

SKYVENZLIGHT

Issue 1

gazette



SKAVENBLIGHT

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g a z e t t e

Skavenblight Gazette

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Contents

The Unified Army pg 3
Scrivener takes us through how to unify your army during painting.

Moulder Pitfighters pg 6
Morkskittar tells us about the insidious online arena of Clan Moulders pitfighting combat.

Skaven army building tactics and general unit uses pg 7
Commanding your troops is only half the battle. Bloodvixen gives an overview on choosing and using elements of your army.

Cursed dreams pg 11
What has happened to the soldiers of an Empire outpost? And what is in the journal of their commander?

Hour of the Wolf pg 12
Asur.net are running a new historical online Warhammer campaign.

Voices from the dark

Greetings rats and inferior races to the first issue of the Skavenblight Gazette! A few months back, the idea for an e-zine for the Underempire was mentioned and ratty eyes began to shine with new light. Many votes were cast, long hours were spent, several messages were exchanged, and we may have even had a few fatalities (but we're Skaven and that's to be expected). Once again, the master race has persevered and here we are today with issue number one.

I believe the purpose of the Skavenblight Gazette is to provide a large warpstone laced dose of knowledge, experience, passion, and achievements from amongst the minds of the Underempire's very own members. This not only provides additional quality articles for those spying on the forums each day, but also allows those with less time to still get their much needed fix of warpstone.

After much plotting, the other editors and I plan for the growth the Skavenblight Gazette. We hope to improve with each and every issue released, not only the quality of the articles but the quantity. It is our hope the e-zine will become synonymous with the Underempire and with fun, interesting, insightful, quality articles.

Many thanks are due to the other two editors, Clanlord Trask and Skaven Lord Vinshqueek, who have been nothing less than fantastic. Thanks are also due to each of the writers who have paved the way for future articles of the Skavenblight Gazette by submitting their own stupendous work. They are the pioneers who made the e-zine's creation possible. Finally, thanks are due to the members of the Underempire and all others who have been in support of the e-zine. Without your support, the drive to create would not be there. This is your Skavenblight Gazette.

Sebrent
Lead Editor

The Unified Army

by Scrivener

A unified army isn't something that enters your mind when thinking about the undisciplined Skaven race, but when it comes to painting and modelling, uniformity and consistency is an issue that is especially important for horde armies. With that many models on the table, a consistent appearance binds them together, and lets the viewer see the army as one body.

Keeping consistency in an army as large and varied as Skaven can be quite a feat. Since it will take months, if not years, to finish painting a true horde, chances are your painting style or choice of colours will change (and hopefully improve) over time, and so too will how your models look.

Before you start, always plan ahead. You will be improving on your technique and trying out new styles as you continue painting, but maintaining some basics can still help prevent the overall look from deviating too much. Here are some tips to planning a unified paint scheme for your army.

Get a system of how you will paint your rats and more or less stick to it. Will you be using washes? Black primer or brown? How many layers of highlighting do you intend to use? You'll need a system that looks good and is fast and simple too, while preferably without using too many types of paint. Find a combination that you're comfortable with, that saves time, and if possible is not too costly financially, and gives you a result you're happy with.

Decide what colours you will be using. Stick to a fixed palate, since too many colours throughout your army can look discordant and distracted. Test out your colours first to see if they work. When basing, also keep all materials consistent: Nothing looks stranger than the warlord in snow standing in a unit of desert-themed Clanrats. It's always a good idea to maintain the same colour consistently for a specific type of material throughout the army: this applies to wood, leather straps, eyes, earth and skin. In real life two pieces of wood are rarely the same shade of brown, but for a model army the feeling that "all the wood came from the same tree" helps the viewer to associate colours with materials, and keeps

consistency. This rule of thumb does have exceptions, like shields and fur, where variety adds some spice and realism.

Make good use of neutral colours. These are browns, greys, beige, off-white, (and grey metallics if it's a metal object), i.e. your natural earth-tone hues. Neutral colours don't contrast with any other colour and don't grab the eye's attention as much as your standard colours (like reds or greens). Neutral colours will be the dominant colours on your grubby, furry, not really fashionable ratmen, so do pick browns that you like best.

Pick a theme colour. It adds life and breaks the dreariness of all the brown on Skaven. I use natural colours for just about everything, with a theme colour from the standard colour spectrum to help enforce the coherence. By standard colours I refer to the usual blue/red/yellow/green/orange/purple range. Painters will usually stick to one or two theme colours and use it throughout their army to enforce coherence. Go for one colour for a very simple, understated look; two colours for a stronger colour scheme, and three theme colours

only if you're Bretonnian. You can use scatterings of other colours throughout your army of course, but the theme colour or colours will be the common denominator. Where other colours are used, such as a second theme colour, sticking to complimentary colours (e.g. orange with red, green with blue) will help avoid the "shock" on your eyes from contrast. Using a neutral colour as a second theme colour can also work to support the dominant theme colour (though with Skaven, brown is already on every other surface anyway.)

Which brings us to the next point.



Breaking uniformity

Now, after yapping for so much about uniformity, why would I suddenly talk about breaking it? The reason is, as much as we don't want to look like a carnival parade, we also don't want it to look like our rats were mass-produced in a factory. Keeping some individuality in your rats can help boost a sense of realism.

Skaven don't really do uniforms. And too much of one theme colour can look too dressed up. Skaven are disorganized and rag-tag, so a paint scheme can reflect this. Don't overdo the theme colour, and paint varying parts of your models with it so that it's not always in the same place on all your rats. Break the rhythm of the theme colour with other colours or neutral hues.



Another way to break uniformity and add some individuality is with the fur and shields. There's no harm to vary the fur tone every third or fourth rat in a unit: after all they aren't clones. Also, with all the different unit types, fur colour is supposed to vary: grey for some characters, Stormvermin being black and slaves being a lighter shade than Clanrats. With shields, consider having an occasional shield that is "unpainted" brown or a complimentary colour to the theme colour. Like I mentioned above, contrasting colours will stick out like a sore thumb, drawing attention to one Clanrat out of a whole unit for no reason, so I wouldn't really recommend this among your rank and file. Characters on the other hand can do best to stand out, being the leaders and also generally looking different from the rank and file anyway.

I wouldn't advise this technique with skin. That much will have to stay consistent. An exception might be with Rat Ogres, which are a slightly different breed, but generally we try to keep them relatively of the same hue.

Now, as a rough guide we're going to see one example of how you can paint up your Clanrats.

Painting

Here's a way to paint up your Clanrats. Everyone has their own way of doing it, but here I'm basing my formula on the basics commonly used by others. Just keep it simple, with as few steps as is possible without sacrificing the final result, and you should be able to brush your way through ranks of vermin without much time. After all, Clanrats are one bunch of troops that don't need Golden Daemon quality. Once ranked up, your many units of Clanrats will be viewed as a great mass, so the important issue is the overall look of your Clanrats when they are a large unit, where detailing on each individual becomes unnoticeable anyway.

Paint can get pricey after you've gone through your fifth pot of scorched brown from painting all those rats, so I'm going to try using as little types of colours as is possible. Where possible, mix paints to create new colours. One way is to mix a colour with white to create a lighter shade for highlighting. This doesn't work for all colours (red with white will just give pink) and the effect of the highlight isn't as good as using a different colour altogether. The reason is mixing white gives a paler shade, while highlights are a brighter shade. But if you don't use a lot of a particular colour in your army and don't want to buy a new paint pot just to highlight the one time it does get used, white is an alternative.

The paints you will need are:

A dark brown: you will need at least 2 types of brown. I chose scorched brown, a rich, deep brown with a reddish hue that will stand out against the second shade of brown I will be using.

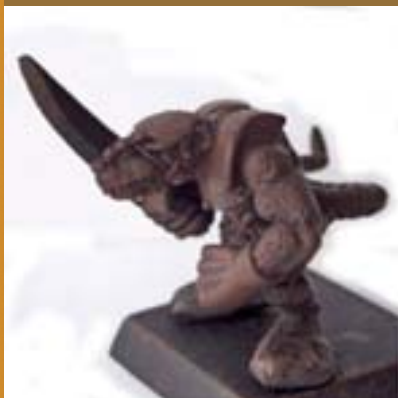
A light brown: I chose snakebite leather, though vomit or bubonic browns also work. Lighter browns tend to be of a yellow hue.

Black and white: Essential colours, you can't leave home without them.

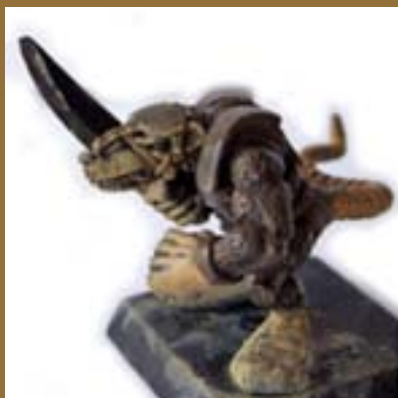
Metallic: I chose Boltgun Metal as it is the most suitable colour out there for steel and iron. Tin bitz also works well for a browner, tarnished look.

A skin colour: Dwarf flesh or bronzed flesh tend to be the preferred colours for Skaven skin, but I will be using elf flesh.

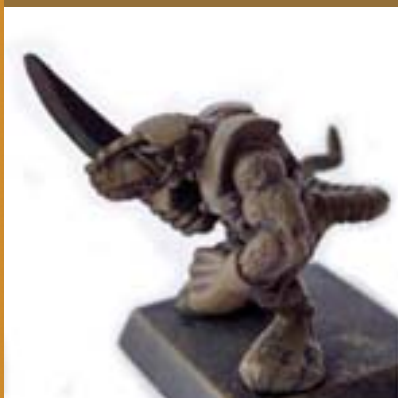
Theme colour: For the step-by-step guide below the theme colour will only be used for the shield. I'm painting the rest of the model by their natural colours



Step 1: I prime all my models chaos black. This deepens shadows and helps give a grimmer, richer tone to all colours that are painted onto it. Drybrush the whole model with scorched brown.



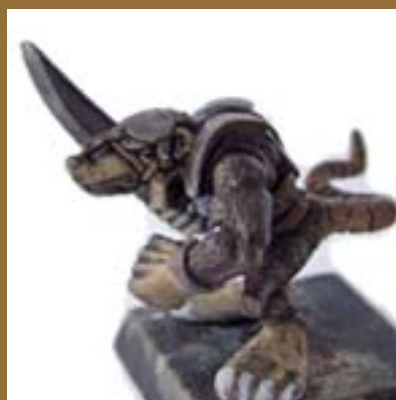
Step 3: Drybrush the skin with elf flesh. I apply it lightly to allow the coats underneath to show through and help blend in the colours. Brush along the length of the tail, across each foot, across the fingers, and down the head from ear to nose.



Step 2: Drybrush lightly over with snakebite leather, applying it more heavily on where the skin is (tail, hands, feet and face). Take a fine brush and paint in the armour straps.



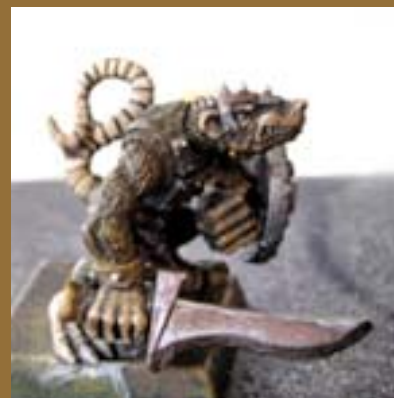
Step 4: Paint in the rest of the details. I'm using the boltgun metal to paint all metal parts like the sword, armour, and buckles. Then I use skullwhite to pick out the claws, teeth and eyes.



Step 5: Now we give the whole model a wash. I dilute chaos black to the consistency where when you brush it thickly onto a paper you can just see the paper through it. Add some liquid hand-soap to break the tension of the water: this helps the wash flow over the model without pooling. This brings out all the recesses and works much like the black ink lines of a comic book drawing. I also apply the wash along the blade then wipe it off the sharpened edge to give the edge a polished look.



Step 6: Shield parts are all painted on the sprue, then clipped off and assembled. I brushed the shield with regal blue then washed it with chaos black to bring out the wood grain. The rim and icon are painted boltgun metal. The icon is drybrushed very briefly with scorched brown to resemble rust. Glue it on and you're done!



If you like you can touch it up a little more. To highlight skin, dab elf flesh on. The clanrat above has also had scorched brown brushed onto his sword blade and helmet for rust.

And there we go! No work of art but it does its work. It was about a twenty minute job for this rat. If you wish to cut corners even more, I find that since the face, arms and tail are the parts mostly visible when a rat is in its unit, you can focus effort on these parts and fudge on breastplates, loincloths and parts of the feet. And still get away with it. Also, it is usually the front rank and command group that usually draws the attention and makes the first impression, so put in more time as you need on these models. Basically, spend the effort on what's most visible, and don't worry too much about the stuff that you'd need to squint under the model to see.

That's about it. Now go ahead and put paintbrush to primed plastic for the master race!

Moulder Pitfighters

Can you tangle with the best Master Moulders in the UnderEmpire and survive? Well, for those of you who haven't heard, at Moulder Pitfighters you can see if you truly have what it takes to make it to the top of the Pitfighting world! Fight Moulders ranging from Scarskrex to Karowak, Scrokk to Vilepaw, Ratticoq to Kalakkial, and countless others!

Moulder Pitfighters is an AoD (Arena of Death)-based game run by Underempire members Morkskittar, Drachau (brownmccoy), Assassin in the dark!, and Warwolt. The game is centred around Pitfight matches, which function just like an AoD, where a neutral third party (in this case the Packlords) fights out the battles between combatants and posts a fluffy summary of what happened. If that's not enough for you, you can do anything from sabotage and gamble on matches to leading terrorist attacks throughout the Mouldering world! Your imagination truly is the limit here, where (similarly to the Underempire's own Civil War Campaign) you can carry out special projects with no listed restrictions.

The secondary basis of Moulder Pitfighters is mutating. Players don't just make characters from GW rules here; they mutate their own beasts however they want! You can chop up and paste limbs from and onto ANY creature that you get your hands on, and see what comes out! Your finished creations can then be entered into the pits, where the true tests begin.

In addition to the fighting and mutating involved, you can involve yourself in Skaven politics. The Mouldering world has a profound affect on Skaven politics, and vice-versa. From Inquisitors to Chaos cultists, Skaven politics is full of danger, death, intrigue, and more death! Learn about the Marienburg and Zundap bombings, and the ever-lingering threat of plagues and political forces. The Underempire is not a safe place to live...

Despite the vast possibilities presented to you in Moulder Pitfighters, it is relatively simple to learn. Most of the work is done behind the scenes by the Packlords (Morkskittar, Warwolt, and Thraskittar), and all the player has to do is tell them what to do.

Pitfighters Season I has recently ended with the UnderEmpire Grand Tournament. The Grand Tournament yielded a surprising winner, Friar Divik of the Badlands. He was up against three Moulders above his class, yet he still managed to come out on top.

In Marienburg, Ratticoq of Clan Gnawkin won the 'Anything Goes' and Marienburg Ratfest Tournaments (the final round of the Ratfest was won by only a hair against the infamous Krabaw of Clan Rustmiths). In addition, the terrorist Ikkilit struck the city during the Ratfest, bombing much of the stands during the match. Lastly, the Marienburg Brawl, in which several man-sized beasts slug it out, was won by the elf Drachau.

In the Badlands, the tournaments were interrupted by an invasion from an infamous Orc Warlord, and the inhabitants of Ogre hold (the Pit-fighting city there) managed to repel the attackers. As thus, the only tournament played in the Badlands was the BadBoys Tournament, with Doctor Ghallden coming out on top.

In the fabled Overempire city of Zundap, these festivities were also interrupted as the Tzeentchian



by Morkskittar

Terrorist Ikkilit struck again, blowing up the Tower of Death, marring the games there. No tournaments were run after that.

In the capital of Skavendom, Skavenblight, two tournaments were played. The Skavenblight Ogrefest was won by the elf in Skaven disguise Drachau. The Skavenryth Maze was one by Master Moulder Blink with his beast Nakai Pestifurr. Doctor Woombeshtein managed to land a spot in this tournament with the most stylish beast: a rolling ball of rat heads known as Ostas MK2.

Finally, in the Mouldering capital of Hell Pit, there were many tournaments played. Ratticoq of Clan Gnawkin, a resident Moulder, won the arena of Squigs by killing 100 Squigs as the total of both rounds! In HellRats, although Ratticoq and his Enlargened Giant Rat, Freddy the Furball, won the most creative prize, Moulder Thrask Vilepaw came out on top in the tournament itself. Vilepaw also won the Hell Pit best of show with his indescribably strange beast, Squilid. In Hell Pit's popular Flames of Revenge, a bit of luck and using brains over brawn won Marienburg-based Scrokk and his beast Makari to first place in this tournament. The last

tournament played here was the Rejected, in which Moulders and their beasts are put into the pit of failed creatures and must survive and kill a set number of beasts. Master Moulder Thrask Vilepaw disappeared during the last match but was rescued by Drachau, and Master Moulder Neek (from near the Overempire Arenas) was the last survivor.

Near the start of the Grand Tournament, the lair of Dead Rat's Peak was finally given Major Moulder City status, and was one of the locations that the Grand tournament was hosted. During this season, there were several losses in the Mouldering world. The death of the esteemed Vorqueek at the hands of Morkskittar, the loss of Marighol the Maggothole in Ikkilit's Mareinburg bombing, and the loss of the powerful company of Ningit Limited (a potion-supplier) in a second attack credited to Ikkilit. The UnderEmpire Mouldering world is still under threat, though. The terrorist Ikkilit is threatening new bombings, and the dreaded Southern Beastpox is coming north, killing heavily mutated beasts.

It is a dangerous world, and only the strong Moulders will survive.

Skaven Army Building Tactics and general unit uses

by Blood Vixen

Hello Underempire! It's me, Blood Vixen, and I'm going to explain the basic tactics in a Skaven army. This edition will cover the core units and character choices (it was going to have a few item combos, special and rare in too but it would be a very big article)

Okay so lets start with the lords and heroes... or shall we?

Tempting as it is, it's always better to put a few points to the side then completely skip the lords and heroes section. "Why is this" you might ask? Well it's quite simple, if you do the characters before the army then your fixing some units for your leaders to go into. This shouldn't happen, so do the characters last. This way you are making the characters to the army, not the army to the character. This is a common mistake that can cause issues if your opponent is bring anti hero weaponry. If you wish more of a reason to why you should do this, here it is. When it comes to characters, your looking at all the fun stuff in the armory and your more likely to fully kit them out. If you kit them out completely like this then that's less points to the army. This is a bad thing because in a 2000 point army you have 4 characters to play with. Kitting them out so they are 200 points is fun, but if your enemy kills those 4 then that's 800 points to him/her. For that same amount they would need to go through eight 20 model strong clan rat units. If it came down to it, I wonder what would be more effective in the long term...

Okay so moving from the lords for now and going to the core units.



Clanrats

Lets start off with the basics, Clan Rats. You should have lots of these, 25 models strong is the average, as this allows freedom of movement as well as a good degree of survivability.

Spears are seen as a useless buy for the Clan Rats, but there are exceptions to this. They make the Clan Rats more expensive but are possibly vital to your battleplans, depending on the army you're up against.

30 model strong clan rats with spears, although expensive, will make excellent flank protectors for armies that will be hit particularly hard; they will be obliterating your full armor save anyway. Spears definitely have an advantage here as you'll be having more attacks. But once again, losing the armour save is risky, although if your going against a soft armored goblin or elf boss then those 5 attacks could take out the boss for you. Spears are practically useless against heavy cavalry, so its not really recommended for most armies, but there are times this can be handy.

Recommended amount of clan rats per army: my personal recommendation would be at least 30% of your army consisting of clan rat units as a bare minimum.



Slaves

The next unit on this list is the clan Rat Slaves.

Clan Rat Slaves are possibly the most valuable unit to the Skaven army. Chosen Chaos Warriors threatening your lines? Send in the Slaves and fire away. They're nice and cheap, so you could kill 10 of your own Slaves and only one Chaos Warrior and you will still be winning in terms of points. But this isn't their only usage. Shooting screens, bait, flank charging, if your opponent ignores them, the slaves do it all and do it well.

20 models is the norm as they're there to die. Some people like to give them a musician to give them a boost in chances to rally, but this is dependant on what role your using slaves for.

The recommended amount of Clan Rat Slaves per army: I recommend as many Clan Rat units as you can have. With their valuable uses and cheapness you always have room for more.



Night Runners

Next are some of eshins trainees, the Night Runners

Night Runners are the more combat effective cousins of slaves, though they do flee further. With the minus to hit thanks to being skirmishers, the night runners make cheap screens, sinks for any flyers that get to brave trying to slowing you down, or that fast cavalry that's running circles around your clan rats.

Never take them as a combat unit, don't upgrade them or you're just wasting points. Unlike slaves you can never expect night runners to survive a frontal assault. With the third worst leadership in the army they'll get mowed down.

Recommended amount of Night Runners per army: this one depends. Although valuable, they are not particularly vital like the Clan Rats and Slaves, although good for cheap screening. Its up to personal discretion as to the amount to take, but never upgrade them. If you want fighty night runners you might as well wait and get Gutter Runners instead



Rat Swarms

Next are the Rat Swarms

Rat Swarms, although seemingly weaker now in 7th edition, still have their uses. But since not everyone's converted to 7th ed lets talk like they are in 6th (it has nothing to do with me not having the 7th edition book yet ;)

Rat Swarms are a tar pit plain and simple. Upgraded to poison they are horribly effective against giants, but this is its only real use. If you have Chaos Knights running down your flank send in the Swarms. With 5 wounds a model your pretty sure that unit will be there for a good while. In the meantime you can position yourself to tackle this threat, even if it is just blasting them repeatedly with a Ratling Gun.

Recommendation: since they are a 0-1 choice, Rat Swarms are the option if you intend on going against someone with a hard hitter like Chosen Chaos Knights or other such heavy cavalry choices. Otherwise, best left at home



Globadiers

Next we have our anti-armor specialist core choice, the Globadiers

Globies are a interesting unit, only needing a 4+ to wound with no armor save. Sounds nice, but this will only have two possible uses. Sacrificial line in front of another unit that's getting charged by cavalry and having a stand and shoot, or as a flank shooter popping off shots into a combat that you are losing. A good unit for its cost but not really a vital one as we have better armor breaking weapons.

Recommendation: effective only against high cost armor. If you're not expecting a uber heavy cavalry unit, best left at home.



Giant Rats

The Giant Rats next

Giant Rats are a bargain for their points, and are a very effective flanking force with movement 6. They will get to where you need them to be quickly. The more packs you take, the more effective they will be, but after 4 packs it begins to lose value to your force

Recommendation: always have at least one unit. They can tie up a unit or flank the enemy. Take them in packs of two or three



Stormvermin

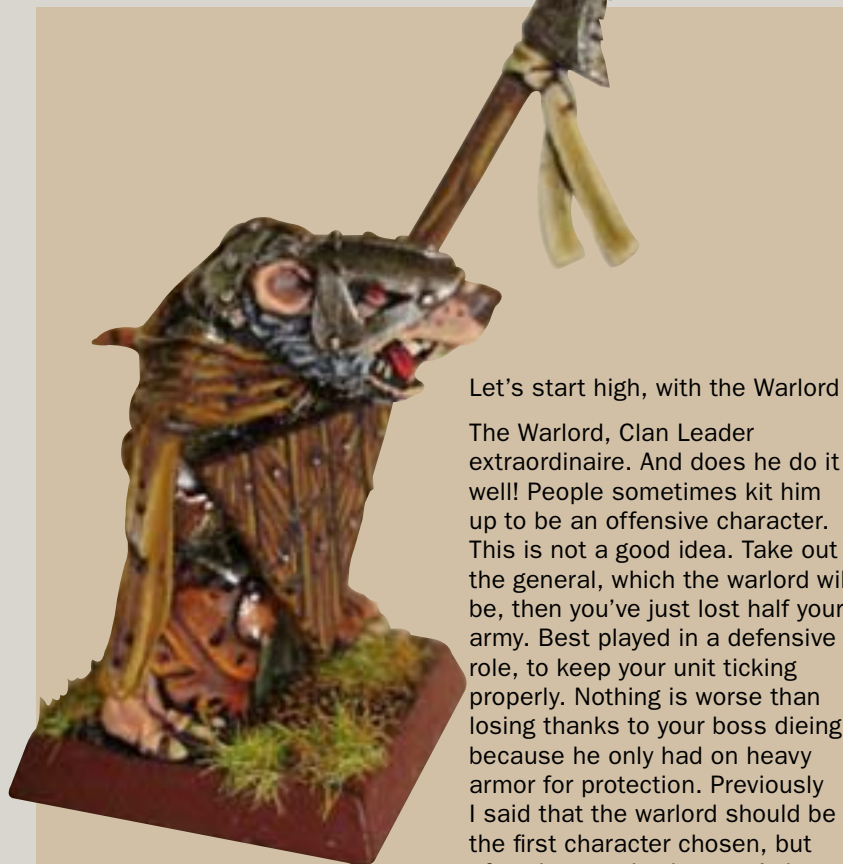
And finally in the core section we have the Stormvermin.

People argue that Stormvermin are overpriced and useless. This is not true. Stormvermin are heavier priced clan rats with extra weapon skill. That alone is normally enough to make it so your hitting on 3's, and if your using halberds, wounding on 3's. Stormvermin are better at killing than their Clan Rat counterpart, but a little more vulnerable. You can take the safer option and buy shields. This, combined with a hand weapon, gives Stormvermin a 3+ armor save. Probably the best save Skaven can hope for in a unit.

Now this is where people make the mistake. Stormvermin are not Mr. *take on everything unit*. That's just not Skaven. Stormvermin are a stronger ranking unit and should be used as such. There is no unit in the Skaven army that can survive by itself, they all must support eachother. Stormvermin also make a good unit to protect your general in

Recommendation: a good unit if a little overpriced. I would recommend taking them in 2.5k+ games, only otherwise it's taking a fairly large chunk out of your points

Now the bit you've been waiting for, the Characters.



Warlord

Let's start high, with the Warlord

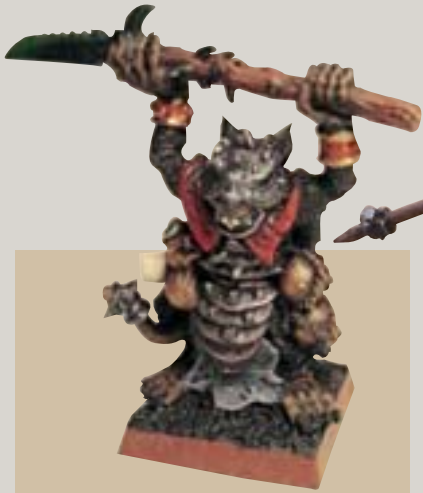
The Warlord, Clan Leader extraordinaire. And does he do it well! People sometimes kit him up to be an offensive character. This is not a good idea. Take out the general, which the warlord will be, then you've just lost half your army. Best played in a defensive role, to keep your unit ticking properly. Nothing is worse than losing thanks to your boss dieing because he only had on heavy armor for protection. Previously I said that the warlord should be the first character chosen, but after the core is chosen. At least it'll help restrain yourself from using Fellblade. Killing himself and losing you the game just because it hits hard doesn't mean you need to use it, specially for characters that you should be keeping alive

Recommendation: a must have, but use defensively. If he's your only one you have lower class characters you can send off to sacrifice themselves for him

Next we have the magical master the Grey Seer.

Ah yes, the Grey Seer, the bombers best friend. If you need something killed, chances are this little squeaker will do the job. Although horribly vulnerable, he is a good offensive lord. Because he has spells he will survive a bit better than an armorless Warlord going round with a spork and chopsticks, running headfirst into a wall of spears. He is, however, very expensive, even more so if given a screaming bell. This little thing is powerfully evil, and most importantly can self destruct.

Recommendation: I would only really recommend the grey seer in 2.5k, and if he's mounted on a screaming bell 3k+ only.

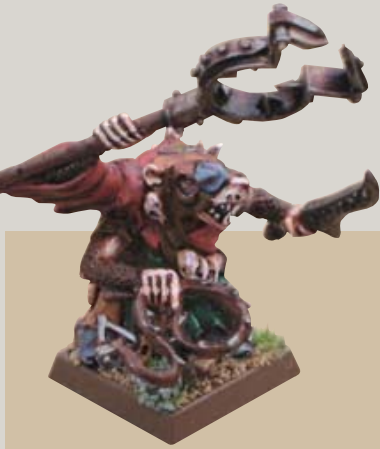


Chieftain

Next the butter to the bread, the Chieftain

The Warlords younger brother. If he's the general then use him as you would the warlord. If he isn't then you can use him for combat. Potentially fairly average in terms of killing power

Recommendation: the Chieftain can fit most roles. A nice all round character, best leader for less than 2k games.

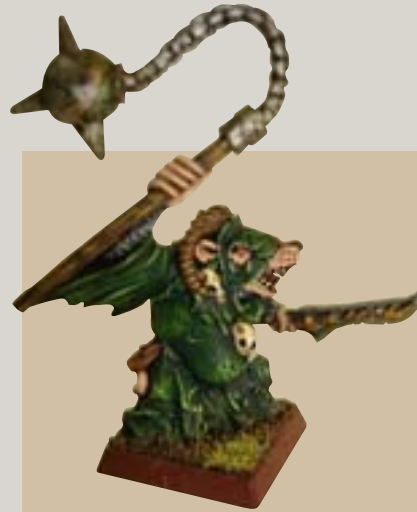


Master Moulder

Then we have the Master Moulder

The Master Moulder is an interesting character. It is effectively a more expensive chieftain with less equipment options, so one would ask why take them. Packmaster allows the Master Moulder to be a mini banner bearer for your army, and is invaluable in a army that's fairly Moulder based.

Recommendation: take if you have more than 3 units of Moulder beasts that are going to be working in close proximity of each other. Otherwise stick to the chieftain.

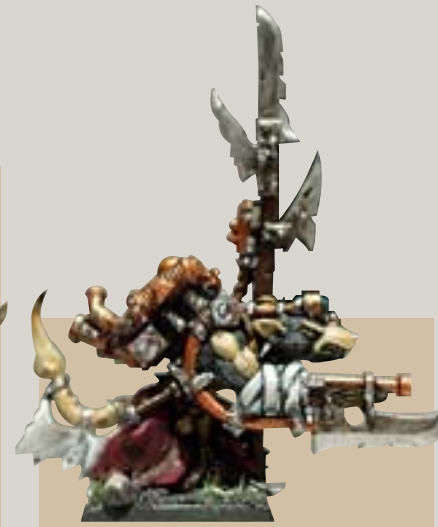


Plague Priest

From the lands of Lustria comes the Plague Priest

The Plague Priest is yet another specialized form of the chieftain, this time focusing more on dealing damage while shrugging its own off with high toughness. The Plague Priest is the hardest melee hitter out of the hero classes. Although not as effective on a one to one basis as the assassin, it can quite easily take out a number of cavalry or infantry, but will suffer in later combat rounds when it loses its charge bonus

Recommendation: a must have if your expecting heavy armor. Best kept cheap, no more than 25 points of magic equipment is about right.



Warlock Engineer

Out of the Skyre workshop is the Warlock Engineer.

Normally taken in pairs, the Warlock Engineers are the Skavens only real source of magical strength in games that don't allow for a Grey Seer. Give them all available options, except the warp lock pistol. One with Storm Daemon and some dispel scrolls for some safety. Don't take more than two if you can help it though, as they'll start drinking your points

Recommendation: in pairs and with basic equipment.



Assassin

And to finish up is the Assassin

The specialized character killer the Sssassin is quite a point sink. Unless you have specific roles for it, best kept with the weeping blades and deployed hidden in a Clan Rat unit that will get into combat with an enemy character. Otherwise, taking Warpstone Stars and scouting is good for taking out any mages your going up against. These are the common roles, but the assassin is highly versatile depending on what equipment you give it.

Recommendation: don't take in games below 1500 points, as even at this value it can be made to take up 10% of your overall army points. In a skaven army you don't want this. Give it Weeping Blades or Warpstone Stars as both are both effective weapons of the trained assassin. Use surprise tactics to your advantage to make the assassin worth its points, and if you keep your enemy guessing then its played its points already.

Next edition I'll start talking about special and rare choices. Hope you enjoyed reading, and stay away from the shadows or horned rodents



Cursed dreams

by Chris

Jürgen Halskrum, the Witch Hunter moved silently through the abandoned camp. A week ago this camp had been full with empire soldiers, but now lay barren and deserted. He and his patrol had been sent to investigate what had happened, and to track down any surviving remnants of the battalion. Making his way through the upturned camp, he had the feeling that he wasn't alone. He shrugged it off.

He entered the captains tent at the centre of the camp. Rummaging through the ransacked contents, he found a diary. Carefully breaking the clasp holding the journal shut, he started to read.

"I had a dream last night." Jürgen Halskrum read "I awoke, sweating. I don't remember much of the details, but I can remember the feeling of pure fear."

Jürgen nodded, turning he pages.

"The dream came again, I can remember details clearer now. It is the worst nightmare I have ever had. I saw the men of the empire vanquish chaos, and all evil would be cleansed from the lands."

"To call that a bad dream, is enough to get him burned..." Jürgen whispered to himself.

"I dreamt the lands of the Old World, settled by men, no sign of chaos anywhere. Then a shadow came. Men had become decadent, sinful, and a horde of rats the size of men, who walked on two legs, came from tunnels. They were everywhere. An unstoppable swarm"

Jürgen flipped through the pages, searching out the most recent entries.

"This damn dream is haunting me. And each day I see details clearer. I saw Sigmar himself. He spoke to me, and he said he was powerless. He said he couldn't defend mankind, he said he wasn't a god. I then dreamt about the conquest of Chaos, just that this time it was even more vivid, more real somehow then being awake. In it, man did not defeat the great enemy, he joined it.

I saw politicians, officers, and kings turn to The Dark Gods. I saw the Emperor, slain by his most trusted advisor. I saw the lands of men burn to the ground. Then the rat men came in an unending mass, and I saw the world crumble before my eyes."

Grimacing, Jürgen broke the dried, encrusted blood that held the last pages together and read the last few entries.

"Dream...Cursed...Haunting.... Skaven...Sigmar...Cant do anything"

The words sat randomly on the page, as is written in a frenzy of lunacy. He turned it again, the words becoming more readable.

"The dream is true! My company and I encountered a warband we at first thought were beastmen. I was terrified when I saw what it really was. Rats, giant rats that stood as men! I saw beast which had been stitched together, plagued and diseased rats with great flails of green corrosive gas. Shadowy assassin like rats, faster than I could ever imagine. I saw war machines which blasted my

men apart. And I saw a horde of warriors, individually cowardly, but together in numbers, as brave as any dwarf. They slaughtered us, I was the only survivor."

Jürgen turned to the last page, it had only two words.

"Kill-kill."

Jürgen turned as he heard a sound from another part of the camp. He was alone, he had thought.

Stepping out into the camp Jürgen scanned the area. From another tent a creature emerged. Its disfigured, patchwork body wasn't enough to disguise the features of the camps commander. His face was sloping and mutilated, covered in boils and clumps of fur. A twisted snout had been sewn onto his face, while a tail that wriggled uncontrollably sprouted from a tear in his tattered pants. His armour was dented and bloodstained. His hands had been chopped off, and replaced with huge metal hooks.

The site made Jürgen stomach lurch into his throat.

The abomination sprung at the Witch Hunter, screaming "Kill-Kill!" in an impossibly high voice.

Jürgen drew his sword, but the former captain chopped the blade in half with his rusted glowing hooks. The creature lashed out, narrowly missing Jürgen's throat. Rolling to one side, Jürgen drew a dagger from his left boot and thrust upward into the belly of the beast.

As thick crimson blood ran down his arm, he heard a faint whisper from the creature

"Thank....You..."

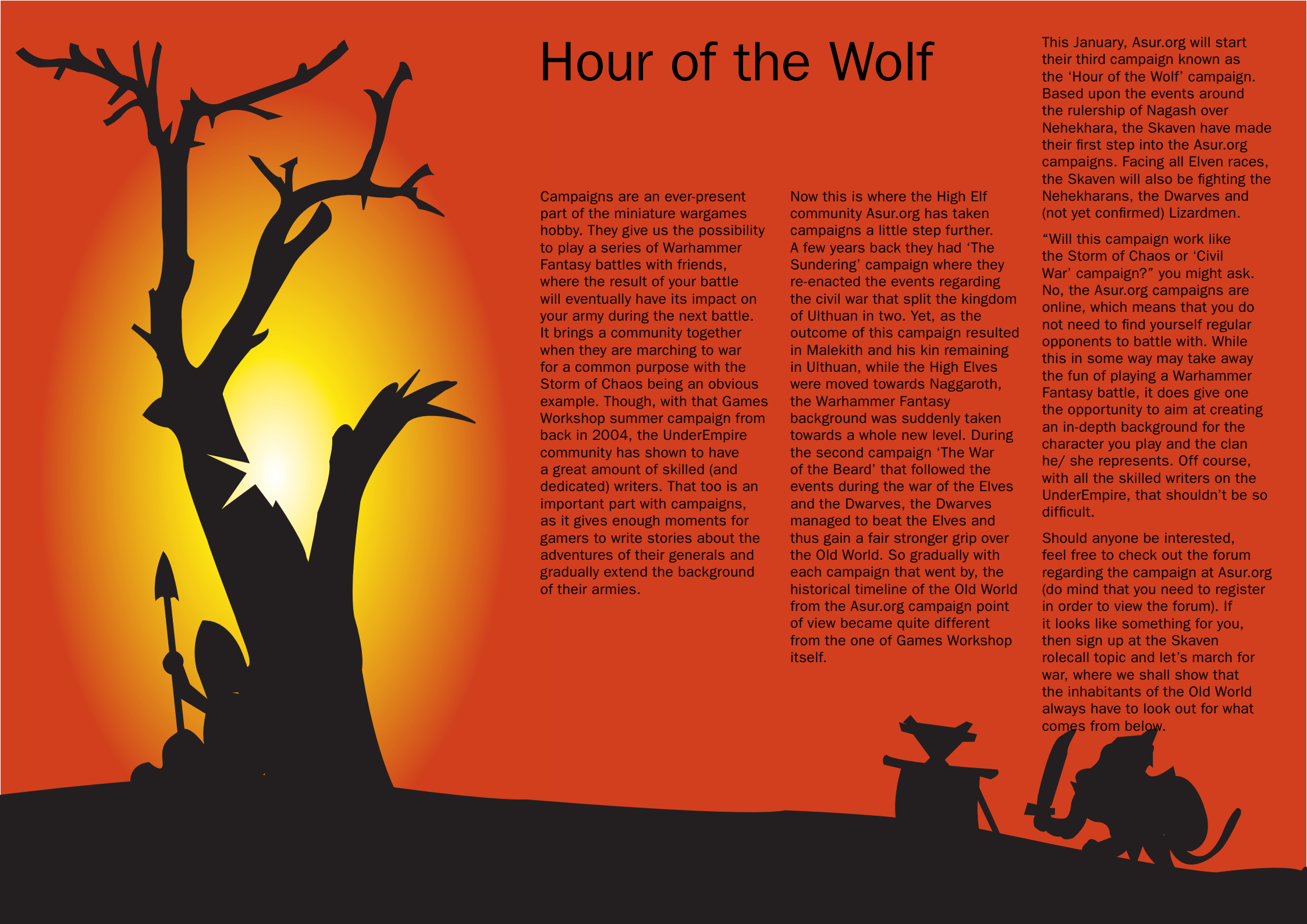
Leaving the camp with the diary, he returned to the patrol.

"Did you find anything?"

"No.." the witch hunter said quietly tossing the diary into a cooking fire.

He watched the pages crackle and burn to ash.

"Goodbye, old friend." he said



Hour of the Wolf

Campaigns are an ever-present part of the miniature wargames hobby. They give us the possibility to play a series of Warhammer Fantasy battles with friends, where the result of your battle will eventually have its impact on your army during the next battle. It brings a community together when they are marching to war for a common purpose with the Storm of Chaos being an obvious example. Though, with that Games Workshop summer campaign from back in 2004, the UnderEmpire community has shown to have a great amount of skilled (and dedicated) writers. That too is an important part with campaigns, as it gives enough moments for gamers to write stories about the adventures of their generals and gradually extend the background of their armies.

Now this is where the High Elf community Asur.org has taken campaigns a little step further. A few years back they had 'The Sundering' campaign where they re-enacted the events regarding the civil war that split the kingdom of Ulthuan in two. Yet, as the outcome of this campaign resulted in Malekith and his kin remaining in Ulthuan, while the High Elves were moved towards Naggaroth, the Warhammer Fantasy background was suddenly taken towards a whole new level. During the second campaign 'The War of the Beard' that followed the events during the war of the Elves and the Dwarves, the Dwarves managed to beat the Elves and thus gain a fair stronger grip over the Old World. So gradually with each campaign that went by, the historical timeline of the Old World from the Asur.org campaign point of view became quite different from the one of Games Workshop itself.

This January, Asur.org will start their third campaign known as the 'Hour of the Wolf' campaign. Based upon the events around the rulership of Nagash over Nehekharra, the Skaven have made their first step into the Asur.org campaigns. Facing all Elven races, the Skaven will also be fighting the Nehekharans, the Dwarves and (not yet confirmed) Lizardmen.

"Will this campaign work like the Storm of Chaos or 'Civil War' campaign?" you might ask. No, the Asur.org campaigns are online, which means that you do not need to find yourself regular opponents to battle with. While this in some way may take away the fun of playing a Warhammer Fantasy battle, it does give one the opportunity to aim at creating an in-depth background for the character you play and the clan he/ she represents. Off course, with all the skilled writers on the UnderEmpire, that shouldn't be so difficult.

Should anyone be interested, feel free to check out the forum regarding the campaign at Asur.org (do mind that you need to register in order to view the forum). If it looks like something for you, then sign up at the Skaven rolecall topic and let's march for war, where we shall show that the inhabitants of the Old World always have to look out for what comes from below.

Starting next issue, straight from the
Temple of the Horned Rat in Skavenblight



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