

THE DRUCHII HERALD

The Web Magazine of Druchii.net

June 2006



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The People of the Six Cities

Druchii Society - by Mornedhel

The Dark Elves of Naggaroth are a harsh enigmatic, and secretive people. To the ignorant, they appear as merely another race of loosely affiliated, bloodthirsty killers, quick to turn each other like so many squabbling greenskins or cultists of Khorne. But to those few outsiders who are fortunate enough to have studied their ways and survived, there are complexities, subtleties and even a sort of honor among them that are surprising to say the least. There are rich traditions and strong loyalties that keep the Druchii bound together as a cohesive whole - an organized society of ruthless killers.

Part One: The Commoners

- Family

The family is the core of Druchii social structure. 'Family' in this context means those elves blood related or married to blood related kin. Thus, the size of a family can range from one person who lost all his kin in battle to over a hundred elves, as due to their long lives, there will frequently be up to six generations alive, or perhaps more in some cases. Combined with inter-family marriages, this will naturally result in some families becoming vast organisations.

The inner structure of a family varies, depending on its size and its primary occupations. Generally, one family member will be deemed the family head. This will most often be an elf from the oldest living generation, but it can also be a younger, more determined or competent elf who managed to wrest control from his or her predecessor. As with almost every aspect of Druchii society, there is no differentiation between genders in regard to leadership.

Larger families will usually be divided into several households, each of which will have its own leader who in turn answers to the overall leader of the family.

Among commoner families, this leadership is not usually executed via orders made legitimate by written law; instead, it is an informal kind of leadership. Thus, single family members might speak up

against the leader or leaders, which may result in a shift of power within the family - or in punishment and/or isolation of the insubordinate member(s).

Within families, intrigue and scheming are generally limited to discussions about how to proceed with business or politics, enabling the Druchii to have a group of others whom they can trust. Family members will help each other out when in need, protect each others interests, and entrust important tasks to each other without doubting the trustworthiness of their relative.

However, internal family intrigue is not completely unheard of. Sometimes, family members will break up into different factions, triggered by an especially intensive argument about the business, politics, or inheritance. Still, this is far from common, and as murder is considered a capital offence and punishable by death, it is rarely more than a few years before the factions unite once more.

- Business

Most families concentrate on one business, though some larger families may extend their activities over several different ones.

The occupations of commoners may range from slaves, other trades, the running of large smithies or other production facilities to simple services like guarding a noble House's estates or working in port administration. Most actual property is owned by noble Houses, though, so a family working in the smithing business would not own the materials and equipment.

It is important to note that not even Druchii commoners do a great deal of menial work, as this is the task of the uncounted number of slaves. Only where the elven skill is needed will the Druchii actually work themselves - for example in the final steps of crafting armour or fine furniture. All work that requires less craftsmanship is done by slaves that are supervised by the craftsman who will put the finishing touches to the piece.

One important tool in business and politics for both commoners and nobles is marriage. Marriage arrangements help forming alliances between families or Houses or elevate a commoner to the rank of nobility (see below). Sometimes marriages

are arranged immediately at birth, sometimes only a few years before the child in question becomes an adult, and sometimes at a time in between those two extremes. Houses/families generally tend to wait with arranging a marriage until there is a useful opportunity. Rare, but not unheard of, is the revoking of marriage arrangements due to a change in alliances.

It should be mentioned here that Druchii society is monogamous, though it is very common for widows and widowers to remarry not long after the death of their partner. This presents another opportunity for political marriage, and as such it is rare that a Dark Elf will remain a widow or widower.

- Military

Through their occupation, most families have a quite close relationship to a single noble House. It is this noble House that the family will usually fight for as warriors when called upon. Families may cut their ties with the noble House and serve another if the financial and/or political situation warrants, however, and some families, especially large ones, are affiliated with several noble Houses.

Generally, Dark Elven commoners fight in war as normal Druchii warriors, equipped with light armour, shields, and either spears or repeater crossbows. Some commoners join more specialised units, though, which in most cases means they have to leave their family. While there are some families that have chosen, for example, the raiding life together as Corsairs, this is not required, and single elves can join these brotherhoods, leaving their family behind. Other military units generally only accept individual elves joining their ranks; the Executioners and Witch Elves are mostly commoners, but they are all members of the Executioner sect of Har Ganeth or the Temple of Khaine respectively. The Black Guard consists of individuals chosen at birth, which is considered an honour for their family. The Shades are completely independent of the rest of Druchii society, and as such, no commoner may join them.

Part Two: The Nobility

- Families

Noble families are organized very similarly to commoner families. However, there are some differences. Noble families are called Houses, and their individual power can vary a great deal. They are commonly divided into two categories, the Lesser Houses and the Greater Houses.

The Greater Houses are those which own estates in Naggarond and regularly attend the court of King Malekith and in addition form the High Council of Advisors, having great influence in politics concerning the whole of Naggaroth. The Houses of the Drachau, as well as some of the more influential Houses of the other cities are considered Greater Houses in addition to this. Members of the Greater Houses are known as highborns, or Oribhain (singular: Oribhein).

Lesser Houses are those which have no seat in the High Council, but only in their city council. The Lesser Houses also include those noble families that have been dispossessed in some way, and only have marginally more influence than commoners. The members of the Lesser Houses are called nobles, or Fain (singular: Fein).

A Lesser House can in time gain enough influence and financial power to be considered a Greater House; likewise, a Greater House can lose influence and their seat at Malekith's court with it. Thus there is even more incentive for competition amongst the Houses.

Another difference is that while among commoner families there is no general rule regarding the family leadership, among the noble Houses it is common tradition for the leader of a House to nominate their successor while they still live. This usually happens before the House goes to war, or when the leader starts to show signs of age (which, for an elf, means that his death through natural causes is perhaps no more than a few decades away). The newly designated heir is given the family's token of nobility, which proves to all that he is the intended heir. Sometimes this is done secretly, but in many cases, it will be done when all or most of the family are present. This token is a tradition from long before the Sundering; the status of being a noble family is not only represented, but even legally dependant on this token, although if it is lost or destroyed, Houses are normally given a chance to retrieve or replace it if their political/financial power still warrants it. The form this token takes varies between Houses; it can be a weapon, armour, a ring, or something completely different, and it often has magical properties.

The inheritance is only leadership of the House, not the property, as the latter is considered property of the House as a whole as opposed to property of an individual elf. This is another reason why there is rarely infighting within Houses, as no member wants to risk becoming alienated from their kin.

- Business

The members of noble Houses generally do not perform any menial work at all, but only run their businesses. They own property, including clothing manufactories, farms, shipyards, and many more. They manage these companies, relying on commoner families to do the actual work that is not done by slaves. Property and the number of commoners working for them will be the basis of their House's influence; political scheming, intrigue and even criminal actions are not unusual in the constant competition for power among the Houses.

What was said about the importance of marriage arrangements for commoner families applies just as much for the noble Houses; finding an ally among the Greater Houses can be immensely useful in a Lesser House ascending to a higher position. Likewise, the more Lesser Houses that support a Greater House, the more unlikely it is for the latter to have their plans spoiled by a rival. Alliances among Houses of equal power are even more common, but they are just as fickle, if not more so.

An option that noble Houses have which is not available to commoners is the duel. A noble can challenge any other noble of equal status to a duel. They can also challenge nobles of higher status, but in that case, the duel will usually be fought by a champion instead of the higher noble himself. Only if the champion is defeated may the original challenger fight the actual target of the challenge, as he has proven his cause to be legitimate.

This law prevents lesser nobles from constantly harassing higher nobles in attempts to gain their power by discouraging them from issuing the challenge in the first place, as the champions of the higher nobles are generally experts in the art of dueling, so the lesser noble's chances of defeating them are rather slim.

Nobles from the Greater Houses can also challenge lesser nobles, but it rarely happens, because a higher noble will rarely gain anything from killing a lesser noble, and because it is easier and less risky for them to let one of their allied Lesser Houses carry out the challenge on the rare occasion that the Greater House deems the lesser noble's death beneficial to their cause.

However, no matter who he challenges, the challenger will have to provide a reason for his challenge. Only if there is an appropriate reason may a challenge be issued. The reason for a challenge

must regard the challenger's honour; while the motive is often political in nature, this cannot be the official reasoning. In order to make sure that the given reasons are always valid, a challenger must first petition the Dread Lord of his city for permission to issue the challenge. The Dread Lord, or in the case of Naggarond, the Witch King himself, decides whether the reason provided is valid or not. In practice, as the case may be, the Drachau often takes into consideration whether or not the duel would be useful to the Drachau himself. Thus, dueling becomes another very useful tool for the Dread Lords to control their nobility, and the number of challenges is kept in check in order to keep the nobility from wiping each other out completely in constant contests for power.

Duels are carried out publicly and will always be supervised by an impartial arbitrator, who will be appointed by the Drachau, so that everyone can see it is a legitimate affair and none of the combatants use illegal tricks or weaponry. There are numerous rules that have to be observed. The actual combat is fought with a Glaith (a ritual weapon that you can see on page 75 of the Army Book, number 4d), and the combatants have to first disarm and incapacitate their opponent before they kill him using the Lakelui, a short spear-like weapon (number 4e). Killing one's opponent while he is still able to defend himself is not only considered bad style, but may also result in a death sentence for the victorious duelist – the decision in this case is in the hands of the arbitrator, who represents the Drachau. Killing a defenseless opponent is not, by law, necessary, but they are rarely left alive. Not killing the defeated elf will usually lead to the winner being seen as soft-hearted and stupid, because not only did he show mercy – a trait not valued very highly in Druchii culture – but he also forewent an opportunity to eliminate a rival.

A noble who is challenged by another can decline the challenge. But he or she must justify this by showing that the challenger's reason is invalid. Even if he succeeds in doing that and the Drachau revokes the permit for the challenge, however, declining a challenge will lead to a loss in prestige and the appearance of weakness in most cases. Only if the reason for the challenge can be proven to have been made up or exaggerated and the challenger is obviously no match in combat for the challenged party can the duel be declined without a loss of honour. Thus, the uses for challenges can be far more complex than just killing a rival.

- Military

In battle, the members of noble Houses gather in elite units like the Cold One Knights or charioteers – though the latter also include some commoners who have proven their worth in battle – and form the officer corps of the army.

Armies levied by a House or a group of Houses for their own purposes are invariably led by either the House's lord or one of his close relatives, always appointed by him. In order to assemble an army for the sake of the House's own purposes, the House must first petition their Drachau or the King to be allowed that venture. In order to receive permission for a military operation, the House must prove that it has the financial assets to maintain the army during the operation and that it has the means to assemble an army fit for the task in the first place. The House will have to call upon affiliated commoner families to send a portion of their members to their army, to hire or to call in favours for the services of special regiments from the other organisations mentioned in Part Three, and negotiate transportation with the fleet. Only when all this is done can they submit their petition, and even then, the Drachau can deny them permission if he pleases. In this way, a Drachau has a lot more control over where the military forces of his city are employed, and can stop noble Houses from gaining too much power through raiding if he wishes.

The Drachai (plural of Drachau) can order an army to be assembled at any time, and both noble Houses and commoners are bound by law to follow their call to arms. Invariably, an army levied in this way will have easier access to specialised troops and equipment, as well as in most cases being much larger than an army assembled by a single noble House. This kind of army will often be led by the Drachau himself. But if not, he can give command of the army to any highborn of his choice.

- Rising to Nobility

Druchii culture places a lot of emphasis on competition and survival of the fittest. Thus, it is only natural that Druchii society allows commoners to rise in rank if they perform well. While there are poor nobles who have nothing left but their clothes and weaponry, it is undesirable for society as a whole to have wealthy commoners. This would result in some commoners being more influential and powerful than noble Houses, and would lead to a lessening of respect for the nobility. Therefore, commoner families who gain enough wealth, power and property are regularly elevated to the rank of nobility, in effect forming a

new Lesser House and being given a seat in their city's council. Likewise, individual commoners can be accepted into a noble House through marriage or adoption if a special deed or a long term of loyal service to the House warrants that, or as part of a business arrangement. While the former - elevating a whole family to the status of a Lesser House - can only be done by a city's Drachau or by the Witch King, the latter is an option for all Houses.

Part Three: The Temple, Convent, Cult and Others

In addition to the commoner families and noble Houses, there are a few noteworthy organisations that have similar influence to Greater or Lesser Houses in Druchii society. These are the Temple of Khaine, the now practically legal Cult of Pleasure, the Convents of Sorceresses, the Beastmasters and the Dark Elven Navy. Each of them would warrant their own article, however, and therefore only a few aspects shall be mentioned here.

None of the above organisations rely on family bonds, but enlist individual elves from both common and noble families in their ranks. Those who feel the urge to join them are generally free to do so, and it is frowned upon for their families to hold them back. On the other hand, having a family member in the higher ranks of these organisations can be of great benefit to their relatives.

Most of these organisations tend to be egalitarian regarding the social rank of their new members, although their political connections to the Houses often mean that nobles rise in their ranks quicker than commoners. The importance of noble birth for an individual's career varies. In the Navy, noble birth is very helpful. Among the Beastmasters, it is virtually useless, with skill and connections to higher ranking Beastmasters being more important factors.

Joining most of these organisations means joining them for life. Leaving them is only very rarely possible without being considered a traitor. Exceptions to this are the Navy and the Beastmasters – joining them for a time, most commonly a century or two, is considered a good career move.

The influence of the individual organisations varies, though usually the Temple is the most powerful among them, closely followed by the Convents. In some cities this can differ. In Clar Karond the Navy is more influential than the Convents, and in Karond Kar the Beastmasters have more influence than the Temple.

The Great Houses of Naggaroth – House Daerleth

by Tastyfish

...In which we begin a series of articles that chronicle the Great Houses of the Druchii – the powerful noble families that form the backbone of Druchii society and hold the reigns of power within Naggaroth in His Majesty's name. For your enjoyment in this issue we present House Daerleth, the keepers of the caravans and guardians of the overland trade routes.

“From the furthest southern plantations, to the most distant of the Northern watchtowers, the banners of the Great House Daerleth fly proudly over this barren land. We are the lifeblood of this great nation, for without our caravans the cities would starve and the armies would fall.”

“Yet despite the fact I risk my life everyday out here in the wilds, Keynlanath and their lickspittle followers still curse us. It's no surprise I prefer the open road and warm welcome of the Rider Inns to the cold embrace of the cities.”

- Talasandras Raleth, Daerleth Caravan Master

“Daerleth? Bunch of spies and bandits, the lot of them. There's a reason why no one will make the long journey between the cities without the protection of their caravans, and it's not just the Shades. I've heard that the caravan masters are in league with the mountain tribes, and I know a fellow who claims to have seen Lord Falkath Daerleth himself meeting with some of their blood just a few months back... ‘course, how Meriak the Lost got his head out of the spice dens long enough to find this out I'll never know. Still, it makes you think.”

- Dakarth Longblade, Lowborn

“The truth, like the sea, is a fluid thing. Make no assumptions on what you have seen before when predicting which way the wind will blow next.”

- Rahiek Daerleth, in a rare moment of honesty.

“Knowledge is power. It threads between us all and binds us together. It forms the puppet strings those in control use to make you dance to their tune. Only in the complete darkness of the mind are you safe, shielded by a web of lies so dense that only you know the way out. Defences of stone and steel can be undone with a simple word, whilst a shield of lies can make the truth both invisible and protected against any attack. Of all the Great Houses, only we know how to rule, and to oppose us can only be a position born of ignorance.”

- Falkath Daerleth, Lord of Great House Daerleth

History

As with all the Great Houses, Daerleth traces its history to a hero from the Age of the Defender, in this case Daerleth of the Waves. Along with most of the records from that time, the early history of the house is sparse and fragmented, so there is very little remaining documented knowledge of the life and times of the original explorer Daerleth. All that is really known is that he and his partner, the Lady Farriel Windbourne, mother to House Daerleth, were explorers and travelled with Malekith as he roamed the world to rid it of the taint of Chaos during the reign of the Traitor King. It is thought that the two died in the colonies trying to rescue members of their family from Dwarf aggression.

Of the children left behind, only the fate of Vandelec of Daerleth is certain, as the histories only started being written later on during his control of the House. Whatever the fate of his siblings, he is regarded as founder of House Daerleth as it is known today after carving out the role the house has since maintained, personally leading expeditions to re-establish contact with the other Black Arks who left Ulthuan after the spiteful followers of the False King sunk their own beloved homeland beneath the waves rather than suffer defeat.

Lord Vandelec was succeeded briefly by his son, Torvthonis, who led the house to battle in the War in the North, where he tragically perished along with many noble sons of Nagarythe. House records are confused as to what happened following this, whilst the leadership clearly passed to Vandelec's oldest daughter Khaeralis, there is some mention of another older son Hrackath, a priest of Khaine. The fate of Hrackath (or whether he even existed at all) is unknown at this point, but lacking heirs, his fate is inconsequential to the House.

The death of Torvthonis struck Khaeralis hard, causing her to turn her back on the invasion of Ulthuan, leaving it to some of the House's younger representatives and allies whilst she concentrated on

solidifying Daerleth's hold over the caravans that supplied the cities for raw materials and using her near unopposed position on the remaining council to build up the influence of House Daerleth at home. She ordered the construction of the first of the messenger houses to act as way stations for caravans and dark riders, and these, combined with the trading alliances she made with a multitude of minor houses, led to Daerleth's ascendancy to Great House status upon Lord Malekith's return. Khaeralis continued her reign for several centuries until she was assassinated on her deathbed by the despicable House Keynlanath, shortly after their failure to prevent the sacking of Anlec. For nearly a millennium there was open war between the two houses, which swiftly dragged in allies until almost all of Naggaroth was in chaos.

The Age of Blood and Banners claimed the lives of many Daerleth nobles, including Lord Maliek, the Head of House during that time, as well as many from opposing houses, greater and lesser. The madness was finally called to a halt when His Most Exalted Majesty King Malekith ordered the execution of Lord Kalhadiour Daerleth and Haroganthel Keynlanath following the two houses raising banners against one another within the streets of Naggarond and the two armies laying waste to the Merchant and Parade Districts. This battle also marks the only time the entirety of Har Ganeth's Executioner regiment has been deployed against fellow Druchii. Following this, Lord Falkath was appointed Head of House Daerleth, where he still continues to lead to this day.

Area of Involvement

Of all the 6 cities, Clar Karond and Naggarond have the most concentrated Daerleth presence, being the starting points for the majority of dark riders carrying messages from the Royal Court to the nobles in other cities or various ship manifests to potential buyers elsewhere. However compared to the other Great Houses, Daerleth are not as concentrated in a single city but maintain a presence in all of them as befits their role as messengers. Most of House Daerleth's resources are located outside the cities, either at the larger caravan stations just outside the cities or the messenger houses deep in the Naggarothi wilderness.

Organisation

In a society like that of the Druchii, inheritance is no simple business due to the number of generations alive at any one time and the average size of the noble families. House Daerleth is no exception to

this. Officially, the choice of heir is entirely in the hands of the current Head of House, a method that has ensured that not one of the Lords of Daerleth has died at the hands of their children, though given that not one of them has yet to die a natural death, this claim may not be all that worthy. Other than this somewhat anarchic method of determining inheritance, Daerleth's organisation closely follows that of the rest of other houses, generally making use of the numerous cousins and other relatives the large noble families produce to form blood bonds between business partnerships. It is, after all, the favour of Daerleth on allied minor houses with regards to marriage pacts that allowed them develop their near monopoly on the messengers and caravans operating between the various cities.

In most cases, the individual who has married into the extended Daerleth family is often awarded control of a relevant business alongside their new partner and expected to form close ties between Daerleth operations and those of their previous house. The same process occurs throughout the various other houses, but the rarity of individuals with witchsight born within House Daerleth has resulted in only weak ties with the Convents of Sorceresses, at least when compared to their support of the more mercantile lesser houses.

Allies and Enemies

Daerleth calls none of the other Great Houses close allies, though it has been known to enter into pacts and trading agreements when the situation has called, something that has been partly responsible for accusations of their being opportunists. More controversial, however, are the constant rumours that Daerleth has very close ties with some of the Shade clans who inhabit the wilder places of the Land of Chill. Some even claim that the ties are not those of an alliance of convenience, but are in fact ties of blood formed between some of the Bloodshades of the clans and Vandelec's unknown siblings in the very early days of Naggaroth. These claims are usually met with ridicule from the house and its followers, who point to the number of Keynlanath caravan guards who seem to go native and join the bandit clans, suggesting that perhaps it is they who have wild blood flowing through their veins while enquiring of the offending individuals if they want to keep their own.

As would be expected, House Daerleth still has not forgiven House Keynlanath for the assassination of Lady Khaeralis, nor are they likely ever to, a situation only exacerbated by their competing roles from Clar

Karond when it comes to moving cargo to the various other cities. Whilst the careful leadership of Falkath - and more recently, Raheik - has prevented this conflict from erupting into open war again, some feel it is only a matter of time before blood runs through the streets of the Tower of Doom.

Among the Lesser Houses it is a very different story, due to the house having so much to offer to one more concerned with base mercantilism rather than honour or glory. Most of Daerleth's troops in the invasion of Ulthuan are drawn from the Lesser Houses and those sworn to them rather than the house itself, especially amongst the officers. This is met with mixed enthusiasm, as it means a contract with Daerleth, whether sealed through blood or with wax, is going to result in a significant military expenditure on behalf of the minor house. Some see it as necessary annoyance that is worth the effort to court the favour of the high house, whilst others see it as a chance to win glory and riches for themselves that would otherwise go to the already rich Great Houses.

Rituals and Practices

Like many of the other houses there are several traditions that have been adopted by members of the house and those who have sworn themselves to it. The most common of these is for an individual setting out to deliver goods to write a letter to themselves at their destination and then burn it the night before they set off. The origins of the practice are not known, despite the fact that it has been widely adopted by Dark Riders aligned to other houses, though it is but one among a myriad of other more personal rituals conducted by individuals hoping to ward off misfortune during the long crossing between the cities.

A less superstitious practice is for most caravans to display three pennants, either on the wagons themselves whilst on the move, or on flagpoles when the caravan has stopped to rest at one of the messenger inns or way stations that are scattered along the more common trade routes. The different colours indicate which direction the caravans are heading and on which trade route, and it is also not uncommon for more renowned caravan masters to display a personal rune on these banners as well. The main purpose of these colours is to recruit dark riders traveling between the various cities, for the caravans appreciate the ability of these swift horsemen to act as outriders and scouts and the messengers appreciate the safety and numbers, in addition to the company and better food that joining with a caravan provides.

Dramatis Personae

- Falkath

Lord Falkath Daerleth is ancient even by elven standards, well into his second millennium of life, and like many of his peers has picked up a few traits that even the most loyal Daerleth supporter would deem 'eccentric'. Foremost among these is his refusal to show his face outside of his inner sanctum within the Daerleth estate in Naggaroth, and when conducting any business outside he keeps his face concealed behind a dark, hooded cloak and a mask in the shape of a laughing skull. This is as much as anyone knows, for none alive have seen the old elf in the flesh for at least a thousand years - not even his own children. This has led to some speculation that Lord Falkath is in fact dead and his children just keep up the charade by donning the distinctive outfit at official occasions, while other rumours claim that the lord has been replaced by one of the Temple's assassins and that even his children are unaware of the switch. Amongst the lowborn of Naggaroth comes the most peculiar of tales, as the secretive lord seems to have found his way into popular folklore as a cautionary tale. Whilst the details differ from time to time, the figure of an aged elf usually in a menial position barely above those of slaves often appears in the tales to offer advice or reveal secrets about an enemy, and upon the conclusion of tale is revealed to be no less than the Lord Daerleth himself.

Falkath himself remains evasive when presented with these accusations, merely commenting that House Daerleth has always been popular amongst the common folk since the time of Khaeralis and any stories that encourage the younger members of society to pay heed to their elders could not be that bad. However, from a figure that was so heavily involved with bringing about the end of the Age of Blood and Banners, what more of an answer could be expected?

- Raheik

Eldest of Falkath's children, Raheik Daerleth is commonly the paranoid lord's representative at the Royal Court, though as he has grudgingly taken to wearing the same mask and cloak as his father, the reason for this is still somewhat unclear. When not in disguise, Raheik is passionate and intense, though far more focused than his younger siblings, as befitting an elf entering their second millennia of life. At other times he can be cold and calculating, which has led to claims that his entire public appearance is a carefully constructed act to hide the fact that he has assumed his father's role and that the real Lord Falkath died long ago.

Raheik is married to Eladhris of Great House Tanasari, cementing the alliance formed by Falkath's original marriage to Sellenia Tanasari. While the pair bear each other no ill will, nor do they feel much (if any) love for one another, as their union is merely one of the many formal affairs that tie the Houses of Naggaroth together and keep the peace. Raheik's true devotion is to the idea of a continued colonisation of Naggaroth and the founding of more cities to the west of the continent.

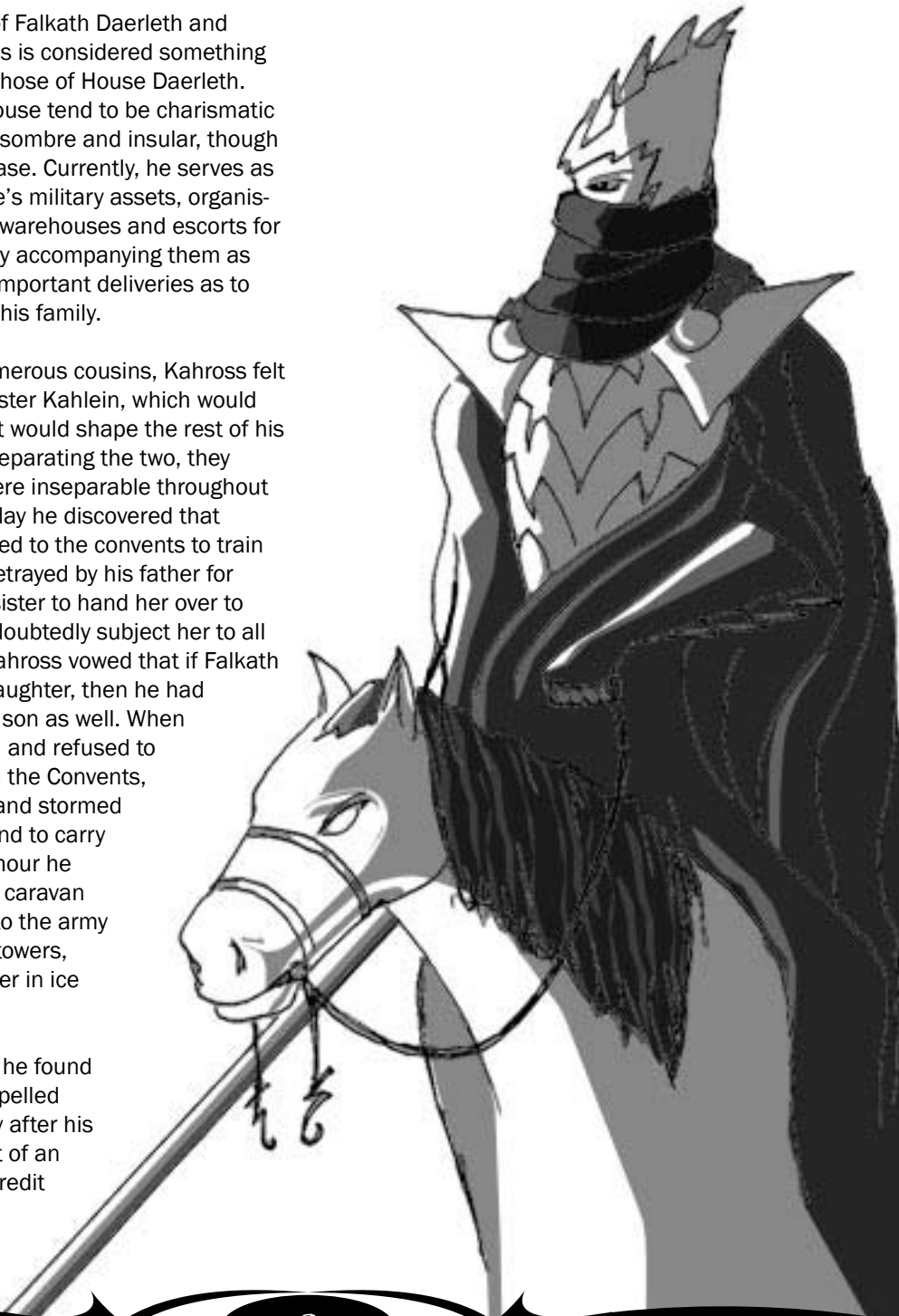
- Kahross

The second eldest child of Falkath Daerleth and Sellenia Tanasari, Kahross is considered something of a black sheep among those of House Daerleth. Whilst members of the house tend to be charismatic and outgoing, Kahross is sombre and insular, though this was not always the case. Currently, he serves as leader of the Great House's military assets, organising guards for Daerleth's warehouses and escorts for the caravans, occasionally accompanying them as much to keep an eye on important deliveries as to get away from the rest of his family.

Of all his siblings and numerous cousins, Kahross felt a special bond with his sister Kahlein, which would lead to the one event that would shape the rest of his life. With only five years separating the two, they became like twins and were inseparable throughout their childhood until the day he discovered that Kahlein had been promised to the convents to train as a sorceress. Feeling betrayed by his father for separating him from his sister to hand her over to strangers, who would undoubtedly subject her to all manner of lethal trials, Kahross vowed that if Falkath was so willing to lose a daughter, then he had better be willing to lose a son as well. When his father merely laughed and refused to break his agreement with the Convents, Kahross flew into a rage and stormed out of the house compound to carry out his threat. Within an hour he was heading north with a caravan after swearing himself into the army as a soldier of the Watchtowers, hoping to quench his anger in ice and blood.

Years later, on his return, he found that Kahlein had been expelled from the Convents shortly after his self imposed exile as part of an elaborate scheme to discredit House Daerleth. By then, however the time in the

north had taken its toll on Kahross. The fiery spark of youth had died fighting demons and barbarians on the edge of the world, and had left naught but his sense of duty. Barely saying more than a few words to the rest of his family, he informed his father of his intentions to take command of the House's caravan guards and left the civilised world behind, and whether it was to seek death or the part of himself that was left behind is still a mystery to all but Kahross himself.



Rebuilding the Six Cities

Building a Druchii Manor House - By General Kala

So your home was burned to the ground during the civil war? Fear not, for His Majesty has bid us to rebuild the Six Cities, and you are fortunate enough to own a bit of property that needs to fortify a stretch of the city walls. So get your slaves on their feet and prepare to build.

Tools and Materials -

You will need:

2 sheets of 20'x30" black core foamcore board (you should have lots of scrap afterward)

1 sheet of black posterboard

- or -

Approximately 10 sheets of black card stock or some other heavy black paper.

Clear plastic for windows. Preferably thin plexiglass, but cut up blister packs will do.

Wood colored paint for the doors

Masking tape

Hot Glue Gun and plenty of glue sticks

X-Acto, box cutter or other sharp hobby knife and a few replacement blades.

Metal straight edge

Measuring tape or ruler

Pencil

Ball point Pen

Cutting surface

Step One -

Start with the basic shape of the main house. Since we are making this to comply with the siege rules, the second floor will need to be four inches up with a two inch ledge, and a set of templates is listed on the following page. You can print this out and use the cut out shapes to copy from or you can mark out the dimensions on the board yourself, but either way, use the straight edge to make sure that you are cutting straight.

A note on cutting foamcore - you will get a much straighter and cleaner cut if you use fresh, sharp blades. Replace your blades as soon as you start getting resistance. Also, instead of forcing the blade to cut all the way through the board, make several cuts through the same line. When cutting corners, try to cut the long edges first and then carefully cut out the corners after the long cuts are made. Follow

Walking into the gates of Naggarond is a breathtaking sight to behold. The homeland of the elves has nothing to compare to the sinister majesty of this place, for while the goodly elves of Ulthuan build their homes for love of peaceful things, in the citadels of the Druchii, each house is a sculpted fortress in miniature. They form a rampart for the giant walls that spiral up to the central towers that are the abodes of their nobility and their terrible king.

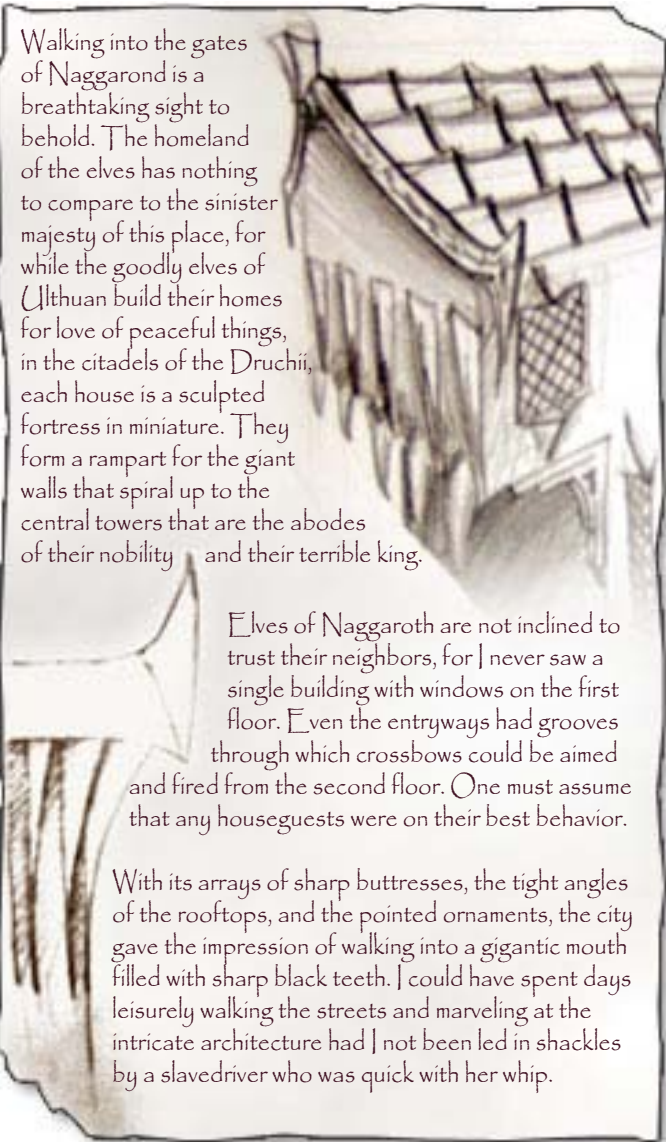
Elves of Naggaroth are not inclined to trust their neighbors, for I never saw a single building with windows on the first floor. Even the entryways had grooves through which crossbows could be aimed and fired from the second floor. One must assume that any houseguests were on their best behavior.

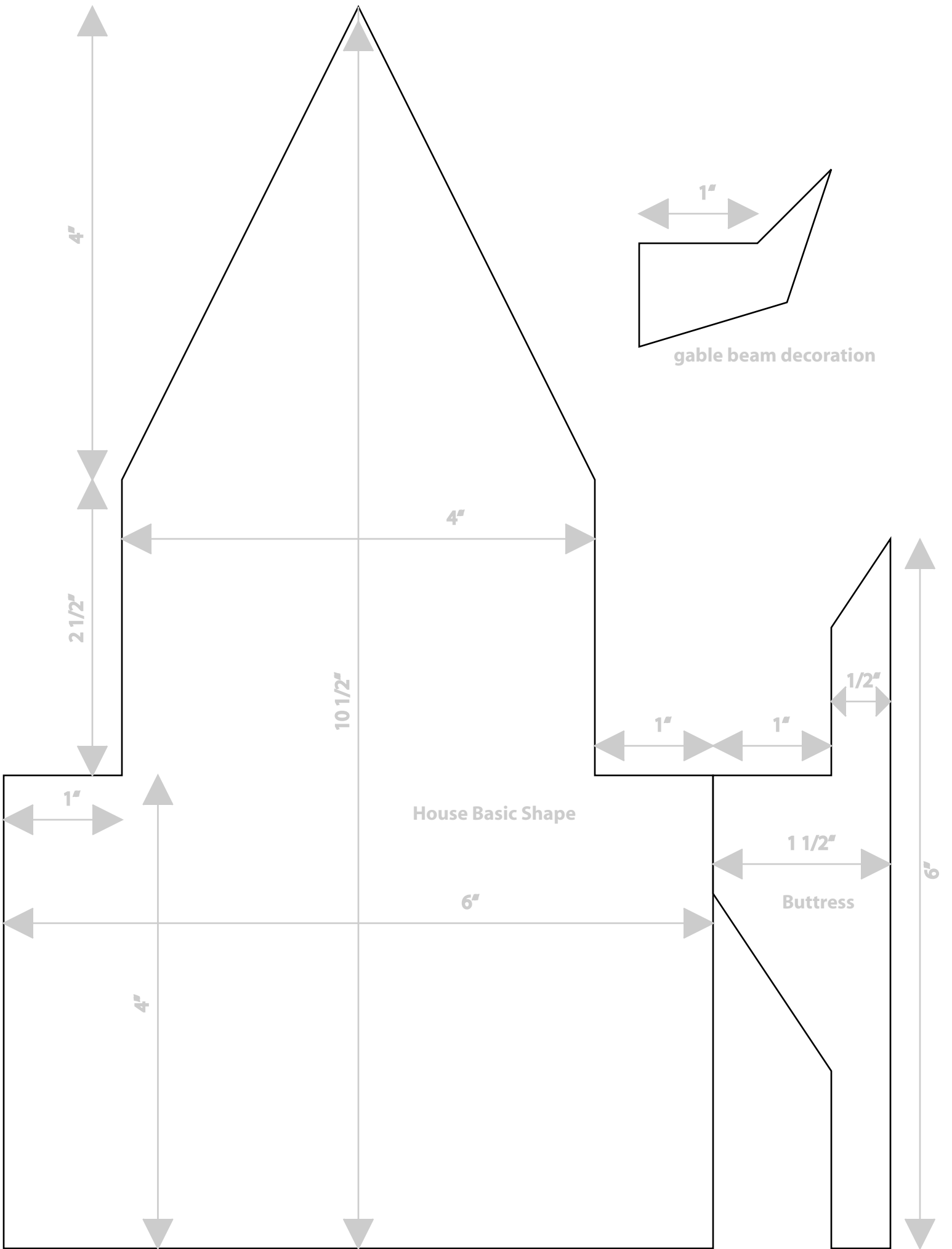
With its arrays of sharp buttresses, the tight angles of the rooftops, and the pointed ornaments, the city gave the impression of walking into a gigantic mouth filled with sharp black teeth. I could have spent days leisurely walking the streets and marveling at the intricate architecture had I not been led in shackles by a slavedriver who was quick with her whip.

these tips and your edges will come out looking much cleaner and your corners sharper.

First we will cut out the front and back. Cut out two of the "house" shapes.

The doors and windows will be difficult to deal with once the structure is put together, so handle those before you start assembling. I chose diamond shapes for the windows, but you can make them any shape that you like. Also, the textured plastic that I used is a cut up piece of fluorescent light cover that you can get at most hardware stores. However, you can just as easily use scrap plexiglass or cut up blister packs.

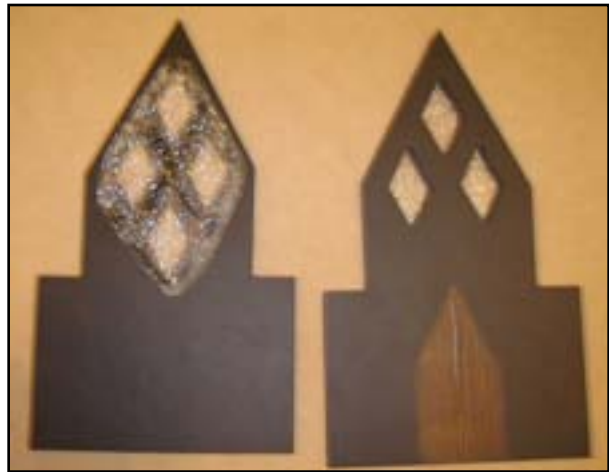




Step 2 -

To make the windows, draw out the shapes of the window panes on both the front and back panels. Cut them out very carefully, and pay particular attention to using the method described for cutting corners. Foamcore will tear in a very messy manner if you are hasty. Then take the hot glue and attach the plastic across the inside of the window panes.

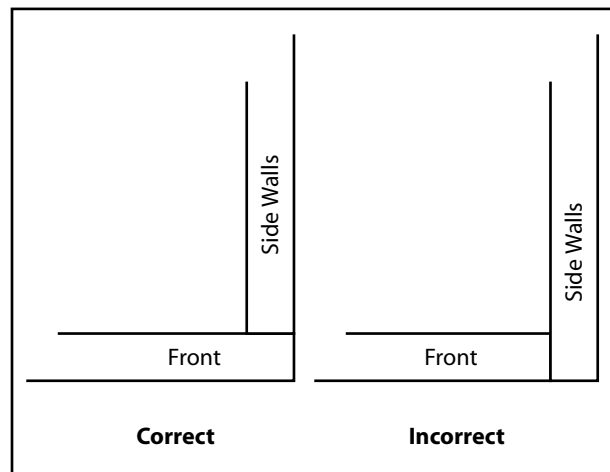
The doors are also simple and open to a lot of artistic license. Mark out the shape of the door on the front, and then use masking tape to mask off the door shape. Press down the tape very lightly so you don't tear the paper that makes up the foamcore surface, then use a ball point pen to mark vertical lines into the door shape to simulate the wood texture. Press down firmly with the ball point and it will sink shallow grooves into the surface of the foamcore, and this will make it easy to drybrush with your wood color.



The front and back of our house, including windows and doors

Step 3 -

Now that you have the front and back of your house ready, it is time to make the walls. Start by measuring and cutting out a 22" section of your foamcore. This represents the width of the house. You can make this any width you want as long as it is uniform. I chose to make mine ten inches wide. Cut this into strips to match the sides of your front and back - two at 4", two at 2 1/2", two for the roof at 4 1/4".



The proper way to attach the walls to the front of the house

At this point if you want to add any windows or doors to the long walls then follow the same instructions as for the front and back. I chose to add two windows and a door to the upper story.

Once you are ready, set aside the roof sections. You are going to hot glue all the walls to the front section and then attach the back. It is important that you are gluing the walls to the inside of the front and not the outside. See the illustration. If you glue the walls wrong at this step, it will make the measurements for the buttresses a little off. Once that is done, then glue on the back with the same method. Then glue in the roof sections. The roof sections will be just a little bit short vertically, but this is OK, as they will be covered up. But it is still best to leave a larger gap at the peak of the roof. It should now be starting to look like a house.



The back of the house with the walls attached

Step 4 -

Next we add the ledges. You will need two strips of foamcore that are two inches wide and exactly two inches longer than the existing structure. Measure the width of the house. If it is 10 ¼" inches like my example, then you will need two strips that are 12 ¼" long. This will extend the ledge out in front and back of the house (so that your crossbow warriors can better guard the entrance and rear). Glue down the ledges with an inch protruding from either side.



Some second-floor windows, a door and a roof.

Step 5 -

The buttresses are going to take a little time and effort, so use the template and cut out several before you start gluing them down. Experiment a little with cutting and extending the inner attachment tab to match up the sizes. You can also experiment with different points and arch shapes, but just remember that you have to make a lot of these! Once you are happy, I recommend starting with the corners. Then lay out all your other buttresses before you glue them to get an idea of the spacing. You may have to trim the inner section to get a nice smooth fit against the ledge, though once you have the spacing laid out, go ahead and glue them down.

Now we are approaching completion. The roof will need shingles and the trademark Druchii "pointy thing" that decorates the gable beam, so start by using the gable beam decoration template to cut two gable beam decorations. You can adjust the pointed decoration to your tastes as long as the 1" section stays the same size. Glue them to the top center of the front and back faces, and this will extend the roof overhang to the same length as the ledge.



A slightly blurry image of our house with walls assembled and the ledges in place.



Starting to place the buttresses. Note that there is one buttress that has a longer inner attachment tab. This one will fit up under the corner of the ledge, where the length is slightly longer. The rest are cut to the exact length of the ledge. I advise that you cut out several buttresses so that you can experiment with the correct measurements before you commit to gluing them.

Step 6 -

Now we are approaching completion. The roof will need shingles and the trademark Druchii "pointy thing" that decorates the gable beam, so start by using the gable beam decoration template to cut two gable beam decorations. You can adjust the pointed decoration to your tastes as long as the 1" section stays the same size. Glue them to the top center of the front and back faces, and this will extend the roof overhang to the same length as the ledge.

Now cut a section of posterboard to the width of the extended roof. This will be the same length as the ledges, so in my example, you will need them to be 12 ¼" wide. Cut one section to 8 ¾" and fold it in half. This should fit nicely over the roof section and come down almost exactly to the top of the upper story wall. Go ahead and glue this down.

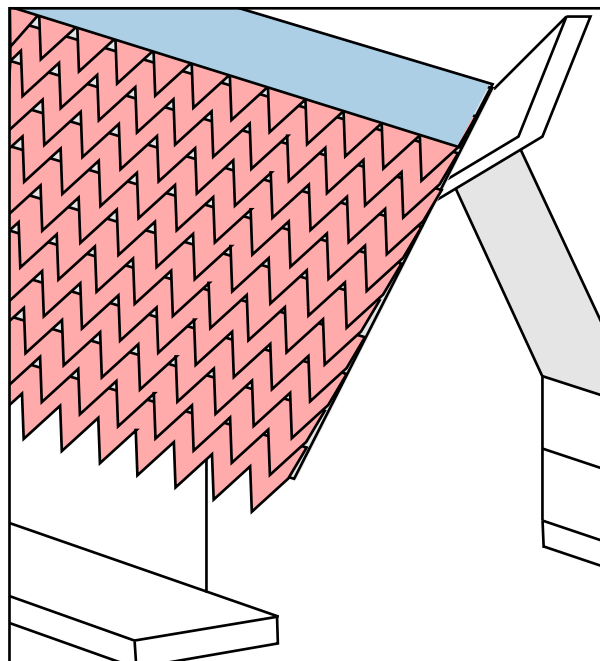
To make the shingles, you can use the rest of the posterboard that you have already cut to width. Cut one edge of the posterboard into a sawtooth design. Then cut this in a strip with about ½" of extra space to adhere it the roof. Curl up the tips of the points before you glue the strip into place. Start from the bottom and work your way up, layering the sawtooth strips above each other, and once you get to the top of the roof on each side, cut yourself another strip of posterboard that is the length of the roof and about 1 ½" wide. Fold this in half and place it on top of the roof to make a clean finish.

Finishing Up -

I used some of the extra posterboard to decorate the windows and doors. At this point you are to the stage where you can add details to your heart's content. Skulls, sinister banners, runes, spikes (spare sprue from the warrior boxes would do well, especially the extra Drannach), rings on the doors, etc. are all good additions. Use your imagination. As with any other project, the more you layer on detail the better your house will look.

Overall, these basic structures and materials can be easily modified to suit your own ideas. Foamcore and posterboard are cheap and easy to manipulate, so don't hesitate to experiment and diversify your design.

So, there you have it. A cozy little den of evil, fit for a Dark Elf.



Detail of how to handle the roof. The grey area in the back represents the piece of posterboard that extends past the edge of the house structure. On top of that are the "shingle" structures (in pink) which are topped by a solid strip folded over the top (in blue) to make a neat, clean finish.



The finished product. Time to go play Mordheim or a Warband siege.

Using Mengil Manhide's Manflayers

by Liger

"He is useful, but undeniably mad. Even in comparison to the Brides of Khaine, he is completely psychotic..."

- Furyon of Clar Karond, discussing Mengil Manhide with Malekith

Mengil Manhide's Manflayers – A unit that inspires terror in its enemies fluffwise, but perhaps it will get a different reaction from opponents on the tabletop, who will usually say either; "Are those Shades?" or "Ah, easy 300VPs for me!" In this article, I hope I can show you why to take them, some tactics to use with them, and perhaps, after trying out a few battles using the Flayers, your regular opponents will start to fear them as they should!

The first thing you'll probably notice about the Manflayers is their high point cost. However, they are certainly worth this high cost, being much better than Shades and also having command, a very useful banner and a noble in their unit. They may seem quite expensive, but their points are justified in what they can do in an army.

They also seem quite like upgraded Shades – but this is only partly true. Perhaps a more accurate definition would be Shades on steroids! They not only fulfill the role of Shades in an army twice as well as Shades themselves can, but are also far more versatile and less vulnerable. Firstly, in shooting prowess they have a higher BS and therefore hit more, but even better – these shots are poisoned, which makes them extremely powerful, as combined with the double shots from the crossbows, their shooting can be extremely effective. On top of this, Mengil has his special weapon, and although it has a short range, it will almost always hit on a 2+, adding some extra damage. The Manflayers also have great weapons, increasing their combat prowess, and since they also have poisoned attacks, when combined with the +2S of a Great Weapon to reduce saves, they become quite powerful in combat. Finally, they have a command, which adds to their combat abilities, and a wonderful banner that makes them far more resilient to shooting than Shades. They also have the flayer special rule and heavy armour – and all of these upgrades are only for about +5 pts/model compared to Shades.

I think that the best unit size for the Manflayers would be at least 8 or 9, and preferably 10. It's true that most scouting units are usually small, for cover, but with the Manflayers, you're paying quite a lot for just having the unit, you might as well pay extra for more troops to make them less vulnerable, and also to make their shooting even more effective. However, if you are strapped for points, then a small unit would still be fine (in combat terms, it wouldn't make much difference in fact), but I think that it's better to go the whole way and get 10, as this gives you a powerful shooting unit as well as making them less vulnerable.

So, now you've got your expensive unit on the table and you really don't want it to be massacred by lucky magic or other annoyances. Manflayers do have some vulnerability, and since they're so expensive, you really don't want to let your opponent kill the unit or even bring it down to half strength. Firstly, normal shooting will not do much against Manflayers, so really you don't need to worry much about it. That doesn't mean that you should go running across the front of missile units, but it means that against most basic shooting (especially at long range) they're not going to be able to hit you very well. The only exception to this rule are tomb king archers – they ignore all penalties, including cover, long range, skirmishing, they always hit on 5s – and they'll usually do better than basic missile troops as a result. However, there is another type of shooting that is deadly, and that is auto-hit weaponry. Ratling guns, Salamanders and Hellblasters will bypass all your penalties and will usually kill most of the unit. Make sure you try to keep out of range or line of sight for these units unless you're feeling very lucky and plan to charge them next turn. This also applies to war-machines such as Organ Guns and Hellblaster Volley Guns so make sure to keep away from them as well.

The other thing that the Manflayers are vulnerable to is magic, and although it is often easier to control due to dispel rolls, it can also damage or even destroy the unit. To protect them from magic, dispelling is really the best way to go, and perhaps even let some other spells pass. Of course, keeping out of the line of sight for a mage is helpful, as is hunting mages down, which the Manflayers can help with. Life magic can be really annoying, especially since you may well be in cover, and also beware of the Wood Elf Lore, as Treelsinging especially can hurt your unit if they are in cover.

Finally, you don't want them to get into bad combats, such as against ranked units, charges from cavalry or really any charges. Beware of Wood Elf units such as dryads and even Wardancers, as well as Jaguar charmed Saurus characters or Alter Wood Elf characters. It may seem like there's a lot to think about to keep them safe, but really, it just comes down to common sense, and keeping them out of dangerous positions.

Now on to how you can use them. There are basically two ways – shooting and combat. They are really too expensive to use solely for march blocking and so on, although naturally you can do that on top of their other jobs. First I'll focus on using them for shooting purposes. Their shooting is rather nasty – in a good way! Their additional BS really helps, and they also have poisoned shots. Also their scouting means that they'll often won't suffer penalties from long range or move and shoot because they'll already be closer to the enemy. This combined makes the Manlayers quite a force to be reckoned with, and more powerful than your average shooting. That is not to say that you should expect them to kill a lot, but concentrated fire on a single unit can easily take it out of the game. However, I think your best bet is to go against something that is killed easily. Fast cavalry or archers are often a good choice. Also, don't be afraid to go against higher toughness things, as long as they are generally unarmoured. 9 flayers will cause on average 4 wounds on a Giant, or about 4 wounds on an Ogre sized unit, just during 1 shooting round!

They are excellent for taking out large, expensive, and vulnerable monsters or units. Other shooting could be at large, weaker units such as Gnoblar or Goblins, where you should do enough wounds to knock off a rank or two and even cause a few panic checks. Also, with their higher ballistic skill, hitting skirmishers are not out of the question. 3-4 wounds should easily be caused (this can be higher against skinks). Then finally, there are war machines. Randomisation is annoying, but with the volume of shooting, it's very possible to kill the crew quickly. Against a T3 unarmoured crew, 18 shots should kill 2 of them on average - that's enough to cripple it. A word should also be said about Mengil's crossbow-pistol. While it's nice, it's still not that powerful, and its short range makes it far less useful. So, when to shoot? Well, firstly, when you're out of range for combat – obviously. Also, use it when combat would take you out of position or where you would obviously lose the combat. The Manlayers' shooting is good, and it can help you, but combat is really where they can really be harsh, so often that's the better choice.

Combat is often the key to why they are such a good unit. Why? Well, firstly, poisoned attacks are nice, secondly Great Weapons mean a nice high strength, thirdly they have a Noble within their midst, and fourthly – and perhaps most important of all, they have their Flayer rule. Then again, they don't have any ranks, nor can they negate enemy ranks, and the only static CR they have is a standard. Therefore, it would of course be suicide to send them into the front of a ranked unit. Hitting the flank is much better, especially for cavalry, while the rear is also a good choice. They are quite potent at close-quarters combat with S5 poisoned attacks. They should kill a few and then add at least 2 for static CR (standard and flank). However, usually a fully ranked up unit would be able to take this, and then possibly hit back harder next turn. Therefore, they should only combat ranked units in the later stages of the game in conjunction with another unit, and preferably a rank breaker. However, there are lots of other possibilities, such as fast cavalry who will easily fall to you, or war machines, who will also die easily. Skirmishers are an option too, as are heavy cavalry – since they will usually have a maximum of 2 ranks, and often 1. The armour of the cavalry is reduced, and without their lances, most attacks back (if any) will be far less threatening. Therefore, you need to make the choice of a flank charge with not as many models in contact but fewer or no attacks back, or a rear charge with an additional +1 CR, as well as more of your models in contact, but suffering more attacks back. Usually, it will come down to how the units are positioned, but sometimes you will need to make that choice, and I think it generally depends on whether they are weaker like Silver Helms or stronger like Chosen Chaos Knights.

One of the best things about the Manlayers is their flaying rule. This means that for every unit you destroy or break, you get 100VPs extra. Enemy RBTs are now worth 200pts each for killing them, and quickly the VPs mount up. By destroying or even just breaking 3 weak, inexpensive units you have easily exceeded the Manlayer unit's own cost. Basically, don't feel that you need to go after large or expensive units with them – they are perfect for killing small, weaker units and still getting lots of points. Anything from a Goblin bolt thrower to a Chaos knight unit could be a potential target (yes, even Chaos Knights can be targets – possibly losing by 5 if hit in the flank and outnumbered by the end of combat). Just make sure that the Manlayers are always doing something every turn, be it shooting or combat, or at least preparing for this.

Just to finish off, let's go through some uses in general. There are many different types of units that the Manflayers can counter and kill. They make outstanding war machine and mage hunters, gaining extra victory points for doing the same job usually assigned to Shades or Harpies. Anything with low armor should be threatened by their shooting, while even the toughest things with high saves aren't safe in combat! They can counter irritating fast cavalry, too, as well as other weaker skirmisher units, getting nice extra VPs for those cheap units. If you're feeling lucky, go against a unit of knights (on average, you should cause a wound even against chosen knights, therefore probably winning by 3 (flank, wound, standard and outnumber vs. standard), which isn't bad if you're desperate – but don't try it normally, in case you fail to cause a wound and lose the unit! Naturally, keep them away from auto-hit weaponry, and fast skirmishers and characters, but this

shouldn't limit you too much. They are a very versatile unit, and can be used effectively against any army.

So, I advise you to try the Manflayers out if you haven't already. They are a great unit with some nice rules, and provide something fresh and new to the Druchii list. They will have a use against any opposing army, and may well be a game-winning factor. They aren't just super-Shades, nor skirmishing Executioners, but a really unique unit that has a myriad of uses and is extremely versatile. I hope this article has given you an insight into the way that the Manflayers work, and I also hope that you will try them out some time for a bit of fun and a new challenge with new rewards! Hopefully this article has been beneficial to you, and now all that remains is for you to go out into the Old World and terrorise the enemy with them! Happy playing!



The History of the War of Flesh and Blood

Part 1 - By Jeffleong13, General Kala, Voodoomaster, and Darkprincess

In the Beginning

Since the Sundering, Lord Malekith has ruled the Druchii with an iron hand and ever has he fomented the continual strife within his domain. He knows that only through struggle and conflict can the true power of his people be forged into the weapon that will one day reclaim their ancient homeland. As always, the dread lord of Naggaroth watched as his people schemed, and smiled as they plotted against one another. With his forces readying to move on Ulthuan once again, Malekith knew that his people needed to a true test to harden them for the coming campaign ... so he left his children to their plans.

Long have both the followers of Khaine and the followers of Slaanesh existed within Druchii society. One side flaunted the supremacy of their beliefs while the other met in secret; one worshipped in blood-soaked temples while the other held its rites in dank catacombs and secret places. The current order of the time was enforced by a secret war of cloak and dagger, a battle in the shadows of the great cities. But great upheaval tends to upset the current order, and the world was ready for just such time.

This cataclysm was the so called "Storm of Chaos" that swept down from the north to wreak havoc on the pitiful principalities of man. The great powers of the Chaos Wastes rode a tide of devastation and destruction into the heart of the human empire, nearly ripping out its throat before foundering before the walls of the City of Wolves.

Seeing the chaos unfolding, Lady Morathi offered to send an expedition to Lustria, claiming to seek magical artifacts to help her son. Having long since lost supremacy over the Temple of Khaine to her hated rival Hellebron, Morathi turned back to an old master ... perhaps one whose service she had never left. With the blessing of Slaanesh at her call, she brought together the Cult of Slaanesh among the Druchii and the human followers of the Dark Prince into a single force. Adding the daemonic servants of her sinister master to her newfound army, Morathi marched on Lustria. Although her forces were unable to breach any of the major temple cities of the Old Ones, they did succeed in obtaining numerous items of great power. As word began to filter back home,



the success of the venture was talked of far and wide. In a society based on strength, success breeds power, and the Cult's power was finally on the rise.

By the time Lady Morathi returned from her Lustrian adventure, the Cult of Slaanesh was experiencing a tremendous resurgence, as Druchii everywhere sought to tie themselves to the perceived success of Morathi's forces. The Cult began to grow beyond its ability to remain hidden, and some reports even point to brazen displays of Cult associations and potentially even minor Cult rituals performed in public places. Clashes between Cult followers and Temple loyalists also became more common and increasingly bloody during this period.

The Temple of Khaine was slow to recognize the return of the Cult to the land of chill. Over the centuries they had managed to push the worship of Slaanesh to the very fringes of Druchii society. And here they thought it would stay, forever subjugated to the power of the Brides of Khaine. When Morathi proposed the expedition to Lustria, Hellebron scoffed, convinced of the failure of any effort the Temple of Khaine did not support. It is rumored that she welcomed the opportunity – that she felt it would once and for all prove the power of her lord Khaine as the soft Cultists floundered in the unforgiving jungles of the Southlands.

Even after the initial reports of the Cult's success, the Temple seemed confident that the Lizardmen would do their work for them. It was not until Morathi's return that Hellebron appeared to fully realize the impact that the Cult's well-publicized successes had had on the Dark Elves. By the time she realized how much ground the Cult had gained, it was too late, the Cult was already growing at a heretofore unheard of pace.

With the Cult's following growing within our lands and the battle-tested armies of the Cult returning to Naggarond, the Temple began to act. Vicious pogroms were launched across the land as the followers of Khaine lashed out in the only way they understood. This time, however, the Cult was ready, and not willing to simply back down.

The fire was lit, and the cauldron began to simmer. It would soon boil over into the War of Flesh and Blood.

The First Blows are Struck

It is uncertain to whom the credit belongs for first blood in the civil war. Each side claims righteous revenge for murderous wrongs. What little that is known points to an almost spontaneous eruption of violence between the two factions. The seeds of conflict were sown long before the actual war began. But the outbreak of war can be traced to two battle-fronts that became the major theaters of combat - Ghgrond and the Southern Reaches.

Though Ghgrond was granted to House Kalanth during the formation of Naggaroth, it was the indisputable seat of power for the Temple of Khaine. House Kalanth may have held jurisdiction and controlled the City Guard, but almost every other aspect of life in Ghgrond was controlled by the Temple. Even the Tower of Ghgrond, the great scrying chamber where the Sorceress Convents kept their fingers on the magical

pulse of the world, barely held their Khainite rivals in check with a huge ransom of slaves for the altars.

It was from Ghgrond that the Temple pulled every string that it had attached to life in Naggaroth. Culling of the weak and meddling in the affairs of state were all orchestrated from the Great Temple by Crone Hellebron and her minions. Thus it was here that the Cult of Slaanesh decided to strike a symbolic blow in an attempt to topple the rule of Khaine.

The long hidden Bel'Kheriour sect finally revealed itself. In a daring infiltration raid of the Great Temple the Cultists attempted to capture the first true Cauldron of Blood. Though thwarted, the Khainites were shocked into the realization that the Cult even permeated the social strata of their stronghold.

Simultaneously, the Tower of Ghgrond was also targeted in an attempt to harness its prophetic powers. The near success of this raid pushed the Convents into an unsettling conclusion. The Convents had to form an alliance with the Temple of Khaine in order to fend off the Cult.

Meanwhile in the Southern Reaches, Morathi's personal Cult of Slaanesh invasion force was returning from ransacking lost Lustrian temples. Though they had met with only moderate success, their forces were not heavily depleted. This was an army to be reckoned with, and the Temple knew full well the consequences of allowing this force into Naggaroth. Such a force would threaten the religious hegemony that the Temple had long enjoyed over the Druchii nation. Furthermore, the Temple clearly had designs on the hoard of artifacts that Morathi's troops had stolen from the temple-crypts of the Old Ones.

Thus another strange alliance was formed with the Lizardmen of Lustria. The Temple would enlist their aid in thwarting this advancing army and retrieving the artifacts. However, no mention was made of actually returning the artifacts to the Lizardmen. Such is the consequence of lesser creatures that are foolish enough to make casual deals with Druchii.



The Cult army was ambushed by a combined strike of the Khainite forces and a Lizardman warhost as they crossed the northern borders of Lustrian territory in the hills of Hlixli-Oqua'a. Despite the fact that the small scale raids in Ghrond occurred almost simultaneously, this attack is considered to be the first official battle in the War of Flesh and Blood. Though losses were slight on all sides, the Cult forces halted their march and prepared to attempt a breakthrough of the Khanite cordon.

It was at this time that scouts from both sides noticed the arrival of fleets of ghost ships with undead crew. The living dead being an abomination to even the bloodthirsty Khanites and depraved Cultists, both sides were quick to assign blame to the other. But the dead had their own cryptic plans.

Wars Within Wars

Though the great conflict between the followers of Slaanesh and Khaine hinged on these two fronts, they were far from the only strife that occurred during the war. It was an easy step to deduce that the war would preoccupy the Druchii. Plans were formulated by the lesser races of the world to extract a toll on the Dark Elves of Naggaroth.

Not the least of these schemes was the nefarious plan hatched by the Asur. Ever quick in their attempts to subjugate the Druchii, the High Elves mobilized into action the moment that they became aware of the civil war. But the extent of the Asur attacks would have been limited to raids, attrition and sabotage had it not been for the mind of Prince Enthardon Aesenar. It was he who proposed the building of a new fortification in the Blackspine Mountains. Called the 6th Gate of Arnheim, it would be built like the five massive gates that seal off the interior of Ulthuan. Positioned within the Shadow Rift, this gate would be a counter-fortification for the great Wrath Gate of the Druchii. The Wrath Gate has long secured the Druchii access to the Underway and had long been the source of many raids on the rich lands surrounding Arnheim. The 6th Gate would curb these Druchii raids while allowing the Asur to build up forces for serious assaults into the heart of Dark Elf territory. It took little convincing for the Asur council to authorize the full use of armies and construction materials.

Word of the blossoming civil war within Karond Kar had made its way down into the slave pens. A large regiment of Cult loyalists returning from Lustria by sea had been denied entrance to the city. Their encampment on the plains surrounding the city

hindered commerce and the Slavemasters were becoming worried. This drew their attention away from their stock, who were quick to capitalize on the fact. Record numbers of slaves escaped during this period and slave rebellions began to brew.

To the North, the armies of Chaos sensed a weakness. Awareness of the Cult strengthened their malevolent power and served to turn attention away from the demoralizing losses of the failed Storm of Chaos invasion. A victory for Slaanesh in Naggaroth would mean a victory for all of Chaos. Thus the dark gods sent their mortal worshippers and daemonic legions to breach the Watchtowers that had thwarted them for millennia. Messages were sent out across the Chaos Wastes. In Honor of the sacred number of Slaanesh, six epic champions were called forth to lead the armies of Chaos and drive a wedge into to the heart of Naggaroth.

Fury Unleashed

By the end of the first week, skirmishing street fights in Ghrond had escalated into full scale battles. News of the ambushes on the army returning from Lustria prompted the Cult of Slaanesh to formally declare open war on the Temple of Khaine. Morathi then appointed Veloran Erathai, Anointed of Slaanesh, to take command of the assault. Druchii worshippers of Slaanesh flock to his banner and soon a new Cult army was marching on Ghrond.

While this new force was marshalling, the first of the Champions of Chaos had arrived at the Watchtowers. The Exalted Daemon Urik'Tharin'ahk led the first Slaaneshi warbands against the Watchtower Spire of Malice. The daemonic forces were initially repulsed, but it was only a reprieve. Reinforcements for the Druchii were tied up at Ghrond, while daemons and mortal worshippers of the Dark Prince joined ranks with the horde of Urik'Tharin'ahk. In hindsight it becomes clear that the assault on the Spire of Malice was designed to punch through the defensive line of the Watchtowers. Should the tower be consecrated to Slaanesh, a fresh tide of daemons could be sent to reinforce the Cult forces at Ghrond.

In the Southern Reaches, the Lizardmen began to reach the higher elevations in their pursuit of the Cult forces. Temperatures dropped as they ascended from the steaming jungles into the southern foothills of the Blackspines. This slowed the smaller of the cold-blooded beasts and pursuit of the Cult forces slipped off.

The Undead were also driven off by the forces of Slaanesh. Vampire Lord Talmon Vail marched an undead host in an attempt to pin the Cult forces in a narrow valley, but was slain by the Anointed Al'Kaith. Meanwhile, forces of the Temple begin to muster for their attacks on the Cult at a series of small Druchii settlements north of the jungle forests. Their intent - to delay the Cult long enough for the Lizardmen to take them from behind. But for the time it seemed the Cult advance was unstoppable.

In Arnheim, news had arrived that the Phoenix King had not only approved the approved the construction of the 6th Gate, but had sent the Lothorn Sea Guard to assist in the defense of the construction site. With the influx of troops and a huge boost to morale, the Asur launched a an unprecedented full scale assault on the Wrath Gate. The Druchii were caught unaware and the fortifications of the Wrath Gate were overtaken before a proper defense could be mounted. Shandiar Aminaiith, Loremaster of Artifacts, was then sent to permanently disenchant the Wrath Gate wards and to lock them from the Arnheim side. If this could be accomplished, the hated enemy would have access to the Underworld Sea and the heart of Naggaroth.

However, fortune had not entirely abandoned the Druchii. Two seemingly unrelated events combined to represent the sole hope for retaking the Wrath Gate.

Kala Kodai Velari, a Highborn General in the standing defense force, had foreseen the potential for an Asur backlash during the opening maneuvers of the war. As a precaution, she had ordered large numbers of the troops under her command into the mountain passes surrounding the Wrath Gate in order to purge them. Kala herself and a significant portion of her army, the Black Lotus Brigade, occupied Maibd pass to the south, while Duke Tularc occupied Dictator Pass to the north with a contingent from Har Ganeth. This represented a considerable army that had been left unscathed by the Asur overrun.

Soon after the initial invasion, Shade Lord Goran Vile discovered a previously unknown tunnel that allowed access from Maibd Pass to the valley approach to the Wrath Gate. Dubbed Scorpion Crawl, this tunnel allowed Goran Vile to assassinate Shandiar Aminaiith before he could reach the gate. Thus the permanent loss of the Wrath Gate was averted.

A counterattack was formulated as soon as news of Scorpion Crawl reached Kala at her bivouac beneath Blade Peak.

Brother Against Brother

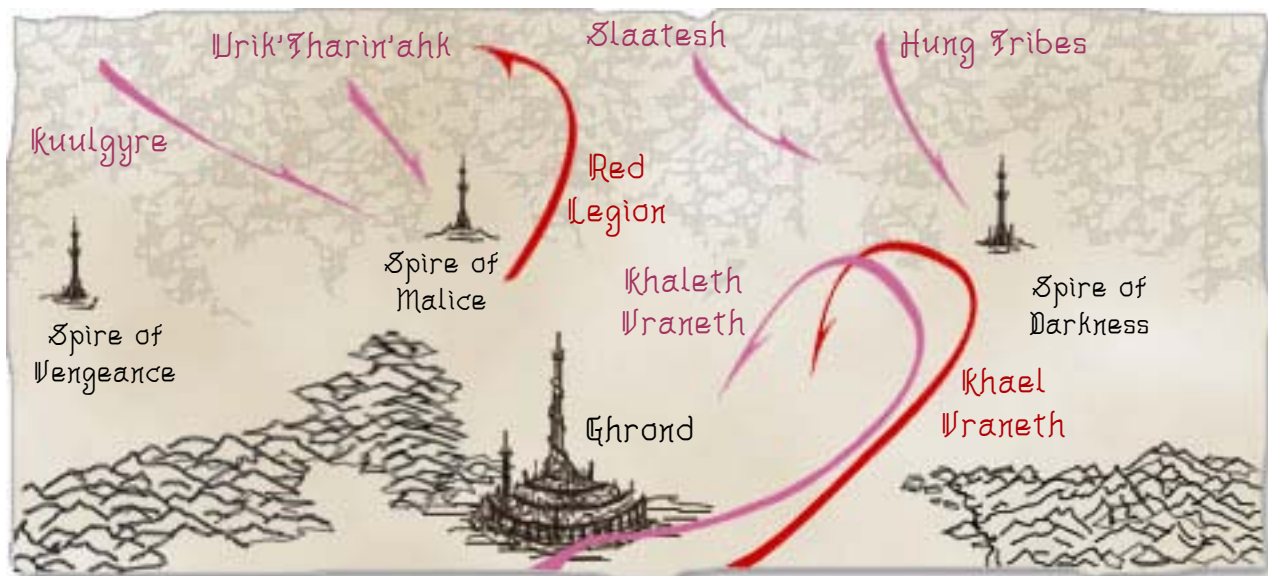
The Druchii have never been a peaceful people, and rightly so. Any society engineered by the sublime wisdom of Malekith would necessarily reserve the prize of life only for those who prove themselves to be deserving. Yet in the civil war, the Great Houses of Naggaroth were divided in unusually bitter and bloody ways. Loyalties to the Cult and the Temple were placed in opposition to the normally strong family ties of the Druchii.

Foremost among examples of these conflicts is that of the House of Vraneth. The patriarch of this family, the infamous Lord Vraneth the Cruel, still fights alongside His Majesty in Ulthuan to this day. In his absence, his sons, Khael and Khaeth, were trusted with the reigns of one of the most powerful Executioner clans in Har Ganeth.

Historically, House Vraneth and the Executioner clans have a history of devotion to Khaine. But the return of the Cult army prompted Khaeth Vraneth to finally reveal his secret, long-held loyalties to Morathi and Slaanesh. Marching his troops through Ghrond still flying the banner of House Vraneth, he dismissed orders from High Priestess Marnei Sarelle to deploy in the defense of the Temple of Khaine. Instead he marched north, claiming to prioritize the defense of the Watchtower Spire of Darkness.

This blatant disregard of orders and deceitful display of the Vraneth family crest sends ripples of outrage through the family, whose devotion to the Temple was previously unquestioned. Khael Vraneth received word of his brother's betrayal and the affront to his family's name. He mustered his own troops and marched to the Watchtowers, vowing a blood vendetta against his own brother.

But this was far from the only display of familial malice in Ghrond. By this point the City Guard was utterly powerless to stop the full forces of both the Temple and the Cult. When Veloran Erathai rallied Cult troops through the outer city, High Priestess Sarelle responded by calling on all Khainite loyalists to quell the insurrection. A spiral of violence swept the city as Houses split asunder in rage. Priestess Nailu marched at the forefront of the Temple forces and killed her sister, formerly a Sorceress of the Convent. The entire House Esharim, divided evenly between the Cult and the Temple, were wiped out in a wave of assassinations. Manors of families loyal to the Temple were burned to the ground by their own Cultist children. Thus began the razing of Ghrond.



Troop movements around the Watchtowers during the first weeks of the war

The Watchtowers Are Shaken

Two weeks into the war the second Champion of Chaos makes his intentions known. Lord Kuulgyre approached with a much heavier force than the daemonic warbands of Urik'Tharin'ahk.

His opening move was to lead another assault on the Spire of Malice. Having a massive force available to him offset the difficulty of besieging a Watchtower. However, outnumbering the defenders two to one was not enough to prevent a clever counterattack. While Kuulgyre focused intently on the Watchtower, the Druchii took advantage of his tight concentration of troops and swept around the lines of the Chaos forces to force a second front. This also allowed the Red Legion an opening to outmaneuver the army of Urik'Tharin'ahk as they prepared to join in with Kuulgyre's attack. The daemonic forces are scattered and Urik'Tharin'ahk is sent fleeing and wounded into the wastes. But daemons are resilient when they are within the realm of the Chaos Gods. Urik'Tharin'ahk quickly began to marshal strength and replenish his lost daemonic troops from the aether.

Although this represented a tactical victory for the Druchii, it was a strategic loss. Lord Kuulgyre's siege force sustained heavy damage, but the Spire of Malice was taken. As the Red Legion and the Druchii Watchtower garrison cut them off from the Chaos Wastes, they consolidated their hold in the Spire over the next few days. Preparations were made for the ritual that would consecrate the tower in the name of

Slaatesh. Completion of this consecration ritual would have granted supernatural protection to Kuulgyre and his minions and allow them to tap into more sorcerous power from the Dark Prince. Supply lines from the Chaos Wastes would have been rendered irrelevant.

More bad news for the Druchii arrived with advance scouts from the Chaos Wastes. In the third week of the war the third Champion of Chaos was en route.

The Shaggoth Slaatesh was force-marching a horde of Beastmen to the Spire of Darkness. Had the Shaggoth managed to join forces with those of Khaeleth Vraneth, they might have easily been able to sweep down into Naggaroth while the Red Legion and the Watchtower garrisons were tied up with the other Chaos attacks.

But by the third week, Khaeleth Vraneth's army was waiting idle at the northern borders. Despite the forced march, Slaatesh the Beastmen were proving difficult to drive

With his brother Khael quick on his heels, Khaeleth turned his army west in an attempt to circle back to Ghrohd. His minions coerced the Hung tribe to sneak attack the Spire of Darkness just as Khael Vraneth had arrived and was making camp. Moniath, Lord of the Watchtower, managed to light an alarm beacon to warn of the assault. Between the two Druchii forces the Hung horde is easily thwarted. But Khael Vraneth finds out too late that the attack is a diversion. His Cultist brother had eluded him.

Reclaiming the Wrath Gate

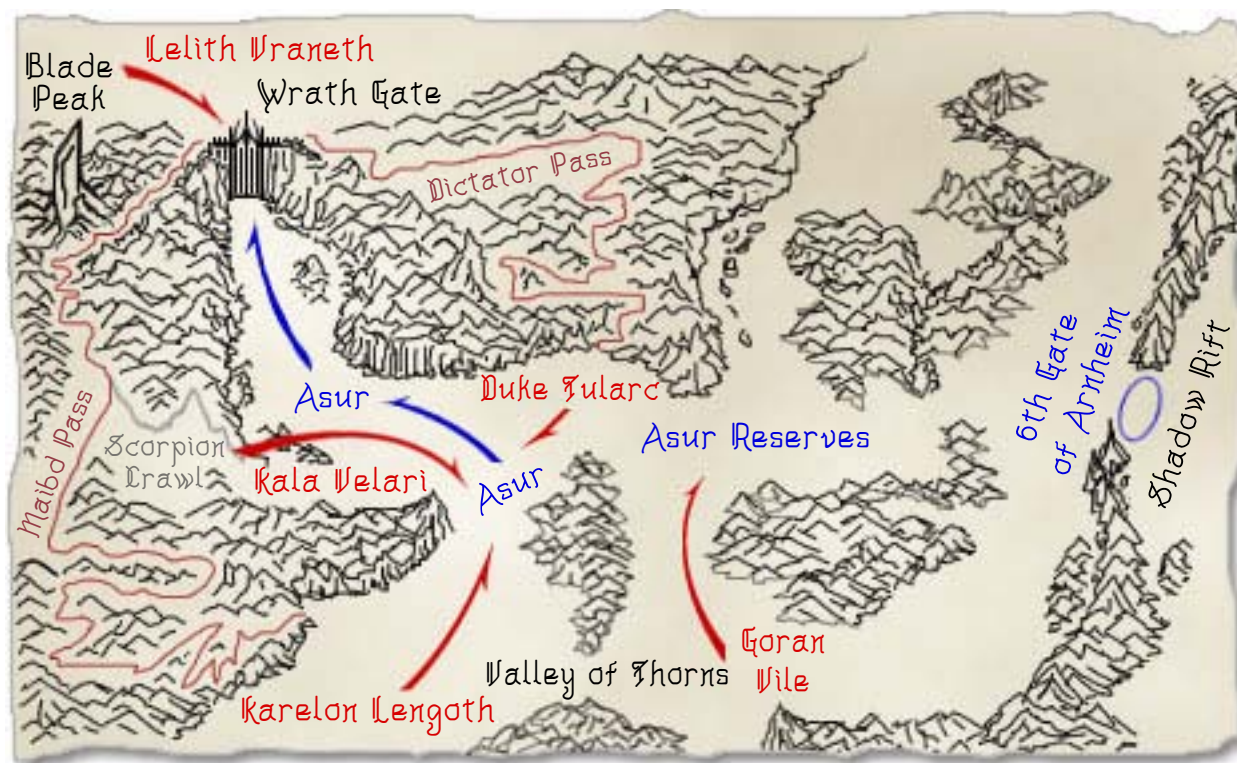
After the defeat at the Wrath gate, the Druchii campaign to repulse the Asur crystallized under the command of the ranking officer, General Kala. Mutual hatred of the Asur and her strict secular policy managed to forge an uneasy alliance between the Cult and Temple forces under her command. Several significant armies that were neutral in the civil war also swear allegiance to Kala's banner. This proved to be fortunate, because the plan devised to retake the Wrath Gate was breathtaking in its complexity and level of coordination.

The crux of the plan relied on the complacency of the Asur. Secure in their victory and superior numbers, they had overextended their forces to reach the Wrath Gate. Now a series of Asur encampments extended throughout the canyons leading from the Shadow Rift to the gate itself.

With the first strike, Shade Lord Goran Vile occupied the Asur closest to the Shadow Rift with a series of guerilla strikes. This would serve to keep the Lothorn reserves at the 6th Gate construction site from reinforcing the others. Colonel Karelon Lengoth, commanding the forces of House Melphular, then led an assault from the south, drawing in Asur troops

from the mouth of Dictator Pass and the Tair Og approach to the Wrath Gate. Once engaged, Duke Tularc's army emerged from Dictator Pass as Kala's Black Lotus Brigade attacked from the Scorpion Crawl. This two-pronged assault succeeded in demolishing the heart of the Asur siege force. General Kala and Duke Tularc then drove the remnants of the Asur army toward the Wrath Gate with Karelon Lengoth acting as a rearguard. The coup de grace was then delivered in concert with the precision plan. The army of Lelith Vraneth, sister of Krael Vraneth, arrived beneath the Wrath Gate and struck the Asur from behind just as they prepared to face Kala and Tularc's counter-siege. Three weeks after being overrun by the High Elves, the Wrath Gate was again under Druchii control. General Kala celebrates by dousing captured Ellyrian Steeds in oil, setting them on fire, and sending the burning horses stampeding into the Asur camps.

With the loss of the Wrath Gate and the anguish of the horse incident, the Asur returned their focus to their original mission. With Goran Vile still striking at targets of opportunity, the Asur opted to consolidate around the 6th Gate construction site. With the burden of occupying the Wrath Gate lifted, the Asur materials and manpower were concentrated on laying the foundations of the 6th Gate of Arnheim.



The retaking of the Wrath Gate

Halt of the Southern March

As the situation in Naggaroth became more volatile, both the Cult and the Temple knew that the advance of the Cult army from the Southern Reaches was critical. At first, the forces of the Khainites were limited to hit-and-run raids and assassinations. But the effectiveness of these strikes were amplified by Lizardmen Skinks guiding them through the dense undergrowth to their targets.

The Cult hordes were hindered as they were forced to assume defensive positions. Concerned by the delay, Morathi decided to send an emissary to motivate the troops. Thus Dhearanna Vathiri, leader of the Cult faction in Clar Karond, departed in the dead of night to ride south at full spur.

The Temple had also dispatched an emissary of its own. Shalix, Hag Queen of Hag Graef, was already marching re-enforcements to thwart the advance. Her arrival ahead of Vathiri managed to cut the forces of Slaanesh off from their leaders in the north. Furthermore, the authority of a Hag Queen could formalize a full alliance with the Children of the Old Ones. The first truly combined Lizardman/Dark Elf assaults were launched.

But Khaine plays no favorites, even with his brides. Shalix herself was killed in her first offensive. Despite causing huge casualties, breaches formed in the battle line. Dhearanna Vathiri managed to slip past a cordon of Saurus and join the Cult command. United beneath a single, charismatic leader, the Cult was revitalized. Counterattacks caused enough damage to allow a few armies to punch through the Temple lines.

Preeminent among these breakaway armies was that of Lord Democles. Cult loyalists at the time viewed him as a hero and role model. Tales of his devotion to Morathi and Slaanesh were sung around Cult campfires. But after the end of the war it became known that his single-minded advance was dedicated to a much more personal objective - his obsessive pursuit of his former lover, the Sorceress Xaniphera. She had abandoned him to follow her own goals, slipping through to the north as the first clashes of the war erupted.

The Undead also forced a breakaway army. However, it was not according to the plan of Morathi or Vathiri. The Vampire Lord Talmon Vail had again risen, and again Al'Kaith the Anointed diverted his forces to

deal with this reawakened menace without orders. For the greater part of the first month of the war, Al'Kaith dedicated his forces to crushing this Vampire. It remains unknown to this day what plans Talmon Vail had for the shores of Naggaroth. But had Al'Kaith remained in formation with the main Cult army, the out come of the battle for the Southern Reaches may well have had a different outcome.

Cycle of Vengeance

On the 22nd day of the war, Veloran Erathai launched a massive offensive against the Temple garrison in Ghrond. The week-long battle solidified Ghrond as the primary focus of the civil war. All other Cult/Temple conflicts, from the Southern Reaches to the Watchtowers, became mere reinforcement or defense of Ghrond by proxy. It was here that the outcome of the war would be decided.

In the shadow of the walls of Ghrond, the family feud of House Vraneth played out its final act. Khael Vraneth, having pursued his brother relentlessly, had finally caught up to Khaeth's army. With the battle raging around them, Khaeth and Khael engaged in single combat. Knowing the heart of this brother, Khaeth applied all his newfound guile in an effort to tempt his brother to the cause of Slaanesh. But despite being nearly mortally wounded Khael Vraneth struck back with the precision of generations of Executioner Lords. Khaeth Vraneth, the turncoat of House Vraneth and Champion of Slaanesh, would leave the field without his head. This fact was noticed by very important eyes.

In the meantime, the forces of High Priestess Marnei Sarelle had been pressed back from the outer city walls. Ghrond was in complete disarray as Cultists clashed with Temple troops and the City Guard fought with both in a desperate and futile attempt to restore order. The inner city still held the Great Temple and the Tower of Ghrond relatively secure. But the outer city had degenerated into a lawless no-mans-land. Mayhem ruled the streets of Ghrond.

A few days later, Khael Vraneth simply and amazingly marched a significant part of his army to the western gate of the inner city. Through a clever series of ruses, he had managed to draw off the majority of the Cultist forces in his path. The addition of his forces nearly doubled the number of Khainite troops in Ghrond. He was appointed Protector of Khaine and Lord General of the Armies of Ghrond by no less than Crone Hellebron herself.

A celebration in his honor was declared by Marnei Sarelle. But in the 6th hour of this celebration, Veloran Erathai led a team of elite Slaaneshi troops and a pack of daemonettes to disrupt the festivities. Marnei Sarelle was slain on the altar of the Great Temple. Erathai and his minions then vanished into the night, mocking the Temple faithful.

Hellebron is infuriated by this new insult. The dawn counteroffensive of her new Lord General is brutal and swift. The lower city is wiped clean of every living soul, regardless of their faith. The forces of Veloran Erathai, overconfident from the previous night's success, were taken aback. The Cult army was driven from the outer city and forced to fall back to the areas outside the city walls. Khael Vraneth then vowed to execute a Sorceress of the Cult at sunrise and sunset of each day until the war was at an end. A new vendetta had been forged for Khael Vraneth. This act was also noticed by other very important eyes.

Sealing the Gate

The magic seals that had made the Wrath Gate impenetrable were ruptured. Convent Sorceresses concluded that only a complicated series of blood rituals could properly re-enchant the wards. The rituals planned would require for the gates to remain closed for the duration, unbroken concentration, and vast amounts of sacrificial victims bound in excruciating pain. Asur captives were quickly volunteered. What's more, these rituals would take a week or longer, depending on the winds of magic. But the Asur mages of Arnhiem also surmised the steps that would be taken to re-enchant the gates and how delicate spells are easy to disrupt and ruin.

On the 29th day of the war, the beloved Asur Prince Regulus mustered a force of Silver Helm cavalry, accompanied by human mercenaries and a sizeable group of Shadow Warriors of Nagarythe. Their mission was to lead an attack on the Wrath Gate. Their objective was not to re-take the gate, but to cause enough disruption to ruin the Spell of Warding that the Druchii Sorceresses had begun casting. His advanced troops occupied Goran Vile, while the main force marched up the valley approach.

General Kala received advanced warning of this attack through her network of spies. She assembled a hasty intercepting force with the few troops available and personally led the counterattack. With no war machines and only light cavalry, she marched through the Scorpion Crawl to the valley of Tair Og.

In one of the most decisive battles of the Blackspines front, Kala managed to rout the Asur invasion force with skillful use of terrain and the element of surprise. She returns to the Wrath Gate with Prince Regulus as a prisoner.

The End of the Blood Moon

A mere month had come to pass and Naggaroth had slipped into mayhem. From the Southern Reaches to the Watchtowers, the bottled-up fury of centuries of hatred burst forth like a scarlet flood. Both the Cult of Slaanesh and the Temple of Khaine felt the time had come for their ultimate ascendance. The magnitude of their clash had caught the secular Druchii population by surprise.

Ghronnd was in flames. Though the Temple still held a tenuous grasp, the outer city was in ruins from riots and warfare on the streets. For the first time since the North Tower was founded, it was the blood of Druchii that ran in the gutters. The altars of the Great Temple of Khaine were silent and cold, for the entire city had become an altar to the god of Murder.

To the North, the Watchtowers were breached. The Spire of Malice had fallen to the hands of a Slaaneshi warlord. If the tower could be made into a stronghold of Slaanesh, it may well have opened the door for a full scale Chaos invasion. The doom of Naggaroth might well have been sealed. As it was, the hordes of mortals and daemons were sweeping down on the other Watchtowers. The Spire of Darkness and the Spire of Vengeance were in desperation.

What had seemed like a triumphant return from Lustria for the Cult army had devolved into a hard push. With Khainite forces slowly building strength to the north and the Lizardmen harassing from the rear, it was clear that simply returning home would not be simple at all. Yet the sultry charisma of a new High Sorceress and the example of a few determined Slaaneshi loyalists might have given them the fortitude to push through.

But for all Druchii of every rank and creed the time of flux was at hand. None now denied that full scale civil war was upon Naggaroth and that Malekith, in his infinite wisdom, had allowed it to flourish. The wheels had been set into motion. There was nothing left to do but see it through to the bitter end.

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End of Part 1

TMLaS Technique Series – Prepping Your Model

By Heldrak

It may seem like a rather humble topic, but proper figure preparation is key to creating an attractive model. Many a great paint-job has been marred or completely ruined by inadequate preparation of the figure prior to painting. Preparation in this instance will be broken down into individual steps including:

- Analysis
- Sprue/Tag Removal
- Cleaning
- Mold-line Removal
- Assembly/Repair
- Pinning
- Gap-filling
- Basing and Priming.

So let's begin....

1. Analysis

Khaine love them, GW produces some beautiful models, but their quality control in the production and release of those models is frequently inadequate. When acquiring a figure, the cautious consumer would be well-advised to examine the model through its clear blister package to insure that the casting is undamaged with clearly-defined details and no miscasts. Obviously, when purchasing boxed miniatures or miniatures sight-unseen (online for instance) it is not possible to examine figures prior to purchase.

In any event, examine the miniature carefully when you first acquire it. First check the figure in profile: Are the mold halves correctly aligned? Sometimes mold slippage during casting can result in the front and the back half of the figure becoming misaligned and then setting that way during the casting process.

Next, check the figure full-face: is the detail sharp and clear? Frequently, wear on the mold results in blurred or indistinct castings (sometimes a broken chunk of the figure remains in the mold and subsequent castings are cast with that portion of the mold obscured and thus absent in the finished figure). Citadel miniatures are notorious for indistinct facial detail, yet this area of the figure is crucial! Carefully examine the figure's face: Are the eyes aligned? Is the nose complete and sharp? If you find that you have acquired a miscast figure, all is not lost.

Games Workshop will usually replace a miscast model free of charge (although they will sometimes grumble about it.) Be sure to save the model's exterior packaging so that you can give the packaging

information the Games Workshop representative if they request it. You should also be prepared for GW to send you a figure with the exact same flaw that they are replacing. Often, Customer Service and miniatures picking is handled in different locations at GW (in the US, they're now in different States!) so the folks working in the warehouse that pull the miniature from their stock and ship it to you will not be the same ones who took your complaint in the first place. If this happens, you can either go through the complaint/replacement process again or resolve to live with the model you have and take steps to repair it further along in the preparation process.

2. Sprue/Tag Removal

Alright, now you have a properly-cast, unflawed model in hand; What's next? The next step is to remove the excess waste components that are a necessary part of the casting process. Plastic components are cast on runners (called "sprues") with a small portion of plastic connecting the component to the sprue. If the component itself is roughly pulled or twisted from the sprue, this can result in damage to the component, either through actual breakage or through the sprue pulling material from the component and leaving a small dimple or divot in the component.

The correct (and safest) way to remove components from sprues is to invest in a pair of angle cutters- this is a very thin pair of clippers with an angled blade that are made specifically for the task. If you do not wish to purchase angle cutters, then normal wire cutters, nail clippers or small scissors can do the job (although not usually as well). Note that you don't have to purchase branded GW angle cutters - many hobby companies make them and they are all essentially the same. Note that there are some sprue removal jobs that angle cutters are impractical for however - for particularly small components (like the Repeater Crossbow Bolt Clips that come on the Dark Elf Warrior sprue) or for components where the construction of the sprue makes it difficult to slip the blades of the angle cutter between the sprue and the component (the area between the cheek pieces of the helmets and the sprue on the Dark Elf warrior sprue for example). In this case it is more practical to cut away a chunk of the sprue itself to free the component and then carefully shave the sprue

connector away with a sharp knife (I use an X-acto knife myself, although I know that the breakaway hobby knives with the retractable blades are also popular). Once all plastic components, including bases, have been removed from the sprue, it will still be necessary to remove small shreds of plastic from the areas where the components met the sprue, as well as mold lines. I will cover this area in more detail later in the article.

For metal components, they sometimes include an excess piece of metal (called a tag and sometimes actually imprinted with the word "TAG") that helps to stabilize small or delicate components in the mold during casting. These should be removed from the metal model in the same way that plastic models are removed from their sprues. Note that it is wise to be absolutely sure that the piece you are removing is waste metal before you get to clippin'! Metal figures sometimes also include small "snakes" of metal that project from raised areas. These are a result of tiny vent holes in the mold that insure the mold is completely filled with casting material. I will cover their removal in the segment on Mold-line Removal.



Examples of common casting defects. Mold lines are visible on the helmet and breastplate. The tip of the Drannach has a small disk of flashing. The Witch Elf has several sprue tags. Each of these will be easy to remove, but is important to the quality of the finished pieces.

3. Cleaning

Both the metal and the plastic casting processes (and they are different) include lubricants that insure that the finished model can be safely removed from the mold. For plastic models, an oily substance called "mold-released lubricant" is used. For metal models, a fine white powder called talc is used. If excesses of these mold-release compounds remain on the finished figures, they can interfere with glue, primer or paint adhesion.

It is recommended that modelers clean their figures with soap and water before proceeding further in the preparation process. Truthfully, I don't do this myself but it makes good sense if you have the time and patience for it. The rest of my preparation process is so involved and it involves so much handling of the figure that I don't usually have trouble with mold-release lubricants interfering with the assembly or painting process. A fully comprehensive overview of the figure preparation process should include this step however. (If metal figures seem "talc" to me, I have been known to give them a quick scrub with an old dry toothbrush...).

4. Mold-line Removal

This is a very important step and one that is frequently overlooked. The essential tools for this job are a selection of needle files and an X-acto knife.

Before going further into this process it is probably best to digress for a moment and talk about tools: The best selection of needle files should include the following: A round (get one that tapers to a sharp point), a half-round (ridged on both sides), a flat, a square, a triangular and an angled flat. If you want to get super-fancy you can also invest in some hooked needle files, but these are only really necessary for very specialized jobs and the same job can often be done with sanding film instead. If you're on a budget, the two most important are the round and the half-round. (Needle files are not very expensive anyway)

The procedures for removing mold-lines from metal and plastic figures are mostly similar, although they differ slightly in their execution. To start with, I like to begin at the figures' feet (where they meet the base rail in an infantry figure or the tag that connects the feet of a cavalry figure). I start at the feet (usually the right foot) because the line of the base rail always defines the mold line- the mold line can be seen following the line of the base rail all the way around

following the line of the base rail all the way around the model until it meets the base rail again on the opposite side. I scrape or file (depending on the harshness of the line and the nature of the detail) my way up the model to the top of the head and then down the other side. Then I do the inside of the legs, starting at the inside of the foot, following the line up through the groin and ending at the inside of the other foot.

A word here about filing technique: when using a round needle file, it is best to lightly twirl the needle file between your thumb and forefinger as you pull it across the model. This gives a smoother result and prevents you from leaving file marks on the model as you work. It also results in a lighter touch with the file, which protects you from accidentally damaging the figure's detail as you go.

Different shaped files are useful for cleaning different areas of detail. I find that the flat side of the half-round is excellent for catching the areas where one item of clothing meets another or for cleaning in between folds of cloth. The sharp edge of the file incises a line in the figure and the half-round underneath gently rounds the edges of the line (I use this tool to file between individual strands of hair modeled on a figure's head all the time). You may find it necessary to reverse the file and file both ways to eliminate all traces of mold line in between details. The square Needle File is a good tool for shaping the areas where sword hilts meet swords, or wrappings decorate poles, or for futuristic models where there are more sharp, square angles. The triangular file is useful for cutting deep grooves in a model. The flat needle file is for heavy lifting jobs, such as filing the bottoms of base rails smooth or flattening the lettering on the front of the base rail. You can also use it to file the underside of a figure's feet flat, but I prefer to use the flat side of the half-round for this as it is usually finer. The angled flat needle file is similar to a flat, but it tends to be thinner and one side is thicker than the other (and both edges have teeth just like the flat sides). This tool is handy for getting into small square crevices.

Now that we've talked about the various needle files and their applications, let's talk about the X-acto knife.

The X-acto knife (or hobby knife, etc.) has two applications more or less, slicing and scraping. I find that I very rarely slice (it's a good way to cut yourself) and I almost always scrape. Scraping involves dragging the edge of the knife down the mold line at

a right angle to the model to peel the line away. This can yield good results, but it will sometimes result in flattening an area that should be curved. I find that the best procedure is the use a combination of filing and scraping throughout the model. I scrape first and then file to restore the roundness flattened by scraping and to further eliminate all trace of mold line.

A word here about the differences between metal and plastic models: You can do most of the mold line removal work on a plastic model by scraping. If your blade is sharp enough, you can almost peel the line off in a continuous strip. On top of that, needle files tend to leave plastic with a rough or grainy texture. Often I will start by filing an area of a plastic model and then give it a light scrape with the knife blade afterwards to restore the smooth texture. If you use a liquid polystyrene (plastic-melting) glue to assemble your models, you can also brush a very small (not too much!) amount of this on afterwards and it will create a smooth and glossy finish.

A further word about mold line removal- no matter how good you are at it you may well find that you have missed a spot and that you only discover this after the model is primed. This is more often the case with metal than plastic - the reflectivity of the metal surface can fool the eye and make you miss some areas. Priming can reveal these areas by dulling down the finish. Be prepared to go back after priming has been done and do some further mold line removal.

In addition to removing mold lines, this stage of figure preparation should also be where you further clean the figure by removing the tiny "snakes" of metal left by the vent holes in the mold. These tend to appear at raised points on the model - pouches, fingertips, the tips and backs of feet, sword hilts, etc. Often these "snakes" can coil back on themselves and look like detail on the figure and they're easy to miss. Unlike mold lines, it can be even harder to detect these once the figure is primed, so be sure to inspect the front and back of the figure carefully before proceeding further in your preparation. Note that because of the way molds are formed (in two halves) these "snakes" will almost always only appear on the front and back of a figure, not on the sides. That's where mold lines and flash appear.

A quick word at this point about flash. Flash is essentially an extended form of mold line that appears as a thin sheet of metal often connecting two parts of a model. It frequently appears in a

models armpit or between the legs. This is formed when metal or plastic seeps between the two halves of the mold. It is best to trim flash away with a knife. If you attempt to file it, it may fold or roll over forming a thicker mass that's harder to remove. This is the one area where a careful slicing motion with your knife serves best. So, now you have doggedly followed my procedures and you have a nice clean figure - or more likely, a nice clean set of components that now require assembly.

5. Assembly

Assembly of multi-part models can be a complex process, so it's best to break it down into stages. I'm a firm believer that models should be assembled as completely as possible prior to painting, as long as said assembly will not interfere with the painting process. However, I suggest assembling and painting riders and horses separately, and not attaching shields until the figure is otherwise finished. Beyond that I recommend complete assembly of all components before proceeding any further. I find it distracting to work on a model with out a head or arms and I would rather complete the assembly in full and solve any painting problems that this may cause later as I paint.

First let's talk about gluing. For plastic models, I recommend using a liquid polystyrene (plastic-melting) glue. This product has a chemical action that dissolves the plastic temporarily and allows it to reset, creating a very strong bond. I use a brand called Tenax, but there are many brands commercially available in hobby shops. Be sure to use adequate ventilation when using such glues as the fumes they produce can be harmful to your health. You should also avoid contact with your skin if possible. I use a small 00-gauge paint brush (dedicated to this purpose) to apply the glue. You should avoid brands that have an applicator brush in the cap, as this is too large and clumsy for the neat application of glue to small parts.

I dab a small amount of glue and both components to be joined and then hold them together briefly (really no more than 5 seconds or so) to form a quick bond. Then I dab a further small amount of glue over the seam between the two parts. You may find, that a small amount of melted plastic squished out from between the parts as you join them - this is usually a sign that you are using too much glue. If this occurs, the dab of glue along the seam will dissolve the bead of excess glue and blend it back into the detail. This surface dab of glue can also help smooth out

textures that you may have accidentally made rough during the mold line removal process. Don't get carried away doing this, however. Too much glue on the surface can destroy detail and it takes a much longer time to dry/set fast.

Now let's talk about gluing metal models together (also gluing metal to plastic and vice-versa). The simple truth of the matter is that the best way to join metal components together is by pinning, but this is a complex, labor-intensive process and it is not always practical due to the size/delicacy/position of components. I will discuss pinning later in its own dedicated section.

For the moment, let's just talk about gluing. For gluing metal components together, I recommend plain cyanoacrylate - superglue. There are many competing brands on the market, but I recommend Zap-A-Gap CA. This is the brand of glue recommended by multiple Golden Demon Winner and figure-painting Goddess Jennifer Haley, so it's good enough for me. I suggest avoiding cheap tubes of gas station/supermarket/convenience store superglues as these may all vary widely in their performance. I also do not recommend the use of "kickers" or accelerants. These are products which purport to speed the drying time of superglues, and they may weaken the glue bond. There are several other sneaky tricks to getting the best out of your glue.

Number one: Shake the glue bottle first and always glue a flat surface to a flat surface whenever possible. Superglue can form a strong bond, but it does so over a thin area and needs a flat and stable area to work on. The more surface area you can cover, the stronger your glue bond will be. Sometimes you will wind up gluing a curved ball-and-socket type joint, but this can be strengthened by pinning.

Number two: Roughen the surface of the components where they are to be joined together. I score tiny lines across both surfaces with the point of my X-acto knife and then I cross-hatch further lines in a crisscross pattern. When I finish, both sides feel slightly "furry". This provides much more surface area for the glue to adhere to as it seeps into the tiny lines I've cut into the flat surface (this is another tip stolen from Jennifer Haley). This procedure also obviates the need for scrubbing the model with soap and water prior to assembly as the cross-hatching removes any trace of talc.

Number three (and this tip is all my own): Take a cheap, brightly-colored plastic cup (I use a brand called "Solo") and turn it upside down. There will usually be a small concave area underneath the base. Dispense a drop or two of superglue into one corner of the base and wait for about a minute. The chemical solvents in the glue will start to strip the color from the cup, staining the glue whatever color the cup is and slightly thickening the glue. Then apply the glue to the model and tightly hold the components together for the count of 60 seconds. The advantage to staining and thickening the glue is that it is much easier to judge the amount of glue that you're using and to control its placement on the components. The reason most glue bonds fail is that there is too much glue between the components and this forms a weak bond. By recognizing exactly how much glue you're using, you can prevent this. Thickening the glue also extends working time and creates less waste, allowing you to wiggle components into an exact fit before the glue sets. Be careful with this! If you move the components when the glue is in mid-set, you will weaken the bond. It's better to test-fit the components several times before applying the glue so you don't need to move them at all once the glue is on.

Number four: A further tip from Jennifer Haley-Superglues work by reacting to moisture (this is why they bond to skin so quickly). You can speed the drying time of your superglue by gently exhaling on the joined components. The moisture in your breath will speed the bonding process. Glue "Kickers" work on a similar principle by adding moisture to the bonding process.

Number five: Even when following the steps I've outlined, you may have the rare occasion when the glue stubbornly refuses to set. The answer to failed (or failing) superglue is not more superglue. Some things which may cause bonds to fail in the application process are: Excess glue, relative age or contamination of the glue, moisture conditions in the room, dirtiness or oiliness of components or the unguessable malice of mischievous fate. In this case, the best solution is to remove the remnants of dried glue as completely as possible from the components, set them aside for a while and then re-roughen the surfaces and start again.

Following all the steps I've outlined so far, you can achieve a strong bond, but the best use for glue is in conjunction with pinning.

6. Pinning

Pinning is the Holy mystery of model assembly and the one that often gives people the most trouble. The secret to easy pinning is to use the right tools for the job. If you're going to attempt to pin multiple models (and why wouldn't you?) then I recommend investing in a motorized drill device of some kind (henceforth called Dremel, after the most popular brand of tool of this kind). Personally, I use a cheap domestic knock-off of a Dremel produced under their Craftsman label by Sears. You may read recommendations elsewhere to use a small hand-cranked device called a Pin Vise, but this is functionally useless when drilling into metal (it can be done but it is mind-bendingly laborious and it takes forever). Let us hear no more about the Pin Vise. In addition to the Dremel (or Dremel-like) tool itself, you will need additional accessories.

1. A selection of Drill Bits
2. A selection of Collets
3. An extendable Drill Shank
4. Pins

For Drill bits, the single most important is a small fine metal-cutting bit (around xx gauge). Additionally, I recommend several scrolling/engraving bits of differing sizes. You will need multiples of the xx bit, because they will break/wear out in the process of pinning.

Collets are small metal collars that adapt the nose of the Dremel to the size of the particular Drill bit that you want to use. They typically come in a small packet of varying sizes (you will ultimately need all of them).

The extendable drill shank is a long snaky tube that attaches to the front of the Dremel's motor device and ends in an attachment shaped like a pen. This allows pinpoint control of the drill bit for fine work (The Dremel itself is too large and bulky for easy control in the delicate type of work that we do in pinning 28mm models together).

For pins, I recommend brass rods. These are sold in hobby shops and they come in varying thicknesses. You may hear recommendations for other items (some people use paperclips or staples bent straight) but these are substandard materials. Brass pins are the best materials for the job (and again, they aren't expensive).



small size of the components, poor alignment, or whatever. In these circumstances, one can glue the components together first and then drill through both glued components to insert a strengthening pin afterwards. The end of the pin that sticks out is then clipped off and the resulting area is re-sculpted with green stuff.

One of the biggest challenges in proper pinning is lining up the components to be pinned. I still struggle with this myself. I usually eyeball it and I sometimes make mistakes that I later have to correct with bending, puttying, etc. The recommended method of lining up pins properly is to drill a hole into the first component, insert a pin that is just barely longer than the hole, and to dab a spot of brightly-colored paint on the end of the pin that sticks out. Then hold the components together - the paint on the end of the pin marks the area on the opposite component where you need to drill the second hole. This is great in theory, but in practice I find that it's too easy to get the pin irretrievably stuck in the first hole, that the pin is too long and the components don't line up properly, that the paint dries too quickly on the end of the pin, etc., etc. It is an inexact process and requires some trial and error.

I like to use my smallest scrolling/engraving bit and make a pilot hole for my pins. This created a small divot in the surface of the metal that allows the actual drill bit to settle on the flat surface and to drill a straight hole. When you go to drill your hole, you don't need to drill terribly deep - about 1/8 - 1/4 inch is plenty. The purpose of the pin is to hold the glue to work and to protect the finished figure against the wear-and-tear of the battlefield, storage, and transportation. There's no need to go crazy trying to insert a brass armature inside a metal model. A note here about the hole itself - you want the hole you drill to be wide enough so that the pin is a little bit loose inside when you go to glue the pin in the hole. The glue will fill the extra space and make the pin snug.

There are circumstances where it is not practical or convenient to pin a figure prior to assembly due to

7. Gap-filling

Now we have a securely assembled figure that's nice and clean with all mold-lines removed. What's the next step? You may well find that the figure assembly process has left gaps in the model that need to be repaired to create a smooth, finished appearance. The best way to do this is to fill these gaps with an epoxy putty and then to re-sculpt the area so that it blends seamlessly into the surrounding detail.

Prior to mixing up our putty, there are some steps we can take to prepare the area and to lighten our workload. Once the model is assembled, examine it and determine where gap-filling is necessary. Many of the areas can be minimized by filing or shaving down the components so that the areas on either side of the gap are smooth and on the same plane. Basically, you want to do as little work with putty and as much work with a file as possible.

Once this has been done and the area fully prepared, you may still find it necessary to use putty to close any remaining gaps. The most popular epoxy putty used in our hobby is Green Stuff (Kneadite) a putty that is made up of two parts, (one yellow and one blue) than when kneaded together form a sticky workable putty that sets in about 2 hours and dries overnight into a hard plastic-like finish. There are other epoxy putties available, most notably Brown Stuff (by the makers of Green Stuff), Milliput, and Fimo (which requires baking to set). All of these putties have different properties and some modelers mix them with Green Stuff to get a different consistency. For our purposes, we will discuss using only unadulterated Green Stuff.

To begin with take a small amount of blue putty and a small amount of yellow putty and mix them together. A little goes a long way and it's less wasteful to only make a small amount at a time. Use a 50/50 mix of the yellow and the blue and mix thoroughly until the blob of putty is a smooth uniform green color - then mix it some more. Streaky or unevenly mixed putty doesn't cure properly and will ruin your sculpting work.

Green Stuff typically comes packaged two ways: in a continuous strip with both types of putty side-by-side or in two separate sticks. Depending on how your putty is packaged, you may need to remove and discard a small strip of cured putty from between the yellow and blue strips. Remove any small chips of cured putty you might find in the mix as you knead.

Be sure to keep your fingers and tools wet at all times, as the putty is very sticky and will adhere to almost any dry surface. Keep a cup of water handy to dip the tools or your fingertips in.

When you have the finished ball of putty, place it on a disposable surface (I use a plastic picnic plate) and cover the ball with a damp paper towel. Keep the putty away from bright lights and heat sources as these will cause the putty to cure faster than you may want. You may well find it necessary to remoisten the ball of putty as you go along to keep it workable.

Now let's talk about sculpting tools. Sculptors and experienced modelers love to go on and on about their particular tools (the "Wax #5" Tool gets banded about a lot) but the secret is to find the tools that are comfortable and work for you. I do most of my own sculpting work with a hooked needle type of tool.

Sets of sculpting tools are readily available both online and in hobby shops. My starting recommendation would be to spend relatively little on tools until you've gained some experience and you can see what will work the best for you. You can also make your own tools from items around the house - a sewing needle held in a pin vise makes an excellent sculpting tool.

The basic technique of gap-filling is to squish a blob of putty into the gap and then to use your sculpting tools to match the texture of the putty to the adjoining areas, making a seamless smooth whole that will completely fool the eye once the figure is primed and painted. If the surrounding areas have a heavy texture (like fur) it can be fairly easy to match the texture as the whole area will have a chaotic look.

If the surrounding areas are smooth (like flesh), it can be a ticklish business to get the surface of the putty smooth and even. When dry, pure Green Stuff is difficult to sand or file, as it has a tendency to tear/shred. Here are some tips on getting a smooth surface with your putty.

1. Sand the puttied area with a fine-grain sanding film and keep the area wet when sanding (this is a tip from our own Golden Demon-winning Georc).

2. Mix additives into the Green Stuff mixture to achieve a smoother finish. Some additives (Milliput or Brown Stuff) can make the putty easier to file or sand (many professional sculptors add Brown Stuff when sculpting the facial detail on a figure), while other additives (Fimo and others) can make the putty mixture softer and easier to smooth (be careful with these additives, as they can make the cured putty weaker or softer).

3. Brush Acetone over the cured putty- this dissolves a small portion of the putty and make a smoother finish. This is not recommended for plastic models as the Acetone may dissolve the surrounding plastic areas as well. Acetone is potentially dangerous to work with and may produce harmful fumes. Use extreme care when using Acetone.

4. Use a lubricant to achieve a smoother, glossier finish. I use Chapstick brand lip balm. I dab a very small amount on the heel of my left hand and rub my tools in it to help me get a smooth, blended finish.

5. Prime the model and then sand or file the puttied area. The coat of primer acts as a binder and prevents the putty from shredding when sanded.

8. Basing

Once a figure is fully assembled and puttied (if necessary) it is time for basing. Before basing your figure it is worth considering a few factors. Is the figure on a correctly-sized base? GW provides a base-size chart on their web-forum that assigns tournament-legal base sizes for various troop and monster types. If you're working on a Monster figure, it's worth checking beforehand to make sure you're using the proper base (how many people here knew that a Dark Elf War Hydra is supposed to be on a Chariot base, for instance?).

Next, is the figure intended to rank up with other figures or is it a stand-alone figure? Even if the figure is meant to be a stand-alone, it's best to make sure that the figure doesn't overhang the base too much so that it can be conveniently placed in base contact with enemy models.

Next, and perhaps most importantly, is the base stable and does it protect the model? Chariots (like the Cold One Chariot or the Vampire Counts Black Coach) are often fragile models and it can be better to create an oversized base for them that will support the model and protect it from damage, even if that results in an oversized base. Modelers often leave War Machines unbased (they don't usually come with bases anyway) but measuring in Warhammer is done from base to base, and it will help prevent disputes during games about whether or not models are in range if the War Machine model has its own base.

Finally, are you creating a scenic base? Some models look better if they are modeled standing on rocky outcrops, flying or levitating, leaping from the waves, etc.. If you are going to create a scenic base, then this requires pre-planning (and sometimes pre-painting) before the figure is attached to it. For our purposes, we will discuss only the simplest kind of regimental basing and leave scenic basing for another time.

When attaching the figure to the base, it is necessary to make sure that the model has a snug fit. Sometimes the base rail (the tab that extends between the model's feet to anchor it to the base) has projections that need to be filed smooth before the model will sit flat when inserted in the base. Sometimes the base rail is too thin for the slot in the plastic base and needs to be crimped with clippers or needle-nose pliers before the figure will be snug. Once the figure fits tightly in the base, it can be glued in place.

Now that the figure is firmly attached to its base, the resulting gaps in the base (usually at the corners, where the figure's base rail does not extend all the way to the ends of the slot) need to be filled. Green Stuff may be used for this purpose, although some models feel that Green Stuff is too expensive to be used for a task where the end result won't be seen and they use cheaper fillers, like Plastic Wood or wall spackle to fill the gaps. Be sure the fill the gap completely, not just at the corners so that the entire top of the base is smooth and flat.

Once the filler is dry, then a textural element can be added. Opinions differ as to whether you should apply surface texture prior to priming the model, but I find that doing the texture first and then priming allows the primer to help "lock" the texture material on the base, so I recommend doing the texture first.

The most common texture for finishing the top of the base is common sand (although you can buy expensive gourmet sand from GW if you like). Cover the top of the base with ordinary white glue mixed with about 50% water. I don't recommend using superglue for basing as it dries too fast and tends to make the sand clump. It is also rather expensive for such a task. Paint the top of the base liberally with the white glue/water mixture. Be careful to not slop it up on the figure's feet or on the edges of the base. Then dip the wet base in a container full of sand. Remove the figure and gently tap or flick the bottom of the base to remove excess sand and then set the figure aside to dry.

If you find that sand has adhered to the sides of the base or to the figure's feet, then gently scrape the unwanted portion away with your X-acto knife (you will find that the glue/sand mixture peels away easily in clumps). Even if you forget this step and later find that you have base sand adhering to the figure's feet where you don't want it, this can still be chipped away even when dry.

One thing you may find is that if you are adding surface texture prior to priming, the glue that you use will tend to pool and won't extend all the way to the edges of the base. This is because the natural slipperiness of the base's plastic finish is causing the glue mixture to "bead". This can be fixed by lightly priming only the top of the base with a brush-on primer prior to adding texture (I don't usually find this necessary). When you are finished with this process, you should have a figure that is ready to prime for painting.

9. Priming

There are differing schools of thought about the types, colors and brands of primers to use. Usually, you will want to let your planned paint scheme determine what color you wish to prime your model. If you have a figure that will use a lot of dark colors or that wears a lot of armor, then you will probably want to prime the figure black. If you plan a predominantly light or bright color scheme and you want to use many subtle washes to achieve a "watercolor" effect, then you probably want to prime

your figure white. (There are even heretical schools of thought that insist on gray or clear primer, but this is a lunatic fringe that we will not discuss here).

The next question is whether you wish to use a spray-on or brush-on primer. Both have their uses, but for general ease and speed of working, and for the overall quality of the finished effect, I recommend the use of spray primer whenever possible. This is not always practical due to environmental/weather conditions in your area. If it is too cold or too humid, you may find that spray primers will clump, giving the primed figure a grainy or furry texture. This can be very difficult to remove. In circumstances where the weather is inclement, then brush-on primer may be a better solution if you can't afford to wait for better conditions to spray.

The manufacture of spray primers is one area where GW excels. Even many masterclass painters who scoff at GW's paint range in favor elite premium paints (Vallejo, etc.) still use GW's spray primer for its superior performance & quality.

In terms of the actual action of spraying, there are detailed instructions on the can itself, but I have some additional tips:

1. Always spray outdoors, and protect your mouth and nose when using spray primers; either with a painter's mask, or a dust mask, or with a bandanna worn "bandito-style" to protect your throat and lungs from the harmful effects of inhaling the primer. Even if you can't see it, the aerosol action produces a fine dust of pigment & propellant that you do not want to inhale.
2. It is advisable to use a spray booth (you can make one from an old cardboard box) to help contain the spray and to protect the figures from windblown dust and particles. If you line the spray booth with newsprint, you can change the paper from time to time if it becomes wet & heavy with primer. (you don't want figures sticking to the paper and picking up excess primer.
3. Spray from an adequate distance away and use several light coats rather than one heavy one. I like to spray figures front side, back side, right side and left side (with adequate drying time between each side) and then I flip them over and do their fronts and backs again from underneath (this gets primer into folds & crevices where it won't go in the previous passes because of the overhang of the figure's head & torso). Then I flip the figures back up on their bases to dry.

4. Allow figures to "off-gas" outside for a while. Even when figures appear dry and are no longer tacky to the touch, they can still release significant fumes which can be harmful to you health in an enclosed space. Let figures sit outside for a while (if the area is secure and the weather conditions permit) before bringing them inside.

5. Once you bring the figures inside, set them on a disposable piece of paper or card (making sure that the figures don't touch) and place them under a strong hot lamp for a few hours. This will have the effect of "baking" the primer on (as they do with auto body painting). Then leave the figures overnight.

6. Once figures have sat overnight, they should have little or no smell of primer left. Examine the primed figure for evidence of mold lines that you may have missed earlier during the figure preparation process. Often, regardless of how careful you've been you will discover additional mold lines that you haven't completely removed at this point. Go back and remove these now. Once all mold lines have been removed, you can touch up unprimed areas (some of which you may have just filed clean removing more mold lines) with brush-on primer of the same color as your spray.

Now at long last, you have a finished, fully-prepared figure that is worthy of your attention as a painter.

Truth is a beautiful thing, far eclipsing any image of glorious battle or triumphant victory that might attempt to contain it. However it is not something that can exist in the 'now', the present is constantly in a state of flux. Only by stepping back and examining the event in the context of what the outcome should eventually be can the real truth be separated from the impurities of subjectivity. It is with this in mind we now turn our attention to the proper preparation of the canvas...

- War Artist Vranehk,
addressing the students of
the Har Ganeth Academy of History

Q&A with Gav Thorpe

Recently, the members and staff of Druchii.net were asked "If you had the hypothetical opportunity to interview Gav Thorpe, what would you ask?" Well - Surprise! The magazine staff compiled a list of the favorite questions from the ones that were posed. Strings were pulled (by a team of a thousand slaves) and Gav was gracious enough to respond. Here's what he had to say.....

About Warhammer in General

Druchii.net - Everyone is buzzing about 7th Edition. Is there anything that you can tell us about the differences between 6th and 7th Edition? What will the main differences be like? What issues did you feel needed to be addressed?

Gav Thorpe - Our main aim is to present the rules in the clearest possible manner, mainly through revisiting the text and diagrams. Our absolute guiding light was to create no contradictions between the new rulebook and the existing army books - something that on occasion means that we wouldn't affect changes that we might otherwise like to do. We hope that there will be no need for an extensive Q+A when the new version is released. Some issues that certain players feel need addressing we have left to ongoing revisions of the army books, looking at individual army list entries and points values rather than across-the-board changes that might have unforeseen or undesired consequences.

Where simply presenting the rules more clearly wasn't possible, we've looked at the mechanics of the rules themselves. A good example of this is in the fleeing rules, which currently leave a lot open to interpretation (even after my extended notes on the matter!). The new system streamlines this aspect of the game to make it a lot more definitive where and how units flee. Another main point was to address some issues with the Magic system, to encourage mid-level magic (both in terms of individual wizards and also in overall army selection).

Aside from the rules we are going to include an extensive history - information that for quite some time has only been divulged in some of the army

books, such as Chaos and Lizardmen. This will give players a grand sweep of the Warhammer world and its history.

Finally we have included a large number of color pages, firstly to introduce the different armies that can be collected, along with an overview of their background, and secondly to provide a solid basis for collecting, painting and modeling that acts as a foundation for the *How to Make Wargames Terrain* and *How to Paint Citadel Miniatures* volumes.

D.net - With 7th Edition, we presume the armies will change and army books will be re-released. Druchii.net was proud to have helped in the last revision of the Dark Elves. Are inputs from fan groups like Warhammer Clubs or forum based groups going to influence future releases?

GT - It is unlikely that we will employ the kind of direct feedback used during the Dark Elves revision for future projects. A more realistic approach is to assess all the current outstanding Q+As, monitor ongoing comments and reactions and incorporate the knowledge of the army gleaned from several years play.

D.net - Can you tell us which Army and Realms books are up next? Is there a 2005/2006 Annual planned?

GT - As evidenced by the recent Dwarfs release we are entering a period of revisiting the earliest 6th edition army books, so that means (in no particular order!) armies currently under the spotlight include Empire, Vampire Counts, Orcs & Goblins and High Elves. Revised army books aren't the only thing we're

"Some issues that certain players feel need addressing we have left to ongoing revisions of the army books, looking at individual army list entries and points values rather than across-the-board changes that might have unforeseen or undesired consequences."



working on at the moment, but you'll have to wait and see regarding the other types of supplements we're planning!

D.net - Are there plans for making the rules errata publicly available in PDF format?

GT - Alessio, with help from Jervis, has been spearheading a revision of our Q+A procedure and the way they are updated and presented. As for the format, that's something that players will have to address to their local web teams - the Design Studio has not direct control over the individual websites, only some of the content.

D.net - Will there be more campaigns like the Storm of Chaos?

GT - There will certainly be more summer events, although it's unlikely we'll run anything as ambitious as Storm of Chaos for quite a while.

D.net - Of course there are the obligatory questions about the "lost armies". Are Cathay, Nippon and Ind ever going to come out as Army Books? What about the Chaos Dwarves?

GT - I wouldn't expect to see anything orient-related as an army book for a very long time. If we are able to work out a Dogs of War plan that everyone is happy with, I would like to use that as an opportunity to explore certain parts of the Warhammer World, without having to make the commitment for a complete army. However, that is still likely to be a few years away.

Chaos Dwarfs are still on my list of Things We Should Do, and while we are not in a position currently to commit to remaking the army, I hope we have signaled our intent to retain them as part of the Warhammer world with the release of the Hellcannon and continued references to them in the background.

Oh, and its Dwarfs!

D.net - So what's up with LOTR?

GT - Hmm, that's pretty broad... LOTR continues to be a popular game and, for the size of the miniatures range that's attached to it, is very successful. We have supplements planned for several more years and as far as we are concerned, as we have been since we acquired the license, it is part of our Core range and will continue to be.

About the Dark Elves

D.net - Many of our members would like to know about advancement of the fluff regarding the Dark Elves. Any thing you can tell us about the background in the future? Is Warhammer Fantasy going to take the same 'one minute to midnight' approach 40K has? Or do you see potential to advance the storyline after Storm of Chaos.

GT - We have no further plans to advance the storyline any further than we currently have. When we return to the Dark Elves, we will be able to present a more up-to-date version of the current events in Naggaroth. You see, that's the problem with an ongoing narrative - players that come along even only a few months later have very little chance of accessing that information, and this undermines the purpose of the Army books to be definitive guides to that race and army. As far as the Dark Elves are concerned, they have an as yet unresolved schism between the Cults of Slaanesh and Khaine, an ongoing invasion of Ulthuan led by Malekith, and an ill-advised sortie by Eltharion and his host to deal with.

D.net - On that note, what were your thoughts on the Flesh and Blood campaign that Druchii.net hosted? Is there any chance that our little war will become an official advancement of Dark Elf history?

GT - I must confess that while I was aware of the campaign, and was glad to see Druchii.net enthused about the story, I have not followed it in any detail. While I will peruse what happened and potentially steal any particular good bits, I think it's important that we don't end up going down a path that sees players continually seeking some kind of official stamp from the Design studio. I would much rather players feel that they can run campaigns and write storylines for their own armies without worry that we're going to produce some update to the background that invalidates their work. The Warhammer world is set up to be expansive and inclusive, just like the game system, rather than something that can only be dictated to by us lot in the Ivory Tower.

D.net - The Dark Elf model range is widely regarded as one of the best in the GW line. Do you feel that the Dark Elf model line has reached a plateau or are there plans for improvements? Are there any Dark Elf plastics on the horizon? *coughDarkRiderscough* Battalion Box? Also, with the extraordinary quality of the new Wood Elf and High Elf heroes, can we perhaps expect to see some new Dark Elf heroes?

A - These are also the two main issues we have highlighted internally with the Dark Elves range – characters and plastics. With our ongoing commitment to creating more and more plastics for Warhammer armies, it is certain that when the Dark Elves come around again they will get to come to the party. Regarding the character options this is something we hope to address in the shorter term (which of course means not for a couple of years probably, but sooner than the army book!).

D.net - How much influence does rule development have on modeling miniatures and vice versa? Were the cold ones really slowed down rule-wise due to their sluggish look?

GT - A little from column A and a little from Column B – it's a self-fuelling process. It's as much about feel as it is about strict WYSIWYG – would a player with a given unit get the right feel for what it should be able to do. From a purely rules point of view, I wanted to encourage the general dynamic that the Dark Elves are raiders and therefore lightly armoured. I felt that sacrificing some the Cold Ones speed for the added protection and hitting power was justified. Perhaps the points could be tweaked, but over a typical army you're not looking at saving more than twenty points perhaps – 1% of the total army value.

Miniatures play a very important part of our design process, as the limitations of the miniatures guide what we can do with an army list – ideally there should be a model available for every troop type and every option. The increased versatility of plastic sets makes this a much more likely situation in years to come.

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D.net - We noticed that the new Dwarf book did not contain the alternative slayer army list. Will other armies with SoC lists get these integrated into their parent army book when they are redone? We kinda like the Cult of Slaanesh.

GT - There are a number of ways in which SoC may get folded back into the main armies. Since we haven't done any particular work on our plans for the Dark Elves, it's impossible to say whether there will be an opportunity to allow Slaanesh-themed armies in the new list. It would be a desirable goal, but we'll have to see.

D.net - What do you foresee in the future for the Dark Elves?

GT - More black! I think there's a lot of interesting dynamic and character to the Dark Elves that didn't quite get realised in the last book. My crystal ball also tells me that a new army book would include a much more comprehensive background section than we could do last time, including a more detailed history, bringing back to the guide to Naggaroth and incorporating 'recent events'. I'd also like to introduce more of a mix of special characters, particularly come of the more Hero-level types to give players more flexibility to include them in their armies

About Gameplay

D.net - Some army formulas appear to dominate the game. Do you feel that some armies are inherently more powerful than others? Can that ever be eliminated? What was your reaction concerning army balance after reading the results for the UK GT?

GT - This is a complex subject that I'll break down into three parts.

Individual armies – I think that while we will always strive to achieve a measure of balance between armies, certain armies will naturally be 'easier' to exploit. I think all armies can be equally unbalanced when taken to extreme; it's just that some armies have a more obvious route. Ideally the most competitive army selections would be those that exploit the character of that race to its greatest extent – unfortunately, as with the SAD Skaven, this hasn't always been the case.

The game system – Warhammer is a game of manoeuvre and close combat, at its heart, and so armies that exploit this are going to have an inherent advantage (all-cavalry, skink heavy, etc), as will

armies chosen to directly counter this (gun and magic heavy armies, for example).

This leads on to my last point, misquoted from Rick. A competitive player will always have more chance of winning than a non-competitive one, whether that comes from army selection or on the field of battle (or more likely both!). I think that some players judge the balance of an army list based on the number of 'competitive' choices in the army, rather than an absolute. Those army lists that contain the fewest competitive combinations are viewed as underpowered and those with more as overpowered. As an example, many players believe that the High Elf list is underpowered and that one must use heavy magic, cavalry and chariots. However, the list itself is not underpowered in itself, as it allows these competitive armies to be fielded. The view that it is underpowered comes from the fact that these competitive armies consist of only a small selection of the units available.

When one looks at the most 'overpowered' lists, the general view is either that it also only utilises a select few entries, while those that are seen as being worthwhile have a clear and even spread of attraction across the different units. Thus I would say that army lists on the whole are neither over nor underpowered, but rather the individual entries themselves are. It might seem like splitting hairs a bit, but two equally competitive and skilled players, restricting themselves to only those options they believe give them the most competitive edge, probably have an equal chance of doing so with any army list. Where power (or lack of it) really comes into play is for the rest of us that balance character, entertainment and competitiveness in a more equal measure. Since that is where most players reside, we must address that issue more closely – we should remove obvious choices where they exist and ensure that no entry is 'widowed' from the rest of the army by being a lame duck.

D.net - *What do you look for in a well designed army? How would you classify an army as 'balanced'?*

GT - Using the last point as a reference, I would say balance is achieved when two equally competitive and competent players have the same chance of winning based upon their army selection and the decisions they make during the game. We cannot remove army selection as a criteria for success without removing all choice and character, so a player that chooses a more 'powerful' army will start off with a better chance. What we would like to do is

ensure that there are multiple routes to that powerful army – competitiveness will always be a factor for certain players, but there's no reason why there shouldn't be more room for debate as to which army selection is actually the best at taking on all-comers.

D.net - *How do you advise GW play testers to go about play testing? Are your play testers fighting against the extreme tournament armies or friendly, balanced lists?*

GT - A mix of both. Externally and internally we have a combination of easygoing players and hardcore competitive players (and some easygoing, competitive players!).

"..rulebooks act as introduction as well as reference, and we'd always err on the side of getting the intent across than specific bullet points where necessary."



D.net - *How important are tournaments to the hobby and to Games Workshop?*

GT - They have been both a blessing and a curse, although more of a blessing overall. Tournaments are a competitive environment and no matter how sporting the event is, players are there to win. This places a lot of pressure on a rulebook that not only has to cater to these veteran players but has to be approachable and understandable to a novice.

While every effort is made for clarity, in order to ensure new players are not confronted with five hundred pages of legalese compromises have to be made – rulebooks act as introduction as well as reference, and we'd always err on the side of getting the intent across than specific bullet points where necessary. Players of all types must understand that they are entering into a form of co-operative entertainment, as you do with any game, and that's the underlying principle that informs our decisions. As I've said elsewhere, if you're a die-hard games player there are much tighter genres than miniatures rules – card games, board games and computer games. On the other hand, I suspect even the most ardent WAAC player fundamentally has the love of toy

soldiers in their make up, otherwise why choose a miniatures game?

On the other hand, tournaments provide a very accessible way for people to host an event and get people playing games with their toy soldiers. As a means of promoting the games and of players actually participating (as opposed to not getting to play at all due to lack of facilities and opponents) they are without question a fantastic leg of the hobby.

As always, though, everything in moderation. Tournaments are very successful at what they do, but they are not the be all and end all of GW games. The tournament community is generally committed, organized and vocal, and thus seems to dominate the wider community. However, despite growing numbers of participants, tournament players are still a minority of our players and so their 'demands' must be tempered with this knowledge.

Overall, I feel that tournaments are not the real concern going forward with regard to rules clarity and such. These events, despite their competition, are moderated by umpires and in general the participants are knowledgeable with the majority of the rules. Thus rules conflicts or disputes can be settled within that framework. Nor are the small group of friends playing at their homes overly concerned with Q+As and erratas. They will have established conventions and methods for resolving anomalies that don't impact on anyone else. The area where the greatest clarity is required is for the large number of club and store players, that may only meet occasionally, but do so in an 'uncontrolled' environment where there is no rules pack to guide army selection, rules discussions and so forth. It is on these battlegrounds that different styles of play are most likely to come together, where different interpretations of certain rules will come to light with no common structure to resolve these. What is absolutely vital in these circumstances is that players can, as far as possible, trust what is written in their books. These should be, as humanly possible as we can make it, ultimate arbiters and sources of knowledge concerning the games.

More so, we can only really assume a player in this environment knows the general rules of the game and their army. The more options and complexity we introduce into army lists and rules, the more chance of losing clarity and conflict arising. Going forward we must stand firm to some principles of games development that we (a collective games dev we)

"The area where the greatest clarity is required is for the large number of club and store players, that may only meet occasionally, but do so in an 'uncontrolled' environment where there is no rules pack to guide army selection, rules discussions and so forth. It is on these battlegrounds that different styles of play are most likely to come together, where different interpretations of certain rules will come to light with no common structure to resolve these. What is absolutely vital in these circumstances is that players can, as far as possible, trust what is written in their books."



have forgotten on occasion. Without picking on individual products, we have made mistakes in the past for introducing complication and choice to the point that any real choice has been obscured by the plethora of options, and so many intricate sub-rules have been included that conflicts are inevitable. We need to get back to a place where players can comfortably play the game, not play the rules, and derive enjoyment from that. It is not fun having to wade through pages of wargear to find an entry for the specific wording of a piece of equipment to see how that matches up with another very specific piece of wording in another book. In short (ironically...) we need to bring the brevity back into the rules and let people get on with playing.

D.net - *A while ago you published articles about characters being made less powerful so as to concentrate on the armies. Do you feel that has that been achieved or are some characters still over the top?*

GT - *I think in a fantasy world of powerful wizards and mighty monsters (not to mention Chaos Lords, Orc Warlords, Daemon Princes and Vampire Counts!) it's always going to be a struggle to perfectly balance that with the desire for massed ranks and volleys of fire to be effective. Characters and magic are important parts of Warhammer, and need to be viable options in any army list. We've looked at characters a lot recently, and although there's not too much room for manouevre we've probably curtailed some of their freedom, if not their baseline killing power.*

About Gav

D.net - So, if you had the freedom to do whatever you wanted with Warhammer, regardless of budget and business factors, what would you do?

GT - I would introduce some extra armies, and certainly increase the number of non-army book supplements we have. However, I don't really think too much about this kind of pipe-dream scenario because that is not the environment I work in - I would rather spend my time finding effective solutions to the issues we actually have at hand, taking into account size of the range, price points, resources and everything else. It's more of a challenge to work within these constraints than to have a blank page and a notion for wish-fulfillment. I think the sense of achievement that we do so much cool stuff despite the realities of the world is increased.

D.net - How would you recommend getting into games design for those aspiring game designers out there?

GT - In all honesty, I wouldn't plan on getting a job as a Games Developer at GW - the Design Studio does not recruit heavily, and so unless you are the next best thing since sliced bread we're unlikely to create a position for you. Fanatic and the specialist games website might have better opportunities for those willing to put in the effort, and anyone serious about games design might be better off looking at RPGs and the likes of Mongoose or Green Ronin.

I'm not in the best position to ask, I joined GW twelve years ago when the company was rapidly expanding and hiring lots of staff, that situation doesn't exist any more. I've not been a games developer outside of these hallowed halls so the only knowledge I have is second-hand from people I know outside of GW. I think it's such an odd industry a lot of success comes from personal drive and ambition - you need a bit of a talent but more important is a passion and affinity for the subject. I was designing games, writing armies, creating rules long before I ever contemplated doing such a thing for a living (in fact I originally planned to become an illustrator somewhere).

Beware! Turning your hobby into your profession comes with certain downsides, not least that your brain doesn't usually shut off at five thirty, and also you will never view your hobby in the same way again once you see the inner workings of it. However, if you can get the balance right it's a great place to be, and I can say without hesitation that despite all the all the

day-to-day dramas that happen in any workplace, working the Design Studio is great and rarely do I feel it's an effort to come to work in the morning.

Oh, and learn to write. Properly. Get feedback from people that understand these things, not just your mates. The opinions you solicit have to be qualified ones.

D.net - Since Druchii.net has members from all across the planet, we'd like to know where is your favorite place in the world?

GT - I've been to lots of great places. I think people are more important though, and I've made some good friends all over. Honestly, I like being where I am right now. It's good to visit the rest of the world but I don't want to live there!

D.net - Was there one event that set your fate with GW, or were you just destined to be a games designer?

GT - It feels like a bit of both. I'll try to keep this short, but my beginning at GW is quite involved, so bear with me! In order to become an Illustrator I was going to attend Manchester Polytechnic (yes, it was still a poly back then). This required me to do an Art Foundation course at the local college. I was, quite frankly, not good enough to start that and so rather than spending another year on a bridging course to get me to the required standard I decided to pack in education and start working for a living. So I guess that interview where I was turned down for the Foundation course was the catalyst for the events that followed.

As for fate, well that must have played a hand. I originally never applied for a specific job at the Studio. GW retail had turned down my applications twice before (once with an interview and the second time without). As I've mentioned, I was happily just churning out games and rules for my own pleasure and to play with my mates, and I wrote some extra rules for Blood Bowl (for, amongst other things, Zoats!). On a whim I took them to Games Day '93 to show to Jervis. Jerv asked that I send them to him at the studio because he would (quite rightly I have subsequently learned) probably lose them if I gave them to him then and there. I spent the next couple of days furiously using my mum's electric typewriter to make some nicer versions of lots of my scribbles. All of this went in an envelope along with the Blood Bowl rules, a CV and a letter volunteering to empty the bins if they'd like.

**"even a prat can drive a
Ferrari into a wall"**



Now we have to go back in space and time for the 'possibly fate' part. A few months earlier WD had been advertising the recently created positions of Assistant Games Developers. I'd glanced at the advert and seen that they wanted someone two years older and preferably a graduate, so I gave it no further thought. There were three positions available and all three had been filled. However, for different reasons, two of those offered the jobs turned them down before starting. This was the situation in Nottingham when a letter from yours truly plops on Jervis' desk from some spod who's written a bunch of rules and is currently 'between employments'. I still have the letter I received from Rick asking me up for an interview. It was on a Friday, I received a phone call offering me a job the following Monday and I moved up to Nottingham that next weekend. The rest, as they say, is history.

On behalf of the magazine and all the members of Druchii.net, we'd like to thank Gav Thorpe for taking the time to share his insight and personal history with us. We'd also like to thank Langmann for cracking the whip at the heels of the aforementioned string-pulling slave team.

D.net - How would you rate yourself as a player?

GT - Fun to play, but nowhere clinical enough to be rated too highly. I'm very good on the theory, not so great in the practice - I simply don't visualize armies the way the top players do, I've even fielded some of Alessio's most competitive lists and not done that great with them (as someone said at the time, "even a prat can drive a Ferrari into a wall"). Also, without exaggeration, I have appalling luck. Not all the time, just when it's important.

D.net - Which faction will you join in Mythic's "Warhammer: Age of Reckoning"?

GT - If I ever get a PC capable of handling it, I would have to stick with my Dwarfs. Maybe.

D.net - Which Warhammer special character would you like to sit in a pub and have a chat with? (Assuming that you are not going to get lucky with Morathi.) ?

GT - Thorgrim. He'd probably bore the pants off you but you know he'd stand his round!

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