



# WHITE DWARF

ISSUE  
**451**

THE TOME  
CELESTIAL: THE  
IRONSUNZ

THE WARLORDS  
OF VICILUS: THE  
GRAND FINALE!

FAITH & FIRE  
SERIALISED  
NOVEL

WARHAMMER  
UNDERWORLDS  
TACTICA

20 PAGES OF  
HOBBY GUIDES

AND MUCH  
MORE FOR



**160-PAGE  
MEGA-SIZE  
ISSUE!**





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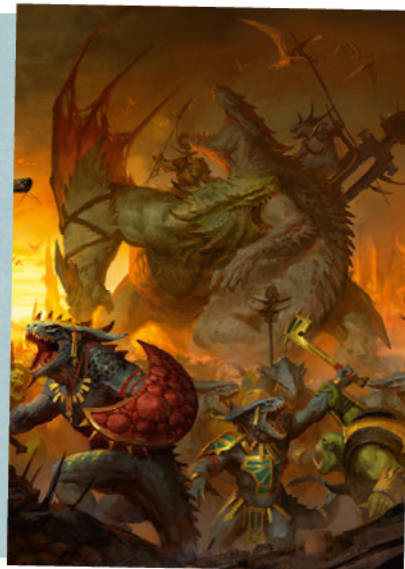


## EXCLUSIVE SUBSCRIBER COVERS!

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 feature a piece of artwork without the contents listing down the side, allowing you to appreciate the art in all its glory.

This month's cover features Ironjawz fighting Seraphon by Johan Grenier.

If you would like to subscribe to *White Dwarf*, turn to the end of the magazine for more information.



## MEET THE WHITE DWARF TEAM

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



**LYLE LOWERY**  
Managing Editor

Until recently, Lyle was painting Aeronautica aircraft and a Warcry warband. Then an Impulsor appeared on his desk. Lyle is keeping his painting plans secret for now, but he has been asking people advice for painting bone armour ...



**MATTHEW HUTSON**  
Senior Designer

Matt's painted plenty of miniatures this month, including a new Titan, a squadron of aircraft and a couple of Imperial Fists characters. He's also preparing himself for next month's Four Warlords showdown.



**DAN HARDEN**  
Staff Writer

Dan recently used his Iron Warriors army in a campaign weekend with his friends. He lost every game he played (32-10 in one case), but he was inspired to paint some new models for his army. He's eyeing up Obliterators.



**JONATHAN STAPLETON**  
Photographer

A unit of Reivers and an Impulsor have appeared on Jonathan's desk recently, but then so too has a Necron Doomscythe. It seems he still hasn't decided which army to work on yet. We're already taking bets ...



**SOPHIE BOSTOCK**  
Designer

A Redemptor Dreadnought has appeared next to Sophie's Space Wolves, but the team are confused why it has been basecoated green, not grey. Could it be a Dark Angel, perhaps? Is a miniature feud about to take place?



**SHAUN PRITCHARD**  
Reprographics

Shaun's pet abomination Steve (see last issue for more info) has been joined by a Skaven Plague Priest. We have a feeling Shaun's obsession with Nurgle has now extended to the Skaven of Clan Pestilens. We wait with bated breath.

## THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

Louis Aguilar, Mark Bedford, Larbi Benyounes, Jes Bickham, John Bracken, Martyn Cashmore, Jay Clare, Thomas Clarke, Robin Cruddace, Colin Cubbon, Thomas Elliott, James Gallagher, Ben Gathercole, Simon Godwin, Israel Gonzalez, Jordan Green, Frank Haas, Jervis Johnson, James Karch, Phil Kelly, Kornel Kozak, Yohan Leduc, Thomas Moore, Sam Pearson, James Perry, Dave Sanders, James Swallow, Sam Wilson



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# WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 451

## WE'VE CREATED A MONSTER



**A**t 144 pages, *White Dwarf* is a monster of a publication. I continually marvel at the sheer volume of Warhammer goodness we manage to pack into each issue of this venerable magazine, month in and month out. But now we've gone and created a monster. I hope you've reinforced your shelf, because the issue you're reading now is a whopping 160 pages!

A hundred and sixty pages, you say? What sort of divine madness is this? Well, we thought it would be really cool to serialise one of Black Library's favourite works here in *White Dwarf*. So starting here and for the following eight issues, we're bringing you *Faith & Fire* by James Swallow.

It was really just the perfect time to bring you an exciting tale of the Adepta Sororitas. But as stubborn as a long-bearded duardin, we couldn't figure out how to fit the fourteen pages the serial would need on top of all the other stuff we wanted to put in the magazine. So

we did the cool guy thing and added sixteen pages just to accommodate *Faith & Fire*. That means you're basically getting a free Black Library novel, delivered to you in nice, digestible chunks over the course of nine issues. And you're not missing any of *White Dwarf*'s regularly scheduled programming; you're just getting more pages.

And what great pages they are! Ahead of you, you'll find a Tome Celestial with background and rules for Dakkbad's own Ironsunz, those yellow-clad Orruks whose bottomless brutality is the scourge of the Mortal Realms. There's also a short story with Dakkbad's kunnin' on full display, and a painting guide to recruit your own orruks into the colours of the Ironsunz. For even more painting and modelling goodness, look no further than the Realms of Chaos article. There you'll find that Fantastical Realms has mutated into something Nurgly.

Turn the page for all that's in store!



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# CONTACT

Where we feature your thoughts, questions and painted miniatures. Send us your letters and pictures, and we'll print the best ones we get!



## THE START OF A GRAND ADVENTURE

Hi, *White Dwarf* Team. As part of our good friend Matt Ashmore's stag weekend, we climbed Helvellyn in the Lake District. To Matt's credit, he also did it dressed as a Hobbit. When we reached the top of

Helvellyn, we thought playing a game of *Aeronautica Imperialis* would be a good way to celebrate. It would be great if you could help commemorate this event and pop these photos in *White Dwarf*. We'd also like to offer our best wishes to Matt and Marianna.

**Matt Blight and Graeme Baldwin**  
Putnoe, UK

We can certainly pop your photos in the magazine, Matt! It looks like you had a great time celebrating other Matt's imminent nuptials, and we hope all your pilots managed to navigate the peaks of the Lake District successfully. However, we are a little disappointed to see that Matt was wearing shoes – a true Hobbit would have been barefoot!



## TINY TERRAIN FOR MIGHTY WAR MACHINES

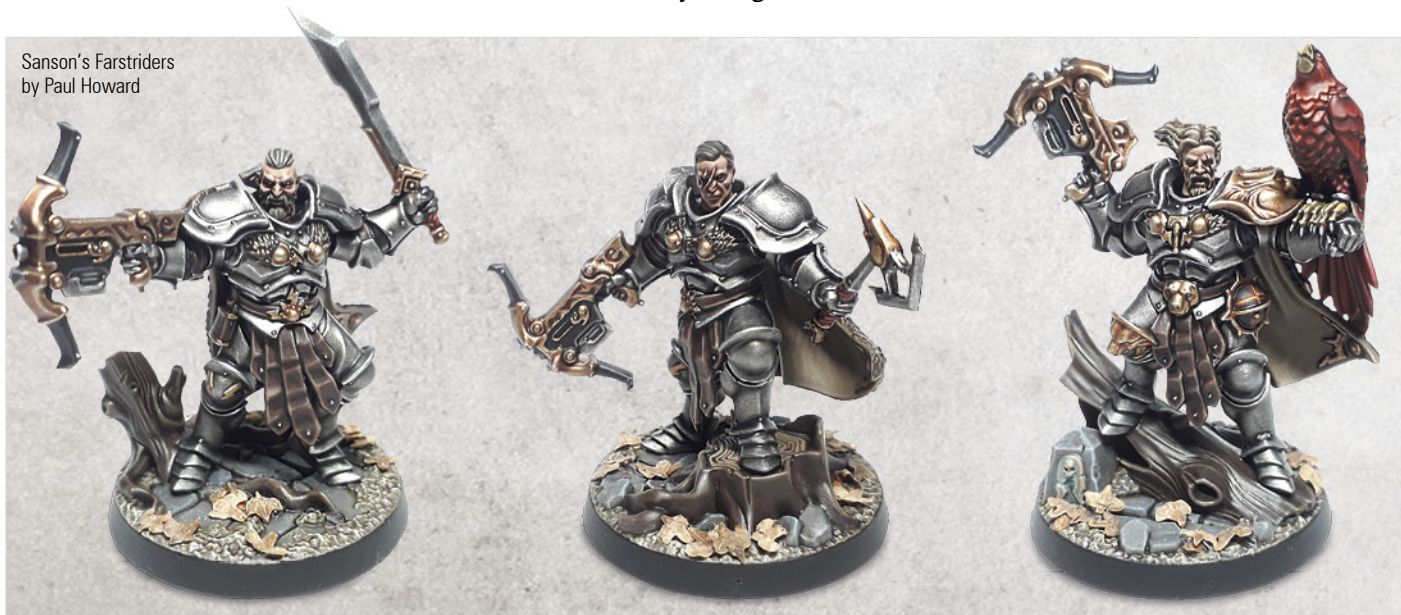
Recently I was putting together my *Adeptus Titanicus* Titan Battlegroup, but I did not finish them. The reason is that I have no idea how to make their bases. *Adeptus Titanicus* has such a different scale to all your other games, so arranging the terrain on the bases should be different, too. Maybe you can make an article about how to base Titans. You also could show the great table from the August 2018 Battle Report again and explain how some of the scenery on it was created. Saying that, are there any signs of another *Adeptus Titanicus* Battle Report?

**Michael Schönhofen**  
Germany

Hey, Michael. Basing articles for *Adeptus Titanicus*, eh? We'll certainly see what we can do! We actually have a Titan-building project underway at the moment, but it might be a while before we feature it in the magazine. We'll see if the chaps working on it can come up with some cool basing solutions for you.

As for an *Adeptus Titanicus* Battle Report, we try to spread out Battle Reports around all the game systems, though we primarily focus on Warhammer Age of Sigmar and Warhammer 40,000. Again, we do have plans for an *Adeptus Titanicus* Battle Report (part of the aforementioned secret project) in the future, but it might be some time off. Patience is a virtue!

Sanson's Farstriders  
by Paul Howard







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[www.games-workshop.com](http://www.games-workshop.com)

Space Marine Crimson Fists Sergeant  
by Nathan Cartwright



### TALLER THAN FIVE-AND-A-HALF DWARFS

Did you know that a human is around five-to-six copies of *White Dwarf* in height? Well, now you do! Before you ask whose hands are in the picture, I was going to say that it was a bunch of Genestealers, but actually it was just some of our younger customers having a laugh.

**Lucas Levieux**  
Warhammer Lyon, France

Grombrindal's magazine has been used for many things over the years, Lucas, but you're probably the first to use it as a measuring device! What worries us is that there are two fingers at the top of the third magazine down, but there doesn't seem to be an arm attached to them. Are you sure you don't have a cult uprising going on in your store?



## PAINTING QUESTION: COLOURS OF THE DEEP

Dear *White Dwarf* team,

I was impressed by the colour scheme of the Isharann Tidecaster painted by Tom Winstone in the 'Eavy Metal painting challenge in the January 2019 issue. I would love to know what colours he used, as I have recently started collecting Idoneth Deepkin, and I would like to apply his colour scheme to my army.

**Adam van Ingen**  
Hastings, New Zealand

A good question, Adam. We took a trip to 'Eavy Metal Towers to ask Tom about his colour scheme for you.

'The main aim for me was to create a powerful contrast between the bone armour and the blue cloth while keeping the overall colour scheme quite pale,' says Tom. 'I mixed orange into the bone colours to shade the armour, giving it a warm tone, while the blue is really cool – the complete opposite. Blending colours like this can take a while and requires a lot of back and forth to get the tone just right. The pink crest and tassels act as spot colours and help tie the Tidecaster to the fish and coral on her base.'

#### BONE ARMOUR

Basecoat: Screaming Skull

Glaze: Troll Slayer Orange & Screaming Skull

Layer: Screaming Skull & White Scar

Layer: White Scar

#### TURQUOISE CLOTH

Basecoat: Sotek Green & Kabalite Green

Wash: Drakenhof Nightshade (recesses)

Layer: Sotek Green, Kabalite Green & Blue Horror

#### PINK CROWN

Basecoat: Screamer Pink & Evil Sunz Scarlet

Layer: Basecoat & Lugganath Orange

Layer: Previous mix & Screaming Skull





## ASK GROMBRINDAL

Oh duardin of the big beard, could you tell me why Kharadron mould beards onto their armour? As a highly pragmatic people, it seems they would be reluctant to waste material on showing off. The battletome doesn't place any emphasis on beards, and the one picture of a Kharadron without his suit on shows a relatively short beard, all of which suggests that they are valueless to Kharadron. Is this the case?

**Daniel David Langley**  
Plymouth, UK

Like all right-thinking duardin, the Kharadron equate beards with status and wisdom. Though being less tied to tradition than the rest of us, they are content to show a robust beard as part of their war-helm whilst sporting a cropped, practical version that doesn't interfere with aethermatic seals or whatever doohickeys they use beneath. It's the sort of thing you expect from these modern gadget-loving types. If you ask me, the proper place for a duardin is with his feet firmly planted on the ground and his beard trailing between them!

**Grombrindal**



## TAKING THE SCENIC ROUTE

Hi, guys. You often ask if we've been inspired by something, and also what other painting articles we would like to see in the magazine. I really like the Fantastical Realms guides you have been doing and would love to see more about scenery. I feel that scenery is just as important as the armies, and I would love to see more guides for Warhammer Age of Sigmar and Necromunda.

**Lee Hamilton**  
Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK

Hey, Lee, thanks for writing in. We're glad you're enjoying Fantastical Realms; it's been hugely popular with a lot of our readers. Fortunately we've got plenty more ideas for it, too! As for scenery making, we have some plans for that, as well. We've got hold of some of the new Necromunda scenery, and we're just trying to figure out what type of article to make with it. If you (or anyone else) have any suggestions, let us know at [team@whitedwarf.co.uk](mailto:team@whitedwarf.co.uk).

## TOP PHOTO TIPS

In Contact, we want to show off the very best miniatures painted by you, our readers. Of course, great miniatures also need great pictures, so we came up with a useful guide to help you out:

[www.warhammer-community.com/the-model-photo](http://www.warhammer-community.com/the-model-photo)

If you follow all the advice in that article, you really can't go far wrong. Our top tips are:

Always use a white background.

Make sure you've got good lighting.

Ensure the whole model is in focus.

Find the model's golden angle. If you're ever in doubt, take a look at the same model on the Games Workshop website.



Gimli  
by Sean McGee



Bombur  
by Amy Snuggs



Sloppity Bilepiper  
by Darcy Bono



Blood Angels Hellblasters  
by Raúl Rodríguez Martín



## MODEL OF THE MONTH

This issue's model of the month is a Skaven Screaming Bell painted by Jeff Paynter. We were particularly impressed by the green glow on the warpstone and the rusty metal bars and bolts holding the rickety wooden frame together.

'The green was achieved using a basecoat of Warpstone Glow, followed by a mix of Warpstone Glow and Moot Green,' says Jeff. 'I then started working on the areas that I wanted to glow, picking out spots with Moot Green, then Moot Green mixed with Flash Gitz Yellow. I added

increasingly more Pallid Wych Flesh to the mix for the very end highlights.

'The rusty areas are basecoated with Leadbelcher, then washed with Nuln Oil. I then applied a drybrush of Runefang Steel followed by a drybrush of Ryza Rust where I wanted the main rust colours to be. I then stippled over the Ryza Rust with a mix of Doombull Brown, Mephiston Red and Abaddon Black to create the darker, wetter-looking rust.' We think the end result looks awesome – great work, Jeff!





Imperial Fists Captain  
and Ancient  
by Paul Newrick



Blood Angels Captain  
by Tom Danvers



World Eaters Praevian and  
Castellax Battle-Automata  
by Dominic Fabri



The Changeling  
by Chris Pike



Untamed Beasts  
by Darcy Bono





Seraphon Troglodon  
by John Hopkin



### JUNGLE T'AU AND WELL WISHES

Hi, *White Dwarf* team. First of all, some compliments. I'm a long-time fan of your magazine. My first issue was about Chaos Space Marines back in fourth edition, which feels like a very long time ago! I've collected every issue since that one, as it was a way for me to keep in touch with the hobby even if I couldn't find time to paint. I really love the current version of the magazine. It's entertaining and inspiring, and when I finish an issue, I always want to go to my desk and paint some models. So congratulations!

I'm also very thankful to have the hobby in my life, especially because it helped me a lot a few months ago. I was struggling with depression, and I discovered that painting required so much precision and concentration that, when I was working on my models, I didn't have the usual dark thoughts. It gave me an efficient escape and a way to stay focused, and I am very thankful for that.

Actually, that's not the main reason of my message. I read the article about jungle armies in the July 2019 issue, and I found it very interesting. And since I also have a jungle-themed army, and I thought it might interest you! My T'au are supposed to be on a long campaign in a stellar system full of jungle planets, and the paint scheme is supposed to reproduce a random effect, like plants in the jungle. The Pathfinders' capes are made of paper towel soaked in PVA glue and painted with a lot of patience. The bases are made using aquariums plants, lichen, small branches and stones. I have about 2,000 points so far!



Valentin Nayral  
Lyon, France

Hey Valentin, thanks for writing in. We're glad to hear that you're enjoying the magazine and that, more importantly, you're feeling better about things now. Life can be pretty tough sometimes, but there's one thing to remember: at least we're not Guardsmen about to be eaten by Tyranids!

As for your T'au, we think they look excellent. You've come up with some brilliant background for your army and executed it splendidly on your models. You should be immensely proud of your creations.



# WORLDS OF WARHAMMER



## PHIL KELLY

As the Warhammer Studio's senior background writer, Phil is almost permanently (some might say eternally) immersed in the lore of the Mortal Realms and the 41st Millennium. He is also a self-confessed hobby magpie, happily picking up and painting whatever miniatures he likes the look of. Phil does love the shiny-shiny!

**C**ollecting an impressive army of Citadel miniatures is a tremendously rewarding experience, but it's typically a marathon rather than a sprint. There are many ways to go about this process, usually driven by different approaches to the hobby and to the game itself. Some people like to plan out their army in advance, then stick to that plan until they reach its completion. Others prefer to collect whatever seems cool at the time, letting their collection accumulate without any real overall intent. There is a third method that I'll cover later – essentially that of collecting an army by accident.

A common question that gets asked to writers is, 'Are you an architect or a gardener?'. These archetypes refer to your preferred process of writing, and they are a useful pair of terms, so I'm going to steal them. The same question is

sometimes paraphrased as, 'Are you a plotter or a pantsner?', the latter meaning someone who flies by the seat of their pants, as it were, by making stuff up as it comes to them and just seeing where their ideas take them. Some people, however, prefer a more structured approach.

## A CUNNING PLAN

'Architect' writers prefer to draw up plans in advance, writing a detailed synopsis and figuring out all the characters, their arcs and trials, all leading to a meticulously planned climactic finale. They deviate when a better idea comes along, of course, but by and large they stick to the blueprint they worked out at the start. The motto of the architect is 'measure twice, cut once'. They usually finish on time, to boot.

The architect's approach to collecting an army is typified by those players who work out a theoretical army list before investing in its practical equivalent.<sup>1</sup> These usually go through several iterations and will be fine-tuned over time – a fun process in itself. By finessing and swapping out units, weapons and characters until they are absolutely sure they have the army they want to collect all nailed down, and perhaps even playing a test game or two using stand-in or 'proxy' models, the architects make sure they are happy with their decisions. Then, after having planned their finances as meticulously as they did their army list, they buy the lot.

<sup>1</sup> Clearly this is how Ultramarines collect their own wargaming armies – and let's face it, if any Chapter is going to, it's these guys. Purely to run simulations, you understand – they hardly ever make the 'pew pew' noises.



Louis Aguilar is a grand architect when it comes to creating armies – he even talks about writing army lists in this issue's Rules of Engagement. His Maggotkin of Nurgle are a fine example of an architect's work.



**Worlds of Warhammer delves into the background of the Age of Sigmar and the 41st Millennium, looking at how stories are created and legends are born. The subjects of Phil's musings this month are architects, gardeners and hunter-gatherers. All will be explained.**

White Dwarf's own Matt Hutson is very much a gardener when it comes to collecting an army. He has been working on his Imperial Fists collection for years, dutifully adding new models as they are released.



Louis Aguilar of the Age of Sigmar rules team is a great exemplar of this approach. After playing a couple of test games with a Maggotkin of Nurgle army built around two Great Unclean Ones, he dutifully collected and painted them with impressive focus and surgical precision.

An architect often collects multiples of the same unit once they've decided on the fact they are the best choice available (or else they just fall in love with a particular model and want to field that same thing several times over). This approach gives them an inbuilt redundancy into their army list – if Brutal Menace A dies, then its brothers, Brutal Menaces B and/or C, can pick up the slack. It also lends itself to a quick assembly line method of building and painting models.

Many architects' favoured manner of painting is a production line blitz that sees a new army crop up in the space of a few weeks, often behind closed doors. When they reveal their handiwork to their friends and gaming opponents, it's as if the army has been magicked out of nowhere. Such collectors still lavish time and attention on their creations, of course; sometimes even more so than the gardeners. Some of the most visually stunning and unified collections I've ever seen have been the work of architects.

Having been painted in one coherent style, they are invariably eye-catching and impressive when

on display. The 'ta-da!' factor of this reveal is a big part of the appeal to the architect's approach. This is often the path of gamers who take part in matched play events such as tournaments, lending them an element of surprise and showmanship as they reveal their next super-army to the *oohs* and *aahs* of their fellow competitors and the thinly veiled envy of those who take a little longer to put together a force.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the catalyst may be, the architect's blitz is a fantastically effective way to go about the hobby journey of collecting an army. With the deadline of the coming event as immovable as a Kharadron Overlord's poker face, such hobbyists are almost certain to get their grand goal completed in time (even if it means staying up until 3 a.m. the night before – you know who you are).

### HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?<sup>3</sup>

Those writers who think of themselves as 'gardeners' come up with the characters of the story and then simply let the story lead where it may, letting the characters grow and change as new ideas come to them, and shaping and pruning the plot as they go. The gardener approach is an organic one, and it is usually a more relaxed experience than the Way of the Planner. Going with gut instinct rather than a

<sup>2</sup> A decade or two, in the case of some gardener types.

<sup>3</sup> By 'garden', I do of course mean 'thicket of tiny but very pointy warriors'.



<sup>4</sup> He found the Emperor instead, though I believe he still has Orky tendencies in there somewhere under all that power armour.

<sup>5</sup> Next up, I plan to invest in some Aeronautica Imperialis Ork aircraft and then rejig them with Grot pilots to make tiny little Mek-planes that I will use as Stormboyz in the game.

fine-tuned plan can lead to all manner of exciting experiments and diversions. When it's going well, this is a very fun approach to a creative task. Sometimes, however, those gardens can become rather overgrown, and they can be quite tricky to cut back or draw to a satisfying conclusion without creating twice as much stuff as you planned to do. This tends to wreak havoc with deadlines, but if you're just doing it as a hobby with no end goal as such, that's not so much of an issue. The gardener approach correlates with those collectors who let their whims guide them – and as we know, most hobbyists have a whim of iron. Spurred on by an almost irresistible urge to make that particular week's vision of coolness a reality, the gardener amasses their collection in fits and spurts, going on massive hobby binges and sprinting through units and characters. Later they may lose pace to dawdle around the collection, waiting for inspiration to strike once more, or even put that collection aside for a while before going back to tend to it when the muse strikes them. Nick Horth, also of the Age of Sigmar background team, tends to collect in this way, as does *White Dwarf*'s Matt Hutson. There's always something new sprouting on their hobby desks.

Although I've always been an architect when it comes to writing, I sometimes lean towards being a gardener when it comes to collecting. I often let myself dabble in new projects rather than feeling like I have to tick boxes. Often I try to collect one of each thing in the army, purely for variety's sake, though this can take a while – I've amassed three shelves full of Tiranids over the years and still have a few units I have yet to collect. I inevitably go off-piste as I venture further into my own conversions and alternative concepts for existing units – as sure a sign of gardenerhood as any other. It's not always this way, however – sometimes an army more or less collects itself.



## THE HOBBY MAGPIE

There is another path, as I mentioned earlier, which does not have an analogue in writing circles. It is one arguably built into Warhammer since its inception. For this approach, you need to be a lot less picky about what you collect, and just go with whatever shiny thing you can get your hands on. I am a bit of a hobby magpie myself (don't judge me!), and I have amassed a fair amount of stuff over the years that is second- or even third-hand, then repainted it in my own colours and adopted it into a wider collection, only to then round out the force with a few choice purchases. A major part of the trick is to come up with a unifying background or paint scheme that

can make it all work and fits into the wider worlds of Warhammer. You might struggle to find a way to fit that Carnifex into an Imperial army – though believe me, I have seen it done more than once – but with the right narrative, a really disparate force can be given identity and focus on the shelf as well as the battlefield.

Most of us will be very familiar with the concept of just collecting whatever we can get our hands on. In fact the vast majority of us start our hobby journey here, I think – we are given our first box of Citadel miniatures as a present, perhaps, a hand-me-down or a treat we bought ourselves purely because we liked the look of it. The notion of how that unit performed in a matched play environment could not be further from our minds. These new and bright-eyed hobbyists will then likely amass stuff that goes alongside that first purchase – perhaps an attack bike to *vroom* alongside some Tactical Marines or a Hive Tyrant to back up that rather less intimidating squad of Genestealer Cultists. More and more gets added, often repurposed or converted to hell and back until guns bristle out from every limb.

Over time, the collection reaches a kind of critical momentum. If those much-loved Genestealer Cultists now number a few dozen, say, and the hobbyist has clearly invested a lot of time and effort in them, the fact the owner collects that faction becomes well known. They might get some more as presents. People in the local gaming store, if they have some spare Cult bits or Tiranids they want to get rid of, might well offer them to the local enthusiast instead of throwing them away. Slowly, surely, the hobbyist's collection grows ever more formidable, and that tiny digestion pool of a bitz box becomes a massive, sprawling bio-ship that spews out ever more interesting gribbles. In a way, the army begins to collect itself. Some lucky people are even given a whole force by friends who have to move away, only to then add to it until it fits their vision and becomes 'theirs' in spirit as well as in body.

## RAMSHACKLE FUN

A good example of this phenomenon is my Ork army for Warhammer 40,000. Though it has recently been on the field as a freebooters 'Bad Mek' army in the studio Vigilus campaign, it should really be Deathskulls given the amount of other people's models that I have amassed over the years, repainted and then added to the horde. Around half of the force started off in other people's collections, the rest being models I bought to ensure the army actually worked as a cogent force on the battlefield. One of my Trukks was given to me by an old friend when he left the country. One of the others was a scratch-build vehicle that the original owner never got around to painting. My Stompa was in bits when I received it, mostly





painted in sub-assemblies, but nonetheless languishing in a plastic bag. The Flash Gitz had fought in two other armies before, which is quite fitting given their mercenary tendencies. My mob of tiny grot-bots has not only Epic-scale Ork Dreadnoughts but also Tinboy members from two different veteran hobbyists whose collections stem from the 1990s, whereas my Dakkajet was a conversion done for a Games Day but then donated to the ladz. Da Sherrif, my trusty Deff Dredd, is a conversion that my gaming buddy Paul Gayner made from an Emperor Titan and then bequeathed to me once his stompin' days drew to a close<sup>4</sup>. And so it went, over the years. In total, my Ork collection comes from no fewer than nine different hobbyists. Painted in the same rust-and-hazard-stripes colour scheme, you'd never know it.

To unify this rather disparate force, I needed a kunnin' background to tie them into the world of Warhammer 40,000. Known as the Skrapyard Dogz, this Mek-heavy force is essentially an Ork scrapheap come to life, weaponised and unleashed upon anyone with shiny gubbinz who stands still long enough to get krumped. The collection has recently sprouted a Mekboy Workshop and some of those ace little vehicles from the Sector Munitorum Killzone. Over the coming years, the collection will get even larger as I hunt and gather more units to add to the throng. Provided they are painted in the same rust-tastic colour scheme, they will all fit in with the same ramshackle aesthetic – admittedly a pretty easy trick to pull off with the Orks.<sup>5</sup>

## THE GRAND HOBBY ALLIANCE

In recent years, amassing a collection from various sources has become all the easier, especially for Age of Sigmar. Buy a few boxed games and special-edition miniatures, and before you know it, you can find yourself with a slew of miniatures all from the same Grand Alliance. You might have the contents of the Soul Wars boxed set, for instance – a great starting force of Stormcast Eternals – the Sylvaneth from Looncurse and the Kharadron Overlords from Aether War. Get them all together and you could field humans, duardin and aelves together as one big Grand Alliance Order army, just to see how they feel on the battlefield, before adding to or rounding out the force (and potentially specialising it to make the most of the relevant battletome's rules set). Sometimes this impromptu host can even hail from the same battletome, at which point it is just plain rude not to turn it into a 1,000 point force and play a few Meeting Engagements at the very least. This is especially easy to achieve using the Cities of Sigmar book – the cities of the God-King are so cosmopolitan they often have Stormcast Eternals fighting alongside freeguild humans bolstered by aelves, duardin or both. With a little brush work, you can add a unifying colour across the collection and *voilà*, you have a Cities of Sigmar army.

Whatever your approach to collecting an army, there are no hard and fast rules. Ultimately, the trick is to ride the wave of enthusiasm, whatever form it takes, and for as long as possible. Don't be afraid to adapt, and if a rationale or background for your army doesn't immediately spring to mind, never fear. Over the course of many happy hours painting, you're more than likely to come up with something cool to help your collection become an all-conquering force of doom.

## 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!

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From the maelstrom of a sundered world, the Eight Realms were born - and with their birth began a war to claim them. In this issue: Ironjawz, Fyreslayers, Sylvaneth and writing army lists.







**THE TOME CELESTIAL**  
Waaagh! Dakkbad! Da Ironsuns are da subject of dis munf's Tome Celestial. Find noo background, rulez and a paintin' guide, startin' on page 16.



**NEW GROWTH IN GNARLROOT**  
Check out this impressive Sylvaneth army painted by Sam Wilson. If you're after some army inspiration, page 42 is where you need to start your journey.





# THE TOME CELESTIAL

The Ironsunz are amongst the most feared of all orruk warclans, a brutal but kunnin' horde that has carved a swathe of destruction across the Mortal Realms. Led by their mighty Megaboss, the infamous Dakkbad Grotkicker, the Ironsunz are fully convinced of their own supremacy and delight in smashing up anything that says otherwise.



## IRONSUNZ

By Jordan Green & Jervis Johnson

**S**tomping, brawling and bellowing come the Ironjaw warclans. From the primal savannahs of Ghur to the sulphurous wastes of Aqshy, these green-skinned marauders seek nothing more than to drown the realms in savage, endless war. They do this not for any conscious purpose, nor even to honour the bestial god Gorkamorka (at least not intentionally). Ironjawz seek endless battle because they are the biggest and meanest orruks around, and in their eyes, that means they were made solely to fight.

Though the Ironjawz are unified in their lust for wanton carnage, they are as prone to idiosyncrasy and obsession as any other race. The Bloodtoofs are wandering nomads, and Da Choppas delight in the spread of mindless anarchy. While the Fang-krushas swagger over their supposed favour with the Fist of Gork, the Kryptboyz raid Shyishan necropolises and hunt Ossiarch legions, looting the finest bones to strap to their dented warplate. Yet there is one warclan whose name, above all others, has become a byword for terror amongst the civilised races. They are the Ironsunz, and in them is embodied the savage duality of the Great Green God.

Clad in their unmistakable, garish yellow armour, the Ironsunz are amongst the most numerous of all warclans. Only the Great Waaagh! contains more Ironjaw warriors, and many of the brawls that fight under Gordrakk's banner are themselves Ironsunz swept up in the cascade of violence. Yet it is not simple numerical strength that makes the Ironsunz mighty, or even the high proportion of fearsome Brutes and bosses that fight in their rampaging armies. The Ironsunz have fully embraced the kunnin' brutality of their barbarous race, and led by their grand overboss Dakkbad Grotkicker, they seek nothing less than to become the greatest orruks that ever were. If they are not stopped, they just might succeed.

### THE RISE OF DAKKBAD

For as long as any orruk can remember, there have been Ironsunz. The primogenitors of the warclan fought alongside Gorkamorka during his first great rampage across the realms. The daemoniac invasion of Ghur was met by bellowing mobs of Ironsunz. When the Fist of Gork himself emerged in the bestial lands of the Wildheart, the Ironsunz raised their voices in savage greeting alongside their fellow greenskins. Yet despite this proud history of 'doin' over everyfing dat looks at us funny', the Ironsunz did not truly rise to prominence until the coming of Dakkbad Grotkicker, arguably the greatest Megaboss ever to rule the warclan.

Dakkbad was once one Brute amongst many, and aside from a habit of booting grots or unlucky



Megaboss Dakkbad Grotkicker leads a mighty Waaagh! into the Realm of Life, where good fights and challenging foes are plentiful.



Ardboys on a whim, there was little that marked him as special. Yet Dakkbad was that rarest of things – an orruk possessed of grand ambitions, and the brains to see them realised. As a yoof, Dakkbad had been weedier than many of the other young orruks that haunted the caverns of Ghur. Though this would normally have led to his swift demise, the runt Dakkbad soon learned the value of convincing two rivals to bash each other senseless before he finished off the dazed winner, or otherwise delivering a good kicking to an orruk who wasn't looking. Such would be the start of Dakkbad's appreciation for 'all that finkin' stuff', even as he grew into a muscled and fearsome Ironjaw.

Upon reaching maturity, Dakkbad did not forget the creed that had served him so well as a yoof: the less one gets hit, the more hitting they are then able to do. He applied this knowledge to the beast hunts his brawl undertook, making sure to always attack from the flanks while the monster was otherwise preoccupied with devouring Dakkbad's mates. Though some orruks grumbled that this was 'not proppa' behaviour, it did see Dakkbad as the victor of countless fights. Before long, he had grown to such a size – enlarged by carnage as all orruks are – that few would dare espouse such doubts in his presence.

## DRESSIN' TO IMPRESS

All orruks are natural bullies, thrilling in pushing around anything punier than themselves, but only the Ironsunz have elevated showing off to something approaching an art form. The defining colour of their warplate is a bright and striking yellow. While this often makes their approach incredibly obvious, to the Ironsunz this is just another example of their 'orruky know-wots' at play. After all, the more fights an orruk gets into, the bigger and tougher he becomes. The red markings on an Ironsun's armour represent teeth, flames or claws, depending on which orruk is telling the story. While the Ardboy mobs take pride in making these markings as neat as possible for a greenskin, most Ironsunz simply let the spray of their enemies' blood define how the patterns take shape.

When Sigmar's Tempest thundered into being above the realms, some scholars claimed that the armour worn by the orruks – for many of the first greenskins encountered by the Stormhosts were of the prolific Ironsunz – was painted in imitation of the God-King's blessed champions, particularly the golden Hammers of Sigmar. While some orruks no doubt did attempt this, simply because they found it amusing, the majority of Ironsunz were not amongst these conscious imitators. In fact, some of the boyz even boasted that the 'lightning ladz' were in fact mirroring their warclan's crude heraldry, a claim that irritated many prouder Stormcast to no end.





**Above:** Gore-gruntas make up the heavy cavalry of the Ironjawz warclans, and they will often lead the charge into the enemy lines. Few foes can stand in their way as both rider and mount hack, gouge and tear apart everything in their path.

**Opposite:** The Megaboss known as Gutdrukk Fourfist ruled the Ironsuns before Dakkbad. It's said that Dakkbad convinced his predecessor to enter a Realmgate that led into a Chaos Dreadhold, then smashed the gate so that the forces of Chaos couldn't escape Gutdrukk's fury. Whatever the truth of the matter, no one has ever challenged Dakkbad on his version of the story.

Dakkbad cemented his rise to power through the death of his brawl's previous Megaboss, Gutdrukk Fourfist. Upon the plains of the Gnashka Plateau, Gutdrukk had noticed the other orruk warleader hanging back during the slaying of a colossal gargant, so he challenged Dakkbad to prove himself by leading the next beast hunt. Dakkbad agreed, but not before quietly scooping yellowish wax from the dead gargant's head. The next morning, Dakkbad led the boyz off bright and early in pursuit of the gargant's monstrous Maw-krusha 'pet'. By using the wax as crude earplugs, he was able to withstand the auditory barrage unleashed by the cornered beast. The Grotkicker gleefully allowed the creature to prey upon his rivals, Gutdrukk amongst them, before battering it into submission. This Maw-krusha, known as Bossbiter, is still ridden upon by Dakkbad to this day. It has been fed on a rarified diet of commanders, champions and great lords, and it is unusually loyal to its orruk master. Bossbiter has even been known to suppress its violent urges for a time, should the possibility of a grander feast later present itself.

Dakkbad would fight many battles to climb his way to the top of the Ironsuns, but few were as decisive as the siege of the Mawgate. A passageway to the cursed Eightpoints, the Realmgate was located in the gullet of Fangathrak, a godbeast imprisoned by six

colossal Chaos-tainted forts amidst the Ghurish Scarlands. Dakkbad's Ironsuns were but one of the warclans drawn into battle against the Chaos armies that garrisoned the forts and the Stormcast who sought to turn the gate to their own purposes. Dakkbad once again proved his kunnin' by luring a large portion of a Khornate warhorde into the gargant-infested Deffgorge before joining up with Gordrakk, the Fist of Gork, once he arrived with his horde. But though Dakkbad fought at Gordrakk's side for a time, he was never content and soon went his own way.

Perhaps Dakkbad resents Gordrakk because his power is of godly origin, rather than having been earned by fighting his way from the bottom. Maybe he simply wants to be the best, like all orruks. Either way, Dakkbad has set his sights on nothing less than taking command of the Great Waaagh! for himself. If that means humbling Gordrakk in the process, so much the better.

### AFTER THE DEFFSTORM

The cataclysm of deathly magic that was the Shyishan necroquake soon entered the mythology of each of the Mortal Realms' many races. To the orruks, the aetheric surge was known, with typical lack of 'mukkin' about', as the Deffstorm. Across the realms, unquiet spirits rose in the tens of thousands to take vengeance upon the living, while the laws of magic were violently rewritten,



birthing new and lingering manifestations of arcane energy that blighted the land.

None of this initially bothered the Ironsunz. While 'spookz' did not crumple quite as satisfyingly as humies did when you hit them, they were at least a new challenge for Dakkbad and his boyz. As for the Endless Spells, the Ghurish orruks of the warclan boasted that they had been facing far stranger predators ever since they were gangly yooofs. For a time, the Ironsunz continued their rampages much as they ever had; if the Boneboss, as they knew Nagash, wished to meddle in their warpath, then they would simply duff him up, too.

Yet soon enough, the Ironsunz realised that their early optimism had been misplaced. Many of the lands they travelled were silent tombs, their populace already slain by the Nighthaunt advance. The wild Endless Spells they had previously dismissed proved impervious to choppa and hacka, and they reaped a great toll on the boyz whenever they were encountered. Even those territories already claimed by the Ironsunz came under attack from the unrelenting dead, and crude monuments raised to the glory of Dakkbad were cast down by the omniscient fury of Nagash.

To make matters worse, the Megaboss's old rival Gordrakk had profited from the Deffstorm in his own way. The destruction of many warclans saw the ragged survivors soon joining up with the Great Waaagh!, while many of Sigmar's newly revealed Stormvaults were plundered of their powerful relics. Gordrakk's power swelled as never before, while the Ironsunz were beset by misfortune at every turn. Many younger orruks muttered that all their boss's vaunted kunnin' hadn't accounted for this setback. Dakkbad was inconsolable, which in orruk terms means that those who approached him rarely remained in one piece for long. It seemed that all the Megaboss had worked for would slip from his grasp, his mighty warclan sundered by outside malediction and internal strife.

But even as disaster beckoned, luck was to send the Ironsunz on the active offensive once more. Dakkbad had regarded the omens of the Time of Tribulations with suspicion and had dispatched several of his most trusted Megabosses to Shyish before the eruption of the Deffstorm. Most never returned. But eventually, word reached the Ironsunz of an underworld named Hallost, the Land of Dead Heroes. Here the spirits of mighty warriors battled eternally, rising with each new dawn to continue their endless war. Inspiration hit Dakkbad like a great green bolt; this underworld must surely be full of belligerent orruk souls, for what greater fighters were there

than the Ironjawz? Furthermore, Dakkbad suspected that these spirits, like any good greenskin, would be spoiling for new and better scraps. With such a host of powerful souls at his back, the Grotkicker could rise to new heights of glory. Besides, even if there were no orruks to be found in Hallost, his armies would inevitably grow stronger and stronger through the constant fighting anyway.

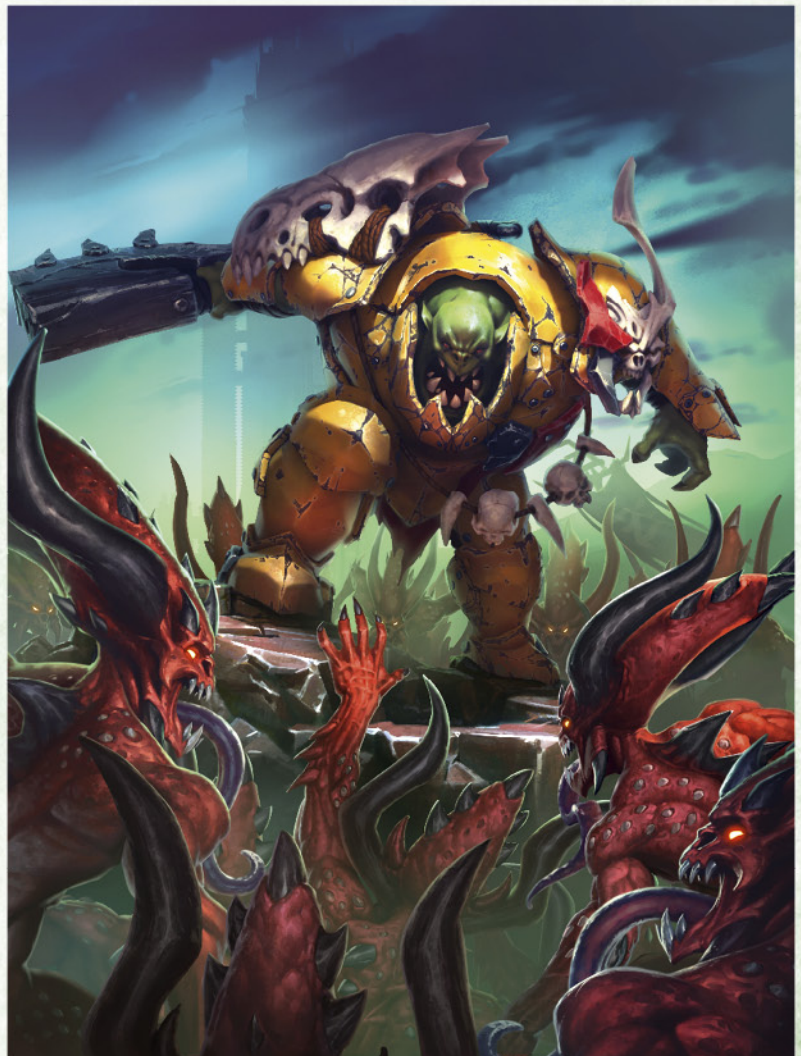
His warlike vigour restored, Dakkbad summoned his mightiest Megabosses. The strength of the Ironsunz was mustered to a degree not seen in decades. Before long, a tide of armoured orruks snaked its way through the hinterlands of Ghur, heading for those gates that led to the realm of endings. The iron sun would rise over grim Hallost, and when it did, Dakkbad would return to glory once more.

## MUSTERIN' THE BOYZ

The Ironsunz are a vast and legendary warclan, but at their core, they loosely organise themselves in the same manner as any other Ironjawz. Each orruk will get together with like-minded mates, from hulking Brutes to stomping Gore-gruntas, to form a mob. Five mobs are known as a fist, five being the number an Ironjaw

**'Right then, yoos horrible lots, let's 'ave a look at ya. Stand up straight now. It's a proper honour to be fightin' in da colours of da mighty Ironsunz y'know. Hmm ... yeah, you'll do. It's the Ardboys for you, my ladz. Now go an' make me an' Dakkbad proud.'**

**– Big Boss  
Moggorz of the  
Rekrootin'  
Krew**





## DA BOSSFIST

Dakkbad's Bossfist is the most fearsome fighting force the Ironsunz can muster, an assemblage of veteran Brutes and battle-scarred Megabosses who fight in the shadow of the Grotkicker himself. Though he has a talent for tactics, Dakkbad is still an orruk, and so he cannot resist rushing forward atop Bossbiter to be first into battle. His Bossfist forms the crushing implement with which Dakkbad punches straight through the enemy lines, fracturing a foe's formation in time for the rest of the boyz to carve them apart. Dakkbad's 'inner circle' of bosses are largely responsible for bellowing his orders to the boys around them, leaving him to concentrate on 'finkin' and fighting'. It also allows him to keep a close eye on these chosen warleaders, to make sure none rise above their station.

can easily count up to on one hand. Five fists make up a brawl, and many brawls with a shared sense of identity constitute a warclan. At every level of a warclan's primitive hierarchy can be found Warchanters, shamans and bosses leading the orruks in pursuit of carnage. All of these are in turn subservient to Dakkbad, Megaboss of the warclan entire and 'ardest Ironsun of them all.

This is quite a claim, for Ironsunz pride themselves on being tough as nails. While Brute mobs form the heart of many warclans, the Ironsunz can call upon vast numbers of these fearsome orruk warriors to fill out their ranks. The Brute mobs of the Ironsunz are infamous not only for their resilience, but also for using a repertoire of sneaky tricks most uncommon to greenskins. They will wait until it is raining before charging a line of handgun-armed Freeguilders, bait the enemy into approaching through bellowing all manner of creative obscenities at them and even hide behind things where necessary (though never when boyz from another warclan might see). Unlike most orruks, Ironsunz Brutes do not hurry into battle. Instead, they have mastered the art of putting on a surprising turn of speed when the enemy dares to come too close, and a single bellowing shout from their Megabosses is enough to send them crashing headlong into the stunned foe. Conserving their energy on the advance leaves more for the fighting later, and besides, it's much funnier to watch the overeager Ardboys go charging off to absorb most of the incoming firepower anyway.

As far as the bosses of the Ironsunz are concerned, they have it all. Not only are they 'ded hard' and 'ded killy', but they're 'ded good at that finkin' stuff' to boot. Dakkbad has expended great effort in bringing powerful orruk war leaders to his banner, but he only wants the best. Such will be necessary if he wishes to take down Gordrakk, after all. While some of these orruks are pure blunt implements, many Ironsunz bosses have taken to imitating the Grotkicker in

employing 'proppa taktikz'. While none are possessed of Dakkbad's own natural gifts, these war leaders are practically masterminds by the standards of most orruks, forever competing to attract their overboss's gaze by utilising such complex manoeuvres as a 'flanking attack' or even an 'ambush' to ensure their lads can get into the press of melee and start smashing as quickly as possible.

### IRONSUNZ OF THE REALMS

Though every orruk of the warclan has a solid grasp on what it means to be an Ironsun, their fists and brawls are by no means united. As one of the largest warclans, the Ironsunz have spread far and wide across each of the Mortal Realms, save Azyr, and few civilisations have not heard tell of their barbarous exploits. While Dakkbad Grotkicker leads his vast armies in pursuit of his own greatness, other Ironsunz brawls roam far from the main bulk of the warclan. This may be a result of being sent on a special mission at Dakkbad's behest, being a potential rival sent far from the overboss's side, or simply because the boss orruk in question feels like it.

Ghur will forever be the spiritual home of the Ironsunz, as it is for all orruks. The Gnashka Plateau in particular is practically sacred to the warclan, for it was here that Dakkbad first rose to power. These savage and practically inimical lands were once the hunting grounds of Stonehorns, Manticores, Crag Leviathans and stranger predators besides. Over the years, the Ironsunz have cleared most of these monsters out, but they regularly release monstrous beasts – or unfortunate prisoners – captured on raids onto the plateau to chase them down whenever they get bored. Standing sentinel over the bone-strewn wastes is the unimaginatively named 'Fort Dakkbad'. Ironjawz build few permanent settlements, but the Overboss has realised the value of a fortified powerbase, and he regularly returns after particularly brutal Waaagh!s to replenish his warclan's ranks and plot his next move. A great totem pole of piled bones and offal marks the centre of the huge, ramshackle encampment. At the very top sits the mangled skull of Gutdrakk Fourfist, the fallen boss condemned to forever look out over his former rival's conquests.

The Ironsunz have made their mark on plenty of realms besides Ghur. It is possible that many orruks who identify with the warclan have never even heard of Dakkbad Grotkicker; rather, they have simply seen the mighty Brute mobs marching in their distinctive plate and decided it looks dead good. With that said, plenty of these roaming warbands are formed of kunnin' Ironsunz through and through. In Ghyran, the mobs under Snappa Krookjaw have used their shamans to



Ardboyz that join the Ironsunz warclan are always keen to prove their worth to Dakkbad and his Big Talka, the surprisingly loquacious Moggorz.



overwhelm a Jotunberg mountain with raw Waaagh! energy, sending it careening across the wilds of the realm like an out-of-control battering ram of living ice. In Ulgu, the Gloomswallowaz Brawl has long fought through the network of shadowy tunnels that threads the sub-terra of the realm, collapsing key passageways and junctions to funnel Moonclan grots, lumbering troggoths and hungry ogors of the Underguts Mawtribe towards the sight of their bright yellow armour.

Some Ironsunz have managed to end up in even more bizarre locations. None exemplify this better than Gurzag Ironskull and his Ardboyz. Decades ago, Gurzag got the bright idea to lead his lads – Basha, Hakka and Bonekutta – into the ruined city of Shadespire in search of loot. Unaware of the curse hanging over those dead streets, Ironskull's boyz found themselves transported to the twilight sub-realm known as the Mirrored City, where those who fall soon rise again. Like any good Ironsun, Gurzag has swiftly turned this to his advantage and is currently having the time of his life indulging in the seemingly endless battle.

## MOGGORZ'S REKROOTIN' KREW

During his time in Gordrakk's Megafist, Dakkbad learned that truly great bosses have gargantuan hordes of orruks to call upon. To facilitate this, he turned to the big boss Moggorz. Moggorz was once a simple Brute, caught stealing a prime haunch of Grunta meat from Dakkbad's own larder. Dragged before the Megaboss, he somehow managed to convince the Grotkicker to not immediately beat him to a lifeless pulp. Dakkbad was so impressed by this that he swiftly named Moggorz his 'Head Big Talka' and bid him bring more warriors into the Ironsunz ranks.

Moggorz has travelled far and wide in pursuit of this duty, followed by his veteran mob known as the Rekrootin' Krew. Around flickering fire pits he regales fellow orruks with tales of the mighty Dakkbad Grotkicker and his exploits. Some of these are even true. As unlikely as it seems, Moggorz is so skilled a rhetorician by greenskin standards that many in audience soon wish for nothing more than to join the Ironsunz themselves. Mobs of these aspirant orruks, often still clad in their old warclan colours with a coat of yellow hastily daubed atop, form up around the Rekrootin' Krew in battle and will fight ferociously to prove themselves worthy in Moggorz's eyes.



## DA AGE OF IRON

The Ironsunz have been causing mayhem across the realms for centuries, but it is only with the rise of Dakkbad Grotkicker at the end of the Age of Chaos that they have truly become a force to be reckoned with. Their armies march at the Megaboss's command, smashing and bashing wherever they go.

### RISE OF A LEGEND

Upon the Gnashka Plateau of Ghur, Dakkbad Grotkicker schemes to bring about the deaths of his fellow bosses and seize control of the Ironsunz. He finally accomplishes this with the aid of the fearsome Maw-krusha Bossbiter, and soon sets about battering the orruks now under his command into a semblance of cohesion.

### A HEAD FOR FINKIN'

Though Dakkbad holds his position through strength and kunnin', some of the boyz still grumble that he is 'un-orryky'. A demonstration is needed. The fortress of Chaos Lord Felgraen Hexflyer amidst the Ghurish wastes presents a fine target. Rather than launch a frontal assault, however, Dakkbad announces he will claim victory through a 'klassic pincer move'. Many of

his warriors are confused, until Ardboy tunnelers dig their way into the great menageries of Lord Hexflyer and release the scorpioid megafauna held there. The beasts rampage through the fortress before the Ironsunz move in to slaughter both the monsters and beleaguered Chaos garrison alike. More of the warclan become converts to Dakkbad's kunnin' ways, while the Megaboss takes Hexflyer's skull as a trophy.

### THE WEB SEVERED

Deep in the clammy Spidergulch, the Webspinner Shaman Spittlefinger spins his so-called 'Realm Web'. All is going well until the Ironsunz arrive. Dakkbad reinforces his 'Grotkicker' appellation by booting any small greenskins he can get his hands on into the strangling webs. When the queen Arachnarok emerges from her lair to feed on the entangled grots, the Ironjawz swiftly proceed to batter her, too. Demoralised by the loss of their living goddess and swiftly overwhelmed by the relentless Ironsunz, the surviving Spiderfangs make Dakkbad the new target of their devotion, painting their arachnid mounts a bright yellow as they follow after his armies.





## SIEGE OF THE MAWGATE

The Chaos-held Mawgate of Ghur comes under siege from Ironjawz and Stormcast alike. The fighting is fierce, with hundreds slaughtered on all sides. The Ironsunz compete ferociously against Zogbak's Bloodtoofs and Da Choppas to prove their strength, with Dakkbad slaying the Slaaneshi daemon prince Synlesha Paleblood, but eventually all the orruks submit to the domineering authority of Gordrakk, the Fist of Gork. Ultimately the godbeast Fangathrak, who bears the Mawgate in his gullet, breaks his bonds and escapes into the Ghurish hinterlands. Dakkbad joins Gordrakk's horde for a time, though only so he can get a first-hand look at how the Fist of Gork fights.

## BRINGIN' DOWN DA HOUSE

Long has the Aqshian settlement of Cinderwatch, situated amongst the mountains of the Great Parch's Reclaimed Demesnes, held out against the Ironjawz of the Brightbelcha Warclan. This all changes with the arrival of boss Moggorz and his Rekrootin' Krew, however. Moggorz makes a deal with the depleted Brightbelchas – should he smash Cinderwatch flat without raising a choppa, they will take the Ironsunz yellow. Moggorz soon heads into the mountains and engages in a shouting contest with the gargant tribes dwelling there. So loud is their idiot bawling that the great ash-banks that line the mountainsides slip free in an avalanche, surging down over Cinderwatch and crushing the entire settlement.

## A STATEMENT MADE

Though Gordrakk undoubtedly knows where the best fights are, the ambitious Dakkbad soon chafes under his authority. It is not long before he and many of his Ironsunz break off from the Great Waaagh! for pastures new – though not before Dakkbad and his boyz ambush their old rival Zogbak of the Bloodtoofs, covering the Megaboss in fresh gore before feeding him to his own Maw-krusha. The new boss of the Bloodtoofs, Braka Skullhorn, swears vengeance on Dakkbad for his 'cheatin' ways.

## SWALLOWED BY DEATH

Wary of the strange portents filling the realms during the Time of Tribulations, Dakkbad sends Megaboss Drogga and his ladz to investigate the mysterious happenings in Shyish. Drogga thoroughly enjoys smashing his way through several underworlds, but during the march on Nagashizzar is trapped in the Great Oubliette along with all those who attempted to thwart the Great Necromancer's ambitions.

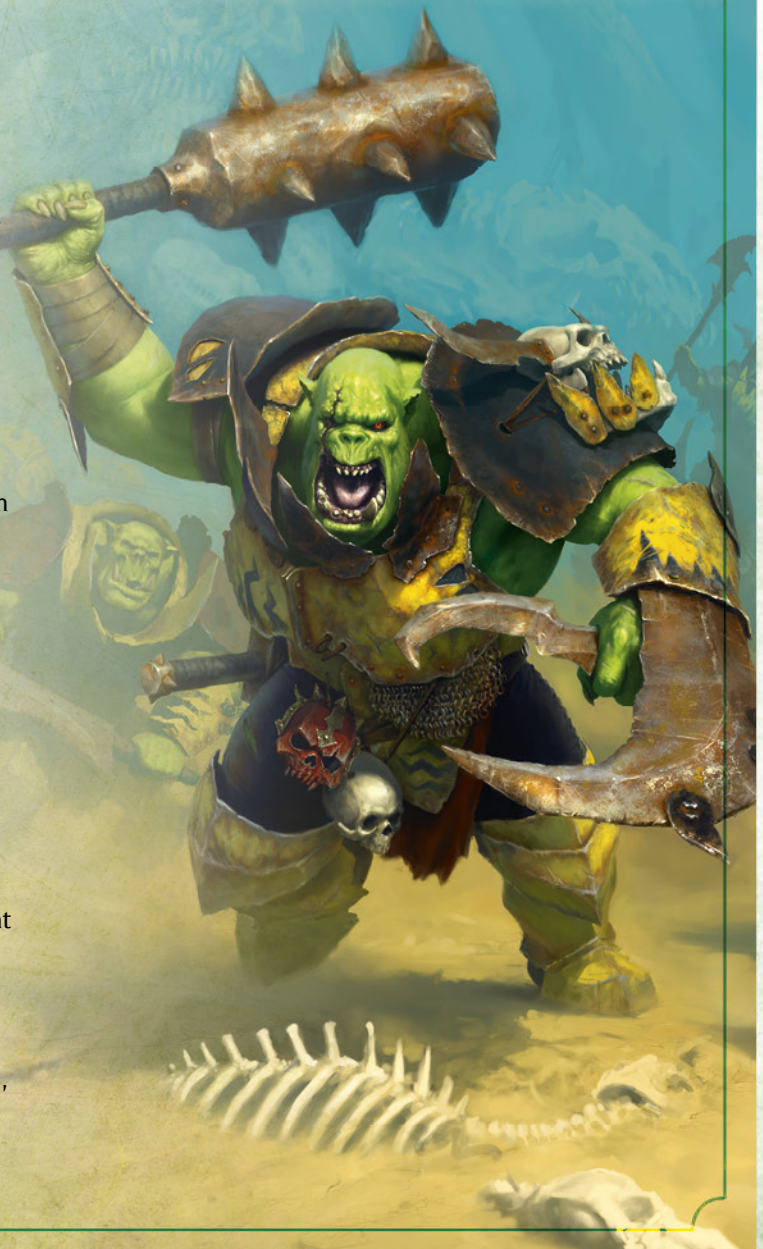
## SPOOKWAR

The necroquake, known to the orruks as the 'Deffstorm', howls across the realms as a result of Nagash's darkling schemes. Mortals of all races and creeds are beset by wave after wave of ethereal terrors, the Ironsunz

amongst them. Fort Dakkbad itself comes under siege, with the attacking Nighthaunt procession only banished when a mob of Weirdnob Shamans detonate in accidental unison and unleash a devastating storm of aetheric force.

## THE GREATEST SCRAP OF ALL

As the main body of the Ironsunz returns to their fortress on the Gnashka Plateau, they are joined by a stumbling and battered orruk. Dakkbad is shocked to learn that it is Drogga, escaped from the Great Oubliette just before the formation of the Shyish Nadir. Grinning manically, Drogga explains that he has travelled far across the inverted lands of Shyish. There he learned of Hallost – where the souls of mighty warriors rise with each new day to engage in glorious battle. Seeing a chance to bolster his forces with deathless recruits spoiling for a fight, Dakkbad and much of his warclan depart with all haste for Hallost.





# WARSCROLL BATTALIONS

These warscroll battalions enable you to field unique formations of Ironsunz on the battlefield. Waaagh!

## IRONSUNZ WARSCROLL BATTALION DAKKBAD'S BRAWL



The seething hordes of the Ironsunz have fully embraced the kunnin' brutality of Gorkamorka. They seek nothing less than to become the greatest orruks that ever were. If they are not stopped, they just might succeed.

### ORGANISATION

- 1 Da Bossfist warscroll battalion
- 1 Moggorz's Rekrootin' Krew warscroll battalion
- 1 Orruk Warchanter
- 1 Orruk Weirdnob Shaman
- 1+ Brute fist, Gore fist, Ard fist, Weir d fist or Iron fist warscroll battalions in any combination

This battalion can only be taken as part of an Ironjawz army that is from the IRONSUNZ warclan.

### ABILITIES

**Boss Waaagh!:** Dakkbad is able to channel and direct the Waaagh! energy generated by the Ironsunz under his command through his subordinate bosses and hangers-on.

Once per battle, if Dakkbad is on the battlefield, another ORRUK HERO from this battalion can use the Ironjawz Waaagh! command ability. This does not stop Dakkbad from using the Ironjawz Waaagh! command ability, but you cannot use the command ability more than once in the same combat phase.





## IRONSUNZ WARSCROLL BATTALION

### DA BOSSFIST

At the head of the Ironsunz hordes comes Dakkbad Grotkicker, the grand overboss himself. Around him are assembled the 'ardest orruks he can muster, their prowess further enhanced by his formidable kunnin'.

#### ORGANISATION

- 1 Megaboss on Maw-krusha (Dakkbad Grotkicker)
- 0-2 Megabosses on Maw-krusha
- 2-3 Megabosses
- 2-3 Orruk Brute units

This battalion can only be taken as part of an Ironjawz army that is from the **IRONSUNZ** warclan. You cannot include more than 1 Da Bossfist warscroll battalion in your army.

#### ABILITIES

**Da Boss 'Imself:** *Dakkbad Grotkicker is arguably the greatest, and certainly the most kunnin', Megaboss ever to rule the Ironsunz warclan.*

Dakkbad must have the Right Fist of Dakkbad command trait. In addition, if Dakkbad is on the battlefield at the start of your hero phase, roll a dice. On a 4+, you receive 1 extra command point.

**Battlescarred Veterans:** *The orruks that make up Dakkbad's Bossfist are amongst the most deadly fighters of their brutal green-skinned race.*

Add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of melee weapons used by models in this battalion (including those used by their mounts).

## IRONSUNZ WARSCROLL BATTALION

### MOGGORZ'S REKROOTIN' KREW

Under the steely gaze of Moggorz and his Rekrootin' Krew, mobs of orruks from across the realms fight for the chance of becoming true-blue Ironsunz. Though not as kunnin' as the warclan's own, their desire to impress lends them a deadly courage in battle.

#### ORGANISATION

- 1 Megaboss (Moggorz)
- 1 Brute unit (Da Rekrootin' Krew)
- 1-5 Orruk Brutes or Orruk Ardboys units in any combination (Aspirants)

This battalion can only be taken as part of an Ironjawz army that is from the **IRONSUNZ** warclan. You cannot include more than 1 Moggorz's Rekrootin' Krew warscroll battalion in your army.

#### ABILITIES

**Out To Impress:** *Though not yet Ironsunz themselves, the boyz that fight alongside the Rekrootin' Krew will face down truly insane odds without fear to earn Moggorz's approval.*

The Ironsunz Kunnin' ability does not apply to Aspirant units from this battalion. Instead, do not take battleshock tests for Aspirant units from this battalion while they are wholly within 18" of Moggorz or Da Rekrootin' Krew.

UNITS	MIN	MAX	POINTS	BATTLEFIELD ROLES	NOTES
Dakkbad's Brawl	-	-	120	Warscroll Battalion	
Da Bossfist	-	-	220	Warscroll Battalion	
Moggorz's Rekrootin' Krew	-	-	150	Warscroll Battalion	



# PAINTIN' DA IRONSUNZ

The Ironsunz Warclan are the colourful stars of this issue's Tome Celestial, so it's only fitting that the yellow-clad orruks get a painting guide. Studio painter James Perry shows us how to paint an Ironsunz Brute using both classic and Contrast painting methods.

## CLASSIC STYLE

**James:** Ironjawz models have a lot of layers, which means you have to think carefully about the order in which you paint them. I find it easiest to work from the inside out, painting the skin first, then clothing, armour and, finally, any stuff that happens to be nailed or strapped to the

armour. That way you can paint the deepest recesses of the model (like the area around the neck) and not worry about trying to manoeuvre a paintbrush loaded with paint past an area you've already finished. I find this way of painting is doubly important when the model in question

### BATTLE READY

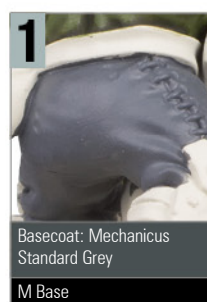
Using the stages to the right, James was able to get this Ironjawz Brute to a standard that most people would be happy to play games with.



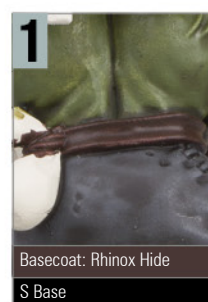
### GREEN FLESH



### GREY CLOTH

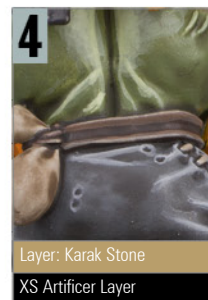
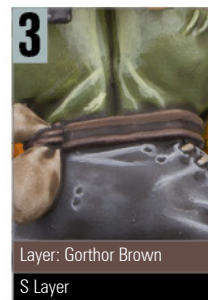
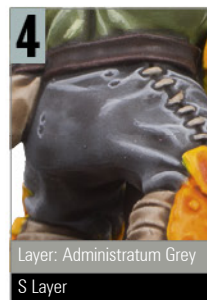
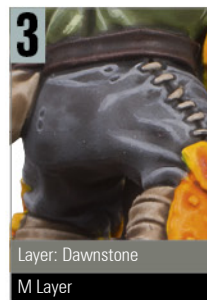
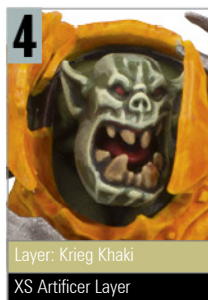
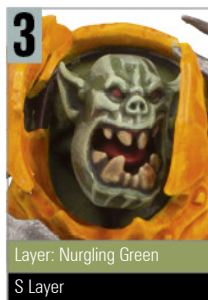


### LEATHER



### PARADE READY

With a couple of extra highlights to each area of the model, James took the Battle Ready Brute and made it Parade Ready. It's stompin' time!





is wearing bright yellow armour. Tidying up yellow is tough at the best of times, but imagine getting a black or green wash on it accidentally – what a nightmare! It's much easier to leave it until last, tidy it up with Wraithbone, then apply the Yriel Yellow.

## TOP TIP

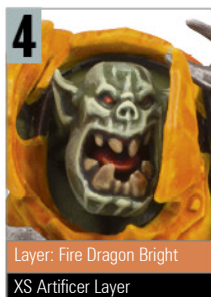
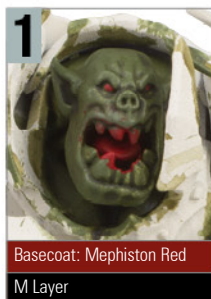
Try a little blending on your skin tones to make them look more natural. After applying a highlight of Nurgling Green to the skin, I thinned the remaining paint on my palette with water. Then, using my S Layer brush, I applied a glaze of Nurgling Green to the area next to the highlight, carefully thinning it out with more water to create a smooth transition between the dark recesses and the sharp highlights. You can see the effect most clearly on the orruk's back, as shown in Leather stages 3 and 4. This thin glaze helps tie the two colours together and gives the skin a softer texture compared to the hard armour next to it.

## MORE PAINTING GUIDES

Wot's dat? You want more painting guides? If you head over to the Warhammer TV YouTube channel, you'll find loads of Ironjawz painting videos. There's one for a Maw-krusha and another for Gore-gruntas. There are guides for rusty armour, orange armour, red armour and even warpaint. Head there now and check out what Duncan, Chris and Nick have to offer.



### EYES AND MOUTH



### ORRUK SKULL



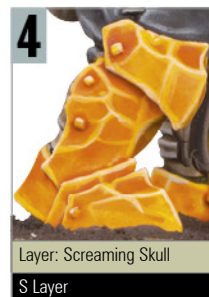
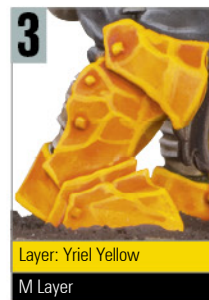
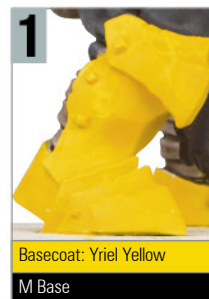
### BASHED METAL



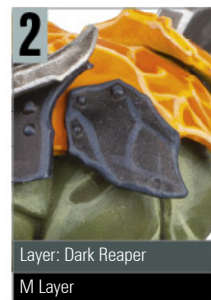
### STRAPS



### YELLOW ARMOUR



### BLACK ARMOUR





## CONTRAST STYLE

**James:** The first stages of this Brute are very similar to the ones shown on the previous page – I just used Contrast paints instead of the classic range of paints.

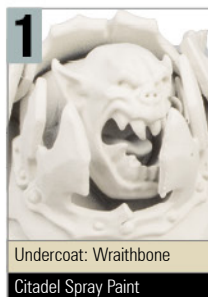
A useful thing to think about when painting your models is what colours to apply where. I used yellow for the majority of the armour, but painted the left shoulder pad black. The reason for this is simple: the skull nailed to the shoulder pad will show up much better on a black background than a yellow one. I painted all the other 'nailed-on' panels and dags black, too, to help break up the colour scheme and add contrast to the model. You could even use this as a way to create rudimentary unit markings for your mobs of Brutes. One unit could have black pads and dags, while another could wear red. Just try to avoid colours that clash with yellow and green.

### BATTLE READY

Like the Ironsunz Brute on the previous page, James applied just a few paints to get this model ready for the battlefield.



### GREEN FLESH



### GREY CLOTH

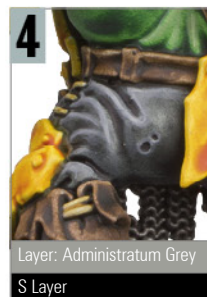


### LEATHER



### PARADE READY

After finishing the Battle Ready stages, James added just one or two highlights to each area of the model to get it Parade Ready. Da Brute is ready for Waaagh!





## WASTELANDS OF GHUR

James painted the bases using Stirland Mud to represent the earthy wastelands of Ghur. He then painted the base rims with Steel Legion Drab to make the model Battle Ready. A drybrush of Balor Brown, then a second of Screaming Skull makes the bases almost Parade Ready. They are finished off with Mordheim Turf.



Technical: Stirland Mud	Drybrush: Balor Brown
M Texture	M Dry
Layer: Steel Legion Drab	Drybrush: Screaming Skull
M Base	M Dry



### EYES AND MOUTH



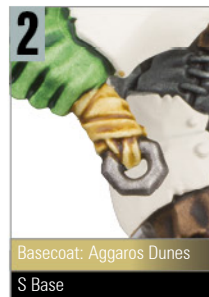
### ORRUK SKULL



### BASHED METAL



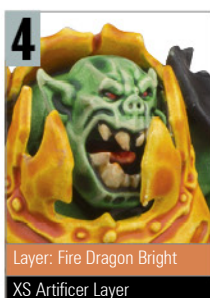
### STRAPS



### YELLOW ARMOUR



### BLACK ARMOUR

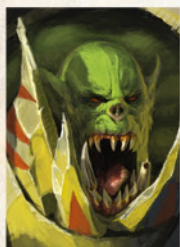




# THE DEATH OF DAKKBAD GROTKICKER



**Dakkbad Grotkicker is wun of da most kunnin' orruk Megabosses around. He's also pretty brutal. Pitted against humies, stunties, grots and pointy-ears, can da kunnin' warboss survive, or will dis be his death? Find out in this short story by Jordan Green.**



The sounds of battle had not yet faded as the mob of orruks stamped through the undergrowth. Men and aelves still screamed. Bass greenskin laughter still split the gathering dark. But even as skulls shattered, choppas smashed home and tongues of flames licked at the inky night sky, the Ironsuns were uneasy.

As they passed under the forest eaves to the clearing, Zorkazug – one of the Megabosses clad in Ironsuns yellow – could understand why. The day had started out so promisingly. They had been looking for a fight, and the newly founded settlement of humies and pointy-ears taking shape in the Ghurish heartlands had provided plenty of opportunities for carnage.

The lonely body lay slumped on its side at the centre of the clearing, surrounded by its own viscera. Unease flickered within the Megaboss's gut. It wasn't the death on display that he cared about; like all orruks, Zorkazug had been battering everything weedier than him to a bloody pulp since he was a gangly yooof. Yet though this corpse was that of a hulking greenskin champion, no enemy bodies surrounded where it had fallen. That wasn't right at all.

'Wot happened 'ere, then?' said Dakkbad Grotkicker, overboss of the Ironsuns, as he glared at the corpse. He'd left his Maw-krusha, Bossbiter, behind to have its fun with the last of the defenders. Seeing him on foot did little to diminish the Megaboss's presence. Zorkazug had been bossing around his fellow Ironsuns for years, had even fought alongside the Fist of Gork himself when their paths had crossed, but even he made sure to always pay Dakkbad the respect his conquests had earned. The Grotkicker was kunnin' in a way no other Ironjaw was. He put great stock in finkin' and had even convinced his subordinates to give it a go. Most orruks would have ignored one body amongst hundreds, but not Dakkbad. His scowl deepened as he recognised the corpse.

'Zog me. Dat's Big Grakka, dat is.'

'One of the lads found 'im like this, boss,' said one of the hulking Big Bosses nearby. He stomped over to the former Megaboss's body, letting out a displeased grunt. Dakkbad wasn't far behind. The overboss's expression remained troubled as he rested a foot on Big Grakka's shoulder and kicked the corpse onto its front.

'Pointy-ears.'

Zorkazug's growl was guttural as he looked to the curved blade driven into Grakka's back. Its design was unmistakably aelven. For a moment that settled it, until Zorkazug looked again. The aelves they'd spent the afternoon fighting had been tree-loving gits. This blade, however, appeared to be formed from shadow itself. A crude nudge from Dakkbad's armoured toe saw the dagger dissipate into wisps of purple-grey smoke.

'Looks like it,' Dakkbad said. Clutching their weapons tighter, the orruks glanced around the shrouded line of trees. For a moment, Zorkazug thought he saw something lurking amongst the claw-like branches. Then it was gone, another shadow amongst shadows.

'I liked Big Grakka,' another of the other Ironsuns said. The orruk did not dwell on his grief. 'But it's done now, boss. One of them krumped 'im, then we krumped them. Fair's fair.' The statement earned a general murmur of assent from the assembled orruks.

'There's some stunties livin' nearby. Da cave-grots were askin' fer help to duff 'em up. Useless zoggin' grots.' Another rumble of agreement from the mob.

Dakkbad was silent for a time, still staring at Big Grakka's remains. At last he shook it off, nodding and stomping back towards the sounds of fighting.

'Yeah, yeah. It's somefin', I suppose.'



Most of the orruks simply followed in Dakkbad's wake. Zorkazug lingered briefly, eyes narrowed in suspicion. He looked at the scar running down Big Grakka's face.

It was very similar to a scar of Dakkbad's own.



The great halls and ancestor-temples of the duardin kingdom echoed to Khazalid oaths and the wordless howls of Gorkamorka's children – Zorkazug amongst them. Blood flowed in rivers through the subterranean tunnels. Duardin blood, grot blood and – more rarely – orruk blood mixed together in a gory soup. Hordes of shrieking Moonclan charged down the dark passages, only to be swallowed by gouts of flame belched from the duardin's fire-throwing devices. Ironbreaker shieldbands stood firm, at least until the orruks peeled them open with jagged hackas and snapping pincers.

Zorkazug battled alongside the Bossfist, the hardest orruks the Ironsunz had to offer, wherever the fighting was thickest. Dakkbad, as ever, was the killiest of them all. The tight passageways meant that he had once again foregone riding atop Bossbiter, but his lethality remained unparalleled. Ziggitt, the bossgrot who had sought their aid in the first place, fought beside Dakkbad. Zorkazug disliked grots, but he had to admit that the Loonboss's great moon-cleaver was satisfyingly vicious.

'In 'ere!' Ziggitt screeched. Zorkazug looked up from stamping in an unfortunate duardin's face to see the grot gesticulating wildly into an adjoining antechamber. 'In 'ere! The stunties probably put loadsa shiny loots in 'ere!'

It was clearly good enough for Dakkbad. Pausing only to direct his lads further down the corridor, the Megaboss ducked into the antechamber. Zorkazug followed, eyes darting around the inside of the shadowy vault. Half-collapsed doorways ringed the space, too small for the orruks to squeeze through. Stone statues of duardin ancestors glowered down at the intruding greenskins. The air was rank with foulness, almost enough to make even Zorkazug retch.

'Ziggitt?' Dakkbad shouted, coming to a halt in the centre of the chamber. Zorkazug stopped just behind him. Of the grot, there was no sign. 'Where'd you go, you little runt?'

A growl echoed from the shadowy recesses of the chamber. Both Ironsunz turned to its source – a hulking Dankhold Troggoth, lumbering forward with murder in its beady eyes. Dakkbad grunted in displeasure.

'Oh, zog.'



Dakkbad Grotkicker was dead.

Amber-tinted morning was just beginning to dawn as Thajara's heralds delivered the news. The aelven sorceress's surprise at the unexpected turn of events was so great, so tinged with cruel glee, that she barely restrained herself long enough to summon her Black Guard before descending her tower. Dakkbad Grotkicker was dead, and his killer waited outside with the proof.

Through her blood-scriving, Thajara had learned of the Ironsunz approach weeks prior. En masse, they would be near impossible to stop. Yet the sorceress was possessed of the cunning of the ancient Ulguan dynasties, and she had swiftly moved to turn the situation to her advantage – should Dakkbad fall, the warclan would descend into infighting, and a powerful unified threat would be scoured from the plains of Ghur.

That had been the plan, at least. She had called forth shadowy allies using old, forbidden words – but outside blessed Ulgu their power was weakened, and they had slain the wrong mark. Then, she had attempted to coerce a clan of filthy grots into doing her bidding. Their talent for treachery had not, it seemed, overpowered their natural incompetence on this occasion. She had been plotting her next move when the news arrived and rendered it all moot. The orruk had fallen, and she wanted to see it with her own eyes.





'How long has he been there?' the sorceress asked Felion, the captain of her guard, as they looked to the base of the incline upon which the tower stood. At the end of the winding path flanked by craggy rock bluffs stood a bulky orruk. In one hand he held the end of a rusted chain fastened around the jaws of some huge, snorting monster. Across the Maw-krusha's back was slung an armoured corpse. Such imposing warplate could only belong to a powerful boss.

'Not too long, my lady,' the Black Guard responded. He sounded suspicious, but then again, such was his duty. 'He has been ... patient, for an orruk.'

'Well then,' Thajara said. 'Let us not keep him waiting.' She spat a string of rasping syllables, the shadow-gathering waystones that concealed her stronghold breaking their enchantment. The orruk took that as his cue to approach, yanking on the chain and bidding the beast to follow him up the winding path. The sorceress met him halfway, flanked by her guardians. She wasn't worried. The rocky shelves above would soon be lined by her enthralled warriors, crossbows ready.

'You are not what I expected,' Thajara said once she was close enough to smell the orruk. Her nose wrinkled.

'Heard ya wanted 'im dead,' the orruk replied. His face was enclosed within a tusked iron helmet, as many of the barbarians wore. 'Was finkin' I'd collect on dat reward.'

'And rewarded you shall be,' the aelf nodded. She cast a sidelong glance as the larger monster let out a rumble, expression curling into a sneer. 'The beast?'

'I killed da boss. Dat makes me da boss. It does what I say.' That made sense to Thajara, considering the orruks' idiot simplicity. She nodded two of her guardians forward. They hesitated just a moment before approaching the bound monster, pulling the armoured corpse to the ground. It landed with a metallic crash.

'You were a potential thorn, greenskin,' the aelf spat as she eyed the body. 'Now, your death will remove a vexing problem from these la—'

She stopped as she turned the corpse's head. Thajara blinked, before scowling at the helmeted orruk.

'This is not Dakkbad Grotkicker.'

'Ain't it?' the Ironjaw asked. He tilted his head before nudging the corpse onto its back, ignoring the halberds levelled his way by the Black Guard.





'Zog me, so it ain't. Dat's Big Grakka. Easy mistake to make, wot wif the same scar an' all. Come to fink of it,' the orruk said as he cast his helmet to the ground. Thajara's eyes widened. Dakkbad grinned back at her.

'Might be me yer after.'



There was no telling how Ziggit had convinced the Dankhold Troggoth to wait for just this moment to strike. Yet the distinctive bellow was soon followed by the huge beast charging from the darkness. The chamber shook under its tread, thick slobber dribbling from its maw. Zorkazug raised his choppa, but a snarl from Dakkbad warned him off. The boss would handle this himself.

The momentary distraction gave the troggoth time to swing its club. The club's stone head connected with Dakkbad, the impact echoing like a funerary bell clattering down a dark crevasse. The Megaboss was hurled across the chamber, slamming into the opposing wall. The stonework cracked more than his armour did. With a growl, Dakkbad staggered back to his feet, spitting out a broken tusk.

'Dat almost hurt.'

When the troggoth came on again, Dakkbad was ready. He waited until the last moment before ducking under the cave-dweller's grasping hand, punching his spiked gauntlet deep into the creature's thigh muscle. Dakkbad did not attempt to drop the beast with a single blow. Rather, his jagged gauntlet punched back and forth, ripping apart tendons before they could regenerate, slowly driving the troggoth to its knees.

The troggoth collapsed with a thud, just in time for Dakkbad to swing his choppa and shear off the beast's head. Another thud was followed by echoing silence. Zorkazug's hearing was filled by the swift beating of his own heart. As he recovered, he noticed a diminutive shape wriggling through the tumbledown door beside him and glancing fitfully about the chamber.

'Ere, you big lug? Didja get 'em?' Ziggit's questions came to a halt as he spotted Dakkbad limping out from behind the fallen troggoth – bloodied, battered, but most certainly alive. The grot's gaze shot round to Zorkazug. He gulped.

Ziggit attempted to duck away, but Zorkazug was fast despite his size. His hand shot out, fastening around the grot's neck. The Loonboss kicked and struggled as he was lifted up, but there was nothing that could stop him being presented to the fuming Dakkbad.

'Now then,' the Megaboss began. His voice was tectonically low. 'Is there anyfing you think you want to tell me?' Ziggit gave a craven whimper, struggling all the more ferociously. Dakkbad's patience snapped almost immediately. 'Talk, ya little git! Or I'll show ya why dey call me Grotkicker!'

'It ... I-it was the pointy-ears!' Ziggit croaked at last. A grunt from both orruks was the signal to continue. 'One of 'em came 'ere, said his lady boss had a ... had a job fer us! Said that whoever gitted ya would get all the shiny stuffs they could ever need!'

'Is dat so?' Dakkbad asked, still wheezing from the troggoth's battering. 'Where'd da pointy-ears say he was from?'

'Didn't say. But ... s-some of the spellflingers went a-snooping. Found a tower up in da hills, got magic hidin' it. Dat's where she is, I swears it on da Bad Moon itself!'

'Right you are, then,' Dakkbad said with a nod. Zorkazug's grip tightened around the grot's neck with a sickening crunch. Hurling the carcass away, he looked back to his overboss.

'So,' Zorkazug said. 'Wot we gonna do, boss?' For a few moments, Dakkbad considered the question. Then a toothy grin split his scarred features. He straightened up, clapping Zorkazug's shoulder.

'Round up some of da boyz and get 'em to go fetch wot's left of Grakka. I've got a plan ...'



Felion lunged like a bolt of black lightning. The veteran aelven warrior was swift enough to slip inside Dakkbad's guard; the orruk grunted as the halberd punched into his armour, staggering him. Dakkbad growled before stepping forward, a swing of his gnarled fist tearing the aelf's head clean off.

The Maw-krusha had been waiting for this moment. Its jaws opened wide, snapping the chains binding it with ease and letting out an ear-bursting roar. The wave of sound was enough to blast several aelves off their feet. Those who remained standing were soon set upon by the beast, its sheer bulk crushing their lithe bodies with horrific ease.

Ears ringing, Thajara staggered backwards. She twisted in place, opening her mouth to call out to the Darkshards. The words died on her lips as green light illuminated the upper vantage points. With her mystical wards dropped, one of the orruks' gibbering shamans had been able to summon in a mob of the hulking monsters, commanded by another war leader. Now, at such close quarters, they were hacking through her loyal servants with horrific brutality, guffawing even as disciplined storms of repeater crossbow bolts pelted them.

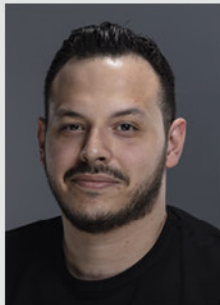
'Ya wanted me. 'Ere I am,' a voice rumbled nearby. Thajara turned just in time for a punch to impact her gut, sending her sprawling. The aelf tried to rise; the boot pinning her down prevented it. Dakkbad looked at her with barely disguised scorn. There was an intelligence in his gaze she would never have expected from an orruk.

'Didn't expect me to outwits ya, did ya, pointy-ears? But I ain't like da uvver boyz. I'm Dakkbad Grotkicker, and I'm always one step ahead.' The cacophony of death echoed around Thajara as she stared into the orruk's ugly grin.

'Dat's why I'm da best.'



# RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



## LOUIS AGUILAR

Louis joined the Warhammer Age of Sigmar team just over a year ago, and he's already made his mark on the Mortal Realms, having worked on both the *Slaves to Darkness* and *Disciples of Tzeentch* battletomes. Now he's taken over Jervis's column for a month to talk about writing army lists, a topic he is very passionate about.

**S**omeone's passion for Warhammer Age of Sigmar can come in a variety of forms. For many of us, it's building and painting amazing miniatures. Others delve into the immersive and thrilling narrative, while others love to see their vision of an army take shape on the tabletop.

It's that last one where I happily dwell. Nothing holds my attention more than building armies, coming up with strategies and seeing how they fare in matched play games. In this month's Rules of Engagement, I'll be standing in for Jervis to write about my approach to building armies in Warhammer Age of Sigmar. I hope I can give you some new things to consider before your next visit to the Mortal Realms.

When it comes to getting models down on the table to play a Pitched Battle, I always aim to have a closely fought game with my opponent. For me, nothing is more enjoyable than battles that come down to the wire, where my opponent and I are absorbed by the game and having a good laugh in the process. To achieve this, I try to build balanced and interesting armies that play to my strengths and give my opponent as much of a compelling challenge as possible.

In my experience, the two most common ways to pick an army are either by how cool the models look or by the army's style of play. I prefer to focus on playstyle when I pick, but however you choose to fill your roster, the first thing to consider is *what do you want your army to achieve during your games?* If your answer is more than simply 'win', then take a look at the following points and see if you can build an idea of what your army might entail.

- **Overall strategy** – What combination of units or abilities really appeals to you? How do you imagine they will work during a battle?

If you're looking to improve an army you already collect, or setting out on a new Age of Sigmar project, asking these questions might help you discover a variety of things that could define your experiences on the battlefield. If you're adamant on including a specific unit as many times as possible, you might find that you're putting too much focus on a single idea and unable to deal with different types of opposing armies. Or, if you want your army to utilise abilities that allow it to strike first or as early as possible, you may get caught out if you haven't thought past a certain point in the game.

Try to imagine if the strategy you want to use doesn't work. Could your army still handle itself if it fails? Are there other units you can fall back on if the worst should happen?

- **Battleline units** – How important are your Battleline units to the success of your strategy?



There are many different units in Age of Sigmar that can be taken as an army's Battleline soldiers. Some of these are exclusive to particular sub-factions of an army, while others are generic across an entire battletome. This sometimes means that the backbone of your army can be some of its most powerful units, but normally cost a significant amount of points. Cheaper Battleline units are great for making space in your roster for other units, but might lack the punching power you're looking for in your strategy.

Here are some things to consider. How vital will these units be in your games? If they're not, will minimum-sized units be enough? This will keep point expenditure low and allow you to invest in stronger units. Or do you need to take the maximum unit size?

Taking and holding objectives is crucial in Age of Sigmar matched play, with the number of friendly models you have within 6" of an objective being decisive. Investing in large numbers here can allow your more powerful units to advance up the battlefield, while your Battleline units hold these key locations. Bigger Battleline units can also



## 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. But wait, that's not Jervis over on the left! It's Louis Aguilar, and he's here to talk about army lists.

serve as useful defensive pieces, capable of taking the brunt of an enemy charge to give you more options of play when it's your turn, without losing a more valuable unit.

- **Other units** – Are there units you haven't considered that could strengthen your strategy?

I always try to include at least one unit that adds an element of 'reactive play' to my army, so if the worst happens, there is some form of backup plan. Being able to support friendly units that are in danger, or to quickly reach an unprotected flank, can be significant over five battle rounds.

Think about the fastest units your army has to offer. Could any of them help to support friendly units that might be vulnerable or out of position? What about ranged units? If your army has units with missile attacks, consider using them to hold objectives while chipping away at enemy units locked in combat. Or use them to put pressure on your opponent's important models.

- **Objectives** – Do you have units that can hold objectives effectively? If not, do you have units that can effectively capture objectives from enemies?

Investing in units that specialise in objective play can make all the difference in later battle rounds. Units with strong Wounds and Save characteristics can be used to put up a better fight when defending objectives. It's also good to be mindful of command abilities here. Something as simple as making sure you have a friendly hero nearby can make these units extremely resilient when combined with Inspiring Presence.

If your army favours being aggressive to get the most out of its warriors, consider investing in units that benefit from additional effects or damage when they charge. A well-timed charge with a unit like this could seize a critical objective and grab you the lead on victory points when it matters most.

Armies that allow units to ambush or set up anywhere on the battlefield are also extremely useful in objective play. If you find your opponent committing to a certain part of the battlefield, or if you can draw enemy units away from key locations, having units that arrive during the battle can swing the momentum in your favour.

- **Plan for the late game** – How will your army work if you lose key units? Can you maintain control of the battle if you lose them? What other units could you include to support them?

Often in Age of Sigmar, weaker units can achieve levels of devastating power with some simple combinations, which can make them especially strong later in the battle once the opposing army is reduced in size. I try to include a strong combination of units or abilities to adapt to mid-game changes to my plans. I often find that duplicating these combinations can be too expensive in terms of points, but I try to make sure at least one option like this is on call.

- **Know your battleplans** – Knowing the requirements of specific battleplans ahead of time (such as units required to hold objectives) can be very important to your overall strategy.

A good example here is battleplans that require heroes to gain control of and hold objectives. In battleplans like this, having just one or two heroes in your army might put you in a bad position early on. However, this doesn't mean that you will always struggle; it may just be a case of changing your approach with your heroes, like keeping them back instead of being aggressive with them.





Next I'll show you what an idea for an army might look like when using the methodology I've mentioned above. To do this, I'll use *Battletome: Cities of Sigmar* to create a 2,000-point roster, explaining my choices as we go.

### OVERALL STRATEGY

First things first, I need to pick the type of army I want to play. *Battletome: Cities of Sigmar* has limitless options for list building, so I'm really spoilt for choice. But after reading through the battletome at length, I've settled on the Living City for its unique deployment ability and the inclusion of Sylvaneth units. I'm drawn to the idea of a shooting-focused army that combines the efficiency of Freeguild Handgunners and the high mobility of Tree-Revenants.

My vision for this army is a fast and aggressive force that can steal objectives, defend key areas of the battlefield and threaten my opponent's important models or unprotected flanks, all while being supported by some key models.

### BATTLELINE UNITS

Now that I've picked a battle trait and the direction I want for my strategy, let's start adding units to the roster, starting with the Battleline.

For this army, the Battleline units will be Freeguild Handgunners, which are a core part of my strategy. With the Living City's battle traits, these units can be set up in reserve and strike from unexpected angles. The 16" range of their handguns makes them capable of shooting a key target in the turn they arrive. In addition, the Stand and Shoot and Steady Aim abilities on the unit's warscroll give them both aggressive and defensive properties, making them a significant threat and something for my opponents to seriously consider.

I can also combine this unit with a Living City hero to use the Strike then Melt Away command ability after they shoot, allowing that unit to move in a turn when they normally wouldn't be able to.



### OTHER UNITS

With the limitation on Sylvaneth units being one in every four, I want to find a way to bolster my army without exceeding this restriction. To do this, I'm going to invest a large amount of points in one of my favourite models: Alarielle the Everqueen.

At 660 points she will take up a significant portion of my roster, but she will provide valuable

### HUNTERS OF THE HIDDEN PATHS

*The warriors of the Living City know of hidden waylines through the realms that they navigate to surprise and ambush all who threaten them.*

Instead of setting up a LIVING CITY unit on the battlefield, you can place it to one side and say that it is set up on the hidden paths as a reserve unit. You can set up 1 reserve unit on the hidden paths for each LIVING CITY unit you have set up on the battlefield.

At the end of your movement phase, you can set up 1 or more of these units on the battlefield, wholly within 6" of the edge of the battlefield and more than 9" from any enemy units. Any reserve units on the hidden paths that are not set up on the battlefield before the start of the fourth battle round are destroyed.

### THE CITY WARGROVES

*Wargroves of the mysterious Sylvaneth inhabit the Living City, rousing to the soldiers' war cries in times of dire need.*

A LIVING CITY army can include SYLVANETH units. 1 in every 4 units in a LIVING CITY army can be a SYLVANETH unit. Those units gain the CITIES OF SIGMAR keyword and the LIVING CITY keyword.







## LOUIS'S LIVING CITY ARMY

### HEROES

Alarielle the Everqueen 660  
Spell: Cage of Thorns

Freeguild General 100  
Command Trait: Ironoak Artisan  
Artefact: Wardroth Horn

### UNITS

10x Freeguild Handgunners 100  
10x Freeguild Handgunners 100  
10x Freeguild Handgunners 100  
10x Freeguild Handgunners 100  
10x Freeguild Handgunners 100  
10x Freeguild Handgunners 100  
10x Tree-Revenants 160  
10x Tree-Revenants 160

### ARTILLERY

Helstorm Rocket Battery 130  
Helstorm Rocket Battery 130

### ENDLESS SPELLS

Emerald Lifeswarm 50

**Total:** 1990 points

spellcasting power and pay some of those points back by giving me a free unit of ten Tree-Revenants once per battle, effectively reducing her points cost to 500.

To add to the shooting power of my army, I'll be adding two Helstorm Rocket Batteries. These are expensive choices, but thankfully the Freeguild Handgunners and Tree-Revenants are a bargain at the centre of my strategy.

### OBJECTIVES

Here is where the Tree-Revenants come in. Their ability to relocate each turn with their Waypipes can be used as a great way to lock down areas of the battlefield, or to push to gain control of objectives. Martial Memories is another strong ability that allows you to re-roll important charge rolls or battleshock tests. I'll be taking two units of ten in this list, and use Alarielle's Soul Amphorae ability to summon another unit of ten Tree-Revenants in my first turn.

### PLAN FOR THE LATE GAME

One of my favourite parts of *Battle tome: Cities of Sigmar* is the Amplified Sorceries battle trait, which allows Alarielle to benefit from the empowered effects of Endless Spells from Malign Sorcery and Forbidden Power. I can't think of a better late-game and more narratively fitting

Endless Spell than the Emerald Lifeswarm. Its empowered ability allows it to return D6 slain models from my Freeguild Handgunners or Tree-Revenants units. Not too shabby!

And there you have it. My Living City army is ready for war, and I'm excited to see how it fares!

I hope this has given you some useful things to think about when you're building your next roster or tweaking an existing one. It's important to remember that it's impossible to build a perfect army, but that's what makes Age of Sigmar so great. Players will have their own preferences and playstyles, with their own favourite units or combos they feel are 'must haves'. My favourite part of the hobby is learning all the different match-ups of an army, considering the intricacies of unit interactions, constantly tinkering with army lists and then starting the process all over again.

And with that I'll clear out for Jarvis's return next month. I hope to be back soon to give you some more useful things to consider in Age of Sigmar matched play. Until then, if you see me perusing the shelves of the Warhammer World store or answering questions at an Open Day or Warhammer Fest, come over and have a chat about your own army ideas and methodologies. There's nothing quite like talking Age of Sigmar!

If you've got any comments about this article or ideas for themes we could use in next year's General's Handbook, you can always email them to us at [AOSFAQ@gwpplc.com](mailto:AOSFAQ@gwpplc.com). We can't reply to the emails we receive, but we do read each and every one, and we value all of the feedback we receive.



# BORN OF FLAME

Though the Eightpoints are dominated by Archaon's fell legions, there are some inhabitants of the Mortal Realms who dare to journey there in search of battle, glory, treasure or some other esoteric reason. The Fyreslayers are no exception.



**T**he Fyreslayers are Grimnir's chosen sons, the embodiment of the war god's fiery temper and lust for battle. Though most Fyreslayers fight alongside the other warriors of their magmahold, some journey into the realms in small warbands, seeking valuable ur-gold to bring back to their people, striking up new allegiances or, on rare occasions, to atone for past sins.

Here we present new rules for using your Fyreslayer miniatures in games of Warcry! To the right, you'll find an abilities card featuring all the single, double, triple and quad abilities for the Fyreslayers. Over the page, there are ten fighter cards enabling you to assemble a warband from the miniatures in your collection. Feel free to photocopy them for your personal use. We hope you enjoy using your Fyreslayers in Warcry – let us know how you get on with them.

Forgar ran his thumb along the edge of his fyresteel axe and finally deemed it sharp enough. Placing his whetstone back in his pack, he hefted his blade and admired it at arm's length. The axehead was surrounded by a golden nimbus, the ur-gold runes embedded in the fyresteel glowing with the power of Grimnir.

'Are you ready, brother?' asked Baelok, the leader of the expedition. Forgar nodded silently, and Baelok took this as a sign of assent. He got to his feet, the warband of Fyreslayers assembling around him in the confines of the small, dark room.

'Carngrad may offer us sanctuary, but it does not offer us what we seek,' said Baelok. 'You all know our quest – to return with the prize that was taken from us, or not at all.' The Fyreslayers nodded grimly, their orange crests bobbing in the greasy light.

'The Bloodwind Spoil awaits us,' said Baelok as he opened the door, axe held ready.





## ABILITIES FYRESLAYERS



[Double] **Fyresteel Throwing Axe:** Pick a visible enemy fighter within 6" of this fighter and roll 2 dice. For each 4-5, allocate 1 damage point to that fighter. For each 6, allocate a number of damage points to that fighter equal to the value of this ability.



[Double] **Encase in Molten Rock:** Until the end of this fighter's activation, the next time this fighter makes an attack action, subtract half the value of this ability (rounding up) from the Move characteristic of the target fighter (to a minimum of 1) until the end of the battle round.



[Double] **Relentless Zeal:** Add 3 to the Move characteristic of the next move action made by this fighter this activation.



[Triple] **Duty Unto Death:** A fighter can use this ability only if they have 5 or more damage points allocated to them. This fighter makes a bonus move action. Then, they can make a bonus attack action.



[Triple] **Honour Our Oaths:** A fighter can use this ability only if an enemy fighter has been taken down by an attack action made by them this activation. Until the end of the battle round, add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of attack actions that have a Range characteristic of 3 or less made by visible friendly fighters while they are within 6" of this fighter.



[Quad] **Unleash Runic Fury:** Until the end of this fighter's activation, add the value of this ability to the Attacks characteristic of attack actions made by this fighter that have a Range characteristic of 3 or less.



## FIGHTER TYPES FYRESLAYERS



Hearthguard Berzerkers



Auric Hearthguard



Vulkite Berzerkers





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# NEW GROWTH IN GNARLROOT

The Sylvaneth are the children of Alarielle the Everqueen. They are vengeful forest spirits imbued with the life energy of the Mortal Realms. This impressive Sylvaneth army from the Gnarlroot Glade Wargrove was painted by Sam Wilson, who's joined us to tell us all about it.



## SAM WILSON

Sam is one of the painters in the Forge World team, though he has also worked in the Warhammer World studio creating displays for the exhibition centre. Sam has painted many armies over the years, including Imperial Knights, Blood Angels, Beastclaw Raiders and, of course, Sylvaneth. Apparently he's still got plenty more of them to paint.

**M**y army actually started as a one-off project when I decided to paint Drycha Hamadreth. I really like her model, and she seemed like an interesting project to work on. I wasn't wrong! The combination of natural textures such as bark and vines combined with magical weapons and ethereal flesh made her an absolute joy to paint. Before I knew it, I had a Start Collecting! Sylvaneth box on my desk, and things quickly escalated from there.

I find that the Sylvaneth really appeal to my painting style – I can use drybrushing and washes to great effect on them, which has enabled me to create a sizeable army pretty quickly. My initial plan was an autumnal theme, with red leaves as a spot colour between the greens and browns. It was for this reason that I picked the Gnarlroot Glade as my wargrove, as they're described as having ruddy brown barkflesh, and they're often covered in green moss. As the army grew, my colour scheme diversified a bit to include Dryads inspired by silver birch trees and creepy blue Spite-Revenants, but the overall colour scheme and spot colours remain consistent throughout. The bases in particular help tie my army together and give it a sense of unity.

While I'm more of a painter than a gamer, I have taken this army to several tournaments over the last few years. I've been nominated a few times for Best Painted Army, which is considerably more impressive than my track record on the battlefield! I always play to have fun rather than play competitively, and I want my opponents to have fun, too. I don't want to smash their army in the first few turns – where's the fun in that? That being said, there's a degree of satisfaction to be had from charging Kurnoth Hunters into the enemy army. The damage output of their greatswords is huge, and once they're rooted to the ground, they're virtually impossible to shift. I need more of them, I reckon!



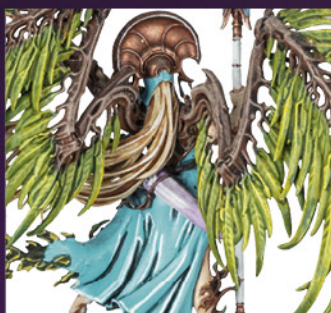






## ALARIELLE THE EVERQUEEN

Alarielle is one of the most recent additions to my army. Rather than paint her to match the wargrove, I painted her in her traditional colours, using Duncan's video on Warhammer TV as a guide. What I did do, though, was paint her base to match the rest of my army. I used a few spare bits of Age of Sigmar terrain to add detail to her base, then built it up with sand and gravel. My favourite little touch is the red leaves. I sprayed some paper with Mephiston Red spray, then used a leaf-shaped hole punch to make hundreds of tiny leaves. That little touch can make such a difference to an army.





**THE OUTCASTS**

I painted my Spite-Revenants with cold blue skin to show that their spirits are tainted and less friendly than those of the Tree-Revenants. I also painted their bark slightly darker as if it's been charred by their anger and malice.







### THE TREE SPIRITS

I painted my Tree-Revenants in warm greens and yellows to show that they have passed beyond autumn and winter and into spring. It helps set them apart from the darker and more sinister Spite-Revenants.







## THE NOBLE SPIRITS

I have four Treelords in my army – an Ancient, two Treelords and a Spirit of Durthu. The Ancient and the Treelord on the right of the picture above are painted to match my main unit of Dryads, while the Treelord on the far left matches the silver birch Dryads. The Spirit of Durthu is kind of the odd one out when it comes to my colour scheme. Like Alarielle, I wanted to paint him just like the model in the battletome, so I followed Duncan's tutorial on Warhammer TV as closely as possible.





### COLOURS OF THE FOREST

I painted the silver birch Dryads to add a little variety to my army. After all, not all trees look the same. This has an added in-game benefit, as it makes it easier for both me and my opponent to distinguish between my units!





## PAINTING THE GNARLROOT WARGROVE

Sam's Sylvaneth army is beautifully painted, with some excellent colour choices. We asked him how he painted all his models and why he chose those particular colours for them.



### GREEN SKIN

Basecoat: Celestra Grey

Layer: Ulthuan Grey

Wash: Warp Lightning & Contrast Medium

Layer: Ulthuan Grey

### HAIR

Basecoat: Ulthuan Grey

Wash: Casandora Yellow & Lahmian Medium

Layer: Ulthuan Grey

I wanted the Tree-Revenants to look ethereal and magical, so I used lighter colours on their skin and hair. I used quite a lot of medium to thin the washes, which I think makes the models look paler and more mystical.



### BLUE SKIN

Basecoat: Celestra Grey

Layer: Ulthuan Grey

Wash: Talassar Blue & Contrast Medium

Layer: Ulthuan Grey

The darker bark on my Spite-Revenants is drybrushed with Stormvermin Fur, Dawnstone and Administratum Grey to make it look charred.



### WHITE BARK

Undercoat: Corax White

Wash: Agrax Earthshade

Wash: Seraphim Sepia

Drybrush: Longbeard Grey

Drybrush: Wrack White

### RED LEAVES

Basecoat: Mephiston Red

Wash: Agrax Earthshade

Layer: Wild Rider Red

The silver birch Dryads and Treelord are the only units in my army that I undercoated with Corax White. Everything else in the force was undercoated with Chaos Black, then airbrushed Mournfang Brown.



### BARK

Basecoat: Mournfang Brown

Wash: Agrax Earthshade

Drybrush: Steel Legion Drab

Drybrush: Sylvaneth Bark

Drybrush: Baneblade Brown

Drybrush: Karak Stone

The paints I used for the bark on my Dryads is pretty much the same colours I used on all my Sylvaneth models. They are normally the first colours I apply to them.



### MOSS & VINES

Basecoat: Loren Forest

Wash: Biel-Tan Green

Layer: Ushabti Bone

### HEARTWOOD

Basecoat: Zandri Dust

Layer: Ushabti Bone

Wash: Agrax Earthshade

Layer: Screaming Skull

### SPIRIT WEAPONS

Basecoat: Celestra Grey

Layer: Ulthuan Grey

Wash: Gryph-charger Grey & Contrast Medium

Wash: Warp Lightning & Contrast Medium

Layer: White Scar

### SYLVANETH RUNES

Layer: Gauss Blaster Green

I like the idea of Sylvaneth weapons being more magical than physical, so I painted them to look like they are glowing with life energy. I painted the soul pods the same way.





# WARHAMMER 40,000

In the grim darkness of the far future there is only war! And in this issue's grim, dark section, you'll find psykers, crusades and our warlords ready for a massive four-way free-for-all!







#### HEROES OF THE INDOMITUS CRUSADE

There are many heroes of the Indomitus Crusade, from fleetmasters to lowly Astra Militarum troopers. Turn to page 56 to find out about six mighty heroes.



#### THE WARLORDS OF VIGILUS

For just over a year, four warlords have worked tirelessly on their armies. Turn to page 62 to see the culmination of their work, followed by a huge battle!





# MINDFIRE

The opening of the Great Rift has seen the number of human psykers across the galaxy increase dramatically. Yet as you'll soon see in this short story by Colin Cubbon, not all of them are loyal to the Emperor.



**S**alamanders Epistolary Xubari watched a forest of exhaust stacks at the Gamma-3 refinery explode, the flames glowing bright against the dark sky. In fact, all of Feldros burned. The industrial planet was in the grips of full-scale revolt. Cities were aflame, lighting the polluted night sky a dull orange as if the heavens themselves smouldered. The populace had risen up by the thousands; cultists and traitor defence units threw themselves at the ruling dynasty's forces. The Salamanders had hastened to Feldros as soon as the planet's terrified plea for aid was sifted from the churning warp. The world fulfilled the sub-sector's highest tithe of munitions and promethium, and the planet's return to full production was vital to the supply of Indomitus Crusade battlegroups sweeping through the region.

The heat wash from the burning refinery was blistering, and it brought the reek of scorched metal and pollutants as another burst of autogun fire pattered against the Librarian's draconic-green and midnight-blue plate. While his brothers fought in other war zones, Epistolary Xubari led his compact force through a smoke-filled warren of alleys behind the Gamma-3 refinery. The thunder of shotguns and the crack of lascarbines, fired by ragged bands of traitors, dogged their every step.

*Workers, enforcers, traitors – yes. But not warriors, Xubari reminded himself. They are flaws and impurities to be burned away, and I seek to scour the greatest impurity of all.*

Idoltrous images and runes of the Dark Gods were worn brazenly on defaced uniforms, held aloft on black banners or even carved into the flesh of frenzied cultists. Stories whispered by harrowed frontline survivors even told of witches and sorcerers: shadowmen casting black fire and terrorwrights shaping killing curses. The planet's rulers dismissed such talk and branded its repetition as treachery. Nevertheless, such frightened tales continued, and their flames were fanned with every new insurrection.

The Salamanders had witnessed such unnatural powers, too. Xubari understood what the nobility of Feldros could never – should never – know. The Epistolary had fought against worshippers of the Dark Gods on scores of worlds and had seen sorcerers strip flesh, overturn tanks and tear open the fragile barrier keeping the warp at bay. As a

Librarian, Xubari knew where such power came from. He could recognise its evil spoor and track it down. There was sorcery on Feldros, and he meant to extinguish it. The strongest trail had led Xubari here, and, with two squads from the 3rd Company, he pushed through a maze of jumbled buildings.

'We are nearing the source of the empyric emanations, Sergeant. I can feel it,' he told the large warrior striding alongside him.

Beside Xubari, Sergeant Ko'val cracked the thin plascrete roadway with each heavy tread of his Mk X Gravis armour. Ko'val's squad of Aggressors weathered a hail of shots. The foetid township they pushed through sprawled at the refinery's edges. They conserved the fuel of their flamestorm gauntlets, unleashing incendiary bursts only against large mobs that tore towards them. Otherwise, the Aggressors crushed the cultists with blows from their enormous powered fists. Broken bodies were sent flying from savage backhand swings, while others were smashed to pulp beneath piledriving punches.

Xubari swung his cupric-chased force axe in wide arcs. He fed only a portion of his psychic might into the psycho-crystalline matrix within the weapon. Most of his attention was focused on divining the nebulous thread of what Xubari thought of as 'mindfire': the corrupted pulsing energy that spoke of a psyker alloyed with unclean powers. It was diffuse and shifting, like greasy smoke, but Xubari knew they were getting closer.

Another Salamanders squad fought in the narrow alleyways to Xubari's right. Deafening noise and actinic glares mixed with amplified roars; terrified screams were suddenly silenced. Sergeant Jurr's Reivers savaged cultists attempting to outflank the Salamanders, protecting their less manoeuvrable brothers. The Reivers' combat knives, glinting with a bronze sheen, slashed and decapitated. Their efficiency was terrifying, and before the Reivers' skull-like faceplates and ruddy eye lenses, the cultists fled in panic.

'There!' Xubari snapped with a gasp as they came in sight of a circular fortified building. 'Straight ahead. Sergeant, fire point incineration,' he told Ko'val before he switched vox channels.







'Sergeant Jurr, converge on our position. Compound breach imminent. Initiate rearguard, pattern Voltis-sigma, then follow us in,' commanded the Librarian.

Xubari guessed the building was the township's Enforcer precinct house, though any signifiers had been burned away and replaced with offensive scrawls. A desultory hail of small-arms fire sprayed from inside. Xubari was surer with every step he took that what – who – he searched for hid within.

Jurr's Reivers tore apart the cultists who tried to stop the Salamanders as they reached the precinct house, before following Xubari's coded instruction. As one, five adamantine grapnels launched skywards, and the Reivers swiftly scaled the building's walls. Ko'val's Aggressors poured sheets of burning promethium towards the firing slits. They were rewarded with shrieks that then stifled as burning air entered the guards' lungs. Xubari forged his will into a shimmering ball of flame before launching it forward with a sudden thrust of his armoured gauntlet towards the reinforced door. The psychic fireball exploded, vaporising the plasteel and shattering the surrounding stanchions. Epistolary Xubari led the Aggressors forward. Shimmering globules of liquid metal dripped as they crossed the threshold.

As Xubari stepped inside, his autosenses adjusted to the contrasting gloom and guttering flames still burning from the Aggressors' attacks. The building was a charnel house. Sprays of gore and runnels of old blood spattered every surface. The guards' burning bodies could not cover the stench of human waste, sweat and blood. Barred cells ringed the curving perimeter, dozens more on the floors

above. Inside each, Xubari saw slumped people; they were barely alive. Within each, the Librarian sensed a spark of psychic potential. But Xubari barely spared a thought for them; the small crowd at the precinct house's centre bound his attention. He now understood why the spoor of sorcery had seemed nebulous.

Almost fifty people stood crowded together. They stared at the Salamanders, many in fear and some weeping. They seemed drawn from every aspect of Feldrosi society. There were strongly built labourers who might have been refinery workers. Elderly nobles from the capital stood with stick-thin urchins wearing haggard faces and others in the faded uniforms of Feldrosi Riflemen. On the floor at their feet rested the remains of a man. His bones were broken, his skin bruised and ritually scarred. The man's head had been ripped apart in bloody chunks, but Xubari recognised the sunken eye sockets of an Astropath.

'YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED HERE,' the crowd said. Everyone at once had spoken, almost at once, as if each read from a single script. None shouted, and many voices were hoarse or shrill with fear, but the collective voice was loud.

From behind them, an Enforcer took two steps, idly kicking the Astropath's broken legs away from him. No one else moved, but several of the crowd looked at the Enforcer nervously and expectantly. Xubari felt the heat of the mindfire radiating off each person in the crowd, but none more so than the Enforcer, the lawman acting as some kind of nexus of their power. It was a ferocious blaze that burned and consumed. Now he understood the psykers in the cells, the ruptured Astropath: the Enforcer





and this crowd were gorging on them, draining the prisoners to fill an ever-emptying void in themselves. This crowd of psykers were not prisoners, but Xubari saw they were equally in thrall to the Enforcer. At least, their bodies were; their eyes betrayed each individual's terror and guilt. The lawman swaggered in pristine carapace armour, a green mantle flecked with blood swathing his shoulders. Xubari's eyes narrowed as he recognised it as an Astropath's robe; now it was worn like a trophy.

'THE PENALTY FOR TRESPASSING IS DEATH,' said the crowd. The Enforcer gazed hungrily at the Librarian, but kept the crowd between himself and the Salamanders.

'As is the penalty for betraying the Emperor,' replied Xubari, raising his bolt pistol and firing.

The shell detonated before it reached the Enforcer, and now the lawman willed his thralls to attack. Bolts of sizzling purple lightning flew from outstretched hands. Tear-streaked faces wailed, and empyric amplification turned the screams into psychosonic screeches. Black streams of fire spat from the thralls' wide eyes. Every one of the crowd drew upon their dangerous powers, and coruscating energy arced towards the Salamanders.

Xubari fought against every warp-forged attack with iron-hard mental discipline. He bled the power from furious bolts and dove into his opponents' minds to destroy curses even as they formed. He could not stop them all, and two Aggressors fell, their armour melted, ruptured or hideously altered.

Ko'val's surviving Aggressors unleashed their full volcanic fury on the thrall-psykers. Torrents of burning promethium roared out and billowed over an invisible barrier that steamed and hissed. Xubari could see the Enforcer beyond the flames, both hands held before him, his face twisted in a snarl as he held back the flames' heat. Warp-frost wreathed his form as he projected a billowing gale of icy wind before him. Other thralls added blasts of kinetic energy to the defence, keeping the Salamanders' fiery attacks at bay.

Xubari backed towards the door and slammed his hands on either side of the broken doorway. With a crack, a spitting line of fire, soot and lightning leapt from each hand and tore its way around the curving inner wall on either side. They bypassed the desperate warding shields thrown forward by the psykers. When the two arcing lines of power met, they exploded in flame and ash. Psy-wrought fire engulfed many of the thralls. Those not killed instantly beat at flames that refused to go out. Their mouths gaped wide, but none screamed, and Xubari at last saw the full power the Enforcer held over them. These thrall-psykers were pawns. Though the Librarian regretted each of their deaths, he knew there was no safe way to let them live. Many thralls yet survived, manifesting attacks with greater desperation.

Over the tumult of psychic power and roaring flames, the shattering of glass from above was almost lost. The shards

fell over the Astropath's corpse, and Jurr's Reivers landed with crushing force in the thralls' midst.

'The Enforcer!' shouted Xubari into the vox. 'Kill him, now!'

Five bolt shells punched into bodies that suddenly dove between the Reivers and the Enforcer. The psychic dominator threw his thralls' lives away to shield him, and more died in every moment.

'DIE, FILTH,' said the psykers, their weakened voice drawn from terrified and exhausted survivors. Several threw themselves at the Reivers, manic fear in their eyes as the Enforcer compelled them while he backed further away. The Enforcer thrust one hand towards Jurr's squad while keeping his gaze fixed on the Aggressors. One of the Reivers jerked and fell as his finely wrought armour crumpled and crushed him.

With few psychic attacks to disperse now, Xubari ran forwards, his mind cleaving a path through the lawman's psychic storm. The Librarian leapt for the Enforcer, bearing him to the ground and breaking the man's ribs beneath his weight. He pressed his hands upon the man's breastplate and poured his anger into the psychic puppeteer. The man thrashed and screamed as psychic fire first melted the armour onto his skin and then incinerated him from the inside. From his open mouth, flame jetted in a gale, playing harmlessly over Xubari's Nocturne-forged ceramite.



With the Enforcer's death, the remaining thrall-psykers died quickly. Smoke trailed up through the broken roof from their bodies. Xubari took a breath and nodded to Ko'val and Jurr. The roar of flame and the muffled bark of silenced bolts began as the two squads steadily made their way from cell to cell.

Xubari cast his gaze and his mind around the prison. *How was this possible*, he questioned, looking at the Enforcer's empty charred armour. There were so many psykers here, and many were old. *How have the Black Ships missed this potential for so long?* Xubari felt a familiar heat begin to build, the tingle of mindfire. Not here, but it wasn't far.

Ko'val and Jurr approached, silently confirming their task was completed with curt nods.

'I fear these were not the last, brothers,' Xubari told them. 'There was never going to be only one, but I did not expect so many.'

'The fires of battle ever temper us,' replied Ko'val stoically. Xubari nodded.

'That they do, brother.'



# INDOMITUS CRUSADE HEROES

The Indomitus Crusade is the largest and most potent assemblage of military might the galaxy has seen since the days when the Emperor walked among his subjects. Some of the Imperium's greatest heroes are counted amongst the crusade's storied warriors.



**E**very fleet of the Indomitus Crusade is a vast armada. In each, there are hundreds – in some cases, thousands – of battleships, cruisers and swift frigates that lead the way in a humbling display of power. Sheltered behind them come hundreds of troop carriers, fuel barges and munitions haulers, not to mention converted merchantmen, requisitioned trading cogs and slab-sided void-trawlers. The brutal warships of the Imperial Navy – the *Navis Imperialis* in High Gothic – make up the majority of a fleet's voidborne assets. Meanwhile, devastating battle barges and strike

cruisers of the *Adeptus Astartes*, explorer vessels and *Arks Mechanicus* from forge worlds, and countless other armed ships drawn from Imperial institutions both known and unknown to their fellow crusaders ply the ravaged stars alongside the Navy's warships. This is Roboute Guilliman's Indomitus Crusade. Over such almighty crusade fleets, over the multitude of armies borne within each battlegroup and over the endless war zones their warriors fight across, truly great figures cast long shadows. Their reputations reach every strata of Mankind, and their legends are forged in war.



## FLEETMASTER OF THE THIRD

### TRANSCRIPTION:

Name: Cassandra, Lady VanLeskus  
 Position: Fleetmaster  
 Flagship: Precept Magnificat, Oberon Class Battleship  
 Indomitus Crusade: Fleet Tertius  
 Former Position: Markha-Gher [local title, hereditary general], Vodine Sergastae regiments, Astra Militarum

When appointing commanders of the Indomitus Crusade's fleets, Roboute Guilliman sought out individuals of exceptional personal belief and cast-iron will. In the imposing figure of Cassandra, Lady VanLeskus, he identified one of the fiercest and most driven generals the Imperium possessed.

Fleetmaster VanLeskus is a towering and dynamic leader. A scion of a noble family, Lady VanLeskus is the product of generations of hard-jawed leaders of Humanity, and she dominates her strategium audiences. Over thirty years ago, as Markha-Gher of the Vodine Sergastae, she lost an eye in a xenos assassination attempt. In its place is a complex bionic, the dark sapphire tint of its unblinking lenses mirroring her remaining eye. The device gives her a pitiless demeanour. Combined with her natural height and formidable strength, VanLeskus has cowed brash generals and entitled groupmasters of Fleet Tertius into submission with her unnerving gaze.

The fleetmaster welds decades of experience to an indefatigable, vigorous energy. Even before the summons from Guilliman, when rumours of the crusade fleets' preparation had spread, VanLeskus began strategising. So confident was she at receiving a senior command that she began organising many of her intended sub-commanders and identifying necessary troop redeployments. Guilliman became aware of her activities and, satisfied no less with her record than with her ambition, granted VanLeskus command of Fleet Tertius. The newly appointed fleetmaster used her authority to recruit specialists who she knew would work as swiftly as she would to advance her plans – intuitive logisticians, troubleshooting Munitorum agents and radical Magi Enginarium, as well as far less orthodox operatives.

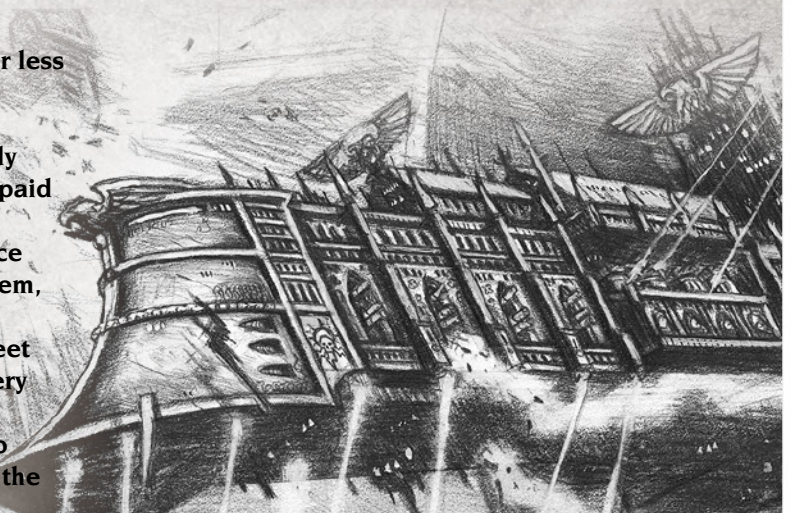
Her tireless drive to get Fleet Tertius combat-ready – ahead of even Guilliman's punishing schedule – paid off in dramatic fashion. When terrifying reports reached Terra of a monstrous heretic invasion force that was slaughtering its way towards the Sol System, VanLeskus saw opportunity where others saw impending doom. She was determined that her fleet would be first to launch and immediately used every means at her disposal to obtain an extraordinary audience with the Primarch. She made her case to Guilliman in person, laying out in energetic detail the

'Groupmasters, attend, for we stand on the edge of history. You have all seen the intelligence on the horrors we face and read the rumours. I will not sully my lips any further with the name. The Lord Commander's vision stands or falls here, at our hands.'

– Fleetmaster Cassandra VanLeskus, before the first action of Machorta Sound, addressing her Groupmasters from Intolerant, Battlegroup Haephestus flagship

pace she had set for the fleet's preparation, the disparate assets she had forged together and her strategic plans to take the fight to the enemy. She vowed to crush the servants of the Dark Gods, and she promised that Fleet Tertius would demonstrate the Imperial vengeance that was coming for every heretic and traitor. Guilliman granted his express permission, and Fleet Tertius had the honour of leading the Indomitus Crusade into the bloody stars.

With five of Fleet Tertius's battlegroups, VanLeskus led her assault into the systems of the Machorta Sound. She absorbed military assets – ragged battalions and limping warships – which were rapidly extracting their forces before the advancing heretics. She heard from their commanders the first whispers of some overarching influence behind the traitors' forces. The Battle of Machorta Sound took the form of an extended campaign stretching for light years across a series of systems, so vast were the Dark Gods' forces. During this first blooding of the Indomitus Crusade, VanLeskus wielded an enormous array of forces from across the Imperium's disparate institutions against a singular and ferocious enemy. VanLeskus conducted intricate and simultaneous operations, coordinating the warships, atmospheric flotillas and ground troops of dozens of task forces. Their commanders and groupmasters won the individual triumphs, but it was VanLeskus who led them to final victory. Any doubt in the Indomitus Crusade from Guilliman's detractors was crushed in the conquest, and the Primarch's calculated trust in VanLeskus proved well founded.





## THE TROOPER TRIUMPHANT

### TRANSCRIPTION:

Name and Regiment: Cenna Syckava, 303rd Elysian Drop Troops Regiment  
Rank: Trooper [brevetted Sergeant, post Issulgat Offensive]  
Issued Arms: one (1) Accatran Pattern Mk IV Lasgun, one (1) Mars Pattern Fragmentation Grenade  
Indomitus Crusade: Fleet Sextus, Battlegroup Chorasine, Task Forces III, XV, XLVI  
Decorations: Adamantine Cluster (7th, 6th and 5th Class), Sesaph Honourific, Illuminated Order of Elysia Prime, three (3) Regimental Preacher's Blessing, see files ii – lxxv for full details

Throughout the crusade's fleets arose tales of individual heroism. Within the battlegroups of Fleet Sextus, one name rang out time and again: Cenna Syckava, whose legend rapidly swelled into the Trooper Triumphant.

Syckava's roll of honour was forged as an Imperial Guardsman with the 303rd Elysian Drop Troops Regiment, known as The Cratermakers. With Battlegroup Chorasine, Syckava's regiment of airborne troops fought on Kappa VI against Heretic Astartes, and it was there that the Guardsman rose to prominence. As Syckava's entire company made planetfall, flights of winged Daemon Engines reduced many to showers of broken, burnt and bloody scraps. Syckava was among less than sixty drop troops who reached their targeted landing zone alive, and only half of those reached the objective they were to hold. The company's officers were dead, their vox units smashed and scattered, but Syckava organised the Elysian Guardsmen into an inspired shifting defence that repelled waves of Chaos Cultist attacks. When squads of Imperial Fists arrived – dispatched on the assumption the Elysians had been wiped out – they discovered the bloody but unbowed Syckava and his ragged survivors surrounded by piles of dead.

Syckava survived battle after battle, fighting as part of several task forces, his instrumental actions securing spectacular victories. He threw the frag grenade amongst fire-spewing Orks on Ferghora to cause the firestorm that tore its way through the Ork advance. At the Issulgat armourium yards, amongst Guardsmen shredded by Aeldari shuriken fire, Syckava took up the compact sniper rifle of a fallen comrade. As its casing still dripped with blood, so it was claimed, Syckava sent a clean headshot straight through the curving faceplate of the witch leading the xenos. With their seer and his foresight dead, the Aeldari's constant uncanny manoeuvring was curtailed, and the Astra Militarum's guns hammered them.

Section leaders and company captains made repeated calls to have Syckava assigned to their commands. They were met with excoriations and censure, until the commissariat saw the benefit in harnessing Syckava's

renown. Vid-captures of Syckava deploying were distributed, accompanied by tales of his feats: the rescue of Major Rulyev from her burning command tank, the jury-rigging of a downed Sentinel's vox set to act as a signal for orbital bombardment, and the decapitation of an immense Ork by shooting the mine at its feet. His deeds were extolled by preachers, who declared Syckava blessed by the Emperor. Soon, the tale of the Trooper Triumphant had spread not only through Battlegroup Chorasine, but was heard through the whole fleet. His exploits became mess hall chatter, his name used as a rallying war cry, and his reported presence in a war zone roused the fleet's Guardsmen to greater valour. The Trooper Triumphant took on a life of its own, becoming a symbol of Imperial victory to which deeds other than Syckava's were attributed.

Rumours spread of his origins, admirers and authorities eager for knowledge of his influences. Word crept out that Cenna Syckava was first conscripted during the Heretic Astartes invasion of Elysia. There were individuals among Fleet Sextus who knew that the Adeptus Custodes had descended on Elysia to shatter the traitors. Speculations on any connection were quickly stifled when a group of Custodian Guard abruptly attached themselves to Battlegroup Chorasine. The golden warriors were seen fighting through at least three war zones, never straying far from Syckava's platoon, but also never fighting alongside them.

Cenna Syckava fell defending the Shrinefort of St Grel Ap Mhorg against apostate forces. Posthumous litanies described his bravery, his unerring aim and his selfless defence of the holy bastion. While possibly embellished, it was clear his efforts did indeed buy time for a ferocious counter-attack by Battle Sisters of the Order of the Grey Spear. More glorious still, proclaimed regimental preachers, his life was laid down for the Emperor. Who, they demanded, dared aspire to more?

Whatever interest the Custodian Guard had had in Syckava was never discovered, and they were not seen in Battlegroup Chorasine again. Those entitled to ask discovered the golden warriors had in fact redeployed two days before Syckava's death – as abruptly as they had arrived.





## THE 'BULL GROX' OF KALLIDES

### TRANSCRIPTION:

Name: Kaspar Marius Todoric Marran  
 Position: Groupmaster  
 Flagship: Hammerblow, Graia Class Battleship  
 Indomitus Crusade: Fleet Primus, Battlegroup Kallides  
 Former Position: Commanding Officer 1st Terran Battlecruiser Armada [substantive rank: Admiral], Battlefleet Solar, Navis Imperialis

Groupmaster Marran is immovable once a decision is made, gruff and barrel-chested. Some among his general staff have taken to referring to him as the Bull Grox – though never in his presence – and the groupmaster certainly embodies his irascible namesake. Marran's large, grey-haired head sits low over his immense shoulders. Standing over hololithic strategium displays, his thick arms like granite stanchions planted on the devices' rim, Marran's stance is as unwavering as his disposition as he presides over squadron movements, troop dispositions and casualty lists. The groupmaster is loud and direct, with no patience for fools, flatterers or vacillators.

Groupmaster Marran is a pious man. He demands not only loyalty from his subordinates but an unwavering adherence to the Imperial Creed, despising officers who show anything less than utter conviction in their devotions. His flagship, *Hammerblow*, is home to many dozens of fervent preachers, missionaries and confessors. Some are as craggy and full of grit as Marran himself, and many have served with him on ships throughout his career. A Navis Imperialis man all his life, Marran had been an admiral within Battlefleet Solar before the Indomitus Crusade, commanding the 1st Terran Battlecruiser Armada. As one of Battlefleet Solar's rare permanent formations, command of the 1st Terran was a prestigious honour that raised Marran far above his fellow admirals in influence. That

influence was vital when the remains of the Primarch's Terran Crusade reached the Sol System, and Marran's actions during the Battle of Luna earned him the recognition and praise of Roboute Guilliman. Marran's skilful coordination and respected reputation allowed more ships to support the desperate lunar battle than was expected, many not under the admiral's direct command. Imperial Navy battlecruisers and monitors, Imperial Fists strike cruisers and transports of the Silent Sisterhood all followed Marran's lead, filling the battlesphere with a ballet of death-dealing void leviathans.

Like all the Fleet Primus battlegroups, Kallides left its mustering in the Sol System alone, as each made a different heading. Marran had orders to drive his ships south-west – orders from none other than Guilliman for a crucial task that he shared with no one – and he dispatched task forces as he saw fit into both Segmentums Tempestus and Ultima, taking light back out into the darkening Imperium. The especially large battlegroup was soon beyond direct astropathic communion with any other forces, and the Astronomican only lit the way fitfully. Marran's navigators dared smaller and smaller warp jumps, yet everywhere the battlegroup forged, they heard cries for help. Desperate reports of last stands reached them, as did terrified warnings to stay clear of falling worlds. Marran's ships fought void battles with xenos fleets pouring north, and his task forces wrenched worlds from the grip of the Dark Gods' servants. Nothing would distract the groupmaster from his headlong drive, however. He refused outright any investigations of xenos migration, shouted down those who suggested they answer pleas from sectors beyond their course. The groupmaster had never experienced such far-reaching devastation, and as Battlegroup Kallides slid ever further from the light of Terra, Marran sought the guidance of the Emperor more fervently. It was faith that sustained the great man, faith that propelled him and Battlegroup Kallides into the ink-black darkness.

### ECHOES OF HEROISM

Many of the Indomitus Crusade's greatest warriors, tacticians and proselytisers are remembered not just by their deeds – whether recorded accurately or not. Around many of these champions, and left in their wake, were swarms of followers, images and relics that grew in number with every campaign.

After each victory of Canoness Jada-kyn, heroine of the Penitents' Gulf, scores of bent-backed pilgrims gathered up her spent bolt shell casings. Each became a priceless relic, painstakingly engraved with holy tracts or scenes of devotion. Some were held as sources of physical faith, while others were guaranteed as amulets to ward away witchery.

When the rigidly feudal world of Pretannis VII was liberated, its newly raised regiments joined its deliverers among the Fleet Secundus Battlegroup Erastus. The factorum-stamped company icon upon their saviours' command Chimera was adopted by the Pretanni

regiments as a symbol of divine overlordship. Its every minuscule striking error, faded edge and smudged re-painting were tirelessly reproduced in tattoos, electro-tapestries and medallions.

Preachers, historitors and even the blind fellowships of Astropaths ensured that the stirring words of the fleets' champions were kept alive. Among Fleet Quintus, its battlegroups beset by so many tragedies, the fleet's Astropaths preceded their missives with quotes from Prelate Deomsk, the fleetmaster's own confessor-general. With every 'Repellam abominatus!', the warp-speakers hoped to grant success to the encrypted orders they transmitted through the storm-tossed nightmare realm.

Guilliman himself praised the champions of the Indomitus Crusade, holding aloft its heroes' deeds for all to see. These indomitable warriors were the deliverers of the Avenging Son's vision, as much wardens of the Imperium as he is.



## THE SCARRED PREDATOR

### TRANSCRIPTION:

- + Signifier: Mannfor [no other accepted appellations known]
- + Stated Command: Company Master, Carcharodons Chapter [company unknown]
- + Lead Strike Asset: Ma-tahe [unknown class, mass approximates known Adeptus Astartes strike cruisers]
- + Indomitus Crusade: Fleet Secundus, Battlegroup Betaris [not formally engaged]

Not all heroes of the crusade's fleets earned the joyous gratitude of foe-scoured worlds or the hearty camaraderie of war zone brotherhoods. Company Master Mannfor of the Carcharodons Chapter was a taciturn and scarred warrior, who exuded a predatory menace. His deadly warriors were recorded fighting alongside Fleet Secundus on at least two occasions, before each time sliding back into the void, and Imperial forces that witnessed his savage way of war gave him a variety of grim epithets.

To the dour companies of Krieg, he was the Grey Phantom, while the artillerymen of the Filkuun batteries whispered of the Maw-blade. Only a few of Mannfor's actions through the Mhoran Belt were witnessed directly. But so many were the sites of his bloody slaughter that Mannfor's name became an invocation of terrible vengeance by many of Fleet Secundus. When Heretic Astartes of the Word Bearers Legion defiled the Castellus Sanctic on Budor V, the

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traitors repelled siege after siege. The diabolists gathered eldritch mists around the citadel, summoning nightmarish Daemons from the warp.

Yet other shades circled in the gloom. Mannfor sent quick feints against several points around the Castellus' perimeter before he suddenly led a lightning-fast strike from the mists. With augmented strength and savagery, the Carcharodons tore through the defences where they were weakest. Where the Word Bearers put up zealous resistance, Mannfor's warriors fluidly swept back, only for more Carcharodons to attack from another angle. Mannfor's chainblade, Skinshrive, ripped open warp-spawned flesh and ancient power armour in frenzied fountains of blood and ichor. Within hours, the Castellus Sanctic was a dead shell. Its vaulted arches dripped with gore and in its plazas were piles of bloody corpses, grisly monuments to Imperial retribution.

## BADUIN AND THE HELSPAWN

### TRANSCRIPTION:

- + Title: Baron Baduin Alarbus Selwyn of House Krast [access sub-file for complete titles]
- + Knight Suit: Red Ruin, Knight Errant
- + Holdings: Planar Ruger Territory, Chrysis
- + Indomitus Crusade: Fleet Tertius, Battlegroup Delphi, Task Force V

Baron Baduin of House Krast was a hunter of giant foes, ever seeking the largest and most powerful enemies. The aged noble and his titanic Knight Errant, Red Ruin, fought at the head of a lance of knightly warriors pledged to fight as part of Fleet Tertius. The Nobles found the forces of Chaos everywhere, pouring out of the Great Rift in a tide. Amongst the armies of the Dark Gods marched renegade Knights, infernal war engines and towering Daemon Lords — things that hunted the weak and took delight in rending them apart. Yet Baduin and Red Ruin preyed upon them in turn.

On the mountainous planet of Mundus di Venn, the forces of the Dark Gods had been hounded down. But within labyrinthine chasms a monstrous evil still hid — a twisted and mutated Warhound Titan named the Helspawn by fearful Imperial soldiery. The horror ripped apart its Imperial pursuers in frenzied

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ambushes, and none ever returned. When Baron Baduin and his exalted court deployed to Mundus di Venn, they tracked the remnants of the Helspawn's victims through dark caverns of skeletal transports, gutted super-heavy tanks, and dried gore no longer recognisable as corpses. Twice the titanic creature pounced from the shadows, ripping apart Baduin's bondsmen one by one and escaping each time. The Baron finally cornered the unhinged beast in a blood-streaked lair scrawled with giant runes. The feral Warhound slashed with empty cannons fringed with claws and snapped its multiple maws. Thermal cannon fire seared, and eventually Red Ruin's thunderstrike gauntlet drove deeply into the beast's twisted hull. As the Helspawn screeched its hatred through blaring emitters, Baduin tore the many-jawed head from its neck in a spray of vile fluids before melting its mutated chassis into a single charred mass.

++ THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: HOPE IS THE BEGINNING OF UNHAPPINESS ++



## THE SPEARTIP OF LXII SQUADRON

### TRANSCRIPTION:

- + Name, Rank, Regiment: Squadron Leader Thyn, 12th Seqqan Air Corps Ccf CM TI425.378.1J
- + Aircraft: Speartip, Marauder Destroyer, Cypra Mundi Pattern VI
- + Kills: 32 ordnance engines (conf.) 54 armoured engines (conf.) 8 strike craft (conf.)
- + Indomitus Crusade: Fleet Primus, Battlegroup Dominus, Task Force XIX

Battlegroup Dominus of Fleet Primus earned a fearsome reputation for its devastating atmospheric strike craft. Its Aeronautica Imperialis officers — those who flew the missions, at least — had no doubt their successes were down to one man: Xanderus Thyn III. Formerly a commodore-colonel with the 12th Seqqan Air Corps regiment, a series of humiliating combat losses were falsely laid at his door. It saw Thyn stripped of high rank and reduced to command of LXII (Heavy Ordnance) Squadron.

Squadron Leader Thyn soon secured the personal loyalty of his bomber pilots and gunners. His rough charisma hid incredible strategic acumen. Expertly piloting his Marauder Destroyer, Speartip, Thyn's daring and tightly executed raids became notorious for their unconventional attack angles. At Vorrah, his high-flying bombers executed a near suicidal dive, catching a column of Heretic Astartes armour unprepared. Supersonic autocannon rounds shredded the traitors' squads, and scores of hellstrike missiles tore apart their heavy tanks. Throughout Battlegroup Dominus' campaigns, Thyn's contacts among the squadrons of the 12th Seqqan enabled

### OFFICIO LOGISTICARUM

Clearance Code: \*\*\*\*\*/\*\*\*\*

Audio Verification: CONFIRMED

++ Logged in - 11:30.24 UTC ++

him to assemble highly complex wings. These mixes of attack craft, air superiority fighters and bombers in unique multi-role squadrons were capable of responding swiftly to changing situations.

The commander of Battlegroup Dominus allowed her Aeronautica commanders to save face by keeping Thyn technically only a squadron leader. Simultaneously, the practical groupmaster granted 'the Speartip', long since inseparable from his aircraft's cognomen, enormous latitude in mission planning and requests for assets.



### OFFICIO LOGISTICARUM

Audio File Recovered: Final approach to Echadon Voidport, cockpit vox-ident: Squadron Leader Thyn, LXII (Multi-Role Specialist) Squadron, 12th Seqqan Air Corps

> Heretic fighters inbound, gamma-six-six, mortis parabola. XXII Squadron, intercept now! Target approaching, vector sigma-5, atmospherics within tolerance. CV and XLI Squadrons, tighten up! Let's pay a call and take a gift. Commence supplications to bomb bay doors. Now, catch Speartip if you can, traitors! DIVE!

End\_of\_Recording<<<



++ THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HERESY AND TREACHERY IS IGNORANCE ++



# THE WARLORDS OF VIGILUS

On the war-torn world of Vigilus, four mighty armies have assembled for battle. Space Marines, Heretic Astartes and Genestealer Cultists stand poised for one final showdown to see who will be the greatest warlord on Vigilus.



**A**nd so, after a year of intense hobbying, our four warlords have come to the end of the Warlords of Vigilus challenge. They have painted miniatures (over 300 in total), played games, and one of them even switched armies, and now they have finally reached the end of their journey.

In this final instalment of the series, we show off all four of the warlords' finished armies and chat to them about their involvement in this most epic challenge. Sam discusses what it was like painting so many infantry and expanding his Genestealer Cults force into a Tyranid invasion, while Mark talks about planning your collections. James Karch (the loyalist) chats about painting a demi-company of Raven Guard, while James Gallagher (the heretic) explains why being a hobby butterfly can be both a good and a bad thing when it comes to painting challenges.

But that's not all! To finish off the series, our four warlords took to the battlefield for one final showdown to see who would be the warlord of all warlords. Any guesses on who it may be?



## SAM PEARSON

Sam has stoically painted his way through a great number of Genestealer Cultists over the last year, not to mention a few Tyranids and a fair chunk of terrain. Having completed the challenge, he's now

taking a deserved rest from alien sympathisers to paint some of the boxed games that he's got lying around at home. We reckon it won't be long before the Hive Mind calls to him once more and beckons him back to the cult.



## JAMES KARCH

Having painted well over half a company of Raven Guard, anyone would think that James Karch had painted enough Space Marines for the time being. But no, of course he hasn't – he's just started

painting Space Wolves! James has also played the most games of the four warlords, having taken on several members of the studio to learn how his Raven Guard work on the battlefield. But can he claim victory in the final game?



## MARK BEDFORD

Mark was the first challenger in *White Dwarf* history to switch armies during A Tale of Four Warlords, changing from Orks to Death Guard after the second month. He proceeded to paint like

a man possessed to catch up with the other warlords and managed to amass a huge army of disease-ridden Chaos Space Marines. He's painted Mortarion, the lord of the Death Guard, for this final instalment.



## JAMES GALLAGHER

Over the last twelve months, James Gallagher has created a diverse army, combining Chaos Space Marines, Chaos Knights and Chaos Daemons into one mighty army. Of CHAOS! To finish off the

challenge, James went back to his roots and painted two more units of Chaos Terminators to accompany Abaddon on his Black Crusade. Two Obliterators have also appeared in his army list. Dark Gods be praised!





## THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

To finish off the series, our challengers played one massive four-way game against each other to decide who would be crowned the warlord of warlords.

James Gallagher wrote an exclusive mission for them to play (he is a rules writer, after all), which you can find in the Battle Report after this article. Suffice it to say the game began pretty tactically, but by the end of the first battle round, it had descended into total carnage. Feel free to try out the mission yourself with your regular gaming group – we're sure you'll have a good laugh. Our warlords certainly did!





SAM PEARSON | GENESTEALER CULTS

# RISE UP AND DEVOUR!

For a little over a year, the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor has plotted the downfall of Vigilus. Now it must rise up and wreak havoc before a Tyranid Hive Fleet arrives and devours all in its path.

**S**am: I have absolutely loved this warlords challenge, and it has been a real honour to take part in it. In fact, more of a childhood dream. But boy has it been tough! I consider myself to be quite a slow painter, so the regular deadlines really helped motivate me and drive me on in my hobby quest to build a Genestealer Cults army.

The games I played inspired my painting, too. I love seeing what my characters get up to on the battlefield, and Saivera Drisst and Doctor Onderghast have both developed into pivotal characters in my cult thanks to the battles they've fought in. I feel a wonderful sense of pride when they do something heroic that goes above and beyond what you'd ever expect from a weedy alien-human hybrid. Onderghast in particular made a name for himself in the Battle Report (*no spoilers here!* – Ed) and his legacy will be forever enshrined in the background of the Delverghouls cell of the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor.

## FAVOURITE MODELS

The model I'm most proud of in my own army has to be Doctor Onderghast, the Biophagus. He was great to paint and proved to be far more deadly than he looks in the Battle Report. Everyone else painted excellent models, too, but a personal favourite is James K's Eliminators. I love the modern camo effect he painted on their cloaks. It really suits the high-tech look of the Phobos-armoured Space Marines.

Overall, my Genestealer Cults army is something I am immensely proud of, and its creation is a real hobby feat for me. This is the first time I've painted an army over 4,000 points in size; normally I just stop at 2,000. It means I've got a huge selection of models to choose from when I fight a battle, which really appeals to the narrative way that I like to play. I can field a mounted army of bikes, Ridgerunners and larger vehicles if I want to, or an entirely infantry-based force made up of infiltrating Acolytes. I'm almost certainly going to keep adding to the army, most likely with more Tyranids.

I think, if I were to take on the challenge again, I would look for ways to include Contrast paints in my army colour scheme. They came out midway through the challenge for us, by which point I'd already established my army colours and was hesitant to change them. Next time I tackle a big army project with tight deadlines, I'll definitely find ways to include them.





## TYRANT OF THE ALIEN HOST

The colour scheme for my Tyranids was inspired by their original colours from back in the 1990s. My intention was to make their carapaces look shiny, but in an unnatural, alien way. Also, a useful tip: if you're mounting a model on slate, glue the slate to the model's feet first, then use smaller bits of slate and Texture Paints to ensure the slate chunks sit flat on the base.



## THE DELVERCHOULS, A.K.A: OPERATION COIL

### SUPREME COMMAND DETACHMENT

Patriarch – Herald of the Void, The Grandsire  
Magus – Saivera Drisst, The Barbed Prophet  
Magus – Ghaskin Voidborn  
Abominant – Specimen 8

Biophagus – Doctor Onderghast with Alchemist Familiar, Bottle

### BATTALION DETACHMENT

Primus – Visor Cryltic  
Iconward – Overseer Gorl  
  
Kelermorph – Red Bandista, The Dust Devil  
Locus – The Silent Warrior  
10 Aberrants – Litoyev Laboratory Sect

10 Acolyte Hybrids – Maco-Yard  
521 Maintenance Crew  
10 Acolyte Hybrids – The Gamma Sub-section Sappers  
10 Neophyte Hybrids – Pravik District Delverkin

Goliath Rockgrinder – Delver  
Clearance Unit Omega  
Cult Leman Russ – Doomtendril

### OUTRIDER DETACHMENT

Jackal Alphus – Agent Jara

3 Cult Armoured Sentinels – Colosine Docks Security Unit  
3 Achilles Ridgerunners – Sympos  
Zone Runners  
5 Atalan Jackals (including 1 Wolfquad) – The Dust Runners

### SUPREME COMMAND DETACHMENT

Hive Tyrant – Void-bringer  
Neurothrope  
Neurothrope

4 Zoanthropes

### BATTALION DETACHMENT

Broodlord – The Prince of Stars

20 Genestealers  
20 Genestealers  
4 Genestealers  
10 Termagants

3 Hive Guard

Mucolid Spore

6 Spore Mines

**Total:** 197 power





JAMES KARCH | RAVEN GUARD

# VICTORUS AUT MORTIS

Now joined by their Chapter Master, the Raven Guard of the 3rd Company are ready to drive the aliens and heretics from the surface of Vigilus. Victory or death awaits them.

**J**ames: This is the second time I've taken part in A Tale of Four Warlords for *White Dwarf*, and it's been really interesting doing it bimonthly over a year rather than every month for six months. I paint armies pretty quickly, so the longer deadlines enabled me to slow down and sharpen up my painting. I actually finished the project with more confidence in my painting abilities, because I knew I'd pushed myself more than I normally would have. The three models I entered into Golden Demon are a good example of that – I spent a long time on them, asked painters like Darren Latham for advice and really worked on honing my skills and knowledge.

It was also quite a challenge painting so much black! I chose the Raven Guard because I wanted to get better at painting black power armour, and I

## FAVOURITE MODELS

Of my own collection – my Primaris Ancient. I loved converting and painting him for Golden Demon, though I still reckon I could have done more to really push my painting skills. Of the others' models, it's a tough call! I really like Mark's rendition of Mortarion. The oily, iridescent effect he achieved on his wings suits the Death Guard perfectly.

certainly got plenty of opportunities to work on my edge highlighting. You need to think carefully about your colour scheme before starting any army because you're going to end up painting it a lot!

If I have any advice for people taking on the challenge of A Tale of Four Warlords, then it's this: think carefully about how you want to build your army over time and what you'll get out of it during that time. I concentrated on getting most of my infantry painted early on, but when I played my first few games, I found myself struggling to match my opponents' firepower. I should have broken up my painting a bit more, alternating between infantry, characters and tanks. I guess the learning point is to be flexible with your approach to the challenge and paint what you want when you want to, rather than sticking to a rigid plan.





## KAYVAAN SHRIKE

It wouldn't have felt right if I didn't paint Shrike for my collection. He's such an iconic hero of the Raven Guard. I found the model really exciting to paint, though I wish I'd painted him earlier in the challenge alongside my other characters. I think I would have spent a little more time on him rather than trying to get him painted alongside another Repulsor Executioner. Saying that, though, he stood next to the same tank during the Battle Report and really improved its accuracy!



## RAVEN GUARD 3RD COMPANY

### BATTALION DETACHMENT

Kayvaan Shrike	7
Lieutenant Kyrin in Phobos Armour	4
5 Intercessors – Squad Vorys	5
10 Infiltrators – Squad Reszan	10
10 Infiltrators – Squad Ordias	10
10 Incursors – Squad Vresn	10
3 Eliminators – Squad Vorkyl	4
3 Suppressors – Squad Estavo	7
Impulsor	4
Impulsor	4

### VANGUARD DETACHMENT

Captain Solaq in Phobos Armour	5
Primaris Ancient Doriasus	4
Invictor Tactical Warsuit Korvin	6
Invictor Tactical Warsuit Orlos	6
<b>SPEARHEAD DETACHMENT</b>	
Librarian Moradus in Phobos Armour	5
3 Eliminators – Squad Aevor	4
Repulsor Executioner Drysk	15
Repulsor Executioner Septyn	15

### VANGUARD DETACHMENT

Lieutenant Orevis in Phobos Armour	4
5 Reivers – Squad Olys	4
5 Reivers – Squad Kaphorn	4
5 Reivers – Squad Kasz	4



Total:

141 power





MARK BEDFORD | DEATH GUARD

# THE VIRULENT HOST DESCENDS

Having inflicted pestilence and plague upon the world of Vigilus, the Death Guard have now been joined by their monstrous overlord, the Daemon Primarch Mortarion. Surely the end has come for Vigilus.





**M**ark: I love painting armies, so this challenge has been great fun for me. I had a bit of a hiccup at the start when I changed armies, but sometimes that happens – your eye gets drawn to something new and shiny and there's nothing you can do about it!

I really enjoyed trying out new paint schemes and weathering techniques on my Death Guard, sometimes lavishing time on a character or centrepiece model, then bashing out a load of Poxwalkers using the new Contrast paints. Being more of a painter than a gamer, it was interesting fighting a battle with my army. If you're a regular gamer, you'll probably think more about what weapons you include in your units, whereas I just picked what looked cool and found they didn't always complement each other. That's probably my biggest learning point from this challenge – I love modelling and painting, but I should play more games to get the most out of my models.

## MORTARION'S DEATH GUARD LEGION

### SUPER-HEAVY AUXILIARY DETACHMENT

Mortarion

24

### BATTALION DETACHMENT

Lord of Contagion

Chaos Lord

10 Plague Marines

7 Plague Marines

10 Plaguebearers

Nurglings

Foul Blightspawn

Biologus Putrifier

Tallyman

Plague Surgeon

Foetid Bloat-drone

Myphitic Blight-hauler

### VANGUARD DETACHMENT

Typhus

Chaos Lord in Terminator Armour

10 Poxwalkers

10 Poxwalkers

19 Poxwalkers

3 Deathshroud Terminators

5 Blightlord Terminators

Beast of Nurgle

3 Chaos Spawn

Chaos Land Raider

Plagueburst Crawler

Plagueburst Crawler

### SUPER-HEAVY AUXILIARY DETACHMENT

Knight Rampager

Total:

211 power



### MORTARION

I painted Mortarion for my final month of the challenge – what better centrepiece for my army than the Daemon Primarch of the Death Guard? I painted him in the same colours as the rest of my force, with white armour and green shoulder pads, but used colour-shifting airbrush paint to get the iridescent effect on his wings.

### FAVOURITE MODELS

I'd say that my Knight Rampager is my favourite model. I enjoyed converting it and painting it to look really weathered and battle-worn. It was a great canvas for trying loads of interesting techniques and textures. That's probably why I like James Gallagher's Knights so much, too – he's picked a great colour scheme for them that really makes them stand out on the battlefield. Plus, they're Chaos – us heretics need to stick together!



JAMES GALLAGHER | BLACK LEGION

## LET VIGILUS BURN!

Joined by Chaos Knights, daemonic servants and the Bringers of Despair, Abaddon the Despoiler - Warmaster of Chaos - makes his bid for world domination.

**J**ames: I rarely focus on a single army for such a long time, so this challenge has been just that – a challenge! If you go back to that very first article in the series, you'll see that my final army doesn't match my original plan at all. I was intending to paint Haarken Worldclaimer and fifteen Raptors, but ended up painting Chaos Knights instead. In my defence, Apocalypse had just come out, and I really wanted to paint some big war machines so I could play it. Then Contrast paints came out and I wanted to have a go with them, which is why I painted the Flesh Hounds. I definitely strayed from painting a Black Legion army, but at least all my units have the Chaos keyword so they can fight together. I actually quite liked exploring all aspects of Chaos – Heretic Astartes, Knights and Daemons – in one force, and I think breaking up large army projects with other stuff (related or otherwise) is a great way to keep the spark alive for your main project.

A key thing I learned from this challenge is not to start with a character first. I painted Haarken in such a way that made applying his colour scheme quite difficult to my rank-and-file units. Next time, I will definitely drybrush the gold trim on the armour – what was I thinking applying it as layers?!

### FAVOURITE MODELS

The model I'm most proud of has to be Abaddon. The model is absolutely stunning and I put a lot of time into painting him as well as I could while still making him look like part of a collection. He's the first model I've ever entered into Golden Demon, too, so there's something special about that. Out of the other warlords' models, Sam's Biophagus, Doctor Onderghast, has to take top spot. Not only has Sam painted it really well, but he's also cultivated a brilliant reputation for him throughout the studio. Everyone knows that Biophagus around here now!

### OBLITERATION!

After much pestering from the Dwarfers, I finally got around to finishing my Obliterators! The reason they took a while is because I wasn't certain what colour to paint their flesh. I dabbled with red, but I thought that might be confusing, as I'd already used red as a spot

colour across the rest of my army. In the end I settled on Cadian Fleshtone, a wash of Carroburg Crimson to incorporate the red in a more subtle way, then highlights of Cadian Fleshtone and Kislev Flesh. The secret, really, is finding a colour that complements the armour on the rest of the model.



### ABADDON'S BLACK CRUSADE

#### VANGUARD DETACHMENT

Abaddon the Despoiler

5 Terminators – Garrok's Chosen  
5 Terminators – The Black Hunt  
5 Terminators – Eyes of the Warmaster

#### PATROL DETACHMENT

Haarken Worldclaimer

Master of Executions – Sorroth Kar

10 Chaos Space Marines – Harkoth's Reavers

Chaos Rhino – Black Vengeance

2 Obliterators – The Cursed

#### OUTRIDER DETACHMENT

Karanak

5 Flesh Hounds – The Redmaws  
5 Flesh Hounds – The Burning Hounds  
5 Flesh Hounds – The Skullseekers

#### SUPER-HEAVY AUXILIARY DETACHMENT

Knight Tyrant – Lord Acherus  
Dreadblade War Dog – The Shamed  
War Dog – Zeraph

#### SUPER-HEAVY AUXILIARY DETACHMENT

Knight Despoiler – Zar Obedon  
War Dog – Eliseth  
War Dog – Sarran

Total:

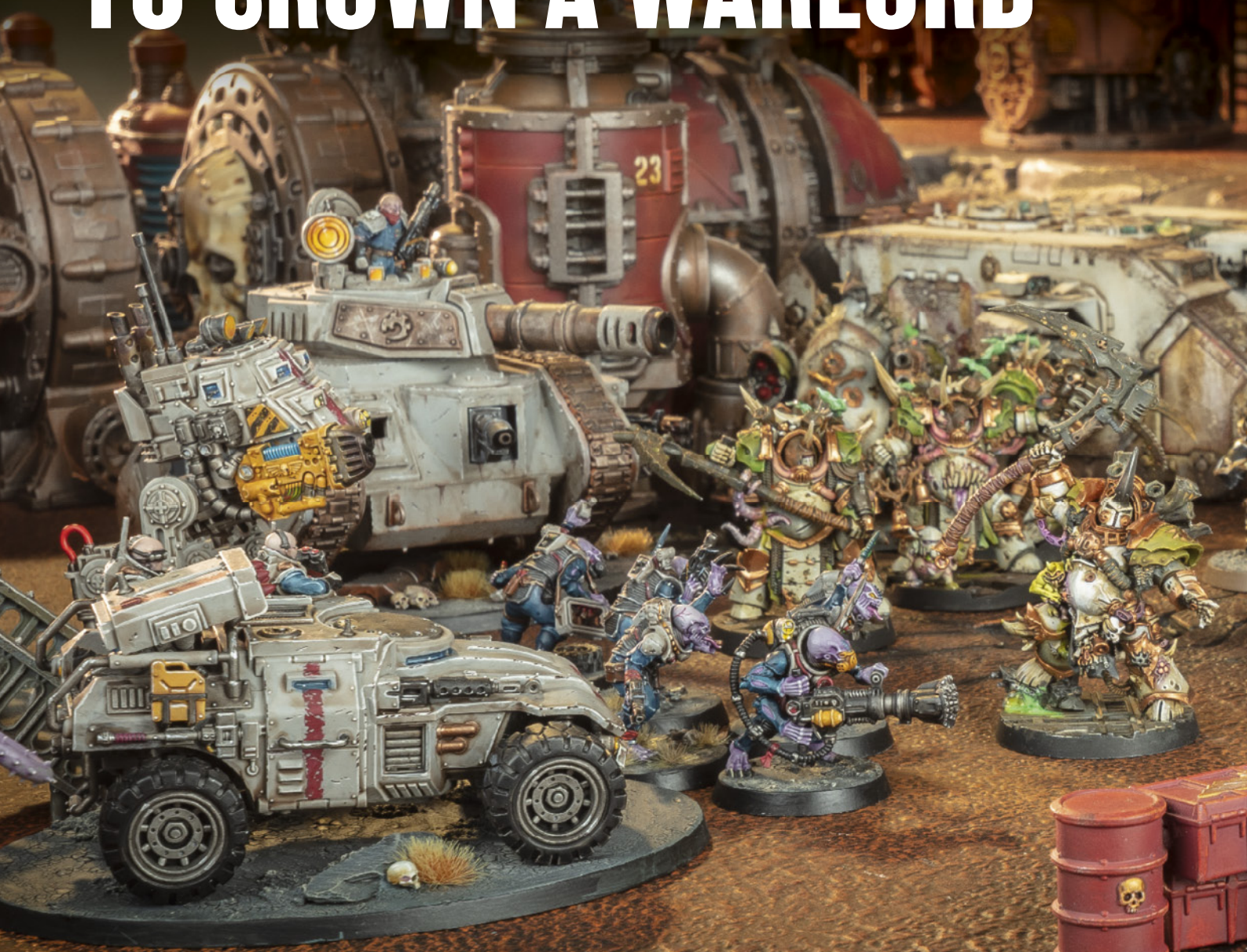
181 power







# TO CROWN A WARLORD



**T**he land of Megaborialis is rich for the picking. Every hour of every day, its vast manufacturums churn out weapons and war machines for the armies of the Imperium in a desperate bid to retain control of Vigilius. Yet in recent months, the Stygian Spires have fallen to a previously unknown threat. With no warning, the city's workers revolted and took up arms against their protectors. Blood was spilt in the streets as foul xenos hybrids took over the factories and processing plants.

A strike force of Raven Guard Space Marines was deployed to eradicate the alien threat, but they could barely contain the cult uprising that threatened to spill into the rest of Megaborialis. Worse still, two armies of Heretic Astartes had established beachheads on the continent and were now fighting their way across the hive-sprawl towards the beleaguered city.

## THE ARMIES

After a year of modelling and painting, our four warlords all have a different number of models completed, which means their final power levels are also different. To even things up for this final game, each player can deploy around 100 power from their army, with other units possibly coming on as reinforcements later in the game. You can see what units they picked for their starting armies on pages 78-81.

## THE SCENE IS SET

And so the scene is set for the grand conclusion to the Vigilus edition of A Tale of Four Warlords. Four armies – the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor, Raven Guard, Black Legion and Death Guard – stand ready to battle it out over the Stygian Spires, their respective generals eager to be crowned the warlord of all warlords. Will it be James or Mark – one of the heretics? Perhaps the other James will prevail as the defender of the Imperium. Maybe Sam will win out with his Genestealer Cultists.

To celebrate the culmination of the series, we came up with an exclusive scenario for the warlords to fight – you can find it over the page should you wish to play it yourself.

And on that note, grab a cup of tea and a pack of biscuits, and prepare yourself for a seriously chaotic Battle Report!



Having mustered their forces, four mighty warlords march on the forge factories of Megaborialis. Should they claim the manufactorums, they will be able to churn out countless war machines to aid in the defence or destruction of Vigilius.



From his vantage point atop his Land Raider, Typhus – Host of the Destroyer Hive – surveyed the outskirts of the Stygian Spires in dour silence. He had been tasked by the Death Lord to claim the forge city, yet his advance had been hampered by the forces of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Now, alien sympathisers and lackeys of the false Emperor lurked amidst the manufactorums, waiting for the moment to strike out at each other and claim the city for themselves. Little did they know that Typhus' Death Guard were closing in on their positions.

The Herald of Nurgle shrugged inside his vast suit of armour and descended from the roof of the ancient tank, a cloud of flies and noxious smoke billowing around him. Nearby, a trio of Deathshroud Terminators stood in stoic silence, watching his every move. Mortarion's gift was a double-edged blade – the Deathshroud were valuable warriors, but should Typhus fail in his duties, they were ordered to claim his head.

'Our old friends the Raven Guard protect this city,' said Typhus to his gathered lieutenants, his deep voice bubbling and seething like boiling tar. 'There are cultists, too – children of the Shadow. Their agenda is unclear. Neither should prove hard to overcome. We fight as we always fight. We give no quarter. We offer no mercy. The walking plague will claim them all.'

One of the Deathshroud advanced and stood before Typhus, his armour reeking of foul corruption. Vox communication passed between the two warriors before the Terminator bowed and retreated.

'It seems the Despoiler of Worlds has seen fit to join us in our endeavour,' said Typhus, gesticulating to the east. Through the toxic smog of heavy industry, the Death Guard could see the towering forms of Renegade Knights advancing on the city. 'Trust none of them,' added Typhus as he climbed into the Land Raider.



# A TALE OF FOUR WARLORDS

## THE CULMINATION

After months of preparation, the armies strike out across the planet, each seeking to claim a vital point of power for their own. The warlords must destroy the others in their quest for victory!

### ADDITIONAL GAMING EQUIPMENT

Each player will require a set of cards numbered 1-6. A deck of playing cards, split among the players, with each player taking the Ace, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 cards from a particular suit is perfect for this.

### THE ARMIES

Each player must first muster an army from their collection. A player can include any models in their army. Each player begins the battle with 12 Command Points, but if their army is Battle-forged, they receive an additional 3.

### THE BATTLEFIELD

Create the battlefield using the deployment map below and set up terrain. Next, set up 5 objective markers as shown on the map below. Note that the battlefield will also be divided lengthways into 3 even sectors, known as the Western Sector, Central Sector and Eastern Sector. Noting the measurements of these sectors on the size of battlefield you are using will help when using Secret Scheme cards as described later. (On the 8' x 4' battlefield used in the Battle Report, each of these sectors is 32" x 48").

### DEPLOYMENT

Each player selects up to 100 power from their army to be their advance force. Each player puts one of their numbered cards into a stack, face down, and these are then shuffled and drawn at random. When a player's card is drawn, that player selects one of the deployment zones that does not have any enemy units in it and sets up their advance force in this deployment zone. These cards are then returned to the players.

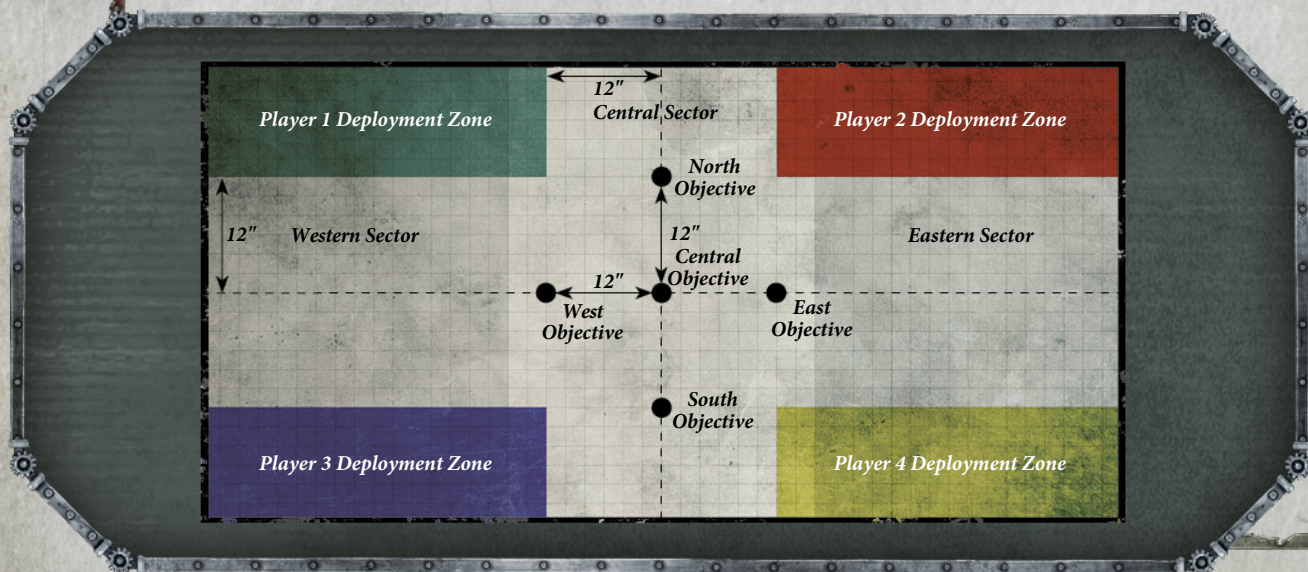
### TURN ORDER

At the start of each battle round, each player selects one of their cards and puts it face down on the battlefield. Once each player has placed a card, these cards are then revealed, and the player with the lowest number takes the first turn, followed by the player with the second lowest number, and so on. If any numbers are the same, those players roll off, re-rolling ties, with the player with the highest roll deciding the turn order for these players. The revealed cards are then discarded and are unavailable in future turns.

### SELECTING TARGETS

At the start of the Psychic, Shooting, Charge and Fight phase, the player whose turn it is must pick one opponent to be their 'enemy' for that phase. A different enemy player may be selected in each phase if desired. In the Fight phase, only the player whose turn it is and their enemy can select units to Fight.

Once you have chosen which player will be your enemy in a phase, until the end of the phase all models in that player's army are enemy models for all rules purposes, and all models in your army are enemy models to that player for all rules purposes. Units belonging to other players are considered to be 'neutral' for that phase, and cannot be selected as the target of attacks, abilities or psychic powers, etc. Neutral units cannot use any abilities which would affect the player or their enemy during that phase.





## SECRET SCHEMES AND REINFORCEMENTS

At the end of each battle round, each player draws a Secret Scheme card (found over the page) for each objective marker they control, and for every 3 units from their army that have been destroyed in that battle round. A player controls an objective marker if they have more models within 3" of the centre of it than their opponent. Each Secret Scheme card is kept secret until that player wishes to use it. When a Secret Scheme allows a player to select units from their army to set up on the battlefield, that player can select any units, including any which have been destroyed earlier in the battle. Named Characters that have been destroyed earlier in the battle cannot be selected.

## BATTLE LENGTH

At the end of battle round 4, the player who had the first turn in that round must roll a D6. On a 3+, the game continues, otherwise the game is over. At the end of battle round 5, the player who had the first turn in that round must roll a D6. This time the game continues on a roll of 4+, otherwise the game is over. The battle automatically ends at the end of battle round 6, or when only one army remains.

## VICTORY CONDITIONS

The player who controls the Central Objective at the end of the battle is the winner. If no player controls the Central Objective, then the player with the closest model to the centre of that objective marker is the winner.

## STRATAGEM

Each player can spend Command Points to use the following Stratagem:

3CP

### SEND HELP!

#### *The Culmination Stratagem*

*Desperate commanders scream demands for aid into comms systems, hoping salvation will come!*

Use this Stratagem at the end of the battle round.  
Draw one Secret Scheme card.





### SECRET SCHEMES

To create a Secret Schemes deck, you will require two sets of the following cards for a total of 24 cards. We recommend photocopying these pages and gluing the cards to strong card and/or placing them in card sleeves so that other players do not know what schemes you have in your hand.

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#### SECRET SCHEME

### TELEPORT STRIKE

Play this card at the end of your Movement phase. Select a point on the battlefield in either the Western or Eastern Sector. You can select units from your army that are not on the battlefield up to a total of 25 power rating and set them up wholly within 12" of this point and more than 9" from any enemy models.



#### SECRET SCHEME

### TELEPORT STRIKE

Play this card at the end of your Movement phase. Select a point on the battlefield in either the Western or Eastern Sector. You can select units from your army that are not on the battlefield up to a total of 25 power rating and set them up wholly within 12" of this point and more than 9" from any enemy models.



#### SECRET SCHEME

### PRECISION STRIKE

Play this card at the end of your Movement phase. Select a point on the battlefield in the Central Sector. You can select units from your army that are not on the battlefield up to a total of 25 power rating and set them up wholly within 12" of this point and more than 9" from any enemy models.



#### SECRET SCHEME

### PRECISION STRIKE

Play this card at the end of your Movement phase. Select a point on the battlefield in the Central Sector. You can select units from your army that are not on the battlefield up to a total of 25 power rating and set them up wholly within 12" of this point and more than 9" from any enemy models.



#### SECRET SCHEME

### TRANSPORT TUNNELS

Play this card at the end of your Movement phase. Select a point on the battlefield that is within a terrain feature. You can select units from your army that are not on the battlefield up to a total of 25 power rating and set them up wholly within 12" of this point and more than 9" from any enemy models.



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## SECRET SCHEME

### BOMBARDMENT

Play this card at the start of your Shooting phase. Select a point on the battlefield in either the Western or Eastern Sector. Roll one D6 for each unit that is within 6" of that point. On a 5+, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds.



## SECRET SCHEME

### PRECISION BOMBARDMENT

Play this card at the start of your Shooting phase. Select a point on the battlefield in the Central Sector. Roll one D6 for each unit that is within 3" of that point. On a 4+, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds.



## SECRET SCHEME

### OUTFLANKING FORCE

Play this card at the end of your Movement phase. Select a point on the battlefield edge that is in another player's Deployment Zone.

You can select units from your army that are not on the battlefield up to a total of 25 power rating and set them up wholly within 12" of this point and more than 9" from any enemy models.



## SECRET SCHEME

### DELAYING TACTICS

Play this card after an opponent selects units to set up on the battlefield as part of a Secret Scheme. Roll one D6 for each unit that player has selected. On a 6, that unit cannot be set up.



## SECRET SCHEME

### ONSLAUGHT

Play this card after all eligible units have fought during an opponent's Fight phase in which you were not selected as their enemy.

You can select one unit from your army that is within 1" of any units belonging to the player whose turn it is. That unit can immediately Fight, but can only select units belonging to the player whose turn it is as the target of attacks. These units are considered to be enemy units for all rules purposes.



## SECRET SCHEME

### DEACTIVATE

Play this card at the start of the battle round. Select one objective marker that is not the Central Objective. That objective marker cannot be controlled during this battle round.





## READY TO INFILTRATE

**Sam:** My starting army is made up entirely of cult troops – I reasoned that narratively they would be on the planet first, with the Tyranids arriving later. My plan is for the infantry to take the objectives, while the vehicles drive right up to the enemy to hold them back. I'm also going to use the Cult Ambush rules to deploy as many of my units on objectives as possible, thereby giving me a greater chance of drawing Secret Schemes and getting reinforcements.

I also have a little bit of experience playing four-way Battle Reports. Last time, I ran my army into the middle as early as possible and doggedly held onto the objective until the end of the game. I don't know if the Genestealer Cultists will be able to pull off the same trick, but I'm hoping that weight of numbers, then extra reinforcements, will enable me to come out the victor.



## OVERWHELMING FIREPOWER

**James:** As I learned from my practice games, I struggle against vehicles, which is why I've included both Repulsor Executioners and both Invictor Tactical Warsuits in my starting force. I'm willing to bet that James will deploy at least some of his Chaos Knights at the start of the game, and I really don't want to have to fight them with pistols and knives.

My plan is to whittle down the enemy at range, while my Reivers drop in using their grav-chutes to claim the objectives. I'm hoping to take a back seat for the first few turns to see how things pan out, then pounce on the Central Objective when everyone is too weak to stop me. My Chapter Tactic should make my army quite survivable, and I'm hoping that it will dissuade the other players from even shooting me at all. It's all about playing the long game for me.







## SAM'S STARTING ARMY

### SUPREME COMMAND DETACHMENT

Patriarch – Herald of the Void, The Grandsire

7

Magus – Saivera Drisst, The Barbed Prophet

4

Abominant – Specimen 8

6

Biophagus – Doctor Onderghast. With Alchemicus Familiar, Bottle

3

### BATTALION DETACHMENT

Primus – Visor Cryltic

4

Jackal Alpha – Agent Jara

4

Iconward – Overseer Gorl

4

Kelermorph – Red Bandista, The Dust Devil

3

10 Aberrants – Litoyev Laboratory Sect

14

10 Acolyte Hybrids – Maco-Yard 521

Maintenance Crew

6

10 Acolyte Hybrids – The Gamma

Sub-section Sappers

6

10 Neophyte Hybrids – Pravik District

Delverkin

6

3 Cult Armoured Sentinels – Colosine Docks

Security Unit

9

3 Achilles Ridgerunners – Sympos Zone

Runners

12

Goliath Rockgrinder – Delver Clearance Unit

Omega

6

Cult Leman Russ – Doomtendril

9

**Total:** 100 power



## JAMES'S STARTING ARMY

### BATTALION DETACHMENT

Kayvaan Shrike

7

Lieutenant Kyrin in Phobos Armour

4

5 Infiltrators – Squad Reszan

5

5 Infiltrators – Squad Ordias

5

5 Incursors – Squad Vresn

5

Impulsor

4

### VANGUARD DETACHMENT

Lieutenant Orevis in Phobos Armour

4

5 Reivers – Squad Olys

4

5 Reivers – Squad Kaphorn

4

5 Reivers – Squad Kasz

4

### VANGUARD DETACHMENT

Captain Solaq in Phobos Armour

5

Primaris Ancient Doriasus

4

Invictor Tactical Warsuit Korvin

6

Invictor Tactical Warsuit Orlos

6

### SPEARHEAD DETACHMENT

Librarian Moradus in Phobos Armour

5

3 Eliminators, Squad Aevar

4

Repulsor Executioner Drysk

15

Repulsor Executioner Septyn

15

**Total:** 106 power





## PUTRID DETONATIONS

**Mark:** Like Sam, I like to have a story behind my army, which is why I've included Typhus and a horde of shambling Poxwalkers in my starting force. They're the vanguard of Mortarion's mighty plague host. Essentially, all the slow stuff will be on the battlefield at the start, with faster assets arriving from reserve later on. I've also included both Plagueburst Crawlers in my army. They have excellent range, and they don't need to see what they're shooting at, so I can saturate the middle of the battlefield with firepower and hopefully knock off anyone who thinks they can claim the Central Objective.

It's going to be a slow, odorous advance for my army, but I reckon the Death Guard's natural resilience will win out in the end. No one is going to shift forty Poxwalkers off an objective, especially if Typhus is there encouraging them on.




## BIG GUNS FIRST

**James:** There are two reasons I picked the Chaos Knights for my starting force. Firstly, I thought it would look cool having them striding into battle together. Secondly, they would be hard to bring on later in the game, as the Knight Tyrant has a higher power rating than the Secret Scheme cards allow! They're also very resilient, so hopefully they can weather the enemies' firepower, dish out a load of damage in return at long range, then get into position around the Central Objective ready for Abaddon and his Terminators to drop in and take the objective. It doesn't matter what's on the objective, the Bringers of Despair will dislodge it! I think the only things I'm really scared about are James's tanks and possibly Mark's Land Raider. I'm going to have to keep some Command Points to one side for the Rotate Ion Shields Stratagem. I think I'm going to need it.







<div>  <b>MARK'S STARTING ARMY</b> </div>	
<b>VANGUARD DETACHMENT</b>	
Typhus	9
Chaos Lord in Terminator Armour	6
10 Poxwalkers	3
10 Poxwalkers	3
19 Poxwalkers	6
3 Deathshroud Terminators	11
5 Blightlord Terminators	14
Beast of Nurgle	2
3 Chaos Spawn	6
Chaos Land Raider	19
Plagueburst Crawler	8
Plagueburst Crawler	8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>95 power</b>



<div>  <b>JAMES'S STARTING ARMY</b> </div>	
<b>SUPER-HEAVY AUXILIARY DETACHMENT</b>	
Knight Tyrant – Lord Acherus	30
Dreadblade War Dog – The Shamed	9
War Dog – Zeph	9
<b>SUPER-HEAVY AUXILIARY DETACHMENT</b>	
Knight Despoiler – Zar Obedon	23
War Dog – Eliseth	9
War Dog – Sarra	9
<b>Total:</b>	<b>89 power</b>





# DEPLOYMENT: THE WARLORDS EYE UP THEIR RIVALS

The four armies descend upon the battlefield, intent on dominating the industrial command hub at the heart of the Stygian Spire. Death and destruction are imminent.

Mark is the first to deploy his army. He picks the south-west corner of the battlefield. He places his Plagueburst Crawlers in the far corner (1), but still close enough to bombard the Central Objective.

In front of them he arranges a wall of Spawn (2) and a Beast of Nurgle (3), along with thirty-nine Poxwalkers (4). In the corner of his deployment zone closest to the objective, he places his Land Raider (5), which contains Typhus and the Deathshroud Terminators.

James G deploys second in the south-east corner of the battlefield. He sets up the Knight Despoiler (6) closest to Mark, with a pair of autocannon-armed Wardogs (7) accompanying it.

**T**he four armies cautiously watched each other across the battlefield, waiting for the right moment to make their move on the Central Objective. To the south, the forces of Chaos massed, the Death Guard and Renegade Knights advancing slowly into the hive-sprawl, both keenly aware that they had an ally, but also a complete lack of trust, in each other.

To the north-west, the repurposed vehicles of the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor clanked noisily into position. Of the cultists that had been milling around earlier in the day, there was no sign.

The Raven Guard waited in sombre silence to the north-east, their black armour making them almost invisible in the shadows of the ancient ruins. Their hated foes were close by, but they would not act in haste. Vengeance would come surely enough ...



## IMMINENT ARRIVALS

Sam, Mark and James Karch all kept units in reserve. Mark deployed a Chaos Lord and his Blightlord Terminators in the teleportarium, while Typhus and the Deathshroud started in his Land Raider (A). Sam placed all of his infantry in Cult Ambush (B). James kept Shrike, a Lieutenant and three units of Reivers in low orbit (C) ready to be deployed by grav-chute. A unit of Infiltrators started in the Impulsor.

**'I'm looking down the barrels of two Repulsor Executioners. That's not good.' - James G**

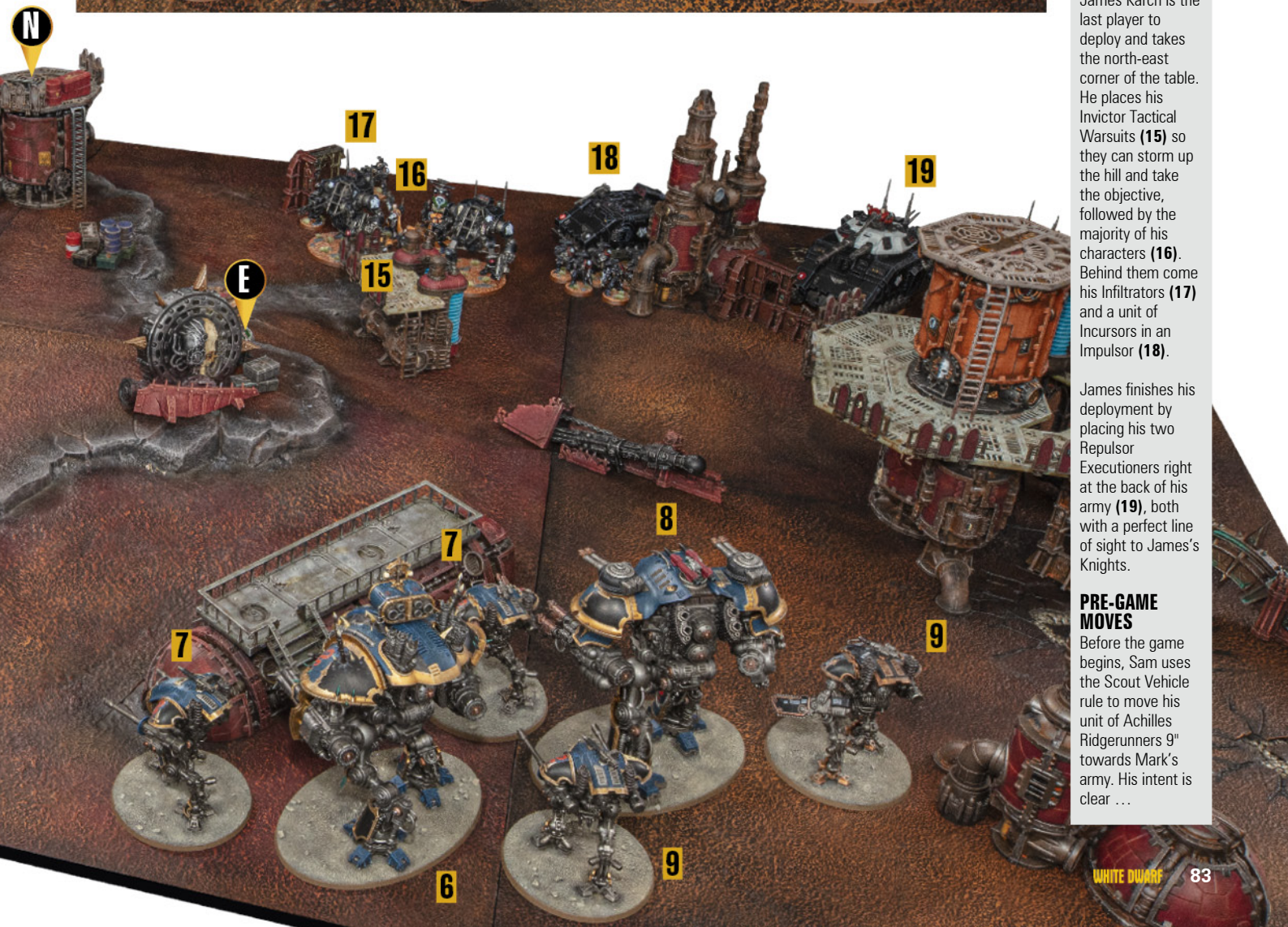




James places the Knight Tyrant looking north (8), again with a pair of War Dogs (9). Not knowing who will deploy opposite him, he just hopes it isn't James K and his tanks.



Sam is the third player to deploy his army. He picks the north-west deployment zone. Sam places only his vehicles on the board, leaving all of his infantry in Cult Ambush. He places his Leman Russ on the far left of the board to cover his flank (10), with a trio of Achilles Ridgerunners next to it (11). He places his Goliath Rockgrinder (12) and Sentinels (13) at the eastern end of his deployment zone, while his Jackal Alphus takes up position behind the crane assembly (14).



James Karch is the last player to deploy and takes the north-east corner of the table. He places his Invictor Tactical Warsuits (15) so they can storm up the hill and take the objective, followed by the majority of his characters (16). Behind them come his Infiltrators (17) and a unit of Incursors in an Impulsor (18).

James finishes his deployment by placing his two Repulsor Executioners right at the back of his army (19), both with a perfect line of sight to James's Knights.

## PRE-GAME MOVES

Before the game begins, Sam uses the Scout Vehicle rule to move his unit of Achilles Ridgerunners 9" towards Mark's army. His intent is clear ...



## BATTLE ROUND ONE: CAGEY MOVES AND RANGING SHOTS

**The ground trembles as four armies race towards the centre of the battlefield, each of them keen to prove their dominance. The first shots are fired. The first warriors fall.**

## ORDER OF BATTLE

As mentioned in the mission rules, each player starts the game with a set of six cards. They must choose a card to play each battle round to determine the order in which they take their turns. Pick a high card and they will likely be going last. Play a low card and they might go first. In the first battle round, James Gallagher takes the first turn, followed by Sam, Mark and, lastly, James Karch.

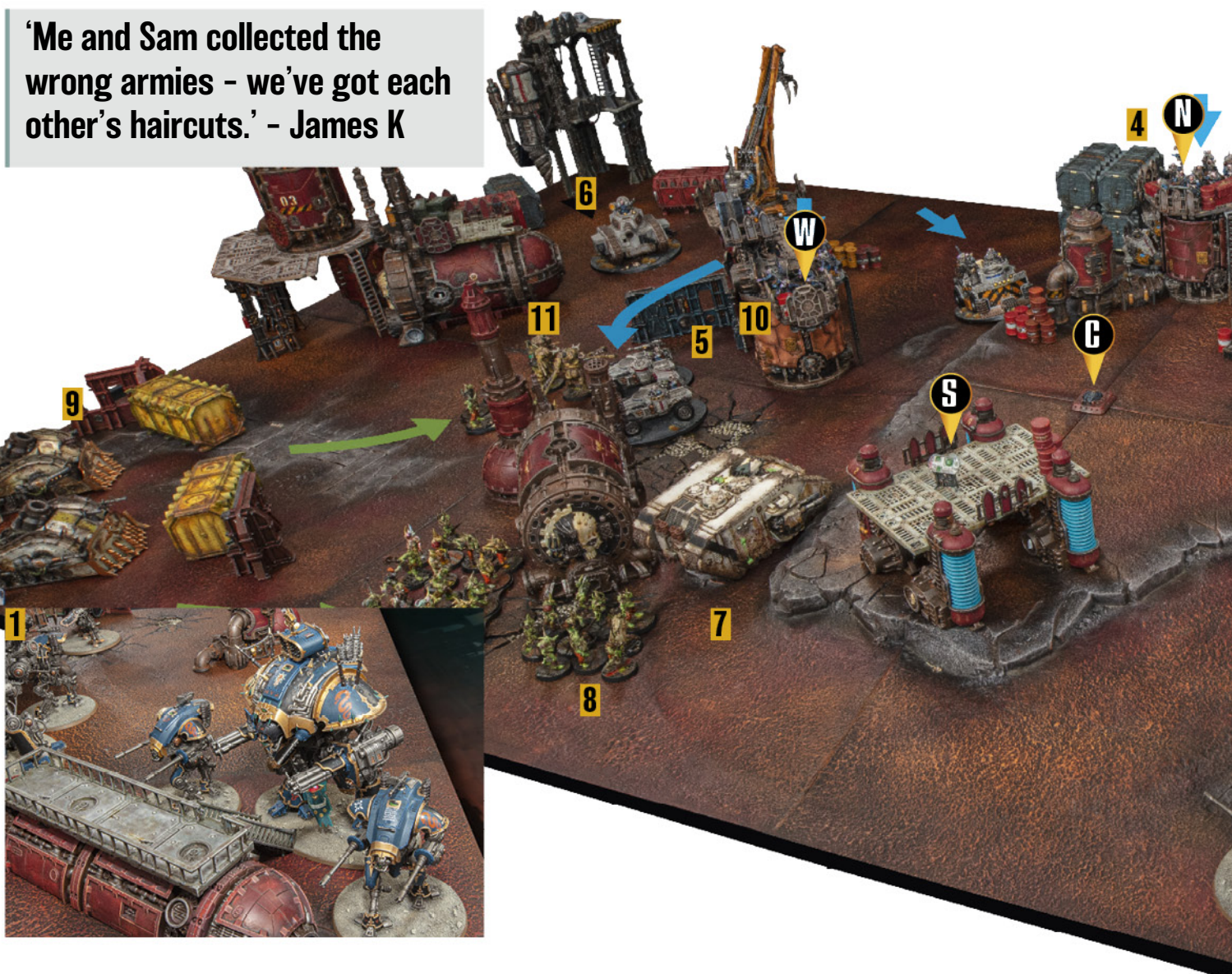
**S**hots rang out as the Knights of House Lucaris fired upon the Raven Guard. Despite the immense firepower of the Chaos Knights, only a handful of Raven Guard battle-brothers fell, their natural stealthiness making them hard to see amidst the ruins. One of the Invictor Warsuits was not so lucky, however, and it was torn apart by the avenger gatling cannons of Zar Obedon's Knight Despoiler.

The Raven Guard responded immediately, aiming all their guns at the Chaos Knights. The Repulsor Executioners targeted the Knight Tyrant striding towards them, but its ion shields deflected most of the shots. Having descended to the battlefield using his grav-chute, Shrike ordered all of the units under his command to target the massive war machine, but despite a fusillade of shots hitting the corrupted Knight, it remained stubbornly standing.

To the west, the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor engaged the Death Guard in a firefight. The cult troopers damaged both Plagueburst Crawlers, using their mining lasers to slice huge rotten chunks off of their armour. At the same time, the Death Guard crippled the Rockgrinder with lascannons and destroyed a Ridgerunner, the lightly armoured reconnaissance vehicle torn apart by a tide of Chaos Spawn.

But both forces were also advancing on the objectives. Typhus's Land Raider was rumbling towards the Central Objective, the huge armoured vehicle followed by a shambling horde of Poxwalkers. The cult troopers were moving up a little more cautiously, their Sentinels and Rockgrinder skirting the hill while Neophytes and Acolytes took control of the north and west command terminals. The opening moves, cagey as they were, had been made.

**'Me and Sam collected the wrong armies - we've got each other's haircuts.' - James K**







James G takes the first turn and immediately turns his guns on the Raven Guard. The Knight Despoiler (1) and one of his War Dogs (2) annihilate an Invictor Warsuit, but the Knight Tyrant (3) barely scratches the paintwork of the Repulsor Executioners.



Sam goes second and advances most of his vehicles towards Mark. He also brings in reinforcements to take the north (4) and west objectives. He picks Mark as his enemy in the Shooting phase and inflicts five damage on one Plagueburst Crawler with his Ridgerunners (5) and six on the other with his Leman Russ (6).

Mark takes the third turn and immediately moves his Land Raider (7) towards the centre of the battlefield, followed by a horde of Poxwalkers (8). One Plagueburst Crawler (9) fires on the newly arrived hybrids (10), killing three of them, while the other knocks five wounds off a Ridgerunner. The damaged Ridgerunner is then set upon by the Chaos Spawn (11) and destroyed.

James K is the last player to act. The Raven Guard barely move from their positions, content as they are to stand and shoot. The Repulsor Executioners (12) fire first and, despite having Shrike nearby to guide their aim, cause just 13 damage on the Knight Tyrant. The rest of James's army also shoots the Tyrant, causing a further 8 damage, leaving it with 7 wounds remaining.







**'My cult picked the worst day for ascension. There are enemies everywhere!' - Sam**

## BATTLE ROUND TWO: BOLD MOVES AND SWIFT VENGEANCE

As the Raven Guard and the Chaos Knights of House Lucaris trade shots, the Death Guard and the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor move to take control of the primary objective.

### FIRST REINFORCEMENTS

Following the first battle round, all four players picked up Secret Scheme cards. Sam plays Deactivate to turn off the easternmost objective, meaning that it cannot be used to generate a Secret Scheme this round. Meanwhile, Mark uses the Outflanking Force card to bring Mortarion on right behind the Jackal Alphus.

As Sam pointed out at the time, this was almost certainly overkill.

Once again, the Raven Guard held their ground and directed their full firepower at the Chaos Knights. Lord Acherus was finally slain, his mind assailed by Librarian Moradus, while his Knight was pummelled by small-arms fire from the Raven Guard. The Repulsor Executioners, once more guided by Shrike, destroyed the Knight's attendant War Dogs. Zar Obedon patched into his vox and desperately called for reinforcements.

He would need them, because suddenly the centre of the battlefield descended into chaos. A host of Genestealer Cultists emerged from the hatch at the centre of the control nexus, a monstrous Patriarch looming over the other cult heroes while Aberrants formed up to protect them. More cultists appeared around the southern command terminal, too, taking control of the vital strategic asset. Vehicles raced back

and forth to get into position as a Rockgrinder launched itself forwards and slammed into the front of Typhus's Land Raider, sparks flying as its rock drills chewed through the tank's adamantium armour. The Cult of the Four-armed Emperor had made their bid for control of the Stygian Spires.

The forces of Chaos responded immediately, the two warlords forming a temporary alliance. Zar Obedon's Chaos Knights poured hundreds of shots into the Aberrants, but only killed four of the hulking beasts, while the Death Guard began smashing apart the cult's vehicles. Typhus himself disembarked from his Land Raider to take the fight to the enemy, his manreaper scythe slicing through the chassis of the Rockgrinder as his Deathshroud Terminators obliterated one of the nearby Ridgerunners. Meanwhile, in the distance, a winged shadow descended upon the field. The Death Lord Mortarion had joined the battle.





James K goes first and once more aims all of his guns at the Chaos Knights. Librarian Moradus **(1)** causes five damage to the Knight Tyrant using Smite before the war engine is finally downed by the Invictor Warsuit **(2)**. The Eliminators cripple one of the War Dogs, which is finished off by one of the Executioners **(3)**. The other Executioner kills off the Dreadblade.

Sam goes second and quickly turns the centre and western end of the battlefield into a confusion of units. Every one of his cult heroes appears in the centre of the battlefield surrounded by a wall of Aberrants (4). More Acolyte Hybrids appear on the southern objective (5). The Rockrunners race away from the Chaos Spawn (6), while the Rockgrinder rams the Land Raider (7).

James G takes the third turn and picks Sam as his enemy in the Shooting phase. Zar Obedon **(8)** and one of the War Dogs **(9)** target the Aberrants, but they only kill four of them thanks to the cultists' bestial vigour and the presence of the Cult Iconward.

Mark is the last player to act. His Poxwalkers take an objective **(10)**, while the Blightlord Terminators teleport in **(11)**. Typhus and the Deathshroud disembark from the Land Raider, destroy a Ridgerunner with their plague-spurt gauntlets, then chop up the Rockgrinder **(12)** with their manreapers. The Jackal Alphas suffers a swift death at the hands of Mortarion **(13)**.





# BATTLE ROUND THREE: DEATH, FOLLOWED BY MORE DEATH

Having taken the Central Objective, the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor comes under attack from all three of the other factions. Ascension, it seems, is costly.

## NINE INCHES OF FRUSTRATION

While the four warlords had access to plenty of reserves during the game, they also needed to find space to deploy them. A unit cannot be deployed within 9" of an enemy model, which made it very hard for the players to deploy their units near the centre of the battlefield, as all four of them had units on or around the hill. Sam's bid to claim the centre early on had them all stumped.

**T**he Death Guard continued their inexorable advance towards the hub of the control nexus, the Land Raider bringing its lascannons to bear on the cult hierarchy while the Deathshroud began their grim reaping. Yet as Mortarion's chosen warriors sliced apart the Aberrants, Magus and Iconward, one of the cult heroes stood defiant before them. Injector goad in hand, Doctor Onderghast struck with pinpoint precision at the Terminators. He dispatched each of them with grim efficiency, their huge armoured bodies crumpling to the ground around him.

His victory was to be short lived. The last surviving Ridgerunner fired a krak missile into the reactor core of the nearby Land Raider, detonating the mobile bunker. The putrid explosion claimed Onderghast's life, along with that of the Ridgerunner and several nearby

Poxwalkers. The Patriarch, seeing Mortarion bearing down on him, decided instead to charge Typhus, which proved to be a fatal mistake.

To the west, the Raven Guard were about to make their move on the command nexus when they were confronted by a brood of Zoanthropes to the front and Death Guard reinforcements to the rear. With Reivers dropping down from the sky to back up their assault, the Raven Guard tackled both foes at the same time. They eliminated the Plague Marines and Blightlord Terminators, but struggled to get past the Zoanthropes' impenetrable warp fields. The nearby Renegade Knights had no such trouble. Through sheer weight of fire they pounded four of the psychic aliens into mulch. At the same time, an actinic blast illuminated the landscape. As the glare subsided, six Terminator armour-clad warriors were revealed. Abaddon the Despoiler had joined the battle.

Mark races his Land Raider up the hill towards the cult hierarchy (1). The Deathshroud follow it and charge into the Genestealer Cult heroes, killing the Magus and the last few Aberrants before all three of them are slain by the Biophagus!

Mortarion charges the Sentinels, destroying the three walkers with his scythe, Silence (2). Meanwhile, a host of Plague Marines and Nurglings appears in the eastern sector (3).

Sam responds by directing all his attacks at Mark. He uses the Teleport Strike card to bring twenty Genestealers and a Broodlord in behind Mortarion (4), and the Precision Strike card to drop four Zoanthropes and two Neurothropes between James K's Raven Guard and the objective (5). The Primus and the Kelermorph join their Tyranid overlords.

**'He's got a combi-bolter, he's got a combi-flamer, and he's got ... harsh language.' - Mark**







Sam's last Ridgerrunner blows up Mark's Land Raider with a krak missile. Mark plays Putrid Detonation, catching the Ridgerrunner in the blast and destroying it, too. Sam's Fight phase is less successful. Having made a 12" charge on Typhus, the Genestealer Patriarch fails to kill the Death Guard hero and is slain in return.



James K is the third player to move. Most of his Characters and the Invictor Warsuit move towards the primary objective (6), where they are joined by a unit of deep-striking Reivers. The ensuing combat with the Zoanthropes is an entirely bloodless affair (7).

James picks Mark as his target in the Shooting phase and plays two Bombardments on the newly arrived Plague Marines. The Repulsor Executioners (8) kill a further seven Plague Marines and two bases of Nurglings, while the Eliminators (9) snipe the Chaos Lord that was protected by the Blightlord Terminators. The Raven Guard infantry finish off the Terminators.

James G takes the last turn and drops Abaddon and his Terminators as close as he can to the Central Objective using a Precision Strike (10). The Knight Despoiler (11) kills both Neurothropes and two of the Zoanthropes with its vast array of guns, while one of the War Dogs charges the Abominant (12). They both agree to wound each other a little bit.







**'It all depends on how many Genestealers Abaddon can kill. I'm hoping ten.'** - James C

## BATTLE ROUND FOUR: A FINAL BID FOR VICTORY

Anarchy ensues as Poxwalkers, Reivers, Genestealers and even Abaddon the Despoiler lay claim to the Central Objective. The fate of the Stygian Spires is about to be decided ...

### DESPERATE TIMES

Because this scenario has a random game length, all four of the warlords knew that this could be the last battle round. As such, all of them pushed forwards to try and claim the Central Objective in the middle of the board. At the same time, all four players tried to capture secondary objectives in case the game continued. Alliances were made and quickly broken as plans came to fruition.

**W**ith a bellow of pure hatred, Mortarion rose into the air on his rotten wings and flew towards the Raven Guard, intent on slaying his ancient adversaries. As the Death Lord engaged the loyalist Space Marines, Typhus led the charge on the hill, hacking his way through an entire unit of Reivers with ease. In his wake, the Poxwalkers shambled towards the Central Objective. It was now within their grasp.

Abaddon clearly shared Typhus's desire to claim the objective. Following the Despoiler's orders, Zar Obedon targeted the Poxwalkers, obliterating an entire horde of the shambling plague victims and clearing the objective of their taint. In the wake of Obedon's destruction, Abaddon pounded up the hill in his Terminator armour and skewered the Abominant on Drach'nyen while his Terminator bodyguard took on the cult heroes and Zoanthropes.

Seeing one of his Chapter's most hated foes, Kayvaan Shrike ordered his entire strike force to fire upon Mortarion. Lasers and bolters tore at the Daemon Primarch until, finally, he detonated in a shower of rancid gore. With vengeance in their hearts, the Raven Guard continued their assault on the Death Guard.

Driven by an alien cunning, the Genestealers bounded across the battlefield and launched themselves at Sarran's War Dog. Though the war machine blasted apart several of the aliens, he was quickly dragged down by the vicious creatures. Abaddon stepped in and easily decapitated several of the Genestealers, but then retreated when he realised he was outnumbered. He didn't need this wretched hive-sprawl anyway – he could get weapons elsewhere. And with that, the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor claimed the Stygian Spires.





Mark takes the first turn and charges Typhus past the Central Objective and into the Raven Guard, killing two Reivers with psychic powers and three more with his manreaper. Meanwhile, Mortarion charges into the Eliminators and wipes them out (1), while the Poxwalkers shamle onto the Central Objective.

James G is the second player. Bringing in more Terminators as reinforcements, he charges Abaddon into the Abominant (2) while the Chaos Terminators take on the cult heroes and Zoanthropes (3). His Knights (4-5) wipe out the unit of Poxwalkers nearest the objective, denying Mark the opportunity to try and claim it. Abaddon fires at Typhus to no effect.

James K moves third, but with Mortarion now amongst his troops, he elects to shoot most of his units (6) at the Daemon Primarch. It takes the entire Raven Guard army to bring him down. Shrike and the Reivers charge into and wipe out the Plague Marines (7), while the Invictor Warsuit (8) and Librarian Moradus finally slay Typhus.

Sam takes the final turn, bringing in more Tyranid reinforcements, including his Hive Tyrant (9). He advances his Genestealers up the hill before charging them into the War Dog (10). Seven die to overwatch fire, three when the War Dog explodes, and a further five when Abaddon joins the fight (11). Sam plays Insane Bravery to ensure they don't flee.





# A WARLORD IS CROWNED

As the dust settles over the Stygian Spires, three warlords lie grovelling at the feet of a worthy victor. Here, the warlords talk us through their tactical triumphs, strategic blunders and favourite moments.

**'The Cult of the Four-armed Emperor have been planning their ascendance, and now that time has come!' - Sam**

**'Sam baited me by ramming the Rockgrinder into the Land Raider, and my units retaliated with extreme prejudice.' - Mark**



## THE CULT REIGNS SUPREME!

**Sam:** Yes! My sneaky plan worked. For many years (at least one year) the Cult of the Four-armed Emperor have been planning their ascendance, and now that time has come! I must say that I was pretty pleased by how well the cult heroes and Abarrents weathered all the firepower that was aimed at them while they stood on the Central Objective. I thought they might even survive, until Mark fired his Plagueburst Crawlers at them. Those tanks aren't especially accurate, but when they hit, they hit hard. The Patriarch getting killed by Typhus was also unexpected.

I think my success came down to sticking to my plan. I took the objectives early, accumulated a stack of Secret Schemes, then brought in reinforcements where they could do the most damage. I'm also really glad that Mark flew Mortarion away from the Genestealers. Otherwise, they may not have survived to reach the objective!

## THROUGH STEALTH, SURVIVAL

**James K:** So the Raven Guard survived the battle pretty intact, but sadly my bid to take the Central Objective failed abysmally. I think I know why, too. Right from the start, Sam was able to bring in his Cult Ambushers and surround the objectives. That meant I had nowhere to land my Reivers, especially as they can't deploy within 9" of an enemy model. My plan fell apart before I was even able to start enacting it.

And that meant I had to fight a war of attrition against James and Sam. My Executioners took on James's Knights to great effect, while the rest of my army started taking on Sam's never-ending tide of reinforcements. Things were going well, too, until Mark flew Mortarion over to hamper my advance. I must admit, it was very satisfying killing a Daemon Primarch, but Mark placing him in the middle of my army pretty much sealed my fate in this game.

## THE STENCH OF DEFEAT

**Mark:** Well, my plan kind of worked. Almost. The Poxwalkers took a huge amount of flak throughout the game but incredibly just kept going, eventually wrestling an objective from Sam's hands. The Plagueburst Crawlers did just what I hoped they would do, landing shot after punishing shot on Sam's army as they tried to hold the centre. I think, perhaps, I made my gamble for the middle a little early, but Sam baited me by ramming the Rockgrinder into the Land Raider, and my units retaliated with extreme prejudice.

Typhus did me proud, though – he was the dominant force on the battlefield for a while, and there was very little anyone could do to kill him. Mortarion was particularly nasty, too. As soon as he arrived, he was off killing stuff and being a pest. In hindsight, maybe I should have moved him towards the objective in the final turn, but I knew that whatever I did with him, he'd get shot. A lot!

## THWARTED ONCE MORE

**James G:** I was so close! If I'd had one more turn, Abaddon and his Terminators would have slaughtered everything near that Central Objective and made an unassailable ring of black and gold around it with Abaddon standing triumphant in the middle. As it was, I was just a little late to the party. This was partly due to the fact that I didn't get as many Secret Scheme cards as I would have liked, and I was unable to bring in any reinforcements in the second battle round. Maybe I should have taken fewer Knights at the start and included some faster units like Flesh Hounds or a unit of Chaos Space Marines in a Rhino to wrestle the outlying objectives from Sam's vice-like grip. Ho hum ...

What I would say, though, is well done to Sam. He dominated the centre of the board early on and held onto it remarkably well. His Abarrents bore the brunt of quite a colossal amount of firepower!



## SAM'S HIGHLIGHT OF THE GAME

Oh, there were some great moments in this Battle Report, but there's one that really stands out for me – Doctor Onderghast slaying not one, not two, but three Deathshroud Terminators in a single round of combat! Admittedly, Mark was extremely unlucky to roll a triple 1 for their saves, then fail so many Disgustingly Resilient Rolls, but it seems as though the dice wanted to help create an epic story for my Cult Biophagus. Sadly, Doctor Onderghast was killed by an exploding Land Raider shortly thereafter. I like to think he just caught a bad cold. He'll be back.



## MARK'S HIGHLIGHT OF THE GAME

It's a weird one, but my favourite moment was Typhus being shot in the back by Abaddon. There were loads of units that were closer for Abaddon to shoot, so James had to figure out how to kill them all with his other units before targeting Typhus with the Despoiler. It was like a masterclass in asset management, James carefully picking which weapons on his Knights would shoot at my other units, whittling them down until Typhus was the closest target. And then Abaddon completely failed to even wound him. It was absolutely worth it to see the look on James's face.



## JAMES K'S HIGHLIGHT OF THE GAME

It's got to be killing Mortarion and Typhus in the same turn. Sure, Typhus was wounded, but no one else had managed to kill him despite their best efforts. I was the one that put the nail in his stinky coffin. As for Mortarion, he is seriously tough! He weathered the firepower of a Repulsor Executioner and my entire army – I had to use my second Executioner to kill him. Still, there aren't many people that can say they've killed a Daemon Primarch, even if it did take every bullet available to get the job done. So yeah, killing heretics was my favourite bit.



## JAMES G'S HIGHLIGHT OF THE GAME

It's a tough call. I loved it when my Knight Tyrant gunned down half of Mark's army in a single Shooting phase. He pureed so many Poxwalkers there was just a messy soup on the hill around the objective. However, I think my favourite moment of the game has to be Abaddon holding the centre of the board against a tidal wave of Genestealers. It was a properly cinematic moment with the War Dog firing its guns on overwatch, being dragged down in combat, then exploding, all before Abaddon strode into combat and started slicing and dicing. Proper heroics.





# ECHOES FROM THE WARP



## ROBIN CRUDDACE

**Only in death does duty end, and having crossed the Rubicon Primaris, games developer Robin Cruddace returns to the front lines to once more bring honour to his Chapter. And by front lines we mean a scribe's station in a dimly lit alcove. It's said that his desk is surrounded by the remains of servo-skulls who failed to do his bidding.**

<sup>1</sup> *Chaos Space Marines is also on its second edition, but this codex primarily introduced a host of new datasheets and did not dramatically alter any army special rules.*

<sup>2</sup> *Having emerged from long months of writing the core rulebook I (and my fellow games developers) immediately dived into writing many hundreds, even thousands of datasheets. On the rare occasions when I slept during this time, I ended up dreaming about writing more datasheets; there was simply no respite.*

<sup>3</sup> *See the June 2019 White Dwarf, pg. 54.*

<sup>4</sup> *Contrary to the release dates, Codex: Adepta Sororitas and its rules were actually developed before those in Codex: Space Marines.*

**I**t has been my privilege to work on several Space Marine codexes during my tenure as a games developer, and even though each new edition is the best version of that codex to date, the most recent edition of *Codex: Space Marines* feels extra special. Not only did we get a swathe of new multi-part plastic miniatures replete with new options, as well as entirely brand-new units such as the Invictor Tactical Warsuit and the Impulsor, this is also the only codex whose army rules have received a complete revamp since the eighth edition of Warhammer 40,000 was launched.<sup>1</sup> On top of that, it has been released along with six codex supplements.

As you might suspect, the codex and its supplements were all developed, written and playtested together to ensure that they all worked smoothly with one another, which made for a very large project indeed. In fact, the only projects that are more daunting that spring to mind are writing the rules system for Warhammer

40,000 itself, or writing the original index books that accompanied the launch of this edition.<sup>2</sup> Thankfully, when we came to write the 2019 edition of *Codex: Space Marines*, the bulk of the datasheets had already been written, and we had nearly two years worth of data and feedback on how Space Marines were faring on the tabletop, meaning we could devote all our time into making this version the coolest and best version ever. Whilst we made lots of improvements to all aspects of the book(s), what I want to focus on in this article are some of the new features that were added during development.

## ARMY RULES

In a previous Echoes of the Warp article<sup>3</sup> I talked about how army rules are one of the first things we work on when developing a codex, and it was no different when we looked at this edition of *Codex: Space Marines*. The previous edition had a single army special rule – the tried and tested, and perhaps classic ‘And They Shall Know No Fear’. This did a fine job of representing the indomitable courage of the Adeptus Astartes, and it's hard to imagine Space Marines without this rule. But as army special rules go, it wasn't nearly as exciting as the army special rules presented in some other books, such as *Cult Ambush*, *Canticles of the Ommissiah* or *Acts of Faith*.<sup>4</sup> Top of the to-do list was to rectify that.

First, for context, a quick aside to talk about the themes of the army – these are the key aspects of a faction's background that define how we want them to play on the tabletop. For Space Marines,





## 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. In this month's column, he talks about the new features added to the latest edition of Codex: Space Marines.

it is the core image of a Space Marine itself – elite, armoured, superhuman shock troops with the weaponry and training to enable them to tackle any battlefield situation. I wanted it so that if you went to a gaming table, and your opponent deployed six ten-man units of Intercessors, you'd go, 'uh oh, how am I going to deal with that?'. If the core infantry were rock solid, then, when they were supported by battle tanks, aircraft, transports, Dreadnoughts and of course, their characters, they'd truly be the Emperor's Angels of Death.

To that end, there were two additions to the Space Marine's repertoire of army rules that we added, primarily to increase the combat effectiveness of their core units. The first, Bolter Discipline, boosted their ranged effectiveness and enshrined the iconic image of Space Marines standing their ground and blazing away against insurmountable odds with their holy bolters. As this was the topic of another previous Echoes From the Warp article,<sup>5</sup> I won't elaborate further on this rule other than to say that the final form of the rule as presented in the codex takes account of the feedback we received from you and the rest of the Warhammer 40,000 community.<sup>6</sup> The second new army rule we introduced, Shock Assault, was designed to give them a little extra punch<sup>7</sup> in close combat by giving them an extra attack in the 'first round' of fighting, helping to represent the fact that the Space Marines are rightly feared, aggressive shock troops. Anything left standing after it's been riddled with bolter shells is swiftly (and brutally) put down by the business end of combat blades and chainswords. Together, these new army rules went a long way to bring Space Marines back to the forefront, but the best was still to come.



### COMBAT DOCTRINES

The combat doctrines ability was the third army rule added to the new codex. It was inspired by the Chapter Tactics of the very first Space Marine book I worked on. It played on the idea that all the Chapters described in this book are, to a greater or lesser extent, what we would term 'Codex Chapters'. That is, these Chapters all owe part of their combat style to the military

principles and tenets laid out in the Codex Astartes, and within its hallowed pages there are certain doctrines and prescribed methods of fighting that many Space Marines hold sacred. The combat doctrines army rule tries to reflect that on the table top. It's a flexible rule in that you can use it to adapt to any foe by giving certain weapons in your army a boost whilst a particular doctrine is active.

However, the combat doctrines rule is also purposefully rigid, in that you have to progress through the doctrine sequence in the correct order, starting in Devastator Doctrine before moving to Tactical Doctrine and finally ending up in Assault Doctrine. Not only did this reflect that core aspect of the Adeptus Astartes background, it was also simple (yet effective) enough that we could easily build upon it with the codex supplements we were also working on. Part of the job of these codex supplements was to really do justice to the idiosyncratic combat styles of the First Founding Chapters (and, by extension, their successor Chapters), and a small bespoke bonus to combat doctrines would help to highlight the differences between the Chapters. After all, White Scars clearly want to be better on Assault Doctrines, whilst Ultramarines would clearly excel in Tactical Doctrine, and so on. Best of all, unlike 'And They Shall No Know Fear', which is a passive, reactive rule, combat doctrines is an active rule that gives agency to the Space Marine player; you can choose when to change doctrines to get the best out of the forces you've brought to battle, and you can do so turn by turn.

There is one additional condition that we added to combat doctrines that makes it different from the vast majority of our other army rules: it is designed to only apply to Space Marine armies – that is, armies that only contain Space Marines units. This was done to give players an interesting choice<sup>8</sup> at the list-building stage. As part of the vast armies of the Imperium, Space Marines can ally with a great number of other factions, from the massed ranks of Imperial Guardsmen to the formidable might of Imperial Knights. That versatility helps to counter some of the inherent weaknesses of a Space Marine army (low model count, as befits an elite army, and the lack of a super-heavy 'walker' – do I really need to explain why?). Currently, there was no downside to making up for a Space Marine army's weakness by taking allies, or rather, there was no incentive to not do so. Combat doctrines presents a very

<sup>5</sup> See the February 2019 White Dwarf, pg. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Thanks, as always, to everyone who submitted their feedback.

<sup>7</sup> Hur hur - sorry, too good/bad to resist. No more 'dad jokes' in this article, I promise.

<sup>8</sup> Or dilemma, you decide ...



<sup>9</sup> I say adapt, but when we were updating the Dark Apostle, I knew straight away we wanted something similar for Chaplains. When I say we are working on all our armies all the time, this is the kind of thing I'm talking about; it's just that we as developers have to sit patiently for the next opportunity to put those ideas into print.

<sup>10</sup> The right answer, of course, is to take all of them and play an even bigger game.

<sup>11</sup> Still the best Chapter – just sayin' ...

tangible boost to the damage output of all Space Marine units – but to make use of it you'll have to choose not to take allies, and in doing so you'll then need to make your Space Marine army, with all its strengths and weaknesses, work alone.

### LITANIES OF BATTLE

With the army rules nailed down, we looked at updating a number of our existing datasheets, most notably the Chaplain, who we felt was currently passed over in favour of other characters such as Captains or Lieutenants. For such an iconic character (some might say the very definition of grim darkness), this seemed a shame. Our solution was to 'adapt'<sup>9</sup> the Dark Apostle's Prayers of the Dark Gods mechanic introduced for Chaos Space Marines and create a bespoke set of Litanies of Battle that could be recited to inspire the Chaplain or his battle-brothers to feats of heroism on the battlefield. The goal is always to make the choice of what you want to field in your army as difficult as possible, with 'too many' good options. With the super-versatile Litanies of Battle, the Chaplain rightly retakes his place in the pantheon of Space Marines heroes that its difficult to choose between.<sup>10</sup>

### CHAPTER TACTICS

A small but significant change to this edition of *Codex: Space Marines* was updating the Chapter Tactics and making it so that they would apply to all Space Marine units (in the previous codex, they only applied to Infantry, Bikers and Dreadnoughts). As it happened, most of the

Chapter Tactics were actually the combination of two rules, and this sparked an idea that we took full advantage of for successor Chapters.

One of the coolest new rules features in this codex was a complete 'design your own' successor Chapter Tactic. Up to now, if you had a successor Chapter, you had to use the Chapter Tactic of its First Founding Chapter. It was important to us that you could continue to do that if you so chose, hence 'Inheritors of the Primarch', but otherwise there are dozens of combinations you can invent to really make your Chapter unique. As an example, up to now, my Howling Griffons<sup>11</sup> have been using the Ultramarines' Codex Discipline Chapter Tactic. Whilst this Codex doesn't force me (or any other faithful champion of Mancorra) to change how I'm playing if I don't want to, it does give me the opportunity to create a bespoke Chapter Tactic, and, if I wanted it to still have a bit of an Ultramarines flavour, I could choose to take the Stoic tactic as one of my two choices (that being one half of the Ultramarines Chapter Tactic).

### STRATAGEMS

For many players, the Stratagems in a codex are the first things they look at when devising strategies and tactics to use on the tabletop. In this edition of *Codex: Space Marines*, we wanted to add lots of new Stratagems, but first we wanted to make some space to prevent the sheer number of Stratagems that Space Marines have access to from proliferating out of control. The first Stratagems to go were the Chapter-specific







Stratagems. After all, we had an entire codex supplement to present, for example, Iron Hands Stratagems, so we didn't need to repeat ourselves here, and the space could be used to add new Stratagems that could be used by all Space Marines. We also removed the Stratagems that were dependent on you having several identical models in your army to combine their firepower or abilities somehow. These were originally added to a few codexes at the dawn of eighth edition as a nod to the formations of seventh edition, but because they require you having three of the same vehicle they actually had low utility, and the feedback we received from you tells us that these are the Stratagems that rarely see play.

Having cleared the deck somewhat, we then had plenty of space to add some great new Stratagems. There are a handful of Stratagems to help boost certain units that we felt weren't seeing as much love on the table top as they deserved. Examples include Duty Eternal to give Dreadnoughts a boost and Fury of the First to give Terminators a boost. My favourite of all the newly added Stratagems, however, is Transhuman Physiology. This Stratagem helps Space Marines withstand even the most formidable attacks and still emerge unscathed – truly the stuff of heroes.

## SPECIAL-ISSUE WARGEAR

I've only briefly touched upon the codex supplements, and that's because on the whole, the content of them simply builds on and expands on the rules you get in the main Space Marines codex (it was super cool to give these Chapters the rules space they deserved though, instead of limiting their rich background and fighting styles to a single Stratagem, one Warlord

Trait, etc.). However, one of the unique (and completely new) features in them is Special-issue Wargear. Whilst the relics in both the main codex and the supplements represent venerated one-of-a-kind artefacts, Special-issue Wargear items are not intended to be unique items. Though still incredibly rare, there is undoubtedly more than one suit of artificer armour in the galaxy, and digital weapons adorn the gauntlets of dozens of Space Marines in the Imperium. Many of these items of Special-issue Wargear were inspired from upgrades available to Space Marines in editions past, so it was great to see them come back. We also added a series of cool items of wargear that are unique to each of the First Founding Chapters, and importantly, any of their successor Chapters.



And with that, I'll sign off for this month. As you can see, we've added lots of new features to this Space Marines codex and its supplements. Together they help elevate it to the next level – creating what I hope will be the new benchmark for codexes going forward. I hope you've found the article interesting and are as excited by the new Space Marines codex as we are. Until next time, may your bolter always fire true.

## 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.



# THE REALM OF NURGLE

Fantastical Realms has mutated into Realms of Chaos, a four-part series exploring how you can build and paint your Chaos models to show which Chaos God they are dedicated to. You'd better dig out your wellies, because we're heading for the Garden of Nurgle.



**P**estilence and decay are rife within the Garden of Nurgle, the unholy domain of the Great Corruptor. It is a stagnant, unwholesome realm where sickness and disease thrive and entropy is worshipped. Great forests of putrescent trees stretch as far as the eye can see. Their rotten fruits are home to swarms of bloated flies whose tattered wings barely keep them aloft in the cloying air. Mutated fungi erupt from the suppurating earth, spewing virulent spores into the air that grow into new and deadly maladies. The bodies of the almost-dead lie amid pools of bubbling fluids, their rancid flesh home to poxes and viruses that should have killed them long ago. Metal rusts and wood rots, cloth moulders and disintegrates, flesh sags and sloughs from wasted limbs. Misery and despair are tangible fruits in the Garden of Nurgle, which exists both in the warp of the 41st Millennium and on the edge of reality in the Mortal Realms.

## THE ICON OF DESPAIR

Most followers of Nurgle wear the trefoil icon of the Plague Lord somewhere about their person. Sometimes it takes the form of a brass icon or pendant, but more often than not it appears as a triad of boils or suppurating blisters. Nurgle's favoured servants may even sprout a third eye.



## CHILDREN OF THE PESTILENT LORD

The followers of Nurgle are invariably sickly in appearance, many of them exhibiting bloated stomachs in the image of Grandfather Nurgle himself. Festering flesh sits in flabby rolls and hangs from wasted limbs that belie their true strength. Mutation is rife among Nurgle's favoured children, taking the form of greasy tentacles, boils, pustules and keratinous horns that erupt from arms, chests, backs and heads. A third, baleful eye in the centre of the forehead is a true sign of Nurgle's patronage, though one single cyclopic eye is equally valued.

## CREATING A LEGION OF DECAY

What would an army dedicated to Nurgle look like? Aside from the obvious kits, such as Death Guard and Putrid Blightkings, imagine an army of Traitor Guardsmen that have dedicated themselves to Nurgle, their armour rusted and



pitted. Perhaps you could paint their skin a leprous green or jaundiced yellow. You could create a Cities of Sigmar force that has fallen to worshipping the Plague Lord, their flesh covered in boils and open wounds. Beastmen make excellent servants of Chaos; perhaps an army of them with tentacled limbs or fly heads would be a fitting dedication to Nurgle. The solution could be as simple as applying streaks of rust, pus or other unspeakable fluids to the power armour of a renegade Space Marine. Maybe your army hasn't been tainted by Nurgle at all, but is fighting somewhere that is. Imagine a Sylvaneth army in which all the bases are painted like rotting vegetation due to Nurgle's influence. Perhaps you could paint an Iyanden Aeldari army that is fighting to take control of a maiden world from a daemonic invasion, their bases covered in maggots, fungi and pools of bubbling slime.

As we all know, there are infinite ways to build and paint your models. We hope this article will provide you with some useful inspiration for how to create an army of Nurgle. If you have an idea you would like to share with us, send us some pictures of your own creations to: [team@whitedwarf.co.uk](mailto:team@whitedwarf.co.uk)

## SERVANTS OF THE PLAGUE GOD

Typhus, Host of the Destroyer Hive (page 29 of *Codex: Death Guard*) is a great example of what a servant of Nurgle could look like. Their stomachs are swollen and bloated with vile diseases, while flesh and muscle hang loosely from their limbs. Their feet (or armour) tend to develop into cloven hooves like those of a bull, while the most favoured of Nurgle often develop or exhibit a single horn on their head. The wargear carried by a warrior of Nurgle is invariably in a state of decay, often covered in rust and pitted with corrosion. Foul liquids seep from armour joints. Vignettes like this, found in many Warhammer books, are a great source of inspiration for your colour schemes and conversions.



## THE COLOURS OF NURGLE

The traditional colours of Nurgle are green, yellow and brown, and the lands he has corrupted tend to take on those rotten hues. However, these colours appear in many different forms, from deep algae greens to bilious (even luminous) slime and dark fecal browns to rusty oranges. Decay comes in many wonderful colours.





## PAINTING YOUR ARMIES – PART I

**We all know that Nurgle loves green, brown and yellow, but disease and corruption come in many colours. Here we provide you with a few ideas for painting your putrid legions.**

In the fantasy world of the Age of Sigmar, anything goes when it comes to painting the followers of Nurgle. The majority of Nurgle's minions are painted a rotten green like decaying food or gangrene (don't look it up, kids), but vomituous yellows are also pretty popular. However, disease and decay come in many colours. You could paint your Plaguebearers a fleshy red to show that they're playing host to some hideous blood disease. Perhaps

they have blue-and-black skin because they're suffering from frostbite. Mortal followers tend to wear more armour than Nurgle's daemons, but this is a great opportunity to show off rust, verdigris and other unusual corrosion on your models. Try looking up electrolysis on copper pipes, sulphur corrosion and zinc rot for inspiration. But what fantastical forms of corrosion could also be out there? What does corroded sigmarite look like, we wonder ...

### WHAT AILS YOU?

These Plaguebearers have been painted in a variety of diseased colours. The one on the left is painted in warm, fleshy tones to show that it was once human, while the one next to it features cool skin tones to match its snowy base. The other two are painted in pale greens (one tending towards blue, the other yellow) with details picked out in a strong contrasting red.



### THE LOST AND THE DAMNED

Not all of Nurgle's followers start out as willing supplicants. The Bestigor on the left is painted with jaundiced skin and verdigris on its armour to make it look sickly, while Nurgle's Rot has been used on its base to show the spread of Nurgle's taint. The Warrior of Chaos on the right is painted with mouldy green armour and a layer of rust on all its metalwork. Both are unconverted, painted straight out of the box.



### A GOLDEN DEMON

This impressively disgusting Plaguebearer was converted and painted by Yohan Leduc, who won Gold with it in the Warhammer Age of Sigmar Single Miniature category at Warhammer Fest 2019. The model is a great example of contrast, with the warm skin tones playing off against the cool blue base and spot colours (like its rheumy eye). You can see plenty more fantastic Nurgle models at [golden-demon.com](https://www.golden-demon.com).





## PUTRID BLIGHTKINGS BY ANDREW KING AND ISRAEL GONZALEZ

Andy's blue-armoured Blightking is part of his Maggotkin of Nurgle army, known as the Plaguewrought Brotherhood. They carry infectious water-borne diseases, which is why all their attendant Plaguebearers have cold blue skin as if they have drowned. Israel's Blightking has glowing green skin to show that he is one of the favoured warriors in his Nurgle army.



## DEDICATED TO THE PLAGUE LORD

This Chaos Warshrine is a great example of how a thoughtful colour palette can turn a non-Nurgle model into a dedication to the Plague God. A limited range of greens and yellows was chosen for all the soft areas of the model such as cloth and flesh (note in particular the jaundiced skin of the magister), while all the metalwork was given a wash of Athonian Camoshade to make it look wet and slimy. A few Nurglings were added to truly help identify it with the God of Decay.





# CHAOS WARSHRINE OF NURGLE BY LARBI BENVOUNES

Larbi heavily converted a Chaos Warshrine to show that it has been corrupted by (or possibly dedicated to) the Plague Lord. He started by building the main body of the Warshrine and mounting the front of it on a carpet of diminutive Nurglings. The back of the Warshrine has sprouted legs of its own, which once belonged to Plaguebearers. Pulling the shrine into battle is a Rot Fly taken from the Plague Drones kit, which has been

harnessed to the shrine using the plough from Horticultural Slimux. The Warshrine magister has been replaced with a Putrid Blightking. When painting the model, Larbi almost exclusively used Contrast paints. The bone areas are painted Skeleton Horde, while all the green areas are painted with Plaguebearer Flesh or Militarum Green. The metal shrine is Iron Warriors shaded with Snakebite Leather and Militarum Green.





## THE PLAGUE VICTIMS OF VYRAS BY ISRAEL GONZALEZ

Israel has a small Nurgle army that hails from the Nurgle-tainted land of Vyras in Ghyran, the Realm of Life. The story for his army is that the Putrid Blightkings arrived in the land and bestowed Nurgle's gift upon the local human militia, who then quickly became sick. In desperation, they beseeched the gods for aid. And who answered? None other than Grandfather Nurgle himself.

Israel used the Freeguild Greatswords and Freeguild Guard kits as the basis for his corrupted militia. He sculpted distended bellies, double chins and goitres using Green Stuff and added tentacles to unit champions and banner bearers to make them stand out. He also added a few Nurglings and icons of Nurgle to his models to show where they have been accepted into the plague army.



Israel used red and purple for the city's colours, then added in green for some of the cloth and armour to show where the people of Vyras have been corrupted by Nurgle. He used ruddy skin tones to make his Freeguild Guard still look relatively healthy, though. The end result is a colour scheme that evokes putridness, bruising and coagulated blood. Wonderful.





## PAINTING YOUR ARMIES – PART II

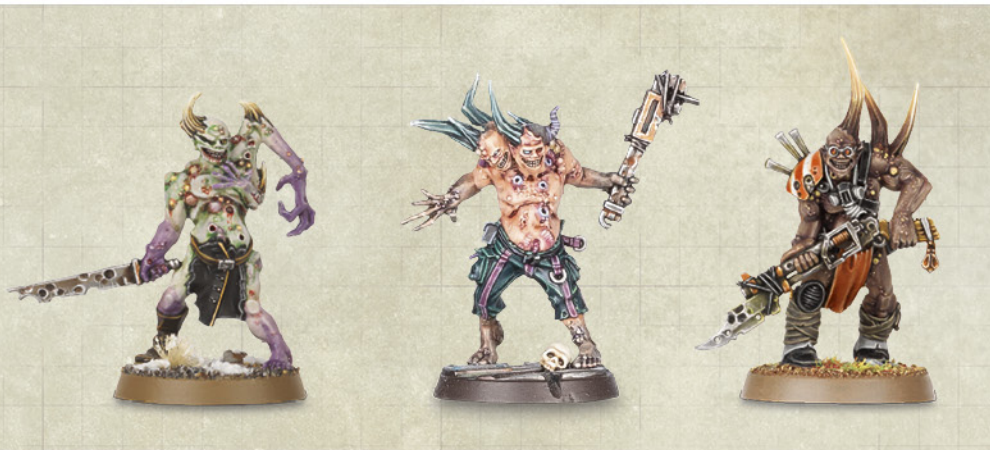
**Nurgle's influence on the armies of the 41st Millennium is just as pronounced as that of the Mortal Realms, giving you loads of great opportunities to create some vile and disgusting paintjobs.**

In the 41st Millennium, Nurgle's followers normally take the form of Plague Marines or Daemons, both of which offer plenty of interesting painting options. The great thing about Daemons is that they really can come in any colour, as shown by Louis Aguilar's Daemons of Nurgle opposite. Plague Marines also offer up a wide range of painting options. You could paint them in their original Legion colours of white and green, or perhaps their

modern-day green and brass is more appealing. But the vectoriums of the Death Guard wear many colours, from grey and green to black and bare steel. All make great canvases for diseases, rot and corrosion. You could even paint some regular Chaos Space Marines to show that they've been tainted by Nurgle – the Cleaved and the Purge (both shown below) are two such warbands who are suspected of having ties to the Master of Pestilence.

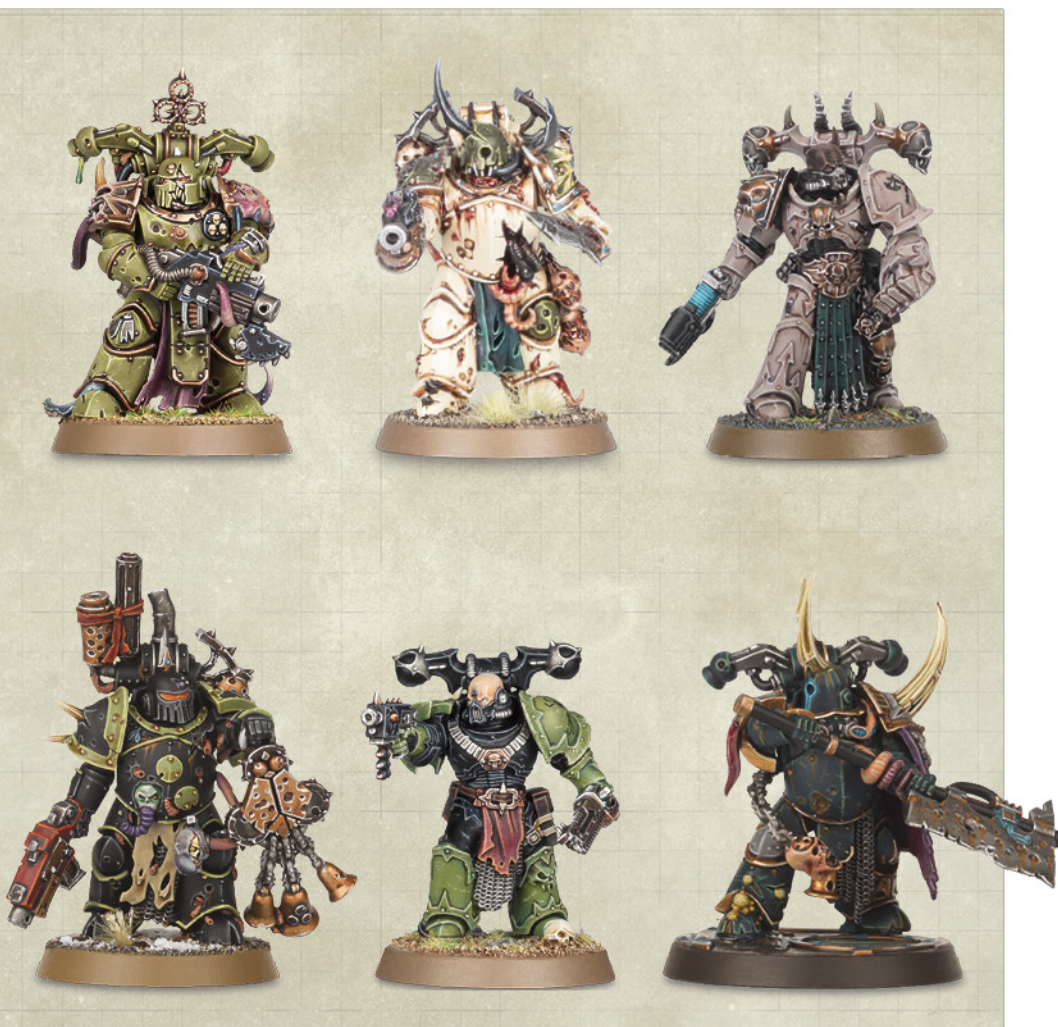
### SLOW DECAY

Poxwalkers were once human, so these three have been painted with vaguely natural skin tones, then their mutations (and extremities in the case of the model on the left of the group) have been picked out in more unnatural colours. Contrast paints are ideal for Poxwalkers, giving you the opportunity for lots of vibrant diseases.



### HERETIC ASTARTES

As with the models shown earlier, contrast is the key to painting a great-looking Plague Marine. The traditional colour scheme of green and brass leaves plenty of scope for fleshy buboes and tentacles, while the white of the original Legion is the perfect canvas for streaks of oil and rust. Darker colour schemes such as those of the Gloomling Lords (bottom left) and the Fecund Ones (bottom right) rely on bright spot colours to make them stand out – red details and rust in the first example and a glowing blue eye socket in the second. Meanwhile, the background of the Cleaved (top right) tells of oil leaking from their armour, which has been painted on with streaks of Mournfang Brown. The Purge (bottom centre) have had chips and scuffs applied to their armour to show where it is slowly corroding.





## THE SUFFOCATING HOST

Louis Aguilar painted these Nurgle Daemons after being inspired by a Warhammer TV painting video for decaying Plaguebearer skin. The idea was to create a force of Nurgle Daemons that looked like they were carrying some kind of suffocating disease, hence their unhealthy shade of purple. Louis undercoated all of his models with Corax White, then applied a 4:1 wash of Lahmian Medium and Fenrisian Grey. He then followed

that with a second wash of 4:1 Lahmian Medium and Druchii Violet. Next, he applied pure Druchii Violet to the deepest recesses, and then a drybrush of Grey Seer over all the skin. The gaping wounds were painted with Flesh Tearers Red, with 'Ardcoat applied in some places to make it look wet and fresh, and Nurgle's Rot to make it look like it was covered in rancid pus and slime.

Louis loves gaming, which is one of the main reasons why he came up with such a quick colour scheme for his models. Most of the details are painted purely with Contrast paints, which work perfectly over the white undercoat. The maggots on Rotigus, for example, are just a couple of layers of Plaguebearer Flesh applied straight over the undercoat, while the horns are Skeleton Horde highlighted with Screaming Skull. The tentacles are two coats of Magos Purple highlighted with Pink Horror.

Louis used the same techniques for painting his Plaguebearers, but he also gave them rusty plagueswords. To paint them he applied a basecoat of Leadbelcher, followed by a wash of Nuln Oil and a patchy layer of watered-down Mournfang Brown to make the blades look rusty.





**DAEMON PRINCE OF NURGLE**  
**BY TOM MOORE**

Tom converted the plastic Daemon Prince by swapping its head for that of a Rot Fly. He also added a couple of scampering Nurglings to the model and painted them bright pink to make them stand out from the bone-and-green colour scheme of the rest of the model. Tom used orange as the unifying colour of corruption on his Daemon Prince, applying it to the model's lower legs and fingers, around its mouth and as rust on all the steel-coloured metalwork.


**GREAT UNCLEAN ONE BY FRANK HAAS**

Frank converted this disturbing Greater Daemon using the body of a Great Unclean One and the tentacle head (if you can call it a head at all) from a Mutalith Vortex Beast. His vision was to create a Greater Daemon that looked truly grotesque and terrifying, rather than jovial like most great Unclean Ones. Frank made the base from a sheet of thick cork, which he painted to look cracked and parched as if the Great Unclean One has leeches the life out of it.





## DEATH GUARD HELBRUTE BY TOM MOORE

Tom converted a plastic Helbrute by mounting an icon of Nurgle on its chest that he took from the Chaos Rhino kit. He also added a capering Nurgling (you get loads spare in the Nurgling set) to the base and a death's head hanging from the torso. The extra pustules and boils were sculpted using Green Stuff. Tom painted his Helbrute in the colours of the Pallid Hand and applied plenty of rust to its armour to represent the Ferric Blight that infects the vectorium's war machines.



## TAINTED ARMIGER BY MARTYN CASHMORE

Martyn used the legs from a Knight Armiger and the body of a Foetid Bloat-drone to create this corrupted Knight. He mounted the legs where the turbines normally sit and moved the plague spitters up to sit behind the carapace. Martyn also used a few Rot Fly limbs and a pair of wings to show how the Knight is slowly metamorphosing. The rust on the legs was achieved using Rhinox Hide and Troll Slayer Orange stippled over Leadbelcher and washed with Agrax Earthshade.





## BASING YOUR ARMIES

**Bases are an important part of any Warhammer miniature. Not only do they keep your models standing, they also help to tie them to the worlds they fight over. Here are a few Nurgle-flavoured examples.**

As we've already discussed, Nurgle takes great delight in corrupting the worlds and realms his warriors fight over. In the Mortal Realms, Ghyran – the Realm of Life – bears the brunt of Nurgle's unwanted attention, so we've provided a stage-by-stage guide showing you how you can make tainted woodland bases for your models, be they servants

of the Plague Lord or the unfortunate people who have to fight them. In the 41st Millennium, metal is more prevalent, so we've created a rusty Sector Mechanicus base that can be used alongside any army. We even took one of the lethal hexes from Warhammer Underworlds to create a truly unique base, as shown opposite.

### FOETID TAR PITS

1



Tear off small chunks of a cork mat (available at most hobby shops) and stick to the base with PVA glue.

2



Roll up some small balls of Green Stuff to make the bubbles in the tar. Wait for them to set ...

3



... then carefully cut them in half to create half a sphere. Glue them to the base using PVA glue.

4



Spray the whole base using Zandri Dust (or whatever colour you want the rocks to be).

5



Wash the rocks with a heavy coat of Agrax Earthshade to help provide definition to the recesses.

6



Drybrush a lighter colour onto the rocks. We used Screaming Skull, as it's the natural highlight to Zandri Dust.

7



Paint all of the tar and the bubbles with Black Templar. This may require two coats to get a solid result.

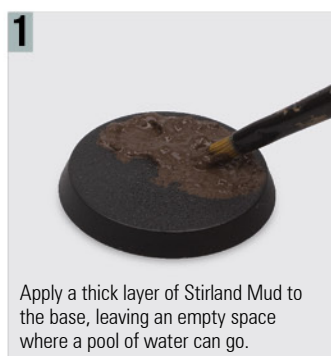
8



Paint all of the tar and the bubbles with a layer of Nurgle's Rot. Et voilà – a foetid tar pit worthy of the Plague Lord.

### THE ROTTING FORESTS OF GHYRAN

1



Apply a thick layer of Stirland Mud to the base, leaving an empty space where a pool of water can go.

2



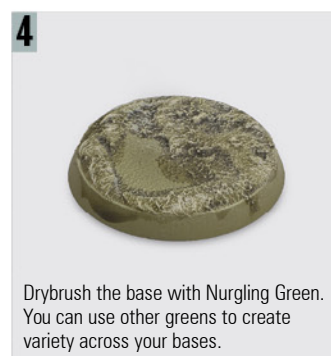
Undercoat the whole base a suitably putrid colour. Death Guard Green spray is ideal for this.

3



Wash the base with Athonian Camoshade to make it look like the vegetation is decomposing.

4



Drybrush the base with Nurgling Green. You can use other greens to create variety across your bases.

5



Apply a thick layer of Wyldwood to the empty pool. Once dry, apply a layer of 'Ardcoat to help simulate depth.

6



Spray a selection of Barbed Bracken with Wraithbone spray. We find it easiest to undercoat it on the frame.

7



Paint the bracken with Contrast paints. We used Plaguebearer Flesh and Aggaros Dunes.

8



Use Fine Detail Cutters to remove the bracken from the frame, then glue them to the base with Super Glue.



## THE RUSTING HIVES OF NEBBUS



### CORRUPTED HERO BASES

A layer of Stirland Mud was used to turn the rubble on this base into fungal growths. The trench wall was painted with a range of browns and oranges before a heavy application of Typhus Corrosion was used to build up texture at the bottom. The walls were then washed with Biel-Tan Green to represent rising mould.



## THE POOL OF FOULNESS





# PUTRID PAINTING

Following on from *Realms of Chaos: Nurgle*, our painter James came up with a stage-by-stage painting guide for a Putrid Blightking. Here he combines Contrast paints with classic colours to create a range of sickly effects. Squeamish painters need read no further.

## PAINTING PUTRID BLIGHTKINGS

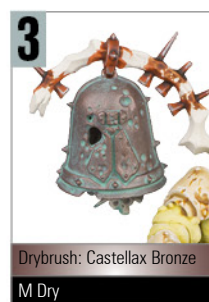
**James:** For this painting guide, I combined several different painting styles to create a unit of Putrid Blightkings. I undercoated all of the models with Wraithbone spray, then, for the most part, basecoated them with Contrast paints. These fluid, high-pigment paints work especially well on Nurgle miniatures where they can run into all the open sores and wounds and

accentuate all the buboes and diseases. They're also pretty vibrant, which means you can start with a light undercoat, apply a light Contrast paint, then use Shades or Contrast paints to shade the model, which is exactly what I've done with the bruised skin below. It may look like a lot of stages, but they're all really quick to apply. Just be sure to give it time to dry between steps!

### BRUISED SKIN



### CORRODED BELL



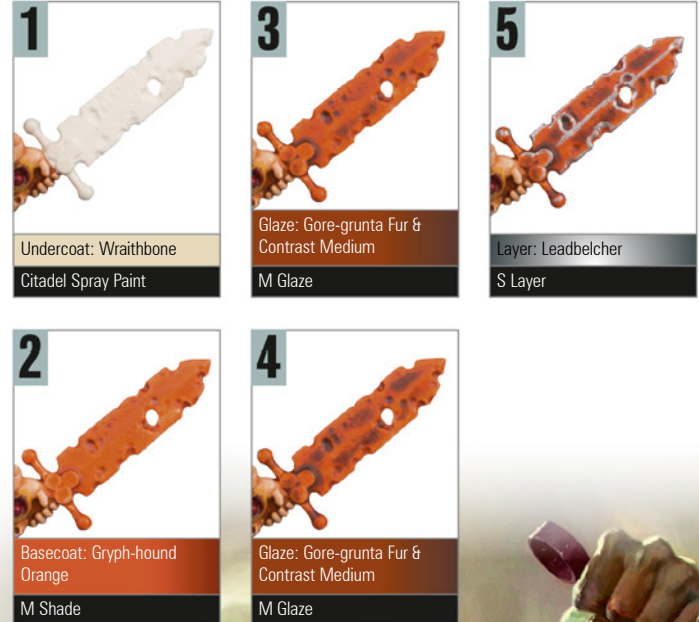


## TOP TIP: CORROSION

I tried out two different types of metal corrosion on these models. The first uses a basecoat of Castellax Bronze followed by a wash of Nihilakh Oxide, then a couple of drybrushes using metallic paints to accentuate the raised areas. This is important because verdigris and rust tend to accumulate in recesses rather than on raised edges where

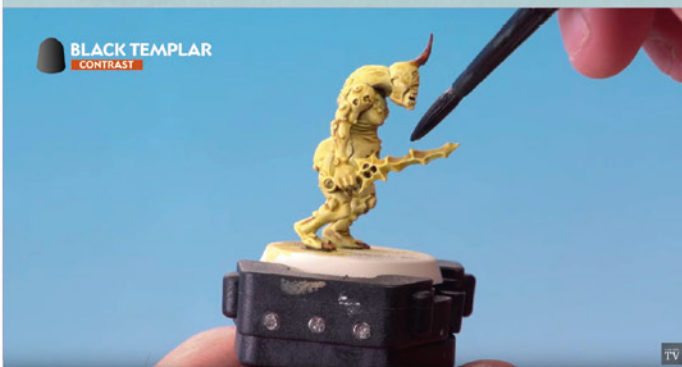
it can be scuffed or scraped off easily. For the second method, I created the rusty look using Contrast paints, then applied a layer of Leadbelcher to the edges of the blade to show where it is still sharp. I used two consecutive glazes of Gore-grunta Fur (rather than one thick layer) to help build up the depth of the rust in the most corroded areas.

## RUST



## ROT YOU LOOKIN' AT?

Not set on putrid yellow skin and mouldy green armour for your Nurgle models? Then look no further than our Warhammer TV YouTube page, where you'll find loads of stage-by-stage guides on how to paint Nurgle models. There's a video for painting Putrid Blightkings in dark green armour and another for rotten green skin. There are videos for swampy bases, plague clouds and Rot Fly wings, not to mention tentacles, plagueswords and rusted metal. There's even one for a Nurgle-tainted gameboard.





**James:** One of the important things to consider with Nurgle models is contrast. That's contrast the technique (with a little 'c'), as opposed to Contrast paints. When painting miniatures, contrast is often used to describe the difference between two areas, such as soft skin and hard armour, or light and dark colours. Nurgle models are an excellent study in contrast, with plenty of mutations, sickly diseases, festering wounds and rusted armour, and they're covered in textures that can just as easily be painted in light or dark colours.

On the Putrid Blightking below, I painted the model's skin with Darkoath Flesh, the dark tones contrasting well with the bone-coloured armour. A paler skin tone would struggle to stand out against it and may even make the model look confusing. On the model at the bottom of the next page, I swapped the light and dark colours around, giving the

model a lighter skin tone and darker armour. There's also a contrast in the style of painting on these areas, too. Most of the skin tones are painted with washes and solid layers to give the flesh a soft, supple appearance. The armour, on the other hand, uses thin edge highlights to emphasise the fact that it is solid and has a hard edge.

### TOP TIP: ADVANCED CONTRAST

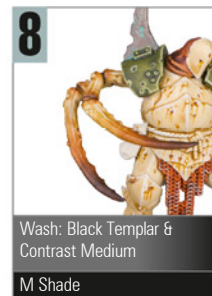
You can take contrasts a step further by using warm and cool colours to help pick out areas on your models. The Putrid Blightking on the bottom of the next page has a warm, ruddy skin tone, but his green armour has cool blue tones in it. I also used Nihilakh Oxide to represent verdigris, which gives the brass areas of the model a cooler tone compared to the warm orange rust on the model's blade. The verdigris also helps draw your attention to the symbol of Nurgle on the model's torso.



### BONE ARMOUR



### HORNS





## FINISHING TOUCHES

The stage-by-stage guides over the last few pages show you how to paint the majority of the details on your Putrid Blightkings. However, there were a few little details such as leather straps and wood that we didn't quite have space for. So, out of a sense of completeness, here they are.

### PALLID SKIN

Undercoat: Wraithbone

Citadel Spray Paint

Basecoat: Guilliman Flesh

M Shade

Layer: Flayed One Flesh

M Layer

### BLACK LEATHER

Basecoat: Abaddon Black

Citadel Spray Paint

Layer: Stormvermin Fur

S Layer

Layer: Administratum Grey

XS Artificer Layer

### ROTTEN WOOD

Undercoat: Wraithbone

Citadel Spray Paint

Basecoat: Wyldwood

M Glaze

Layer: Baneblade Brown

S Layer

Layer: Screaming Skull

XS Artificer Layer



## GREEN ARMOUR



Basecoat: Creed Camo

M Shade



Layer: Screaming Skull

XS Artificer Layer



Undercoat: Wraithbone

Citadel Spray Paint



Layer: Ulthuan Grey

S Layer



Wash: Gore-grunta Fur & Contrast Medium

M Glaze

## WHY NOT ...

... try out these painting guides on other Nurgle models such as Plaguebearers, Beasts of Chaos and Death Guard? The bone armour stages opposite would be perfect for painting the Death Guard Vectorum of the Pallid Hand.



Layer: Nurgling Green

S Layer



Wash: Gore-grunta Fur & Contrast Medium

M Glaze



Basecoat: Gryph-charger Grey

M Shade



Layer: White Scar

XS Artificer Layer





# GLORY POINTS



## JOHN BRACKEN

John Bracken is a games developer in the Boxed Games team and writes rules and articles for Warhammer Underworlds and Warhammer Quest. This month, he has wrested control of Glory Points from Dave's shadeglass-riddled hands to talk about an oft-used phrase in the gaming community. That's right, John's tackling the 'meta' of Warhammer Underworlds.

**T**oday I want to discuss a term bandied around a lot in gaming circles all over the world, and how it applies to Warhammer Underworlds. That term is the 'meta'. It is an incredibly valuable tool both for Dave Sanders and me in our role as games developers, as well as for all you players out there that love playing Warhammer Underworlds.

## WHAT IS THE META?

When you play Warhammer Underworlds, you are pitting yourself against other players who are universally trying to do the same thing as you: win (see 'Is It All About Winning?' below for some context to this broad statement!). This means, logically, that they will take what they think are the best warbands and decks available to maximise their chances of victory. The most popular of these choices (warbands and cards combined) form what is known as the 'metagame', or 'the game within the game'. This is commonly shortened to the 'meta'. It even becomes a

## IS IT ALL ABOUT WINNING?

To answer the question in the title, no, it certainly is not all about winning. Many players who enjoy Warhammer Underworlds aren't too concerned with the actual result – they are simply participating in a fun game with like-minded people. Regardless, it is not the nature of Warhammer Underworlds to play a game deliberately to lose, or draw. Even the most relaxed player in the world will try to make decisions to score glory points, because that is what the game is about. Scoring objectives and taking enemy fighters out of action is satisfying and exciting, and in my own personal opinion, casual players play to win just like anyone else – they simply don't take the process of winning, or themselves, as seriously. They are more concerned with the experience than the result, but it doesn't mean they don't want to win a game or two! It's not wrong to want to win – when things fall apart is when a player chooses to win regardless of the cost and sacrifices everything to the pyre of victory, which is typically an unpopular choice.

common descriptor; a 'meta choice', 'meta warband' or a 'very meta card' are all terms that broadly mean 'quite popular'.

## GLOBAL AND LOCAL METAS

Something important to bear in mind is that there is no single metagame. There are hundreds of metas, one for each play group. These are known as local metas. In one area, where the Grymwatch consistently win, players will choose cards and warbands to deal with them. In another area, where Mollog's Mob rules supreme, the choices will look quite different, even if it is only to the tune of a few cards here and there.

An exciting juncture for all concerned is when members from both of those play groups attend the same regional tournament. All of a sudden, their perception of what a great deck or warband is might radically change, which in turn changes what they play back in their local area, which in turn changes what everyone uses, and so the cycle of the meta evolves to its next stage.

This means that when players attend larger tournaments (see last month's Glory Points article to see how to prepare for them), the accumulated knowledge of all the local metas combine to form a 'global meta'. Some cards and warbands are so popular that they are used in nearly every play group across the world. It's fantastic and exciting to watch players attempt to counter those popular choices by 'reading the meta'.

## READING THE META

Understanding how to 'read the meta' and how to use the information gleaned from it forms a core component of successful play. Here I'll discuss reading the meta and why it is useful to players who enjoy Warhammer Underworlds.





Glory Points is our column all about Warhammer Underworlds: Beastgrave. Curated by games developer Dave Sanders, it delves into the development of the game, plus rules tactics and gameplay. But Dave's not here – he's been usurped once again by John Bracken!



Reading the meta is a term used worldwide by Warhammer Underworlds gamers to describe the process of trying to determine what warbands, decks and cards will be popular at their next play session so that they can take a warband and deck that reliably counters and therefore beats those choices. This essentially becomes a game in and of itself, with its own rules and so forth. This is another source of the term metagame – essentially, it's this game within the game. It's also a huge topic, and it consists of far more detail than I can possibly go into in a single article, but the general idea of what it is and how I would approach it for the first time is what follows here.

I boil the basics of reading the meta down to finding the answers to four questions:

1. What's the latest release?
2. What was popular before?
3. What are people playing right now?
4. What 'counters' all of the above?

#### 1. WHAT'S THE LATEST RELEASE?

If something is new, it's likely going to be popular. Not just because of the 'new and shiny' effect that

we all know so well, but because the expansions themselves change the meta, sometimes dramatically. It's important to look at these new cards and warbands and make an objective decision about which cards you think will see play. The most obvious cards to watch out for are cards that deal damage directly to fighters and cards that score glory points easily.

#### 2. WHAT WAS POPULAR BEFORE?

'If it ain't broke, don't fix it' is a phrase often bandied around the world today, and it's true in Warhammer Underworlds as well. A less complex part of reading the meta, it is as simple as looking at the available data, either from personal experience or information gained from the online community, and seeing which warbands were popular up until the release of a new expansion or season. If I'm trying to guess what will be popular in October's upcoming Grand Clash (which, when you read this, will have already happened – time travel is a brain burster for sure), I would assume that the following warbands will be among those out and about in full force: Stormsire's Cursebreakers, Mollog's Mob and Ylthari's Guardians.

**Above:** Stormsire's Cursebreakers introduced magic to Warhammer Underworlds and changed the meta of the game forever. They are a popular choice at tournaments, but what clever plans have people been devising to take them down a peg or two?



Over the last season, each of these warbands has performed consistently well, or otherwise they are simply difficult to easily counter. This does not mean that a tournament will exclusively have these warbands in it, but you should expect to play at least one of them, at least once, using what is close to the most popular decks at the time.

In addition, there will be no less than three new warbands available from Beastgrave, and I would expect to see a diverse selection of them being used, with a heavy lean towards the Grymwatch, as they will be the most recent release (see the first point, preceding!).

So now we have an idea of what is new and might work well, plus what is tried and tested. The next step is figuring out what's being tested right now in the world today.

**Below:** Ylthari's Guardians have proven to be tough opponents for many Underworlds players. But what will happen when they come up against one of the new warbands such as Rippa's Snarlfangs? Will the Sylvaneth prevail, or will they struggle against this new threat?

### 3. WHAT ARE PEOPLE PLAYING RIGHT NOW?

There are many ways to research this, and most of the information is available online. It's up to you how you gather your data, but the most simple and effective way is to find your local store tournament(s) and take part! Alternatively, you can simply think back to the last thing your play group used. As an aside, by playing in smaller, local tournaments you can get a good read on what the most popular choices of the day are, and you can see which warbands are the rising stars in

response to recent changes in the meta based on the last big tournament. Pay special attention to the deck and warband of the winner. They might know something you don't.

For example, Mollog's Mob was the top warband at the Grand Clash in July. Despite the fact that it was done with quite a unique deck build, it means the popularity of that warband will likely rise further in the coming months. In addition, the deck build Neil Snowball-Hill used to pilot Mollog's Mob to victory is almost guaranteed to spawn clones as other people try out this fun and powerful build. This in turn means players who wish to do well with a different warband at a large tournament now have little choice but to make plans to ensure they can deal with the big smelly troggoth. Preventing your opponent from achieving their game plan is known as 'countering', and we will talk about it next.

### 4. WHAT 'COUNTERS' ALL OF THE ABOVE?

The above question is the reason to try to read the meta in the first place. By reading the meta successfully, you can make an informed choice about cards and warbands that have the best chance of doing well against those predicted threats. For example, Mollog, being something of a one-troggoth army, is punished by cards that reduce the power or mobility of a single fighter. Examples include Abasoth's Withering,







Maddening Cackle, Jealous Hex, Enfeeble, Binding Wind or Transfixing Stare. All of these cards have their uses against a warband with large numbers, but against Mollog they have a far more pronounced impact.

Here's an example combination Skaeth's Wild Hunt can use to deal with Mollog. In your first round, you can run up to Mollog, give him two move tokens using the cards shown above, and then the poor troggoth is stuck in place, unable to act for an entire round! This leaves you free to run past him and hunt down his minions or pepper the big guy with arrows, spells and hunting lances to try and bring him down before he can get out of his predicament. Alternatively, you can wait for him to move, then drop one move token on him,

leaving one spare for the second round. Suddenly he becomes a lot less scary, and your ability to win the game increases dramatically. Just don't stand too near ...

This is a fine example of picking cards to deal with a specific match that you are worried about losing without crippling your overall game plan. In the preceding example, you would be fairly confident of a match against a player using Mollog, because you have cards you know will help deal with the big galoot. And against everyone else, preventing enemy fighters from moving is a fine method of control, so the cards should always find a way to be useful no matter your opponent.

Now that you understand the basics of countering, all that remains is to pick your warband, finalise your deck and start practicing! If you are so inclined, you could read the previous issue's Glory Points article for lots of information on how you might go about making those choices.

## THE END PHASE

That's all I have space for when it comes to the meta of Warhammer Underworlds. I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. You may have even found something useful in here, too. Good hunting!

**Above:** Even the toughest fighters can fall foul to dirty tricks, and Mollog is no exception. A well timed gambit or spell can render him virtually useless for an entire round. Just remember that in subsequent rounds, he will be able to move normally. And he'll probably be pretty grumpy, to boot!

## TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS

As ever, do write in if you have any suggestions or something in particular that you'd like to read about to:

[whunderworlds@gwplc.com](mailto:whunderworlds@gwplc.com)

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



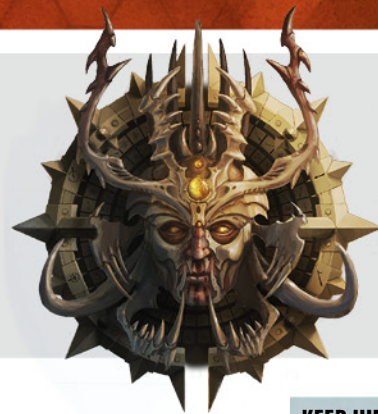


# PATH TO VICTORY

In the second article of its kind, Dave Sanders - unfortunately now ensnared in Beastgrave with no hope of salvation - presents an in-depth tactical guide to two more of the warbands from Warhammer Underworlds: Beastgrave.







**W**e're now well into the Beastgrave season, and it's been fantastic to see so many of you getting to grips with this version of Warhammer Underworlds and making each warband your own. The card pool that you're using for your Championship decks is more diverse than ever (you'll have close to 500 cards to choose from between your warband's cards and the universal cards from Nightvault and Beastgrave), and I'll be giving you some tips for making the most of them with the most recent warbands to take to the caverns of Beastgrave. I refer of course to the cunning Hrothgorn's Mantrappers and the pestilent Wurm spat.

## HROTHGORN'S MANTRAPPERS

Numbering six fighters (but five models, we'll get to that) Hrothgorn's Mantrappers are a unique warband with a mix of hard-hitting Hunters and sneaky, tricky Gnoblar. To get the most out of this warband, you'll need to learn the strengths of each fighter and the part they play in your strategy. Let's start with a look at the fighters.

### HROTHGORN MANTRAPPER

Without a doubt the star of the show, Hrothgorn is a mighty ogor Hunter and the leader of this warband. He's also the second biggest fighter in Warhammer Underworlds, with only Mollog the Mighty starting the game with a higher Wounds characteristic. However, while Mollog fights like a relentless berserker, Hrothgorn is far more cunning and in some ways more reserved.

Hrothgorn has an enviable set of characteristics, starting with a Move of 4 and 6 Wounds, as well as two fearsome Attack actions: his Hunting Knife with a mighty 2 ⚔ and 3 Damage, and his Trap Launcher, which is Range 3, 2 ✂ and 2 Damage. His Trap Launcher also has a nifty reaction that, if the Attack action succeeds, allows Hrothgorn to haul his luckless target towards him. These Attack actions both gain 1 Dice when Hrothgorn becomes Inspired, making them very reliable.

Hrothgorn also makes each enemy fighter a Quarry. This means that cards that benefit Hunters and penalise Quarries are great choices for this warband's decks, and you should bear this in mind when choosing which cards you want

to support Hrothgorn. I'm looking at you, Hunter's Reflexes (1) and Trophy Belt (2).

To make the most of Hrothgorn, you must keep in mind that, unlike Mollog, he is subject to the normal rules for Move and Charge tokens – in most cases, he'll only be able to Move or Charge once in each round, and if he makes a Charge action, he won't be doing much for the rest of the round! You'll want to use his Trap Launcher so that you can get at least a couple of Attack actions out of him each round, and we'll see when we look at the other fighters in the warband that you have a number of tools at your disposal to help you make this happen. You'll also want to bolster his survivability. He's tough, but if an entire warband is bent on his destruction (which is quite likely), you'll want to bring cards like Toughened Hide (3) and Terrifying Aura (4) to keep him going as long as possible.

### THRAFNIR

The second-best fighter in your warband is the ferocious frost sabre, Thrafnir. While the animal fighters in some warbands are really just supporting characters, Thrafnir is a different beast altogether. Thrafnir is a Hunter with a Move of 5, 2 ⚔ and 3 Wounds, and a Range 1, 3 ✂ and 2 Damage Attack action. This makes the frost sabre a more-than-capable fighter, tough enough to take a hit, dangerous enough to pose a threat to most fighters in the game and fast enough to get wherever you need it. Thrafnir's only downside, and it's a relatively minor one given its

### KEEP HIM WELL FED!

Hrothgorn is the key to getting your warband Inspired – every fighter in your warband becomes Inspired when an enemy fighter is taken out of action adjacent to Hrothgorn (presumably as the ogor tucks in and at least temporarily sates his awesome hunger). Note that it doesn't matter how the fighter is taken out of action, so consider how you can use lethal hexes and damage-dealing gambits to your advantage.

Your fighters receive a significant boost when they are Inspired, which helps to augment the roles in the group's strategy. While for some warbands Inspiration can be seen as secondary to your game plan, I'd say with Hrothgorn's Mantrappers you should always be trying to hit this Inspire condition as quickly as possible!



1



2



3



4





characteristics, is that it cannot have Attack action upgrades, and it cannot hold objectives.

While your focus will naturally be on Hrothgorn, it's likely that the same is true for your opponent. This can lead to opportunities to strike with Thrafnir when your opponent isn't expecting it, picking off a weak fighter or softening up one for Hrothgorn's killing blow. Against slower fighters, make the most of Thrafnir's Move 5 by setting up the frost sabre somewhere where it has a choice of targets but can't itself be charged in the first activation.

Attack action upgrades might not be on the cards for Thrafnir, but there are plenty of other excellent options available. Hunting Beast (5) is an extremely useful upgrade, giving you the ability to reposition either Thrafnir or its target after an Attack action – perfect for bringing a weakened fighter within range of Hrothgorn. Hunting Companion (6) is also a good choice with Thrafnir's 3 attack dice, giving the frost sabre a decent chance of dealing 1 extra point of damage when it makes an Attack action.

There are plenty of gambits that help you get the most out of Thrafnir as well. Carnivore's Senses (7) is a good example, granting temporary access to Ensnare. Use this gambit before Thrafnir's Charge action to put the fear into all fighters with a Defence characteristic and an aversion to being horribly mauled by a giant, predatory feline.

## QUIV

We turn now to the Gnoblar of the warband. These diminutive fighters (if you can even call them that) do not pack much of a punch by themselves, but each has a role to fulfil if you want to get the most out of this warband.

First up, we have Quiv. He has a Move of 3, 1 Defence and 2 Wounds, and his Range 1 Attack action hits with 2 ✕ for 1 Damage. Simply put, he's not going to get a lot done by himself. But that's not his job. He's there to make sure that Hrothgorn doesn't run out of ammo, and to that end he comes with a neat ability that gives you a re-roll for the Trap Launcher Attack action as long as Quiv is adjacent to the ogor. When you look at

it like that, he's more like a walking, talking – and in extreme cases edible – Archer's Focus (8).

In most cases, you're going to want to keep Quiv next to Hrothgorn to make the most of this ability, and just hope that no one pays him much attention. If it does look like he might be in trouble, you could give him the Desperate Parry (9) upgrade, giving him a chance of avoiding the most devastating Attack action without so much as a scratch.

## LUGGIT AND THWAK

This dynamic duo of Gnoblar are far more gung-ho than Quiv, and they actually want to get stuck in. Acting as the beaters of this hunting party, their job is to flush out prey for Hrothgorn. They are represented by a single fighter card (and a single miniature); Thwak rides into battle astride Luggit's shoulders!

Their characteristics are slightly beefier than Quiv's as a result, with a Wounds characteristic of 3 and a 2 ⚔ Attack action (at least, before they've taken too much damage). They're still a bit let down by the Attack action's 1 Damage, but again they have a trick up their sleeves; if there are fewer successes in the attack roll than in the defence roll, you get to push the target one hex. Again, this is a very useful tool when looking to position enemy fighters perfectly for Hrothgorn's attacks, and it can make it worth making an Attack action even when there's only a very slim chance of success!

## BUSHWAKKA

Finally we have Bushwakka, who sneaks around setting horrible giant mantraps. This fighter has the worst set of characteristics in the warband, but a pretty great ability. As a reaction after any activation, Bushwakka can set up a trap that effectively turns a hex into an extra-lethal lethal hex. Any fighter other than Bushwakka who enters that hex is dealt 2 damage!

I'm sure you can see where I'm going with this. Between Hrothgorn's Trap Launcher, Luggit and Thwak's Beatin' Club and Thrafnir's Hunting Beast upgrade, you have a number of ways to push enemy fighters around the battlefield – and to keep doing that until something awful happens to





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them! The trick is to find the best positions for Hrothgorn and Bushwakka so that you can make this happen, and this will depend on your opponent and what you think they're up to. The More Traps (10) upgrade can really help you with dealing as much damage as possible with your many push abilities, as you flip an objective token next to Bushwakka to gain an extra lethal hex. You could even bring Hostile Ground (11) to double down on this nastiness!

It's usually best to use Bushwakka's reaction after your opponent's activation. That way, they will have less of an opportunity to respond to it. You can of course use the ability simply to make one hex a no-go area, as there aren't many fighters in the game that can afford to take the 2 damage to get past it.

### GNOBLAR TACTICS

The key thing is not to overlook these fighters. Though they are small, each has their uses, and some good deck-building decisions can go a long way towards ensuring that they're pulling their weight.

There are some cards that can certainly help you get the most out of your Gnoblar. Gnoblar Scramble (12) lets you push each friendly Gnoblar up to two hexes, which is one of the best land grabs in the game. You can use this card to hold objective tokens, to get a supporting fighter for a crucial Attack action, to position Quiv and Bushwakka as advantageously as possible, or do all of these at once! It's a really useful card.

There are a number of Attack action upgrades that are worth considering as well. Any of the Gnoblar will look considerably more menacing when armed with an Amberbone Spear (13) or a Larval Lance (14), and they may even bag you a cheeky kill in a pinch. I like to get a Range 2 Attack action on my fighters when I can, and these are perfect examples.

### WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Hrothgorn's Mantrappers favour aggro – that is, planning to decimate or eliminate the other warband – more than any other strategy.

## PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

Push cards are a key part of this warband's arsenal, and you should make sure that you bring plenty if you're hoping for a successful hunt. I've mentioned Gnoblar Scramble and Hunter's Reflexes already, which are two of the best, but there are many other contenders. Nightmare in the Shadows is an extremely versatile card, and you're certain to find a use for it whenever it is in your hand, whether you're pulling a fighter into range of the Trap Launcher or shoving someone onto Bushwakka's trap. I like Blindside for its ability to pull in support during an Attack action (either as the target or the attacker) at the same time as pushing a friendly fighter two hexes. It's more situational, but as your fighters advance to single out targets for Hrothgorn, it can have many uses.



However, the Gnoblar aren't likely to be taking anyone out of action without some trickery, so if you plan to go for an aggressive strategy, then you need Hrothgorn and Thrafnir to do the heavy lifting.

One way to do this is to set up opportunities for Hrothgorn to employ his Trap Launcher (supported by Quiv so that he has a re-roll) and his Hunting Knife at least once per round (the latter usually after a Charge action). Your other activations can be dedicated to making this happen, to making those Attack actions more devastating or to getting opportunistic kills with Thrafnir. Meanwhile, you're more likely to use power cards than activations on your Gnoblar,





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pushing Luggit and Thwak and Bushwakka into advantageous positions to support Attack actions or set up traps and keeping Quiv adjacent to Hrothgorn.

There are a number of the warband's objectives that support this strategy, and in most games, you'll be aiming to score Butchering (15) for more enemy fighters being out of action than are still on the battlefield. Although this scores less than the mighty Momentarily Sated (16), it's more reliable, scaling nicely with the size of the opposing warbands. Of course, if you know you're fighting a three-model warband, you might as well take Momentarily Sated and go for it!

You should be able to score Flush Them Out (17) in most games; it's a surge objective that you score for pushing an enemy fighter so they are adjacent to your leader. Given that this is essential for getting your warband Inspired, you'll be trying to do this anyway, so you may as well get a glory point for doing it. It pairs nicely with Dinner Time (18), which you score when an enemy fighter enters Bushwakka's trap hex. As I said earlier, you'll want to make sure that you have a lot of cards that push fighters around for this warband, which should almost guarantee a chance to score these objectives.

Hrothgorn's Mantrappers have two surge objectives that score two glory points, giving a massive mid-phase boost if you score either of them. Hunter's Feast (19) rewards you when Hrothgorn takes two fighters out of action in the

same phase, and Extra Crunchy (20) rewards you when you take an enemy fighter with three or more upgrades out of action. If I were just to take one of these, it'd be Hunter's Feast. I'll be aiming to do this in every game in any case, while Extra Crunchy, which might seem easier to score, relies on my opponent tooling up one of their fighters for me. To make achieving Hunter's Feast more likely, consider cards like Gloryseeker (21), which can give both his Attack actions a boost against fighters with four or more Wounds, or Predatory Instinct (22) for a re-roll to make his Attack actions more reliable.

Top of the Food Chain (23) should be a staple for this strategy. It's a card you score if Hrothgorn is the only surviving leader, which is something that you'll be trying for in every game. Then there's The Beast is Slain (24), which you'll score if either Hrothgorn or Thrafnir take an enemy fighter out of action. Yep, that's a good one.

There are a couple of objectives which, while not aggro-focused, are nonetheless good choices. Unexpected Cunning (25) should be scorable in almost every game, requiring you simply to play three or more power cards in the same phase. Arm of the Everwinter (26) is an easy card to score with the right cards, and it ties into your strategy if you plan to be flipping feature tokens. This has two advantages: you deny objectives to opponents who care about them, and you create more lethal hexes to push your unwitting victims into! More Traps and Lethal Snares (27) are two good ways to achieve this.



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## WHERE TO START

When setting up your warband, you'll want to keep your options open. Look at your starting hexes in relation to your opponent's and work out which of your starting hexes gives you the best chance of targeting enemies in your opponent's starting hexes. That hex, or those hexes, are where you'll most likely set up Hrothgorn. Ideally, there will be a starting hex adjacent to that one so that you'll be able to set up Quiv adjacent to him at the start of the game.

However, the first fighter(s) you put down will probably be Luggit and Thwak. As the toughest of your Gnoblar, they're the least likely to be taken out of action immediately, so you can risk your opponent knowing their position early on. If you're confident in their ability to survive a first Attack action, you can set them up further forward. Otherwise, try to find a position for them where they're still not too far from the action. Just be sure to leave Hrothgorn's hex free!

Next will probably be Thrafnir, then Bushwakka – Thrafnir because its Move value is so high that you'll almost always be able to set it up with decent charge options, and Bushwakka because you want to make sure that you can keep him safe until he's had a chance to drop a trap into a hex somewhere where it will help you and hinder your opponent.

Finally, you'll set up Quiv and Hrothgorn. While ideally Quiv would go in the hex next to the one that Hrothgorn will go in, make sure you take in what you've learned about your opponent's strategy so far. Where have the enemy fighters been set up? Does your intended hex still give you the best options for Hrothgorn? Do you already know where all your targets are, or does your opponent still have a chance to respond? Sometimes, it might even be worth bluffing with Quiv, setting him up with an adjacent starting hex so that your opponent assumes they know where Hrothgorn is going. You can then wrong-foot them by placing Hrothgorn somewhere else.

## THE WURMSPAT

The Wurmspat are a very different warband to Hrothgorn's Mantrappers. They are a pestilent trio sent by Nurgle into Beastgrave to bring an end to the Katophrane Curse's disruption of the cycle of life, death and decay. Led by Fecula, a powerful sorceress, they're arguably the toughest warband yet seen in Warhammer Underworlds. They excel at advancing steadily across the battlefield, bringing sure annihilation to any foe that strays within reach.

### SEPSIMUS, PLAGUESWORN

I normally start with the leader of the warband, but in the case of the Wurmspat, I think it makes more sense to start with their two front-line fighters: Ghulgoch the Butcher and Sepsimus, Plaguesworn.

The Wurmspat are reasonably flexible in the different ways that you can use them, but they can struggle to adapt mid-game. I like to use them as a flex warband – one that aims to achieve a balance between holding objective tokens and taking

enemy fighters out of action. To succeed in this strategy, you need to learn how to handle their comparatively low Move values; they each have a Move characteristic of 3. To help me with this, I'll place objective tokens on the battlefield in the positions I want my fighters to be at the end of Round 1 – often in no one's territory or even just inside enemy territory, depending on which warband I'm facing. Sepsimus and Ghulgoch are the foremost fighters in this strategy, with Fecula following close behind and bolstering their inevitable onslaught.

Sepsimus is an excellent fighter, with a Range 2, 2 ⚔, 2 Damage Attack action that goes up to 3 Damage when he's Inspired. When Inspired, he also gains access to a Range 1, 3 ✂, 2 Damage Scything Attack action. He's more than capable of carving through the bulk of an enemy warband himself, particularly when you include some cards to augment him.





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## DISGUSTINGLY RESILIENT

Each time a fighter from the Wurmspat is dealt damage by an Attack action, you reduce that damage by 1 (to a minimum of 1) for each roll of 7 in the defence roll. This works even if the Attack action has the Cleave keyword, and it makes the fighters very resilient indeed. There's a one-in-three chance of reducing the damage by 1 when they have one defence dice, and that rises to a bit better than one in two when they have two defence dice. Your opponent will have to work that bit harder to guarantee taking one of your fighters out of action, and you can use this against them when you see them building up for a crucial attack.

Some great options are Pestilent Deliverer (1), which gives his Attack actions Cleave during a Charge action, and the Crushing Charge (2) ploy, which when combined with his Scything Attack action can give you the potential for a charge that tears the heart out of your opponent's warband. To make sure you get the opportunity for this charge, you'll need to boost Sepsimus's Move value, but as we'll see later, you have some good options here. Sepsimus is a great fighter for gaining a bit of extra glory with the Overkill (3) gambit, particularly when you augment his damage output using some of the cards I mention later.

Sepsimus is also very resilient, with a Defence of 1 7, going up to 2 7 when he's Inspired, and 4 Wounds. He also has an ability shared by every fighter in the warband that can reduce the damage he takes. If you're going for a flex strategy, it can be worth looking for ways to give him Guard tokens, increasing his resilience still further and preventing your opponent from driving him back. Buried Instinct (4) is a good example of such a card that can really wrong-foot your opponent.

## GHULGOCH THE BUTCHER

Ghulgoch is a massive fighter armed with two fearsomely heavy blades, and he's just as impressive a fighter as Sepsimus. He has the same Move, Defence and Wounds characteristics as his comrade in arms, but his Butcher's Blades Attack action is Range 1, 3 7, 2 Damage, and it gains Cleave when he becomes Inspired.

Ghulgoch has access to a restricted upgrade that significantly augments his characteristics: Hulking

Physique (5), which gives him -1 Move, +1 Wounds and +1 Damage to his Range 1 Attack actions. While you'll have to time this upgrade well, it makes him incredibly difficult to take out of action, and it also means he'll be hitting with a 3 7, 3 Damage Attack action (with Cleave if he's Inspired), which ranks amongst the best in the game.

Ghulgoch's weakness is the same as that of Sepsimus; his Move characteristic of 3 can leave him out of the action. For a nasty surprise for your opponent, you can give him the Putrid Vomit (6) Attack action, a 3 X, 1 Damage Attack action with a Range of 3! This can be very helpful when you're trying to meet the warband's Inspire condition.

## SPREADING SICKNESS

The Wurmspat all become Inspired at the same time: when there are three enemy fighters wounded and/or out of action. This is something that you should certainly be trying to achieve in each game because of the significant boosts your fighters will get as a result. It does mean that the Wurmspat in some ways feel like they are going about the flex playstyle backwards – marching in and beating up the enemy, then grabbing objectives as the dust settles.

It can also mean that sometimes you'll prioritise damaging a third fighter rather than finishing the job and taking out a fighter that you've already wounded. Think carefully about when it's best to do this, as although the Wurmspat are very tough, they're not invincible, and you do need to do what you can to reduce the number of fighters arrayed against them. It's a judgement call, and the more you practice with the warband, the more confident you'll feel about when you can take a risk if it means Inspiring your warband earlier.

## FECULA FLYBLOWN

It was Fecula's vision that led the Wurmspat to Beastgrave, and she considers herself on a mission from Nurgle himself. She's a level 2 wizard from the start of the game, with a decent Range 1, 2 7, 2 Damage Attack action, as well as a Range 3, \* 7,



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Damage 1 spell. When she's Inspired, her Range 1 Attack action gains an extra dice, while her spell switches to \* ♣, making it one of the most accurate spell Attack actions in the game. She's also solidly built, with Move 3, 1 ♣ and 4 Wounds. Unlike the other fighters, she stays at 1 ♣ when she becomes Inspired (she's dressed in rags, after all), which is why I suggest keeping her slightly back from the action.

With that said, what we have here is fighter in the same league as Averon Stormsire, and similarly to him, Fecula is a solid all-rounder. Her magical abilities give your warband a lot of options, and her characteristics and ability mean that you can afford to risk her being on the receiving end of the odd attack. To get the most out of her, however, you need to do a bit of planning and bring a few choice cards.

As she's your leader, it's worth taking a bit of extra care of Fecula, and the Wurmspat have several cards to help you out here. Foetid Shroud (7) is an upgrade that lets her re-roll one defence dice when she's attacked, and Eldritch Haze can be a huge boon. It's a spell that will give her an additional defence dice for a round, which makes her resilience ability even better.

You can make the most of Fecula's unique strengths by bringing cards like Retchling (8) to augment her magical abilities. With Retchling, you'll always be sure of at least one ♣ result when you make a casting roll, which is great for Fecula Inspired's spell Attack action and also for casting the powerful Wildform (9) spell. If you

cast Wildform with two ♣, it's as good as an upgrade that gives you +1 Move and +1 Damage to your Range 1 and Range 2 Attack actions.

Fecula also makes a good choice for the Scattered Tome (10) upgrade, as she's a tough wizard. This upgrade gives you one glory point at the end of the game for each of the **Lost Page** upgrades on the same fighter. These Lost Pages also include some spell Actions that are very useful for the Wurmspat. Examples are Quintok's Combative Cantrip (11) for its push and Guard token, and Mazzig's Many Legs (12), which can help you position another fighter on an objective token or for a key charge.

### SHOWER THEM WITH GIFTS

The Wurmspat might start off slow, but they have a lot of options when it comes to increasing their Move and damage potential. You'll want a balance of both if you plan to adopt a flex strategy. In addition to the cards I've mentioned earlier in this article, there's Blades of Putrefaction (13), a spell which means that your fighters' Range 1 and Range 2 Attack actions deal +1 Damage on a critical hit. This pairs very nicely with the Fecund Vigour Cycle. If you're looking to make your fighters' Attack actions even more reliable, Virulent Blade (14) is a solid upgrade for Sepsimus and Ghulgoch, granting them a re-roll in their attack rolls, while Hunting Companion (15) gives them another chance to deal extra damage.

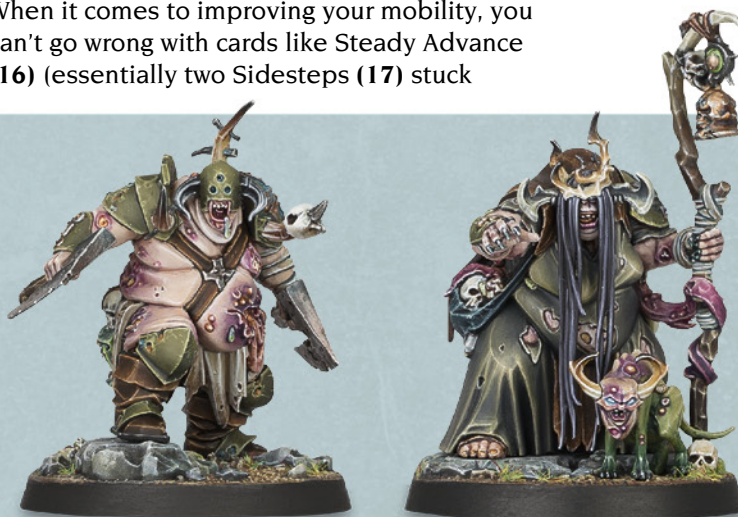
When it comes to improving your mobility, you can't go wrong with cards like Steady Advance (16) (essentially two Sidesteps (17) stuck



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together), while there are some potentially flashier options available in Blindside (mentioned earlier), Sprinting Charm (18) or Desperate Flight (19), which while unreliable has some exceptional potential with Sepsimus's Range 2 Attack action.

You'll also want some cards to help you grab and hold objective tokens. Stolid Bulk (20) is an upgrade that means that fighter can't be driven back, and Survival Instincts (21) can get you to the same place – great for ensuring that your fighter stays on an objective token. Restless Prize (22) is very useful for a warband with lower Move characteristics, as it means you can pull a more distant objective token a bit closer. Finally, Nightmare in the Shadows can be extremely useful in all sorts of situations, but particularly when an enemy fighter is holding an objective token you'd rather have!

### WHAT'S THE PLAN?

It's probably worth mentioning some of the objectives that these cards are meant to help you achieve. The idea is to pick a mix of objectives that reward you for taking out enemy fighters and for holding objective tokens.

A simple place to start is Spread His Blessings (23), which gives you one glory point in the end phase for holding an objective token in enemy territory, and Swift Capture (24), a surge objective you score for holding one objective token in each territory. Once you've got there, if your fighter's on Guard, you've then got a good chance of scoring Seeping Rot (25), a surge objective you

## CYCLES OF DECAY

The Wurmspat have access to some unique gambits with the Cycle keyword. These are very powerful gambits, most of which persist, but you can only ever have one in play at a time; if you play a second Cycle while another is still in play, the first one is discarded. This means judging when it is the best time to play each Cycle is more difficult than with a regular ploy, but the payoff is that much stronger. Two of the best Cycles are Fecund Vigour, which gives friendly fighters a re-roll in their attack rolls, and Unnatural Vitality, which gives each friendly fighter +1 Move while it is in play. Not so slow now!



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complete by having a friendly fighter on an objective token who is attacked but not driven back. With careful use of your push cards (and a bit of judicious chopping) you should also be able to score Uncontested **(26)**, which gives you three points for holding two objective tokens in the end phase, as long as your opponent doesn't hold any. It's worth name-checking Path to Victory **(27)** once again, as it's another good fit for this warband.

If you're feeling very confident in your strategic ability, you can make great gains with cards like Temporary Victory **(28)**, Sacred Tri-lobe **(29)** and Supremacy **(30)**. However, if you lose even one fighter, these become impossible to achieve. So think carefully before including them in your decks,

and plan carefully at the start of the game for how you will score them. While we're still on the subject of holding objective tokens, Cryptic Companion **(31)** is a very good choice for this warband, increasing the value you can get out of one of your three fighters holding an objective token.

On the more aggressive side of things, **Fell the Faithless (32)** (for taking the enemy leader out of action), **Chosen Warriors (33)** (for taking at least three enemy fighters out of action) and **Faithful Reward (34)** (which you'll necessarily achieve if you're trying for Chosen Warriors) are all good choices. If you're planning for Fecula to bring her arcane might to bear against your opponent, then it can also be worth bringing **Arcane Expertise (35)** and **Rotbringers (36)**.

## WHERE TO START

Setting up the Wurmspat needn't take too long. Indeed, against most warbands you'll be finished first. I'd start with either Sepsimus or Fecula. Sepsimus would normally be placed somewhere where he can make a first-turn Charge action that ends with him on an objective token and within two hexes of one or two enemy starting hexes; while Fecula would normally be set up in a fairly central position but out of charge range from enemy fighters. Once both of these fighters have been set up, you'll have all the information that you can get out of your opponent, so you can then set up Ghulgoch somewhere where, like Sepsimus, he has a clear route to both an objective token and a target in a single activation, if at all possible.



## HUNT'S END

That brings me to the end of this tactical guide. I hope that you've found it helpful, and I'd love to know what you think. Do you have some favourite cards or tactics that you think I've missed? Is there a warband you'd like me to feature in a future article? Let me know at [whunderworlds@gwplc.com](mailto:whunderworlds@gwplc.com) and you might see your suggestions appear in *White Dwarf*.



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# SANCTIONED CARNAGE

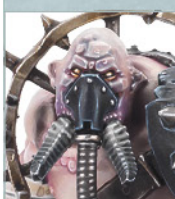
What if the skull-faced killer known as an Eversor Imperial Assassin stalked the corridors of the Blackstone Fortress? See for yourself what would happen if such a drug-fuelled killing machine were unleashed with these new solo rules for Blackstone Fortress.



**O**f all the Assassins in the employ of the Imperium, there are few as feared as the Eversor. A psychotic killer hyped up on combat stimulants, an Eversor Assassin is nothing short of a murderous terror weapon – the ultimate sanction against renegade commanders, recalcitrant overlords and blasphemous priests. Deployed by drop pod into the heart of the enemy's stronghold, the Eversor emerges ready to slay the enemies of the Imperium. He shows no compassion or mercy, butchering all those who stand between him and his prey and leaving a trail of destruction that few would have the stomach to look upon. Should he complete his mission, the Eversor will slink back to his pod to be recaptured and deactivated. Should he fail, he will get as close to his intended target as possible and detonate his drug-fuelled body in a spectacular bio-meltdown of blood, bone and corrosive acid.

## BIGGER FOES!

Hostile players may find the Eversor Assassin quite a tough prospect, especially when he can shred his way through Ur-Ghuls and Beastmen as though they were wafer-thin paper. Perhaps you need a tougher hostile such as the Chaos Ogryn or the Commissar from Traitor Command.



## THE GRIM FACE OF DEATH

Over the next few pages, you'll find rules for using an Imperial Assassin from the Eversor Temple in your games of Blackstone Fortress. Due to their violent nature, an Eversor Assassin is almost always deployed alone, which means he will be the only explorer on the board, facing off against a horde of hostiles. We're pretty sure he'd be able to handle himself.

As you would expect, an Eversor is a monstrous foe to face in the confines of a Blackstone Fortress. If he successfully takes a foe out of action, he can just keep attacking thanks to his Killing Rampage special ability. He can also fire his executioner pistol up to three times using a single activation dice, enabling him to mow down enemies at range. In fact, there really is very little you can do to stop him! Hostiles are advised to take the day off when he's around ...



# AN ARMY OF ONE

**Blackstone Fortress** is a game that can be played as both a single player and multiplayer experience. Whether one explorer takes control over an entire group and leads them to victory, or a group of friends decide to tackle the challenge of the fortress as a team, there are pitfalls and challenges aplenty for all.

But what if a single hero took to the field of battle who was powerful enough to handle the threats of the Blackstone Fortress alone? A warrior so mighty that not even a Chaos Space Marine or an entire group of Negavolt Cultists was enough to give them pause?

Well here it is: a 'what if' scenario in which we present a potent warrior who is quite capable of completing an expedition by themselves, and with activation dice to spare. To set up an expedition using this fell-handed explorer, use the rules for setting up a one-off expedition, with the following changes.

**Stage 2:** When setting up a one-off expedition, during stage 2, you can pick the Imperial Assassin, Eversor Temple as an explorer. If you do, no other explorers can be picked. This means that only one player can be an explorer in this expedition, and one other player can be the hostile player.

**Stage 3:** Note that some exploration cards require more than one explorer. If one of these is drawn during the expedition, draw a different challenge from the remaining challenge exploration cards instead.

**Stage 4:** Pick an unused explorer initiative card to represent the Imperial Assassin, Eversor Temple.

**Stage 5:** Do not set up any spacecraft.

**Stage 12:** The leader reads the following:

**'The denizens of the Blackstone Fortress shift uncomfortably in their lairs. Feral Ur-Ghuls pause suddenly to sniff the air as they travel through the shadows, their predator's instinct recognising an apex threat. Even the deranged minions of Mallex whisper amongst themselves of a fresh terror that hunts them, one that will not rest until they have all been eliminated. Even as such rumours are brutally put down, in the distance, panicked screams and terrified howls begin to echo down the corridors ...'**

## HARDLY A CHALLENGE:

When making event rolls, use the following table instead of the one in the Combat booklet.

SOLO PLAY EVENT TABLE	
ROLL	EVENT
1	<b>Bring It Down!:</b> Make one attack with every hostile that has line of sight to an explorer. If a hostile does not have line of sight to an explorer, they make one Move action towards the nearest explorer.
2-3	<b>Unfulfilled Destiny:</b> Do not make a destiny roll at the start of the next turn.
4-6	<b>Wave after Wave:</b> If possible, every hostile that has been slain during the combat encounter is returned to the battlefield as reinforcements (pg 13 of the Combat booklet).
7-10	<b>Dangerous Conditions:</b> Draw two encounter cards. Any twists on those cards apply for the rest of the combat. If neither encounter card has a twist, repeat this process until at least one encounter card that has a twist on it has been drawn.
11-14	<b>Deadly Escape:</b> The leader replaces the portal furthest from the explorer with a maglev transport escape chamber. If more than one portal is equally far from the explorer, the leader can pick which one to replace. If this event has already been rolled, or if an explorer has made a Summon (4+) action, treat this result as a 'Bring it Down!' result instead.
15-17	<b>Inspiration:</b> The explorer receives 1 inspiration point.
18-19	<b>No Limits to My Slaughter:</b> The explorer can make one Move action and then one weapon action.
20	<b>Lucky Find:</b> The explorer can draw one discovery card.





# EVERSOR ASSASSIN


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, the High Lords will sometimes sanction the use of an Eversor Assassin.

In order to better enact these one-man killing sprees, the Eversor Temple engineers its inductees to be super-human 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.

When an Eversor is selected for a mission, he is transferred from the ship-borne cryo-crypt where he is held in suspended animation to a special drop pod. Neuro links feed the details of the mission to him as he is awakened en route to the planet below. When the pod impacts, the Assassin will be fully awake and ready to satiate his desire to slaughter the enemies of the Imperium. To do this, he uses bolt shells and toxin needles from his executioner pistol, stabbing thrusts of his power sword, hypodermic incisors and shock generators built into his neuro-gauntlet, melta bomb blasts, throat-crushing punches and whatever else is to hand. The Eversor's assault is so swift and ruthless that his 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.







**IMPERIAL ASSASSIN, EVERSOR TEMPLE**

*"Fear me, for I am your Apocalypse"*  
- *Diectus Eversor*

Move: 5

Defence: Agility: Vitality:

Move: 5

Defence: Agility: Vitality:

**WEAPON ACTIONS**

Weapon	Range		
	1	2-3	4+
Executioner Pistol (1+) <sup>1</sup>			
Power Blade (1+)		N/A	N/A
Neuro Gauntlet (4+) <sup>2</sup>		N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> **Lightning Reflexes:** When taking an Executioner Pistol weapon action, the Imperial Assassin, Eversor Temple can attack twice for a cost of (3+), or three times for a cost of (5+). Carry out each attack one at a time, one after the other. The target chosen for the second and third attacks must either be the same as the target of the previous attack, or in the same hex as, or in an adjacent hex to, the target of the previous attack.

<sup>2</sup> **Neuro-toxin Injector:** If this attack was a success, it causes a grievous wound instead of a wound.

**UNIQUE ACTIONS**

**Melta Bombs:** Take the Melta Bombs resource card and give it to the Imperial Assassin, Eversor Temple at the beginning of each combat. If this resource card was in a stasis vault, remember to place it back there after this expedition.


**Killing Rampage:** Each time the Imperial Assassin, Eversor Temple slays a hostile, place an activation dice in an available action dice space on his character card that has a value of 1.

**Bio-meltdown:** If the Imperial Assassin, Eversor Temple is taken out of action, each adjacent hostile suffers 1 grievous wound.

**Sentinel Array:** When the Imperial Assassin, Eversor Temple ends an activation with dice remaining to use as overwatch dice, do not remove activation dice with a score of 1 or reduce the value of remaining dice.

**SECRET AGENDA**

Slay an entire hostile group that had every model on the battlefield at the beginning of the round in the same activation.



**IMPERIAL ASSASSIN, EVERSOR TEMPLE (INSPIRED)**

*"I have only heard tales of such creatures. If nothing else, they keep me honest."*  
- *Chorus Drail*

Move: 5

Defence: Agility: Vitality:

Move: 5

Defence: Agility: Vitality:

**WEAPON ACTIONS**

Weapon	Range		
	1	2-3	4+
Executioner Pistol (1+) <sup>1</sup>			
Power Blade (1+)		N/A	N/A
Neuro Gauntlet (4+) <sup>2</sup>		N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> **Lightning Reflexes:** When taking an Executioner Pistol weapon action, the Imperial Assassin, Eversor Temple can attack twice for a cost of (3+), or three times for a cost of (5+). Carry out each attack one at a time, one after the other. The target chosen for the second and third attacks must either be the same as the target of the previous attack, or in the same hex as, or in an adjacent hex to, the target of the previous attack.

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# PANOPLY OF WAR

The Imperial Navy takes great pride in its military assets, every one of its aircraft carefully identified with squadron markings, numbers and designations. In this article, we provide you with a few examples of how you can apply them to your own air wing.



**T**he Imperium is vast beyond imagining, its military forces alone made up of trillions upon trillions of Astra Militarum troopers, Imperial Navy pilots, Titan crews, artillery teams, support staff, logisticians, munitorum drivers and so on. So widely scattered across the galaxy are these numerous institutions that imposing a common organisation upon them is largely impossible.

This is as true of the air forces of the Imperial Navy as any other Imperial institution, and yet the scribes and strategos of the Adeptus Administratum strive valiantly to bring some semblance of order to this galaxy-spanning body. Rules and regulations are written on what colours can be used for squadron markings. Iconography is sanctioned by top vexillographers. Approved numbering conventions are devised, rewritten, implemented, then almost as quickly forgotten.

## MORE AERIAL EXAMPLES

The *Rynn's World Air War* campaign book contains loads of great information on squadron markings and icons, camouflage schemes, numbering conventions and even aircraft names. Check it out now!



## AIR WINGS OF THE IMPERIUM

In this article, we explore the official organisation of the Imperial Navy's air wings. On the opposite page you'll find an explanation of the Imperial Navy's organisational structure, from a flight of a couple of aircraft right up to a flying group of several thousand. You'll also find examples of some of the more common aircraft insignia, from squadron markings and Imperial Aquilas to ace markings and camouflage schemes.

While this is all great background information, these insignia guides are also particularly useful when it comes to painting your own squadrons of Imperial aircraft ready for the battlefield. Will you paint your planes to match the lands they're fighting over? What will be your squadron colours? Will you apply markings for air groups and campaigns? Hopefully these few pages will provide you with plenty of inspiration.



## IMPERIAL NAVY AIRCRAFT

Nearly every aircraft in the Imperium of Mankind, even those seconded to Astra Militarum regiments, is officially a part of the Imperial Navy and fully under its control. The exact organisation of these aircraft varies and is dependent on the demands of the conflict in which they are embroiled, with instances of heavy casualties often undoing any attempt to impose order. However, nearly all deployments of Imperial Navy aircraft rely upon the basic structure laid down in the founding charter of the Imperial Navy.

Squadrons form the core of the Imperial Navy's atmospheric commitment in any theatre of planetary war, with each squadron consisting of a collection of aircraft that – in all but the rarest of cases – are of the same pattern, such as Thunderbolts or Marauders. Each squadron is assigned a designation, although the sterile character of such official identifiers is often replaced with more evocative monikers by the pilots, such as 'Dragon Squadron' or 'Wrath Squadron'. The size of a squadron differs greatly and has no upper limit, though the most commonly seen is between five and thirty aircraft.

Squadrons are kept together for the length of the conflict unless casualties and attrition force the surviving aircraft of a battered squadron to be absorbed by another. As demanded by operational needs, a squadron can be split into flights to complete several objectives; such flights are temporary and are merely a subdivision of the squadron. Flights consist of two or more aircraft, and multiple flights, drawn from different squadrons or wings, often work in concert to achieve mission goals.

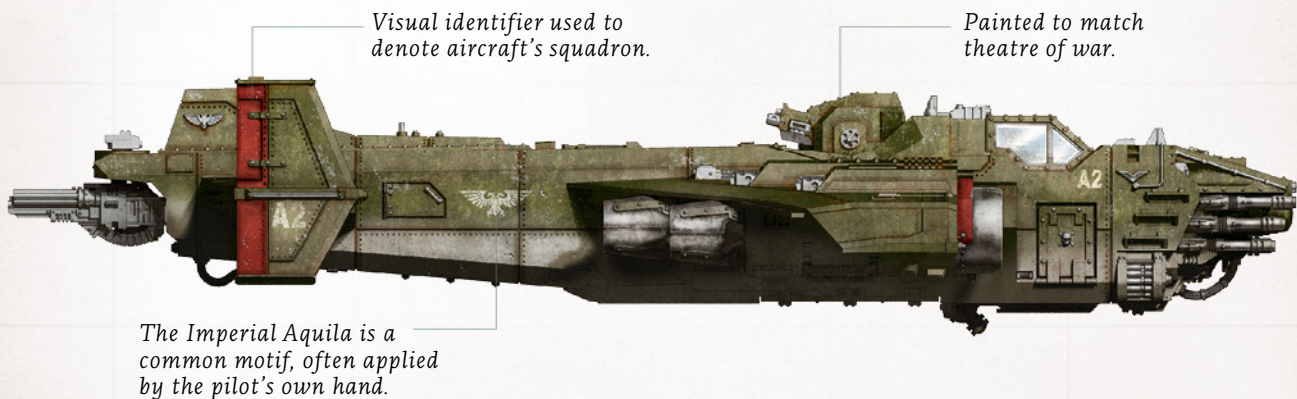
Squadrons are organised into wings, in which a single commander oversees dozens or, in larger theatres, hundreds of aircraft across several squadrons. Wings are formed around aircraft role but can contain different patterns of aircraft; a fighter wing can contain both Thunderbolts and Avenger Strike Fighters, while a bomber wing can contain all manner of Marauder patterns kept separate within their squadrons. In the largest of conflicts, where thousands of aircraft are assembled, wings are organised into groups, with each group assigned specific areas of engagement, whether that be the airspace above a vital hive city or an entire continent.

The identification of individual aircraft is far less codified and varies greatly across the Imperium, a problem further compounded by the lack of regimented livery or uniforms employed by other branches of the Imperium such as the Adeptus Astartes or Astra Militarum. Nevertheless, there are many common identifying markings used across the breadth of the Imperium, designed to allow simple identification of aircraft during a conflict.

### IMPERIAL NAVY AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS STRUCTURE

ELEMENT	SUBORDINATE ELEMENTS
Flight	Two or more aircraft
Squadron	Two or more flights
Wing	Two or more squadrons
Group	Three or more wings

#### CMA85-MAD/8462BW – 'Fated Arrow' 8462nd Bomber Wing, Forsaken Squad

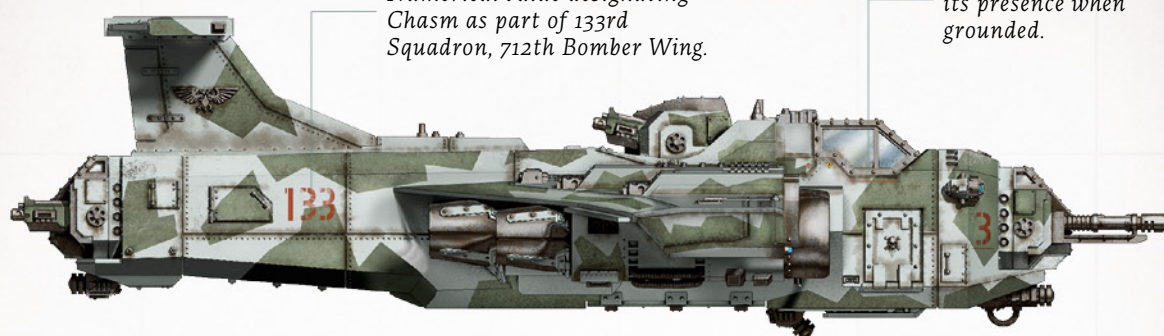


The most common visual identifier used by the Imperial Navy is colour bands, with unique colours assigned to each squadron in a given conflict. Colour band identifiers are placed to ensure visibility from both the air and the ground. On Thunderbolts and Marauders, such colours are typically displayed on their tail fins, wing tips and/or along the tail edge of their fuselage.



### URG49-MAB/712BW – 'Chasm'

712th Bomber Wing, Death Tally Squadron



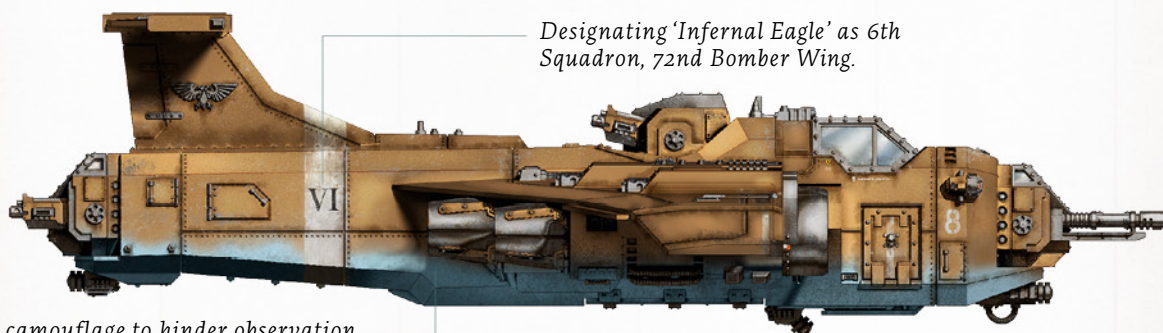
Numerical value designating Chasm as part of 133rd Squadron, 712th Bomber Wing.

Camouflaged to hide its presence when grounded.

The livery of each aircraft changes across deployments, and even during the same conflict if operational needs demand it. Camouflage aimed towards concealment when grounded is the most common, an example of which can be seen on the Marauder Bomber 'Chasm'.

### VZE17-MAB/72BW – 'Infernal Eagle'

72nd Bomber Wing, Infernal Squadron



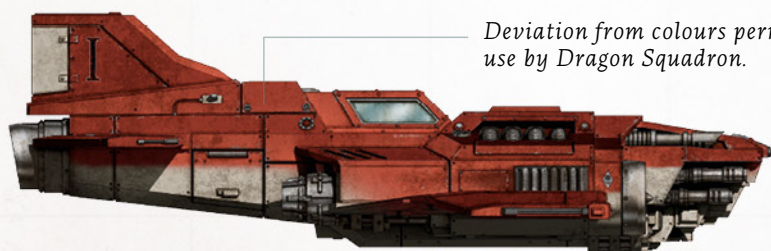
Designating 'Infernal Eagle' as 6th Squadron, 72nd Bomber Wing.

Blue camouflage to hinder observation from ground defences.

Dual-purpose camouflage, as sported here on 'Infernal Eagle', is also common, with the purpose to conceal the aircraft both during flight and when landed. Less effective than disruptive patterns, such methods are employed against less technologically-advanced forces, where observers on the ground are far more common than, for example, orbital monitoring stations.

### 'Executioner'

672nd Fighter Wing, Dragon Squadron

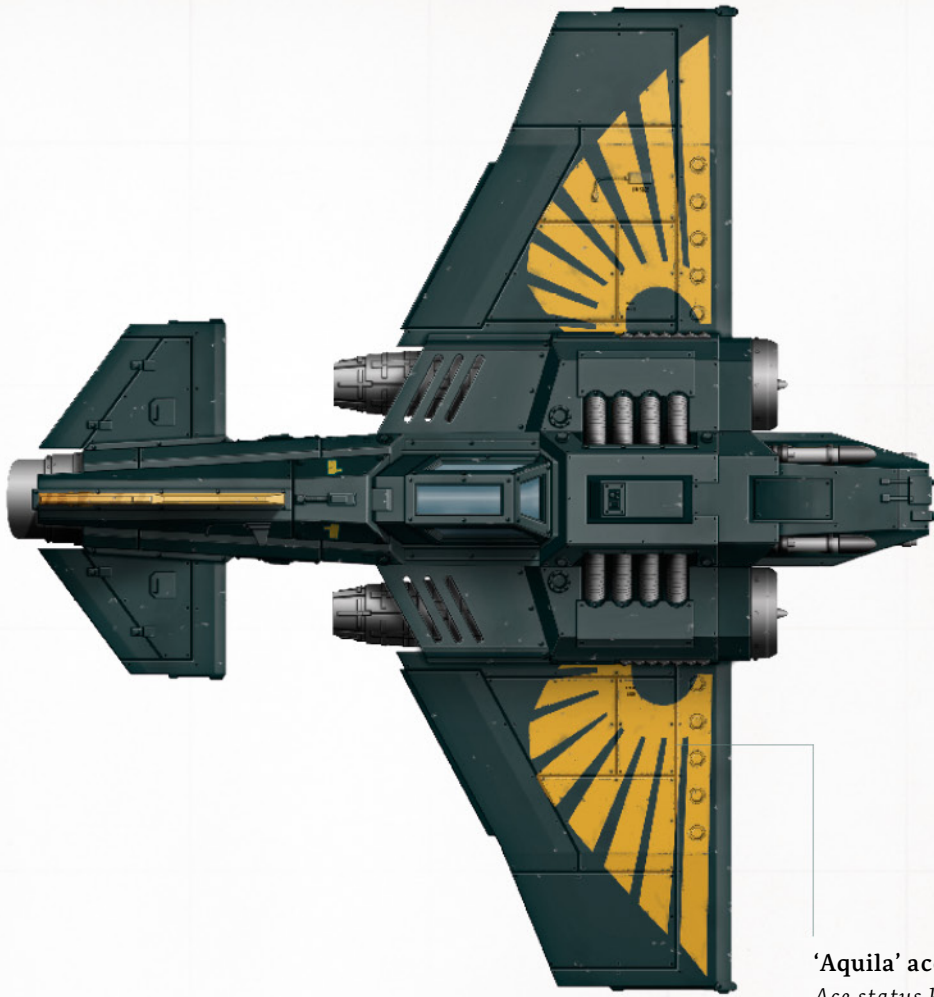


Deviation from colours permitted for use by Dragon Squadron.

Imperial aces often sport distinctive colour schemes that set them apart from others within their squadron. These are unique to each pilot and are often designed to be bold and ostentatious, against tactical advice. Though officially frowned upon, such schemes are invariably overlooked in light of the effect such aces have on the morale of the Imperium's forces. Such colour schemes also serve to taunt the foe and can bait them into recklessly hunting for the ace.



VZH09-THB/43FW – ‘Angel of Terror’  
43rd Fighter Wing, Veil Squadron  
Participated in the defence of New Rynn City.



#### ‘Aquila’ ace markings

Ace status bestowed after successful raid on Ork tank convoy and subsequent aerial duel with reinforcing Ork aircraft.



Another identifier for Imperial aces, in lieu of bold colour schemes, is the use of the Aquila across an aircraft's wings. This is the preferred identifier used by those who wish to retain their squadron's colours. The number of confirmed kills to become an ace varies anywhere from five, the most common number, to ten or higher amongst more competitive aircraft groups.



# AN OATH FULFILLED

In this instalment of *Tactica* focusing on the heroes and villains of Middle-earth, rules writer Jay Clare talks about perhaps one of the most unusual characters that fought against the forces of the Dark Lord – the King of the Dead.



**JAY CLARE**

An avid matched play enthusiast, Jay has played with almost every faction and Hero in the game at some point. He even won the 2019 Grand Tournament with the focus of this article, the King of the Dead, so he certainly knows a thing or two about playing with the ghostly king.

**E**ver since watching *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*™ for the first time many years ago, I have found the King of the Dead to be a really intriguing character. A long-dead king of old who has dwelt for centuries with his people within the remnants of his kingdom, deep within the halls of the White Mountains that separate the kingdoms of Gondor and Rohan – how could anyone not find such a story simply fascinating?

During the War of the Last Alliance, in the closing years of the Second Age, the armies of Men and Elves were in need of more allies, and so Isildur came to the Men that dwelt within the mountain to ask for their allegiance in the war against Mordor and Sauron. The king of these Men swore an oath, pledging to join Isildur's cause and fight alongside him in the coming wars against the Dark Lord.

However, when the time came to take up arms and fight, the Men of the mountains did not honour their word; instead they locked themselves in their kingdom and hid. For their betrayal, Isildur cursed them to never rest until they had fulfilled their oath to come to the aid of the King of Gondor. It was 3,000 years before the chance to do so would arise.

In the Middle-earth: Strategy Battle Game, the King of the Dead is quite a different kind of character to pretty much anything else we have come across – and so, naturally, there are many clever ways you can use him in your own games.

So, over the next few pages, I am going to talk about how to use this ancient king, as well as how to get the most out of him when the Army of the Dead march to war in aid of Aragorn to finally fulfil their oath.





### WRATH OF THE KING

The King of the Dead has an impressive statline and is a character very much focused on combat. Getting him into a fight quickly is vital so that he can wreak havoc amongst the enemy's forces.

With a Fight value of 5 and 2 Attacks, the King of the Dead is certainly no slouch in a fight, easily able to go toe-to-toe with all but the mightiest of heroes, villains and monsters from across Middle-earth.

A solid Defence value of 8, 2 Wounds and 3 Fate points also means that it is very difficult to even cause a scratch on the King of the Dead, let alone kill him outright (well, he is already dead, but you know what I mean!). Even if you were thinking of using Magical Powers to stop him in his tracks, it is worth pointing out that the King of the Dead has a whopping 6 Will points in order to Resist any dark sorceries thrown at him. All of this combined makes taking the King of the Dead down a tall order indeed, and one that will take multiple turns to accomplish.

With a Strength of only 4, it may first appear that he has no more killing power than most other Good characters in the game and that a wall of heavy-armoured troops would cause him some issues. Well, not quite.

The King of the Dead feeds off the fear of his enemies, striking terror into the hearts of even the bravest foe and rendering their armour useless. When making Strikes, he treats the opponent's Courage value as their Defence. Suddenly, that heavy-armoured front line is crumbling as he hacks through it with ease.

When benefitting from the Dead of Dunharrow Army Bonus, the King of the Dead gains the Harbinger of Evil special rule. This means enemy models within 12" of him suffer a -1 penalty to their Courage value, making it easier for him to cut them down where they stand.

The final, and arguably most important, special rule that the King of the Dead possesses is Drain Soul. Any model that suffers even a single unsaved Wound from the King of the Dead will be instantly slain – regardless of how many Wounds they have remaining! This is a huge advantage for the King of the Dead, and it makes him a truly terrifying foe to face. Throw him straight at enemy Monsters, multi-Wound Warriors, or enemy Heroes, and you will likely be able to kill a few far quicker than you would normally. If playing against the King of the Dead, then try to keep your important models as far away as you can – it may only take a single Wound to ruin your entire plan!

The King of the Dead leads a spectral host of Warriors and Riders of the Dead against the fearsome Mûmakil that threaten the lives of those upon the Fields of Pelennor.

### THE BIGGER THEY ARE...

Monsters in particular should be wary of the King of the Dead; his Drain Soul special rule means that he can slay them instantly by causing only a single Wound. The likes of Trolls, Ogres, Fell Beasts, Mûmakil and even the mighty Dragon Smaug will need to think twice before challenging this ghostly king on the battlefield!





## ARAGORN

If engaged in the same fight, Aragorn can use his free Might point to call a Heroic Strike to ensure they have the higher Fight value, allowing the King of the Dead to slay their foe. Also, if together, Aragorn can call a Heroic Combat to allow the King of the Dead to move and attack twice in one turn!



The Dead swarm the Corsairs, their foe's low Courage value meaning that many fail to Charge and are forced to leave their allies at the mercy of the Dead.

## THE SHADOW HOST

The King of the Dead is not just useful for killing swathes of enemy Warriors (and the odd Monster here and there). He also improves the capabilities of the rest of the Army of the Dead who fight alongside him.

The King of the Dead improves his own killing power with the Harbinger of Evil special rule, and he also helps all of his followers that are fighting near him. To get the most out of this, ensure that your force is fighting in close-knit ranks so that all enemies are affected.

Much like their liege, Warriors, Riders and Heralds of the Dead all have the Blades of the Dead special rule, meaning they will count their opponent's Courage value as their Defence for the purpose of making Strikes, which will often make it far easier for them to wound their foes.

Now, if you couple in the fact that, when benefitting from the Dead of Dunharrow Army Bonus, the King of the Dead gains the Harbinger of Evil special rule, all enemy models suffer a -1 penalty to their Courage value when within 12" of the King of the Dead – this essentially reduces an enemy model's Defence by 1.

To put this into practice, let's say that a Warrior of the Dead, who has a Strength of 3, is fighting against a Black Dragon Easterling, who has a Defence of 6 and a Courage of 4. Usually, a model with Strength 3 would need to roll a 6 to cause a Wound to a model with a Defence of 6.

However, when using the Easterling's Courage of 4 instead of its Defence value, the Warrior of the Dead now only requires a 5 to Wound. If you then factor in the Harbinger of Evil special rule from the King of the Dead, this reduces the Easterling's Courage to 3 and means that the Warrior of the Dead now only needs a 4 to Wound – making it significantly easier to cut through even the most heavily armoured enemy warriors.

Orcs are particularly vulnerable to this tactic, as their already pretty measly Courage value of 2 is then reduced to 1, meaning that they will suffer a Wound from a Warrior of the Dead on a roll of 3+!

Positioning the King of the Dead is key; you will want to have him as close to the centre of your lines as possible to ensure that he is impacting as much of the enemy force with Harbinger of Evil as he can. That way, you maximise the benefits that go with reducing the enemy's Courage.







### HERALDS OF THE DEAD

One of the downsides to the King of the Dead is that he only has a single point of Might, and deciding when to spend it can be a really tricky call to make in the heat of battle. Luckily, the Heralds of the Dead provide the ideal solution to such a dilemma.

If he is within 3" of a Herald of the Dead, the King of the Dead can use a Herald's Will points to declare a Heroic Action instead of using his own Might point. Well, Heralds of the Dead have 3 Will points each!

This is perfect for the King of the Dead, as the Heralds can support their liege by allowing him to use a Heroic Move at key moments, declare a Heroic Combat if he has been tied down by a single enemy model or even call a Heroic Strike when fighting a fearsome foe. And he can do this without reducing his own precious store of Might.

By having two Heralds of the Dead in your force, you can essentially give the King of the Dead a whopping 7 points of Might to use across the game. And, as any veteran player will tell you, the correct application of Might can be the difference between victory and defeat – so having access to plenty of Might for Heroic Actions is absolutely vital in the Strategy Battle Game.

### RETURN OF THE KING

The King of the Dead works really well alongside Aragorn, and the Return of the King Legendary Legion contains both – just like in the iconic scenes from the film.

The Legendary Legion grants a number of benefits: giving Aragorn Andúril for free, granting the King of the Dead the Harbinger of Evil special rule and, perhaps most importantly, meaning that all friendly Spirit models within 6" of Aragorn count as being in range of a banner.

With 2 Attacks and only 1 Might point, the King of the Dead can be subject to losing key combats without any way of mitigating against that. The chance to re-roll a single dice in each combat is a huge boost to the King of the Dead, giving him the best chance to keep winning those fights and slaying all those that stand before him.

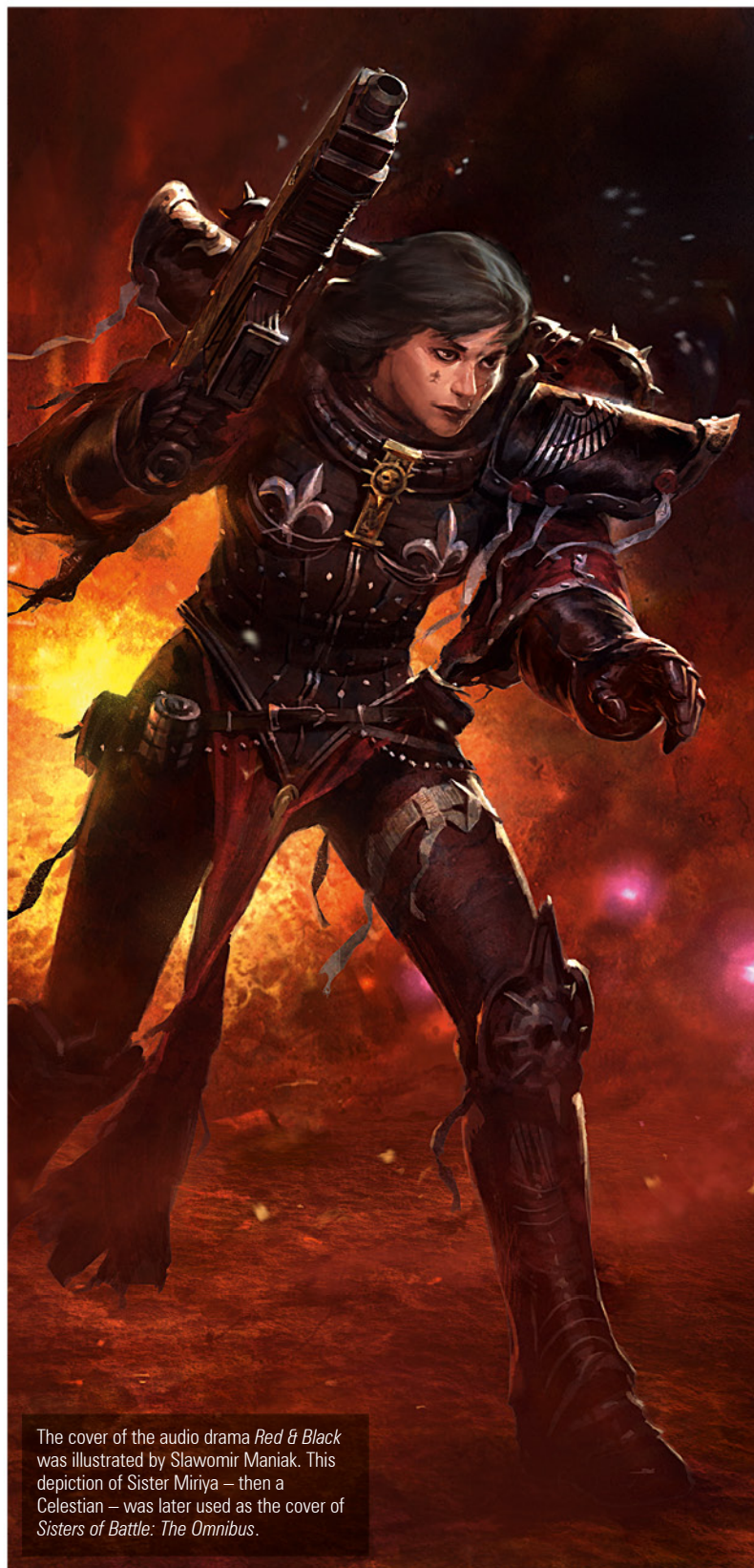
The King of the Dead can be a very dangerous character to face on the battlefield, one that plays very differently from anything else in the Strategy Battle Game. He does have his weaknesses, and he requires some careful positioning, but with practice, you will soon be carving through enemy lines with ease. If you are planning on playing the Dead of Dunharrow, then the King of the Dead is essential and, most importantly, a lot of fun to use on the tabletop!





# THE FIRST ACT OF FAITH

This issue of *White Dwarf* is a little chunkier than usual. That's because it contains the first instalment of James Swallow's *Sisters of Battle* novel *Faith & Fire*, which will be serialised over the coming year. We asked James to tell us what the story is all about.



The cover of the audio drama *Red & Black* was illustrated by Slawomir Maniak. This depiction of Sister Miriya – then a Celestian – was later used as the cover of *Sisters of Battle: The Omnibus*.



## JAMES SWALLOW

James Swallow has written many novels for Black Library over the years, both for Warhammer 40,000 and The Horus Heresy. Some of his best-known works include the Blood Angels series (see right), his *Sisters of Battle* novels (read on) and anything to do with the former Death Guard Captain turned Knight-Errant hero Nathaniel Garro.

**T**he Sisters of Battle, also known as the Adepta Sororitas, are the military arm of the Ecclesiarchy – the Imperial Church. Fervent believers in the divinity of the God-Emperor, they hunt down witches and heretics who oppose his rule and bring them to justice with purifying flame. Their faith is both their mental and physical armour, shielding them against the myriad foes they must face while carrying out their solemn vows. They know only duty, devotion and righteous fury, and that's exactly what the very first Sisters of Battle novel, *Faith & Fire*, is all about. Black Library author James Swallow joins us to talk about that first book – now serialised in the pages of *White Dwarf* – and what it's all about.

## So how did *Faith & Fire* come about?

**James:** Cast your mind back to 2007. I'd just finished work on the Blood Angels series of novels, and I was looking for a new challenge. The great thing about the Warhammer universes is that they are an embarrassment of riches – they're so broad and deep, with loads of factions to talk about, but the focus at that time was almost entirely on Space Marines. That's why I suggested a Sisters of Battle story. No one had written any novels about them at that point, and the only literary recognition they'd had was the *Daemonifuge* graphic novel (which, by the way, I love).

There were a few reasons why I suggested the Sisters. Firstly, they have an iconic design that I've found appealing since I saw the very first models of them. Secondly, their background is the stuff of pure science fantasy. They have power armour, boltguns and some pretty great tech, but what really drives them is their faith. And it's not just zealous belief in a cause – that's part of it – but a tangible faith. It enables them to do incredible things that are beyond what anyone would expect of a regular human. That's a pretty interesting concept to explore as a writer. The idea of a belief





**MORE POWER ARMOUR**  
Before writing *Faith & Fire*, James wrote a series of books set around the Blood Angels Space Marines and the civil war that almost tore them apart. Search for 'Blood Angels: The Complete Rafen Omnibus' on the Black Library and Games Workshop websites to find out more about the series.

system driving you to do extremely good or bad things has the potential for a lot of drama. And so that was why I pushed for a Sisters of Battle story.

But the novel I pitched wasn't *Faith & Fire*. It was actually *Hammer & Anvil* – the sequel. I was going through all the Sisters of Battle lore that existed – mostly the original codex with the great John Blanche cover – and I discovered the story of Sanctuary 101, which sees a Convent of Battle Sisters wiped out by a newly awakened force of Necrons. There was a little piece of flavour text from the point of view of a Canoness who had been sent back to rebuild the destroyed Convent, and I thought that sounded like the perfect opening to a story. I was about a week away from starting the novel when I got a call telling me to stop. The editors felt that it was a bit strange for the Sisters of Battle to be fighting aliens in their first novel rather than witches and psykers, so they asked if I could have a think about another plot line. So *Hammer & Anvil* went on the shelf for a bit, and I began work on what would become *Faith & Fire*. Fortunately, I'd already established what I wanted to do with the main characters, so I lifted them out and started to build a new story around them.

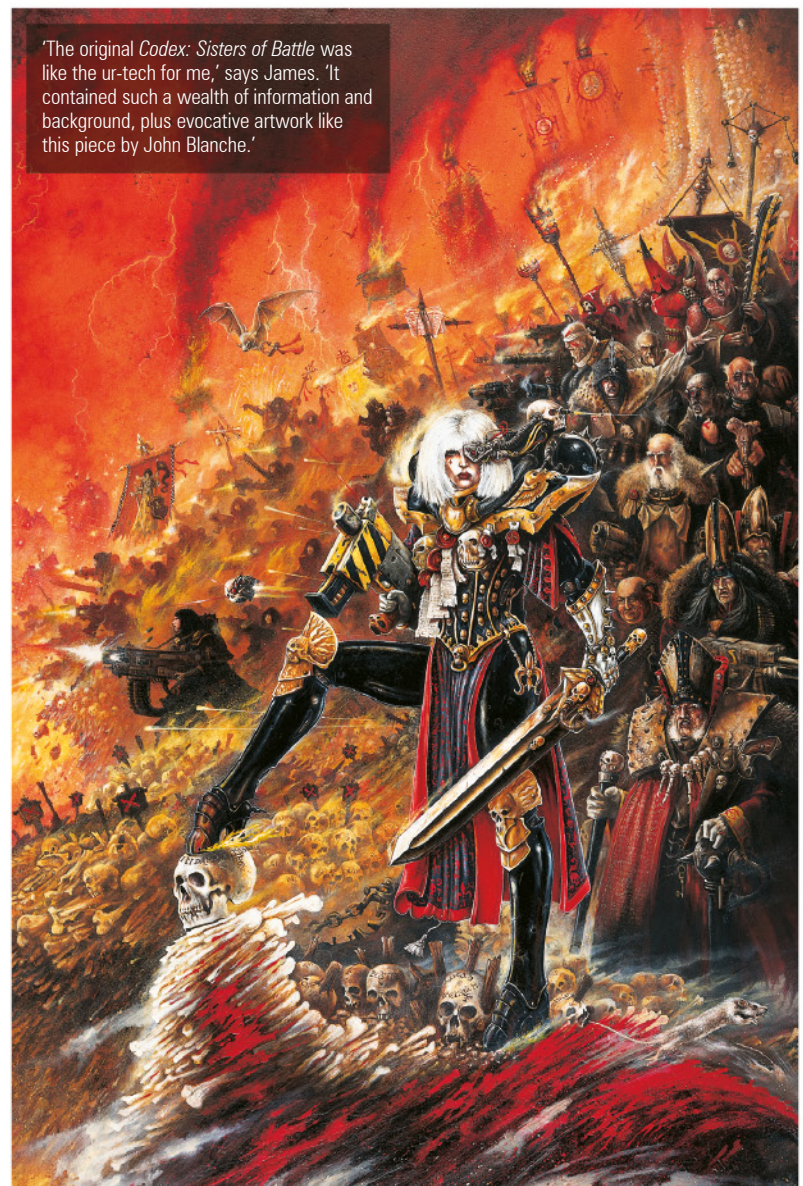
### What's the story in a nutshell?

The story is centred around two Adepta Sororitas – Miriya and Verity – who find themselves hunting down a rogue psyker by the name of Torris Vaun. They track him to the planet Neva – an Ecclesiarchy world – where they begin an investigation into his whereabouts. But the more they uncover about him, the more they begin to realise that something isn't right on Neva and that a larger conspiracy is afoot. Dun-dun-duuuuuun!

### So it's an investigative story?

It is, yes – there's a lot of super-sleuthing going on. I'd just written a couple of Space Marine novels that were all bolters firing all the time, so I wanted to write something a bit different.

Normally the Sisters of Battle are called in when heresy is imminent and psykers need to be purged. However, I liked the idea that two characters – a warrior and a medic – have been taken out of their comfort zones to conduct an investigation instead of hammering something flat for a change. It means I can place them in





interesting situations because investigators can go anywhere and talk to anyone – they're the law after all, so they can do what they like. They can talk to the rich and the poor, use warrants to search places, journey to places that characters like Space Marines would never go. This gives them a real sense of agency, and the reader gets to travel with them as they journey across Neva in search of their escaped prisoner. I got to do a lot of world-building, which I'm a big fan of.



### **So who are Miriya and Verity?**

Sister Miriya is a Sister Superior in the Order of Our Martyred Lady – a veteran, a squad leader and a well-respected member of the convent. Outwardly she's quite tough and she can handle herself on the battlefield, but inwardly she has a lot of doubts. She's very much a 'fire torpedoes, full speed ahead!' kind of person who is driven by her faith. She wants to believe that if she does the right thing, the Emperor will protect her, but she's not entirely sure that's true. When it comes to dealing with the philosophical questions in her life, she's on shaky ground. That's the central conflict in her character. Verity is a Hospitaller, and she's the inverse of Miriya in that she appears outwardly weak, but she's emotionally strong. She has a clear sense of who she is and a strong moral code. She's very brave for someone who's not a line soldier – she goes to show that you don't need to kick down doors or fire bolters to be a strong character.

Miriya and Verity are brought together by the death of Sister Lethe, who was Miriya's second in command and Verity's actual biological sister. They both want to know why it happened and who is responsible – that's what drives them together at the start of the story. Initially, there's quite a bit of friction between them. Verity believes it's Miriya's fault that her sister is dead and blames her for it. Ironically, Miriya blames herself, too – she believes she should have been there to protect Lethe, and she carries that guilt around with her but cannot admit it to Verity. As the story develops, they work towards a sullen comradeship, then eventually a friendship in which they come to realise that they can rely on each other in the toughest of circumstances.

The whole idea is that they're a double act, kind of like your classic buddy cops. They're two mismatched people working together, which obviously creates its own drama alongside that of the story itself. I like writing characters like this because you can explore each of them by reflecting them off the other.

### **Did you approach writing the Sisters of Battle differently to Space Marines?**

Definitely. Space Marines are essentially scooped up when they're young boys, put into the system, processed and turned into soldiers. There's something about them that's missing to us as humans because of the way they have been transformed. Sisters of Battle are still humans, and they have lived something closer to a regular life, which makes them a bit more relatable. There's more opportunity for their individual personalities to shine through, and to explore how they interact with each other and the people they encounter. Canoness Galatea, for example, is quite motherly towards Miriya, but she can also be pretty ferocious. That's one of my favourite scenes in the novel, actually, when Galatea is hauling Miriya over the coals for yet another transgression. She knows she has to administer punishment, but she also wants to look after one of her rising stars.

Then there's the faith aspect of the characters. Everything they do is informed by it, which is to be expected seeing as they've been surrounded by the Ecclesiarchy their entire lives. Some of the characters are extremely pious and humourless about their faith, while others have a more casual relationship with it. Arguably the most zealous of the group is Sister Iona. She's so tuned into the doctrine that when something goes wrong, even if it's not her fault, she is so ashamed and feels so much guilt that she is almost ready to take her own life. It was really interesting exploring what it means to fight and die for a higher ideal.



### **Speaking of higher ideals, can you tell us more about Torris Vaun?**

Put simply, he's a psychic terrorist. He doesn't have a grand plan; he just wants to cause as much destruction as possible before time runs out for him. His psychic potential is wholly unrestrained and only kept in check by his own will, which makes him incredibly dangerous to all around him. He would burn down an entire building just to kill one person and think nothing of it. Like many bad guys, he does have a pretty good motive for doing what he does, even though he's a genuinely reprehensible person at heart, and he does some pretty appalling things throughout the course of the novel using his powers. You certainly aren't expected to sympathise with him, but you can understand where he is coming from. The further you get through the story, the more you come to realise that he is a victim in a much bigger conspiracy.



## How did you choose what type of psyker to make him?

That came from the title of the novel. Faith and fire are the tools of the sisterhood – they have unshakeable faith in what they are doing, and they use fire to impose their will. I liked the idea that their nemesis lived by similar ideals, which is why I decided to make Vaun a pyrokene – a telekinetic that can manipulate fire. Where the sisters use fire as a cleansing force to destroy evil, Vaun uses it as a force of evil to destroy good.

## Some of the effects of his powers are quite messy. Did you enjoy coming up with new and interesting ways to melt people?

There's a strange kind of glee that comes from writing something destructive and horrible. The texture of Warhammer 40,000 is grimy, gritty and unpleasant, and there is a dark glamour to it. Psychic powers are particularly unusual because they don't even really obey the laws of physics. If you want to melt or combust someone, you can. A simple fireball isn't really 'Warhammer' enough. Actually, one of my favourite descriptions is when Vaun uses his powers to excite the molecules in a bottle of alcohol (well, many bottles actually), turning them to gas and igniting them into an aerosolised cloud of fire. One of my previous editors, Marc Gascoigne, once said, 'When you think you've gone far enough, go a little bit further,' and I still live by that mantra.

## You mentioned world-building earlier. What's that when it's at home?

It's when you create the environment and setting for your story. If you have an escaped prisoner, he needs to escape somewhere. In this case it's the planet Neva. But who lives there? What does the planet look like? What are its rules and customs?

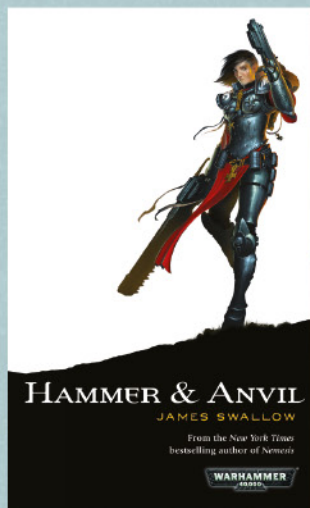
Are they different to what our characters are accustomed to? And so on. *Faith & Fire* has been one of my favourite world-building exercises to date I reckon. I loved delving into Ecclesiarchy life and the daily procedures and observances that the Sisters of Battle have to make. I got to write about Imperial society on a world that's not on the front line of warfare. I explored civilians of all classes and social standings, from the rich and moneyed cruising through life surrounded by clouds of perfume to the down-and-outs begging for cash in the gutter. That's what I meant earlier about having characters that can investigate anywhere – you build the world around them as they conduct their inquiries and create a really deep sense of culture and societal structure. I think, had I not reigned myself in, I would have ended up with the core book of a roleplaying game!

## So, faith ... or fire?

I'd rather stand on the side of faith with the Sisters backing me up. The idea that faith is their armour and the idea of having faith – be it something religious, belief in your friends or even just hope in human nature – is a really reassuring thing. Chaos is fun for a while, I'm sure, but it will get out of hand eventually. Then the Inquisition will turn up, and no one wants that.

## FURTHER READING

Over the page you'll find the first part of James's novel *Faith & Fire*, with subsequent instalments appearing in *White Dwarf* over the coming year. However, if you just can't wait and want to read it all in one go, then the whole novel, plus its prequel and sequel, are available from the Black Library website as both novels and audio books. You can find out more here: [blacklibrary.com](http://blacklibrary.com)



Sister Miriya, as illustrated by Hardy Fowler for the cover of *Hammer & Anvil*. 'I love the attitude Hardy got into the piece,' says James. 'He's given Miriya that don't-mess-with-me look that I think is very apt.'



# FAITH & FIRE

BY JAMES SWALLOW

**When psychic heretic Torris Vaun escapes from her custody, Celestian Miriya is disgraced in the eyes of her fellow Sisters. In pursuit of Vaun, Miriya takes her Sisters in pursuit and, along with Sister Verity, follows a trail of heresy that will challenge their strength of faith. Part I of IX.**

## CHAPTER ONE

From his high vantage point, the Emperor of Mankind looked down upon Miriya where she knelt. His unchanging gaze took in all of her, the woman's bowed form shrouded in blood-coloured robes. In places, armour dark as obsidian emerged from the folds of the crimson cloth. It framed her against the tan stonework of the chapel floor. She was defined by the light that reflected upon her from the Emperor's eternal visage; all that she was, she was only by His decree.

Miriya's lips moved in whispers. The litany of divine guidance spilled from her in a cascading hush. The words were such a part of her that they came as quickly and effortlessly as breathing. As the climax of the declaration came, she felt a warm core of righteousness establish itself in her heart, as it always did, as it always had since the day she had discarded her novice cloak and taken the oath.

She allowed herself to look up at Him. Miriya granted herself this small gesture as a reward. Her gaze travelled up the altar, drinking in the majesty of the towering golden idol. The Emperor watched her over folded arms, across the inverted hilt of a great burning sword. At His left shoulder stood Saint Celestine, her hands cupped to hold two stone doves as if she were offering them up; at His right was Saint Katherine, the Daughter of the Emperor who had founded the order that Miriya now served.

She lingered on Katherine's face for a moment; the statue's hair fell down over her temple and across the fleur-de-lys carved beneath her left eye. Miriya unconsciously brushed her black tresses back over her ear, revealing her own fleur tattoo in dark red ink. The armour the stone saint wore differed from Miriya's in form but not function. Katherine was clad in wargear of a type not seen in nearly four thousand years, and she bore the symbol of a burning heart where Miriya wore a holy cross crested with a skull. When the saint had been mistress of her sect, they had been known as the Order of the Fiery Heart – but that had been decades before Katherine's brutal ending on Mnestheus. Since that date, for over two millennia they had called themselves the Order of Our Martyred Lady. It was

part of a legacy of duty to the Emperor that Sister Miriya of the Adepta Sororitas had been fortunate to continue.

With that thought, she looked upon the effigy of Him. She met the stone eyes and imagined that on far distant Terra, the Lord of Humanity was granting her some infinitely small fraction of His divine attention, willing her to carry out her latest mission with His blessing. Miriya's hands came to her chest and crossed one another, making the sign of the Imperial aquila.

'In Your name,' she said aloud, 'in service to Your Light, grant me guidance and strength. Let me know the witch and the heretic, show them to me.' She bowed once again. 'Let me do Your bidding and rid the galaxy of Man's foe.'

Miriya drew herself up from where she knelt and moved to the font servitor, presenting the slave-thing with her ornate plasma pistol. The hybrid produced a brass cup apparatus in place of a hand and let a brief mist of holy water sprinkle over the weapon. Tapes of sanctified parchment stuttered from its lipless mouth with metallic ticks of sound.

She turned away, and there in the shadows was Sister Iona. Silent, morose Iona, the patterned hood of her red robe forever deepening the hollows of her eyes. Some of the Battle Sisters disliked the woman. Iona rarely showed emotion, never allowed herself to cry out in pain when combat brought her wounds, never raised her voice in joyous elation during the daily hymns. Many considered her flawed, her mind so cold that it was little more than the demi-machine inside the skull of the servitor at the font. Miriya had once sent two novice girls to chastisement for daring to voice such thoughts aloud. But those who said these things did not know Iona's true worth. She was as devout a Sororitas as any other, and if her manner made some Sister Superiors reluctant to have her in their units, then so be it. Their loss was Miriya's gain.

'Iona,' she said, approaching, 'Speak to me.'



'It is time, Sister,' said the other woman, her milk-pale face set in a frown. 'The witch ship comes.'

In spite of herself, Miriya's hand tensed around the grip of her plasma pistol. She nodded. 'I am prepared.'

Iona returned the gesture. 'As are we all.' The Sister clasped a small fetish in her gloved grip, a sliver icon of the Convent Sanctorum's Hallowed Spire on Ophelia VII. The small tell was enough to let Miriya know the woman was concerned.

'I am as troubled as you,' she admitted as they crossed the chancel back toward the steel hatch in the chapel wall.

Iona opened it and they stepped through, emerging into the echoing corridor beyond. Where the stone of the church ended, the iron bones of the starship around it began. Once, the chapel had been earthbound, built into a hill on a world in the Vitus system; now it existed as like a strange transplanted organ inside the metal body of the Imperial Naval frigate *Mercutio*.

'This vexes me, Sister Superior,' said Iona, her frown deepening beneath her hood. 'What is our cause if not to take the psyker to task for his witchery, to show the Emperor's displeasure?' She looked as if she wanted to spit. 'That we are called upon to... to *associate* with this mutant is enough to make my stomach turn. There is a part of me that wants to contact the captain and order him to take that abomination from the Emperor's sky.'

Miriya gave her a sharp look. 'Have a care, Sister. You and I may detest these creatures, but in their wisdom, the servants of the Throne see fit to use these pitiful wretches in His name. And as much as that may sicken us, we cannot refuse a command that comes from the highest levels of Ecclesiarchy.'

The answer was not nearly enough to satisfy Iona's disquiet. 'How can such things go on, I ask you? The psyker is our mortal enemy—'

Iona's commander silenced her with a raised hand. 'The *witch* is our enemy, Sister. The psyker is a *tool*. Only the untrained and the wild are a threat to the Imperium.' Miriya's eyes narrowed. 'You have never served as I have, Iona. For two full years I was a warden aboard one of those blighted vessels. On the darkest nights, the things I saw there still haunt me so...' She forced the memories away. 'This is how the God-Emperor tests the faithful, sister. He shows us our greatest fears and has us overcome them.'

They walked in silence for a few moments before Iona spoke again. 'We are taught in the earliest days of our

indoctrination that those cursed with the psychic mark in their blood are living gateways to Chaos. All of them, Sister Superior, not just the ones who eschew the worship of the Golden Throne. One single slip and even the most devout will fall, and open the way to the warp!'

Miriya raised an eyebrow. It was perhaps the most passion she had ever seen the dour woman display. 'That is why we are here. Since the Age of Apostasy, we and all our sister Sororitas have stood at the gates to hell and barred the witchkin. As the mutant falls, so does the traitor, so does the witch.' She placed a hand on Iona's shoulder. 'Ask yourself this, Sister. Who else could be called forth to accomplish what we shall do today?' Miriya's face split in a wry smile. 'The men of the Imperial Navy or the Guard? They would be dead in moments from the shock. The Adeptus Astartes? Those abhumans willingly welcome psykers into their own ranks!' She shook her head ruefully. 'No, Iona, only we, the Sisters of Battle, can stand sentinel here.' The woman patted her pistol holster. 'And mark me well, if but one of those misbegotten wretches steps out of line, then we will show them the burning purity of our censure.'

The sound of her voice drew the attention of Miriya's squad as she approached. They did not exchange the curt bows or salutes that were mandatory in other Sororitas units; Sister Miriya kept a relaxed hand on her warriors, preferring to keep them sharp in matters of battle prowess rather than parade ground niceties.

'Report,' she demanded.

Her second in command Sister Lethe cleared her throat. 'We are ready, Sister Superior, as per your command.'

'Good,' Miriya snapped, forestalling any questions about their orders before they could be uttered. 'This will be a simple matter of boarding the ship and securing the prisoner.'

Lethe threw a look at the other members of the Celestian squad. Usually deployed for front line combat operations, the Celestians were known as the elite troops of the Adepta Sororitas and such a simple duty as a prisoner escort could easily be considered beneath them. Celestians were used to fighting at the heart of heretic confrontations and mutant uprisings, not acting like mere line officer Arbites.

Miriya saw these thoughts in the eyes of Lethe and the other Sisters; she knew the misgivings well, as they had been her own after the orders had first been delivered by astropathic transfer from Canoness Galatea's adjutant. 'Any duty in the Emperor's name is glorious,' she told them, a stern edge to her words, 'and we would do well to remember that.'



‘Of course,’ said Lethe, her expression contrite. ‘We obey.’

‘I share your concern.’ Miriya admitted, her voice lowered. ‘Our squad has never been the most favoured of units—’ and with that the other women shared a moment of grim amusement, ‘—but we will do as we must.’

‘There!’ Sister Cassandra called, observing through one of the crystalline portholes in the corridor wall. ‘I see it!’

Miriya drew closer and peered through the thick lens. For a moment, she thought her Battle Sister had been mistaken, but then she realised that the darkness she saw beyond the hull of the *Mercutio* was not the void of interstellar space at all, but the flank of another craft. It gave off no light, showed no signals or pennants; only the faint glow of the frigate’s own portholes and beacons illuminated it – and then, not the whole vessel but only thin slivers of it caught in the radiance.

‘A Black Ship,’ breathed Iona, ‘Emperor protect us.’



In two by two overwatch formation, their bolters at the ready, Miriya’s squad made their way up the corded flex-tube that connected itself to one of the *Mercutio*’s outer airlocks. At their head, the Sister Superior walked with her own weapon holstered, but her open hand lay flat atop the knurled nalwood grip. The memories spiked her thoughts again, taking her back to the first time she had stepped into the dark iron heart of an Adeptus Telepathica vessel. No one knew how many craft there were in the fleets of the Black Ships. Some spoke of a secret holdfast concealed in the very immaterium of the warp itself, sending out droves of ebon vessels to scour the galaxy for psykers; others said that the ships worked in isolation from one another, venturing back and forth under psychic directives sent by the Emperor himself. Miriya did not know the truth, and she did not want to. Whenever a potent psyker was discovered, the Black Ships would come for them. Some, those with pure hearts and wills strong enough to survive the tests the adepts forced upon them, might live to become servants to the Inquisition or the astropathic colleges. Most would be put to death in one manner or another, or granted in sacrifice to the Emperor so that he might keep alight the great psychic beacon of the Astronomican.

The Battle Sisters entered an elliptical reception chamber carved from phase-iron and whorled with hexagrammic wards. Strips of bioluminescence cast weak yellow light into the centre of the space and hooded figures lingered at the edges, orbiting the room with silent footsteps. Lethe and the others automatically fell into a combat wheel

formation, guns covering every possible angle of attack. Miriya watched the shrouded shapes moving around them. The Adeptus Telepathica had their own operatives but by Imperial edict they were not allowed to serve as warders upon their own vessels; it was too easy for a malignant psyker to coerce another telepath. Instead, Sisters of Battle or Inquisitorial Storm Troopers served in the role of custodian aboard the Black Ships, their adamantine faith protecting them from the predations of the mind-witches they guarded.

Footsteps approached from the gloomy perimeter of the chamber. Her eyes had grown accustomed to the dimness now, and she quickly picked out the figures filing from an iris hatch on the far wall. Two of them were Sister Retributors, armed with heavy multi-melta weapons, and another a Celestian like herself. The other Battle Sisters wore gunmetal silver armour and white robes, with the sigil of a haloed black skull on their shoulder pauldrons. There were more behind them, but they remained in the shadows for now.

The Celestian saluted Miriya and she returned the gesture. ‘Miriya of the Order of Our Martyred Lady. Well met, Sister.’

‘Dione of the Order of the Argent Shroud,’ said the other woman. ‘Well met, Sister.’ Miriya was instantly struck by the look of fatigue on Dione’s face, the tension etched into the lines about her eyes. Her fellow Sororitas met her gaze and a moment of silent communication passed between them. ‘The prisoner is ready. It is my pleasure to have rid of him.’ She beckoned forward hooded men and the two Retributors turned their guns to draw a bead on them.

The adepts brought a rack in the shape of a skeletal cube, within which sat a large drum made of green glass. There was a man inside it, naked and pale in the yellow illumination. His head was concealed beneath a metal mask festooned with spikes and probes. ‘Torris Vaun,’ Miriya said his name, and the masked man twitched a little as if he had heard her. ‘A fine catch, Sister Dione.’

‘He did not go easily, of that you can be sure. He killed six of my kith before we were able to subdue him.’

‘And yet he still draws breath.’ Miriya studied the huge jar, aware that the man inside was scrutinising her just as intently with other, preternatural senses. ‘Had the choice been mine, this witch would have been shot into the heart of a star.’

Dione managed a stiff nod. ‘We are in agreement, Sister. Alas, we must obey the Ministorum’s orders otherwise. You are to deliver this criminal to Lord Viktor LaHayn at the Noroc Lunar Cathedral on planet Neva.’ A hobbling



servitor approached clutching a roll of parchment and a waxy stick of data-sealant. Dione took the paper and made her mark upon it. 'So ordered this day, by the authority of the Ecclesiarchy.'

Miriya followed suit, using the sealant to press her squad commander signet into the document. From behind her, she heard Lethe think aloud.

'He seems such a frail thing. What crime could a man like this commit that would warrant our stewardship?'

Dione took a sharp breath; clearly she did not allow her troops to speak without permission as Miriya did. 'The six he murdered were only the latest victims of his violence. This man has sown terror and mayhem on a dozen worlds across this sector, all in the name of sating his base appetites. Vaun is an animal, Sister, a ruthless opportunist and a pirate. To him, cruelty is its own reward.' Her face soured. 'It disgusts me to share a room with such an aberrant.'

Miriya shot Lethe a look. 'Your candour is appreciated, Sister Dione. We will ensure the criminal reaches Neva without delay.'

More servitors took up the confinement capsule and marched into the tunnel back to the *Mercutio*. As Vaun was taken away, Dione seemed to relax a little. 'Lord LaHayn was most insistent that this witch be brought to his court for execution. It is my understanding the honoured deacon called in several favours with the Adeptus Terra to ensure it was so.'

Miriya nodded, recalling the message from Galatea. The Canoness would be waiting in Noroc City for their arrival with the criminal. 'Vaun is a Nevan himself, correct? One might consider it just that he be put to the sword on the soil of his birthworld, given that he created so much anarchy there.' She threw a glance at Lethe, and her second marshalled the rest of the Celestians to flank the prisoner as he vanished into the docking tube. Miriya turned to follow. 'Ave Imperator, Sister.'

Dione's armoured gauntlet clasped Miriya's wrist and held her for a moment. 'Don't underestimate him,' she hissed, her eyes glittering in the murkiness. 'I did, and six good women paid the price.'

'Of course.'

Dione released her grip and faded back into the blackness.

From the rendezvous point, the *Mercutio* came about and made space for the Neva system. The Black Ship vanished from her sensorium screen like a lost dream, so quickly and so completely that it seemed as if the dark vessel had never been there.

The frigate's entry to the empyrean went poorly, and a momentary spasm in the warship's Geller Field killed a handful of deckhands on the gunnery platforms. The crew spoke in hushed tones behind guarded expressions, never within earshot of the Battle Sisters. None of them knew what it was that Miriya's squad had brought back from the Black Ship, but all of them were afraid of it. Over the days that followed, prayer meetings in the frigate's sparse chapel had a sudden increase in attendance and there were more hymns being played over the vox nets on the lower decks. Most of the crew had never seen Battle Sisters in the flesh before. In dozens of ports across the sector they had heard the stories about them, just like every other Navy swab. There were things that men of low character would think of women such as these, thoughts that ran the spectrum from lustful fantasy to violent distrust. Some said they lived off the flesh of the males they killed, like a jungle mantis; others swore they were as much concubines as they were soldiers, able to bring pleasure and damnation to the unwary in equal measure. The crewmen were scared by the Sororitas as much as they were fascinated them; but there were some who watched the women wherever they went, compelled by something deeper and darker.



Lethe glanced up as Miriya entered the cargo bay, stepping past the two gun servitors at the hatch to where she and Cassandra stood on guard by the glass capsule.

'Sister Superior,' she nodded. 'What word from the captain?'

Miriya's frown was answer enough. 'He tells me the navigator is troubled. The way forth through the warp is turbulent, but he hopes we will arrive at Neva in a day or so.'

Lethe glanced at the capsule and saw that Cassandra was doing the same.

'The prisoner cannot be the cause,' Miriya answered the unspoken question. 'I was assured the nullifying mask prevents any exercise of witchery.' She tap-tapped her finger on the thick glass wall.

Sister Lethe fingered the silver rosary chain she habitually wore around her neck. She was not convinced. 'All the same, the sooner this voyage concludes, the better. This inaction chafes at my spirit.'





Miriya found her head bobbing in agreement. She and Lethe had served together for the longest span among this squad and often the younger woman was of one mind with her unit's commander. 'We have endured worse, have we not? The ork raids on Jacob's Tower? The Starleaf purge?'

'Aye, but all the same, the waiting gnaws at me.' Lethe looked away. 'Sister Dione was correct. Being in the presence of this criminal makes my very soul feel soiled. I shall need to bathe in sanctified waters after this mission is at an end.'

Cassandra tensed suddenly, and the reaction brought the other women to attention. 'What is it?' Miriya demanded.

The Battle Sister stalked toward a mess of metal girders heaped in one corner of the cargo bay. 'Something...' Cassandra's hand shot out and she dragged a wriggling shape out of the darkness. 'Intruder!'

The gun servitors reacted, weapons humming up to firing position. Miriya sneered as Cassandra hauled the protesting form of a deckhand into the centre of the bay. 'What in the Emperor's name are you?' she demanded.

'Muh. Muh. Midshipman. Uh. Vorgo. Ma'am.' The man blinked wet, beady eyes. 'Please don't devour me!'

Lethe and Cassandra exchanged glances. 'Devour you?'

Miriya waved them into silence. 'What are you doing here, Midshipman Vorgo? Who sent you?'

'No one!' he became frantic. 'Myself! I just... Just wanted to see...' Vorgo extended a finger toward the glass capsule and just barely touched its surface.

The Sister Superior slapped his hand away and he hissed in pain. 'Idiot! I am within my rights to have you thrown into the void for this trespass!'

'I'm sorry! I'm sorry!' Vorgo fell to his knees and made the sign of the aquila. 'Came in through the vent... By the Throne, I was only curious—'

'That will get you killed,' said Lethe, her bolter hovering close to his head.

Miriya stepped away and made a terse wave of her hand. 'Get this fool out of here, then have the engineseers send a helot to seal any vents in this chamber!'

Cassandra hauled the man to his feet and propelled him out of the cargo bay, his protests bubbling up as he went. Lethe followed, hesitating on the cusp of the hatch. 'Sister Superior, shall I remain?'

'No. Have Isabel join me here forthwith.' Vorgo's protesting form between them, the Battle Sisters closed the hatch behind them.

The cargo bay fell quiet. Miriya listened to the faint, irregular tick of metal flexing under the power of the frigate's drives, the humming motors of the servitors, the murmur of bubbles in the tank. A nerve in her jaw twitched. She smelt a thick, greasy tang in the air.

'Alone at last.'

For a moment, she thought she had imagined it. Miriya turned in place, eyeing the two gun slaves. Had one of them spoken? Both of them peered back at her with blank stares and dull, doll-like sensor apertures, lines of drool emerging from their sewn lips. Impossible; whatever intelligence they might have once possessed, the machine-slaves were nothing but automatons now, incapable of such discourse.

'Who addresses me?'

'Here.' The voice was heavy with effort. 'Come here.'

She spun in place. There before her was the capsule, the ebony metal frame about it and the spidery, hooded man-shape adrift within. The Battle Sister drew her pistol and thumbed the activation rune, taking aim at the glass tank. 'Vaun. How dare you touch me with your witchery!'

'Have a care, Sister. It would go badly for you to injure me.' The words came from the air itself, as if the psyker was forcing the atmosphere in the chamber to vibrate like a vox diaphragm.

Miriya's face twisted in revulsion. 'You have made a foolish mistake, criminal. You have tipped your hand.' She crossed to a pod of arcane dials and switches connected to the flank of the glass container. Rods and levers were set at indents indicating the amounts of sense-deadening liquids and contrapsychic drugs filling Vaun's cell. The Battle Sister was no tech-priest, but she had seen confinement frames of this design before. She knew how they worked, pumping neuropathic philtres into the lungs and pores of particularly virulent psykers to stifle their mutant powers. She adjusted the rods and fresh splashes of murky fluid entered the tank. 'This will quiet you.'

'Wait. Stop.' Vaun's body jerked inside the capsule, a pallid hand pressing on the inside of the thick glass. 'You do not understand. I only wanted... to talk.'

Another dial turned and darts of electricity swam into the liquid. 'No one here wants to listen, deviant.'



The words became vague, laboured, fading. 'You... mistaken... will regret...'

Miriya rested the barrel of her plasma weapon on the glass. 'Heed me. If one breath more of speech comes from that cesspool you call a mind before I deliver you to Neva, I will boil you in there like a piece of rotten meat.'

There was no reply. Torris Vaun hung suspended in the foggy solution, slack and waxy.

With a shudder, Sister Miriya muttered the prayer of virtue and fingered the purity seals on her armour.



*Mercutio* fell from the grip of the warp and pushed into the Neva system at full burn, as if the ship itself were desperate to deposit the cargo it carried. As the capital planet orbiting fourth from its yellow-white star swelled in the frigate's hololiths, a small and quiet insurrection began on *Mercutio's* lower decks.

Men from the labourer gang on the torpedo racks came to the brig where Midshipman Vorgo was confined, and in near silence they murdered the armsmen guarding him. When they freed Vorgo, he didn't thank them; in fact, he said hardly anything but a few clipped sentences, mostly to explain where the gun servitors were placed in the cargo bay, and how the Battle Sisters had behaved toward him.

Vorgo's liberators were not his friends. Some of them were men who had actively disliked him in the past, picking on him in dark corridors and shaking him down for scrip. There was a common denominator between them all, but not one of the men could have spoken of it. Instead, they went their separate ways, each moving with the same hushed purpose and blank expression.

In the generarium where the *Mercutio's* reactor-spirits coiled inside their cores and bled out their power to the vessel's systems, some of the quiet men walked up to the service gantries over the vast cogwheels of the coolant arrays. They waited for a count of ten decimals from the turning discs and then leapt in groups of three, directly into the teeth of the mechanism. Of course, they were crushed between the cogs, but the pulpy mess of their corpses made the workings slip and seize. In moments, vital flows of chilling fluid were denied to the reactors and alarm tocsins began to wail.

Vorgo and the rest of the men went to the cargo decks, meeting more of their number along the way. The new arrivals had cans of chemical unguent taken from stores of the tech-priests who ministered to the lascannons. Applied

in a vacuum, the sluggish fluid could be used to keep the wide glassy lenses of the guns free from micro-meteor scarring and other damage; but on contact with air, the unguent had a far more violent reaction.



After the incident with the midshipman, Sister Miriya had demanded and been given a third gun servitor from the ship's compliment to guard the prisoner. Miriya made sure that no member of her squad was ever alone again with Vaun, pairs of the Celestians watching him around the clock in shifts.

Lethe and Iona were holding that duty when the hatch exploded inward. The machine-slaves stumbled about, their autosenses confused by the deafening report of the blast. The muzzles of weapons dallied, unable to find substantial targets to lock on to.

The Battle Sisters had no such limitations. The men that pushed their way in through the ragged hole in the wall, heedless of the burns the hot metal gave them, were met with bolter fire. Lethe's Godwyn-De'az pattern weapon chattered in her gloved grip, a fountain of glittering brassy shells cascading from the ejection port. The gun's fine tooling of filigree and etching caught the light, catechisms of castigation aglow upon its barrel and breech. Iona's hand flamer growled as puffs of orange fire jetted across the bay, licking at the invaders and immolating them; but there were many, clasping crude clubs and metal cans. She spied Vorgo among them, throwing a jar of thick fluid at a servitor. The glass shattered on the helot's chest and the contents flashed magnesium-white; plumes of acrid grey smoke spat forth as acids chewed up flesh and implanted machinery alike.

'Sisters, to arms!' Lethe shouted into the vox pickup on her armour's neck ring, but her voice was drowned out by the keening wail of the *Mercutio's* general quarters klaxon. She couldn't know it from here, deep inside the hull, but the frigate was starting to list as the heat build-up in the drives baffled the ship's cogitator systems.

A scrum of deckhands piled atop another gun servitor, forcing it down, choking the muzzles of its guns with their chests and hands, muffling shotgun discharges with the meat of their bodies. Lethe's face wrinkled in grim disgust; and it was then she noticed that the men did not speak, did not cry out, did not howl in frenzy. Doe-eyed and noiseless, they let themselves die in order to suffocate the prisoner's guardians.

Another chemical detonation signalled the destruction of the last servitor and then the attackers surged forward over



the bodies of their crewmates, ten or twenty men moving in one great mass. Sister Lethe saw Iona reel backward, choking and strangling on clouds of foul air from the makeshift acid bombs. The bleak woman's face sported chemical burns and her eyes were swollen. Unlike the abhuman warriors of the Adeptus Astartes, the Sororitas did not possess the altered physiognomies that could shrug off such assaults.

Lethe's lungs gave up metallic, coppery breaths as the bitter smoke scarred her inside. The silent mob moved to her, letting the Battle Sister waste her ammunition on them. When the magazine in her bolter clicked empty, they pounced and beat her to the ground, the sheer weight of them forcing her to her knees.

Time blurred in stinking lurches of pungent fumes, fogging her brain. The toxic smoke made thinking difficult. Through cracked and seared lips, Lethe mouthed the litany of divine guidance, calling to the Emperor to kindle the faith in her heart. She forced herself up from the decking. Her gun was missing from her grip and she tried to push the recollection of where it had gone to the front of her mind; but the smoke made everything harsh and rough, each breath like razorwool in her throat, each thought as heavy and slow as glaciers.

She focussed. Vorgo had loops of cable and odd metal implements in his hands, all of them still wet with greenish liquid where they had been immersed in the tank. He was struggling to breathe, but the midshipman's eyes were distant and watery. Behind the portly deckhand, a naked man was clothing himself in a dirty coverall, running a scarred hand through a fuzz of greying hair. He seemed to sense Lethe's scrutiny and turned about to face her.

'Vaun,' she choked. His reply was a cold smile and a nod at the broken capsule, thick neurochemical soup lapping out of the crack in its flank. Lethe's eyes were gritty and inflamed, making it hard to blink. 'Free...'

'Yes,' His voice was cool and metered. Under the right circumstances, it would have been playful, even seductive. He patted Vorgo on the shoulder and gestured toward the torn doorway. 'Well done.'

'Traitor,' Lethe managed.

Vaun gave a slow shake of the head. 'Be kind, Sister. He doesn't know what he's doing.' A brief smile danced on his lips. 'None of them do.'

'The others will be here soon. You will die.'

'I'll be long gone. These matters were prepared for, Sister.' The psyker crossed to Iona, where the injured woman lay gasping in shallow breaths. Lethe tried to get to her feet and stop him from whatever it was he was doing, but the deckhands punched and kicked her back to the floor, boots ringing off her armour.

Vaun whispered things in Iona's ear, brushing his hands over her straw-blond hair, and the Battle Sister began to weep brokenly. Vaun stood up and rubbed his hands together, amused with himself.

'You can't escape,' Lethe said thickly, 'It will take more than this to stop us! My Sisters are loyal! They will never let you get away from this vessel!'

He nodded. 'Yes, they are loyal. I saw that.' The criminal took a barbed knife from one of his erstwhile rescuers and came closer. Vorgo and the others held Lethe down in anticipation. 'That kind of loyalty breeds passion. It makes one emotional, prone to recklessness.' He turned the blade in his hand, letting light glint off it. 'Something that I intend to use to my advantage.'

Lethe tried to say something else, but Vaun tipped back her head with one hand, and used the other to bury the knife in her throat.

## CHAPTER TWO

The *Corolus* was a starship in only the very loosest sense of the word. It didn't possess warp drives, it was incapable of navigating across the vast interstellar distances of its larger brethren; and where the majority of vessels in service to humankind had some degree of artistry, however brutal, to their design, *Corolus* was little more than an agglomeration of spent fuel tanks from sub-orbital landers, lashed together with pipework and luck. Fitted with a simple reaction drive and a bitter old enginarium from a larger vessel now centuries dead, the cargo scow plied the sub-light routes across the Neva system from the core worlds to the outer manufactory satellites with loads of chemicals and vital breathing gases. The ship was slow and fragile and utterly unprepared for the fury that had suddenly been turned upon it.

There was a matter of communication that had not been acted on quickly enough; then thunderous flares of laser fire from an Imperial frigate had set *Corolus* dead in space while razor-edged boarding pods slashed into her hull spaces.

If the ship had a captain, it was Finton. He owned *Corolus*, after a fashion, along with most of the crew thanks to a network of honour-debts and punitive indenture contracts.



He floundered around the cramped, musty bridge space, his hand constantly straying to and away from the ballistic pistol on his hip. Over the intercom he kept hearing little snatches of activity – panic, mostly, along with bursts of screaming and the heavy rattle of bolt-fire. Piece by piece, his ship was slipping out of his grasp and into the hands of the Navy.

But he'd dealt with Naval types a hundred times before. They were never this fast, never this good. Finton was entertaining a new emotion inside his oily, calculating mind. He was *afraid*; and when the bridge door went orange and melted off its hinges, his very nearly lost control of his bodily functions.

Figures in black armour came into the chamber, iron boots clanging off the patched and rusty deck plates. They wore dark helmets bannered with white faceplates, eyes of deep night-blue crystal that searched every shadowed corner of the bridge. Movement for them was graceful and deadly, not a single gesture or motion wasted. One of them noticed him for the first time and Finton saw a difference; this one had a brass shape on the front of its helmet, a dagger-shaped leaf.

'Oh, Blood's sake!' whispered the captain, and he fumbled at his belt. The next sound on the bridge was the thud of Finton's holster and weapon hitting the deck. He bent his knees, hesitated, and then raised his hands, unsure if he should kneel or not.

As one, the invaders threw back their heads and the helmets snapped open. Long hair pooled over their robes, framing eyes that were hard and flinty. The leader came forward to Finton in two quick steps and gripped him with a fistful of his jacket.

'Where is he?' growled Miriya, lifting the man off the deck.

Finton licked his lips. 'Suh-Sister, please! What have I done to displease the Sororitas?'

'Search this tier!' she barked over her shoulder, 'Leave no compartment unchecked! Vent the atmosphere if you have to!'

'No, please—' said the captain. 'Sister, what—'

Miriya let him drop to the deck and kicked him hard in the gut, rupturing an organ or two. 'Don't play games with me, worm. You measure your life in ticks of the clock.' The Sister Superior carefully placed her armoured boot on Finton's right leg and broke it.

Behind her, Sister Isabel directed the other women to their tasks, then began a search of the bridge's control pits,

pushing her way past doddering servitors and aged cogitator panels. 'As before, there is nothing here.'

'Keep searching,' Miriya presented her plasma gun to Finton's face, the neon glow of the energy coils atop it washing him with pale illumination. 'Where is Vaun, little man?' she spat, '*Answer me!*'

'Who?' The word was drawn out like a moan.

'You are testing my patience,' snapped the Sister Superior. 'Half your crew are dead already from resisting us! Unless you wish to join them, tell me where the heretic hides!'

In spite of his pain, Finton shook his head in confusion. 'But... but, no! We left the commerce station... You came after us, fired on us! Our communications were faulty.' He waved feebly at a jury-rigged console across the chamber. 'Couldn't reply...'

'Liar!' Miriya's face twisted in anger and she released a narrow-gauge shot from the plasma weapon into a support stanchion near Finton's head. The captain screamed and shoved himself away from the corona of the white-hot vapour, dragging his twisted leg behind him. Miriya tracked him across the floor with the gun muzzle.

Finton tried to make the sign of the aquila. 'Please don't kill me! It was just some smuggling, nothing more, a few tau artefacts! But that was months ago, and they were all fake anyway!'

'I don't care about your petty crimes, maggot.' Miriya advanced on him. 'I want Torris Vaun. The *Corolus* was the only interplanetary ship to leave Neva's orbital commerce platform.' She bit out each word, as if she were explaining something to a particularly backward child. 'If Vaun was not on the station, then here is the only place he could be!'

'I don't know any Vaun!' screamed Finton.

'*Lies!*' The Battle Sister fired again, striking a dormant servitor and killing it instantly.

Finton coiled into a ball, sobbing. 'No, no, no...'

'Sister Superior,' began Isabel, a warning tone in her voice.

Miriya did not choose to hear it; instead, she knelt next to the freighter captain and let the hot metal of the plasma gun hover near his face. The heat radiating from the muzzle was enough to sear his skin.

'For the last time,' intoned the woman, 'Where have you hidden Torris Vaun?'



‘He’s not here.’

Miriya blinked and looked up. It was Isabel who had spoken.

‘Vaun was never aboard this vessel, Sister Miriya. These cogitator records show the manifest.’ She held a spool of parchment in her grip. ‘They match the dockmaster’s datum for the *Corolus*.’

‘The datum is wrong!’ Miriya retorted. ‘Would you have me believe that Vaun used his witchery to simply teleport himself to safety, Sister? Did he beg the gods of the warp to give him safe passage somewhere else?’

Isabel coloured, afraid to challenge her squad commander when her ire was so high. ‘I have no answer to give you, Sister Superior, save that this wretch does not lie. Torris Vaun never set foot on this trampship.’

‘No,’ Miriya growled, ‘that will not stand! He must not escape us—’

A hollow chime sounded from vox bead in the Battle Sister’s armour. ‘Message relay from *Mercutio*,’ began the flat, monotone voice, ‘by direct order of Her Eminence Canoness Galatea, you are ordered to cease all operations and make planetfall at Noroc City immediately. Ave Imperator.’

‘Ave Imperator,’ repeated the women.

With effort, Miriya holstered her pistol and turned away, her head bowed and eyes distant. The rage she displayed moments earlier had drained away.

‘Sister,’ said Isabel, ‘what shall we do? With him, with this ship?’

Miriya threw a cold glance at Finton and then looked away. ‘Turn this wreck over to the planetary defence force. This crew are criminals, even if they are not the ones we seek.’

At the hatch stood Sister Portia and Sister Cassandra; their expressions confirmed that they too had found nothing of the escaped psyker in their search.

Portia spoke. ‘We heard the recall from Neva. What does it mean? Have they found him?’

Miriya shook her head. ‘I think not. Our failure is now compounded, my Sisters. Blame... must be apportioned.’



There had been Adepta Sororitas on Neva for almost as long as there had been Adepta Sororitas. A world of stunning natural beauty, the planet’s history vanished into the forgotten past of the Age of Strife, into the dark times when the turbulent warp had isolated worlds across the galactic plane; but unlike those colonies of man that had embraced the alien or fallen into barbarism, Neva had never given up its civilisation. Throughout the millennia, it had been a place where art and culture, where theology and learning had been ingrained in the very bones of the planet. From a military or economic standpoint, Neva had little to offer – all her industry existed on the outer worlds of the system, on dusty, dead moons laced with ores and mineral deposits – but she remained rich in the currency of thought and ideas. Grand museum-cities that were said to rival the temples of Terra reached toward the clouds, and in the streets of Noroc, Neva’s coastal capital, every street was blessed with its own murals drawn from the annals of Imperial Earth and Nevan chronicles from ten thousand years of history.

There had been a time, after the confusion wrought by the Horus Heresy, when Neva had become lost once again to the Imperium at large. Warp storms the like of which had not been seen for generations cut the system off from human contact and the Nevans feared a second Age of Strife would follow; but this was not to be their fate. When the day came that the storms lifted, as silently as they had first arrived, Neva’s sky held a new star – a mighty vessel that had lost its way crossing the void.

Aboard that ship were the Sisters of Battle, and with them came the Living Saint Celestine. Golden and magnificent in her heraldry, Celestine and her cohorts had embarked on a War of Faith to chastise the heretical Felis Salutas sect, but fate had brought them here by the whim of the empyrean. It was said by some that Celestine remained only long enough to allow her navigators to establish a fresh course before leaving Neva behind, but for the planet it was deliverance from a servant of the Emperor Himself.

Internecine conflicts and the wars of assassination that had riven Neva’s theocratic barony during the isolation years were instantly nulled. Chapels and courts and universities dedicated to the Imperial Cult flourished as never before; new purpose came to the planet, and that purpose was pilgrimage.



The Order of Our Martyred Lady was not the sole chapter of the Adepta Sororitas to have a convent on Neva, but theirs was the largest and by far the most elaborate. The tower was cut from stone of a hue found only in Neva’s equatorial desert, a honeyed yellow that made the building



glow when the rays of the sunset crossed it. From the highest levels of the convent, an observer could look down along the graceful curve of Noroc City's bay, following the lines of the snow-white sand that mirrored the bowed streets and boulevards.

On any other day, the beauty of it might have struck a chord in Sister Miriya, but at this moment her heart was immune to the sight. From the battlements she stared out over Noroc's cathedrals and habitat clutches without really seeing them, watching the day dissipate, observing nothing but the moments fading away from her in the march of shadows over the city's giant sundial.

A grim smile rose and fell on her lips as she recalled her words to the trampship's captain. *You measure your life in ticks of the clock.* Perhaps she had meant that as much to herself as to him. The time fast approached when she would be called to the Canoness and made to answer for her errors.

Miriya's gaze dropped to the plaza beyond the convent's gates. There were penitents there, robed in hair shirts and cloaks of fishhook barbs. Some of them moaned and growled their way through verses of Imperial dogma, while others took to picking out hapless members of the public who tarried too long, for shouted condemnation and censure. There were flagellators who whipped at children wearing the wrong kinds of hood, and men bearing spears that ended in festoons of candles. She frowned. Parts of the rites at play down there were known to her. The Battle Sister recognised the Commemoration of the Second Sacrifice of the Colchans, the Litany Against Fear and one of the Lesser Prayers to Saint Sabbat – but there were other cantos that seemed strange and hard against her ears. The iconography the penitents bore brimmed with images of wine-dark blood, and unbidden the stark, lifeless face of Lethe rose to the surface of her thoughts, the dead woman's throat open like a second raw mouth.

'They do things differently here,' Cassandra's voice drifted to her on the evening breeze as she approached. The woman threw a nod at the people in the plaza. 'I've not seen the like on other worlds.'

Miriya made an effort to shake off her black mood. 'Nor I. Like you, this is my first venture to Neva. But each planet beneath the Emperor's light embraces Him in its own way.'

'Indeed.' Cassandra joined her at the balcony's edge. 'But some embrace with more fervour than others.'

The Sister Superior eyed her. 'Do I detect a note of disquiet in your tone?'

From a different squad leader, such a comment might have been a caution; but from Miriya it was an invitation. Cassandra's commander demanded and respected honesty in the women who served the church with her. 'It troubles me to hear, but I have been told that in some of Noroc's less... civilised districts, there are women who will mutilate and murder their third child if it is revealed to be a female whilst still unborn. This is done in the name of some aged, arcane idolatry.'

'It is not our place to question their ways,' said Miriya. 'The Ecclesiarchy work to ensure that the veneration of the God-Emperor meshes with the doctrine of each and every planet. Some distasteful anomalies of belief are inevitable.'

'Fortunate then that our order is here to show the Nevans the way.'

'I have never believed in fortune,' Miriya said distantly. 'Faith is enough.'

'But not enough to find Vaun,' replied Cassandra in a morose voice. 'He tricked us, played us for fools.'

Miriya looked at her squadmate. 'Aye. But do not punish yourself, Sister. Canoness Galatea will wish to reserve that pleasure.'

'You know her of old, yes?'

A nod. 'She was once my Sister Superior as I am yours. An unparalleled warrior and a true credit to the legacy of Saint Katherine; but perhaps a touch too inflexible for my liking. We would often disagree on matters of our credo.'

Cassandra could not keep the fear from her voice. 'What do you think will become of us?'

'There will be a cost for our lapse, of that you may have no doubt.' Inwardly, Miriya was already rehearsing the plea she would enter, offering to fall on her sword and take all the blame for Vaun's escape rather than drag Cassandra, Portia, Isabel and poor Iona down with her.

Her Sister gripped the edge of the stone battlements tightly, as if she could squeeze an answer from them. 'This apostate torments me, Sister Superior. By the Throne, how could he have simply vanished into thin air? The escape pod Vaun stole from the *Mercutio* was found on the commerce station, witnesses saw him there! But the only ship he could have been on was that rattletrap scow we boarded!' She shook her head. 'Perhaps... Perhaps he hides still on the orbital platform? Waiting for a warp-capable craft to leave?'



‘No.’ Miriya pointed at the ground. ‘Sub-orbital craft are plentiful on the station. Vaun took one and made planetfall. He came *here*. It is the only explanation.’

‘To Neva? But that makes no sense. The man is a fugitive, his face is infamous on every world in this system. Any rational person would find the first route out of this sub-sector as fast as possible!’

‘It makes sense to Vaun, Sister. The witch’s arrogance is so towering that he believes he can hide in plain sight. Mark me well, I tell you that Torris Vaun never had any intention of escaping from Neva. He wanted to come here.’

Cassandra shook her head. ‘Why? Why take such a risk of discovery?’

The sun dropped away behind the Shield Mountains and Miriya turned from the balcony. ‘When we learn the answer to that, we will find him.’ She beckoned her Battle Sister. ‘Come now. The Canoness will be waiting.’



The boat rode in the swell, making good speed across the narrows, the lights of Noroc long since vanished over the stern. The first mate rose into the untidy flying bridge and gave the sailor on watch a jut of the chin, like a nod.

‘Asleep,’ he whispered, and the sailor knew whom he meant. ‘Fast asleep but still I’m adrift around him.’

The sailor licked his dry lips, chancing a look back through the open hatch at the shape beyond, hidden under the rough-hewn blankets. The atmosphere on the little fishing cutter had turned stale and leaden the moment they’d taken the passenger aboard. ‘Wish I could sleep,’ he muttered. ‘Men been getting bad dreams since we left port, is what they say. Seeing things. Reckon he’s a witchkin, I do.’

The first mate blinked owlishly. He was tired too. ‘Don’t you be saying what you’re thinking. Keep a course and stay silent, lad. Better that way. Get us there quick-like, all be gone and over.’

‘Oh aye—’ The words died in the sailor’s parched throat. Out of the windscreen, across the bow of the cutter, there was a dark shape rising from the ocean. A razormaw, ugly as Chaos as twice as hungry. He’d never seen a fish so large, not even a deader like in the docker pubs where big stuffed heads and jawbones decorated the walls.

The sailor threw the wheel about in a panic, turning the boat on a hard arc away from the razormaw’s grinning

mouth. Ice water pooled in his gut. The thing was going to swallow them whole.

‘You wastrel throwback, what are ye doing?’ The first mate smacked him hard about the temple and shoved him away from the helm. ‘Trying to capsize us?’

‘But the razor—’ he began, stabbing his finger at the sea. ‘Do you not see it?’

‘See what? There’s nothing out there but ocean, boy!’

The sailor pressed his face to the window. No razormaw floated, arch-backed and ready to chew the boat apart. There were only the waves, rising and falling. He spun about, glaring at the sleeping man alone on the cot. For a moment, he thought he heard soft, mocking laughter.

‘Witchkin,’ repeated the sailor.



As the rituals demanded, each of them surrendered their weapons to a grey-robed novice before they entered the chapel. The noviciates were just girls, barely out of the schola progenium on Ophelia VII, and they sagged beneath the weight of the heavy firearms. As Celestians, and with that rank, privileged, Sister Miriya and her unit were gifted with superior, master-crafted guns that resembled a votive icon more than a battlefield weapon; but as with all elements of the Adepta Sororitas’s equipment, from the power armour that protected them to their chainswords and Exorcist tanks, every piece of the order’s machinery was as much a holy shrine as the place in which they now stood.

The convent’s chapel was high and wide, encompassing several floors of the building’s shell keep design. Up above, where the pipes of the organ ended and biolume pods hovered on suspensors, cherubim moved in lazy circuits, handing notes to one another as they passed, the sapphire of their optic implants glittering in the lamplight.

The four women advanced across the chancel to where their seniors awaited them, falling as one into a kneeling position before the vast stone cross-and-skull that dominated the chapel altar.

‘In the name of Katherine and the Golden Throne,’ they intoned, ‘we are the willing daughters of the God-Emperor. Command us to do His bidding.’

It was customary for the senior Battle Sister present to let the new arrivals stand after the ritual invocation, but Galatea did not. Instead, she stepped forward from the pulpit and took up a place before the altar. Her dark eyes



flashed amid the frame of her auburn hair. ‘Sister Superior Miriya. When Prioress Lydia informed me that it would be your Celestians bringing the witch to us, I confess I was surprised. Surprised that so sensitive a prisoner be given to a woman of your reputation.’

Miriya spoke without looking up. ‘Sister Lydia showed great faith in me.’

‘She did,’ Galatea let the breach of protocol go unmentioned. ‘How shameful for her now, given your unforgivable lapse of judgement aboard the *Mercutio*.’

‘I...’ Miriya took a shuddering breath. ‘There is no excuse. The culpability is mine alone to shoulder, Canoness. I had the opportunity to terminate the psyker Vaun and I chose not to. His escape falls to me.’

‘It does.’ Galatea’s cold, strong voice echoed in the chapel’s heavy air. ‘You have lived a charmed life, Sister Miriya. Circumstances have always conspired to save you from the small transgressions you have made in the past, minor as they were. But this... I ask you, Sister. What would you do, if you were I?’

After a moment she replied. ‘I would not presume to have the wisdom for such a thing, Canoness.’

Galatea showed her teeth in an icy smile. ‘How very well said, Miriya. And now I find myself on the horns of a dilemma. A dangerous warlock is loose on this world and I need every able-bodied Battle Sister I can field to corral him; yet, the more severe interpretations of our doctrines would seem to insist that you be made to atone. Perhaps in the most *final* of ways.’

Miriya looked up, defiant. ‘If the Emperor wills.’

The Canoness leaned forward and her voice dropped to a whisper. ‘You do presume, Miriya. You always have.’

‘Then kill me for it, but spare my Sisters.’

Galatea gave a grim smile. ‘I’m not going to make you a martyr. That would excuse you, and I am not in a forgiving mood...’



The rest of the Canoness’s words were lost in a sudden crash of sound as the chapel doors slammed open. A commotion spilled into the room as a troop of armsmen and clerics marched through. At their head was a tall rail of a man, draped in fine silks and priestly regalia. Red and white purity seals hung off him like the medals of a soldier,

and the rage on his face matched the crimson of his robes. In one fist he clasped a heavy tome bound in rosaries; in the other there was the clattering blade of a gunmetal chainsword, the adamantine teeth spinning and ready.

‘Which of them is the one?’ He bellowed, pointing across the book at Miriya’s squad. ‘Which of these wenches is the fool who lost me my prize?’

Galatea held out a hand to stop him, her face tight with annoyance. ‘Lord LaHayn, you forget yourself! This is a place of worship! Shoulder your weapon!’

‘You dare defy me?’ The high priest’s colour darkened, the mitre on his head bobbing.

‘Aye!’ Galatea shot back. ‘This place is the sacred house of Saint Katherine and the God-Emperor! I should not need to remind you of that!’

There was a moment when LaHayn’s wiry muscles bunched around the sword, as if he were preparing to strike; but in the next the anger dropped from him and he stiffly forced the blade into the hands of a subordinate dean at his side. ‘Yes, yes,’ he said, after a long silence. ‘Forgive me, Canoness. I allowed my baser instincts to overrule the better angels of my nature.’ He gave a low bow that was echoed by all of his retinue. When he came up, he was looking into Galatea’s eyes with a piercing, steely gaze. ‘My question, however, still stands. You will answer it.’

‘Vaun’s escape is not so simple a matter that can be laid at the feet of these women,’ said the Canoness, each word carefully balanced and without weight. ‘An investigation must take place.’

‘The Arbites have begun an analysis,’ noted the dean.

Galatea ignored him, concentrating on LaHayn. ‘This cannot be left to the Arbites or the Imperial Navy. Torris Vaun was the responsibility of the Adepta Sororitas, and we will find him.’

The priest-lord’s gaze drifted to Miriya and her troops. ‘Unsatisfactory. While I applaud your determination to amend the oversights of your Battle Sisters, necessity demands consequences.’ He took a step forward. ‘In all things. Did not Celestine’s arrival teach us that?’ LaHayn smoothly shifted into a mode of speech better suited to a church mass with the common folk. ‘This is a universe of laws. Actions beget reaction. For all things, there are costs and penalties.’ His lined, hard face loomed over Galatea. ‘There must be reciprocity.’



‘Lord deacon, I would ask that you speak plainly.’ The Canoness did not flinch from his gaze.

LaHayn showed a thin smile. ‘The few survivors of the witch’s escape, the man Vorgo and the others, they are to be taken to the excruciators to become object lessons. It occurs to me that perhaps a contrite Battle Sister should join them, as an example of your order’s devotion.’

‘One of my kinswomen has already perished in unfolding of this sorry matter,’ snapped Galatea, ‘you would ask me to give you another?’

‘The dead one... Sister Lethe, yes? She is the most blameless of all, falling in honourable conflict to the heretic. Her sacrifice is not enough.’

Miriya began to rise to her feet. ‘I shall—’

‘*You will kneel, Sister!*’ The voice of the Canoness hammered about the chamber like a cannon shot, and by sheer force it pushed Miriya to her knees once more. Galatea’s expression hardened. ‘My Sisters are the most precious resource of my order, and I will not squander them to appease your displeasure, my lord priest!’

‘Then what will you do, Sister Galatea?’ He demanded.

Finally, the Canoness looked away. ‘I will give you your sacrifice.’ She gestured to her aide, a veteran Sororitas. ‘Sister Reiko. Summon Sister Iona.’



A gasp of surprise slipped from Portia’s lips and Miriya shot her a look to silence her; but in truth, the Sister Superior was just as shocked to hear their errant squadmate’s name spoken. From the dim shade of a sub-chancel, the woman called Reiko returned with Iona following behind. Her pale face looked down at the floor, her yellowish tresses lank and unkempt. She seemed like a faint ghost of her former self, a faded copy worn thin through age and neglect.

In the aftermath of Vaun’s escape, it was Isabel who had found Iona alone in the cargo decks of the *Mercutio*. Her eyes were faraway and vacant, and the cool, intense will she had always shown in the Emperor’s service was gone. Iona’s physical injuries were slight, but her mental state... That was a raw, gaping wound, ragged and bleeding where the psyker had pillaged her mind to exercise his powers. It was only until much later that Miriya had understood what the witch had been doing when he casually despoiled Iona’s psyche; Vaun had used her to test the gallows, and left her alive as left as a warning.

None of them had expected to see Iona again. Her bouts of uncontrolled weeping and self-mutilation marked her as irreparably broken; yet here she stood, still clad in her wargear.

‘What is this?’ LaHayn asked.

‘Tell him,’ said Galatea.

Iona looked up and blinked. ‘I... I am far from absolution. Lost to any exculpation. I offer myself to repentance.’

‘*No...*’ Miriya was surprised by the denial that fell from her mouth. At her side, Portia’s hand flew to her lips. Only Cassandra dared to whisper the terrible truth that all of them suddenly realised.

‘She is invoking the Oath of the Penitent...’

Iona shrugged off her red robe and let it drop to the stone floor in an unkempt heap. Behind her, Sister Reiko silently gathered it up, never once looking upon the other woman as she trembled.

‘Before the Emperor I have sinned.’ Iona’s voice found a brittle strength and swelled to fill the chapel. ‘Beyond forgiveness. Beyond forbearance.’ She blinked back tears. ‘Beyond mercy.’

Miriya looked to the Canoness, a pleading expression on her face. Galatea gave her a tiny nod and the Celestians came to their feet, moving to surround Iona. All of them knew the pattern of the ritual by heart.

Miriya, Portia, Cassandra and Isabel each took an item of Iona’s wargear and armour, detaching it and casting it aside. As one they spoke the next verse of the catechism. ‘We turn our backs upon you. We cast off your armour and your arms.’

‘I leave this company of my own free will,’ Iona continued, ‘and by my will shall I return.’ Behind her, Reiko used a rough-hewn blade to rip the Sister’s discarded robe into strips that Portia and Isabel tied over Iona’s bare arms and legs. Cassandra strung barbed expiation chains across her torso and pressed seals bearing the words of the oath into her stripped tunic. ‘I shall seek the Emperor’s forgiveness in the darkest places of the night,’ intoned the woman.

Sister Reiko bent forward with the knife and reached for a hank of Iona’s hair, but Miriya took the blade from her with a stony countenance. The Sister Superior leaned close and whispered in her friend’s ear.

‘You do not have to do this.’



Iona looked back at her. 'I must. With just one touch he hollowed me out, did such horrific things... I cannot rest until I cleanse myself.'

Miriya nodded once and said the next stanza aloud. 'When forgiveness is yours, we shall welcome you back.' With sharp, hard motions, she cut off Iona's straw-coloured tresses until her scalp was bare and dashed with shallow scratches. 'Until such time you are nameless to us.'

With that, the oath was sealed, and the Battle Sisters took two steps back before turning away from her. Miriya was the last to do so, gripping the paring knife in her hand.

'See me and do not see,' Iona sighed, speaking the final verse. 'Know me and know fear, for I have no face today but this one. I stand before you a Sister Repentia, until absolution finds me once more.'

'So shall it be.' Galatea bowed her head, and all others in the chapel did the same. Iona walked past them all, into the stewardship of a lone Battle Mistress at the chapel doors. The Mistress carried a pair of matched neural whips that crackled and hummed with deadly power. In her hand she held a ragged red hood. Iona donned it, and then they were gone.



LaHayn broke the silence with a grunt of contentment. 'Not quite the price I would have demanded, but it will do.' He gave a shallow bow and snapped his fingers to summon the dean. 'Until the Blessing, then, Canoness?'

Galatea returned his bow. 'Until then, lord deacon. His light be with you.'

'And you.' The priest's delegation filed out, leaving the Battle Sisters alone again.

The Canoness made a dismissive gesture. 'Leave me now. I will deal with your dispensation later.'

The rest of the Celestians did as they were commanded, but Miriya remained, still kneading the grip of the knife. 'Iona was unfit to take the oath,' she said without preamble. 'It is a death sentence for her.'

Galatea snatched the blade from her grip. 'Fool! She saved your life with her sacrifice, woman! You and all your unit!'

'It is not right.'

'It was her choice. Willingly taking up the mantle of the Repentia is a rarity, you know that! Even Lord LaHayn

could not deny the piety and strength of zeal Iona showed today. Her gesture casts away any doubt on the devoutness of your squad and our order...' Galatea looked away. 'And what other path was open to her? After suffering so terribly at the hands of that monster... Honourable death was her only option.'

'What did Vaun do to her?' Miriya swallowed hard. Even thinking about such a thing made her feel ill. 'What horrors must he have conjured to breach her shield of faith?'

'The witch's way sees into the very core of a human soul. It finds the flaws that all of us hide and cracks them wide open. Pity your Sister, Miriya, and pray to Katherine that you never have to face what she did.'

When she was alone, Miriya knelt before the altar and offered up an entreaty to the Saints and the God-Emperor to keep Iona safe. To become a Sister Repentia was to throw away all thought of survival and fight possessed by a righteous passion. Ushered on into battle by the whips of the harsh Mistress, the Repentia were the fiercest and most brutal of the Battle Sisters. Enemies lived in dread of their fearless assaults as their mighty eviscerator chainblades blazed through heretic lines, and only in death or forgiveness would their duty to the Emperor end. Some said that they lived in a state of grace that all aspired to reach, yet few had the purity of heart to attain. Each day, each breath for these women was an act of self-punishment and penance in honour of the Golden Throne – and they turned their righteousness into a weapon as keen as their killing swords.

Miriya had seen the Repentia on the field of battle in the past, but she had never expected to count one of her own among them. The purity of Iona's sacrifice stabbed at her heart; it would take much to prove herself worthy of it. The Sister Superior resolved then and there that Torris Vaun would be brought to justice, or she would forfeit her life in the attempt.

**Continued next month**





# INSIDE THE STUDIO

**T**here's been a lot of painting going on in the studio this month, from Age of Sigmar and Warhammer 40,000 to Aeronautica Imperialis and Adeptus Titanicus. As is so often the case, our very own Matt was one of the primary painting culprits, having completed a squadron of aircraft and a third Warlord Titan, but there are other contributors as you'll see over the next few pages. We even encouraged former avatar of Grombrindal, Jes Bickham, to show off the Lord Discordant he painted for his Black Legion army. Apparently it's proving to be a bit of a menace on the battlefields of the 41st Millennium.



## NEFARIOUS NECROMANCERS

Studio artist Thomas Elliott converted these two Necromancers for his Legions of Nagash army. He used Battle Wizards as the basis of the models with Grave Guard heads to make them look similar, but not identical. He then painted a whole load of intricate freehand on their robes. He applied the design with watered-down paint first, then went back over the lines to make them solid.



## THE DESERT EAGLES

Matt has just finished work on his first squadron for Aeronautica Imperialis, which he painted in desert colours to match his Warhammer 40,000 Armageddon collection. He sprayed his planes Wraithbone, then applied basecoats of Nazdreg Yellow and Aggaros Dunes before drybrushing them with Zamesi Desert, Flash Gitz Yellow and Ushabti Bone. The markings are Black Templar.





As we come to the end of the magazine, we take a look at the games people have been playing and the models they've been painting in the studio over the past month. This month, we've got wizards, aircraft, a tank, a traitor and a sinister-looking Titan.

#### MORE FIREPOWER!

In his quest to field an entire tank company, Dan has painted another Leman Russ with a dozer blade built for siege warfare. 'This is *Warm Reception*, a Leman Russ Demolisher,' says Dan. 'I wanted it to look like a really heavy siege tank, so I looted an extra-large dozer blade from a Space Marine Vindicator to go on the front. I equipped the tank with loads of heavy flammers, too, with the intention that it goes in and clears out all the buildings and bunkers it has just demolished. It also makes people think twice about charging it. That many automatic hits are never a nice prospect.'



#### THE LORD DISCORDANT

Jes had built up a menagerie of Daemon Engines for his Black Legion army over the last few years, which is why he recently added a Lord Discordant to his force.

'I undercoated the whole model with Leadbelcher spray, then washed it with Nuln Oil and drybrushed the silver bits with Necron Compound,' says Jes. 'Then I painted the gold with Retributor Armour, washed it Agrax Earthshade and (carefully!) drybrushed it Sigmarrite. Then it was a case of filling in the black armour panels and edge highlighting them with Dark Reaper and Fenrisian Grey.'





### FIRST OF THE ORDO SINISTER

Matt has also added a new Titan to his Adeptus Titanicus collection this month. But unlike the rest of his models, this Titan is not from the Fire Wasps Legion. In fact, it's a Warlord-Sinister Titan from the Ordo Sinister – it's a massive psychic Titan!

'I painted this Titan to look a little older and darker (and therefore more sinister) than my other Titans,' says Matt.

'To do this, I washed the metalwork with both Agrax Earthshade and Nuln Oil, while all the brass has a wash of Nihilakh Oxide in the recesses to make it look corroded. I painted the main armour panels Corvus Black and highlighted them with Mechanicus Standard Grey, with chevrons painted in Abaddon Black just like the Titans in my existing collection. The gun carapace on the right arm is painted red, just like all Ordo Sinister Titans.'



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