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Hawk Wargames Newsletter #38 - 7th March

March sees the release of our devastating new Command units for all five races; [these are available for pre-order from our website today](#). Lead from the front with these vanguard commanders, ready to get up close and personal with the enemy.

Don't forget that our [famous commanders have now been released](#) – these heroic and infamous individuals add flavour (and awesome power!) to your Dropzone Commander games. Full rules for all of these can be found in our Reconquest: Phase 1 rulebook.

Last but not least, we like to add a little something extra to our newsletters, and this month is no different. With all the new commanders and units coming soon, we thought we'd give you an insight as to how we actually take units from concept to production; take a peek behind the scenes at Hawk HQ and see how we bring the world of Dropzone Commander to your tabletop.

1. Brand New Command units

As the Reconquest continues, all factions are committing new units to the fight, and these will be coming to your tabletop in the coming months. With new tactics come new commanders, and March sees the release of five new command units to lead your armies into the fray!

UCM: Phoenix Command Gunship - £30



The legions were designed for shock and awe, descending on the cradle worlds without warning and rapidly taking back what belongs to humanity.

The Phoenix is an up-gunned beast. It is a heavy command platform which is always first into the fray with weapons blazing, issuing directives in real time to the troops. It was designed to come in with the first wave of planetary assaults where there is no existing ground presence and where a beachhead has to be established under enemy fire. The ship itself is one of the heaviest aircraft utilised by the UCM, both in terms of mass and armament. All aspects of the unit revolve around close support for the rest of the squadron – being able to take punishment and return such extreme levels of firepower that there is nothing left to threaten the drop zone a second time.

It sports the following:

- Six UM-86 'Punisher' missiles that are perfect for levelling structures or crushing armour with equal effect.
- Two triple-barrelled heavy chain cannons, which are capable of ripping apart all but the toughest opponents.
- Paired Point Defence Launchers capable of blunting any aerial reprisals that the enemy might be foolish enough to attempt.

Scourge: Oppressor - £18.50



As the UCM pushes deeper into Scourge controlled territory they are encountering new and even more menacing enemy constructs, most recently the horrifying Oppressor.

Clearly a command unit of some kind, the Oppressor is a far more resilient, albeit ground-based alternative to the dreaded Desolator. It features an awesome array of weapons which are at their most potent up-close, where aggressive Scourge commanders can build a vanguard force around this formidable monstrosity. It has also been seen operating from the rear of Scourge lines, using its survivability and overcharge fire ability to extend range and keep high value commanders alive through protracted engagements.

Opressors are most often seen with large numbers of Prowlers, Stalkers and Ravagers, but unlike many command units are frequently on the sharp edge of any attack where they can do the most damage. Leading with two Plasma Carbines and an Electroweb caster, it carves a gory path through the enemy, scuttling over all obstructions to rip any survivors apart with apparent glee.

PHR: Nemesis - £25



This PHR command unit has been seen only fleetingly in previous battles. Confirmation of this command vehicle's very existence has

been hard to verify given the lack of solid evidence and very few first-hand accounts as there so few survivors. It is likely that the Nemesis has been mistaken for the Hades in previous encounters, but hard intel from the Atlantia front has shown the clear difference in walker armament.

Its mandible weapons are the equal of two smaller walkers combined, but are only a sideshow to the construct's main gun – The Nemesis Laser. This fearsome tail gun has a seemingly infinite range, and has the ability to punch through the toughest armour with ease while causing maximum devastation. The Nemesis is deployed when implacable advance is needed; a mobile wall of firepower that grinds the foe to dust.

Shaltari: Gharial - £12

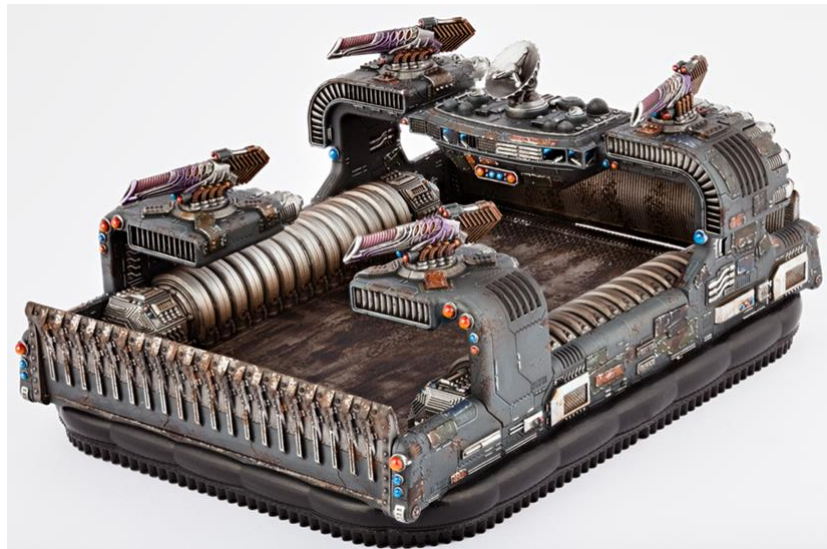


Speed and power have always been the watchwords of the Shaltari tribes. The Gharial embraces both ideals in one command package, taking the fight to the enemy, dealing maximum damage and then relocating to sow more destruction elsewhere.

Based on a Caiman hull, the Gharial is a more aggressive fighter than its longer-ranged cousin, and is designed as the ultimate in close support. Its tactical role makes the Gharial the preferred mount for the most aggressive of Shaltari Warchiefs, individuals that live for nothing but war and disdain risk more than any others of their usually prudent kind.

The Gharial's fearsome Heavy Microwave Cannon is able to slice through tanks with contemptuous ease and is also powerful enough to liquefy all organic matter in enclosed spaces even through several layers of concrete and steel. If that is not enough to stop the enemy, this command skimmer is also equipped with close range Neutron Launchers that fire one-shot heavy density projectiles into the core of structures, often levelling them in one volley.

Resistance: NT-5 Thunderstorm Custom - £40



The NT-4 Leviathan earns its name is sheer scale, but the command variant – the NT – 5 Thunderstorm Custom – is a step further. Its huge fusion generators are massively over-sized given modern technological advances, yet no less potent. They have such a high level of power output that many resistance bands can run an entire forward base's power network from them. But the truly fearsome application is only appreciated when used as a combat unit on the front lines. The dual power plants are unleashed through four over-charged looted Plasma Cannons, capable of reducing anything in range to a bubbling pool of cooling liquid in seconds.

Few commanders can resist the lure of such awesomely destructive power, and often choose the Thunderstorm Custom as their mount when going into battle. Almost all will then employ their most trusted lieutenants as a mobile strike force, disgorged from the vast transport platform that the craft is built around. Together this combination has spelt doom and destruction to many Scourge garrisons, as well as any other enemies foolish enough to get in the Thunderstorm's way.

2. Some Careful Changes

After carefully considering the many pages of debate on the forums as well as talking to players in person, we have decided to take this opportunity to make a few changes to the v1.1 edition of the rulebook as well as Reconquest: Phase 1. Dropzone Commander is a living game and although this is not something we intend to do often we feel and hope that players will prefer a slightly updated version. You can still use your original rulebook with the aid of the free to download documents and the Original Rulebook Errata and Clarifications documents. [These can all be downloaded here >](#)

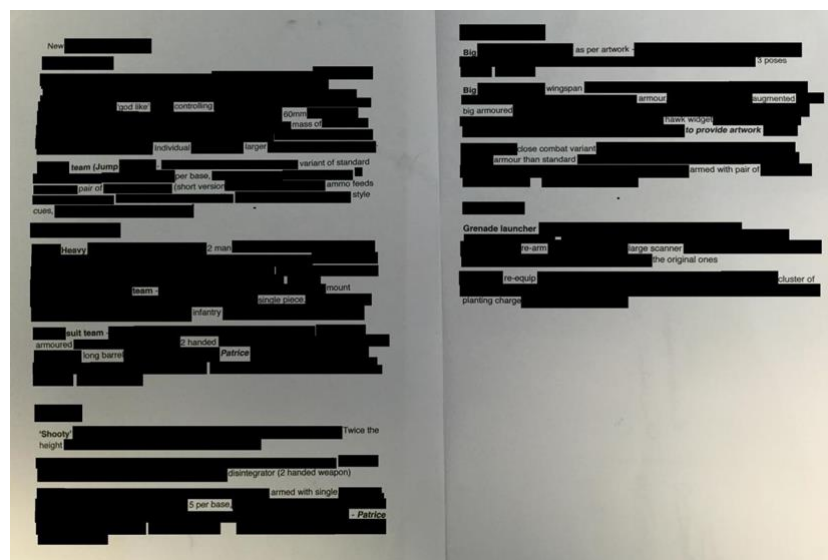
3. How We Design (Part One)

We often get questions at shows and on [our forum](#) about how we come up with units, produce them and implement them in game. So we thought we'd offer some insight into the design, production and testing process for the new units in Dropzone Commander, including those that we're currently working on.

We're very keen on making sure that everything has a place in the world that the Hawk Team has created. There's an overarching pattern and plan to the shape and character of the game universe, and each race's character and flavour has to be maintained. While we have broad categories – small, medium and large dropships, APCs, MBTs etc – we want to make sure that the feeling of each model is distinct to each race; no armour 11, 10 DP, 30 inch moving PHR walkers for example. Everything has to fit.

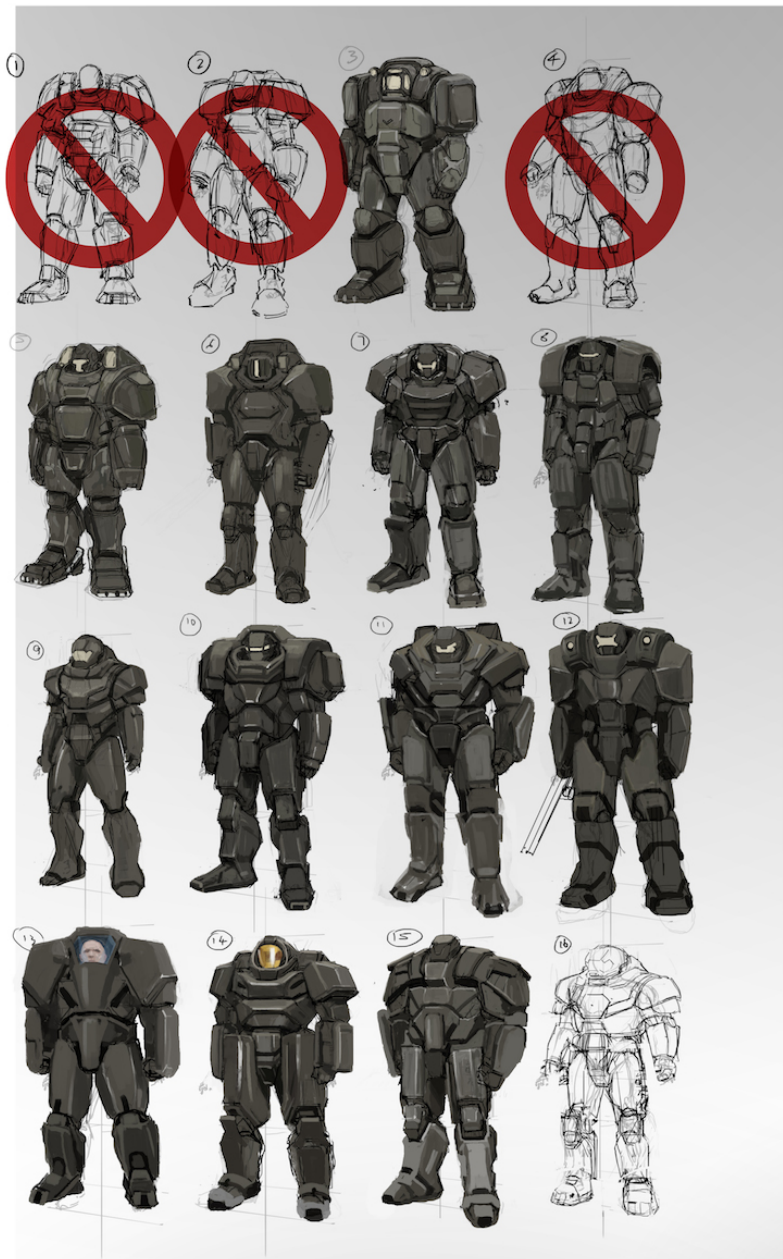
Another concern is obsolescence. Nothing should be an auto-include in armies (except for some of the game's most standard units), and new units shouldn't supersede old ones. We playtest extensively both in-house and with local gaming groups to ensure this doesn't happen (as well as changing and tweaking older units to keep things up to date) but we try to include these thoughts in the planning process, which involves the whole team.

With that in mind we create a design document and mood board for each unit, stating what we want it to achieve and what it should be like. This will include the niche it fits into in an army as well as what we want it to look like and a rough outline of its features.



Example of the design document for some work-in-progress units, including some of the bits we can currently show.

This, coupled with a mood a board of phrases, ideas, images and influences gives our designers the starting point to create the look of new units. Concept sketches are the next step, with several iterations of each idea taken forward. If the new unit is based on an existing vehicle chassis or infantry type, we spend more time on the new details. However many of our designs are brand new concepts so we have to start from the ground up.



Concept sketches for a new UCM Infantry Unit

We feed in new written background, images and views from the team, under Dave's direction. Once the finalised look and design of the unit are in place, the design team make a much more technical design of it. This will also go through a series of changes, which will result in a finished digital sculpt. From here we go to master production – which we'll talk about in part two of how we design.

We hope this provides some insight into what we do at Hawk Wargames, and we look forward to sharing more with you soon.

We hope to see you at Adapticon or Salute in the coming weeks.

- The Hawk Wargames Team.

