THE ULTIMATE WARHAMMER MAGAZINE

WHITE DWARF

MARCH 2019

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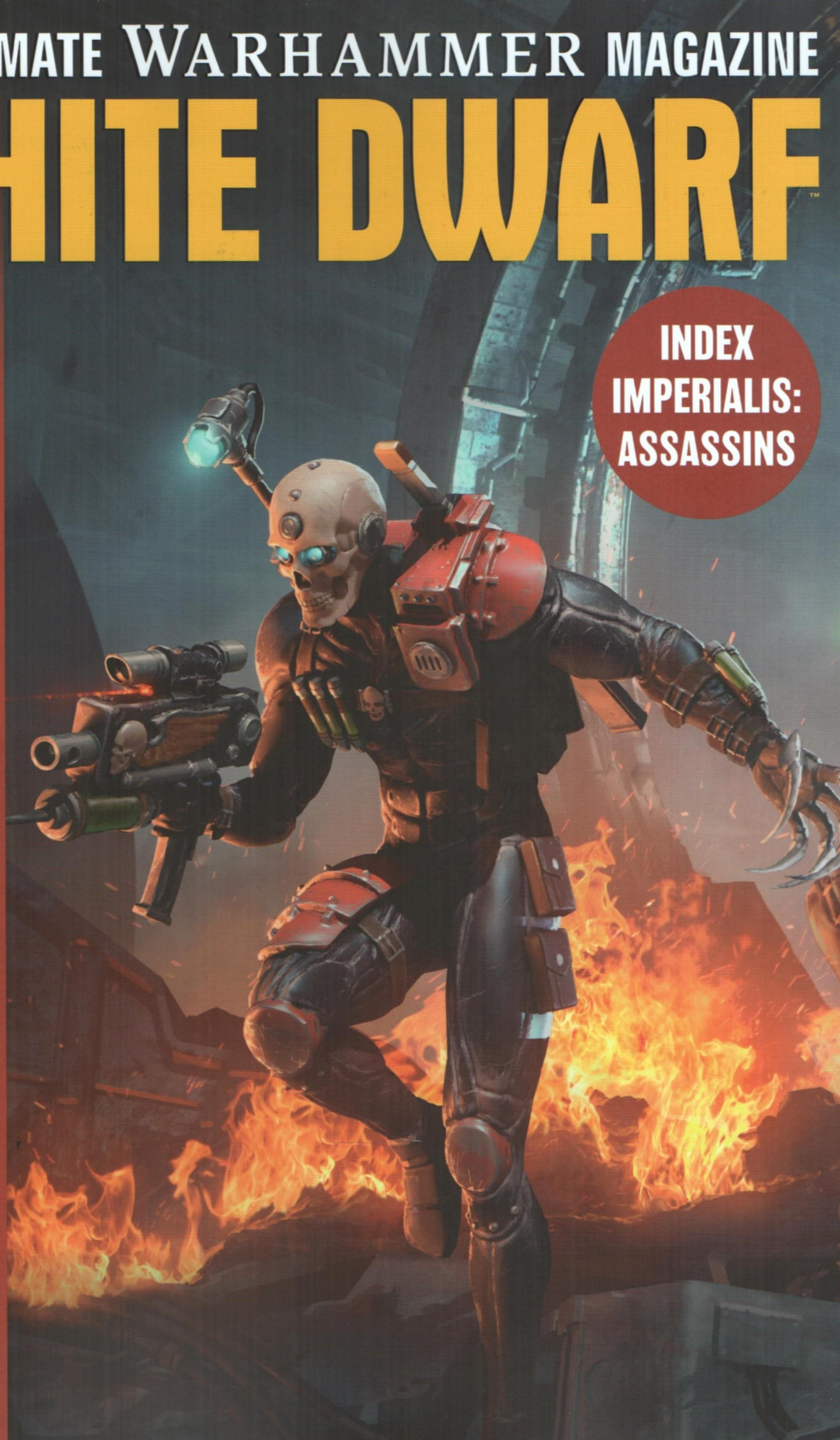

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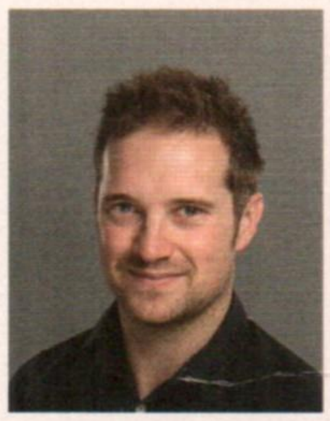
MEET THE WHITE DWARF TEAM

From their secret sanctum, itself hidden deep within the Games Workshop Design Studio, the White Dwarf team work tirelessly to craft everyone's favourite Warhammer hobby magazine each month.



DAN HARDEN
Staff Writer

Dan's spent much of the month interviewing people, be it James Swallow, Phil Kelly or the chaps from Ulisses games. He did just about find the time to paint one of the new Warlock Bombardiers for his skaven army, though.

MATT HUTSON
Lead Designer

Matt has spent much of the month preparing for this month's Battle Report, which he organised with guest editor Phil. He's also started work on a new project for Warhammer Age of Sigmar – something to do with Tzeentch…

BEN HUMBER
Designer

Ben's put his talents to good use this month, having designed both our new Battlefield Terrain article and A Tale of Four Warlords (yes, it's back!). Rumour has it that a Carnifex has appeared on his desk, too. But will it ever see paint…?

SHAUN PRITCHARD
Reprographics

'Why do I have to be the Spindle Drone?' is all we ever hear from Shaun, who laments not being able to choose his own comedy job titles. He has declined all offers to paint said mechanical critters, despite agreeing they do look cool.

MARTYN LYON
Photographer

Over the next few months, Martyn will be shepherding (more like wrangling) our Four Warlords as they build and paint their new armies. In his own time, Martyn has been painting Uruk-hai for a Battle Companies campaign.

JONATHAN STAPLETON
Photographer

Jonathan has got a secret project underway, but you won't find out what it is until next month! In the meantime, he's been shooting Assassins (with a camera, not a gun) and painting an Endrinrigger from the Realm of Life.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Bedford, Timothy Brown, Andy Clark, Maxime Corbeil, Robin Cruddace, James Gallagher, Paul Gegg, Lee Hadfield, Adam Hall, Andy Hoare, Nick Horth, Ian Huxley, Jervis Johnson, James Karch, Phil Kelly, Nick Kyme, James Littler, Tom Moore, Phil Moss, Paul Norton, Chris Peach, Sam Pearson, Damien Pedley, Dave Sanders, Natalie Slinn, James Swallow, Ross Watson, Rachel Williams.

EXCLUSIVE SUBSCRIBER COVERS!

If you subscribe to White Dwarf, you may have noticed that you have a different cover on your magazine compared to the ones found in shops.

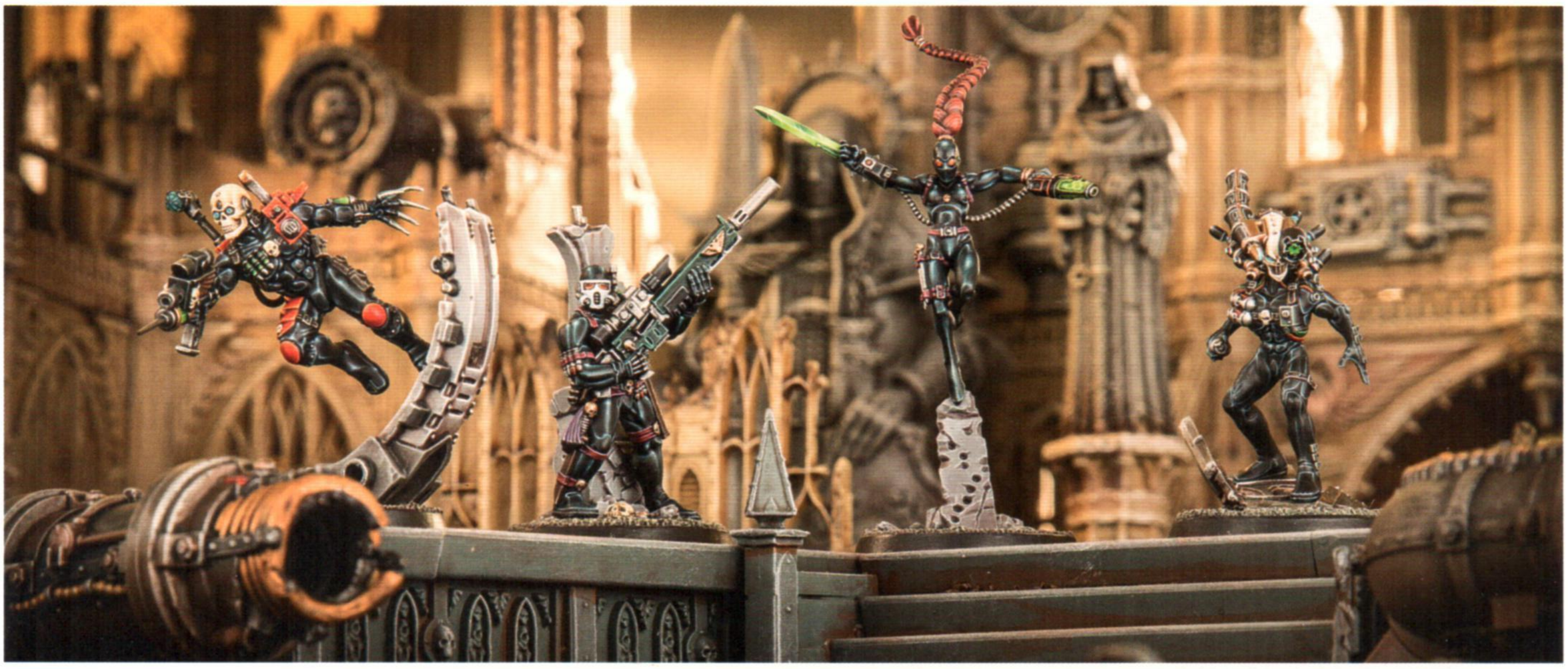
Subscriber copies now feature a piece of artwork without the contents listing down the side, allowing you to appreciate the art in all its wonderful glory. This month's cover was illustrated by Marek Okon.

If you would like to set up a subscription to White Dwarf magazine, turn to page 4 for more information.

WHITE DWARF™

MARCH 2019

PREPARE FOR CARNAGE!



Twenty years after starting work on White Dwarf, I am finally writing an editorial for this august publication (even though it's March). The Grombrindal beard is a little impractical as it turns out; it gets in the way of the keyboard. Luckily I'm working with a very experienced and dedicated team who not only know this mag inside out, but also know how best to put curlers in duardin facial hair.

For the next thirty days, this month's issue is, without doubt, the latest White Dwarf ever. I think it is also one of the best. There is a feast of fiction to sink your teeth into in our series of short stories, as well as returning favourites A Tale of Four Warlords and Index Imperialis. On the miniatures side we get a good look into the Realm of Life, and a showcase of the stompy, shooty goodness of Damien Pedley's Imperial Knights army. There are insights into the hobby from the legendary Jervis Johnson and the good doctor Robin Cruddace, as well as Warhammer Underworlds guru Dave 'the Bear' Sanders. There are features on venturing into (and even defining) the 41st Millennium, on navigating the hilarious carnage of the Blood Bowl pitch, and telling your own stories in Wrath and Glory. But the best part was rewriting and playing my favourite mission in a Battle Report – the four-player spectacular known only as Carnage. There will be blood (for the Blood God).

Though the White Dwarf team have never really forgiven me for being a dirty splitter and leaving the team to write about goblins full time, working with the guys has been exceptionally rewarding. I have been collecting White Dwarf since I was a nipper, and contributing to it in one way or another for (gulp) a full half of my life. It's a real highlight of my career to be asked to guest edit the magazine, and fill an issue full of the sort of stories I loved reading as a kid. To those of you for whom this is your first magazine, good news – you've discovered a hobby so rich and rewarding it will sustain your escapism with cool characters and battles for a lifetime. Venture in, friend, and never look back.

PHIL KELLY
Guest Editor

Phil has been a member of the Games Workshop Design Studio for over twenty years – it's rumoured that he's written more words than any human could possibly read in a lifetime. And he's still going! Turn to page 62 to read an interview with Phil.

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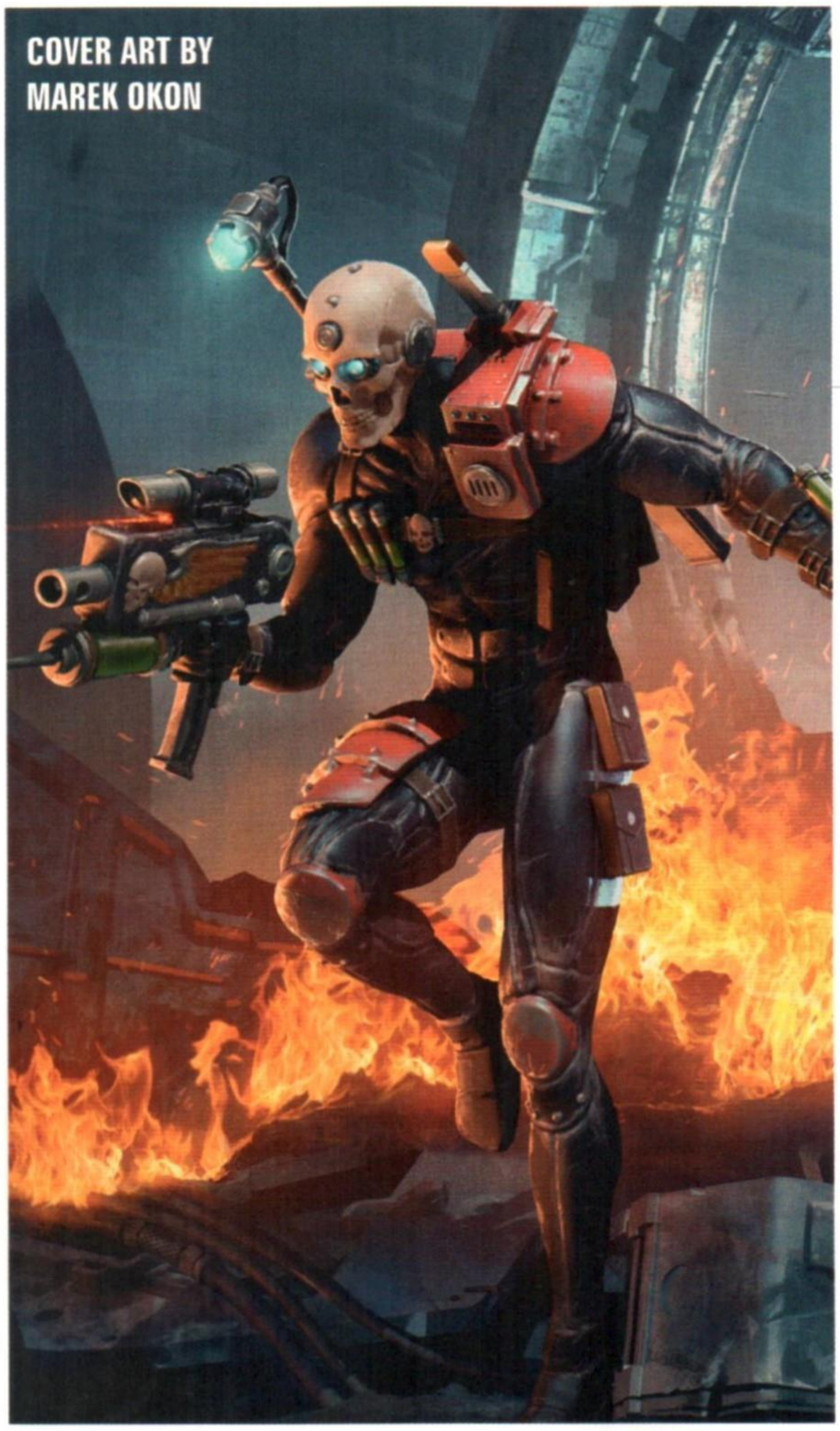
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PHIL KELLY
It's a barren, featureless desert out there! Join Phil on page 10 where he talks all about maps.

JERVIS JOHNSON
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DAVE SANDERS
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WARHAMMER 40,000

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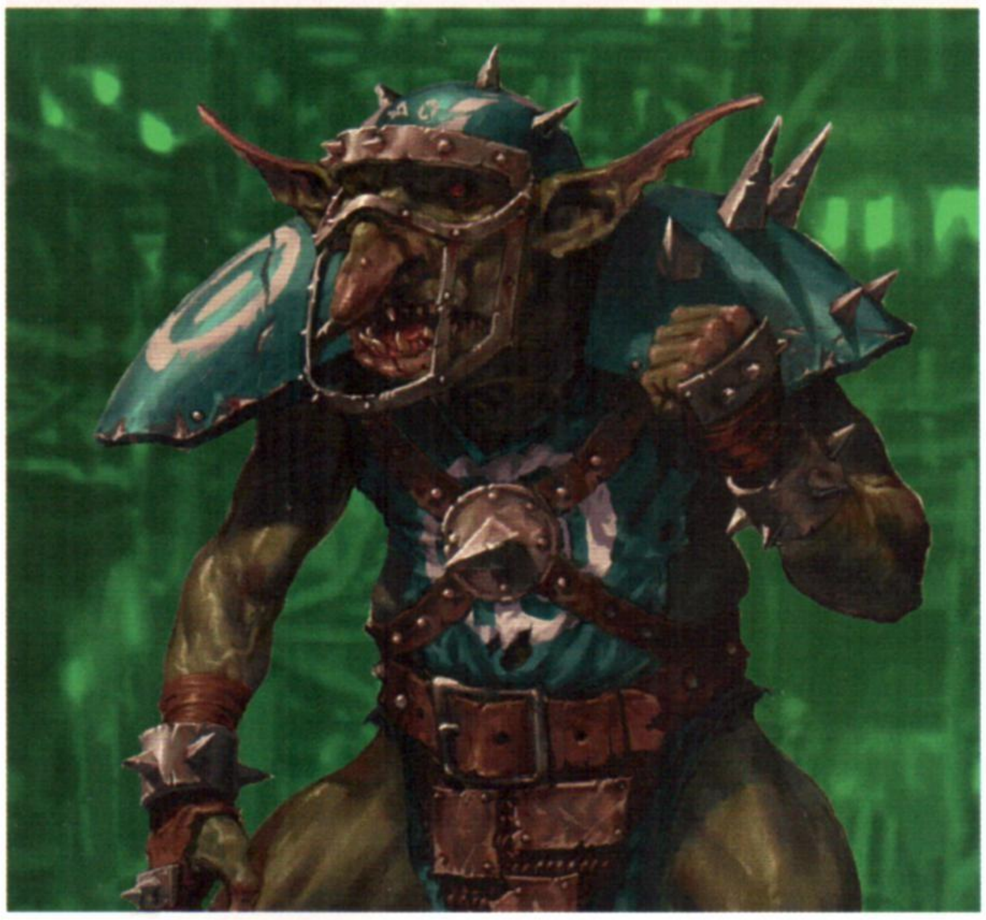

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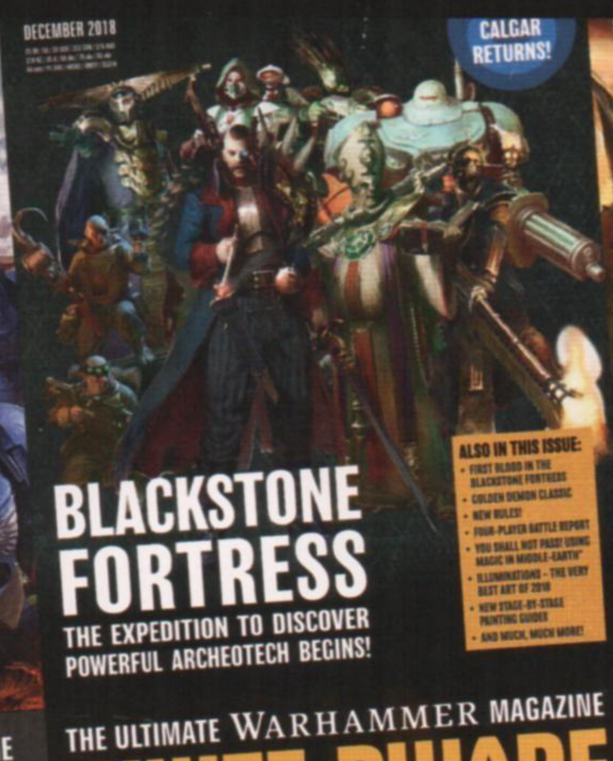
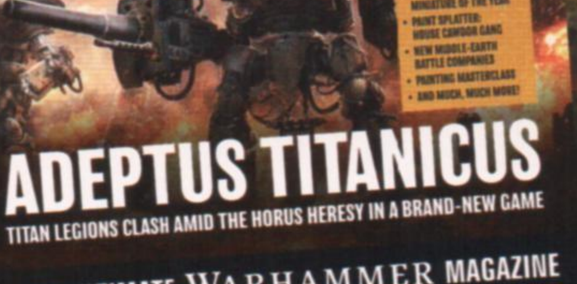




CONTACT

Where you get to have your say on all things Warhammer. This month, guest editor Phil Kelly answers all your queries.

100+

STAR LETTER

THANK YOU, IDEAS, AND LITTLE DUDES

I'd just like to open by saying that I love White Dwarf! I'm always excited when a new edition comes out – it's kept me involved in the hobby through the years, particularly when life, work or a lack of nearby players has stopped me from playing. To seal my return to the fold, I acquired the new Necromunda – a favourite game of mine growing up in the 1990s. I don't suppose Gorkamorka will be coming back, will it? That was my absolute favourite – a re-print with the ace new models, perhaps? Or my other favourite, Mordheim. Anyway, I have some suggestions!

For the magazine: I love articles on painting and terrain. Could we have more in-depth articles on how to build terrain from scratch? I used an old Nigel Stillman article for building Mordheim ruins many, many times, and would love to see a return of these articles. I'd like to see how we gamers can make quick but effective scenery and how we can get the most out of current kits that Games Workshop sells. There was a recent article with a gaming board, but a more step-by-step type thing would be amazing.

For the games: More tiny rubbish-at-fighting people, please. More specifically, a Ratling kill team (hey, you could make it an abhumans kill team and include Ogryn heavies, maybe throw in a Squat or Beastman or two). And Gretchin-only kill teams (with Snots thrown in as cannon-fodder). And a new Halfling team for Blood Bowl. And if Halflings could somehow reappear in Warhammer Age of Sigmar, that would be amazing. In fact, can you ask Grombrindal what happened to them? Keep up the good work!

Andrès Gonzalez,
Lugo, Spain

The Speed Freeks game will definitely help you scratch that Gorkamorka itch, Andrès, especially if you use the campaign rules at the back. You're in luck on the terrain front – see pages 44 and 52. As for the little fellas, we have a soft spot for them, too (the gut, speaking as an Ogor player). Watch this space!

HOOF AND CLAW

I know they don't appeal to everyone, but I would like to see more articles about Seraphon and Beasts of Chaos in White Dwarf. They're two unique armies with great miniatures and background, but they don't seem to get a lot of air time.

Lucas Clarke,
Essex, UK

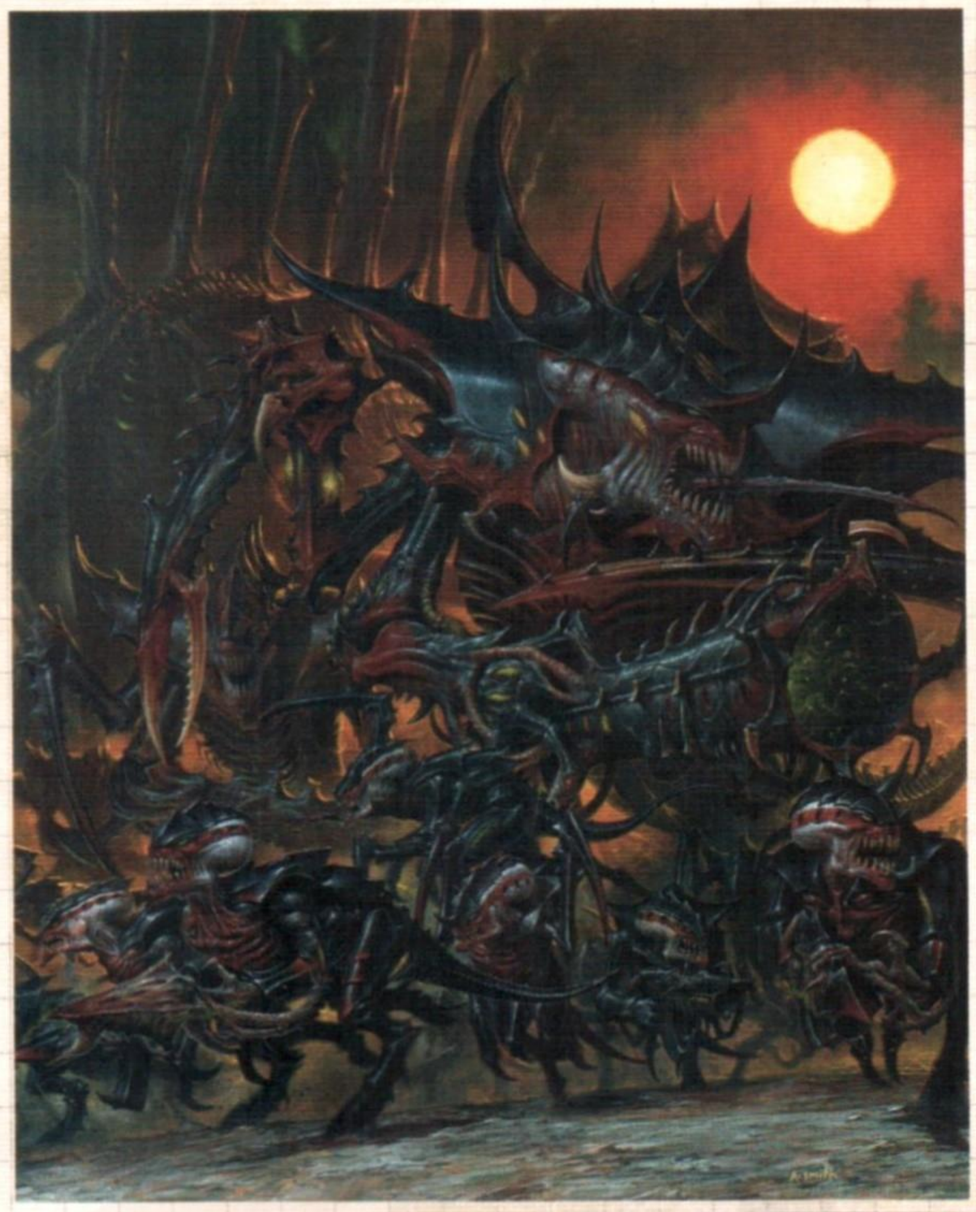
Hey Lucas. Well, there are a lot of Beasts of Chaos fans around these parts – check out Warhammer Community. As for the Seraphon, their time will come! Meantime, why not hunt down the Malign Portents story 'Dying Star' on our website.

PAINTING QUESTION: A NEW (BUT OLD) HIVE FLEET

I'm an avid fan of Tyranids and I'm determined to recreate the hive colour scheme from the cover of the third edition codex. But I'm having a really hard time working out how to achieve this. Could you help me get in touch with the 'Eavy Metal team to ask how they would paint it?

Harry Ebblewhite,
Farnborough, UK

We can certainly help you out, Harry. Max Faleij from 'Eavy Metal has this to say. 'If I was painting them, I would start with a Chaos Black undercoat and highlight the carapace using Incubi Darkness, then add in a little Fenrisian Grey for the final highlights. For the red chest, joints and face, I would use thin layers of Khorne Red to build up the colour (and blend it into the black), highlighted with Wazdakka Red and Squig Orange. For the white head I'd use Celestra Grey highlighted with White Scar. Hope that helps!'



HIGHER GROUND

I may be mistaken, but in Warhammer 40,000 there doesn't appear to be a rule or benefit for a model being higher than their target when shooting. Surely being higher should make hitting the target easier or reduce their cover somehow (unless I'm missing something…).

Paul English,
Suffolk, UK

We have just such a rule in Cities of Death, where sniper's nests, high vantage points and open streets are critical. See the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, pages 258-261.

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BEASTMEN... BAAAAAAA!

Having just finished my latest batch of beastmen, and with the new battletome and Herdstone out, I thought I'd take my chances and try and get some of my models into your glorious magazine (the first one I bought was issue 79 with the John Blanche cover). I've painted and kitbashed some Gors using spare bits from the old Forsaken kit. There is a fair bit of conversion work in my army and these latest models are my favourites. I think these are my best-painted efforts, too, as I've only just started wearing glasses and I wore them while tackling these last two models. Cheers!

Stephen Cranston,
Littleborough, UK

Converting models is one of my favourite parts of the hobby, too, and the models in the Chaos range let your imagination run wild (much like the beastmen). Your guys would fit in well with the Gavespawn Greatfray, where mutations are revered and Spawn are seen as sacred. Congratulations on making your ambition a reality, Stephen, and getting your models in print. All hail the primordial chaos of the bits box!

RUNNING OUT OF CREDITS

Hi, White Dwarf team. I've just finished reading another great issue of your magazine. As usual, it contains a wide spread of topics for everyone to find something they are interested in.

I think it's a good time to be in the hobby right now, what with all the new Warhammer Age of Sigmar factions, Kill Team, Imperial Knights and so on – I might as well just give Games Workshop my entire wage as there seems to be something I want every week. But I am trying to resist, as I'm looking forward to the upcoming Orktober event and the release of Speed Freeks.

I have also signed up to the Warhammer 40,000 Conquest magazine as a way to build up some armies and learn about the gaming side of the hobby. But I have to admit that it is a little disappointing that it's focused on Ultramarines and Death Guard again. When I first heard about the magazine, I was hoping it would introduce you to all the armies, giving you samples of each to build and paint – then you could decide which army you wanted to continue with. Thanks for all the painting and diorama building guides in the magazine, too – they have given me some ideas.

Michael Whitehead,
Bradford, UK

Hey Michael. I know the feeling about having many hobby choices to make – but it's a pleasant dilemma in the end, debating what to add to your collection next. Conquest is ideal for new starters, but I still snapped up the first issue when it came out. I confess I haven't built the models yet, as I got distracted by the Rogue Trader boxed set! I have this feeling that Speed Freeks will appeal to my inner Ork and see me leave Elucia Vhane and co. behind for the sands of Vigilus. Race you to the finish line...

ASK GROMBRINDAL

Hello, White Dwarf. I am quite new to this hobby and I have a question about Space Marines. How are they funded? I assume the Imperium collects taxes, but how can this possibly pay for the upkeep of the Imperial armies? How does it work?

Anu Holman,
Plymouth, UK

Anu, well met! Pull up a chair, youngling, and get me a pint of Bugman's XXXXXX – it's the least you can do when coming to me about such human matters. At least it's about gold, I suppose. Well, the longbeards say that the human leaders of the Imperium, known as planetary governors, have two duties and two duties alone; other than that, they can do precisely as they please! The first is to pay their tithes to the Imperium, a matter the Administratum takes very seriously. If they lapse in this, they are visited by the armed might of the Imperium, just as my bar stool visits the heads of those who don't stand their round. If you ask me, those thrice-damned oathbreakers deserve everything they get! With a million worlds taxed, that pays the bills. The second duty is to root out mutation and heresy so that the forces of evil cannot get a foothold on their planet. Those evil Chaos swine get everywhere, it seems...

Grombrindal

PAINTING HELP

I'm elated to see the Middle-earth Strategy Battle Game get a new edition. As I'm preparing to add more miniatures to my collection (notably Uruk-hai Scouts and Lurtz), I've found that there aren't any painting tutorials around for them. Any help would be appreciated!

James Sullivan,
Reading, UK

Hey, James. We actually featured painting guides for Théoden and Gandalf in White Dwarf last year, but we see what you mean about painting guides for the regular troopers. We'll see what we can do to help!

READERS' MODELS

Ultramarines Primaris Captain
by Pascale Roujou

Carcharodons Stormtalon
by Marcel Kinrade

Lotann, Warden of the Soul Ledgers
by Thilo Engels

Steelheart's Champions
by Will Vale

Carcharodons Captain in Cataphractii Armour
by Seyni N'diaye

Readers' Models is the place where we share pictures of some of our favourite miniatures painted by you, our readers. This month, we're featuring servants of the Plague God, armoured heroes, an octopus and a couple of sharks (in space).

Send your photos to:
TEAM@WHITEDWARF.CO.UK

By submitting photographs of your miniatures, you give Games Workshop permission to feature them in White Dwarf at any time in the future.

Death Guard Rhino
by Jeroen Diks

EDITOR'S MODEL OF THE MONTH

'This Nurgle Daemon Prince is the handiwork of Adam Gayner, a regular on our School League circuit and a fellow Southender,' says Phil. 'As a family friend, I have known Adam since he was roughly the size of a snotling and watching his talent grow over the years has been great fun. This conversion shows the rampant inventiveness that we all have when we first dive deep into the hobby, coming up with cool combinations that might not occur to a more traditional mindset. By taking the elephantine proboscis-head and tattered wings of a Rot Fly from a Plague Drones kit, Adam has turned his Daemon Prince model into a leader for his impressive Death Guard army. You can tell this hideous beastie unmistakably owes his allegiance to Nurgle, even before the sickly paint job.'

OUR TOP TIPS FOR TAKING PICTURES OF MINIATURES

In Readers' Models, we want to show off the very best miniatures painted by you, our readers. Of course, great miniatures also need great pictures, so here are our top tips for taking pictures of your favourite models.

Firstly, always use a white background – a large piece of plain white paper is perfect. This helps reflect light back at your camera (unlike a black background, which absorbs it), making your shots brighter and cleaner.

Make sure you've got good lighting. We recommend using daylight bulbs – a couple of desk lamps aimed at the front of the model should provide plenty of light and eliminate any unsightly shadows behind the model.

Find the model's golden angle – the angle that shows most of the miniature's details. If you're ever in doubt, take a look at the model on the Games Workshop website and you should get a good idea of what angle to take the picture from.

Make sure the picture is in focus! If parts of your model look blurry, move your camera back a few inches and try another shot.

For more advice on taking pictures of your miniatures, check out this photography article:

warhammer-community.com/the-model-photo

WORLDS OF WARHAMMER

PHIL KELLY

In his role as a Studio background writer, Phil Kelly has plumbed the depths of his fevered imagination to bring the worlds of Warhammer to life in battletomes, codexes, rulebooks and even the pages of White Dwarf. When he's not writing about new worlds, he's drawing them, sometimes with mathematical equipment, more often with crayons and a plate.

In this month's column, I'd like to talk about making up your own settings for your narrative games. I'm not talking about one-off sessions, but those you will play over a long period of time. Recurring rivalries, long summers of gaming, linked scenarios, hex-based campaigns – all are enhanced by the addition of a good map and some well thought-out places to war over. This is rather grandly called 'world-building', though I warn you now, it involves little in the way of terraforming engines and far more in the way of tracing around upturned cups.

With the war for the Vigilus System entering a new phase, I'm going to use that embattled planet as an example of what I'm talking about. I'll try to avoid spoilers if you haven't joined in the fun just yet – though I can say even the campaign for Vigilus will come to an end,[1] and that it's a great showcase for the techniques of setting out imaginary landscapes for collections of Citadel Miniatures to fight upon. Note that the world-building and map-making techniques I'm going to cover work just as well for Age of Sigmar as they do for Warhammer 40,000, with the added bonus that you only have to design a single continent or two before you've enough territory to carve up between you and the rest of your gaming group.

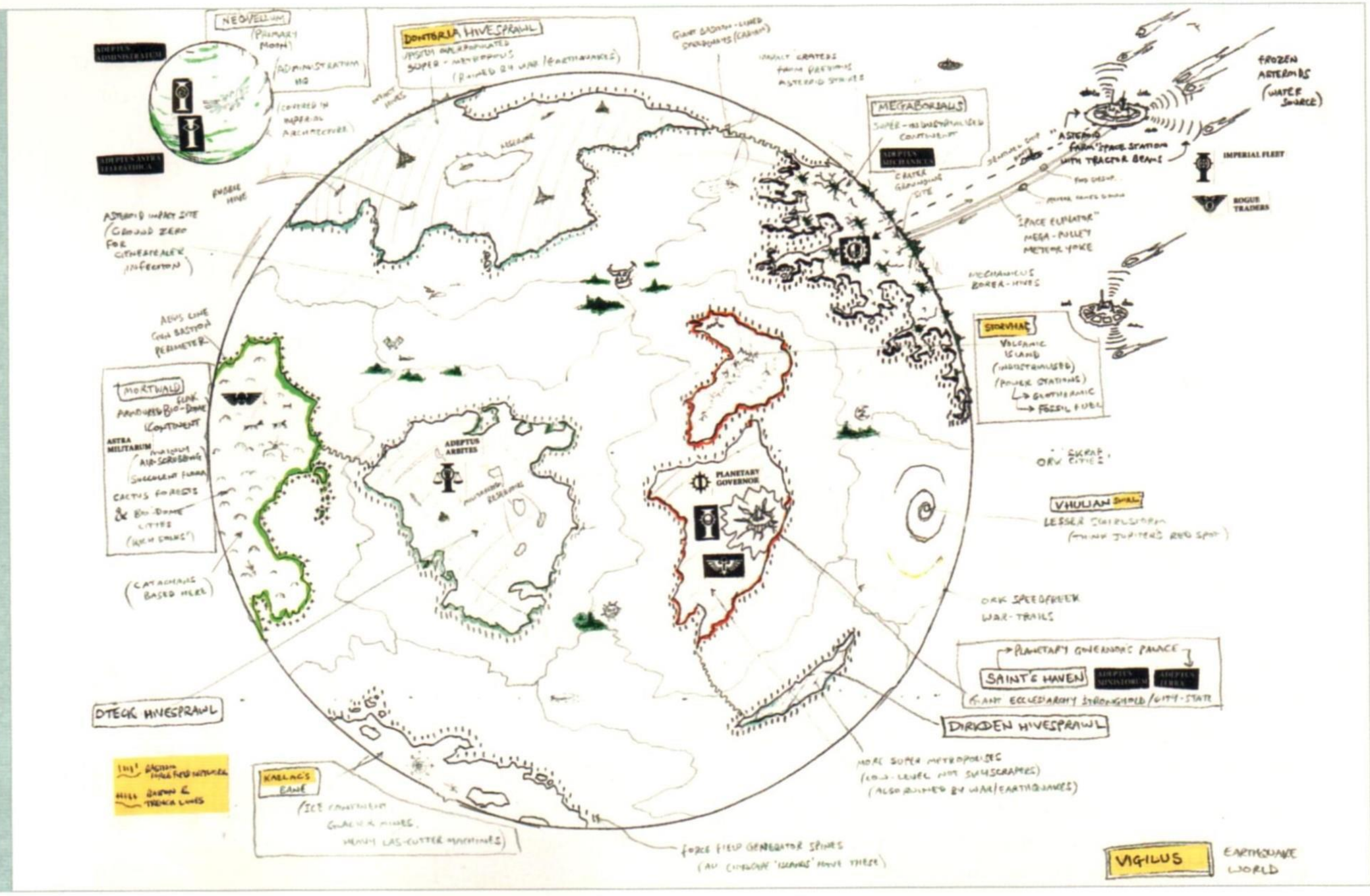
To make a world of your very own on a tight budget (and then conquer it/liberate it/set it on fire), you will need the following tools:

- An A3 pad of tracing paper (lots)
- An atlas or map of the world[2]
- A HB pencil
- A pencil eraser
- Adhesive putty or a glue stick
- A pair of compasses[3]
- Coloured pencils or pens
- A small pair of scissors
- Some Post-it notes
- A propeller pencil or fine black pen (not a ballpoint).[4]
- A photocopier, or access to one.

WAR ZONE VIGILUS

The War Zone Vigilus map is a great example of one of Phil's illustrations, later rendered into a glorious full-colour map by artist Nuala Kinrade (which came free with January's issue of the mag). Much of the advice Phil talks about in this article is put into practice on this map, including naming conventions, army specific icons and using wiggly lines.

If you look closely, you can also see where Phil has crossed out names and made amendments – an important part of creating any map.



Worlds of Warhammer delves into the background of the Age of Sigmar and the 41st Millennium, looking at how stories are forged and legends are born – and, in this instalment, how worlds are created. Read on to find out how Phil tackles world-building.

Of course, instead of taking this rather dated and traditional approach to design, you can use a suite of graphics software. If you have access to such a resource, you will be able to use layers and saved files in much the same way – but I'm going to assume that you don't. Personally I find it easier to sketch out a hard copy of a world first before making any kind of digital copy. It's somehow easier to make grand designs with a pencil than a digital tablet and stylus – you feel less pressure to get it right first time, and can doodle around without getting discouraged.

GETTING STARTED

The first step is to get sketching and making notes. This is even something you can do when on the bus, train, or in a quiet moment between the tasks you are supposed to be doing. Just a small sketch of what you have in mind, with annotations, can help you lock in on what you imagine to be the landscape over which you will be fighting. I'd recommend using A3 paper – or even A2, if you can. This gives you a lot more room to work with, and when you later photocopy it down with the photocopier's reduce function to a handier size, it will seem all the more detailed. Turning an A3 image into an A4 one (that you give to your players as handouts) can sharpen it right up and make it look a lot more detailed.

Use a basic pencil for the initial sketches, rubbing out the bits you don't like (your primitive undo button) and messing with it until you get something you think fits your original idea. Then, when your sketch is looking good,[5] go over the dodgy lines with a propeller pencil – or even a thin black pen – to make them more defined and formalise them into something you can later build on top of. Don't be afraid to do a bunch of these sketches, and don't throw any of them away, no matter how frustrated you may get that you're not quite getting it right just yet. Prepare yourself for the fact it might be Map Version 3 or even 4 that is the one you use as your Brave New World.

Before you put pencil to paper, you should decide what kind of a world it is. There are entries on each type of Imperial world in the *Warhammer* 40,000 rulebook to inspire you and give you a few guidelines. A forge world, for example, will look a lot more organised, built-up and polluted than an agri world, where great rolling plains and irrigation networks are common, or death worlds, where jungles and monster-filled seas are more likely.

There should be parts of your map left deliberately ill-defined – places where map makers of yesteryear would write Here Be Dragons. Only you should know what truly lurks within – even then, you can leave it blank and make something up later when it suits you. On Vigilus, the Vhulian Swirl is a good example of this. There's something at that great dust storm's heart, but its nature is not divulged until the second part of the campaign – a mysterious location can really engage your players as much as a well-drawn capital city.

'There should be parts of your map left deliberately ill-defined – places where map makers of yesteryear would write Here Be Dragons.'

TRACING PAPER

Tracing paper is great stuff. If you draw something you are pleased with but then want a cleaner version than your dog-eared original, or even just to keep some parts and miss others out, you can trace over your best efforts with another sheet. It may seem flimsy but once you've photocopied it, it will be transferred to a nice new sheet of robust A3 paper. Alternatively, if you don't want to redraw a whole section and want to transpose it onto a new map, you can cut that section out, then use tiny bits of adhesive putty or a glue stick to glue it onto the next version you make. Once you've photocopied this new version, it will all blend into one, and no one will be any the wiser about your earlier Frankenstein's monster of a map.

CUTTING EDGE TECH – THE MIGHTY PHOTOCOPIER

Though not essential (and a pretty blunt object), this tool is very useful, and very cheap to use. If you don't have one at your place of work or study that you can get permission to utilise, a local newsagent, library or corner store will have one that you can employ for a few pence a copy.

You'll likely be designing your world map in an iterative fashion, which is a posh way of saying bit by bit and layer by layer. Photocopying the map at different stages – basically whenever you are happy with what you have done thus far – essentially gives you a 'save point' that you can return to if you mess up the next stage, or decide

[1] A grisly one, naturally.

[2] Or equivalent website, of course, though that is missing out on a prize opportunity to use an altas – and you always find something inspiring in those.

[3] Or failing that, a collection of Citadel Miniature bases, cups, and saucepan lids to draw around when making circles. Anything circular you can find, really.

[4] Some ballpoint pens can leave ugly little oil slicks of ink where the pen interacts badly with the pencil. Though rampant pollution is pretty fitting for 40K, these can smudge badly and hence redecorate your map/clothing/furniture.

[5] Or rather good enough – it doesn't need to be a masterpiece, just something that is clear and has some interesting features to fight over.

ARMY ICONS

Here are just a few examples of Imperial icons that you can use on your maps to show who owns what. They're a great way to add character to your maps and they can even help you theme your battlefields.

Adeptus Ministorum

Adeptus Mechanicus

Adeptus Astra Telepathica

Astra Militarum

Planetary Governor

Adeptus Arbites

Adeptus Astronomica

Adeptus Astartes

Inquisition

to go a different way at a later date. This comes in very handy for those people who worry about messing up that one master copy that you cannot easily replace.

INSPIRATION

Find some real-life maps for inspiration – good old planet earth has loads of weird features that might surprise you. This is where that atlas comes in handy. Want to know what a fjord looks like to better illustrate your arctic region or windswept wasteland? Have a look at a map of Norway. Want to have an area on your world typified by its island chains and archipelagos? Look at the Pacific Islands. Though you shouldn't trace over these unless you really want to – having your Tyranids invade a thinly veiled Oslo is not quite as rewarding as a space-age coastline city – they can give you a set of shapes that will be readily identifiable as interesting geographical features.

'When naming locations, make them sympathetic to the terrain features you have placed on your map.'

USE WIGGLY LINES

A key thing here is to make sure the lines of your geographical features are uneven. When you draw them, do so with a deliberately shaky hand[6] – this gives a sense of scale to the map. No coastline or inland lake has much in the way of a straight edge, and if you don't draw very wiggly edges, your land masses will just end up looking like blobs. That way when you do use a straight line – perhaps for a massive tunnel, fortress or bridge that could form the focus of a set of wargames – it will look all the larger by comparison.

INCLUDE INTERESTING FEATURES

These are the parts of your map that will make your gaming group go 'ooh' and lean in for a closer inspection when you finally unveil your semi-glorious handiwork. A teeming metropolis, fortified zone, fortress monastery or hive city – and in the awesome scale of Warhammer 40,000, such areas are visible from orbit – can be a great focal point for an invasion or the cornerstone of a dogged defence.

Here's a short list of Warhammer 40,000-style features you might want to put on your map to add a bit of colour, and to create locations your armies can fight over.

- Hive cities
- Fortress monasteries
- Trench networks
- Bastion clusters
- Superhighways
- Inland seas
- Acid lakes
- Archeological digs
- Mechanicus forge-cities
- City-sized cathedrals
- Planetary governor palaces
- Force field networks
- Giant pit mines
- Haunted canyons
- Artificial chasms
- Canal-like lava networks
- Polluted rivers
- Burning deltas
- Bio-dome networks
- Militarised railways
- Spaceports
- Death world-style jungles
- Cave network entrances
- Webway portals
- Warp breaches
- Predatory tornadoes
- Alien enclaves
- Rad wastes
- Lairs for indigenous monsters
- Fields of battlefield wreckage
- Crashed spaceships

You can add extra coolness to these areas by adding the symbols of the forces that are fighting there – the 40K universe is replete with these. Just by looking in the rulebook you can find excellent icons and symbols for the Imperium's various institutions, and those of its manifest enemies to boot. You can copy these onto your map next to vital strategic locations to tell your players who is in control of that area – at the beginning of the campaign, at least.

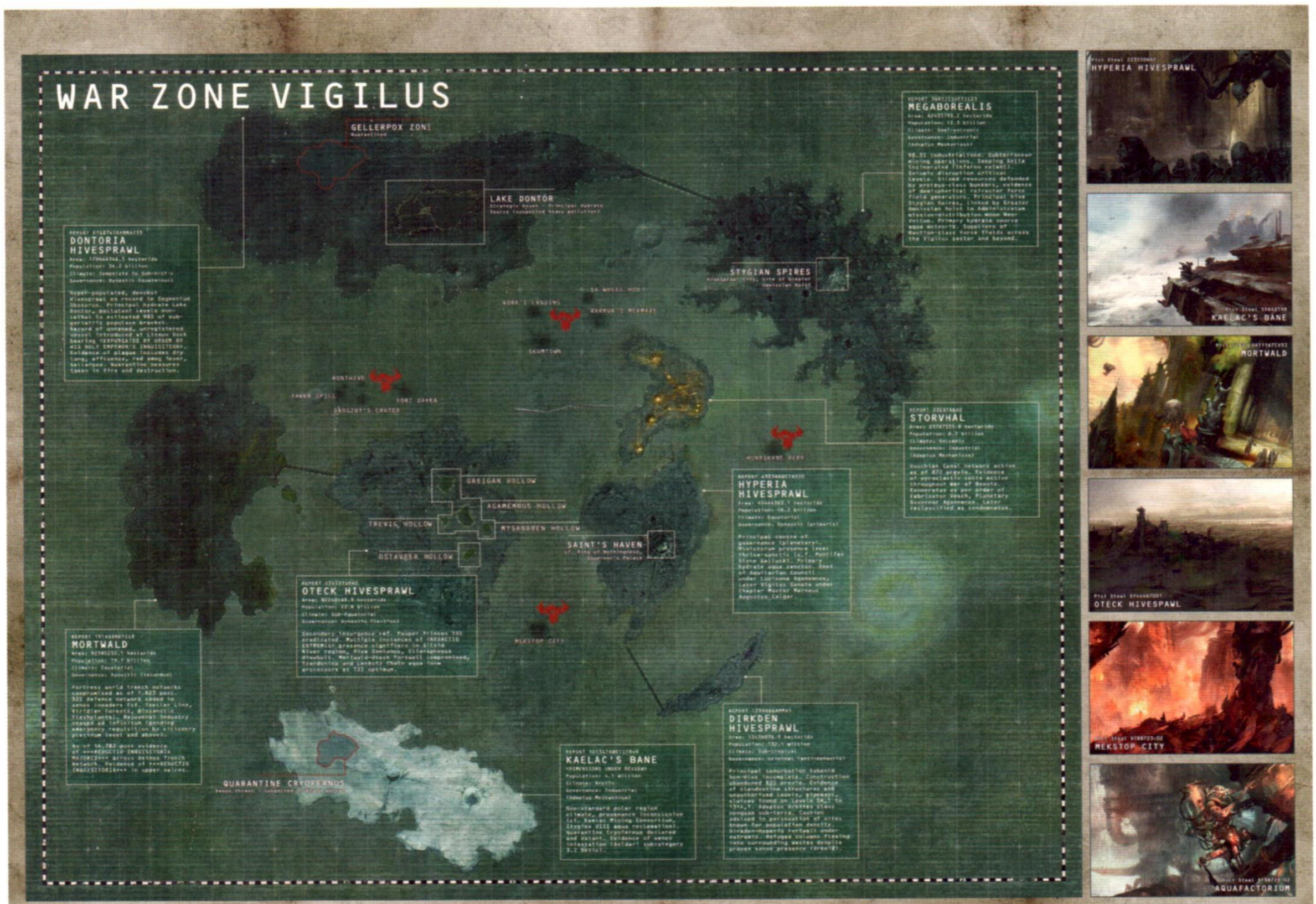
Alternatively you can use coloured pens or pencils to mark out who controls what zone. Each race in Warhammer 40,000 has a predominant colour – so you could use green to show where the Orks are, purple for the Genestealer Cultists, red for the Adeptus Mechanicus and pink for the Ultramarines. Just kidding on that last one.

NAMING LOCATIONS

Once you've drawn on your features, it's time to photocopy the map one more time, and then to write on the names of places. A good way to do this is to cut up the sticky parts of some Post-it notes into little sections a few centimetres in length and perhaps half a centimetre in width. You can then write the name of your feature on that little note and stick it onto your map – with the added bonus that you can move it around later if necessary.

When naming locations, make them sympathetic to the terrain features you have placed on your map, but not purely descriptive or ordinary. So if there's a massive crevasse across the part of your

[6] Or read a really good horror story shortly beforehand, preferably whilst riding a viciously fast rollercoaster.



landmass you've called the Heathen Wastes, calling that great chasm the Heathen Crevasse seems a bit simplistic – you've already used that word. You could instead go with the Heretic's Maw, the Great Rent, or the Screaming Chasm. This will make the planet feel more like it is a genuine Warhammer 40,000 location riven with superstition, myth and supernatural phenomena, rather than one named by real-world cartographers. For more on creating suitable names, see the Worlds of Warhammer article in last month's issue.

'You will probably have more skill at colourising black and white images and choosing colour palettes than you realise.'

TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

At this point your planet is good to go, and it's time to show it off to your gaming group. However, there are other ways you can lavish even more attention on your map, from making 3D representations and Realm of Battle boards to transferring them into digital artworks. The rendered Vigilus map you can see above is the work of Nuala Kinrade, a veteran member of the studio's art team who takes my primitive sketched maps and turns them into something beautiful using graphics software and sheer talent. If you have a computer with such software you can, of course, scan in your map and have a go yourself, colourising and adding features as you see fit (some photocopiers can scan and send to email instead of actually photocopying; failing that, go to a local print shop and pay for a single inexpensive scan). After all, if you paint miniatures, you will probably have more skill at colourising black and white images and choosing colour palettes than you realise. Once you have a digital copy, you can play around with your map as a sort of side project in its own right – and this time you really do have an undo button in case it goes wrong.

Above: The War Zone Vigilus map was beautifully rendered by Nuala Kinrade and was given away free with January's White Dwarf.

Some people lavish months, even years on bringing their worlds to life, revisiting locations and developing them until they feel like living, breathing places. For those of you with a yen for games mastering, this can be a hugely rewarding sub-hobby in its own right. It'll be a fair bit of work, but you can get a great deal of fun exploring it – even before the rest of your gaming group help you evolve it into a war-torn hellscape that any hobbyist would be proud of!

A LITTLE EXTRA READING

What would you like to read about in Worlds of Warhammer? Let us know your thoughts and we'll pass them on to Phil!

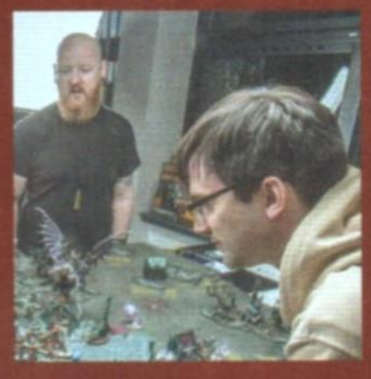
team@whitedwarf.co.uk

WARHAMMER AGE OF SIGMAR

From the maelstrom of a sundered world, the Eight Realms were born - and with their birth began a war to claim them. This month, we present a short story, play a four-player Battle Report and choose Life!

EMPTY GRAVES

In the free city of Lethis, the dead do not rest easily in their tombs, as grave robber Jhoris Parl soon finds out to his cost. Turn to page 20 to read this bone-chilling short story by Nick Horth.



THE BATTLE FOR TECHUAN'S KEY

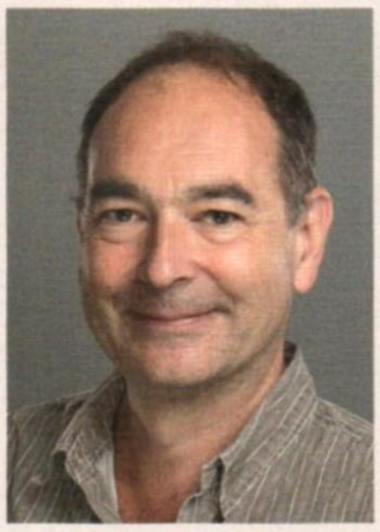
Order, Chaos, Death and Destruction – four armies brought together in one epic Battle Report, where carnage is assured. See which of our four gamers survive on page 24.

FANTASTICAL REALMS

We plant the seeds of inspiration in this month's modelling and painting article set in the Realm of Life. Turn to page 44 for conversions, painting tips and basing ideas for your Ghyranite models.

WARHAMMER AGE OF SIGMAR

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



JERVIS JOHNSON

Jervis is the lead games developer for Warhammer Age of Sigmar, but over the years he has worked on just about every game in the Games Workshop catalogue. One of the toughest aspects of Jervis' job is working out the points values for every unit in the game. It's believed that, should Jervis ever take to the battlefield, he would cost 220 points.

MASSIVE REGIMENTS

The General's Handbook 2017 introduced the idea of massive regiments – huge hordes of warriors that are comparatively cheaper in points than several smaller units of the same type. While such a huge unit may be a little unwieldy on the battlefield, the benefits are twofold. Firstly, any bonuses conferred on the unit affect all the models, meaning augmentative spells and command traits affect more of your fighters. The unit may even receive a bonus for containing more than a certain number of models. The other benefit is that the unit is normally around 10-20% cheaper in points, enabling you to field more warriors for your points and perhaps fit an extra unit into your army list.

One of the great things about my job is getting to go to events like Warhammer Fest and Warhammer World Open Days – they provide an opportunity to talk to the players of our games, and always provide me with plenty of food for thought when I return to my desk in the Design Studio. One question I am very often asked is how we go about coming up with the Pitched Battle points values for units in Warhammer Age of Sigmar, so I thought I would spend this month's column laying out exactly how we go about doing so. I also take the opportunity to let you know how you can become involved in helping us to make those points values as accurate as possible.

'Coming up with the points system proved to be a monumental task...'

A POINT OF CONTENTION

However, before I get started on the ins and outs of the system that we use and how you can help, I think it's important to address one issue, which is that the variables in a complex game like Age of Sigmar make it is almost impossible to come up with a points value that will be accurate in every single game of Age of Sigmar that you play. This is best illustrated with an example: imagine you have a unit armed with a highly effective and long ranged missile weapon, and you need to work out the points value for it. The first time it is used, the battlefield is open and clear of terrain, and your new unit mows down countless enemies – it is awesome! So you assign it a high points value. However, in your next game, the battle is fought in dense terrain which limits lines of sight, and the new unit is charged and destroyed before it gets a chance to shoot at all – it is useless! So you assign it a low points value, and so on. In the long run you'll end up giving the unit a points value roughly halfway between these two extremes, and that will do a perfectly good job, but it doesn't change the fact that in most games that are played the points value will probably be slightly off, because it is so dependent on things like the amount of terrain being used, the types of units being shot at, the other units in your army, the victory conditions for the game, and so on.

Because of this, if you want a really tightly balanced game, you are best off working together with your opponent to pick armies that are evenly matched against each other, taking into account things like the terrain and the battleplan that is being used. This method became the default position for the original Age of Sigmar rules, and it remains the single best way of creating a tightly balanced contest to this day. Nonetheless, we also wanted a points system for the game, and so, with the publication of the first General's Handbook, we introduced rules for matched play games and points values for units. The system made it much easier for players to take part in pickup games at their local club or games store, because all they needed to do was turn up with a pre-selected army. It also enabled players to run tournaments more easily.

GETTING TO THE POINT

Coming up with the points system proved to be a monumental task, but one of the benefits of the gap between the publication of the first Warhammer Age of Sigmar rules and the first General's Handbook was that several dedicated tournament organisers had taken it upon themselves to create their own sets of points values. These proved to be extremely helpful, as I was able to take all of the different systems, feed them into a master spreadsheet, and check them against each other. More often than not there was a consensus on how effective each unit was, though there were a number of cases where units were rated very differently from one set of tournament rules to another. Investigating these revealed that the differences were related to the sort of thing I've mentioned earlier, namely that other rules contained in a tournament pack could change how effective a unit was at that event when compared to another event's house rules. Because of this, rather than averaging out these divergent sets of points, I allowed myself to be guided by the points for the tournament that most closely aligned with the Pitched Battle rules I was working on.

Rules of Engagement - penned by veteran games developer Jervis Johnson - focuses on the creation, design and evolution of the rules for Warhammer Age of Sigmar. This month, Jervis asks: what's the point? Yes, he's looking at points values.

At 800 points, Nagash is the most expensive character in the game. At 6½ points, Moonclan Grots are one of the cheapest units in the game. 60 of them aren't even half the points of Nagash!

SUMMONING

The General's Handbook 2018 changed the rules for summoning units. Before, you had to put points aside to bring a summoned unit to the battlefield. Now you don't! You can now summon as many units as you like, but you'll often find there are restrictions that prevent you from creating whole new armies. A Blades of Khorne army can summon new daemon units, for example. but only if enough other units die to generate Blood Tithe points. Skeleton Warriors and Grave Guard can only be summoned by heroes standing near gravesite markers, Seraphon units can be brought to a battlefield by an Engine of the Gods and so on. Of course, not all armies can summon new units. But they'll often find that they have their own army special rules that benefit them in a different way. Everything's accounted for in the points!

THE POINTS CALCULATOR

At the end of this rather long-winded process, I had a set of points values for all of the units currently in the game. I then took this information, and used it to construct a spreadsheet that could be used to work out the points values of new units we wanted to add to Warhammer Age of Sigmar. The formula used is rather complex, and would probably take the rest of this issue of White Dwarf to describe in detail, so, suffice to say that, at its heart, it works out the expected damage output of a unit, the survivability of a unit, and the value of the abilities a unit has, and mushes these together to create a points value. The calculator went through quite a few iterations, both to make it more accurate, and also to make it more user friendly (my first version could only be used by me, and although the latest is not an elegant piece of design, at least the rest of the rules team can use it too!). The points values derived from the tournament systems proved really helpful here, as it allowed me to test out the calculator by seeing how closely the points it produced aligned with those in my master points value spreadsheet. The same process, and a similar calculator, is used to work out the points values for warscroll battalions and endless spells.

PLAYTESTING

We use the points calculator to generate the first set of points for any new units we add to the game. However, it only gives a rough approximation of the value of a unit, and although it is usually in the right ballpark, more work is still required. The work in question is playtesting, playtesting and then more playtesting! We try to make sure that we get as many games in as possible with a new unit, both in-house by the rules writers, and out of house by our external playtesters. These games give us a pretty good idea if the way a unit actually performs in the game conforms to the points value assigned to it by the calculator. What we tend to find is that while most units perform much as expected, some don't, mainly because the performance of a unit can change a lot depending on how well it aligns with the core rules, and the other units and allegiance abilities for its army. This is especially true of units that do something that no other unit from the same army is able to perform. As a simple example, imagine an army that has only one unit that is a Wizard. Such a unit is going to be much more useful to the army it is a part of than it would be in an army that has lots of units that are Wizards. Because of this, the points for the lonely solo Wizard needs to be artificially increased, in order to avoid them becoming a no-brainer choice that is always taken for their army.

'The work in question is playtesting, playtesting and then more playtesting!'

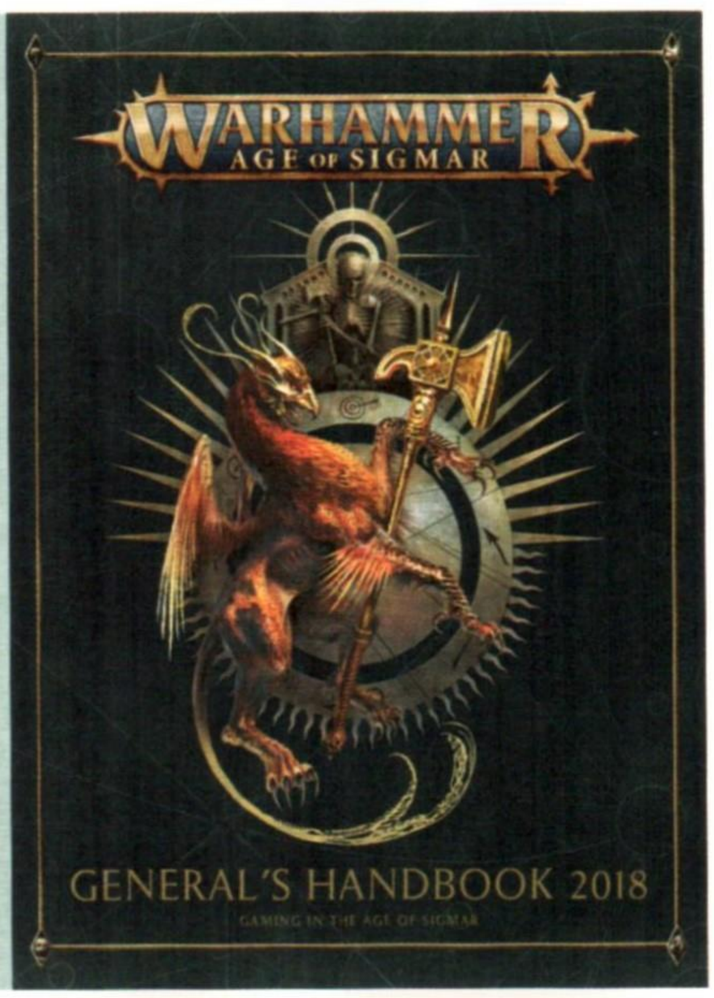
As an aside, one thing players often get wrong when they look at points values is thinking that they are too high for units they really want to be able to include in their army – in my experience this reaction usually means that the points value is spot on, because it is making the player think twice about using the unit, and making them consider other options. In other words, if players think a unit is vital, it should cost a lot of points! But I digress. Returning to the matter in hand, as you'd expect, playtesting always leads to some points adjustments. In general, and proving the benefit of the hard work that went into making the calculator as accurate as possible, the majority of units get through playtesting with their points values completely unchanged, and most of those that do get changed only go up or down by a small number (usually about 10 or 20 points). As an example, in the last battletome I worked on (which isn't out yet, so I can't tell you what it is, sorry!), roughly 20% of the units needed a points adjustment based on playtesting, and less than 5% of the units needed points adjustments of more than 20 points.

THE END RESULT (OR IS IT?)

You might think that after all of this intense calculation and playtesting that, when the points values are published, they're perfect. The truth is that they still benefit from periodic reviews and modification. There are a number of reasons for this, but the two most important are army list optimisation and changes to the matched play meta. Army list optimisation is something that comes about because – after a battletome is published – the army is used to play thousands of games, which is exponentially more than we were able to playtest it with. This results in army lists becoming increasingly fine-tuned, as players

THE GENERAL'S HANDBOOK

Every year, the points values for all Warhammer Age of Sigmar units are updated in the General's Handbook. Those that change are marked with an asterisk, making them easy for players to find and ponder over. Sometimes, other features of units change too, such as whether they have the option to be a massive regiment or whether they become a battleline unit under certain circumstances.



home in on units and combinations of units that can provide them with a slight edge in their games. If left unchecked, this optimisation process can lead to cookie-cutter armies that are very similar in their composition.

The second thing that can impact points values are changes to the Pitched Battle meta, which is really just a fancy way of saying that changes to the core rules and tournament rules pack, and the release of new armies, can impact on the value of units in existing battletomes. This can lead to units that used to be fairly lacklustre becoming suddenly much more useful, while units that used to be a must-have unit in every army find themselves getting dropped.

'Players home in on units and combinations of units that can provide them with a slight edge.'

Things like army list optimisation and the changing tournament meta are almost impossible to anticipate in advance. However, if left unchecked they can wreck the balance of a game, and because of this we have a biannual review process to look at the points values in Warhammer Age of Sigmar and make any adjustments that are necessary. This involves a series of feedback sessions with our external playtesters, with tournament organisers, and by gathering information through social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

The feedback sessions are used in turn to generate the reviews, split into an interim review and a full review. In the interim review we only make adjustments to points values if something has come up that is causing fairly serious problems in terms of play balance in Pitched Battle games, and any changes we make are published as a set of errata for the points values in question. The full review also deals with issues like this, but is also an opportunity for us to fine-tune points values by making minor adjustments where we feel they are needed. The results of the full review are used to generate the Pitched Battle profiles section in the next General's Handbook. Many of these changes will be quite small in and of themselves, but when taken as a whole they do a huge amount to maintain the overall balance of all of the armies in Warhammer Age of Sigmar.

As I hope you can tell, we take the points values for units in Warhammer Age of Sigmar very seriously, and put a huge amount of work into making them as accurate as we possibly can. Nothing is ever perfect, however, least of all things created by an absent-minded games developer like me, and this is where you can help us out. If you feel we have not got a points value for a unit (or units) right, email the rules team at **AoSFAQ@gwplc.com** and tell us where we may have gone wrong, and what you think the right points value should be for the unit(s) in question. Your feedback will help us to keep on improving the points values in Warhammer Age of Sigmar, making the game better for everyone. We look forward to hearing from you.

Above: Imagine a day spent playing games – sounds wonderful, right? But the fate of armies around the world rests on the shoulders of these fine people. Surrounded by books, pens and calculators (it's very high-tech), they pit armies against each other every day, finely tuning rules, abilities, stat lines and, consequently, points values, to make sure every unit works correctly on the battlefield.

AN AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

If you have a topic about Warhammer Age of Sigmar that you would like Jervis to tackle, please write in and let us know:

team@white-dwarf.co.uk

EMPTY GRAVES

The realms are assailed by the legions of the dead. Not even the grand strongholds of Order are safe from the terrors of the Soul Wars. In this short story by Nick Horth, a malevolent evil stirs in the free city of Lethis.

The gates of Druchmar Cemetery were shut tight, bound with great padlocks of black iron. There was little of the baroque ornamentation that marked the entrance to the Grand Mausoleum, the most sacred burial ground of the free city of Lethis. No, this was a place for less worthy souls to rest.

Still, Jhoris Parl found it perfectly suited to his particular needs. He paused before the entrance, peering back and forth along the cobbled streets for signs of city watchmen, or worse, the bird-masked silhouette of a Morrdan priest. Fortunately, only the ravens bore witness to his deeds this night. Clusters of the night-black birds peered down disapprovingly from the spires of nearby townhouses. He bowed theatrically.

'Watch o'er me, master raven,' he said, with a smile that exposed yellow-black teeth. 'And put a word in with Morrda for an old rogue.'

The silent deity of the dreaming dead was not known for his love of grave robbers, but Jhoris hardly thought godly eyes would be upon him this night. They had bigger concerns in these dark days. All he needed was a little drinking money, enough to buy him a few more nights in the Gray Maiden. Surely the dead would not begrudge an old man such meagre pleasures?

Jhoris scampered across to the locked gate and began to rummage through his bag for the correct tools. He withdrew a vial of black liquid, and –

handling it with particular care – removed its wax plug. He poured the liquid into the padlock, and stood back. There was a bubbling hiss and an eruption of steam as the skullcoiler venom did its work, slowly eating through the thick metal.

'Come on, come on,' the grave robber muttered, pulling his ragged cloak about his shoulders.

It was a bitter night, the kind of cold that cut deep into one's bones. He looked out, over the sleeping city. From this lonely spot you could see the entire lakeside half of the city; the steepled spines of townhouses descending down towards the harbour, and the eerie glow of whale-oil lanterns like a thousand eyes flickering in the night. Lake Lethis itself lurked beyond, black and silent and still. And far, far in the distance, rose the looming monolith of Deific Mons. The Mountain of Forgotten Gods was many leagues away, but so vast was its size that it always appeared to be looming directly over Lethis. At this late hour its peaks were wreathed in sickly witch-light. As wispy clouds passed across the light of the moon above they seemed to wheel and twist, less like elemental forces than spirits cavorting in some macabre dance. Watching it made Jhoris profoundly uncomfortable, yet he found he could not look away.

The padlock dropped to the stones with an uncomfortably loud clang, and he almost leapt out of his boots. Cursing, he bent to retrieve the heavy lock and slipped through the now open gate.

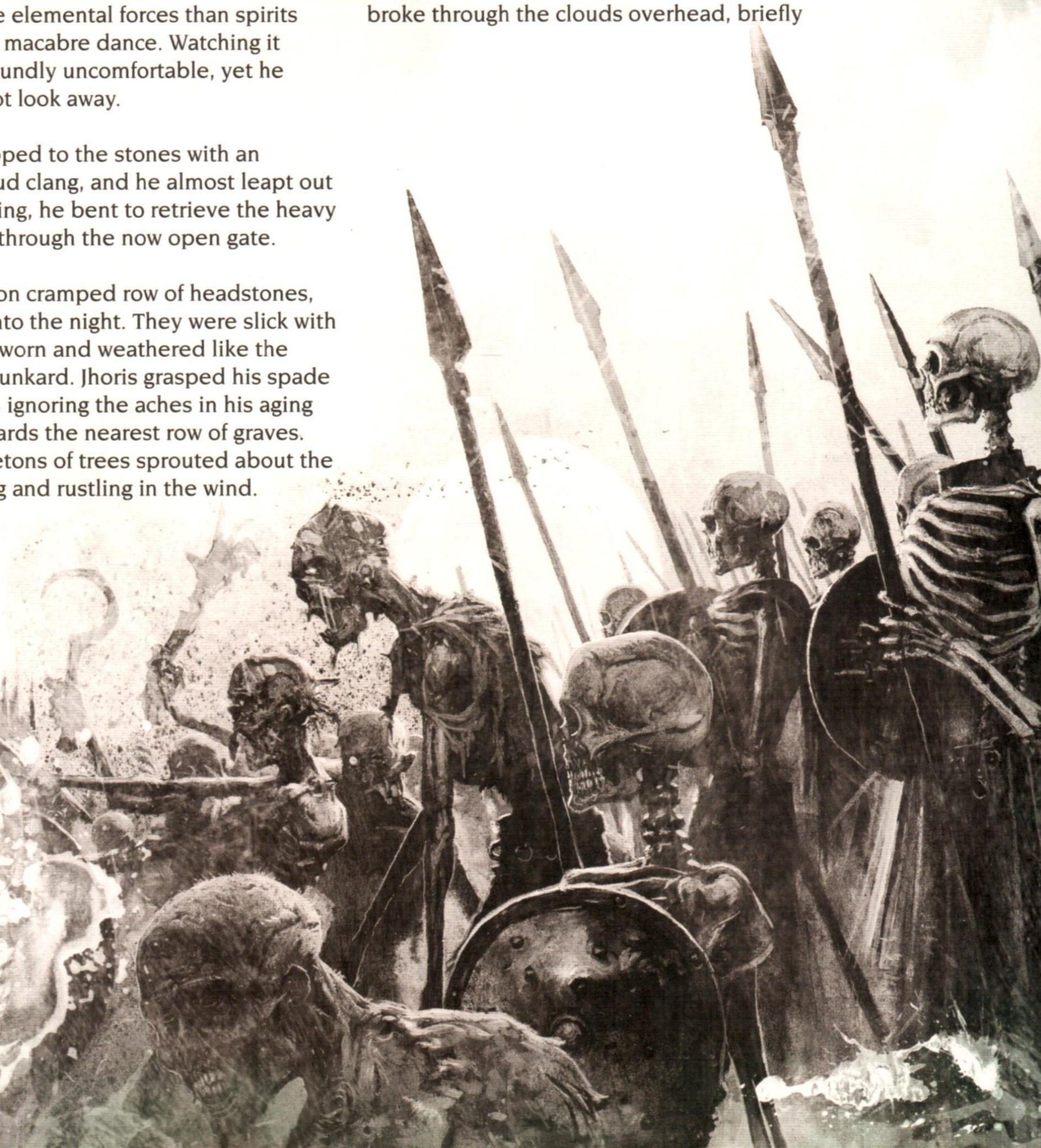
Inside lay row upon cramped row of headstones, stretching away into the night. They were slick with moss and lichen, worn and weathered like the teeth of an old drunkard. Jhoris grasped his spade in two hands and, ignoring the aches in his aging back, started towards the nearest row of graves. The gnarled skeletons of trees sprouted about the cemetery, twisting and rustling in the wind.

The grave robber frowned as he approached the nearest headstone. Beneath the modest star-shaped stone was a wide hole, almost perfect in diameter, as if it had been carved out of the earth with a butcher's blade. Black soil was piled high next to the pit. Jhoris cursed. Someone had beaten him to his work. He peered down into the hole, expecting to see a pile of bones and little else.

The grave was entirely empty. No skull grinned back at him, and there were no bleached bones. Only several rings crafted from varying metals. Jhoris hopped down into the grave and scooped up the meagre haul. Inspecting the rings more closely, he saw that most of them were shaped crudely from brass. Only one was of fine silver. Not a wondrous find, but certainly nothing that a grave robber would be likely to pass over. He jammed them into the pockets of his long coat.

'What strange manner of grave robber exhumes a corpse but leaves its valuables behind?' he said.

As he clambered free of the hole, greenish light broke through the clouds overhead, briefly



illuminating the graveyard. Mounds of displaced dirt lay next to every single grave.

'Wh... What in Sigmar's name?' Jhoris whispered.

He hurried on, scrambling down row after row of headstones. Each grave was empty, save for a few paltry scraps of belongings. Rings, mirrors, keepsakes and tchotchkes. The dead had departed, and left only their treasures behind. Jhoris shivered. It felt as though the air was growing colder by the moment.

The rustling of the leaves became more insistent, like hushed laughter echoing all around him. Jhoris peered out into the gloom, cold sweat trickling down his spine. He gripped the tool of his trade in two shaking hands, brandishing the rusty shovel as if it could fend off the evils of the night. Had some Necromancer or foul bone-witch visited this place tonight? Mayhap they still lurked nearby, seeking fresher meat for their foul pleasures.

'Who's there?' he cried, and his voice sounded weak and pitiful in the silence. There was no answer.

Every ragged breath turned to mist. Jhoris very desperately wished to leave the graveyard then, but he thought of the cold night that awaited him on the streets, and steeled himself for the task ahead.

'I can hardly leave such treasures behind,' he said to himself, 'not when some fool's done the hard work for me. What's the state of things when an old grave robber's afeared of a little darkness?'

Jhoris bent and lowered himself into the nearest hole. Seeing a gleam of silver, he reached down, and his fingers closed around something cold to the touch. It was a silver chain of fine make, at its centre the crude image of a half-moon. He pocketed it, then frowned. There was something else buried beneath the soil. He could see a curved plate of bone, then the circular gap of an eye socket. So not every corpse had been removed after all. He leaned down to scoop away the dirt. Perhaps this lucky soul had some treasures worth taking.

The empty eye socket swivelled towards him. Jhoris fell backwards with a scream, his shovel falling from nerveless fingers. The dead thing rose. It did not displace a single speck of dirt. Instead it drifted up through the grave-soil, its ragged cloak floating as if underwater. The spirit's skeletal face was locked upon Jhoris, and it opened its maw to grin with obscene malice. Jhoris turned and clawed at the lip of the grave, grabbing clumps of mud and grime as he desperately tried to drag his way free. Somehow he scrambled out, and on his hands and knees he crawled away, unable to summon the strength to stand. Ahead, several dozen paces away, was the cemetery gate. Yet even as he finally staggered upright, his knees threatening to give way beneath him with every step, it swing shut with a terrifying crash.

Coils of mist crept around the branches of the skeletal trees on all sides, drifting out across the empty graves. As Jhoris watched, shapes formed in the darkness. Cloaked, insubstantial figures approaching with dreadful resolve. Their empty eye sockets were locked upon him, their skeletal faces grinning eagerly. Rusted blades and cudgels were clasped in their hands. Jhoris' scream caught in his throat, and he staggered backwards, clutching at his chest. He felt an ice-cold wind at his back, and turned. The spirit-thing drifted towards him, one terrible hand outstretched.

'Morrda save me,' Jhoris gasped, and even as he spoke the words he knew that there would be no absolution for his damned soul.

He, who had spent his life disturbing the rest of the dead, selling their dearest possessions in exchange for a few coins, or enough wine to drown his sorrows. They had come for him at last, those poor, tormented spirits. They reached out to him with ghostly fingers. He sank to his knees, unable to breathe. Closer and closer the spirit came.

Thunder struck, and a flash of lightning seared Jhoris' eyes. When its glare receded, three statues stood before him. They were broad and immensely tall, their ornate armour and swirling robes limned with dancing trails of amethyst light. The Black Saints, guardians of the living and the dead. The Anvils of the Heldenhammer.

'Begone, spirits,' boomed the central figure. This one alone was unhelmed, his skin pale-white and tattooed with spirals of purple. 'Back to the grave.'

The gheists shrieked in outrage, a sound that turned Jhoris' blood to ice. Then they rushed at the onyx giants from all sides, moving with terrifying speed.

The Anvils stood their ground, slamming their shields down. The leading warrior's mace, sparkling with amethyst light, smashed across the spectral form of an oncoming spirit, blasting it into motes of ethereal matter. The remaining gheists recoiled, screeching, then surged forward again like a changing tide. The Anvils' shields came up, and the dead broke upon them, rusted blades unable to pierce the wall of unyielding metal. Down came the maces, again and again, and with every blow another ghostly form was dispersed, smote into nothingness. All was thunder and howling hatred, and Jhoris closed his eyes, tears streaming down his cheeks. He wept in relief and in shame – to be so old and weak and mortal in the face of such splendour was more than he could stand.

When he finally opened his eyes, the cemetery was silent once more. The grave robber felt something close around his neck, and haul him roughly to his feet. He found himself staring into a lifeless mask, its eyes sunken and pitiless. It was no less terrifying to look upon than had been the wrathful spirit.

'Thou hast trespassed here, worm,' the mask growled, in a voice that made Jhoris' blood turn to ice. 'No doubt to pick upon the bones of the dead. Dost thou know the price for such blasphemy?'

'Enough,' said another voice. The giant who had first spoken. 'Release the mortal. Are the dead not legion enough, without adding to their ranks?'

The mask snarled, but the vice-like grip around the grave robber's neck was released. Jhoris slumped to the floor, gasping and spluttering.

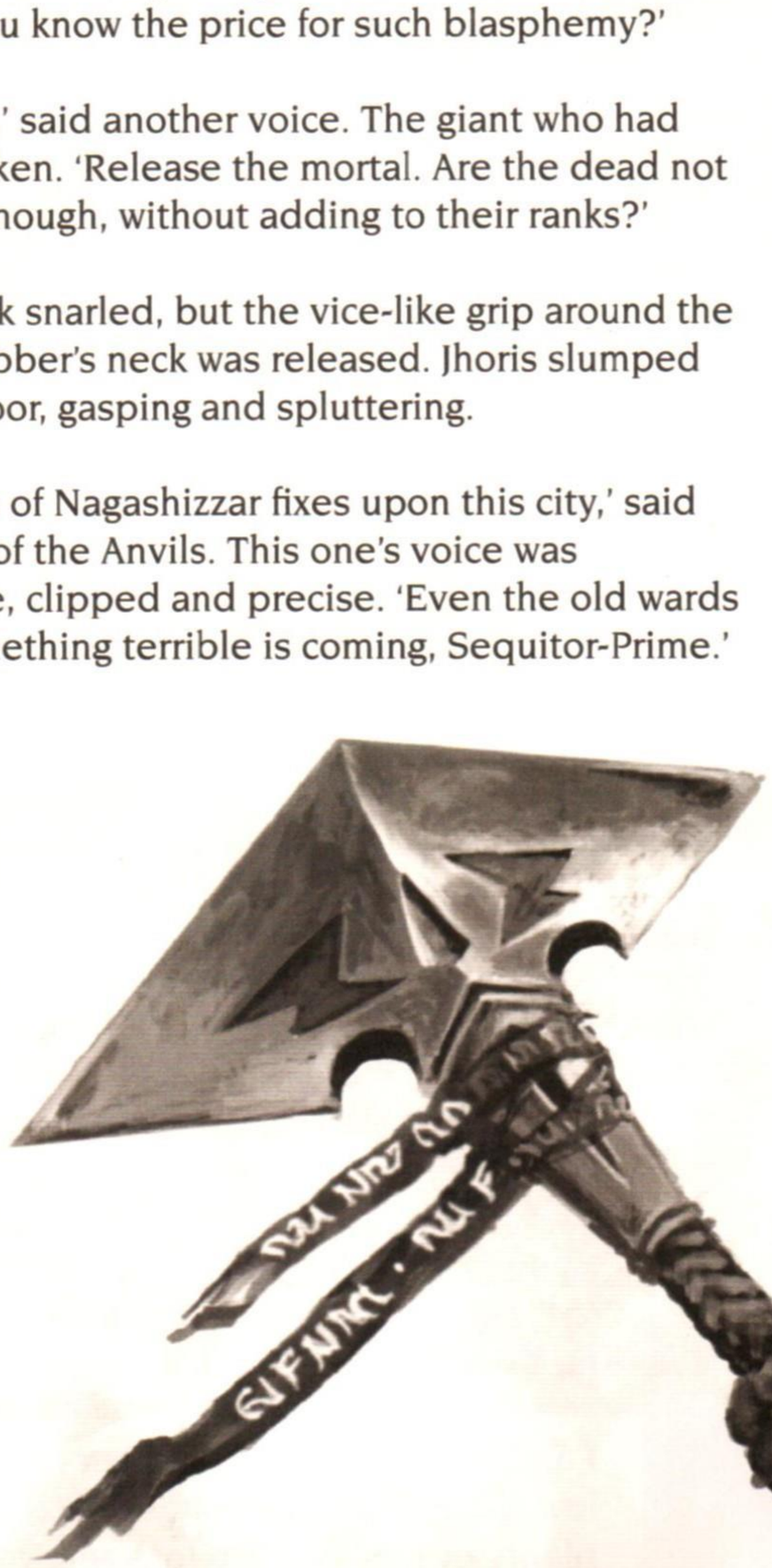
'The eye of Nagashizzar fixes upon this city,' said the last of the Anvils. This one's voice was feminine, clipped and precise. 'Even the old wards fail. Something terrible is coming, Sequitor-Prime.'

No sooner had she spoken the words than the ground began to tremble. Across the city, flocks of ravens darted into the air, cawing and screeching. A thunderous sound stirred deep beneath the earth. At first it sounded like the distant roar of running water, but it grew in rage and intensity with every passing moment. Jhoris clapped his hands to his ears as the sound grew into an unearthly howl, full of hate and fury. Windows shattered, and headstones crumbled to dust. Beyond the cemetery gates, cobblestones split apart, and spider-webbing cracks opened in the city streets. Just as Jhoris thought he could take no more, the awful sound stopped. It was then that the screaming started. Distant, frenzied screams, like those of panicked animals.

'Death,' whispered Jhoris, his voice trembling. 'Death comes to Lethis.'

The helmless warrior turned and fixed the grave robber with a stare. His face was gaunt and waxy, his eyes sunken coals of purple flame.

'No,' he said. 'It was already here.'



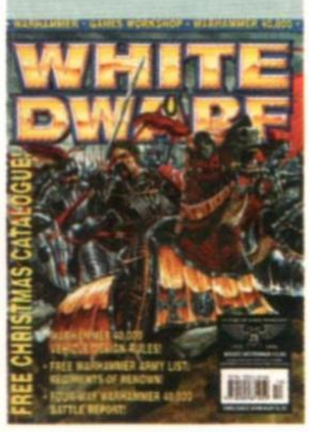
BATTLE FOR TECHUAN'S KEY II

At the heart of a barren moorland in the Realm of Death lies an ancient temple known as Techuan's Key. The contents of the temple are a mystery, for none have ever emerged from its depths alive. Now, four armies approach Techuan's Key, intent on claiming it.

This month's Battle Report is a little different to our regular games – it's not a matched play game or a narrative-driven story, but a four-player, all-on-all royal rumble! So where did the inspiration for this game come from? Well, back in December 2000, Matt and Phil (along with then-Dwarfers Graham Davey and Paul Sawyer) played a Warhammer 40,000 scenario they'd written themselves called Carnage. The premise of the game was simple: four players battled it out for an objective in the centre of the battlefield – the player with a model closest to the objective at the end of the game was declared the winner. The result of that game was, unusually, a draw, with Matt and Phil (using Black Templars and Ulthwé Aeldari respectively) both claiming the objective. Eighteen years later, they thought it was time for a rematch to see who could finally claim it. So here it is, the Battle for Techuan's Key II.

ONCE UPON A TIME...

The original Carnage scenario was fought in White Dwarf issue 252 back in December 2000. In it, Black Templars, White Scars, Ulthwé Aeldari and Black Legion Chaos Space Marines duked it out for supremacy.



The first thing you'll notice is that this isn't a Warhammer 40,000 Battle Report. Nope, this time Matt and Phil decided to play Warhammer Age of Sigmar and roped in games developers Sam Pearson and James Gallagher to join in the fun. Phil and Sam wrote a new Carnage scenario for Warhammer Age of Sigmar, which you can see to the right – why not give it a go with your gaming group? The scenario uses the Triumph & Treachery rules from page 302 of the *Warhammer Age of Sigmar Core Book* and, just like the original scenario, alliances can be made and broken, bribery is encouraged and backstabbing is par for the course.

For this game, Matt, Phil, Sam and James used a low, flat building to represent Techuan's Key, with plenty of space on top for some good scraps; they picked Shyish as the realm they'd be fighting in. Turn the page to see their chosen forces.

BATTLEPLAN

CARNAGE

The sacred site has been found! The gods will rain blessings upon those who can fight off their rivals and take the vital nexus of power for themselves – but it will not be easy...

TRIUMPH & TREACHERY!

This is a Triumph & Treachery battle for 3-4 players. Use the Triumph & Treachery rules from the *Warhammer Age of Sigmar Core Book*. Secret Objectives and victory points are not used in this battle – the only criteria for victory is to be the one that claims the Nexus of Power!

THE BATTLEFIELD

The centre of the battlefield is marked as the Nexus of Power. This battleplan works especially well if there are no terrain features that models cannot be placed easily upon within 6" of the Nexus of Power. However, an imposing terrain feature that models can be placed easily upon (such as a hill) can be placed at the centre of the battlefield, as it will add a cinematic feel.

SET-UP

The players roll off, and the winner decides the order in which the players pick their territories. The territories for the armies are shown on the map below.

The players then alternate setting up units one at a time, starting with the player that won the roll-off. Units must be set up wholly within their own territory, more than 24" from any enemy models. Continue to set up units until all players have set up their armies.

Players can choose to place any of their units in reserve instead of setting them up on the battlefield. Reserve units can enter play in any of their controlling player's movement phases, starting from the second battle round. All of the models in the unit must be set up in the player's starting territory, wholly within 6" of the table edge and more than 9" from any enemy models. This counts as their move for that movement phase.

COMMANDING POSITION

At the start of each battle round after the first, the player with a friendly model closest to the Nexus of Power receives D3 command points. If 2 or more players have friendly models equally as close to the Nexus of Power, neither player receives additional command points in this manner.

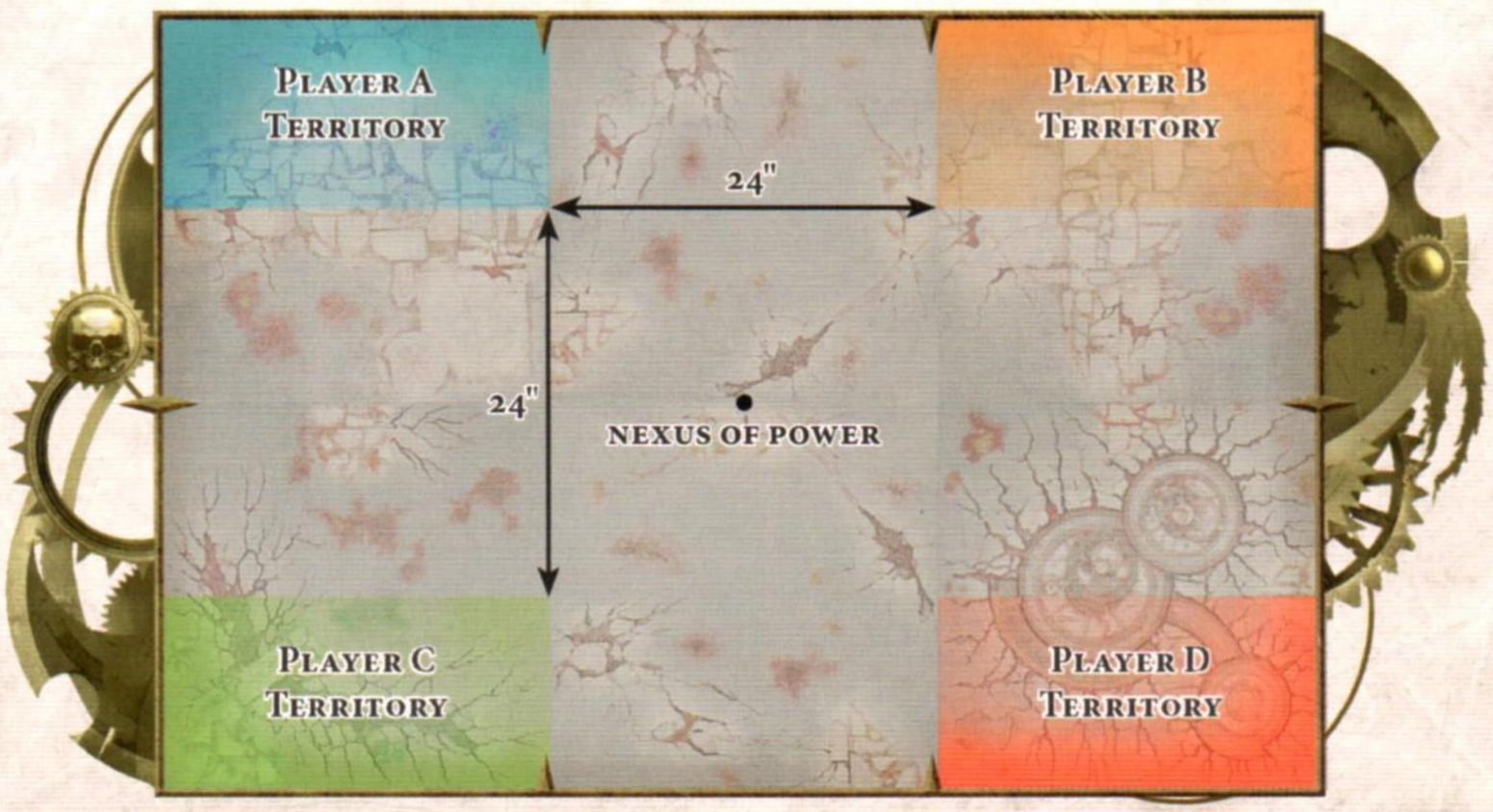
TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Roll a dice at the end of the fourth battle round and every round thereafter. If the dice roll is equal to or higher than the battle round number, the battle continues. If not, the battle ends and the winner is determined.

GLORIOUS VICTORY

The player with a friendly model closest to the Nexus of Power at the end of the battle wins a **major victory**, and is proclaimed the High Lord of Carnage. If 2 or more players have friendly models equally as close to the Nexus of Power at the end of the battle, these players roll off to determine the winner.

Designer's Note: *As there is a limited amount of space on an average gaming table, we suggest limiting your armies to no more than 80 models a side (or 1,500 points a side if you are using Pitched Battle Profiles) unless you have a suitably large battlefield to fight over.*



FORCES OF ORDER

Matt: For this game, I picked Drycha to lead my army – I don't often get to use her, but she has some seriously powerful abilities that work really well when she's surrounded by enemies. If I can get her onto the objective, I reckon she can hold it well enough.

To back up Drycha, I'm taking a load of Spite-Revenants (they can re-roll wound rolls of 1 when they're near her) and two units of Kurnoth Hunters – one unit with greatbows, the other with greatswords – as they can deal with pretty much anything the enemy can throw at them. I plan to hold back a bit at first and let the others scrap, then go in for the kill. Oh, and stop Phil from winning, because he denied me victory last time!

FORCES OF CHAOS

Sam: I really love the Slaughterpriest models, so I based my Blades of Khorne force around the Gore Pilgrims warscroll battalion. It's expensive points-wise, but it gives me some great bonuses that I think will make my army very hard to kill and dish out a lot of damage in return.

My plan's pretty simple (as it should be for Khorne). I'm going to race my Skullcrushers into the middle of the battlefield, stand right over the objective and never let go of it. I can then back up the Skullcrushers with my units of Blood Warriors – between them they have a lot of wounds that will be hard to shift. And, if my plan goes horribly wrong, I'll just attack James, as he beat me in the last Battle Report we fought.

DRYCHA'S WARHOST

1 – Drycha Hamadreth **280 points**
Deepwood Spell: Treesong

2 – Lantana **80 points**
Branchwraith
Deepwood Spell: Regrowth

3 – Alidora **80 points**
Branchwraith
Deepwood Spell: Verdant Blessing
Arcane Treasure: Hagbane Spite

4 – The Zanthella **140 points**
10 Spite-Revenants

5 – The Phalartos **70 points**
5 Spite-Revenants

6 – The Anegaden **160 points**
10 Tree-Revenants

7 – The Nepenthes **200 points**
3 Kurnoth Hunters with Kurnoth greatbows

8 – The Tahina **200 points**
3 Kurnoth Hunters with Kurnoth greatswords

9 – Kagetora **240 points**
Treelord

10 – Endless Spell: Aethervoid Pendulum **40 points**

Total: **1490 points**

THE BLOOD LEGION OF KHARKHAROS

1 – Ashkal Darksworn **100 points**
Slaughterpriest with bloodbathed axe
Command Trait: Berzerker Lord
Artefact: The Brazen Rune
Blood Blessing: Killing Frenzy

2 – Rullak the Reaper **100 points**
Slaughterpriest with hackblade and wrath-hammer
Blood Blessing: Bronzed Flesh

3 – Khar Dar'roth **100 points**
Slaughterpriest with hackblade and wrath-hammer
Blood Blessing: Killing Frenzy

4 – Eklax "The Coward" **140 points**
Bloodsecrator
Banner of Khorne (Artefact): Banner of Wrath

5 – The Doomed Ones **70 points**
10 Bloodreavers with reaver blades

6 – The Eight-Marked Reapers **170 points**
5 Skullreapers with daemonblades and soultearer

7 – The Butchers of Mar'rak Khos **180 points**
5 Wrathmongers

8 – The Charnel Hounds **140 points**
3 Mighty Skullcrushers with bloodglaives

9 – The Bloodfiends **100 points**
5 Blood Warriors with goreaxes

10 – The Bloodied Hand **200 points**
10 Blood Warriors with goreaxes and goreglaive

Gore Pilgrims Battalion **200 points**

Total: **1500 points**

FORCES OF DEATH

James: For my army I picked lots of small, summonable units such as Skeleton Warriors and Spirit Hosts, plus a couple of hard-hitting units in the form of my two Vampires. While my battle-line units act as the anvil, my heroes will be the hammer, smashing all before them. The Mortis Engine and Banshee will provide a little ranged support.

I want to encourage Phil and Sam to fight each other for the centre as they're the two hard-hitting forces in my opinion. Once they've ruined each other's armies, I can then sweep in for victory. My Vampire Lord on Zombie Dragon is super-resilient and should be able to hold the centre on his own with the command trait and artefact I've given him.

FORCES OF DESTRUCTION

Phil: My battle-plan hinges on my Tyrant's command ability – Bully of the First Degree. With this, I can make my units immune to battleshock, which is very handy if you need to keep them around somewhere, like, say, on an objective! My big unit of Ogors and the Ironguts will spearhead the assault, with my Grots and Gargant acting as distractions – 60 Grots can be quite a thorn in the side, and I can easily hold up someone's advance with them if I need to.

I'm hoping that the rivalry between James and Sam will see them neutralise each other, which means I might only have to deal with Matt's Sylvaneth. Inevitably, he'll have tricks up his sleeves...

LORD REINHARDT'S BLOODHOST

1 – Lord Reinhardt **440 points**
Vampire Lord on Zombie Dragon with chalice of blood, deathlance and ancient shield
Artefact: Soulbound Garments
Command Trait: Aura of Dark Majesty
Lore of the Vampires Spell: Vile Transference

2 – Catalina Morden **140 points**
Vampire Lord with membranous wings and chalice of blood
Lore of the Vampires Spell: Soulpike

3 – Leonara the Screaming **80 points**
Tomb Banshee

4 – The Blackgate Sentinels **80 points**
10 Skeleton Warriors with ancient blades

5 – The Darkroad Wardens **80 points**
10 Skeleton Warriors with ancient blades

6 – The Gaol Watch **80 points**
10 Skeleton Warriors with ancient blades

7 – Heinrich von Wursthoven's Spectral Conjuration **180 points**
Mortis Engine

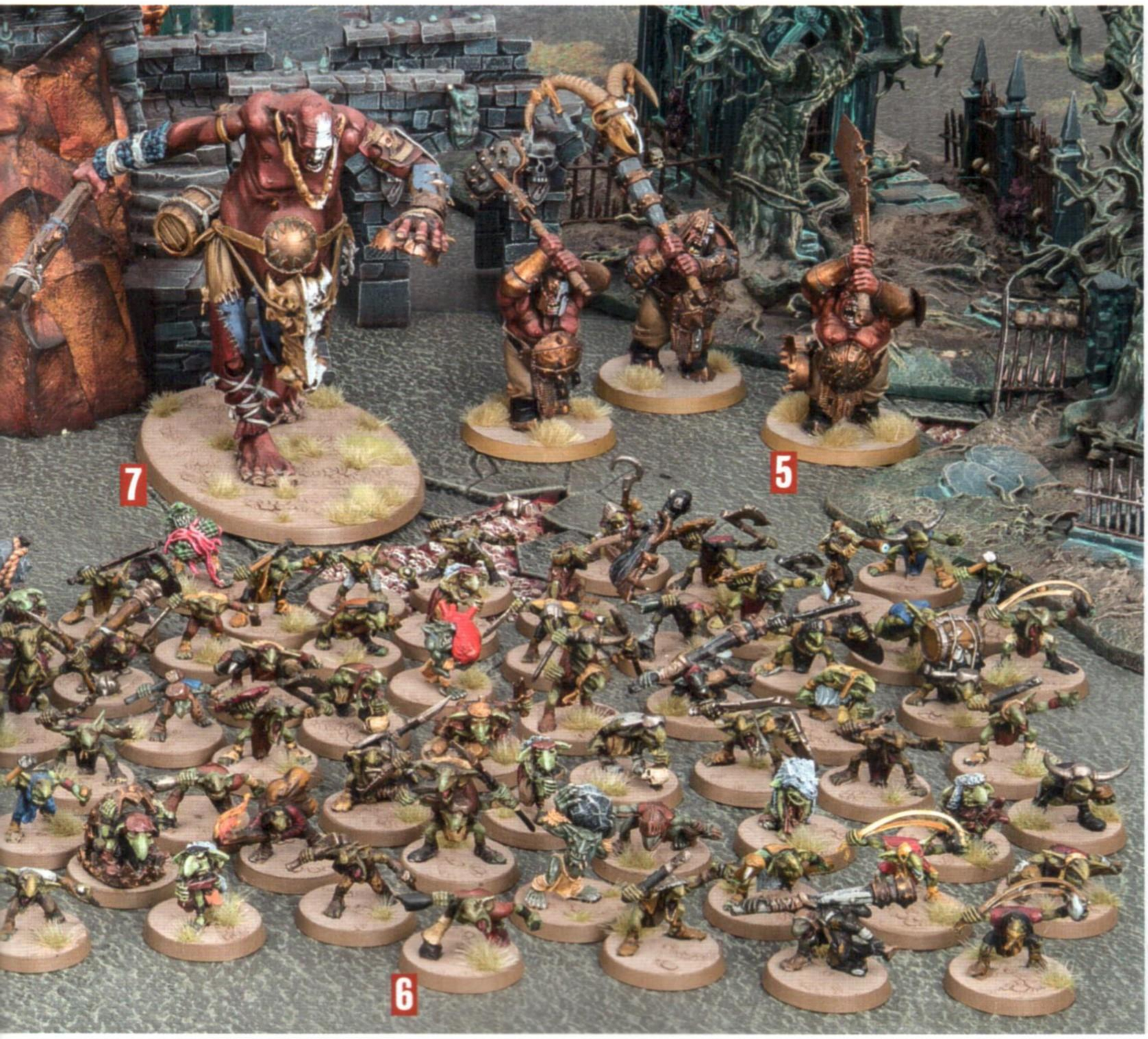
8 – The Lost **240 points**
6 Spirit Hosts

8 – The Damned **120 points**
3 Spirit Hosts

10 – Endless Spell: Aethervoid Pendulum **40 points**

11 – Endless Spell: Malevolent Maelstrom **20 points**

Total: **1500 points**



BOLG'S GUTBUSTER HORDE

1 – Bolg da Tyrannical Tyrant **160 points**
Tyrant with basher and slicer, ogor pistols
Big Name: Longstrider
Command Trait: Wild Fury
Artefact: Battle Brew

2 – Stewpot Burk **140 points**
Butcher with stump blades and great cauldron

3 – The Big Biters **400 points**
12 Ogors with ogor clubs and blades, crusher, bellower, tribal banner and lookout grot

4 – The Belly Boys **180 points**
3 Ironguts with mighty bashing weapons, Gutlord, bellower and rune maw bearer

5 – The Boss Bashers **180 points**
3 Ironguts with mighty bashing weapons, Gutlord, bellower and rune maw bearer

6 – The Measly Horde **270 points**
60 Grots with sharp stuff and a motley assortments of weapons

7 – Kroksnappa **160 points**
Aleguzzler Gargant with massive club

Total: **1490 points**

'Drycha's Swarm of Squirmlings could really mess up your Grots.' – Matt

'That would be... mean.' – Phil

DEPLOYMENT

With their forces picked and the battlefield set up, the four players deployed their armies. Many a suspicious glance was thrown at the players to either side as they tried to work out who would be sending what units where in the opening stages of the game. Sam deployed a unit first, followed by Matt, Phil and finally James. 'I'm going right for the middle with my Skullcrushers,' said Sam, which is perfectly in keeping with Khorne's subtle approach to warfare. 'I won't be,' said James, aiming his Spirit Hosts at Sam's army.

Phil and Matt eyed up each other's forces as more units were deployed, with Phil aiming his huge unit of 60 Grots in the general direction of Matt's deployment zone and Matt hiding most of his own units behind his Sylvaneth Wyldwoods. The hardest hitting units – Skullcrushers, Treelord, Gargant and Vampire – all faced into the centre...

'I don't have any sneaky tricks, but twelve Ogors have strength in numbers. And actual strength, too, obviously.' – Phil

SAM'S DEPLOYMENT

Sam sets up his Skullreapers, Wrathmongers and a unit of Blood Warriors facing James's undead forces **(1)**. He aims the Bloodreavers at Matt's Sylvaneth **(2)** and the Mighty Skullcrushers at the objective **(3)**.

A unit of ten Blood Warriors, the three Slaughterpriests and the Bloodsecrator make up the second wave **(4)**.

MATT'S DEPLOYMENT

Matt puts down his Treelord and Kurnoth Hunters so they're facing Sam's army **(5)**. He deploys all his Spite-Revenants facing the ogors **(6)**. Matt places his Tree-Revenants at the back of his deployment zone as they can use their waypipes to move **(7)**, and leaves (pun intended) Drycha in a hidden enclave to deploy later.

PHIL'S DEPLOYMENT

Phil places the Gargant front and centre flanked by the Ironguts **(8)**, with his Tyrant **(9)** and Butcher **(10)** close behind. The big unit of twelve Ogors sits behind them **(11)**, with the Grots on the eastern flank **(12)**.

JAMES' DEPLOYMENT

James deploys his Skeletons and Spirit Hosts around two of his gravesite markers **(13 and 14)** for easy summoning. He sets up both Vampires **(15)** and the Mortis Engine **(16)** further back as they can all fly over other units and terrain. Finally, James nestles his Banshee 'somewhere in amongst the Skeletons' **(17)**.

CAN'T SEE THE TREES FOR THE SYLVANETH WYLDWOODS

It may not be immediately obvious, but there is actually an army hidden in the top right-hand corner of the battlefield behind all those trees – it's Matt's Sylvaneth. 'I get to deploy a Sylvaneth Wyldwood before the game, so I did,' says Matt. 'I'm hoping the trees will screen my advance. It also means I can use the Forest Spirits rule to bring Drycha in closer to the objective.'

BATTLE ROUND ONE: A CAGEY ADVANCE

The battle for Techuan's Key began slowly, the four armies eyeing each other warily across the temple complex. The Sylvaneth to the east moved first, breaking the deadlock, Wyldwoods springing up around them as they advanced. A wrathful scream announced that the vengeful Drycha had also been awoken from her slumber, appearing in the centre of the Wyldwoods.

To the west, Lord Reinhardt's undead host waited patiently amidst the gravestones and sepulchres, unwilling to get too close to the Blades of Khorne army to the north. From atop his Zombie Dragon, Lord Reinhardt cast a Malevolent Maelstrom onto the battlefield. Around him, his minions shuffled almost imperceptibly forwards.

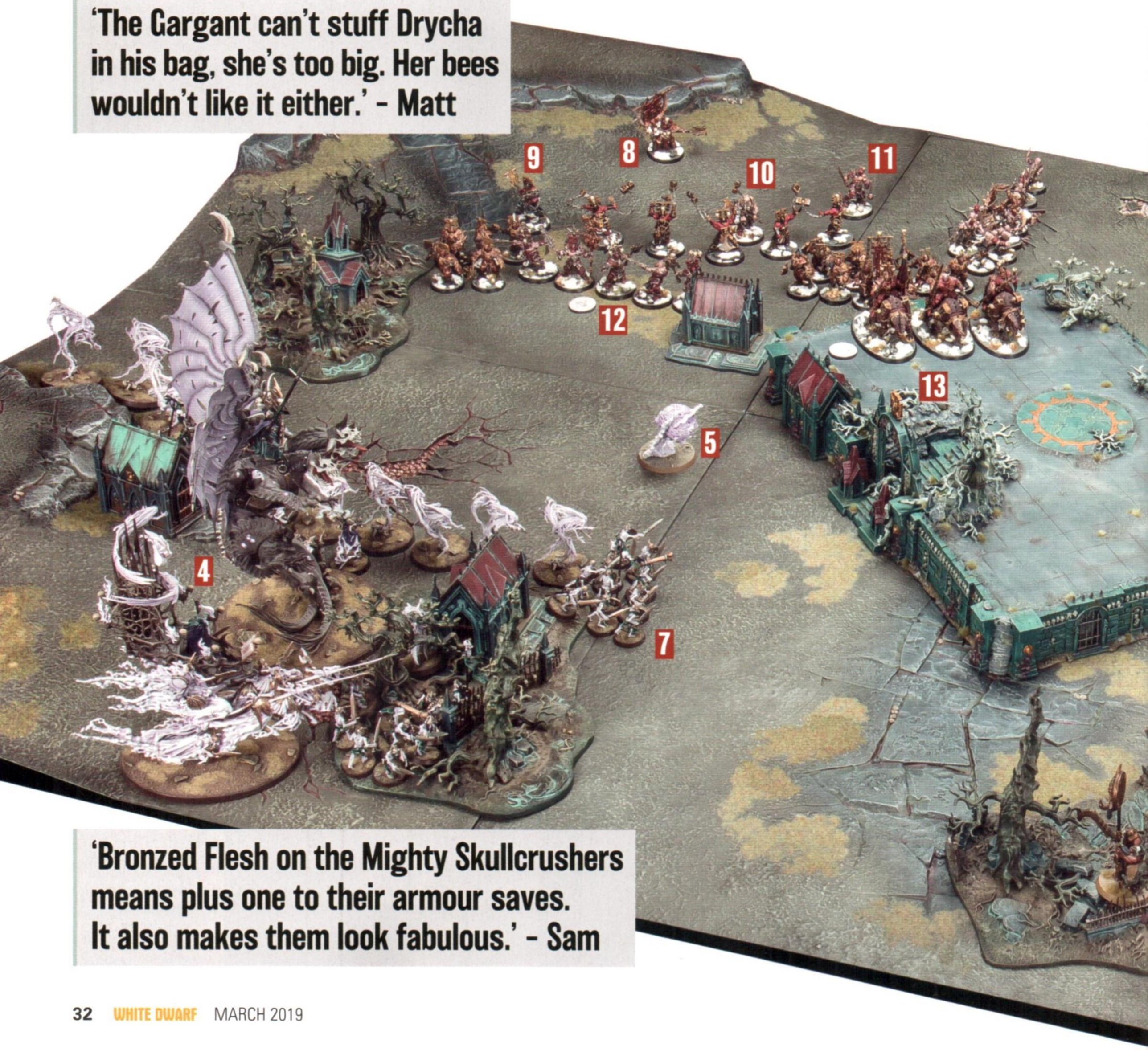
THE NEXUS OF POWER

The Nexus of Power is what everyone's fighting for in this game – the player with a model closest to the nexus at the start of each battle round controls it, and receives D3 command points for holding it. As you can see below, Sam's Mighty Skullcrushers are closest to the nexus after the first battle round, so he receives the bonus.

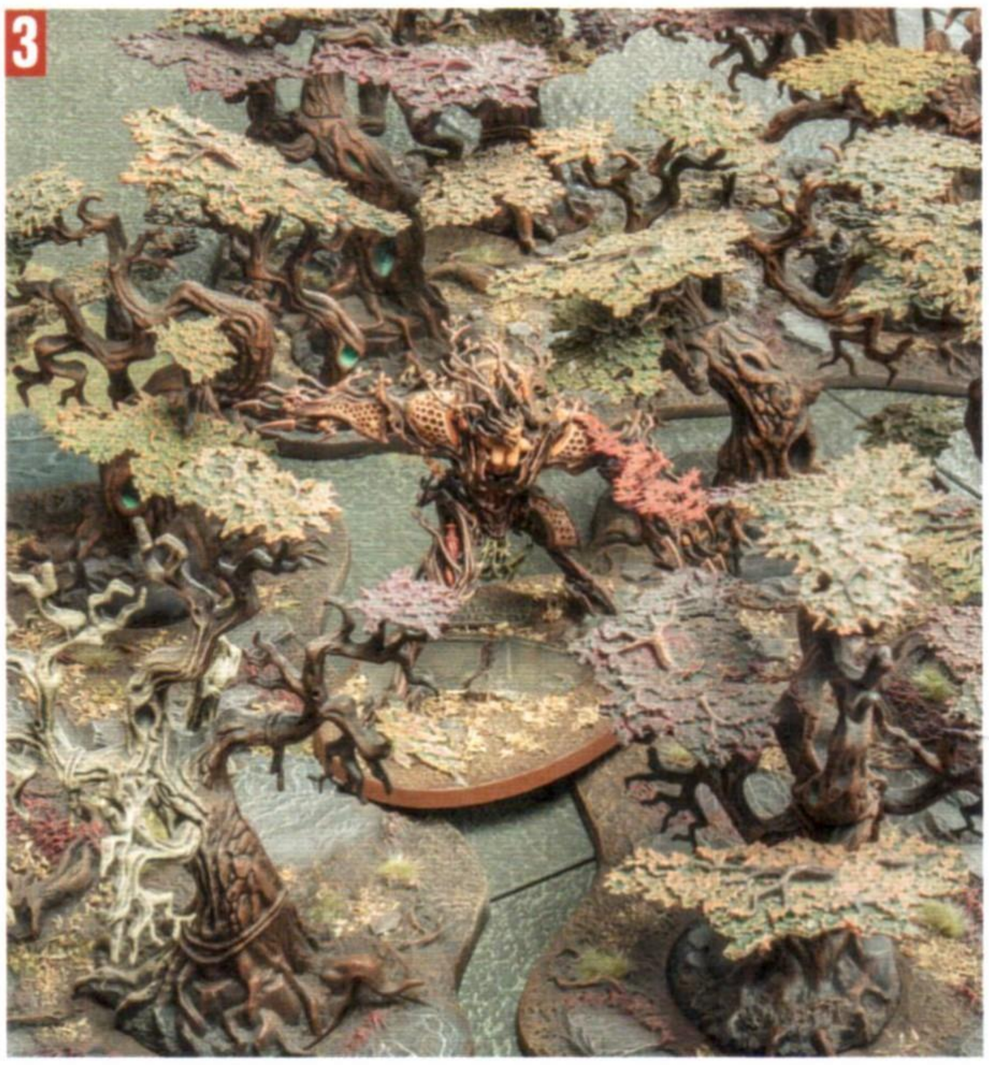
To the north, a bellow of rage split the sky and the Blood God's followers, led by the Mighty Skullcrushers, raced forwards to take the Nexus of Power. No quarter would be given – blood would flow! Eklax the Bloodsecrator planted his Portal of Skulls in the barren earth, driving the Gore Pilgrims around him into a frenzy that was further enhanced by the chanting of the Slaughterpriests.

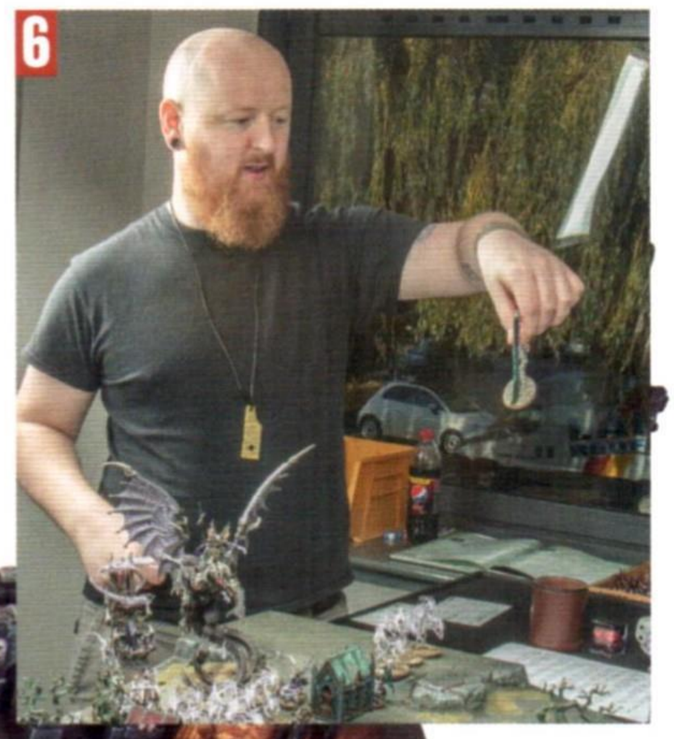
With the Blades of Khorne racing towards the temple, the ogors to the south reacted in kind. Bellowing and stomping, Bolg the Tyrant ordered his lads forwards, the Belly Boys racing towards the temple followed closely by Stewpot Burk. With a nudge to Kroksnappa's legs, Bolg aimed the Aleguzzler Gargant at the nearby trees. 'Tree smash!' said Kroksnappa.

'The Gargant can't stuff Drycha in his bag, she's too big. Her bees wouldn't like it either.' - Matt



'Bronzed Flesh on the Mighty Skullcrushers means plus one to their armour saves. It also makes them look fabulous.' - Sam





'How does the pendulum move? Something like this, I guess...' - James

Matt takes the first turn and casts Verdant Blessing with one of his Branchwraiths, summoning a new Wyldwood to the battlefield **(1)**. He then casts Roused to Wrath with his other Branchwraith to summon a new unit of Dryads **(2)**.

The Sylvaneth advance into the trees, with Drycha appearing in their midst **(3)**.

James goes second and uses his Vampire Lord **(4)** to cast Malevolent Maelstrom **(5)**. He fails to cast the Aethervoid Pendulum **(6)**.

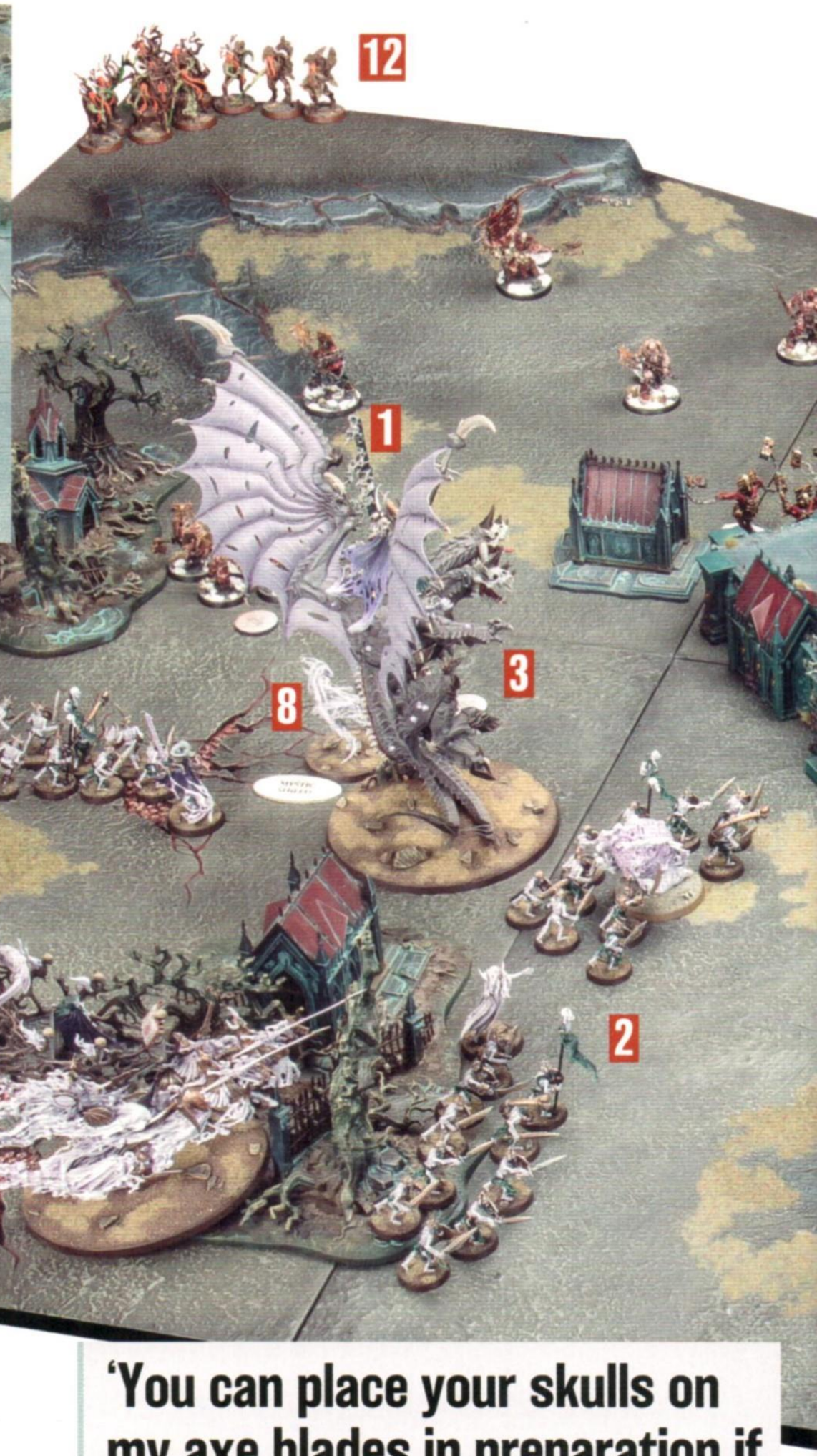
James' advance is particularly cagey, with most of his units only inching forwards from their starting positions. One unit of Skeletons does start to shamble towards the temple, though **(7)**.

Sam moves third. His first action is to plant his Bloodsecrator's Portal of Skulls which, because of the three nearby Slaughterpriests, has an effective range of 36" **(8)**.

Sam then uses his Slaughterpriests **(9-11)** to cast Blood Blessings, including Killing Frenzy on the Skullreapers **(12)** and Bronzed Flesh on the Skullcrushers. The Skullcrushers use At the Double to move onto the temple **(13)**.

Phil moves last, his Tyrant **(14)** using Bully of the First Degree on the Grots **(15)** to ensure they never run away.

The rest of the ogors race towards the temple, with the Ironguts leading the charge **(16)**. Phil aims the Gargant **(17)** at Drycha.



'You can place your skulls on my axe blades in preparation if you like.' - Sam

BATTLE ROUND TWO: CAREFUL MANOEUVRING

The undead continued their shambling advance towards the Blades of Khorne, while Lord Reinhardt flew closer to the nexus of power. Catalina Morden cast an Aethervoid Pendulum at the servants of Khorne, which only succeeded in making them angrier.

To the south, the ogors stomped ever onwards, the Belly Boys and Stewpot Burk climbing up onto the temple to take on the Mighty Skullcrushers, while Kroksnappa thundered through the trees in search of something tasty. What he found was an embittered Drycha, and the two monsters slammed into each other, causing a great ruckus but very little damage. Nearby, the cowardly Grots refused to attack the leering Spite-Revenants.

RANDOM ORDER
In games of Triumph & Treachery, players roll off at the start of each battle round and the winner decides who goes first. After that player has finished their turn, the players roll off again. Endless spells are controlled by the player to the left of the player who goes first in the battle round, so you have to think carefully about who you give priority to!

Across the battlefield, Khorne's servants continued their advance, the Bloodreavers running towards the Sylvaneth, while the Blood Warriors and Skullreapers raced towards the undead. The Eight-Marked Reapers smashed into the Spirit Hosts, their daemonblades thirsting on tormented souls. Lord Reinhardt, seeing a blood feast before his eyes, swooped down to join the fight, tearing apart four of Khorne's chosen warriors.

Meanwhile, the Sylvaneth continued their advance. Though most of them stayed hidden in the Wyldwoods, the Kurnoth Hunters ran forwards to massacre the nearby Bloodreavers, while the Tree-Revenants walked the forest paths to appear behind Eklax. Despite their best efforts, they failed to kill the Bloodsecrator.

'The plan with the Blood Tithe points was not to generate them from my own units.' – Sam

James goes first this round. He immediately casts an Aethervoid Pendulum and aims it at Sam's Skullreapers **(1)**.

Again, James plays cagily, his Skeleton Warriors and Spirit Hosts advancing slowly towards Sam **(2)** while his Vampire Lord moves towards the temple **(3)**.

Phil moves next, his Tyrant beating up his own Ogors **(4)** to make them immune to battleshock. Phil moves the Grots towards Matt's Spite-Revenants **(5)**, and the Ironguts and Butcher up onto the temple **(6)**.

Lastly, Phil charges Kroksnappa into Drycha **(7)**. Neither monster does much damage.

Sam is third to fight and starts by casting Blood Boil on James' Spirit Hosts, causing six mortal wounds **(8)**.

Sam then charges the same Spirit Hosts with his Skullreapers, almost wiping out the unit **(9)**. The Vampire Lord is dragged into the fight and kill four of the Skullreapers in return. The Mighty Skullcrushers continue to hold the objective **(10)**.

'There might be such a problem as having too many trees on the table.' – Phil

Matt goes last and summons another Wyldwood to protect his flank **(11)**. He then moves the Tree-Revenants, using their waypipes to make them appear behind Sam's Bloodsecrator **(12)**. They subsequently charge the Khorne hero, but fail to kill him **(13)**.

Nearby, the Kurnoth Hunters **(14)** charge the Bloodreavers and wipe them out.

BATTLE ROUND THREE: AND SO THE BLOOD FLOWS

The Sylvaneth surged towards the temple, intent on pushing the servants of Khorne and the ogors off the prize. While the Kurnoth Hunters with greatbows and Treelord targeted the Ogors, the Spite-Revenants attempted to kill off the Gargant. But Drycha, now enraged, tore the monster to pieces before they could even fight.

Seeing blood spilt around them, the servants of Khorne continued their brutal advance. The Slaughterpriests turned their attention to the Sylvaneth, Khar Dar'roth and Rullak obliterating the Tree-Revenants while Ashkal Darksworn killed off one of the Kurnoth Hunters. The Wrathmongers piled in to finish the job, but found the Sylvaneth far tougher than they expected...

ENDLESS SPELLS

By the third battle round there were three endless spells in play. Because Matt elected to take the first turn, this meant that Phil, James and Sam each got to move one of the endless spells. Phil moved Matt's pendulum through Sam's Skullcrushers, James moved his pendulum closer to Sam's Bloodsecrator and Sam moved the Maelstrom back into James' army.

Across the battlefield, Bolg bellowed for his ogors to leap off the temple and take on the Sylvaneth. In a display of brutal incompetence, the Ironguts and Ogors failed to kill either the Kurnoth Hunters with greatbows or the Treelord. Furious, Bolg da Tyrannical Tyrant stomped over to Drycha and tore her in half before she could even react. Nearby, the Grots cheered and flung sharp stuff at the Spite-Revenants to little effect.

On the other side of the temple, the undead finally launched their attack on the army of Khorne, the Spirit Hosts tearing through the Blood Warriors while the Skeleton Warriors climbed the steps of the temple to battle the Mighty Skullcrushers. Lord Reinhardt finally killed the last Skullreaper and headed for the nexus of power.

'I will give you four command points if you pick me to go first.' - Sam to Matt

Matt begins the turn by casting Regrowth on Drycha. The Wyldwood she's in is roused by the magic and attacks the Gargant. Matt also summons another ten Dryads near the Kurnoth Hunters **(1)**.

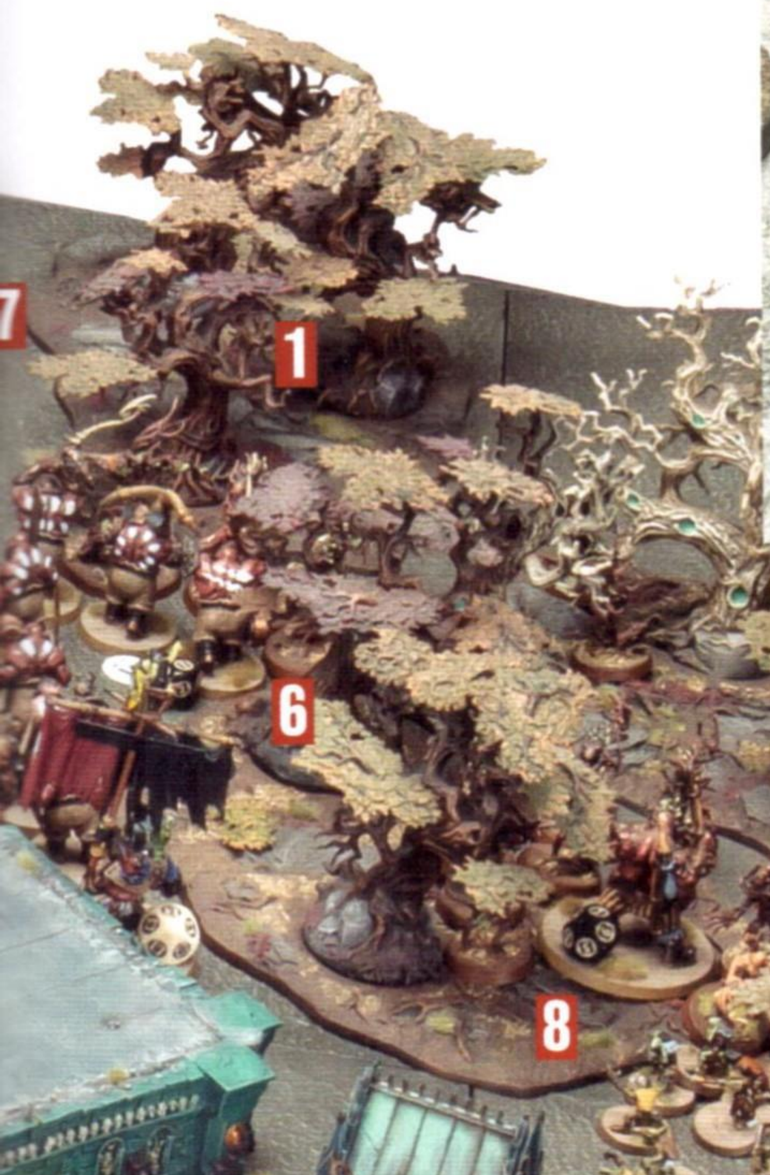
The Spite-Revenants **(2)** charge the Gargant, but Drycha kills it before they can attack. Kroksnappa falls on her, causing two wounds.

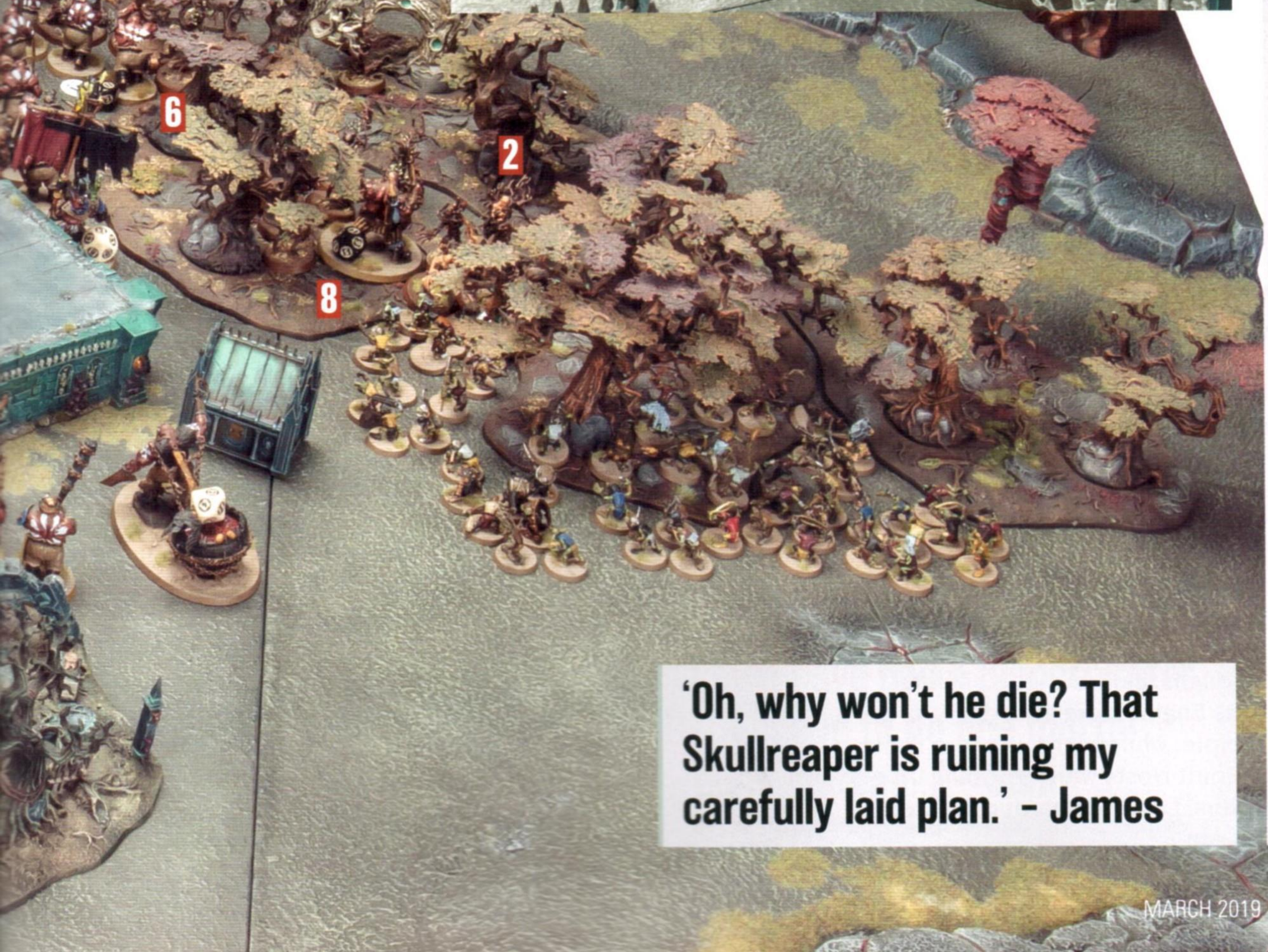
Sam fights next. He uses his Slaughterpriests' Blood Boil ability to wipe out the Tree-Revenants fighting Eklax **(3)** and cause six wounds on the Kurnoth Hunters. Sam then charges the Kurnoth Hunters with his Wrathmongers **(4)**, killing a second one and four Dryads. In return, three Wrathmongers are slain. The lone Kurnoth Hunter flees!

Phil goes third and uses Rampaging Destroyers to move the Grots into combat with the Spite-Revenants **(5)**. He then charges the Ironguts off the temple and into the Kurnoth Hunters with greatbows **(6)**, while the Big Biters charge the Treelord **(7)**. To finish off, Phil charges his Tyrant into Drycha **(8)** and kills her outright!

James is the last to fight. The Zombie Dragon melts the last Skullreaper with its pestilential breath **(9)** as the Skeleton Warriors charge up onto the temple to fight the Skullcrushers **(10)**. They kill one and only lose two in return.

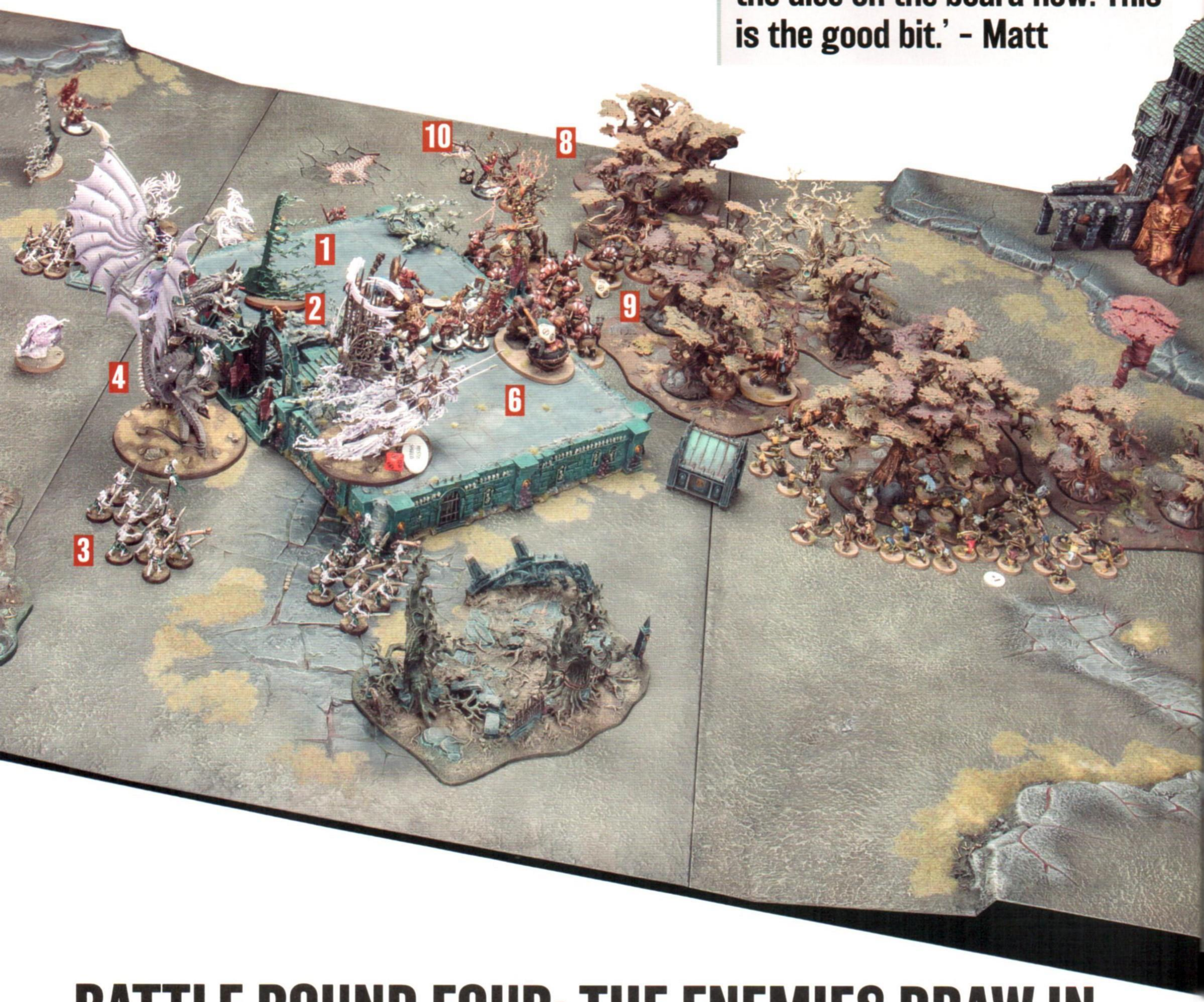
Far to the west, the Spirit Hosts and Skeleton Warriors wipe out the Blood Warriors **(11)**.





'Oh, why won't he die? That Skullreaper is ruining my carefully laid plan.' – James

'I've figured out where to roll the dice on the board now. This is the good bit.' – Matt



BATTLE ROUND FOUR: THE ENEMIES DRAW IN

Though pummelled by magic and enemy attacks, the warriors of Khorne stood their ground on the nexus of power. The trio of Slaughterpriests continued their blood rituals, driving the Blood Warriors into a killing frenzy and shielding the Skullcrushers in bronzed flesh, as a huge brass skull hurtled like a comet from the sky and smashed into Lord Reinhardt. Ashkal Darksworn knew his warriors were dying, but Techuan's Key was almost in his grasp!

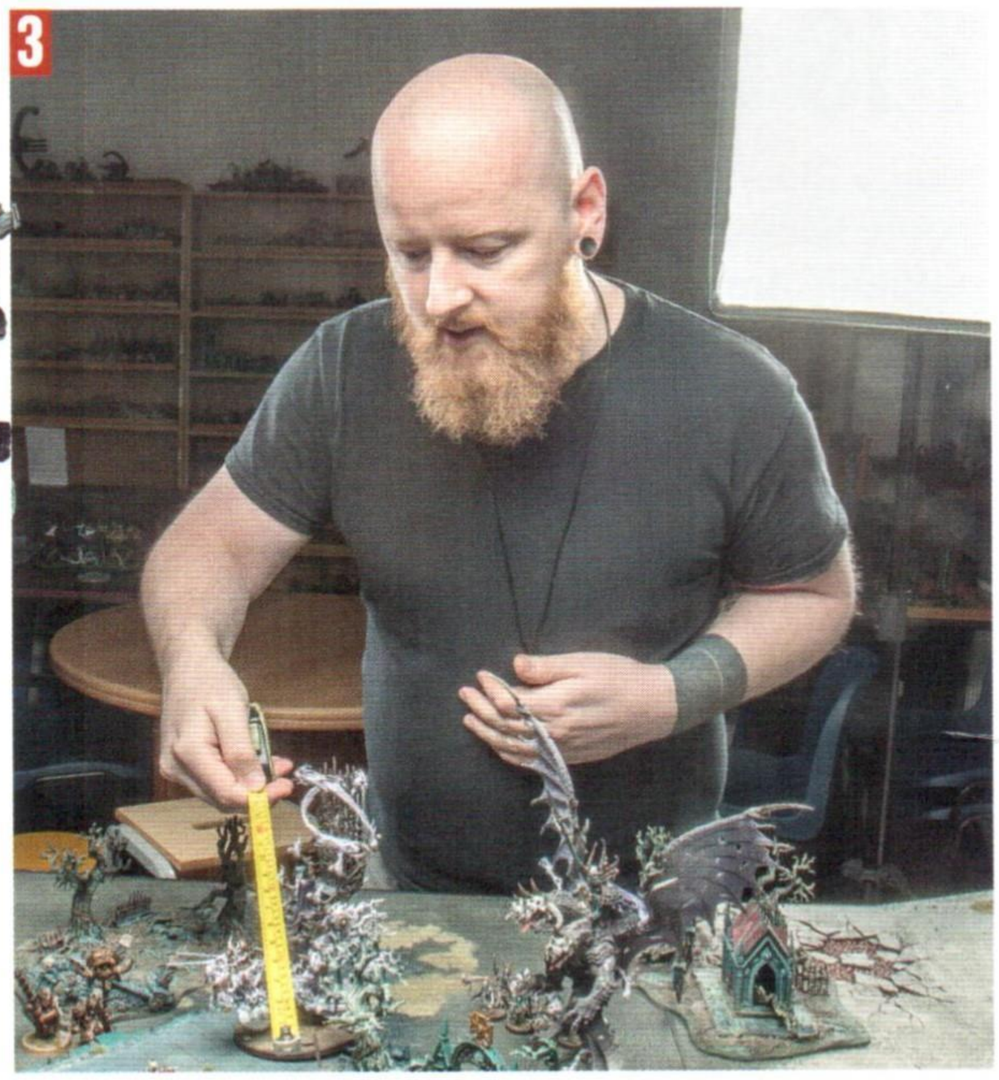
Lord Reinhardt thought the same – his skeletal minions and Mortis Engine were already contesting the temple, while on his western flank, Catalina and the Spirit Hosts were mopping up the last few survivors. Lord Reinhardt could see victory on the horizon.

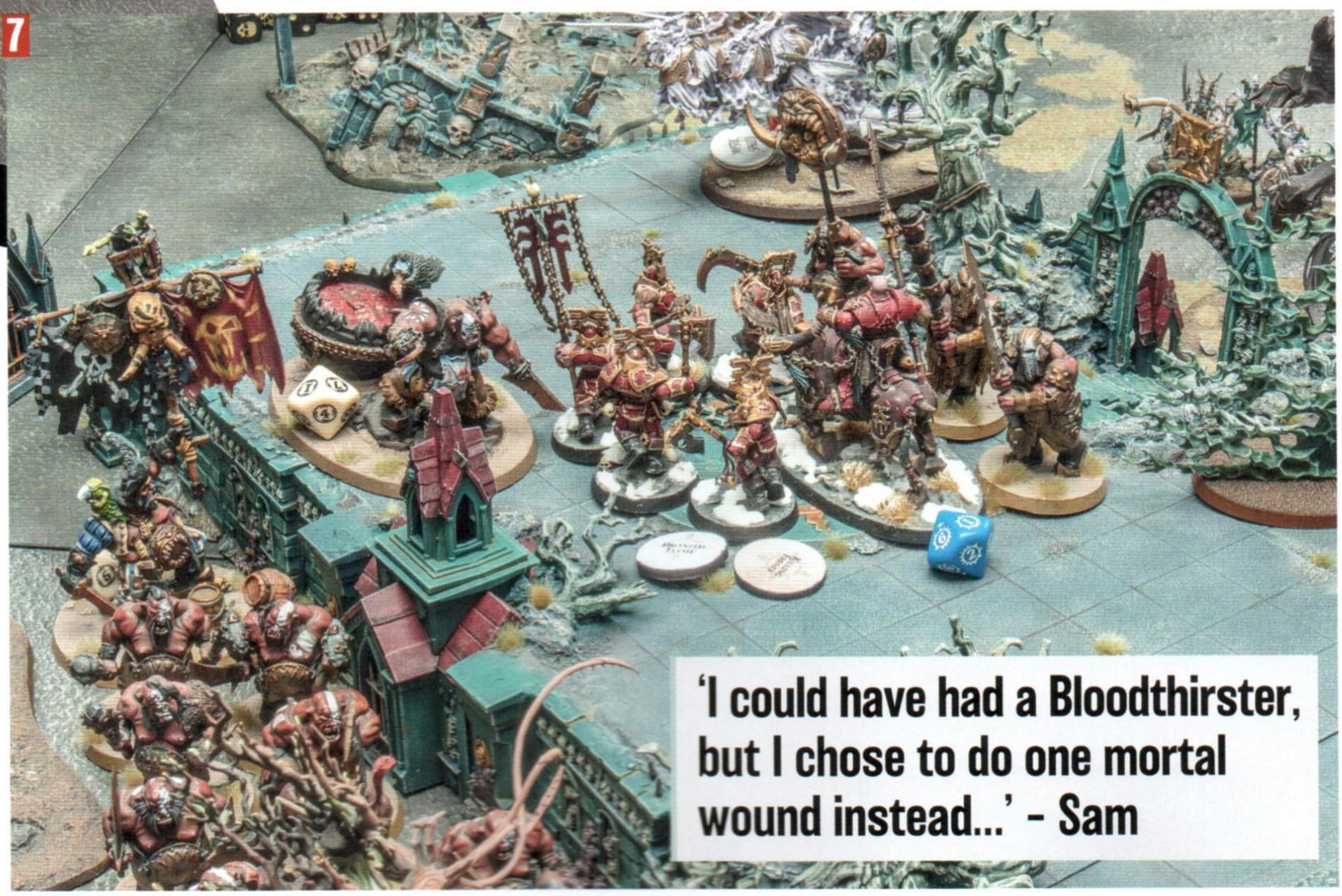
CASHING IN THE BLOOD TITHE

By the third battle round, Sam had accumulated eight Blood Tithe points – enough to summon a Bloodthirster to the battlefield. Sadly, Sam doesn't have a Bloodthirster painted (yet!), so he brought down a Brass Skull Meteor in the middle of James' army. Despite hitting eight units, he caused only a single mortal wound.

Stewpot Burk dragged his cauldron up onto the temple and slammed into the Blood Warriors, followed closely by the Ironguts. The nexus of power was only a few feet away now. Below, the rest of the Ogors squabbled with the Sylvaneth, while the Grots flung sharp stuff at the Spite-Revenants hiding in the trees. The Butcher smashed aside a Blood Warrior and gobbled down some troggoth guts in celebration.

Cut off from the temple by the ogors, the Sylvaneth tried desperately to fight off their ever-hungry foes. A few ogors were dragged into the Wyldwoods by creeping vines and strangethorns, but the Sylvaneth concentrated their attacks on the Wrathmongers on their flank, hoping to somehow sneak around behind the Khorne force.





'I could have had a Bloodthirster, but I chose to do one mortal wound instead...' - Sam

Sam gets the first turn, which means that Matt gets to move the first Endless Spell – he moves his own Aethervoid Pendulum less than an inch **(1)**, causing two mortal wounds on the Skullcrushers and six on the Blood Warriors.

Sam moves his Blood Warriors up onto the temple **(2)** and charges them into James' Skeletons, wiping them out.

James fights next and summons a new unit of Skeletons **(3)** from a gravesite. His Zombie Dragon **(4)** uses its pestilential breath to kill off one of the Skullcrushers, but then fails to charge the survivor (even with a Forward to Victory re-roll). His other Vampire is more successful and, between it and the Spirit Hosts, kills one of Sam's Slaughterpriests **(5)**.

Phil goes third **(6)** and piles his Butcher and Ironguts onto the temple before charging them into the Skullcrusher and Blood Warriors **(7)**. The Ironguts fail to kill the Skullcrusher, who kills one of them in return. The Butcher and Blood Warriors cause a couple of wounds on each other.

Matt takes the last turn and starts by casting Regrowth on his wounded Treelord **(8)**. He kills a couple of ogors in the shooting phase with the Kurnoth Hunters **(9)**, but then picks Sam as his enemy in the combat phase, thereby denying Phil the chance to kill the Treelord in combat. Instead, the Dryads and Wrathmongers duke it out, with a single casualty on each side **(10)**.

BATTLE ROUND FIVE: THE KEY IS CLAIMED

Lord Reinhardt tried desperately to join the battle on the temple, but the fighting below was too fierce for him to land his Zombie Dragon. Shouting to Catalina, he ordered her to take the nexus in his stead. She did, too, slicing her way through two huge ogors to stand at the centre of the temple. Nearby, the spirits swirling around the Mortis Engine plucked the life essence from the ogor Butcher.

With a Vampire now claiming the prize, Ashkar Darksworn barged through the Spirit Hosts around him and leapt up onto the temple. He may not get to fight the Vampire, but he could still kill her! Tapping into Khorne's eternal rage, the Slaughterpriest boiled the Vampire's blood until she detonated in a shower of gore. The nearby Blood Warriors, invigorated by the rain of blood, hacked at the Mortis Engine, but were suddenly drowned in a sea of howling Grots. The Blood Warriors killed a few of the pesky creatures, but they were almost overwhelmed. Nearby, the ogors continued to chop ineffectively at the Sylvaneth, who simply healed their wounds and carried on fighting. Ashkar Darksworn rocked backwards as a magical maelstrom detonated next to him, two of the Blood Warriors falling to the cowardly magical attack.

Suddenly, with a crack of stone, the nexus of power – the gateway to Techuan's Key and eternal glory – opened. Ashkar's face split into a feral grin – Techuan's Key was his for the taking. Glory to the Blood God! Skulls for his Throne!

A DIFFICULT CHOICE

This battle has a random game length, so it could end any time after the fourth battle round. This means that you have to plan very carefully when to make your bid for the objective. Do you go for it early on like Sam and try and hold it against all-comers, or do you wait like James and Phil and try to steal it at the last minute?

'I will give you two command points not to go first.' - Phil

'Sorry, we aren't accepting any more donations.' - James

James goes first this turn – as a result, Sam gets to move James' Aethervoid Pendulum, which he inches up to his Slaughterpriest **(1)**. More importantly, Matt moves the Malevolent Maelstrom back up onto the temple…

With so many models now on the temple, there is nowhere for Lord Reinhardt to land. Instead, James charges Catalina Morden and the Mortis Engine into the Blood Warriors **(2)**. James picks Phil as his enemy in the combat phase – the Mortis Engine kills Stewpot Burk and Catalina kills both Ironguts outright.

Sam fights next and retreats Ashkal Darksworn away from his fight with the Spirit Hosts and onto the temple. While he can't charge, he can boil someone's blood! He targets Catalina Morden and kills her outright. The Blood Warriors turn to fight the Mortis Engine and cause a couple of wounds.

Phil is third to fight. With his ogors trapped in combat with the Treelord **(3)**, Phil uses his Grots to kill the Spite-Revenants in the shooting phase, then make a mighty 11" charge into the Mortis Engine **(4)**. The Grots then pile into the Blood Warriors **(5)**, but fail to kill them all.

As the last player, Matt directs all his attacks at the ogors, killing two of them.

The Malevolent Maelstrom finally explodes, wounding the Spirit Hosts, Slaughterpriests, Mortis Engine, Vampire Lord and killing two (but only two) of the three Blood Warriors…

'I guess she was full of blood after killing those ogors. She was ready to explode.' – James

THE AFTERMATH

THE WINNER!

And so the winner of the Carnage Battle Report is Sam, whose Blades of Khorne army managed to take the objective right at the start of the game and held onto it (mostly…) for the entire battle. Sam may only have had a handful of models left alive at the end of the game, but all of them were incredibly angry and covered in gore. Could someone else have won if the game had continued? We will never know…

TWIG OF THE MATCH

Matt: The Kurnoth Hunters with greatswords were my unit of the match – they easily proved their worth against Sam's Khorne army. The ones with bows were pretty nifty, too, but they're not quite as choppy in combat!

BLOOD-CRAZED LUNATICS OF THE MATCH

Sam: For me, it's the unit of ten Blood Warriors that managed to hold on to the objective. They took a beating throughout the game, but managed to hang on through spells, shooting and combat. Good lads!

FORCES OF ORDER

Matt: Hmm, well that didn't go to plan at all now, did it? My tactics were working well to begin with – I summoned a few more Sylvaneth Wyldwoods to create my own little tree fortress and I got most of my army pretty close to the temple without losing any models thanks to the cover afforded them by the trees. Drycha even killed Phil's Gargant in combat and only took a couple of wounds in return, which was a pleasant surprise.

Then it all went wrong! Phil's ogor Tyrant killed Drycha outright, taking out my most powerful unit (not to mention the one I wanted to hold the objective with) and suddenly there were unbreakable Grots everywhere holding up my units. Things went better on my other flank – the Kurnoth Hunters and Dryads sorted out the Bloodreavers easily enough, then smashed up the Wrathmongers, too. I was a little worried about their Bloodfury rule, but incredibly none of my units ever hit themselves, much to Sam's annoyance.

What did I learn, then? Well, I'd say that James and I held back too long before making a move on the centre, Phil got distracted attacking my army and Sam clearly deserved to win because he was the boldest player. He also lost the most models, but that's Carnage for you! I reckon given another turn, James might have won it, though.

'Then it all went wrong! Phil's ogor Tyrant killed Drycha outright, taking out my most powerful unit…'

FORCES OF CHAOS

Sam: My plan paid off! Well, only just, but it's still a victory even if I only had a few battered warriors left standing at the end. I guess that's why they call it Carnage! There were quite a few stand-out moments in the game for me – the Skullreapers charging into the Spirit Hosts, then taking on the Vampire Lord was epic, though it's a shame they didn't manage to wipe out the ghosts. Then again, James would just have brought them back, so it's not such a loss! The Wrathmongers also did well against Matt's Sylvaneth, though I was surprised how little damage they did with Bloodfury – normally that does almost as much damage as their regular attacks. Matt was really lucky with his dice-rolling. The impending doom of the Aethervoid Pendulum as it swung ever closer towards my Bloodsecrator was pretty funny!

Of course, the biggest moments took place on the temple – the Skullcrushers and Blood Warriors handled themselves admirably and survived far longer than I could have hoped for considering what was thrown at them. When James' units started to encroach on the objective, I thought I'd had it, but then Ashkal Darksworn detonated James' Vampire with Blood Boil, which probably won me the game. Had James attacked my units instead of Phil's in the last battle round, I reckon he might have won.

'The impending doom of the Aethervoid Pendulum as it swung ever closer towards my Bloodsecrator was pretty funny!'

MOMENT OF THE MATCH

For us Dwarfers watching the game, we were genuinely shocked by the utter carnage that three Slaughterpriests can dish out using the Blood Boil prayer. Sam consistently rolled high with it, causing – throughout the course of the game – ten mortal wounds on James' Spirit Hosts, six mortal wounds on Matt's Kurnoth Hunters, nine mortal wounds on his Tree-Revenants (wiping out the unit), and obliterating James' Vampire Lord. Phil considers himself very lucky that his ogors managed to avoid such a fate.

FORCES OF DEATH

James: The scenario certainly lived up to its name – that was carnage. And also really tough! Trying to decide who to attack in each phase, when to make my push for the centre, who to trust and who not to trust, whether to take my turn or let someone else go before me, trying to remember who might get to move the endless spells at the start of each battle round – this scenario can be seriously tactical!

Honestly, I think I waited a turn too long before making my bid for the objective. I was expecting Phil and Sam to both go for the centre, but Phil played a more cagey game than I was expecting (Sam bribed him with a lot of command points – I sense shenanigans…) and I couldn't quite bring all my units to bear as I would have liked – that Skullreaper fighting my Vampire Lord really messed up my battle plan! Then, of course, I ended up with the Mortis Engine in the wrong place on the temple and the Zombie Dragon kept failing its charges on the Skullcrushers (that were only 5" away!).

For me, the crowning glory of the game was my Vampire Catalina Morden killing one of Sam's Slaughterpriests, then racing up onto the temple to kill two Ironguts outright. We'll gloss over the fact that she then exploded in a shower of gore…

'I ended up with the Mortis Engine in the wrong place on the temple and the Zombie Dragon kept failing its charges...'

FORCES OF DESTRUCTION

Phil: Ho hum… that didn't quite go as planned. I fully expected James and Sam to go for each other – friendly rivals that they are – and leave me to run into the centre, but Sam went straight for the objective. I had a bit of a stalemate on my border with James and my ogors kind of ended up being pushed towards Matt's Sylvaneth.

Losing my Gargant early on was a bad blow and one that I didn't expect – Drycha is vicious! But her uppance came when my Tyrant took her out in combat – never underestimate an ogor Tyrant, especially if he's got a pair of pistols! I thought, with Drycha out the way, I could then storm my big unit of ogors around the temple, cut Matt off on one side and hit Sam in the flank. And it might have worked, too, if it hadn't been for that Treelord. Matt was very clever in that he made sure to give other people priority when he won it and didn't select me as the enemy in the combat phase so I couldn't attack the Treelord – very sneaky! If I'd killed the Treelord, I could have piled the ogors up onto the temple and wiped out those Blood Warriors. As it was, it was the Grots – the unlikely heroes of the hour – who had to dash up onto the temple and try and secure victory. If they'd just killed one more Blood Warrior I might have done it. So yeah, if you're playing this scenario – stick to your plan!

'If I'd killed the Treelord, I could have piled the ogors up onto the temple and wiped out those Blood Warriors.'

UNDEAD THING OF THE MATCH

James: It has to be my Vampire Catalina Morden – she cast Soulpike on a Slaughterpriest, then killed him in combat. Then she chopped up two unwounded Ironguts and held the objective for about ten whole minutes. What a hero!

OGOR OF THE MATCH

Phil: It's clearly Bolg, my tyrannical Tyrant. He spurred the army into action, made two units immune to battleshock by bullying them, killed Drycha and sorted out a load of Dryads. Those twigs are good roughage.

WARHAMMER AGE OF SIGMAR

THE REALM OF LIFE

Fantastical Realms is an ongoing series of articles showing you how you can build and paint your Warhammer Age of Sigmar armies based around the Mortal Realms they live and fight in. This month, we travel to the verdant forests of Ghyran, the Realm of Life.

A mystical realm of verdant majesty, Ghyran teems with countless forms of life, be they flora, fauna or other, more magical creations. There is a natural order to things in the Jade Kingdoms, a cyclical process where birth, life and death flow constantly into one another, just like the seasons that dominate the lands. Despite the best efforts of the Chaos God Nurgle to corrupt this cycle, it has always endured, much like its people. Pragmatic and forward-thinking, Ghyranites revel in life energy, and they are seen by many as energetic, mystical people who – even in times of hardship and suffering – always return to exact their revenge.

This month's modelling and painting article for the Mortal Realms focuses on Ghyran, the Realm of Life – the most vital and fecund of all the realms. As we mentioned last month, many of the ideas in this article were inspired by the background in the *Warhammer Age of Sigmar Core Book*, *Malign Sorcery* and the many battletomes now available. There's a lot of inspiration already out there waiting for you to explore it!

THE COIL OF LIFE

The rune of Ghyran is the Coil of Life, which represents the cyclical and unending flow of life in all its forms. It is often worn as a tattoo or tribal marking by the people of Ghyran, or fashioned into trinkets and talismans. The rune is commonly found on waystones or menhirs in the Realm of Life.

THE BIRTH OF NEW IDEAS

The question is, what would an army from the Realm of Life look like? Do the people of Ghyran wear more green than those of other realms? Do they favour organic weapons, armour and wargear over those that have been crafted and forged? Perhaps their gemstones and magical items emit a lambent green glow, or they're followed around by tiny scampering spites or motes of life energy. How would an army of Idoneth Deepkin from Ghyran look different to a raiding party from Hysh? Would Kharadron Overlords prospecting in the Jade Kingdoms appear any different to their Chamonite cousins? Are all the buildings in Ghyran overgrown? There's a lot to consider.

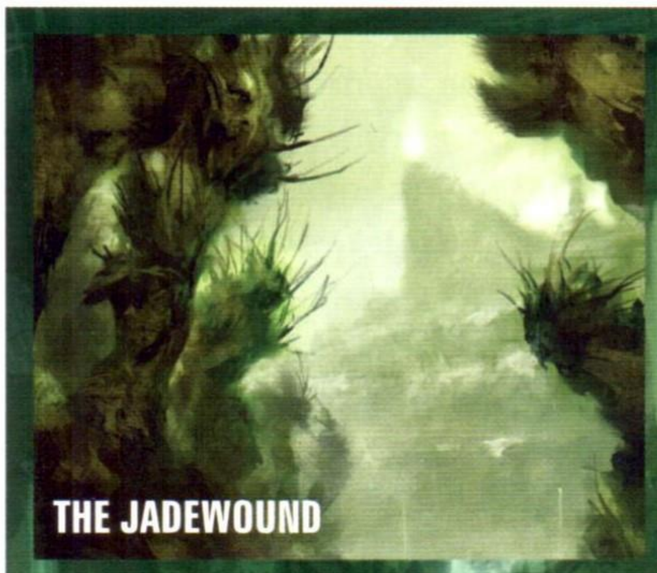
These first pages are a mood board of sorts, giving you a feel for the colours and designs you could use on your miniatures – the look of a realm and the environment your army is fighting in can be great inspiration for how you paint your models. Like all the Mortal Realms, the lands of Ghyran vary greatly in appearance, though it's safe to say that they are the most verdant and fecund of all the realms' domains, ranging from freshly tilled fields and blossoming orchards in the territories closest to the realmsphere's core, through to the impenetrable forests and jungles at the edge. Waterfalls of jade crystals crash down upon floating gardens, carnivorous trees uproot themselves and roam the lands in search of prey and the very air pulses and throbs with life energy. These different lands give you even more scope for building and painting the models (and scenery) in your collection.

Over the next few pages, you'll find useful tips on how to paint, convert and base your models in the Realm of Life. Of course, there are infinite ways to build and paint your models, but hopefully this article will provide you with some inspiration. If you have an idea you would like to share with us, why not send us some pictures of your own creations: **team@whitedwarf.co.uk**.

A WELLSPRING OF IDEAS

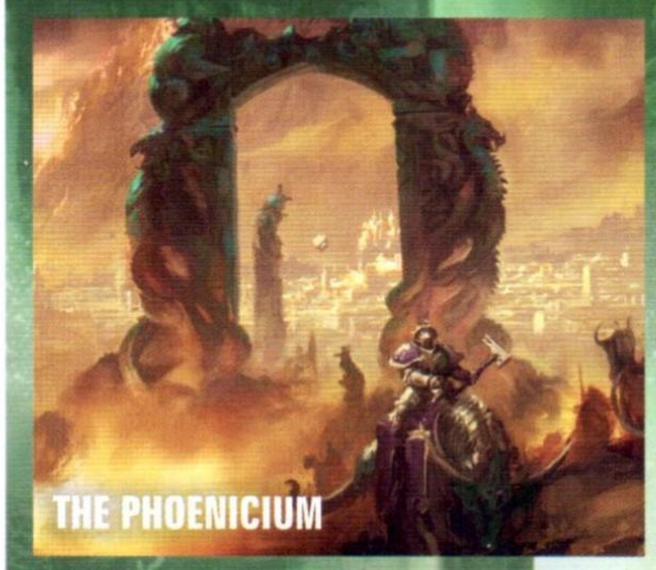
There are many pieces of artwork in battletomes and the *Warhammer Age of Sigmar Core Book* that illustrate the inhabitants of the Realm of Life. This piece from page 93 of the Core Book is a great example of one of the realm's human inhabitants. Of course, not every inhabitant of Ghyran looks like this or wears these kinds of clothes, but the organic design of his clothing and trappings are a great indication of what someone from the Realm of Life could look like. Roots, vines, the colour green – all are great modelling and painting inspiration.

There is a natural order to things in the Jade Kingdoms, a cyclical process where birth, life and death flow constantly into one another.



THE JADEWOUND

PLAGUESPIRE



THE PHOENICIUM

THE LIVING CITY

THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

The Realm of Life is full of colour – the yellow of spring shoots, the green of summer, the red of autumn and the crisp white of winter. Creation and rebirth can take on many colours and they are constantly changing, eventually fading into the browns, greys and blacks of decay.

PAINTING YOUR ARMIES

Verdant greens, earthy browns and any other seasonal colour you can think of – there are many ways to paint your models from the Realm of Ghyran. Check out these great examples.

How you paint your models is a great way to show what realm they are from or, indeed, what realm they are fighting in. Fortunately for us, all of our models stand on bases – the perfect place to add a little bit of greenery (or brownery) and show what realm they're fighting in. But why stop there? You could give all your Idoneth a green tinge to their skin, or paint your Witch Aelves with green hair like vines. Maybe it's as simple as a few green items of clothing or green armour.

The logical colour choices when it comes to painting models from Ghyran are browns, greens and yellows, but the colours of the seasons also make for excellent inspiration. A Fyreslayers army painted in the greys, browns and whites of winter would look excellent, with fire as the spot colour across the army. The reds and oranges of autumn would suit a Blades of Khorne army perfectly, but would look just as good on Kharadron Overlords or Ironjawz. Then, of course, there's the dirtier side of life – mud, dirt, even blood. You could paint an army of Stormcast Eternals (Hallowed Knights have fought long and hard in the Realm of Life) covered in the filth of war. On these pages you can see just a few examples of how you can personalise your collection of Citadel Miniatures to be from the Realm of Life.

NOBLE PROTECTORS
This Sequitor of the Hallowed Knights is not a native of Ghyran, but the foliage on his base clearly shows the realm he is fighting in. Adding greens and reds to the base really help explain the setting the character is fighting in. Another nice touch is the mud around the hem of the Sequitor's cape and the use of cyan (a colour associated with Sylvaneth magic) for the runes on his armour.

'I painted them in the colours of spring - of life coming into bloom.'

BRINGING IT ALL TO LIFE
This Treelord Ancient was painted by Lee Hadfield, who won a Golden Demon for his efforts a few years ago. It's a great example of a warrior from the Realm of Life, the model and its base evoking the image of a land abundant with life. Bracken covers the base and vines flow up and around the Treelord's legs, showing the unity of the character with its surroundings. Rather than paint the Treelord a ruddy red like a young sapling, Lee has painted it to look much older, with green algae and wet moss growing all over its bark, which ties in well with the muted greens used on the model's base. You get the impression of ancient life rather than new growth, though Lee has painted the end of the Treelord's staff bright red to show where it is blooming.

Many of the colours, painting techniques and materials Lee used on the base are also replicated on the treelord. The tiny mushrooms, for example, are the same colour as those on the Treelord's legs, while the same green tones have been used on both model and base.

Natalie originally painted her Sylvaneth for Armies on Parade a few years back. She painted several Wyldwoods in the same colours as her models to use in games.

NATALIE SLINN'S SYLVANETH

Natalie is a member of the 'Eavy Metal team and has collected a Sylvaneth and Wanderers army for many years now. 'I wanted my army to be really bright and colourful, so I painted them in the colours of spring – of life coming into bloom rather than withering,' says Natalie. 'I picked lots of light greens and yellows for my colour scheme, with pink blossom on some of the Dryads (cherry blossom is one of the first flowers to appear in spring). They're meant to look really fresh and clean and verdant. I painted the younger Dryads and Kurnoth Hunters with ruddy red bark using Doombull Brown, while the older Sylvaneth are painted a grey colour to show that they're older and more gnarly. I used a traditional 'good' cyan for all the magical effects.'

TOM MOORE'S NURGLE ARMY

Tom is one of the Studio army painters, and his army of Nurgle daemons has been featured in many books over the years. 'I painted my army using really simple techniques – lots of washes and drybrushing over a Corax White undercoat,' says Tom. 'This has the added benefit of giving the models a lot of texture – they look greasy thanks to the washes, but their skin also looks really leathery because of the drybrushing. I wanted them to be the epitome of decay – the opposite of Natalie's army, basically. I applied watered down Sotek Green to the brass weapons to make them look corroded (as if with verdigris) and painted all the boils and open sores with Blood for the Blood God to show how the daemons were in an advanced state of decay.'

A USEFUL KIT

Nothing says life like Creeping Vines and Barbed Bracken. These two sets are packed full of foliage that's ideal for sprucing up your bases and scenery. You could even use them to convert your Sylvaneth models.

Tom used Corax White as the undercoat for his daemons. He then washed them Athonian Camoshade, followed by drybrushes of Ogryn Camo and Pallid Wych Flesh.

CONVERTING YOUR HEROES

Whether wizards or warriors, priests or monsters, there are many ways to convert your models to show that they're from a specific realm. We got out our clippers and glue to create a few.

This month, four keen hobbyists converted and painted models from the Realm of Life – an Aleguzzler Gargant, a Kharadron Endrinrigger, a Battlemage and a Sylvaneth Branchwych. Some are quite simple kitbashes, while others involve reposing and even resculpting parts of the model.

King Brodd (below) was converted as part of a much larger clan of gargants, all of which were featured in *The Realmgate Wars: Godbeasts* book in the Battle for the Great Green Torc. Chris' goal with Brodd was to create a gargant hero, hence the dragon-skull crown. Meanwhile, Jonathan – who already has an army of Kharadron Overlords – fancied trying out a new colour scheme and some new painting effects on an Endrinrigger, most notably on the copper-oxide weathering on the model's aether-endrin.

BIT OF THE MONTH
The staff heads from the Sisters of the Thorn kit are perfect for converting wizards and magical heroes. There are five designs in the set, too.

Dan was inspired to convert his Jade Wizard after reading about all the arcane artefacts in *Malign Sorcery*. He gave the model an Arboreal Stave, though he could just as easily be armed with a Wand of Restoration. Maxime was inspired to convert a male Branchwych using a Spite-Revenant. To keep the model 'game legal', he gave it a bittergrub and a greenwood scythe – the Branchwych's regular weapons. He even gave the model a swarm of spites to show it using the Unleash Spites ability.

KING BRODD BY CHRIS PEACH

This Aleguzzler Gargant was converted to represent King Brodd, one of the characters featured in *The Realmgate Wars: Godbeasts*. In the background, King Brodd wears the skull of a mouldragon, so Chris cut the skull from the gargant's club and stuck it on the model's head, along with the jawbone pieces that come in the kit. The huge lump of ancient temple that Brodd carries comes from the Arcane Ruins kit – it's two broken bits of pillar stuck base to base. The gargant's arms were repositioned at the shoulders so they could be modelled to carry the ruin.

To get the dragon skull to fit, Chris cut away the top of the model's head, leaving it flat. He also cut the dragon skull off the tree branch it's usually attached to, glued the two halves of it together, then tidied up the underneath so that it would sit on Brodd's head.

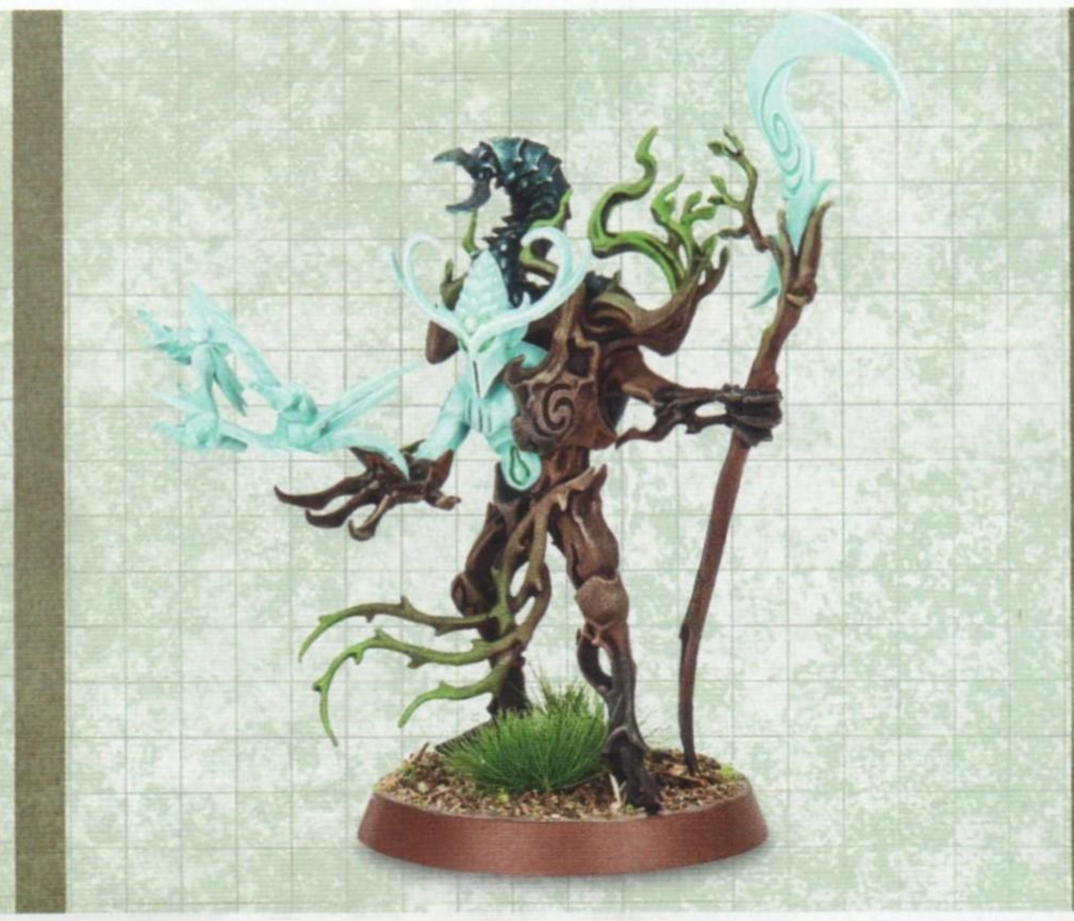
Before gluing the dragon skull to the gargant, Chris dry fitted the pieces together to make sure they matched up. After taking a little more off the sides of Brodd's head, Chris glued on the dragon jaw bones (part of the standard kit) and then the skull crown.

ENDRINRIGGER BY JONATHAN STAPLETON

Jonathan's Endrinrigger hails from the Realm of Life, his wargear covered in moss and lichen made from small pieces of clump foliage (available from most model stores). Jonathan also replaced the model's flying stand with creeping vines. He used green as the spot colour for the verdigris and on the model's tabard.

JADE WIZARD BY DAN HARDEN

Dan converted this Battlemage using a spare Flagellant head, plus a couple of spites from the Treelord kit. He converted the wizard's staff into an Arboreal Stave – an arcane weapon in *Malign Sorcery* – using spare branches from the Dryads kit. Dan painted his Battlemage in wintery greys and greens, using cyan as a spot colour for all the magical bits.



BRANCHWYCH BY MAXIME CORBEIL

Maxime converted this Branchwych from a Spite-Revenant, with the head of a Wild Rider. The scythe arm and bittergrub are from the original Branchwych model, while the spites come from the Kurnoth Hunters set. Maxime painted his Branchwych to look ghostly and ethereal by washing Nihilakh Oxide straight over a Corax White undercoat.

SPITES!

Spites can be found in the Treelord, Kurnoth Hunters and Dryads kits. They could be used to represent familiars, cast spells or even artefacts such as a Hagbane Spite.

Treelord

Treelord

Kurnoth hunters

Treelord

Dryads

Kurnoth Hunters

THE FIELDS OF BATTLE

Ghyran is home to many varied landscapes, from verdant fields and fresh earth to teeming forests, impenetrable jungles and magical grasslands. Here are just a few ways you can base your models.

TAINTED GROUND

1. Basecoat: Abaddon Black — M Base
2. Drybrush: Mournfang Brown — M Dry
3. Drybrush: Ushabti Bone — M Dry
4. Layer: Nurgle's Rot — M Layer

LUSH UNDERGROWTH

1. Basecoat: Caliban Green — M Base
2. Drybrush: Elysian Green — M Dry
3. Drybrush: Ogryn Camo — M Dry
4. Layer: Abaddon Black — M Base

FRESH EARTH

1. Basecoat: Rhinox Hide — M Base
2. Drybrush: Balor Brown — M Dry
3. Drybrush: Screaming Skull — M Dry
4. Layer: Steel Legion Drab — M Base

AUTUMNAL LEAVES

1. Basecoat: Khorne Red — M Base
2. Drybrush: Wild Rider Red — M Dry
3. Drybrush: Troll Slayer Orange — M Dry

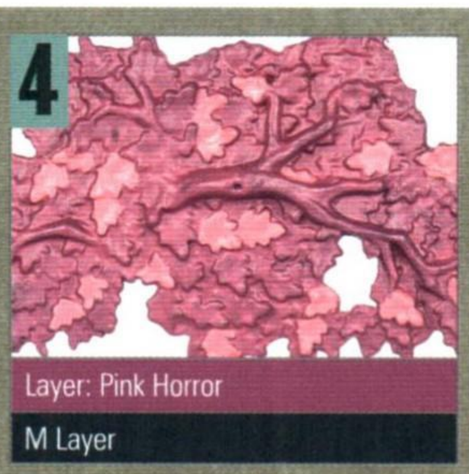
EVERGREENS

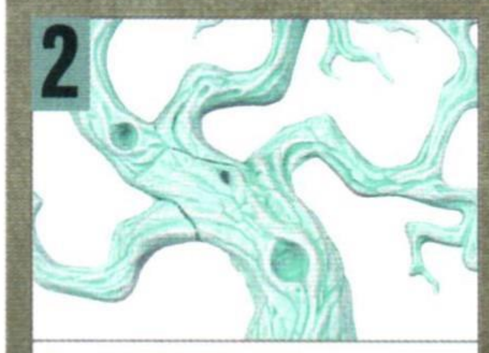
1. Basecoat: Caliban Green — M Base
2. Drybrush: Castellan Green — M Dry
3. Drybrush: Elysian Green — M Dry

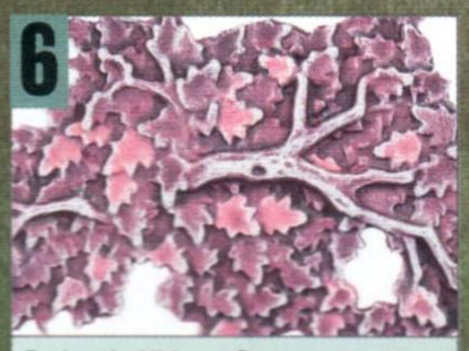
TOP TIP:
Barbed Bracken is great for basing models and really easy to use, too. We recommend undercoating and painting the bracken on the sprue (as shown above). This means you can drybrush it without getting paint on your models. You can then clip the bracken from the frame and stick it down with Super Glue.

THE BURGEONING LANDS OF GHYRAN

One of the easiest ways to bring life to your battlefield is with a suitably verdant piece of scenery. Below, we show you how to paint this magical, ethereal-looking Sylvaneth Wyldwood.







BLOSSOM TREES

After assembling the trees and clipping the leaves from the sprue, the trees and base were stuck to a spray stick and undercoated Corax White. The trees were then washed with Nihilakh Oxide directly over the undercoat.

The leaves were taped top-side down to a large piece of cardboard, undercoated Corax White, then (when dry) flipped over and sprayed again. While still attached to the cardboard, they were all basecoated, washed and drybrushed at the same time. Not only is this much easier than painting each set of leaves individually, it's also a lot quicker and far less messy.

NOT JUST GREEN AND BROWN

When it comes to the Realm of Life, there really is no better piece of scenery to paint than the Sylvaneth Wyldwood – it fairly screams life! But green and brown trees are such a cliché – in a magical realm full of the strangest and most bizarre forms of life, who says that trees have to be a 'normal' colour? Ironically, these ethereal pink and white trees were inspired by real-life cherry blossom trees, which capture the image of burgeoning life perfectly.

These trees were painted for the Realmgate Wars series of books and make for an excellent backdrop to the armies fighting around them. After all, not many armies are painted pink and white! To make painting the scenery easier, the trees were assembled and painted separately from the leaves, which were glued on after everything was painted. The trees have actually been slightly converted, too – spare sets of leaves were taken from other Wyldwood kits and glued on to create a denser canopy of leaves. Don't worry, though, the other trees were still used – they were built and painted without leaves and used to represent haunted, lifeless woods from the Realm of Death.

CREATING A BATTLEFIELD

From ruined temples and the remains of ancient civilisations to manufactorums and towering city complexes, scenery plays an important part in our games - without it, our battlefields would look distinctly bare! So how do you get a great looking scenery collection?

Battlefield scenery is something many of us take for granted. We rock up to our local store or gaming club, find a free table, play a game and then head home happy, not thinking much about the time or effort that went into building and painting the scenery we just fought over. For some of us, we would love to paint more scenery, but we're not sure how to approach it. Fortunately, Studio scenery painter James Littler is here to help.

'Creating a battlefield is actually not as time-consuming or difficult as it first appears,' says James. 'The secret is finding the right style of painting – you could paint every detail on a piece of scenery as if it was a miniature in your army, but it would take you ages to get a whole battlefield painted. Better instead to find a style of painting that is quick and functional, but that also looks great when arrayed on the tabletop.

JAMES LITTLER
If you've bought a box of scenery recently, it's likely that the kit on the front of the box was painted by James. A skilled scenery painter, James loves coming up with new ways to build and paint Citadel scenery – who better to help with this article?

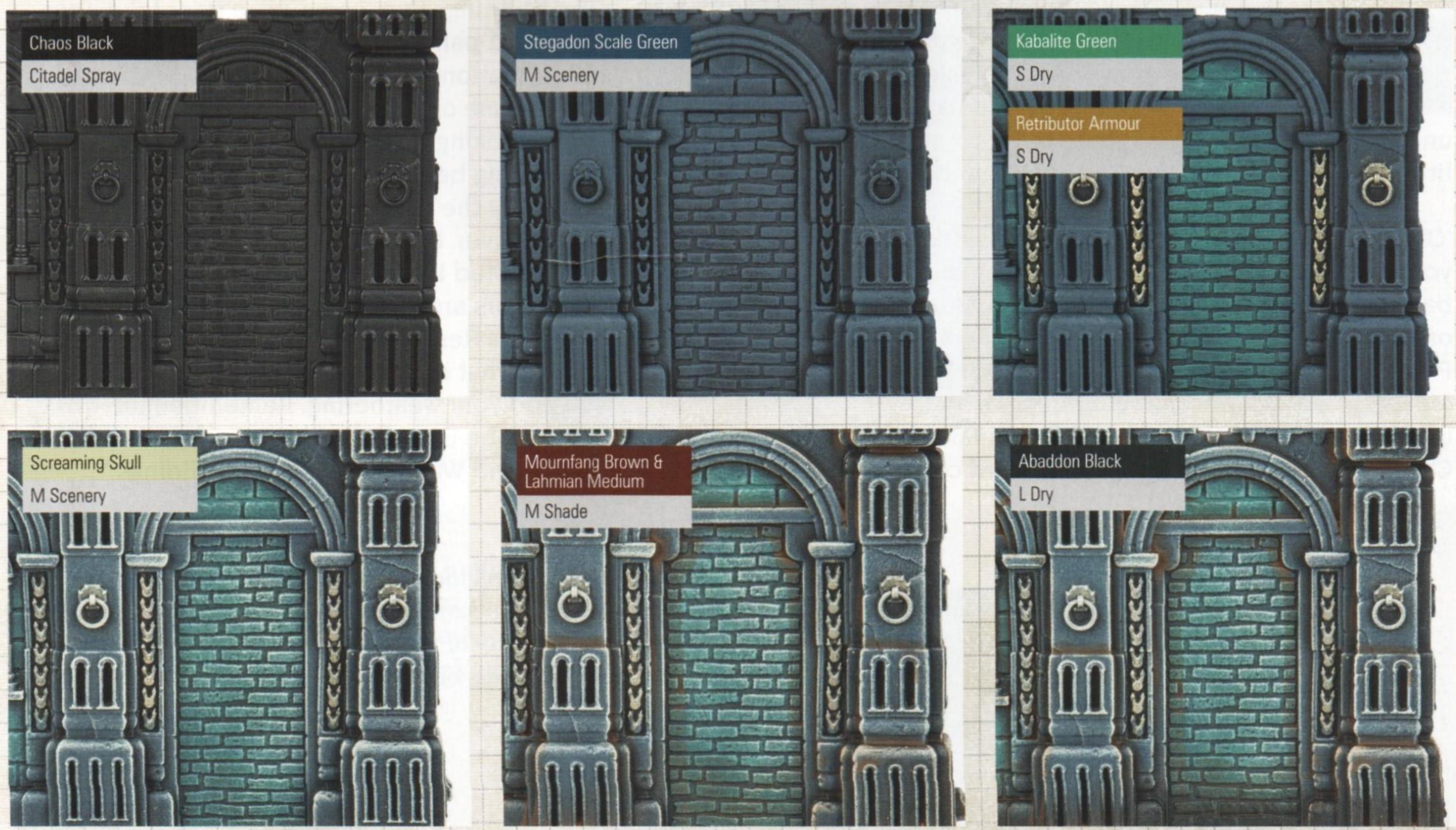
'For this article, I'm going to show you how I approach painting scenery and how you can convert a set of buildings (and paint them in a unified way) to create a themed battlefield – in this case a backwater Imperial outpost.'

THE QUICK AND EASY METHOD

'My style of scenery painting is quick and easy – I use drybrushing and weathering techniques to get the effects I want. The buildings shown in the picture above were painted using the stages shown to the right. While the buildings are clearly different colours, the techniques I used to paint them are identical, as are the undercoat colours and the weathering techniques I picked to finish them. The only differences are the basecoat colour and detail colours in between. The full set of buildings – taken from the Realm of Battle: Blasted Hallowheart set – probably took me about an hour to paint.'

THE IMPORTANCE OF DRYBRUSHING

The first thing to note is that Base paints can be drybrushed over a Chaos Black undercoat to great effect. Not only can you apply the colour quickly, you also get natural shading (from the black) and texture (from the drybrushing). You can then use a smaller drybrush to pick out a few details before applying a light drybrushed highlight to the whole piece – in this case Screaming Skull. The last stage was adding the weathering to tie the building to the gaming board that comes in the set.



APPLYING WEATHERING

The building below has also been drybrushed, but this time with Rakarth Flesh over Chaos Black. Because the colour is lighter, you will need several light drybrushes to get the build-up of colour. Like the building above, there are two stages of weathering. The first is a wash of Mournfang Brown and Lahmian Medium in the recesses, which helps shade the scenery and tie the colours together. The second is a light drybrush of Abaddon Black around the base of the wall to tie it to the board.

SAME STYLE, DIFFERENT COLOURS

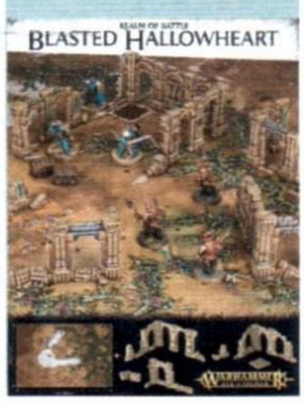
On the previous page, James showed how to paint a set of buildings in his quick and simple style, but using different basecoat colours. But he's got plenty more painting tricks up his sleeve...

All the buildings shown on these two pages were painted the same way as the scenery on the previous page, using drybrushed basecoats over a dark undercoat, followed by a lighter drybrush and a little weathering to tie the scenery to the board.

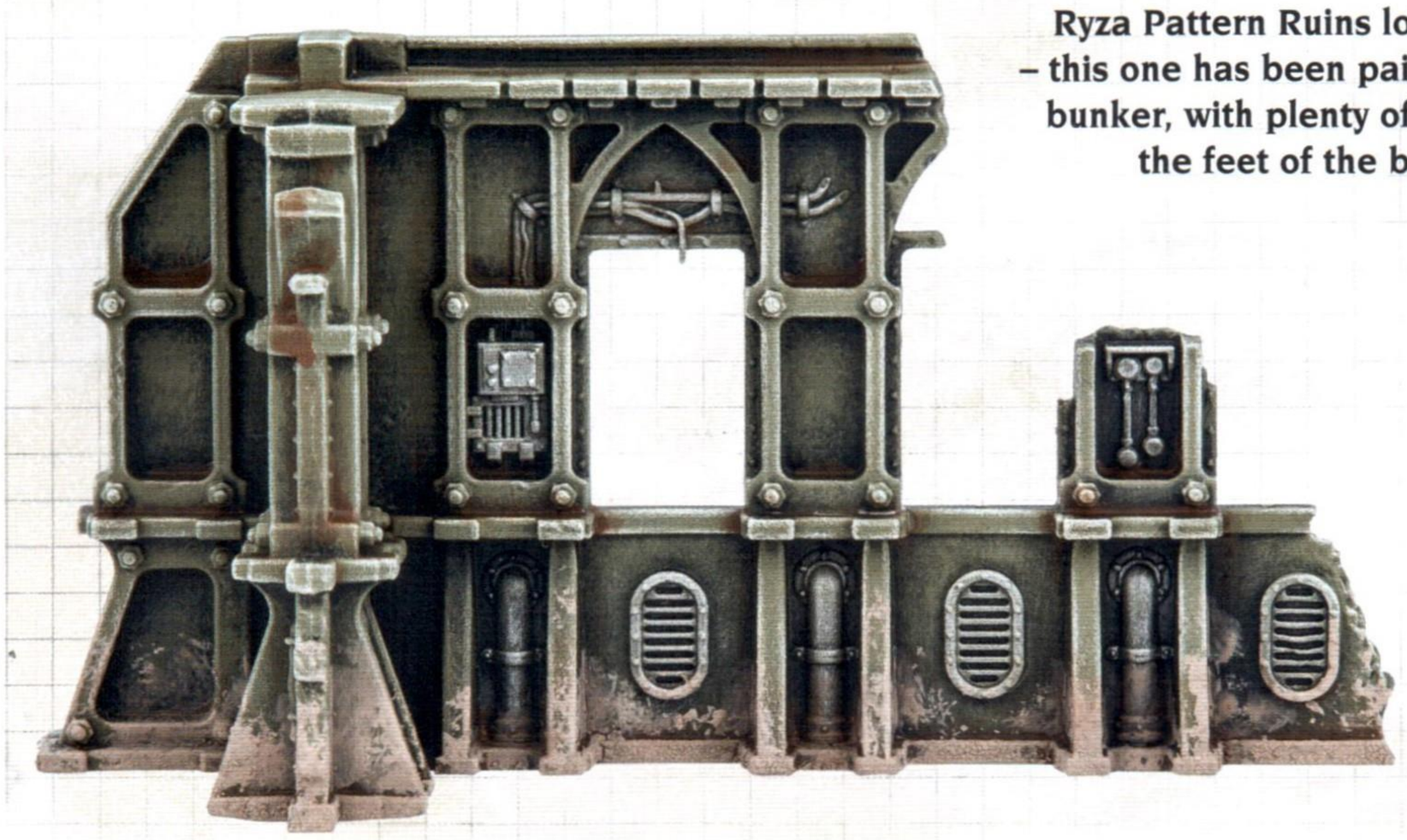
'One of the key considerations when painting your terrain is deciding where you want your battles to be set,' says James. 'Is your battlefield on a jungle world or in the forests of Ghyran? Perhaps it's an ash wasteland or a lava field. Maybe you're fighting in the mountains or underground. It could even have been tainted by Chaos, so that everything's gone a weird colour!

TERRAIN SETS

There are two battlefields in a box available – Blasted Hallowheart for Warhammer Age of Sigmar and Moon Base Klaisus for Warhammer 40,000.



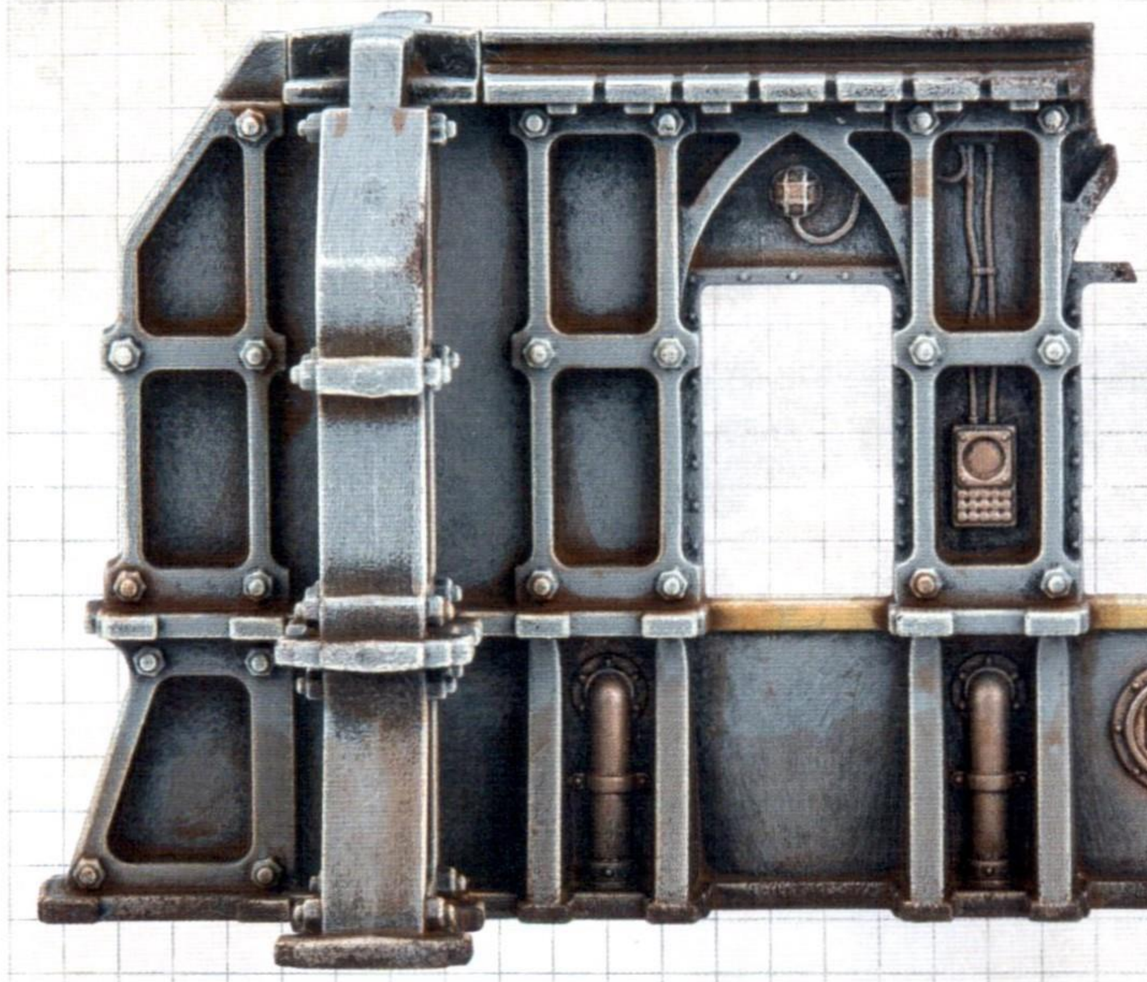
'The buildings here show just a few of the ways you could paint your terrain. There are two main considerations at this stage. Firstly, what colours will you use on the buildings to create the effect you're looking for? Secondly, what colour will the weathering be? This second question is normally solved by the colour of the game board you're fighting over. If you're using one of the boards from Blasted Hallowheart or Moon Base Klaisus, the colours are already chosen for you. If you're painting a Realm of Battle board, you need to choose what colour you're painting that before you add your weathering. Remember, the tips here can be used for both Warhammer Age of Sigmar and Warhammer 40,000 buildings.'



FRONT-LINE BUNKER

Ryza Pattern Ruins look great in military colour schemes – this one has been painted to look like a ruined front-line bunker, with plenty of weathering and dried mud around the feet of the building to make it look abandoned.

- Caliban Green (Citadel Spray)
- Death Guard Green (M Scenery)
- Leadbelcher (S Dry)
- Screaming Skull (M Scenery)
- Mournfang Brown & Lahmian Medium (L Shade)
- Agrellan Earth (M Dry)



INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Grey industrial buildings make a fantastic background for games of Warhammer 40,000. A hint of colour (yellow in this case) acts as a spot colour for the building. James painted all the ruins shown later in these colours.

- Chaos Black (Citadel Spray)
- Dawnstone (M Scenery)
- Balthasar Gold (S Dry)
- Averland Sunset (S Dry)
- Screaming Skull (M Scenery)
- Mournfang Brown & Lahmian Medium (L Shade)
- Rhinox Hide (L Dry)

CITY OF THE CHANGE LORD

This building looks really unnatural, as if it has been corrupted by Tzeentch. Or perhaps it is located in one of the Shyishan underworlds... This goes to show, you really can paint Azyrite Ruins any colour you like!

The Fang
Citadel Spray

Temple Guard Blue
M Scenery

Screamer Pink & Lahmian Medium
L Shade

Pallid Wych Flesh
M Scenery

Nihilakh Oxide
M Shade

OVERGROWN TEMPLE

The mud around the base of this building suggests that the area it's in floods a lot and that the undergrowth has started to grow. Simple painting effects like this can have a dramatic impact on the look of a building.

Stormvermin Fur
Citadel Spray

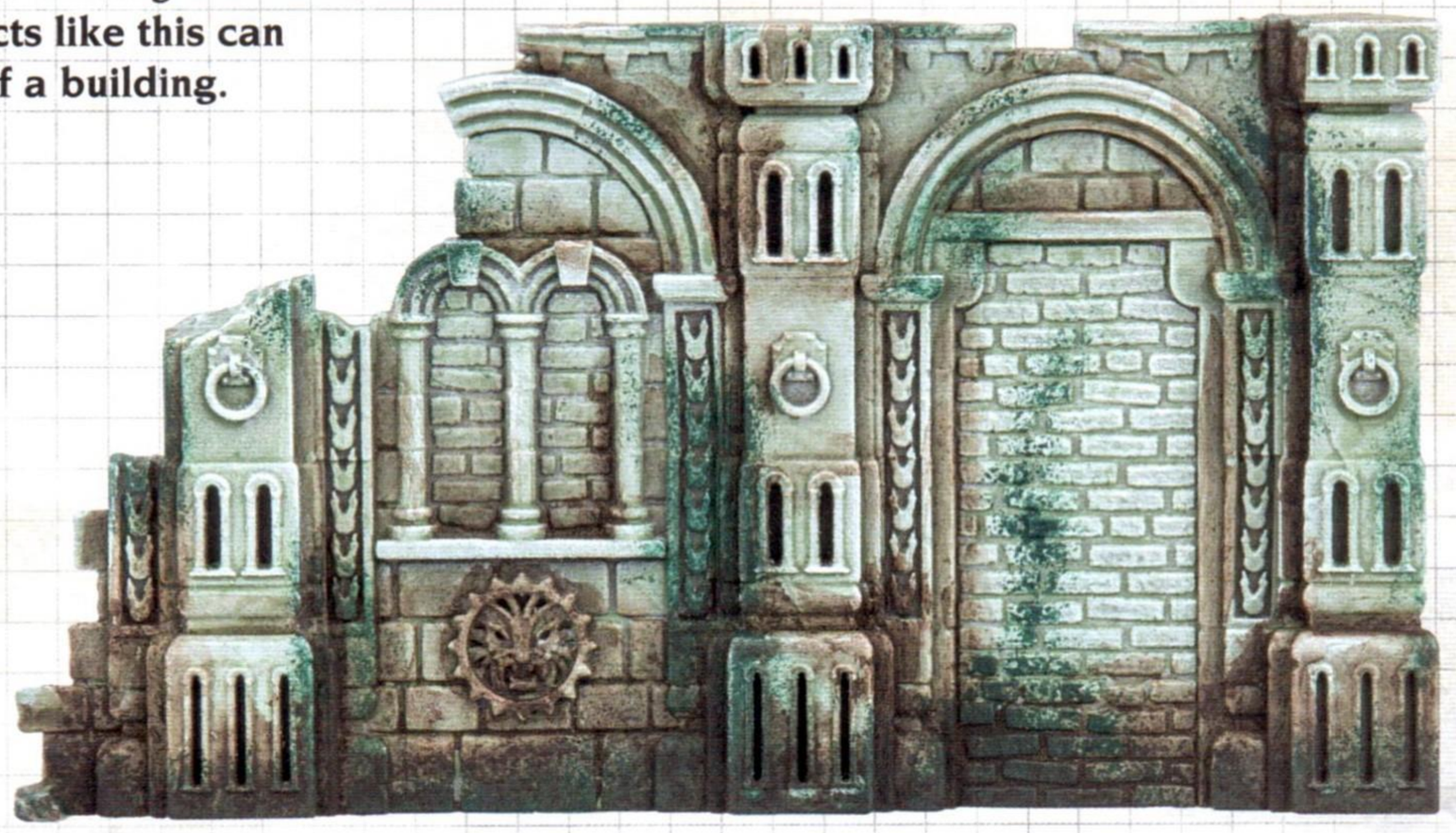
Typhus Corrosion
L Dry

Administratum Grey
M Scenery

Caliban Green
S Dry

Loren Forest & Lahmian Medium
L Shade

Praxeti White
M Scenery



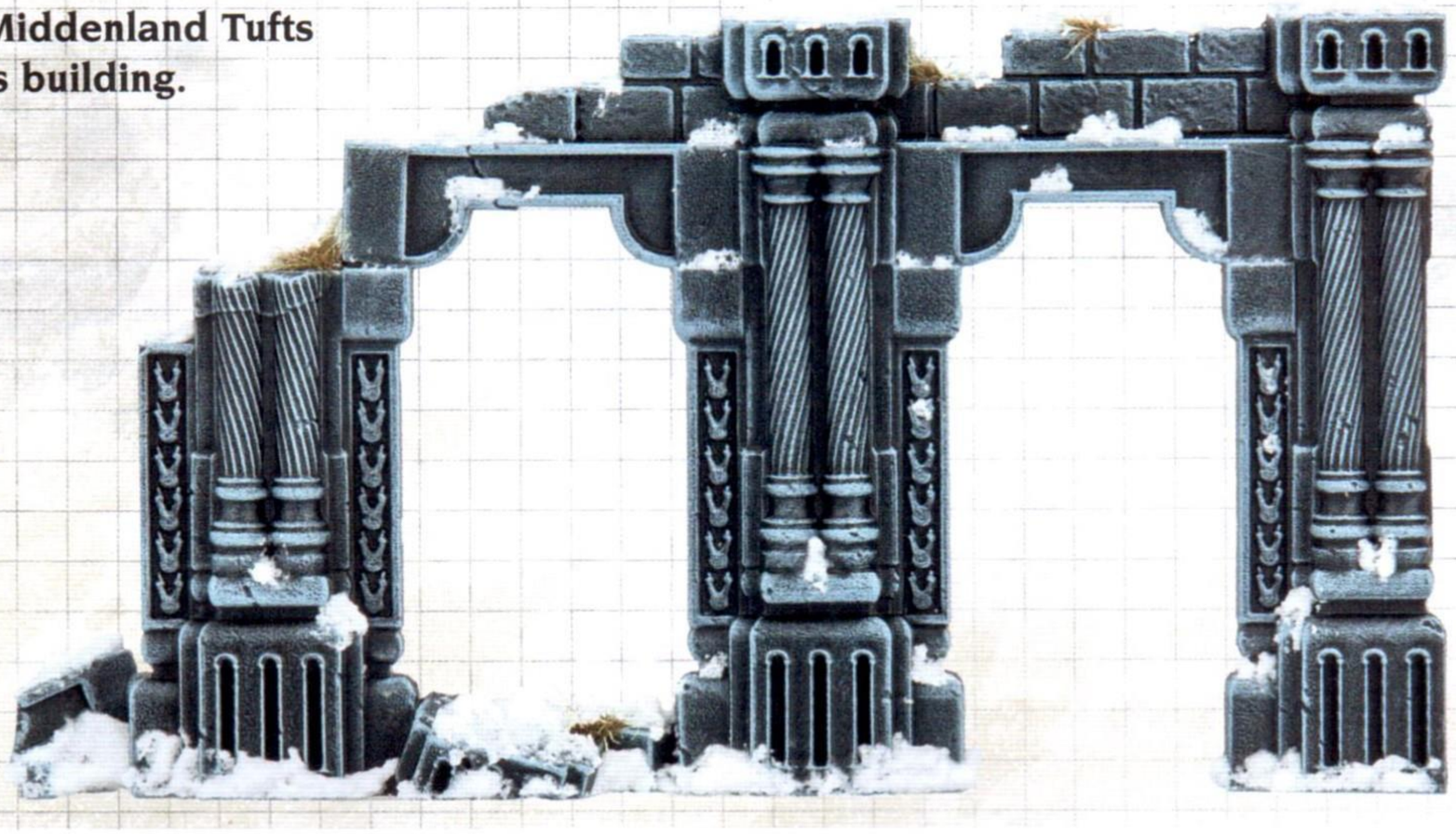
ABANDONED MOUNTAIN FASTNESS

This piece shows how easy it is to create a contrast between a dark building and its environment. Liberal use of Valhallan Blizzard and a few Middenland Tufts really helps set the scene around this building.

Chaos Black
Citadel Spray

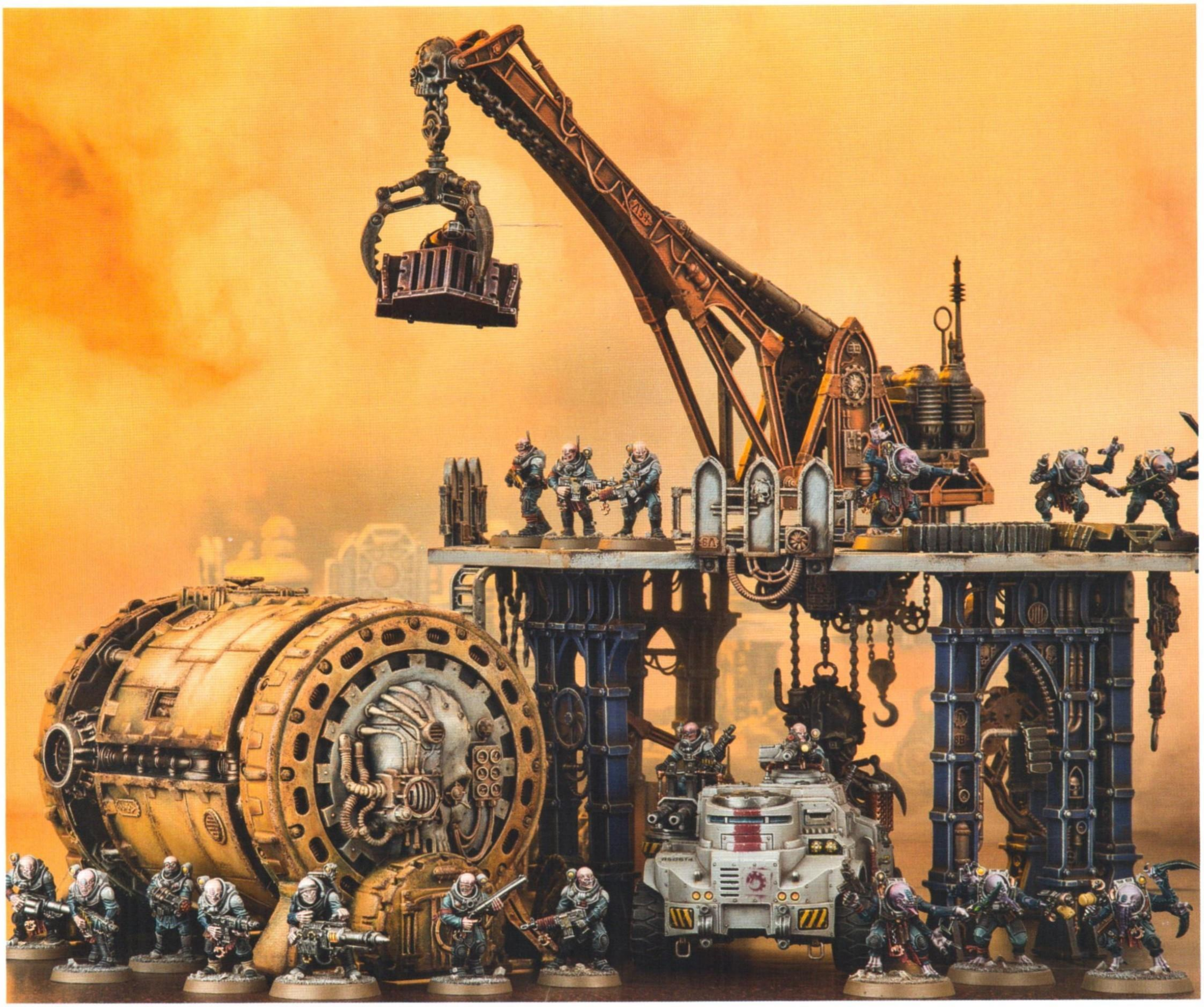
Fenrisian Grey
M Scenery

Valhallan Blizzard
M Base



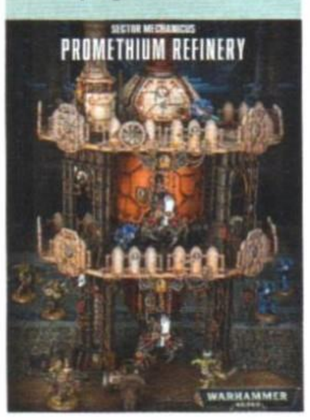
SETTING THE SCENE

Creating a great scenery collection isn't just about how you paint your terrain – the way you build your scenery kits can also have a dramatic impact on how your battlefield looks.



PROMETHIUM REFINERY

The Promethium Refinery is a great kit to add to the Realm of Battle: Moon Base Klaisus set as it includes plenty of gantries and ladders that are ideal for making some of the terrain shown over the next few pages.



So you've painted your battlefield in a box – now what? The next logical step is to add some more scenery kits to your collection and there are certainly plenty to choose from. James explains how he chooses what to build and paint next.

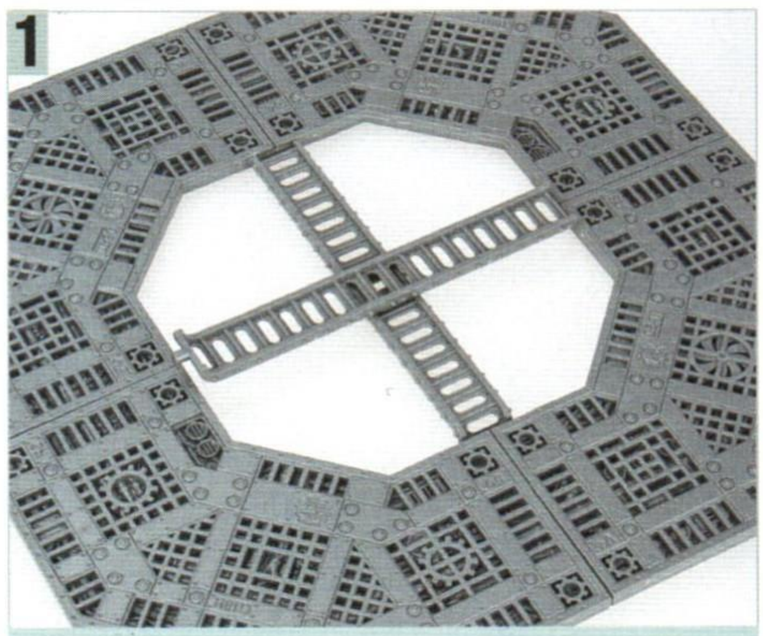
'The great thing about our scenery ranges is that you can build and paint any kit and it will look great next to pretty much any other scenery piece,' says James. 'What's really rewarding, though, is when you come up with a story for your terrain, basing it around a particular idea or theme to create a cohesive collection.

'If you've just painted the Ryza Ruins from the Moon Base Klaisus set, for example, what story could you create around them? They are pretty common STC (standard template construct) buildings, so perhaps they were once part of a farming complex or a water filtration silo. Maybe they are the ruins of a military bunker on the outskirts of a trench complex. The possibilities for what you could build really are endless.'

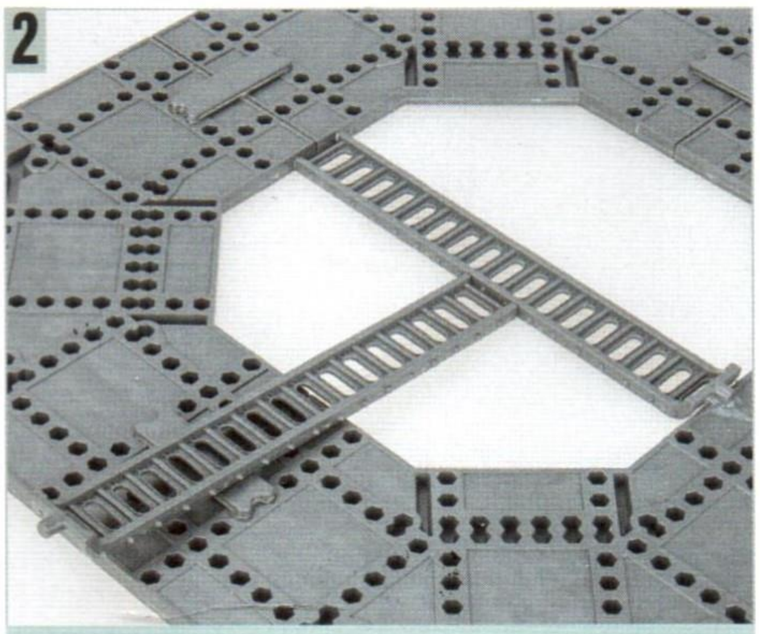
THE BATTLEFIELD VISION

'My idea was to create an Imperial outpost – some kind of explorator facility on a backwater Imperial world. I envisaged a power reactor and a repair bay for vehicles plus, of course, the ruins of what was probably once the main outpost building. My inspiration for the power reactor was the awesome terrain pieces that the Warhammer World studio have converted for their battlefields – they look great, they're easy to make and they're very practical gaming pieces. My second idea was to build a garage with a crane attached. Here's how I set about converting them.'

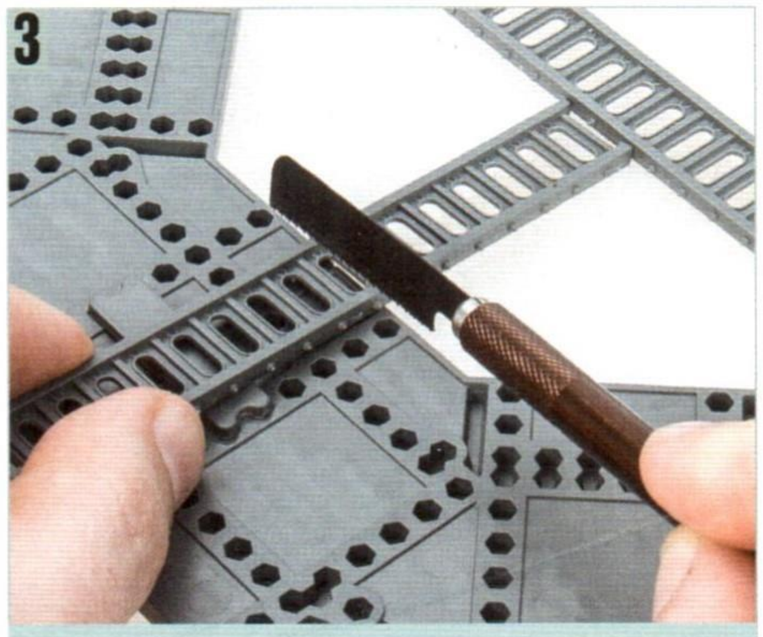
THE REPAIR GARAGE CRANE GANTRY



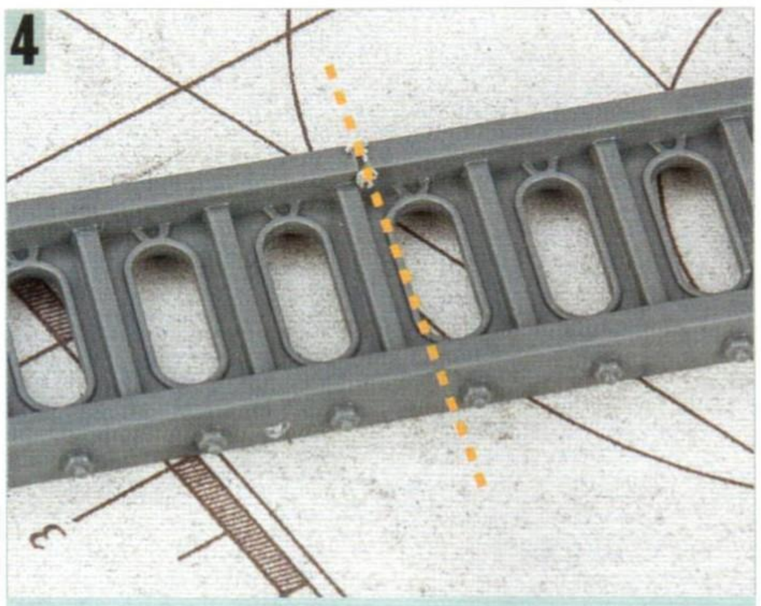
The ladders are the perfect length to fit across the gap in the gantry walkway, making them ideal as supports for the crane assembly.



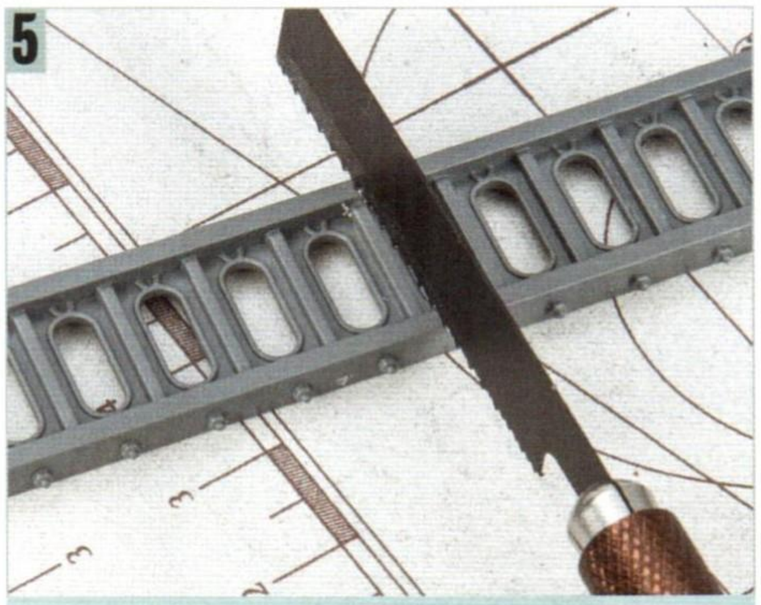
James glued the first ladder in place across the middle of the gantry, then worked out where he would have to cut the second ladder to get it to fit in neatly.



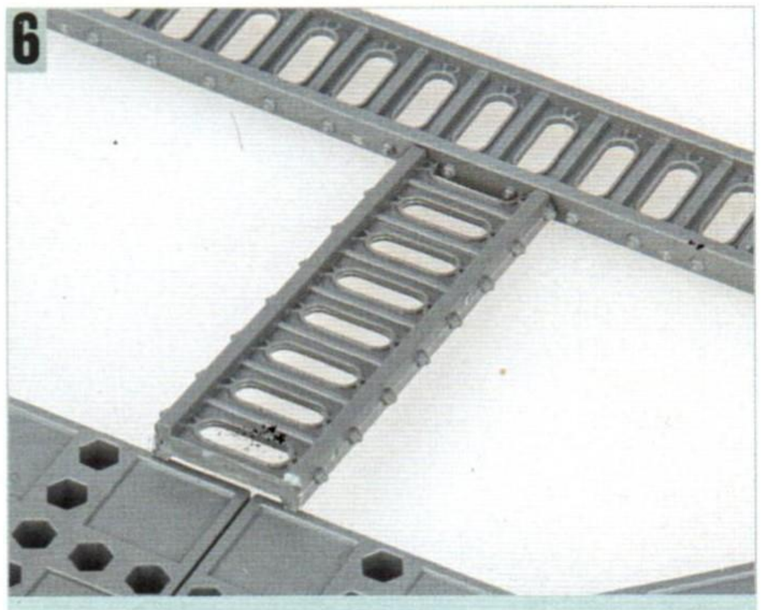
Using a Citadel Saw, James marked the ladder where he would need to cut it, ensuring the ladder was a few millimetres longer than the gap it would sit in.



Here you can see where the cut will be made. It conveniently lines up with one of the ladder rungs – the perfect guideline for the saw.

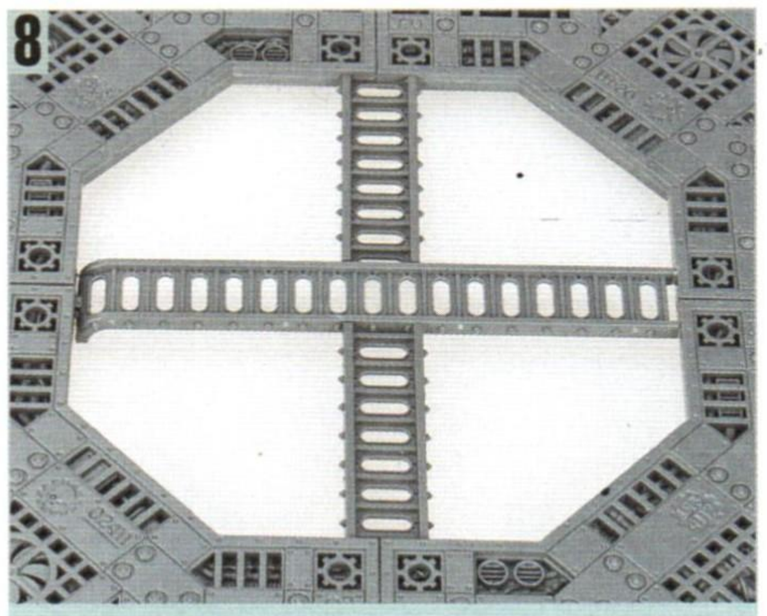


James used the largest blade on the saw to cut through the ladder, ensuring that he kept the blade vertical so that the cut remained straight.

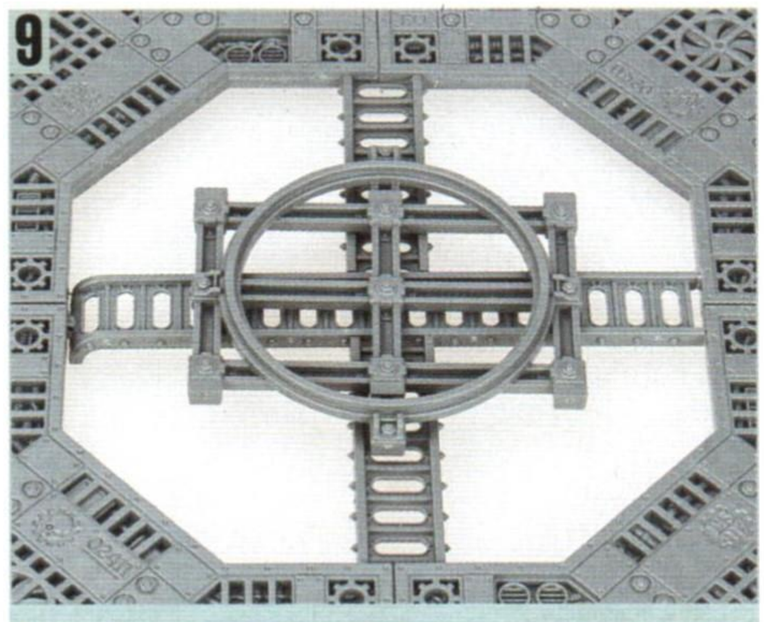


A test fit shows that the ladder is slightly too long for the gap (better than too short!) Fortunately, there's a simple solution…

Taking a Mouldline Remover, James carefully scraped a layer of plastic off the top of the ladder. He kept scraping thin layers off until the ladder fitted snugly.



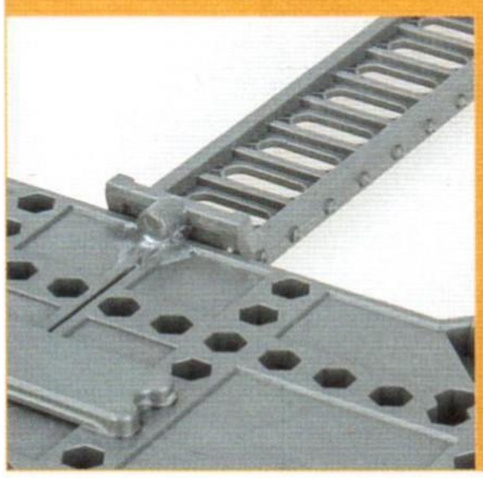
James cut the other piece of the ladder to fit the gap on the other side of the gantry, then glued both pieces of ladder in place with Plastic Glue.

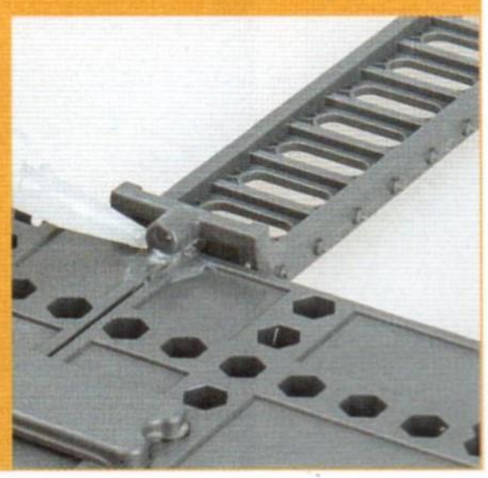


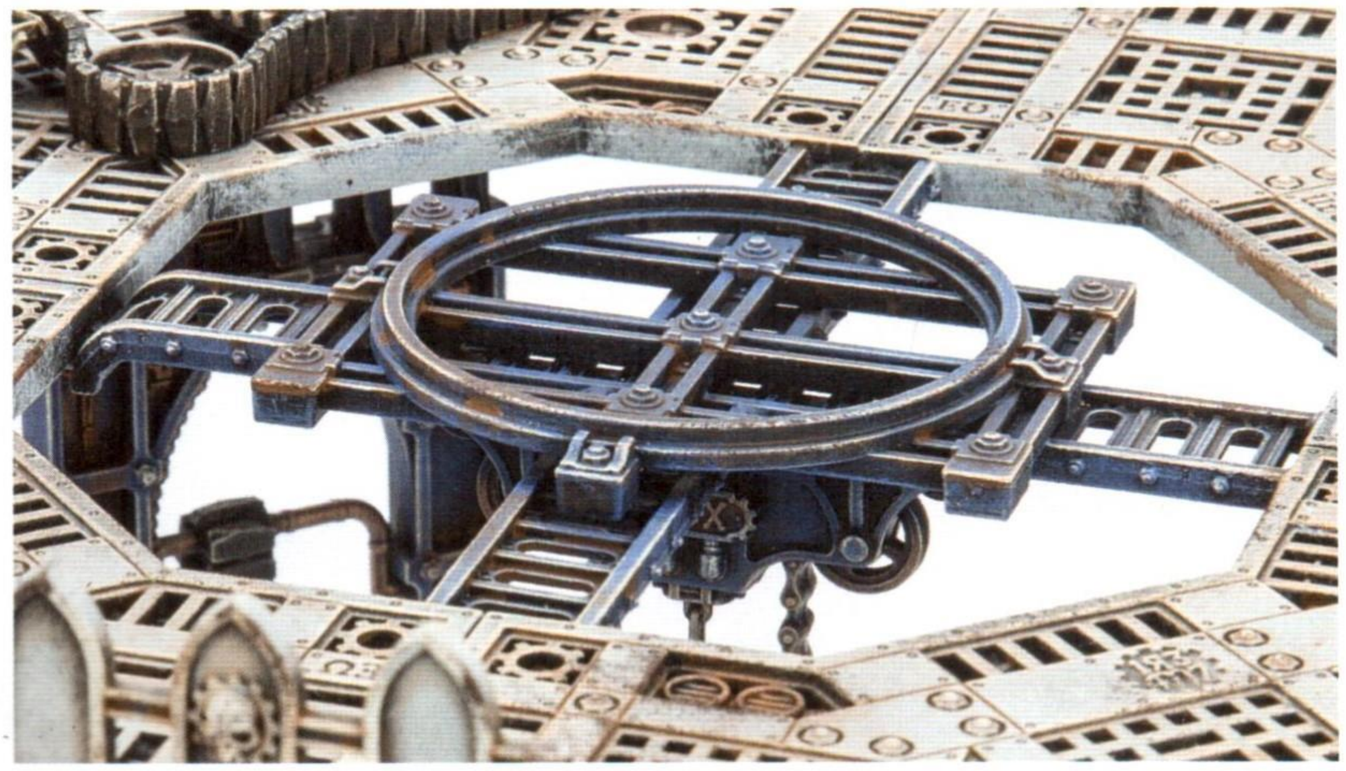
Once the ladders were stuck in place, James glued the mount for the crane in place, ensuring it sat square with the ladders underneath it.

TOP TIP

When gluing the ladders to the gantries, James used Plastic Glue to hold them in place. Once the glue was set, he then applied Super Glue over the top to make the join even stronger.

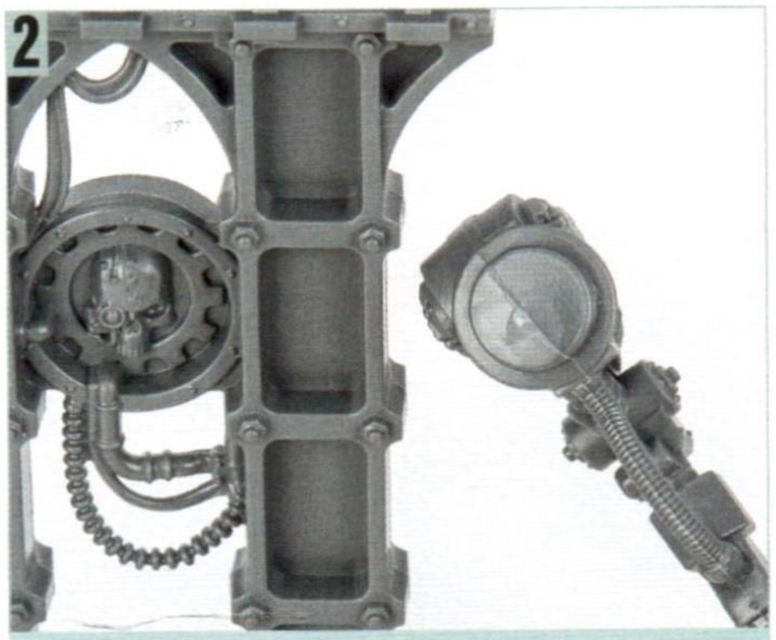




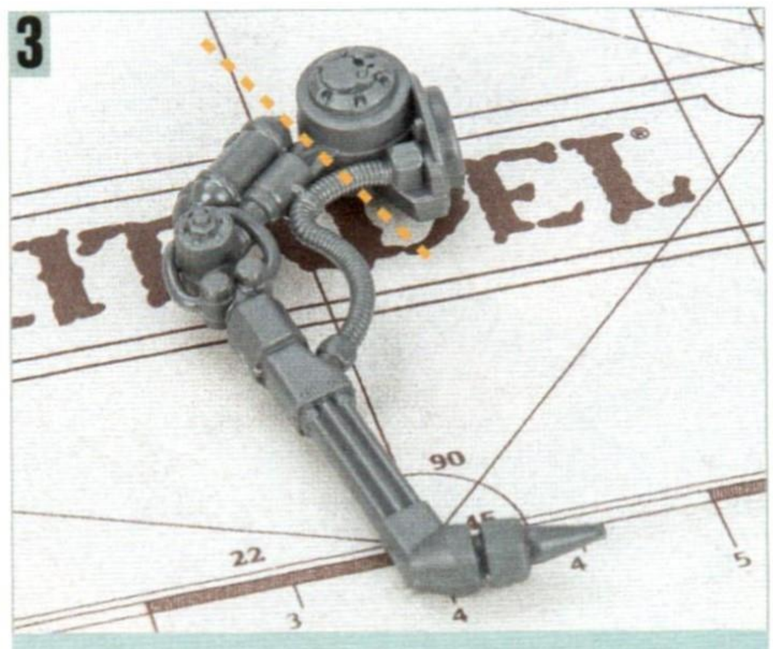


BUILDING THE WELDING ARM

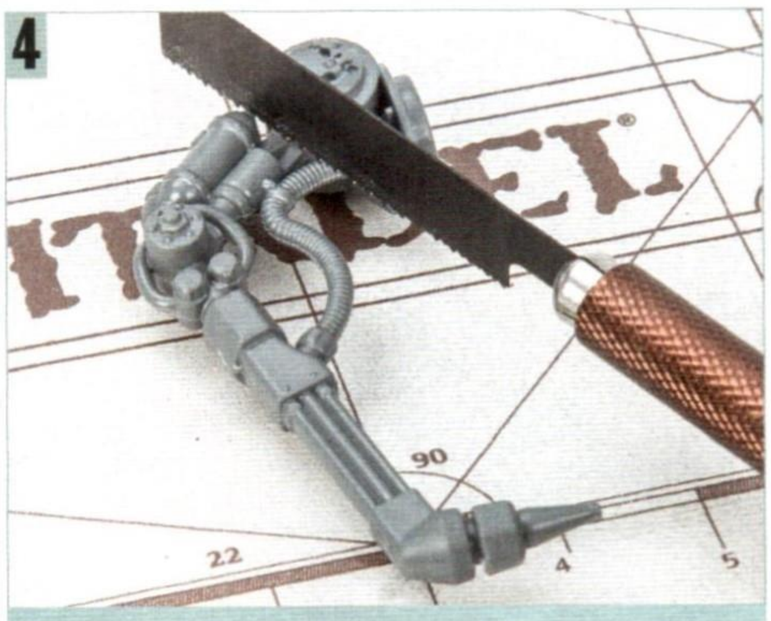
The plan was to fit one of the arms from a Galvanic Servohauler onto one of the Sector Mechanicus gantry legs to represent a welding arm…



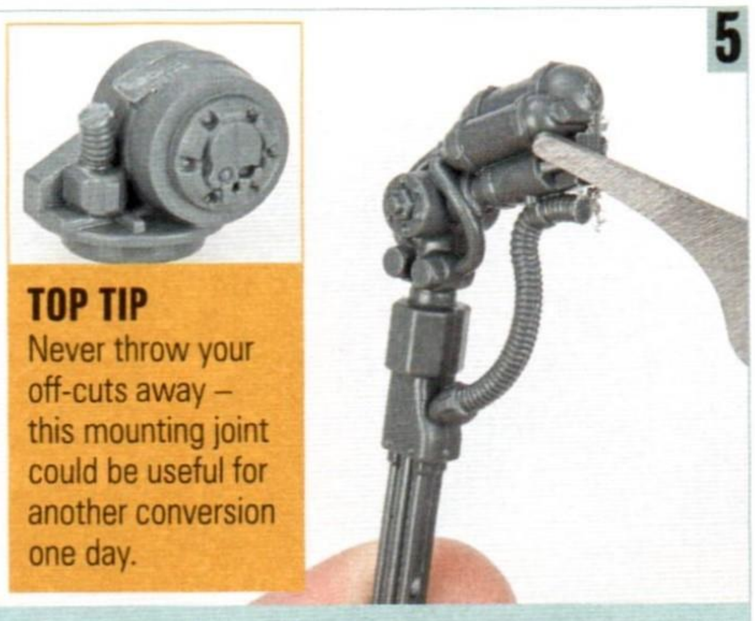
…but the fitting for the arm is circular, and the gap James wanted to fit it in is rectangular. To get the two pieces to look right, some cutting would be required.



From the side, you can see the shape of the arm. There is a thin section between the mounting joint and the canisters that makes for an ideal cutting point.

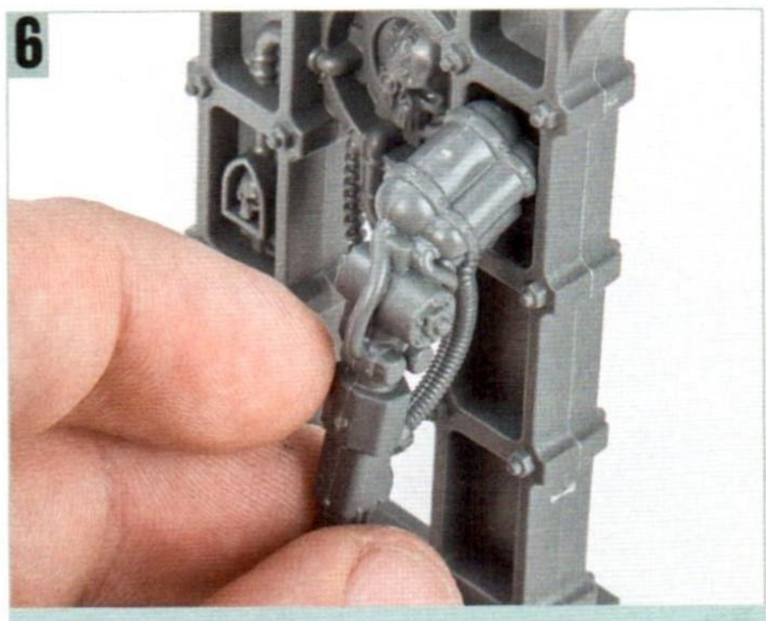


Taking his Citadel Saw, James cut through the thin bit of plastic, taking care to make sure the cut was straight and neat.

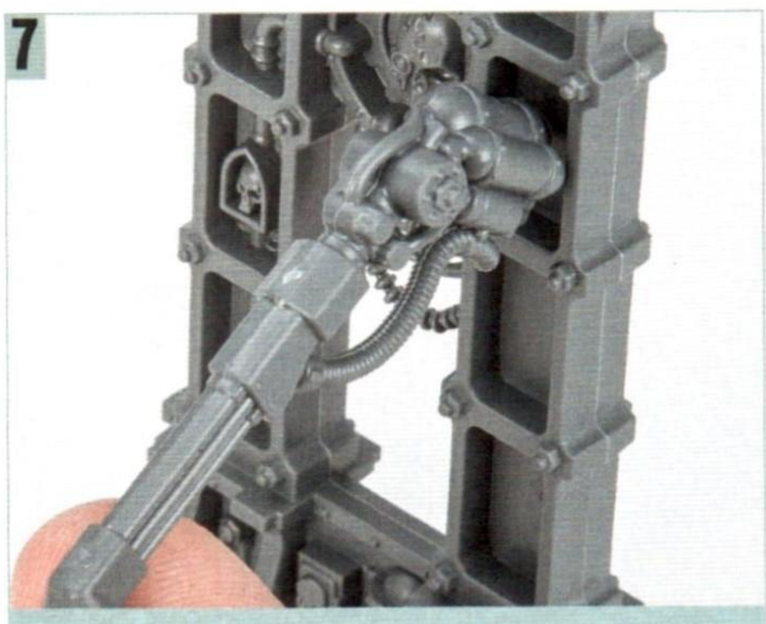


TOP TIP
Never throw your off-cuts away – this mounting joint could be useful for another conversion one day.

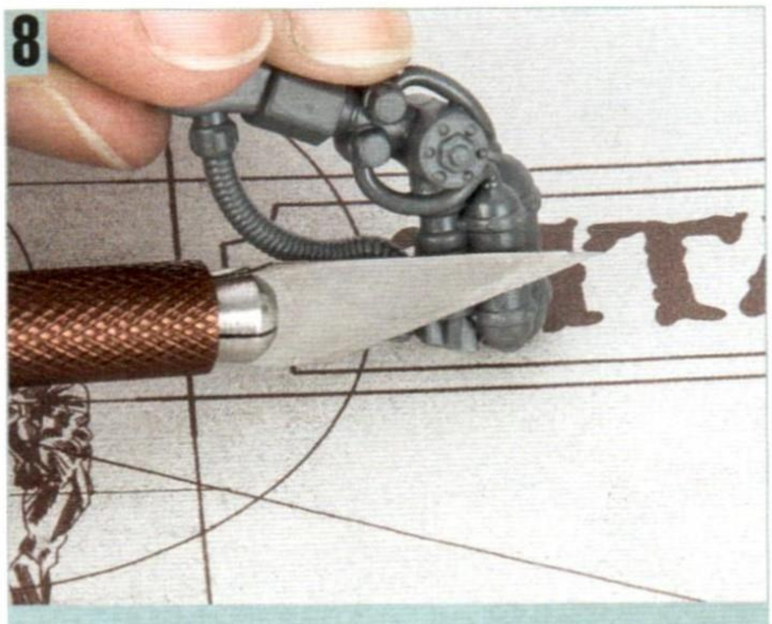
With the mounting joint cut off, James cleaned up the cut (particularly around the back of the hydraulic canisters) with a Mouldline Remover.



With the arm cleaned up, James dry-fitted the piece into the gantry legs. It almost fitted, but not at the angle he wanted – it sat too low.



This is the angle James wanted the arm to sit at. Unfortunately, the hydraulic canisters are just a bit too wide for the gap.

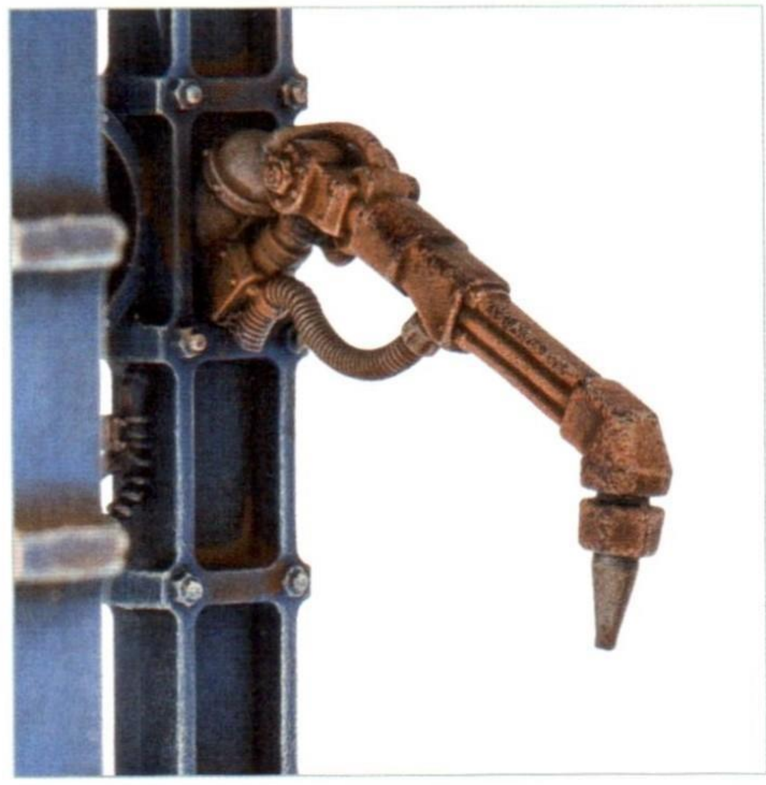


Using a Citadel Knife, James very carefully shaved off the edge of the canisters, taking care to test whether they fitted after each cut.

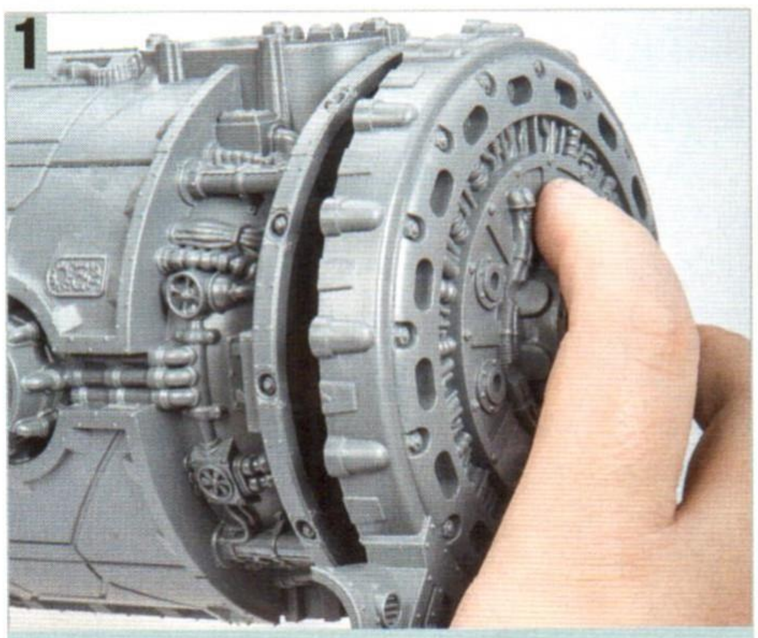
After a little trimming, the arm fits snugly in the rectangular section on the gantry leg. But the angle of the arm was still too low…

…so out came the saw again! This time, James cut off the back of the canisters (a section only a few millimetres wide) at the angle he wanted.

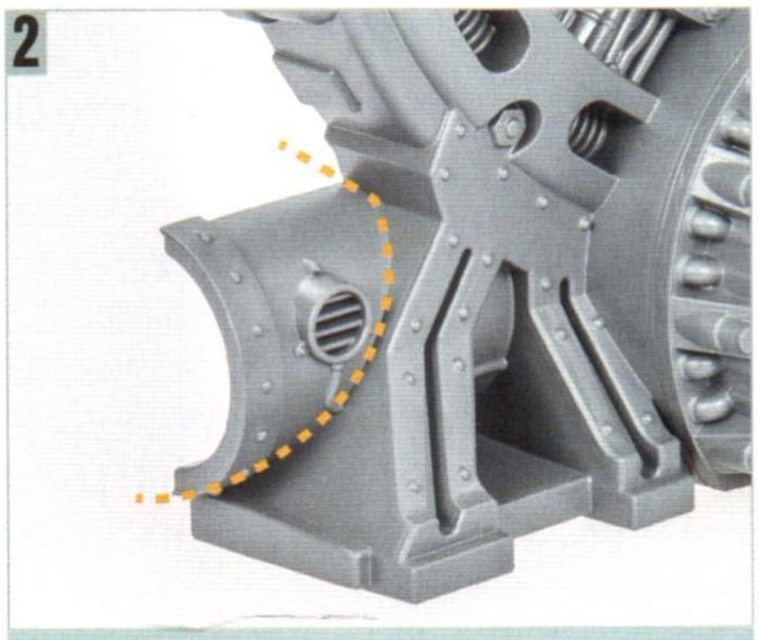
And this is what the leg looks like with the welding arm in place – the perfect addition to an outpost repair facility. To make painting both the arm and the leg easier, James kept the two components separate and painted them in sub-assemblies. He then glued them together with Super Glue.



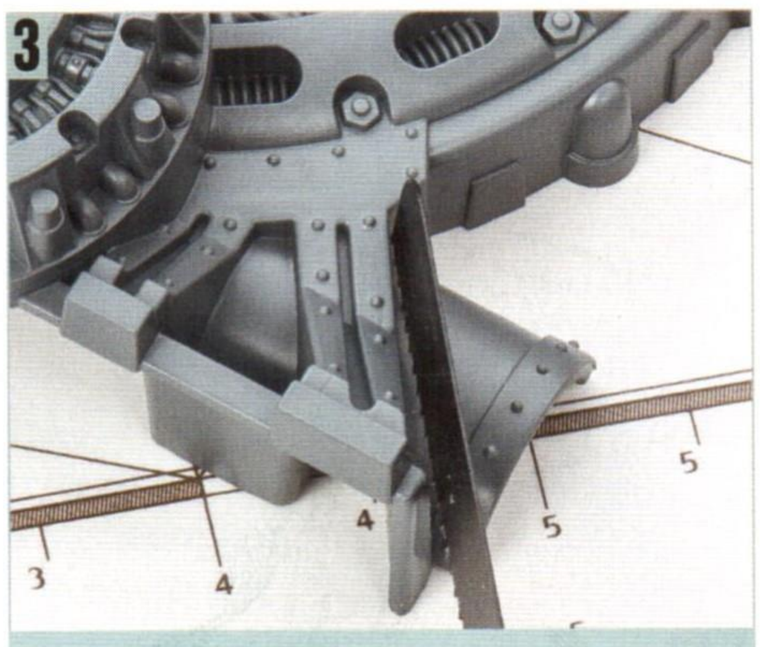
THE FERRATONIC REACTOR



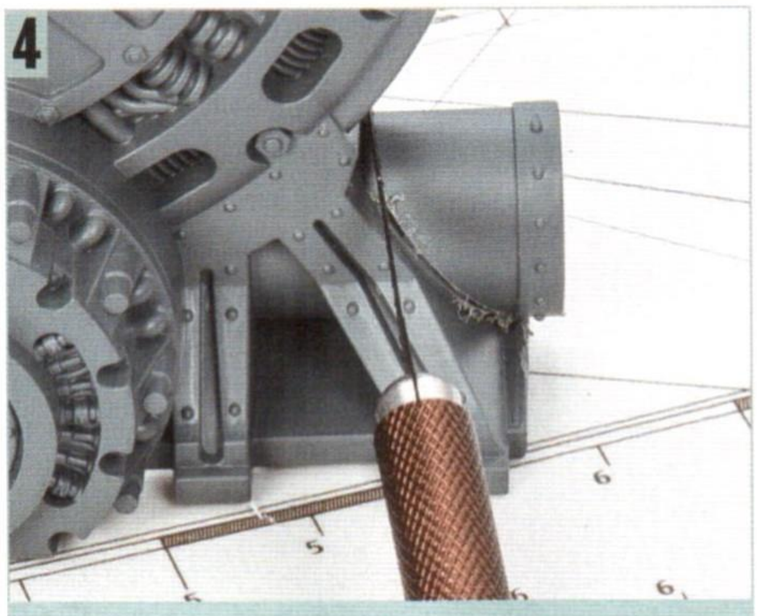
With the body of the Ferratonic Furnace built, James checked if the Haemotrope Reactor would fit on the end. Would you believe it – they're the same diameter!



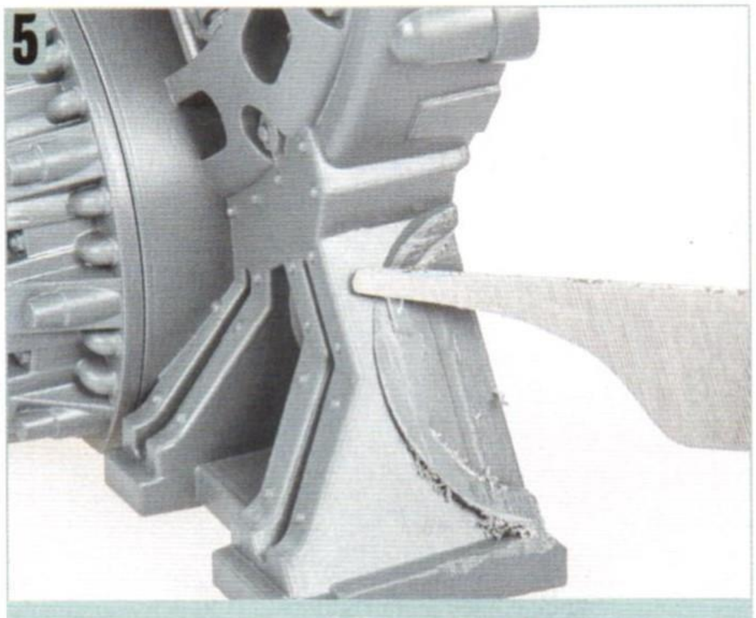
To make the legs look right, the pipes would need to be cut from the legs. Here you can see the bit that would need to be removed.



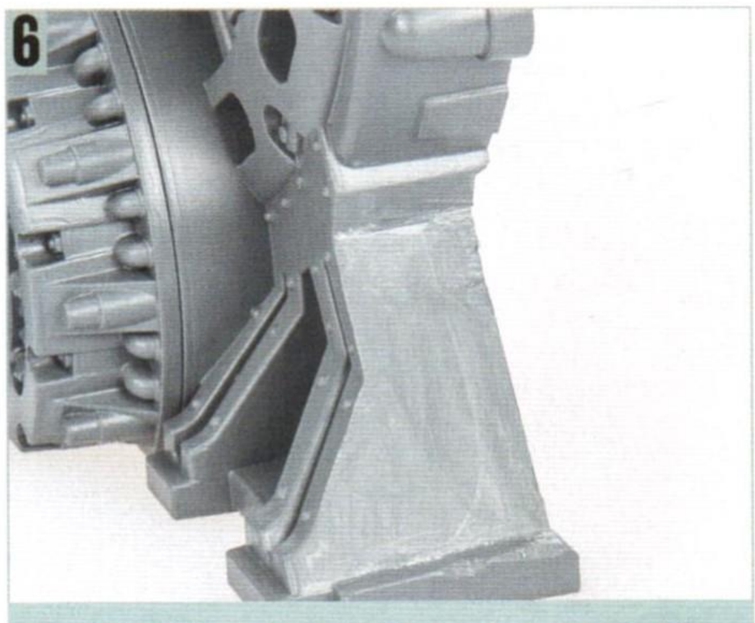
James needed to make two cuts to remove the pipe. The first cut was made with the large saw blade diagonally across the pipe.



The second cut at the top of the pipe (where the larger blade wouldn't fit) was made using the smaller, thinner-nosed saw blade.



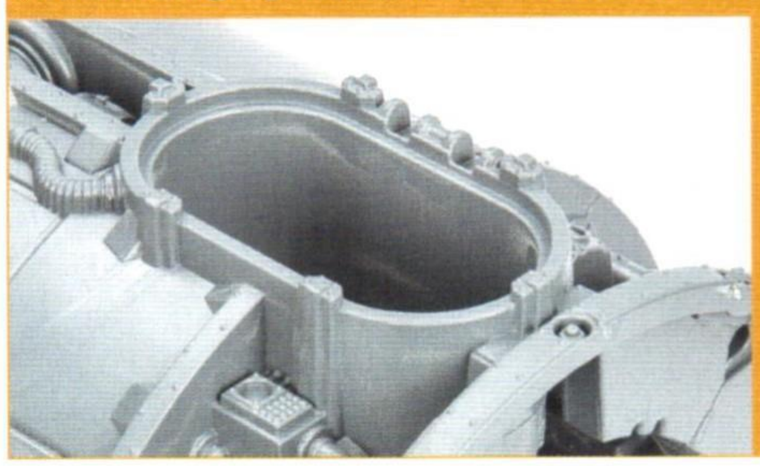
With the pipe removed, James then set to work with a Mouldline Remover, gently scraping away the excess crescent of plastic .

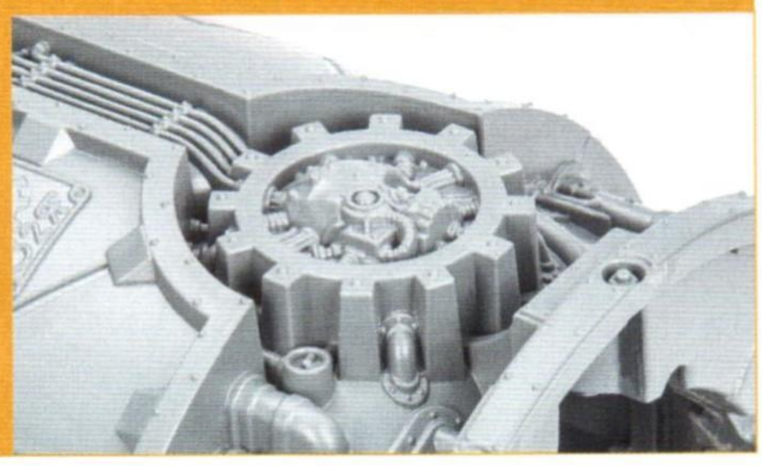


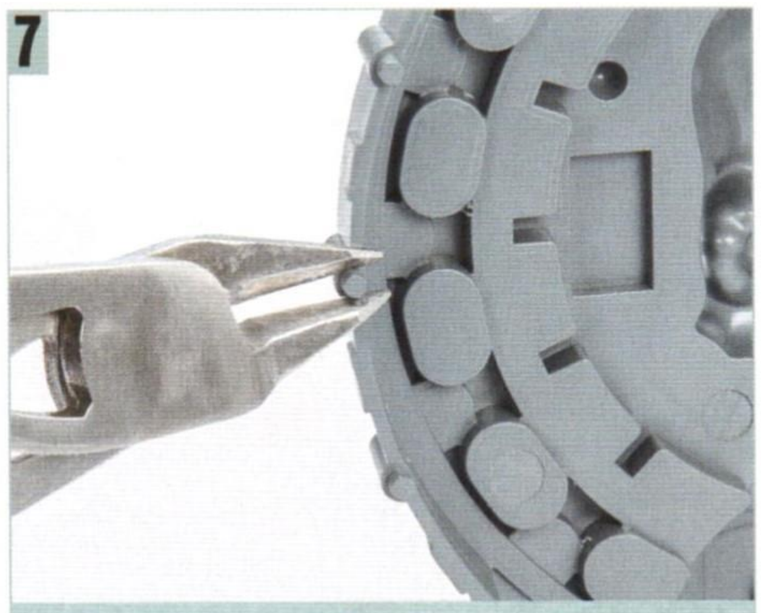
And this is what it looked like when he was done! As you can see, the foot underneath where the pipe sat is still intact. Just three more feet to go!

TOP TIP

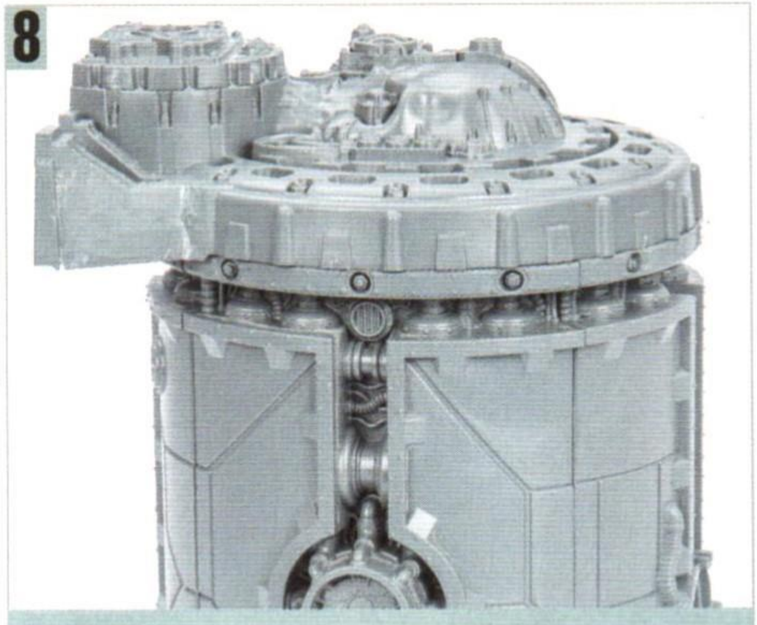
While the Ferratonic Furnace is cylindrical, it does have two 'sides'. One features a door, the other an Adeptus Mechanicus symbol. If you're building a reactor like this, make sure either the icon or the access hatch are facing upwards, otherwise it will look weird having them on the sides.







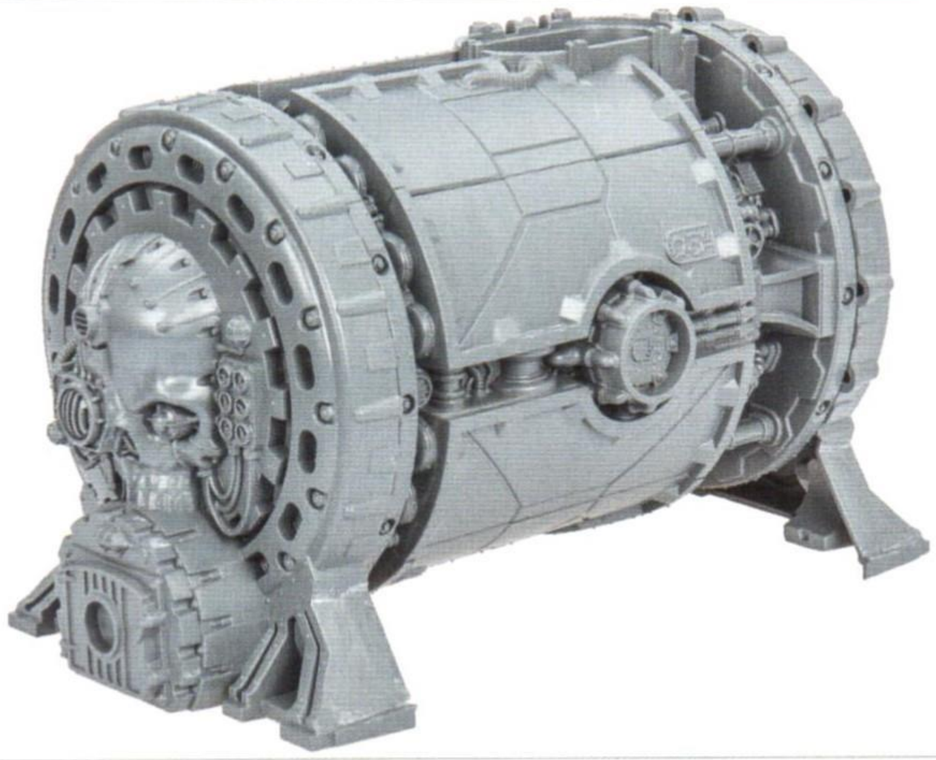
With the pipes removed, James clipped off the assembly tabs from the inside faces of the Haemotrope Reactor.



James glued the first reactor piece to the end of the furnace. To help it stick, he sat the reactor on its end. Once it was dry, he glued on the other end.

ALL POWER TO THE REACTORS!

And this is the completed piece. As James points out, there are gaps under the feet, but when the scenery is on the table, painted, with miniatures running around it, no one will even notice. Remember, you rarely see your scenery from a model's eye view like this.



IMPERIAL OUTPOST GAMMA LXVIII

The completed Imperial Outpost features a power reactor, ruined outbuildings, Alchomite Stacks and a vehicle repair facility. It's just waiting for a game to be played on it now!

TOP TIP
To keep the weathering consistent on all his buildings, James poured two pots of Mournfang Brown and two pots of Lahmian Medium into a tub, mixed them up, then decanted them back into their pots – much easier than mixing it every time!

So there you have it, the completed board, built and painted using the tips shown throughout this article. We asked James if he had any last thoughts on painting terrain. 'Just remember that scenery is the backdrop to your miniatures and the setting for your games,' says James. 'You can paint every detail on a piece of scenery as if it was a model in your collection, but it would take you ages to get a whole battlefield painted. Instead, focus on getting the effect you want to achieve right. If you want an overgrown battlefield, think what you would need to do to achieve that. If you want it to be an industrial wasteland, what will that look like? You can get a set of scenery like this painted pretty quickly and it will look great – you can always go back later and paint in some of the extra details if you want to.'

THE CRANE
Here you can see the completed crane sitting on top of the converted platform that James built earlier in the article. The supports for the crane were painted using the same colours as the gantry legs (see opposite), while the crane itself was drybrushed Jokaero Orange over Chaos Black (yes, that really is it!), then weathered.

THE FERRATONIC REACTOR

James painted the Ferratonic Reactor using the techniques shown earlier in this article. He drybrushed Averland Sunset over a Chaos Black undercoat, then drybrushed the pipes with Balthasar Gold and the skull with Administratum Grey. He then drybrushed the whole piece Screaming Skull, washed it Mournfang Brown mixed with Lahmian Medium and stippled on some battle damage using Rhinox Hide.

James used pieces from the Sector Imperialis Objectives set to add to his repair facility – the Administratum Cogitator Shrine **(1)** makes for a perfect data console.

The Alchomite Stacks **(2)** were drybrushed Leadbelcher and Balthasar Gold over a Chaos Black undercoat. Note the Exterminatus Device objective **(3)** that has been added to the main stack.

What exactly does it do, though? A narrative hook for a game, perhaps.

James used the Thermic Plasma Conduits, Thermic Plasma Regulators and spare flooring pieces he had left over from the Ferratonic Furnace kit to create this plasma reactor relay station **(4)**. Not only is the scenery great to fight over, it's easy to hide behind too – it's interesting and practical!

THE REPAIRS GARAGE

Here you can see some of the extra details that James added to the garage, including the tracks from a Galvanic Servohauler and a toolbox. The gantry legs were drybrushed Macragge Blue and the gantry floor Administratum Grey, both over a Chaos Black undercoat. The whole scenery piece was then weathered using the same techniques and colours mentioned above.

THE MAKER OF HEROES

Rules writing, map making, graphic design work, writing for White Dwarf - Phil Kelly has done it all over the last two decades. Now one of the Design Studio's background writers, Phil joins us to talk about his work - of building worlds, writing sagas and creating heroes.

Whether you're a fanatical gamer, a keen painter, someone who loves reading stories or a dedicated hobbyist who loves all things Warhammer, there's one inescapable fact – behind all the models we paint and the games we play lies a wealth of background that would take even the most avid reader a lifetime to get through. Over the last forty years, valiant heroes have been born, cruel tyrants have ruled without mercy, cities have been pounded to dust by besieging armies, rebuilt, then smashed to rubble once more. Worlds have burned, realms have exploded into existence, vast armies of incalculable size have marched to war across countless battlefields on thousand of planets and through some of the most inhospitable magical lands imaginable. In the depths of space, lone warriors have fought on despite overwhelming odds, while in the darkest crypts, despicable villains have plotted the downfall of civilisations. It's incredible what the Design Studio's background writers have created over the last four decades.

One of the most well-known background writers in the Design Studio is Phil Kelly, and it's fair to say that you have almost certainly read some of his work since becoming a hobbyist. For over two decades, he has contributed to the fantastical worlds of Warhammer that we know and love, building worlds, creating heroes and bringing everything we know and love to life. But Phil hasn't always been a writer. We sat down with him to talk about all things hobby, from painting miniatures and playing games to drawing maps, writing background and jousting in warehouses...

Where did your love of writing and wargaming begin then, Phil?

I read a lot when I was a kid. My father was an excellent storyteller – he used to make up elaborate tales and read books to us in different voices. I remember him reading *Watership Down*, speaking in a different voice for every rabbit. I think that's where my love of books and stories came from. *The Hobbit* was one of the first books I read and *The Lord of the Rings* came soon after. My teachers at school had to fend me off with books because I just ploughed through them.

'I mean, what's not to like about several tonnes of giant death lizard?'

I also did a lot of model making when I was younger. Polystyrene cement was a common sight (and smell) in our house. I remember painting model aircraft with enamel paints, levering the lids off the pots with a tiny screwdriver. It was horrible, gloopy stuff, but it was all we had to work with in those days. I started painting Spitfires and Hurricanes then progressed onto dinosaurs. Actually, the other day I was gluing together a Carnosaur – nothing really changes, does it! I actually nearly became a palaeontologist because I loved dinosaurs so much. I mean, what's not to like about several tonnes of giant death lizard? They're fantastically large and powerful creatures and that is still

Name:
Phil Kelly

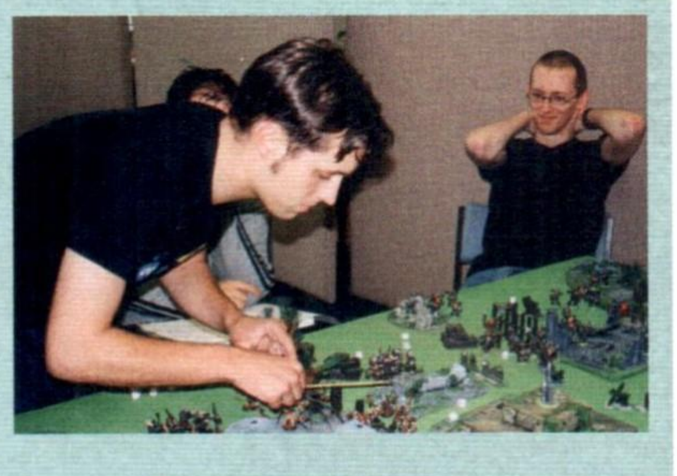
Born:
1977 in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex

Profession:
Warhammer Age of Sigmar senior background writer

Known for:
Writing many codexes and army books, including Dark Eldar, Skitarii, Necrons and Ogre Kingdoms. Writing much of the background for Warhammer Age of Sigmar: Soul Wars. Phil even worked on White Dwarf at one point!

WHITE DWARF – THE SPIRITUAL HOME

Phil has appeared in many issues of White Dwarf over the years, most notably in Kelly's Column, Codex Apocrypha, Index Astartes and, of course, plenty of Battle Reports (occasionally sporting an impressive set of mutton chops). In the early days, some people believed that Phil and our very own Matt Hutson were one and the same person – we hope that the picture below of them both wearing black shirts and blue jeans and sporting the same haircut will finally put that rumour to rest...



Phil's Tyranid army – Hive Fleet Jormungandr – takes on the Astra Militarum in this huge Apocalypse game.

TALES OF LEGEND

Many are the unusual tales of Phil's life. It's said that he once rowed a dingy down the River Trent to a house party and that he once went scuba diving with someone who was also called Phil Kelly. He once scripted and made a short film called Zombie Cuisine (which can still be found on YouTube) and he played the corporate bad guy in two Megadeth music videos. One of his proudest moments was playing live at Glastonbury, though sadly The Prodigy and Blur were on stage at the same time…

really exciting to me. Actually, I have quite an interest in the animal kingdom as a whole – it's one of the reasons why I love monsters and strange creatures so much.

Anyway, back to the books. I used to read a lot of Choose Your Own Adventure books, sticking my fingers in all the pages to keep track of my progress just in case it all went wrong. Some of them featured John Blanche's artwork and I found his style and the creatures he illustrated fascinating. I enjoyed those books so much that I started writing my own – every year I would make my sister one for her birthday. I wrote the story and drew all the pictures myself. I think that was my first dabbling with games design.

When did you first encounter Games Workshop games, then?

It was through a friend at school. One day he brought in a box of fifteen metal Space Marines quite unlike anything I'd ever made in plastic. I was entranced. I learned about Rogue Trader and started painting models with acrylic paints – I found it very relaxing and meditative. I remember trying to emulate John Blanche's style on some Blood Angels, giving them all checked shoulder pads. I became kind of the unofficial painter at school and people would pay me fifty pence to paint a model for them. That was kind of my first job – I had great riches at that point in my life!

At the time, I was certainly more interested in painting than gaming, though I did play the Battle at the Farm scenario quite a few times with my sister. She was really good at painting desert camouflage. I did love reading the background, too, and it was *Waaargh: Orks* that really caught my attention. There were no rules in the book, just information about the clans and Ork kultur, which was incredibly well realised for its time. And it was fun, too – I enjoyed rolling dice on random charts to see what kustom guns I could create for a Flash Git, or what cybork parts my Nobz would have. That book was what got me collecting Orks – I had a little display of them sitting on a moonscape in the hallway at home.

'I did love reading the background, too, and it was Waaargh: Orks that really caught my attention.'

After school I fell out of the hobby a bit, but I still picked up White Dwarf every month – that was my anchor. That's why I think it's such an important part of our hobby (*thanks for the plug, Phil!*), because there are lots of people out there in the world taking the same journey that I did and White Dwarf is a great way to stay involved in the hobby. To keep your toe in the water, as it were.

While I was at university, I worked in an aircraft warehouse with a chap called Paul Gayner – a good friend of mine whose models have been featured in White Dwarf in the past. We used to have our own warehouse olympics, making bows and arrows out of bits of old aeroplane and jousting on wheelie chairs. We once spent a fortnight smashing up plane parts with sledgehammers. Good times… it felt very Orky!

'I remember Jervis Johnson describing the piece as 'a valiant effort'!'

It was Paul who asked me – if I was to get back into Warhammer – what army would I collect. He had Undead and Chaos armies and he mentioned High Elves and Dwarfs, but I wasn't really interested in them at the time. Then he asked if I'd heard about the Skaven. I read up on them, found out about their wonder weapons, their warring clans and their crazy experiments and I was hooked. I even sculpted my own Giant Rats.

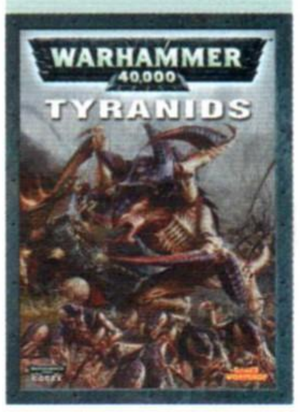
You can sculpt?
Yeah, my degree was in sculpture and fine art. Normally I would sculpt with a hammer and chisel – wood and plaster are my medium. I have done stone, but it's really tough – there's no undo button if you mess up. By the time I finished uni, I realised there wasn't much of a living to be made from traditional sculpting, so I went into graphic design. I was in the post-university doldrums, not really sure what to do with myself. Paul and I went to Games Day 1999 and we saw Jim Butler and Adi Wood there handing out job application forms. They had bolters and skulls on them and I thought, this is my kind of job application! I got an interview and somehow convinced Paul Sawyer – then the editor of White Dwarf – to give me a job.

And so you started working on White Dwarf.
Yep, as a graphic designer. But in those days we all kind of pitched in on every aspect of the magazine and I found myself writing more and more articles for it. I became the features editor for White Dwarf, hunting down cool content to go in it and I eventually became a full-time writer. In hindsight, I wish I'd studied writing all along – I find it much easier to write than to sculpt or paint. I basically gravitated back to my first love.

What was your first big article for White Dwarf?
It was an article about collecting Space Wolves. I remember Jervis Johnson describing the piece as 'a valiant effort'! I looked up to him so much, like everyone in the studio does to this day, and thought, I need to get really good at this. I still don't think I'm there yet.

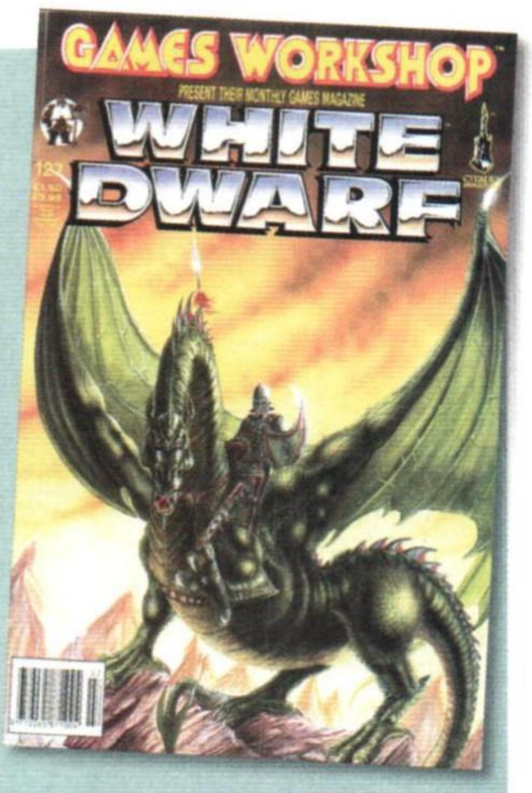
CODEX WRITING

'I've worked on lots of army books and codexes over the years, starting with Daemonhunters, Necrons and *Codex: Eye of Terror*. *Codex: Tyranids* for the fourth edition was the first codex where I was the lead writer – that was really exciting for me because the Tyranids are such an unusual race to write about. They are the epitome of the ultimate alien bad guys. They're not necessarily evil, just so alien – they could not be less human, in fact. I really liked that aspect of them – they felt like mythological creatures in space.'



WHITE DWARF

White Dwarf 127 was the issue that really drew me into collecting Aeldari (or Eldar, as they were then). I was an Ork collector first and foremost, but issue 127 had a huge impact on my hobby because it contained a forty-page Eldar army article. Forty pages… in a magazine that was only eighty pages long! It delved into the background of the Eldar, into Farseers, Aspect Warriors and craftworlds, accompanied by loads of illustrations by Jes Goodwin. They were the coolest sketches I'd ever seen. From that point on I was an Eldar collector. I know that Black Library author (and former games developer) Gav Thorpe felt the same way.



Over the years, I've moved between collecting Orks, Aeldari and Tyranids; my allegiances are fickle. But I usually play the aliens rather than the Imperium or Chaos. After all, why play as the humans when you're already human?

KELLY'S COLUMN
Even when he was working as a games developer, Phil couldn't shake off his ties to White Dwarf. 'I wrote a couple of columns for White Dwarf over the years,' says Phil. 'I was doing a lot of games development at the time and I used the columns in White Dwarf to talk more about the background of particular armies, characters and stories. They helped me realise that background writing was the thing I loved most about the hobby and, over the years, I slowly came to specialise in that area rather than writing rules.'

KELLY'S COLUMN

What was your fondest memory of working in the White Dwarf team?
There are so many! I do remember the Armageddon Battle Report, though, where we had to balance precariously on stepladders to take the pictures, using what was essentially Victorian photo equipment (well, close enough). It was great fun playing and writing Battle Reports. I fought a lot of games against Matt Hutson and Graham Davey during Paul's tenure as editor.

How did you make the leap from White Dwarf to games development?
Andy Chambers leaned over the fence that separated games development and White Dwarf and said 'do you fancy applying for this job we've got going?'. So I did! Andy Hoare – now the head of our specialist games team – joined at the same time. That was in 2001. It was a pretty gentle start – we didn't have as many projects underway as we do nowadays. I had a week every month to build and paint models for Inquisitor! I did a lot of assistant tasks, working with Jervis, Andy, Gav and Tuomas Pirinen – they were the people who taught me the craft of designing games. They were firm but fair, a great group of friends.

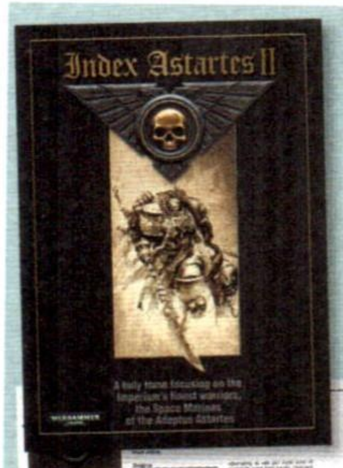
What did you work on in those early days?
Wow, okay… well, one of my early projects was Index Astartes (and, of course, Index Xenos, Imperialis and Chaotica). We wanted to look at the Space Marine Legions in more detail and depth than we ever had before; in some cases in microscopic detail – battle cry, home world, traditions, combat doctrine and, of course, the Legion Primarchs. In some cases, the Primarchs were virtually unknown aside from their names. Their origin stories are the founding history of the Space Marine Legions. I wrote the Space Wolves, Blood Angels and Night Lords Index Astartes articles. They had some great art in them, too – the scythe-wielding Sorcerer in the Night Lords article is a personal favourite.

The Index Astartes series became the cornerstone for the background of the Space Marines – they developed from a page (or even just a paragraph of text in some cases) into the incredible entities we have today. I think that's one of my abiding contributions to Warhammer 40,000 and it's quite humbling to see how much things have developed since I worked on those articles. They helped considerably when it came to writing codexes – the Chaos codex from third edition (it was affectionately known as Codex: Chaos Space Marines 3.5 by many fans) was a huge step up for us and shaped how codexes looked from then on.

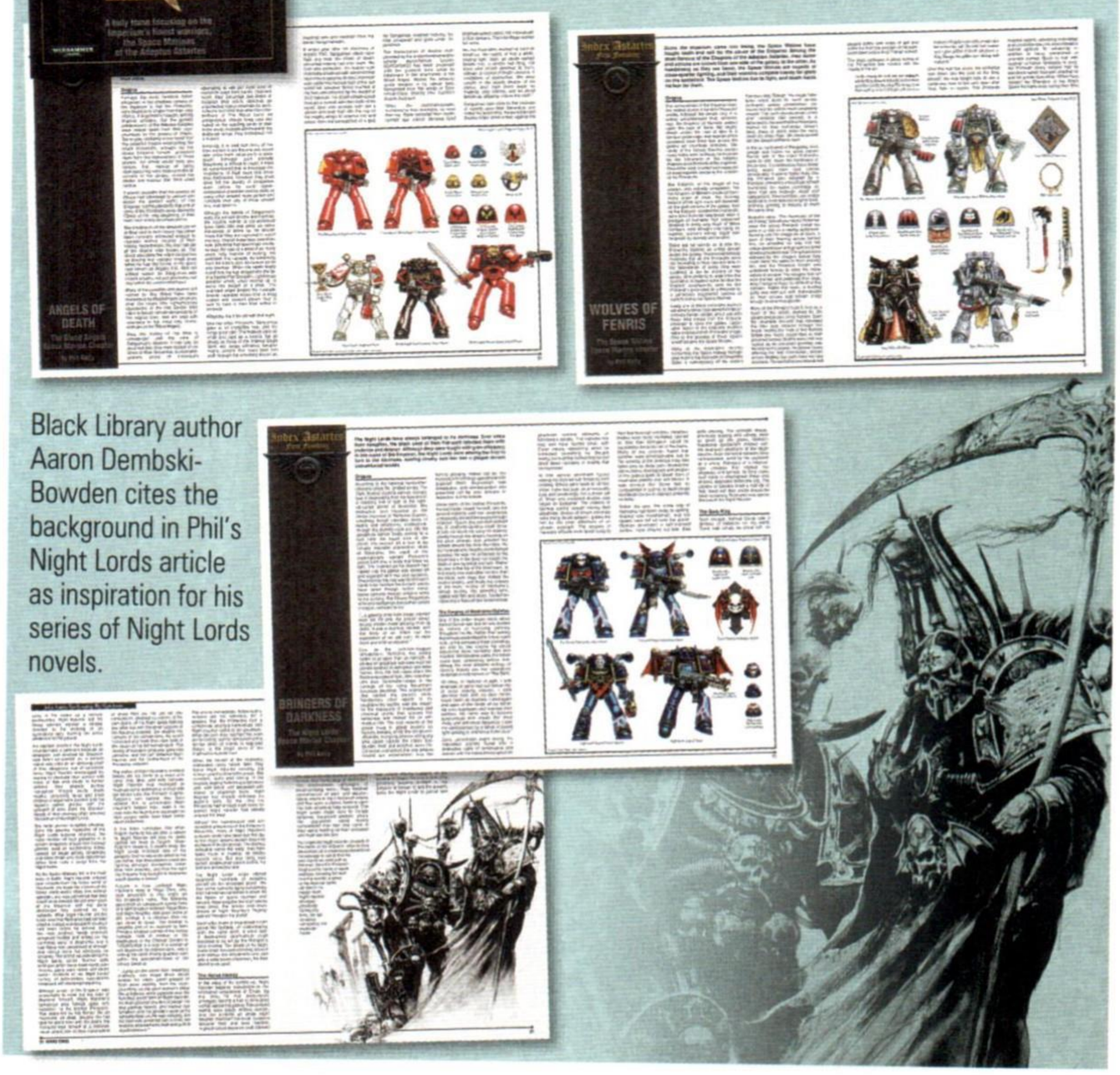
'Every day I get to write about characters that have been thirty or forty years in the making.'

You created some of the characters in that codex, didn't you?
I did, yes. Abaddon, Ahriman and Khârn were already well-established characters, but we wanted to create characters for Nurgle and Slaanesh, too. And so were born Typhus and Lucius the Eternal. I never really expected Lucius to be more than a special character in the game, but he has grown so much over the years – he's even a key character in the Horus Heresy series. Dan Abnett, Graham McNeill and, more recently, Ian St Martin, have all written stories featuring him. It's been amazing to see Lucius grow and take on a life of his own. To me, he still feels new – he's not Abaddon or Marneus Calgar – but he's now a part of the mythology of Warhammer 40,000.

And establishing the mythology of the worlds of Warhammer is an important part of what you do as a background writer.
Absolutely. Warhammer and Warhammer 40,000 have such incredible mythologies. Every day I get to write about characters that have been thirty or forty years in the making – there are more stories and adventures about our characters than you can count. They give our worlds a huge weight, a sense of gravitas. When you say Nagash or Sigmar, or the Emperor or Sanguinius… those are



INDEX ASTARTES
The Index Astartes series about the Space Marine Legions first appeared in White Dwarf in 2001. Phil wrote three of those articles – Blood Angels, Space Wolves and Night Lords – which were later compiled into Index Astartes II.



Black Library author Aaron Dembski-Bowden cites the background in Phil's Night Lords article as inspiration for his series of Night Lords novels.

names you conjure with – they land with a thud. They have an impact. They're not just throwaway characters. I feel very lucky to have been able to contribute to that, to write about gods and monsters, heroes and legends – it's everything that I loved about storytelling as a kid and now I actually do it as a job. I feel like I'm standing on the shoulders of giants.

One of the biggest projects for me was writing the first army book for Ogre Kingdoms. It was a brand-new race for Warhammer and the first time I'd developed an army book from the ground up. It was a bit taboo at the time – can we make a whole army of big dudes? Will it break the game? How will they rank up? But we saw the project through and created a whole new race for Warhammer with its own distinct culture, religion (the Great Maw) and method of warfare. They were vital, massive and hungry, always hungry – it made them feel very different to the Orcs & Goblins. This background helped inform later models such as the Thundertusk, Stonehorn and Mournfang Cavalry, which in turn led to the development of the Beastclaw Raiders for Warhammer Age of Sigmar.

What about the Dark Eldar back in 2010 – that looked like a pretty intense project?
Having grown up on Eldar, being able to work with Jes Goodwin on that project was an amazing privilege. As it turns out, Jes and I have a very similar path in life – we both come from Essex, we read the same books growing up, we both studied fine art at Nottingham Trent uni (under the same tutors in some cases) and now we're both here. There's a common language between us – it's why we get on so well and we know what each other's talking about when we go off on one. That's what happened with the Dark Eldar – or Drukhari as they are now. There was already a really solid (though limited) body of background to work from, and we developed and adapted that into what we have now. The same went for the miniatures. We developed an enthusiasm loop between us, continuously refining and distilling ideas until we got to the core of what the Drukhari are. I think the end result is an incredibly strong range of miniatures with some wicked background to back them up. The secret, really, is that while they're a super-high fantasy race of space aliens, there's a degree of plausibility to the madness of the Dark Eldar. That's what Games Workshop excels at, I think – creating things that are so unusual, yet believable.

Was it the same for the Adeptus Mechanicus?
Totally – Jes and I worked on that project together, too. We spent a long time working through what we wanted to do with the Adeptus Mechanicus, what it would take to make them a viable army. We talked about language, schools of thought, philosophies, schisms and the

DID YOU KNOW?
Phil wrote the original rules for Kill Team way back in 2004. They first appeared in a Chapter Approved article in White Dwarf, before being added to the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook. 'It was more of a sneak-'em-up than a beat-'em-up,' says Phil. 'Your kill team had to complete a mission without alerting the enemy guards. It was a lot more narrative than the Kill Team game we have now, with mutable and immutable rules. Looking back, it was an unusual way to design a game, but it was great fun.'

Phil's Drukhari army is painted in gloss black with neon-orange and acid-green details. 'It's reminiscent of poisonous creatures like tree frogs and Gila monsters,' says Phil. 'Also the cybergoth rave scene, which I think fits the Drukhari look and mentality perfectly.'

INTO THE WEBWAY

'I was lucky enough to take part in one of the first ever Warhammer TV videos, which was a round-table discussion about the Dark Eldar with Jes and Adam Troke,' says Phil. 'I like appearing on Warhammer TV – it gives me an excuse to talk about goblins with people who also like goblins!'

morality (or lack thereof) of the Martian Priesthood, their guiding principles and religion. We had to establish what their beliefs were. How could we fuse cold logic, cybernetics and machinery with raw faith? Technology and religion are an unusual combination, but they became united in the Quest for Knowledge – there's a common purpose there for every member of the Adeptus Mechanicus. They might not ever use the knowledge they gain, but they want it, like a dragon sitting on a big pile of gold. From there, Jes drew a load of concept sketches for what the Skitarii and Tech-Priests could look like, while I started work on their background. The key for us was keep them human, but as far away from human as possible.

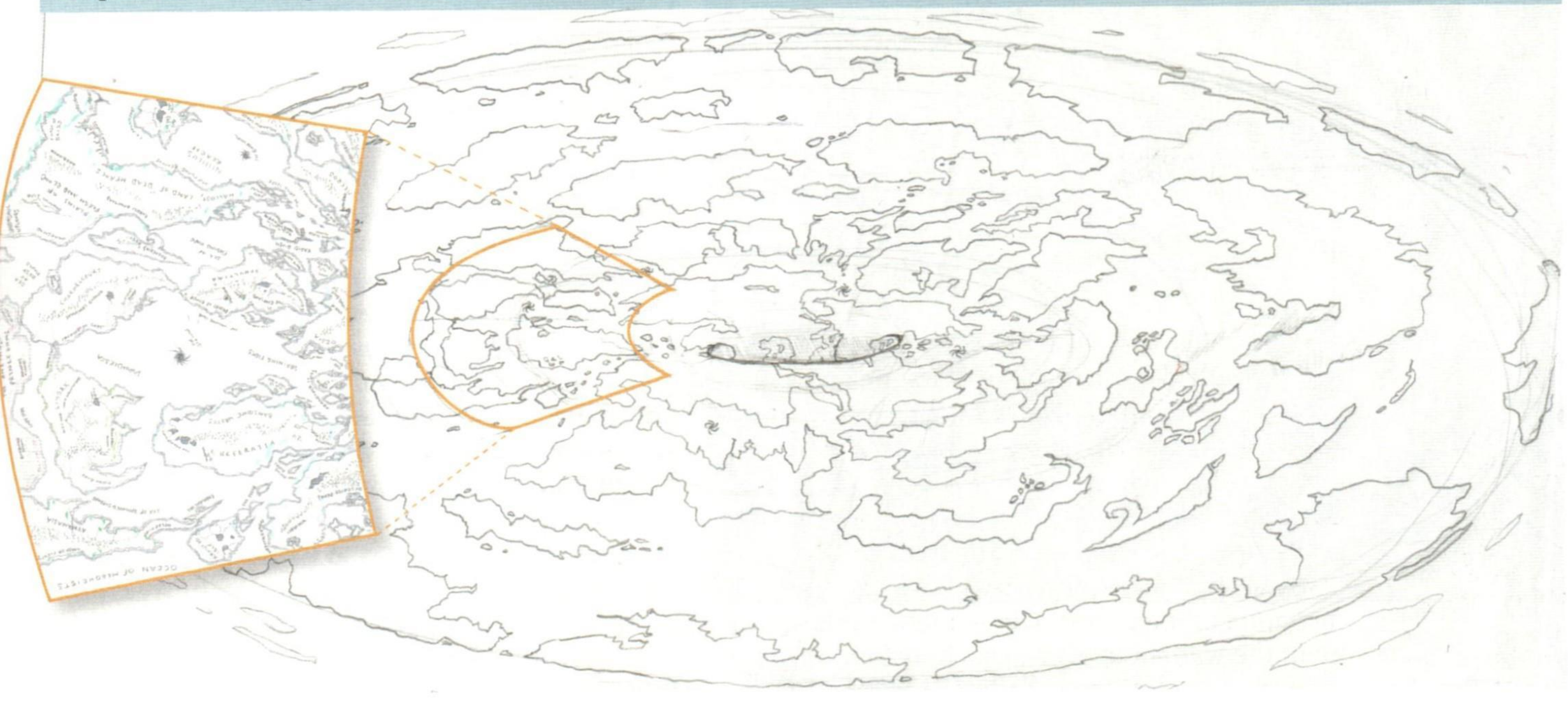
Do you ever get told to rein things in? The background of the Adeptus Mechanicus is pretty grim.

We have a rule – we don't talk about innocents getting hurt in any real detail. We know it happens during an Exterminatus, for example – a whole lot of innocent people die there – but we don't zoom in on it, that's not what we're about. However, if you sign on the dotted line – 'yes, I am a trooper' or 'yes, I am a planetary governor' – then you are in the line of fire. Nasty things will likely happen to you. You're going to get puked on by a Carnifex and turned into acid goo. You're going to get captured by Drukhari raiders or turned into a Chaos Spawn. We rarely describe the full gruesomeness of it all – we prefer to leave it to the reader's imagination. I find that makes it more horrifying in a way, when you're left to fill in the gaps yourself. Most of us writer types sneak across the line every now and again – I like writing creepy stories. The background of the Skitarii Vanguard is a good example of that – their radiation sickness, teeth falling out, the fact that they have their legs sawn off and replaced with bionics... it's all pretty horrible, but still eminently plausible in a space dystopia.

Below: Phil's Ogor army is a mixture of Gutbusters and Beastclaw Raiders, with a Firebelly thrown in for good measure. You can see the Gutbusters portion of his army in action in this month's Battle report on page 24.

BUILDING WORLDS

'I love world-building and making maps,' says Phil. 'I feel they aid the storytelling and add depth to the tales we're telling. I remember once we had a map of the old Warhammer world – Nuala Kinrade, Rick Priestley, Gav Thorpe, Andy Chambers and myself were all standing around it – and we covered it in places, names and ideas. We explored what was east of the Empire and it was great fun. I've drawn a lot of maps for Warhammer 40,000 and Warhammer Age of Sigmar since, both for my own use and work. I've run a lot of campaigns, such as the Rok of Ages and Vogen campaigns that were featured in White Dwarf. Vogen was so popular we ran it twice! The maps in the Vigilus books are based on my (some might say fevered) sketches. And then there are all the realm maps in the *Warhammer Age of Sigmar Core Book*, many of which I sketched out before passing them on to the artists.'



What's your favourite thing you've written for Games Workshop?

A year ago I would have said the Ogre Kingdoms army book – that was a huge moment for me. Now, Warhammer Age of Sigmar II. We worked so hard on the core book; I put my heart and soul into the background section – diagrams, maps, timescales and histories, the lot. We're so pleased with what we've created and we think our fans are, too. And that, of course, is what really matters!

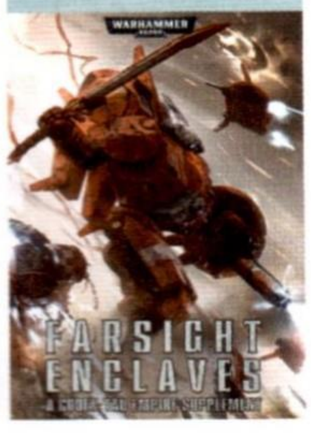
'We brought back that haunting, gothic, dirty, grimy, creepy stuff...'

We pushed the boundaries of Warhammer Age of Sigmar a lot, particularly with *Malign Portents*. The change from Warhammer to Warhammer Age of Sigmar was a big deal for us as a company and at the start the background was very high fantasy, quite biblical and legendary, hugely epic, glorious, grand and massive. It was a very broad canvas that, because of its immensity, didn't include a lot of the little details and the grit that everyone wanted. But that sort of thing takes time – Rome wasn't built in a day. With *Malign Portents* (and now with Warhammer Age of Sigmar II), we got to delve into the cities and civilisations of the realms and see them through the eyes of the common man (or orruk). We got to see what they are experiencing on what is arguably the most terrifying Halloween that could ever occur. We brought back that haunting, gothic, dirty, grimy, creepy stuff that Warhammer has always rejoiced in – that quintessential British weirdness. We now have high fantasy and low fantasy – the best of both worlds – and eight incredible worlds to explore. We've barely scratched the surface.

One of my main contributions to that change was the background for the Stormcast Eternals. When we first encountered them back in 2015, they were the shining paladins of Sigmar. Now we're beginning to see what's behind their masks, what their journey is and how immortality is as much a curse as it is a blessing. People make comparisons between Stormcasts and Space Marines, but Stormcasts don't fall to Chaos. Instead they become more and more ordered with every reforging – they lose their ability to register morality in shades of grey and begin to see it only in black and white, wrong and right. In a way, that's just as scary as a noble warrior falling to Chaos, because while they are technically on the side of Order, the Stormcast Eternals are uncompromising, lethal and brutal in the pursuit of their goals. What price will the people of the realms have to pay for salvation at their hands?

FARSIGHT ENCLAVES

'I wrote the Farsight Enclaves codex supplement a few years back and I enjoyed it so much I wrote the novel *Farsight: Crisis of Faith*,' says Phil. 'O'Shovah is a really interesting character to write about, as the journey that he's embarked upon is kind of the vanguard journey for the whole T'au race – they are slowly becoming aware that they might well be the smartest people in the room, but they're in a haunted house. They've got really good tech, but that's not always going to be enough.'



WARHAMMER UNDERWORLDS NIGHTVAULT

GLORY POINTS

DAVE SANDERS

Dave has been writing rules for Games Workshop for nearly three years. He is the lead rules writer for Warhammer 40,000: Kill Team and, if you hadn't guessed from this article, Warhammer Underworlds. When Dave's not writing Glory Points for us, he can often be found in the Studio playtest room cutting up bits of paper for 'secret projects'.

This month I want to talk about how we go about designing the rules for a new Warhammer Underworlds warband, from first ideas to the finished article.

Below: The Godsworn Hunt are one of the most recent warbands to enter the Mirrored City. The design of the miniatures was influenced by the Darkoath Chieftain and Darkoath Warqueen miniatures, while their playstyle reflects that of marauding Chaos barbarians – they're fast, savage and more than a little bit evil.

MINIATURES FIRST

It might surprise some readers to learn that our starting point when we write rules is the miniatures themselves. Our miniatures designers hand the warbands over to us, fully formed, and then it's our job to find the best way for them to work in Warhammer Underworlds. This is actually how Warhammer Underworlds itself first came to be – we were given eight sets of miniatures for some of the factions in Warhammer Age of Sigmar, originally intended for use as expansion sets for existing units. When we saw them, we knew that they were too special to be used this way – they had so much character that we wanted them to be a thing in their own right. Coincidentally, we had been looking for an opportunity to make a game that was quick to play, didn't take up a lot of space, and was designed with competitive play in mind. This was that opportunity, and the pieces for the game that became Warhammer Underworlds: Shadespire fell into place very quickly after that.

So we don't write the rules for, say, a Darkoath Tribes warband and then go and ask the miniatures designers to make some miniatures to represent those rules – it's the other way around. Imagine how exciting it is to be given eight new warbands and the task of finding the best way to represent them in a game. I love my job.

BROAD BRUSHSTROKES

After the initial excitement of seeing the new miniatures simmers down a bit, it's time to write the fighter cards, which is the starting point for

Glory Points is our column all about Warhammer Underworlds: Nightvault. Curated by games developer Dave Sanders, it delves into the development of the game, plus rules, tactics and gameplay. This month, Dave explains how warbands are created.

every warband. To do this, we look at the details of the warband – how many fighters does it include? How big and well armoured are they? Do they look like they can move quickly? What weapons are they wielding? Who is the leader? Are any of them wizards? These give us a starting point for the fighters.

For example, a warband of three tough-looking fighters will start with Wounds characteristics of around 4 and a Block Defence characteristic, while a warband of five or six nippy-looking fighters will probably have 2 or 3 Wounds each, a Dodge characteristic, and a higher Move characteristic. If a fighter is armed with a massive broadsword and it looks like they know how to use it, they'll have a Smash characteristic (Smash is more accurate than Fury) and a Damage characteristic of 3 (or even more). If they are instead armed with a couple of knives and look like they go for lots of quick attacks rather than a single, devastating blow, they will have a higher Dice characteristic, but might use a characteristic and have a Damage characteristic of only 1 or 2. We can add in extra details at this point – if it looks like a fighter might make scything attacks that could cut down several enemies at once (such as the Harvester in the Sepulchral Guard warband), we can give them Attack actions that do just that. We might give their Attack actions Cleave or Knockback if it seems appropriate (which is the case with Rastus the Charmed and Ammis Dawnguard).

Then we look at their Inspired characteristics. When a fighter meets a certain condition in Warhammer Underworlds they become Inspired and their fighter card is flipped over. Becoming Inspired usually means that a fighter's Attack actions become more dangerous – more reliable, damaging, or both – and is often accompanied by characteristic increases, such as gaining a defence dice or a higher Move characteristic. Again, these are informed by the miniatures – we look at them and consider how those fighters should be acting when performing at their very best.

Above: Characters such as Vortemis the All-Seeing, the Sepulchral Warden and Skritch Spiteclaw all have special actions that enable them to summon other fighters to the battlefield. These rules have to be carefully playtested to ensure they are balanced and that they don't give their respective warbands an unfair advantage.

'What weapons are they wielding? Who is the leader? Are any of them wizards?'

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

We then feed all of the numbers into a calculator that allows us to compare each fighter with each other fighter, and each warband with each other warband. The calculator takes into account how dangerous a fighter is, looking at their potential damage output alongside their survivability, and factors in the usefulness of any additional abilities. It also takes into account the limited number of activations in the game, so warbands with a large number of fighters get a 'discount'. At the end of the process, we get numbers that give us a good idea of how powerful the warband is compared to other warbands, and whether or not we need to adjust any of the numbers. It's important to note that while the calculator gives us a good indication of the power of a warband, we only use it as a guideline, and if playtesting shows that a fighter is too powerful or not powerful enough, we'll change them so that they work as they should.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

The next step is to decide what the warband is good at. We think of this in terms of playstyles – some warbands are very good at going toe-to-toe and beating their enemies up, some warbands are great at moving around and holding objectives, and some are great at all kinds of sneaky tricks.

We broadly define the playstyles as Aggro (aggressive warbands that aim to eliminate their opponents), Objective (warbands that like to hold objectives), Control (warbands that aim to limit their opponent's ability to score glory, while scoring themselves in unconventional ways) and Flex (warbands that strike a balance between aggression and holding objectives). Each warband is likely to tend towards one of these categories, but will often have a second category that they can fit into too, depending on how their deck is built. For example, Ironskull's Boyz are a natural Aggro warband, but also work as a Flex warband.

Below: Ironskull's Boyz are arguably one of the most aggressive of all the warbands – they hit hard naturally and many of their upgrades and gambits revolve around hitting the enemy even harder! They're also particularly resilient, making them excellent at holding objectives – the icing on the cake is that they become Inspired when they take wounds!

A warband's playstyle is to some extent determined by the fighters' characteristics, but also by how the faction behaves in the world of Warhammer Age of Sigmar. To continue with the previous example, it would be strange if Ironskull's Boyz, as war-loving orruks, worked best as a Control warband. However, we leave the door open for people who think that they can make it work that way – it's up to them to decide how they want to play and how to build their decks! We try to ensure that there is a good balance of available playstyles, as the game would not be as interesting if every warband was aiming to win in the same way.

LOOKING FOR INSPIRATION

With the warband's playstyle decided, we can then start on one of the trickiest bits of getting a warband right – their Inspire condition (or conditions). The way that fighters become Inspired tells you a bit about them, and should complement their playstyle. This is probably the most tinkered-with bit of every warband, as we try to make sure that the Inspire condition is not too easy or too difficult, and importantly that it feels right. Some mechanics may work nicely for the warband's playstyle but fail to give you that sense of what a warband is doing, or why the fighters are becoming Inspired. Similarly, a very thematic mechanic can fall down if it is simply too difficult to achieve during a game, or works contrary to a warband's playstyle. It often takes a number of attempts to get a mechanic that we're happy with.

CARDS, CARDS, CARDS

At last it is time to write the warband's cards. First come the objective cards. These do two jobs – they tell you about what the warband is trying to do in the cursed city of Shadespire, and they support the warband's playstyle. For example, the Darkoath Tribes are on the Path to Glory, the

quest to become one of the chosen champions of the Chaos Gods, and their objectives reward them for swearing mighty oaths, achieving great feats and slaying worthy foes.

Finally come the power cards (I actually follow this order when constructing decks as well, though that's a topic for another time). A warband's upgrades typically emphasise certain aspects of that warband or the fighters within it, and are often inspired by details on the model (Mollog's Jabbertoad is a good example of this, as is Drizgit's Fiery Brand). They will also, for the most part, support the warband's playstyle.

A warband's gambits should paint a picture of how the warband fights – they might include signature spells, tested tricks or cunning manoeuvres that allow the fighters in that warband to perform to their full potential. Again, for the most part these will support the warband's playstyle.

TESTING, TESTING

It's then time for the lengthiest part of the process – testing the warband. We play loads of games with each warband, pitting them against warbands from both Shadespire and Nightvault, and putting them through their paces. This is a really exciting time, as we find out whether or not the warband plays as it should, that it is balanced against the other warbands, and that the synergies sewn into the cards come together in the ways we expect them to. Changes come thick and fast at this stage, and sometimes a card used in three successive games will have a different rule each time!

Rarely, we find that a warband doesn't quite work as it should – as I mentioned earlier, the Inspire condition can be particularly tricky to get right – and it needs more than a tweak to fix the issues. When this happens, we return to an earlier stage in the process to fix the problem before we get back to testing. This might just involve redesigning a couple of cards, but sometimes it's more extensive than that.

'We work closely with the other writers and artists to ensure that each card presents an idea clearly, concisely and imaginatively...'

For the most part, though, this part of the process is fine-tuning – making sure that an Attack action isn't dealing 3 damage if it should be dealing 2, making sure that a fighter's Wounds characteristic is right at 4 rather than 5, and making sure that cards are clear, exciting and useful.

This is also the part of the process when the other text on the cards is written and the art for each card is done. We work closely with the other writers and artists to ensure that each card presents an idea clearly, concisely and imaginatively, making each card an exciting part of the game in its own right.

Once all of that is done, and any final changes from playtesting are made, the warband is complete, ready to be added into the world of Warhammer Underworlds.

END PHASE

I hope that this has been an interesting glimpse behind the curtain, and has given you an insight into how we create new warbands for Warhammer Underworlds. It's a time-consuming process, but a lot of fun, and it's extremely rewarding for us when we see you get your hands on the latest fighters and use them to win everlasting glory!

ENSORCELLED JAVELIN

Ensorcelled Javelin is a great example of an upgrade card that can turn an average attack into a really devastating one. Played on Jagathra, it can upgrade her javelin into one of the most deadly missile weapons in the game. Just remember, though, that her javelin is a one-use item!

TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS

As ever, do write in if you have any suggestions or something that you'd like to read about. You can contact me by email at:

whunderworlds@gwplc.com

or by sending a letter to Dave Sanders, Books and Box Games, Games Workshop, Willow Road, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2WS).

I may not be able to reply directly, but you might see your suggestion or question in a column in a future issue.

WARHAMMER 40,000

In the grim darkness of the far future there is only war! This month, part two of the short story 'Before the Storm', an impressive army of Imperial Knights and Index Imperialis: Assassins!

INDEX IMPERIALIS

Deadly killers and masters of infiltration – this month's Index Imperialis takes a closer look at Assassins. Plus, new rules for fielding them in your Imperial armies. Head to page 80 to find out more.

A TALE OF FOUR WARLORDS

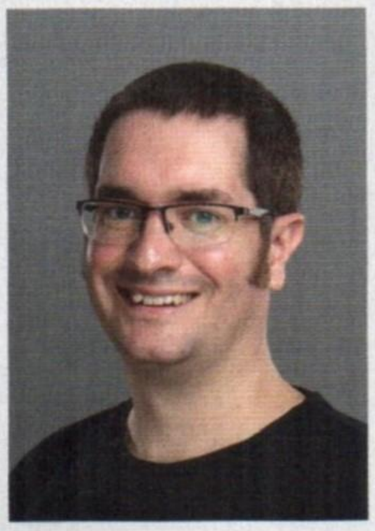
A classic article returns, with four warlords building new armies to take to the fields of battle. Turn to page 106 to see who will be taking up the challenge this time!

GUARDS OF THE EMPEROR

On page 112, we feature a Vassal Knight army from the Legio Invigilata painted by Damien Pedley. If you enjoy Imperial Knights and superbly painted models, here's the place to look!

WARHAMMER 40,000

ECHOES FROM THE WARP



ROBIN CRUDDACE

Robin is the lead games developer for Warhammer 40,000. In this month's column, he takes some time away from writing <deleted by order of the Inquisition> to look back upon his recent experience of attending one of the world's largest wargames conventions, and of being a rules judge at a Warhammer 40,000 Grand Tournament.

I mentioned last month that one of the coolest parts of my jobs is being invited to attend events across the world and chat to hobbyists about Warhammer 40,000. Well, a few months back I was lucky enough to attend the NOVA Open convention in the USA. I was there in part to host a few seminars, but also to help referee two of the event's Warhammer 40,000 tournaments.

I'll be honest, the thought of being a judge at the NOVA Open was a little nerve-wracking at first – I'd never done anything like this for such a high-profile event. However, I was on a great team of experienced judges[1] who soon taught me the ropes. After a day or two to get over the jet lag, take in a few sights and eat a real steak, the NOVA Open convention started in earnest, which meant it was time to don my judge's shirt[2] and report for duty.

TO THE BATTLEFIELD!

My first few games were spent around the livestream tables[3] at the invitational event. In this event, top players from across the USA were invited to pit their best armies against each other. There were only a handful of rules queries or corrections required throughout the entire invitational event – all the players involved know the rules extremely well – which meant I mostly spent my time enjoying the games unfold. This was particularly interesting from a rules writer's perspective, because I got to see combinations of units and Stratagems that I had not really considered before, being used to ingenious (and often deadly) effect. All players involved were eking out every advantage they could during the battle. Tactics were being used that were just downright clever, both in their conception and in their execution. There was no

The NOVA gaming event in full swing. Players attended from all over the USA and, in some cases, from further overseas.

Echoes from the Warp is a regular column about the rules, tactics and ongoing development of Warhammer 40,000, hosted by games developer Robin Cruddace. Here, Robin tells us all about his experience at the NOVA Open 2018.

With one hundred and twenty games taking place at one time, the judges were certainly kept busy throughout the event.

doubt that all of these players were really good, and I suspect any one of them would have destroyed my humble Howling Griffons army by the third battle round, or maybe the fourth if they were feeling kind. Like most games designers, I wouldn't class myself as a particularly strong player – probably because I'm mostly interested in seeing if the rules work mechanically and coming up with new rules, both of which often distract me from coming up with the best tactics.

THE GRAND TOURNAMENT

After the invitational followed the Warhammer 40,000 Grand Tournament, during which each judge had a set of tables that we patrolled. If you attended and wasn't sure which of the judges was me, I was the one living up to national stereotypes by carrying a cup of tea around with me whenever possible. The tournament itself was much bigger than many I had attended before; eight games in total ran over three days. On some days, the first game started at 9:30am, and the last ended at 8:00pm. As you can imagine, it's really important then that the games kept to time, or the whole schedule could be thrown into chaos.[4] The events I helped to judge at NOVA used milestones to help keep all the games moving at the right pace, so one of the things we did was gently remind people at certain times that they should be starting the next battle round in a few minutes' time.

Occasionally, though, I would be beckoned – usually with a bellow of 'juuuudge' – to a table to help resolve a question. Nine times out of ten, these were all rather easy to resolve by simply reading the rules in question. Sometimes, though, there was enough ambiguity to require a judgement call. After making my ruling, I then wrote it down in my notebook – not only so that I could be consistent should the same question come about again,[5] but also so I could add it to our FAQ list for attention in the next online update.

In between games, all the judges would reconvene and grab some food (or in my case, more tea), and discuss any questions that arose during the previous round, with a view to giving consistent answers. Then, the next round would start, and we would help a little with ushering people to the right tables, finding them opponents and getting them fresh score sheets before battle begun on the tabletop once more.

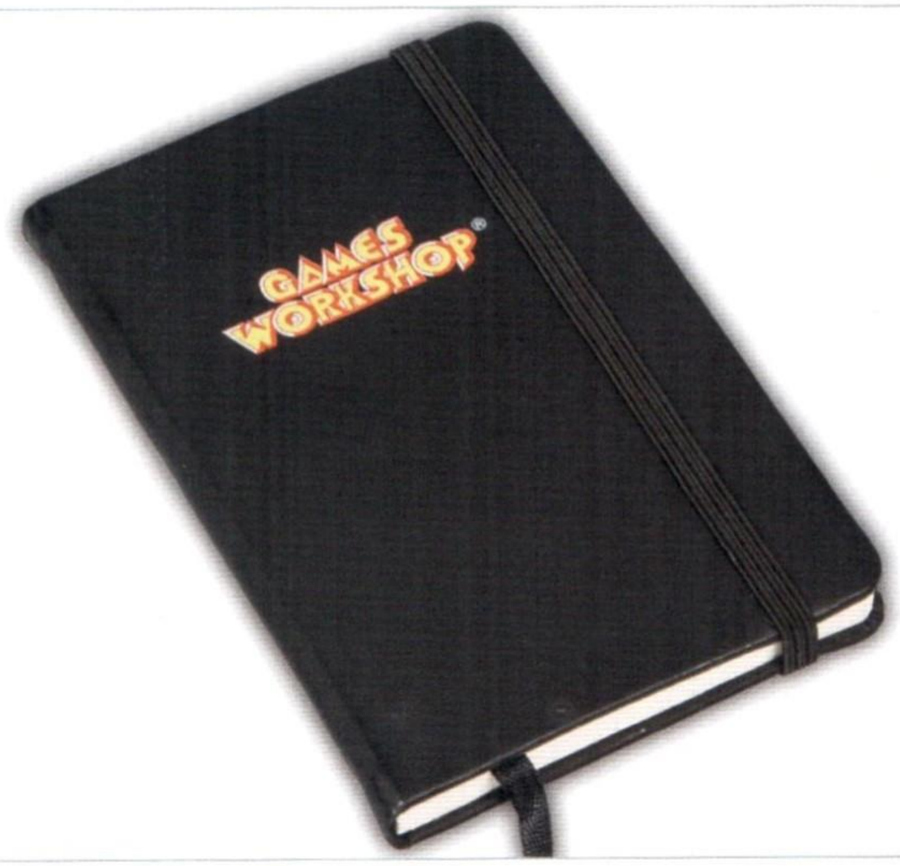
[1] Thanks in particular to Phil, David and Sam for welcoming me to their team.

[2] It was a yellow so bright that even a Bad Moons Ork would have approved of it – not recommended for urban camouflage.

[3] Warhammer TV were streaming the event – if you're a subscriber and you haven't already done so, search for and watch their coverage on Twitch.

[4] Turmoil might be a better word here. It's unlikely that the whole event would be thrown into the Realm of Chaos... probably.

ROBIN'S LITTLE BLACK BOOK
Robin's little black book includes all kinds of interesting notes about gaming and rules. Particular favourites include the notes 'CP regeneration', 'wobbly model', 'rapid fire bolters – make better' (see last month's column), and 'buy milk'. We're not sure if the last one is related to Warhammer 40,000 or not...



THE PAINTING COMPETITION

One of the additional things I was asked to do was to be a judge at the event's painting competition. I jumped at the chance – looking at peoples' armies, paint schemes, conversions and basking in all that hobby is a cool thing to do. However, if you think it sounds like an easy job, you'd be wrong. Judging a painting competition is, from a logistics stance if nothing else, really challenging. The Warhammer 40,000 gaming hall alone had over two hundred and forty armies in it, and I needed to make sure I'd seen each and every player's army before the judging could finish. It was a big responsibility – some people labour painstakingly over their armies, so it's only right that you take time to appreciate all that hard work. Everything started smoothly enough; I started on table one and was methodically moving down the hall. Then the game round ended and everyone switched tables, and it suddenly got a lot... trickier. Several times I was admiring a particular army, thinking to myself 'that's great, it's just like another one I've seen here' only for the penny to drop that I *had* already seen it. Still, after several hours I had succeeded in tracking down the armies that I hadn't yet seen and assigning them a score. In hindsight, it was really cool – there were some great armies to look at – but if you're asked to judge the painting at a big event, be aware it takes a while and involves a lot of walking, so wear comfy shoes.

CHATTY MAN

Outside of the two Warhammer 40,000 events, my only other duty was a handful of seminars. These were run as relaxed question and answer forums, where attendees could ask us[6] about what it's like to work in Games Workshop's Design Studio. I did my best to answer all the questions asked, but the seminars also acted as an opportunity for us to ask the attendees some questions too...

I mentioned earlier that I had a notebook at the NOVA Open. This accompanied me everywhere throughout the convention, and into it I wrote down all kinds of important things.[7] One thing I wrote down were rules questions that arose that I felt needed to be included in the next rules update. I also wrote down general observations, with a mind to review this or that thing upon my return to the UK. The most important thing written in this small black book, though, is the feedback, comments and thoughts from attendees about Warhammer 40,000. I found it helped if I was a bit proactive in getting this by asking almost everyone who engaged me in conversation with the following question:

'If you had a magic wand, and with it you could change one thing about Warhammer 40,000, what would it be?'[8]

I then followed up that question with another, by flipping the first on its head:

'Using the same magic wand, you can safeguard one thing about Warhammer 40,000 and make it so that it can't be changed – what would that be?'

It was these two questions that we used as the icebreaker at the seminars we ran, and ended with a great set of answers from all kinds of players, from casual gamers and narrative campaigners, to seasoned tournament veterans. The answers were very informative, and my notebook soon started filling up. We had some great suggestions and thoughts, and we've had several great discussions about them all since I've returned to the UK. I think it's fair to say that the feedback from that will help to shape the future of Warhammer 40,000 in a positive way.

'Looking at peoples' armies, paint schemes, conversions and basking in all that hobby is a cool thing to do.'

However, one of the things that also became apparent was that Warhammer 40,000 has never been played and enjoyed by more people than right now. It's great to be reminded that different players want different things out of the games. For some people the thing they value the most is the ease of being able to play straight away without having to memorise a weighty tome of rules. For others, it's being able to play intricate campaigns. Thanks to everyone who took the time to talk to me at NOVA Open.

THE AFTER-PARTIES

So that was the official part of the event, but what was it like to attend as a guest overall? Well, I was struck with the comparison to one-day events, such as open days, which I have attended many times over the years. There are a few differences between attending one-day events like

[5] Which they tended to. If you were curious, the two most common rules questions I had at the event were: 'If I declare no charges in my Charge phase, can my opponent's Characters still perform Heroic Interventions?' and 'When I declare target units in the Shooting phase, do I also have to declare what weapons will target which units?'.

[6] Us, in this case, being myself and Pete Foley, head of our book and boxed game studio.

[7] In fact, the very notebook in question is on my desk as I type this column.

[8] We've recently been interviewing for new rules writers, and I asked these same questions. If you apply for a rules job with Games Workshop in the future, be prepared...

The event seminars gave hobbyists the opportunity to ask the Studio guests insightful (and sometimes tricky) questions.

Warhammer World open days and a wargaming convention that lasts for several days. The biggest difference is that, at a one-day event, after the day's scheduled activities have concluded, most people are in a rush to get back to their cars and miss the traffic, or catch their trains to get back home.

At NOVA, I found that after the last game of the day was finished, everything was a bit more relaxed. Typically, the attendees are staying at the same hotel the event is being held at, or if not, they are staying close by. Instead of scattering to the four winds, people just hang about to chat about the hobby, be it the games they played that day, or else reminiscing about past games and the mighty victories or crushing defeats they entailed. It seems to me that it's this that gives these multi-day events their sense of community. I talked to regular convention-goers and was delighted to hear that they attend year on year – often just as much to catch up with fellows and trade war stories as to play games. They attend to show off their latest additions to their armies or, more often, their entire new army! Whether they won or lost during a long day of gaming, everyone was chilling out and having a great time in the evening, talking about the hobby. There was a true sense of community that was a pleasure to be part of.

I was no exception, and got to do a very similar thing by catching up with some friends I've met at previous conventions. Many of these are members of one of our external playtest groups, and we had a few meetings to discuss up-and-coming projects, as well as talk about upcoming online updates, FAQs, erratas and the like.

There were some playtesters who I had, until that point, only communicated with by email, so it was great to finally meet them in person and put a face to the name. I also got to make some new friends, and we had some great chats about Warhammer 40,000 and rules writing over a drink or two in the evening. And of course, I got to ask all of the above people my two new favourite questions.

'Instead of scattering to the four winds, people just hang about to chat about the hobby.'

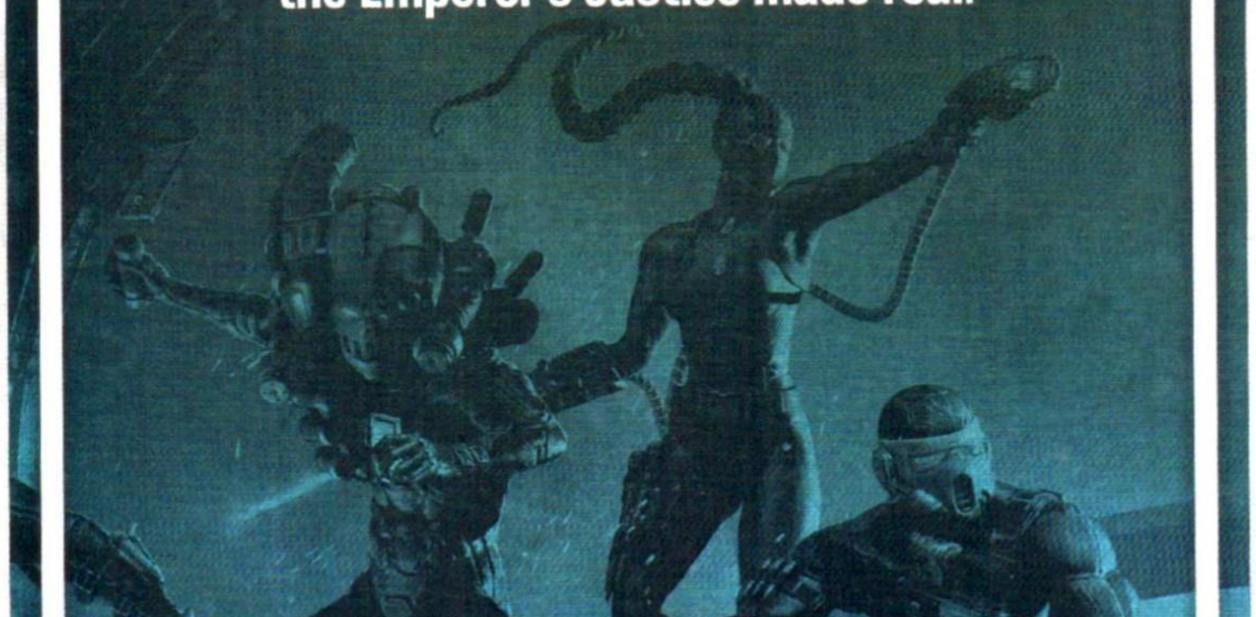
So, if you get to attend an event, whatever the size, my recommendation is do it – you'll have an absolute blast. And whilst you're there, don't forget to thank all the staff and volunteers who are helping run the event – a LOT of work goes on behind the scenes to make sure that everything goes as smoothly as possible so you can just rock up and enjoy the day. With luck, my notebook and I will be back to attend more events soon. I hope to see you there, and if I do, be prepared for me to ask you a question or two...

IN THE GRIM DARKNESS

Head over to the Warhammer 40,000 Facebook page for all the latest news on Warhammer 40,000, from new releases and promotions to FAQs and rules updates.

INDEX IMPERIALIS

The Imperial Assassins are the hidden blades wielded by the High Lords of Terra. They are the slayers of kings and false messiahs, the bane of traitors and rebels across the stars. Once an agent has been dispatched, they are as relentless and inescapable as the march of time itself. Though the temples of the Officio Assassinorum are shrouded in the utmost secrecy, all men and women of influence fear the shadows they cast, for their operatives are the Emperor's Justice made real.



ASSASSINS

THE OFFICIO ASSASSINORUM

By Phil Kelly

In a realm the size and scope of the Imperium, it is all too common for planets to escape the vigil of the High Lords. With communication and travel at the mercy of the warp's shifting tides, a populace can go for ten, twenty, even a hundred years without being contacted by the wider Imperium. It is a fragile system indeed, and given the crushing grind of Imperial life, one that has seen many worlds fall into the thrall of heresy.

Left to fend for themselves against a hostile galaxy, it is easy for a planet's citizenry to harbour the seeds of heresy. A world may fail to pay its tithes, allow its psyker containment routines to slip, or come under the rule of an unsanctioned government. Some simply crave independence from the dictates of the Administratum, the Ecclesiarchy and an empire ruled by twelve faceless figures in the name of a distant sovereign.

'Thought begets Heresy; Heresy begets Retribution.'
– Anon

Regardless of whether the new order is benevolent or tyrannical, its orchestrators make themselves targets for the most violent of retributions. Though their government may thrive in the short term, word will eventually reach the Adepts of the Imperium of their disobedience. Sometimes the resultant confrontation leads to open war, but it is just as often resolved by covert means. Coercion, bribery, threats, blackmail and murder are all weapons in the armoury of those whose iron grip defines the realms of Man. To this end, the Imperium has developed several institutions to exploit these weapons to their fullest; ancient organisations that trace their history back to the Great Crusade and the very birth of the Imperium. One such body is the Officio Assassinorum.

The Assassins of the Imperium are able to change the fate of worlds with the pull of a single trigger. Where the length of the Emperor's reach needs to be made abundantly clear, a Vindicare sniper will put a bullet in the target's head whilst the errant individual is surrounded by his followers. If the traitorous creed has spread to an entire organisation or military force, an Eversor will instead be set loose, a biomechanical berserker that will slaughter dozens if not hundreds of rebels alongside the key individual he has been sent to slay. Should the deed require more subtlety, an operative from the Callidus Temple will instead be dispatched; in such cases it is all but impossible to detect the presence of these shape-shifting Assassins until the deed is done. Should the target

be a psyker, one of the rare and fearsome Culexus will be sent to hunt them down – beings with a strange void in place of their soul that makes them the bane of all who treat with the warp.

The weapons of the Assassins range from simple knives and garrottes, to exotic neural shredders and phase swords that can cut through armour and force field alike. Even barehanded these operatives are lethal foes; each is trained extensively in unarmed combat and is more than capable of fighting their way free of the mayhem that ensues from their kill. Returning to their masters, they are extensively debriefed and examined before being given a new mark and mission to accomplish. In this way, each Assassin is locked into a constant cycle of headhunting that spans the breadth of the Imperium, reforging the fragile chains of Imperial rule even as the Time of Ending breaks them apart.

THE EMPEROR'S KNIVES

The forging of an Assassin is a long and arduous business. Almost every recruit is an orphan, taken from the wreckage of his or her former life on a death world, feral society or hive city and transported to the Schola Progenium for tutelage. There they train alongside the youths who will become the foremost agents of the Imperium.

Life in the Scholas is extremely hard, a relentless grind of physical and mental challenge where only the strongest thrive. Taught to strive for excellence and obedience in all things, the minds and bodies of the recruits are sharpened to a killing edge

THE WARS OF VINDICATION

A few months after the death of the traitorous High Lord Goge Vandire and the end of the Wars of Apostasy, the Imperial Palace was once again rocked by the violence of all-out war. This time a far more sinister element was involved: the Officio Assassinorum. Somehow entrance to and from the palace had been barred, despite no order coming from the High Lords. Trapped within its confines, many had barricaded themselves in their chambers as the palace echoed to the sound of gunfire and shook with the force of devastating explosions. Vandire had managed to corrupt many within the Officio Assassinorum, just as he had bribed and blackmailed his way to influence within the Administratum, Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Astra Militarum and Ecclesiarchy. Foremost amongst his agents was one Tziz Jarek of the Callidus Temple. Using polymorphine, Jarek had assassinated the true Grand Master of the Officio Assassinorum and assumed his identity. However, unbeknownst to Jarek, the Grand Master had expected such a plot and had a loyal Callidus Assassin take his place in his chambers. So it was that Jarek had not killed the true Grand Master, who secretly mustered those Assassins still loyal to him to fight against this usurper. A heinous battle raged within the Imperial Palace itself, with many innocents dying as the Assassins brought their terrible skills to the war. The ancient arsenal of the Officio Assassinorum was opened and terrifying weapons used once more, weapons whose use had been banned by the Senatorum Imperialis since their discovery. Gene-sympathetic nerve gases polluted the corridors, while neutronic warheads destroyed whole wings of the palace. In the end, the true Grand Master assassinated Jarek and then disappeared in self-imposed exile. It was this chain of events that led to the formation of the Ordo Sicarius, that branch of the Inquisition that is specifically tasked with ensuring the Officio Assassinorum remains as true to the goals of the High Lords as humanly possible.

HIDDEN BLADES
There exist two major temples of the Officio Assassinorum that specialise in untraceable kills. The Vanus Temple engineers their mark's doom via their consummate command of information. The Venenum Temple, whose mastery of poisons and toxins is unparalleled outside the Dark City of Commorragh, sew the deaths of their targets with a delayed kill that affords them ample time to escape suspicion. Though they have not the pedigree of Vindicare, Callidus, Eversor or Culexus, these temples are just as ferocious in their pursuance of the Imperial cause.

whilst their spirit learns to embrace the Emperor as master and immortal father. Most of these intense young men and women go on to train as Militarum Tempestus troopers, Commissars or, in the most unusual cases, Inquisitors. Those of their number that are born killers, however, are instead appropriated by the shadowy figures that haunt each Selection Day. Those recruits are never seen again by their fellows. From that day onwards, their only true friend is death itself.

'A single death can prevent a war that would claim a billion lives.'
- Assassin's Maxim

Training starts even as the Assassinorum ships return to Terra, with the Officio instructors testing their prospective pupils mercilessly. The recruits must survive on limited food or air for days at a time. They must constantly fight each other in armed and unarmed combat, in conditions of total darkness or blinding light, zero-G or crushing weight, stifling heat or freezing cold. By the time of their arrival, there may be only a tenth of the prospective Assassins left, or sometimes – if the instructors deem every recruit to be unworthy – none at all.

Upon arrival at Terra the surviving initiates begin the next stage of their training. Sailing past the space-borne basilicas, immense queues of pilgrim craft and military cordons that congest Terra's outer orbit, they are carried down into the Temples Assassinorum under the most advanced of shrouding protocols. In subterranean safehouses these new recruits are divided amongst the hidden temples of the Officio Assassinorum. Each temple has its own ancient ways and mysteries; each specialises in a different aspect of the art of murder. There are many such temples, some of which are known and others that remain completely secret. There the initiates train for a full decade, labouring under the auspices of Lord Assassins so harsh they make the drill abbots of the Schola Progenium look like kindly uncles by comparison.

The training procedure becomes ever more rigorous over the years as the temples test each candidate to his or her utmost limits. Days are spent battling with bone-wrenching exercise engines, fighting in deadly bouts or mastering their tolerance for pain. Initiates must survive lengthy courses of psycho-indoctrination and aggressive hypnosis, undergo physical tests of ever-escalating severity, and digest vast quantities of information about the Imperium that will soon be their hunting ground. They must train in the most esoteric of weaponry and steel their bodies against the ravages of endless steroids and stimms. Even then, they have only scratched the surface of their temple's potential arsenal. The hidden orders of the Assassinorum

THE HERO'S SHADOW

The Adeptus Astartes and the agents of the Officio Assassinorum have never seen eye to eye, despite the fact their ultimate goal is essentially the same. Because of the long-standing warrior traditions and codes of honour by which the Space Marines operate, the vast majority of Chapters see the Assassin's trade as distasteful at best. Some have even gone so far as to brand the Officio Assassinorum a despicable blight on the Imperium's honour, little realising that in doing so, they are courting the crosshairs themselves.

Though the Officio's operatives have fought alongside the Space Marines on countless battlefields across the Imperium, there are several incidences in the history of the Adeptus Astartes where Assassins have been implicated as enemies rather than allies. There is evidence to suggest their presence in shipyard reports prior to the abortive warp translation that led to the disappearance of the Fire Hawks Chapter. A strangely empty set of early-model power armour was discovered near the site of the ambush at Alantor X, where the Angels of Retribution fell to a man. It is widely rumoured amongst the Adeptus Astartes present on Armageddon that the snipers that picked off the Celestial Lions' Apothecaries, and therefore doomed the Chapter to a slow death without geneseed, were in the employ of the Vindicare Temple. Some amongst the Crimson Fists blame the Officio Assassinorum for the disaster at Rynn's World, where a faulty missile ignited the very arsenal from which it was launched, killing over half of the Chapter and ruining its fortress monastery in a single apocalyptic explosion.

The truth, as is usually the case when the Officio Assassinorum is involved, remains shrouded in mystery. Suspicion thrives nonetheless. It is a rare day indeed when the Imperial Assassins and the Adeptus Astartes will work together in harmony, for each institution is convinced that the other is a wayward perversion of the Emperor's Will.

house masterpieces of destruction, some of which were devised by the Primarchs, the Sigilite Malcador, and even the Emperor himself. Truly it is said that each temple houses a thousand deaths and more besides.

AN ARMY OF ONE

Unlike other warriors of the Imperium who are able to focus on war and war alone, the Assassin must be truly autonomous. Once the operative is in the field, they must be able to cross the galaxy from one side to the other, by means fair or foul. They must not only master their own lethal calling, but also be proficient in a dozen others. They must know how to drive and sanctify everything from an armoured bike to a small spacecraft, must be able to convince truculent machine spirits to do their bidding, and clean, disassemble and reconsecrate their wargear whenever necessary. They must have a professorial knowledge of the Imperium's history, organisation, and common languages. Their understanding of human anatomy must be complete, and every fact the Imperium has uncovered about the physicality of the xenos is bequeathed to them under oaths of secrecy.

Few human minds can process such vast quantities of information, let alone master them. Not all survive the rigours of their training with their spirits intact, and many have fallen into madness at the sheer quantity of the trials they face. Yet an initiate that joins the ranks of their temple's operatives will have all these skills at their command and more besides.

Key to the uncanny might of the Assassin is the surgery they must undergo during their ten years of tutelage. Augmentative nodes are stitched into their brain, and sub-muscular acoustic surgery prepares their body for the punishment that will be visited upon them in the line of duty. The level of arcane technology necessary is perhaps the most advanced the Imperium can provide – for good reason, it is constrained to Holy Terra to minimise the chance of it being captured by the enemies of Humanity. It is well that such ancient technomagicks are revered so, and maintained with painstaking care. Without them, the polymorphic drugs and reality-shifting devices used by the more esoteric temples would literally tear their operatives apart.

> **'A dagger in the dark is worth a thousand swords at dawn.'**
>
> **- Anon**

Even should an Assassin complete their training, their leash is still held suffocatingly tight. Only by a successful petition to the High Lords of Terra themselves and a two-thirds majority in the subsequent vote can an Assassin be sanctioned and released into the galaxy to complete the task they were born to do.

The fact that the ultimate luminaries of the Imperium give their direct attention to the deployment of a single individual shows just how exceptional these killers are. The records of the Officio's temples are as detailed as they are scrupulous, a source of great pride to the masters that watch over them. Across the millennia, occasions where the dispatch of an operative has not resulted in the desired outcome are extraordinarily few and far between. Be the target man, witch, beast or Daemon, the result is the same, for an Imperial Assassin is death incarnate.

SYNSKIN

One of the exotic pieces of equipment used by the Assassins is synthetic skin or synskin. This is a rubbery black layer that the Assassins spray onto their bodies, forming a close-fitting suit that enhances the function of the muscles below. Even items of equipment can be sealed in place by successive layers. Synskin acts like a flexible form of armour, absorbing blows and dissipating the energy of a hit. Synskin also feeds the body with oxygen and metabolic booster chemicals. An Assassin wearing synskin can survive burning heat, freezing cold, or even the hard vacuum of space for a limited time.

VINDICARE

'Exitus Acta Probat: the outcome justifies the deed.'
- Dictatus Vindicare

Vindicare Assassins are cold, calculating killers that eliminate their targets with contemptuous ease. They aim to bring inglorious death to the enemies of the Emperor with a sniper's bullet, and have elevated the skills of the marksman to an art form. It is said that a Vindicare can pick out a target's jugular vein or pupil from extreme range, even should the distance be traced through the ruins and smoke-stacks of an underhive sprawl.

To complement their superhuman accuracy, the Vindicare Temple emphasises stealth and evasion techniques. One of the temple's maxims is that a clean kill can only be made from an excellent firing position, and Vindicare Assassins have been known to occupy a given location for weeks, waiting for their quarry to reveal itself before finally taking the perfect shot. By meditating on the immortal glory of the Emperor, these superb marksmen can slow down their metabolism to an almost hibernatory state. Though an operative's heart beats perhaps once per minute when in this state, subliminal triggers ensure they are roused into total focus the instant their target shows itself. In this way, the Vindicare can be likened to a spider or mantis, waiting motionless as stone before springing into action at the critical moment.

The skills of the Vindicare Temple are commonly used to slay those who use mob rule and rousing oratory to inspire wars against the Imperium. Their reply to sedition is the unstoppable retribution of an invisible, untraceable sniper. When such charismatic figures meet their sudden death at the hands of a faceless servant of the Emperor, their followers are easily subdued once more by the weight of Imperial rule. Many false prophets have fallen mid-sermon with large-calibre bullet holes through their foreheads. So it is that revolutionaries, hive city demagogues and battlefield commanders alike live in fear of being gunned down without warning. Even the suspicion that such Assassins exist is enough to lend uncertainty to the words of these would-be leaders, robbing their credo of conviction. In this way, the shadow of the Vindicare has undermined a thousand would-be rebels without their presence even being required.

Vindicare Assassins are always in great demand to support Imperial forces on the battlefields of the war-torn galaxy. Successful alien commanders and dangerous visionaries often fall beneath the crosshairs of the Vindicare. In one incident, a massed Eldar assault in the Lammas campaign was halted by a lone Vindicare Assassin hiding in a ruined hab-tower. The tower enjoyed a commanding view of the surrounding terrain, and time and again the Eldar advance was stalled by a sequence of pinpoint shots that slew Exarchs, Warlocks and support weapon crews in quick succession. The Eldar called in their Rangers to clear the tower, but when they entered the sniper's nest, they found only a string of grenade traps ready to meet them.

THE WEAPONS OF THE UNSEEN

Vindicare Assassins are pragmatic in the extreme. Of all the temples, they rely on the tools of their trade the most – if their exitus rifle is not in peak condition when the trigger is pulled, the entire mission can be compromised and the opportunity lost. For this reason a Vindicare lavishes an obscene degree of care and attention upon his gun. All of the human affection and protective instincts that a normal man would show towards his family is instead transferred to the machine spirit of that most deadly instrument.

The exitus rifle is no ordinary sniper's tool. Each of these magnificent weapons is purpose-built for its wielder, its large bore barrel balanced so perfectly and stock so cunningly wrought that once aimed it becomes an extension of the Assassin's body. Its breech is capacious and advanced enough to house a variety of extremely advanced ammunition types selectable at the press of a rune, each geared towards a certain kind of kill.

The ammunition types used by the Vindicare Temple are marvels of occult science, for the targets of these Assassins are usually sequestered behind all manner of protective measures, both physical and metaphysical. Shield-breaker shells, for instance, include destabiliser cores that collapse Imperial force shields, Ork bubble fields and even the protective rune-magicks used by the Eldar. Due to the hexagrammatic runes and exorcisms that the Assassin inscribes in tight spirals upon each shell casing, they are even able to render Daemons and their ilk vulnerable a microsecond before impact. In this way they can destroy even aetheric foes, blasting through their semi-corporeal forms in an explosion of dissipating ectoplasm.

'Pain is an illusion of the senses, despair an illusion of the mind.'

– Officio proverb

Turbo-penetrator shells are segmented cylinders, each portion tipped with a concentrated melta charge that activates with a staggered detonation. This allows a single bullet to blast through successive layers of armour, no matter its thickness or composition. With just such a shell, the Vindicare Jutos Markov famously shot the noted paranoiac Velvian Thrisp with a bullet that penetrated not only the hull of his flagship, but also the adamantium hide of the personalised Land Raider the renegade was hiding inside.

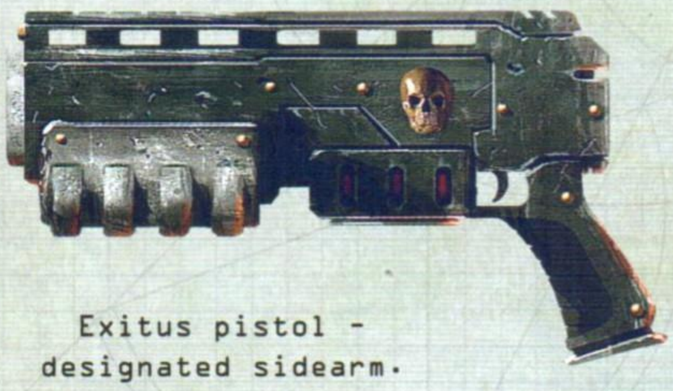
Hellfire shells are loaded with a wide cocktail of acids, each keyed to maximum lethality against the Imperium's corporeal foes. More potent even than the equivalents used by the superhuman warriors of the Adeptus Astartes, these horrible concoctions can chew away the chitin of even a Tyranid commander-organism until there is nothing left but smoking black gunk.

It is not only the Assassin's rifle that holds these murderous charges, but also the sidearm known as the exitus pistol. Used primarily in circumstances where the Vindicare must engage the foe at close quarters, this bulky weapon is as versatile as its long range equivalent. Some Vindicares only use their exitus pistols in the direst of circumstances – when fighting their way through the baying throngs that attempt to block their escape, they break their foes with blunt trauma and broken necks rather than expend their precious ammunition on such low priority kills.

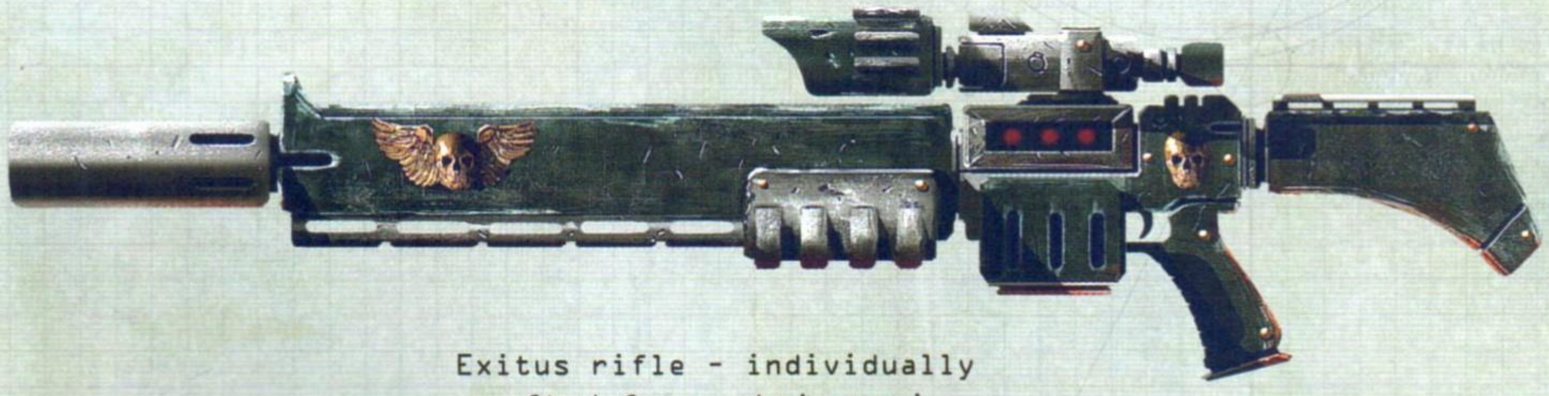
WARGEAR OF THE VINDICARE TEMPLE

Vindicare spy mask featuring in-built sensorium suite.

Exitus special issue ammunition.



Exitus pistol - designated sidearm.



Exitus rifle - individually crafted for each Assassin.

CALLIDUS

'To assume the shape of the accursed, and deliver death from the purity within you.'
- Dictatus Callidus

The Callidus Temple is the subtlest of the ancient temples of the Officio Assassinorum, specialising in the artful deception of the enemies of the Imperium. The methods of the Callidus Assassin are those of utmost cunning and duplicity. They are sometimes used on missions where overt interference by the Imperium would upset the intricate balance of power maintained by the High Lords of Terra. It is quite possible for a Callidus operative to complete their task without the enemy force in question knowing they have been there at all. However, as the tumultuous times of the 41st Millennium draw to a close, the Callidus Temple is making its presence felt upon the fields of battle more than ever.

The techniques that the Callidus Temple use to bring down their targets are many and diverse, and go far beyond that of simply killing the perpetrator. The temple undertakes many covert operations that may involve an Assassin infiltrating an enemy civilisation for weeks, months or even years. Specialists in infiltration, deceit and impersonation, these human chameleons will often take the place of a trusted aide or adjutant through their utmost mastery of disguise. Using this technique the Callidus Assassin can get close to enemy commanders or powerful warlords, influencing their strategy and finally killing them when the opportunity arises. On the battlefield, they get as close to the chosen target as possible before making the kill at a critical time, often at the crux point of a conflict already in full flow. With the commander of an enemy force suddenly slain, the balance of the battle can be skewed dramatically in favour of the Imperium.

Should their target be dispatched without alerting his acolytes, the Callidus might then assume their identity. By disguising themselves with the recently deceased's clothes, armour and wargear, and using specialised elixirs to change their appearance, the Callidus Assassin can assume the identity of almost anyone in the enemy force. Using their newly appropriated persona, they will either countermand the organisation's standing agenda with a few well-chosen commands, or sow as much disruption as possible before disappearing altogether. In this way the Callidus assassinates not only the individual, but any contagious beliefs or policies they have spread to their fellows. As the Lord Assassins of the temple like to point out, although other temples may be able to slay their targets in a faster or more dramatic fashion, only the Callidus can kill their ideology as well.

THE CREATURE WITHIN

To achieve their exacting tasks, the Callidus Temple specialises in the use of the shape-altering drug polymorphine. Whilst using polymorphine, an Assassin must have complete control of their body, as well as a total understanding of the subject they are attempting to replicate. The high level of discipline required by the temple's gymnastic martial arts also helps the Assassin achieve the total calm and concentration required for shape-shifting. Over the centuries, the masters of the Callidus Temple have learnt that the female body and psyche is better able to implement these changes, and that women make for better chameleons than men. For this reason the Callidus Temple is almost exclusively female.

An injection of polymorphine allows a trained Callidus Assassin to change their appearance dramatically. Under the influence of the drug, the user's body undergoes startling changes that only a fully trained individual can keep under control. Essentially the bonds that hold together flesh, bone and nervous system are broken down, allowing the user a brief period to rearrange their physicality through sheer

willpower. Whilst under its influence they can lengthen bones, stretch skin, change the size and shape of their internal organs, convert muscle to fat and vice versa. Even sanctums thought sealed and safe can be penetrated by one skilled in the use of polymorphine, its metamorphic properties allowing the user to extend, wriggle and squeeze like a hunting snake through vents and pipelines that lead to the Assassin's quarry before reverting to humanoid shape in time for the kill. Only once the polymorphine drug has done its work does the Assassin release her body from its agonising ordeal. The operative will now be set in her new form until another injection of polymorphine allows her to re-assume her original shape – or change to another.

With polymorphine alone, a Callidus may masquerade as any human being they may choose, from a fresh-faced officer to a crippled Ministorum priest. Stranger still, the Medicus Adepts of the Imperium have developed a range of surgical implants to allow Callidus Assassins to mimic members of abhuman cultures or xenos races, even those with morphologies as extreme as Orks and Eldar. These implants consist of flexi-cartilage and hardened synskin, substances similar to those used in the black carapace of Space Marines. When the Assassin is in their normal form, these implants lie dormant under their flesh and within their bones. It is only when polymorphine is injected that these implants react to stimulants within the drug and transform. Genetically encoded shapes push through the Assassin's muscular form, allowing her to restructure her body into the grotesque form of an Ork, or the lithe and graceful body of an Eldar. There are even temple legends of a revered operative who underwent extreme surgery in order to transform herself into the totally alien form of a Genestealer Hybrid. From that point on the Assassin could only take the shape of the monster lurking within her, a sign of her true devotion to the arts that has never been bettered.

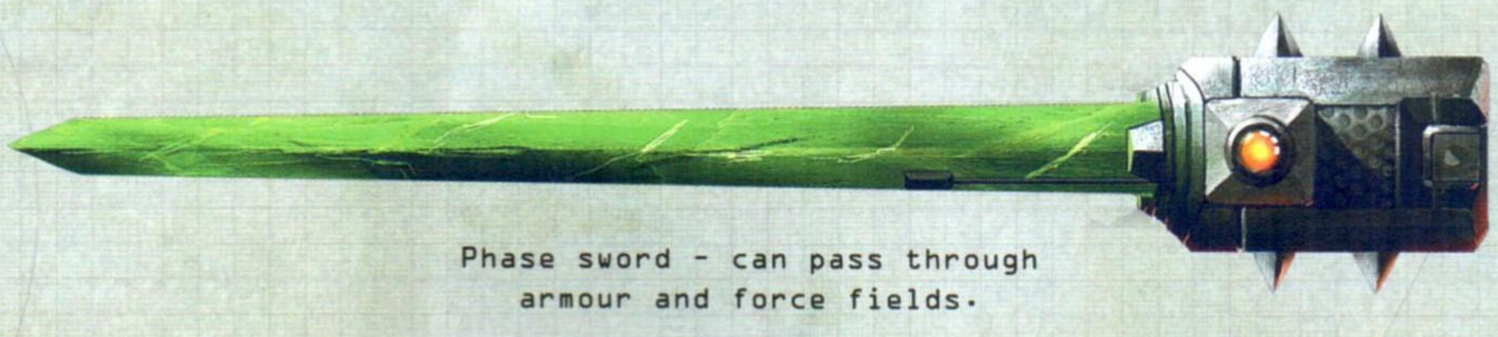
Callidus Assassins undergo years of rigorous training to become one of the living weapons of the Imperium. As part of this training, the Callidus Temple practises innumerable ancient and secret martial arts. These operatives must move among the enemy as one of them, so choice of weaponry is always limited – in some cases the Assassin may be forced to fight bare-handed. A Callidus Assassin is a deadly foe unarmed, but when carrying the powerful signature weaponry of their temple, they are all but unstoppable.

Though Callidus Assassins usually bear a variety of poisoned knives and hidden garrottes around their person, the distinctive weapons of their temple are the phase sword and the neural shredder. Phase swords are extremely advanced artefacts rumoured to be of xenos origin. Some of the temple's scholars believe they were originally forged from inert splinters of C'tan necrodermis, the same material used by the Necron race to bind their former masters into service. Regardless of their provenance, these blades are all able to cut through physical armour and metaphysical protection alike. The neural shredder, a weapon originally devised by the Adeptus Astra Telepathica, is able to kill a man's mind in a single ray of disruptive psychic power. All must fear the Callidus, for there is truly no protection against her strike – even by the act of seeking allies, her target invites death into their house.

WARGEAR OF THE CALLIDUS TEMPLE

Every Callidus Assassin carries an array of poisoned blades.

The neural shredder uses psionic disruption to kill its target.



Phase sword - can pass through armour and force fields.

EVERSOR

'Fear me, for I am your apocalypse.'

- Dictatus Eversor

The Eversor is possibly the most gruesome weapon of the Officio Assassinorum. The temple specialises in shock and terror tactics, instilling fear of Imperial retribution into the hearts and minds of all who hold positions of power. Eversor Assassins are primarily used against rebels who have plans to move against the Imperium with a large armed force. When the long, grinding war of attrition that is the Astra Militarum's forte is ruled out – perhaps because it is likely to leave a valuable planet ravaged – the High Lords will sometimes sanction the use of an Eversor Assassin.

An Eversor distils the brute force of an entire strike team into a single human body, and hence rarely has just a single target. His mission will be to rip the heart out of the rebel operation, wreaking havoc and destruction. Such brutality ensures that the renegade leaders are destroyed in one fell swoop, and that no would-be successors may take over.

In order to better enact these one-man killing sprees, the Eversor Temple trains its operatives to be utterly ruthless and completely dedicated to the Imperium. The temple engineers its inductees to be superhuman killing machines, their bodies driven far beyond normal human capabilities. Once this process is complete, the temple introduces a range of stimms and implants to alter the Assassin's state of mind into a boiling cauldron of murderous intent.

The only way an Eversor Assassin can be kept from constantly committing grievous acts of carnage is to keep them in cryo-suspension until they are required for a mission. Each Eversor Assassin is stored in a cryo-crypt on board one of the many hidden ships that the temple has scattered across the Imperium. These ships maintain a constant state of alert, waiting only for orders from the High Lords of Terra to unleash their deadly cargoes.

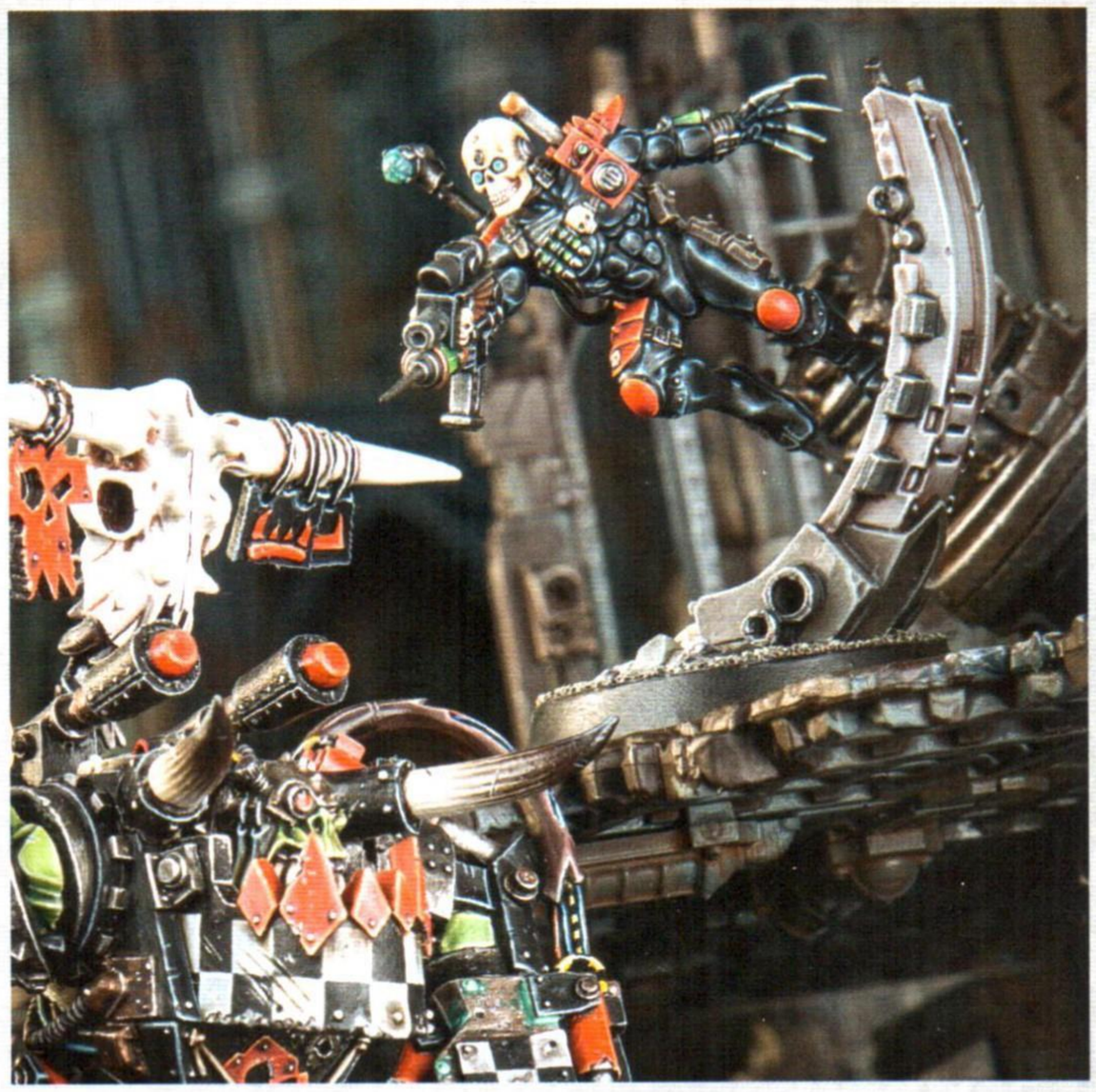
When an Eversor is selected for a mission they are transferred from the cryo-crypt to a special drop pod, where neuro links feed the details of the mission to them during their cryo-suspension. The pod is launched at the target planet, as remote links with the spaceship reanimate the Assassin and ready their finely-tuned body with all they need to complete the mission. When the pod impacts, the Assassin will be fully awake and ready to begin their grim task. They will be totally unaware of the time spent in cryo-suspension – they might have spent years or even centuries in a frozen state, but to the Assassin the time gap between the end of the last mission and the start of the next will be mere moments. They will be psyched up and ready to satiate their desire to slaughter the enemies of the Imperium. To do this they use bolt shells and toxin needles from their executioner pistol, stabbing thrusts of their power sword, hypodermic incisors and shock generators built into their neuro-gauntlet, melta bomb blasts, throat-crushing punches, and whatever else is to hand. The Eversor's assault is so swift and ruthless that their foes are rarely aware that they are under attack – that is until the doors of their sanctuary are torn off their hinges and the skull-like mask of the Assassin is looming out of the darkness towards them.

CREATING A MONSTER

Recruits for the Eversor Temple are invariably chosen from the youngest of the available novitiates. This is because only a body yet to fully develop is able to accept the many genetic alterations that the novitiate will undergo. The process of becoming an Eversor is arduous and long, the extensive testing, genetic manipulation and drugs turning each Assassin into a living, breathing weapon of war. At first, results from training exercises are assessed to determine

which alterations would be most suitable. After that, the real experiments begin.

The masters of the Eversor Temple and the Medicus Adepts are constantly developing and adapting a special programme of genetics, bio-implants and chemical boosters to enhance the Assassin's body far beyond what a normal human could achieve. The Medicus Adepts make the most of these adaptations when an Assassin is chosen for the Eversor Temple. The novitiate Assassin undergoes endoskeletal restructuring, increasing their stamina and aerobic performance and allowing them to fight for days without tiring. Muscular hypertrophy enables the Assassin to explode into a fury of activity that lasts for hours at a time. In order to cope with these changes the Assassin is given a second heart. Not only does this give the Assassin extra survivability should one heart be damaged in combat, it also ensures that when they are really driving their body to the limits, both hearts can kick in, maintaining the excessively high heart rate demanded by their frantic killing frenzy.



If the trainee's body survives all of the implants and modifications, their cerebral cortex is also enhanced by genetically coded lobo-chips. These chips amplify the Assassin's state of mind, turning a mere dislike for the enemy into raging hatred, or the wish to serve the Imperium into determination to complete their mission at any cost. Adrenal ducts are implanted and electro-elixirs injected, speeding up the brain's higher functions and allowing the Assassin to make complex calculations and tactical decisions in seconds.

The process of turning a normal human being into a bio-enhanced killing machine is not without its dangers. Many Assassins have died on the operating table or, more often, from some unforeseen side effect of their many complex bio-enhancements. Many of the side effects are known to the Medicus Adepts and can be countered by glandular implants that constantly feed the necessary counter-active agents into the Assassin. However, every Eversor Assassin's body is in a state of constant agitation and conflict. Whilst the Eversor lives, they can keep everything under control using their hyper-immuno system and an advanced cortex that maintains safe combinations of chemicals within their body.

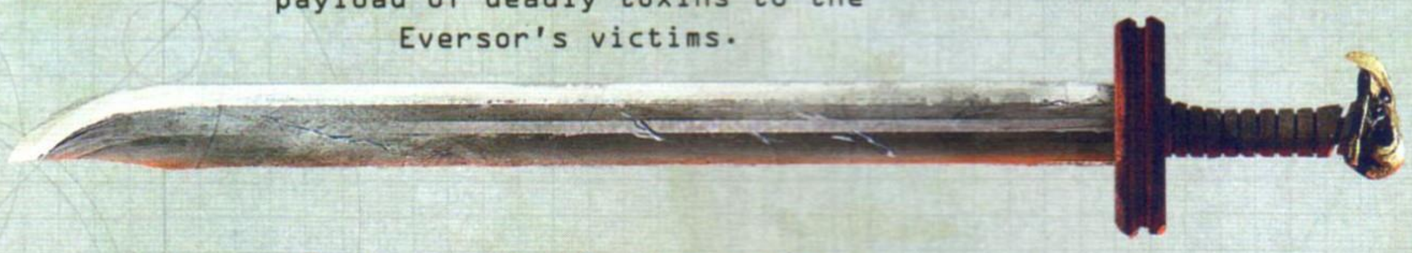
However, should the Assassin's hearts stop or their brain fail, the concoctions inside them will react at a rapidly accelerating rate. As the dying Assassin's control over their body deteriorates, they spontaneously combust with such explosive force that their bio-meltdown can kill those standing nearby. This is not something that the Assassins resent, for they will use any weapon they can to fulfil their violent quest. Even in death they will slaughter and destroy, for they are true killers, and relish every murder they can commit.

'For those that defy the Imperium, only the Emperor can judge your crimes. Only in death can you receive the Emperor's Judgement.'

- Motto of the Officio Assassinorum

WARGEAR OF THE EVERSOR TEMPLE

The neuro-gauntlet delivers a payload of deadly toxins to the Eversor's victims.



Power sword, for dispatching armoured foes.

Executioner pistol - a bolt pistol/ needle pistol combi-weapon.

CULEXUS

'That which is unknown and unseen commands the greatest fear'
- Dictatus Culexus

The Culexus Temple is in all likelihood the most sinister of all the Assassin temples. Even amongst the upper echelons of the Officio Assassinorum, this temple is always viewed with extreme caution. This is not because of the way that the Culexus operate, nor even any particularly hideous methods of killing their targets. It is because of the Assassins themselves.

The Assassins that form the Culexus Temple are not chosen because of their savagery, cunning or combat skills, although these are most definitely required qualities. First and foremost, a potential Culexus Assassin is chosen because they possess a very rare genetic defect, something that is totally unique and yet utterly abhorrent to the Imperium.

THE PARIAH GENE

Every living being has some sort of presence in the warp, where the soul is reflected through from the real universe. For non-psykers this will usually be little more than a minute spark. For psykers, however, their soul blazes, a shining beacon that can be seen by other psykers and creatures that live within the warp. The more powerful the psyker, the brighter their soul burns within the warp. Culexus Assassins are true terrors because they have, or appear to have, no presence in the warp – there is just a void. They are, to all intents and purposes, soulless.

This extremely rare defect occurs in less than one in a billion individuals. Those who have this defect are known by the name of Pariah, or untouchable, and meeting one is something that no normal human being can ever forget. Their cold, calculating stare draws attention to their eyes; pools of blackness that seem to suck their prey into a void of nothingness. It is hardly surprising that Pariahs are usually treated like outcasts or lepers, rejected by their parents and banished from settlements. The Inquisition often finds Pariahs that have become hermits, or have been reduced to scraping a squalid life in the depths of a hive city.

The name of this genetic anomaly – or perhaps abomination – has seen the esoteric mineral known as blackstone, or in High Gothic as Noctilith, sometimes erroneously called Pariah Stone. Blackstone has a peculiar property that can see it charged either to attract the energy of the warp, as with Abaddon's Blackstone Fortresses in the Gothic War, or to repel it, as with the pylons of Cadia. The null zone blackstone can create is analogous to the soul-void projected by a Culexus Assassin – but only the Culexus truly understand how to wield that strange aura as a weapon.

In the early years of the Imperium's founding, Pariahs were transported back to Terra aboard the Black Ships with other untamed psykers. Once they reached their destination they would be handed over for experimentation by the Magos Biologis of the Adeptus Mechanicus. As the years slid past, a growing number of Pariahs were sent to languish in the cells of the Omnissiah's priests. Such a large number of Pariahs began to create a hole in the warp. Their psychic blankness interfered with the Astronomican, that most vital of psychic beacons used to guide spaceships to far reaches of the Imperium. Other branches of the Administratum, especially those that relied upon psykers, were horrified by this discovery. Soon several of the High Lords of Terra were making moves towards having Pariahs outlawed, and the Inquisition was given the task of ruthlessly eliminating any more that were found. A number of the High Lords, including the Paternoval Envoy of the Navigators, the Master of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica and the Master of the Astronomican, pushed for an official decree so that they could rid the Imperium of these troublesome freaks.

This was most unfortunate for the Officio Assassinorum, who had been working closely with the Magos Biologis and Genetors of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Their work was almost complete, and many years had been spent developing specialist wargear and training techniques. All of this was about to be ruined by the short-sightedness of a few power-hungry individuals. But the decree from the Master of the Administratum never came. The Adeptus Mechanicus announced that it was ending the Pariah project, and made a great show of closing down the laboratoriums and executing the lab specimens. Satisfied that no further action was needed, the High Lords turned their attentions to other matters. However, closer study of the records would reveal that the number of executions did not match the number of Pariahs contained within the labs at the time. With the help of the Officio Assassinorum, the Adeptus Mechanicus moved a few of the most promising Pariahs to a secretly constructed fortress on the edge of the galaxy. It was here that the Culexus Temple was created.

THE SOULLESS HUNTER

When the Culexus Temple receives a mission, an Assassin is chosen and transported to the arena of conflict on board a specially shielded ship, much like the Black Ships of the Inquisition. In addition to this, the Assassin wears a huge helm called an animus speculum. During battle it is used to fire focussed blasts of psychic energy, but its primary purpose is to block out the Culexus Assassin's innate abilities. The helm is only partially effective even when operating at full power; most people can barely stand to be in the same room as the wearer due to the nauseous, head-spinning effect that is the trademark of a Culexus Assassin. When it is switched off altogether, the mayhem that ensues is terrifying to behold.

Once despatched to kill a specific foe, the Culexus Assassin attacks using their own innate abilities enhanced by years of training, mental exercises and arcane wargear. They carry no guns or hand-to-hand weapons, for they need none. Whilst closing with their mark, the Culexus operates under the protective field of the etherium – a highly advanced form of aegis suit that is built into the Culexus Assassin's synskin. This, combined with the wearer's innate abilities, makes them all but impervious to psychic attack. Weapons that are in any way connected to non-material dimensions simply pass through them as if they were no more than a ghost.

Under the cover of their own repugnance the Assassin slips through battle lines and bodyguards, their negative aura muddling the minds of conventional troops. Whilst closing with the foe, the Culexus will hurl psyk-out grenades – each containing dust from the Golden Throne itself – that swathe those nearby in crippling confusion. As their panicked quarry reels from this extra-sensory assault, the stalking Assassin moves in for the kill.

When the enemy is in sight, the animus speculum is used, an unnaturally powerful weapon that is deadly to all, but hell incarnate to those with psychic abilities. Once deactivated, the large eye in the helm opens and the magnified intensity of the Assassin's horrific capabilities flood the surrounding area. Turning upon their target, the Culexus aims the animus speculum and obliterates their brain, leaving them a withered, blasted husk.

WARGEAR OF THE CULEXUS TEMPLE

The etherium enables the Culexus to shift out of phase with reality.

Psyk-out grenades for use against psykers.

The animus speculum focuses the operative's null aura.

THE CHAINS THAT BIND

Over the course of the Imperium's history, the agents of the Officio Assassinorum have claimed millions of lives for their masters. Not for them the worldwide slaughter brought to bear by the Astra Militarum or the unremitting force of an Adeptus Astartes strike. Each death they bestow upon the enemies of the Imperium is a carefully crafted link in the chain that binds the realm of Man to the Emperor's immortal will. Though every one of these kills is extensively documented in the appropriate temple's datacrypts, only a very small fraction have entered the legends of the Imperium, known by few outside the vaulted halls of the High Lords themselves.

c. M.31 THE HORUS HERESY

After the Warmaster Horus' treachery is revealed, an early incarnation of the Officio Assassinorum sends four operatives, one from each of the major temples, to hunt down and destroy the traitor Primarch. All four are found wanting, for Horus is powerful beyond the reach of mortal men, and his destiny lies elsewhere.

c. M.31 DEATH OF A PRIMARCH

The Primarch of the Night Lords, Konrad Curze, is plagued by visions of his own demise – a kill-strike ordered by the Emperor himself. The knowledge of his spiritual father's betrayal festers within him, and he becomes the fiendish traitor known as Night Haunter. As the Heresy unfolds, the Callidus Temple is charged with the Primarch's death. Though his warriors fight to catch the killer in their midst, the Assassin M'Shen enters Night Haunter's throne room to find him unresisting. By allowing the Emperor to kill his own son, the creature that was once Konrad Curze believes his rebellion vindicated forever – for in death, he has proved the Emperor is as callous as he has always maintained.

546-646.M32 THE BEHEADING

The High Lords of Terra are slain to a man when the Grand Master of the Officio Assassinorum, Drakan Vangorich, mounts a bloody coup decades in the making. Thus begins a hundred-year period of anarchy in which the Imperium is all but torn apart. It is only through great loss that a Space Marine retribution force delivers the Emperor's justice to Vangorich and his acolytes. In the aftermath over fifty Space Marine leaders arrive upon Terra, accompanied by a crusade-strength 'honour guard.' After a long council with the great and the good behind closed doors, twelve new High Lords are placed in office, and stability thus returned to the Imperium.

990.M32 A GHOST AMONGST DEVILS

The Culexus Assassin Dranos is sent to destroy the Sorcerer Xantaka before he can conjure any more daemonic legions from the warp. Being all but invisible to not only the aethersight of Xantaka's Daemon armies but also his Rubricae bodyguard, Dranos simply walks up to Xantaka and burns his brains to ash with a blast of negative warp energy.

340.M33 MOTHER GULLET

A Callidus Assassin, sent to steal away the firstborn child of the dangerously self-centred Planetary Governor Thygmus van Spracht, disguises herself as the infant's matron-vigilus. By widening her craw with polymorphine and swallowing the princeling whole, she walks past the elite palace guards without so much as a whisper of resistance. She carries the prize in her belly to her masters before regurgitating it whole, mewling but safe. Pict-skull footage is sent to the governor, and he falls back into the Imperial fold within the week.

452.M34 THE BLINDED SEER

A Culexus Assassin is sent to claim the head of the manipulative Farseer Lithandros-Esmanthil. The Eldar senses the threat and scries the skeins of fate accordingly, but is increasingly alarmed to find he is unable to locate the thread corresponding to his pursuer. After a long and terrifying hunt the Assassin ambushes his prey in the lonely halls of Saim-Hann's Dome of Reflection. Rendered psychically inert and driven to exhaustion by the chase, Lithandros-Esmanthil gives himself up to the sinister violence that follows.

372.M35 THE CULL OF THE GOLIATHS

The abhuman Goliaths of Thugrock Secundus, a recruitment moon for the Astra Militarum, develop a blood cult that consumes the planet's ruling caste. In an unprecedented display of miscommunication, no fewer than six Eversor Assassins are dispatched to slay the leaders of the indigenous population. By the time the single surviving Eversor is recovered, not a single Thugrock Goliath is left alive, and when the news reaches the Astra Militarum they are most displeased that such a rich resource has been wasted. To this day, the event is used as a cautionary fable to illustrate the dangers of dispatching several Assassins at once.

501.M37 DEATH OF A RECIDIVIST

The influential cardinal Jerome the Unsaintly of Oristia IV secedes from the Imperial Creed. He amasses an insane amount of wealth through illegal levies, hoping to gather an army of Frateris Militia to rival that of Goge Vandire. He is shot in the roof of the mouth by a Vindicare Assassin whilst he is singing subversive hymns.

563.M37 THE MORISHA INCIDENT

Urhua Thereaux, Assassin of the Venenum Temple, is dispatched to assassinate the renegade Governor Yawell of Morisha. During transit, the starship is caught in a warp rift, holding the vessel in temporal stasis for some six hundred and ninety-eight years. Not knowing that this has occurred, Thereaux proceeds to her target, only to find Yawell long since dead and replaced by an anti-Imperial democratic committee consisting of over a thousand members. Faced with such an extreme task, Thereaux only succeeds in killing the committee members after spending three days poisoning all the chairs in the council's auditorium prior to a meeting of the full committee.

003.M38 THE STARGAZER'S DEMISE

The progressive astrologer Lenas Scard is marked for death before his heretical discoveries shake the Imperial Creed any further. The Vindicare Assassin Erasmus Menst hangs upside down from a promethium relay pipe for six days, awaiting his prey, only to realise that Scard is aware of his pursuit and has holed up inside his observatory. Menst abandons his plan and instead climbs to the highest spire of Hive Mendicantus, knowing that it is only a matter of time before the glint of Scard's scrying scope appears. Sure enough, as the planet's moon is bisected by the spire, a telltale flash from Scard's observatory appears. Menst is able to put a shot through the telescope's lens and into the eye socket of the stargazer behind it.

386143.M38 THE FALL OF ORLENZA TRIARTES

The planet of Orlenza Triartes severs its ties with the Imperium, hoping for better trade terms. The Planetary Governor tricks his Adeptus Arbites into quelling a prison break that turns out to be a carefully crafted ambush, placing the Arbitrators under lock and key alongside those same criminals they had arrested. Word reaches the Imperium, and two regiments of Imperial Guard are sent to intervene. The preening aristocrats at the heart of the rebellion muster their forces and attack, only to find that their chief military advisor, a vulgar but effective mercenary known as Le Kard, was not who they thought he was. The Orlenza forces find their dispersal to be extremely ineffective, and they are surrounded and cut off within a week. When Le Kard's airtight cell is opened it is found to contain only a set of discarded clothes and a synskin-clad Callidus, crouching like a hyperfelid ready to pounce. The Assassin cuts a swathe through the planet's nobility before disappearing without a trace.

243.M39 STATUESQUE

The Vindicare Temple is given a kill order to take out the predatory Dark Eldar pilot known as the Skyknife. Knowing that to enter Commorragh would be to court almost certain failure, the Vindicare Assassin Dejedris Garamach determines the site of a previous sighting of the Skyknife's Razorwing Jetfighter. He mounts his vigil in the eye socket of the Threndian Collossus, subsisting on moss and the raw flesh of the birds that use the statue as its nest whilst never taking his eyes from the sky. Six years later, his vigil is rewarded when the Skyknife appears from midair in a flash of azure light. Within a half-second of its appearance Garamach puts a turbo-penetrator round into the cockpit, killing the pilot instantly.

718924.M40 TO SLAY A WAAAGH!

The Ork Warlord Urgak the Unstoppable is on the verge of completing his Gargant and launching a Waaagh! into the Vondiac Sector when a Vindicare Assassin sends a bullet into the reactor core of the giant effigy. The thing catches fire and then explodes spectacularly, killing not only Urgak himself but also the vast majority of the Meks in his employ. The Waaagh! is halted before it even begins, putting the lie to Urgak's self-aggrandizing title and plunging the surviving Orks into a bloody civil war.

231.M41 THE TIGERS CAGED

Hetman Grettch of the 593rd Kadaveran Tigers becomes so incensed at constantly being interrupted by the Tactical Auto-Reliquary of Tyberius that he 'accidentally' deactivates it with a ceremonial mace. It is the first step in a rebellion that sees not only the 593rd, but the entirety of the Kadaveran Tigers, turn against the Imperium. A Callidus Assassin is sent to infiltrate Grettch's advisor corps, assuming the identity of his eyeless Astropath before killing the traitorous commander and taking his place. When the Tigers open hostilities against the Cadian 342nd their orders suddenly become contradictory and counter-intuitive, and when the command staff is obliterated by an artillery strike called down upon their own position, the entire war effort falls to pieces. The Kadaverans, their forces decimated within the hour, quickly see the error of their ways and submit themselves for a regiment-wide court martial. Though the Tactical Auto-Reliquary is recovered and later repaired, they are found guilty and executed to a man.

290.M41 A DESTINY DENIED

The Officio Assassinorum, having failed to destroy the obscenely powerful Chaos Lord Malfecius with operatives from the Eversor and Vindicare Temples, sends the Culexus Assassin Vaedrex instead. The Culexus haunts the steps of Malfecius across the Eye of Terror. Only when Malfecius ascends to Daemon Princehood does Vaedrex finally strike. With Malfecius' latest incarnation rendering him vulnerable to Vaedrex's psyk-out grenades, the Culexus finally manages to kill the reeling Daemon Prince with a punishing series of blasts from his animus speculum.

353.M41 THE DREAD GESTALT

The Wyrdvane Psykers of the Vostroyan Firstborn 122nd come through a difficult warp translation as a gestalt entity of terrifying psychic power. Revelling in their new abilities, they rise up amongst the ranks of their former comrades and enslave every one of them to their bloodthirsty desires. When the regiment makes planetfall upon Sylvanus II they set about the murder of the populace with a will. The Hammers of Dorn are sent on a planetfall mission to destroy the Dread Gestalt, but the powers of the Wyrdvane Psykers are so swollen that the Space Marine attack is repelled with terrifying ease. Only when the Culexus Assassin known as the Revoker is unleashed into the Vostroyan ranks does the Dread Gestalt lose its power, flopping back to earth as weak as mewling kittens. They are killed to a man by Vostroyan bayonets even before the Revoker can close with his target to finish the job.

886.M41 SONS OF THE INTERSTICE

The Lubricae Cult arises within the Adeptus Mechanicus, a body of heretics that worship the interstitial substances that keep the universe running smoothly. All twelve of the senior Technomagi gather around a black and shimmering pool of arcanoil, anointing themselves with a mixture of blood and boiling grease as they declare open war on their former brethren. A slick black devil bursts from the pool's depths when the Eversor Assassin sent to slay them reveals himself. Within moments every one of the Lubricae Cult is slain. Their Skitarii legions attack nonetheless, but without leadership they are quickly defeated by their loyalist counterparts.

999.M41 THE FOE UNTOUCHABLE

Within the Eye of Terror, a Black Crusade of unprecedented size musters to break open the Cadian Gate. Rumours abound that its supreme warlord, Abaddon the Despoiler, is empowered by the Gods of Chaos – and that whilst he enjoys their favour he cannot be laid low by mortal weaponry. The agents of the Officio Assassinorum are dispatched en masse to slay the Warmaster Abbadon and his most favoured lieutenants before they breach realspace. One by one they reach a succession of grisly ends, and Abaddon remains at large. His crushing assault on Cadia sees a grinding stalemate broken when the Blackstone Fortress *Will of Eternity* is sent to collide with the fortress planet, obliterating vast swathes of the Imperial last stand and rendering the carefully laid plans of the Assassinorum obsolete. The planet is shattered beyond recovery, and the death knell of the 41st Millennium sounded across time and space.

999.M41 THE GREAT RIFT YAWNS WIDE

Over the course of the intervening years, the Cicatrix Maledictum splits the night sky. The psychic trauma of the Fall of Cadia merges with the backlash caused by a series of other catastrophes, and the Emperor's realm is changed forever. Roboute Guilliman, as Lord Commander of the Imperium, consults with the Grand Master of the Officio Assassinorum as to how best to send every possible Imperial Assassin into active duty at once – for the hour is so dark they have no other choice.

OFFICIO ASSASSINORUM ARMY LIST

This section contains all of the datasheets that you will need in order to fight battles with your Officio Assassinorum miniatures. Each datasheet includes the characteristics profiles of the unit it describes, as well as any wargear and abilities it has. Some rules are common to several Officio Assassinorum units – these are described here and referenced on the datasheets.

ABILITIES

The following abilities are common to Officio Assassinorum units:

Execution Force

So long as your Warlord has the **Imperium** keyword, you can include this unit in your army as part of a Vanguard Detachment even if that Detachment contains no HQ units. However, if you do so, that Detachment's Command Benefits are changed to 'None' unless that Detachment contains exactly 1 Vindicare Assassin, 1 Callidus Assassin, 1 Eversor Assassin and 1 Culexus Assassin.

Independent Operative

This model can never have a Warlord Trait. During deployment, you can set this model up in concealment instead of placing it on the battlefield. At the end of any of your Movement phases, this model can reveal its position – set it up anywhere on the battlefield that is more than 9" from any enemy models.

Lightning Reflexes

This model has a 4+ invulnerable save.

POINTS VALUES

If you are playing a matched play game, or a game that uses a points limit, you can use the following list to determine the total points cost of your army. Simply add together the points costs of all your models and their wargear to determine your army's total points value.

UNITS

UNIT	MODELS PER UNIT	POINTS PER MODEL (Includes wargear)
Vindicare Assassin	1	85
Callidus Assassin	1	85
Eversor Assassin	1	85
Culexus Assassin	1	85

STRATAGEMS

If your army is Battle-forged and includes any **Imperium** Detachments (that is, a Detachment in which every unit has the **Imperium** keyword), you have access to the Stratagems shown here, meaning you can spend Command Points to activate them. These help to reflect the unique tactics used by Assassins on the battlefield.

1CP/3CP

OPERATIVE REQUISITION SANCTIONED

Officio Assassinorum Stratagem

The ultimate fusion of stealth and lethality, an operative of the Officio Assassinorum is a great asset to any Imperial commander.

This Stratagem costs 1CP if you are playing a matched play game, or 3CP otherwise. You can only use this Stratagem if your Warlord has the **Imperium** keyword. Use this Stratagem during deployment. Add one **Officio Assassinorum** unit of your choice to your army. Remember that in a matched play game, you must pay reinforcement points for any new unit added to your army. You can only use this Stratagem once per battle.

1CP

PRIORITY THREAT NEUTRALISED

Officio Assassinorum Stratagem

Shorn of their commanders, the enemy's tactical advantages will often crumble.

Use this Stratagem after an enemy **Character** model is slain by an **Officio Assassinorum** unit from your army. You gain 2 Command Points (or 3 Command Points if the **Character** was your opponent's Warlord). You can only use this Stratagem once for each enemy Character model slain.

1CP

DOUBLE KILL

Vindicare Stratagem

Striking from the perfect vantage points, Vindicare Assassins have been known to fell a second foe before the body of the first has even hit the floor.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, after a **Vindicare Assassin** from your army shoots. That model can shoot one additional time this phase (this must be at a different target).

1CP

TURBO-PENETRATOR ROUND

Vindicare Stratagem

Ripping through even the densest flesh or armour before detonating, this special ammunition is the bane of vehicles and monstrous beasts alike.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, after an attack made with an exitus pistol or exitus rifle by a **Vindicare Assassin** from your army scores a hit against a target that is either a **Vehicle** or a **Monster**. Do not make a wound roll for that attack; instead that hit inflicts D3 mortal wounds on the target. If this Stratagem is used then the Head Shot ability does not apply to that attack.

1CP

ACROBATIC

Callidus Stratagem

Callidus Assassins strike with such speed and grace that their targets rarely land a single defensive blow.

Use this Stratagem in your Movement phase. Choose one **CALLIDUS ASSASSIN** from your army. That model can Advance and charge this turn. In addition, until the start of the next battle round, subtract 1 from hit rolls for attacks that target the chosen model.

1CP

PARIAH'S GAZE

Culexus Stratagem

The pure negativity of a Culexus Assassin's soulless presence is focused through their wargear.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, before choosing a **CULEXUS ASSASSIN** to shoot with. Until the end of the phase, the Damage characteristic of that model's ranged weapons is increased to D3.

2CP

SUPREME DECEPTION

Callidus Stratagem

Operatives of the Callidus Temple are peerless infiltrators able to disrupt any chain of command.

Use this Stratagem at the start of any battle round after the first. Choose one **CALLIDUS ASSASSIN** from your army. That model's Reign of Confusion ability is considered to be in effect until the end of that battle round. You can only use this Stratagem once per battle.

2CP

STIMM OVERLOAD

Eversor Stratagem

Dangerous levels of frenzon flood the Eversor's system, triggering a frenetic killing spree.

Use this Stratagem at the end of the Fight phase. Choose one **EVERSOR ASSASSIN** from your army to fight with, even if that model has already fought this phase. After that model has fought, roll one D6; on a 1, 2 or 3 it suffers 1 mortal wound.

2CP

SOUL HORROR

Culexus Stratagem

An aura of nameless fear surrounds operatives of the Culexus Temple, freezing the hearts of their foes.

Use this Stratagem at the start of the Fight phase. Choose one **CULEXUS ASSASSIN** from your army. Enemy units within 3" of that model cannot be chosen to fight this phase until after all other units have done so, even if they charged. If one of those units has an ability that allows them to fight first this phase, they instead fight in this phase as if they do not have that ability.

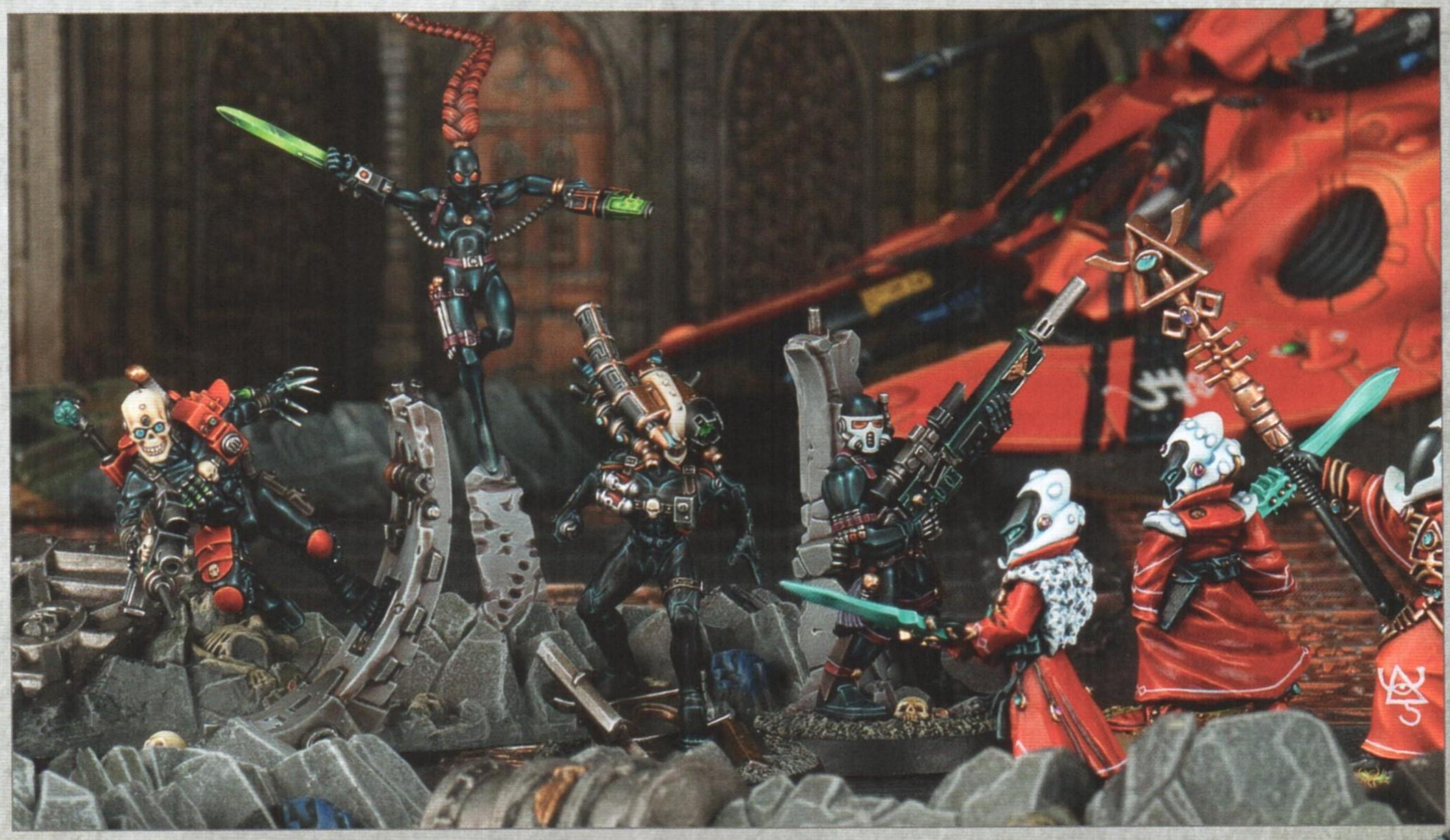
1CP

HYPERMETABOLISM

Eversor Stratagem

Chemically augmented in the extreme, the bodies of Eversor Assassins can weather injuries that would otherwise prove fatal.

Use this Stratagem at the start of any phase. Choose one **EVERSOR ASSASSIN** from your army. Until the end of that phase, roll one D6 each time that model loses a wound (excluding those lost as the result of a mortal wound); on a 4+ the wound is not lost.



Vindicare Assassin

5 POWER

NAME	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	A	Ld	Sv
Vindicare Assassin	7"	2+	2+	4	4	5	5	9	6+

A Vindicare Assassin is a single model armed with one exitus pistol, one exitus rifle, and blind grenades.

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D	ABILITIES
Exitus pistol	12"	Pistol 1	4	-3	D3	Invulnerable saves cannot be taken against attacks made with this weapon. This weapon wounds **Infantry** units on a 2+.
Exitus rifle	72"	Heavy 1	5	-3	D3	Invulnerable saves cannot be taken against attacks made with this weapon. This weapon wounds **Infantry** units on a 2+.
Blind grenade	12"	Grenade D6	*	*	*	This weapon does not inflict any damage (do not make any wound rolls). Instead, if a unit is hit by any blind grenades, subtract 1 from all hit rolls for attacks made by that unit until the end of the turn.

ABILITIES

Execution Force, **Independent Operative**, **Lightning Reflexes** (pg 94)

Deadshot: This model can target a **Character** even if it is not the closest enemy unit. In addition, each time an unmodified wound roll of 6 is made for an attack with a ranged weapon by this model, the Damage for that attack is D6.

Faultless Aim: If this model remained stationary in its previous Movement phase, it always hits on a 2+ when firing a ranged weapon, regardless of modifiers (hit rolls of 6 are still required when firing Overwatch).

Head Shot: After this model has made an attack with a ranged weapon, roll one D6 if a model suffered damage from that attack but has not been slain; on a 3+, that model suffers 1 mortal wound and, if that model is not slain, you can roll one more D6. This time, that model suffers 1 mortal wound on a 4+. Keep rolling one D6, increasing the result required to cause a mortal wound by 1 each time, until the model being rolled for is slain or the roll is failed.

Spymask: Enemy models do not gain the bonus to their saving throws for being in cover against attacks made with ranged weapons by this model.

Stealth Suit: Subtract 1 from hit rolls for attacks made with ranged weapons that target this model. If this model is on or in a terrain feature, subtract 2 instead.

FACTION KEYWORDS Imperium, Officio Assassinorum

KEYWORDS Infantry, Character, Vindicare Assassin

Callidus Assassin

5 POWER

NAME	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	A	Ld	Sv
Callidus Assassin	7"	2+	2+	4	4	5	5	9	6+

A Callidus Assassin is a single model armed with one neural shredder, one phase sword and poison blades.

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D	ABILITIES
Neural shredder	9"	Assault 1	*	*	*	Roll 3D6 each time this weapon scores a hit; if the roll is equal to or greater than the target unit's highest Leadership characteristic, it suffers D3 mortal wounds.
Phase sword	Melee	Melee	User	-3	2	Invulnerable saves cannot be taken against attacks made with this weapon.
Poison blades	Melee	Melee	*	-1	1	Each time the bearer fights, it makes 1 additional attack with this weapon. This weapon wounds on a 3+, unless it is targeting a **Vehicle**, in which case it wounds on a 6+.

ABILITIES

Execution Force, **Independent Operative**, **Lightning Reflexes** (pg 94)

Polymorphine: During deployment, you can set up this model in disguise instead of setting it up on the battlefield. At the end of any of your Movement phases this model can revert to its true form – set it up anywhere on the battlefield that is more than D6+3" away from any enemy models. For example, if you roll a 4, the model can be set up anywhere that is more than 7" from any enemy model.

Hit and Run: This model can Fall Back and still shoot and charge in the same turn.

Reign of Confusion: If you have any models with this ability in your army, then during the first battle round, roll one D6 each time your opponent spends Command Points (CPs) to use a Stratagem. On a 4+, your opponent must spend one extra CP to use that Stratagem, or else it has no effect (the CPs spent so far are lost). This ability cannot affect Stratagems used 'before the battle begins'.

FACTION KEYWORDS Imperium, Officio Assassinorum

KEYWORDS Infantry, Character, Callidus Assassin

Eversor Assassin

5 POWER

NAME	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	A	Ld	Sv
Eversor Assassin	7"	2+	2+	4	4	6	6	9	6+

An Eversor Assassin is a single model armed with one executioner pistol, one neuro-gauntlet, one power sword, and melta bombs.

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D	ABILITIES
Executioner pistol	12"	Pistol 4	4	-1	1	You can re-roll wound rolls for attacks made with this weapon that target **Infantry** units.
Neuro-gauntlet	Melee	Melee	+1	-1	1	You can re-roll wound rolls for attacks made with this weapon.
Power sword	Melee	Melee	User	-3	1	-
Melta bomb	4"	Grenade 1	8	-4	D6	You can re-roll wound rolls for attacks made with this weapon that target **Vehicle** units.

ABILITIES

Execution Force, **Independent Operative**, **Lightning Reflexes** (pg 94)

Bio-meltdown: If this model is reduced to 0 wounds, roll a D6 for each enemy unit that is within 6" of this model before removing it from the battlefield. On a 4+ the enemy unit suffers D3 mortal wounds.

Sentinel Array: Each time an enemy unit Falls Back whilst within 1" of this model, this model can immediately make a shooting attack against that enemy unit as if it were its Shooting phase.

Frenzon: When making a charge roll for this model, roll 3D6 rather than 2D6. In addition, add 2 to this model's Attacks characteristic if it charged in the preceding Charge phase.

Killing Rampage: Each time an enemy model is slain as the result of an attack made with a melee weapon by this model, this model can immediately make one additional attack against the same unit. These additional attacks cannot themselves generate further attacks. In addition, this model can consolidate up to 6" instead of up to 3".

FACTION KEYWORDS Imperium, Officio Assassinorum

KEYWORDS Infantry, Character, Eversor Assassin

Culexus Assassin

5 POWER

NAME	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	A	Ld	Sv
Culexus Assassin	7"	2+	2+	4	4	5	4	9	6+

A Culexus Assassin is a single model armed with one animus speculum and psyk-out grenades.

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D	ABILITIES
Animus speculum	18"	Assault D3	5	-4	1	Change this weapon's Type to Assault D6 whilst there are any enemy **Psykers** within 18" of the bearer.
Psyk-out grenade	6"	Grenade D3	2	0	1	Each hit roll of 6+ for an attack made with this weapon inflicts 1 mortal wound on the target instead of the normal damage if the target of the attack is a **Psyker** or **Daemon**.

ABILITIES

Execution Force, **Independent Operative**, **Lightning Reflexes** (pg 94)

Abomination: This model can never be targeted or affected by psychic powers in any way. **Psykers** that are within 18" of any **Culexus Assassins** must subtract 2 from Psychic tests and Deny the Witch tests they take.

Life Drain: Saving throws cannot be made for attacks made with melee weapons by this model unless they are invulnerable saving throws.

Etherium: Attacks that target this model are resolved as if the attacking model had a Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill characteristic of 6+.

Psychic Assassin: Attacks made by this model can target a **Character** that is a **Psyker** even if it is not the closest enemy unit. In addition, this model can make an attack with its psyk-out grenade in the same phase that it uses its animus speculum.

FACTION KEYWORDS: Imperium, Officio Assassinorum

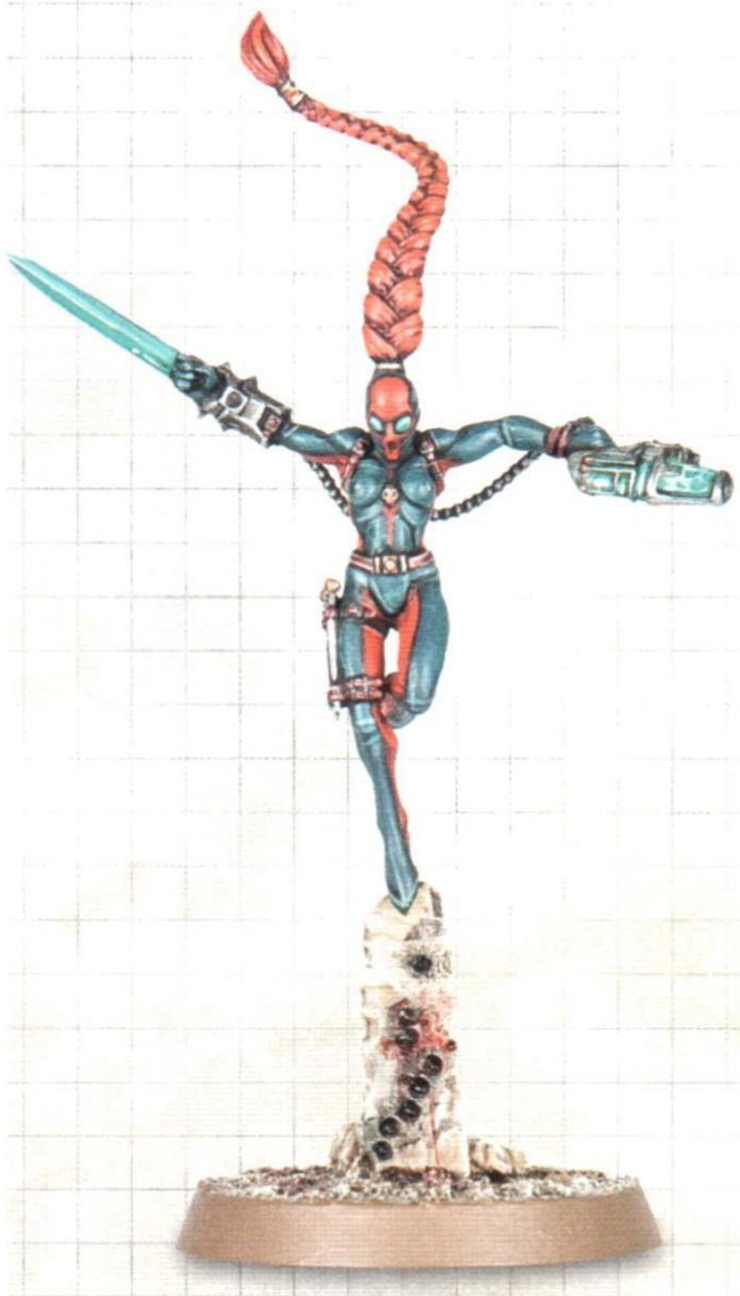
KEYWORDS: Infantry, Character, Culexus Assassin

WARHAMMER 40,000

AGENTS OF DEATH

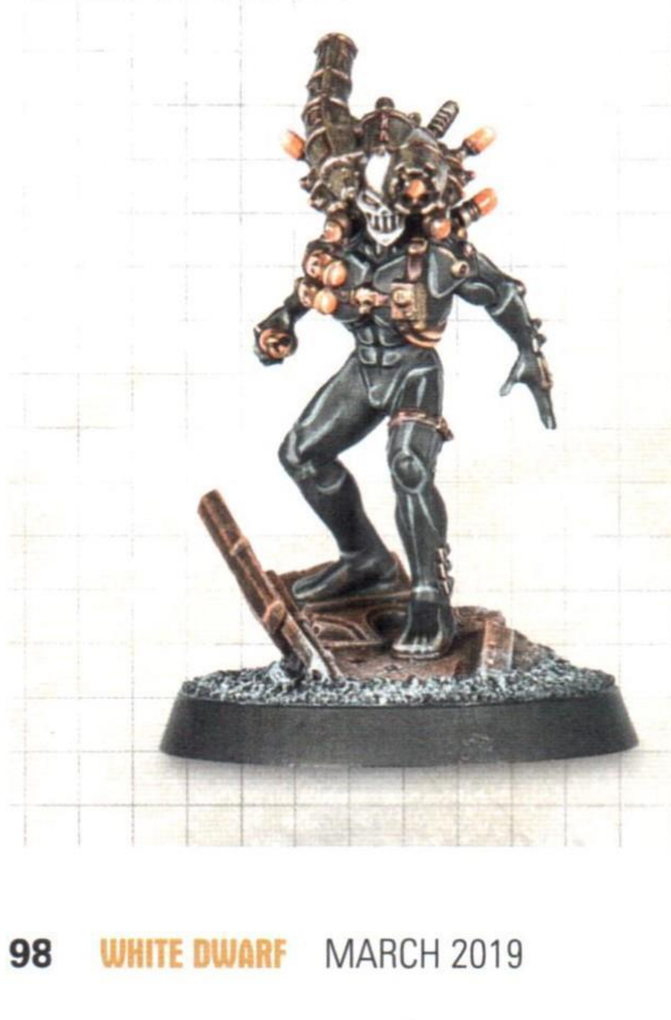
You've read all about the shadowy warriors of the Officio Assassinorum and you're now probably wondering how to paint an operative for your own army. To help you choose a colour scheme, here's a collection of Assassins painted by members of the Studio team.

Callidus Assassin
by Chris Peach

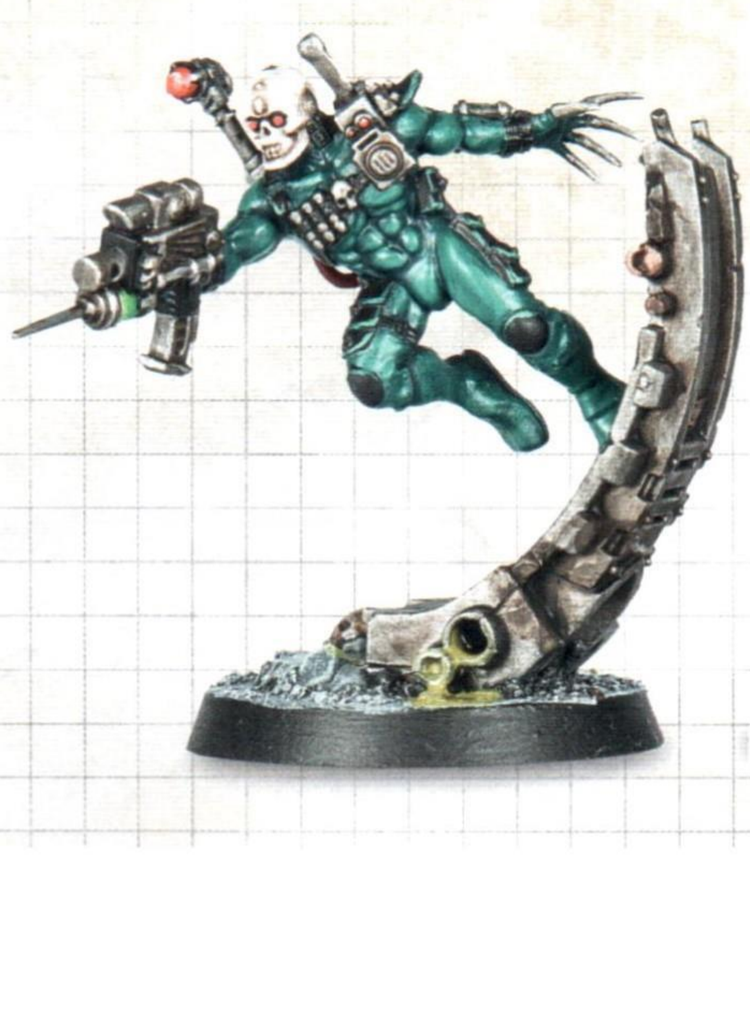


Vindicare and Callidus Assassins
by Joel Martin

Culexus Assassin
by Dan Harden



Eversor and Culexus Assassins
by Joel Martin



Eversor Assassin
by Tangui Jollivet

Eversor Assassin
by Nathan Trolley

Culexus Assassin
by James Gallagher

Eversor Assassin
by Maxime Corbeil

Vindicare Assassin
by Chloe Hitchcock

Vindicare Assassin
by Chris Merrick

Culexus and Vindicare Assassins
by Ben Johnson

WARHAMMER 40,000

PAINTING ASSASSINS

Now that you've read all about the operatives of the Officio Assassinorum, you're probably thinking about adding one to your collection, right? Here we provide you with a stage-by-stage painting guide for the Vindicare Assassin. Now, where's that black paint...?

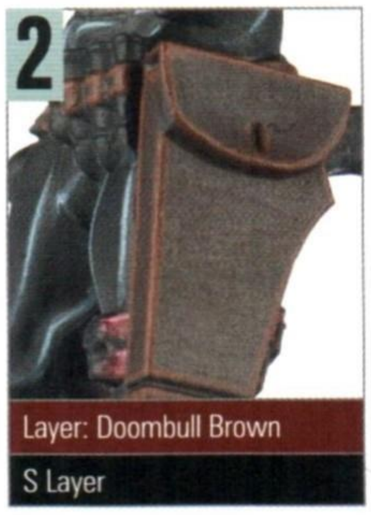
Assassins are great character miniatures for any Imperial army. They make brilliant stand-alone display pieces, too, which is why this painting guide focuses on painting really neat, fine edge highlights to get a great result. Even if you don't have an Assassin in your army, the tips in this guide can be used on any of the models in your collection – painting black armour can be applied to Raven Guard, Black Legion, Stormcast Eternals... the list goes on!

For this painting guide, we picked the Vindicare Assassin, though he features colours that can be used on any of the other three Assassins. The model was painted in two sub-assemblies – the Assassin, and his base (which you can read about to the right). The Assassin was undercoated Chaos Black and the base Mechanicus Standard Grey. To make painting the Assassin easier, he was stuck to a spare base using double-sided sticky tape. When the Assassin and his base were both finished, he was then glued in place.

SYNSKIN

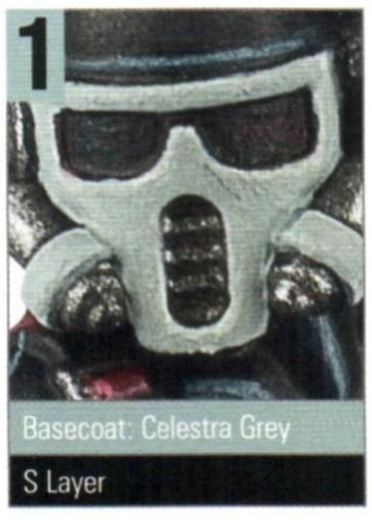
RED STRAPS

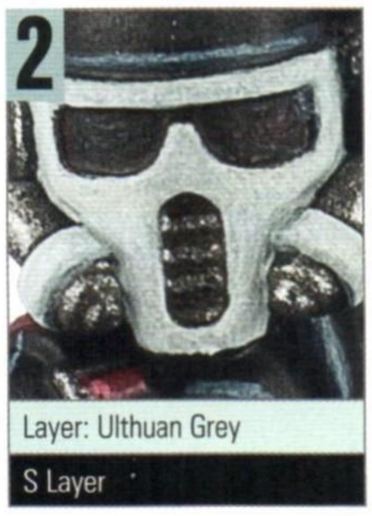
LEATHER



GUN CASING

FACE MASK





ON THE APP

SYNSKIN SUITS

Assassins operate all across the galaxy in all kinds of war zones, from the urban sprawl of a hive planet to the frozen wastes of a death world. Why not paint their synskin suits using some of these colour schemes from the Citadel Paint app?

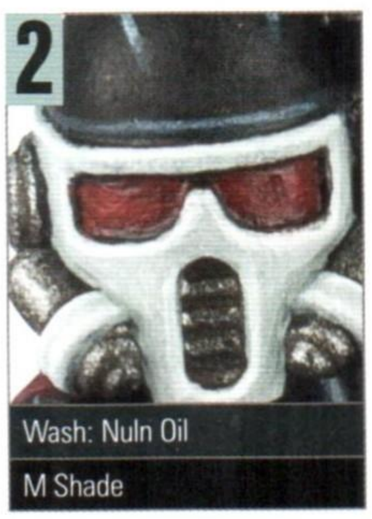
- **Dark red**
- **Emerald green**
- **Amber**
- **Dirty white**

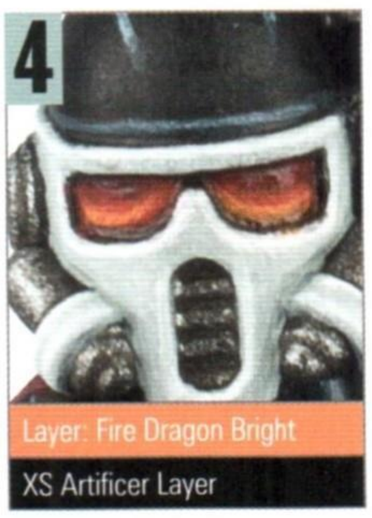
TOP TIPS – EDGE HIGHLIGHTING

When edge highlighting, first find the smallest brush you have – an XS Artificer Layer brush is ideal. Brace your hands to avoid them shaking – even the smallest involuntary movement can make a mess of a highlight. Many painters rest their elbows or forearms on their painting table to minimise shake. Just remember to keep a good posture while you're painting – no slouching!

Another key aspect of edge highlighting is to always keep your paints watered down. A tiny spot of water will keep the paints thin enough to work with – if you use them straight out the pot, they will dry quickly on your brush and you'll find it hard to get a smooth, thin highlight. Lastly, always draw the bristles of the brush towards you when painting, rather than pushing them away, otherwise you'll split the hairs and the paint will go everywhere.

EYE LENSES



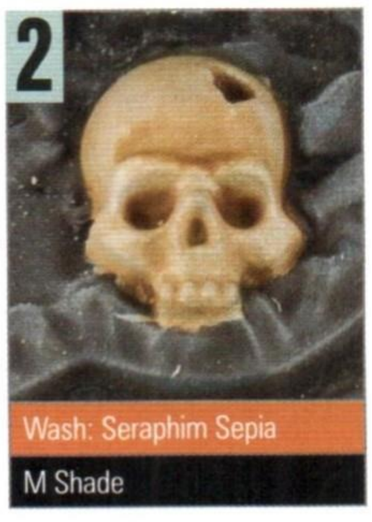


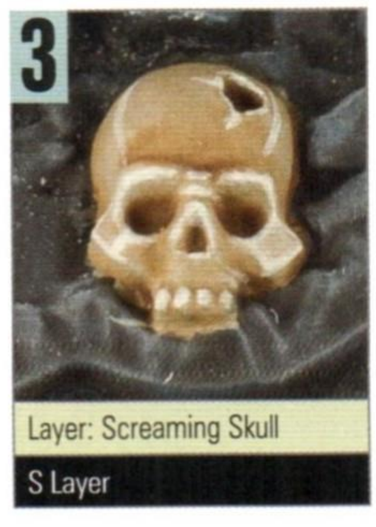
GUN SCOPE

GUN METAL

GOLD DETAILS

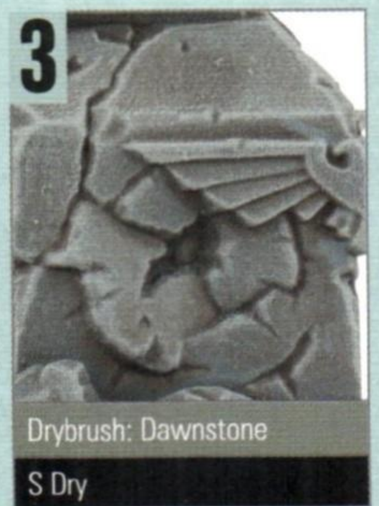
SKULL

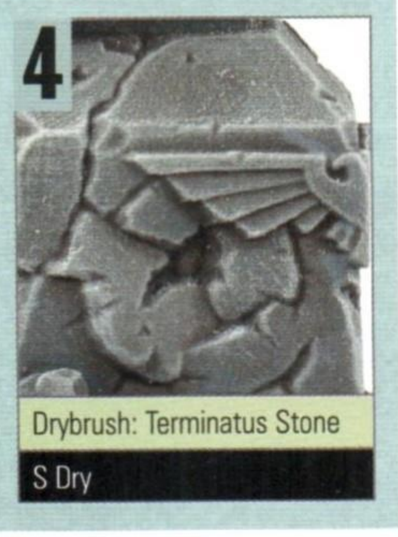




THE BASE

The scenic base is a key aspect of the Vindicare model. However, while the Assassin benefits from some careful edge highlighting, the base can be drybrushed to give it a different texture. That's why the Assassin was painted separately to the base – you don't want to apply all your highlights then accidentally drybrush the Assassin's legs. The Eversor and Culexus can be painted in a similar way, with the model separate to the base. For the Callidus, we suggest drybrushing the stone base first, then painting the Assassin. Just be careful around her feet.





HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

These pages offer clear stage-by-stage guides to painting your models, by breaking down each area of the miniature into a series of stages and showing the paints and techniques used in each stage.

Each stage includes the following:

Photograph: These show exactly what has been done – study the pictures before you paint to see where you're applying the colours and what they should look like. Remember to look for similar areas of the model and do these at the same time.

Technique & Paint: The coloured bar names the technique shown in the picture along with the Citadel Paint used.

Brush: We name the Citadel Brush used – the name here is exactly what you'll find on the Citadel Brush, making it really easy to identify the right one.

WARHAMMER 40,000

BEFORE THE STORM

In part two of this short story by Andy Clark, Cadian Lieutenant Danzek and his armoured column find themselves confronted by an Ork Speedwaaagh! on the dust plains of Vigilus. Will they be able to outrun the Orks, or will they have to turn and fight them…?

Hymnal roared onto the packed dirt of the Ork speedway. Within the Chimera, Lieutenant Danzek hung onto his restraints and prayed silently. Voxman Bastric sat beside him. The two of them watched the voxman's auspex with fixed intensity, willing the screen to show only the small cluster of blue runes that signified the vehicles of their escort force. At any moment Danzek feared the appearance of angry red triangles indicating Ork forces bearing down upon them.

The Cadians were in this situation thanks to the orders of Arch-pedant Gunther Henk, the Munitorum bureaucrat they were escorting across the wastes between Otek and Hyperia Hivesprawls. Motivated by overwhelming terror at the coming of the Despoiler, Henk had ordered his escort force to set out under-strength and unprepared.

Lieutenant Danzek felt that Henk had allowed fear of the still-distant heretics to blind him to the xenos dangers that loomed all around them. Perhaps, he thought bitterly, that had been Haarken Worldclaimer's true intent; if the Orks slew Danzek and his men, they would be doing the work of the Despoiler as surely as Henk had done in ordering this panicked rush into danger. If Danzek's force reached Hyperia alive, he would put in an official complaint about Henk's conduct. Even if the complaint was registered he'd be more likely to find himself disciplined for questioning a superior officer. Yet this mission had already cost good Cadian lives, and he owed those men and women no less.

'Nearing the halfway point, sir,' said Bastric. Danzek shook himself from his angry reverie and unhooked the vox handset from his squad-mate's pack.

'Danzek to all vehicles, maintain course and speed,' he said.

The far side of the hard-packed speedway drew closer, visible now clearly beyond the blackened hulks of crashed greenskin speedsters and cannibalised Imperial tanks.

'Contact,' came Sergeant Vence's voice over the vox. 'Single xenos aircraft, high up and moving fast north to south.'

Danzek was out of his restraints the moment he heard her words, popping the Chimera's turret hatch and staring up into the bruised sky. He kept the vox horn in one hand. Sure enough he saw the plane, little more than a faint black cross high above. A bomber, he thought, by its silhouette.

'Sharp eyes, Sergeant,' Danzek voxed. He kept his voice level, projecting calm he didn't feel. 'All drivers flank speed, combat dispersal, be prepared for evasive manoeuvres.'

Hymnal weaved between the shattered wrecks of old vehicles as it raced for the rocky slope that would bring them out of the speedway. Sergeant Outren's Chimera, *Defensor,* sped ahead of Danzek. Behind raced the Tauroxes *Wages of Faith* and *Courageous* – between them carrying the Arch-pedant and his acolytes – Vence's Chimera *Grox*, the column's macro-hauler

and finally Sergeant Oleg's Punisher *Emperor's Mercy*. Danzek paid the vehicles scant notice; he could trust his soldiers to do their duty. Instead he split his attention between the aircraft high above them and the distant cloud of dust and smoke growing to the north.

'Sir, what–'

Danzek shook his head, silencing Bastric's question. The lieutenant felt horribly exposed, out in the open at the mercy of what could only be Ork vehicles racing closer by the moment. He stared at the aircraft as though he could will it to fly on and ignore them. Greenskins were sloppy. If the Emperor was with the armoured column, this one might soar right over their heads and never notice, never radio back to report their presence to its comrades.

The tanks roared headlong across the speedway.

The rocky escarpment drew closer.

The Ork plane flew on.

Danzek only realised he was holding his breath when *Hymnal*'s tracks bit into the upslope, and he released it in a rush.

'There has been entirely too much running scared these past days,' he muttered to himself, watching the plane as it dwindled to a speck. Looking north he could see the dark cloud drawing closer; it was still mercifully distant.

Danzek dropped back into the troop bay.

'I think we're clear,' he said in answer to the questioning looks of his Command Squad.

'Ork plane,' said Gunner Henders. 'If it'd seen us, it would have dived down to take a potshot. Wouldn't it?'

The only answer was the rumble of the Chimera's treads as it bore them onwards into the wastes.

The Cadians watched the skies, the horizon and their auspex screens, keeping their weapons close to hand. Yet as evening drew in and the tanks rolled on through the gloaming, no attack had come. Lieutenant Danzek ordered his soldiers to stand down and begin the usual pattern of ration consumption, medicae treatments and sleep rotations. He himself snatched a few hours' sleep, waking to the sound of grit rebounding from the hull of his transport as it ploughed tirelessly through the dust ocean.

He accepted a tasteless ration slab from Bastric, sipping brackish water from a hollow-sounding canteen as he read the night sentries' reports. The column had stopped once, briefly, to afford the tanks' machine spirits a little respite. Otherwise, the night had been uneventful.

'Dust storm blew in maybe an hour ago, but we've been lucky,' said Bastric as he chewed on his own ration slab. 'It's moving parallel to the highway. We're skimming its southern edge.'

'And no more sign of the Orks,' said Danzek, sipping dirty aqua and wishing for recaf.

'None. Emperor willing we–'

The Chimera lurched as though a giant had kicked it and rang with a muffled boom. The last of Danzek's water splashed the ceiling as *Hymnal* reared and he was thrown against the hull. A hot flush of pain shot through him, stealing his breath.

Hymnal slammed back down and Danzek was flung forwards, colliding with Gunner Poldyn. The two of them fell in a tangle of limbs, and fresh pain blossomed in Danzek's skull as his jaw hit the metal deck with a crack.

His head swam. The world dimmed then came back, too sharp and full of an agonising din that pierced his skull like an augur.

'Report,' Danzek gasped, pushing himself to his feet and spitting blood.

'*Defensor*'s gone,' barked Bastric, who had been lashed into his restraints and was already hunched over his vox set with the earpiece clamped to his skull.

'Gone?' repeated Danzek, feeling detached and dizzy.

'Ork bomber, sir, dropped out of the stormwash and buzzed the column,' said Bastric. 'Sergeant Oleg reckons his Punisher winged it before it could clear its run, sir.'

Danzek blinked furiously, trying to clear the lights that were blooming across his vision.

'Any sign of additional enemy contacts?' he asked.

'None, sir,' replied Bastric.

'Crew recovery for *Defensor*,' began Danzek, but Bastric looked up at him, expression grim.

'There was nothing left but a crater, sir. And they're a half mile back by now.'

Danzek felt like things were happening faster than his dulled wits could follow.

'Damn it, understood,' he said, then took the vox horn. 'This is Danzek to all vehicles. Disperse formation and watch for threats, airborne and ground. Drivers, maintain combat speed and heading.'

'Contacts bearing nine-three-eight, four-four-one,' barked Bastric, and the hull rang again, this time with the insistent hammering of bullets.

Gunner Poldyn grabbed a lasgun and sighted through its scope.

'Ork light vehicles swarming up from the south, sir. Couple of dozen, sandwiching us between them and the storm.'

'Throne,' spat Danzek. He grabbed a lasgun and saw through its optics the xenos vehicles swarming towards them. They were racing parallel with the tank column and angling closer by the moment. Blue-painted jalopies and crude speedsters muscled between sleek dragsters and heavier trucks that swarmed with Ork crew. The brutes bellowed with excitement and fired pintle weapons whose fire stitched across the Imperial line. Danzek flinched as shots rang along *Hymnal*'s flank. Poldyn fell back from her lasgun with a cry, hands flying to her eyes as spall lashed her face. Medicae Tydus dropped down beside her and tried to staunch the flow of blood.

'All vehicles, do not slow or turn to address. Gunners, repelling fire,' Danzek ordered. He heard the scream of mutlilasers letting fly. They were joined moments later by the rattling howl of the Punisher's cannon, and Danzek felt a stab of satisfaction as he watched the storm of las and shot tear into the Orks. A buggy exploded and cartwheeled through a mob of bikers, scattering them into the dust. A volley of shots hit a dragster's energy weapon in its glowing guts and it imploded with a sudden and catastrophic crack. Danzek cried in triumph as the blast erased the dragster, several vehicles around it, and a sizeable chunk of the desert floor. A hurtling speedster plunged into the sudden pit and landed grille-first before exploding.

'More of them behind us,' Bastric said. 'Cadia's ghost, there's more ahead. Sir, they've encircled us.'

'Is it the ones from the speedway?' asked Gunner Henders, manning another lasgun.

'Oh Throne, my eyes,' moaned Poldyn, as Tydus repeated 'It's alright, just be calm, just be calm, the Emperor protects.'

'Greenskins converging fast from right flank and rear,' said Bastric. 'Contacts showing as heavier armour ahead, sir, They're slowing, forming a roadblock.'

A runic chime sounded insistently through the Chimera's interior, pulsing in time with the ringing in Danzek's head. Henk, he realised angrily, trying to open a vox link, no doubt to issue shrill demands that Danzek somehow make the greenskins vanish.

Danzek's eyes widened.

'All drivers, hard left,' he ordered over the hammering of gunfire and the ringing of shots against the hull. 'Into the storm.'

'Sir, the winds inside those dust storms have been recorded in excess of two hundred miles per hour,' said Bastric. 'We could be dashed to pieces.'

'And if we maintain our current heading we'll be encircled and torn apart,' said Danzek as *Hymnal* swung hard left and jounced off the highway into the dust and rocks. 'If there's one thing the last days have taught me, Bastric, it is that to fear dangers unknown over those before us is to invite disaster.'

Poldyn screamed in pain as the Chimera lurched violently. Tydus swore and fumbled in his medi-pack for a sedative ampoule. The storm winds closed around them like a monster's jaws and *Hymnal* shuddered as the gales battered it.

There was an explosion from their rear, the blast so ferocious that it sounded as though it was right outside their hull.

'They got *Emperor's Mercy*,' came Sergeant Vence's voice over the vox, barely audible above the cacophony of gunfire and the scream of the wind.

'Specifics,' snapped Danzek.

'A massive Ork on some sort of trike!' Vence replied, sounding breathless. 'He plunged right into the storm behind us and put a claw through the Punisher's engine block!'

'Confirm, multiple Ork vehicles pursuing into the storm,' said Bastric, hanging onto his restraints as *Hymnal* juddered. Something clanged against the Chimera's hull, hard enough to leave a dent.

'Sir!' a new voice broke over the vox, strangled with panic.

'Identify,' barked Danzek.

'Sir, this is trooper Basloch, *Wages of Faith*,' came the voice. Henk's transport, thought Danzek, his blood running cold. 'Sir, the Arch-pedant and his acolytes, they've turned on us!'

'They've what?' snapped Danzek, incredulous.

'They wouldn't go into the storm, sir, went mad with fear,' gasped Basloch. Danzek realised he could hear pain in the man's voice. 'Henk grabbed… my sidearm and shot Driver Yans when he wouldn't turn… around. I've sealed off the… driver's compartment to keep them out, but…' Basloch broke off to cough.

'Sir, *Wages of Faith* has stopped. *Courageous* is doubling back to it. The Orks are all over them,' reported Bastric, the vox operator hunched over his auspex and looking stricken. Danzek felt the pounding of blood in his temples. Orders be damned, he would drag Henk out of that Taurox and shoot the man himself.

'*Hymnal*, *Grox*, on my mark turn and converge on *Wages of Faith*–' began Danzek. A chorus of screaming and oaths from the vox interrupted him. Danzek and Bastric locked eyes as they listened to Gunner Basloch's agonised cries, which died to a gurgle then cut out altogether.

'They're overrun, sir, the Orks have encircled them and ceased pursuit,' said Bastric. 'If we turn back, we'll be going straight into the teeth of the greenskins against twenty-to-one odds. The storm hasn't deterred them one bit.'

Danzek ground his teeth so hard he thought they would crack. The Tauroxes could have gotten clear, if Henk could just have controlled his fear. For a moment he considered turning back anyway, a last vainglorious charge in the name of duty. Then he thought about the lives in his hands, two Chimeras still packed with brave Cadian soldiers and a mass conveyor laden with the supplies they would need to make it back to safety. The war for Vigilus would need every able warrior the Imperium could muster.

Gunther Henk – the Arch-pedant – and his cronies were dead, and quite likely so was Danzek once the Commissariat got ahold of him.

It didn't matter now.

He knew what he had to do.

'Leave them,' he ordered over the vox. 'Aquila formation and push east. We make for Hyperia. The butcher's bill for this debacle will rise no higher.'

Lieutenant Danzek sank back in his restraints as *Hymnal* forged on through the howling wrath of the storm and the Orks were left in their wake. He shook his head.

Coward, Danzek thought angrily. In that moment he could not have said if the thought was aimed at Gunther Henk, or at himself.

Nine Days Later

Trooper Fenzil stood atop the ramparts of Bastion 563-8 and watched the battered transports approaching. A pair of Chimeras in Cadian colours, blackened and salt-etched so badly that Fenzil was amazed they were still running. The tanks flanked what could generously have been called a macro-hauler, but which was barely more than rolling scrap.

'Yes sir, that's correct,' said Fenzil into his vox as the vehicles approached, wincing at the clipped and irritable responses from his superior officer. 'Yes sir, he says his name is Lieutenant Danzek. Supposedly they were escorting some Munitorum bigwig across the reach from Oteck… No sir, no sign of an official missive to that effect, but then word out of Oteck has been…. no sir, I understand, not our place to… I understand sir. Yes, as you command.'

Trooper Ghyvan shot Fenzil a look.

'Captain doesn't care who they are or what they were supposed to be doing,' said Fenzil. 'We're to get an Enginseer on those tanks and rations into the Cadians, then get them back on the line.'

'Told you he'd say that,' said Ghyvan, risking a glance skywards and visibly paling. 'Nothing else matters now, does it?'

'Not now, no,' replied Fenzil, expression grim.

As the Chimeras limped to a halt in the shadow of the Bastion, Fenzil made the sign of the aquila and took a breath to steel himself. Above, the sky burned with contrails and eldritch light. The storm was about to break.

The Despoiler had come to Vigilus.

WARHAMMER 40,000

THE WARLORDS OF VIGILUS

The Imperial world of Vigilus is at war, assailed on all sides by aliens and heretics. Carnage and mayhem reign as battles rage across the planet's surface. The warring factions of Vigilus need heroes to lead them to victory – luckily, we've found four of them!

Welcome, one and all, to a Tale of Four Warlords… the Vigilus edition! As is ever the case with this long-running series, we have assembled a crack team of four keen hobbyists to build and paint new armies for us to feature in the pages of White Dwarf. Models will be painted, games will be played, dreams will come to fruition and, in the fullness of time, four excellent armies will be admired by all.

And so begins a Tale of Four Warlords!

DID YOU KNOW?
A Tale of Four Warlords first appeared in White Dwarf back in 1997. There have been seven incarnations of the series since then, with this being the eighth. How will these warlords match up to their predecessors?

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The premise is simple – four keen hobbyists have a year to build and paint an army of their choice. Regular readers may recall that in previous editions of a Tale of Four Warlords we gave our hobbyists just six months to build their armies. This time around, the challenge is bi-monthly, giving our hobbyists more time to paint their models and play games with their burgeoning collections (and maybe take a day off here and there – we're not completely heartless).

SAM PEARSON

Sam Pearson is one of the games developers for Warhammer Age of Sigmar, but decided to trade his goreaxe in for an autogun so he could paint a Genestealer Cults army for this challenge. With a range of exciting new miniatures available to him, Sam's spoilt for choice. He has descended into his underground lair to ponder his choices.

JAMES GALLAGHER

Warhammer 40,000 games developer James Gallagher loves anything to do with tanks and guns. As a former Studio army painter, he knows how to get armies painted quickly to a high standard. Following the release of Haarken Worldclaimer, James has thrown in his lot with the Chaos Space Marines of the Black Legion.

A TALE OF FOUR WARLORDS

As with previous years, we encourage you at home to join in, too. Many Warhammer stores, independent stockists and gaming clubs like to run a Tale of Four Warlords alongside the series in the magazine, so why not ask them if they're planning anything this time around?

THE FOUR WARLORDS

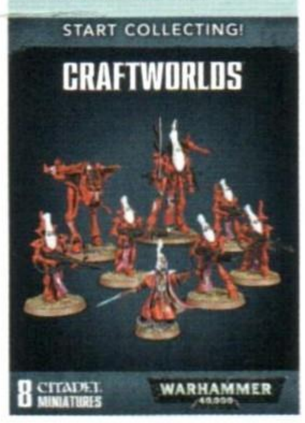
For the Vigilus edition of a Tale of Four Warlords, we've picked four people who all love different aspects of the hobby, be it modelling, painting, gaming, background or a little bit of everything. They're going to set their own challenges as to what they want to achieve each month – if you're playing along at home, why not take them up on their challenges? If you do, make sure you send us some pictures of your models, we'd love to hear from you: **team@whitedwarf.co.uk**

So who are our four Vigilus warlords? They are: games developers Sam Pearson and James Gallagher, Forge World miniatures designer Mark Bedford and Warhammer World Studio manager (and former warlord of the Mortal Realms back in 2016) James Karch.

Each of our four warlords is approaching the challenge in a different way. James Gallagher is planning to build a new army of Chaos Space Marines to dominate the battlefields of the 41st Millennium, while Mark is taking the opportunity to build an Ork Speedwaaagh! featuring loads of converted Ork vehicles. James Karch – the all-rounder of our team – wants to start a Raven Guard army from scratch, putting plenty of time into painting them really well and, hopefully, taking them to a few Warhammer World events. Sam, meanwhile, already has a small Genestealer Cults army but, with the recent release of all the new models, wants to add a whole lot more to it. Who were we to stop him? Turn the page to find out what our warlords are planning...

START COLLECTING!

One of the best ways to start a new army is with a Start Collecting! box or even a boxed game such as Dark Imperium. These sets are perfect for a challenge like this, as they contain a great selection of units for you to build, paint and try out on the battlefield.



MARK BEDFORD

'Waaagh! Dakka dakka dakka! Where's da loot?' These were just some of the words miniatures designer Mark Bedford used when we asked him to join in our challenge. A fan of the Orks for many years, Mark wanted to take this opportunity to join the Speedwaaagh! on Vigilus with an all mechanised Ork force.

JAMES KARCH

Some say that Warhammer World Studio manager James Karch is permanently immersed in the hobby, be it playing games, painting models or reading the latest Black Library novel. A fan of all things power-armoured, James has decided to paint an army of Raven Guard Space Marines for this challenge.

SAM PEARSON | GENESTEALER CULTS

BEWARE THE CULT OF THE FOUR-ARMED EMPEROR

Sam is unusual amongst the warlords in that he's adding to an existing army for this challenge. He plans on making his Genestealer Cults army considerably larger over the next year.

With the recent release of all the new Genestealer Cults kits, Sam has decided to expand his existing army, which currently sits at around 1,700 points. 'A Tale of Four Warlords is a great opportunity to add to an existing collection,' says Sam. 'I'm thinking of pushing my army to around 3,000 points – a proper cult invasion force. I love the new Atalan Jackal models – the Cult bikers. My plan is to build and paint an Outrider Detachment of them led by a Jackal Alphus – that way I can use them independently of the rest of my army if I want to. I'm also thinking of adding a few Tyranids to the army when it gets larger – I painted three Zoanthropes a while back in the same colours as my cult troopers. I think it would be great to collect a unified Tyranid-cult army.

'One of the other reasons I wanted to take part in a Tale of Four Warlords is because I want to play more narrative games. Vigilus is such a great setting for story-driven missions and campaigns and I've already bought the Killzone: Sector Munitorum set so that I can make some scenery for my cult, kind of like their home turf, to play games of Kill Team over. I'm hoping to get some tips from Warhammer TV's Chris Peach on how to add cult icons and posters to the containers.'

The new Atalan Jackals have inspired Sam to expand upon his existing cult force with a Detachment of fast-moving outriders.

'I've already bought the Killzone: Sector Munitorum set so that I can make some scenery for my cult, kind of like their home turf.'

Here you can see part of Sam's existing Genestealer Cults army, including some of his infantry, a Rockgrinder and a brood of Purestrain Genestealers from the Space Hulk boxed game. Reinforcements are inbound!

JAMES GALLAGHER | BLACK LEGION

THE HERALDS OF THE DESPOILER

Known for collecting Orks, Necrons and loyalist Space Marines, James has thrown in his lot with the forces of Chaos to start a Black Legion army. He is already plotting the downfall of Vigilus.

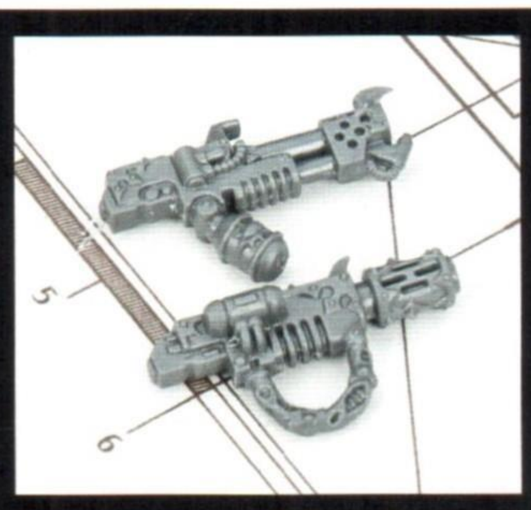
Chaos Space marines play a major part in the Vigilus storyline, so it was no surprise that one of our warlords chose to collect an army of them for this challenge. 'It was a toss-up between the Black Legion and the Night Lords for me,' says James. 'I really love Aaron Dembski-Bowden's series of Night Lords books, but I decided on the Black Legion for two reasons. Firstly, they're the iconic bad guys in Warhammer 40,000 and they've got a great story that's really compelling. Secondly, I don't see many armies of them around apart from the Studio collection – I thought it would be nice to do my own take on them. Thirdly (I know, I said two reasons...), there's Haarken Worldclaimer – a new Black Legion character.

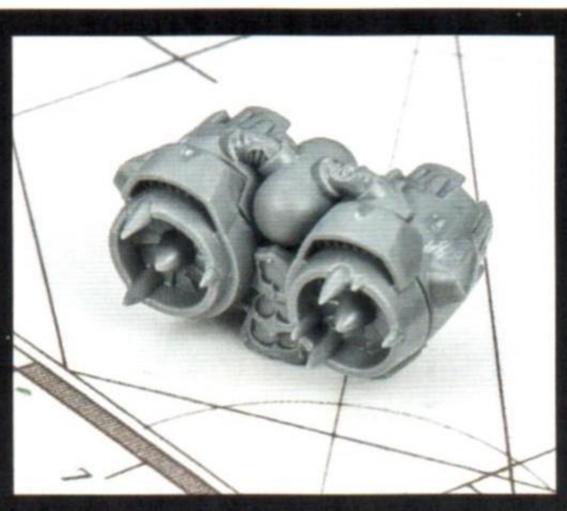
'My goal with a Tale of Four Warlords is similar to Sam's – I want to build up my army in Detachments, starting with an Outrider Detachment of Haarken and a load of Raptors, and then a Vanguard Detachment of Abaddon and Terminators. And, of course, I'm looking to get plenty of games in with them, too! My top tip for painting Black Legion – should you wish to join the Black Crusade – is to spray the models Retributor Armour, paint all the gold trim, then fill in the armour panels with Abaddon Black.'

Haarken Worldclaimer is the first model James has painted for his Black Legion army.

'I painted him standing on a fallen Blood Angel, with red as the spot colour across the model,' says James. 'That'll teach those foolish loyalists.' James swapped the fallen Blood Angel's shoulder pad for a spare pauldron he took from the Death Company sprue.

'They're the iconic bad guys in Warhammer 40,000 and they've got a great story that's really compelling.'





Like Sam, James has picked a Fast Attack choice as his first painting challenge. 'I have kept the jump packs and some of the weapons separate to make painting them easier,' says James.

MARK BEDFORD | ORKS

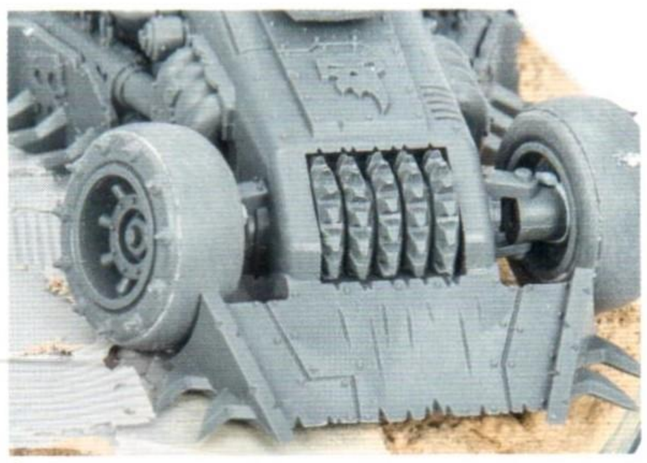
START YER ENGINEZ FOR DA SPEEDWAAAGH!

When it comes to Warhammer 40,000 armies, Mark Bedford has painted pretty much all of them. Now, with a host of new buggy models available, Mark had turned his attention back to the Orks.

Mark Bedford has painted quite a few Orks over the years, but he's starting afresh with this challenge. 'I love Orks – they're one of my favourite armies to collect and paint,' says Mark. 'There are just so many kits to choose from and infinite possibilities when it comes to converting your models – one of my favourite aspects of the hobby.

'My idea for this army is based around the Vigilus Speedwaaagh! Imagine loads of Ork vehicles in a massive rolling convoy, with all the Boyz mounted up and bikes racing around everywhere. I think there are loads of options for converting with this army and I've already managed to get my hands on a few of the new Ork vehicles (see right).

'I've decided to paint my army as Deathskulls – blue and green make for a really strong, bold colour scheme. I like the idea of them racing around stealin', lootin', burnin' and shootin'. I think some Kill Team games with Burnas hunting for fuel depots would be a really characterful way to start off my challenge.'



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Mark has built his Shokkjump Dragsta racing up and around a ruined sheet of corrugated metal as if it's taking a tight corner. 'I turned the front wheels on their axle so it looks like the Dragsta's turning **(1)**,' says Mark. I also canted the back wheels in a bit to give the impression of immense weight at the back of the vehicle **(2)**.' To make painting the model easier, Mark has kept the crew separate so that he can paint the dashboard **(3)**.

'There are just so many kits to choose from and infinite possibilities when it comes to converting your models.'

Mark tried out his Deathskulls colour scheme on the Megatrakk Scrapjet, the first model for his new Speedwaaagh! As is traditional for Mark, the Scrapjet is heavily weathered with dust, oil and other unmentionable grime.

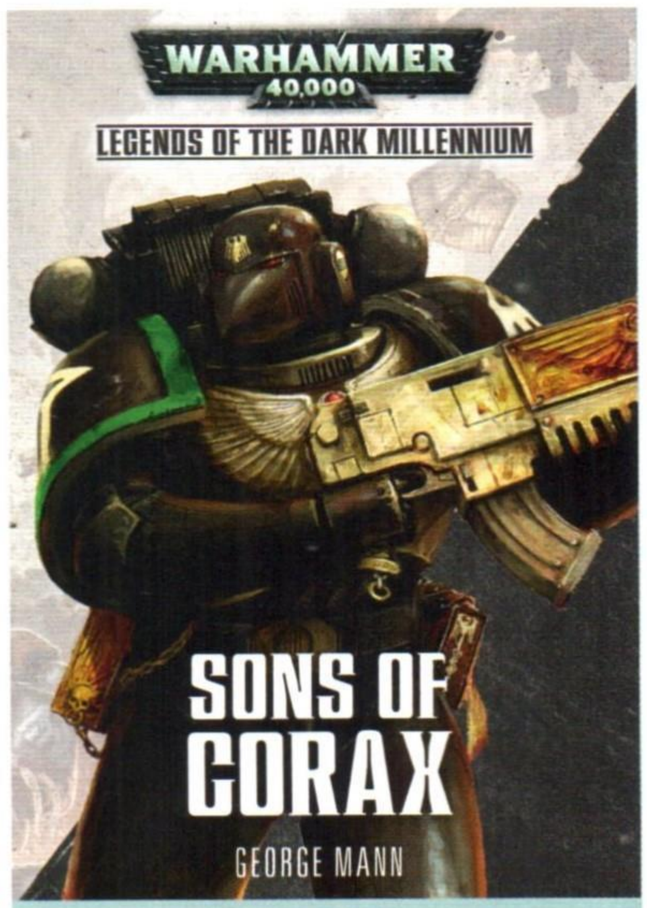
JAMES KARCH | RAVEN GUARD

THE NOBLE SONS OF CORAX

It's fair to say that James Karch is quite a fan of Space Marines, having painted Sons of Guilliman, Space Wolves, Mentors and White Scars over the years. Now he's turned his attention to the Raven Guard.

James has converted his first squad of Reivers by adding tiny bird skulls that he pilfered from the Thousand Sons kit to their chest armour.

To make painting the skull masks and bare heads easier, James had kept the models' heads separate. They are currently held on with adhesive putty.



LITERARY INSPIRATION

'I get a lot of my inspiration from Black Library novels,' says James. 'They give me cool ideas for conversions, paint schemes and suchlike. I read *Sons of Corax* recently, which is why I decided to paint a Raven Guard army for this challenge – I liked how they fought in the novel and they have an interesting style of warfare.'

James is our dedicated defender of the Imperium in this edition of a Tale of Four Warlords. A fan of all things power armoured, James has set his sights on the Raven Guard for this challenge.

'I've read a few Black Library novels recently that feature the Raven Guard, and the stories were what inspired me to paint an army of them,' says James. 'I want to create a fast-moving scouting force based around Primaris Reivers, which I think epitomise the swift, stealthy style of warfare that the Raven Guard are known for. I'll probably start with a Vanguard Detachment, then add in a few characters before building the army up to a Battalion-sized force.

'For the models themselves, I want to try a few minor conversions (you can see them above) to help reinforce the iconography of the Raven Guard. I've found that there are quite a few tiny bird skulls and icons on the Thousand Sons sprue that would look great on the Raven Guard. Even better, they're all optional or spare parts, so I don't have to cannibalise another kit to make use of them – I just need to find a few Thousand Sons players who are willing to part with the contents of their bits boxes. As for painting, I haven't quite settled on how to paint my Raven Guard yet – I've painted a test model (see right), but I might change it. Watch this space…'

THE TEST MODEL

'I tend to paint my Space Marines quite neatly with fine edge highlights on the armour panels,' says James. 'That's what I've done with this test model, but I might try out a few more styles before I commit fully. I'm aiming for a monochrome colour scheme, possibly with a bit of weathering to show that these Reivers have been in the field for a while.'

BLACK ARMOUR

- Abaddon Black
- L Base
- Rhinox Hide
- M Glaze
- Dark Reaper
- S Layer
- Fenrisian Grey
- XS Artificer Layer

METALWORK

- Leadbelcher
- M Base
- Nuln Oil & Nuln Oil Gloss
- M Shade
- Leadbelcher
- S Layer
- Stormhost Silver
- XS Artificer Layer

SKULL MASK

- Mechanicus Standard Grey
- M Base
- Agrax Earthshade
- M Glaze
- Mechanicus Standard Grey
- S Layer
- Mechanicus Standard Grey & Screaming Skull
- S Layer
- Screaming Skull
- XS Artificer Layer

ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE OF A TALE OF FOUR WARLORDS? WHY NOT SEND US SOME PICTURES OF YOUR FIRST MODELS?

GUARDS OF THE EMPEROR

This army of Vassal Knights from the Legio Invigilata Titan Legion was painted by Damien Pedley. Over the next few pages, we chat to him about painting, converting and playing games, accompanied by plenty of pictures of his Imperial Knights.

The Legio Invigilata, also known as the Emperor's Guard, are a loyalist Titan Legion hailing from the Forge World of Voss Prime in the Segmentum Solar. Like many Titan Legions, the battlegroups of Legio Invigilata are often accompanied to war by banners of Imperial Knights, some of which diréctly serve the Legio as a Vassal House, rather than an autonomous force. Such is the case with this army of Imperial Knights painted by Damien Pedley, which he painted to join his ever-growing Imperial army based on Armageddon. We asked Damien to tell us more about himself and his impressive collection.

WE NEED YOU!

Do you have a beautifully painted army that you would like to see featured in the pages of White Dwarf? Or perhaps you know someone who has a stunning collection of models? If so, we would like to hear from you!

team@whitedwarf.co.uk

How long have you been in the hobby, Damien?

I've been painting since about 2009, I think. In that time, I've gone from utter hobby novice to winning a Golden Demon a few years back – it's been quite a journey.

That's quite an achievement!

I put a lot of time and practice into painting to as high a standard as possible. But I re-evaluated my approach to the hobby about five(ish) years ago and stopped painting for competitions. I prefer to focus my attention on all aspects of the hobby rather than just painting – I'm a collector, modeller, converter, painter and gamer. I love it

Above: The Vassal Knights of the Legio Invigilata arrayed for war. The army's general is the Knight-Atrapos *Kolobos* on the far left of the picture.

all! Since taking a more relaxed approach to painting, I've found far more joy in my personal hobby, albeit far less joy in my bank statement, as now I'm painting entire armies rather than just one model a month…

What is your favourite army to paint?
So far, I'd say it has to be my Inquisition and Talons of the Emperor force. All the models are pretty individual, so I can really push the boat out quality-wise when it comes to painting and converting them. Though I have recently started a Nurgle army for Warhammer Age of Sigmar – the Golden Demon I won was for a Nurgle model, so it sort of feels like I'm revisiting an old friend.

We've featured some of your Astra Militarum in White Dwarf before – what was your plan with this new army of Imperial Knights?
Well, it's all part of the Armageddon army that I've been working on over the last few years, which includes Steel Legion, Inquisitorial forces, a Titan and now these Knights. With the Knights, I was motivated more by painting than anything else. Painting such large models offers up unique challenges and helps me learn new techniques – there's nothing quite like a bit of practical trial and error when it comes to learning. I also liked the idea of them as a vanguard for my Adeptus Titanicus forces. Dan had the pleasure/misfortune (*I'd say pleasure, my T'au army might say otherwise…* – *Dan*) of playing against my Reaver Titan *Danol's Retribution*, but I still have the Warlord Titan *Bane Sidhe* to build and paint. My long-term goal is to paint all of the Legio Invigilata Titans that featured in the Battle of Helsreach (as mentioned in the Black Library novel *Helsreach*).

Are your Knights from a particular house?
They are not from a specific house per se. My army is based around the idea of Titan Legions requesting households to provide Knights to march into battle alongside their forces; sometimes, as in the case of my army, these Knights will then be permanently seconded to the Legio, taking on new heraldry to reflect that (*you can read more about Vassal Knight Houses in last month's issue of White Dwarf. – Ed*).

DAMIEN PEDLEY
Damien has been a regular contributor to White Dwarf over the years. His Steel Legion army was featured in Warhammer Visions and turned up again in a mini Battle Report back in 2014.

PAINTING THE KNIGHTS OF THE LEGIO INVIGILATA

'My first bit of advice when painting Imperial Knights is to always paint the armour panels separately from the skeleton,' says Damien. 'I use an airbrush for a lot of the armour panels, masking bits off, spraying them, then masking those bits off to apply the next colour. Once I've applied the transfers, I gloss varnish all the armour panels, then wash them with watered-down burnt umber oil paint – a trick I learned from the *Forge World Model Masterclass* books. I dry the oil paint off with a hairdryer, then take a lint-free cloth and buff the panels, starting in the centre of each panel and working towards the edges, gradually reducing the amount of pressure I'm applying. This not only shades the recesses of the panels, but also gives a lovely aged feel to the armour.'

METAL SKELETON

- Warplock Bronze – Basecoat
- Leadbelcher – Overbrush
- Runefang Steel – Drybrush
- Agrax Earthshade, Nuln Oil & Lahmian Medium – Wash
- Runefang Steel – Drybrush

RED ARMOUR

- Rhinox Hide – Basecoat
- Mephiston Red – Airbrush
- Flash Gitz Yellow – Airbrush
- Bloodletter & 'Ardcoat – Layer

BRONZE TRIM

- Warplock Bronze – Basecoat
- Retributor Armour – Drybrush

BLACK ARMOUR

- Abaddon Black – Basecoat

BONE WHITE

- Balor Brown – Basecoat
- Ushabti Bone – Airbrush
- White Scar – Airbrush

'The chipping on the armour was achieved using Runefang Steel applied with a small piece of sponge,' says Damien. 'I carefully dab it onto the edges of armour panels and areas where wear and tear will occur, trying to be as random as possible. You can use a brush for this, but the effect can end up looking a bit too uniform.' You can see the effect quite clearly on the armour of the The Knight Gallant, *The Headsman*, below.

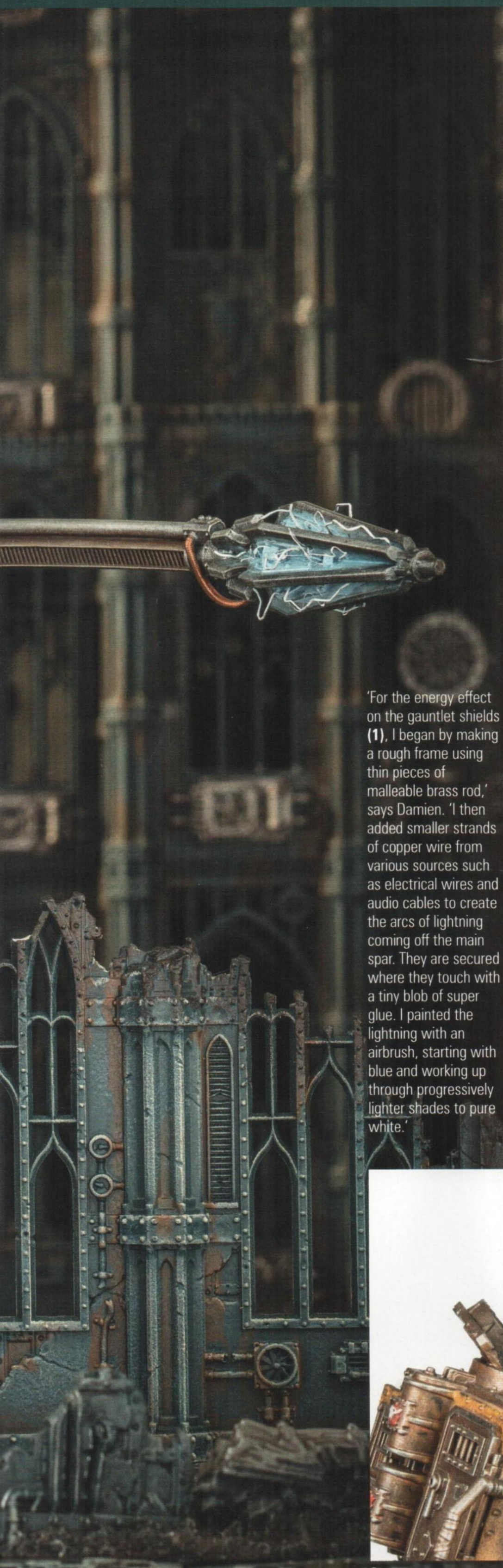
Damien converted his Knight Gallant using components from Forge World's Questoris Knight Magaera, including the carapace, shoulder plates, greaves and groin plate.

CERASTUS KNIGHT-ATRAPOS – KOLOBOS

The Cerastus Knight-Atrapos is the commander of Damien's Knight force. 'It's a tough beast, the Atrapos,' says Damien. 'It has a few more wounds than a regular Knight, not to mention an ionic flare shield, which can even protect it in combat – perfect if you plan to use it as your general. The Atrapos' lascutter also has a really short range, so it's almost inevitable that it will end up in combat at some point in the game.' Damien painted the weapons of the Atrapos differently to all the other guns in his army to make them stand out and to show their ancient heritage. Damien also painted a bone-white stripe along the centre of the model's carapace to mark it out as the leader of this banner of Knights. Kolobos' personal heraldry can be seen on his right shoulder pad and on the inside of his left greave.

THE HEROES OF ARMAGEDDON

'I've always loved Armageddon as a setting for games of Warhammer 40,000 – humans against Orks, it's a classic match-up,' says Damien. 'When I started my Astra Militarum army a few years ago, I started by painting Steel Legion troopers (converted from Death Korps of Krieg models) and I got the idea of basing them on roadways and ruined industrial areas, like they were fighting on the outskirts of the hive cities. When I started painting an Inquisitorial force, I based them in the same way and used similar colours on the models. When I painted my Reaver Titan a few years ago, I picked the red, black and bone-white colour scheme for the Legio Invigilata – not only did it fit the colour scheme of my other Imperial models, but Voss Prime (the forge world where the Legio is stationed) happens to be pretty near to Armageddon. They feature in a few Black Library novels about the Third War for Armageddon, so there's plenty of scope for creating stories around my Knights when they fight battles against Orks.'



CERASTUS KNIGHT-LANCER – GUNGNIR'S WRATH

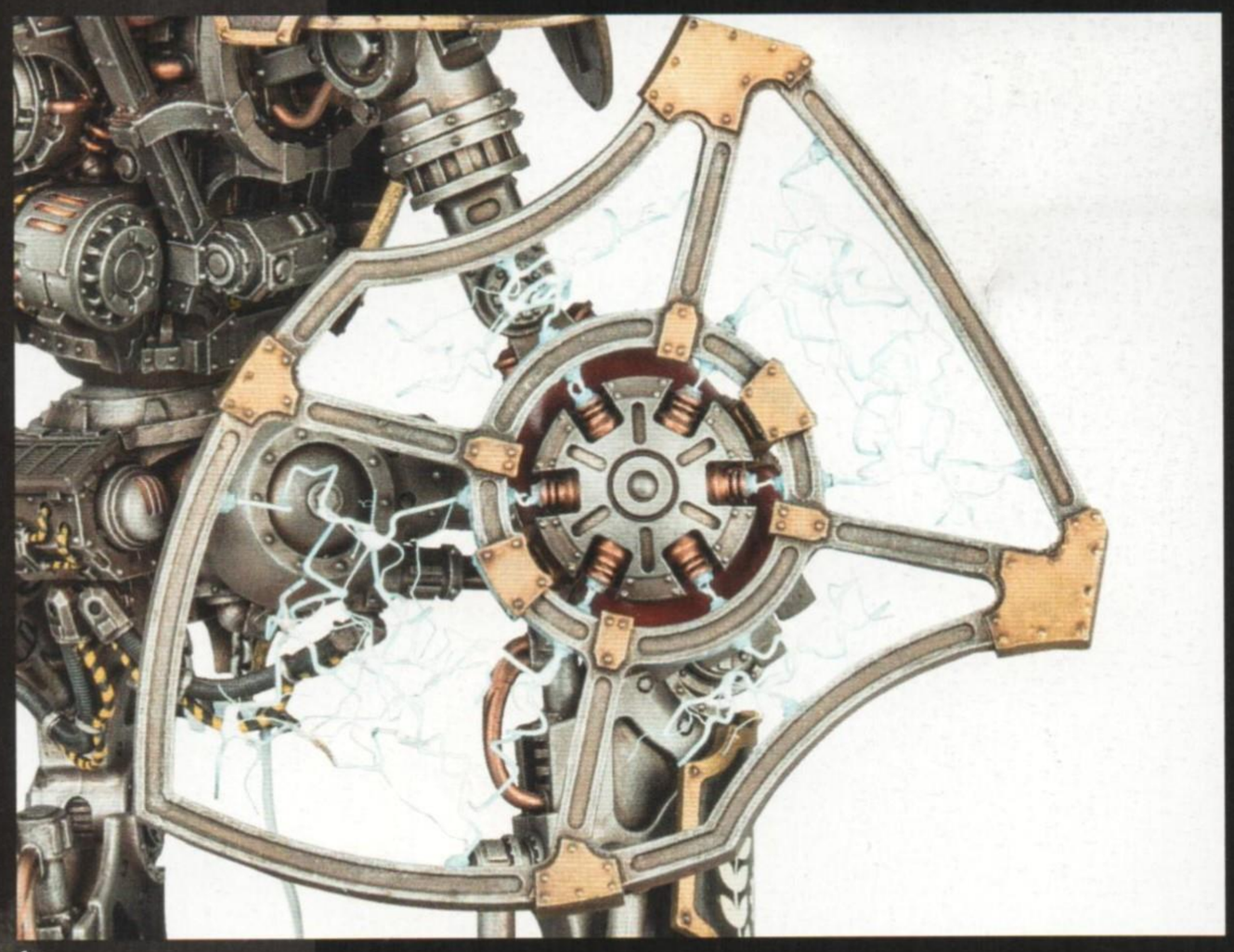
This Knight-Lancer is one of Damien's most converted models, featuring lightning effects on the shock lance and gauntlet shield and a diorama base. 'I like creating models with a sense of motion,' says Damien, 'The Knight-Lancers (*Iapetus* is charging full tilt at the enemy, while *Gungnir's Wrath* is standing victorious over a mangled Ork Battlewagon) were built with virtually no conversion work – the kits are that posable. The running Lancer has a steel rod fitted through the base into his leg for support, though.

'For the Porphyrion (over the page), I had to cut away a bit of the endoskeleton on one leg and make some spacers for the shin armour on the other to achieve its striding pose. It also has a steel rod running through the base into the leg because it's a little front heavy – most of the model's weight is on that front leg.

'When building models in dynamic poses, or any large models, really, I find that dry fitting the parts is a must. Adhesive putty is your friend in this – measure twice, cut once, as my grandad used to say.'

'The Knight-Lancer leads the charge in most of my battles, so it seemed only fitting that he was the one to get the trophy.'

'For the energy effect on the gauntlet shields **(1)**, I began by making a rough frame using thin pieces of malleable brass rod,' says Damien. 'I then added smaller strands of copper wire from various sources such as electrical wires and audio cables to create the arcs of lightning coming off the main spar. They are secured where they touch with a tiny blob of super glue. I painted the lightning with an airbrush, starting with blue and working up through progressively lighter shades to pure white.'



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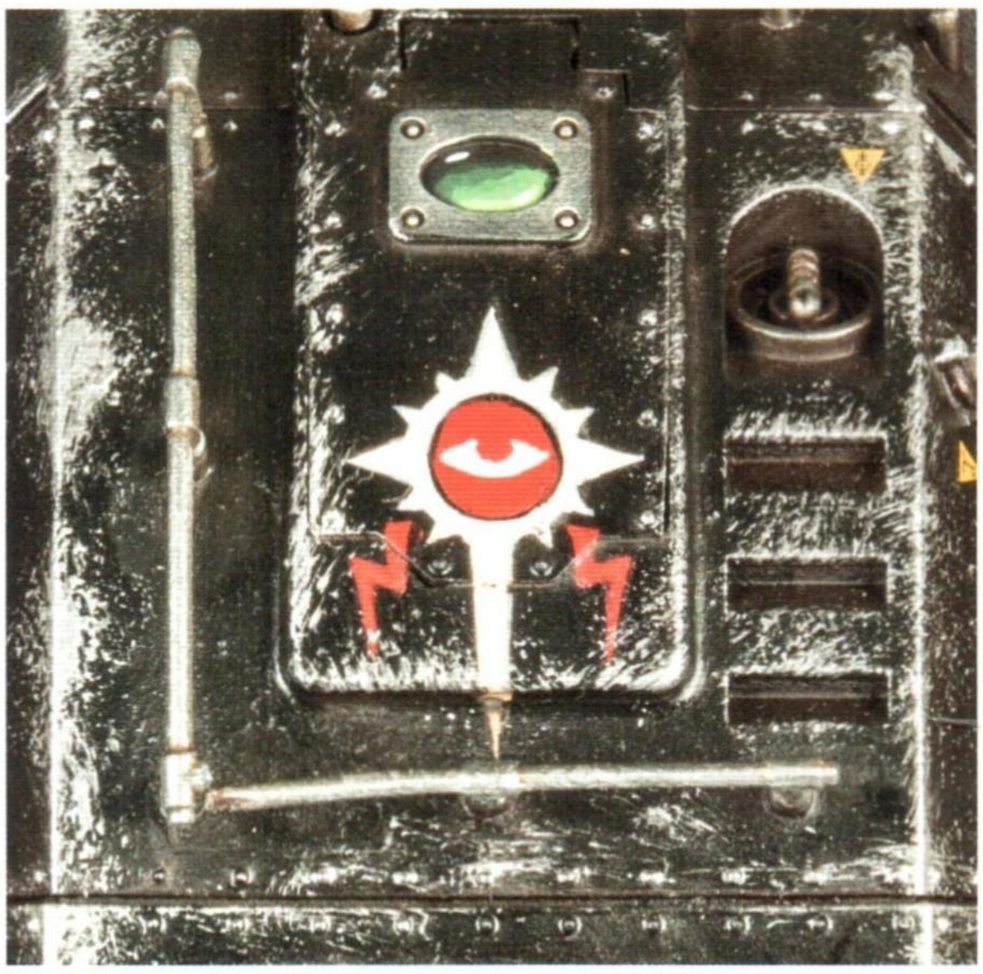
Damien acquired an old Ork Battlewagon kit, which he disassembled (in a suitably Orky fashion) and modelled into the base of his Knight-Lancer **(2)**. The weight of the Knight standing on the vehicle's roof has caused one side of the Battlewagon to sink into the mud around it. 'The Knight-Lancer leads the charge in most of my battles, so it seemed only fitting that he was the one to get the trophy,' says Damien.

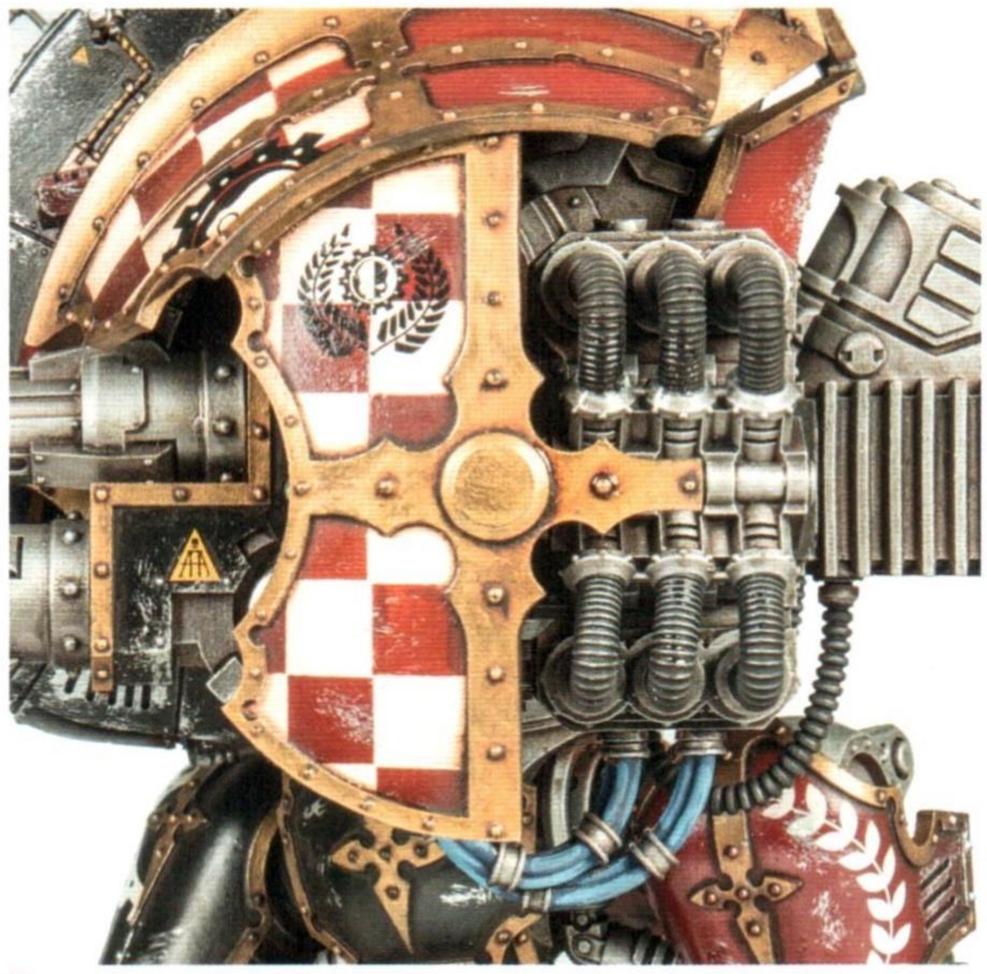
THE RUINS OF ARMAGEDDON

'The bases of my models are made from all manner of stuff,' says Damien. 'I use Styrofoam for the larger walls, cork tiles for the roads, bits of broken plaster for rubble, car body mesh for fences, Warhammer 40,000 building kits, plastic pipes, watch cogs and, the secret ingredient – mud. Cook it in the oven for an hour and you have some great basing material. I get as much fun from building bases as I do from painting the models that stand on them, especially when they're as big as the one for the Porphyrion.'



1

'The Legio Invigilata symbol **(1)** is all freehand,' says Damien. 'I break it down into smaller, simpler shapes rather than trying to tackle it as a whole. I start with a white circle, then paint a white cross through it, using the tips of the cross to paint the long white triangles that form the cardinal points. Then I added in the white triangles. The last stages are painting a black circle in the centre of the icon, followed by a red one inside that, then the lightning bolts and, finally, the eye.'



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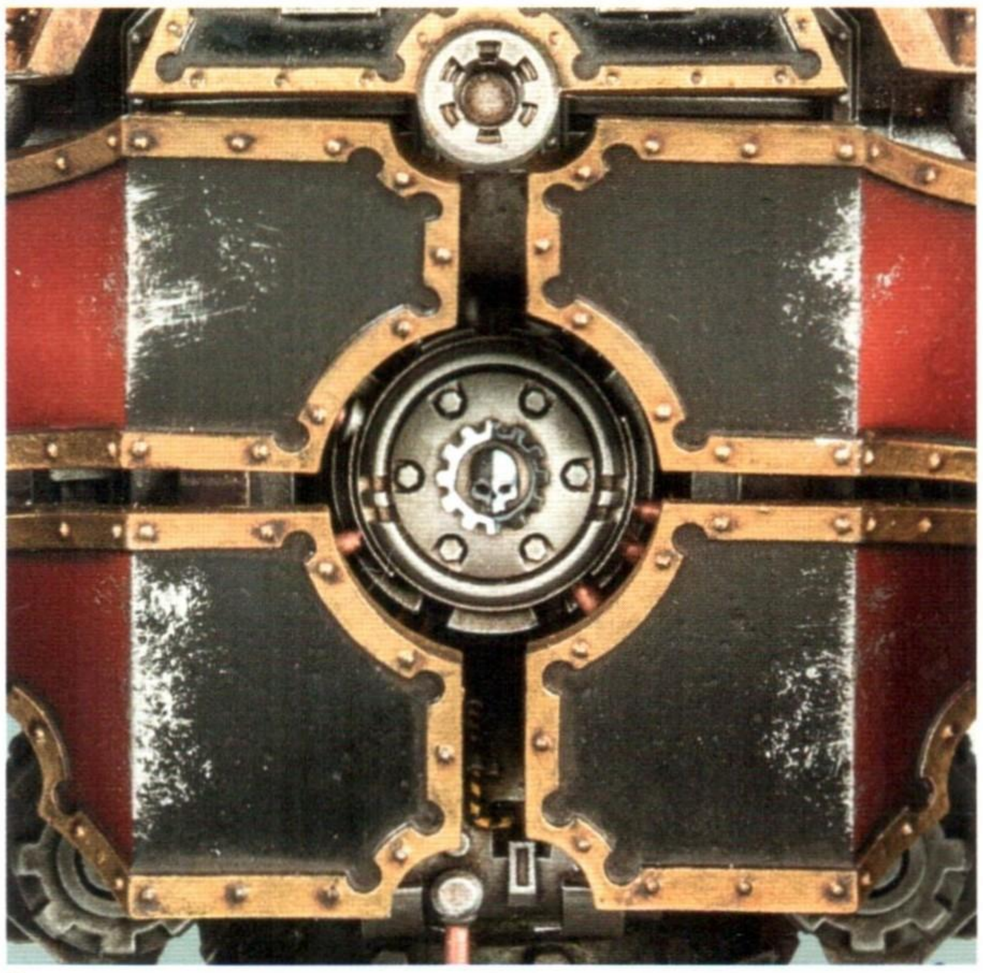

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Damien uses squares of masking tape to help create the checker pattern **(2)** when he airbrushes his Knights.

Here you can see the weathering on the armour panels around the reactor core **(3)**.

Damien made and printed off tiny versions of Warhammer 40,000 posters, which he stuck to the walls of some of the buildings on his models' bases **(4)**. He then weathered them to match the scenery.

4

How did you come up with the colour scheme?
The colour scheme is the same as the one I used for the Legio Invigilata, which was based on what limited information I could find in Black Library novels that featured the Legio. Essentially, black, red and bone-white. Not having a huge amount of information was actually a blessing, as it meant I had a little more creative license to paint them how I liked.

'There was this one time when an Ork Stompa ran away from my Knight-Atrapos, then blew up...'

What is your favourite army to play games with?
I love all my armies, but I value the opponent more. Having a nice, fun person on the other side of the table is all that matters. What I have found, though, is that playing a game with only six Knights is very quick. Packing them up is also far easier than a hundred guardsmen!

TOP PAINTING TIPS

'If you're applying transfers to your models, I would suggest varnishing the model first – it helps the transfer adhere to the surface,' says Damien. 'Once you've applied the transfer, varnish it again to make sure the transfer stays on. Then apply any weathering such as dirt, scratches. Lastly, varnish the model once more to protect it when you're gaming.'

What sort of games do you like to play?
I play quite regularly at my local gaming club, but I also frequently travel to Warhammer World for Throne of Skulls events; both doubles and singles. They are perfect events in my opinion because there's not such a focus on destroying an opponent's army like there can be at serious gaming tournaments. Most people I've played against have been really decent people and great hobbyists – in the fifty or so games I've played at Warhammer World events, I've rarely had a bad one. Personally, I prefer doubles games in general, tournament or not, because there's more banter to be had with everyone round the table.

Do you have any fun war stories of using your Knights in battle?
There was this one time when an Ork Stompa ran away from my Knight-Atrapos, then blew up and caused a chain reaction, detonating one of my other Knights, which in turn wiped out a load of Orks. Dan did tell the team about that game, right (*erm...* – Dan)? I think a rematch is in order now that the Orks have their new codex.

WARHAMMER 40,000 ROLEPLAY

WRATH & GLORY

WRATH & GLORY

The galaxy has been torn in half by the Great Rift. On one side lies the Imperium Sanctus. On the other is the Imperium Nihilus, where thousands of planets and trillions of people are cut off from the light of Holy Terra. In this broken starscape, heroes and villains will rise.

Hold on to your Munitorum-issued helmets, recharge your lasgun clips and make sure you've got enough ration packs for your next mission because there's a new Warhammer 40,000 roleplaying game on the scene – Wrath & Glory by Ulisses North America. Of course, this is huge news for all of us who love roleplaying games (or who secretly wish they were a Space Marine), as now we can delve into the darkest depths of the 41st Millennium like never before. We asked Ulisses team members Timothy Brown and Ross Watson to tell us all about Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay: Wrath & Glory. On a roll of a 4+, you may read on.

'The Dark Imperium offers a perilous setting that is in dire need of heroes.'

Why did you decided to make a Warhammer 40,000 roleplaying game?

Ross Watson: The universe of Warhammer 40,000 is a unique and compelling setting, one that presents a particularly good backdrop for stories of various themes. Courage and honour, horror and despair, adventure and heroics, grit and grime. Warhammer 40,000 has had a significant impact on the roleplaying hobby, with games such as Dark Heresy, Rogue Trader and Deathwatch, but there is still so much of the 41st Millennium that hasn't yet been explored. Wrath & Glory provided an opportunity for Ulisses North America to create a new game system and a new approach to roleplaying in the grim darkness of the far future – one where many of the interesting races, factions, and other groups could take centre stage.

Timothy Brown: We're always on the look out for great opportunities, and what opportunity is greater than getting involved with a new edition of Warhammer 40,000 Roleplay! Honestly, when I first heard we might license the roleplay game, I thought someone was playing a joke on me, and when we landed it, the little boy inside me jumped for joy! I've been a fan of Warhammer 40,000 for an embarrassingly long time! We gathered the team, looked at how we might 'clear the decks', and re-shaped ourselves to make it happen. It was a perfect fit for our team, our ambitions, and our future plans.

So you were already fans of Warhammer 40,000 before you started work on Wrath & Glory?

Ross: I've been a devoted fan of Warhammer 40,000 since the late 90s, when some friends introduced me to the tabletop miniatures game during my time in the US Army. Since then, I've painted and played with over a dozen different factions. I read tons of Black Library novels and I've even written for some Warhammer 40,000 video games (such as *Battlefleet Gothic: Armada*). It is safe to say that, for me, Warhammer 40,000 is one of my favourite games around.

Timothy: I started with Warhammer Fantasy Battles back in **<decade redacted>** – I had all manner of armies back in the day. Space Hulk got me into the Warhammer 40,000 universe, and I wore out quite a few brushes on Tyranids and Space Marines. So yes, the hobby aspect of Warhammer 40,000 was already right up my alley.

What are your favourite aspects of the Warhammer 40,000 universe?

Ross: What speaks to me the most about the Warhammer 40,000 setting are the characters and the background – don't get me wrong, the armies are awesome, but I love discovering more about why and how these armies fight. Battles to me are always more epic when I understand what is at stake in the conflict. I find minor characters such as Prince Yriel pretty fascinating – I want to know more about him, his followers, his ships.

Timothy: I'm a setting guy, and there's no sci-fi setting quite like Warhammer 40,000. I try to keep one foot planted in the realistic – 'that which might be possible' – but I was easily tempted toward the more fantastical and grim nature of Warhammer 40,000. It's just too compelling. The art drew me in, and the lore grabbed me.

Why did you choose the Imperium Nihilus as your setting for the game?

Ross: The Dark Imperium offers a perilous setting that is in dire need of heroes. This is a place where the threats are more dangerous, the

GETTING STARTED

If you're new to roleplaying games, the Wrath & Glory starter set is a great way to get playing. It includes a quick start rulebook, pre-generated character sheets, battlemaps, dice and acrylic character tokens. To find out more, head over to www.UlissesNorthAmerica.com.

TIMOTHY BROWN & ROSS WATSON

Timothy is the President and Chief Operating Officer for Ulisses North America while Ross is the Wrath & Glory Product Line Manager. Who better to ask about this awesome new roleplaying game set in the 41st Millennium?

horrors more fearsome, the risks higher. Also, the Dark Imperium is unique in that the planets there are in even more serious danger from attack, corruption, and invasion as they are cut off from the wider Imperium. This means those worlds must rely on the forces that are already there to protect them and, when they're not available, groups of defenders that may not normally work together. In the Imperium Nihilus, Eldar stand side-by-side with humans, while Space Marines fight alongside Skitarii, to name but a few.

'A roleplaying game allows a player to 'zoom in' from the army scale warfare they're familiar with...'

What will fans of the tabletop game get from playing Wrath & Glory?

Ross: Many of the models in a typical Warhammer 40,000 army are a great fit for adventures in the Dark Imperium – a favourite commander, specialist, or even a regular trooper could form the basis for an interesting character in Wrath & Glory. We give a tabletop player the opportunity to delve deeper into the setting beyond the usual confines of the battlefield, enabling them to explore ancient ruins, negotiate tense alliances, and investigate unexplained mysteries. A roleplaying game allows a player to 'zoom in' from the army scale warfare they're familiar with to look at the story of an individual warrior struggling to survive in the 41st Millennium.

Timothy: They'll immediately sense the similarity in game systems, and that's a big plus. Enormous battles are thrilling, no doubt, but the roleplay game parts the curtains to everything going on behind and beneath that – the intrigue and backstabbing, the greed and wrath, the many tales that lurk on the fringes of every battlefield. It's a way to utilize and experience one's miniatures in an entirely new and exciting way, which is something I personally really enjoy.

Are there any game mechanics Warhammer 40,000 gamers will recognise?

Ross: The game system should be very familiar to players of the tabletop game of Warhammer 40,000. Characters have Wounds, Strength, Toughness, and other statistics – these all function similarly to the tabletop game, though they are not exactly the same. Perhaps most importantly, tabletop players will find that Wrath & Glory characters possess abilities that match the essence of those archetypes from Warhammer 40,000 – Commissars are fearsome, Sisters of Battle help resist corruption, and Eldar Warlocks have access to impressive psychic powers.

SEEMS FAMILIAR...

If you already play Warhammer 40,000, you'll recognise a lot of the terminology in Wrath & Glory. Weapons have the same traits, for example (such as being considered heavy or assault weapons) and keywords are used to define the nature and allegiance of a character or creature. Many special abilities take advantage of matching or opposing keywords, such as a Ministorum Priest's Fiery Invective only working on characters with the Imperium keyword.

CHOOSE YOUR HERO

The character creation rules in Wrath & Glory offer a wide array of options and the flexibility to build a character to fit your imagination. If you want to be an Ork Kommando or an Aeldari Corsair, you can be!

Once you've picked your character type, you'll find that there's a virtually infinite number of options for customising them (and who doesn't like spending an evening creating a roleplaying character?). You can choose new attributes for your character, new skills, talents, wargear and special abilities. You can even establish a background for them, which will give you minor benefits in-game. It's fair to say that there's quite some depth to character creation!

What types of characters can you play as?
Ross: Wrath & Glory has a very wide variety of characters you can play as – the core rules have four different races and thirty-two archetypes. Humans, Orks, Aeldari, and Space Marines are all playable races, and the archetypes include a wide range of options, including well-known characters such as Commissars and Space Marine Scouts, plus more unusual characters like Sisters Hospitaller. The Imperium is well represented, of course, but we also have archetypes for Scum and Chaos Renegades as well.

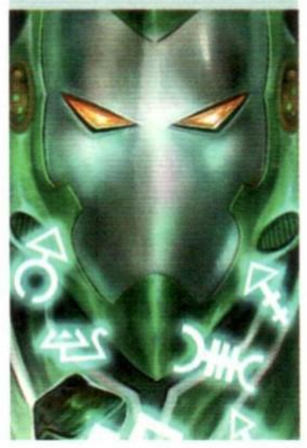
Timothy: I can't say enough how excited I am about bringing more playable races to a Warhammer 40,000 roleplaying game. I get to play as an Aeldari Ranger! For me, this is the standout feature of our new game.

What sort of situations will players find themselves in and what enemies will they face?
Ross: The Dark Imperium has no shortage of dangers – bloodthirsty Orks, sinister Genestealer Cults and Daemons of Chaos are just a few enemies that lie in wait for characters in Wrath & Glory. As for the situations, the only limit is your own imagination! In Wrath & Glory, the first step is to come up with your framework – a term that covers who the characters are, what they're doing, and why. Wrath & Glory allows you to create campaigns of various different power levels and themes, ranging from a band of Imperial Guardsman in over their heads behind enemy lines, all the way up to a team of veteran Deathwatch Space Marines facing a Tyranid invasion. We have a default setting – the Gilead System – and a starting framework that makes your characters a warband under the direction of a powerful Rogue Trader, seeking out and dealing with threats to that system's worlds.

'Wrath & Glory allows you to create campaigns of various different power levels and themes.'

What's it like being a gamesmaster for a Wrath & Glory game?
Ross: One of the design goals for Wrath & Glory was to keep the necessary information simple and up-front. As a gamesmaster, the focus then stays on the narrative and the characters, giving them important choices to make, which will then affect the outcome of the story. We have several tools to help keep all the reference materials handy, such as our card decks for critical hits, complications, and psychic powers. That material is also in the core book, and we have an extensive chapter about building adventures in

WHAT ELSE?
If just playing a Warhammer 40,000 roleplaying game wasn't enough for you, Wrath & Glory also offers such wonders as vehicle rules that enable (one could say 'encourage') players to carry out daring stunts and high-octane scenes. You can engage in deadly voidship combat and your character might even suffer the effects of warp travel – crossing the immaterium in such dangerous times can be a pretty harrowing experience for all concerned.



WARHAMMER 40,000 ROLEPLAY

WRATH & GLORY

A UNIVERSE BROUGHT TO LIFE

The cover art for the Wrath & Glory core book (seen earlier) and the *Dark Tides* adventure anthology (shown here) were illustrated by Diego Gisbert Llorens. Diego is no stranger to Warhammer, having illustrated pieces for the Realmgate Wars books, the Damocles campaign series and the Black Library audiobook *Martyrs of Elysia*. It's fair to say that he captures the dark and forbidding world of the Imperium Nihilus perfectly.

THE DANGERS OF THE WARP

As you'd expect from a game set in the Warhammer 40,000 universe, not every character will get to the end of a Wrath & Glory adventure. One of the more insidious ways to depart the game is through Corruption, the slow and painful deterioration of your character's mental and physical wellbeing by the taint of Chaos. Over the course of an adventure, a character can become more and more corrupted, moving from pure through to tarnished, contaminated, tainted and defiled. If, by this point, they're somehow still trusted by their fellow adventurers, they have one chance left before they devolve into a Chaos Spawn. The moral of the story: look after your character's wellbeing – heretical tomes, talking about Chaos and staring into the warp aren't good for them.

the Warhammer 40,000 universe, including advice on bringing out the themes and tropes of that setting.

What's the replayability like – how many stories can you create from the core game?

Ross: RPGs are, by their nature, almost endlessly replayable. The Wrath & Glory core rules present a number of different frameworks to bring your characters into the Warhammer 40,000 universe – you can play through the Gilead System adventure, serve the Inquisition in a series of missions, act on behalf of the Craftworld Aeldari – there are many options. We've even created a framework for the Orks. And, of course, you can come up with plenty of your own as well.

'Every scrap of lore is fodder for a roleplaying situation. Every story and every character....'

Timothy: That question goes right to the core of the roleplaying experience. Every scrap of lore is fodder for a roleplaying situation. Every story and every character, their actions, motivations, and the nuances of every tale can plant a seed for a roleplay adventure. What better reason to bone up on the details of Warhammer 40,000 lore than to prepare new stories for your roleplaying group? The more ideas you have, the more opportunities you have for campaigns. And, of course, we'll be adding to the game, too, with new expansions such as *Dark Tides* – you'll never run out of resources!

BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

The opening story to Wrath & Glory is written by none other than Black Library author Aaron Demski-Bowden. It gives you examples of the sorts of heroes and champions you can expect to find in the game, including a down-on-his-luck bounty hunter, a skilled Magos Errant, a grim Space Marine from the Absolvers Chapter, an Assassin serving the Inquisition and even an Aeldari Ranger, all brought together by a powerful Rogue Trader.

What expansions have you got planned? If you can tell us, of course!

Ross: We have lots of great expansions for Wrath & Glory on the way. First up, we have an Imperium Nihilus campaign set, focused on the Dark Imperium. This set offers plenty of new player character options, additional wargear and vehicles, an in-depth look at the Gilead System, and a series of linked adventures that deal with a rising threat linked to the Dark Mechanicum. After that, we're taking a look at the mysterious Craftworld Aeldari, with a campaign set all about this enigmatic and deceitful alien race.

Timothy: Ross is our Warhammer 40,000 guru, plain and simple, and he's bursting with ideas for products going forward. What he's listed here just scratches the surface of what we've pondered and discussed in countless meetings and conversations. The existing lore is vast, as any Warhammer 40,000 fan knows, and we're very excited to present it for roleplaying fans for many years to come!

GREEN IS GOOD

OR 'WEAPONS OF MODERATE DESTRUCTION' OR 'BOMBS AWAY!' OR 'THE GOBLIN PLAYBOOK'

Goblins have a long and proud history of being quite terrible at Blood Bowl. Individually, they are not very good. Collectively they are not much better! They sneak weapons onto the pitch, which invariably get them sent off. They employ Trolls, who lose their concentration at really, really crucial moments. In fact, the only thing a Goblin coach can rely on is their unreliability! We sat down with Blood Bowl coach extraordinaire Paul Gegg, and while he picked his nose, we picked his brain for the secrets to sneaky success.

Goblins are a lot of things to a lot of coaches, but what they really are is lots of fun. With bombs, ball & chain swinging fanatics, chainsaw wielding loonies – and indeed Goblins – flying around the pitch, games are never dull. Some believe that this fun comes instead of being competitive, that this is the price to pay for being wacky. Sure, they are not a top-tier team or anything close, but their reputation for being really, really bad and the preserve of only loonies (chainsaw wielding or otherwise) is perhaps a little undeserved. So let's have a look at how a Goblin coach can get a bit more juice from these cheatin' varmints.

Like all teams, success ultimately comes down to numbers. They might be small, but if they can put more players on the pitch than their opponent, their chance of a successful drive or even a touchdown increases. Goblins, however, are very easily damaged so their best plan is a combination of causing maximum damage whilst preserving the more squishy and valuable players behind less squishy ones.

And Goblins have the weapons to do this – with their Trolls, their swarming numbers and, for want of a better term, their actual weapons...

TROLLS

Arguably the most stupid players to ever take to a Blood Bowl pitch (and that is saying something!), what Trolls provide is muscle. A Strength characteristic of 5 ensures that, with two offensive assists, you can maximise your block dice against the average Strength 3 player – improving your chances of knocking a player down and reducing the chance of a Troll-related turnover. And let's not forget Mighty Blow, adding to the likelihood of keeping an opposition player down. Three-dice blocks and blitzes with the Trolls are a key part of achieving success.

In addition, an Armour Value of 9 and the Regeneration skill ensures these guys stick around. But for all this resilience, they do need taking care of, because they are Really Stupid. This isn't an insult, it's a statement of fact – Trolls have the Really Stupid 'skill' and this can cause them to forget about the game altogether! The support they provide is crucial to the rest of the team, so keeping a team-mate close to help with their Really Stupid rolls is very important. An experienced coach will often not activate their Trolls at all if broadly happy with the job and position they have found themselves in. Failing a Really Stupid roll at an inopportune moment can often leave the poor old chaps hoping to hide behind a Troll in a pickle (and then the infirmary)!

GOBLINS

Common Goblins don't have a lot going for them. But they do possess the Dodge and Stunty skills, giving them ample chance of dodging out of harm's way and hiding behind the Trolls. As a drive plays out, having decent numbers of these guys left can allow for a layered defence, often enough to screen a Goblin who hopes to make a break for the End Zone with the ball. A Goblin team should never allow the opposition to perform too many blocks, and this is especially true early in a drive, so dodging clear of opposition players, away from blocks and into a position to slow them down, is often the best tactic. In the absence of a particularly blitz-worthy opponent, blitzes should prioritise opposition players that are marking Goblins, further reducing the dodges needed for them to get out of harm's way.

Goblins are also cheap, so teams often have a deep bench of expendable and interchangeable players in reserve, at least at the start of a game. They can – and must – put the boot in. A prone opponent, especially one not near friends, can be gang-fouled and potentially removed from play. Ideally, Goblins should be fouling high value opposition players, but, quite frankly, there are not too many opponents that are lower value than a Goblin (in many provinces it is actually a criminal offence to leave a prone Wardancer un-fouled). Goblin coaches also enjoy half-price bribes, encouraging officials to look the other way. Which brings us nicely on to the particularly fun bits...

SECRET WEAPONS

Chainsaws are thankfully (and quite rightly) a staple of Blood Bowl today. And no one relies on them as much as Goblins. For the most part, they are the only players that should be performing a blitz other than the Trolls. They can use a team re-roll (without needing to worry about the Loner skill) and the +3 on Armour rolls can and should play havoc against more lightly armoured opponents. Attacks on heavily armoured opponents should be made with discretion, as a failure to take an opponent down will often mark the sad end of said Looney. An ideal situation is to use a Looney and then be able to protect them from retaliation, perhaps with the Trolls screening them.

Opponents may well play more defensively whilst a Looney is lurking, so it can sometimes be wise to keep them away from trouble, waiting for the opportunity to pounce. Late in a drive, the chainsaw-wielder is also a good player to foul with as their +3 to Armour rolls still counts against Prone opponents, and the chainsaw may be seconds from being sent off anyway.

Bommas are possibly the most random player on the team. They can accurately throw a bomb up to

six squares on a 5+, which is quite a big ask, but provided they don't fumble it, an inaccurate bomb can still cause havoc! The threat can be very disconcerting to a slow moving opponent – and they may play very differently whilst the Bomma is taunting them from behind a wall of pals. However, great care must be taken to avoid knocking team-mates down, and an intercepted or caught bomb often spells total disaster when thrown back! It is for this reason that Bommas have limited value on offence and are best kept for defence. Even then, they should be used judiciously rather than wantonly.

The last of the weapons is the Fanatic. These guys are deadly and synonymous with Goblin mayhem. Their movement is random, but it can be managed and they provide key additional blocks to whittle away the opposition. Alongside the Trolls, they also provide a wall for the regular Gobbos to hide behind – and quite frankly are an all-round headache for opposing coaches. A wise opponent will prioritise knocking a Fanatic down given half a chance, so this means not careering off into enemy territory in search of more blocks, and sometimes even moving back towards safety, to provide a threat in a later turn. Don't be afraid of a movement that could end up hitting a friendly Goblin. Don't make a habit of it, obviously, but the chances of causing a Turnover are relatively low.

Whilst these weapons are popular with Gobbos and fans alike, they are not overly popular with keen-eyed referees. Up to three Bribes can be purchased by Goblin teams, and at half the cost other teams pay they are of great use, helping to keep the mayhem on track. The challenge lies in being able to afford them in the first place through careful Team Value management. Once induced, use both Bribes and the available players wisely. There is no long term advantage in using all of the Bribes on one drive, only to lose all the players after the next one.

THE KILLER CONTRAPTIONS

All Secret Weapons have their specific purpose – and the same is true "the killer contraptions".

The Pogoer comes with additional movement and a pogo stick that gives them the Leap and Very Long Legs skills. They are the quickest player on the team and can leap on a 3+ although a dodge or two with Dodge is likely safer and preserves team re-rolls.

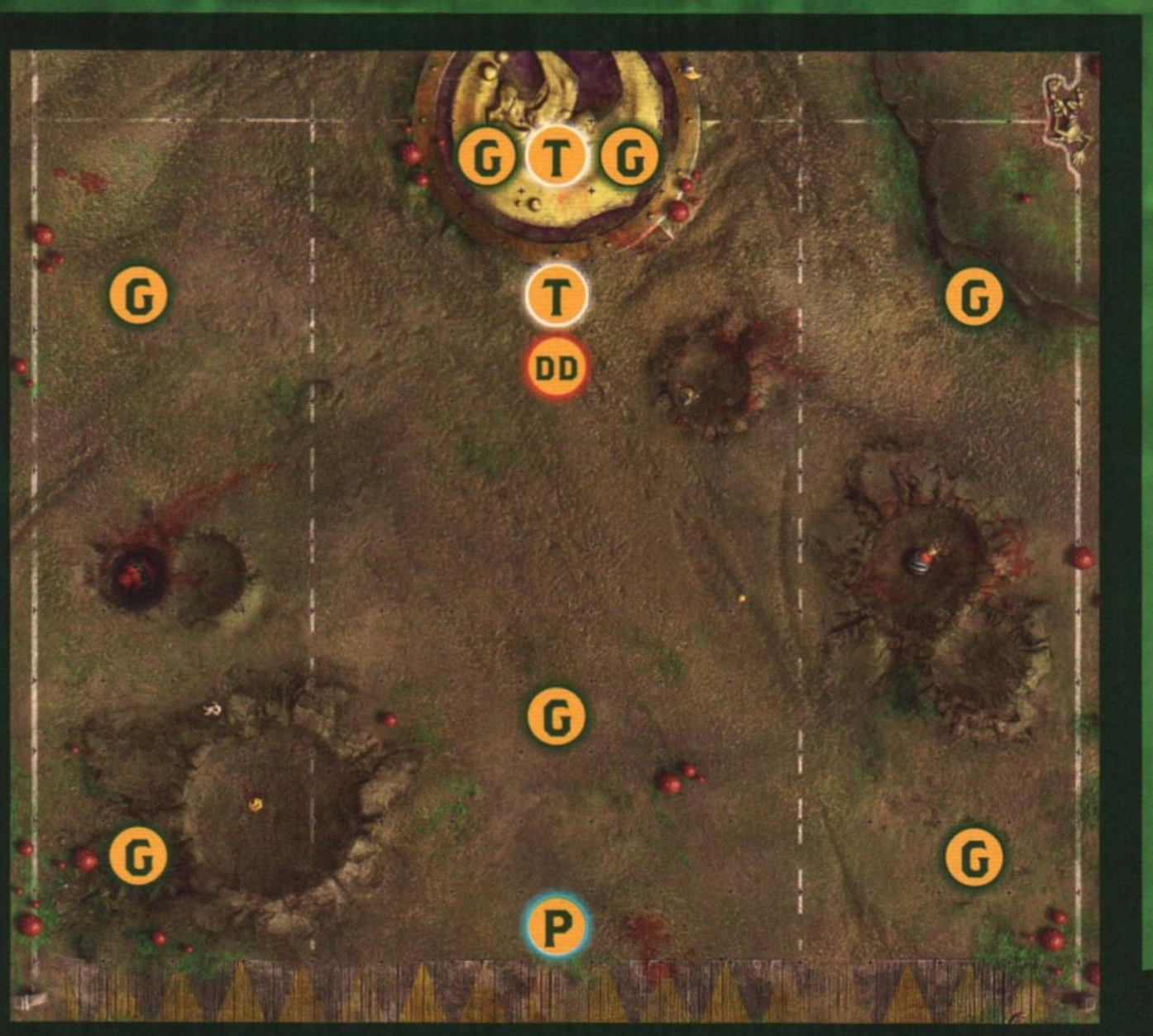
The 'Ooligan's main value is getting the crowd agitated and involved. The +1 FAME can help with winning re-rolls (and preventing opponents getting them) as well as encouraging a handy Pitch Invasion or a well-timed rock to an opposing player's head. They also have Disturbing Presence which can be very off-putting to those trying to pass the ball or return intercepted bombs.

The Doom Diver is a one-trick Gobbo if ever there was one. Lacking Dodge and not able to ignore tackle zones when dodging, a Doom Diver is only ever going to be much use for scoring super quickly. The Doom Diver is a player ideally held in reserve until the opportunity arises to try for the fabled One-Turn Score.

THE ONE-TURN SCORE

For other stunty teams, this is a bit of nonsense at the end of a half – and far more likely to fail than succeed. A coach has to worry about the kick being short enough for the score to be on, hoping for a pick-up and hand-off to a potential scorer, for the Big Guy to throw the ball carrier downfield and then a helpful scatter and land. This is where a Doom Diver comes into their own, as they can reliably be expected to swoop forward and even land with poise, rather than scattering backwards and landing in a heap. This means the Doom Diver can be set up further back, massively increasing the amount of squares that can reached to recover the ball and get it to the winged hero.

The set-up below ensures that only the most awkward of kick-offs will stifle the attempt. Note the Pogoer as the deepest player due to its movement. A pick-up and hand-off to the Doom Diver shouldn't be too tricky for even the most incompetent Gobbos. The Troll will hopefully launch the Goblin six squares from the Troll's square – and with three forward scatters, the Goblin will be in range. A 3+ to land (unless tackle zones add to the difficulty) and a score is on the books. Huzzah!



KEY

G Goblin T Troll DD Doom diver P Pogoer

Without the Doom Diver it's much, much harder as the Troll's throw will just as likely cause the potential scorer to scatter out of range, rather than towards the End Zone. This means setting up the Trolls and scorer on or near the Line of Scrimmage – and therefore placing all potential ball-gatherers much closer to the soon-to-be launched, or maybe lunched, Gobbo. A deep kick will now scupper the chance, but, hey, that's Blood Bowl.

Throwing Goblins is not only the preserve of the One-Turn Score, of course. A good defence may keep a well-organised Goblin offence out of range of a regular score. Never fear, if a Troll can remember what it is doing, a score is still on. Throwing Goblins is not only reserved for attempting to score either. Desperate times can lead to a Troll throwing a Goblin at a cage, hoping for a direct hit on the ball-carrier or at least a cage corner. The Doom Diver is particularly accurate at this – but is perhaps best left in reserve for scoring, rather than hoping to injure other players and risking injury in turn.

STARTING GOBLIN ROSTER

With so many positionals, they are many ways to start a team. Two Trolls, a Fanatic, a deep bench of Goblins and at least three team re-rolls are a must. Beyond that, there are multiple options. This roster is fourteen players strong and probably leaves your Team Value low enough to get a Bribe in the first game (although three Secret Weapons need to be managed carefully):

2x Troll
1x Fanatic
1x Looney
1x Bomma
1x Doom Diver
8x Goblin
3x Team Re-rolls
Total: 930,000 gold pieces
Treasury: 70,000 gold pieces

There are not a lot more things to buy – an 'Ooligan and a Pogoer can replace retiring or deceased Goblins and an Apothecary has tremendous value to save Trolls, or Goblins that gain an Agility increase or a useful double skill (like Block). The team shouldn't fill all sixteen roster spaces. It's sensible to leave space for a Star Player to be hired and to keep Team Value slightly low to help with Petty Cash to Induce them.

SKILLS

The Goblin team has a record number of positionals, but the absence of General skill access means choices are fairly limited when considering player progression.

Guard and Stand Firm are good skills for Big Guys, meaning they retain maximum annoyance and keep others around them protected. In the early days Juggernaut can also be very useful on a Troll, massively reducing the chance of a hilarious blitzing failure. It also means Trolls can be allowed to Blitz with only two block dice, preventing the inevitable damage to Goblins who had hoped to assist but are left high and dry when the Troll forgets what it is doing. Strong Arm is a bit off the wall, but halves the chance of fumbling a thrown team-mate at a key time. Any doubles should be exchanged for Block. Pro also helps potentially re-roll those annoying Really Stupid fails.

PLAYER ROLE	NORMAL SKILLS	DOUBLE SKILLS
Troll	Guard, Stand Firm, Juggernaut, Strong Arm (for the quick score attempt)	Block, Pro
Goblin	Side Step, Diving Tackle	Block or Wrestle. Dirty Player
Bomma	Side Step	Hail Mary Pass or Pass
Fanatic	Mighty Blow, then Grab a distant second	Block
Looney	Dodge, Side Step	Block
Doom Diver	Catch, Dodge	Block
'Ooligan	Side Step, Diving Tackle	Block or Dirty Player
Pogoer	Sure Feet, Sprint, Side Step	Block

Side Step is a fine skill for most Goblins. It adds to their nuisance-factor and is particularly helpful where the ball is on the floor or an opponent needs to be forced into a dodge. Adding Diving Tackle makes this even better.

Fanatics really like the Mighty Blow skill so that should be a priority. Choose Grab as a second skill to manoeuvre opponents into better positions. Bommas really, really like Pass skills, especially Hail Mary Pass (allowing them to stand well out of range and mortar the opponent's cage) – so it is a bit of a shame they need a double skill roll to get them.

Looneys do not have the Dodge skill so that should be remedied. A second skill (if they live long enough to get that far) of Side Step means they can stay in contact with any unfortunate souls that blocked them and failed to knock them over. Chainsaw attack incoming! Doom Divers are the potential quick scorers so it's the Catch skill for them. Pogoers are the players with the range, so Sure Feet then Sprint help increase this range further.

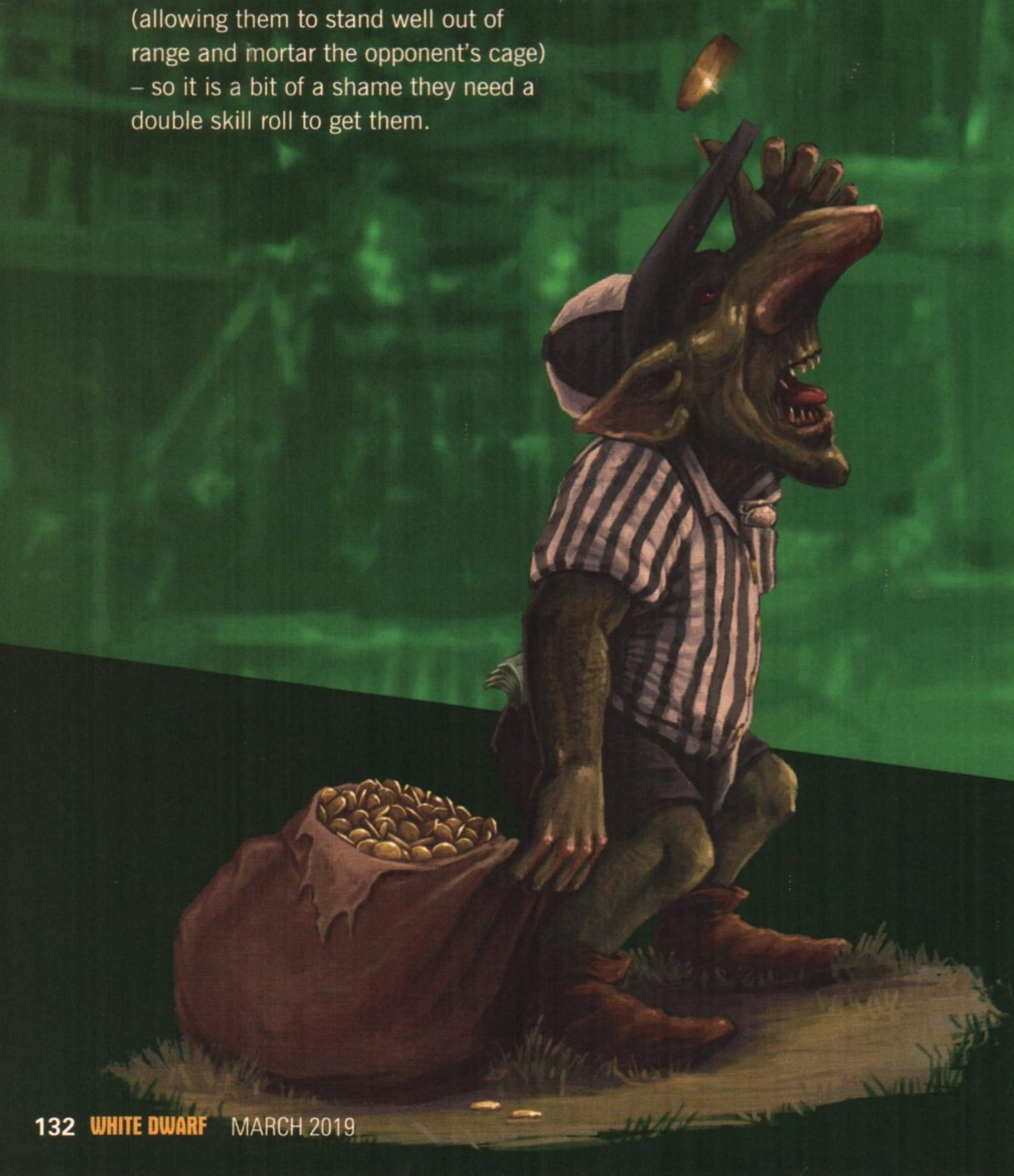
Without access to General skills, Block is great on a double – as is Wrestle for aggressively hunting the ball. Dirty Player provides an increased chance of hurting players when they're down, especially with the odd Bribe floating around to keep the cheeky rascals on the pitch.

Increased Strength players are very helpful in other teams, but for Goblins, it could be argued that the above double skills are more useful. The best advance a Goblin can make, however, is +AG. This provides ball security and (multiple) dodge security. Don't get attached to these players, mind. They have a massive target on their back.

It should be added that not all skill increases are worth the increase to Team Value. Bribes and Star Players will help far more than a series of minor skills on regular Goblins. Managing the Team Value and replacing relatively expensive players with rookie alternatives can mean match-altering Inducements are available. Remember though that Inducements are temporary and firing is permanent.

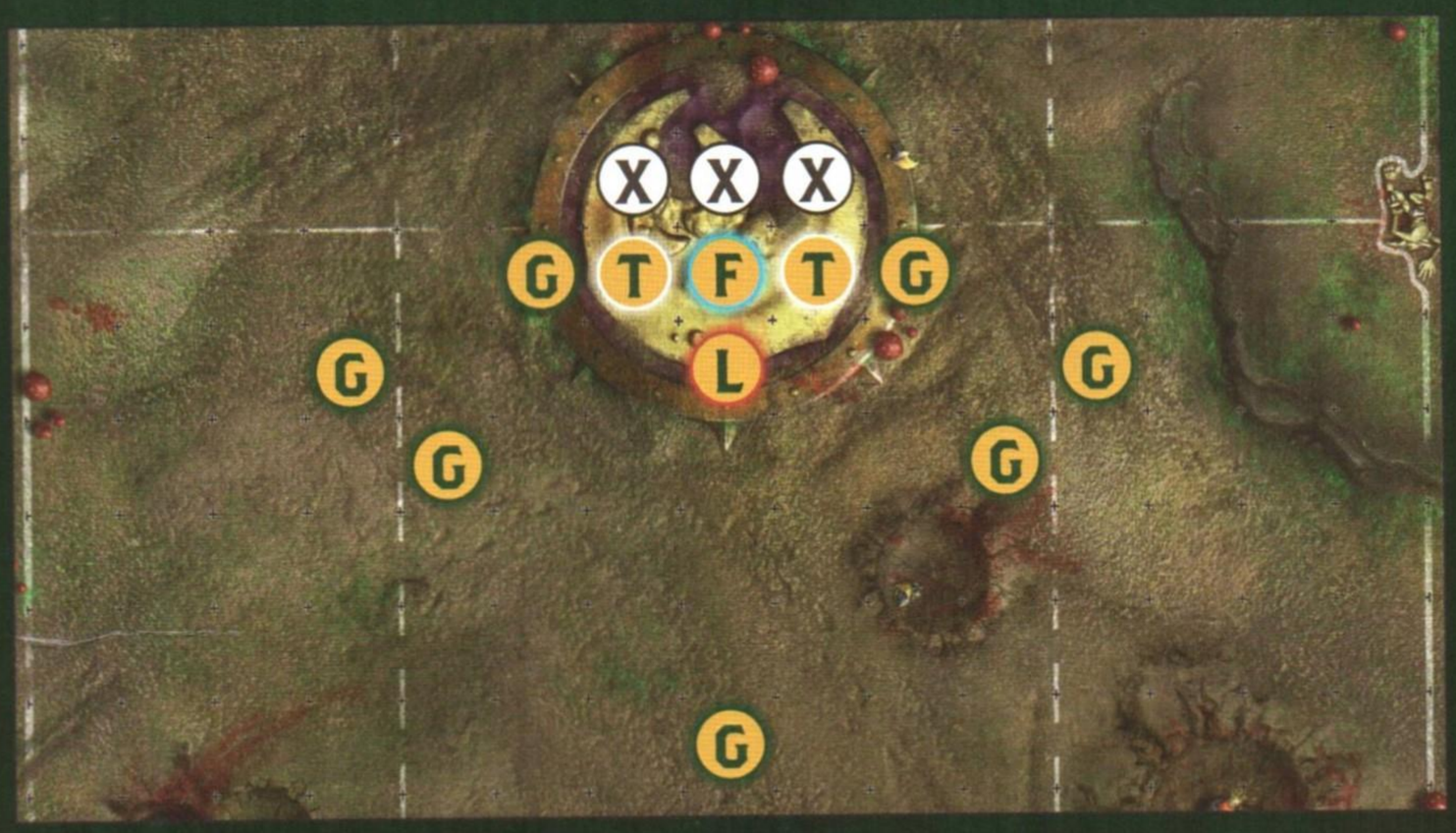
TOURNAMENTS & EXHIBITION MATCHES

Many events allow an initial spend of 1,100,000 gold pieces. Fourteen players is a must, but with the extra money, the Doom Diver can be swapped for the second Fanatic, Fungus the Loon, leaving enough money for three bribes. Where skills are arranged in advance, Block and/or Juggernaut for the Trolls is a good starting point, then Mighty Blow for the Fanatic, with Side Step or Dodge (if not on them already) for remaining Goblins.



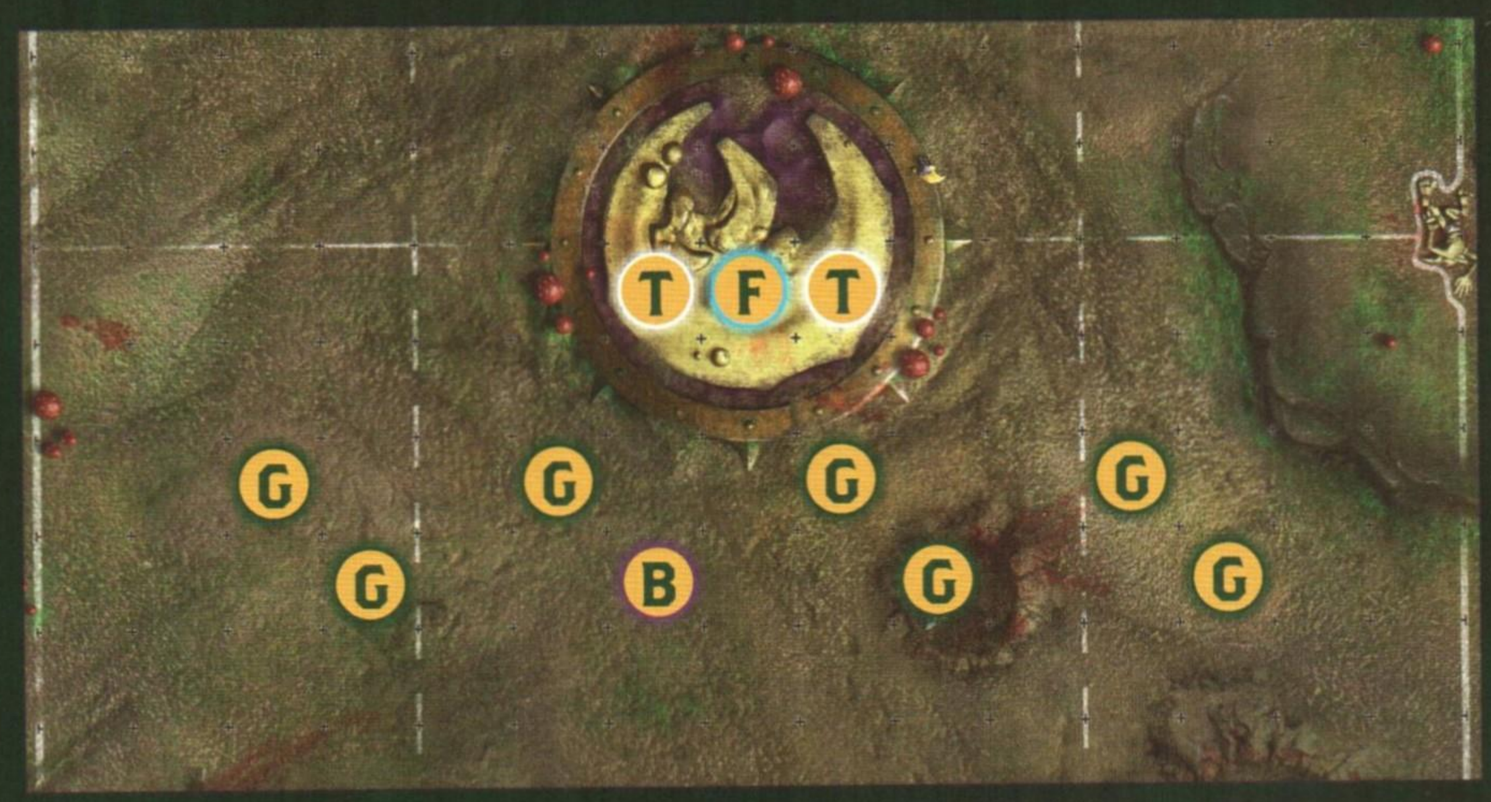
OFFENSIVE SET UP

Making the most of the initial blocks on offence is really important. The Fanatic will certainly hit at least one opponent here, then the Trolls can (hopefully) provide follow-up blocks and send the opposing line of scrimmage to the floor or worse. The Looney can race in and hit anyone still standing, as long as they remember to stay protected against retaliation. At least one player is deep for the ball, with the remaining Goblins prepared to provide cover for the ball/Looney/Fanatic as necessary.



DEFENSIVE SET UP

The Fanatic is better on offence, but with a few bribes, it might be able to play defence too – and help protect the rest of the team with that Strength 7. This player must be protected as long as possible so that the opponent cannot get an easy one dice or two dice block against them – as that will likely mean curtains. The Bomma is fielded here and starts behind cover to harass the opponent's cage.



KEY

G Goblin — T Troll — L Loon — F Fanatic — B Bomma

SUMMARY

Okay, Goblins aren't going to win (m)any championships. They aren't quick, or well-armoured or particularly agile. Some are a bit dim and most are inept. There will be some games where it goes wrong from the off, the Secret Weapons are immediately sent off and shoulders must simply be shrugged – but that's the Gobbo way.

What they lack in skill, they mostly make up for with their toys and their craziness. They are certainly fun and also a big challenge. It can be hugely rewarding managing a Goblin team, and will keep even the best coaches on their toes throughout a close game. Sure, they are never far from the big red self-destruct button, but that makes the victories all the sweeter.

GO GO GOBLIN POWER!

THE BURIED DAGGER

Horus has betrayed the Emperor. The galaxy burns and the siege of Terra is imminent. Yet there are still a few last tales to tell before the curtain rises for the final act. Black Library author James Swallow joins us to talk about the Horus Heresy and The Buried Dagger.

James Swallow is one of Black Library's best-known authors, having penned many short stories, novels and audio dramas over the years, including *The Buried Dagger* – the last Horus Heresy novel before the siege of Terra begins. We caught up with James to chat about writing, playing Warhammer, Nathaniel Garro and, of course, his latest novel.

JAMES SWALLOW
A sci-fi author of great renown, James Swallow has been writing novels and audio dramas for Black Library for over a decade. He also used to clone dinosaurs in a lab. Apparently...

When did you first get into writing?
Come with me now on a journey into the dim and distant past of my writing and gaming youth, when dinosaurs roamed the earth! When I was a kid, I loved writing short stories – I was always working on them in English class, but never finishing them. I had such ambitious ideas, but it was really hard to finish them in forty-five minutes.

As I grew up, I started writing for fanzines as a hobby, though I had a normal job working in an industrial laboratory. By day I was using industrial machinery to do science stuff (I imagined I was using cyclotrons and cloning dinosaurs, but it was nothing so glamorous), by night I was writing. I fell asleep in meetings a lot, because I was obsessed with becoming a writer. So, after a few years of saving up, I left my job and went into writing full time. It was the best decision I ever made.

I started writing magazine articles – game and book reviews, features about movies and TV shows, but I always wanted to write creative prose. I finally got the opportunity to write a series of steampunk adventure books in the early 2000s, which got my foot in the publishing

door, as it were. Then I found out about Inferno! magazine and thought, I remember this Warhammer stuff from when I was a kid. I reached out to Black Library and asked if I could write a story – that story became 'Crimson Night' – a story about the Doom Eagles Chapter of Space Marines.

You were a hobbyist when you were younger, then?
Yeah, from a young age. There used to be an event called the Model Engineering Exhibition, which was held at the Wembley Exhibition Centre every year – my dad was an engineer and I liked making models, so it was the perfect day out for us. I came across tabletop wargames at one of these events and I found it fascinating. Board games had always been big in my family, but wargaming was a step above for me. There was no board as such, you could do what you liked, move where you liked, play how you wanted. In the Venn diagram of stuff that little Jim thought was cool, wargames was right in the middle.

At the weekends, my friends and I would go into London and cruise around the games and comic shops like a little nerd invasion force. Games Workshop in Hammersmith was a regular stop for us. I remember going in one day and picking up issue 91 of White Dwarf, which featured a pamphlet about the upcoming Rogue Trader game – it blew our minds! My friend Scott bought five of the first Imperial Space Marine models and painted them really well. I remember I was never that great at painting, which is probably what stymied my collecting, but I did paint a Blood Angels army. We used to play games in the school music room – my friend's mum was a music teacher, so we snuck in on Sunday mornings and played on the floor.

A COUPLE OF FIRSTS
'Crimson Night' was the first short story that James penned for Inferno! magazine. *Deus Encarmine* was the first full novel that he wrote, which is now part of a much larger anthology. Both stories (and *Blood Angels: The Complete Rafen Omnibus*) are still available to download from the Black Library website.

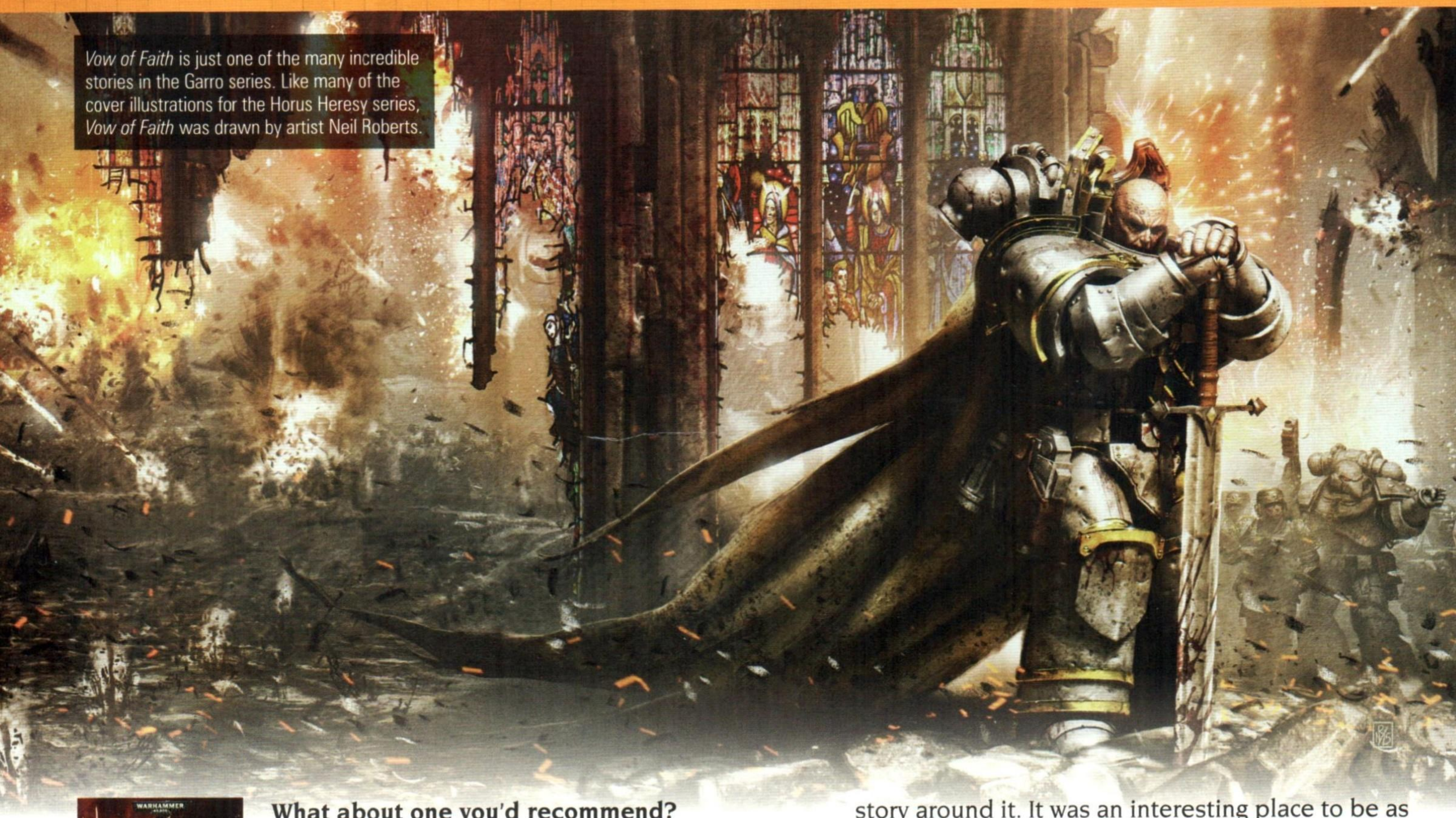
blacklibrary.com

What really fascinated me most, though, was the lore of Warhammer 40,000. There is a unique nihilistic Britishness to it all. In places it's darkly funny, in others it's just darkly dark. I really connected with that – the ornate, gothic, decaying splendour of everything. There's no other sci-fi franchise out there that looks or feels like Warhammer 40,000 – it has a tone and texture that are pretty unique. And there's so much of it, too – as a youngster, I was fascinated by it. When I started writing for Black Library, I dug out all those old rulebooks and dived right back in.

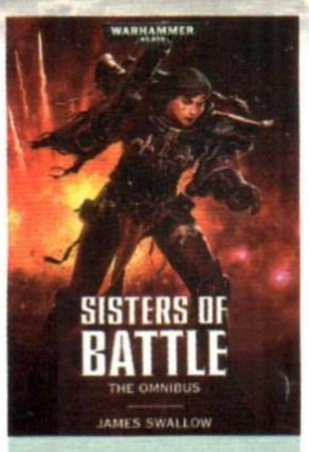
> **'In places it's darkly funny, in others it's just darkly dark. I really connected with that.'**

Do you have a favourite novel that you've written for Black Library?
That's like asking me which of my kids I love the most! They all have a place in my heart for a particular reason. In one there may be a character I particularly like, in another it might be an action sequence or a plot twist. *Deus Encarmine* was the first novel I wrote back in 2004 (it's about the Blood Angels, too – my first army when I was a youngster), so I guess there's a sense of pride in having that story published, but no, I really couldn't pick a favourite.

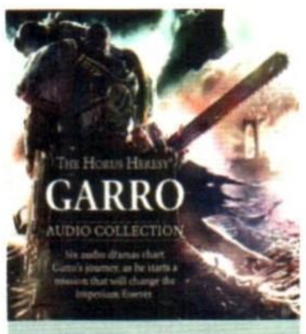
The Flight of the Eisenstein is the fourth novel in the Horus Heresy series and James' first Horus Heresy novel. It proved to be the start of a long relationship between James and the Death Guard.



Vow of Faith is just one of the many incredible stories in the Garro series. Like many of the cover illustrations for the Horus Heresy series, *Vow of Faith* was drawn by artist Neil Roberts.



SISTERS OF BATTLE
James' recommended novel *Faith and Fire* is now available as an eBook omnibus along with the novel *Hammer & Anvil* and the short stories 'Red & Black' and 'Heart & Soul'.



THE GARRO AUDIO COLLECTION
At eight hours and twenty minutes, the Garro audio collection contains all six audio dramas in the series: 'Oath of Moment', 'Legion of One', 'Sword of Truth', 'Shield of Lies', 'Burden of Duty' and 'Ashes of Fealty'.

What about one you'd recommend?
Another tough question. For people who are new to the hobby, I'd recommend the short story 'Liar's Due'. For people who don't know anything about Space Marines, it's a good entry point into our worlds. For existing hobbyists, *Faith and Fire*. It's a good stand-alone story with lots of gritty action, plenty of world building and the Sisters of Battle, who are always great to write about. For the Horus Heresy, I'd say *The Flight of the Eisenstein* – it was the first Horus Heresy novel I wrote and it sets the tone for everything I wrote after that point.

You were in the first planning meeting for the Horus Heresy series, weren't you?
I was there, the day Horus slew the Emperor, yeah! In some ways it feels so long ago, in others, not at all. I remember people being worried that fans wouldn't like the idea. We were writing the history of Warhammer 40,000, the core mythology the whole universe was built on. It was like handling the crown jewels. We wanted to take scraps of lore, tiny snippets of background and vague references and turn them into epic stories – we really couldn't mess it up. It's incredible to think that the series is now over fifty books long and there are still so many stories to tell. We're narrowing it down now, coming to the siege of Terra, but there are still so many untold tales. We could easily write another fifty books – the Horus Heresy is a consistently compelling setting for us as writers.

Tell us about Garro – did you see his story developing the way it did?
Absolutely not, no! When it came to *The Flight of the Eisenstein*, I was taking a tiny bit of lore from the earliest days of Warhammer 40,000 and building a story around it. It was an interesting place to be as a writer – the first three Horus Heresy books are kind of like an operatic overture to the series, drawing you in and setting the stage. *Horus Rising* is a big epic story, *False Gods* is even bigger. *Galaxy in Flames* is even bigger still – big, big, big! I didn't want Eisenstein to go any bigger – I wanted to make the tale more personal, to delve into the story of a few warriors viewed through the eyes of one man. That was Nathaniel Garro. Straight-Arrow Garro – a strong-willed, honest guy, an inflexible, noble hero. John Gravato's illustration of Garro from the Horus Heresy trading card game was hugely inspirational – it gave me a good feel for the character and what he was like.

'It's the eve of war and there's a terrible tension on Terra - at any moment the sirens will go off...'

I never assumed that I would keep writing Garro's story after that, but people kept asking me when I was going to write the sequel. I had a few ideas, but not really enough to make them into a full novel. That's when I suggested to Black Library that we make some audio books. I love writing audio scripts and Warhammer 40,000 is such a strong textural universe – I thought the sounds of it would translate well to audio. I was given the go-ahead and wrote 'Oath of Moment', and people leapt on it. Garro works so well in an audio format – he's a lone warrior, a ronin-like hero, masterless with no loyalty except to his own moral code. He's like the classic wandering knight of old – a Knight-Errant. I never intended or expected him to

THE KNIGHTS-ERRANT
Nathaniel Garro and his Knight-Errant companion – the Librarian Tylos Rubio – were sculpted by miniatures designer Israel Gonzalez. Many of the elements mentioned in the stories and artwork – Garro's bionic leg and Rubio's psychic hood, for example – have been incorporated into the miniatures.

This illustration of Nathaniel Garro by John Gravato was featured in *The Horus Heresy: Collected Visions*. It was an inspiration to both James when he wrote his novels and Israel when he sculpted the model.

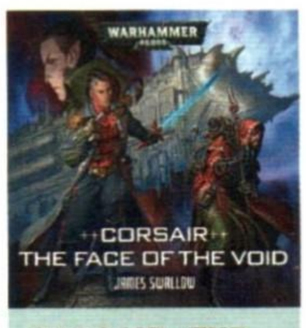
become a viewpoint character for the series, but he's proven to be a great lens through which other characters like Malcador the Sigilite are viewed.

It eventually dawned on me that I was writing a story arc for Garro. *The Flight of the Eisenstein* is the start of the story, *Weapon of Fate* is the middle movement and *The Buried Dagger* is the conclusion.

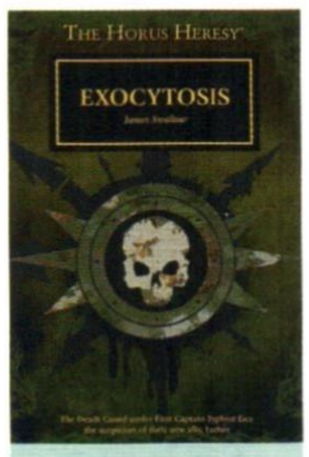
So what's The Buried Dagger all about then?
It's two parallel storylines. The first follows Garro, Malcador and the Knight-Errant. It's the eve of war and there's a terrible tension on Terra – at any moment the sirens will go off and the skies will turn black with warships. Every second matters and those characters are in amongst it all, preparing for the battle they know is coming. Horus is knocking at the doors, but – without giving too much away – the Warmaster has already struck before he strikes, if that makes sense. War has already come to Earth. It's during this build-up that Garro properly starts to realise his purpose in the grand scheme of things.

At the same time, out in the warp, the second story is taking place, this one focusing on Mortarion and Typhon (it basically follows on from the short story 'Exocytosis'). This story is about the doom of the Death Guard – a moment in the background of the Horus Heresy that many of us are already familiar with but that we've never explored in detail. The Death Guard fleet is becalmed in the warp and Mortarion has to make the devil's bargain with Nurgle. And it's not an easy choice for him – he has to bend his knee to save his Legion, but in doing so damn his warriors. It was fascinating to write the two stories back to back and to switch between the narratives as they slowly converged. I'm happy to say there are some shocking revelations in *The Buried Dagger* and a few of the deepest mysteries in the background of Warhammer 40,000 are finally answered in it. I'm not going to say what they are here – you'll have to read it. No spoilers. What I will say, though, is that it's been great fun adding to that massive mosaic of narrative that is Warhammer 40,000 – a few more pieces have been added to the galactic puzzle.

Once you've read *The Buried Dagger*, put it down, take a breath and prepare yourself, because after this point we're in the final run to the end. This book is the last curtain drop before the final act of a play – the pieces are in place, the characters are established, the grand conclusion is in sight.



CORSAIR: THE FACE OF THE VOID
There are a lot of Rogue Traders in the galaxy these days – what better way to find out more about them than with this awesome full-cast audio drama set on a derelict starship in the depths of space?



EXOCYTOSIS
'This short story provides a bit of backstory to the Death Guard part of *The Buried Dagger*,' says James. 'You get to learn a bit about Typhon and his role in the fate of the Death Guard Legion.'

Any final thoughts?
I'd like to thank the readership for staying with us on this epic journey. The passion and dedication of the Warhammer fanbase has never waned and I am continuously astounded by the love and fascination our fans have for the Horus Heresy story. People come up to me at events and they want to talk about the stories, about the minutiae of every chapter. We have crazy nerdy discussions about everything that's written. And about everything that's unwritten, too! The passion is amazing, and that's great for us as writers because we share that passion, too – we care as much as you do. I'm looking forward to the grand conclusion of the series – I'll be sad when we get to the end, but elated, too. I think it will be bittersweet. But I guess we can always come back and tell more stories...

BLACK LIBRARY

THE HORUS HERESY®

READING ORDER

If you want the complete, unabridged Horus Heresy experience then you should read the series from book 1, *Horus Rising* all the way to book 54, *The Buried Dagger*.

However... that might seem like a daunting undertaking, enough to make even a Primarch balk at the thought.

Here, then, is a handy guide for navigating the Horus Heresy series and the greatest, galaxy-spanning conflict the Imperium has ever known.

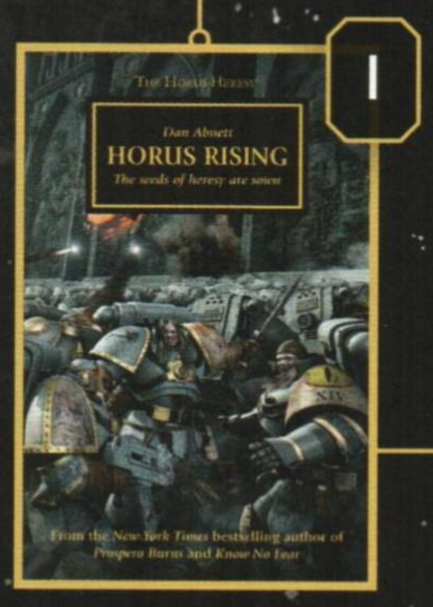
Note: The further related reading titles are suggestions for books and novellas that feature the same characters and Legions but aren't essential to read in the order presented.

Main Reading Order

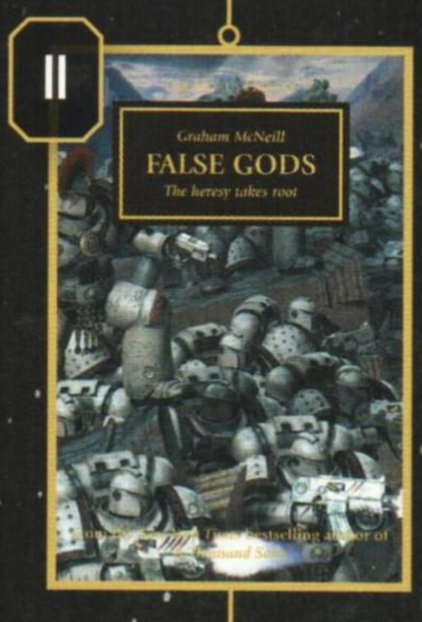
Further Related Reading

1 THE GREAT CRUSADE ERA

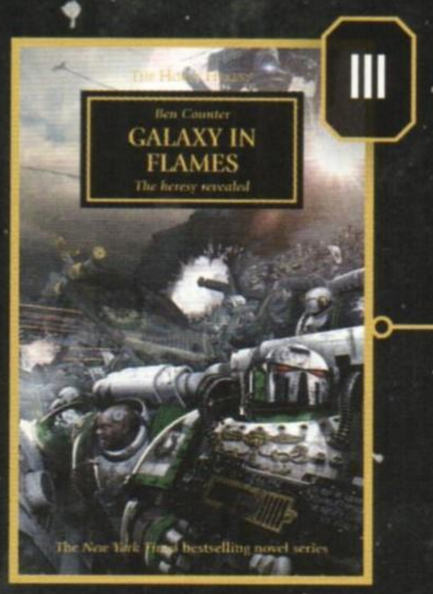
The opening trilogy perfectly sets the scene for everything that is to follow. The Great Crusade is drawing to a close and the Emperor returns to Terra, pronouncing Horus Warmaster...



HORUS RISING



FALSE GODS



GALAXY IN FLAMES

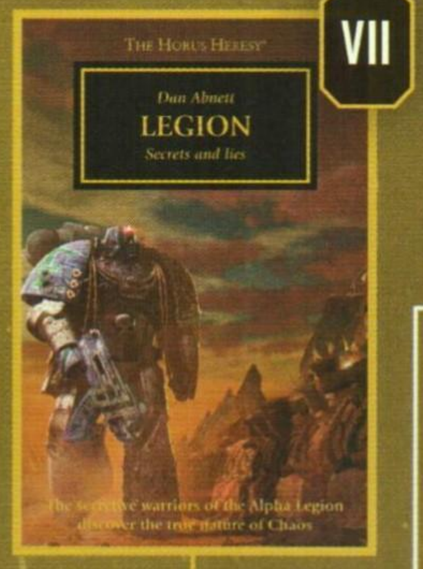
2

THE BETRAYAL

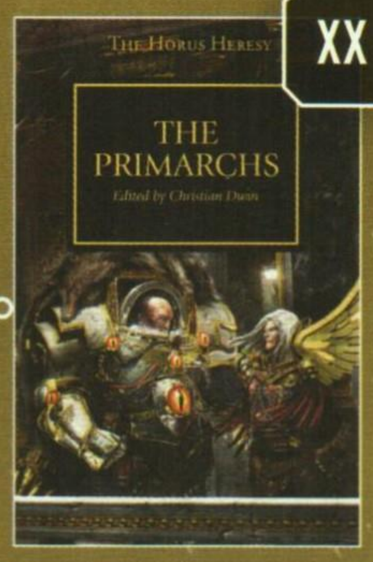
Seduced by the promises of dark gods, Horus rejects his oaths to the Emperor and declares outright rebellion. The true beginning of the Horus Heresy starts here...

THE ALPHA LEGION AND THE PERPETUALS

The story of *Legion* takes place much earlier in the timeline, before *Horus Rising*. It features the mysterious Alpha Legion and introduces the characters known as the Perpetuals.



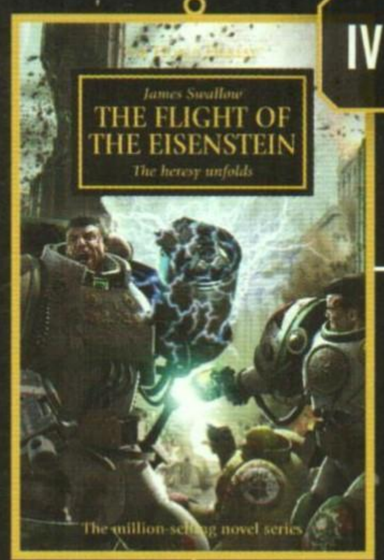
LEGION



THE PRIMARCHS

The Serpent Beneath

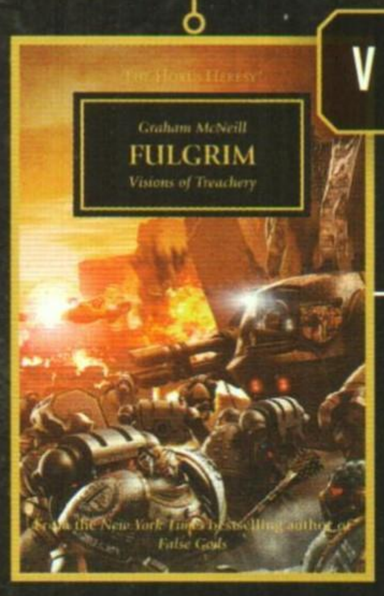
FURTHER RELATED READING



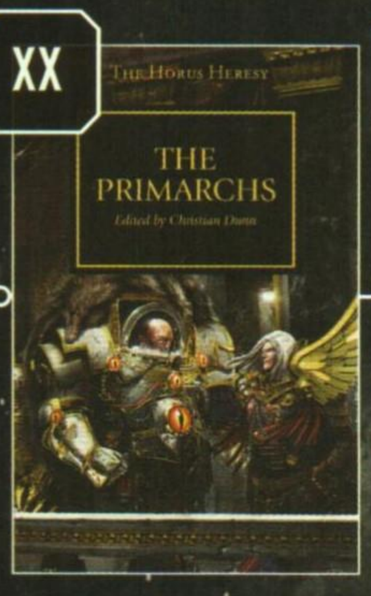
THE FLIGHT OF THE EISENSTEIN

FURTHER RELATED READING

GARRO

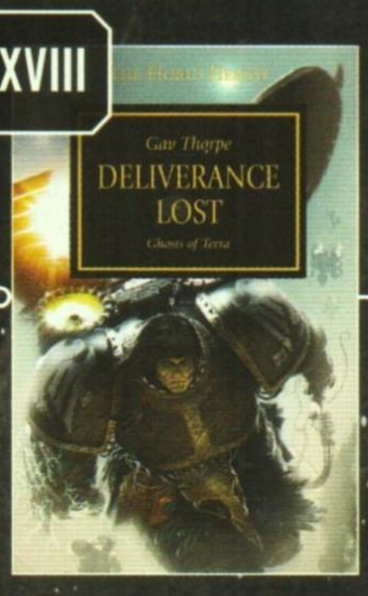


FULGRIM

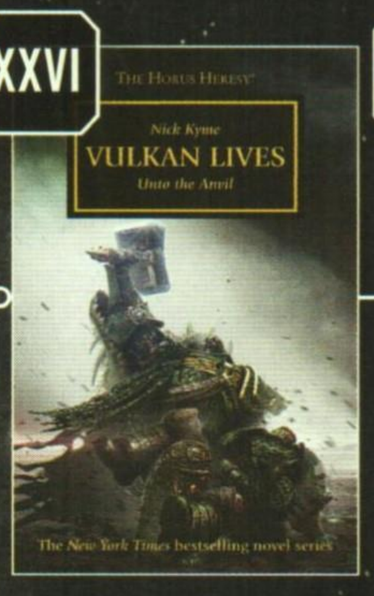


THE PRIMARCHS

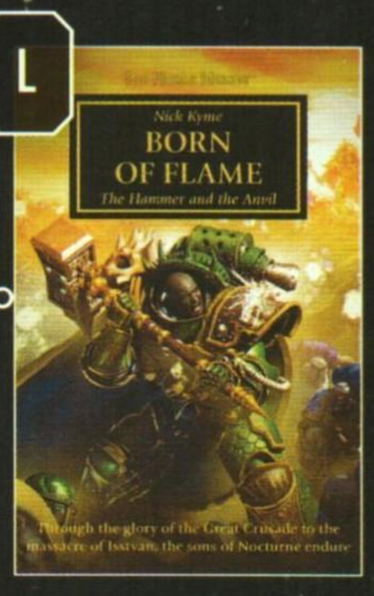
The Reflection Crack'd and Feat of Iron



DELIVERANCE LOST



VULKAN LIVES



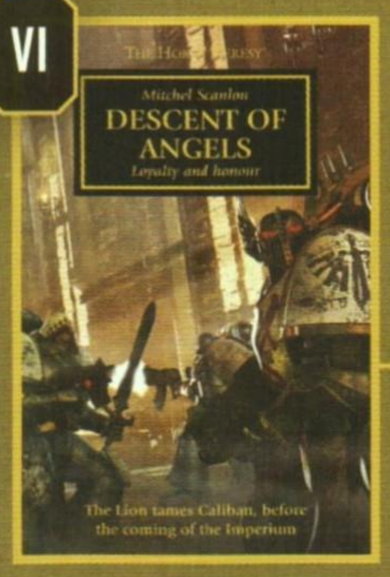
BORN OF FLAME

Scorched Earth

ORIGINS OF THE DARK ANGELS

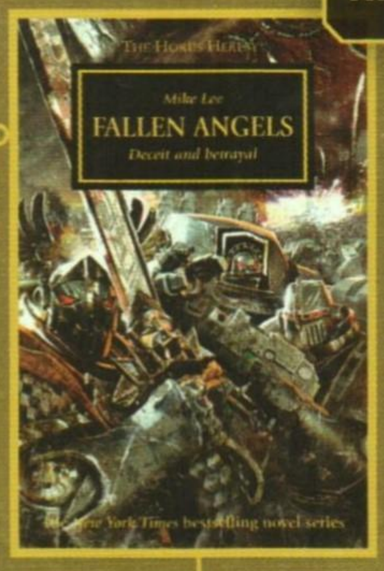
The history of the Lion, Primarch of the Dark Angels, and his Legion is revealed.

VI



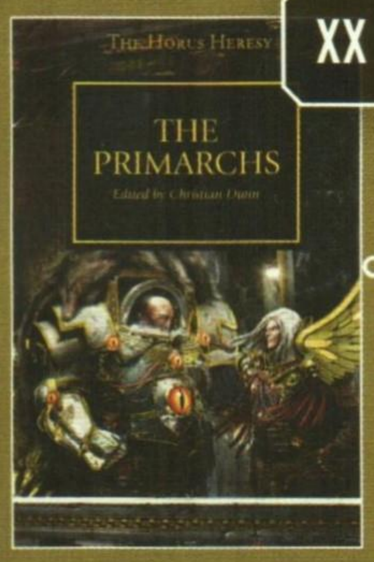
DESCENT OF ANGELS

XI



FALLEN ANGELS

XX



FURTHER RELATED READING

THE PRIMARCHS

The Lion

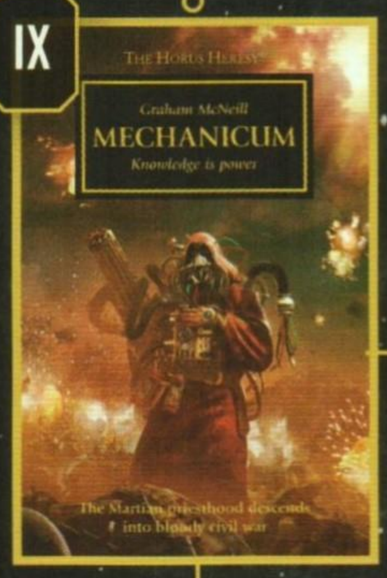
3

THE WAR ESCALATES

As Horus' treachery is revealed and several other Primarchs and their Legions join his cause, the struggle for the galaxy begins across multiple war fronts.

MARS

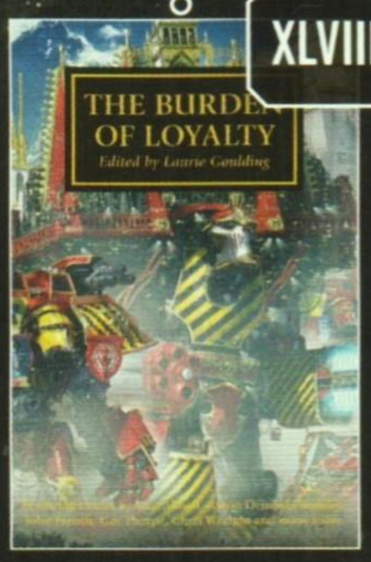
IX



MECHANICUM

FURTHER RELATED READING

XLVIII

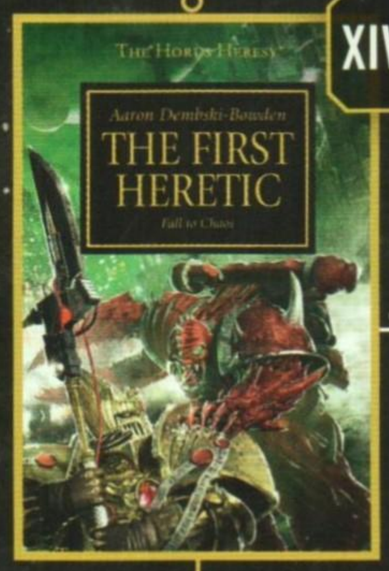


THE BURDEN OF LOYALTY

Cybernetica

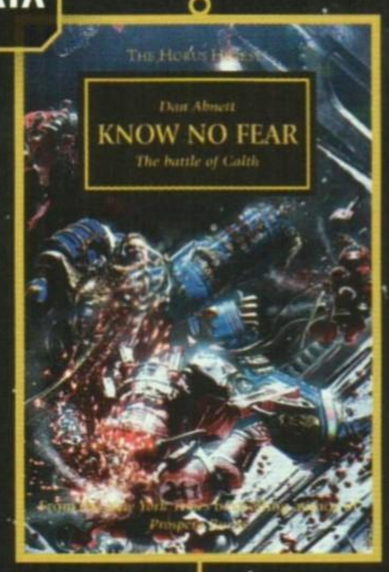
CALTH

XIV



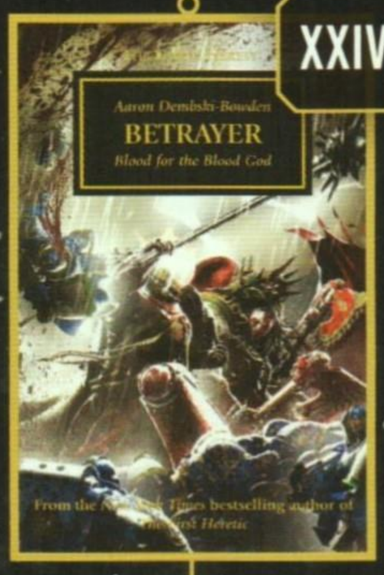
THE FIRST HERETIC

XIX



KNOW NO FEAR

XXIV



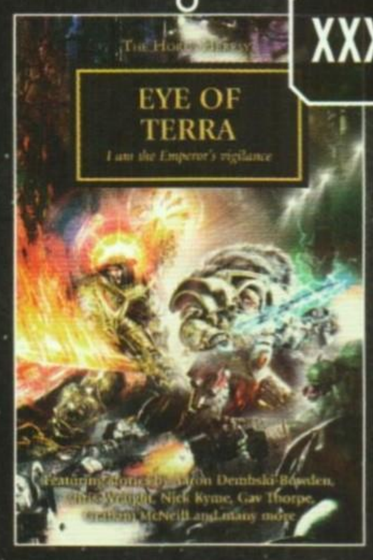
BETRAYER

XXV

MARK OF CALTH

FURTHER RELATED READING

XXXV



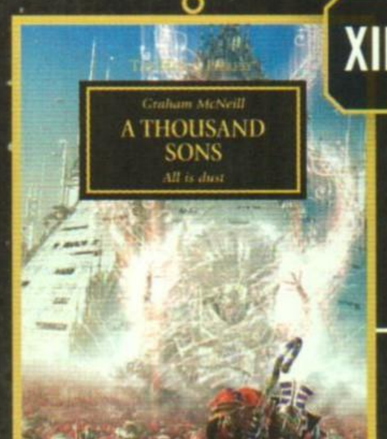
EYE OF TERRA

Aurelian

PROSPERO

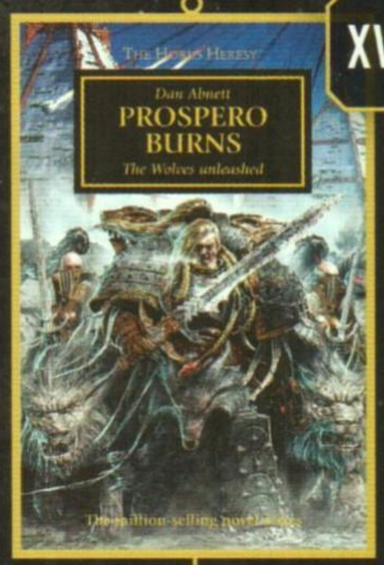
SIGNUS PRIME

XII



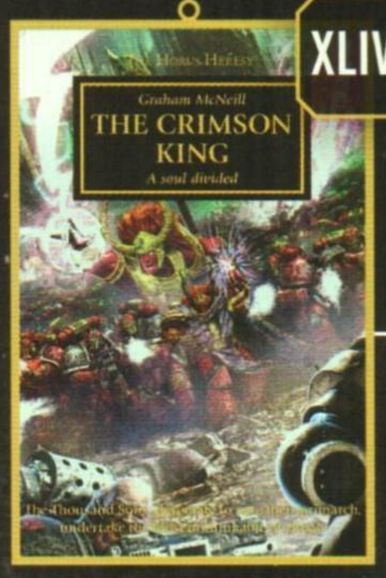
A THOUSAND SONS

XV



PROSPERO BURNS

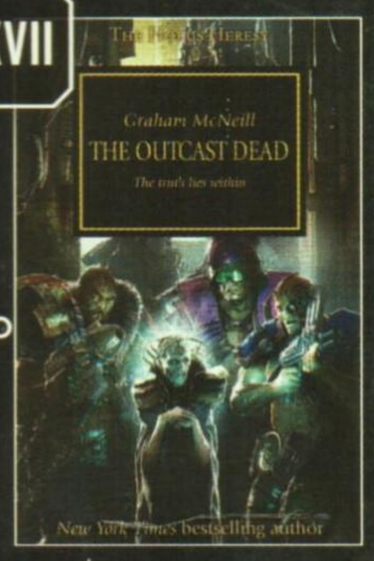
XLIV



THE CRIMSON KING

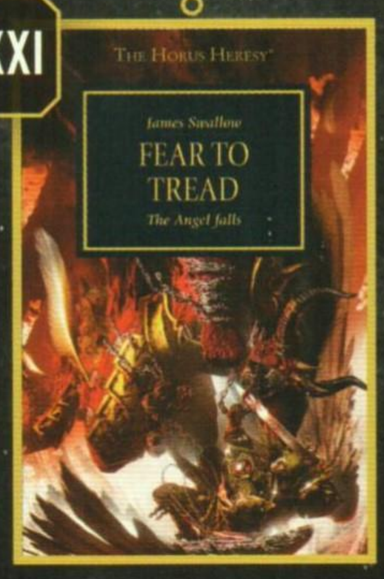
FURTHER RELATED READING

XVII



THE OUTCAST DEAD

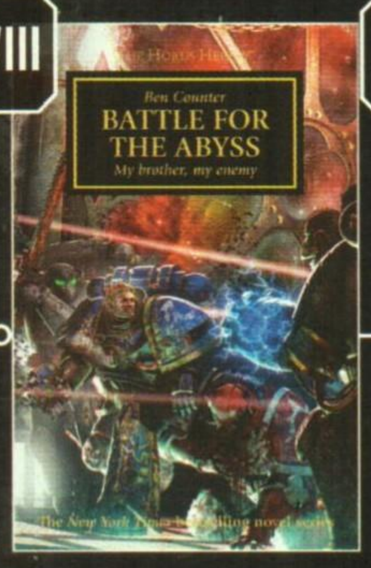
XXI



FEAR TO TREAD

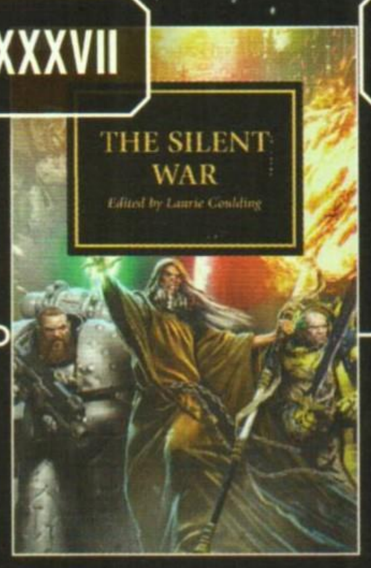
FURTHER RELATED READING

VIII



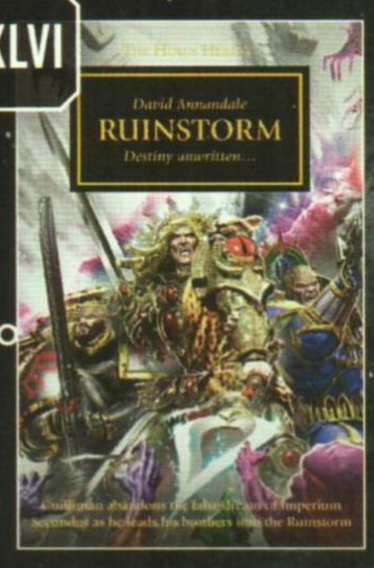
BATTLE FOR THE ABYSS

XXXVII



THE SILENT WAR

XLVI



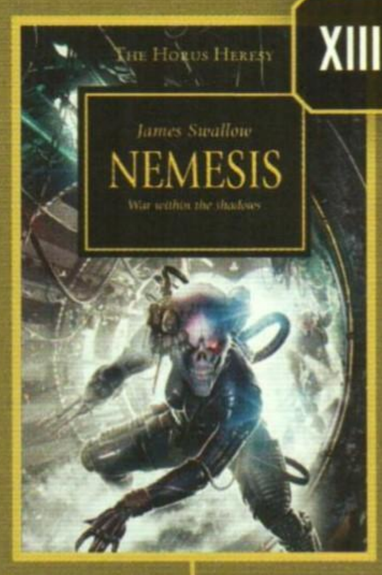
RUINSTORM

The Purge

ASSASSINS EVERYWHERE!

As the war begins to reach a crucial phase, the leaders of the conflict look to assassins and other less honourable means to gain an advantage.

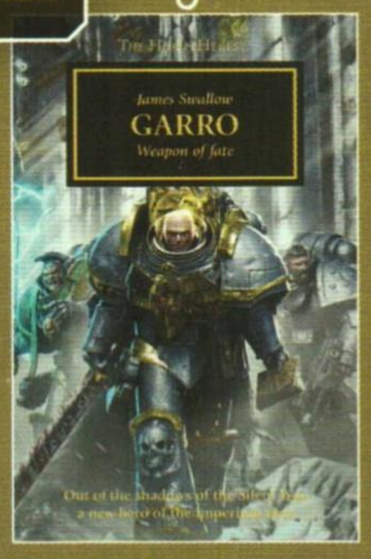
XIII



NEMESIS

FURTHER RELATED READING

XLII

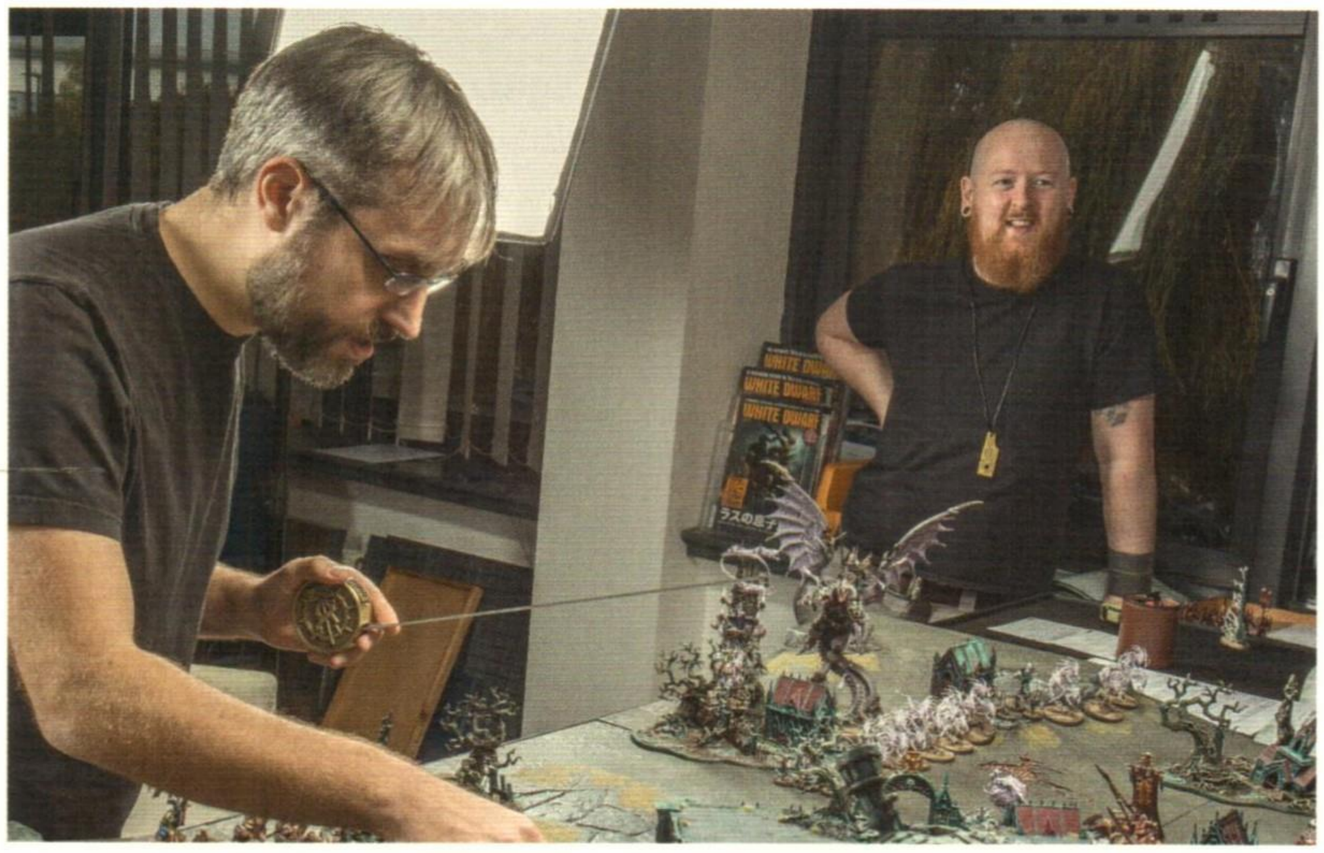


GARRO

TO BE CONTINUED IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

INSIDE THE STUDIO

Battles have been fought, models painted and new armies started in the Design Studio this month. Quite a few people have been playing Warhammer Underworlds: Nightvault over their lunchbreaks and Matt painted a new warband – the Eyes of the Nine – so that he could join in. Other people have been working on models for our Realm of Life article – if you turn the page you can see one of the awesome scenery pieces that 'Eavy Metal painter Natalie Slinn created for her Sylvaneth army. Also in the Studio this month (or rather, in the Studio by proxy) is a superb diorama painted by David Moss, brother of illustrator Phil Moss. Artistic talent, it seems, runs in the family! Enjoy, and see you all next month!



EYES OF THE NINE

Matt has just finished painting the Eyes of the Nine warband for Warhammer Underworlds: Nightvault. 'I painted them in the same colours as the Tzaangor Shaman I painted for last month's issue,' says Matt. 'I've only played a few games with them so far, but I've been getting some tips from rules writer Dave Sanders on how to use them. One of his favourite tactics is to get the Brimstone Horror surrounded, then play Malicious Flames on it to cause wounds to everyone adjacent.'

MUNITORUM REPORT: THE REALM OF LIFE

Since the coming of Chaos, the fate of Ghyran has been in constant flux. Here we examine the ups and downs of the Realm of Life.

TIDE OF FILTH

Ghyran draws the eye of the Plague God Nurgle. Daemons spill from the Realm of Chaos, corrupting all they touch. Hope dwindles in Ghyran as the armies of Nurgle grow stronger. Alarielle retreats into hibernation.

THE AWAKENING OF BEHEMAT

Archaon Everchosen seeks to harness the power of the godbeast Behemat and sends the skaven to awaken him. The Celestial Vindicators and Knights Excelsior defeat the forces of Chaos, but the Great Green Torc – once a wonder of the Realm of Life – is destroyed in the process.

THE AGE OF SIGMAR

Sigmar's Storm breaks over the Mortal Realms and the Hallowed Knights are deployed to Ghyran. They are tasked with finding Alarielle, but in doing so lead the armies of Nurgle to her. A series of desperate battles ensue before Alarielle is finally reborn.

GENESIS

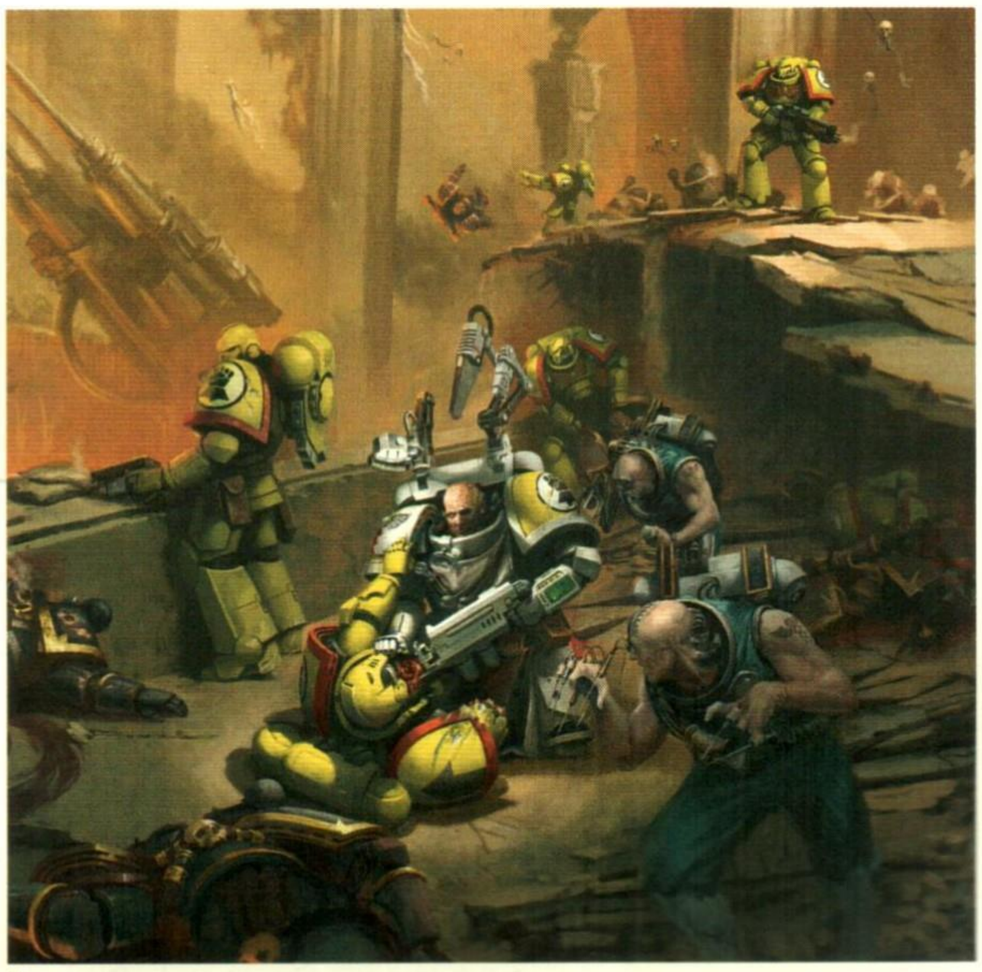
The Genesis Gate – a Realmgate that leads to the Allpoints – is retaken by the forces of Order and closed to Archaon's marauding hordes. Life returns to Ghyran and the forces of Nurgle are driven back. A time of rebirth begins and races thought long lost return to the Realm of Life. The Chaos God Nurgle sulks and plots his revenge.

Welcome to the last few pages of the magazine, where we take a regular look at the games people have been playing and the models they've been painting in the Design Studio over the past month. This issue: the eyes have it, art imitates art, and more trees!

ART IMITATING ART

You may well have seen this awesome piece of Imperial Fists art by Phil Moss in the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*. Well, the diorama below was built and painted by his brother, David!

'I chose to recreate Phil's picture because it sums up the true grimness of Warhammer 40,000,' says David. 'There really is only war, and it never stops. I painted the Imperial Fists with strong shading, and in an impressionistic style more similar to Phil's painting than to the usual way I'd paint a miniature. I sprayed bone over black, then drybrushed the yellow into the bone followed by a yellow glaze. The Apothecary was the hardest both to convert (Space Marines sure don't like to kneel) and paint, but I just used focused drybrushing to get the light in the right places.'



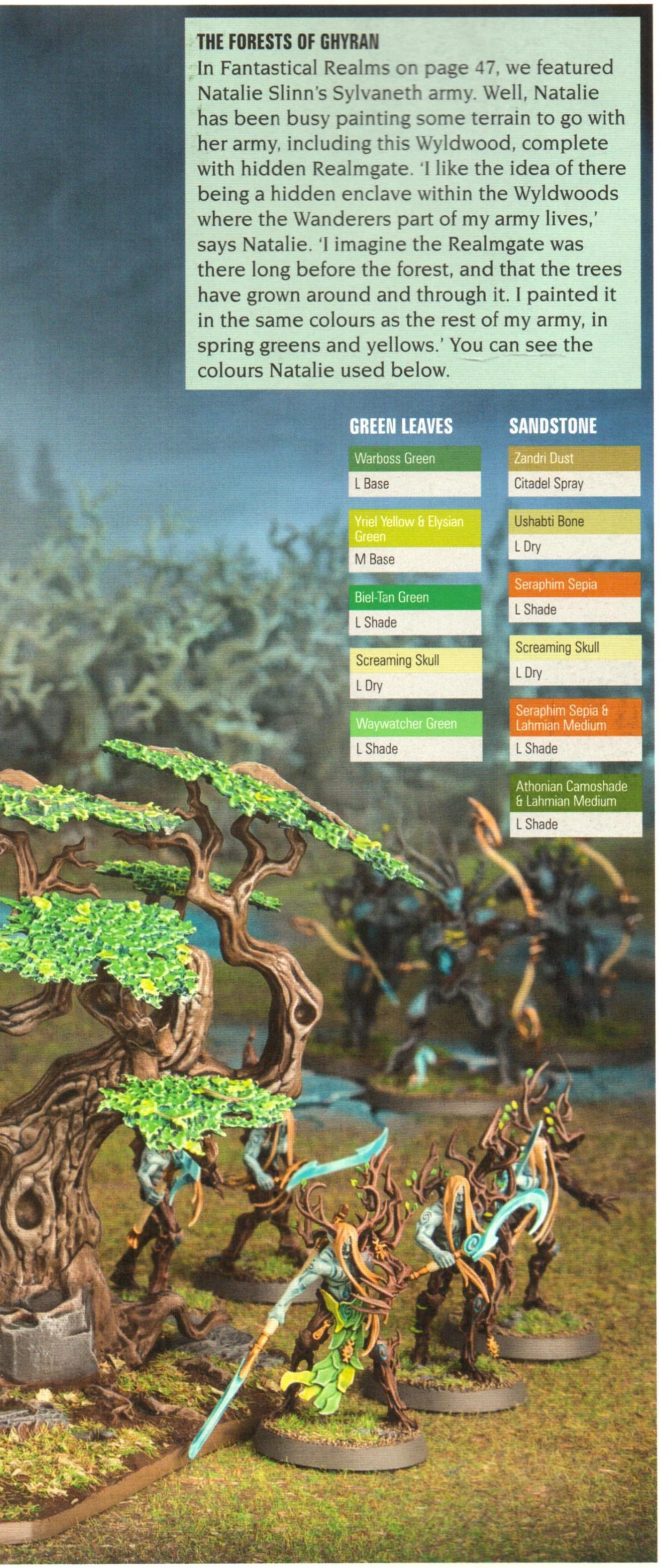
1

'The display base was made of florist's foam, covered with plaster and then textured with grit to make it look just like Phil's art **(1)**,' says David. 'After that, I used coloured spray paints for the base colours followed by plenty of drybrushing with my trusty (and very crusty) drybrush.'

David's diorama is now on permanent display at the Warhammer store in Harajuku, Tokyo – Japan. If you happen to be in the vicinity, make sure you pop in and take a look!

THE FORESTS OF GHYRAN

In Fantastical Realms on page 47, we featured Natalie Slinn's Sylvaneth army. Well, Natalie has been busy painting some terrain to go with her army, including this Wyldwood, complete with hidden Realmgate. 'I like the idea of there being a hidden enclave within the Wyldwoods where the Wanderers part of my army lives,' says Natalie. 'I imagine the Realmgate was there long before the forest, and that the trees have grown around and through it. I painted it in the same colours as the rest of my army, in spring greens and yellows.' You can see the colours Natalie used below.



GREEN LEAVES

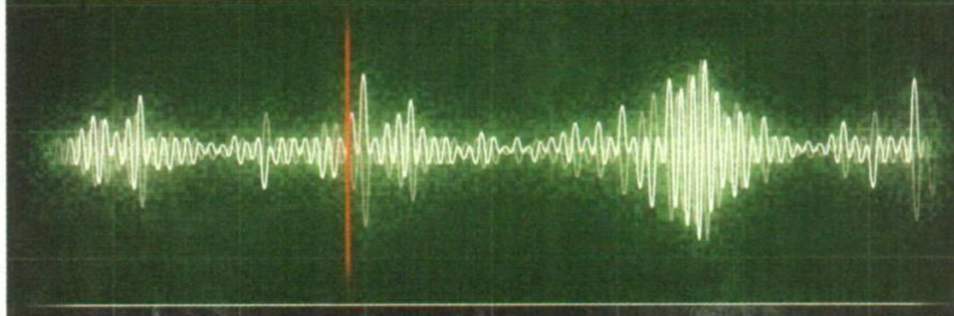
- Warboss Green
- L Base
- Yriel Yellow & Elysian Green
- M Base
- Biel-Tan Green
- L Shade
- Screaming Skull
- L Dry
- Waywatcher Green
- L Shade

SANDSTONE

- Zandri Dust
- Citadel Spray
- Ushabti Bone
- L Dry
- Seraphim Sepia
- L Shade
- Screaming Skull
- L Dry
- Seraphim Sepia & Lahmian Medium
- L Shade
- Athonian Camoshade & Lahmian Medium
- L Shade

VOX CHATTER

Excited by Index Imperialis, the Dwarfers don their synskin suits and black cloaks and chat about their favourite assassins.



Ben: The Vindicare has to be the coolest assassin – I like the idea of a sneaky sniper taking out his target from a distance. His method of warfare feels more skilful and planned than the other assassins, who have to get very close to make their kills.

Jonathan: I'm going to pick Boss Snikrot – he's kind of the Ork equivalent of an assassin. He's got a cool pose, sneaking forward, his finger to his lips as though sshh-ing the rest of his Kommandos to be quiet. I like the idea of him telling his boyz to be quiet as he stabs his target in the back. He's also got cool goggles.

Matt: There isn't a model for them, but I really like the background of the Vanus Temple Assassin – they basically kill their target with fake news! You can read more about one of them in the Assassinorum: Execution Force novel (available to download as an eBook from the Black Library site).

Dan: The Skaven Assassin, obviously. A knife in each hand, one held in the tail, throwing stars, long black cloak – what's not to like? It's only made more awesome by the fact that skaven are inherently pretty cowardly – not an ideal trait for an assassin!

Shaun: The background for the Culexus is pretty sinister – far more so than the assassins of the other temples in my opinion. I like the idea that their abilities are part of who they are rather than skills they have learned, and that they use technology to turn their null aura into a weapon.

Martyn: The Genestealer Cults Sanctus is my favourite assassin. He's really dynamic, which makes him great for photography – you can take some really atmospheric pictures of him. Like Snikrot, he's got a great pair of goggles (a key feature for any assassin, I say) and the kit comes with a huge sniper rifle as an optional weapon.

NEXT MONTH

THE TOME CELESTIAL: THE HALLOWED KNIGHTS