

HM Review

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Games Workshop Warhammer 40,000

It's more than just a game.

We can trace the roots of modern tabletop wargaming all the way back to the 19th century. Wargaming gained popularity with the publication of H.G. Wells' *Little Wars*, which provided rules that allowed two opponents to battle with miniature soldiers.

The first mass-produced wargames entered production in the 1950s and began to emulate historical military conflicts, giving players the opportunity to engage in the battles of Gettysburg or Thermopylae during an afternoon of rolling dice and moving miniature armies. The popularity of tabletop wargames exploded during the 1970s, with many new and complex games that provided a variety of options to players, and several of the most popular and most enduring games were produced during this period.

At the height of gaming popularity, Games Workshop was founded in London in 1975, and opened its first retail location in 1978. In early 1979, Games Workshop helped to found Citadel Miniatures, a manufacturer of high-quality metal miniatures for role-playing and tabletop games. Now an integral part of Games Workshop, Citadel continues to produce miniatures, miniature accessories, scenery, tools and paints.

In 1983, Games Workshop released the first edition of *Warhammer Fantasy Battle*. The first edition contained a rulebook, reference manual, playing board, game accessories, and the first published scenario *Ziggurat of Doom*. Focused on small unit and squad-based combat in a fantasy setting, the game allowed for simplification of play, engaging in balanced and fair gameplay using a point value for each unit. Subsequent editions



expanded on the universe to include magic, monsters, and a multitude of races, each with their own play style.

The success of the Warhammer title brought Games Workshop overseas, opening offices in the United States in 1984. *Warhammer 40,000 Dark Vengeance*, the most

recent version of the game, includes a full color 168-page rulebook, a complete assembly guide, a quick-play reference guide, an army roster sheet, dice, templates, a how-to-play booklet with six scenarios to play, and dozens of tiny gaming figures. The figures depict a variety of demonic and stoic soldiers in various poses with a variety of weapons. These figures are attached to large sprues, and feature snap-together assembly. The detail molded into each figure is staggering, and they really come alive once painted. Some scale modelers buy the games just to paint and display the figures, either individually or as units. The International Plastic Modelers Society and AMFS (Atlanta Military Figure Society) both include contest categories for figures in groups or as individual pieces, and the AMFS

includes a toy soldier collection category for its contests.

The figures can be assembled and painted to achieve a greater measure of realism for the game. The figures are usually comprised of three to four parts,

although the larger and more complex figures are likely to have more parts. The molding is superb and the figures are incredibly detailed considering their size. Painting the figures could easily become an addiction—it is just great fun.

Citadel offers paint sets that include a variety of paint colors and a starter paintbrush. The *Warhammer Paint Set* includes eight paints, a paintbrush, and five practice figures. The Citadel



The Citadel starter set is aimed at the beginner, and the Warhammer set is for more advanced gamers.



Before painting, all components need to be primed, but by using an airbrush it is easy.

Hobby Starter Set includes eight paints, a paintbrush, PVA (white) glue, plastic cement, a set of sprue cutters, and containers of sand and grass for the figure bases. The Citadel paints are water-based acrylic, non-toxic, cover well, and dry almost immediately.

The primer coats or base colors can be airbrushed, if the paint is thinned properly, but the molded details are so fine that they really need to be painted by hand. If one color is used for a large area on a figure, or for painting multiple figures at the same time, it is a good idea for the modeler to have a wet

palette or small container of water available otherwise the paint tends to dry in the paintbrush. Most of the figures can be assembled before being painted, but with the larger and more complicated figures, it may be easier to paint the individual parts and then assemble the figure.

In Warhammer 40,000, two players each command an army, either the noble Dark Angels or the Chaos Space Marines. For the basic game the armies are placed on the table setting, with specific locations measured and established with the included bright red plastic rulers. The game is played in turns with a clearly-defined sequence of steps. In each turn, the player rolls the dice, moves his miniature army, shoots and assaults the enemy. The reference sheets are handy to determine the power and attributes of a character played. Troops can be moved up to six inches at a time, as measured with a ruler, and all members of a unit must be placed within two inches of each other.

Each army unit can shoot at the enemy army, using dice to determine each shot fired. Another roll of the dice determines whether the target was wounded, and how many models are removed from the field after the dice are rolled is based on the number of wounds received. There



It takes some real patience to paint one of these figures as the base is about the size of a dime.

are ways to save models, depending on the amount of wounds and the results of a roll of the dice. Also included in the how-to-play booklet are five different missions, each complete with an overview, description of the armies, battlefield size, deployment, victory conditions, and battle tactics.

A unique feature of the Games Workshop product line is the Trade Stockist Program, which is part of a direct relationship between the retailer and the manufacturer. By participating in the Stockist Program, the retailer has the benefits of no minimum order, free shipping, free display racks, product support, as well as the store location advertised on the Games Workshop and White Dwarf Newsletter websites. Also included in the program is a modular inventory plan, which includes guidance from Games Workshop to help ensure success, that allows the retailer to select a starting inventory with options for expanding to include other modules of model kits, paints and hobby supplies, and games as needed.



Just like any model, it is often easier to paint small parts separately before assembling the figure.

Wargaming can actually encourage the growth and development of young people, and Games Workshop publishes parental guides that may aid in alleviating any reservations parents may have. The kids can develop better language skills in reading the play guides and materials, mechanical skills in following the instructions to build the models, artistic skills in painting the miniatures, mathematical skills in measuring and moving the armies, and social skills in playing the games in groups. With all of these benefits, the kids can have fun, too. Whether there is an interest in participation in playing the games, in collecting miniature armies, or in the challenge of building and painting models, the Games Workshop line will likely have something that can appeal to hobbyists of all ages. **HM**

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There are a number of sci-fi warrior creatures and fantasy vehicles included with every Games Workshop set, and although painting these tiny figures will test the skills of every modeler, the results are worth the effort.