

# irregular

Spring 2015 Issue 1 Volume 2

magazine



# Editorial

We're back folks, yes, Irregular Magazine is back. After closing down the magazine back in 2013 due to a lack of contributors and real life issues, we've decided to bring back Irregular. The aim is to be bigger and better, so this is Issue 1 Volume 2... what have we in store for you, well this issue see tutorials for painting and terrain building, along with our resident fiction writer is back with a brand new short story. Future plans include campaign background for Bolt Action set in China during WW2.

So what a great year to come back to, the Star Wars film is a lot closer, the third part of the Hobbit has been released, there is a new CEO at Games workshop and if the rumor mill is correct we're going to see some massive changes on the Warhammer front. Dreadball season 4 is officially out in March, though the KS backers will already have early copies, myself included. We also had 5th edition of D&D released in autumn 2014, so you can expect supplement and additional material to roll out all of this year.

In regards to the pending release of the new Star Wars film, Fantasy Flights have several games exploding onto the market in the wake of X-Wing success. There is the miniature board game Imperial Assault, which was released just before xmas, so expect several expansions this year for that game. A new RPG has also been released, so the outlook for the rest of the year would suggest lots more SW related games.

So what have I been upto since 2013, well I moved house from Wales back to England and I got engaged at Christmas.. oh.. you guys are wanting to know what I've been upto hobby wise.. right... Well like every other person on the planet I started playing Dreadball and Deadzone. The other big game I've started getting into along with every Tom, Dick and Harry is Bolt Action. I've started both a British and German army, but I've started researching the Asia theatre of war, and realised I don't actually know much regarding the war in the Pacific/Asia. So this has led me to build a Chinese army to battle the Japanese.

Other hobby projects have included building a small High Elf army on the cheap, plus I've started my entries for this years Salute Painting Competition. Plans for this year include finishing one of the three Bolt Action armies, paint a faction for Malifaux and play a few games. I'm also hoping to build, paint a faction for Helldorado, I need to add some fantasy and Sci-Fi or steampunk to the mix, so decided to try and play Malifaux, Helldorado and I'm considering Infinity.

Well thats all for now folks...enjoy the rest of the magazine and I'll see you next time..  
Cheers Jason

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<http://www.twitter.com/irregularmag>  
[irregularmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:irregularmagazine@gmail.com)

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**The Irregular Team**

Editor: Jason Hubbard

Co-Editor: Alex Garbett

Proofing: Irregular Team

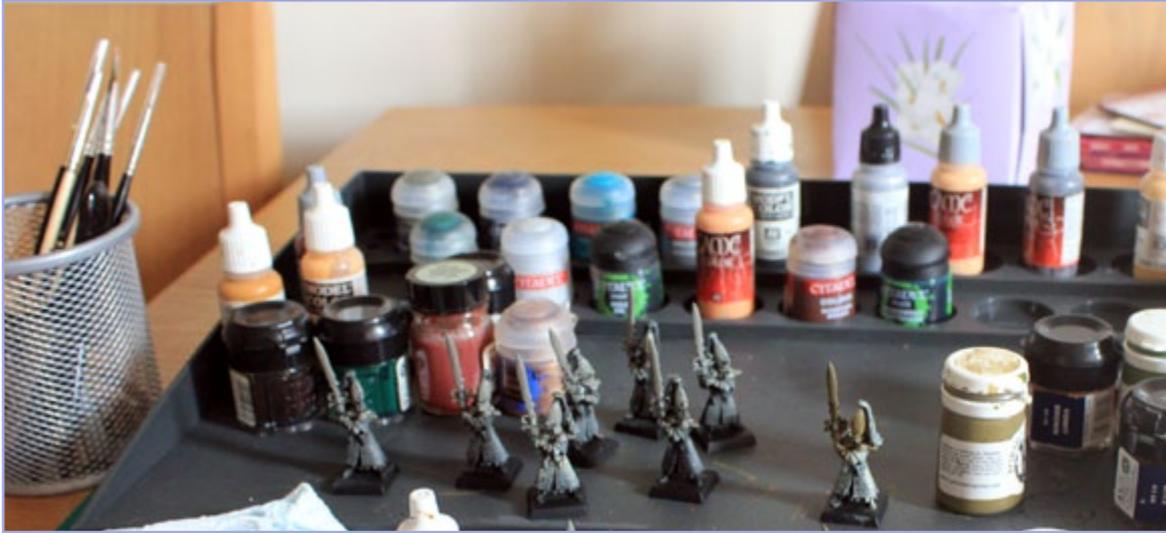
Cover Art: Gracjana Zielinska

Graphic Design/Layout: Jason Hubbard

Interior Art:

Web Site: Dave Barker

Social Media: Irregular Team



## Editor's Challenge: An Army on the Cheap

*Jason Hubbard*

Last year I decided to set a challenge to myself, and that was to build and paint an army for under £150. Although I didn't quite manage to complete the challenge in the allotted time. It has given me the germ of an idea, set some challenges for 2015. All I need now is some ideas for a challenge.

One of the constant complaints I hear from gamers is the rising cost of gaming. Especially by those who want to start a new army for a system they already play or getting into a new game. Most say the high start up costs put them off. So I decided how cheaply can I start a new army for a system I don't play.

I started to look around at the different systems out there. I initially started to look at historical, but I realise that I have quite a few armies for several periods already and have started a couple of new ones. So I decided to look at the fantasy and science fiction genres. This led to look back at my childhood game of choice, Warhammer by Games Workshop. You only have to check out the forums for this system to see the mass of complaints about the costs for this particular game to know its expensive. Having not played Warhammer or 40K in a number of years I decided to check out the website and the prices. Yes, they are really high, in fact I would go as far to say its probably the most expensive game to buy an army for.

This then confirmed my choice of game system to build an army for. The next question was which army, this turned out to be pretty easy. I decided on High Elves mainly because I've never painted a GW elf before, so this would be an interesting challenge for me.





So what are the rules for this challenge, well NO;1 is basically I only have £150 to build a competitive 1500-2000 pt High Elf army. I then have to paint it all in a period of 6 months. The next rule is it has to be bought 2nd hand from either Ebay, buying from friends or via swaps. I have to paint the items I've bought before making the next purchase. I also have to obtain a copy of the High Elf army list and the system rulebook. Now this doesn't need to be the latest edition of the rules, but what ever edition of the rules I decide to purchase. Then the army book has to be also from that edition.

So I gave myself 6 months to complete this challenge and that includes having the army fully painted. The aim is to show how cheap you can enter the wargaming hobby, and I intend to show this by building a GW army which most gamers would say is the most expensive game to start playing.

So having decided to build and paint a Warhammer Fantasy Army, I decided to do High Elves. My first port of call was to head over to EBay and try my luck on some bargains. To be honest I was surprised how cheap some of the listings are.

I placed some bids on several items, hoping that I'd win at least one of them. I selected a random choice of units to bid on. These included a chariot, spearmen unit, Swordsman of Hoeth and a Lord on a Griffon, from the recent starter set. I also decided to search through the listing for starter sets as well, as I realised that if I could get a copy of the recent starter set or a copy of the 4th edition starter I'd get a reasonable amount of troops on my first purchase. The current starter sets at retail are around the £70 which is not a bad price, but I wanted to go better than that. To be honest at the time of bidding there was a both a recent set and a 4th edition, but alas I didn't win either.

So what was my first purchase, well I managed to win two of the items I was bidding on. The first were the Swordsmen of Hoeth, 15 metal individuals already undercoated. These came in at a price of £5.75, which was a massive bargain, especially when you consider that at retail 15 would have cost me £61.50. So a huge saving of £55.75.

The second item was the Lord on the Griffon, which cost me £3.50. As this came from the starter set I'm not sure how much it would cost retail but I'm guessing that if this was sold individually by GW would come in at around £20 retail. So if I work on that basis I save £16.50. So those two items have already saved me £72.25, already its proving to be an excellent way to purchase a new army through eBay.

So I started painting the Swordsmen of Hoeth, I decided to go with a bronze look to the armour. I don't really want a bright shiny army, but more a battle hardened one, that's been campaigning in the field for some time. So the aim will be to make it look like they've been on campaign for some time. I've never liked my armies to look like they've just walked on the parade ground, or are more suited to being palace guards. I like them to look a little rough and dirty.

In regards to which edition I'm going to use I'm currently contemplating 3rd edition of Warhammer. Though this will mean trying to get my hands on a copy of the Warhammer Armies book, as individual army books weren't produced until 4th edition was published. If this becomes a sticking point then I may look at a later

edition.

I'd managed to paint and complete two units, the swordsmen of Hoeth and a unit of Seaguard. I've also managed to purchase enough minis for a 1200 point army, plus the current rule book and the High Army book all for under £40. Which is a lot cheaper than I originally expected.

This just goes to show that if you shop around on sites like E-bay is fairly easy to obtain an army at a very reasonable price. My plan going into 2015 is to replicate this process with an army for Bolt Action. War gaming doesn't need to be an expensive hobby, there are ways to build an army relatively cheaply, it may mean that you don't have the latest shiny models that have just been released, but you will have an army that you can game with. Which at the end of the day that's what counts.

So as the weeks have rolled by I've not been able to paint all of the units for this challenge so far, that will be the next phase I'll need to complete. Some of the units I purchased had already been painted, but luckily these were just simple base coats. So I decided I could repaint them without having to strip them right back.

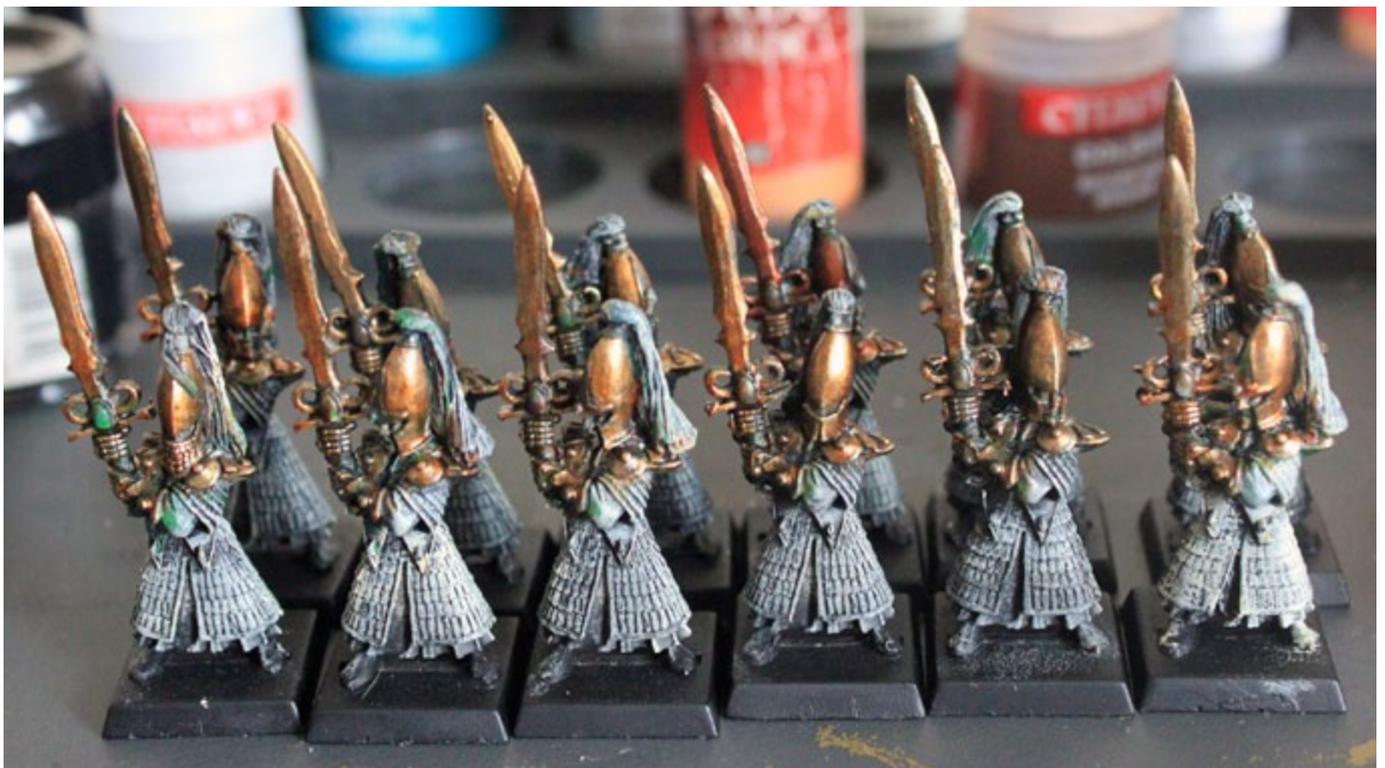
I finally managed to paint and complete two units, the swordsmen of Hoeth and a unit of Seaguard. I've also managed to purchase enough minis for a 1200 point army, plus the current rule book and the High Army book all for under £40. Which is a lot cheaper than I originally expected.

This is still an ongoing challenge, as I've still got between 300-800 more point to buy. Even though I've not managed to complete the challenge in the allotted time I gave myself it has show me that starting a new army for any game/rules system needn't be an expensive task. It can be done cheaply and I would highly recommend setting yourself a budget and giving it ago.

This just goes to show that if you shop around on sites like E-bay is fairly easy to obtain an army at a very reasonable price. My plan going into 2015 is to replicate this process with an army for Bolt Action. War gaming doesn't need to be an expensive hobby, there are ways to build an army relatively cheaply, it may mean that you don't have the latest shiny models that have just been released, but you will have an army that you can game with. Which at the end of the day that's what counts.

I plan to challenge myself to a different task each issue. The next challenge will be a painting one, more details will follow on our Facebook page. I will also be asking our readers for future challenge ideas on our Social Media as well. I will endeavour to get this army painted and finished, once I've done that all images will be uploaded to our Facebook page.

So Challenge 1: Buy an army on the cheap (Accomplished), paint it, well that was a complete failure. Better luck next time I guess.





# Strange Aeons

Taylor Holloway

Art: Lesley

*"The worms crawl in, the worms crawl out,  
The worms play pinochle on your snout.  
They'll eat your ears, they'll eat your nose,  
They'll gobble your fingers and your toes."*

•Traditional

The sickly green glow of the operations panel gave the observation deck an eerie feeling of desolation. A lone figure leaned forward in a chair, sobbing quietly to himself. His face and hands were slick with blood, as were his feet - judging by the gory tracks leading to his chair.

"This is Gate Observation Zero-Gamma-Zeta-Alpha, looking for confirmation. Do you read?" a voice bounced out from the command speaker. It was clear, yet had a certain coldness to it. Undoubtedly belonging to one of the non-human members of the council.

The lone resident of the ship slapped a gore-smeared hand against the call button. He meant to reply with the confirmation code, but as he opened his mouth, it was if something else took possession of his vocal cords.

"Worms, worms, they rule all things - some have fins and some have wings."

He quickly slapped his hand over his mouth. What the hell was that? Who the hell was that? It was though something was talking for him. He hesitated, still keeping his hand over his mouth to make sure nothing else came through.

The speaker sparked back to life.

"Uh... Pardon me? Terran Alliance Civilian Ship Macheon - we need a confirmation code to let you pass through customs. Is this some kind of goddamn joke?" The voice was definitely human now, it was another speaker entirely.

He shook his head violently in the negative - though no one could see him.

"TACS Macheon - if that is you. You have missed your scheduled gate-jump exit by over thirteen hours. We need to make sure everything is alright. Can you please signal if everything is copacetic?"

Slowly sliding his hand from his bloody face, he reached over and touched the button. It cast a red light indicating it was uplo ading.

"No... Not.."

A vicious pain flashed from the roof of his mouth to the top of his head. It was so intense he fell backwards in his seat and clawed at his face, digging furrows beneath his eyes with his fingernails. He tried to scream but all that came out was a muffled laugh.

A memory came flooding back to him. Entering the gate... he could remember it clearly, but the rest was cloudy, as if he was taking a very bitter medicine in which the only enjoyment would be that he would not be taking it any longer. Pain flashed again, and everything went black.

2.

"Terran Alliance Civilian Ship Macheon, you have been cleared to jump. Has your crew prepared?"

Propulsion Technician Calvin Graves looked through the observation deck of the ship and clearly saw the creature speaking to him from the control deck of gate customs. It wasn't human - it was a Shavmehtel. The skinny creature was dressed in the traditional military garb of his people - loose fitting fabric and strategic plates. It looked terribly uncomfortable, and he wondered why they wore such heavy armour in such a protected area. It cocked it's head quizzically, and it's vertical eyelids blinked. It was something they had picked up from exposure to human vids, no doubt. Something cartoon children did when they wanted an answer to a question. When the blue skinned, broad faced creature did it, it was almost comical - but also creepy.

Captain Hicks slapped the comm. "Yeah. We're ready. This ain't our first rodeo."

That response seemed to satisfy the customs agent. He nodded and motioned for the ship to push through. Hicks slowly engaged the engine and started forward. Calvin looked at the Captain, who didn't look at him - but he knew what he was thinking.

"You know, the Shavs aren't so bad, Cal."

Calvin took his seat and started calibrating the propulsion drive. It was a Fusion-Powered PMD - or Perpetual Motion Drive. That meant that once the engines were started, using a fusion core, they wouldn't stop unless forced to shut down. Technology shared with the humans by the Shavs as an initial peace offering. It was the first of many generous gifts.

"I don't distrust all aliens, Captain. I just think the shavs are a little too giving of a species, if you ask me. I mean, I'm friends with Mehlam, aren't I?"

"That's because Mehlam can tear your damned arms off like the stem from a cherry."

"You're jaded. He's good company."

"Yeah hah. I believe that - with all the drinking you two do."

The captain looked at the controls, and hit a few flashing icons on the screen. "You're gonna want to give it some juice, Cal. We're coming up on it."

Calvin looked up at the HUD and saw the massive sprawling black vortex coming up on them. At first glance, it could easily be mistaken for a flat object, simply because of its all-consuming darkness. In reality, it was spherical, and had tendrils that would reach out and pull you within.

Calvin ramped up the engines, and entered the void.

3.

"Nyuh. Nyuh. Nyuh."

Calvin pounded the console as a gulping sound emanated from his open mouth. It was as if there was something in there, and he was trying to talk words around it. He felt like he could almost swallow it, but something was preventing it from going down. Each time he swallowed hard, it wiggled. Choking back his cowardice, Calvin reached into his mouth and pushed his hand back. He felt something retract with the tips of his fingers, and recoiled. There was something back there.

He stuck his fingers further back, and felt himself gag - and his gorge rose to the top of his chest. Fighting the urge to vomit, he made one final push and grabbed onto something slick.

Something hard and sharp clamped down on his fingers, then pain shot up his arm and down to his bowels. Quickly retracting his hand, he screamed and laughed at the same time - pulling back the mangled remains of his right hand.

"Nyuh! Nyuh!!"

There was further movement in his throat, and Calvin quickly came to the conclusion that whatever was in there had just bitten off his fingers.

"What is happening?!!" he said to himself, frantically, but all that came out was garbled nonsense. He couldn't remember anything after the jump, and he wasn't sure that even if he could, it would be something he'd be capable of processing.

Something was nagging at him - there had to be a way to recall the events that led to his current condition - then it occurred to him.

The video logs.

Using his good hand, Calvin pulled up the display for the logs, and scrolled back to the point before they entered the gate. Travelling through a gate was a lot of science and voodoo technology cobbled together by

the shavs. Though he supposed there were humans out there that understood how the jump-gates worked, he understood that there was a large portion of astrophysical understanding that was missing from his skill set. Essentially, Calvin trying to understand that intricate workings of the jump gate was kind of like trying to get a dog understand physics.

He understood what he should be seeing though. About a minute or two of unremembered activity, and then arrival at their destination.

Calvin slapped the console angrily and the images shot to life.

4.

"You're going to want to give it some juice, Cal. We're coming up on it." The captain pointed at the HUD. The grasping darkness that was the jump gate awaited them. Punching in the orders to fire up the engines, they moved slowly towards the darkness and let themselves get pulled in.

"We're in." The captain smiled and leaned back, pulling a half-smoked cigar from his breast pocket.

Cal made a face. "You know you can't smoke that on the ship. If Ares Division caught you smoking that in an enclosed vessel, they'd have your ass so fast."

Captain Hicks smiled. "Why do you think I'm doing this in jump space?"

Cal smiled at the Captain. He was right - in jump space, no one would be the wiser. Suddenly, the console in front of Calvin flared to life. It was a proximity warning - but that should be impossible. There was nothing inside of jump space.

"Sir. It's a proximity warning."

Hicks took a haul of his cigar. "What? It must be a malfunction."

"No sir. It says there is a vessel within 100 meters of ours." Cal shook his head, trying to get more data on the vessel.

"Who does it belong to?"

Cal released the scanning drones. "Approximately eight crew members are on the vessel, but it doesn't have identifiable markings. I don't think it's of Ares, or even human origin."



"You think it's the shavs?" asked Hicks.

A chill suddenly ran through Cal as he understood what he was seeing. "It doesn't look like any shav ship I've ever seen, Captain."

"We can ignore it then - just make your way to the gate exit."

Cal gave the engines a little more juice. He was expecting the jolt forward as they changed speeds, but nothing happened.

"Sir. We aren't moving."

"Our movement has been disabled. I think we are in a traction field."

Alarms suddenly flared to life. Hicks swore and tossed his cigar into a coffee cup. "The hell with this!"

Cal knew those alarms meant they were being locked onto, and the ship was coming dangerously close.

"I think we're being boarded, Captain."

Hicks immediately sprung into action, pulling out a pistol from the holster at his hip. "The hell you say?"

Cal nodded. "The hell is right - the crew is in stasis."

The Captain growled dangerously. "Blow their pods - that ought to wake them up. Then grab a rifle. I don't like this."

"You can add me to that list." Cal brought up the display and started the process of bringing the crew out of stasis. He engaged emergency protocols, adding additional oxygen to the cocktail to wake them up faster, and hopefully would be more alert.

"Come on. Let's go greet our guests."

Calvin was a novice when it came to combat. He'd done his fair share of mandatory target practice, and even done pretty well in simulations - but he'd never seen it before with the fear of death gnawing away at his belly. He went to the back of the bridge and pressed his hand to the wall, and a panel slide up revealing a select variety of boarding rifles. Grabbing two, he tossed one to Hicks and held onto another one for himself.

"Ready?"

Hicks nodded, and took off the safety.

5.

The hallway's lighting flickered slightly as Hicks and Cal made their way quickly down the hallway to the airlock. Hick's had a plan, and that was to meet them at the airlock when they entered, and hopefully deal with them there before they made their way onto the ship. Looking at his watch, he realized it would be at least another five minutes before the crew was even awake - and probably ten before they could make it from the lower deck to the airlock bay.

The yellow lights swirled over top the airlock doors. They signaled that the air inside was cycling - which also meant that whatever was coming aboard was waiting for those doors to open.

Hicks motioned to Cal to cover the opposite side of the door. He leveled his boarding rifle and moved to the opposite side and counted down. On three, the door began to hum, and slowly began to slide open. Taking a deep breath, Cal peeked around the corner.

Nothing.



The empty airlock bay was dimly lit, and opened up into a dark interior of another ship - though nothing stood between themselves and the dark portal where their would-be attackers should have been streaming from.

"This ain't right, Cal."

Calvin held up his rifle. "Should we check it out?"

Hicks nodded and they advanced into the darkness.

6.

Cal glumly watched the monitor as he and Captain Hicks left the ship. He waited impatiently for something to happen. Switching views, he brought up the stasis tanks and watched the crew start to suit up. They did so quickly, as they were trained - Sarah Harrison - a deft hand at the worst of times, was on her game. She noticed right away that the elevated levels of oxygen meant there was trouble, and they needed to act quickly. He watched them grab their fire arms and page the bridge.

Obviously there was no answer. The only two crew members on the bridge would have been himself and Captain Hicks, and they were exploring some sort of god damned alien craft attached to their airlock, doing god knows what.

Mehlam finally decided, it would seem, to go and check out the bridge to see what was going on. He was the company's quartermaster, and though he was young by Resh standards, he was a decorated soldier and experienced fighter. Essentially, his role was to keep everyone safe - and considering his eight foot, four hundred pound frame could barely fit through the corridors of the ship - Cal would have said he was doing his job.

The other crew - there were about six of them in total, were starting to get anxious, and began splitting up to look for Cal and the Captain. He waited, keeping the video at the airlock running while following members of the crew around for their search. It was then that Mehlam found the open airlock, and moved towards it cautiously, his gigantic pistol at the ready.

7.

Memories came flooding back to Cal suddenly. He saw a violet, pulsing glow. There was complete silence, then an explosion of action. They descended on himself and Hicks. They couldn't move. The creatures hovered over the both of them, grunting and looking at them with large black eyes. They vaguely resembled Shavs, but shorter and far more slender. They were surprisingly strong for their size. He was then moving quickly, but still

immobile. The creatures were dragging him and Hicks down a hallway, grunting to each other the whole time.

Horror flooded through Calvin as they were brought into a strange room resembling the interior of some sort of organ. The furniture seemed to have been grown out of the floor, and having seen his fair share of medical bays quickly realized where in the ship he and Hicks had been taken.

More flashes of pain. Calvin's mouth was pried open. He tried to bite down on their cold, long fingers but to no avail - his body was like a ball of modelling putty, and responded to their gentle touch without so much as a single ounce of resistance. The largest one opened a panel on the wall, and a strange scorpion-like creature crawled up his arm. It's legs and tail were needle thin, but it's compound eyes shone with malign intelligence.

Cal suddenly realized what was about to happen. Hicks started to make a squealing noise, which was what passed for a scream in their current state. The creatures then moved around Cal and held the strange insect forward, and it scurried into his mouth. He could feel it's legs and tail scrape is tongue and cheeks as it made it's way into his throat.

The last thing Cal heard before he passed out was whispering, and for a fleeting moment, he was sure it was the insect trying to reassure him that everything was going to be just fine.

8.

The insect in Cal's throat twitched, likely in response to his memories flooding back to him. He tensed and thought about trying to choke himself, hoping he could crush the parasite now living inside of him.

Then he remembered what was left of his mangled right hand. He watched video of him rushing out of the darkness of the alien ship. He was covered in gore, likely that of Hicks - he remembered tearing into his paralyzed body with his fingers hooked and his teeth gnashing. The taste of his friend's blood as it rushed down his throat, and his rubbery entrails in his mouth. His new colleague relished every moment of it - the warm ropey strands of flesh sent shivers of ecstasy through his body, just as would a warm steak seem to a man dying of starvation.

Mehlam didn't hesitate, he squeezed off a shot, but it was already too late. On the screen, he left onto the Resh's face and bit off a sizeable chunk of his cheek. The giant tried to push him off, and his lips screamed Cal's name, but it didn't seem to matter. With a grip that would rival the most tenacious ape, he made his way onto Mehlam's back and bit into his furry neck, and tore again



and again. Blood splashed against the walls, and finally the Resh fell to his knees and lay still.

He stared at the screen, watching as he killed again and again - each time with a savage fury, clawing and biting, and often stopping to devour his fallen comrade before moving onto the next. Cal felt bile rise in his throat. It was as though he was watching someone else perform these horrible acts of carnage - wearing his very own skin.

There was a rumble, and alarms started to sound. A ship was moving to board the Macheon. Panic began to slowly erupt from inside of him. He could hear the creature in the back of his mind, like seeing a dim candle behind a shroud.

It was still hungry.

The parasite was trying to force Cal to stand. He fought with all his might to resist the creature, but slowly he felt his body doing as the creature commanded - and not what he wished it to do. Pain began to shoot in the back of this throat, so sharp it made his eyes water. Panicking, he did the only thing he could think to do - he obeyed. Picking up his boarding rifle, he began to stalk towards the airlock. Step after step, he allowed the creature to take control of his body, and he could feel its satisfaction that he was no longer fighting.

Then Calvin lifted the rifle to his left knee, and pulled the trigger.

The retort was deafening, and the pain was incredible. Inside his head, he could hear squeals of displeasure as it clawed and bit the back of his throat. It tried to force him to get up, but each time he stood, he would fall over - as the only thing below his left knee was ragged flesh and jutting bone. Behind the pain, Cal smiled in satisfaction and gave himself over to the parasite.

9.

Elias Colt had a bad feeling about this. Ever since he heard Calvin say those fucked up things over the comm, he knew the shit had hit the fan on the TACS Macheon. He'd been doing this for seven years, and he knew that things could get bad during gate travel. Those that didn't pass the stability test had to be put in stasis, just so they didn't lose their goddamn minds each time they entered the gate - and those that did pass the stability test - well, let's just say that the human brain didn't process time the same way the Shavs did. Every once and a while, someone dropped the deck and couldn't find all the cards.

That's why the Gate Observation Detachment was created. To essentially monitor all traffic from a particular gate. The Shavs were particularly sticky about it - though they were also a pretty tight lipped bunch. All he knew was his partner, Irimir, was pretty worked up. In his three years being partnered with the Shav soldier - he'd never seen him so nervous.

The alarm sounded, indicating that the airlock was cycling and they would be able to board the Macheon in a couple of minutes. Irimir started checking over his pulse rifle, making sure the battery was charged. Elias thought he should do the same with his boarding rifle, but then thought it would look silly on the camera if they both just fiddled with their guns for a couple of minutes.

"What's got you all worked up, Rim?"

The shav looked at him with his large black eyes. Against the light blue of his skin, they just looked like open pits. If one looked closely though, it could be seen that there was a pupil and retina behind them - and the black lenses were flare compensation most shav soldiers had surgically implanted. They were pretty sensitive to bright lights, apparently.

"Between you and me?" Rim honked. It was hard to get used to their voice, but Elias had three years practice. "This could be a quarantine situation."

"Eh?" Elias blinked. He'd never come across a situation that didn't involve an arrest - at worst. He'd been in a couple of gunfights with pirates, but he'd never had to quarantine a vessel before.

"We don't talk about it. The space between time has many dangers - but the most dangerous thing one can face is those that not only have no fear of the dangers within the gate, but thrive upon it."

Elias smirked. "You're fucking with me, right? You're just



getting all cryptic with me to get me worked up.”

The shav cocked his head to the left, which meant the same thing as a human shaking his in a negative fashion. “No. Be ready.”

The doors slid open suddenly, as did the doors leading to the Macheon. The first thing they both saw was the slumped over body of some poor Resh who looked like it had lost a fight to shark. Chunks of it were everywhere, and the amount of blood on the walls and floor was staggering.

“Sheee-it.” Elias drawled, leveling his rifle and wished he had checked it over like his partner had his own gun.

The pair moved cautiously to the edge of the door and checked each other’s sixes. With the all clear, they stopped and listened. Aside from the rhythmic thumping of the Macheon’s PMD, everything seemed normal.

Then they both heard it - a scraping, sliding noise - accompanied by heavy breathing.

Following the sound, they moved, Rim facing forward and Elias covering his back. As they got closer, it sounded far more human, and far more menacing.

Both rounded the corner, guns at the ready - but they were not prepared for what they saw. A very wounded

man with a pulped leg was attempting to crawl his way towards them. Elias recognized Calvin almost instantly, though the Calvin he remembered wasn’t covered in gore and chunks of flesh last time he saw him.

“Good God - Cal?”

Calvin looked up at Elias and smiled. “Help me, Elias. Oh god, I’m so hurt. I’m so hu-”

A flash of blue emitted from Rim’s pulse rifle. It blew off a good sized chunk of Calvin’s chest, which splattered against the floor behind him. Elias yelped, and ran towards the corpse, when Rim grabbed his arm and pulled him back.

“No! Elias - wait.”

Elias turned to Rim and jerked his arm away. “He was asking for help.”

“The parasite was waiting for you to get close.” Rim responded sagely, pointing at the corpse. If almost on queue, Calvin’s mouth cracked open, far wider than any mouth ought to be, and a black insect began to peek out.

“Holy Shit!” Elias shrieked. Rim nodded, and held up the gun. The insect, as if it knew what the gun was, retreated back into Calvin’s mouth.

“Go back to the ship, Elias, and fetch a large quarantine bag. We’re going to need to interrogate this one.”

In all his years, Elias was now shocked and stunned. “What?”

“Get a quarantine bag. Once we remove his head, we will place it in the bag, and we will bring the parasite back to Observation, and we will found out where it came from.”

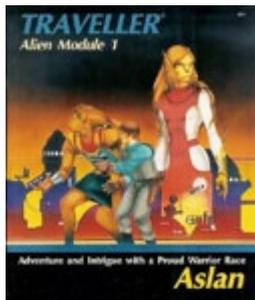
He was starting to get it. In it’s own fucked up way, it made sense.

“Then what?”

Rim tilted his head to the right this time, a signal of the affirmative.

“Then we blow this ship up and we forget we ever saw this mess.”

Elias nodded. That was pretty much all he needed to hear. His resolve hardened. He realized he would soon be beheading a man who he had once shared drinks with every time they were in port together. Once all of that business was over with though, he knew exactly what was going to be in his letter of resignation.



## A SALUTE TO MARK MILLER

*Clayton J. Callahan*

One of the early pioneers of gaming was Mark Miller. Like Christopher Columbus or Davy Crockett, only with dice instead of a ship or coonskin cap. He founded the once mighty company; Game Designer's Workshop and produced the most iconic science fiction game of all time, *Traveler*.

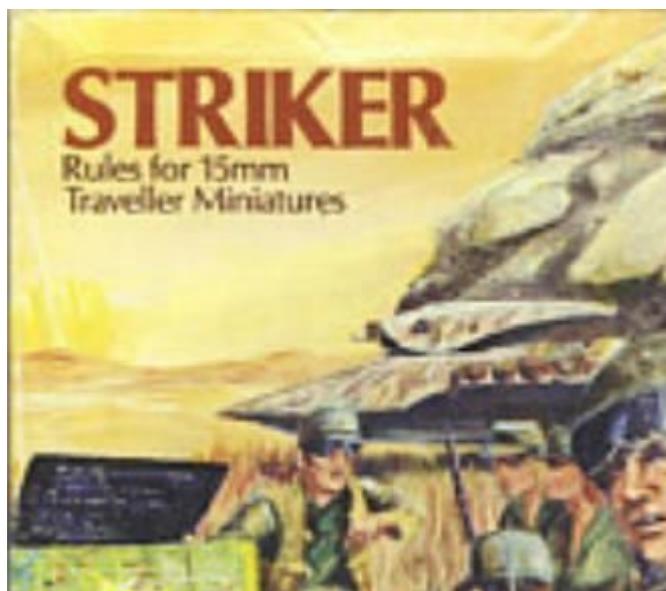
I was in my early teens when *Dungeons and Dragons* first cracked the public consciousness in the early 1980s. I dabbled in D&D, but even though I enjoyed the concept of role-playing, swords and wizards weren't really my thing. At heart, I was always a science fiction fan. Fortunately for me, there was *Traveler* by Mark Miller of GDW. Being the 80s, I got to say; the game was totally awesome, dude.

It was a star spanning epic, where you got to be a heroic space adventurer on the frontier of the great Imperium of Mankind. Characters were veterans of one of the many space militaries such as the Marines or the Scout Service. With their military skills, and maybe a surplus space ship, they struggled to survive in an unforgiving galaxy. *Traveler* was all about the space opera, with plenty of gunfights, space battles and bar-room brawls. Planets were also ripe for exploration, and there was plenty of intrigue as nations rose and fell on the frontier.

Originally released by Game Designer's Workshop in 1977, *Traveler* was the first widely published space role-playing game. It covered everything from characters, to space ships, to world creation. The game didn't ape the rules mechanics of D&D, but charted its own course. In fact, *Traveler* was the first game to create skill based characters (as opposed to D&D's original "class" system). It was also the first game to use the concept of "tech lev-

els," making it possible to play in many eras of scientific progress. *Traveler* could be found in most gaming shops and some bookstores back then, and it had a strong and supportive fan base.

The growing numbers of fans were kept stoked by a monthly magazine called, *Journal of the Traveler's Aid Society*. Each edition included rules expansions and scenarios for *Traveler*, but for hard core gamers, even that wasn't enough. So, GDW licensed the rights to several smaller companies to produce *Traveler* materials such as adventure scenarios and universe guides. This was a chance for small gaming startups to break into the market, the most notable being FASA (future makers of *Battletech*). GDW also made several spin off games from the *Traveler* concept such as *Striker*, the first science fiction miniatures war game.



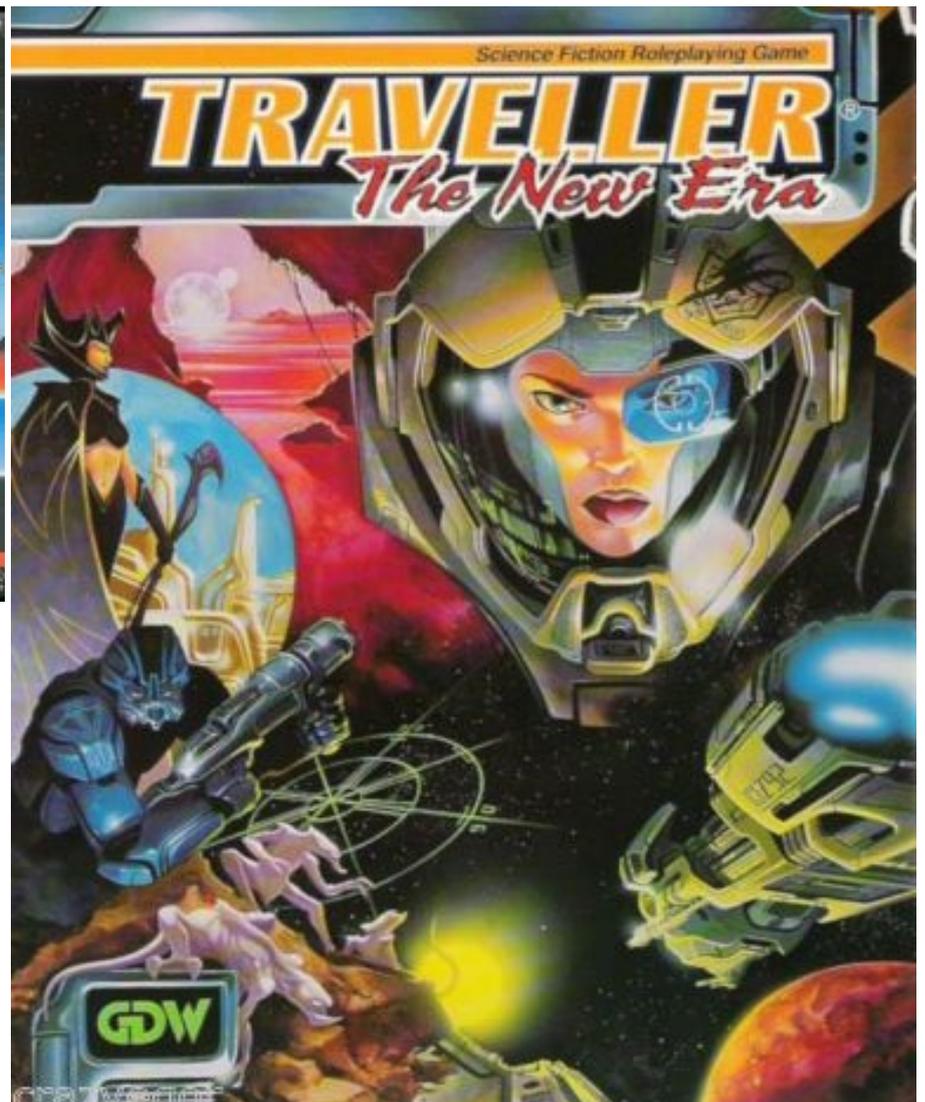
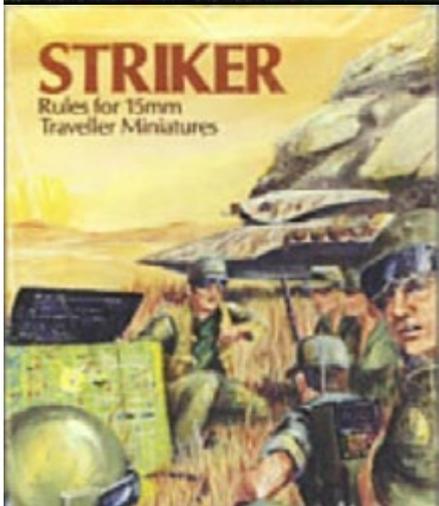
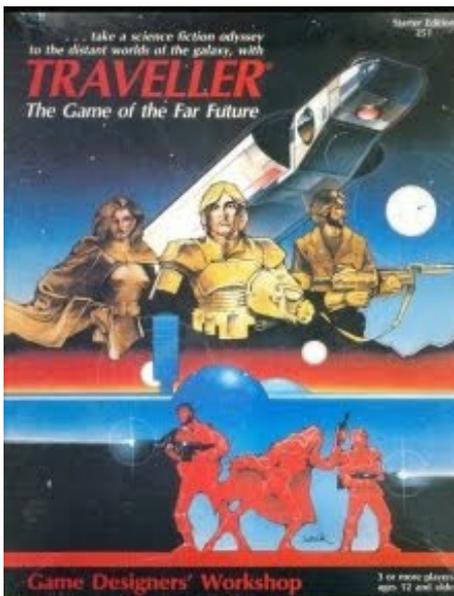
So, what happened to Traveller? Well, the rules were always a bit clunky, and the addition of hundreds of magazine articles and rules expansion books didn't help. The company tried to consolidate it all with a new product called Mega Traveller in 1987 but that was a mixed success. Although Mega Traveller had its fans, many gamers were starting to gravitate to newer games that FASA and other former licensee companies were coming out with. GDW tried again in 1993 with Traveller: New Era, but by that time gamers had truly moved on and the company went under soon after.

Mark Miller gave it another try in 1996 with a new company he called Imperium Games. They released a sadly over complicated version of Traveller that flopped right out of the gate. He now licenses out the rights to Steve Jackson Games who produce a GRUPS version. There is also a licensed version for the D20 system by RPG Realms and a version for Hero Games. These enterprises have known some success. It's not uncommon to encounter a group playing one of them at a con nowadays, because they still retain that space adventure appeal that was Traveller's strength to begin with.

We, who roll dice, should remember our hobby did not grow in a vacuum, and our roots run deeper every year. It took imagination to create the very concept of role-playing when it had never existed before. And it took guts to push ideas out into the market with no idea how the public would respond. Without Traveller, there would almost certainly be no Rifts or Star Run; and without its spin-off Striker, no Warhammer 40K. That's what makes Mark Miller a pioneer of gaming. Each "next new thing" is inspired by what came before, and Mark Miller gave us inspiration by the truckload.

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*Clayton Callahan has written articles for several hobby magazines including Knights Of The Dinner Table and has published the role playing game Star Run, along with several gamer's guides. Also he's written short stories for the e-zine Perihelion and his story Beer Today, Gone Tomorrow can be read in How Beer Saved the World by Sky Warrior Press. For more about Clayton Callahan visit his blog at; [quickandeasygames.wordpress.com](http://quickandeasygames.wordpress.com)*



# STAR WARS X-WING MINIATURES GAME

## STAR DESTROYER SCRATCH BUILD – IMPERIAL CLASS

*Alex Garbett*

“Sir, Rebel Ships are coming into our sector...” – “Good....Our first catch of the Day!”

Ever since Star Wars X-Wing Miniatures Game burst onto the tabletop in 2012 I have been dreaming of epic dog-fights between Tie Fighters and Rebel ships weaving in and around large Capital ships engaged in a duel to the death.

From wave to wave and new releases we have seen iconic ships produced for the X-wing. We have been given the chance to field the fantastic Millennium Falcon, Tie Interceptors and A-Wings through to ships from the Expanded Universe like E-wings and Tie Defenders.

We have also seen the release of two large Rebel Ships for the game – The Tantive IV and the GR-75 Rebel Transport, and while these huge and awesome models add a larger presence to the table top many players and myself included are yearning, longing and desiring something of equal measure for the Imperial Forces.....but with nothing available I decided I would change this and show my true loyalty to the Empire!

### The designing and Planning

Over the course of several weeks worth of planning, checking states, brainstorming numbers and sizes, along with a good amount of plotting, scheming and finally doodling ideas on paper I organised my thoughts to



gether to plan a large ship Scratch Build for the X-Wing.

I could make an Imperial ship and it HAD to be something along the lines of a Star Destroyer or dagger type ship but which type and what size and scale?

I consulted several websites for details and sizes on various Imperial ships with the Star Wars Official Canon. These Included full size Imperial Class Star Destroyers to Interdictor Class Cruisers – basically anything wedge shaped and Grey which looked cool!



Scale was always going to be a difficult issue and while the fighters (1/270) and epic ships (1/450) are set it was never going to be possible to get an Imperial Star Destroyer to anything less than 1/2000 Scale.

Based on this I ditched the idea of scale in favour of making a piece which would be a large enough to eclipse other models on the table (and the size of the table in the standard 3x3ft X-wing Games) but that would be not too large as to make it too big to store a final finished model of around three to four feet long (36-48 Inches) by approx. one foot wide (12 Inches).

Due to this real world scaling it made sense to construct the main dagger shaped hull and build out from there adding superstructure and details as I went while referencing the in movie ship designs and design features (Bridge Tower, Engine location etc.)

### Detailing The Model

To Ensure I had that Star Wars look and feel along with making the designs look close enough to the Films, Games and various TV series I began asked a simple question:

'what makes a Star Destroyer look..... well like a Star Destroyer?'

The ship had to feature the Bridge and Engines but it needed more – plus I'm a stickler for details – which meant the Shield Generators needed building, I would need extensive hull lines and details as the model would be around 4ft long,

Most importantly though was the axial trench which runs between the top and bottom hull and the level of detail I would need for this. I wracked my brains for a

few days when in a sort of enlightened moment at work I spotted some old circuit boards from a Server being disposed. While it wasn't the boards so to speak which grabbed it was shapes of the various components, memory modules and processors on the boards.

Seeing these set me down the route of looking for these small pre-made/manufactured components, parts and using their shapes to build out the center trench.

I very well couldn't afford to buy IT hardware and strip down servers for parts – it would be cost prohibitive no matter how good a look. Brooding for a few more days it was my father who gave me the idea of fuses to use as I mentioned I was after small squares, tubes, blocks and other various shapes to bulk out the central Trench on the Star Destroyer.

With his idea illuminating my mind I set down the route of looking into electrical parts and pieces to use for their shapes and size. Buzz words became for me, Resistors, Diodes, Transistors.

I realised I would need a lot of parts considering how big I was going to build the Star Destroyer so sitting down at my computer I put into the eBay Keyword Search: Transistor, Radio Spares, Resistors and was amazed at the results and shapes of the parts in front of me

Following the revelation and new direction I did a weeks worth of looking through for various bulk auctions, job lots and bargain buys or anything else which looked cool that I could get my hands on for cheap on eBay. I told myself "I'm sure these things are made ten a penny!" and after another few days looking I chose my auctions and 'buy it now' listing, made the payments made then waited the inevitable three weeks for the parts to arrive from China and across the world to me.

### Gathering Materials

Now I had the components I needed on the way next came gathering extra parts and pieces which I could use to bulk these further out.

You need an eye for seeing shapes and parts when Scratch Building, to take an item and see a hundred uses for it....what to anyone else a bottle top, broken plug socket, an old lamp shade or junk to others became the nuts and bolts for this Scratch Build.

To add to my growing pile of materials I took trip to the local D.I.Y, Hardware and Electrical Store helped me find further interesting shapes, parts and 'stuff' to bring home for under £20 followed by a raiding of the attic at home for other bits and items I could use.

I put everything into a single box and below is a rough list of what I had assembled together:

Brass Rod

Paper Clips

Cocktail Stick

Lamp Fittings (those bits that hang from the ceiling)

Small Rubber and Plastic piping

Water Bottle click tops

Plastic Studs (The kind you use to cover screws when building furniture)

Electronic Chocolate Blocks of all shapes and sizes

Various sized and thickness Cable Ties

Fuses of all shapes and sizes

Diodes

Resistors

Different shaped Transistors

Metal Washes

Various MDF bases

A large quantity of parts and spares from my Bitz Box

An old Revell 1/1200 Model Kit of the Bismarck

Blank D20 dice (shield generators)

Spartan Games Firestorm parts

White Stationery Stickers

It took several trips to Hobbycraft (Large Hobby High street Store here in the UK) to find a suitable card stock from which to build the hull from. I chose to go with thick Brown card for the base structure and slightly thinner White card to adding the outer Hull. These sheets were the largest I could buy at A1 and I believe I spent over £50 on card stock.

With this large box off parts, cardboard shoved behind my desk and models to be in front of me I was somewhat daunted by the size of what I was trying to make but at

the same time excited and thrilled for the journey I was about to go on!

Thus I had to begin somewhere so I finished the working week in the office, chilled at home with a Cider while I organised my thoughts on a Friday evening. I did some prep work and decided I would begin Saturday morning.

### Visualising and Construction – Main Hull

I had loaded the previous night various images and plans of Star Destroyers onto a memory stick and viewed these via my Xbox 360 on the large TV in my room to give me a visual indication of a final size and size of what I would be aiming for. Seeing the rough size on the 40" screen helped me with gauging the size I was looking for along with being able to actually take a ruler and measure the image on the screen too!

Then with the images on screen I placed the card on the cutting mat on the floor (Safety First!) and began the process of cutting out the top and bottom Hull dagger sections. As the largest sections of the ship it was key to get these as close to each other as possible.



Once both pieces (Top and Bottom Hull Dagger Triangles) had been removed and cut out I started to consider the Docking Bays underneath the Star Destroyer.

The main Docking Bay size was a tricky compromise. While I wished it to be big enough to take the Epic Scale Tantive I knew that this was completely out of the question so chose to make the Dock and Hanger in proportion to the rest of the ship therefore ensuring a better model and setting the scale for the smaller front Docking Bay.

The construction of the Docking Bay was a simple 5 sided cube for the larger and smaller. Built separately and angled so it would sit flat within the Hull.

I added various parts and details inside with smaller sections of card which I got from a old Space Marine Tactical Box. Careful to make the parts I added actually look like they fitted in with both the design and function I continued to add extra detail and sections building up the raised the detail on the card finally topping off with some larger parts and some of the Cranes from the Bismarck kit.

Happy with the look, form and function of the parts I then undercoated the Docking Bays Black separately figuring it would be tricky to paint inside once assembled and it was not going to be easy to get a brush into all the areas I had made.

Leaving the Docking Bays to dry outside I took the bottom Hull and scored the main axial line down the centre fold taking care to score and not cut through the thick card. Measuring just smaller than actual size I cut the areas out for the Docking Bays and once dry I glued both Bays into the inside of the bottom Hull giving the first real indication of the shape of the Destroyers triangular wedge using a good dollop of Super Glue.

As the Glue dried I set about making the Triangular support spars and beams inside the Hull which added a huge amount of strength.

It was a process of repeating this for the top Hull section without the Docking Bay though, again adding the spars for strength and rigidity.

Setting the two halves of the ship aside I started to work on the central trench which runs up and down each side to the Engines at the back. This consisted of cutting two large strips the length of the longest sides of the Destroyer with a small section for the front of ship.

I then set about using all the Diodes, Transistors, Resistors and various other parts to bulk out this central section. The process for this was to assemble two or three Resistors to a Fuse, then putting a Diode near by and building out and working this into another section of parts and pieces already glued in place.





With the Trench built it came time to add this to the lower Hull again using a good amount of Super Glue.

The important thing here was to ensure everything lined up (I'm a stickler for this) but once happy and that the Hull and Trench were correct I added further bracing internally to give it extra strength I went about the task of gluing the top to the bottom Hull – again taking care to ensure lines and angles were correct with the central line of top and bottom coming to the same point with a final dollop of Super Glue to ensure it was solid.

Now the top and bottom were a single piece I did have a wee run around my room and checked the scale against the Tantive IV and Rebel Transport. Happy with this I continued to build.

#### Construction – Main Hull Lower Surface

With the dagger Hull box now complete came the process of adding the layers onto the Hull surface. The process for this was to build up layers of card and detail working to a final top surface which would have panel lines and then further additional detail raised upon.

I approached this with adding small extensions of the Hull outwards with the thin White card and working back to just the edge of the Brown Card. Finally the main top sheet which was cut from a Single A1 Sheet then scored down the middle and glued into place on the top and bottom (Having had the Docking Bays cut out).

The first slip up happened here in that I'd forgotten to add the ventral (Bottom) largest Shield Generator. As it's



a giant dome underneath the Star Destroyer to the rear I considered using a Polystyrene Ball for the easiest but went with a Wooden sphere – the kind you find on the first run of Stairs.

I took the hacksaw and gently sawed it first in half and then sawed the Hull angle into the wood. I must admit it wasn't a perfect cut...but having spend money on this I worked it into the Hull with further Super Glue, Poly Filler and some Muscle.

Once the Glue and Poly Filler had dried I had to patch up the mess but this worked to my advantage adding a large detailed (which was painstaking to cut out) to the central spine of the lower Hull.

With putting extra work into the lower Hull I decided upon continuing to work this side of the Star Destroyer. I again consulted my pictures, the films and more along with actual shots of the filming models to get a precise idea of what I was trying to replicate.

The majority of this work included surface detailing and panel line scoring. There were mistakes made but in the nature of the detail I was trying to replicate I would put stickers or other pieces of card on top to hide this and in doing do add further surface texture to the model.

I added some additional superstructure on each side. These were 5 sides constructs cut to fit and angle correctly on the lower Hull. I intended to use these also as use for a stand or base (having not figured this out at the time of building)

Lastly I dig into the bits and parts and added some brass rod as final detailing ending these in sections of raised Hull plating and armour.

#### Construction – Main Hull Upper Surface

Gently placing the lower Hull now all glued face down I went about the same process for detailing up the top Hull. I extended the sides very much as the bottom and added the top layer of White card once the build was complete

As we all know the top Hull of the Star Destroyer features extensive superstructure all the way up to the Tower and Bridge. I began the process of building this using some of the various spare card I'd been saving and with a solid base it was a simple case of gluing down successive layers and levels working my way up to the top base of the Bridge Tower.

For the detailing I followed my lessons on the trench and applied this to the sides of the superstructure working sections of Transistors, Diodes and Fuses into each other

and the occasional model kit piece.

The Turrets on the side were brought as spare parts from Spartan Games Firestorm and these were built onto raised sections on the aft of the main Hull.

#### Construction – The Tower

Like the other super structure I built this mainly by eye and hand utilizing spare cardboard and matching the size against my stock photos of Star Destroyers.

It was a simple case of making the sides, Copying this for the other side and then adding the front and back paneling. As I wasn't scoring Hull lines into the Tower I went about adding additional detail onto to the surface, I used a few metal washes and took special note on making the garbage dump area as in The Empire Strikes Back when the Millennium Falcon detached from the Star Destroyer pursued by Boba Fett on the way to Cloud City and Besbin.



## Construction – Bridge

The iconic Star Destroyer Bridge started off with a close examination of photos and pictures I had found previously to understand the true shape of the Bridge. I chose to build it from the front backwards and the first piece cut was the front face. Next I measured and cut the top of the Bridge followed by the sides and bottom leaving the rear free to connect to the Tower section.

Before I glued the Bridge into place though I set about making all the additional super structure, domes, raised detail and Shield Generators. I spent approximately 3 hours adding surface details to the Bridge using all manner of parts again digging deep into the bits box and using various lengths of brass rod and electronic components.

The trickiest part though was making the Shield Generators. In the films they have a specific shape but the closest I could find to this at home were some blank D20 Dice. I chose to mount these on a series of metal screw washers to a height I was happy with and glued the D20 Dice into place adjusting for the slope of the top of the Bridge.

Happy with the results I could have left them alone but I decided on adding further details and small metal sections to the bottom and sides of the Shield Generators. This was quite a fiddly process and I lost my patients



several times but after 90 minutes of trying and holding them in place they were all glued.

## Construction – Engines

One of the last areas I built were the giant engines located on the back of the Star Destroyer. I placed a large piece of card and score this bending the card inwards to give the correct shape to build into.

Next from the side edge of the card I added brass rods, Screw covers, Resistors, Paper clips and large symmetrical Spruce frame in working this detail in towards the middle where the engines would be mounted topping these off with Squeeze Bottle tops as a base from the Engines to come out from.

Not happy I had enough detail I did another course of adding extra parts and components onto the rear of the model while consulting pictures of the Star Destroyer Studio Model used in the movies

Now finally happy with the detailing, piping and other parts assembled into the Engine housing on the Star Destroyer I went looking for Engine Exhaust Nozzles. I found these in the form of ceiling lamp fittings (The parts which hold the bulb and circuitry together before the power cable exits and goes up to the ceiling) With three of these which worked out at a couple of pounds each I added some additional card detailing in the form of armour plates and then used PVA glue via dabbing dots to add those last final touches.

## Painting

I had never painted something so large before (well bar walls at home) so I knew my painting techniques would break down over a large area without an airbrush which I did consider getting but I wanted to try using a paint brush none the less.

After an expensive trip to WH Smith (My local store stocks Humbrol Spray Cans) I came home and took out the Destroyer to the back yard to begin undercoating the ship.

First coat was simply black all over to initially hide the card and various coloured components but also like the painting style of the smaller ships which heavily use Washes to bring out the detail I wanted to replicate this on a large scale. It was my hope too that all the panel lines and detail id put into the model would be pulled out in the end.

It took approx. 4 spray cans to cover the Destroyer in Black and once dry I applied the Grey spray. I went with

a couple of different Greys (Army Painter, Humbrol and something I found in the Garage I forgot I had). Mixing the sprays and sometimes using two cans at once I covered the model front to back in Grey Spray, often having to re-go over areas where the black was showing through.

After the first grey coat had dried I then went with a final dusting of a Light Grey on top focusing on certain areas and key points of the model to bring out the shape and depth more than having a giant Grey mass

I will add that after spraying I ran into challenges on the Destroyer in that some of the spray paint had a strange effect on the coatings of the various transistors casings (polymers and solvent type chemical reaction I'm guessing) - effectively semi melting the outer surface of parts and remaining sticky and not drying ...even after 3 months.

For a fix I had to whip out the standard codex grey GW paint and cover these in the hopes of sealing the top layer or in areas where the melt area was too large I added further details in the form of card and other parts on top to disguise it and cover up the problems.

Now the ship was all Grey with Black in the recesses it was time to apply the Black Wash. I went and brought a large tub of Black Army Shader (Had to wait for a second as the first exploded in the post...not good and very messy!)

This application of wash while I have much experience in washes with was a giant gamble on such a large area, but feeling bold I and after I made the model level by propping it up so I was painting on to a flat horizontal surface I started to cover the surface of the ship.

What came next was a major battle!

I was trying to apply the wash, prevent it from pooling and messing up the grey main coat, keep the surface wet so the washes would flow into the recesses while trying to prevent warpage of the cardboard

This was extremely challenging and the model in essence became a wet canvas for around 45 minutes while I struggled to move the wash and keep it flowing. About half way through I realised I needed some help so ran and grabbed the Hair Dryer and in one handing moving paint around with a tank brush I had the Hairdryer going in the other trying to dry the paint but not blow the heavy wash out of the recesses and detail I'd spent so long building

Another hour later, feeling drained and weary I had

finished doing a single large surface. Pooped and tired It was time for a Cuppa Tea and some food.

I resumed painting and washing then did the other side later on that afternoon. Again rotating the model so I was painting on a flat surface and learning what I had from earlier that morning I changed the way I applied the wash. I did this sections by section based on the panel lines in the hull rather than a huge area in one go which allowed me to control the wash easier and made a more organised approach than the chaos before.

With one side done it was then simply a process of repeating the wash application technique on the other.



Next came dry brushing the detail and hard highlights to the leading edges. I simply took a selection of Grey paints and added some Skull white and took my time dry brushing and highlighting raised edges and surfaces.

I chose to also add some battle damage, scuffs and blackened lines on the model to give it a more rough look. This was a mix of slight dry brushing and painting flat colour on the model.

One thing I noted is that due to the model's size I didn't have to go to extremes on the highlights due to the natural light casting shadows and doing the work for me.

Finishing Off – Acrylic Stand

To Finish off the model I needed a stand – but what kind. I bounced around this idea for over a week in a whole host of shapes and materials. In the end I wanted to keep the stand in line with what the X-wing fighters and Epic Ships had which was a clear Transparent Base and Flight Rod.

A Flight Rod was out of the question and I didn't want to start putting holes in the hull so I came on the idea

of using an Acrylic Display Stand – the sort of thing you would find in a shop.

Again I went to Ebay for this and came across one which was 20cm x 20cm x 20cm which after some measuring seemed the right choice to go for height wise as it would sit above other ships on the table (If any were silly enough to challenge a Star Destroyer Close up) but that it was tall enough to move ships beneath and giving a spectacle when gaming.

Once it arrived I had to cut down the sides so the base would match the contours of the Star Destroyer which involved the Saw again. With the sides cut though it was a simple case of placing the Destroyer on the base and it was finally done!

As a dual function too and discovered when gaming the base of the Acrylic stand became a sort of safe deployment area for Tie Fighters which we use when launching. The Fighters would be placed on the Star Destroyer base and then move off onto the Table to hunt down those pesky Rebels!

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## Final Thoughts – What Would I do differently

Im very happy with the model let alone seeing the project through to completion. We all start so many projects and i'm bad at not finishing them but with this Star Destroyer im really pleased I saw it through to a finished model.

I'd certainly love to make one bigger! (Which I did in the form of the Star Wars Episode 3 Venator Class)

On the negative side trying to store a 4ft Model is a totally different experience and challenge than store gaming tables of boards. It's a slightly off putting factor in making large models/terrain pieces.

In gaming we have used the Destroyer 6 times, sometimes as a static backdrop, other times with basic rules but we have never played too seriously with the model always opting to have fun unleashing waves of fighters, blasting entire Rebel Transports away each turn and so forth.

As its so big the model breaks the rule system and game mechanics on a 3x3ft table but the rules mechanics for X-wing aren't really fit for 6x6ft or bigger. (One of the house rules we use is a double movement in favour of shooting by doubling that ships dial movement so models can get around the table quicker)

Thanks again

Alex



# D&D 5th Edition The Rise of Tiamat

*Jason Hubbard*

Late last year saw the release of Dungeons and Dragons Edition 5. The newest set of rules for this long standing Role Play Game was play tested by the community. The designers have taken the game back to its roots for the latest reincarnation of the game. Many players have thought recent previous editions had moved the game away from its storytelling roots into something more in common with a skirmish tabletop game. Personally I quite liked 4th Edition rules, but I have to admit the skirmish feel appealed to my war gaming side.

So how would I find this latest edition. Well I've quite liked and enjoyed playing it. The game reminds me of playing D&D as a teenager back in the eighties, (Yes, I'm that old), playing with a copy of the Basic Red Box set from TSR.

So its been 6 years since 4th edition was released, but even though it was a bold and innovative release, it failed to capture the attention of the community. By the end of the edition many of the planned releases were cancelled due to poor sales. So edition 5 was pushed into development with an open playtest.

The rules for this edition have been streamlined, but it's not been dumbed down in any way. Yet it has lost a lot of the needless complicated elements that were prevalent in previous editions that had a tendency to slow down play. One of the streamlined aspects of the game was saving throws, there are no longer separate values. Basically now all a player has to do is use an ability score which makes life a lot simpler.

Skills have been trimmed down, so instead of a massive long list of skills, they are now directly tied to ability scores. This means there are fewer overall. The designers also improved feats they are now optional. In 3rd edition you needed a string of feats to specialise in something. Edition 5 feats means a single feat will let you be excellent in a particular skill. Player classes are still the same classic PC's that have always been central to D&D.

A players background has now become a mandatory ele-

ment of the game and character generation. The background will include additional skills and proficiencies, as well as bonus equipment. Starting equipment is now decided by the list for a given class, as well as additional items granted by the background.

5th edition does feel and play a lot closer to 2nd edition D&D than any other previous edition. Though there are some aspects of 4th edition that have been kept.

The Rise of Tiamat

Tyranny of Dragons is set on the Sword Coast region of the Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting. It's a strip of land stretching down along the Faerun's western shore line.

This adventure can be played with the basic rules and the Tyranny of Dragons online supplement, which are available for download from [www.dungeonsanddragons.com](http://www.dungeonsanddragons.com)

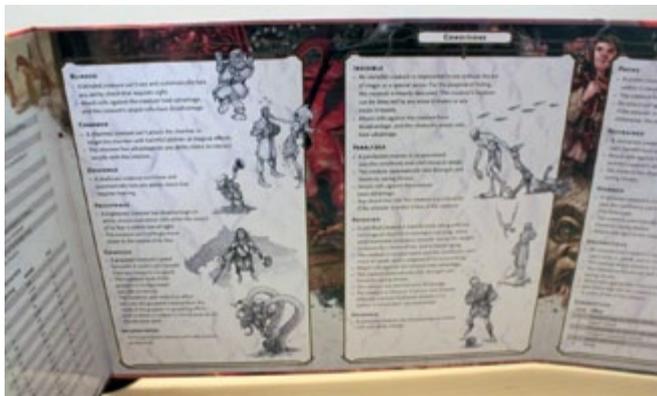
The adventure is made of 4 stages starting in Waterdeep. The Cult of the Dragon are in an unholy crusade to bring back Tiamat. From Waterdeep to the Sea of Moving Ice to Thay, its a race against evil for the players.





This module takes place after the Hoard of the Dragons, this means the whole campaign combined will take the players all over the Realms, which makes it a great introduction to the Forgotten Realms campaign setting. It has cultists, Dragons, a great selection of villains to go up against and the opportunity to battle the Queen of Dragons. To play this module/adventure its highly recommended that the players have a party of at least 4 or more otherwise any less and expect to get slaughtered.

The level of detail that is described throughout the book is excellent. some of the encounters have great maps and intricate room by room descriptions. There are parts that do lack detail and will need the GM to add some flavour to them, especially the council events which are quite sparse.



The production value of the book is excellent, the artwork is outstanding though this has become something I expect of a D&D product. Its really a great adventure to get your teeth stuck into and will take the players on a quite comprehensive path across the realms. I would say that players would be better placed having played the Hoard of the Dragon Queen first but its not required, as this can be played as a stand alone. Overall its a great product and an enjoyable adventure to play with



# Creating Alien Landscapes

*Vet Sgt*



One of the best things about playing a science fiction-based miniatures game is the creative freedom you get when making terrain! The good news is that creating terrain is actually very easy to do when your imagination is the only restriction. Knowing this, we decided to experiment with ways to make good-looking alien flora as cheaply as possible. One of the techniques we came up with was reshaping everyday plastic objects with heat. We settled with a gooey transparent-green theme, but this could just as easily be done with differently colored or opaque materials.

## How-to

The material that will be used to make these plants is plastic. It is important to understand that the plastic must become pliable for many of these methods to work, which means heating them. Don't try to melt the plastic. Soft enough to bend without breaking is all you

need. You should take care to not go beyond that. If you have ever made the mistake of trying to stir a hot beverage with a cheap plastic spoon and had it go all "droopy" then you know exactly what to shoot for. Using a stove to heat your plastic is usually the best way, but even a simple candle will work. For our oven: 400°F for a few minutes worked well for most plastics. It isn't an exact science though, so be sure to keep a close eye until you find the right settings for your needs. A Pyrex dish is the best surface to heat the plastic if you are using a stove, since it won't stick and pops off easily enough. The heating surface will be significantly hotter than the plastic you are heating, so always use an oven mitt and spatula to pick up the plastic.

You will need to shape a lot of the plastic, which we do by hand. You should use a pair of thin leather gloves while doing this. Never tightly hold anything hot. If you work quickly and keep both the plastic and your hands

moving, only a small amount of heat will transfer to your hands. If an uncomfortable amount of heat reaches your hands through the gloves: you are doing something wrong! The time between when it is almost too hot to touch and when it is too cool to work with is narrow, so you have to work fast. You should try this a few times with a small amount of plastic to get the hang of it before you try doing it in mass.

## Utensils

### Forks

Let's start with something easy to work with: the fork. Break off the tines, stick the pointy end of the tines into a plastic bead for support, apply a little heat, and you now have your first utensil plant! This is one of the simplest plants to make, and is good to experiment with before trying others. Use a very low heat on these since you only want to get them warm enough to cause them to stick together and droop a little. The leaves can be easily bent while the plastic is still warm and soft for a more natural look.



A second method that works well with forks is to keep the tines together and just break off the handle. Warm them up enough to be able to fold the opposite sides together and form a squid shape. If you want a taller plant, leave the handle attached and roll it into a more rounded shape.

### Spoons

Spoons look like they are meant to hold something, so we like to mix in beads with some of these. You can heat the beads with the spoon or put them in after, depending on what look you want.

Here we heated up the spoon heads, used several of them to form a 'bowl' and put the stuck-together beads in separately.



### Knives

These were simple plants, made using knives and extra handles with the same basic techniques.



## Other Materials

### Pebbles

Pebbles make for great foliage clumps. If you can't find decorative plastic pebbles, small beads can work well too. Just like the utensil plants, we made these with heat. Once the plastic is hot enough to become spongy and stick together, start peeling it off in chunks.



We made the foliage clumps by mixing two shades of green and one of yellow. The trick with this is to get some plastic that is shaded close enough to blend, but still be noticeably different.



If you want to use them as-is try rolling them into cigars or other shapes.



They work great as tree tops. Try using them in combination with some utensil handles.



## Beads

Some beads have a rounded organic shape already, but even the very angular ones work great after they have been heated a little and lose the sharp edges.



The easiest way to use plastic beads is to clump them up and apply heat until they shrink just a little, sticking together. If you do this on top of rocks it makes a very convincing looking fungi or moss plant.



Many beads are designed to stack on top of themselves, making it easy to create tall/thin plants. Heating them may help some stacks look more natural. If you want to do something really tall (like a tree trunk), use a small piece of wire as an armature to keep it from falling over. A different round bead or a smaller size of the same bead works nicely to finish off stacks.

If you happen to have any unused flying stand posts lying around, they can make stems to raise the beads up off the ground, especially when heated to get more organic shapes.



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