more faces than a clock manufactory,' as Poll put it.

In the garb of a senior merchant, Chatterton was entertained in the home of a Signet Noble. In the red-lit tunnels of Ladyhole, he passed as an illegal bio-implant courier. But it was at the spaceport that we found his most persistent persona. There he was pilot and owner of shuttle Moonfleet 464. I used Baptiste to wheedle information on this identity from the port master. According to the port master, Chatterton was a freelance docking-pilot who sold his skills to merchantman captains.

It was a local racket, enforced by law, that shipping had to be navigated into orbit by licensed pilots. It gave Chatterton ample opportunity for smuggling. Small smuggler ships mean exclusive cargos.



The nature of Chatterton's cargo began to obsess me. My sleep was disturbed as,

unbidden, my mind began to extrapolate the various possibilities. I put it down to stress caused by the difficulties of keeping Chatterton under surveillance. Still, I was disturbed. My training and my augmentation mean that, when I obsess, I can do rather more obsessing than the average citizen.



The Netherward's spaceport was a grid of high-walled paddocks, leased on an individual basis. Usage of the port had slumped after the expansion of the heavy lifter port some hundred miles away. Chatterton's shuttle berth was unguarded beyond the port's Clavigers, in keeping with the relatively low status of a freelance pilot, but was monitored by surprisingly sophisticated auto-sentries disguised as altogether more primitive technologies. This is where the third member of my party came into her own. Still, it took my exactor four nights to convince their machine spirits to admit us.

'Exactor Poll,' I said, 'I'm authorising a covert inspection of Shuttle Moonfleet 464 at the third hour of the sixty-sixth day of Penury according to the third Rite and Regulation of Assessment, sub-clause 4F. It is recorded and signed.'

'So noted, Assessor Joseph,' she replied. [For the record, I am Tithe Assessor Kafka Joseph.]

With the formalities out of the way, Poll set about disengaging the aft locks. Given the time we'd spent gaining access to the bay, I wasn't expecting instantaneous results.

'I'm not going to be able to open this,' said Poll, 'not without him knowing we've been here, and probably not without triggering the plasma bomb he's rigged as a failsafe.'

I was somewhat shocked by this announcement. Poll was an expert in her craft and she hadn't let me down before, not even when we had broken into the Privy Bank Mercantile on Gudrun.

'Not to worry,' said Poll, 'I'm not out of tricks yet.'

Poll took out a wire imbued with a machine-spirit and a glass controller globe. She set the

wire's head against the hatch and it began to burrow its way through the metal.

'The tail segment will break off and fuse with the surrounding metal. There won't be a hull breach.'

Poll rubbed the controller globe, steering the spywire through the craft to the cargo hold. I peered into the globe as the wire entered the hold. There wasn't much to see, but what there was made me blanch. Departmento Munitorum requisition chits. They were dormant, but I didn't need my cortex cogitator to tell me there were enough to provision a small army.

As we left the bay, I was extremely troubled.



There is no better way to think than prostrate in abeyance to the Emperor and I can think of no better prayer than silent discourse on how to follow His will. I was being drawn to this case in a way I had not experienced before - something was pulling me to act against my better judgement. I went immediately to the House of Forgotten Saints, a small, hewn-stone chapel not far from the surface.

Departmento Munitorum requisition chips! The Departmento is the heart of the Imperial war machine. This is the master for whom I toil, the warmonger for whom I tithe, the beast I feed. I am not of it but I live for it nonetheless.

This affair was becoming all too complicated. If Chatterton was profiteering, even at the military's expense, I had a duty to investigate. But, if it was a secret military matter, if Chatterton was an Imperial Agent, I would have to ignore these events and ensure my associates' silence. [Regulations on these matters can be found in The Helican Edition of Contrariwise Policy Making Regarding Assessment and Local Affairs.] Fortunately, my time in the chapel had cleared my mind and, with the Emperor's guidance, a path out of this situation was becoming clear. I resolved to return with Poll to our apartments to chair a meeting on the subject. There are few problems that cannot be solved by a dedicated committee of pious minds.

I dispatched Baptiste to watch the spaceport.



Poll and I travelled by gravlev to the apartments we were renting in a mid-depth area popular with local functionaries. The apartments were at the end of a cul-de-sac corridor, chosen precisely because the neighbouring domiciles were unoccupied. I have an eye for detail - no more than a necessity when one's occupation is modelling planetary economies in one's own head. Upon the ground, I noticed a thread, red and made from a rough, synthetic fibre that I had seen before.

Some of my colleagues rely on the sophisticated technomagics of the Adeptus Mechanicus when engaged in their craft. I prefer simpler, more devious methods. There is good reason for this. Poll's equipment aside, much of which would not be uncommon in an assessor's assistant anyway and the rest of which is disguised to conceal its true purpose, there is no reason to mark oneself out from the crowd. More than one tithe assessor has run into trouble by lugging round an excess of hardware.

'I shall be glad when this day is over,' I said, which was a coded message that danger lay ahead. Poll surreptitiously drew her Type 101, a compact laspistol better known as a "Scrivener's Special". The work of an exactor is necessarily more of an active one than that of an assessor and Poll was equipped accordingly. For example, the little booklets that filled the many pockets under her robes had flak-weave covers. I led the way into the apartment.

As we entered the communal area from the apartment's hallway, my eye caught movement behind the settee. With a shove from Poll, I fell on my face and heard the hornet buzz of a silenced autopistol rake the entranceway. I heard the low crack of Poll's 101 returning fire, but knowing she was distracting our foe didn't help me feel any less exposed. I can easily recall the smell of dust and polished stone as I dragged myself behind the granite lump of the kitchen island. I remember the cold fear of that short journey and the strange elongation of time where a second lasted a minute.

I peered round the far edge of the kitchen island to get a look at our assailant. As I suspected, it was our _Spook_ dealer friend from Fayed's. He was hunched behind the settee, his oversized autopistol convulsing as it loosed projectiles. Burning fluff-butterflies floated up from the sofa to surround him, hatched into life by Poll's return fire. The man noticed me and was redirecting his auto-sprayer when I shot him with my own 101. I may not be equipped for war, but I'm not so foolish as to go unarmed. I singed his neck and he fell back, clutching the burn. Poll ran from the cover of the doorframe and bounded the sofa. I heard the smack of a pistol butt against human skull.

'I recognise this one,' said Poll before adding, 'he is unconscious.'

My shot had been a fortuitous one. I am no marksman and had been aiming for his centre body mass, as they taught me to long ago in Administratum Bastion Defence.

My telecommunicator chirped on the bureaucratic channel I had given Baptiste and I touched my aquila earring to receive. The bureaucratic channels are usually reserved for the endless streams of numerical data that the Administratum generates. Misuse is severely frowned upon, but I had submitted Consecrated Requested Form 5804-Alpha with some creative entries and Blessed Procedure had duly assigned one to me.

'Sire Joseph, the hat maker is available by appointment tomorrow,' reported Baptiste, meaning Chatterton's shuttle had just departed.

'Inform him that I will call presently,' I said. 'I trust you will ensure that all the necessary paperwork will be made available.'

I disconnected the channel.

'Exact what you can from this one,' I said to Poll. 'I've told Baptiste to keep the bay under observation and that I will join him shortly. I will take the control globe.'

I left Poll to her work on Chatterton's hiring. This turned out to be a fruitless exercise; the man knew nothing and I would have been glad of Poll's assistance in what was to come. This is hindsight, but it is also a cautionary

warning against following the letter of Divine Process.



The gravlev was empty as I boarded for the spaceport.

I admit to a certain amount of irrationality on my part at this stage. All thoughts of defining a measured, agreed direction forward had disappeared. Chatterton had obviously seen through my subterfuge. My determination to assess the value of Chatterton's dealings seemed driven by instinct, by a pressing need I could not define. I was following a path to direct violence where none was necessary. Even now, I cannot explain it.

The control globe came to life as the spywire came back into range. I directed it to look round the hold. The requisition chips were gone. Some transaction had taken place. I raised Baptiste.

'Chatterton is returning. Accost him. I must see what he has. It is my duty.'

If Baptiste thought anything of this blithe assertion, he kept it to himself and merely grunted an affirmative. Baptiste had once been a member of the governor's Clavigers, but had been discharged and imprisoned for accepting a bribe. On his release, he started making a living as a bodyguard. His new career had spanned all strata of society, criminal or otherwise, and I found his local knowledge invaluable. You may be shocked that I would associate with such a man, but if it isn't obvious already, I am something of a radical.

The gravlev was approaching the spaceport station when my telecommunicator chirped into life. I heard Baptiste's heavy slug pistol boom twice and he shouted a stream of colloquial expletives.

'Damned Godmother!' spat Baptiste. 'Can barely see. He's making for the gravlev, Sire Joseph.'

I rose from my seat as I saw Chatterton board the next carriage. He spotted me and the clearspex of the dividing door shattered as he fired a bolt pistol down the carriageway. Amber warning lights lit up and the gravlev's

doors reopened. I returned fire with my Type 101 and was glad I had the presence of mind to close an eye. The machine-spirit of Chatterton's Lonely Godmother intercepted the shot and converted its energy into a flash of blinding light.

Chatterton must have expended some ammunition on Baptiste, for he ejected his pistol clip and was reaching for another. I hurled the control globe at him. It wasn't a particularly powerful throw and it didn't trigger the conversion field. The globe connected with Chatterton's hand and knocked a fresh clip from his fingers. I ran at him without any real plan and we fell in a tangle of limbs.

Moving to close quarters became an obvious error as I found Chatterton had some skill at unarmed combat. He punched me twice, paralyzing blows that left me limp. He pushed me aside.

'Shunpiker,' said Baptiste's voice and Chatterton face went chalk white. Baptiste put a heavy slug through his forehead. I recovered some movement and painfully righted myself.

'How're your injuries, Sire Joseph?' asked Baptiste.

'I have been better,' I replied. 'How are your eyes?'

'Been better, but I was pretty sure I was shooting the right gentleman.'



Not wanting to explain things to the Clavigers, we made a discrete exit, but not before I sequestered a thing from Chatterton's corpse. Exactor Poll was waiting for us at the safe house prepared in case any of the Netherward's underworld assesseees became a problem.

I must mention the book, though to even think about it clouds my judgement. Strapped to Chatterton's dead breast was a satchel containing a singular volume. I dare not open it; I dare not part with it. I imagine it to hold some ancient knowledge, perhaps the lost Library Codification sought by the Cult of Saint Dewey, perhaps something even more valuable.

I was at a loss as to what to make of my experiences and my new possession, so I did what any pious servant of the Administratum would do. I recorded it all. In this report.



Why Won't Anyone Play With Me?

It's a familiar refrain and complaint on the online forums: "I want to play *Inquisitor*, but no one I know plays." So here're some hints and tips on how to find players.

1. **Ask them.** You may be surprised. Just because you don't see anyone playing *Inquisitor* at your Friendly Local Wargames Store (FLGS) or wargaming club, that doesn't mean that there aren't other people with a warband tucked away in a dusty corner at home. They might be enthusiastic for a chance to dust them off and have a crack.

2. **Search online.** The *Conclave* (<http://www.the-conclave.co.uk>) has a register of players around the world and you may be surprised to find people in your locality who play.

3. **Run some demo games.** If you have at least two models (and you really should have at least two models), then you can play a demo game to introduce new players to the rules. Most FLGS will be happy to let you have a table for an hour or so and wargaming clubs certainly will.

I've found the last to be by far the most effective way of recruiting new players to the game. Use some of the scenarios we've already published in *Dark Magenta* or make up your own and get people playing. Obviously, with more models you can involve more people, but I find that two people and a GM is the ideal balance for introductory games.

Be prepared to do this for a few weeks in a row and you'll find that people gravitate to your table. *Inquisitor* is a fun, funny game that inevitably excites much shouting, laughter and groans of despair and crowds will gather. Before long, you will become used to the words "can I have a go next week?"

I started with no players at all in my club and the last time we played *Inquisitor*, we had to use two tables to involve all the people who wanted a go. Now, even though I'm taking a break and concentrating on other games (heresy!), I'm always asked when we're going to play some more *Inquisitor*. Several of those who joined in have now bought their own warbands and they're keen to give them some tabletop action.

If you think that models or terrain are a problem, look back over the last two issues of *Dark Magenta* where I've already solved all of your problems for you.

What are you still reading this for? Go play some *Inquisitor*!

Communiqués

The Grandmaster answers your whispers from the Warp

Once again, it's time to delve into the postbag and answer your queries regarding past contents of *Dark Magenta*, or to discuss matters surrounding the *Inquisitor* game in general. Things have been quiet in the Editor's inbox these last few months, so please keep sending us any *Inquisitor*-related musings you have, and we'll give them some column inches here. Any questions and stories should be sent to editor@darkmagenta.co.uk for our attention!

My Pet Grumble...

First off, I love *Dark Magenta*. It's awesome!

My only complaint, (and this is a really minor, pedantic thing) is that in issue 2 you referred to boltgun reloads as "clips". This is a common error, and as a firearms enthusiast it always grates my ears whenever I hear someone refer to clips. Just for future reference, clips are used to load magazines which, in turn, load a weapon. The things you stick in bolters are magazines, not clips!

Keep up the good work - I'm really enjoying it.

Tom Schinckel.

Whoops! Sorry, and consider us educated. This is obviously symptomatic of the fact that we all love the 41st millennium, but many of us (the editor included) have little practical experience of weaponry. Hence, our terminologies probably slip more often than not (indeed, the same mistake has probably cropped up in this issue!).

We'll try to keep our eyes open for this mistake in the future, Tom, and thank you for your kind words surrounding the first two issues.

Robey says: *I have no excuse. I edited the article and I know full well the difference between a clip and a magazine. I shall report to the excruciator in the morning.*

Can I Get Involved in This?

Thank you so much for producing the first two issues of *Dark Magenta*! I love the fact I've now got some source for keeping on top of things going on for the *Inquisitor* game.

I'm wondering about the modelling articles you've shown in the first two issues. They were both great, great collections, and I'm wondering if I can get involved. I don't have a huge collection at the moment, but I'm a keen painter. Do you accept submissions for modelling articles, or do you invite your submissions?

Thanks for your time, and please keep writing the magazine!

Allen O'Shea.

Many thanks for your e-mail, Allen. In response to your query, the answer is that we do both! If the Dark Magenta editorial staff know of a good painter or a dedicated hobbyist who has a large collection, we'll approach them and see if they're interested in producing a Showcase or Masterclass article for us. However, we really, really want the readership at large to submit their work to us.

So if you think that you've got a collection of models good enough to show off (or even if you don't know if they're quite good enough, but want to try anyway!), then please send us some photos to

editor@darkmagenta.co.uk. We can get back in touch with you and invite you to produce a full article if we think there's potential there. You've seen the sort of thing we're after in the last two issues, but you'll also have noticed there was no Showcase article in this issue, so we really do need your help to be able to keep showing off beautiful Inquisitor figures!

Well, that's it for this issue. Keep your comments coming, one and all, and we all hope you've enjoyed this issue of *Dark Magenta*.

Regards,

Derek

Record of Heresies

Derek Gillespie is the Editor-in-Chief of *Dark Magenta*, and has been keeping his fingers in many *Inquisitor*-related pies ever since the game came out. He's currently trying to get back to having some regular gaming and painting time after finishing off his thesis, and is finally having some small measure of success!

Robey Jenkins is a nu-renaissance man. He lives in York, where he runs the York Garrison Wargaming Club and writes science fiction. Look out for his latest story – "The Sixth Day" – at <http://www.afterburnsf.com/>.

Ruaridh Dall is a newly qualified dentist working in Elgin in the north of Scotland. While not filling teeth he can be found working on far too many modelling projects at once and thinking about grown up stuff like buying a house. He goes by the online moniker Van Helser..

Jeremy Lowe is a a veteran of Games Workshop games, from Man O'War to Aeronautica (although he has a strange aversion to Gorka Morka). Whilst he doesn't get to play *Inquisitor* as much as he would like to, it doesn't stop him talking about it whenever he has the opportunity and reminiscing about aerial sneak attacks with Eviscerators. These days he can be found thinking about tanks, painting High Elves and dreaming of Dark Elves...

Nathan Dowdell can't talk about what he does during the day, but this secretive vocation is punctuated with feverish bursts of imagination that sometimes result in usable rules and interesting background material. He's been musing about the 40k universe for over a decade and a half, and has produced a small-but-well-received collection of fan material for *Inquisitor*, *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay* and *Dark Heresy*... and has made a small but satisfying contribution to the forthcoming *Dark Heresy* supplement, *Creatures Anathema*. Which he is extremely pleased about.

Jason Heuser has more talent than any one person should rightly enjoy. His deviantArt gallery is: <http://sharpwriter.deviantart.com/>

Mark Erlight is not his real name and he refuses to be drawn.

Frank O'Hanlon is a hard man to contact for further information, but at least has the common sense to be a regular frequenter of The Conclave...

If you'd like to buy any of the artwork you see in *Dark Magenta* or to commission any of our artists, please email the editor at the submissions address.



Space Marine Character Sheet

Name:

Player:

Chapter:

Campaign:

	WS	BS	S*	T	I	Wp	Sg	Nv	Ld
Starting									
Current									

Effective

* +40 for Marines with biscopea, before any bonus from armour

Weapon	Type	Range	Mode	Acc	Damage	Shots	Reload	Weight

Weapon	Reach	Damage	Parry penalty	Notes

Equipment

Armour:

Strength Bonus:

96-100 HEAD
Armour:
Ablative:
c <input type="checkbox"/> e <input type="checkbox"/>
Damage
L H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A C

c – ceramite-bonded ablative armour
e – exposed power cabelling
f – fixed greaves (may not sprint)

Organs

Defective organs:

Abilities / Psychic powers

True Grit (Larraman's organ)
Spit Acid with Bloodfire toxin (Betcher's gland)
Ambidextrous & Nerves of Steel (hypno-indoctrination)

Awareness

Re-roll failed Awareness tests – sight (occulobe) & hearing (Lyman's ear)
Awareness check to detect poisons by taste or smell at -20% (Neuroglottis)
Derive memories from ingested brains; requires D3 turns Stunned & Sg test (omophagea)

Poison

Re-roll resistance tests (Oolitic kidney)
+10% versus ingested poison (Preomnor)
+10% versus gaseous poison (Multi-lung)

Damage:

System Shock: (T x 0.3): _____
Consciousness: (T x 0.75): _____
Instant Death: (T x 1.5): _____
Above Toughness increased by 50% (haemastamen) Ignore first *Stunned* each turn (secondary heart)

Injury Total:

36-65 RIGHT ARM
Armour:
Ablative:
c <input type="checkbox"/> e <input type="checkbox"/>
Damage
L H S A C

81-95 CHEST
Armour:
Ablative:
c <input type="checkbox"/> e <input type="checkbox"/>
Damage
L H S A C

36-65 LEFT ARM
Armour:
Ablative:
c <input type="checkbox"/> e <input type="checkbox"/>
Damage
L H S A C

Right hand carrying

66-80 ABDOMEN
Armour:
Ablative:
c <input type="checkbox"/> e <input type="checkbox"/>
Damage
L H S A C

Left hand carrying

01-30 RIGHT LEG
Armour:
Ablative:
c <input type="checkbox"/> e <input type="checkbox"/> f <input type="checkbox"/>
Damage
L H S A C

31-35 GROIN
Armour:
Ablative:
c <input type="checkbox"/> e <input type="checkbox"/>
Damage
L H <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A C

01-30 LEFT LEG
Armour:
Ablative:
c <input type="checkbox"/> e <input type="checkbox"/> f <input type="checkbox"/>
Damage
L H S A C

☒ Immediate: character must test for system shock (second heart)



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