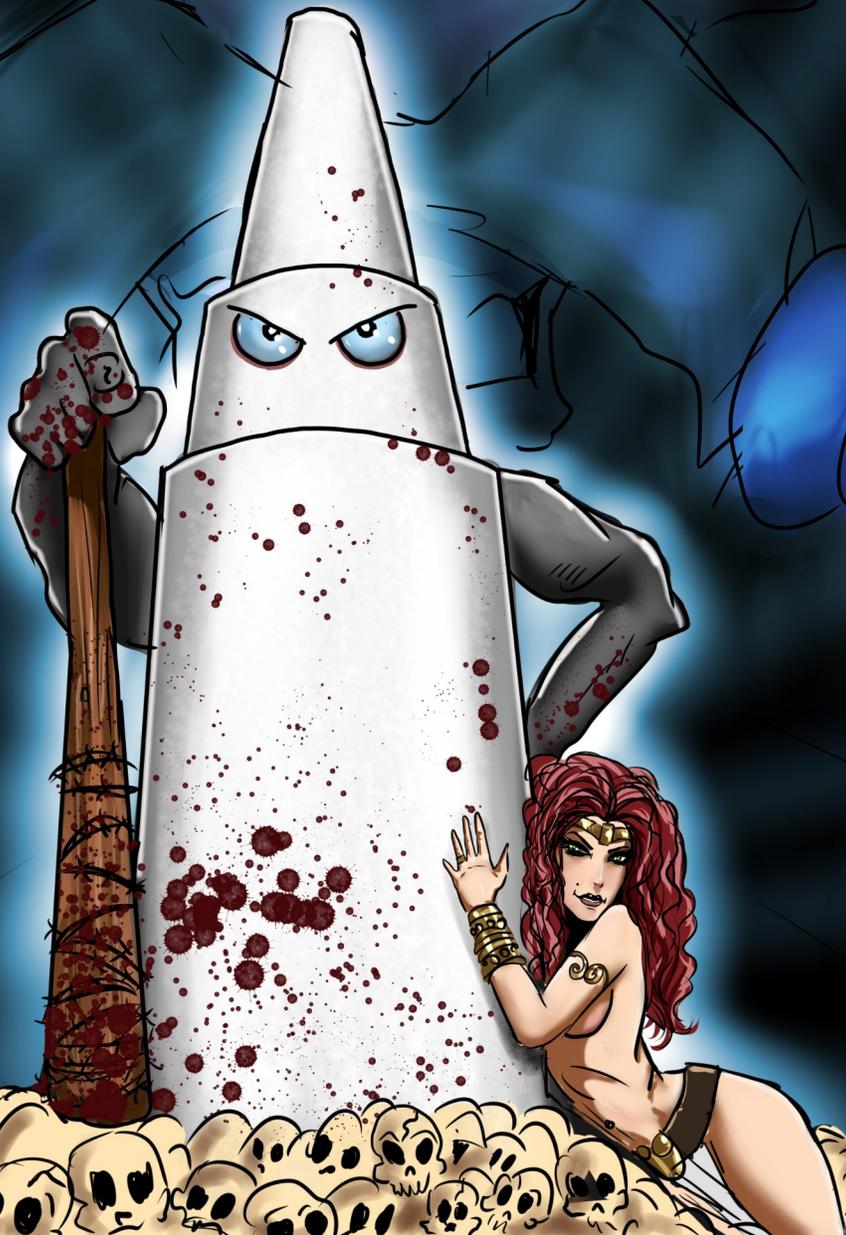


IRONWATCH

DECEMBER 2016 | ISSUE 52



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ABYSSAL TIDINGS

A MESSAGE FROM
THE EDITOR



Welcome back to another thrilling issue of the **IRONWATCH** Magazine! This month we've got adventurers in the Star-Struck City, the results of the Redstone Rumble, Rylor Ings and the adventures in the Deadzone, and much more!

This time of year tends to be a bit sparse for us for content, so please send us your articles, stories, custom rules, and images! We would especially love to see more pictures, so please submit your photos so we can include them alongside suitably amazing articles in the process!

If you're a fan of Ironwatch and want to know how you can help, share the issue with your friends! We always love seeing new faces and new readers, and the more the merrier when it comes to both viewers and potential content submissions as well. Please share us on Facebook, and let us know if there are any areas you think we should reach out to for expanding the reach of your favorite Mantic gaming magazine.

Once again, thanks for reading, and whether you're a fresh-faced new reader or a grizzled old veteran, thanks for reading and Welcome to the Watch!

-Austin

Corrections: We missed two Mantic events for November, the Hate Con Zom and Mantic Open Day. We sincerely apologize for the omission!

Contact us and submit articles at:
ironwatchmagazine@gmail.com

If you find any errors, grammar mistakes, or rule imbalances, please contact us on the Mantic Forums (Look for the discussion labeled "Ironwatch Issue X Feedback") and let us know what we could do to improve your fan-produced magazine. If you are interested in writing, illustrating, or editing for our magazine, please let us know on the feedback discussion as well so you can get in on the action!

All models used in this publication are from the respective author's own personal collections, and any models displayed herein are not intended to challenge the status of the copyrights of their respective owners.

This publication is completely unofficial and is not produced by Mantic Games. It is fan-made material based on the original works by Alessio Cavatore and Jake Thornton, and produced by Mantic Games. Mantic, Dungeon Saga, Kings of War, Warpath, Deadzone, Dreadball, and all associated characters, names, places and things are TM and © Mantic Entertainment Ltd 2015. Used without permission. No challenge to their status intended. All Rights Reserved to their respective owners.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

IRONWATCH

Iron Forge 5
See the amazing array of top tier paintjobs from our team of professional-quality painters.

The Mantic Calendar 17
Learn what Mantic related events and tournaments are upcoming in your area.

Advertisements 96
Our section where you can advertise your local Mantic game group or store for free!

KINGS OF WAR

The War Journal of Sister Superior Augusta, by Alex Younger 19
Augusta faces her punishment for reckless actions: to take her warband and enter the Star-Struck City..

The Dwarven Windmill, by Peter—“Tek Thornisson” 36
Peter shows us how to make a stunning and electrified windmill terrain piece

The Order of Maurice, Episode 5, by Ben Stoddard 68
Our press-ganged thief clashes with the captain, as the deadly city begins to fray nerves and endanger all of their lives

Road to the Rumble, Part 5, by David Reid 77
David goes over how the Redstone Rumble event transpired, and the rankings of the victors in Kings of War

WARPATH

Deadzone: The Cleansing Part 8, by Matthew Lindsay 81
While downloading the files, Augustus realizes he and the other enforcers may have stepped right into a trap

THE IRON FORGE

new Dr. Simmonds Mercenary for Plague strike forces!

Keep tuned in next month for more fantastic models, and if you have some painted Mantic minis you'd like featured to possibly become an Iron Forge artist, please email high resolution photos of your miniatures to ironwatchmagazine@gmail.com.

Please include your name and/or Mantic forum name. You can also provide descriptions of your paint jobs and titles if you'd like!

Welcome back to the Iron Forge.

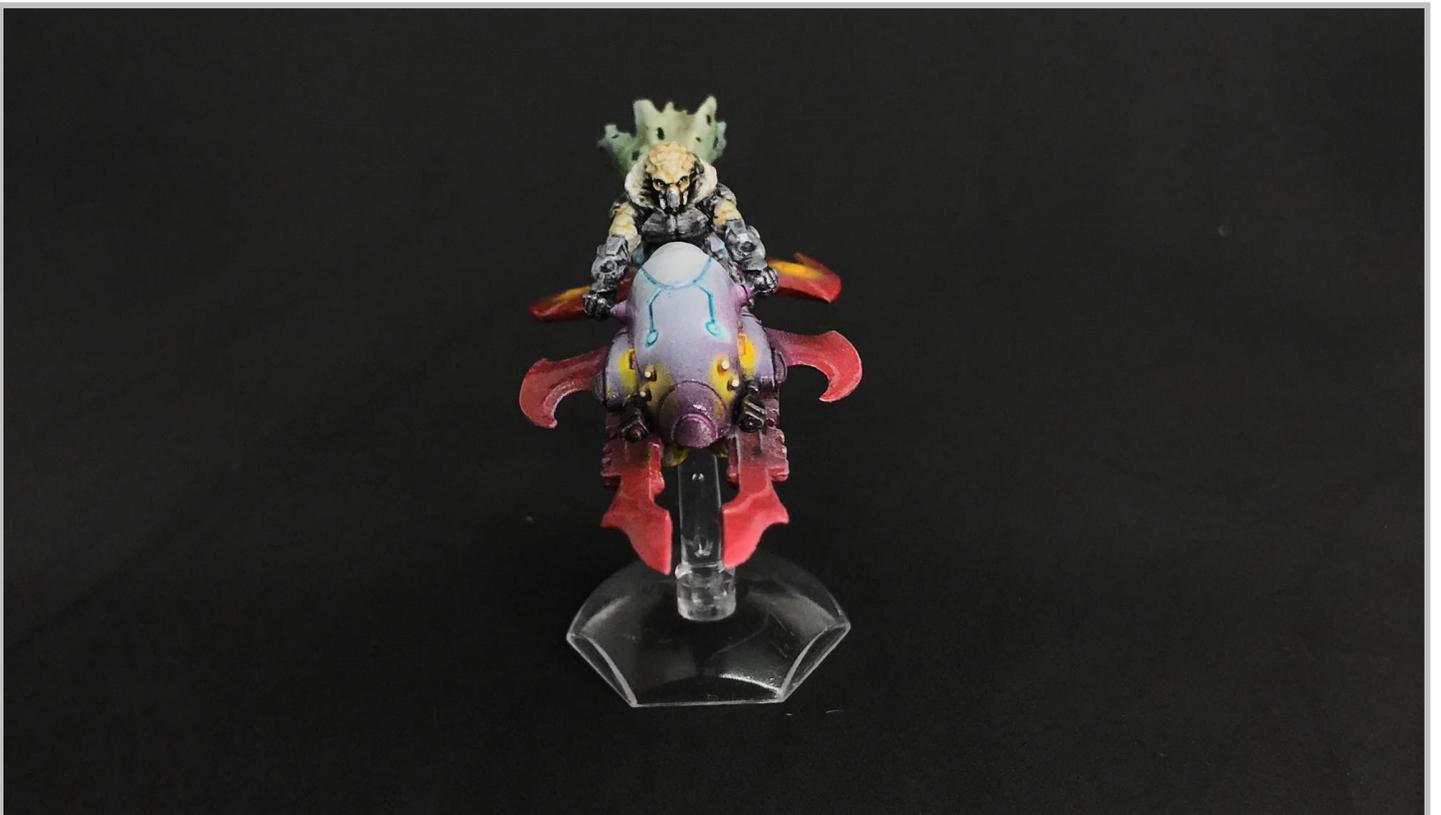
On display this month for you we have:

- Cedric Boudoya, and his set of exquisite Deadzone Rebs and Mercenaries, the Furious 7, led by Blaine on a Jetbike!
- Geoff Burbidge, and his outstanding customized Judge Dredd-themed Dreadball team: The Law! He's also included his fantastic Marauder Convict, "Brickbat" Vognar, as well!
- Marcel Popik, with two phenomenal Deadzone 2.0 Forgefather Thorgarim heroes and a painted up version of the



Undead Wraiths by Chris Schlumpberger

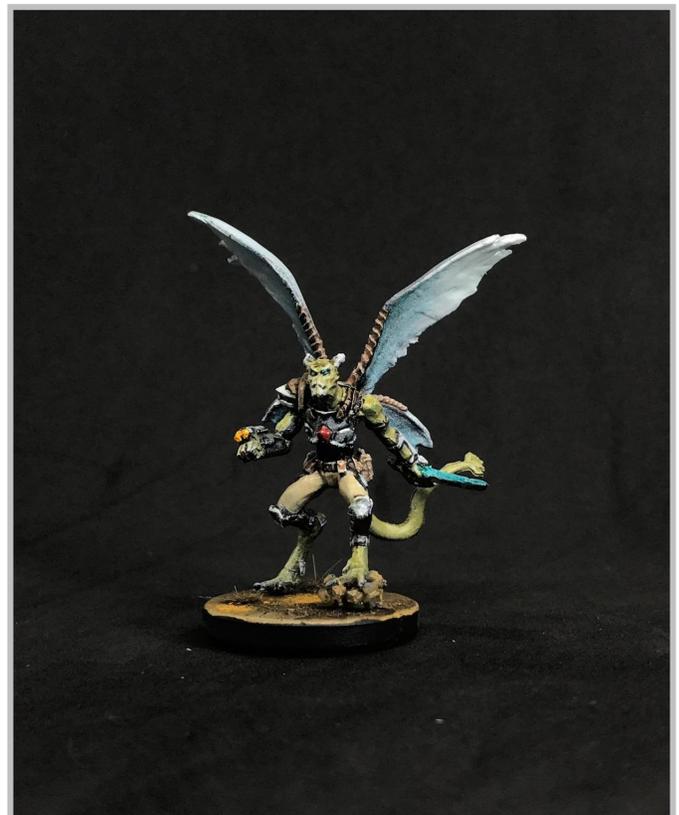
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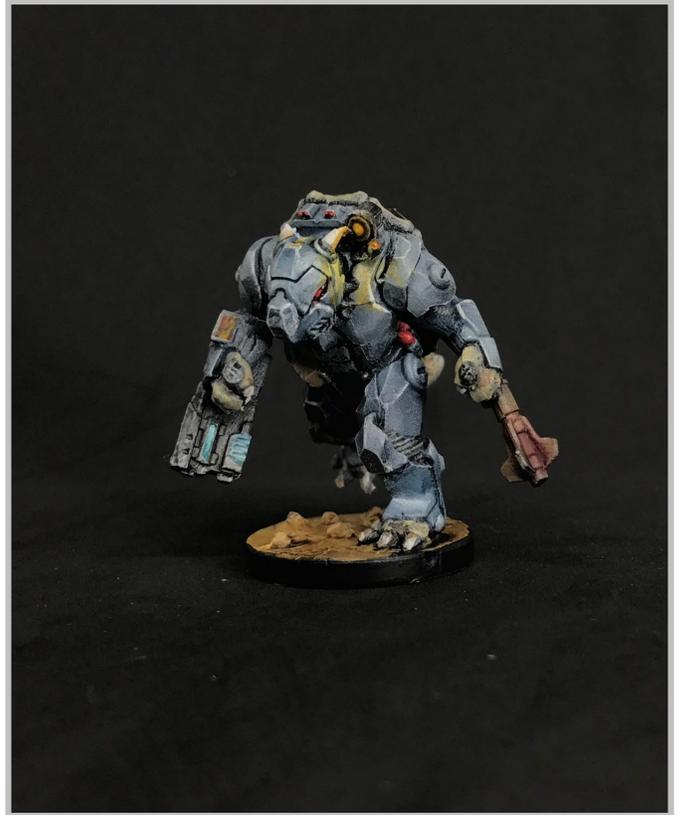
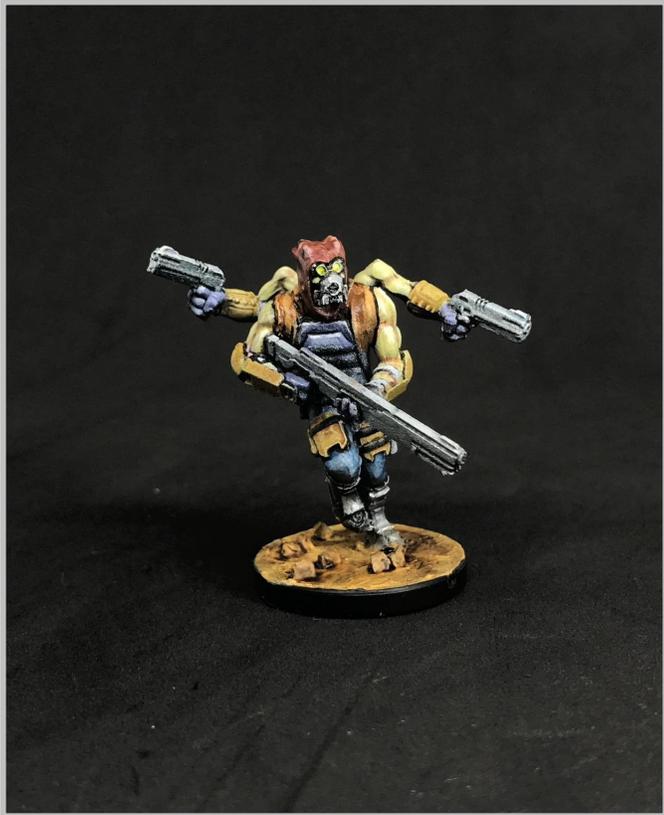
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CEDRIC BOUDOYA



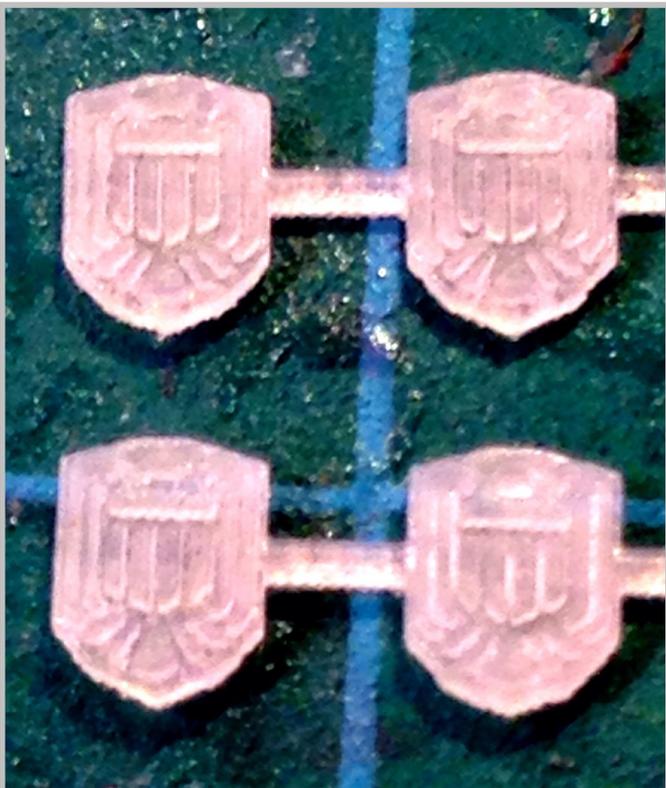
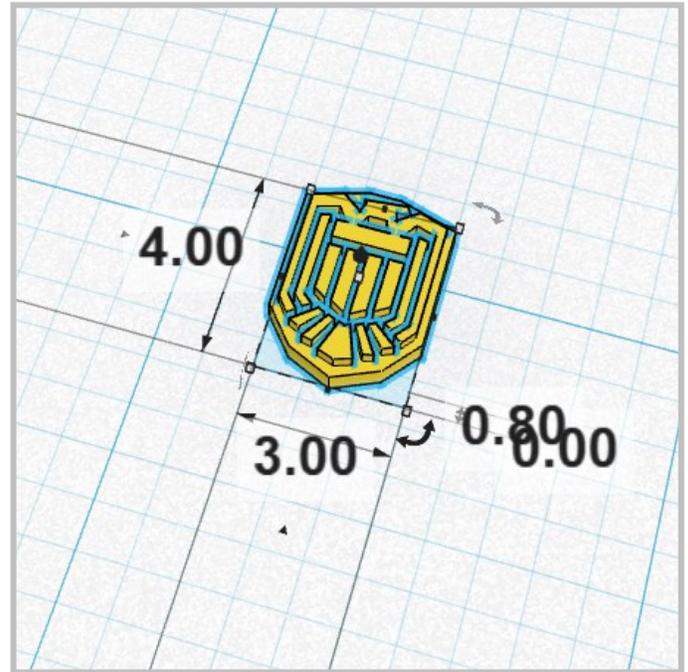
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GEOFF BURBRIDGE



GEOFF BURBIDGE



GEOFF BURBIDGE



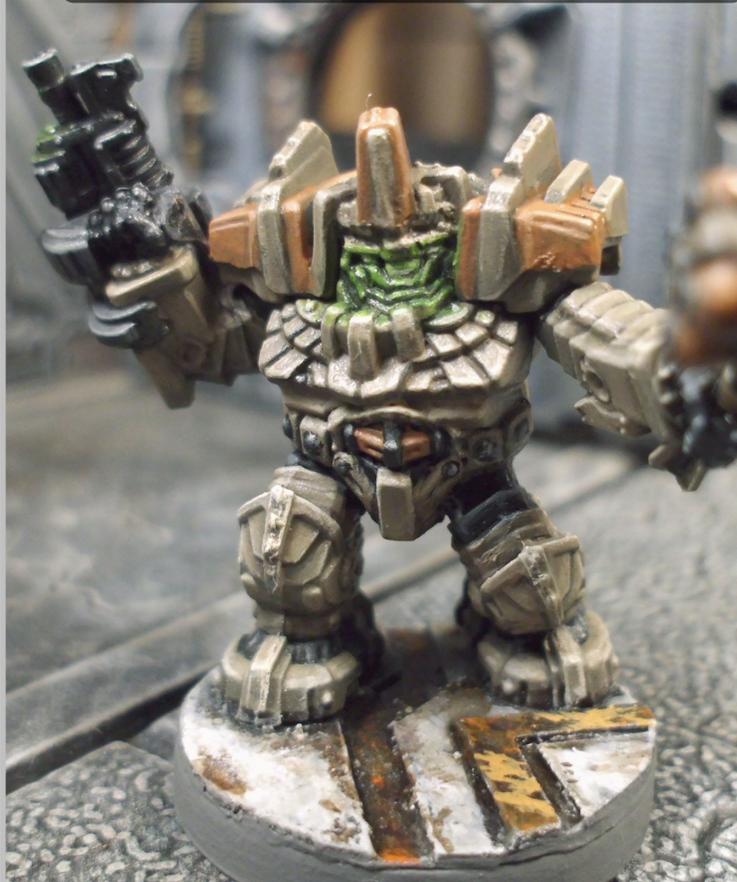
GEOFF BURBIDGE



MARCEL POPIK



Forge Father Thorgarim Hero in DZ2 style



MARCEL POPIK



Forge Father Thorgarim Hero in DZ2 style



MARCEL POPIK



Dr. Simmonds (new version)





Dreadball at Adepticon 2015, courtesy of Mantic Games

MANTIC CALENDAR

If you have Mantic-related events or tournaments you'd like to add, please PM Matt Gilbert or Austin Peasley on the forums or [email us](#) with your event's date, time, location, cost, a brief description, and a URL for more information.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and indicates where Mantic games are being enjoyed, not necessarily where Mantic will be making an official

appearance (Save for the Mantic HQ, of course).

December

12/3 [Dragonmeet](#)

From 10:00 AM to 12:00 AM

Tickets start at £12.00

Dragonmeet is one of the most vibrant tabletop gaming conventions and the largest of it's kind in London. You can expect boardgames, roleplaying games and miniatures games, tournaments plus an evening of gaming including the charity auction. Novotel London West, 1 Shortlands, London W6 8DR, United Kingdom

February 2017

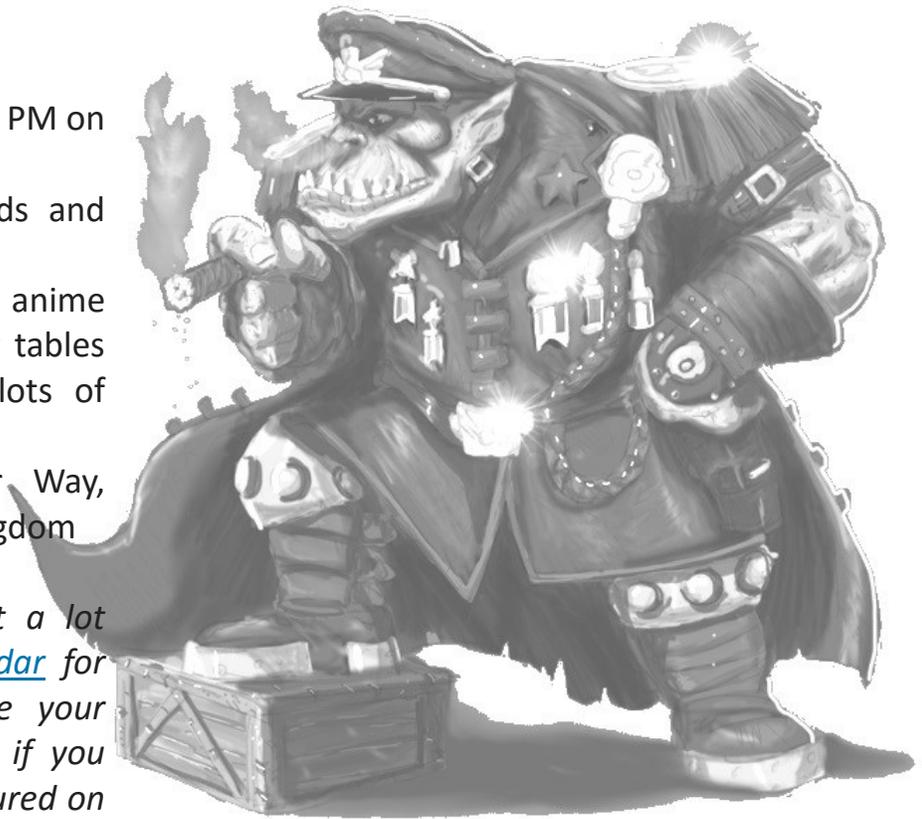
2/25 [Digi-Con 3](#)

From 10:00 AM on 2/25 to 6:00 PM on 2/26

Tickets start at £8.00 for kids and £25.00 for adults.

Bringing special movie and anime themed guests, over 60 trader tables full of geeky goodness and lots of Cosplay!

Doncaster Deaf Trust, Leger Way, Doncaster, DN2 6AY, United Kingdom



You might have noticed there's not a lot here! We rely on the [Mantic Calendar](#) for events, so please either coordinate your event there or let us know directly if you have an event you'd like to have featured on the monthly Calendar!



Kings of War pitched siege by "SneakyChris"



Basilean Panther Lancer by "C.M. Minis"

THE WAR JOURNAL OF SISTER SUPERIOR AUGUSTA

Battles in the Star-Struck City

By Alex Younger

"You call them Star-Metal, because they are shiny. You lack both Knowledge and Imagination. We know what they really are; after all, we were there when they were forged, and when they were shattered."

Ravings from a Nightmare

Prologue

Sister Superior Augusta stood in full armor in front of Paladin Captain Julius' desk. She was used to living in her armor, but she had been standing in the same spot, at attention, without moving for at least ten minutes. The light from the large stained glass window to her left was warm, and one particularly resilient drop of sweat was moving glacially down the back of her knee. She flexed her leg just enough to crush the bead of sweat against her leather greaves, and ease the infernal tickling. Her movement was slight, but Julius noticed, and held up one finger on

his right hand without looking up. It was as if he was saying, "Just a minute more." It was a petty punishment, and it galled her how well it worked. It made her feel that being called to his office for a reprimand was somehow wasting his precious time, and that she was less important than the parchment piled on his desk.

A short eternity later, Julius set aside the parchment he was reading, and steeped his fingers. He started to speak, then squeezed his eyes shut. Augusta took a minute to look at him before the storm broke. Though his neatly trimmed beard was still black, there was more salt than pepper in his short-cropped hair. There were more lines around his eyes than she remembered, and he looked tired as if he hadn't slept in days. Given the depth of the reports scattered across his desk, she wondered how many

days it had been.

"The *entire* town?" he asked finally. His tone was passive, almost disinterested, but the stress on the word 'entire' betrayed hidden depths of anger.

"Yes Sir," she replied in a tight, controlled tone while looking straight ahead, six inches above the Paladin Captain's head. Julius took a single breath, in long through his mouth, and then quickly out through his nose, just short of snorting.

"Can you," he said calmly, as if her entire career wasn't held over the fire and crisping at the edges, "explain to me why you decided to pacify the entire town with fire and steel?"



Kingdoms of Men Knights by Andre Kritzingner



Undead Ghouls by Guiseppe Aquino

“Well Sir, in my report...” she began in the same professional tone.”

He cut her off by slamming his armored fist into his desk hard enough to leave divots from the knuckles of his gauntlet. He stood at the same time, spreading his hands wide on his desk, and leaning forward in what was an admittedly impressive intimidating stance. “I’ve read the night-blessed report!” He shouted.

She felt somehow relieved that he was finally shouting. The tension behind his previous cold demeanor had been worse. Being shouted at was normal, almost cathartic.

“I’ve read all the reports. I’ve interviewed your team. Do you know what they said?” The question was obviously not a question. She stood in silence while he angrily stirred

the storm of papers on his desk, and ripped out the ones he wanted. “Aquila says, and I quote, ‘the fire was pretty’. Camilla said nothing at all, just stared at the floor until I dismissed her. Claudia suggested that it will be ok because, ‘we tried to only burn the guilty ones’ and, ‘the Shining Ones will sort them out’. And Fausta,” he stopped to shake a blank piece of parchment in Augusta’s face, “stole my night-blessed quill and I didn’t notice until she had left the briefing!”

“They are very loyal, Sir.” Augusta said once he stopped to take a breath.

“Loyal to you,” Julius said quietly in a tone composed entirely out of very cold steel, “rather than loyal to the Church.”

Augusta had no response, because he was probably right. She just waited through the awkward silence until he continued.

“I sent you to scout the town, and verify rumors of an Abyssal Cult.” His voice remained cold.

Augusta nodded once sharply and said, “the rumors were true, Sir.”

“And,” Julius continued as if she hadn’t spoken at all, “you decided rather than return with that information as you had been ordered, to burn the entire town, and cut down the survivors as they fled? How,” his voice rose sharply, “did you even manage to burn an entire town in one night?!”

“It was a very small town, more of a hamlet, Sir.” She tried, and failed, to keep the corner

of her mouth from turning up.

Julius slammed the desk again, hard enough that it jumped, and his reports slid perilously close to the edges, “This is not a joke!” He shouted. “Arch-Deacon Flavius’ sister’s son was in that town.”

Augusta’s tone abruptly became as cold as ice, “then he was a...”

Julius’ right index finger was abruptly in her face, “don’t finish that sentence.”

“Even if it’s the truth?” Augusta asked in a tone that would kill spring flowers.



Liche King by “left64”



Undead Ghouls by Martin Geibner

“Especially if it’s the truth!” Julius’ shoulders were shaking with the force of his fury. He took several deep breaths before continuing. “Even,” he put his finger inches from her nose again, “even if what you say is true, then he’s already been purified by flame, and therefore returned to a state of innocence.” He sat back down and sighed, seeming to deflate. “Tell me there was at least armed resistance.”

Augusta’s stiff posture relaxed enough for her to look directly at Julius for the first time, “the rites were being led by an Abyssal Dwarf. This was the real thing. They were using...” she shuddered in spite of herself, “Rat-kin to tunnel beneath the buildings, and connect all of them to their profaned temple. When we discovered their temple, and the sacrifices,” her hands curled into fists at her sides remembering what they had found in the nave of the temple, “the cultists attacked. We killed most of them, but the Dark Dwarf, and the Rat-Kin, retreated into the tunnels. We collapsed the entrance, and burned the temple both to purify it, and to cut off their escape. Something down in the tunnels must have been very flammable; buildings across the hamlet went up like

candles. We barely made it out with our riding cats.”

“It would be easier on me if you hadn’t.”

Augusta’s face and heart fell. She knew she was a trial to her superiors, but she truly acted out of faith. The damage an Abyssal Cult could do in the heart of Basilea was sickening. She’d been a member of the Basilean clergy her entire life, raised in a Church run orphanage, and then later training and serving as a member of the Sisterhood. She’d never wanted to be anything else. If she was turned out, she had no idea where to go, or what to be.

Julius immediately raised his right hand, palm out to her, “Mea culpa, Sister. My weariness runs away with my tongue.” He closed his eyes, and his lips moved in a silent prayer. “To the Abyss with politics,” he said to himself once he was done, “my official finding,” he said to Augusta, “is that you terminated the cult with an excess of zeal.”

Augusta felt like a weight had been removed from her ribcage. She wouldn’t have her emblem stripped from her, and be separated

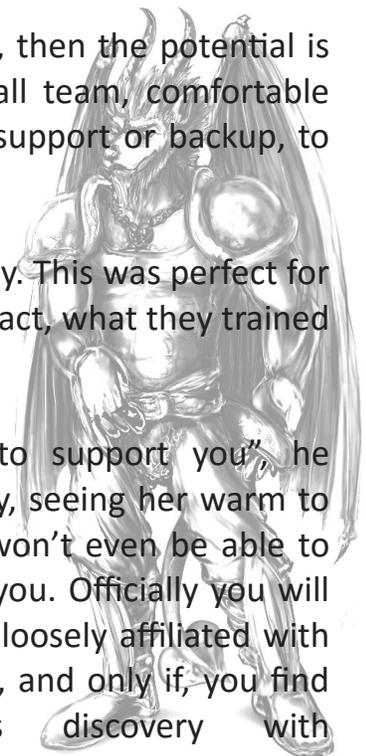
from her sisters and riding cat.

“There will be waves,” Julius continued in a subdued tone, “and I can’t protect you from all of them. I need to get you out of sight for a while. Maybe a long while.” He shuffled the parchment scraps in front of him until he lost patience, and swept half of them onto the rug with a violent sweep of his arm. “There it is,” he said with something combining surprise and weariness. He held the report out to Augusta. While she skimmed it, he said, “There are reports, that in the Infant Sea, a new island has formed. Or, an old one has floated back up, like a swollen corpse. If it is one of our cities lost

during the Winter War, then the potential is limitless. I need a small team, comfortable with working without support or backup, to scout it.”

Augusta smiled inwardly. This was perfect for her team. This was, in fact, what they trained for.

“We won’t be able to support you”, he continued more quickly, seeing her warm to the assignment, “We won’t even be able to acknowledge we sent you. Officially you will be a private company, loosely affiliated with the Basilean Church. If, and only if, you find proof linking this discovery with



Basilean Abbess by Peter Grose



Blocking Terrain by Rob Phaneuf

Primovantor, from before the Winter War, we will be able to send an official detachment, and establish an ancestral claim. I will expect missives, coded with one of the standard cyphers, to report your progress.”

“We won’t let you down, Sir.” Augusta was excited. There was no unit in the Military Arm of the Church better suited to operate in a hostile environment than her team. “Can we bring our riding cats?”

Julius nodded sharply, “I can give you your cats, your armor and hand weapons, as well as transportation to the island. That’s all. Anything else you need will have to be foraged or traded. You can wear your unit insignia, but no Church insignia.”

She nodded several times accepting the terms, already thinking about establishing contacts and supply routes. “When do we

leave, Sir?”

He started writing out orders in a sloppy and hurried hand, “this afternoon,” he said, “and the sooner the better. Gather your team, draw your gear, and select your cats. Report to the wharf before High Tide, and commandeering a ship. Here is a promise of remuneration for the Captain.” He handed her the parchment after waving it in the air a few times to set the ink.

Augusta took the parchment, and snapped to attention. She brought her fist to her chest for a salute but stopped, puzzled by a raised eyebrow from Julius.

“As of this moment,” he said with a smile, “you are the Captain of a private company contracted to the Church of Basilea. You don’t have to salute me, as I am now your employer, not your commander.

She thought about this, then cocked her head to the side and smiled. She stepped forward and offered her arm to him. He gripped her arm firmly halfway between her wrist and elbow. She gripped his in turn. "Walk in the shadow of their Wings, Julius" she said, her voice brimming over with mirth and excitement.

Julius looked her in the eye, and said, "and you as well, Augusta."

Augusta straightened, and turned on her heel, heading for the barracks, but stopped in the doorway. "Did you say the wharf, Si—uh, Julius?"

Julius smiled wickedly, "yes, I did in fact."

The color drained from her face, "but you know how the cats react to a sea voyage."

In a falsely innocent tone Julius said, "But how else do you reach an island, Augusta?" He waited a minute, seeing her face look more and more like curdled milk, and finally said, "You didn't think you were getting away without punishment did you?"

Your reflection blocks your view through a mirror. It moves when you move, so that you can never see behind it. Have you ever asked yourself, is it protecting you from something? Or hiding something from you?

Whispers in an Empty Room

Chapter 1

Three days aboard this scow pretending to be a merchant vessel. Just three days, and she'd already broken the first mate's hand



Undead Wraiths by Chris Schlumpberger



A Kingdoms of Men Pirate warband ambushes an Elven warband by Austin Peasley

for grabbing what no man had a right to. She'd polished her armor and short sword 5 times, but already saw spots of rust growing again. The never-ending sound of the waves made her want to deafen herself, and the smell of the crew made her gag worse than the rocking motion of the deck. Seriously, how could you live and work surrounded by water, yet never bathe? The crew talked fondly of month long voyages to exotic lands. She didn't know how they did it. She'd have killed the crew, and wrecked the boat, within a week just for a chance to stand on dry land again.

"Miss Augusta," the voice of the Captain was falsely cheery, another nail in his fondly imagined coffin. She rankled at the familiarity of being called "Miss". She could no longer be called "Sister Superior", despite the other Sisters slipping, and calling her by her old title. Technically, she was Captain of

a private company, but a ship could only have one Captain, so until this interminable voyage was over, she was simply "Miss". "Just the woman I wanted to see."

No one should be that happy while bobbing up and down on this blue-green hell. He ambled up to her, and stood way to close to where she was leaning on the rail. She had been deciding whether it was worth leaning over the rail to throw up, the combination of the Captain's breath and unique 'eau de unwashed man' quickly made her mind up for her. He politely waited until she was done retching, and had a chance to wipe her mouth. "Miss Augusta," he began, and she wondered if he used the term out of politeness, or because he knew how much it bothered her, "I seem to be missing some things from my cabin."

She waited for him to continue, but he seemed content to stand there in the sun and spray, and let her draw her own conclusions. “Maybe you just misplaced them,” she said finally, trying to sound like a gruff and battle-worn veteran, but settling for not sounding like she’d just thrown up yesterday’s salted beef.

“Oh, no, no, Miss Augusta,” he said smiling, “on a ship everything has a place, and everything is in its place, except of course, my second-best compass and spy-glass.”

“Are you accusing me, or My Girls, of theft?” she asked tiredly, knowing that was exactly what he was doing.

“No, no, no,” he said jovially, waving his big callused hands in front of him, “I think maybe someone just borrowed them, from my locked cabin, and forgot to return them.” His smile never wavered, but something

about it contrived to remind her that he, in fact, owned the only piece of real estate you could actually stand on for as far as the eye could see.

Augusta turned her back to him, placed both hands on the rail, and spent several long seconds focusing on speaking without vomiting. “You may be right, Captain. If you haven’t found them by the end of the voyage, I will add them to the Letter of Remuneration, if that is acceptable to you.” Fausta, she thought tiredly, do you even know how to work a compass?

“Yes, yes,” the Captain said magnanimously, in the infuriating way he had of repeating himself. “The sea is beautiful in the morning, isn’t it?” He waved out over the railing at the white-capped misery she’d been avoiding looking at.



Basilean Panther Lancers by “C.M. Minis”



Basilean Paladins by Andre Kritzinger

“Pardon me,” she said hurriedly, trying, and failing, not to follow his hand out across the shifting horizon, “I need to check on my cat.” She hurried to the stairwell, and down into the hold, trying to convince herself she wasn’t running away.

If anything, the hold was more miserable than the deck. The smell hit her like an Orc’s war club. It was a disturbing mix. Equal parts raw meat, cat musk, and the sour smell of vomit. She powered through it, and made her way to the riding cat stalls. One side of the hold had been hastily converted into stalls for the cats. The wooden enclosures were more to keep the cargo from sliding into them, than for keeping the cats contained. The hay, which had been fresh three days ago, had long since become a

slimy, matted mess. She walked to the farthest enclosure, and slid down onto the filthy hay regardless of what it would do to her leather greaves. Friendship, after all, was much more important than vanity.

As soon as she settled down, the large cat lifted its head, and laid it in her lap. It looked more like a sick child than a sleek engine of destruction. When it lay its head down, its breath came out in a ‘whuff’ and it made a sound like a mewling kitten. She ran a hand down its sweaty flank, and murmured, “Its ok Koshka, almost done now.” Whether it was her words, or her touch, he calmed. After a few minutes, he even broke out in a rumbling purr. It was technically against the stricture to name, or befriend, the riding cats. They were more wild than domestic,

and even after decades of partnership, the Sisters were still the only ones that could ride them. More than one Paladin had been mauled thinking 'he'd be the one'. Unofficially, though, if you couldn't form a relationship with a riding cat, you couldn't ever be a true Lancer. And, Lancers were the 'true' Sisters.

The Sisters who were too scared of the cats, or just failed to form a bond, were forever relegated to cleaning and maintaining the chapels, or at best, performing missionary work in 'safe' areas. She'd known Koshka

since he was a cub. She'd been a part of his training, hand-feeding him to build trust between them. He'd saved her life in battle, and would follow her into the Abyss itself, but he was still at heart, a cat. His moods were as changeable as the wind or the tide, and she had plenty of scratches to attest to that. He'd only been willing to board the ship, and enter the hold, at her coaxing. Over eight feet long, and over five hundred pounds, she'd seen him rip open armored Orcs easier than she could shuck an oyster.



Undead Revenant King by Paul Mullis



Obstacle Terrain by Rob Phaneuf

She ran a hand over the scar in his dark reddish fur from when he'd carried her five miles to safety with a Goblin javelin in his left shoulder. She had a matching scar just below her ribs, on the right side. She'd thought that they would both die that day, but his great heart pulled them both through.

Seeing him dizzy and sick, laying in the stinking hold of this rotten ship, was breaking her heart. Alone in the darkness, without anyone to see her, was the only place where she could let down her guard. She bent down, and put her face in Koshka's fur, where she could pretend the wetness on her cheeks was his sweat, rather than her tears. "Did I make the right decision?" she asked, quietly and completely to herself. The only answer was another of the cats hacking and spewing into the already dirty hay.

She wasn't sure how long she spent in the hold, petting Koshka and keeping his head out of the hay, but she'd heard the bell on deck ring once, so it had been at least an hour, or was it three? Who knew how sailors kept time? She was slowly preparing to work her way out from under Koshka's head, hopefully without disturbing him too much, when she heard soft footsteps on the stairwell. She scrubbed at her face quickly; she could never afford to appear weak, not

even in front of her girls, and certainly not in front of those sailors.

The footsteps stopped at an earlier enclosure. One of her girls, then. She was happy she wasn't the only one checking on the cats. She was awkwardly unsure whether she should call out, to let the other girl know she was already down there, or to try and slip out quickly. She hesitated. Before she made up her mind, she heard a quiet voice speaking. It was a voice she heard so rarely, that it took her a minute to place it. It was Camilla, who rarely, if ever, spoke to anyone but Claudia.

"Eat it silly," the girl said, "it's lemongrass, and it'll help your tummy." There was the sound of a large body moving through hay, and a few minutes later the sound of deep purring. "See isn't that better? You're going to like this new island once we get there. We're going to go on adventures, and get to kill lots of bad monsters. Then, when we get back to Basilea, we'll all get promoted, and I'll finally be able to join the Sisters Hospitaller."

Augusta didn't know what shocked her more. That Camilla, who couldn't talk to anyone, would talk so freely to her cat, or that the girl wanted to join the order to



Elven Archer by Matt Gilbert

travelling healers. She knew the girl was right though. If this island really was a preserved Primovantor city, then it would make the career of not only her, but the entire team. This was no time for doubt, despite not wearing the familiar colors of the church. Their work was Holy work. Camilla's speech had trailed off into quiet snores, so Augusta quietly slipped out from under Koshka, and headed up toward the deck. As she silently padded past Camilla, she stopped to observe her while she slept. She

was leaned up against the wall of the riding cat enclosure, with her mouth open like she fell asleep mid-sentence.

Her curly golden hair framed her round face, and reminded Augusta just how young she and the other girls were. Her whole team, highly-trained fighters and dedicated to the Church, but all in their late teens. In another life, they'd still be discussing boys, and preparing for weddings, but here they were. On a ship, headed to what would most likely

be, a warzone. Thinking back to when she was as young, and new to this life, as they were, made her feel much older than her 30 years.

She turned to head toward the stairwell, again, when she noticed that the girl was cradling a bound stack of vellum on her lap. The top leaf was half covered in an almost finished charcoal drawing of her riding cat, Calico. Most of the riding cats had a coat of either black or brown, shading to red. Camilla's cat, however, had a coat that had patches of black, brown, and red, in a tortoise-shell pattern. Calico, the subject of the sleeping artist, looked healthier than any of the other cats, and was batting the charcoal stick Camilla had dropped between its paws. Augusta deftly retrieved the charcoal stick before Calico could crush it or

gnaw it to pieces, and tucked it safely into one of Camilla's belt pouches.

Augusta had no sooner than emerged into the light, when she heard voices shouting. She followed the commotion, and was not surprised to find Claudia sitting in the middle of whatever trouble was brewing. She, and five of the sailors, were sitting on barrels next to the main mast. Claudia looked out of place, but then she looked out of place anywhere. She was a head taller than any of the other girls, including Augusta, and insisted on exaggerating that by binding her ginger-colored hair into a rough topknot. She was stripped down in a way that, Augusta thought, bordered indecent.

Her chain shirt was nowhere to be seen, and the sleeves of her leather armor had been



Forces of the Abyss Lower Abyssals by "C.M. Minis"

unlaced at the shoulders, and removed. Augusta knew it was hot in the sun, but imagine, baring her arms in front of sailors! The sailors were shouting at each other, and alternating between shoving and shooting dirty looks at a small and particularly weasel-faced one of their number. Augusta stalked up to them, wearing scowl number five. Her, 'I'm in charge here, and you're all guilty' look. "Claudia," she said, in what could politely be termed a growl, "what is going on here?"

Claudia looked up at her as if she was slightly hurt to be singled out, when all of this was obviously not her fault. "We are playing dice, Sister—uh, Captain."

Augusta tapped her foot impatiently, and rolled her hand, indicating Claudia should keep telling her version of the story, "and?"

"And, I noticed Billy here," Claudia stopped, and smiled at the small oily-looking sailor, as if remembering his name was a huge compliment she'd paid him, "uses a different set of dice than the rest of us use. I just asked him if he minded if I used his dice,

rather than the normal set, because they seem luckier." Claudia shrugged, as if it was a completely reasonable suggestion, and that Billy was being completely unfair for resisting.

Augusta looked at the sailor in question. He was hunched up with his head tucked down between his shoulders, as if he expected someone to try to punch him in his ears at any moment. The knuckles on his right hand were white from how hard his fist was clenched around something.

"And then I noticed," Claudia paused, and her hand darted out as quick as a snake. She grabbed Billy's right wrist, and expertly applied an armored thumb to the tender nerves between the bones, just above the palm of his hand. Billy's hand popped open like a triggered crossbow. Claudia's other hand grabbed one of the die lying there. "I noticed," She continued happily, "that his dice each had two sixes, rather than a one and a six." She held the offending die up for Augusta's inspection.



Abyssal Dwarf Lesser Obsidian Golems by "Dwarf Giant"



An Elven warband corners an Undead Vampire by Austin Peasley

Augusta took the die gingerly, as if it were a scorpion that might sting at any moment. She turned it over several times, looking at it from every angle. It did, indeed, have six pips on top and on bottom, rather than the more traditional one on top, and six on bottom. Augusta made a point of touching it as little as possible, her thumb on one face and her index finger on the other, as she handed it back to Billy in plain view of the other sailors.

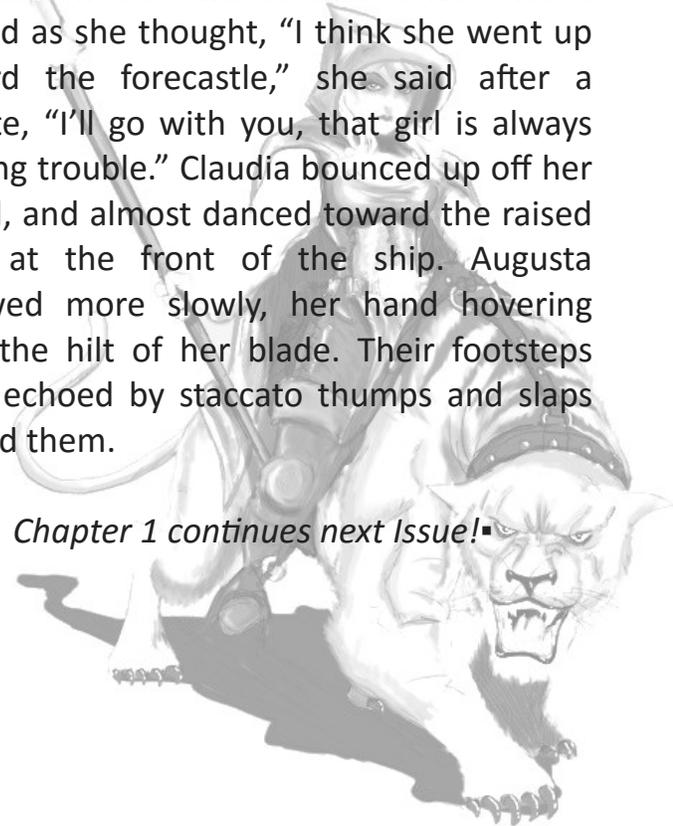
"I didn't know they even made dice with more than one six!" Claudia said, as if she was discovering a new species of dice in the wild. "Think how often you'd win if you didn't have to worry about rolling a one."

Augusta didn't honestly know whether Claudia realized how much worse Billy's life was about to become, now that he'd been outed as a cheat. Either way, she did know when it was time to make a graceful exit. "Claudia," she said, hoping to interrupt the

girl's train wreck of thought, "have you seen Fausta? I'm worried that she may be getting into trouble."

Claudia's mouth twisted into a knot for a second as she thought, "I think she went up toward the forecastle," she said after a minute, "I'll go with you, that girl is always starting trouble." Claudia bounced up off her barrel, and almost danced toward the raised deck at the front of the ship. Augusta followed more slowly, her hand hovering near the hilt of her blade. Their footsteps were echoed by staccato thumps and slaps behind them.

Chapter 1 continues next Issue!





THE DWARVEN WINDMILL

By Peter—"Tek Thornisson"

Editor's Note: Peter has been kind enough to send us several terrain-making tutorials for the next few issues. While they don't have step-by-step written overviews, the materials

are simple, and a picture (of a tutorial step) is worth a thousand words!

"I work until now only with high-density polystyrene-often colored has a smooth, tough structure.

The only special tool I use is a desktop foam cutter from Proxxon.

The other tools all modelers have at home:

- Retractable knife
- Scalpel with disposable blades (for very detailed cutting)
- Brushes
- Pencil
- Toothpick

And endless imagination!"

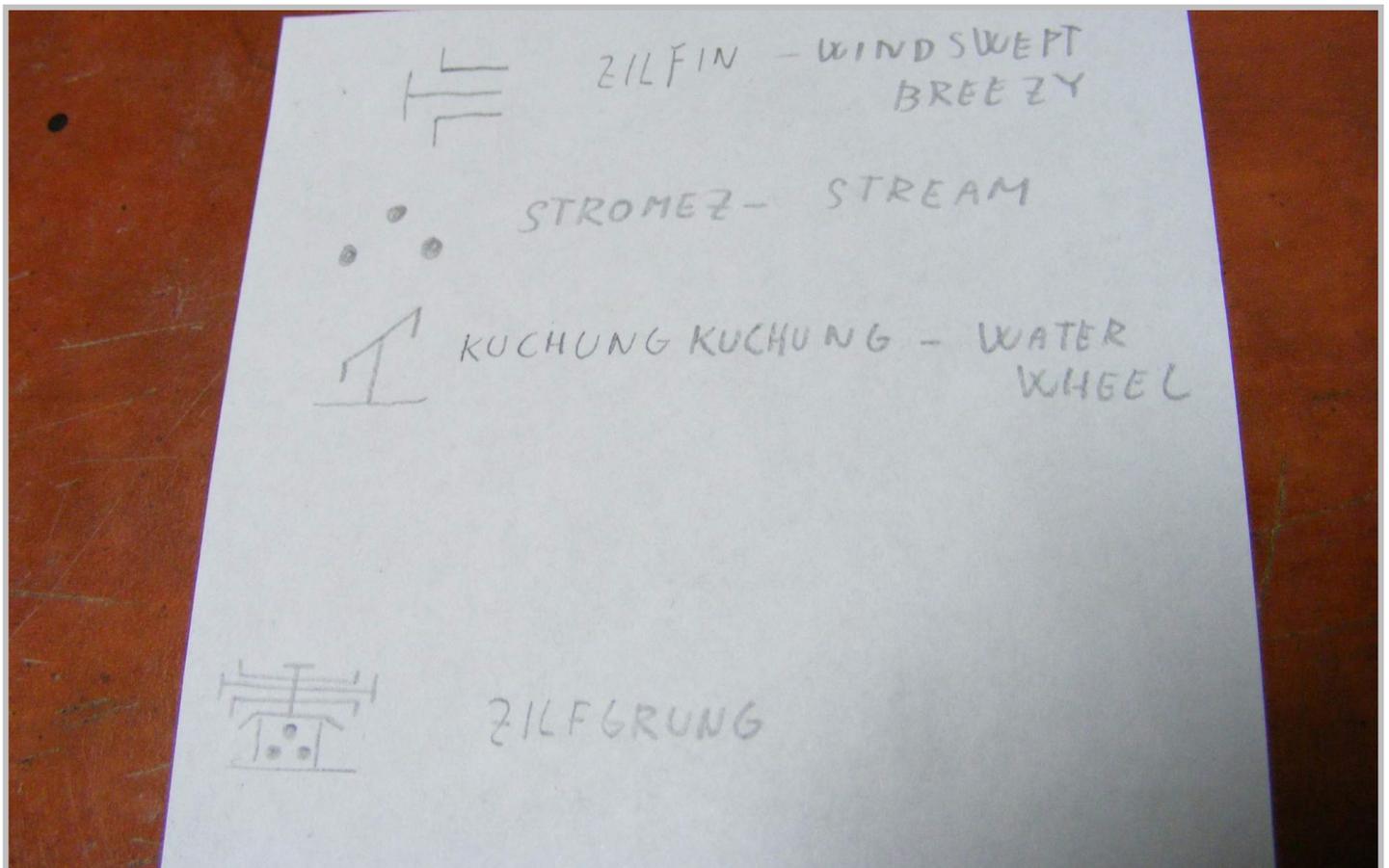
Peter's other notes for this build:

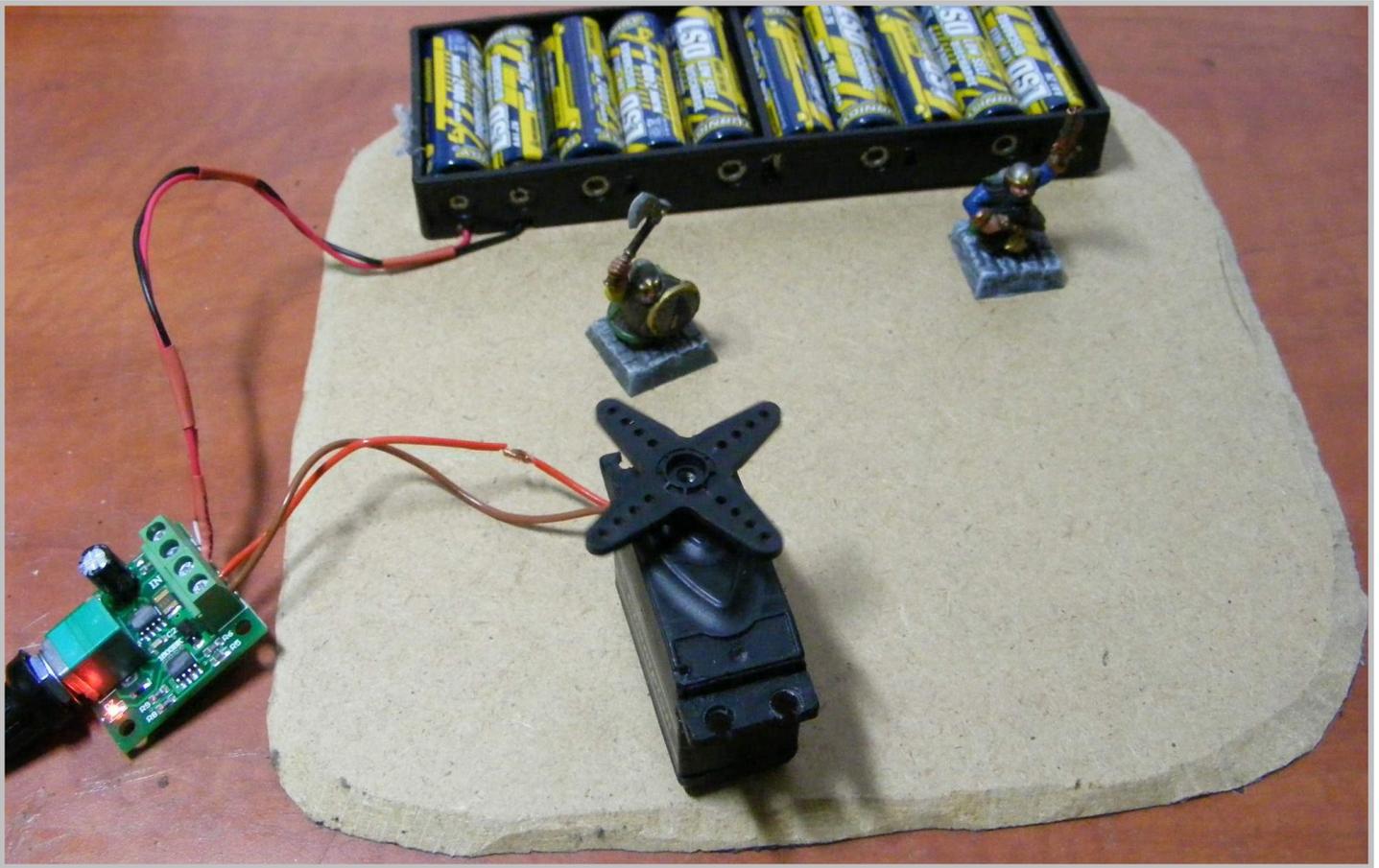
"I wasn't sure if this was too sci-fi for Kings of War, but when Dwarves have steel Behemoths powered by internal combustion engines fuelled by black blood of earth, I figured this would fit just fine!

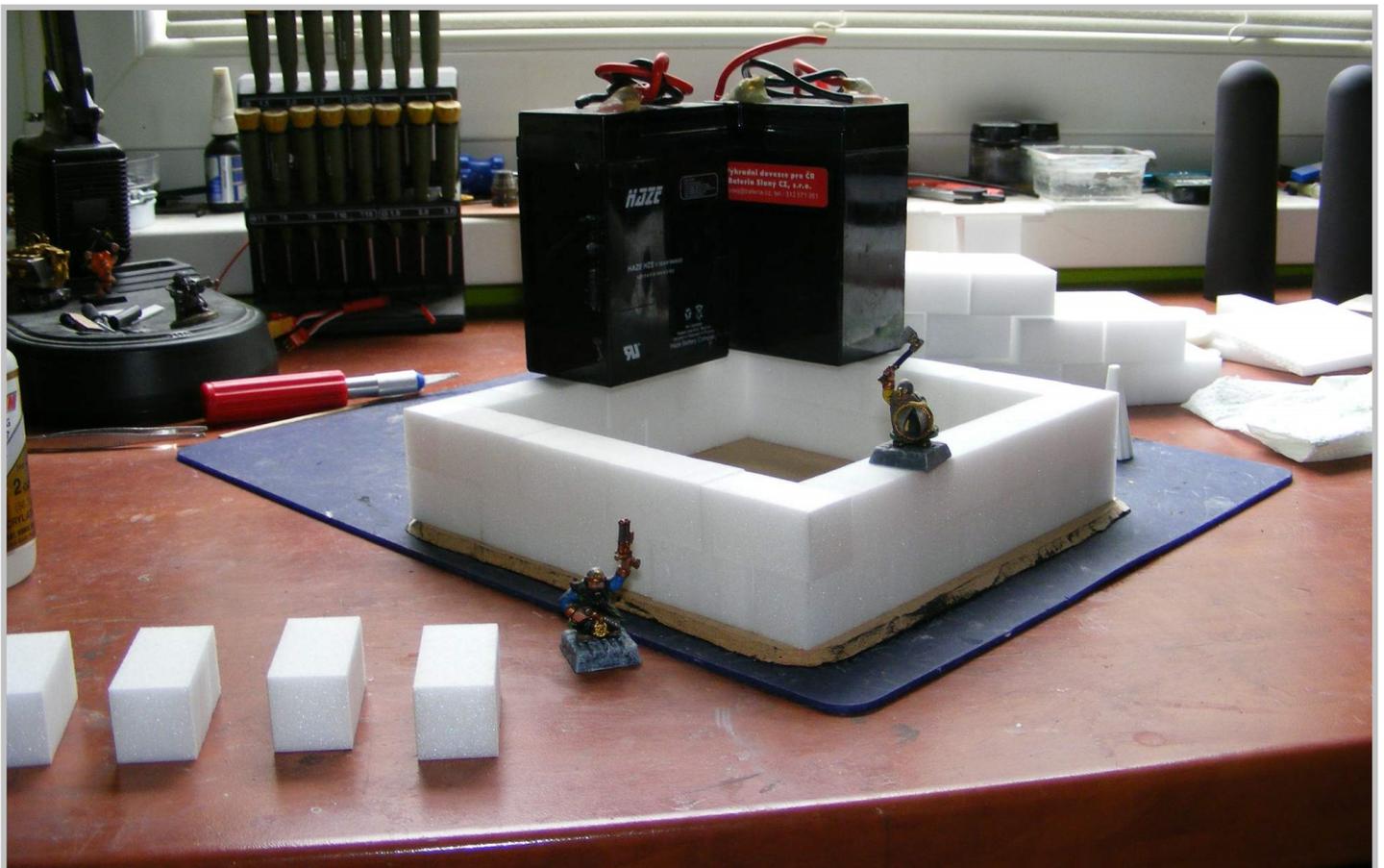
This is special type of terrain, similar to my Fish Farm in Issue 37: they're both functional! Under the terrain is 10 AA batteries connected to a proportional switch (the button

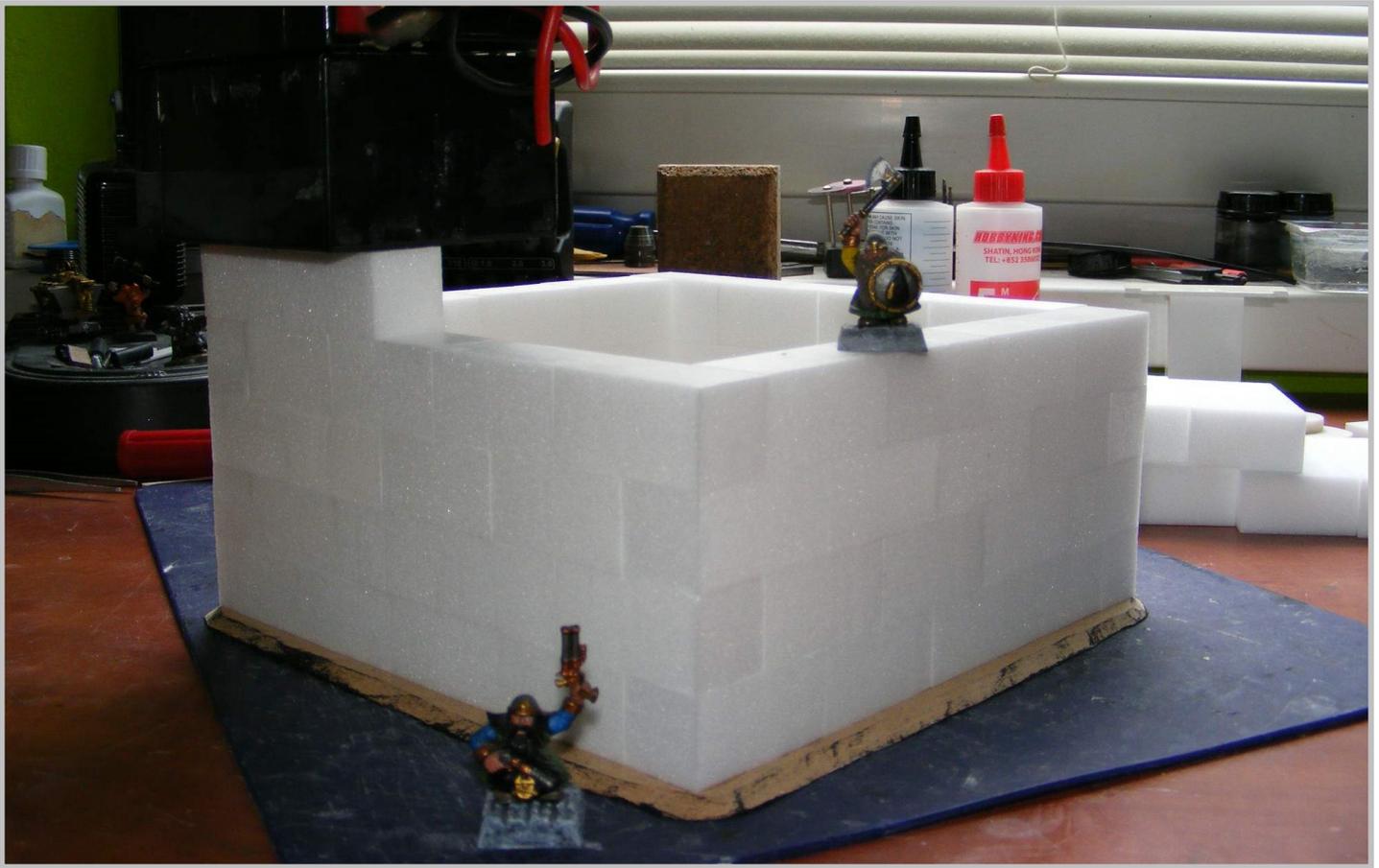
above the gate) and then to a small servo motor to wiggle the whole wind turbine. So it works, and makes some small noise. Another dwarf player in the thread I posted this suggested this could count as a special terrain, with some sort of rule making it dangerous for flying units!

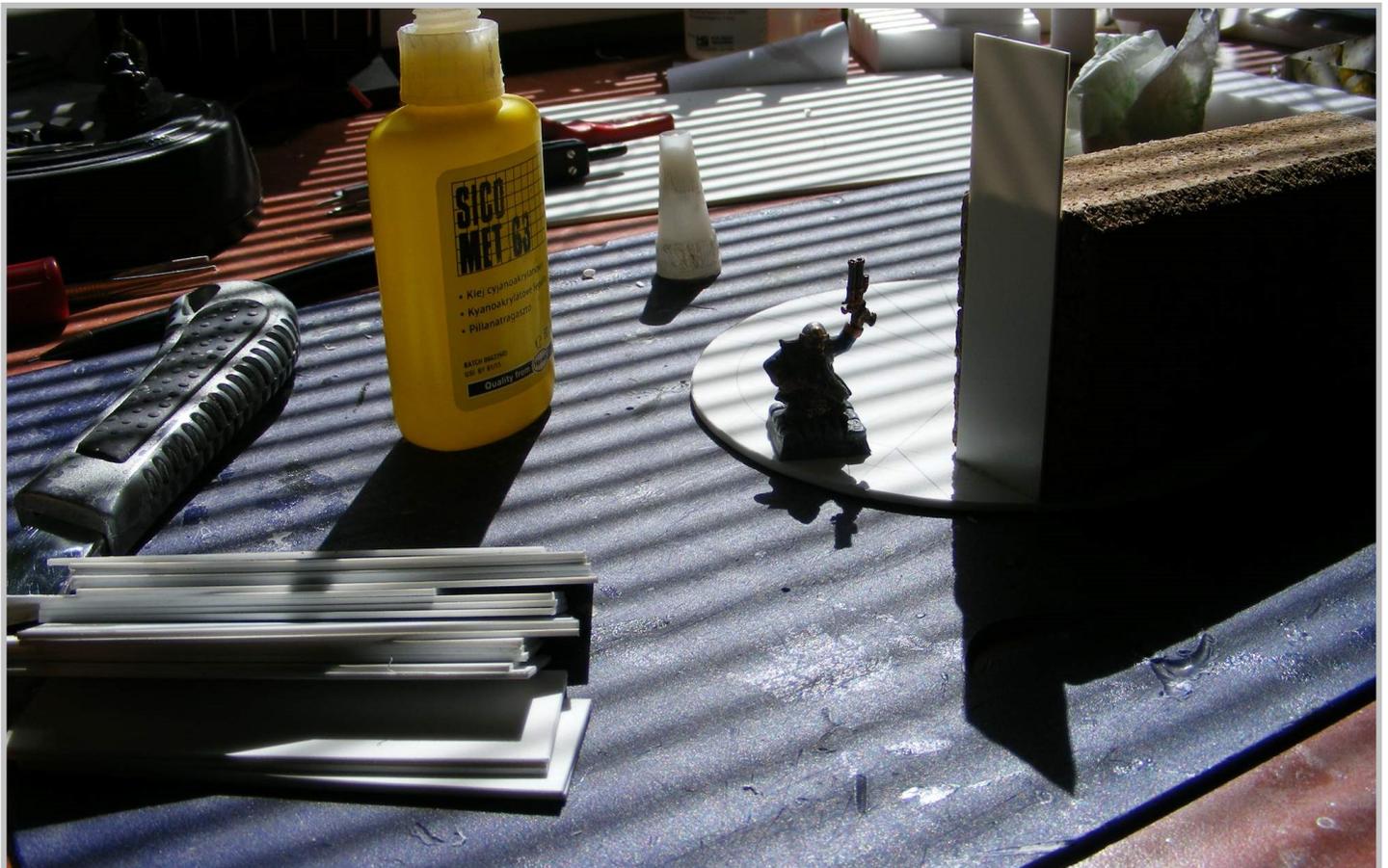
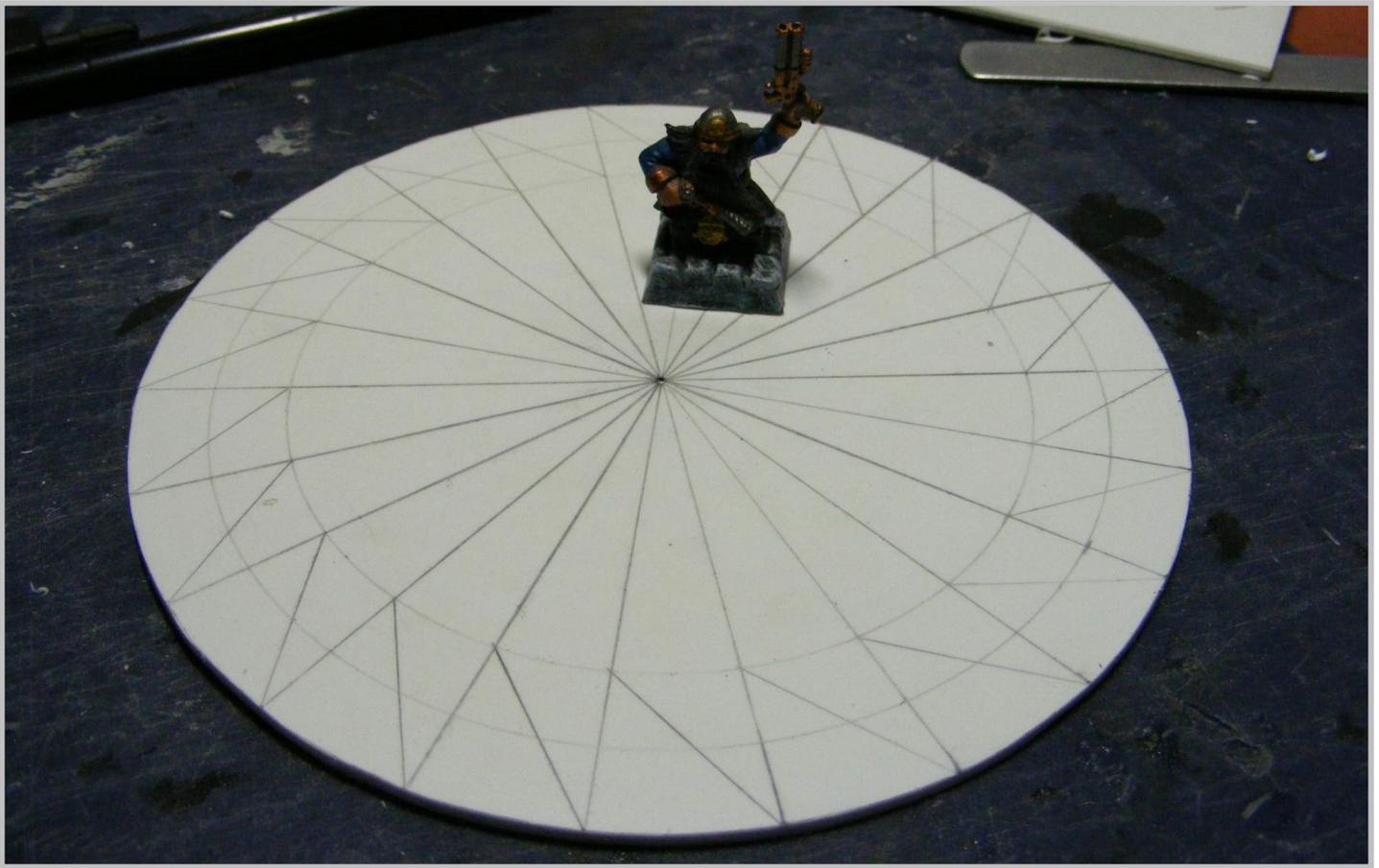
You can watch a video showing how the wind turbine works [here](#)."

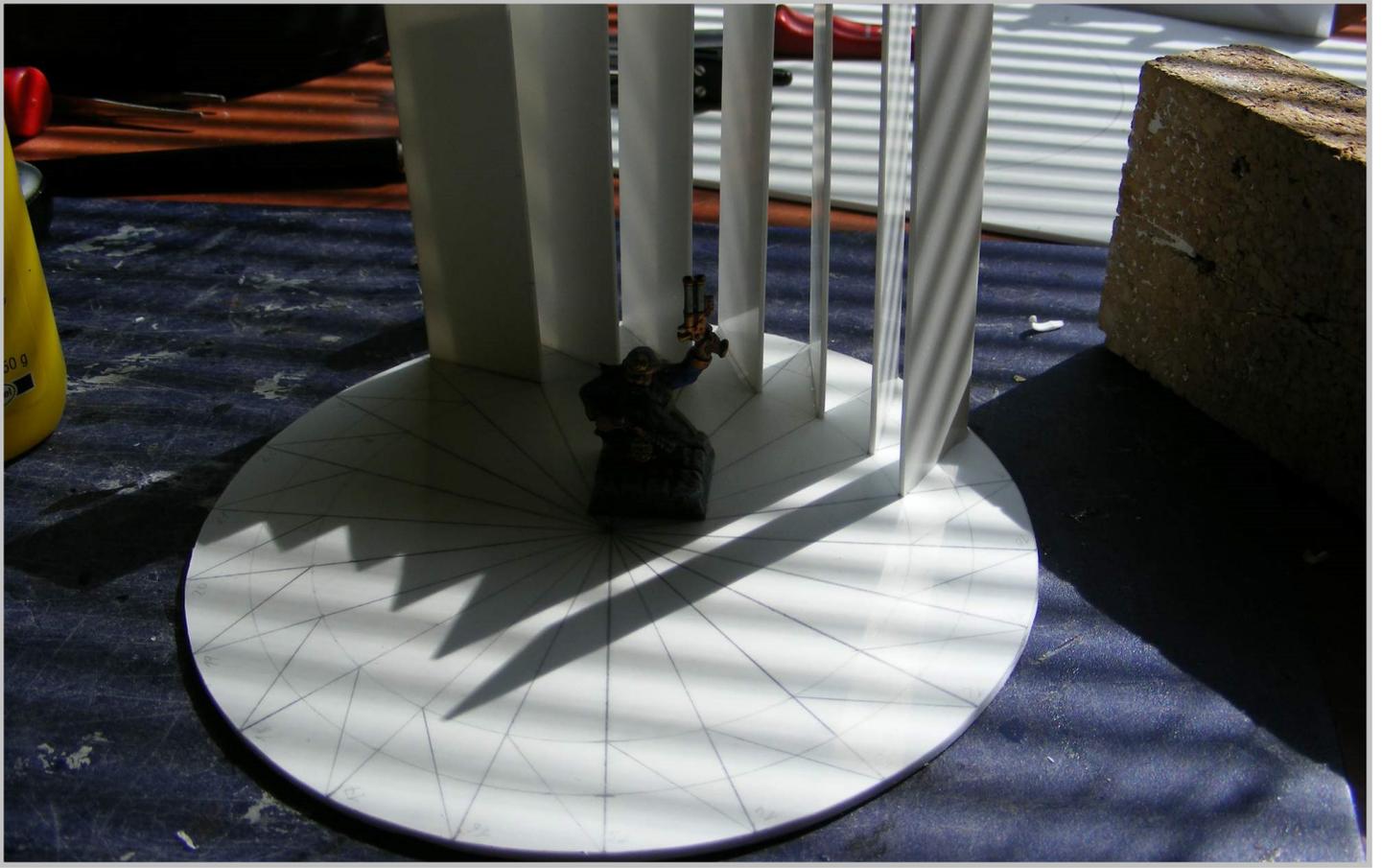


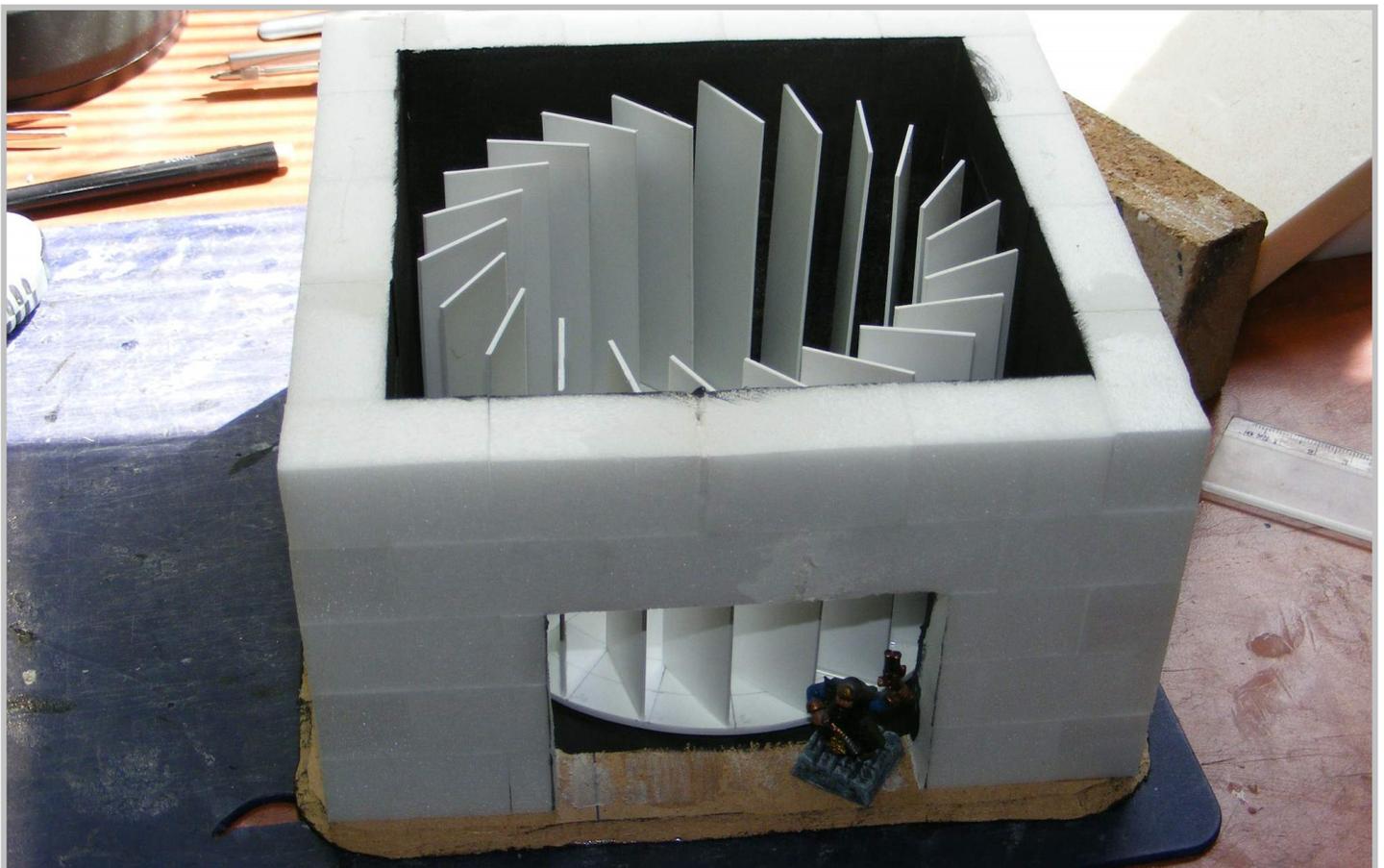


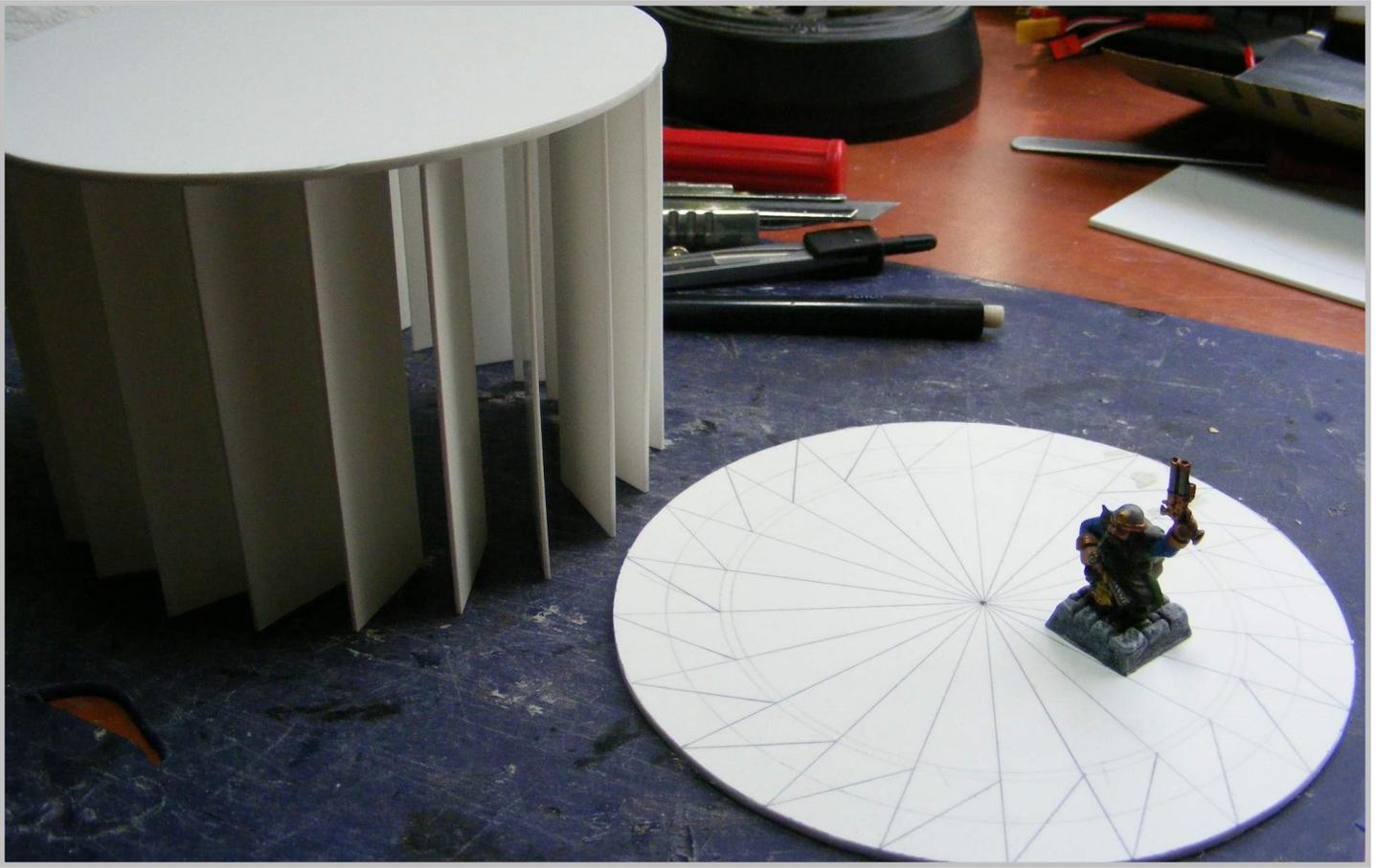


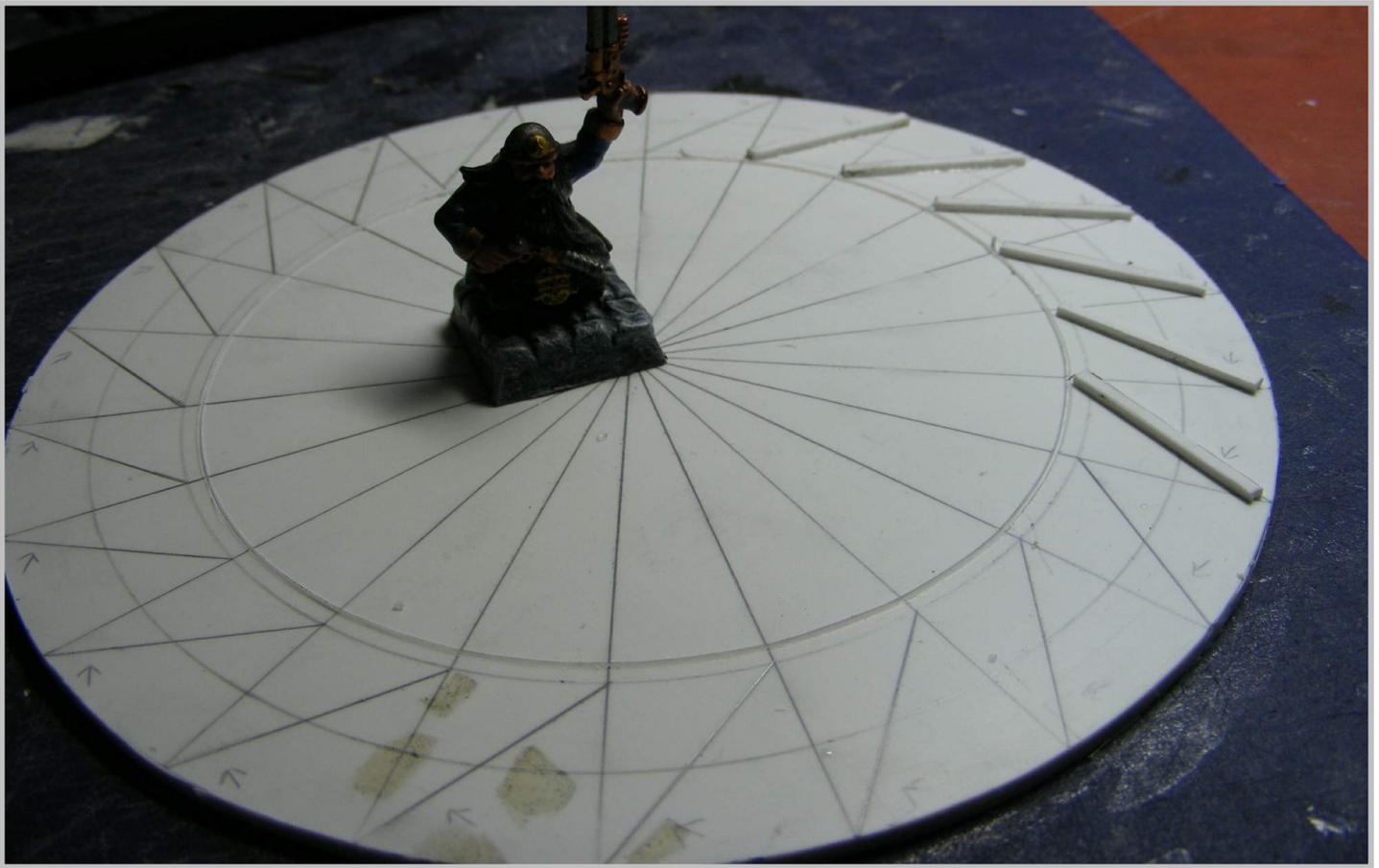


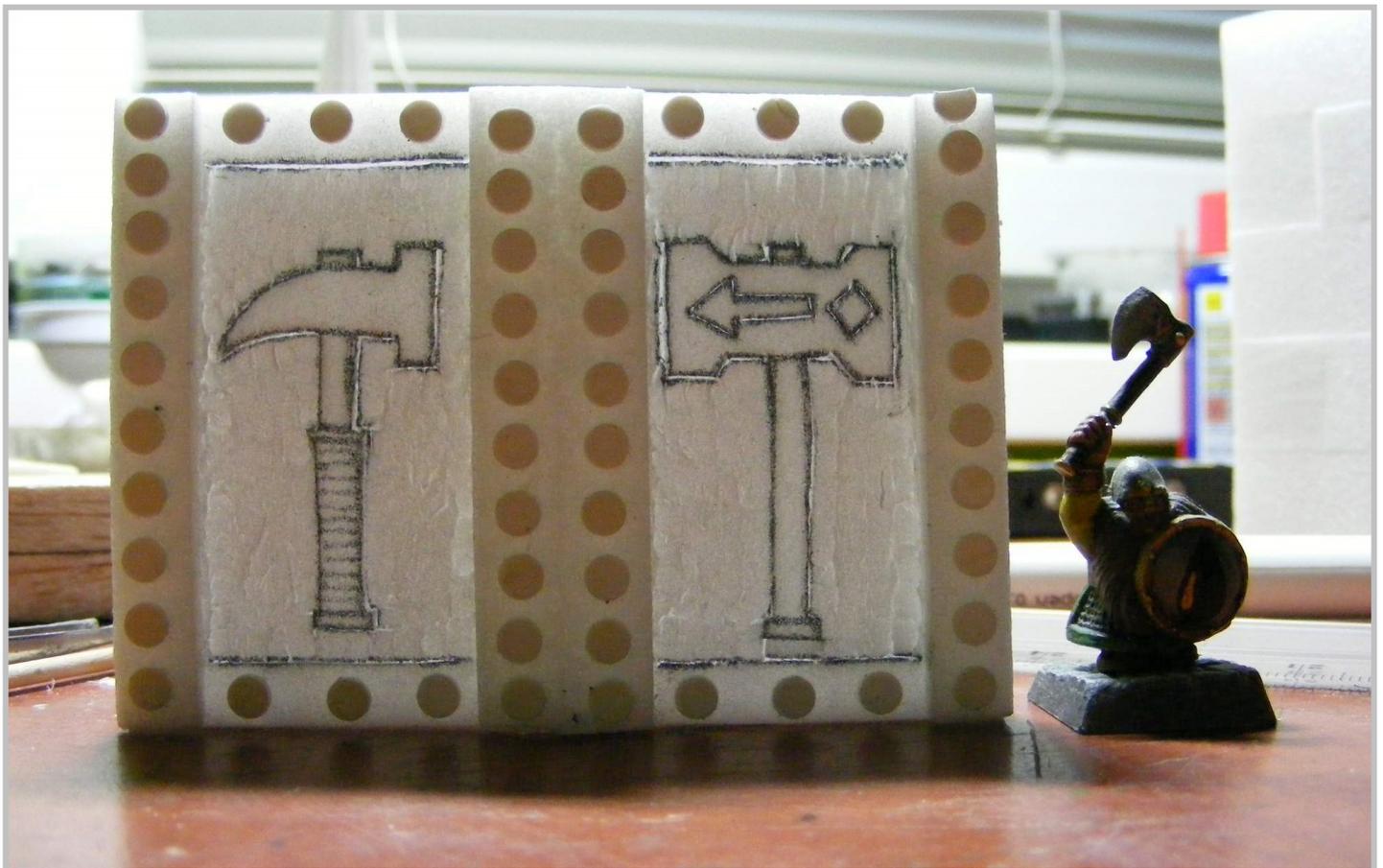


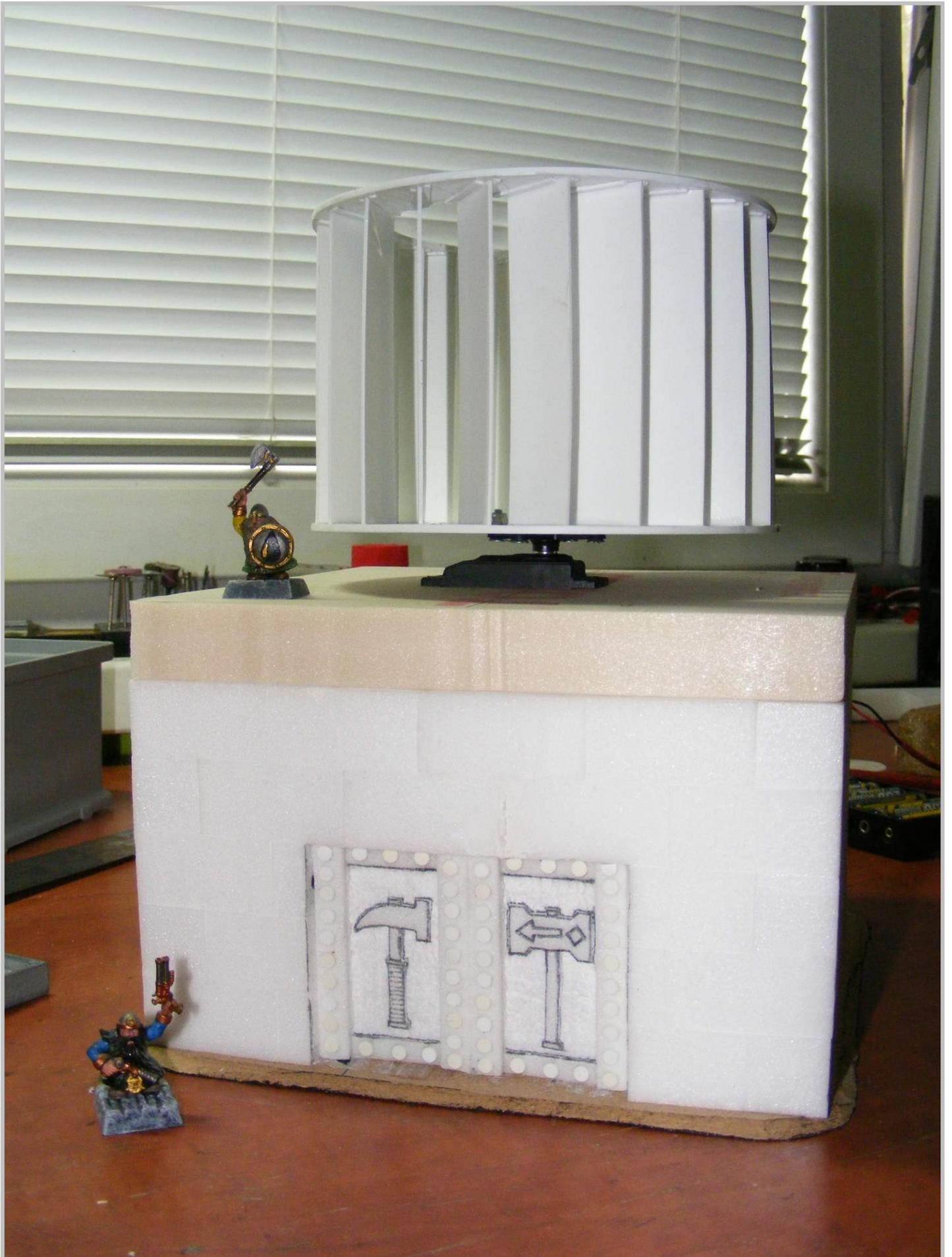


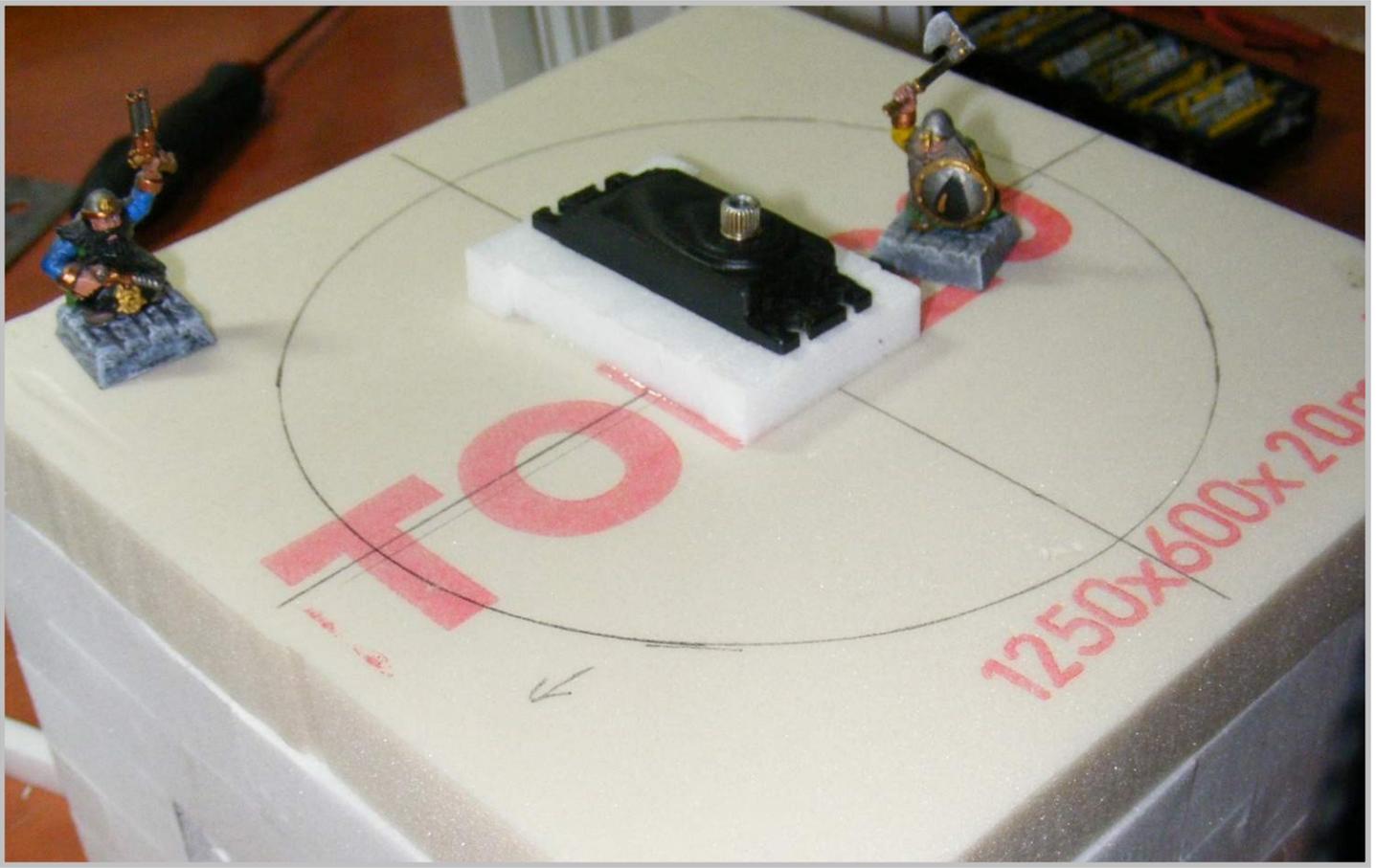


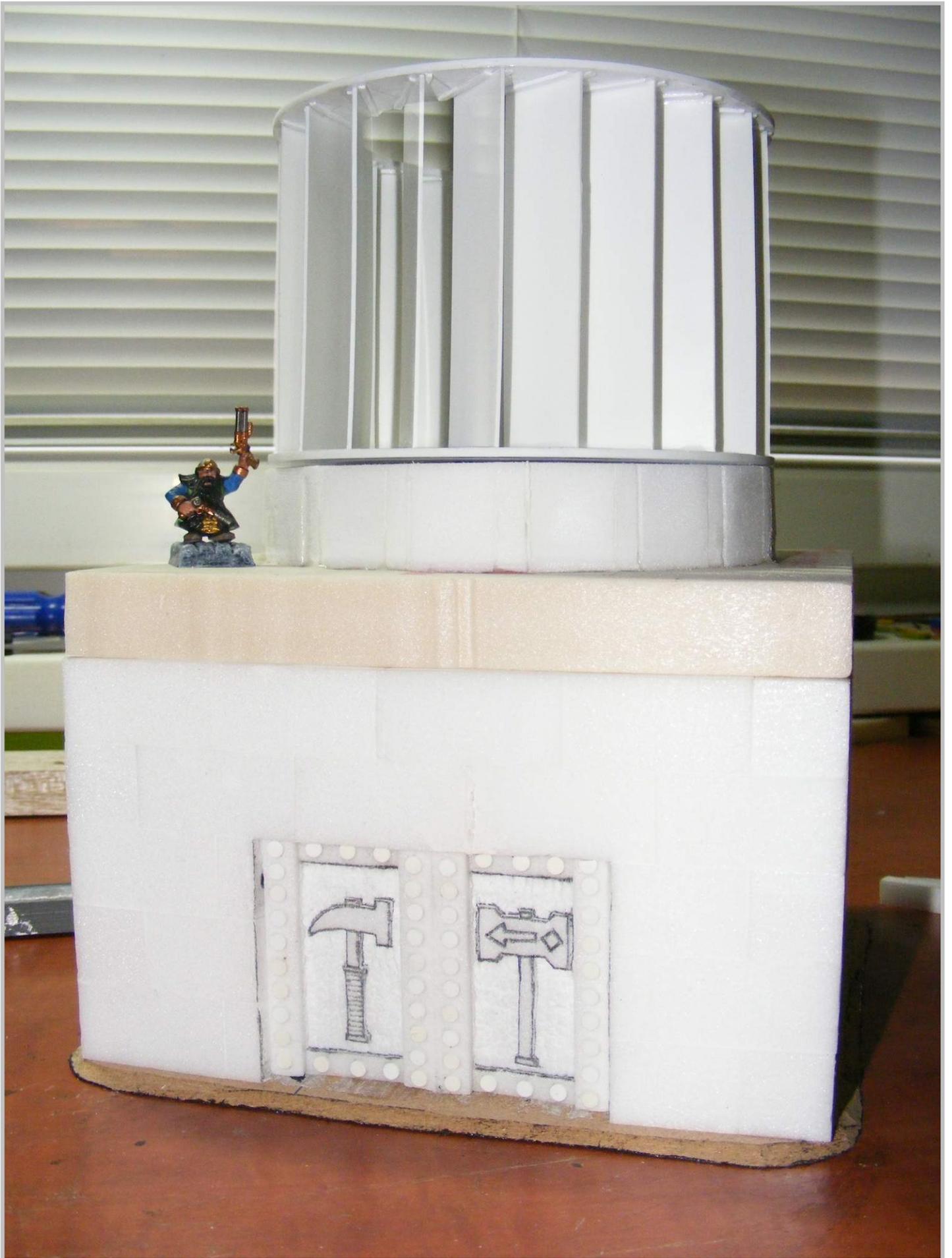


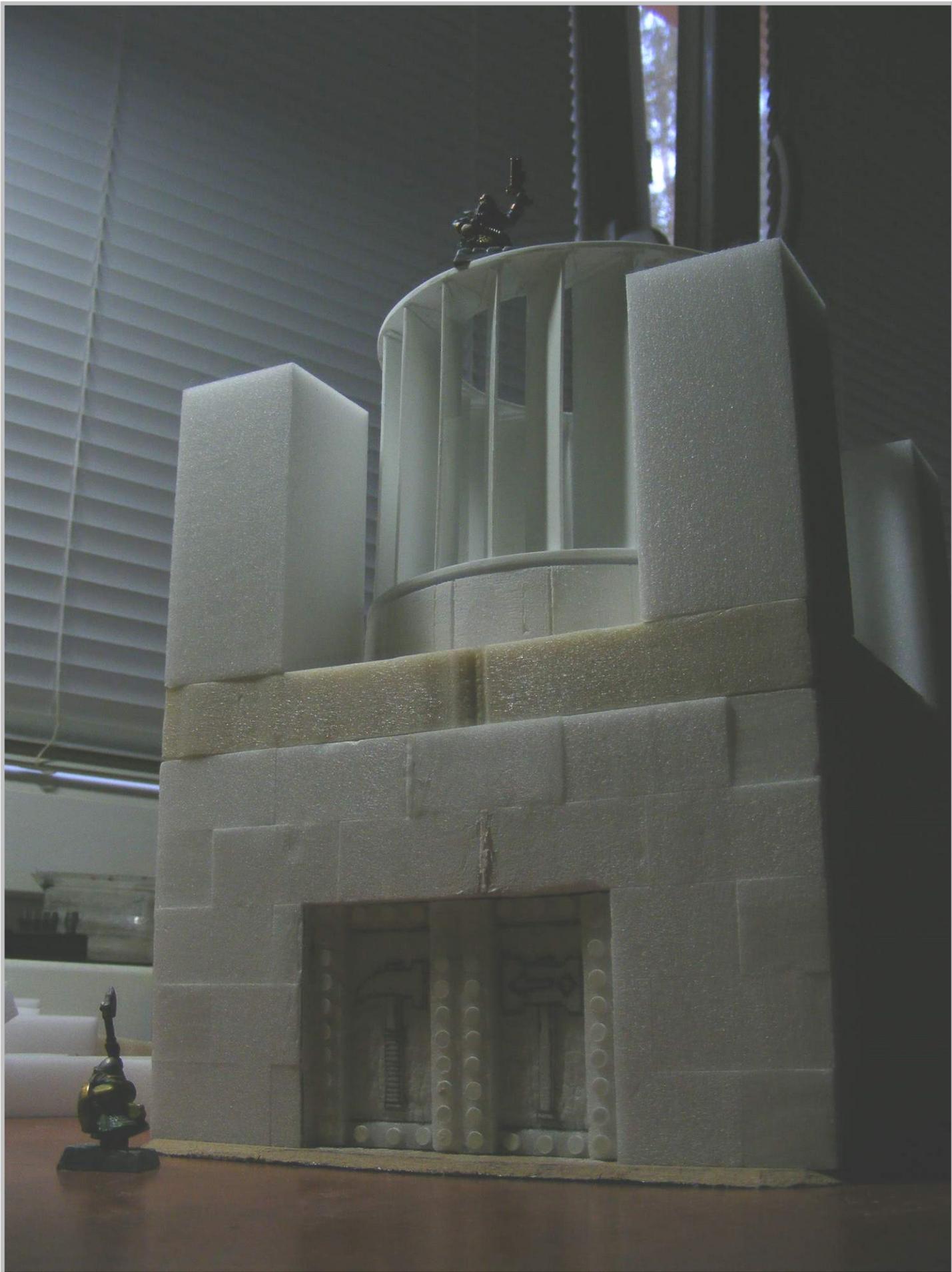


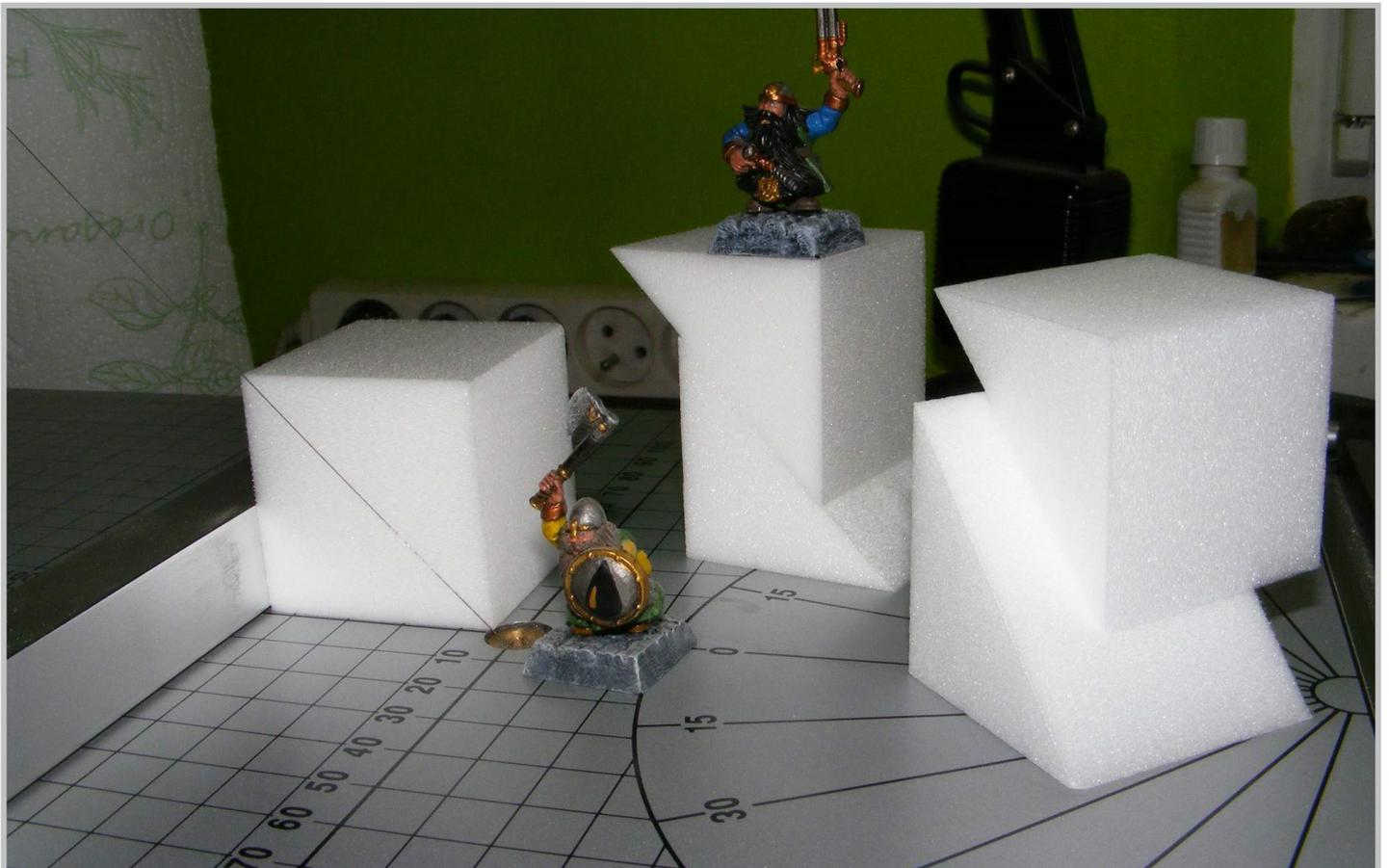


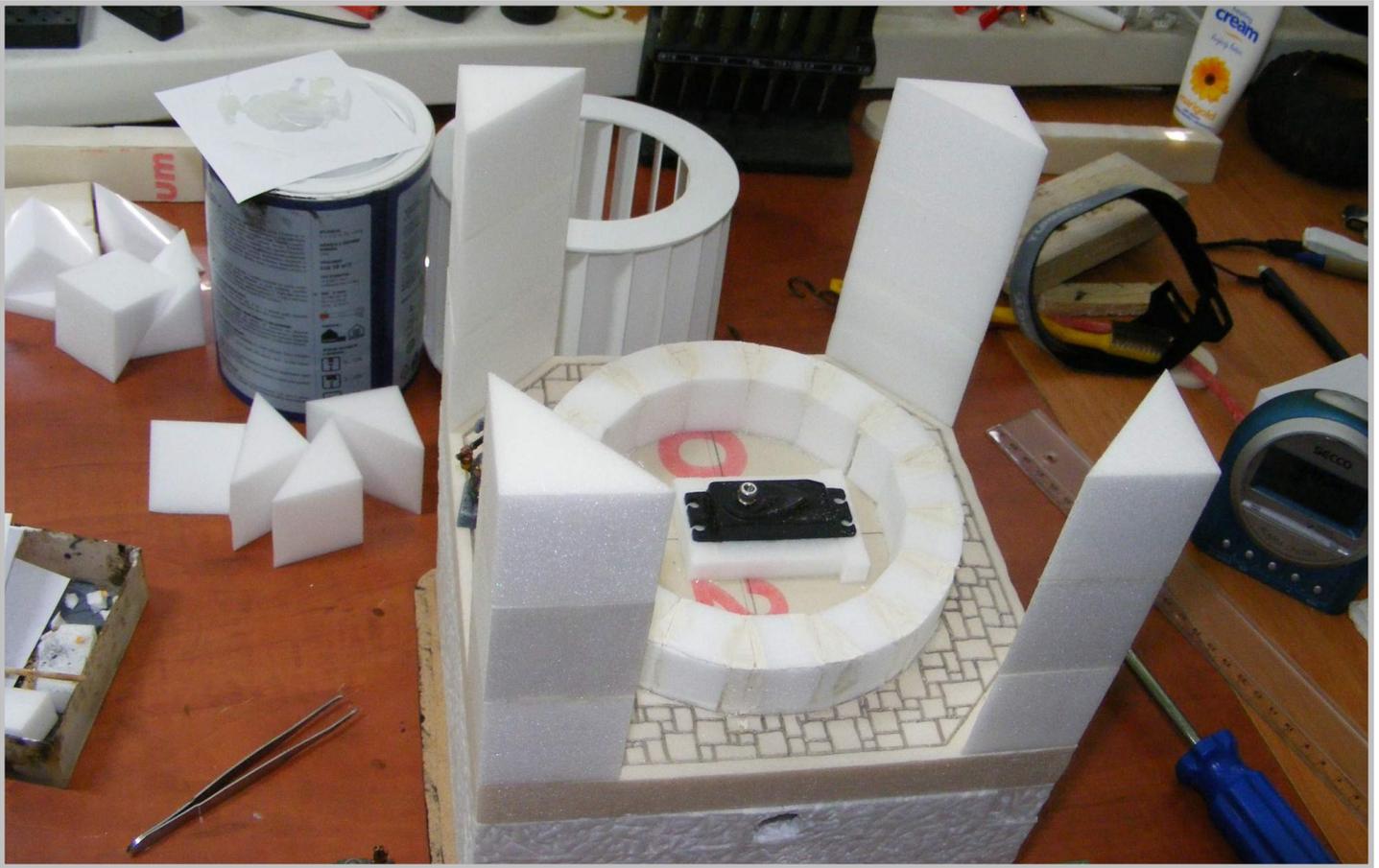


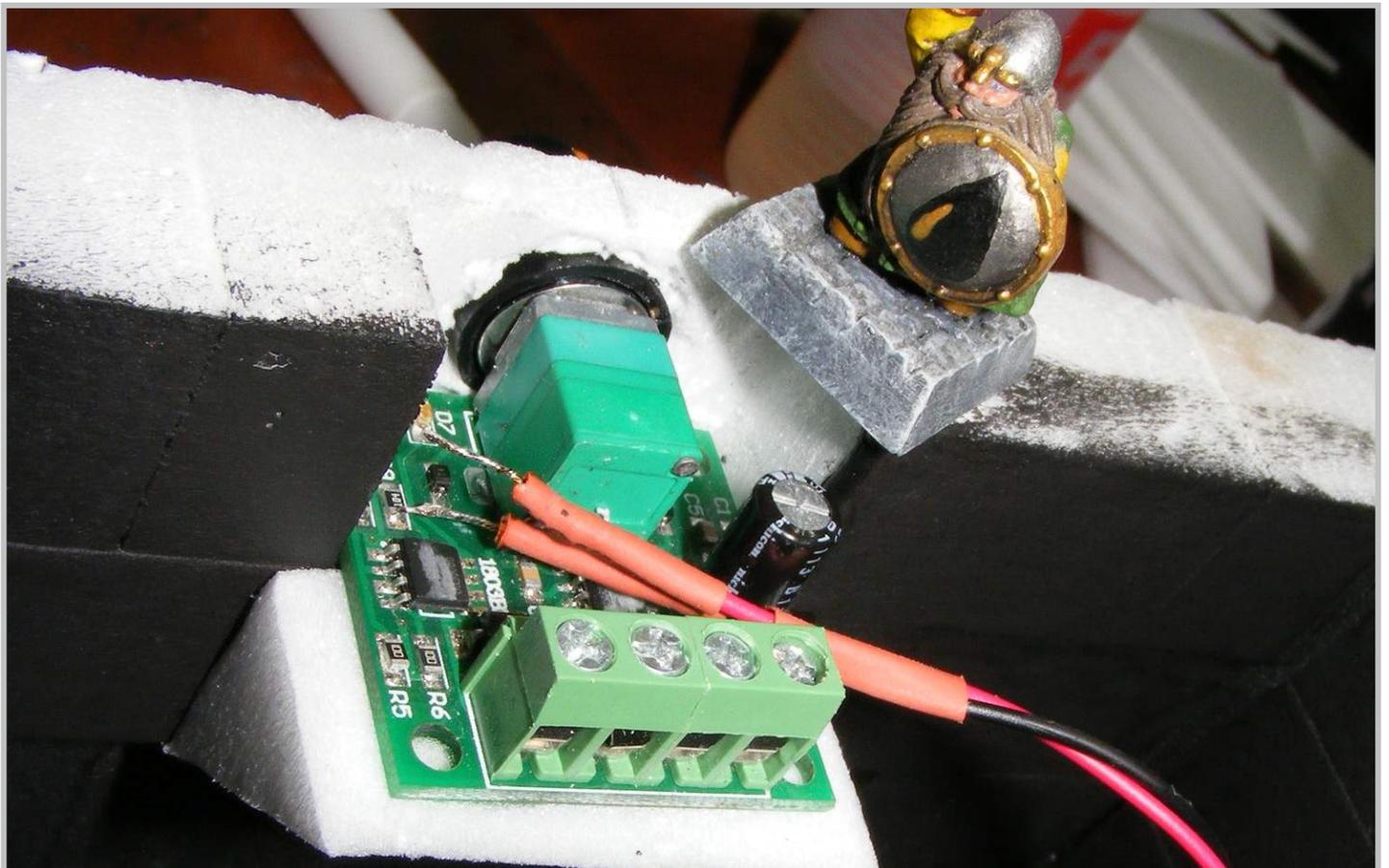


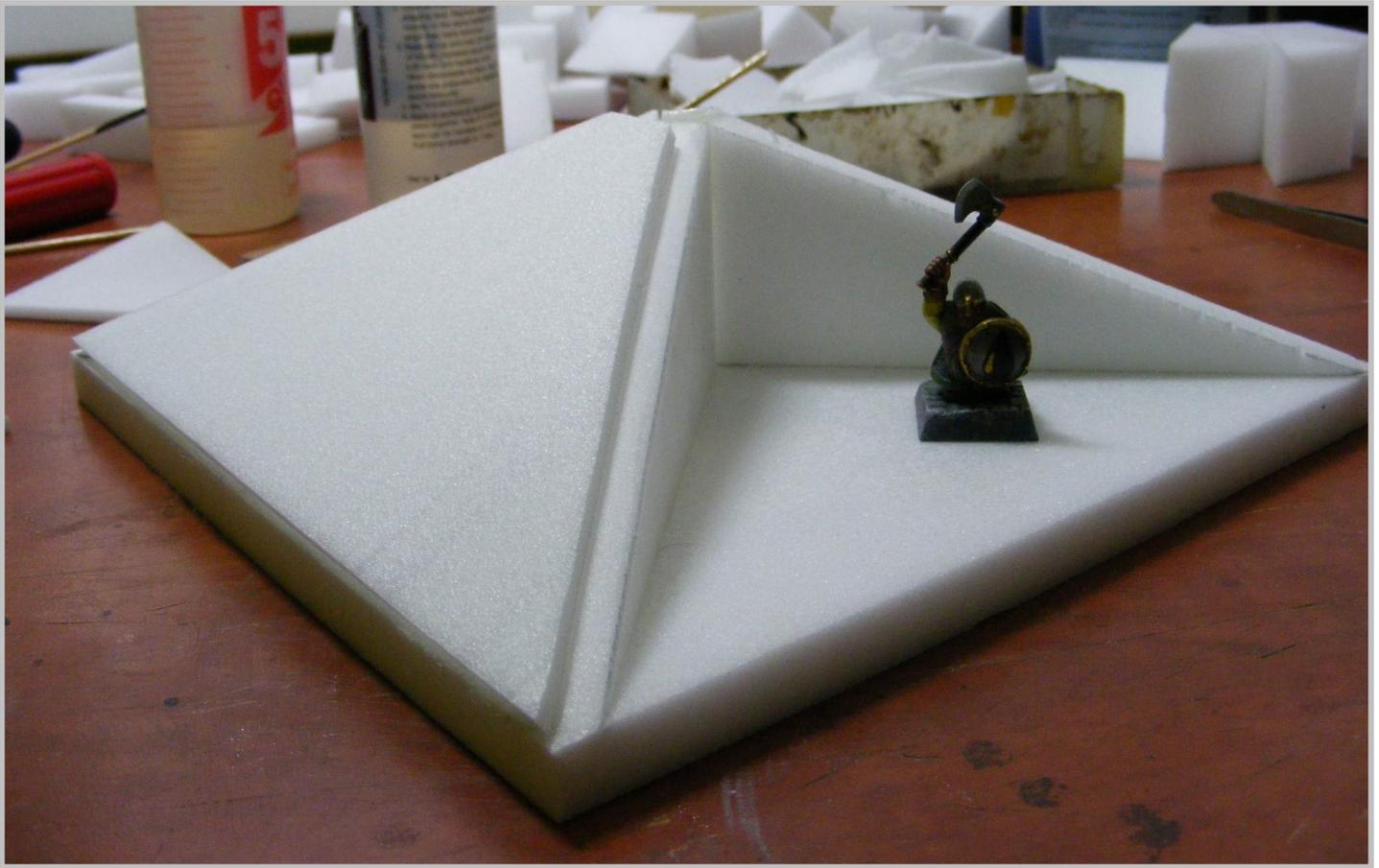








































An Undead Ghoul in the Star-Struck City by Austin Peasley

THE ORDER OF MAURICE

EPISODE 5: A MORNING WITH NO DAWN

By Ben Stoddard

The crack of thunder pulled Jephraim from his troubled dreams. He stared around at the huddled forms of his companions and listened to the heavy pattering of rain on the roof of the hut. A cold wind blew through the room that caused him to shudder and pull his limbs in closer to his body. His clothing was still damp from the battle that seemed like an eternity ago and it seemed to feed off the cold air to chill the marrow of

his bones. Jephraim stared listlessly at the wall before him as he wondered what new tragedy was waiting to befall the beleaguered crew. He didn't have to wait long to find out.

The captain swept into the small hut from outside and shook the rain from his already soaked cloak, scattering drops onto the rest of the party. Jephraim barely noticed, his eyes struggling to focus on the captain's face when he spoke.

"The way is clear, so get ready to move out." The captain hesitated at the end, as if about to say more but cut himself short. He shook his head and walked over to help Rigo stand while his brother gathered their supplies and weapons. Wilford continued to sit with his knees pressed to his chest for a moment before grunting and pushing himself onto his

feet. He grabbed his axes and strode over to stand beside the door, peering into the stormy darkness beyond. Jephraim returned to staring at the wall, his eyes glazing over as he watched rivulets of rain pour through some of the small holes in the masonry until he felt a sharp pain in his back. Squirming, he turned around to see Morticus aiming a second kick to his ribs and he pushed himself back against the wall.

“I said get up, thief. I won’t ask again. We need to move and I cannot have your laziness dragging my men down. Stand up and let’s move.” The captain’s eyes were harder than flint and Jephraim unconsciously flinched back further into the wall before scrambling to his feet when this caused Morticus’s eyebrows to rise further up his brow and his foot to cock itself back once more in preparation of violence. Muttering to himself, the thief walked over to stand

behind Berns, who was supporting the slumped form of his brother, Rigo, with his shoulder and gripping him around his waist. Rigo’s eyes were dull with pain, but he was conscious and aware of his surroundings so that when the captain gave the signal he was ready to move out as the small party dived into the stormy darkness.

Jephraim couldn’t fathom the storm. It felt as though they had spent the whole night in the hovel of a building where the demons had discovered them, but it was still dark as pitch outside. The howling rain drenched them almost immediately -- it was as if they had never had a chance to dry out from the previous day’s events and Jephraim felt the stinging pain of newly forming blisters creeping out from where his foot rubbed against the inside of his boot. The other foot he had wrapped in leather scraps that Wilford kept to wrap his axe handles with



Undead Skeletons by Andre Kritzinger



Forces of the Abyss Tortured Souls by "C.M. Minis"

and the result was a crude shoe that was almost as painful as not having any kind of footwear at all.

The rather pitiful group pushed their way through twisting streets filled with dilapidated and crumbling buildings. They had to stop frequently in order to allow Rigo to rest and give his brother a chance to change his bandages. Jephraim made a mistake of looking at the wound when it was exposed during one such exchange and instantly regretted his decision. The wound was a bright red and it dug deep into Rigo's side. Charred flesh from the demon's attacks came away with the strips of bandage placed over top of it and caused Rigo to gurgle in pain as he fought back the primal urge to scream. After that experience the thief generally tried to talk to Wilford while Berns

performed his minor surgical miracle of keeping his brother alive. Wilford, however, was less talkative than the twins and refused to say much.

"Will this blasted night ever end?" Jephraim spat as the rain poured over the them. They were already drenched, so this was more of an inconvenience at this point than anything else. He was surprised, though, when his mohawked friend turned and broke the watery silence.

"It al'reddy 'as, lad!" His gruff voice lacked the usual comfortingly mischievous tone. "It nearly be midday a' this point. Tha' rain do make it seem a' though it be night, thoo. I gi' ye that." He turned and spat onto the ground before once more slumping into silence beside Jephraim and refusing to respond to

any other attempts at conversation. After some time, the thief finally settled into the cold silence as it became more apparent that nobody wanted to talk in this dreary weather, or under such dire circumstances.

Time had no meaning in such a storm as this. There was no way to mark its passing besides the depth of the puddles through which the party was forced to cross on several occasions. Jephraim could not fathom how the captain knew which streets to take, or in what direction they should go as there was nothing there with which one could gather his bearings and form a specific route to follow. Yet Morticus was unwavering in his guidance. Taking them down street after street, each turn was done with confidence, every alley was selected as if it

was plainly the obvious path to take. Without the sun to guide them, the rest of the party was at his mercy in this regard.

Several times it felt as though something was watching them. A presence that was almost palpable, as if all they needed to do was stop abruptly and the unseen observer would come crashing into their back. Jephraim's shoulder blades itched from these unseen eyes and he wondered, not for the first time, whether they were real or just his imagination playing tricks on him from last night. Finally, he could bear it no longer and when the party stopped to tend to Rigo, Jephraim stepped in close to Morticus's side and whispered to him.



Goblin Sneek by Darren Lysenko



Abyssal Dwarves by "Dwarf Giant"

"I think that something is following us." Morticus's face flickered for a moment, displacing confidence with something akin to worry before being replaced with his stony mask once more.

"I know," he replied. This time it was Jephraim's turn to feel shocked.

"You know?" He asked, shocked. "Then what are we going to do about it?"

"Nothing."

"Oh, superb! So we just sit here and wait for it to attack us?"

"Are you even sure that it will?"

"I'm more confident that it will than that it will leave us be for much longer. We need to act now!"

"No." Morticus turned to walk away, but Jephraim reached out and grabbed his arm to refuse him.

"What do you mean no? This thing is likely dangerous! It might be able to finish what those Tortured Souls started! We can't just ignore it!" He hissed. Morticus turned his head to stare at Jephraim's hand on his arm. Then he looked up and the fire in his eyes caused the thief to release his grip.

"What would you have me do?" Morticus growled. "I have a man who is injured, a halfwit thief who is barely capable of not killing himself in a fight, and two exhausted soldiers that are emotionally and physically drained! Whatever this thing is that is following us, it obviously thinks that it can win a fight, or else it wouldn't be stalking us, but it isn't sure yet. We are close to our destination now, and if we keep moving there's a good chance we can reach the

docks where the Brotherhood maintains a presence and where we can get Rigo the help that he needs.” Morticus took a step towards Jephraim, who took a step back reflexively, shrinking away from the captain’s accusing stare.

“I tell you, thief, I brought you on this expedition because I felt you might benefit our efforts, but if you question me again, or try to tell me what I should do, I will leave you by the wayside to fend for yourself in this forsaken place! If you threaten the lives of my men, I will kill you personally. Is that understood?” Jephraim gave the barest nod of his head. His eyes were pinned to the captain’s chest and he felt as though that small movement was as loud as a shout in

the pouring rain. Morticus grabbed the front of his shirt and pulled him in even closer so that the heat of his breath washed over Jephraim’s face as he spoke next.

“Look me in the eye, now.” The thief felt his neck creak from the effort of complying with this command. Morticus’s eyes boiled as he spoke. “Let me dispel any notion from your mind of doing anything rash, either. If you do anything to jeopardize my men’s safety, or if you try to stab me in the back, you had better make sure that I am good and dead. Because if I am not and you try to run, there is not a rock big enough for you to hide under where I will not find you and the horrors that those Tortured Souls conjured up inside of you will be nothing compared to



Ogre Captain by Grant Mahoney



Undead Werewolf by Guiseppe Aquino

the creativeness that my wrath will have upon your sodden corpse. Got it?" Jephraim could only blink in response, but this seemed to satisfy the captain, who simply pushed him away and walked back over to check on Rigo. Jephraim stared at his back for a few moments before turning around to find Wilford smiling at him.

"I see you're feeling better." Jephraim spat at the raggedy man, which only made the smile broaden.

"Tha cap'n do have a way aboot 'im, don' he?" Wilford's voice was still sad, which clashed horribly with the expression on his face, causing the melancholy of the darkened sky above them to deepen.

"I don't want to hear about it, okay?" Jephraim shook his head. His cheeks were hot and he stamped away from the still-grinning Wilford. He walked several feet away from the group in an effort to cool his own temper and embarrassment at what had happened. In his distraction, however, he failed to realize just how far he had walked until he looked up several minutes later and found himself completely alone and unsure of how he had gotten to where he was. The creeping sensation of being watched increased and he gripped his chest as his breathing sped up. He whirled about in an effort to try and discern which way he had come from, but this only succeeding in helping him to further lose his sense of direction. His pulse quickened. Then his eyes lit on something stirring in the shadows.

Jephraim took a step back as a hulking shape materialized out of the darkness. It had three heads that growled and snapped at the air. In the gloomy light of the storm-lit afternoon Jephraim could just make out the general appearance of a large dog of some sort, each of its snouts baring glistening white teeth. It moved forward on musclebound legs of sinew and torn skin and Jephraim shrank away from the beast and fumbled for the weapon at his waist, his fingers struggling to wrap around the hilt of his blade.

With a sudden burst of speed, the three-headed dog launched itself at him, tackling him to the ground, where each of the three heads fought for a chance to tear at his flesh. Jephraim screamed as teeth raked across his face, fire following their trail across his skin as he struggled to push the fangs away. As abruptly as the creature had attacked, it suddenly stopped and arched its back, giving out a sharp howl as it did so before toppling down on top of Jephraim, threatening to crush him beneath its massive bulk.

Grunting in pain and exertion, Jephraim forced his way out from underneath the three-headed corpse and found himself staring at a pair of feet he was all too familiar with.

“Get up, thief!” Morticus’s voice was loud and clear and it rang out in the heavy rain-soaked alleyway. Jephraim cringed at the sound before the captain reached down and grabbed him by the back of his cloak, wrenching him to his feet. Jephraim saw the Captain’s blood soaked sword in his hand and flinched back at the sudden movement of being stood upright.

“We need to go, thief! Now!” the captain yelled in Jephraim’s face and then turned, dragging him along with the motion. He began running down the alleyway with the thief being dragged bodily behind him. In his terror, Jephraim was only vaguely aware of other shapes taking form in the darkness. Lithe, supple bodies called out from the shadows after him. Horned heads wreathed in fire bellowed challenges at their retreating backs.



Undead Wraiths by “imm0rtal reaper”



An Undead Vampire versus an Elven warband by Austin Peasley

“We need to get to the docks! That’s our best chance. The others should already be there by now, and if we hurry the other members of our Order might be able to...” The Captain’s voice trailed off as they rounded a bend that should have led them to the quay where the hopeful reinforcements could be found. Jephraim’s heart sunk as he took in the sight that greeted them: Rigo, Berns, and Wilford all stood there waiting for them, but at their feet lay the charred bodies of several men, with more corpses laid out behind them and the distinct odor of burning flesh lingering in the air.

The docks were still there, but the Brotherhood outpost had been burned to the ground, along with all the soldiers garrisoning it. ▀



ROAD TO THE RUMBLE

Part 5

By David Reid

Now things have calmed down, it's time for a quick rundown on the 2016 Redstone Rumble Grand Tournament event held in Huntsville, Alabama. The GT was a part of our larger annual event taking up about half of the ballroom. The remainder of the main ball room was being occupied by either by 40k, Warmahordes, Frostgrave, or X-Wing events.

Thanks to help from [Urbanmatz](#) we had some great Frostgrave and Kings of War tables. If you haven't gotten a chance to use them I would strongly suggest it. They do look sharp!

As for terrain I went with 8-10 pieces per table with the players alternating deployment of the terrain. I've tried doing preset terrain in the past and the players end up just moving the terrain anyway. So instead of fighting it I embraced the chaos! Overall it worked well from a TO perspective and I'll most likely continue it in the future.

The event was 2k, 5 rounds at 2.5 hours each, with only deviation from the main rules is allies weren't allowed magic items and no Destiny of Kings heroes.

As this was our second year with Kings of War, I decided to add back some of my tweaks on things to keep things interesting. Even with 6 missions things can get stale after a while if you don't mix it up. I tend to prefer the longer rounds as it gives the players more time to be social during the game. Chess clocks weren't required and I didn't see anyone with them out.





Saturday Kings of War gaming in full swing



Close up showing good 'ol Elf on Elf violence.

Our final rankings are on the next page. The event was very successful as there were a large number of ex-fantasy players stopping in to check out the new game. We were able to grow slightly from last year, which is always nice. It was nice to have more questions about my packet than the rules of the game, as a Tournament Organizer (TO) that is amazing.

We did take some feedback from the players on terrain amount, round length, and the Clash of Kings rules pack. A large majority of players liked the amount of terrain and want more of the Clash of Kings rules pack included in the future. The only thing people were evenly split on was the round

length, so we'll likely ask again next year before opening up registration and writing the rules pack.

All in all we had a great time and a big shout out for our sponsors is required. The first being [Mantic](#), not only did they create a great product with Kings of War, they actively supported our event! I know I look forward to both playing and TO'ing their games in the future. [Broken Egg Games](#) for providing gift certificates to their store and making great unit trays. [Wartime Hobbies](#) for helping set up the Rumble and providing support and prizes that we're able to give to our players. Last, but not least thanks to [Bare Bone Battle Works Co.](#) for supplying a

Ranking	Player	Battle Total	Sports	Paint	Early List	Rumble Total	Army
1	Chris Gibney	80	38	35	5	158	Undead
2	Andrew Atkins	80	30	35	5	150	Elves
3	Justin Rigdon	73	30	35	5	143	Varangur
4	Nathan Clevenger	74	33	30	5	142	Elves
5	Bryan Tucker	71	35	35	0	141	Varangur
6	Todd Perkins	73	35	29	0	137	Elves
7	John Corbett	67	33	32	5	137	Ogres
8	Robert Brandon	71	30	35	0	136	Abyssals
9	Rob Phaneuf	66	35	34	0	135	Ogres
10	Billy Smith	59	35	35	5	134	Dwarfs
11	Chip King	63	30	31	5	129	Undead
12	Josh Koziura	56	33	34	5	128	Varangur
13	Josh Smith	61	33	31	0	125	Abyssal Dwarfs
14	Shawn Williams	59	30	35	0	124	Undead
15	Jeff Lamb	53	30	35	5	123	Elves
16	Lennon Roy	51	33	34	5	123	Ratkin
17	Jason Dunham	59	33	22	5	119	Ogres
18	Andrew Shadel	45	33	28	5	111	Ogres
19	Joe Smith	48	30	31	0	109	Undead
20	Dylan Murray	57	30	16	5	108	Salamanders
21	John Blair	34	33	35	5	107	Goblins
22	Casey Miller	41	38	23	5	107	Undead

Battle Bag as prize support for the Kings of War player raffle. For more information and pictures check out www.Redstone-Rumble.com or Redstone Rumble on Facebook.



Dwarven Stone Priest by Peter Grose

DEADZONE THE CLEANSING

PART EIGHT

By Matthew Lindsay

Gamma Prime Corporation Headquarters

Location: Gamma Tau, Surface

08:02 hours Earth equivalent

For who were the circumstances favourable, Augustus? The Captain chastised himself.

The sounds of fighting had stopped; the civilians who had made their stand now

Dramatis Personae

- *Rylor Ings, Enforcer 8th First Recon Response*
- *Annika Sanne, 'The Fourth', Enforcer 8th First Recon Response*
- *Caelum Augustus, Enforcer Captain of the Gorgon's Fury*
- *Celeste Allenova, Enforcer Interrogator of the Gorgon's Fury*
- *Carthor and Voya, Enforcer Sergeants of the Gorgon's Fury*

either dead or become a part of the infection that killed them.

They had done well to last as long as they did.



Deadzone Plague Zombies by Boris Samec



Deadzone Plague vs Marauders by "Boston Miniatures"

And now their enemies' ranks would have swelled further.

He did not have to look outside to know what he would see: Empty streets married to absolute silence. The desolation left in the wake of infection.

The calm before the storm, he thought.

Rylor's grip on his rifle was assured but gentle, like a parent holding its child.

Like the way he held his daughter.

Like the way Annika had, once.

Like the way Annika held her rifle when she had shot him.

Assured, but gentle.

He sighted down the scope, observing the deserted streets.

He breathed. He waited.

Celeste believed she could predict the near-exact outcome of any given circumstance if there was a guarantee of no outside interference with her process. She understood people. She understood thought and desire, and what could make a person

do good or bad things.

And despite everything she had ever done, and everything she knew she would do, and would do it all again, she was a believer.

Celeste had once seen the impossible happen.

Such occurrences were called miracles: the laws of the universe bent and broken by one who lay outside it, like an artist working her canvas, casting brush strokes here and there, adding and subtracting, giving and taking as saw fit.

And from that celestial occurrence millennia ago, she was here and now: the numbers

ran; her data-box chirped; her chest rose and fell with the breath of life... she almost prayed.

Sergeant Voya clicked the side of her mouth with her tongue. It was a bad habit and like all bad habits it died hard. She'd done it for as long as she could remember, unable to recall a time where she did not tap her tongue in a clicking noise when she needed focus. The gentle tap-tap-tap sound, felt as much as heard, helped ground her thoughts. It gave them something to concentrate on.

She was composed. Her pulse was steady; her breathing steady; her hands steady. And around this oasis of calm the other Enforcers quickly scanned the tower interior, searching



A Deadzone Plague 1st Gen ambushes a Marauder Ripper Suit by Grant Mahoney



Deadzone Plague Teraton by Jamie O'Toole

for something, anything, that could have been turned into an explosive or a structural weakness.

She had left a skeleton guard at each compass point of the eighth storey, the floor that had given the best angle of aim versus cover facing the avenues that lead to the plaza.

Under the weight of her steps debris crunched and splintered from where the Plague or looters had ransacked this place. The sound of ruin beneath her was echoed, enlarged, slowed down. Everything about her passed by in a slight haze; she was outside herself, observing, within and without, and waiting, waiting, waiting.

Tap-tap-tap went her tongue.

Physically and mentally she was at peak combat efficiency.

She welcomed this fight.

Numbers flashed on the data-box quicker than the eye could follow. Though they appeared in no logical order that the mind could understand at such speed, they implied the heavy sense of a countdown.

The transfer was almost complete. It had been nearly seven minutes since Celeste had broken the security and firewalls protecting the servers. Now every surveillance unit was being collated. Just one more minute.

Chance... luck... fortune. That many-faced quality of many names had a prodigious amount of power in all matters but

especially in war, and could bring about great changes in a situation through very slight forces.

Chance could be semi-controlled and negated, twisted and manipulated. Annika's actions celebrated this, the events had that transpired on this world were evidence that Annika knew how to play the game of chance, and she played it exceptionally well. She had been manipulating chance from the start.

Their chances were slim, Celeste appreciated. But chance can never be broken. You can only see how far it will bend. Slim? Yes. Impossible? No.

Celeste had survived slim chances before. Probability and luck, what it is to live and to die, and an Enforcer knew this more than most. She knew sooner or later, pushing the odds far enough, she was going to lose.

Her train of thought was interrupted by Voya on the public comm channel: 'Plague approaching,' Voya said, her slick voice low. 'Fifty strong.'

Right on time: Celeste's data-box chirped completion.

What were the chances?

Too many to fight, the scavengers knew it before us. Augustus began computing the most efficient course of action: the flight



Deadzone at Adepticon 2015, courtesy of Mantic Games



Deadzone Reb Strider by Nicodemus Sandberg

path retrieval would be done momentarily:
 Options: They wait the Plague out: Launch a
 surprise attack and make directly for the
 shuttle LZ: The southern approach was
 closest: Risk of detection was high.

‘How long until hostiles in range?’ he asked
 over the public channel.

‘They’re headed directly toward the tower.
 Three minutes,’ replied Voya.

‘Can we avoid them?’

‘Unlikely.’

Celeste had disconnected her data-box and
 stood up, secreting it away about her

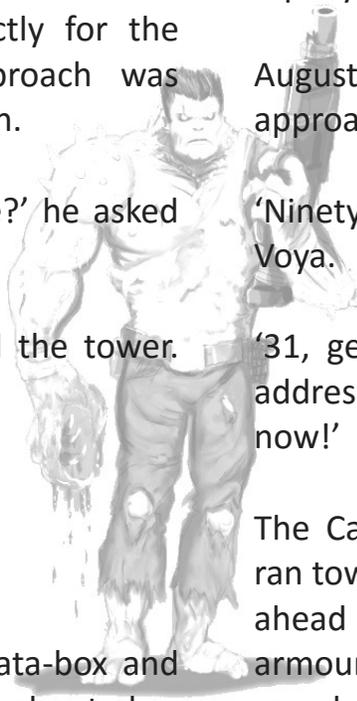
person. She unslung her Genling and moved
 rapidly toward the windows.

Augustus moved alongside her and saw the
 approaching horde.

‘Ninety seconds until they’re upon us,’ said
 Voya.

‘31, get your Enforcers to the rooftop,’ he
 addressed Voya. ‘All Enforcers – rooftop –
 now!’

The Captain whirled from the window and
 ran toward the stairwell. Carthor was already
 ahead of him, so was Rylor. The sounds of
 armoured boots and heavy footfalls
 reverberated through the stairwells; the



time for discretion was past. Either the Plague already knew they were here or they would do soon, but Augustus would not entertain the idea of open combat unless all other options were exhausted. A last stand was suicide, but a fighting retreat was not far behind. He would not condemn the men and women under his command to death unless there was no alternative. He was an Enforcer, a Captain no less, and he would find a way to survive this or he would make one.

'Command: I want a rooftop extraction. The LZ is not secure: I repeat: This will be a hot extraction,' he addressed his command unit.

'Acknowledged. Shuttles en-route,' replied the Gorgon's Fury.

'Stallion GF02, where is your location?'

Silence on the comm. The footfalls of the Enforcers seemed louder.

Silence.

Where is my intel shuttle! Thought Augustus, and a cold feeling began to take hold.

A sudden metallic clanging slit through his thoughts like a scalpel as Carthor kicked open the door to the rooftop ahead of him and a cold light blazed through, the Enforcer's helmets automatically adjusting the shade levels to compensate.

Carthor and Rylor spread out across the rooftop, the First Recon making his way to the edge of the building as the other Enforcer took their positions.

Rylor looked down and in the distance below he could make out large dark swarms



Deadzone Enforcer strike force by Paul Mullis



Warpath Forgefather Steel Warrior by Peter Grose

converging on the tower. *Plague. Looks like the capital's not quiet any longer,* he thought.

Several streets away the smoke of the civilian's last stand continued to drift hazily upward, indifferent to it all.

Sixty seconds later and all Enforcers were atop the tower's roof. Voya had stationed herself and five others at the rooftop entrance and final stairwell, creating a chokepoint should any Plague make it this far up. Karthor was there, his tri-barrel pointed down, the fearsome weapon engaged to kill whatever should emerge.

How long can we hold here? the Captain asked himself, answering immediately: *only as long as it takes the Stage Ones and Twos to arrive.*

A defensive location was now a requirement for survival: that he had called for a city centre extraction meant once the shuttles arrived their engines would bring every Plague in the city running. While they could hold off the Stage Three's indefinitely, it was the moment that the Stage Two's or Stage One's breached the stairwell the real bloodletting would begin. Such monstrosities were not easily put down. It would only take one to reach the doorway and start tearing through them and then the dam would break: the horde would spill out and consume them all here atop the tower in a flood of violence and rending and tearing of flesh.

We must hope the shuttles arrive soon, before the Plague, and be prepared to defend until that moment. How long until they breach this building? Another sixty

seconds?

Still, Augustus felt he had made the correct decision, if it could be labelled such a thing, given the poor choices he had been presented. The moment any fighting began, regardless of where, would bring more Plague. At least here, at this height, they had bought time, and could hold while the shuttles landed. Better a fight here than through the lower storeys of the tower where they could be surrounded.

But had he made the correct decision coming here in the first place?

Could he not have found another way?

Such questions are for another time, he thought. But you will be answering them with a body count, his doubt refuted.

He quickly silenced that voice. The danger of this place isn't the Plague! It is Annika. She is surely using the Plague as a tool. But what of her? She wanted us here! Of that I am certain.

But why? They had found nothing to suggest sabotage, and though Annika would disguise sabotage well, could she truly hide from their inspection? For almost a fortnight he had the three squads trained in searching for the most unusual forms of sabotage and explosives that could be created. He had



Deadzone Nastanza Mercenary by Chris Schlumpberger



Deadzone terrain by Jamie O'Toole

been as confident as could be, given the circumstances, that they had a chance of discovering her handiwork, should any exist. But to find nothing? Nothing at all?

The only nothingness Augustus had found with any certainty was that nothing felt right about this entire situation.

And soon the Plague will be upon us.

So was it this? Was this attack Annika's grand strategy? It seemed so... lackadaisical, compared to her carefully orchestrated betrayal. A convergence of Plague gave them too much time, too much opportunity to escape.

At least, so Augustus thought.

If he was wrong, and Annika had not sabotaged this place, then he knew he had

unnecessarily called every Plague in the city upon them, and surely alerted her to their presence also.

A double-bluff perhaps? Make him imagine a threat were not existed, then by his own actions he would condemn them all?

It was a deadly tactic of practised knife-fighters; feint with the blade then drop it to the other hand and strike home, as your foe parried the first attack that was no longer there.

But none of this answered where his intel shuttle had disappeared to. And that cold sensation gnawing at his gut grew larger with each passing moment. It had been too quiet, too long.

Something was very wrong here.

'Stallion GF02, I try again, where is your location?' he said.

'It's not coming.'

A reply.

An unexpected reply.

A voice he had never heard before. Lightly spoken. Gentle, but assured.

A woman's voice. She had spoken on the public channel, and as he looked up, he saw Rylor facing him, frozen.

And he knew that voice was Annika.

But the distant sound of engines could be heard, and each Enforcer turned to the face the origin. Even Voya looked over her shoulder from the stairwell door.

Three – no, four – black spots appeared on the horizon, growing larger every second.

Council's blessings, thought Augustus.

But what had Annika meant? Why now – why speak now?

He knew she attempting to get beneath his skin. *The moment you get angry, you lose*, he had been taught. *The cold thinker wins. Be like frost Augustus, be like frost.*

But, "it's not coming?" How, or what, Annika had meant by that?

He did not know, but he would find out. They had the flight path now. They would find her. Her words had touched him; he would admit that. Three words had cut him as sure as any blade, but pain was distant to him. He was used to it. He was unfeeling. He was frost.



Deadzone Plague Starter Force by "C.M. Minis"

But, he would return the favour, in time.

Then the explosions began, and all thought was destroyed.

The first three shuttles were simultaneously hit: three fiery streaks of light soared from nearby buildings and detonated into the shuttles. The first Stallion was struck underneath, the force flipping it over and colliding with a nearby tower, smoke billowing as it then fell, metal screaming against metal to the ground below. The second simply exploded mid-air, the resulting inferno almost blasting the third clear of the incoming warhead, but not far enough, as its tail was clipped the shuttle span violently out of control, into a second tower and out the other side and was lost to sight. A burst of flame a moment later marked the end.

A deafening howl was heard below, the Plague, ever thirsting for blood, were now most certainly aware of human presence.

The sickening truth struck home: Augustus had called his shuttles into an ambush.

And now, the trap is sprung, he thought with an appalling vindication of his earlier suspicion. His Enforcers had already taken positions across on the towers, covering the sides and the building entry, but their Genlings were out of effective range.



Deadzone Plague Gen 3 by Jamie O'Toole

They couldn't fire upon their enemy.

Annika had chosen her strategy well. He saw that now. Scattering her forces across the city, not to fight, but to prevent any departure.

The Plague, it seemed, would be allowed to do its work.

But hope remained – the fourth shuttle still remained, a little ways back. The pilot flew up and over the tower tops, now wise to the gauntlet, exposing as little of itself as possible. It curved a wide berth from where the warheads had been fired, coming at the tower from a forty-five degree angle above

the main thoroughfare, straightening for its pickup run.

But it was going too fast – the shuttle loomed larger – showing no intent of slowing.

‘That’s not one of ours,’ said Rylor, sighting down his scope.

Augustus thought: *of course it isn’t.*

The shuttle was in plain sight now; a military shuttle, its hull jet black, without markings or insignia. A second later dark shapes began to emerge from its hull as it unloaded whatever cargo it was carrying.

‘Fire!’ screamed Augustus, but he didn’t have to. The Enforcers had already begun lighting the morning sky with crimson laser, streaking through the air toward the shuttle.

Several hit but damage was minimal, and above them the cargo was released.

Oblong black shapes fell to the ground around them, then struck the tower.

Augustus waited for the detonations.

A body landed in front of him – corpses scattered across the rooftop – the weight and velocity producing a sickening crunch as flesh hit metal and concrete and gave way to the impact. His boots were smeared with blood and bile expunged from the tangled mess of tissue and bone in front of him.

Bodies? Corpses?

What the hell is going on? thought Augustus.

The enemy shuttle continued on, curving back over the fresh graves of the Enforcer’s



Deadzone Rebs strike force by Paul Mullis



Deadzone Dr. Simmonds Mercenary and Plague Gen 3s by "Boston Miniatures"

own shuttles, landing atop one of the towers a missile had fired from.

Rylor pointed at the streets below, and where the corpses had landed, the Plague was tearing amok them from every direction. Swarms of black were pouring from streets and doorways, converging on the trail of the twisted bombing run.

'If they weren't dead when they fell from the shuttle, and if they weren't dead when they hit the ground, well, they're definitely dead now' said Voya, breaking the silence among them as she placed one foot on the tower's rim, peering over the edge.

The Plague were tearing through the corpses.

Bodies? Is that really it – that's how they're directing the Plague? Augustus thought. *So simple, so obtuse.*

Rylor looked across the rooftop at the scene: crimson fluid filled his vision, a nightmarish depiction of the reality that war is hell. But this wasn't a nightmare. This was real, and this was happening. In that moment, he felt the last love he felt for Annika die, that she could be party to something so vile. He saw sizes of bodies that made him think of – and he couldn't even finish the thought.



Deadzone Plague Gen 1 by "C.M. Minis"

Numbness washed over him, though he had not known these victims, they wore the faces of his own.

'Here they come!' said Voya. 'They're entering the tower!'

'All Enforcers prepare for engagement. Take positions and pick your targets. Upon my command, fire,' Augustus said as he strode to the doorway. 'It seems we are forced to fight our way out.'

Karthor gripped his tri-barrel tighter; tap-tap-tap went Voya's tongue; Celeste whetted her lips, entering the trance of battle, as each Enforcers inhibitions loosed and the battle adrenaline began to take hold.

Rylor's legs gave way beneath him.

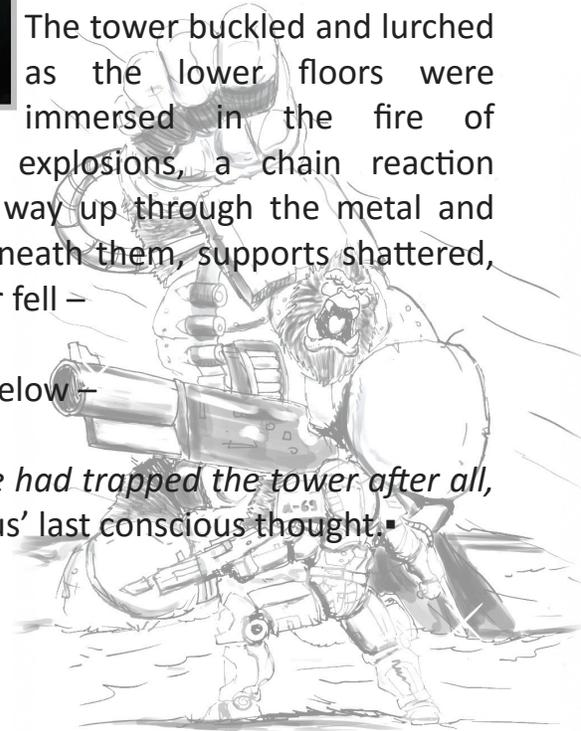
The tower shook, then shuddered, and a final explosion was heard –

Celeste was the first to realize it. It's what she would have done. Augustus' realisation was only an instant behind, as he thought, with a emotionless respect: *this is the coup de grâce.*

The tower buckled and lurched as the lower floors were immersed in the fire of explosions, a chain reaction working its way up through the metal and concrete beneath them, supports shattered, as the tower fell –

The horde below –

Annika... she had trapped the tower after all, was Augustus' last conscious thought.



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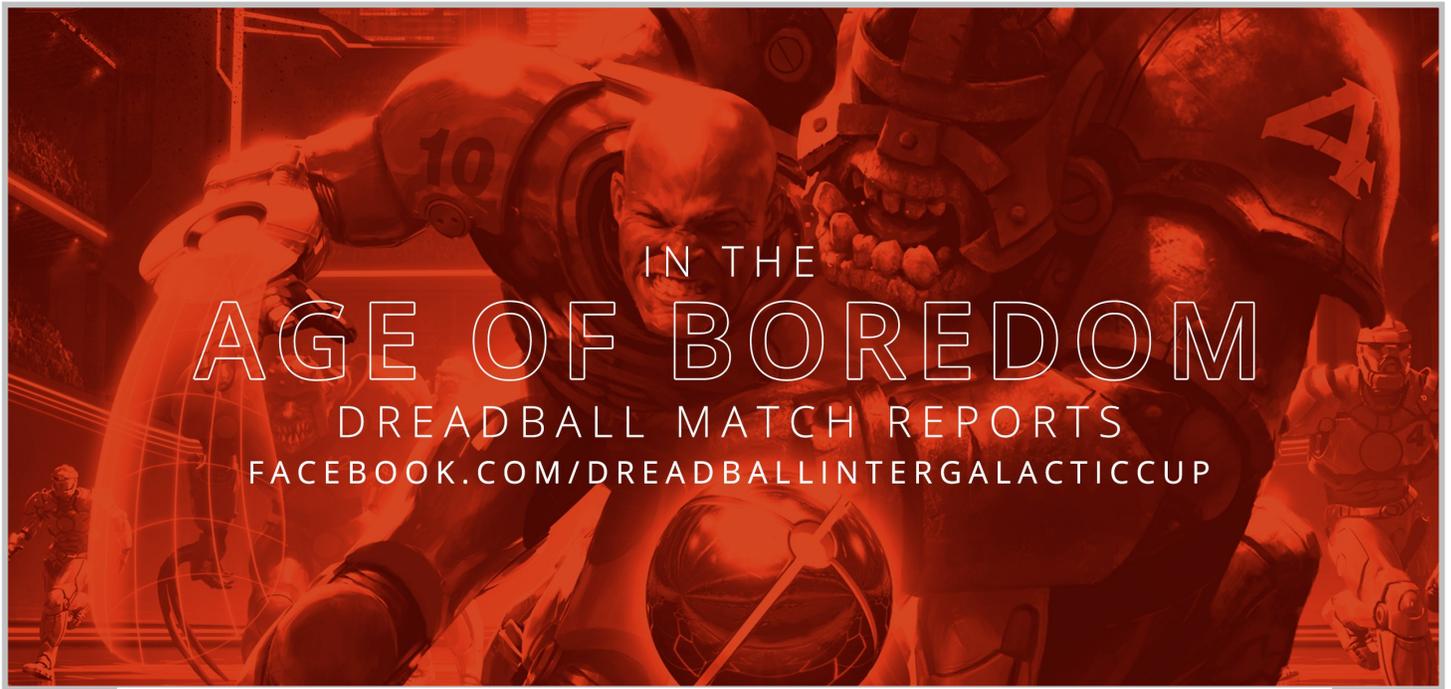
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Dwarven Brock Riders by Jose Chasco Manuel Gonzalez

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