

THE PARaelix CONFIGURATION

An Inquisitor battle report by Graham McNeill,
Gav Thorpe and Phil Kelly.

Welcome to this month's battle report, the continuing exploits of Inquisitor Lichtenstein and his obsessive hunt for the Librarium Hereticus. Following on from *The Dweller Beneath*, Lichtenstein was able to question the Daemon Prince Pharaa'gueotla for information regarding the whereabouts of this collection of blasphemous knowledge, declared Index Expurgatorius by the Adeptus Mechanicus. Using his bound daemonhost to sift the lies from the

Daemon Prince's words, Lichtenstein set out to fulfil his quest, a search that has consumed him for more than twenty years, made him many enemies and cost him much of his sanity.

Inquisitor Kessel's band of heroes, commanded by none other than Inquisitor's creator, Gav Thorpe, would oppose Lichtenstein. If anyone could give Phil a run for his money it would be Gav. Kessel, like Lichtenstein, is also a radical, though he knows full well the dangers of trusting the words of a

beast from the depths of hell. He has foreseen the danger in what Lichtenstein is attempting and will stop at nothing to prevent him from achieving his goals. For games of Inquisitor, we've taken the narrative approach, telling the game as a story rather than the usual turn-by-turn sequence of Warhammer 40,000 battle reports. So buckle up, and get ready to descend into the madness of a Chaos infested temple buried deep beneath the surface of Karis Cephalon.

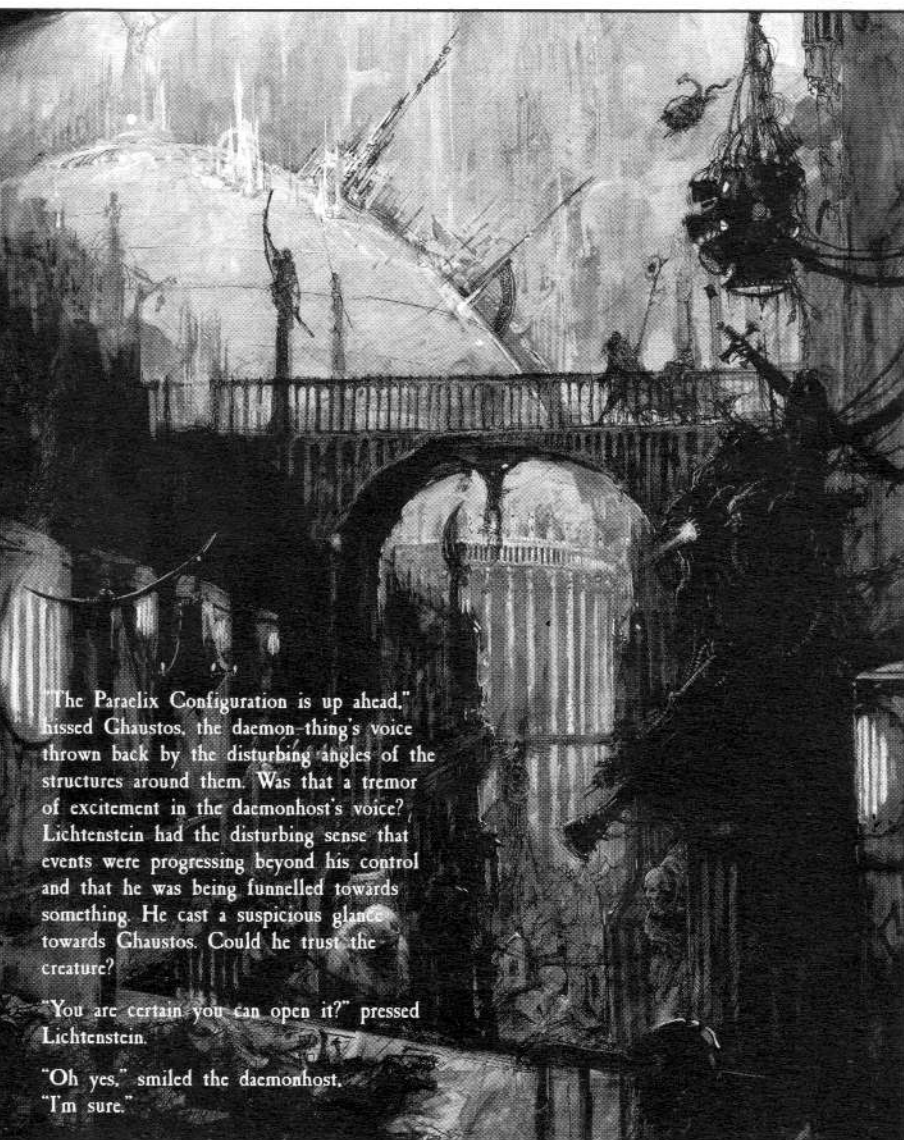
The passageway echoed with weirdly distorted sounds and, even through his fevered anticipation, Inquisitor Lichtenstein felt uneasy. This was the place, there could be no doubt about it; the reck of power was unmistakable. He could feel the miasma of Chaos radiating from the Paraelix Configuration even from here. They were close now, the gateway to the Librarium Hereticus was near and it took an effort of will not to break into a run towards the temple at the heart of this darkened place. He must be vigilant; others must surely have been drawn here as well. Over a thousand feet below ground, Lichtenstein's warrior band advanced cautiously through the dimly lit passageways of the Paraelix complex. Who had constructed this place, and why here? These were questions he felt sure he would know the answers to soon enough. Gryx shambled along behind him, while Dimitri took a different route, ready to cover their advance with bolt pistol fire. Lichtenstein was concerned that the Magos would not be up to the task, having only recently recovered from the injuries he'd suffered in the confrontation with Tyrus's warband. The Magos had also replaced a portion of his damaged skull with a cybernetic implant, speeding his journey to almost complete mechanisation. Chaustos stood next to the Inquisitor, the icy chill of his proximity penetrating Lichtenstein's heavy robes.

The Daemon Prince Pharaa'gueotla had spoken of this place as a portal through the warp, though it had only volunteered this information after Lichtenstein had won the battle of wills with the aid of his daemonhost.

"The Paraelix Configuration is up ahead," hissed Chaustos, the daemon-thing's voice thrown back by the disturbing angles of the structures around them. Was that a tremor of excitement in the daemonhost's voice? Lichtenstein had the disturbing sense that events were progressing beyond his control and that he was being funnelled towards something. He cast a suspicious glance towards Chaustos. Could he trust the creature?

"You are certain you can open it?" pressed Lichtenstein.

"Oh yes," smiled the daemonhost. "I'm sure."



LIGHT FROM A DARK FLAME



Gav Thorpe

Gav: So, once more Inquisitor Kessel has to save the world as we know it from complete annihilation at the hands of a misguided fool. While Lichtenstein may have some worthwhile ideas about the use of the

powers of Chaos, he certainly doesn't know when he's gone too far.

Kessel and Lichtenstein and their warrior bands are superficially similar, but actually there are a couple of profound differences. For a start, Lichtenstein is

monomaniacal in his quest for the Librarium Hereticus, whereas Kessel is older and wiser and dedicates himself to many duties. Secondly, Lichtenstein has not really suffered the consequences of misjudging the power of Chaos first-hand, whereas Kessel's experiences and his own physical transformation leave him in no doubt as to the corrupting influence he daily fights against.

For me, these subtle distinctions are what Inquisitor is all about. It's obvious to see why a loud monodominant like Tyrus would have a fight with Lichtenstein or Kessel, but to come up with a scenario which pits them against each other

requires more thought. Speaking of which, Graham's done a great job for this scenario, which I think will give us a well-paced, action-filled game.

My plan is simple: Wait for Lichtenstein to prove his folly by opening the portal, then chase him off and close it. While Loa Gorg and Kessel lie in wait for this to happen, Mechsimum and Logan will attempt to hold off the rest of Lichtenstein's band and give my Inquisitor and Daemonhost the time they need to finish the mission.

Again, the much maligned and suspected Kessel will save a soul from damnation.

Kessel comes from the branch of the Inquisition known as Radicals. Having been the victim of a daemonic possession which left him physically altered, he is now a dedicated member of the Chaoticians, precursors to the Xanthite movement, whose studies into daemonology and the warp have earned him many enemies, but much rare knowledge. He is one of a number of Inquisitors drawn to the world of Karis Cephalon following widespread rumours of a device called the Angel.

It was the daemon Loa Gorg who temporarily possessed Kessel, as the Inquisitor was attempting to create the daemonhost. Though the ritual was completed, a part of Loa Gorg's essence remained within Kessel. This symbiotic relationship forced Loa Gorg to cooperate with Kessel, as the Inquisitor's death would result in the release of this soul-fragment and the destruction of the daemon. This state of affairs lasted for

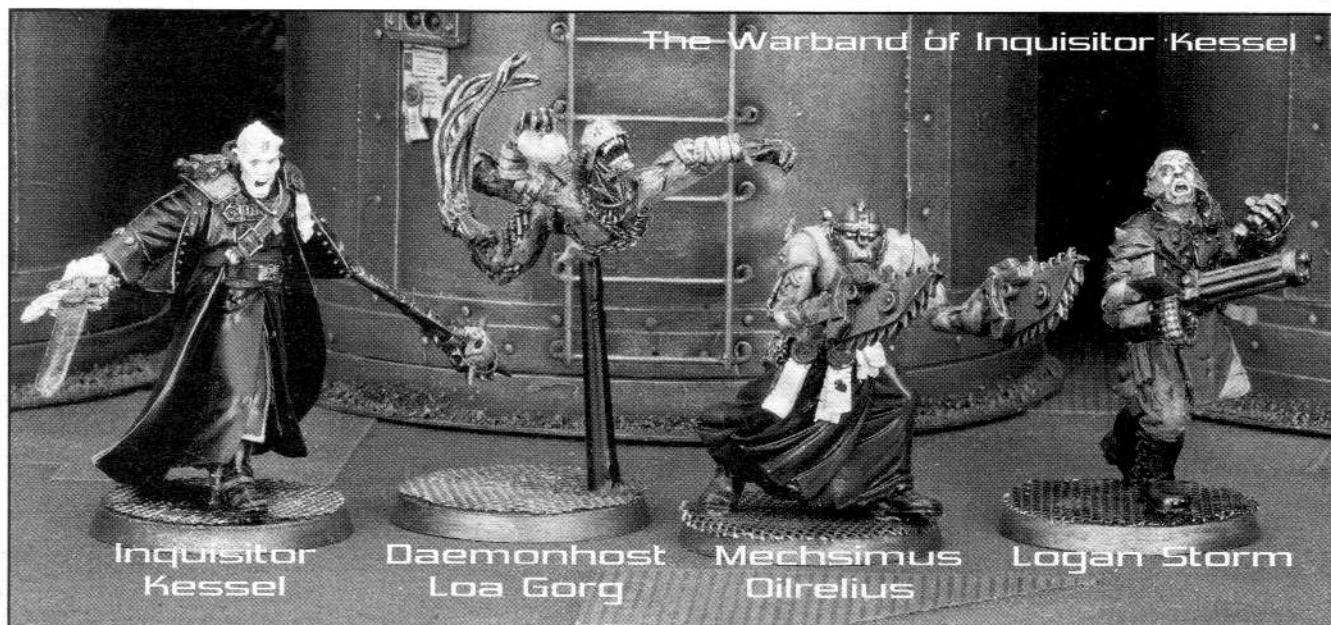
three decades, the daemonic presence corrupting Kessel more and more, and would eventually have led to his death. Kessel searched long and hard for a remedy and finally managed to transfer the presence to a daemonsword, which he now wields.

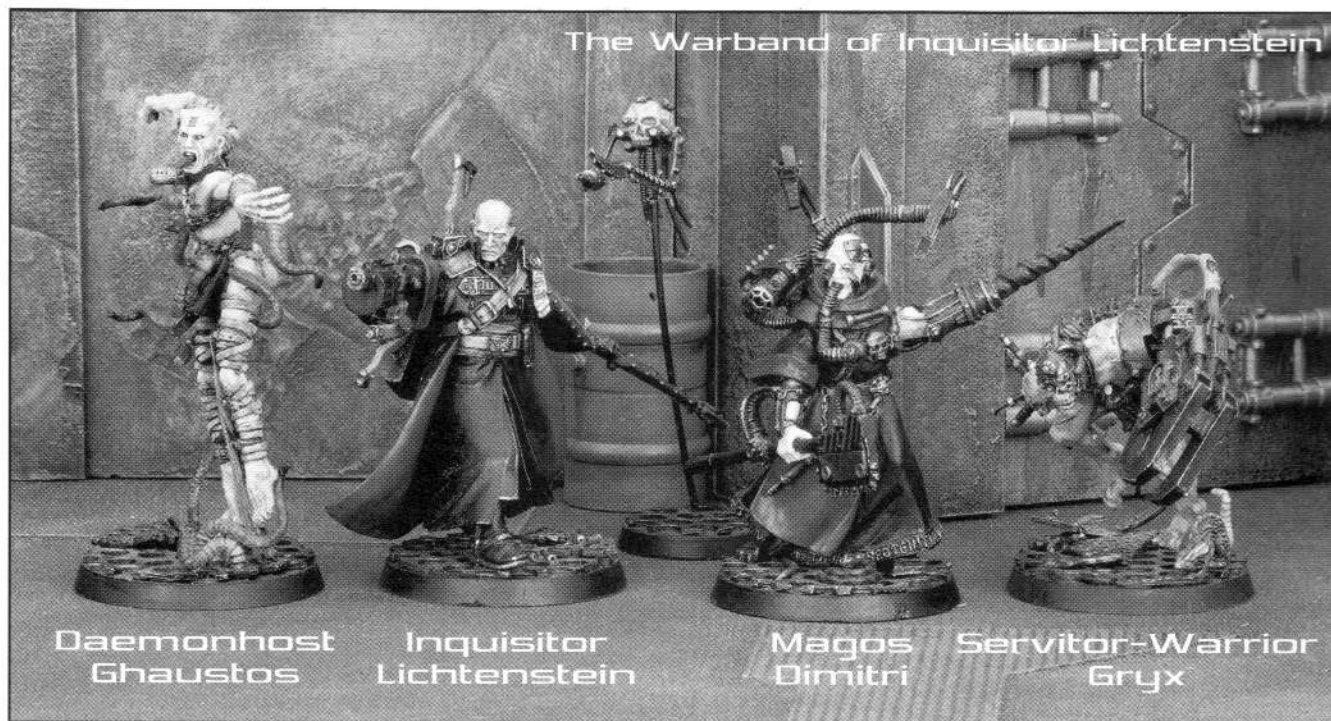
Kessel has purged the unclean and continued his research into Chaos for nearly two centuries, the daemon-taint that once threatened his life now extending it as long as he continues to possess the sword. Currently his most useful servants are the chrono-gladiator Mechsimum Oilrelius and the ex-Skitarii Logan Storm.

Oilrelius was dying, his body-clock almost expired, when he met Kessel. He saved the Inquisitor from the blades of a Siddith Assassin, and in return Kessel had his in-built chronometer halted in its countdown. Oilrelius is fanatically loyal to Kessel, knowing that should he cross the Inquisitor, he would not hesitate in

restarting the death-timer, giving the chrono-gladiator only days to live.

Logan Storm once fought for the Adeptus Mechanicus in the Skitarii. From the Forge World of Transix Seven, Storm was part of a force seconded by Kessel in his battles against members of the Xenarite sect, who were attempting to secretly rebuild the remains of a recovered Eldar Wraithlord. Storm himself turned on his heretical Techpriest masters and was pivotal in Kessel locating their hidden laboratory. During this fighting, Storm lost his hand, and Kessel ordered the Adeptus Mechanicus to replace it with a bionic, an operation usually only performed for officers, Storm Troopers or Space Marines. Magos Phixian followed the letter of the deal but, rather than replacing the limb with an expensive artificial hand, simply implanted Storm's multi-barrelled autogun. Since then, both he and Kessel have shared a degree of enmity for worshippers of the Machine God.





Daemonhost
Ghaustos

Inquisitor
Lichtenstein

Magos
Dimitri

Servitor-Warrior
Gryx

INTO THE DARKNESS



Phil Kelly

Phil: Well, misguided as it may be, Inquisitor Lichtenstein's near-fanatical quest to find the entrance to the Librarium Hereticus seems to be nearing its conclusion. His bizarre collection of weirdoes and

warriors have fought tooth and nail to get this far in their quest for knowledge, but the sheer drive and arrogance of Lichtenstein looks like it could plunge them and anyone insane enough to try and stop them into the depths of hell. With that kind of plot line and the fantastic scenery put together over the last few months by White Dwarf's Paul Rudge, we could hardly fail to have a real roller-coaster of a game.

Gav's warband was similar to my own, and although Kessel shares the kernel of Lichtenstein's philosophy (to turn Chaos against itself) he seems to lack the conviction to follow it through. What Kessel theorises about, Lichtenstein does. Unfortunately, he seems to be pursuing his goal with all the delicacy of a bull in a china shop, and Kessel has decided to stop him before he goes too far. Fair enough; a rogue Inquisitor hell-bent on grasping the dark heart of Chaos itself and giving it a good hard squeeze is a dangerous liability to the Imperium.

Gav plays like he wrote the book on Inquisitor (oh hang on, he did) and, although we've not clashed swords before, I knew I was in for a memorable game. We were both more interested in

getting a cinematic and dramatic game than 'winning', and with Graham as the Gamesmaster, the resultant story was sure to be dark, brooding and gothic with the occasional moment of light relief. Just how we like it, in fact.

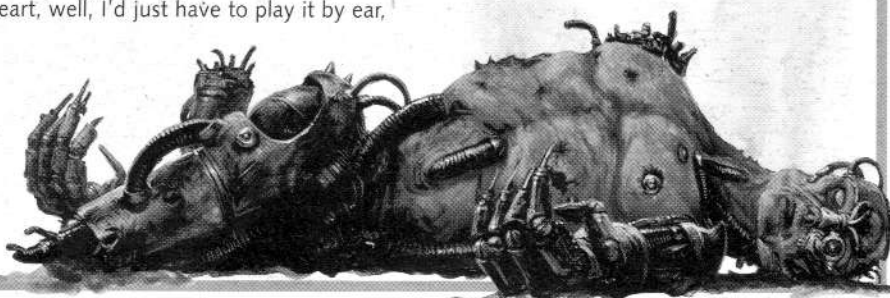
Since Rowland and I duked it out in *The Dweller Beneath*, my warband has undergone a few changes. Magos Dimitri, the Adeptus Mechanicus, has reworked himself with yet more bionics since the beating he took last battle, and seeks to eventually remove all traces of his withered body barring his brain. Ghaustos the Daemonhost has weakened a little, the bonds between the physical shell and the daemon inhabiting it eroding with every passing day. Lichtenstein has learnt much from his experiences, including the ability to banish a daemon back into the warp, and is now accompanied by a medical servo-skull that cauterises and seals wounds even as Lichtenstein fights.

My plan of action was fairly simple; get Lichtenstein and Ghaustos into the centre of the temple by any means necessary, use Dimitri to give them covering fire and Gryx to tear into anyone who comes too close. Once my Inquisitor and his daemonic charge are inside the temple and manage to tear open the obelisk at its heart, well, I'd just have to play it by ear,

but if I know Graham I could be in for a nasty surprise. Nevertheless, if Gryx and Dimitri manage to distract or take down enough of Kessel's warband, Lichtenstein should have a good shot at achieving his objective. Casualties along the way are inevitable, though it's actually quite difficult to kill an Inquisitor character outright (aside from grievous head wounds, you have to inflict over their Toughness value in damage before they permanently bite the dust), and I always relish the modelling opportunities that truly agonising damage results force you to incorporate.

So bring it on, I thought. If Tyrus and his henchmen couldn't stop my Inquisitor in his search for the vulnerable underside of Chaos itself, I was more than willing to pit him against Kessel's heroes face-to-face. There was much to be learnt from the object of Lichtenstein's mission; a chaos-saturated obelisk at the centre of an ancient temple.

Besides, I thought, what's the worst that could happen...?



SCENARIO: THE PARAELEX CONFIGURATION



Graham McNeill

Graham(GM): So, once again I can rake the depths of my foetid imagination to plunge two players into the heat of battle? Excellent! After checking out Gav's warband, it was clear that both

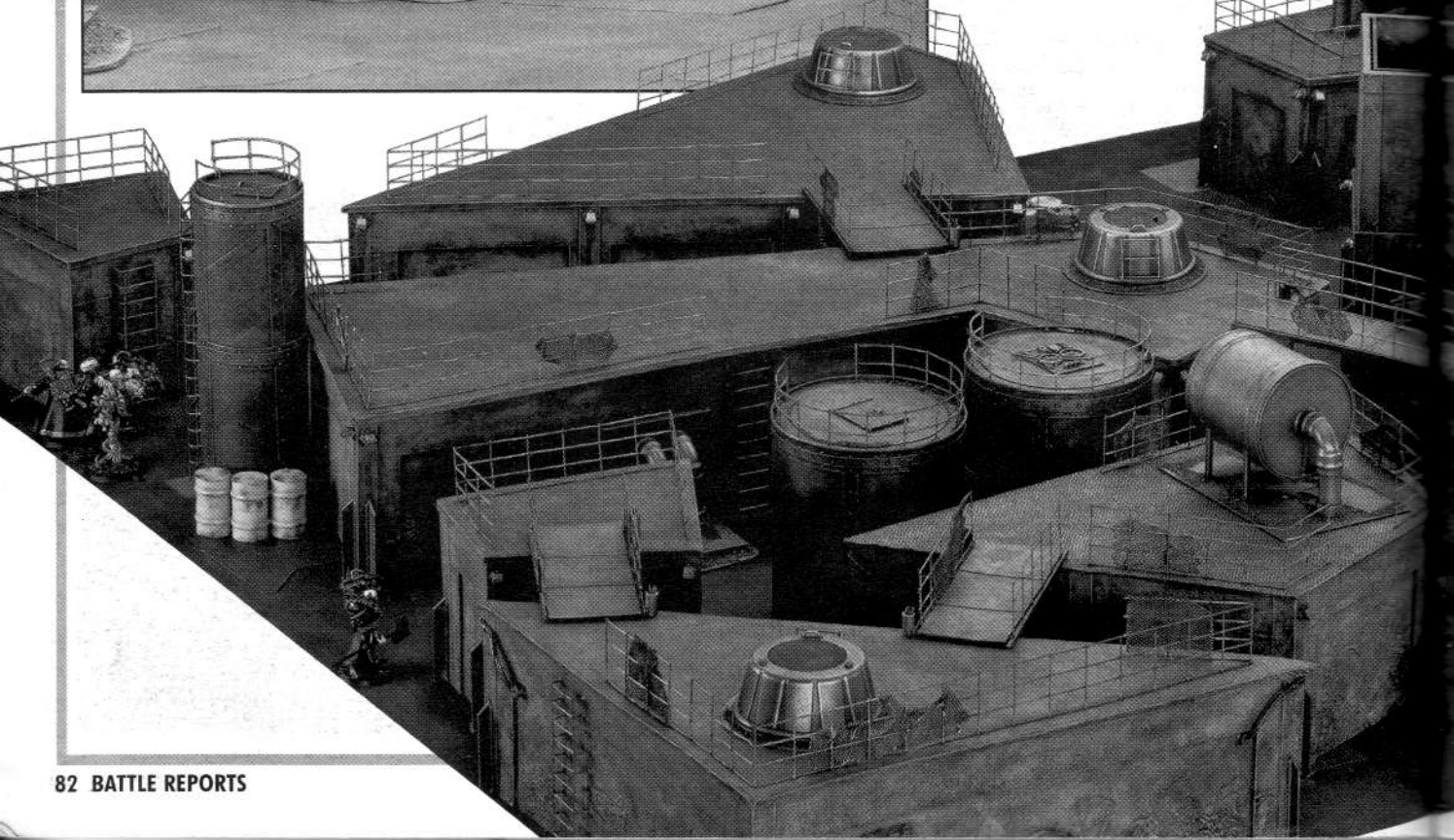
his and Phil's had similar ideals to one another, but where Inquisitor Kessel is content to merely turn the power of Chaos against itself, Inquisitor Lichtenstein takes matters a step further, believing he can master the power of the warp. To this end he has dedicated his life to unearthing the location of the Librarium Hereticus. Though both Inquisitors walk the same path, Kessel knows that Lichtenstein

has gone too far and must be brought back into line.

As Paul Rudge's scenery for this battle report began taking shape, it became clear that this was not going to be your average battlefield. Dank, narrowing passageways, gradually converging on a twelve-sided structure with a twisted monolith at its centre reeking of Chaos magic and forbidden powers. Just the sort of thing Inquisitor is all about. After all, it's not very dramatic to have characters slug it out in the supermarket is it? Following on from the last game, I decided that the daemon prince in the mine had led Lichtenstein to believe that a newly revealed underground complex held the key to unlocking the path to the Librarium Hereticus.

Keeping the narrative going between battles is a great way to give each game a sense of place and context. Warbands will develop as the games progress, acquiring their own personalities and quirks, and players should reflect this in their style of play. The GM should also develop the narrative between games, allowing events in previous games to influence future scenarios and suggest ideas for extra plot twists. It's a good idea to keep some tricks up your sleeve, with events that neither player knows about, that you can spring on them during your games. You shouldn't try to come up with too many of these nefarious ploys, as your players will become so wary of doing anything for fear of stuff blowing up or gribbly nasties jumping out at them. Don't be afraid to surprise them, however, and the odd unexpected shock will help to keep them on their toes.

As you'll see, I had one of these planned for the endgame of this scenario...



KARIS CEPHALON

Following the titanic release of energies in the mountainous region surrounding the Taberna Ostium mine workings, a mighty earthquake ripped the skin of the planet apart and utterly destroyed the abandoned forge mine. The loss of the mine was bad enough, but there was worse yet to come.

Buried far beneath the surface of the world, locked away from the eyes of man for nine millennia, a crumbling guardian portal has been revealed to the light of day. Ten thousand years ago, a tear in the fabric of reality was plugged by one of the Emperor's Inquisitors with the Paraelix Configuration, an obelisk inscribed with powerful runes and incantations to ward against Chaos. It was enclosed within a temple of precise geomantic architecture designed to dissipate the Chaos energy it contained. As the millennia passed, however, the warding sigils slowly faded in power and dark energies from the warp began leeching through from the immaterium, saturating the obelisk with the essence of Chaos. This taint has stretched upwards through the soil and rocks, spreading its evil on the wind and exuding a diabolical attraction to those similarly tainted.

Inquisitor Lichtenstein has come to Karis Cephalon, partly in response to the mystical convergences gathering around the planet, but more specifically in search of the Librarium Hereticus. Drawn by dreams and portents and the words of a heretic abbot from Selethoth, Lichtenstein discovered the resting place of a sleeping daemon that had been bound to the bedrock of the planet. The daemon, Pharaa'gueotla, told Lichtenstein that the power contained within the Paraelix Configuration would unlock the warp gateway that led to the Librarium he so desperately sought.

Lichtenstein was then drawn towards a pulsing locus of power once hidden deep below the planet's surface. The earthquake near the Taberna Ostium forge mine had exposed an ancient temple containing the obelisk Pharaa'gueotla named the Paraelix Configuration and Lichtenstein sensed that it was indeed saturated with power. He believes Ghaustos can break the energies contained in the temple's unholy icon to effect his entry into the Librarium Hereticus before his enemies destroy the temple.

Inquisitor Kessel has also come to Karis Cephalon, but he is in search of the Angel, an ancient weapon of unimaginable power that he believes is hidden somewhere on the planet. In the course of his search, he discovered the temple below the

mountains and the terrible danger it represents. He knows that dark power has impregnated the very walls of the temple with vast amounts of Chaos energy and believes that the temple has, in effect, become a huge, charged battery of daemonic energy. If such power were to be unleashed, it could tear apart the already fragile fabric of realspace. Kessel knows that he must safely discharge the built-up energy back into the Immaterium. To allow such a powerful reservoir of Chaos energy to remain intact is unthinkable.

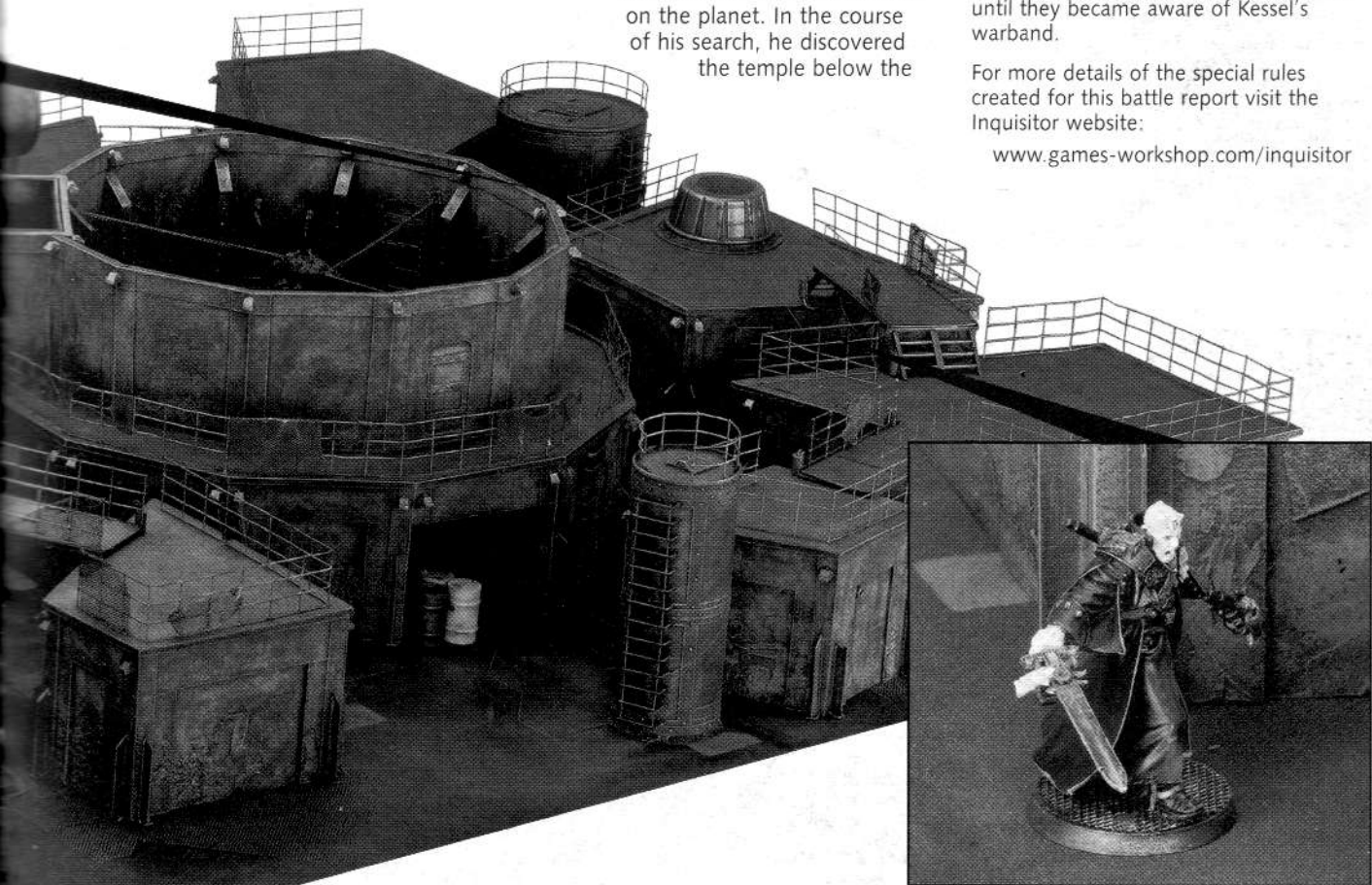
To effect this latter plan, he believes that his daemonhost Loa Gorg and his daemon sword (containing a soul-fragment of the creature) can be used to seal the rift in realspace. By allowing Lichtenstein to first open the portal, Kessel believes he can then seal it by plunging his sword into the ruptured chaos obelisk at the temple's heart, using Loa Gorg's connection to the warp to re-knit the fabric of reality and seal the tear forever.

SPECIAL RULES

Due to the stygian darkness and silence of the twisting underground tunnels in the complex, all Awareness tests based on hearing are at +20%, while those involving vision are at -20%. Also, since Lichtenstein's warband were advancing into an unknown arena, I decided that they could not move faster than a walk until they became aware of Kessel's warband.

For more details of the special rules created for this battle report visit the Inquisitor website:

www.games-workshop.com/inquisitor



Inquisitor Lichtenstein stepped cautiously along the darkened passageway, straining to hear any sound that might indicate that their entry to this forbidden place had been discovered. The rippling flow of powerful magicks was almost tangible and he felt its seductive tendrils pulling him forwards. He could hear the metallic tread of Dimitri's footfalls as the Magos moved forward to find a higher vantage point from which to cover their advance. Gryx padded along behind him, his enormous power claw lolling at his side, the pacifier helm keeping him docile for now. He stole a glance at Ghaustos, not liking the anticipatory gleam in the daemonhost's dead eyes. But, for better or worse, the die was cast. He could no more abandon his search for the Librarium than he could stop breathing. He drew his stubber, setting the voice-activated shot selector to man-stopper shells and continued into the darkness, the pistol extended before him.

In the shadow of the temple, Kessel waited. He knew that Lichtenstein would be here soon. Logan Storm had brought word from the upper reaches of the complex that the misguided Inquisitor had breached the wards protecting this place. He would need to be careful in his handling of this; to act in haste would mean losing the chance at sealing this breach forever, but to wait too long would result in a diabolical cataclysm. The attraction of



Inquisitor Lichtenstein, Gryx and Ghaustos advance towards the Paraelix temple.

the Paraelix Configuration pulled at him, but he had meditated and strengthened the psychic bulwarks in his mind to resist the whispered temptations that seeped through the obelisk from the madness of the Immaterium that lay beyond. Only Loa Gorg felt a similar pull, but it seemed to bask in the energies flowing from the obelisk. Kessel waved the others forward, watching as the heavily scarred Skitarii veteran lumbered

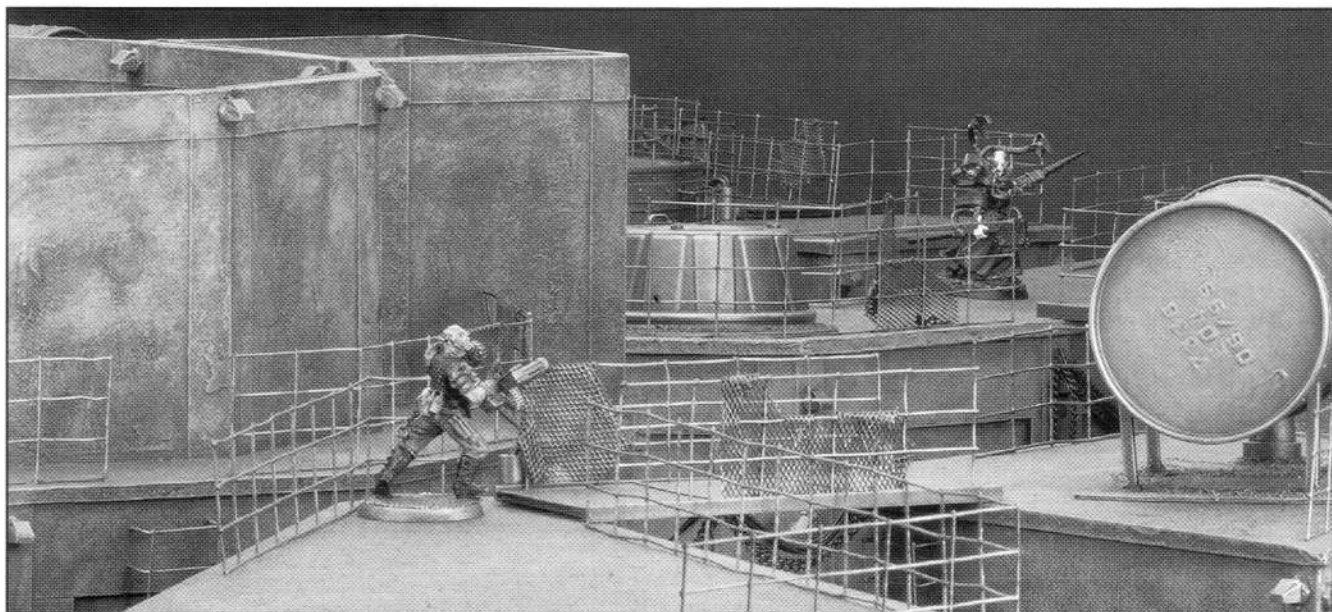
forwards, dragging back the arming lever of his implant autogun. The low buzz of the gun's firing motor seemed hideously loud in the heavy silence, but there was little that could be done about it. The chrono-gladiator, Mechsimum, and the daemonhost, Loa Gorg, moved out of sight, heading towards the temple building. Kessel drew his sword, climbing the steps to higher ground and making his own way towards the pulsing well of energy.

Logan Storm ghosted up the steps leading to the building's roof. Who had built these structures around the temple, he neither knew nor cared. All that mattered to him was that there were enemies of his master to fight. He reached the roof, and ran quickly towards a gantry that led to a good firing position. Across from him he could make out the shape of a furtively moving figure and he smiled grimly as he recognised the robes of an Adeptus Mechanicus Magos. He felt again the pain of losing his hand, and the anger at its replacement with this unwieldy gun. He had killed the man responsible, but any chance to strike back at the adepts of the Machine God could not be passed up. He ducked down behind the cover of the gantry and drew a bead on the figure.

Lichtenstein hugged the wall, panning his pistol back and forth, his keen eyes piercing the gloom. A flash of movement above him caught his eye and he saw the darting form of a man



Inquisitor Kessel orders his warband to move into position.



Showdown. Logan squares off against Dimitri.

with what looked like an autogun implanted where his arm should have been. Behind and above him he could hear Dimitri's heavy steps and made to shout a warning but, as a two metre tongue of fire blasted from the muzzle of the man's gun, he knew it was wasted breath.

Dimitri caught sight of Logan Storm a fraction of a second too late. The enormous weapon sprayed a hail of projectiles towards him, but his vector trajectory assessors computed that a full 90% would miss and the probability of lethal wounding was less than 2.3%. Three shots impacted on his refractor field, the energy shield robbing them of their kinetic energy. Those that penetrated the shield ricocheted from his metallic components and his shoulder-mounted bolt pistol followed the targeting information relayed via the MIU, zeroing in on his attacker. Dimitri adjusted his aim a fraction to compensate for the range and fired a shot with a pulse of thought. The explosive bolt took Logan in the belly and knocked him to the ground. Dimitri marched implacably forward, the bolt pistol mimicking every movement of his head.

The roaring of Mechsimum's chainswords powering up echoed through the complex and, hearing the weapons' activation, Lichtenstein turned to Gryx and shouted, "Angellus!", triggering the injection of a multitude of combat stimms and withdrawing the enforced docility of the pacifier helm. Gryx shuddered as

the drugs pumped through his system, flooding his limbs with unnatural speed and strength. The muscles on his thighs swelled and the servitor warrior sprinted into the darkness, his every thought enslaved to the imperative to kill. Lichtenstein and Ghaustos followed the demented warrior, advancing more cautiously in the wake of Gryx's berserk charge. The Inquisitor could see a portion of the temple wall, and a door that must surely lead within. Dimitri appeared to have the autogun-armed man pinned down and, deciding that he could wait no longer, Lichtenstein burst from cover, sprinting towards the temple.

Kessel watched Mechsimum power up his weapons and knew that there must be enemies near. From this vantage point he could see the chrono-gladiator sprinting around the temple's circumference. Lichtenstein must be close and he could not wait any longer. He didn't have time to go back down so Kessel sprinted towards the edge of the structure he stood upon and launched himself through the air, landing deftly on the upper walkway around the temple. There was an entrance to his left and, this close to the Paraelix Configuration, his warp sight allowed him to see wisps of ghostly energy leaking through the arcane metal of the door.



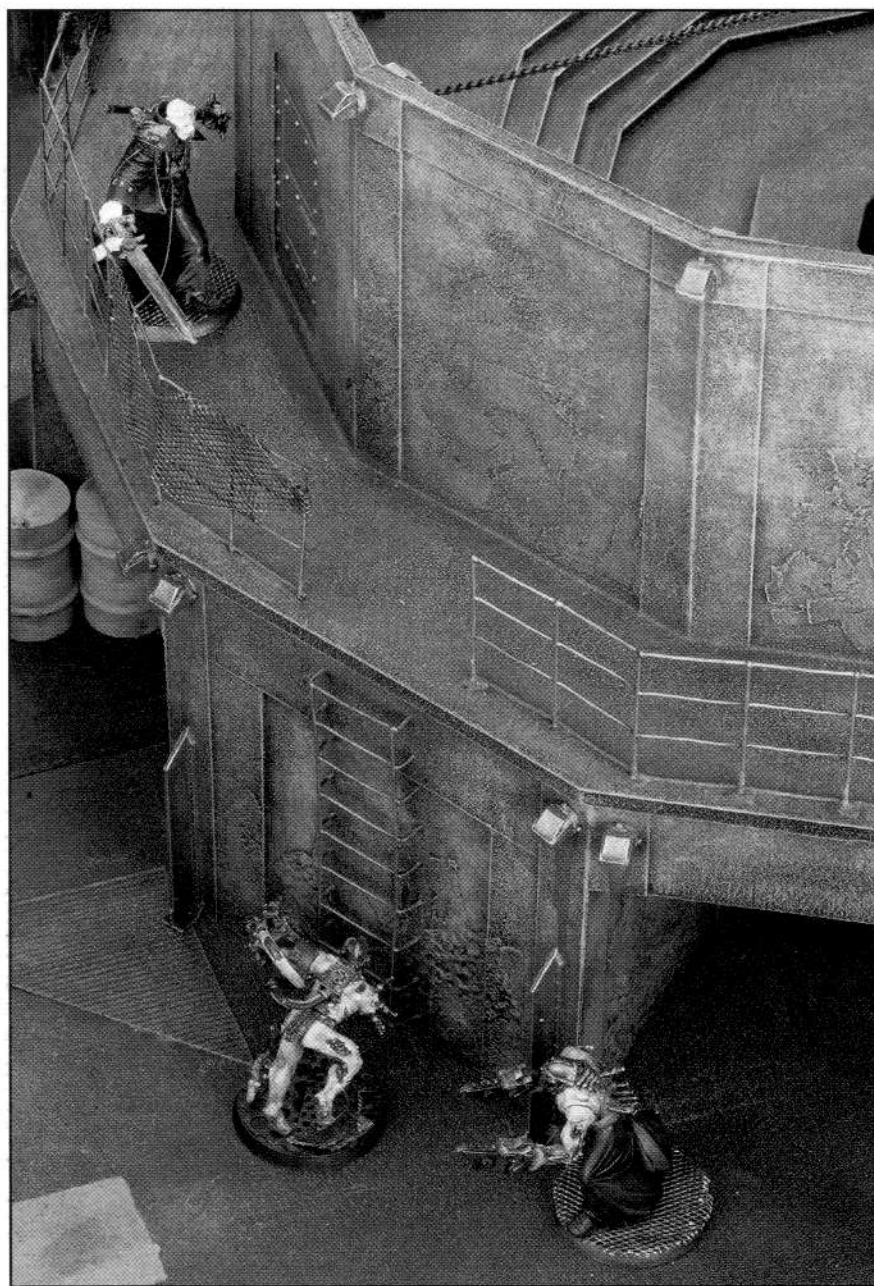
Gryx splits off from the group as his combat drugs kick in.

Logan pushed himself to his knees as another bolter round tore a gouge in the concrete beside him. The daemonhost of the enemy Inquisitor was moving below him towards the temple, and the damned Magos who'd blasted him calmly advanced, lining up another shot. Gritting his teeth against the pain, Logan rolled behind the cover offered by a nearby roof tank. He ripped the sleeve from his tunic and hastily plugged the bloody hole in his belly. It wasn't pretty, but it would do for now.

Seeing the rooftop gunman roll out of sight, Lichtenstein paused by the lever control for the lift. The controls looked as though they had been designed for



Logan suddenly realises the folly of sheltering behind a promethium tank.



Ambush. Mechsimum charges from hiding to attack Gryx.

beings larger than humans and it took all his strength to drag the lever down. The clatter of millennia-old chains and grinding gears sounded deafeningly loud as the lift carriage rose from the darkest depths of the world. Soon he would be inside the temple and close to completing his life's work. Briefly he wondered what he could achieve with the knowledge contained within its hidden walls and chided himself for thinking too far ahead. All good things to those who wait. Gryx sprinted past him, snapping his power claw madly. The combat stimms had heightened his senses to an amazing degree and Lichtenstein could only guess at what the servitor warrior had detected.

The sound of an iron bolt drawing back echoed in Gryx's head and he tore around the corner of the temple, finally setting his eyes on the prey. A man, similar in dress to his master stood by a door on a higher level but, more importantly, there was a ladder leading towards him. Gryx leapt through the air, his power claw snapping through the metal of the rung and hammering straight through the building's fabric. Gryx braced his feet on the ladder, ready to launch himself up to his target. So focused was Gryx on Kessel, that he didn't notice Mechsimum Oilrelius step from the shadows of a hidden alcove. The first warning was as the chrono-gladiator's screaming chainswords slashed towards him. Gryx hurled himself back, narrowly avoiding a disembowelling blow. He fell to the ground as the frenzied warrior came at him again.

In a lull between shots, Logan ducked out from his cover and opened fire on the advancing Magos, filling the area



Gryx falls beneath the blades of Mechsimum.

before him with hot lead. The autogun bucked madly on his arm, spraying shots in all directions. Unfortunately, very few of those directions were towards Dimitri. The one shot that was on target impacted on the Mago's breacher arm and was unable to halt his advance. Analysing the pollutant content of the air through his olfactory assayers, Dimitri calculated a 78.4% probability that the tank the inaccurate gunner was using as cover contained promethium, a volatile chemical used in the fuel cells of flamer weapons. A thought pulse fired a shell through the tank's side, and a thick, viscous liquid began pouring out. The stink of it caused his probability cogitators to revise their estimate of the likelihood of promethium to 99.8%. As much as his atrophied emotions allowed him to, Dimitri relished the look of panic on Logan Storm's face, as his pistol ejected the spent casing and loaded another.

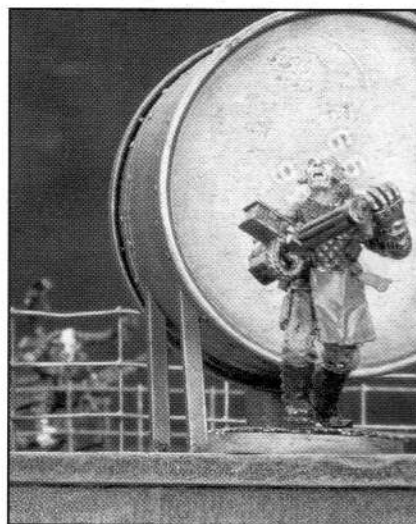
Gryx rolled clear of another attack of the chrono-gladiator's slashing chainswords, fat orange sparks flaring from the blades' impact with the floor. He pushed himself to his knees, deflecting another blow with his metal claw, but was unable to parry the reverse stroke. The chainsword slashed open his face, the whirring teeth ripping open his skull, finally tearing clear as it struck the steel of his neck brace. Blood poured from the gaping wound in Gryx's head, but the servitor warrior still struggled to rise, swaying aside as another blow chopped past his chest. But Gryx was blinded by blood and couldn't avoid the final blow that hacked into his leg. The roaring chainblade sawed through the meat and bone of Gryx's leg, severing it

completely, and the servitor warrior collapsed in a bloody pile, the shock and pain overloading even Gryx's formidable powers of endurance. Mechsimum howled in triumph over the defeated body of his foe, blood from the whirring blades spraying the walls of the temple.

The grime and rust covered doors to the elevator groaned open, the screech of buckled metal painful to the ears. Lichtenstein and Ghaustos ducked inside, the Inquisitor holstering his stubber and unsheathing the combat shotgun from its shoulder scabbard. He checked the load and racked the slide, ready for whatever might await them at the top. The elevator shuddered upwards, ancient mechanisms hauling the lift carriage towards the culmination of his quest. Lichtenstein could feel the daemonhost beside him drawing psychic energy into his body and again, a tiny flare of suspicion went off in Lichtenstein's head. He could hear the crack of bolter fire from outside and presumed that Dimitri was still duelling with the rooftop gunman. He slowed his breathing, raising the shotgun to his shoulder as the lift doors began to judder open.

Across from the temple, Logan watched with terrified relief as the Mago's bolt round passed through the promethium tank, but miraculously failed to ignite the chemicals. He wasn't taking any chances however, and rolled towards the edge of the platform as the spreading pool of fuel engulfed him, soaking him in its choking pungency. He glanced back towards the Mago, whose merciless advance had carried him to within almost point blank range.

The muzzle flared as it fired. Logan hurled himself from the roof, arms flailing, and hit the ground hard, breaking his shoulder and cracking his skull against the concrete. Lights flashed before his eyes and he rolled onto his back in time to see the promethium ignite. A huge orange fireball mushroomed from the tank, liquid tendrils of burning fuel pouring over the edge of the roof. They licked down the side of the building in a flaming torrent towards him. He tried to push himself to his feet, but his head pounded and his vision swum crazily. The flames leapt and his promethium saturated body caught light. Within seconds he was ablaze from head to toe. He tried to scream, but drew superheated air into his lungs, searing them with toxic fumes. He stumbled from the lake of burning fuel and collapsed, slipping into unconsciousness as the flames consumed him.



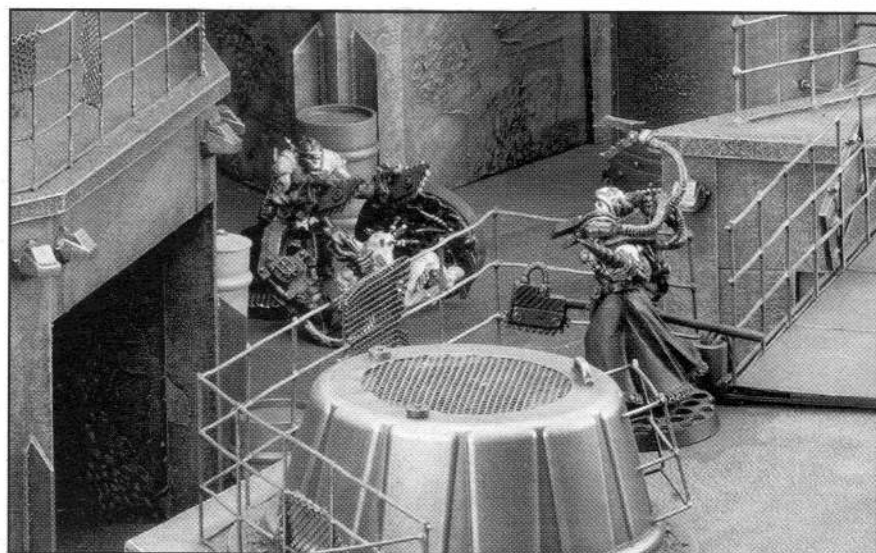
Logan jumps as Dimitri's shell hits the tank.



Logan's desperate attempt to escape fails as the promethium ignites.

A pallid glow that seemed to emanate from the pulsing obelisk at the temple's heart cast a ghostly illumination around the chamber as Lichtenstein edged his way inside. The structure rippled with barely perceived motion, as though the very walls were breathing. Ghaustos followed him eagerly, as he swung his shotgun left and right, covering a pair of doors that led outside. There was danger here, but his eyes were constantly drawn to the object hung from verdigris-encrusted chains. A rectangular cuboid of veined black stone, the Paraelix Configuration hung suspended over a swirling pit of utter darkness. Its surface bulged and writhed with leering faces, twisting alignments of geomantic significance and chaotic nonsense. Hands and skulls pushed clear of its glistening surface chittering and whispering obscene offers and promises of servitude. Lichtenstein could feel them clawing at the barriers within his mind and pushed them clear with an effort of will, repeating a whispered mantra of psychic defence. He must not be distracted now. With a curt nod to Ghaustos, he ordered the daemonhost forward, keeping his shotgun trained on the iron door opposite him.

Outside, Dimitri watched the raging inferno he had created spread across the floor, a collection of barrels exploding in the intense heat. His dermal temperature augers registered heat in excess of 400°C and he could feel those few fleshy components left of his body begin to blister. He turned and walked away, calculating the probability of his foe's



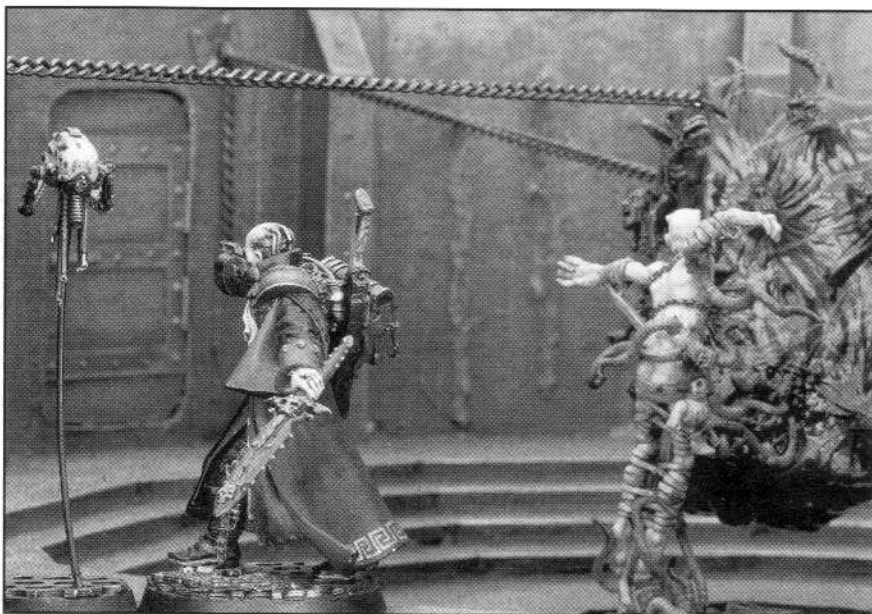
Dimitri attempts to avenge Gryx with a shot from his shoulder-mounted bolt pistol.

survival to be less than 7%. Below, he saw the roaring form of a cyber-warrior standing over the bloody form of Gryx. Such a target of opportunity was not to be wasted and he lined up another shot, hurling the warrior back with a chunk of flesh blasted from his chest. Amazingly, the warrior climbed to his feet and ducked into the cover offered by one of the temple's projecting buttresses. If he moved across the gantry he would be able to get the angle for another shot and began moving into position.

Ghaustos reached out, running his fingertips along the undulating surface of the obelisk, feeling as though they were sliding beneath its visible surface. He smiled as he concentrated his powers and reached deep within the warp-spawned matter of the Paraelix

Configuration, gripping the psychic anchors within. Instantly, liquid bolts of dark matter spewed from the tear and Ghaustos roared in pain as the undiluted power of the Immaterium washed through his fleshy prison. His knees sagged, but he held on, pulling and tearing at the obelisk's fragile solidity.

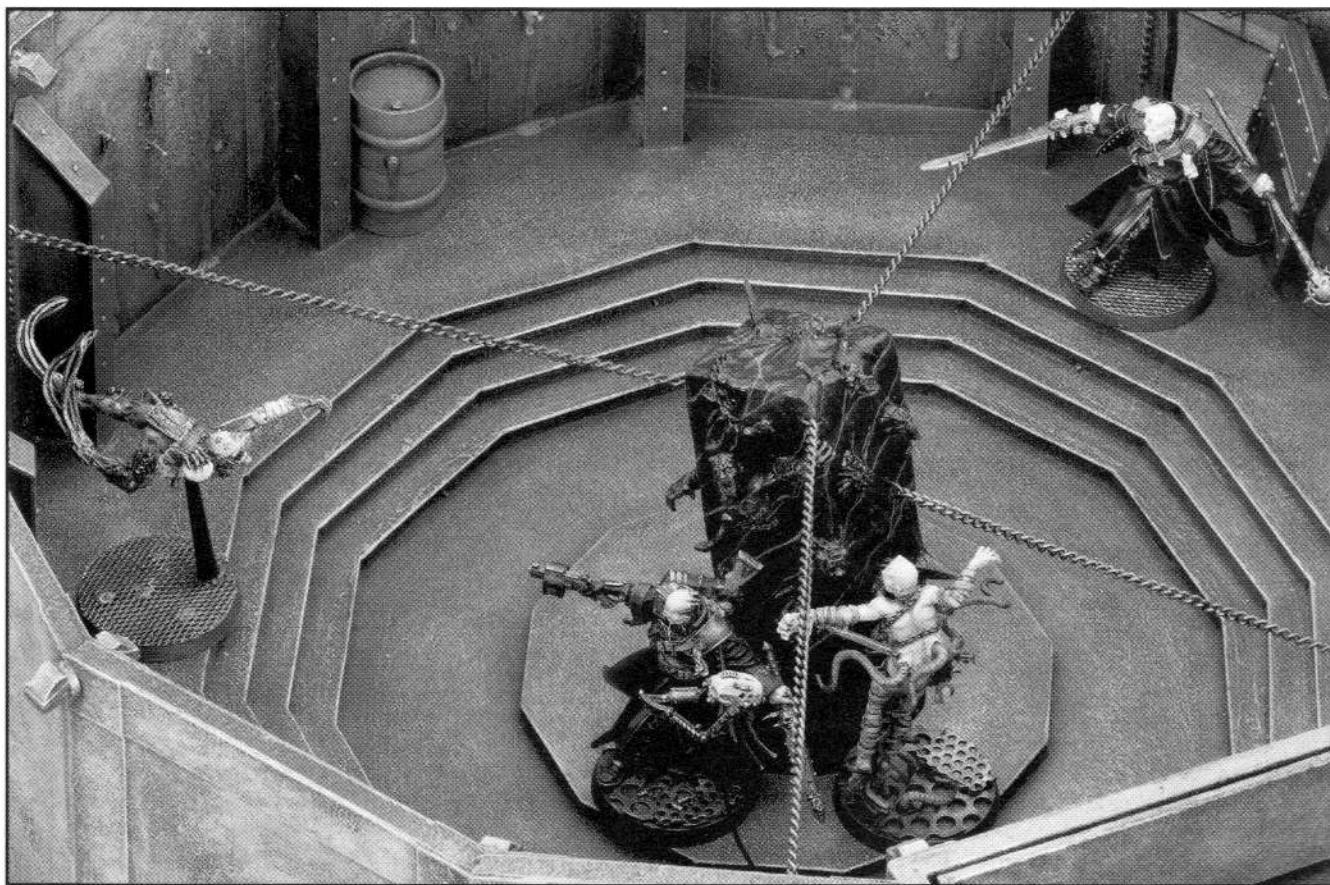
Inquisitor Kessel felt the sudden shift in the currents of power coursing through the complex and knew that the time to act had arrived. The powerful surge of chaotic energies threatened to overwhelm his mental wards, but grimly he pushed back the tide of filth that gurgled from the Paraelix Configuration. He sensed a concentration of power from Loa Gorg and heard the crash of a door as the daemonhost hammered it from the



Lichtenstein covers Ghaustos as the daemonhost prepares to open the portal.



With a firm boot, Kessel smashes open the door.



Kessel and Loa Gorg spring their trap on Lichtenstein and Ghaustos.

frame with its warp-borne strength. He thundered his boot against the door and stepped through into the chamber. Lichtenstein's daemon creature was pulling the obelisk open, streaming whips of black lightning arcing from its dissolving matter. Across the chamber he could see the screaming skull-face of Loa Gorg, and behind the obelisk was Lichtenstein. Before Kessel could shout a warning, Lichtenstein lashed out with his indomitable will and slammed Loa Gorg back through the door. Unable to get a clear shot at Lichtenstein, Kessel looked up and swung his sword in a flaming arc, severing one of the obelisk's supporting chains.

The obelisk swung in a low arc, but Lichtenstein dived forwards, rolling to his feet as his med skull was smacked into the wall behind by the Chaos monolith. Its servos sparked and whirled, but the skull shrugged off the impact and returned to its master's side. Kessel advanced and his fiery lashing blade whipped out, scoring a deep gash in Ghaustos's arm, but not driving him from the obelisk.

Lichtenstein moved around the madly swinging obelisk and drew his own sword, its blade similarly wreathed in unnatural flames. He recognised the

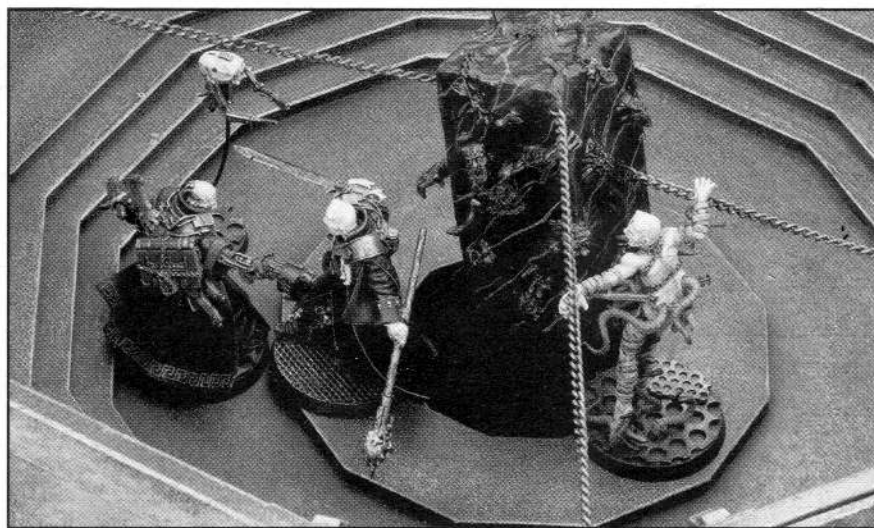
familiar sign of the Inquisition beneath the warrior's skin. Invisible to normal sight, Lichtenstein's psychic senses and the immense energies bloating the chamber caused it to blaze with crimson fire. Lichtenstein realised they were men of common purpose, but he would not be denied this final victory. He thrust his blade at his opponent's belly, the flaming swords clashing in a blazing discharge of light as the blow was parried, a lightning quick riposte stabbing at his groin. Lichtenstein

dodged and circled his foe, a wary respect in his eyes.

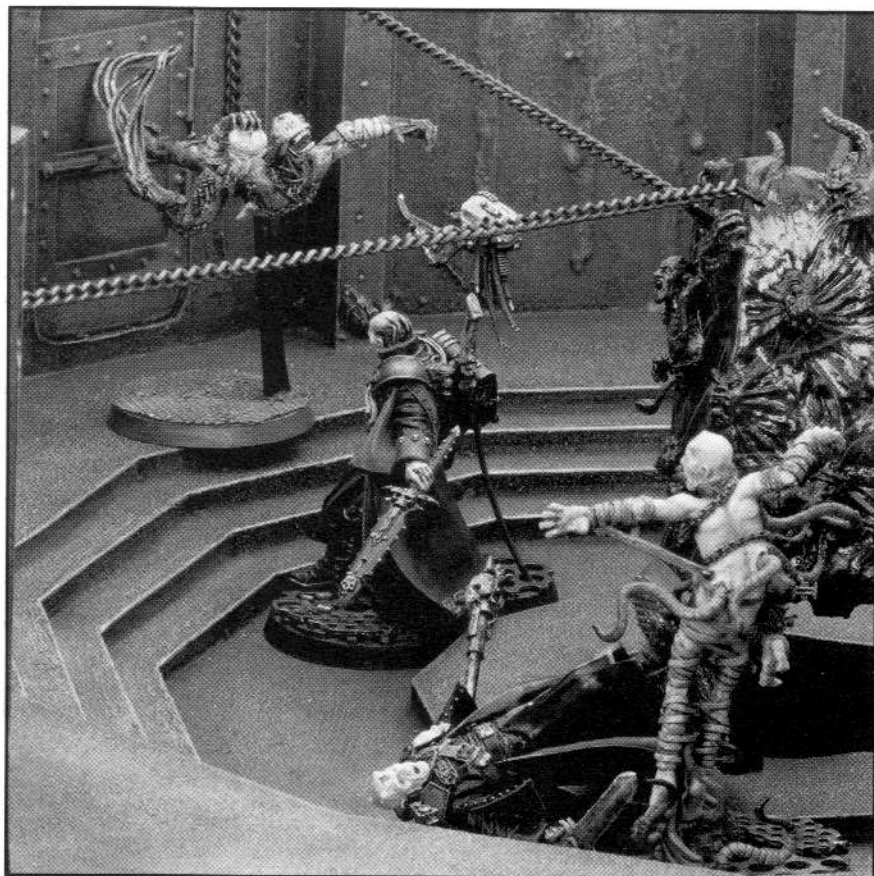
"I am Inquisitor Kessel," shouted the newcomer over the rising whine emanating from the disintegrating obelisk. "You must stop this. To open this portal will bring dire consequences!"

"Is that a threat?" hissed Lichtenstein.

"Not to you," clarified Kessel, "to this world."



Kessel and Lichtenstein duel as Ghaustos rips open the paraelix configuration.



With Kessel down, Lichtenstein turns his attention to Loa Gorg.

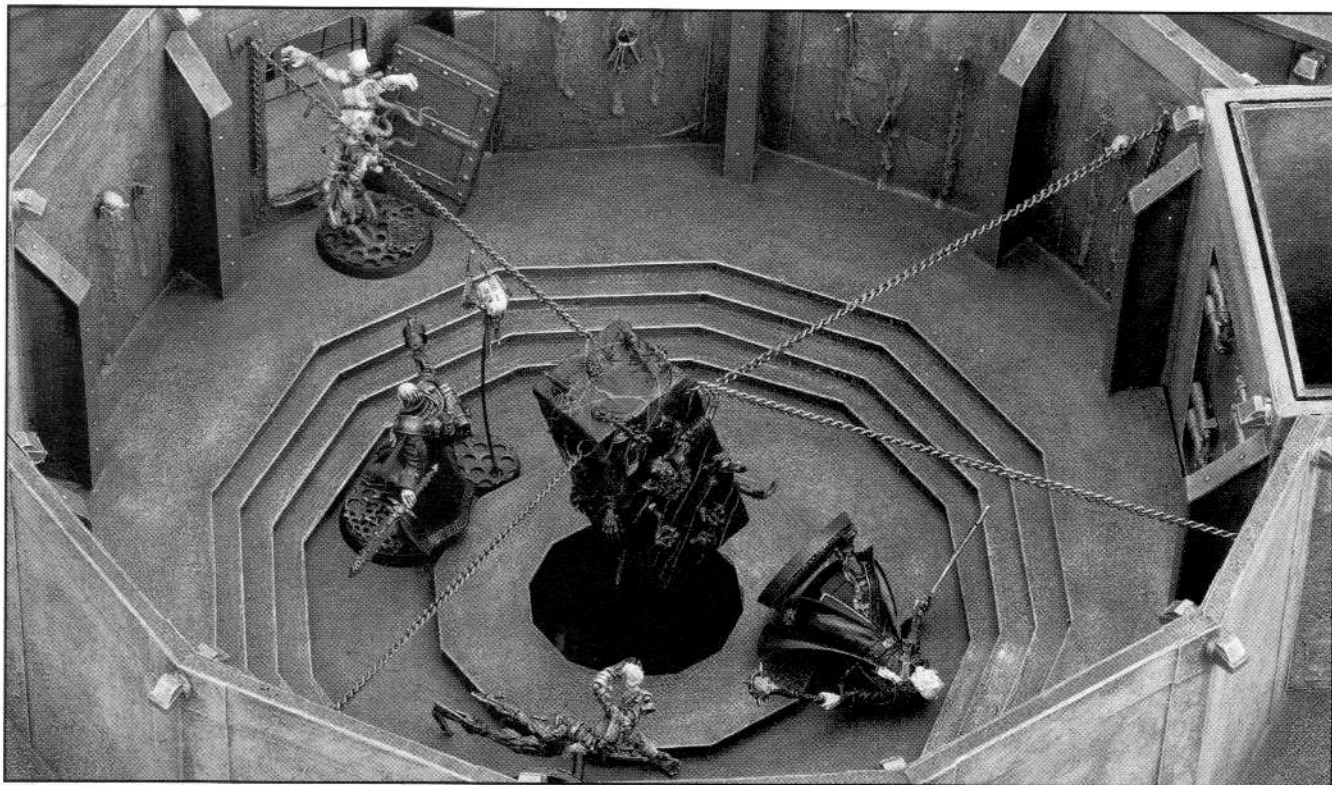
Kessel lunged, and the two Inquisitors traded blow after blow, parrying, riposting and dodging in a display of skill that would have left lesser men

speechless with envy. Their flaming swords traced intricate webs of shimmering light as they battled in the shadow of the Paraelix Configuration

and Ghaustos's attempts to unmake it. From the corner of his eye, Lichtenstein saw his enemy's daemonhost reappear at the door he had previously hurled it from, and knew this had to end quickly. As the two Inquisitors traded flaming blows, Ghaustos ripped the last of the obelisk apart, his outstretched arms wreathed in dark matter and his eyes blazing with unholy energy.

Coruscating flares of warp energy erupted from the newly opened portal and Lichtenstein immediately knew that he had been catastrophically misled. This was no entrance to the Librarium Hereticus, but a pulsing gateway into the stuff of the warp itself. Only the geomantic architecture of the temple was preventing it from explosively tearing open, but he knew that it was only a matter of time until the energies of the warp overcame the ancient warding sigils engraved into the temple's structure. He had no choice but to attempt to escape. He parried another blow from this meddlesome Inquisitor Kessel, fainting to the belly, then angling a lighting cut towards his head. The blow smashed Kessel from his feet and Lichtenstein ducked as Kessel's daemonhost swung at him.

Ghaustos was bloated with power and greedy for more. The glistening tentacles wrapping his body whipped out, seeking entry to Kessel's flesh, sliding into his mouth and feasting on

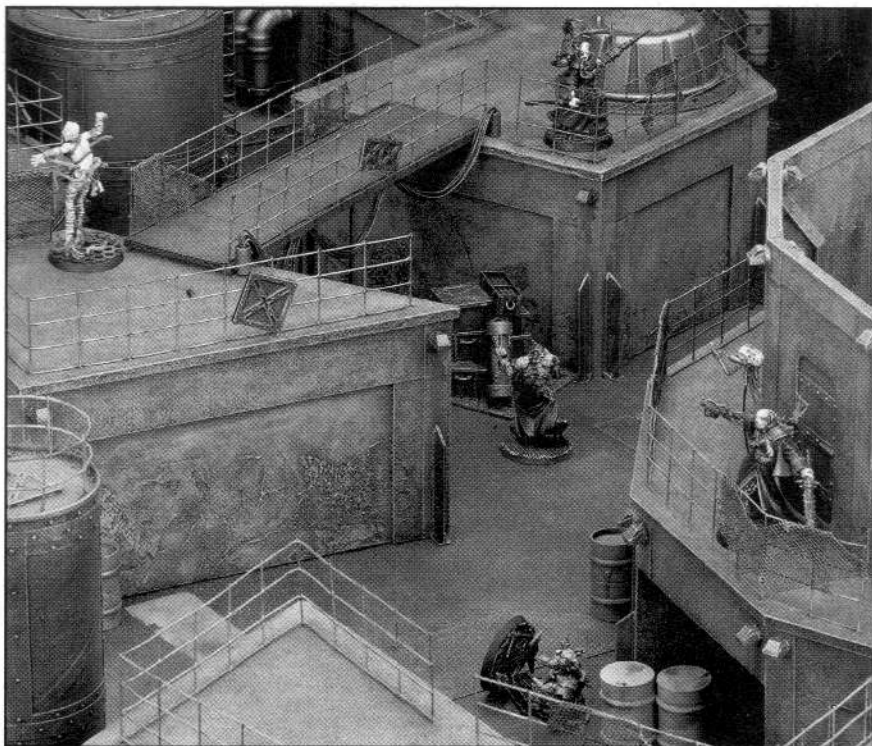


As the portal begins ripping apart reality, Ghaustos and Lichtenstein make their escape.

his strength. Kessel bit down hard. Foul pus filled his mouth as Ghaustos screeched, withdrawing the questing tentacles and retreating. Kessel retched, spitting out the slug-like piece of severed tentacle, and rolling aside as the black miasma spread from the ruptured obelisk and threatened to engulf him. He watched as Lichtenstein smashed the flat of his sword into Loa Gorg's head then sprinted from the rapidly degenerating temple, his daemonhost already ahead of him. Kessel rose to his knees, feeling the fabric of reality twisting, the angles of the temple sliding in and out of true. A disgusting grainy texture filled the air, reeking of corruption, and his every action felt as though he were moving through thick glue. The darkness at the heart of the temple was expanding exponentially and he knew he didn't have much time.

Lichtenstein emerged from the temple, his movements sluggish from the concentrated psychic energy filling the complex. Blood leaked from his nose and he could feel an enormous pressure building within his head. How could he have been so blind? As he watched Ghaustos leap effortlessly across to a nearby structure, Lichtenstein instinctively understood that there was no way the Daemon Prince Pharaa'gueotla could have lied; the bindings and oaths he had placed upon it had been too great. The only way he could have been so badly misled would be if his daemonhost had allowed him to be. He flinched, hearing the blast of a bolt pistol, but saw that the shot came from Dimitri towards a bloodstained, chainsaw-wielding berserker. Behind the roaring warrior, Lichtenstein saw the prone form of Gryx, his leg hanging by gory threads of muscle tissue, lying in a pool of dark blood. Dimitri's shot had blown a crater in the berserker's chest, but he seemed impervious to pain and charged towards a pile of crates that led up to his attacker, the chainswords hacking at the gantry Dimitri stood upon.

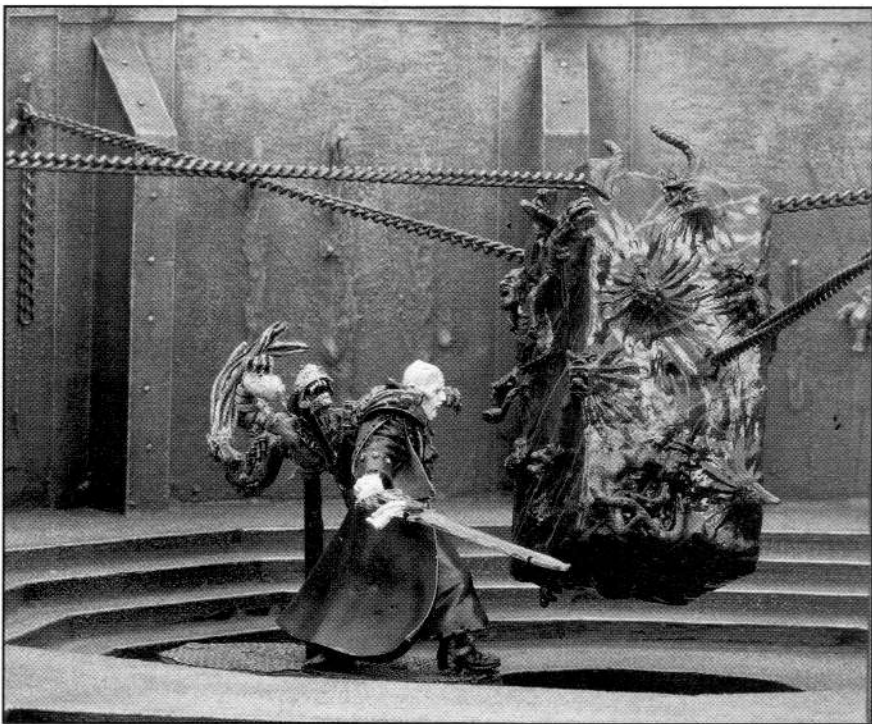
Within the roiling chaos of the temple, Kessel raised his daemonsword, fighting against the soporific effects of warp energy pouring into the chamber. The sundered remains of the obelisk were a ball of utter midnight at the centre of the dark conflagration. He felt tendons tearing in his muscles as he struggled to aim his blow. A cry of pain burst from his lips as he rammed his sword into the heart of the darkness, the energies



With one opponent dispatched, Mechsimum turns his attention to Dimitri.

of aeons past flowing through his sword arm and into the soul-fragment of Loa Gorg bound within the weapon. Ethereal winds snatched at him, howling around his body and lifting him from the ground. Phantoms born of the warp passed through him, seeking to prise his grip loose from the sword. But Kessel would not let go, hearing the screech of Loa Gorg behind him as a huge reservoir of Chaos

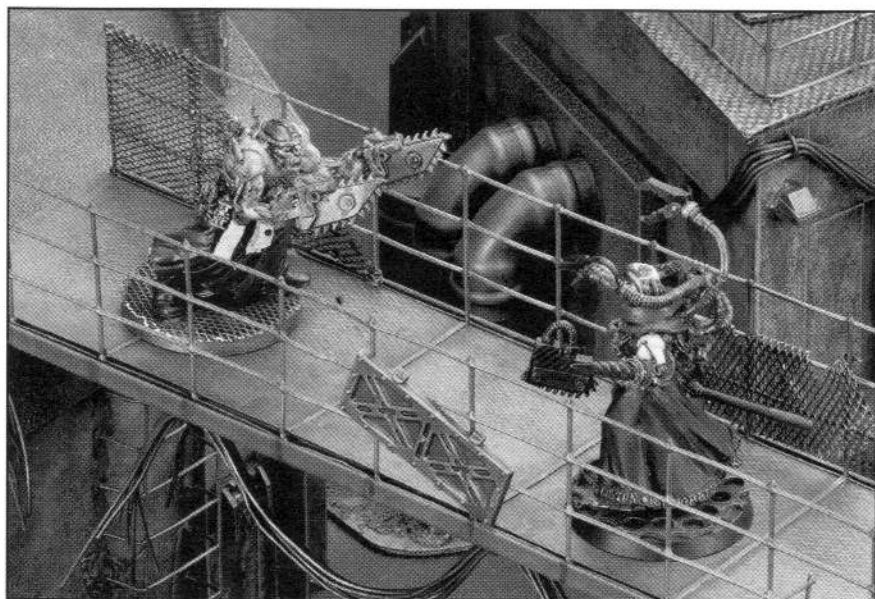
energy earthed through his body. The daemonhost's skin split, cracks of light appearing from within, but together he and Kessel were able to hold the rent together, until finally the fabric of reality reasserted itself with a tortured scream. Kessel dropped to the floor of the temple. He still gripped his sword and stared at the roiling pit in the floor above which the Paraelix Configuration had stood. In its place was a smooth,



Amid the chaos of the temple, Kessel and Loa Gorg attempt to seal the rift.

unblemished slab of black marble, its surface veined with jade lines. They had done it. The temple was deathly silent. All he could hear was the crackle of flames and the crack of pistol fire from outside. Utterly exhausted by his ordeal, Kessel waved his sword at Loa Gorg and shouted, "Go. Stop them, but do not kill them!"

Lichtenstein vaulted the railing, landing lightly beside Gryx as Kessel's berserker warrior dodged a blow from Dimitri's whirling chain axe. He hauled his servitor warrior's body onto his shoulder and set off towards the planet's surface. Seeing what he had unwittingly released in the centre of the temple, Lichtenstein now realised the folly of his actions and knew that it was time to make good his escape. He struggled under the heavy burden of Gryx, as he saw Kessel emerge from the temple, following his daemon creature, which floated through the air towards Dimitri. Caught between two enemies, his Magos fired a shot at the charging berserker, blasting yet another



Mechsimus and Dimitri clash on the gantry overlooking the temple.

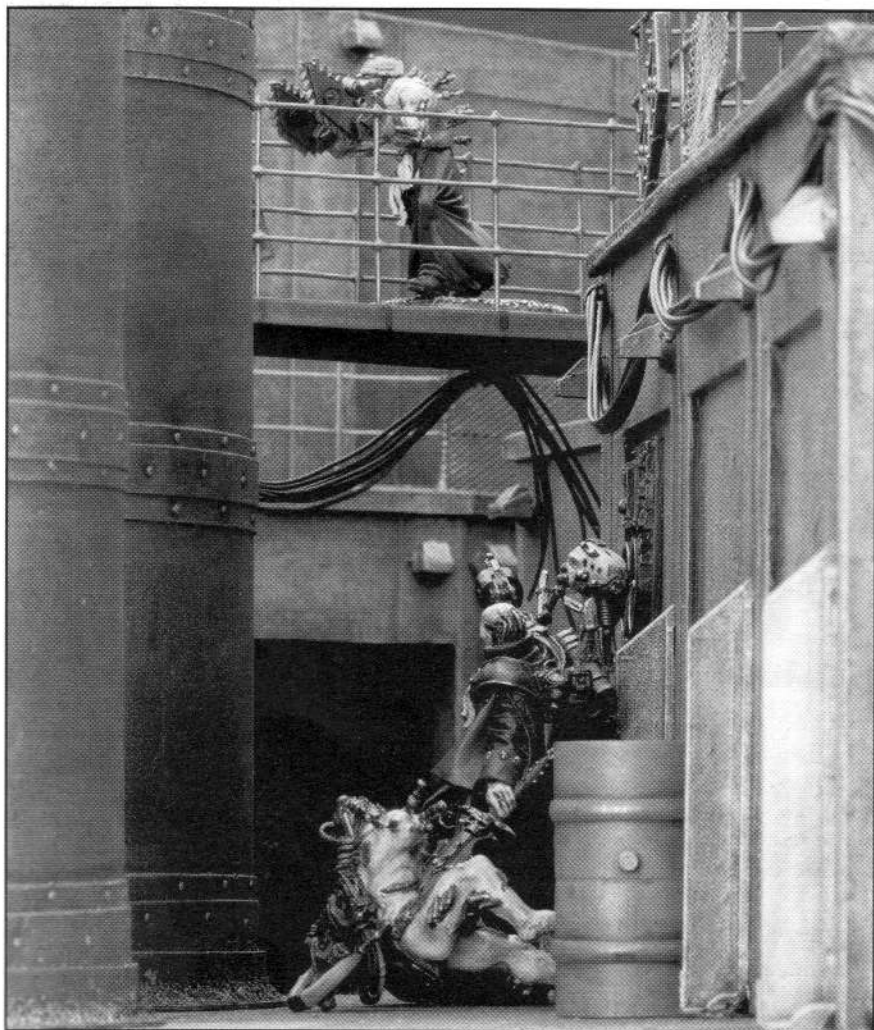
chunk from the warrior. Then, with a relentless fortitude that horrified Lichtenstein, the warrior scrambled up the side of the building and onto the gantry. Dimitri blocked the first blow

with the adamantium haft of his chain axe, but another underarm stroke of the chainsword hacked upwards into his groin, spraying blood and driving the Magos to his knees. The berserker moved in for the killer blow as Lichtenstein sensed the build-up of psychic power from Loa Gorg and the mental backwash from its discharge as the daemonhost attacked the magos.

Dimitri felt incredible agony, even though the haze of suppressants were blocking the majority of the pain. He knew he would need several weeks to repair this damage. He pushed himself backwards as he suddenly felt a strange rise in temperature within his body. Once more he cursed his continued reliance on organic components as he felt his blood begin to boil in his veins. Agonising pain clamped down on his chest and head. He had but a moment of surprised incredulity as he detected a 90°C rise in the blood temperature of his arterial system before his heart exploded and his brain boiled in his cranium. Dimitri went offline.

Lichtenstein screamed a shout of denial as the powerful psychic power overloaded Dimitri's fragile organic matter and he felt the Magos's life energy fade. Dropping Gryx from his shoulder, he shouldered his shotgun and fired a succession of shots at the berserk warrior on the gantry, blasting a trio of holes in him and dropping him to the floor. He could not see the daemon creature: the gantry prevented him from taking a shot. Grabbing Gryx by the metal of his arm, he vanished into the darkness after his daemonhost.

There would be another time.



Lichtenstein exacts a measure of revenge against Mechsimus for Dimitri's death.

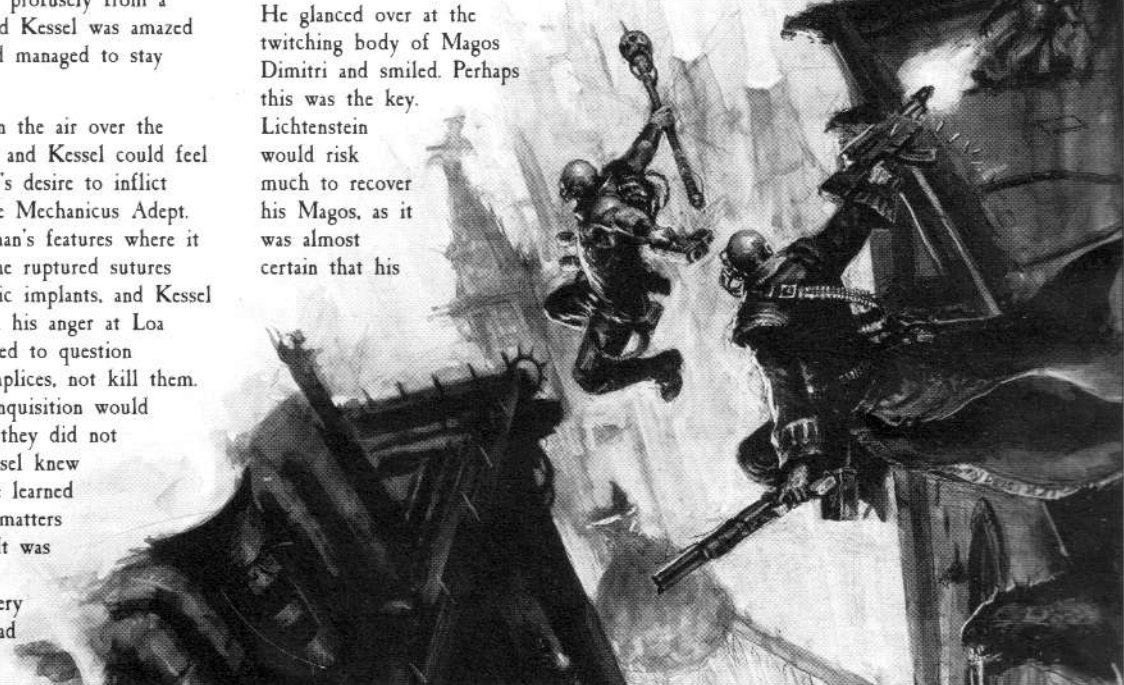
Smoke billowed in roiling black banks from the pools of burning promethium that leaked from the ruptured tank the Magos had detonated. From the screams of pain Kessel had heard as he waited to spring his trap on Lichtenstein, he guessed that Logan Storm had fallen foul of the despicable tactics of the Magos. Kessel sheathed his warblade, containing the soul-fragment of Loa Gorg, and gripped the railing of the Paralex temple. He could see Mechsimum pick himself up from the gantry across from him. The cyber-gladiator bled profusely from a score of wounds and Kessel was amazed that the warrior had managed to stay upright.

Loa Gorg floated in the air over the body of the magos and Kessel could feel the daemon creature's desire to inflict further harm on the Mechanicus Adept. Blood coated the man's features where it had gushed from the ruptured sutures around his cybernetic implants, and Kessel struggled to control his anger at Loa Gorg. He had wanted to question Lichtenstein's accomplices, not kill them. Too many of the Inquisition would destroy that which they did not understand, but Kessel knew that much could be learned from the study of matters deemed forbidden. It was ironic that he and Lichtenstein were very much alike. Both had

plumbed the mysteries of Chaos, but where he had studied and learned the nature of the Ruinous Powers, Lichtenstein was attempting to bend those same forces to his will. Kessel could understand such desires, but knew that mastery of Chaos was an impossibility. If the Primarch Horus had tried and failed, what chance did a mere mortal have? He did not believe that Lichtenstein was evil, merely misguided, and Kessel knew that he must bring him back to the path of righteousness.

He glanced over at the twitching body of Magos Dimitri and smiled. Perhaps this was the key. Lichtenstein would risk much to recover his Magos, as it was almost certain that his

brain would have some form of memory recovery cogitator built in. But would Lichtenstein risk a meeting with Kessel? He hoped so; there would be much they could learn from one another.



FAREWELL TO THE HELLMOUTH



Graham McNeill

Graham: Well, we pretty much managed to destroy just about every piece of scenery in that game! We blew up promethium tanks, smashed doors from their hinges, hacked

through obelisk supporting chains and attempted to saw through wobbling gantries. Only the thought of an angry Paul Rudge prevented us from taking clippers, a chisel and a blowtorch to the scenery to represent the damage we inflicted.

I don't think there was a single action movie scene we didn't manage to cram into that game. For my part, everything ran pretty smoothly, both players knew the rules and both consistently looked for ways to do things that were

dramatic rather than utterly game-winning. This is the kind of play GMs should definitely encourage and reward. There were a couple of instances during this game where I had to make calls that weren't strictly by the rules, but allowed play to proceed in an exciting manner.

You shouldn't be afraid to improvise like this as there are bound to be situations cropping up during a game that you can't have predicted. Remember that, as GM, you have the final say in such matters, so let your players know that what you say goes. Try to keep instances of this to a minimum, though, because if you're constantly having to bend the rules in order to make things work, then there's something wrong.

After the game was over, we discussed what had happened and possible ways that the narrative could be continued. Dimitri's demise and Ghaustos fleeing

the battlefield after the warp gate had opened allowed us to plant a seed of doubt in Lichtenstein's mind concerning the strength of the bindings he has placed on the daemonhost. It also opens up the possibility of a fresh scenario. What lengths will Lichtenstein go to in order to rescue his Magos? Gryx will almost certainly expire without Dimitri's knowledge of his bionics and surgical implants, assuming that the magos' brain survived in electrical format. And what of Tyrus? Sufficient time has passed for him to rally his followers, recruit new members and vengeance on Lichtenstein is never far from his mind...

Yes, there is much more carnage to be unleashed on the world of Karis Cephalon and when warbands with such bloody histories collide, the results are sure to be catastrophic.

I, for one, can't wait.

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT



Gav Thorpe

Gav: Fantastic! I must admit that my duties for Warhammer have somewhat flattened my Inquisitor gaming over the last couple of months, so what a way to get back into it. First

up, a big thanks to Graham for such a great scenario and running the game effortlessly. Also, much appreciation to Phil, whose grasp of the Inquisitor spirit is total. Between the three of us, I think that was one of the best Inquisitor games we've ever had.

All in all, the plan worked pretty well. There were some nice showdowns – Logan Storm against Dimitri, Mechsimum versus Gryx, and of course that wonderful clash between the two Inquisitors and their daemonhost allies.



Phil Kelly

Phil: As far as the end results go, I'm not quite sure what to make of that one, but my expectations were far exceeded by the events of the game. So many dramatic scenes and cool set pieces

cropped up that I doubt it would have been as good if the story was contrived from the start. Lichtenstein achieved his goal, only to find that he had been misled by Pharaa'gueotla (or Ghaustos, perhaps). Kessel came through admirably to seal the resultant warp portal shut once more, saving us from being dragged screaming into the warp. We had a duel with flaming swords, pitched battle on a rickety gantry, a spreading pool of burning oil, heroic leaps aplenty, cyber-gladiators ripping into one another, psychic duels, screaming daemons, exploding barrels...what more could two Inquisitor players ask for?

The best aspect of this game, in my opinion, was that at all times Gav and I were thinking of cool and innovative things to do with our characters rather than just shooting at each other. As a result, we had Dimitri firing at the tank Logan Storm was sheltering behind and then igniting the contents (What did it contain? Promethium of course! – Graham), we had Kessel chopping through the chains holding the obelisk so that it careened toward Lichtenstein,

For me, the pacing of the game was perfect. The fighting gathered impetus, with the Inquisitors' companions getting stuck in while the leaders themselves concentrated on their tasks. This died down, leaving the duel in the main chamber at centre stage that, once resolved, led to a tension-building but quickly resolved endgame.

Although Inquisitor isn't about winning and losing, I think I came out slightly on top of that one. True, we both achieved our objectives, but since it was impossible for me to complete mine without Lichtenstein starting his own nefarious deed, I think that was acceptable. The only real problem is poor old Logan Storm. He finished the game unconscious and his legs hideously burnt. Considering his previous career as a member of the Adeptus Mechanicus Skitarii, I think it only fitting that Kessel employ the

services of the Tech priests to fix up the brave warrior. I'm thinking of upgrading him to full Praetorian battleservitor status. This will mean converting him up a bit (or more likely starting afresh) and giving him either bionic legs (possibly three or four) or tracks. I'll be looking through my bits box then.

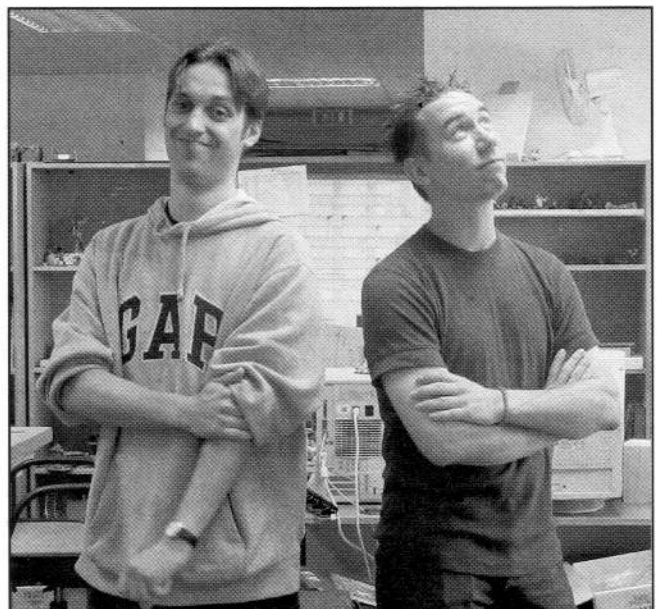
As for the campaign, Lichtenstein slipped away. I think after the scare he's had meddling with forces he doesn't fully understand, he may be a bit more reticent in the future to go opening random warp portals. Considering the similarities between Kessel and Lichtenstein, my Inquisitor may try and track him down to offer him a deal. Be a friend and calm down a bit, or become an enemy. If Lichtenstein knows what's good for him he'll go for the former!

TOTAL CHAOS

we had Mechsimum attempting to saw through the bridge that Dimitri was standing on, and so on. Firing at ammo crates next to your target can be a lot more fun than shooting the target itself, and potentially do more damage. Besides, as every action movie fan knows, explosions are great fun, so go on, blow stuff up! Improvisation for your character's actions really is the key to a truly memorable game, and if it's a cool idea, the GM is that much more likely to allow you to do it. Poor old Rudgey will have a fit when he hears the scale of the property damage the characters have wreaked on his scenery!

All that remains for my warband is to count the cost, and unfortunately the cost seems to be high indeed. Gryx lost a leg, but that isn't a big deal, I'll just fish through the old bits box and find a cybernetic replacement. Sure, he'll only have one of his original limbs, but Gryx is a servitor-warrior and wasn't likely to win any beauty contests anyway.

More importantly, Dimitri's brains were so thoroughly cooked by Loa Gorg's Blood Boil power that he was effectively dead, all this after catching a chainsword in the crotch. Not so good. However, Graham is considering the chance that Dimitri, being comprised of around 90% metal and 10% flesh, downloaded his memory engrams into his internal hard drive many years ago. He's already come through suffering an inferno bolt to the head, and is by far the most durable member of the warband. I'm just hoping his autosave is up to the task...



Gav would like to thank a higher power for his warrior band's success.