Privateer Press

NO QUARTER™

ISSUE Nº 51
Nov 2013

FIRST LADY OF THE RETRIBUTION

EIRYSS RETURNS IN *VENGEANCE* PREVIEWS

MONSTERNOMICON RETURNS!

UNDEAD, UNDEAD, AND MORE UNDEAD

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DR. ARKADIUS IN THE GAVYN KYLE FILES

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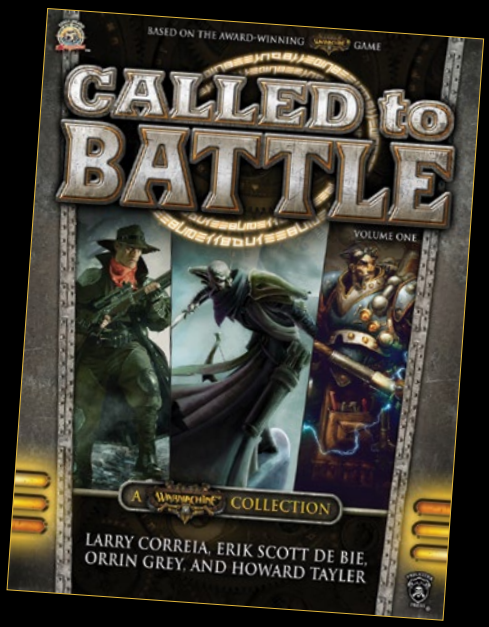
ON THE COVER

Eiryss, Mage Hunter Commander by Andrea Uderzo

ANSWER THE CALL!

Every month, Skull Island eXpeditions releases a new work of fiction set in the Iron Kingdoms, and the most recent novella—the first volume in the *Called to Battle* anthology series—runs the gamut of characters: heroes, villains, and those living in the shadows in between. You'll find mercenaries, mage hunters, even blighted trollkin lying in wait for you at **skullislandx.com/warmachine/called-to-battle-volume-one**



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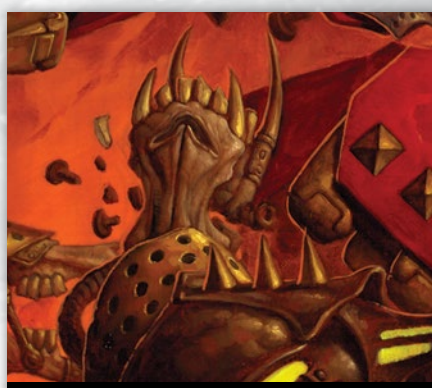

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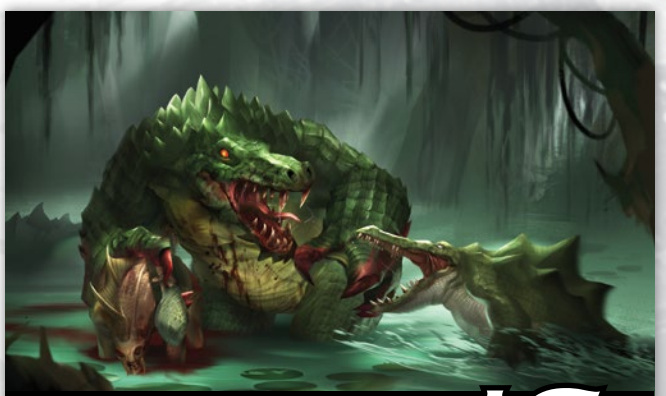

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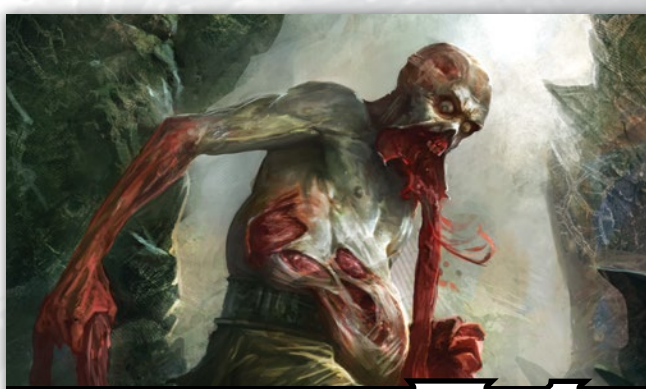

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CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Three years and twenty-plus issue ago, I stepped into the role of *No Quarter* editor-in-chief, a fresh-faced newb with a bagful of expectation, hopes, and dare I say, dreams of what the magazine could be. Despite my limited knowledge of WARMACHINE, HORDES, and the Iron Kingdoms, I dove into *No Quarter* with both feet. The water was deep, but I soon discovered I had plenty of life preservers to keep me afloat. Of course, my colleagues pitched in to help me learn the ropes, but I also found the Privateer Press community—the players and the Press Gang—there to welcome me into the fold with open arms.

During my tenure as editor-in-chief it's been my goal to repay the support shown to me by the Privateer Press community by creating the best possible magazine. I've listened to players on the forums and at conventions, and I've tried to use their thoughts and opinions to drive even more compelling content. I hope I've done that, and I hope the dedicated readers of *No Quarter*—new and veteran—have enjoyed *No Quarter* #30 through *No Quarter* #51.

Now the time has come to pass the torch and let a new creative voice take the wheel of our magazine. Don't worry, though: we've chosen someone with the experience, imagination, and the little bit of crazy required of all magazine editors to take up the post. His name is Mike Ryan, and he'll be your guide from here on out.

So, thanks for having me—it's been a blast. I'll poke my head in occasionally to see what Mike's up to, but now I leave you in his very capable hands.

Aeryn Rudel
Publications Manager

I've been in the gaming industry for a long, long time, and I've had the pleasure to serve as a writer, an editor, or an editor-in-chief for a number of games. Coming on board to work at Privateer Press feels very much like the apex of my contributions to a wide variety of creative worlds. I can't imagine it getting much better than this.

No Quarter is already great; if I want to contribute something meaningful to its growth as the incoming editor-in-chief, I have my work cut out for me. But I have ideas and goals about expanding content for the RPG, adding more in-depth and behind-the-scenes articles for all aspects of the tabletop game, providing more coverage of new Privateer Press games, and exploring more of the Iron Kingdoms through fiction spanning multiple issues and allowing characters and plots to fully develop. Plus, we need to allow room for new theme forces, more previews, and greater portals into the Iron Kingdoms with properties like *WARMACHINE: Tactics*.

In the end, my goal and intent is to live up to the high standard Aeryn Rudel already established for *No Quarter*…and then to nudge the bar a little higher.

See you in January.

Michael G. Ryan
Editor-in-Chief

IRON GAUNTLET UPDATE

Do you have what it takes to battle for the ultimate title in WARMACHINE and HORDES competitive play? Then… ENTER THE IRON GAUNTLET. Compete in Iron Gauntlet Qualifier events around the world for glory and a chance to compete against the best of the best at the Iron Gauntlet: WARMACHINE & HORDES World Championship at Lock & Load GameFest 2014! In this epic confrontation, one competitor will dominate the championship and claim the title **"Best in the World."**

The gauntlet has been thrown down. Prove you're the best…if you've got the metal!

UPCOMING IRON GAUNTLET QUALIFIERS

WARMACHINE Weekend 2013
St. Louis, MO
November 15–17

Iron Moot 2013
Gothenburg, Sweden
November 29–December 1

Cancon 2014
Canberra, Australia
January 25–27

TempleCon 2014
Warwick, RI
February 6–9

SmogCon 2014
United Kingdom
February 21–23

Kingdom Con 2014
San Diego, CA
April 24–27

More dates to come!

IRON GAUNTLET GLOBAL PLAYER RANKINGS

Through August 2013

PLAYER NAME	POINTS		REGION
REGION LEADERS			
Daniel Knauss	18	▲	Europe / Africa
Jay Larsen	12	▲	NA West
Keith Christianson	10		NA West
Robin Maukisch	10	▲	Europe / Africa
Jake Hoffman	6	▲	NA East
David Chandler	4	▲	NA East
Kuen-Kuen Sim	1		Australia / Asia
AT-LARGE LEADERS			
Brandon Cating	8		NA West
Andy McBirnie	8		Europe / Africa
Chris Green	8	▲	NA West
Charles Arrasmith	6		NA West
Liam Jordan	6		Europe / Africa
Tobias Voigt	6	▲	Europe / Africa
Endre Fodstad	4		Europe / Africa
Josef Skladanka	4		Europe / Africa
Bartholomäus Dobrzanski	4	▲	Europe / Africa
IN THE HUNT			
John Demaris	2		NA West
James Russel	2		NA West
Walter Langendorf	2		NA East
Jake Van Meter	2	▲	NA East
Tony Moore	2		Europe / Africa
Vladimir Kokolia	2		Europe / Africa
Martyn Jenkins	2		Europe / Africa
Dean Booth	2		Europe / Africa
John Richards	2	▲	NA West
Cory Hockman	2	▲	NA East
James Preusser	2	▲	NA West
Craig Cassata	2	▲	NA West
Matthias Adolph	2	▲	Europe / Africa
Alexander Baues	2	▲	Europe / Africa
Sebastian Potthoff	2	▲	Europe / Africa
Leif Barleben	2	▲	Europe / Africa

At the end of the season, the top two players from each region and the top eight at-large players will earn a spot at the Iron Gauntlet Finals at Lock & Load GameFest 2014. Results include Lock & Load GameFest 2013, Gen Con 2013, UK Masters, 2013 and RatCon 2013.

For more information about Iron Gauntlet: The WARMACHINE & HORDES World Championship, visit www.privateerpress.com/organized-play/iron-gauntlet

NEW RELEASES

Reciprocators (plastic)
Game: warmachine/convergence of cyriss
Sculptor: ben misenar
Painter: meg maples
Release: november • **PIP 36011** • **$44.99**

Accretion Servitors (metal)
Game: warmachine/convergence of cyriss
Sculptor: sean bullough
Painter: meg maples
Release: november • **PIP 36008** • **$10.99**

Steelsoul Protector (metal)
Game: warmachine/convergence of cyriss
Sculptor: michael jenkins
Painter: matt dipietro
Release: november • **PIP 36012** • **$13.99**

Temple Flameguard (plastic)
Game: warmachine/protectorate of menoth
Sculptor: todd harris
Painter: matt dipietro
Release: november • **PIP 32096** • **$49.99**

Night Troll (plastic)
Game: hordes/trollbloods
Sculptor: brian dugas
Painter: matt dipietro
Release: november • **PIP 71078** • **$18.99**

Eiryss, Mage Hunter Commander (metal)
Game: warmachine/retribution of scyrah
Sculptor: thomas david
Painter: meg maples
Release: december • **PIP 35052** • **$14.99**

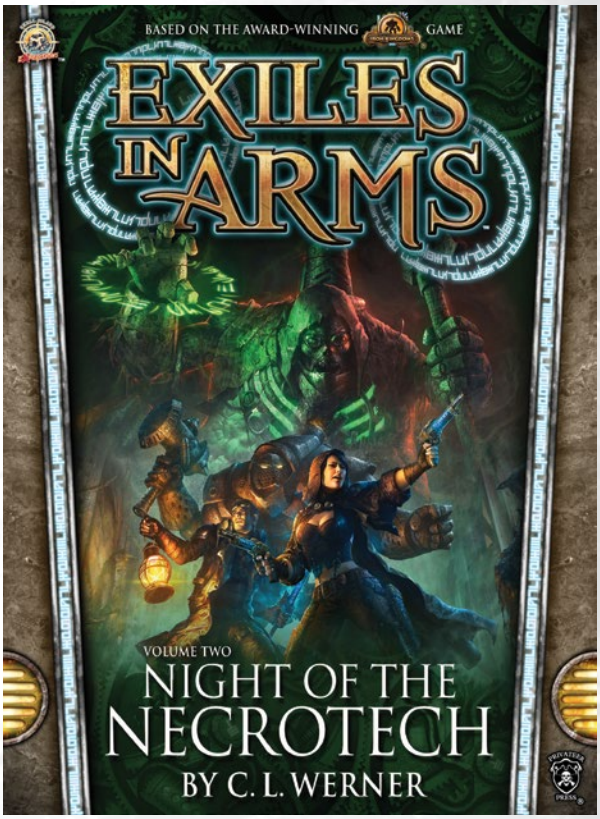
NEW RELEASES

Flame Bringers (metal & plastic)
Game: warmachine/protectorate of menoth
Sculptor: todd harris
Painter: matt dipietro
Release: december • **PIP 32071 • $59.99**

Optifex Directive (metal)
Game: warmachine/convergence of cyriss
Sculptor: steve saunders
Painter: matt dipietro
Release: december • **PIP 36007 • $16.99**

Beast Mistress (metal)
Game: hordes/legion of everblight
Sculptor: patrick keith
Painter: matt dipietro
Release: december • **PIP 73074 • $12.99**

Perforators (plastic)
Game: warmachine/convergence of cyriss
Sculptor: ben misenar
Painter: meg maples
Release: december • **PIP 36020 • $44.99**



Night of the Necrotech
skull island expeditions
Format: digital novel
Author: c. l. werner
Release: november • **$7.99**

NEW RELEASES

WARMACHINE High Command: The Big Guns
Release: december
PIP 61007 • $15.99

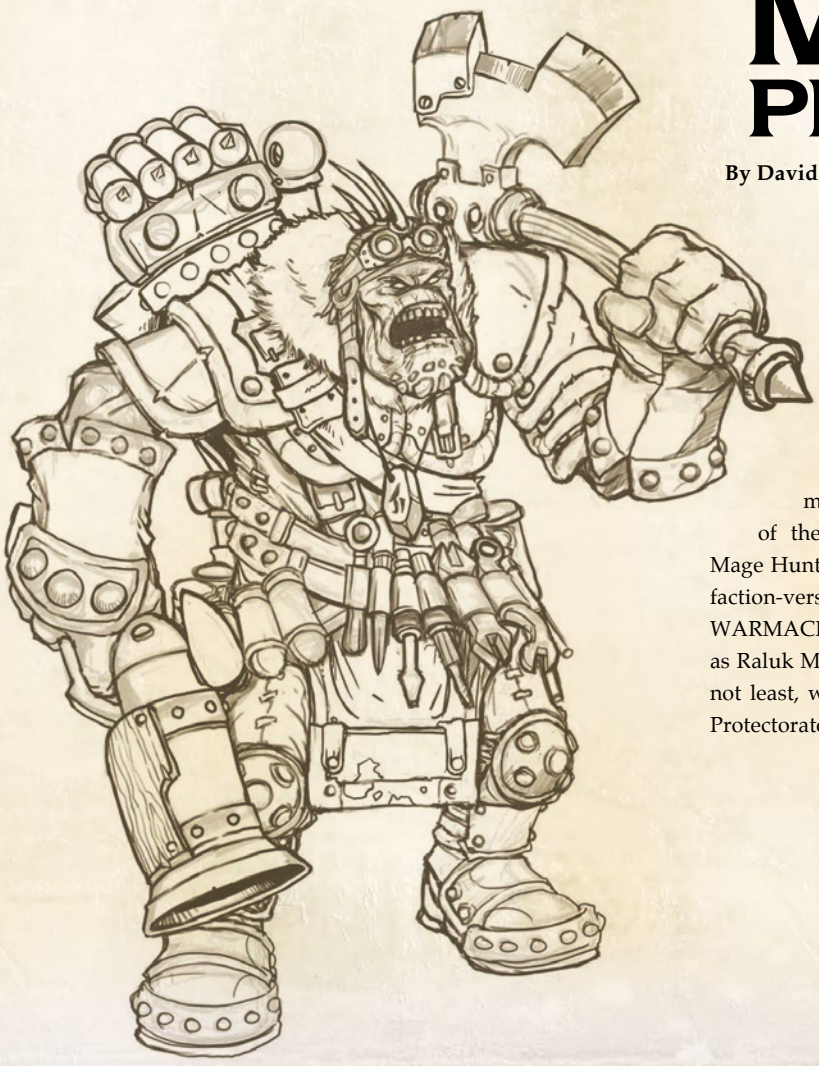
Classic WARMACHINE and HORDES Models Now Available in Full-Size Units

Idrian Skirmishers (metal)
game: warmachine/protectorate of menoth
Release: november
PIP 32101 • $44.99

Blighted Nyss Legionnaires (metal)
game: hordes/legion of everblight
Release: december
PIP 73077 • $54.99

WARMACHINE®

VENGEANCE



MODEL PREVIEWS

By David "DC" Carl, Jack Coleman, and Michael Sanbeg
Art by Christopher Burdett,
Néstor Ossandón, and Andrea Uderzo

With the release date of *WARMACHINE: Vengeance* looming ever closer, we're digging deep to show off some of the models that will soon become available to players everywhere.

In this preview, we'll kick things off with the much-anticipated newest incarnation of one of the very first WARMACHINE characters: Eiryss, Mage Hunter Commander. We then present one of the most faction-versatile Mercanaries among the armies of WARMACHINE and HORDES, the trollkin mechanik known as Raluk Moorclaw, the Iron Monger. And last, but certainly not least, we showcase the thunderous mobility of the new Protectorate cavalry unit, the Flame Bringers.

EIRYSS, MAGE HUNTER COMMANDER
RETRIBUTION EPIC CHARACTER UNIT ATTACHMENT

EIRYSS						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
7	4	7	9	16	12	9

CROSSBOW			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
12	1	–	10

CROSSBOW BLADE	
POW	P+S
3	7

SABER	
POW	P+S
3	7

DAMAGE	5
FIELD ALLOWANCE	C
POINT COST	3
SMALL BASE	

Attachment [Mage Hunter] – This attachment can be added to a Mage Hunter unit.

EIRYSS
Officer

Pathfinder

Stealth

Arcane Assassin – When making attacks, ignore focus points overboosting the target's Power Field and spell effects adding to its ARM or DEF.

Arcane Hemorrhage – When this model hits another model with an attack, the model hit loses the focus and fury points on it, and upkeep spells it cast immediately expire.

Granted: Fearless – While this model is in play, models in its unit gain Fearless.

Granted: Reform – While this model is in play, after all models in its unit have completed their actions, each can advance up to 3".

Quick Work – When this model destroys one or more enemy models with a melee attack during its combat action, immediately after that attack is resolved this model can make one normal ranged attack. Attacks gained from Quick Work do not count against a weapon's ROF.

Tactics: Advance Deployment – Models in this unit gain Advance Deployment.

CROSSBOW
Weapon Master

CROSSBOW BLADE
Weapon Master

SABER
Weapon Master

Eiryss, Mage Hunter Commander

Long admired as a living legend among her people, Eiryss has at last embraced her role as a commander among the mage hunters of the Retribution of Scyrah. Having gathered information for many years as a mercenary, she now accompanies the forces of the Retribution exclusively. On the battlefield she emboldens her allies and pushes them to engage with even greater mobility. With a unique talent for disrupting the arcane powers of her foes, Eiryss glides undetected through the field of battle to add her mastery of blade and bow to that of the mage hunters fortunate enough to be selected to fight alongside her.

TACTICAL TIP

Quick Work – This model cannot make the additional attack if it is still in melee.

Using Eiryss, Mage Hunter Commander

The mere name of Eiryss is sufficient to make most opponents a bit nervous, and that diminutive elf with her flowing cloak and ready crossbow is a priority target on WARMACHINE tables everywhere. Whether she's stripping focus from a warcaster for an entire round or invalidating an upkeep spell critical to an opponent's plans, Eiryss packs a punch that's impossible to ignore.

Eiryss, Mage Hunter Commander is a departure from her previous incarnations in that she now works exclusively for the Retribution of Scyrah alongside any Mage Hunter unit. For now, that means she's a unit attachment for the Mage Hunter Strike Force or Mage Hunter Infiltrators. This veteran Mage Hunter has trained these forces to infiltrate enemy positions and stand firm in the face of danger (Tactics: Advance Deployment and Granted: Fearless). The real coup de gras, though, is that she can coordinate their attacks using the Granted: Reform ability. Though 3" of movement may not seem like much, it is more than enough to allow the Mage Hunter Strike Force to slink back into the woods and out of sight or to allow Mage Hunter Infiltrators to engage enemy ranged targets or reposition to minimize counterstrike casualties.

Whether fighting at range or up close and nasty, Eiryss has more personal combat potential than ever before. With two Weapon Master melee attacks at MAT 7 or one Weapon Master crossbow shot at RAT 9, she is equally capable of leading by example whether charging in with Mage Hunter Infiltrators or taking aim at a key target alongside a Mage Hunter Strike Force.

Naturally, Eiryss also maintains her prowess at disrupting human magic. Arcane Assassin makes it even easier for her to hit and damage targets despite protective spells, and Arcane Hemorrhage strips the target's focus or fury points when she hits it with a melee or ranged attack. Even more important, against warcasters and warlocks Arcane Hemorrhage negates *all* upkeep spells the model has cast; a truly terrifying threat against upkeep-heavy models like Morvahna the Autumnblade or Forge Master Syntherion.

RALUK MOORCLAW, THE IRONMONGER

MERCENARY MINION TROLLKIN CHARACTER SOLO

MOORCLAW						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
5	7	6	6	13	15	9

SLUG GUN			
RNG	ROF	AOE	POW
4	1	—	14

BATTLE AXE	
POW	P+S
6	13

DAMAGE	8
FIELD ALLOWANCE	C
POINT COST	2
MEDIUM BASE	

Mercenary – This model will work for Cryx, Cygnar, and Khador.

Minion – This model will work for Trollbloods and the Blindwater Congregation or Thornfall Alliance pacts.

MOORCLAW

'Jack Marshal

Tough

Assault – As part of a charge, after moving but before making its charge attack, this model can make one ranged attack targeting the model charged unless they were in melee with each other at the start of this model's activation. When resolving an Assault ranged attack, the attacking model does not suffer the target in melee penalty. If the target is not in melee range after moving, this model must still make the Assault ranged attack before its activation ends.

Drive: Hog Wild – This model can attempt to Drive each warjack under its control in its command range. To Drive a warjack, this model must make a command check at any time during its activation. If it passes, the warjack can make one ranged attack this activation before its normal movement. After its normal movement, the warjack can only make melee attacks that activation. If it fails, the warjack does not benefit from 'Jack Marshal this turn.

Mechanikally Adept – This model can attempt to repair friendly non-Faction warjacks and battle engines.

Repair [8] (★Action) – This model can attempt repairs on any damaged friendly Faction warjack. To attempt repairs, this model must be B2B with the damaged warjack and make a skill check. If successful, remove d6 damage points from the warjack's damage grid.

Raluk Moorclaw, the Iron Monger

Never happier than when fighting alongside the warjacks that follow his every command, the mechanik known as the Iron Monger requires nothing more than the love of battle itself to motivate him. Raluk Moorclaw constantly seeks opportunities to hone his talents for directing and repairing warjacks, and he fights enthusiastically alongside any who have coin to spare. Whether blazing away with his own slug gun, applying his exceptional skills to the repair of warjacks, or charging directly into the enemy ranks with his battle axe in hand, Moorclaw is both a daunting and talented foe.

TACTICAL TIPS

Assault – The assaulting model ignores the target in melee penalty even if is not in melee range of its charge target after moving.

'Jack Marshal – A Mercenary Minion 'Jack Marshal can field Mercenary warjacks normally when fielded as a Minion.

Repair – A wreck marker cannot be repaired.

Using Raluk Moorclaw, the Iron Monger

Raluk Moorclaw will work for a great many allies: for Cygnar, Khador, Cryx, and Trollbloods armies along with the Four Star, Highborn, Blindwater, and Thornfall contracts and pacts. One prime service Moorclaw offers is warjack and battle engine repair, regardless of faction. He also allows these factions to marshal a mercenary warjack. A sturdy warjack like a Vanguard or Rover allows him to make the most of his repair capabilities, and thanks to Drive: Hog Wild, it can use its ranged and melee attacks in the same activation.

Moorclaw himself can use ranged and melee attacks in a single activation when he's fighting rather than repairing. Assault lets him get a lot of mileage out of that short-ranged slug gun, and his battle axe is respectable at P+S 13. And with MAT 6 and RAT 6, Raluk Moorclaw delivers capable combat potential on top of his technical prowess.

FLAME BRINGERS

PROTECTORATE FLAMEGUARD LIGHT CAVALRY UNIT

TACTICAL TIP

SIDE STEP - An initial attack with a light cavalry Mount will trigger Side Step

Flame Bringers

When the need arises for great mobility, the most skilled riders among the Daughters of the Flame mount up for war. Flame Bringers engage their enemies at full gallop while riding with incredible skill and blinding speed. With their twin swords, these masters of mounted combat slice through their enemies with fluid grace and precise lethality.

Using Flame Bringers

The Flame Bringers are the most mobile light cavalry unit in WARMACHINE. Their three initial attacks combined with Side Step and light cavalry rules allow them to move up to 23″ in a single activation. This mobility lets the Flame Bringers penetrate deep into enemy lines, clear out objectives, or outflank and circle behind the enemy army without suffering free strikes.

With a large number of attacks and Weapon Master, the Flame Bringers are ideal for clearing out single-wound troops and solos. They benefit greatly from spells such as Death Sentence, Ignite, and Eye of Menoth and are exceptionally deadly during the feat turns of High Exemplar Kreoss, Grand Exemplar Kreoss, and the Testament of Menoth.

The Flame Bringers have great combat potential, and any players who take advantage of their mobility and provide the right support are capable of making truly incredible plays.

LEADER & GRUNTS

Pathfinder

Side Step – When this model hits an enemy model with an initial melee attack or a melee special attack that is not a power attack, it can advance up to 2″ after the attack is resolved. This model cannot be targeted by free strikes during this movement.

SWORD

Weapon Master

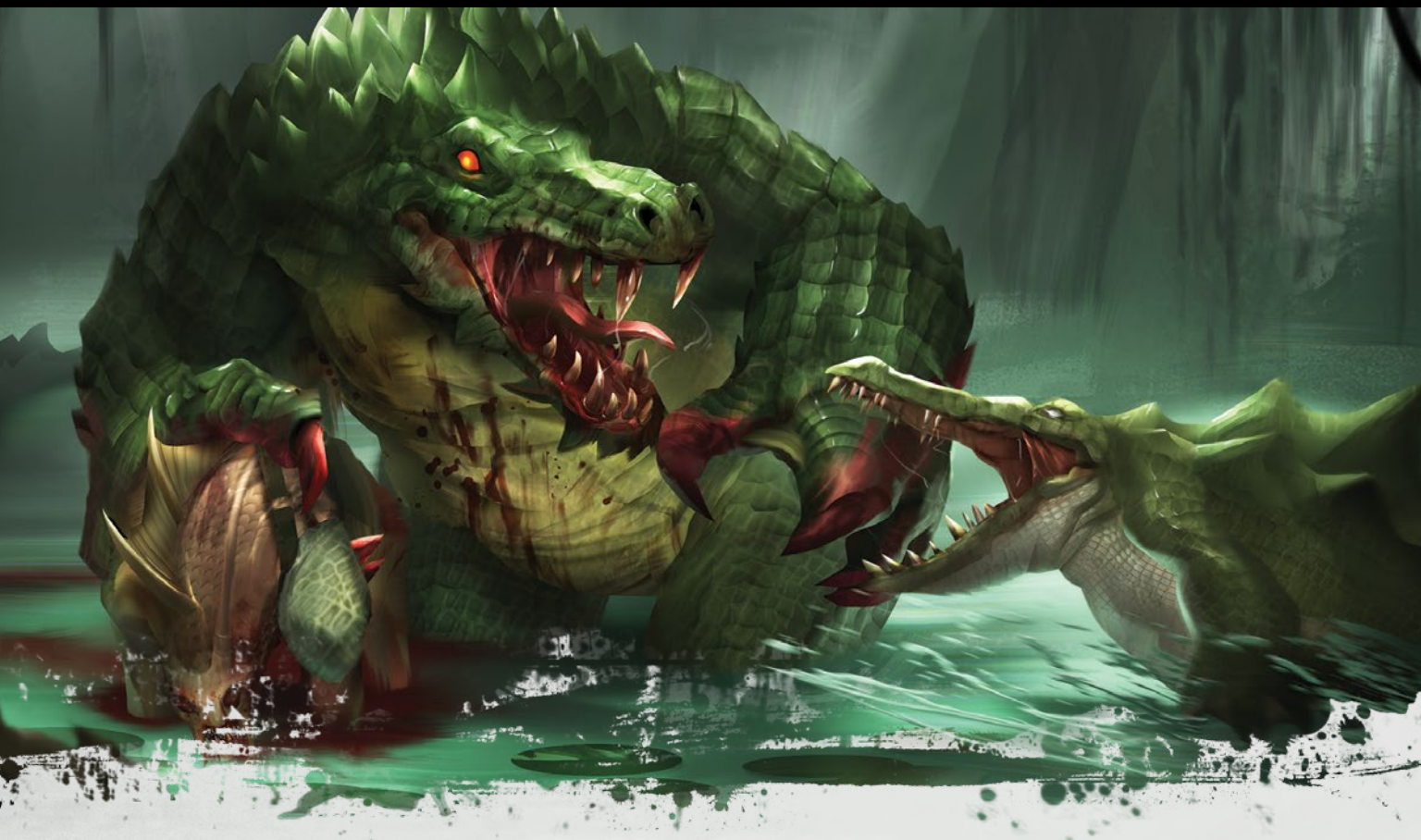
Critical Grievous Wounds – On a critical hit, the model hit by this weapon loses Tough, cannot heal or be healed, and cannot transfer damage for one round.

LEADER & GRUNTS						
SPD	STR	MAT	RAT	DEF	ARM	CMD
9	5	6	4	14	15	9

SWORD	
POW	P+S
4	9

MOUNT
POW
10

DAMAGE	5 EA
FIELD ALLOWANCE	1
LEADER & 2 GRUNTS	6
LEADER & 4 GRUNTS	10
LARGE BASE	



GUTS & GEARS

BULL SNAPPER & BLACKHIDE WRASTLER

BY MICHAEL G. RYAN • ART BY SIMON BOXER AND CARLOS CABRERA

Date: Solesh 4th, 607 AR

To: Professor Viktor Pendrake, Department of Extraordinary Zoology, Corvis University
From: Associate Professor Lynus Wesselbaum

Dear Professor,

Pursuant to our conversation about my research into snappers at the Prendergast Plantation expansion south of Clockers Cove, I've spent the last month in the workcamp of that esteemed road warden. His hired hands had just begun to drain the acreage in the Fenn Marsh to expand his retirement estate when the trouble began. In addition to a wealth of information aquired about both the snapper and later the blackhide wrastler, I was taken aback to learn despairing news about the mysterious disappearance of Professor Conleth Bray nearly a year ago.

I've included my notes on the snapper and the blackhide, and (I hope) toned down the overall disdain for Prendergast's approach to managing local wildlife I acquired while in his presence. This seemed only appropriate, in light of everything that happened.

Lynus Wesselbaum

BULL SNAPPERS

Prendergast's workers first stumbled upon the snappers as they were digging drainage ditches in the sunken area in which the manor would stand. The men whose duties included hauling away fallen trees were horrified to discover that some of the logs were, in fact, predators bigger than a man lying in wait. I was told the distinctive snapping sound of the beasts' jaws forcefully closing on hapless victims could be heard all the way back at the project's base camp. One worker described it to me as the sound of "every bone in the body being broken at once."

In general snappers are lethargic hunters, preferring to wait for a meal to get close so as not to expend much energy pursuing it. This is not to say a snapper won't give chase if sufficiently hungry or angry. Its finned tail and webbed feet make it especially fleet in the water (more so than on land, though they are equally comfortable hunting out of the water), but no degree of appetite or rage will keep a snapper in pursuit for long. In the Fenn Marsh prey is available in abundance, so a snapper is less likely to pursue a boatful of fleeing hired hands than it is to ambush an unsuspecting wild animal as it drinks. This state of torpor, combined with the snapper's ravenous hunger, accounts for its exceptional size, I suspect.

I arrived at the Prendergast Plantation during the breeding season of the snappers, which proved to be a problem for the former road warden. Prendergast had his men scouring the marsh well beyond his established estate grounds in search of snapper nests. These were often guarded by bull snappers, the larger, darker-colored male, while the cow snappers (easily identified by their smaller size, lighter color, and shorter snouts) hunted to restore their vitality. Each bull dutifully stood guard over as many as thirty buried eggs; because snappers eggs and hatchlings are vulnerable to predators, the male won't stray far from the nest voluntarily. Thus, while one group of Prendergast's men antagonized the bull snappers away from the nests another group rushed in to crush the eggs before the bulls returned, despite some suggestions regarding their value as food or objects of trade. I further objected to the elimination of my subjects for study, but Prendergast dismissed my concerns.

"Better now than when they turn up fully grown," he said.

Even his awareness of the value of a hatchling snapper's egg tooth—the single tooth it uses to break the shell of its egg—as a collectible or a good-luck token among some Morridane villagers did not alter his opinion that the beasts should be destroyed before they could become a problem.

I could hear the agitated snarling of those snappers that had lost their entire nests echoing out of the swamp and all the way up to the first completed outbuilding of the plantation, the guesthouse where I stayed with Prendergast. Snappers make a number of different noises, from aggressive growls and rumbles to chirps and gurgles that sound almost playful. To be perfectly clear, however, I saw nothing to suggest a snapper is ever actually "playful." In my month-long research, I found little to convince me that snappers are much more than violent eating machines.

One particular incident underscores my assessment of a snapper's diminished survival instinct. Once its appetite or aggression has been engaged, a snapper attacks both relentlessly and recklessly. It has little sense of self-preservation and will attack whatever it sees as edible, regardless of the dangers this might present. On one occasion, Warden Prendergast staked a full side of bloody beef in an open clearing to lure snappers out. As the beasts appeared, a dozen of Prendergast's hired hands opened fire. This barrage went on for some minutes, and when it was over three snappers lay dead, one with its jaws still locked around the side of beef. None of them had even tried to escape, and the next two snappers that unexpectedly emerged from the swamp died climbing over the first snapper bodies to reach that same bait.

My study of the snappers came to an unexpected end when we returned to the guesthouse for a late dinner one evening. Prendergast left us to briefly return to his rooms, and though we waited some time he failed to rejoin us. When we went to investigate we discovered destroyed furniture, shredded curtains, and the clear indications that snappers had begun building nests in Prendergast's bedroom. Prendergast himself had clearly been taken by surprise, as he was literally torn to pieces, his bedroom walls painted in blood. The snappers had apparently wandered off through the open balcony doors, the same way they had likely entered, and our explanations for their presence in the house were reasonable...though perhaps intended mostly to reassure ourselves that animals are not vengeful.

I assisted in the cleanup of the carnage and, a few days later, in packing up Prendergast's personal belongings as the plantation was being abandoned. You can imagine my surprise when, among his limited treasures, I found the presumed-late Professor Conleth Bray's university ring. My enquiries of Prendergast's staff revealed a disturbing turn of events: Prendergast, it seems, acquired the ring from a gatorman shaman who controls blackhide wrastlers. When I ventured that Professor Bray's ring had undoubtedly been bartered away by those who killed him, the servant who knew of its origins cocked an eyebrow. He had heard it was a gift from a shaman, and more specifically that Professor Bray had once traded it to a gatorman shaman in exchange for his life.

"The last I heard," the servant said, "he was alive."

And so, instead of returning to Corvis with my notes on snappers, I began to track down the gatorman shaman named Gargar the Whip—and hopefully Professor Bray as well.

BLACKHIDE WRASTLERS

I was lost in the Fenn Marsh, despite a modestly detailed map of the wetlands around me, and was on the verge of turning back the way I'd come when I accidentally cut my fingertip on a decidedly sharp swamp-palm frond. A very minor wound. A few beads of my blood spilled into the murky waters. Then the swamp bubbled and churned. In the trees above, beasts and birds fled. And suddenly a massive monstrosity of black and green and yellow with teeth like a casket full of daggers broke the surface, its eyes wild with hunger. Within moments I was no longer lost, much to both my fascination and regret. What a study opportunity! And what a horrifying way to die!

In this way I finally inadvertently located Gargar the Whip and his favored blackhide wrastler, Gullet. The three-ton beast had been drawn to a mere three or four drops of blood.

In truth, I learned a blackhide is just as easily drawn to the scent of blood as to the actual presence of it. In fact, it can be enticed to attack with merely the promise of a bloody meal, as Gargar explained to me later that afternoon, many hours after he'd intervened on my behalf to prevent the beast from devouring me in the swamp. But spilled blood, whether in battle or from some minor injury, is utterly irresistible to the monster, causing it to lose control and driving it into a feeding frenzy.

"Less bleeding," Gargar said to me in the Quor-gar dialect, "less blackhide."

Our introduction to one another was initially fraught with great risk. Gargar, of course, had little reason to allow me to live, even when I offered him the trinkets I had brought to initiate our temporary alliance. Gatormen are often quite willing to trade goods, even with humans, yet Gargar seemed reluctant. I knew he had traded Professor Bray's university ring to Prendergast, so I pinned my hopes of survival on that transaction. When I showed Gargar the seal of Corvis University on some of my papers and told him I could perhaps recover for him the ring he'd traded away, he finally relented.

The blackhide's ravenous appetite—which is seemingly impossible to sate regardless of the amount of meat it is able to consume—gave Gargar quite the eating machine by his side. In battle, I was led to understand in a tone that implied a warning, a blackhide wrastler will tear its opponents to pieces, often biting prey in half before proceeding to devour the separate parts, leaving nothing behind but a bloodstain. In fact the blackhide becomes more aggressive the longer it is in battle—given its voraciousness and the effects the presence of blood has on the beast, many a blackhide has attempted to eat its way through an entire platoon of soldiers, right up to the moment of its death.

During our brief time together, with my questions about how he acquired Professor Conleth's university ring being ignored, Gargar exposed me directly to the blackhide's insatiable hunger. We came upon an unfortunate encampment of bog trogs, after which I was subjected to a nightmarish sight. With savage glee the blackhide wrastler smashed its twelve-foot-long frame down amid the bog trogs, roaring as it rolled over its victims, its tail thrashing as it searched to encircle its prey.

This death roll is, in fact, a blackhide wrastler's signature means of attack—its claws and tail wrap around its intended victim, and with its full and exceptional body weight pinning its prey beneath it, the blackhide either suffocates, crushes, or drowns its prey in preparation for eating it whole, whether it is dead or alive. A blackhide is terrifyingly

humanoid—it can rise up on its hind legs and run toward its victims, forelegs outstretched, to fall upon them. While I was unable to learn exactly how gatorman shamans control these monstrosities, the bog trog incident was a perfect example of how the shamans use blackhides to terrorize and subjugate other swamp-dwelling tribes. What followed was a bloodbath of death rolls and snapping jaws the likes of which I hope to never see again. The bog trogs, for all their fierceness, had no hope against Gullet, despite the number of bloody blows they landed on the blackhide. In one case, it bit a bog trog in half with greater force than even the fiercest bear would, spraying the creature in multiple direction. And I discovered the beast is as comfortable hunting on dry land as it is in the water. It is an amphibious creature, and Gargar confirmed for me—with distinct pleasure—that the blackhide is as prone to wander into a village in search of prey, drawn by the smell of blood, as it is to lie still and wait for victims in the marshes where it lives.

When the slaughter was over I was witness to the restorative powers tied to a blackhide wrastler's appetite. As Gullet feasted upon the dead and dying bog trogs, its wounds healed right before my eyes. It would seem that blackhide wrastlers benefit far more than is usual from their exceptional consumption of flesh. By the time he had consumed the last chunks of bog trogs Gullet had fully healed of the wounds he had received. I could well see how a blackhide wrastler in battle could last longer than normal mortality should seem to allow.

Unnerved, I felt it better to leave Gargar's camp than wait to become a curative meal for his blackhide, as seemed an imminent probability. Gargar the Whip had clearly wearied of me, and had become increasingly impatient and occassionally hostile. My questions about blackhide wrastlers were more often than not answered with hisses and growls beyond interpretation. An intuition drove me to stop sleeping in my tent and to instead spend the night in the tree limbs overhead, sneaking back into place in the early morning. Gatormen and blackhide wrastlers do not climb trees, you see.

In the middle of the night just two days later, I awoke in my tree to the sounds of splashing, growling, and fabric tearing below me. I looked down to see Gullet tangled in the remnants of my tent and Gargar standing to the side, watching with eyes narrowed to slits. My tent was in its death grip, and Gargar clearly believed I was tangled in the canvas.

When he finally called Gullet back to his side and stroked its snout affectionately, I knew it was time to take my leave of the camp and abandon my education of the blackhide wrastler. I slipped away through

the branches just as Gargar began to search the remnants of my tent, presumably in hopes of finding Professor Bray's university ring, which he had made clear he wished returned to him. I wondered if he would try to force Gullet to regurgitate my non-existent remains when he did not find the ring in the tent's wreckage.

I have abandoned the matter of Professor Bray long enough to return to Clockers Cove, recover from my ordeal in the swamps, and send these notes to you for your perusal. Given the roadblock I encountered with Gargar and Gullet, I feel the next step is to retain the services of some mercenary types to take me to this Stonescale tribe and its bokor Chursk, among whom Professor Bray was apparently last seen alive. It will not surprise me if I learn he was killed—between gatormen, snappers, and blackhides, it seems one should not travel into the Fenn Marsh without being prepared to be consumed and digested by one of its myriad scaled inhabitants.

Sincerely,

Lynus Wesselbaum

BULL SNAPPER TACTICS

BY DAVID "DC" CARL

Bull Snappers may not seem like the most terrifying warbeasts to rise from the swamps of the Blindwater Congregation, but these humble hunters are ever hungry. A Bull Snapper rushes its prey with blinding speed before bringing it down in a mist of gore and a flurry of gnashing teeth.

GATOR SKIN

Spiny Growth. Any considerations of the Bull Snapper should begin with its Spiny Growth animus. Not only does Spiny Growth provide an additional 2 points of ARM for any friendly Faction model, it also turns an enemy warbeast's melee attacks against itself for d3 points of damage to that warbeast after *each* attack. Spiny Growth can raise a Blindwater warlock's ARM to 18 or 19, can make Gatorman heavy warbeasts even tougher to dispatch, or can increase the longevity of light warbeasts, including Bull Snappers themselves. For a mere 3 points, Spiny Growth puts at least one Bull Snapper into the "don't leave home without it" category for most Blindwater Congregation army lists.

Those d3 damage rolls add up over time, but just as important, they mitigate one of the greatest advantages of enemy warbeasts—healing. Simply healing 1 point of a warbeast's Spirit, for example, before charging into combat with a target under Spiny Growth suddenly becomes a risky proposition. Should the Spiny Growth damage land in the Spirit aspect, that warbeast's activation will quickly grind to a halt.

And when a warlock has fury to spare, it never hurts to throw an extra Spiny Growth or two into the mix. Even a trooper model from a Gatorman Posse reaches ARM 20 when packing Spiny Growth and engaging its enemies.

BLOODTHIRSTY

Bull Snappers also make efficient missiles for dealing with living models, especially mid-ARM warriors and warbeasts. The combination of Man-Eater and Blood Thirst means a Bull Snapper can charge a living model without being forced at an effective SPD 8. Add in spell or animus support like Warpath or Elasticity, and a few Bull Snappers can threaten truly massive swaths of the battlefield.

Once they reach a target, Bull Snappers are remarkably efficient. Boost the first attack roll and Sustained Attack will turn every additional attack into a guaranteed hit. With up to four chomps each, Bull Snappers can make quick work of mid-ARM enemy warbeasts. Alternatively, use Bull Snappers against lighter foes for self-managing fury. The Torpid ability prevents Bull Snappers from making further attacks once they've snagged their meal, but it also allows them to discard a fury point so the warlock won't need to deal with it later.

The pros and cons of fighting Undead and Constructs are also worth noting. On one hand, a Bull Snapper can bite numerous different Mechanithralls, Woldstalkers, or Servitors in the same turn, but it will cost a point of fury to charge and the Bull Snapper won't receive its movement boost. It also means the Bull Snapper won't be able to Torpid a fury point away. Remember, however, that the low cost of individual Bull Snappers means a frenzy here or there is far less costly than it is for a heavy warbeast.

BENEATH STILL WATERS

Alone or in groups, Bull Snappers are remarkably helpful light warbeasts for passing out Spiny Growth to those in need or ripping into living enemy models that draw too close (and by "too close," a Bull Snapper means halfway across the table).

- As noted earlier, Bloody Barnabas' Warpath spell and the Swamp Horror's Elasticity animus are great tools for increasing the Bull Snapper's already prodigious threat range. With both these effects in place a Bull Snapper has an effective 16″ threat range.
- Maelok the Dreadbound allows Bull Snappers to maximize their missile-like qualities in a way no other warlock can. His Spirit World feat turns the light warbeasts Incorporeal, allowing them to move straight through enemy models. Since most opposing warcasters and warlocks are living models that trigger Blood Thirst and Man-Eater, Bull Snappers with Elasticity gain a 13″ threat range and can use Sustained Attack to maximize attack quantity. Just a few Bull Snappers can pose an assassination threat your opponents will quickly learn not to underestimate.
- Effects that reduce opposing ARM can also maximize Bull Snapper efficiency. Since Sustained Attack already makes attack rolls so efficient, a damage roll boost is just what the doctor ordered. Parasite and Malediction are great tools to maximize the Bull Snapper's damage output.
- There are also numerous ways within the Blindwater Congregation Minion pact to keep Bull Snappers relatively safe from opposing models while they maneuver into position. Whether from Occultation, Swamp Pit, Admonition, or Dark Waters, the more Bull Snappers that safely reach the target the better off your hungry gator army will be.

BLACKHIDE WRASTLER TACTICS

BY DAVID "DC" CARL

Blackhide Wrastlers are the muscle of the Blindwater Congregation army and are favored warbeasts among most of its warlocks. As they charge forward to chomp, slash, and thrash their foes, their toughened hides and powerful natural weaponry are the perfectly complement to their insatiable lust for battle.

BEEFY BRAWLERS

Blackhide Wrastlers are strong, sturdy, have three initial melee attacks, and can charge living targets without being forced. With FURY 4, they can make as many as seven attacks on a charge and can regenerate some of the damage they suffer thanks to Snacking. With a little help from its tentacled friend the Swamp Horror, a Blackhide Wrastler becomes an excellent blender against tightly positioned enemy troops.

Its unique Death Roll ability requires a Wrastler to forego its three initial attacks in exchange for a knockdown effect on the P+S 17 bite attack with a boosted damage roll. This contrasts nicely with the anti-troop tactics discussed above as a powerful anti-warjack/warbeast option. With Death Roll and four additional attacks, a Blackhide Wrastler can make quick work of most light warjacks or warbeasts in a single activation and can even take out some heavy warjacks and warbeasts. A little backup may be necessary for the heaviest targets in the form of an ARM debuff or some allies joining in on the attack.

Much like the Bull Snapper's Sustained Attack, Death Roll makes additional attacks very efficient since the target's DEF is no longer an issue. Death Roll does knock down the Blackhide Wrastler as well as its target, but the namesake "Wrastler" ability means it's not a problem for our scaly hero. Thanks to the Wrastler ability, the warbeast can continue to make attacks and can even use its animus, Rise.

EVER READY

Rise acts as a perfect complement to the Death Roll ability, allowing a friendly Faction model to stand up for a single fury point. A Blackhide Wrastler can hop back to its feet after Death Rolling a victim, or a warlock can Rise a Blackhide Wrastler instead. This allows the Blackhide Wrastler to regain its respectable DEF 12 and readies it for charging further into battle on the following turn.

Though the Death Roll bite is its most destructive weapon, a Blackhide Wrastler's claws are exceptionally popular thanks to their Open Fist advantage. Open Fist allows Wrastlers to armlock and weapon lock in addition to being able to head-butt, push, slam, or trample. Perhaps most important, however, they allow the double-hand throw power attack. This versatile tool allows a Blackhide Wrastler to knock down and reposition an enemy model… or a friendly one.

Double-hand throws against friendly models aren't always a good idea, but Rise mitigates one key disadvantage of doing this (knockdown), while the gators' resiliency mitigates the other (suffering damage). With proper initial positioning, a Blackhide Wrastler can reposition a friendly model by a good half a foot and then stand it right back up again.

BLINDWATER BRUISER BACKUP

A self-sufficient warbeast that also plays well with others, the Blackhide Wrastler has no lack of support options. All three Blindwater Congregation warlocks can find a solid place for a Blackhide Wrastler (or two) in their battlegroups. Wrastlers work well with other warbeasts' animi, and their own Rise animus is an invaluable tool on the battlefield.

- Even more so than for Bull Snappers, movement tricks are a huge benefit for Blackhide Wrastlers. Whether it's a simple +2″ of charge distance from Boundless Charge or clever repositioning to set up a throw chain with Warpath, spells and abilities that increase threat range are extremely helpful. With lower SPD than Snappers and without Blood Thirst, they won't *quite* keep up with the smaller reptiles, but with a bit of help they'll get where they need to go to rip into their next meal.
- With a base ARM 19, a Blackhide Wrastler is an ideal target for the Bull Snapper's Spiny Growth animus. Top it off with Maelok the Dreadbound's Death Pact spell and it can reach a formidable ARM 23. This makes the Wrastler virtually immune to generic swords or rifles and even allows it to shrug off a round of attacks from most warjacks or warbeasts attempting an alpha strike.
- Buffs to melee damage output or debuffs to enemy ARM values are overkill against many of the Blackhide Wrastler's targets, but they are paramount against the heaviest targets such as opposing colossals and gargantuans. Don't forget that Calaban's Hex Blast can act as an ARM debuff against targets relying on their own upkeep spells for protection. Even an Arcane Shielded Stormwall will quickly crumble after the Grave Walker applies his Hex Blast and Parasite spells.

PAINTING ALBINO GATOR WARBEASTS

BY STUART SPENGLER

COLORS USED

- Armor Wash
- Bastion Grey
- Beast Hide
- Beaten Purple
- Bloodstone
- Coal Black
- Cryx Bane Base
- Cryx Bane Highlight
- Ember Orange
- Hammerfall Khaki
- Khardic Flesh
- Menoth White Highlight
- Murderous Magenta
- Morrow White
- Pig Iron
- Ryn Flesh
- Traitor Green
- Trollblood Base
- Trollblood Highlight
- Umbral Umber

STEP 1 – BASE DRYBRUSH

As always, drybrushing first can save you a lot of time that might otherwise be spent cleaning up stray brush strokes.

As the models are going to be painted in an albino scheme, I wanted to use dark, swampy colors to really make the base stand out.

1) After priming the models with P3 Black Primer, give all the base textures an even drybrush of Cryx Bane Base.
2) Drybrush with Cryx Bane Highlight.
3) Lightly drybrush with Hammerfall Khaki.

Colors Used: *Cryx Bane Base, Cryx Bane Highlight, Hammerfall Khaki*

STEP 2 – SKIN

1) Paint the model with Menoth White Highlight.
2) Wash the model with watered-down Hammerfall Khaki. Since the model is mostly skin and hide, a slightly inconsistent wash will give it the appearance of natural marks and discoloration.
3) Drybrush the skin with Menoth White Highlight. You may need to do a little cleanup to define the scales.
4) Highlight the edges of the scales with Morrow White.

Colors Used: *Hammerfall Khaki, Menoth White Highlight, Morrow White*

STEP 3 – MOUTH

1) Paint the tongue and insides of the mouth with Ryn Flesh.
2) Wash the insides of the mouth with thinned Murderous Magenta.
3) Wash the insides of the mouth with a very watery Beaten Purple. Concentrate on the bottoms of the teeth and the bottom half of the tongue.
4) Highlight the gums and the upper surface of the tongue with Ryn Flesh.

Colors Used: *Beaten Purple, Murderous Magenta, Ryn Flesh*

STEP 4 – CLAWS & TEETH

1) Paint the claws and teeth with Bastion Grey.
2) Highlight the claws and teeth with Trollblood Highlight.
3) Continue highlighting with a 1:1 mix of Trollblood Highlight and Menoth White Highlight.
4) Add another portion of Menoth White Highlight to the previous mix and highlight the tips with the new mix.

Colors Used: *Bastion Grey, Menoth White Highlight, Trollblood Highlight*

STEP 5 – EYES

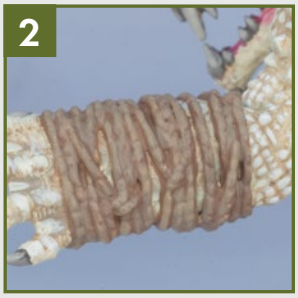
1) Paint the eyes and the surrounding skin with Armor Wash, then paint the nasal cavities with Armor Wash to make them look deeper.
2) Fill in the eyes with Coal Black.
3) Add a small, pinpoint highlight of Trollblood Base.

Colors Used: *Armor Wash, Coal Black, Trollblood Base*

STEP 6 – ROPE

1) Paint the ropes with Beast Hide.
2) Paint the upper surfaces of the ropes with Hammerfall Khaki. Since these will be washed, they don't need to be precisely highlighted. Just a general lighter area is fine.
3) Wash the ropes with a thinned Armor Wash.

Colors Used: *Armor Wash, Beast Hide, Hammerfall Khaki*



STEP 7 – METAL

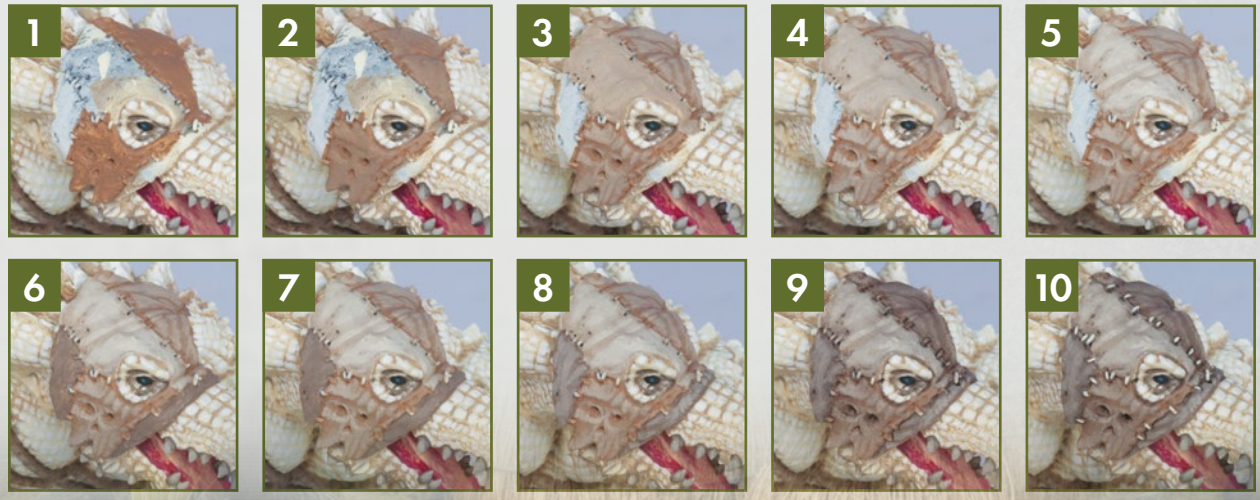
1) Paint the shoulder armor with Pig Iron.
2) Wash with a thinned mix of Umbral Umber.
3) Wash with a thinned mix of Bloodstone.
4) Wash with a thinned mix of Ember Orange.

Colors Used: *Bloodstone, Ember Orange, Pig Iron, Umbral Umber*

STEP 8 – DEAD SKIN MASK

1) Paint sections of the mask with different mixes of paint to give it a patchwork appearance. Paint the first sections with a mix of Khardic Flesh and Traitor Green.
2) Add a bit of Trollblood Highlight to the previous mix and highlight these first sections.
3) Add more Trollblood Highlight to the mix to highlight the first sections and paint the next sections.
4) Add more Trollblood Highlight to the mix and highlight these sections.
5) Add still more Trollblood Highlight to the mix and highlight the second sections.
6) Make a mix of Khardic Flesh and Trollblood Base, then paint the last sections.
7) Add a bit of Trollblood Highlight to the previous mix and highlight the last sections.
8) Add more Trollblood Highlight to the previous mix and continue highlighting the last sections.
9) Wash the entire mask with thinned Armor Wash.
10) Paint the stitches with Trollblood Highlight.

Colors Used: *Armor Wash, Khardic Flesh, Traitor Green, Trollblood Base, Trollblood Highlight*



CONCLUSION

I hope you enjoy this striking alternate color scheme. With these techniques in mind, you can now add a little albino variation to any of your HORDES armies!

Take a look inside the files and dossiers of Gavyn Kyle, the Iron Kingdoms' premier spy. Gathered at great expense and risk, these dossiers give a behind-the-scenes look at the histories and motivations of important characters in WARMACHINE and HORDES.

The Gavyn Kyle FILES

Transcribed by William Shick
Art by Josh Manderville, Andrea Uderzo, and Chris Walton

DR. ARKADIUS

Given your previous interest in the farrow chieftain Lord Carver, I had wondered when you would engage my not inconsiderable services in discovering more about the man behind the pig, as it were, the human scientist Dr. Egan Arkadius. [Note: he does not appear to tolerate anyone referring to him as Egan.]

Where Carver might be little more than the most brutish and predatory among a brutish and predatory race, Dr. Arkadius represents a most curious anomaly—a brilliant and once-lauded man of science who now finds himself more at home as the kingmaker of the farrow. While it might seem odd that a man of his talents kowtows to an uncultured and simple would-be conqueror, once you understand the obsession behind the man it becomes clear there is no limit to what he will endure in the pursuit of his greater work.

Documents from Arkadius' childhood and early adulthood were simple enough to locate. His family possessed substantial wealth, having made their fortunes as high-ranking members of the Mercarian League within Caspia. Gifted with arcane talent and a brilliant analytical mind, young Egan Arkadius was set to attend the prestigious Royal Cygnaran University's arcane engineering program. Fate had different plans for the young man, however; records show his youngest sister Tabitha, twelve years his junior, suffered from a cruel and unusual sickness. While her early development was completely without incident, after her sixth birthday Tabitha began to regress both physically and mentally. The Arkadius family spared no expense in attempting to treat their beloved daughter. Yet in the end, she proved unresponsive to both spiritual and alchemical aid. The greatest minds of Caspia could not stop the spread of the disease, and within two short years Tabitha succumbed to this rare affliction.

The following is a letter Arkadius sent to his father, following the son's decision to transfer his focus of study to the natural sciences with an emphasis on physiology and anatomy.

— GK

Dear Father,

Though you have advised against it, I will not be swayed from my course of action. Tabitha's death represents an inexcusable affront to the state of our enlightened age. That even the best minds in the medical field could not begin to guess at what afflicted my most dear sister, much less stop the horrific disease from ravaging her delicate spirit, demonstrates to me the absolute necessity of my decision.

From this moment on I will bend all my effort and intellect to rooting out mankind's weakness so that it may be expunged, and ensure no one must suffer as our family has suffered.

Arkadius quickly established himself within his new field of study at the R.C.U., much to the amazement of many of his professors, who originally viewed the fiery upstart with no small measure of reserve due to his change in academic pursuits. As this internal memo from the head of the Natural Sciences department to the dean of the R.C.U. reveals, however, by 578 AR his professors believed Arkadius on the verge of something revolutionary.

— GK

Dr. Arkadius Summary

555 AR: Egan Arkadius is born.

567 AR: Egan's sister Tabitha Arkadius is born.

573 AR: Tabitha shows signs of mild palsy. The Arkadius family seeks out top physicians for diagnosis and treatment.

Early 574 AR: Egan accepts entry into the Royal Cygnaran University's esteemed engineering program to begin training as an arcane mechanik.

Late 574 AR: Tabitha begins a rapid regression both physically and mentally. Doctors are unable to ascertain the cause of the illness or implement any successful treatment.

576 AR: Tabitha succumbs to her affliction. Devastated by the death of his sister, Egan changes fields of study to natural sciences with a focus on anatomy and physiology.

578 AR: Egan's work concerning the linkage between parental traits and offspring is met with high acclaim from his professors at the R.C.U. His research is lauded as groundbreaking.

581 AR: Egan leaves R.C.U. for Ceryl University.

583 AR: Egan completes his doctoral thesis and assumes a junior professorship at Ceryl University, teaching both engineering and physiology. (Hereafter referred to as Dr. Arkadius.)

587 AR: Dr. Arkadius meets Corvis University's High Chancellor of Extraordinary Zoology, Professor Viktor Pendrake, during one of Pendrake's lecture tours.

589 AR: Arkadius leaves Ceryl University for Corvis University with the encouragement of Professor Pendrake, joining the Department of Natural Sciences. He secures a post as a researching professor.

597 AR: Arkadius is dismissed from Corvis University on the grounds of unethical behavior.

599 AR: Arkadius initiates relations with a tribe of farrow within the Thornwood, trading with them in return for captured farrow from other tribes.

605 AR: Arkadius moves his operation from the Thornwood to somewhere in the Bloodstone Marches, likely to avoid interference by Cygnaran authorities.

606 AR: Arkadius brokers a deal with the rising farrow chieftain known as Carver, who has risen to dominance over the farrow tribes of the Bloodstone Marches. He brings with him several fierce porcine creatures, surgically altered and fused with steam engines and mechanikal components, later known as war hogs.

607 AR: Carver, backed by Arkadius, summons a large number of scattered farrow chieftains to the Thornwood at the Thornfall battlefield site and forces them to accept his rulership. This becomes known as the Thornfall Alliance.

To: Dean Colum Thompson

From: Professor Edwin Orthollo

I have no doubt word has reached you of the work of one Egan Arkadius. While I must first admit that many in our department had doubts about the young man's aptitude for this field of study, given the circumstances surrounding his sudden change in academic interest, he has proven to be of a most remarkable mind.

While he has shown significant aptitude in the theoretical, it is within the practical that Arkadius' genius truly lies. I suspect this has much to do with his original training in the field of engineering. The boy views the natural sciences with the same analytical and incisive approach one might take while disassembling a steam engine. What's more, this view drives him to apply the same systematic approach to his research efforts.

It has long been known that offspring bear certain physical resemblance to their parents and that careful selection of mating pairs can increase the likelihood of those traits appearing in offspring. This is knowledge ranchers and horse breeders have used to great effect, to create hardier livestock over the centuries by only allowing ideal animals to mate.

Arkadius has taken the basic concept of parentage and systematically codified it in a manner most groundbreaking. I have enclosed his current thesis for your complete review, but in summary Arkadius, through months of systematic research and documentation, has compiled data demonstrating how the passing of traits from parent to offspring is far more complex and sublime than ever realized.

In the end, the monumental possibilities presented by this research make it well worth overlooking Arkadius' misappropriation of the various mice, reptiles, and birds he procured from the lab stores, as well as his conduction of research within his personal dormitory without proper authorization. After all, the expansion of knowledge and understanding, not bureaucracy, is this institution's primary goal.

Though Arkadius' star continued to rise at the R.C.U., in a move that surprised everyone he left the university in 581 AR for Ceryl University. Arkadius might have earned a junior professorship within the next year had he stayed at the R.C.U., but by switching to Ceryl while he was still a bit of an unknown quantity he effectively set his career back by several years. In a letter addressed to his father, however, Arkadius presented his reasons for doing so and revealed a slowly developing distaste for the strictures of the academic environment.

It is worth noting that, at some point in this period, it seems his initial goals of studying and curing illnesses had been fully derailed. He increasingly focused on general biological studies rather than on medicine. His sister's death may have motivated him to shift fields, but it seems clear the allure of the natural sciences captured his imagination and became an end in and of itself.

—GK

Dear Father,

It is with no small amount of trepidation that I prepare to take my leave of the R.C.U. and Caspia. While it pains me to leave you and mother behind, it is a necessary evil, as I simply cannot continue to achieve any measurable progress in my work if I remain within the antiquated halls of the Royal Cygnaran University.

These last few years have only shown me the truth in the old warning to beware the resting of oneself upon past laurels. For in truth the R.C.U. has become a decrepit giant, its death prolonged by a slow and painful process of degradation hidden from all by its gilded exterior. True innovation is not vaunted within its halls. Real invention is nothing but an abstract concept, preached as an ideal while derided in practice by professors grown fat and complacent from accolades and prestige long past. They believe they already have all the answers, looking more readily to dusty tomes than the vital and living work being undertaken within the laboratory.

Ceryl University offers me a renewed hope that I may find an environment with both facilities and intellectual peers equal to the grand pursuits to which I have dedicated myself.

Whatever delay Arkadius' move to Ceryl University might have caused in his academic career, it is clear he quickly established a name and reputation for himself as a brilliant, if somewhat radical and single-minded student.

—GK

From the diary of Professor Brandus Fargin

Since his arrival in our hallowed halls of learning, Egan Arkadius has proven himself to be possessed of a most keen intellect. Though I knew little of the work he brought with him from the Royal Cygnaran University originally, having reviewed it personally I must admit the theories presented are both fascinating and meticulously detailed.

While this young man has accomplished more in the various fields of biology than most men thirty years his senior, he remains unusually discontented. Where most men would see accomplishment, he sees naught but limited success. His single-minded drive toward some greater revelation concerning the very fabric of life is inspiring amid the too-often complacent students who seek only to gather knowledge rather than further it.

And yet there is danger in such utter obsession. History is rife with great men who fell because they became blinded to all but their singular goal, whether that goal be power, love, or even knowledge. In the end their stories teach us the same lesson: Sacrifice in the name of a greater cause is good, though one must be wary, for such forbearance is a slippery slope that inevitably leads to the sacrifice of the very goal toward which one once strove.

Within the year Arkadius had completed his doctoral thesis and, in light of the high praise for his research, was granted a junior professorship within the Natural Sciences department at Ceryl University. Yet this new stage in his career marked a far more important milestone than his inclusion among the ranks of the university elite.

It was during this time that Arkadius radically shifted the focus of his research. He had proven that manipulation of offspring was possible through careful categorization of parental pairings. Now he was ready to reveal the next stage of his work: that of manipulating these traits within the living individual. This period also marked his first intellectual attempts to bridge engineering and physiology—a notion that was not embraced by his peers.

—GK

Address given to the Department of Natural Sciences at Ceryl University

Gloven 6th, 581 AR

My previous work into the parental lineage and categorization of the passage of traits from parent to offspring has been but a small step toward a much grander goal: that of making man truly the master of his own destiny.

Over thousands of years mankind has asserted dominance over the chaos of the natural world. Indeed such may be a holy mandate, the very first tools for such mastery having been gifted to us by the divine. Yet for all our control we still find ourselves slaves to the randomness of birth, living at the mercy of the cruel and mysterious rules of physiology and biology.

I ask you, why? Why have we, the species that has bent wild beasts to become little more than docile living food stores, that has tamed rugged landscapes to grow bountiful and orderly crops of our choosing, that has carved mountains into grand cities, that has spread from a small region to cover the entirety of western Immoren—why have we yet to bend our indomitable will to wrest control of the one thing that remains most important to us?

I see a world where man casts off the invisible shackles of biology and truly becomes the master of himself. Where the feeble man can be made strong and the crippled man made whole again. Not just with crude mechanika replacements, but actual flesh and blood. Just as a mechanik can replace a broken gear to make a machine functional once more, so too can we do the same with a man's lungs or heart.

What is a limb, an organ—even the body itself if not an assembly of parts combined to create a greater whole?

We can alter the very makeup of the physical self through the principles of science and engineering. Such understanding, while in its infancy, is possible.

Just look at the specimens before you.

Through alchemical stimulation I have significantly increased muscle density and mass in rats. Through applied surgery and physiological engineering I have replaced severed limbs with new ones not even from the same species of animal. Even now I have begun to devise ways to distill and imbue traits unique to one species and implant them in another. Imagine a world in which man shares the same regenerative gifts and tireless heart as the hardy trollkin or borrows the dexterity inherent in a gobber's hands.

These steps are merely the first on a path to our greater destiny.

All of this is possible if we only allow ourselves to cast aside doubt, to cast aside fear, and rise to take hold of our fate and forge a brave new era of man.

This is my vision for a better world. It is a vision I invite you to share.

While Arkadius was ready to move forward into his "brave new era," it seems the head professors at Ceryl University were far less enthralled by Arkadius' "vision." It was during this time that all of Arkadius' papers and lectures began to focus exclusively on the body as a machine whose parts and workings could be manipulated with the same principles applied to mechanikal science.

Perhaps his most notorious lecture from this time had him dissect a living lab animal in front of a class of engineering students. As if that bloody spectacle were not bad enough, he then began replacing and altering the internal makeup of the creature to "improve" it according to understood engineering principles. It is my firm belief, however, that it was not the action itself that brought Arkadius under such incredible scrutiny from the university board, but rather the fact that after he concluded his grisly work the creature reportedly lived for almost two hours despite the manipulations Arkadius had performed. And as more of the radical nature of his research became apparent, the stronger the opposition grew among the administrators at Ceryl University to allowing him to continue his work. Even among those who had once held him in high regard.

—GK

From: Dean of Natural Sciences Brandus Fargin

To: Junior Professor Egan Arkadius

I do not exaggerate when I say that recent review of your academic work has caused a shocked tremor to ripple through this prestigious institution. While I still believe you are gifted with a most capable mind, I fear it is your very intellect that has led you to this crossroads. Intelligence must be moderated by ethics and morality.

Your work borders on an affront to everything this institution holds dear. You have meddled with the very fabric of life itself, and your twisted creations should have revealed the folly of your attempts to play at the divine.

In particular, your work with melding flesh and mechanikal apparatus to alter the physiology of the test subject is atrocious. While you may claim that your work represents the cusp of a revolution in our understanding of life, I can see only a twisted mockery of science that should never be. Animals are not machines and should not be treated as such.

You have mixed and matched body parts of lab animals to create parodies of life. I ask you: in what circumstance does a rat need the wings of a pigeon?

You have gone even further, melding flesh and machine in a way most unwholesome. The rabbit is renowned for its quickness, yet you

have felt the need to "improve" its natural ability with surgically implanted alchemical mechanika, turning one of Caen's most innocent creatures into a nightmare of flesh and metal.

Your radical research methods and disregard for our approval process have left us no choice in the matter. It is clear that only active intervention will stay your hand, as you clearly lack the ethical integrity to rein in your imagination. By decision and order of the Ceryl University Natural Sciences Board, you are to cease and desist in all current research experiments on live specimens. In addition, until such time as this board deems, you are forbidden from engaging in new non-theoretical research. Any requests for laboratory equipment or specimens will be denied.

Despite this censure Arkadius continued to retain his position for some time. It is clear that the university leadership was uncertain of how to handle him. His research papers continued to advance intellectual thought, despite their radical bent, but his physical experiments were unanimously viewed as unethical and disturbing.

Arkadius' answer came unexpectedly in the form of a visiting lecture tour from Corvis University's Professor Viktor Pendrake.

It seems Pendrake was quite fascinated by the work of Arkadius and the impact it had on his own field of study. Pendrake, always known for being possessed of a far more open mind then many of his contemporaries, began to push for Corvis University to extend a professorship to Dr. Arkadius. After several lengthy letters, Pendrake finally got his way in 587 AR when Arkadius was offered a junior professorship within Corvis' Department of Natural Sciences.

That Corvis University only extended a junior professorship speaks volumes to its own reticence to bring on Arkadius, who, at this point in his career, should have more than earned a full professorship. To anyone other than Arkadius the offer would have likely been looked at as a slap in the face. Arkadius' first and only concern was his research, however, so he accepted the offer believing Corvis would offer a more liberal environment to openly pursue his research.

And indeed this seemed to be the case for the first several years of his time there. With Pendrake's support, Arkadius was given greater access to research material to pursue his initial investigations into living physiology.

By 589 AR, though, the scope of Dr. Arkadius' research had become more insidious. His initial address to the professors at Ceryl University had made it abundantly clear that Arkadius' ultimate goal was the manipulation and alteration of sentient life itself. While even a radical like Arkadius must

have realized that a request for human test subjects would be met with fierce resistance, he began planting the seeds for such work by focusing on less prominent races, such as trollkin. But of particular interest to him were the farrow, seen as little more than wild animals by the bulk of society.

Never one to allow bureaucratic concerns to stop him, Arkadius procured several farrow by unknown means, though given the nature of that race I believe he likely paid several of the creatures a modest amount to become his "test" subjects, and began experimentation on them. Yet even Arkadius was aware his actions would likely be frowned upon by the Corvis University chairs. So, he conducted his work in secret, slowly amassing research data he intended to present to the professors at Corvis University to prove his initial theories and procure permission for further official testing.

Personal notes from this period show Arkadius had subjected his subjects to all manner of grisly work, including severing limbs and replacing them with improved artificial ones, subjecting them to a host of alchemical treatments designed to enhance or regulate their basic physiology, and even attempting to culture lab-grown replacement internal organs.

When he submitted his research to the ranking professors at Corvis University in 597 AR, their response was not one of adulation but of horror. The university immediately disavowed the work and expelled Arkadius from its ranks.

In one final letter to the heads of the university, Arkadius vented his disgust with Immoren's most vaunted learning institution.

—GK

Too long have I allowed myself to stagnate within the closed-minded and archaic institutions of so-called higher learning. You pride yourselves on ideals of free thinking, of exploration, of expanding the scope of human knowledge. You preach the merits of innovation, of invention, of discovery.

Yet the only thinking you allow is that which is based on old and familiar principles, endorsed by books already mildewed and rotting. The only exploration is that done within the confines of a library. The only expansion you seek is that of your own coffers, the only innovation that of creative regurgitation, the only invention that of redefining what you already know and which satisfies your egocentric intellectualism.

You crush free thought because it threatens you. You repress true innovation because it invalidates you. You fear discovery because it reveals you to be worthless relics of the past.

Throughout my career you have done everything in your power to silence me and to stop my work from bringing about a true revolution of scientific process and innovation. I am on the very cusp of a breakthrough, but without the ability to test via experiment, all is theory and empty air.

Try as you might, you cannot stop intellectual progress. Whether willingly or kicking and screaming, I will drag this world into a glorious new age where life is as malleable as clay.

His expulsion from Corvis University marked a critical turning point in Arkadius' life. Within the intellectual community, even Arkadius had to follow some rules and regulations; now completely free, he was left to his own moral compass. There seems no question he had grown increasingly unstable and could no longer distinguish any meaningful limits to his actions.

Having found exceptional "test" subjects in the farrow due to their unusual physiology, Arkadius wasted little time in leaving Corvis and drawing on his family's wealth to set up his own private research laboratory in the southeastern Thornwood near several competing farrow tribes. Using black market contacts within Corvis and elsewhere, Arkadius procured a substantial amount of alchemical and mechanikal equipment.

With his new laboratory in place Arkadius entered the next stage of his work. He began building on the groundwork from his unofficial research in Corvis by working on different porcine species in addition to the farrow themselves. He exploited the farrows' rapid maturation cycle to enact radical changes in their physiology, and apparently manipulated adults with alchemical enhancement and other alterations to affect their offspring. He seemed to have sought to augment farrow with beneficial traits from other

porcine species while simultaneously looking to imbue farrow intelligence on related animals. His writings describe the farrow as the perfect foundation for his work due to the tremendous mutability of their flesh. In addition to experiments in cross-breeding and organic manipulation, he introduced invasive alchemical agents and enacted extensive mechanikal alterations to his subjects, both during infancy and through adulthood. Such experiments, if performed on human beings, would have been deemed an utter abomination.

I tracked down a farrow mercenary who was once part of one of the now extinct farrow tribes near to where Arkadius had established his original lab.

—GK

I know his name now, but back then we only knew him as the Bald Man. The first time he came to us he told our chieftain he had an offer to make him. That he knew our troubles with the neighboring tribes. That he could make us strongest.

For a price.

The chieftain laughed. He said we didn't need the Bald Man. We were strongest already. Our chieftain ordered his slaughterhousers Horex and Tarn to kill him. Seeing those two brutes should have made any creature tremble in fear. But the Bald Man did nothig. Before Horex and Tarn could charge, there was a great rumble and from the forest burst a massive creature. It slammed right into Horex, knocking him to the ground before smashing him to pulp with its oversized fists. Tarn struck the beast, causing it to squeal—a sound I'll never forget, his cleaver chopping the thing's arm clean off.

It should have stopped the beast. But all it did was make it angrier. It pounced on Tarn, ripping out his throat with its tusks before collapsing in a heap. As it died the Bald Man sighed and muttered to himself. He had a pocket watch in his hand, as if he was counting the time.

He looked back at our chieftain and said, "You are not as strong as you think. But I can make you as strong as you need to be."

The farrow's story continued with the chief giving captured farrow from other tribes to Arkadius, who in turn provided them with enhanced warriors. As in all infernal bargains, Arkadius clearly never intended to tie his fortunes to a single lowly tribe. They were simply a first step. Within a year, Arkadius had subjected the entire tribe to an alchemical substance that bent the farrow to his will.

Arkadius' actions from that point on are difficult for even someone of my skill to track, given that he conducted little to no correspondence and worked in a remote locale, hidden within his wilderness laboratory. Any information about his activities would be speculation at best. The only assumption I feel confident in sharing is that Arkadius continued to labor over his experimentation on the farrow, his obsession leading clearly to several "breakthroughs," each more horrifying than the last. I believe at some point, perhaps by 605 AR, he had moved outside of Cygnar entirely and into the Bloodstone Marches. He may have been motivated by a desire to evade Cygnaran authorities as well as that of gaining readier access to more farrow.

It is not until 606 AR that I am once again able to acquire what I consider corroborative evidence of the good doctor and the fruits of his labor from the infamous farrow brigand Rorsh. The following is an edited transcript of a conversation with Rorsh, extracted with considerable prodding, given the mercenary's customary reticence.

You know Lord Carver? He'd never admit it, but Arkadius is the only reason any human ever had reason to fear him.

I wasn't there when Arkadius met Carver, but I've heard stories. They met at the edge of the Marshfells. Carver had united the nearest tribes and made their chiefs bow to him. His first reaction had to be to kill Arkadius rather than listen to him. But that was before he saw what the man had to offer.

Only Carver stood firm when Arkadius' twisted creatures came forth—each a mix of hog and machine. Where the others saw monsters, Carver knew at once these were weapons that would lead to conquest beyond all former imagining. Carver had talked of building an empire atop the ashes of mankind. Here was his means.

As I conclude this report I am reminded of the words of warning from Professor Fargin on the dangers of obsession. Dr. Egan Arkadius represents the truth of those words. His is a brilliant mind whose lofty ideals have been corrupted into something monstrous, thus transforming both creator and creation into something utterly inhuman. Reading these reports has made me feel considerable sympathy for the unfortunate farrow and other creatures subjected to his experiments.

There is no question that Dr. Arkadius is a man who will let nothing stand between him and his goals. As to what those ultimate goals might be, only he knows. Perhaps they continue to change with each achievement reached. The depths of his obsession have clearly yet to be plumbed. Perhaps humanity is fortunate he found farrow such appealing subjects, lest he turn his imagination onto his own people.

—GK

FOUNDRY, FORGE & CRUCIBLE

MECHANIKA RUNES AND CAPACITORS

By Matt Goetz and Jason Soles • Art by Mariusz Gandzel

Infused with arcane power, the runes inscribed onto runeplates are fundamental to the function of mechanika. These runes empower weapons, armor, and equipment in ways that would otherwise be impossible to achieve. To that end there are always those exploring the fringes of rune theory, hoping to achieve a better understanding of the forces that have, for centuries, helped shape the modern world.

Whether experimenting directly on a known formula to create a new and unique effect or delving into libraries to discover functional combinations long forgotten, there will always be those who seek to expand upon the rune formulae used in the manufacture of mechanika. These men and women are working at the fringes of rune theory where successes—and safety—are not guaranteed. For every usable formula discovered, there are innumerable failures. The raw cost of materials notwithstanding, this task is not one for the fainthearted. An arcane mechanik who cuts corners, or who pushes a change too far in the hope of rapidly discovering a new effect, faces the prospect of failure at best and a deadly discharge of raw magical energy at worst. The process is one measured in years, and every new discovery is a major victory.

The following attributes define supplemental runeplates for the Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game.

ARCANE DISRUPTOR

Type: Melee or Ranged Weapon

Cost: 450 gc

Rune Points: 3

Effect: When a Will Weaver is damaged by this weapon, he immediately gains 1 fatigue point for each upkeep spell he has in play. When a Focuser is damaged by this weapon, he must immediately spend 1 focus point for each upkeep spell he has in play. When a Harnesser is damaged by this weapon, he must immediately spend 1 fury point for each upkeep spell he has in play. If a character cannot pay a focus or fury point, his spell will expire. This weapon loses this ability if the runeplate is not powered.

ARCANE WARDING

Type: Armor

Cost: 150 gc

Rune Points: 1

Effect: While the armor has power, the character wearing it gains +1 DEF against magical attacks.

BACKFIRE

Type: Melee or Ranged Weapon

Cost: 150 gc

Rune Points: 1

Effect: This runeplate intentionally uses an unstable rune formula as a deadly booby-trap. When a mechanika item with this rune is activated, the weapon is destroyed and the wielder immediately suffers a POW 14 magic damage roll. When a character is incapacitated by this effect, the result is automatically a Lost Limb on the Injury Table (see *IKRPG: Core Rules*, p. 217).

BOUNDING

Type: Armor

Cost: 300 gc

Rune Points: 2

Effect: While the armor has power, a character wearing it who makes a Jumping skill roll gains an additional six feet (1″) of height or twelve feet (2″) of distance to his result.

DETONATE

Type: Armor

Cost: 450 gc

Rune Points: 3

Effect: While the armor has power, once per encounter the character wearing it can force it to produce a powerful arcane blast as a quick action. Center a 4″ AOE on the armored character. All other characters in the AOE suffer a POW 10 blast damage roll and are pushed d3″ directly away from the center of the AOE. Once the blast is resolved, the armor loses power for one round while the capacitor recharges. During this time, the character suffers –2 DEF.

FOGBANK

Type: Armor

Cost: 300 gc

Rune Points: 2

Effect: While the armor has power, once per encounter the wearer can use a quick action to produce a thick cloud of obscuring fog. Center a 3″ AOE on the character. The AOE is a cloud effect that remains in play for one round.

HEADTAKER

Type: Melee Weapon

Cost: 750 gc

Rune Points: 5

Effect: While a weapon with this runeplate is active, on a critical hit double the damage exceeding the ARM of the character hit. A living character who is incapacitated as a result of this critical hit may not make a Tough roll and is slain; do not roll on the injury table.

INCENDIARY

Type: Ranged Weapon

Cost: 150 gc

Rune Points: 1

Effect: While the weapon has power it causes fire damage, and on a critical hit the target suffers the Fire continuous effect.

LIGHT EATER

Type: Melee Weapon, Ranged Weapon, or Armor

Cost: 150 gc

Rune Points: 1

Effect: While the item has power, it produces an 18-foot (3″) area of darkness around the character carrying the weapon or wearing the armor. In the affected area, bright light is treated as dim light and dim light is treated as complete darkness. This effect can be activated or turned off as a quick action. This runeplate does not grant its user the ability to see in the darkness it generates.

LOCKOUT

Type: Melee Weapon, Ranged Weapon, or Armor

Cost: 150 gc

Rune Points: 1

Effect: This runeplate is specially designed to protect mechanikal weapons and armor from unauthorized use. When this rune is inscribed on a runeplate, choose a user. While an item with this runeplate has power, any other runes on its runeplate will not function if handled by anyone other than the designated user.

MAGNETISM

Type: Armor

Cost: 150 gc

Rune Points: 1

Effect: While the armor has power it produces a short-range magnetic field able to hold predominantly steel or iron objects in place. The character gains an additional quick action that can be used to affix or retrieve such objects.

NATATION

Type: Armor

Cost: 150 gc

Rune Points: 1

Effect: While the armor has power, the character wearing it gains +2 on Swimming skill rolls.

OBSCURATION

Type: Armor

Cost: 450 gc

Rune Points: 3

Effect: While the armor has power, when the character wearing is casts a spell the spell runes are much less visible and magically sensitive characters have difficulty sensing the character's magic. Spell runes are only visible up to 24 feet (4″) away, and a magically sensitive character can only detect the character's magic from a distance equal to his ARC score x 10 in feet.

RECIPROCITY

Type: Armor

Cost: 600 gc

Rune Points: 4

Effect: While the armor has power, a spellcaster in the user's CTRL area suffer d3 damage points each time he casts a spell.

VITRIOL

Type: Armor

Cost: 300 gc

Rune Points: 2

Effect: While the armor has power, if the character wearing it is hit by a melee attack, immediately after the attack is resolved the attacking character suffers the Corrosion continuous effect unless the wearer was incapacitated by the attack.

WHIPLASH

Type: Armor

Cost: 750 gc

Rune Points: 5

Effect: While the armor has power, when an enemy character misses the character wearing it with a magic attack, the attacking character becomes the target and is automatically hit by the attack. AOE magic attacks that miss are centered on the attacking character. This character is the point of origin for these attacks.

THE PRICE OF POWER

Equally significant in the development and customization of mechanika is the manufacture of capacitors. Whether conceived and constructed by military manufacturing powerhouses like the Cygnaran Armory or the product of obsessive tinkering in a single mechanik's workshop, the development of mechanikal capacitors is a constant pursuit of more powerful, efficient, and cost-effective means of powering the mechanika of the Iron Kingdoms.

Capacitors are works of art in their own right, each a dedicated piece of craftsmanship tailored to the device it will power.

While capacitors vary widely in form and in the principles they draw upon to produce arcane energy, they all share the common function of fueling a runeplate.

The capacitors below are a small sample of the more esoteric solutions developed to address this need. These capacitors range from the relatively straightforward design of the disposable Runelock Capacitor to the truly bizarre Parasitic Generator.

ARCANE INTERVAL GENERATOR

Cost: 350 gc

Power Output: 6

Lifespan: 3 hours at a time, with the ability to be recharged as described below

Description: The arcane interval generator contains several rune-inscribed cylinders of various precious metals mounted on a rotary point within an insulating glass housing. A heavy mechanical spring is attached to the rotary mount of the cylinders. Each cylinder is carefully inscribed with hundreds of runes that, when brought into alignment with those on other cylinders, produce a momentary but powerful arcane charge. When the mainspring is released the cylinders rotate at high speed, causing constant charges from the interacting runes.

Special Rules: Completely rewinding the mainspring of a discharged arcane interval generator requires thirty minutes of effort.

Fabrication Requirements: Craft (glasswork), Mechanikal Engineering, Inscribe Formulae

Material Costs: 120 gc

Fabrication Rules: Construction requires both a mechanik's workshop and a glassworker's shop.

Once a character has the raw materials to construct the arcane interval generator, he must spend five days crafting and assembling the components. At the end of this time, the player makes an INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16. If the roll succeeds, the character creates a functional capacitor. If the roll fails, the character can make another attempt once he has spent an additional day reworking the capacitor.

PARASITIC GENERATOR

Cost: 250 gc

Power Output: 5

Lifespan: Indefinite with direct skin contact

Description: This rare and unusual capacitor draws its power from the living energy of the mechanika's wielder. Most commonly mounted in the grip of a weapon or within a suit of mechanika armor, the parasitic generator requires direct skin contact to function. The generator draws off and converts a small amount of the user's life force to produce a charge sufficient to power most mechanika.

Special Rules: The parasitic generator must be in direct contact with the user's skin to function. While in contact with a parasitic generator the user cannot recover lost vitality, and the generator draws 1 vitality point from the wearer during each of his Maintenance Phases.

Fabrication Requirements: Mechanikal Engineering, Medicine

Material Costs: 50 gc

Fabrication Rules: Construction requires a mechanik's workshop.

Once a character has the raw materials to construct the parasitic generator, he must spend one week crafting and assembling the components. At the end of this time, the player makes an INT+ Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 16. If the roll succeeds, the character creates a functional capacitor. If the roll fails, the character can make another attempt once he has spent an additional day reworking the capacitor.

RUNELOCK CAPACITOR

Cost: 55 gc

Power Output: 5

Lifespan: 1 day

Description: The runelock capacitor is a metal cylinder inscribed with runes on rotating rings. The rings lock into place when aligned in the proper configuration, completing a formula and releasing an arcane charge to provide an immense output of power for a short period of time before burning itself out.

Special Rules: Runelock capacitors can provide a remarkable power output, but they deteriorate over time. Each month the power output of a runelock capacitor decreases by 1, regardless of whether it was in use.

Runelock capacitors cannot be recharged.

Fabrication Requirements: Mechanikal Engineering, Inscribe Formulae

Material Costs: 12 gc

Fabrication Rules: Construction requires a mechanik's workshop.

Once a character has the raw materials to construct the runelock capacitor, he must spend 12 hours crafting and assembling the components. At the end of this time, the player makes an INT + Mechanikal Engineering roll against a target number of 13. If the roll succeeds, the character creates a functional capacitor. If the roll fails, the character can make another attempt once he has spent an additional hour reworking the capacitor.

NO QUARTER COVER FIRE

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF WARMACHINE ART

By Mike Vaillancourt

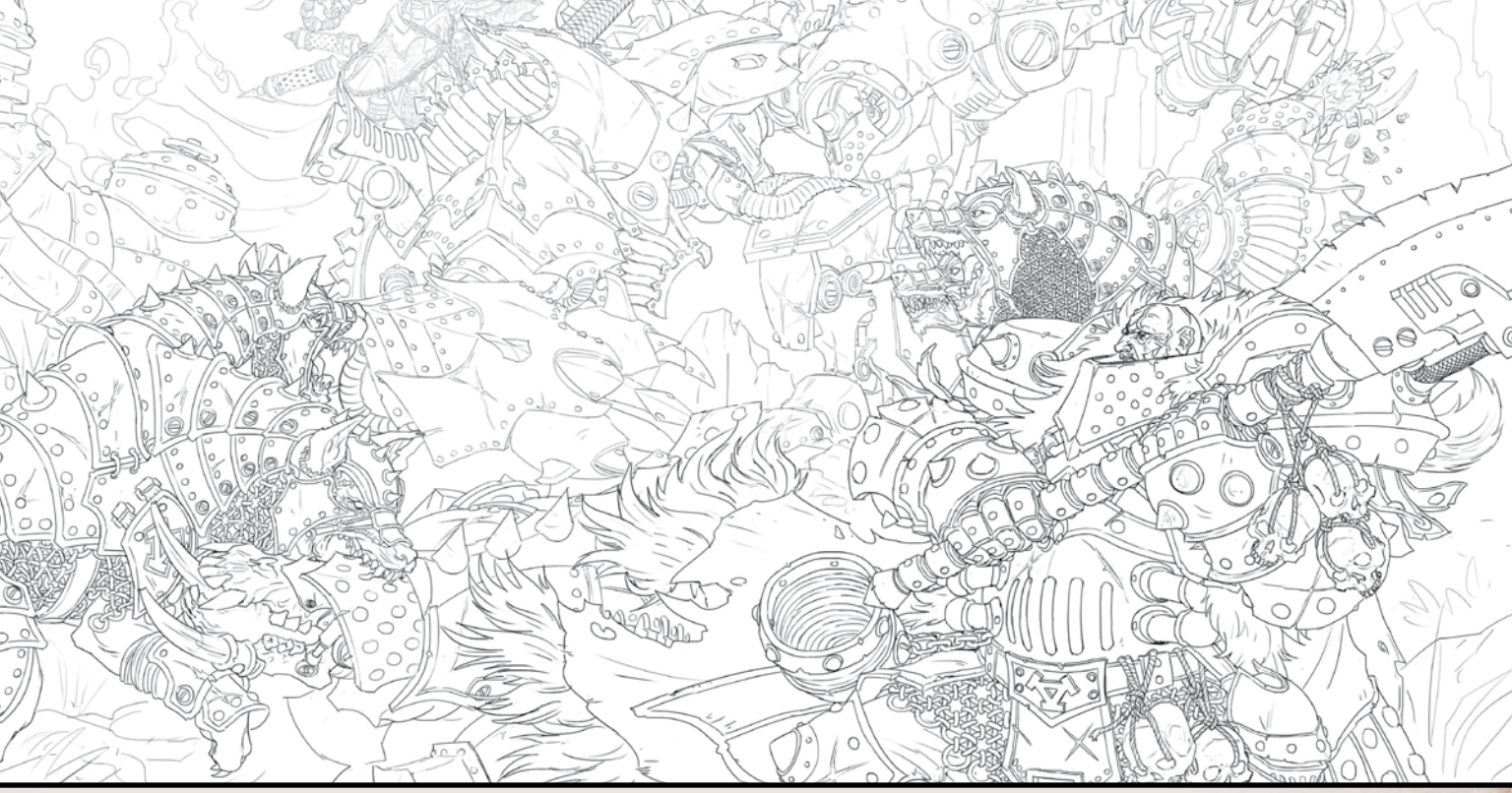
Privateer Press Art Director Mike Vaillancourt has guided the art for a wide variety of projects, from last year's HORDES: Gargantuans *and* WARMACHINE: Convergence of Cyriss *to the recent* Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Kings, Nations, and Gods *and is currently wrapping up both the third RPG book and* WARMACHINE: Vengeance. *In this special "Cover Fire" feature, he describes the process for bringing the landmark 10-year anniversary illustration from the cover of issue* No Quarter *#50 to life.*

Having art-directed over a thousand illustrations in the last five years, I know that every piece starts the same way: before the process can begin, the characters need to be designed. So, in the case of this 10th anniversary piece, Privateer Press concept artist Nick Kay first had the daunting task of designing the third incarnation of Orsus Zoktavir or, as he's more affectionately known, the Butcher. In addition, Nick was also tasked with designing the Butcher's Khadoran argus. Once he completed work on both of those figures, the next task was to come up with an illustration concept to send to arist Andrea Uderzo.

During this phase, Creative Director Ed Bourelle and I exchanged ideas about what we'd like to see in the piece. For this illustration we decided on doing a homage to the original *WARMACHINE: PRIME* cover art. With Matt Wilson's blessing, we prepared an art brief and gathered references for the other figures that would be featured. All this was then packaged with the brief and sent to Andrea Uderzo to begin the thumbnail phase.

I generally request 3–5 thumbnail sketches for an illustration so there will be a few options to choose from. In thumbnail stage I only need enough visual information to know where the elements are, as I'm primarily focused on composition. In the next stage of the process I like to see a work-in-progress showing grayscale or color blocking to make sure everything fits in the setting, to confirm we've established the right mood, and to verify none of the approved elements have changed. In the final stages I'll make sure all these details match up and verify we have the appropriate level of rendering to establish the focal point of the illustration.

For this illustration all the normal guesswork was removed from the process because it was based on the original *PRIME* cover. After Andrea received the art brief and associated reference material, he sent a single thumbnail sketch to see if he was moving in the right direction. His sketch is a great example of the exceptional quality I typically get from him, even at this early stage. Andrea added a nice twist to the illustration by swapping the positions of the Helljack and the Juggernaut to establish distinct sides. There's also a clever reference to the original: the Deathripper being punched by the Juggernaut is in the exact same pose as in the original *PRIME* cover. I then sent the thumbnail sketch, along with my thoughts, to Creative Director Ed Bourelle and Chief Creative Officer Matt Wilson. Matt's only request was to add some extra sky to the illustration, and we both agreed that adding something below Asphyxious on the left and right top corners would be needed to help balance out the composition.



Once we have the basic composition knocked out, we need to come up with the appropriate environment information and color palette for the piece. The original illustration was heavy on red, so for this one I wanted to go more with cool blues and greens for contrast. We elected to stage the piece on the edge of the Thornwood, and included a Cryx mining rig and piping to fill in the gaps in the composition. With notes in hand, Andrea proceeded to final line art for the cover.

The next two stages assure the mood and atmosphere will reflect our intended tone. In the grayscale pass—unless there are any glaring issues—I'll generally give a thumbs-up to move on to the final color. In the final stage Andrea prepares a color pass for approval. One of the new visual effects we're establishing with magical weapons is a glow around them, so with this pass I requested more bounced light on the argus from the Butcher's glowing spell ring, and I asked Andrea to add the glow around Lola and gave the Juggernaut's axe a glow to match. This last change was to tone down the dust and dirt around the Juggernaut's leg and to bring it into focus—the dust was generating a large hole in the center of the illustration that drew the eye right to it.

Andrea made all his final revisions and sent it back to me for final approval…and the rest is history. Now that you're seeing the art without text on top of it, you can see all the little details in both the foreground and background. I think you'll agree this was a great homage to Matt's original illustration and a great way to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of WARMACHINE.

M&P MODELING & PAINTING

BUILDING A COLOSSAL DISPLAY BASE

BY MATT DIPIETRO

Sometimes a model is so cool it inspires you undertake a special project, such as a diorama to showcase it or a display base to elevate the model within a meticulously designed scene. The advantages of a display base as opposed to a full diorama are that it keeps the focus on a single figure, it's less time consuming to complete, and it creates a model that can still be fielded in a game.

Every project starts with an idea. Here you can see my sketchbook with one of the rough sketches I drew during the design process, along with some tools and materials I used in the project. I didn't end up using all the items pictured, but it's always good to have extra materials on hand. Sketching the project will help you to refine your ideas and avoid possible construction issues.

TOOLS AND MATERIALS USED

- Artificial water
- Balsa wood
- Beast Hide
- Clay, painter's tape, or masking tape
- Dust mask
- Formula P3 Black Primer
- Formula P3 Modeling Drill & Pinning Set
- Formula P3 Modeling Putty
- Formula P3 White Primer
- Hacksaw, small hand saw
- Insulation foam
- Plaster of Paris
- 4″ plastic pipe
- Protective gloves
- Quarter-round plastic trim
- Rotary tool
- Rust-colored spray primer
- Sheet styrene
- Twigs, pine needles, rocks, sand
- White glue

STEP ONE

The two major objectives I had when designing the base were for it to be perfectly round and for it to remain playable. To achieve this we'll use a 4″ plastic pipe, available from any hardware store. This is smaller than a 120mm base, but I have a plan to solve the size discrepancy later. Here I've measured out and drawn a guide onto the pipe using a silver pen. This guide is required to get a clean, finished look, so take the time to get it right before you start cutting.

Following your guide, use a hacksaw to cut away the parts you don't need. Since this pipe is not designed to withstand significant pressure, the plastic is hard, light, and very easy to cut through. It only took two minutes to separate the piece I'm working with from the rest of the pipe.

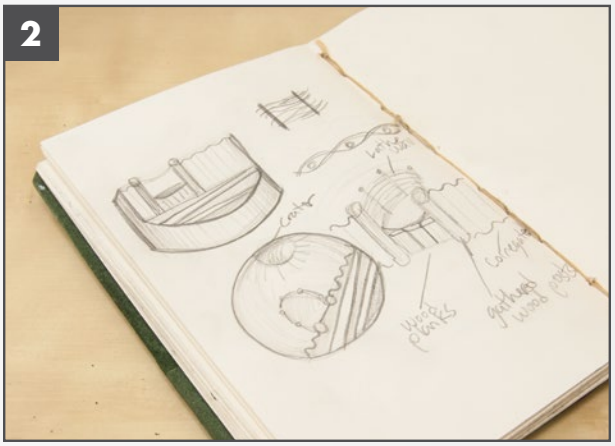
To ensure the terrain will merge smoothly with the base edge, use a rotary tool to shave away some more plastic from the edge at an angle. If you don't do this, you'll have to pile terrain onto the flat lip of the pipe, and the effect will not look realistic.

STEP TWO

In this next step, place the base on a piece of sheet styrene and surround the edge with clay. Then, being sure to wear gloves and a dust mask for safety, fill the bottom of the pipe with plaster of Paris. If you don't have any clay, painter's tape or masking tape can work too. The important thing is to keep the base from shifting while the plaster dries. Pour the plaster up to just a little below the rim of the base to leave room for artificial water to pool in the trench.

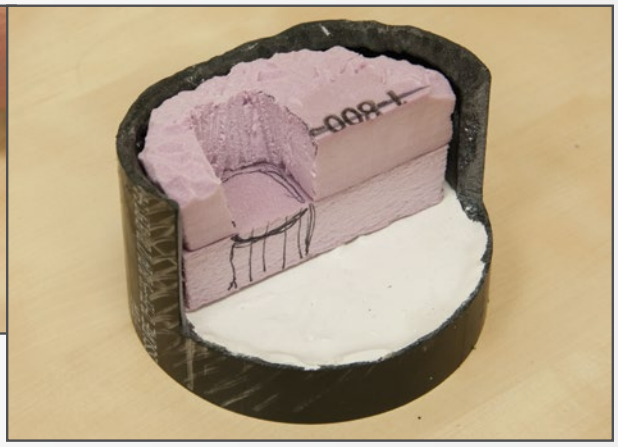
STEP THREE

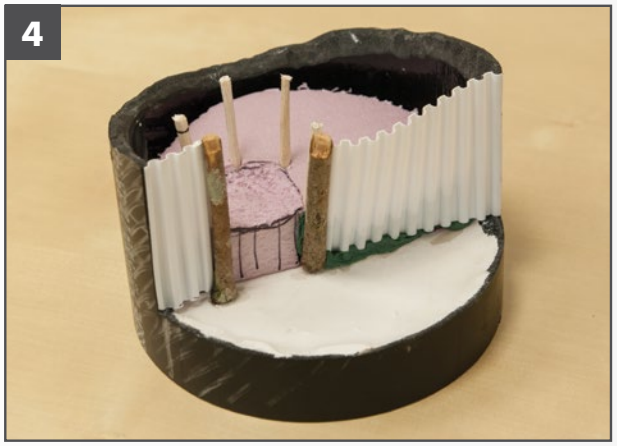
Now that we've fabricated a solid and heavy base, it's time to craft the terrain details. Laid out here are some materials I gathered from the parking lot and from a local hobby shop. The man-made structures will be built out of corrugated sheet styrene, balsa wood, and insulation foam, while the scavenged materials our trenchers have used to dig in will be made from twigs and pine needles.



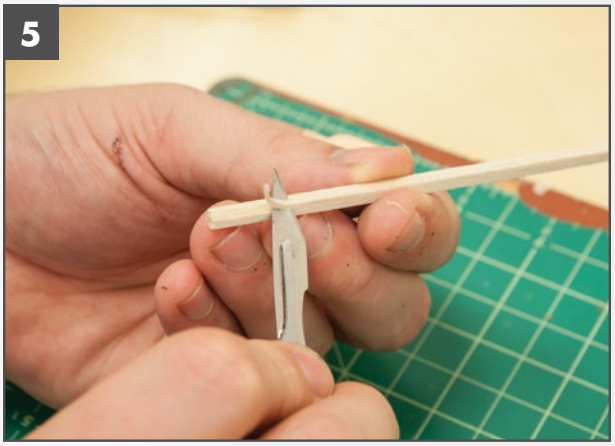
Here's another glimpse of my sketchbook: I've roughly illustrated the form, proportions, and some of the details of the trench. Before sketching I looked at as many pictures as I could find of historical trenches. I discovered that many incorporated lathe walls built from scavenged wood, and so I decided to incorporate this into my trench design.

Using a small saw blade, cut a round notch into the insulation foam ground material, which will become a raised fighting position a trencher would use to fire out of the trench.





Here's the trench after the first stages of fabrication, once all the major forms and boundaries have been defined.



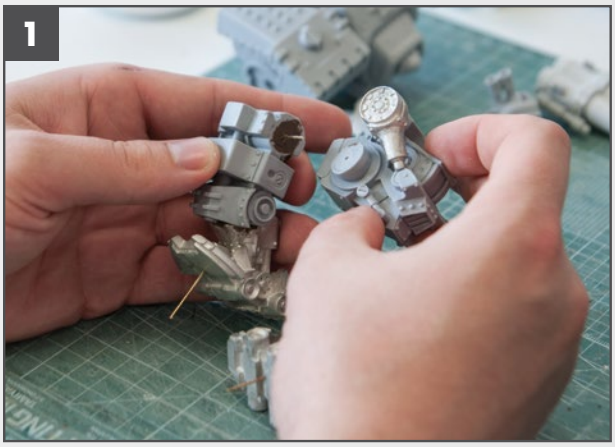
To make the skeleton of the lathe wall, shave down the hard edges of some balsa wood to create posts.

Next, take some of your pine needles and trim them so they are of equal length and fit well.

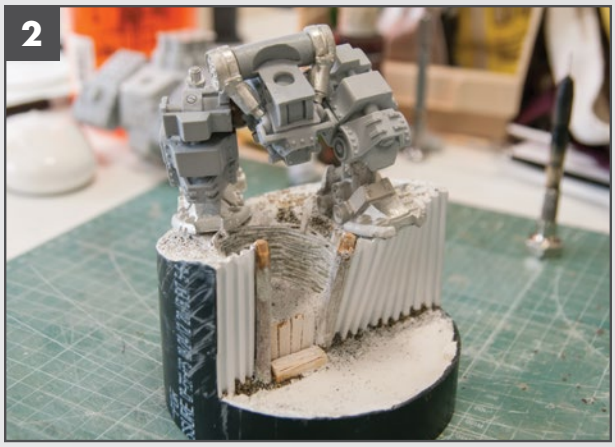
Then weave the needles between the posts to create the lathe wall.

Apply a mixture of plaster, rocks, and sand to the terrain using an old brush. This will provide the base with texture and fill in the gaps in the lathe.

STEP FOUR



Since our Conquest will be tromping uphill on the base, you'll need to reposition the hips. To do this, remove the pegs in its thighs and fill the waist sockets these would fit into with P3 Modeling Putty. Add pins to the legs so they can move freely while you're determining the pose.



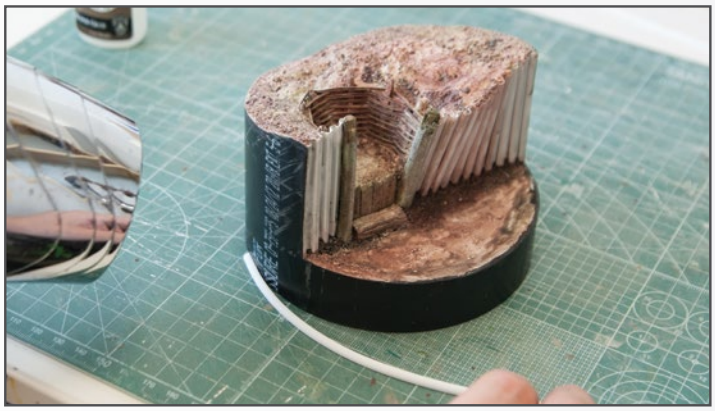
Once the pose is finalized, score a waffle texture into the flat surface of the resin around each pin to reinforce the joints, then glue them into place. Don't glue the legs onto the base yet, as it will be much easier to assemble and paint the model separately.

STEP FIVE

Now we need to create a few boards and a log bench from balsa wood to give the trench a lived-in look. Shave down the ends of the boards so they appear to merge with the surface of the base instead of resting on top, but do not glue them in place yet.

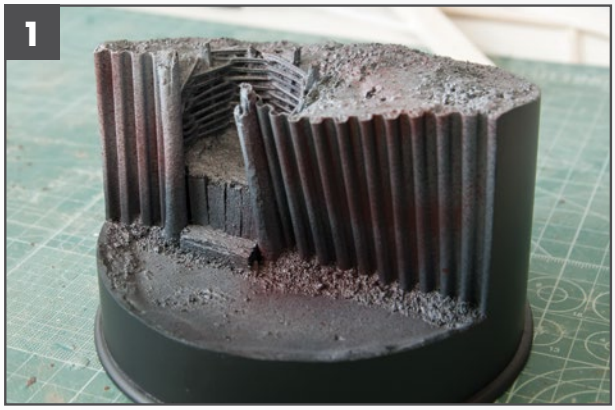
Since they need to be painted before they can be encased in artificial water, it is important to paint the boards and bench at this point. Use reference photos to help determine how to paint the weathered wood. Mix paint with some white glue and water, then apply the mixture to the base. The paint will help you see where the glue mixture is going. This application will seal the fragile natural materials and reinforce the sand and stones, making the whole base a lot more durable.

STEP SIX



We finally address the problem of base diameter by applying a rim to the base. Attach a piece of quarter-round plastic trim to one end of the base, then heat the plastic with a blow dryer, bend it around the base, and secure it to the edge. This will increase the base diameter to a playable size.

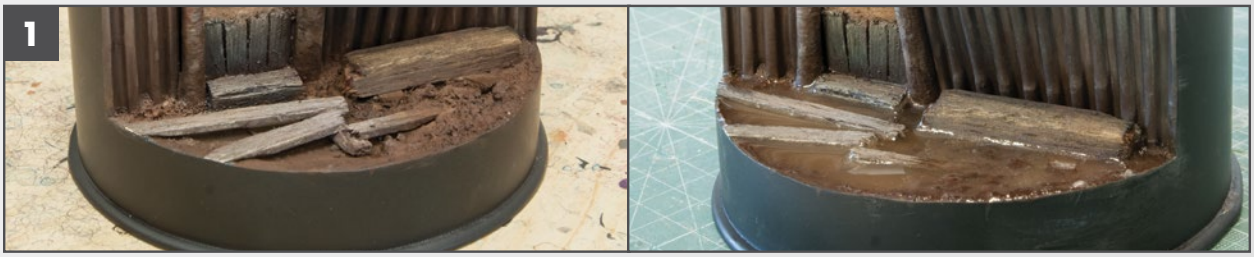
STEP SEVEN



Start painting your base with a multi-layer primer technique. Spray it with Formula P3 Black Primer, followed by rust-colored primer. Lastly, hit it from above with P3 White Primer. This will help you to render the lighting of the scene in a more realistic manner.

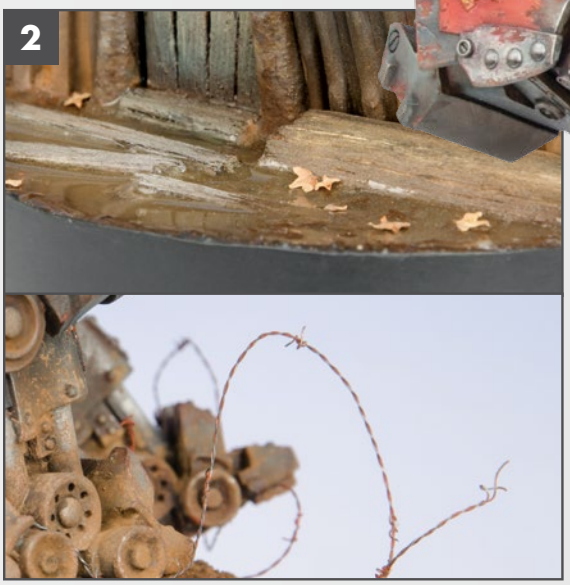
Apply color to the base using translucent layers and stark highlights. The bark on the tree trunk is the only part of the base I painted in a detailed fashion, because things are about to get messy in the next step.

STEP EIGHT



Apply mud, made up of powder pigments mixed with acrylic resin and sand, to the terrain areas. Add the mud in stages, with different pigment mixes in each to ensure a varied look. Attach the boards and wooden bench to the base at this point.

Pour artificial water into the shallow trough of the trench bed. Mix a very small amount of Beasthide into the two-part epoxy resin so it will look like muddy water. Make sure to fill the trough up to the rim of the base to avoid a meniscus and achieve a flat, realistic pool of water. If you need to, you can sand this clear resin flat once it dries and then use a clear, brush-on varnish to make the resin appear transparent again.



Finally, add a few finishing touches to the base to tie it all together. I created a length of barbed wire by twisting two wires around each other using a rotary tool. I then added floating leaves to the pool of water, both to introduce some atmosphere and to hide a few bubbles that formed when the resin was curing.

CONCLUSION

I hope this article helps guide and inspire you to try your hand at constructing your own display bases!

Gazetteer

NOVOKORSKA

By Claire Conte and Jason Soles
Art by Mariusz Gandzel and Tobias Trebeljahr
Map by Ed Bourelle

INTRODUCTION

One would never know by its current state that Novokorska was once a prosperous industrial town. Its original prospects long ago stolen by rivals, the town has fallen into disrepair. Located within the old Khadoran territory of the Volozk of Rorschik, in present day Umbrey, southeast of Shattershield Lake and north of Rorschik, Novokorska once held great promise. Now it is dusty and lonely, its population dwindling. While in recent years the efforts of those living there have brought some new life to Novokorska, it is still a town struggling to grow. Not everyone considers the quiet seclusion a bad thing, however; its remoteness makes Novokorska useful to Khadoran criminals, from bandits to dangerous *bratyas* living in self-imposed exile from the great cities. The town hangs in a precarious balance: it offers enough industry to sustain its population and draw in gangs to leech from its resources, but too much improvement could hinder those criminals. These elements have a vested interest in holding back the town's progress to keep them free from law enforcement, but not so much that Novokorska suffocates and withers away. This difficult balance makes Novokorska extremely volatile.

The arrival of well-armed newcomers threatens to initiate a chain reaction that could leave the town in smoking ruins or set it on a course to renewed prosperity. Any action impacting the struggling town's future affects the hopes of honest citizens and craven outlaws alike. Whether they act to save Novokorska or condemn it, outsiders will find great challenges on both sides of the divide.

Novokorska

Ruler: Posadnik Bel Ivasch

Population: 1,500 humans (mostly Umbrean), small numbers of gobbers and trollkin

Military Presence: None

HISTORY

Once a symbol of unquenchable Khadoran ambition, Novokorska is a town in decline. The region, located in Khador's largely untapped north-central interior where rolling plains slowly give way to lowlands surrounding hills, promised growth and prosperity. Though plagued by extreme seasons, the region is blessed with mighty river tributaries providing shipping avenues and lakes rich with resources.

Settlers who came to mine coal from the mountains to the northeast founded Novokorska in 383 AR. In its early years, the town was a small community of hardy miners and those catering to them, overseen by the posadnik and a few well-established merchants. Farmers outside the city grew what crops they could for the local market but were sometimes the targets of roving bands of thieves.

Novokorska grew slowly over the following centuries. At its height, the town was home to nearly ten thousand hard-working souls and more than a few criminal bands. Descendants of Novokorska's leading citizens continued to guide its growth for generations, buoyed by old family wealth. Several kayazy from Rorschik and heirs to Novokorskan estates helped shape the town's growth as it became an industrial center. By 583 AR, however, the town was ruled by Bel Ivasch, a descendant of the first posadnik.

Around this time plans were implemented to extend a spur of the Iron Highway from Korsk to Rorschik, which Ivasch anticipated would have a dramatic impact on Novokorska's future. The posadnik and his allies among the kayazy spent most of their fortunes and called in their favors to lobby for their town to be connected to this railroad, and by the end of 597 AR it seemed their plans to grow their coal-mining industry would come to fruition.

Toward the turn of the century, however, those dreams withered. Ivasch's political support evaporated as nobles of neighboring

regions won the favor of the empress and her most prominent kayazy supporters. Novokorska's rulers abandoned the town once they realized it now had few prospects for the future.

By 604 AR, political outmaneuvering left Novokorska adrift and Ivasch with little power. Many of the local kayazy and the hundreds of laborers who served them moved on to more promising destinations. By the end of the year, Bel Ivasch was posadnik in name only, barely wielding enough influence to have a say at the table of the merchants. He pleaded with Iosef Cheko, chief agent of Viscount Solomino, ruler of the lands around Novokorska, for more support. But Solomino had lost favor along with Novokorska and had little good will to spare the beleaguered town.

Into this power vacuum moved the gangs. The first bosses came to retire from more urban areas to a place where they could still control their piece of the action, and in deteriorating Novokorska they saw potential. With Khador's fortunes on the rise in Llael and rumors whispered of a broadening war, the most forward thinking of the *bratyas* sought to establish outposts along the border where men and supplies flowed in ever-greater numbers.

In the meantime, the conflicting interests and political rivalry of Novokorska's remaining kayazy turned into open disputes. Some, like ruthless kayazy Drae Delvosk, felt that making the town a center of trade was a pipe dream; they saw much more to be gained in reinventing Novokorska as a military outpost. Others remained faithful to Ivasch's original vision, arguing to lobby once more to connect the town to the Iron Highway. Among these conflicting ideas about how to proceed, Mera Korskod offered the intriguing suggestion of Novokorska as a leisure destination, both for soldiers on leave and Khadoran citizens escaping the smog and bustle of the cities for a while. She even advocated offering Llaelese comforts and cuisine to attract citizens of Llael displaced by the war.

With Novokorska pulled in so many directions, its potential as a bastion of criminal activity blossomed. Though it lacked any true industry, the attempts of its first citizens to renew Novokorska's fortunes were a clarion call for the hungry and dispossessed of the war. While most would stay only briefly before realizing the true lack of opportunities, the locals became increasingly adept at fleecing newcomers of their limited wealth.

As conflict among the kayazy increased, some sought to align themselves with the growing power of the town's gangs. Even the most legitimate of Novokorska's business interests were tainted by hastily arranged alliances. Drae Delvosk himself hired a small mercenary force to protect his holdings and person. Matters grew increasingly tense. Novokorska continued to sink, the disunity of the kayazy leaving them powerless to stop the town's decay. Slowly but surely, gangs began to infest the city, further squeezing out honest citizens and spreading their influence over the town's remaining industries.

A new hope came from unification of Umbrey, and while attempts to revitalize Novokorska bore some fruit they were far less effective than the leadership had hoped. The empire, flush with victory and struck by the post-war necessity of rebuilding

and reorganizing, needed new industry to accommodate its growing borders. Those who could manage the changes brought about by Khador's expansion won favor from the throne, and the kayazy of Novokorska vied for that favor. The town might have risen from the ashes but for the influence of the Khadoran underworld.

An intense period of violence followed. The better-armed *bratyas* came into conflict with the old unaffiliated gangs, the agents of the kayazy, and the local militia, raised when the local Winter Guard garrison was summoned to the eastern front. When the dust cleared the *bratyas* had consolidated their power and a rough semblance of order fell into place, occasionally broken by the arrival of new criminals jostling for control.

Though calm on the surface, Novokorska remains an open town with no faction able to seize and hold power for long. The old guard of the kayazy remains entrenched with their criminal allies to fight proxy wars in the streets. Despite the apparent power of their gangs, the lives of bosses at the top of Novokorska's criminal underworld are very short.

THE TOWN

Novokorska is a rugged place, built to withstand bitter winters and shelter its equally rugged people, but a closer look reveals the decay beneath the surface. The streets are poorly maintained and cracked by weeds. Many buildings are worn and remain unpainted or unfinished, used only by those vagrants or low-level thugs unable to seize more favorable holdings. Trash and ruffians clog the alleyways in the worst parts of town. The town's main coal-processing facility still operates, employing hundreds as it belches black smoke into the sky both day and night. Others find mining work to the north or pursue other production professions, and many struggle with low wages. Small mercenary companies act as ersatz law enforcement, but by their very nature their loyalty can be readily bought.

Novokorska is roughly horseshoe-shaped, with the ends of the U-shape facing southward. Prevailing winds tend to blow north and west, so the factories and smithies have been built up on the west side of town in a rough semicircle. Smaller textile and meat-processing plants sit in an adjacent area and constantly exude noxious odors.

At the center of town lies the posadnik's manor, by far the largest and best-constructed estate in Novokorska. Ivasch still maintains a small number of servants, who help tend the manor in exchange for a life of relative luxury amid the squalor of their neighbors. The manor is surrounded by a large iron fence, and Ivasch keeps a couple of guards on duty at all times, though they are often tired, overworked, and ineffective.

In the north-central part of town is a small, crudely built arena for sporting events, but the only games hosted there now are violent. Bare-knuckle boxing and drunken wrestling contests are a regular feature, with gangs of all different affiliations coming together to bet on the matches. It is a place where one can find representatives of nearly every faction in Novokorska.

The eastern half of Novokorska is mainly comprised of private residences. Over one thousand people live in the area, spread out enough that there are sometimes empty houses even between neighbors. Many of the residents are too poor to escape their situation and too frightened to organize any kind of resistance against the criminal filth that infests their town.

In the southeastern part of town stands a lone church of the Morrowan faith, which the honest locals patronize and the criminal residents largely ignore. It is maintained by a lone priestess, who does her best to maintain the morale of the citizens.

Many of the most disused and dilapidated structures were built in preparation of railway transport, and even those are slowly being repurposed. Whole warehouses sit dark and silent, their contents scavenged to build and repair other structures. Some of the smaller shacks and outbuildings on the edge of the town are overgrown and full of animal warrens. In the worst areas, a few houses hold the bones of victims of violence and poverty.

Novokorska has seen better days and the dream of its prominence seems long in the past, but the town is not dead yet. Khadoran people are tough and endure strife better than most in western Immoren. Though the town holds more than its fair share of seedy elements, music still flows from its gaming establishments and its people still work hard in the foundries and factories, building the materials that make modern life possible. No single gang openly rules the streets because each must tread a fine line between fear and reprisal. The neighboring farmlands yield enough crops to sustain many families and provide some trade, so there is still hope the town will find its feet.

Most locals withdraw into their homes at dusk and do not often come out, even to help anyone foolish enough to go out at night and find trouble. The criminals know this and are emboldened to do as they please at night, vandalizing, stealing, or simply carousing without the presence of law enforcement to rein them in. While the many factions keep one another in check, it is a chaotic balance to which newcomers either adapt or fall victim.

PULLING THREADS

Novokorska is a place of desperation and tension where its leaders vie against one another for command of its future. The gangs keep the locals, who are poor and outgunned, in constant fear. It is a volatile situation in which the right catalyst can set off a series of changes. Player characters may find many opportunities to interject themselves into this chaos as heroes, criminals, or something in between.

LIBERATORS

Players can intervene to drive away the worst criminal forces in Novokorska. They might have heard rumors about the situation here or have been contacted by Posadnik Ivasch, or by a friend or

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Morrowan Cemetery
1. Ivasch Manor
2. Arena
3. Temple of Morrow
4. Dimir's Threads
5. Coal-processing plant

relative living in the town. If they are a mercenary company, they may have been hired by one of the town's wealthier interests to help bring order to the town's chaos. Alternatively, they might simply be passing through on another mission.

Once in Novokorska, player characters will find numerous hooks to become involved in the town's tenuous situation. Most of the locals are too afraid to be seen openly helping, or directly opposing, the gangs, but a few might take a chance on working with a group of promising adventurers.

- Dimir Vanke, a local tailor and owner of Dimir's Threads, is afraid for his daughter's life and hates the criminal element infesting Novokorska. He is also proud and, like many people with roots there, stubbornly refuses to abandon his home to a bunch of thugs. As a man whose patronage includes many of the gangs and even the kayazy, Dimir hears many rumors. He can provide the characters with basic information about most of the major players in town, including their habits, territories, and routine schedules. He is willing to work with the characters to help bring down the gangs one by one, as long as his daughter is kept safe. Dimir particularly hates the *bratyas* and what they represent, all the more so because his daughter has fallen under the spell of a rising underboss.

- Posadnik Bel Ivasch still maintains more authority in the town than the gangs or the other kayazy realize. He remains in close contact with Viscount Solomino. With the unification of Umbrey and relative peace restored to the region, Solomino may soon have the troops at his disposal to sweep away Novokorska's criminal elements, at least for a time. Presently, however, Ivasch commands limited manpower—the few men working in his remaining factories, honest folk much terrorized by the gangs, are loyal and depend on him for their livelihood. What he does possess is a tremendous amount of knowledge about the town, its history, and its inhabitants. He holds records pertaining to most of the local buildings and can describe their interiors in some detail. Of course, Ivasch won't risk a direct confrontation with the gangs, but he will work with the characters in his own way to gain an advantage in Novokorska.

- Mera Korskod is a kayaz who has fallen on hard times. After losing her legitimate business interests to the hardships of the past decades and her hospitality services and gambling establishments to the gangs that came later, she reinvented herself as a local fight promoter for a stable of bare-knuckle boxers. The hard-bitten old woman is no saint, but she detests the situation in Novokorska. She will gladly aid anyone looking to make a difference. She still possesses a number of buildings throughout every quarter of the town, any of which can be quietly occupied as a base of operations. She also keeps close tabs on the gangs, many of whom she has business dealings with and pays protection to. Mera is respected as an unaligned operator, and her matches have a reputation for being honest, so she holds a valuable place in the local sporting scene.

  Mera may also make direct overtures to physically hardy characters she believes could make money in the ring. The life of a boxer is hard. In addition to the obvious risks, the gangs are always looking for leverage over fighters willing to take a fall in the ring. This is especially true of honest fighters, like those Mera represents. Despite her best attempts to counter the influence of the gangs, she suspects some of her boys have already been compromised, and she would go to great lengths to keep them out of the arena. She takes such interference very seriously and has ended the life of at least one would-be fixer who was fed to wild dogs on the outskirts of town.

The people are scared of the gangs, and few will join any active resistance. Instead, the characters will have to gather support, perhaps to help set up an ambush and a turf war, and be subtle where possible. All the gangs battle one another for power, so it is possible to play them off against one other by acting as double agents or even simple couriers of messages, whether real, embellished, or outright lies.

Both Ivasch and Mera will be powerful allies, should the town be liberated and brought under control. Victorious characters can expect positions of stature and respect in a revitalized Novokorska, as the townsfolk will be extremely grateful to anyone freeing them from the shackles of fear and restoring their failing town to prominence.

INSTIGATORS

The player characters need not act as underdog heroes fighting to liberate a faded town from its oppressors. They may well choose to thrive in Novokorska's shadowy underbelly, perhaps setting themselves up as the puppet masters. In that case, the frequent gang wars might work to their advantage—or sweep them up in its fury.

- Drae Delvosk is not a man to be trifled with. Historically Ivasch's chief rival, Delvosk is the owner of Novokorska's most prominent industry, its coal-processing plant. At the heart of virtually every conspiracy in town, Delvosk's policy is to align himself with the most powerful and ruthless gangs at any given time. If a faction will not yield to his overtures, Delvosk has no qualms about supporting its rivals until the balance of power shifts. Delvosk uses his personal fortune to employ a mercenary gang that serves as both the town watch and the kayaz's own bodyguards. These mercenaries are as distrusted as they are hated but are viewed as a necessary evil by the unaffiliated locals.

- Delvosk's mercenaries are a skilled group. Their loyalty is to coin above all, however, and not to the kayaz himself. Characters who can offer a more lucrative bargain could convince the mercs to join their cause or to leave at an opportune moment, robbing Delvosk of much of his power. Alternatively, the characters might well join Delvosk's men or hire on as a secondary company in Delvosk's employ.

- Would-be boss Voron Valissen has little in the way of muscle with which to threaten his rivals. He is on the lookout for newcomers he can hire as bodyguards and soldiers. An agent of his might approach the characters if they are not obviously affiliated with another group and offer them cash and access to pleasures of the flesh, along with a promise of great reward after Delvosk and Korskod are taken out of the picture.
- There is always friction between the gangs. Young toughs are always looking for a way up to become the boss of their own gangs. More established gangsters are constantly on the lookout for threats within and beyond their organizations. Make too much money, and you become a target. Expand too quickly, look too weak, cross the wrong man, and you become a target. Gang wars spasm to life and flare out quickly in Novokorska.

Player characters could easily find themselves in the midst of a shootout just by crossing the street. Depending on how they respond, they could make friends, acquire enemies, or simply gain an introduction. Fast guns are always sought, and handy characters could easily find themselves recruited into a growing outfit. Sooner or later one gang or another will make its move, and then the characters will be presented with an opportunity to move up in the ranks.

TIME BOMB

No matter which side they take, player characters will find themselves caught up in a situation ready to explode. *Someone* will notice newcomers, and eventually the characters will be forced to stake a position alongside either the embattled citizens or one of the groups maintaining a chokehold on Novokorska's redemption.

If the characters are smart and quick to act, they can find allies to help hide them and possibly act as shields while they set gang against gang. Striking out to eliminate disparate criminal elements one at a time can work in their favor, as few if any would act to save a rival unless perhaps they realized they were next on the short list. In that case, the plan could backfire as the new group finds itself the target of several dangerous factions.

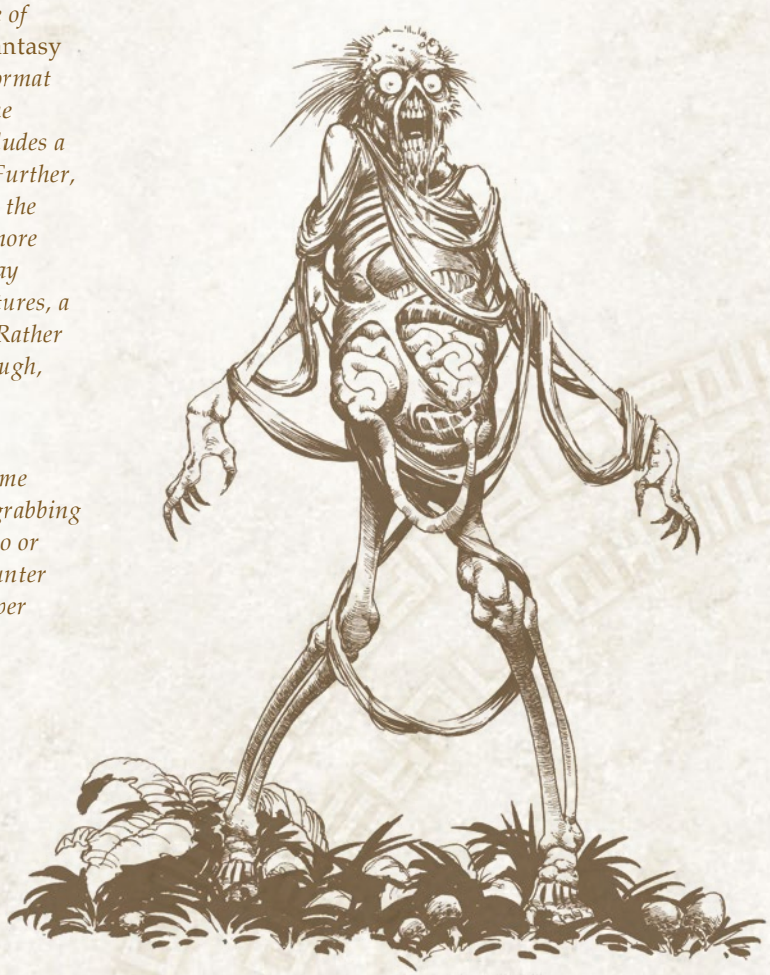
By working together with the people of Novokorska, the characters can minimize collateral damage while touching off a powder keg that will leave their foes destroyed or weakened. Whether they want to step in as conquerors in the aftermath or help rebuild a fractured dream, many risks and rewards await the adventurous party in Novokorska.

WELCOME TO THE NEW MONSTERNOMICON

BY MATT GOETZ & JASON SOLES • ART BY BRIAN SNODDY & ALBERTO DAL LAGO

We are excited to reveal for the first time in this issue of No Quarter *the new* Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game *Monsternomicon format. This format provides you with more detailed information about the habitat, behavior, and qualities of a creature, and includes a complete breakdown of its stats, skills, and abilities. Further, this format gives Game Masters the ability to explore the creatures of Immoren in greater depth, allowing for more insight into their backgrounds and behaviors. You may notice each entry has only a single stat block for creatures, a departure from how they were presented in the past. Rather than giving you fewer options for your monsters, though, this allows us to give you many more.*

We are also unveiling an exciting new tool: Creature templates. These templates are a fantastic way for Game Masters to represent a wide variety of creatures. By grabbing a handful of monsters and applying a template (or two or three!) to some, a Game Master can produce an encounter with greater diversity, range of challenges, and a deeper connection to the story.



ANATOMY OF A MONSTER ENTRY

The following define a monster in the game:

Monster Name: The name of the creature.

Description: A detailed description of the creature.

Stat Profile: Each creature entry has a stat profile, made up of the following primary and secondary stats, each of which function exactly as they do for player characters.

Physique (PHY): Physique represents how tough, healthy, and physically durable the creature is.

- **Speed (SPD):** Speed represents how quickly a creature can move.
- **Strength (STR):** This measures the creature's physical strength.

Agility (AGL): This measures the creature's reflexes and nimbleness and is used in determining a creature's DEF.

- **Poise (POI):** Poise is a measure of the creature's nimbleness and ability to focus physically. Poise is used to calculate a creature's RAT.
- **Prowess (PRW):** Prowess is a measure of the creature's grace, balance, and control over its body. Prowess is used to calculate a creature's MAT and Initiative.

Intellect (INT): Intellect determines a creature's wits, deduction, and speed of thought. A creature's INT represents its animal intelligence, and a wild creature with a high INT is intelligent in comparison to other animals. Intellect also helps determine a creature's Willpower.

- **Arcane (ARC):** This determines a creature's arcane power.
- **Perception (PER):** This measures how astute and aware the creature is.

DERIVED STATS

Derived stats are values computed using an antagonist's primary and secondary stats together along with other factors. Derived stats are calculated in the same way as for a player character.

Defense (DEF): This stat determines how hard it is to hit a creature in combat and includes any modifiers imposed by its natural armor.

Initiative: A creature's initiative determines how quickly it can act in combat and is used in the same way as for a player character.

Armor (ARM): Some beasts have naturally thick hides that give them an armor bonus. This bonus is listed in the creature's ARM stat. For instance, a hollowed has an ARM score of 13 (equal to the hollowed's PHY score of 9 + 4 from its natural armor).

Willpower: A creature's Willpower determines its ability to resist the effects of fear and mind control magic.

Natural Weapons: A creature can attack with all of its ranged natural weapons or melee natural weapons on each of its turns or make an attack with a weapon it carries. The natural weapons of some creatures have locations listed. A weapon with a listed location is susceptible to a headlock/weapon lock (*Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Core Rules*, p. 312). If a creature's natural weapons have any special abilities, they are listed beneath its natural weapons.

Skills: Skills a creature has training in, typically representing its innate abilities.

Abilities: The creature's special abilities.

Vitality: Most creatures simply have an amount of damage points they can suffer before being disabled, while more powerful or important creatures have full life spirals. A creature's primary stats do not directly influence a creature's life spiral as they do a player character's; a creature's size and durability can cause it to have more vitality points than it otherwise would.

Creature Templates: This section lists the templates a creature can take, including any warbeast templates it can have.

Command Range: The creature's command range in inches.

Base Size: This is the model base size the monster should have to resolve encounters.

Encounter Points: The Encounter Point cost of the enemy. See "Combat Encounter Building" (*IKRPG: Core Rules*, p. 333) to determine how many Encounter Points you should spend on a specific encounter.

Combat: This section details how the creature generally approaches combat. In the case of humanoid creatures, it also provides a list of the common weapons and armor the creature uses in battle.

Lore: A character can make a Lore skill roll to determine how much he knows about the creature. The higher the character's total, the more he learns. The character learns all the information up to his total. This section also lists any resources a character can gain from the creature, either in the form of loot carried or from harvestable resources.

HOLLOWED

I've always said prolonged starvation is among the most horrible things any living being can experience. These wretched creatures have forced me to amend "living" from such statements. Imagine the worst gnawing hunger you have ever experienced, the most all-consuming need to eat you can fathom—that experience does not compare to every moment of every day of a hollowed. Driven ceaselessly to glut itself on the sweetbreads of living creatures, a hollowed stuffs its distended jaw at such a wanton pace I cannot help but wonder if it expects to somehow cease its supernatural famishment, if only it can consume enough flesh. My observations and experience with these miserable dead suggest this can never be the case.

–Professor Viktor Pendrake, Monsternomicon

PHYSIQUE	**PHY**	**9**
SPEED	**SPD**	**5**
STRENGTH	**STR**	**5**
AGILITY	**AGL**	**3**
PROWESS	**PRW**	**3**
POISE	**POI**	**2**
INTELLECT	**INT**	**1**
PERCEPTION	**PER**	**3**
ARCANE	**ARC**	**—**

CLAW		
MAT	**POW**	**P+S**
5	**3**	**8**

Hunger's Touch – A living creature hit by this weapon suffers –2 SPD, DEF and STR for one round.

CLAW		
MAT	**POW**	**P+S**
5	**3**	**8**

Hunger's Touch – A living creature hit by this weapon suffers –2 SPD, DEF and STR for one round.

INITIATIVE	**INIT**	**11**
DEFENSE	**DEF**	**11**
ARMOR (Natural Armor +4)	**ARM**	**13**
WILLPOWER	**WILL**	**10**

VITALITY: 9

COMMAND RANGE: 1

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 4

+1 EP for each corpse token the hollowed has at the start of the encounter.

Sometimes, those who die due to prolonged starvation rise againt as hollowed, terrifying undead monstrosities driven by an all-consuming hunger for the organs of intelligent creatures. Unwilling to accept death and unable to sate their terrible hunger, these wretched, shambling corpses wander the wilderness, forever searching in vain for a means to quell their unnatural and unending hunger, their skin hanging in tatters and their most recent feast wetly oozing from the ragged holes in their flesh.

Ancient Tordoran folklore describes the hollowed as men who slowly starved to death while wandering lost in the mists of the moors. To quell their hunger, some were said to murder and consume the flesh of their companions, dooming themselves to rise after death as hollowed. There may be a grain of truth in these old legends; hollowed are most prevalent in the lands of Old Tordor, but cases of the dead rising as hollowed have occurred all across western Immoren. Despite Tordoran folktales, there seems to be plenty of evidence that any sentient starving humanoid can degenerate into becoming a hollowed after death.

Overwhelming hunger drives the hollowed to constantly seek prey among the intelligent races. Forgoing any other source of food, hollowed feed exclusively on the organs of the living. They will attack dwarves, elves, trollkin, and ogrun as readily as humans.

Hollowed blindly wander through the wilderness in search of their next meal. They typically travel at night, preferring darkness to light. During the day a hollowed will crouch silently in the shadows, its head slowly swiveling to ensure it does not miss the passing of a potential feast.

When a hollowed catches sign of prey, its behavior undergoes a dramatic and disturbing shift. Instead of mindlessly wandering, it will relentlessly track prey, exhibiting enough cunning to keep hidden from sight. Rather than simply lurching toward a potential meal from the wilderness, the hollowed will move ahead of it and lie inert. Waiting in plain sight, the hollowed lashes out at anyone foolish enough to investigate its corpse.

Hollowed attack with twisted, claw-like hands. Strikes from a hollowed enervate the wounded, crippling them with pangs of hunger. Drained of strength and speed, such victims become easy prey for the hollowed, which rips away organs barehanded, distending its jaw to swallow them whole. One after the next, the hollowed will consume all of the major organs of its victim, leaving a gutted corpse behind.

A hollowed becomes stronger and deadlier as it consumes more vitals; however, the organs of a feast will never be enough to satisfy the creature's hunger. Rather than being digested, in time the organs consumed will fester and rot, which forces the hollowed to constantly feed.

Disturbingly, unless a creature killed by a hollowed is decapitated it will rise as a hollowed itself within a few days and seek to feed in the same fashion. Sometimes these freshly risen hollowed will follow in the wake of their progenitor to share in its kills like carrion crows. Given enough time, a group of hollowed can number in the dozens as newly created undead are drawn onward by the activity of the flock. When they fall upon prey it is akin to a feeding frenzy, each struggling to devour the organs of the slain.

HOLLOWED

ABILITIES:

Consume Organs – A hollowed can spend a full action to harvest and consume the organs of a living character it destroyed with a melee attack, gaining a corpse token for each victim. A hollowed can have up to three corpse tokens at a time. During its turn, this creature can spend corpse tokens to remove all damage, to make additional attacks, or to boost attack or damage rolls. A hollowed can spend a corpse token to automatically pass a Tough roll.

Death Rise – A character slain by a hollowed will rise as a hollowed itself in d3 days unless the corpse is decapitated. Newly risen hollowed gain Consume Organs, Death Rise, Terror [15], Tough, Undead, +3 PHY, +2 STR, and suffer –2 POI and –2 INT. They have a number of vitality points equal to their new PHY and gain two POW 3 claw attacks with the Hunger's Touch ability.

Terror [15] – A hollowed causes Terror [15].

Tough – If this creature is disabled, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, this creature heals 1 vitality point, is no longer disabled, and is knocked down.

Undead – A hollowed is not a living creature and never flees.

CREATURE TEMPLATES:

Large Specimen, Pestilent Hollowed, Predator, Swift

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	RANK	STAT + RANK
Detection	**PER**	**1**	**4**
Sneak	**AGL**	**2**	**5**
Tracking	**PER**	**1**	**4**

COMBAT

When a hollowed catches sight of a potential victim, it will pursue it relentlessly with no regard for its own safety. If a hollowed is presented with multiple potential targets, it will attack the closest one first, relying on its draining touch to weaken it enough to finish it off. Once a victim is downed, the hollowed drops immediately and begins to feast. Inflicting damage on a hollowed will not draw it away from a victim it is feasting on. If there are still other creatures nearby after the hollowed has glutted itself on the organs of a victim, the hollowed will spend corpse tokens to boost attack and damage rolls or to heal itself, depending on its current vitality. The organs of animals do not interest a hollowed, only those of an intelligent race. If a group of hollowed is moving together it is likely one will have fed recently, making it much more dangerous.

LORE

A character can make a Lore (undead) skill roll to determine what he knows about this creature.

8: Hollowed are a type of undead creature that consume the organs of the living. If a hollowed manages to kill a target it will immediately feed, giving a narrow window of opportunity for others to flee. Once it has consumed fresh organs, the hollowed is much more dangerous.

10: Sometimes those who die due to prolonged starvation arise as hollowed. Victims of a hollowed rise as hollowed themselves, greatly increasing their numbers over the centuries. Hollowed can be found wandering in many wild places in search of fresh victims.

12: The touch of a hollowed unnaturally saps the energy of its victim, flooding a creature with the same unbearable hunger and weakness the hollowed suffered prior to its own death. This unnatural weakness allows the undead to dispatch a target with ease.

14: When hollowed travel together, one of the undead is likely to have fed recently, the other hollowed being its risen victims.

IRON MAIDEN

I have occasionally encountered iron maidens within the ruins of forgotten cities deep in the wilderness. I cannot help but wonder if perhaps these ruins were once the home of the spirit trapped within that metal form, trying to contextualize its perpetual existence among the shadows of its former life. And what a horrible existence it must be, able to move and act only according to the whims of another, its spirit locked within a body of cold metal and meshing gears. Perhaps that is why these creatures are so eager to attack the living? Perhaps they seek their own destruction in the hope it will release their spirit from such incarceration. I cannot be sure of anything but this: the marvel of their craftsmanship is matched only by the tragedy of their existence.

–*Professor Viktor Pendrake*, Monsternomicon

PHYSIQUE	**PHY**	**10**
SPEED	**SPD**	**6**
STRENGTH	**STR**	**8**
AGILITY	**AGL**	**5**
PROWESS	**PRW**	**6**
POISE	**POI**	**3**
INTELLECT	**INT**	**3**
PERCEPTION	**PER**	**4**
ARCANE	**ARC**	**—**

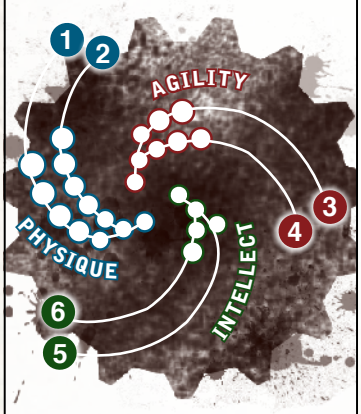
CLAW		
MAT	**POW**	**P+S**
8	**5**	**12**

Rend – On a critical hit, this weapon gains an additional damage die.

CLAW		
MAT	**POW**	**P+S**
8	**5**	**12**

Rend – On a critical hit, this weapon gains an additional damage die.

INITIATIVE	**INIT**	**16**
DEFENSE	**DEF**	**15**
ARMOR	**ARM**	**17 (Natural Armor +7)**
WILLPOWER	**WILL**	**13**



COMMAND RANGE: 3

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 13

The Clockwork Renaissance gave rise to technological innovations that forever altered life in western Immoren, but few inventions developed during the era are quite so tragic as the iron maiden. The iron maiden is both a marvel of engineering and a travesty of the soul. A marriage of clockwork engineering, metal craftsmanship, and necromancy, contained within each iron maiden is a restless spirit. The trapped spirit animates its clockwork prison and has no choice but to obey the whims of those who have dominated it beyond death.

Though the process of their creation has long been forgotten, some believe that the practice of crafting iron maidens was once widespread. Constructed by highly skilled engineers working in close conjunction with necromancers, the iron maidens of the Renaissance were built to serve as assassins and bodyguards for the rich and powerful. The spirits enslaved to provide the constructs with life were robbed of their free will and forced into eternal servitude. The bonds that animate an iron maiden cause the spirit to be wracked with torment whenever its master comes to harm, effectively torturing it if it fails to perform its duty.

When the iron maidens' original masters died, the constructs went into a state of torpor. Some remained in this inactive state for centuries, waiting in the ruins of their masters' former palaces.

An iron maiden only returns to consciousness once a new master speaks aloud its living name as part of an ancient ritual. The name of the spirit within an iron maiden is engraved somewhere on its body, though the location varies from one to another. Once reactivated, an iron maiden is as unerringly loyal to its new master as it was to the one who first commissioned it.

At a glance, the iron maiden looks like a masterfully sculpted iron statue of a young woman. Most are so well built that, if wearing a hooded cloak and seen from a distance, it could be mistaken for a woman of flesh and blood, albeit one who moves with a slightly stiff and mechanical gait. If an iron maiden or its master is ever threatened, however, its iron skin erupts in a forest of hooks, spikes, and razors in response to danger or at its master's command. It uses this array of deadly blades to eviscerate and shred its victims.

Damage inflicted to an iron maiden can be repaired by a skilled metalworker, and as a result of the magic that sustains them they are immune to the effects of age and corrosion. Some take on a patina or the appearance of age but can be polished back to their original luster.

Unfortunately, iron maidens are unstable constructions not at peace with their own existence. From time to time an iron maiden experiences a flash of memory from its past life, gradually building a picture of the person it was centuries ago. Their souls are over a thousand years old, however—frayed and tattered from centuries of enslavement—and the shattered recollection of a living existence is nothing short of torture.

Some iron maidens manage to pull together enough of their old identities to break free of their masters' bonds. When this occurs, the maiden becomes a terrifying creature devoted to the slaughter of the living, taking out its long centuries of suffering and enslavement on any living thing within reach, though the iron maiden reserves its most savage ferocity for its master. These unfettered maidens generally lurk in tombs and ancient lost places, drawn by echoes of memory from lives long past.

IRON MAIDEN

ABILITIES:

Preternatural Awareness – An iron maiden gains boosted Initiative rolls. Additionally, enemies never gain back strike bonuses against an iron maiden.

Repairable – An iron maiden cannot regain vitality normally. A character can repair damage to an iron maiden provided he has access to sufficient tools, scrap metal, and components. A character attempting to repair an iron maiden must spend a week repairing damage. At the end of this time he makes a Mechanikal Engineering skill roll against a target number of 14. If the roll fails, nothing happens. If the roll succeeds, the iron maiden regains vitality equal to the rolling character's Mechanikal Engineering skill.

Shield Guard – Once per turn, when a friendly character is directly hit by an attack while within 2˝ of this character, this character can choose to be directly hit instead. This character cannot use Shield Guard if he is incorporeal, knocked down, prone, or stationary.

Soul Vessel – An iron maiden has a soul and generates a soul token when destroyed.

Spike Skin – A character that is grappled by or hits an iron maiden with a melee attack immediately suffers d3 damage points. Living characters cannot grapple an iron maiden.

Undead – An iron maiden is not a living character and never flees.

Unstable – The mind of an iron maiden is incredibly unstable. The maiden constantly struggles with her memories, ego, and the bonds enslaving her soul. When something causes a memory stir (at the Game Master's discretion) once per month or so while active or when its present master dies, the Game Master rolls a d6. On the roll of 1 the iron maiden breaks the bonds controlling her spirit. If the iron maiden does so in the command range of her present master, he can make a contested Willpower roll to try and maintain his control over the iron maiden. If he wins, he remains in control of the maiden. If the maiden wins, she breaks her bonds. If a maiden breaks her bonds, she will exist to destroy the living starting with her former master.

CREATURE TEMPLATES:

Wild Iron Maiden

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	RANK	STAT + RANK
Detection	PER	2	6
Disguise	INT	1	4
Sneak	AGL	2	7
Unarmed Combat	PRW	2	8

COMBAT

An iron maiden under the control of a master fights according to its master's whims. An iron maiden has an overriding drive to protect its master and cannot consciously allow its master to come to harm. If, however, an iron maiden has broken its bonds, it throws itself into battle without hesitation or regard for its own safety.

The spirit within a wild iron maiden resents and loathes the living, and it will brutally slaughter any person it encounters, driven mad by its centuries of enslavement to the living.

LORE

A character can make a Lore (undead) skill roll to determine what he knows about this creature.

10: Iron maidens are ancient constructs that fuse a woman's soul to a clockwork body. They are sometimes found in tombs and other lost places.

12: These constructs were built in the Clockwork Renaissance and bonded to masters for use as bodyguards and assassins. When their original masters died they were left inert and forgotten.

14: There is a ritual through which an iron maiden can be bonded to a new master. A key component of the ritual requires the trapped soul's living name, engraved on some hidden component of the construct, to be spoken aloud.

16: Iron maidens are unstable creations. They sometimes break the chains of their servitude and lash out at their former masters before rampaging to kill the living.

SHAFT WIGHT

I once led an excursion into a mine owned by the Wyrmwall Coaling Consortium to investigate the possibility of a shaft wight infestation. Once we entered the mine, we were under constant attack from the wights as they fought to protect their domain. Small groups would hammer on the rocks to draw our attention one way while others would move to attack us with picks and hammers from the opposite direction. I was reminded of nothing so much as a colony of wasps, attacking a threat in concert to shelter its nest from harm. These things are not simple and mindless undead. They are vicious predators that will destroy anything that intrudes on their subterranean domain.

–Professor Viktor Pendrake, Monsternomicon

PHYSIQUE	**PHY**	**7**
SPEED	**SPD**	**6**
STRENGTH	**STR**	**7**
AGILITY	**AGL**	**3**
PROWESS	**PRW**	**4**
POISE	**POI**	**2**
INTELLECT	**INT**	**2**
PERCEPTION	**PER**	**2**
ARCANE	**ARC**	**—**

GRAVEL VOMIT

RAT	RNG	AOE	POW
4	SP6	—	10

A character hit by this attack suffers –2 to attack and PER rolls until he spends a quick action to clear his eyes and mouth of debris.

CLAWS

MAT	POW	P+S
6	4	11

INITIATIVE	**INIT**	**12**
DEFENSE	**DEF**	**11**
ARMOR (Natural Armor +5)	**ARM**	**12**
WILLPOWER	**WILL**	**9**

VITALITY: 7

COMMAND RANGE: 2

BASE SIZE: SMALL

ENCOUNTER POINTS: 3

Shaft wights are dangerous undead creatures that inhabit tunnels and mines throughout all of western Immoren. Most were once miners, buried by cave-ins and collapsing tunnels and left to die in the darkness beneath the earth. Those who rise as shaft wights had been consumed by terror at the thought of their inevitable death and clung to life so strongly that they fueled a terrible transformation. Survival meant more to these men than did their lives and humanity, and hours after they died they clawed free of their earthen tombs with hands stripped of flesh and twisted into bloody talons.

A shaft wight never willingly leaves the tunnels of its mine and will forever lurk in the subterranean darkness in which it died. A shaft wight wields the tools of its earlier profession, clumsily and without reason pounding at the walls of its mine with picks and hammers or beating against the stone with bare hands until they are torn to useless stubs. Any hunks of stone it extracts are senselessly hauled from chamber to chamber within the mine. Occasionally these efforts cause cave-ins or breech a tunnel wall into a new area.

Miners who hear the sounds of the creature's toil and investigate can be drawn into the heart of a shaft wight lair. When confronted by a living invader, shaft wights will savagely defend their territory. Those slaughtered by shaft wights rise as wights themselves in a matter of hours, swelling the ranks of the undead. The ability of a shaft wight to create new undead is not limited by racial boundaries—every intelligent race is vulnerable. The populations of entire mining operations have fallen victim to shaft wights, turning an underground complex into a massive nest of the creatures. From within these desolate mines can be heard the steady scrape of the tools the shaft wights carried in life, dragging on the stones behind them as they shamble from chamber to chamber deep beneath the surface.

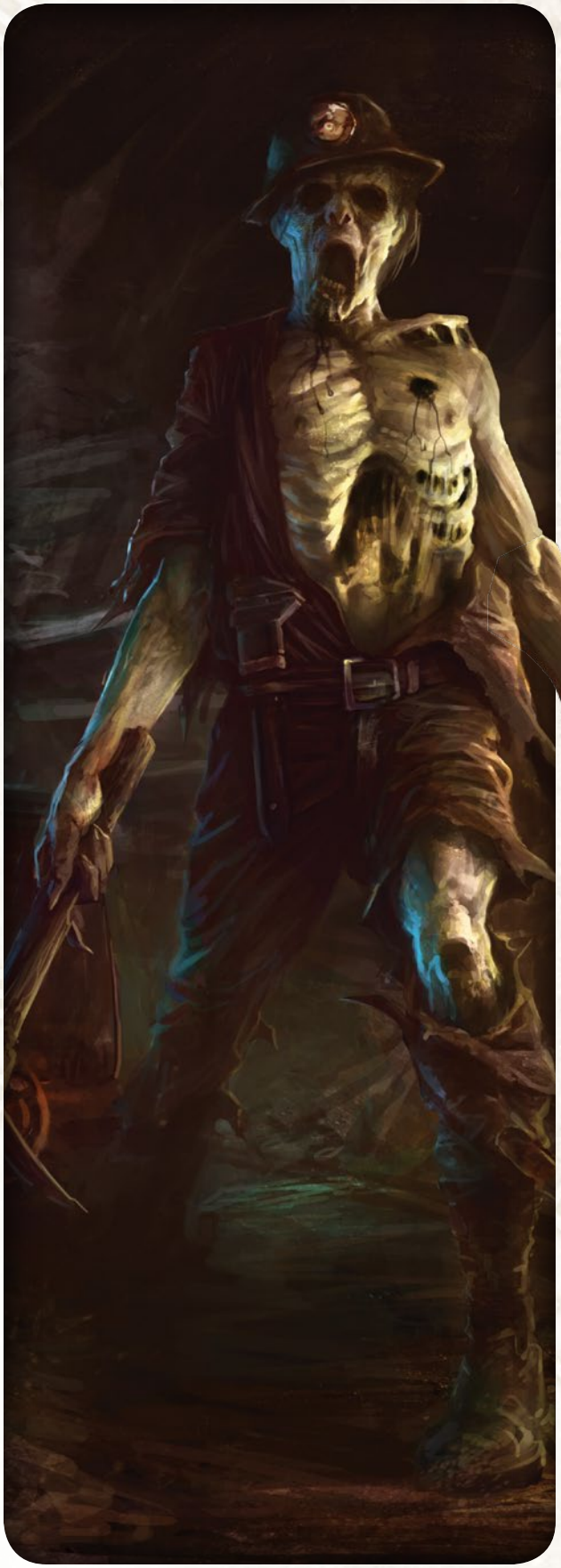
In Rhul, the presence of shaft wights is a particular concern. The extensive mining operations of the Rhulfolk present an elevated risk of tunnel collapse and the creation of Rhulic shaft wights. When a mine tunnel caves in, if any workers cannot be rescued, a team of heavily armed warriors—supported by steamjacks outfitted for battle—will move through the mine, clearing every tunnel and chamber, one after the next. Any wights the dwarves encounter are put down at a distance to minimize the risk of others rising as new undead.

If a clan is unlucky, some of its ogrun workers may have risen as shaft wights. These risen ogrun are particularly dangerous, so the dwarves will sometimes prepare explosive charges capable of bringing down an entire mining complex. These explosives will bury the wights under hundreds of tons of rock to prevent them from spreading through a clan's holdings.

COMBAT

Shaft wights can be found anywhere, working in the most unlikely of places, and will pour out in disorganized throngs when an intruder enters their lair. When they attack, shaft wights vomit a spray of blinding dust, forcing a victim to endure the same choking terror the wights experienced in a grisly imitation of their own deaths. Those who survive this initial onslaught do so only to be hacked apart by the wight's mining tools and claws. The equipment most commonly carried by shaft wights are durkin bars, pick axes, and sledgehammers.

The longer a battle against the undead takes to resolve, the more likely it is to draw the attention of even more wights from deeper within a mine complex. These new arrivals can quickly cut off all avenues of escape.



SHAFT WIGHT

ABILITIES:

Create Spawn – Characters killed by a shaft wight rise as shaft wights in 6 + d6 hours. Newly risen shaft wights gain Tough, Undead, +2 PHY, +3 STR, but suffer –2 POI and –1 INT and PER. They have a number of vitality points equal to their new PHY and gain a single POW 3 claw attack and a gravel vomit ranged attack.

Tough – The character is incredibly hardy. When this character is disabled, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, the character heals 1 vitality point, is no longer disabled, and is knocked down.

Undead – A shaft wight is not a living character and never flees.

CREATURE TEMPLATES:

Large Specimen, Swift

SKILLS:

NAME	STAT	RANK	STAT + RANK
Detection	**PER**	**1**	**3**
Sneak	**AGL**	**2**	**5**

LORE

A character can make a Lore (undead) skill roll to determine what he knows about this creature.

8: Shaft wights are undead sometimes found in old mines and subterranean regions, risen miners who died due to suffocation from tunnel collapse.

10: Shaft wights can vomit a torrent of powdered rock and dust. They frequently initiate combat with this spray before closing to finish off a target with their talons or mining tools.

12: Every victim killed by a shaft wight is cursed to become a wight himself. Such a victim will rise in a matter of days and possess all of the qualities of the creature that killed him, including the ability to create spawn. Because of this, shaft wights can quickly overrun a mine's entire population.

14: Despite popular belief, death suffered from the mining tools carried by a shaft wight offers no proof against a victim rising as a wight. The ability these undead possess to create spawn extends to the implements they carried in life.

CREATURE TEMPLATES

The creatures of the Iron Kingdoms vary widely. Some are born with talents and capabilities beyond their fellows while others acquire unique capabilities over time. Templates allow a Game Master to fine-tune certain creatures, to represent trained animals, to create unique antagonists, or to build richer and more varied encounters. Templates can be used alone or in conjunction with one another to represent exceptional creatures for players to interact with.

USING TEMPLATES

Templates can modify a creature to grant new abilities, improve skills, and increase stats. The templates that can be applied to a particular creature are listed in its Monsternomicon entry. A creature can have multiple templates (for instance, both the Large Specimen and Predator templates) but cannot have the same template applied twice.

All of the bonuses and penalties of a creature's templates combine toward a final result in the same way as a player character's careers. For example, if a creature gains +2 PHY from one template but –1 PHY from another, the total modification to its PHY is +1. Note that a creature's stats cannot be reduced to less than 1 as a result of applying templates. If a template would reduce a creature's stat to 0 or less, the template cannot be applied.

Stat modifiers are only applied to the stats listed. If a primary stat is modified, the modifiers are not applied to its secondary stats unless they are specifically modified by the template. For instance, a template that confers +1 SPD does not also modify a creature's DEF or Initiative unless the template lists modifiers for those stats.

TEMPLATES AS A STORYTELLING TOOL

Rather than using templates solely to make an encounter more difficult, Game Masters are encouraged to employ them to advance the stories they intend to tell. The theme of an adventure can be reinforced through careful selection of templates, such as the inclusion of the Pestilent Hollowed template in an adventure with themes of corruption and desperation.

Similarly, Game Masters should not feel constrained by the descriptions provided in the creature templates. For instance, the Large Specimen template represents a creature born naturally bigger than other members of its species, but when added to the shaft wight it can also represent an ogrun killed by the undead in an infested mine to rise as a shaft wight itself.

Creature templates can also serve as inspiration for stories. A town being menaced by a dire troll is one thing, but a town being menaced by a Large Specimen of a dire troll adapted to the local environment is something else entirely!

ANATOMY OF A TEMPLATE

The following describes a template in the game:

Name: The name of the template.

Description: A brief description of the template. In the case of warbeast templates, it also includes any special training or conditions that must be met for the monster to receive the template.

Stat Modifiers: Lists any modifiers to the creature's stats. Note that no stats can be reduced to less than 1.

Ability Modifiers: Lists any abilities gained or modified by the template.

Skill Modifiers: Lists any skills granted or modified by the template. Note that no skill can be increased above 4 or reduced below 0.

FURY: Lists the FURY stat of the template. This modifier applies only to warbeasts.

Threshold: Lists the threshold stat of the template. This modifier applies only to warbeasts.

Animus: Details the animus of the template. This modifier applies only to warbeasts.

EP Modifier: Modifies the creature's EP value.

Notes: The notes section includes any additional information, like the common behavior of a creature with a particular template, and includes any armor, equipment, and weapons granted by a template.

LARGE SPECIMEN

Description: All creatures occasionally produce massive examples of their kind, able to withstand more punishment than normal. Usually these creatures possess great strength, making their strikes far deadlier, but their movements can be ponderous, and it is far more difficult for them to move unnoticed.

Stat Modifiers: –1 DEF, +2 ARM, +6 Vitality (or +2 to each Life Spiral Aspect)

Ability Modifiers: This creature gains the Brute Force and Big'un abilities.

Brute Force – This creature gains an additional die on melee damage rolls.

Big'un – This creature is treated as being one base size larger than normal, with a maximum of large-based. Small-based characters are treated as medium-based, and medium-based creatures are treated as large-based.

Skill Modifiers: Sneak –2

EP Modifier: 2x Base cost

Notes: —

PESTILENT HOLLOWED

Description: Hollowed are often exposed to diseases carried by their prey. Most of these diseases cannot thrive on the dead flesh of a hollowed, but occasionally the creature is exposed to a strain that is capable of flourishing within the organs it

consumes. These pestilent dead are even more dangerous than the typical hollowed. Even those who escape death at the hollowed's claws run the risk of a prolonged and excruciating death from a disease it carries.

Stat Modifiers: —

Ability Modifiers: This creature gains the Pestilent and Rupture abilities.

Pestilent – A living character damaged by an unarmed melee attack made by this creature has a chance of being infected. Immediately after the attack has been resolved, the character must make a PHY roll against a target number of 14. If he succeeds, he has resisted the disease. If he fails, he is infected. The first symptoms manifest after d6+6 hours, at which time the character suffers nausea and an elevated temperature. Every six hours thereafter, he must make an additional roll against a target number of 16 (reduce this number to 12 if the character remained at rest for the previous six hours). If the character passes three of these rolls, he fights off the disease. If he fails three of these rolls, the disease moves on to the advanced stage.

During the advanced stage, every three hours the character must make a PHY roll with the same target numbers described above. If the character fails, his PHY is reduced by 1. If the character's PHY is reduced to 0, he dies. If the character passes three of these rolls, he fights off the disease. A character recovers PHY lost as a result of the disease at a rate of 1 point per day once the disease has run its course.

Rupture – When this creature is destroyed by an attack, center a 4″ AOE on it. All characters within the AOE must make a PHY roll to resist infection as above. Characters gain +2 to their PHY rolls to resist the initial infection.

Skill Modifiers: —

EP Modifier: +4

Notes: —

PREDATOR

Description: Predators are careful and quiet, using shadows and terrain to their advantage as they bide their time for the perfect strike. Some species are naturally adept at this behavior while others have learned it through repeated conflicts with mankind.

Stat Modifiers: +1 AGL

Ability Modifiers: This creature gains the Ambush, Hunter, and Prowl abilities.

Ambush – During the first round of an encounter, this creature gains boosted attack and damage rolls against enemies that have not yet activated that encounter.

Hunter – This creature ignores forests, concealment, and cover when determining LOS or making a ranged attack.

Prowl – The creature is virtually invisible while in the shadows or in terrain that grants a degree of concealment. The creature gains stealth while within terrain that provides concealment, the AOE of a spell that provides concealment, or the AOE of a cloud effect.

Skill Modifiers: Sneak +1

EP Modifier: +3

Notes: Predators will use terrain whenever possible and typically attempt to surprise targets to make use of the Ambush ability. Predators rarely attack a target head on, preferring to stalk it until they can attack suddenly from the flanks.

SWIFT

Description: Swift creatures are both leaner and faster than others of their type. Natural sprinters able to cross great distances in a very short time, swift creatures are ideally suited to running down prey or avoiding an attacker. This speed comes at a price: such creatures are rarely able to suffer the same degree of punishment as a hardier creature.

Stat Modifiers: +1 SPD and DEF, –2 PHY

Ability Modifiers: This creature gains the Fleet Foot ability.

Fleet Foot – When this creature runs, he does so at SPD x 3.

Skill Modifiers: —

EP Modifier: +1

Notes: —

WILD IRON MAIDEN

Description: Iron maidens that have broken the bonds enslaving their spirits are savage fighters. Driven to murder the living as repayment for their centuries of servitude, wild iron maidens are swift and deadly combatants found in secluded places, often the overgrown ruins of their former masters' estates. A wild maiden's hatred of the living is so great it will continue to rend a victim's body even after it is slaughtered, unable to tear itself away from butchering the corpse.

Stat Modifiers: —

Ability Modifiers: This creature gains the Berserk, Chain Attack: Laceration, Relentless Charge, and Savagery abilities.

Berserk – When this creature incapacitates or destroys one or more characters with a melee attack during its turn, immediately after the attack is resolved it must make one additional melee attack against another character in its melee range.

Chain Attack: Laceration – If this creature hits the same living target with initial attacks from multiple natural weapons, after resolving the attacks it can immediately make one additional melee attack against that target. If the additional attack hits, the target suffers 1 damage point to each branch of its life spiral.

Relentless Charge – This character ignores penalties for rough terrain while charging.

Savagery – When this creature incapacitates a living character with a melee attack, it must make a Willpower roll against a target number of 16. If the roll succeeds, the creature can act normally. If the roll fails, the creature must spend its next activation savagely attacking the incapacitated target.

Skill Modifiers: —

EP Modifier: +5

Notes: The iron maiden will ignore the passage of wild animals, but intelligent races are treated as intruders and enemies.

GEN CON — 2013 —

BY LYLE LOWERY

Gen Con's exhibition hall couldn't contain all the enthusiasm for WARMACHINE's tenth anniversary, as convention goers formed a line extending beyond the hall and up to the second floor. To commemorate this milestone event we released the limited-edition WARMACHINE Ten-Year Anniversary Collector's Set, featuring an advance release of Orsus Zoktavir, The Butcher Unleashed, along with an exclusive scenic display base, art print, and collector's coin packaged in a burn-stamped wooden box. This amazing set wasn't the only hot-ticket item, though. Attendees also snatched up copies of *WARMACHINE High Command* and *HORDES High Command*, *LEVEL 7 [OMEGA PROTOCOL]*, and the new *Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Roleplaying Game: Kings, Nations, and Gods* book. With so much cool stuff on hand, it's no wonder the line spanned two levels!

Privateer Press offered much more at Gen Con than just a chance to snag new and advance releases. An assortment of tournaments, seminars, demos, and open-play events meant there was always something to do and something to see. And of course the Formula P3 Grandmaster Painting Competition drew some of the best painters from around the world, filling the display cases with models of unparalleled awesomeness.

Press Ganger Chris Richards shows off his incredibly massive collection of fully painted Cygnar, including some very fine conversion work!

TOURNAMENTS

IRON GAUNTLET:
WARMACHINE & HORDES WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

The new Iron Gauntlet tournament format was the featured bout of the WARMACHINE and HORDES tournament slate at Gen Con. Meant to challenge the tactics and strategies of the game's top players, this format pushes the limits with a fully painted, two-list requirement without faction limitations. In addition to the prestige of winning such an intense tournament format, players compete for critical ranking points to earn a berth in the Iron Gauntlet Finals at Lock & Load GameFest 2014! In this pressure cooker, Jay Larsen emerged to earn a hard-fought victory over Chandler Davidson. This game, which you can watch at privateerpress.com/videos, featured Larsen's victorious Major Markus "Siege" Brisbane list taking on Davidson's formidable Harbinger of Menoth list. Chris Green came in second on the strength of his Asphyxious the Hellbringer and Adeptis Rahn lists, and Jake Hoffman battled to a third place finish with Major Victoria Haley and Warwitch Deneghra.

CHAMPION—JAY LARSEN
Iron Gauntlet Qualifier: List 1

Major Victoria Haley	**+5**
Centurion	9
Thorn	8
Squire	2
Arcane Tempest Gun Mages	6
Arcane Tempest Gun Mage Officer	2
Stormblade Infantry	5
Stormblade Infantry Office & Standard	3
Stormblade Infantry Storm Gunner (1)	1
Horgenhold Forge Guard (10)	8
Journeyman Warcaster	3
Anastasia di Bray	2
Gorman di Wulfe, Rogue Alchemist	2
Ragman	2
Rhupert Carvolo, Piper of Ord	2
Specialists	
Horgenhold Forge Guard (10)	8
Stormsmith Stormcaller x2	1 ea.
Total	50

CHAMPION—JAY LARSEN
Iron Gauntlet Qualifier: List 2

Major Marcus "Siege" Brisbane	**+5**
Stormwall & Lightning Pods	19
Squire	2
Arcane Tempest Gun Mages	6
Arcane Tempest Gun Mage Officer	2
Greygore Boomhowler & Co. (10)	9
Black 13th Gun Mage Strike Team	4
Rangers	5
Eiryss, Angel of Retribution	3
Journeyman Warcaster	3
Reinholdt, Gobber Speculator	1
Stormsmith Stormcaller	1
Gorman di Wulfe, Rogue Alchemist	2
Ragman	2
Rhupert Carvolo, Piper of Ord	2
Specialists	
Horgenhold Forge Guard (6)	5
Taryn di la Rovissi, Llaelese Gun Mage	2
Captain Arlan Strangewayes	2
Stormsmith Stormcaller	1
Total	50

HARDCORE

Gen Con's annual Hardcore tournament draws some of the toughest WARMACHINE and HORDES competition in the world. Players eager to prove their mettle throw down in a tournament format requiring finely honed skills, mental endurance, and dedication. With challenging time restrictions, a single-list format demanding players construct well-rounded armies, and fully painted model requirements, Hardcore tournaments are not for the faint of heart.

HARDCORE AWARDS

Vanquisher	Undefeated
Executioner	Most Enemy Army Points
Mage Hunter	Most Efficient Warcaster/Warlock Kill
Master Craftsman	Best Painted Army

With a perfect 6–0 record, Chuck Elswick vanquished each of his foes to win the aptly named Vanquisher title. His Legion army, led by Vayl, Disciple of Everblight, destroyed every opponent it faced to claim the Executioner title as well. Jake Hoffman's surgical Cygnar army won him the Mage Hunter title, and Joe Scota's exquisite Trollbloods army was more than deserving of Master Craftsman honors.

VANQUISHER & EXECUTIONER—CHUCK ELSWICK

Vayl, Disciple of Everblight	**+6**
Typhon	12
Ravagore	10
Angelius	9
Scythean	9
Spawning Vessel & Acolyths (6)	3
Annyssa Ryvaal	4
Strider Deathstalker	2
The Forsaken	2
Blighted Nyss Shepherd x2	1 ea.
Spell Martyr	1
Total	50

MASTER CRAFTSMAN—SCOTT SCOTA

Scott Scota's Trollbloods army really stood out. Take a look at his Hoarluk Doomshaper, Rage of Dhunia army, with a Mountain King pounding a Woldwarden into oblivion as its centerpiece!

MASTERS

One of the most popular events at Gen Con, the Masters tournament always draws a crowd. Even with the Iron Gauntlet: WARMACHINE & HORDES World Championship format making its debut, Masters still drew a multitude of fierce competitors. After two preliminary heats and a 4–0 record in the finals, Anthony Ferraiolo prevailed over Chuck Elswick, who was dominant in the Hardcore tournament, to win first place and the Gen Con Masters title. Matching Elswick's 3–1 record in the finals, Lou Coduti placed third with his Cryx lists, led by Goreshade the Cursed, Wraith Witch Deneghra, and Asphyxious the Hellbringer.

MASTERS CHAMPION— ANTHONY FERRAIOLO
List 1

Kromac the Ravenous	**+4**
Warpwolf Stalker x2	10 ea.
Pureblood Warpwolf	9
Gorax	4
Druid Stoneward & Woldstalkers x2	5 ea.
Shifting Stones	2
Stone Keeper	1
Swamp Gobber Bellows Crew	1
Lord of the Feast	4
Druid Wilder	2
Gallows Grove	1

MASTERS CHAMPION— ANTHONY FERRAIOLO
List 2

Baldur the Stonecleaver	**+6**
Woldwrath	20
Ghetorix	11
Warpwolf Stalker	10
Tharn Bloodtrackers	8
Shifting Stones	2
Stone Keeper	1
Swamp Gobber Bellows Crew	1
Gatorman Witch Doctor	3

MASTERS CHAMPION— ANTHONY FERRAIOLO
List 3

Morvahna the Dawnshadow	**+5**
Feral Warpwolf	9
Wold Guardian	9
Tharn Ravagers (6)	9
Tharn Ravager Chieftain	2
Tharn Ravager Shaman	2
Warpborn Skinwalkers (5)	8
Warpborn Alpha	3
Wolves of Orboros (10)	6
Wolves of Orboros Chieftain & Standard	2
Shifting Stones	2
Stone Keeper	1
Gallows Grove x2	1 ea.

OTHER TOURNAMENT WINNERS

FLANKS FOR THE MEMORIES
Jordan Nach (Protectorate of Menoth)

BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TIERS
Jordan Nach (Legion of Everblight)

DEATH RACE
Dan Smilek (Khador)

3 COMMANDERS
Team Three Stooges: Jordan Nach (Protectorate), Tony Faber (Legion), James Preusser (Cryx)

PRIVATEER PRESS FORMULA P3 GRANDMASTER PAINTING COMPETITION

Some of the world's best painters showed off their skills in the prestigious Formula P3 Grandmaster Painting Competition at Gen Con for bragging rights and $5,000 in prizes. Painters submitted their best work in six different model categories: Warrior, Warjack/Warbeast, Battlegroup, Unit, Diorama, and Massive. Each entry was judged individually and on its own merits, with the best entries winning gold, silver, or bronze, with the overall winner of the competition being crowned Grandmaster. This year's Grandmaster was Marike Reimer for her incredible rendition of Morvahna the Dawnshadow. This overall winner in the Warrior category stole the show, and her incredible paint job speaks for itself!

MARIKE REIMER
MORVAHNA THE DAWNSHADOW

CATEGORY & GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

There were many other beautiful models that deserved gold medal recognition.
Here are the gold medal and category winners from this year's Gen Con Grandmaster Painting Competition!
Visit privateerpress.com/p3grandmaster2013 for a gallery of all the winning models.

WARRIOR

JESSIE CARLILE
CAPTAIN GUNNBJORN

JASON THOMPSON
VAYLE, CONSUL OF EVERBLIGHT

WARJACK/WARBEAST

RICH CURTISS
TORCH

JESSIE CARLILE
SPRIGGAN

SAM LENZ
WAR HOG

BATTLEGROUP

DREW DRESCHER
BUTCHER BATTLEGROUP

UNIT

BENJAMIN WILLIAMS
HUNTERS GRIM

DIORAMA

CHRIS BORER
STONETIDE VS. IMMORTAL

MASSIVE

SAM LENZ
MOUNTAIN KING

BENJAMIN WILLIAMS
MOUNTAIN KING

Tournament Triple Threat

Trollbloods

BY JACK COLEMAN • ART BY ANDREW TRABBOLD AND ANDREA UDERZO

Building a great WARMACHINE or HORDES army takes practice, ingenuity, and a deep understanding of the play style you enjoy most. Sure, you could copy whichever army list did best at the most recent Iron Gauntlet Qualifier, but you'll almost always have more fun and perform better at competitive tournaments when you play a list you've created on your own.

This article series focuses on the art of building an awesome list that works for you. The idea isn't to provide you with a list you should copy and use for yourself, though that certainly is an option. Rather, we're going to dissect the process of choosing models for different types of forces with their own distinctive play styles. While these decisions will be specific to each author and each list, they will provide insight into concepts to consider when building a list with specific goals in mind.

As with previous Tournament Triple Threat articles we offer three lists, one for each of three major army archetypes: assassination, attrition, and control. There are definitely more archetypes, but this trio is the most popular and prevalent.

This time we focus on the popular brute-force HORDES faction, Trollbloods.

Faction Breakdown

The traditional image of a Trollblood army is a brick of heavily armored, medium-based infantry crashing into enemy forces and applying axe to face while ravenous dire trolls devour the living and beat down solid metal warjacks with their bare hands. For obvious reasons, this imagery appeals to many players, and you will still find countless original and re-imagined versions of the troll brick. The options and play styles available to Trollblood armies, however, have greatly expanded since the release of HORDES. Trollbloods can shed the traditional melee attrition play style and build capable lists for each of the major archetypes or for any style in between.

Trollbloods are well known for synergy. With a wealth of great animi, spells, and various other support abilities, Trollbloods are capable of adapting to any situation, and because these buffs come from a variety of different sources, Trollbloods can stack them for even greater effect. Whether you need mobility, resilience, control, or just raw power, Trollbloods have an answer. All you need to do is bring the right tools.

When building a list for Trollbloods, consider your support options carefully. Bringing too much support is a common mistake and one that can leave your forces outnumbered and lacking models to benefit from all these great abilities. Even though Trollbloods *can* provide an answer to just about anything doesn't mean they *should*. Instead, you want to determine the goals of your army and focus on selecting the best support options to help you achieve them, either by enhancing your army's strengths or providing the utility needed to overcome the most likely pitfalls.

Assassination

Assassination lists are at the core of WARMACHINE and HORDES lists. They take the game and boil it down to the basics. Every official event format, scenario, and league game has one thing in common: if you kill the enemy warcaster/warlock, you win the game.

While creating this list I asked myself, "what's better than killing the enemy warcaster/warlock?" I only thought about this for a moment: the only thing better than killing an enemy warcaster/warlock is killing it *and* shoving that enemy down the gullet of a ravenous dire troll!

If I want to assassinate with a mob of trolls, I am going to need a good deal of mobility and a warlock with fury efficiency. Hoarluk Doomshaper, Rage of Dhunia provides me with both of these needs in spades. Goad allows Doomshaper to force any warbeast in his battlegroup to advance 2″ after it destroys an enemy model. Goad can be triggered multiple times each round, providing Doomshaper's battlegroup with tons of extra movement and greatly increasing its threat range. In addition, Doomshaper's feat gives +3 SPD to his entire battlegroup and allows his warbeast to charge, trample, or slam without being forced.

My goal with this list is to use the incredible mobility from Doomshaper's feat along with Goad to get my Dire Trolls into melee with the enemy warlock/warcaster. If this should prove difficult, plan B is to combine this mobility with snacking and some defensive buffs to literally chew my way through my opponent's army in a battle of attrition.

In order to get the most out of Goad, I need Mulg the Ancient. With MAT 7 and Reach, Mulg is exceptionally capable of using a string of infantry and Goad to reach the enemy warcaster/warlock. With his Affinity for Doomshaper, Mulg is also capable of making 8 attacks in a single turn. If it boils down to attrition, Mulg is fully capable of taking out enemy colossals and gargantuans in a single round.

Next I'll add Rok. Even without Reach, Rok's MAT of 7 and Berserk make him even more frightening than Mulg if he gets into a clump of enemy models. The number of attacks Rok can generate between Berserk and Goad can be staggering, and this is usually only

ASSASSINATION: 50-POINT LIST

Model	Point Cost
Hoarluk Doomshaper, Rage of Dhunia	+6
Mulg the Ancient	12
Rok	11
Earthborn Dire Troll	10
Troll Axer	6
Pyre Troll	5
Troll Whelps (10)	4
Janissa Stonetide	3
Krielstone Bearer & Stone Scribes (4)	3
Stone Scribe Elder	1
Swamp Gobber Bellows Crew	1
Total	**50**

limited by the enemy's positioning. The other reason Rok is an auto-include is his animus. Primal is one of the only ways for Trollbloods to improve a warbeast's MAT. While an automatic frenzy next turn is a steep price to pay, it is preferable to not having Primal when you need it. Primal is used when you absolutely have to deal with DEF 18+ models or when you are sure you can get to the enemy warcaster/warlock. Combined with Doomshaper's Wild Aggression spell, Primal gives you the accuracy you need to minimize the chances of bad rolls and ensure the assassination goes off without a hitch.

With my primary damage dealers and means of assassination sorted, it's time to focus on plan B. For attrition I want to bring what I consider to be the holy trinity of Dire Troll protection: an Earthborn Dire Troll, a Krielstone Bearer & Stone Scribes, and Janissa Stonetide. The trick here is to use the Earthborn's animus on Mulg and Rok and then have Janissa summon a rock wall in front of them. Between this and the Krielstone, I have a wall of three Dire Trolls with 94 hit boxes, ARM 22/23, and cover. Janissa is also great for setting up the assassination with Tectonic Shift, using it to clear charge lanes, pull the enemy warcaster/warlock closer, or to create clumps of enemy models so your warbeasts can Goad to them.

Looking over my list, I see I am lacking a reliable way to provide pathfinder to Mulg and Rok, and I don't have any way to increase their damage without causing them to frenzy. To resolve this I add a Troll Axer for his Rush animus, a Pyre Troll for his Flaming Fists animus, and I attach a Stone Scribe Elder to the Krielstone unit. With Stone Strength from the Elder and the Primal/Flaming Fists animi, these light warbeasts can then deal serious damage without requiring me to commit a Dire Troll.

With 5 points left I want to address the fury management issues that I will undoubtedly run into with this list. Doomshaper is efficient, but with five warbeasts he might still need a bit of help. I take ten Troll Whelps to help me shed excess fury, block charge lanes, and provide additional healing for my warbeasts. I spend my final point on a Swamp Gobbers Bellows Crew to protect Doomshaper and Janissa from ranged harassment.

Now I have solid brick of troll flesh that can weather the enemy's approach and then explode into action. This list can deal with high DEF or high ARM without breaking a sweat, and it can ravage swarms of infantry. The trick with this list is to be careful not to overextend and leave Doomshaper exposed.

ATTRITION: 50-POINT LIST

Model	Point Cost
Madrak Ironhide, World Ender	+5
Trollkin Runebearer	2
Dire Troll Mauler	9
Troll Impaler	5
Fell Caller Hero	3
Stone Scribe Chronicler	2
Trollkin Sorcerer	1
War Wagon	9
Fennblade Kithkar	2
Trollkin Warders (5)	8
Trollkin Fennblades (10)	8
Trollkin Fennblade Officer & Drummer	2
Krielstone Bearer & Stone Scribes (4)	3
Stone Scribe Elder	1
Total	**50**

Attrition

While durability is certainly a key element, the goal of an attrition list is not to take a beating but to trade your models for your opponent's in a favorable manner. It is important not to overlook the offensive capabilities of your forces when building for attrition. Thankfully, with Tough, Regeneration, Snacking, and a large selection of high ARM models, durability comes naturally to a Trollbloods army. This resilience allows me to focus on the other end of the equation: *the unmitigated destruction of my opponent's forces.*

When it comes to destruction, Madrak Ironhide, World Ender is still the chief. His Desperate Hour feat and the Blood Fury spell allow his army to output *tons* of damage that can swing the tempo of the game greatly in his favor. When combined with the other damage buffs available to Trollbloods, the World Ender will allow even basic trollkin infantry to go toe-to-toe with heavy warbeasts and colossals. Now, that's what I call *favorable* attrition.

Normally I would begin my list construction with the battlegroup, but no Trollblood attrition list would be complete without a Krielstone Bearer and Stone Scribes. Their Protective Aura provides a +2 armor buff for the entire army that cannot be dispelled by Eiryss, Purification, or similar effects. With the addition of the Stone Scribe Elder, this unit gains even more utility from his Stone Warp effects. Combat Warding and Spirit Chaser are powerful abilities and can be game changing under the right circumstances, but the main reason I want the Stone Scribe Elder is for Stone Strength, which is a perfect fit for this list, allowing this unit to buff the ARM and STR of my army simultaneously.

For my battlegroup I'll start with a Dire Troll Mauler. Its Rage animus is a huge buff for melee and thrown weapon damage (combined with Stone Strength, Madrak can throw Rathrok at P+S 18!). Tactful use of this animus will allow me to deal heavy damage without committing my own warbeasts to the fight. Next, I will take an Impaler. He brings another

powerful ranged attack that can benefit from Rage or from its own animus, Far Strike, as needed. Far Strike will allow the Impaler and Madrak to throw out some decent damage and clear charge lanes during the first couple of rounds.

With only 5 Fury and two upkeep spells, Madrak can be starved for resources. To help alleviate this I will take a Trollkin Runebearer. Harmonious Exaltation helps take the edge off his fury problems, and Power Glyphs is indispensable for cycling Blood Fury between my units.

For my front line I want a Faction unit that can take advantage of Madrak's feat, and an aggressive unit that can engage enemy models quickly to secure the alpha strike and avoid ranged attrition. The Pyg Burrowers certainly fit the bill, but with Madrak their MAT and RAT of 4 will struggle against high DEF targets and limit their effectiveness during his feat turn. Instead, I decide to take a full unit of Fennblades with their Officer and Drummer unit attachment. The Officer's No Quarter ability provides Pathfinder and increases the Fennblades' threat range to an impressive 13″, in addition to any movement they might gain from Vengeance. Reach will allow the Fennblades to take full advantage of Desperate Hour, and with Vengeance they get twice as much mileage from Blood Fury.

While the Fennblades are fairly durable, I want a second line unit that is truly tenacious, even by Trollkin standards. For this I turn to the Trollkin Warders. With 8 health boxes and up to 21 ARM, these trollkin are ideal for holding objectives and grinding down enemy forces after the initial engagement. The Warders can also take full advantage of all the offensive buffs at my disposal with Reach, Weaponmaster, and a MAT of 7. Even if my opponent gains an early advantage, a retaliatory charge from the Warders combined with Desperate Hour can easily swing the game back in my favor.

Right now this army can hit hard but has no way to increase its accuracy. To alleviate this problem I will take a Fell Caller Hero and a Stone Scribe Chronicler. Between them I have three abilities to increase the accuracy of my models (War Cry, Charge of the Trolls, and Hero's Tragedy) and a great selection of utility options. The Fell Caller is also an excellent target for the damage buffs available in this list. In a perfect storm, the Fell Caller is capable of wielding two P+S 14 swords with five damage dice on the charge!

Now that I have determined the core of my army I need to look carefully at its weaknesses and determine the best way to address these problems. Currently this army is mobile, tough, accurate, capable of dealing incredible damage in melee, and has a boatload of utility. On the other hand, it lacks any way to protect itself from enemy spells, has limited ranged capability, and offers no reliable control.

A Trollkin Sorcerer offers a little of everything I need. For just 1 point I get a RNG 10 magic attack, control with Winter Storm, and enemy upkeep removal from a unit of my choice. That's quite a bargain!

Next I include a Trollkin War Wagon because it hits all the right notes with great ranged capabilities, a 5″ AOE knockdown, high mobility, and great durability. The War Wagon brings a lot of options to the table.

It can clear charge lanes, Hold a flank or objective (and take advantage of ride-by attacks), and clear out control zones with boosted impact attacks and point-blank AOEs. With the War Wagon this list also has legitimate assassination potential (especially during Desperate Hour). Keep an eye out for opportunities to knock down the enemy warlock/warcaster with a Pounder or a boosted critical slam from an Impaler.

With only 2 points remaining I decide to add another powerful melee solo, because frankly I can never have too many targets for Rage. The Fennblade Kithkar has two powerful melee weapons, an out-of-activation move/attack, and Tactician [Fennblade]. Tactician is great for the Fennblades because, with 12 medium bases, they tend to get in each other's way during Vengeance and when charging. Additionally, I can often surprise an unwary opponent by charging a fully buffed Kithkar straight through my Fennblades!

This list is an excellent example of Trollblood synergy and adaptability. A great selection of utility ensures I'll have answers to many possible setbacks, and offensive buffs allow me to transform any model in my army into a serious melee beatstick. Even the Krielstone Bearer & Stone Scribes are more than just support in this list, with the modest Stone Scribes becoming a second-line offensive unit capable of taking out heavily armored troops, 'jacks, and warbeasts!

Control

Control is easily the most diverse of all of the major archetypes. Generally it is achieved with a combination of mobility, denial, positioning, and threat. While there are many different kinds of control, the common goal of all control lists it to manipulate the game in a way that forces your opponent to play to your advantage.

For this list I am focusing on mobility and movement denial as my forms of control. I choose Grim Angus because he is a toolbox of utility and denial. Grim is all about either providing a solution to problems or hindering your opponent. Grim has multiple ways to hamper his opponents' movement, strip away their defenses, and provide additional mobility for his own troops. Altogether this allows him to control the flow of battle and systematically tear down the opposing army, which is why he is my go-to warlock for any Trollblood control list.

Grim works nicely with models/units that need more accuracy and ranged models that can take advantage of his debuffs for assassination potential. With this in mind, I decide on a Troll Impaler, a Slag Troll, and a Mountain King. This battlegroup has great damage potential at range or in melee and will benefit considerably from Grim's DEF-reducing spells and feat.

For my units I choose Pyg Burrowers and Bog Trog Ambushers. Between these I have twenty models to threaten my opponent with, without putting those models in danger. The lead Pyg Burrowers can even threaten those enemy models that are over 15″ from their tunneling marker. If the Burrowers are tunneled near the center of the board it will be impossible for my opponent to maneuver around them without crossing into charge range of my ambushing Bog Trogs. With Grim's support the Burrowers can attack at an effective MAT 9 or RAT 11 while aiming, and the Bog Trogs can charge at an incredible MAT 13! This puts my opponent in a rough situation. He can't avoid my units if he advances, and he can't afford to hold back since Grim would delay him further with Spread the Net and win by scenario.

CONTROL: 50-POINT LIST

Model	Point Cost
Grim Angus	+6 WB
Troll Impaler	5
Slag Troll	6
Mountain King	20
Fell Caller Hero	3
Lanyssa Ryssyl	2
Totem Hunter	3
Pyg Burrowers (10)	6
Bog Trog Ambushers (10)	8
Farrow Bone Grinders (4)	2
Swamp Gobber Bellows Crew	1
Total	**50**

To further this plan of control via mobility and long threat ranges I add a Totem Hunter and Lanyssa Ryssyl. With SPD 7, Jump, Sprint, and Prey, the Totem Hunter's superior mobility allows it to flank and circle behind the enemy army, taking out vital support models and contributing to an assassination run when the time is right. Lanyssa provides +2″ of movement for any friendly model that charges an enemy hit with Hunter's Mark. This is particularly useful with the Bog Trogs on the turn they ambush, and it is valuable with the Mountain King when combined with Bait the Line to give it a 14″ threat range.

At this point my list contains a good number of soft and hard control elements. I have two great jamming units, exceptional threat ranges, a SPD-reducing feat, knockdown, critical slam, charge denial, and great ranged assassination potential. I feel pretty good about this list, but one thing it could use is a little more support for Grim himself. I'll add a minimum unit of Farrow Bone Grinders to increase the range of Grim's spells. The additional range on Marked for Death and Lock the Target allows Grim to do what he needs to without endangering himself too much. I also take a Swamp Gobber Bellows Crew for additional protection and denial.

With my final points I call upon the Fell Caller Hero once again. Although the Burrowers are incredible during Grim's feat turn, they can have trouble hitting without its DEF debuff. War Cry and Marked for Death will allow them to hit at MAT 8, giving me the option to hold off on Spread the Net without completely nerfing the Burrowers alpha strike.

This army is now completed, and it is anything but traditional. Even so, it has a selection of tools to deny an opponent options while engaging on its own terms. You may want to avoid this one in casual games, though, as lists with this much control can be incredibly frustrating for your opponents.

Conclusion

This article should provide you with fresh insight into the process of composing army lists capable of achieving specific goals, and I hope it will encourage you to explore some new twists on the common archetypes within the Trollbloods faction. It is always beneficial to consider new options and tactics, and a great way to enhance your understanding of any faction is by straying from the familiar.

IN BATTLE FORGED

COMMEMORATING TEN YEARS OF WARMACHINE

The game of WARMACHINE has always been deeply intertwined with the sweeping storyline told in the pages of its expansion books. Throughout the years, we have seen western Immoren become embroiled in all-out warfare as the various nations of the Iron Kingdoms seek to achieve their own ends through force of arms. Heroes and villains have risen and fallen, attained glory, and found redemption in their darkest hours. As the story of WARMACHINE has evolved, so have the models used on the tabletop. The relationship between narrative and development has been a pillar of WARMACHINE since it was first conceived, evidenced by models from epic warcasters to terrifying new weapons of war.

VICTORY IN RETREAT

A STORY & SCENARIO FOR WARMACHINE

BY AERYN RUDEL • ART BY ANDREW HOU, ALEX KONSTAD, AND CHRIS WALTON

Thornwood, Late Fall, 608 AR

Sergeant Kargul Shatterhaft cracked open the breech on his battlecannon, shoved another round in, and snapped the weapon closed with a flick of his wrist. He let the cannon—heavy even for an ogrun—drop down and rest against his hip, most of its weight supported by the thick leather strap over his shoulder. He glanced up the battlefield where dozens of bonejacks and helljacks swarmed in front of three enigmatic, wraith-like figures—a vile trio of Cryxian warcasters known as the Witch Coven of Garlghast.

Around him, a dozen other ogrun awaited his orders. "Two hundred yards! Squad one, three degrees left! Squad two, four degrees right! Thirty-five degree angle! Mark!" he called out, instantly calculating and rattling off the necessary measurements to place the battlecannon shells on target.

"Mark, sergeant!" The ogrun around Kargul shouted, and ten battlecannons swung in unison toward the Cryxian line.

"Fire!" Kargul shouted and squeezed the trigger. The huge weapon let loose a throaty roar and kicked back against his grip. His two squads of assault corps fired an instant later, creating a deafening thunder. Eleven shells screamed over the battlefield and struck a pair of Defilers in the center of the Cryxian line almost simultaneously, a testament to the skill of the assault corps with weapons that were not designed for such precision. The massive explosion that followed swallowed the bonejacks in a huge cloud of dirt and smoke. Kargul felt a surge of pride and satisfaction when the smoke cleared, and he saw the two Defilers had disappeared, although *pieces* of both bonejacks—a taloned claw, a skull-like head—were still in evidence.

Kargul's pleasure was short-lived. The remaining helljacks and bonejacks moved over and around the ruined Defilers and continued their advance. Between and around them a horde of mechanithralls flowed like a blasphemous river of rotting flesh. To Kargul, the most terrifying aspect of the Cryxian army was its silence. They came on with the quiet inexorability of death.

"Reload!" Kargul ordered as he opened his battlecannon. His men did the same. Ahead, three units of High Shield Gun Corps moved swiftly in front of the ogrun, forming a solid wall of shields and rifles. Two Grundback Gunners trundled along with the dwarven gunmen, following the shouted orders of their 'jack marshals. The Gun Corps and their warjacks opened up on the Cryxians, strafing their ranks with a withering salvo. Dozens of mechanithralls were cut down, along with another Defiler, but it wasn't nearly enough.

Kargul looked to his left and saw a sea of red and blue armor, the combined Cygnaran and Khadoran armies the Rhulic mercenaries were supporting— two enemy nations brought together under the banner of desperation. It was a monstrous army, more men than he had ever seen assembled in one place. When they had first joined the gargantuan allied force, he'd thought there was no place for his assault corps; their own firepower, although significant,

In celebration of ten years of WARMACHINE, No Quarter *is proud to present In Battle Forged, an article series that looks back at some of the most pivotal moments in the story of WARMACHINE with exciting new fiction from the perspective of those involved. In addition, for the first time, players have a chance to reenact battles from those key moments on the tabletop with new scenarios and exclusive scenario models that represent the forces that took part in those famous engagements.*

"Victory in Retreat" focuses on the Rhulic perspective of the final clash of the recent Battle of the Thornwood Necrofactorium. The joint armies of Cygnar and Khador had at last united to drive Cryx from their factory complex in the Thornwood Forest—a mainland stronghold from which they had begun to threaten the whole of the Iron Kingdoms. Unknown to these allied forces, however, Lich Lord Asphyxious had prepared a massive reserve army outnumbering their own, as well as a necromantic fortress that was itself a weapon of tremendous power. Abruptly overrun by the Cryxians, the human armies and their mercenary allies were forced to retreat under the threat of utter destruction.

would be a single pebble in the landslide of Khadoran and Cygnaran artillery. He'd thought there was no chance that such an army could be challenged, let alone defeated.

How wrong he had been.

He saw the Cygnaran warcaster, a captain named Darius, enclosed in a suit of massive steam-powered armor, commanding a single gigantic warjack along with a half-dozen regular heavy warjacks. Supported by the thundering blasts of Defender heavy barrels, the Stormwall colossal was laying down an impressive hail of fire with its chain guns and cannons, but there was no apparent end to the Cryxians. Kargul couldn't see the Khadoran warcaster, Kommander Sorscha, in the chaos, nor could he find his own commander, General Ossrum. Ossrum had likely been drawn to the opposite flank where the fighting was thickest; his units of Forge Guard would be sorely needed there to blunt the assault of the enemy infantry.

The Cryxians were close enough now that Kargul didn't bother calling out distance and angle. "Fire!" he bellowed, and he and the rest of the assault corps launched their shells over the heads of the dwarves. The shells landed in the center of the swirling mass of mechanithralls, which had now outpaced the bonejacks and helljacks behind them. Dozens of the animated corpses were blown to pieces, but dozens more followed in their wake.

Kargul dared to hope for some measure of victory when he saw the Cryxian ranks had thinned. The human army seemed to have regained the upper hand elsewhere on the field. As he glanced to the left, he saw enemy troops and helljacks crumbling beneath a combined storm of arcing lightning and screeching cannon shells.

Then the world came unhinged.

A massive tremor shook the earth, smashing the ogrun and the dwarves around them to the ground. He managed to keep his feet, which allowed him to see the ground split open in front of them like a gaping maw from which shone hellish green light. Elsewhere, in front of the human army in particular, other trenches had opened up, and they now disgorged a tide of Cryxian horrors. He saw thralls of all types, along with floating abominations festooned with spidery metallic arms. These enigmatic creatures led swarms of muscular, thrall-like creatures—what might have been humans fitted with ghoulish mechanical apparatuses on their heads and arms.

The emergence of these hidden enemies threw the allied lines into disarray, as enemies were suddenly positioned between and behind them. Then the great Cryxian fortress unleashed gouts of green fire down upon the human army. Kargul saw men consumed by this hellfire but not destroyed; instead, their corpses rose and turned against their former compatriots. He looked away, terrified, and returned his focus to the nightmare in front of him.

His flank had been spared the worst of the Cryxian assault, but more mechanithralls and bane thralls had emerged from the open chasm in front of them and were now streaming toward the dwarven line.

Kargul slung his battlecannon and pulled his own axe from his belt. The heavy double-bitted axe felt surprisingly reassuring in his hand. "Axes in hand!" he shouted, and the rest of the ogrun drew their own melee weapons. "Let's make some room!" Kargul charged forward, pushing to the front of the dwarven line so he could swing his axe over the heads of the shorter Rhulfolk. His first target was a bane thrall that had managed to hack the shield of the dwarven corpsman in front of Kargul to splinters. The wraith-like Cryxian was raising its axe to finish off the Rhulic gunner when Kargul shattered its skull with an overhand blow of his own. The bane thrall crumbled to the ground, and the dwarven gunner looked up and back at his savior, relief flooding his features. "Get behind me," Kargul said. "Find another shield." The gunner was only too happy to comply, and Kargul stepped into his place.

The next few minutes were a blur of chaos and fear. The Cryxian troops rushed them from multiple directions, and Kargul swung his axe again and again, using his greater reach and strength to cut down bane thralls and mechanithralls as they closed. His ogrun were doing the same, and the Gun Corps used their shields to protect their much larger allies when possible. He saw two of his ogrun go down, one beneath the pummeling blows of a mechanithrall's steam fists and another to a bane thrall's axe. They were being pushed back, step by step, but the line was holding.

"Sergeant!" someone shouted behind Kargul. He removed the head of a mechanithrall and spared a glance back in the few seconds he'd bought before the next Cryxian stepped in to fill the downed thrall's place. He saw Lieutenant Grindum, the bearded, muscular commanding officer of the High Shield Gun Corps. The lieutenant's shield and armor were spattered in gore, but he appeared unharmed. "We need to retreat!" Grindum shouted, trying to be heard over the chaotic din of battle.

One of Kargul's own, a young ogrun named Varak, shouldered Kargul aside and took his place in the line, meeting a charging mechanithrall with a vicious front kick that sent the thrall flying backward. Kargul liked Varak; the young ogrun showed a lot of good sense, as he'd just done stepping up to let his CO deal with something important, no questions asked, no directions needed.

"The humans are lost," Grindum said, his face pale with terror. Kargul spared a glance to the left and saw absolute chaos. Men were fleeing in broken waves with Cryxian troops in hot pursuit. Only their own force had maintained its line, largely because the enemy had yet to focus its strength here. More chasms had opened up and a seemingly endless stream of necromechinkal horrors poured out of them. "We have to withdraw; we'll be overrun if we stay."

Kargul shook his head and gestured across their own faltering line. "Where will we go?" he asked. "This valley is swarming with everything Cryx can throw at us. There's an entire damned army between us and the general."

"We'll be cut to pieces here, sergeant," Grindum said. "I'm going to sound the retreat. We'll make for the forest and try to go around the valley."

"Give the order," Kargul said. "I'll follow it."

Grindum nodded, hoisted his shield, and then disappeared into the knot of dwarves and ogrun around them. Kargul turned back to the battle and stepped up behind Varak. "We're pulling back," he shouted. "Get everyone ready."

Varak nodded and stepped away, letting Kargul take his place in the line. Then he was gone, moving quickly to relay Kargul's orders. Less than a minute later a deep horn sounded: two blasts. Fighting withdrawal. The entire Rhulic line took a step back and then another. Kargul and the others on the front line continued their butcher's work with axes and edges of shields, cutting down the surging mass of thralls. Most of the Cryxian resources appeared to be focused

on the human army. A single Slayer remained, and it was charging toward the Rhulic line, the grim figure of an iron lich overseer moving swiftly behind it.

Grindum had obviously seen the threat as well, and both their remaining warjacks, a pair of Grundback Gunners, rushed forward to block the Slayer. The smaller Rhulic 'jacks had no chance against the helljack, but they would buy some time. They were near the southern end of the desolate valley where Lich Lord Asphyxious had been building a massive army beneath the Thornwood, and the tree line wasn't far away. The forest was thick enough that helljacks wouldn't be able to easily move through it.

Kargul split a bane thrall's skull with his axe and watched the two Gunners slam their squat metal bodies into the Slayer. One of them was destroyed almost immediately, torn to shreds by the helljack's talons. Kargul cursed under his breath. They needed more time, and the remaining Gunner was not going to last long enough. If the helljack reached their line, it would kill dozens, and they had no way to deal with it.

"Cannons ready!" Kargul shouted, then stepped back and swung his battlecannon into position. The survivors of his two squads of assault corps did the same. The dwarves around them understood instantly and halted their slow retreat, pushing forward to cover the ogrun.

"Helljack! One hundred fifty yards! Thirty-degree angle! Mark!"

"Mark, sergeant!" came the reply.

"Fire!"

The battlecannons unleashed thunder and smoke, sending nine explosive shells over the heads of the dwarven line. They struck true and detonated in a blinding flash. Kargul didn't wait to see the damage they'd done. He hoped the battlecannons would at least slow the helljack. The horn sounded again: three blasts this time. Full retreat.

Kargul slung his battlecannon and pulled his axe again. The remaining turned smoothly and broke into a brisk jog. Many of the High Shield Gun Corps were firing their carbines over their shoulders at the thralls pursuing them. In the hundred-yard sprint to the trees, Kargul whirled around a number of times to hack down a thrall that had drawn too close.

He suppressed a grin when he saw the first dwarves reach the trees. Within the forest, they at least had a chance. They could hide, regroup, and possibly find the warcaster General Ossrum on the other side of this damnable valley. He'd been wrong to doubt Grindum. This was the *only* course of action left to them; the dwarven lieutenant had seen it, and he should have too.

Kargul was one of the last to hit the tree line, and as he entered the dense shadows beneath the soaring oaks and poplars, relief flooded through him. He spared one glance back and saw they weren't being followed. All he could see of the Cryxian force was a single floating figure. An iron lich overseer hovered at the edge of the trees, its eyes glowing a baleful green in the shadows.

Kargul stood in the center of a ring of shields, hands on his hips, looking down at Lieutenant Grindum. The remaining Gun Corps, twenty-one dwarves, had formed a protective barrier around their leaders when they'd stopped their mad flight through the Thornwood to catch their breath and regroup. In addition to Kargul, seven members of the assault corps had made it out of the valley.

"I think it's likely General Ossrum survived," Grindum said. "He would have seen what was happening and saved as many as possible."

"Agreed," Kargul said and smiled. "He's a tough little bastard. No doubt about that." Grindum frowned up at him. He wasn't used to this kind of familiarity when talking about their illustrious commander. Kargul had known Ossrum for years, however, and there was more to their relationship than a shared mercenary charter. "Where do you think he went?"

Grindum tapped the haft of the axe jutting from his belt and scratched his chin. "I think it's possible the other contingent of Cygnarans and Khadorans may have held. Nemo was leading that bunch. The general might try and join up with them."

Kargul nodded. "I'd buy that. But the other side of that valley is twenty miles from here, through thick forest."

Grindum glanced around. "And we're in rough shape. I know."

Kargul could only agree with that assessment. They'd run maybe five miles from the site of the battle. Wounds and heavy armor had slowed their flight, and although he had no doubt the dwarves and his ogrun would press on, their strength could only hold for so long. "We'll make it," he said, trying to sound encouraging. He hoped the doubt he felt wasn't evident in his voice.

"Sir!" one of the members of the Gun Corps shouted. Kargul turned and followed the Rhulfolk's outstretched arm. Dusk had settled over the Thornwood, and a slight greenish glow was visible through the gloom. He glanced around and saw fear, naked and shameless, on the faces of the dwarves and ogrun nearby. He didn't blame them.

"Let's move out," he said. "We'll make for the other side of the valley. Double time."

Night had fallen on the Thornwood, but there was a bright moon overhead, and it cast enough light to illuminate the forest floor, but there was still darkness sufficient to make

moving between the thick trunks like navigating an endless shadowy labyrinth.

The Cryxlight behind them had grown in intensity, gaining ground on them. It spurred them on. They kept to their direction, but fear and desperation had frayed their discipline. The Gun Corps was moving like a mob of individuals rather than a cohesive unit. Lieutenant Grindum did what he could, shouting orders or words of encouragement, and they would come together for a time before drifting apart again.

Whatever was behind them didn't worry Kargul as much as what might be in front of them. Doubt nagged at him, and he couldn't shake the terrible sense they were running into a trap. Hunters drove their quarry from the rear, pushing their prey into the waiting nets and spears of hidden allies.

They'd covered some ten miles at this point, and their pace was slackening. Kargul and his ogrun were moving much slower than they were capable of to match pace with the dwarves, who were not weathering the ordeal nearly as well as their much larger allies. Kargul had ordered the assault corps to drop back behind the dwarves, covering their rear. He had moved off alone and to the far right, keeping an eye on the Cryxlight behind them. If whatever was following them caught up, he wanted to be ready.

They had encountered neither friend nor foe since they'd abandoned the valley, and that added to the impending sense of doom Kargul felt. Unless the other half of the human army had fared much better than the force he had been supporting, these woods should be swarming with Cryxian troops. He had expected to run into survivors from Darius or Sorscha's forces, had hoped to strengthen their numbers, but so far had found nothing.

Excited shouting sounded ahead and Kargul saw a dim blue glow flickering through the trees. The source of the light became apparent as they drew nearer. Although they had not encountered any survivors from the combined Cygnaran and Khadoran army, there was evidence that the valley had not been the only field of battle. Terrifying in the dark, shattered hulks of warjacks and helljacks thrust up from the forest floor like the corpses of great beasts, though what lay head was something else entirely.

Kargul had seen Cygnar's mighty Storm Striders in action in the valley, and the great spider-like machines had impressed him with their firepower and resilience. But they were still just machines, as evidenced by the smashed wreck looming out of the darkness ahead.

The Storm Strider's legs were folded beneath it and the massive spherical storm chamber that powered the siege engine was cracked and even rent open in places. The wrecks of a handful of bonejacks and dozens of burnt thralls lay around it. The Cryxians were so badly scorched it was impossible to tell their type. They had taken their quarry down, though. The storm chamber had obviously been damaged, possibly breached, and the wreck was wreathed in arcing electricity.

"Don't get too close!" Kargul yelled as they neared the ruined Storm Strider. He'd once seen a Cygnaran Stormclad's great generator blade take a hit from a Khadoran Destroyer's bombard, directly to the enormous storm chamber in its hilt. The shell had breached the device and set off a surprisingly powerful chain reaction. He remembered a blinding flash of blue-white that seared his eyes. Once it faded he saw it had torn off the warjack's arm and electrocuted two trenchers who'd been unlucky enough to be standing nearby. That had been a far smaller storm chamber than the one employed by a Storm Strider. While they didn't often explode so catastrophically, it was not a risk he dared take.

The dwarves heeded his warning and gave the wreck a wide berth. He wanted to get as far from it as possible, but the luck that had seen them through this far now changed for the worse. He heard a choked guttural scream from ahead, along with what sounded like hoofbeats. A cold shroud of fear dropped over him when the first soulhunter came charging out of the forest.

The soulhunters were a perverse blend of horse, human, and necromechanika—a terrifyingly effective amalgamation. Kargul could see five, each armed with a long scythe and a shorter sickle. He watched one of the Gun Corps raise her rifle to fire at a charging soulhunter. The sound of the carbine's discharge was shockingly loud after the quiet desperation of their flight. The shot went wide, and the soulhunter barreled down on the dwarven gunman. Its scythe licked out, blood sprayed, a black fan in the dim glow of the Storm Strider's ruptured storm chamber, and the dwarven gunman came apart at the waist. As the soulhunter flashed by, it seemed to pull something from its victim, a greenish smoke that trailed after it and disappeared into the hellish necromechanikal workings along its flanks.

Disgust and rage rose within Kargul, and he brought his battlecannon up. The soulhunter saw the movement and changed direction, weaving through the trees with a nimbleness Kargul would not have thought possible for something so large. He was forced to fire the cannon before he could properly brace it. It lit up the forest with light and thunder, knocking him back a step. The soulhunter was nearly on top of him, and he hit it at point-blank range. The shell's detonation hurled Kargul to the ground, but he sat up immediately, his ears ringing, searching for his enemy. The bottom half of the soulhunter lay a few paces away; it's upper torso was gone.

Kargul climbed to his feet and glanced around. Knots of dwarves had banded together, shields out, rifles firing at Soulhunters flashing through the trees. Everything was lit with the lurid blue glow of the wrecked Storm Strider, punctuated by flashes of green as a soulhunter claimed another dwarven soul.

"Form a line, you bloody bastards!" he heard Grindum yell, and he began running in the direction of the lieutenant's voice. There wasn't time to reload his battlecannon so he pulled his axe instead, stooping to pick up a shield from a fallen Gun Corpsman.

He found the lieutenant and most of the dwarves about fifty yards from the wrecked Storm Strider. Grindum had managed to throw together a fairly steady double battle line, ten in front and ten in back. Sandwiched between these two lines of dwarves were four ogrun, including Varak and lieutenant Grindum himself.

Kargul sprinted toward the dwarves but found his path blocked by a charging soulhunter. He didn't let up, pushing his shield out and raising his axe. The soulhunter slammed into him at a full tilt, and its scythe hacked into his shield but did not penetrate it. He managed to keep his feet after the impact, although it nearly jarred the shield from his grasp. The soulhunter's scythe had lodged in the thick wood, and its forward momentum tore the weapon from its grip.

Kargul spun, tossed aside the shield and the weapon stuck within it, and took a two-handed grip on his axe. The soulhunter pivoted smoothly around a tree, then came back for another charge. Kargul raised his axe as it barreled down on him, knowing he was at a severe disadvantage. The sudden staccato popping of dwarven carbines behind him brought a grim smile to his lips. A hail of dwarven bullets stopped the soulhunter's charge cold, and it went down in a tangled heap.

Kargul turned and ran toward the two lines of Gun Corps, who had shifted position to fire on his attacker. The line opened to allow him through.

"Is this all?" Kargul said, moving to stand next to Grindum.

The lieutenant nodded grimly. "All I could find or all that could hear my voice."

"Varak?" Kargul said, addressing the last of his assault corps. "Only you four?"

"We ran into those soulhunters straight off," he said. "Killed three of them, but they carved us up good."

The dwarves behind them fired a volley, and Kargul twisted around to see another soulhunter flash by, apparently unwounded. One of the dwarves toppled forward, his throat

slashed, and Varak dragged him behind the line to choke out his last among his friends and allies.

"We've got to move," Kargul said. "They'll cut us to pieces if we stay here."

Grindum nodded. "See if you and your boys can lay down some covering . . ." His voice trailed off and Kargul saw that he was staring off to the south. The green glow had intensified, and they could now see its source.

Like hunting hounds, five bonejacks, their tusked heads marking them as Deathrippers, ran ahead of a floating demon—the same iron lich overseer he had seen in the valley. Now that it was closer, he could see it was slightly different from the others he'd seen during this conflict. Instead of a spear, it carried a buckler fitted with a hooked blade on each of its three arms. It also seemed *older*, it's blackened metal body scarred and pitted, its tripartite heads bearing the mark of bullet and blade in many places.

The dwarves in front of Kargul had their carbines out and were firing at the onrushing bonejacks and soulhunters as opportunity permitted. His ogrun looked to him for orders, and he felt like he had none to give. They would be killed here, and there was nothing he could do to stop it.

The glow of the arcing electricity around the ruined Storm Strider flashed suddenly and drew his attention. The light had grown brighter, strobing now in flashes of blue-white. The damaged storm chamber was becoming more unstable. Kargul was suddenly struck with a possibility, albeit a slim one.

"Lieutenant," Kargul said. "Lead half the men away from here and leave me the rest."

"What?" Grindum said. "We can't split up like that. We'll both be killed."

"There's not much that's going to stop that now," Kargul said, "but I can buy you some time. Time enough to get to Ossrum, maybe."

Grindum's eyes shifted to the bonejacks barreling down on them. Then he nodded, and Kargul could see the desperation in his eyes. "Fine. I don't think it'll matter much, but we'll try." He turned away from Kargul.

"Second and third squads! Full retreat! Covering fire!" he shouted, and half the High Shield Gun Corps picked up their shields and began moving away, firing their carbines as they went.

Kargul didn't watch Grindum leave but instead began giving orders of his own. "High Shield, we need covering fire on myself and Varak. Tarrog, Ivosh," he said, turning to the remaining ogrun. "Keep the bonejacks off the dwarves." They nodded, turned, and aimed their battlecannons. "Varak, you're with me."

Kargul broke into a run, and Varak fell in beside him. They sprinted away from the dwarves and the remaining ogrun, Kargul leading the way. Varak asked no questions; he knew there wasn't time. Three of the bonejacks broke away from those charging in at the High Shield line and darted toward them. The overseer broke off as well, perhaps realizing what Kargul was up to.

They were running toward the wrecked Storm Strider, and Kargul turned to Varak. "Load that cannon," he shouted. "We're going to need both shells." He swung his own battlecannon around and popped the breach, loading a shell without breaking stride.

The bonejacks were skirting around the other side of the Storm Strider, trying to cut Varak and Kargul off. They had to take a circuitous route to avoid the arcing tendrils of lightning that writhed around the battle engine. While loading his cannon he'd lost sight of the overseer, but the bonejacks were close enough now.

"Target the Storm Strider," he said. "Fire on my command."

Varak's eyes went wide as he realized what Kargul was ordering him to do, but he aimed his weapon.

Kargul had no idea if their shells would complete the rupture of its storm chamber. He also had no way of knowing if he and Varak would be outside the blast radius if they were successful. That part, at least, he wasn't overly concerned with.

His finger tensed around the trigger, and he opened his mouth to shout the command. A shadow fell over him, and he jerked his head up in time to see the overseer descending from the dark canopy overhead in a whirl of scything blades. Kargul brought his cannon up over his head and felt the overseer's blades bite into the metal. The force of that triple blow was enough to throw him to the ground. One of the overseer's blades had cut the strap holding his battlecannon to his body, and it flew from his grasp.

Kargul rolled, avoiding a slashing lunge from the overseer, and pulled his axe. He climbed to his feet and swung wildly. The axe slammed into one of the overseer's shields, checking the blow.

"It cannot, cannot, cannot trick us!" The overseer shrieked, its voice echoing from three grinning skulls. "We see, see, see what it does!"

It spun toward him, blades humming through the air. He knocked one aside, narrowly avoided another, but the third drew a flaming line of agony across his chest. He stumbled back, and the overseer pressed in.

"It dies, dies, dies!" the overseer howled, pushing forward, spinning its blades in a weaving pattern he knew he could

not deflect or avoid. He brought his axe up, thinking to get in one good blow before the fiendish Cryxian machine slashed him to ribbons.

The dull thunder of an ogrun battlecannon drowned out his fear. Then the world dissolved into searing light and a sound so loud he thought his head would burst. He felt his body go slack and weightless as a giant, unseen hand lifted him from the ground and flung him away. Blind and deaf, he still knew his body was tumbling end over end, and he awaited that impact—a tree, a boulder—that would bring the final dark. When the moment came it was almost gentle, and he felt the soft yielding sward of the forest floor beneath his fingers and face.

Kargul lay in the quiet bliss of unconsciousness for what might have been hours. When sight and hearing returned to him they brought terrible pain. His entire body felt broken, his head a pounding anvil of agony. He lay still for a few moments, wondering if the overseer would return to finish him. Finally, he found the strength to climb to his knees and look around.

The forest had changed. It was still dark, but the moonlight revealed a huge barren patch fifty yards ahead. He could see a crater there, a huge wound in the earth where the wrecked Storm Strider had once been. There was nothing left of the battle engine or the three bonejacks likely caught in the blast.

He climbed to his feet and saw his axe had landed next to him. As he stooped to pick it up, he heard a soft rustling in the undergrowth a few feet away. The dim green glow of Cryxlight told him what he might find. He moved cautiously, painfully, toward the sound and light.

The overseer was broken but still moving. Two of its arms had been ripped from its body and one of its heads had been caved in by a flying piece of shrapnel. Kargul almost laughed when he saw it was a piece from a battlecannon barrel, maybe his own. *Maybe Varak's. He was too close.* Varak had done his job; Kargul would grieve for the young ogrun later.

One of the overseer's heads was facing him, and it hissed softly as he approached. "Corpulus cannot die, die," it said. "We will destroy you—"

Kargul had heard enough and brought his axe down on the face he could see, smashing it to pieces. He kept hacking until the overseer stopped moving.

With the overseer dispatched, Kargul limped to where he'd left the dwarven Gun Corps and the last two members of his assault corps. They were gone. But instead of finding the area littered with Rhulic corpses, he found the wrecks of two Deathrippers and the bullet-riddled bodies of three soulhunters.

Kargul sat down on a nearby stump. It was quiet, and he noticed the first hint of dawn overhead, a pale rose tint to the iron-grey sky. He sat for a moment, enjoying the first real peace he'd had in weeks.

He might have gone on sitting there, watching the morning break over the treetops, but the sound of something large crashing through the forest to the north compelled him to stand up, axe in hand. He saw black smoke rising over the trees, and the noise grew louder. There were definitely warjacks moving toward him.

He began walking slowly toward the noise, hoping Ossrum was with them, hoping they'd let him sleep for a few hours before the fighting began again.

Victory in Retreat

BY DAVID "DC" CARL

SETUP

Before the game, determine who will be the attacker (Cryx forces) and who will be the defender (Mercenary forces). Then designate one table edge as the attacker's table edge and the opposite table edge as the defender's table edge.

The attacker's deployment zone is the area within 10˝ of his table edge, and the defender's deployment zone is the area within 10˝ of his table edge.

First, the defender places a Storm Strider representing the Ruptured Storm Strider. The Ruptured Storm Strider cannot be placed within 12˝ of any table edge. Beginning with the attacker, players then take turns placing four forest terrain features, each representing trees within the Thornwood. Forests cannot be placed within 3˝ of a table edge, the Storm Strider, or another forest.

The attacker deploys first and takes the first turn.

ARMY COMPOSITION

The attacker's army consists of Iron Lich Overseer Corpulus, 5 Scout Deathrippers, and a 5-model unit of Soulhunters.

The defender's army consists of Lieutenant Grindum Ironwall, a 10-model unit of Hammerfall High Shield Gun Corps, and Sergeant Kargul Shatterhaft with a 5-model unit of Ogrun Assault Corps. The defender's army does *not* gain the bonuses of the Searforge Commission mercenary contract.

SPECIAL RULES

At the end of each round, models within 2˝ of the Storm Strider suffer a POW 10 electrical damage roll . (Each player rolls for affected enemy models.)

At the start of the defender's turn, if one or more models from Sergeant Kargul Shatterhaft's unit are in contact with the wreck marker and no enemy models are in contact with the wreck marker, immediately make one battlecannon damage roll against the Ruptured Storm Strider (ARM 18). If the attack damages the Storm Strider, it explodes.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The attacker wins the game if Sergeant Kargul Shatterhaft is destroyed.

The defender wins the game if the Storm Strider explodes, covering the retreat of the surviving Rhulic forces.

OPTIONAL RULES

If both players agree, they can play a variation of the Victory in Retreat scenario. In this variant, the attacker adds a 35-point Cryx army to the army listed above in Army Composition, and the defender adds a 35-point Cygnar, Khador, or Highborn Contract Mercenary army to their own forces.

IRON LICH OVERSEER CORPULUS

CORPULUS

MAGIC ABILITY [7]

- **DARK FIRE (★ATTACK) -** Affected models can reroll missed attack rolls against living models this turn. Each roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Cold Blood.
- **DRIFTING SHADOWS (★ACTION) -** RNG 5. Target friendly Faction model gains Ghostly for one turn. (A model with Ghostly can advance through terrain and obstacles without penalty and can advance through obstructions if it has enough movement to move completely past them. A model with Ghostly cannot be targeted by free strikes.)

NECROMANCER – Once per turn, this model can spend a soul token to make one additional Magic Ability special attack or special action during its activation.

SOUL COLLECTOR – This model gains one soul token when a living enemy model is destroyed in its command range. This model can have up to three soul tokens at a time. During its activation, this model can spend soul tokens to gain additional attacks or to boost attack or damage rolls at one token per attack or boost.

SOUL MATRIX – While in this model's command range during their activations, warjacks controlled by this model can spend soul tokens on this model to gain additional attacks or to boost attack or damage rolls at one token per attack or boost.

WELL OF SOULS – This model begins the game with one soul token.

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SCOUTING DEATHRIPPER

DEATHRIPPER

HUNTER – This model ignores forests, concealment, and cover when determining LOS or making a ranged attack.

SCOUT CORTEX – A 'Jack Marshal can control up to five Scout Cortex warjacks instead of only two.

MANDIBLE

SUSTAINED ATTACK – During this model's activation, when it makes an attack with this weapon against the last model hit by the weapon this activation, the attack automatically hits.

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SERGEANT KARGUL SHATTERHAFT

KARGUL

'JACK HUNTER – This model gains an additional die to its melee and ranged damage rolls against warjacks.

ARTILLERY VETERAN – When this model's AOE ranged attacks deviate, you can reroll the direction and/or distance of deviation. Each roll can be rerolled only once as a result of Artillery Veteran.

CLEAVE – When this model destroys one or more enemy models with a melee attack during its activation, immediately after the attack is resolved the model can make one additional melee attack. This model can gain only one additional attack from Cleave each activation.

GRANTED: BRACED – While this model is in play, models in this unit gain Braced. (If a model with Braced forfeits its movement during its activation to gain the aiming bonus, it ignores concealment and intervening models that activation.)

GRANTED: FEARLESS – While this model is in play, models in its unit gain Fearless ⊛.

WAR AXE

CRITICAL AMPUTATION – On a critical hit, warjack arms and weapon systems that suffer damage from this attack are crippled.

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LIEUTENANT GRINDUM IRONWALL

GRINDUM

DUAL SHOT – When this model forfeits its movement to gain the aiming bonus it can also make one additional ranged attack this activation.

RHULIC COMMANDER – During this model's activation, it can choose one of the following strategies. The strategy affects this model and Rhulic models/units in this model's command range at the time this model chose the strategy.

- **BEAR'S STRENGTH -** Affected models gain +3 STR for one turn.
- **MARCH -** Affected models gain Pathfinder ◔ for one turn.
- **MONEY SHOT -** Affected models gain +2 to ranged attack and damage rolls for one turn.

BATTLE AXE

POWERFUL CHARGE – This model gains +2 to charge attack rolls with this weapon.

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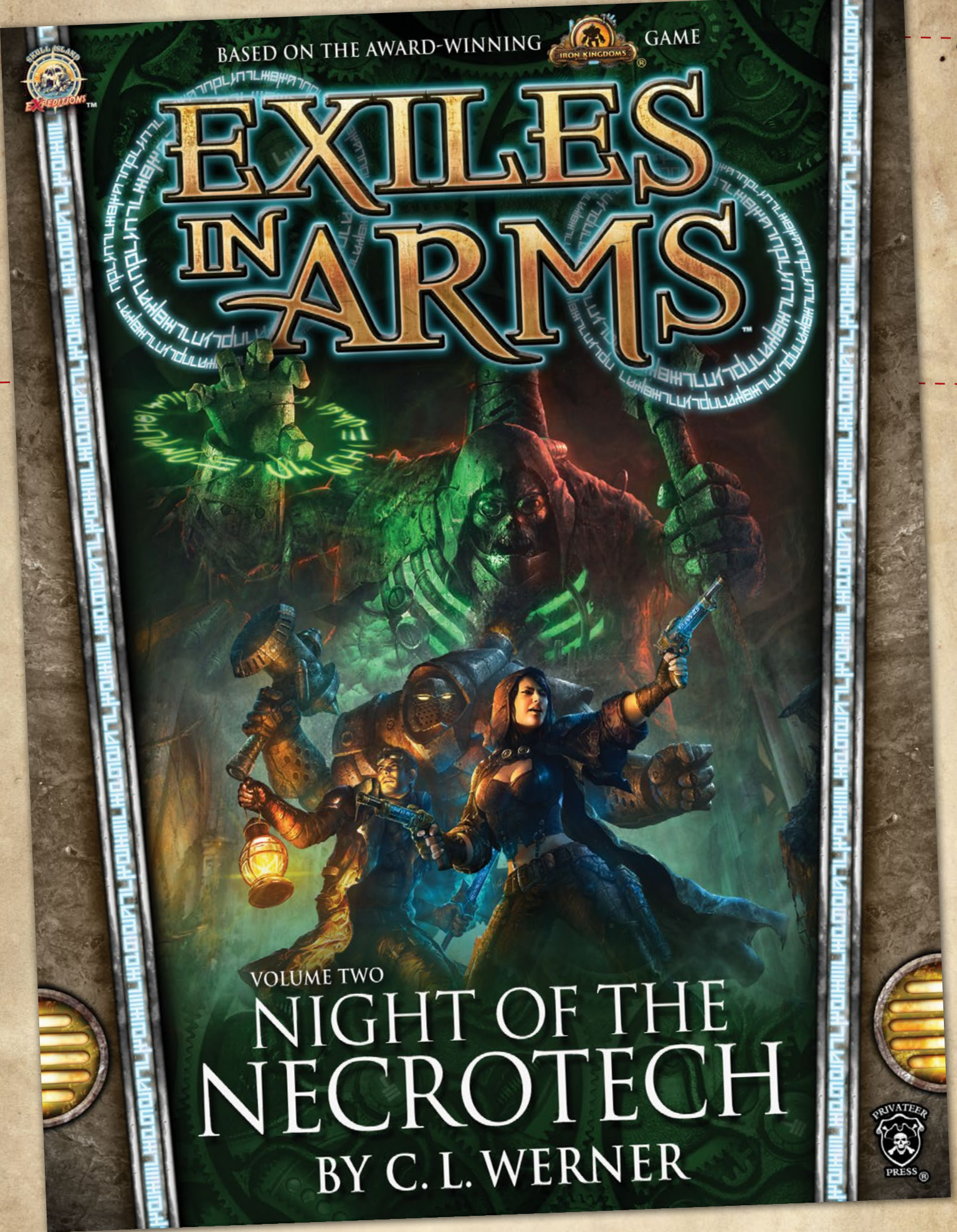
BASED ON THE AWARD-WINNING IRON KINGDOMS GAME
EXILES IN ARMS
VOLUME TWO
NIGHT OF THE NECROTECH
BY C. L. WERNER
PRIVATEER PRESS

Where Shadows Fall...

The life of a sell-sword is a hard one, and trouble always seems to find even the most well-meaning mercenary . . .

Rutger and Taryn are scraping by in the infamous Port of Deceit, a place where two skilled mercenaries should have no trouble finding work. But an ominous shadow has fallen across the city of Five Fingers, and an ancient evil has come to gorge itself on the agony and suffering that have long been the city's stock and trade. Rutger and Taryn are dragged into a tangled plot of danger and intrigue as they face a terrifying Cryxian invasion and a vengeful specter from their past.

When the vile leader of the Cryxian incursion takes an unhealthy interest in the two, the stakes get impossibly high, and Rutger and Taryn may not survive the *Night of the Necrotech*.

The following excerpt is from *Exiles in Arms: Night of the Necrotech*, the latest offering from Skull Island eXpeditions from C. L. Werner, author of the Iron Kingdoms novella *Exiles in Arms: Moving Targets*. Available now at skullislandx.com in three digital formats: ePub, mobi, and PDF.

Fog from the Bay of Stone smothered the wooden piers, reducing the lights from Captain's Island across King's Finger Channel to an indistinct glow in the darkness, a phantom blaze on the distant horizon. Even at this late hour there was life on the main island; the taverns and gambling halls were more active by night than by day. The big island was never quiet.

It was far different on Dicer's Isle, a collection of squalid drinking holes, shadowed alleys, and rundown buildings. Here the pulse of activity waned as the night deepened and the gathering darkness drove the denizens of the island to whatever shelter they could afford. Cutpurses, burglars, muggers, and footpads all prowled the shadows, watching for opportunities to add blackpennies to their pockets or notches to their blades.

On the Doleth Docks, stevedores and sailors had quit their labors with the sun's retreat. Those with coin had withdrawn to the stewpots lining Privateer Lane on the cliff above the docks. Those without had slunk away to parts unknown or into the holds of their vessels to seek refuge in sleep. An abnormal tranquility settled over the docks, a sharp contrast to the noise and bustle of the day. Only the creaking of timber and the snap of rigging stirred the quiet.

Men in heavy boots clomped down the easternmost pier, a long finger of planks and timber called Grimbold's Gamble after the merchant who'd built it two hundred years earlier. Lamps at intervals of forty yards briefly illuminated the figures: a company of mercenary guards in grimy leather armor. Each man wore a bright red band around his arm and carried a heavy cudgel. Hirelings of the merchant combines who owned the pier, the men were expected to subdue malcontents with their bludgeons before resorting to more lethal tactics. A live thief or smuggler was a commodity, grist to feed the mill of justice in Five Fingers. A dead man was only more garbage to be hauled away.

The men who watched the guards from the belly of a small fishing boat knew the type of justice the mercenaries would dole out. The prospect of being dragged before the courts was to be avoided at all costs. Their orders didn't allow for answering a magistrate's questions.

As soon as the sound of boots on wood faded, the men concealed in the fishing boat climbed out and onto the walkway. Each was dressed in a black tunic and breeches, the cotton soaked in oil to waterproof it. Their oiled-leather shoes made their progress nearly soundless as they stole down the dock.

The big merchantman moored near the end of the pier was their objective, a hulking clipper of Cygnaran design. The ship had arrived three days before, and its cargo of timber and grain had been unloaded. Now it was waiting while its captain tried to secure fresh cargo. It was common practice for merchants to haggle with independent captains for days, playing upon the loss of tide and time to induce more favorable terms. As many a captain had learned, pirates were as ruthless in port as they were at sea.

The gang from the fishing boat had different ideas about why the clipper remained in Five Fingers. There were incongruities about the cargo that had been unloaded, questions that had stirred suspicions in certain quarters. Proven, those suspicions would present certain opportunities. To that end, they needed proof.

Without a sound the men caught hold of the ropes tethering the *Black Anne* to the pier and scrambled up and onto the deck. The lone sentry, a sailor more interested in the tobacco in his pipe than in his duty, failed to notice the intruders creeping across the deck. The crack of a blackjack against his skull ensured he wouldn't notice anything for hours to come.

"The forward hold," the leader whispered, gesturing with a grease-blackened hand at the covered hatch. Two of his fellows hurried forward to loosen the bolts that held the cover in place.

Cautiously, the gang descended into the hold, small metal lanterns hooked to their belts lighting the way. The last to climb down slid the hatch cover partly back into place—anyone discovering the unconscious sentry might think the sailor had simply fallen asleep, but an open hatch would certainly indicate something was amiss.

The hold should have been empty. Instead, it was packed with crates and boxes. The gang prowled between the stacked crates, inspecting each for some mark that might indicate the nature of its contents. The boxes bore no mark or sign. As the men moved deeper into the hold, they could smell a musty, unpleasant odor.

Some of them turned anxiously to their leader. Each man suspected what would come next, but he wanted the decision to be made by someone else. There was an air of nebulous dread in the dark hold.

"Open it," the gang chief said, gesturing with a drawn pistol at one of the crates. Without a word, his men removed iron bars from beneath their tunics and went to work.

The screeching sound of nails being wrenched from wood occasionally interrupted the silence, and each time the men glanced up at the hatch with worried faces. They quickly finished their task and leaned the front panel of the crate against the side of a neighboring box. The odor was stronger now; it was magnified along with a stinging, sulphuric reek. The gang chief stepped forward to shine his lantern into the crate, revealing the merchandise they had come to find.

The gang knew some sort of contraband was in the hold, as any lawful goods would have been unloaded with the timber and grain. Never had they imagined the crates held such a horror as they looked upon now. The source of the sharp odor dominating the hold was revealed.

The thing in the crate would have been taller than a man but for its hunched, squat construction. Two legs of steel and bone supported a barrel-shaped metal torso from which protruded a set of monstrous skeletal jaws. Razor-sharp, tusk-like teeth, bolted directly to the bone, lined the thing's maw. A chaotic array of pipes and tubes snaked from the head back into the steel body. A ridge of exhaust pipes, like the dorsal fins of some oceanic beast, sprouted from the rear of the horror's hull. Great talons of steel-plated bone tipped each of its feet, and a faint green luminance smoldered behind the grated vent in its belly.

Each man stared at the thing in mute terror. They recognized that ghastly glow, knew it from tavern tales and ghost stories, from the shuddersome recollections of war veterans and from the dour warnings of aged priests.

"Open the others," the chief said, his voice hoarse. His gang first stared at him with fear-filled eyes but then moved to obey. As they pried open the other crates, none of the men noticed a stirring in the darkness between the crates behind them. None of them saw what was watching them from the shadows with malicious fascination.

The gang had opened four crates, each containing another of the alarming mechanikal horrors. As they were opening a fifth, the stench in the hold became still more oppressive. The air became sour, foul, defiled in some fashion. Several of the men covered their mouths, gagging.

The sinister constructs of steel and bone suddenly changed and the faint, smoldering gleam in their bellies burst into a full gibbous brilliance. A thin wail rose from each machine's furnace. Before the men could react, the awakened bonejacks scrambled from their boxes.

Three of the gang were cut down immediately, torn to ribbons by the snapping jaws of the abominations. A fourth man was hurled to the ground when the crate he and his fellows had been prying open exploded in a shower of splinters. The bonejack within leaped atop him and brought a clawed foot slamming down to pulverize his legs. Blood streamed from ruptured flesh, spraying the monster's hull with crimson. The bonejack ripped at the man pinned beneath it, tearing strips of meat from his body and eliciting piercing shrieks of pain and terror.

Only the gang's chief, who had avoided direct contact with the crates, was afforded a chance to flee. He did not hesitate; to linger even a moment would have been to squander the opportunity fate had given him. He fled back across the hold, retreating toward the hatch as he tried to ignore the screams behind him.

Halfway up the ladder, the chief could not resist one look back. The sight of one of his men's thrashing bodies in the jaws of a bonejack was horrifying, but the spiderlike monstrosity scuttling from the shadows to inspect the bonejack's victim was more than the chief could stand. He stopped, leveled his pistol at the horror—a terrifying amalgamation of rotting corpse and dread mechanika—and fired. His aim was true, and the bullet struck the creature's chest. A thick, filthy liquid bubbled from the wound, and the creature pressed a bony talon to the hole. It turned and regarded him through the tinted lenses that covered its eyes, its skeletal face split in a ghastly smile.

The gang chief threw open the hatch and started to scramble onto the *Black Anne*'s deck. Instead of a making a mad dash to freedom, he found himself staring into the barrel of a gun. The man behind that gun was lean and wolfish, his clothing well cut and elaborately embellished. He wore soft grey breeches, and his grey frock coat shone with rich embroidery, the silver thread outlining maritime shapes that flowed up to a luxurious fur collar. Rubies glittered from the beveled neck of his sharkskin boots, and gold chains lay atop his silken shirt and vest. The gunman smiled when he saw that his victim recognized him.

"Lorca," the chief said, fairly spitting the name.

The gunman's eyes glittered like chips of ice. "Aren't you glad you found what you were looking for?" He discharged the pistol into the gang chief's face and kicked the twitching body back into the hold.

Lorca imagined his friends below would appreciate something to play with.

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Skull Island eXpeditions is Privateer Press' own digital publishing imprint, featuring an all-star lineup of acclaimed novelists, including *The New York Times* bestselling author Larry Correia, C.L. Werner, Howard Tayler, and Dave Gross. Fans of the Iron Kingdoms, WARMACHINE, and HORDES can now experience the setting like never before with immersive new tales about their favorite characters.

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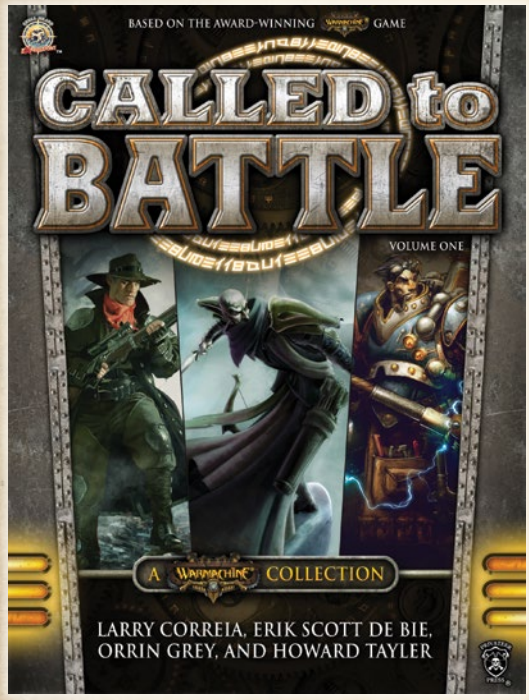

CALLED TO BATTLE by Larry Correia, Orrin Grey, Erik Scott de Bie, and Howard Tayler

The Iron Kingdoms is a land dominated by mighty warcasters, arcanists who command the terrifying war machines called warjacks. While these epic figures lead armies and shape the futures of their nations, other powerful individuals, no less skilled, forge their own destinies in steam and steel.

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These stories draw you deeper into the wartorn landscape of western Immoren and the Iron Kingdoms, where heroes, villains, and those somewhere in between find themselves *Called to Battle*.

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PRIVATEER PRESS®

th' Abomination

— BY ALFONSO "THE TRAITOR" FALCO —

A mix of many different parts, the Abomination is a terror to behold… and a masterpiece of model mayhem by a Privateer Press staff member.

It all started in the resin reject pile at work when I discovered Mountain King legs and a Stormwall torso. I thought to myself, *What would Dr. Arkadius do?* The answer launched the long, laborious task of taking the fallen Mountain King and making him stronger, faster, and with superior firepower, because I had the technology and the money… Well, I had the technology, anyway. I set about acquiring body remnants from devastated battlefields all over western Immoren. The Mountain King…a ruined Stormwall… Stormstriders…a Conquest…a Galleon…and the mighty right arm of a Mammoth. Yet I was still missing a few pieces, like the shoulders, the back of my creation's head, its rock jaw, and its massive gut. These I re-created from Green Stuff and Magic Sculp. The base I made of driftwood, kitty litter, fine turf foam, baby's breath, grass tufts, my own handmade ferns, and my trademark magic mushrooms. And the rules for Dr. Arkadius' Abomination? Perhaps one day… Muhahahahaha!

DEEP EARTH

The Modeling & Painting Challenge in *No Quarter* #49 sent you underground to unearth terrible denizens of the subterranean realm. What did you find buried just beneath the surface? Here we proudly present our three favorites.

WINNER:
JAMES BARNES

Burrowing through forgotten tunnels, James Barnes' Nightwretches indifferently stomp past the bones of the dead.

"UNDERGROUND CRYX"

RUNNER-UP:
SIMON FOSTER

Pyg Burrowers came across this strange beast, Simon Foster's Star-Nosed Dire Mole Troll that, while mild-mannered underground, becomes a veritable terror when it breaks the surface.

"DIRE MOLE TROLL"

HONORABLE MENTION:
JOEL TEPLY

"SCY-THING"

Check out page 96 for the next **Modeling & Painting Challenge!**

NO 51 MODELING & PAINTING CHALLENGE

MEAT & METAL

When flesh fails, technology takes over. Dead limbs are replaced with metallic surrogates, even to the point where living beings become more like machines. The *No Quarter* #51 Modeling & Painting Challenge wants you to mercilessly alter a living body with cold, efficient metal. Butcher the Butcher to give him cannons for arms. Warp a warpwolf to increase its speed with military treads. Use your skills to turn skin into steel, biological into mechanikal, and humans into superhumans.

To submit your entry, take a digital photo of your creation, fill out a submission form, and send both to submissions@privateerpress.com. Before you send your entry, make sure you read the rules and submission guidelines at:

privateerpress.com/no-quarter/no-quarter-challenges

The winner of this challenge will receive a $100 U.S. spending spree at the Privateer Press Store (store.privateerpress.com), and the runner up will receive $50.
The top entries will also be published in an upcoming issue of *No Quarter*.

ENTRIES DUE BY 1/15/14

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