

# Orcs in Space!

Role-playing campaigns  
in Games

Workshop.s

WARHAMMER. 40,000  
universe

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Illustrations by Tim Wright  
he Emperor Who Was a Man  
and Is Now a God abides in the  
solitude of the Imperial Palace.  
For 10,000 years he has ruled.  
Now a withered husk, sustained in an  
eternal living death by the vast biomechanisms  
of the Imperial Throne, this  
ghost in the machinery works his will  
upon a galactic empire 100,000 light years  
across.

Mankind is evolving into a race of beings  
with great psychic powers. However, to  
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protect mankind from void entities that  
would prey on a naive and immature  
psychic race, the Empire must ruthlessly  
control and suppress those having emerging  
psychic powers. The rule of the Imperium  
is harsh and brutal. The power of  
the Emperor is absolute, and the loyalty of  
his servants unquestionable. It is an age of  
darkness, ignorance, and unimaginable  
cruelty. To save Man, the Imperium must  
crush the precious joys and freedoms  
most cherished by Man. This tragedy  
might weigh heavily on the conscience of  
the Emperor.if, indeed, that unique amalgam  
of man and machine still recalls such  
an ancient relic of his humanity.  
But where there is life, there is hope.  
Where there is duty, there is honor.  
Where there is the enemy, there is courage  
and heroism.

This is the universe of Games Workshop  
.s WARHAMMER. 40,000: ROGUE  
TRADER game.

Future fantasy

The WARHAMMER 40,000: ROGUE  
TRADER game (herein called WH40K) is a  
science-fantasy game for tabletop miniatures,  
set in the distant future. The campaign  
setting of WH40K has more in  
common with fantasy role-playing than  
with most other science-fiction games.  
Sure, there are spaceships, lasers, and  
plasma guns, but in WH40K these marvels  
are treated more like fantasy magical  
devices than like plausible developments  
of modern technology. And the WH40K

universe is populated with races familiar  
to any fantasy role-player-such as Orks,  
Squats (dwarves), Stunties (halflings), and  
Eldar (elves).as well as with bizarre alien  
races commonly found in science-fiction  
games.

This choice of a future-fantasy theme  
has two appealing features as a roleplaying  
setting. First, a future fantasy  
frees the game master (GM) from the  
challenging task of moderating and maintaining  
a plausible science-fictional universe.  
Only veteran game designers and  
GMs of science-fiction RPGs can properly  
appreciate how difficult that is. In WH40K,  
you can have the entertaining trappings of  
high technology.robots, powered armor,  
and death rays.without the obligation of  
rationalizing them with elaborate pseudoscientific  
gobbledygook.

The other major virtue of a future fantasy  
setting is that you can borrow liberally  
from the trappings and conventions of  
two popular adventure genres.medieval  
fantasy and science fiction.to create a  
fantasy campaign with its own peculiar  
and distinctive flavor. An Eldar Harlequin  
mercenary, wearing carapace armor with  
a conversion field and armed with a  
chainsword and a neuro disruptor, is  
probably not much different in game  
terms from an elven fighter/magic-user in  
*plate mail* +3 with a *long sword* +2 and a  
*wand of paralyzation*, but the charm and  
novelty of these high-tech trappings has a  
special appeal for fans of bug-eyed monsters  
and lurid space opera.

However, GMs hot to set up a WH40K  
role-playing campaign face one tiny problem:  
WH40K is a set of tabletop miniatures  
rules, *not* a role-playing game. A roleplaying  
version of WH40K is currently  
under development but isn't likely to be  
available for at least 6-12 months, and  
maybe longer.

This article offers some rough-and-ready  
strategies for adapting the miniatures  
skirmish rules for role-playing, and suggests  
some models for the kinds of roleplaying  
campaigns particularly suited to  
the WH40K future-fantasy setting.

PC roles

The archetypal WH40K character role is  
that of a Space Marine of the Legion  
Astartes. Ironically, while ideally suited for  
tabletop miniatures combat, the Space  
Marine is poorly suited as a role-playing  
character. A Space Marine can do only two  
things: kill and wait around until he can  
kill some more. Such goals are ideal in a  
tabletop war game but too one-dimensional  
in a role-playing adventure. Further,  
Space Marines are indoctrinated to mindlessly  
follow orders.again, a virtue in  
tabletop troops but not much fun in roleplaying,  
where independence of thought  
and action is the essence of an appealing  
PC role.

Below are some WH40K character roles  
more suitable to role-playing. Also included  
are some strategies for adapting  
otherwise unsuitable PC types, like the  
Space Marines, to role-playing campaigns.  
*The Adeptus Arbites*: The Adeptus Arbites;  
or .Judges,. are the judicial and police

arm of the Adeptus Terra, the administrative bureaucracy of the Imperium. Judges and their staffs are accorded extraordinary independence in their actions, each having the authority to act as policeman, judge, jury, and executioner. With such broad powers and discretion, they might easily fit into any sort of role-playing party, since most activities a role-playing party might pursue could conceivably be rationalized to include the crusading concerns of an independent agent of the Imperium.

*The Inquisition:* The primary duties of the Inquisition are to identify psykers and mutants, and to either indoctrinate or eliminate them in the interests of the security of the Imperium. The Inquisition is also given broad powers to investigate any threat to humanity or the Imperium, and to employ whatever means are deemed appropriate to eliminating such threats. Inquisitors and their staffs thus have the freedom of action and broadly defined interests and motivations that make a flexible and independent PC role.

*Navigators:* Each Navigator has a single, exclusive genetic mutation that allows him to navigate through warp space. This stable mutation makes Navigators precious resources of the Imperium, and Navigators form a privileged aristocratic class in the service of the Emperor. As such, Navigators have a certain independence as a result of their exalted status, and they function in a role-playing setting as educated, elitest nobles with limited combat abilities, broad general backgrounds, and snobbish personalities.

*Astropaths:* Astropaths offer a unique character role, closest to an FRPG spellcaster or psychic in abilities but with distinctive differences. For one, all Astropaths are blind, an unavoidable byproduct of the soul-binding ritual that assures their loyalty to the Emperor. In compensation, they have a peculiar near-sense that permits them to perceive the features of their environment within 20 meters. In DRAGON 33

the campaign, Astropaths are supposed to be rigidly controlled by the Imperial Bureaucracy (the Adeptus Terra), but their singular charm as a character role justifies considerable GM improvisation of rationales for including them in any given PC party.

*Rogue Traders:* This is the most promising and flexible PC type for WH40K roleplaying. Rogue Traders are licensed and equipped by the Adeptus Terra to explore the frontiers beyond the control of the Imperium. Rogue Traders come from a variety of backgrounds, and they are often selected from outcasts and politically suspect individuals who are considered too useful to eliminate but best kept at a safe distance from the workings of the Imperial power structure. For example, officers of the Space Marines and Imperial Army with distressingly independent personalities, or Inquisitors who have demonstrated a too-fastidious attitude toward swift and brutal execution of justice. *Space Marines and Imperial Army personnel:*

Since soldiers in the Space Marines and Imperial Army are inducted for life service, it's hard to rationalize a class of ex-Marine or ex-Army veterans as PCs. desirable as such character roles might be. Here are a few excuses for creating Space Marine or Imperial Army veterans as PCs:

1. Psychological and dishonorable discharges: A good Space Marine or Army

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soldier never leaves his service, but a defective one might be discharged for any number of reasons, such as cowardice, insubordination, insanity, political unreliability, and so on. Such rejects might still have substantial combat skills and the additional added charm of colorful backgrounds.

2. Renegades and deserters: Such might be particularly common in the Imperial Army, whose soldiers are drafted for life and swept away from home, friends, and family to fight in the remote reaches of the galaxy. Many might turn up as mercenaries in the private armies of planetary governors or on the staffs of Judges, Inquisitors, or Rogue Traders.

3. Detached agents and observers on special assignments: Judges, Inquisitors, Rogue Traders, and other powerful servants of the Imperium have unrestricted power to requisition manpower whenever they need it. A trooper might thus be separated from his unit and enlisted as a guard, scout, or military agent in the service of the Emperor.

#### PC parties

The PC party is an established convention of role-playing. The trick to having a successful PC party is to provide just enough common motivation for group cohesion without unnecessarily limiting the personal expressions of the personality and motivations of the individual characters. Here are several sample rationales for PC parties in WH40K:

1. The staff of an Imperial Agent.

Judges, Inquisitors, and Rogue Traders are defined as having the broad authority to assemble their own staffs and to draft or commandeer personnel for temporary assignments. Such a staff is likely to be made up of a variety of skilled specialists and may often be dispatched on an extended mission with considerable freedom of action. Such a mixed party of PCs might form the core of a role-playing party, with new or temporary additions to the roster being made according to the needs of a specific mission.

2. Ambitious adventurers hired (or shanghaied) by a Rogue Trader. Rogue Traders recruit their troops, scouts, and volunteer settlers from frontier planets, where the citizens have been less spoiled by the civilized comforts of the Imperium. A odd assortment of friends and companions might be hired from a backwater planet and constituted as a small combat, scouting, or exploration unit for an outward-bound Rogue Trader expedition.

3. Rebels, renegades, and pirates. So far, the Imperium has been presented as the good guys, at least in the sense that the Emperor and Imperium are trying to protect humanity against evil races of

alien beings intent on subjugating and devouring mankind. It is also easy to imagine casting the PC as rebels against a brutal and repressive Imperium. (Say, do I hear the *Star Wars* theme in the background?) In this case, the Emperor, the Adeptus Terra, and the Space Marines are cast as most formidable adversaries, while the PC party might start as resistance fighters on a frontier planet occupied by the Imperial Army, or as pirates raiding the fleet of a Rogue Trader expedition that is attempting to absorb an independent planet under the ever-expanding domination of the Imperium.

### Role-playing mechanics

The following modest alterations and additions to the WH40K rules should permit GMs and players to experiment with a role-playing adventure or campaign in the Imperium. Here are the objectives I had in mind as I designed these modifications:

1. Stay as close to the miniatures rules as possible. This keeps the design task manageable and encourages tabletop gamers to add secondary role-playing elements to their regular tabletop warfare sessions.
2. Use the most primitive and universal models of role-playing rules as standards for a successful design. There's no point trying to achieve the sophisticated elegance of systems like Chaosium's KING ARTHUR PENDRAGON or Steve Jackson Games' GURPS® game in a short article. A more practical goal is to aim for a relatively simple and popular design: the original 1975 boxed edition of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. The original D&D®

game was an undeniably successful roleplaying design, as witnessed by its incredible popularity and innumerable hosts of successors. It is also a logical model for adapting WH40K, since the original D&D game itself was a direct modification of a tabletop miniatures system: CHAINMAIL, the ancestor of all fantasy role-playing games. Thus, if role-playing with the modifications proposed here is no less satisfactory than role-playing with the original D&D rules, I judge the proposed design to be a success.

### Characteristic profiles

One universal convention of role-playing is the personal characteristic and the characteristic test (e.g., "Roll your intelligence or less on 1d20."). WH40K characters have something called a characteristic profile, which will serve as a PC's personal characteristics. Beginning WH40K PCs simply begin with standard profiles as defined for the individual character types in the WH40K rules. (More ambitious GMs may devise systems by which players can roll up their basic characteristics.) The following WH40K characteristics are tested against a 1d6 roll (rolling the characteristic or less is considered success): Strength, Toughness (similar to constitution), and Initiative (similar to dexterity, agility, or quickness—the ability to act faster than your opponent). The following WH40K characteristics are tested against a 2d6 roll (rolling the characteristic or less is considered success):

Leadership (similar to charisma), Intelligence, Cool (a morale stat), and Will Power (most commonly used as a saving throw against magic or psychic attacks).

### Skills and abilities

Most WH40K characters have only two skills: Weapon Skill (for melee weapons) and Ballistic Skill (for ranged weapons). This should suffice for cheap-and-cheerful RPG combat. Some WH40K characters may have psionic abilities, as per the standard WH40K rules.

To judge a character's success in any noncombat or nonpsionic action, test the most appropriate personal characteristic. If the action requires thought or personal experience, check Intelligence; if the action tests physical agility or a drilled or practiced physical activity, test Initiative. Ambitious GMs might improvise a rough-and-ready skill system on the model of the characteristics tests, as long as they remember that some characteristics test on 1d6 while others test on 2d6. For example, a character may be assigned a First Aid skill rating in a range of 2-12, based on the notion that First Aid is a mental skill related to Intelligence.

### Character advancement

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Veteran players of GDW's TRAVELLER® game know that character advancement is not strictly necessary for successful roleplaying. Alternatively, since the WH40K miniatures rules already offer a crude form of character advancement, the GM can honor that practice. Review the rules provided in "Improving a Character's Profile in a Campaign." (in the WH40K rule book, page 47), which essentially allows the PC to add one point to the characteristic of his choice for each adventure session he survives, with no characteristic to exceed limits as defined by the major hero profile of that race.

### Wounds and healing

This is the trickiest part of a miniatures system to adapt to role-playing. In the WH40K rules, most characters have only one wound point. If they get wounded, they are out of the game for the rest of the session. This is fine for tabletop combat but won't do for role-playing.

For role-playing purposes, consult the Injuries table in this article when the PC has at least one wound point before he receives a wound. The character has a substantial chance of suffering only a temporary penalty without the loss of a wound point. Consult the Critical Hits table when the PC has been reduced to zero wound points in a previous combat turn before receiving a new wound. A PC who receives a wound after being reduced to zero wound points has a substantial chance of dying if he is not treated promptly.

Review "Injury statuses." (Table 1) and "Medical treatment and healing." (Table 2). Note that the medipack functions something like the magical healing of D&D game clerics, but it can be used only once per character per combat. GMs who prefer a style of fantasy combat more like the D&D game, with half-dead characters

popping back into the fray after a quick, refreshing touch from the cleric, might consider easing the one-use-per-day restriction to two-, three-, or unlimited-uses-per-day.

For important NPC allies and opponents, GMs may use these charts at their discretion.

For all those other one-wound-point NPCs, when they take one wound, they're dead. Most NPCs are just cannon fodder, anyway; the faster and simpler they fall down, the better.

### Dramatic tone

The following notes may help GM and players appreciate the spirit implied in the charts and rules modifications suggested above for WH40K role-playing combat:

1. WH40K combat is closer to World War II movie combat than to typical FRPG combat. Almost all characters have access to deadly ranged weapons. Many combats begin at long or medium range, with both sides immediately seeking available cover. A wounded character may thus more easily be rescued and dragged to cover,

### Table 1

#### Injuries

1d100

01-40

41-70

71-95

96-00

Injury Effect

Superficial wound Stunned for one turn; no wound loss

Light wound Knocked down; no wound loss

Serious wound Knocked down; lose one wound point

Critical wound Lose one wound point; roll on Critical Hits table

If a character has one or more wound points before being wounded, roll 1d100 and consult this table. If more than one wound is received in a single round, add +30 to the 1d100 roll for each additional wound received.

Injury statuses

Stunned: No attacks possible; no other penalties or restrictions.

Knocked down: Move, Weapon Skill, and Ballistic

Skill are reduced by two until the

victim can stand. Roll Toughness or less on 1d6 to stand during Movement Phase.

### Table 2

#### Critical Hits

1d100 Injury Effect

01-50 Severe injury Test 1d6 vs. Toughness or become unconscious. If the

victim remains conscious, his actions are limited to speech

and feeble gestures. His injuries are not life threatening.

51-80 Critical injury As for severe injury, but injuries are life threatening, with

death occurring in 2d6 turns. A successful First Aid application

reduces the victim to severe injury status and saves him from death.

81-95 Fatal injury The victim is automatically unconscious with lifethreatening

injuries. He will die in 1d6 turns. A successful First Aid application reduces the victim to severe

injury

status, saving him from death.

96-00 Killed outright The victim is Really Dead. Kiss the character good-bye.

If a character has no wound points at all before being wounded, roll 1d100 and consult this table. If more than one wound is received in a single round, add +30 to the 1d100 roll for each additional wound received.

Medical treatment and healing

*First Aid:* Any character can perform First Aid by

spending 1d6 -2 turns treating a victim (minimum of one turn), then testing

Intelligence. A successful test means

the victim is saved. If the test is failed, another

character can attempt First Aid,

but no more than one character at a time can perform First Aid on a victim.

*Medipack:* This item restores one wound point when applied to a victim, but it

cannot raise the number of wound points above the victim's original maximum.

This application removes all of a victim's current

penalties and restrictions (i.e., stunned, knocked down, unconscious, coma, etc.).

This works on any living

character, but it can only be applied once per day per character; subsequent uses

of the medipack have no effect (see the WH40K hardbound rule book, page 123).

*Stimulant:* This restores a severe injury victim to

consciousness for 2d6 turns. If the

character chooses to make a heroic effort (see

below), the wound-point test is

automatically successful; otherwise, the victim is

conscious but unable to perform

any action other than speech and feeble physical gestures.

*Heroic effort:* A severe or critical injury victim may choose to make a heroic effort

if he can roll his wound-point score on 2d6 +2. The

character remains conscious

for a single turn, taking actions for that turn at a -3

penalty on all characteristic

tests and having his Move reduced by two. In the turn

following a heroic effort,

the character falls unconscious and 1d100 is rolled

on the Critical Hits table with

+50 to the roll.

*Unconsciousness:* An unconscious character can be brought to consciousness for

2d6 turns with a stimulant or with the successful use of First Aid (testing Intelligence).

Thereafter, the victim cannot regain consciousness for 2d6 hours.

*Character healing:* Without medipack treatment, a character heals naturally at a

rate of one wound point per week.

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unlike victims of fantasy melees, where most participants are locked in hand-to-hand or close combat.

2. Engagements initiated at long or medium

range should often permit prudent

overmatched or battered PC parties to

withdraw from combat. In fantasy, running

from combat is unheroic and often

impractical. In WH40K, a successful escape

from a dangerous enemy should be

considered a moral victory at least.

3. The charts have been designed to

produce numerous casualties that require

a party member to rescue a wounded and

disabled companion, to treat his injuries

before they prove fatal, and to remove the

injured companion from the risk of further

wounds. This reflects my personal

taste for heroic activities of this nature. Like most gamers, I like heroic combats that result in dispatching evil opponents, but my role-playing soul is most stirred by heroic rescues under fire.

4. The influence of psionic abilities and exotic weaponry on combat in WH40K is complex and unpredictable. Familiarize yourself with the rules and powers concerning these game elements and still expect to be surprised at their dramatic effects in a combat engagement.

### Designing a campaign

GMs familiar with the WH40K universe shouldn't have any trouble coming up with characters, settings, and plots for roleplaying campaigns. However, here are some suggestions for particularly promising campaign material.

*Good guys and bad guys:* As was discussed elsewhere, the obvious choice of the good-guy team is the Imperium and its loyal agents and citizens, struggling desperately to preserve civilization against the Creatures from the Void and the numerous pirates, renegades, traitors, and hideous alien menaces of the galaxy. However, given the brutal nature of the Emperor's rule, the Imperium could just as easily be cast as the villains, with the PCs as plucky, independent frontier settlers or part of a small but dedicated Rebel Alliance.

For villains, here are some choices:

- | Warp entities: These are soul-sucking demons from beyond space and time;
- | Eldar: Space elves are a particularly nasty, psychotic breed in WH40K.
- | Tyranids and the Hive, Fleets: These cute little six-legged horrors and their biologically engineered slave race, the Zoats, are powerful, destructive, and ruthless on a large enough scale to challenge mankind itself for possession of the galaxy.
- | Orks: Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy! Orcs in spacesuits, with lasers and everything! My absolutely favorite all-time fantasy monsters! Need I say more?

*Recommended Settings:* Three types of settings seem particularly appropriate:

- | Frontier planets: Here the power of the Imperial bureaucracy and military is weakest, and renegades, pirates, evil invaders, and alien beasts are strongest.

Ideally, the setting of your current fantasy role-playing campaign might be a planet openly (or secretly) visited or invaded by the Imperium or one of its enemies.

- | Isolated backwaters: The vagaries of weather in warp space often cut certain planets off from the Imperium for years at a time. Such planets must be independent and undisciplined enough to provide plenty of excitement for their citizens. (See the WH40K rule book, pages 224-228, for a treatment of Logan's World, just such an isolated backwater.)

- | Uncharted space: PCs in the service of an exploring Rogue Trader might be set down in a new and exciting planetary setting for each game session, or might labor for months to make a wild planet suitable for settlement.

### Sample campaign plots

GMs looking for an exhaustive list of appropriate campaign plots and sub-plots

should review the .Plot Generator., in the WH40K rule book, pages 240-248. a list of over 100 adventure and campaign ideas suitable for role-playing in the Imperium. However, the following are three sample narrative frameworks that seem particularly well-suited for a WH40K role-playing campaign.

*The Lost Legion:* The Eyes of Fire chapter, Legiones Astartes, was dispatched to the frontier world of Niederlage, out of contact with the Imperium for a decade due to inclement warp weather and no longer answering to communications via the astropaths of Adeptus Astra Telepathica. What the Eyes of Fire found was an ambush set by the Tyranids of the Hive Fleets. Surrounded by disciplined, well-equipped units of Zoats and other Tyranid slave races, and cut off from evacuation by the destruction of his spacecraft, the Chapter Commander ordered a final transmission sent via astropath: .Avenge our fate! Long live the Emperor!. Since that transmission, no further word has come from Niederlage. The region has been assumed to have fallen under Tyranid domination, and Adeptus Terra has determined that no more units must be exposed there to further risk of ambush. However, two members of the Eyes of Fire, marines who had remained at the chapter's home base to recover from training injuries, avoided the fate of their comrades. They have successfully petitioned the Emperor for permission to recruit a small unit of veterans and specialists to voyage in secret to Niederlage and learn the fate of the Lost Legion. They are determined to rescue any Marine captives who might endure unspeakable horrors at the hands of Tyranid interrogators. If, as is likely, there were no survivors, they hope to recover the chapter banner of the Eyes of Fire, so that the legion may be resurrected and the stain upon its honor removed.

*Blows Against the Empire:* Mona Magan, a garden planet with a stable medieval technology lying just beyond the boundaries of the Imperium, had been visited several times by trade ships but had eluded the grasp of Imperial domination. until the discovery of valuable mineral deposits on its surface. Adeptus Terra has determined that the Empire must have these resources and has dispatched a Rogue Trader, supported by a corps of the Imperial Army, to subdue the local population and protect mining operations. A peculiar alliance of three interest groups now resists the Imperial Army of Occupation. Two deserters from an earlier Rogue Trader visit, a Squat mercenary and a Stuntie mechtch, have settled on Mona Magan and have come to love its peace and independence. They provide resistance forces with military and technological know-how. A ruthless and unprincipled band of Eldar pirates, based in a nearby star system, regard expansion of Imperial influence in the region to be a bad thing, so the Eldar are providing the rebels with advisors and material assistance. And a powerful sorcerer's guild,

painfully aware of the Empire's ruthless policies toward psykers, provides arcane abilities and resources unfamiliar to the Imperial forces. (Note: While initially this campaign would be confined to the sur-  
*I have assembled a mixed support team from volunteers among the Imperial personnel, brig's crew, and passengers. The loyalty and combat prowess of Captain Harrack and his troopers are unquestionable, but the subtlety and discrimination of Space Marine tactics might prove inadequate to the challenges facing them. As face of Mona Magan, the rebels might soon as my team is assembled, it will folsoon come in contact with other rebel low the captain into the warp distortion.*

groups from nearby star systems through I must repeat my strong protest against  
Player introduction

Transcript of vidifax report:

Ad: TechPriest Phidius Quirus, StarFleet OPs

Ex: Lord Lucinius ap Moryd, brig Moritori Capellus

*At 17:40, Inquisitor Polo and his Psyker Interrogation staff were discovered missing from their quarters. Captain Harrack of the Marine Chapter Spacewolves, 10 troopers, and myself responded immediately Astropath Forus, two Psyketech aides, and Prefect Dwalinnarius had preceded us, searched the site, and established that Polo and his staff had indeed simply vanished.*

*Astropath Forus directed a scan for psykeforce traces or signs of warp intrusions, revealing an unsealed warp distortion at the site of the disappearance.*

*Captain Harrack accompanied his platoon into the warp distortion in pursuit of the missing Inquisitor and his staff*

*or through contacts with the Eldar pirates.) the psionic powers of the sorcerer.s guild*

*Orcs in Space: An assortment of characters gathers around the blaring brass and chattering drums of an Imperial Army recruitment mission. Join the Imperial Army! Travel to far-off, exotic planets! Earn a fabulous salary AND a special recruitment bonus! Show your loyalty to the Emperor, and drive the heathen Orks from the Imperium! Step right up! Just sign right here. . . . After a whirlwind regime of boot camp training and psyke-hypnotic indoctrination, the small party is unceremoniously dumped on a small planet in the center of the Ork Domains and is given the assignment of acting as advisors and scouts to a courageous but pathetically untrained and inadequately outfitted guerilla army (consisting of several dozen wretched Stunties who have labored under the harsh rule of the Orks for decades). Between the bizarre and horrific local lifeforms, the aggressive pacification campaigns of the nearby Ork garrisons, and the energetic, well-intentioned, and illadvised heroics of the Stuntie partisans, the PCs should have plenty to keep them busy for a couple of sessions.*

The Warrens Beneath

WarpSpace

Finally, here.s a short example of a roleplaying scenario outline for WH40K, with

a sample PC roster to show how a variety of characters could be assembled as a typical RPG party of adventurers.

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*your policy of keeping these incidents secret. This is the seventh such event in my sector this month, all involving Psyketech staff of the Inquisition. As yet, none of the measures you've suggested have apparently lessened the likelihood of further incidents.*

*I can only hope Captain Harrack and the volunteer support team may be more fortunate than those who pursued through the Warp Gates in the previous six incidents.*

PC roster

1. Lieutenant Gradus, Imperial Army Intelligence: A standard-profile Imperial Army human with superior marksmanship (BS 4), leadership (LD 8), and intelligence (Int 8). Unfortunately, Gradus has no combat experience (Cool 5). Gradus has an inflated estimate of his abilities and is eager to impress his superiors with his initiative in rescuing Inquisitor Polo.

2. Sergeant Boorik, Security (brig crew): A standard-profile Imperial Army human with limited ambition and extensive combat experience (Init 2, WS 4, Cool 9).

Boorik is more concerned about returning alive with the men in his command than with rescuing Inquisitor Polo.

3. Trooper Pallindacus, Weapons Specialist (brig crew): A standard-profile Imperial Army human with extensive heavyweapon training (BS 4). Pallindacus is rated for all heavy weapons, but he prefers his heavy plasma gun, which he carries.

.Shoot first and forget the questions!. is Pallindacus.s motto.

4. Crewman .Stumpy. Grocwis, Power-Mech Operator (brig crew): A standardprofile Squat.bright but with no interest in responsibility or status (LD 7, Int 9). .Stumpy. knows robots and auto-drive systems inside and out, and he has the typical Squat gift for complex machinery (which may come in handy if alien technology is encountered).

5. Astropath Forus, Adeptus Astra Telepathica: A standard Adeptus Astra Telepathica profile with the Mental Blow, Steal Mind, Telepathy, Astrotelepathy, Locate Warp Gate/Portal, and Resist Psychic Attack psychic abilities, and a Psychic Mastery Level 1. Like all Astropaths, Forus is blind, not a warrior (WS 1, BS 2), and consequently concerned for his physical safety (Cool 4). Forus has no interest in this mission whatsoever and is following orders only because his loyalty to the Emperor has been burned deeply into his mind through soul-binding. Regardless, Forus will always discover excellent reasons to pack up and go home where it.s safe and warm.

6. PsykeTech Chamos, Psyke Sensitive: A standard Psyker profile with Psyke Master Level 2 and the following abilities: Cure Injury, Telekinesis I, Teleport I, Jinx, and Teleport II. Chamos is on Forus.s staff and remains with Forus to act as his eyes. Chamos carries an auto-pistol, but he can.t

hit the broad side of a starship with it (BS 2) and has no taste for physical roughhouse (WS 2, Cool 4).

7. Passenger Dondi Fredar, BioMedTech: A cute little standard Halfling profile with surprising durability (Tough 4). He is too hard-headed to feel psychic attacks (WP 9). Dondi is a cheerful volunteer for this mission, probably because he hasn't got too firm a grip on reality, but he did get basic Home Guard training on his home planet.

8. Passenger Elrohir Flamelocks, Trader: A standard Eldar profile, Elrohir is an operative for a licensed Rogue Trader in transit to a recruiting conference on Gades Base. Outwardly a quiet, cultivated character, Elrohir is actually rather bloody minded, arrogant in the typical Eldar fashion, and looking forward to a pleasant firefight.

The scenario plot

Warp uglies have abducted Inquisitor Polo and his staff for mind-tapping. The victims are being held captive in a vast underground warren dug by monstrous pals of the Warp creatures. The Warp guys are presently sucking their victims dry of high-clearance secrets about Imperial antipsyke defenses. Captain Harrack and his two squads of Marines cheerfully dove into the monster nest and stirred up a mess of trouble. They waded confidently into combat but were chewed up into smaller groups that have lost contact with one other, completely failing to locate the missing Inquisitor and his staff. Though they made a lot of noise, killed monsters, and wrecked things, the captain is now dead and his squad has disintegrated as a unit. The Space Marines have had a half hour to get chopped up and dispersed before the PC party arrives.

Now, in a central warren chamber, a giant queen monster sits with a pulsing, exposed brain, and poor Inquisitor Polo and his staff lie under its vast bulk getting their souls sucked out as the nasty Warp villains stand around, wringing their hands and cackling fiendishly.

The PC lieutenant and his makeshift team must travel through the Warp portal into the equivalent of a science-fiction dungeon, with lots of spider robots and trained attack beetles running around in elaborately trapped tunnel passages. Laser-toting monsters of various species wander these tunnels and shoot it out with anyone they encounter. The PC volunteers could possibly achieve some or all of the following goals:

1. Locate and rescue isolated Space Marine survivors, then unite them into a coherent force.
2. Investigate various tactics for butchering monsters, like using medical supplies for poisons or stealing control of the local robots.
3. Look around for secret doors, of which there are skillions and behind which are all sorts of useful and dangerous things, including weapons, more robots, friendly prisoners and, of course, the Lair of the Monster Queen.
4. Mount an assault on the Lair of the

Monster Queen, attempting to rescue the Inquisitor from the Queen, her bodyguard, and the nefarious Agents of the Warp Madness that planned this caper.

5. And, if they can handle the above, the PCs might get back to the brig through the warp, with the rescued Inquisitor and staff, surviving Marines, and a report on the nasty boojums that been abducting the Psykestaff of the Inquisition.

The dungeon could be a tabletop layout like those used for miniatures warfare, either revealed bit by bit as the players explore or designed as a standard abstract or small-scale map as typically used for RPG adventures. The monster opponents could be based on WH40K alien horrors (Orks, Tyrannids, Zoats, Ambulls, for example) or on the GM.s favorite fantasy or science-fiction monsters (orcs, lizardmen, demons, beastmen, dragons, dinosaurs, robots, etc.). My suggestion is to buy a \$2 bag of plastic dinosaurs, spiders, or whatever at your local toy store and use them for table layouts. (I used a bag of 80 tiny black flies. loads of fun for me making .buzz-buzz. noises as I belabored the hapless PCs.)

A product disclaimer

Don.t be fooled by the graceful presentation of this make-shift adaptation of WH40K for role-playing. I have cheerfully ignored lots of major problems, which are left as exercises for clever students. A few examples:

! What do things cost? Can a PC buy a plasma cannon?

! Do weapons and devices break down? How can they be repaired?

! What about game balance? Aren.t certain PC types going to be more powerful than others? Some PC types start out with higher profiles than others, and some can receive some pretty powerful weapons if they are outfitted according to the rules.

Without attempting to minimize the importance of these problems, I confidently assert that experienced role-playing GMs can improvise their way around them for the first few sessions. at least for long enough to decide whether they like the WH40K universe enough to put some extra work into adapting the rules to fit their expectations. And for tabletop GMs just interested in fooling around with a bit of role-playing in their miniature campaigns, such esoteric role-playing questions aren.t likely to bother them at all.

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