



# WARP RIFT

THE BATTLEFLEET GOTHIC NETZINE





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## NAVIS NOBILITE

Hello everyone,

As some may know, Roy, who you know better as Horizon, is stepping down as the editor of Warp Rift and he's left me to take over in his stead. I want to thank him for the opportunity to shape the magazine and I hope that I can do half as good a job as he has done since, well, forever it seems.

As part of taking over, I'll also be overseeing a redesign of the magazine geared toward opening up more space on the pages and standardizing the sections common to each issue. As always, we desperately need your help in providing articles, art, and photos to showcase.

To give everyone a better overview of where we are headed, I'll be running through some of the major changes that are happening alongside the more cosmetic adjustments. To start with, there will be four regular divisions to the magazine. The first of these is the Editorial section which will contain things like the article you are currently reading. This section will also include a small article from the High Admiralty to help keep the fan base up to date with what is going on in the BFG world.

The second section is the Lexicon which contains the old Tactical Command and Encyclopedia Gothica sections. Tactical Command will remain

dedicated to tactics on the various fleets of BFG and to any battle reports. Encyclopedia Gothica will remain the same as a repository for new rules and fleet lists, but new ship designs will be broken out into a new category named, somewhat unsurprisingly, Ships Database.

For painting, modeling, and other hobby related articles we have created a category named The Forge. This will be home to the Dry Dock and Showcase sections. Both of these sections will remain as they have been in the past and we look forward to seeing any submissions you may have.

Fan Fiction has been grouped under a single category named Sensor Readings and contains the older sections Void Stalker, and Officers Mess. These two have a slight distinction from each other with Void Stalker containing story driven scenarios and campaigns and Officer's Mess used fan fiction without scenarios.

While I would love to have articles and content for each section in every issue, I know that some issues just won't have articles submitted in every area. Because of this, some of the subsections may not appear in every issue of the magazine. If you see one lacking, feel free to submit an article for it. This magazine is driven by your submissions after all!

Finally, I would be remiss to not tell you a bit about myself before signing off. Some of you may know me as Vaaish on various forums related to 40k and Specialist Games. I've been active in 40k for quite a few years after being introduced to the universe through the original Dawn of War games. From there I quickly moved over to BFG and finally Epic as I've found those games to be much more enjoyable to play. I typically spend a good bit of my hobby time painting, so expect to see stuff show up from time to time in the picture box to the right.

Thanks for reading,  
Aaron (Vaaish)





## HIGH ADMIRALTY

Heylo,

I'm Ray, the young'un of the High Admiralty clocking in at a little under 3 decades! I've been playing BFG since it's release, in fact it was my first tabletop game and is still my favourite after playing and owning all of the Games Workshop games, including those no longer in production like Gorka-Morka and Warhammer Quest. I've also dabbled in numerous other spaceship/ naval games my second favourite being B5 A Call To Arms (out of production) as it easily allows numerous players to the table without much pause. There are numerous other tabletop games I've played and occasionally use for inspiration or as examples of what not to do! Safe to say I've got a rich gaming background which influences most of my geeky life!

I have a crazy huge collection of BFG ships including all fleets, easily exceeding a total points value of 100,000pts! If I including home brew ships it would get even more extreme. This allows me to run campaigns lending out fleets to people that don't own their own or just fancy a change. Although it has been over a year since I've run a campaign, I still squeeze in the odd BFG game in between the myriad of others cluttering my gaming table.

Being a HA member is very important to me, I dedicate a lot of my free time to reviewing the rules and taking the pulse of the online community. Some may have

noticed this is almost seasonal, this is due to the 'real' part of my life which ebbs and flows beyond much of my control.

With the current 'big' FAQ getting nailed down and hopefully being made available on GW's website or at the very least deemed official I can see room for fleet specific refinement over the next few years in anticipation of a version 2 rerelease! However unlikely this is due to the cutbacks by GW I choose to believe in a better future!

Cheers,  
Ray



# USING THE VENGEANCE CLASS GRAND CRUISER

by DAVID HSCOCKS

In this article I will be arguing that the Vengeance class grand cruiser (see the *Imperial Fleets* PDF) is a worthy choice for many Imperial fleets. I am not discussing its role in the context of a Traitor fleet. I should point out that of the purposes of this study I will be comparing its performance to the Overlord class Battle-cruiser. I chose this ship to compare it to based on roughly equivalent points cost and their role in the fleet.

The reason why I first bought this model was basically just because I liked the look of it. In my opinion it is one of the coolest looking Imperial vessels. The sculpting is truly superb, and its size is equivalent to an Imperial battleship. What more does one need?

As a gaming piece though, why should one take the Vengeance? I do not believe, like some do, that it is a *Jack of all trades* and ergo, master of none. It fulfils an important niche role, in a way that no other Imperial cruiser can, at least so efficiently for relative points cost. At this point I ought to make it clear that a few things, in the spirit of honesty. It will not be able to outgun a regular gunship, such as the Repulsive Grand cruiser, at close range at least. Nor will it be able to tear apart its nearest rival, the Overlord class, which has torpedoes and 6+ prow armour, with only slightly less firepower to the flanks, for 5 points more. Nor, in truth, is it significantly more powerful than the average Chaos Cruiser. So, having said this, what can the Vengeance class actually do?

Its two greatest strengths are its weapon batteries, and its sheer durability against incoming fire, be it weapon batteries or ordinance; with its increased number of hit points it will survive a duel longer, and its multiple turrets give it a fair chance of surviving an average strength bomber wave with minimal impact. Combine these two strengths with its low points cost (especially so when one considers it against the Overlord!), and the Vengeance suddenly looks more promising.



Bearing these strengths in mind we can determine what role it should take in the average, balanced Imperial fleet. It is my belief that it is viable for use in any size Imperial fleet. It should be used to support the torpedo armed close ranged cruisers (i.e., the Lunar class) as they close with the enemy. This is done to disrupt the enemy's formation, and slow them down. If you are lucky you may cause some damage. Then, once the cruisers are within 30cm and are ready to fire torpedoes, the Vengeance should shift its fire onto flanking cruisers, escorts, etc, as the need arises according to the greatest threat. It can also be used to finish off badly damaged enemy vessels from afar. In this fire support role it is the ideal companion to the Emperor battleship. Not only does it have a good level of firepower, but its imposing nature may draw fire off the Emperor.

This idea of being 'imposing' is a personal idea. To the less experienced player, the scarier the ship looks, the greater its target priority. Ergo, the Vengeance can be used as bait; it looks scarier than it actually is. Whilst the enemy fires at the Vengeance, the

Emperor can do its job more effectively. And if the enemy ignores the Vengeance, it can still dish out some useful firepower. In this long range fire support role it is more specialised and efficient than the Overlord, whose torpedoes are usually wasted at long range as its overall design dictates. The lack of 6+ prow armour on the Vengeance is not important. So, we can see that in 'normal' fleet battles, the Vengeance serves the same niche as the Overlord, but slightly better firepower where it matters (the weapon batteries), for fewer points and with greater durability.

In a more niche area, the Vengeance is also very useful versus Eldar, a stratagem that will surprise some. Not only is it just as manoeuvrable and fast when compared to the standard Imperial cruiser, but it is tougher. Additionally, its long range weapons means that it can hit the Eldar even when they flee (hopefully!). But, these advantages when considered together makes it an excellent choice, indeed, it is unique. Not only does it stand a better chance of surviving an Eldar first strike, but it has the range to reach out and take its revenge (pun intended) once the Eldar retreat. Of course in a terrain heavy board this is less useful, but even in this situation its two strengths, durability and firepower, make it a better choice than lighter weight cruisers. A cheaper Lunar class or Dominator will not do better as they will be less likely to survive an Eldar close range assault, therefore the fact they are cheaper points wise is irrelevant. As a gunship, paying a bit more for toughness versus the Eldar is well worth it. It is also worth bearing in mind that it can be used as a rallying point for the Imperial fleet in such actions, with its size and long range batteries it can cover the advance and withdrawal of lighter and faster Imperial ships.

So, in conclusion the Vengeance has a niche role in a regular fleet, but in anti-Eldar operations it is also very handy. I hope that more people will field this fantastic and oft underrated vessel in the future.

# ELDAR PHOENIX BATTLESHIPS

by HELLBORE



The largest Eldar stellar vessels besides the Craftworlds themselves, the Phoenixships have a strong symbolic place amongst the fleet. Named for the symbol of the Lord of the Eldar gods, Asuryan's Phoenix represents the hope and rebirth of the Eldar race from the ashes of the Fall; their attempt to rekindle what was lost. The Phoenixships are a potent symbol of this, equipped with the most powerful Eldar weaponry available and can lay waste to entire squadrons with a single barrage. The ship design emphasizes durability and destructive force, something not often seen amongst Eldar ships. To the Craftworlders however, speed is secondary to absolute force, as nothing is more important than the protection of the Craftworld itself. Very rarely do the battlefleets of a Craftworld stray too far from home, as to do so would leave their kin horribly exposed to the depredations of a hostile galaxy. With this in mind the Phoenixship has an enlarged hull design to free up space for weapon mounts and give the ship a staying power greater than even a Dragonship. To power such a large ship the design incorporates extra sails, giving the Phoenixship a magnificent yet sinister silhouette.

Phoenixships are also sometimes upgraded with unusual weaponry, ancient devices created before the Fall when Eldar technology was at its height. These weapons vary from massive pulsar cannons adapted from their mounts on the Craftworld itself to the deadly

Distortion Lance, a horrific weapon that tears the very fabric of reality apart to spill the horrors of the warp into realspace. An enemy ship that takes a hit from a D-Lance will discover whole sections missing as a miniature warp-storm is created within the ship itself. Unfortunately, despite the advance technology of the Eldar the power necessary to fire such weapons slows the ship down considerably, leaving it dead in space for precious seconds, and so are only used in the direst of circumstances.

The running engagements and escort attacks favoured by corsairs are at odds with the Phoenixship design and so the corsairs retrofit these behemoths to create the Void Stalkers, and lacking the resources to keep the more complicated systems functioning, strip down the hull for greater speed and manoeuvrability.

## PHOENIXSHIP

400 points

Type/Hits	Speed	Turns	Shields	Armour	Turrets
Battleship/10	10/15/20	Special	Holofields	5+	0

### Choose ONE Dorsal Weapon System:

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Dorsal Weapons Battery	45cm	10	Left/Front/Right
Dorsal Phantom Lances	45cm	3	Left/Front/Right

### Choose ONE Prow Weapon System:

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Prow Weapons Battery	45cm	16	Front
Prow Pulsar Lances	45cm	4	Front

### Choose ONE Keel Weapon System:

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Keel Torpedoes	30cm	8	Front
Dorsal Phantom Lances	45cm	3	Left/Front/Right

Notes: One of each of the following may be mounted on a Dragonship or Phoenixship per 1000 points, or part thereof for 50 points. Ships firing these weapons may not move in the ordnance phase of that turn due to the massive power drain firing the gun causes.

Armament	Range/Speed	Firepower/Str	Fire Arc
Distortion Lance	45cm	Special	Front
Pulsar Cannon	60cm	1	Front

The Distortion Lances follows the Nova Cannon rules except they do not have a minimum range and ignore shields. Each shot causes D3 hits on ships under the template and D6 on ships under the hole

The Pulsar Cannon follows the rules for Pulsar Lances except for every hit caused, the gun inflicts D3 hits.

# IMPERIAL AND CHAOS VESSEL TIMELINE by DAN LEE

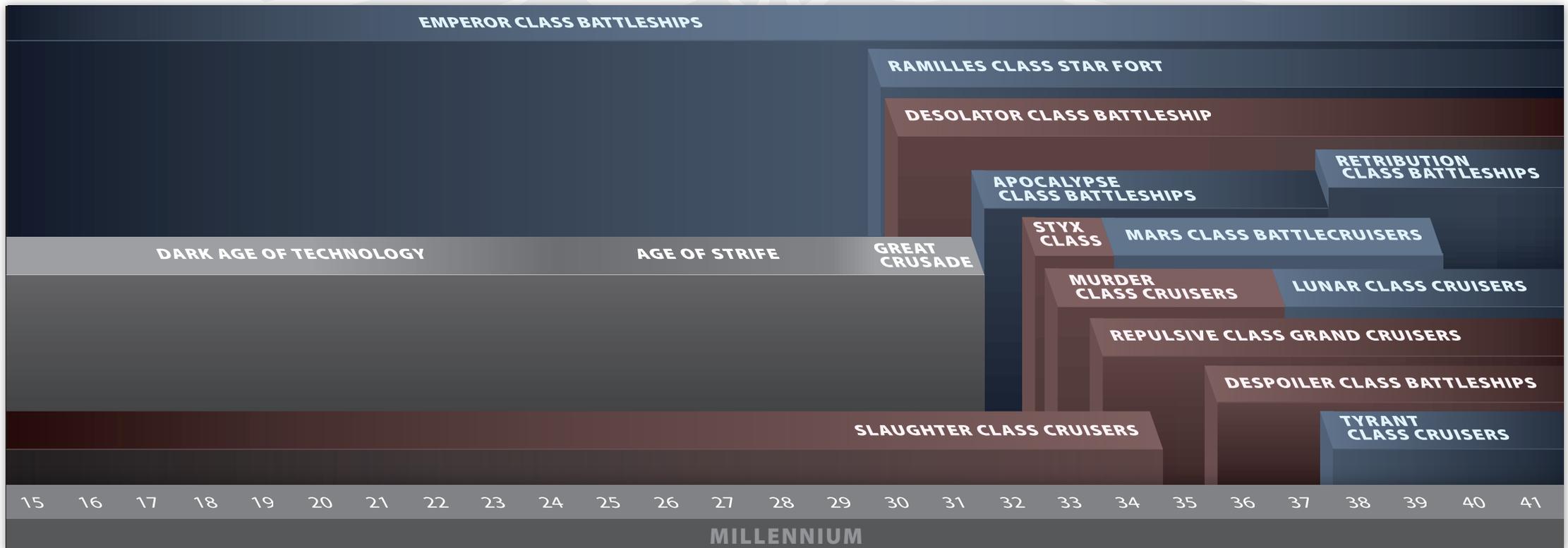
Prompted by feedback on Warseer about my article in the last issue of Warprift (thanks BaronIveagh) I've compiled a timeline of known ship construction dates for the Imperial and Chaos fleets. The timeline is based on information from the BFG rulebook and Armada and this information is summarized after the timeline. I looked through my Horus Heresy novels too but found they were generally vague about ships, so I decided to stick to BFG fluff. Even just sticking to these two books though, there are contradictions. The Apocalypse class battleship is said to be a precursor to the Retribution, and was developed to counter raids from the Eye of

Terror (which are themselves post Horus Heresy events), but then the Retribution is said to date from the founding of the Imperium (which is before the Horus Heresy). This would put the Apocalypse in production for only a relatively short period of time, or have it being produced after the ship that was supposed to replace it. This single contradiction aside though, most of the information in these books makes sense.

Imperial ships are in blue and Chaos ships are in red, and I've put the key periods of human history at the top for easy reference. Where a colour abruptly starts or ends we have a definite start or

stop date for production of a ship, and where the colour fades out or in we don't have a definite date.

As you can see from the timeline, the general trend of Imperial ships being newer and Chaos ships being older is actually barely noticeable, but it is there. Only the Murder, Mars, Styx and Slaughter class vessels have definite end dates to their production. Every other vessel could theoretically still be in production somewhere in the Imperium, and many vessel types (the ones not shown on the timetable), both Imperial and Chaos, could have begun production at any point from the Dark Age of Technology onwards.





M15–M25...Dark Age of Technology

M25–M30...Age of Strife

M30.....Emperor class *Legatus Stygies* construction began

M30.....Artisan Magos Lian Ramilies designs the Ramilies class star fort from STC data

M30–M31...Great Crusade

~M30.....Desolator class battleships developed

M31.....Avenger class *Forinax*, *Leonis*, *Iron Duke*, *Duchess Arbelatris*, and Vengeance class *Castigator* and *Vindicare* present at battle for Diamat [Fallen Angels]

M31.....Founding of the Imperium

~M31.....Apocalypse class battleships developed to counter Chaos raids from the Eye of Terror

M33.....Emperor class *Legatus Stygies* completed (construction was halted for nearly 2 millennia)

M33.....Styx class heavy cruisers begin to gain popularity

M33.....Construction of Murder class cruisers begins

M34 Inception of the Repulsive class grand cruisers

M34.....Construction of the Slaughter class *Dutiful* begins. The *Dutiful* subsequently bombards the only forgeworld capable of manufacturing the engine coils needed Slaughter class cruisers, preventing any more from ever being commissioned

~M34.....Mars class battlecruiser begin to replace Styx class heavy cruisers

M36.....Emperor class *Divine Right* recovered – estimated to have been in the warp for ten millennia

M36.....Despoiler class battleships developed as part of the Gareox Prerogative

M36.....Age of Apostasy

M37.....The Lunar cruiser class begins to replace the Murder class cruiser

M38.....Adeptus Mechanicus Artisan-Magos Hyus N'dai completes a number of new ship designs, including the Tyrant class cruiser

M39.....Production of Mars class battlecruisers stops (18 centuries before Gothic war)

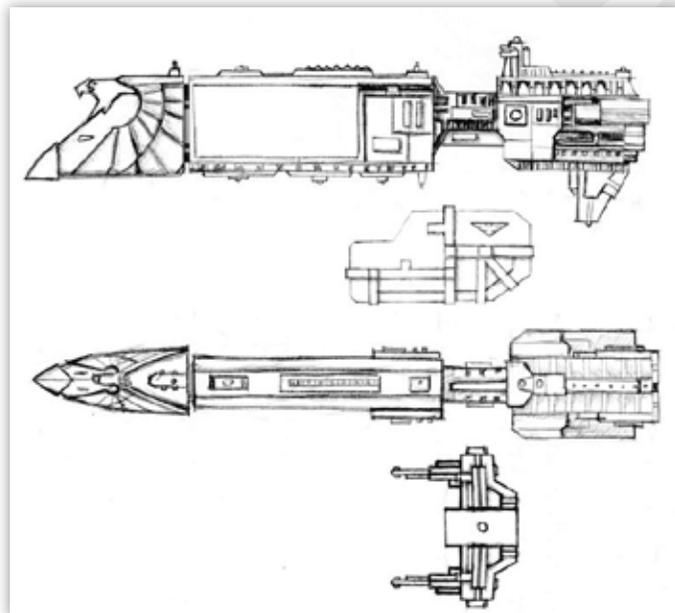
M40.....Designs for the Infidel escort are stolen and the forces of Chaos begin their construction

M41.....Falchion class escort developed to replace the stolen Infidel class

# BUILDING THE ZEUS LIGHT CRUISER by MANGOZAC

I recently received an email from my friend Vaaish, notifying me that he was taking over the editorial aspect of Warp Rift and asking if I could do some articles for upcoming issues. Well how could I say no? So here I present my first article for Warp Rift, providing a condensed overview of the process that goes into designing and completely scratchbuilding a BFG model: the Zeus light cruiser.

Following the completion of my Zeus prow project, I received a lot of feedback from people suggesting that I try my hand at a full scratchbuild, specifically a model along the same lines as the infamous Voss light cruisers (of which only a handful were ever produced by Games Workshop before the product was canned). All of the ego stroking went to my head and I accepted the challenge, embarking in what would end up being a 3-month project. For a number of reasons I had never been a big fan of the Voss light



cruiser design, so after accepting the challenge Vaaish and I came up with what we felt to be a very nice new design, combining a number of different Imperial design aesthetics so that it would fit in with any Imperial fleet theme.

I will point out early on that the intention from the start was to make a model that I could then duplicate in resin so I could have a number in my fleet (and provide a couple as prizes for Gothicomp 2010 as it turned out). This has two implications on the project:

1. The design must be constructed with casting in mind, so that it is split up into easily cast components.
2. No Games Workshop parts can be used, as there can be legal implications for casting GW IP. This means that all parts to be cast will be 100% build from scratch.

With a plan in place, the project had begun. This article is in essence a stripped down version of the build thread I ran on Port Maw and Resin Addict, and thus uses only the images I took for those posts. This means that they are more progress reports than instructional pictures, but I hope that by presenting them here and discussing the process people will be able to learn from it.

## THE CONCEPT ART

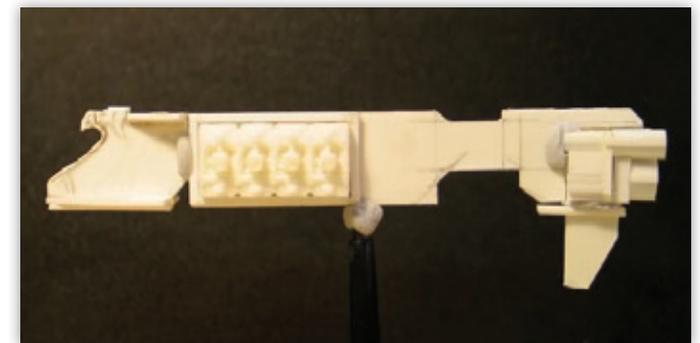
So I've scratchbuilt a few things by now, and the biggest thing one can do to ensure that the project goes as smoothly as possible is to have some good concept art to work from. Some people are sculpting freaks who can just mash plastic and putty and come up with something awesome, but not me. Thankfully Vaaish is quite an accomplished graphic designer and after I supplied him with a crude sketch of my own, he returned to me a beautiful sketch showing the side and top views of the design. Furthermore, as the

project progressed he provided updated versions of the drawing. Although the final physical design does have variations to the concept art, this does not make the concept art any less relevant or useful.

Equally important at this stage is deciding how the model will be broken up for casting. Of course if doing your own one off scratch-build this isn't a concern but in my case it was! I decided to split the hull into three main pieces: the prow, the hull and the engines/tail fin. In addition to that would be the horizontal and vertical wings, for a total of 6 parts. Later in the project I decided to do a second prow variant and my own design of weapons battery, increasing the parts count to nine.

## INITIAL FRAME

Since I was happy with the main proportions of the concept art, the first step in the process was to print it out, measure and transfer the basic side profile to some 1mm thick styrene sheet. The model is made from just two materials: styrene and putty, however I used several different styrene extruded shapes in addition to the basic sheet. A couple more shapes were added and a basic frame was formed, as shown in the picture. Note the early engine design

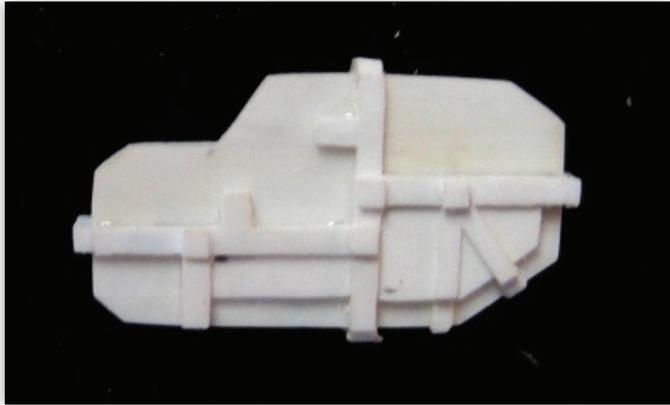


that was soon after scrapped for a better one. When working with styrene I use plastic cement almost exclusively.

### ADDING DETAILS

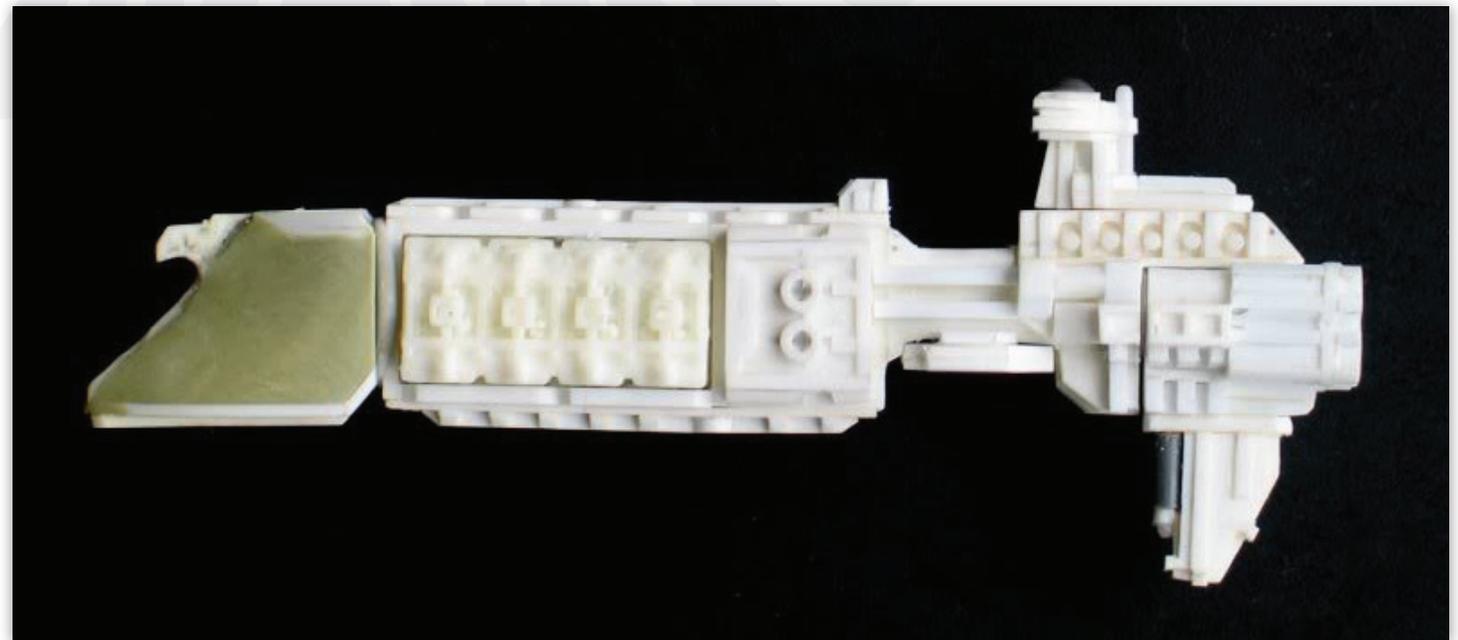
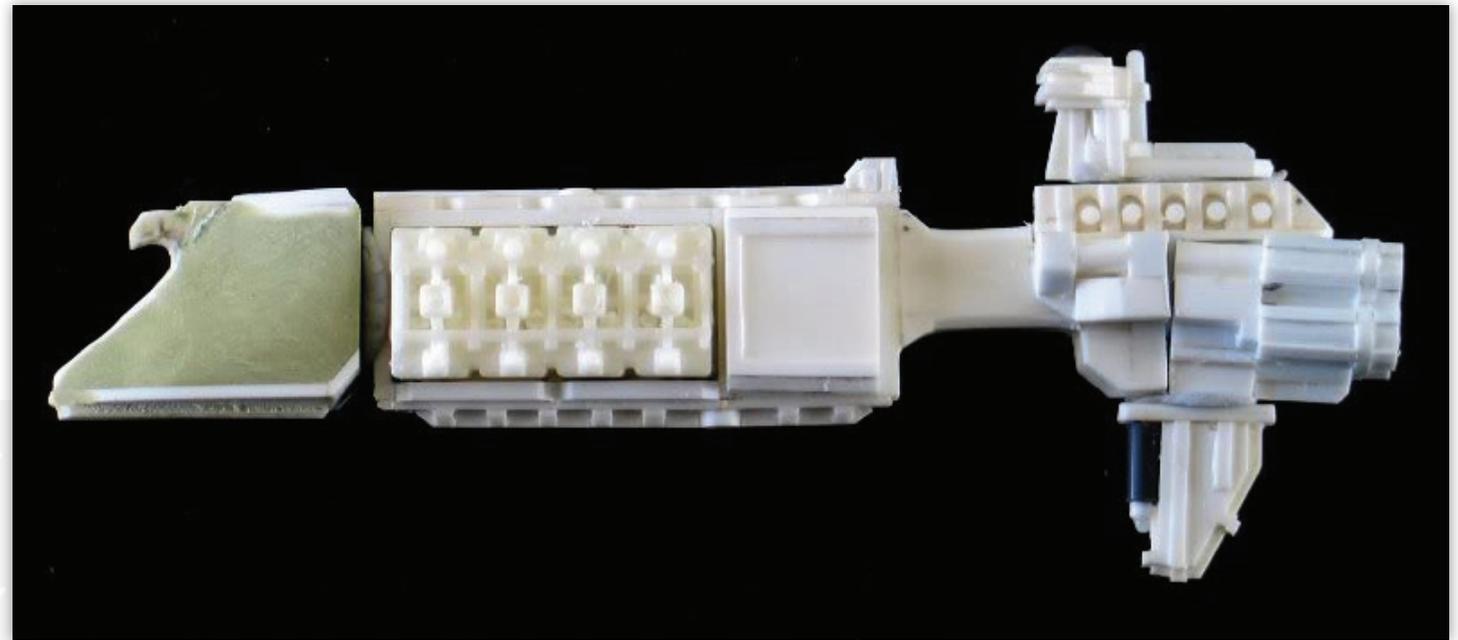
OK let's just say that this project took a lot longer than I had anticipated, mainly due to the level of detail required! Each and every little thing had to be cut from some tiny styrene extrusion. The arches below the bridge took quite a while to complete, each requiring a precisely drilled hole which was then cut into an arch. It's so small and fiddly that I broke the first two attempts.

The detail is all added in layers, which I hope these images portray. When breaking them down like that the task isn't so daunting and



the process can be made out fairly easily. In this picture you can see the new 6-tube engine design. By far the most widely used styrene strip in this project was the 0.75mmx0.25mm stuff used for most of the detailing. I often built it up in sections to get 0.5mm and 0.75mm by gluing two or three strips on top of each other. Alternatively you could just buy the right thicknesses of strip, but that can get quite expensive!

The next few shots show the continued detail build up. You will notice that some sections (particularly the block just aft of the weapons module) receive some gradual rework as the design is refined. You must excuse the misalignment of the parts in the

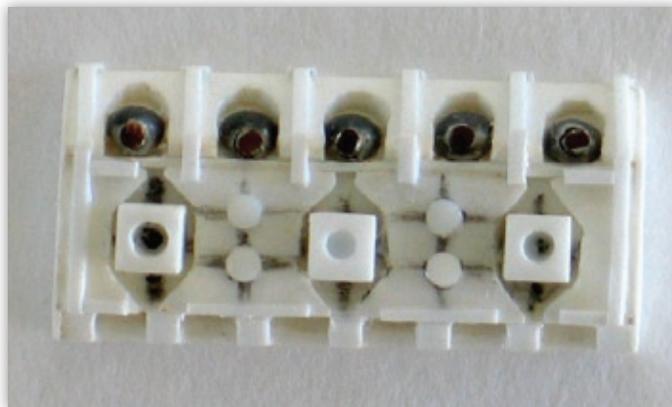
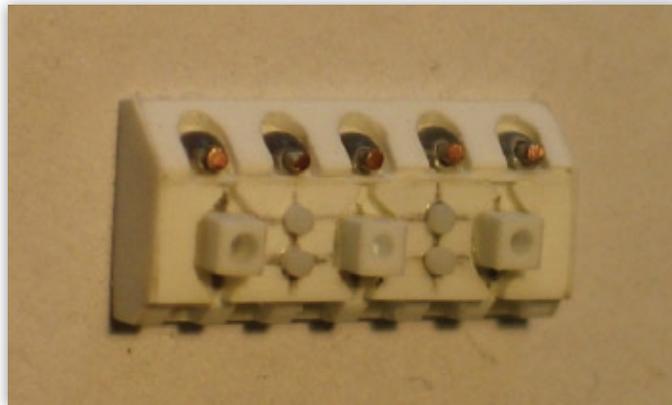


photos – they are just being held together with globs of blu-tac, which doesn't exactly make for precision joins!

## WEAPONS BATTERY MODULE

Unfortunately I didn't take any pictures of the very early stages of the weapons battery design, but much like the ship itself it's simply the gradual building up of styrene.

The grey domes used to make the top row of turrets (and used in other places on the ship) are a little scratchbuilding secret called "Modelling Support Goods" made by Kotobukiya in Japan. They produce a number of small sprues with all sorts of cool shapes and sizes for detailing and although intended for Gunpla (i.e. Gundam



models), they work just fine for any modelling application. They can be intimidating to buy though if you've never dealt with Japanese online stores.

Barrels for the top row turrets are made from 0.8mm diameter tinned copper wire (the lead of a 1N4007 diode shopped up, for those who know what that is).

## THE PROW

Originally the plan for the project was to do a unique new prow design in which the bulk of the prow was covered with sweeping forward wings of the eagle, but after it had been created there was a lot of feedback that I should do a standard "Voss" style prow. So I did both!

Both prows are constructed using the same technique. The first step is to create a basic frame out of 0.75mm styrene: this includes the side profile piece, top surface, bottom surface and rear. Once the glue is set then some Milliput is mixed up and pushed into the cavities of the frame. You then have two options: spend some time to properly sculpt the Milliput into the exact shape of the prow itself (i.e. the blank prow without the eagle, wings, etc.) or just do a rough shaping before letting the Milliput set and then refining the shape with sandpaper. I prefer the latter option as I find it easier, but either technique is perfectly valid.

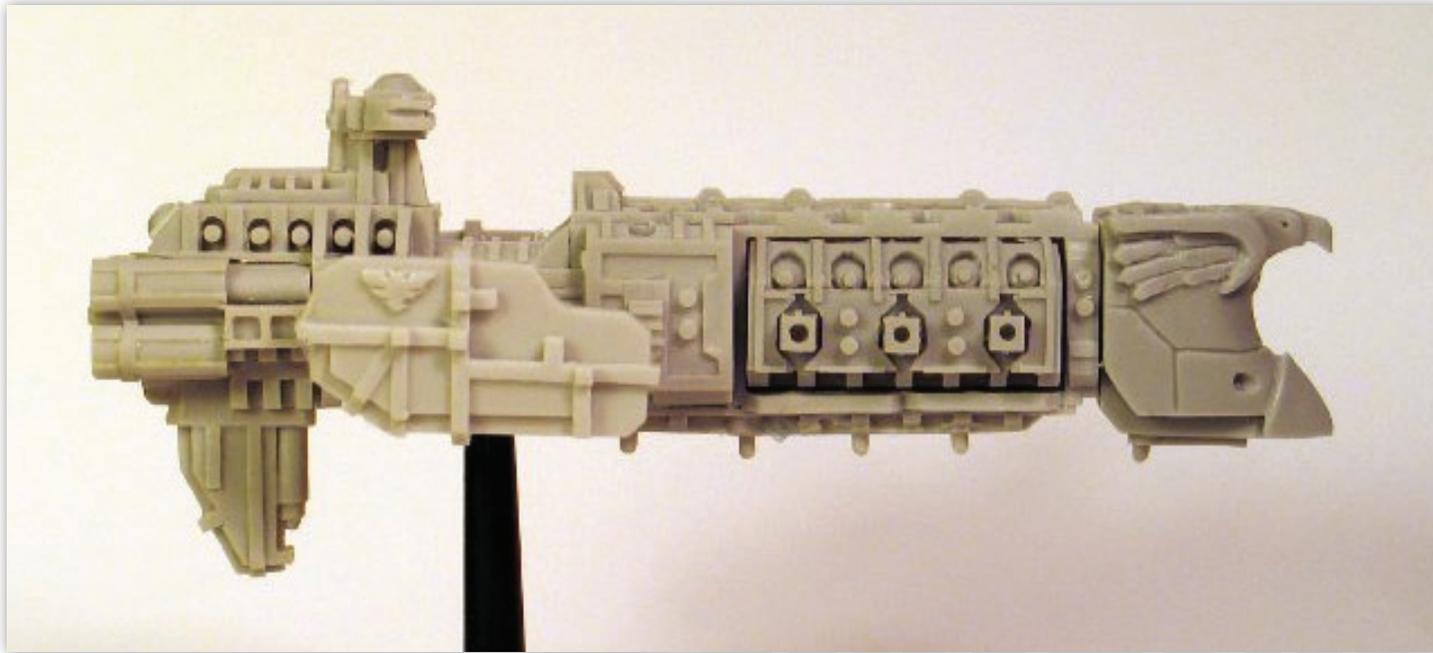
Once the basic prow shape is complete it's then time to detail. More styrene is used to create interesting shapes on the top and bottom surfaces, like the miniature masts, etc. I sculpted the armoured lower tip of the prows with Milliput using the same technique of rough application and then further refinement through carving and sanding once it has set.

Arguably one of the most difficult parts of the project (depending on how good a sculptor you are) is creating the prow figurehead eagle. It took me a couple of goes to get right. First off the basic outline is sketched onto the prow using a pencil. Ensure that various points are measured so that the two sides are symmetrical as possible. I found it easiest to sculpt the wings first (one side at a time, allowing curing in between) and then the head in a separate session. For



the record, my medium of preference for this kind of sculpting is a 50/50 mix of greenstuff and Milliput. I hate working with greenstuff by itself and for very fine work the uncured Milliput can be a pain too. But mix them together and you have the best of both worlds! Note that in these pictures only the Voss style prow was done with this mix as I was still experimenting through this project.

The very last step in creating the prow is to carve the panel lines and drill torpedo tubes. Again, I first sketch them on in pencil and then create over the top of these lines. The panel lines I create using a tiny saw blade intended to fit onto a scalpel, which I then widen using a sculpting tool that I find has a perfectly shaped end for carving panel lines.



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## FINALISATION

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You may notice in some pictures pink areas on the model. This is where I've used automotive spot putty to fill in little gaps or flaws. Although the spot putty can only fill small gaps/holes (and sometimes may need a couple of coats), it's extremely quick curing time means that it can be sanded and worked with after less than half an hour, much faster than sculpting putties! It does need to be used in a well ventilated room though...

With the master model complete it's time for moulding and casting, but those are subjects for another day! Here are some pictures of the finished product.

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## CONCLUSION

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As mentioned earlier in the article, this project did end up taking much longer than I had first anticipated, and by the end I was certainly eager to see the completion. I now have several of my own, and gave a couple to Vaaish who did a fantastic job of painting them up (I have too much fun modelling these days to find time for painting!). Although I'm currently working on plans for a 40k scale model scratchbuild, I'm always discussing ideas for new BFG projects with others and I wouldn't be surprised if I take another one on soon enough!

I hope this article has presented a suitably useful demonstration of the process used to scratchbuild a BFG model and that it inspires others to undertake such projects. If you do, please take time to share the results! For any questions or further information feel free to contact me or the other mad keen modellers on the Resin Addict forum at <http://www.resinaddict.com/forum/>

Thanks for reading!

# GOTHICOMP 2010 FLEET CATEGORY WINNER: WESSELSTEIN

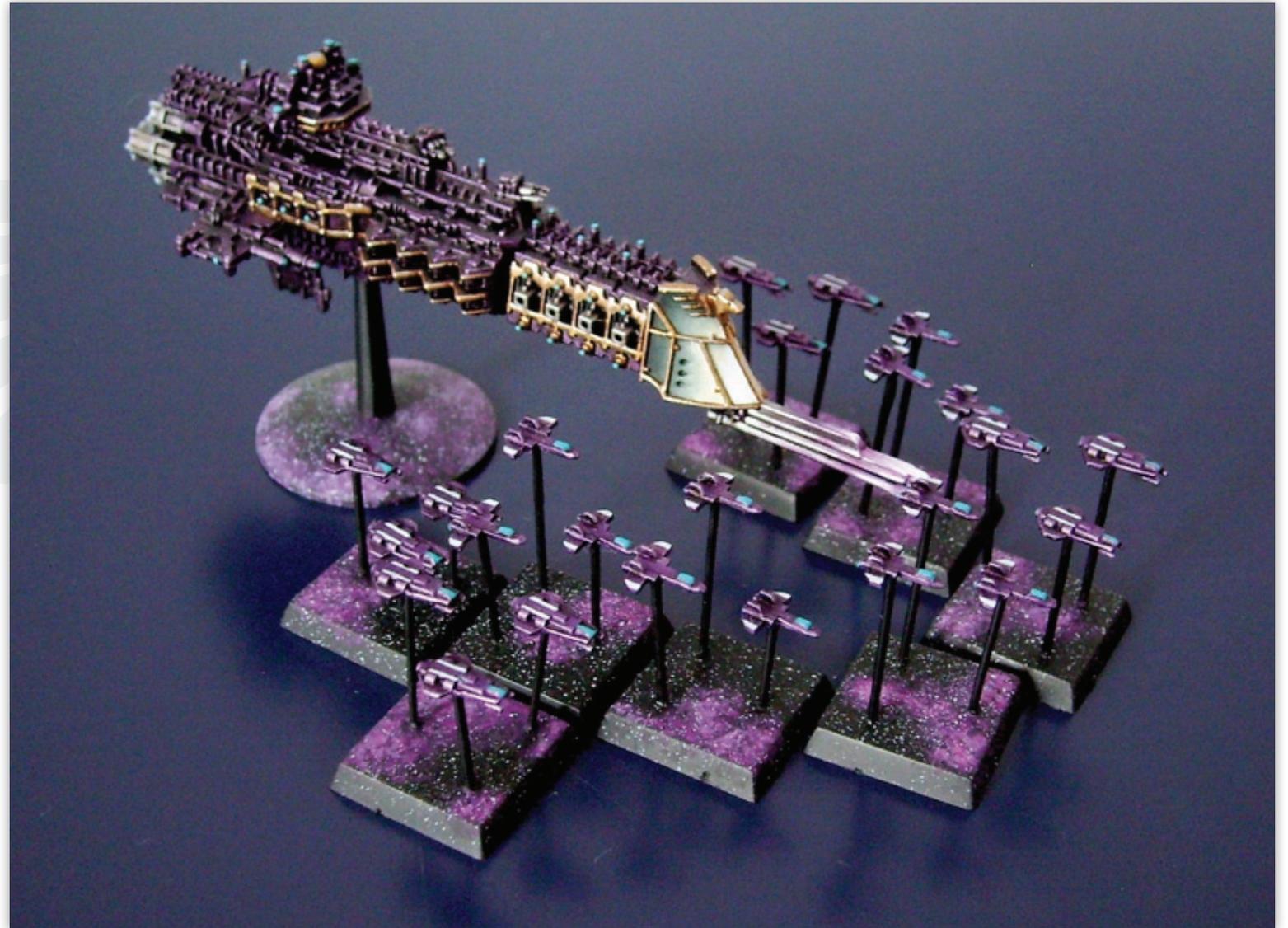
## ABOUT THE ARTIST:

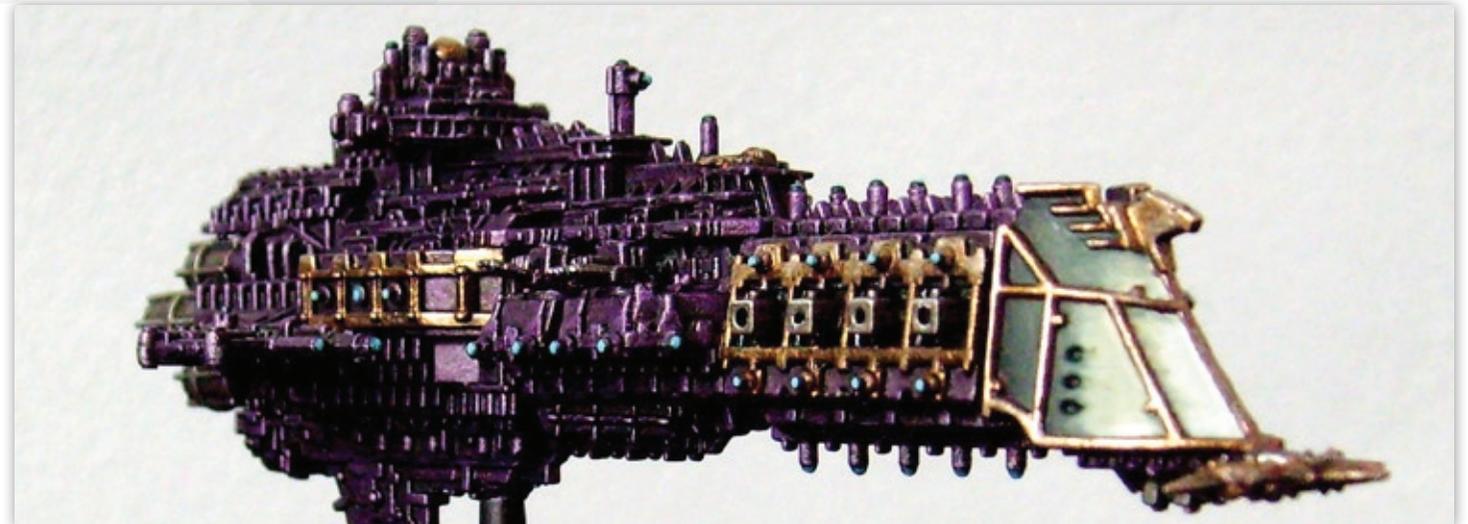
My name's Hugo (known as "Minus" on internet boards) and I'm a 27-year-old French gamer. I've played WHFB, 40k and Mordheim since I was in high school and a friend of mine wanted us to start playing BattleFleet Gothic. The board we belong to has group painting projects in which several people build and paint an army at the same time with several steps and deadlines to observe. When the board launched a BattleFleet Gothic project, my friend joined it and so did I!

The aim for the fifteen attendees was to paint a 750 points fleet plus some scenery elements during a three months period. My friend had chosen to paint a dirty Nurgle Fleet, I decided to do the opposite and paint an immaculate Imperial Navy Fleet. I wanted to use purple as the main color. After some color scheme trials, the current one came out : metallic purple for the body, and a white prow with golden ornaments to symbolize the purity and the arrogance of the Imperium.

This year's Gothicomp ended exactly the same day as our deadline and we thought that attending to this contest was a funny way to end our project. That's why several French painters were present this year.

To conclude, I'd like to thank the Gothicomp team and all those who voted for my fleet.





# BATTLES IN THE WARP

by DAN LEE

Though fighting space battles in the Warp is dangerous to the point of being suicidal, there are times when an admiral is desperate or crazy enough to try it. Such battles are incredibly difficult to fight as most of a ship's auger systems are non-functional in warp space and much of the ship's power must be diverted to the Geller field which maintains a bubble or real-space around the ship.

Fighting a battle in warp space is best done as a one-off battle where both players agree to do so before hand, or as an interesting twist to a scenario in a narrative campaign.

## SCENARIO

Given the rarity of battles in the warp they are probably best represented by confrontations between small forces. I would recommend playing a small point size fleet engagement or a cruiser clash. Small games are also helpful as the rules for fighting in warp space are quite chaotic and could over-burden a larger game.

## CELESTIAL PHENOMENA

There is no solar wind or light from the stars in warp space, so there is no need to roll to see which table edge is sunward. For the sake of Eldar movement, assume that they are always facing away from the sunward edge.

The warp is completely alien to real-space, but at the same time contains reflections of real-space which create deceptively familiar phenomena.

Use the following generator to determine celestial phenomena (roll D6):

1. **Warp Tsunami:** Roll a D6 at the start of each player turn. On a roll of 6 a tsunami occurs. Every ship or squadron must make a leadership test. Any ship or squadron that fails is attacked by



the equivalent of a strength 2D6 lance battery (roll separately for each ship or squadron). Shields and "brace for impact" are allowed as normal. If multiple tsunamis are generated only roll one D6 per player turn, but continue to roll each turn for the tsunamis until all generated tsunamis have arrived.

2. **Warp Current:** Draw an arrow D3 x 10cm long. Determine the arrow's direction using a scatter dice. Any ship crossing the arrow will immediately move in the direction of the arrow by 2D6cm without changing its direction. If two currents cross and a ship is therefore moved through one current followed by the other, apply both current movement effects in full.
3. D3 Warp Currents
4. **Shoal of Warp Predators:** A shoal of warp predators is D3 x 5cm by D3 x 5cm big. Any ship which is in base contact with

one or more shoals during any part of the movement phase suffers D6 hit and run attacks at the end of the movement phase. In every end phase move each shoal D6cm towards the nearest ship.

5. D3 Shoals of Warp Predators
6. **Ghost Planet:** Place a small planet on the table. The size of the planet's gravity well randomly fluctuates. At the start of each player turn roll D3 and multiply the result by 5cm to get the size of the planet's gravity well.

## SPECIAL RULES

**Beyond the Geller Field:** Anything which passes beyond a ship's Geller field immediately begins to break down as the laws of Physics upon which its very existence depends begin to unravel.

- Lances (and similar weapons) hit on a 5+ if the target is over 30cm away, and require a 6+ to hit if the target is over 45cm away.
- Weapons batteries (and similar weapons) suffer a right column shift for every 15cm (or part thereof) that the target is away.
- Nova cannons may not be fired as their ammunition is too precious to be wasted in the warp.
- Ordnance waves loose a single squadron or torpedo at the end of each ordnance phase.
- Teleport attacks simply do not work as the matter beams dissolve in the warp.

**Geller Field Failure:** The rigours of battle play havoc with a ship's Geller field, which makes incoming fire doubly dangerous when fighting in the warp. At the start of each end phase every ship or

escort squadron that has taken a point or more of damage in the current turn, or is in contact with blast markers, must make a Geller field check. Geller field checks are resolved as follows:

1. Roll 1D6 and then add one for each point of damage taken in the current turn, plus another one for each blast marker that the ship (or squadron) is in contact with. As escort squadrons that are damaged are destroyed, you do not need to add the amount of damage taken by escort squadrons to their Geller field checks.
2. Subtract the ships remaining hit points or the squadrons remaining number of escorts from that number.
3. The ship or squadron then suffers a number of hit and run attacks equal to this remaining number as warp predators and daemons find weaknesses in the Geller field and begin

materializing onboard the ship. In the case of escort squadrons the hits are distributed as evenly as possible around the squadron.

Battles in the warp work normally in all other respects. Ships move normally, can disengage (they make an emergency real-space transition), and have shields. Note that loosing shields is not the same as loosing the Geller field. A ship can have its shields down or even suffer a "Shields Collapse" critical hit and still be protected by its Geller field.



## A GOOD DEED, PART 1 by A. R. ASTON

The signal came in bursts. At first it was garbled; like a person shouting underwater. Then, as the Explorer neared the waystation, the signal relayed through the bright glinting space station became much clearer.

++Come to us... help...++

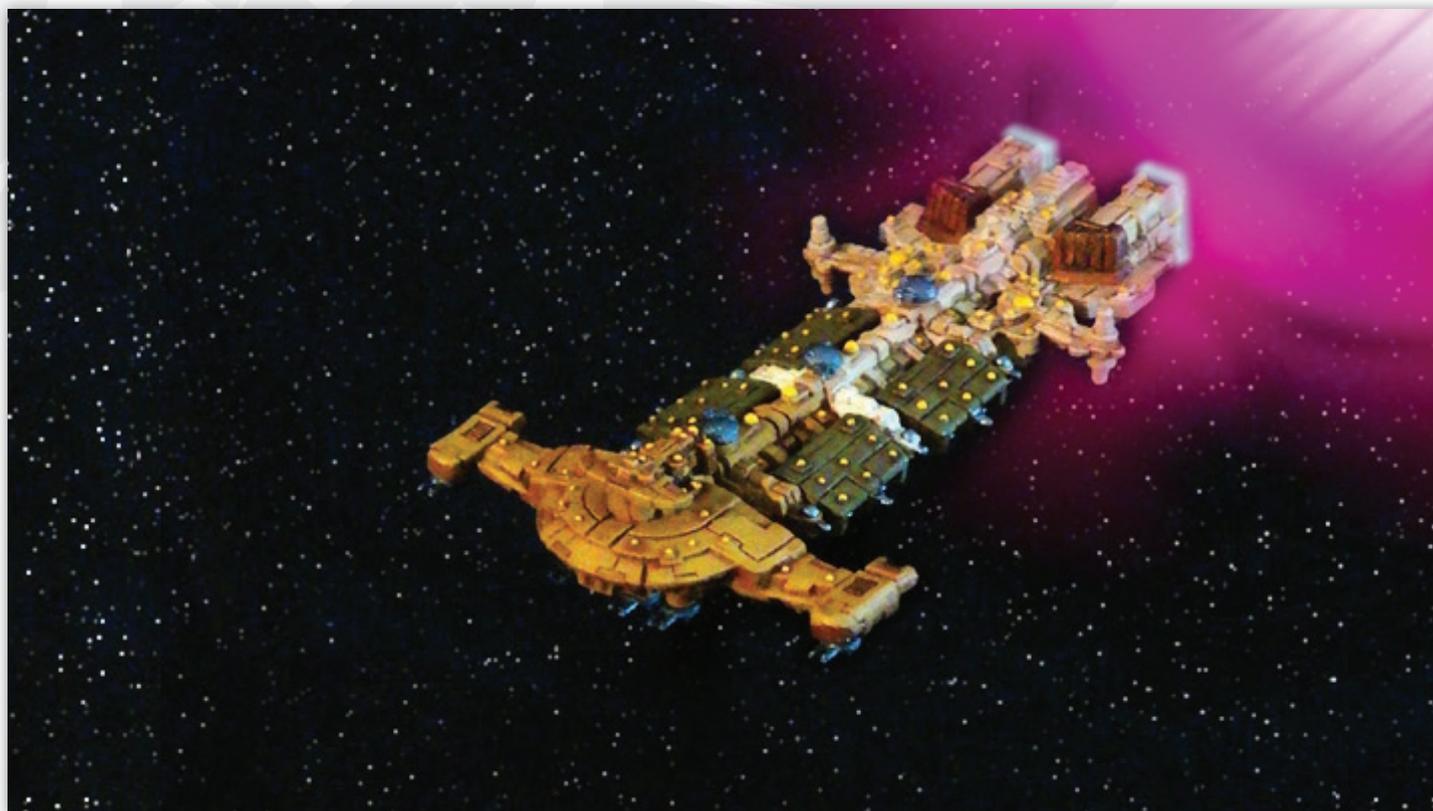
Repeated over and over, the signal called out to Kor'Vanai and his various water caste interpreters like a siren song. Por'Kais, the Por'O of his expedition was almost certain the voices down the line were Gue'la voices (indeed, he had translated the signal for the Air Caste Admiral only scant days before), but distorted somehow. It wasn't just interference or the long lag and deterioration that eventually decayed all signals in the void; their voices sounded strained and unlike the deep throaty voices of Gue'Vesa he had met. As if they were gargling something vile.

He turned inside his grave-dome; letting his limbs float without effort in the weightless sphere, as he languidly pressed holographic runes or tapped on symbols that were pressed into the plastic-glass that surrounded him. With a gesture, an image of the world beyond the explorer's flank-windows swam into view. It was an odd realm; the space between space. The Earth Caste knew it as another dimension, a realm when time and space contracted, until journeys of millennia took weeks, unlocking a realm of near-infinite possibility beyond Tau. Out into the galaxy, where his race could encounter diverse cultures and bring them into the fold of the greatest good in the galaxy. The thought made him smile, yet the faster than light dimension always unsettled him for some reason.

For two decades he had plied this realm; plunging his various vessels into a yawning chasm of darkness and dull muted colours his sensors couldn't quite determine, before his vessel would experience a sudden surge in apparent speed. It didn't feel like he had penetrated anything at all. It felt, in his hollow bones, that the ships

of the Tau were being skipped along the surface of some great vast... deepness, which would not permit them entry. Of course the gue'la, that ancient race of star-mariners, spoke of the realm as if it were some realm of mythical monsters and sea beasts, but every caste knew the gue'la were hopeless mystics; they saw terrors wherever they went, and whoever they met. Anything they didn't understand was a foe to be overcome. Perhaps that was why their Empire, the 'Imperium' was so reluctant to join with the Tau and

help them save the galaxy from the old terror of disunity? It was not hate, but rather a collective terror, a fear of the dark between stars. Vanai lacked this defect of course, as did his race entire. The Tau trusted the Earth Caste. They would one day penetrate the mysteries of that anomalous dimension. A phenomenon understood was a phenomenon overcome. Vanai couldn't remember which Aun had said that. He cursed himself for his laxity.





His mind returned eventually to the signal. Gue'la calling out into the void for help. This deep in Tau space, they must know only the Tau could respond quickly enough to do anything for them? Yes, this signal was surely for them; the Gue'la were throwing themselves upon the mercy of the Ka'Mais sept. Vanai vowed that he would prove to them that their hope was not unfounded. Then, perhaps, the way would be paved for assimilation into the collective. In truth, the humans would have no choice but to accept the Greater Good. Kor'Vanai couldn't in good conscience save a gue'la vessel only for it to remain opposed to his ideology. E couldn't permit an enemy to grow stronger from his charity, only to strike at the Empire later. The Tau were many things; merciful, persuasive, hopeful, but they weren't naive. If they rejected their efforts to help them become better than they were, then he'd have to remove the threat, regrettably. Such is the price of peace.

The vast Explorer class starship broke back into realspace in a wash of azure hues and strange coils of colour that lingered

briefly on the colossal hull like electromagnetic ripples of energy; ghosts of a realm beyond the real. The cold, expansive void stretched out in all directions, studded with pearl-like stars that glittered with promise.

"Admiral, wide range scans have yet to pick up the engine signature of the stricken Gue'La vessel," one of the Kor'La explained in calm tones from his own grav couch.

"Keep scanning; it may be shrouded by the radiation from this system's red star. It is in its last stages before collapse," he replied professionally. No one argued.

###

It took the expedition three days to locate the weak, stuttering signal's source, winking from the midst of a field of slowly spinning debris. Kor'Vanai didn't like to linger for so long in such a realm

of the dead and the silent. It was a diversion from their original goal; the foundation of the new colony worlds beyond the southern plane-wards region of the third sphere expansion. By the time they found the vessel originating the communication, the rest of the Tau fleet burst into the system like worrying pilot fish around their wayward behemoth.

Aun'Tava was on the deck as they reached the vessel, and every Tau on the bridge stood that little bit straighter, or spoke with slightly faltering, awe-inspired words while the Ethereal paced the smooth polished floors with almost the practiced grace of a dancer.

"May I see the ship, Admiral?" Tava asked sweetly, her voice like honey; peaceful yet so full of certainty it made Vanai grin with simple joy to hear it. He compiled instantly, tapping several runes until a wide panel of a viewscreen shimmered into existence before the Ethereal.

The ship was ugly; it was profoundly angular and ostentatious. It could almost pass for a greenskin vessel if it wasn't for the obvious signs of aesthetic that showed through in the great gargoyles and crenulations that decorated the stricken vessel. And stricken it was, for its entire port side seemed ripped away; frozen coils of formerly-liquid metal spiralling off from the old wound. The debris field was composed of elements of the injured vessel, but there was too much wreckage for it to be the remains of one dead ship. There must have been a great and terrible battle fought in the system. Not a clean and civilised engagement between two naval powers, but some great and brutal mauling. A war of murder and mutual destruction. A war between barbarians. Kor'vanai's lip curled in distaste.

"I think we should send a team to this vessel, to rescue the poor souls calling out to us. Do you think this Kor'Vanai?" Tava asked softly.

Up until then, Kor'Vanai had not thought of this. But now the Aun had said it, he was certain that is what should happen.

"Of course. I will organise the details Aun," he nodded in his orb of weightlessness.

She nodded humbly, deferring to the technical skills of the various castes under her guidance. The ethereal never claimed to be experts in the field of leading or organizing. They were to guide and encourage and to shape the ideology upon which their civilization rested. They were the bedrock and the cornerstone in one.

He reluctantly turned away from the Ethereal, and focussed once more upon the forbidding darkness of the wreck.

If anyone still lived, then by the Aun he'd bring them into the light.

###

Shas'Ui'Lox was the first into the breach burned into the gue'la vessel's hull. There was no light, save the glittering of broken displays and dials long since shattered into irrelevance.

"Blacklight," was all he needed to say to his men as he plunged into the darkness, flanked by his fire team.

Within moments, the darkness vanished; replaced by a world illuminated in blue-green tones. The Tau warriors moved from room to room, deck to deck, with practiced efficiency and cold precision. First the bobbing sensor drone would enter each chamber in turn, passing its wide beams throughout, searching for any signs of life. The Fire Warriors would follow the instant the dull-witted machine bleeped a positive result.

The ship was a tomb for the most part, with deck after deck filled with shattered consoles and void-frozen corpses sprawled across the ground in various stages of decay and destruction. Red alien blood coated the walls in nonsensical patterns, and gathered in tight little crimson ball bearings of frozen gore across the floor. Lox thanked the Earth Caste for his sealed environmental suit, which warmed his blood despite the hateful chill beyond. It took them almost 2 decs of dispassionate searching before they found the location of the miniscule heat source that still lived within the ruin.

From deathly chill to sweltering heat, the fire team burst into the heated deck. Here there was air, yet Lox refused to allow his fellow Tau to sample it, for he opened his vents for a few seconds and

instantly regretted it. Faeces and filth assailed his sense organs in an overwhelming tide of revulsion. He knew Gue'la had a poor sense of smell, but surely they knew this rotten stench was beyond tolerable! But then again, it seemed they had little choice. One did what one could to survive he supposed, as he looked upon the wretches that huddled in alcoves and doorways, glaring at his men with eyes aflame with hope, or perhaps mania. Bodies and ruptured tins of rotting food and other, less wholesome remnants, littered the floor hoof-deep. He sealed his helmet vents with an unseen sneer of distaste.

The faces of the survivors were carved with that same runic language Lox had failed to decipher before, and their hair was matted with caked grime and dried blood, giving them an ever more savage appearance.

Lox almost stumbled as a dozen of the figures pressed upon him and his team, hands groping the armour and stroking it like beggars. They babbled and moaned in gue'la speak. Lox tapped his helmet antennae once.

"Shas'Ui'Lox'Vanesh'Kais here. We have located survivors. Water caste, I'm linking my audio sensors to your control desks; tell me what they are saying."

Within moments, the smooth voice of Por'Kais filtered through the comm.

++ They are asking if you have come to save them. Others are thanking you, and a few are begging you to help their... leader. ++

"Hesitation?" Lox inquired.

++ Apologies. Their dialect is strange. It might be leader, or holy man, or demagogue. I cannot be entirely certain. ++

Lox shrugged, gesturing for them to lead on.

They plunged deeper into the inner reaches of the cramped gue'la vessel, with its narrow passages and harsh angular lines. Only the flicker of torch-flames illuminated the path through the squalor for the gue'la, while Lox retained his green mono-colour image to navigate by. He took note of several strange and interesting

machines as he passed, making a mental note to inform the Earth Caste of interesting new technology that could be assimilated into their wider knowledge. Every situation was an opportunity for betterment, he smiled sagely.

Eventually, they reached the innermost sanctum of the community of starving aliens. A strange star-like symbol was carved into the deck plates, and dozens of gue'la clad in black and white robes hung back in the shadows, observing the new arrivals warily. In the middle of the room, surrounded by several muttering figures clad in bloodstained orange worker's fatigues, was a man, coughing up blood. His body was a ravished mess; probably the result of multiple projectile wounds. The primitive gue'la had attempted to help the stricken figure, but their stitches and bandages were woe-fully inadequate and oozed pus and infected flesh which Lox knew would stink of rot. A wilting stick of some sort of parchment was rolled and sat smoking in his mouth, and the dying man seemed to gurgle with laughter as the smoke billowed from a blistered wound which opened up his throat. It seemed surreal that such an injured figure could seem so at peace. Perhaps he knew he was dying? Perhaps he had given up?

The men at his side babbled at the Fire Warriors and gestured frantically.

"What are they...?"

++ "Save him! Save him! Please! Please! The saviour must survive! The truth must be known!" That is as much as I can decipher Shas'Ui. I suspect this is some sort of spiritual leader, akin to our own Aun. I strongly advise you bring him to the ship for healing. We will require him for negotiation. ++

"Understood. Earth Caste; We will require a saviour pod and several medical attendants as soon as possible. In addition, I have markerlighted several technologies of interest as advised. Shas'Ui'Lox out."

Editor's note: Look for the conclusion of "A Good Deed" in the next issue of *Warp Rift*.

PROJECT DISTANT DARKNESS

# DISTANT SUN

