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NECROPOLIS

2350

THE LAST WORD



PAUL 'WIGGY' WADE-WILLIAMS

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BY PAUL “WIGGY” WADE-WILLIAMS

EDITING & PROOFREADING: RON BLESSING, DAVE BLEWER

GRAPHIC DESIGN & TYPESETTING: ROBIN ELLIOTT

**INTERIOR ART: AARON ACEVEDO, AARON PANAGOS, DAVI BLIGHT, LEANNE BUCKLEY,
DIEGO GISBERT, MICHAEL JAECKS, RETO KAUL, OJO DE KUERVO, LUIS NUNEZ DE CASTRO,
DANIEL RUDNICKI, CHEYENNE WRIGHT, CELIA YOST, DAREK ZABROCKI**

COVER DESIGN: ROBIN ELLIOTT



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DEDICATION: TO THE FEMALE NECROPOLIS FANS.

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NECROPOLIS 2350

WAR MASTER'S NOTES

Welcome to *The Last Word*, a standalone scenario written for the *Necropolis* campaign setting.

If you intend to play in this adventure, you should **stop reading now**. Advanced knowledge of the scenario will only spoil your enjoyment of the game.

The WM should read the entire adventure before play begins. Knowing the basic flow and details in advance will greatly speed up play and make the game run smoother.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

You also need a copy of the *Savage Worlds* rulebook and the *Necropolis: 2350* Savage Setting. The *Necropolis* Figure Flats are recommended, though any suitable sci-fi or dark future miniatures will suffice.

CHARACTERS

This adventure is designed for a squad of four Knights from any of the core Sacri Ordines. The adventure is designed for Knights with 40–55 XPs (Veteran Rank), though lower-experienced characters should be able to cope if they use their brains. Use the archetypes from the *Necropolis 2350* setting book if you need pre-generated characters. Each archetype has been designed as a starting character. Those used should be advanced as the player wishes to bring them up to 45 XPs.

For larger groups or more experienced characters, the WM needs to adjust the number and stats of opponents appropriately to create an exciting challenge.

EXTRAS

Guarding the shrine is a Lance of Sisters of Bradamante, a militant order of nuns. There is a total number of Sisters equal to that of the player characters. Sister Superior Freemont, their commanding officer, is a Wild Card and the rest are Extras. Stats can be found on page 18.

Text in the adventure assumes four Sisters are present. GMs will have to alter any text for greater or lesser numbers of Sisters. Should there be more than six, their cells contain bunks rather than single cots.

Note that each Sister except Freemont has a special talent, which must be determined randomly by the GM. Roll this and a personality trait (Freemont is automatically Heroic) before the adventure begins and fill out one Ally Record Sheet for each Sister. When indicated in the adventure, the Sisters' Ally sheets should be handed out at random among the player characters. Until that time they are GM-controlled characters.

There is also a number of recruitment Sergeants (p. 19) equal to the player characters. Although quite inept in combat, the GM should fill out an Ally Sheet for each one and hand them to the players—all guns matter in war. Roll a random personality trait for each one.

CHARACTER DEATH

In any adventure involving combat there is a chance of character death. Should a Wild Card die, the character can take any allied Extra and promote him or her to Wild Card status for the remainder of this mission or play Sister Superior Freemont as his sole character once the Sisters' sheets are handed out (until then she remains an NPC).

At the end of the mission, the player creates a new character as normal, gaining Experience Points earned during the adventure for his new character (so his new character doesn't lose out).

ACT 1: MEETING THE HOSTS

Begin the adventure by reading aloud the Tactical Briefing (page 14) or handing out copies to the players to read themselves. Remember to give the players Player Handout #2 and the Update sheet during the briefing, as these contain important information.

SCENE 1: A SHAKY START

Once the Lance is ready, they are driven to the Angel dropship, whereupon they meet the recruiting Sergeants assigned to the mission. Once everyone is aboard the Angel takes off and begins its journey. If the players want to banter while en route to the shrine, let them—it's a good way to introduce the Sergeants' personalities in play and gives the players a chance to voice their opinions on what the mission might entail.

THE LAST WORD

On arrival at the town, read aloud the following text.

The voice of the pilot crackles over your headset communicators. “Looks like any hope of a quiet mission is out of the question.” The screen by your commander’s seat flickers into life, showing the town and landing field as the pilot begins his final maneuvers.

Although the image is grainy, you can make out a vast throng of people crowding the town streets, congregating most thickly around a large Gothic structure—no doubt the shrine. Further out, the perimeter of the landing strip is ringed with onlookers. As the dropship approaches, people begin pointing toward it and cheering. A Prophet APC can be seen moving across the airfield toward one of the landing pads.

The Angel hits the pad with a slight bump, and the pilot lowers the ramp. As you clamber out across the various boxes of merchandizing material, the APC draws to a halt nearby. An attractive woman climbs out of the passenger door, her light armor glinting in the sun and a flechette SMG slung over her soldier. With the aid of a spear used as a walking stick, she limps over to your position.

“I’m Sister Superior Freemont,” she says, with no hint of friendship in her voice. “Your presence has attracted the usual gathering of supporters and detractors, so it was decided you’d travel to the shrine via Prophet. Load your gear in the back.”

As she gestures to the APC, another woman, similarly clad in armor, emerges from the driver’s door and leans against the front of the APC.

Sister Superior Freemont then scans each of the Knights’ and Sergeants’ ID tags into her ID scanner for security purposes. If the Knights’ commanding officer does not do the same with the Sisters’ tags, she requests he does so immediately to avoid friendly fire incidents in the event of trouble.

Shortly after the scans are complete, loud sounds of arguing can be heard from near the APC. One of the Sergeants is shouting at the driver, who seems to be making matters worse by ignoring his complaints. Upon investigating (Sister Superior Freemont investigates if the

Knights don’t) the Knights discover the Sergeant ordered the Sister to help load boxes onto the APC, an order she flatly refused.

Let the Knights sort out the disagreement. The Update sheet makes it clear the Sisters are not members of the Ordines. However, if necessary have the Knights make Common Knowledge rolls. Success means they know the Sisters are under no obligation to follow any orders given by a member of the Ordines while operating under their own mandate and commander. The Sisters may be armed, but they are nuns, not soldiers, and thus answer to ecclesiastical authorities in this situation, not military ones.

At some point during the problem-solving exercise Freemont speaks up. Use the first section of text if the Knights back the Sergeant and request the Sister helps their men. The second box should be read if the Knights rebuke the Sergeant and remind him of his position.

“Look, commander,” she says, “we have to work together for a few days, but let’s draw the lines here and now. The Sisters are not part of the military structure. We’re not here to answer to your requests unless combat occurs. Our sole duty is protect Mother Agnes and the shrine. Driving here to collect you was a courtesy, not a sign of subservience. As for the boxes, get your troops to load them—we’ve got to get back to the shrine, with or without you and your materiel. Are we both clear on where we stand?”

“At least you know where the line is drawn,” Freemont says. “If a fight breaks out, we’ll fall under your command as senior military commander. Until then, our only duties are to protect Mother Agnes and the shrine. Just make sure all your troops understand that and we’ll get along fine for the few days you’re here.”

When the boxes and troops are loaded, the APC heads off through the crowd gathered outside the airfield and into town. The short journey takes an hour, due to the crowds. Finally, the APC enters through the gates of the shrine and into the relative calm of the outer compound.

SCENE 2: ARRIVAL AT THE SHRINE

Saint Malachy’s shrine is a squat, irregular-shaped structure of typical Church Gothic design. Its dark gray, stone walls are far from welcoming

NECROPOLIS 2350

in appearance, and the atmosphere within the precinct is a somber one. After vacating the APC, Freemont points to areas around the courtyard. Indicate the areas Freemont points out to the players using an unlabelled map or areas on the tabletop.

“Over there is where you can set up your stand. The gates open at dawn tomorrow, and believe me, this place will get crowded very quickly. One of my Sisters will be with Mother Agnes at all times, one guarding the shrine, and another on the gate. I’ll be around as necessary to help maintain order where needed.

“That door,” she indicates a door in side of the shrine, “is where you’ll be sleeping. It’s usually the poorhouse, but we’ve had to move them elsewhere during your visit.” Her voice makes it clear she did not approve of this action. “There are two basic sleeping areas and a communal washroom. Keys are inside—don’t lose them or you’ll be fined. Meals are available in the main refectory. I’ll give you a quick tour after you’ve had the chance to unpack.

“The shrine is protected by a basic security system. I can link my mobile command center into any of the security cameras, which are concealed around the site. Restricted doors are protected by id scanners and alarm systems—the others just have regular locks. The shrine itself is protected by infrared beams linked to silent alarms, which patch through to our headset comms gear. Trip the alarms and the shrine area seals off automatically. Unless Mother Agnes declares otherwise, your id tags won’t be cleared for secure areas.

“I have some paperwork to complete. I’ll meet you back here in two hours for a tour and introduction to Mother Agnes.”

With that she limps into the main shrine, while the driver maneuvers the now-empty APC into a nearby garage.

The sleeping quarters and washroom are indeed very basic. Eight hard wooden cots, with woolen blankets and pillows seemingly stuffed with rocks, are crammed into each sleeping area. At the foot of each cot is a small trunk for storing personal items. The washroom has two toilets, four sinks, and a communal shower cubicle, capable of holding four at a time. There is no hot water available (though enterprising Knights may be able to jury rig a simple heating system). As

Freemont said, there is a set of twin keys in each sleeping area—one key opens the outer door and the other the sleeping chambers (both barracks use the same key).

SCENE 3: A BRIEF TOUR

Exactly two hours later, Freemont enters the courtyard from the shrine. She does not go to the barracks to fetch the Knights, expecting them to be present when she arrives. She doesn’t comment on tardiness, but she does give the characters disparaging looks if they are late.

The tour is brief and takes in the main shrine, chapel, library, crypts, and shop, in that order. She indicates the doors to the Sisters’ quarters but does not allow the Knights to enter. Likewise, she mentions there is a secure armory in the shrine, but unless pressed hard by the Knights, she does not reveal its location to them.

The shrine, the centre of attraction at the site, comprises a toughened bulletproof glass case (Toughness +14) surrounding a gem-encrusted, gold casket about 12” to a side and 8” tall. The casket sits on a purple velvet cushion. Freemont explains that in the morning the casket will be opened, and the skull of Saint Malachy will be placed on top for the pilgrims to see.

The aim of the tour is simply to give the Knights a general overview of the areas likely to be visited by the public tomorrow, just in case their assistance is required. Other areas may become used as the scenario develops.

SCENE 4: MOTHER AGNES

Freemont knocks on the door, pauses for a moment, and then enters, beckoning the Knights to follow.

“Mother Agnes,” Freemont says, her head bowed slightly, “these are the Knights who will be recruiting outside the shrine tomorrow. Knights, this is Mother Agnes, keeper of the shrine of Saint Malachy.”

Seated behind a wooden desk is a wizened woman wearing blue robes. She rises slowly and slightly unsteadily to her feet and stares at each of you in turn. Her bright grey eyes seem to pierce your very soul with their intensity, rooting out every minor sin you have ever committed. Each of you feels a flicker of relief

THE LAST WORD

as her eyes move on from you, for though it's obvious she is extremely frail in body, the willpower of the elderly nun is immense.

"Welcome to the shrine of Saint Malachy," she whispers. "I hope your mission tomorrow is profitable." With that she sits down again.

Mother Agnes is content to answer questions, though she has an intense dislike of frivolity and time wasting. Saint Malachy is naturally her favored subject. Given the near-unlimited questions which could be asked, no answers are given here. GMs should use the background notes and common sense when formulating answers.

Agnes is also interested in the activities of the Sacri Ordines and interrogates the Knights about their service. She has a keen eye for body language and is a good judge of character—attempts to impress her with tales of bravery or outright lies are doomed to failure, and she will call the Knight on any obviously erroneous facts. She's interested in the men behind the tales, not barack room bravado and war stories.

When the questioning is over, read the following text to the players.

Freemont gestures to you to say any farewells and leave. Once outside she says, "Mother Agnes tires easily these days. Sometimes I feel it is only her willpower and devotion to Saint Malachy that keeps her going. Until tomorrow morning you are free to do as you wish, though I believe your orders prohibit you from leaving the precinct. The chapel is available to you for prayers. The evening meal will be served in an hour in the refectory. You'll be escorted there, around the back of the shrine."

ACT 2: RECRUITMENT DAY

As dawn breaks over the town, whether the Knights are ready or not, Mother Agnes appears at the main shrine doors and walks slowly to the gates, outside which are thousands of cheering pilgrims. Sister Superior Freemont and two other Sisters walk just behind her, their eyes scanning the crowd, their guns ready for instant use. (The Sister guarding the shrine is already at her station.)

Agnes gives a short speech, welcoming the pilgrims to the shrine and wishes each of them a successful pilgrimage. She then walks back into the shrine with her bodyguard. Only when

UPDATE: SELLING RELICS

The selling or purchase of holy relics, or fraudulently selling items as holy relics, is considered a major sin by the Third Reformation Church and is punishable by 3-12 years hard labor, plus confiscation of any relics in the perpetrator's possession. Selling holy relics to a heretic (or even just giving them away) carries a sentence of death by burning. When Inquisitors are involved, a trial is considered optional and pleas of, "I didn't know he was a heretic" carry no weight.

Citizens who discover a relic, or an item which could be classified a relic, are rewarded by the Church, but only with absolution of past temporal sins (it doesn't grant the citizen a guaranteed place in Heaven). Relics fall under the jurisdiction of the Office of Relics, a sub office of the Office of Antiquities (see the adventure, **The Long Sleep** for details).

Shrines are allowed to sell replicas of relics to raise income, but must clearly state their mundane nature.

she is safely inside are the gates opened and the pilgrims allowed entrance. Sister Superior Freemont hangs around outside until the procession of pilgrims is well underway, then makes her way inside to oversee events in the shrine.

Despite the fervor running through the excited crowd, the procession is generally orderly. There is some pushing and shoving and a few impatient shouts from those further back, but nothing the Sisters on duty can't handle with a few well-chosen words.

Pilgrims enter the shrine along the right-hand side of the path, passing by the Knights' recruiting table, and enter the corridor leading to the shop. From here, they enter the shrine and walk counter clockwise around the reliquary and into the chapel. After praying, they leave the building by going back through the shrine and out the main doors, keeping to the clear side of the path.

SCENE 1: WE HAD SOME MINOR INCIDENTS...

The first part of the adventure deals with a series of random events centered on the Knights as they try to secure new recruits. The order in

NECROPOLIS 2350

which these occur can be chosen by the GM or rolled randomly. GMs should also feel free to create a few encounters of their own. How many the GM uses is really up to the players, the sorts of gaming they like, and how much they are enjoying the game. Groups with a strong desire for combat should only have one or two scenes, whereas those who enjoy roleplaying their characters may be happy to run through a half dozen or more.

GMs can reroll duplicate events or modify them. For instance, the armchair general may, if sent packing by a Knight's superior knowledge of tactics, return with a new theory to bore the characters. Maybe another family wants photos. This time the lone-parent mother tries to bribe the Knights to take her kids, a rude and unruly pair, off her hands and deliver them to the Ordo's orphanage (possibly prompting a stern lecture on family values from a Knight).

After each cameo, each of which is set about an hour apart, have every Knight make a Persuasion roll. Success means they persuade one person to go talk to the recruiting Sergeants. A raise nets them 1d4 potential recruits. Keep a record of the total and halve the final number. This is how many new recruits actually sign up to join an Ordo. About half these join the main Ordo the Knights serve and the other half elect to enlist with rival Ordines. Feel free to reward the Knights with an extra Experience Point if they manage to actually recruit new members equal to two-thirds of the events used (i.e. if you use 6 events, they need to recruit 4 or more new soldiers to earn the bonus).

In addition, for each person who talks to the Sergeants, the Knights receive donations equal to several thousand miters. These aren't from the potential recruits, but from the pilgrims in general.



THE LAST WORD

Once the cameos have been dealt with the adventure proper begins—the cameos partly serve to disguise the first major event as merely another routine incident, rather than having it stand out as special as soon as it is announced.

d10 Event

1 **Old Friend:** One or more Knights meet an old friend. The buddy may be from the same school or neighborhood, or perhaps be a former Knight who left through injury or crisis of faith. What he has been doing since he last saw the character(s) is up to the GM and may be interesting (“Yeah, I stopped jacking cars. I’m a priest now”) or rather mundane (“Hey, being a farmer isn’t all bad”).

2 **Potential Assassin:** Have each Knight make a Notice roll while surveying the passing pilgrims. Whoever rolls highest spots what looks like a pistol sticking out from a youth’s jacket. It is in fact a paintball gun the kid intends on using after he finishes his pilgrimage. Use citizen stats for the youth.

Knights who shoot first and ask questions later must answer to Mother Agnes first and then their superior officer back at the Preceptory. How they handle the incident may lead to wild applause from the pilgrims (nonlethal means) or boos and jeers (another casualty of war).

Sister Superior Freemont comes to investigate any disturbance. She speaks to the Sister at the gate, who had already checked the youth, a local lad of very good character and strong faith, and noticed the gun for what it was. She was under no compulsion to tell the Knights, who aren’t responsible for security. Freemont gives the Knights a lecture on areas of responsibility if they start kicking up a fuss.

3 **My Plan Was Better:** The armchair general the briefing officer warned the Knights about makes an appearance. He’s a real nerd and has never been within 1000 miles of a battle, but he knows his theory. He launches into a blow-by-blow account of how he would have led the Battle of New Budapest and secured victory weeks earlier and with fewer losses. Have each Knight make a Spirit roll. Those who fail suffer a level of Fatigue from boredom for the next two hours.

The only way to get rid of the armchair general is to beat him in an opposed Knowledge (Battle) roll, to show him the error in his great plan. He has a skill of d10 (theoretical only—he’d panic in combat and be of no use). One roll can be made each hour.

4 **Shoot Me, Please:** Meeting an old friend is one thing, but one of the characters has an encounter with someone he never expected to see here—his mother. This can be played seriously, with the mother being genuinely concerned about her son’s welfare, or more for laughs, with the mother henpecking her son over his sloppy dress, slouching stance, strange friends, gaunt looks, slight paunch, or whatever other imaginary issue the GM wishes to invent.

5 **Sign Him Up:** A young lad of 18 years slips out of line to talk to the Knights. After a few minutes have each Knight make a Common Knowledge roll. With success, they realize the kid knows his stuff, and is able to discuss their weaponry, not in some post-adolescent fan boy way, but with a solid, practical grasp of the hardware’s strengths and weaknesses.

Problem is, the kid doesn’t actually want to join the Sancti Ordines—he’s already lost two brothers and an uncle in the war. Convincing him to enlist requires a Persuasion roll at –4 and only one roll is allowed. With success, he signs his life away. Next time they hear of the kid is a year later, when they learn of his death during an ambush.

6 **A Real Assassin:** The Sister at the gate suddenly cries out, “Assassin!” and points toward a young man in the crowd as she readies her SMG. The man, a Necrolatrist hiding among the pilgrims who had hoped to kill Mother Agnes, draws a gun and aims it at the Knights (any Church target is better than none). Deal initiative cards at this point for the Knights and the Sister on duty (pick one at random, except Sister Superior Freemont).

Treat him as a Wild Card assassin but armed only with a 6mm pistol (2 mags) and two monofilament grenades. The courtyard is packed—two solid lines of citizens, one entering and one exiting, line the path between the gate and the shrine. Civilian casualties lead to a strong reprimand back

NECROPOLIS 2350

at the Preceptory and give a -4 penalty to the next Persuasion rolls to recruit new blood.

Security is stepped up a notch after the incident—Freemont joins the guard at the gate and Mother Agnes' guard carries a shield, using it to protect the elderly nun from potential attackers. No amount of arguing can convince Mother Agnes to halt the pilgrimage—cultists wanting her dead are just a fact of life she must live with.

- 7 **Medic!:** One of the Sergeants (picked at random or based on a suitable personality trait, such as Lazy) commits a potentially fatal error in judgment. He accidentally leaves his flechette pistol close to the replicas.

A woman picks up the gun and pulls the trigger (while shouting bang—civilians seem to think all guns go bang), thinking it to be a fake, at her boyfriend, who is seriously injured as a flechette rips through his neck. The Knights, alerted by the screaming, have one chance at a Healing roll to save the man's life. How they deal with the Sergeant is up to them.

- 8 **Smile for the Camera:** A rich family (mother, father, two young kids) come across to the Knights after leaving the shrine and asks if they can take some photos of their kids posing. Unfortunately, the photos seem to go on forever, with shots of the kids carrying guns, posing with Knights, wearing camouflage paint, and such like. Think of them as really excited tourists.

Asking the kids if they want to join up when older gets a rather rude response. With a serious face, the young daughter turns to the Knights and says, "No way! Daddy says only retards and the poor join the military! I'm going to work in a bank and marry a rich man." The father, totally embarrassed by his offspring's outburst, quickly ushers the family on their way. Being rude to the family gives the next recruitment roll a -2 penalty.

- 9 **You're His Father!:** A young woman carrying a baby suddenly leaps out of line and thrusts the kid at the nearest Knight. Through tears (false) she claims the Knight is the baby's father and deserted her after a one-night stand (no pun intended).

The woman is slightly deranged, though harmless, and is known to the local authorities, having pulled this stunt several times before with complete strangers. Convincing her, and the startled pilgrims, the Knight isn't the father, requires a Persuasion roll at -2 (and ideally some roleplaying). With success she snatches the baby back and joins the queue as if nothing had happened. On a failure she tries to run away into the crowded street, leaving the Knights with a young infant whose diaper needs an urgent change if she is successful. Treat her as a civilian.

Local police, if informed of the incident, take the child away and call in Family Services to deal with the mother. There's a good chance the child will end up in a Church orphanage, so the Knights may wish to arrange for him to be sent to an Ordo orphanage instead.

- 10 **Crazy Woman:** A female pilgrim stumbles from the shrine and collapses in a heap in the courtyard. When given basic medical attention she recovers, babbles, "It's not real. He told me! It's not real," rises shakily to her feet, and makes her way out of the precinct. If stopped and questioned, she merely repeats what she said before, only louder. This occurs *ad infinitum*.

The woman received a vision from Saint Malachy, informing her of events which will soon become apparent to the Knights. Unfortunately, the experience has left her temporarily dazed and confused.

SCENE 2: ...AND THEN THE REAL TROUBLE STARTED

This scene ends the pilgrimage, so the GM should ensure all the cameos he wants to use are dealt with first.

Inside the shrine, the skull of Saint Malachy is on display behind its bulletproof screen. From outside, the Knights hear a child shout, followed by a cacophony of screams and shouts. The loud crack of a stun grenade signals something very bad has happened.

On entering the shrine, the Knights discover a riot in progress. Several citizens stagger around stunned by the grenade, but many others are pushing and banging on the glass, while Mother

THE LAST WORD

Agnes and her bodyguard have been pushed back into a corner by the angry mob. The Sister has her shield covering Agnes, but this leaves her exposed to kicks and punches.

Hand out the stats for *one* Sister to the players. The other Sisters join the fray if the characters summon them or if Mother Agnes is taking a beating. Under no circumstances should she be Incapacitated, let alone killed.

The Knights now have a dilemma. The citizens are rioting, endangering a holy relic, and threatening a member of the Church, but they are unarmed civilians. A massacre will not go down well (a trip to the Penitents is the likely outcome of any inquiry—and one will be launched). Unfortunately, flechette weapons are virtually silent, so firing into the air won't get anyone's attention.

Calming the riots can be achieved a number of ways. First, the Knights can take out half the number. This can be achieved by nonlethal means (such as punches or baton grenades), stun grenades, or killing them. Second, they can try to shout or talk them down. Only a single roll is allowed, though it can be a Cooperative roll. Intimidation rolls have a -2 penalty, whereas Persuasion suffers a -4 penalty.

Hardcore Rioters (4): Treat as civilians, but they are unarmed and Berserk (see *Necropolis*).

Rioters (16): Treat as civilians, but they are unarmed (see *Necropolis*).

WHAT HAPPENED?

Once the riot is over, the Sisters quickly assume control. The pilgrims in the building are lead or carried outside, and the shrine doors are closed. The main gates are also closed, leaving the rioters trapped in the courtyard (for questioning). Sister Superior Freemont addresses the crowd outside the gates, by now becoming agitated, and spins a story of “religious fervor” and “closing the shrine for a short while to allow passions to cool.”

The Sister on duty in the shrine at the time tells the Knights that a child pointed at the skull and shouted something. Suddenly the crowd around the reliquary strengthened, and then the riot broke out. All she can recall is hearing phrases like, “It's not real!” and “They've lied!”

Investigating the skull through the glass requires a Notice roll at -2. With success, the Knight discovers a small hole (just a fraction of an

inch across) in the back of the head. A Common Knowledge roll indicates the hole could have been made by a flechette.

Mother Agnes allows the Knights to investigate the skull in more detail, but only if they wear gloves. Sister Superior Freemont deactivates the alarm system and opens the lock using her ID tag. Closer inspection allows the Notice roll at no penalty. Removing a flechette from a magazine to compare sizes isn't possible due to the way the magazines are loaded. However, firing a single shot into something relatively soft (such as the cushion on which the casket sits) produces a near-intact flechette. It's a perfect fit!

Mother Agnes is shocked to her core and collapses to the floor. After waking (a Healing roll can do this in a few minutes with smelling salts), she orders the shrine closed down until further notice and orders Freemont and the Knights to launch a full investigation. She also states that she checked the skull just last week in minute detail and noticed nothing untoward.

Questioning the rioters doesn't reveal a lot of interest. A child spotted the hole and someone (an ex-Sergeant) quickly explained it was a flechette injury, something an ancient relic could not have. Religious fervor then spilled over into anger and the riot ensued.

Freemont orders the rioters arrested and locked in the Knights' barracks (after they have cleared out their gear). The local authorities are not yet informed of the situation, both Agnes and Freemont wishing to keep the news of the skull being a fake secret until the truth of the matter has been deduced.

SCENE 3: THE INVESTIGATION

Hopefully, a Knight recalls Sister Superior Freemont's earlier comments about the security system and advises they check the recent security logs. Should they not, Fremont makes the suggestion.

If asked, Freemont says she knows of only one visitor in the last week, Father Superior Turman Fitzgerald, the head of a small monastic order whose monastery is located on the end of town. Freemont reveals Father Superior Fitzgerald visits every year just before the pilgrimage to worship in private and pay his respects to the saint. He and Mother Agnes have known each other for many years.

NECROPOLIS 2350

Five cameras cover the shrine. Scrolling back through the various recordings reveals just one visitor who entered the shrine area—the Father Superior. He is escorted in by Sister Marie-Nicole. The recordings show the elderly man and Sister walk across to the shrine.

The monk then whispers something to Sister Marie-Nicole, who promptly uses her ID tag to deactivate the alarms and open the case. Father Superior Fitzgerald then opens the casket and removes the skull, which he places in his robes, and replaces it with another. The Sister then secures the case and reactivates the alarm. A further ten minutes shows the monk seemingly at prayer before leaving, escorted again by the Sister.

A character making a Notice roll realizes the monk's face is only clearly visible from one of the cameras—from the others he is concealed by the Sister, the shrine, or his hood. Freemont (who discovers this if the Knights don't) states that the camera they are viewing was installed only two weeks ago and in secret—only Freemont and Mother Agnes knew of its existence. If questioned about this, Freemont says it is standard practice before a major event to add extra cameras to increase security.

Should a character think to zoom in on the monk's face, have the Knights present make Notice rolls. With success, they spot the monk is smiling while praying. It isn't a warm smile, but rather one of victory. On a raise, a Knight detects a momentary flash of yellow across the Father Superior's eyes. Freezing that frame reveals not the eyes of a man, but something reptilian.

INTERROGATING THE SISTER

Freemont protests if the Knights demand to question Sister Marie-Nicole, claiming the security of the shrine is a matter for the Sisters. However, Mother Agnes rebukes her sternly, proclaiming the Sisters have failed in their sacred duty. With heavy heart, she turns the investigation over to the Knights, promising them whatever aid she and the Sisters can provide.

Freemont, through gritted teeth, asks if she can be present for the interrogation. The final decision rests with the senior Knight.

Rather than provide a pre-written speech from the Sister, her interrogation takes the form of likely questions and the nun's answers. During

the interrogation the characters can make Notice rolls. Success reveals the Sister is telling the truth.

Q: What did Father Superior Fitzgerald say to you?

A: *"Nothing of note. He greeted me at the gate and asked if I was well. Then we entered the shrine, but nothing more was said until he bade me farewell."* [Showing her the tape causes the nun to frown and say, "I don't remember that at all. I swear, he never said a word in the shrine."

Q: Why did you allow him to take the skull?

A: *"I didn't! No one is allowed to touch the Blessed Saint except Mother Agnes. Those are the rules of the shrine."* [Again, showing her the recording elicits a firm denial and total lack of memory.]

Q: Did Father Superior Fitzgerald seem different?

A: *"No, not at all. He was his usual polite self. He is a charming man, very devout and very proper in his ways."*

The Sister can't remember anything of the events because she was subjected to a version of the *puppet* litany. Under the command of the monk, she performed the deeds exactly as on the tape, and was then ordered to remember nothing untoward. As far as she is concerned, the monk came in, prayed silently, and left, the same as he does every year.

Breaking the mental block is possible, but it isn't easy. First, a character can try to perform a quick exorcism of whatever is blocking her memories (a *dispel* litany in game terms). The *puppet* spell has an arcane skill of d12 for this purpose and only a single roll is allowed. With success, the spell is broken and Sister Marie-Nicole's memories come flooding back, causing her to break down into loud sobs. After the nun calms down, she tells the Knights what happened—Fitzgerald asked her to deactivate the alarms and open the case, and then forget everything that happened.

Should *dispel* not be available, there is a ritual exorcism available, though it is difficult and not without danger. Instead of invoking a litany, the exorcist uses his own faith and willpower to break down the mental block by asking questions over and over, quoting scripture, staring into her eyes and locking wills with whatever is causing the memory loss, and looking for any chinks in the block. This involves a Faith roll at -2 opposed by a d12 roll.

THE LAST WORD

ACT 3: MONASTERY OF THE DAMNED

With success, a thin black vapor escapes the Sister's lips and she begins sobbing. She then reveals the truth as above. On a failure, the poor chaplain catches a glimpse in Marie-Nicole's eyes of the Dark, causing him to make a Guts roll or suffer Terror. A critical failure gives a -2 penalty to the Guts roll. Whatever the outcome, the lengthy ritual is extremely draining, both mentally and physically. The character must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue for 24 hours.

It doesn't matter if the Knights learn the truth or not—they have enough evidence of his involvement in the theft to question the Father Superior. Should they make their intentions public, Mother Agnes pens a letter granting the Knights full authority in the investigation and stamps it with the shrine's seal as proof to the Father Superior of their status.

REINFORCEMENTS

The Knights may wish to procure reinforcements for their trip to the small monastery.

Sister Superior Freemont and the Sisters of Bradamante are extremely reluctant to leave the shrine. The crowd outside is still ugly, and whatever stole the skull may seek to return and finish off Mother Agnes. However, Freemont allows them full access to the Prophet and the armory.

Aside from a lot of flechette ammunition (assume 50 mags for every type of flechette weapon), the Sisters have six flechette pistols, a 25mm SBAC (with 2 magazines), 20 baton grenades, 20 stun grenades, 10 monofilament grenades, 10 HEAP grenades, a Maximus RGL (after 2352), and a dozen heartbreakers, donated to them by the Impalers.

The Sergeants whine loudly about being non-combatants, but orders are orders and they're not stupid enough to go against the Knights' demand. They continue to whine through the journey.

Outside reinforcements from the nearest nearby Preceptory are, in theory, a possibility, but the WM should try to avoid allowing this through plausible excuses. Perhaps there are simply no dropships available (due to an exercise, routine maintenance, or mass delivery run), bad weather has grounded all flights until further notice, or the local commander doesn't think tracking down a missing relic requires his troops.

Father Superior Fitzgerald isn't really the villain of the tale. It was his flesh which committed the crime, but not his soul. Always interested in the nature of the Rephaim, Fitzgerald acquired through dubious means several archaic volumes on the nature of demons. Alas, one of the books contained more than just speculation, and while reading a passage something from the Dark Dimension consumed him.

Armed with the monk's full memories, the fiend learned of the skull of Saint Malachy and its history. Seeing a potentially powerful tool for the Dark's cause, it promptly stole the relic. Although it could easily have slaughtered the Sisters and Mother Agnes, it had no wish to instantly alert the authorities to the disappearance of the skull. Had it not been for a child, it would likely have been a year before the theft was noticed.

You can use the shrine map for the monastery. Instead of the shrine area, the monastery has a small church (with a separate chapel, still). This is where all the action takes place.

SCENE 1: THE TRUTH WILL OUT

The main church doors open to reveal the stench of a charnel house. Blood, blackened with age, clings to the walls and stains the tiled floor. Hanging in one corner are the corpses of a dozen monks, their skin missing, gaping wounds across their necks indicating the cause of death and the source of the gore. Each has been hanged by his own intestines.

Time for Guts rolls. The Knights have seen worse sights on the battlefield, so those who fail suffer Fear while they remain in the monastery.

Seated on the altar (a blasphemous act, as the Knights know) is an elderly man wrapped in voluminous black robes. His left hand rests on a skull—the skull of Saint Malachy.

"You're earlier than I expected," the monk sneers. "I had hoped for more time to complete my quest, but, as you mortals say, the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. I take it you have come for this?" It strokes its fingers across the skull.

"So strange an object, the bones of a mortal being, yet ones possessed of strange power." It lifts its hand and brings it crashing down

NECROPOLIS 2350

toward the skull. A faction of an inch from the skull, the hand pauses, as if held back by some invisible force. "Material remains, yet ones impervious to physical destruction by anything I can summon, and I can summon a lot of power! Still, I can't allow you to reclaim it. You see, it spoke to me and I don't want you learning its secrets. Perhaps your weapons would have some effect."

With lightning reflexes, the hand clasps the skull and holds it in front of its body, darting it left and right, up and down. "Go on," it taunts, "fire your guns. Let's see if I can intercept your flechettes."

Knights looking to engage the monk immediately are met with a stern rebuke. The seated figure merely wags its finger and says, "How typical. You are faced with something you don't understand, so your first thought is to kill it. Surely the opportunity to ask questions and learn something about your enemy should be seen as a golden opportunity."

The fiend is stalling for time, though it will answer questions (such is its sheer arrogance). While it talks, it secretly animates the skinned monks. They join the battle one round after the combat begins (no matter how long that takes), assuming the Knights haven't topped and tailed them, of course. Questions the creature will answer are given below (along with its reply). On other matters it merely scoffs and refuses to answer.

Q: What is your name?

A: "Names are power. I think you may find this answer appropriate, though. My name is Legion, for we are many. If you want to live, you may call me Master!"

Q: What are you? Are you Rephaim?

A: "In your terminology, a demon would be the closest approximation. These creatures you call the Rephaim are nothing, mere pawns in the endless struggle. Since you claim you are the light, the Rephaim would be mere shadows. We are the darkness."

Q: How long have you been here?

A: "I have been here for a matter of weeks, but my kind has haunted the universe since time began. Your ancestors knew of us. Some worshipped us as gods, and rightfully so. Others called us demons and sought to barter with us."

We are immortal and infinite. We witnessed the beginning of the universe, and we shall be its end.

Q: What do you want?

A: "Ah, now that is a simple question. Surely even a talking ape like you could guess at the answer. We want nothing more than the total extermination of all life, all existence."

Sooner or later someone is going to get trigger-happy. Maybe the Knights don't want to banter with a self-proclaimed demon, or perhaps the fiend grows tired and seeks to end the charade. The fleshy body of the monk has Toughness 5. When it takes its first wound (which actually causes the demon *no* injury), a dramatic transformation occurs. The skull is immune to *any* damage the Knights can cause, though they won't know this, of course.

The flechettes rip into the monk's flesh, spraying blood as they exit his shattered corpse. Rather than falling, the figure simply looks down and smiles. "Now let us play," it laughs.

The skin suddenly bulges and splits, a gigantic figure merging, writhing, twisting from the fleshy shell as if escaping imprisonment. It grows larger, rising to its cloven feet to reveal a towering, glistening black-scaled humanoid figure, with yellow eyes and huge, curved horns. Bony spines suddenly erupt from its arms and legs, while two bone blades slide from its forearms with a sickening, grinding noise. Green balefire crackles across its body as it rushes to attack!

Time for another Guts roll, only this time it's at -2 and those who fail suffer the effects of Terror. The demon, unable to return home to the Dark Dimension, and being arrogant enough to believe it is indestructible, fights to the death. Once the demon is destroyed, all its spells end. This also deactivates the zombie monks, who fall to the ground, lifeless.

After it takes its final wound, the demon manages to utter a few final words before dissolving into a cloud of black, sulfur-smelling dust. "My work is undone, but the shrine is no more!" it howls. "Commence the attack! Let their blood stain the shrine, forever!"

Back at the shrine, a squad of Ordo Tenebrae, summoned days ago by the demon and currently operating from a safehouse close to the shrine, begin an attack.

THE LAST WORD

Demon: See page 19.

Rephaim Monks (12): See page 19.

ACT 4: SHOWDOWN AT THE SHRINE

When the Knights get within five miles of the shrine, their headset communicators burst into life.

“This is Sister Superior Freemont to all available Knights. The shrine of Saint Malachy is under attack. I repeat. We are under attack. Suspect Ordo Tenebrae Lance. Urgent assistance required. They are in the building! They are in the building!”

The radio then goes silent, though the Knights can hear Freemont cursing as she lays down withering fire. The Knights can reach the shrine in just a few minutes at top speed. Outside the main gates, which hang off their hinges (having been blown apart with monofilament grenades), are many dozen dead, dying, and injured civilians. The sounds of combat, grenade explosions and shouts, can be heard from within the shrine.

SCENE 1: FIREFIGHT!

Hand out the Sisters’ Ally Sheet to the players (the GM controls Mother Agnes). The positions of the Sisters and Black Knights are as below. No one has yet taken any injuries. Deal initiative cards and let the combat begin.

Mother Agnes is in her bedroom, with Sister Superior Freemont in the office, using the door as Medium cover as she fires at two Ordo Tenebrae at the end of the corridor near the stores (Medium Cover from the door). Mother Agnes will use her miracles to defend the Sisters and shrine, but won’t risk her life in a fruitless endeavor.

Sister Bernadette is crouching behind a sarcophagus (Heavy Cover) in the crypt, keeping a single Black Knight in the doorway to the chapel at bay (he has Medium Cover).

Sister Ophelia is pinned down in the furthest cell from the refectory (Medium Cover), firing from the doorway at two Dark Knights at the other end of the corridor

Sister Marie-Nicole is in the library, prone (Heavy Cover) behind a fallen bookcase while firing at one Black Knight in the chapel doorway

and the Ordo Tenebrae officer who is by the door that leads from the refectory (both have Medium Cover).

The Ordo Tenebrae soldiers are not rookies. Once they realize they are being attacked on tow fronts, they pull back to reform and fight from a defensible position. They make use of available Cover and Aim if the opportunity arises. They’ll certainly use their grenades to maximum effectiveness, not caring if they injure their own men or not, so long as a larger number of foes are in the blast radius.

Once the battle is over, the Knights and Sisters can perform first aid on the wounded. All the Ordo Tenebrae Knights have a skull painted with the number 666 in blood red below on the left shoulder plate of their armor. They are members of the “Legion of Hell,” an elite Ordo Tenebrae Banner trained to operate behind enemy lines and strike at a moment’s notice. Now introduced, the Knights should encounter these fanatics again during your campaign.

Ordo Tenebrae Dark Knight (5): Page 19.

Ordo Tenebrae Officer (1): Page 19.

SCENE 2: SAINT MALACHY’S FINAL PROPHECY

Once the head is returned to its rightful place in the shrine, a distant yet strong voice can be heard echoing throughout the room.

“The rekindled candle shall be engulfed in darkness when the fallen angel to Salus comes and the black eye flickers. Men of purity shall fall and stand brother against brother in times to come. The one upon the throne shall reign eternal over a divided realm. The End of Days has come.”

With a loud crack, the skull shatters into a hundred pieces. Saint Malachy, it seems, will speak no more.

Mother Superior Agnes falls to her knees, her hands locked in prayer, tears in her eyes. “At last I have heard his voice! I shall inform His Holiness of this prophecy at once. May God have mercy on us all.”

The prophecy is *not* just random gibberish to confuse the players or force them to spend time trying to work it out—it points to a terrible future event. That event will be detailed in a future product.

PLAYER HANDOUT #1: TACTICAL BRIEFING

Date: 26.VII, 0600 Zulu.

Good morning! My name is Donald Malidore. I am the Preceptor Marketing and Merchandizing Officer, or MMO for short.

Tomorrow is the feast day of Saint Malachy, and thousands of pilgrims are set to descend on his shrine in Argentoratus in northwest Nova Europa. He's a minor saint, so chances are you have never heard of him. A datasheet has been drawn up listing the pertinent facts. [Give the players Player Handout #2.] Read it thoroughly.

The Preceptor Master has seen fit to organize a recruitment drive to take advantage of the gathering, and your Lance has been volunteered for the hearts and minds mission on behalf of our Ordo.

Mother Superior Agnes, who runs the shrine, has granted us permission to set up a stand outside the main shrine and hand out flyers and promotional material. All you Knights need do is look charming and talk to the locals. Once the potential recruits are engaged in conversation with you, steer them to the marketing and recruiting Sergeants who will be accompanying you. By all means regale them with war stories, but avoid mentioning losses in combat and anything too horrific.

Mother Superior Agnes is a personal friend of His Holiness, so please treat her with great respect, and obey her commands. Although she is advanced in years, she has a reputation as being fearsome when roused. More than one battle-hardened Knight has been reduced to a quivering wreck by her. She has permission from the Preceptor Master to hand out punishments if you break any rules while in her domain, and believe me, she will carry them out.

Security at the shrine is being handled by the resident Sisters of Bradamante, a militant order of nuns unaffiliated to the Sacri Ordines who specialize in this sort of thing. A data update has been prepared. [Give the players the Update: Sister of Bradamante sheet.] Liaise with their commander, Sister Superior Freemont, when you arrive. Should any trouble occur, she is the commanding tactical officer in matters of protecting the shrine, its contents, or Mother Superior Agnes, and you are strongly advised to listen to her—she knows the local terrain, you don't.

You will be flown up to Argentoratus, straight after the briefing by Angel, so you have time to rest before tomorrow and set up the stand. The town is likely to be heaving with pilgrims already. Quarters have been arranged for you near the shrine, and you are under orders to stay within the shrine precincts at all times.

Enemy Forces: Thousands of pilgrims, the occasional fanatic or madman, groupies clamoring to touch you brave war heroes, and some know-it-all armchair generals who will tell you how to win the war are likely to be the worst of your problems. There is always a chance militant heretics will use the gathering to commit some atrocity, so stay sharp out there. Just do not go shooting any innocents—think before you fire!

Support: A handful of marketing and recruitment Sergeants will be accompanying you. These men have not been near a battlefield in years, so please treat them gently. You Knights will draw the crowds, so the Sergeants are basically going to be working in the background.

The Angel will drop you off just outside the shrine's precinct and then fly to the nearest Preceptory, a Templar Maritime Preceptory, to refuel. Your commanding officer will have the necessary radio frequencies and call sign. It will return at 0900 hours on the 28th to bring you back here.

Equipment: Just your standard gear is being issued. We have loaded boxes of recruitment flyers and posters, promotional mugs, pens, and buttons to give away, and other marketing material on the dropship. Do not throw it out en route! Mock flechette weapons are also being supplied. Civilians love this stuff; so let them play soldier all they want. Just don't give them any live weapons.

PLAYER HANDOUT #2: SAINT MALACHY

Born of noble blood in Ireland, Malachy (1094-1148) rose quickly through the Church ranks, becoming Archbishop of Armagh in 1132. Zealous by nature, he helped reform the ailing Irish Church, bringing it back in line with Rome's doctrine. He was also a strong supporter of monasticism, founding the Abbey of Mellifont in 1142.

During a trip to Rome in 1139, he allegedly fell ill and spoke the Prophecy of Popes, though this was never mentioned during his life. Saint Malachy died in 1148 at Clairvaux, in the arms of Bernard of Clairvaux (later Saint Bernard). He was canonized in 1199 by Pope Clement III.

PROPHECY OF THE POPES

On a trip to Rome, St. Malachy reportedly succumbed to illness. During his fevered state, he began spouting brief Latin verses, which an aide duly recorded. Each verse was purportedly a prophecy relating to a future pope. In some cases it gave clues to the identity of the pope, in others the works he would achieve.

Malachy's list ended with Peter of Rome (Petrus Romanus), about whom he said, "During the final persecution of the Holy Roman Church, the seat will be occupied by Peter of Rome, who will feed his sheep in many tribulations; and when these things are finished, the seven-hilled city will be destroyed, and the formidable Judge will judge his people. The End."

The prophecies were not published until 1595, which made the veracity of the authorship dubious. Regardless of who actually wrote them, their interpretations stood the test of time, ringing true one after another. Detractors point out that any prophecy can be twisted to fit known facts.

Following the death of the last-but-one pope, the Catholic Church sought to delay the prophecy in a move which stunned the world. Rather than electing an elder statesman, as was previously the case, they elected a youth, albeit one extremely knowledgeable of religious lore and doctrine, who took the papal name Leo XIV. What the Curia who elected the youth did not know was that he was an orphan whose original name was Peter. Even Peter had no knowledge of his true name. Fate, it seemed, could not be avoided.

Saint Malachy's prophecy began to ring true in 2100. News of the discovery of Chalcis swept the globe and religious upheaval began. Though Rome was not destroyed, her powerbase collapsed rapidly. Already pumped full of anti-aging drugs to extend his life, the pope saw his people through the worst of the strife.

However, drugs could not work miracles, and he died a natural death on November 2, 2148, exactly a thousand years after St. Malachy. In 2149, the First Reformation Church united mankind's religious beliefs, albeit temporarily, ending the Catholic Church's spiritual power. The city of Rome survived until 2198, when it was destroyed during World War III.

SHRINE OF SAINT MALACHY

Saint Malachy's head was exhumed from its shrine in Clairvaux in 2318 and brought to Salus as a holy relic. Since 2320, it has been enshrined in the Shrine of Saint Malachy, in the town of Argentoratus in northwest Nova Europa. Mother Superior Agnes has been keeper of the shrine since its foundation. She is served by a Lance of Sisters of Bradamante.

Pilgrims visit the shrine in the hope Saint Malachy will grant them a prophecy regarding their future. Though many pilgrims speak of hearing a disembodied voice recite Latin verses, which have then come true, lengthy investigations by the Church, including a careful study by both the Inquisition and those blessed with miraculous powers, have revealed nothing untoward.

St. Malachy's feast day in the new calendar falls on 27.VII.

NECROPOLIS 2350

UPDATE: SISTERS OF BRADAMANTE

Of all the orders of nuns on Salus, the Sisters of Bradamante (or Bradamantites) stand out as unusual.

HISTORY

The Sisters of Bradamante were created in 2342 by Papal Edict. Several cardinals, all opposed to the power given the Sacri Ordines, had long voiced concerns about male Knights guarding convents, claiming it would lead to “disciplinary problems.” None of the Ordines were willing to split their forces along lines of sex, and most resented having to divert manpower away from the frontlines for this duty.

Never one to let his opponents have the final word, Pope John dutifully declared the Sacri Ordines were no longer responsible for the protection of convents. Before his opponents could congratulate themselves, he added that he was creating a new order of nuns, the militant Sisters of Bradamante, to fill that role instead. The Grand Masters put up token resistance, claiming any warriors of the Church should be part of the Ordines, but secretly breathed a sigh of relief. In creating the Sisters, though, the Pope may have played into the hands of cardinals who want to see females formed into their own Sancti Ordo.

Bradamante, though a creation of literature, was described as the ideal warrior maiden—highly skilled, brave, and loyal. The Sisters serve the Church as protectors of its female-oriented sacred places. Efforts are focused on guarding shrines of female saints and convents. Many female senior Church figures use them as bodyguards even today, a direct snub against the Praetorians.

Bradamante supposedly had a magical lance. Unsurprisingly, many Impalers consider the Sisters almost part of their organization, and relations between the two factions are generally good.

TRAINING

Members are accepted from the laity or transfers from the five original Ordines. Current membership stands at just 5,000. Their forces are divided across Salus.

When a Sister joins the order, she undergoes a year of religious and military training, similar to that of Knights. Currently, the Sisters receive military training from Praetorian instructors. Those who fail to meet the grade are sent home. Those who stay become Novitiates and are closely watched for a further two years. During this time they are expected to perform the role of full Sisters, but are not required to take holy vows. Candidates who pass must decide to take their holy vows (identical to those of a Knight) or leave. Assuming she stays, the candidate receives the title of Sister.

Transferees undergo six months of religious training only before becoming Novitiates. They also lose a rank, beginning again at the bottom the ladder.

COMMAND STRUCTURE

Although militant, the Sisters are nuns first and foremost, and thus have no Grand Master. Although always technically commanded by their Abbess, she was primarily a figurehead until recently.

Before 2351, Sisters answered to the cardinal in charge of the Office of Antiquities when it came to military matters, something which annoyed the Grand Masters, who saw this as placing military resources under civilian authority and a dangerous precedent. As of 2351, they officially answer to Grand Master Adolphus Kesting of the Praetorians, a move seen as even worse than giving control to the archbishops. Kesting, however, wisely leaves the day-to-day running of the Sisterhood to their highest-ranking officer, Abbess Alicia Winters, a former Preacher, who has served in this role since their inception.

There are four actual ranks—Abbess (the head of the order), Mother Superior, Sister Superior, and Sister. The Abbess is commander of the Sisters, though technically subservient to Grand Master Kesting. Each one of Salus’ archbishoprics (even the Union has Church shrines which need guarding) is commanded by a Mother Superior. Sister Superiors command a single Lance, having the same status and command responsibilities as a Senior Knight. Sisters are the rank-and-file members, equivalent to Knights. As a purely monastic order, albeit a militant one, there is no equivalent of Sergeants.

THE LAST WORD

MILITARY STRUCTURE

The Sisters based their organization loosely on the Sacri Ordines. The smallest unit is the Lance, comprising 4-6 Sisters. As defenders of the Church, not aggressors, Sisters use only the roles of Chaplains, Combat Medics, Infantry, Infantry Support, and Vehicle Crew. A typical shrine is guarded by a single Lance. Convents and abbeys house up to six Lances, depending on their size and location.

All the Lances in an archbishopric form a Convent. The Sisters have never marshaled their forces into a cohesive force, and a Convent is considered an administrative formation, not a military one.

Military hardware is similar to that used by the Sacri Ordines, though they may not carry swords (they carry molecular daggers instead) and only wear light armor. The Sisters have access to Prophets and Nazareth tanks, but must rely on the Ordines for other military hardware.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As a non-military force, the Sisters are forbidden from operating Commanderies or Preceptories. Likewise, they have no permanent convents or abbeys of their own, and thus may not collect tithes. Instead, they rely on a small budget from the Office of Antiquities, pilgrim donations, and funds from the Ordines. Convents and abbeys are quick to provide as much support as they can, especially in rural communities, where the Sisters, despite their low numbers, are often the only form of military power.

PLAYING A SISTER

Sisters are sometimes sent to serve with the Sancti Ordines when protection or liberation of Church property or female personnel is required

and to gain combat experience. They can never command a mixed Ordo Lance, regardless of their rank, and must defer to the highest ranked Knight. Sisters use only the military roles listed above, but every Sister must have Spirit d6+ and Guts d6+, in addition to any other requirements.

A newly created character may either take the Praetorian's special training *or* elect to be a transferee and take an Ordo's training. Transferees must give up their sword. Characters who transfer, whether in play or as part of their background, may learn the Praetorian's abilities through the Sister of Bradamante Edge. They retain their Ordo's special training, but may not take the Ordo Edge of their former Ordo while serving with the Sisters, being removed from the special training and constant practice necessary to earn that bonus.

NEW EDGE

SISTER OF BRADAMANTE

Requirements: Novice, female

The character is a member of the Sisters of Bradamante and has received special training.

The character may take either the Bodyguard or Defensive Mentality special training of the Praetorians when she picks this Edge. Note this as Sister of Bradamante (Bodyguard) or (Defensive Mentality). This Edge may be taken more than once, thus allowing the hero to acquire both bonuses. These benefits are retained even if the Sister leaves the sisterhood. A serving Sister with both Praetorian special training benefits may take the Serve and Protect Edge as an advancement, ignoring the Praetorian requirement.

NECROPOLIS 2350

THE CAST



MOTHER SUPERIOR AGNES

Mother Superior Agnes has governed the Shrine of St. Malachy since it was founded in 2320. Wizened with age, yet possessed of indomitable spirit, she accepts no breach of the rules regarding the shrine. She is a staunch supporter of the Pope, and was an early convert to the Third Reformation Church. In her time she has caused several cardinals to back down from proposed changes to the shrine's running, much to the Pope's amusement. Dressing down heavily-armed Knights who breach the rules holds no fear for her.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d10, Spirit d12+2, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Faith d12, Guts d8, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Church) d10, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Taunt d8

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 3; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 7

Hindrances: Elderly, Lame (advanced old age), Loyal, Pacifist (Major), Stubborn, Vow (Major: holy vows)

Edges: Arcane Background (Miracles), Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor, Improved Tough as Nails, Master (Spirit), New Powers, Power Points, Strong-Willed

Powers: *Blessing, detect/conceal arcana, dispel, healing, stun* (25 PP)

Gear: Habit, rosary, walking stick

SISTERS OF BRADAMANTE



SISTER SUPERIOR CLARE FREEMONT

Sister Superior Freemont transferred from the Impalers, where she served with honors as a Senior Knight, three years ago, after a leg injury ruled her out of future frontline duty. The Sisters accepted her without question. Since then she has worked hard and received her promotion last year. She is very fond of Mother Superior Agnes, though she'd never tell the old girl that to her face. Her spear doubles as a walking stick.

Notes: Remove her Tactician Edge if a player character has the Edge.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d8+2, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d8, Notice d6, Shooting d6,

Stealth d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 7/8; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Heroic, Lame (old leg injury), Loyal, Mean, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Attractive, Block, Charismatic, Combat Reflexes, Command, Dodge, Face-to-Face, Hold the Line, Rank (Senior Knight equivalent), Rock and Roll, Sister of Bradamante (Bodyguard & Defensive Mentality), Tactician, Total Faith

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette SMG with 3 mags (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 hands), 2 stun grenades on belt (Range: 5/10/20, MBT, Vigor roll or Shaken), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), binoculars, mobile command center, ID scanner, ID tag.

SISTER OF BRADAMANTE

Assuming there are four player characters, the three other Sisters are named Sister Bernadette, Sister Ophelia, and Sister Maria-Nicole. With more than four Knights, the GM must create more names.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6

Charisma: +0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9(4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Major: sacred vows)

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Sister of Bradamante (Bodyguard: currently Mother Superior Agnes)

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette rifle with 3 mags (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, AP 2, Auto, 3RB), 5 baton grenades in GL (Range: 10/20/40, Damage: 2d10 nonlethal), 2 stun grenades on belt (Range: 5/10/20, MBT, Vigor roll or Shaken), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), medpac, ID tag.

Specialties:

Each Sister has a particular specialty or talent, represented by an additional Edge. Roll a d8 for each Sister and consult the chart below. Do not reroll duplicates.

d8 **Edge**

1 Alertness

2 Brawny (Toughness 10(4))

3 Fleet Footed (Pace 8)

4 Grenade Launcher King

5 Hose 'Em Down (armed with flechette MG, 3 mags, 2 stun grenades, and molecular dagger)

THE LAST WORD

- 6 Marksman
- 7 Medic (armed with flechette SMG, 3 mags, 2 stun grenades, and molecular dagger)
- 8 Rock and Roll

RECRUITING SERGEANT

The Sacri Ordines need constant recruits, and it's the job of marketing and recruitment sergeants to tempt the masses into enlisting. Few have any practical combat experience, though they are equipped with sidearms as standard. Smartly dressed and with silver tongues, Knights refer to these necessary links in the chain as "Slimes."

Notes: The Yellow Hindrance represents the Sergeants general lack of combat experience and tendency to panic when faced with armed opposition.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Guts d4, Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Vow (Major: sacred vows), Yellow

Edges: Charismatic

Gear: Flechette pistol with 1 mag (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 30, AP 2, Semi-Auto), molecular dagger (Str+d4+2, AP 2), marketing materials



THE DEMON

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d12, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Necromancy d10, Notice d10, Stealth d6, Taunt d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14(2)

Hindrances: Arrogant, Bloodthirsty, Mean, Overconfident

Edges: Ambidextrous, Command, Improved Frenzy, Improved Sweep, Level Headed, Two Fisted

Special Abilities:

- * **Armor +2:** Glistening black scales.
- * **Damage Resistance:** The demon halves all piercing weapon damage and slashing damage from melee weapons. Heavy Weapons, lasers, explosive weapons, and flamethrowers inflict normal damage.
- * **Demon:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Called shots do no extra damage. Immune to poison and disease. No wound penalties.
- * **Gore:** If the demon moves at least 6" before attacking and uses its horn at the end of

its movement it causes an additional +4 damage.

- * **Improved Arcane Resistance:** +4 Armor against damage-causing powers and +4 on trait rolls to resist opposed powers.
- * **Necromantic Weapons:** Bone blades and horns (Str+d8). For each wound inflicted on a living foe with these weapons, the demon heals one of its own wounds.
- * **Size +3:** The demon stands around 15' tall.
- * **Spells:** *Barrier*, *burst*, *deflection*, *dispel*, *puppet* (special: permanent duration unless *dispelled* or the demon is slain), *zombie* (special: once per day can animate all corpses within 24"); 30 Power Points.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Halves penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets.
- * **Weakness (Skull of St. Malachy):** Hitting the demon with the skull causes Str+d10 damage (Range: 3/6/12 for throwing). The damage ignores the demon's natural armor (reducing it to Toughness 11), passes through any *barrier* it has erected, and cannot be Soaked. Unfortunately, the demon dedicates its attacks to killing a character holding the skull after it has been used once.

REPHAIM MONKS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 7

Gear: None

Special Abilities:

- * **Claws:** Str+d4.
- * **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- * **Thermal Vision:** Rephaim halve all penalties for bad lighting when attacking living targets or vehicles with their engine running.
- * **Undead:** +2 Toughness. +2 to recover from being Shaken. Immune to poison and disease. No additional damage from called shots. Half-damage from piercing weapons.

ORDO TENEBRAE



DARK KNIGHT OFFICER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Knowledge (Battle)

NECROPOLIS 2350

d6, Notice d8, Riding d8, Shooting d8

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command, Fervor

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette SMG with 3 magazines (Range: 12/24/48, Damage: 2d6+1, AP 2, Auto), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4)

Special Abilities:

* **Insane:** These insane soldiers are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

DARK KNIGHT

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Charisma: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10(4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

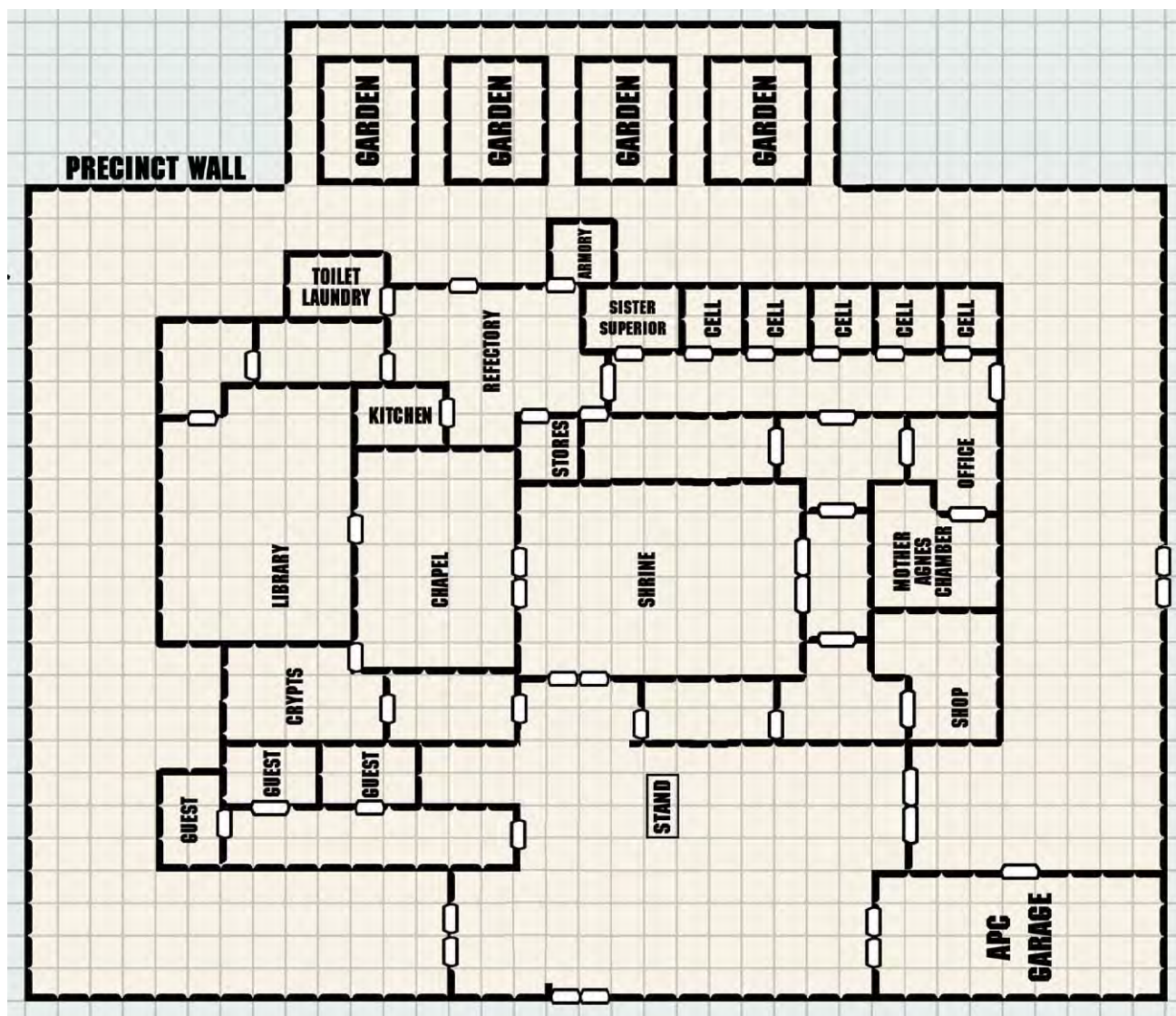
Edges: Combat Reflexes

Gear: Light armor (+4), flechette rifle with 3 magazines (Range: 24/48/96, Damage: 2d8+1, AP2, Auto, 3RB), 4 monofilament grenades in GL (Range: 20/40/80, Damage: 3d8, AP 4, MBT), molecular sword (Str+d8+2, AP 4)

Special Abilities:

* **Insane:** These insane soldiers are immune to Fear and Intimidation.

MAP OF SHRINE OF ST. MALACHY C.2350, ARGENTORATUS, NOVE EUROPA



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SAINTS PRESERVE US!

The Ordo is launching a recruitment drive at the Shrine of St. Malachy, a famous visionary from Earth's history, and the Knights are ordered to win over hearts and minds. In addition to the recruitment operation, the Knights must also liaise regarding security of the shrine with its permanent guardians, the militant nuns of the Sisters of Bradamante.

What should be a quiet mission quickly breaks down into violence and mayhem. The theft of a precious relic by a force more powerful than anything the Knights have faced before leads them on a desperate mission.

But the creature they must face is nothing compared to the horrors revealed in a prophecy. St, Malachy, dead for a millennium, will yet speak his Last Word.

This *Necropolis: 2350* adventure combines roleplaying and combat away from the frontlines of Salus' battlefields. It also introduces the Sisters of Bradamante as a player character option.



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