

SKAVENLIGHT

Issue 2

gazette



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g a z e t t e

Skavenblight Gazette

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All complainers will be fed to the Mutant Rat Ogre.

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So here we are, at Issue 2.

Things are certainly getting exciting around here. The first issue was really successful, and a lot of people were blown away by how good it was. Frankly, even us who work on it have been suitably suprised by the response, both for the first issue, and from the subsequent support and passion that people are showing for the publication.

So as you can see, the Skavenblight Gazette is really starting to take form.

That form is largely dependant on you, the readership, though. As you would already know, we run completely off of voluntary contributions, and as such, rely quite heavily on submissions. You may not think yourself a writer of any calibre, but a good idea is a good idea!

Over the course of the issues, we will slowly introduce a selection of regular articles that you can contribute to. The idea is that having feature articles will help to focus the creative process for those who wish to contribute. It can be daunting coming up with an article concept from scratch, and these features will be a good starting point for you to explore the inner workings of Skavendom.

The first of these, Legends of the UnderEmpire, is aimed at exploring the myths and stories of Skaven society, be it a place, a person or a thing. This issues article, King Rat, is a good example of this. It explores a mythological character of Skaven lore, giving a life and personality to the largely mysterious inner working of the Skaven race.

Voices from the dark

In the case of the Legends of the UnderEmpire, it isn't so hard to look at the Skaven and think "What would constitute a legend to the Skaven?". Sitting down and getting down your ideas is the hardest part of the battle. Even if you are not confident in your ability, our editors are here to help you to improve your contribution and give valuable advice and support.

As well as articles, we are always looking for illustrations and miniature photos. In fact, what we are lacking at the moment is a stockpile of well painted miniatures in a battle scene or diorama. We have had some impressive work already submitted, and I expect soon the cover space will be hotly fought over by enthusiastic artists and miniature painters wanting to create the cover.

Get involved with the ezine any way you can. Tell your friends about it. Tell members of other Warhammer boards about it. Tell your Mum about it. Tell someone, even if its your pet rat.

Especially if its your pet rat.

*Clanlord Trask
Editor*

Skaven Army Building Tactics and general unit uses

by Blood Vixen

Heya everyone

First off thank you for the great feedback for the gazette. It makes it worthwhile to do this for everyone, and it also gives enough motivation to continue with my part.



Ratling guns

Ratling guns are one of our major units for firepower. Although they are a lot harder to use since 7th edition, ratling guns are still powerful. Take 1 per 500 points at the most and always with a unit of 25+ clanrats. If you take less clanrats then they are a lot more likely to panic so keep behind your lines until they are needed.



Warpfire throwers

Next are the warp fire throwers. If you like fire, you'll be good friends with these ratties as they produce more fire than a dragon with a cough. Unfortunately this could result in them setting themselves alight, but they are extremely useful against armies where the d3 wounds can make all the difference (e.g. ogre kingdoms/ beast of chaos and bigger things). They are also good versus well-armored armies since they have a good armor modifier too.

Gutter runners

Okay, now let's look at special choices.

Let's work from the bottom up starting with the gutter runners.

For their points, gutter runners are effective at little but useful all the same. They are a skirmishing scout unit with above average speed and good combat stats and have two weapons. This unit can cause your enemy a major headache in the early turns for not an amazingly large amount of points, but don't expect them to do much by themselves. Gutter runners can be fit to many roles thanks to a variety of equipment upgrades. Give the unit throwing starts and they become a nice little harasser unit to any light armor squads and could be given poison to make them more effective against high toughness foes like giants. This can also be done with their combat weapons; making them a pretty strong combat unit. The slings option however is debatable in uses as the x2 shots within half range might seem tempting but having to deal with the ballistic deductions can prove to be a lot less useful; but they are still a viable choice even though I believe the stars are normally better.

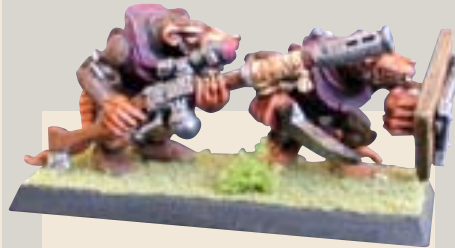
Recommendations for gutter runners: if taken, it is best to have them scout forward where they can cause the most damage even if they don't get into



combat. Poisoned hand weapons or poisoned stars are what I personally recommend but not both as this will drive their points up more than you will need. Gutter Runners are definitely a high on the list of choices for your special slots.

Tunneling team gutter runners are useful as war machine hunters and lone mage mincers but come with added risks and at a bit steeper point cost. However, the tactical uses outweigh this quite a lot. Again one poison or the other as they are already pretty expensive just to be made to tunnel and it'll be quite a large chunk of your points if they fail to show

Recommendation for tunneling teams: very useful but not very reliable. Keep them cheap but capable of taking the role that you intend for them. I wouldn't recommend more than 1 team per 1000 points but its dependant on what you're playing.



Jezzails

Now bow your heads or lose them, it's the sniper suck-ups from Skryre, the jezzails. These are a double edged sword unit as although they give you some strong firepower, it leaves a soft centre when charged which can cause problems if against a smarter opponent. However being skirmishers and having the pavise gives them a built in -1 to be shot and a 4+ save against shooting. Jezzails will need to be taken in larger units to get their shots off, but when they hit they are very good tin can openers; making a mockery of cavalry and armored stunts alike. These should be your only real targets however otherwise the cost for jezzails won't reap benefits.

Recommendation for jezzails: a nice choice is squads of 8. This will allow you to hit fairly often and make use of the better wounding capabilities. One unit per 2000 is a good estimate as their point cost for a unit of 5 will get you 20 clanrats or 50 slaves.



Plague monks

From Lustria, chanting plague and death to those against, them are the plague monks. A great anti light armored unit and even effective against medium armored units. Always give them additional hand weapons as the combination with frenzy will allow you 3 attacks per monk which will make many units disappear very quickly. However they are fairly soft as they only have their toughness of 4 to protect them. That's right no armor, just an extra point of toughness, but then again we're Skaven, we should have a line of slaves ready to die for our cause willing or otherwise so why do we care?. The command as normal is useful although I see less use for the musician than the other two.

Magic banners for plague monks

Banner of burning hatred: this makes monk combat capabilities loads better. Being able to re-roll to hit on the first turn of combats will allow many more hits to land and at a low points cost as well.

Banner of the four black winds: commonly ignored as even if there were flyers chances are they'd stay very far away from your plague monks if they could help it. However it's still useful against Bretonian RAF and the elven bird brigade.

Umbranner: another common banner; this allows you to have a 4+ ward save vs. all strength 4 or less shooting.

Warbanner: +1 combat resolution is always helpful but not as helpful as other choices.

Banner of the swarm: if you're not taking a horde of plague monks (30+), I don't see why this would be considered over the warbanner. It can still be useful; just not here.

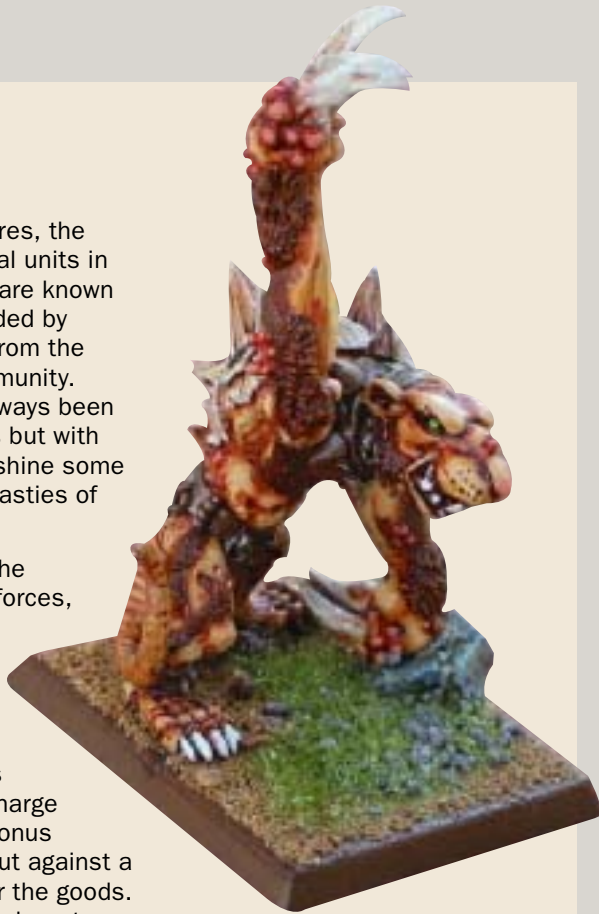
Recommendations for the plague monks: these should fill a lot of gaps in your army as they're not only useful in combat but they allow the plague censors to be taken. I recommend no more than 20 a squad and always with additional hand weapons and standard.

Rat ogres

Now comes the rat ogres, the underdog of the special units in the Skaven army that are known to be feverishly defended by Bassik Dwarveripper from the UnderEmpire.net community. Now rat ogres have always been debated in usefulness but with some luck this might shine some light on these poor beasts of gory death.

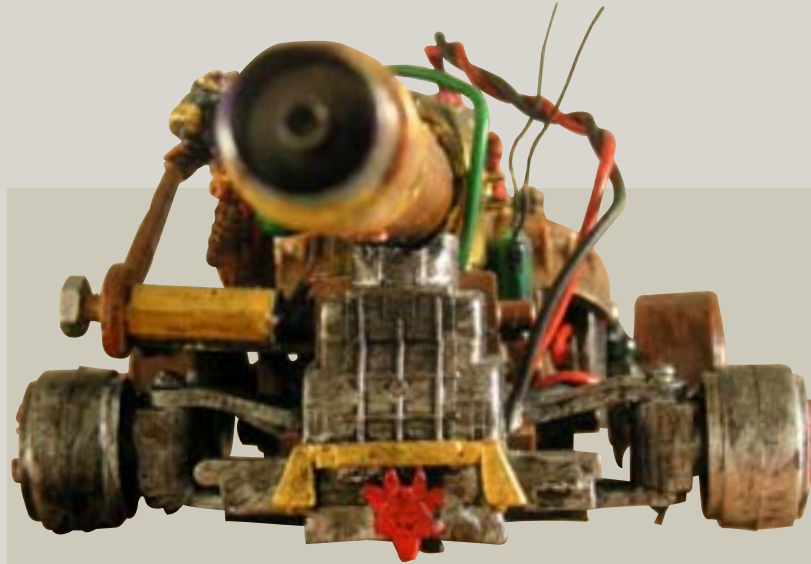
Rat ogres are one of the Skaven's anti cavalry forces, but unlike the other forces of the jezzails and weapon teams who need to be at range or the plague censer bearers who need to get the charge to get their strength bonus these guys can hold out against a charge and still deliver the goods. Unlike other units like clanrats who lose attacks per wound basis the rat ogres need to take 3 wounds before you can remove their attacks so if only two wounds are caused you still get all of your attacks in return.

Causing fear is also a bonus specialty. Against armies with a lot of fear causing units, you'll be thankful you brought these guys along. Rat ogres also make it in as one of the Skaven's flanking forces that negate ranks and can still hurt the big things. That is something no other unit in the Skaven army has.



However they can prove to be a costly investment, especially against shooting, though they can always be screened, and since they are not large targets, they can not be singled out past units.

Recommendations for rat ogres: squads of 2 or 3. The amount of squads is down to what you're expecting to go up against, but when it comes to all out combat rat ogres are one of the only things in the Skaven army that can duke it out with a heavy armored foe.



Warplightning cannon

Okay, that ends the special options so now I'll move on to the rares next... not a very large section but still; there's better things to put your points towards.

Warp lightning cannons either giving your enemy a case of the ashes or a spiky hairstyle. These are our only true war machines and everything about them is random. The range, the strength, the misfires, these can be the most deadly or the most pitiful war machine out there, but it's still useful to have on your side. Never let it get charged or you have to run.

However, being able to shoot through terrain is a bonus as well as instead of aiming at a target you point it in a direction and fire in a straight line. This has proven to be very helpful and something people have often missed out on.

Recommendation for warp lightning cannon: one per 1500 is a good estimate but again army dependency is the key.



Plague censer bearers

Totting next to the monks are their flail crazy brothers the plague censer bearers. Other than rat ogres, these are our combat can openers either with their gas attacks or their flail bonus strength. They have to keep next to plague monks until they charge and with frenzy they have 2 attacks each which can cause a lot of damage but remember that the gas can hurt them too.

Recommendation for plague censer bearers: very helpful unit you'll need them if you don't have rat ogres. Take one unit of these per two plague monk units depending on the rare slots available.

That's the end of this copy and I hope you enjoyed reading it. Next time I'll talk about armory choices and spells

War in the tunnels

by StormverminWarrior

Warlord Snuff walked into the small alcove he was using as a nest in these hazardous sewage tunnels, beneath the man-city above. He unbuckled his armour, throwing it down beside his bed of straw and unsheathed his long fine blade, sweeping it from left to right in a few practice swipes. He had done well to reach his position of Warlord, tricked, murdered and fought his way into power over the skaven forces in the area. The blade, he had taken from his predecessor, Skittich.

As Snuff went to sheathe his blade he heard a faint sound behind him. He turned in curiosity and came face to face with a black-clad skaven who had dropped from the rafters of the alcove. The mysterious skaven stepped sideways, blocking the only exit from the alcove. Reaching inside its cloak, it produced a short, wickedly curved blade, which had a slight green tinge to its surface. Snuff recognised this instantly as one of the poisons of Clan Eshin. He was frozen on the spot, his own blade brought up in front of him ready to defend in case the assassin attacked.

Instead, the assassin reached inside its cloak again, then paused for a second. Suddenly in a quick flash of movement the assassin flipped out the alcove,

its hand releasing two small silver stars as it moved, each flew straight at Snuff with perfect accuracy.

Snuff dodged to the right, bringing his blade up in front of one of the stars as he moved. The first star bounced off his sword with a metallic ringing which echoed around the alcove. The second star flew straight past Snuffs face and embedded itself in the soft wall behind him. Snuff snarled and raced out into the tunnel after his attacker. The tunnel was dark, one faint brazier in the distance giving this stretch of tunnel an eerie glow.

Snuff caught sight of two red eyes in the darkness just to his right but as he lashed out at the darkness the shadows seemed to move and he lost track of the assassin's position. Suddenly there was a flash of silver as the assassin's blade caught the light and Snuff lunged forward, burying his sword deep in the assassin's belly. Snuff jumped backwards, staying out of reach of the return strike. The last of his energy spent, the assassin toppled forward, dropping its blade and clutching the wound Snuff had inflicted upon it.

Snuff grabbed the assassin by the fur on his neck and pulled his head up,

"Who sent you?!" he demanded. No reply came. "Who sent you?!" he repeated, hitting the assassin and lashing his tail on the floor, snarling at the dying skaven.

"Clan Fenwell, warlord paid us much warpstone" the skaven managed to mumble before it fell limp at his feet.

Snuff turned back into his alcove and strapped his armour back on before heading down the tunnel to the rest of his troops, stepping over many dead stormvermin corpses on the way.

The chittering horde of skaven were assembled in the huge hall the clan had spent many years digging. The main sewer ran straight along one side of it. It was a good point to gather his forces before they marched to war.

Snuff stood atop a high wooden ledge built into the front wall of the grand hall. To his left stood his two chieftains and two warlock engineers, to his right stood his grey seer and the champion of his stormvermin bodyguard, Stitch. Snuff, Stitch and the grey seer, Vishniq, had been in a council

all night since the attempted assassination. Snuff was going to launch a full scale war on Clan Fenwell until their warlord was defeated and the skaven joined his own ranks. The two clans had been rivals for years, always fighting minor battles over arguments about where exactly the border was between their territories. Now, however, Snuff was not backing down. Such an army had never stood before him, the entire clan was assembled here today.

"Listen" said Snuff.

The stormvermin all fell immediately silent and looked up at their lord, the excited clanrats took a while longer to fall silent.

"Warlord Chutin of Clan Fenwell has declared war on our clan" he lied, "Says if we do not meet him in battle he will come kill us all. But we are not scared of this puny clan. No-no, not at all – we will go to Clan Fenwell and I will kill Warlord Chutin!"

With this the whole horde burst into shrieks, yelps and more chittering.

"Go, attack from below!"

Snuff and Vishniq stood at the back of Stitch's stormvermin unit, ready to charge the unwary clan from below. They had slain any scouts and lookouts they had come across and were now ready to reveal themselves.

The clanrats, slaves and many other units were all in position throughout the many tunnels below Clan Fenwell, and knew to strike at the sound of thunder. This is where Vishniq came in. The stormvermin climbed a series of ladders and reformed in front of the huge black door that led to the halls of Fenwell. This was the main tunnel and was well protected. However, the smaller tunnels could easily be captured by clanrats with the help of globadiers and gutter runners.

Vishniq stepped up to the doors and snarled "These are tough doors, strong wood over strong steel, it will take much-much force to move them"

"Do it, unless you want to be given to the rat ogres" Snuff said, snarling at the grey seer.

The grey seer looked frightened and turned his attention back to the doors. After a moment he held up his hands and a green glow started to emit from them. It got brighter and brighter until, with a sound like thunder, two bolts of warp energy hit the doors and blew them straight off the hinges. The energy caused Snuff's fur to stand on end but his stormvermin were already halfway through the doorway so he ran after them.

As Snuff entered the huge hall he saw many surprised and dazed skaven looking around in confusion. Some had only just realised what was happening and were reaching for weapons, others were already armed and launching counter charges against the skaven pouring out of every tunnel, pipe and drain in the area. Snuff had underestimated the size of clan Fennel, their hall was well over double the size of his own and packed with both skaven and slaves. Two huge cannons were against the far walls and skaven were now running around them turning knobs and pulling levers, aiming the huge things in... his direction.

Snuff panicked, looking down the barrel of the two huge cannons, which had been turned on him and dove into the ranks of his stormvermin as a huge green line of warplightning fired across the hallway and vaporised all the skaven it touched, including Stitch.

Snuff waited for the second shot but it did not come. As he rose to his feet he looked in the direction of the cannons. His gutter runners had killed the first weapon crew and were pouncing on the second, poisoned blades killing the enemy skaven. Snuff looked over the battle from his position near the door. His clanrats were in combat with the enemies and the fight looked about even. Globadiers were throwing globes of poisonous gas into the massed ranks of the enemy and it was taking its toll on Clan Fenwell. Snuff noticed the ratling gun he had hired from Clan Skryre unleash a hail of bullets into the enemy ranks, shredding

clanrats, slaves and stormvermin alike – most of which came from the enemies ranks.

Suddenly the gun stopped firing and the skaven manning the thing looked down at it in confusion before it exploded in a fiery green ball of flame. Clan Skryre had cheated him, he would deal with them later.

Snuff caught sight of warlord Chutin fighting amongst the clanrats, killing many with every blow. Snuff ordered Vishniq to attack, motioning towards Chutin, and the skaven started to chant. Suddenly the floor was filled with huge black and brown rats, which started gnawing at anything that came to close. The grey seer pointed at Chutin and the rats erupted into a swarm of destruction, leaving a trail of blood and gore in their path.

When they reached Chutin's unit they took a heavy death toll on the enemy before once more disappearing. Much to Snuffs annoyance, many skaven had died but Chutin was still standing and now fighting his way up towards Snuff. He turned to his stormvermin and ordered the charge but one by one they fell to the mighty warlord's blade.

Snuff watched as the enemy warlord seemed to grow bigger as he came closer. The skaven was huge, standing at least seven feet tall and had arms almost as wide as a rat ogre's.

"No wonder he had killed so many clanrats", thought Snuff, as Chutin got even closer

He dove behind Vishniq but even the mighty grey seer was cut down and soon only the two warlords stood in a massive clearing.

Snuff looked out to see his Clan had been mercilessly beaten. Only he now remained. The last of his clanrats were being either butchered or chained and shackled ready to be used as slaves. All the eyes of Clan Fenwell turned to the two lords.

"I see my assassin failed in his task. I will have to finish it for him" the mighty Warlord said

Snuff looked for a way out but there was none.

Chutin darted forward with speed seemingly impossible for his size and knocked Snuff back into the wall in a series of fast, heavy blows. Snuffs tail lashed out across Chutin's face as he pushed back and landed a few blows himself upon the mighty Warlords armour but none drew blood. He turned his blade and drove it into Chutin's arm, but his weapon became embedded there. Chutin seemed to not feel the wound, pulling the blade free from his arm and throwing it back over his shoulder, leaving Snuff unarmed and defenceless. Chutin stepped forward and landed a few heavy blows, knocking Snuff to his knees.

"Wait-wait, I can join you, I can be at your command" Snuff pleaded as the warlord raised his massive sword. Chutin laughed and brought his blade down in one final deadly stroke.

King Rat

Rattenkönig; The Hand of the Horned Rat; The Bound Many

by Clanlord Trask

Legends of the UnderEmpire

Many legends throughout the Warhammer world tell of the King Rat. To the Empire it is known as Rattenkönig. To the Cathayans, The Bound Many. Within the UnderEmpire, it is known as the Hand of the Horned Rat. But all know it as the King Rat.

Stories of the King Rat are many and varied, and generally considered fictitious. Even among the Skaven, legends and tall tales in the realms of men themselves, the King Rat is the equivalent of a bed time story. Something you tell to frighten and intimidate your kindred.

But the truth is, the King Rat is real. And it plots.

The King Rat is a sight to behold. From a distance it would appear as a wriggling ball, almost spawn like, with an ungelating surface. On closer inspection, a far more shocking truth would be revealed. The King Rat is comprised of five Skaven, bonded together by their tails. Whether this is an environmental effect, caused by the close birthing confines of Skaven breeding dens, or some kind of foul mutation spawned from the like of Clan Moulder or worse, is not known.

The five Skaven constantly wriggle and struggle against each other. Skaven are naturally distrustful of each other, and even the close kinship of the King Rat cannot overcome this innate need to fight internally. As each Skaven within the King Rat is essentially an individual, this makes it impossible for the King Rat to accomplish basic survival tasks, such as finding food and moving about. With such an unfortunate circumstance, the King Rat should simply have starved to death quickly after birth. This, however, doesn't seem to be the case.

Though Skaven are loathe to help each other, the King Rat survives on food brought to it, and moves about by being carried or pushed along. Skaven know no notions of pity or selflessness, helping such an unfortunate should not be in their nature, and yet the King Rat lives on.

It appears that the apparent closeness and bond of the King Rat allows for a degree or telepathy within the five Skaven. Skaven do not willingly help the King Rat to survive, they simply feel an overwhelming urge that compells them to obey orders. Whatever the King Rat asks, Skaven are unable to resist its commands.

This power seems to stop short at self inflicted harm, however. The King Rat could not command a Skaven to commit suicide of any kind, the Skavens natural survival instinct over-riding the telepathic commands perhaps. The King Rat can, in certain circumstances, seem to 'trick' the Skavens mind into acts of self sacrifice, for instance, stepping on a trapped tile and being sliced in two. The King Rats powers also do not seem to work on higher level Skaven who have some kind of a sense of identity. Indeed, the King Rats powers seem to operate solely on those of Skaven society who are simply one of many, such as Slaves, Clanrats and Workers.



Because of this, the King Rat will rarely work along side another powerful individual, instead opting to use easily controlled lackeys. This means that the King Rat almost never operates with the help of Grey Seers or Warlords. Chieftains, Warlock Engineers, Plague Priests, Master Moulders and Assassins are far easier to control. Their lust for power and advancement makes twisting their goals and alligances much easier.

The King Rats own alligances are largely unknown. There are stories in the UnderEmpire that detail the King Rat as an unflinching Agent of the Council, while others tell of the King Rat as a renegade force. The truth is that the King Rat is both and neither of these. Like any Skaven, the King Rat craves power and control. Sometimes this calls for co-operation with the Council, while other times this wararnts openly defying their wishes.

And because of the control the King Rat has over the desperate, faceless masses of the UnderEmpire, declaring all out war on it would result in another catastrophic civil war, which the Council cannot afford to fight. So the King Rat occupys its own small niche within the Skaven Empire, neither hero nor villain, but an uncontrollable force that has to be managed.

The King Rat has appeared at many places over the Warhammer world, at many times throughout history. Whether it is the same King Rat every time, or some kind of subsequent King Rat is not known. The lifespan of the King Rat is totally speculation, and it is not beyond reasoning that its powers have granted it access to technologies and techniques that can extend the life of the normal Skaven.

Far from having a stable base of operations, the King Rat moves from place to place. Whether this is a survival tactic, or part of some larger plot is unknown, but the King Rat has a tendency to make its home exclusively beneath the cities of Man. For some unknown reason, the King Rat hates Mankind above all other races, and indeed, the image of rats joined at the tail is a potent omen of ill times in many human civilisations.

Even among the Skaven, the King Rat is a powerful symbol. Through breeding trials and magical interference, Clan Eshin has managed to create tiny Rat Kings, inspired by the King Rat itself. These fairly easily carried clusters of rats allow Clan Eshin to control the minds of other Skaven, as well as communicate over long distances. There has also been stories of Grey Seers creating large, golem like creatures from the corpses of many Skaven, also called Rat Kings. These monsters are very powerful, but have no personality and are purely a tool of war.

What follows are some guideline rules for including the King Rat in your games of Warhammer. It shouldn't be to hard to adapt these rules to other settings the King Rat would be likely to appear in, such as Mordheim or Warhammer Quest. These rules have not been play tested.

King Rat

110 points

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	LD
5	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	7

Equipment: 5 Hand weapons, 5 suits of light armour and 5 shields

The King Rat takes up a single Lord choice, but also takes up an additional Hero choice.

Special Rules:

Bound:

The King Rat must be placed in a unit, and it can never leave the unit. All normal rules regarding Skaven characters in units otherwise apply. The King Rat moves normally, being allowed to march, charge, etc. However, if the King Rat is ever forced to flee, for whatever reason, it is automatically destroyed. The Skaven's survival instincts meerly take over, and they leave the King Rat to its own devices.

The King Rat is fielded on a monster sized base. This does not, however, give it the same rules as a monster.

One is many

The King Rat is made up of five Skaven. Each is armed with a hand weapon, light armour and shield. This does not give the King Rat any additional attacks, he only gets his base 5. Nor does it gain any additional defence, having the standard 5+ save, with 4+ in combat.

Controller:

The King Rat must always be the army General. Also, the King Rat can lend his leadership to any test within 12", much like an Army Standard. Any army that includes the King Rat cannot include Warlords, Grey Seers or other Special Characters, though it can contain Heroes as normal.

Bad Omen:

The King Rat causes Fear in humans.

Ask Seer Squeek

Skavenblight Gazette's very own Agony Uncle answering your questions

Dear Seer Squeek,

As a newly appointed Stormvermin Warrior, I believe that I should have rights to the breeding pen like the Clan Guards do. Should I bring this to the attention of my Chief or should I sneak in when no one's around?

P.S. I'm worried about the sneaking part because my armor rattles a lot.

Ratmaster Rex

Dear ignorant stormvermin,

If the Horned Rat deemed you worthy of breeders, then you would have breeders. Obviously he does not. Maybe you should try earning breeders. I know not the policies of your clan, but the Seer Council has no use for unworthy offspring. Your predicament is exactly why we neuter the clanrats who attend our breeders. The warlord of your clan might want to look into this.

Shattering dreams since 0 I.C.,

Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

I want to paint my Grey Seer brown. Is this allowed?
scrivener

Dear fatalist,

When walking up to the grey seer of your clan with a paintbrush in your paws and the intent to paint him brown, I think his answer to your question would be very obvious. My best bet is that it involves lots and lots of warp-lightning.

I like my runts fried,
Seer Squeek

Honourable Seer Squeek,

If I may be so bold as to ask your worshipfulness the following question:

Because most skaven live their lives underground (in the absense of light), how do we keep track of days and years? Do we even have a calendar like the man-things?

Yours truly,
Bodacious.

Dear Bodacious,

A concept such as days or years is something a young clanrat like yourself shouldn't be taking interest in. The Council of Thirteen tells you what time it is.

Clan Skyre did develop a warpstone powered timekeeping device. However, it had a tendency to explode whenever it rung on the hour, killing hundreds. The device is currently being developed for use against man-things. No more can be spoken about the Warpstone Terrorclock.

My 'agents' will explain all this when they visit you.

Time's on my side.
Seer Squeek

by Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek

I have an upstart Chieften who I know is plotting against my glorious rule and so far he has illuded every attempt of mine to have him assassinated, what can I do to remove this annoying thorn from my side?

Glory to the Horned Rat and the 13!
Warlord Bloodfang.

Dear incompetent warlord,

If you hire agents of clan Eshin to deal with this upstart, and let them get away with failure, the end of your rule is deserved! Secondly, dealing with the chieftain in secrecy won't stop others plotting your downfall. I suggest consulting the closest Grey Seer (I happen to be available) to capture and skin him alive, in front of the whole clan. I demand no payment, I am a servant of The Horned Rat, but I may call upon you for a favour in future.

You owe me.
Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

About 3 months ago I was on patrol in the northern wastelands with my unit and as we made camp one night I drank a bit too much skavenade. Needless to say, waking up the next morning was very difficult.

When I did awaken I found myself alone. My unit had gotten up and left me behind, a typical joke with us that usually all ends up well, but not this time. I awoke missing three fingers and an ear. The fingers had been replaced with possum tails and the ear had been replaced with an eyeball. An top of this I found a human head grafted onto my chest looking up.

Now the possum tails are working out fine as they are prehensile, but the third eye makes me dizzy and the human head won't shut up, making it difficult to sleep.

I know that this was done by some friggin' Moulder, and I have my suspiciaons who. What I want to know is how I should go about confronting him so hell undo all of this.

Please advise,
Frustrated in the Northern Wastes.

Frustrated Clanrat,

If you are so foolish as to believe Moulder will reverse any work it has done on you, you might as well believe that a charging Rat Ogre only wants to play with you. I advise that you accept these "gifts" and learn to use them to your advantage. Your only other choice is death, which moulder or myself can gladly help you with.

Always happy to help
Seer Squeek

Yo, Squeeky!

My friends all say that warlords are better than grey seers, bcoz they are so badass, they get to carry big swords and hack their enemies to bits, while grey seers are cheesy cowards that zap things and sometimes kill themselves. What is your opinion on the matter?

Warlords R. Betta

Dear soon-to-be-fried furball,
Apparently, your friends have never seen a grey seer cooperating with their clan, but most likely missed out on their presence due to them hiding behind the back of their warlord.

Of course, the point your friends seem to miss is that one can not be killed if he stays out of reach of the enemy. The reason why grey seers live far longer than the warlords is due to our capability of taking down enemies from very, VERY far away through various forms of magic.

Need I say more?

You can run, but you can't hide.

Seer Squeek

O glorious Seer, may your fur always be grey and your magic never misfire,

I have recently purchased nightrunner boxes to use as clanrats, since I do find them so much prettier than the clanrats we got, and also better dressed in the hindquarter department. However, imagine my dismay when I realize that they do not come with a command team, nor are there sufficient shields to equipt all my rats. My dear Seer Squeek, whatever shall I do to remedy this sad state of affairs?

Closet Nightrunner Lover

Dear suck-up,
If your rats appear to be without a command team and not wearing any form of armour, I suggest to sent them towards the enemy first as cannon fodder, while your armed forces move in behind them. To tackle this problem in the future, I suggest to start 'mixing' your troops with one another. It might give a somewhat disorganised look, but each second your opponent will underestimate you is another second in your advantage.

Get your freak on,

Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

As a young jezzail sniper, I was told by my Master Engineer that my weapon, as well as many others in our army, count as magical because of the warpstone we use in it. (Pg10) I am aware that they will cause damage to opponets invenerable to non-magical weapons however, I was told by some bitter jealous and deluded mercenarys that when we use our own Banner of the Storm we have the same handicap as our enemies. Which is obvious orc crap, since we can clearly see in the incriptions on the banner that only non-magical weapons are effected. (Pg39) Am I right?

Ratmaster Rex

Dear unexperienced sniper,

If you would read the magical inscriptions of the stormbanner more closely you would see that it says non-magical weapons that don't use ballistics skill. Yes, being a creation of the master race, your jezzail is magical, but it does require your limited ballistics skill to use. So the stormbanner does affect you during battle.

Keep rolling those 1's,

Seer Squeek

Dear Seer Squeek,

I am just wondering, about the safety of our warlord during the battle. Our warlord wears Warpstone armor and carries an ordinary Shield. I'm pretty sure he has a Talisman of Protection too. I'm confused about how much protection this is against, say; a knife in the back? Also are there better ways I coul-I mean, he could be protecting himself?

Ratmaster Rex

Dear eager one,

Armour is no protection against even the cheapest of poisons. I would suggest contacting an Eshin agent, though as you've shared your scheme with other Skaven, a hunch tells me they're already coming your way.

**Don't look at me,
Seer Squeek**

Seer Squeek,

Why are grey seers lousier generals then warlords?

With regards,
An anonymous clan
Vinshqueek member

Anonymous?...

Dear slave,

The only time grey seers ought to be acting as the generals of a clan, is when the warlords have messed up that task.

**You do the math,
Seer Squeek**

Feeling extremely paranoid when visiting the breeders? Searching for a decent redecoration of your lair? Or simply looking at the proper way to avert the gaze of the Council of... be a good Skaven?

Then perhaps you need to ask Seer Squeek a question of your own! Send your questions to Seer Squeek at the UnderEmpire.net community and look for his response in the next issue of the Skavenblight Gazette.

Musings about Clan Eshin

Part 1

By Moritz Hampel (Mutter)

Introduction

The following article describes the use of an Eshin list without utilizing the special rule Under Cover of Darkness. The list makes heavy use of ranked units in the form of clanrats, slaves and giant rats, and only uses the skirmishing Eshin troops as a support, not the main combat units.

The list also uses a Sensei (a Master Assassin) and equips him with a Fellblade. While I will also briefly talk about alternative builds without the Sensei, it will be – well, brief.

Why not use UCOD?

Basically, there are two reasons why the UCOD-rules aren't very worthwhile to exploit: first, because it often doesn't make for a very enjoyable game for your opponent.

A lot of people complain about skirmishing armies, and the Clan Eshin fits right in – even if it's nowhere near as powerful as for example the Southland skink horde, it's still very annoying for opponents, whose armies don't have the tools to deal with that many skirmishers. Basically, the UCOD list is a VP-denial list, circling the opponent, killing soft

stuff and avoiding unfavorable combats. Some people call that boring (some might not, but either way, the UCOD list is fairly one-dimensional).

The second reason is efficiency. The non- UCOD list is actually much stronger. It utilizes the strengths of most of the Eshin elements in the list (skitterleap, sorcerers' high LD, the Sensei, the triads) without suffering from the drawbacks of an all skirmishing list (mainly having no ranked units, not being able to take the fiendish ratlings and not being able to break ranks). Plus, quite frequently, the UCOD benefits your opponent about as much as yourself – limited visibility for charges, rendering the jezzails useless, etc.

Using big blocks of infantry changes all that. Suddenly it's not about trying to catch an elusive enemy – it's a game of Warhammer again! Furthermore, the list doesn't really suffer from bad match-ups (like the UCOD list definitely does!), and it uses the strength of traditional skaven builds: ranks'n'flanks. The only thing you really exchange is some warp-lightning against skitterleaping assassins. The

rest stays more or less the same – well, you pay heaps more for your characters, but you get to do cool ninja-like stuff with them, so it's all good.

There's another reason to make use of the block-build rather than the allskirmisher list – models. If you've already got a skaven army, all you need for THIS version of the army is to put some funky china hats on three of your night/gutrunner, and hey! Instant triad! Give two of the rats some staves (I put a chain with a ratskull on one of mine) and more china hats – and you've got yourself your sorcerers.

Now, if you haven't got any skaven models, this is even more persuasive. You can get both the warlord army and the Eshin list without having to buy any/many extra troops. Now, by building up the UCOD list, you'll end up buying tons of models you won't have any use for outside of the Eshin list. And playing the all-skirmish, pointsdenial list CAN get tedious after a while. Plus, in Europe some tournaments have started to outlaw the SOC lists – where will that leave the UCOD list?



Characters

Why use the Sensei?

When the SOC lists came out, he was in the first couple of lists I wrote simply because the seduction of having a Sensei with the Fellblade was just too great to resist.

After a while, the Sensei got kicked out of the list – he died a number of times, giving away more than 400 VP, and I felt he was a waste of points. But eventually, I came back to him. I just had to realize that there are certain things he shouldn't take on all by himself.

I guess basically the answer to the question "Why use the Sensei?" is: Because he can carry the Fellblade, and is damn impressive in doing so!

Why use the Fellblade?

Some people use the Sensei, but not the Fellblade. Frankly, I don't think he's worth it without the big blade. His killing potential is minimally bigger than that of a normal assassin but with a much higher cost. A further disadvantage is that the Sensei is usually gunning for somebody – leaving your troops outside the much needed leadership umbrella. If you don't want to sink the points into him, just use a normal assassin with Weeping Blade, and keep you sorcerer as the general for that nice leadership 10 right in the centre of your army. Another configuration I have seen is the Weeping Blade and Bands of Power on the Sensei. I think Bands of Power are way too unreliable, and when they are dispelled, the Sensei isn't doing anything another assassin couldn't do just as well.

Obviously, the Sensei carries the risk of killing himself with the Fellblade, but that happens very rarely. Statistically, in every game he will only cause two wounds to himself – so just make sure he doesn't loose the last one!

The Sensei is like one of those death-cult assassins who doesn't care whether he dies or not – which is true if he fulfills his designated role first. So take care he kills all the valuable, easy stuff first (steam tanks, stegadons, slanns) and then jump him into a nasty character. He'll have made his points back loads by then, and you'll have fun as well.

As long as you don't expect your Sensei to actually survive a battle, you're good.

Alternative builds

If you use two hero-level assassins instead, you can make one sorcerer the general, and enjoy a Ld 10 across the board (at least in ranked units). Using two sorcerers and two assassins, one with the Weeping Blade and the other with the Warpstone Stars can make for a strong build, too.

The army enjoys a much more stable Ld 10 than the Sensei-build and runs a much smaller risk of loosing its biggest asset. On the other hand, it doesn't deal instant death to so many things the Sensei just laughs at - it's basically a question of risk vs. reward. The Sensei offers great rewards, which also come with a huge risk. The two-sorcerer-two-assassins-build is a very conservative, stable build, which serves the skaven well. But the Sensei is just so much more fun!

The Talisman of Uselessness

Most people consider the Talisman of Protection too useless to employ – some don't even consider a 5+ ward to be worthwhile because it's too unreliable. But the talisman is all that we can get if we want the Fellblade, and there is nothing else we could take.

So we might as well. Every so often, there will be a game where the last wound of the Sensei is saved on a six, and he'll continue on his killing spree, and in those moments we're glad we spent the 15 points over and over ... Basically, you spent 90 points (six games by 15 points) to make one save.

With other characters, that one save often doesn't mean a lot, 'cause they mightn't have taken damage at all. With the Sensei, it often means the difference between dying to the Fellblade, and being able to take the next Über-character down before croaking himself.

Assassin vs. chieftain

Basically, if equipped with a Weeping Blade to hunt down wizards, there isn't much that makes the assassin any better at it. The move of 6 doesn't often come into play since Skitterleap is often used on him, and the WS is usually not a factor, either, since the designated targets are wizards. One major difference is the ability to buy smoke bombs, though. But by using the chieftain, quite a number of points are saved, so either is a viable choice, really. Of course, the assassin is the much fluffier option ... it's really up to you and, more importantly, your points budget.

If the assassin is to be used with the warpstone stars, well ... then you need an assassin. The stars are really ace, and can be game-winners against many targets – you basically have to decide whether you feel comfortable with your Sensei going after wizards and characters all by himself, or if he would like a helping hand. I'd consider the assassin with warpstone stars to be the more flexible build to the weeping blade.





Flying Ninja On A Stick

This idea actually came up when discussing a horde build with another player, Bobo the Vampire Monkey. The initial idea was to use a BSB (much improved in 7th!) with the Stormbanner or Warbanner to help out the ranked units of the horde. While I'm not too keen on sacrificing a character slot for non-Eshin stuff (well, sacrificing a character slot to somebody NOT assigned to actually killing people), it kind of dawned on me that it's no problem to make the chieftain with the Weeping Blade (see above) a BSB as well!

(Well, obviously, there is SOME risk. You hand over another 100 Vps when the BSB fails in his assassination duties, but I think that's a small price to pay for the abovementioned advantages ...)

He doesn't lose out apart from maybe a shield, can lend his re-roll and +1CR ability in the middle of the horde if need be, and can also be skitterleaped about by the sorcerers to go off and kill pesky wizards and weedy hero-level characters. And if beaten in combat, he might actually hang in there for a turn with his re-roll for the break test (he should really only go up against units with VERY little static CR, though, otherwise even the re-roll won't save the BSB).

Equipment for sorcerers

Standard equipment for sorcerers should be a scroll and two warpstone tokens. With two scrolls and 4 DD, you should be able to weather the first two magic phases. After that, there should be at least one wizard less on the opponent's team. More than two scrolls you will rarely need.

The warpstone tokens, on the other hand, make sure that the skitterleap can be cast on four dice for the first three turns. With four dices, the chances for IF are the highest, and especially early in the game people will burn scrolls rather than let you leap.

A further advantage of four dice is that to stop the spell somewhat reliably, the other player has to throw five DD if he's not using a scroll. But 5 dice carry a pretty high risk of getting an automatic dispel fumble. Either way, you're dramatically increasing your chances to leap with the warpstone tokens. But beware: as soon as a sorcerer gets a wound, stop using the warpstone. The risk to lose your magical mouse altogether is just too great.

Smoke or no smoke

Sure, it's 20 points – but it can save your valuable characters as often as not. So I'd always advise to buy the smoke, but keep in mind that if another unit is involved, smoke bombs can't be used – even if all your units are equipped with smoke bombs.

So either win those fights, or make sure at least one of your units sticks around (can you say "swarms"?).

The rules

Skitterleaping in 7th ed.

Debate is still up how exactly skitterleaping is resolved in 7th ed. The Eshin rules for the spell claim that the charge is 'treated exactly like a pursuit into enemies'. Now, under 7th rules, this would mean that: A: some people argue the rules for PIFE (Pursuit Into Fresh Enemy) means the combat is actually resolved NEXT round unless your target is already engaged with other troops of yours – now, since the rules state that you won't fight till the NEXT combat phase, RAW (Rules As Written) would allow you to fight – seen as you moved in the magic phase, not the combat phase, and so the combat phase IS actually the next combat phase. But you might want to watch out for that, since every so often your opponent might argue that point.

And B: the target gets to make a flee reaction if it so chooses, leaving your Sensei or assassin behind and stranded. Now, this won't be much of a problem if you choose a high-point target since your opponent is unlikely to flee with it or if your target is immune to psychology, but it could result in some nasty situations leaving your Sensei high and dry.

The army

Army-list composition

Nightrunners

With these guys, there is basically two ways to go about: either small units of five with nothing extra or groups of nine (to ward off panic tests till the 3rd casualty) with either additional hand weapons and/or throwing stars. The small units only cost 25 points, so for a measly 100 points, you get four deployment options and throwaway units.

The disadvantage is that the small units can easily cause panic when destroyed by shooting or magic, so space them out and keep them away from other panic-prone units.

The bigger units are support and even combat troops. With additional hand weapons, they can tackle most light skirmishers and even light cavalry if they get the charge.

For a standard list, I'd consider three to four units of five and two units of nine, with additional hand weapons. Throwing stars I'd only throw in (excuse the pun) if I have the points left over.

With the new crossfire rule in 7th ed., the small units of NR will excel at making a nuisance of themselves in the opponent's backfield, too.

Clanrats

If you're not using the UCOD-rules, you need a stable fighting platform. Even though they are not mainstay anymore, they stay at the core of the army. This is true even if the Sensei is the general (the clanrats will generally not be able to profit from his leadership, and so their usefulness is slightly reduced).

I would take three units of 25 clanrats in any list – slightly less than in a normal skaven list, but then we have to pay for the Sensei somehow, don't we. Obviously, clanrats can carry Rattling Guns.

Rat-swarms

Swarms are already highly useful in a normal list, but even more so in an Eshin list.

They can be a life insurance for your assassins: if you manage to "stick" a unit you plan to jump your assassin into, you are safe from pursuit if you break. Slightly expensive, if you lose the swarm, so either only use to save your Sensei, or keep it to one base. Usually, I'd go with two bases and rarely upgrade them to poison, because the elites slot is just too valuable.

However, this was written with 6th ed. Rules in mind – how the new rules with the swarms 'crumbling' similar to undead affect swarms hasn't been extensively playtested yet. I presume, if swarms are being used in the usual manner of 'sticking' something up, at least three bases should be employed.

If used as a light support unit to hunt single models, flush out skirmishers from terrain and help the Sensei in his killing duties two will probably suffice.

Another excellent use for rat-swarms is the possibility to help your Sensei hunt down big gribbilies like dragons or griffins. More on that in a later article.

Slaves

These little fellows serve a dramatically different role in an Eshin list than in a standard list. Because the Sensei will usually be about, they often suffer from their abysmal leadership of five. Keep that in mind when taking break, panic and fear tests.

They are less of a mainline unit (which they sometimes can be in a normal skaven army) than true diverters and fleers. It is imperative to keep them far enough away from each other so you won't lose multiple units in chain reactions on panic tests.

It is also worth noting that since nightrunners are mainstay, there is virtually no limit as to how many slave units you can field. 65 points buys you five nightrunners and twenty slaves – anybody care to calculate how many rats you could cram into 2000 points (I think it's about 750 rats in 50 units)?

Stormvermin

Basically, to these guys applies the same as to stormvermin in the normal list: if you like the possibility of an armor save of 3+ and the option to stick in a magical banner, and don't mind paying a premium in points for it – go for it. They can be worth it, but are hardly necessary. I usually can't find the points for them.

Poison wind globadiers

These handy little guys basically fulfill the same role in a block-build Eshin list than in any other skaven list: they kill armoured troops. Since you're able to take them in small units, they can come in handy as a diversion, but I'd refrain from using them in bigger units, simply because it isn't too difficult for the opponent to take them out, and big units means big points. Just be aware of panic possibilities, since the Sensei list can suffer quite badly from panic.



Jezzails

These guys are a good buy in any skaven list, and the Eshin list is no exception. They are very powerful in dealing with big monsters and well-armoured foes alike, and I'd always include a unit of five or six. Their threat also often influences the opponent's set-up, so even just for that they are well worth it.

Because elite slots are at a premium in an Eshin list, I'd advise against splitting them up and buying more than one unit.

Gutter runners

Gutter runners are not quite as needed in the list as in standard lists, because usually they are the one unit that can reach far out and touch things the other rats would just take too long to get to: warmachines, wizards, etc. This is mitigated partially by the fact that with skitterleap, the Sensei and assassins can somewhat fulfill that role. But gutterrunters are still very useful, so depending on the use for the other elite slots, I'd add at least one unit of five, with the obligatory poison and tunneling option.

If a triad is used, gutter are even less of a necessity, but of course team up nicely with the triad.

Giant Rats

This is where for my style of play the Eshin list really hurts. In a normal list, I often have at least two big regiments of them, and often up to three or four "rat darts" - this is no longer possible due to them being elite. I usually still employ two big units (three to four packs) because I rely on them to sweep the flanks and control that part of the board.

Players less dependant on their speed might do okay with only one unit, or even (*shock*) none ... but my advice would be: don't leave home without them.

Plague Monks

They are a solid troop choice - their immunity to psychology and the ability to stick the warbanner in the unit makes for quite a solid choice. Don't bother with additional handweapons, though. Makes them needlessly expensive, and doesn't add that much punch. I'd either use ten to twelve basic ones for reliable flank guarders or 25 with standard, musician and the warbanner as a main line unit. You only pay 1 point more than clanrats and shouldn't worry much about the rare slots, unless you make extensive use of triads.

Censer Bearers

These guys can be really powerful - basically, if you bring plague monks anyway, might as well include a unit of these if you have the points. If you only get six to seven, they should in most cases get their points back, and they are a strong deterrent for heavy cavalry.

Triads

Triads are Eshin's new toy, and lots of people love them. I guess in an UCOD list, they make a lot more sense, because they are one of the few units that can actually hurt someone, but in a block-build (non- UCOD), they don't make much sense. They are hideously expensive, very fragile and deal with stuff you're not in grave danger from (the light units the Triad can destroy easily are less of a threat if you have lots of big blocks of troops).

Already seriously under-pointed (compared to a normal skaven list), I can just never scrounge the points together for them.

Weapon Teams

Ratling guns are effective, warpflame-throwers are not. People hate ratlings with a passion, and don't usually mind the WFT. The ratling is even more useful in an Eshin

list than in a normal list because we're missing the warplightnings, which pull a lot of the duty the ratling now has to fulfill. I would take a minimum of two, often three.

Some people will moan, but since there is no electricity in the air, they shouldn't complain too much (they'll find other things to complain about, though).

With the new rules allowing weapon teams to be individually targeted, make sure to impair visibility to them unless you're ready to unleash them.

Careful placement is warranted to stop them being killed early by bowfire, magic, etc.



Play Eshin RPG



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WANTED, EXTERMINATOR

Help is needed. Our warrens are infested with Squigs! If you can help, contact Frikkitt of Clan Gartin.

All reasonable, and some unreasonable, solutions accepted.

FOR SALE Head Collection

My collection has grown far to big. Some of it must go. Good quality heads, severed from a variety of races and opponents.

Those interested, contact Queek of Clan Mors

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Warlock Engineer looking to offload forty slightly charred slaves. Used in various experiemnts with warpfire.

Ideal for cannon fodder and meat shields.

Contact Clan Skryre.



Feeling extremely paranoid when visiting the breeders? Searching for a decent redecoration of your lair? Or simply looking at the proper way to avert the gaze of the Council of... be a good Skaven?

Then perhaps you need to ask Seer Squeek a question of your own! Send your questions to Seer Squeek at the UnderEmpire.net community and look for his response in the next issue of the Skavenblight Gazette.

LOOK OUT SIR!

Keep your eyes on the Skavenblight Gazette website, as soon we will be releasing Scriveners last two fantastically illustrated covers as wallpaper images.

Quote of the day

Given the nature of the Warhammer world, I don't see why there aren't more Life Insurance Salesmen...

Matt Lee,
during a Warhammer game



COMING SOON!

Out in the Chaos Wastes roam monsters beyond belief. Some are mindless beasts, only existing to feed, while others are ancient and evil.

One of these monsters has been tracked down.

With the help of Clan Moulder Packmasters, adepts from the Skavenblight Gazette have captured one of the oldest, most vile, evil creatures known.

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This creature has hatched plans that have shaped the face of the Warhammer world.

And now it is in the hands of the Skaven.

As you read this, deep within the bowels of the Gazette headquarters, the insane Editors interrogate the beast.

Soon, its knowledge will be revealed.

Soon, its secrets will be ours.

Soon, we shall dive into the mind of **Alessio Cavatore**.

And power shall come to the Skaven race.

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contribute or die, man-thing!