

WARP RIFT

THE BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC NETZINE



ISSUE 26

HORIZON

FROM THE NEXUS PUBLISHING HOUSE

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+++ SUBMISSIONS +++

All types of article are desperately needed, to keep this publication alive. In some cases, submission includes inclusion on the web site at: www.epic40k.co.uk, or through www.tacticalwargames.net. Please include a note with your submission if you would like this clarified. Submission via e-mail implies approval for publication.

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+++ ABOUT PAINT AND BITZ +++

Hello once again,

and its another issue of Warp Rift! Number 26, the fifteenth under my reign. And we still go strong. The article influx is steady and even Warp Rift 27 is already almost completely collected. A big thanks to all to people who have submitted their articles in the past, now and hopefully in the future as well.

But first a look at this issue. Filled with grand pictures from GothiComp. We dedicated seven pages to the best ships of the competition, starring the winning entries on full pages. It has been a great competition once again. GothiComp is something we hope to continue in the coming years. It creates a great online gallery of Battlefleet Gothic vessels. It, at least for me, urges me to improve my painting skills and raising my own bar.

We start this issue with an article on how you can raise interest in the game and persuade other people to join. Follows an article with a take on three of the Major Imperial Sector fleets. Each getting an unique twist and context. In the Officer's Mess we have the first part of the follow up to the Waaagh story from a couple of issues ago. The Dry Dock sections shows us what we can create with all those left over bits. Additionally some Tyranid Markers, this time by Martin Schlachter, and some goodies by Rodrigo Barbera. Closing Warp Rift, as usual, a grand display of art.

enjoy,
Horizon

+++ WARP RIFT BLOG +++

You can check out our blog at the following location:

http://www.players.tacticalwargames.net/tiki-view_blog.php?blogId=10

+++ WARP RIFT FORUM +++

Check out the Warp Rift forum at:

<http://www.tacticalwargames.net/forums/index.cgi?act=SF;f=89>

+++ GOTHICOMP 2010 +++

What? GothiComp 2009 has just ended and GothiComp 2010 is already mentioned?

The fleet category in 2009 has been a great success in my opinion but I think 'requesting' a new fleet each year is too demanding for most players (or painters). This is why for GothiComp 2010 I want to see if it is possible to run a 'small fleet' category. Think of patrol fleets or small explorator groups. As a guideline to this category I was thinking to have a 500pts restriction with a maximum of two capital ships and at least three escort vessels.

For this I want to encourage people to show ships not shown before and not selections of last years fleet. Of course, repainted they are 'cool' again.

Let us know what you think about this at the Tactical Command forums!

Horizon

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BFG: RELEVANCE AND RECOGNITION

BY ROBERT HUGHES

This article was written with the idea that an unsupported, hard to get, easy to learn games can make a come back. The idea that this game is in a decline comes from the infrequency of play and lack of official support or anything nearing interest by the company that invented the game. So let's leave them out of the solution.

BFG is an easy and fun game that can be played stand-alone or in conjunction with your games of 40k whether that is a standard game, an apocalypse event or the new planet strike games. BFG players will enjoy the ease of putting a painted fleet on the board with out too much skill required and the satisfaction of an accomplished army as it were.

Tactically this game is challenging enough to be a serious match, escalation or campaign game. There is plenty of community content to add and play test with your group. That being said there seem to be some glaring negatives to the game as it stands.

The models are generally only available from GW or "Ebay" which is not always the best source. The rule books also fit on that list of hard to get items. Not enough people play the game in most places because there is not an effort put forth or people think the models are unaffordable. So you can spout off all day long about how great the game is but until someone steps up in your area it will always simply be talking and no walking.

Alright you say but how can we easily over come such disadvantages on a small budget with almost

no one in my gaming group having the rules or the models? Easy, just take a look at the efforts I suggest here and see how doable this thing can be!

Problem One: No one knows how to play! The solution to this is hold a demo for your group, print off a few rules sections available on the GW website in the BFG articles section and includes the link to the bottom of the page.

Bring the ships you have or baring that bring some proxy that can be labeled as a cruiser versus a frigate and so on.

Add some terrain to make the game less two

dimensional and more fun.

Take the time to familiarize with the rules so when they hit you with those questions you have a good idea of the answer or at least where to get the answer. Guide them along and encourage questions and let them learn the game, let them take back a bad move when they see they could have done better with a different tactic.

This should be a simple and easy way to help people learn the game and if anyone expresses interest but can not attend find some time to teach them as well do not be stingy with your time at this point.



Problem two: Models and cost where can I get the models at a better price? Well look to the web my friend there is at least one website and perhaps more that will give you a 20% discount when ordered. You simply email them your list and they give you a price and in a week or so you are replacing proxies. Try to gather a bulk order and tell the seller you are trying to get this game going and see if you can get a discount if you continue to buy from them, I can't guarantee this will happen but at the least you will save on shipping. Look at the web for ideas for making your own terrain and models out of spare parts and bits. Lastly try "Ebay" you might just get lucky.

Problem three: The rules and beyond can be obtained via the GW website under the BFG specialist game section and the BFG community at large is a huge source of information and assistance.

The ability and desire to create a BFG league for your gaming group is a bit challenging but ultimately rewarding. Talk it up while you are setting it up let the players know that this game is a lot of fun and goes great with those fluffy campaigns we all enjoy. Tell your players to ignore the haters on the forums who say the game is dead and this is unbalance while that is not. Make up your own minds. Go to GENCON and games days and see the tables of dedicated BFG players who can give you inspiration and the stores at those events sell the models as well.

Once your group has some games under it's collective belt start a campaign, encourage input from your players and present them with some options. Do not overwhelm them and do not draw this out but let them feel as though they helped

design the campaign they are dedicating there time and money too. Be the advocate for this campaign and go the extra mile with fluffy star maps with sector controls in your gaming area. Encourage play by doing a small write up of the week's battles and label it as classified, that way it encourages your players to read it and gain tactical knowledge from said information. Little things like this not only make the game fun but memorable.

For people who are struggling to understand the rules or for those who need some help setup some practice games with them and offer tactical advice and help them to see the benefits and weaknesses of their fleet.

The important thing to remember with a campaign is that the longer it goes the less interest you maintain. So make it shorter and the consequences of victory and defeat should be fast paced and heart pounding. Think of it like a really good two hour action movie where you can't wait to see what happens next, some players may not like this style so try to get a feel for your groups taste and adjust if need be.

When the campaign is over, take some time to do a big final write up summarizing the campaign and setting up a possible sequel. Encourage players to have named admirals and entities so that they really are involved with the story. Trust me this is worth the time because people will get tired of the game as with any game but if they have a break they can reread that great write up and think its time to get that fleet out of dry dock and maybe add some new additions to the fleet and get stuck in.

Painting contests can be an added bonus as well, no matter the talent level encourage participation by having categories where each player could have

a shot at winning. Categories like best painted and players choice along with theme and best MOD. This kind of competition will attract other gamers who will see the fruits of your player's labor and you will start to gather more interest.

You might even run a tourney when enough players have gathered fleets and feel comfortable laying down 5 bucks or so to get a small prize that is BFG related. Like that star map in the hobby store or a battleship for there fleet.

Tourneys are not for everyone and money might keep some people away so suggest a free tourney and get recognition and bragging rights as a reward.

These ideas can apply to any game that fits the criteria and should be considered by anyone serious enough to generate interest in the game. BFG simply happens to be a personal favorite of mine.

"We have them now!"

*Attributed to an unnamed Imperial Captain, M37
Siege of asteroid belt base of Ork Admiral Fuzznutz*



BATTLEFLEETS OF THE IMPERIUM

BY ROBERT C. M. PASSOVOY

Battlefleet Pacificus The Grand Fleets of Hydraphur

Background

One of the more populated zones of the galaxy, with many of the worlds conquered during the Mecharius crusade. This sector of space is ancient, dangerous and not without its conflicts.

The Fleet Forge World and HQ is the planet of Hydraphur; A massive, sprawling and powerful planet that created the ancient knowledge of the grand cruiser.

As such, the grand cruiser hull is seen throughout their battlefleet, almost to the exclusion of the battle cruiser design. Some consider the tactics of the commanders to be behind the times at best, and at worst lazy in the face of modern threats to the imperium of man.

All words aside, the fleet commanders of Hydraphur use their mighty and ancient ships to great effect, and have found a powerful way of war which has kept their segmentum under a tighter control then Segmentum Ultima or Obscuris.

The Tactics used by the Admirals of Hydraphur are a throwback to the ancient combat tactics used during the Grand Cruisers golden era, that of tough, massive ships supported by lighter, more nimble craft to act as a screen. The nearly battleship-sized Grand cruisers may seem lumbering and cumbersome, but their withering firepower and flexibility have proven the end of many heretic vessels.

Commonly used in squadrons of identical craft to maximize firepower, they have more then enough firepower to demolish vessels of all sizes, and have proven effective against all who oppose the will of the Emperor in the galactic south.

Fleet List

Leadership: *A commander must be taken for any fleet over 750 points, and must be placed in a Grand Cruiser or larger vessel.*

Fleet Admiral	Ld	8	50pts
Admiral	Ld	9	100 pts
Solar admiral	Ld	10	150 pts

Fleet commanders have a single re-roll included in it's points cost, and may buy more

1	=	25 pts
2	=	75 pts
3	=	150 pts

Special Rules for Battlefleet Pacificus

Planetary Defense Fleet (PDF) and Expeditionary Fleet (EF): The fleets used to attack and defend the worlds of the galactic south are highly specialized and are arranged differently for attack and defense. During one-off games or scenarios in which there is no attacker or defender, you may pick PDF or EF. IF you are in a campaign or playing a scenareo, select PDF or EF depending on if you are the attacker or defender.

Capital Ships

Battleships

You may take one Oberon Battleship for every three cruiser class vessels you have in the fleet.

Oberon_____335 pts

Grand Cruisers

PDF: *May take one grand cruiser for every two cruiser class vessels*

EF: *may take one grand cruiser for every six escorts or two cruiser class vessels*

Vengeance	230 pts
Avenger	200 pts
Exorcist	230 pts
Execution	220 pts
Retaliator	275 pts

Cruisers

PDF: *1-12 cruisers*

Dominator	185 pts
Lunar	180 pts
Gothic	180 pts
Dauntless	110 pts

EF: *0-6 cruisers*

Dauntless_____110 pts

Escorts pick PDF or EF

PDF: *0-3 squadrons*

Cobra Destroyer	30 pts
Firestorm Frigate	45 pts
Sword Frigate	40pts

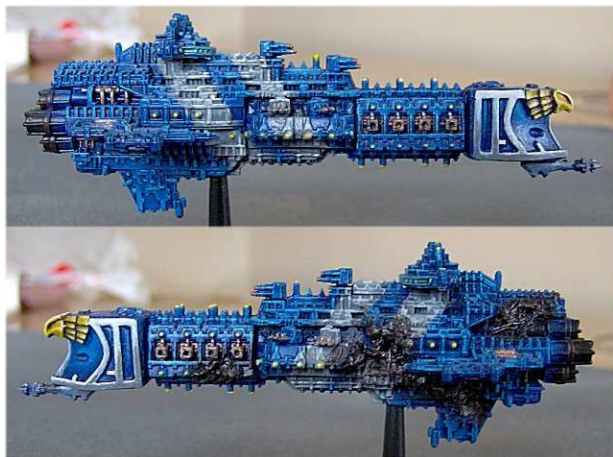
Legendary Vessel: The Macharius Grand Cruiser

This vessel is a one-of-a-kind vessel that was commissioned in honor of one of the Imperiums greatest heroes. While extremely controversial in nature due to it's origins (having been constructed with the weapons and power systems salvaged from a captured Desolator Battleship), it has served the fleets of Hydraphur with honor and uncharacteristic valor for thousands of years. This vessel is responsible for no less then ten cruiser kills in it's time, and the assisted destruction or capture of several more.

As such this vessel is loved by the admiralty, and loathed by the crews. While it has a long and distinguished history, being assigned to the Macharius means long terms of service aboard a vessel with a very questionable past.

Special Rules:

Legendary Vessel: This vessel is one of a kind, and the chance to command it cannot be passed up! as such you may only take one Macharius grand cruiser and your fleet commander must be stationed on it, should it be taken in your fleet. A fleet must be at least 1000 points before the macharius can be fielded.



TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELD	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Grand Cruiser/10	20 cm	45°	3	5+	3
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED	FIREPOWER/STR		FIRE ARC
Dorsal Weapons Battery		60 cm	6		L / F / R
Port Lance Battery		45 cm	4		L
Starboard Lance Battery		45 cm	4		R
Prow Torpedoes		30 cm	6		F



The stats and model of the Legendary Macharius Class Grand Cruiser are based on the model as build by Warmaster Nice and the rules designed by Admiral D'Artagnan.

The Governor class Grand Cruisers were one of the first class of warships ever built for the Emperor's Crusade and the precursor to the Desolator battleships. The millenia long war and cannibalizing for parts has whittled them down so that only a handful are left and any that are lost can no longer be replaced.

Although they have long since been obsolete, they still make for a perfect system fleet flagship with it's powerful lances and weapon batteries providing protection especially to the Forge Worlds or escorting the Imperial transports bearing the Guard where they need to go. Because of this, they have never been placed on reserve status and they have also been used to backstop the fleet against the Black Crusades of Abaddon.

Majority of the Governors are with the Bastion fleets although some like the Soevereiniteit can be found with the other fleets like Battlefleet Gothic.

Battlefleet Kar Duniash

Background

Kar Duniash is a gigantic Ramilies Star Fort and its accompanying Forge World that makes up the fleet command and control in Segmentum Pacificus.

This massive base is also the central trading hub of the wily and unpredictable Rogue Traders; who prefer it's comparatively lax enforcement of Imperial law.

The largest yet most dangerous of the Segmentums has threats pushing from all sides. Ghost Stars and Crone Worlds to the north, Tau Empire to the east, Chaos forces appearing from the Peridus Rift, and the ever present threat of Orks and two different Hive Fleets.

All encroaching on Imperial held territories every minute of every day.

In Segmentum Pacificus, standard fleet tactics are now no longer used by many. Most of them inventive fleet commanders, many of which are ex-Rogue Traders. Ship designs not seen in other Segmentums and fleets using ancient technologies that are only barely accepted by the Adeptus Mechanus appear from time to time.

This provides a fast and modern fleet that uses every trick in the book in order to maintain order in the largest Segmentum of the galaxy.

As such their ships are often smaller and more streamlined then the standard Mars pattern hull, while sacrificing none of the durability and reliability of their cousins. This design is highly sought after by other Forge Worlds, but is carefully guarded by the Tech-Priests of Voss.

Fleet List

Leadership: *A commander must be taken for any fleet over 750 points, and must be placed in a Grand Cruiser or larger vessel.*

Fleet Admiral	Ld 8	50pts
Admiral	Ld 9	100 pts
Solar admiral	Ld 10	150 pts

In addition a Kar Duniash fleet may take a "Rogue Trader Captain" for 75 points. Adding +1 Ld to the selected vessel and an additional ship only re-roll.

Capital Ships

Battleships

You may take one Battleship for every three cruiser class vessels you have in the fleet.

Retribution	345 pts
Invincible Fast Battleship	
Emperor	365 pts

Battle Cruisers

Overlord	235 pts
Mars	270 pts
Armageddon	245 pts

Grand Cruisers

Vengeance	230 pts
Avenger	220 pts
Exorcist	230 pts

Cruisers

0-2 Demonslayer class Cruiser	
Gothic	180 pts
Lunar	180 pts
Dictator	220 pts
Tyrant	185 pts

Escorts

0-6 Fire Ships	
Cobra	30 pts
Sword	35 pts
Firestorm	40 pts

Special Rules

Rogue Trader Auxilliary. If you have at least one Rogue Trader captain in your fleet, you may take one additional Rogue Trader cruiser per 2000 points. (This is in addition to the normal rules for including a Rogue Trader vessel).

Non-Official vessels

The Invincible fast battleship and Demonslayer cruiser can be found in the Additional Ships Compendium.



The Gilded Fleets of Voss

Background

Battlefleet Solar, the principle fleet defending the area of space around Holy Terra, is among the largest and best equipped in the galaxy. One of the most advanced and potent fleets, it comprises of ship patterns from two different patterns, that of Mars and Voss. Frequently these vessels interact and work side by side during major fleet engagements (such as the Armageddon wars), but on the whole the fleets function and fight separately, using tactics unique to the admiralty of the fleet.

While the Gothic sector (commonly equipped with Mars class ships), functions on the basis of a strong defensive gunline with powerful and potent prow mounted weapons to weaken the enemy, Voss prefers a more aggressive approach, closing with the enemy quickly and taking advantage of their unique ship designs to pulverize their opponents. The gilded fleets have the largest number of the Endeavor, a nimble and effective support cruiser, and are the origin of the Armageddon class Battlecruiser. Because of the pride the fleet has in the Armageddon, they use it almost exclusively over the Lunar, preferring to use gothic and tyrant vessels to fill the void it leaves.

The Voss fleet is not without it's weaknesses. The pride in Voss pattern ships severely restricts their escort and battleship options, feeling that the Emperor is too rigid in design and the Retribution woefully underpowered for a ship of it's class. This fleet is renown for it's handful of Apocalypse and Oberon Battleships, including the "Ajax", who crippled the grand cruiser "Hellhaven" in a single blast from it's nova cannon.

Differences between the Mars and Voss patterns are subtle, but easy to detect. Voss pattern ships tend to

have slightly less exterior ornamentation, and large portions of the ships tend to show large hull patches and re-paints due to their habit of commandeering crippled or disabled vessels and refurbishing them in their own pattern. The greatest distinction is the intimidating Voss pattern prow, which is much larger and more aggressive then it's Mars or Kar Dunash counterparts. Many Voss admirals claim it assists in ramming actions, though there has been no documented evidence of this.

Fleet List

Leadership: *A commander must be taken for any fleet over 750 points, and must be placed in a Grand Cruiser or larger vessel.*

Fleet Admiral	Ld 8	50pts
Admiral	Ld 9	100 pts
Solar admiral	Ld 10	150 pts

Capital ships

Battleships

You may take one battleship for every three cruisers.

Oberon	335 pts
Apocalypse	365 pts

Battlecruisers

You may take one battlecruiser for every two standard or light cruisers. Mars and Overlords are a rare sight in the Voss fleets, and are usually recommissioned vessels.

0-2 Mars	270 pts
0-2 Overlord	235 pts
Armageddon	245 pts

Cruisers

Gothic	180 pts
Dictator	220 pts
Tyrant	185 pts
Endeavour	120 pts
Endurance	120 pts
Defiant	130 pts

**there are no limits on the Light Cruiser Classes as they are far more numerous in this part of Segmentum Solar*

Escorts

Falchion	35 pts
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Special Rules

Technocratic Respect the fleets of Voss may take reserves from the Adeptus Mechanus fleet.*



STRIKE CRUISERS

BY ADMIRAL LORD MICHAEL

In response to the article '*Strike Cruisers are too Cheap!*' by Ray Bell [reference Warp Rift Magazine #12, Page 9], I have decided to respond with what I consider to be a more balanced view. Realizing that Ray wrote the article in a light hearted and somewhat sarcastic accounting, this response will be more factual with all aspects of a strike cruiser.

Before comparing the strike cruiser statistics against the purpose of a strike cruiser, we need to be honest with ourselves with respect to the Dauntless Class light cruiser comparisons. Any comparison of these ships is not a comparison of apples to apples, which is why they are different class names, that is light cruiser as compared to strike cruiser.

Additionally, they have different designs because they were designed for different missions, that is deep space fleet defense and hit & run raids for the light cruiser and deep space strategic strikes/probes, Space Marine fleet defense, and planetary



strikes, specifically landing zone protection for the strike cruiser.

Both ships are built on small frames, which is the six hit frame as compared to the eight hit frame of the heavy cruiser. This is most logical as the maneuverability of both ships is paramount to the typical demands placed on the ships from standard operational missions, thus the 90° turn capability is most appropriate for the concept of form following function.

The concept of a strike cruiser dictates high power and high speed to ensure delivery of marine forces to the combat zone. For the purpose of establishing and securing a landing zone, the strike cruiser must be a tough ship, thus the Armor Class 6.

The ability to get in and out of any situation is paramount to surviving for any light framed ship, so speed is highly desired, thus the speed classification of 25. Since the Dauntless is less armored, it is not pushing as much mass as the strike cruiser. Even with the same engines on both ships, and such an assumption is logical due to the ease of manufacturing and logistics of resupply of engine components, it would be logical for the light cruiser to gain a +1D6 on All Ahead Flank (All Ahead Full, for you Brits) while the strike cruiser, with the additional mass, would lose such an advantage.

Both light and strike cruisers have one shield, which is logical since heavy cruisers have only two

shields, heavy battle cruisers (read this as Grand Cruisers) have a maximum of three shields, and battleships have four shields. The fleet carrier, Emperor Class, has five shields and the Battle Barge has only three.

The Armour Class 5 for the light cruiser is logical due to huge contracts given to manufacturing concerns to produce armour for the Imperial Navy. Since all strike cruisers are Marine vessels, and all Marine vessels receive Armour Class 6, this is an automatic construction detail. To do otherwise is completely unthinkable.

In 2002, the strike cruiser had one turret and the bombardment cannons were front firing only. In 2003, these were changed to two turrets and left, front, right firing arc for the bombardment cannons. There was no change in the point cost of the strike cruiser, but these changes were exactly what was needed for the SM fleet since they do not have any heavy cruisers.

Now there has been many individuals that have said that the strike cruiser was under priced, but is it? The comparison made to a Dauntless, which is 110 points, is one thing, but the comparison to a Murder Class heavy cruiser is completely different.

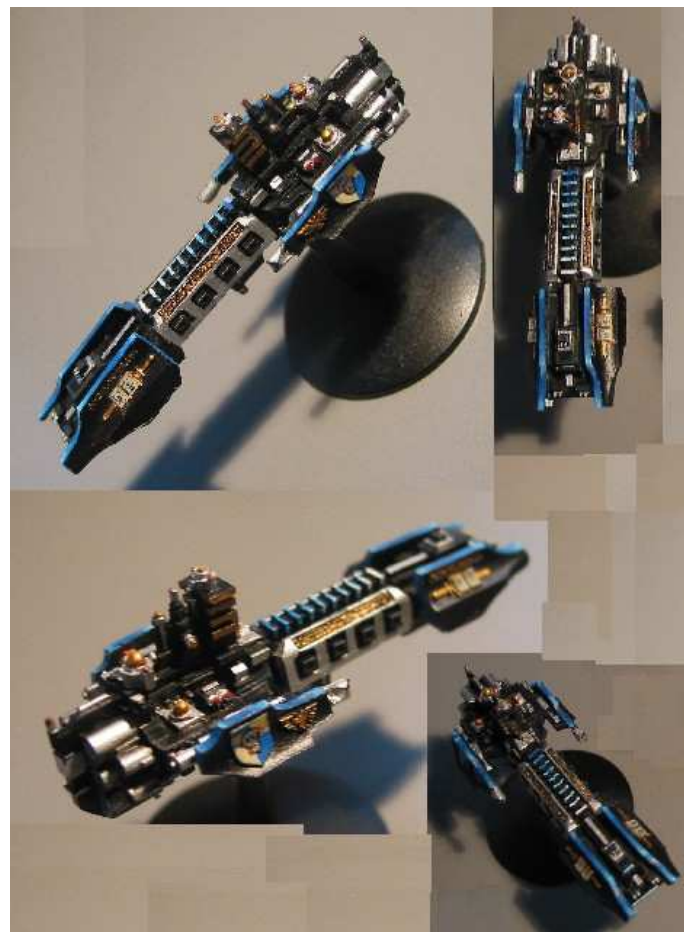
With these two ships in battle against one another abeam, the strike cruiser is rolling 1D6 verses 4D6 from the Murder. In addition, the Murder has a range of 45cm where the strike cruiser has a range of 30cm. The bombardment cannons use the weapons chart so they roll 1D6 also. 2D6 verses

4D6, but some of the advantage is offset by the restriction imposed by the Armour Class 6 of the strike cruiser and the two shields of the Murder. This makes the battle a no win scenario.

But, wait! There's more! Strike cruiser cost of 145 verses 170 for the Murder! And the deciding factor of Thunderhawk gunships, which inflict 1D6+1 on the hit & run chart. It is the ordnance that could be the deciding factor in this match up. Two squadrons are launched against two turrets; the odds are that at least one squadron will survive and cause a critical. The odds are also that the specific critical will be repaired in the end phase. So we once again have a no win scenario.

Now we have to say, does it matter that the strike cruiser costs 145 points? The answer is no, so you have to look at conversions and modifications. The Devastator Class Strike Cruiser is 160 points due to an additional Thunderhawk squadron and 6 pack torpedo strike capability. Although designed specifically for the 9th company of any marine chapter, it can be taken as a replacement of any standard strike cruiser. I believe the point value for this ship is fair.

The assault cruiser that the Space Wolves (*Warp Rift 11 - Admiral D'Artagnan*) use is 170 points. It has no weapon batteries, but mounts a launch bay to starboard and port. This gives the ship the ability to launch four (4) Thunderhawk squadrons per turn. It also has an option for bombardment cannons (port, prow, starboard) or a six pack torpedo (prow). It is known that the Space Wolves have at least two of these cruisers, Dire Wolf and Sword of Morkai, according to Space Wolf background stories. I believe the point value for this ship is fair.



The Black Templars (*Fanatic Online - Ray Bell*) also use an assault cruiser that comes in at 165 points. They have designed it with three (3) weapons batteries to port and starboard and a three (3) Thunderhawk squadron launch capability from the prow. It retained the three (3) bombardment cannons mounted on the dorsal. The Black Templars are known to field two (2) cruisers of this design, Dorn's Sword and Ophidium Gulf. I believe the point value for this ship is fair.

The Dark Angels prefer to mix their fleet with

three (3) modified strike cruiser models, three (3) Devastator models, three (3) Black Templar assault cruiser models, and three (3) Space Wolf assault cruiser model. It should also be noted that two (2) ships are always on training duty near the Tower of Angels. The three (3) modified cruisers have reinforced armor, which basically modifies the internal frame and bulkhead from 250 meters to 187.5 meters for improved isolation of damage and survivability. The overall length of these ships remains 1500 meters and cost 160 points, which I believe is fair point value.

GOTHICOMP 2009 - FLEETS

END RESULT



FIFTH PLACE

TAU COMMERCE PROTECTION FLEET
BY ROY'HORIZON' AMKREUTZ

FOURTH PLACE
RED SCORPION SPACE MARINES
BY MARTIN SHARPE





THIRD PLACE

NURGLE PLAGUEFLEET OF CHAOS

BY USABOB



SECOND PLACE

AKAERIS' CRAFTWORLD ELDAR

BY ROY'HORIZON' AMKREUTZ



FIRST PLACE

TAU FLEET 'CAY'NE'HOA'

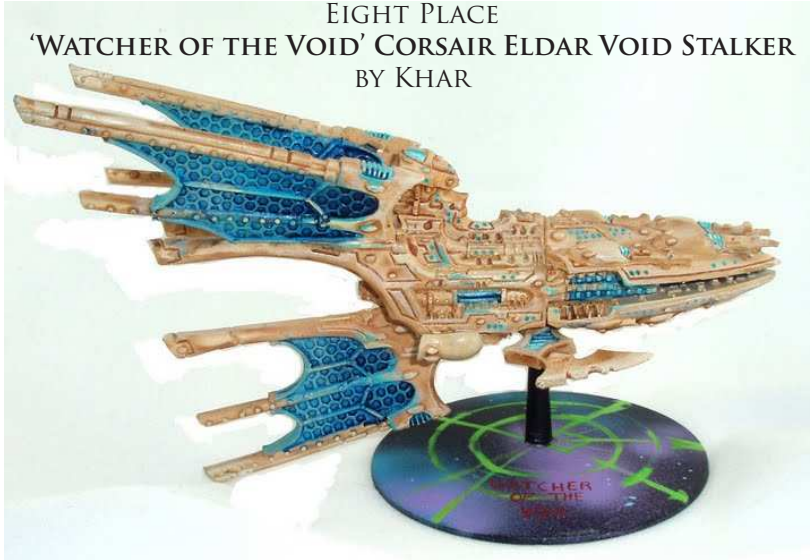
BY CAINE-HOA

GOTHICOMP 2009 - SINGLE SHIPS

END RESULT

EIGHT PLACE

'WATCHER OF THE VOID' CORSAIR ELDAR VOID STALKER
BY KHAR



SIXTH PLACE

'SAHRET IRET'A' VENGEANCE CLASS
GRAND CRUISER
BY VAAISH



SIXTH PLACE

'MALATESTA' CHAOS DEVASTATION CLASS CRUISER
BY KHAR



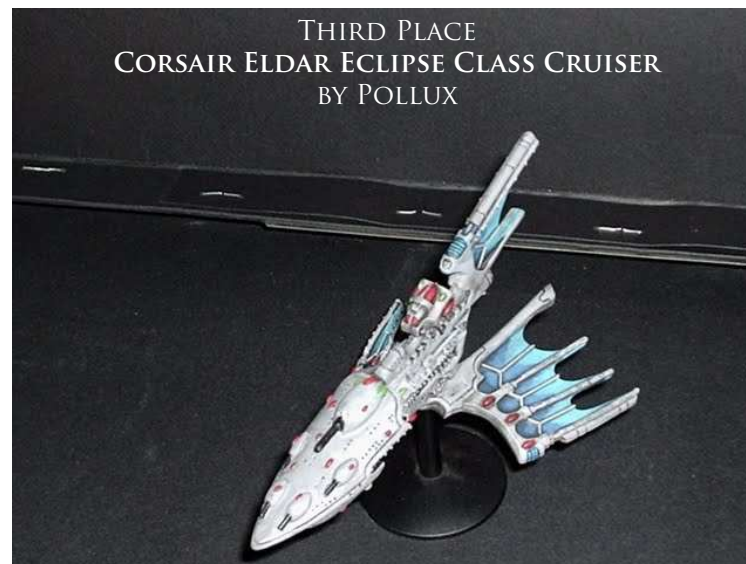
FOURTH PLACE

'SPEAR OF VENGEANCE' SPACE MARINE BATTLE-
BARGE BY USABOB





FOURTH PLACE
 ** Reliant Star ** Dauntless Class Cruiser **
 BY ROBEY JENKINS



THIRD PLACE
 CORSAIR ELDAR ECLIPSE CLASS CRUISER
 BY POLLUX



SECOND PLACE
 'ALDURUKHS PRIDE' DARK ANGELS VENERABLE BATTLE BARGE
 BY CAINE-HOA



GOTHICOMP 2009 - CONVERSION

END RESULT



CONVERSION WINNER

‘VECTIS CONTAGIUM’ SLAUGHTER CLASS CRUISER
BY WARREN ‘BURNTHEN’ SPREADBURY

WAAAAAGH

PART 2 - 1 OF 2

THE SHIP

BY DOMINIC AMLÔT

Chapter One

Although you could barely see it through the sealed portholes and windows, the occasional flash of warpspace went through the filters. It was said that a man who looked at one of these flashes directly would rip his own eyes out so that he didn't have to see the shapes anymore. Atmosphere trailed from several broken compartments and to any outside observer it was easy to spot where the Ork spacecrafts' weapons had pounded the ship as its shields failed.

Jason shivered uncontrollably despite the feeble attempts of the air conditioning in his space suit to heat him. He struggled to remove another piece of wreckage from the damaged inside of a small compartment that had been depressurized during a brief attack run from some Ork bombers. This particular vessel was a merchant and obsolete version at that. It had been retrofitted with jump engines from a derelict, mothballed freighter that was even older, it had weak shields and had been falling apart almost since it was on the assembly line.

The compartment was partially destroyed. Since it was open to warpspace someone had to dig out the control panel so that they could activate the secondary filters to protect the crew from the deadly radiation that would soon start pouring from the damaged reactor coils that littered the floor. Jason was doing his best not to think too hard about that. His suit filtered out radiation but no-one knew how to filter out the amount that this core could produce. Because of the weightlessness it was easier to lift the broken metal that had been twisted out of shape by the extreme pressures. As he lifted them up he launched them into the void, well clear of the ship. If he left the sharp metal here as the ship left warpspace it would move around at such velocities that there was a chance that it could rip a gaping cavity in the ship's side. Then, just as he was lifting the last piece of wreckage he saw it, the bloody broken body of what looked like a gretchin. It was wearing what looked like a space suit but it had seen better days. The damage to the mangled

body showed the impact not just of flying debris to the suit but also the sudden loss of pressure that a tear in the suit had caused, making the tiny body explode. Small green organs floated aimlessly in the airless, gravity-free environment of the compartment.

Jason broke into a cold sweat and was about to shout something when he realised that floating among the bloody remains was what looked like a bomb. Before he could say anything into his mike, the gretchin's grenade exploded tossing him into space like a discarded toy. His body floated off into its own orbit but he was dead long before that. His suit had survived the explosion but the pressure wave had punctured his lungs and he choked to death on his own blood.

Chapter Two

Williams clambered out of the hatch on the assault boat. His face was bloody, his nose was broken, but he was alive. Behind him Trina and Vinx both dragged themselves out of the ruined ship. Trying to muster any confidence that he could, Williams said, "Come on, we need to make contact with the crew. They need to know that they have some Orks on board."

"Sure," the single word escaped from the cracked and broken lips of Trina. Suddenly, out of nowhere, the ship suddenly shook, throwing all three stowaways and the backpack of equipment that Williams had with him to the floor. Despite gravity's best efforts, the trio pulled themselves to their feet and stumbled on through several deserted corridors until they came to what looked like a service hatch. Even though the only trained engineer was Vinx they could all see that the torque was twisting the support buttresses out of shape and that this area was quickly becoming unstable. They didn't know what caused it but it was no doubt due to the short firefight that the ship had endured.

Throwing open the hatch they came upon a startled engineer who looked like he was monitoring the life support machines that kept the crew alive.

"What the hell..." shouted the tech and started reaching for his radio.

"That won't be necessary," said Vinx pointing an auto pistol at him. Dropping his hand to his side the tech stuttered out, "Who... a a are you?"

"I am Commander Williams and we are the only survivors from the system you just left."

"How did you get on board?" said the technician visibly relaxing at the thought that they probably wouldn't shoot him in cold blood.

"There's a Shark Assault Boat about 500 yards down the corridor."

"I suppose that you would like to see the Captain then?"

"I suppose so."

Vinx chuckled almost imperceptibly at Williams' manner.

Chapter Three

Captain Harold looked up from his command chair as his comms officer strode over, obvious worry etched all over his face. "Sir, one of our engineering crew, you know the one we sent to try to repair one of our secondary reactors... he's missing, as far as we can tell he was blown from the ship. There was some form of chemical explosive of unknown origin."

Harold looked like he was about to say something when a Petty Officer sprinted from the lift and whispered a message into the Captain's ear. Shock eased itself across his features and he turned to look at the petty officer.

"I'll take it in my compartment, thank you,"

With that the Petty Officer ran back out to carry out his instructions.

"What was all that about?" asked his second in command, John.

"It would appear that we have boarders, human and Ork alike," said Harold, rising and moving to his private compartment off the bridge, leaving the stricken John standing there, gaping open-mouthed.

Harold pushed a button on the wall and the door to his 'office' slid open. It wasn't so much of a compartment – just a tiny little room where he slept, ate and generally managed the day to day running of the star ship. He had just managed to sit down and get vaguely comfortable in his hard-backed chair when three bedraggled looking crewmen walked in. At least he thought they were all men until they got closer, and he was able to inspect them. One of them, he realised, was a woman. Another, apparently the leader of the trio, had a broken nose and the front of his clothes were red with blood."

"So, you're the arseholes that have been sabotaging my ship?" Despite the apparent tone of the Captain's voice, Williams thought that it had sounded more like a question than a statement.

"As you're probably aware, you have Ork boarders. What's more, thanks to the information that we have, we've think that you have been relatively lucky. It looks like you only had one of their assault craft successfully grapple with the ship."

Despite this 'good' news the Captain's face turned ashen and he let out a small gasp. He knew that although it was only one craft it would have held at least 30 or maybe even more fully armed Orks against his unarmed crew.

"This isn't as bad as it sounds."

Harold yelped, "WHAT? How can this not be as bad as it sounds, I have some information that you don't. The section where you grappled just happens to contain the arms lockers. We thought it was just a system malfunction, but the 'hull breach' that's registered on our screens is probably the boarders creating a suitable section of the ship to live in. And we've started having widespread systems troubles. Maybe, they've already hacked into the main-frame to try to vent the air in this part of the ship. Personally, if I was them I would have done it already."

Trina looked at him and simply said, "Sport."

Chapter Four

The briefing room was filled with the officers commanding each of the star ship's departments and their juniors. John stood towards the rear of the room. Although his manner was calm his face betrayed him. Much like all the others he was terrified. He hadn't signed on for this, he'd signed on to get as far away from the frontlines as possible and the first time he had stopped to make a delivery, the supplies hadn't even been really needed, the planet was an agricultural one. However, the planetary aristocracy were prepared to lavish much wealth on any that made the journey across the border worlds to deliver luxury goods. It seemed an easy way to become wealthy himself but then a massive Ork armada had swept through the system.

The last garbled reports that they'd had from the Imperial Guard outpost stationed on one of the mountains on Minerva told them of terrible acts of brutality and torture. Even though he had left the frontline far behind, it had followed him with at least 30 Orks bent on killing him and the rest of the crew.

The Captain had outlined the situation plainly enough, the only weapons they had to hand were a couple of outdated side arms, two lasguns an autogun and a few grenades. The briefing ended although, thought John miserably, it was more a speech of how utterly screwed that they were.

The Captain signalled to him to stay behind. As the last few junior ensigns filed past, their shoulders slumped, he saw that the Captain had gotten the Chief of Engineering, Petty Officer Willis to stay behind as well.

"Well then gentlemen, you know the situation. I want options, ideas," said the Captain. He turned to Willis, "Why can't we just flush the air out of that area of the ship?"

"There's a safety feature fitted to stop boarders doing just that. He sighed, "If you want to take the ship's air supply away you have to do it to the whole ship not just one section."

"Can we introduce something into the air that will just kill the Orks?" Harold asked.

"We could but it would take a couple of hours to modify the ship's main air recyclators so they wouldn't remove the element from the air."

"I want you to get on it right away."

"Aye, Sir."

"Dismissed."

Chapter Five

Trina sighed. The three survivors had been taken to 'guest quarters'. It wasn't quite a brig but then neither was it exactly the kind of compartment you'd put heroes in. They were waiting for the Captain to make up his mind. It was his ship, at the moment, that is.

There was loud commotion outside the compartment door. They barely had time to stand up when the second in command and a member of what passed for the ship's 'new' militia stepped inside.

"The Captain has called your commanding officer to the bridge," said John, speaking as he paced their quarters, managing by his tone and manner to convey his disgust at the state of their clothes and their smell. Obviously, thought Trina savagely, a man of fine tastes, or at least as fine as you can get on this 500,000 tonne trash hauler.

Williams stepped forward. In a shaky voice far from the Chief Petty Officer who had made them cry blood as he worked them to the bone, he responded, "I'm the commanding officer in this unit." He spat out the word 'unit' as if it were some curse.

"I would be obliged if you came with me," smirked John as if being sarcastic to Williams earned him a small victory, easing his own terror of the Orks.

Ignoring the officer's attempt at an insult, Williams was escorted out by the two men.

As if it was a small afterthought, without turning his head, the second in command spoke again, addressing Vinx and Trina, "We haven't forgotten you. You will be escorted to the elevator on level nine. Since the other doors are sealed that is the only way for the boarders to breach the upper deck. You and anyone not vital to

the running of the ship is being sent down there to hold off the Orks.”

Obviously he considered himself ‘vital to the running of the ship’ as he clearly wasn’t preparing to fight. Even though they were probably going to die, Vinx and Trina felt a small glimmer of hope. Although they might not make it through the next few hours, their fate was finally back in their hands, not on the whims and eddies of the warp or the weapons of an Ork fleet.

Williams walked onto the bridge. There was almost nobody there, only a few technicians were handling the data from servitors that were feeding directly from the sections below into their computer chips. In a matter of hours the space had been converted from the bridge of a space ship to a war room, of sorts. The Captain was sitting at his chair working on a computer terminal conversing quietly with his Chief of Engineering or so Williams thought by his uniform. As the Captain heard Williams and his escort enter he looked up telling his Chief to leave.

The Captain spoke, “We have been monitoring the Orks through the cameras and heat sensors here but there is something strange going on down there. You’re the only person here that has recent combat experience with these creatures. We don’t know what they’re doing and we...”

“Will you stop giving me all this crap about you not knowing what’s going on and just tell me already,” barked Williams.

Angered at this outburst, the Captain’s face turned a shade of pink. He was obviously not used to people he considered his ‘inferiors’ talking back in such a manner. Despite this he quickly shrouded his emotions and replied, “Look as far as I can tell the sensors are working but they’re not there! A while ago the life signs started dropping. The only thing that we can come up with it that the Orks are all dead due an explosive decompression caused by the hull breach.” Although this was relatively happy news, the commander delivered it with incredible coldness.

“Captain... Sir I know what your sensors are saying. They must be wrong. We all felt some kind of shock not long after we got off the Shark Boat but if a whole section had blown out then the whole ship would probably have been torn apart.”

Williams was worried. Despite Orks’ general stupidity they could be amazingly cunning even though their brains weren’t much more complicated than melons. “The only way to be sure is to send someone over there.”

“I know that, man. I sent five people in space suits just in case the emergency air locks to the upper level didn’t seal properly. They should be almost there now.”

“Hold on... the only way to the upper level is through the elevator and that can’t be activated from below. If they open those airlock doors they could be letting in a whole lot of Orks. The shielding around the airlocks could hide a small army!”

“Oh crap!” the Captain shouted, reaching for the radio but already knowing it was too late.

“Sir, we just reached the bottom of the central core. We’re opening the doors now,” a voice crackled from the speaker.

“Negative, do you copy, negative! Do not open those doors!” the Captain literally screamed into the radio, almost deafening the crewmen receiving his desperate message. nBut it was too late.

“Holy God Emperor...” as the crewman looked on at the slaving Orks his voice trailed off.

Initially the explosion of grenades and gunfire filtered through the radio but it was shortly replaced with static. The Captain visibly shrunk, terrified at the actual thought of combat against a far superior foe.

“We’re all going to die...” Harold muttered near tears. He stumbled off into his compartment, mumbling an old child’s prayer to the Golden Throne.

Chapter Six

Williams walked into the compartment where Vinx and Trina were still being held. Although head only been gone a few minutes, he looked like he been up for days.

Trina was the first to speak, “What’s happened? We heard someone saying the Orks had gone off the scanners and that someone one had gone down to see what had happened.”

“They went down. The Orks were waiting. With the service elevator now under

their control the Greenskins have free access to the upper decks and us.”

“God Emperor damnit,” Vinx muttered.

“Understatement of the week,” Trina muttered right back.

“Let’s get going, we have work to do,” Williams said, silencing the others.

Despite still being slightly shell-shocked by the news, the other two nodded in agreement.

The trio began scouring neighbouring compartments in the corridor. They retrieved their lasguns from the abandoned security post outside the compartment they had been held in. But there were no other weapons to be had with the armoury under Ork control.

As they were heading down the deserted corridor a voice, emanating from Vinx’s wrist-com brought them back to harsh reality. The second in command, John, was squawking a continuous alarm signal. It was simple and left no room for doubt as to its meaning, “Keep them away from the bridge, repeat, keep them away from the bridge, go into hand to hand combat. If we lose the bridge we will lose the ship and we will be lost in the Empyrean.”

The message repeated several times before Vinx shut it down. As they descended through the decks till they reached the breach they were joined by more and more crewmen bearing a wide variety of make-shift weapons. Some held smooth-bore riot shotguns, others old-style slug-throwing revolvers while some simply carried clubs and heavy wrenches.

Despite their limited level of skill and the distinct lack of potency of the weapons, every crew member had the same look on his face, it was a face of cold, resolute determination. These were men who were almost certain they were already dead but still they went forth.

This was the sort of bravery that had built the Imperium of man. This was the sort of bravery that would ensure that it would endure.

As the comm. alarms faded out due to the amount of lead shielding around them and the stragglers caught up to the main group, they took their places at the barricades.

One obsolete yet still effective autocannon was dragged into place. Bayonets were fixed by a couple of men who held las-rifles. Others checked their ammunition and magazines. Final blessings to the weapons not to fail were spoken.

As the seconds dragged by, men spoke in hushed whispers, careful to not attract attention. Then as seconds turned into minutes, Williams thought about the power surges that had plagued this section of the ship. Suddenly, he understood. They weren’t the target!

The Orks had already proven resourceful enough. Could it be that they had found another way to the bridge? If they had then the battle for control of the ship was almost over before it had started. If the Orks got to the bridge by-passing their barricade then all that stood in their way would be a few broken down servitors.

Apparently the same thoughts were beginning to pass through the minds of the others. Shouting, “Follow me!” Williams sprinted off, closely followed by Trina and Vinx. Five others ran with them.

As they ran for the bridge they left the lead shielding behind, The static in their wrist-comms began to clear. They would know soon enough what was going on. Williams hoped frantically that he was wrong, but the news wasn’t good.

“Oh God Emperor!” a voice sobbed, “Can anyone hear me? They’re nearly through the doors. Where are you? They came out of the vents... at least nine. Please if anyone can hear this, help us, please, OH THRONE OF TERRA HERE THEY COME!”

“Faster,” yelled Vinx, already knowing it was too late as the screaming died out to static. They rounded the final bend in the corridor to see the bridge doorway and the wreckage of the doors. The image that met their eyes stayed with them for the rest of their lives, blood had been sprayed on the bridge walls as if some deranged vandal had thrown buckets of it around, organs were strung up as if some debauched party had happened.

What was rose, some of the bridge crew actually still seemed to be alive staring in maddened shock and pain at their own organs hung before their eyes.

Most of the consoles were filled with static, the few that still operated were showing the deck directly below them where the men Williams and his followers

had left fought against an almost unstoppable foe. Even though the humans outnumbered the Orks by four or five to one, for every Greenskin who fell, as many as 10 humans lay dead, dying or injured.

The Orks in the bridge at last noticed the group of humans standing by the doorway but before they could attack, Williams yelled, "Kill them!"

"FOR THE EMPEROR," his followers screamed in unison. They fired as one, their guns on full auto, not only slicing the Orks apart but bringing the God Emperor's peace to the dying remains of those who had been tortured by the Greenskins..\\

As they cleared they shifted the carnage of Ork and human body parts from the consoles, they discovered an awful truth. This far from Earth and Segmentum Solar, they needed a Navigator. His corpse lay discarded and broken, his three eyes staring sightlessly.

The Navigator's console was a mess. He had done them one service before death, however. Knowing his demise was imminent, the telepath had dropped them out of the warp although far before their destination.

Williams turned towards Vinx, "You're the only one that knows how these star charts fit together, you'll have to find out where we are. They'll stay with you," Williams said this gesturing at the men who had come up with them. Vinx wanted to argue, but knew better. It was now just important that they find out where they were as deal with the remaining Orks. Vinx nodded.

"Good, let's go Trina; we need to clear the lower decks," said Williams.

Chapter Seven

Trina put a bullet dead centre into a squirming grot's head. She moved on, finding another live one, shooting it as well. The battle continued but it had started to tip towards the humans. Despite the catastrophic casualties, they still outnumbered the Orks.

It took only a few more minutes, minutes that lasted hours but eventually the last Greenskin was shot down. Later, as they cleared away the corpses and did a head count, they realised that to barely thirty or so Orks, 90 humans had paid the

ultimate price, and another 200 were wounded.

The ship barely had 100 crewmen left alive; only just enough to man its systems. Yet they had still won. Trina heard distant shouts down the corridor. She ran forward, slipping occasionally on pools of mixed human and Greenskin blood.

Pulling herself around a mound of corpses piled near an airlock she saw two men frogmarching a small frightened man towards her. As she got closer she realised that it was the second in command.

"You have no right, the Captain is dead this ship is now mine," with the last word he puffed out his chest, that was until he saw the look Trina was giving him. The man visibly shrunk into himself.

Trina's gaze was filled with contemptuous disgust. "What's happened?" she asked.

"They dragged me out of my own quarters, they..." he was waving an accusatory finger at the two men. Trina reached out and dislocated it. Despite the sudden nauseous pain John tried appear as if it hadn't hurt.

"We found him hiding in his quarters, he was locked in there, cowering under his bunk with a lasgun."

Trina snapped, "You know what cowardice in the field is punishable by?"

When no answer was forth coming she continued, "Death, take him to the brig."

The men saluted, showing a new found respect for her. Her wrist-comm beeped, flashing a text message.

It read, "Vinx: Trina, Williams, get to the viewing deck quick, I've found out where we are."

She met Williams striding towards the command deck, splattered with blood. He nodded to her. They walked up to the top of the ship. As they had come out of warp, the ship had automatically shut down the barriers that protected the crew from seeing the Empyrean.

As they stepped onto the viewing deck each step filling them with a bit more

hope. Vinx turned to greet them, the look on his face instantly flushed any hope out them.

"I've verified our position twice, Welcome to Armageddon!"

Despite all that had happened, Trina and Williams were suddenly filled with a fresh surge of fear.

Armageddon

Chapter One-Armageddon

"Sir, we've got something on sensors. It came out of warp ten minutes ago, it looks like an obsolete freighter, Sigma class."

"Has it transmitted clearance codes?"

"No sir, it's just sitting there."

"Send a transmission to the Bloody Mary to check her out."

"Yes sir, relaying message."

Since the end of the last Ork Waaaagh there had been a massive influx of goods, even going so far as to have 'flat-pack' townships. Work had even started on rebuilding the great spires that formed the hive cities. However, because of this increased shipping, there was also an increase in the number of smugglers hauling dangerous cargoes to corrupt governors. The strain this had put on the planetary economy resulted in the formation of a special unit to deal with these 'crises' as well as the derelict vessels that still drifted in system. The Bloody Mary and her sister ship King's Revenge were part of this clean-up operation; they were both Lunar class cruisers, having ample weaponry to deal with almost any threat.

"Copy that Control. Our sensors are showing that it's sending out a distress signal, it's civilian, it looks like there are some discrepancies in the hull. It looks like it might have been boarded, please advise our next course of action, over."

"This is control; send a shuttle of marines and medical personnel over, search for survivors then leave the area, long range sensors show five unidentified vessels,

possibly Ork in origin, heading towards you at maximum burn, you have twenty minutes till they hit, Control out."

"Well, you heard them, send Alpha shuttle with the med-team. Make sure Dr Jameson and the planetary defence force marines check in every five minutes, I don't want any surprises."

There was a murmur of "Yes sir's" as his orders were carried out.

Chapter Two

"Pack your bags Doc, we're going house calling," one of the nameless marines said too loudly into the 'Doc's' ear. Grumbling, he packed his medical kit and followed him to the docking bay. Through the shimmering force field that protected the docking bay from the depths of space he could make out a ship. It was massive. He gulped; to him it looked like some massive warship.

When he made his qualms known to the assembled group they burst into laughter, informing him that it looked so large because it was a bulk carrier, built so long ago that mostly they were used as tugs for the newer models. The Doctor tried to look like he didn't care about the laughter at his expense. The crossing was simple and as their shuttle docked with one of the protruding tubes, the marines grew slightly more relaxed. That lasted only until they entered the docking bays and they saw where the Orks had come in. Despite the short time they had been here the Orks had already daubed the walls with their crude images and spread their filth to even the most sanctified of places.

They went in guns raised, expecting an ambush. They heard a slight movement to their side, and they nearly blew off Trina's head. One over-zealous trooper actually fired off a round in her direction. That was how trigger-happy they were. He got a "we'll talk about this later" look from his sergeant. Trina deftly navigated the wreckage. "It's good to see that someone finally came to see us," she said.

"Are you the Commanding Officer of this ship?"

She let out the briefest of chuckles filled with no humour, "Not exactly, I'll take you to the bridge, follow me."

The Captain of the Bloody Mary's voice came over the sergeant's wrist-com.

"Well?" The sergeant looked over his shoulder to see the woman walking out of hearing range, "It looks like there were Orks here but there don't seem to be any survivors and ships like these don't carry marine complements, but the woman taking us to the bridge has obviously had military training, you can tell from the way she walks."

"The plot thickens," murmured the Captain as he mulled over the information he had just received, "Keep me appraised of the situation, out."

"Roger that," the sergeant muttered sarcastically to no-one in particular.

Chapter Three

"Are you sure that you can't fix it?" Vinx asked.

"Your drives are completely shot and even if we got it to work, the wiring would need a complete overhaul. She broke her back, we'll mothball her until we have the manpower to strip her of anything that could be of some use to us." The engineer who had come with the marine detachment shrugged. He was covered in grime, they both were. They had been crawling on their stomachs through three decks, using the access shafts to get from place to place.

As Trina had led the boarding party to the bridge she had told them of the events that had befallen them in the past week or so, finishing by telling them that it was almost certain that the Waaaagh was heading this way; the ships the planetary sensors had spotted in the outer system where simply scouts, a precursor to a much greater threat.

As they reached the bridge, the acting commander of the vessel, Williams, greeted them. He showed almost no reaction as he was informed that, considering the gravity of the situation, he would have to evacuate this ship immediately; if what they said was true then such a fleet as could be cobbled together would need to mobilize.

The Captain of the Bloody Mary called for access to their sensor recordings and told them that as it was it would be hard for them to evacuate the ship's personnel as well as pulling the encrypted data from the logs. This meant that the Bloody Mary was going to have to hold off the Orks while her shuttles took off the crew and necessary equipment. However she would not be alone, the King's Revenge

would be there soon. Together they could defeat almost anything the Orks decided to throw at them.

"This is the Captain. The Orks will be here momentarily. When they arrive I want a full broadside, hopefully it will make them rethink taking us on,."

Williams shook his head at the announcement. "You can tell he's never fought Orks before. A direct strike will only make their morale stronger."

Vinx shrugged, "It doesn't really affect us, all we got to worry about is getting the shields up and making sure the point defence system won't collapse on us at any second."

"Thanks for the morale boost, sailor," Trina grumbled.

"I try, I try," he said grinning.

"Look it can't be all bad you see this sensor, five objects, we'll have them,"

"Actually I'd look again, if I were you..." Williams' voice dried as his face drained of all colour. "Holy...."

The screen had lit up with hundreds of objects leaving warp-space. Gulping, his earlier humour gone, Vinx asked, "When does the other cruiser get here?"

"Five minutes, but I don't think it will help much against that particular firestorm," Williams said stating the obvious, "Vinx I need those engines now."

"But they're completely broken!!!" Vinx complained.

"Re-route the power from the shields to the engine pods."

"But we'll be defenceless!!!" Vinx said terrified.

"If we stay here we're dead. If we move now there's still a chance we can escape."

"Yes sir," Vinx said quietly, cowed by Williams' expressionless face.

"Good, it's up to you get us the hell out of here."

Chapter Four

"This is Admiral Parol to fleet: form up. Enact Alpha-Charlie-Epsilon manoeuvre and set course to intercept." The Admiral's voice rang out over the ship to ship intercom, ordering all ships to form into what amounted to a U shape, with interlocking fields of fire. All ships except the Bloody Mary and the King's Revenge and, of course, the derelict cargo hauler. They were already in position. In fact at the very moment they heard those orders the first Ork destroyers and attack craft were coming into range.

"That's all the power you'll get," Vinx's voice crackled over the intercom.

"Good enough get back up her and..."

Williams' voice was cut off as the first weapon's impacts started to rock the Lunar class warships.

"This is the captain of the Bloody Mary, any time you want to leave would be great." Despite his attempt at humour there was very real terror in his voice.

"Copy that, we're out of here. Engineering, let's go."

As the engines powered up the ship hummed with noise and some of the systems burst to life as power returned, coursing through the ship like blood. The ship started to move off at a painfully slow crawl, the escorts staying within a few hundred kilometres.

Although their point defence was still an almost impenetrable wall, the Ork fighters and bombers were circling closer and closer, their numbers growing by the second. And then as the green horde reached critical mass they attacked. The area around the ships was filled with explosions and missiles screaming down on their final attack vector.

Despite the violence of the situation, in the darkness of space the scene was strangely muted. Still the chaos continued, but with every second, as the Imperials slowly slunk away, the Orks grew nearer and nearer; it wasn't a question of if, but when. Slowly, inevitably each second dragged out. The Imperial fleet sped towards the Orks, the three ships trying to leave, stuck in the middle of what was going to become an incredibly bloody crossfire.

It looked like they were going to make it as the battle raged on. Great sections were being blown out of the Orks and Imperials at an incredible rate. But then a lucky Ork shot bypassed the warship's defence, grazing the hull of the freighter. Although the ship was massive its shields were down. Thankfully the section that was hit was sealed off, so that they didn't have to waste power on life support to that area.

Finally salvation arrived, in the form of the massed salvoes of missiles and energy weapons that lanced out slicing the enemy up. The scene was framed by the Orks' fighters trails lighting up as they exploded, painting a fiery picture as the Imperial fleet fired again and again slashing and ripping the Ork ships, leaving gaping holes that leaked atmosphere. As the battered cruisers fell back into the gun line a ship-to-ship message was broadcast to them.

"This is Admiral Parol to King's Revenge and Bloody Mary, form up in your assigned positions. Unknown freighter pilot your way to high orbit above Armageddon." the strong voice left the intercom as the freighter's escorts powered away to join the formation. They had seen the Ork fleet; the Imperials were going to their death.

As the freighter moved through the system Williams heard calls for aid running through a full frequency range. They listened as the monitor stations were overwhelmed one by one, fear building inside them as they heard a final report – the Ork fleet now numbered in thousands. Still close enough to see on the sensors, they saw Admiral Parol's fleet overwhelmed even as they pounded the vanguard of the Ork fleet to dust. Although Williams and his crew could not be described as 'educated' there wasn't any guard world in this sector that hadn't heard of Armageddon and its reputation.

The threat of another invasion that looked many times the size of the previous one sent a shiver of fear down their collective spine. They reached the planet barely hours ahead of the onrushing Orks. Passing under the massive lance batteries of St Jowen's Dock they felt some semblance of peace, thinking that nothing could fight its way past the base but barely had they made it to the surface in modified construction shuttles than massive explosions clouded the sky. The bombardment of Armageddon's space defences had begun.

Chapter Five

As they touched down, they caught sight of the massed war-machines and guard regiments that were on stand-by, waiting to be deployed into the wastes. In the distance they could make out the outline of one of the great hive cities and to the west the massive equatorial jungle. Even as they were led away by an officious Adeptus Mechanicus clerk they could still see the explosions in the sky that heralded the coming of invasion. It appeared that with the obviousness of an attack, everyone that could be had been snapped up eagerly by the conscription office. They were taken away to a run-down building that looked like it had been hastily constructed and then never finished; entering the rat-infested building they threw their packs on some empty bunks.

"You have now been officially conscripted into the Emperor's glorious army," the bureaucrat piped up, "There is a briefing for all new conscripts in the main hanger F at 1.15." He said all this while jotting things down in his ledger; he waved a dismissive hand leaving. They glanced up at the clock; with an hour to kill they decided to look round the base.

Ayden looked around, scanning the area around him with keen eyes; the underhive was dark as always. Hefting his massive flamethrower to his shoulder, he stepped forward. His previous position was now filled with badly aimed autogun shells that ricocheted off the walls, blowing chunks off the masonry. But he didn't scare easily. Moving forward, he calmly sent out great spurts of flame; the gunfire died down until he was left in a silent alleyway, the only one still alive.

"You did good, kid. With the bounty on their heads we'll be rolling in cash." A great bear of a man detached himself from the shadows behind Ayden, followed by three others. None of them shared their names instead they were simply known by what they did. Ayden was 'flame', the man who had just spoke was 'sir' and the others were 'snipe', 'gun' and 'hack' - he was a self proclaimed computer genius, every time they need to get into a computer system he hadn't failed. Without a word the slight, creepy and pale form of snipe stepped forward. There was a meaty hacking sound as he removed the heads of those who had been torched. As soon as he was back they moved off, the bag with the heads in making a dull clunking noise as they walked, blood seeping out of the cloth.

Despite the threat of imminent ambush they made good time to the Adeptus Arbites outpost located deep in the hive. The enforcers couldn't hunt all the criminals so they occasionally hired out the 'lesser scum' of the underhive. A

harsh looking shotgun-toting Arbites enforcer was standing at the gate eying the surrounding wasteland with disgust. They stepped past him and through the gates without a second glance, heading to a dark tower, resplendent in its black and yellow livery and surrounded with walls.

Wordlessly they moved through the compound, at every turn met with armed guards. Even an idiot would see something was going down, there were at least three times the number of guards that were usually in place. Quelling these thoughts for the moment they stepped into an elevator that took them to the top floor of the tower and a sort of office block. A dark haired man wearing a flak jacket was sitting at the desk, his eyes were pale and his skin appeared withered, probably from too many close calls with radiation sickness. There was a bandolier slung around his chair with grenades and spare clips of ammo hung on it and a lasgun leaning against the chair. He fixed them with a penetrating gaze before standing.

"You must be the... gentlemen that we hired for the Haven gang contract, if you leave the...um... bag's contents with me you will be paid. However as you've probably heard the Orks have launched a Waaaagh of epic proportions against this planet." They shared nervous glances, they hadn't heard but they knew what it meant, war, and a war on the surface always had a way of reaching the underhive in one way or another.

Continuing as if he hadn't seen their intimidated glances, the Arbites officer carried on speaking, "As you know, to our west is the equatorial jungle. This place is notoriously hard to patrol and several hundred Orks dropships made it to the surface, on top of the feral Orks already infesting the jungle this poses a serious threat to our defences. It is possible that a few Orks have managed to infiltrate this hive in preparation for the main conflict in an attempt to cripple us. As it is, several power stations in this area have already been sabotaged. In fact there are only two left. If either one were to go then this place would be without power, which would mean no lights and no automated turrets. We'd be almost defenceless. We have barely enough forces to protect this outpost and one of the generator stations. I will give you a free pass to the surface and 5,000 credits each if you protect the second station."

Gun let out a low whistle. That much money could keep them happy for years to come and the pass to the surface would mean no more fighting for survival.

"We'll take it, how long will it take to get there and will there be re-supply?" Sir

spoke up without a moment's hesitation.

"There is a stockpile of weapons and ammo there. But you need to leave immediately and with luck you'll get there ahead of the Orks. The Emperor protects," the Arbites officer frowned dismissively at them.

Snipe and gun had been together for as long as they could remember, they were as close as brothers, the look they gave each other was relatively simple: the Orks work in numbers, 'a few Orks' could mean anywhere from 10 to 100 of the greenskins. This could get ugly but it was too late to back out now.

They left; five men going on what could turn out to be a suicide mission. They jogged to the power station using directions given by the Arbites. It was housed in an old building in the centre of a town square. Half the building had been blown out and strewn with rubble, the other side was covered with blast marks and bullet holes. However in the sub-basement there was a three inches thick steel trapdoor that led into a sealed bunker that housed the generator, the codes to the door were electronically swapped every month or so the outpost's commander wasn't privy to this information. However, now that he knew where it was, hack hacked the lock in a matter of minutes. They stepped inside to find a room brightly lit and filled with ancient technology. They could see why this was a prime target. All that stood between them and pretty much shutting down an entire sector of the hive was a thin see-through plastic wall.

However, before they could continue this egotistical train of thought, snipe's voice crackled over the com-links that they had 'liberated' from a well-equipped gang a while ago. "We got Orks. I can't tell how many but it looks like a lot, get your butts up here and seal that door. They're going to start shooting this place up any moment."

Sprinting up the steps, hack sealed the door behind them. He then led them over to another door he had found. Inside there was the largest array of weapons any of them had ever seen outside of the Arbites' outpost armoury. It was crazy that anyone would leave this amount of firepower around in this unguarded spot. But they had and Ayden wasn't complaining. Grabbing a large canister of flamer-fuel he headed up top with the others with their new-found guns.

Snipe hadn't exaggerated. If anything he had sugar-coated the truth. There were at least a hundred Orks milling around, waiting for Emperor knows what. Then, without warning, they loosed a volley into the building and charged. In a moment

of clarity before the Orks came in range Ayden thought: it's just one of those classic scenes: humanity, it's enemy's unnumbered charging in - it could only lead to the complete annihilation of one side. Before he could continue though, his thoughts were broken by the imminent arrival of the Orkish horde, then it was just action and reaction.

He was burning Orks as fast as he could but they were surrounded. Pain shot up his left leg. He looked down, a bullet had ricocheted off a wall grazing his leg. He saw sir wrestle an Ork to the ground and then gun expertly put a bullet in its head. Snipe climbed down from his vantage point standing back to back with hack as they unleashed a firestorm into the Ork ranks.

Although they were cutting swathes down, the greenskins kept coming again and again, he saw that soon the five men would be overwhelmed. Without even realising he was doing it he began reciting every prayer he knew, shouting them out at the top of his lungs, and then they were answered. Whether the God Emperor was listening or whether it was just dumb luck, suddenly the hive started to shake. Great chunks fell from the ceiling, crushing much of the area. Although this bought a respite in the intense fighting, their relief soon gave way to a much greater fear. The only reason the hive would shake was if it was under intense bombardment. The Imperials must have lost the battle for the sky, the Ork dropships must have started to land. If the hive was besieged then there would be almost no point in contesting this place, they had already lost. They started to run. Startled by their prey's sudden change in 'tactics' the Orks milled around, only firing the odd shot in their direction, apparently content to sit on their original objective. As they reached fresh cover, sir and hack shared a worried look. "What is it?" snipe piped up not understanding.

"We disobeyed a direct order by an Arbites officer. So that we could be paid and not get shot we had to have our names and DNA patterns added to the database and officially become part of the Adeptus Arbiters. But because what we just did..." hack replied.

"We just committed a treasonous offence..." said sir.

"Punishable by death." snipe finished.

"Let's keep running," Ayden said.

"Agreed."

TO BE CONTINUED...

RAIDING THE BITS DRAWER

BY S.A.N.G.

(Or Bag In My Case)

Hey gamers! It's Nathan, in this article I'm going to demonstrate a number of different combinations of leftover Bitz which I used to increase my fleet.

I play an Imperial fleet with some Chaos ships on the side, but when I got the Chaos and Imperial cruisers (one box of two of Chaos and three boxes of two of Imperials) and built them I was left with a massive pile of bitz which I hated to see to go to waste.

About a year after I built my fleet I finally got round to trying to make something out of them. I also play warhammer, and attempted on various occasions to create a model from leftover bits and came up with creative combinations of limbs centered upon a torso of... There are never any spare torsos, the best I could come up with was an Ogre fist creatively sculpted, but that didn't work for my goblins or D-elves or basically anything else and I'm no good with green stuff (this project only uses the sticky stuff once and then only as a blob).

After a string of failed creations I didn't have high hopes for this project, and therefore, according to the law of invercity (the opposite happens of anything I say or think) the project turned out really well, now, onto the modeling!

This isn't a single project on a single model, in fact I'm going to detail how to use leftover bits to create four different types of models, and I made eight of one of those types! Each type is escort sized or slightly smaller and will cost you nothing more than the pennies you base them with! That is of course

if you have suitable bits, if not then this might still inspire you!

Type 1: Used as: transport, ork ship, escort, part of an armoured convoy, objective etc.

Bitz needed: parts from the Imperial cruiser sprue, for each one you need a pair of launch bays and then a pair of lance batteries or weapons batteries plus half a lance battery for the engine plus four of the short little pylons for landing gear (this is optional as explained later, there are three different types of pylons, I used the shorter two types for this but make sure you get all of one type on each ship as each type is longer or shorter than the others leading to a ship tilting forwards or backwards, you can see which pylons I mean in the picture at the end of this section).

You will then need to raid your bits bag for a suitable prow, for each of mine I sliced up an orc shield from warhammer and added the shield motifs of the tribe onto the shield, once you've put together the other parts of the model just scavenge around for something.

From six Imperial cruiser spare parts I made eight of these ships

Method: What I did for my first seven was to take one of the launch bays and add a tiny blob of blue tack (you could use green stuff but I found blue tack much easier as it is sticky, but only hardens when you put super glue on it and is not uber expensive) into the holes the fighters launch from, the two on the right and the two on the left, leave the centre two

alone, then stick one of your pylons in each of the four holes, the blue tack is only there to hold them in place until they are glued, try to make them all touch the ground on a flat surface, all of mine could stand up on their own with a bit of work.

This is the least satisfactory part of all of my models as the job was fiddly and in the end I had to lay a roll of blue tack onto the base and then stick these legs onto that for this model to stand, alternatively shaving the bottom launch bay to get a flat surface without the little legs worked for the last one I tried and as far easier so this is the method I recommend or you may prefer to work out your own way to stick these on a base, its up to you but I prefer the shaving the launch bay.

Next, once the undercarriage of the model is finished glue the other launch bay to this launch bay, glue the sides you would glue to the cruiser together so you have a blocky, razorbacked ship with little legs sticking out the bottom, then glue your lances, WBs or launch bays to either side, the former two look better but in the end I ran out and did the last one with all launch bays, next is the final tricky bit for me, slice a lance battery in half, I nearly cut my fingers off with the precision knife I was using so be careful!

Then trim away until it has straight sides with the lance guns in the centre (just to make it look symmetrical), finally glue this to the back of the model as an engine, I found half a lance battery looked best but feel free to try WBs or anything else that might work, then glue your prow on and

the model is done, paint it then glue it to a base (a penny works if you haven't got a proper one).

Essentially this model is made by gluing two launch bays together, then two of the other cruiser bits, one on each side, then adding an engine and a prow and any other bits, I added nova cannons and prow lances and turrets to some of mine, I have photos of a few below.

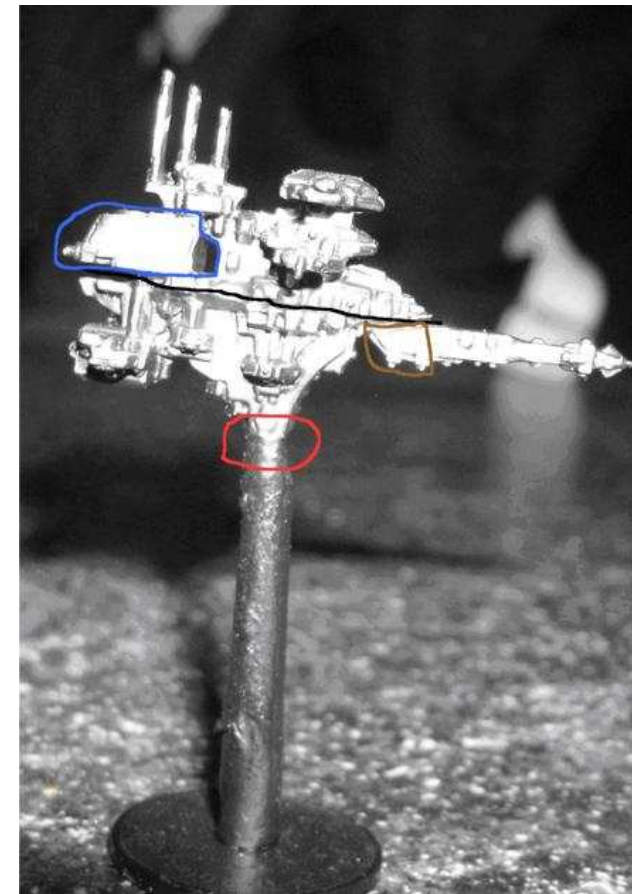


Type 2: Used as: scout ship, escort

Bits needed: two chaos cruiser bridges (there are two bridges for each chaos cruiser so each cruiser box contains these, I used two different types of bridge btw), a prow lance (optional), half a lance battery (again you can substitute this for anything that will work for an engine), and a spare base (I took one of the spare stalk thingies you glue between the base and the ship, shaved the tip off to give a larger surface to glue to the ship and glued it to a penny as I did with all my other models except type 1)

Method: this is the easiest one I did, file the bottoms of the chaos bridges which you would stick to the cruiser, flat, then glue them together as shown in the photo below by the black line in the centre WITH a slight overhang from the top one in front to glue the lance to, note that the one upside down is facing the other way to the other, then on the bottom half cut off the spines which were on top of the hump in the red box and shave the area flat as well as the stalk so you can glue them together, glue the lance onto the front overhang to give your ship sensors/ weapons where the brown box is, finally do some careful shaving in the blue box area to slot your engine into the gap between the overhang at the back caused by the bottom half and the small space by the top half of the bridge at the back, then just glue the ship to the base and paint it stealthy black!

Picture to the right.



Type 3: Used for: Chaos escort.

Bits needed: I do believe the main bulk of the ship came from a spare bridge of either an emperor battleship or a retribution battleship, then two chaos launch bays- one for either side- and some spare nova cannons and a couple of stalks from the chaos cruisers.

Method: Trim off MOST, not all of the overhang used to attach the launch bays to chaos cruisers then stick each one to either side of the bridge, use your own best judgment is the best I can say, then stick a nova cannon under each side of the bridge (I ran out of lances) and a few pylons to make the underside a bit more interesting, once again glue it to the base in the usual way with a penny if you haven't got a proper base, I tend to use the broken stands which have been broken off my proper models for this as there is no little hole to slot the stand into on these custom models and gluing to the small thing to slot into the holes isn't as stable as gluing to the main shaft, so don't throw away broken shafts! Just use them for models without the slot to slot the little thing into as 9 times out of ten that is what will break (if anyone can make sense of what I just said give yourself a medal, I don't!). This model is all about using your best judgment and trying things out before you glue permanently, for me it is my favourite model, I think it looks so professionally done because the parts fit so nicely together, anyways, there is a picture of my one below for you to have a scoff at! (Something along the lines of "that's not even slightly professional, what is he babbling on about?")

Two top pictures in the middle column.



Type 4: Used as: Ork Rok

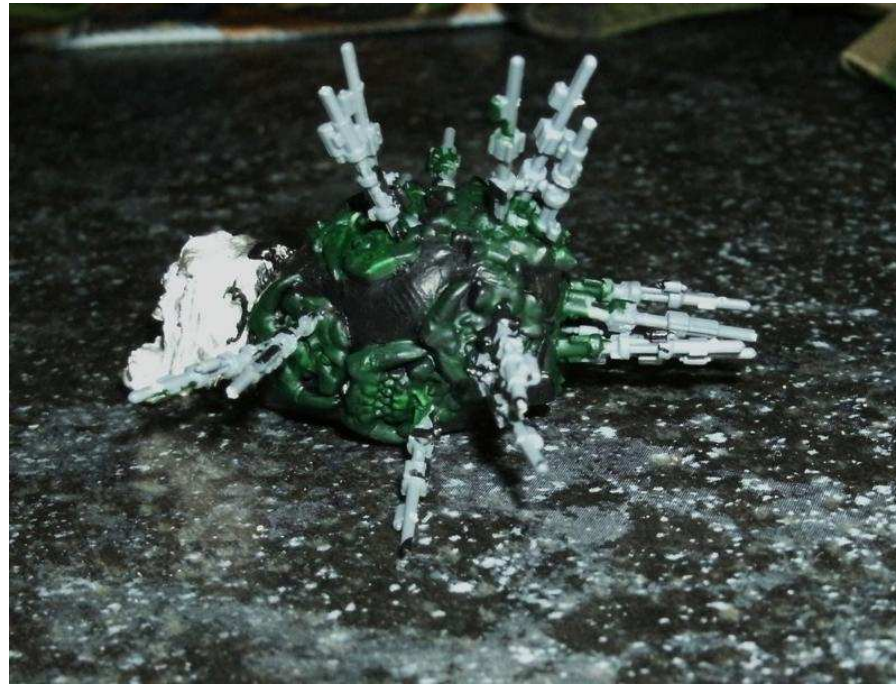
Bits needed: a wadge of green stuff (as much as you want but I used about half of a single strip which makes it escort sized) a lot of long pylons from the Imperial cruisers sets(look at the photo at the bottom, the bits jutting out are what I mean by this), something for the prow (I chose a gorgor head from warhammer as I'd just built one and used the spare head) and optionally some more of the emblems you put on orc shields in warhammer.

Method: roll your big wadge of green stuff into an asteroid shape with some pinching etc. be artistic! (better than me I hope!) next, this is the optional part, drill or file with a round file holes through the shield motifs, I chose eyes, ears and mouth in variation, stick them all over the asteroid except what is to be you front or prow and the bottom (you can put some on the bottom if you like but seems a waste) next just push the pylons into the green stuff (through the holes in the shield motifs if you did that part) with a cluster at the back for engines (you can use something else for engines but I ran out of lance batteries to hack at) and add something for the prow, then wait for the green stuff to go solid (add a bit of super glue to the pylons if your not confident GS will hold them, I super glue just about everything to be sure), your done! I included experimental rules for this one and suggest type three has two lances and two launch bays, but make up whatever you want! Sorry that you can't see the prow well in the photo but the silver metal dazzles the camera when it flashes, by the way I painted the GS black for the asteroid and will add grays later and green for the motifs, the green bits are plastic and the black stuff is GS!

Bottom picture in the middle column.

This fearsome Ork rok has been the scourge of the tipoca systems ever since Warboss Grimgore Dungfist assembled it, after the interrogation of one of the Boss's Boyz Imperial command learned that the Warboss had found an ancient power core imbedded within an asteroid in the Cron Asteroid Belt, the belt is famous for when a squadron of six Gothic class cruisers entered it and simply disappeared, intelligence surmised that there had been a battle where one of the cruiser's warp drives had imploded, leading to a rift in the warp from which the core of a powerful vessel had emerged and collided with the asteroid, the ork then went on to say that they had scavenged no less than eighteen lances from the hulls of squadron Sunray, (named after the famous battle of Cron five where the Gothic squadron had brought low the infamous ecstasy of torment, a torture class super battleship in the hands of one of Abbadon's Exalted Warmasters, the captains of the Gothics had received Medals for service beyond the call of duty, and the immolation of the ecstasy was described as "shafts of blindingly pure light, burning away the taint of Chaos like the rays of the sun burn away the darkness".) Now powered by a single power core of immense power, studding a ship so maneuverable that it can bring all weapons to bear by whirling on the spot, the tremendous power of Sunray squadron is under the command of the orks, with leering faces spouting weapons to all sides and the cruel visage of the Warmaster carved into the front of the asteroid hull, even battleships tremble before this ship no larger than one of the Emperor's Firestorms.

The Ork Rok Grimgore's Gutbusta is an extremely powerful ship with eighteen lances able to fire in all arcs with a range of 45, it has four shields and damage points of six, armour of five plus and six to the front, no turrets, can turn on the spot at any point in its move multiple times and has a speed of twenty five. It is classed as an escort due to its size



despite its immense firepower. It costs 400 points (experimental) and comes with a Warlord with one extra re-roll, the Gutbusta always has a leadership of ten.

Special Rules: The Gutbusta has a few special rules owing to it encasing the power of a battleship in an escorts shell capable of taking the hits of a light cruiser; firstly, critical hits do not automatically destroy the ship, instead of rolling on the critical hits table roll a D6, on a 1 the Gutbusta is fine, the resilient power core re-routes around the problem keeping the ship at maximum efficiency, on a 2 or 3 reduce the number of lances able to fire by D3, on a 4 or 5 reduce the number of lances able to fire by D6, on a 6 there is a direct hit on the power core which destroys the Gutbusta in a roiling explosion, treat the result as a warp drive implosion except the blast radius is 6D6 and the number of lance hits is equal to

the remaining number of operational lances! Not the total damage points the ship has.

There you have it! I must note after writing this article that it is unlikely that people will have all the same bits as me, but the idea remains the same to show what you can do with some sticks and a blob of GS or a number of unused WBs, feel free to make up your own rules for the ships and the rules for Grimgore's Gutbusta are entirely experimental and untested (and the points guessed, I've pretty much made them up as I write this), I apologize for the lack of pictures of the construction process but I wrote this after writing my previous article for warp rift and after I finished, but had not painted most of the ships, I am planning another modeling project to create a destroyed Imperial cruiser out of polystyrene which should have pictures of the entire process, until next time! S.A.N.G (Solar admiral Nathan G!)

