



WHITE DWARF

ISSUE
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BATTLE REPORT,
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PAINTING GUIDE

A TALE OF FOUR
WARLORDS
RETURNS!

EXCLUSIVE NEW
STORY BY DAVID
GUYMER

AND MUCH
MORE FOR



WARHAMMER
40,000



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White Dwarf Manager: Ian Huxley

Managing Editor: Lyle Lowery

Printed by Wamers Midlands PLC in the UK.

Distributed in the UK by Marketforce UK Ltd, 2nd Floor, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
Telephone: 0203 787 9101
Web: www.marketforce.co.uk

Email: team@whitedwarf.co.uk

WHITE DWARF (ISSN#0265-8712) is published monthly for \$9 by Games Workshop Ltd., Willow Road Nottingham NG7 2WS, United Kingdom. Periodical Postage is paid at Santa Ana, CA and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Games Workshop Customer Services, 6211 East Holmes Road, Memphis, TN 38141.

UK Publisher: Games Workshop Limited.
Willow Road, Nottingham, United Kingdom, NG7 2WS

EU Publisher: Games Workshop Limited - Irish branch.
Unit 3, Lower Liffey Street, Dublin 1, D01 K199, Ireland

Registered in England and Wales

- Company No. 01467092.

January 2021

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 the Sons of Behemat by Thomas Elliott.

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

Lyle has ticked off three boxes on his hobby bingo card this month, having painted a Chainrasp Horde, an Armiger Warglaive and a Death Guard Chaos Lord. He has also got a Crusade game lined up with his Tome Keepers.



MATTHEW HUTSON
Senior Designer

Alongside painting a new Imperial Fists Lieutenant (see Outside the Studio), Matt has answered the call of the wild and revisited Warhammer Underworlds, where he is currently painting Skaeth's Wild Hunt for his collection.



DAN HARDEN
Staff Writer

This month Dan has mostly been painting a Mega-Gargant for this issue's Paint Splatter. However, he did find some time to paint some more scenery for his Warcry collection, ticking off one box on his hobby bingo sheet.



JONATHAN STAPLETON
Photographer

We can finally reveal that Jonathan is taking part in the 2021 series of A Tale of Four Warlords! He's currently painting Necrons at a furious pace, including a load of Necron Warriors for the next challenge deadline.



SOPHIE BOSTOCK
Designer

Sophie has completed two tiles on her hobby bingo card, having painted Ulrik the Slayer and a Battle Leader for her Space Wolves successor Chapter – the Moon Eaters. She's now working on Lukas the Trickster and Njal Stormcaller.



BEN HUMBER
Designer

Ben has just assembled another unit of Reivers for his Raven's Watch army. Inspired by the Index Astartes article for the Tome Keepers, he has also started writing some background for his home-grown successor Chapter.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

Louis Aguilar, Mark Bedford, Jes Bickham, Stephanie Burton, Rob Crouchley, Robin Cruddace, Aidan Daly, Callum Davis, Sam Dinwiddy, Aaron Dembski-Bowden, Lydia Grant, Jordan Green, David Guymer, David Halfpenny, Elliot Harner, Alex Hedström, Nick Horth, Ben Johnson, Tangui Jolivet, James Karch, Kornel Kozak, Joel Martin, Andrew Palies, Sam Pearson, Damien Pedley, Seb Perbet, Dave Sanders, Jonathan Taylor-Yorke, Sergi Torras, Duncan Waugh, Dirk Wehner, Steve Wren.



The home of Warhammer on the web, the Warhammer Community website brings you the latest news on Warhammer 40,000, Warhammer Age of Sigmar, the Horus Heresy, Forge World, Black Library, and more!

www.warhammer-community.com

WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 460

A CLASH OF TITANS



It is often easy to identify the headlining feature for a particular issue of *White Dwarf*. Well, that's certainly not the case this time around! There's so much cool stuff here just screaming for attention that we struggled to decide what should get top billing. Sounds like a main-event fight!

Here's the tale of the tape. In the blue corner, we've got the show-stopping tag team duo of Index: Emperor's Spears written by none other than the renowned far-future scribe Aaron Dembski-Bowden, partnered with the first part of a new Flashpoint set in the Charadon War Zone and complete with new rules, fiction and background! With eighteen pages of Emperor's Spears content and sixteen pages of new Flashpoint content, they bring a combined weight of thirty-four pages and a mean one-two punch that can't be denied.

In the red corner, we've got a true super-heavyweight, the biggest bruisers the Mortal Realms have yet seen,

the Sons of Behemat! Weighing in at fifty-two pages of gargant-centric content, this behemoth challenges the well-remembered 'Giant issue' (*White Dwarf* 316) for the super-heavyweight championship belt. And we're talking fifty-two pages of pure, lean muscle, including Designers' Notes from the creators of the Mega-Gargant kit, a Battle Report featuring the Sons of Behemat, two columns, a short story and – my personal favourite – a very fun mini-game brawl for two to four Mega-Gargants.

Who wins such a titanic clash? I guess that's for you to decide! But in an anything-goes type of event like this, don't underestimate the likes of a new A Tale of Four Warlords series or the first in an exclusive new collection of Black Library stories from the Age of Sigmar, the latter featuring the saga of a mysterious duardin. They're circling the ring and just waiting for their moment to pounce. Maybe with an event card as stacked as this, everyone wins!

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Cover art by Marc Lee



Subscription cover art by Thomas Elliott



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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.



THANKS YOU, NHS!

Hey *White Dwarf* team!

During this strange time in the world right now, I came across some Easy to Build Primaris Space Marines. Until now, I had only painted a couple of the new Space Marines, and I was initially unsure what Chapter to paint them as. In the end, I decided on painting them as a tribute to honour the brave and selfless workers within the NHS here in the UK, and across the world.

I have since posted a display piece of three Primaris Marines (see right) to my local hospital – Good Hope – here in Sutton Coldfield. And a single miniature is set to cross the pond for a friend who is working as a newly qualified nurse during all this.

It is my way of saying thank you to the brave nurses, doctors, porters, cleaners – and anyone else – fighting on the front line against this virus.

I hope everyone at *White Dwarf* and Games Workshop, and the wider hobby community, are keeping safe and well during these times.

Robert McPhillips
Birmingham, UK

That's a great job you've done there with your Space Marines, Robert – nice work! In fact, your NHS scrubs-inspired colour scheme is reminiscent of the colours of the Rainbow Warriors, a Chapter that appeared a very long time ago during the Rogue Trader era of Warhammer 40,000 (that's the late 1980s to all you young-uns). They even featured a rainbow of colours (who'd have guessed?) on their armour. We reckon your friend overseas and the Good Hope team will love your dedications to them.

As for us in *White Dwarf*, we're doing fine, thank you. Creating a magazine in these strange times is certainly an interesting challenge, but we're getting there. Battle Reports are particularly entertaining to figure out!



Blood Angels Redemptor Dreadnought
by Paul Wald

The Light of Eltharion
by Eric Sega





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A THERAPEUTIC HOBBY

I feel I must write in and tell you all how you have saved my sanity.

I have been in self-isolation due to low immunity. I am also a new subscriber to *White Dwarf*. I was feeling a bit sorry for myself, sitting at home, when your magazine came through my letter box. What a great day for me! I love making and painting Warhammer models, and they keep me occupied and focused. This hobby has given me something to look forward to every day. Hope you all stay safe and well.

Samuel Flanagan
Mansfield, UK

Hey Samuel, and thanks for writing in. We hope that by now you have managed to end your self-isolation and emerge phoenix-like into the world once more. It's pretty much just how you left it, but with a bit more overgrowth. Watch out for the Catachan Mantraps – they're pretty hungry right now.

We're also glad to hear that our hobby has helped you through the last year (At time of writing, we're still very much in the middle of 2020. – Ed). Mental wellbeing is extremely important, and it's great to hear that sitting and painting for a bit, or even reading *White Dwarf*, has helped you to relax in these uncertain times. We're sure there are a lot of other people out there who feel the same way. You're definitely not alone, Samuel!



Exalted Deathbringer
by Bas van der Schaaf



Lord-Ordinator
by Ben Chatterton



Azure Dragons Intercessor Sergeant
by Dieter van Hoecke

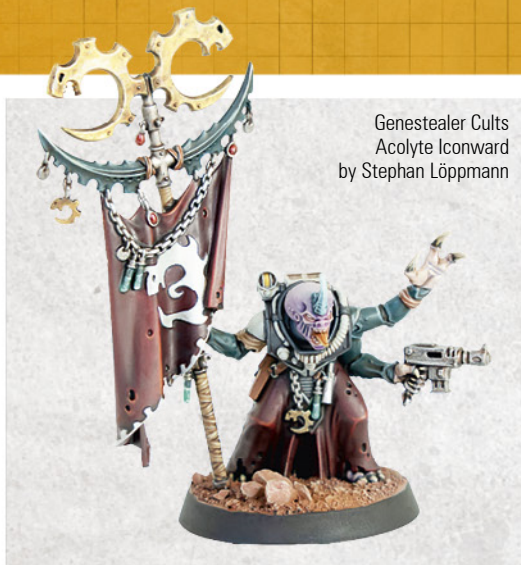


PURE AGGRESSION, DEATHWATCH STYLE

Hi there! I'm a massive fan of *White Dwarf*, and I've been purchasing your magazine ever since I got back into the hobby a few years ago. You guys even featured my Deathwatch Kill Team from the Kill Team Weekender at Warhammer World in 2018, which was such a proud moment for me! I just thought that I would share my latest addition to my Deathwatch force with you: Aethor Bittersteel, Imperial Fists Veteran Aggressor Sergeant of the Indomitus Crusade.

Adam Langton
Sutton Coldfield, UK

Hey Adam, good to hear from you again, and great to see that you're still working on your Deathwatch collection. We love what you've done with the conversion work, too – it looks like you used Tor Garadon for the body and a Warhammer 40,000 Hero Base for the base. The power fist on his left hand is from an Aggressor Captain, his head is from Brother Aethor in the Space Marines Heroes set and the shoulder-mounted storm bolter is from a Munitorum Armoured Container. Very clever work indeed – the Deathwatch would be proud of such artifice!



Genestealer Cults
Acolyte Iconward
by Stephan Löppmann



The Wurmshat
by Michal Skublicki



Raven Guard Incursor
by Maykel Michiels

PAINTING QUESTION: THE WHITE WARDEN

Hey *White Dwarf* team,

I would like to add the Freeblade Knight known as the White Warden to my army of Salamanders Space Marines. Sadly, I'm unsure what colours I need to use and how best to recreate the mottled pattern on the White Warden's armour plates. Please share your knowledge with me so that my Salamanders can go into battle with the White Warden while their Primarch is still missing!

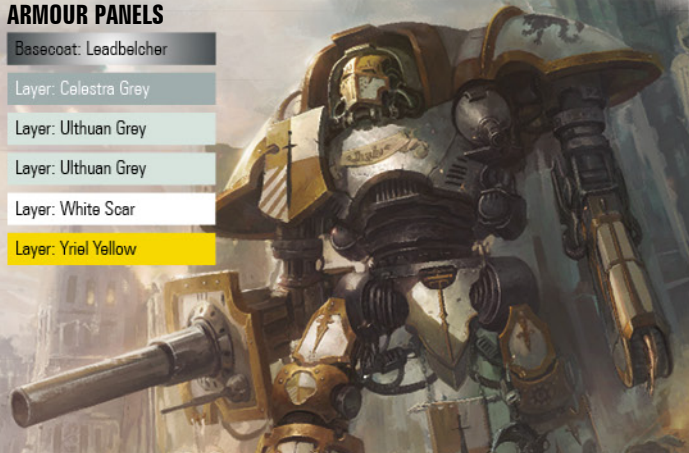
Manuel Paul Heitel
Dresden, Germany

How could we possibly refuse such a noble request, Manuel? Of course we can help! Warhammer TV's Chris Peach painted the White Warden. Here's how.

'First, I sprayed the whole model with Leadbelcher,' says Chris. 'I then dappled on Celestra Grey over the Leadbelcher, applying it quite patchily rather than neatly to build up the pattern. I then applied patches of Ulthuan Grey using the same technique. I did this twice to build up the colour. I used White Scar to paint on the wiggly lines around the dappled areas to help give the armour a marbled effect. I applied thin coats of Yriel Yellow to create the markings.'

ARMOUR PANELS

Basecoat: Leadbelcher
Layer: Celestra Grey
Layer: Ulthuan Grey
Layer: Ulthuan Grey
Layer: White Scar
Layer: Yriel Yellow



Illuminor Szeras
by Adam Gladzinski



ASK GROMBRINDAL

Greetings, Great and Mighty Dwarf. Would you humour me and answer a simple question? Since the Fabricator General and many other Tech-Priests sided with Horus during the Heresy, could there be such a thing as a Chaos Mechanicus warband?



**Fio Navaka
Dal'yth**

In answer to your question, there are indeed renegade Tech-Priests out there. Collectively, they are most commonly known as the Dark Mechanicum. Like many Chaos Space Marines, they dedicate themselves to the Chaos Gods, and they often merge their knowledge of machines with daemon-craft, creating monstrous war machines such as Defilers and Heldrakes. Some also fight alongside Renegade Knight Houses and Titan Legions, and the most powerful command entire legions of corrupted and debased cyber-warriors.

Grombrindal

MODEL OF THE MONTH: MINDSTEALER SPHIRANX BY FRANÇOIS BALON-PERIN

'This model took around sixty hours to paint,' says François. 'I began with a Chaos Black undercoat, then pre-shaded it with Corax White. I then applied Shyish Purple around the bottom and the paws, Talassar Blue on the thorax and the fur, and some Iyanden Yellow on the top of the head and the back (that's why it looks green). I added Blood Angels Red to the ends of the braids, followed by a mix of Khorne Red and Flash Gitz Yellow to make an orange layer. To achieve the effect of fur, I painted hundreds of little lines. Naggaroth Night for the darkest lines, Thousand Sons Blue for the intermediate colours, and a mix of Thousand Sons Blue and Flash Gitz Yellow for the brightest lines.'

'I didn't want the horns to look like bones, so I tried something akin to a metal effect. I used Abaddon Black and Naggaroth Night for the shadows, a mix of Thousand Sons Blue and grey for the intermediate colours, and a mix of Flash Gitz Yellow and White Scar to create the shiniest reflections. The face is the only part of the model that doesn't use Contrast paints. I used a mix of Khorne Red and Naggaroth Night and highlighted it by adding in yellow. I wanted the face to be more desaturated than the rest of the model to help draw attention to the bright yellow eyes that are boring into your soul!'



TOP PHOTO TIPS

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

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, including the base and all its weapons.

Find the model's golden angle. If in doubt, take a look at the same model on the Games Workshop website to see how it was photographed.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: THE TITAN WALK

Ever seen sixty-one Warhammer 40,000-scale Titans battling it out on one battlefield? Well, now you have! David Halfpenny from the Titan Owners Club explains all.

'The Titan Owners Club is a global community of Titan enthusiasts for Warhammer 40,000 and the Horus Heresy,' says David. 'We have arranged several huge battles, or 'Walks' as we refer to them, over the years. Our last full weekend event saw sixty-one Titans with support from thirty-eight Knights battling in either the Emperor's or Horus' name. We utilise a 52' x 16' bespoke battle mat, with terrain in the form of a 28' siege wall and mountain ranges. For the last walk, we used the rules from Adeptus Titanicus with some minor tweaks such as taking it in turns to activate maniples rather than individual Titans. We also had to scale everything up by four, including the blasts – using 20" templates was insane! We also had terminals for each Titan participating in the battle to monitor void shields, reactor levels and any damage that the Titan took.'

'One of my favourite aspects of the event is being able to carefully walk into the battle to move your Titan, and to be able to look around to imagine what views the Princeps would have from within the head of the Titan. It adds another dimension to the game not seen on the tabletop. We celebrate every Titan death with a very special phrase – one that I smile at every time I've said it or heard it shouted out loud during a Walk. It is also a fitting way to end this little spotlight. ENGINE KILL!'



1



2



3



4



5

Reaver Titan *Iracundos* of the Legio Ignatum (1), painted by Lee Marshall.

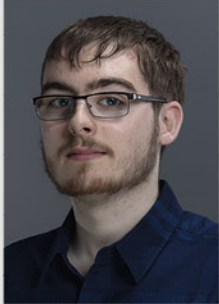
The Titans and players deployed, ready for war (2)! Note the home-made fortress walls and ruins.

The Legio Crucius painted by David Halfpenny and the Legio Astorum by James Winsor are arrayed and ready for battle (3).

Opposite them stand four Legio Mortis Titans painted by Simon Winter (4).

A maniple of Legio Astorum Titans painted by James Winsor and John Hext (5).

WORLDS OF WARHAMMER



JORDAN GREEN

Jordan has been a member of the Warhammer Studio for a couple of years now, and he has written the background sections for several recent battletomes. His sharp wit (and even sharper collection of bladed implements) has helped him carve out his place in the Age of Sigmar team, where being kunnin' is just as important as being brutal.

You probably haven't failed to notice that here in the Mortal Realms, we've been rather overrun as of late by an influx of stomping Mega-Gargants. The Sons of Behemat have arrived, and they certainly intend on letting everyone know about it. While the rest of the Age of Sigmar team wisely dived for cover and waited for the whole thing to blow over, I – coward that I am – instead bolted through our local realmgate in an effort to avoid getting summarily stepped on. In doing so, I accidentally embarked on a realm-spanning quest¹ in search of lore concerning the kin of mighty Behemat: the godbeasts. In the interest of us all making it through this gargant-shaped storm so that my esteemed colleague Phil Kelly can get back to his secret project, Grombrindal has convinced me² to share what I've learned concerning these monstrous titans of myth.

GOING WILD

What exactly is a godbeast? Put simply, godbeasts are creatures of immense power that occupy their own order of being within the Mortal Realms. Each is unique, the equivalent of Jörmungandr, Cerberus or Apophis³ in real-world mythologies. Godbeasts are unknowable to mortals and draw legends to themselves like a flame draws moths. They can lay low entire civilisations and, in some cases, threaten the foundations of the realms themselves. Some have formed an alliance with Sigmar's Pantheon, others have fallen under the sway of Chaos, while others still remain unaligned, possessing their own agendas beyond our comprehension.

The presence of the godbeasts adds a great deal of texture to the ever-deepening world of Age of Sigmar; out beyond the boundaries of deployment zones and campaign maps, there are entities of immense power that can't be represented by stat blocks or special rules.⁴ While they rarely drive the overarching plot

(though when they do, the ramifications are breathtaking to behold), they loom large around the periphery. Age of Sigmar is a setting placed after the stroke of midnight, and the mythic aspects of the godbeasts drive home themes of a lost golden age. Their bones lie scattered across the Ghurish plains, their images are etched into the walls of ancient temples, and one of them has even had their skull turned into a weapon. Godbeasts are larger than life, and their existence cranks the fantastical elements of the Mortal Realms up a notch; a world in which mountain-sized giants or constellation dragons can exist surely has plenty of other awe-inspiring discoveries to be made.

That isn't to say, however, that the godbeasts have no direct relevance to the armies of the Mortal Realms. Almost every species has been influenced by the existence of the godbeasts, whether through worshipping them, battling them or even claiming direct descent from one of their number. By exploring these connections, we can examine our factions through a new lens, helping to add nuance to them and the setting alike.

Legends are, by their very nature, shrouded in mystery, and so it is with the godbeasts. Many of their kind were most active during the Age of Myth, the specifics lost to time. What modern inhabitants of the realms know of them is almost entirely allegorical, tales told so often that they have become almost unrecognisable. Mythical stories of a godbeast could represent a natural disaster, an invading civilisation or an otherworldly threat whose true nature is long forgotten, or they could simply be the stuff of fables used to express a culture's understanding of their world. We, of course, know that some godbeasts assuredly exist – we've even seen a few of them in action. Yet even then, ambiguity remains. That's the fun of the godbeasts: you never know if there's a bigger fish ...

CRYPTOZOOLOGY OF THE MORTAL REALMS

My quest began, appropriately enough, in Ghur. One would expect the ferocious Amber Realm to host plenty of godbeasts, and sure enough, the number of gargants behooves me to begin with the (possibly literally) biggest deal of the bunch right now: **Behemat, the World Titan**.

The legendary forefather of the gargant race,⁵ Behemat was so titanic that it is said that his knuckles were akin to the peaks of Ghur. During

¹ Think of me like a rubbish Odysseus.

² He's very good at that.

³ Technically also a god in his own right, but the comparison stands.

⁴ Although you could probably play a game on a godbeast's back. Just make sure it's sleeping first.

⁵ Well, there's also Ymnog, Behemat's own sire who was so vast that his club supposedly shattered reality into land, sea and sky and his toenail carved the chasms of Ghur. Let's not tempt fate by saying his name out loud, though.

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. You might expect part III of the Age of Sigmar timeline, but normal service has been interrupted by godbeasts!

the Age of Myth, he served as Gorkamorka's champion, performing a series of ever-escalating feats at the behest of the Twin-Headed God: stripping the flesh from Shyish's mortals in an eating contest, for instance, and causing a tidal wave to drown the cities of the aelves (though that one was as much by accident as on purpose). In the end, he was challenged to fight Sigmar, but he was knocked unconscious in Ghyran's Scabrous Sprawl. There he lay for centuries before Archaon sought to awaken him and enslave his mind. Sigmar was forced to unleash the Twelve Great Bolts to slay the godbeast, and his ribs now form the wall of a great mercantile strongpoint. Since that day, Behemat's gargant children have been growing in might and belligerence, determined that, eventually, one of them will rise to inherit the mantle of 'World Titan'.

Though the deeds of Behemat lie in the distant past, his presence resonates throughout the setting; indeed, he has an entire faction named after him! The World Titan's exploits form a powerful creation myth for the gargant race, as well as offering insight into their beliefs about how the other species of the realms came to be.

It doesn't matter whether or not these events actually happened, only that the gargants believe they did. Examining the tales of Behemat tells us a great deal about who the gargants are and how they perceive the realms around them.

As I pondered all this, I tumbled into a slime-wreathed chasm filled with the debris of civilisation. This is the Wake of Fangathrak, a trail of destruction carved by the eponymous worm-like creature. **Fangathrak** is unique amongst the known godbeasts in that it carries a realmgate in its gullet – more specifically the Mawgate, a portal to the dread Eightpoints. It's not the only godbeast to leave a physical impression on the realms, however; just look at the footstep-shaped craters across Ghur known as Ymnog's Trample. Deciding that there was no need to get familiar with old Fangy, I clambered out the chasm, only to be set upon by one of the predatory spells known as Ravenak's Gnashing Jaws. **Ravenak** is said to be imprisoned somewhere beneath the plains of Ghur. Little is known of this strange godbeast, not even his appearance; what is consistent in the tales, however, is that those devoured by the Gnashing Jaws go to feed the creature's bottomless appetite. He'd probably

Below: Behemat battles the God-King Sigmar during the Age of Myth. Though Sigmar eventually won the fight by swinging Ghal Maraz into Behemat's jaw, even this did not kill the World Titan. Behemat staggered off and fell unconscious, becoming the foundations of the Harmonis Veldt in Ghyran.



⁶ Yeah, stars are weird in the Mortal Realms.

⁷ So you can blame him for any bits you don't like.

⁸ Love their phoenix-themed appellations, they do.

⁹ Jerks.

¹⁰ Not to be confused with **Hydragos**, a most mysterious zodiacal godbeast; even the learned scholars of Azyr know almost nothing of this creature beyond its name.

¹¹ She was very insistent on that. I wonder what she meant.

have wanted to snack on **Auroxis**, the horned World Beast who legend says was felled by Sigmar during the Age of Myth.

Godbeasts need not be animalistic in form.

Drakatoa, for instance, was a living avalanche of amber that once swallowed Gorkamorka whole. The greenskin god was saved only through the intervention of Sigmar and Dracothion (more on him momentarily). In my case, a band of spell-hunters were thankfully around to pull me out of the Gnashing Jaws' way. They informed me that Ghur is more perilous than ever: the orruks are on the march, with their warlord Gordrakk boasting the skull of the bull-godbeast **Hammergord** as a battering ram.

Before leaving Ghur, I cast my gaze to the heavens above. We can't talk godbeasts without mentioning **Dracothion**, the celestial Great Drake of Azyr. One of the cosmic zodiacal godbeasts, a hybrid of stellar constellation and living leviathan,⁶ Dracothion is a figure of great import in our setting. Since he rescued the God-King from the Aetheric Void long ago, he's arguably the reason we have the Age of Sigmar at all!⁷ Unlike many of his kin, Dracothion is extremely willing to act for the cause of Order, whether through fighting against his corrupted ilk, lending the aid of his draconic children to the Stormcasts, or his continued involvement in the doings of the mysterious Seraphon. Dracothion's proactive nature makes him a big player in our stories, and his otherworldly presence amongst the ranks of Order – typically the most relatable of our alliances – really drives home the fantastical feel of the Mortal Realms.

My next stop was Chamon, specifically the city of Vindicarum. Few lands have been shaped so thoroughly by the godbeasts, and by one in particular: the **Lode-Griffon**. This was a creature whose blood was so magnetically powerful that when it was lured by Tzeentch to roost at the heart of the Spiral Crux, it proved enough to distort the entire region into twisted new forms. When the peoples of the Crux unified to work a ritual of destruction against the godbeast, they realised too late that they had simply served Tzeentch's ends, their overwhelming terror of the Lode-Griffon's power hastening their own destruction.

Other Chamonian godbeasts have come under the thrall of the Great Schemer. The zodiacal godbeast **Vytrix**, known as the Crystal Cockatrice, greedily guzzles from the molten mercury rivers of the Hanging Valleys of Anvrok, while the Silver Wyrms **Argentine** has battled Dracothion twice and fought in defence of the Chaos-held Mercurial Gate during the Realmgate Wars. Chamon is a realm defined by the interplay of

godbeasts and deities; I would have stayed to investigate further, but the hymn-loving Vindicarites didn't seem to appreciate my musical tastes, and I was forced to hop through the nearest realmgate to Ghyran.

Emerging in the jungles of Verdria, I was immediately accosted by a wall of spears and left at the mercy of a Gloomspite mob. Thankfully, the weaselly grot boss recognised me as a kindred spirit. Over a barrel of fungus grog, he recounted the saga of **Boingob**, the father of squigs who attempted to devour the light of Hysh in one mighty leap and was promptly burnt to a crisp. His skull lies in the Orborean Woods, where it's been turned into a fortress by the grots – a tangible link between them and their bizarre pantheon. Boingob is far from the only unusual entity honoured by the greenskins; the Bonesplitterz revere all manner of strange realm-spirits, from the twin-headed shark **Skwidmuncha** to the lava-dwelling trillipede of Aqshy known as **Rakka Nak**.

I would have inquired further, had the grots not been suddenly decimated in a storm of arrows. Fortunately, their ambushers, a kinband of aelven Wanderers, escorted me to the city known as the Phoenixium, stronghold of the Ur-Phoenix's cult. The **Ur-Phoenix** is worshipped by the Phoenix Temple,⁸ making them strange bedfellows with the Sons of Behemat as an entire faction dedicated to a godbeast! Aelven aspirants to the Temple must, after recovering from grievous wounds in the fight against Chaos, travel to the Pyre of the Phoenix in Hysh to meditate and catch a glimpse of their deity in the crystalline walls of the valley. I tried getting into Hysh, but the Lumineth wardens at the realmgate turned me away for my Nagash-sympathising tendencies.⁹

Ulgus didn't appeal; those shadowy fens are supposedly stalked by **Shurihuratha**, the Thought Viper, who whispers into the dreams of mortals and infects them with creeping madness. Rumour says cults dedicated to the Viper have spread as far as Aqshy's Great Parch. Speaking of which, in a tavern off Hammerhal's Cinderfall district, a bard regaled me with the lay of **Vulcatrrix**, the Mother of Salamanders, mutually slain in battle with the duardin warrior god Grimnir during the Age of Myth. Legend says that the power unleashed in this clash ignited the magics of Aqshy; certainly she's a big name amongst her fellow godbeasts, honoured second only to Grimnir by the Fyreslayers for her blazing wrath. Vulcatrrix is also the primogenitor of arguably the most iconically Aqshy units around – Magmadroths! These flame-blooded allies of the duardin were born from eggs created in the release of Vulcatrrix's energies, and I'm looking



forward to seeing them face off against their fellow godbeast spawn, the Mega-Gargants.

While we're talking Aqshian godbeasts, let's not forget **Ignax the Solar Drake**. Once, this godbeast was tethered to the floating Land of the Chained Sun, spreading light and warmth across the Flameworlds. Archagon attempted to corrupt Ignax and even succeeded for a time; only the heroics of the Fyreslayers freed her. Aside from a brief reappearance at the climax of the Realmgate Wars, Ignax hasn't been seen since. Given her penchant for knocking seven bells out of other godbeasts, however, she's probably off brawling somewhere. In ancient times, one such hapless opponent was **Nagendra the Great Serpent**, worshipped by the Splintered Fang tribe of Invidia – who are quite fond of spreading their faith all over the Eightpoints, as Warcry players will tell you – and supposedly responsible for birthing the snakes of the realms from the flesh torn away in his battle with Ignax. Unfortunately, it was about this time that a fist fight broke out between mobs of Reclaimed and Azyrite townies, so I swiftly bartered passage on a Kharadron trading fleet to finish my quest.

At last, I made my way to Shyish and the city of Lethis. It wasn't always so (relatively) simple to pass into the Realm of Death; once, the Starless Gates were guarded by the skeletal Hydragors¹⁰ and their godbeast father, **Gnorros**. Gnorros was so powerful that even Sigmar, having slain the Hydragors and thrown open the gates, couldn't best him. Mortalkind was fortunate that Gnorros'

unknowable urges drew him off to pastures new, though the whirlpools known as the Black Nihil and Sea Maw are said to be indentations from where his claws speared the Innerlands. Having heard all this, I travelled to the trinket-markets of Lethis to find a means of protecting myself. A charming pale-fleshed woman overheard my ravings concerning godbeasts of all shapes and sizes (but mainly mind-bogglingly colossal), and with some amusement, she informed me that Shyish is the rumoured lair of many such sinister titans. Amongst them is **Hrunspuul**, the Hound of the Cairns, who folklore claims bestowed the curse of unlife upon the first of the ferocious Vyrkos vampires. Though maybe Hrunspuul is just another of Nagash's many guises; with godbeasts, it's hard to know where legend begins and ends!

Though my new friend offered to take me out for a bite,¹¹ I had to decline. It was time to come home and tell all of you what I've learned about the legendary godbeasts. They're certainly a varied bunch, and they fulfil all manner of roles within our ongoing stories. Plus, getting to narratively throw around the occasional huge magical kaiju causing untold devastation is a lot of fun! While we may never see a bona fide godbeast take to the tabletop, the Sons of Behemat will no doubt be making a big impression, just as their dear old dad would have wanted – and it's likely not the last time that the godbeasts will be leaving their mark on the Mortal Realms.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to go and extricate Phil from his bunker ...

Above: The duardin god Grimnir battles Vulcatrux, Mother of Salamanders. Neither came off too well from the encounter. Vulcatrux was slain, and Grimnir was shattered into itty-bitty little pieces of god-stuff. Apparently if the Fyreslayers gather all the ur-gold in the realms back together, they can reforge him. Good luck with that!

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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WARHAMMER 40,000

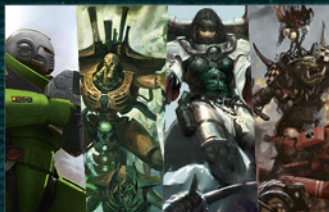
In the grim darkness of the far future, there is only war! Plus Index Astartes, four pages of painting guides, a stunning Deathwatch army, A Tale of Four Warlords and the first part of Flashpoint: Charadon!





INDEX ASTARTES

The Emperor's Spears are the latest Chapter to receive the Index treatment. Background, rules and painting guides from page 38 onwards.



A TALE OF FOUR WARLORDS

It's back! Four new warlords, four unique collections, four armies ready to begin their Crusades. It all starts right here on page 56.





THE CHROMYD FRONT



As the Imperium plunges further into darkness, the Death Guard seize the moment to lay siege to the embattled Charadon Sector. In the first of a new series of Flashpoint articles, the Chromyd System descends into all-out war.

WHAT ARE FLASHPOINTS?

Flashpoints are collections of articles that explore a particular region or war zone at a specific point in time. Flashpoints contain new rules for you to try out on the battlefield, plus new stories and background about the setting, giving you plenty of opportunities to theme your games. You could recreate some of the battles mentioned in the background section, convert characters based on the heroes in the stories or build a new battlefield to represent one of the theatres of war.

Flashpoints span multiple issues, and articles are always marked with the Flashpoint's symbol, making them easy to find in your copy of *White Dwarf*.



The Charadon Sector has been a hotbed of conflict for millennia, its worlds plagued by Orks, Aeldari pirates and insidious cults to the Dark Gods. In the wake of the Noctis Aeterna, the Charadon Sector and the nearby forge world of Metalica came under relentless attack.

Typhus' campaign against the forge world of Metalica was an enormous operation that brought much of an entire sector into a terrible war. Many generals, warlords and champions fought beneath the Death Guard First Captain's banner. One of these was Thraxoplasmox of the Death Guard, who led his host to the Chromyd System and assaulted each of its worlds. The Chromyd System was well defended, having been recently reinforced in response to Drukhari raids. Due to the nature of this piratical foe's rapid and unpredictable strikes, however, Imperial forces had been stretched out over a wide area. The Chromyd System was vulnerable.

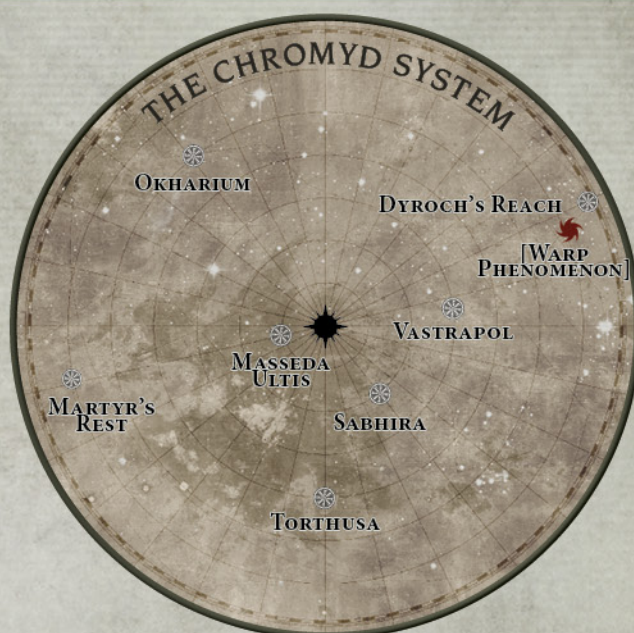


++SYSTEM PLANET CATEGORISATION — CHROMYD SECTOR ++

> Planetary classifications correct as of 997.M41. More recent data unavailable.

- > Masseda Ultis — fortified void-city
- > Sabhira — death world
- > Vastrapol — agri world
- > Torthusa — agri world
- > Okharium — industrial world
- > Martyr's Rest — mausoleum world
- > Dyroch's Reach — hive world

Note: Warp phenomenon in proximity to Dyroch's Reach — source of route to Barlech's Channel. Route considered stable (Beta level). Defence platforms and monitoring stations fall under jurisdiction of Dyroch's Reach.



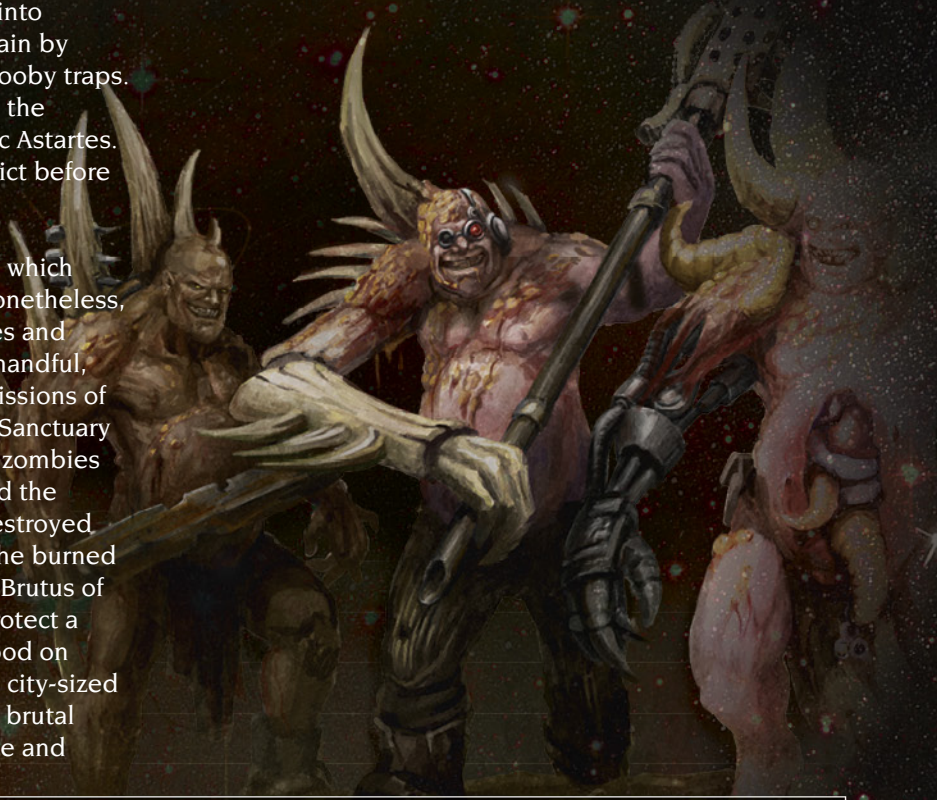


MARTYR'S REST

The mausoleum world of Martyr's Rest was one of the first in the system struck by the sadistic raiders of the Drukhari. Lelith Hesperax, the Queen of Knives herself, paid this world special attention. She turned its capital city, Purity, into one giant arena of pain and death – all to serve as a grand spectacle for the rich and powerful of Commorragh. The city's population was turned into playthings and slaves, with countless people slain by circles of Wyches, gangs of Hellions and cruel booby traps. Whilst some Drukhari forces were destroyed by the invading Death Guard, most evaded the Heretic Astartes. They went on to prey on both sides of the conflict before retreating back to Commorragh.

Martyr's Rest ultimately fell to the Death Guard, which blockaded it with an armada of plague ships. Nonetheless, war raged for many cycles, with numerous battles and skirmishes. Most will never be remembered. A handful, however, were particularly remarkable. Three Missions of Sisters of the Order of the Sable Robe held the Sanctuary of St. Trystahn Beloved against waves of plague zombies before eventually being overrun. They defended the sanctuary until it was buried in a mountain of destroyed foes, making their last stand upon redoubts of the burned corpses they had heaved together. Strike Force Brutus of the Iron Hounds Chapter fought fanatically to protect a monument to fallen battle-brothers that had stood on Martyr's Rest for over three thousand years. The city-sized graveyard of Silent Absolution became home to brutal trench warfare between numerous cults of Nurgle and

regiments of the Martyr's Rest Crematorians, Martyr's Rest Pyrestokers and Martyr's Rest Graveguard defence forces. Here, troops on both sides were forced to dig into layer upon layer of buried dead to take cover from artillery bombardments. Much sickness was inflicted upon the defenders, and many Imperial dead were even turned against their former comrades by the fell magicks of Chaos.



BATTLE FOR THE ASHES OF HEROES CRYPTS

One of the most remarkable acts of Imperial resistance on Martyr's Rest was the guerrilla war that took place in the Ashes of Heroes Crypts. Many tens of thousands of refugees and retreating Astra Militarum troops fled to the vast tunnel network, pursued by thousands of Nurgle cultists of the Givers of Life, the Hidden Hand and the Sevenfold Conjunction, among others.

Finding himself to be the most senior officer present, General Vilhelm Klapp of the Martyr's Rest Ashclads took command of the disparate Imperial troops, among which were Cadian Shock Troops, Martyr's Rest Cryptkeepers and Argolishian Creedsmen, as well as troops from artillery and armoured regiments forced to abandon their vehicles and weapons. Knowing that time was of the essence, Klapp organised these troops into semi-independent forces, giving them great autonomy to patrol and guard the tunnels as they saw fit. The conditions were terrible. The tunnels were cramped, the walls of many sections made of ornately arrayed bone matter. The weak air was thick with the stench of burning promethium ignited to stave off the pitch darkness. Cave-ins were common, and the ever-present fear of the enemy made every waking moment fraught with tension. Food supplies were low, and many resorted to cannibalism.

Nonetheless, the loyalists fought on for many cycles. They bored holes into the ground to find deep sources of water that

had yet to be tainted by the heretic forces. Where necessary, medical supplies and weapons were improvised, and every soldier and civilian had a role to play – their survival depended on it. With their better knowledge of the crypts' tunnels, the Imperial troops set countless traps and ambushes, slaughtering cultists in droves. They carried out purgation missions to hold back the taint of pestilence that followed wherever the heretics went. Some patrols even went on raids above the surface. They stole what little unpolluted supplies they could find, gathered intelligence on the wider war and called for aid if they could.

For all their bravery, however, they could not win. The tide of foes was unending. The loyalists could not replace a single loss – and there were many scores each day. Their ammunition stores ran low, and morale weakened. Soon, many troops were forced to use improvised hand-to-hand weapons. Hope of rescue or victory faded to a bitter desire to inflict only the most grievous losses possible before inevitable defeat. Klapp's ragtag group was ground down, little by little, eventually being wiped out in its entirety. Unbeknownst to them, however, their dogged resistance pulled in large forces from elsewhere. The battered defenders of the St. Boniphen spaceport were granted much reprieve thanks to this, and thousands more citizens were evacuated than would have otherwise been before the planet finally fell.

DYROCH'S REACH

The desert hive world of Dyroch's Reach was the first world in the system attacked by the forces of the Death Guard and was thus hit with incredible ferocity. The attackers were led by a host of Dreadblade Knights known as the Company Malevolent, and these monsters cracked open the defences of many hives to let hordes of cultists and traitor Militarum troops pour in. As the fighting dragged on, the Death Guard blockade strangled the planet, bringing starvation and despair to the desperate defenders. The Company Malevolent roamed the deserts, preying on supply convoys or making sport of hunting captives herded en masse into the world's vast plains.

As with Martyr's Rest, Dyroch's Reach too fell to the Death Guard. But its defenders did not relinquish control lightly. For every hive that surrendered and had its population exterminated, another held firm. Hive Ghent, built into an ocean-facing cliff side, was one such example. The Death

Guard launched numerous sea-borne invasions against its lower levels, only cracking its salt-encrusted walls on the seventh attempt. Many of Dyroch's Reach's supply convoys were well guarded, accustomed to fighting off giant sand-skorpiads or nomad raiding parties mounted on large, predatory lizards. The five-mile-long Enthraki Desert supply convoy was guarded by robe-draped warriors riding mighty tuskaphants – aggressive beasts almost as large as an Imperial Knight. Such was their tenacity that they drove off the Company Malevolent after a tuskaphant impaled the Knight Desecrator *Karnetaurus Rex*, killing its pilot and destroying the suit's power systems. A further action of note is one carried out by Strike Force Krenzig of the Black Guard Space Marine Chapter and Strike Force Vorgha of the White Scars. They conducted a guerrilla war among the hab-block-sized termyte mounds and steep-sided ravines of the Dereen Canyon. There, they frustrated the advance of multiple Death Guard vectoriums and allowed Hive Bakhenthri to withstand an attack launched by hordes of Nurgle-worshipping cultists.





DEFENCE OF ORBITAL DEFENCE STATION 570 'STAR BREAKER'

Among Dyroch's Reach's most powerful defensive features were the orbital defence batteries that dotted its surface. Many were built into hive cities and quickly became primary targets for the Death Guard forces. Most fell quickly, their fate tied to the hive they were attached to. If the hive surrendered, there was little chance their defenders would hold out for long.

Defence Station 570 'Star Breaker' was built into Hive Bajenthan and had four colossal macrocannons, each capable of inflicting enormous damage to the largest warships. A Tech-Priest was permanently bound to each cannon, and scores of servitors crewed them. Several Skitarii macroclades and the 42nd Dyroch's Reach Gunshields regiment were responsible for the station's defence. Petty corruption within the hive's resource allocation bureaucracy had seen the defenders undertrained and under-equipped for many cycles prior. By a stroke of luck, however, the garrison was commanded by General Barphemius Dyroch, an obscure and neglected distant relative of the planet's ruling family. Sent to the planetary defence forces to keep him out of politics, he in fact was a highly skilled and well-liked commander. He did his utmost to upskill his troops.

When Hive Bajenthan came under attack, Dyroch wasted little time in taking control of the hive's regions immediately bordering his defence station. He knew the macrocannons would be a primary target, and he knew that they could not be allowed to fall. He ordered all citizens under his purview to be pressed into service for the duration of the conflict, and he ruthlessly put down criminal groups that threatened to compromise his plans. He even had the leader of the local Enforcers publicly executed for corruption. In doing this, he

won the loyalty of the citizenry, who had long been extorted and threatened by the criminals and bullied by those who were supposed to ensure the Emperor's laws were followed. Dyroch ordered the citizens to carry ammunition, plant explosives and serve as stretcher bearers. He would need every soldier for the coming fight.

The attackers Dyroch's troops faced were throngs of moaning plague zombies, countless deranged cultists and battalions of traitorous Astra Militarum. Knowing he did not have numbers for a straight fight, Dyroch's strategy involved a skilled application of fighting retreats. His troops lured the foe into prepared kill zones and annihilated them before launching furious counter-attacks that surprised the enemy. He deliberately left some troops behind enemy lines in these tactical withdrawals so that they could attack the heretics' flanks and rear. Soon, traitor dead choked most of the routes of ingress, whilst Dyroch's casualties were incredibly light. Morale was high. With the rest of the fighting across Hive Bajenthan also faring well, victory was thought assured. But the Death Guard were determined to take the hive and capture the defence station. Eventually, their patience ran thin. Throwing hordes of cultists into an overwhelming attack to distract the defenders, Terminators of the 6th Plague Company vectorium known as the Heralds of the Fly teleported into the heart of Dyroch's command facility. Within minutes, they slaughtered his entire command staff. Nothing could stop them as they advanced inexorably throughout the defence station, killing at will. Dyroch himself died at the hands of the vectorium's lord, cut in half by a great sweep from the Lord of Contagion's plague reaper. Without Dyroch's inspired leadership, the defence soon collapsed.





OKHARIUM

The industrial world of Okharium had suffered many Drukhari raids before the Death Guard assault. As a result, it had been reinforced with regiments of Savlar Chem-Dogs and Death Korps of Krieg Astra Militarum. By the time the Heretic Astartes launched an orbital bombardment of bubotic warheads and waves of landing craft, many of the world's defences had already been crippled by the Drukhari, meaning the invasion was poorly opposed. The harsh world's endless cycle of back-breaking work shifts had also long oppressed the population, and many subversive cults had been fermenting for many cycles by the time the attack came. They rose up when the Death Guard struck, forcing the defenders into a war against invaders coming from above and rebels striking from within. The sabotage attacks launched by cultists choked the chem canals with wrecked barges, stymieing the movement of troops and supplies as well as inflicting significant casualties.

Despite the horror of the fighting, the defenders were made of resolute troops who had already endured the terror of the Drukhari. Battle-hardened, they transitioned to the conditions of this new war with remarkable resilience. At the 15th chem canal magna-junction,

Okharium Canalguard and Savlar Chem-Dogs infantry went toe to toe against Death Guard of the 4th Plague Company to secure the vital logistical point. It had previously been subjected to heavy bombardment, and the battlefield was littered with unexploded pestilential ordnance. Poxwalker infections ran rampant in the city-sprawl of Yunager, and troops of the Death Korps of Krieg, Lucor Pyretroopers and Okharium Wrenchers engaged in gruelling room-to-room warfare to cleanse them of the infected. In spite of enormous losses, they conducted systematic purges of building after building, threw back hordes of the walking dead and prevented the fall of the city-sprawl. When industrial workers on the promethium rigs in the Sordus Ocean threw their lot in with the heretics, troops of the Militarum Tempestus were swiftly deployed to retake the vital assets and slaughter the traitors. Mounted in flights of Valkyrie gunships, Tempestus Scions of the 31st Omeghon Gorgons, 503rd Nuvin Lions and 79th Psion Banshees launched dozens of surgical operations. Rappelling directly into the fray from their transports, they slaughtered the poorly equipped rebel workers. In less than two hours, over fifty rigs had been recaptured with all their workings intact. Thousands of traitors were killed, their bodies unceremoniously dumped by the Scions into the frothing waves below.



BATTLE FOR FERRUMORE PREFABRICUM XIX

Ferrumore Prefabricum XIX was one of Okharium's largest munitions factorums. As such, it was vital to the Imperium as much as it was a rich target for the Death Guard. Three vectoriums of the 3rd Plague Company — the Pus Brothers, the Putrid Choir and the Dolorous Gnaw — attacked it with hordes of plague-ridden followers. To meet them were Adepta Sororitas of the Order of the Adamant Halo, lances from House Taranis and macroclades of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Numerous regiments of Astra Militarum, including Okharium Steelclads, Finreht Highlanders and Brontian Longknives, stood alongside them.

A brutal war of attrition followed. Blood was shed in enormous volumes among working machinery, promethium relay pipes and production-shrines. Fighting erupted in the waste tunnels beneath the factorums and upon the gantries that sat between great vats of molten metal. Ferrumore Prefabricum XIX was a warren of corridors, storehouses, hab-blocks and production lines, and thus the Imperium could not truly establish a front line. Some areas changed hands on multiple occasions in any given day. Units believed wiped out emerged again heavily depleted, days later, having fought their way back to safety. Neither the Imperium nor the heretics were willing to give an inch of ground, the battlezone becoming a quagmire into which more and more forces were being sucked and drowned. The Death Guard were immovable, setting up multiple lines of near-impregnable defences. Though very difficult to uproot, their relative slowness in the attack and counter-attack was a slight weakness Imperial commanders exploited to the best of their ability, striking rapidly before pulling back to

escape reprisal. These attacks were not enough, however. The Death Guard rebuilt destroyed defences swiftly, often making them even stronger than they were before.

It took the intervention of the Adeptus Astartes to break the deadlock. Captain Xanthin Atris of the Blood Vipers' Strike Force Deepfang knew a decisive assault was required, one that shattered the Death Guard defences and allowed a breakthrough. It was his advice to Imperial command that probing attacks assessing the Death Guard's defences be made wherever possible. They needed to identify the weakest point and be prepared to annihilate it. After some weeks, an assault point was decided. The action was commenced by a number of diversionary attacks to confuse the Death Guard and draw forces away from the target. Multiple lances of House Taranis Knights spearheaded the attack. Adepta Sororitas forces and Astra Militarum battle-tanks charged with them, shattering the defences they came up against and moving swiftly. Momentum was everything. The Death Guard could not be given the time to regroup and shore up their defences. Even as the Death Guard faltered and attempted to rally, the Blood Vipers struck by drop pod and gunship. The Space Marines overwhelmed the Heretic Astartes' rear positions, slaughtered cultist artillery crews and cut communication lines. After several days of fierce fighting, the Adeptus Astartes linked with the rest of the Imperial forces. A breakthrough had finally been made. Fresh Imperial troops surged through the breach. Though many weeks of fighting remained, the Death Guard stranglehold was broken.



CANAL OF THE DAMNED

On the industrial world of Okharium, the Canalguard must safeguard consignments of precious ores along the planet's chem rivers. Yet their latest delivery – which began like any other – is about to take a horrifying turn in this short story by Callum Davis.

The fumes drifting off the chem canal made Captain Venalia's eyes sting. They always did, even after five years with the 77th Okharium Canalguard. Her barge moved through the thick, corrosive effluence that made up the canal at the same speed, along the same route and carrying the same amount of ferrumore as it always did. This stage of the fourteen-week journey from the mines to the factorums was always the most uneventful. The gangs that were known to target the barges almost never probed this far from their territories.

Stand guard. Eat. Sleep. That was it for weeks. But it paid well, and it was better than a life sweating hundreds of feet below ground with nothing but a pick for company, or spending every waking moment at risk of being crushed or sliced apart by huge machinery.

At least here I can see the sky, Venalia thought. Thick red clouds of pollution blocked out Okharium's sun, but it was good enough.

Yes, much better than the factorums or the mines, she thought. She pondered the open air, the gentle rise and fall of the barge, the quiet.

Too quiet, she realised. This stretch of canal moved through built-up areas and hab-blocks. They were never teeming with life, their inhabitants were always at work, but this silence was unusual. Venalia darted her eyes to windows and alleyways from where her barge might be watched. She could not see much. An army could be hiding in the hab-blocks, and she would never know. The gangs rarely came here, it was true ... but it was not unheard of. She patrolled the deck, speaking into the vox to all her troops on the barge. She walked to the bow, where Anjus manned the forward multi-laser turret. He wore the bold crimson of the Canalguard, a colour chosen to mark them out against the dark hulls of the barge. The planet's leadership wanted the criminals to know they risked a fight if they dared strike at the resources the craft carried. Anjus sported several small but painful-looking burn scars on his forearms – a natural consequence of serving so close to so much chemical waste. Many troops chanced rolling up the sleeves of their fatigues in Okharium's oppressive heat. Venalia had a few burns of her own. Even ones she had gained years before still itched on occasion.

'Everyone on alert. Something is not right,' she said through the vox to her entire unit.

Anjus smiled and shook his head.

'We should be grateful for the quiet. Normally by now at least one urchin has thrown a rock at us to impress their friends with how tough they are,' he said.

'*Captain, distress call inbound,*' said Letsya over direct vox. '*It's the next barge up, 512β. They're under attack.*'

The vox booth was below deck. Venalia hurried down the rusting steps. She found Letsya pressing an earpiece to her head, frantically scribbling everything she was hearing. One half of Letsya's face was one giant chem-scar.

Venalia took another earpiece.

'*Und ... tack ... rep ... nder ... atta ...*' the voice from the other barge said. Venalia heard gunfire in the background.

'This is Captain Venalia of the ferrumore barge 873μ. We are on approach. What gang attacks you? Their numbers?'

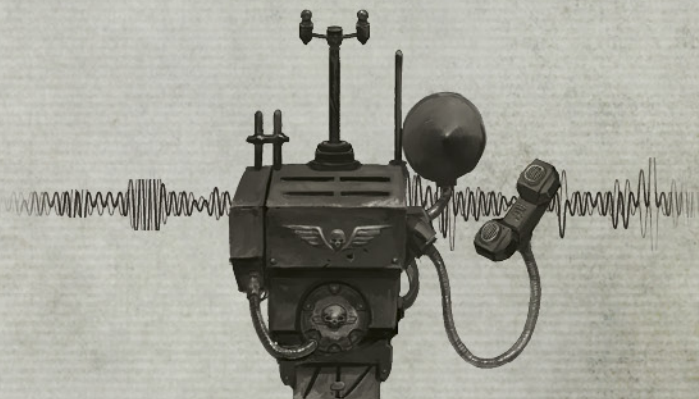
'*No gang ... some ... else ... not ... fro ... ere,*' the voice continued.

'Where are they now?' Venalia asked Letsya.

'A kilometre, just under. They're round the next bend.'

Venalia broadcast over the vox. 'Everybody. Up. To your stations. The barge in front has been attacked.'

'We are coming,' she said to the crew of the attacked barge.





Venalia ran back up the stairs to the outer deck. Her troops scrambled to defensive positions, taking cover beside the crenelated armour plates that flanked the length of the eighty-metre vessel.

Eventually, her barge turned the corner, and Venalia could see what fate had befallen the craft ahead of them. Its wreckage was burning. Parts of it had sunk into the chem flow, and interior elements unprotected by the outer hull were melting in it. As they drew closer, she could make out the scorch marks left by las weapons and the bullet holes of autoguns.



There was no sign of the enemy anywhere. Venalia and her troops were completely trapped here now. They could not pass through unless the wreckage was cleared.

Please let them be gone, she prayed.

'Letsya, report to the canal magisters what's happened.'

'Yes, Captain,' replied Letsya from the vox booth.

Venalia scanned the buildings on the barge's port side. She strained her eyes looking for movements in windows or at the back of alleyways. She saw nothing.

She looked back to Anjus on the bow. He scanned buildings on the port side, too, looking wherever his weapon was pointing.

Venalia saw him buckle over and a huge blast of bone matter and blood burst out of the small of his back before she had even registered the crack of the sniper rifle. Anjus' body collapsed to the floor. Blood poured out of him. He was dead.

'Ambush!' she yelled, though not before another Guardsman's head was ripped off by the sniper's second shot. Brains and blood were sprayed over the decking.

Then the firing really started.

Bullets and lasfire struck all over the barge. It was at such a rate that the noise was like the grand fireworks displays from the Day of Gratitude for the Eternal Emperor celebrations. Venalia took cover.

She looked down the barge's flank. Her other troops had done the same and were cowering behind the defences. A handful were clutching wounds. Some were firing blindly over the top of the crenellations.

'Letsya, we need reinforcements,' said Venalia.

'I can't reach the enforcers. I can't reach central command, either. What should I do?'

'Keep trying.'

Venalia could feel the impact of dozens of rounds striking the armour she crouched behind.

Throne, what is happening? she thought, desperately thinking of ways to gain even some kind of control of the situation. *Who is attacking us? The gangs don't have this kind of firepower.*

Venalia needed to see what was happening.

'Corporal Nenil, what's the situation on your side?' she asked the section leader of the starboard troops.

'No enemy, Captain, what's going on?' the corporal replied.

'I don't know. Send half your troops to this side. Tell them to go below deck and come back up. Tell them to keep their heads down.'

'Yes, ma'am,' he said.

Within seconds, trapdoors on Venalia's side of the barge opened, and troopers crawled out. Many of them took positions next to her, grimacing as fire arced over the barricades. One screamed in pain as a ricochet tore into his elbow. He writhed on the floor, clutching his arm. His comrades dragged him up against the barricades.

'All of you, I need to see what's out there,' she broadcast to her troops. 'Rapid covering fire in three ... two ... one.'

Over a dozen troops held lasguns and shotguns over the barricades, firing blindly in the general direction of the enemy. Venalia took her chance, taking several rapid glimpses. She could see their foes. It looked like there could be scores of them. They were seemingly human but ... different.



What in the Emperor's name are they? she wondered. She had heard of strange cults that sometimes operated in Okharium's bowels, but surely none of them could end up like this ... or perhaps they could. They were no petty criminals or gangers. They were strange. All looked incredibly ill and pallid. Most appeared to be wearing the remnants of Imperial-issue armour or carrying Militarum weapons with Imperial insignia scratched off or graffitied over with clusters of three circles. Others were clad in rotting rags. Flies buzzed around all of them, the drone of the insects audible even amongst the weapons fire. The worst thing was the smell, like some horrid combination of rotting flesh and excrement.

They were getting closer.

Venalia ducked down again.

'Letsya, have you got through to anyone else?'

'Yes. The barge behind us is under attack, too. I'm sorry, ma'am.'

They were completely alone.

Venalia felt a thump on the decking and looked to one side. One of the attackers had jumped on board. Where his mouth should have been, there was a nest of small, wriggling tentacles. His face was covered in seeping warts. In a bloody flash, it was all blown apart. A Guardsman kicked the headless corpse into the canal as he pumped another round into his shotgun.

'Keep firing! Fix bayonets!' she ordered, drawing her laspistol and firing in the enemy's direction.

If one can get on board, others will follow, she thought.

She was right.

Despite all the fire she had her troops laying down, it wasn't enough. She felt more thumps, saw more of these things taint her barge with their presence. Some had open bellies, trailing intestines behind them as they grappled with the Canalguard. Others were missing the

lower parts of their jaws. Many were run through with bayonets and shot at point-blank range yet refused to go down.

Whatever she was looking at, Venalia knew it was heresy.

'Emperor curse you all,' she said, just as one of the creatures jumped onto the deck beside her. His eyes were milky-white, his skin a pale shade of green. Flies crawled in and out of his mouth, nose and ears, yet he paid them no heed. He walked on stumps where feet should be, the wounds weeping pus and part-congealed blood. He carried no weapon.

He lunged at Venalia. She rose to her feet to evade him, but in the close confines, she could not avoid his reach completely. He grabbed her by the leg and tackled her to the floor. Venalia writhed and kicked and struggled, but his grip was like a vice. He pinned her down, reaching for her throat with his grime-coated hands. Venalia tried to break his hold. His hands would not budge. She reached for his eyes, driving her fingers into them. She felt them pop beneath the pressure, and warm juices flowed down her wrists. The man did not flinch. He did not scream. He started slamming her head against the deck. Venalia saw stars. With every increasingly shallow breath she took, she inhaled the foul stench of his breath, which was like that of a muddy swamp in midsummer.





She reached for her knife, which was attached to the side of her boot. She pulled it out and drove it into the man's neck in a last-ditch effort to survive. He did not budge. She stabbed again and again. She pulled the blade across his throat left and right. Finally, she felt his grip weaken. He collapsed on top of her.

She threw the body off her. Thick, ruddy blood coated her face and uniform. She got to her knees. She coughed and wretched and wheezed.

Venalia realised the sounds of battle had stopped. She looked around. The foul attackers stared at her as they stood over the broken bodies of her troops.

She heard clanks now. Each one was like a mallet being dropped and was accompanied by a strained creak as the deck struggled to bear the weight. A shadow came over her. She looked up at whatever created it. She froze, her eyes fixed upon it. Tears fell down her face.

It was a monster. It was clad in thick, sickly green armour. Pus oozed out of it. Rusting chainmail hung from its shoulders. Antlers had sprouted out of its helm, which had three eye lenses. One of its arms was now a long, pale-blue tentacle. The other was heavily armoured. It held a two-handed sword above her, the black blade pointing down. Thick gobs of slime dripped from the point.



She raised her hands, shielding herself.

'Oh please oh please no Emperor forgive me no I'm sorry please no—'

The warrior brought the weapon down.



THE CHROMYD FRONT

The Charadon Sector has come under attack by the Death Guard, leaving many worlds cut off without any chance of rescue. The Chromyd System is one such region. Over the next few pages, you will find new campaign rules enabling you to fight in this blighted war zone.

Over the following pages, you will find several Theatres of War set within the Chromyd System during the invasion of the Charadon Sector, as well as a number of unique Relics that can be discovered by your forces when they secure victory within these environments. You can use this content on its own or combine it with the rules found within *War Zone Charadon Act 1: The Book of Rust*, which also contains in-depth details of these war-torn locales and a wide range of exciting new rules for your games of Warhammer 40,000.

FLASHPOINTS

Flashpoints represent specific areas of conflict at particular moments in time. Some of the rules content found within the following pages is tagged with the Flashpoint that it belongs to. Rules that are labelled as belonging to one or more Flashpoints, in this case the Charadon Sector, are thematically linked to them and are not intended to be combined with rules from different locales.

When playing a game, if both players wish to use any Flashpoint rules, they should agree ahead of time which Flashpoint their battle is

set in. After this choice has been made, the only Flashpoint rules that can be used in that game are ones labelled with that Flashpoint.



CHROMYD THEATRES OF WAR

If you are playing a Flashpoint, you can, when selecting your missions, choose to set that mission in a Theatre of War that is found within that Flashpoint; these are themed locations that will provide you with new rules to represent the battlefield conditions within that locale. Theatres of War are a fantastic way to add an extra level of narrative to your games as well as adding new and exciting challenges to your battle. You and your opponent can either select a Chromyd Theatre of War to use for the battle, or you can randomly select one from those available.



OKHARIUM CITY RUINS



The enemy is but one of the deadly hazards encountered within the city ruins. Booby traps left by past defenders make every doorway and window a potential grave. Unexploded Death Guard ordnance litters the battlefield, detonating unexpectedly and releasing hideous pestilences and plagues.

Flashpoints: Chromyd System, Charadon War Zone

Designer's Note: If playing using this Theatre of War, we recommend that the battlefield features a large number of Buildings and Ruins to represent the bombed-out city streets.

When fighting a battle in the Okharium city ruins, the following rules apply:

Bombed Battlefield

Before the battle, after determining who the Attacker and Defender will be, the Attacker rolls one D3 and consults the following table to determine how badly bombed the region has been.



D3	BOMBING EFFECT
1	Untouched roads: Each player can re-roll Advance rolls and charge rolls made for units from their army.
2	Torn-up streets: Subtract 1 from Advance rolls and charge rolls made for VEHICLE and BIKE units (excluding TITANIC models and units that can FLY).
3	Fallen debris: Each time a ranged attack is made against an INFANTRY , BEASTS or SWARM unit that has not Advanced, that unit is treated as having the benefits of Light Cover against that attack (see the <i>Warhammer 40,000 Core Book</i>).

Booby Traps

Each time a model moves over any part of a Building or Ruins terrain feature, if it is the first time that a model has moved over that terrain feature during this battle, roll one D6 after that model's unit has finished its move and consult the table below:

D6	BOOBY TRAP
1-4	False alarm: No effect.
5	Anti-personnel mines: That unit suffers 1 mortal wound.
6	Rigged to blow: That unit suffers 1 mortal wound. In addition, until the end of the turn, each time a model in that unit makes a ranged attack, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.

Unexploded Biologic Ordnance

This Theatre of War uses ordnance tokens to represent unexploded biologic warheads fired by the Death Guard at the city's defenders. Over the course of the game, these will explode, unleashing their pathogens on those nearby.

Before the battle, after the battlefield has been created, the players roll off. Starting with the winner, players alternate placing ordnance tokens on the battlefield until each player has placed two tokens or until no more tokens can be placed. Each ordnance token must be placed more than 12" away from any other ordnance token and cannot be placed in either player's deployment zone. These ordnance tokens start the battle unexploded.

At the start of each battle round, the player who is taking the first turn rolls one D6 for each unexploded ordnance token and consults the table below to see if it explodes:

BATTLE ROUND	EXPLODES ON
1	6
2	5+
3	4+
4	3+
5	2+



When an ordnance token explodes, the player who is taking the first turn rolls one D6 and consults the table below to see what payload it was carrying. Until the end of the battle, that ordnance token gains the corresponding ability:



D6	ABILITY GAINED
1	Putrescent Fog (Aura): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While a model is within 6" of this ordnance token, each time that model makes a ranged attack, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll. While a unit is wholly within 6" of this ordnance token, each time a ranged attack targets that unit, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
2	Twisted Flora (Aura): While a unit is within 6" of this ordnance token, each time that unit is selected to Fall Back, roll one D6: on a 5+, that unit cannot Fall Back and must Remain Stationary instead.
3	Suffocating Presence (Aura): While a unit is within 6" of this ordnance token: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That unit can only be affected by the aura abilities of other units that are also within 6" of this ordnance token. Any aura abilities that unit has cannot affect units that are not within 6" of this ordnance token.
4	Diseased Warp-field (Aura): While a PSYKER unit is within 6" of this ordnance token, each time a Psychic test is taken for that unit, it suffers Perils of the Warp on any dice roll that includes a double, instead of only a double 1 or double 6.
5	Plague Mulch (Aura): While a unit is within 6" of this ordnance token, each time that unit is selected to move, it cannot Advance.
6	Devouring Insects (Aura): While a model is within 6" of this ordnance token, each time that model makes a ranged attack, on an unmodified hit roll of 1, that model's unit suffers 1 mortal wound after shooting.



MARTYR'S REST MAUSOLEUM DISTRICT



Not every soul of those buried in the mausoleums rests easy. Terrified screams and dying cries continue to clutter vox communications of those who enter the district. Even those at peace cause problems in their own way – the sanctified blessings on tombs affect the psychic powers of those nearby.

Flashpoints: Chromyd System, Charadon War Zone

When fighting a battle in the Martyr's Rest mausoleum district the following rules apply:

Spirits of the Dead

Before the battle, after determining who the Attacker and Defender will be, the Attacker rolls one D3 and consults the table below to determine the state of the entombed souls. Every unit on the battlefield gains the corresponding ability.

D3	ABILITY GAINED
1	Stilled Spirits: No effect.
2	Vengeful Spirits: Subtract 1 from the Leadership characteristic of models in this unit. If this unit has destroyed any enemy units, add 1 to the Leadership characteristic of models in this unit instead.
3	Peaceful Spirits: Add 1 to the Leadership characteristic of models in this unit. If this unit has destroyed any enemy units, subtract 1 from the Leadership characteristic of models in this unit instead.



Sanctified Blessings

Before the battle, after determining who the Attacker and Defender will be, the Attacker rolls one D3 and consults the table below to determine what blessings were placed on the structures in this district. Every Area Terrain feature on the battlefield gains the corresponding ability.

D3	ABILITY GAINED
1	Inscribed with Benedictions: Add 1 to Deny the Witch tests taken for units within this terrain feature.
2	Divine Benevolence: Each time a unit within this terrain feature would lose a wound as the result of a mortal wound, roll one D6: on a 4+, that wound is not lost.
3	Quieting Consecration: Each time a Priest model within this terrain feature rolls for their PRIEST ability (e.g. to see if a Space Marine Chaplain's litany is inspiring, or a Chaos Space Marine Dark Apostle's prayer is heard), add 1 to that roll.

Voices in the Darkness

At the start of each battle round, the player who is taking the first turn rolls one D6 and consults the table below to see what effect the voices of the dead have on the communications networks of the two armies. That effect lasts until the end of the battle round.

D6	ABILITY GAINED
1	Resonant Psalms: Add 3" to the range of all units' aura abilities (to a maximum of 9").
2	Screaming Dissonance: Subtract 3" from the range of all units' aura abilities (to a minimum of 3").
3	Knowledge of the Dead: The first time each player uses the Command Re-roll Stratagem this battle round, it costs 0CP.
4	Conflicting Insanity: The Command Re-roll Stratagem cannot be used.
5	Emboldening Tales: Add 1 to Combat Attrition tests.
6	Undermining Fears: Subtract 1 from Combat Attrition tests.



DYROCH'S REACH DESERT BADLANDS



The stifling heat of the Dyroch's Reach desert badlands is trouble enough for any army fighting in it, but this is not their only difficulty. Mirages impair vision. Radiation throws off auspex scans and the magnetic mineral compounds of the rocks affect weapons and ammunition.

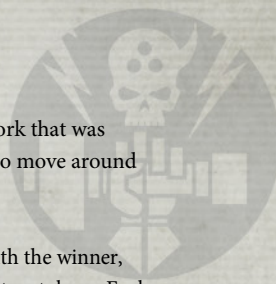
Flashpoints: Chromyd System, Charadon War Zone

When fighting a battle in the Dyroch's Reach desert badlands the following rules apply:

Mineral Deposits

Before the battle, after determining who the Attacker and Defender will be, the Attacker rolls one D3 and consults the table below to determine what mineral deposits lie exposed on the desert surface. Every objective marker on the battlefield gains the corresponding ability.

D3	ABILITY GAINED
1	Magnetic Iron Ore (Aura): While a unit is within range of this objective marker, each time a ranged attack is made against that unit, an unmodified wound roll of 1-2 for that attack fails, irrespective of any abilities that the weapon or the model making the attack may have.
2	Granite Outcrops (Aura): While a unit from your army is within range of this objective marker, each time an enemy unit declares a charge against that unit, if that unit from your army is not within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can either Hold Steady or Set to Defend.
3	Glittering Silica (Aura): While a unit is within range of this objective marker, each time an attack is made against that unit, that attack's hit roll cannot be re-rolled.



Cavernous Tunnel Network

This Theatre of War uses cave entrance tokens to represent access to the cave network that was dug out by an ancient society many aeons ago. Units can use these cave entrances to move around the battlefield.

Before the battle, after the battlefield has been created, the players roll-off. Starting with the winner, players alternate placing cave entrance tokens on the battlefield until each has placed two tokens. Each cave entrance token must be placed more than 9" away from any other cave entrance token.

At the end of a player's Movement phase, for each cave entrance token, they can remove from the battlefield one **INFANTRY**, **BEASTS** or **SWARM** unit from their army that is wholly within 6" of that token. In the Reinforcements step of their next Movement phase, that player can set that unit back up on the battlefield anywhere that is wholly within 6" of any cave entrance token and not within Engagement Range of any enemy units. Each time a unit is set back up on the battlefield in this manner:

- Roll one D6 for each model in that unit: for each dice result of 1, that unit suffers 1 mortal wound.
- Until the end of the turn, that unit cannot declare charges.

Intolerable Heat

Before the battle, after determining who the Attacker and Defender will be, the Attacker rolls one D6 and consults the table below to determine the current heat level. At the start of each battle round, the player who is taking the first turn rolls one D3, adding 1 if the current heat level is Tolerable and subtracting 1 if the current heat level is Solar Flare: on a 1, subtract 1 from the current heat level; on a 2, the current heat level remains the same; on a 3+, add 1 to the current heat level.

Heat level	EFFECT
1	Tolerable: No effect.
2	Desert Heat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 1 from Advance rolls. • Each time a ranged attack targets a unit, if the attacker is more than 36" away from that unit, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
3	Dizzying Haze: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 1 from Advance rolls and charge rolls. • Each time a ranged attack targets a unit, if the attacker is more than 24" away from that unit, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
4	Scorching Temperatures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 2 from Advance rolls. • Subtract 1 from charge rolls. • Each time a ranged attack targets a unit, if the attacker is more than 18" away from that unit, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
5	Unbearable Exposure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 2 from Advance rolls and charge rolls. • Each time a ranged attack targets a unit, if the attacker is more than 12" away from that unit, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
6	Solar Flare: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 2 from Advance rolls and charge rolls. • Each time a ranged attack targets a unit, if the attacker is more than 6" away from that unit, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.



CHROMYD CRUSADE RELICS

When a unit from your army gains a Crusade Relic, if you have just won a battle on one of the **CHROMYD SYSTEM** Theatres of War you can instead select the relevant Relic from the list below. All the usual rules for selecting Crusade Relics, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*, apply.

ARTIFICER RELICS

A **CHARACTER** model can be given one of the following Artificer Relics instead of one of the ones presented in the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*.

Martyr's Rest: Warrior's Bones

These bones belonged to a mighty warrior, and a portion of their spirit somehow still resonates within them, aiding the bearer in combat with ancient battle wisdom.

Once per turn, when the bearer makes an attack, you can re-roll the hit roll, the wound roll or the damage roll. If you do, add 1 to that roll.

Dyroch's Reach: Lost Archeo-sights

These unique thermal vision sights once belonged to a long-dead warrior. The technology is of unknown provenance, but it is powerful enough to cut through any disruption to the wearer's vision.

In your Command phase, select one friendly unit with the Troops Battlefield Role within 6" of the bearer. Until the start of your next Command phase, each time a model in that unit makes a ranged attack, you can ignore any or all hit roll modifiers for that attack.

ANTIQUITY RELICS

A **CHARACTER** of Heroic rank can be given the following Antiquity Relic instead of one of the ones presented in the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*. Add 1 to a unit's total Crusade points for each Antiquity Relic it has – this is in addition to the +1 from gaining a Battle Honour, for a total of +2.

Okharium City Ruins: Resilient Cuirass

It is impossible to determine what technology powers this ancient cuirass, but somehow it makes the wearer remarkably resilient to the hideous plague weaponry of the Death Guard.

- The bearer is not affected by the aura abilities of enemy units.
- Each time an attack is made against the bearer, subtract 1 from the Strength characteristic of that attack.



THE KEEP EXTREMIS

The Deathwatch are an elite brotherhood of veteran Space Marines and the deadliest alien hunters in the Imperium. Here, award-winning painter Damien Pedley shows off his eclectic Deathwatch collection, whose members hail from no fewer than forty-three Chapters!



Damien: Over the years I've collected a lot of Imperial armies, including Ordo Malleus and Ordo Hereticus forces. It seemed only right that I complete the set with an Ordo Xenos Deathwatch army. I use every army I start as a learning tool to help me improve an aspect of my hobby, and this army was no exception. With this force, I attempted to freehand the majority of the Chapter icons as well as throw in as much other freehand as I could to

push my painting skills. The army also offers up a lot in terms of conversions and customisation – I see each Deathwatch Space Marine as a character, which gives me a deeper sense of love for the army and the warriors within it.

Like my other Imperial armies, my Deathwatch force is involved in the fighting on Armageddon, so I chose Keep Extremis – the closest keep to Armageddon – as its watch fortress. This had the



DAMIEN PEDLEY

We can't recall how many armies Damien has had featured in *White Dwarf* now, but it's quite a few! His Deathwatch collection is just the latest contingent to be added to his ever-expanding Armageddon crusade force.



added bonus of there being no official watch fortress icon or banner in the codex, giving me a little creative license on how to paint the watch fortress banner carried by one of the Intercessors. I decided on a winged skull held by an armoured gauntlet, representing the members of the watch grasping death and taking it into their own hands.

The main objective with this force was to get an army ready for a Grand Tournament, then to add in some new stuff for the final. Using a tournament as a target date for the completion of an army is a great motivator for me – I have my goal, and there is no room for failure. I also wanted to create a full Watch Company made up of a Watch Captain and four Kill Teams. Going forwards, I will be adding more Watch Companies to the watch fortress to give me a chance to do more cool conversions, more freehand, and add in more unusual units that you don't often see.

A few people have asked how many Chapters are present in my force. So far, forty-three. There are representatives from the well-known Chapters such as the Blood Angels and Ultramarines, plus more unusual ones like Mantis Warriors, Nova Marines, Carcharodons, Star Phantoms, Taurans, Rainbow Warriors, Necropolis Hawks, and plenty more besides. As I mentioned before, most of the Chapter icons are freehand painted, which did take some time and practice to get the hang of.

THE BLUEST BLACK ARMOUR AROUND

'If you're going to paint a Deathwatch army, then you'll need to learn to paint black and love it!' says Damien. 'I didn't just want to paint my models black and white, so I added in a hint of turquoise to make them more visually interesting. Starting with a basecoat of Abaddon Black, I mix in Ahriman Blue for the first highlight around the edges of the armour, while also picking out where I want light blooms and reflection lines. Then it's just a case of working your way up through the highlights. It can take a while!'

BLACK ARMOUR

Basecoat: Abaddon Black

Layer: Ahriman Blue & White Scar 2:1

Layer: Abaddon Black & Ahriman Blue 1:1

Layer: Ahriman Blue & White Scar 1:1

Layer: Abaddon Black & Ahriman Blue 1:2

Layer: White Scar (reflection points)

Layer: Ahriman Blue

Glaze: Abaddon Black (extremely thin)

Damien mixes quite a few of his colours to get exactly the right transition of colour from black through turquoise and up to white. The numbers after some of the colour mixes indicate the ratio of the colour mix (two parts turquoise to one part white, for example). After painting his final highlight, Damien applies a very thin, controlled glaze of black to the armour to help tie all the colours together. He then reapplies the last two highlights (Ahriman Blue & White Scar then pure White Scar) to make the reflections really pop.



A Land Raider Achilles provides deadly firepower for the infantry of the Deathwatch. To the right, the watch fortress banner is held aloft by one of the Kill Team's Intercessors.





Damien's force is made up entirely of Primaris Marines, all converted with icons and imagery from their parent Chapters. Touches like this are a great way to push your converting skills.





Damien's Ordo Xenos Inquisitor is converted from Rogue Trader Elucia Vhane, while her retinue is a combination of Blackstone Fortress and Age of Sigmar Vampire models.

DURING THE LOCKDOWN ...

We actually received Damien's army to photograph at the start of 2020, but things went a bit weird last year, and the army feature we had planned got quite drastically delayed. So while his models were sealed in a stasis booth, Damien set to work painting a load more! Here you can see a few of the pictures he sent us of his latest Deathwatch creations. There are more to come, apparently.



My key advice would be to thin down your paints and build up a design out of simple geometric shapes. When painting a skull, for example, it can be broken down into one large circle for the top of the head, two smaller circles for the eye sockets and a rectangle for the top of the jaw and teeth. From there you can start blocking out other details such as the nose hole and teeth. Of all the models in my army, the Red Talons Leviathan Dreadnought – Venerated Brother Khalon – is a personal favourite. He's an absolute monster on the board, not just as a massive bullet magnet that can take it and ask for more, but he can bring the pain too! It feels very fitting for Red Talons.

So far I've played about forty games with my army, with more wins than losses since I decided on a list and started building the army at the end of June 2019. The army is a lot of fun to play with, and though I don't feel it is the most competitive army, it has caught a fair number of people out. The special issue ammo is definitely a seller for me and can be a game winner if you pick wisely. I haven't struggled against anything other than the 120-Gaunt Tyranid army I came up against at the Grand Tournament Final. I shouldn't have taken the Aggressors out of my list! I lost five games that weekend, but on the plus side, I was nominated for and won Best Army at both the heat and the final, which gave me a real feeling of satisfaction and pride.



INDEX ASTARTES

Barbarian sons of a haunted world, the Emperor's Spears have stood sentinel over Elara's Veil for over one thousand years. Yet in a galaxy sundered by war, they must honour old allegiances and put aside bitter enmities if they are to survive in the embattled Imperium Nihilus.



EMPEROR'S SPEARS

Warlords of Nemeton

By Aaron Dembski-Bowden & Elliot Hamer

For over a thousand years, the Emperor's Spears have watched over the embattled stars of the Elara's Veil nebula. They are the barbarian sons of the haunted storm-world Nemeton: tattooed headhunters standing defiant against the poisonous darkness bleeding out from the Great Rift. Calling upon the most ancient of oaths, the Emperor's Spears gather their surviving allies to ensure the light of humanity keeps burning in their besieged region of the Imperium Nihilus.

The first confirmed sighting of the Emperor's Spears in Imperial space is a footnote in Erisekes' *Historica Arguria*. It notes that in the middle years of M40, the warship *Daughter of the Storm* answered astropathic cries for aid sent by a deep-void Adeptus Mechanicus hydroponics installation.

Witness reports recovered from the installation's corrupted archives list the Chapter's deployment as 'needlessly aggressive' and 'heedless of collateral damage.' From this, it can be extrapolated that the xenoflora research of dubious morality did not survive the Space Marines' deployment. A final note in the archive lists the 'cerulean-clad brutes' as 'lingering after the devastation in order to draw blades through the necks of fallen xenos and harvest the dead aliens' heads'.

This first recorded account roughly matches references to the Emperor's Spears' supposed origins in the Twenty-Fifth Founding – also known as the Bastion Founding. As is standard with the Imperial dating system, the exact date of the Bastion Founding is a source of conflicting data, but temporal signifiers mark it within the latter five hundred years of the 40th Millennium. This would make the Emperor's Spears well over a thousand years old.

SENTINELS OF THE VEIL

The Elara's Veil Sub-sector was once watched over by the most noble Celestial Lions Chapter. Centuries passed with the Lions struggling valiantly to defend such a vast realm alone, eventually resulting in a petition sent to Terra demanding reinforcement. The High Lords of Terra looked towards the blighted, burning worlds of Elara's Veil and at last dictated a solution. The next Space Marine founding would not see the Lions joined by one bloodline of new brothers, but by two. And so, the Adeptus Vaelarii – the Sentinels of the Veil – were formed. Three Chapters bound by sacred oath, fated to watch over Elara's Veil.

Nemeton was the world chosen for the Emperor's Spears, while Khamun-Sen was chosen as home world of the Androctonus Astra Chapter (the Star Scorpions in vulgar argot). The Androctonus Astra,

despite a proud existence, were fatally undone by flaws in their gene-seed and eventually lost to the warp. Their heraldry, and their position as Chapter 888 in honour rolls of the Adeptus Astartes, was later granted to the Mentor Legion – a gift that did not sit well with the remaining Adeptus Vaelarii.

Three Chapters were enough to temporarily scour the region clean, but the Imperium is vast and subject to myriad threats. The loss of the Star Scorpions gravely wounded the Adeptus Vaelarii, and the situation grew ever more dire

when the Celestial Lions began to haemorrhage warriors and ships due to Inquisitorial accusations of malignancy. A region of space that had started to stretch three Chapters thin was now held by only one. Keeping to their ancient oath, the Emperor's Spears swore they would hold the line against the darkness while the Celestial Lions reforged their butchered Chapter. The Lions' own nobility has slowed this process significantly, for rather than retreat entirely and rebuild, they still send forth strike forces to fight at the Emperor's Spears' side, refusing to completely abandon their younger brethren.

– Long ago, the storm-blighted planet of Nemeton was brought to compliance by the proud Ultramarines Legion, who brought the gift of civilisation to its barbaric people. Rather than accept this gift with gladdened hearts, as the centuries passed, the clans of Nemeton abandoned the marble cities constructed by their conquerors and returned to the wilderness. Now, millennia later, the surface of Nemeton is dotted with empty, ruined cities, considered haunted by the tribes, their beautiful marblwork eroded by time and the planet's endless storms.

– Classified as an Ocean World, Nemeton nevertheless possesses thousands of archipelago chains serving as landmasses for the population. Equatorial island chains see the longest breaks in storm cover, suffering severe seasonal monsoons instead of the eternal grey storms of more northern and southern regions. This tends to make the equatorial island clans darker in skin, with white tattoos, while the northern and southern islanders are usually paler, tattooing themselves with ink of black, red or blue.

– The population of Nemeton is divided into widespread clans, each with its own variant

cultures and beliefs. The planet is locked in a stage of development reminiscent of the Terran Iron Era, knowing little of the wider Imperium. Wars between the tribes are common, usually over what little land exists for the taking. As a result, healers and seers are greatly respected, as are tribal elders, for their wisdom and the simple fact they have survived to old age in a culture where war strikes down a great many adults before they can reach such a venerated state.

– The tribespeople are in thrall to potent superstitions, such as spitting on the ground to ward away misfortune, or the need for a warrior to die with a blade in their hand to avoid shame in the eyes of the God-Emperor.

– One of the most notable religious beliefs is the notion that Nemeton's rain is the godlike expression of the Emperor's sorrow, weeping for his lost bride Elara. The historical Elara is noted in conflicting archives as either an arch-commander or the Imperial saint who led the wars to first bring the region to compliance. To the people of Nemeton, she is the God-Emperor's bride, and her crimson funeral veil became the nebula that bathes the stars red.

PLANET DESIGNATION: NEMETON

- Planet Signifier: Nemeton
- Designation: Adeptus Astartes Chapter Planet, Ocean World
- Gravity: 0.93 of Terran standard
- Temperature / Climate: var Arctos/Tundric
 - Tolerare/Modicus [Thalassic/Tempestor]
- Population: No available numerics
- Planetary Governor: Arucatas the Swordbearer, 'Ard Righ' ('High King')
- System: Avalon
- Sub-sector: The Annwyn Reaches
- Sector: Elara's Veil
- Segmentum: Ultima
- Tithe Grade: Adeptus Non

Thought for the day: Better crippled in body than corrupt in mind.



THE GEAS

The most esoteric belief held by the natives of Nemeton is that of the geas. In childhood, every son and daughter of the clans is brought before a tribal shaman, who reads the flow of fate in their blood. The nature of geases vary wildly, though all are semi-supernatural 'promises' of a specific moment or choice in the child's life ahead. The Chapter believes that Nemeton's seers read these futures through the warp's echoes, like any prophecy, and armed with this poetic foreknowledge, the bearer of the geas can hopefully avoid the wrong choice when the time comes.

Many geases take the form of warnings against dishonour or death should the bearer ever act in a certain way. A famous example among the Chapter is that of Yvas of the Novontei tribe, Lord of the Sixth Warhost, who was told as a child: *'You will die on the day you follow a raven in flight.'* He spent the years of his youth making sure he never walked beneath a circling raven or journeying in the same direction one of the birds flew.

Years later, when serving alongside the Raven Guard warship *Second Shadow*, Yvas knew that to support his fellow Chapter's battle to break through an enemy blockade would violate his geas, but that he would survive to fight another day if he held back. Nonetheless, he commanded his vessel, the *Skyreaver*, to join the fight alongside the Raven Guard. History records that the *Skyreaver* was grievously wounded and Yvas himself was killed in the ensuing battle, but the Emperor's Spears were hailed in the Raven Guard's archives for their loyalty, and Yvas' name was etched into the rolls of honour among both Chapters for his sacrifice. Veterans of that campaign were permitted to inscribe the Raven Guard's sigil upon their vambraces to mark their commander's valour.

NEMETON, THE STORM WORLD

Nemeton is orbited by a disk of moonlets, lesser rocks and dust from ancient planetary impacts, granting the planet a great ring akin to Saturn in the Sol System. Since the opening of the Great Rift, many of these void-boulders have been weaponised as torpedo silos, fighter hangars, laser batteries or jamming stations, in preparation for what the Emperor's Spears regard as an inevitable invasion. Due to its isolation, Nemeton's defences have been layered and enhanced even beyond that which would be expected of a Space Marine home world. A vast minefield permeates the Nemeton System, requiring inbound ships to possess up-to-date drift charts in order to navigate the system safely. The jewel in Nemeton's crown is the forge moon Bellona. Colonised millennia ago by a fleet from the forge world Incaladion, these tech-lords chose to settle on Bellona due to its abundant mineral riches.

The Emperor's Spears have capitalised on this advantage. The Chapter's druidic Techmarines – unable to reach Sacred Mars – are trained on Bellona, and most of the Emperor's Spears' warships also carry Skitarii support legions aboard. All three Chapters of the Adeptus Vaelarii

once cherished the easy supply route and access to materiel offered by unity with Bellona, but the Emperor's Spears focused most of all on expanding their Chapter fleet over the course of the first millennia of their existence. With Bellona's industrious alliance, the Emperor's Spears are capable of deploying a Chapter fleet far beyond the usual capabilities of most Adeptus Astartes fraternities.

THE WARHOSTS

The Emperor's Spears maintain an organisation in loose adherence to the Codex Astartes, with several notable exceptions. The first is that rather than Chapter Companies, the Emperor's Spears favour autonomous warhosts that can operate far from Nemeton under their own recognisance, returning only for recruit-harvesting and repairs at Bellona's orbital dockyards. The exact number of these warhosts is undetermined by Imperial scholars, though it stands to reason that they are similar in number and offensive capabilities to a standard Battle Company.

The Chapter makes use of several unorthodox sigils and personalised heraldry, most of which relate to their role in the Sentinels of the Veil or their ties to Nemeton. Runes of Ogham – the written language of Nemeton that is impenetrable to most outsiders – are common across their azure ceramite. Warriors also occasionally wear cloaks of beast- or serpent-hide, marking their success in hunts on their home world. Some veteran warriors also wear the symbols of the Celestial Lions or the fallen Star Scorpions on their war plate, honouring the Chapters they fought alongside for so long.

One knee pad is almost always marked a deeper blue in order to provide a space for personal heraldry, which is usually given over to a specific campaign marking or to the renowned Manticora Bestia Fidelitas.

The Manticora Bestia Fidelitas is the primary symbol of the Adeptus Vaelarii, symbolising their unbreakable unity. A manticore stands for both the Celestial Lions and the Star Scorpions, gripping a trident in its talons to represent the Emperor's Spears. Any warrior may wear this sacred coat of arms, so long as he has shed blood in battle. It is also commonly seen on Bellonan forces, as well as the regiments of Imperial Guard stationed – or trapped – in Elara's Veil over the last century.

Imperial tacticians have chronicled the Emperor's Spears as exemplars of a close-assault ideal. Via drop pod and gunship, the Emperor's Spears descend into the heart of the enemy and hold position long enough for other Imperial forces to advance, linking up with their vanguard. It is known that the Emperor's Spears are not the

berserkers one might expect of tattooed savages, but they instead wage war in bursts of adrenal fury tempered by periods of chanted tribal dirges. Their way of waging war is chimeric, as conflictly melancholy and joyous as the barbarians of Nemeton themselves.

Imperial commanders have, in the past, accused the Emperor's Spears of being unreliable, noting that the Chapter expresses Space Marine autonomy to a difficult degree. While the Chapter has always made efforts to minimise collateral damage, its strike forces have also been known to plunge into battle. They put glory above prudence, as if the Chapter's youth means its warriors have something to prove to its older brethren.

Desperation in recent decades has forced the Emperor's Spears into a more cooperative mindset. Necessity has forced their hand with Elara's Veil in such danger. Pride can no longer come first. Now, survival must do so instead.

THE DRUIDIC COUNCIL

The clean delineations of Librarian, Apothecary, Chaplain and Techmarine do not exist in the Emperor's Spears. Psychically gifted battle-brothers go to war in black armour, as do the machine-versed warriors that train on Bellona, along with the battle-chanting warrior-priests

THE GHOSTS OF NEMETON

The clans of Nemeton have a strained relationship with the Space Marine Chapter that watches over them. To the barbarians, service in the God-Emperor's armies is no honour to be fought for.

It is a death sentence.

Those who ascend to the shrouded heavens must abandon their natural lives in order to live as inhuman angels. Space Marines on Nemeton are not seen as warriors from the clans returned to honour their bloodlines, but as the spirits of children lost to the whims of fate, reshaped past their humanity. They are not heroes to be celebrated, but ghosts to be mourned.

whose duty is to stand watch over the souls of their men. All are Druids, black of ceramite, white of helm, and all three orders are also trained in the alchemical and biological expertise necessary to use an Apothecary's tools and harvest the gene-seed of his fallen brethren. It is unclear if this break with tradition developed in reaction to the Chapter's isolation or was in place beforehand.

THE GREAT RIFT

The Cicatrix Maledictum that ripped across the galaxy in the wake of the Despoiler's Thirteenth Black Crusade has made travel within the Imperium Nihilus a nightmare of tempestuous





Battle-brother Finan of the Vargantes,
5th Squad (Battleline)



Chapter Icon



5th Battleline Squad

Emperor's Spears typically have one knee pad that is painted in a darker blue. This knee pad is used for personal heraldry.

The Emperor's Spears are organised into warhosts, roughly analogous to companies. They do not use any standardised warhost markings.



RANK MARKINGS

Officers among the Emperor's Spears are marked out from their battle-brothers by tall helmet crests, with colours corresponding to their ranks:



Battleguard (Lieutenant):
A striped black and red longitudinal crest.



SERGEANT:
A RED TRANSVERSE CREST.



Warleader (Captain):
A striped black and white longitudinal crest.



Veteran Sergeant:
A striped black and red transverse crest.



High King (Chapter Master):
A white longitudinal crest.

THE PARAGON CASTE

The Emperor's Spears' First Company is known as the Paragons. They are the Chapter's warrior-elite caste. Paragons wear no crest; their white helms are marked by inverted red tridents painted on their faceplates in barbaric echo of their Chapter symbol.

Unconfirmed reports claim that to gain acceptance among the Paragons, a supplicant must be recommended by no fewer than three current veterans. He must then perform a number of feats of prowess in battle, as well as secretive blood-rites unknown outside the Paragon caste.

Paragons are never permitted to serve as officers. They are outside the chain of command, each one a champion at arms who has forgone the chance to lead his brethren into battle.

Witnesses mark strange interplays of authority between Paragons and traditional Emperor's Spears officers. The caste is a respected fraternity unto itself, with mission objectives that do not always match those of their brethren. To that end, Paragons are usually focused on the elimination of enemy commanders and champions. Many of them wear back banners with their personal heraldry on proud display, though others are just as likely to consider the habit preening and unnecessary.



voyages, catastrophic warp breaches and tides that swallow ships whole. Like many regions of the Dark Imperium, Elara's Veil is cut off from almost all external contact and support.

From the Great Rift there came a new host of Archenemy forces. These marauding warlords tore into Elara's Veil, not for destruction and plunder, but with staggering numbers of human and mutant forces, seeking to establish their own foul kingdoms on Veil worlds. These were the first encounters with the invading force known as the Exilarchy and their cruel Heretic Astartes overlords: the Pure.

Not long after the Rift's manifestation, lore on the creation of Primaris Marines reached Nemeton from elsewhere in the Dark Imperium, carried by a depleted contingent of the Emperor's own Custodian Guard. Yet, like so many other warring Chapters in the Imperium's darker half, neither the Emperor's Spears nor the Celestial Lions received fully grown, battle-ready reinforcements. They were forced to create their own Primaris warriors over time to bolster their ranks. Unpleasant tales are told of reinforcements destined for the Celestial Lions' home world of Elysium IX never reaching the sector due to Inquisitorial interference, though given the nature of the Cicatrix Maledictum, no one can know the truth of such a matter.

In recent years, Elara's Veil settled into a seething deadlock between the Adeptus

THE PURE

The first encounter with the Heretic Astartes known as the Pure came in a vicious engagement over a Bellonan mining outpost in an exo-system asteroid field. Far from the usual classes of formerly Imperial warships that comprise most of the Exilarchy's fleets, the Adeptus Vaelarii found themselves in a pitched battle with their mirror images: Traitor Astartes vessels of equivalent bulk, ferocity and firepower to their own. The Celestial Lions' flagship *Blade of the Seventh Son* was almost lost that day, as was the Bellonan war-barque *Alpha Magna Prima*.

The Pure's origins are a source of debate among the Adeptus Vaelarii and their allies. They bear a symbol worn by no other Renegade force – a serpentine basilisk coiled around a captive world – and wear armour of filthy white and corroded bronze. Speculation abounds as to their roots among the Traitor Legions, or their past identities as a Renegade Chapter fallen from the Emperor's grace.

There are even those among the embattled worlds of Elara's Veil that claim 'the Basilisks', as the Pure are often known, are truly the remnants of the once-noble Star Scorpions, vomited back out into their former territory and devoted to reclaiming what was once theirs.

Soon after their emergence into Imperial space, the Pure were known to be recruiting from the Star Scorpions' former home world – a dishonour that the Adeptus Vaelarii could not endure. This parasitic harvest was decisively ended by the Emperor's Spears, committing Exterminatus on Khamun-Sen, leaving a globe of lifeless ash in their wake.

Emperor's Spears warriors that took part in the Burning of Khamun-Sen often show the campaign marking on their armour: a black claw-marking through a yellow circle.

Vaelarii and their foes – a deadlock that held until the Exilarchy struck a decisive blow by laying siege to the Celestial Lions' home world. Answering their oldest oath of loyalty, the Emperor's Spears hurled their Chapter fleet at the Exilarchy blockade to aid the Celestial Lions' evacuation.

Now, with the Emperor's Spears and the surviving Lions gathering their armada to hold their remaining territory, it remains to be seen which way the winds of war will blow in Elara's Veil.

THE EUKARI INSURRECTION

[CHRONO-MARKER DISPUTED; EARLY M41]

The governor-regent of the planet Eukari petitioned the Sentinels of the Veil to aid his loyal armies against a planetwide rebellion, and it was the Emperor's Spears that answered the call. However, Trystane of the Arakanii, Warleader of the Fourth, arrived to find the insurrection was already being battled by the Aurora Chapter – technically a cousin bloodline to the Emperor's Spears.

Rather than greet the Emperor's Spears as brethren, the commander of the Aurora Chapter berated the Emperor's Spears for requiring other warriors to fight their wars inside Elara's Veil. With typical hot blood, the Emperor's Spears' reply was a planetary deployment right into the heart of the enemy capital, sustaining far heavier losses than the Aurora Chapter's meticulously fought counteroffensive but stealing final victory for themselves through three days and nights of brutal urban warfare.

With the Archenemy warlord's still-bloody skull chained to his pauldron, Warleader Trystane voxed the Aurora commander and informed him that his men had no right to mark the battle on their war banners as a triumph, since the Emperor's Spears had 'done all the hard work'.

The exact events that led to continued destabilisations in relations are unclear, though it seems both commanders eventually agreed to an honour duel to end the unrest. Even this engagement is the source of yet more conflict; both Chapters claim their champion was the victor, and in the skirmish that followed, both Chapters claim that the other side fired the first shot, leading to several warships sustaining significant damage in the name of Adeptus Astartes pride.

Representatives from the Ultramarines, acting either as benevolent overseers or unwanted judges, depending on which Chapter's perspective is being described at the time, later ruled in the Aurora Chapter's favour. They stated that the Emperor's Spears had acted on impulsive instinct rather than following the approved guidelines laid out in the Codex Astartes. Accordingly, they stated that the glory of the Eukari victory was to be equally shared. Such was the bitterness over the Ultramarines' perceived inflexibility – some archives list it as 'favouritism' – that Lord Trystane swore never to set foot on Macragge even if the planet was imperilled by threat of destruction.

This edict was apparently overturned by High King Arucatas the Swordbearer when he

REDDEN THE EARTH

The Chapter's battlecry is a solemn, tribal chant, accompanied by the beating of fists on breastplates and weapons crashing against shields. The sound of that rhythm is akin to the heartbeat of a primal god.

'Skovakarah uhl zarûn, skovakarah uhl zarûn ...' the warriors of Nemeton chant as they advance into battle. The Gothic translation is a vow, or a promise: *'Redden the earth, redder the earth ...'*

assumed the mantle of leadership over the Chapter, citing it as 'an oath of spit and fire, made in the heat of the moment'. Since then, elements of the Emperor's Spears and the Ultramarines have waged war alongside each other on at least two occasions, though if tales of Imperial observers are to be believed, there remains little affection between the two Chapters.

No record exists of the Emperor's Spears and the Aurora Chapter fighting together since the events that took place on Eukari, though there is an apocryphal tale in the *Liber Honora Astartes Quintia* that says a cargo vessel arrives every ten years in the skies above the home world of the Aurora Chapter, declaring that it brings a tribute to the Emperor's Spears' 'beloved cousins'. This gift is the same each decade: the ship has a hold full of seawater and several hundred abyssal vine-serpents, supposedly a despised – and incredibly ugly – breed of oceanic vermin on Nemeton, with almost no nutritional value whatsoever and a profoundly unpleasant taste.



CODEX SUPPLEMENT

This section presents the rules for fielding an army formed from the Emperor's Spears Chapter, an Ultramarines successor Chapter. If your army is Battle-forged and includes any **EMPEROR'S SPEARS** units, the rules in this section can be used in addition to those presented in *Codex Supplement: Ultramarines*.

Designer's Note: *Records of the Emperor's Spears are scarce, but they are believed to have come from the Bastion Founding in the latter half of M40 and are relatively young by the standards of Space Marine Chapters. Since the opening of the Great Rift, they have become largely isolated from the rest of the Imperium and now defend the region known as Elara's Veil with a barbaric tenacity akin to their tribal home world of Nemeton. They are an aggressive and mobile fleet-based Chapter that engages the enemy with speed and brutality. Therefore, an ideal army would be made up of fast-moving and close-assault units.*

RELICS

If your army is led by an **EMPEROR'S SPEARS WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give one of the following Chapter Relics to an **EMPEROR'S SPEARS CHARACTER** model from your army. Named characters and **VEHICLE** models cannot be given any of the following Relics.

Note that some Relics replace one of the model's existing items of wargear. Where this is the case, you must, if you are using points values, still pay the cost of the wargear that is being replaced. Write down any Chapter Relics your models have on your army roster.

DRUIDIC TALISMAN

Librarians and Chaplains of the Emperor's Spears diverge from the Codex Astartes to become Druids. The most esteemed mark their black armour with sigils and totems earned through bloodthirsty duty to the Chapter.

LIBRARIAN or **CHAPLAIN** model only. Once per turn, you can re-roll a Psychic test made for the bearer or re-roll the dice when determining if a litany recited by the bearer is inspiring.

BEAST-HIDE CLOAK

When a mighty beast stalked a tribe on Nemeton, a ghost set out into the wilds to end its scourge. The ghost returned with the slain beast and delivered it to the tribe to symbolise the end of their suffering. In return, the tribal elders bestowed a portion of its hide in recognition of the ghost's grim service.

Each time an attack is allocated to the bearer, subtract 1 from the Damage characteristic of that attack (to a minimum of 1).

CHAPTER TACTIC

The Chapter Tactic (see *Codex: Space Marines*) gained by **EMPEROR'S SPEARS** units is Redden the Earth.

EMPEROR'S SPEARS: REDDEN THE EARTH

The warriors of the storm world Nemeton are tattooed headhunters, chanting funeral dirges as they bloody their blades in the ceaseless warfare that rages through their protectorate.

- Add 1 to Advance rolls and charge rolls made for units with this tactic.
- Each time a model with this tactic makes a melee attack, if that model's unit made a charge move, was charged or performed a Heroic Intervention this turn, an unmodified hit roll of 6 scores 1 additional hit.

HORIZON BLADE

Blue waves seemingly cascade in the alloy of this blade, their ceaseless motion intensified by the movement of the bearer. As they crash across its length, its lethal edge is energised to levels capable of cutting anything it comes into contact with.

Model equipped with a power sword or master-crafted power sword only. This Relic replaces a power sword or master-crafted power sword and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Horizon Blade	Melee	Melee	+2	-4	2
Abilities: This weapon has a Damage characteristic of 3 and an Armour Penetration characteristic of -5 in a turn in which the bearer made a charge move or performed a Heroic Intervention.					

WARLORD TRAITS

If an **EMPEROR'S SPEARS** model is your **WARLORD**, you can use the Emperor's Spears Warlord Traits table below to determine what Warlord Trait they have. You can either roll one D3 to randomly generate one, or you can select one.

1. BLOODIED BUT UNBROKEN

Since the opening of the Great Rift, this Warlord has faced hardship and adversity at every turn. Even in turmoil, they will prevail through strength of will.

- Add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of this **WARLORD**.
- While this **WARLORD** has fewer than its starting number of Wounds remaining, add 1 to its Attacks characteristic.

2. TRIBAL HERITAGE

This Warlord holds to the traditions of their tribe from Nemeton, proudly honouring their heritage as they fight their enemies.

- Once per battle, you can re-roll a failed hit roll, wound roll or saving throw made for this **WARLORD**.

- Once per battle, if your army is Battle-forged, you can use a valid Epic Deed Stratagem on this **WARLORD** without spending any Command Points.

3. SENTINEL OF THE VEIL

This Warlord has persecuted many a war across the Veil and personifies the Chapter's moniker.

- This **WARLORD** is eligible to perform a Heroic Intervention if it is within 6" horizontally and 5" vertically of any enemy unit, instead of 3" horizontally and 5" vertically. Each time it makes a Heroic Intervention move, it can move up to 6" instead of 3" (all other rules for Heroic Interventions still apply).
- This **WARLORD** fights first in the Fight phase.

STRATAGEMS

If your army includes any **EMPEROR'S SPEARS** Detachments (excluding Auxiliary Support, Super-heavy Auxiliary or Fortification Network Detachments), you have access to these Stratagems and can spend CPs to use them.

SKOVAKARAH UHL ZAÛRN!

1CP/2CP

Emperor's Spears – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The battle cry of the Emperor's Spears is the call that precedes their red work.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when an **EMPEROR'S SPEARS CORE** or **EMPEROR'S SPEARS CHARACTER** unit from your army that made a charge move, was charged or performed a Heroic Intervention this turn is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes a melee attack, add 1 to that attack's wound roll. If that unit contains 5 or fewer models, this Stratagem costs 1CP; otherwise, it costs 2CP.

FIGHT AS BROTHERS

2CP

Emperor's Spears – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Having spent years relying on their trusted brothers, when Emperor's Spears fight together, little can stay their blows.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when an **EMPEROR'S SPEARS INFANTRY** unit from your army is selected to fight. Select one enemy unit within Engagement Range of that unit and one or more other friendly **EMPEROR'S SPEARS INFANTRY** units. Until the end of the phase, each time a friendly **EMPEROR'S SPEARS INFANTRY** unit makes a melee attack against that unit, you can re-roll the hit roll.



EMPEROR'S SPEARS

You've just read an Index Astartes article about the Emperor's Spears, so it's only right we follow it with a painting guide! Specialist Games Studio 'Eavy Metal painter Drew Palies shows you how to paint Emperor's Spears using both classic and Contrast methods.

Drew: The Emperor's Spears wear light-blue power armour with white helmets – a cold, pastel colour scheme that's not seen very often on Space Marines. This is complemented by a warm gold casing on their bolt rifles. On these two pages I show you how to paint the Emperor's Spears using the classic painting style, while over the page I use Contrast paints.

BATTLE READY

Using the stages to the right, Drew painted an Emperor's Spears Intercessor so that he is ready for the battlefield. An army painted to this standard would look awesome.



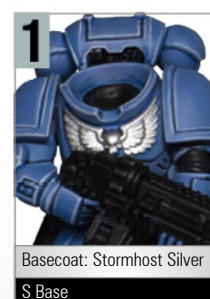
LIGHT BLUE ARMOUR



KNEE PAD



CHEST EAGLE



PARADE READY

With a few extra highlights to each area of the model, Drew took the Battle Ready Intercessor and made him Parade Ready. Skovakarah uhl zarûn!



helmet black, though I kept it separate for painting. This was to ensure the colours remain consistent across the whole model. I would end up with a brighter silver if I painted it over a white undercoat, for example.

I started with the power armour first, because it is easily the largest area of the model. It is also an important benchmark for brightness. If the armour ends up quite dark, you don't want to paint the helmet too bright, as it will stand out unnaturally. All the colours on a model need to work together to create an overall feel, so establishing that main colour first is crucial.

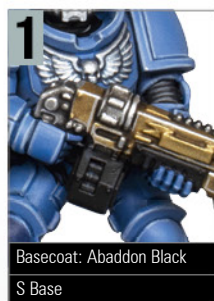
Also, a confession. You may have noticed that a Contrast paint has snuck into the classic section! Shock! Horror! I used Talassar Blue as a shade for the armour because it is absolutely the perfect hue for the job. The Emperor's Spears agree, and who's to argue with them, eh?

MORE BLUE, MORE SPEARS!

You can never have too many painting guides, which is why the Warhammer TV team have created a painting video for the Emperor's Spears' blue power armour. Not only that, but they've even created a video showing you how to convert a Space Marine Captain to have a fancy spear, just like on the front cover of the Black Library novel *Spear of the Emperor*.



BLACK



WHITE HELMET



HELMET LENSES



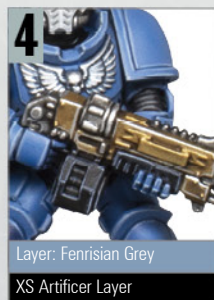
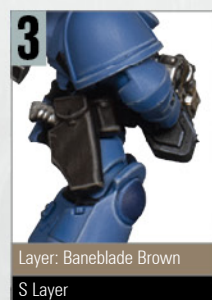
GUN CASING



BARE METAL



LEATHER



CONTRAST STYLE

For the Contrast painting guide, I used Grey Seer as the basecoat for the model. It's got a slightly blue tone to it, (as opposed to Wraithbone's yellow tone), making it the ideal undercoat for the cool blue and the white helmet.

Getting the blue power armour right was paramount, so I experimented with a couple of spare models to make sure I got it just right. I mixed two Contrast paints – Ultramarines Blue and Talassar Blue – to get the colour right, then added in some Contrast Medium to make it more translucent. This means that the paint becomes more see-through, enabling the Grey Seer basecoat to be seen underneath.

It's important when applying the paint at this stage not to just slap it on. You need to use your brush to guide the paint into the right places, namely the recesses and lower

portions of the armour (such as around the bottoms of the greaves). You're looking to stain the armour blue, not drown it! Most importantly, if the paint does pool and you don't notice for a while, don't try and 'hoover up' the paint with a brush – you'll just end up with unsightly tide marks where the paint had started to dry. Let it dry fully, then touch it up afterwards with your next colour.

In this case, the next colour is Hoeth Blue, which I applied over the Contrast basecoat, leaving the darker colours in the recesses. With very little work you get almost instant shading and, if you water down the Hoeth Blue a bit, you can even create a colour gradient across the shoulder pads and greaves where the darker Contrast colours show through. You can then highlight the edges of the armour with pure Hoeth Blue as normal, followed by Blue Horror. Try experimenting with this effect on a few spare shoulder pads – the practise is worth it!

BATTLE READY

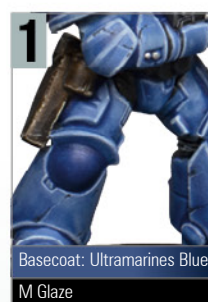
Using the stages to the right, Drew painted an Emperor's Spears Intercessor using Contrast paints and one or two quick highlights. Nice and simple, right?



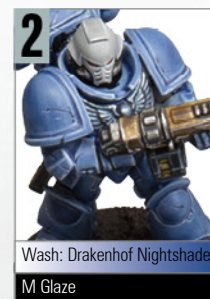
LIGHT BLUE ARMOUR



KNEE PAD

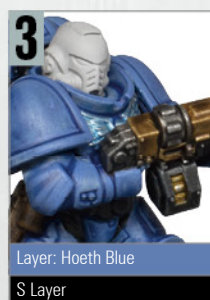


CHEST EAGLE



PARADE READY

Drew added a few highlights to each area of the model, taking this Emperor's Spears Intercessor from Battle Ready to Parade Ready. He is now ready for war!



GOLDEN BOLTERS

The Emperor's Spears carry bolt rifles with gold casings, which is quite unusual – bolter casings are normally a matt colour while the working parts are metallic. To help break up all the metal areas, I gave the gold casing a heavy wash of Agrax Earthshade (classic) or Wyldwood (Contrast) to take away some of the shine before highlighting the edges with Stormhost Silver. To help limit the amount of silver on the gun, I also painted some areas black, including the ammo hopper, hand grip and even the barrel. Again, this helps limit having too many metallic colours in one area.

TOP TIP

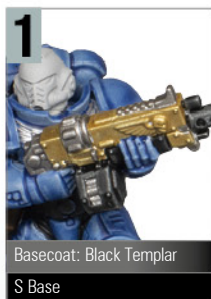
For really fine edge highlights – like the edges of shoulder pads – try running the side of your brush's head along the area you want to paint rather than the tip. It gives you much better control. Remember, though, always pull the brush towards you, never try pushing the bristles away.

WAR IS A DIRTY BUSINESS

Drew has shown how to paint pristine Emperor's Spears, but what if you want yours to look dirtier, like they've been in a hellish war zone or on a lengthy campaign? Well, studio army painter Tangui (whose army you can see over the page) suggests washing thin glazes of Baneblade Brown around the feet to simulate dirt and painting in chips and scratches on the armour with Rhinox Hide. It even works on vehicles, too!



BLACK



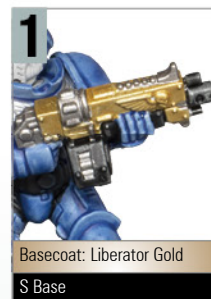
WHITE HELMET



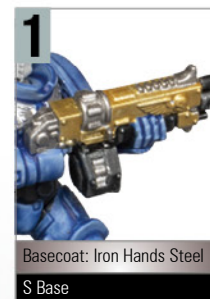
HELMET LENSES



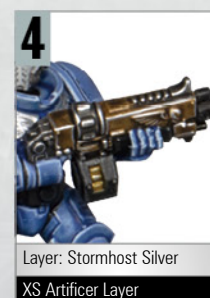
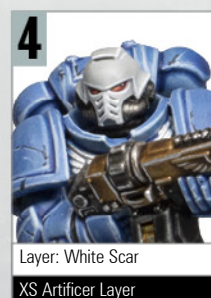
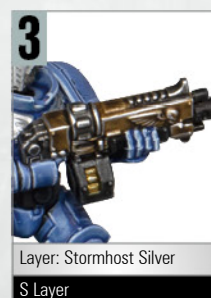
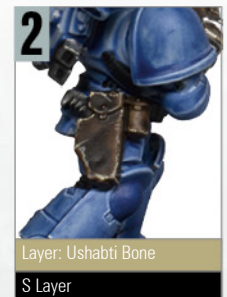
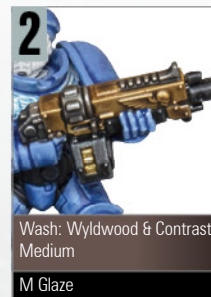
GUN CASING



BARE METAL

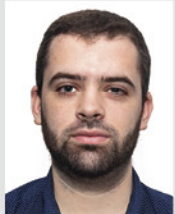


LEATHER



WARHOST OF NEMETON

After reading *Spear of the Emperor* by Aaron Dembski-Bowden, studio army painter Tangui Jollivet decided it was high time he painted an army of blue Space Marines. Here you can see his growing collection of Emperor's Spears.



TANGUI JOLLIVET

Tangui is one of the newest recruits in the Warhammer 40,000 army painting team, but he has already painted scores of models in his short time in the studio, most notably for *Codex: Sisters of Battle*. When he's not painting Warhammer 40,000 miniatures, Tangui can be found ... well, painting Warhammer 40,000 miniatures!

Tangui: Like most fans of Warhammer, I've always been interested in Space Marines, though until recently I'd never quite settled on a Chapter that I wanted to paint as a whole army. Then I saw the cover of Aaron Dembski-Bowden's novel *Spear of the Emperor*, and my imagination was captured.

My first step was reading the novel, which gave me a really good feel for the Chapter, what they look like and how they fight. I originally come from Brittany in France, where there is a strong Celtic heritage, and I could see that reflected in the naming conventions and the Ogham runes that the Emperor's Spears use. I'm also a fan of history – particularly Greco-Roman architectural and artistic influences – and these are also clearly present in the Emperor's Spears (notably the Chapter symbol). The final selling point for me was the fact that they wear blue armour. I like blue. The combination of influences and colours was perfect for me.

I actually picked up the limited-edition version of *Spear of the Emperor*, which has loads of interesting extras in it, including a version of the Index Astartes article found in this magazine. That really helped me figure out what markings to put where on my models, what the dark-blue knee pad was for, what colour crests to paint on my characters, and so on. I was even lucky enough to chat with Aaron about the Emperor's Spears, and he gave me some pointers on how I could paint my miniatures. The Chapter generally follows the Codex Astartes, but there are a few deviations that make for interesting painting challenges. That's why my Bladeguard – known as Paragons – all have white shoulder pads to mark them out as veterans (instead of white helmets, which they already have). The inverted red tridents on their helms are also mentioned in the novel as being a symbol of the Chapter's elite.





Tangui has painted several characters for his army, including a Captain (foreground), an Ancient and two Lieutenants. He has also painted his first Incurator to add to the force.





A unit of Paragons is the latest addition to Tangui's force. Their personal heraldry – a big thing for the Emperor's Spears – can be seen on their tilting shields and their storm shields.

THE UNITED COLOURS OF NEMETON

Tangui's dark-blue colour scheme was inspired by the artwork on the front cover of *Spear of the Emperor*. He started with a spray undercoat of Mechanicus Standard Grey, and then he painted the blue and white using the colours below. It's also worth noting that he painted the coils on his plasma incinerators in two different ways – a cool blue to show they can be fired, and an angry pink to show that they are overheating and need to cool down.

BLUE POWER ARMOUR

Basecoat: Hoeth Blue
Shade: Alaitoc Blue
Glaze: Talassar Blue
Shade: Drakenhof Nightshade
Highlight: Hoeth Blue
Highlight: Blue Horror
Chipping: Corvus Black
Chipping: Blue Horror

WHITE HELMET

Basecoat: Corax White & White Scar (1:1)
Shade: Grey Seer
Line Shade: Stormvermin Fur
Highlight: White Scar
Chipping: Baneblade Brown



The first model I painted for my force was my Lieutenant, which I converted for a Space Marines kitbash article in the May 2019 *White Dwarf*. I based the model on the cover artwork of the novel, using a cape and spear from the Stormcast Eternals Vanguard-Palladors kit to convert it. I've since used fur capes and helmet crests on other models in my force, as I feel they add a sense of narrative to the characters and unit sergeants. I decided to paint my Emperor's Spears just like the novel artwork, too, with plenty of weathering and battle damage. You can see the colours I use for the blue power armour over to the left, while the weathering is achieved by painting thin glazes of Rhinox Hide and Baneblade Brown onto the armour around the legs, feet and anywhere else that feels appropriate. The white helmets also have a very (very!) thin glaze of Baneblade Brown to add a hint of weathering to the focal part of the model.

I paint the bases of my models a dusty, warm red to contrast with the cool blue and white armour of the Emperor's Spears. I use two different texture paints on my bases – Martian Ironcrust and Armageddon Dust – applying them in patches and then blending the patches together to create a craggy, cracked effect. Then, I wash the bases with Agrax Earthshade and drybrush them with Balor Brown and Ushabti Bone.

A TALE OF FOUR WARLORDS

In a galaxy sundered by an eternity of battle, four mighty warlords are assembling their armies. Will they defend the Imperium of Mankind, or do they seek to crush it underfoot? Four crusades are about to begin in earnest. This is A Tale of Four Warlords.



Don your power armour, charge your gauss flayers, offer up a prayer to the Emperor and bellow out one truly massive Waaagh! because A Tale of Four Warlords is back! Yes, that's right, readers, January 2021 marks the beginning of not one, but two series of this classic article – one for Warhammer 40,000, the other for Warhammer Age of Sigmar. If you couldn't tell from all the guns and the big header on the opposite page, this is the Warhammer 40,000 edition. Welcome!

WHAT IS A TALE OF FOUR WARLORDS?

The premise is simple – four keen hobbyists have a year to build and paint an army of their choice, with their latest creations being shown off every other issue in the pages of *White Dwarf*. This time around, we have challenged our four warlords to start a new army based around the Crusade rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000: Core Book*. The goal is for each of them to paint around 25 Power Level of new models for each instalment while

developing the story behind their units and heroes as they play through their campaigns. By the end of the challenge, they should not only have a beautifully painted army, but some cool battlefield memories, plenty of veteran units and some truly heroic warriors who have survived the crucible of war to become mighty champions. In this inaugural part of the new series, our four warlords introduce themselves and set out their plans for their armies. They even painted a few test models to show you what they're planning for their armies – it's all very exciting stuff!

As with previous years, we encourage you at home to join in, too. Many Warhammer stores, independent stockists and gaming clubs like to run A Tale of Four Warlords alongside the series in the magazine, so why not ask them if they're planning anything this time around? If you do get involved, make sure you send some pictures of your creations to team@whitedwarf.co.uk – we would love to see what you've been working on.

WARLORDS: A BRIEF HISTORY

A Tale of Four Warlords first appeared in *White Dwarf* back in 1997, and there have been ten iterations of the series since then, with this being the eleventh. But the Warhammer 40,000 series won't be the only one running in 2021, as next month sees the start of a Warhammer Age of Sigmar series that will run bimonthly alongside it. So whether you prefer sword and sorcery or guns and psykers, there is a warlords series for you.

THE CRUSADE BEGINS

For this edition of A Tale of Four Warlords, our four hobbyists will be using the narrative play Crusade rules, which begin on page 313 of the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*.

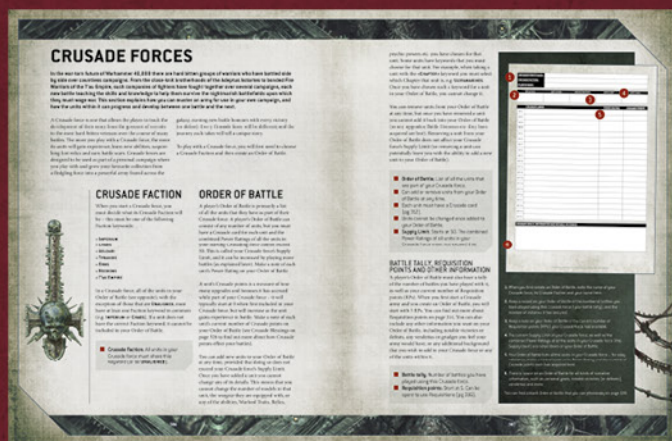
For those of you new to Crusade, it is an incredibly cool and very exciting way to build up a story around your army. Once you have established the core of your Crusade force, you can fight any number of battles against any number of different opponents, and as you play more games, your army will grow in size and experience. When you launch your Crusade, your force will be relatively untested and inexperienced, but as it fights more battles, it will develop into a hardened Imperial battle group, a nightmarish Chaos warband, or a marauding xenos horde. Your units will acquire new skills that allow them to better defeat your enemies. Your characters will uncover prized relics that they can use in the ongoing war effort. And as your army continues to fight on new fronts, you will be able

to add more warriors, heroes and deadly war machines to the ranks of your ever-expanding force. What began as a small crusade can soon develop into a mighty army of conquest!

Each Crusade force is on a personal crusade that you, the commander, can define however you like. What this means is that you don't have to play with the same group of opponents if you don't want to – any Crusade force can be pitted against any other at any time, wherever you are. Furthermore, when two forces of different levels of experience encounter one another, the Crusade rules provide the tools to ensure that the battle is not unfairly balanced in either direction. So whether you're playing through a carefully planned campaign with a group of friends, taking part in a massive multi-player campaign with your gaming club or crusading on your own into a galaxy full of deadly foes, the Crusade rules have got you covered!

For the first article of the new A Tale of Four Warlords series (that's this one!), our four warlords painted some test models to show us the colour schemes for their armies. For the second article, we've asked them to paint 25 Power Level of models – essentially a good core to their force and roughly the equivalent of what you might find in a Start Collecting! set. While the Crusade rules suggest starting a campaign at 50 Power Level, there is nothing to stop our warlords from beginning early. In fact, we actively encourage it!

In the third and subsequent months, our warlords must paint roughly 25 Power Level each month, adding to their collections and giving them enough models to fill out their Crusade force as their supply limit increases.



SPACE MARINES

THE SONS OF MEDUSA



JOEL MARTIN

Joel is senior designer for the Warhammer 40,000 team, but he's swapped his graphics tablet for a bolt rifle for this series. Joel was last seen in the August 2019 issue's Battle Report with his eighteen-strong army of Kastellan Robots. Eep!

Joel Martin believes that the best way to win any challenge is to purge the weak – a fitting sentiment considering that it is also the motto of the Sons of Medusa. Joel explains why he decided to collect this successor Chapter for A Tale of Four Warlords.

Joel: I've always had an interest in collecting miniatures and creating a story around them, and when I was asked to take part in A Tale of Four Warlords, I jumped at the chance! The new Crusade content for Warhammer 40,000 really fits with the approach I take to collecting and gaming, so I'm really looking forward to seeing how all of our armies progress throughout the challenge.

Unusually, I don't really have many Space Marines in my miniatures collection, which is why I decided to start an army of them for this series. I've always had an interest in tales of the Machine God, the Iron Hands and their successor Chapters, so that was my starting point for inspiration. After reading through codexes, Black Library novels and loads of other source material (and after much subsequent deliberation), I settled on the Sons of Medusa as my Chapter choice and set to work on planning an army that would reflect both the ruthless and logical nature of the Chapter.

A MOST LOGICAL PLAN

I want to focus on building a resilient strike force that has a mixture of firepower and speed as described in the Chapter's background. The Sons of Medusa are pretty aggressive and not really known for their gun lines, preferring to race forward in their vehicles and get right up close to the enemy. For this reason, I'm going to include

lots of vehicles such as Impulsors and Repulsors, with backup in the form of highly mobile Gladiators and possibly some air support from a Stormhawk Interceptor (I've always been a fan of that miniature). Also, plenty of Dreadnoughts as befits a successor Chapter of the Iron Hands! I can then fill out the rest of my army with support units that can move up to capture objectives and adapt to any tricky situations on the battlefield.

FIFTY SHADES OF GREEN

The striking green of the Chapter's armour has been presented in a variety of ways over the years, from bright, almost luminous green to drab olive green. After some colour trials, I settled on a slightly darker green than the one shown in the Iron Hands supplement. I wanted a scheme that would be easy to replicate en masse that used just a few key colours. As the Sons of Medusa follow a different Chapter structure to the Codex Astartes (see below) I chose for my force to represent the Atropos War Clan, which would allow me to add hints of black to my colour scheme. This can be seen on the shoulder trims and right knee pads.

That brings me on to another interesting discovery about colour schemes. While I was looking for source material, I actually found loads of interesting things about the Chapter's colour scheme that I didn't previously know. In one of



WHO ARE THE SONS OF MEDUSA?

The Sons of Medusa are a Chapter with a reputation for utter ruthlessness. Descended from the Iron Hands following a schism within the Chapter, they share many of their forebears' predilections, including intolerance for the weakness of flesh and a reliance on the power of the machine. Yet while the Chapter maintains an impressive and distinguished roll of battle honours, its glories mask a dark past that many could not guess at. Deep down, there are several Imperial factions that still regard the Sons of Medusa with suspicion.

A fleet-based Chapter, the Sons of Medusa's Battle Companies are divided between three war clans: Magera, Atropos and Lachesis. Ever conscious of the controversial roots of their formation, each of these clans strives all the harder to prove themselves, and they are renowned for the furious aggression with which they prosecute their campaigns. In particular, the Chapter is notable for the preponderance of armoured transport vehicles it employs and the thundering armoured spearheads that it drives deep into enemy lines.



ESTABLISHING A COLOUR SCHEME

I took most of my inspiration from the Sons of Medusa featured in the showcase section of *Codex Supplement: Iron Hands*. I primed my models with Death Guard Green, then applied an all-over basecoat of Warpstone Glow built up in thin layers. I picked out any details with Abaddon Black. Next was a recess shade of Nuln Oil and a quick tidy up with Warpstone Glow. The highlights are Moot Green with a final edge highlight of Skarsnik Green to some of the character models. The black areas are highlighted with Mechanicus Standard Grey. With larger models like vehicles, I'm planning to add a weathering step to the black by applying a wash of Mournfang Brown and Lahmian Medium around metallic areas and rivets to give it a rusty, dirty look.



THE FLESH IS WEAK

Because the Sons of Medusa are Iron Hands successors, I went on a hunt to find as many bionic parts as possible from various Space Marine kits. The Iron Hands Primaris Upgrades set was obviously a great starting place for bionic arms and heads, though I have also taken parts from the Hellblasters, plus a load of servo-skulls from a variety of kits to hover around my warriors.

the old Rogue Trader books, for example, there is a picture of a Sons of Medusa Space Marine in desert camouflage. That could look really cool on a unit of Infiltrators – a unit of super-sneaky Space Marines sent to take out important targets or capture hard-to-reach objectives. That colour scheme influenced my choice of basing for the army. I also noticed that in Forge World's Badab Wars books, the Sons of Medusa often paint their vehicles (or parts of them at least) black – a nod back to their parent Chapter. I really like that idea and plan to paint most of my vehicles black, with hints of green to show the Chapter colours. I'm even considering painting the new Outriders riding black bikes.

WHAT'S THE STORY?

As I mentioned earlier, I like to create a story around my armies, and the Sons of Medusa are no different. The leader of my Crusade force is

Captain Morn Graevarr (shown above), who was mortally wounded during the Badab War campaign where he lost his left arm (now bionic). After finding out about the Primaris Space Marines, he chose to embrace death and cross the Rubicon Primaris to become one himself. He survived the ordeal and now leads the Atropos War Clan, which has seen a large influx of Primaris Marines since the opening of the Great Rift and after the heavy losses of the Badab War. They now venture out on crusade amongst the stars seeking out traitors and heretics. I plan on converting some of my characters if they receive any augmentations from their crusade efforts, and if any suffer a terrible wound in battle, maybe they will be entombed inside a Redeptor Dreadnought! I plan on adding some kill and campaign markings to my vehicles, too, which will commemorate some of those memorable moments during my games.

NEXT TIME ...

Like most of the warlords, I'm going to start work on the core of my force over the next couple of months, mostly working on Intercessors and characters, I think. I'm also going to fully embrace the power of the Machine Spirit and – if possible – paint a Redeptor Dreadnought for the next instalment. As I've already mentioned, I'm planning to paint most of it black with green arms. We'll see how that goes!

THE FIRST INTERCESSORS

I find it's always good to paint a core unit first to see if you like a colour scheme. Painting a character is great fun, but until you paint the rank and file, you don't really know what you're getting yourself into. I built my Intercessors pretty much straight out of the box, but I used a few upgrades from the Iron Hands accessories frame and a servo-skull. The number on the Sergeant's knee shows that this is the second battleline squad in the war clan.



NECRONS

THE THOKT DYNASTY



JONATHAN STAPLETON

Jonathan is the *White Dwarf* representative in this series of A Tale of Four Warlords. An accomplished painter, Jonathan can get a lot of models painted to a high standard very quickly – a useful attribute for a challenge such as this!

After sixty million years asleep, White Dwarf photographer Jonathan Stapleton has awoken from his slumber to find the galaxy changed. Now he summons the Necrons of the Thokt Dynasty to do his bidding. But how will he approach this new challenge?

Jonathan: I'm from that generation that grew up reading the very first A Tale of Four Warlords in the pages of *White Dwarf*. I can remember some of those armies even now, and seeing them grow each month was the highlight of reading the magazine for me. Since joining the *White Dwarf* team a few years ago, I've been lucky enough to photograph a fair number of armies for A Tale of Four Warlords. Seeing the collections grow before my eyes is always a great experience. The time and dedication that people put into their armies is astounding.

I was asked if I would like to take part for the 2021 series, and I couldn't have been more excited! Right from the start there was only one army I could imagine doing: Necrons. They were the second army I ever collected, and after seeing the new range of models, I knew it was time for me to pick them up again. The models in the Indomitux box set would make the perfect core to a new force – around 50 Power Level – and from there I could then add whichever units I felt like. The Necron range is pretty huge now, so there are lots of units to choose from, but I'm imagining large units of Necron Warriors marching slowly out of their tomb complex and into crackling portals ready to be deployed to faraway worlds. I see the army as a slow march of death across the battlefield, but with the support of many mad, scary and fast-moving units of Destroyers to

outflank the enemy. Over the course of my crusade, I can then build upon this narrative, which will hopefully culminate in the arrival of the Silent King. Now that would be a cool centrepiece model to finish off the collection!

FORGING A DYNASTY

With my army decided, I wanted to come up with an achievable colour scheme – one that was achievable both in terms of my painting skills and the time I would have to work on the models (the Warlords deadlines are relentless!). But I also wanted a colour scheme that matched up with a cool Dynasty background – one that not many people had done before and that looked and felt distinctly different from the silver and bronze Necrons you traditionally see. I spent ages looking through the codexes – both new and old – and trying out colour schemes (you can see some of them to the right). I reckon I changed my mind at least four times a week.

THE PERFECT COMBINATION

The colour scheme and background that finally stuck were those of the Thokt Dynasty. These Necrons are mostly silver, but with a startling blue glow to their weapons and power cells that really makes them stand out from the Necrons of other dynasties. This is because their crownworld is bathed in the radiation of nearby stars, which the Crypteks have harnessed as a power source.

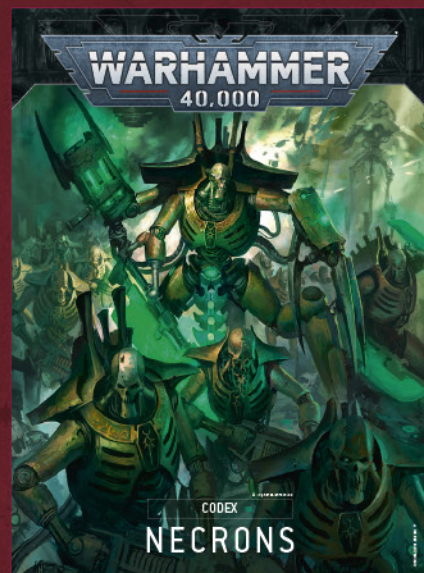


WHO ARE THE THOKT DYNASTY?

The shifting void rifts of the Hyrakii Deeps hide the coreworlds of the Thokt Dynasty. These planets orbit the massive Meghoshta crownworld in a stately dance across the aeons, and smaller, heavily weaponised planetoids orbit them in turn. Wreathed in sparking cerulean energy, the crystalline continent-tombs of the Thokt Dynasty feed upon the radioactive power of the void rifts that surround them, the sky overhead thick with rippling darkness and flickering blue comets. As their armies emerge from their stasis-crypts to bring death to their

foes, dull metal skulls reflect the cold sapphire stars far above.

Harnessing this potent radiation, the Thokt Crypteks have fashioned rad-receptors into the weaponry of their soldiers, a symptom of which is the shimmering azure light that emanates from their eyes, gauss flayers and even the cracks in their mechanical forms, debilitating and weakening those with bodies of flesh and blood. When the Thokt gather for war, the icy power of the Hyrakii void rifts becomes a truly baleful weapon.



TESTING, TESTING

The original plan for my Necrons was to paint their carapaces like ceramic – an effect I had seen on a Golden Demon entry that I really liked. At this point I was undecided on a Dynasty, but I knew I wanted some chipping and/or blending on the carapaces, as I wanted the Necrons to be my best-looking army yet. I started with a Grey Seer basecoat and experimented with a few colours, testing out washes of The Fang (1), Space Wolves Grey (2), Gryph-charger Grey (3) and then

Drakenhof Nightshade for the deep recesses. But I was struggling to achieve a consistent result – I needed something easier to replicate. At this point I'd decided on the Thokt Dynasty and needed a carapace colour to complement the blue glow. The colours I chose are a basecoat of Sons of Horus Green with a Sybarite Green highlight followed by a 1:1 mix of Akhelian Green and water and a 1:1 mix of Terradon Turquoise and water (4). A final highlight of Sybarite Green (5) finishes the effect.



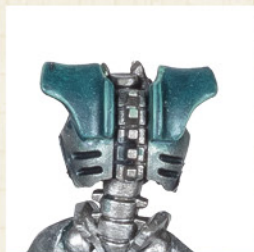
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2



3



4



5

So, cool background and cool colour scheme combined – perfect! The icing on the cake is that in the new codex there is even a Dynastic Tradition that seems tailor-made for the Thokt Necrons – Rad-wreathed. Essentially, while non-vehicle enemy units are within 1" of my units, they're at -1 Toughness. That's something no one wants!

There was another incentive for painting my Necrons as the Thokt Dynasty, though. At the time we were planning this series, we were also working on creating our own Chapter of Space Marines – the Tome Keepers – who are based in the Segmentum Pacificus. As luck would have it, (you think we plan these things?), their Chapter planet is pretty close to the Hyrakii Deep where the Thokt Dynasty's crownworld is based. With Lyle painting a Tome Keepers army, the Thokt Dynasty seemed like the perfect foil to his army. I

can see us playing a fair few narrative games using our forces.

COLOURS OF THE DYNASTY

I didn't want to just paint a silver army with blue weapons (although it would have been nice and quick), so after admiring some of the colours on the Szarekhan Monoliths, I thought a nice teal would complement the blue weapons. Tangui – one of the studio army painters – gave me a few recipes for teal (see above), and after a few practice runs, I had my theme. I still wanted some silver, though, as there is a description of the warriors marching out of their tombs, the blue light of the stars reflecting off their heads. So I decided the amount of bare metal to dynastic teal would depend on their position in Necron society. The lowliest warriors would only have their shoulder painted teal, while characters in the Royal Court would be full teal.

NEXT TIME ...

My goal for next time is to try to get most of the contents of the Indomitux box set painted. Now that I've nailed down my colour scheme, I hope I can get them all painted pretty quickly. That will also put me well ahead of my Power Level quota for the month, with around 50 Power Level painted rather than just 25. It's a bit ambitious, but once I've got a production line running, I reckon I can get them done in time.

THE FIRST FEW WARRIORS

Once I had established the colour scheme for my Thokt Dynasty army, I set about testing the colours out on a few other models such as Necron Immortals and the awesome Skorpekh Lord. As you can see, the higher the warrior in rank, the more teal there is on its armour. The tricky bit was transferring the icy blue glow to the Skorpekh's blade – a task I will have to do with all my Destroyers now!



ADEPTA SORORITAS

ORDER OF THE ARGENT SHROUD



DREW PALIES

Drew is one of the 'Eavy Metal painters for the Specialist Games Studio, and he loves nothing more than converting and painting new miniatures. His most recent project was a Space Marine Chapter of his own creation called the Emperor's Havoc.

His faith in the Emperor burning like a beacon in the darkness, Drew Palies has chosen to paint a Sisters of Battle army for this Warlords challenge. In this opening article, he talks about his inspiration for the army and his plan for the ongoing series.

Drew: When *White Dwarf* asked me if I was interested in taking part in A Tale of Four Warlords, I instantly said yes. I am excited and honoured to have been chosen! I have been a fan of the Adepta Sororitas for a very long time – I've collected an army of them in the past (using the previous miniatures) and constructed several displays and dioramas that feature them. Considering a whole new range of miniatures has recently come out for the Sisters of Battle, deciding which army to pick for this challenge was pretty easy for me.

I really like the colour scheme for the Order of Our Martyred Lady, and I have painted several Sisters of Battle in that colour scheme recently. But that's how the studio army is painted, and I wanted to do something different for this challenge – I wanted to paint an army in a colour scheme that no one around here had tried yet. I had a chat to 'Eavy Metal content lead Max Faleij about what colours would work well and what would stand out. I had a good read of the codex, too, to get a feel for the different Orders. While I am a painter first and foremost, I love to immerse myself in the background of my armies and, to some extent, their rules, too. Cool background and rules can often act as a catalyst for exciting conversions and painting options that you might not have considered if you just paint the models straight out of the box.

THE SILVER SISTERS

While all the Orders interested me to some degree, it was the Order of the Argent Shroud that really caught my attention. Their bright silver colour scheme is very different to the black power armour that we see most Sisters wearing, and their background is really exciting, too. When the Cicatrix Maledictum split the galaxy, the domain of the Argent Shroud was right next to it, and much of it was consumed in the warp rift. The Adeptus Terra assumed that the Order was lost, but the Sisters of the Argent Shroud keep appearing, stronger than ever and prevailing against incredible odds. The fact that they rarely talk and always appear at the most critical moments only add to their coolness!

IT'S ALL IN THE STORY

All this rich background is perfect for me because I love adding narrative touches to my models. I like creating characters, giving them all names and making up stories for them. For example, I know that my army will be the 4th Mission of the 1st Commandery of the 5th Preceptory of the Order of the Argent Shroud, and it will be led into battle by Canoness Eleanor. I'm already looking forward to making a cool conversion of her and using some of the Crusade rules to make her into a formidable Warlord with an awesome crusading story. I'm hoping to develop my other characters as they prove themselves in battle.



WHO ARE THE ORDER OF THE ARGENT SHROUD?

Without fear or doubt, the Sisters of the Argent Shroud throw themselves into the deadliest conflicts, marching boldly against overwhelming enemy numbers and into hellish battlefield conditions.

The Sisters of the Argent Shroud avoid formulating grand stratagems, placing their trust in the divine guidance of the Emperor rather than in the carefully orchestrated plans of his fallible servants. Spearheads of silver-clad warriors conduct lightning-fast assaults that are followed just as swiftly by rapid

withdrawals. As the foe reels in confusion, the Sisters of the Argent Shroud reform and strike again, conducting hit-and-run assaults with divine conviction.

By committing themselves so boldly to these offensives, the warriors of the Argent Shroud often leave themselves cut off from support, surrounded and outgunned. But it is in such dire circumstances that their faith shines brightest and they cry out to Silvana for protection, knowing that their fallen saint watches over them in battle.



WARRIORS OF THE GRIM DARKNESS

I wanted a colour scheme that reflected the Argent Shroud's determination to survive and the battles they have endured since the opening of the Cicatrix Maledictum. As such, I painted their silver armour with a more neutral tone compared to the blue tint they normally have, and I gave them off-white robes shaded with brown to show that they are perhaps not as clean as they normally might be. I'm already planning on covering my vehicles in battle damage and weathering powders. For the silver armour, I used 'Eavy Metal painter Paul Norton's advice to keep it to a basecoat and wash, which allowed me to spend more time on their faces. I plan to build quite a few Sisters and vehicles with candles and braziers on them so that I can add flame lighting effects to the models.



URBAN BASING

My main goal with the bases is to convey that feeling of an eternal crusade – to reflect that ambiance of endless, gruelling war. I picked a neutral, lifeless grey for the base colour, starting with a layer of Astrogranite Debris that I washed with Agrax Earthshade to help get that dirty feeling across. After that, I drybrushed the bases with Stormvermin Fur (which is a bit green in tone) and then Karak Stone. Lastly, I applied a couple of Forge World weathering powders – Aged Rust and Dry Mud – to add an element of extra filth.

MODELLING AND PAINTING OBJECTIVES

There are a few little goals I have set myself in this challenge that I think will be quite good fun. Firstly, I'm not going to use the same bare head twice across the army. This may seem like madness, but I think it really helps give each Sister her own personality and makes her stand out from the crowd. I'm also not going to use the same Simulacrum Imperialis more than once, as I feel every one of them should be a unique relic. The icon with the little coffin in it, for example. I'll take the coffin out and swap it for something else. Probably skulls and bones. They're also going to be a major theme in this army, featuring prominently on bases, relics and vehicles. My plan is to turn every one of my vehicles into a mobile shrine that's covered in bones, litanies and burning braziers (I want a lot of fire everywhere!). I like the idea of the Sisters congregating around them to pray.

I'm also not going to be using many non-Sisters units in my army. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, I really like the Sisters of Battle models – they're what excite me about the army. Secondly, I want my army to represent a badly battered crusading force in which only the strong survive. I imagine Ecclesiarchal elements like Preachers, Arco-flagellants and most of the cherubs have already long perished, leaving just a core of hardened Sisters.

I am currently pondering whether to add Saint Celestine to my army as a centrepiece at some point, too. I have painted her several times before, and always in radiant colours, but it's said that she always appears just how the Battle Sisters imagine her too look. Perhaps she would appear as a vengeful angel to the Order of the Argent Shroud – a wrathful manifestation all fire and brimstone in this time of darkness ...

NEXT TIME ...

The next stage of my project will be painting the core of my army, which will consist of several squads of Battle Sisters, plus a Canoness and some vehicles to transport them into battle. I'm also hoping to have a Dialogus finished for the next instalment, as I really like that model. The plan is to keep my projects varied by painting a unit, then a vehicle, then a character, giving each of them their own individual look.

NAILING DOWN THE COLOUR SCHEME

These five models cover pretty much all the colours and effects I want to use across my army. The Sister on the left covers the basic armour, robes and weathering on the white helmet. The cherub was useful for testing 'non-Sister' elements such as weathered skin, brass wings and rust. The Sister Superior features platinum blonde hair, while the Sister with the heavy flamer helped me test out weathering and muzzle burns. The Sister on the end was so I could try painting a pristine relic.



ORKS

WAAAGH! DA GOFFS



LYDIA GRANT

Lydia has been a hobbyist for over twenty years and has collected many armies in that time – most of them yellow! She's the company's lead customer services advisor, which means she gets to boss all the other grots around. She'll do fine playing as Orks!

Flying the flag for the unkultured aliens of the galaxy is Lydia Grant, who has begun a Goff Ork Crusade to krump da stars. Here, Lydia outlines her plans for galactic domination, which begins, unusually, with a whole load of grots ...

Lydia: When I was approached by the *White Dwarf* team and asked if I had any cool ideas for an Ork army, the answer was a resounding YES! And when I say that, I mean that Lyle's ears almost popped from the exultant yelling that can only mean one thing: a mighty Waaagh! was about to begin! A Tale of Four Warlords is the best excuse (not that you need one, of course) to get a big bunch of Boyz together to do some krumpin'. I mean, how does anyone not have cool ideas for Ork armies? And are there any Ork armies that aren't cool?

The real struggle with the question was which of the many ideas I should pick for this project. For me, armies come from the soul rather than the meta. Writing lists forms a part of the process, but I never know what army I'm going to do until I'm elbow deep in photographs from codexes and Instagram and I feel that eureka moment. After writing up a couple of lists, I had thoughts for bike armies and Killa Kan armies, but nothing was really leaping out at me. I paint a lot of things yellow, so that was an option. But on the flip side, I do paint a lot of things yellow – perhaps a change was due. I spent some time reading *Codex: Orks*, thumbing through the images and looking for ideas. The artwork of the Weirdboy vomiting power out of every orifice is a personal favourite. But it was when I properly looked at the cover that inspiration finally stuck me.

FROM SMALL ACORNS ...

What happens if you are a big important Warboss and you go off for a fight, leaving your workshop to be defended by some rabble of runty types? What if someone attacks your workshop while you are out? What if some hoity-toity Imperial humie comes and thinks he can have a scrap without you? What happens when that little, poorly defended outpost turns out to have more than little runty types in it? What if that gigantic guttural Waaagh! we hear actually starts with a croaky squeak from the throat of a long-downtrodden Grot finally about to get their big chance in an uncaring galaxy?

And that's where it all began. I decided that I wanted to create the rowdiest rabble of little runts I could. The sickliest looking bunch of gits you ever did see, where quantity is the only real quality they possess. Yeah, those are the greenskins for me. And if you're going to make the biggest and palest rabble you can, there's only going to be one clan to use. Bring on the Goff Orks!

IT'S AS SIMPLE AS BLACK AND WHITE

I love the visual impact of imagery that's black and white but with flashes of colour running through. Post-apocalyptic movies, black-and-white comic book art – all that dark and gritty imagery is what I love. I have tattoos in the same style, and



WHO ARE THE GOFF ORKS?

The Goffs are 'Ork's Orks' – big, violent, and utterly disinterested in anything but fighting. Larger and stronger than their kin, Goff Orks exist in a state of constant conflict, keeping their skills sharp between battles with brawls and scraps amongst themselves. It's no wonder that their veterans are known as Skarboyz, for they bear their battle scars with immense pride – an Ork with no scars clearly hasn't done enough fightin'.

When the largest Goff hordes go to war, the ground shakes with the

thunder of steel-capped boots as vast, unruly mobs of Goff Orks charge headlong at the enemy to hack and bludgeon them to death – a strategy that, while simple, has seen the destruction of countless armies across the galaxy.

As befits their no-nonsense approach to life, Goff Orks tend to wear sombre black and white with the occasional chequerboard pattern daubed on their wargear. There are no fancy, show-off colours for these Orks – they distract too much from the killin'.



DA PILE O' JUNK

I had the idea that I wanted my army based on a rusty, dusty wasteland, but I really had no idea what I was doing! Then I got invited to a post-apocalyptic airsoft event, and I needed to make a costume. So I got out some weathering stuff and made a respirator, which you can see here. Then I thought, I can probably do that on miniatures too! So I took a pile of scrap from the Mekboy Workshop and practised weathering techniques on it, including using transfers. I tried out all the Technical paints – Nihilakh Oxide, Ryza Rust, Typhus Corrosion, the slimy one ... and played about with colours and techniques. Once I had the hang of how things worked, I set to work on the minis knowing I could replicate the effects. This bit of scenery was actually the first thing I painted for the project.



the cover of *Codex: Orks* also has this theme running through it, with just the hint of fiery light catching the edges of the imposing Goff Nob taking centre stage.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A WAAAGH!

After trying out some weathering techniques on some scenery (see above), I set to work on painting a few test Gretchin. I knew I wanted their skin to be really pale and desaturated (like real goth Goffs), so I had a go with some Contrast paints, but they were all a bit too green for me. Then I tried a more traditional painting style with Elysian Green as the base, but that was still a bit too green. Then I changed tactics. Rather than picking a base colour and working up, maybe starting with a lighter colour and working down would be a better option. I used Ionrach Skin as a basecoat over Corax White, then used a 1:1:2 mix of Biel-Tan Green, Athonian Camoshade and

Lahmian Medium to build up a bit of colour before highlighting with Deepkin Flesh. Hey presto – sickly looking Gretchin! Fortunately for me, the colour scheme is easy to replicate, too! Picking the main colours for the rest of their kit was simple. I wanted to keep the palette limited, so it's just black, white, brown and the odd flash of red. After painting the grots and applying a few checks, I gave them all a hefty wash of Nuln Oil and Agrax Earthshade to give them a greasy look, plus a bit of weathering powder to make them look like they've been in a rusty sandstorm.

Going forward, I can see a long tale of 'I'll get my dad!' with bigger Orks appearing, not to mention robots and guns. I might be starting with the grots, but they'll go and get the Nobz and Meganobz, then the Killa Kans, the Gorkanauts and who knows what else. The sky is the limit for giant klanking machines of death!

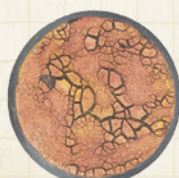
NEXT TIME ...

Over the next few months, I'll be painting my first batch of grots – about ninety of them I reckon (got to get those Troops choices filled out!). Then comes anything else that involves grots, such as Mek Gunz, Shokk Attack Gun (they're being sucked into it) and maybe a converted Weirdgrot.

I also want to paint a Mekboy Workshop, since scrap yards are very much the theme of my force.

TEST BASES

I wanted the base to act as a spot colour. I thought about a wasteland crackling with wyrd energy, but it didn't quite work for me. Then I thought maybe your standard dusty wasteland would be cool, but it was just too drab. Then I looked at the cover of the codex and saw that red glow and got an idea for a planet that is heavy in iron oxide. That seemed like the perfect home for scrap-hungry Orks.



SICKLY GROTS

These are the first few grots from my fledgling Waaagh! As you can see, they're all really pale and sickly looking, as if they've been irradiated by terrain and generally mistreated by their Orky overlords. The colour palette is pretty monochrome to fit in with my imagery of the Goffs. The grot with the goggles is called Nuggz – he's the real boss of the force and the model that brought the project to life.



From the maelstrom of a sundered world, the Eight Realms were born. And with their birth began a war to claim them. This issue, the whole section is all about the massive Sons of Behemat. What else?





DESIGNERS' NOTES

The miniatures designers join us to chat about the awesome new Mega-Gargants. Plus, painting notes from 'Eavy Metal. It all kicks off on page 72.

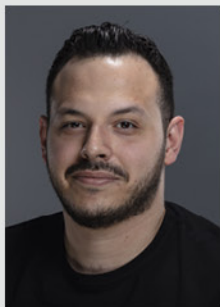


GET READY TO RUMBLE!

The Sons of Behemat fight their inaugural Battle Report against the Ogor Mawtribes on page 88. Plus, there's a new mini-game on page 110.



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



LOUIS AGUILAR

Louis is one of the games developers for the Warhammer Age of Sigmar team, and he spends his working days writing rules for core books, expansions and battletomes. He has recently taken to carrying around a club made from a bit of tree, claiming that it's the best way to solve rules disputes. Who are we to argue with that kind of persuasion?

With this issue's gargant theme running throughout the Age of Sigmar pages, what better time to talk about the design and development of the Sons of Behemat than in this edition of *White Dwarf*? At the time of writing, there has been much speculation and excitement about the Sons of Behemat, with many wondering what they will bring to the tabletop. In this issue's Rules of Engagement, I discuss the nuances of the recently released faction, the options they present to players, and some of the decisions we made for the descendants of the World Titan.

A COLOSSAL PRESENCE

The biggest challenge presented by this battletome was how we would best design an army of so few units to operate without hindrance or disadvantage. While this seemed a daunting task at first, it soon became clear that this restriction gave us one of the most enjoyable design spaces we could have hoped for. With three different types of Mega-Gargant, all with their own unique personalities and backgrounds, it took us no time to drill into the detail of these miniatures to produce exciting rules concepts and potential play styles for each.

The first thing that we felt we had to consider was how the gargants would work with one of the most important aspects of Age of Sigmar: holding objectives. It was clear that we needed to capture the sheer might of the Mancrusher and Mega-Gargants, and with such high points costs, we had to explore evocative ways of representing their presence on the battlefield, as well as ensure they could compete against other armies that have units with high model counts.

During our design discussions, we first decided that the Mancrusher Gargants would count as ten models when determining control of an objective, and we doubled this value to twenty models for their Mega-Gargant leaders. This allows the units from the army to comfortably contest objectives against larger units, and it reflects the scale and terrifying power these colossal warriors possess. So it was that Mightier Makes Rightier was born. Inspired by *Battletome: Ogor Mawtribes* in name and concept, this battle trait encourages the faction's players to consider the objective side of the system just as much as the temptation of charging the enemy.

MIGHTIER MAKES RIGHTIER

Mega-Gargants and their followers are so immense that it takes many lesser creatures to drive them from the lands they have claimed.

When determining control of an objective, each friendly MANCRUSHER GARGANT model counts as 10 models instead of 1, and each friendly MEGA-GARGANT counts as 20 models instead of 1.

Designer's Note: *If the battleplan being played does not follow the normal rules for controlling objectives, you can pick whether to use this battle trait or to follow the rules from the battleplan each time control of the objective is determined.*



Rules of Engagement - curated by the Age of Sigmar games developers - focuses on the creation, design and evolution of the rules for Warhammer Age of Sigmar. This month, Louis Aguilar returns to talk about this month's hot topic: the mighty Sons of Behemat!

The beauty of this rule comes from the designer's note, which allows you to choose which objective control condition you want to use for your gargants depending on the battleplan you're playing. This adds to the versatility we want the Sons of Behemat to provide despite the faction's small number of units.

VERSATILE WARRIORS

Playing with such high-point units can often affect the efficiency of an army and its ability to deal with the wide range of challenges it could face on the battlefield. While missile weapon profiles are present on some of the warscrolls in this battletome, it was important that we made an additional rule to offer the Battleline unit of the army some aid in their versatility. After considering the types of armies the Sons of Behemat's small unit pool could create, we thought it was necessary to provide a shooting attack in a different form - one that keyed off the army's general and provided fantastic imagery of how the Mancrusher Gargants operate under the command of their masters.

CHUCK ROCKS

If a dominant Mega-Gargant spots any Mancrusher Gargants standing around during a battle, he is likely to bellow at them to make themselves useful and start throwing rocks at the enemy!

In your shooting phase, you can pick 1 friendly MANCRUSHER GARGANT unit wholly within 18" of your general. Each model in that unit can make a shooting attack with the Chuck Rocks missile weapon below:

Range	Attacks	To Hit	To Wound	Rend	Damage
18"	D3	4+	3+	-1	D3

Chuck Rocks allows you to pick a friendly Mancrusher Gargant unit to perform a shooting attack in the shooting phase, one that can be a significant volley when used on a maximum-sized unit! This missile weapon profile provides the range and damage that you would expect from gigantic creatures hurling debris, but without pushing them too far and creating a play style that was unintended for the faction. With Mancrusher Gargants now able to participate in the shooting phase, the unit naturally became one that could be doubly offensive and fill the roles of multiple units despite being single models.



SPOILT FOR CHOICE

With a total of four Pitched Battle profiles across the entire army, we wanted to ensure that there were several builds that could be drawn upon from this small pool of units. To do so, we employed an innovative approach that allowed the army to fulfil its Battleline requirements without taking up too much army roster space, allowing players to field as many Mega-Gargants as possible.

After we had established the Mancrusher Gargant warscroll, we calculated its point value to find that it is a solid 180-point unit that provides a

performance that justifies its cost. In order for us to achieve our goals for army configuration options, we allowed a maximum-sized unit to not only receive a mass unit discount but count as three Battleline units too. With this in place, Sons of Behemat players would gain all of their Battleline requirements for 2000-point Pitched Battle games from a single unit, while allowing up to three glorious Mega-Gargants to lead them into battle.

With this foundation in place, we next ventured into the different play styles the army could have and the identities of the Mega-Gargant variants.

SONS OF BEHEMAT WARSCROLL	UNIT SIZE		POINTS	BATTLEFIELD ROLE	NOTES
	MIN	MAX			
Mancrusher Gargants	1	3	180/480	Behemoth	In a Sons of Behemat army, battlefield role is Battleline (not Behemoth) and maximum-sized units count as 3 Battleline units.



A TITANIC TRINITY

The Mega-Gargant kit can be built into one of three iconic units. First we have the Kraken-eater Mega-Gargant, whose miniature shows a hoarding disposition adorned with trinkets and nautically themed trophies. These details in combination with the creature's background give you a strong sense of a territorial creature that doesn't hesitate to get its hands dirty to rid its turf of intruders. With these qualities of the Kraken-eater set, we conjured one of my favourite rules from the battletome.

Get Orf Me Land!: *Kraken-eater Mega-Gargants hate intruders and trespassers, and do not take kindly to people that decide to fight battles on their land.*

In your hero phase, if you have any models with this ability within 1" of an objective that you control, you can pick one of those models and say that it will kick the objective away. If you do so, you can move that objective up to 2D6" to a new position on the battlefield, more than 1" away from any models, terrain features or other objectives. An objective cannot be kicked away more than once in the same phase.



Get Orf Me Land! introduces a new mechanic of moving objective markers outside of a battleplan's rules, and it captures the possessive nature of the Kraken-eater almost perfectly. In addition, if you take a Kraken-eater Mega-Gargant as your general, you will have access to the Taker Tribes allegiance abilities. These additional rules bolster the objective-capturing capabilities of the Sons of Behemat, and when used in tandem with Get Orf Me Land!, you can

begin to imagine how positional play and kicking objectives into the control range of another friendly gargant unit creates a really interesting play style that immediately gives the Kraken-eater the personality it deserves.

Next we have the Warstomper Mega-Gargant, a fearsome, battle-scarred creature that claims the armaments of defeated foes and adds them to its own arsenal. This sculpt immediately evokes imagery of being in the thick of combat or surrounded by foes that can be effortlessly squashed or cast aside. With the fighting style of this creature established, it was logical to equip this Mega-Gargant with weapon profiles and abilities that allow it to be surrounded by enemies with little to no concern.



Titanic Boulderclub: A Warstomper Mega-Gargant will drive straight into the midst of the foe, swinging their titanic boulderclub in great sweeping arcs that smash foes in all directions.

The Attacks characteristic of a Titanic Boulderclub is equal to the number of enemy models within 3" of the attacking model. Add the Titanic Boulderclub value on the attacking model's damage table to the total, and add 4 to the total for each enemy MONSTER within 3" of the attacking model. If the modified Attacks characteristic of the Titanic Boulderclub is less than 1, count it as being 1, and if the modified Attacks characteristic of the Titanic Boulderclub is more than 10, count it as being 10.



Titanic Boulderclub rewards players who position the Warstomper Mega-Gargant aggressively on the battlefield. It is intentionally capped at a maximum Attacks characteristic of 10 to encourage players to go where the enemies are thickest without going too far and overcooking the ability. If you take it as your general, the Stomper Tribes allegiance abilities enhance this play style further by increasing the damage inflicted by friendly Mancrusher Gargant units that march into the fray at the Warstomper's side.

Last, but by no means least, we have the Gatebreaker Mega-Gargant, a spiteful and sinister creature that adorns itself with the fortifications of bastions and strongholds it has left in ruins. With a portcullis as armour and repurposed masonry as its weapon of choice, this titanic wrecking ball excels at destroying terrain features and ignoring the modifiers to saving rolls that they bring. Adding to the uniqueness of the Mega-Gargant range and capturing the destructive might of the Gatebreaker, we designed a new mechanic that enables the Gatebreaker Mega-Gargant to render enemy faction terrain or garrisons useless at the end of each combat phase through its Smash Down ability.

Smash Down: Gatebreaker Mega-Gargants have a deep loathing of cities and settlements, which are seen as symbols of those who killed their ancestor figure, the godbeast Behemat.

Add 1 to the damage inflicted by each successful attack made by this model that targets a unit that is part of a garrison or is wholly on or within a terrain feature.

In addition, at the end of the combat phase, you can pick 1 terrain feature within 3" of this model and roll a dice. If the roll is equal to or greater than the Smash Down value on this model's damage table, that terrain feature is reduced to rubble: all of its scenery rules are replaced with the Deadly scenery rule, and its keywords are changed to SCENERY, RUBBLE.



The Smash Down ability makes things really interesting for armies that lean on their faction terrain as part of their strategy, or for any unfortunate enemies who use garrisons or terrain features for cover. If you take the

Gatebreaker Mega-Gargant as your general, the Breaker Tribes allegiance abilities will further enhance the destructive force of your army by passing on the ability to smash down terrain features with Mancrusher Gargants, too. The Gatebreaker is certainly one to watch out for in siege warfare games!



MERCENARIES FOR HIRE

If a dedicated Sons of Behemat army isn't for you, then you'll be pleased to hear that the new battle tome provides mercenary rules that allow you to take one of these incredible miniatures in your army. We really wanted to reflect the mercenary nature of the gargants in their rules, and with the endless conversion and colour scheme options, it felt like it would be a missed opportunity if we didn't. With that in mind, we set out to make unique rules that would allow each Mega-Gargant variant to be included in armies other than the Sons of Behemat, while retaining their identity on the battlefield and the impact they have on your games.

These new mercenary rules allow any army (even those picked using Pitched Battle rules) to include a Mega-Gargant model and benefit from its own unique ability. Each of these has been designed to allow the mercenaries to fill specific roles in your army and is ideal for providing your army with elements of board control or aggression. If your army often struggles with taking or holding objectives, one of these gargantuan warriors can fill that role without breaking a sweat, all while providing devastating power to unleash on your opponent. Better still, despite being 480-490 points, these mercenaries ignore any restrictions to the amount of points you have to spend on mercenary or allied units. That means you can take one of these Behemoths without the impediment of the points limits.

And so concludes this edition's Rules of Engagement. I hope it has sparked some ideas for your own Sons of Behemat force and given you an impression of the truly unique play style the army offers. As always, if you have any thoughts, feedback or queries regarding the Sons of Behemat or indeed any aspect of Age of Sigmar, please let us know by sending your emails to aosfaq@gwplc.com. Until next time, good luck and have fun!

MIGHTIER MAKES RIGHTIER

A new monster has been unleashed on the Mortal Realms, and by Sigmar's beard, it's a biggun! In this huge Designers' Notes article, members of the Warhammer Studio join us to talk about designing, painting and even converting the impressive Mega-Gargant kit.



Sam Dinwiddy: Massive projects like the Mega-Gargant normally begin with pretty humble beginnings. We'd been chatting for a while in the design team about creating a new mega-beast – something huge for the forces of Destruction. As it turned out, there was an archetype that we all know and love that we had yet to explore in the Mortal Realms: the giant! The existing gargant, designed by Brian Nelson (see below), is such an iconic kit that really captures the essence of a fantastical, mythological creature but with that classic Warhammer twist to it. We wanted to take the idea of the gargant one very large step further.

The first stage in any project like this is coming up with ideas. I started by writing down a bunch of key themes – words and phrases that summed up gargants in the Age of Sigmar. Ancient, solitary, venerable, force of nature, oafish, not corrupt or malevolent but easily manipulated, unintelligent, rancorous, hostile, powerful. I like the idea that these huge creatures are ingrained in the world, more like part of a realm than a specific race. They're part of the Gaia, if that makes sense. They keep to themselves, but when they're disturbed, they will go on the most destructive and devastating rampages imaginable.

Alex Hedström: Meanwhile, I started looking at the project from the miniatures side of things. What makes Brian's gargant model so exceptional is its anatomy. That is the absolute key to that model. The way its arms hang and the weight on its shoulders, the protruding belly and sagging skin, the tilt of the hips and the angle of the feet. There's a lumbering ungainliness to it, but also clear, unmistakable power. The anatomy gives the model such incredible character, and that was something I also wanted to bring through on the

Mega-Gargant. But sadly it wasn't as simple as just making a bigger version of the existing gargant. Getting the physique and the posture right was crucial, and Tom (the concept artist) and I spent quite some time coming up with ideas for how it would look and what size it could be. Sam looked at my mock-ups and just kept saying 'bigger'. So we made it bigger!

Sam: Scale is a really important consideration when making a huge kit like this. Whether a model is on a 25mm base or a 170mm one, the scale needs to be consistent, even if the size isn't. In classic fantasy artwork you see giants leaning on houses, sat on mountains or smashing up things we know to be huge. That helps convey the scale of them. If a naked Mega-Gargant is standing there on its own, its anatomy needs to convey its massiveness – long arms, huge belly, massive muscular legs. But equally, the details on the model need to be in scale with the outside world. The shields on the Warstomper's belt, for example, are to scale with the miniatures that normally hold them, but they look tiny on the Mega-Gargant. The Kraken-eater is holding two cannons and a chunk of tree in one hand!

Alex: It's worth noting, though, that the Mega-Gargant's heads are kept relatively small compared to the rest of their bodies. We often do this to emphasise the massiveness of a monster. Besides, body builders don't suddenly grow a massive head just because they bulk up, right? With the Mega-Gargants, we have the added incentive of keeping the head small because we want them to look unintelligent, with heavy Neanderthal brows and small eyes that are barely bigger than a human's. The end result is a huge but clearly lumbering monster that looms over everything else on the battlefield. There's no mistaking the silhouette of a Mega-Gargant!

MONSTER MAKERS

Design manager Sam Dinwiddy is the lucky chap who got to oversee the Mega-Gargants project. Working alongside him were concept artist Tom Harrison and miniatures designers Alex Hedström, Seb Perbet and Sergi Torras. Alex worked on the main body of the Mega-Gargant before moving on to designing the Warstomper, while Seb worked on the Kraken-eater and Sergi sculpted the Gatebreaker.



ONE GIANT LEAP FOR MODEL MAKING

Gargants (or Giants, as they were known in ye olden days) have been a part of Warhammer for decades, and there has been a Giant model around for as long as anyone here can remember. But everything changed in April 2006 when the very first plastic Giant was released. Sculpted by design veteran Brian Nelson, the Warhammer Giant towered over the little people of the Old World and brought a new scale to games of Warhammer. This landmark kit – which was so large it had to be cast in a bin (those being the days before digital design) – was a huge inspiration for the Mega-Gargant kit you see today.

KRAKEN-EATER MEGA-GARGANT

The Kraken-eaters are wanderers and pillagers – coastal raiders who emerge from the sea to prey on unsuspecting settlements. Seb Perbet discusses what it was like designing this salty character.

MONEY FOR OLD ROPE

Seb: Fifteen years ago, when I was still a trainee designer, I actually helped Brian with his Giant model. I sculpted some of the rope and most of the knots (there are quite a few!). At that time we sculpted physically, and Brian's work blew my mind – it was amazing handling those parts at 3:1 scale. I made those knots the knottiest knots around, and I've upheld that ethos on the new kit.



Seb: The Kraken-eater is the most ancient-looking of the three Mega-Gargants, a proper old man of the sea – like a saga or an ancient myth that has come wandering ashore. While the base body of the Mega-Gargant is the same as the other two kits, all the extra details are nautical in design to help reinforce the idea of a monster that lives near the coast. The belt around his belly is made from a ship's rigging and is hung with glass buoys that echo the wargear carried by the Idoneth Deepkin, while around his waist are hung a tentacle and the chewed tail of a scaly fish. In one hand the Kraken-eater carries a huge fishing net full of flotsam, jetsam and unfortunate buccaneers, while in the other he wields a club made from the cannons of unfortunate ships that strayed too close to him. He wears sandals on his feet, which are slightly wider than the other feet in the kit and only have three toes each, making them look more like flippers. His vambraces are made of eel-skin, more rigging and a ship's wheel (the arms and feet are interchangeable with the other Mega-Gargant variants), while around his neck is hung the jaw of some monstrous sea creature that he no doubt pounded to death at some point. He's even grown a few barnacles!

Most notable of his nautical details is the prow of the ruined boat that juts out over his shoulder. I deliberately made the details on it primitive and unusual to give the impression that this Mega-Gargant has been raiding unknown, faraway lands. I made the figurehead look particularly weird, like the effigy of an unknown god. The Kraken-eater is also a bit of a connoisseur when it comes to food, and he has a taste for sea-air-dried meat, as evidenced by the salted, dried-out human hanging from the boat's prow.

It was absolutely awesome working on a model like this because, as a miniatures sculptor, you are always simplifying details to make something that is only as big as your thumb enjoyable to paint. Just sculpting the Kraken-eater's face was brilliant fun – he has actual eyebrow hairs, a lank wet beard, bags under his eyes and big pores on his nose! I particularly loved sculpting the inside of his mouth and all those teeth (I'm weird, I know). I also wanted to suggest that he's a bit more intelligent than the average gargant, which is why he has a massive aetherquartz lantern hanging from his ear. He probably thought it looked fancy, but it has actually doubled his IQ!

The Kraken-eater's shipwrecka warclub is made of assorted cannons and lumps of driftwood bound together with leather straps (1). Some of the cannons are duardin in origin. The rest are a mystery ...

The prow of the boat features a bizarre figurehead of unknown origin (2). The strange effigy is replicated on the boat's oar. The desiccated human hanging from the boat (3) is considered to be a tasty delicacy.

The Kraken-eater's net is full of sailors, fish, seaweed and even masonry (4). A few of the seafarers wear clothing from distant, uncharted lands.

A huge jawbone adorns the Mega-Gargant's neck (5), while an aetherquartz lantern hangs from his right ear.

A chunk of leftover sea beast (6).



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WARSTOMPER MEGA-GARGANT

A belligerent force of nature, a Warstomper Mega-Gargant can often be found at the forefront of battle, looting the spoils of war and devouring the bodies of the fallen. Alex Hedström talks about his

A NOD BACK TO A CLASSIC

Alex: There have been many Giant models over the years, and they've all added to the design aesthetic of what it means to be a Warhammer gargant, be it a barrel of ale, a bag full of people or a wineskin made out of a goat. One idea I've always loved comes from the 1991 Marauder Giant, which wears a knight's armour as finger guards. I managed to sneak that idea onto the Warstomper.



Alex: The Warstomper is your archetypal gargant. He's a big, bearded monster carrying a club made out of a tree and a huge boulder – what more could you ask for? He is very much an evolution of Brian's Giant model, taking all the elements that make a Warhammer gargant so iconic and ramping them up to the next level.

The image we were looking for with the Warstomper was that of a ragged wild man, your classic Northman raider come to ransack the lands of civilised people. He rarely settles in one place but stomps angrily around the realms, always on the hunt for a fight or a meal. He's an aggressive, grumpy Mega-Gargant, and that can clearly be seen in his face – he's got a busted nose and stitches across his cheek and eyebrow. He's even got a couple of metal plates nailed into place over his forehead to show where he has headbutted something equally monstrous. We assume he won because he's still alive! His bottom lip is ragged, his teeth are broken and misaligned, his beard is threaded with the bones of tiny humans. His skull earring, while being a grim little trinket, helps scale the Warstomper's head. The rest of the Mega-Gargant model is pretty weather-beaten,

too, featuring scarred and veined hands, striated toenails and fingernails, cuts, scrapes, calloused skin on his knees and elbows and even cracked heels. We wanted to convey the feel of an old man, but a really dangerous, very large old man!

Everything about the Warstomper's wargear and trappings suggest that he's a hoarder with a 'make do and mend' attitude to life. Nothing is made neatly or with any finesse but simply bound to him or stitched together with rope. His left hand is clad in buckled armour plates plundered from a variety of sources, while in his right hand he carries the traditional gargant weapon – a nice, big club with sharp stuff wedged into it. The rest of his armour is made up of shields taken from fallen foes. Clearly he doesn't have the skill to make a shield or armour himself, but he can definitely loot them from the bodies of the fallen. Arguably his most impressive acquisitions are the Leviadon shell that he now wears as a gut plate and the Thundertusk horns and pelt that he wears over his shoulders. These are big monsters in their own right, but they look quite tiny compared to the Warstomper, which only helps to emphasise his hugeness.

The Warstomper's face (1) is properly beaten up and craggy. Note the human skull hanging from his ear, which helps provide a sense of scale.

His vambraces are made from the shields of fallen enemies, including warriors from the Iron Golem and Splintered Fang warbands (2) and bits of duardin machinery (3). The arms from a suit of armour are used as finger guards.

The looted weapons circling the Warstomper's waist (4) are modular, so they can be swapped for other acquired treasure in the kit.

Battered ogor armour protects the Warstomper's shoulders (5). It is surrounded by pilfered weapons like a crude heraldic device.

The Mega-Gargant's fingers even have fingerprints (6)!



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2



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4



5



6



GATEBREAKER MEGA-GARGANT

Gatebreakers love wrecking things - the bigger the better - and no city wall or mountain fastness is safe from their wanton destruction. Sergi Torras talks about his hooded annihilator of architecture.

YOHAN!

Sergi: Keen-eyed hobbyists will notice that the screaming human held in the Gatebreaker's hand looks very similar to Yohan - the running man that comes with the Mancrusher Gargant. Yohan was an ingenious way to help convey the gargant's size compared to a human, and I wanted to use the same idea (it's more of a cheeky joke, really) on my Mega-Gargant. Perhaps he's Yohan's distant descendant ...



Sergi: My part in this project was designing the Gatebreaker - a siege gargant - and my first port of call was his weapon. Seeing as he's all about smashing stuff up and breaking down walls, a huge wrecking ball seemed appropriate for this gargant. The Gatebreaker isn't an artificer, so his flail is made out of a piece of heavy, hard-wearing masonry bound together with chains, which feels more industrial and metropolitan compared to the leather straps and ropes found on the other Mega-Gargants. For the Gatebreaker's other hand I wanted to reinforce the idea that he smashes down people's doors and grabs whatever's inside. The homemade vambrace on his right arm is made from the shattered remains of one such door, while in his hand he holds two terrified townsfolk. This was a bit of a gag for me, because Brian's gargant model holds just one unlucky peasant, so I wanted to show the Mega-Gargant was twice as powerful by holding two! It also helps scale the model - we know how big a human is, so we can more easily appreciate the Gatebreaker's massiveness when he's holding one. Getting the human arms and hands to wrap around the giant wrinkly knuckles of the Gatebreaker's fingers was certainly a challenge!

All the other details on the model are connected to human buildings or societies. His lower belly and groin are protected by the remains of a portcullis ripped from a fortress gateway. He has also hung a gravestone, a pub sign, a bell and some wooden panels around his waist. All these items are quite heavy, which adds a feeling of weight and momentum around the model's stomach. They all swing in the same direction as his flail, which helps reinforce the idea that he has just swung it in a big arc.

The model's head was another key consideration. I wanted the Gatebreaker to look like the stuff of nightmares - a dark and sinister myth come to life. The executioner's cowl was the first step in creating that persona for him. It's got a Gothic, medieval vibe to it that ties in nicely with the portcullis and locked door. It gives him the look of a gaoler or torturer. Add to that his overly large mouth filled with broken teeth and bared gums and he ends up with quite a cruel appearance. He's also missing his left ear - there's just a hole in his hood, then a ragged mess where his ear should be. These are little touches that you would rarely get to explore on a smaller kit.

The Gatebreaker wears the trophies of his conquests, including a pub sign, a gravestone and part of a portcullis (1).

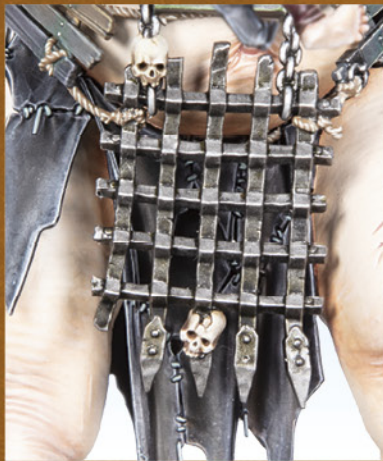
The fortcrusha flail (2) is made from the remains of a stone column with extra spikes hammered in.

Locks mean nothing to a Gatebreaker Mega-Gargant, who wears a fortress door (still locked) as a vambrace (3). Note that this Mega-Gargant holds two poor captives in his massive hand - a 100% increase over the gargant model.

The Gatebreaker's face is covered by a sinister executioner's hood (4).

There are several icons of Shyish on the model, including this brass bell (5) and numerous skulls.

The Gatebreaker wears a street light as a fancy trinket (6).



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2



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4



5



6



'EAVY METAL GARGANTS!

The Kraken-eater Mega-Gargant was painted by 'Eavy Metal's Aidan Daly, who was kind enough to share the colour combinations he used with us. Some of these colours do involve mixing paints, but if you want to push your skills to the next level or try out something different, then this is a great way to do so.



THE BIG AND SMALL OF IT

You are here



Grot



Duardin



Human



Orruk



Ogor

SKIN

Base: Cadian Fleshtone	Mournfang Brown	1:1
Shade: Mournfang Brown		
Shade: Mournfang Brown	Rhinox Hide	1:1
Highlight: Base Mix	Ushabti Bone	3:1
Highlight: Base Mix	Ushabti Bone	1:1
Highlight: Base Mix	Ushabti Bone	1:3
Glaze: Base Mix		

ROPE/NET

Base: Ushabti Bone	White Scar	3:2
Shade: Aggaros Dunes		
Shade: Plaguebearer Flesh		
Shade: Creed Camo		
Tidy/highlight: Base Mix		
Highlight: Ushabti Bone	White Scar	1:1
Highlight: White Scar		

JAWBONE

Base: Celestra Grey	White Scar	1:1
Shade: Fenrisian Grey		
Shade: Dark Reaper		
Highlight: Celestra Grey	White Scar	1:3
Highlight: White Scar		

CLOTH

Base: Stegadon Scale Green		
Shade: Stegadon Scale Green	Abaddon Black	1:1
Highlight: Stegadon Scale Green	Thunderhawk Blue	1:1
Highlight: Thunderhawk Blue		
Highlight: Thunderhawk Blue	Fenrisian Grey	1:1
Glaze: Tallarn Sand		

TENTACLE SKIN

Base: Screamer Pink		
Shade: Naggaroth Night		
Highlight: Screamer Pink	Ushabti Bone	3:1
Highlight: Screamer Pink	Ushabti Bone	1:1
Highlight: Screamer Pink	Ushabti Bone	1:1:2
Glaze: Volupus Pink		

KRAKEN SKIN

Base: Sotek Green	Temple Guard Blue	1:1
Shade: Sotek Green	Night Lords Blue	1:1
Shade: Night Lords Blue		
Highlight: Temple Guard Blue		
Highlight: Temple Guard Blue	White Scar	1:1
Glaze: Akhelian Green		

BOAT

Base: Baneblade Brown		
Shade: Dryad Bark		
Shade: Rhinox Hide	Abaddon Black	1:1
Highlight: Baneblade Brown	Karak Stone	1:1
Highlight: Karak Stone		
Glaze: Plaguebearer Flesh		
Glaze: Creed Camo		

HANDY TIPS

'I generally work from the inside out with models like this,' says Aidan. 'I paint the deepest layer of detail first and work my way out across a model. On this model, I started with the skin. I painted it using the colours to the left, starting with a mid-tone basecoat all over, then working quite expressively, applying the shading and highlights to show the shape, form and volume of the gargant. Most of the work then came in the form of glazes. Once I was happy I had the lighting on the skin right, I glazed everything with the basecoat colour.'

GARGANTUAN!

GIGANTIC



Mancrusher Gargant



Warstomper Mega-Gargant

KRAKEN-EATER MEGA-GARGANT

BY MARK BEDFORD

Mark: I converted a Kraken-eater into a real terror from the deep. I imagine he hides in caves eating fishermen, fighting sea monsters and wearing the flotsam and jetsam of wrecked boats. I reckon a kraken might have ripped half his face off, which is why he now covers it with a boat. I also converted him to be carrying a Leviadon carapace as a shield (that kept him fed for days!), while in his other hand he carries a mast from a Gloomtide Shipwreck with the portcullis from the Gatebreaker Mega-Gargant bolted to the top of it as a form of rudimentary axe. I even added extra barnacles to his skin, which I carefully removed from the Leviadon.



I used cool colours on the flesh areas to keep the gargant looking pale, then applied a lot of heavy weathering to his clothes and wargear to show where he spends all his time immersed in water. He's meant to look really quite hideous! I based it the same way as the Warcry boards I built to visually tie all my Age of Sigmar models together.



WARSTOMPER MEGA-GARGANT

BY STEVE WREN

Steve: My Mega-Gargant conversion was inspired by a piece of art in the Disciples of Tzeentch book that shows a bizarre daemon with a hand for a head. I started by cutting out the gargant's stomach and fitting in the orb from the Mutilith Vortex Beast. I then used the tentacles from the same kit as the model's head. The staff is a spare from a Lord of Change attached to the Kraken-eater's net hand with the net clipped away. Smaller details include Treelord vines in his left hand and eyes on his knees (for watching smaller enemies). The overall colour scheme is dark skin with bright details to match my Disciples of Tzeentch army.



Because the Mega-Gargant is so big, I used an airbrush for its skin. I used Guilliman Flesh as a basecoat, then a mix of Guilliman Flesh and Kislev Flesh for the highlights. Shyish Purple and Magos Purple were applied to the shadows and creases to tie the skin tone in with the rest of the model. I used Kislev and Ungor Flesh for the final highlights.
























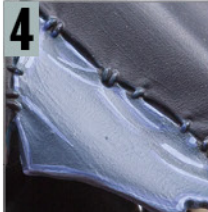
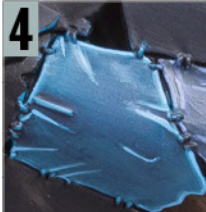

MEGA-GARGANT!

It will come as no surprise whatsoever that this Paint Splatter is all about Mega-Gargants! Over the next four pages, we provide no less than nineteen stages for the new Warstormer Mega-Gargant, along with useful tips and advice to help you paint one. Enjoy!

It's fair to say that the Mega-Gargant kit is quite a monster! Standing almost 7" tall from malformed toes to greasy topknot, it is a centrepiece kit worthy of some dedicated painting time. But how do you paint such a large kit? Is it the same as painting a smaller Warhammer miniature? The next few pages will answer all these questions and more!

PREPARATION

This Warstormer was painted in three sub-assemblies – the main body, the gut plate and the shield on its back. The arms could be kept separate, but in this example they were glued on. The model was also painted separately from the base, which made painting the loincloths and legs easier. It was undercoated with Chaos Black spray.

SKIN	HAIR	BLACK CLOTH	DARK BLUE CLOTH	LIGHT BLUE CLOTH	FUR
1  Basecoat: Catachan Flestone XL Base	1  Basecoat: Corvus Black M Base	1  Basecoat: Corvus Black L Base	1  Basecoat: Incubi Darkness M Base	1  Basecoat: Sotek Green M Base	1  Basecoat: Mechanicus Standard Grey M Base
2  Drybrush: Bloodreaver Flesh L Dry	2  Layer: Skavenblight Dinge M Layer	2  Layer: Skavenblight Dinge M Layer	2  Layer: Dark Reaper M Layer	2  Wash: Drakenhof Nightshade M Shade	2  Wash: Nuln Oil M Shade
3  Drybrush: Knight-Questor Flesh L Dry	3  Layer: Stormvermin Fur S Layer	3  Layer: Stormvermin Fur S Layer	3  Layer: The Fang S Layer	3  Layer: Ahriman Blue S Layer	3  Drybrush: Dawnstone M Dry
4  Drybrush: Cadian Flestone L Dry	4  Layer: Karak Stone XS Artificer Layer	4  Layer: Karak Stone S Layer	4  Layer: Russ Grey S Layer	4  Layer: Lothorn Blue S Layer	4  Drybrush: Administratum Grey M Dry

PAINTING THE SKIN

You can achieve a great texture on this model's skin using drybrushing, which will pick out all the ridges and wrinkles without creating harsh highlights. A useful tip is to try out your drybrushing technique on one of the spare heads or arms you get in the kit, just to make sure the end result is what you're expecting. The Warstomper's face, palms, feet, knees and elbows received a second drybrush of Cadian Fleshtone to help accentuate them.

PAINTING THE FUR, CLOTH AND ARMOUR

Most of the fur and metallic areas were painted next, as they were also drybrushed. By painting them early on, you can avoid drybrushing over adjacent areas and having to redo your hard work. The armour and cloth were painted next in a variety of colours to show where the Warstomper has looted from many different battlefields over the years. Again, try testing out some of your colours on spare parts so you know they will look right next to each other.

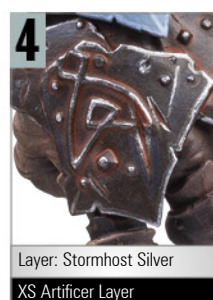
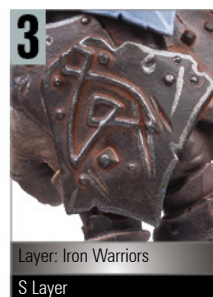
BLUE ARMOUR



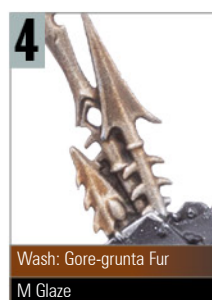
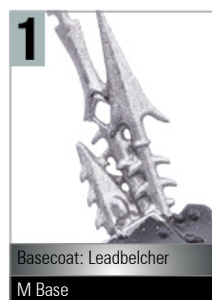
Red ARMOUR



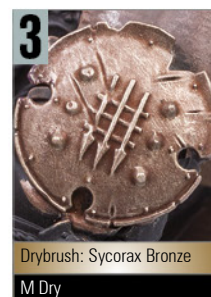
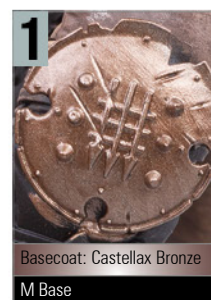
BLACK ARMOUR



METALWORK



BRASS



GOLD



MORE PAINTING ADVICE

What's that, four pages of painting stages not enough for you? Well fortunately you're in luck! *Battletoome: Sons of Behemat* contains a wealth of painting tips and advice for Mega-Gargants, including variant skin tones, hair, cloth and armour colours. Also, make sure you check out the Warhammer TV YouTube page for additional gargant-sized painting guides and modelling advice.

TEXTURED STUFF

The Mega-Gargant kit is covered in loads of exciting textures, so it's worth taking the time to play around with a few of these on your model. The Warstomper's club, for example, features a boulder, wood, rope and metal, all of which can be painted a different way to emphasise what they are made of. On our example, the metal and rope were basecoated, washed, then highlighted as normal. The boulder was drybrushed, while the tree trunk was painted with a wood-grain effect running down the length of it. This may look a little tricky, but actually it just involves painting lots of very thin lines along the length of each section of tree. In many ways, it's easier than highlighting as you just apply the lines to the raised areas wherever you feel like it! The same technique was used on the huge tusks on the Warstomper's shoulders.

COMPLEMENTARY AND CONTRASTING COLOURS

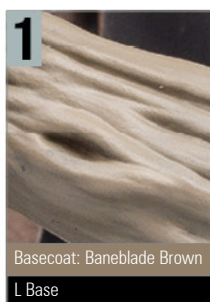
When painting any model, it's important to consider how the colours you use interact with each other. For example, our Warstomper's skin is dark brown, so painting the leather straps on his body a similar colour wouldn't really work – they'd just get lost. That's why we painted the leather grey and the rope a light beige colour so they are easy to see.

It was decided that blue would be the secondary colour on this model – you can see it used on some of the armour panels, the Leviadon carapace and several of the cloth patches. The cool blue contrasts well with the warm brown skin tone, visually separating these areas of the model and helping to keep them distinct. You can clearly see when you're looking at an area of skin or an area of cloth, for example. A neutral black

HUGE BOULDER



WOODEN CLUB



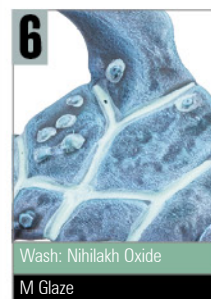
BONE



ROPES



LEVIADON CARAPACE



was used to provide variety in the colour scheme, while a deep crimson appears as a spot colour on a few armour panels and the Khorne shield hanging from the gargant's waist.

The majority of the model has quite a dark colour scheme, so we've also added a few light/dark contrasts to catch the eye. The Warstopper's club, for example, is painted in light tones to help draw attention to it (you'd want to know if that was coming for you), while all the bones, tusks and skulls are painted a stark white to help them stand out. The tusks on the Warstopper's back in particular help frame the model's head and draw your attention to it.

In summary, our top tip is to practise your colour schemes on the spare bits you get in the kit first. When you're happy, go wild with your new model!

ON ME 'EAD, SON!

The face is the focal part of any Warhammer miniature, and the Mega-Gargant has a particularly large one! It's worth taking the time to paint in all those fine little details and really finish off your model.

TEETH

Basecoat: Rakarth Flesh

Wash: Skeleton Horde

LIP

Layer: Cadian Flestone

STITCHES

Layer: Rakarth Flesh

SCAR

Wash: Flesh Tearers Red



LEATHER STRAPS

1



Basecoat: Mechanicus Standard Grey

M Layer

2



Wash: Agrax Earthshade

M Glaze

3



Layer: Mechanicus Standard Grey

S Layer

4



Layer: Administratum Grey

XS Artificer Layer

EYES

1



Wash: Drakenhof Nightshade

M Glaze

2



Layer: Grey Seer

M Shade

3



Layer: Abaddon Black

M Shade



GET READY TO RUMBLE!



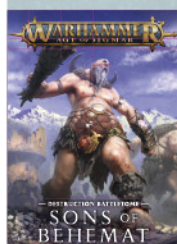
There's an old ogor proverb that might makes right. There's also an old gargant saying that mightier makes rightier. But which adage is better? Well, there's only one way to find out ...

FIGHT!

With the Sons of Behemat taking over the Age of Sigmar section, we thought it only right to throw them into a Battle Report against the biggest, meanest and hungriest foes we could find – the Ogor Mawtribes. It would be Destruction versus Destruction in a full-on mash-up to discover who is the mightiest (and therefore the rightiest). But we didn't want this to be an ordinary your-turn-my-turn battle. We wanted something with a bit of panache and finesse – something that revolved around the two armies' objective-taking special rules. And so was born the game of Rumble.

SONS OF BEHEMAT

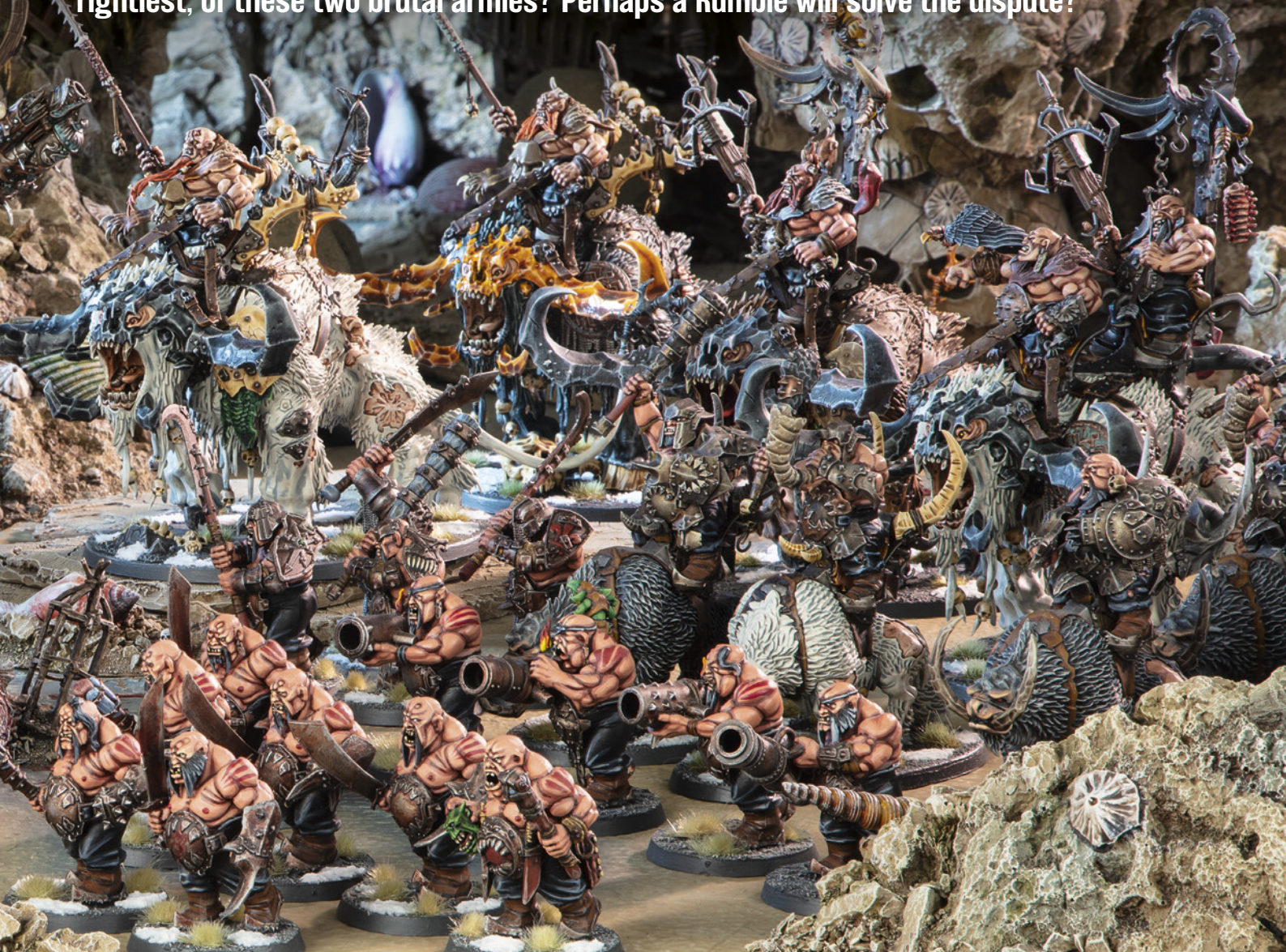
As you may have guessed by the theme of this issue, the Sons of Behemat have their own battletome! As you'll see in this Battle Report, the army has lots of cool special rules, all of which can be found in this weighty tome.



SPOILING FOR A RUMBLE

In this Battle Report, the ogors must observe an ancient tradition and play the Sons of Behemat at a game of Rumble. As you'll find in a few pages' time (we've included a battleplan so you can play at home), Rumble is kind of like a game of football, with both sides competing to control boulders that can then be used to score goals. The side that kicks (or headbutts) the most boulders through their opponent's goal by the end of the fifth battle round is the winner. This is a great way to show off the Ogor Mawtribe's Might Makes Right allegiance ability and the Sons of Behemat's Mightier Makes Rightier ability, as both sides will be competing for the objectives (boulders) at the same time. But they'll have to be wary of kicking the objectives too close to the enemy, or the enemy may kick them right back. Alternatively, it may turn into one colossal scrap. The Rumble could get messy ...

On a mountain plateau high above the ashen plains of Aqshy, the Ogor Mawtribes and the Sons of Behemat have come to blows. But who will prove the mightiest, and therefore the rightiest, of these two brutal armies? Perhaps a Rumble will solve the dispute?



Big Horg reached under his gut plate and scratched absentmindedly at his belly. He had barely eaten in the last hour, but the winding mountain path – so devoid of snacks – was finally coming to an end. He felt his saddle tilt backwards as his Stonehorn finally crested the rise and lumbered onto a wide plateau littered with huge boulders. As Big Horg watched, a large geyser spat a boulder high into the air before it came crashing back to earth with a thud.

In the distance – and on the other side of the mountain range – lay the plains, and beyond them the human settlements. It had been almost a decade since the Boulderheads had passed this way, and Big Horg was excited to raid the human towns once more. There would be plenty of new things to eat and drink by now. The Frostlord's stomach growled, and he spurred his Stonehorn onwards. As eager as he was to eat, he had a tradition to observe first.

As the Boulderheads ambled across the plateau, huge figures began to emerge from nearby crags and caverns. The ogors raised their weapons, ready for a scrap. Big Horg waved them down. This would be no ordinary battle. Not unless it descended into one, of course.

He rode towards the largest of the gargants – a huge Kraken-eater that towered above his kin and stank of fish. As Big Horg got closer, the gargant eclipsed the sun.

'You want pass,' said the Mega-Gargant, his voice like two mountains colliding, 'then you play Rumble.'

'We play Rumble,' replied Big Horg, bowing his head to the Kraken-eater.

The gargant grinned, revealing broken fangs. 'RUMBLE!' he bellowed. He lashed out with his foot and kicked one of the nearby boulders. The bizarre game had begun.

THE ARIDIAN STOMP



**BEN
JOHNSON**

Ben is the product developer for the Warhammer Age of Sigmar team, which seems to mean that he has to paint a new army every time a tabletop comes out. Apparently gargants get quite easy to paint once you've finished your first six or seven of them.

The Aridian Stomp is based in Aqshy, roaming freely between Anvilgard and the Adamantine Chain of mountains. They eat or destroy (or both!) almost everything they come across. Fimnog Sea-drinker is a Kraken-eater Mega-Gargant and the Big Heel of the Aridian Stomp. Beneath him (under the heel) are Gatebreaker Derrok, Smasher of the Onyx Gate, and Warstomper Lunk Linebreaker.

The Footsloggers in the Aridian Stomp are made up of – at the moment – nine Mancrusher Gargants. Brokk Lumberfist, Zongro Sea-swirl and Dorgg Cattlebane form a trio together, as do the Brogg Brothers – Varbo, Dorg and Modo. Bronn Skullmantle, Drabb Salt-hand and Nogar Greatbelly fight on their own. The whole force is always moving, never staying in the same place for too long, taking everything it needs to live and fight with it.

The army is built around nine Mancrushers and one of each Mega-Gargant to allow me to play almost every combination possible in a Pitched Battle game, from a Mega-Gargant-heavy force with minimal Mancrusher Gargants all the way to all nine Mancrushers led by one of the Heels.

Seeing as this is a somewhat unusual battleplan, Jes and I played a practice game – my first game in a few months because of the lockdown we've been through here in the UK. That game definitely taught us a thing or two about how to approach this battleplan. As a result, I decided to field some Mancrusher Gargants in units and some as single entities. The single gargants would be able to chase the boulders (balls) without me giving up one of my fighting units – something the army has few of compared to Jes's army. I'll be playing a bit cautiously to begin with, too – don't expect any first-turn charges!



THE ARIDIAN STOMP – TAKER TRIBE

Allegiance: Sons of Behemat

The Heels (Leaders)

1 Fimnog Sea-drinker

Kraken-eater Mega-Gargant

- General

- Command Trait: Extremely Intimidating

- Artefact: Krakenskin Sandals

490 Points

2 Derrok, Smasher of the Onyx Gate

- Gatebreaker Mega-Gargant

490 Points

3 Lunk Linebreaker

- Warstomper Mega-Gargant

480 Points

The Footsloggers (Units)

4 Brokk Lumberfist, Zongro Sea-swirl and Dorgg Cattlebane

3 Mancrusher Gargants

480 Points

5 The Brogg Brothers: Varbo, Dorg and Modo

3 Mancrusher Gargants

480 Points

6 Bronn Skullmantle

Mancrusher Gargant

180 Points

7 Drabb Salt-hand

Mancrusher Gargant

180 Points

8 Nogar Greatbelly

Mancrusher Gargant

180 Points

Total Points: 2960

THE TAKERS

Because Ben's army is led by a Kraken-eater, his force becomes a Taker Tribe. In a Taker Tribe, each Mancrusher Gargant counts as 15 models instead of 10 when determining control of an objective, and each Mega-Gargant counts as 30 models instead of 20. This will make taking control of the boulders very difficult for Jes if Ben manages to get any of his gargants (regardless of size) close to them.

BIG HORG'S BRUISERS



JES BICKHAM

Jes is the studio manager for the Warhammer Age of Sigmar team, though rumour has it that he was once a dwarfier just like us. Strange, then, that he would dedicate his time painting an army of big guys when he should be painting guardin. Shame on you, Bicksie!

Working on *Battletome: Ogor Mawtribes* was the excuse I needed to expand my existing Gutbuster-heavy army into the sphere of the Beastclaw Raiders. Like Ben, I'm a sucker for monster-heavy armies, and the Boulderhead Mawtribe, in particular, was designed around the concept. And so Big Horg's Bruisers came into being – lots of Stonehorns and Mournfang Packs, all of them excited to charge into the enemy and trample them to bits. It's brilliant fun to play with and was a joy to paint!

The army is in fact a big family, united by paint schemes. Big Horg, Vhurl Icecrusher and Thorth the Chomper are all brothers; the rest of the army comprises the sons of Vhurl and Thorth (Big Horg has been too busy leading his Mawtribe and eating, drinking and smashing enemies to worry about siring heirs). Clearly there's some familial pride at stake here!

There's no subtlety to this force. The army is all about charging and little else – what better to prove who is mightiest against the Sons of Behemat? With much of the army benefitting from the Eurlbad warscroll battalion, and lots of Ironfists dotted around, there are plenty of ways for this force to cause mortal wounds. And getting wounds off those Mega-Gargants is going to be the number one priority for my ogors!

As the game is bigger than usual, at 3,000 points, I added in a big block of Gluttons plus some Ironguts and Leadbelchers to help slow the gargants down. Then the big hitters can smash their way into combat with some devastating charges. Will it be enough, though? Even though this army is one of the best at taking objectives in the game, Ben's army is a Taker Tribe, meaning he's going to have the upper hand when it comes to kicking boulders around ...



BIG HORG'S BRUISERS – BOULDERHEAD MAWTRIBE

Allegiance: Ogor Mawtribes

Leaders

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1 Big Horg Blacktooth | 400 Points |
| Frostlord on Stonehorn | |
| - <i>General</i> | |
| - <i>Command Trait:</i> Lord of Beasts | |
| - <i>Mount Trait:</i> Black Clatterhorn | |
| - <i>Artefact:</i> Brand of the Svard | |
| 2 Vhurl Icecrusher | 400 Points |
| Frostlord on Stonehorn | |
| - <i>Mount Trait:</i> Metalcruncher | |
| - <i>Artefact:</i> Alvaqr Rune-tokens | |
| 3 Thorth the Chomper | 320 Points |
| Huskard on Stonehorn with harpoon launcher | |
| - <i>Mount Trait:</i> Old Granitetooth | |

Units

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 4 Skurl and Skog | 300 Points |
| Stonehorn Beastriders with blood vulture | |

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 5 The Gargant-gougers | 140 Points |
| 2 Mournfang Packs with culling club or prey hacker and ironfist | |
| 6 The Gut-tuskers | 140 Points |
| 2 Mournfang Packs with culling club or prey hacker and ironfist | |
| 7 The Kneecappers | 140 Points |
| 2 Mournfang Packs with culling club or prey hacker and ironfist | |
| 8 Garl's Gulpers | 400 Points |
| 12 Ogor Gluttons | |
| 9 The Beastcrushers | 220 Points |
| 4 Ironguts | |
| 10 The Splatterers | 220 Points |
| 4 Ironguts | |
| 11 The Blackfingers | 160 Points |
| 4 Leadbelchers | |

Warscroll Battalions: Eurlbad **140 Points**

Total Points: 2980

THE EURLBAD

Jes's Eurlbad warscroll battalion includes Thorth the Huskard, Skurl and Skog on their Stonehorn and the three Mournfang Pack units. Any melee attacks made by these units that hit on a 6 automatically inflict a mortal wound in addition to any normal damage they may cause. Considering Mournfang riders have seven attacks in combat, they could easily dish out a fair number of mortal wounds in the fight phase.

BATTLEPLAN

LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE!

The migratory Mawpath of the Boulderhead tribe takes it up a narrow pathway to a plateau on a high mountain peak. On the other side of the plateau lies the way down to the meat-rich feeding grounds beyond. However, the plateau is also home to a well-fed group of gargants. Sometime in the long distant past, a tradition was established to determine if the Boulderhead ogors would be allowed free passage across the plateau or would instead pay a hefty toll for the privilege. The tradition was that the two sides would gather teams to play a game known to both sides as Rumble. If the ogor horde won, they earned free passage, and if they lost, they had to slaughter half of their Stonehorns and Thundertusks and give up the meat to the Sons of Behemat – or risk being eaten themselves.

Beloved of ogor and gargant alike, Rumble is a game that is a bit like football and a bit like a battle. A strange geomantic reaction within the mountain's volcanic guts

sends up large and rather unstable boulders of igneous, gas-filled rock that emerge on the plateau through three fissures in the ground. These boulders are almost perfectly round and can be kicked or pushed around quite easily by one of sufficient strength – the only tiny problem being that doing so may set off a reaction that causes them to explode in a storm of flesh-shedding shrapnel. Luckily, there are always more – a short while after a boulder is moved from its starting location, a new one bubbles up through the crack in the ground to harden in the cold mountain air.

In a game of Rumble, each side must try to move these boulders into the opposing side's territory or, even better, through the chalk-marked area known as the opposing side's goalmaw. The game traditionally lasts the amount of time it takes for the Hyshian sun to pass through the gap between two distant mountain peaks. At the end of this time, the side that has scored the most 'Rumbles', or goals, is

the winner. Both the Boulderhead tribe's butchers and also the gargant tribe's Kraken-eaters have long maintained that getting a boulder through the opposing goalmaw is worth three Rumbles, and each boulder that explodes in enemy territory or that is located in enemy territory at the end of the match is worth one Rumble. The rest of the ogors and gargants simply take their word for it and get on with the carnage – they're far more interested in breaking heads, swinging wildly in all directions and kicking or headbutting everything that comes close until there's nothing left in their way!

REALMS OF BATTLE

Ben and Jes must decide between themselves where the battle takes place and which realm rules (if any) will be used.

THE ARMIES

Jes must use his Ogor Mawtribes army, and Ben must use his Sons of Behemat army.



SET-UP

Ben and Jes can set up the scenery as they see fit, as long as no scenery is placed within 6" of a boulder or a goalmaw (see the map).

Ben and Jes roll-off, and then they alternate setting up units one at a time, starting with whoever lost the roll-off. Units must be set up wholly within their territory, more than 12" from enemy territory. They continue to set up units until both Ben and Jes have set up their armies. If one player finishes first, their opponent must set up the rest of the units in their army, one after another.

THE BOULDERS

The boulders are controlled in the same way as an objective marker. In this battle, all units have the following Kick That Boulder! rule:

KICK THAT BOULDER!

In the hero phase (friend or foe), if you have any models within 1" of a boulder that you control, you can pick one of those models and say that it will kick that boulder. If you do so, you can move that boulder up to 2D6" to a new position on the battlefield, more than 1" away from any models, terrain features or other boulders. A boulder cannot be kicked more than once in the same hero phase.

Kicking Modifiers

Apply the following dice roll modifiers to the 2D6 roll that determines how far a boulder can be kicked.

Kraken-eater Mega-Gargant +6

Any other MEGA-GARGANT +5

HERO on STONEHORN or THUNDERTUSK +4

Mancrusher Gargant, other STONEHORN or THUNDERTUSK +3

Any other model +2

Rumble, Rumble Ka-Boooooom!

If the 2D6 roll that determines how far a boulder can be kicked is an unmodified 2 or an unmodified 12, that boulder explodes. On a 2, it explodes before it is moved, and on a 12, it explodes after it is moved. When a boulder explodes, roll a dice for each unit within 3" of it. On a 2+, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds. The boulder is then removed from the battlefield.

On Me Head!

After a boulder has been moved, if it is within 2" of a friendly model, you can say that that model will head the boulder. If the boulder is moved within 2" of models from both armies, the players roll-off, and the winner can decide if one of their models will head the boulder. When a boulder is headed, you can move it another D6", so that it finishes more than 1" away from any models, terrain features or other boulders. The unit that the heading model belongs to then suffers D3 mortal wounds. A boulder cannot be headed more than once in the same phase.

The Goalmaw

If a boulder is moved so that it finishes the move within 1" of the opposing side's goalmaw table edge and more than 3" from any enemy models, and the boulder does not explode, then a Rumble is scored. Remove the scoring boulder from the battlefield.

New Boulders

Starting from the third battle round, at the start of the battle round, after determining who will have the first turn, the player taking the second turn must set up 1 new boulder in any boulder starting location that is no longer occupied by a boulder (because it has been kicked away). If no locations are free, the boulder is not set up. If the location is occupied by an enemy model, that model is slain (even if they are a Mega-Gargant) and then the boulder is set up.

BATTLE LENGTH

The battle lasts for 5 battle rounds.

GLORIOUS VICTORY

At the end of the game, count up the Rumbles each side has scored. Getting a boulder within 1" of the opposing goalmaw is worth 3 Rumbles, and each boulder that explodes in enemy territory or that is located in enemy territory at the end of the match is worth 1 Rumble.

The side with the most Rumbles wins a **major victory**. In the case of a tie, the side that controls the most boulders at the end of the game wins a **minor victory**. Any other result is a draw.



DEPLOYMENT: THE STARTING LINE-UP

As Big Horg's Bruisers line up against the Aridian Stomp, three geomantic boulders are blasted high into the air. The two armies watch eagerly as they come smashing to the ground. The Rumble is on!

TRIUMPH!

Ben: Because my army is slightly smaller than Jes's, I started the game with the Bloodthirsty Triumph, which enables me to re-roll a unit's wound rolls once per battle. However, because my army is a Taker Tribe, every time I slay a model with an artefact of power – of which Jes has two – I can generate a new Triumph to use in the game. I might even get the same one again, which could be handy!

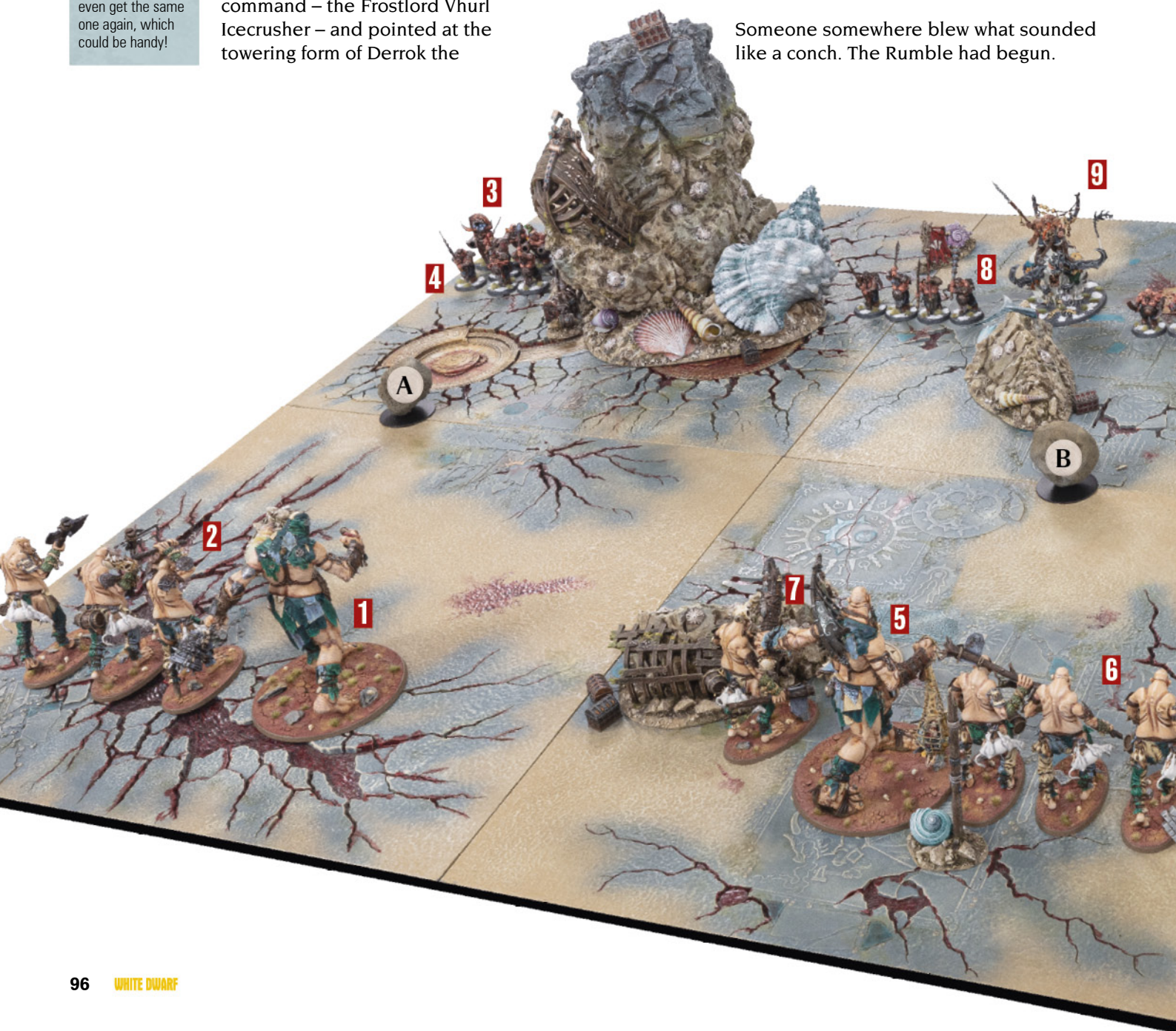
Big Horg watched the gargants carefully as they lumbered from their rocky dwellings. There seemed to be more of them than usual. They looked bigger, too. Or maybe, mused Big Horg, they were just standing closer ...

The Kraken-eater that he'd negotiated with was clearly the leader of the Aridian Stomp. He'd taken up a spot in the middle of the gargants' battleline, four Mancrusher Gargants milling around him, most of them carrying cows. Big Horg urged his Stonehorn forwards to stand opposite the Kraken-eater. In his line of work, the easiest way to show who was boss was to smash the biggest enemy to bits. Also, those cows looked delicious. He beckoned to his second in command – the Frostlord Vhurl Icecrusher – and pointed at the towering form of Derrok the

Gatebreaker, who was encouraging another trio of Mancrushers to advance to the south-west. Vhurl nodded appreciatively and ordered the tribe's Ironguts and Leadbelchers to block their path. They would hold the western flank while Big Horg and his boys held the centre.

Over to the east, Thorth the Chomper eyed up the massive Warstomper standing opposite him. One Huskard and six Mournfang cavalry against two Mancrusher Gargants and that monster. The boulder sat in the middle of the parched ground between them, smoking violently. Thorth was tempted to ignore the boulder and go for the kill, but the game of Rumble was a tradition in these parts, and he had to be seen to play along. He loaded his harpoon nevertheless.

Someone somewhere blew what sounded like a conch. The Rumble had begun.





DEPLOYMENT

Ben deploys the Gatebreaker Derrok, Smasher of the Onyx Gate, to the south-west (1) along with the Brogg Brothers (2).

Jes sets up his Leadbelchers (3) and the Ironguts known as the Beastrushers (4) opposite them on the eastern flank.

Ben places his general – the Kraken-eater Finnog Sea-drinker – in the centre of his battleline (5). He sets up Brokk, Zongro and Dorgg on one side of him (6) and the lone Mancrusher Gargant Bronn Skullmantle on the other (7) 'just in case Jes does anything sneaky'.

Jes deploys his second unit of Ironguts (8) and the Frostlord Vhurl Icecrusher (9). In the centre of his battleline he places the twelve-strong Garl's Gulpers (10), behind which he deploys his general – Big Horg Blacktooth (11) – and the Stonehorn Beastriders (12).

To the east, Ben deploys the Warstomper Lunk Linebreaker (13), along with the Mancrusher Gargants Nogar Greatbelly (14) and Drab Salt-hand (15).

Facing off against them are the Eurlbad of Huskard Thorth the Chomper on his Stonehorn (16) and all three units of Mourmfang cavalry – the Gargant-gougers (17), the Gut-tuskers (18) and the Kneecappers (19).

The three boulders (balls) are set up across the centre of the battlefield as described in the battleplan (A-C).



BATTLE ROUND ONE: GRAB DA BOULDERS!

The ogors surge forwards in an attempt to grab the three boulders before the gargants, but their larger cousins are just as quick off the mark. At this point, it is anyone's game!

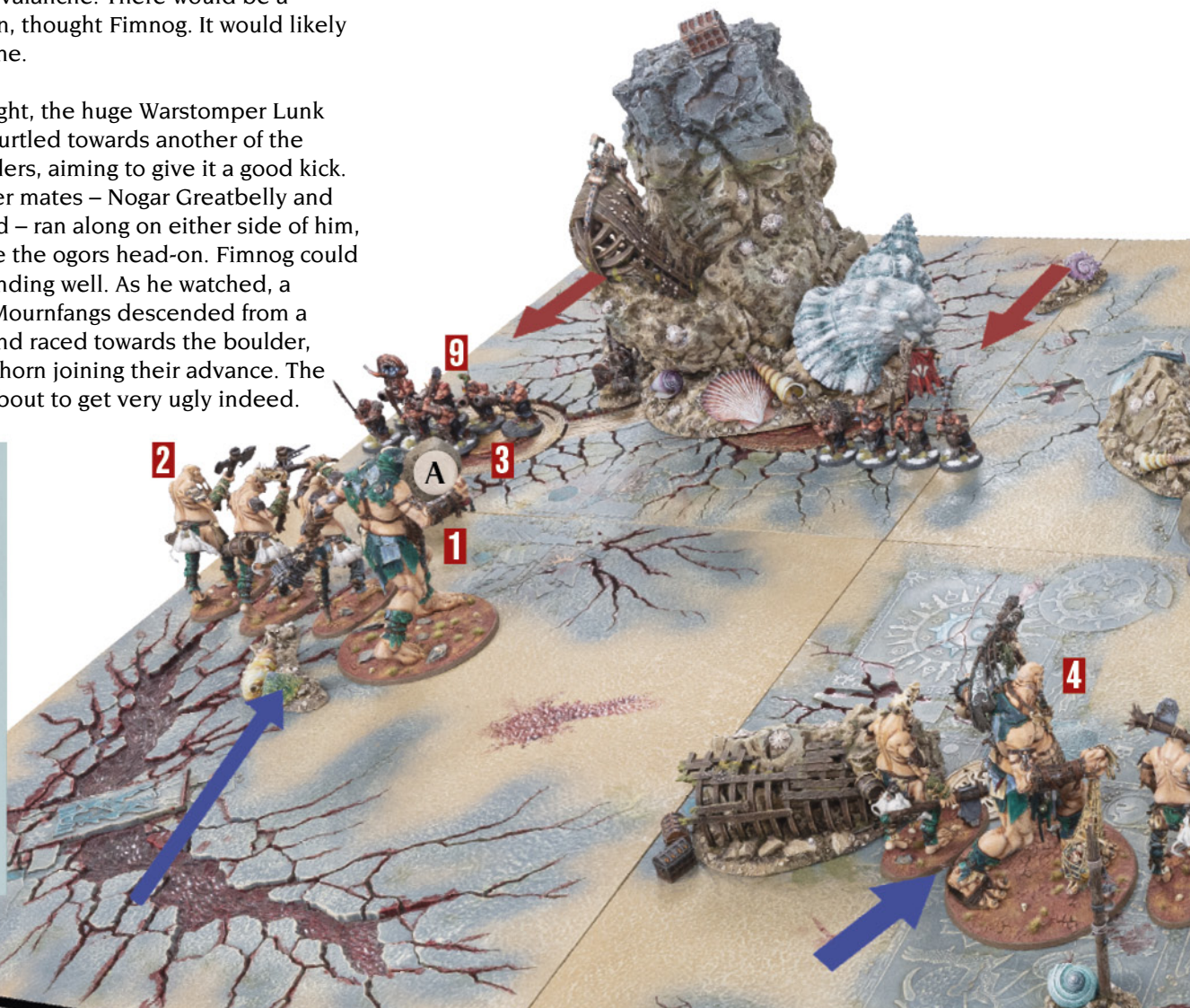
Fimnog Sea-drinker signalled for his gargants to advance by swinging a net full of screaming humans around. To his left, Derrok hefted a huge rock onto his shoulder, stomped towards the encroaching Ironguts and Leadbelchers and launched the rock into the air. The boulder sailed through the air and flattened one of the Ironguts with a sickening crunch when it landed. The nearby Brogg Brothers cheered heartily and ran forwards, eager to crush some ogors or kick the nearby boulder, whichever got in their way first.

Eager to join the fighting, Brokk Lumberfist, Zongro Sea-swirl and Dorgg Cattlebane started ambling towards a big mob of ogors who were already milling around one of the boulders, a trio of Stonehorns lurking close behind them. Fimnog waved the Mancrushers back. He had headbutted plenty of Stonehorns in his time and always ended up with a splitting headache. He wanted to see what the ogors were planning before he got involved in a fight. Opposite him, the Frostlord he'd spoken with before the Rumble spurred his mount into something resembling a slow-moving avalanche. There would be a reckoning soon, thought Fimnog. It would likely be a painful one.

To Fimnog's right, the huge Warstomper Lunk Linebreaker hurtled towards another of the massive boulders, aiming to give it a good kick. His Mancrusher mates – Nogar Greatbelly and Drab Salt-hand – ran along on either side of him, ready to tackle the ogors head-on. Fimnog could not see that ending well. As he watched, a stampede of Mournfangs descended from a nearby pass and raced towards the boulder, another Stonehorn joining their advance. The Rumble was about to get very ugly indeed.

CLAIMING AND KICKING

This battleplan is unusual in that you have to be within 6" to control an objective (boulder), but you have to be within 1" in the following hero phase to be able to kick it. This is why Ben and Jes both rush units forward to hold objectives, because in the second round, some of those boulders are going to get kicked hard!





Derrok (1) and the Brogg Brothers (2) run towards the westernmost boulder to claim it but are not close enough to kick it. Derrok hurls a different boulder at the Beastcrushers (3), killing one.

Fimnog (4) and his Mancrushers (5) hang back to see what the ogors will do in the centre.

Lunk (6), Nogar (7) and Drab (8) run towards the eastern boulder but are also too far away to kick it in the next round.

Jes runs the Blackfingers (9) and Beastcrushers towards Derrok in an attempt to contest the objective. The Leadbelchers inflict two wounds on the Mancrushers with their cannons.

Garl's Gulpers (10) claim the central boulder and are close enough to kick it in the next round. Vhurl (11), Big Horg (12) and the Stonehorn Beastriders follow them closely.

To the east, the Mourmfangs (13) get close to the boulder but are unable to kick it. Thorth (14) causes a wound on Nogar with his harpoon launcher, while the Mourmfang Skalg causes a further three wounds with his pistol.

True to form, Jes fails every charge roll he makes!



Garl's Gulpers boot the central boulder (1) into Ben's half of the board.

The Brogg Brothers (2) club, headbutt and stomp most of the Ironguts and Leadbelchers to death. The surviving Leadbelcher shoots Modo Brogg but is slain when the gargant falls on him.

Derrok suffers 15 wounds from the Ironguts but in return smashes them to pulp with his flail (3).

Ben plays the All-out Attack command ability (re-roll 1s to hit) and his Triumph on Brokk, Zongro and Dorgg (4) as they fight Garl's Gulpers. The gargants cause a total of 36 wounds on the unit, which is then wiped out by Fimnog (5).



BATTLE ROUND TWO: KICK DA BOULDERS!

With the boulders firmly in the possession of the Sons of Behemat, Big Horg's ogors go on the offensive in an attempt to slay as many gargants as possible.

Holding tight to the reins of his Stonehorn, Big Horg braced himself for impact as the army of gargants broke into a run. In front of him, Garl's Gulpers had shoved one of the massive boulders into enemy territory, which was certainly a good start to a game of Rumble, but Big Horg was worried that the rest of his lads were about to get stomped. To the west, the Beastcrushers and the Blackfingers were embroiled in a furious fight with three gargants that seemed determined to ignore the nearby boulder and just flatten some ogors instead. The brawl was brief but bloody, with just two gargants staggering out from the pile of mangled body parts. Nearby, a Gatebreaker Mega-Gargant was busy tenderising the Splatterers – another unit of Ironguts. Big Horg could see that the Mega-Gargant was bleeding profusely, though, which was some consolation.

To the east, the ogors were having an equally tough time. The Warstomper Mega-Gargant had smashed into the Mourmfang riders but had somehow managed to miss most of them with his colossal club. His Mancrusher mates, however, were happily pulverising the tribe's hard-hitting cavalry. Big Horg bellowed at Thorth the Chomper

ON THE OFFENSIVE

Ben: Because I won the roll-off to take the first turn in this round, I needed to get my Mega-Gargants into position to kick the boulders before Jes took his turn. That way, they could kick them in his hero phase and gain me valuable ground. My main problem was the boulder that Jes's Gluttons had kicked into my territory – I needed to get that shifted. Fortunately, I had kept Bronn Skullmantle back for just such an eventuality. He booted the boulder a massive 11" towards Derrok, who then headed it another 4". Sure, he took two mortal wounds doing it, but it was worth it!

to sort things out. The Huskard did so the only way he knew how – he hit something really hard. That 'thing' happened to be a gargant called Nogar, who fell like a menhir and crushed one of the Mourmfang riders. Thorth shrugged and started hitting Lunk the Warstomper instead.

But it was the centre of the battlefield that concerned Big Horg. With a roar like a hundred avalanches, the Kraken-eater and a trio of Mancrushers descended upon Garl's Gulpers. The destruction that followed both impressed and horrified Big Horg as he watched his lads torn limb from limb or crushed underfoot. Knowing there was only one way to end the carnage and prove who was the mightiest, he did what any self-respecting ogor would do and charged.

Fimnog Sea-drinker wasn't entirely sure what happened next. One moment he was crushing an ogor in his massive fist, the next he was smashed from his feet by a trio of Stonehorns. Sitting up, he was surprised to see a very long, very broad spear piercing his chest. At the other end of the spear, an ogor grinned triumphantly at him from his saddle. As the Mega-Gargant slumped to the ground, Big Horg knew who was mightiest.

RUMBLE SCORE

0

Sons of Behemat

0

Ogor Mawtribes



Lunk and his mates **(6)** smash up some Mournfangs, but Nogar **(7)** is killed in return. Thorth **(8)** charges into the Warstopper and causes 12 wounds. Lunk ignores the Huskard and squashes the Gut-tuskers **(9)** instead.

Bronn Skullmantle **(10)** kicks a boulder 11" to Derrok, who heads it another 4" towards the ogors' goalmaw.

Jes retaliates by charging Vhurl **(11)**, Big Horg **(12)** and the Beastriders **(13)** into Fimnog. Their impact hits cause 12 wounds, though Skurl and Skog are quickly butchered by the nearby gargants. Big Horg skewers Fimnog, leaving Vhurl to pile into the nearby Bronn Skullmantle and flatten him.



BATTLE ROUND THREE: THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER ...

Both armies are in tatters, with many of the ogors dead and nearly all of the gargants wounded. More importantly, all of the Rumble boulders are in the ogors' half of the battlefield.

NEW BOULDERS PLEASE!

Jes: Because Ben won the roll-off to see who went first this turn (again!), I got to place one new boulder on the battlefield. I placed it right in the centre, reasoning that I had three Stonehorns nearby that could shunt it around. True, they would need to kill a Mancrusher Gargant or two first, but they might be able to even the score a little if they could move it towards Ben's goalmaw. The only problem was that Ben was going first.

Derrok, Smasher of the Onyx Gate, was having a great day. He'd thrown some rocks, he'd headbutted some rocks, he'd squashed some tiny ogors and he was now in charge of the Aridian Stomp because old Fimnog was taking a nap. Another boulder sailed through the air nearby, and Derrok headbutted it towards the ogors' end of the plateau. This Rumble game was easy!

As far as Derrok could tell, the other gargants were having a great time, too. Two of the Brogg Brothers were kicking around a boulder, as was Drab Salt-Hand, while Lunk seemed to be engaged in a headbutting contest with a Stonehorn and a Mournfang at the same time. The thick-headed Warstomper seemed to be coming off worse. Even as Derrok watched, the Stonehorn pounded forwards and smashed into

the gargant's gut. Lunk went down with a bellow of pain and lay very still. Derrok shrugged.

Nearby, Brokk, Zongro and Dorgg were thumping the life out of the Frostlord who had skewered Fimnog. Derrok cheered them on and offered words of encouragement along the lines of 'smash 'is teef in!' and 'kick 'im while he's down!'. Bolstered by Derrok's words of wisdom, the trio of gargants did just that and dragged the Frostlord from his saddle. So busy were they hitting him that they didn't see the Mournfang and Stonehorn that slammed into the back of them, triggering a whole new fight.

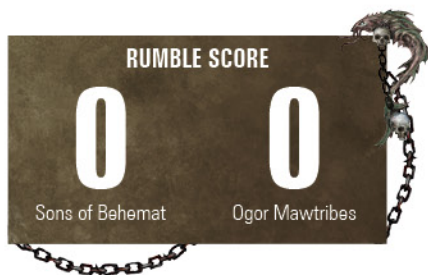
Derrok, meanwhile, had a new adversary to play with. The ogor on the big white Stonehorn was charging towards him at a furious pace. Swinging his flail, Derrok smashed the Stonehorn from its feet, but not before its rider had jammed a huge spear in his throat. Derrok's eyes went wide in surprise as he fell forwards, slid down the haft of the barbed spear and crushed the ogor beneath him. Everything went a bit dark after that.

Varbo and Dorg – the surviving Brogg Brothers (1) – run towards the nearest boulder and kick it to Derrok (2), who heads it further into Jes's territory. Derrok then kicks another boulder a mighty 13", nearly scoring. He throws a rock at Vhurl, too, but the Frostlord is saved from harm by his Alvagr Rune-tokens.

Brokk, Zongro and Dorgg (3) charge Big Horg (4). Jes plays the Boulderhead command ability Dig Deep your Heels! in the hope that Big Horg will survive and be able to fight back. In response, Ben plays All-out Attack, which enables the gargants to just about kill Big Horg (though only by 1 wound).

Thorth and his Stonehorn (5) hit Lunk (6) hard enough to finally slay him. The Mega-Gargant falls on Drab Salt-hand (7).





The Sons of Behemat go all-out on kicking boulders, successfully moving all four into the ogor half of the battlefield.

Thorth and the last Mournfang rider charge into Brokk, Zongro and Dorgg. The Mournfang rider slays Brokk with impact hits but is then crushed by his falling body.

Thorth almost kills Zongro and is almost killed in return. Both the gargant and the ogor are alive, but with 1 wound each remaining.

Vhurl (8) charges Derrok. Though the Gatebreaker strikes first, the Frostlord survives his attacks. Using Dig Deep your Heels! once again, the Frostlord batters the Mega-Gargant to death. Derrok promptly falls on Vhurl, killing the Frostlord, too.



BATTLE ROUNDS FOUR AND FIVE: ... IT IS NOW!

With the ogors virtually wiped out and the remaining gargants in possession of all the boulders, all that remains to be seen is how many Rumbles they can score before the sun goes down.

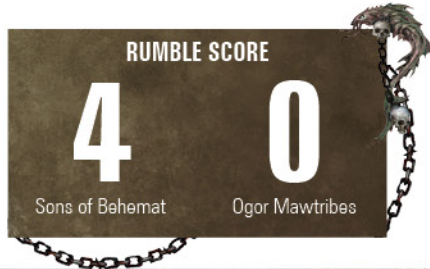
Thorth's Grasp of the Everwinter aura slays Zongro, leaving just Dorgg Cattlebane to kick the boulder in the centre of the battlefield. The wounded Huskard attacks the gargant, causing 8 wounds – which is not quite enough to slay him. Dorgg easily kills the ogor in return and ambles off to kick some boulders.

Drab Salt-hand kicks a boulder (1), which explodes just before it hits the goalmaw, denying him 3 Rumbles (but still scoring 1).

Dorgg punts one boulder along while Varbo and Dorg half-heartedly kick another one forwards (2), resulting in three boulders resting on the ogor half.

Dorgg Cattlebane finished stomping on the Frostlord who had tried to poke him to death with a big stick and concentrated on pounding a nearby Mournfang into a flat steak. He'd had a long day killing stuff, and all he wanted now was a good meal. He couldn't even remember what the fight was about.

A sudden chill came over Dorgg, and he saw Zongro freeze as stiff as a board before toppling over and shattering into a thousand bloody pieces. Dorgg knew enough about ogors and their mounts to realise it was the nearby Huskard causing the frosty weather, so he hefted his lump of fallen masonry once more, gave it a good swing and knocked the ogor flying. As far as he could see, there were no more ogors left standing. Nor any Mega-Gargants, come to think of it. Just a few Mancrushers and some boulders. The boulders! They were playing Rumble! Dorgg remembered now. He lumbered off to kick something ...



THE FINAL SCORE

As the dust settles and the boulders finally stop rolling (and exploding), Jes and Ben discuss what proved to be an extremely violent game of Rumble.

'Well, it's safe to say that the Sons of Behemat are mega! They gave the ogors a good kicking and no mistake.' - Ben

'The number of times I rolled a 1 for the Stonehorns' D6 crushing hooves was beginning to get a bit silly!' - Jes



WHO'S THE MIGHTIEST?

Ben: Well, it's safe to say that the Sons of Behemat are mega! They gave the ogors a good kicking and no mistake. Shame they weren't as enthusiastic about the boulders!

I kind of figured that after the practice game Jes would let me go first, as he really wanted to avoid getting charged by the Sons of Behemat. But that meant I also had to deploy a little cautiously to avoid him charging me with all those Stonehorns. I had to find that perfect balance between claiming the objectives and being far enough away from the ogors to stay safe.

Jes: Yes, I learned a lot from our practice game. I advanced and Ben steamrolled me, so this time I let him make the first move. He did exactly what I expected him to – move up on the flanks and play cautiously in the centre. But that was where my plan kind of backfired. I foolishly tried to contest the flanks, knowing full well that I would have to kill at least a couple of Mancrushers or a Mega-Gargant on each flank if I was to take control of the boulders. Instead, I should have concentrated my power in the centre of the battlefield and gone right down the middle.

Ben: You were very unlucky with priority rolls, though (For the record, when Ben rolled a 2 for his priority roll at the start of the second battle round, Jes inevitably rolled a 1. – Ed). I made sure that I was never in any serious trouble if I lost priority, but I reckon the game would have been a lot closer if you had managed to steal it in the second or even third battle round.

Jes: We should never bemoan the luck of the dice, but the number of times I rolled a 1 for the Stonehorns' D6 crushing hooves was beginning to get a bit silly!

Ben: Ah, but when they did get going, they were brutal. When Jes charged with his Stonehorns in the second round, they made pretty short work of the Kraken-eater, and the Gatebreaker suffered a similar fate later on. Stonehorns and Mournfangs need to charge if you're to get the most out of their attacks and abilities.

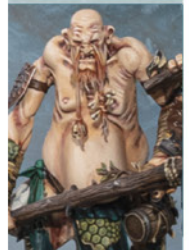
Jes: Agreed – none of the Mournfangs got to charge in this game, which meant I never got to use their Mournfang Charge or Trampling Charge rules, both of which could have made a big difference on the eastern flank. When the Stonehorns pulled it off in the centre, they dished out a lot of mortal wounds, and that's what you really need against gargants.

I also should have concentrated more on killing Ben's units. I was always going to struggle against the Mightier is Rightier rule, especially as Ben chose to field a Taker Tribe. I should have gone in for the kill and worried about the boulders later.

Ben: If you'd done that, though, I would have just booted the boulders into your half of the board, and you would have had to send units back to get them, which you really couldn't afford to do. Kicking the boulders first should be a key part of anyone's strategy in this battleplan. Otherwise you're playing catch-up, which is tough when the enemy is trying to kill you at the same time!

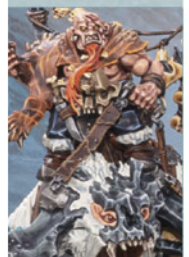
GARGANTS OF THE MATCH

Ben: Brokk, Zongro and Dorgg were definitely my best fighters in this match. They killed twelve ogors in the blink of an eye, smashed his general to death and gave a boulder a bit of a kick.



OGOR OF THE MATCH

Jes: It has to be Vhurl Icecrusher – he pasted a Mancrusher Gargant in one turn, gave the Kraken-eater a good kicking and killed the Gatebreaker. That's quite a track record, I reckon.



A BRAWL FOR

When they are not sleeping, eating or smashing cities into rubble, the Sons of Behemat love to partake in brutish and idiotic trials of strength. Very few of these contests end amicably, as this short story by Nick Horth illustrates.

The first sign of Thornwall's impending doom was when the ground began to tremble violently, shaking many buildings apart at their foundations. The second was when the smoking remains of the perimeter cogfort Providence dropped out of the sky and crashed through the portico of the High Chancery. The charred ball of metal pulverised the building, the surrounding gardens and the entirety of the governing conclave before continuing to roll on through the main thoroughfare, leaving destruction in its wake.

Bleary-eyed and covered in a patina of choking dust, the survivors staggered out from the ruins and looked upon the cause of this sudden devastation. Screams split the air. Three titanic shapes came lumbering down from the Kronspine mountain range to the west, their footfalls shattering windows and tearing open great rents in the sun-baked earth. For a moment, it seemed as if the peaks themselves had come to life, for such was not unknown in savage Ghur. But mountains do not have shaggy lengths of hair knotted with bones and sail-ship rigging, nor do they carry clubs as large as ironoaks and caked in gore.

These were Mega-Gargants, amongst the biggest and most ill-tempered titans in a realm renowned for its monsters, and they had come to Thornwall to settle an argument.

Thornwall did not welcome them warmly. The good folk who called this humble stronghold of the God-King home were as hard as mortals came: hunters and trappers who had battled the slaving predators of the Ghurish plain all their lives. As the monstrous trio approached, copper-armoured halberdiers formed bristling squares about the city's grand plaza, and there was a perfunctory crackle of cannonfire and musketry from the perimeter guntowers.

The largest of the gargants, a flame-haired brute whose burly frame was bedecked with swords, shields, lances and scars, glanced down at the nearest tower in mild irritation. Then he

swung a gnarled foot and kicked the whole structure into pieces. Men and duardin went tumbling to their deaths.

His companions strode into the settlement itself. The tallest, a scraggy-haired ancient clad in tattered whale hides, swatted aside the stubborn halberdiers with great sweeps of his warclub – a vicious-looking implement made out of lashed-together cannons. The other gargant wore a patchwork hood and a loincloth fashioned from a battered portcullis and amused himself by reducing Thornwall's proud palisade to a pile of bricks and rubble, taking an atavistic delight in tearing down these pitiful trappings of civility.

After several hours of wanton destruction, there came a brief pause. The flame-haired titan put his hands upon his blubbery hips and surveyed the flattened, smoking ruin of what had once been a prosperous Sigmarite stronghold. Only the Cathedral of the Blazing Bell still stood largely untouched, though if the few comet-priests still cowering inside thought this to be a miracle provided unto them by their God-King, they were soon to be disappointed.

'Ere's as good as anywhere, I reckon,' the Mega-Gargant boomed. 'Let's begin.'



Squinting one eye and sticking his tongue out between scabby lips, Humgut Horsepuncher sighted the spire of the cathedral, still gleaming tall amidst the ruins of Thornwall. Then he took a few lumbering steps forward and hurled the spiralhorn.

The herd-beast protested in the strongest possible terms, its mournful bray growing fainter as it sailed through the air. It struck the church bell with a meaty 'clong', leaving a splatter of

ALL SEASONS

crimson across its shiny, brass surface before tumbling bonelessly to the ground.

Humgut smirked and swivelled about to face his rivals.

'What you'm got to say about that, then?' the Warstomper said. 'That's me the first winner, so it is.'

Brontoc the Briny shook his head, and a number of rotten fish tumbled from his greasy grey locks. 'Not so far as I sees it. We said him that sticks one o' these pointyorns right on that little spike wins the game.'

At this, he gestured to his trawler net, which was stuffed to bursting with dazed, wide-eyed steers, and then to the cathedral's narrow spire, rising out from the dome of the bell tower.

'Yurp,' said Mog Belcher with a nod of his hooded head, who then resumed stomping a row of warehouses flat.

Humgut's triumphant leer slipped from his face as his enormous, bushy eyebrows knitted together. He was being swindled. That was not what had been agreed upon, not at all.

'Rot!' he roared. 'We said 'im that first hits the bell was the winner!'

True, the exact wording of their mutual wager was a little hazy, on account of the duardin brewery he had been drinking dry at the time. Still, he dimly recalled the gist of it. Three challenges, three tests of strength and gargantyness, to decide which amongst them would be the big heel round these parts and would dominate the gargant tribes of the Krondspine Range for evermore.

Horse-hurling had been the first challenge agreed upon – though in the absence of any such creatures hereabouts, Thornwall's stock of spiralhorns had proven handy replacements. The grizzled Warstomper would be a bearded stuntling before he allowed anyone to cheat him of this opening victory.

'I says I hit the clanger with the pointyhorn,' Humgut growled, advancing upon the pair of them. 'And I says that counts!'

Brontoc glared back at him, as unimpressed as usual with his fellow Mega-Gargant's blustering.

'Yurp,' said Mog Belcher, threateningly.

An ominous whirring drone to the east broke the tension. Descending out of the clouds came a swarm of stubby little stuntling aircraft, metal engine-spheres gleaming in the blazing midday light of Hysh – sworn allies of Thornwall, flying to the city's aid. Several hours too late.

'Right-o,' said Humgut, hefting his ironbound club as he peered at the rapidly descending flotilla. 'Next game's stuttybird-swatting. I wins this one and you're both done for.'

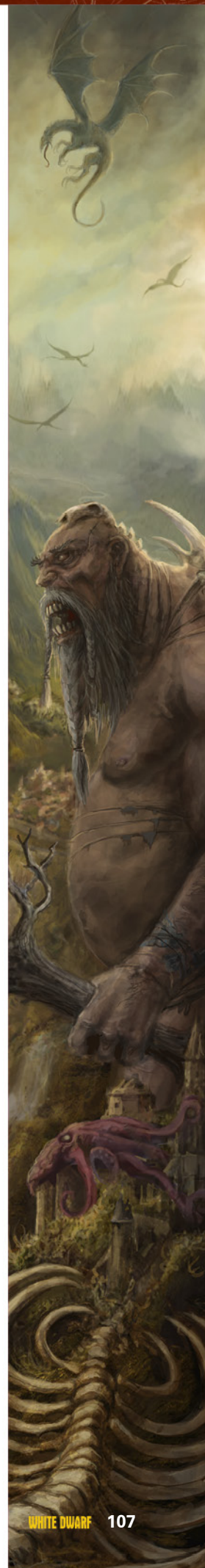


The blocky little duardin craft buzzed about the Mega-Gargants like a swarm of angry wasps, cannons spitting hot little shards of metal that stung Humgut devilishly. He waved and slapped his hands about in a spitting rage, occasionally getting lucky and feeling the painful but satisfying impact as his wild flailing crushed another stuttybird to pulped ruin.

'Three!' Humgut bellowed, triumphantly. Then he splattered another two together between clapped hands.

'Se... uh.' He frowned, unsure exactly what numbers came after three. He glanced about, anxious to see what his competitors were up to.

Mog Belcher was windmilling madly, face screwed up in concentration and arms pumping like the spokes of some enormous wheel. It was a strategy that was proving only mildly effective. Brontoc, meanwhile, had produced his foul-smelling net. Sighting a larger stuntling vessel amidst the swarm, he hurled the mesh, and it dropped neatly over the sky-ship's prow. Brontoc gave an evil chuckle and hauled with all of his considerable strength. The stuntling vessel was almost as big as the Kraken-eater, but even its powerful engines could not compete with a Mega-Gargant's raw might. It careened down and





smashed prow first into the ground, tiny, leather-clad figures tumbling to their doom from its sundered deck. A moment later, the sky-ship's explosive payload detonated en masse, sending a hail of painful metal shards zipping through the air. One buried itself painfully in Humgut's nose.

With the death of the stuntling flagship, the attack broke off, and the surviving airships turned their noses and climbed towards the clouds. As one passed by his elbow, firing a last blistering salvo, Humgut snatched it out of the air by its burnished metal endrin. He squeezed it until the metal crumpled then sent it spinning end over end to explode against Thornwall's ruined palisade.

'Nine!' he said, smugly, leaning on his blood- and oil-spattered club. 'I wins again!'

'Nay,' growled Brontoc. 'This 'un counts fer ten.'

The Kraken-eater jabbed a gnarled finger at his own trophy – the largest of the shattered stuntling airships. It now resembled nothing more than a crumpled flower of blue metal.

'Yurp,' said Mog Belcher, accusingly.

Humgut could hardly believe it. Again, the wizened old fishbreath was trying to cheat him out of victory! He bunched his fists and stamped his feet in a furious tantrum.

'Watch yourself, young 'un,' said Brontoc, his eyes narrowing. 'I've drowned bigger 'n you.'

Humgut's response was a bellow of rage and a wild haymaker aimed at the cheating Kraken-eater's nose. Much to his surprise, however, Brontoc leaned back out of the way of his swing, and instead he clocked a surprised Mog Belcher right in the temple. The Gatebreaker let out a stunned 'Yurp!' and sprawled on his enormous backside, legs kicking like an upturned bug. Humgut could not help but let out a bark of laughter. Then Brontoc the Briny sent a knee rocketing up into his groin, and his merriment swiftly subsided.

Slapping and grasping at each other, the two Mega-Gargants staggered through the ruins of Thornwall, stumbling over the burned-out shells of warehouses and walled mansions. Humgut Horsepuncher had never before met a foe he couldn't outfight, but Brontoc was slippery as an oiled fish. Every time he thought he had a good grasp of the old white-hair's neck, his foe somehow managed to twist aside and ring Humgut's head with another clubbing blow. Already the Warstomper was dazed and drooling, spitting shards of yellow teeth.

Humgut started laughing. Great, guttural peals of laughter. He hadn't had such a good scrap in ages.

Brontoc's club came sweeping across for a killing strike, but Humgut thundered in close to the Kraken-eater, and the blow did little more than sting his shoulder. The Warstomper lifted one foot and sent it crashing down upon Brontoc's toes. The old gargant howled and hopped on one leg as Humgut leaned back and snapped his head forwards, driving his iron-hard skull into Brontoc's nose. It splattered pleasingly under the impact.

In response, the Kraken-eater picked up a steam-carriage and broke it over Humgut's head. The Warstomper reeled backwards, clutching his forehead, which had been burned lobster-red by the machine's detonating engine. Through a blur of pain, he saw Brontoc the Briny charge, beard flapping in the wind, club raised up in two calloused hands for an overhead strike that would surely cave in his skull. Realising he had dropped his club, Humgut scrabbled around for something to hit the Kraken-eater with. His hands found the smooth metal shell of an engine-sphere, which had been torn loose from a doomed stuntling sky-ship. He hurled it at the oncoming Kraken-eater, and the missile struck Brontoc in the knee. The Mega-Gargant stumbled and came crashing down, skidding across the shattered street in a cloud of tiles and dust.

Brontoc the Briny lay on his back, clutching his shattered kneecap and roaring in pain. A shadow fell over him. Looking up, his last sight was a pair of stinking, calloused feet descending rapidly towards his head.

Humgut felt his opponent's skull burst under his soles, and a squidgy mass of gore slid satisfyingly between his toes. Swaying drunkenly, he leaned down and spat a gobbet of reddish phlegm at what little was left of Brontoc's face.

'Told you I won, you bleedin' old fishface!' he chortled. 'There's only one big heel round these parts, and his name be Humgut Horsepuncher.'

Ears still ringing from Brontoc's blows, the Warstomper didn't hear the sound until it was too late: a thunderous clamour of stomping feet and a bellowed war cry that grew louder by the moment. Humgut frowned. It sounded a lot like 'Yurp'.

At the last moment, he looked up to see what looked very much like a gigantic bell descending towards his face with skull-smashing force.

It was, in fact, a gigantic bell, carried by a charging Mog Belcher and descending towards his face with skull-smashing force.



By some miracle, the spire of Thornwall's great cathedral remained gleaming and untouched, despite the fact that the surrounding area was squashed almost entirely flat, strewn with corpses and twisted metal. His tongue protruding from between his lips in an expression of intense concentration, Mog Belcher placed his trophy onto the golden spike above the now-empty bell tower, delighting in the squelchy sounds that emanated as metal sank deep into rubbery gargant flesh. Stepping back, the Gatebreaker surveyed his handiwork. Humgut Horsepuncher's

ugly head stared back at him, still fixed in an expression of drunken confusion despite the gruesome, bell-shaped dent in its temple.

'Yurp,' said Mog Belcher, nodding in satisfaction as he inspected his new weapon. The ornately engraved tocsin was liberally smeared in blood and matted hair, but it still made a satisfying 'clang' sound when he rapped his knuckles on it.

All in all, it was a most fitting trophy for the winner – by default – of the morning's trials and the new and undisputed big heel of the Kronspine Range. With that, Mog Belcher strode back towards the distant mountains to inform the local gargant tribes of the good news, pausing only briefly to headbutt a windmill into smithereens.



**EXCLUSIVE
MINI-GAME**

THE MEGA-BRAWL

The ground trembles as the Mega-Gargants battle for dominance. Anything caught in their path of wanton destruction is smashed to rubble or crushed into bloody pulp beneath their colossal weight. It is time to decide which Mega-Gargant is the strongest!

In this game, each player will take control of a mighty Mega-Gargant and attempt to defeat their rivals in battle. The game caters for 2, 3 or 4 players. Only when 1 Mega-Gargant is left standing does the game end, and the sole survivor is declared triumphant.

GETTING READY

To play the game, you will need the following:

- 1 Mega-Gargant model for each player (2-4).

- A battlefield to play on (any flat surface roughly 60" x 44" in size will do).
- Any scenery pieces you have in your collection (the more the better!).
- 6 tokens or coins for each player.
- A selection of six-sided dice.
- A tape measure.

SET-UP

Before the mega-brawl is ready to

commence, you first need to set up the battlefield. To do so, the players roll off, and the winner sets up the scenery on the battlefield. This player can set up as many scenery pieces as they wish (adding more gives your Mega-Gargants more things to smash through and more things to hurl their opponents into!), but as a general guide, we recommend 6-8 medium-sized scenery pieces.

The other players then each pick a different corner of the battlefield to set up their Mega-Gargant. If there are 3 or 4 players in total, the other players roll off to determine the order in which the players get to pick their corner of the battlefield. Once all other players have picked their corner, the player that set up the battlefield picks their corner.

Once each player's corner of the battlefield is determined, they set up their Mega-Gargant within 1" of their corner. If there are any scenery pieces in the way, these are removed from the battlefield.

The game is now ready to begin.

MEASURING DISTANCES

Distances in this game are measured in inches ("), between the closest points of the bases of the Mega-Gargants you're measuring to and from.

DICE

All dice used in this game are standard six-sided dice (sometimes abbreviated to D6). Some rules refer to 2D6, 3D6, and so on – in such cases, roll that many dice and add the results together.

ROLL-OFFS

Sometimes a rule may require the players to roll off. To roll off, each player rolls a dice, and whoever rolls highest wins. If any players are tied for the highest score, those players roll off again.

PLAYING THE GAME

The game is played in a series of rounds. In each round, the players take it in turns to make actions with their Mega-Gargant (such as charging and attacking).

ROUNDS

At the start of each round, the players roll off. The winner of that roll-off gets to pick 1 Mega-Gargant to take its turn. This does not have to be the player's own Mega-Gargant and could instead be one of the other Mega-Gargants (indeed, the cunning player might force an opponent to take their turn early and bait them into a trap!). Once that Mega-Gargant has finished its turn, the players controlling Mega-Gargants who have not yet had their turn this round roll off, and the winner again gets to pick 1 of the Mega-Gargants that has not yet taken its turn to do so. Repeat this process until every Mega-Gargant has taken 1 turn, then a new round begins.

STAMINA POINTS

Each Mega-Gargant starts the battle with 6 stamina points (these can be represented by tokens or coins placed next to the model). Stamina points can be spent on performing extra actions in your turn (see right), as well as on certain special rules such as counter-attacking or powering up a charge or hurl attack.

At the start of each round after the first, each Mega-Gargant gains D6 stamina points. A Mega-Gargant can never have more than 6 stamina points at one time (any extra stamina points are lost).



LOSING STAMINA POINTS

During play, Mega-Gargants may 'lose' stamina points (such as when another Mega-Gargant bellows nearby). Any stamina points that are lost can be later regained.

TURNS

When it is a player's turn, they pick 1 action from the list below for their Mega-Gargant to make:

- Charge
- Attack
- Bellow
- Rest

Once they have resolved the action, the player chooses to either end their turn or spend 1 stamina point to make an additional action with their Mega-Gargant. The player can spend as many stamina points as they wish in their turn to perform extra actions (but a wise player will keep a few handy for later turns).

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

- The players roll off. The winner picks 1 Mega-Gargant to take its turn.
- That Mega-Gargant takes its turn by making 1 action.
- The remaining players roll off. The winner picks 1 of the remaining Mega-Gargants to take its turn.
- The sequence repeats until all Mega-Gargants have taken 1 turn.
- A new round begins.

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends when all but 1 of the Mega-Gargants have been defeated. The player controlling the remaining Mega-Gargant is declared the winner of the game.



ACTIONS

The 4 actions a Mega-Gargant can make in its turn are as follows:

CHARGE ACTIONS

Only Mega-Gargants that are more than 1" away from all other Mega-Gargants can make a charge action. The player can choose to power up the charge action by spending 1 stamina point. The player then makes a **charge roll** by rolling 2D6. If they powered up the charge action, they roll 3D6 instead.

The player then moves their Mega-Gargant a number of inches equal to or less than the charge roll in a straight line across the battlefield. As the Mega-Gargant moves, it cannot move through any other Mega-Gargants. In addition, the smash and ram rules below may come into effect.

Smash: As the Mega-Gargant moves, each time it comes into contact with a scenery piece, **1 damage dice** is dealt to that Mega-Gargant, and then the scenery piece is removed from the battlefield. The Mega-Gargant has smashed it to rubble.

Ram: When the Mega-Gargant finishes its move, if there are any other Mega-Gargants within 1" of the Mega-Gargant that moved, the player can pick 1 of those other Mega-Gargants to be rammed. **1 damage dice** is dealt to that other Mega-Gargant.

ATTACK ACTIONS

While a player is making an attack action with their Mega-Gargant, they are referred to as the **attacking player**. Attack actions are resolved as follows:

1. The attacking player picks 1 other Mega-Gargant within 1" of their Mega-Gargant to be the **target** of the attack action. The player controlling the target Mega-Gargant is referred to as the **defending player**.
2. The attacking player must choose 1 of the 4 following attack types. To do so, they secretly place a dice behind their hand with a face-up number that corresponds to the attack type they have chosen:

Attack Type			
1	2	3	4
Club Attack	Headbutt	Stomp	Hurl

(For example, if the attacking player wishes to hurl the other Mega-Gargant, they would place a dice behind their hand with the number '4' face up.)

3. Unless the target Mega-Gargant is stunned (see page opposite), the defending player also secretly places a dice behind their hand. The face-up number is what they think the attacking player will choose.

(For example, if the defending player thinks the attacking player will attempt a club attack, they would place a dice behind their hand with the number '1' face up.)

4. Both players reveal their dice. If the face-up numbers of both dice are the same, the attack action fails. In addition, the defending player can choose to spend 1 stamina point to **counter-attack** and deal **1 damage dice** to the attacking player's Mega-Gargant.

5. If the face-up numbers of both dice differ, the attack action succeeds and is resolved as follows:

Club Attack: Deal **3 damage dice** to the target.

Headbutt: Deal **2 damage dice** to the target. In addition, roll a dice. On a 4+, the target becomes stunned (see page opposite).

Stomp: Deal **2 damage dice** to the target. In addition, roll a dice. On a 2+, the target loses 1 stamina point (to a minimum of 0).

Hurl: The attacking player can choose to power up the hurl by spending 1 stamina point. The attacking player then makes a **hurl roll** by rolling 2D6. If they powered up the hurl, they roll 3D6 instead. The attacking player then nominates a direction, and the defending player moves their Mega-Gargant in a straight line in that direction. The attacking player can choose for the Mega-Gargant to move a number of inches across the battlefield equal to or less than the hurl roll. As the Mega-Gargant moves, each time it comes into contact with any scenery pieces, **1 damage dice** is dealt to that Mega-Gargant and then the scenery piece is removed from the battlefield. If it comes into contact with another Mega-Gargant, the move immediately ends and both Mega-Gargants are dealt **1 damage dice**.

STUNNED

While a Mega-Gargant is stunned, for the next attack action that targets it that round, the defending player does not get to place a dice behind their hand (giving the attacker free rein to pick their attack type).

Once that attack action has been resolved, the target Mega-Gargant is no longer stunned unless it has been stunned once more by a Headbutt or from rolling the stunned result on the critical hit chart. At the end of the round, any Mega-Gargants that are stunned are no longer stunned.

BELLOW ACTIONS

Roll a dice for each other Mega-Gargant within 12" of the Mega-Gargant. On a 4+, the Mega-Gargant being rolled for loses 1 stamina point (to a minimum of 0).

REST ACTIONS

Remove D6 damage points suffered by the Mega-Gargant.



ATTACK ACTION CARDS

During an attack action, players can use these cards (instead of hiding a dice behind their hand) to indicate which attack they are making with their Mega-Gargant. Simply photocopy this page, print and cut out the cards, and enjoy!



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DAMAGE DICE

During the game, many rules will deal 1 or more **damage dice** to a Mega-Gargant. When damage dice are dealt to a Mega-Gargant, roll a number of dice equal to the amount dealt and total up the score. This is how many **damage points** the Mega-Gargant suffers. During the game, the players will need to keep a running tally of how many damage points their Mega-Gargants have suffered (we recommend using dice placed next to the model's base to do this).

In addition, if the roll for a damage dice is a '6', it scores a critical hit. For each **critical hit** suffered, the player controlling that Mega-Gargant must roll on the critical hit chart below.

CRITICAL HIT CHART

Each time a player rolls on the critical hit chart, they must cross-reference the dice roll with the number of damage points their Mega-Gargant has suffered to determine the result.

Critical Hit Chart					
Total Damage Points					
D6	0-11	12-23	24-35	36-47	48+
1	No Injury	No Injury	No Injury	Winded	Winded
2	No Injury	No Injury	Winded	Winded	Stunned
3	No Injury	Winded	Winded	Stunned	Stunned
4	Winded	Winded	Stunned	Stunned	Defeated
5	Winded	Stunned	Stunned	Defeated	Defeated
6	Stunned	Stunned	Defeated	Defeated	Defeated

There are 4 results on the critical hit chart: **No Injury**, **Winded**, **Stunned** and **Defeated**. Each is resolved as follows:

No Injury: This result has no effect. The Mega-Gargant simply brushes off the damage and lunges back into the fray.

Winded: The Mega-Gargant loses 1 stamina point (to a minimum of 0).

Stunned: The Mega-Gargant becomes stunned. While a Mega-Gargant is stunned, its capacity to protect itself from other attacks is reduced (see 'Attack Actions', previous).

Defeated: The Mega-Gargant succumbs to their injuries and falls to the ground. Remove the Mega-Gargant from the battlefield.



SPECIAL RULES

Each type of Mega-Gargant has a special rule as follows:



Kraken-eater Mega-Gargant:
When a Kraken-eater makes a rest action, roll 2 dice instead of 1 and pick the highest result.



Warstomper Mega-Gargant: When a Warstomper makes a stomp attack action, the target loses 2 stamina points on a 2+ instead of 1 (to a minimum of 0).



Gatebreaker Mega-Gargant:
When a Gatebreaker makes a charge action, no damage dice are dealt to it from the smash rule.



GLORY POINTS



DAVE SANDERS

Dave Sanders is the senior games developer in the Boxed Games Studio and the lead rules writer for Warhammer Underworlds. When he's not at his desk organising cards into neat piles, Dave can be seen lurking in the corner, a mysterious device held to his ear as he communicates with faraway playtesters. We reckon sorcery is involved.

After what has seemed like a very long year, Warhammer Underworlds: Direchasm is at last in the world! The latest season of Warhammer Underworlds has been a real labour of love, and in this article I'll share some of my insights into how we designed the set and some of the exciting new developments contained within.

THE MOUNTAIN ENRAGED

Direchasm takes us once again into Beastgrave, the monstrous living mountain said to be visible on every horizon in Ghur, the Realm of Beasts. As the warbands trapped within this mountain venture ever deeper, the mountain itself responds to its savage, growing hunger.

Beastgrave is starving. Ever have those trapped in its winding tunnels provided it with sustenance, but now those unfortunates are steadily falling prey to the Katophrane curse. Those slain in Beastgrave find themselves returned to life, only to fight and die once more in a ghastly cycle. The mountain's hunger is thus denied, and Beastgrave is famished and angry.

The primal urges and emotions of the mountain now flood its caverns and overwhelm the fighters trapped there. They find themselves losing control, feeling echoes of Beastgrave's great hunger and being driven into ever more savage contests as the mountain desperately seeks sustenance.

Into this perilous setting march countless fresh fighters, for Beastgrave's call is stronger than ever. Whether they come seeking riches, knowledge or glory, they all risk much more than their lives as they enter the depths of Direchasm.

PRIMAL HUNGER

Though we're still in Beastgrave, this set is full of exciting new ideas, cards and warbands, while building on the setting established in the previous season.



Glory Points is our column all about Warhammer Underworlds. Curated by the games developers of the Boxed Games Studio, this column delves into the development of the game, plus rules, tactics and gameplay. This month, it's all about Direchasm!



The key themes of Ghur carry through into this season, and you'll be treated to new warbands that fit perfectly into this battleground of hunters and hunted. However, with the mountain's emotions overflowing, the set also explores themes of primal contests, primacy and hunger.

The warbands in the core set are well suited to this contest, coming at it from very different directions. Representing the forces of Chaos, we have the Dread Pageant, a band of Hedonites led by Vasillac the Gifted. Accompanied by his excess-seeking underlings, Vasillac intends to steep himself in the overwhelming emotions of Beastgrave, giving himself over in complete abandon to the hungers erupting in the depths of the mountain. The forces of Order, meanwhile, are bolstered by the arrival of Myari's Purifiers. These Lumineth aelves have mastered their emotions, and their leader, Myari, believes that only he and his cohort have the discipline to resist the mountain's call and silence it. It remains to be seen whether the purity of the Lumineth or the barbarity of the Hedonites will prove superior in the depths of Direchasm.

Of course, these are just the first two warbands in this season, and the forces of Death and Destruction will surely also continue to descend on Beastgrave as the mountain gives out its primal call.

THE BIGGEST AND THE BEST

We've put a lot of work into making this the biggest and best season of Warhammer Underworlds yet, building on the groundwork laid in Beastgrave and incorporating all of the lessons we learned in the previous season. Here are some highlights:

New warbands and starter decks: We've designed a new set of warbands for you, and, as in Beastgrave, each warband comes with full 'faction' decks – twelve objectives, ten gambits and ten upgrades – that you can use straight out of the box. These decks are designed to help you learn how to use each warband, and they play well to the warbands' strengths. They're the perfect starting point for your journey with a warband, and I'm looking forward to seeing you all get to grips with them.

Move universal cards than ever: This set includes more universal cards than ever before, and you'll see greater variety in these cards. In the core set alone you get thirty-two unique universal cards which represent a solid start to anyone's collection and a springboard into a new season for seasoned players. The new set mechanics (see below) are featured in some of these cards, allowing any warband to embrace the themes of the set and make them their own.



New battlefields: The new setting is brilliantly realised in four new boards for your collection, which capture the darkness and danger of the depths of Beastgrave. Three of these also present brand new layouts, expanding your strategic options.

Revised core rules: The core rules of the game stay largely the same. However, we've cleaned things up and cleared up ambiguities, making these the best set of rules yet for Warhammer Underworlds. You should find that the rules for line of sight, the combat sequence and how reactions work have all improved. However, there are a few additional changes to mention.

- **Surge limit:** The maximum number of six 'Surge' objectives in your objective deck, which players with experience of organised play will recognise, is now part of the core rules. We've had a lot of positive feedback about this limit, and we think having it built into the core game will improve the experience for everyone.

- **Simplified support:** Although we enjoy maths as much as anyone (and possibly more than most!), we decided that this new edition was the right time to simplify the rules for supporting fighters in combat. Whereas before, the difference in the number of supporting fighters determined which symbols were successes on the attack and defence dice, now it is simply the number of supporting fighters that determines those successes. This change makes support much more relevant and a bigger part of the game.

- **Greater glory:** We've added in a little bonus for all you ogor- and troggoth-hunters out there – when an enemy fighter with a Wounds characteristic of 6+ is taken out of action, you gain one additional glory point. This helps to offset the generally huge amount of effort that you have to put in to take down one of these beasties (or any other fighter getting a bit too big to handle).

New mechanics: Direchasm introduces two new mechanics which represent the effects of the mountain's overflowing emotions – these are Hunger and Primacy.

Hunger is a mechanic that uses counters to track how much a fighter has been affected by Beastgrave's own hunger. This hunger can manifest as a physical or metaphysical hunger, weakening some fighters while driving others to new depths of savagery. A fighter with a lot of Hunger counters can tap into the power of the mountain, but they may risk losing themselves in the process.

Primacy, on the other hand, is a tug-of-war mechanic that sees warbands competing to achieve great deeds on the battlefield to prove their superiority. Those that do so will gain the Primacy token. Only one player can have the Primacy token, and having it unlocks a number of benefits that will make this season the most fiercely contested yet.

A NEW META

With the release of Warhammer Underworlds: Direchasm, we have entered a new season of organised play, and that means that we have cycled out the universal cards and boards from the Nightvault season, including the Power Unbound card pack and the Forbidden Chambers board pack.

We want Warhammer Underworlds to remain fun, fresh and accessible forever, and cycling older cards and boards in this way ensures that the card pool in competitive play remains manageable, while still allowing players to discover new strategies and explore the potential of the various warbands. If you're completely new to the game, you'll only have the most recent seasons to learn, and if you're a veteran, this ensures that the competitive scene stays engaging, balanced and fun.

Cycling only affects organised play, so when playing at home or at your local gaming club, you can still use every card in your collection.

FAMILIAR FACES

I want to finish with some reassurance to collectors of older warbands: all previously released warbands and their warband-specific cards remain entirely compatible with – and competitive in – Warhammer Underworlds: Direchasm. The roster of warbands continues to grow, giving old and new players alike a huge amount of variety in the games they play and the foes they face. As a final note, I'd like to point out that if you look at the universal cards in the Direchasm core set, you'll see that all of these warbands have been represented in the art, placing them solidly in the depths of Direchasm for this season's contests!



End Phase

That brings us to the end of this introduction to Warhammer Underworlds: Direchasm. The season has only just begun, and there are still so many amazing things left to reveal. I can't wait to see how you all get on with the new warbands and mechanics in this most exciting season yet!

TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS

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

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A DECADE IN REVIEW



Welcome, sports fans, to the new season of Blood Bowl! Last time, Jim and Bob introduced the Bögenhafen Barons and the Thunder Valley Greenskins – two new teams competing in the 2498 Blood Bowl Classic. And what a match that was, viewers – the pitch was, quite literally, painted red. This month, our much-beloved pundits are taking a look back at the last decade, in which some decidedly underhanded things happened in the world of Blood Bowl ...



Jim: Good evening viewers! I'm Jim Johnson, joined as ever by my loyal sidekick, Bob Bifford. Say Hello, Bob!



Bob: Hello, viewers! I'm ... wait, 'sidekick'? I'm a sporting legend, a lovable raconteur with many a tall tale to tell. You're my sidekick!

Jim: Yes, yes, now isn't the time for that, old chap. Tell the people why we're here tonight, Bob!

Bob: What? Oh, yes. Yes! Oh boy, viewers, have we got a treat for you tonight! As you will no doubt be aware, today is the 3rd of Brauzeit, 2498. But some of you may not be aware of the significance of this fateful date. Ten years ago today, the sport of Blood Bowl changed almost beyond belief. That's right, viewers, today marks the tenth anniversary of the collapse of the NAF!

Since then, much has changed, and much has stayed the same, but mostly it's all different now! For the next little bit of time or so, Jim and I will be talking you through some of the highs and lows of the past decade and reminiscing on some of the most remarkable moments in the history of Blood Bowl! Isn't that right, Jim?

Jim: It certainly is, Bob! And I have to say, I can hardly believe it's been a full decade since the terrible scandal that caused the worldwide governing body of our beloved sport to collapse almost overnight. Can we even bring ourselves to discuss such dark times before the watershed, Bob? Indeed, are we even allowed to make mention of such unseemly events when children might be watching?

Bob: You bet we are, Jim!

Jim: Marvellous! Right then, let's start the evening with a brief recap shall we, Bob?

Bob: My Pleasure!

Now, as I'm sure everyone knows, ten years ago today, the Temple of Nuffle closed and bolted its doors for the final time, the priests within refusing to speak to anyone other than to claim that it was not the job of the NAF to run the sport of Blood Bowl! This shocking event came after a season of scandal, and it marked the inevitable end of a series of dire events!

Several months before, the current Sacred Commissioner, a fiend by the name of Nikk Threehorn, had absconded during the first half of the 2488 Blood Bowl Championship Game, taking with him the Darkside Cowboys cheerleading squad and the entire contents of the NAF treasury!

Jim: And be under no illusions, viewers, that was no spur of the moment decision by old Nikk! No sir. At that time, the NAF was wealthy beyond imagining. For more than a decade, Nikk Threehorn himself had ensured that the wealth pouring into the NAF coffers far exceeded its outgoings! Between the extortionate administration fees charged to teams, the unseemly licensing fees paid by the Cabalvision networks for the rights to broadcast games, the obscene sums paid in sponsorship by advertisers, and the NAF's incredible share of ticket sales from every stadium in the land, the NAF was sitting on a gold mine, both figuratively and literally! To make away with such a sum without anyone noticing, one would have needed an army

of trained Elven soldiers and a Black Ark waiting in the harbour!

Bob: Goodness. Whoever could command such a powerful force and conceive of such a dark and devious act, Jim?

Jim: Well, it wasn't Jeremiah Kool acting in secret but with the full backing of the Witch King.

Bob: No one said it was, Jim!

Jim: No, no one is saying that at all Bob!

Uncomfortable silence during which our hosts stare unblinking into the camera.

Bob: Of course, the fallout of this shameful act by Nikk Threehorn was immediate. The scandal rocked the world. The fans were in dismay. The teams that comprised the NAF's many leagues and divisions were in disarray. Over the next few months, the NAF's many partners and creditors began making demands for payment that the NAF simply could not meet!

Jim: Indeed. And so it came to pass that, with no financially viable way of continuing, the Temple of Nuffle closed its doors to the public. And as that sonorous slam echoed around the world, the people slowly came to realise that the great sport of Blood

Bowl was no more!

Oh! What a mighty wailing and gnashing of teeth this caused! Nations that had been friends and allies under the glory of Nuffle turned quickly upon one another as borders were threatened by squabbling monarchs! Economies that had relied upon the sport of Blood Bowl teetered on the brink of collapse, and all across the known world, angry fans took to the streets to riot!

Bob: And that went on for all of, oh, three days?

Jim: About three days, yes.

Bob: Because as we now know, Blood Bowl is greater than the NAF alone! The world is home to a great many leagues! The glorious Elven Kingdoms league, the ancient and venerable Lustrian Superleague and the demonstrably ludicrous Halfling Thimble Cup, to name but a few! These competitions did not care that the NAF was no longer around to charge them fees! The organisers saw no reason to stop what they were doing, so they simply carried on.

Jim: And the Cabalvision networks were quick to realise this as well. They quickly filled their suddenly clear programme schedules with coverage of different competitions. Within a matter of weeks, the fans had realised their haste in making their feelings known was unseemly, for their magic mirrors and crystal balls were



still filled with sporting splendour. Governments quietly climbed down from their high horses, apologised to their neighbours and carried on as before.

Blood Bowl was a living, breathing thing. It could not be constrained by the fusty strictures of the NAF. Nuffle, the game's patron god, was not ready to turn his back on our world, not this time. His game was freed into the world, and his followers would play on!

Bob: But it wasn't all good news. For some of the sport's most famous teams, the collapse of the NAF was a death sentence. Many established teams relied upon the NAF, those that competed exclusively within the confines of the big leagues found themselves lost and unsure of where to turn. Others faced financial hardships. Still others were left without a stadium or training ground when landlords swiftly sold their assets.

Jim: Indeed. Amongst the casualties, famed franchises such as the Everbold Unicorns and the Hobgoblin team collapsed. Others like the Bifrost Berserkers were taken over with extreme hostility by rivals. Many great teams, gone but not forgotten.

Bob: But it wasn't all doom and gloom. Some teams faced with imminent closure found hope. One famous example is the Middenheim Marauders. Who can forget the emotional announcement that this beloved team was to merge with none other than their hated rivals, the Middenland Maulers? The shock that two such bitter foes would come together and unify, setting aside their decades of enmity in the name of

Blood Bowl, choosing to protect their shared legacy of sporting glory as close allies and firm friends. Why, the very thought of it brings a tear to my eye even now, Jim!

The distinctive sounds of an ogre sobbing loudly interrupt the transmission for a moment.

Jim: There, there, Bob. You have a good cry. That's it. Better? Good.

As time passed, the sport of Blood Bowl surged onwards to bigger and better things. Like a tsunami of snot flowing forth from the ridiculous face of an emotional ogre that needs to stop it now and read his lines, the sport of Blood Bowl rode the wave of this new era. Soon, new competitions were emerging, new teams were bursting onto the world stage and, in the fullness of time, new heroes stepped forth to govern the great game!

Bob: That's right, Jim. Though it pains me to say it as an old ex-player myself, it was the RARG that stepped forth most heroically, ready and able to fill the void left in the governance of the game by the NAF! Yet the Referees and Allied Ruleskeepers Guild had no interest in controlling the sport the way the NAF had done and cared not for the personal gain and profit that could be made from numerous side-hustles and scams. They were not priests, oh no. Their interest was purely in ensuring that the sacred rules and regulations were maintained and constantly amended, the better to fit the ever-changing game of the modern era!



Jim: In truth, it had for many years been the role of the RARG to enforce the rules of the game, yet the guild had always been subservient to the NAF. The RARG had long been forced to make rulings and impose restrictions for strange and arbitrary reasons that may have made sense to a priest, but often made no sense at all to the players and coaches!

Freed of the petty dictates of the NAF, the RARG set about amending the rules of the game, the better to allow for the many regional variations that had grown popular in recent years. New rulings allowed an ever-greater variety of teams to compete in a full and official capacity – Old World Alliance, Underworld Denizens, Snotling teams and more! The game became open and welcoming to teams that had once been outcasts!

Bob: Different formats were encouraged and alliances formed with the various league commissioners and tournament organisers of the Old World. The Colleges of Magic welcomed the RARG on board to help legitimise the Dungeon Bowl. The Tavern Keepers Guild applied to have Street Bowl recognised. Even the famed Krush, where teams of enthusiastic rookies would try out for a place on a top-tier team, and which was formerly orchestrated annually by the NAF, became the responsibility of the RARG. For their part, the RARG were quick to adapt the rules of this tradition, allowing the once fusty and dull affair to blossom into an out-of-season extravaganza known as the Blitz Bowl!

Jim: With such innovation, Blood Bowl became ever more popular than it had been before, something which many pundits – and I must admit to being such a one myself – had thought impossible! It seemed that there were more games being played than ever before! But, alas, with such popularity, fresh scandal was soon to emerge.

Bob: Sadly, yes. As more leagues and tournaments sprang up, as the Cabalvision networks began to offer ever more gold for broadcast rights, and as more sponsors appeared, it was only a matter of time before greed crept back into the game. Several league commissioners in the Border Princes chose to copy the example of Nikk Threehorn, emptying their coffers and leaving participants and sponsors high and dry. In some parts of the Old World, crooks and con men even went so far as to set up seemingly prestigious tournaments, securing stadiums, sponsorship, broadcast deals and even collecting entry fees from eager teams before simply vanishing, leaving everyone involved out of pocket and creating a sense of deep mistrust!

Jim: Combined with the actions of some coaches who discovered they could enter amateur competitions with teams of professional players completely unchallenged by officials, in which they could secure easy wins and pocket significant prizes without much effort, the game of Blood Bowl rather quickly began to develop a bad image in some corners of the Old World. Such deceit and dishonesty led many in the higher echelons of the game to take action, to intervene and ensure the sport remained honest.

Bob: Well, honest-ish.

Jim: Honest-ish, yes. The solution came in the form of more organised competition. The RARG took it upon itself to introduce divisions and to rank teams accordingly, based upon performance. Meanwhile, the Cabalvision networks began to take a firmer hand in the running of leagues and tournaments, ensuring that commissioners and officials could be trusted. And occasionally employing large Black Orcs to follow those the networks didn't fully trust to their homes, making it clear the network knew where they lived!

Bob: With such ... incentives, and with such backing, the stage was set for the Majors to return, bigger, bolder and more spectacular than ever before. The Chaos Cup, the Spike! Magazine Trophy Open and even the Dungeon Bowl soon emerged as the pre-eminent competitions. These glorious events attracted many top-tier teams and gave teams of lower divisions something to aspire towards!

Jim: But perhaps the biggest surprise was the reimagining of the crowning glory of the sporting calendar: the Blood Bowl itself, the very competition that gave the sport its name!

Bob: Indeed, with the backing of no less a personage than the Emperor himself, supported by the major Cabalvision networks and sponsored by Bloodweiser, the Blood Bowl returned in 2490, taking the world by storm with its scope and splendour! The new event attracted the finest teams from across the known world, all competing at the very peak of their ability! Every year since, this marvellous spectacle has grown ever more in size and ambition – providing the truest test of ability – and every year crowning the best of the best as Blood Bowl Champions!

Jim: In the years since the collapse of the NAF, the game unexpectedly grew, and it has continued to flourish and blossom as more coaches lead more teams to ever-greater glories on the gridiron! From disaster, Blood Bowl has risen to greatness!

Bob: Join us next time, viewers, as we'll be looking back on some of the finest Blood Bowl Champions and looking ahead at what we can expect as the greatest game ever played marches boldly into a new century!

Jim: Good night, sports fans!

Studio lights dim.

Bob: What's this about you retiring, Jim?

Jim: Oh no, I don't think I could ever leave Blood Bowl, Bob.

Bob: I'm glad, Jim. The fans sure do love you, my old friend.

THE MANIPLES OF WAR

When the god-machines of the Titan Legions march to war, they do so in battlegroups that can annihilate a city in a single salvo. Here, Legio Princeps Rob Crouchley and Stephanie Burton give you the tactical low-down on how to get the most out of your Titan maniples.



**ROB CROUCHLEY
AND STEPHANIE
BURTON**

When they're not manufacturing miniatures, Rob and Stephanie can be found testing out new rules for Adeptus Titanicus.

Rob: Hi, Rob and Stephanie here! We've both been playing Adeptus Titanicus since the Grand Master Edition came out in 2018 and are now both playtesters for this awesome game. If, like us, the idea of gigantic god-engines duelling each other across the war-torn battlefields of the 31st Millennium gets you really excited, then read on.

Picture the scene. You've picked up Adeptus Titanicus: The Horus Heresy, played several games and have the basics down. However, when looking at expanding your battlegroup, there are so many options that you're not sure where to go next. That's where we come in.

When the Titan Legions go to war, they form up into battlefield formations called maniples, which are made up of between three and five Titans. These are fantastic building blocks to construct

your battlegroup around as they reward certain play styles, and with their mandatory and optional components, they make creating a Legio capable of conquering the galaxy a breeze.

Both Stephanie and I have very different play styles. I have declared for the Warmaster as the rightful ruler of the Imperium of Man. I also have a deep and abiding love for Warhound Scout Titans and so naturally gravitate towards maniples that get the most out of them. Stephanie, on the other hand, fights for the Emperor with her array of Heavy Battle Titans, usually Warlords and Reavers, crushing all beneath their feet.

In this article, we're going to explore some of our favourite maniples and our tips on how to best utilise them. So hop into your cockpit, link up your MIU and prepare to march to war.

Stephanie: Picture it. The smoking remains of a once-proud city brought to rubble and ruin. The groan of enormous metal pistons as a huge armoured foot slams down, crushing the roadway with every step. The hiss of an enormous plasma reactor venting excess heat. The hum of charged energy weapons. War horns blare, long and loud, a challenge to all who defy the Emperor and the Omnissiah both. An enormous, mighty Warlord Battle Titan bestrides the ruined city, hunting for fresh targets, void shields active and rippling. All must give praise to the god-machine, for there is no greater engine of war!

While my fellow playtester Rob might prefer faster, lighter classes of Titan, especially the Warhound, I prefer the heavier Battle Titans of the Collegia Titanica. Here I present some of the maniples best suited for use if, like me, you prefer to wield the godlike power of the biggest war machines as standard!

AXIOM BATTLELINE MANIPLE

How could I not talk first about the Axiom? This is my personal favourite, go-to maniple for playing Adeptus Titanicus. While other maniples might contain slightly more heavy Titans, this one is perfect for smaller games or if you are starting out and aren't yet sure how best to harmonise your forces (or if you often fail your Command checks, like I do). To use this maniple requires a Warlord, a Reaver and a Warhound at a minimum, with the option for another Reaver and Warhound.

The great strength of this maniple (and the reason I personally favour it), is in its Might of the Omnissiah ability. This allows you to continue issuing orders to the Titans in this maniple even when one fails its Command

check. Since there's nothing worse than planning out your next moves only for it to all go pear-shaped on the first roll of a dice, this maniple ensures that you get maximum effectiveness out of the rest of your Titans even if one does fail its Command roll. The careful use of the right order at the right time can often turn the tide of a whole game – make sure you get them off exactly when you want them!

MYRMIDON BATTLELINE MANIPLE

As another heavy maniple that contains a large number of Warlords in a single maniple, this is another favourite of mine. Its mandatory Titans consist of two Warlords and a single Reaver, and you can add a third(!) Warlord and another Reaver if you want to bulk it out further. It is a heavy points investment, but it is more than capable of staying on the battlefield longer than most over maniples out there while punishing your foes in equal measure.

The great bonus of this maniple is its Overwhelming Firepower special rule. This means that whenever you issue First Fire or Split Fire orders to your Titans, those Command checks will always pass on the roll of a 2+ regardless of all modifiers, making this maniple highly unlikely to fail these Command checks. As I've already mentioned, getting the right orders off at the right time is a key strategy in games of Adeptus Titanicus, and with the multitude of heavy guns you'll have at your disposal, this maniple allows you to consistently bring serious firepower to bear on your foes round after round.

As a side note for Loyalist players, this maniple will also couple extremely well with the new Warlord-Sinister Psi-Titan, since always passing those Command checks on a 2+ effectively ignores the -1 to Command value modifier



the Psi-Titan gives your models when it stands near them. Plus, it's yet another Warlord to stride alongside your maniple! What's not to like?

CORSAIR BATTLELINE MANIPLE

Next up we have the Corsair maniple. This battlegroup is perfect for any aspiring Princes who yearns for the heavy guns of Battle Titans but wants to remain a little bit more mobile when on the battlefield. Comprising between three and five Reavers, this is a nimble, effective battlegroup, made even more so by its special rule: Fighting Withdrawal.

With Fighting Withdrawal, your Reavers can move in their side or rear arcs at full speed, rather than half speed. You cannot boost your speed when you do this, but it allows your Titans to nimbly step around obstacles or even sidestep enemy Titans who charge you, almost without reply. There's nothing better than the look on your opponent's face when they complete a charge into one of your Reavers, only for your Reaver to step into the charging Titan's side arc and shoot it to pieces from within its own void shields!

FORTIS BATTLELINE MANIPLE

As the name implies, this mighty maniple is a veritable Titan fortress. Forget strategy and tactics, forget the worries of lone Titans being picked off piecemeal by the enemy – this is a maniple that is as subtle as a brick to the face. Containing a Warlord and two Reavers to start, but with the option of another Warlord and Reaver, this battlegroup is quite simply an anvil upon which your opponent's Titans will shatter long before you do. Its unique rule is the aptly named Titanic Fortress: when the Titans in this maniple are in base-to-base with another Titan from this maniple and don't move, they are allowed

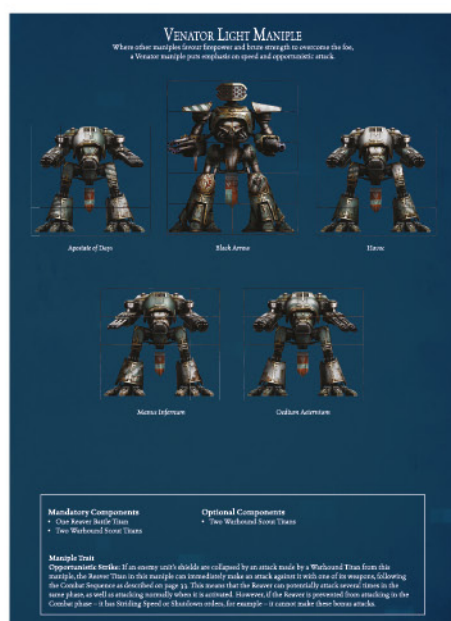
to ignore damage modifiers from heavily or critically damaged locations or from being attacked in the flank or rear, and they can even merge their void shields!

Using this ability, your own Titans become a fortress of Ommissiah-blessed metal capable of shrugging off all but the most extreme enemy firepower, with each Titan in the maniple lasting much longer and absorbing far more damage than they usually would. Sharing the high number of void shields will also mean you'll be shielded from damage for as long as possible, too, making outshooting this maniple a very difficult prospect for any foe. I would counsel caution, however, it can be quite a static maniple and could be outmanoeuvred by a cunning opponent. It could also be potentially vulnerable in close combat, so watch out for canny opponents who will try to peel your Titans away from the maniple one by one.

RUPTURA BATTLELINE MANIPLE

The final maniple I'm going to talk about makes use of the Warbringer Nemesis Titan, because hey, who doesn't love artillery Titans? It requires two Warbringer Nemesis Titans and a single Reaver, with two more Reavers being optional additions. Its ability is the Artillery Bastion rule, the effect of which is twofold. Firstly, once per round, a single Reaver can boost its speed for free – there's no reactor increase. Secondly, every time a Warbringer Nemesis gets a killing shot on an enemy Titan, every Reaver gets a free move, so long as they are able to do so (for example, not immobilised or undergoing emergency repairs).

This is a fantastic maniple, allowing for very fast, very mobile Reavers who can act as excellent support for the Warbringers. With their rapid speed and free moves, they



will be able to quickly get in position to strip a foe's shields and potentially lay down crippling damage on opposing Titans for the Warbringers to finish off. Once a Warbringer has finished off a crippled Titan, the Reavers will all move again, allowing them slip out of the enemy's grip and into new positions to threaten more of their foe. Try pairing a couple of Warbringers equipped for heavy long-range combat with Reavers armed with shield-stripping guns and close-combat weapons. Then you should have a battlegroup that is more than capable of felling any foe.

Rob: Whereas Stephanie would try to persuade you that the Warlord Battle Titan is the pinnacle of the creations of Mars, I have to respectfully disagree. It is true that nothing can match the Warlord for sheer destructive potential, but it is a blunt hammer – no finesse. I much prefer the Warhound Scout Titan, a surgical blade that can get to where it has the biggest impact and then deliver a precise, decisive blow that will end the conflict instantly. With its menacing profile, speed and versatility, truly it is the greatest thing to ever come from the forge fires of Mars!

VENATOR LIGHT MANIPLE

This maniple is a great one when getting into Adeptus Titanicus, with its components available in most Adeptus Titanicus box sets. Consisting of one Reaver and two Warhounds as the mandatory components and with the option to add another two Warhounds, you can run this with a support Reaver straight away.

This maniple grants the Opportunistic Strike ability, allowing the Reaver to make an extra attack with one of its weapons whenever an enemy's void shields are dropped by one of the maniple's Warhounds. Getting the most from this maniple is a delicate balancing act, too few shield-stripping weapons on the Warhounds (a shield-stripping weapon is one that has a high rate of fire like the trusty Vulcan Mega-bolter) and you never manage to get an extra shot off. However, too many shield-stripping weapons will mean you can't finish off any enemies if your Reaver is destroyed. As for the Reaver, I recommend giving it at least one high-strength weapon – like the Melta Cannon – to maximise any extra shots you do manage to get.

LUPERCAL LIGHT MANIPLE

When talking about Warhounds, you have to talk about the mighty Lupercal Maniple! It is the premier choice for Warhound aficionados seeing as it contains, you guessed it, solely Warhounds. In order to field it, you need to take between three and five of them!

Its power lies in the Hunting Pack ability, which has two effects. Firstly, at the start of each round, your Warhounds can form new squadrons with each other until the end of the round. The ability to form and collapse squadrons at will is amazing, because it lets you manipulate how many activations you have in each turn, great for making sure you see where the enemy Titans are going before moving in for the kill. Then, when you are ready for the killing

blow, all your Warhounds can squadron together to take advantage of the Coordinated Strike rules, allowing you to increase the strength of your weapons for that final killing blow. The flexibility means you can keep your opponent on their toes, never quite sure which Warhounds are going to strike and where.

FERROX LIGHT MANIPLE

The Ferrox Light Maniple is another one that leverages Reavers and Warhounds to full effect. It needs one Reaver and two Warhounds, with the option to add an additional Warhound and Reaver.

This maniple is one of the most fun ones to play, and after the Lupercal, it is my favourite. Its Maniple trait, Knife Fighters, gives you +1 to all damage rolls while attacking an enemy that is closer to it than its scale in inches, and additionally while within 2" of an enemy, you can choose to use either your weapon skill or ballistic skill. Combined, these rules really reward aggressive play styles and are a great way to run a close-combat Reaver. The look of fear in your opponent's eyes as your whole force Full Strides on the first turn is glorious to behold! One more cheeky little trick to mention with this maniple is the Stratagem Bloodthirst (found in the *Doom of Molech* supplement). This can only be used by a Traitor player, but for one round it gives every Titan +2 to issue Charge orders and +2 to hit while within 2" of the enemy. Combined with Knife Fighters, this gives you the prospect of using targeted attacks and still hitting on a 2+!

CANIS LIGHT MANIPLE

The last one I want to talk about is the Canis Light Maniple. This is an unusual maniple, as it is a rare one that can only be taken by one Titan Legion: Legio Audax. As you'd expect for the Ember Wolves, you need three Warhounds to run this maniple, with the option for an additional two Warhounds.

The Maniple trait Pack Ambush allows you to deploy the Warhounds in this maniple in an unusual way. After all other units have been deployed, each Warhound is deployed either in your deployment zone as usual or near an ambush point as long as they are 50% obscured. This lets you get far up the table and into perfect position to fire the Ursus Claws!

Stephanie: I hope what Rob and I have demonstrated is that there is an immense amount of tactical flexibility with games of Adeptus Titanicus, right down to whether you prefer the heavy, stomping gait of a Battle Titan or a more nimble approach with the Scout Titans. There is a maniple out there for you no matter what play style you prefer. This article has covered some of our favourite maniples, what to expect when using them and how you can get the most out of them.

Now Princes, get to your engines. The flames of this Heresy are spreading. Worlds are burning. All must choose a side or die. The Collegia Titanica shall walk! Onwards, to victory and glory! Engineering, give me striding speed! Engine kill! Engine kill! Engine kill!

A NEW SAGA BEGINS

Black Library author David Guymer has written many great Warhammer novels over the years, from the grim darkness of the far future to the Old World and the Mortal Realms. But recently he's been working on a series of exclusive stories for the pages of *White Dwarf*!



DAVID GUYMER

David Guymer has been one of Black Library's most prolific writers in recent years, having worked on scores of novels, novellas, short stories and audio books. Notable titles include the Hamilcar series, the Primarchs novel *Lord of the First*, a handful of Gotrek & Felix stories and two novels in *The Beast Arises*.

Once upon a time, a young chap named David Guymer made the fateful decision to pick up a pen and write a short story about some skaven. Almost a decade later, he has become one of Black Library's most well-known and loved authors. He has written novels for *The Beast Arises* series, *Warhammer Fantasy* and *Warhammer Age of Sigmar*, not to mention short stories for *Blood Bowl*, *Warhammer Underworlds* and the *Horus Heresy*. It's fair to say that he's been a busy man.

David's latest project is a little different, however, because he's writing something exclusively for *White Dwarf*: a series of linked short stories about the duardin of the Mortal Realms. In fact, the first instalment – 'Mother of Fire' – is in this very issue. If you couldn't guess from the title, it involves some very fiery duardin! We caught up with David to chat about his introduction to Warhammer, how he got into writing for Black Library and what it's like creating stories about dwarfs, duardin and all things stuntsy.

White Dwarf: When did you first get into Warhammer then, David?

David: I started collecting Warhammer when I was twelve. I remember because the blister packs of lead miniatures had 'age restriction 13' labels, so buying them felt like the most wonderfully rebellious thing a geek like me could pull off. Like a lot of people now in their mid-thirties, I started out playing *Space Crusade* and later discovered the wider Games Workshop cosmos as an extension of that.

I picked up *White Dwarf* 185 in my local Toymaster store (I still have it, by the way). There was a photo of some skaven miniatures on the inside cover, and a lifelong devotion to the interests of skavendom was born. I don't have the commitment nowadays to collect whole armies and play massive battles, but I've been playing a lot of *Blackstone Fortress*, and during the Coronavirus lockdown, I've been painting up a Van Saar gang for *Necromunda* and *Thundrik's Profiteers* for *Warhammer Underworlds*. The

system I'm really keen to try, though, is the Middle-earth Strategy Battle Game, and I'm badgering my gaming group to build some Battle Companies.

WD: How did you get into writing?

DG: Curiously, it wasn't something I'd always had in me to do. With hindsight I could look back on the short stories and newsletters I used to write for our school Warhammer campaigns and go, 'Aha! See the germ of writerhood!' but I was never really all that creatively inclined. Rather, it was the classical 'eureka' moment, seeing a particularly uninspiring dragon in a film (I forget which one) and immediately deciding that I could write something better. I wrote half of a fantasy epic that has been read by three whole people, one of them me, but that I never quite got around to finishing. I have this impression in my head of it being good, but I'm sure that if I were to go back to it now with an eye to finishing it, I'd be mortified.

WD: At some point writing and Warhammer combined, though. Did you write short stories for your own entertainment, or did you jump straight in at the deep end with Black Library?

DG: I'd been out of the hobby for a fair while by the time I started writing, but those formative influences are a part of you forever, and even though I wasn't playing anymore, I was still reading *Gotrek & Felix* and *Gaunt's Ghosts*. I discovered the Black Library submission window by chance while searching the internet for Bill King in, I think, 2011, and even though I'd never written anything but my unfinished novel, I took the chance.

WD: What was your first piece for Black Library?

DG: My first story for Black Library was 'The Tilean's Talisman', which I'd written for the submission window, but then rewrote for *Gotrek & Felix: The Anthology*. The story is about two skaven Clanrats sneaking into a tavern to rob a merchant when obviously things go very wrong for them. Writing about *Gotrek* and *Felix* in my very first professional story was hugely exciting, but I also remember being very anxious about it. If I didn't hear back from anyone for a few days after submitting a draft, I would start thinking, 'oh my god, they hate it, what was I thinking?' Which I totally don't do anymore ... It's a good thing that smartphones with email apps weren't a thing back in 2011, or I would have gotten no sleep at all! But it set me up well for the work I would go on to do later, and it clearly impressed the Black Library editors enough to let me write more and bigger *Gotrek & Felix* stories.

WD: What's your favourite Warhammer story that you've written to date?

DG: There's something Chris Wraight said to me



Left: Hamilcar is one of David's favourite creations in the Mortal Realms – a bombastic hero who is also the narrator of his own stories. Hamilcar even appears in his own audio short – 'The Palace of Memory' – in which he ventures into the cursed city of Shadespire after specifically being told not to. Some people never listen ...

You can find the full Hamilcar collection on blacklibrary.com.

when I first starting out: 'I don't enjoy writing. I enjoy having written.' It's stuck with me all this time because it's very true. I look back on all my books with fondness, however big a pain in the neck they happened to be at the time of writing. *Hamilcar: Champion of the Gods* is my personal standout, and not just because I actually genuinely did enjoy writing about that guy. It was the first opportunity I'd had with Black Library to create something entirely my own and to explore the wonders of the Mortal Realms while also making a few jokes at its expense. I've seen it called the Ciaphas Cain of the Age of Sigmar, and you'd have to be a hard, hard man to not take a little pride in that.

WD: You've actually written quite a few Age of Sigmar novels now. What was it like exploring the Mortal Realms?

DG: There was a steep learning curve for me when we first started writing the Realmgate Wars, the first Age of Sigmar series after the End Times. I'd grown up with the Old World. I'd internalised pretty much everything about it that I needed to write a story without ever needing to pick up an Army Book, and now all of a sudden I needed to read. I needed to read a lot. One advantage of being around from the beginning, though, is I've been able to keep up to date with new releases. I've read almost every Age of Sigmar novel and novella released so far and all of the lore supplements like *Forbidden Power*. I'm not in the

Phil Kelly and Andy Clark league of Age of Sigmar loremasters, but I like to think I'm somewhere nearby, scribing away in the antechamber of their White Tower. It's allowed me to work on related projects outside of Games Workshop like the Realm Wars mobile game and the Soulbound Age of Sigmar RPG. Those have both been new challenges and great fun to work on and have also, in turn, helped me look in new ways at the Mortal Realms, which feeds back into my stories.

I love what the vastness and variety of the Mortal Realms makes possible, which is great stories. And I appreciate that my experience of the setting allows me to poke gentle fun at it through curmudgeons like Gotrek or outrageously unreliable narrators like Hamilcar, whilst surreptitiously showing off everything I love about the Mortal Realms.

WD: Talking about Gotrek, what was it like bringing him into the Mortal Realms?

DG: Going from 'The Tilean's Talisman' to *Curse of the Everliving* to *City of the Damned* to *Kinslayer to Slayer* was a steady, stepwise progression of escalating terror, each book bigger and more important than the last, the pitch forks oiled and sharpened (or whatever it is one does with one's pitch fork) should I fail. My favourite of the bunch was probably *Kinslayer*. I enjoyed reading through the old Bill King and Nathan Long stories to pick up useful plot threads and then put them all to bed. It also served as a bit of a farewell tour of the Old World for me as Felix travels through the northern provinces of the Empire on his way to Kislev. Spoilers, but most of it was gone by the time he made the return journey in *Slayer*.

After writing what I assumed at the time to be the epic conclusion to Gotrek's fourteen-novel quest for a worthy doom, returning to the character for *Realmslayer* felt like a breeze. It

brought its own challenges, of course. What is Gotrek about now that he's technically found his doom? How can you tell a story about Gotrek without Felix? I had a lot of people at Black Library to trade ideas with in figuring some of these questions out and how to make interesting stories out of them. Darius Hinks has picked them up and carried on the good work with *Ghoulslayer*.

WD: We heard you've been writing some more stories about duardin recently ...

DG: What? Who told you? Well, since you already know. Yes ... yes I have! It was shortly after finishing my Primarchs novel, *Lord of the First*, that my editor, Hannah, asked if I'd be interested in writing a series of stories for *White Dwarf* all about the duardin and their heroes, myths and legends in the Age of Sigmar. To this day I'm not sure why she thought she had to ask! I said yes straight away.

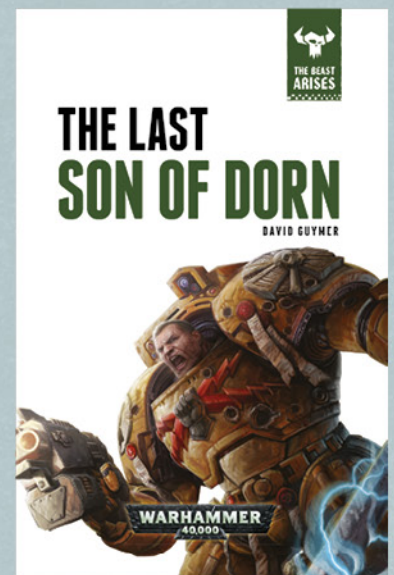
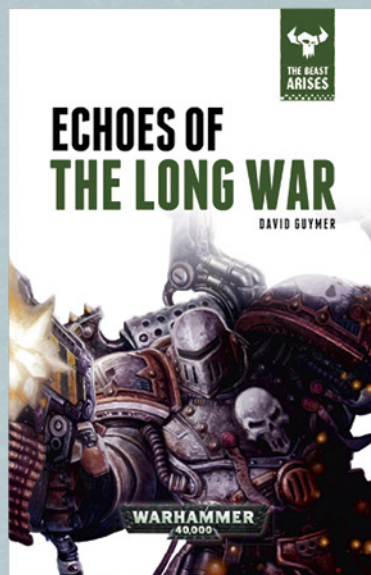
WD: So what sort of stories have you been writing about them then?

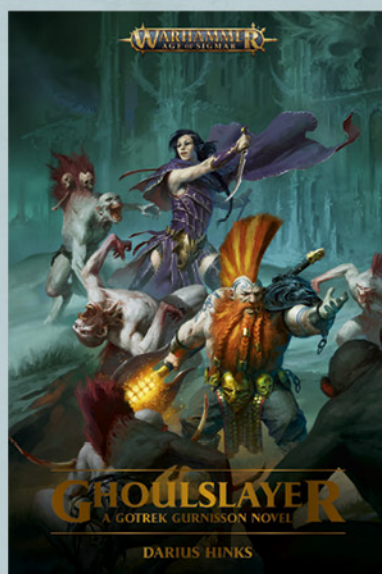
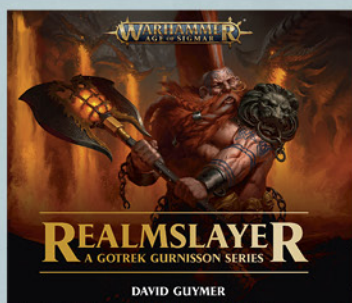
DG: There were a few ideas that Hannah and I talked over at the outset, plus several suggestions that Lyle had proposed in some of our earlier chats on the subject. The first was for a conventional serialised narrative story, but that felt a little limited in scope, because we really wanted to explore the different duardin factions and societies within the Age of Sigmar, and shoehorning them all into one story would feel a bit awkward.

In the end, we decided upon a slightly more unusual setup of standalone but linked stories, all involving a duardin hero who journeys through the realms. It's more like a heroic saga or a collected mythos than a single tale with a discrete start and end. That way, we could explore all the different factions, while

THE BEAST ARISES

When he's not busy writing about swords and sorcery, David has also penned a few novels for Warhammer 40,000. Well, sort of! *Echoes of the Long War* and *The Last Son of Dorn* are novels six and ten in the twelve-part The Beast Arises series, which is set in the 32nd Millennium – a good nine thousand years before the current point in Imperial history. This epic series focuses on the rise of a mighty Ork Warlord – the Beast – and how his vast armies almost topple the Imperium. For all you Imperial Fists fans, both novels are a must-read. In *Echoes* they form an uneasy alliance with the treacherous Iron Warriors against the Orks, while in *The Last Son* you realise (as the title alludes) just how close the Chapter comes to total destruction.





THE SAGA CONTINUES!

When the Warhammer world was torn apart, everyone thought that the Old World's favourite hero – the irascible Gotrek Gurnisson – had finally met his doom. Well, not so! As the last author to work on Gotrek's Old World saga, David had the honour of bringing him back in the Mortal Realms, albeit a bit confused and missing both his axe and his companion Felix (in that order of importance). Gotrek's first appearance in the Mortal Realms was in the audio drama *Realmslayer*, where he was voiced by the equally well-bearded Brian Blessed. Gotrek returned again in *Realmslayer: Blood of the Old World* and then the novel *Ghoulslayer* by Darius Hinks. Perhaps he will make an appearance in David's latest series of short stories. We will have to wait and see ...

developing this mysterious character in his own right at the same time. The series is called *Chronicles of the Wanderer* and the stories are told through the eyes of those who meet him and, whether they are Fyreslayer, Kharadron, Dispossessed, an engineer of the Ironweld or even a cantankerous survivor of the world-that-was, they will all discover – in ways both great and small – that this mysterious bearded hero is not all he seems.

WD: Can you tell us more about this character? He sounds intriguing!

DG: Not really, no! That's all part of the mystery. You get to piece together his saga as you read each instalment and discover who he is bit by bit. I will say this, though – he's a bit grumpy. But then to a duardin there are countless gradations of grumpy. It would be like getting one started on the colour of gold! He's kindly but world-weary, grandfatherly almost, but with a thinly disguised steeliness, and he's certainly not a character you would take lightly or cross more than once.

WD: Do you have a favourite bit of the saga that you could share with us?

DG: I've written six stories, and they all have elements that I enjoy for one reason or another. In one tale, our hero offers sage advice to an Ironweld Engineer who is competing in a Lumineth craft fayre, thereby showing off both the Ironweld faction and the difficult relationship they have with the aelves (bitter enmities die hard!). There is also a story about how he passes through a Dispossessed brewery once each year to pass judgement on their new ales.

My favourite though – and I really wasn't expecting it to be – is when our mysterious adventurer appears in the guise of a Kharadron to guide a skyfleet from Barak-Zilfin through the shadowpaths of Ulgu. It's one of the more battle-

centric stories of the bunch, and these tend not to be my favourite to write. I'd much rather write the Idoneth wedding in *Court of the Blind King*. Or Hamilcar musing on immortality and loneliness while languishing in a skaven dungeon in *Champion of the Gods*. Give me a moody tavern or a Hyshian market any day! But here, I loved writing the aerial combat between the Daughters of Khaine and the Kharadron Overlords. Plus, a certain snake-shaped mega-mage makes an appearance! That was the one thing, right from the outset, that I knew was going to happen in these stories somewhere.

So yes, some of the stories are battle-orientated, others are more personal, but all of them combine together in the end to create one saga.

WD: What's the first story about?

DG: The first story is called 'Mother of Fire', which, as you may be able to guess, involves our hero coming to the aid of a lodge of Fyreslayers when one of their sacred ceremonies goes awry. It's a proper deep dive into the culture of the Fyreslayers, while at the same time introducing this curious character.

One of the things I most enjoyed with writing all of these stories – and which I sort of grazed across in your earlier question – is describing how this enigmatic traveller appears differently depending on who is looking at him. In 'Mother of Fire', he is a muscle-bound hearthkarl with a crest of ash-white hair and leather-hard skin covered in Ur-gold runes. But how will he appear in the next story? Well, you'll just have to wait until next issue to find out!

Turn the page to read the first instalment in our mysterious hero's saga in the Mortal Realms – 'Chronicles of the Wanderer Part I: Mother of Fire'.

FURTHER READING

To find more of David Guymer's books and audio dramas, visit www.blacklibrary.com

MOTHER OF FIRE

By David Guymer

A runeson has been born to the Fyreslayers of the Skarravorn! Yet as the warriors of the lodge gather for the Rite of Naming, the fires of Mothirzharr burn hotter than ever before, and the wisdom of a white-bearded warrior must be heeded to avoid disaster. Part I of VI.

‘Duardin, as all peoples of the Mortal Realms know, are a proud and insular folk, as reluctant to ask for a stranger’s aid as they are to freely offer their own. And yet, in all duardin traditions, there is a similar legend, an aged traveller by whose timely arrival calamity will be averted or intractable wrongs righted. Who is this white-bearded wanderer? From whence does he come, that all duardin peoples recognise and know him? And where does he go when his act of charity is done...?’

Heat steamed from a giant crack in the earth, its roar akin to that of a godbeast giving birth to fire. The air was languid and molten. From rocky walls the graven idols of Grimnir in all his aspects sweated. The golden lines of his many mouths moved with silent utterances, eyes alive with the wit of ages and the wisdom of stone-sleep. Feeling that warm, wrathful gaze upon her, Helka Hravnsdottier bore her unnamed son to the ledge of rock overlooking Mothirzharr.

She smiled as the flameling punched at her arm with tiny fists, protesting the heat, the noise, or any of the dozen or so confused urges that could stir a month-old infant to ire.

So young, and already a fighter.

Murmuring a lullaby about blood and gold, she drew him to her breastplate, soothing his temper with the blistering touch of hot metal. The child looked up, mesmerised by her face, entirely disinterested in the wealth of brooches and jewels that framed it. Helka felt her own ambitions melt in the forge-heat of his regard. The child was just beginning to bulk out with muscle, and already Helka could discern the warrior he would become; the battles he would win, the glory he would claim, the foes he would slay. Nor did her heart shy from envisioning the manner in which he would one day die, for they were children of Grimnir, and a violent death was as inevitable as the *drip-drip-drip* surrender of rock to Mothirzharr. Helka’s father was long dead. Her brothers were all fallen in battle. They were at Grimnir’s side now, awaiting the call to the final battles of the doomgron, their deaths celebrated in the hearts of all who had witnessed or heard the battlesmiths’ tales. If she mourned their passing at all, it was that she alone remained to have grown old.

Three Fyreslayers awaited her at the precipice, a nation’s wealth in gold and fyresteel shimmering against Mothirzharr’s sulphurous breath. To the left was an elderly duardin, streaks of ash-grey in the fire of his beard. Shadows

wavering along deep crags in his face pooled into the bowls of his eyes. Ur-gold runes bulged from shrunken muscles, but his grip on his runestaff was strong, both it and he enveloped by the runes’ golden glow. His eyes were tight shut as he muttered invocations under his breath, teeth gritted against the occasional cough brought on by the gorbrost from which he suffered in his dimming years. His name was Morthrun Bloodsmith. Power rolled off the ancient runemaster like a second source of heat, and Helka could almost feel Mothirzharr tremble at having its temper stayed.

To the right was Tangron. The battlesmith was as broad and strong as any rendering of the Shattered God he might forge. The icon of Grimnir he held in one hand had been fashioned from ur-gold and fyresteel, with a beard of magmadroth-hide straps studded with sapphires and blue spinel. The eyes were shadowed and grave – little more than hollows in the metal – yet they were at once somehow joyful. Grimnir in his aspect of the Father. Tangron struck the icon pole rhythmically on the baked rock, beard straps jingling, almost perfectly in time to the grumbling of the earth, the chanting of the lodge’s mustered fyrd, and the beating of Helka’s heart.

Between them stood Jord-Grimnir: her husband. Runefather of the Skarravorn lodge.

‘From the fires of breaking are we made,’ he intoned, his voice betraying a lifetime spent inhaling smoke and drinking fire.

He was clad for the naming ceremony in a kilt of golden scales, a large buckle bearing the image of Grimnir, and a set of crossed keys in white gold, fyresteel and Skarravorn sapphires. His helmet was a whorl of knotwork and zharrgrim runecraft, funnelling his hair into a crest that echoed the wall of heat rising from the chasm behind his back. Smoke rose from his beard. His expression, such as Helka could read of it, was one of excitement. They had both reached an age where neither had expected to see this day.

‘By the fires of making are we made strong.’

Raising one hand, he half turned, holding it out over the heat of the chasm. He grimaced, but made no other sound. The ur-gold embedded in his forearm began to hiss and sputter.

'By the fires of our own deaths do we return.'

He withdrew his hand, flexed his fingers, then made a fist. The skin wheezed where it had reddened and cracked, but the runes remained aflame, as though the runefather had been cut open, baring the fire that burned within them all.

'And from the fire do we rise to fight and die again!'

Bending to the ground, Jord-Grimnir scooped up a handful of grit and tossed it into the chasm. Smaller pebbles popped the moment they were free of his hand; the larger stones burned for longer, creating a brief, brilliant sheet of rain over the crack in the ground. He bowed his head.

Tangorn beat his pole against the rock to the same steady beat.

The watching fyrds rumbled their unspoken approval as, marching in time, Kazrigar-Grimnir of the Unbrogun lodge left their ranks for the Long Walk to Mothirzharr. Brostur-Grimnir followed him. Then Rorvik-Grimnir and Vulgun-Grimnir. With them went their runesons, the priests of the zharrgrim, the battlesmiths and karls and thegns of the fyrds. No order of precedence was observed. They were Fyreslayers, united as much by temperament as by tradition, and by the spirit of their law as much as its letter. There, by the mouth of the fire, they clapped Jord-Grimnir on the back, congratulated him in terms ranging from the solemn to the ribald depending on their familiarity, tossing their own fistful of gravel into Aqshy's furnace before making the return. Many had words too for Helka, of congratulation and commiseration, others simply touching her hair or her armour or smiling at the child in her arms as they passed.

Anticipation became as raw as burned skin in the heat. Pockets of song broke out as those who had paid their respects to Jord-Grimnir and the fire and then returned to their fyrds began to outnumber those who had not. Jord-Grimnir broke his dignified observance to bawl for silence. *I am too old for fatherhood to temper me now*, he had said earlier that day, when the final preparations for the Rite of Naming frustrated him as such duties always had. Helka felt herself smile.

Last of all to the ledge were the lodges' hearthguard. They came as a respectful throng, leaving Helka and Jord-Grimnir unmolested in order to offer their tokens to Mothirzharr and depart.

Amongst the last group to make its walk was a warrior made striking by the white crest of hair pluming from his helmet, a beard of the same colour dressed in gold rings reaching well past his ankles. His face was old, and yet unlike Morthrun, the runemaster, he seemed stronger for his years – the way that lava will thicken and harden over time to become rock. His eyes were older yet, but at the same time harboured such a capacity for mirth that Helka could not meet them without feeling the solemnity of the occasion slipping from her. Ur-gold studded his leather-hard torso, but the runes they described were unfamiliar. His wargear, too, was exceptionally fine for a warrior of his rank.

'A strong-looking lad,' he muttered in passing.

'Thank you, hearthkarl,' she said, bowing her head in reply. The duardin grinned fire-blackened teeth at her and continued on his way. Helka soon lost him to the throng.

When it was done, the last warriors drifting back to their fyrds, Jord-Grimnir turned to Helka. Tangorn pounded out the steady rhythm. Morthrun's strained voice matched it with his incantations, and compelled the unruly earth to be still. Arguably, the task of shackling Mothirzharr for the ritual's duration should have fallen to one of the runemaster's undersmiths. But Morthrun had overseen Jord-Grimnir's own naming, and that of his father, and the runefather would have no other for his own son.

The runefather extended his arms to his wife. Fire wreathed him. He glowed with it, his immensely muscled torso twisted by the heat. Behind him, and despite Morthrun's best efforts, an inferno fire roared.

'When I went before your father to claim your hand, I promised him gold and a grandson.' Jord-Grimnir regarded the ill-tempered bundle in Helka's arms, pride briefly unmasking the father behind the king. 'I had come to fear that I would next stand beside him in the doomgron fyrd as an oathbreaker.'

'I could always use more gold, husband.'

The runefather grinned as Helka handed him his son. The fyrds, never comfortable when restrained, gave such a roar of approval that the heat rising from Mothirzharr fluttered like a curtain of smoke.

'We *are* the fire!' Jord-Grimnir yelled at them. 'In our birth. And in our death. We are the lords of our own lives. We fight so that we may die. And join the fire willingly when it is our time.' He turned fully to face the boiling chasm, the young runeson held firmly between his giant fists. 'And not before!'

He thrust the child into the heat, the ur-gold studding his forearms flaring within the acrid smoke.

Helka watched, open-mouthed.

The fyrds fell silent.

Tangorn beat his staff upon the ground.

Once.

Twice.

'Your great-great-grandfather, who was Baeldrun, son of Baelash the Sunderer, lasted a nine-beat before crying out,' said Tangorn as his staff struck a fourth, a fifth, a sixth.

'Do you hear that?' Jord-Grimnir shouted, fierce with affection. 'Do you hear, runemother? Our son is too stubborn to cry.'

Seven.

'Had you been present for the birth then you would know from which of us that comes.'

Eight.

'The name you have chosen for him had best be a hero's,' said Jord-Grimnir.

'I've one in mind.'

Nine.

Jord-Grimnir started to laugh. 'My mountain is not hot enough for this boy!'

'That's enough,' said Helka.

'He cannot be named before the fyrds until Mothirzharr hears him cry.'

'Your arms are burning.'

'I'll not be shamed by my own child.'

'Jord!' she yelled as the ground trembled, hot gases boiling from the fissure. The runemaster continued his chant, but the strain on his face was telling.

'The fyrds gather to hear him cry!' said Jord-Grimnir.

'Then let them depart having seen him refuse.'

The runefather gritted his teeth. 'No.'

The shelf trembled again, unbalancing Tangorn and breaking the battlesmith's rhythm.

Fifteen.

'Morthrun!' Helka snapped, turning to the runemaster.

Gold flared from Morthrun's staff in undirected bursts, the elder folding to the ground with a wracking cough and a cry of what must have been agony. Fire shot from Mothirzharr's jagged mouth, scorching the high ceiling, and driving Jord-Grimnir from the ledge with a shout of pain. His arms were black and steaming, except for where ur-gold burned like the bruises left after a beating from a god.

His hands were empty.

Helka looked between Morthrun and Jord-Grimnir. Her expression was volcanic. And with a strangled yell, she started towards the crevasse after her son.

'Easy, lass,' said the voice attached to the restraining hand on her shoulder. 'That'd be the last unwise thing you ever do.'

'Unhand me,' Helka snarled.

'I will. When you stop pulling so hard to go over.'

Helka whirled, one hand raised into a fist, finding herself face to face with the white-haired hearthkarl she had traded pleasantries with earlier. She would have knocked down her own father had he been stood behind her then – even Grimnir himself, and without care for the consequences – but something about the duardin's expression stayed her temper. The certitude of years radiated off him like warmth from a stone.

'Wait,' he said.

'For what?'

'Listen.'

'For wh-?'

'You'll know it when you hear it.'

And then she heard it: a thin and frail cry, almost buried under the infernal, never-ending outbreath of volcanic sound.

'Now...' Jord-Grimnir was on his back, arms black and bleeding gold. Tangorn crouched over him. Morthrun was a few paces away on his hands and knees, overlooking the edge. 'Now he cries.'

Helka flew at him, and it took all the hearthkarl's considerable strength to restrain her.

'You dropped him!' Helka snapped.

'He lives,' said Jord-Grimnir. With a slow hiss of rising pain, he laughed. 'And he will be a legend.'

Morthrun turned from the ledge, his long face drawn. 'It is not the runefather's fault.'

'It is not *only* the runefather's fault,' said Helka.

'It was Grimnir who handed you so fearless a son,' said Tangorn sternly. 'As it is his stirrings that quicken Aqshy's molten heart.'

'I will not have you defend me, battlesmith,' said Morthrun. 'The fault was mine. I failed to control the fire's wrath.'

'I have heard enough from both of you,' said Helka. 'Lest I throw you in as well.'

'I do not know what I—' Tangorn began.

'Goading him always with feats of the past that might be bettered.' Before the battlesmith could speak again, Helka turned to the stunned fyrds to shout. 'Fetch hooks and lines.' The Fyreslayers milled uncertainly, held back from the edge by their priests and runesons. 'Now!' she yelled.

'I will retrieve him,' said Jord-Grimnir, pulling himself upright as warriors hastened to obey.

'You have done enough for one day, husband.'

'It is my shame to amend.'

'Yes, it is.'

'You are impossible, woman,' he snarled, but not without affection.

'Can Mothirzharr be scaled?' said the white-beard, in a voice so level that it gave the arguing Fyreslayers pause.

'What is your name, hearthkarl?' Helka asked.

'Around here, I've always gone by Azkharn.'

'With which runefather do you travel?' said Jord-Grimnir, struggling to sit up with Tangrorn struggling equally to restrain him and tend his burns.

'I came alone. I'd heard of Mothirzharr and the Rite of Naming and came to witness it.'

'Mothirzharr breathes hot,' said Morthrun, suppressing a cough to answer the hearthkarl's earlier question. His limbs shone golden as he tapped his runes for the strength he needed to stand. 'Grimnir tosses in his slumber. The mountain feels it, and I fear the eruption from Shyish brings worse yet in store.' He coughed again, the gorbrost afflicting his lungs flecking the back of his fist with gold. It was difficult to remain furious with him. 'The Mother of Fire has been explored in ages past, but not for a hundred years.'

'And yet my son lives,' said Helka.

'Aye,' the runemaster conceded with a glance at Jord-Grimnir. 'He'll grow to be a rare one.'

As he spoke, Fyreslayers clad in baked leathers and gold, with the blue ornamentation of the Skarravorn, returned bearing climbing tools and harnesses.

'I will go down,' said Helka.

'Those days are behind you, runemother.' Tangrorn made to lay a consoling hand on her shoulder, only for the look on her face to dissuade him of it.

'I will go,' she said again.

The battlesmith threw his hands up in aggravated surrender. 'Then I will go too, and Grimmir's best wishes to any who would try and stop me.'

'And I,' Morthrun wheezed.

'You can barely stand, let alone climb,' said Helka.

'I will go,' he insisted. 'I will quell the mountain as I should have, or neither of you will get near the bottom.'

'One of your undersmiters can do that,' said Helka.

'Don't disdain him his age,' said Azkharn and, with all eyes on him again, gave the same fire-dark grin that Helka had seen first in passing. 'Aye, maybe he's not so mighty as once he was, but who here is? And if nothing else then he's old enough to know what he's talking about.'

'The fires of Aqshy erase all deeds in time,' said Tangrorn.

'Aye,' said Azkharn. 'I'd wager they do at that.'

Helka turned to him. She was not sure what compelled her to ask, or why his presence walked goosebumps along her spine. 'Will you come?'

'Aye, lass. If you'll have me.'

The air was smoke. Breathing it in through the nose left even the tough skin that lined a Fyreslayer's nostrils stung and raw. Drawing it instead through the mouth scalded the back of the throat, drying the lips and the inside of the mouth so hard it felt as though teeth would come loose from gums. It did not smell of anything, nor taste of anything. The heat was so total, there was nothing else. The way that Hysh light was white. Or fyresteel was fyresteel, regardless of the iron, silver and gold that went into its making.

There was no part of herself that Helka could see. Smoke boiled across her, as though she descended the chimney of a working magmaforge. The power of it was appalling. It buffeted her body, strong enough almost to force her back without any active participation on her part. Only the faint, frail cries of her son guided her deeper.

Fyreslayers were supremely resistant to heat. They did not feel it. Rarely suffered it. But delve deep enough, and fire could be found that would burn even their flesh. The walls of the chasm were too hot to climb. The rock would have been liable to collapse or simply explode if Helka had attempted to grip it. Instead, the Fyreslayers descended by line, feeding out fyresteel chain from a spool at their hips. This Helka did continuously, she might almost have said monotonously, but for the jolt her heart gave with every length of chain she ran out through her palm, dreading the snag or the jam that would leave her helpless and dangling. In her left hand, gripped like a talisman too dreadful to ever be used, was a snap-hook that would allow her to graduate her descent. But she would not. Deep down, like all Fyreslayers, she exulted in her peril. She let the chain run out as quickly as it could be unspooled, listening out for the tell-tale creak that would be her first and last warning of death. As with Fyreslayer flesh, fyresteel too had its melting point.

'How far to the bottom?' she called out.

Smoke answered her, the rippling laughter of the mountain's depths. She strained, but could hear no other voice but her son's cries, nor the creak of other harness chains. For a moment she feared that she was alone, that her companions had surrendered to Mothirzharr and returned to the surface without her knowledge, or that the earth had somehow devoured them whole.

Or had the heat addled her senses? Had she been alone all along?

'I do not know.' Morthrun's belated answer was distorted by the boiling fumes, seeming to bounce at her from all sides, making it impossible to tell how far the runemaster was from her, or whether he was even above her or below. 'The zharrgrim holds no lore of successful expeditions in my lifetime. And the fire is changeable. What was true a half-millennium past is true no longer.'

'Might the runeson have landed on some kind of ledge before reaching the bottom?'

Again, that arduous wait, as though the smoke separated them in time.

'There's no way to say.' The fumes muffled the sounds of coughing, but not the hard consonant curse of the zharrgrim's secret *rhun* tongue that the runemaster managed to get out. Light bloomed about twelve beard-lengths below Helka's feet. The fire caged within Morthrun's runestaff, the smallest ember of the Skarravorn Master Forge, itself the smallest ember of the eternal firestorm ignited by Vulcatix's death throes, snapped at the smoke and for a moment forced it to recoil. With a sultry *crack* the rocks flanking their descent began to cool. Like skin going blue in the cold. Mothirzharr was still hot enough to melt tin, but Helka shivered all the same.

Morthrun coughed again, more clearly now with the fumes' clearance.

'I cannot hold the fires of Aqshy at bay forever,' he said. 'Even as a younger duardin my rune-might was not so great.'

Helka would have praised him for his efforts, consoled him with the proof of their progress thus far, but that stung with a defeatism she would not countenance. Defeat was a concept she did not acknowledge. Even death, honourably claimed, was victory of a sort. It was the guarantee of a place in Grinnir's final fyrd, and a triumph over any consequence of failure. And so instead she barked at him to grow a beard and stop his whining.

'No one asked you to hold it forever. Just long enough to reach the bottom.'

'Aye, runemother.'

Helka strained her ears to fix again on her son's cries when she caught the final bars of a song.

*Karaz Ankor krunked,
a khazakendrum zharr,*

*Bin rikku loz grungned,
Angrung kan binazyr,*

*Kharadron binskarren,
Drengizharr a galaz,*

*Azka duardrazhal,
Karaz Ankor grungnaz.*

Her lips mimicked the shape of the words, despite the unfamiliarity of the dialect and the verse, calling as they did to something fundamental in her beneath the heat and the wrath. It spoke to her of ancient sagas, of times lost, legends of yesteryear and a future that might yet be as golden. Azkharn was well ahead of them all. As badly as Helka suffered, she could imagine how fierce the conditions must be for him, beyond the shielding influence of Morthrun's powers. What strange gifts did the runes in that Fyreslayer's body provide, she wondered? A resilience to heat that surpassed even that of a master of the zharrgrim? Immunity to fire and pain?

Who was this Fyreslayer? What runefather beyond the legendary Fjul-Grimnir himself could command the axe of such a karl in their hearthguard?

'What is this verse that you sing?' Tangorn called, yards from death, and yet unable to resist the glimmering of a nugget of ancient lore.

The hearthkarl was silent a while, as though he genuinely struggled to recall. 'A ditty I once heard.'

'It is not one I have ever heard sung,' said Tangorn. 'And I have travelled throughout this realm and the realms beyond, and consulted with the battlesmiths of many lodges.'

'Yours is an old tradition, lad. *Ours*,' Azkharn corrected himself. 'Older than the zharrkhul and the forge fires of the first lodges. It begins before the death of Grinnir. With those duardin who aided him in his quest for Vulcatix or who, inspired by him, pledged oaths to destroy evils of their own. Aye, oldflame, you could say that ours is the oldest tradition of them all, except, perhaps, the Khazalid empires of old.' He chuckled, idly letting out chain from his spool. 'But you'd be wrong, of course.'

'Then how—' Tangorn began, before Helka shushed him. 'But I—'

'Shhh.'

Heart suddenly strident in her chest, she strained her hearing against the venting force of furnace smoke. She listened until she could convince herself that she could hear almost anything.

Except for the one sound she was desperate to hear.

'He has stopped crying...'

Outstretched toes touched ground.

The rock had been baked by forces far beyond those of mere heat. It was no longer entirely solid, nor exactly liquid. It gave under the pressure of Helka's descending weight like a sponge swollen with sparks. She struggled to free herself from her descent chain. Haste made her hands clumsy.

Clumsiness made her angry. With a curse on all smiths and makers she succeeded in unhooking herself from the spool mechanism latched to her belt and then threw it to one side, sprinting to where Morthrun, Tangorn and Azkharn were already waiting for her.

Smoke veiled their broad, rune-studded backs from view. Compared to Mothirzharr's higher reaches the smoke was insubstantial and without direction, but it remained thick enough to choke on and hot enough to ignite ur-gold without the need for a zharrgrim's command.

Morthrun and Tangorn were both standing.

Azkharn knelt. Steam rose from his knee where it sank into the ground, the scent of burned meat and soldered metal mingling with the sulphuric fumes.

Given strength in exchange for a terror she would not name, she barged between Morthrun and Tangorn, casting the latter to his face, before throwing herself to the ground beside Azkharn, drawing up hot sparks with both knees.

A bowl-shaped depression had been dug out of the hot earth, large enough to install a magmic battleforge with all its smiths and priests in attendance. Huge, clawed feet had been employed to drive out the semi-molten spoil, banking it to make high sides that contained and aggravated the heat. The inside was littered with plates of mottled eggshell, thicker than Helka's hand was wide. The pieces varied in size. The smallest were fingernail-sized. The largest were broader than a vulkite slingshield.

Eggs. She was looking at a nest.

She looked over its entirety, a feeling in her breast that was altogether too cold to have been called rage, regardless of how it made her body quiver.

'I'm sorry, my lady,' Azkharn mumbled.

Helka glared at him, but he gave no suggestion that he had ever intended to say more.

'A magmadroth,' said Morthrun.

The runemaster pulled off his helmet, silver and red hair spilling from its flute neck and tumbling over his broad shoulders. No Fyreslayer ever looked more forlorn than one geared for battle, but with their head undressed. It was the garb of the walking wounded and those in mourning. He tugged on his beard with a clank of gold braid, cleared his throat with a crackling wheeze.

'Big one too,' said Tangorn, who had righted himself and was nudging the banked sides with a bare toe, looking not at Helka but at the miniature landslide of sizzling sand he had caused. 'Going by the hole she's dug.'

'Aye,' said Morthrun.

'Aye,' said Azkharn.

Helka picked up one of the larger eggshell pieces. It was heavy.

'My son...'

She could imagine only too easily what must have happened. The magmadroth would not have ventured far from her nest. They were territorial. As were the Fyreslayers. She would have heard the young runeson's cries just as Helka had from the mouth of Mothirzharr. She would have returned to her nest to find—

Helka killed the thought, turning her face from her companions, grateful, if only for that moment, for the heat that scorched every drop of moisture from her eyes.

Azkharn put a hand on her shoulder. 'Aye,' he said.

'It's a wonder he survived his fall,' said Morthrun. As if that changed anything, or helped anyone.

'What now?' said Azkharn, with tenderness enough to startle her from her grief.

What now?

She wanted her son back. Alive. But she was a Fyreslayer. Their god had destroyed himself in battle, and ever since they had been forced to make do without recourse to miracles.

So what now...?

She turned back to the nest. Closer inspection revealed four or five smaller sets of tracks scattered lightly over the top of the very much larger and deeper set that had excavated the nest. She pointed to them.

Azkharn nodded, as though there had been a right answer to his question and this was it.

'I grieve with you, runemother,' said Tangorn. 'I grieve for you. But it is time for us to return, that Jord-Grimnir might be told of what happened here and grieve also.'

'We swore oaths,' said Azkharn, runes glowing bright with sudden anger. Fully helmeted and wreathed in golden fire, the hearthkarl seemed for a moment to be twice his usual size. 'To see the young runeson returned.'

'The runeson is dead,' said Morthrun.

'Then it is Grudgement that is called for,' said Azkharn.

Morthrun looked at him without comprehension.

'You mean vengeance?' Tangorn scoffed. 'That is an Ulung's game.'

'And what of our own failures?' Azkharn tapped on the golden rings that sheathed his beard. 'Do they demand no penance?'

Helka looked down at her hands. Through them. Into herself, where she could feel something long inert touched by the hearthkarl's talk of oaths and vengeance.

'Runemother,' said Morthrun. 'Jord-Grimnir can send an entire fyrd to capture the magmadroth. As he will need to do in any case should we fail to return soon.'

Azkharn dipped his head in acknowledgement.

'You agree with him?' said Helka.

'What is there to disagree with?' the hearthkarl shrugged. 'If Grimnir had ever heeded a priest he'd likely still be here now.'

'He did not though, did he?' said Helka.

Azkharn's moustaches hiked in what might have been amusement. 'No, lass. I don't imagine he ever did.'

A series of loud, crackling booms echoed through the labyrinth of branching tunnels. Fire sprites, pin-sized elementals of bright magic, drawn to the sound like scavengers to soured meat, formed whirlwind constellations of fire. Morthrun sat back against a stalagmite and let rip another resounding cough, sending swirls of confused sprites chasing after the ever-splitting echoes. He cleared his throat of dust and gunge, until the muscles of his chest ached, before raising a hand to show he was able to continue. Tangorn shook his head and walked on. Helka made a disgusted noise in the back of her throat before following. Only the outsider hearthkarl stopped.

'Are you well, oldflame?'

'Aye,' Morthrun answered with a wheeze, his lungs crackling like the burning of cheap candles.

'Something ails you.'

'You think so, do you?' Morthrun tempered his sharpness with a chuckle that soon brought on another cough. 'Gorlbrost. The gold-lung. The fire of this place aggravates it, I think.' He took a deep breath to allow for another deliberate cough. 'It would seem that it is my fate to perish of old age's accumulated ills rather than to die in battle.'

'The young of today don't appreciate the old as they once did.'

Morthrun frowned in remembrance. 'And when was it that they did?'

Azkharn's response was a faint smile and a faraway look. 'Are you recovered enough to walk?'

'Aye.'

The hearthkarl helped him to stand, but was wise enough to withdraw his aid immediately thereafter. Side by side, they continued on.

The rock at that depth was of an odd material: glassy, and veined with metamorphic crystal that flickered and faded like some mineralised form of fire. In spite of their peril, the runemaster still yearned to take a hammer to it, break a piece open, pestle it into the mortar of the palm of his hand and smell it, taste it, subject it to fire, note the colour of its flame. No Fyreslayer had delved this far into Mothirzharr since the spiritquake. Who could say how far this arcology might extend, what monsters and miracles it might harbour, and which distant cousins might warm their hearths from its same fire.

'Wait...' said Azkharn.

Morthrun winced as he dropped into a crouch. The joints. It was the joints that age took first, and the joints that a duardin missed most, even after everything else started to fail. Azkharn waved at something ahead.

'Aye,' Morthrun muttered, watching from the partial cover of another flickering stalagmite as Helka and Tangorn walked ahead.

The effervescent rocks bathed the runemother in gold, colouring her cuirass and skirt and shoulders of mail. Her hair had been elaborately dressed for the Rite of Naming, but had freed itself in the travails since. Shod in fyresteel, she did not move quietly. He smiled to himself, envying the runemother her brashness. He had earned the name 'Bloodsmith' as a young runesmith for a similar abandon in battle. The name had outlasted the fire that had given it to him.

Preceded by the echo of the runemother's own footsteps, Helka and Tangorn passed across the gaping maw of an old lava tube. It was gnarled and craggy. Lumps of stone protruded like teeth from an old orruk's mouth. A deep growl, low and trembling, ran through the rocks. Morthrun tensed. His palm, suddenly moist, went to the grip of the handaxe that swung by a thong from his belt. Tangorn looked nervously up at the tunnel mouth. Helka ignored it, walking on past the larger branch as if drawn by some instinct towards another that lay further ahead.

'We are not equipped to bring down a magmadroth ancient,' Morthrun muttered to himself, although he did not care who heard. 'We've no pikes or javelins. No nets, bait or lures.'

Azkharn chuckled, still watching the other Fyreslayers. 'Oh, we've bait right enough.'

'Is that why you stay back with the old runemaster?'

'When did you last hunt a magmadroth, oldflame?'

Morthrun sighed. 'Not since I was an undersmith, tasked by the lord of the lodge klinkin to join a fyrd of youths led by Runeson Bjard.' He smiled in reminiscence. 'That was Jord-Grimnir's father. We were to retrieve the body of a hale beast, that we might feed its heart to the forge fire and nourish the Master Flame.' He sighed again. 'A long time ago.'

The hearthkarl briefly touched his shoulder. 'Not so long ago, oldflame.' He turned to where Helka and Tangrorn continued to move away. 'The lines of Vulcatrrix and Grimnir are two peaks of the same range. Sometimes it's hard to know where one ends and the other begins. Both have always been drawn to the hottest blood and the fiercest challenge, to strive against an equal and perish whilst we burn at our brightest. My blood isn't nearly so hot. There are times, like now, I think I might wish it otherwise, but there are too many ties for me in the realms for me to go out as Grimnir did.'

'You speak of responsibilities.'

'Aye.'

Morthrun snorted. 'And what are the responsibilities of a karl without a hearth?'

Azkhar suppressed a fuller laugh. 'You've got me there, oldflame. By Grimnir, you've got me there.'

'You may stop calling me *oldflame*.'

'It's a term of respect.'

'I know. Though I suspect you mock me with it, for we both know that you are by far the elder of me.'

Azkhar's expression became sober. He dipped his head. 'I meant no insult.'

'Come on then,' said Morthrun, feeling faintly embarrassed to have mentioned it at all. 'The runemother gets ahead of us.' Hands flat against the stalagmite, he pushed himself upwards. Azkhar followed in wary silence.

The opening to the tunnel yawned over them, never more like a giant mouth than as the two Fyreslayers passed across it. After a short distance, the tunnel plunged down towards depths unfathomable, waves of dry heat blowing out and then fading back like breaths. Beholding it from up close, Morthrun noticed something unusual that he had failed to mark before. While the near side of the mouth was thoroughly gnarled and warted with rocky protrusions and bulges, the other side of the half-circle was smooth, blasted clean by the same magmic processes that had carved the rest of the tube. He puzzled for a moment as to why one half of the opening had been left so uneven before moving on.

Another deep, tectonic growl trembled under his feet.

Close now. Whatever it was.

He paused halfway across the tunnel mouth, an old warrior's senses screaming for him to turn around. He did, jaw dropping open as the contours of the opening's rougher side rippled, optical illusions breaking down before his eyes. Rocky outgrowths became armour plates. Stalactites became claws, protective spines the length of pike blades. The magmadroth that had been warming herself against the curvature of the lava tube dropped the

chameleonic pigmentation of her scales, sliding from gold to bronze to black as she moved.

'Grimnir...' he breathed.

All magmadroth had the ability to alter their colouration, and could be trained to do it by a Fyreslayer of adequate patience, but he had never seen a wild magmadroth mask themselves so completely. He was awed. There was no place in his heart for terror. Eyes the size of clenched fists and the colour of lava-crust blinked, shattering the last traces of disguise as two heavy forelegs crashed into the ground before him. A sledgehammer head, armoured and scaled, ridged and rimmed with spines, peered down at the two duardin. A tongue of living fire pressed against the backs of long, black teeth, spraying the two Fyreslayers with sparks. Azkhar drew his axe.

If that blade was to be the last thing Morthrun ever witnessed then he would go to Grimnir gladly.

'Khazuk!' he bellowed, as the world turned to fire.

Helka spun around just as the molten stream went over Morthrun with a sound like a thousand gallons of liquid rock forcing a crack in the earth. There was a flash of gold, runic protections flashing and failing at the same time. A splash sent Azkhar flailing, covering his beard and his eyes, the force of the eruption punching him back through a stalagmite and into a wall that turned instantly to broken glass. The magmadroth had more to come, the soft, unprotected skin of its throat ribbing as it brought up lumps of molten rock from its belly. Helka whirled as Azkhar hefted his axe and barrelled towards the titanic beast.

'Khazuk!' he roared, his helmet and beard chain bloodshot with reflected fire, his beard turning briefly orange as he brought his axe down.

Even a fyresteel grandaxe would have bounced off the rock-hard skin of an elder magmadroth, unless driven with the rune-hanced strength of a grimwrath berserker, but Azkhar's runeaxe cleft her bottom lip neatly and deep. Sparks flew in place of blood, and the hearthkarl shook his head as sizzling motes rained across his crest. A Fyreslayer's hair would smoulder, but it would never burn. He ducked a swiping foot, back-pedalled beyond the reach of a lunging bite, countered with an uppercut, but the magmadroth had already pulled back. It growled, wary beyond its immense size, eyeing the hearthkarl the way an emberfox would eye a springtrap baited with fresh coal.

With a wild yell, Helka sprinted back towards them. Her heart pounded with the thrill of battle and the hot closeness of death. Tangrorn followed on stout legs, slowed by the bead-book rolls that fell from his belt and the heft of the icon in his hand.

'See first to Morthrun,' she shouted.

'But—'

'He's a warrior of the Skarravorn. He's earned the right to have his last words recorded by a battlesmith.'

'Aye,' he said reluctantly, peeling off to allow Helka to proceed alone.

She bared her teeth and willed herself to go faster, ruing the fact that as a runemother her body carried little ur-gold to lend her speed or her muscles strength. And yet she was unafraid. She charged the beast just as Azkharn recovered his poise. Its attention was fixed entirely on the hearthkarl. And that, Helka would not allow. It offended the blood of the godly many-times-great grandsire that burned through her veins.

'Runk-ha!'

The magmadroth twisted its neck towards her, distracted, as Azkharn buried his runeaxe in its shoulder. The monster belched fire in pain. Hurdling the last yards of broken rock and blistered glass, Helka leapt onto the magmadroth's side, hand burning where she found a hold between two spines, axe coming down hard. The blade skidded off marble-like scales. Pain rang through Helka's arm. Holding firm to her grips she wound back and struck again, this time aiming for the overlap between the rows of scales. The blade wedged in to the join but caused no obvious damage. She cursed, feeling rock-hard muscles bunching beneath her as the monster reared onto hind legs. Ignoring the meat-smoke spilling from her left-hand grip Helka held grimly on to the magmadroth's spines.

The beast took another lumbering swipe at Azkharn, who skipped out of the way, but it was a ruse only, and it turned its neck adder-swift to snap for the irritant clinging onto its back. No time to do anything but react, Helka let go. She rolled down the monster's flank, hot air displaced from the magmadroth's champing jaws propelling her on her way to the ground. She landed in an awkward tangle on top of her axe. Joints ground with chalky *pops* as the magmadroth turned towards her.

'Over here!' Azkharn bellowed. 'Fight a duardin nearer your own age.'

The hearthkarl ran at the beast at an angle intended to catch the magmadroth's eye and draw it from the runemother. And it did, but with an old beast's wiliness it flicked out a disguised foot to sweep out the Fyreslayer's legs. Azkharn's face slammed into the rocks and he slid beneath the monster's underbelly. The magmadroth set its foot onto his back and, with the immense satisfaction of one unwittingly reprising ancient battles, applied her colossal body weight to the leg.

Metal crunched.

Helka rolled onto her back just as the magmadroth swung her head back towards her, spines scraping dust and sparks from the rock walls. The monster's head hovered over her like an anvil. Azkharn's exhortation returned to

her then; about right, about honour, about standing by what was grudged regardless of how little it was worth.

'For my son!' she yelled, and hacked her axe into the side of the magmadroth's head.

She had been aiming for the beast's eye, but her target was obscured behind smoke from its nostrils and protected by ridged flesh and armour. She missed. Her blade bounced off. The magmadroth breathed its mockery into Helka's face. With a scream of defiance she dropped her axe to take hold instead of the knobs of bone that protruded from the thing's jaws, duardin strength enough to guide them away from her face, but nothing more. The snout struck Helka's breastplate like a hammer into a nail. Metal groaned. Bones creaked. Hot air blasted across her, everything that was not metal or of Grimmir's blood curling off her in smoke. Her mouth formed a wide 'O' in lieu of the scream she no longer held the breath for. Magmic saliva dribbled into the etchings of her plate, pooling in the runic motifs of her lodge.

She felt herself dying.

'*Gorzharr!*' came Azkharn's voice, from beyond the grave most certainly, for even the most strident of doomseekers would have surely perished against what he had suffered. It rose into a battle-chant, and then into a song. '*Afurk a Grimmir, uzkul!*' Morthrun's smoke-thin wheeze rose to join it, and Helka's heart rejoiced to hear the war-song of the doomgron from the valorous dead who arose to lead her to Grimmir's fyrd. Only then the runemaster's voice fell silent, and Tangorn's rose in timbre to take its place. '*Afson a Grimmir, uzkul!*'

Realising that she yet lived, Helka gritted her teeth and stared the magmadroth in the eye. 'Not today. Today the children of Grimmir live.'

The magmadroth bellowed as Azkharn hewed into its hindquarters with a sound like a miner breaking stone. The beast spun to face him, and Helka rolled to avoid being crushed between the rock and its tail. The beast's throat hitched, scales ribbing, a retching sound rumbling from deep within her gorge as she dropped her jaws and vomited forth a stream of molten-red rock over Azkharn and Tangorn.

The eruption shook the foundations of the cavern, bringing cascades of cinders from the ceiling and turning great swathes of the ground into a molten lake. The battlesmith reeled back from it, but Azkharn somehow found a way to skip through, not merely holding his ground but advancing, and for a moment Helka thought that she could see many duardin in place of one. Different lengths of hair. Different cuts of beard. Some wore armour of various styles. Some were draped in a warm red cloak with a golden, runic trim. But all had the same good-humoured face, the same timeless eyes. As soon as she attempted to focus on one of these different duardin he became fixed again, a Fyreslayer in his powerful entirety as his axe descended, roaring with rune-struck might as the blade gouged deep into the magmadroth's flank.

The beast arched its back and bellowed. Lava flowed in rivers from the wound, pooling under Azkharn's bare feet. He heeded it not. His axe came down again, met by another shriek, weaker and more plaintive than the one before; like that of a warrior whose prior courage has taken flight and who now cries impotently for their mother. Helka wondered if such thoughts had entered her own child's mind as he had called for her. Her hands balled into fists, only then to loosen as Azkharn's axe arced to smite the beast a third and final time. The hearthkarl planted a foot onto the magmadroth's stricken hide, wheezing like a forge bellows.

It was over.

But beyond that, the monster's final moments had stirred something in her that she would not have expected she possessed. Pity. One grieving mother to another. But then the children of Grinnir and Vulcatrrix shared a bond of gold and fire.

She could almost still hear the creature's cries.

'Runemother.'

Coughing as harshly as Morthrun had through his final years, Tangorn staggered from the smoke and the fire. His beard and hair were as moulder. His icon glowered like a star impaled on a magmapike. He was looking at something other than Azkharn or her.

Helka turned towards it. The smaller tunnel that instinct had drawn her to, before the magmadroth's ambush.

She *could* hear cries.

Before she knew what she was doing she was running, axe on the ground somewhere behind her, mail skirts drawn up in both hands. The tunnel swallowed her. Inside, it was darker, the fire in the stones hot but steady. A chorus of belligerent chirps assailed her as her eyes adapted. Five hatchling magmadroths made uncertain moves towards her, snapping jaws filled with pale, still-soft teeth, flicking tails, all the while mewling for their absent mother.

And with them...

Heedless of the infant reptiles, Helka snatched up the child and crushed him to her chest. Tiny hands knotted themselves in her hair. A broad, chubby face rubbed itself against her breastplate. The child continued to cry, and Helka unconsciously began to rock him in her arms, singing Azkharn's battle-song under her breath. '*Drengizharr a galaz, Azka duardrazhal...*' Dry tears stung her eyes.

'New-hatched,' said Tangorn, behind her. 'The magmadroth we slew must have mistaken the runeson for one of her own.'

'Maybe,' said Azkharn. He walked to the tunnel's mouth bearing Morthrun's body. 'Or maybe the daughters of

Vulcatrrix seek to dominate the sons of Grinnir, just as you would conquer them in turn. Grudgement begets Grudgement. As it ever was, so must it always be.' The hearthkarl nodded towards the clutch of hatchlings. 'A fine stable to gift a young runeson, eh, lass?' He looked up, something combustible, almost ephemeral about him in the aftermath of battle. 'Promise me you teach him something other than war, though. The Fyreslayers deserve more than their god's worst hour.'

'I swear it,' Helka murmured, her attention fully on her son's face, slack now in exhausted slumber against his mother's breastplate. 'I would have abandoned him to a magmadroth if not for your insistence. If this is all you ask in payment then it is yours.'

She looked up. The hearthkarl fizzed around the edges of her tired eyes.

'Why did you come here this day? Why did you aid us?'

Azkharn shrugged. 'Why do the matrons of the Skarravorn wear armour?'

'The warriors might say it is to protect us.'

'I'd wager they do. What do you say?'

She thought about it. 'I'd say that someone has to.'

With a knowing look, the hearthkarl turned as though to leave.

'Wait,' said Tangorn. 'Where are you taking Morthrun's body?'

Azkharn smiled, his eyes glimmering with familiar mirth. 'To his maker.' With that he did turn, and he did leave, the smoke and embers folding in to envelop and scatter him to the eight winds as though neither he, his axe, nor Morthrun Bloodsmith had ever been real at all.

For a long time, neither Helka nor Tangorn felt that there was anything more to be said.

'Where did he go?' the battlesmith asked, at last.

Helka did not answer. All she could do was take the hearthkarl at his word. He had taken Runemaster Morthrun back to their maker.

'Have you a name for him?' said Tangorn as the silence stretched.

'I do.'

Helka looked down at her sleeping child.

'A hero's name.'

OUTSIDE THE STUDIO

Welcome to the back pages of the mag, where this month we're coming to you live from our back bedrooms, studies and hastily repurposed dining room tables. Of course, this was written far in the past, so hopefully everything's blown over by now.

Here in studio-land, most of us are working on Warhammer 40,000 armies in excitement for the new edition. Dan even managed to get in a game against one of his friends in what was described as socially distanced T'au-fresco gaming (Sorry, we couldn't stop him. – Ed). However, a few models popped up from other systems, including some Wurmspat from translator Dirk and a Black Coach from our very own editor. There are also some lovely Space Wolves on the back page. Awoo!



FAST ATTACK!

Dan has added to his Blood Angels force by painting a unit of the new Outriders. He added Chapter icons (taken from a Drop Pod) and converted the Sergeant with a Blood Angels head, power fist and tilting shield. Their insignias mark them out as the eighth squad (yellow knee pad) of the 3rd Company (white blood drop on shoulder pad).



REINFORCEMENTS FOR THE BEST CHAPTER IN THE WORLD!*

Games developer Robin Cruddace painted these Howling Griffons during the lockdown while waiting for the Indomitux box set to come out. 'I was just really excited about Space Marines, and I couldn't wait to paint some Assault Intercessors, so I painted some regular ones,' says Robin. 'I enjoyed painting them so much I've got another five almost finished, and I'm trying to be good and finish them before working on my new starter set. The Terminator Chaplain was actually painted before the Intercessors at the very start of lockdown because I had run out of Khorne Red paint. I needed something to keep me busy while I waited for the webstore to reopen!'

*Header by Robin



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 around the studio over the past month. This issue: a lot of power armour, plus ghosts and gangrenous followers of the Plague God.

MORE UNDERWORLD MONSTERS

Prior to the arrival of Direchasm, Dirk Wehner finished painting one of his existing warbands – the Wurmspat. 'When painting the Wurmspat, I aimed for a colourful comic vibe,' says Dirk. 'I especially enjoyed painting their bases, which at first glance look like desert bases, but if you look twice, you might notice that they're more putrid and fleshy. I painted the stones with various skin tones like Bugman's Glow and Ratskin Flesh and used some red and purple washes around them.'



THE THIRD OF THE THIRD

Matt has continued to hammer away at his backlog of Primaris Space Marines during the lockdown, and he recently completed a third Lieutenant for his Imperial Fists 3rd Company. He converted the model by adding a tilting shield, shoulder pad and ranging equipment from the Imperial Fists upgrades set.



A GHOSTLY PROCESSION

Lyle has continued with his Nighthaunt army this month by painting a Black Coach. 'My Black Coach is the centrepiece model for The Funeral Procession of Young Charles von Sealh, an army I started a while back in memory of my dog, Charlie,' says Lyle. 'I made a custom lid for the casket in the hearse, and it features a small dog image as a tribute. I repainted the gheists and steeds several times to get the colours right, going

through iterations of glowing green and luminous blue before finally settling on the scheme you see here. Specialist Design Studio 'Eavy Metal painter Drew Palies helped coach me through the ghostly colours, giving me the conviction to redo them. He told me something along the lines of "sometimes painting is repainting", and I think that's good advice to keep in mind.'



SURELY NOT MORE SPACE WOLVES!

During the UK lockdown, Warhammer World studio manager James Karch set to work on a new Space Wolves army. 'I've always loved the Space Wolves as an army since their first codex came out back in 1993,' says James. 'I had a decent-sized army back then that was Ragnar's Company. This is now my fifth Space Wolves army, having previously had armies for both Alarik Nightrunner (twice) and Harald Deathwolf. With the release of the new Ragnar Blackmane model, I knew I had to revisit his Great Company once again.'

'It's a relatively small force at present – around 62 power, I think – and they'll be starting a Crusade very soon. I plan on adding some new units from all of the upcoming releases in the not too distant future. My paint scheme is a mix of 'Eavy Metal and Army Painter schemes, using Russ Grey as a basecoat followed by a 1:1 shade of The Fang and Rhinox Hide (which adds a warm tone to the depths of the cool armour). I then highlight the edges of the armour with Fenrisian Grey followed by Blue Horror and then a final mix of Blue Horror and White Scar.'



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