



WHITE DWARF

ISSUE
456

NEW
WARHAMMER
40,000!

SPACE MARINES
VERSUS NECRONS
BATTLE REPORT

DESIGN NOTES
FROM THE
CREATORS

WARHAMMER
CRIME SHORT
STORY

CITIES OF
SIGMAR IN
WARCRY

AND MUCH
MORE FOR



Copyright © Games Workshop Limited 2020 excepting all materials pertaining to the New Line theatrical productions: The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King, THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY, THE HOBBIT: THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG, THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES which are © 2020 New Line Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring, The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King and the names of the characters, items, events and places therein are trademarks of The Saul Zaentz Company d/b/a Middle-earth Enterprises under license to New Line Productions, Inc. © Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY, THE HOBBIT: THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG, THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES and the names of the characters, items, events and places therein are trademarks of The Saul Zaentz Company d/b/a Middle-earth Enterprises under license to New Line Productions, Inc. (s20)

All quotations from J.R.R. Tolkien's literary trilogy The Lord of the Rings (including any of the volumes thereof) © The Tolkien Estate 1954-55, 1966.

White Dwarf © Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2020. White Dwarf, GW, Games Workshop, Citadel, Warhammer Visions, Golden Demon, 'Eavy Metal, Paint Splatter, Space Marine, 40K, Warhammer, Warhammer 40,000, the 'Aquila' Double-headed Eagle logo, Warhammer Age of Sigmar, Battletome, Stormcast Eternals, and all associated logos, illustrations, images, names, creatures, races, vehicles, locations, weapons, characters, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are either ® or TM, and/or © Games Workshop Limited, variably registered around the world. All Rights Reserved.

Please be aware that Games Workshop products are usually sold unpainted and unassembled and the contents of any products may vary from those shown herein (for example, any banners shown may not necessarily be included). Pictures are used for illustrative purposes only. In accordance with national laws, Games Workshop is prohibited from selling spray paints and bladed equipment to certain age groups. Further, certain Citadel products may be dangerous if used incorrectly and Games Workshop does not recommend them for use by children under the age of 16 without adult supervision. Whatever your age, be careful when using glues, bladed equipment and sprays and make sure that you read and follow the instructions on the packaging. Prices correct at time of going to press. Customers are advised to contact Games Workshop for current availability and current Games Workshop prices. Prices quoted are for products sold by Games Workshop through its own stores, catalogue or website. Independent retailers are responsible for determining their own prices.

White Dwarf Manager: Ian Huxley

Managing Editor: Lyle Lowery

Printed by Precision Colour Printing Ltd in the UK for distribution to the rest of the world. Printed by C&C Offset Printing Co. Ltd in China for distribution to Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

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

Email: team@whitedwarf.co.uk

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

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

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

Represented by: Games Workshop Deutschland GmbH, Am Wehrhahn 32, 40211 Düsseldorf, Deutschland

Registered in England and Wales

– Company No. 01467092.

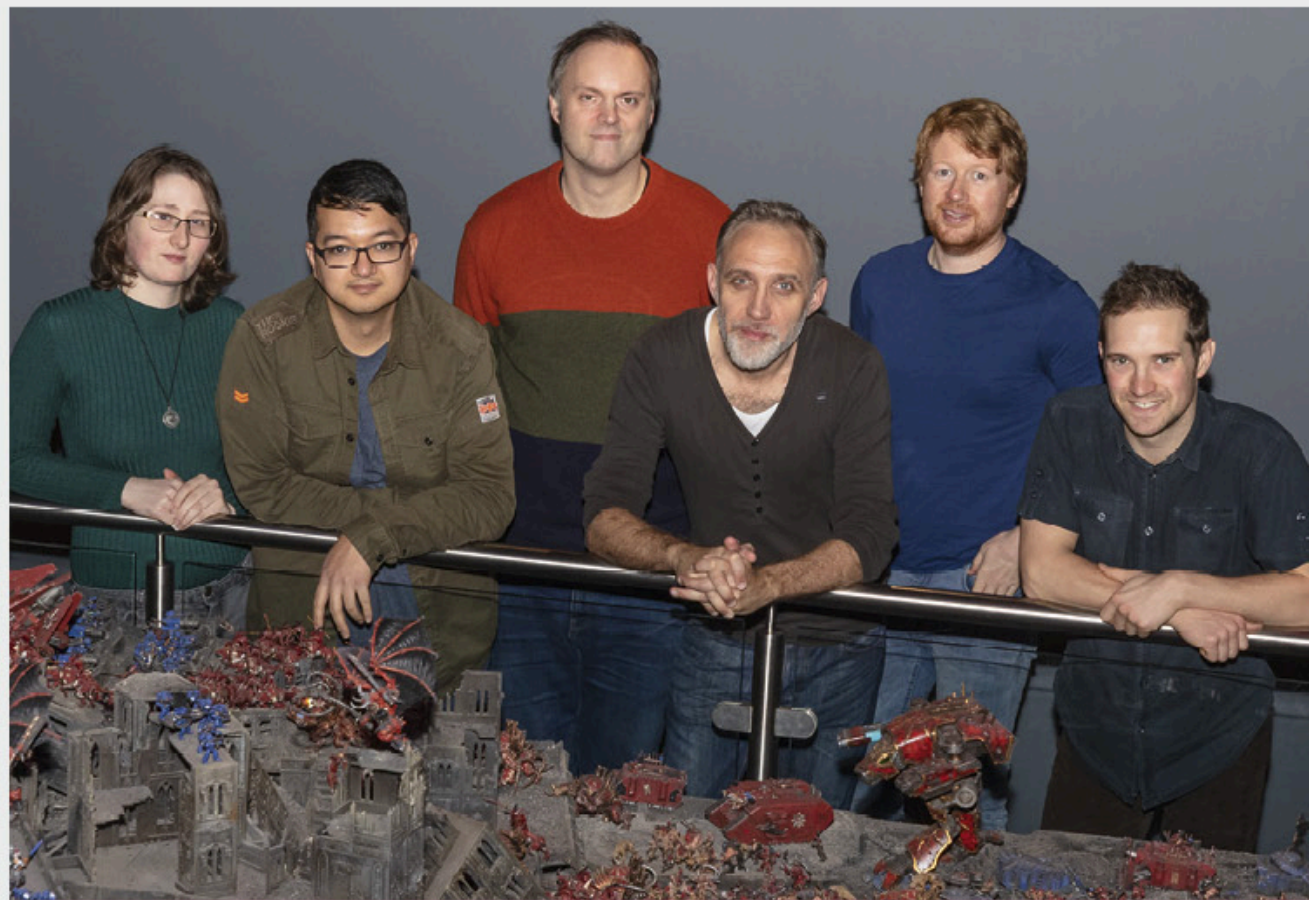
September 2020



ISSN: 0265-8712 / Product code: 60249999598

MEET THE WHITE DWARF TEAM

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



From left to right: Sophie Bostock (Designer), Lyle Lowery (Managing Editor), Matthew Hutson (Senior Designer), Shaun Pritchard (Reprographics), Jonathan Stapleton (Photographer) and Dan Harden (Staff Writer).

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS

Louis Aguilar, Nyle Ajina, Andy Barlow, John Bracken, Steve Buddle, Andy Clark, Paul Claridge, Adam Cooper, Robin Cruddace, Ed Cottrell, Calum Davis, Sam Dinwiddy, Paul Foulkes, James Gallagher, Jes Goodwin, Colin Grayson, Elliot Hamer, Nic Ho, Tom Horth, Ben Jefferson, Ben Johnson, Chris Kelley, Phil Kelly, Martyn Lyon, Sam Pearson, James Perry, Peter McMullin, Aly Morrison, Steve Party, James Swallow, Nathan Trolley, David Waeselynyck, Dirk Wehner, Chris Wraight.

EXCLUSIVE SUBSCRIBER COVERS!

If you subscribe to *White Dwarf*, you may have noticed that you have a different cover on your magazine compared to the ones found in shops. Subscriber copies feature a piece of artwork without the contents listing down the side, allowing you to appreciate the art in all its glory.

This month's cover features the Ultramarines on crusade, illustrated by Paul Dainton.

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



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

www.warhammer-community.com

WHITE DWARF

ISSUE 456

THE ERA INDOMITUS



The Imperial records are finally declassified, the Necron tomb worlds have awakened, and the new edition of Warhammer 40,000 is well and truly upon us. You've had a chance by now to kick the tyres for yourself on the new edition, and now *White Dwarf* is here to lead you through a deep dive into the new range, filled with commentary from the creators and behind-the-scenes insights into the goals, driving forces and ultimate results of this massive project.

We start first with a look at the amazing new Necron and Space Marine models that are part of the new edition's launch. The talented artists behind those figures talk about these new miniatures and what inspired their new and defining looks.

From there, we turn to Robin Cruddace for some designer's notes on the evolution of the rules. After you've taken that in, it's time to see the rules in action in the form of our first Battle Report for the new edition.

After that, Andy Clark has something to say about the background written for the new Warhammer 40,000 Core Book, which leads in nicely to an exploration of the Pariah Nexus and the mysterious 'Stilling' that has befallen its inhabitants.

Then we circle back to where we started with another feature packed with stunning models and incredible imagery. Here you'll find a magnificent diorama display showcasing the new range of models in battle.

Finally, the Silver Templars, a relatively new Chapter of the Ultima Founding, get the Index Astartes treatment complete with new Chapter rules.

That's a lot of 40K! And while we're certainly giving Warhammer 40,000 its day in this issue, there's lots more Warhammer goodness besides. So what are you waiting for?

WHITE DWARF CONTENTS

4 CONTACT!

Letters, painting advice and beautifully painted miniatures in this issue's Contact. Check out that Alarielle!

10 WORLDS OF WARHAMMER

Master cartographer Phil Kelly is back from a tour of Hysh to share his adventures with us. And some maps.

WARHAMMER 40,000

16 DESIGNERS' NOTES: CRUSADERS AND ALIENS

The miniatures designers for the Indomitus box set chat about their latest creations, including the new Necron models.

WARHAMMER 40,000

24 PAINT SPLATTER: THE SZAREKHAN DYNASTY

Stage-by-stage painting guide for the Silent King's own warriors.

WARHAMMER 40,000

26 ECHOES FROM THE WARP

Robin Cruddace talks about the new edition of Warhammer 40,000.

WARHAMMER 40,000

30 BATTLE REPORT: THE EDGE OF SILENCE

The Ultramarines battle the Necrons of the Szarekhan Dynasty using the new Warhammer 40,000 rules. Ooh!

WARHAMMER 40,000

48 ECHOES FROM THE WRITERS

A special one-off column from Andy Clark about writing the background for the new *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*.

WARHAMMER 40,000

52 BLADEGUARD

Civilians come under attack by blade-wielding three-legged Necron monsters in this action-packed short story.

WARHAMMER 40,000

56 BATTLES OF THE PARIAH NEXUS

Exciting new background detailing the war for the Pariah Nexus.

WARHAMMER 40,000

62 THE MINES OF VERTIGUS II

An awesome new diorama display designed by the Warhammer World team.

WARHAMMER 40,000

70 INDEX ASTARTES: SILVER TEMPLARS

The silver-clad sons of Novaris receive their very first Index Astartes article. Focus and Fury!



Cover art by Paul Dainton



Subscription cover art by Paul Dainton



30

BATTLE REPORT: THE EDGE OF SILENCE



70

INDEX ASTARTES: SILVER TEMPLARS

**SUBSCRIBE TO
WHITE DWARF
TODAY!
SEE INSIDE
BACK COVER**

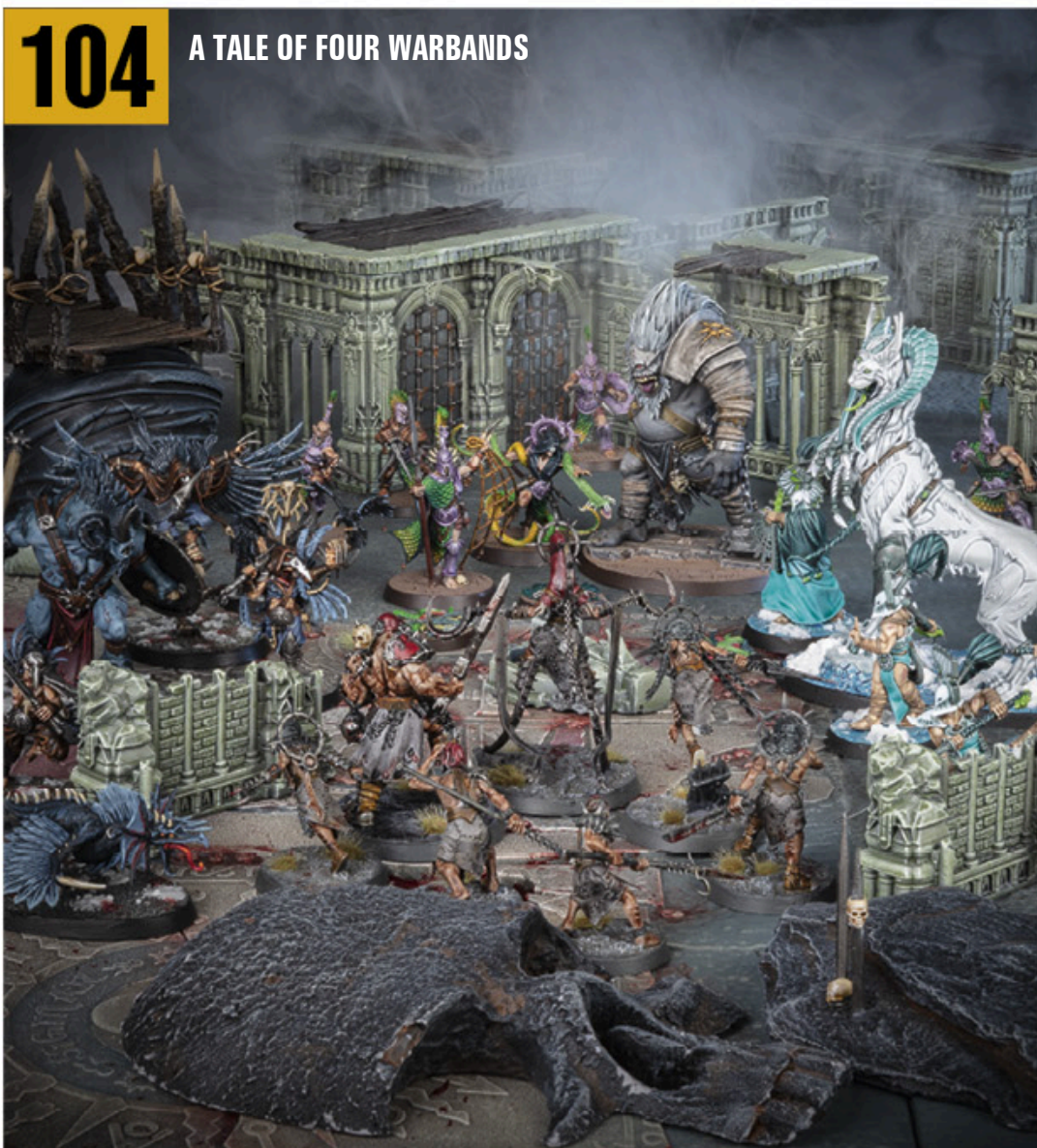
62

THE MINES OF VERTIGUS II



104

A TALE OF FOUR WARBANDS



WARHAMMER 40,000

82 PAINT SPLATTER: SILVER TEMPLARS

Grab some silver paint, because here's a stage-by-stage painting guide for the Silver Templars. Who'd have guessed, eh?

WARHAMMER 40,000

84 THE BOND MARTIAL

A gallery of Silver Templars painted by the studio army painters, plus a few sent in by one of our readers.

WARHAMMER AGE OF SIGMAR

92 RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Louis Aguilar has pushed Jervis off his soap box to chat about gaming aids. Plus, a useful cheat sheet.

WARCRY

96 CHASING THE FLAMES

New rules and background for Cities of Sigmar warbands in Warcry. Plus, a fiery campaign for them to play through.

WARCRY

104 A TALE OF FOUR WARBANDS

The final instalment in our Warcry campaign series. Which of the warlords will finish their quest first?

114 THE MODEL PHOTOGRAPH

Ever wondered how to get pictures of your miniatures into the pages of *White Dwarf*? Well, here's how.

WARHAMMER UNDERWORLDS

120 GLORY POINTS

Dave's flexing his gaming muscles once more to talk about Flex warbands and how to get the most out of them.

BLACK LIBRARY

124 SANCTIONER

An exclusive short story by Chris Wraight for Warhammer Crime, a new imprint from Black Library.

WARHAMMER 40,000

128 FAITH & FIRE PART VI

The sixth part in James Swallow's classic Sisters of Battle story. This time the Ecclesiarchy comes under scrutiny.

142 INSIDE THE STUDIO

We chat about the games we've played and the models we've painted over the last month.

CONTACT

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



A NEW STORMHOST MARCHES TO WAR

Dear *White Dwarf*, I'd never really gotten to grips with Warhammer Age of Sigmar until Games Workshop released the *Mortal Realms* magazine subscription. I am now totally sold and I've not only subscribed, but read a huge amount of Age of Sigmar lore as a result. The miniatures are superb, and I've really enjoyed painting them. To add to that, your Realm of Heavens article in the October 2019 issue has spurred me on to create some background for my own Stormcast Eternals Stormhost.

The Anvils of Azyrheim originally hail from the heavenly city itself and were once either artisan blacksmiths or engineers before their rebirth as Stormcast Eternals. Sigmar himself invited them to become emissaries to the realm of Chamon in order to rekindle an alliance with the duardin. Initially treated with suspicion, they have now been warmly received and often attend raiding parties with Kharadron Overlords in order to suppress the power of Tzeentch within the realm. I've attached some photos of some of my Sequitors – I hope you like them enough to feature them in the magazine!

Oliver Rowley
Camberley, UK



Sometimes all it takes is a spark of inspiration, and suddenly a whole new army is born, right Oliver? We think the idea you have for your Stormhost is really cool. You've come up with some interesting and compelling background, a place for them to fight, a great name for them and a really cool colour scheme. All in all, a job well done!

For anyone else out there who wants to create their own Stormhost, make sure you check out our recent articles about creating your own Space Marines Chapter. We know they're different game systems and armies, but the underlying principles are still the same.



Inquisitor Greyfax
by Michał Gmitrasiuk



Myrmour Banshees
by Darcy Bono

NURGLE'S OFFERINGS!

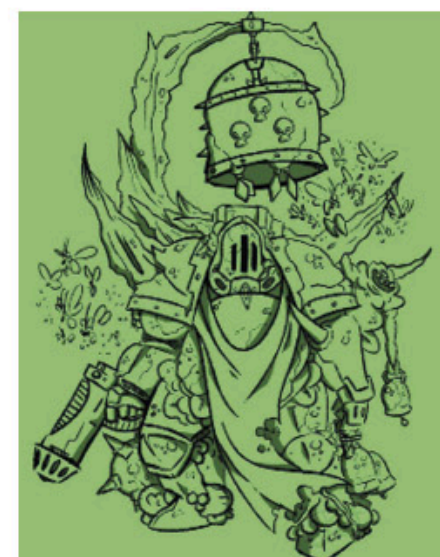
Hi, *White Dwarf* guys and gals! I recently just got back into the Warhammer hobby after playing a few games with some work colleagues. I've been working hard on a few armies, including an Age of Sigmar Maggotkin force and a Nurgle 40K force. While I was waiting for the models to arrive, I got creative and did a few drawings of the gross green guys themselves!

I know you normally print pictures of painted minis and suchlike, but I thought

I'd share my infectious doodles with you all and hopefully the readers, too!

Jalen Rose
Leamington Spa, UK

Hey, Jalen, good to have you back in the hobby. Your Noxious Blightbringer illustration looks brilliant – very nice work! We love the cartoony style you've used, while still making him look dangerous and disgusting. We particularly like the flies.





EMAIL US:
TEAM@WHITEDWARF.CO.UK



FIND US ON FACEBOOK:
SEARCH 'WHITE DWARF
MAGAZINE'



WRITE TO US:
THE WHITE DWARF BUNKER
GAMES WORKSHOP
NOTTINGHAM
NG7 2WS
UNITED KINGDOM

By submitting letters, articles or photographs, you give Games Workshop permission to feature them in White Dwarf, on the Warhammer Community page or on Facebook at any time in the future. To read our full privacy policy, see the White Dwarf Privacy Notice in the Customer Services section on

www.games-workshop.com

PAINTING QUESTION: THE BLACKEST BLACK

Heya, *White Dwarf* team! In issue 450, there's a Basing Masterclass article in which we can see the wonderful Black Legion army of Paul Claridge. I really would like to know what colour scheme he used for the black armour and the gold trim.

And, by the way, death to the False Emperor!



Aurélien Cheminot
Lyon, France

Your wish is our command, Aurélien – we went and asked Paul how he painted his models. He undercoated them Chaos Black, painted the armour, then the gold trim and finally the details. For the black armour, he basecoated the models with Abaddon Black, then used Incubi Darkness as a 'chunky' highlight on the edges of the armour panels. He used Thunderhawk Blue for the edge highlights, then picked out the corners and top raised areas with a spot of Fenrisian Grey. Good luck painting your traitors!

BLACK ARMOUR

Basecoat: Abaddon Black

Layer: Incubi Darkness

Layer: Thunderhawk Blue

Layer: Fenrisian Grey

GOLD TRIM

Basecoat: Retributor Armour

Layer: Liberator Gold

Wash: Agrax Earthshade

Wash: Nuln Oil (recesses)

RED DETAILS

Basecoat: Mephiston Red

Layer: Evil Sunz Scarlet

Layer: Wild Rider Red

Layer: Fire Dragon Bright

SANDSTONE BASE

Basecoat: Zandri Dust

Wash: Agrax Earthshade

Drybrush: Karak Stone

Drybrush: Corax White



Loonboss
by John Margiotta



Iron Hands Lieutenant
by Aksel Olsson



Jain Zar conversion
by Ólafur Ólafsson

MONSTROUS SQUIGS!

Hello, *White Dwarf* Team.

I am Edison and I am eight. I have been playing Warhammer Age of Sigmar for three years, and I collect Orruks and Gloomspite Gitz. Currently my best two models are my Megaboss on a Maw-krusha and Mollog, not to mention my twenty-five Ardboys!

Now, I have a couple of questions for you. I noticed that in issue 450 the Squig Gobbas and Colossal Squig don't have any rules in the battletome, so what are the rules for them and why aren't they mentioned? I want to know because I

might like to put them in my army. I also enjoyed the Destroy the Nexus Battle Report in the same magazine.

Edison Morgan
Aylesbury, UK

Hey, Edison, thanks for writing in. First off, we're glad you liked the Battle Report – Jes put up a good fight, but Phil is a clever devil and outfoxed him at the last minute! To answer your question about the monster squigs, their rules are available to download for free from the Forge World website. You can find them here: forgeworld.co.uk/Monstrous-Arcanum-2018

ASK GROMBRINDAL

Hello there – I have a question for Grombrindal. What is the difference between a Negavolt Cultist and an Arco-flagellant? They look kind of similar.



Shane Johnson
Anderson, Indiana, USA

Nega-who-what-now? No, it's okay, I know who you mean. I just prefer answering questions about axes and ale is all. Want to know about Bugman's XXXXXX, then I'm your duardin. Put simply, Negavolt Cultists are techno-heretics, or heretekes. They are fully aware of their actions and seek to corrupt and defile technology with their weapons and wargear. Arco-flagellants are criminals and sinners who have been punished (or rewarded depending on how you look at it) with arco-flagellation instead of death. They are partially mind-wiped and controlled by a handler who will unleash them on their foe. They are considered to be 'good guys' as they fight for the Imperium, whereas the Negavolt Cultists are very definitely servants of Chaos.

Grombrindal

Slambo
by Vincent Lepoutre



TOP PHOTO TIPS

In Contact, we want to show off the very best miniatures painted by you, our readers. Of course, great miniatures need great pictures, so we came up with a useful guide to help you out. You'll find our updated guide on [page 114](#) of this issue!

If you follow all the advice in that article, you really can't go far wrong.

Our top tips are:

Always use a white background.

Make sure you've got good lighting.

Ensure the whole model is in focus, including the base and all its weapons.

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

THE CHALLENGE HAS JUST BEGUN

I have to say, guys, that the Warhammer resolutions challenge included in issue 450 was a phenomenal idea. My brother (the Imperial scum that he is) and I have challenged each other to paint a load of our models over the coming year using that as the scoring curriculum. We have wagered two Start Collecting! boxes as the prize. The close of January had the score at 3-2, with my brother taking a slight lead, but I evened it up for February at 6-6, so it's still anybody's year! Thank

you for adding another entertaining and enjoyable layer to the hobby. Back to painting my Orks and Chaos!

KC Miller
Oregon, USA

Now this sounds like a great fun, KC, and congratulations on hitting your first couple of targets. You'll have to keep us updated throughout the year!

Khorne Berzerkers and Chaos Dreadnought
by Konrad Zielezny



MODEL OF THE MONTH

Our model of the month is this stunning rendition of Alarielle the Everqueen painted by Gregor Pilarski. We asked him how he went about painting her.

'I painted Alarielle as an ice queen so that she can lead a winter-themed Sylvaneth army,' says Gregor. 'I painted the model in sub-assemblies, priming most of the components black, but the wings white. One of my goals was to use different techniques and colours to vary the tone across the model. Her dress is painted using The Fang, then Russ Grey,

Fenrisian Grey and Ulthuan Grey up to pure White Scar on the extreme highlights. I used layering then glazes to smooth the transitions between the colours. For the beetle, I started with an Abaddon Black basecoat followed by drybrushes of Incubi Darkness and Sotek Green to define all the raised curves of the carapace. I then used a mix of White Scar and Sotek Green to create light reflections on the curves of the carapace. For the lower parts of the beetle's horns and its face I used Naggarth Night and Xereus Purple. Light reflection points were made by adding White Scar to Xereus Purple.'



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: DAMIEN TOMASINA

Damien is a Golden Demon-winning painter, but when he's not entering competitions, he's painting new armies like this Sisters of Battle force.

Damien: When the new models of the Adepta Sororitas army set were revealed, I was very excited by the designs of the miniatures. The army had been long-awaited by many fans, myself included, and I really enjoyed the build-up to the release, especially when I saw the weapon designs at Warhammer Fest. When I finally got to hold the new miniatures, I found their designs to be incredibly beautiful, very dynamic and highly detailed. I was very happy to take my brush to them. Choosing a colour scheme was easy enough, as I like the black armour and red robes of the Order of Our Martyred Lady best. Models such as Canoness Veridyan, Amalia and Saint Katherine in particular show off the colour scheme really well. My decision was settled when I read the codex – the Order Conviction of Our Martyred Lady works really well with the miracle dice rule and seems both powerful and really fun to play with.

'I wanted my Battle Sisters to be bright and shiny, despite the fact they are wearing black armour,' says Damien. 'I used bright red for the robes, starting with a basecoat of Mephiston Red and highlighting them with Evil Sunz Scarlet, Wild Rider Red and Lugganath Orange.'

'To complement the red-orange colour of the robes, I used Abaddon Black, Incubi Darkness, Thunderhawk Blue and Blue Horror for the armour, painting it to look polished and highly reflective. The white hair is painted using the same tints: Thunderhawk Blue, Blue Horror and White Scar.'

'Keeping the idea of brightness in mind, I chose to paint the metal parts of the models using a non-metallic metal technique. This enabled me to add reflection points to the models and reflected effects such as the flames on the Repentia Superior and the Penitent Engine.'





'To contrast with the brighter colour scheme of the Sisters, I chose to paint my other units darker and a bit filthier. Both the Sisters Repentia and the Arco-flagellant miniatures lack the shiny and clean effect. To show the result of the injected products and punishments received, I painted the Arco-flagellants with more-unusual skin tones that feature a lot of greens, browns and purples.'



'For the bases of my Sisters of Battle, I wanted to add a religious touch. I decided to model cobblestones onto the bases to give the impression that my Sisters are fighting over the remains of a cathedral, or perhaps over holy ground. The pavements are decorated with gothic symbols, and the words 'Glory' and 'Strength' appear here and there, too. There are also plenty of fleur-de-lis symbols to match those on the Sisters themselves.'



'To maintain a harmonious colour scheme across my models, the bases are basecoated with Thunderhawk Blue, then highlighted with Screaming Skull. I then used weathering powders to cover them in dust, representing the never-ending warfare of the 41st Millennium.'

'And now, the Sisters and I are ready to go and burn heretics!'

WORLDS OF WARHAMMER



PHIL KELLY

As the Warhammer Studio's senior background writer, Phil is almost permanently (some might say eternally) immersed in the lore of the Mortal Realms and the 41st Millennium. Most recently, however, Phil has donned pith helmet, walking boots and sunglasses and disappeared into the Realm of Light to map its every contour.

¹ Though not impossible. The Mortal Realms have a wide variety of subsidiary islands and even moons that you could set your campaign on if you wished. And yes, we did once blow up a certain Warhammer world, but we've replaced it with eight more.

² Despite the fact that our planet has some very weird and wonderful elements that might seem fantastical. Search the term 'incredible landscape photos' on the internet if you want a quick fix of inspiration.

WORLD BUILDING PART TWO – ZOOMING IN

Last year, the *White Dwarf* team let me guest edit the March issue of their fine magazine. I took the opportunity to talk about how to build your own fictional worlds, and I also showed some map sketches that I then used as a basis for telling war stories of different kinds. The main article focused on Vigilus, a planet of vital strategic significance to the current Warhammer 40,000 storyline that we took to the brink of destruction. This time, I'd like to focus on the Age of Sigmar equivalent.

The Imperium is an empire of a million worlds. One of the joys of writing 40K material is that you can commit a total alien conquest or enact Exterminatus, and ultimately the main body of the setting remains the same. In the fantasy equivalent, it's a lot harder to make up an entirely new world to fight over, save and/or blow up.¹ Instead we tend to detail a section of a Mortal Realm rather than its entirety, generating a map that is 'zoomed in' to a specific area.

The reason for this is because the Mortal Realms are near-infinite war zones. They are mind-boggling in size, and it would take a few table-breaking atlases even to properly depict just one of them. As a result, we zoom in on 'focal zones', those areas that we can detail properly in our books and use as the basis for our campaigns. I like to say these are roughly a twentieth of the full size of that realm. The idea is that the other nineteen-twentieths belong to you.

In those vast, uncharted wildernesses are the lands from which 'Your Dudes' may hail. With the general concepts of the Realm and a good solid example of what they may be like in our published focal zone, the rest is burgeoning with potential for narrative games, cool maps, empires rising and falling, reality-wrenching spells and whatever acts of skullduggerous calamity you can come up with. Your own cities can be founded,

background be devised, the history of your collection written in blood.

Given that principle, I thought it a good idea to show how we devise our empires and histories, the better to encourage your own. One of the latest focal zones we created in the Age of Sigmar design studio was the Ymetrican Geosegment in Hysh, the Realm of Light. Hysh is the homeland of the Lumineth, and as always, developing the map was a key ingredient in developing the race's background. So where to start?

FANTASY GEOGRAPHY

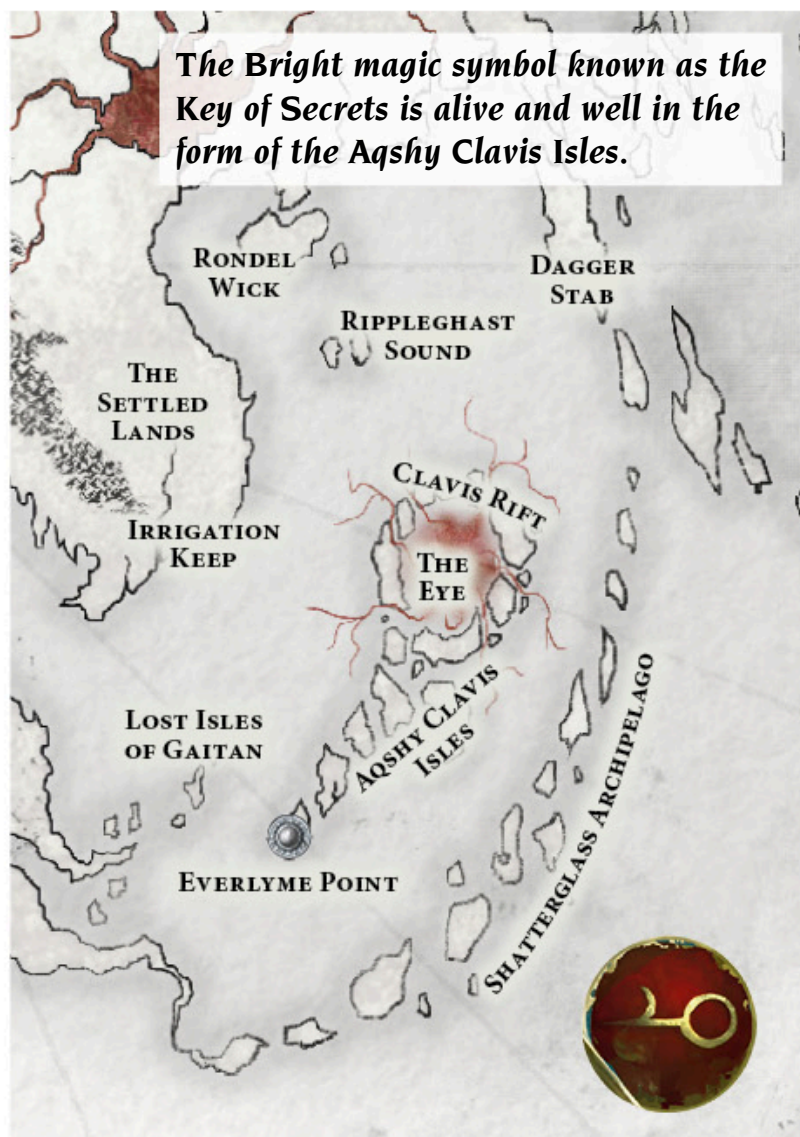
For me, a good place to begin is the concepts that lie behind the race itself. These will invariably inform the concepts behind the map. In Age of Sigmar, it's not enough to just make a map that looks like part of our own real-life world and call it a day.² There has to be something specifically fantastical about it, even if rendered only subtly, that the viewer will pick up on and lean in closer to examine. Across the map in *Battletome: Ossiarck Bonereapers*, it's the weird vertebrae-like pontoons that adjoin the lands and the rib-like harvesting structures that help say 'this is a land of skeletal remains and ever-present death.' Likewise, the rivers are made to look like the cracks in a cranium rather than normal watercourses, those tiny fissures we associate with bony matter. Similarly there are places in the Prime Innerlands map that have islands that look a little like distorted skulls. Though you might not notice these consciously, they all add to a sense of vague unease and fantasy deathliness that give that landscape character.

Another device we've used over the years is that of including the magic symbol of the realm in question somewhere on the map. This is something started by my colleague, the talented cartographer Nuala Kinrade, and we've kept up the tradition ever since. Opposite, you'll see a couple of examples – and good hunting for the rest!

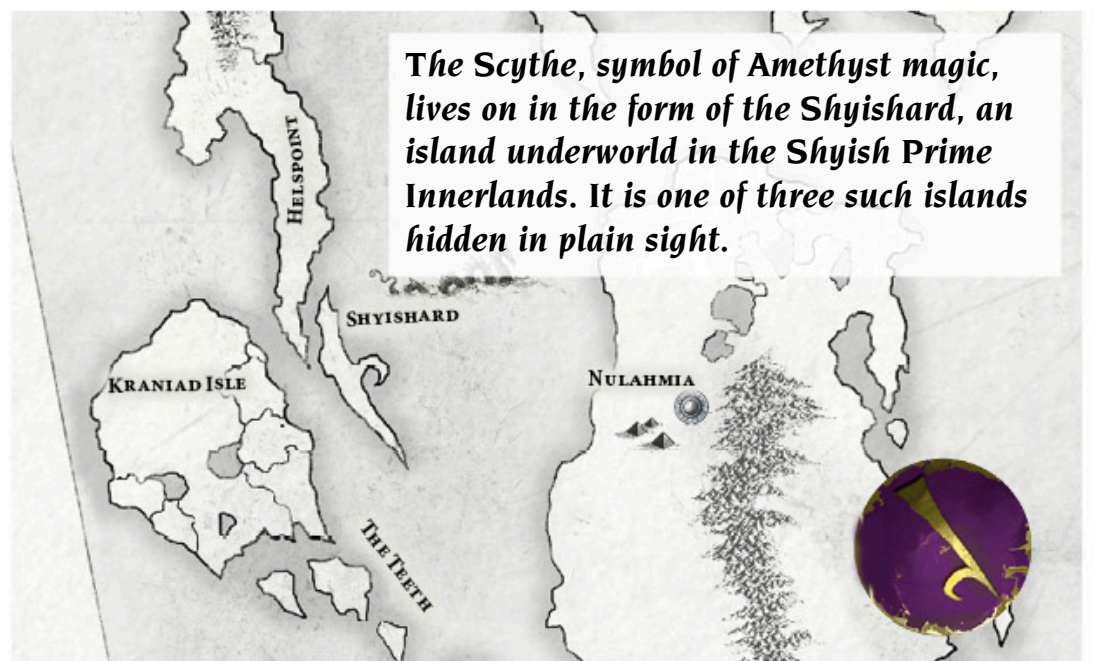
INTO THE REALM OF LIGHT

The map of Hysh was essentially a vast version of the same concept. The symbol of Hysh is wheel-like, an echo of the ancient wheel of magic itself, with one arrow pointing out from the top. Well, one of the things we'd defined about Hysh was that it was known as the Ten Paradises. I wanted to delve into that. Given that the wheel symbol had eight segments, I thought perhaps the 'hub' of that wheel could be the ninth, and the 'rim' of

Worlds of Warhammer delves into the background of the Age of Sigmar and the 41st Millennium, looking at how stories are created and legends are born. Dig out your coordinate plotters and proportional dividers, because Phil is talking about maps again.



The Bright magic symbol known as the Key of Secrets is alive and well in the form of the Aqshy Clavis Isles.



The Scythe, symbol of Amethyst magic, lives on in the form of the Shyishard, an island underworld in the Shyish Prime Innerlands. It is one of three such islands hidden in plain sight.



In the Ghurish Heartlands, the Hunter's Arrow is echoed in the isle south of Wailingspike, Lendu.

the wheel shape could be the tenth. This would give ten landmasses that later became the Great Nations of Hysh. With this in mind I took to drawing a set of landmasses that looked roughly like the shape of the symbol of Hysh's magic – or rather, I drew half of them.

SYMMETRY AND SYMBOLISM

One of the key concepts of Hysh is it being a land of symbolism, order and symmetry (before the coming of Chaos, of course, and the events that messed it all up).³ I wanted to see that writ large, and hence I employed one of the foremost tools in my own version of budget cartography – a photocopier. After drawing one half of the realm, I photocopied it on 'mirror setting' and glued the two semi-circular sections together. Primitive perhaps, but it gave me a basis to start with.

When drawing maps, a good place to start is to use tiny wiggly lines for the borders. This ensures a sense of scale; each little stretch of wiggle denotes a coastline, a delta, a fjord, an estuary or a similar feature.⁴

With the main map sketch done (if you are running your own campaign, this is a useful way to

show where your focal region is), the next stage was to choose one part and zoom into it. Back to the photocopier I went, enlarging a section that incorporated one of the Ten Paradises, but also some segments of those around it. As luck would have it, the photocopy, with such enlargement, did not keep the integrity of the mirrored semi-circular equivalent, which gave a lot more texture and granular detail to the coastlines. I leant into it, as they say, and the randomness that came from that degradation actually helped sell the idea that my prototype map had been eroded by war.⁵ Those of you who are familiar with Hysh's core concepts might be asking 'why, as a land of such symmetry and order, does this place look so beaten up' – and the flippant answer to this is 'because Chaos'.

Over the course of the Age of Chaos, every realm (save Azyr) was corrupted, shattered, twisted or consumed to a great extent by the forces of the Dark Gods. As a result, I made sure many of the Ten Paradises (or Great Nations, as they are known to the Lumineth) had large rivers or cracks across them that broke them into two or three pieces. When mirrored, the equivalent shape appeared on the other side of the realm. The idea that Chaos acts of cosmic vandalism

³ Before Chaos wrecked the joint, Hysh had an impressive rotational symmetry as well as the usual kind. No doubt this is the sort of thing Teclis gets a kick out of.

⁴ If you look at the coastline of one of our planet's landmasses, you will be hard pressed to find a straight line anywhere. Even a small straight line can de-scale a map. The exception, perhaps, is the delineations between many of the states of America, which are impressively straight. Presumably the founding fathers had very big rulers.

⁵ Making good use of random happenings and happy accidents is a fun part of this sort of rough-and-ready cartography. A splash of spilt tea could form the basis for a lake, for instance.

⁶ This place is so steeped in symmetry that even the name Haixiah is a palindrome, phonetically as well as visually when spelt in capital letters: HAIXIAH. I convinced the layout and editorial guys we should use a big H at the end of the word as well as at the front on the relevant location on the map.

were mirrored exactly due to the inherent symmetry of Hysh seemed fitting. That is, when one crack opened in one realm, another mirrored it – which was no doubt highly irritating for the gods of disorder. As an example, the Great Daixo River in Ymetrica has a very similar opposite number in Helon.

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT

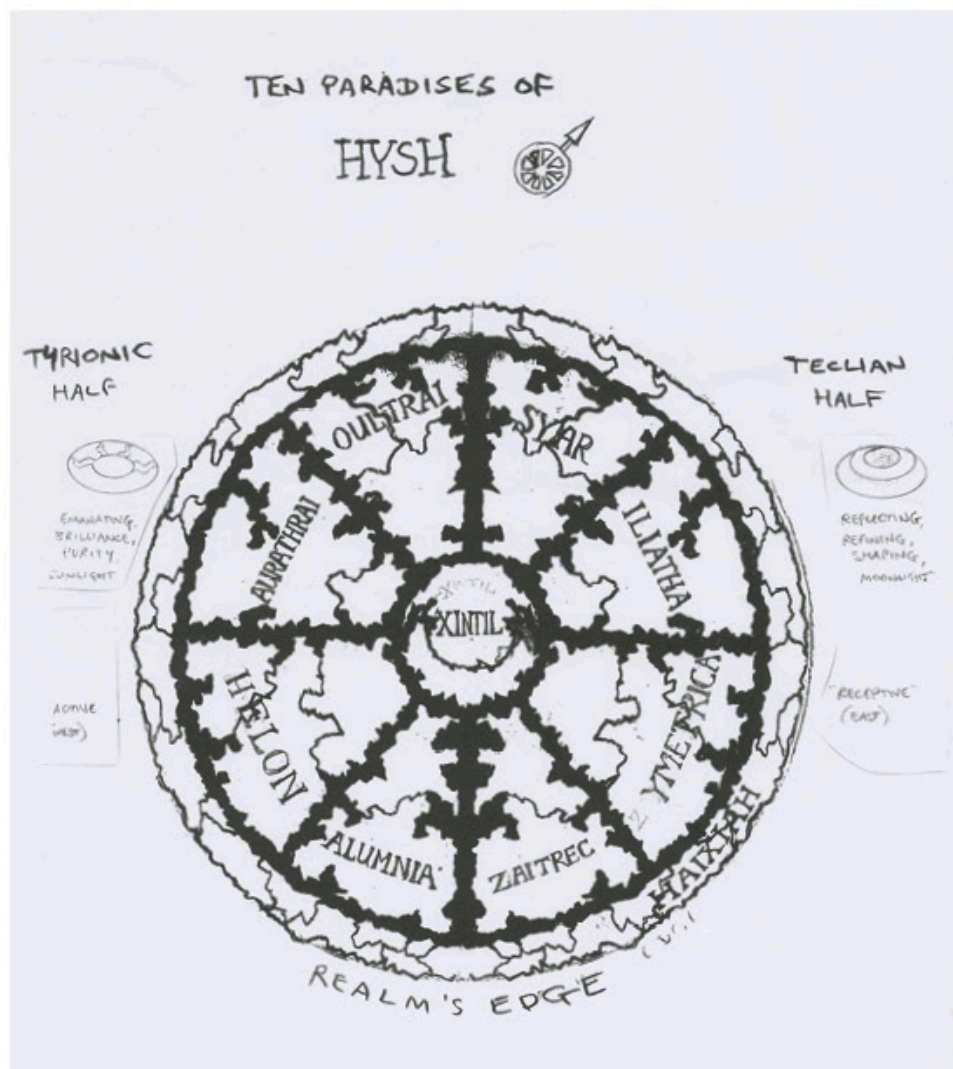
The next stage in making the Hysh map more fantastical was to get across the notion that the closer you get to the edge of the realm, the more reality itself fades to white. This is especially true in Haixiah, the last of the Ten Paradises, which girdles the rest (the rim of the wheel I spoke about earlier).⁶ To borrow some text from the Battletome about Tyrion's first journeys in Hysh, 'The closer to the Realm's Edge he roamed, the more reality faded; washed out by the sheer intensity of the light that shone there, it became little more than a pencil sketch, then a cluster of dots, then nothing more than a concept or wave of thought.' To represent this I thought it would be cool to have the image fade from 'realistic' and relatively dark on one side to 'abstract' and very light on the other. My rather basic solution was to take a photo with the light shining on one side (from a nearby window) and then print that out and photocopy it again. That gave me the basic lighting on the map that I could then work into.

MAKING A SCENE

Once my initial map was set, I then started to layer in the specific locations. Part of the reason for this was to ensure there was a good spread of names that sounded aelven (after all, the

civilised parts of Hysh are largely the province of the Lumineth) whilst another was to include names you could figure out straight off the bat. For every fancy-sounding 'Bel Sarathain' there is a 'Scholar's Gift' or a 'Desert of Fasting'. Some of these names were purely descriptive; the Vertiginous Peaks, for instance, are dizzyingly high. Others are deliberately evocative of locations from the long-lost land of Ulthuan, the crescent-shaped island of the High Elves from the World Before Time. In real life, human explorers sometimes name new-found territories after the places they come from, and it was likely Teclis and Tyrion of Ulthuan that did much of the naming of the new territories they took in Hysh. In this method, there is a heritage there that gives the place depth, and it makes those who know their aelves (or even elves) feel like there is a through line in the history of the race from the world-that-was to the Mortal Realms.

Other locations were named to carry a theme for that region. The Great Nation of Zaitrec, being a continent that holds the Hyshian moon sacred, has a lot of locations that use words that are connected with our own lunar language. Examples include the Seleni Coast (Selene is another name for the moon), Monchildrani (moonchild is an archaic term for someone who is fey and strange of mind), Luneglow and even the Corrupted Craters, which I imagine to look a bit like the surface of the moon. When you are picking your own names, use terms that are reminiscent of the thing you want to evoke and then change them up a little. It can lead to a real sense of identity for that place.



The Ten Paradises were once places of harmony and arithmantic precision. Since the coming of Chaos and the ravages of the Spirefall, they have crumbled and broken apart in a thousand places. Only the fates know if they can still be saved.

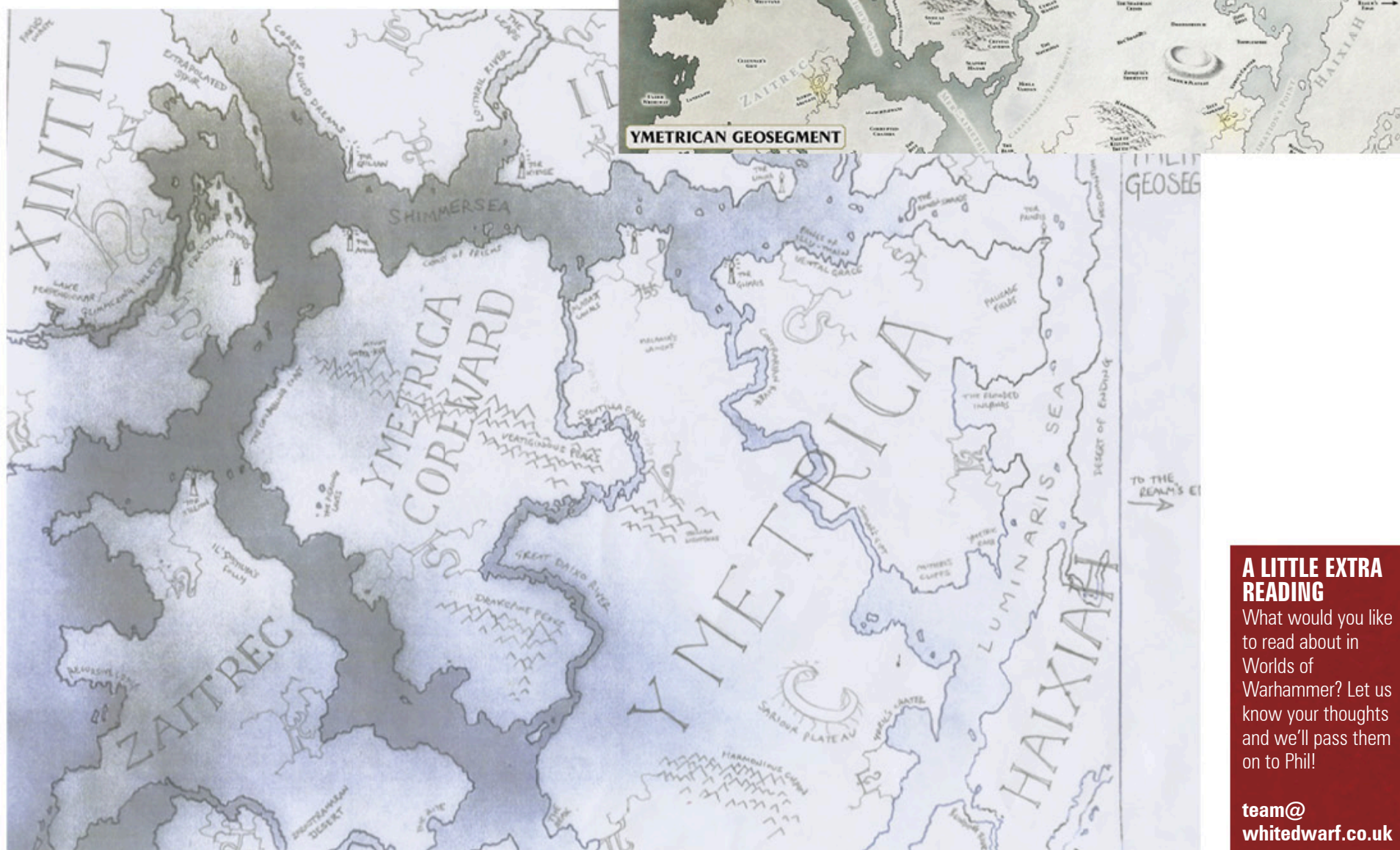
Naturally, being a location in the Mortal Realms, Hysh has had some serious chunks taken out of it by Chaos, and it bears the scars of the wars instigated by Slaanesh's subtle influence. A lot of the names reflect that; the battle sites Temper's Flare, Doom of Spires and the Syll'Esskan Wastes all hint at something good being torn down, for example. The breakage of the coastlines can also be attributed to the effects of Chaos; once, this land looked a lot more ordered and harmonious, but it's been badly affected by the Dark Gods.

So what are the Lumineth doing about it, and how does that come across on this map? Well, that brings me to perhaps the most fantastical feature of the lot: the giant geomantic runes emblazoned upon it. I wanted the viewer to see and recognise them second, as it were, rather than at first glance. Viewers should parse the glowing yellow sites after taking in the general shape and a few of the more prominent details. On closer inspection, it becomes clear they are massive aelven runes nearing the size of inland lakes.

In the lore of the Realm of Light, these runes have been literally burned into the countryside on a massive scale by the geomantic magic of Teclis and his Scinari disciples. The runes are chosen carefully to sear the corruption from the land, and with the power of symbolism being within the very stuff of Hysh, the right pictogram with the right meaning deployed in the right way can banish a multitude of evils.

After getting that message across, it was time to hand the prototype map over to Nuala, whereupon she worked it up into the definitive version that you can find in *Battletome: Lumineth Realm-lords*. Working closely with Emma Turner, my layout artist colleague who is well used to deciphering my crazed scrawlings, we had a fully detailed map of Hysh ready to be fought over (again) by the Lumineth and their enemies.

Though you may not have so much in the way of backup for your map-making projects, you can get an awful lot accomplished with pencil and paper, or with a suite of graphics software if you have such tools at your disposal. Whatever approach you take, if you're of a narrative bent, you'll have tremendous fun making up a wondrous landscape and then founding your own civilisations as a background for your campaign. It's a very rewarding process unto itself. Even better, you and your friends then get to unleash havoc upon that landscape over the course of many a game of Age of Sigmar!

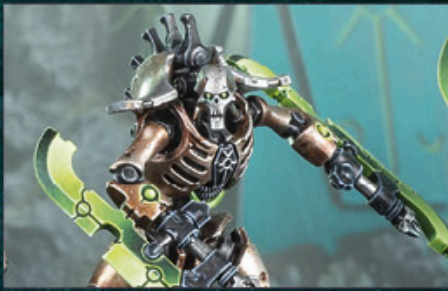


A LITTLE EXTRA READING
 What would you like to read about in Worlds of Warhammer? Let us know your thoughts and we'll pass them on to Phil!
 team@whitedwarf.co.uk

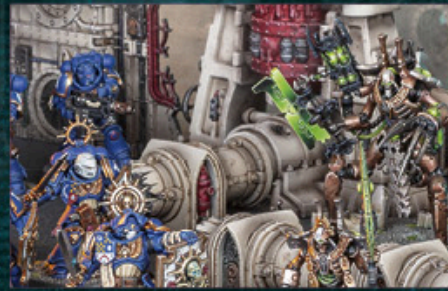
WARHAMMER 40,000

In the grim darkness of the far future, there is only war! Well, war and painting guides, model galleries, a Battle Report, Designers' Notes, new background, a short story and an Index Astartes!





CRUSADERS AND ALIENS
The miniatures designers who worked on the Space Marines and Necrons in the Indomitus box set have lots to say in our Designers' Notes on page 16.



THE EDGE OF SILENCE
The world of Vertigus has been overrun by Necrons of the Szarekhan Dynasty. Can an Ultramarines Crusade force drive them off? Find out on page 30.



CRUSADERS AND ALIENS

Warhammer 40,000: Indomitus is upon us! This box set contains a wealth of incredible new miniatures for both the Space Marine and Necron ranges, so we sat down with the miniatures designers to see what they had to say about their latest creations.



THE ASTARTES ARTIFICERS

Design manager Sam Dinwiddy and designer Jes Goodwin oversaw the team that worked on the new Space Marine models. They are:

David Waeselynck:
Captain

Ed Cottrell:
Chaplain, Judiciar, Assault Intercessors, Bladeguard and Bladeguard Ancient

Nic Ho: Outriders and Eradicators

Colin Grayson:
Lieutenant

CRUSADERS OF THE IMPERIUM

Jes Goodwin: Everyone has an idea of what they think a Space Marine should look like. Some people love them basic, with clean wargear – very functional and utilitarian. Others want them encrusted in detail, be it scrollwork, scripture, relics or little trinkets (or all of the above). Most people like them somewhere in between. When we started looking at the Primaris Marines a few years back, we had a whole bunch of ideas for what they could look like, ranging from the ultra-clean right through to the totally tooled up. Ultimately we decided to go with the clean look – that way hobbyists could paint them how they liked and even convert them if they wished to. Nothing stays clean in the 41st Millennium for long, though – we knew people would stick purity seals, skulls and reliquaries all over their Primaris Marines!

Now, a few years down the line, we've decided it's time to take a proper look at the other end of the spectrum where everything is really grim and nasty. Space Marines are the archetypal knights in space, but the models in the Indomitus box take that a step further, making them more like holy medieval knights on crusade (in space). They're tooled up to the nines, their armour covered in reliquaries, heraldry, iconography, curios and purity seals. They don't carry long-ranged guns or heavy weapons, favouring swords and shields to destroy their foes in glorious combat. They're brutal, righteous warriors. That's why there are two Chaplain characters in the set – they reinforce the idea of faith being a weapon that the Space Marines can use against their enemies. And they're definitely going to need it against the soulless Necrons!

Sam Dinwiddy: We had a few key phrases in mind when we started work on this new range of Space Marine miniatures. Obviously the first one was Gothic – these Space Marines had to capture the dark grittiness that we know and love about Warhammer 40,000 while still maintaining the distinctive silhouettes of the Adeptus Astartes. Forward momentum was another key factor. Existing miniatures like the Intercessors are not necessarily static, but they're very much standing their ground or advancing slowly. We wanted the assault elements of this force to be clearly on the attack, an avalanche of ceramite ready to crush all before it.

Ed Cottrell: Another consideration was mobility. A Space Marine army made up entirely of infantry makes the force quite predictable when it's being moved around the battlefield. We knew we wanted to add a fast-moving element to the force for variety. The answer was the Outriders, which also added a new scale of model to the Space Marines' force. The Necrons range from tiny Scarabs to the huge Canoptek Reanimator, whereas the Space Marines are all of a similar size. The bikers help mix that up a bit.

Sam: Heavy hitting was our last buzz phrase. These Space Marines needed to be powerful, but specifically they needed to be powerful in combat. The faster units needed to look mobile,

while the hard-hitters needed to look really brutal and heavy, as if nothing in the galaxy could move them once they got stuck in. The Bladeguard certainly nail that.

Jes: There's a weight to the Bladeguard and the characters that does make them look utterly immovable. The armour has extra plates on it for a start. The Bladeguard and characters wear Indomitus armour, but with tasset plates and bigger pauldrons – it makes them broader. Their gorgets reach higher, too, making their chests look bigger. The tabards fill the gap between the legs, grounding the models even more solidly. The shields obviously go a long way towards their appearance. They're based on that classic Maltese cross shape (the same shape used on the Crux Terminatus), but elongated at the bottom like a tower shield to protect the bearer head to foot.

Sam: You'll notice that there's a hierarchy to the models, too. The battleline troops have only minor additions to their armour and very few trinkets or relics. They carry chainswords and heavy bolt pistols. The Bladeguard and the Lieutenant are covered in gear – imagine them like the knightly lords of old with access to the very best wargear. The Captain (shown below) is covered in the panoply of an ongoing crusade. That visual hierarchy is a clear indication of rank and a symbol of that warrior's importance.

THE CRUSADE BADGE

Jes: All of the models in this set wear a device on their left vambrace. It's not a specific icon, but rather a campaign badge to show that this group of Space Marines are on crusade together. It is similar in design to a Crux Terminatus, but with a blade extending down from the bottom of it. The same design is repeated on the storm shields of the Bladeguard Veterans.



IN CERAMITE CLAD, BY FAITH PROTECTED

The Space Marines in the Warhammer 40,000: Indomitus box set are equipped with some of the very best weaponry that can be found in their Chapter armoury. They also wear the garb of holy crusaders, their armour covered by monastic surcoats and adorned with purity seals. The Primaris Captain below is a great example of what you can expect from the new models.

1 – Crusading icon.

2 – Purity seals. These may display oaths of fealty and service or tales of heroic deeds. Some battle-brothers inscribe them with litanies of faith, purity or hatred. They are regarded as a ward against evil and a mark of the bearer's faith and devotion to the Imperium.

3 – Tilting shield featuring personal heraldry. The shield also protects the vulnerable undersuit of the Captain's power armour when his sword arm is raised.

4 – Gorget. The raised gorget of this suit of power armour protects the wearer's head and neck from incoming attacks.



5 – Battle helm. Based on the design of the Mark III 'Iron' helm. The helmet's visor is shown here raised, revealing the rebreather apparatus worn by all Space Marines under their helms.

6 – Relic shield. The skeleton of a revered battle-brother adorns the shield. The Captain is reminded of his sacrifice and seeks to emulate his forebear's courage in battle.

7 – Chapter symbol. The Captain's left pauldron features the Chapter symbol, in this case the inverted omega symbol of the Ultramarines.

8 – Iron halo. This device surrounds the bearer with a powerful force field that is impervious to most attacks.

9 – An Aquila adorns the Captain's right pauldron – a mark of his rank.

CAPTAIN

Jes: The Captain is the epitome of the grim Gothic crusader. Armoured, robed, well-equipped, decked out with litanies, scrolls and heraldry – he looks like he has been on crusade for decades. The real talking point though is his relic shield, which features the skeleton of a deceased battle-brother built into it. No doubt the skeleton is protected by a powerful force field to stop it getting smashed up, and in turn it offers the Captain a measure of spiritual protection.



LIEUTENANT

Colin: If you're going to delve into the vaults and bring out the best weapons for your crusade, then guns like the neo-volkite pistol are going to turn up. Heresy-era weapons like this and the Mark III styling of the helmet give the impression that this Lieutenant is wearing venerated wargear that has been passed down through many generations. A personal favourite touch is the ancient key hanging from the handle of his storm shield.



CHAPLAIN

Jes: We'd already designed a robed Primaris Chaplain, so this one was more of a classic design with a tabard. While the Captain is the military leader of the force, this Chaplain is the spiritual leader of the crusade. His crozius is raised as he preaches his rhetoric to his battle-brothers. There are loads of little trinkets and memento mori hanging from his belt, plus books, skulls and all the other paraphernalia you normally associate with Chaplains.



JUDICIAR

Ed: The Judiciar is essentially a holy executioner. He has deliberately removed his right shoulder pad and taken off his surcoat on that side to leave his sword arm free to deliver a decapitating strike. The hourglass – the tempormortis – is a traditional symbol of death. It's basically saying 'your time is up' to his enemies. The mask over his mouth and nose reinforces the idea that this Chaplain preaches his beliefs with actions rather than words.



OUTRIDERS

Nic: The Outriders are the cavalry of the crusade – the armoured knights on their armoured steeds. We worked on a few ideas for them, including a Phobos-style bike, but it felt too light and high-tech compared to the heavy, medieval brutality we'd got going on in the rest of the force. Jes suggested elongating the existing bike design to see what we came up with. The result was a really front-heavy, powerful-looking machine, with squared-off edges and a solid cowling for the guns and engine. It's not

elegant, it's not aerodynamic, but that's because the chassis has to carry a massive armoured warrior into battle (just like a medieval warhorse would have). There's a strong emphasis on direct assault, with the guns pointing straight forwards over the front wheel and the riders leaning out of their seats as if riding down their foes with their chainswords. The bikes are slightly angled on their bases to help convey that sense of forward momentum and directionality.



BLADEGUARD ANCIENT

Jes: Faith is a powerful weapon in the Space Marines' armoury, and the Bladeguard Ancient is a visual representation of that. His banner is not a flag, but the preserved remains of a long-dead battle-brother. You can tell it was a Space Marine by the service stud and implant marks. A pair of wings frame the skeleton, symbolising it as an angel of death, while the halo represents the Emperor's protection. Note how the Ancient carries the dead Space Marine's skeletal hand in his own left hand. No doubt it is a revered relic in its own right.



BLADEGUARD

Ed: A few years ago when we started conceiving the Primaris Space Marines, Jes created several mock-ups out of plastic kits and modelling putty to get a feel for the direction we could take with the miniatures. One of the first models he designed looked exactly like the Sergeant in the Bladeguard squad (the one in the middle). As Jes mentioned earlier, we wanted the first Primaris Marines to have a more

pared-down look, but the kits I worked on did almost end up with these crusade-style helmets. They are influenced by the classic Mark II and III helms, but you can tell they are new Primaris designs by the flaps over the earpieces. They evoke a real sense of brutality that's matched by the huge storm shields they carry into battle. Their wargear clearly includes some of the Chapter's oldest and most valuable relics.



ERADICATORS

Jes: The Eradicators are much like the Hellblasters in that they're an adaptation of the Intercessor design. Because of the nature of their weapons, however, the Eradicators have to get much closer to the enemy, which is why their suit is a variant of the more heavily armoured Gravis design. Their melta rifles are a beefed-up version of the traditional meltagun, including a much larger fuel flask.

Nic: The Eradicators may be part of the crusade force, but as the lowest ranking battle-brothers (along with the Assault Intercessors and Outriders) they do not wear tabards or surcoats. It's an important distinction to make because it means you can tell, at a glance, what level of warrior you're dealing with. It's why Sergeants often have bare heads – so you can pick them out easily.



ASSAULT INTERCESSORS

Ed: The idea of forward momentum was a key factor in the design of the Assault Intercessors. The regular Intercessors have both feet firmly grounded, which matches their background of advancing slowly and implacably on the enemy while laying down a torrent of bolter fire. The Assault Intercessors are virtually launching themselves into battle, blades swinging, bolt pistols firing. It's a very deliberate contrast with the Necrons – where the aliens have high-tech ranged weapons that deconstruct their

enemies atom by atom, the Space Marines carry brutal combat weapons that shred and tear their foe apart with what we imagine would be a great deal of noise! To reinforce the more combat-orientated role of the Assault Intercessors, their left (forward-facing) pauldrons have higher rims to protect their helms, their vambraces on their left arms are wider (and feature the crusade icon), and they all wear tasset plates to protect their thighs and the undersuit beneath.



THE CANOPTEK CREATORS

Design manager Ben Jefferson oversaw the group of designers that worked on the new Necron miniatures in the Indomitus box set. The talented team are:

Steve Buddle (design lead): Skorpekh Destroyers and Canoptek Reanimator

Aly Morrison: Plasmancer and Cryptothralls, Skorpekh Lord, Necron Warriors, Scarabs

Steve Party: Necron Overlord (also Illuminor Szeras)

Colin Grayson: Royal Warden

CONSTRUCTS OF CONQUEST

Ben Jefferson: The Necrons are arguably the most creepy and sinister race in the Warhammer 40,000 universe, and that was something we were very keen to explore with the new models. When the Necron race was first introduced back in 1997, they sort of appeared out of nowhere, rising like metal skeletons from their sandy graves to raid the Imperium. There was an inherent creepiness about their android forms that appealed to a lot of people. In time the race was redesigned and expanded upon, then expanded once again in 2011. That last release in particular added a lot of personality to the Necrons and firmly established the idea of a Necron hierarchy with the – then absent – Silent King at its head.

But over the years the Necrons have strayed a bit from their original undead archetype, and we felt that was something worth reintroducing. We wanted to develop the creepy horror behind the race and describe that on the miniatures so that they match the artwork and the stories written about them. That involved re-examining what sixty million years of hibernation has done to the

Necrons, both physically and mentally. Also how their repair protocols work, and what it looks like when they fail. Conveying a hint of how the Silent King's return has affected the Necron race was also a key consideration for us. How has his paranoid megalomania infected the warriors that fight in his name?

Steve Buddle: We started by taking a look at the basic Necron Warriors – the poor unfortunates that make up the rank and file of the Necron legions. When biotransference took place, their souls were stripped from their bodies and their essence encased in the most basic living metal bodies. They are little more than skeletons. But we wanted to make them seem even less substantial than that. Over sixty million years it's likely that the living metal has begun to deteriorate to such an extent that their repair protocols – which themselves have probably degenerated – can no longer repair them properly. To represent this, there's a lot of degradation on their bodies, almost like the metal is delaminating to reveal the layers

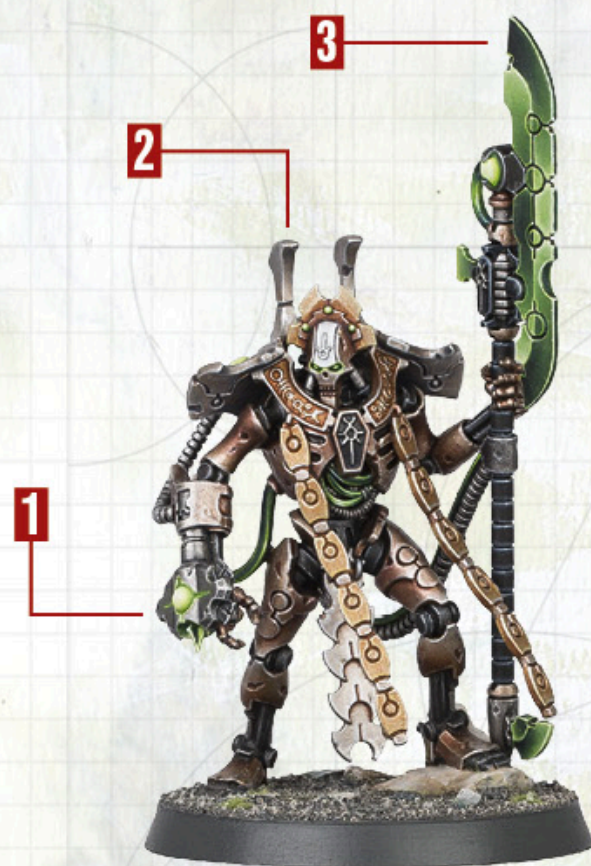
ILLUMINOR SZERAS

Steve P: Szeras is another recent Necron model who ties in with both the narrative of the Necrons and their new designs. He is a deranged scientist and the main authority on biotransference, which is why he is vivisecting a human through the process of electrophoresis. He wants to find out what makes them tick. You can see the process in action by following the beam of light emitted by his staff through the man's disintegrating body, along the swirl of biomass and into the test tubes on Szeras' wrist.



DESIGNED FOR DESTRUCTION

There are lots of new design features on the Necron models in the Indomitus box set, from time-ravaged armour to new weapons. Here you can see just a few of the new elements that have made an appearance in the range, such as the incredibly long-ranged tachyon arrow, the gauss reaper and the bizarre tomb construct known as the Canoptek Plasmacyte.



1 – Tachyon arrow. A ranged weapon of colossal power.

2 – Command nodes. The Overlord's orders are conveyed through these to his warriors.

3 – Hyperphase glaive. An energy globe is mounted behind the blade.

beneath, like skin giving way to muscle, then muscle to bone. Kind of how a gauss flayer works, atom by atom.

Aly Morrison: We actually went so far as to design what a Necron looks like under his armour – the bare bones, if you will. By doing that we could then add the external layers, but leave gaps to show years of deterioration. If you look carefully over all the Warriors, you can start to piece together what their skeleton looks like. There are other signs of degradation, too, such as exposed cables and hanging wires. Some of the Warriors have jaws hanging off or no jaw at all. They're actually more like zombies than skeletons, which is why they're posed quite unnaturally. They have more of a stumbling gait, with their feet turned in, their torsos cantered over and their heads not quite straight. It helps reinforce the idea that they are automatons doing their master's bidding.

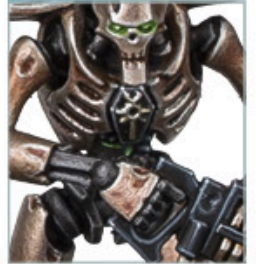
Steve: It's like the lower-level warriors are glitching – the Silent King left them asleep for too long, and now they're almost beyond repair. The higher-level warriors, however – like the Royal Warden and the Overlord – are relatively

unscathed from their years of slumber. They got the good suits, as befits their status.

Ben: The megalomania design arc is more apparent in the Skorpekh Destroyers and the Skorpekh Lord. They still exhibit a level of physical deterioration, but it's their mental instability that has driven the design of the models. The Silent King despises the Destroyer Cults, but he knows they will be a useful tool in achieving his goals, so he has just left them to their own devices. Destroyers will sacrifice anything in their quest to kill more things more quickly, so they've had their bodies modified to do just that. They are the ultimate nihilists. The fact that they've got three legs is a clever touch by Steve. It's not a logical physical upgrade (two or four legs would work perfectly well!), but then nothing about the Destroyers is logical anymore – they're completely insane! You can just imagine them racing into battle, a whirlwind of legs and blades, not caring what they hit so long as it stops living. While the Necron Warriors are the embodiment of sixty million years of physical deterioration, the Destroyers represent the mental destabilisation of the Necron race.

THE ANKH OF THE TRIARCH

Steve: Every Necron features an icon on their chest, showing their fealty to the Silent King. The shape of the symbol has two meanings. Firstly, it replaces the sternum of the ribcage and mimics that shape pretty closely. It is also the shape of a coffin lid – a nod to the Necrons' undead archetype. The shape appears a lot across the range – the metal shoulder tassels on the Overlord, for example.



4 – Necrodermal deterioration reveals what resembles a brain or processor.

6 – Missing armour panels are evidence of failing repair protocols.

5 – Gauss reaper. More powerful than a gauss flayer, but with a shorter range.

7 – The gauss flayer is the traditional armament of the Necron Warrior.



12 – Hyperphase threshers. Note how the blades are in pristine condition compared to the Destroyer itself. This is not only due to the care and maintenance that is lavished upon them by the Plasmancers, but also down to the rare alien alloys they are made of.

13 – The Ankh of the Triarch. Worn by all Necron Warriors (but not constructs, who are not considered part of the dynasty).



8 – Cryptothralls are constructs, as shown by their beetle-like carapace.

10 – Monomolecular proboscis. Plasmacytes use this appendage to inject Destroyers with sentient energy.

9 – Scouring eye. A high-tech weapon, shown here deployed.

11 – Energy globe.



14 – Overcharge socket. A Plasmacyte can infuse a Destroyer with tainted energy through this socket, driving them into an even greater killing frenzy.

15 – Destroyers are deranged killers who will go to any lengths to cause great harm and destruction. The Skorpekh Destroyers have had their bodies modified with a third leg that enables them to scuttle into battle faster.

SKORPEKH LORD

Steve B: This insane Necron Lord has a more static, but still threatening, pose than the other Skorpekh Destroyers. This reflects the fact that it possesses a far more calculating form of murderous insanity. It is tooled up for all occasions and all methods of death-dealing. It has a single-handed hyperphase harvester, an enmitic annihilator (the gun) and flensing claws. I like to think it uses those for its more sadistic kills.



OVERLORD

Steve P: As the army commander, the Overlord has to be the most ornate and impressive of all the Necrons. Its armour is almost entirely free of degradation, and its wide carapace makes it very broad, giving it an intimidating presence. The crest on its skull-like head clearly indicates that it is the leader. The tachyon arrow is mounted to the back of the Overlord's right wrist, leaving its hand free to hold the hyperphase glaive in a double-handed grip.



CANOPTEK REANIMATOR

Steve B: The Canoptek Reanimator definitely reinforces that feeling of creepiness in the Necron range. It does walk on its spindly legs, but you can almost imagine it floating more like a jellyfish, with all its cables and tendrils drifting around it. Its head is also hung deliberately low, as if it's looking for something – probably a Necron in need of repair.

One of the goals with the Reanimator was to capture the feel of constructs like the Canoptek Spyder and Wraiths by putting most of the details on the underside. In that way it evokes the feel of an insect. From above they just look like an armoured carapace, but turn them over and there's a load of horrible joints and moving parts. It's meant to look organic, but unnatural.



ROYAL WARDEN

Colin: The Royal Warden is the equivalent of a lieutenant-level hero for the Necrons. It's based on the Necron Immortals, albeit bigger and with fancier armour to show its status.

Like the Overlord, it wears a more detailed gorget featuring Necron runes, and a pair of command prongs emerge from its shoulders just behind its head. The coffin-lid design also makes an appearance on the metal cape that hangs from its left arm.



PLASMANCER AND CRYPTOTHRALLS

Aly: Plasmancers are the weaponsmiths of the Necron race, and they're very much into unusual body modification, which is why this model has no legs at all – it is quite literally above walking! It keeps the traditional 'beard' that we've come to associate with the Cryptek class and a collar, which indicates its servitude to the dynasty. It's posed as if ordering the Cryptothralls into battle. It's worth noting that the Cryptothralls themselves are not Necron Warriors, but constructs made by the Plasmancer in their image. Note how the one on the right's face has opened up to deploy an eye – his primary weapon. Both wear collars that match the shape of the one worn by the Plasmancer.



SCARAB SWARMS

Aly: Scarabs are another nod to the creepy nature of the Necrons – after all, no one wants to come face to face with a swarm of hovering metallic insects. The new Scarabs are much ganglier than their predecessors – more spider-like and sinister, with articulated limbs. They also vary in size quite a bit, suggesting that they may have different roles to fulfil in the upkeep and maintenance of a Necron tomb. You'll also find really tiny Scarabs latched on to some of the other Necron units – no doubt sent to conduct repairs.



NECRON WARRIORS WITH GAUSS REAPERS

Aly: Something the previous incarnation of Necron Warriors lacked was individuality. They basically all looked the same. Obviously they would have been identical sixty million years ago once they were stripped of their organic bodies and entombed in metal suits, but time has taken its toll on them. They're bound to look a bit different now. When we designed the Necron Ghost Ark a few years back, we took the opportunity to add a load of damaged Necrons to it. They felt like they had real

character to them – you could imagine how each of them had been taken out of action. To get across that individuality on the new Warriors kit, the heads all feature subtly different degradation. While this isn't an expression as such, it does give each of them a different face. Look carefully and you could be convinced that some of them are frowning, grimacing, or even speaking. We also added in a new weapon variant – the gauss reaper – to add more flavour and character to your units.



NECRON WARRIORS WITH GAUSS FLAYERS

Ben: As we mentioned earlier, the Necron Warriors show a high level of degradation, with whole chunks of their armour missing. It's important to note that this isn't battle damage, but rather a failure of their repair protocols. It's as if their necrodermis has been bashed off and flaked away. We deliberately avoided adding v-shaped sword cuts and bullet craters that would indicate that new physical damage has been done to them. What you see is aeons of deterioration, nothing new.

Another key consideration when designing the new Necrons was how they would be painted. Traditionally, Necrons have been painted silver – what would later become the Sautekh Dynasty colour scheme. This time around, we decided that a weathered bronze would help identify them as being truly ancient and give them more of a patina of age. Note how the gauss weapons are painted to look clean, showing which bit of the Warriors the Necrons Overlords value most.



SKORPEKH DESTROYERS

Steve B: The idea for the third leg on the Skorpekh Destroyers came about because we wanted them to look unbalanced, like they were constantly in motion, shifting their weight from one leg to another rather than ever standing still. To further reinforce that idea, the Skorpekh's torsos are twisted round or leaning over, their arms and weapons flung out around them. They are captured right at that moment just before they kill something. Or just after, depending on how you look at it.

Another idea we wanted to get across about the Destroyers is that they are so addicted to killing that they will push their living metal bodies to dangerous extremes in order to do so. That's where the Plasmacyte comes in. The energy globe contained in its parasite-like body is full of sentient energy that can be injected into the Destroyers through a port at the base of their spine. It's a little detail, but one that really builds on the narrative of these deranged warriors.



SEE THEM IN ACTION!

Now that you've seen all the new miniatures and found out more about their designs, you'll no doubt want to see them in action on the battlefield. Well, if you turn to page 30, you'll find The Edge of Silence Battle Report, which pits all the models from the Indomitus box set against each other in a new mission written exclusively for *White Dwarf*. Don't forget to check out Paint Splatter over the page, too – it's for a Szarekhan Dynasty Necron!

THE SZAREKHAN DYNASTY

By now you can't have failed to notice the new studio Necron army, which has been painted in the colours of the Szarekhan Dynasty. Here, studio painter Nathan Trolley explains how he painted a Necron Warrior to both Battle Ready and Parade Ready standards.

Nathan: The Szarekhan Dynasty is the new colour scheme for the studio's Necron collection, so it seemed only right to create a painting guide to help you paint an army of them, too. Getting them to a Battle Ready standard is particularly easy and involves only a few colours, including the new Runelord Brass basecoat spray, Cryptek Armourshade Gloss and the wonderfully neon Tesseract Glow.

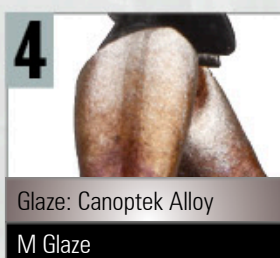
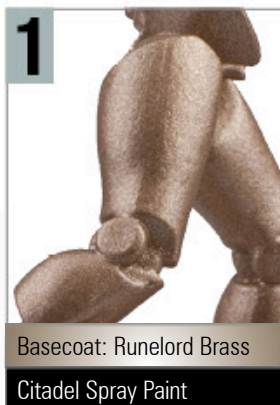
Taking your Necron Warrior to a Parade Ready standard involves a technique that we don't often use with metallic paint: glazing. First, I shaded the lower third of the Necron's limbs with Druchii Violet (you can see it below on his thigh). I also painted it around any damaged areas. Then, I watered down the new Canoptek Alloy Layer paint a little and carefully applied a thin layer of it to the top third of the model's armour panels (again, shown in the

BATTLE READY

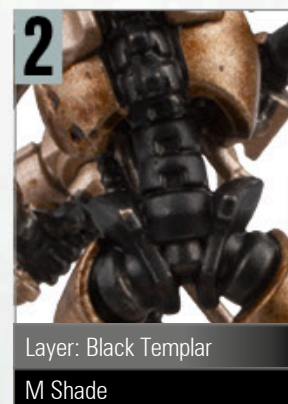
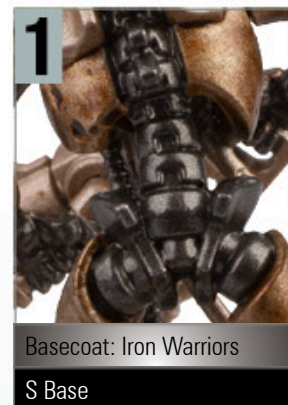
Using the stages to the right, Nathan painted a Necron Warrior to a standard that most people would be happy to play games with.



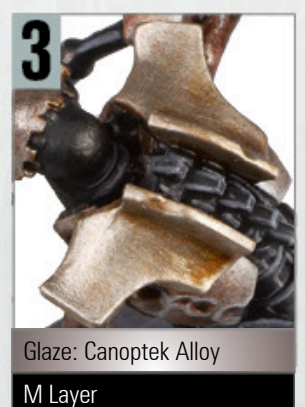
ARMOUR



SKELETON



SHOULDER PLATES



PARADE READY

With a few extra highlights to each area of the model, Nathan took the Battle Ready Necron Warrior and made him Parade Ready.



stages below). The goal is to thin the paint so that it is translucent enough for the brass base colour to show through, but not too thin that it turns into a wash and runs into the recesses. Try it out on a larger area like a thigh first and see how you get on. It may take a couple of tries to get the effect right, but the end result is definitely worth it. Alternatively, if you're not confident with glazing, try drybrushing the colour on instead. The end result may not be quite as neat, but it will still look great if you're careful where the paint goes.

TOP TIP

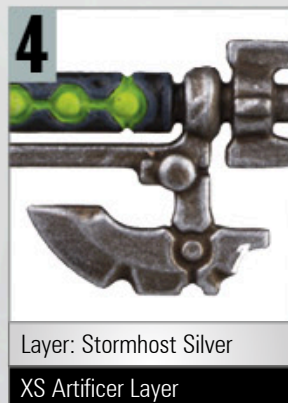
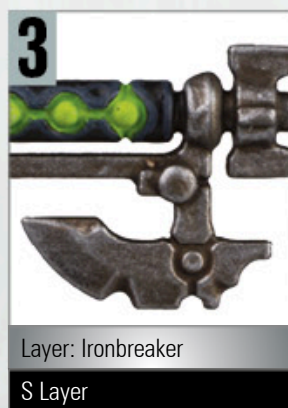
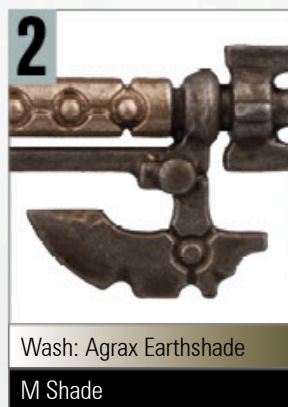
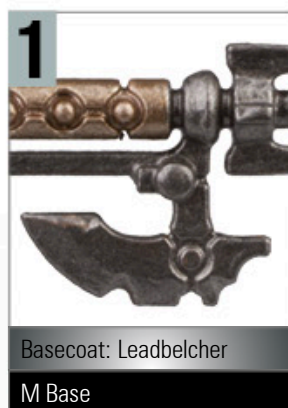
Contrast paints are more opaque than Shade paints, but they can perform a similar role. On this Necron Warrior, I painted it over the metallic spine and skeleton, creating a really dark, dull metallic effect. A highlight of Administratum Grey helps give the skeleton a different texture and tone to the Necron's brass armour.

MORE NECRON PAINTING GUIDES

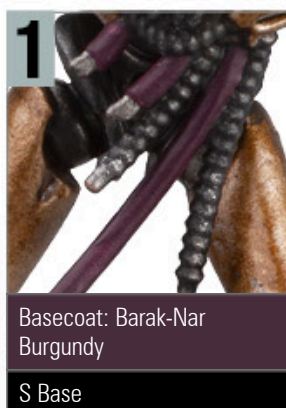
What's that? This isn't enough Necron painting for you? Well, make sure you check out the Warhammer TV YouTube channel, which has loads of Necron painting guides! On there you'll find guides for painting Necron vehicles, warscythe blades, Triarch Praetorians, green glowing effects and Necron Warriors from the Nephrekh, Nekthyst and Nihilakh Dynasties. That should keep you busy!



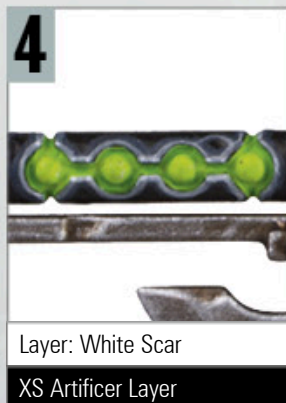
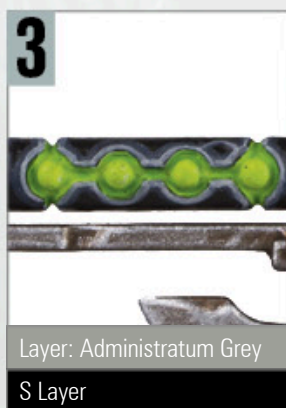
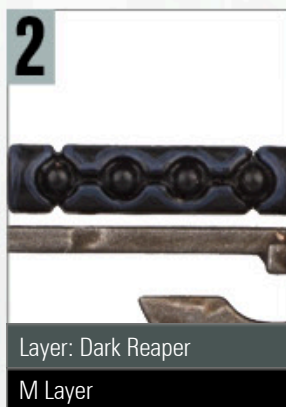
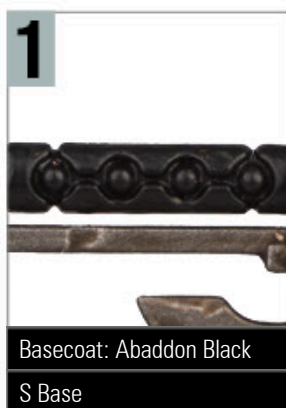
GUN METAL



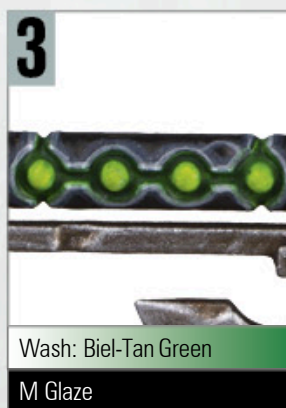
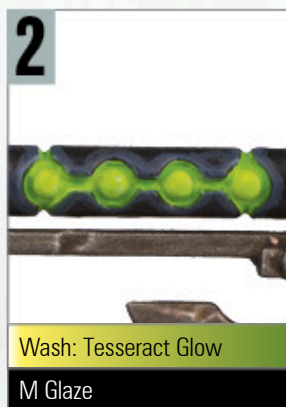
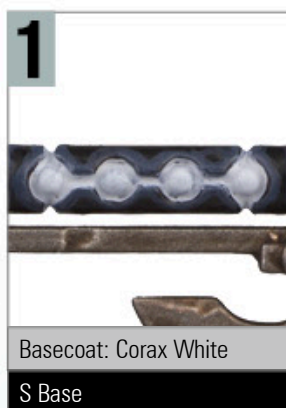
INTERNAL CABLES



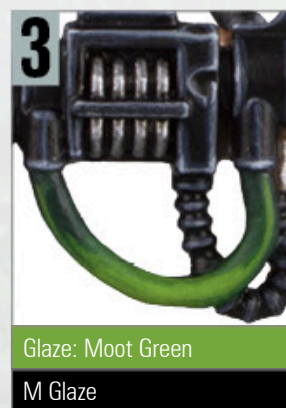
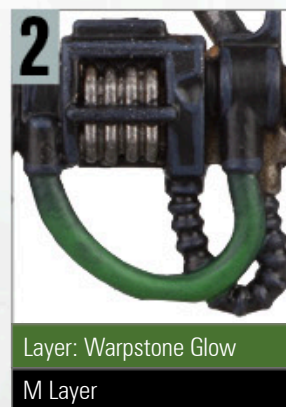
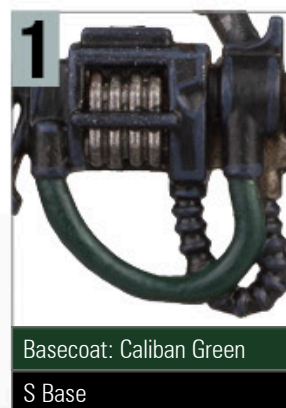
GUN CASING



GAUSS GLOW



WEAPON CABLE



ECHOES FROM THE WARP



ROBIN CRUDDACE

As the Warhammer Studio's senior games developer for Warhammer 40,000, Robin Cruddace is the rules-servitor (sigma-7 pattern, gamma grade) responsible for the latest edition of the game. Apparently he's started painting lots of Space Marine vehicles in a red and yellow quartered colour scheme – something to do with the new rules, perhaps?

¹ That's actually a pretty good description of my job, come to think of it.

² This might have been added by me ... Actually, as an in-joke, the first few drafts of the rules had it so that if your **Warlord** was **Howling Griffons**, you got D6 Command points in your Command phase instead of only 1. Much to my chagrin, this particular rule was removed before we went to print. (Not that it would have helped. Robin would still have rolled a 1 every turn. – Studio Manager)

At the time of writing this column, the latest edition of Warhammer 40,000 is actually still a closely guarded secret (we are currently only halfway through the Psychic Awakening), but by the time you read this, it will have been released into the wild, and no doubt you've had a chance to test out many of the cool new rules and features on the battlefield for yourself. Assuming so, you probably know what has changed by now. What I'd like to do in this column, then, is to try and explain *why* we made some of these changes. I'll quickly caveat now that I'll not delve into each and every change here (there simply isn't room), but I will endeavour to spend some time in future articles going into greater depth on some of the topics. Indeed, some changes are so involved that they could be whole columns unto themselves.

So, where, to start? Well, first I have to cast my brain back to sometime during the winter of 2018 when I was summoned into the Inner Sanctum of the Warhammer Studio to start the first round of meetings about the rules for the next edition of Warhammer 40,000. We spent a long time chatting about all manner of possibilities, all kinds of new ideas and all sorts of proposed additional features we could use. At the end of those meetings, with brains buzzing, we had, in addition to the main objective of 'make the best version of Warhammer 40,000 ever',¹ a series of overarching goals for the new rules. They were:

1. Make playing Warhammer 40,000 more structured.
2. Make Warhammer 40,000 play more quickly.
3. Make Warhammer 40,000 more dynamic.
4. Make Warhammer 40,000 battles scalable and playable on a dining table.
5. Make Howling Griffons the pre-eminent faction in the 41st Millennium.²

We also had some fixed points. We knew that eighth edition had been the most popular edition of Warhammer 40,000 to date, and we wanted to build on that. We also wanted to ensure that ninth edition was, as much as possible, backwards compatible with the current range of codexes. What followed was an intense period of R&D where several different iterations



Echoes from the Warp is a regular column about the rules, tactics and ongoing development of Warhammer 40,000, hosted by games developer Robin Cruddace. This month, Robin talks about creating the latest (and greatest) edition of Warhammer 40,000.



of what the new core rules could be were drafted and thoroughly tested.³ I must extend a massive ‘thank you’ to the members of our external playtesting teams, who were invaluable in helping us test and proofread these various drafts. Their names are forever remembered in the Hall of Heroes on Holy Terra. I will actually forgo a lot of the details that happened during this time since I want to eventually get into each of those goals in a bit more depth, but I will say that we also took the opportunity during this time to tighten a few of the nuts and bolts of certain core rules mechanics whilst I was under the bonnet, so to speak. This mostly involved baking in certain errata and making some adjustments based on lessons learned over the course of eighth edition, but it also involved standardising the language and structure of the rules,⁴ which we will use to write rules in the future. Some of this is evident in the appendices and glossaries in the back of the Core Book, but hopefully you’ll see the true benefits of these labours in the fullness of time as new publications are released.

PROVIDE MORE STRUCTURE

Eighth edition presented players with a vast toolbox of cool rules from which they could create whatever gaming experience they wanted. It wasn’t just a case of choosing between open, narrative or matched play – you could then decide to Battle-forged your army (or not), select

to use points (or not), opt to use the advanced terrain rules (or not), decide to use a Battlezone (or not), and so on. In our efforts to try to cater to every possible gaming experience, we had actually paralysed some players with an overabundance of choices before the game had even started.

To help provide more structure, we developed the concept of mission packs. The idea of a mission pack is to give players one big decision to make (which mission pack to use), instead of giving them lots of small ones. There are several different mission packs, each advertised and designed for a particular style of gaming. Once you’ve chosen your mission pack, you just follow the instructions detailed within and away you go. All the small decisions you would have made beforehand about terrain, points, etc. are then preset by the mission pack itself. The instructions within detail every aspect of playing a game (including starting and ending the battle!). About the only additional thing you’d need to decide is what size battle you want (which I’ll talk about a bit later in this column).

Mission packs are doubtless one of the coolest new features in Warhammer 40,000. We included three mission packs in the Core Book (and there are plans to do many more) – one each for open, matched and narrative gaming. The open play

³ We ended up with nine drafts by the end, appropriately enough.

⁴ Interestingly, this is where the Command phase came from (as well as separating certain phases into steps). It just helps to give certain rules a more precise order of sequencing. You can expect a lot of ‘at the start of the turn’ abilities to become ‘in your Command phase’ rules instead.

⁵ Almost every single gamer in the design studio now has a Crusade force, and our playtest room has never been more full at lunch times.

⁶ The average dining table is smaller than 4'x6' and relatively few gamers are lucky enough to have a dedicated gaming table in their house.

⁷ We cannibalised them from our Kill Team sets.

⁸ Now Imperial Knights and Adeptus Custodes players can start the battle with the same number of Command points as an Astra Militarum player, and the 'Loyal 32' can enjoy a well-earned retirement ...

⁹ As an aside, this is also where the idea of a Battle-forged CP bonus came from. If you could only fire Overwatch once per turn, then we'd give you a CP to spend to do it. If you want to spend it on something else, of course, then that's up to you.

mission pack is ideal to get on with gaming as quickly as possible. The matched play mission pack includes some extremely exciting features, introducing new mechanics such as selectable secondary missions – an idea inspired by the success of arena objectives in Kill Team: Arena. Narrative gaming in ninth edition is also restructured with a revolutionary new vision – Crusade. I can, and will, spend an entire column talking about Crusade in the months to come (it's that cool), but what makes Crusade so different to anything we've done before for Warhammer 40,000 is that it is your campaign – one you can pick up and put down and pick up again as and when you want to. Previous campaign systems required a group of friends to commit to a period of scheduled gaming. Crusade doesn't do this – it's your army's story, and you can progress it when you want to. It still has all the cool perks of a campaign: earning experience in battles, upgrading your troops with new skills and weapons, gaining unique battle traits and incurring terrible scars. As a gamer, Crusade is quickly becoming my favourite way to play Warhammer 40,000.⁵ As a games developer, Crusade opens doors to writing rules that would not have been possible before, and I can't wait to share some of our ideas for this in the future.

DEFINED, SCALABLE ARMIES AND BATTLEFIELDS

One of the more common questions asked by people getting into the Warhammer 40,000 gaming hobby is 'how big an army do I need to play'? Previous editions of Warhammer 40,000 have purposefully been left so they can work at any points value, the size of the battle ultimately being another one of those decisions the players had to make. However, during the lifetime of eighth edition, we also made a dedicated skirmish game (Kill Team) and a mass-battle game (Apocalypse). When starting work on ninth edition, there was a very defined range that Warhammer 40,000 was designed to work with – that being armies between 500 and 3,000 points. That's still a large range, and so we decided to split it into four distinct battle sizes: Combat Patrol (500 points – ideal for playing games with your brand-new collection), Incursion (1,000 points – perfect for a lunch hour or two), Strike Force (2,000 points – just the way to spend an evening) and Onslaught (3,000 points – for those who like the spectacle of a weekend day). Each of these provides the full, proper Warhammer 40,000 gaming experience, and the missions found within the mission packs are tailor-made to get the most out of these different battle sizes.

Twinned to army size is battlefield size – the bigger the battle, the bigger your battlefield needs be. We really wanted to make sure that Warhammer 40,000 was something you could play on the average kitchen or dining table,⁶ and during our playtesting we actually started using

several Killzone boards pushed up next to each other.⁷ Bigger battle sizes then equated to more Killzones – nice and simple.

Defining the battle size also meant we could reset how you Battle-forged your army. Now, the number of Command points you start with is preset depending on the battle size, instead of being a resource that you only get by fielding certain detachments. By giving you your Command points up front, we can ensure every player starts on a level playing field,⁸ as well as creating a greater level of decision-making when it comes to mustering your army (a critical part of the game). I will endeavour to make the new Battle-forging system the topic of a later Echoes from the Warp column, because there is a lot of nuance in the detachments and games design philosophies here that I think you'd find interesting, but all of it is only possible because of the simple change of defining set battle sizes.

PLAY MORE QUICKLY

This is something I think all gamers can agree on – a quicker, more fast-paced game is a better one. There's no magic bullet to speeding up game play in ninth edition, but instead a series of little changes here and there that together should keep the game moving apace. One simple thing is insisting that army rosters be written before the battle, with as many decisions about which psychic powers to have, what relics to take, and so on being made before the players even get to the table. This instantly cuts out a chunk of time and gets the action started that much sooner. We've also limited most battles to a max of five battle rounds, ensuring that games don't keep going on due to random game lengths way past the point of making a true difference to the final outcome. Within the core rules themselves, one change that was driven to make the game quicker was switching Overwatch to be a Stratagem. If Overwatch was not a Stratagem (and so not limited to one use per phase), it didn't really matter who was charging you or what you were armed with – there was always technically a chance you could inflict damage, so you might as well do it. For example, a Chaos Knight charging twenty Conscripts? Hit rolls of 6s followed by wound rolls of 6s and then hoping against formidable armour saves? Might as well, because nothing to lose, right? Well, nothing except time, perhaps. In this particular example, resolving the Overwatch shots is mostly an exercise in wearing the edges off your dice. When Overwatch is genuinely useful, like when that same Chaos Knight is charging a unit with four meltaguns and the outcome might have a tangible effect, then rolling the dice can be an exciting and worthwhile experience. Now players can decide for themselves if it's worth a CP to do this or not⁹ without slowing the game down by resolving several bouts of Overwatch 'just in case'.



MORE DYNAMIC GAMEPLAY

There are several rules additions that are all designed to help make Warhammer 40,000 become an even more dynamic experience. Much of this comes down to mission design. For example, with our Eternal War missions, all the primary missions are focused on grabbing and controlling objective markers around the battlefield, forcing players to move around the battlefield in order to score victory points. The new actions mechanic,¹⁰ which ties into many secondary objectives, also aids in creating a more dynamic game, as many actions can only be performed by units who have first got to a certain point on the battlefield (often before their opponent). Strategic Reserves is another new addition to help the game feel more dynamic, with units arriving throughout the battle, outflanking the foe to launch a devastating enfilade mid-game.

Another simple but game-changing addition to Warhammer 40,000 is applying terrain traits to terrain features, in particular the Obscuring trait. This one terrain trait by itself immediately creates a more dynamic battlefield, where players need to manoeuvre their units around terrain features in order to draw a bead on the foe, instead of just sitting back and shooting any number of porous terrain features.

Finally, Big Guns Never Tire – the rule that allows Monsters and Vehicles to shoot whilst in combat – and the changes to heavy weapons (specifically removing the penalty to hit rolls incurred for moving and firing them with any model other

than Infantry) was primarily driven by the goal of creating more dynamic battlefields. It was rather frustrating to be unable to unleash the full fury of your mighty Land Raider because a grot was knocking on your assault ramp, or to be unable to hit anything with your Hammerhead because you had moved it. As such, these units were often kept in your backfield, staying stationary for the whole game. Now, there is less reason to keep these units away from the fight. Indeed, they'll need to move to bring their firepower to bear now that there will be more obscuring terrain. And if you're foolish enough to stand in front of a Baal Predator, you might find it a bit too hot for comfort.

So, there you have it. These are a few of the reasons why I made some of the changes that I did. Were there any other changes implemented to the ninth edition of Warhammer 40,000? Of course. There were lots of small changes that I'm sure will end up making a big difference. They include things like tightening up unit coherency to prevent large units forming conga lines from one end of the battlefield to the other, putting a cap on the total number of modifiers that can be applied to hit and wound rolls, adding Combat Attrition tests to the Morale phase, introducing Blast weapons, adding several brand new core Stratagems, and a host more. I don't have space to list all of them here, but perhaps I can expand upon them in a future column. In the interim, I really hope you're enjoying the ninth edition of Warhammer 40,000, and I hope these writings give you some small insight to some of the larger goals we set out to achieve.

¹⁰ Actions were created to enable units to do something other than stand here, shoot this or punch that. The possibilities for what this mechanic could do in the future is enticing.

THE EDGE OF SILENCE

Deep within the Ultima Segmentum, in a region classified as the Pariah Nexus, the Necrons are awakening. Determined to eradicate the xenos threat, the Ultramarines are deployed to the Khalaian Gate on the planet of Vertigus. But the Necrons are waiting for them ...



Unless you've been living under the Rock for the last few months, you can't have failed to notice that there's a new edition of Warhammer 40,000 out there in the world. This wonderful new rules set builds upon the previous edition of the game, while introducing loads of new game mechanics for hobbyists to sink their teeth into.

Of course, we in the *White Dwarf* bunker were extremely excited to hear about the new edition, and even more excited to play some games of it, especially when we saw all the awesome models in the Warhammer 40,000: Indomitius set. So, that's what this month's Battle Report is all about – playing a game with the new rules and models.

Taking command of the Space Marines is *White Dwarf* designer Sophie. Though she's painted many models over the years, Sophie is still

INDOMITUS

All the Space Marine and Necron models used in this Battle Report come from the new Warhammer 40,000: Indomitius box set, which also includes the core rules for the game and a book of datasheets so you can start using your new models straight away.

The scenery and board used in the Battle Report come in the Warhammer 40,000 Command Edition starter set.

relatively new to the gaming side of Warhammer. With a new rules set available, though, she thought now would be a good time to learn! Having read through the rulebook and *Codex: Space Marines*, she's now ready for battle.

Commanding the Necrons is Warhammer 40,000 games developer James Gallagher. Having worked on the new rules set, James is more than qualified to talk about how the game works and show off some of the new mechanics. No doubt he'll be keen to show off what some of the new Necron models do, too – he's been looking at the Skorpekh Destroyers a lot ...

For this Battle Report, James even wrote a new mission, which you can find on page 34. Because this is a narrative play mission, Sophie and James will also be using the new Crusade mission pack featured in the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*.



Overlord Oemau of the Szarekhan Dynasty watched the enemy as they advanced through the ruins towards his position. Their blue armour shone in the waning sunlight, their battle honours glinting as they strode implacably onwards. Oemau furrowed a brow he no longer had, his once glorious visage now an impassive metal mask. The Humans of this world had been easy prey, but these warriors were something different – upgraded versions that fought back with skill, determination and ferocity. They were almost to be admired. Almost.

A heavy off-beat tread announced the arrival of Tynakht, the Skorpekh Lord that had joined Oemau's forces. The Overlord resented the Destroyer's presence, but grudgingly accepted that he was a useful ally, not to mention a ferocious killer. Oemau sent a command protocol to the Skorpekh Lord, who shuddered violently then skittered off on his three legs

to find his Destroyer brethren. Oemau hoped they would obey his orders and wait before launching their assault. He doubted they would.

The Overlord looked around the ruins of the astropathic relay station and realised then why the Space Marines were there. He understood that this complex had once allowed the Humans to connect with that abhorrent realm known as the warp. Perhaps there was something here that they were after. In reality, it did not matter what their mission was – Oemau and his legion had been tasked with protecting the Khalaian Gate, and they would do so until instructed otherwise. The Space Marines did not seem to be affected by the stilling, which intrigued the Necron Overlord but caused him little consternation. They would be disintegrated just like all the others, reduced to their component atoms and scattered on the wind.

DESTROY THE XENOS

Sophie: Having read through the mission, I've decided that my best course of action is to storm up the centre of the battlefield and take the central objective, then spread out from there to take the other two. If I can get my units into combat as quickly as possible, I can hopefully limit the damage that James will do with his superior firepower. While my army has already been selected for me (it's the contents of the box!) I can still pick a Warlord Trait, a Relic and a few other bits and pieces. The Rites of War trait will be particularly helpful in this battle, as it means all my Core units gain the Objective Secured rule if they're near my Captain. That means that all five of my units can wrest control of objectives from James's Necron units. I also gave my Chaplain the Litany of Faith, which means units near him have the potential to ignore mortal wounds.



DEFEND THE GATE

James: Like Sophie, I'll be going for the objectives in this game, and my plan is to swarm them as quickly as possible with my Necron Warriors so she can't get to them. I have the advantage of numbers, so as long as I stay near the objectives, she won't be able to take them. I doubt I'll be able to get to the central objective first, so I will have to hold the other two and pick off the Space Marine characters so they can't use the Extract Information action to gain victory points. I also have another way of securing victory points: I can assassinate Sophie's Warlord, which will grant me an additional 30 points at the end of the battle. This is why I've given my Overlord the Honourable Combatant Warlord Trait. I reckon he can finish off a Space Marine Captain in a single turn. And if he can't, I've got a Nanoscarab Casket to keep him alive long enough for another round!





STRIKE FORCE DRASTUS

Characters

- | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Primaris Captain | 5 Power |
| | - Warlord Trait: Rites of War | |
| | - Relic: The Burning Blade | |
| 2 | Primaris Lieutenant | 5 Power |
| 3 | Primaris Chaplain | 5 Power |
| | - Litany of Battle: Litany of Faith | |
| 4 | Judiciar | 5 Power |
| 5 | Bladeguard Ancient | 5 Power |

Units

- | | | |
|-----------|------------------------|----------------|
| 6 | 3 Bladeguard Veterans | 5 Power |
| 7 | 5 Assault Intercessors | 5 Power |
| 8 | 5 Assault Intercessors | 5 Power |
| 9 | 3 Outriders | 6 Power |
| 10 | 3 Eradicators | 6 Power |

Total Power: 52

Starting Command Points: 6

(4 after choosing two Patrol Detachments)

Space Marine Agendas:

- Know No Fear (*Codex: Space Marines*)
- Sentinel (*Core Book*)
- Slay the Xenos (mission-specific)



THE OMNITEK LEGION

Characters

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Overlord | 6 Power |
| | - Warlord Trait: Honourable Combatant | |
| | - Relic: Nanoscarab Casket | |
| 2 | Royal Warden | 4 Power |
| 3 | Plasmancer | 5 Power |
| | - Cryptek Arkana: Quantum Orb | |
| 4 | Skorpek Lord | 7 Power |

Units

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 5 | 10 Necron Warriors | 6 Power |
| 6 | 10 Necron Warriors | 6 Power |
| 7 | 3 Skorpek Destroyers | 6 Power |
| 8 | 2 Cryptothralls | 2 Power |
| 9 | Canoptek Reanimator | 6 Power |
| 10 | 3 Canoptek Scarab Swarms | 2 Power |
| 11 | 3 Canoptek Scarab Swarms | 2 Power |

Total Power: 52

Starting Command Points: 6

(4 after choosing two Patrol Detachments)

Necron Agendas:

- Supremacy Through Annihilation (*Codex: Necrons*)
- King Slayer (*Core Book*)
- Gatekeepers (mission-specific)

CRUSADE MISSION – INCURSION

DEFENCE OF THE KHALAIAN GATE

MISSION BRIEFING

The Ultramarines have moved to control the astropathic relay at the Khalaian Gate spaceport, hoping to extract records from its databanks of what befell this world. Even as they move towards their objective, metallic shapes lurch from the gloom, sickly beams of energy blasting from their ranks.

Mission Rules

In this mission, players can attempt to perform the following action, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*:

Extract Information (Action): A **CHARACTER** unit from the Space Marine player's army can start to perform this action at the end of their Movement phase if it is within range of the Astropathic Records objective marker. The action is completed at the end of their turn so long as that **CHARACTER** unit is still within range of the Astropathic Records objective marker.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

Information Extraction (Progressive): The Space Marine player earns 10 victory points each time they successfully complete the Extract Information action (see Mission Rules).

Capture and Control (Progressive): At the end of each player's Command phase, the player whose turn it is scores 10 victory points for each of the following conditions they satisfy (for a maximum of 20 victory points):

- They control two or more objective markers.
- They control more objective markers than their opponent controls.
- They control the Astropathic Records objective marker.

This mission objective cannot be scored in the first battle round.

Slay the Warlord (End Game): At the end of the game, the Necron player scores 30 victory points if the enemy **WARLORD** is destroyed.

VICTOR BONUS

After the battle, the victor can select one **CHARACTER** unit from their army that took part in the battle (this must be a **CHARACTER** that can gain Battle Honours). That Character gains the following Crusade Relic (Increase that **CHARACTER'S** Crusade points total by 1).

Eye of the Astronomican

This crystalline orb sifts the incoming messages at the Khalaian Gate for heretical content and was left in the wreckage of the astropathic relay when it fell. When gazed into, the eye provides glimpses of the future, but there is always a risk ...

In your first Command phase, if the bearer is on the battlefield, they can

gaze into the Eye. If they do so, gain 1 additional Command point and roll one D6; on a 1 or 2, the bearer suffers 1 mortal wound.

MISSION AGENDAS

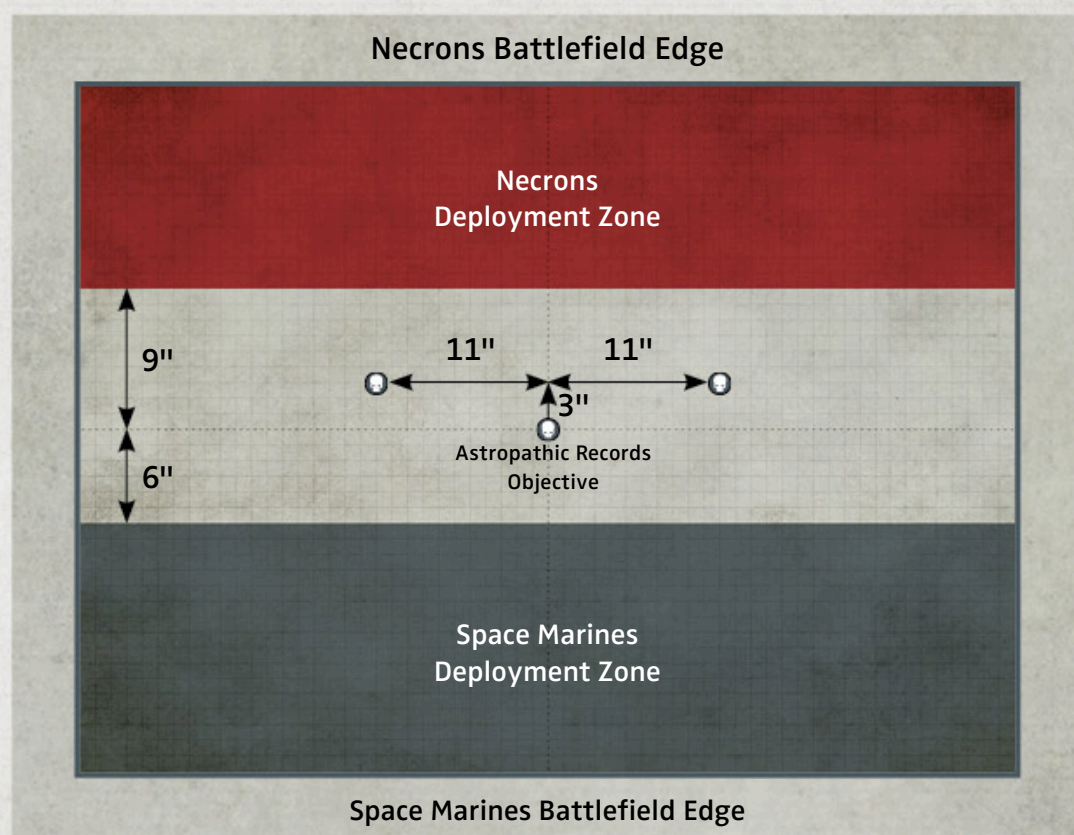
Each player has one of the Agendas below in addition to any others they select:

Gatekeepers (Necron Agenda)

In your first Command phase, select up to three units from your army (excluding **AIRCRAFT**). If there are no enemy units wholly within your deployment zone at the end of the battle, each of these units earns 2 experience points.

Slay the Xenos (Space Marine Agenda)

Keep a Slay the Xenos tally for your **WARLORD**. Add 1 to your **WARLORD'S** Slay the Xenos tally each time it destroys an enemy **CHARACTER** unit. If your **WARLORD** destroys an enemy **WARLORD CHARACTER** unit, add 2 instead. Your **WARLORD** gains 2 experience points for every mark on its Slay the Xenos tally.





DEPLOYMENT

The Ultramarines advance into the ruins of the astropathic relay, determined to glean information on the xenos threat from its databanks. But the Necrons are already waiting for them.

CRUSADE MISSIONS

If you turn to page 332 of the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*, you will find the Crusade mission pack, which explains how to set up and play a narrative game. This is exactly the process we used for this Battle Report, and it's very simple to follow. No more ambiguity about what dice you roll when or who sets up what models where – everything is explained right there for you.

The battle being fought is what's known as an IncurSION, which means it is a small-to medium-size game that will normally last up to two hours. IncurSION games are typically fought on a smaller battlefield so that all the units get into the action nice and quickly. The battlefield shown below is the size of two Kill Team tiles, though it can be any size you choose.

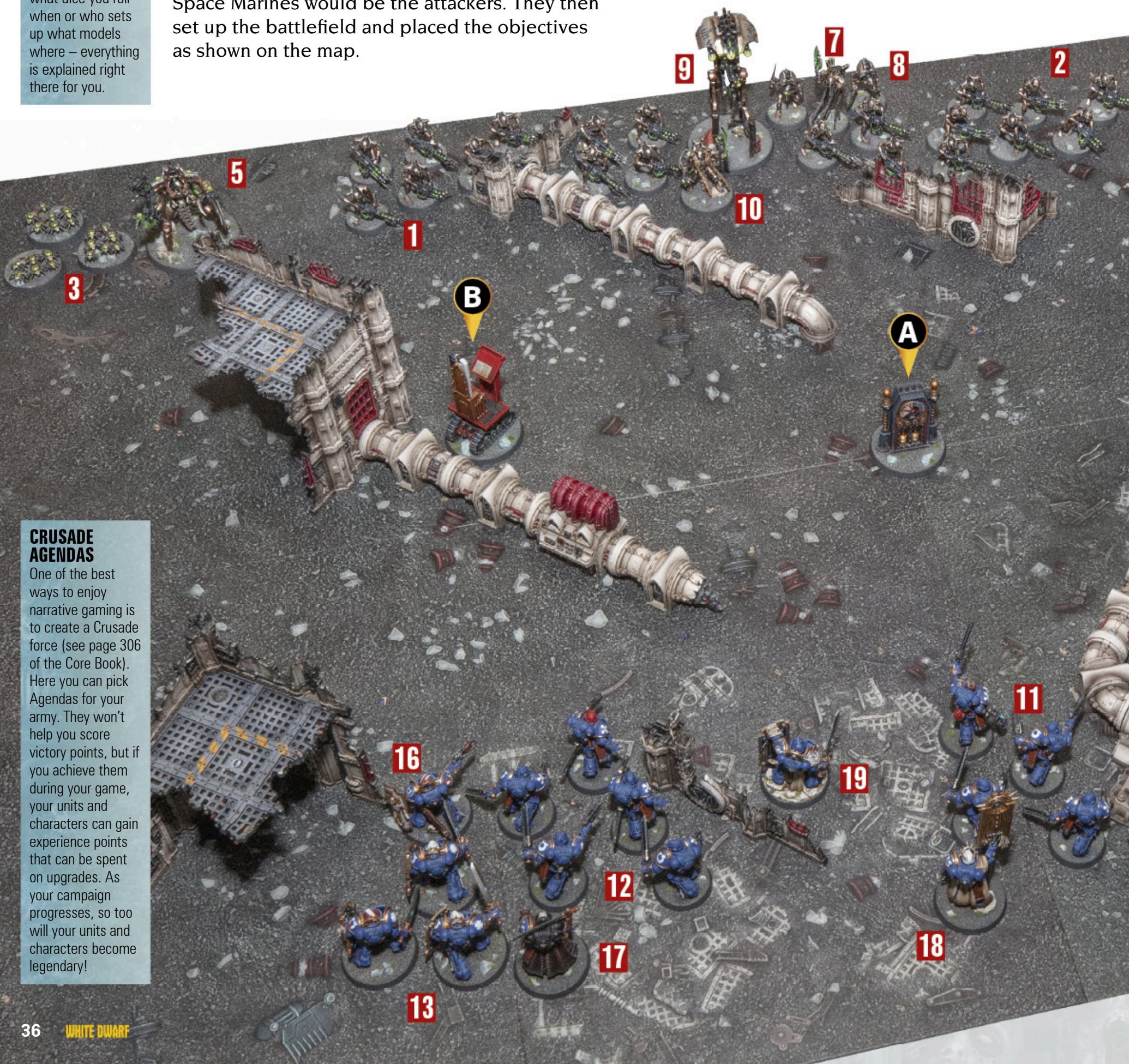
Having read through the mission briefing and selected their Crusade Agendas (see army lists on the previous page and below left), Sophie and James rolled off to see who would be the attacker and who would be the defender in this mission. Sophie won and decided that her crusading Space Marines would be the attackers. They then set up the battlefield and placed the objectives as shown on the map.

Both players then secretly picked units to keep in reserve. Neither player had any units that could arrive as reinforcements (such as Terminators or Deathmarks), but they both decided to spend Command points (CPs) to place units in Strategic Reserves. James used 1CP to place his Skorpekh Destroyers in reserve, while Sophie spent 1CP to hold back her Outriders. These units would start the game off the battlefield and appear later in the game. James and Sophie revealed their choices to each other, then they set up their remaining units as shown in the picture below.

Lastly, they rolled to see who would go first. James won the roll and elected to take the first turn.

CRUSADE AGENDAS

One of the best ways to enjoy narrative gaming is to create a Crusade force (see page 306 of the Core Book). Here you can pick Agendas for your army. They won't help you score victory points, but if you achieve them during your game, your units and characters can gain experience points that can be spent on upgrades. As your campaign progresses, so too will your units and characters become legendary!



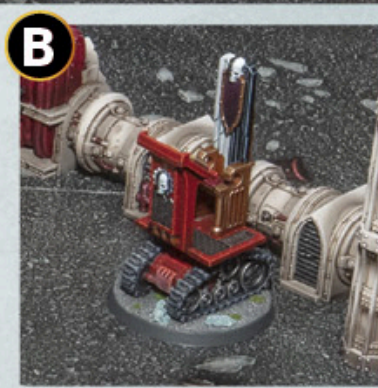
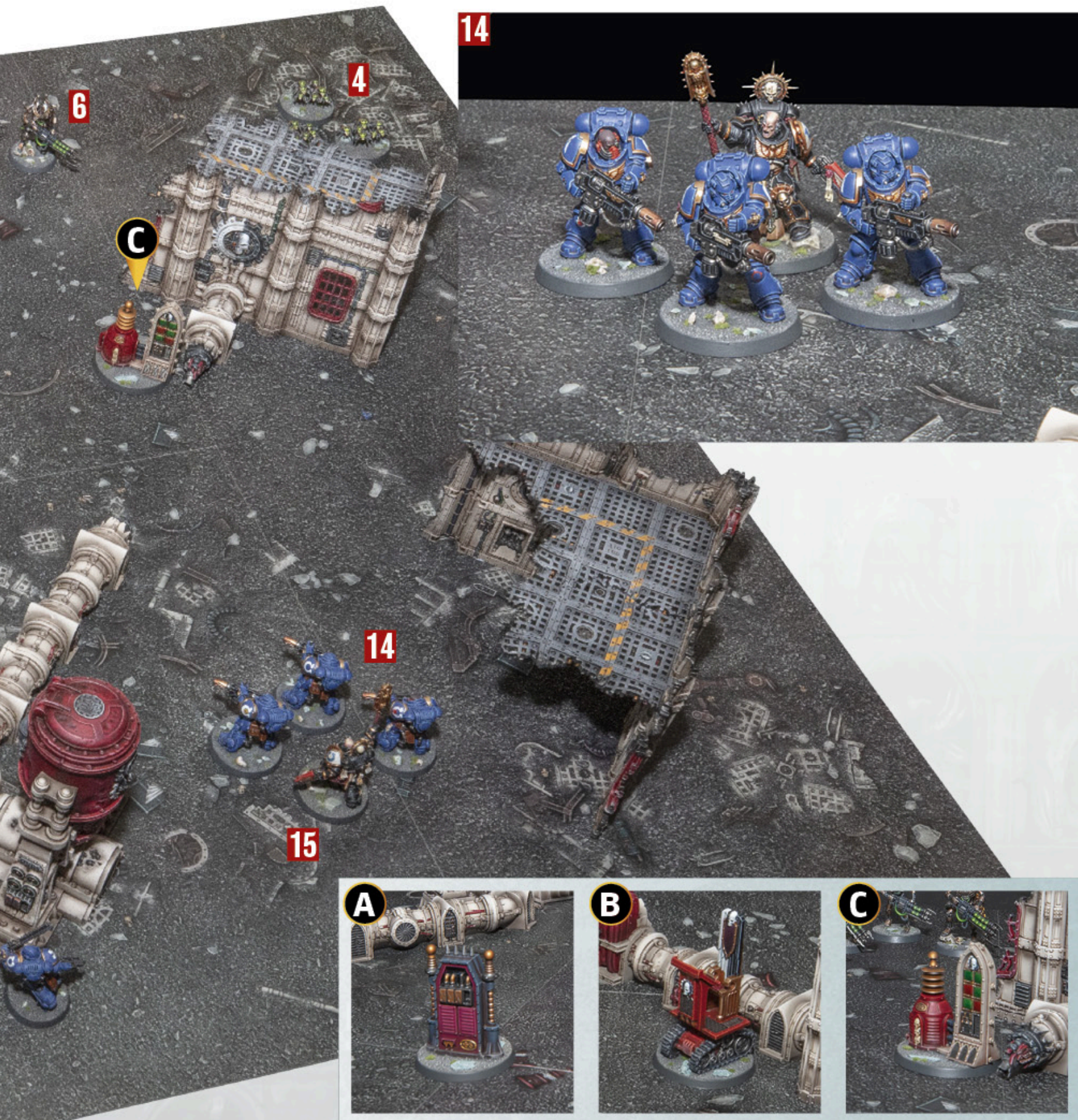


James deploys both of his units of Necrons Warriors **(1-2)** close to the outlying objectives, ready to move onto them as quickly as possible. He then places his Scarabs at either end of his battleline **(3-4)** in the hope that they will prevent Sophie's Outriders outflanking him. Units arriving from Strategic Reserves cannot be deployed within 9" of an enemy model.

James places the Skorpekh Lord on the western flank **(5)**, while the Royal Warden is placed to the east **(6)** where his Adaptive Strategy and Relentless March abilities can benefit the Necron Warriors. The Plasmancer **(7)**, Cryptothralls **(8)** and Canoptek Reanimator **(9)** are deployed in the centre of James's battleline along with the Necron Overlord **(10)**.

Sophie places one unit of Assault Intercessors **(11)** in the centre of her battleline, ready to take the central objective. She deploys her second unit of Intercessors to the west **(12)** along with the Bladeguard **(13)**.

The Eradicators are deployed to the east **(14)** along with the Chaplain **(15)**. Sophie deploys her remaining characters last. Her Lieutenant **(16)** and Judiciar **(17)** join the Bladeguard, while the Bladeguard Ancient **(18)** deploys alongside the Intercessors in the centre. She places her Captain **(19)** right in the middle of her army so that as many units as possible can benefit from his Rites of War Warlord Trait.



BATTLE ROUND ONE – SEIZE THE OBJECTIVES

The Necrons advance upon the secondary objectives, while the Ultramarines head straight for the Astropathic Records. Now all they need to do is extract the information.

OVERWATCH

The previous edition's Overwatch was a very useful ability, but it could slow down a game of Warhammer 40,000 considerably. Now Overwatch is a Stratagem, which means you have to pay 1CP to use it. Not only does this make the Charge phase considerably faster, it means you can only call Overwatch once per phase. You'll have to think very carefully what unit you're going to use it on, because you'll only have one chance to use it!

The first phase of every turn is the Command phase. The player whose turn it is gains a Command point before performing any Command actions. James began by checking his Agendas and selecting the Skorpekh Destroyers and Necrons Warriors as the units to complete his Gatekeepers Agenda. He also declared that the Eradicators would be the target of Supremacy Through Annihilation. If James was able to destroy them completely in this round, his units would gain much experience.

Sadly for James, his shooting was not hugely effective. He killed one of the Eradicators and a few Intercessors, but otherwise he concentrated his efforts on securing the objectives. His greatest success was charging the Skorpekh Lord across the width of the board and into combat with the Primaris Lieutenant, who suffered a painful but mercifully quick death. This manoeuvre pretty much ground Sophie's western flank to a halt.

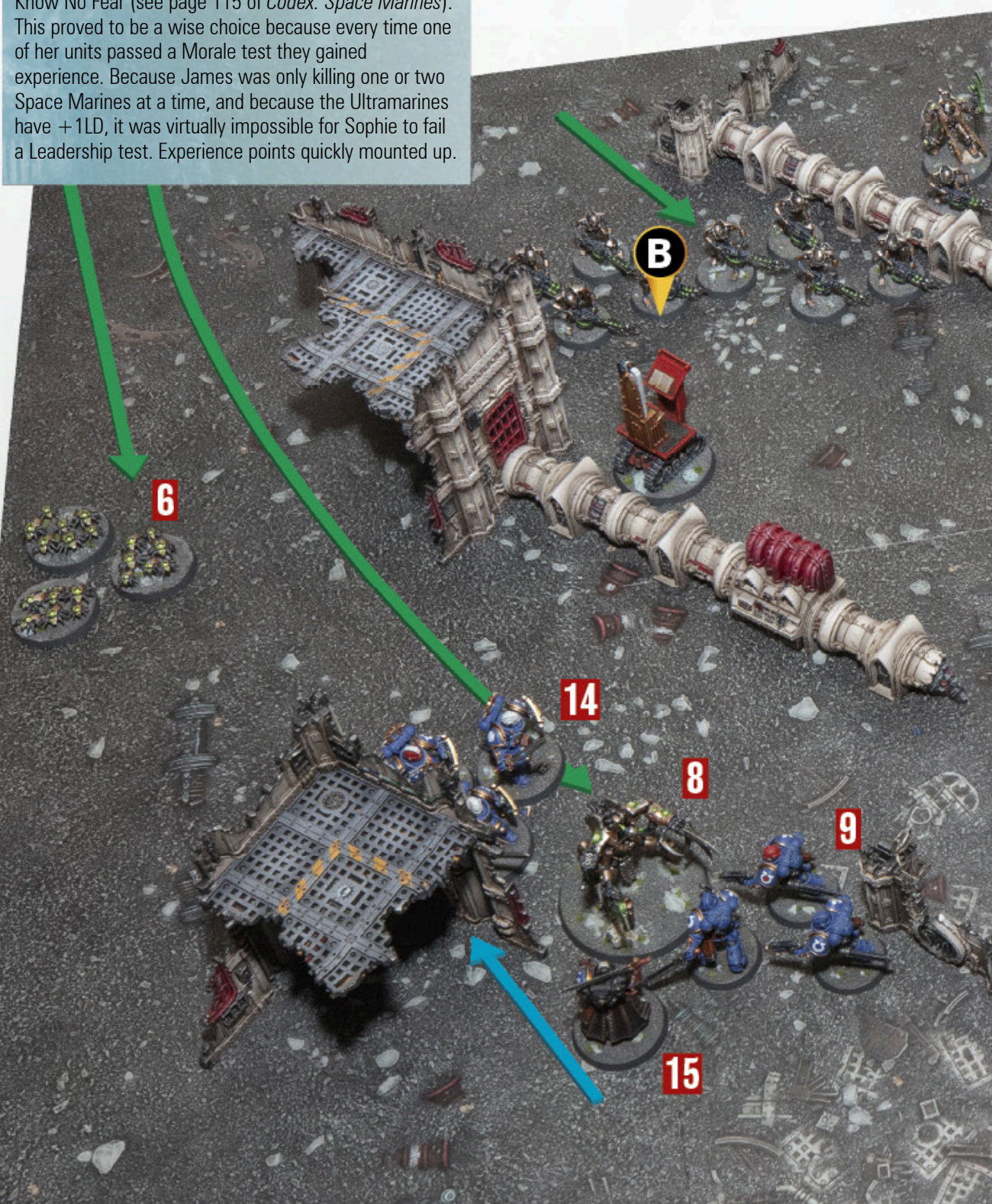
In Sophie's turn, she also gained a CP and declared that she'd be using the Sentinel Agenda on the Eradicators to take the central objective. But would they be able to hold it at the end of the game? Fortunately, her Chaplain chanted his Litany of Faith, which would help protect the Eradicators from harm.

With the Skorpekh Lord holding up her western flank, Sophie moved on the central objective with the rest of her units. Unable to target the Necron characters because of the Look Out, Sir! rule, she set the sights of her Eradicators on the Canoptek Reanimator and turned it into molten slag, much to James's surprise. The rest of Sophie's shooting did very little damage, as the Necron Warriors passed all their Reanimation Protocol rolls. The Skorpekh Lord was less fortunate. Sophie played the Gene-Wrought Might Stratagem on the Bladeguard, enabling them to chop up the Skorpekh Lord before he could fight back.



KNOW NO FEAR

One of the Agendas that Sophie picked for this game is Know No Fear (see page 115 of *Codex: Space Marines*). This proved to be a wise choice because every time one of her units passed a Morale test they gained experience. Because James was only killing one or two Space Marines at a time, and because the Ultramarines have +1LD, it was virtually impossible for Sophie to fail a Leadership test. Experience points quickly mounted up.

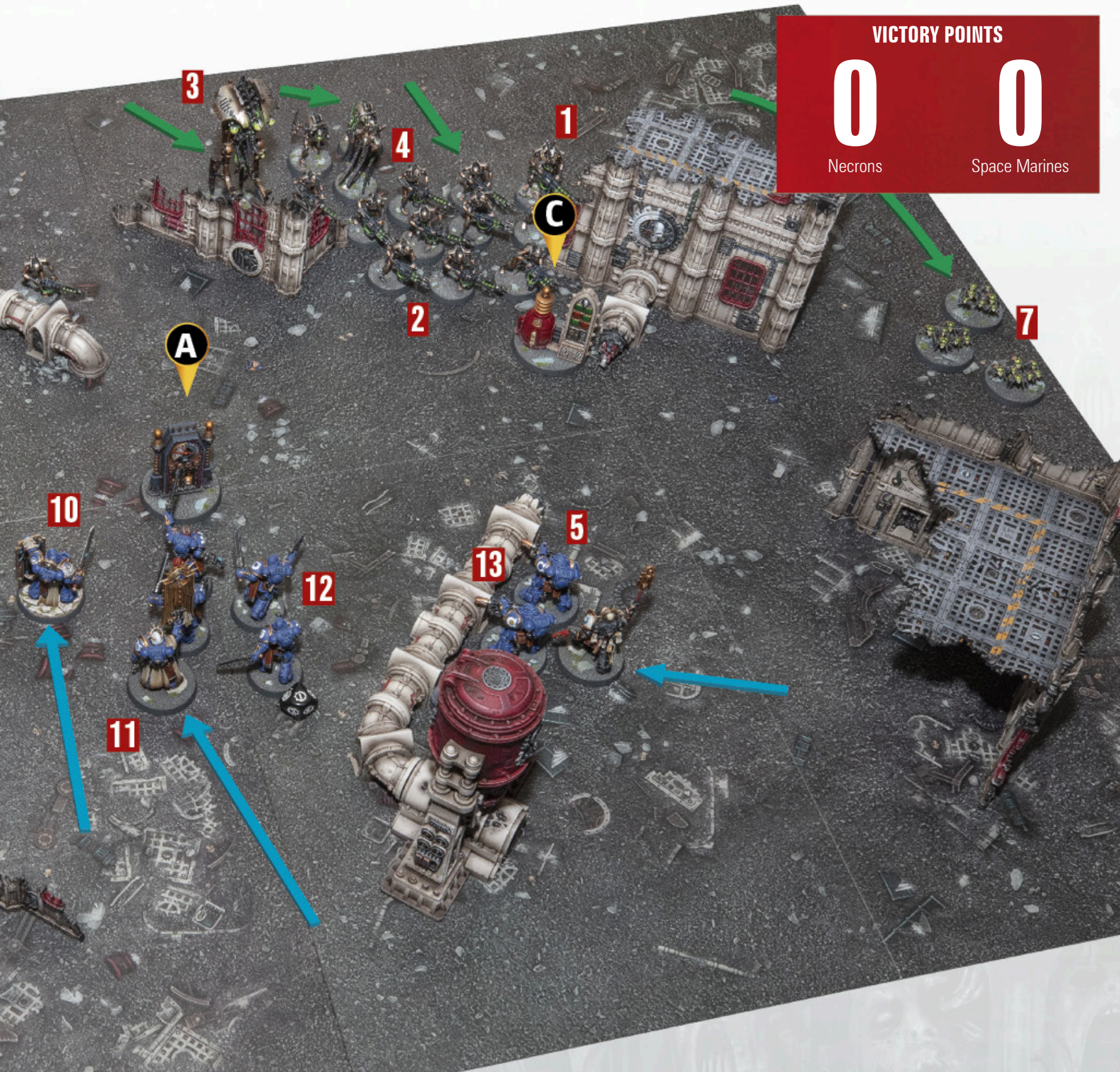




The Royal Warden (1) moves forwards and obliterates an Assault Intercessor with his relic gauss blaster. The nearby Necron Warriors (2) benefit from his Relentless March ability, enabling them to move faster and take Objective C. They are followed by the Canoptek Reanimator (3).

The Plasmancer (4) uses Harbinger of Destruction to inflict a mortal wound on the Eradicators (5). The Eradicator is subsequently taken out of action by the Necron Warriors' gauss flayers.

The Scarabs race forwards on both flanks (6-7). To the west, the Skorpekh Lord (8) kills two Assault Intercessors (9) with his enemic annihilator, then makes a 12" charge straight into the Primaris Lieutenant. His hyperphase harvester makes short work of the Space Marine.



VICTORY POINTS

0

Necrons

0

Space Marines

Sophie moves her Captain (10), Bladeguard Ancient (11) and Assault Intercessors (12) towards the central objective.

The Eradicators take cover behind the pipeline (13) and fire their melta rifles at the Canoptek Reanimator. Sophie uses a CP to ensure she wounds the construct twice, causing nine damage and destroying the machine.

The Bladeguard (14) blast apart a base of Scarabs with their pistols, then charge into the Skorpekh Lord alongside the Judiciar (15). Their combined power weapon attacks are enough to finally kill off the Skorpekh Lord.

BATTLE ROUND TWO – RECOVER THE DATA

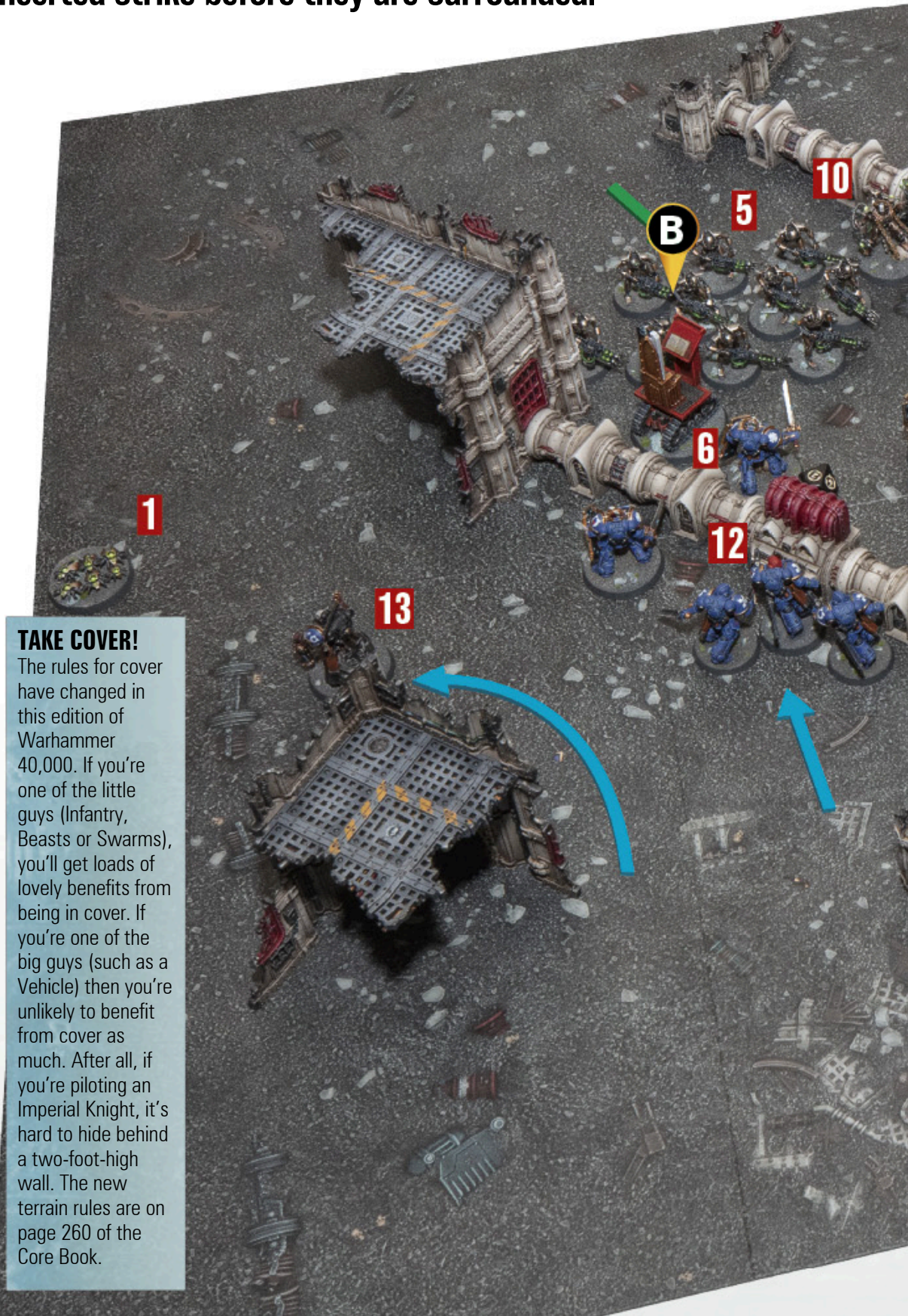
As the Space Marines extract information from the Astropathic Records, the Necrons move to encircle them. The Adeptus Astartes must make a concerted strike before they are surrounded.

At the start of the Command phase, James changed his Necrons' command protocols from the Protocol of the Vengeful Stars to the Protocol of the Eternal Guardian. This meant that his units would gain the benefits of light cover if they didn't move. He also used his Overlord's My Will Be Done ability to improve the accuracy of his Necron Warriors. At the end of his Command phase, he checked his objectives and found that he had secured himself 20 victory points.

With the Space Marines drawing ever closer to his battleline, James decided to bring his Skorpekh Destroyers on from the eastern flank. If he could take out the Eradicators, he could severely reduce the damage output of Sophie's army. Unfortunately for James, the Eradicators were making the most of the pipes they were hiding behind, not to mention the Chaplain's Litany of Faith. Despite James using the Disintegration Capacitors Stratagem, not a single shot got through their armour and, to make matters worse, the Skorpekh Destroyers failed their charge. James even failed to wound the Space Marine Captain, who was now standing dangerously close to the Necron Overlord. James declined to charge the Overlord into combat, though, as he felt he hadn't softened up the Captain enough.

At the start of Sophie's turn, her Chaplain chanted his Litany of Faith. Sophie also scored 10 victory points for holding the central objective. Then she went on the offensive, moving all of her available units forwards to assault the Necrons. In the centre of the battlefield, she charged the Captain into the Necron Overlord (the Intercessors decided not to join him) while the Eradicators held off the Skorpekh Destroyers, slaying one of them with their melta rifles (after a CP was used to re-roll a damage roll). Nearby, the Bladeguard Ancient used the Extract Information action at the Astropathic Records objective to score 10 more victory points.

In the Combat phase, Sophie fought with her Captain first just in case James used the Counter-offensive Stratagem. Despite some solid attacks, the Overlord's phase shifter kept him safe from harm, and he almost killed the Captain in return. To the west, the Bladeguard and Assault Intercessors charged the Necron Warriors but only killed two of them, while the Judicial ran off to destroy the Scarabs. While it wasn't a particularly heroic move, it meant that Sophie would be able to bring her Outriders on anywhere along the western board edge.



TAKE COVER!

The rules for cover have changed in this edition of Warhammer 40,000. If you're one of the little guys (Infantry, Beasts or Swarms), you'll get loads of lovely benefits from being in cover. If you're one of the big guys (such as a Vehicle) then you're unlikely to benefit from cover as much. After all, if you're piloting an Imperial Knight, it's hard to hide behind a two-foot-high wall. The new terrain rules are on page 260 of the Core Book.





VICTORY POINTS

20	20
Necrons	Space Marines

The Scarabs continue to lurk on the flanks (1-2). The Skorpekh Destroyers and Canoptek Plasmacyte (3) arrive from reserves. They try to charge the Eradicators (4) but fail.

The Necron Warriors (5) move closer to Objective B, then shoot the Bladeguard (6), killing one of them. The other unit of Necron Warriors (7) kill an Assault Intercessor (8). This means the Captain (9) can no longer benefit from Look Out, Sir! James fires his Overlord's (10) one-shot tachyon arrow at him and misses. He uses a CP to re-roll the dice but fails to wound the Captain.

The Plasmancer (11) uses Harbinger of Destruction on the Eradicators, but the Chaplain's Litany of Faith protects them. His plasmic lance also does no damage thanks to the pipes they are taking cover behind.

The Bladeguard and Assault Intercessors (12) charge into the Necron Warriors. One Bladeguard dies to Overwatch and the Space Marines only kill two Necrons because they keep reanimating. Nearby, the Judiciar (13) charges the Scarabs and wipes them out.

Sophie moves the Eradicators onto the objective, then they open fire on the Skorpekh Destroyers. They blast one of them apart.

The Captain charges the Necron Overlord (14). They cause two and four wounds to each other respectively.



BATTLE ROUND THREE – THE DEATH OF HEROES

With the Necrons advancing on the Ultramarines' positions, the Adeptus Astartes renew their assault on the alien warriors. Only by crushing them utterly will they have any chance of victory.

REANIMATION

The way in which Reanimation Protocol works for Necrons has changed in the latest codex. Now they can reanimate after each enemy attack, making them extremely tough to kill off unless you destroy the entire unit in one go. As we found out, James's Necron Warriors were suspiciously good at staying on their feet ...

The Reanimation Protocol rules can be found on page 80 of *Codex: Necrons*.

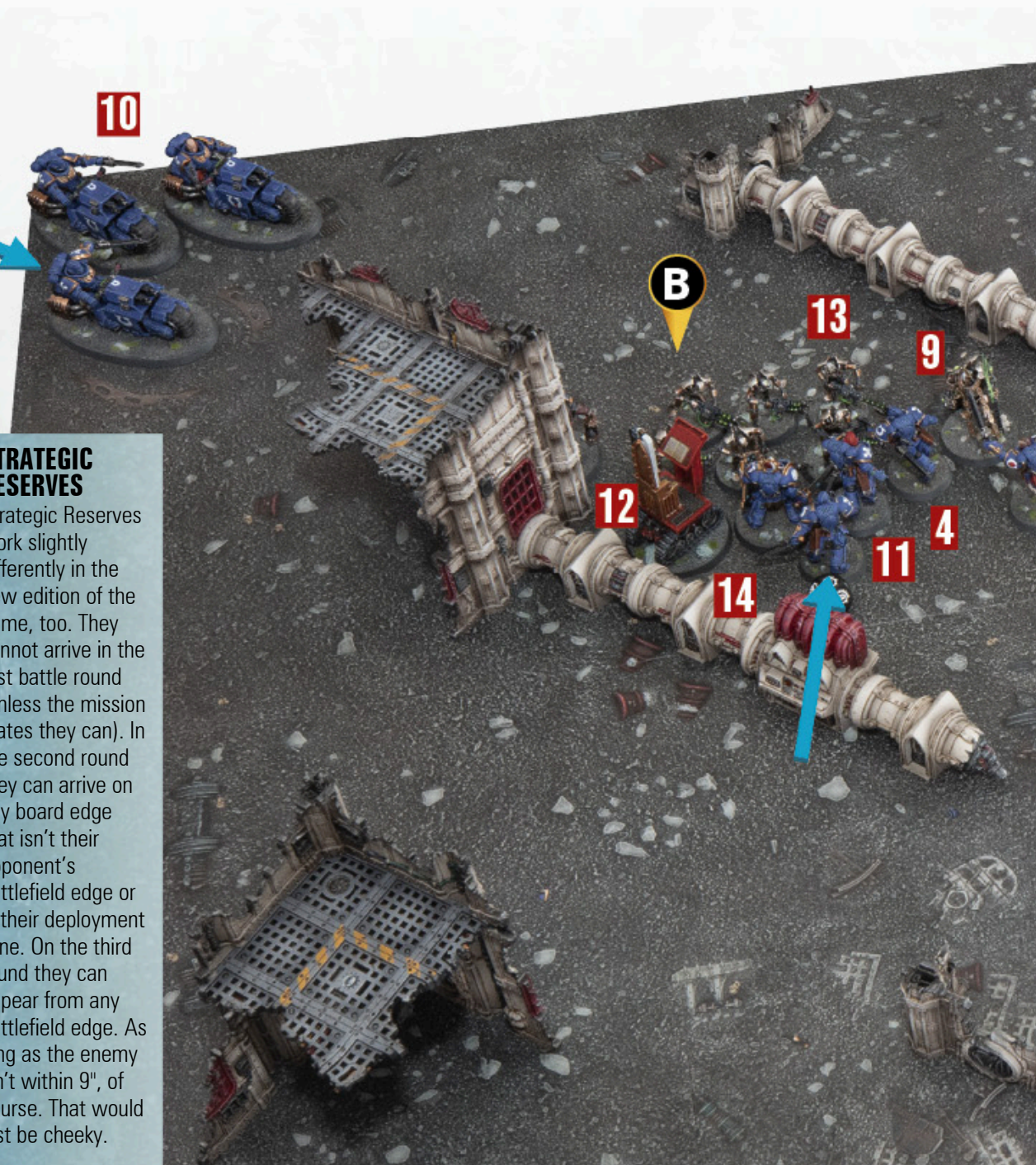
The third battle round sees James initiate the Protocol of the Hungry Void, which improves the Armour Penetration characteristic of his units in combat. He also picks the Bladeguard Ancient as his victim for Supremacy Through Annihilation. This turns out to be a wise choice, because the Ancient is the character model scoring Sophie 10 victory points every turn by accessing the Astropathic Records. Boosted by a well-played Stratagem, James uses his unengaged unit of Necron Warriors to atomise the Ancient with gauss fire at very short range.

However, it's the Combat phase where the Necrons truly excel in this round. Boosted by their command protocol, one of the Skorpekh Destroyers kills the Chaplain, while the other slays and wounds an Eradicator. Nearby, the Space Marine Captain and Necron Overlord continue their duel, but the Necron remains

stubbornly alive and slices apart the Captain despite his huge storm shield.

Sophie's turn sees the arrival of the Outriders, which she brings on to complete her dominance of the western flank. However, their shooting (along with that of her entire force) is almost entirely ineffective. The only saving grace is that the Intercessors' heavy bolt pistols do enough wounds to the Necron Overlord to counteract the effects of his Nanoscarab Casket.

Again, it's the Combat phase that proves to be the most eventful. The Judiciar charges the Necron Warriors and uses his tempormortis to make them strike last. The Space Marines finally wipe out the unit, while nearby the Assault Intercessor Sergeant from the other unit (who is by this point fighting alone) somehow manages to inflict enough wounds on the Necron Overlord to stop him reanimating.



STRATEGIC RESERVES

Strategic Reserves work slightly differently in the new edition of the game, too. They cannot arrive in the first battle round (unless the mission states they can). In the second round they can arrive on any board edge that isn't their opponent's battlefield edge or in their deployment zone. On the third round they can appear from any battlefield edge. As long as the enemy isn't within 9", of course. That would just be cheeky.



The Skorpekh Destroyers (1) move towards the Eradicators and Chaplain while the Scarabs (2) move north to stop the Outriders arriving behind the Necrons.

The Plasmancer (3) uses Harbinger of Destruction on the Captain, but only causes one wound. He kills an Intercessor (4) with his plasmic lance.

The Necron Warriors (5) fire at the Bladeguard Ancient (6), who can no longer benefit from Look Out, Sir! James plays the Relentless Onslaught Stratagem to ensure his Necrons slay the Ancient in one salvo.

James uses the Canoptek Plasmacyte's (7) Infused Madness ability to give the Destroyers +1 Strength and Attacks before they charge. They easily slay the Chaplain but only kill one of the Eradicators (8).

Sophie plays the Counter-offensive Stratagem so that she can interrupt the combat sequence and fight with her Captain against the Overlord (9). The Necron is wounded but slays the Captain in return.

The Outriders arrive from reserve (10) but fail to cause any damage to the Destroyers.

The Intercessor Sergeant (11) charges the Necron Overlord and miraculously takes him out of action!

The Judiciar (12) joins the fight against the Necron Warriors (13). He, the Intercessors and the Bladeguard (14) wipe out the unit.

VICTORY POINTS

70	30
Necrons	Space Marines



BATTLE ROUND FOUR – SLAY THE XENOS!

With the Necrons now leaderless, the Ultramarines sweep in from the west ready to recapture the Astropathic Records. But the aliens are not giving up without a fight.

Having lost the western objective, James knew that he would have to take the central objective in order to retain his lead in victory points. Fortunately the Skorpekh Destroyers were in striking range of the last Eradicator, who was standing right next to it. Unfortunately for James, he would have to fight the last couple of turns of the game without his command protocols, as all of his Necron nobles (essentially the Overlord) were dead.

In an effort to bring down Sophie's Core units, James concentrated his firepower on the Outriders and the last few Intercessors. Because his Warriors' gauss reapers were out of range, he only succeeded in wounding a single biker, while the Cryptothralls only killed one of the two Intercessors. The Royal Warden, who had benefited the Necron Warriors throughout the battle with his presence, failed to cause any damage for a third round in a row!

James's Combat phase had mixed levels of success. He moved his Cryptothralls just a little too close to the Judiciar, and they were quickly chopped up by the Space Marine hero. On the other hand, the Skorpekh Destroyers easily finished off the last Eradicator, giving them control of the central objective. However, because of how victory points are scored in this mission, James would need them to still be alive at the start of his next turn in order to score any points.

Sophie's response to James's turn was to try and claim as many of the objectives as possible. Firstly, she moved her Intercessor Sergeant into the building next to Objective B, thereby holding the objective and gaining the benefits of light cover. The Outriders shot at the Necron Warriors, but most of them got back to their feet using their Reanimation Protocol.

The Outriders then swept round towards the Destroyers ready for the Combat phase. Despite being pretty close to the Skorpekh, the Outriders failed their charge, forcing Sophie to use her only CP to re-roll the result. It proved to be a wise decision, because they managed to get into combat and their attacks (now boosted by the Assault Doctrine) were instrumental in finishing off the Necrons.

At the end of the fourth (and penultimate) battle round, James was clearly in the lead in terms of victory points, but Sophie had more objectives under her control, including the crucial Astropathic Records.

VICTORY POINTS

During the battle, players can earn victory points by achieving Mission Objectives, which are described in the mission's mission briefing. Mission objectives can either be 'End Game' or 'Progressive', meaning that you can earn victory points throughout the game and at the end depending on what objectives you've achieved. Victory points aren't always scored at the end of a turn, either – sometimes they're at the start.





The Skorpekh Destroyers **(1)** advance on the last remaining Eradicator, tailed by the Plasmacyte **(2)**. They charge in and kill him easily.

The Scarabs **(3)** race towards the Astropathic Records now that they're no longer needed to protect the flanks.

The Necron Warriors **(4)** inch closer to the central objective while still holding on to Objective C. They, along with the Royal Warden **(5)**, shoot the Outriders **(6)**. They wound one but fail to kill him.

The Cryptothralls move to attack the Assault Sergeant, but he is slain by the Plasmancer's **(7)** Harbinger of Destruction ability before they get to him. They use their scouring eyes to slay one of the other Assault Intercessors instead, then charge the unit.

The Judiciar **(8)** makes a Heroic Intervention into the Cryptothralls, forcing them to fight last because of his tempormortis. The Judiciar slays both Necrons and consolidates towards the Destroyers.

In Sophie's turn, she moves the last surviving Intercessor **(9)** into the westernmost building from where he can hold Objective B.

The Judiciar, Bladeguard Sergeant **(10)** and Outriders charge the Skorpekh Destroyers. Between them they manage to wipe out the unit before any of them can reanimate, thereby securing the central objective.

VICTORY POINTS

70 **30**

Necrons Space Marines



BATTLE ROUND FIVE – THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

With both armies now severely depleted, the Ultramarines once more consolidate their position around the Astropathic Records. The Necrons, however, may have held them off for just long enough ...

The Plasmancer fires at the last Intercessor, but causes only a single wound. The Necron Warriors (1) fire at the Outriders (2), killing one of them.

In desperation, the Plasmancer charges the Judiciar (3), but is quickly slain by the Space Marine. The Judiciar continues downloading information from the Astropathic Records.

The Scarabs (4) swarm towards the Outriders and James uses the Self-Destruction Stratagem to blow them up, killing a biker and wounding the Sergeant. The Bladeguard Sergeant (5) joins the fight and between them they Space Marines kill the Scarabs.

With only one objective under his control, James scored no victory points in his last round of the game. His only real chance of total victory was to wipe out all the Space Marines, but the Outriders were virtually untouched and the Judiciar was unwounded. In an effort to minimise the number of victory points that Sophie could score, James tried shooting the last Assault Intercessor with his Plasmancer, but his plasmic lance just blasted a hole in the building the Ultramarine was standing in. The Royal Warden also failed to kill the last stubborn Space Marine.

In the Charge phase, James finally got his Scarabs into combat, then promptly detonated them, reasoning that they would do more damage exploding than attacking. He was validated when they took out one of the Outriders. Unsurprisingly, the Scarabs didn't reanimate after such a cruel death. James's other combat was, perhaps, a little

unwise. He charged the Judiciar with the Plasmancer in the hope of tying up the Space Marine character so that he couldn't perform an Extract Information action in the following turn. His gamble did not pay off, and the Plasmancer phased out after being hit very hard by the Judiciar's blade.

With so few Space Marines left alive (just four by this point), Sophie knew that she'd be unable to wrest the last objective away from the Necrons. Instead, she concentrated on squashing the last of the Scarabs and scoring a few more victory points off the objectives she did have. By the end of her final turn, Sophie had scored a total of 60 victory points (20 in the last turn for holding objectives and a further 10 for extracting information). Sadly it was not quite enough. With the victory points for Slay the Warlord under his belt, James was victorious with a score of 70 points to 60. It was a win for the Szarekhan Dynasty!



THE FINAL TURN

Unless otherwise stated in the mission briefing, most missions in this edition of the game are five battle rounds in length. This ensures that the game doesn't run on unnecessarily when all the main action has been concluded. However, if a player's army has been wiped out before this point, their opponent may continue to play on if crucial victory points are at stake. This is most applicable in Eternal War missions.

THE AFTERMATH

As the dust of atomised Ultramarines and violently deconstructed Necrons settles over the astropathic relay, the Necrons stand victorious over their Imperial foes. But only just.

‘The Judiciar and his tempormortis might well have been the bane of my existence in that game.’ - James

‘You need to obliterate a whole unit in one go; otherwise they really will just keep getting up again.’ - Sophie



NOT THIS DAY, HUMANS

James: Well that was just a little bit too close right at the end. I'd managed to rack up a healthy number of victory points by the middle of the game (mainly because of Slay the Warlord), but it was by no means a done deal. When those Space Marines got into my lines and moved onto their Assault Doctrine, they were brutal and I really struggled to hold them back.

Interestingly, I think I'd been doing pretty well up until that point. The Necrons are super resilient to light arms fire, and I managed to roll really well for my Reanimation Protocols, which meant that my two units of Necron Warriors were virtually unharmed for the first half of the game. The surprising loss was the Canoptek Reanimator. With no other large targets on the table, Sophie just went straight for it with her Eradicators and, well, eradicated it. I'm sad I didn't get to do much with it, but I think it was a smart choice on her part. I'm also very glad I took the Nanoscarab Casket for my Overlord. Without that he would have died fighting the Space Marine Captain, and who knows what may have happened if he'd still been alive?

On the subject of Space Marines, the Judiciar and his tempormortis might well have been the bane of my existence in that game. Several times I charged into combat and forgot that he would make my units strike last. That, kids, is the importance of conducting your charges carefully. Had I been more careful with the Cryptothralls, I might have been able to ignore the Judiciar and kill that last Intercessor. Ah well, live and learn!

EXTERMINATUS REQUIRED

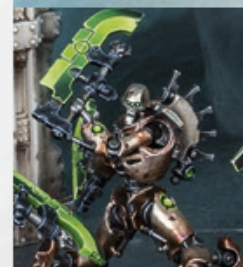
Sophie: Well I had great fun in my first Battle Report. I honestly thought I was going to lose right at the start when the Skorpekh Lord charged into combat and killed my Lieutenant, but I soon got my own back on James's Necrons. The Bladeguard made a real mess of the Destroyer, then stormed off across the battlefield to take on the Necron Warriors. By the end of the game only one of them was left standing, but he was still doing pretty well for himself.

I was also really pleased with the Eradicators, though I'm sad they didn't make it to the end of the game to complete their Crusade Agenda. They took out the Canoptek Reanimator early on, then started blasting holes in the Skorpekh Destroyers. James was so worried about them that he just had to keep attempting charges, and soon enough I ran out of CPs for Overwatch. The Eradicators didn't last long after that. The Judiciar finished the Skorpekhs off in the end, though, which I was really happy about. The Judiciar is a real combat monster, and I think even James was surprised by how well he performed in the game.

Fighting the Necrons was a really interesting challenge for me, as I've never played against them before. Seeing them reanimate was really daunting, and I honestly didn't quite know what to do. You need to obliterate a whole unit in one go; otherwise they really will just keep getting up again. More close combat units are the way forward I think. True, the Necron Overlord and the Destroyers were horrible to fight, but I reckon the Space Marines have the edge in combat.

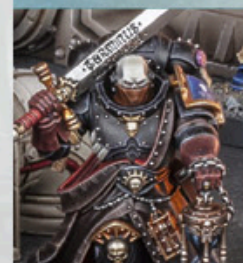
ANDROID OF THE MATCH

James: Easily the Skorpekh Destroyers. They murdered their way through everything they touched. Until they had to fight the Judiciar, of course. Keep the Plasmacyte close is my advice.



MARINE OF THE MATCH

Sophie: It has to be the Judiciar. He killed off the Scarabs, a few Necron Warriors, the Cryptothralls, the Plasmancer and one of the Skorpekh Destroyers. I want to paint one now.



ECHOES FROM THE WRITERS



ANDY CLARK

Andy has been working at Games Workshop for just over eight years, which means he is now a well established part of the furniture. He had the honour (and the associated terror) of being the lead background writer for this edition of the *Warhammer 40,000 Core Book*. He also had just enough time to write this special one-off column all about it.

One of the things that sets Warhammer 40,000 apart is the vast and shadowy galaxy in which its endless wars take place. For over thirty years a succession of writers have worked on this setting, adding remarkable worlds, monstrous races and apocalyptic war zones. The foundation of that work has always lain in the background to be found within the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

It's here that we delve into pre-Imperial lore and the apocalyptic disasters and conflicts that created this dark future. The rulebook allows us to set out the labyrinthine organisation of the Imperium, the cataclysmic nature of the wars consuming the galaxy and the myriad strange beings that battle over its countless worlds. In short, this is the jump-off point for everything else we write throughout the entire edition of the game.

With each edition of Warhammer 40,000, we as a studio have striven to create the best tabletop wargame in existence. This has involved many different approaches, from fundamental redesigns to careful pinpoint refinements. Not only has this served to keep the gaming experience fresh, but it's also allowed us to try out different game mechanics and work our way collectively toward an ever-better end product.

While they might look like quite different disciplines, the same principles are true for writing core background as for writing the rules. It's our responsibility to retain all those cool elements that people love so much about Warhammer 40,000, while at the same time ensuring that – unlike the Imperium we're writing about – our actual background text doesn't stagnate. Sometimes this has seen us trim back the background section of the rulebook and present our galaxy's lore in an ultra-refined fashion. At others, it's seen us pen vast reams of dramatic and engaging background text or build upon what came before.

This time around has proven especially interesting because my brief was clear; we were going to write the entire background section from scratch! This isn't to say the plan was to radically alter anything about the background of Warhammer 40,000. If you have been a fan of this game since its earliest days, fear not, you're not



At the very heart of Warhammer 40,000 is the core rulebook. Not only does this weighty tome contain the rules for the game, a wealth of beautiful art and stunning photography, but it is also the cornerstone of the game's setting and background.

about to see the Emperor eaten by Pterasquirrels or Horus win the Heresy (ahh, what if ...). Rather, the job has been to take everything that makes our setting what it is and re-present the information in a fresh and up-to-date fashion.

Writing this article after the fact of finishing the book itself, I can honestly say this approach was a huge undertaking, but also that I'm so glad we did what we did. Writing from fresh allowed new lenses through which to present classic information. It let us gauge how much weight should be given to each element of the background, and it gave license for my team and me to deploy the entire writerly toolbox of styles and perspectives at our disposal. Of course, it was important that the job not get self-indulgent at any point. The intent here was not to 're-invent the wheel'. Throughout the writing process, the entire background writing team and our invaluable and extremely wise editors kept a weather eye to ensure that the text was not only exciting and interesting, but also that it remained informative and true to what had come before.



NEW PERSPECTIVES

One of the biggest changes that eagle-eyed veteran readers will spot is that we've adjusted the viewpoint from which our galaxy's ancient history is presented. Once upon a time, the events of the Great Crusade and the subsequent Horus Heresy were naught but a few hazy references coupled with the odd amazing piece of fiction. (Anyone who remembers Bill King's phenomenal short piece in *White Dwarf* about the Siege of Terra will know what I'm talking about. If not, see if you can find it; it's a true Warhammer classic.) Nowadays, though, there's a vast series of novels and an impressive array of Forge World publications that examine the Heresy era in exhaustive detail. This is, frankly, brilliant. I for one love knowing how these ancient and once-mythological conflicts actually took place.

It has led, however, to an odd de-mystification of events that – by the 41st Millennium – are at best myth and allegory, but more likely are buried in dust-shrouded forbidden archives if they are still recalled at all. There's an elasticity to this notion, of course. Roboute Guilliman, Mortarion, Magnus the Red, even figures like Fabius Bile or Abaddon

the Despoiler were actually *there* for the Heresy. Equally, it would be a remiss First Founding Chapter that didn't seek to retain some relic records of what truly occurred. Yet even in cases such as these, ten millennia have a way of distorting or fragmenting people's memories. Moreover, even the noblest Primarch or most bombastic arch-heretic knows that secrets are powerful things. And then of course there's the simple fact that the galaxy is so unutterably immense that even keeping track of what is happening in the here and now is likely a Sisyphean task. For the majority of those in the 41st Millennium, ancient prehistory is just that – fact distorted by entropy, ignorance, hatred and fear until any truth it may once have resembled is lost forever.

We therefore took a conscious stylistic decision to draw the veil of ignorance and superstition across our setting's more ancient events. Not that I didn't get a chance to write about them – indeed, each of the ancient pre-Imperial ages gets an entire section all to itself. However, these segments are written more as an examination of how their events have borne upon the evolution of the modern – and hideously dystopian – Imperium, rather than as potted histories for their own sakes. It's a section of the rulebook I'm especially proud of, and one that seems to have inspired a lot of excitement and debate amongst those who have read it in the studio and beyond. There's never been a better opportunity to drill down into the psychology and underlying superstitions of the Imperium, and the inherent insanity of the way in which it operates.

This in turn speaks to another mission that we as a design team set ourselves for this edition of Warhammer 40,000. It is important to remember the distinction between what we as a studio do with our core publications, compared to what Black Library and similar departments set out to do with their fiction. Specifically, the mission statement for design studio publications is not to tell a character-driven (or even faction-driven) story so much as it is to bring to life and to maintain a setting. The background we write is intended to furnish our hobbyists and the rest of our business alike with a canvas, a backdrop, the stage on which to forge their own narratives.

This isn't to say that we don't tell stories of our own, both on the macro and the micro scale. In eighth edition we tore the galaxy in half and

brought back a Primarch, after all! This time around, though, the brief is different. We've thrown some pretty hefty stones into the galactic pond, and it's time to revel in seeing what ripples they create. For Warhammer 40,000: Indomitus our role is to examine the detail of an Imperium torn in two, of a Human race committed to a grand crusade intended not to win the Long War but simply to survive. The advent of the Cicatrix Maledictum has had vast ramifications for every race in the galaxy, including countless species we've only hinted at in text or have never even seen ... yet! This time around, it is our role to ensure the galaxy feels vast, dark, storm-lashed and full of unholy peril.

The aforementioned crusade is inevitably a big focus this time around, too. It is Warhammer 40,000: Indomitus, after all! During the previous edition of the game the notion of the Indomitus Crusade was introduced, but what is it? How is it organised? What does it do and why? This isn't a hasty 'one and done' event wherein Roboute Guilliman and Belisarius Cawl jet around the galaxy delivering Space Marines to one and all. Rather, it is the biggest unified military undertaking for Humanity in thousands of years. It is a desperate gambit to stabilise the Imperium Sanctus before the worshippers of the Dark Gods – coupled with the innumerable alien threats rampaging through the stars – usher in final damnation for the Emperor's realm. We've already released a number of *White Dwarf* articles aimed at elaborating on the nature, organisation and goals of the numerous Indomitus Crusade

Fleets and their individual battle groups. Now, the core rulebook felt like a great place to crystallize some of that information. No doubt we shall build upon it further as we proceed into the Era Indomitus.



Another aspect worth mentioning about this rulebook is its wealth of short fiction. Multiple authors have contributed dark and exciting tales, including several of Black Library's mightiest. To me, this is especially exciting and important. No writing tool is more immersive or immediate than a good short story, and these pieces really grab you by the collar and drag you headlong into the mud, blood and horror of the Warhammer 40,000 setting. Coupled with some incredible art provided by our talented in-house artists, this content is some of the most rich and evocative in the book. It's an absolute joy to read.

All things considered, this was one heck of a project, and it involved some genuine challenges. The nature of the brief I've already covered, but it still bears saying that it was a big deal both professionally and on a personal level. Some really major names have written the background text for Warhammer 40,000 over the years. These are gents that I've respected and looked up to for their writing, in some cases since I was a kid, and it's lore that is tremendously dear to my heart. When I was taking their work and writing it afresh in my own



words, I definitely wanted it to live up to their standards! People, I think, sometimes have an erroneous image of studio background writers as a sort of walking lexicon of all background knowledge. This simply isn't the case. With the amount of layered and nuanced background that's been developed over these last few decades, we'd need supercomputers instead of brains to contain it all. Sure, we know plenty about the Warhammer 40,000 background in general terms and have favourite corners of the lore where our know-wotz could be considered specialist. (You'll be amazed to know that in my case it's Orks ...) As I said above, though, this is a setting more than a story, and it's constantly deepening, adapting and subtly changing. It might be heresy to say it, but some bits of lore even get quietly shuffled off this mortal coil (after due and weighty consideration, obviously) if they no longer fit the models we sell, the setting we're creating or the tone we're aiming for. I will never not be delighted that Zoats once enjoyed Zoatibix, for example, but that just doesn't really fit the modern 40K presentation of these enigmatic alien beings or the tone in which we write about them. Our most important skill as background writers, then, isn't 'know all the things'. Rather it's the ability to rapidly and comprehensively research the granular detail of an area of our lore, and to then plan and execute the deployment of that researched lore in order to meet the brief we've been given. Put simply, we're good at inloading a ton of lore and then exloading it again onto the page in as cool, informative, appropriate and interesting a way as possible. You can see where this is going, right? The Warhammer 40,000 rulebook contains the core background for the entire setting and all of its key races (as well as hints at quite a few others). There was a reason that my desk came to be known as 'book mountain' for a little while there ...

Another challenge was that at the time of my writing this book, our studio had only recently undergone a major move-around. I was training my new – but thankfully extremely talented – team of Callum Davis and Colin Cubbon. They actually both made contributions to the book in their own right, and I reckon they did themselves proud. Then there was the main challenge we always face: getting it all written in time, and to the highest possible standard, with all the lore spot on.

Any one of these things by itself is a manageable enough task. When you're working to a tight deadline and a tight brief, with additional projects always on the go, folks from other departments needing background consultation, unexpected side-quests forever raising their heads and the knowledge that you're being entrusted with the biggest single

product your department of your company ever makes (alongside the Age of Sigmar rulebook, of course) ... well, then things get a bit more exciting! Fortunately, though, exciting is the right word. I think it's fair to say that you don't work anywhere in the beating creative heart of the world's biggest and most prolific tabletop wargames company because you want a quiet life. I always relish a challenge like this. It's why eight years in I'm still writing background for the studio and loving it, and I think the end product speaks for itself.



For every challenge, of course, there was also a really enjoyable opportunity. Getting to deep-dive our lore going all the way back to year one and to write about apocryphal subjects we normally don't get anywhere near? Check. Getting to face down all the challenges above and come out on top? Check. Enjoying writing one of the most in-depth, bespoke and interesting books we ever release as a studio? Check. Maybe the most enjoyable detail of this project, though, was providing some 'in-world' perspectives on this dark galaxy. Throughout the book, you'll find a series of boxouts that provide first hand excerpts from the points of view of Inquisitors, Astropaths, Space Marines and various other worthies. Among my tasks was inventing these characters and establishing who they were, what sort of voice and perspectives each would have. I even went so far as to figure out which actor or actress I'd have play them were they ever to show up in a movie. All this was intended to provide these characters with strong and compelling real-world voices, while they in turn are there to give readers another way into the nitty gritty of the grim, dark 41st Millennium. I wouldn't be at all surprised if you see some of these figures show up again through this edition's publications. I'm guessing they've got plenty more to say!

Summing it all up, then, writing the background for the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook was every bit as intense, challenging, exciting and rewarding as you'd expect. I'm very, very proud of the finished result. I feel like, even amongst the best part of a decade's worth of doing this with my life, this has been a standout opportunity to contribute a real lasting foundation stone to the edifice that is Warhammer 40,000. That matters to me. It's a bucket-list tick. And with any luck it's resulted in a book that you lovely folks out there in hobby-land will thoroughly enjoy.

BLADEGUARD

In the Basilica of Saint Tassimus, the scripto-savant Zax Gadnar is running for his life. Alien monstrosities pursue him, leaving only death in their wake. What Zax needs is a miracle - or an angelic intervention. But will it arrive in time? A short story by Callum Davis.

Zax Gadnar ran. His leg muscles were cramping with effort. No amount of breathing satisfied the demands of his burning lungs. *Must keep going*, he thought. *Must keep going*.

He ran through the corpse-strewn corridors and chambers of the basilica in which he worked as a scripto-savant. The floors were slick with blood. He nearly slipped and fell in spilled innards.

He couldn't hear those ... things ... anymore, but he felt no safer. The thought of them spurred fresh terror within him, lending him the impetus to keep running on his flagging

limbs and pushing him on. Metallic, three-legged, blade-armed monsters, spinning and slashing. Their blades slicing through his colleagues. The creatures didn't even need to hack; their swords just seemed to pass through all they touched, cutting people in half and disembowelling them. Though the creatures' expressions were completely impassive, something about them still gave the impression they were somehow ... deranged. They had cut through most of his colleagues in Cloister 3δ5ρ in less than a minute. By sheer luck, Zax had been at the other end of the chamber when they cut their way in. When he heard the screams, turned and saw what was happening, his instincts took over. He ran and never looked back.



How did this happen? he wondered. Rumours had circulated for some months now, of war happening elsewhere on Rytiann III. 'Keep working,' the canons had said. 'Everything is, as always, under complete control. The Emperor commands that you ignore the lies and keep working.' This continued for months, but after a while people started disappearing. The oldest member of their cloister, Xink, said that she'd seen this once in the past. 'It happened to me before. I was thrown into the holy defence brigades. They trickled out those they picked to go into military service to avoid panic and to make sure the copying of the holy texts never ceased.'

Zax had little idea where he could run, or where would be safe.

The basilica is a fortress in itself ... if those ... things ... could get in ... past the walls and the turrets ... where in the Throne's name is safe?

He ruled out the hab-blocks. They were too close, and too labyrinthine.

They'd trap me.

He thought about the Enforcer station. It was better protected than the basilica, and it would be guarded. They had gunships. Maybe they were evacuating people.

Zax reached a staircase and descended. He went as quickly as he could whilst trying to reduce the noise of each step. Now that Zax had a goal, he felt more focused. He peered over the edge of the handrail, looking down and above to see if any of the monsters were here.

In the relatively narrow confines of the staircase, each step on the stone seemed to echo for an eternity, and they made Zax wince. He held on to the handrail as he walked, the touch of them as cold as ever. He stopped at every floor to look up and down the stairs. After the fifth such pause, Zax started on down again. He felt a heavy drop of liquid land on his hand from somewhere above as he gripped the rail. It was far from uncommon for water to drip here, but what he felt was warm. He felt another drop before he'd even had time to react.

Zax knew what it must be, but he looked anyway. Two drops of blood had spattered on his hand. He looked up the staircase. A number of floors up, he saw pairs of green eyes staring down at him. They must have chased some other servants of the basilica here.

Zax's chest constricted on his already gasping lungs. An intense shiver ran down his spine. His throat narrowed as he tried to take in wheezing breaths through his fear. He felt a flesh-crawling prickle all over his body.

He ran down the stairs, barely shrugging off the paralysing fear. He had seven more floors to go.

He could hear the metallic clank of his pursuers all the way down. It never sped up, it never slowed down. It was rhythmic, ceaseless and untiring – the exact opposite of

his burning, weary legs that felt like they could give out at any moment. He knew that if they did, he'd never rise to his feet again.

Zax reached the ground floor level. His pursuers were no more than two floors above him. There were three corridors at the bottom of the stairwell. He took the first he came to. He wasn't sure where it led.

He breathed heavily, and his heart pumped rapidly. *Have to escape, have to escape!*

With a sudden lurch, Zax felt himself being grabbed by his robes and dragged into a room, the door for which had just been opened.

He kicked and shoved and struggled. 'Get off me you monsters! Get off me!' he yelled.

The hands that had seized him threw him to the floor. One covered his mouth. He wriggled and lashed out, trying to get up. But whatever had him was too strong.

'Stop. Be silent. Look at me,' a voice whispered. 'We heard you running.'

Zax realised with a surge of relief that he was looking up at a trio of Enforcers. Blood splattered their orange helmets. They were breathing heavily from the struggle.

'You're safe. We've got you. But be quiet. Those things are everywhere.'

Zax nodded. The Enforcer took his hand from Zax's mouth.

The scripto-savant looked around. Five Enforcers had barricaded the door with upturned desks, several scriptural lecterns and even a marble statue of Saint Tassimus the Fervent. The incense burners looked like they had been hurriedly extinguished, and the Enforcers had moved twenty or more other survivors to the back of what was once a cloister similar to the one he had worked in, only smaller.

The Enforcer who had spoken to him pointed at the crowd.

'Stay with them,' he whispered. 'We're holding here until they move on. Stay quiet. The Emperor will see us through this if we're patient.'

Zax walked to the back of the room and crouched with a group of people, gaining some forlorn sense of comfort from the proximity of other people. Many were shivering with shock, many were caked in the dry blood of former colleagues and friends. None bore identification markers from the part of the basilica where he worked on the plain robes they wore. They were doing the best they could to be as quiet as possible, but each whimper, scuff and muffled cough made Zax want to scream at them, in case their noise alerted the monsters.

He looked around the chamber, hunting for ways the things might get in, scared the Enforcers or the others might have missed something. Its walls were bare, besides more sigils of the Imperial eagle and a scattering of tattered purity seals and noticior-parchments. Dozens of candles had been left on the floor where they had been knocked over when the Enforcers set up their barricade. There was also another door. Zax furrowed his brow and tapped the shoulder of the man he was sat next to. He had wrapped his arms around his knees, and was rocking gently and murmuring to himself.

'What's that door for?' Zax asked in a hoarse whisper.

The man stopped rocking. Zax could see his eyes were bloodshot.

'Don't know. It's locked.' He went back to his murmuring, which Zax could now tell were prayers for safety and deliverance. Zax didn't say anything else.

The only sounds in the room now were muffled tears and whispered prayers. The Enforcers were behind their rudimentary barricades, clutching their shotguns tightly. Zax had always seen the Enforcers as utterly terrifying, barely even Human within their bright orange armour. They were to him fearsome symbols of the Imperium's authority ... and they didn't seem to be much less afraid than he was.

What are these things, to overwhelm us so quickly? he thought.

He heard clanking. Metallic limbs striking a metallic floor. The Enforcers heard, too. They took up positions, aiming their weapons at the closed door in front of them. The noise stopped abruptly once it reached the chamber Zax and the others were in. There was a pause. Zax was taut as a wire. He willed the footsteps to move on, as if he could force them away with sheer desperation. He dared not even breathe.

He jumped as a blade cleaved through the door, moving as easily as though the barricade wasn't even there. People screamed. Those closer to the front of the group pushed backwards.

Three of the tripod metal monsters that had savaged Zax's colleagues burst into the room, their rapid advance a continuous revolution of flashing blades. They moved with a blurring ferocity that their ungainly frames had no right to possess. Only one Enforcer reacted quickly enough to fire his weapon. Sparks flew as the weapon's discharge struck the monster, but didn't even slow it. The Enforcers were cut to bloody ribbons in short order, the strips of flesh that remained of them smoking from the heat of the blades that sliced them apart.

'God-Emperor, s-save my soul. For all my sins, I repent and b-beg your beautiful forgiveness,' Zax gabbled, unable to take his eyes off the soulless forms now surging towards him and the others. There was nowhere he could go. He closed his eyes, thinking death was upon him. He

felt a wet warmth form in the crotch of his robes, and he shook in terror. He imagined how terrible the pain would be, and he prayed the suffering would be short, like it seemed to be for the others.

But the pain never came. The locked door exploded open, and three demigods surged through, clad in armour of gleaming cerulean. The helmet of one was a glorious crimson, the other two purest white. All were bedecked with purity seals and golden trinkets. Each carried a towering shield larger than Zax and wielded a long sword. They struck the monsters like a thunderbolt. Though he knew in another context they would be terrifying, here they were magnificent. They radiated an Imperial glory mightier than anything he had ever seen before.

Surely those are not ... they cannot be ...

'Space Marines!' yelled the man he had asked about the door. 'The Emperor's Angels of Death, come to save us!'

Zax had heard of the Space Marines. He'd copied tales of their victories hundreds of times in his life. He had secretly thought they were a myth.

How wrong I have been! he thought. 'Emperor be praised!'

He gazed in awe as the monsters' blades rebounded from the Space Marines' energy-wreathed shields with cracks like lightning bolts. He watched in wonder as his saviours' swords met the blades of the attackers amidst showers of searing sparks.

The Angels of Death fought in seamless unison. Each stab, block and parry they made with their swords supported the strikes of their battle-brothers. Where they could, they defended each other with timely blocks from their shields. In contrast, the metal monsters were frenzied, savage and individual. In the narrow confines of the chamber, their frenetic movements and eagerness to engage the Space Marines put them at a disadvantage. They lacked freedom of movement and on occasion hampered each other's attacks. The Space Marines' wall of armour and shields became impenetrable to them. Eventually, the Angels of Death found an opening. One of their number, the warrior with the crimson helm, cut a blade-arm from one of the creatures. Without the constant whirling of two swords, the metal monster was more vulnerable, and a Space Marine was able to put it down, driving his sword through its head. He drove his gladius through it four times more, plunging deep into its metallic body and ripping free amidst leaping arcs of emerald energy, hacking through the steely vertebrae that supported its head and sending the grotesque skull clattering across the floor.

With one of their foes fallen, the Space Marines drove forward more furiously, using their numerical advantage and godlike strength to drive their foes back into a corner. They took the brunt of attack after attack on their

shields, which began to crack and splinter under the relentless assaults.

'No!' Zax screamed when one of the monsters speared its blade through a Space Marine's pauldron and bit deep into his shoulder, slicing off his arm. The Angel of Death fought on, even as blood poured from his open wound. He still hefted his shield, using it to protect his battle-brothers and push the beasts further into a corner.

Zax had been in a kind of reverie watching the duel, expecting a swift victory for the Space Marines. Seeing one so wounded reminded him of the danger they were all in. Brought back to reality, he saw the metal remnants of the fallen monster on the ground moving together, slowly.

'No,' he said, as it dawned on him that these beasts might possess some vile ability to cheat death and fuse back together.

What can I do? I am no warrior, he thought. He looked to the Space Marines and watched them fight. He knew he could never get close to matching them, but something about their dauntless courage inspired him. He rose shakily to his feet and rushed to a shotgun discarded by one of the dead Enforcers. He took it in his hands uncertainly, surprised by its weight and with little idea of how to use it. He saw the metal limbs crawling their way back together. Already the severed head had fused back to the body proper. He raised the shotgun, aiming it at the squirming mechanical mass. He closed his eyes when he pulled the trigger. The recoil nearly knocked him over. His shoulder felt like it had been hit with one of the canons' lashmauls, and the noise set his ears ringing.

He opened his eyes. The metal monster was now in more pieces than it had been before. He lifted his arms into the air in triumph, laughing. 'For the Emperor!'

'Gratitude, citizen,' said one of the Space Marines. Speaking through his vox-grille, his voice sounded like gravel being scraped over corrugated iron decking. He was the one who had lost his arm. The other two Space Marines had dispatched another of the beasts, and he had withdrawn from the fighting as his battle-brothers finished off the last. 'These xenos' foul abilities see them able to rise from death. You did well to stop it from happening. Your courageous intervention may well have saved us.'

Zax did not know what to say. The Space Marine was at least a metre taller than him, and perhaps three times as wide. He had never seen such power and glory before. It overwhelmed him.

'Your wound, Angel?' he said, eventually. *I must sound so weak to him,* he thought.

'I will recover,' said the Space Marine. 'Our battle-brothers fight to cleanse the rest of the basilica. There

are dropships inbound to evacuate any survivors of the xenos attack. We cannot escort you to the landing zone, there are many more of these Necrons to slay. Lead these people to safety.'

Just being asked to carry out this duty by one of the Emperor's Angels seemed to stiffen Zax's resolve. He struggled to hold back tears. He clutched the shotgun more tightly, holding it to his chest, standing in some amateur form of the attention position he had seen the Enforcers hold before.

'In the Emperor's name,' he said.



BATTLES OF THE PARIAH NEXUS

The war to restore the Pariah Nexus to Imperial rule, conducted principally by Battle Group Kallides of Indomitus Crusade Fleet Primus, ground on in a long and costly conflict. The battles were many, the horror nigh indescribable.



This being an excerpt of the introduction to Volume I Of The Definitive Account Of The War For The Pariah Nexus, written by myself, Esteemed Appointed Historitor Alfus Rekorik Smigh. Written to the sweet music of earthshaker cannon and medusa siege gun sending the Emperor's greetings to the Necron foe.

Those in sanctioned circles will no doubt be familiar with some of the major events of the War for the Pariah Nexus, such as the Disaster at Mesmoch, the Battle for the Gates, the Tredica Raids and the False-salvation of Asthan to name but a few. But how many can claim to have a more detailed understanding of this war, and the environments in which it is taking place? Every action, however small, has thus far played a role. How many can nod in recognition upon hearing of the Miracle of the Bellosian Fracture, the Last Stand of the Telghun Marshlanders or the Sinking of Purtalan City? It is my honour, privilege and mission to amend this state of ignorance among those of us granted permission to know. There are innumerable lessons to be learned and heroes to celebrate and mourn. There is no telling how many more learnings may be acquired or great heroes made before war's end, but here in this text do our full records truly begin. In this introduction to the first volume, I shall present but a handful of events and involved individuals.

THE VIE ALMUS MAJORA COUNTER-PUSH

In the early stages of the war, Vie Almus Majora was the site of punishing defeats for Battle Group Kallides. The soul-decaying effects of what was later termed the 'Stilling' and the Necrons' increasing numbers made it almost impossible for Imperial forces, under overall command of Field Marshal Bigelis Thao, to gain any kind of foothold on the planet. His efforts to completely reclaim the world – his primary brief from Groupmaster Marran – were hindered further at the disastrous Battle for the Ishlarn Thermokarst. Here, twenty armoured regiments, including Chancyllian Ironclads, Gabikhan Thunderers and Pteroni Highryders, supported by ten regiments of Gelzoan Light Infantry, were surrounded and almost completely wiped out. Others of the Field Marshal's forces fared little better, and within a matter of months the bulk of Thao's strength held a perimeter scarcely a week's march from their initial landing zones, hemmed in by surrounding Necron forces.

It was only after the Daemonifuge's victory on Cherist that the Counter-push began, as the revelation that through strength of faith the effects of the Stilling could be to some extent slowed or even held back. It was a realisation that Field Marshal Thao embraced

The Daemonifuge

Ephrael Stern, known by some as the 'Daemonifuge', is somewhat of an enigma, albeit a pivotal one in the war thus far. The story of how she came to join Battle Sisters of the Order of Our Martyred Lady fighting against the Word Bearers Traitor Legion on Severitas has escaped my research. It is clear, however, that by undeniable demonstration of the Emperor's favour she earned the Battle Sisters' trust. From there she joined Battle Group Kallides, and Groupmaster Marran took heed of her guidance. It was her stratagem to strike the Dolmen Gates on Cherist in the Lomorr System, limiting the Necrons' ability to strike the Zeidos and Shen'tai Systems. With the tide of Necron reinforcements stemmed, Chapter Master Karyas Kaeso of the Andromedan Blades was able to redirect the six companies under his command to relieve the siege of the city of Exulta on Mesanor in the Zeidos System. On Hethalas in the Shen'Tai System nine regiments of Keshari Light Yeomanry were able to break out of the cordon of Necron phalanxes that threatened them with total annihilation. These are but two of dozens, if not more, examples of how this Stern's victory on Cherist either prevented defeat or opened the door to victory elsewhere.



Day 4 of the March Along the Silver Path of St. Winifryd
 Today we reached and secured the first shrine without incident. Though there are twenty-seven more to reach before we can arrive at the Chancel Winifrydum, morale is high. The marching has been hard, but Gelzoa has made us equal to it. Priest Axiol has led us in morning, noon and evening prayer each day with inspiring vim and vigour. Not a single attack anywhere on the column was mentioned at the Colonel's briefings, thank the Emperor. We anticipated the desert dust to be a significant problem for us. Provided we keep on schedule, and arrive at the Chancel in the next forty days, I expect no problems to arise.

**EXCERPT FROM THE WAR JOURNALS OF
 MAJOR ANTIN DEZORAX OF THE 17TH
 GELZOAN MOTORISED RIFLES**

It is a point worth remembering that those who took part in the Death March of Paradyce II did not call it that, certainly not from its outset. This impromptu forced march is estimated to have involved as many as three million Astra Militarum troops and tens of thousands of vehicles. The route is that said to have been taken by St. Winifryd three millennia ago as she carried out miracles for the Emperor and preached His Word to the populace. The Chancel itself was the size of a city, and each 'shrine' was more akin to a basilica complex in size. Though Major Dezorax was unaware, the column had already sustained approximately eight thousand casualties by this point, due to a combination of sickness, outlier cases of the Stilling and enemy activity.



wholeheartedly. He had powerful sermons broadcast on an almost continuous basis to his forces, ensured Adepta Sororitas Missions were deployed more evenly across his front lines and imposed much stricter prayer regimens, which he followed to the letter himself and in full display of his troops wherever on the front lines he was touring or inspecting.

In Thao's official campaign reports, he observes the feeling of 'renewal' among his 'brave soldiery', after his changes were implemented. He devised a plan to begin the counter-attack, which he apparently presented with such enthusiasm and demonstration of tactical nous that he won backing even from the delegations of the Darkspires, Sons of Orar and Harrowers Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes. His plan was an ambitious one – to break out of the cordon they found themselves in, their counter-attacks spearheaded by northward, southward, eastward and westward advances.

With many of the Imperial lines under constant pressure, it was the Space Marines' task to draw the Necrons' forces away, utilising their ability to rapidly redeploy their military might where needed. To the

north of Thao's landing zones, the Sons of Orar conducted an armoured assault in the Lhesper Pass, a bottleneck which had to be taken swiftly if Thao wished to gain and keep momentum in his northward advance and prevent his forces from being bogged down in constraining terrain. An armoured spearhead led by Astraeus super-heavy tanks launched an attack against a phalanx of Necron Monoliths, resulting in many of the xenos constructs being destroyed. Though it is impossible to know just how much of the Necrons' strength was displaced by this effort, the effect was to allow a combined-arms surge to smash through the opposing Necron positions at such speed even Field Marshal Thao was 'reduced to tears of gratitude for the Emperor's benefactions to [them that] day'. To give credit to Thao, he ensured that the armoured regiments involved were reinforced with Leman Russ Executioners, and that Tempestus Scion detachments involved were provided with additional plasma weaponry. Such a preponderance – at least relative to other Imperial forces involved – of these fearsome weapons no doubt played a key role in the vanguard elements of the northward advance's ability to break out more quickly.



I have found an enormous disparity between the levels of assistance provided to me by Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes. The Darkspires were almost impossible to reach – even taking into account the considerable hardships my Astropaths endured trying to send my requests to the relevant commanders – before they rejected my requests. Whilst in my Human frailty this vexes me, I am certain that as loyal warriors of the Emperor they can only have the best reasons for such secrecy.

The Darkspires Chapter have refused to provide any information at all about what they did to enable the eastward advance.¹ Even Imperial forces that later overran the locales in which these Adeptus Astartes were reported to have fought the Necrons found no significant evidence besides spent shell casings and impact craters. Nevertheless, when the Knights of House Navaros and House Thalmus weaved their way through the Borlayan Tors alongside the Order of Lamentations, the 9th Orlaxian Sentinel Corps and the 22nd Orlaxian Light Dragoons, they met nothing like the kind of opposition they had in previous, failed, breakout attempts. Here, as with the northward advance, the objective was rapid movement, to take full advantage of the Adeptus Astartes' interdiction and to build a momentum the more numerous Necrons would find difficult to slow down. Crucially, momentum was essential for morale. Though we all know that faith is what keeps us strong in times of hardship, faith is always at its most powerful when victory is achieved. On the eastward advance, so much territory was gained that the strike force's logisticars and munitorium officials were almost unable to maintain appropriate levels of supplies to front-line forces, reduced in some cases to burdening follow-up waves of troop transport vehicles with additional

ammunition and ration packs that the diminished squadrons of Arvus Lighters couldn't bring to the ever-deepening front.

CATASTROPHE ON KALLIPHOR

Without reminding oneself of the Emperor's power and purpose, it is quite easy to despair when one learns of what occurred on Kalliphor. I dedicate an entire volume to the retelling of the seemingly never-ending catalogue of disasters that befell the brave warriors that fought there, but this introduction would be incomplete without mentioning it, for the losses sustained have without doubt had enormous effect on the campaign thus far. Thirty to forty million dead or Stilled. Three hundred and seventy three ships lost, taking much of their crew with them to their death. (Including warships of the Imperial Navy, Logisticarum transport vessels, Ecclesiarchal Mission ships, troop transports, and others. For a complete assessment as I have been able to source of the military assets committed to Kalliphor, please consult Volume V of this history.) And this is just what we know. I shudder at the thought of how many more lives were lost once the native population, in-situ Astra Militarum and Navis Imperialis forces and local defence forces are added in to the astronomical total.

Day 39 of the March Along the Silver Path of St. Winifryd

The fourth platoon was cut to ribbons today. By metal serpents that burst out of the dust. I saw it all. It happened within sight of the ninth shrine. The attacks are more common now. We are all tired. Even Priest Axiol seems to have lost some of his verve. Though he would never admit it. No one has been 'stilled' yet, as some are calling it. All of the troops have lost weight. Our packs would cut even deeper into our shoulders had we not eaten most of our rations and lightened our loads that way. No one has mentioned that we should have completed our mission by now. Have faith, I remind myself, have faith. The Emperor protects.

**EXCERPT FROM THE WAR JOURNALS OF
MAJOR ANTIN DEZORAX OF THE 17TH
GELZOAN MOTORISED RIFLES**

By the time the march was supposed to have been completed, the column had suffered around half a million casualties. Some reports claim there to have been a 'mere fifteen thousand martyrs' by day thirty-nine, others ludicrously argue four million. The first claim is not only farcical, for the chain of vehicles abandoned by the column is visible from Paradyce II's stratosphere, but those who produce this data to try to make it look as if the Imperium won an impossible victory merely undermine the great sacrifice of our warriors and the immense faith and fortitude they displayed. This is a victory worthy of remembrance because of the loss required to achieve it.

*Day 87 of the March Along the Silver Path of St.
Winifryd*

Priest Axiol is dead. I was promoted to Colonel. No one told me what happened to my predecessor. Was invited to RSOM on GCCT. Troops normally only permitted to eat every other day. Water is strictly limited. Not on GCCT. I was ravenous. Forced myself to maintain decorum. Thank the Emperor for Militarum discipline. Vomited after I left. Body can't handle real food any more. Managed to lift some water for Sergeant Norzan. She's been sick for days. I'm angry. Our troops starve. Our commanders don't. But their responsibility is higher. Remember your duty. Remember your duty. Emperor give me strength. Give us all strength. We need it. More than ever.

**EXCERPT FROM THE WAR JOURNALS OF
COLONEL ANTIN DEZORAX OF THE 17TH
GELZOAN MOTORISED RIFLES**

HISTORITOR'S NOTES

RSOM: Regimental Senior Officers' Mess

GCCT: General Commanding Command Tank. For the Gelzoan Motorised Rifles, this typically took the form of a Crassus Armoured Assault Transport, loosely modified with Tech Priest permission.

This is the last known diary entry of then Colonel Dezorax. We cannot be sure when he died (for he surely must have), but we know he never reached the Chancel. The march itself continued for another forty-two days after this entry was written. My best estimates suggest approximately ten percent of those who took part in the 'Death March' reached the Chancel after their one 129-day endeavour. Though these figures to some may be disastrous, the Imperium was ultimately successful. Such are the sacrifices that must be made for victory over an enemy such as the Necrons, and glad should we be in making them. The shrines were secured. The xenos threw vast resources at the march – see Chapter 19 of Volume III for a full expansion – and ultimately failed. The Chancel, though under heavy siege, was relieved of much strain thanks to the amount of Necron attention the oncoming Imperial troops drew.

Which sane, loyal citizen cannot shed a tear thinking of the loss of His Imperial Majesty and His Divine Purpose? The stars will never see such vessels again. Few would not feel a shiver in their spine upon hearing of the fate of the two million men and women of the Kalliphorian Free Companies blast-sealed inside the bunkers beneath the Glastojun Mountains with tens of thousands of the Necrons euphemistically known as 'Flayed Ones' – all because of bureaucratic errors and blustering officers? Who cannot hold their head in their hands when they learn that the Laryon Salt Flat is now known as the Rustiron Sea, for the tens of thousands of corroded Leman Russ, Hellhound and Macharius tank wrecks that have been abandoned there, from worlds as far flung as Valhalla, Cadia, Quisto'rol, Aleusis and a dozen more in between?

For all that, there are tales of victory and hope among the lists of woes. The Charge of the Heskian Light Dragoons is, I hope, an event that will be taught in

Astra Militarum officer training scholas for centuries to come. It must have been a glorious sight indeed, to see so many Necrons crushed beneath the Dragoons' tanks' tracks. I cannot forget the Ratlings of the 337th Abhuman Auxiliary Corps. The skill of their marksmen, so I am informed, accounted for hundreds of senior ranking Necrons during the fifteen month-long siege of Traanaxis Hive, actions which no doubt prolonged the battle long enough for the aforementioned Heskians to arrive. (Though, it must be said, Ratlings are not always known for their honesty.) The renowned Haephosian Tritons successfully sent a sprawling Necron tomb complex crashing into the cold depths of the Tranzpasian Ocean in an audacious act of sabotage to its sub-aquatic pillars, even as swarms of xenos fighter craft poured from the tomb's hangers. The pilots of the Aeronautica Imperialis' 78th Division – the 'Fire Jackals' – would certainly have been completely overwhelmed without this reprieve.

THE MINES OF VERTIGUS II



The Ultramarines have deployed to the world of Vertigus II, the most recent planet to fall silent in the Nephilim Sector. Not a single life form is detected, the world scoured clean of Imperial citizens. Yet the Ultramarines are not alone, as you'll see in this impressive diorama.



THE WARHAMMER WORLD TEAM

The displays and dioramas in the Warhammer World Exhibition Centre are curated by a team of highly skilled and very creative model-makers and painters. The Vertigus II board was built and painted by team members Andy Barlow, Adam Cooper, Paul Claridge and Lewis Collins.

For the past few months, the Warhammer World team have been hard at work on a new kind of project – a travelling Warhammer 40,000 display board that will be shown at events around the world. The board features all the new Space Marine and Necron models from the Indomitus set, plus a whole lot of impressive terrain representing an abandoned mining facility. We caught up with the Warhammer World team to find out more about the Vertigus display board.

Adam: The board was inspired by the background in the Edge of Silence booklet that comes in the Indomitus boxed set. The story talks about the Ultramarines arriving at a mining colony and finding it deserted – a proper Mary Celeste situation. As the Ultramarines investigate the dig site and the mines, they are suddenly set upon by a legion of Necrons, who emerge from the desert and their underground tomb complexes to attack them. This diorama is a snapshot of that fight, taken right at the moment the two forces clash.

BUILDING THE MINE

To recreate the mine workings, we built a railway, complete with mining carts. Some of them are full of ore and minerals, possibly even some blackstone, though the people of Vertigus may not have known what it was when they dug it up. The railway is made from the tracks that come on the Tectonic Fragdrill. We used a lot of them! The carts are Munitorum Armoured Containers with their roofs cut off. They were then mounted on the wheels from the Galvanic Servohaulers kit.

On either side of the railway sits the mining colony, which has two different types of architecture. The residential buildings where the workers live are made from the Sector Fronteris kits so that they look like frontier-world low-tech hab shelters. The more important Administratum buildings are made from the Sector Imperialis Manufactorium kits and comprise of a loading crane and a tall observation and control tower. We deliberately made these buildings octagonal to make them stand out from the rectangular hab blocks. The outskirts of the colony (on the right of the board) are also more ruined than those closer to the mine entrance, which suggests the directions the Necrons attacked from.

‘As the Ultramarines investigate the dig site and the mines, they are suddenly set upon by a legion of Necrons.’





From the top of the cliff face, you can see the remains of the mining colony stretching along either side of the track **(1)**. The Warhammer World team deployed the Ultramarines around the buildings closest to the track, with the Necrons around the outskirts of the display. This shows the Ultramarines being caught unawares by the Necrons and forming a hasty defence.

A Chaplain leads the fighting inside the mine **(2)**, where Necron Warriors and Scarabs have issued forth from their underground tomb. The Necrons have been painted in the colours of the Szarekhan dynasty – the emissaries of the Silent King himself. The Ultramarines hail from the 2nd Company, as evidenced by their gold shoulder trims.

THE EARLY STAGES

Adam: The cliff face and the mine entrance were all made out of roof insulation foam. It's the perfect material for carving large rock formations as it's strong, easy to cut and pretty dense, so it can take a fair bit of punishment. Once we'd established the shape we wanted, we covered it in rock mouldings that we made out of resin (you can buy these in most hobby and model railway shops) and filled the gaps with all-purpose filler. Aside from the foam and filler and some XPVC under the track, the rest of the board is made almost entirely out of Warhammer 40,000 scenery kits. As you can see from the picture below, the display is split into three 2' x 4' boards to make transportation easier, but the middle section can also be removed and the section at the end turned around to make the display into a 4' x 4' board, too.



The view through the mine entrance shows the tracks and mining carts (1). White plastic I-beams (available from hobby shops) were used to make the support struts that were put in place by the workers to hold up the ceiling of the mine. You can also see where some of the Warhammer Underworlds: Beastgrave – Primal Lair tiles were used to represent ore.



The Warhammer World team used XPVC for the track foundations. Once they'd built the intact track, they planned out where all the craters would go before adding the battle damage (2).

The board just before painting (3). Note how some of the mining carts change position in the final display to help accommodate the models.





Left: Bladeguard Veterans come face to face with a trio of Skorpekh Destroyers. Here you can see the ruined hab buildings, which were painted using Leadbelcher as a basecoat followed by a wash of Nuln Oil and Agrax Earthshade. Next, Adam and Andy covered them with cheap hairspray, then airbrushed them with Celestra Grey. When the paint was dry, they used warm water and an old toothbrush to attack the paint, revealing the Leadbelcher beneath. Chipping done, they applied a wash of watered-down Mournfang Brown with a spritzer bottle to create the rust streaks, followed by liberal applications of weathering powders.

Below: Eradicators take up firing positions on the building next to the colony's plasma reactors. Note the full mining cart behind them that has been left abandoned.



SCARABS!

Andy and Adam made good use of the Scarab Swarms that come on the Necron Warriors frame. Some of the Scarabs were carefully pinned to bits of terrain (such as the ore carts) to make them look as though they are hovering, while others were modelled feeding on dead Space Marines. The vast majority, though, were placed on the rock walls inside the mine to show them emerging from a disturbed slumber.

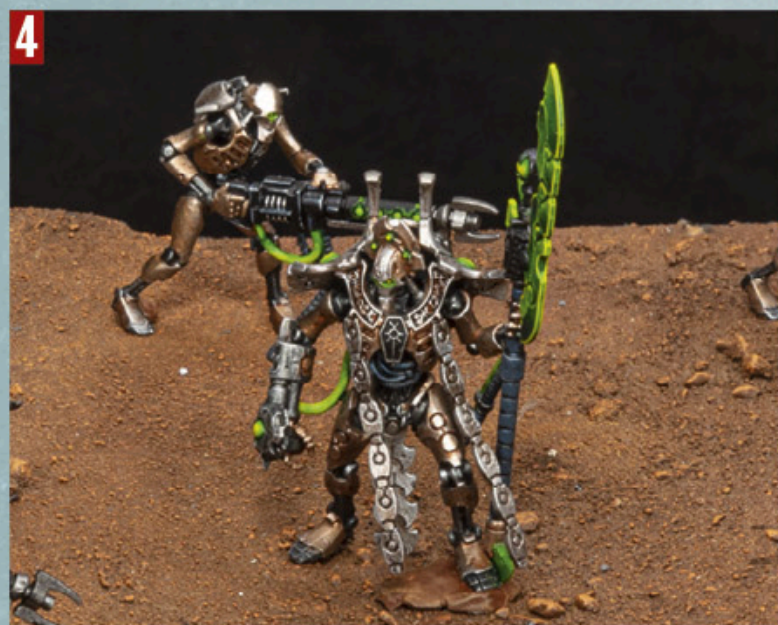
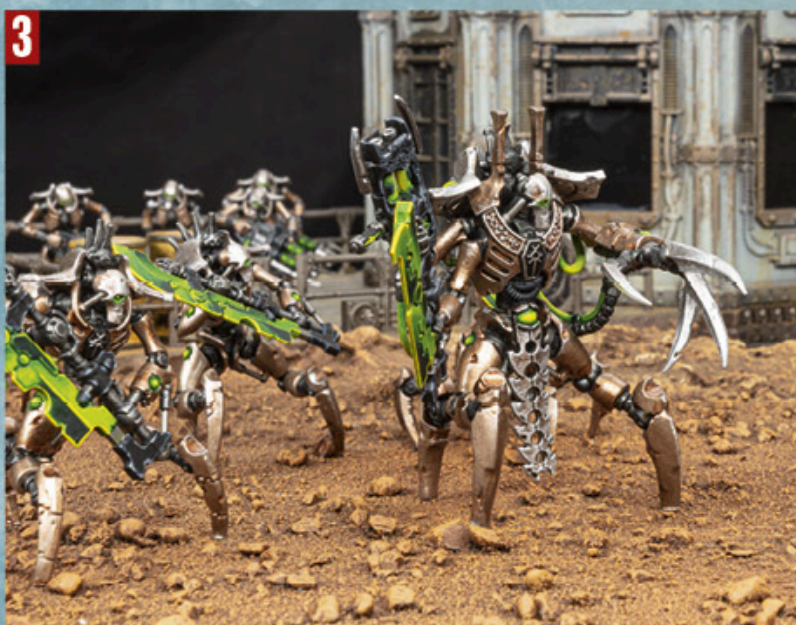


LEADING THE ATTACK

All of the character models from the Indomitus box set are represented on the battlefield.

The Bladeguard Ancient stands between the train tracks **(1)**, watching over the Assault Intercessors as they engage the enemy. On the other side of the track, near the crane, a Judiciar and a trio of Bladeguard Veterans **(2)** advance upon a phalanx of Necron Warriors.

A Skorpekh Lord leads a host of maniacal Skorpekh Destroyers along the ridge above the mine workings **(3)**, while far to the south, one of the Necron Overlords in charge of the assault on Vertigus II watches over his phalanx of living metal charges **(4)**.





Above: The colour of the rocks was achieved very easily – it is simply Mournfang Brown drybrushed with Tau Light Ochre! The Necrons were basecoated using Leadbelcher spray, with Black Templar used to pick out their under-skeletons. Their armour was then painted with Runelord Brass and shaded with Cryptek Armourshade Gloss before they were entirely drybrushed with Runefang Steel. The Ultramarines were painted using Macragge Blue as a basecoat, followed by a wash of Nuln Oil mixed 70/30 with Talassar Blue. Russ Grey was used to highlight the armour.

Left: Canoptek Reanimators loom over the Necrons as they advance upon the encircled Space Marines. The Ultramarines respond by taking the fight to the enemy.



INDEX ASTARTES

Forged in the fires of war, the Silver Templars are amongst the galaxy's newest Space Marine Chapters. They fuse the combat skill and tactical prowess of the scions of Guilliman with boundless fury and a desire to prove their worth to the Imperium.



SILVER TEMPLARS

Focus and Fury

By Tom Horth & Duncan Waugh

The Silver Templars are direct successors of the Ultramarines, and one of the many Space Marine Chapters who can trace their bloodline to the Primarch Roboute Guilliman. They are direct successors of the Ultramarines and continue their legacy as defenders of the Imperium. Created during the Ultima Founding, they were born into a time of upheaval, war and destruction. Their ranks are made up entirely of Primaris Space Marines, the newest additions to the ranks of the Adeptus Astartes.

The Silver Templars differ from most Ultramarines successor Chapters. Where most of Guilliman's sons embody his discipline, tactical acumen and talent for leadership, the Silver Templars inherited his fury, skill at arms and utter loyalty to the ideals of the Imperium. They are duellists supreme, experts with any weapon they choose to wield, and eager to display this skill against the forces of Chaos and the many alien races that plague the galaxy.

The Silver Templars have gained a reputation as cold and utterly focused warriors who display little emotion. They are expert duellists, preferring to select a single target and focus their attention on eliminating this chosen opponent before selecting a fresh target. Silver Templars strategy often revolves around carving a path to enemy leaders, so that their most powerful warriors can engage the foe in a final and decisive duel to the death.

The Silver Templars are accomplished weaponsmiths, often crafting their own weapons and establishing a link with its machine spirit, known as the Bond Martial. Once this bond is established, a Silver Templar will devote himself to mastering the weapon's use. Losing a bonded weapon is a mark of great shame, and a Silver Templar will go to great lengths to reclaim one.

Born into a galaxy riven by war, the Silver Templars are eager to prove themselves to their Primarch and their Emperor, throwing themselves into combat against the Imperium's countless foes.

NOVARIS: THE HOME OF A CHAPTER

Novaris is the newly christened Chapter Planet of the Silver Templars. It is a large world of huge oceans, soaring mountain ranges, vast deserts and dense mangrove swamps. Its people are hardy folk, brilliant swordsmen and expert weaponsmiths. They revere the Silver Templars and see serving them as a great honour.

The humans that make Novaris their home live in a low-technology feudal society. Kingdoms both

large and small cover the planet, each ruled by noble families. Weaponsmithing is seen as the highest art, and every Novarian warrior must craft his own weapon as a rite of passage.

Before Novaris was liberated by the Silver Templars, the planet spent several long decades under the control of the Flawless Host. This Slaanesh-worshipping Chaos warband was envious of the quality of craftsmanship displayed by the Novarians, and so they enslaved thousands of the planet's population to make weapons for them. This dark period in Novaris' history was ended when the Indomitus Crusade arrived. The Silver Templars utterly and systematically cleansed the Flawless Host from the planet and saved those Novarians who remained uncorrupted.

Novarian warriors are famed for their duelling skill, and many Kingdoms will settle disputes with a duel between their most skilled champions. Consequently, duelling has become an important part of the Silver Templars' culture. The Chapter's potential recruits are required to attend a grand tournament in the foothills below the fortress monastery of the Silver Templars, Kolossus. There, aspirants engage in duels to the death in the hope of being among the few chosen to ascend the winding mountain paths to the fortress above. Only then do these aspirants begin the gruelling process of becoming a Primaris Space Marine.

Planet Signifier: Novaris

Designation: Adeptus Astartes Successor Chapter Planet

Gravity: var 0.75 - 1.15 x Terran standard

Temperature / Climate: var Hyperoceanic, Arctic, Tundric, Volcanic, Boreal, Subtropical

Population: Post-Liberation of Novaris <5.3 million>

Current estimates <unknown - current population uncertain due to post-liberation purgatus>

Governor: Akilios Zanaris, Chapter Master and Regent of Novaris

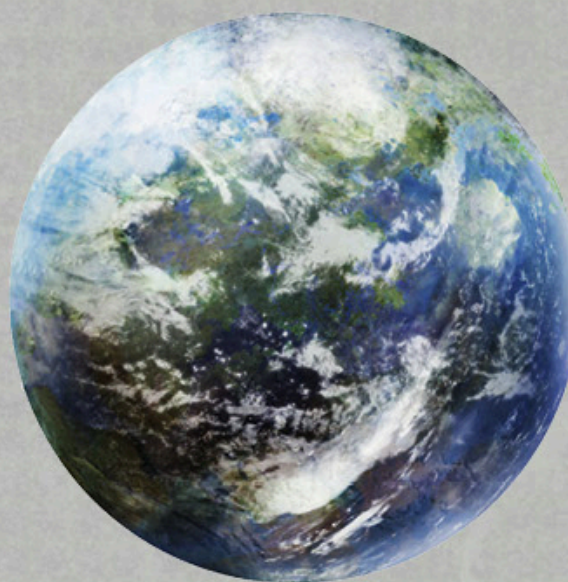
System: Novaris System

Sub-sector: Argentus Sub-sector

Sector: Anekitosian Sector (advise caution whilst traversing Anekitosian Sector - uncharted astral bodies recorded in vicinity post-Cicatrix Maledictum)

Segmentum: Ultima Segmentum

Tithe Grade: Adeptus Non - Astartes Home World



CHAPTER ORGANISATION

The Silver Templars are fully compliant with Roboute Guilliman's Codex Astartes. Comprised entirely of Primaris Space Marines, and incorporating the recent changes to the Codex, they are a cutting-edge force capable of waging war on dozens of fronts.

The Silver Templars follow standard Codex structure, consisting of ten companies of Space Marines, each one hundred warriors strong. Each is commanded by a Captain, who is assisted by a pair of Lieutenants, a Chaplain, an Apothecary, an Ancient, and a retinue of veterans. The rest of the company is divided into squads of ten or five warriors.

The 1st Company is made up of the Chapter's most experienced warriors. Veterans who wish to join the 1st Company's ranks must swear a Sword Oath to complete a task set by the company's Captain. The warriors who swear these oaths must complete them or die in the attempt. The 1st Company rarely fight as one unit, usually taking to the field alongside other Companies.

The 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Companies are Battle Companies and do most of the Chapter's fighting. They usually consist of six battleline squads, two close support squads and two fire support squads, forming a balanced force to take on any

foe. When the Silver Templars go to war, they usually deploy a single Battle Company supported by troops from the Veteran, Scout and Reserve Companies.

The Reserve Companies are each made up of squads of the same designation. The 6th and 7th Company are Battleline Companies. They can be moved into a Battle Company to replace losses during a campaign.

The 8th Company is the Close Support Company. Reiver and Inceptors from the 8th Company often make up the first wave of an invasion force, disrupting enemy lines and causing panic before the main force arrives. The warriors of the 8th Company are also expert at responding quickly to support their brothers when needed.

The 9th Company is the Fire Support Company. It is made up of Hellblasters and other heavy weapons squads. They will often be called to assist a battle company should they need extra firepower.

The 10th and final company of the Silver Templars is the Vanguard Company. Each space marine is outfitted with lighter Phobos armour. They are often tasked with reconnaissance and infiltration missions.

BROTHER ANGELUS, PRIMARIS BATTLE-BROTHER



SILVER TEMPLARS HERALDRY

The Silver Templars were established during the Ultima Founding, and as such every battle-brother is a Primaris Space Marine.

The Silver Templars follow the Codex when marking their heraldry. The company colour is shown on the left knee guard with the squad number or symbol of rank overlaid upon it.



Brother Angelus, 2nd Company, 4th Squad, Intercessor





THE SIEGE OF TALASA SECUNDUS

A CALL TO ARMS

The warriors who would become the Silver Templars were forged in the fury of battle. They served with honour and distinction at the side of their Primarch during the Indomitus Crusade, battling Daemon and Xenos alike. Having cleansed the world of Novaris from the taint of the Flawless Host, they were granted the vast world as their Chapter planet, and they were given the task of defending this region of space from the many enemies of Mankind. They settled quickly on Novaris, establishing their fortress monastery and replacing their losses from the battle-hardened populace of their newly claimed world.

It would not be long, however, before their beloved Primarch called for their services once more. In Guilliman's absence from Ultramar, the Death Guard had invaded in force, devastating several worlds and penetrating as far as Macragge. The Silver Templars did not hesitate when word reached them, dispatching three full companies of their most experienced warriors to assist their brothers and liberate Ultramar. All three companies fought bravely at the side of their parent Chapter, distinguishing themselves in battle against Daemon hordes and Death Guard warriors alike. It was to be the campaign

undertaken by the 3rd Company, however, that solidified the Silver Templars' reputation for fearlessness and bravery in the face of overwhelming odds and devastating losses.

THE SIEGE BEGINS

Led by Captain Petricias, the 3rd Company arrived in the Ultramar System to join a small force of successor Chapters in the defence of the hive world Talasa Secundus. Control of the task force had been given to Captain Aurelius Lobos of the Novamarines 5th Company, the most experienced of the Space Marine commanders. By the time the Imperial forces reached the surface, Talasa Secundus was already succumbing to the devastating diseases and viral bombardments unleashed by the Death Guard forces. Much of the human population was infected with foul contagion, coughing their lungs out into the dirt. The fortunate died swiftly, the rest found their souls corrupted and were transformed into boil-encrusted, shambling Poxwalkers. The walking dead surged across the surface of the planet, harrying the Space Marines as the Death Guard forces used the distraction to land their Plague Marines.

As they fought running battles with hordes of Poxwalkers, the Space Marines formed defensive

lines around the hive cities and dug in, preparing for the inevitable Plague Marine assault. For weeks the Space Marines held their lines. The Silver Templars battled back-to-back with their Novamarines allies, fighting day and night to hold back the press of Death Guard warriors. Assailed on both sides by Poxwalkers and heavily armed Plague Marines, the Space Marines eventually began to falter. Sensing weakness, the Death Guard made their final push.

THE DEATH GUARD ASSAULT

In tightly organised infantry formations, the Death Guard swarmed over the Space Marine defenders, reaping a terrible toll on the Imperial lines, their bloated bodies absorbing bolter rounds as they marched forward. The two armies clashed in furious hand-to-hand combat. The Primaris Space Marines were greatly outnumbered, but fought with great skill, picking out opposing champions and besting hulking Plague Marines in brutal duels. Still the Death Guard came on, climbing over the dead and dying to reach their enemies.

Marching amidst his putrid troops was the hulking form of a Death Guard Lord of Contagion. Wherever this giant warrior stepped, the life around him withered and rotted as Nurgle's blessings worked their putrid magic. Captain Petricias knew that he had to act in order to avoid a crushing defeat. Only the death of the Lord of Contagion would halt the Death Guard advance. He would have to engage this mighty enemy in single combat.

Meanwhile, the Novamarines under Captain Lobos were being swamped by Daemons and Plague Marines. Lobos, seeing that the line would soon break, ordered the Space Marines to fall back to the hive and regroup until reinforcements arrived. Amongst the Silver Templars, however, these calls fell on deaf ears. Petricias had made his decision. He blocked out the enraged bellows of the Novamarines Captain, his mind utterly focused on slaying his chosen target. He ordered his troops to clear a path. The Silver Templars fought with a frighteningly cold precision. They exchanged few words, moving as one to cut through the enemy lines until they were surrounded on all sides by hordes of Plague Marines.

Dozens of Silver Templars fell, but eventually they cleared a route to the enemy commander. Petricias wasted no time with words, charging directly towards the scythe-wielding Death Guard Lord. The duel between the two warriors was epic, with the Silver Templars Captain suffering terrible wounds that would have killed a lesser man. Despite his injuries, Petricias' superior combat skills still showed, and with a final swing, he cut down the Death Guard Lord. With their chain of command disrupted, the Death Guard assault began to grind to a shuddering halt. The Space Marines pursued the faltering warriors of Nurgle as they retreated, putting hundreds of them to the sword and chasing them from the planet's surface.

SEEDS OF DISCORD

The Silver Templars had carried the day, but the event had driven a wedge between the Swords of Novaris and their Novamarines allies. Their attack had left gaps in the Space Marine lines and the Novamarines had been surrounded and nearly overwhelmed by hordes of advancing Plague Marines.

Captain Lobos had lost fully half of his warriors after the Silver Templars charged from their positions. He did not mask his fury at the Silver Templars' failure to obey direct orders. Captain Lobos grieved at the devastating losses his men had suffered and vowed never to forgive or forget the disobedient and reckless behaviour of the Silver Templars.

Captain Petricias refused to admit to any error, coldly pointing out that the death of the enemy commander had surely saved the day, and that losses were always acceptable in the pursuit of victory. This argument did little to calm Lobos, who, at the conclusion of the conflict, left the planet in disgust. Despite both Chapters being scions of Guilliman, a bitter enmity would linger between many members of the two Chapters from then on.



MAKING A SILVER TEMPLAR

The Silver Templars' home planet of Novaris is a vast world of warring kingdoms, savage tribes and colossal mountain ranges. The bravest, boldest and most resilient of Novaris' youth are selected by the Silver Templars as potential recruits. They are first taken to the foothills beneath the fortress monastery, Kolossus, where their martial skills are tested in duels to the death. The few that survive these deadly combats must ascend to the peak of Novaris' tallest mountain, Mytikas. The final few who survive the climb may then begin the process of becoming a Primaris Space Marine. This process is long and potentially deadly, involving several surgeries and the implanting of no less than twenty-two new internal organs, all grown from the gene-seed of their Primarch, Roboute Guilliman. These organs work with the initiate's own body tissues, stimulating natural abilities such as muscle growth, as well as granting them new abilities. The surgeries are accompanied by a harsh routine of physical and spiritual training. This is achieved through hypnotic suggestion, meditation, psychological and spiritual testing, as well as an induction into the culture and traditions of the Chapter. Only then are the survivors fully inducted into the ranks of the Silver Templars.



THE ASSAULT ON NECTHIS

During the Indomitus Crusade, a Silver Templars strike force found refuge on the industrial planet Necthis. Grateful for the assistance of the locals, the Silver Templars swore a Sword Oath to protect Necthis. Several decades later, this oath would be fulfilled.

High in the mountains of Novaris, at the peak of the fortress monastery Kolossus, Chief Librarian Ionnas was awoken from his meditation by a powerful vision. His mind raced with scenes of rampaging green-skinned warriors, cleaving axes, and the death cries of outmatched human defenders. A single name came to his lips, Necthis. Immediately, he recalled an oath of protection sworn many years ago. As the vision faded, Ionnas raced from his chambers. He knew the Sword Oath must be fulfilled. Alerting Chapter Master Zanaris to the danger, he offered

to lead the forces of the 2nd and 3rd Companies to Necthis and fulfil the Chapter's oath by rescuing the stricken planet from an invasion of deadly Orks.

Such was the intensity of Ionnas' astropathic vision that he considered more than an entire Battle Company necessary to combat the threat. Upon arrival in the Necthis system, it became clear that his decision had been wise. Dozens of ramshackle Ork vessels drifted lazily in orbit above the planet. They began pivoting to face the newly arrived Space Marines. The Silver Templars fleet moved in to attack, launching drop ships as they began blasting Ork vessels to pieces. Ionnas scanned the surface of Necthis and began directing operations from the bridge of the strike cruiser Novarian Dawn. The Orks had broken the planet's meagre defences, leaving most of the survivors trapped in the remains of the capital, Necthis City. A force would be sent to bolster the city while Ionnas and 2nd Company Command would concentrate on splitting the Ork forces and eliminating their leadership.

'A sworn Sword Oath can never be broken. Failure to fulfil such an oath invites terrible dishonour and absolute shame.'

The initial strike met with great success. Inceptors hammered the Ork lines, punching through the greenskins, targeting Ork leaders and causing the Orks to lose what little discipline they possessed. Reivers landed in the no-man's land between forces, striking at Ork command assets and disrupting their supply routes. If the Space Marines had expected a swift victory, however, they were to be sorely disappointed. The Orks regrouped, showing greater tactical ability and toughness than any greenskins the Silver Templars had fought before. At their fore strode giant Ork Nobz, their arms covered in the carapaces of fallen xenos creatures, crude weapons dealing death amidst the Silver Templars battleline.

Lieutenant Maniakes' demi-company held their position atop the city walls as best they could, but they were being thinned at every turn. Scores of precious Space Marine lives were lost amidst the carnage, and every Ork they slew seemed to be replaced by a dozen more. The trophies the Orks carried marked them as Freebooters that had been hardened in battle against hundreds of enemies across the galaxy. They were experienced and would not break easily.

When a giant Ork Warboss emerged from a rumbling Battlewagon to assault the city walls,

Ionnas knew the turning point had come. With the Captain of the 2nd Company, Vetrans Leontias, at his side, Ionnas descended to the walls of Necthis City. Atop the battlements he fought, cloak billowing behind him as his force sword felled target after target. Eyes glowing with the power of the immaterium, he lent his psychic might to the martial skill of Captain Leontias, and together the two of them rallied the troops and slew the Ork leader. By the third day, Lieutenant Maniakes and close to a third of the Space Marines had been slain. But the line had held, and the Ork numbers had been decimated.

With the prospect of loot fading and having suffered terrible losses, the Ork attack began to falter as they fought amongst themselves for command. It was then that Chief Librarian Ionnas again came to the fore. The power of the warp still coursing through his veins, he led a punishing charge into the depths of the Ork ranks. The Orks were sent scurrying away from the city walls, only to be pursued by Reiver hunting parties. There would be no retreat for the Orks, for in orbit their fleet had been reduced to molten scrap. Necthis had been spared, and the Sword Oath fulfilled.



TEMPLARS OF LEGEND

Grand Oathkeeper Hekaton

Chaplain Lampros Hekaton is amongst the most veteran warriors of his newborn Chapter, and the highest ranking Chaplain in the Silver Templars. As Grand Oathkeeper, it is he who oversees the Sword Oaths sworn by his brothers, ensuring they are upheld and bestowing honours upon those that complete them.

Hekaton is a mighty warrior in his own right, and his name has already been carved into the Chapter's mythology. During the Liberation of Novaris, he held the mountainous Cendarine Pass against an advancing band of Heretic Astartes. In the midst of a violent storm, with the battle raging around him, he chanted the Litanies of Battle. Each swing of his crozius arcanum was accompanied by a booming roll of thunder and the violent death of a traitor. By his actions on that day, many Novarians were saved.



Captain Petricias

Captain Zeno Petricias of the 3rd Company was the first Novarian native to rise to the position of Captain within the Chapter. His progress through the training regimens of the Silver Templars was meteoric and his swordsmanship superior even to that of his Chapter Master. In addition to being a skilled warrior, he is a tactical mastermind, locating weaknesses in the enemy line and launching audacious attacks against overwhelming numbers of enemies. He carries the power-sword *Animus*, whose blade was forged by his own hand. The weapon's cross-guard is studded with Novarian gemstones, and the blade is delicately inscribed with the motto of the Silver Templars, 'Focus and Fury'. In the hands of Petricias, *Animus* has dealt the Emperor's justice to the many enemies of Mankind.



Ancient Korelon

The Silver Templars have battled many enemies of the Imperium in their short history, and always the Chapter's banners have remained aloft, inspiring battle-brothers to acts of heroism. While defending Hill 34 during the Ork attack on Corwyn's Bane, Korelon's 3rd Company Command was surrounded by ravaging greenskins. Even as his brothers fell, he maintained his grasp on the banner, refusing to let the sacred symbol of his Chapter fall to the xenos filth. When the rest of the 3rd Company arrived to reinforce their overwhelmed leaders, Hill 34 had been buried beneath a mountain of corpses. At the centre of this carnage was the bloodied and battered Ancient Korelon, alive amidst the dead. His banner was still held aloft, and a mountain of Greenskins lay dead at his feet.



Sergeant Anicius

In the hands of a Primaris Intercessor, the bolt rifle is amongst the deadliest infantry weapons in the known galaxy. Sergeant Anicius has spent many a long year perfecting the art of bolt rifle marksmanship. As with most Silver Templars Intercessors, he has a preference for the Stalker pattern bolt rifle, trusting himself to out-aim his opponent and fell them with a single, well placed shot. An enemy unfortunate enough to be a target of Anicius can count his remaining life in seconds, for the Sergeant's aim is unerring. In more than a dozen battles, Sergeant Anicius' bolt rifle has accounted for an enemy commander, crushing the morale of the foe. Each Sword Oath Anicius swears promises his Chapter yet more victims and continues an ongoing cycle of violence and death.

'Clear your head, slow your heart and focus your senses. When the moment for the killing strike arrives, unleash your fury without hesitation.'

- Akilios Zanaris, Chapter Master of the Silver Templars

THE ANNALS OF WAR

Since the Ultima Founding, the Silver Templars have amassed an impressive battle record. Their victories have saved entire worlds from certain doom. As Chaos threatens to consume all, the Silver Templars bear a beacon of hope in the gathering darkness.

M30-M31: THE DAWN OF THE IMPERIUM

A Primarch Rises

Roboute Guilliman is found by the Emperor on Macragge. He is immediately recognised as one of the lost Primarchs and installed as the leader of the Ultramarines Legion.

The Horus Heresy

Half of the Emperor's Primarchs turn traitor, having been influenced by the Chaos Gods. Guilliman and his Ultramarines fight a long campaign, primarily against the Word Bearers and their primarch, Lorgar. The Horus Heresy ends in tragedy, and the mortally wounded Emperor is entombed within the confines of his Golden Throne.



M37-M38: THE AGE OF REBIRTH

Scouring the Galaxy

In the wake of the Horus Heresy, Roboute Guilliman becomes Lord Commander of the Imperium. He launches a series of counter-attacks, purging millions of traitors.

Martian Ingenuity

Troubled by the devastation of the Horus Heresy, Guilliman envisions the need for a new legion of warriors that will aid the Imperium in its next darkest hour. Belisarius Cawl, Archmagos of the Adeptus Mechanicus, is charged with completing this task.

Ultramar's Darkest Hour

Roboute Guilliman falls, mortally wounded by his traitorous brother, the Daemon Primarch Fulgrim. The Ultramarines manage to bear their Primarch away from the battlefield. He is placed in a stasis field at the centre of the Fortress of Hera on Macragge, frozen at the moment of death. With the Primarchs now all dead or missing, the Imperium enters a new age of darkness.

M41: THE END TIMES

Guilliman Reborn

Through the combined efforts of Belisarius Cawl and a mysterious band of Aeldari, Roboute Guilliman is revived out of stasis and healed. He embarks upon a dangerous journey to Terra, to stand before his father's Golden Throne and seek guidance.

The Great Rift

Reality is torn apart as a huge warp rift opens across the centre of the galaxy. Warp storms of power not seen since the Age of Strife wash across the Imperium, cutting communications and isolating half of the galaxy from the guiding light of the Astronomicon.



The Ultima Founding

Roboute Guilliman launches the Indomitus Crusade, carving a path across the galaxy and smiting alien, traitor and Daemon alike. During his crusade, Belisarius Cawl unveils his greatest works, the Primaris Space Marines. They are faster, tougher and stronger than normal Space Marines. Many new Chapters are founded and presented with Chapter planets. The Silver Templars are founded towards the end of the Indomitus Crusade. They are granted the feudal world of Novaris as their Chapter planet.

The Liberation of Novaris

The newly chosen Chapter Master of the Silver Templars, Akilios Zanaris, leads his Chapter to the surface of Novaris, only to find that the populace have been enslaved by Heretic Astartes of the Flawless Host. The Silver Templars and the heretics engage in a short but fierce war, resulting in the deaths of a quarter of Novaris' population. Eventually, Captain Ducas of the 1st Company defeats the Flawless Host's leader, Lyrius Soulslayer, in a duel that lasts more than a day. With Soulslayer's defeat, the battle for Novaris is soon won.

Faith Corrupted

The Ecclesiarchy world of Umbris falls under the influence of the false prophet Vormir the Ascendant. The corrupted priest spreads his foul dogma, promising ever-lasting life to his followers and delivering only horrific mutation and rivers of blood. Adeptus Sororitas forces of the Order of our Martyred Lady attempt to hold the heretics at bay, but they are overrun. As the sisters prepare to martyr themselves, their calls to prayer are answered. From the heavens descend angels of death, clad in silvered armour. The arrival of the Silver Templars turns the battle in the favour of the Imperium. The Heretics are utterly destroyed.

With the galaxy riven by conflict and split in half by the Cicatrix Maledictum, the Chapters of the Ultima Founding have been thrown straight into a deadly fight for survival. Each new day brings more conflict, and the Silver Templars are at the forefront of the Imperium's fight for survival.

The Plague Wars

The Silver Templars learn of the Death Guard assault on Ultramar. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Companies are dispatched to assist their Ultramarines brothers. They quickly find themselves involved in heavy fighting. Chapter Master Zanaris displays his matchless swordsmanship, defeating several Death Guard Lords and mighty Daemons of Nurgle in single combat. The Death Guard are beaten and fall back to their domain, the Scourge Stars.

The Bond Martial

Silver Templars Lieutenant Retsos and his forces are ambushed by Drukhari Raiders. Retsos is disarmed during the battle, a matter of great shame. Desperate to regain his honour, the Lieutenant obsessively hunts the foul xenos across an entire sector. Several months later he catches up to the raiders, slaying scores and snatching his weapon from an Archon's cold, dead hands. Retsos is soon cut down by the Drukhari, but dies with his honour intact.

Rargukk's Speedwaaagh!

The Ork Warboss Rargukk unleashes a Speedwaaagh! on the agri world Orman's Hearth. Ork vehicles churn the earth, spoiling crops and sending black smoke belching into the air. A distress call reaches the Silver Templars, who swiftly respond. The Ork forces are eventually lured into a narrow valley by Silver Templars gunships. The Chapter's Repulsors and Hellblasters lie in wait, ending the war in a few brief moments.



CODEX SUPPLEMENT

This section presents the rules for fielding an army formed from the **SILVER TEMPLARS** Chapter, an Ultramarines successor Chapter. If your army is Battle-forged and includes any Silver Templars units, the rules in this section can be used in addition to those presented in *Codex Supplement: Ultramarines*.

Designer's Note: *The Silver Templars Chapter was founded during the Ultima Founding, and their ranks are made up entirely of Primaris Space Marines. As such, when building their army, we encourage players to only include Primaris Space Marines in their force. Note, however, that this does encompass the wide range of powerful support pieces that these mighty warriors are known to field, such as the Repulsor Executioner.*

RELICS

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

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

ARMOUR OF ZANARIS

The Silver Templars Chapter fought with great distinction during the Plague Wars, their need to push themselves to ever-greater heights of heroism in the presence of their genetic forebears securing many a victory. It was during the midst of this conflict, on the planet of Espandor, that Chapter Master Zanaris strode into the heart of the enemy ranks, his progress unstoppable as he and his cohorts carved a path through the foe. Upon reaching the heart of the enemy contagion, he engaged the foul Daemon Prince that lay at its source. As the warrior's blade tore the enemy apart, banishing its unsightly presence back to the warp, Zanaris and his brothers became covered in the creature's disgusting viscera. The stinking fluids burned through ceramite and flesh with equal vigour, but miraculously Zanaris emerged unscathed. It seems that the Chapter Master's own courage and fortitude formed an alloy in that moment with the loyal machine spirit of his armour and its absolute determination to shield its wearer from harm. That boon of protection has persisted since that day, and it is conveyed to any who dons the Armour of Zanaris.

PRIMARIS model only.

- Each time an attack with an Armour Penetration characteristic of -1 or -2 is allocated to the bearer, that attack has an Armour Penetration characteristic of 0 instead.
- Each time the bearer would lose a wound as a result of a mortal wound, roll one D6: on a 6+, that wound is not lost.

CHAPTER TACTIC

The Chapter Tactic (see *Codex: Space Marines*) gained by **SILVER TEMPLARS** units is The Bond Martial.

SILVER TEMPLARS: THE BOND MARTIAL

The warriors of the Silver Templars Chapter form a spiritual bond with the machine spirits of their favoured weapons, viewing their blades, bolt rifles, and so forth more like trusted familiars than mere tools of war. This synergy lends them near preternatural skill at arms.

- Each time a model with this tactic makes a melee attack against an **INFANTRY** or **BIKER** unit, an unmodified hit roll of 6 automatically wounds the target.
- Each time a unit with this tactic is selected to shoot or fight, you can re-roll one hit roll when resolving that unit's attacks.

BANNER OF ECHOES

A Sword Oath can never be broken, as evidenced by the Silver Templars' valiant defence of the people of Necthis. The industrial world, already overrun by the greenskin menace by the time the Adeptus Astartes strike force arrived, became the site of one of the Chapter's greatest victories. Having suffered terrible losses and severely outnumbered, their forces had been bled deeply by the siege of Necthis City, the Orks' numbers seemingly unending. Yet Lieutenant Maniakes' demi-company would not yield. They planted their banner on the highest point of the city wall and fought with speed, skill and murderous efficiency that appeared supernatural in nature. By the end of the battle, Maniakes and many of his fellow Space Marines lay dead, their actions the very embodiment of the every value the Silver Templars hold dear and a powerful example to their battle-brothers. Many claim that their spirits flowed into the banner that fluttered proud above them on the winds of war, and that those same echoes of heroism flow forth to aid their battle-brothers and guide their killing blows even today.

PRIMARIS ANCIENT model only. Once per battle, in your Command phase, the bearer can use this Relic. If it does, until the start of your next Command phase, the bearer gains the following ability:

Banner of Necthis (Aura): While a friendly **SILVER TEMPLARS PRIMARIS CORE** unit is within 6" of the bearer, add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of models in that unit.

WARLORD TRAITS

If a **SILVER TEMPLARS CHARACTER** model is your **WARLORD**, you can use the **SILVER TEMPLARS WARLORD TRAITS** table below to determine what Warlord Trait they have. You can either roll one D3 to randomly generate one, or you can select one.

1. ACCOMPLISHED DUELLIST

Martial excellence is integral to advancement within the Silver Templars, for the Chapter's tenets of strategy and spiritual philosophy employ it as their foundation. Many of the Silver Templars' greatest heroes are thus also their greatest swordsmen.

- At the start of the Fight phase, if this model is within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can fight first that phase.
- Each time this **WARLORD** makes a melee attack, if it made a charge move, was charged or performed a Heroic Intervention this turn, you can re-roll the wound roll.

2. PRECISION COMMANDER

When a Silver Templars commander sets their mind to the destruction of the enemy, their pursuit of that goal becomes all-encompassing, not resting until that threat to the Imperium has been destroyed.

In your Command phase, you can select one friendly **SILVER TEMPLARS PRIMARIS CORE** unit within 6" of this **WARLORD**. Until the start of your next Command phase, each time that unit is selected to shoot or fight, you can re-roll one hit roll and you can re-roll one wound roll.

3. SPIRITUAL SYNERGY

Over many years of fighting, this warrior's bond with their chosen weapon's machine spirit has become so strong the two have become almost intertwined, a singular, lethal entity.

Select one weapon this **WARLORD** is equipped with (excluding Relics). Each time this **WARLORD** makes an attack with that weapon, an unmodified wound roll of 6 inflicts 1 mortal wound on the target in addition to any normal damage.

STRATAGEMS

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

THE SWORDSMAN'S STRIKE

1CP/2CP

Silver Templars – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The Silver Templars view all battles, no matter their scale, as a duel between two gestalt opposed combatants. Their battle strategies thus focus on how best to deliver the killing blow that swiftly and decisively ends that duel.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **SILVER TEMPLARS PRIMARIS CORE** unit from your army is selected to shoot, or in the Fight phase, when a **SILVER TEMPLARS PRIMARIS CORE** unit from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack against a **CHARACTER** unit, add 1 to that attack's hit roll. If that unit contains 5 or fewer models, this Stratagem costs 1CP; otherwise, it costs 2CP.

CLAIM RUNES

1CP

Silver Templars – Battle Tactic Stratagem

When faced with overwhelming numbers, the Silver Templars employ a system of rune-marking their chosen targets on their autosenses, allowing for pinpoint and hyper-efficient slaughter.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when a **SILVER TEMPLARS PRIMARIS** unit from your army is selected to fight. If, when it was selected to fight, that unit was within Engagement Range of an enemy unit containing more models than itself, then until the end of the phase, each time a model in that **SILVER TEMPLARS** unit makes an attack:

- Add 1 to the Strength characteristic of that attack.
- Improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.



THE SILVER TEMPLARS

Hyped up about Silver Templars? Of course you are, they're one of the coolest Space Marine Chapters around these days (after the Tome Keepers, of course). And that's why studio painter Nathan Trolley came up with a stage-by-stage painting guide for them.

Nathan: The predominant colour on Silver Templars Space Marines is, unsurprisingly, silver! You can paint their armour very quickly using Leadbelcher spray as a basecoat, though your XL Base brush will get the job done almost as fast (and you can do it indoors if the weather is bad). After that, all you need is a black wash over the armour and your Silver Templar is ninety percent painted!

On the subject of black washes, the studio army painters tend to use a 1:1 mix of Nuln Oil and Nuln Oil Gloss on predominantly silver models (Iron Warriors, Hallowed Knights, Sautekh Necrons, and so on). The regular Nuln Oil helps shade the metal and give it a darker tone, while the gloss version gives it a bit of shine, as if it's well-oiled. The end result is so striking that you could even leave the metal at that stage if you want to.

BATTLE READY

Using the stages to the right, Nathan painted a Silver Templars Space Marine so that he's ready for the battlefield. Heretics beware!



ARMOUR



RED KNEE



EYE LENSES



PARADE READY

With a few extra highlights to each area of the model, Nathan took the Battle Ready Silver Templar and made him Parade Ready. The Chapter would be proud.



TOP TIP

When applying highlights to armour (especially power armour), we apply a 'chunky' highlight first. This may look odd to begin with, but it's there to smooth the transition between the main armour colour and the final 'edge' highlight, which should be very thin. If you're unsure how thick to make your chunky highlight, practice on a spare component from the kit first such as a shoulder pad or arm, then apply the edge highlight to see how it looks.

ANOTHER TOP TIP

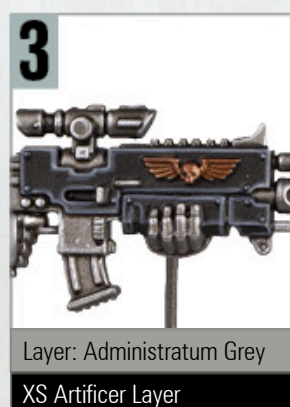
The model in this article was painted in sub-assemblies so that you can see all the stages more clearly. In reality, most people would just glue their models together and then paint them, but there is some merit in painting a model this way. It makes painting the Aquila considerably easier, for example, and the base was sprayed Chaos Black instead of Leadbelcher like the rest of the model.

SILVER SAVIOURS

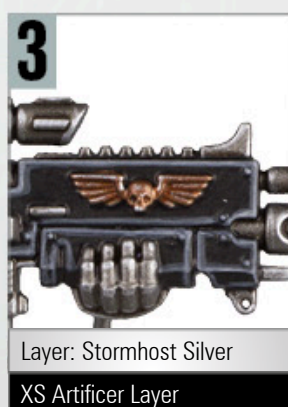
While there isn't a Warhammer TV video for the Silver Templars, there are plenty of videos that focus on useful aspects of their colour scheme. For example, there's an excellent video for the Iron Snakes Chapter that shows you how to paint silver armour. It may be a bit heretical, but there are also several painting guides for Iron Warriors (gasp!) that would be useful, especially because of those yellow chevrons.



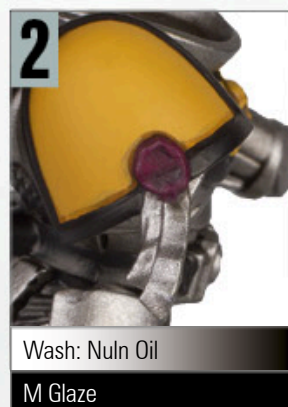
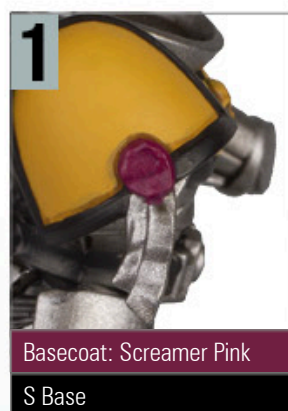
BLACK DETAILS



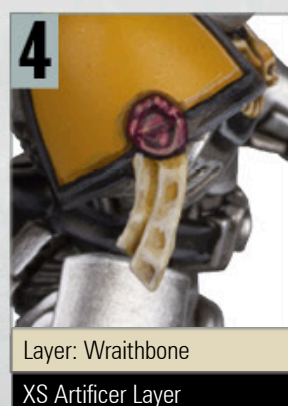
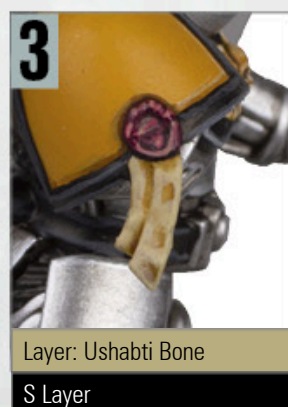
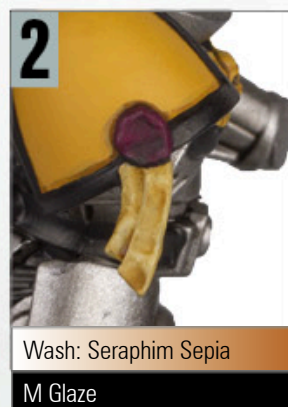
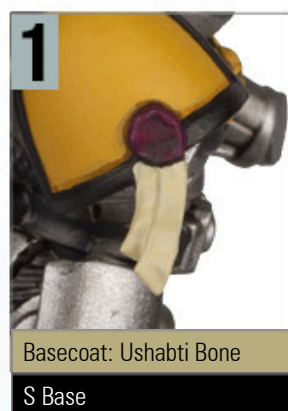
BRONZE DETAILS



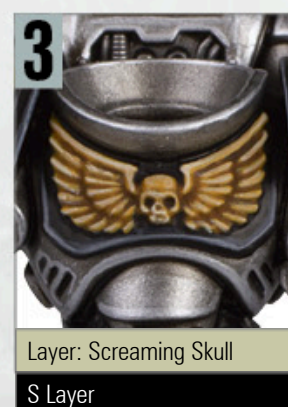
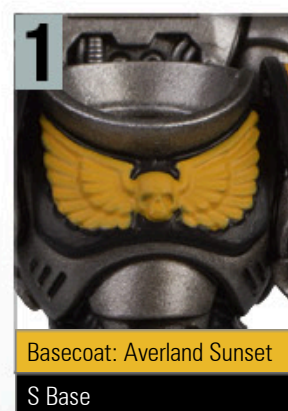
PURITY SEAL WAX



PARCHMENT



AQUILA & PAULDRONS



THE BOND MARTIAL

You've had a chance to read about the background of the Silver Templars. You've seen our guide to painting models from the Chapter. Now have a look at this gallery of miniatures painted by readers and studio staff! Focus and Fury!

The Silver Templars were the invention of the *Warhammer 40,000: Conquest* team, having first appeared in *Conquest 7*. Within a few issues they received their very own feature, followed by a stage-by-stage painting guide and even their own exclusive mini-codex.

The main feature of the Silver Templars (if you hadn't noticed by now) is their silver armour, which is accented by yellow shoulder pads, gold or yellow chest eagles and red details such as purity seals and capes. Their company markings are shown on their left knee pad and follow the traditional company colours as laid down by the *Codex Astartes*. The studio's collection, shown here, are all from the 3rd Company, as indicated by their red knee pads. Squad numbers and rank markings are also shown on the knee pads.



Captain Zeno Petricias and the Ancient of the 3rd Company. The Chapter's home world – Novaris – is written across the centre of the banner



The core of the studio collection is based on the *Dark Imperium* boxed set, with a plethora of additional characters and units such as a Librarian, Apothecary and Repulsor tank.

Intercessor Sergeants Solon (top) and Akronos (bottom) lead their battle-brothers to war. Their squad numbers (I and II respectively) can be seen on their left knee pads over the red company colours.



Battle-brother Valens is a noted hero of the Chapter, having been slain during the early days of the Indomitus Crusade. His remains were interred in a Dreadnought, from which he will serve beyond death.



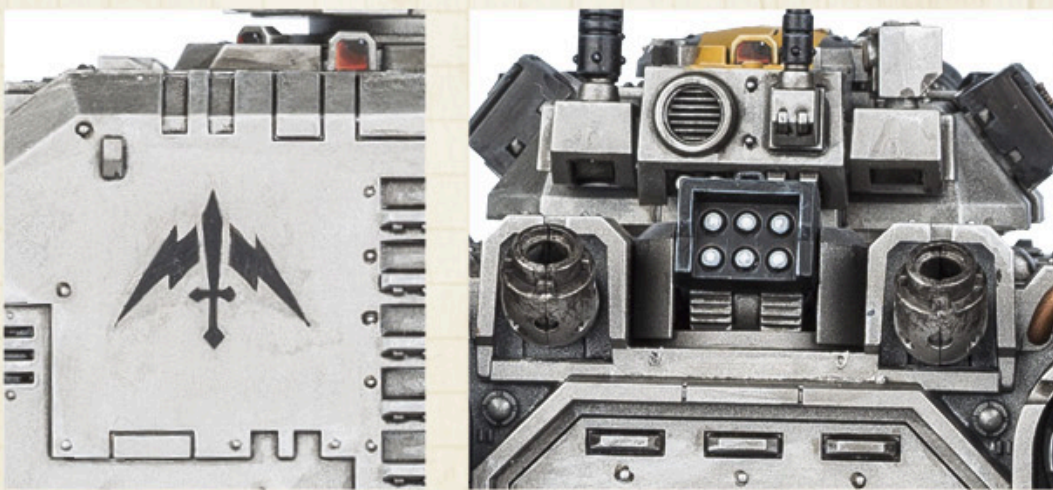
A trio of Inceptors provide a fast assault unit for the Silver Templars. This squad is armed with assault bolters – ideal for taking on closely packed infantry.



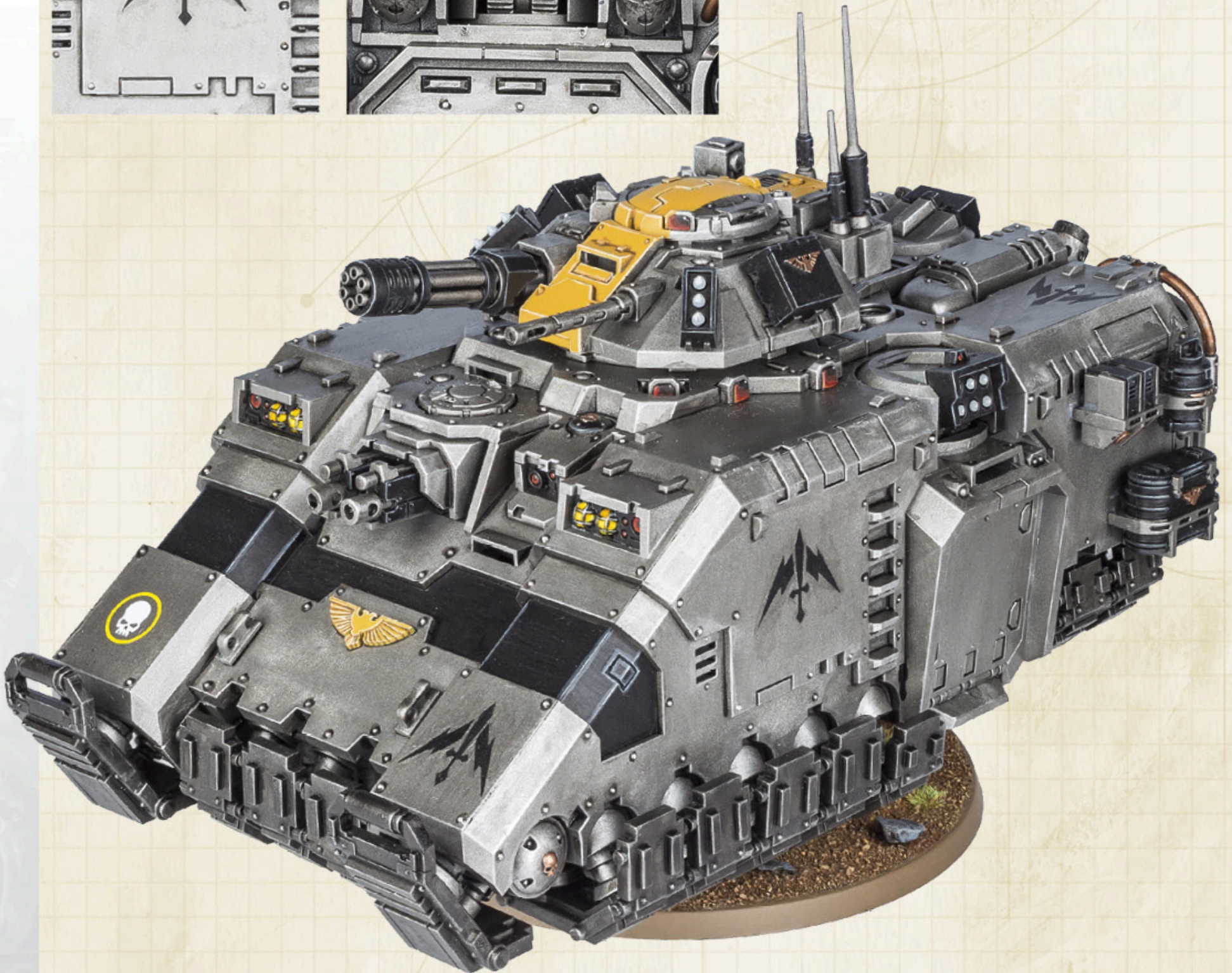
The shining armour and yellow heraldry of the Silver Templars make them instantly recognisable on the battlefield. Their battlefield designations follow codex guidelines.



Hellblaster Squad Xystos provide fire support for the 3rd Company. Their gun casings, shoulder trims and chest armour are black as per the Chapter heraldry.



A yellow stripe across the Repulsor's turret matches the yellow shoulder pads on the rest of the Silver Templars. Note that the Chapter symbol is presented on silver instead of yellow.



The Silver Templars often use Aggressors to storm defended positions, their boltstorm gauntlets and fragstorm grenade launchers making short work of entrenched foes.



Reiver Squad Bessarion often work alongside the Company's Inceptors, creating a landing zone for the Inceptors to make their sub-orbital strike.



Company heroes include Librarian Ares Ionnas, Grand Oathkeeper Hekaton, Apothecary Mionas and Lieutenant Adonys Eskadon.



READERS' MODELS EXTRA

Every now and again we get sent a bunch of pictures by one talented hobbyist. This month, it was Chris Kelley who got in contact with his collection of Silver Templars.

Chris: I instantly fell in love with the Silver Templars the moment I saw them. Their silver armour, their lore and their duellist mentality really brought me back to being a kid pretending to be a crusader in shining armour. I quickly picked up all the Primaris Space Marine box game sets – Dark Imperium, Shadowspear and Wake the Dead. I wanted to tackle a different company for each box set, as

well as a Kill Team made from the Silver Templars Painting Guide Set. The next project for my army is an Astraeus Super Heavy Tank, which is the only vehicle I currently own for my Silver Templars. Go big or go home, right? It's been a mammoth project, but great fun. So far I've only played a few Kill Team games with my Silver Templars because I don't like playing with unpainted miniatures.



1

'I spray all my models with Leadbelcher, then apply a wash of Nuln Oil to the recesses,' says Chris. 'I follow this with an edge highlight of Ironbreaker. The shoulder pads are Averland Sunset. I actually hand-painted all the Chapter symbols, but I've managed to get my hands on a decal sheet now, so that should make things easier in the future.'

Chris decided to paint his Silver Templars with golden Aquilas. Most of them are from the 3rd Company, as you can see from the red knee pads on his Intercessor squad's armour (1).

Conforming to the Codex Astartes, Chris painted his Reiver Sergeant (2) with a red helmet to show his rank. The Sergeant also bears the squad number in Roman numerals on his knee.



2

Chris's Lieutenants (3) have different-coloured knee pads to show they are from different companies. The one on the left hails from the 7th Company and has been converted to carry an auto bolt rifle under his arm.

All of the bases on Chris's models are painted to look like a rust desert, which contrasts well with their shiny silver armour.



3



WARHAMMER AGE OF SIGMAR

From the maelstrom of a sundered world, the Eight Realms were born. And with their birth began a war to claim them. This month, A Tale of Four Warbands, new rules for Warcry and a handy cheat sheet.





CHASING THE FLAMES

No sane person would ever venture into the Eightpoints. Until now, that is! Turn to page 96 for new rules on fielding the Cities of Sigmar in Warcry.

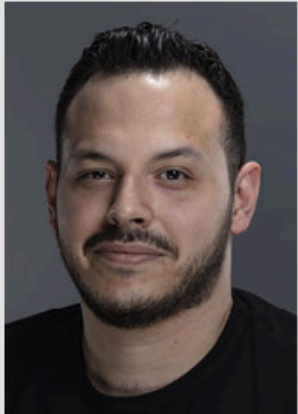


A TALE OF FOUR WARBANDS

The legions of the Everchosen await one warlord and his warband, but who will achieve his quest first? All is revealed on page 104.



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



LOUIS AGUILAR

Louis joined the Warhammer Age of Sigmar team a year and a half ago, and he's already made his mark on the Mortal Realms, including working on the new matched play and Pitched Battle rules in the *General's Handbook 2020*. He's currently building a Kharadron Overlords army, which he hopes will conquer many lands and make much profit.

As a system that provides such a vast range of armies, Age of Sigmar gives its players a lot of information to remember over the course of a battle. On top of this, there are many important decisions for each player to make during a game, and it's easy for things to slip through the net and be forgotten. There have been many occasions when I've felt confident I've used all of the abilities I have at my disposal in one phase, moved onto the next and then realised there was another unit on the other side of the table that I'd forgotten about. Actually, it's quite easy to get lost amongst the finer details of your army when there is so much

to learn and put into action in a battle. With time of course, things become easier, and as they do, these details become more natural to recall while playing. But for those that are new to an army or just forgetful (like myself!), having things to help you at the tabletop can really get you the most out of your army and give you the feeling that you can effectively command your miniatures. One way to get the help you need during a game of Age of Sigmar is by using gaming aids.

Even experienced tournament players and those who pride themselves as being adept at Age of Sigmar use gaming aids to track, monitor and remind them of certain things their units are doing on the battlefield. Their reasons for doing this are simple. Firstly they don't want to miss anything they can do during their turns, and secondly they want to ensure their decisions are made in a timely manner so that the battle will be finished in the time allocated. In this month's Rules of Engagement, I'll be taking you through some useful things that will help you speed up your games without losing track of your army's most important details.



Rules of Engagement – penned by veteran games developer Jervis Johnson – focuses on the creation, design and evolution of the rules for Warhammer Age of Sigmar. This month, Jervis has given up his throne of power to let Louis Aguilar talk about gaming aids.

SETTING UP THE BATTLEFIELD

One time-consuming aspect of Age of Sigmar is setting up the battlefield. When playing games at home or at the club, a useful shortcut I try to use is to have a table set up and ready to go for when my opponent arrives. I'll grab some terrain features too and have them ready to be put down once we've decided what sort of game we're going to play. If you want to take this further, you can even set up all of the terrain features on the battlefield in roughly symmetrical positions. By doing this, you can simply push the terrain features around so they conform to the restrictions required for matched play after you have picked the battleplan. Little things like this can save a good amount of time and let you get into your games much quicker.



AVERAGING DICE ROLLS

Arguably one of the most time-consuming aspects of Age of Sigmar is rolling dice, and while everyone loves doing this, rolling for a large unit that has multiple attacks eats into the time you have given yourselves for the game. This is especially applicable to armies that use multiple horde units, such as Plague Monks, which can have an immense number of attacks in the combat phase. While there are many ways people like to roll their dice for large numbers of attacks, I've taken quite a liking to an approach that Jervis mentioned to me a few months ago.

Let's say you have a unit that has made its pile-in move and is about to attack. This unit has ten models in range of the target, and each model in this unit has four attacks. As the bulk of the dice for this fight will be rolled for the hit rolls, you can use the average results of a dice to shortcut your way to determining which hit rolls have succeeded and which have failed.

Over the forty attacks we have with our hypothetical unit, thirty-six of them can use this averages shortcut to cut down the time used on rolling the dice and filtering through the results required. The remaining four attacks can have their hit rolls rolled for as normal.

For every six dice (six groups of six dice in this example), one of them will be counted as a result of 1, one of them as a result of 2, one of them as a result of 3, and so on. This means that out of the thirty-six dice we're using this shortcut on, six of them will be 1s, six will be 2s, six will be 3s, six will be 4s, six will be 5s and six will be 6s. While this method might not be for everyone, it certainly speeds up rolling dice in large amounts and lets you filter through results much faster.

This approach also allows you to filter through results based on modifiers that might affect the dice roll. For example, if you are attacking a unit that requires you to subtract 1 from the hit rolls of melee attacks, and that unit normally hits on a 4+, you know to disregard anything within your averaged results of 4 or less, allowing you to get to the wound rolls much faster. Should your unit produce a large amount of wound rolls, simply apply the method above again, dividing the number of dice into groups of six and averaging the results.

Using this sort of method during a game should only be used for large numbers of dice being rolled at once. For smaller numbers, there is still nothing as satisfying than rolling a handful of dice and hitting above the odds on unmodified 6s! And of course, always make sure your opponent agrees to you using this method.





BE A GRACIOUS OPPONENT

Something as simple as being understanding if your opponent has forgotten something that won't heavily impact the game and letting them go back to correct their error (like them forgetting to shoot with a unit just as they've rolled their first charge roll) can remove unnecessary pressure on the players of a battle. Suddenly your opponent feels less inclined to take more time in being extra careful when moving their units or declaring their actions in their turn. Obviously this is less applicable at tournaments, where players are entering a contest to prove their skill over several rounds. But for games with friends and clubmates, this is something I'm more than happy to do.

While this mentality won't speed up your games in a direct way, it does make your battles a more relaxed and enjoyable experience. If both players know they aren't going to be punished for minor errors, it can have a really positive effect on your current and future games with them, and it truly captures the spirit that Age of Sigmar should be played in.

THE 'CHEAT SHEET'

Along with the different ways to trim down the time taken for your turns, we've also included an Age of Sigmar 'Cheat Sheet' in this month's issue. The cheat sheet gives you a template to write all of the reminders you need for the key abilities,

spells and important details for your army, each broken down into the phases of a turn.

With this, you'll be able to glance at the current phase on the sheet and identify what essential things you need to do or remember, without constantly flicking through your battletome. This serves as a great way to get familiar with a new army, or to avoid missing the fantastic abilities you've included in your army, especially after taking the time to consider each unit carefully.

In our General's Handbook, we estimate that players need around 2 ½ hours for a 2,000-point matched play game of Age of Sigmar, but the reality is that few of us will achieve this when we're playing with friends or clubmates because of the relaxed nature of the game. Whether it's chatting about our hobby or explaining what our units do, these things add on lots of time, so using handy gaming aids can ensure all of those great conversations and nights at the club are achieved without being at the expense of finishing your battle.

As always, I hope you've found some helpful information within this edition of the Rules of Engagement and find the cheat sheet useful during your games of Age of Sigmar. I look forward to giving you some more things to consider for your matched play games in the future, but until then, good luck and have fun!

WARHAMMER AGE OF SIGMAR CHEAT SHEET

BATTLE TRAITS:

.....

.....

.....

DURING SET-UP:

.....

.....

.....

START OF THE BATTLE ROUND:

.....

.....

.....

HERO PHASE:

.....

.....

.....

MOVEMENT PHASE:

.....

.....

.....

SHOOTING PHASE:

.....

.....

.....

CHARGE PHASE:

.....

.....

.....

COMBAT PHASE:

.....

.....

.....

BATTLESHOCK PHASE:

.....

.....

.....

CHASING THE FLAMES

The Eightpoints is arguably one of the most deadly places in the Mortal Realms, yet even so there are some warriors willing (or perhaps ordered) to brave its terrifying depths. Here we present new rules for using a Cities of Sigmar warband in your games of Warcry.



The Cities of Sigmar are vast, sprawling metropolises, home to millions of humans, aelves, duardin and other more unusual races. Most inhabitants of these huge townships are civilians, but every city also has a considerable standing army to protect it from marauding forces. Yet on occasion, these forces will be tasked with other missions. Some may accompany the Stormcast Eternals into battle, providing local knowledge and artillery support to Sigmar's lightning-forged warriors. Others are sent off to protect nearby lands or reconquer them in the God-King's name. However, sometimes subtlety is required. When a rogue wizard needs to be brought to heel, or a rampaging spell destroyed, warbands of hand-picked warriors are assembled and sent out on deadly missions. Some say they are the most experienced warriors of the free cities. Other say they're the most expendable ...

WARCRY

To get started with Cities of Sigmar in Warcry is pretty simple. All you need is the Core Book and some models to build your warband. And this article, of course! There's a wide range of miniatures to choose from, too – you can find them all on the Games Workshop website.



CITIES OF SIGMAR IN WARCRY

Over the next few pages, you'll find new rules for using a Hammerhal warband in your games of Warcry. To the right you'll find a great scene-setting story by Age of Sigmar quill-wielder Jordan Green, which gives you an inkling of why Sigmar's servants may have a need to venture into the Eightpoints.

This is followed by the rules for a Hammerhal warband, including a raft of new abilities (Pulverising Strike is a team favourite – chop!), fourteen new fighter cards featuring humans, aelves and duardin, the Chasing the Flames campaign and rewards, artefacts of power and command traits for you to enjoy. Will you send a warband of Hammerhal's greatest warriors out into the Eightpoints? Will they all be humans? Perhaps you'll include a duardin or two. Maybe even an aelf. The choice is yours!

MARTYR'S BLOOD

This is the land that the God-King forgot.

The thought was a blasphemous one. Broran Jeth tried denying it, but it lingered nonetheless. Gazing out from the jagged maw of the cave, staring at the dark spider that was the camp squatting in the ruin-strewn valley below, Jeth supposed that such was what exposure to the Eightpoints did to a mind.

This is what awaits all the realms if our crusade falters. This is what happens when Sigmar – forgive me my doubts, lord – fails.

'It's still there, then?'

Thanna and the Irondrake, Guzgi, approached from behind, their steps sounding disturbingly wet. Sheltering in the cavern had been considered preferable to risking the plains in the dark, even if the latter would have let them get the drop on the camp. Even so, Broran had no desire to examine their holdfast too closely. Coming from a ten-year Greatsword veteran of the Goldjackets, the vaunted military guilds of Hammerhal, that was saying something. Thanna's footfalls were light and considered, in contrast to how she drummed her fingers across the stock of her crossbow. Guzgi's gromril plate, on the other hand, clattered under the weight of many field repairs.

'It's still there,' Broran nodded, shifting the ragged beret atop his head in an effort to maintain some measure of decorum. Each day they spent in this netherplace made that feel like a hollower enterprise, but some standards had to be kept. 'Though who knows for how long. They're a twitchy bunch.'

'I don't blame them, Broran,' said Thanna. Her wry grin sent ivy-shaped tattoos, marks of allegiance to one of the agricultural guilds of Hammerhal Ghyra, dancing across her face. Thanna grinned a lot, and it always had the same effect. Broran had never understood it, but then, there was a lot about the Ghyranites he didn't understand. Strange, the divide one Realmgate could cause. 'You can't tell me you'd want to stay here any longer than necessary.'

Thanna wasn't wrong, though she was also of a lower rank than Broran. Normally the Guild Champion would have reprimanded such informality, but they were long past that point. That was another thing about the Eightpoints – it turned order and structure on its head, forced you to make do with what you had. They had been 'making do' ever since the strategists of the Twin-tailed City had pulled them together for this mission. Each of them had been condemned in some way, either shamed by a past failure or considered expendable enough by their masters to be sent on this suicide mission. Their charge was to hunt down the Krowl, an unremarkable roving warband known only for the recent capture of the least notable son of some foppish Azyrite household who had been studying alongside the Collegiate's Battlemage. Broran thought it likely that some overeager wizard busybody no doubt believed they could climb the ladders of prestige by

financing this expedition and recovering the feckless noble runt, as if returning home from this place was ever a possibility. But orders were orders, and Goldjackets followed orders.

Now there was only Broran, Thanna, Guzgi, Leithru the Wanderer and the Black Guard Malchai. Five souls in a land that hated them, their stomachs wracked by hunger, their flesh slick with foul-smelling sweat. Bathing was a distant dream. Fresh water was a kingly legend. Their companions had been run down by corrupt warbands or preyed upon by the malformed beasts that haunted the darkness, or they had fallen victim to more sinister blights. Young Derrick was the latest. Broran had no idea who the poor lad had drunkenly insulted to end up in this mess, but they had awoken a night prior to find him writhing and howling, a cluster of slick tentacles crawling from his mouth and eyes. Leithru had put him out of his misery with a swift blow from her draich. They had used Guzgi's drakeblaster to immolate the body, just to be sure. Better that than let the lords of this land get their hands on him.

The Krowl had never stopped moving, but they bled as the Hammerhalians had bled. It had been through interrogating the dying detritus they callously left behind that Broran's fellows had drawn a bead on them at all. The Krowl also fought to make do with what they had in this land, but Broran didn't like to think too much about that. They were not the Krowl, and the Krowl were not them. Certainly he did not believe he would ever have willingly chosen such a forbidding location in which to set up camp. Broran would have said that the inhuman faces and towering, warped statues were carved into the crags overlooking the valley, were it not for the lingering impression that no mortal hands had ever dared shape this place.

But it was now or never. If they didn't strike while the Krowl were close, they never would. That, at least, was what he pitched to the others.

'Always rushing, human,' Leithru said. Beneath her hood, the Wildwood Ranger's expression was grim, though Broran knew that her phlegmatic demeanour was a shield against their circumstances. Thanna would obey, if only to do something proactive, and Guzgi would never be outdone by an aelf. As for Malchai, he could be trusted to give one of his typical cold and mocking smiles – and to fight like a raging sulphur canid caught in an ash storm.

They slipped down into the valley one by one. Leithru led, the aelf light-footed as ever as she ghosted into silent ruins streaked with old blood. The others followed, sticking to the long shadows cast by the gore-stained light of the Eightpoints. Smoke was clawing into the bloodied sky from beyond the inner walls of the ruins, the sound of drums and raw-throated chanting rising with a sonorous intensity. Some manner of ritual was brewing, and that alone was enough for Broran not to like it. Whatever they were here to do, they had to do it soon.





All the while, Broran was aware of the ominous presence on the horizon. It was always on the horizon. No matter where they went, the tower – driven into the land like a blade into the heart of some wounded godbeast – was there. Its highest reaches grasped at the swirling maelstrom that substituted for this place's sky, and into which Broran never looked too closely. Mortals were not meant to know of such things. And yet, here they were.

It was Thanna who slew the first of the Krowl. The warrior wandered around a column, a heavy cloak lined with mangy beast fur draped over the shoulders of his onyx armour. He rested a rune-marked axe over one shoulder with a killer's easy poise. None of that confidence prevented Thanna slipping from a pool of thick darkness and drawing her hunting knife. She rammed the blade into the side of the Krowl's neck as her free hand muffled his gagging screams. The warrior jolted and spasmed in her grip, each convulsion spraying glistening crimson along Thanna's arms. Only when the jerking motions had ceased entirely did she drag the body back into the shadows, offering a tight nod.

'Guzgi,' Broran whispered, reaching back to unfasten the zweihander strapped across his back. The aelves were already out of view; by now, the Greatsword knew to let them do as they will. None of them were allies by choice, but trust was one of the few things they could afford one another. The duardin advanced as quietly as he could, which was still far from graceful. From beneath his helmet, a low but constant stream of blazing Aqshian invectives bubbled forth. Broran let him have his moment before nodding towards the dilapidated walls that enclosed the Krowl's camp.

'Reckon you can make us an opening?'

'Stand back, manling.' Guzgi reached into the assortment of worn leather satchels strapped across him before producing a pair of rune-marked spheres, rolling them around his palm. Broran had fought alongside the Dispossessed clans enough to know a cinderblast bomb when he saw one. 'And get ready. They won't miss this.'

As Thanna loaded a bolt into her trusty crossbow, Broran drew his zweihander and visited a brief kiss upon the steel. It tasted of blood and grit and death, but also of home – forged in the foundries of the cogfort Thunderclap and tempered in battle against the blood-seeking hordes who roamed the Great Parch. It was duty wrought in shining steel, and here of all places, that meant something.

Guzgi muttered an old Khazalid oath, primed the bombs and hurled them at the wall.

The ground shook under an almighty crack, a catastrophe of smoke and noise filling the air as the crumbling stonework blasted inwards. Strangled cries were silenced by the thudding impact of displaced masonry. The sound of booming drums and unclean chanting was soon replaced by bloodthirsty growls that demanded violence. Broran and Thanna were already moving. Nimble vaulting over hurled stonework, the Ghyranite raised her crossbow and loosed a shot. There

was a brief cry of pain before another of the Krowl tumbled from the acrid smoke, rolling to a halt with his blade falling from dead fingers.

As Guzgi drew up beside Thanna, deep bellicose laughs echoing from behind his gromril mask as he opened up with his fire-spitting drakeblaster, Broran was already inside the camp. In a matter of moments, all had become pandemonium. Warriors of the Krowl darted back and forth, bellowing for foes and seizing weapons where they could. From the corner of his eye, Broran saw Malchai vault over a tumbled statue, unimpeded by his segmented armour. Like a blur of black wind, his halberd lashed out once, twice, thrice. Each blow gutted or decapitated one of the Krowl, their bodies heaped around the Black Guard as he silently revelled in the slaughter.

A blast of hot, stinking breath from Broran's right was all that saved him from annihilation. With a braying growl, an armoured beastman stepped forward, swinging a dented mace. Broran ducked as the bludgeon passed where his head had been. His zweihander carved through the air with an ogor's hunger. The tip pierced the beast's armour and kept cutting into the flesh below. Thick blood sprayed across his faded uniform. The monster brayed again as it lowered its head and attempted to gore him. Broran drew a dirk from his belt and rammed it into the beastman's eye. Even as its brain was impaled, the creature still raised its maul and attempted to crush him, a lashing flick of the horn opening a ragged wound across the man's cheek.

As the monster collapsed, Broran risked another glance around the camp. Smoke formed a dark pall that smothered the ruins, rendering his companions muffled and distant. He saw the bright tongues of flame vomited out by Guzgi's firearm. He saw Thanna take another of the Krowl through the eye with a bolt before two more of the marauders approached her from behind, blades flashing. Malchai was lost entirely to him now. And still, on the horizon, he could feel the gaze of that infernal tower – never diverting, as if amused by this petty squabble in its omnipresent shadow.

'Broran.'

Leithru's cloak was caked in blood as she drew up alongside him. Her grim, ash-streaked expression remained unchanged as she nodded towards the largest of the ruins. 'Whatever we're here for, it's in there.'

They moved silently, two more shades amidst a mausoleum. Sundered effigies of the God-King watched in forlorn repose from the ruined walls – those whose heads had not been brutally defaced. Runes in a dark tongue Broran did not understand were daubed in gore. Drums and blazing pits sat abandoned, rituals forgotten in the need to slaughter.

Only one guard remained at the ruin's heart. He whipped around as they entered, bearing needle-sharp teeth in a growl. A hurled dagger carved across the aelf's thigh; she grunted, but did not stagger, charging forth in silent determination. Her draich lashed out to parry the wild sword-blow of the Krowl. The opening left by

the deflection was enough for Broran to punch his blade through the marauder's gut and out the other side.

Silence fell as quickly as battle had raged. Leithru panted hard, kneeling in an effort to stem the blood leaking from her fresh wound. Broran panted too, drawing in ragged lungfuls of air, casting his eyes about the innards of the ruins. Flayed skins stood on racks that flanked piles of bodies, iron sigils of ruin raised over spluttering fire pits. It prepared him, somewhat, for the sight that was to follow.

The prisoner was slumped against the walls of the ruins, bare save a loincloth, arms bound tightly behind his back. Even a glance would tell that the young man had passed through hell. His face was a mass of welts and scars barely recognisable as human. Dried blood coated his lower jaw – the result of a barbed gag and severed tongue. There was some evidence that he had tried to fight his captors, given that plenty of his wounds were to the fore; perhaps he had even had some talent as an aspiring mage. It hardly mattered now.

'Sigmar's blood,' Broran muttered. The man blinked away a fog of pain, eyes blue as crystal. Despite his terrible state, he seemed to retain enough of his faculties to be aware of the ruin wrought upon him. Few of his many scars were random, instead carved in the image of strange runes that hurt the eye to stare at. This was not simple butchery; this was ritual in the making. The Krowl no doubt intended to offer him in sacrifice to some unknowable deity. Perhaps the prisoner's soul had already been promised, the beasts that lurked behind the veil simply waiting to collect.

Orders were orders.

The man was already dead.

We are trained to obey. The God-King's crusade must not falter.

Likely they had failed before they'd even started on their long and arduous quest. This man could not be rescued. Even should they somehow make it back to Hammerhal, he would be shunned by his family for the ruin done upon him, and Broran and his warriors would likely be thrown to the purifying flames.

After what he has seen, what he has become, he certainly can't be allowed to live.

Broran's sword lashed out, carving through the man's neck. His head rolled clear, the body slumping forwards moments after. Broran stared for long and drawn-out moments, the scent of blood still in his nostrils. He didn't know if the poor wretch's soul had made it back to Azyr and to a seat at the God-King's feasting table, as the preachers taught. He supposed it didn't matter. Their duty was done, in a manner of speaking. Now there was only one option left.

Broran turned, helping Leithru to stand once more. Silently, weapons in hand, they headed back outside – back into the endless carnage of the Eightpoints.

This is what happens when Sigmar fails.





HAMMERHAL

HAMMERHAL ABILITIES	
	[Double] Reclaim for Sigmar: A fighter can use this ability only if they are within 3" of an objective. Add 1 to the Strength and Attacks characteristics of attack actions made by this fighter this activation that have a Range characteristic of 3 or less.
	[Double] Pulverising Strike: Add half the value of this ability (rounding up) to the number of damage points allocated by each critical hit from the next attack action made by this fighter this activation that has a Range characteristic of 3 or less.
	[Double] Form Shieldwall: Until the end of the battle round, add 1 to the Toughness characteristic of friendly fighters with the Bulwark runemark () while they are within 3" of this fighter.
	[Triple] For Sigmar and for Hammerhal!: A fighter can use this ability only if an enemy fighter has been taken down by an attack action made by them this activation. Until the end of the battle round, add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of attack actions that have a Range characteristic of 3 or less made by visible friendly fighters while they are within 6" of this fighter.
	[Triple] Volley of Shots: Add half the value of this ability (rounding up) to the Attacks characteristic of the next attack action made by this fighter that targets an enemy fighter more than 3" away.
	[Quad] Righteous Purpose: This fighter makes a bonus attack action that has a Range characteristic of 3 or less. Then, pick 1 friendly fighter within 3" of this fighter. That fighter makes a bonus attack action that has a Range characteristic of 3 or less.

GUILD CHAMPION **175**

| 1 | 4 | 4 | 2/4

4 | **4** | **20**

FREGUILD SERGEANT **130**

| 1 | 3 | 4 | 2/4

4 | **3** | **20**

MARKSMAN WITH REPEATER HANDGUN **145**

| 3-12 | 3 | 4 | 1/3

| 1 | 3 | 3 | 1/3

4 | **3** | **20**

MARKSMAN WITH LONG RIFLE **200**

| 6-20 | 1 | 4 | 4/10

| 1 | 3 | 3 | 1/3

4 | **3** | **20**

FREGUILD GUARD WITH SWORD AND SHIELD 80

1	3	3	1/3	

4 4 10

FREGUILD GREATSWORD 95

1	3	3	2/4	

4 4 10

FREGUILD GUARD WITH SPEAR 65

2	3	3	1/4	

4 3 10

FREGUILD CROSSBOWMAN 80

3-16	2	3	1/3	

1	2	3	1/2	

4 3 10

FREGUILD GUARD WITH HALBERD 75

2	3	4	1/4	

4 3 10

FREGUILD HANDGUNNER 80

3-12	2	4	1/3	

1	2	3	1/2	

4 3 10

IRONBEARD WITH DRAKEFIRE PISTOL AND CINDERBLAST BOMB 175

8	3	3	1/3	

3-5	2	4	2/4	

3 4 22

IRONWARDEN WITH GRUDGEHAMMER TORPEDO 190

3-16	2	5	2/5	

1	3	3	1/3	

3 4 22

IRONBREAKER 95

1	3	3	1/3	

3 5 12

IRONDRAKE 95

3-12	2	3	1/4	

1	2	3	1/2	

3 4 12

WILDWOOD WARDEN 140

1	4	4	2/4	

5 3 16

CAPTAIN OF THE BLACK GUARD 170

2	4	3	2/4	

5 4 20

WILDWOOD RANGER 85

1	3	4	2/4	

5 3 8

BLACK GUARD 105

2	3	3	2/4	

5 4 10

CHASING THE FLAMES



The magisters of Sigmar's cities are constantly seeking knowledge of the wild, lingering spells that now roam the realms. The Collegiate Arcane of Hammerhal is no exception. Your warband has been commanded by the city authorities to track down and capture the Burning Head known as Cinder Johann in a mystical prism trap devised by an eccentric wizard. Unfortunately, the spell has streaked its way into the dreaded Eightpoints – but you were not in a position to refuse ...

FIRST CONVERGENCE: PATH OF DESTRUCTION

Cinder Johann is not difficult to track – one must simply follow the burning trail of destruction carved across the land. This path soon leads you to a destroyed shanty town of some kind. Raiders have already chanced upon this place, picking through the ashen ruins with avaricious vigour. As they spot you, they draw cruel-looking blades. You will have to fight your way clear of them.

BATTLEPLAN

Terrain: See map.

Deployment:

Show of Strength

The Aspirant warband uses the blue deployment points.

Victory: Drawn and Quartered

Twist: Eager for the Fight



SECOND CONVERGENCE: THE HAUNT OF MONSTERS

The Burning Head has streaked through the eaves of a gnarled forest, and from miles around, great pillars of smoke can be seen choking the sky. You intended to camp a short way away, but it seems the flames have driven warbands and monsters alike from their shadowed homes and into your path. As tongues of fire lick the night, you must battle hard to avoid being overwhelmed.

BATTLEPLAN

Terrain: See map.

Deployment:

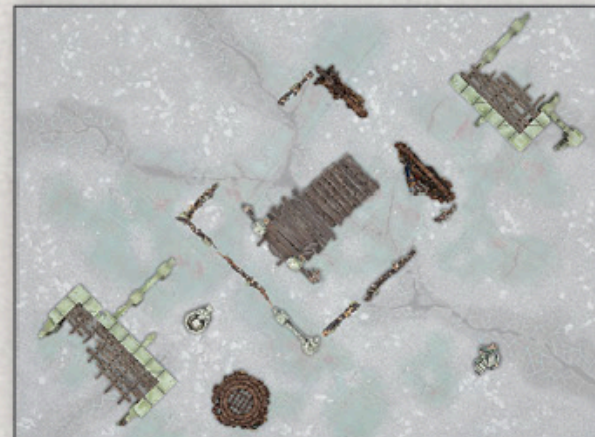
Defiant Stand

The Aspirant warband uses the blue deployment points.

Victory: The Raid

The Aspirant warband is the defender.

Twist: Rampaging Beasts



FINAL CONVERGENCE: FIRES OF WRATH

One of your warband, a student of matters Aqshian, has devised a cunning plan – if sufficient bellicose energy can be generated, then the volatile spell may well be drawn to you. You fall on roaming warbands with a vengeful fury. Soon one particularly zealous group begins hunting you, desperate to spill your blood. Under a sacred Azyrite storm you meet them in combat. Give no quarter!

BATTLEPLAN

Terrain: See map.

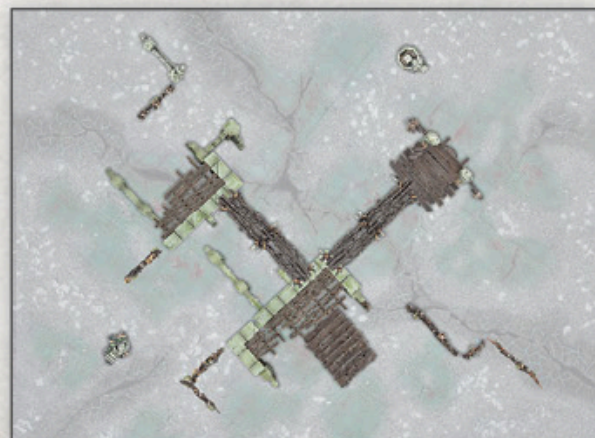
Deployment:

Frontal Assault

The Aspirant warband uses the blue deployment points.

Victory: No Mercy

Twist: Azyrite Lightning Storm



RESOLUTION

No sooner has the last foe has fallen than the smell of flame and ash fills your nose. From over a short incline comes the shrieking form of Cinder Johann, the spell's eyes alight with blazing wrath. Even as your guts clench in fear, you hold your nerve long enough to deploy the prism trap crafted by your employer. For a moment, the device seems to do nothing. Just before you can be burnt to a crisp, however, a storm of aetheric light fills the air. With a shriek, the Burning Head is dragged into the prism, there to rage impotently. It might keep you alive in this place, at least a little longer.

REWARD – CINDER JOHANN'S PRISON-PRISM

In extremis, a portion of the spell trapped within this arcane device can be unleashed to immolate nearby foes.

Once per battle, the bearer can use this artefact as an action. If they do so, pick 1 visible enemy fighter within 9" of the bearer and roll a dice. On a 3+, allocate 2D6 damage points to that fighter.

D3	ARTEFACT OF POWER
1	<p>Goldjacket Buckler: <i>This trusty shield has protected former bearers against even the most terrible blows.</i></p> <p>Add 1 to the Toughness characteristic of the bearer.</p>
2	<p>Count Coswick's Commanding Cap: <i>This elegant hat, complete with matching feather, is a show of grandiose defiance against the depredations of Chaos.</i></p> <p>Only fighters with the Leader runemark (★) can bear this artefact. Once per battle, the bearer can use the 'Inspiring Presence' ability without needing or using any ability dice.</p>
3	<p>Conqueror's Steel: <i>This blade is said to have been wielded in the holy crusades to found Hammerhal itself. It has never lost its killing edge.</i></p> <p>Add 1 to the damage points allocated by each hit and critical hit from attack actions made by this fighter that have a Range characteristic of 3 or less.</p>

D3	COMMAND TRAIT
1	<p>Jaded Veteran: <i>This warrior has seen it all on the battlefield and has the scars to prove it.</i></p> <p>Add 5 to the Wounds characteristic of this fighter.</p>
2	<p>Flamboyant Duellist: <i>Few can match this warrior in the arena of showy single combat.</i></p> <p>Add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of attack actions made by this fighter that have a Range characteristic of 3 or less.</p>
3	<p>Innovative: <i>This warrior always finds a way to make the best of a bad situation. Being stranded in the Eightpoints certainly counts as a bad situation.</i></p> <p>If this fighter is included in your warband, at the start of the third battle round, you gain 1 additional wild dice.</p>



WARBANDS OF CARNGRAD

Four warlords have been making a name for themselves in Carngrad. As their warbands strive to complete their missions, Archaon's emissaries watch their every move. Perhaps one of these warlords could serve the Everchosen in a greater capacity ...



The streets of Carngrad echo with the sounds of battle like never before, the pavements stained red with the blood of the slain. The rulers of this cruel city, known as the Seven Talons, are more than aware of the reason for the increase in violence: four power-hungry warbands have entered their domain and are in the process of making a name for themselves. The Seven Talons are untroubled by this intrusion into their territory, for the strong will survive and the weak will perish – such is the way with all things. If these warbands are strong enough, they may prove useful. If not, they will fade into obscurity, forgotten for all time.

Over the past three months, Lyle, Matt, Jonathan and Dan have played through their warbands' campaigns in a bid to join Archaon's mighty legions. Lyle's Splintered Fang have duelled, stabbed and poisoned (in that order) countless

WARCRY!

Fancy starting a Warcry campaign? All you need is a warband and a Core Book, both of which are available from the Games Workshop website.

To help you out with your campaign, you can also fill in and download a free Warcry warband roster from the Warhammer Community website. Head there now to get started:

warhammer-community.com

foes to get to the end of their quest in the Arena of Death, while Matt's Corvus Cabal have manipulated enemy warbands to fight each other before swooping in for the kill. Meanwhile, Jonathan's Unmade have journeyed far into the Murderlands in search of the Temple of the Flayed Prince, while Dan's Cypher Lords have continued their quest to infiltrate the House of Talons in a bid to seize control of Carngrad from its cruel overlords.

This month sees the end of our four warlords' campaigns (sad times, we know). But who will complete their final convergence first? Lyle was all set to complete his last month, but failed at the final hurdle against a very nasty warband of Ironjawz. This gave Matt, Jonathan and Dan the chance to catch up. It really is anyone's game! Read on to find out how they all got on and who will join the ranks of Archaon's grand legions!

DAN HARDEN | CYPHER LORDS

THE JADE EYE

The Jade Eye have made it their mission to infiltrate the House of Talons. They are on the cusp of victory, having back-stabbed their way to power, but can they complete their infiltration?



Dan's campaign to place a spy in the House of Talons has proceeded well over the last few weeks, and he was the second of the four warlords to reach his third convergence. You can find out how he got on in his last games later in the article.

'I've really enjoyed playing through my campaign over the last few months,' says Dan. 'I loved painting my warband and adding new models to it, and I also really enjoyed seeing the personalities of my warriors develop. I had a real sense of investment in them by the end of the campaign, and I think playing on champion mode helped with that. I really felt Cerulean's pain when he got a permanently fractured arm, then both Aureolin and Viridian suffered from gut wounds. My ex-Luminate Incarnadine was my favourite warrior, though she continuously lost favour that she didn't have until she was finally killed in battle by one of Sam Pearson's ogors. Her Shadowy Recall ability helped me win more than one game, while her attacks felled a fair number of enemy fighters. Hopefully her replacement – the Luminate Zaffre – will fare better in my second campaign, Cold Vengeance.'

NEXT STEPS

Dan: I'm thinking about developing my warband into a small Slaves to Darkness army. I love converting models, and I've been wondering what a fully fledged Chaos Warrior who came from a Cypher Lords warband might look like. Perhaps I could convert a Sorcerer Lord from a Thrallmaster, or maybe even make a chariot crewed by Cypher Lords. I've also been trying out a few colour schemes on Blue Horrors to see if I can get them to match the Jade Eye's colours. Talassar Blue mixed with Contrast Medium works perfectly for their skin.

FAVOURITE MOMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN

Dan: It has to be my first convergence against Lyle. Having failed at it twice already, I came up with a cunning plan (my third cunning plan) that almost fell apart the moment we started the game. Watching my Thrallmaster punch a tide of Serpents to death on a wobbly bridge was particularly amusing. It was a really close-fought game that could have gone either way, too – my favourite kind.



JONATHAN STAPLETON | THE UNMADE

THE JOYOUS AMPUTATION

Having been joined by a bloodthirsty Slaughterpriest, the Joyous Amputation have carved their way across the Murderlands in search of enlightenment. Their campaign is almost at an end.



Jonathan's warband is the smallest of the four, but the addition of an allied Slaughterpriest to his force has really helped him along in his quest. He was the third to reach his final convergence, but did he succeed in completing it?

'It took me a little while to wrap my head around Warcry,' says Jonathan. 'I'm not the most tactically aware player, and it took me some time to figure out how to use my warband's abilities and make the most out of them. Who'd have thought they could be so useful? Once I'd figured out what I was doing and what the strengths and limitations of my warband were, I started to improve and dominate more territories. The addition of the Slaughterpriest revolutionised my warband even further. Not only is he a formidable fighter, but his Bloodbind ability enables me to drag enemies towards my slower fighters and get them into the action quicker. It means I can pick off enemy fighters one at a time, which can be very handy.'

'Overall it's been really enjoyable watching everyone's warbands grow and progress. I'm looking forward to my next campaign now.'

NEXT STEPS

Jonathan: Well, after several months of procrastination, I finally finished painting my Furies, which you can see in the picture above. I'm pretty happy with my warband now, so I might spend my time painting some scenery to go with my force, perhaps draped in the flayed skin of their foes.

In all honesty, I've enjoyed taking part in A Tale of Four Warbands so much that I wish it could carry on. I'd like to do it for ... at least another year. That would be super. *(Is this an unsubtle hint as to what might be in next month's issue, Jonathan? – Ed.)*

FAVOURITE MOMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN

Jonathan: My favourite moment was every time I used the Flaying Frenzy ability with my Joyous One, Weeping Throat. People kept making the mistake of letting him get close to their models, which only ever ended badly for them. His most successful frenzy was against Dan's warband in one of our earlier games. I think he killed one fighter and wounded three others in a single bloody sweep.



MATT HUTSON | CORVUS CABAL

THE PENUMBRAL HUNTERS

The Streets of Carngrad are littered with bodies just waiting to be picked clean by the survivors of a bitter turf war. The Penumbral Hunters watch carefully, their beady eyes on the ultimate prize.

Matt's warband has gone from strength to strength over the last few weeks, and he ended on a high note after a hat trick of impressive victories. He's put his reversal of fortune down to a couple of key fighters in his warband.

'As I said in a previous issue, the Corvus Cabal are fast but not very tough,' says Matt. 'The little guys in particular can struggle against stronger opponents, though they tended to die alarmingly quickly to Lyle's blasted snakes. The inclusion of the Ogroid Myrmidon really changed how my warband functioned because he's big and tough and they can all hide behind him. He's the tank of the warband, taking the hits so my cabalists don't have to. I've also had great success with both my Shrike Talon and my Shadow Piercer. My leader now has a Move of 6, thanks to the Prey-bird's Swiftiness command trait, and a Shadow-blessed Dagger that makes her really deadly in combat. She did have two destiny levels, but she lost favour toward the end of the campaign. My Shrike Talon, on the other hand, has three destiny levels and could have had five if he'd been able to. He's clearly been noticed by the Chaos Gods.'

FAVOURITE MOMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN

Matt: It was when my Shrike Talon Dis Drehst killed Lyle's Venomblood Lash'ya Tertius in Lyle's final convergence. I equipped him with the Bauble of Shadows for the mission, which enabled him to fly. He leapt off a building using the Swooping Attack ability, pecked Lash'ya to death, then flew back up to the top of the building again. It was the perfect example of the Corvus Cabal in action.



NEXT STEPS

Matt: I think I said this last month (and possibly even the month before), but I'd really like to paint another Shrike Talon for my warband. They are easily the most reliable fighters in the Corvus Cabal, and they're really great fun to use, too. Once I've got one painted, I might start on the second campaign for my warband – the Hunger of Isiphus.

I would also really like to paint Gotrek (I have him on my desk), and I'd like to go on a monster hunt for a War Hydra. I think that would be a really cool model to paint and use in my warband.



LYLE LOWERY | SPLINTERED FANG

THE VENOMBORN

Having failed to conquer the Arena of Death, the Venomborn have returned with stronger fighters and more virulent poisons. Can they become the champions of Carngrad's arenas?

Lyle has been arguably the most successful of the four warlords, having won more of his games than any of the other warlords. Here he discusses how his campaign went.

'The Splintered Fang are a really fun warband to play with,' says Lyle. 'My fighters can be pretty tough, especially when they've got shields, but their true strength lies in the Poisoned Weapon ability. If you can maximise the use of that – especially on your fighters that do the most damage – you'll do pretty well. Also, my Trueblood's ability to net people without having to roll a dice is very strong, and I used it several times to pin down my opponent's best fighters so they couldn't escape.'

'I have a couple of favourite units from the campaign. Jomo was excellent and had several really cinematic moments, but my Serpents were the true stars of the show. They're really fast, and they get a bucketload of attacks that do a lot of damage when you score a critical hit. Anything you can do to give your Serpent bases more attacks or more chances of scoring a crit is good!'

NEXT STEPS

Lyle: Well, first off I want to finish my Souldrain Forest terrain. With that and my Shattered Stormvault, I've got a pretty solid terrain set for Age of Sigmar and more than enough scenery to play Warcry.

I'm also thinking about starting a couple of new warbands, too. I like the idea of starting a warband of Sylvaneth or Nighthaunt, playing through a campaign or two with them, and then building them into a full Age of Sigmar army. I think that would make for a characterful core to a new collection. But which to do first?

MEMORABLE MOMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN

Lyle: My game against Pete last month might be my most memorable of the campaign. It was a really high-stakes game because if I won it, I would win my campaign. The game came right down to the wire – whoever got the initiative in the final turn would get to fight first and almost certainly win the game. Pete won the initiative, and that's what happened. Ironjawz are terrifying opponents!



ABSOLUTELY NO MERCY

The Jade Eye were once subtle and sneaky, but now they're just in it for the kills. After playing the No Mercy mission three times in a row, Dan's warband has finally infiltrated the House of Talons.

HOLD OUR GAINS!

Dan: My first two games this month were against my friend Jamie's Iron Golem warband. In a rare display of competence, I actually won both games, managing to hold onto a valuable treasure in the first game and assassinating his leader in the second. The Cypher Lords are so fast it was easy to somersault over a few buildings to stab up his Dominar.

NO MERCY

Dan: My third game was against Mark Bedford's Corvus Cabal and his Ogroid Myrmidon. We played on a board that Mark had made himself, which really set the scene for our encounter. While the Mindbound Cerise managed to slay the Ogroid in combat, Mark's warband quickly racked up enough kills to score a victory. The final kill went to his Shrike Talon, who descended from the sky and pecked Viridian to death.



Dan: Having got to my final convergence, I found that I would be playing the No Mercy mission once again. I drew Lyle as my opponent. We began the game very cagily, but as it turned out, it really didn't matter what I did because Lyle's warband slaughtered my warriors. Nyanza the Sphiranx was critically wounded by Jomo the Fomoroid Crusher after he caused 24 damage to it, while two of my fighters were killed by snakes jumping off buildings onto them. Celadon even got blinded in one eye to add to his concussion. My second attempt at my final convergence was a total reversal of fortunes, with my fighters butchering their way through Jonathan's Unmade warband. Once again, Nyanza was killed early on, this time by Jonathan's Slaughterpriest. Celadon also received another post-battle wound – a cracked rib. But still, I'd won!



Above: Nyanza the Sphiranx is pounded almost to death by Jomo, then stabbed repeatedly by an aelven Venomblood.

Left: The Joyous Amputation line up against the Jade Eye, ready to stop them completing their final convergence.

Right: The Unmade are easily broken by the Jade Eye's ferocious assault. Sinuous Spider soon finds himself in a tricky situation, facing off against six warriors and a Fury. He makes a very swift escape.



CRIPPLING VICTORIES

The Joyous Amputation have slaughtered their way across the Murderlands in search of enlightenment, and now they come to their final reckoning. But can Jonathan complete his campaign?

DRAWN AND QUARTERED

Jonathan: My first game of the month against Matt saw us fighting over four objectives. Matt placed his Ogroid Myrmidon right in the centre of his warband and stormed into the middle of the board before spreading out to take three out of the four objectives. Our leaders duelled each other (with no winner), and my Slaughterpriest did manage to kill the Ogroid, but it was too little, too late. Matt won the game easily.



Jonathan: My penultimate game against Lyle was The Comet, which saw us fighting over, well, a comet! It landed smack in the middle of the battlefield, and the two of us just went for it. For the most part, the game devolved into mutually assured destruction, but Lyle managed to claim victory at the end by seizing control of the crashed comet.

My final convergence – Temple of the Flayed Prince – was against Dan's Cypher Lords. I had to capture three objectives, but to do it I would have to get past his fighters. Dan scored a couple of early kills by picking on my weaker fighters. Then Sinuous Spider managed to take down his Sphiranx, a Mirrorblade and a Mindbound in quick succession. It was just mopping up after that. I'd successfully completed my campaign!



Above: Beneath the boughs of beautiful trees, the Joyous Amputation battle the Venomborn for possession of a comet.

Left: The Joyous Amputation home in on their final prize, but the Jade Eye look set to hold them off.

Right: That is until Sinuous Spider slices up Nyanza the Sphiranx, then turns round and kills both Celadon and Aozora with the Vessel of Torment ability. Once again, Celadon takes a post-battle wound, this time in the gut.



A FEAST OF CROWS

The Penumbral Hunters have watched the streets of Carngrad descend into madness. But now Matt's warband faces its toughest challenge to date ...

Matt: My first game this month was playing Drawn and Quartered against Jonathan. We set up four objectives pretty much in each quarter of the battlefield, then ran to try and grab them quickly because each one was worth a victory point each turn. Jonathan made an early dash with his Blissful One to try to claim one of the objectives nearest to me, but I still had more fighters around it and managed to keep control of it. His leader did a bit of damage, but I quickly took him down and secured my position before racing my fighters to the other objectives. I won by a solid margin of 9-2 in the end.

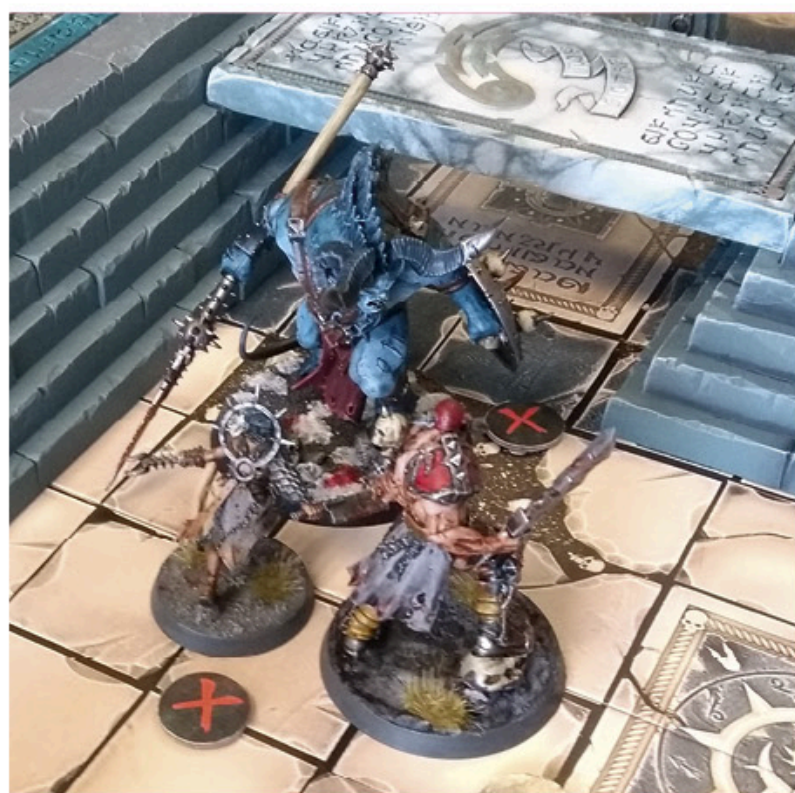
My next game against Lyle (see Vantage Point below) was as far as I got in my campaign for this edition of A Tale of Four Warbands, but I doubt you've seen the last of the Penumbral Hunters!



Above: The Penumbral Hunters use their speed to claim as many objectives as they can early on.

Left: Sinuous Spider sprints off to steal one of the objectives from the Cabal.

Right: With little interest in claiming any kind of prizes save the adversary's skull, the Ogroid Myrmidon and Slaughterpriest start hacking away at each other. The intervention of Weeping Throat doesn't stop the beast killing the priest, though.



VANTAGE POINT

Matt: This was an odd battle because the mission corresponded perfectly with the map, enabling us to place one objective right at the top of a temple. Then both of us swarmed it with as many fighters as we could, while our big guys duked it out below. Lyle's leader eventually stepped up and killed my Ogroid, and his super-fast snakes nearly got onto the temple, but I did manage to hold it till the end.



RETURN TO THE ARENA OF DEATH

Having stumbled at the last hurdle in the previous month, Lyle was now determined to win his final convergence before the other warlords could catch him. All he needed was one win!

Lyle: I played Matt in my final convergence. After losing my first attempt to Pete and his Ironjawz, I was more prepared this time. Like Dan, I had the No Mercy victory condition, so I needed to take down half of Matt's warband. I brought thirteen fighters to the Arena of Death, using every bit of the 1,400 points I could muster. Matt was a cagey adversary, deftly manoeuvring his agile warriors behind his Ogroid Myrmidon and around to my weak flank, away from mighty Jomo. Both of our warbands were divided, with Jomo, Jehk, the snakes, Ma'amba and Pyth'us in the middle of the arena swatting at fast-moving feathered fiends while Ophiou, Thaan'os and Lash'ya took on the Myrmidon. In the end, I won by focusing on Matt's weaker warriors and ignoring the Myrmidon. And thus was the Venomborn's quest for the perfect poison completed victoriously.



Above: Jomo stands sentinel in the centre of the arena surrounded by Lyle's best fighters.

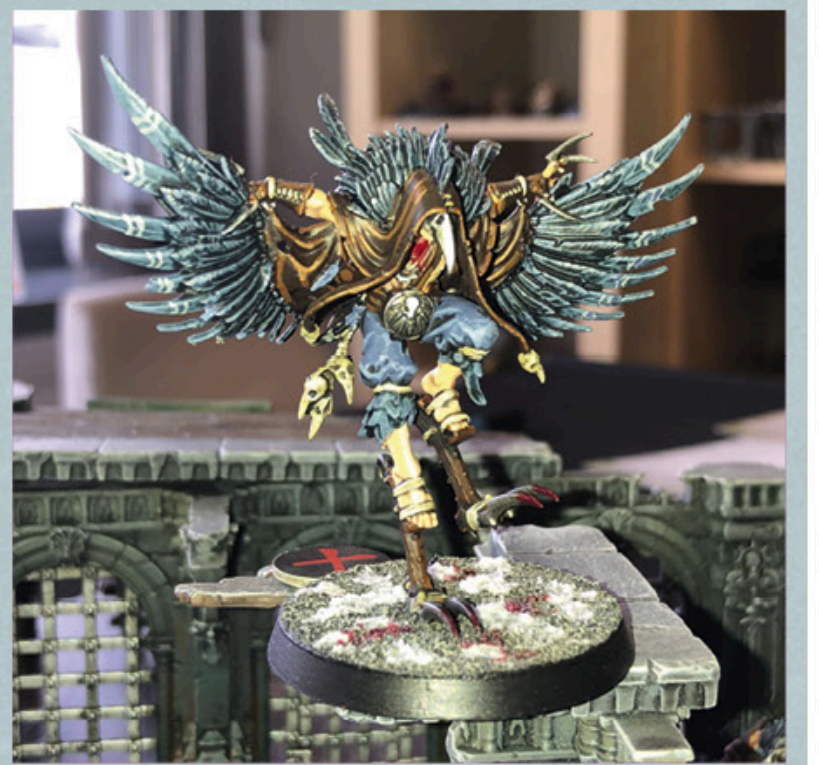
Left: The Ogroid Myrmidon draws out Lyle's leader and some of his retinue. The only problem is the Myrmidon still only counts as one kill ...

Right: Matt sends his Spire Stalkers in to try and pick off Lyle's weaker fighters. As Matt soon finds out, Splintered Fang warriors armed with shields are particularly tough opponents and not that easy to kill.



MODELS OF THE MATCH

Jomo was a star in this game. He didn't actually kill much, but he did cripple both of Matt's Spire Stalkers to the point that they were easy to pick off, and he protected some of my weaker fighters from harm. Of Matt's fighters, his Shrike Talon was by far the most deadly. Matt positioned him on a building so that he could use his triple ability, swoop down, kill someone and then jump back out of danger. It was very annoying!



A TALE OF FOUR WARBANDS

We finally reach the conclusion of our four warbands' campaigns through the Eightpoints. In the end, the Venomborn completed their quest first, soon followed by the Jade Eye and the Joyous Amputation.

THE VENOMBORN		LYLE	
CAMPAIGN QUEST		GLORY POINTS	DOMINATED TERRITORY
VENOM OF THE GODS		12	
CAMPAIGN PROGRESS TRACKER			
LEADER / FAVOURED WARRIOR			
LEADER / FAVOURED WARRIOR NAME	DESTINY LEVELS		ARTEFACTS
OBVIOUS PRAGMATA			Godsayer Bane, Ur-gold Sigil
COMMAND TRAIT	Sibilant Whispers		
FIGHTERS			
FIGHTER NAME	FIGHTER TYPE	ARTEFACTS	DESTINY LEVELS
JERK SITH'USS	SERPENT CALLER	Sacred Unguent, Bauble of Shadows	
SWAKKI	SERPENTS	Vial of Jabberslythe Blood	
SERPENTSI	SERPENTS	Vial of Jabberslythe Blood	
LASH'YA TERTIUS	VENOMBLOOD WITH BARBED WHIP		
THAAN'OS	VENOMBLOOD WITH SPEAR AND SHIELD	Bauble of Shadows	
MAKAMA SPLITFANG	VENOMBLOOD WITH DUELING BLADES	Jar of Chamonic Glowflies	
MA'UTHI SINDRITH	CLEARBLOOD		
SILREN ULLINASH	CLEARBLOOD		
AGKIST PACHIVOR	CLEARBLOOD		
PYTH'US ONIDAK	PURRBLOOD	Ur-gold Sigil	
SORREN AGARETH	CLEARBLOOD WITH SHIELD		
JOMO	POMOROID CRUISER	Greater Healing Potion	
VIPREESI	SERPENTS		

PENUMBRAL HUNTERS		MATT	
CAMPAIGN QUEST		GLORY POINTS	DOMINATED TERRITORY
WAR OF TALONS		3	
CAMPAIGN PROGRESS TRACKER			
LEADER / FAVOURED WARRIOR			
LEADER / FAVOURED WARRIOR NAME	DESTINY LEVELS		ARTEFACTS
RUMA RANIS			Shadow-blessed Dagger
COMMAND TRAIT	Prey-bird's Swiftness		
FIGHTERS			
FIGHTER NAME	FIGHTER TYPE	ARTEFACTS	DESTINY LEVELS
DIT DREHST	SPIKE TALON	Carvolat-scale Anklet	
VEIG VEEL	SPIKE STALKER	Godbeast Idol	
CHIN CHUL	SPIKE STALKER	Godbeast Idol	
KROM KRIL	SPIKE STALKER		
MRAL MRAL	SPIKE STALKER		
CHIS CHOS	CABALIST WITH FAMILIAR		
BRAGA BARAGA	CABALIST WITH SPEAR		
TYEN TEEL	CABALIST		
SHRAK SLAK	CABALIST		
SIV SEL	CABALIST WITH SPEAR		
NORAD NARL	CABALIST WITH SPEAR		
MAGNUS PUER	OGROID MYRMIDON		

THE JADE EYE		DAN	
CAMPAIGN QUEST		GLORY POINTS	DOMINATED TERRITORY
A SPY IN THE HOUSE OF TALONS		29	
CAMPAIGN PROGRESS TRACKER			
LEADER / FAVOURED WARRIOR			
LEADER / FAVOURED WARRIOR NAME	DESTINY LEVELS		ARTEFACTS
LOQUACIOUS AMARANTH			Formless Blade, Jar of Chamonic Glowflies
COMMAND TRAIT	Strange Physiology		
FIGHTERS			
FIGHTER NAME	FIGHTER TYPE	ARTEFACTS / INJURIES	DESTINY LEVELS
ZAFFER	LEMNATE	Nochseed Thrall Stone	
CERULEAN	MIRRORBLADE WITH GLAIVE	Swiftwind Dust	
CELADON	MIRRORBLADE WITH GLAIVE	Potion of Onslaught, Permanent Concussion, Temporarily Blinded, Temporary Cracked Rib	
AURKOLIN	MIRRORBLADE WITH DUELING SWORDS	Temporary Gut Wound	
KORICHA	MIRRORBLADE WITH DUELING SWORDS		
VERIDIAN	MENDBOUND		
CERISE	MENDBOUND	Temporary Fractured Arm	
AZOCRA	MENDBOUND WITH DOUBLE-BLADED SWORD	Raven-feather Necklace	
CARMINE	MENDBOUND		
NYANJA	MENDBOUND WITH SWORD	Temporary Gut Wound	

THE JOYOUS AMPUTATION		JONATHAN	
CAMPAIGN QUEST		GLORY POINTS	DOMINATED TERRITORY
PATH OF THE FLAYED PRINCE		11	
CAMPAIGN PROGRESS TRACKER			
LEADER / FAVOURED WARRIOR			
LEADER / FAVOURED WARRIOR NAME	DESTINY LEVELS		ARTEFACTS
SINIGOS SPIDER			Tome of the Flayed Prince
COMMAND TRAIT	Flenser		
FIGHTERS			
FIGHTER NAME	FIGHTER TYPE	ARTEFACTS	DESTINY LEVELS
WEeping THROAT	JOYOUS ONE	Gutting Dagger, Godbeast Idol	
SLICED SMILE	ASCENDED ONE		
TONGUEBELLER	ASCENDED ONE		
FLAYED SPIRIT	ASCENDED ONE		
EYE-CATCHER	AWAKENED ONE WITH PLAIL		
STUMP	AWAKENED ONE WITH BRUTAL FOLDBARM		
FLENSER	AWAKENED ONE WITH BRUTAL FOLDBARM		
SLIPPERY BONES	AWAKENED ONE WITH BRUTAL FOLDBARM		
STUB-TOR	AWAKENED ONE WITH BRUTAL FOLDBARM		
GULLET	SLAUGHTERPRIEST WITH HACKBLADE AND WRATH-HAMMER	Ironoak Seed	

THE MODEL PHOTOGRAPH

Every month in *White Dwarf*, we feature models painted by you, our readers. But how do you take great photographs of Warhammer miniatures? Well, we've resurrected this classic article (and tweaked it a little) to show you how. We look forward to seeing your pics!

Even in the early days of the Warhammer hobby, taking pictures of miniatures was something that people loved to do. In those days, photos were taken on film, and only the very best photographers would be able to capture all the little details of a Warhammer miniature on celluloid.

Over the last forty years, though, technology has improved substantially, and taking pictures is now something that many people do every single day. Increasingly, hobbyists are taking pictures of their miniatures, and over the last few years, there has been a collective desire to share photos of painted Warhammer miniatures online, be it in forums, on blogs or over social media. It's often how painters share ideas, search for inspiration and ask for feedback, and how gamers show off their latest tactics and the events in which they've most recently taken part.

CAMERAS AND PHONES

The first time we wrote a photography article was back in 2014, and over the last few years, camera phones have become significantly better. Sadly a camera phone is rarely up to the task of taking a picture of a high enough quality to print in a magazine, but it's not impossible, as some of you have proven with the pictures you've sent in. You'll find a section all about camera phones later in this article.

Sadly, taking pictures of Warhammer miniatures is not as easy as, say, taking a selfie. Warhammer miniatures are very small and feature miniscule details – both sculpted and painted – that require a sophisticated setup to allow them to be faithfully captured in a photo. Pointing a camera phone at them and tapping the screen is rarely enough to get a great picture.

We decided to republish this article – firstly to help you take great pictures of your miniatures and secondly so you can then send those pictures to us so we can feature them in *White Dwarf*. If you've ever wondered why certain people's models appear quite regularly in *Contact* (or even in the article immediately before this one), it's because they've taken our photography tips on board (and they have well-painted models, of course). We hope you'll find our advice over the next few pages useful.

SETTING THE SCENE

Before you take out your camera, it's important to set the scene for your pictures. We suggest a simple setup with a plain white background – a piece of paper stuck to a sturdy backdrop is a quick and easy solution and perfectly suitable for the job, providing a neutral backdrop for your models. We often use a white background, as it helps show off the model in the best light, with no distractions from the details of the miniature.

Here you can see our setup, which has the model positioned on a large piece of matte white paper 90cm away from the camera. You can read more about the lighting and camera setup over the next few pages.

Top tip: If you're really serious about photographing miniatures, look at investing in a light box. You can find them in most camera shops and online.



LIGHTING YOUR MODELS

Lighting is one of the most crucial aspects of photography. At the simplest level, if you have no light, you have no picture! Here's our advice on getting your lighting just right.

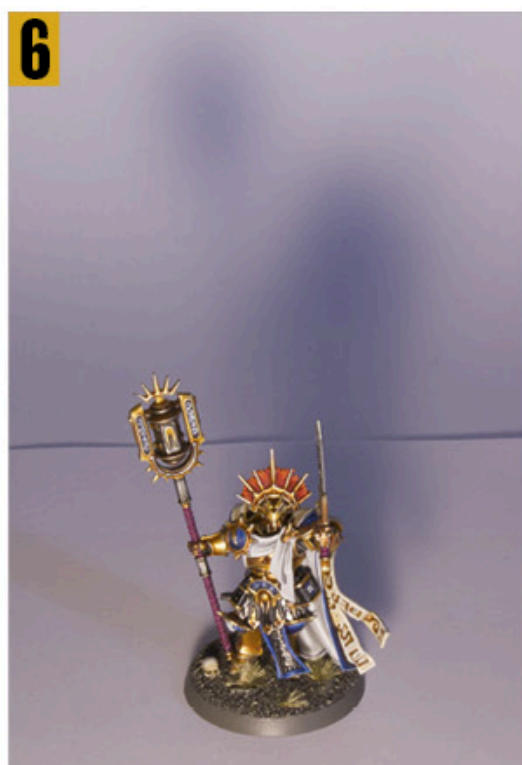
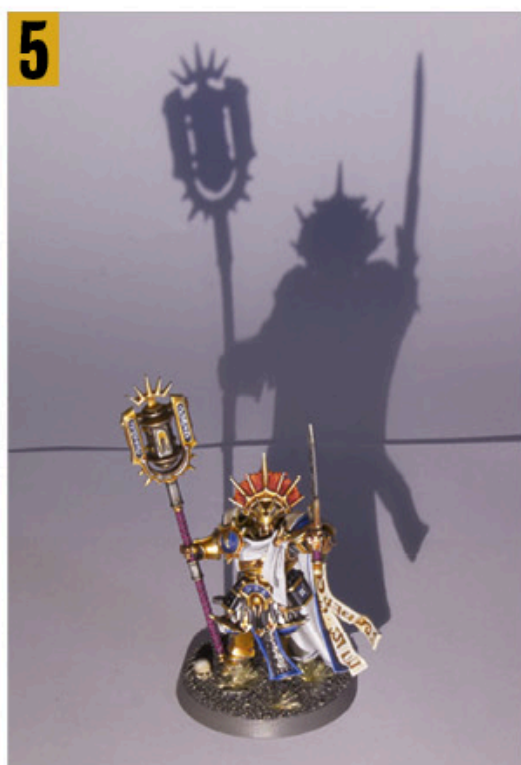


When taking pictures of miniatures, you need a consistent, even light. The best way to achieve this is with lamps – specifically, daylight bulbs. Daylight bulbs provide a neutral light, not too yellow, not too blue, but just right for taking pictures of models. They'll fit most standard desk lamps, and they're easy to get hold of. Two lamps positioned in front and slightly to either side of the model work best, lighting the front of the miniature. To the left you can see what a model lit with two lamps looks like (1), while next to it you can see what the lighting set-up (also shown on the previous page) looks like from the side (2).

Always remember you're lighting the miniature, not the background. Don't worry about getting a solid white background, especially if it would cast a less than favourable light on the miniature. In this example (3), the lights have been placed too high above the model (4). The backdrop is better lit, but the model is now too dark. If you wanted, you could add a third light situated above the model and pointed just at the background, but this is usually not necessary unless you want to specifically draw attention to the background – for example, if your model is on terrain.



It's also important to make sure that your lighting is not too hard or soft. Your miniatures are painted to have their own shadows and highlights, so you don't want to misrepresent your hard work by over- or under-lighting some areas. For this reason, the light we want is soft and even, as it will let the painted shadows and highlights show where you intended them to be. A great way of testing whether a light is hard or soft is to check the shadows it produces. A hard light, such as one from a spotlight, will create shadows with sharp edges (5), whereas a soft light, like the one created by our two-lamp set-up, will produce shadows that have no defined edges (6). It's worth noting that natural daylight is not a good substitute for a light set-up, even if it is really sunny. Natural daylight varies constantly, making it hard to get a consistent level and colour of light in your pictures. A cloudless day, for example, will often make your pictures come out too yellow, while an overcast day will leave them blue. Avoid using the on-camera flash, as it will create a photograph that has very harsh and high-contrast light. Remember, you want the light to be as soft as possible.



Top tip: If your light is too hard, you can soften it with a sheet of tracing paper over the light.

FINDING THE GOLDEN ANGLE

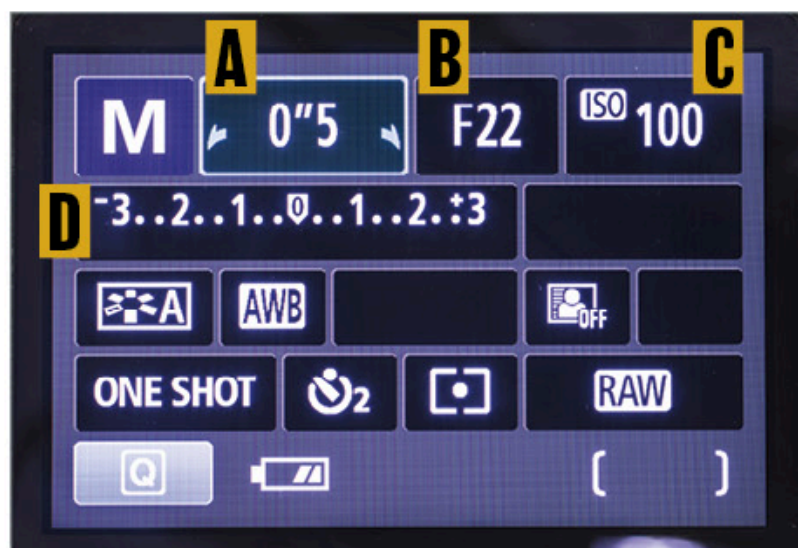
Citadel miniatures are covered in wonderful details, and sometimes it can be hard figuring out what angle to take your picture from. Here's a little bit of advice on finding that golden angle.

Every miniature has a golden angle, a viewpoint that best captures the essence of the model. For infantry this will almost always be a frontal view of the model, where you can see its weapons, face and body clearly. If you take a picture and all of these key areas aren't visible – in this case the model's sword (1), turn the model a little and try another angle where you can see all of the model's most important details (2).

Some miniatures, like Khârn the Betrayer, for example, can be pretty hard to photograph, so if you're ever unsure of a model's golden angle, just have a look at how it's been photographed on the Games Workshop website. If you match that angle, you can't go wrong!

Another important factor to consider is the vertical angle of the camera. Looking back at the setup earlier in the article, you'll notice that the camera is level with the model, not angled down at it. We refer to this angle as a model's-eye-view, as the camera lens should be at the same height as the model's eyes. If your camera is positioned too high and angled down towards the model, you'll get a lovely shot of the model's shoulders, the top of its head and its base, but little else. As you can see with the Lord-Veritant in image 2, the top of his base is hardly visible at all. That's what we're looking for.

However, for larger miniatures such as tanks and monsters, it is usually beneficial to experiment with the angle of the camera, as shooting from too low may fail to capture the shape of the miniature (3). Try raising the camera a little to capture the depth of the miniature (4).



THE DISPLAY SCREEN

Over the next few pages, we'll be talking about some of the settings on your camera. If you have a DSLR camera, you will be able to see these on the screen on the back of your camera. On the back of one of our Canon cameras, you can see the shutter speed (A), f-stop (B) and ISO (C). Below them is the exposure bar (D) – a sliding scale that indicates how all three of these settings interact.

IMAGE SIZE AND GETTING YOUR PICTURE IN FOCUS

One of the toughest parts of photographing Citadel miniatures is getting your pictures to be wholly in focus and of a usable size to see all the details. How do we go about doing it, then?



Miniatures are often pretty small, so you need to make sure you are close enough to get a usable picture. This doesn't mean you need to fill the frame, but aim to fill at least one quarter of the viewfinder. Just be careful not to cut the ends off weapons and banner poles – you want a picture of the whole model, not most of it. The biggest drawback with moving the camera in close is that parts of the model may go out of focus, in this case the Reiver's gun and blade (1). The camera in this example was only 20cm away from the model (2). If the shot is not entirely in focus, move the camera back from the model and try another shot. If it's still out of focus, move the camera back and try again. In this example, the end result is a picture where the whole model is in focus (3). The camera was 90cm away from the model. Obviously the model now looks tiny, but you can see, when viewed on a computer, that the image size is still large enough to capture all the details of the miniature (4). These distances work for our camera, which is 18 megapixels. If your camera is a lower resolution, you'll need to place it closer to get a big enough image.

Top tip: If your model appears really tiny in the viewfinder, remember that your camera probably has a zoom function.



WHITE DWARF PHOTOGRAPHY

The advice in this article comes from the Warhammer Studio's photographers, who take hundreds of pictures every month for our various publications. *White Dwarf* alone features lots of different photography styles, but the principles explained in this article are always followed. You can see many great examples of Jonathan's work throughout the magazine, but the clearest example of the photography style shown in this article can be seen in *The Monster Slayer* article (next issue). Here you can see a Golden Demon-winning miniature and the final magazine image after it was clipped from its background. If you send pictures of your models to us, don't worry, we will do that bit for you!

SETTING UP YOUR CAMERA: APERTURE, ISO AND SHUTTER SPEED

So you've got your model placed on a clean white background, your lights are in the right places and your camera is in position to take some pictures. But is your camera set up correctly?

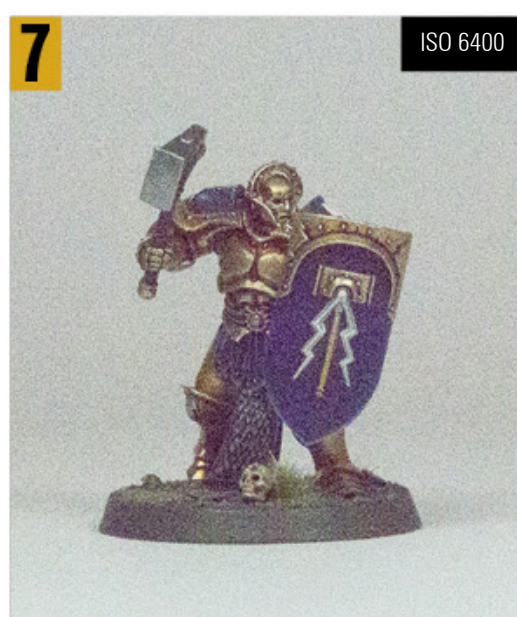
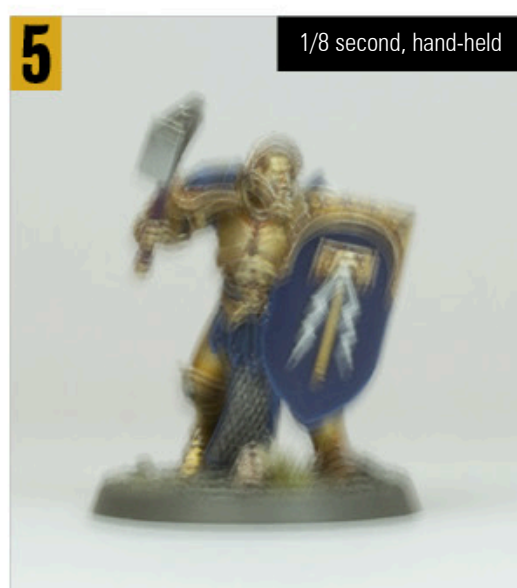
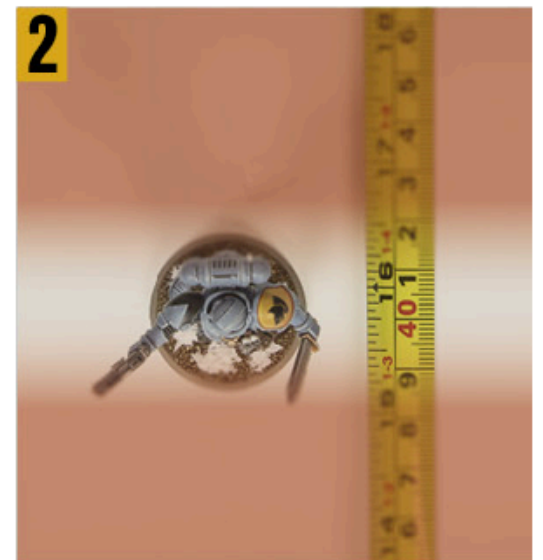
If conditions are right, you might be able to take your pictures with your camera on its automatic setting. To get greater control of your shots, though, you'll need to use the manual setting and adjust the aperture, shutter speed and ISO.

The aperture controls how much light comes through the lens and how much of the photograph is in focus. The aperture is described by a measure known as its 'f-stop', with low numbers representing more light but less in focus and high numbers meaning less light with more in focus. The higher you can set the f-stop, the better. The standard lens that comes with most cameras will have a range between $f/5.6$ and $f/22$ with the lens zoomed all the way in. A low f-stop (1) will leave your model fuzzy and out of focus in places such as the model's extremities – this example is $f/8$. From above (2) you can see the focus depth of the camera only covers part of the model. A higher f-stop (now $f/22$) will get all of your model in focus (3) because of the larger focus depth (4).

The longer the camera's shutter stays open while taking the picture, the more light will be let in. Shutter speed is a measurement of time, and most cameras range from 30 seconds to 1/4000th of a second. If you're taking pictures by hand, you'll need a shutter speed of 1/100th of a second or faster to avoid getting blurry images as you move the camera (5). We also recommend using a tripod if you have one, and if not, supporting the camera on a stable surface, as it will make it much easier to get sharp photos (6). Sometimes the shutter speed will be very slow, sometimes as much as a second. This is fine as long as the camera is kept steady during the exposure.

Top tip: Use the camera's timer function so you're not touching the camera at all when the picture is taken.

You can also fix a lack of light by increasing the ISO level. The ISO represents how sensitive the camera is to light. A higher ISO makes more of the available light but will make the picture grainy (7). Instead, set the ISO as low as it will go – 100 is the lowest on most cameras, and we recommend never going above 400. You can then alter the shutter speed to compensate for low light levels. Aim to get the marker on the exposure bar near the centre of the scale for a good exposure. The end result is a picture where the whole model is in focus, the light levels are correct and the quality of the picture is wonderfully sharp with no graininess (8).

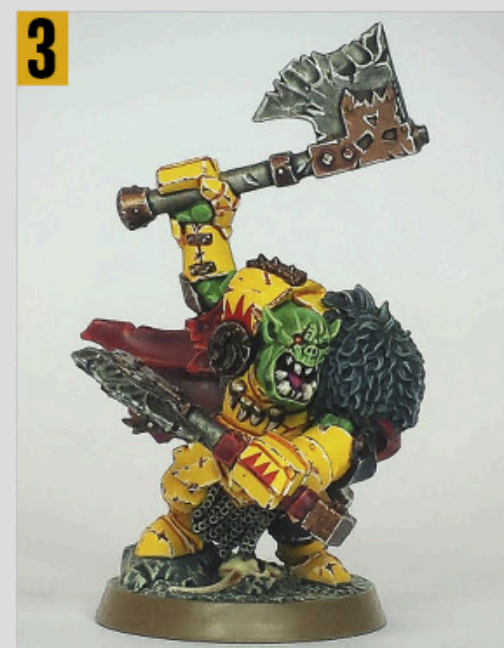


THE CAMERA PHONE

Selfies, impressive meals and cats doing strange things are often the subject matter for camera phones. But how good are camera phones for taking pictures of Citadel miniatures?

The first thing to note when using a camera phone to take pictures of miniatures is that you'll need to hold the phone a lot closer to the model than you would a camera. This is because the digital zoom doesn't work in the same way as the lens on a camera – you just need to get closer to the subject.

Phone cameras offer you very little control over their settings (ISO, aperture, and so on), though interestingly the fixed aperture on a phone camera can often get more of a model in focus than the equivalent aperture size on a camera. This is a good thing and enables you to get pretty close to the model without its extremities going out of focus. In our example setup, you'll notice that the lights are positioned a lot closer to the model, too (1). Pictures taken on camera phones can often come out pretty dark. They look fine on the phone screen, but transfer them to a computer and you'll soon notice a difference. Remember, you don't have any control over the shutter speed, so moving the lights closer to the model gives the camera's automated settings the best chance of getting a usable photo. The pictures to the right (2 and 3) were taken on a camera phone. Both have been brightened a little in Photoshop, but otherwise nothing else has been changed. They are both entirely in focus and big enough to feature in the magazine. In fact, image 3 is the shot that Jonathan is taking in image 1. As you can see, the model isn't filling the screen on his phone. If he'd moved his phone any closer, it would have gone out of focus.



SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!

With all these tips at your disposal, you should now be equipped to take pictures of your Citadel miniatures. What you need to do now is send them to us at team@whitedwarf.co.uk

When sending your pictures, send the original pictures straight off the camera, the higher the resolution the better. It's best if you don't edit, crop or tweak them in any way. We'll do all that for you if we choose to feature them. This World Eaters Dreadnought by Konrad Zielezny is a fine example of a reader's submission that hasn't yet been edited (you can see the edited versions in Contact). Make sure you tell us about your models, too, such as how you painted or converted them, and your name so that we can credit you for your hard work.



GLORY POINTS



DAVE SANDERS

Dave has been writing rules for Games Workshop for several years now, working on such notable games as Warhammer 40,000: Kill team and Warhammer Underworlds. It's rumoured that his favourite objective card is Death From Afar, which explains why he was last seen skulking around the dark end of the studio with a bow ...

This month's column is the second in a two-article series about the Flex play style in Warhammer Underworlds. In my last column I explained what Flex is, how it works, and where to start with your objective deck as you plan for victory. In this column, I'm going to talk about building a power deck to support a Flex play style, and I'll give you some final tips about how to Flex most gloriously! As with my last column (featured in *White Dwarf* 454), I'll be using the oh-so-flexible Godsworn Hunt in my examples. I'll be focusing on decks for Championship play, and I will be bearing in mind the iteration of the Forsaken and Restricted list live at the time of writing.

QUICK RECAP

In the last article, I discussed how to pick an objective deck for a Flex play style, with an emphasis on reliable, hard to prevent objectives that play to your warband's strengths.

My Godsworn Hunt objective deck ended up looking something like this:

Calculated Risk
Gathered Momentum
Fired Up
Oath of Murder
Oath of Supremacy
Opening Gambit
Path to Victory
Solid Gains
Swift Capture
Temporary Victory
Warning Shot
What Armour?

As I said in my previous article, it's unlikely that this will be right the first time. I'll need to test this objective deck in numerous games to figure out what's working best and what could be improved upon.

When we look at the objective cards listed, we can see that there are cards that need no support from your power deck and that will happen almost by themselves: Calculated Risk, Fired Up, Opening Gambit and Solid Gains.

We can see a few that require us to make Attack actions: Gathered Momentum (in one of its modes), Oath of Murder, Path to Victory, Warning Shot and What Armour?. Oath of Murder and Path to Victory require us to take an enemy fighter out of action, while the others are less demanding, if reliant on a number of key fighters. Oath of Murder and Path to Victory mean that we will want to include power cards that support us in making reliable Attack actions, and preferably ones that will take an enemy fighter out of action in one fell swoop. Warning Shot and What Armour? mean that we want to be sure of getting Shond and Ollo Inspired (for Cleave), and we'll want to look after Ollo and Jagathra until we've scored Warning Shot. Gathered Momentum will take care of itself as long as we can get at least one of Grundann, Jagathra or Grawl Inspired.

Finally, we have the objectives that require us to hold objective tokens: Oath of Supremacy, Path to Victory, Swift Capture and Temporary Victory. Of these, two require that we hold two objectives (Path to Victory and Swift Capture) and two require that we hold three objectives. So we want to be sure that our power deck helps us to get two – or preferably three – fighters onto objectives and keep them there as long as we need them.

POWERFUL FLEX

Let's look at how you build a power deck to support an objective deck like this. We want cards that will help us make the most of every opportunity to score our objectives, and create opportunities where there seem to be none. We've identified that we need aggressive power cards to help us score Oath of Murder and Path to Victory, and positional and defensive power cards to help us score Oath of Supremacy, Path to Victory, Swift Capture and Temporary Victory.

Those who have read my previous articles on deck building know that I like to start with upgrades before gambits, but there's no real need to do this one way or another, and in this article I'll discuss them together. Upgrades are very important for the Godsworn Hunt, as each fighter becomes Inspired when you give them an upgrade. When choosing them, we'll try to make

Glory Points is our column all about Warhammer Underworlds: Beastgrave. Curated by games developer Dave Sanders, it delves into the development of the game, plus rules, tactics and gameplay. This month, Dave's flexing again!



sure that the key fighters we've identified will have a number of suitable upgrades so that we can get them Inspired as soon as possible.

DAMAGE, DAMAGE, DAMAGE

Great Strength (1) is the first upgrade card I'll include in almost every deck. The Godsworn Hunt have two fighters that reach Damage 3 when Inspired, but we need at least Damage 4 to be sure that we can take enemy fighters out of action when we need to for Oath of Murder and Path to Victory. We can increase the damage still further with the powerful Inspired Attack (2) ploy. These objectives don't require that the enemy fighter be taken out of action by an Attack action, so we can also use lethal hexes or damaging gambits like Pit Trap (3) or Rocksnake Toxin (4) to finish them off if need be.

Other damage upgrades that have a lot of utility are Sting of the Ur-grub (5) (which only affects Range 1 Attack actions) and Gloryseeker (6) (which affects all Attack actions, but only when the target has 4+ Wounds). It's tempting to include both, greatly increasing the damage potential of the warband. Whether we spread these around or concentrate them on one or two fighters will be determined by which warband we're facing.

THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

There are a lot of Attack action upgrades that are worth considering for this deck, but what we want

to do is narrow them down to the upgrades that directly support our strategy. Larval Lance (7), for example, is a great Attack action upgrade, but not necessarily that useful for scoring our objectives. We may be better off looking at Amberbone Axe (8) or Nullstone Arrows (9). Both of these upgrades can give our warband another Range 3+ Attack action to help us score Warning Shot or drive an enemy fighter back off an objective at range. For the Godsworn Hunt, Ensorcelled Javelin (10) is a strong choice, giving Jagathra a repeatable Range 3+ Attack action with Cleave, making it useful for scoring What Armour? as well. If we do include this card, we'll want to make sure that we keep Jagathra out of harm's way until we can use it, so that we don't end up with a 'dead' card in our hand.

We could also gain Cleave from the Keen Avarice (11) gambit. It's less reliable, but it gives any fighter in the warband a chance to score What Armour? as long as the target is on an objective.

LAND GRAB

That gives us some options for power cards that will help us with our aggressive objectives, but we also want some that will help us take commanding positions on objectives and then hold them. Faneway Crystal (12) is the outstanding example of such a card, and it is indispensable for any warband that wants to hold three or more objectives at any point.





13



14



15



16



17



18

Duellist's Speed (13) and Quickening Greaves (14) can work well in Flex decks, potentially giving our fighters multiple pushes over the course of the game. Duellist's Speed works very well with fighters like Ollo, letting them effectively sidestep across the battlefield over the course of a number of Range 3+ Attack actions. Quickening Greaves, on the other hand, lets us push a fighter after the final power step in a round, which is extremely difficult for an opponent to counter and can help us grab a crucial third objective before the end phase.

There are also excellent gambits for grabbing objectives, and we'll certainly want to include some of these (Sidestep (15), Distraction (16) and the like). It's worth noting, though, that a Flex deck is unlikely to be able to match a Hold Objective deck in terms of sheer pushing power, so we'll need to be clever about which cards we include and when we use them to greatest effect. Countercharge (17) is a very powerful ploy, and if we bear it in mind when setting up our objectives and fighters, we can create opportunities to push a fighter onto an objective or into position to strike. Similarly, Mirror Move (18) has the potential to be extremely powerful, allowing us to push any fighter when our opponent pushes a fighter, while Two Steps Forward (19) allows us to push two fighters at once, ideally grabbing two objectives in one fell swoop. Restless Prize (20) is an important card for any warband planning to hold objectives, and it also makes it easier to score Swift Capture, as you can be more certain of having objectives where you need them to be. Finally, Spectral Wings (21) is a must in any Flex deck – that +2 Move can be used in a Charge or when getting to an objective, and in our deck it has the added bonus of helping us score Gathered Momentum.

LOCATION, LOCATION

Once our fighters are on objectives, we'd rather be able to keep them there, which means we need to make them difficult to push and difficult to take out of action. The Guard action has a part to play here, but we'd rather get

our fighters on Guard without using an activation wherever possible (for example, using the Buried Instinct (22) gambit). There are some upgrades that can help us, though – Hidden Presence and Stoneform (23) both make a fighter very difficult to push, meaning that our opponents will have to resort to brute force to get our fighter off an objective. The Shadow Shape (24) spell achieves a similar result. Note that we can't push our fighter once they're upgraded with Stoneform or Shadow Shape, so timing these cards is important. The No Time (25) gambit can also be extremely useful when played as the first power card after the final activation in a round. This can prevent your opponent using push cards that they had been saving to get your fighters off objectives before the end of the round.

We can make our fighters more resilient with upgrades like Great Fortitude (26), Survival Instincts (27) and Spectral Armour (28). Survival Instincts works best on a fighter with Defence 2 or higher, so it's great for Ollo. Spectral Armour makes any fighter with a Dodge characteristic more resilient, and it is a real boon for the really quite fragile Godsworn Hunt. Meanwhile, defensive gambits like Warding Eye (29) and Dark Destiny (30) are also extremely handy for keeping the Godsworn Hunt's fighters in the game and on objectives.

MAXIMUM FLEX

If we have any spare room in our deck, there are a number of upgrades that work very well in Flex decks to increase the amount of glory points the warband can garner. Crown of Avarice (31) is a good fit as some of our fighters will be getting stuck in, while Tome of Glories and Cryptic Companion (32) can all provide bonus glory points when we have fighters holding objectives. Meanwhile, Ghoulish Pact and Forward Planning (33) can be very helpful cards for the Godsworn Hunt, getting an upgrade on a fighter and Inspiring them to boot.

Given that we're planning to be holding some objectives, we might consider Jealous Defence (34),



25



26



27



28



29



30



19



20



21



22



23



24

which for our strategy is essentially a free Attack action, and Frenzied Search (35), which can help us get the cards we need when we need them.

Finally, Bag of Tricks (36) gets a mention. When playing Flex, we're likely to have a couple of fighters removed from the action that will be good recipients for this upgrade. When we have an objective that will be difficult to score without a particular card, we can then use the action on Bag of Tricks to find the perfect card for the job, ensuring that we maintain our momentum and keep scoring those objectives!

WRAPPING UP

After all of these considerations, our power deck might look something like this (see right).

When putting together this list, I first reminded myself of our objectives and tried to make sure to include the cards that were most likely to help us score them.

When playing these decks, we'll prefer three objectives in our territory where possible. We'll have Theddra claim an objective in our territory, where she'll likely stay for most of the game, and we'll look for opportunities to get Jagathra or Ollo onto another objective in our territory (though not if it's going to stop us scoring some of our more aggressive objectives). We can do this even before we've drawn the relevant objectives, because we know four of our cards require us to hold two or more objectives. We'll need one objective in enemy territory for Swift Capture, but ideally we'll grab that one only when we have the card in hand, and most likely as part of a Charge action, so that will probably be up to Shond or Grundann.

The objectives we have in our hand will likely determine which of our fighters we want to upgrade (and therefore Inspire) first. If we have What Armour?, we will want to Inspire Shond or Ollo. If we have Gathered Momentum, we will want to Inspire Jagathra or Grundann. If we have Path to Victory, we might want to Inspire Grundann for an easier kill, and so on.

We'll need to carefully gauge the right time to use our push cards, as we don't have too many of them. If we're playing against a dedicated Hold Objective warband, we shouldn't be afraid of turning to brute force to wrest control of the battlefield from them, rather than getting into a pushing war in the power step. We should recognise that it's likely that we will be pushed from our prime positions now and then, and that we'll have a fight on our hands to keep our objectives. However, at the right time our powerful push gambits, or the push from Quickening Greaves, will prove decisive.

We also need to be careful about our charges. We have some hard-hitting fighters, but none of them are very resilient, so we'll need to commit our fighters only when it's advancing our strategy. Remember that of our objectives, only Oath of Murder and Path to Victory require enemy fighters to be out of action, so ideally we will choose when to risk our fighters in combat.

END PHASE

That's it for this pair of articles about the Flex play style. I've presented one approach and some decks that will certainly need refining over a number of games, but I hope it's been helpful, given you some pointers for this play style and some ideas about your next decks. Now it's your turn to refine these Flex decks to suit you!

SAMPLE DECK Upgrades

Duellist's Speed
 Ensorcelled Javelin
 Faneway Crystal
 Gloryseeker
 Great Fortitude
 Great Strength
 Nullstone Arrows
 Quickening Greaves
 Spectral Armour
 Stoneform

Gambits

Countercharge
 Dark Destiny
 Jealous Defence
 Keen Avarice
 Lethal Ward
 Mirror Move
 Restless Prize
 Rocksnake Toxin
 Spectral Wings
 Two Steps Forward

TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS

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

whunderworlds@gwplc.com

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



31



32



33



34



35



36



WARHAMMER
CRIME

SANCTIONER

Black Library have introduced a new genre of literature to their ever-growing repertoire – Warhammer Crime. To celebrate the new imprint, here is an exclusive short story written by Chris Wraight.

She heard her own breathing echoing in her earpiece – elevated, but under control. The underground environment was hot, confined; a maze of tunnels and walkways, stained from the raw sewage that bubbled past her. You had to go carefully on the narrow ledges, stay pressed to the curved brickwork, watch the algal smears underfoot that made every surface as slippery as glass.

But then, Sanctioner Sergeant Marta Onorova had always been careful. She checked her equipment before every assignment. She kept her weapons cleaned and stowed, logged her ammo boxes with the armoury. She murmured the right benedictions to the machine-spirits when she needed to use a gunship or assault groundcar, all vehicles that she piloted through the city's spires with precision and care. Her armour was in peak condition, responding to her movements silently and without lag.

It paid off, all that work, once you were on-mission. She hunkered down in the dark now, clad in her heavy, overlapping black flak-plates. Her noctis-gear kept her invisible in the deep shadow. Her helm's visor showed her the route ahead – a grey-green overlay of false colour, flickering as her head moved. In her right gauntlet she clutched a slender service laspistol – quiet, but punchy. Her left hand was free, but stayed close to the cluster of blind-grenades at her belt.

Not all of her colleagues were so conscientious. Some let the power go to their heads. Some were drunks or narc users. A few were no better, temperamentally, than the thugs they should have been keeping in check. She avoided those ones. She kept Varangantua's coiled-serpent sigil polished on her breastplate, clean and visible. She knew the Lex-Alecto, what it was for, what it could do, what it could not. She kept her eye in, she kept her mind sharp, she kept her body honed.

Out of habit, she activated her augmetic iris' translexer function.

> Targets located.

She half-rose, edging forward, keeping her sidearm held in front of her. A circular access tunnel ran straight ahead, pitch-black save for some dull, old maintenance lumens blinking away in recesses. Had she not activated her helm's filters, the stench would have made her retch. As it was, all she could smell was her own sweat and the latex of her helm's tox-seals.

Being an enforcer was all about these moments – alone in the

dark, free from the nagging interference of the command Bastion, just a single weapon, just a single target. So much of the rest of her work was done in squads – crowd-culls, rabble-cleansing, cult-breaking in grimy habs full of grimy people. This, here, was what she'd joined for. The quiet hunt. Though the detection cadres – the probators, the analysers – thought of sanctioners as dispensable gristleheads to be wheeled in when the need for a little violence became pressing, Onorova had never thought of herself like that. She was a professional. Everything was in its place; all tools out and ready. It had to be clean, in and out, job well done. Take some pride. Take some care.

She reached an intersection. A larger sewer ran left to right, its roof soaring into a gothic arch, its floor lost under the foaming effluent. She was a long way down, far under the tangle of transitways, hab-blocks and landing stages that made up Varangantua's titanic sprawl.

From the right came the faintest blush of light, picked up by her helm, isolated and analysed as hand-lumens moving jerkily. They were carried by her targets, and there was no reason for them to suspect she was coming for them. This was their kingdom, after all – a world of buried tunnels that smelled so bad and carried so many contagions that only the insane or the very well protected ventured down into them.

> First visual.

Onorova paused for a moment, letting the light fade again before slipping around the corner. She picked up her pace, half-jogging, relying on her thick-tread boots to keep her footing. Her helm-display started to pick up fragments of other things – heat-signatures, echoing noises – and she noted the results.

She blinked up a cartographic overlay and saw where the targets were headed: a chamber, part of a large pumping station, a place with lockable hatches and access up towards the surface and the mag-train railheads. If they were moving there, they were aiming to get out and reach a transport. Once out onto the rail lattice, they could get to anywhere in the huge labyrinth of the Vostoka habclave.

> Engaging now.

She dismissed her helm's spidery overlay map and started to run. The sewer squirmed ahead, writhing around like a brickwork serpent, before she caught sight of the targets'

destination – a high rust-streaked metal wall, riveted and double-braced, sunk into ancient filth. The sewer's contents gurgled onward, sloughing down into a barred culvert. The only other mark on the wall's blank surface was an access hatch – a heavy circle of burnished steel, thick-rimmed and crusted with corrosion – reached from the sewer walkway by a shaky-looking ladder.

The last member of the gang was still making his way through the gap. She saw a pair of boot-soles disappear into darkness just as she reached the ladder's base, followed by a gloved hand emerging to pull the heavy door closed. She could hear the echoing clang of footfalls, moving faster now from up ahead inside the chamber.

She took aim and snapped off a single las-bolt, angled up through the narrowing hatchway. She heard a grunt of surprise as she raced up the ladder, hand over hand, before pushing her way through the gap.

She saw a man wearing cheap armour – big, muscled, grey skin and a scraggly mohican over a shaved scalp – clutching at his bleeding stomach. Silently, she shot him through the throat, shoved the body aside and pressed on after the rest of the gangers. She could smell the topaz now – the narcotic had a potent odour in its uncut form. They carried it this way in sachets and capsules, ready to process for the users in the hab-blocks. It stuck to the clothes like pollen on an insect – hard to shake off.

> One elimination.

None of the others had noticed her coming after them, or the loss of their comrade. It was dark and they were pressing on, running through a tangle of pipes in the pumping station, their progress now masked by the roar of the processors in action. It was a steamy, close interior, hazy with condensation, shuddering from piston thrusts and valve discharge.

Her helm-display gave her four targets. Three of those would be gangers, indentured muscle like the one she'd just wasted. The last one was her target, Ero Zerkoj – narc-runner, thief, sadist, all-round undesirable.

Onorova ran faster, weaving through the huge pipes, picking up the distant growl of a mag-train engine starting up. Just beyond the chamber, out in a larger space beyond, it sounded like they had their transport waiting. She saw two shadows ahead of her, lumbering, hampered by cumbersome, ill-fitting armour.

She shot four times, two for each target, hitting them just where she wanted. They tumbled forwards, skidding on the slick deck before crashing down, head first.

> Two eliminations.

The third ganger found something to hide behind – some kind of wheezing regulator housing – and fired off some wild projectiles. By then she'd already dropped low and scampered into cover, the bullets smacking into a bunch of overhead pipes. One of them burst open, showering her with scalding steam, and the temperature sensors on her armour went crazy.

She surged out of the thundering spray, relying on her helm's machine-spirit to get a target. Her lasbolt hit the crouching ganger in the head, searing through a low-grade helmet and sending a puff of red out the other side.

> One elimination.

That only left Zerkoj. She'd lost sight of him in the steam but could still hear the transport's engine going just up ahead, out across an open rockcrete deck. She could sprint straight for that, catching him before he could make a break for it.

But that would leave her out in the open, if only briefly. Zerkoj was a sneaky breed of gutter-rat and she guessed he'd have hunkered down somewhere in the machinery, waiting for her to break for the transport, knowing it would give him a shot.

She went carefully, keeping her body low, edging towards the regulator housing, then moved along a brace of pipes the width of her waist.

Once out of the worst of the steam, she picked up his heat-signature again. He was crouched down over to her right, lodged deep within the metallic entrails of a pair of exchangers. The waiting mag-transport stood at the railhead, out in the open, twenty yards straight ahead, driverless, powerplant idling.

'Show yourself, citizen!' she shouted, her voice rasping through her helm-vox. 'Running won't help you now.'

She heard him swear. 'Yeah. Tell that to my entourage.'

'Entourage. Big word for a small crew.'

'What's this about? You want to tell me that?'

She sidled a little closer to his position, keeping plenty of cover between them. Silently, carefully, she slipped a fully-charged powerpack into her laspistol. 'It should be obvious. There's too much filth on my patch. Filth that comes from you.'

'Hells. You know all about it. Your master sergeant – Mhurov. Ask him how it works. He knows.'

'I already did. You think we don't talk?'

Zerkoj swore again. This time he sounded jumpier, like he was thinking about making another break for it. 'This is zone aleph, Vostoka, grade-sevens,' he said. 'The hovels, the shit-heaps. My kind of concession.'

She sidled a little closer, trying to gauge which way he'd bolt. Go left, he'd only have a few yards to cover, but he'd be exposed. Go right, and he'd have to get through a nasty mess of hissing engine workings before getting out, slowing him down. She only needed one shot – his clothing didn't look like it hid any decent armour underneath.

'Then you'll have permits,' she said.

He laughed. 'Permits? For this stuff?'

'Exactly. I get bored of carting the bodies away, Ero. I feel the need to clean things up.'

'You ... know my name?'

'I know plenty about you.'

Then he bolted, bursting from cover, heading left, racing for the transport and freedom. She'd guessed he'd go the other way, so had to compensate, shifting her weight to one side and taking aim. She loosed two las-bolts – one missed, the other sliced through his thigh, and he hit the floor with a thin wail.

She emerged from cover herself, walking up to him as he lay on the deck, writhing. She shot him in the other leg, just to be sure, kicked away the combat knife he'd drawn, then lowered herself, kneeling into the small of his back.

She sniffed.

'I can smell it on you,' she said softly. 'It never gets less disgusting.'

Zerkoj stopped squealing, teeth gritted. He tried to lift his head, only giving up once the laspistol muzzle landed against his temple, pressing down. 'I've got friends down here,' he grunted.

'You don't have any friends, Ero.'

He rolled his eyeballs to look up at her. 'I had an understanding.'

'Not from me.'

'So, what now? You'll go back to Mhurov? Tell him he's a liar. Tell him I spit on his face.'

'He'll like that.'

She turned her head away as she fired, so that his blood didn't splatter over her face mask. She felt Zerkoj's body go limp under her knee.

> Target elimination.

Then she holstered her pistol and rummaged through his clothes. He was carrying a few capsules of lime-green powder – probably samples. High-grade, worth some slate. She peeled back the collar of his jacket and felt around the collarbone. The telltale bulge of a subdermal augmetic caught her finger. She reached for a knife and cut it out – it would be a comms node, something that, once cracked, would give up more contact details, exposing his network of suppliers and buyers. Then she worked her way down, going methodically, looking for more. She didn't find much – a datslug, another knife, some physical slate credits wrapped up in a greasy paper sleeve.

She sat back on her haunches. It was all rather pathetic. No one made a fortune dealing topaz in the habclave underwarrens – the ones turning slate were a long way away, protected by private armies and fortified spires. For all the misery Zerkoj

had caused, for all the lives wasted and the violence inflicted, he was still a scruffy urchin, able to count on only a few gangers in poorly fitting armour, vulnerable to elimination from anyone in the grade-sevens with a decent crew. No doubt he'd dreamed of rising up the ladder quickly. That was why he'd been throwing his weight around, getting people killed, making enemies. Left alone, he might have become a bigger problem. So she hadn't left him alone.

Onorova got up, brushed herself down, pulled out a sealed bag for the evidence and stowed it at her belt. Then she walked over to the mag transport, still pumping out fumes. She clambered up into the cab, disengaged the drive controls and shut down the powerplant.

When she got out again she headed back the way she'd come, through the pumping station, through the acrid stench of the sewers, tracing the winding path underground before climbing back up the slippery access shaft again to street level.

She emerged feeling grubby. The space around her was busy, crammed with workers shuffling between habs. The transitway was dark, noisy, the air a fug of human smells. Groundcars juddered their way slowly through the crowds, alert-horns blaring. Viaducts soared overhead, black against a blood-red night sky, and chameleon screens flashed and scattered their commercial bulletins. The serpent-sigil of Varangantua jostled up against the Imperial aquila on the lintels of the great towers, and the mag-trains on the elevated tracks clattered between the bores of the dark hab-towers. It was all massive, rising up and up, spreading out like a plague of rockcrete and asphalt, burgeoning, churning, alive with the stink of danger and energy.

She took a deep breath. The air was acrid with promethium, wet, too hot for comfort, but still better than the sewer's had been. She had accomplished what she had set out to accomplish, had the evidence of the kill, and now all that remained was to return to the Bastion to file a report for the analysers.

Every face on the street was averted. She walked through the crowds like a cutter scything through the waves, bodies shuffling out of her path. To meet the gaze of a sanctioner was dangerous, and the chief survival strategy of the average citizen was to remain nondescript, invisible, just a part of the great mass of undifferentiated humanity. That suited Onorova. She didn't much like looking at them either.

She reached her groundcar – a heavily armoured Mukha squad-vehicle. The security bars slipped back and the gullwing doors hissed open. She got in, roused the machine-spirit, ignited the engines. Then she was pulling out, threading her way through the masses, inching her way out of the crowds and up onto the transit viaducts.

Before long, she could see the huge profile of the command Bastion on the horizon – a lumpen mass of dark granite, floodlit, as imposing as it was impenetrable. Zhurov gunships hovered over it, keeping station amid throngs of whirling servo-skulls. The next intersection would take her there, sweeping up the access ramps, under the gaze of the gun-towers and the augur-screens.

But she wasn't headed there, not yet. Another appointment beckoned, still deep in the Vostoka habclave, that ruinous conglomeration split between mouldering industrial units and run-down hab tenements. She steered the groundcar off the main route, plunging back into the twilight of the under-city. Lumens blinked above her, watery and pallid against the seamy night. She went deeper, winding under a series of low rockcrete arches before pulling up in front of a brick facade. Suspensor lumens blundered around high above her, casting very little illumination on the glinting asphalt below. She got out, secured the groundcar, then walked up to a steel door covered in flaking red paint. It smelled of refuse, with a lacing of hard-to-place chems.

She banged on the door. After a while, a slide-panel was jerked back, and a metal ident-reader was thrust out. Onorova took off her left gauntlet and let the machine take a pinprick of blood. After that, the ident-reader withdrew, and the panel slammed closed.

It didn't take long before she heard the heavy clunk of bolts being pulled. The door swung inward, revealing a dark hallway and a steep set of stairs. The smell of raw topaz spilled out on to the street. At least three guards hung back in the shadows, not hindering her, just there to look threatening. They were well armed – las-carbines, shock-mauls – and wore decent body-protection.

Onorova ignored them and went up the stairs. Across the landing at the top was another metal door, which she pushed open. On the far side of that was a large room with sodium lumens and walls that looked like they were made of synthleather panels. Low couches were placed against the walls, and a vial of cotin smoke gently hissed atop a plastek table. The blinds were down, and the air was tangy with topaz.

A woman lounged on one of the couches. She was large, running to fat, with jowly cheeks and lank hair. She wore a crimson gown, cut high at the neck. Ganger tattoos ran down one exposed arm. She had a needle-gun strapped to her left boot.

'Hello Livia,' Onorova said, sitting down opposite her.

The woman looked at her through a haze of cotin. 'Wasn't expecting to see you here,' she said. 'You took a risk coming.'

Onorova reached for the evidence bag, and placed it on the table between them. 'You don't have to worry about Zerkoj any more. He decided to exit the business.'

Livia sniffed. 'Wise man. Why come here to tell me?'

'Because he had friends. Four of them. I'm getting bored of dropping gangers, Livia. Very bored.'

'You don't look bored.'

'It's not as easy as it used to be. I've got real work to do, as well as cleaning out your rivals for you.'

Livia gave her a sour look. 'I see. More slate, that it?'

'It would help. Keeping all of this quiet, keeping Mhurov out of the loop, it takes effort.'

For a moment, it looked like the woman might refuse. Eventually, though, she nodded. Onorova felt a twinge under her eyeball as her iris processed the payment. Fifteen percent – that would do.

'Thanks,' she said, getting up, leaving the evidence bag on the table. 'There'll be things in there you'll want to read.'

Livia didn't look up. 'You should be careful, enforcer,' she said. 'Don't get too many ideas about how this works. That's the route to trouble.'

Onorova was already walking out. 'I never get too many ideas. I'm just the muscle, see.'

Then she was heading back down the stairway. She kept tabs on the gangers in the hallway, but they did nothing but glower at her. She got out, headed to her groundcar, got in, locked it.

For a moment, she sat in the pilot seat, looking out at the forests of hab-towers ahead, half-lit by scatters of lumen-points, piled atop one another, buzzed by clouds of atmospheric flyers and servo-skulls. Under every one of those towers was a basement level, and then an underwarren, going deeper, getting darker. She knew too many of them. After a while, it felt like you lived in those places. Maybe they left a stain, after a while. Maybe that would be hard to rub off, when the time came.

She started the engines. Once the groundcar was moving, she activated her tracker-scrubbers, removing all trace of her activities from her mission-cogitator and translexer. Once back at the Bastion, she'd file the usual reports – crowd-culls, rabble-cleansing, cult-breaking in grimy habs full of grimy people. She'd do it carefully, covering her tracks, not making it look too clean, just enough to keep Mhurov's eye elsewhere.

It was what you needed to do. It was how it was, how it had always been. Livia knew it. Zerkoj, for all his protestations, had known it. A sergeant's stipend barely covered basic food rations. This was how you made a living.

It was dangerous, of course. Everything was dangerous. But Onorova did things properly. She was careful. The model of a sanctioner sergeant. It had to be clean, in and out, job well done. Take some pride. Take some care.

She drove hard then, out into the night, back up into the heart of the city. Overhead, where a transit overpass crossed the heavy arch of a mag-train route, the serpent sigil of Varangantua glinted in the dark, just like the one she wore proudly on her chest. She passed under its gaze, smiling, already thinking how she'd spend the slate.

If you liked this short story by Chris Wraight, then you'll be pleased to know that there are plenty of Warhammer Crime novels on the horizon, including *Bloodlines* by Chris and the anthology *No Good Men*. Check out blacklibrary.com for more information.

FAITH & FIRE

BY JAMES SWALLOW

Sister Superior Miriya has hunted down the rogue psyker Torris Vaun, but now a deeper treachery has been uncovered on Neva. Can Lord Deacon Viktor LaHayn of the Ecclesiarchy really be behind the psychic uprising? Part VI of IX.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The words pressed into Ignis's brain like burning darts. *Now's the time, laddie. We're casting off. Get to the roof pad, fast.*

The youth clutched at his head and staggered, a thin trickle of blood leaking out of his nose. He bumped into the chart table that dominated the centre of the baron's chambers, setting the confusion of markers and tiny flags upon it tumbling.

'What are you doing?' snapped Sherring, pushing past one of his soldiers. 'Answer me! What is going on?' His expression was taut with anxiety.

Ignis waved a vague hand at the nobleman. 'I... I have to go...' He shook his head to rid it of the after-effect of Vaun's telepathic touch. Bile rose in his throat and he coughed.

Sherring grabbed his arm as the youth tried to make for the door. 'Stop where you are!' He pulled Ignis around to face him, pinched and furious. 'Where is Vaun? He's abandoned me! Tell me where he is!'

'I'll go look for him—'

Quick! came the mind-speech, and a fresh wash of nausea washed over Ignis. *The Sororitas are here! We can't tarry!*

'Can't tarry...' Ignis echoed the words under his breath.

The baron saw the moment of glazing in the lad's eyes and understood what was unfolding. 'You hear him, don't you? Damned witchkin can know each other's thoughts, eh? Where is he? What is he doing?' He shook Ignis violently. 'Tell me now, you worthless gutter rat!'

'Get off me!' Ignis retorted, fighting to free himself from Sherring's frantic grip. 'I'll bring him to you—'

'Liar!' roared the baron. 'He used me! You did this to me, made me ruin my beautiful city!' Sherring's free hand came up with an ornamental dagger in it. 'I'll kill you!'

'No!' Ignis shouted, and the word hammered at the air in the room; in the echo of his cry, every photon candle and view-tube spat sparks and burst into flames.

Sherring shrank backwards in shock, still brandishing the gold blade. 'You... You can't defy me! I am your better!'

'Shut up, you pathetic lackwit!' Ignis spat back at him. 'All the money in the galaxy isn't going to save you now! You were played! You're just a mark!' With each word, the sputtering electrical fires pulsed with flashes of heat.

The baron shot imploring looks at his men. 'Slay this witch! Destroy him! I order you!'

The cavalrymen had their guns in their hands, but they were pointed at the floor. The officers exchanged glances; all of them had seen Sherring's rapid deterioration over the past hours, and none had the desire to cross the psyker on the baron's word. Outside, beyond the tall glass windows, Metis was hidden beneath a curtain of smoke, and through the walls came the sounds of gunfire and men dying. The soldiers watched in silence, waiting for the battle to end. In their eyes was the mute knowledge that they had already lost.

'We are leaving, baron,' sneered Ignis, 'and there's nothing you can do to stop us.' The youth turned and strode toward the doors.

'You will not!' Sherring threw himself at the boy and buried the knife in his back. Ignis was caught unawares and collapsed to the floor. He tried to drag himself away, the little fires around the room throbbing with his heartbeat. 'You will not!' shrieked the baron again, his lips trembling with agitation.

Something hissed and spat outside the sealed security doors to the chamber; then in the next second a flat report of sound tore through the air and the heavy wooden portal crashed open.

Wreathed in smoke, Sister Miriya and her cohorts strode into the room. Sherring balked as he caught sight of the remaining Repentia, scarred and soaked in the blood of his men.

'Too late...!' whispered Ignis, reaching with trembling fingers toward the knife in his back.

'Baron Holt Sherring, city-lord of Metis and its territories, you are bound by Imperial law.' The Battle Sister advanced, her plasma gun aimed at his chest. 'Your crime is heresy, declared and made known by the Lord Deacon Viktor LaHayn.'

Sherring raised his hands in a halting motion. They were wet with the youth's blood. 'Wait! Please! You don't understand, it's LaHayn who is the heretic! You don't know what he has been doing! He wants to usurp the Golden—'

'The sentence is death, to be carried out with all due alacrity.' Miriya raised the pistol to come level with his face.

The baron threw Ignis a pleading look. 'Please!'

Verity caught the gesture and her heart went cold. 'Miriya, the boy—'

Ignis was as quick as lightning. His eyes flashed and the guttering fires about the room erupted like blowtorches; in a split-second the chamber's walls were yellow with streaks of conjured flame, licking up at the opulent tiles and scrollwork of the mansion's ceiling.

Bedlam broke out among the cavalymen, some of them diving for cover beneath the chart table, others turning their guns on the Battle Sisters. Isabel and Portia shot back, but the blaze funnelled out under the psyker youth's control, ripping into a burning tornado. Verity was shouldered to the floor by Iona as the flames spiralled past her; Ignis sent the column of fire into the Repentia Mistress and the other hooded woman, setting them alight. Their death screams were piercing, the flames carrying them out into the open as the back draft shattered the chamber's armoured windows.

A tail of trailing heat slammed into Miriya and sent her flying across the room, smashing her into a cogitator bank and spinning her about like a top. A streak of energy from her pistol went wide, knocking down one of the cavalry officers with the force of its plasma nimbus.

Iona pushed away and threw herself at Ignis, brandishing her eviscerator, the ragged red hood flying from her shoulders. The psyker was on his feet, marshalling the fire into a spinning shield of flames, burning the chart table and

the heavy brocade curtains. A wordless cry of vengeance on her lips, Iona charged him and thrust herself through the heart of the firewall. Her clothing and armour combusted about her, the incredible heat controlled by the boy burning off layers of her skin as she cut through it. Streamers of blackened flesh curled off her as she fell on him.

Ignis raised his arms to ward her off, but the chainsword came down upon him with an executioner's hand upon the hilt. The spinning tungsten-carbide teeth ripped into the bone and matter of his shoulder and cut into the youth's chest. Rendered nerves firing for the last time, the boy grabbed at the Repentia as she buried her blade in him, and took her in a burning embrace. Ignis perished drawing his witch-fire into himself, and his blackened corpse crashed through the chart table with Iona in a fatal grip. The Repentia wailed as she followed the psyker into death. They were a monstrous parody of two lovers, melded as one in a halo of orange flames.

Without the psyker to keep the inferno alive with his unholy power, the guttering fires shrank and spat, crawling like fat insects over the walls. It took a monumental effort for Verity to turn her face from the carnage and she attended to Miriya, pulling barbed injectors from the depths of her medicus ministorum.

Nearby, Cassandra spoke a few words of the Oath of Katherine over the dead Repentia. 'You are redeemed,' she told the corpses. 'Go to the next life free of your burden.' With a flick of her wrist, the Battle Sister salted the body of the psyker with drops from a vial of holy water; the liquid hissed into steam where it met the heated bones.

The Hospitaller frowned and applied a brass syrette to Miriya's jugular vein, forcing the injector rod into her skin. The Celestian twitched with shock as the chemical philtre charged her bloodstream, fighting off the hydrostatic shock from Ignis's psy-strike. After a long moment, Miriya blinked and opened her eyes.

'What... did you give to me?' she demanded.

'A restorative,' said Verity. 'A blend of witch-bane and tetraporfaline, blessed by the apothecarium. You should rest a moment, you are bleeding.'

Miriya pushed her aside and dragged herself to her feet. 'I have no time to shed blood for traitors.' The Celestian found Sherring on his knees, cowering by his desk. 'Where were we?' she asked him. The drug in her system made the pain of her wounds seem distant and unimportant.

'I am not the enemy,' whispered the baron. 'The deacon is the devil!'

'If that is true,' she told him in a low voice, 'then when the time comes I will judge him as harshly as I have judged you.' Miriya pulled the trigger and vaporised the upper torso of kneeling man with a single shot. Bolter fire joined her from the guns of the other Battle Sisters as they executed the remaining men in Sherring's chambers.



Vaun felt Ignis die like a light going out in his mind, and he swore violently. In the control cupola of the aeronef, the baron's tech-priest gave him a worried look. The psyker had already killed the two comrades of the adept as a show of force and the priest was fearful he would be next if he displeased the criminal in the slightest.

'Don't stare at me,' growled Vaun, 'you have a job to do. Get this thing airborne.'

The tech-priest blinked tin eyelids with a clicking noise. 'But, there was another to come? You said we should wait.'

Vaun tugged the escape ladder and the metal frame folded up into the belly of the sleek airship racer. 'Changed my mind. We're going now.' He strode over to the cowering adept and thrust a pict-slate under his nose. 'You know where these co-ordinates are?'

Cogs inside the tech-priest's elongated skull case clicked and whirred as he stored the numbers on the slate in a datum buffer. 'Yes, but that zone is restricted. It is a geologically unstable region, dangerous volcanic flows and sulphur swamps—'

'Take me to it,' Vaun stabbed a finger at the smoke-filled sky. 'Now.'

'It's a toxic wasteland!' the adept twittered. 'We will die there!'

Vaun gripped the tech-priest's robes and squeezed. 'You'll die here unless you get this 'nef moving, understand?'

The adept nodded and began to work the controls. With clanks of oiled steel, Baron Sherring's personal flyer detached from the tethers holding it to the roof and unfurled its sails. The powerful thermals blooming up from the burning city took hold of the craft and guided it skyward.



'Honoured Canoness, this is Sister Miriya.' The Celestian spoke into her vox. 'I have bestowed the Emperor's justice upon Baron Sherring.'

'I understand,' Galatea's voice crackled through her ear bead. 'We are delayed. A pocket of the turncoat Guard have decided to make a fight of it in the greenhouses. Secure the mansion house and find Vaun.'

'Your will.' Miriya cut the communication and glanced at Verity. The Hospitaller was bent over the burnt remains of the psyker and poor Iona. 'Stand away!' the Celestian snapped, suddenly angered by the woman's lack of respect for the dead.

Verity did not obey, and instead crouched close to the blackened skull of Ignis. 'There is something here.'

'It is not your place to interfere with the departed—' began Cassandra, but Miriya waved her to silence and crossed the chamber, laying a heavy hand on Verity's shoulder.

'Desist.'

'I do no dishonour to Iona,' retorted the Hospitaller, 'I imagine each of you owe her a debt from her time in your squad. Know then that she saved my life today as well. It is the witch that interests me.' She used a stylus to point at something in among the bones and charred meat of the dead man. 'Look here. Do you see?'

Miriya studied the object; it was a pewter half-orb, as small as a tikkerbird egg, fused to the curve of Ignis's skull. Wires as thin as human hairs spooled out from it along the inside of the bone. 'A bionic implant? I've never seen the like.' She ran a finger behind her right ear, touching the place where the device had been rooted in the psyker's body.

'Curious,' said Verity. 'The bone has partly covered the metal. This was grafted to him several years ago. It appears to be Imperial technology, not xenos or traitor-made. As to the purpose, I cannot fathom.'

'Perhaps some device to conjure his witch-fire?' Portia made a disgusted face.

'Very advanced,' added the Hospitaller, and she looked up at Miriya. 'Far beyond the acumen of a thug like Vaun.'

A silent communication went between them, the recollection of the shadowy assassin in the Noroc librarium.



At the broken windows, Isabel reacted with a start to something. 'Listen! Do you hear that?'

'Just the shelling—' began Cassandra.

'No! Rotors!' Isabel pointed as a silhouette moved over the glass. 'There!'

The wind changed and all the women heard it, the thrumming chop of propeller blades slicing through the thick air. Miriya sprinted to the windows in time to see the sleek bullet-shape of Sherring's gaudy aeronef passing over the mansion. The prow of the airship dipped and then rose, angling away from them.

'It's *him*,' spat the Celestian, and she threw herself out of the oval of shattered glass, landing heavily in the torn gardens below. The flyer cast a dark pool of shadow beneath it, and Miriya ran to keep below it. Her training took over from her conscious mind, compartmentalizing the pain from her injuries and the adrenaline rush in her bloodstream. Her vision caught on a trailing tether dragging down the ornamental steps where it hung from the aeronef's underside; with every passing second the cable was drawing shorter as the craft gained height.

Ignoring the gunfire that lanced past her, Miriya leapt at the tether and caught it in the grip of her armoured gauntlets; no sooner as she done so than the aeronef's props pitched up in tone and the airship pushed away at great speed. Suddenly, the Battle Sister was hanging suspended beneath the vessel as the mansion grounds flashed by beneath her feet. With dogged and relentless determination, Miriya pulled herself up, hand over hand, toward the passenger cupola beneath the gas envelope.



'Is this the best speed you can muster from this craft?' demanded Vaun, menacing the adept. 'This is supposed to be a racer!'

With visible effort, the tech-priest found his voice. 'The weight distribution is in error.'

Vaun prodded him with a finger. 'Perhaps I should lighten the load, then? I'll start with your corpse.'

'No!' screeched the adept. 'The correct prayers must be offered to the machine-soul. I will compensate.'

'Bah!' The psyker shoved him back at the console and turned away, steadying himself on the listing deck as the priest mumbled and made symbols in the air over the navigational console. 'Get us some more altitude, at least! I don't want to be in range of those Exorcist tanks!' The front quarter of the aeronef's cupola was made from a skeleton of girders and a cowl of transparent glassteel, so that the late baron and his hangers-on could view the landscape below the aerial yacht; now all there was beneath the flyer were streets choked with dead or dying, burning buildings and the debris of a murdered city.

A fitting epitaph for a braggart and a fool like Sherring, considered the psyker. He was sure that the baron, with his overblown sense of grandeur, would have enjoyed the idea that his precious Metis would not endure without him. Playing Sherring had been easy. Like every one of these idiot nobles, he had thought that his little world, his tiny games of empire, were the only things that were of any import. It mattered nothing to the rich men of Neva that on other planets there were creatures of such alien nature that they would devour whole worlds, or that there were places where the raw stuff of Chaos itself came to life; the universe began and ended at the edge of the Nevan solar system, and they cared nothing for the greater galaxy beyond, as long as it didn't interfere with them and their asinine festivals.

But Vaun thought differently. It was ironic, really. There was only one other man he knew who was native-born to this pretentious and grandiose planet, but who saw the wider view as he did; and Torris Vaun hated Viktor LaHayn with every fibre of his being.

It was that hate that had first brought Sherring into the psyker's orbit. Vaun has seen the avaricious desire in the baron's eyes, the need for power in the man that overwhelmed everything else. Vaun had aided the baron in strengthening his position and in turn Sherring had helped Vaun break the chains that bound him to the deacon; but while the nobleman had craved position and title, Vaun played – and was *still* playing – a far longer game. And now, at last, after Vaun had been forced to spend years on the run here and in deep space, the loathsome prig had finally made good on his promises.

'And for that, I pay you in immortality,' whispered the psyker, catching sight of a hobbled statue of the baron as the aeronef passed over the city. 'No one on Neva will ever forget the name of Holt Sherring,' he told the effigy. 'You'll go down in history as a traitor and a fool.' Vaun spat at the statue and turned away, his resentment kindling.

The data-slate was there in his pocket, heavy with the price he had paid to get it. Oh, of course he had never intended to keep those wastrels Abb and Suki around; had they survived, he would have just found another way for them to serve as fodder for the cannon. After all, their talents were hard to control and unpredictable. Vaun had only recruited them because they were all he could find.

But the boy... That made him angry. Ignis was a sharp lad, and he had real potential. Vaun has seen in him someone worthy to be his protégé, a psyker with ability, but nicely untroubled by such clutter as ethics or morality. It annoyed him to have to lose so promising a tool before he could bring its potential to bear.

With a snort, he dismissed the thought. At the Keep he'd find all the raw material he needed to start afresh; and then maybe he would blow Neva apart, just like the lad had wanted.

A creaking noise in the deck plates drew his eyes from the window and sent the killer's nerves on edge. They were not alone up here. Vaun spun, calling fire to him.



A shape in black armour and red robes threw itself into the cupola from the rearward compartment, crashing through the hatchway. The psyker's face twisted in a grimace as he recognised the woman.

'You again,' he said, with loathing. 'This is becoming tiresome.'

'How did she get aboard?' asked the tech-adept, cowering at the helm.

'Be silent,' Miriya broke in, 'you'll have time to speak for your crimes soon enough.'

'Crimes?' bleated the priest. 'He forced me! He killed my brethren!'

'You should have died with them. That would have shown dedication. Now you are guilty of collusion with a criminal.'

Vaun smiled, amused by her. 'Don't be so hard on the poor wretch, Sister. I can be very persuasive, if I've a mind to.'

'Your co-conspirator Baron Sherring is dead,' Miriya told him, 'this vessel is being tracked by units of the Order of Our Martyred Lady. You have no way to escape the church's reprisal.'

'Oh,' sniffed the psyker, his voice taking on an arch tone. 'Perhaps I should bow down and surrender? Yes, should I do that and beg for a swift and merciful death?' He gave a derisive snort. 'You won't dare fire that weapon inside this vessel. One misplaced shot could sever a fuel line or puncture the gasbag. You'd kill us all.'

'You do not understand my devotion to the God-Emperor, witch. My life counts for nought if you still draw breath. If the price I must pay to have you dead is my own blood, then I do so willingly.' She fired, the plasma gun cutting hot light across the cabin.

Vaun threw himself away from the stanchion where he had been standing, the haze of rippling heat from the discharge searing his face. He cried out in pain and threw back a trio of flaming darts. The bolts missed the Sororitas and blew out an ornate windowpane. 'You mad, blinkered bitch!' he swore. 'Stupid little wind-up toy! You have no idea what is really going on here, do you? LaHayn is the worst traitor of them all!'

'When I read your crimes to the quill servitors, I will be sure to add defamation to the list.' Miriya stroked an indent on the plasma gun's breech and dialled the weapon's emitter nozzle to a narrow beam setting. Ducking from behind a support pillar, she fired again, slashing through a tertiary cogitator console.

A sudden thermal made the aeronef lurch to starboard and both the combatants were knocked off balance. The tech-priest wailed, his voice like a warning siren.

Vaun's next flurry of psi-fire hit home close to the woman, one glancing dart of burning air searing her shoulder plate and carving a scar across the wood panelling behind her. Miriya snarled and fired again; the plasma weapon turned a steel stanchion to hot slag and sent flame licking up to the ceiling of the compartment.

'I should have known better than to expect intelligence from a servant of your corrupt religion!' Vaun called out to her from behind cover. 'I may be a thief and a killer, but at least I am true to myself! I don't do the bidding of ancient, crooked clerics!' He gave a harsh, mocking laugh. 'Tell me, Sister, have you never questioned? Have you always been the same trained mongrel, just a dog on some priest's leash?'

Miriya said nothing, moving carefully toward the sound of his voice. She placed each footfall with absolute care, keeping herself steady as the airship listed. The walls of the caldera drifted by below them, hazed by the smoke from the burning forest.

'If only you knew what I know,' continued Vaun, 'if only you could see the horrors that Viktor LaHayn has perpetrated over the years. You think I am a threat to your precious law and order? *Ha!* My plans are just for money and mayhem! The deacon intends nothing less than the unseating of your god!' His voice was thick with hate. 'My crimes are a child's compared to his madness.'

The Celestian hardened her heart against the psyker's words, forcing herself to put aside her own doubts. He was very close now, a few hand spans away, crouched behind a recliner couch in rich groxblood leather. Miriya took careful aim.

'I know you don't trust him. You and the nursemaid both, there's something that gnaws at your thoughts. If you kill me, by the time you understand it will be too late. LaHayn will take the Imperium for himself. I'm the only one who can stop him. That's why he's so desperate to capture me.' The psyker seemed to be struggling with effort of speaking. 'He needs me to complete his plan.'

The woman cared nothing for that order now; she would finish this wastrel and weather the ire of the deacon later. 'In the God-Emperor's name—' Miriya threw herself around the couch and levelled the gun – at *nothing*. 'Vaun? Where?'

'Here.' From behind her, the hot claws of his burning hand pressed into the flesh of the Battle Sister's neck.

'How...?'

Vaun chuckled. 'It's not just a matter of throwing balls of fire and the like, Sororitas. Being a witch brings certain other talents to the table. Misdirection, among others.' He blinked sweat from his eyes. 'Quite tasking, though.'

'Kill me then, if you dare,' she growled. 'For my death there will be ten Sisters to take my place.'

Contempt dripped from Vaun's words. 'You foolish nuns are so predictable. So desperate to throw your life away in service to the church, you practically beg to be killed. It's what you want, isn't it? To become a tragic martyr like your beloved Saint Katherine, to perish on a heretic's blade and thus earn your place in the pathetic annals of some forgotten convent?'

Miriya's gaze remained locked forward; ahead of her she could see the adept cowering at the helm, his spidery brass limbs working the tiller.

The criminal pressed harder. 'Would you like to die now, Sister? Would it assuage the guilt you carry like a millstone about your neck? Far easier to end your life in a futile gesture than to live on in pain, isn't it?'

'Vaun,' said the woman, gently turning her hand to aim her pistol, 'you talk too much.' Miriya pulled the trigger and the plasma gun spat flame across the cabin. The gaseous plume melted the helm into runnels of liquid metal and sent the tech-priest screaming away, his robes on fire and his prosthetics twisted by the heat surge.

The aeronef's deck pitched hard, throwing the two fighters apart and slamming them into the wall. The Battle Sister tasted blood as her head rebounded off a support girder. She heard Vaun shouting a string of inventive curses and her vision blurred for a second.

When she blinked it clear, Miriya saw the blackened forest rising up to fill the airship's windscreen, fire-stripped trees reaching up to snatch at the flyer.



Night had fallen by the time they located the crash site in the woodlands south of Metis. Sister Verity had expected to find a field of wreckage but Baron Sherring's aeronef was intact for the most part. The elegant bullet shape of the airship's gas envelope was dirty and discoloured, some of the cells torn open and flaccid; the craft had cut through a burnt copse and landed at a tilt toward its starboard side, exposing the passenger cupola to the air. The front of the compartment was a mess of broken glassteel and twisted girders.

At her side, Sister Portia consulted an auspex and frowned. 'The device's machine-ghost speaks of lives still inside, but the glyphs are contradictory.'

'Heat from the fires,' said Cassandra, approaching the downed ship with her bolter held ready. 'The warmth radiates up from the ground. It confuses the sense-taker.'

Verity picked her way through a trail of shredded hull plates and bits of ornate furniture that had been ejected during the landing. Her boots crunched crystal droplets from a chandelier into the ashen earth, and she stepped around a stool detailed in red leather, that had landed intact and incongruous in this black setting.

From the corner of her vision she saw Isabel stoop and recover something from the dirt. 'The Sister Superior's weapon.' She held up the plasma pistol by its barrel. 'If it fell from her grasp...' The unspoken words curdled in her throat.

Cassandra shot her a look. 'Keep searching.'

Verity saw a flicker of motion among the disorder of wreckage and called out. 'Here! Someone alive!' The other women were at her side in an instant, working together to lift away a metal panel the size of a dining table. It was still warm to the touch, and had they not been wearing their gauntlets, their hands would have been scorched raw.

From under the panel emerged a crooked man, almost strangling under the weight of his own robes. Brassy claw-hands, hooked and spindly where they were half-melted, snapped and clicked. 'Hello?' His voice was laden with static, like a poorly tuned vox.

'Tech-priest,' said Isabel with more than a little disappointment, 'where are Vaun and Sister Miriya?'

'Thank you.' The adept pointed back at the grounded airship. 'Inside, I believe. Thank you. Believe.' He gave a metallic cough and tapped the vocoder implant in his throat. Verity remained a moment to examine him as Cassandra led the other women on in a steady, weapons-high approach.

She glanced around, taking in the desert of burnt land and skeletal trees, the towering plume of smoke issuing from the caldera-city dark against the night sky. Verity felt leaden and heavy with disgust at the sight. How many thousands had died today in order to punish Baron Sherring's stupidity? The unfettered carnage sickened her, and the Hospitaller found herself entertaining an almost treasonable anger toward the lord deacon. LaHayn had shown callous disregard for the people of Metis, not all of whom were to blame for their city-lord's foolish choices. With effort, she forced the thoughts away.

A sudden commotion near the wreck snapped her back from her reverie. Cassandra had a man by the scruff of the neck, dragging him out of the cupola. *Vaun*.

The Sister of Battle applied a vicious kick the back of the psyker's legs and sent him sprawling to the ground. As Verity gingerly approached, she could see he was badly wounded, his face crosshatched with new scars caused by flying fragments of glass. He managed a bloody smile.

'Ah. Nursemaid. Kind of you to come minister to me.'

Without a word of command between them, Cassandra, Isabel and Portia all pointed their guns at his head.

Vaun blinked. 'Oh. Viktor has changed his mind, then? I'm to die now?'

Verity strained to master her loathing of the man. 'Your execution will be at the lord deacon's pleasure.'

His smile widened. 'Lucky me. How frustrated you must all be, little sisters, to find me alive and your harlot Miriya not. Worse still, that you must keep me so.'

Verity looked at Cassandra. 'Miriya is dead?'

'There was no sign of her body in the aeronef.'

Vaun's head bobbed. 'Dead. She fell. So sad.'

Skin met skin with a loud smack and before she even realised it, Verity was looking at her hand, at the red mark where she had slapped him. Real anger flashed in Vaun's eyes.

'Careful,' he said, in a voice low and rich with menace, 'you mustn't damage me further.'

'To hell...'

The words were a ragged gasp. 'To hell with that.' Verity turned with a start as Miriya approached from the tree line, carrying herself awkwardly. The Hospitaller instantly recognised the signs of broken ribs, contusions and minor wounds. The Sister Superior marched as best she could into the circle of women, taking her pistol from the hand of a stunned Isabel.

'In Terra's name, how did you survive?' whispered the Battle Sister.

'As the witch said,' Miriya nodded at the psyker, making signs over her gun, 'I fell. By the grace of the Golden Throne, I did not die from it.'

Even Vaun was lost for words in that moment; but then Miriya thumbed the activation stud on her plasma weapon and he knew what she was going to do next. 'No, no!' he blurted. 'You can't kill me here! On the 'nef, no one would know, but here, these ones will see you! You can't disobey the deacon in front of them!'

'The deacon be damned.' Those words alone were enough to earn Miriya a thousand lashes. 'Die, witch.'

'Miriya...'

There was a warning in Verity's tone. 'Our orders...'

The Sister Superior didn't seem to hear her; Miriya's entire world had collapsed to the space between the muzzle of her gun and Vaun's head. 'You are trying to marshal your witchfire, but the pain hobbles you. You know that I hold your life in my grip, Vaun. How does it feel to be the victim? Can you taste it?'

Then, slowly and inexorably, something cold emerged behind the psyker's eyes. 'The deacon be damned,' he

repeated. 'My own thoughts, Sister. Shall I tell you why? If my death is but a heartbeat away, then let me give you a gift before I go. Let me tell you why Viktor LaHayn deserves damnation, more than I, more than any sinner you have ever sent to his grave. Let me do this small thing.'

Verity saw Miriya's finger tighten on the trigger – but not enough; and as she watched the Hospitaller heard her own voice rise in the silence.

'Let him speak.'

CHAPTER TWELVE

He was not smiling now. 'Your curiosity is all that keeps me breathing, yes?' Vaun moved his head slightly to look at Sister Verity. 'I thank you for these additional moments of life.'

'He has nothing to give us,' Cassandra murmured irritably. 'Sister Superior, if you will break the lord deacon's edict to keep this witch alive, then do it now, before he can run his mouth and try to talk us to death.'

Vaun blinked at Miriya, and she searched his face for truth and for lies. The psyker's aspect was one she had never seen on him before, without masks or artifice. In his way, he was naked to her. 'Is it absolution you want?' she asked him. 'Will you confess your sins to me?'

'Oh, there shall be a confession,' he nodded, 'but not mine. I'll give you LaHayn's in proxy. Tell you the secrets.' Vaun raised a bloodied hand and tapped at spot at the base of his skull, 'Show you things.'

Miriya's eyes narrowed as she remembered the strange device Verity had found implanted in the head of Vaun's cohort Ignis. With a quick motion, she holstered her plasma pistol.

A moment of relief crossed Vaun's face. 'You've seen the value in my words.'

The Sororitas shook her head. 'I have learnt that every sentence you utter is just one more gambit in the strategies you spin.' She looked at the other women. 'Hold him down.'

Before Vaun could struggle, Cassandra and Isabel took Vaun's wrists and pressed him against a slab of hull metal. Portia kept her gun on him. The psyker blinked, trying to muster his powers, but his injuries had made him weak and tired.

Salvaging a turn of ragged, sharp-edged wire from the wreck, Miriya fashioned a makeshift binding to hold the criminal's wrists together. She glanced at Verity. 'You have a

sanguinator in your medicus kit, and neuropathic drugs. Show them to me.'

The Hospitaller did as she was asked. 'What do you want to do?'

'Sedate him.' There was a long moment before Verity understood that Miriya was not telling her but ordering her to do it.

Vaun struggled. 'I told you, I will freely explain everything!'

The Sister Superior gave him a measuring stare. 'I must be convinced.' She pointed at his arm, and Verity reluctantly discharged the glass injector into the psyker's clammy skin.

The rush of chemicals struck his bloodstream. He let out moans and the occasional coughing yelp, the sounds rolling about the burnt landscape. Now and then, small fires would puff into life around the clearing as Vaun's pain exhibited itself through his witchery. The whites of his eyes showed; like the fluids that had contained him in the glass prison capsule on the Black Ship, the potent philtre robbed him of the will to create his mindfire. He became groggy and pallid. Finally, when she was sure he was quietened and unable to attack them, Miriya allowed him to answer questions. 'You have your audience,' she told him, 'now enlighten us.'

Verity gently cleaned the dirtied sanguinator. 'How did you escape custody?'

Vaun sniffed wetly. 'Unimportant. You know the answer to that already.'

'You were in league with Sherring. He brought the men of the *Mercutio* to Metis and coerced them.'

'Clever, clever Holt. Too clever for his own good. Yes, a simple task, really. With the reach his clan gave him, to the shipping guilds and the commerce station, he found it easy. A man's mind can be moulded quite quickly, if one has the right tools and is untroubled by morals. Those that did not take to the imprinting... They were allowed to die. The others he made my erstwhile saviours, although they would never know it, seeds of my control sleeping in their heads.' The psyker coughed and spat. 'The one who came to the cargo bay, yes? He carried the order in his unconscious, then spoke it to all the others.'

Cassandra's lip curled. 'You expect us to believe that you allowed yourself to be captured on Groombridge? Just so you could be brought to Neva?' She snorted. 'There must be simpler ways to come home.'

The ghost of a smile emerged. 'Indeed. But I am such a slave to my sense of drama.' His self-amusement faded. 'I wanted to make sure Viktor would let his guard down. I knew his arrogance would make him complacent and careless, but for that to happen, he had to believe he had beaten me.' Vaun's teeth flashed. 'All to give him a greater height to fall from!'

'Your hate for him must consume you,' said Verity, pity in her words.

He glared at her. '*Hate?* There's not a word strong enough to describe my loathing for your precious deacon! A million deaths won't pay back the years he took from me, the life he stole!'

'Explain, witch,' demanded Miriya. 'I grow weary of your obtuseness.'

'Ask yourself this, Sister. If my talents were so deadly, then why was I not surrendered to Black Ships whilst still a mere child? Why was I not put down? What happened to me between then and now?'

'The datum,' said Verity quietly. 'The records of the librarium. There were missing pieces...'

'Years!' spat Vaun. 'Made into an experiment for him, a tool, a *plaything*! He took only those he could conceal, only those with the strongest potential! Broke us like animals, used us! Cut upon us!' With a savage yank, Vaun tore a clutch of hair from the back of his head to reveal the distortion where a metal implant lay under his skin. 'This was just one of his gifts!'

'Like the pyrokene in Sherring's mansion,' said Isabel.

'Yes. We were all his tin soldiers, doctored and neutered by LaHayn's secret scheming.' His eyes were wide and manic. 'Do you see now, Sister? Can you begin to understand? His agenda is not that of your church – it is not even that of your god! With his puppet governor and his willing slaves in one hand, and those blind and hidebound to your dogma in the other, LaHayn does as he wishes! He plays his long game—'

'Must we listen to any more of this?' Portia growled. 'We have dallied long enough with this wastrel! Canoness Galatea must be informed of his capture, and the witch must be processed.'

'Aye,' added Cassandra. 'Can any of these creature's ramblings be corroborated? Is there more evidence than his treasonable spewing?'

'There is,' said Verity, after a long moment. 'In the deeps of Noroc's librarium, I found facts that speak as he does. I am certain there would be more to find, if only we could search deeper.'

'Facts? Enough to take the word of a witch over that of a High Ecclesiarch?' demanded Portia. 'I imagine not.'

'But there is doubt, yes?' Vaun broke in. 'You must have seen the edges of LaHayn's grand falsehood, you felt it out there! I know you have, else your Sister Superior would have executed me the moment I was pulled from the airship! You want to know, don't you? You have to be sure!'

'Doubt is the cancer in the minds of the unrighteous,' said Portia, quoting a dictum from the *Cardinae Noctum*.

'Only the certain can know faith. Only they are fit to judge,' countered Miriya.

'Whose words are those?' said Verity.

'The great Sebastian Thor, from his speech at New Hera during the Age of Apostasy.' She turned a penetrating stare on Portia. 'Are *you* certain, Sister? Beyond all shadow of uncertainty?' Portia's silence was answer enough.

'Heh,' managed the psyker, 'as entertaining as it is to listen to you cite your turgid scripture at one another, may I continue?' Vaun blinked. 'By your own admission, the Canoness knows nothing of my survival as yet. Keep that silence for me and in return I will open the doors of the deacon's duplicity to you. Better than that, I will take you to the site of his blackest and most mendacious secret.' He took a breath, his eyes glittering. 'I will take you to the Null Keep, and you will see for yourself.'

'A covenant with a witch?' Miriya made a disgusted face. 'You would dare to utter such a suggestion to a Sister of Battle?'

The man gave a sigh of false contrition. 'It is your choice, Sister Superior. But you know as well as I do that the moment I leave your sight, it will be my death and you shall never have the answers you want. You will never know why I came here, or what it was that the Hospitaller's sibling perished for.' He ignored Verity's sharp intake of breath and focused all his attention on Miriya. 'By the time you realise that I speak the truth, all the scripture in the galaxy won't be able to stop Viktor LaHayn from ripping your precious Imperium apart.'

'And what would you gain from this selfless act?' demanded the Battle Sister.

'The satisfaction of watching you realise that I do not lie. It will be sweet to see you recognise the betrayal of your own priest-lord.'

None of the women spoke, and the moments seemed to stretch out into hours. Only the crackle of distant fires on the wind crossed between them. Then at last, Sister Miriya cast a glance at the tech-priest, where the adept pottered around the damaged aeronef.

She called out to him. 'You, cleric. Will the flyer be able to make sky again?'

The priest gave a jerky nod. 'Many systems were damaged but the machine-ghost is well. It will fly once more, although without such grace as before.'

'Make it ready to lift.' She turned on Vaun. 'This Null Keep of which you speak, this place of secrets. Where does it lie?'

'A few hours by 'nef. I was on my way there myself when you, uh, joined me.'

'You will take us to it.'

A chorus of disbelief erupted from the other Battle Sisters but Miriya silenced them with a stern gesture.

'Galatea will not allow this,' said Cassandra, 'her orders were most emphatic.'

'I know what her orders were,' Miriya replied, 'but I also know that since we arrived on Neva, at all turns we have been confounded by a bodyguard of lies. I want the truth, and if it takes this blasphemy to lead us to it, so he will.' She beckoned the psyker up from where he lay. 'No word of Vaun's capture will go beyond the five of us. We shall not return to Noroc, nor surrender our prisoner to the church. These are my orders, and you will obey them, if not for me then to honour the sacrifices of Lethe and Iona.' She cast her gaze upon them all, and one by one the women returned nods of agreement. Portia was the last, but finally she bowed her head.

'You shall not regret this,' said Vaun, a razor behind his smile.

'You know nothing of regret,' she told him, and shoved the witch toward the damaged aeronef.

Galatea stepped over the debris of a broken window and surveyed Sherring's chambers with a cold eye. The baron's centre of operations was a poor attempt at being a war room, something that an armchair warrior might create in order to play at the role of a general. A group of Battle Sisters had already been detailed to isolate and attend to the corpses, placing strips of sanctified parchment over the dead men that bore warnings not to approach the bodies of these traitors.

The heavy stink of cooked meat still hung about them, mingled with the omnipresent musk of burnt wood from the city. It occurred to the Canoness that she had not taken a single breath of clear air for hours, since the advance in to Metis had begun. With sadness, she watched two women carefully wrap a dead Repentia in a funerary cloth.

'My lady.' A veteran of the Seraphim corps entered the room and gave a short bow.

'Sister Chloe? What is it?'

'We have completed our sweep of the mansion house grounds and put the disloyal to the sword.' The powerful Seraph-pattern jump pack on Chloe's back made her seem taller and broader across the shoulders than the rest of the women in the room; Galatea knew her from campaigns of old, where the arrow-faced warrior had lead her unit on pillars of orange jet flame through throngs of heretics. 'Evidence of the baron's treachery is being gathered as we speak.'

The Canoness nudged Sherring's corpse with her boot. The fact that Chloe had not told her the news she wanted to hear was confirmation enough, but she asked the next question anyway. 'And the witch Torris Vaun?'

'No trace. The baron's personal aircraft was seen to depart the mansion's grounds. It is likely the witchkin fled, my lady. A unit of Sisters went in pursuit.'

'Whose?' she demanded.

'Unverified at present. Several units have yet to respond to status queries.'

'Miriya...' said the Canoness, under her breath. She waved Chloe away. 'Keep me apprised. You are dismissed.'

The Sister Seraphim rocked on her heels, self-consciously. 'With respect, Canoness, there is another matter. I also bear a message from one of the adepts in the command vehicles. The lord deacon's office has been attempting to contact you for the last hour. They seem most vexed.'



Galatea concealed a wan smirk. 'Of course. I would imagine so.' The Battle Sister had purposely tuned her vox frequencies to take in only local signals immediate to the engagement at hand, not the high channel communiqué links that would connect Lord LaHayn to her ear. She wanted little distraction, reasoning that anything of great import would be relayed to her eventually. Galatea hooked her fingers over indents in the neck ring of her Sororitas power armour and was rewarded by an answering chime in her ear bead relay. 'Canoness Galatea, returning to network,' she announced.

Within seconds, the even voice of the PDF officer Colonel Braun came to her. 'Honoured Sororitas,' he began, an edge of irritation creeping into his words, 'at last. Stand ready. I have the Governmental Palace for you.' No doubt the soldier chafed at being ordered to sit by a vox and wait for Galatea to come back on stream.

A message from the Governmental Palace? The Canoness pursed her lips in thought. Has Emmel recovered enough to resume his duties already?

The next voice she heard answered that question immediately. 'Canoness, this is Dean Venik. Thank you for your attention. We have been observing the confrontation via scrye-scans from the *Mercutio* in orbit. Lord LaHayn demands a report on the situation there.'

'Put him on,' she replied, walking out into the halls and atria of the mansion, 'I'll brief him myself.'

There was a miniscule pause. 'The lord deacon is... indisposed. You may brief me in his stead.'

'Indisposed? I had thought he would wish to hear of the witch's fate first-hand.' She frowned. 'No matter. My honoured dean, please let the deacon know that by his decree, Metis is burning and all who stood against the rule of the Emperor have been made to show due contrition... or they have died. Baron Holt Sherring and his city cabinet have been terminated, as have a number of pyrokenes that we encountered acting in his employ.'

'Vaun?' demanded Venik impatiently.

Galatea thought it curious that Venik showed no concern over her mention of the other fire-witches they had dispatched. 'Status unknown, presumed at large. The Sisterhood are engaged in a search for him.'

Fury erupted from the dean. 'You burn a city and still you cannot cage this creature? Lord LaHayn's disappointment will be great!'

'I will explain it to him--'

'I told you, Sororitas, he is unavailable!'

'And why might that be?' snapped Galatea, the tension from the day's fight and her dislike of the dean breaking the veneer of her civility. 'What is of such import that he cannot speak to me himself? Is he even there in the palace with you?'

She could almost hear Venik's look of shock at her retort. 'The... The deacon does not have to justify his movements to you, Sister Galatea!'

The woman waved her hand, as if she were dismissing a nagging insect. 'Yes, of course. Permit me then to inquire after the health of the noble Governor Emmel. Is he recovering?'

Venik's voice changed in a moment, from irksome to disingenuous. 'Ah, yes, but of course. You would not have heard. It saddens me to report that the governor passed away a few hours ago. The deacon was there at the time to administer last rites and the Emperor's blessing.'

'Dead?' Galatea weighed this in her mind. 'Then who presides over the government now?' She racked her brain for the name of Neva's sub-viceroy and Emmel's second, a large fellow and the scion of a family of Imperial Guardsmen. 'Baron Preed, is it not?'

'It is not,' replied Venik with more than a little swagger. 'The lord deacon determined that for the best of the Nevan people in this time of great moral and spiritual crisis, the Imperial Church should take a more direct role in the management of the planet. Until further notice, I have taken on the honour of assuming the governorship.'

The Canoness fell silent. Such a decision was unprecedented in the modern Imperium. Since the Age of Apostasy, when the High Ecclesiarch Goge Vandire had tried to turn the galaxy to his rule, the separation of church and state in the ruling of human worlds had become an unbreakable dictum; a dictum that LaHayn had swept away while the Sisters of Battle were deep in the thick of fighting. Galatea frowned. While she believed utterly in the church's rightness in all things, this was a development that did not sit well with her; but it would do her no good to let Venik know her mind. Finally she spoke. 'My congratulations to you on your new duties, honoured dean. May they bring you what you deserve.' She turned back to the burnt-out chambers. 'I will contact you again once Vaun is ours.' Before Venik could speak further, she deactivated the link studs on her vox control and walked away, brooding.



Once the aeronef had reached its optimal altitude, the ship's nature as a racing yacht came to bear. Even with the damage it had suffered, even with only the lone, twitchy tech-priest at its controls, Sherring's airship cut through the clouds of Neva's skies with the swiftness of a raptor, at times riding on the rapid jet streams of the planet's upper atmosphere as fast as a cruising Thunderhawk.

Verity watched the landscape below alter as they travelled further north. The habitable zones of countryside gave way to valleys choked with dense grey snows and these to chains of black, basalt hills. In among them, stubby volcanic peaks spat desultory chugs of ash, and in many places there were thin streams of lava. Neva was at its most geologically active in this region, riven with small earthquakes and outgassings of fumes. Nothing lived here beyond the hardiest plant life and a few dogged invertebrate life forms. So the mythology of the planet said, the toxic lands would have one day expanded to engulf the entire world if not for the arrival of the Emperor of Man, who, with a gesture to His magnificent technologies, halted the march of the volcanoes and reined them in. The blighted landscape remained now as a reminder of the planet's turbulent core and one more example of Neva's unanswerable debt to the God-Emperor.

Behind her, Cassandra was in hushed discussion with Miriya. 'This is a pointless voyage,' she growled, 'we've been travelling all night and for nothing! Vaun is lying to us.'

'That much is certain,' replied Miriya, 'but we must know for sure. We shall give him enough rope to hang himself.'

'I can hear every word you are saying,' said the psyker from across the cupola. 'And it makes me sad. Is there not even the smallest iota of trust in you? In anyone?' He looked directly at Verity. 'Even the nursemaid?'

'It would be easier to give you some credence if you could reveal this mystery destination of yours,' said the Hospitaller. 'Come now, Vaun. How much further do you expect us to go?'

The man threw her a weak smile and glanced at a chronograph on the 'nef's bulkhead. 'No more,' said Vaun, 'we're here.' He nodded to the tech-priest. 'Take us down, cogboy, nice and easy. And douse the lumes. They'll be watching.'

'Who will be watching?' said Miriya, striding forward to where the naked sky peeked into the wrecked cabin.

'LaHayn's dogs.' He pointed into the darkness. 'What do you see?'

Verity squinted. 'Only the volcanoes.'

Vaun nodded. 'As you are meant to. That is the outermost lie.' The aeronef dropped quickly, just a few metres from the ground now. With his bound hands, the psyker took the adept's claw and turned it so the flyer's tiller moved; in return the ship wavered sideways. 'The battlements are cloaked with clever design, the points of entry disguised. Look now. Do you see?'

The Sister Hospitaller did; and she gasped as a string of casements seemed to appear from nowhere along the surface of the tallest ashen crag.

'The Null Keep,' smiled Vaun. 'I've been away too long.'



From afar, no human eye or auspex scan would ever have considered the towering structure to be anything than what it first appeared to be; one more huge volcanic tor, seething with roils of dirty steam and clogged rivulets of sluggish lava. Yet the closer one came to the mount, the more it changed to resemble a citadel rather than a natural form. At one time, centuries, perhaps millennia ago, the craggy basalt peak had been untouched by the devices of human technology; but now it was a masterpiece of clandestine engineering, a castle made by stealth that stood undetected in this barren arroyo. Shafts had been bored into the thick walls of the rock face, connecting the magma voids in the same manner as ants and termites lived within their earthen colonies. These open chambers had been emptied of molten stone, sealed seamlessly with a science that was lost to humans in this age, and made habitable. Some of the voids were small things, perhaps the size of a few rooms; others were large enough to accommodate an Imperial Navy corvette, layered with decking, corridors and internal crawlways.

The slumbering volcanic shaft at the axis of the citadel provided tireless reserves of geothermal energy from mechanisms sunk into the liquid mantle of Neva, venting excess gouts of superheated steam from conduits about the surface of the tower. Battlements and window slits looked out on the approaches. Cunningly fashioned from the cut of the rock itself, these openings appeared to be natural formations; only on closer examination could the dim glow of bioluminescence be seen behind them. Spines of obsidian glass and petrified trees masked clusters of armoured sensor vanes and vox antennae. There were even dock platforms,

planes of flat stone that extended out enough to accommodate something the size of a coleopter or a land speeder. Every shadowed hollow in the sheer face of the mountainside could be home to a watching sense-engine or a concealed weapon emplacement. It was an oppressive edifice, black and leaking menace into the hot and sulphurous air. The endeavour to create such a structure, the will to hide a secret tower in this barren landscape, dwarfed the palaces and temples of Noroc. The construction's original purpose was lost to antiquity, but whatever it had been made for, it had been born in secrecy. The walls of the inner chambers masked everything that took place within, patterned with exotic ores that defied the study of the few tech-adepts allowed to survey them. Nothing, no wavelength of radiation, not even the warped energy of the human psyche, could escape the walls of the tower. The silence of the Null Keep was deeper than the vacuum of space.



They left the aeronef in a steep-walled chasm, the nervous and shifty mechanicus priest chained to the landing skid in case his curiosity got the better of him. When the Battle Sisters had secured the adept, Miriya's intent look at Verity sparked a pre-emptive denial from the Hospitaller.

'Do not ask me to remain here, Sister Superior. I have no intention of staying in this lightless cabin while you venture out.'

'I have only your safety in mind,' began Miriya, but Verity shook her head.

'I have come this far. I will see this road to its end.'

Vaun snorted. 'Ah, bravo, nursemaid. You have such tenacity.'

Miriya turned her ire on the psyker, barely moderating the tremor in her gun hand. 'We are here, witch. Now tell us, what is this place?'

'You cannot simply be told what the Null Keep is,' Vaun said darkly, 'you must see it for yourself.'

Portia snorted. 'For Katherine's sake! For all we know, this could be some elaborate trap! We'll venture inside and find a horde of mutant psykers baying for our blood!'

'If I wanted to kill you, Sister, it would have been simple to reduce this aircraft to ashes,' Sweat beaded on his brown and with effort Vaun managed to make a puff of flame snap

from his fingertip. 'No, I *want* you to see this. It will please me no end to watch the truth barge its way into your shuttered minds. Even if you gun me down then and there, you'll never escape the fact that I was right... and your precious church is wrong!'

The woman pulled her bolter, but Miriya held up a warning hand. 'You know better than to let a witch goad you, Portia. Recite the Saint's Lament and reflect upon it.'

Her face soured, but the dark-skinned Battle Sister did as she was asked, turning away to mumble the prayer under her breath. Miriya looked to Vaun once more. She could see the neuropathic drugs were beginning to wear off; and she knew that Verity had no more.

'She has a valid point. Why should I trust you, witch?'

'Nothing I have ever said to you has been a lie, Sister Miriya,' he replied. 'I see no need to change that now.' He paused. 'The Keep is the covert domain of Lord LaHayn. It is here that I spent those lost years of my life-' Vaun threw a look at Verity, '-here that your precious deacon's schemes are incubating. As the nursemaid said, this place is the end of the road. For all of us.'

Miriya accepted this with a nod; then with her hands she made a couple of sharp sign-gestures, battle language directives that the other Sisters instantly reacted to. The woman took her plasma gun from its holster and spoke the litany of activation to it. She approached Vaun and gave him a level state. 'You will have heard this from me before, but it bears repeating before we go forth. If you betray us, your life will be forfeit. All that keeps air in your lungs is my desire for the truth. Give me cause to doubt you, and I will give you the screaming, bloody end that you so richly deserve.'

'Such a compelling argument,' he teased, 'and pray tell, if I do indeed give you the truths you seek, what then? What gift do I get?'

'A chance to repent and a quick end.'

'Well,' Vaun smirked mockingly, 'I'm convinced. Shall we go?'



There were entrances to the Null Keep, but none of them were less than four hundred metres above the level of the valley floor. Instead, Vaun led them to a place where the oval mouths of steam tunnels opened to the cloudy sky. 'This is the manner in which I exited the citadel on the day

I escaped. Many had attempted it before me and all had been brought back for us to see, their bodies bloated by scalding and their skin falling off in sheets.'

'You speak of this place as if it were a prison,' said Cassandra.

'It is that, and it is other things as well. A honeycomb of cells exists within these walls, dungeons cut in the solidified magma bubbles, rooms impossible to gain purchase upon...'

He shuddered at the memory.

Isabel gingerly peered over the lip of the tunnel and ducked back with a start, blinking furiously. 'Ach! The heat! It will roast any exposed flesh!'

Miriya traced the fleur-de-lys on her chest plate. 'Don your helmets. Our power armour will protect us.'

Isabel pointed at Vaun. 'What about him? What about the Hospitaller?'

The psyker shook his head. 'There is a routine to the outgassing from the core. The temperature falls and rises in a precise rhythm, which I can predict. Keep close to me and I will guide you though, but do not dally. Hesitate in the wrong place and you'll be cooked.' Like a suitor asking for a courtly dance, Vaun offered his hand to Verity. 'Stay by my side, dear nursemaid.' He ended the sentence with a leer.

'Verity,' Miriya nodded. It was as much an order as she was going to give.

Loathing rose on the Hospitaller's face as she gingerly approached him. 'Have no fear, Sister,' said Vaun in a silky voice, 'I promise I will be the consummate gentleman.'

The girl closed her eyes, fighting down the disgust that she felt and Miriya gave Vaun one final look of warning. 'Portia, with me. Cassandra, the rear. Isabel, you will keep our erstwhile guide honest. If you so much as suspect he is leading us astray or performing a foul act upon Sister Verity's mind, you have my consent to kill him where he stands.'

suit's internal mechanisms labouring to keep her body cool. The tiny fusion core apparatus in her power armour's backpack showed warning glyphs at the corner of her vision, the temperature gauge rising quickly toward the redline. The Battle Sister kneaded the grip of her gun and pondered Portia's words again. For all she knew, Vaun was leading them into a pit of boiling lava – but to have brought them this far only to take them to certain death? It was not his way. In the days since his escape aboard the *Mercutio*, Sister Miriya found she was coming ever closer to understanding the mind of the aberrant. Vaun's ego was his driving force, and to merely end her life and that of her squad would not be satisfactory for him; he wanted them to admit *he* was in the right before they died.

In the back of her mind, a small voice asked the question; *and what if he is?* Miriya shook the thought away and kept moving.



After what seemed like hours of walking in a doubled-over crouch, they reached an intersection festooned with service walkways. Vaun, fatigued by the sustained use of his abilities, sagged a little, but directed them on to a service hatch. Portia ventured through and beckoned them into a maintenance room. Relief welled up in each of them as the Battle Sisters took a moment to remove their helmets. Verity was pale and her habit was drenched with sweat; she drained most of her water bottle before she administered a potion to each of them that would restore the balance of their bodies.

There was another door in the room and Vaun walked across to it, peering through a barred slit. The strength that had been missing from his gait was starting to return. 'Here we are,' he said, a curious sadness in his tone that Miriya had not heard before.

The Sister Superior took a look herself, and gasped.

Continued next month



In a ragged line, they entered the tunnel and ventured inside. Boiling hot streams of scorching air rumbled past them, fogging the visors of their Sabbat-pattern helms with condensation. Miriya toyed with the preysight setting, but the colours were a riot of tumbling reds, whites and oranges, and she quickly became disoriented. Blinking sweat from her lashes, she pushed on, conscious of the



INSIDE THE STUDIO

And so you reach the end of the magazine, weary from your hobby journey but full of inspiration for your own projects. But before you go, here's a little glimpse at what we've been up to in our own hobby worlds.

The big news is that quite a few studio members have been painting models for the Warhammer 40,000 army painting challenge we've had going on, including our very own Lyle, Matt and Sophie. The goal was to paint a 50 Power Level collection over four months – the perfect start to a new army. As you can see from the pictures below, there was a pretty good turnout! Elsewhere, people have been painting all manner of models, from Ambots to special characters. Seems like painting is very much the theme of the month!



THE ARMY CHALLENGE

Like a very sudden and unexpected teleport strike, twenty-nine new armies have suddenly appeared in the Warhammer studio. Among them you can see Tyranids, Drukhari, Astra Militarum, Space Marines and, if you look very carefully, an army of Tome Keepers painted by Lyle. We'll be showing off plenty more of these collections in the very near future.



AMBOT BY ELLIOT HAMER

Inspired by the Outlaw Brutes in this issue's Necromunda article, Elliot converted this very spiky Ambot using spare Chaos Space Marine parts, including the lightning claws from Warp Talons. The glossy red armour was achieved by painting Blood Angels Red over a Leadbelcher basecoat, then highlighting with Stormhost Silver.



NEW STARTER

Dirk Wehner is one of the translators for the German edition of *White Dwarf*, though right now he's on paternity leave looking after his newborn son William. 'I'm just giving him some advice on his first Warhammer army,' says Dirk. 'It would be cool to have this picture in *White Dwarf* – if he becomes a hobbyist one day, it would be awesome to show it to him.'



As we come to the end of the magazine, we take a look at the games people have been playing and the models they've been painting in the studio over the past month. This issue: literary heroes, a tainted Ambot, a new starter and some big green monsters.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

The team behind *White Dwarf* are always engaged in hobby activities behind the scenes. Here's what some of them have been up to recently.



DAN

Dan's been playing lots of games recently, mostly *Warcry* and *Warhammer 40,000*. His games of *Warcry* against his friend Jamie saw him score a double victory, but his gaming weekend a week later saw him lose three games in a row with his *Iron Warriors*. So, mixed results then!



MATT

Matt's been working on a collection of *Word Bearers* for the studio's army challenge. He now has 50 Power Level of red-armoured evil ready to make war and spread heresy on the battlefields of the 41st Millennium. Hopefully we'll be showing you more of them soon.



SOPHIE

Sophie has also been taking part in the studio challenge, having painted a small force of *Salamanders Space Marines* with allied *Adeptus Custodes*. She's now gone back to her first love – the *Space Wolves*. It's rumoured that she's got *Ragnar Blackmane* around somewhere ...



LYLE

Lyle's spent the last few months painting *Tome Keepers*, having been inspired by the background we're writing for them in *White Dwarf*. So far he's painted *Reivers*, *Intercessors*, *Aggressors*, *Inceptors*, *Hellblasters*, an *Impulsor*, a *Redemptor Dreadnought* and a few characters.

PETER MCMULLIN'S HEROES

Peter has been painting a lot of special-release miniatures recently, including *Valerian* and *Aleya*, plus Sergeant 'Ripper' Jackson, the new store-opening model. He painted the two *Black Library* heroes with gold and silver armour, using *Drakenhof Nightshade* to shade both of them and give them a bluish tint. He also used *Forge World's Orange Rust* weathering powder on their bases to provide contrast. For *Ripper Jackson*, Peter sprayed her with *Mechanicus Standard Grey*, then painted all her base colours with *Contrast* paints.



THUNDER LIZARDS BY BEN JOHNSON

This army of Seraphon was painted by renowned Age of Sigmar hobbyist Ben Johnson, who decided an entire collection of monsters was the only way to go!

'The army started out as so many of my armies do – with a simple question,' says Ben. 'How many monsters can I fit in the list? That was the basis for my Stegadon horde. The colour scheme is based on that of the Thunder Lizards, as

shown in *Battletome: Seraphon*. The basecoat for the scales is Caliban Green drybrushed through Kabalite Green and Sybarite Green before being washed with Nuln Oil. I made one final pass with Kabalite Green to finish it off. The skin is painted with a basecoat of Incubi Darkness followed by drybrushed layers of Sotek Green and Temple Guard Blue also followed by a wash of Nuln Oil. The bases are from the Warhammer Underworlds Primal Lair set.'



NEXT MONTH
GLOGG'S MEGAMOB

NEXT ISSUE
ON SALE 16
OCTOBER

SUBSCRIBE TO WHITE DWARF

THE ULTIMATE WARHAMMER MAGAZINE



- NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!
- MAKE A SAVING ON THE COVER PRICE.
- GET WHITE DWARF DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR EACH MONTH.
- SUBSCRIBER COPIES ARE MAILED OUT EARLY AND SHOULD BE WITH MOST SUBSCRIBERS BEFORE THEY ARRIVE IN STORES.
- EXCLUSIVE SUBSCRIBER COVERS!

SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT [GAMES-WORKSHOP.COM/WHITEDWARF](https://www.games-workshop.com/whitedwarf) OR CALL THE NUMBERS BELOW

CUSTOMER SERVICES CONTACT DETAILS:



UK

subscriptions@warnersgroup.co.uk

+44 1778 392083



USA & CANADA

custserv@gwplc.com

1-800-394-4263



ASIA-PACIFIC

au.hobbyservice@gwplc.com

+61 2 9829 6111



REST OF WORLD

uk.custserv@gwplc.com

+44 115 91 40000

