# THE HORUS HERESY®

## BOOK FOUR



## CONQUEST



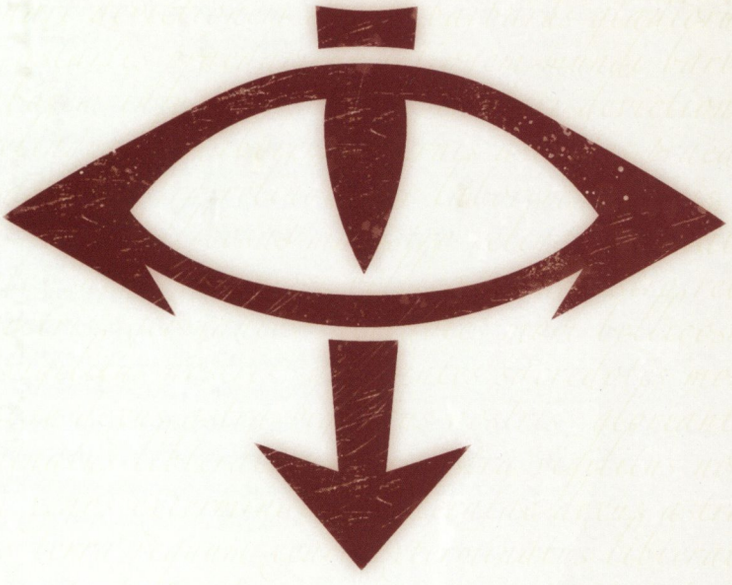




"The Age of Darkness is upon us,
We shall not live to see its end."

# THE HORUS HERESY®

## BOOK FOUR



# CONQUEST

A SUPPLEMENT FOR WARHAMMER 40,000

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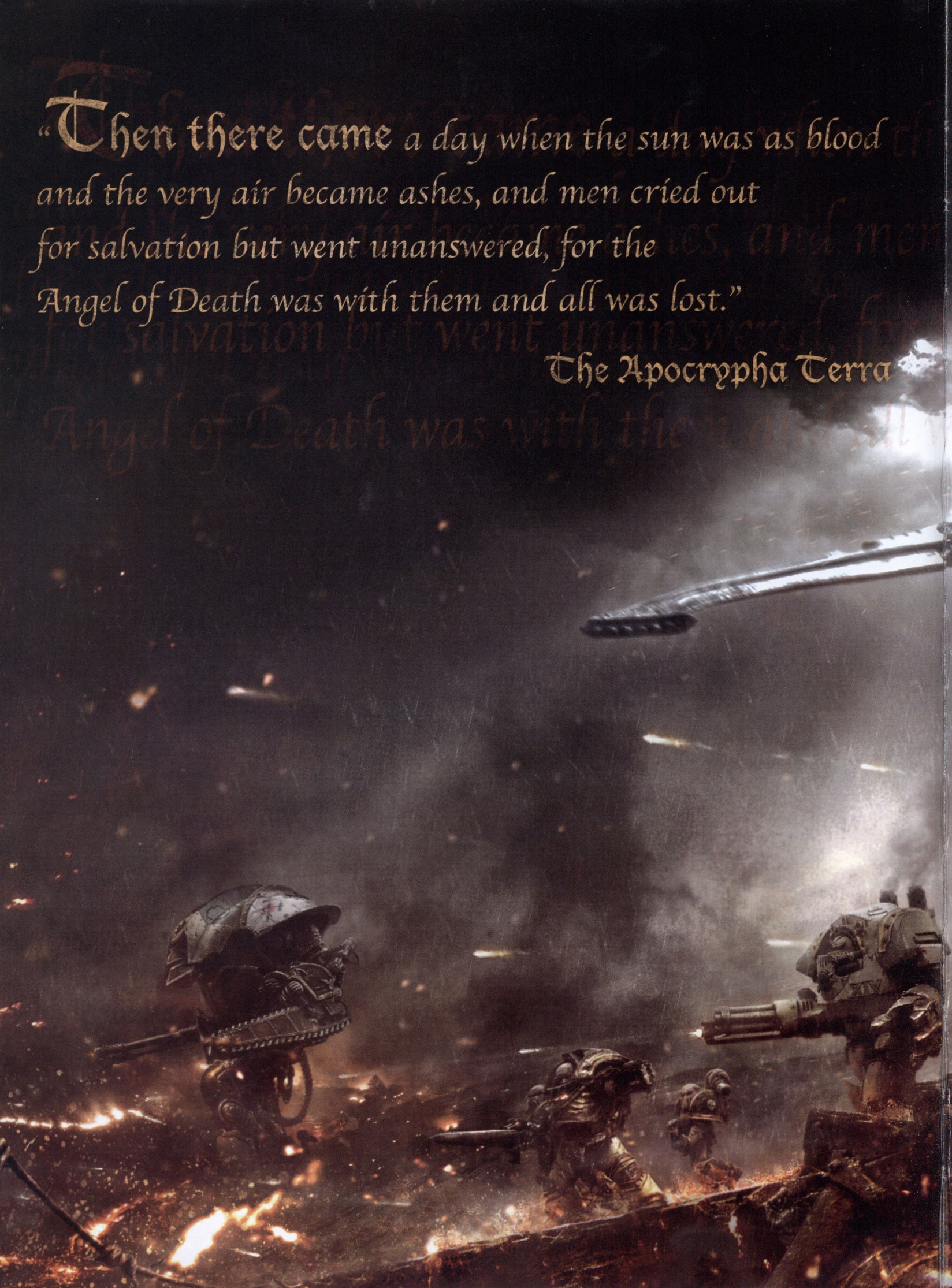

"Then there came a day when the sun was as blood
and the very air became ashes, and men cried out
for salvation but went unanswered, for the
Angel of Death was with them and all was lost."
The Apocrypha Terra



# Preface

Darkness, it would be an Age of Darkness.

Where once flourished the brief bright hope of the Imperium; of security, of salvation, of unity, of light, there would now be darkness. Darkness and primal fear more terrible even than the suffering and ignorance of the Long Night that had held sway before the coming of the Emperor. Worse because the terror in the darkness was our own doing, our own creation, our own greatest and most terrible weapon turned against us.
The terror had a name.

Horus.

Warmaster he had been appointed by his creator's will, elevated from among his fellow Primarchs in rank and authority, and not without reason. General, warlord, champion, world breaker, master of legions, demi-god among men, he was all these things, but so too were his brothers; so why then was he different, why then was he chosen? The answer is so simple, so self-evidently true, though many before and since may have denied it, praising the acumen of Guilliman, the bravery of Vulkan or the cunning of Russ instead— as if these things weighed in the balance when the simple truth was that they did not. The answer is that Horus, of all his preternatural kind, was simply the most dangerous. In him were alloyed the elements of his brothers, their strengths were all also his to a greater or lesser measure, while his charisma, his ability to forge others —mortal or transhuman— to his purpose, was a strength all his own.

But more than this, it is no coincidence that the symbol of the Eye became his seal and his sign, for he saw much, and his vigilance did not sleep—but his was not the eye of a guardian, but a predator. His was an eye that saw weakness, no matter how well hidden, and saw how to exploit it; an eye that saw always how best to destroy. This baleful eye was turned now upon the Imperium. The embers of Isstvan were barely dulled to ash behind him, and yet he already looked upon all that the Great Crusade had wrought in the galaxy and saw weakness wherever his gaze fell. He saw the flaws, whether in the serried lines of the Imperium's defences or in the hearts of the soldiers who manned them, and he knew how to exploit them. Where once he had waged war in the name of the Emperor, he would now turn back to cast down what he and his brothers had strived to build. He would conquer once more, but now in his own name.

The light of the Imperium would be extinguished in the Warmaster's taloned hand.
The Age of Darkness had begun.


Zarnov
Keopsis
Morintal Beacon
Baroda
The Grail Abyss
The Coronid Prohibited Zone
[Area forbidden]
Shoar
Grail
Damaetus
Fellwatch Keep
Kelshok Stat
Lascal
Segmentum Obscurus
Taracanis
Zavarich
Port Maw
Mezoa
Lethe
Moab
Gethsamaine
Dark Haven
M'pandex
The Cyclops Cluster
Sagathi
Dominica Minor
Subinus
Goth


Legatus
Othion
Vespasia Infernus
The Coronid Reach
Agathon
Cerada Primus
Cerada Secundus
Numinal
Quavausari
Revorthe Keep
Cyclothrathe
The Frost Gyre
Ultima
Arrian
Segmentum
Manachean
nmonwealth
Vlorlath Srader
nachea
a Imperialis:
ronis Thule
Key
Fortress Bastion
Forge World
Imperial World
Knight World
Hive World
Contested
Astropathic Relay



# The Hour of the Warmaster

*"The slave cares not whose hand wields the whip or why, knowing only the authority of its touch, the discipline of its voice and the certainty of its pain."*

A *Chthonian Proverb*

### The Imperium Betrayed

In the year 006.M31, the Imperium of Man reeled bloodily from the greatest blow it had ever suffered; the betrayal of the Warmaster Horus and what will come to be seen as fully half of the fighting strength of humanity's greatest warriors—the Space Marines of the Legiones Astartes. Eight of the eighteen Legions were now pledged to the Warmaster's cause, with the disposition of a ninth, that would later join him, as then unknown. As for the rest, three of those Legions known to have remained loyal had been wrecked upon the black sands of Isstvan V, victims of the Dropsite Massacre, a most grievous ambush wrought by the hand of Horus himself, while a greater part of a fourth had been ravaged in bloody void battle in the Phall system.

The five loyal Legions that remained yet accounted for were scattered, divided by vast distances both from each other and from Terra, and in the cases of two of them, they already were falling victim to fresh perfidy and murderous death-traps that would see them neutralised for a time and their strength bled, for such had been the plotting that had long foreshadowed the reach of the Warmaster's dark will.

Despite this monumental blow to the might and stability of the Imperium, not all however had fallen the Warmaster's way, and the fickle hand of fate and the bloody courage of the Loyalists who had already fallen had robbed Horus of the chance for a surprise strike against Terra to win the war before it had truly begun. Furthermore, each battle won had cost him a portion of his force's strength, as the realities of Legiones Astartes against Legiones Astartes, Mechanicum against Mechanicum and Imperial against Imperial in open warfare became clear, and the butcher's bill for both sides —even when one caught the other in seemingly overwhelming ambush— had proved time and again frighteningly high. In terms of the overall armed forces of the Imperium other than the Legiones Astartes, who like the Space Marines were now divided against themselves, the death toll was already mounting into the millions, and would only multiply arithmetically as the war spread and progressed.

There would now be no sudden death blow to end it cleanly; it would perforce become a war of conquest and counter-conquest, of merciless destruction and bloody defence. A domain as large as the known galaxy itself would now be the battleground on which merciless attrition, as much as bold strategy, would be the means to achieve victory. It would be a war fought across thousands of worlds and would doom untold billions to their deaths, a war on a scale so incomprehensible that not even the mind of a Primarch such as Horus, who had been named by his creator as first among his kind, could perhaps encompass it.

The unparalleled savagery already apparent in a war still young should not in retrospect have surprised anybody who had witnessed the fury and destruction unleashed at the hands of those self-same forces during the years of the Great Crusade; the Legions had torn world after world asunder, put uncounted alien races to the sword and cast empires that had lasted millennia into oblivion.

Now those Legions turned on each other, and on the worlds they had once sworn to defend with their lives. The Imperium itself would become the battleground over which this war would be mercilessly fought, and the destruction that had once been visited on the alien, would now be visited on humanity in their stead.

The galaxy would burn.

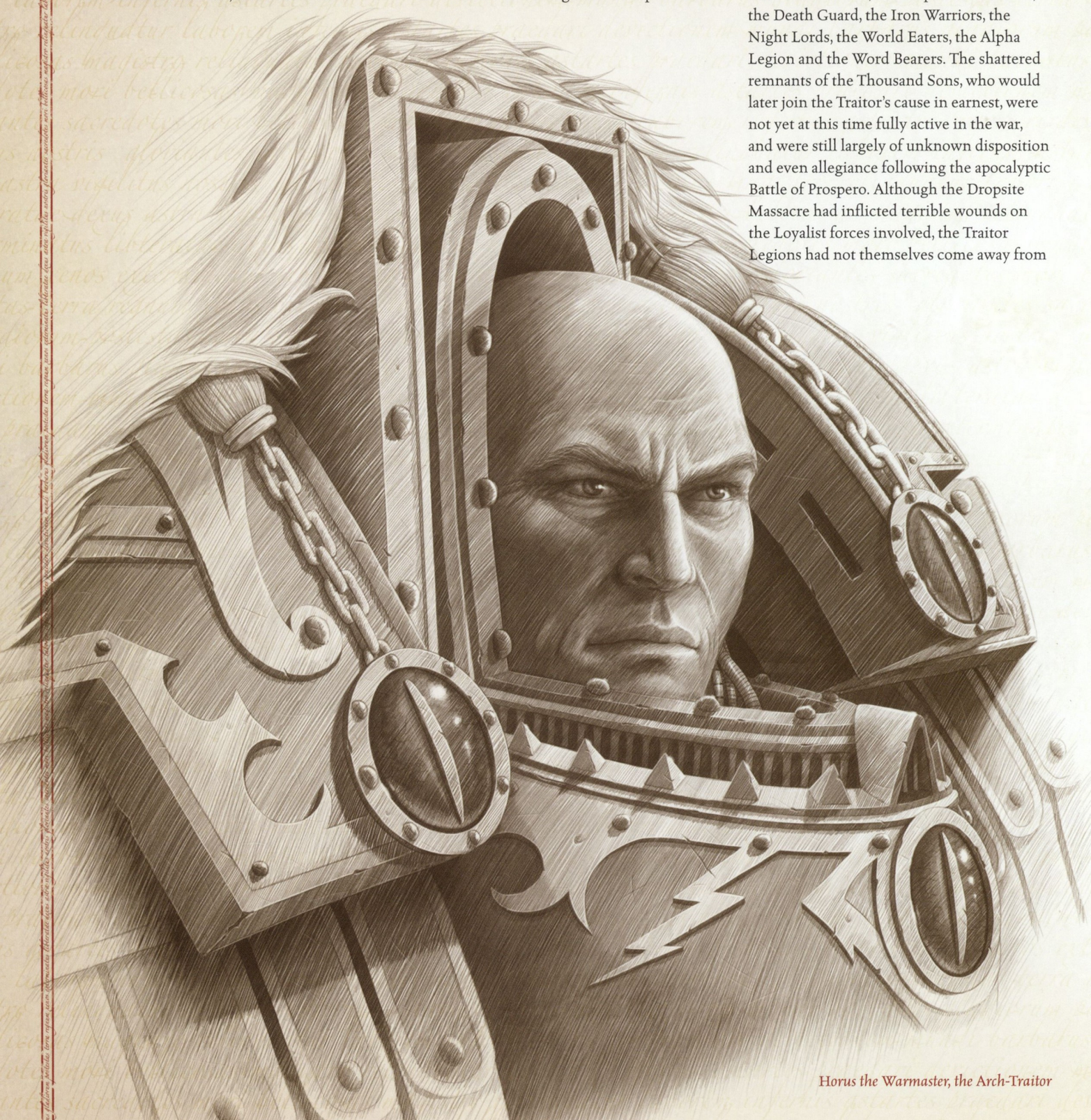



XVI

## The Dispositions of the Traitor Legions

Much remains uncertain in regards to the strategic position, deployments and configuration of the forces loyal to Warmaster Horus in the early phases of the war, and even their full scope and extent cannot be ascertained with any genuine certainty by the historian. Perhaps a full half of the Titan Legions and the numberless hosts of the Excertus Imperialis —hundreds of millions of soldiers, vessels and war machines— had either through corruption, misguided loyalty to Horus or simple blind ignorance in compliance with their orders, sided with the Warmaster. But this alone would never be enough. A thousand battleships might be wrecked against the defences of Terra, ten million Auxilia might spend their lives in besieging the Eternity Gate, and ten million follow them, and again and again, but Horus knew this alone would never avail him. Not against the superhuman warriors who held it; not against the Legio Custodes and defences designed by the Emperor's own hand and garrisoned now by Rogal Dorn and his sons.

So it is that rightly in this matter, the greatest attention should be placed on the location and strengths of the Traitor Legions at this hour. The Legions at the Warmaster's side during this time comprised the following: the Sons of Horus, the Emperor's Children, the Death Guard, the Iron Warriors, the Night Lords, the World Eaters, the Alpha Legion and the Word Bearers. The shattered remnants of the Thousand Sons, who would later join the Traitor's cause in earnest, were not yet at this time fully active in the war, and were still largely of unknown disposition and even allegiance following the apocalyptic Battle of Prospero. Although the Dropsite Massacre had inflicted terrible wounds on the Loyalist forces involved, the Traitor Legions had not themselves come away from



*Horus the Warmaster, the Arch-Traitor*

the cataclysm unscathed which, combined with losses suffered during the recent purging of the Traitors' ranks at Isstvan III and elsewhere, had weakened Horus' position from its notional strength when the die for war was cast.

Hard facts regarding operational Legiones Astartes numbers are impossible to ascertain, but credible estimates place Traitor losses during the battles of the Isstvan, Phall and Paramar systems in the region of 100,000 Legiones Astartes fatalities, compared to an unknown number, perhaps three to four times as high, as a death toll for those who remained loyal to the Emperor. This, by many estimates, left something in the region of 900,000 Legiones Astartes under arms in the Warmaster's cause, with perhaps two thirds or more of that figure in the Loyalist camp. This estimate, however, is still far from certain, one which is itself further distorted by the events that were to shortly unfold on Calth and Signus Prime. From this calculation —as equivocal as it is— it is possible to determine that even after the Dropsite Massacre, the military advantage Horus had yet gained was simply not large enough in scale to make an immediate and direct assault on Terra and the Imperial heartlands of the Segmentum Solar, roused as they were now against attack, a strategically viable option, let alone one that would guarantee victory. This was the reality that Horus now faced in determining his next move.

**The Hounds of Horus Unleashed**

In retrospect, his strategy seems to have been based upon the ancient maxim that when faced with a numerous foe spread over a wide geographical (or in this case celestial) area, the surest route to victory is to divide and conquer. As befitted one of the Warmaster's undoubted military genius, the interpretation and execution of this strategy was however a subtle and complex one, which simultaneously served a number of different, but interlinked, short term tactical priorities as well as longer term strategic goals. The first and perhaps foremost of these goals was to blind, bleed and confuse his enemy, an enemy which in this case comprised the entire sphere of the vast Imperium of Mankind.

Under Horus' orders, the war was to be taken to every corner of the Imperium, and on every battlefront imaginable; from small scale strikes by elite forces, to sponsored terrorist campaigns and civil uprisings, commerce raids by warship squadrons, and targeted strikes to disrupt vital supply chains, smash strategic keystones of Segmentum defence and shred astrotelepathic communications. Alongside these came wholesale campaigns of conquest and devastation, spearheaded by mighty Legion-led combined-arms battlegroups which operated like a dark mirror of the Expeditionary fleets of the Great Crusade, now turned inwards to ravage and subjugate what once they had built. To this end, taskforces comprising the core elements of entire Traitor Legions, such as the Night Lords and Iron Warriors, were dispatched, seemingly at random, to strike at locations all across the Imperium, to conquer, neutralise and destroy, but perhaps most of all to weaken and provoke resistance— Loyalist resistance that could then be isolated, overwhelmed and exterminated.

In this Horus, it can be gleaned, hoped to maintain control of the war's initiative, to force battles where he chose and not his enemies, relying upon the Imperium's monolithic strength being both slow to respond and hampered by the need to defend as much of its territory as it could lest entire sectors slip from its grasp, which they did, and as many and more to their own parochial concerns, petty revolts and secessions as went over to the Traitors' cause. Horus, once the Imperium's defender, had exposed its greatest weakness; that below the cohesion of a domain maintained by war and bound by a web of communication, authority and the ultimate threat of punishment directly to Terra, lay potential disunity, insurrection and rebellion were the threads of those sustaining webs cut. Once this was done, the isolation of the vast and empty void between the lights of human civilisation, and the omnipresent fear of a terrible predator stalking the night skies, would be enough to drive whole worlds into anarchy alone.

These terrible campaigns of fear and destruction make up the early years of what has since become known to historians as the Horus Heresy's '*Age of Darkness*', not least because so great was the chaos and damage of this time, and so widespread, that no true light may be shed on the full facts and progress of the myriad catastrophes and genocidal strife of the period. They were themselves but a means to an end for Horus. This end was not simply that the Imperium beyond Terra be fatally weakened and dismembered piecemeal, but that the Warmaster and his armies would wax stronger than ever before.

*Historia Terra Regnum*

**The Dark Compliance**

On many worlds, the seeds of corruption had been sown long before the hand of betrayal struck at Isstvan. When the Warmaster led his forces in civil war, hundreds of worlds not directly connected to his power base declared for his cause. On these planets and dominions, many scattered around the dangerous periphery of the Imperium's frontiers, it was because his agents and those of his allies within the Mechanicum, the Alpha Legion and the Word Bearers had already poisoned their hearts against the Emperor. There would be many hundreds more, from isolated and otherwise unimportant colonies to keystones of the Imperium's economy and military strength, that would fall under his sway as the war progressed in a process that became known as the '*Dark Compliance*'.

To each world over which the Warmaster's shadow fell, a simple choice was given; total submission and surrender or total destruction and brutal subjugation—slavery or death, there were no other options and no second chances. It was a perverse parody of the progress and glorious goals of the Great Crusade, but served as more than mere scorn for the Emperor's dream or even the vainglory of a tyrant, for there was underlying method and intelligence beneath the apparently wanton savagery. When one militant world or stubbornly Loyalist star system was punished by apocalyptic destruction for their brave defiance, such fear was created in others nearby that their surrender came as a rapid and forgone conclusion, often without a shot fired in their defence. Each world added not simply territory but manpower, production capacity and supply, feeding a war machine that was growing exponentially in power. Further, those worlds marked for death — where possible— can be seen with hindsight to have been more strategically expendable compared to those spared to fall through fear, or the more measured if no less brutal decapitation strikes for which Horus' own Legion had long been famed. It can also be observed that the devastation visited during the Dark Compliances was never so thorough that survivors were not left to spread the word of what terrors they had beheld, and of the price this new shadow emperor exacted for defiance.

## The Scions of War

With the task of waging war against the Imperium in order to slay its master at hand, it was of vital importance to Horus and his forces that their martial strength not only be maintained, but expanded as rapidly as possible. It is a common mistake among the uninitiated to assume that the strengths of the various Legions at the outset of the Horus Heresy represented their greatest force, which simply diminished by attrition until the end, like the dwindling playing pieces of a parlour game as it winds out to its conclusion. This could not be further from the truth.

From the outset, all sides strove to increase their recruitment of new Legiones Astartes, accelerating and expediting the process of gene-seed implantation and mimetic programming to unheard-of speeds, often with disastrous consequences. Even before the calamity, it had been widely reported that it had become possible for the most callous Legions, such as the World Eaters, to cut down the creation time of a Space Marine to as little as two years, perhaps less, although the rate of failure was frighteningly high. This had been a matter for controversy and censure in the past, but with the onset of galaxy-wide civil war, dire expediency overrode such concerns, for Loyalists just as much as Traitors. No full account of the actions of individual Legions in the particulars of this regard can be given, but it can be said that recruitment was not only vastly accelerated across the board, but also the nets were cast far wider with, it is believed, a tithe of manhood demanded from scores of suitable worlds where it had not done so before. Tens of millions were inducted into the massing forces on both sides of the warring divide, and from these the finest were culled as potential Legiones Astartes, with perhaps as few as one in a hundred in several cases surviving the brutally accelerated techniques.

Not in all cases was this to be a success, however, as the terrible price the Raven Guard was to bear was later to prove, but it was the case that a number of Legions saw very swift and marked increase in the order of tens of thousands during the early years of the Horus Heresy, particularly amongst those whose gene-seed was known to be stable, or who had access to extensive apothecarions and the resources for mass-implantation techniques to be viable. The fate of these new recruits was to be a bloody trial by fire, and it is believed some did not even know for who they fought or under what colours when first they were unleashed to be hammered on the anvil of war.

The maelstrom of the Horus Heresy was, however, to prove a brutally effective crucible of training, and units comprising such new blood were always formed around a core of hardened veterans of the Great Crusade and cast into the first and bloodiest throes of the civil war. Alongside these waves of newly forged Legiones Astartes was an unceasing need to arm and equip them, and the loyalty and control of key Forge Worlds became of paramount importance to both sides of the war, particularly after the Blockade of Mars —a Traitor domain at the heart of the Sol System— came into effect. Supplies of advanced arms and armour, interstellar vessels and even basic munitions were commodities for which entire campaigns were fought, and more than one industrial world or indefensible fortress was rendered a lifeless cinder by its own side, simply to prevent it from falling into an enemy's hands. The military expediencies they encountered, and forced evolution-in-arms and tactics the internecine conflict created, all had their own undeniable influences to bear on those who fought, and the armies on both sides began to rapidly change, some under the influence of dark and then largely unguessed at forces from beyond, and others simply by the brutal, mutilating hand of war. Swiftly gone were the lock-step Legions and serried ranks —diverse though they had been— of the Great Crusade. In their place were savage angels of death and bitter armies clashing in ignorance without respite or relent, all but unrecognisable from what had gone before.

## The Talon Closes around Manachea

What came to be known as the Conquest of Manachea was a campaign carried out by those under the direct command of Warmaster Horus during the latter part of 007.M31. It was both an early example of the Warmaster turning his forces to seize entire sectors of the Imperium he deemed valuable, and a demonstration of the speed and brutality with which such campaigns were accomplished. It can be seen in retrospect to have provided a template for scores of such campaigns which came after it, both in terms of strategy and the savage consequences involved for those worlds which fell into the Traitors' grasp throughout the time of the Age of Darkness.

The Conquest of Manachea, led personally by Horus and his inner cadre of commanders, was itself the centrepiece of an interlinked series of campaigns, fleet actions and local wars which swept like storms through the celestial region sometimes referred to as the Coronid Thule, or the Coronid Deeps, between 006.M31 and 008.M31. This region, which encompasses the frontier border areas of the Segmentum Obscurus and Ultima Segmentum, and constituted some of the most industrialised regions of the northern Imperium at the time, had been effectively cut away from regular direct contact with the Segmentum Solar owing to the rising tide of warp turbulence which would culminate in the so-called '*Ruinstorm*', which followed on from the dark events at Calth in 007.M31.



Manachea itself was the jewel of the region; a highly populated, highly advanced hive world of the first rank which sat at the centre of its own well-developed sub-domain of attendant star systems. As such it offered the Warmaster much that would be of value in the ongoing war, not least of all strategic control of the region, and vast human resources to exploit as well as industrial capacity that could be readily turned towards the war effort. Nearby sectors also included the mineral-rich Cyclops Cluster—home to two fully fledged Mechanicum Forge Worlds, the vital Armada Imperialis fleet anchorage of Port Maw, several independent Knight Worlds, and a score of agri-worlds and other colonies that could be used to feed and supply the Warmaster's armies on the long march to Terra.

These prizes were not, however, unguarded. Although the Traitor's agents had already been at work in the region, the bulk of its worlds and military strength was already set against him, the region's Imperial Commanders alerted by the wildfire warning that had spread after the news of the Isstvan III Atrocity had reached Terra. That such a warning had been issued in the region (whereas many other sectors and domains had been kept ignorant at first of the betrayal) was a result of the frontier's own proximity, in relative terms, to the Isstvan system itself; Port Maw being used as a layover and resupply base for a number of the fleets despatched so disastrously to punish the Traitors.

With only a few notable exceptions, the garrisoning of the Imperial worlds of the Coronid Deeps was provided for by the Imperialis Armada and regiments of Solar Auxilia pattern Excertus Imperial Army formations. The Solar Auxilia pattern was particularly suited to the defence of the region as it was equipped and formed to fight in hostile environments and participate in void battles, both of which were common in this far-flung domain of the Imperium, while the high technological base of worlds such as Manachea and Agathon made the requirements of Solar Auxilia pattern regiments possible to maintain in a manner that was simply untenable on the majority of Imperial colony worlds. These defenders had shown themselves repeatedly able to withstand the assaults of xenos raiders, rebel uprisings and, on occasion, wholesale invasion—at least until reinforcements arrived. They were well provided with arms, armour and warships, and numbered in their hundreds of thousands in terms of active troops. They had never though been measured against the unthinkable opponent; the Imperium's own Space Marines.

So it was that in the closing days of 006.M31, terrifying reports, quickly suppressed, reached the governing courts and councils of the Coronid Deeps that the unthinkable had occurred; that the Traitors had crushed those sent to bring them to heel at Isstvan V. These reports were at first scoffed at and wilfully disbelieved, until the first few battered ships, Loyalist survivors of the void battle at Isstvan, began to limp brokenly in, seeking sanctuary from the hounds of Horus at their heels. Fear came then to Manachea, to Agathon, to Mezoa and a hundred other worlds greater and lesser along the frontier. Requests for aid and instruction from Terra were lost on blinding squalls of warp static, and with the warp storms behind them and the black void of the frontier before them, the worlds of the Coronid Deeps could do little but wait for the devil to come for them from the dark.



**The Sundered and the Black**

It is said by ancient proverb that truth is the first casualty of war and, if this is the case, then rumour is its first child. Almost from the outset, the war of the Horus Heresy was a vast cataclysm and one whose events moved with such quicksilver pace that mystery, supposition, lies and simple ignorance cloaked much of the bloodshed even as it occurred, casting a veil over much that will never be lifted. Though the roll call of Space Marine Legions, Titan Legio, Auxilia regiments and Mechanicum Taghmata that sided with the Arch-Traitor and those who remained loyal is largely known and accepted, the full truth is far more complex and far more mysterious than commonly believed.

Of those who fell at Isstvan, there were survivors, remnants and fleeing fragments shorn of command and driven half mad by treachery; from that point onwards they were isolated, alone. These were the shattered Legions and, while some swiftly returned to the Imperial fold, some did not or would not. Some would go on to wage a bitter war of vengeance alone, some would simply disappear, their fates unknown, their stories untold. But there were others of a darker hue. It has long been refuted since, but is indelibly the case, that in the Legions that remained loyal there were elements, sometimes whole companies and commands, that did not. In some cases the infection of the Warmaster's '*warrior lodges*' has been blamed, while in others perhaps grievances long smouldering were the cause, just as infiltration by outside forces, or simply a darker truth applies that, given the option, some Legiones Astartes believed Horus had the superior cause and the superior right to command their allegiance, not the Emperor, while some retained a loyalty to their Emperor and the Great Crusade over that of their own Primarch's will. It is true that particularly in the early years of the war, detachments of Legiones Astartes and sometimes entire squadrons of warships simply vanished without apparent trace, and while many may have fallen foul of warp storms and enemy action, it is likely just as true that some quietly slipped anchor and turned their coats to serve another master, and that this happened on both sides of the divide.

Thus can perhaps be explained, at least in part, persistent stories and evidence long since suppressed of midnight clad warriors in defaced Night Lords heraldry savagely attacking Traitor forces at the liberation of Estaban III, or of recurring reports of multiple Space Marine strike forces seemingly in the resurrected livery of the Dusk Raiders thwarting the Iron Warriors at Kibron and Malinche's Fall. Likewise also should be considered the long-denied evidence of a Great Company of the Space Wolves Legion bearing the symbol of the Serpent's Eye slaughtering millions at Neo Cadiz in 008.M31, or of a company of Legiones Astartes present at the Siege of Mezoa bearing the hybrid arms and panoply of the Iron Hands and Sons of Horus Legions both. These are merely a handful of still infamous cases, but there are many more unsubstantiated or simply now forgotten which paint a more complex and uncertain picture of this great civil war than is normally accounted. Further to this, and perhaps an even more sinister enigma, are the persistent reports of Space Marine forces appearing bearing no sign or seal of heraldry or origin at all, or stranger yet, heraldry which bears no mark known during the Great Crusade, although whether the 'black' Legionaries were merely turncoats or, as some have whispered, perhaps raised by the Traitors from the chimeric gene-seed of the Isstvan dead for their own terrible purposes, none can now say for certain.



# The Conquest of the Coronid Deeps



# The Scourging of the Cyclops Cluster

"Mortus Autem Horus Rexia"

*Found carved into the corpse of Guald Numo, Imperial Commander of Taracanis*
*The Taracanis Genocide*

**006-007.M31**

The first region of the Coronid Deeps to feel the Traitors' fury in the birth-years of the Horus Heresy was the Cyclops Cluster. The cluster was, at the time, famed for both its industrial output and the harshness of its living conditions, and had proven a key factor in the supply and expansion of the Imperium, both across the Coronid Deeps and the eastern Segmentum Obscurus. These factors made it a prime target for attack, as the warp route access through its star systems —known to many Navigators— was still yet clear of turbulence, making it a welcome avenue of escape by fleeing Loyalist forces retreating from the catastrophe at Isstvan.

## The Hounds and the Hunted

While Terra and a few select and powerful Imperial Commanders, who were given to know the truth that Horus and what was then believed to be four Legions had turned against the Emperor, waited with various apprehension for the outcome of the battle at Isstvan V, the worlds of the Cyclops Cluster, and their billions, turned ever onward in ignorance. Defence states had been heightened on many frontier worlds, but in the Cyclops Cluster, as elsewhere in the Coronid Deeps, such a condition was a regular occurrence, and no reason or enemy was given to those lower down the chain of command. The changes of security codes and

targeting matrixes to forbid the vessels and retinues of the four turncoat Legions was a precaution enacted swiftly, but one that would ultimately prove futile.

The first harbinger of the war to come was a ship of the dead. The *Malin Dawn*, a Gladiator class frigate belonging to the Emperor's Children Legion, was detected moving at a low velocity in the outer reaches of the Gethsamaine system by watchful servitor-gunstations guarding the system's astropathic beacon at 4598006.M31. So alerted, high speed reconnaissance cutters were launched and their close range augurs found the ship to be badly damaged and almost without power. Having identified the vessel as a derelict enemy ship, the warden captain of the system took the decision for the vessel to be prevented from closing with its core worlds, her motion arrested and the ship boarded under all possible precautions. Leaving nothing to chance, the system's two primary defence monitors, *Gaius Herab* and *Brazen Bull*, conducted the operation flawlessly, Veletaris troopers performing the incursion of the vessel without resistance.

Inside they found nothing but the dead. Slaughter bedecked the corridors where Space Marines and crew in the purple livery of Fulgrim's Legion had fought a brutal close quarter combat in defence of their ship against others of their own kind and Legiones Astartes in the white and azure of Angron's World Eaters to their mutual extinction. Further interrogation of the ship's logs revealed that the *Malin Dawn* had been a casualty of the desperate battle over Isstvan III, having remained loyal only to be turned on by her fellows in murderous ambush. During the confusion of the battle in the system as the Traitors exterminated their brethren, and under heavy assault, the ship had barely managed to escape, but in the Warp the battle within her hull had raged on until she had become nothing more than a flying tomb, bent upon a preordained course. Her Navigator had clung on to life long after the rest of the ship had fallen silent, and held on in the forlorn duty of carrying a warning of treachery that fate had, unknown to her, given to another to herald. When the frigate had, after her arduous voyage, broken into realspace in the dark of the Cyclops Cluster's stars, life had finally fled the Navigator's body before she could broadcast her distress call.

Even as this omen of war caused great consternation among Gethsamaine's high command, and urgent messages were dispatched to Port Maw and Lascal, the fabric of reality ripped open and the hunters appeared; a wing of four Havoc class heavy destroyers in the slate grey and bronze of the 507th Attack Squadron, an Imperialis Armada formation attached to the 63rd Expeditionary Fleet of Warmaster Horus, and behind them the huntsmaster to these hounds, the *Ikon*, an Eclipse class battlecruiser in the dark viridian of the Sons of Horus Legion. Battle was joined immediately as the Traitors charged headlong at the system defence monitors, their destroyers releasing cycling volleys of fusion-warheaded torpedoes as soon as they entered effective range. The Gethsamaine defence monitors were powerful ships designed for protracted operations, each with the firepower of a cruiser and the armour of a battleship in their own right. Used primarily for planetary blockade and picquet, they were slow and lumbering compared to the sleek interstellar warships that confronted them. Their turbo laser and plasma-caster batteries threw up a blazing barrier of fire against which even the heavy salvos of the Havocs' torpedoes could not prevail, while the monitors' own dorsal lances pulsed frantically at the attacking destroyers through the web of fire.

Drawn close together to maximise their overlapping fields of fire, the monitors fell into the defensive tactics for which they were designed, while soon the vast distance between the Loyalist and Traitor ships shortened inexorably and the firestorm went on unabated between them. The duel waxed hot and between the relentless barrages of the destroyers' torpedoes and the heat of the monitors' cannonade, it was up to the fates which were to fail first. Then, at once, elation flashed across the *Brazen Bull's* command deck as one of the Traitor destroyers blazed suddenly out of existence as a lance strike found the Havoc's reactor. But triumph turned at once to horror and despair as a frantic message voxed through by the skeleton crew left on board the broken *Malin Dawn* cut through the static. They had seen what the monitors, blinded by the fury that they and their enemies were unleashing, had not; the *Ikon*, her massively powerful engines burning at over-thrust, had split from behind her destroyer screen and corkscrewing wide of them had overtaken the firefight and was about to attack from their flank.

Panic gripped the *Brazen Bull's* command as they attempted to answer this new threat, but the diversion of fire did nothing but open a gap through which the latest torpedo volley streamed, striking her amidships just as the broadside macro-cannon batteries of the *Ikon* spoke and ripped the *Brazen Bull* open from stem to stern. With dismissive cruelty she flew on beyond the two monitors, loosing a wave of Dreadclaws in her wake. The remaining monitor *Gaius Herab* was bracketed and torn by the concentrated final volley of the Havocs' torpedoes as they too sped on by the wounded defender. Swiftly after, the attacking wave of Dreadclaws slammed home into the stricken defence ships, and the cargo of Sons of Horus they carried —once the proudest warriors of humanity— tore into the crew within, who in turn sold their lives with desperate futility.

Shorn of its most powerful defenders, Gethsamaine's system lay open before the Traitor Hunter squadron, and again the skeleton crew aboard the powerless *Malin Dawn* were forced to watch helplessly as one after another gun-stations and watch posts were out-ranged and out-manoeuvred and destroyed without mercy. Without the monitors to shield them, Gethsamaine's few static defences were isolated and blasted into flaming debris, just as the screams and pleas for help on the still-open vox channels from the *Gaius Herab* grew fainter and fewer.

Hours later, the Dreadclaws finally detached from their prey and flew to rendezvous with their mother ship, by which time both the *Gaius Herab* and the *Brazen Bull* were little more than blood-splattered charnel houses of rent metal, venting air into the void, and the system's astropathic relay station was nothing more than a dissipating cloud of vapour. Gethsamaine Colonus, the major inhabited world of the system, its planetary weapons primed for an attack which never came, had itself been spared, but as the *Ikon* departed for the Warp, she left a chilling message behind her. It was a message which with variation in word, but not intent, would be repeated shortly across the Cyclops Cluster and in a hundred star systems in the years to come, a dark ultimatum which promised a future only of despair and destruction.

*"Bow before Him who is the Warmaster,*
*abase yourselves before His truth.*
*Serve those who serve Him,*
*harken only to their words.*
*The Imperium is His. Mankind is His.*
*You are His.*
*Submit to the Warmaster, or die by His hand.*
*There is no other choice, and you will be given the chance to kneel but once.*
*Horus is Lord. Horus is Death."*

**The Reign of Fear**

The destruction of the Gethsamaine astropathic relay, vital in a system often troubled by turbulence in the Warp, prevented the swift dispersal of the news of the sudden attack by the Traitors, but the seeds of fear had already been sown. By the time the Imperialis Armada was properly alerted to the incident, there was no chance of forming a pursuit force to track down the hunters, and it was only then as alerts were raised to forewarn the worlds of the cluster about these marauders, that it was discovered that a score of distant frontier outposts could not be raised. Soon after, ships and freight convoys passing through the northern stars of the Cyclops Cluster towards the Grail Abyss began to be declared first overdue and then lost. Within a dozen sidereal months standard, the dark rumours about the attack at Gethsamaine and the words the Sons of Horus had delivered —compounded and amplified many times in the telling— had passed through the void-borne, the trade ships and the patrolling Imperialis Armada, spreading like a contagion.

## The Eve of the War

The Cyclops Cluster was now raised to arms, and the auspexes and astrotelepathic auguries of a hundred worlds began to reach outwards in fear and keen vigilance. Reports were channelled through to the centralised Imperialis Armada commands at Lascal and Dominica Minor to be sifted and organised in the hope of divining a pattern and planning a defence. Only now did the extent of the silent intrusion become clear. At Taracanis, the *Ikon* had once again appeared and delivered her bleak message, but only after blasting a docking station from orbit, the wreckage costing thirteen thousand lives as it fell to earth. At Shoar, long range detectors had observed a savage void battle between a score of Capital class warships, which lit up the occularis screens of the savant-surveyors of the Imperial Legation's bastion for more than nine hours with their dread fires, before disappearing again unknown and unidentified into the deep night. Black-hulled ships were sighted over Dark Haven, while at the edge of the Zavarich system, a hulking Dolmar class mass conveyor carrying processed nutrients enough to feed millions simply disappeared without trace on its way to its assigned Warp transit point. As news of the events spread, an insurrectionist revolt flared up on Moab, the mob chanting the Warmaster's name, only to be bloodily put down in a five week pacification pogrom and the instigation of planet-wide martial law.

It was to this fever of rumour and baleful report that confirmed word of the Dropsite Massacre came at last and overdue, like a death blow to a wounded man. Panic erupted amid the ruling classes of a score of threatened worlds in the Cyclops Cluster, factionalism long simmering came to the fore, and worlds long used to operating largely independently from each other became isolationist and insular, distrusting their own neighbours and withdrawing troops and ships from their tithe to the Imperialis Armada's overall plan of defence. Almost unheeded, other stranger reports came to the attention of some Imperial Commanders and authorities, but in a rising climate of distrust and paranoia were either ignored or simply not shared onwards: reports of a deadly race between Loyalist and Traitor for the sanctuary of the underground hives of distant Keopsis before the solar fires of its angry sun scorched its surface in its endless cycle of life and death. Of a great dragon-prowed battle barge, perhaps once emerald and gold, now blasted nearly cinder-black, taking on supplies at a feral world near Fellwatch Keep, but departing before interceptor vessels could draw close. Of the most direly portentous report —that of a deadly plague erupting on Hialis within hours of an unknown comet appearing in the heavens of the recently contacted feudal world— was nothing inferred or was anyone forewarned. Everywhere, crackdowns against unrest were brutally enforced, trade links grew thin, emergency laws were enacted, workers were conscripted to militias, industry began to grind slow, and everywhere rumour and fear began to overtake the dream of unity. The Cyclops Cluster as a coherent structure within the Imperium began slowly to unravel.

And so the name of Horus, once almost a talisman in itself of protection for the common man and woman, was now a byword for a terror that dare not be named.

## The Emissary of Mars

It became known much later, that at the height of the spreading alarm throughout the Cyclops Cluster in the closing quarter of 006.M31, the Forge Worlds of M'Pandex and Mezoa, the two greatest independent powers within the region, each received the Emissary of Mars, and with very different outcomes. The ambassador in question was the Magos known as Regulus (or at least an entity bearing that name, as there are extant contradictions in the records regarding the location of this individual at various times). This senior Tech-Priest



of the Mechanicum had for many years served alongside the Warmaster, long before the betrayal at Isstvan, and now remained his, body and soul, being part of Horus' inner circle and bound in allegiance to the Traitor's cause. Regulus came bearing dual patents of authority, the first from his Warmaster and the second from the hand of Kelbor Hal, none other than the Fabricator-General of Mars, and by right the voice of the Omnissiah and supreme pontifex of the Mechanicum. Kelbor Hal had also thrown in his lot with the Traitor Horus, sparking a civil war on Mars itself, a fact not yet known by those in the Cyclops Cluster. To each Forge World in turn he made an offer and a demand; the demand was for fealty, that they



serve the Warmaster as their own Fabricator-General bid them to do. That they obey him and offer up their arts and the fruits of their forges to him and his armies, and open their ports to his warships, while denying these things to both the forces of distant Terra and the local Imperial Commanders, already demonstrably squabbling amongst themselves in fear and disunity. To honey the threat of force, Regulus offered the Warmaster's protection for their Forge Worlds and, just as he did to sway Kelbor Hal to his cause, he also offered gifts; STC technologies harvested from the later Great Crusade era and kept solely by Horus and those he trusted, and the freedom to pursue those technologies and arcana the Emperor had so cruelly denied them as forbidden knowledge since the Treaty of Mars.

On M'Pandex, an ancient Forge World whose history had been blighted until re-contact by the Great Crusade, here a Magos also identifying himself as Regulus was greeted with great reverence and courtesy, and personally led to direct audience with the High Ourteka of M'Pandex to put his case. What passed between them at this private conference is unknown, but from then onward and without recourse to consorting with the synod of M'Pandex's Magos for confirmation, the Forge World was pledged to the Warmaster. There was in some quarters brief but violent resistance to this new order, but the world was long used to internecine conflict in its ranks, and the High Ourteka was merciless in wielding the handful of Martian Skitarii and the small detachment of Legio Mortis Titans based there to aid in his world's protection, now his private enforcers to ensure compliance. This new allegiance, while firm, was not widely broadcast and was unknown to outsiders. M'Pandex was quickly girded for war, its production capacity ramped ever higher and now destined for Horus' armies, while whatever Loyalist or merchant ships passed into its space were seized and impounded, their crews and complement forcibly converted into adsecularis slaves for a growing Taghmata of the Forge World's own.

The reception which greeted the Emissary of Mars at Mezoa, however, could not have been more stark in contrast than to that at M'Pandex. Regulus found a star system already geared for siege and conflict; his warp runner was stopped at the outer edge of the system and forbade entry on the threat of immediate destruction. Mezoa had ever been a militant system, born of the ferocious wars of the Great Crusade and fashioned as much as a fortress as a centre of macro-industry, its Magos fiercely independent from their kin elsewhere and just as fiercely loyal to the ideals of the Imperium whose expansion they served.

Forced to communicate via only the most primitive two-way vox circuit with a hulking Mezoan battle-sphere rather than directly with the Forge World, and under the condition that any attempt at other communication or the passage of data-djinn or other influence over the circuit would result in immediate annihilation, Regulus nevertheless put his case. In response the Pentarchy of Archimandrites, which had by tradition ruled Mezoa, offered a blunt rejection of the Warmaster and a formal secession from the authority of Mars. Further, they called Regulus and Kelbor Hal both apostates and blasphemers in the eyes of the Omnissiah, and pronounced them or any under their command to be under sentence of death if they entered the Mezoan system again. They finished their communication with a single word in judgement: "*Heretek*". Regulus fled.

**The Blockade of Mezoa**

Shortly after the denial of Regulus, a blockade of Mezoa was begun. With the direct aid of the warships of M'Pandex — both their own Mechanicum vessels and those they had captured and now operated under false flag, as well as more shadowed forces operating under the Warmaster's



direction— the various star systems that fed into Mezoa were cut off from it, with the aim of choking off its supply of raw materials. Resources which, where possible, were now directed instead to the hungry forges of M'Pandex. The Mechanicum of Mezoa actively resisted where they could, although they steadfastly refused to sally forth with their full force, treating the attacks as bait in a trap. Instead, they ordered their outposts and detached forces to resist until destroyed, and on far flung mining stations and on the decks of mass transporter vessels, the forces of the two Forge Worlds, long rivals but never before enemies, clashed in mortal combat.



Mercy was not to be found in either sides' circuit-augmented hearts and the adsecularis cohorts of M'Pandex were matched savagely by the armoured centuries of Mezoa's Thallaxii which, while fewer in number, vastly overmatched the adsecularis in individual might. In what seemed now to outsiders to be a civil conflict between the Mechanicum rather than a move in a wider game, refinery stations on Jujya and Gunnar's Rock burned, and on New Providence, thousands of fleeing vapour-mill workers, caught between the battle lines, were crushed beneath the tracks of Krios tanks and slaughtered needlessly in the withering crossfire of blazing energy weapons as both sides utterly ignored them, as if they had all the consequence of stalks of wheat caught in a hurricane. Confusion as to the cause of this conflict forestalled any intervention by the Imperialis Armada, fearful of the consequences of their actions, until it was too late.

By the end of 006.M31, the Mezoan system had been almost entirely cut off, and now enemy warships were circling the edge of its outer reaches as sharks waiting for prey. Mezoa was a prize not to be underestimated, but it was also fortified beyond ready conquest, even by a force as large as a fully marshalled Expeditionary fleet, but once cut off from aid and from giving aid to others, it was now effectively neutralised. Mezoa would wait. The next stage of the Warmaster's plan was about to begin.

It was just as the fleet command at Port Maw was finally progressing with a plan to break the blockade of Mezoa in order to counteract the growing loss of advanced munitions and macro weapons supplies the Imperialis Armada was predicting, that dire news reached it via garbled astropathic signal from Lascal on the edge of the Grail Abyss. Previously, a number of reports of worlds '*going dark*' had come out of that region and the stars which bordered it, but to the authorities on Lascal, Dominica Minor and at Port Maw, the abyss was too distant, its worlds too unimportant to be considered a priority for action, or to justify the diversion of their finite supply of warships where the wolf was evidently at the door of closer, far more strategically important systems.

Now such parochial thinking had born dark consequences, and without warning a massive fleet had torn out of the Empyrean at the edge of the Lascal system, and there would be no time to rally reinforcements to meet it. Much of the strategic detail of what was to be Lascal's last broadcast had been lost to the soul-static of the Warp, but what images and allegories remained were clear enough: bleak warship after bleak warship, slab-grey and bone white, stained and pitted with the scars of ancient battles and recent acts of murder. Alongside these were Warp-carried images of the death's head and the black sunburst, the scythe of the reaper. The Death Guard Legion had come for the Cyclops Cluster.

*Historia Terra Regnem*

**The Fate of Orhlacc**

When the Warmaster's dread ultimatum of Dark Compliance came to the forlorn Knight World of Dark Haven near the otherwise lifeless centre of the Cyclops Cluster, it was not carried by the now much feared *Ikon*, but by the ruby-hulled galleass of the Rogue Trader, Charid Undine. The message, however, was the same, and the reply of House Orhlacc, who had held dominion over Dark Haven for millennia, was to meet the Rogue Trader's strutting landing party with the brutal reply of their Knights' thermal cannon and volkites, and to drive the galleass off with fire from their few defence lasers, concealed deep beneath Dark Haven's all but impenetrable fungal canopy. The Lord Seneschal of Dark Haven made due report of the incident to the cluster's authorities, but received only platitudes in reply from them—help would not be forthcoming; while Mezoa, the Forge World to which the House of Orhlacc was distantly allied, was already under tightening blockade.

Imperial observers believed the Knight House, infamous in the region for its vengeful and bitter temper, would no doubt resist to the last, but would be doomed in the face of an assault from any major Traitor force it encountered alone. So when in 4102007.M31 communications efforts by the *Khabir*, a Lunar class cruiser on deep patrol out of Dominica Minor, were met with silence, it was immediately believed that such a fate had befallen them already. Further reconnaissance, however, revealed a world not ravaged by war, but simply deserted. House Orhlacc had disappeared, its halls stood empty, its vaults stripped and silent—with only the vast darkness of Dark Haven's strange and forbidding forests mute witnesses to the fate of Orhlacc.



# The Reaper of Worlds

*"There is no darkness to be found between the void of stars, nor the deepest pits of the earth that equals the darkness of Mankind's deeds."*

*Excerpt from the suppressed Neo-Terran Credos*

### The Death Guard Unleashed

When the XVII[th] '*Sun Dragons*' deep range cruiser squadron of the Armada Ultima finally forced their way through the warp turbulence which had dogged their attempts to reach Lascal in answer to their home station's distress call, they broke into a scene of still burning carnage. The war fleet, mustered at the Armada's high orbit anchorage over the fifth world of the system —some forty ships of the line and more than a hundred escorts, including three Retribution class battleships: the *Sceptre of Iron*, the *Ozymandias* and the *Star Tamer*— was blasted to ruin; some of the larger hulks still bleeding fiery plasma from broken reactor cores and frozen air from their rent and lifeless hulls. Further scans shockingly revealed precious little wreckage that could be identified for certain as belonging to an enemy, speaking of an attack utterly overwhelming in its suddenness and its overmastering power. Further in, they found the fleet anchorage station had been torn into a new debris belt ringing Lascal V, and the core worlds themselves were dense with a ghost fog of weapons-fire radiation and the garbled echoes of distress calls.

Proceeding with caution through the dangers of the war zone's aftermath, still deadly with unspent ordnance, tumbling wreckage and waiting mines, the Sun Dragons swept the ruins of the systems with their auspexes and their weapons primed for ambush, but no attack came. Lascal had not been merely invaded or conquered; it had been purged of life and left to the dead. The system's sole primary world, Lascal IV, once a burgeoning Imperial colony with a population in the tens of millions, was now a poisoned orb, its atmosphere thick with toxic green and black strata betraying the tell-tale signs of mass biochemical bombardment.

Solar Auxilia landing parties in full hazardous environment gear launched from the Sun Dragons cruisers to the palace of its Imperial Governor and several known defence bunkers all returned, ashen faced, with the same tale of utter destruction. The dead in their thousands covered the land, struck down in their stride by blistering airborne poisons and murderous nerve-agents. In those few places, such as the Imperial Governor's palace, which had been sealed in time, a more direct hand had been taken to destroy those huddled within. Ferrocrete walls had been shattered by direct cannon fire, bulkhead doors torn from their mountings by the merciless gauntlets of power fists, and everywhere was rank slaughter and the litter of spent bolt shell cases, unmistakably Legiones Astartes in pattern. As if any more evidence was needed of the perpetrators of this atrocity, in the auditorium of the Imperial Commander, above the cast-down Aquila and impaled in the bloated corpse of the man who had ruled there in the Emperor's stead, was a ragged banner bearing the death's head and black sunburst of Mortarion's Legion.

As the Sun Dragon squadron left the charnel house of Lascal behind them, news of what they had found quickly spread, and in the systems of the Cyclops Cluster, already fraying apart from each other in fear, pure terror now took hold. At worlds such as Endicott, Moravasis and San Pardor, when the news of the murder of Lascal escaped to



*Mortarion the Reaper,*
*Master of the Death Guard Legion*

the general population —perhaps aided by agents and fifth columnists already planted among the population by the Traitors' spy network— widespread civil insurrection, rioting and rebellion toppled the Imperial authorities from power and left only chaos in their wake. But barely had similar dissent been put down in the orbital habitats of Dominica Minor, the seat of the Cyclops Cluster's notional political leadership, the Guildmasters, when news reached them that the reaper's scythe had visited two more systems, the mining colonies of Grist and Rabbasan, and left none alive. Both star systems lay in a near direct path via the known warp routes between Lascal and Dominica itself, and left the Guildmasters in no doubt that they would soon be next.

Frantically, they attempted to invoke their Terran-bestowed primacy and call to them a muster of fresh forces from their dominion of worlds, but were answered with silence or scorn. They found with horror that the Mezoan blockade was now reinforced with dark-hulled warships of unknown origin, and the Forge Lords of M'Pandex had reached out to nearby worlds and seized control with their implacable half-dead cohorts of adsecularis, butchering any who would stand in their way. Worse yet, reports reached them that Gethsamaine's Imperial Commander had bent the knee before the Traitors, and delivered up his world without a shot fired in its defence. His actions were echoed on the lesser worlds of Vargas and Bleak Harbour, while the feral natives of Zavarich had massacred their Imperial overseers and abased themselves before the Sons of Horus as if they were gods descending from the heavens. It was to the Guildmasters of Dominica Minor suddenly apparent that, with a surgeon's skill, the Cyclops Cluster had been dismembered and laid bare before onrushing death, as much by human weakness as by the sword of the enemy.

### Death on Dominica Minor

Datacore recordings retrieved from the sundered command tower of the lance cruiser *Pride of Hemicron*, which had been cut free of her hull by enemy fire and left adrift for nineteen years before its eventual recovery, logged the attack on Dominica Minor as occurring at 4392007.M31. With typical brutal efficiency, the warfleet of the Death Guard Legion appeared at the outer system's primary warp transit nexus, first blunting the waiting minefields with fire ships —converted mining barges no doubt taken from the dead worlds they had visited— and then simply ploughing through the remainder of the minefields firing as they went, undeterred as the atomantic ordnance and servitor guided-missile clusters exploded against their pale hulls. The attacking force comprised perhaps a half of the recorded Death Guard Legion fleet, now reinforced with warships taken as prizes from their murdered brethren at Isstvan, and was arrayed in four columns of attack. Each was led by a heavy Capital class warship made famous in the Great Crusade, now turned against the Imperium they had helped create: the *Reaper's Scythe*, the *Spectre of Death*, the *Mia Donna Mori*, and the newly re-named and re-built *Dread* – formerly the battle barge *Winter's Oath* of the Iron Hands Legion. Of the dark roll of the Death Guard's heaviest vessels, only the *Terminus Est* was absent, its location and purpose at this time unknown. Against this mighty force, the defenders of Dominica Minor were a poor match indeed, fielding half of their enemy's number of line warships, with only an aging Goliath class battleship, the *Spear of Umbriel*, long relegated to second line duties, to match the Death Guard's heavy Capital class ships. Furthermore, the fears of the Guildmasters had pulled their fleet in to defend their capital world of Dominica Prime and clustered it around their orbital fortifications, robbing them of the ability to manoeuvre and abandoning the outer worlds and precious void-refinery complexes of the system to their fate. But as these sacrificial victims bleated vox-signals of frantic surrender, they were ignored and bypassed, and the Death Guard fleet, its engines burning at battle speed, came on for Dominica Prime.

The battle which followed was brief and catastrophic, with the attacking fleet holding its fire under the desperate barrages of the defenders until almost within boarding range, the void shields of the Death Guard ships blazing like dying suns and their armoured prows cracking and splitting under torpedo strikes and blasts of annihilating energy. When at last the four columns of attack spread open like a clawed hand to grasp Dominica Prime, as one the Death Guard fleet turned broadside and let their guns speak at last, and the defenders were swept aside in fiery ruin. Mutilated and blinded, the *Spear of Umbriel* met her end as the Death Guard Legion assault ship, *The Fourth Horseman*, mercilessly rammed her amidships from above and broke her back. With her died any hope of resistance. Of the handful of Loyalist warships that endured the firestorm, none survived the desperate hour that followed as hunter-killer packs of destroyers tracked down any that tried to escape, leaving Dominica Prime to the Death Guard Legion, and the world would now pay the price.



**Planetfall**

The orbital assault came in inexorable and measured steps, the Caestus Rams and Thunderhawks of the Death Guard descending amid the meteoric fires of the falling ships that had perished in Dominica Prime's defence. This first wave selected its targets and deployed its strike forces to ruthlessly destroy them; communications towers, defence batteries, auspex arrays and militia bastions—all were systematically neutralised to pave the way for the next wave. Unhurried, like the reaper setting out upon a field of wheat, came the heavy assault landers and Stormbirds, dropping



down into the centres of the great caldera-cities of Dominica Prime formed from the craters of vast open-cast mines that pitted the planet's surface. Whole districts of habitation blocks were crushed beneath the landers and panic gripped the cities even before the dull-armoured forms of the Legionaries marched out in horrifically rhythmic unison, the sound of the ceramite-shod footfalls of thirty thousand Space Marines echoing like a hammer beating out the world's doom. With them roared the thunder of mighty engines as squadrons of Predator and Typhon tanks poured forth from the gaping maws of the assault ships and simply tore a path through the habitation blocks, sending up great black clouds of choking dust as the roughly built prefabricated buildings closed like rotten petals around them.

The workers militia that struggled to rally against the invaders outnumbered their foes twenty and thirty to one in places, but it did not matter. Their autocarbines and scatter-locks were all but useless against Legiones Astartes power armour, and their few heavy weapons —field mortars and crew-served autocannon for the main part— were woefully inadequate and soon silenced. On came Mortarion's Legion, patient and inexorable, dealing death at every turn; frail human bodies were torn apart by bolter shells, buildings undermined with cannon fire or simply torn down by the hulking clawed hands of the Legion's Dreadnoughts. Faced with such terrible and controlled power, the militia swiftly broke and ran, and in the killing of the rout, the Death Guard made no distinction between combatant and civilian. As the force spread out, Whirlwind batteries blanketed the workers slums with aspyx-gas warheads, while the horror of burning phosphex was unleashed into breached bunkers and poured through deep cellars sought as final, desperate refuges as the invasion became a massacre.

Like a blackening stain visible from orbit, the Death Guard radiated out from their landing zones and the crater cities fell around them. Soon only two knots of serious resistance remained, the first at Dominica Prime's largest starport, where a rag-tag company of industrial servitors and colossal mining engines had been turned into makeshift war machines to bolster the last stand of the planetary defence militia, and the second at the fortified entrance to the Guildmasters'





sub-surface compound, where a score of Salamanders Legion Space Marines had suddenly appeared to hold the line. The Salamanders were recent arrivals, refugees from the orbital battle around Isstvan, their crippled strike ship had made the journey to Dominica Minor against the odds but could travel no further, and they were trapped there, doomed it seemed to replay the fate that had befallen so many of their brothers before them.

**The Hammer**

Against the starport, a new element was brought to battle. The great mining engines —each massing more than a scout Titan and staunchly armoured— had resisted the firepower of the Death Guard's heavy support squads, and alongside suicidal attacks by the overridden industrial servitors, actually managed first to stand off and then drive back the Legion's attack. Rather than waste more Legionaries in an overwhelming charge, or wait until massed artillery support could be wielded to engage the huge machines, a new heavy lander was summoned from orbit, bearing not the heraldry of the Death Guard, but the crimson blaze and crossed black warhammers of House Makabius.

From the moment the heavy blast doors of the assault lander crashed down, the doom of the starport was sealed. Thirty Knights in the proud quartered sable-and-shadow of the House of Makabius, their armoured forms each looming twice the height of a Land Raider and more, strode forth. They moved with a speed and purpose the hulking mining engines and brute servitors that opposed them could never hope to match. Mortar shells landed in their midst and autocannon fire rattled from their armoured plates, but they paid it no heed, and war-horns blasting out, they formed with clockwork precision into a series of interlocking echelons and advanced, all the time gaining speed.

Entering range, they opened fire, the battle cannon of their Knights Paladin picking out the lumbering servitors and blasting them to bloody shreds of flesh and metal. Breaking out to the flanks, the swifter Knights Castigator and Acheron hunted the remaining militia strongpoints and gun pits, raking them with their mega-bolters and obliterating them in swathes of incendiary flame. Against the colossal mining engines themselves, the core echelons of Knights Errant struck, with a cadre of Cerastus Lancers forming the spearpoint of the attack. Rather than engage the lumbering hulks,

which might have easily crushed even such as they, the Knights broke around them like the tide against a rocky shore, using their superior speed and mobility to evade the roaring drills and saw-toothed maws of the mining engines. As close in as they were, not even the dense armour of the colossal machines could deny the searing power of the Knights Errant's thermal cannon, nor the deft savagery of their chainblades, while the blinding flashes of the Lancer's strikes blew out their control mechanisms and blasted apart vital couplings. Soon the gigantic engines were reeling and crashing like dying beasts, smoke belching from a dozen rents in their scorched plating. All that remained for the last defenders of the starport was a terrified rout, which ended with the waiting Death Guard.

**The Scythe**

At the adamantium gate of the sub-surface Guild Hall, against all odds the line still held. The few Salamanders who stood fast fought on like devils, unyielding, driven on beyond even the superhuman endurance of the Legiones Astartes by the desire for vengeance and the power of raw hate. With them stood the last of the Guildmasters' finely equipped elite bodyguards, knowing that they had nowhere else to run, even as the Guildmasters themselves cowered in the bunkers beneath them, save a few who had chosen to stand and die with their men. Only when reports that Space Marines had been sighted among the defenders of the gate filtered through to the Traitors' command, did Mortarion himself, Primarch of the Death Guard, deign to join the battle in person. The first the beleaguered Salamanders knew of it was when the Traitors' guns fell suddenly and eerily silent in order to await their master's arrival.

Like a circling carrion crow in the smoke-stained sky, the Primarch's battered and battle-scarred Stormbird descended steeply, braking sharply at the last, its retros flaring bright as it disgorged its deadly cargo; the master of the XIV$^{th}$ Legion accompanied by his silent Deathshroud. At once was battle mercilessly re-joined, as the disbelieving Loyalists unleashed everything they had left at the spectre of the grave come for them, and the Death Guard surged forward from their positions in an all-out attack.

Though one of his Deathshroud fell never to rise again and a score of his Legionaries were cut down mid-stride, Mortarion came on through the storm of shellfire and las bolts, as unstoppable and inviolate as death itself, his tattered cloak streaming behind him and his scythe held high. He crashed into the defence line like a thunderbolt, sending the first two Salamanders he reached to their deaths with ancient Nocturnian curses on their lips, bisected in a sweep of his great, reaping blade. The third caught him with a melta blast which set the Primarch's armour bubbling and running like molten wax, but he did no more than stagger soundlessly for a moment, before splitting the valiant Loyalist open with a single downward sweep of his scythe. Then fell a fourth, a fifth and a sixth. By then his Death Guard had smashed into the defence lines with him, and crashed over the last of the Guildmasters' elite like an obliterating wave, so that the crush of splintered bone and the racking of reloading bolters was all that could be heard. Then came a mighty, amplified roar like that of a monster of ancient myth, and from a pile of broken rubble rose up a huge form, cast in deep emerald armour chased with ruddy gold. It was Shar'rac Grenn, once Consul-Centurion of the Salamanders 3$^{rd}$ Company, bound to serve for the last four decades within the deathless shell of a Contemptor Dreadnought, and for all that he knew, the last of his kind.

A tongue of flame spitting from his whirring assault cannon, Grenn blasted a path to his arch-foe, slayer of his brothers, and betrayer of his Emperor. Mortarion, as still and impassive as lifeless stone, waited for his enemy to come on. The Dreadnought charged, bellowing his war cry, cannon blazing, power claw drawn back to strike. Mortarion spun, stillness to blurring speed quicker than a mortal eye could follow, the great scythe sweeping out in its lethal arc. The blade struck, ceramite and adamantium split, and the Dreadnought bellowed in shock as his severed arm fell, the assault cannon still firing wildly as it clattered across the rubble. Mortarion turned again for another strike but the Dreadnought turned with him, bathing the gaunt Primarch in roaring fire from the heavy flamer concealed in his power claw. Mortarion's shoulder slammed into his foe's sarcophagus, knocking the mighty machine reeling, in return its crackling power claw pitched the Primarch a blow that would have sundered a battle tank, but the Reaper did not fall. The great scythe lashed out, again and again, and with each cut Grenn howled in bitter rage and frustration as the Contemptor Dreadnought's armoured frame was taken slowly apart. At last crippled and burning, the mighty Shar'rac Grenn fell, and Mortarion's scythe plunged like a raptor's beak at its prey to slay the flesh within the machine. It was over, Dominica Minor had fallen two-point-seven-five sidereal hours after the attack had begun—less than three hours was all it had taken to murder a world.

**The Sorrow of Moab**

Almost at the same hour that doom befell Dominica Minor, a tragedy of a different character was to unfold on Moab. This chill, desert orb had, through accident of history and its location at a relatively stable junction of currents within the Warp passing though the Cyclops Cluster to the Manachean Commonwealth, become the most populous world in the region, and a crossing point for colonists and labour cohorts setting out across the sector. Moab was a world possessed of a single coin; its people, and in terms of political power and economic might, it had long lived in the shadow of more favoured worlds such as Dominica Minor and Mezoa. Now, as darkness reached out across the stars, Moab found itself alone before the wolf, its defensive squadrons stripped away for deployment elsewhere, and its few picquet ships and orbital gun stations, intended to deter corsair and renegade incursions, offering little hope where far mightier bastions had already fallen.

When the enemy came, it was not the pale-hulled, implacable warships of the Death Guard, but the knife-like deep viridian and sable predators of the Sons of Horus. Arcing into Moab's near-void space without warning, they appeared from behind the local gas giant, their drives blazing like torches in the heavens, a wide spearhead comprising eight strike cruisers and, at their apex, the dreaded *Ikon*, her ultimatum this time delivered from the barrels of her accelerator cannon. Moab's orbital defences were quickly silenced, its single great geo-stationary satellite —a tangled conglomeration fashioned from the hulls of colony arks and used as the planet's primary orbital transfer— was mauled and boarded with almost contemptuous ease by the Traitors. Ground fire was late in coming so swift was the attack and it too soon faltered of its own accord as the cruisers danced back out of range.

The Imperial Commander of Moab, one Malthus Grange, was quick to signal his world's surrender. The call went unanswered. The signal was made again, this time on all available vox channels, but still the cruisers circled without answer. Again and again the signal was made, with increasingly frantic and shameful pleas for mercy, all the time the fear built on the planet and the tension mounted to breaking point as the hours

wore on, for while the Night Lords were the Legion most renowned for their use of terror as a weapon, the Sons of Horus were well versed in its application too. Below, within their fortified enclaves, the muster barons who ran the great labour barracks began to turn on each other, and civil insurrection and infighting broke out. The tension became unbearable, until Malthus Grange himself was slain, and the next transmission of surrender now carried images of his bullet-ridden body as further offering to the fleet in orbit. It was only then that the *Ikon* answered. Pict-screens across Moab were filled with the image of a savagely armoured Legiones Astartes in a black-plumed, snarling-masked helm, all but unrecognisable as once one of the Imperium's finest warriors. They had made a beginning, the nameless master of the *Ikon* told them, but it was not enough. Horus had sent him to save them from the Emperor's lies, and from the weakness he had fostered, and the due payment for this boon was to serve Him. But only the strong, only those who deserved to survive would live, and the blood of the weak would buy them that survival. "*Kill in His name and live, or perish with your Emperor's name on your lips; it is for you to decide.*" What followed was unspeakable.

It was many days later when the dark bulks of orbital lighters began to appear in the skies of Moab, and descended into its barrack cities through the blood-reeking smoke that hung over them like a pall. Into their cavernous holds filed haggard, hollow-eyed men and women by the thousands, bound into the Warmaster's service as footsoldiers by a pact far darker than any sane mind could know or comprehend.

## Silence Falls over the Cyclops Cluster

By the closing days of 007.M31, the steady flow of broken and fleeing Loyalist warships, refugee transports and escaped merchant craft that had made the desperate flight to the nearby sanctuary of the Manachean Commonwealth had ended as swiftly as it had begun. The last news that came to Manachea — bordering the Cyclops Cluster in the Ultima Segmentum to the galactic east— was of the direst import. The reports spoke of scores of worlds in the grip of the Warmaster, and of scores of others laid waste, or simply descended into anarchy and barbarism as if Old Night had come again.

Only Mezoa, it was said, held strong amidst the darkness, although now besieged by the numberless cohorts of its ancient rival M'Pandex, pale-hulled Legion warships, and turncoat siege-monitors of the armada. The first great assault had been hurled back, it was whispered, only because the Mezoan Magos had somehow turned the fabric of their molten world against their attackers, causing vast swathes of the planet's mantle to suddenly and violently collapse under the enemy's landing zones. The wilder reports even said that colossal island-sized chunks of magma had somehow been hurled up into space at the attacking ships, and that an ashen-black war machine called by some '*the dragon*', claimed to have been dug loose from the black sands of Isstvan itself, had somehow appeared to meet the attack and torn the Traitor Archimandrite limb from metallic limb.

Regardless of the truth, that the Traitor forces had been hurled back was known, but Mezoa was but one light amid a sea of night and how long it would last could not be predicted. All astropathic communication from the Cyclops Cluster had ceased, and the rising warp squalls blinded any attempt to pierce the darkness with probe ships.

Silence had fallen across what was now the domain of the enemy.






# The Manachean War

*"Woe unto the mighty city,*
*Blood there ran in torrents,*
*drenched was all the earth,*
*As the mighty and the base were*
*cast down together,*
*Here were men lying quelled by bitter death,*
*And shrouded was the world in their blood."*

*The Apocrypha Terra*

## The Muster of War

The Manachean Commonwealth was an independent dominion forming its own self-governing sub-sector within the Imperium to the galactic east of the Cyclops Cluster. Considered the lynchpin of the Coronid Deeps, it was also the principal axis of Imperial power holding the northern border of the Imperium together thanks to the dual influence of two systems: Manachea itself—principally the hive world of Manachea Vysidae, which was in terms of population and industry the equal of any of the great hive worlds of the Segmentum Solar, and Port Maw which, while still under partial construction and expansion, was one of the most powerful Imperialis Armada bases in the northern Imperium. This border sub-sector, geared as it was for war, presented a formidable obstacle to any attack contemplated against it, and few regions outside the heartlands of the Segmentum Solar could claim to be so well protected.

Port Maw itself was home port to a very sizable fleet, numbering some hundred and seventy capital and line vessels of the first rank, and nearly a thousand other warships of lesser degree, whose principal purposes were to patrol the nearby Segmenta within the borders the Great Crusade had established, defend its worlds from attack, maintain order and enforce the writ of Imperial law. As part of this peacekeeping force, stationed there and at secondary bastions in the Manachea and Numinal systems, were a combined army of one hundred and ninety-three Solar Auxilia Imperial Army Cohorts, forming an independent strategic command of the Excertus Imperialis under Grand Admiral Ospheus LaBray. In practical terms, this comprised notionally some 3,860,000 fully armed, equipped and disciplined fighters outfitted to the highest standards of the Imperium's human soldiery. As Solar Auxilia, they were trained and experienced both in void combat and planetary defence

operations, and represented a significant military force, even when set against the threat of a Legiones Astartes attack. Besides this elite army, the Commonwealth's own emergency defence planning was predicated upon the ability to quickly raise, arm and supply tens of millions of planetary militia in extremis, and this act itself did not seriously impact upon the massive economic output of the sector—such were the immense labour reserves of Manachea Vysidae and the war materiél its wealth had allowed it to stockpile. Nor was the Commonwealth entirely without the assistance of the Legiones Astartes, albeit in very small numbers. The limited garrison the Imperial Fists had left in their bastion station of Manachea Lux since the Great Crusade had liberated the region, and staying true to their oaths, quickly subdivided itself and sent its Legionaries to act as advisors throughout the Commonwealth, lending their expertise in counter-siege to improving defensive planning and structures, but the shattered survivors that had returned from Isstvan and found their way to Manachea had neither stayed nor submitted themselves to 'merely' human authority for the main part, content to regroup and move on, rather than being tied down to the defence of worlds other than their own.

The question then immediately becomes why did this vast and mobile force not come to the aid of the Cyclops Cluster when it was attacked? The answer is a simple one; it was not allowed to. The Warmaster had not allowed it. Long even before the outbreak of the war of the Heresy, along with many centres of Imperial military power not under the direct control of Horus or his agents enough to ensure loyalty, the subtle hand of the Traitor had done much to temporarily neutralise potential resistance when the hour of civil war came. So it was that at the time of the Isstvan III Atrocity, numerous elements of the Port Maw Excertus had been deployed to the very edges of their usual far-flung operational range; occupied on deep patrols, sent chasing half-unsubstantiated reports of privateer or xenos marauder activity, or even been temporarily reassigned to reinforce distant border conflicts and ongoing war zones, whether or not such reinforcements were truly warranted. Such actions the authority of the Warmaster allowed without gainsay or suspicion.

When the rebellion became apparent, commands were changed and squadrons and cohorts recalled for a general muster at Port Maw, but this was neither a swift task, nor an easy one, and was made all the more difficult by the now-infamous upsurge in warp turbulence and storms which were to spell such disaster over the coming years as they gained in strength. By 006.M31, matters for the fragmented Port Maw Excertus became increasingly worse and where elements of the fleet had spent much of the previous several years all but chasing shadows, now the threats they faced were very real. All across the Coronid Deeps, reports of unknown warships, civil unrest, unexplained calamities, outlaw activity, and xenos privations were on the rise, and then came the messengers of the Warmaster, demanding the Dark Compliance of the Cyclops Cluster, the Grail Abyss and even Lethe on the Commonwealth's border—few doubted that such an emissary would soon arrive at Manachea as well.

Many deep range patrols sent beyond the Segmentum border simply did not return, while raiders chaotically attacking outposts perilously close to the Coronid Prohibited Zone, which even the authorities at Port Maw were forbidden to enter by ancient decree, were tentatively identified as belonging to the Rogue Trader Militant Rom Jhutlannder, whose ships had in the past served as pathfinders for the Warmaster's own great 63rd Expeditionary Fleet. But the attack when it came appeared from a most unexpected quarter, as a xenos-infested space hulk of the likes which had not been seen in the region for many decades, complete with scores of heavy parasite warships in tow, arrived at the edge of the Vlorlath system, sending the Commonwealth's military scrambling to respond.

**The Enemy Unlooked For**

The invading space hulk, a vast conglomeration of shattered planetary rock and ancient ship derelicts, designated *Red Polyphemus* in accordance with the *Coda Navis*, was thought drawn perhaps to the system's potent Astropathic relay station orbiting the system's seventh planet, Vlorlath Srader. Its appearance after a brief but violent storm in the Warp mere ill-fortune, but this too seems doubtful in hindsight.

While the Orks as a galactic-scale threat within the expansive celestial territory of the Imperium had been subdued by the Great Crusade, on the outer frontier, they still remained a potent if infrequent menace, and the degenerate, half-devolved breed that infested the *Red Polyphemus* represented the largest concentration of the brutal xenos encountered in the region for nearly thirty years. Such a dire menace required the immediate mustering and dispatch of an entire battle group from Port Maw to combat, diverting a muster of warships and cohorts intended to deal with the worsening situation in the Cyclops Cluster. By the time the Imperial fleet answered the attacks, the Vlorlath Srader Relay was already overrun, and tens of thousands of mutated Orks and gyre-worms had made planet fall on Vlorlath Srader, while the space hulk itself ploughed madly onwards, forcing the fleet into a dogged and bloody



pursuit. In normal circumstances, the aid of a sizable Legiones Astartes force would have been ideally called upon to strike a death blow to the hulk, but in this darkening time, no such help was available. This left the Port Maw battlegroup the thankless and dangerous task of attempting to slowly pulverise the gargantuan *Red Polyphemus* with prolonged, close range bombardment, rather than board it and destroy it from within—all the time under attack by the barbaric xenos which infested it like vermin. Without the elite Solar Auxilia cohorts of the Port Maw Excertus Command, dealing with the catastrophe at Vlorlath Srader would simply have not been possible, both in terms of the counter-invasion of the system's colony worlds, and the defence of the taskforce attacking the Ork hulk, which faced continual suicide attacks and boarding assaults by the savage xenos and their crude but murderous void engines.

As the campaign against the xenos dragged on into the closing days of 007.M31, the hulk finally began to fragment under the bombardment, but the victory's cost had entailed a butcher's bill in lives and ships lost increasing with every report, while word reached Port Maw and Manachea of the fate that had befallen first Lascal and then Dominica Minor offering another terrible blow to the Commonwealth's morale. The fears of the Commonwealth's defenders now had a name and a shape at last. Calls for military aid were passed to still-loyal territories to the east in the Coronid Reach—the only part of the Imperium with which contact could still be readily made and answers of grudging accord were given, worlds such as Agathon and Numinal aware that if the Commonwealth fell, they stood little chance in turn. Orders for general mobilisation were issued, the final stages of emergency plans enacted, defences on the Commonwealth's eastern border were heavily reinforced and known stable termini on warp routes to the Cyclops Cluster were aggressively laid with void mines. Given the ongoing battle in the Vlorlath system occupying a major part of the fleet's strength, the order was given that taskforces and patrols were to be recalled where possible from all other posts and ordered to rendezvous at Port Maw with the expectation of having to meet head-on what would once have been an unthinkable threat; the direct and massed attack of the Death Guard from the silence of the Cyclops Cluster.

It was, unfortunately, all just as the Warmaster had planned.

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**The Jealousy of the Black Magos**

Though their loyalties had yet to be revealed for what they were, the greatest threat from within the Coronid Deeps would prove to be the Mechanicum Forge World of Cyclothrathe. Born not of ancient history, but rather some of the darkest and most horrifying conflicts of the Great Crusade and long withdrawn into secret ways and the study of the arcane, they were recognised by their strange arachnid symbol and their robes not of Martian crimson, but of deepest hearts-blood and sable, and by the fathomless storm-cloud hues which adorned their servants and engines of war. For years they had garnered a reputation for ruthlessness and aggression, both in defence of their domains from any xenos that crossed the frontier, and in pressing any claims they made to resource rights and territory. Imperial law and the intercession of Mars had been called upon on more than one occasion to keep Cyclothrathe's expansion in check. Bellicose and arrogant, the black-clad Magos of Cyclothrathe kept their distance even from others of their own kind, and where they walked, they walked alone.

It is not known how the jealousy and ambition of the Cyclothrathine Mechanicum came to the attention of the Warmaster, but it was so, and it may even perhaps have formed part of a larger strategy in dealing with the Mechanicum as an ally in revolt, and perhaps one day as a future enemy. For while Horus had courted and indeed caused the corruption of much of the Martian Mechanicum, and the Fabricator-General himself, and through that alliance brought many Forge Worlds, Titan Legions and Magos into his sway, he had also courted a number of Forge Worlds and Archmagos to whom Mars was at best an unwanted and distant authority. This was the case with Sarum and with Estaban III, both Forge Worlds whose loyalty secured for Horus lines of supply which did not depend on the writ of Mars, and with minor Forge Worlds like Cyclothrathe, whose industrial resources were not of such magnitude, but brought other, more unique powers into the Traitors' fold. In return he offered them freedom; no ultimate master but himself as a disinterested overlord who did not care to interfere with their works, their creed or where their arts led them, so long as his rule remained unopposed and his warriors were glutted with arms. To Cyclothrathe it seems, long before blood was shed at Isstvan, Horus offered something else as well. He offered empire; a domain of their own to rule in his name, and for years their vault-fanes and sunken forges had laboured in secret and without the knowledge of the Imperium nor of Mars, fashioning baroque engines of destruction and unliving legions of Battle-automata, stockpiling them in the deep vaults beneath their lightning-scoured world, waiting for the trumpet blast of war to call them forth.

## Treachery at Port Maw

The situation in the Port Maw system was one of extreme and ruthless order holding back a tide of chaos. The shell of the great artificial planetoid on which the vast naval base and void-forges had been built was choked by a swarm of vessels, both mighty and small, from a score of battleships girding themselves for war, to dozens of cruiser squadrons, countless hundreds of escorts, and thousands of servitor-drone tenders, victuallers and supply ships, troop transports and orbital lighters—all about their own business as the entire system stood on a state of high alert. In grim alliance, reinforcing fleets had come from the east, dark bronze warships bearing the fiery lantern-sigil of the Agathean Domain, one of the most isolated of all the Imperium's clusters of civilization, lean pirate-killers from the Cerada Nebula and a trinity of huge storm-grey war-arks from the Mechanicum Forge World of Cyclothrathe, void-automata scuttling across their hulls like macabre insects. Into this morass of vessels, before the border fell silent, had also come the refugees from the storm. Some had been mercantile vessels, others great livestock conveyors or ore transports, fleeing from a dozen different systems under threat or under direct attack, and others were warships, the ragged survivors of the battles in the Cyclops Cluster and a handful had fled from as far afield as the murderous void battles at Isstvan, but of these no Space Marine vessels remained long at anchor. Of this flotsam of war, most had been mauled by the enemy or driven past any safe operational ability in the desperate flight to reach safety, and all required aid and assistance of some kind. Some even had arrived in such a parlous state that they had to be scuttled or set to drift at the system's edge so they posed no danger to the vortex of ships that swirled around the port station.

This hurricane of vessels, with its bewildering complexity and ever-shifting maze of hazards, was far too great a burden than any merely human mind could bear, and control of the vast armada was channelled through Port Maw's Mechanicum Astra Control Panopticon. This powerful broadcast tower, ten kilometres high, jutted spike-like from Port Maw's southern pole. From here fleet orders and beacon signals were relayed, navigational co-ordinates checked and rectified, and centrally controlled cogitator-maintained data directly fed into the helms of the ships under the Port's watch, so as to swiftly reorganise their patterns and avoid collision. This system could, of course, be swiftly overridden by the ships themselves, but still represented a terrible vulnerability and so the Panopticon's control frequencies had been proofed against treachery by a complete replacement of cyphers and



encryption-djinn following the reveal, first of the Warmaster's treachery, and then changed again with panicked haste after the double blow of yet more betrayal at Isstvan V. This had been of even greater concern as a significant portion of both the Raven Guard and Iron Warriors fleets had made layover for resupply at Port Maw on their way to what would become the Dropsite Massacre, and both had been fully updated on the Port's codes and deployment schedules. All of this was deemed compromised and once again swiftly replaced wholesale and, due to this, the Port Maw void augury and geas-overide systems were then believed by the Armada Command to still be impregnable against outside influence. Indeed, perhaps they would have proved so, except that the spider at the heart of this vast web, the Archmagos-Astral Leit Mercuric, cyber-ordinator of Port Maw, was already secretly sworn to Horus.

**The Web of Deceit**

Under the hand of the treacherous Archmagos of Port Maw, a fiendish web of conspiracy and malevolence had been forming and its strands stretched far and wide across the Manachean Commonwealth and its worlds, and out to the dominions of Agathon and the dual suns of Cerada at the furthest extreme of the Coronid Reach. Now its hour was at hand.

This conspiracy had many layers, and many agencies were bound up within it, from the Traitor Archmagos-Astral Mercuric and her acolytes, to several officer cadres of the Imperialis Armada who had been corrupted by strange rites and secret societies brought into their midst while serving alongside the Sons of Horus and the Word Bearers Legions, to turncoats bribed through the more traditional means of festering dissent, greed, fear and hungry ambition, and purposefully planted spies and saboteurs hiding behind the identities of murdered men and women. Their numbers, particularly in relation to the billions of men and women under arms in the Manachean Commonwealth, were in comparison very few, but they were well placed, and with such a tainted network, it had been all too easy to ensure that forces and agents loyal to the Warmaster were where they would do the most harm when the time came.

Like a fruit, wholesome to the appearance but canker-ridden from within, the Manachean Commonwealth's vaunted defences were already undermined, and its fate was to serve as an object lesson not in outright destruction —as that at the worlds of the Cyclops Cluster had been— but in the surety of a blade in the back.



## The Blade in the Dark

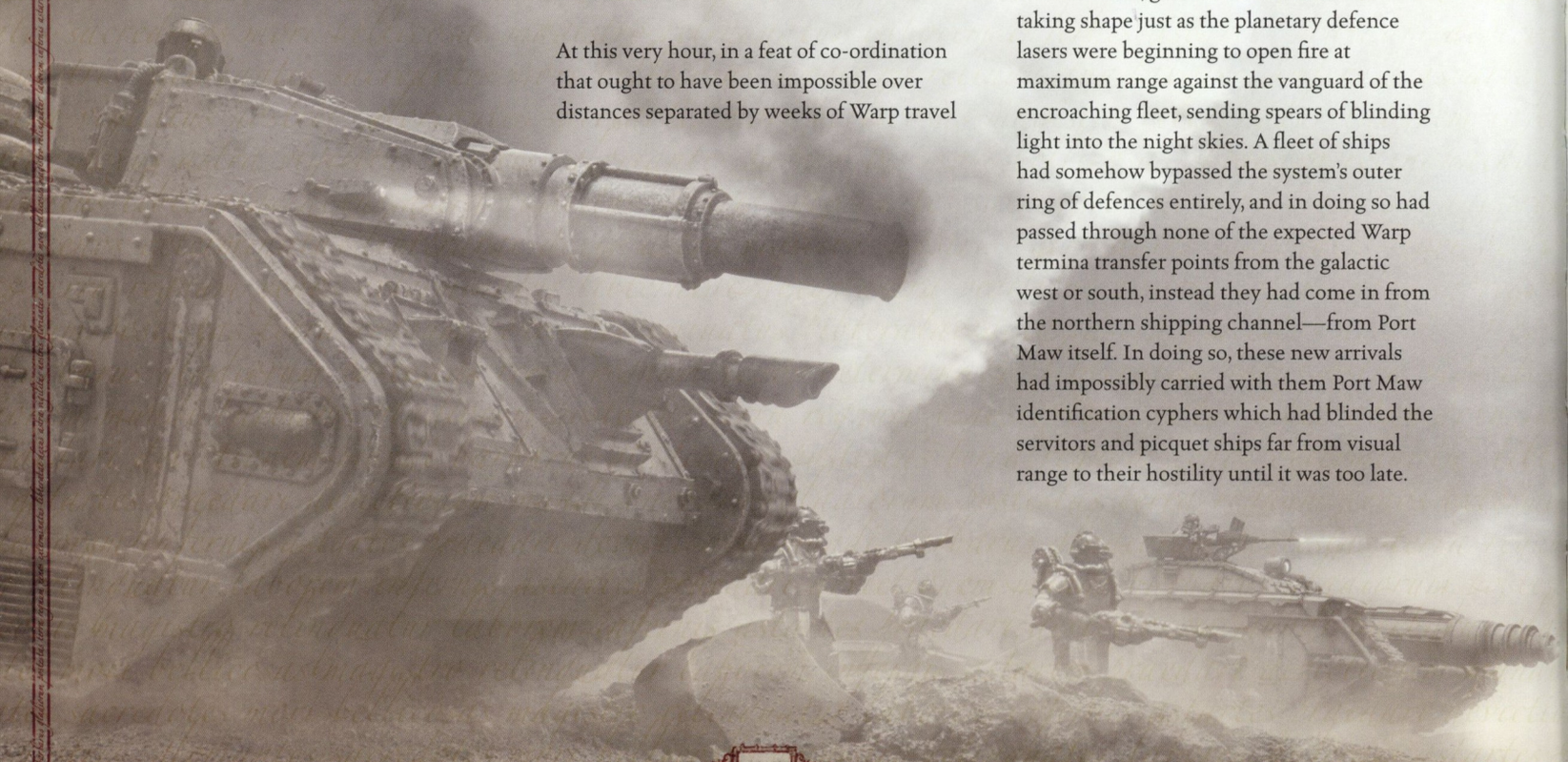
It was at 0044008.M31, 0402 local standard time, some five hours before the system's white sun would dawn over the spires of Hive Ilium, principal seat of power and governance of Manachea Vysidae, when the first reports of the attack came. Within minutes alarm klaxons were sounding and civil defence hailers were barking out orders all across the world's eleven sprawling open-metroplex hive structures, and Manachea's billions were rousing themselves for imminent crisis. Ground-to-orbital defence laser batteries and sentinel auspex towers swept the skies. Great arterial roadways which thundered daily under the treads of millions of vehicles were cleared and fell silent but for priority military traffic, habitation blocks went under mass curfew, and countless militia units were mustered, armed and deployed, their Rhino carriers sweeping through the otherwise empty night-time streets. In the most vital strategic areas, transport termina, landing zones, mass-generatora stations and the thuggish Arbitrator block fortresses set against the threat of civil revolt, the scurrying of the militia was watched impassively by the visored helms of the Solar Auxilia Cohorts deployed to defend the capital hive, the battle-hardened professional soldiers already alert and ready at their posts. But the clockwork precision with which the long-drilled defence plans of the Manachean state swung into action was belied by the horror and near anarchy that reigned in the command amphitheatre of the Palace of Light, as the fortified government spire of Hive Ilium was known.

Here the Imperial Commander of Vysidae and Lord Protector of the Manachean Commonwealth, Pryamus Beket, a born patrician whose noble line had ruled this world since the Age of Strife could do nothing but look on in disbelief and dawning terror at what was displayed in the huge holo-occularis which lit up the central space of the echoing amphitheatre. Around him his generals and staff officers bickered and argued, almost in a frenzy, whilst civic officials wandered in confusion. The Tech-Priest strategos linked to the sensorium through thick umbilical cabling howled screeds of lingua-technis at each other while their slaved servitors spewed reams of data-parchment as they checked and re-interrogated readings and reports, which should not… could not be true. The very stars of the night skies over Vysidae were being blotted out by the warships of the enemy approaching and despite this, the orbital mines had not detonated and the defence monitor ships had answered no vox-hail, although they appeared to sail on serene and oblivious to the danger on the auspex-scanners. All of this is recorded in the deep-core archive of Hive Ilium, recovered from its ruins many years later when the ashes of the Commonwealth were raked over by the forces of the Great Scouring, shedding light on a tragedy that until then had remained just one more mystery of this great and unknown war.

At this very hour, in a feat of co-ordination that ought to have been impossible over distances separated by weeks of Warp travel from each other in normal circumstances, the skies of other worlds yet untouched by the war were being darkened by other war fleets moved by the Warmaster's hand. In orbit of the frontier world of Subinus, an expected relief convoy, flanked by escorting frigate squadrons, opened fire on the patrol cruisers they were to have resupplied, before turning their batteries on the few cities of the world below, pounding them to rubble. Elsewhere, at the vast open-cast carbide mines on the shattered planetoid of Cryxa, the lone *Fourth Horseman* of the Death Guard Legion attacked, crashing through the outer workings to unleash an entire company of Grave Warden Terminators directly into the mine's populated gallery levels, commencing a month long season of slaughter which purged the planetoid of human life. At distant Numinal, key to the Coronid Reach, an armada of more than a hundred vessels bearing the arachnid-machina heraldry of the Taghmata Cyclothrathe tore out of the Warp and declared the entire star system forfeit to them on pain of death. Even further out, at Maxilla Planus, the arrival of Rogue Trader warships bearing the Eye of Horus on their flanks was the signal for a mass workers revolt that set the continent-spanning fields of the agri-world ablaze, while at the nearby colony world of Bredac Junction, the reaver Knight House of Ærthegn swept down from the stars to plunder, enslave and kill, bearing that same serpent's eye upon their banners.

### The Wolves of War

In the amphitheatre of the Palace of Light on Manachea, garbled facts were at last taking shape just as the planetary defence lasers were beginning to open fire at maximum range against the vanguard of the encroaching fleet, sending spears of blinding light into the night skies. A fleet of ships had somehow bypassed the system's outer ring of defences entirely, and in doing so had passed through none of the expected Warp termina transfer points from the galactic west or south, instead they had come in from the northern shipping channel—from Port Maw itself. In doing so, these new arrivals had impossibly carried with them Port Maw identification cyphers which had blinded the servitors and picquet ships far from visual range to their hostility until it was too late.



Waves of near silent boarding torpedoes, assault rams and Dreadclaws sent hurtling towards their targets as mute and cold as lead shot in the void had done the rest.

The frost-rimed assault craft, using neither life support nor power in order to conceal their approach, slammed into the hulls of defence monitors and gun platforms undetected until the last, and soon the void war for the control of Manachea's orbit was over before it had even begun. It was only now, as the main body of the invading task force drew close, that the cogitators and lexmechanics reached their conclusions and put names to a handful of the warships poised like spear tips over Hive Ilium: the *Desolation*, *King Eater*, the *Oblivion*, *Gore Prow*, and the infamous *Bone Jackal*; all heavy warships of the XVI[th] Legion—warships of the Sons of Horus.



**The Path of the Damned**

Post facto reconstruction of the events surrounding the onset of the Manachean War must take note of the sudden and unexpected plane of attack taken by the Warmaster's forces; the galactic north. Although the void of realspace operates in three dimensions, the empyreal vortex of the Warp has its own idiosyncrasies and arteries, tides and storms. These factors make the pursuit of and adherence to known and near-stable warp routes both a necessity and an act of sanity, particularly in times of increased turbulence and unpredictability in the Warp, as was the case at the time of the attack. In fact, such was the reliance on these routes that the very Coronid Deeps had been colonised along such a winding cluster of warp passages, predominately arcing from the galactic east to the galactic west roughly parallel to the northernmost border of the Ultima Segmentum. Furthermore, to the direct galactic north of the Manachean Commonwealth lay the dark abyss of the Coronid Prohibited Zone, a region forbidden for its sheer hazardousness in fragmentary records dating back to the Dark Age of Technology. The means by which the Warmaster's fleet either closely circumnavigated it without their destruction or, even more unthinkably, crossed it directly remain utterly unknown. By doing so, and by first provoking the Commonwealth's defenders to look to their eastern borders, the Warmaster was able to create an element of surprise for his fleets' assaults that simply could not by any normal means have been possible.



## The Song of Chaos

At Port Maw, in the flickering actinic light and glimmering brass of the Mechanicum Control Panopticon, a countdown set in motion long before wound down finally to zero. The Mechanicum djinn-data web blazed with a power unheard of, and all over the system vox-circuits burned out, auguries were suddenly shrouded in static and auspex scanners shut themselves down as if to avoid the flash-flare of a nova. The vast swirling fleet that surrounded the Port station was in a moment all but blinded, and in that same moment, the navigational net entrusted to sift safe order from chaos began to lie. Ships collided without warning, showering wreckage into the paths of others, drives flared suddenly to full power, hurling the crews of the runaway vessels to bloody pulp, pulverised by unexpected and unguarded-against accelerations, and flag bridges were swamped with hostile scrap-code.

On a hundred vessels, systems failed or misfired as the chaotic signal continued to pulse, and in others whole decks depressurised or vented into the void, dragging their silently screaming inhabitants with them. The worse calamities the deadly electromagnetic song inflicted though befell upon only the lesser vessels; the merchantmen and the light escorts without the power to resist and to whom an end came swiftly. The greater warships were far too powerful and too resilient to suffer much other than debilitation and confusion from this data djinn-borne blade in the back, their own fearsome machine-anima immediately reacting against the attack, over-riding or burning out corrupted systems to regain full control. But many of these leviathans of war as they recovered found themselves suddenly under fire from those they believed allies. For while many reeled, there had been warships prepared in secret for this assault and others against whom the attack had not been directed at all, and at whose helms Traitor hands had mastery. Already warships had begun to burn as former comrades opened fire at point blank range before they were aware of the danger—laid low by treacherous strikes intended to cripple rather than kill. Within tightly formed squadron formations, vox-broadcasts demanded surrender and some vessels, finding themselves surrounded by turncoats and all but powerless, could do nothing but comply, but elsewhere the initial attack had been anything but successful in subduing those ships that remained loyal, and aboard these, void shields swiftly ignited and alarm sirens sounded as battle stations was called with vengeful ire.

On the vast conglomerate station complex that was Port Maw itself, fighting had already broken out between Traitor and Loyalist, the station's provost marshals having thwarted an attempted mutiny in their own ranks were now rallying armed resistance to lay siege to the Mechanicum Control Panopticon, which would answer neither vox-hail or override command, and was the undoubted source of the malign broadcast drowning out all others. The frantic provost marshals, unable to make headway against the automated defences which ringed the Panopticon citadel, gave way to the elite white-armoured Veletaris sections of the 905th Lethe Cohort, the Ash Scorpions as they had come to be known. Veterans of a dozen ferocious war zones, the discipline of battle had turned these infamous feral-worlders into a lethally effective fighting force. Blasting through bulkheads with melta bombs and tracked rapier cannon, they worked their way corridor by corridor, cutting down any resistance they met with savage crossfires of volkite rays, and forced a passage through the Maw's labyrinth of tunnels towards the generatora which supplied the Panopticon with its power.

As they battled closer to the Mechanicum section, matters became yet more desperate as the station's fabric itself seemed to turn against them and they were forced to bring up flamer units to scour the passageways clear of scuttling haemonculites and darting servo-skulls, driven in frenzied attacks like maddened animals. Breaching their way at last into the great generator vault, they found a vast cathedral-like space, dominated by five enormous, lightning-shrouded plasma coils, each as large as a battle Titan. Here stood the acolytes of the treacherous Archmagos-Astral Mercuric: hulking Tech-Priests as heavily armoured as Legiones Astartes Terminators in order to endure proximity to the radioactive infernos they tended, metre-wide steel spiders which leered with the rictus-dead grins of human skulls from the gantryways and webs of cabling that festooned the vault, and scores of blank-eyed servitors, their flesh scorched cinder-black. Beyond all these, guarding the central control pulpit, was a maniple of iron-grey Castellax Battle-automata, their bolt cannon levelled and cycling; a deadly barrier beyond which nothing could pass.

Battle was joined. The fate of Port Maw hung in the balance, bravely the Ash Scorpions advanced into heavy fire, rushing from cover to cover as fast as they could as they tried to find a way through the tangle of consoles and companionways to the heart of the generatora. Soon the cavernous vault was filled with a hurricane of shrieking energy blasts and roaring bolt shells. Machinery exploded, companionways buckled, acrid smoke filled the air. Men and automata were cut down alike, steel claws found flesh and bit deep, flamers gouted their hot breath, grenades clattered and thundered, shredding bodies and sundering metal.

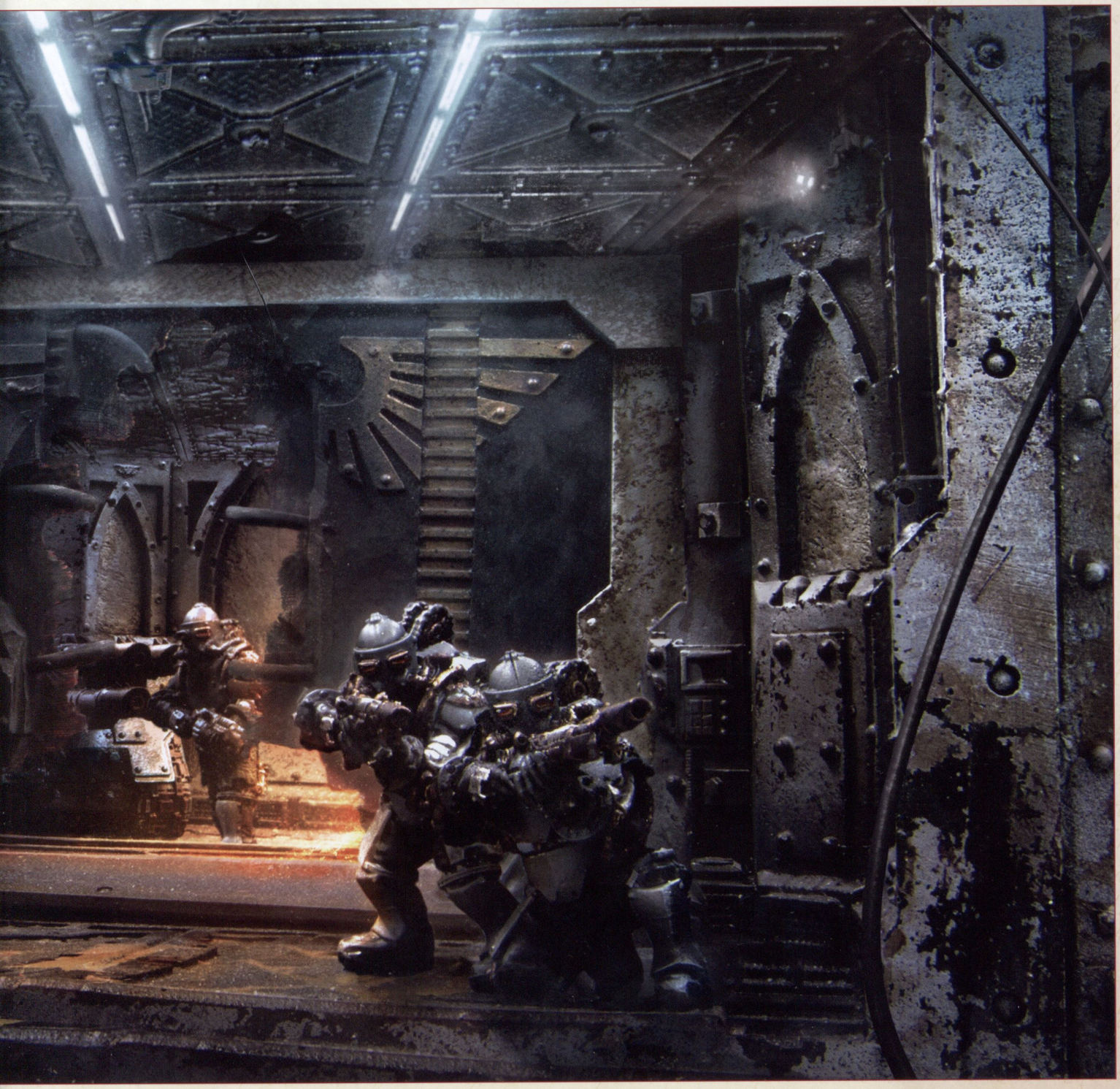
Amid the storm, the wall of Castellax stood unbreached, their armour scorched and smoking as blast and shell washed off them like hail across stone until a trio of tracked



rapier batteries emerged from the smoke, the shearing beams of their laser destroyers converging on the lead Castellax and sending it to burning oblivion. Sensing that their moment had come, the Veletaris storm sections broke from cover, screaming the ancient blood-cries of their feral world, and charged the breach in the lethal barricade of Battle-automata. Dozens died before they reached it, torn to pieces by the fury of the Mauler bolt cannon of the surviving Castellax, while others were pulverised by the heavy blows of their servo-claws, but like a pack of raptors they swarmed the armoured behemoths, volkites spitting hellish rays at point blank range into joints and tears in the Battle-automatas' armour. Another of the Castellax fell, thrashing in blind rage as its legs were cut from beneath it, and the Veletaris surged through, crashing into the waiting Tech-Priests with a strength born of desperation and sacrifice that could not be allowed to be in vain.

Only a single Veletarii Prime, whose name has gone unrecorded, managed to force his way through the tumult and slaughter to the dais of the control pulpit, his void armour blood-spattered and aflame. With no time for thought or plan of action, he plunged his power sabre directly into the heart of the machine, even as vast steel claws were fastening themselves around his pressure helm. The pulpit dais exploded in a blazing white fireball, murderous arcs of lightning shot from the great plasma reactor cores, ravaging the vault as their emergency protocols engaged, and the mis-directed power was vented into the capacitors which lined the walls, burning the men and machines caught between them into clouds of cinders.

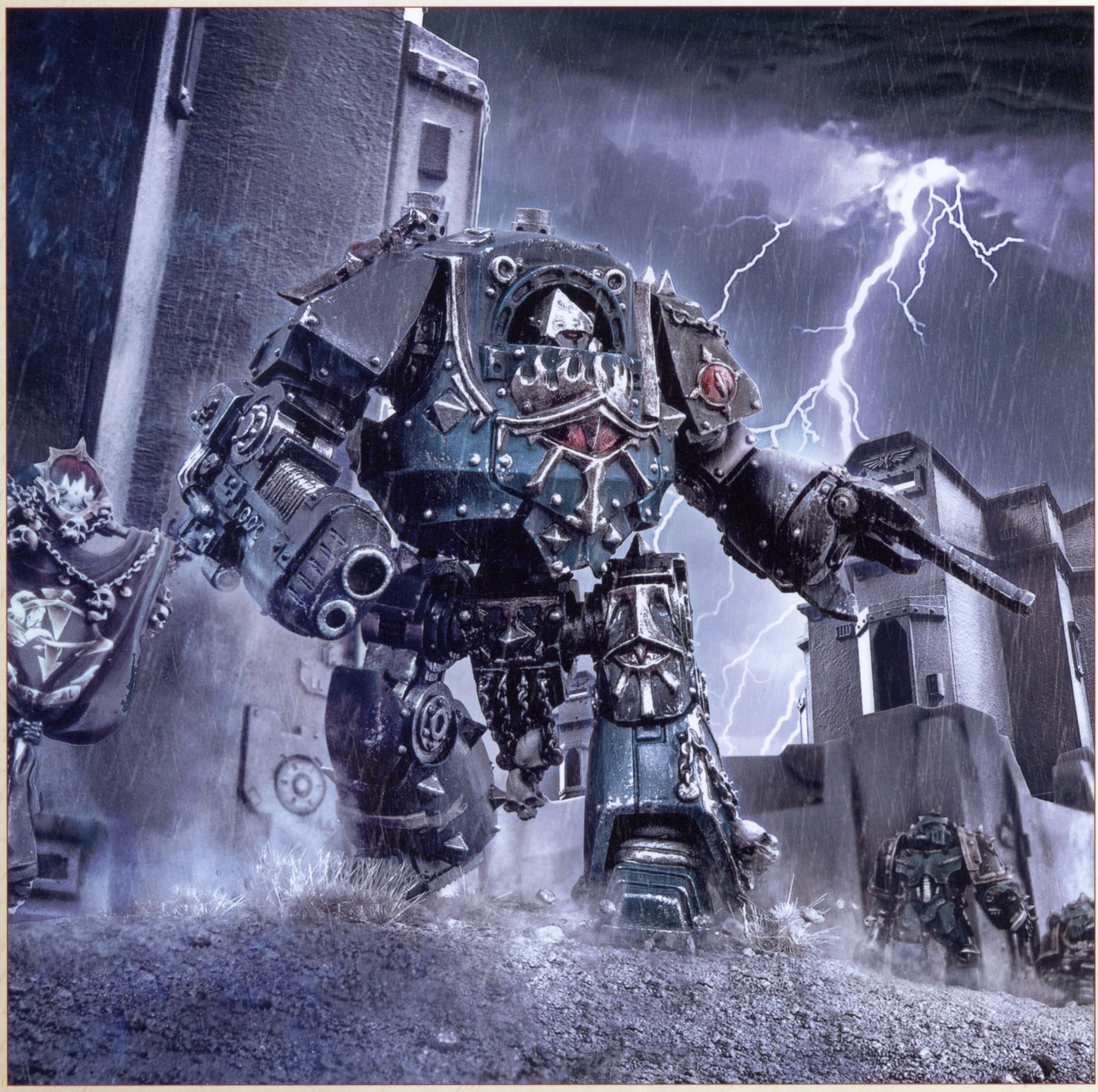
The interference signal blanketing Port Maw first faltered, and then failed.



**Triumph and Betrayal**

In the void-space around Port Maw, sudden deafening silence cut through the incessant pulse across the vox and signal network of the Loyalist ships, and in its wake matters immediately became both less chaotic and more murderous as battle lines were swiftly drawn between friend and enemy, hails sent and answered, ultimatums and demands for surrender issued and spurned, and command asserted in the face of the crisis.

Aboard the titanic *Triumph of Reason*, the Port Maw Armada's flagship —a huge fleet control vessel re-forged from the twin hulls of two Legatus class macro-battleships crippled in the earliest years of the Great Crusade— the attempted assassination of Grand Admiral Ospheus LaBray had been thwarted, and an attempted mutiny eradicated with bloody certainty. LaBray was now once more in full command of the immense warship and with the malign signal countered, the auguries and strategium-luminatior systems of the *Triumph* —designed to order and direct an entire Segmentum fleet-of-war if needed— reasserted tactical control over all Loyalist vessels that would answer its call. LaBray's first order was to the Dictatus class ram-battleship *Kurga*, which hung in orbit near the Port Maw station, having just similarly suppressed a mutiny of its own. Awakening to war, it powered towards the now silent Mechanicum Panopticon tower, the six kilometre long armatures of the ram-battleship's triple servo-claws extended. The *Kurga* smashed into the tower, the thirty metre long teeth-spikes of its claws piercing its armour and sinking slowly through its guttering power fields, and were joined moments later by scores of rocket-fired melta-barbed harpoons which speared into the brazen faces of the tower. Its victim secured, the *Kurga's* drives burned white hot. The ten kilometre tall tower shivered and cracked, resisting defiantly against the unimaginable forces tearing at it, but soon shuddered and gave way as the *Kurga's* oversized engines burned like hellfire. The tower broke, a myriad of secondary explosions rippling along its length as it



crumbled like rotten wood and was dragged free into the void. The malign signal would not sound again.

At the centre of the maelstrom of ships, Loyalist and Traitor vessels began to break apart, guns firing in fitful bursts, uncertain of friend and enemy. On the outer edges of the vast slow vortex of ships, tens of thousands of kilometres from Port Maw itself, the outriders of the great armada were only just recovering. These vessels had not been part of the core fleet at the Maw, and comprised dozens of reinforcement squadrons sent to the muster from other systems, along with numerous refugee craft and mass conveyors, around which were small provender and repair vessels that flitted like tiny sea creatures swarming around ocean leviathans. Here, removed from the heart of the treacherous attack, the carnage had been less extreme and the mutinies fewer, but still the anathema signal from Port Maw had blinded and deafened them for a time, and now most were bewildered and uncertain of just what the catastrophe unfolding before them meant, uncertain of who was firing on who, or why.

At the outermost edge of the maelstrom of ships, and all but unnoticed in the confusion, one of the great war-arks of Cyclothrathe, which had so far taken neither side in the anarchy, now triggered its manoeuvre jets and came about. The colossal barrel-shaped vessel slowly turned and pointed its prow towards the opposite edge of the spiral arm of outer ships to the still unengaged warships of the cruiser squadron sent from distant Agathon to answer Port Maw's call. Not one of these vessels bore a Traitor inside and to them the battle yet had no seeming cause and no clear side to choose. The Cyclothrathine war-ark, designated *Arithmetic of Violence*, silently broke apart, its ten kilometre long hull plates separating like the petals of a colossal flower in a storm. Revealed within in place of internal decks were row upon serried row of inert void torpedoes, which, as if lit by a single torch, ignited their plasma drives with a golden blaze of fire. They burned across the void to the Agatheans, smaller ships caught in their path obliterated instantly, and struck home like the obliterating fist of a god. The sudden searing flash of a score of mighty warships dying at once in fire was so bright that in that instant it burned visible to the naked eye even to the dark edges of the system's Ort cloud. And there in answer, a gigantic black warship came to life.



**The War Fleet of the Port Maw Armada**

The Port Maw fleet anchorage was one of a handful of massive Imperialis Armada fleet bases situated on or near the Imperium's borders. These bases, and the forces which operated from them, were a relatively recent development, born of an Imperium for which the galaxy now had been largely conquered, rather than one in which the Emperor still led the Great Crusade, its work not yet done. These fleet anchorages, at least one of which was founded in each of the Segmentum Majoris, with more planned, were the largest of their kind outside of the Segmentum Solar, and in their turn were dwarfed by the vast capacity of the Sol System itself, and were founded for the specific purpose of securing the domains the Great Crusade had forged from the strife-torn galaxy. As such, their functions were in the main as ports of supply and muster, command-and-control hubs, and as home bases for a permanently stationed armada of warships with their own armies of Auxilia troops. These armadas were designed to serve both as a source of deep-range patrols and rapid-reaction forces to respond to sudden threats, be they civil disturbance, rebellion or outside attack, both from within the Imperium and from beyond its borders.

In terms of the warships that physically made up these fleets —and the Port Maw Armada was an exemplar of this— they outnumbered and en masse likely out-gunned any single Expeditionary fleet of the Great Crusade, at least on paper. They were made up primarily of several hundred first and second rate ships of the line; various classes of cruiser and assault vessels intended to dominate 'small wars' and conduct lengthy patrols, supported by frigates and destroyers meant for escort duty, to pursue and destroy marauders, and hunt lone predator craft that might disturb the Emperor's Peace. By nature they possessed fewer large capital class ships than the outward reaching forces of the Great Crusade by disposition, but those they possessed were often very powerful examples of the type, including Goliath and Legatus class battleships. These two in particular were still extremely strong but support-intensive designs that had been replaced in frontline service only as the Great Crusade had reached ever further from the core worlds of the Segmentum Solar and supply lines had become stretched, giving way to more independently operating Gloriana and Victory patterns, but this was a deficiency of no consequence in their current role.

Unlike the ships and armies that made up the great Legiones Astartes-led Expeditionary fleets, the smaller Compliance battlegroups, and the Explorator and Rogue Trader-led formations, they were essentially defensive in nature, inward looking and meant to be successively piecemealed down into smaller commands and sub-deployments when needed, and as for as long as was needed. Because of this, they were made up almost entirely of the Imperialis Auxilia, with cohorts formed in the 'Solar' pattern almost exclusively. These were in turn usually drawn from the established Segmentum Excertus commands, and so were purely human in make-up and quite outside the regular command structures of the Great Crusade. Their Grand Admirals and Lords Marshal operated under authority directly proffered by the ruling Council on Terra, and were equal or perhaps greater in effective rank even than the Lords Commander who governed the individual worlds their ships protected. In practice, of course, it would be a very foolish Grand Admiral that would not defer to a Primarch when matters came to it, or an emissary of the Terran Court or Mars for that matter, but this growing distance between these two sides of the Imperium's military coin, one to defend, the other to conquer, particularly after the Emperor's return to Terra, accounts perhaps for the fact that the Traitors' cause did not have quite so much traction in the midst of these sovereign defence fleets as it did elsewhere in the Imperium's forces, a fact borne out broadly by the historical record.

This observation bears true in the case of the Port Maw Armada, which despite clear efforts being made to deliberately subvert it, remained in the majority loyal, and those ship's crews and Solar Auxilia regiments which did join the Traitors' cause were seldom crewed by wholehearted converts, but more often taken over by a polluted officer cadre or an armed mutiny by a well-prepared and ruthless minority.

## The Battle of Hive Ilium

The attack on Manachea when it came was both swift and executed with ruthless precision. Long had the Sons of Horus been famed as one of the Imperium's finest exponents of the decapitation strike; the sudden killing blow to an enemy's fighting power that makes victory all but inevitable. The attack on Manachea Vysidae was to be no exception to this, save that the throat to be cut was not simply a command post, an enemy general or even a great fortress, but an entire hive city.

In their plan of attack, the Sons of Horus assault fleet had aligned itself in a precise conical formation, a three-dimensional spear tip assault from space which presented the fleet's minimum aspect to the planet below, greatly reducing the potential hazard of ground fire to the attacking ships. Even so, Hive Ilium itself was well defended, with multiple reactor-fed laser batteries the equal of a battleship's main guns, banks of surface-to-air missile emplacements, and layered power field and void shield umbrellas over its most vital installations. As with any hive city, its sheer gargantuan scale was also a defence in itself, the inherent resilience of its titanic architecture as proof against violence as any purpose built fortification, while its thousands of kilometres of roadways and passages, habitation blocks, administration districts, manufactora, plazas and concourses, were a maze in which entire armies could be swallowed up whole. But to the Sons of Horus, such obstacles were the meat and drink of warfare, and to the master of the attacking fleet, none other than Ezekyle Abaddon, First Captain of his Legion, commanding the assault from the bridge of the battle barge *King Eater*, Ilium represented a prize he was determined to deliver to his Primarch as an emphatic victory.

As the spear tip descended into low orbit, the night skies around them became awash with varicoloured fire as the city's defence lasers found the attacking ships, blinding pulses of energy as bright as the noonday sun flashing from their void shields as the searing blasts struck home. In answer, the strike cruisers and battle barges let loose with a cannonade of their own, macro-shells and plasma bolts hammering down upon the city. Where the deadly meteors fell, the ground shook, power fields crackled with lightning and habitation blocks crumbled like sand, dooming those caught within. But this was no indiscriminate bombardment, and the strange method in Abaddon's plan of attack was soon apparent. Buildings collapsed, causeways shattered and great gouges were carved into the fabric of the city, but aside from probing for weaknesses in the heavy defence shields of the great ground batteries and the block fortresses, and leaping upon them where such weakness was found, the majority of the Traitors' fire was falling not on military targets but on precise sections of the city's sprawl, smashing them flat. The ground barrage intensified and the strike cruiser *Oblivion* reeled under the counter-fire, her own shields splitting, and was forced to pull away from the fury or topple to her death, but the work was done and the way was paved.

The Traitors' second wave came, descending through the firestorm. First the black, carrion crow shapes of the drop ships: massive Condor class Stormbirds, and their smaller, more agile Warhawk class brethren, relics as they were of the earliest wars of the Great Crusade. Then, outnumbering them, scores of the newer Thunderhawks and Storm Eagles wheeling and darting to avoid a hurricane of flak now rising up to greet them as they breached the lower atmosphere. The attack craft screamed down out of the fire and darkness, here and there some of their number exploded in blazing ruin as the spite of Hive Ilium's guns found them, but far too few to alter the course of what was about to happen. On reaching the skyline, the Sons of Horus craft broke off into strafing runs, roaring at breakneck speeds through the city's towering artificial canyons of ferrocrete and adamantium, missiles streaming from wing pods, cannon blazing as they found their targets. Power junctions were blasted to fragments, flak weapons silenced, auspex antenna severed and defence domes blown open. As the heavy firepower of the Stormbirds and Thunderhawks was unleased against Hive Ilium's defences at point blank range, horrified silence fell in the watching amphitheatre of the Palace of Light. No-one present could escape the realisation that every attack had been perfectly plotted, every field of fire anticipated, every gun-site and concealed power node known to the attackers before a blow had been struck. Like so many before them in this bitter civil war, not yet three years old, the defenders of Manachea had been betrayed.

The silence of the amphitheatre was broken by fresh outcries of alarm and urgent requests for aid as new reports began to stream in; the Sons of Horus had made footfall, and already the blood was flowing. The vast fortified dome-complexes that housed the defence lasers were among the Legiones Astartes' first targets, waves of jet-pack equipped Assault squads peeling off from the drop ships to attack them from the air, while Despoilers and Reavers leapt from the armoured maws of the Thunderhawks as they hovered perilously close to the defenders' ramparts, braving a fury of ground fire as they did so. Here, at the fortified bastions and cannon-domes, the Solar Auxilia stood their ground against the attackers. While each one of them, as an unmodified human, was no match for a Legiones Astartes in the press of battle, their discipline was iron. They fought in tight, ordered patterns, forming firing ladders to maintain a steady stream of rapid fire against the armoured monsters that came for them in the dark. Against such relentless fusillades even Space Marine power armour was not entirely proof, as las-bolts found chinks and vulnerabilities, piercing eye-lenses and burning through suit joints. But where the Sons of Horus crashed into the line, all was a carnage of whirling chainblades and bodies torn asunder. Despite the valour of the Solar Auxilia, one by one the great defence lasers went dark and fired no more.

Where the hardened veterans of the Auxilia Tercios had offered strong resistance to the Son of Horus, the conscript militia units which haltingly engaged them offered little, and here the scions of the Warmaster tore into the militia platoons like the wolves they had once used as a namesake set loose amid a caged flock. But yet the tide might be turned for the defenders of Manachea, for in their lightning assault the Sons of Horus had stirred up a hornet's nest, and even now armoured columns of lumbering battle tanks by the hundred were stirring from sub-surface vaults, and thousands of fresh troops were streaming up from their bunkers to make good a counter-attack. Against such overmatching numbers and weight of fire even the Sons of Horus spear tip had no chance of standing alone in open battle, but then it had never intended to.

With the majority of the ground defence batteries negated, the night skies above Hive Ilium shivered and boiled anew as the third wave of the attack came. Forcing brutal passageways through the air with a shrieking roar that drowned out even the cacophony of battle below, fifteen great orbs of fire seemed to hang above the city like new suns. The orbs slammed down into the blasted landing zones that had been prepared for them and the ground shook for kilometres in each direction. The cyclopean doors of the vast drop ships, still glowing with the embers

of their arrival, rent open, and the Titans of the accursed and treacherous division of the Legio Tempestus strode forth, and before them through the dust and smoke, their searchlights stabbing forth defiantly against the darkness, the armoured might of the Solar Auxilia came defiantly to meet their challenge. Hundreds of Leman Russ, their engines straining and bleaching heat, arced out to the flanks, encircling the landing zones, while through the centre of the armoured wave, scores of Malcador heavy tanks formed up in echelon before the Auxilia's most powerful units: Baneblades and Shadowswords in the winter-white and sapphire livery of the Excertus Imperialis Ultima, while behind them Basilisk artillery squadrons were already striking up their deadly thunder. Their void shields already crackling under the growing fury of the bombardment, the Legio Tempestus advanced. The Warlord Titan, *Agrippa*, towering far above the ant-like tanks which dared to challenge it, let howl its war siren and the chorus was taken up by the score of God-machines now treading the rubble of Hive Ilium to dust behind it. Kilometres away, eardrums burst and windows shattered. *Agrippa* then raised its gargantuan plasma annihilator and banished the night in white-hot sun fire.

### The Ravens

At the same hour that the first footfalls of the Titans were sounding at Hive Ilium on Manachea, at Port Maw open void war had now erupted between those ships that had turned fully traitor and those who had remained loyal, while all across the artificial planetoid station below them, civil war was being waged with bloody conviction. The Traitors' plan had proved only partly effective in conquering the Loyalist fleet from within or forcing its surrender, and now the malign influence radiating from the Mechanicum Panopticon had been ended, the Loyalists were rapidly gaining strength.

After the bloody and chaotic skirmish, those warships that remained mobile had broken away and parted into two battle lines, forming thousand kilometre-long crescent formations mirroring each other in orbit round the Maw, each now staying their range and keeping the bulk of the artificial planetoid between them and the enemy as they manoeuvred to form up. Around them hundreds of wrecks and stricken ships cascaded, reeling with damage or drifting paralysed as bloody struggles raged on within them for control. Neither force had such overwhelming superiority yet that a direct attack on the other would guarantee victory without severe losses, but both knew that to attempt to flee —to turn away from the enemy and run— would be to secede the entire strategically vital star system and all it contained to the enemy. The fate of Port Maw and its vast armada hovered on a knife edge.

As the two battle lines fell into a deadlock, from the darkness of the outer system came a new and unexpected threat. The dark fleet answered no hails, broadcast no identification cyphers, but came hurtling on at near relativistic speeds like a dagger hurled at the heart of Port Maw. In the Strategium of the gargantuan Loyalist flagship, *Triumph of Reason*, Grand Admiral LaBray waited impatiently as his sensorium officers strained their auspexes to get a firm report on the incoming fleet. Some form of masking technology was being employed that scattered and defused the scanning beams, making a definite fix on the vessels impossible to attain. LaBray likely knew, as many of his rank did, of the rumours of such arcane devices being employed by the secretive Raven Guard Legion—a Legion which remained loyal, but was reported destroyed at Isstvan V. Could this be a Raven Guard splinter fleet, the survivors of that cataclysmic battle? If so, why did they not answer, why did they not identify themselves? These questions could not be readily answered. But however effectively their true nature was shrouded from LaBray's fleet auspexes, while operating at such intense acceleration, their engines burning bright with plasma thrust, they could not hide their number; there were twenty vessels by their drive flares, at least half of which were capital class by his savants' estimations, meaning LaBray's own fleet outnumbered the interlopers by a margin of four to one. It was a force which alone he could overwhelm, but if it joined with the mass of the enemy now matching him in orbit on the other side of Port Maw, would likely tip the balance in the Traitors' favour. Without hesitation LaBray gave the order, and the vast crescent of his armada turned and began to arc toward the stranger-fleet on an intercept vector, their own engines burning bright.

The distance closed, thousands of kilometres flashing by in mere seconds, and behind the Loyalists the Traitor fleet followed suit, but it would be LaBray's ships that met the newcomers first, that was now inevitable. The minutes ticked by until it was reported that the incoming ships were now close enough to be within visual range of the flagship's occularis, and LaBray immediately ordered the image up before him. It was only then that he realised the depth of his mistake. The vanguard of the incoming fleet were indeed Legiones Astartes battle barges of the Raven Guard, or at least had been; two modified Dagon class grand cruisers bearing the sable heraldry of Corax's Legion now torn and burned in the fires of battle, but what came after them was not of the Raven Guard. The monster rose up behind the battle barges, making them seem as mere frigates in comparison to its nightmare magnitude. It was a ship no Imperial captain could ever have failed to recognise at first glance, it was a war machine few vessels could ever hope to match, but what its presence portended was darker still. It was the *Vengeful Spirit*; it was the flagship of Horus.

### Conquest

The warships of the Sons of Horus cut into the Loyalist battle line at its apex, smashing into it head on, the turncoat warships of the Raven Guard being sacrificed to soak up the fury of the Loyalist guns as they closed. The Traitor spearhead of warships cut into the Loyalist fleet like a lance, piercing it bodily —splitting the Loyalist fleet's defensive formation in two like an axe cleaving meat.

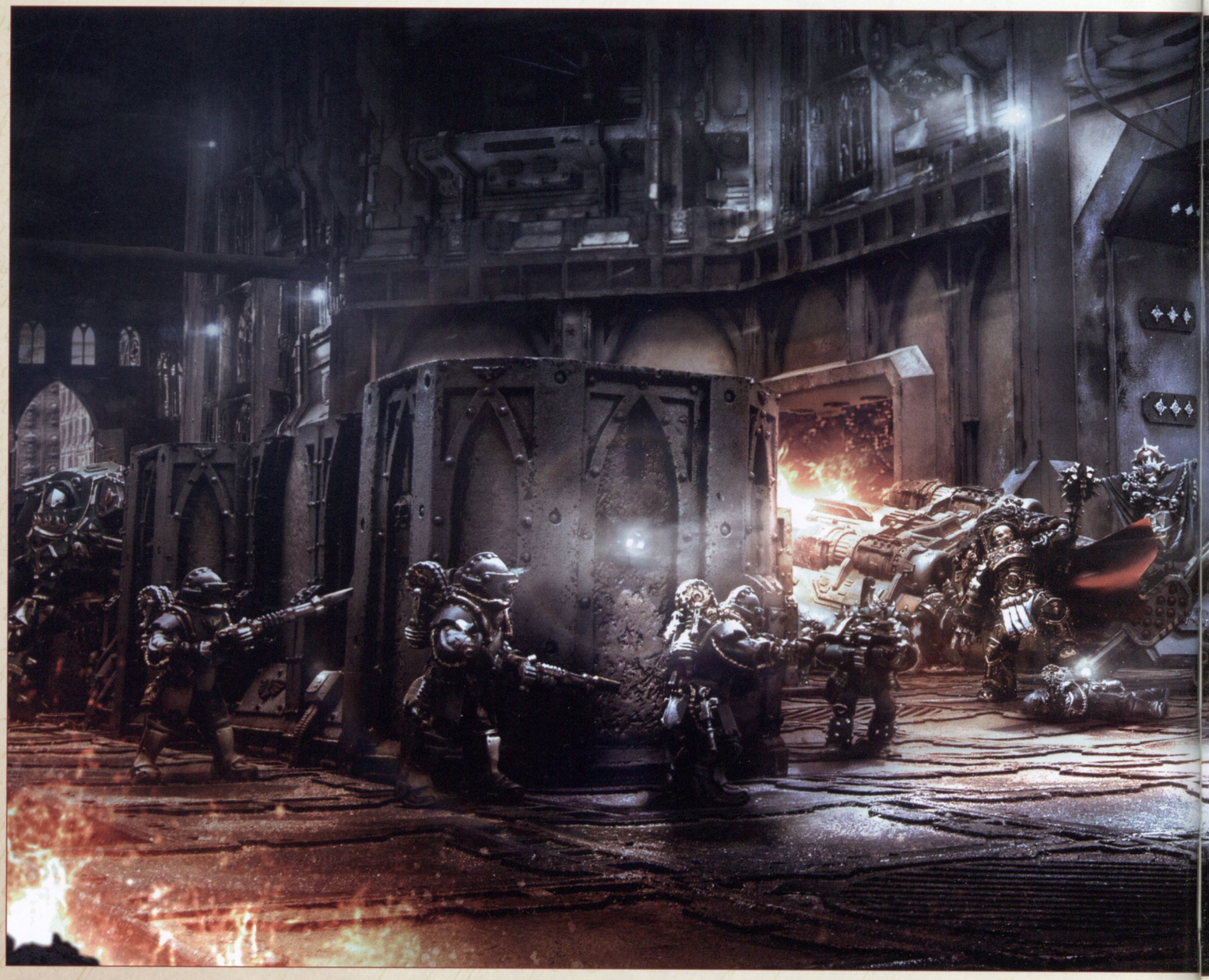
At the apex of the spearhead, the *Vengeful Spirit* came on through the blast waves of flame and debris ahead of it like a beast of ancient myth made real, its huge armoured prow smashing aside Loyalist cruisers like toys, its many-decked broadside batteries smashing shields and cracking open hulls with contemptuous ease as it passed. Along its darkly armoured flanks, strange symbols writ as if by a colossal hand seemed to flicker and fade, as if pulsing to some terrible heartbeat and the void around it appeared to twist and recoil. The juggernaut-ship plunged on through the Loyalist vessels, dealing death as it went, unstoppable. The gargantuan battle barge of Horus had one goal, one true target; the *Triumph of Reason* protected at the heart of the Loyalist armada, and the focus of its command and control.

Its quarry in sight, the *Vengeful Spirit* made as if to ram the vast double-hulled *Triumph of Reason*, but as it closed —the guns of both hunter and deadly prey blazing savagely— the *Vengeful Spirit's* engines flared and it spun suddenly on its axis —a manoeuvre which at that velocity should have been fatal for any ship of its size— the manic and unexpected turn smashing to dust two hapless escorts that found themselves in its path, while a bastion frigate that caught the full blast of the *Vengeful Spirit's* engines as it

swung was flung burning into the void. The space between the two gargantuan warships seemed to distort and shudder as the ship of the Warmaster violently arrested its progress so that it now flew above and alongside the *Triumph*—matching her course and velocity. In response to the seemly impossible manoeuvre and the threat now looming vulture-like over the *Triumph*, the lumbering giant below her tried to throw herself aside to evade what was to happen next or at least to roll and bring her own broadsides to bear, but she was too slow and it was too late.

Vortex missiles, rare and deadly weapons of the Dark Age of Technology, spat from the *Vengeful Spirit's* broadside launch tubes and exploded in ghostly spheres of silent nothingness that tore away the *Triumph of Reason's* void shields like paper and cracked open the decametre-thick hull plating beneath them like splintering ice. Seconds later, the Dreadclaws and Kharybdis of the Sons of Horus followed, punching through the weakened hull in a score of places and spilling out a cargo of death within. Gunships and assault rams followed, forcing their way into flight bays and hangars, crash landing in a storm of fire and shell.

Throughout the *Triumph* emergency alarms sounded '*repel boarders*', security bulkheads slammed shut and weapons cages were flung open to arm the thousands of crew, from the lowliest galley rating to the highest astrogator. The elite Solar Auxilia of LaBray's own Lifeguard Cohort rallied to meet an invader that was already within their iron walls, and soon corridors and gun decks were filled with the din of battle and the screams of the dying. Quickly, the Sons of Horus assault forces smashed their way into the core of the vast and labyrinthine double-hulled ship, killing with controlled savagery; viridian-hued Legion Breachers locking shields to march down on automated gun stations that turned the air in front of them into hurricanes of shellfire, heedless of their punishing losses. Elsewhere, Sons of Horus Reavers turned crew decks into blasted abattoirs, headless bodies strewn in their wake as crew, servitor and armsmen alike were slain without mercy by bolter and blade. At defensive choke points and at the gateways to vital compartments, the Solar Auxilia Lifeguard made their stand as black armoured Terminators thundered inexorably towards them, maintaining disciplined volleys of las-fire of such intensity that the sable ceramite plates of the Cataphractii began to glow a dull ember red and their gilded chasements ran molten as hot wax. In the bowels of the *Triumph*, armoured locking mechanisms were thrown open, cryo-chambers vented and at LaBray's command, the last line of his gargantuan flagship's



defence was let loose upon the enemy; Ogyrn Charonites—hundreds of them. Mutilated, cybernetically augmented monsters fuelled by rage and combat stimulants —barely controllable— the processes that created these beasts of war were themselves based on techno-arcana many had thought better abandoned to the Age of Strife. But such creatures were still maintained under Imperial dispensation to the masters of the Solar Auxilia, a weapon of dire resort that was unleashed now against the Sons of Horus. The hulking, surgically armoured abhumans towered over a Space Marine, and their augmentic fists could crush power armour as easily as bulkhead plate.

Even against the superhuman warriors of the Sons of Horus, in the confines of the *Triumph's* passageways and engine decks the Charonites proved deadly, smashing into their ranks and sending them flying or ripping them apart like over-cooked meat. Bolters hammered the Charonites at point blank range, blowing out bloody chunks of their chem-infused flesh, chainswords slashed and wheeled, but to seemingly little effect, and the insane abhumans ploughed on, heedless of wounds that would have killed even a Legiones Astartes many times over—even headless they sometimes continued to murderously flail around them until life was torn from bodies smashed beyond recognition. Force was met with force, savagery with savagery, and soon the Traitors' attack began to stall as casualties mounted on both sides. For the briefest moment, a glimmer of hope came to the embattled survivors of the *Triumph of Reason*, only to die as the eerie screams of reality being torn open echoed all across the Loyalist flagship as the *Vengeful Spirit's* second wave of attack teleported on board, and with them came Horus.



Horus, the Warmaster, Primarch, God of Battle; nothing could stand before him. Into the thickest concentration of the Charonites he charged, his black-pelted cloak streaming behind him, his maul, Worldbreaker, crushing the Ogryns as if they were inert figures of gore-filled porcelain rather than the nightmares of the Age of Strife made flesh. In him his Legion found new vigour, a dark power seeping into their souls which hurled them at the enemy once more like the devils of ancient lore. Seeing that all was lost, LaBray led the last of his personal Lifeguard in an attempted break for the ship's fighter bays, hoping no doubt to escape to another Loyalist vessel, but even in sight of the launch bays they were cut off. Denied even the glory of a last stand, LaBray and his party were torn apart in a savage crossfire, his half-incinerated body only later identified long after Warmaster Horus had moved on from the war ravaged system.

As a tide of murder, Horus and his sons crashed through the *Triumph of Reason*, obliterating all in their path, until at last the command decks were breached and the Strategium broken open, and all within slaughtered without deference to rank or title. Before Horus, the human crew of the *Triumph of Reason* simply cast down their weapons in despair, but such submission did not save them. From the corpse-strewn bridge of the Loyalist flagship, the Warmaster addressed the surviving Loyalist fleet, his voice burning across the cold void to the very depths of Port Maw where the fighting raged on still. To those who resisted him, this god of death offered mercy in praise of their valiant, if deluded, struggle; submission and service to him would spare them, only this. They would be his now and forever, or they would be exterminated utterly.

Leaderless, broken and alone, the Loyalists were now confronted with the same unimaginable force that had cowed and butchered countless star systems in the name of the Emperor, and had no answer to its inhuman power. One by one, save for a handful such as the *Kurga* who fled into the darkness, the Loyalist ships struck their flags —dispersing their shields and cutting their targeting auspexes— and thereby surrendered. Within the myriad corridors and vaults of the great station complex itself, the din of battle died away to a dreadful and expectant silence, broken only by the cries of the wounded and the dying.

Port Maw and everything in it belonged to the Warmaster.




# The Darkness Descending

*"Whom gods destroy, they first drive mad. Mere toys we are for their pleasure, and those it amuses them to raise up, they soon tire of and strike down for their sport."*

*The Dramaturge Procul Soldaris*
*Circa M2*

### Manachea in Chains

The battle was in its eleventh day when the gates of the Palace of Light finally fell and crowned the end of the battle. For five days the defenders of Ilium had held out against the power ranged before them, but it had been the breaking of them, and after that had come six days of rout and the protracted slaughter of an enemy hounded to their end. Now, in the ash-blown city, Titans strode the great arterial roadways uncontested, wrecking and burning in spite at their own losses, as the skies above them shrieked with Legion gunships which plummeted like birds of prey when some last holdout of resistance or fleeing refugee band was spotted. Hive Ilium's once white plazas were strewn with broken bodies and the burned-out wrecks of tanks, the ordered rows upon rows of habitation blocks were mutilated and shell-pitted beyond recognition —where they had not been smashed and toppled entirely— and the manufactora and seats of government were now merely skeletal frameworks of twisted metal clad in cinders.

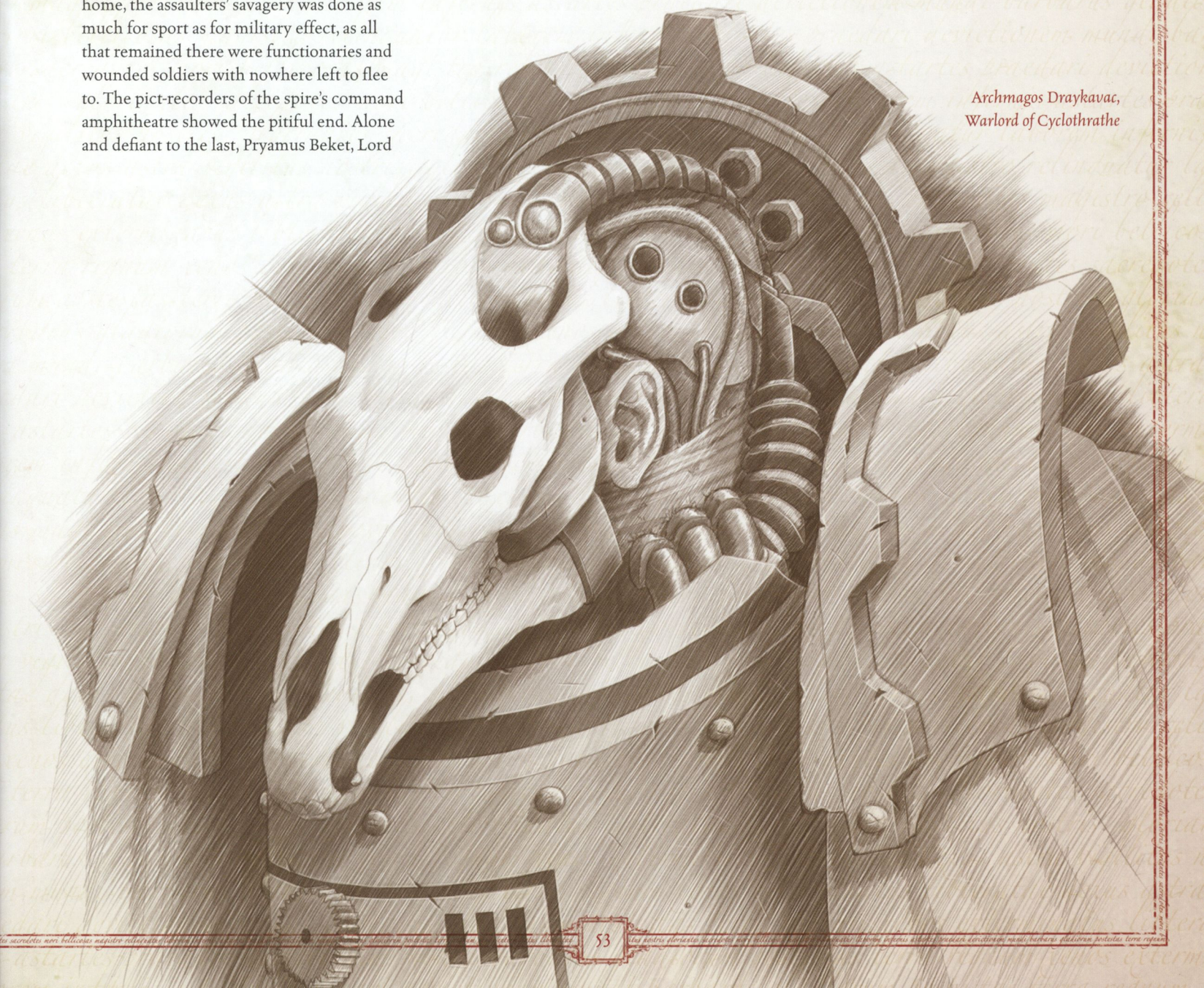
Not all had gone the attackers' way in the battle; even now amid the ruin of Block Fortress 77-4, the Tempestus Reaver Titan *Raxvalian* lay slain, its embers still glowing with decaying radiation. It had been the victim of an ambush attack by a handful of House Vyronii Knights caught on-world when the invasion came. It had meant their end but the Vyronii had sold themselves dearly. The *Raxvalian* had been the third Titan to perish in the assault, two lighter Warhounds having gone before it, and four others of various classes had met with severe damage in the armour-clash

which had raged after the Legio Tempestus' arrival. Hive Ilium's division of super-heavy tanks had acquitted itself with unexpected effectiveness in the attempt to hold back the Titans' landing, though ultimately, with a demi-Legio of Titans before them and the Sons of Horus falling on their flanks, they had been doomed. Despite the bitter resistance of the Manacheans of Ilium, the city had fallen, victory now was no more than a formality. Having witnessed the fate of their capital, Manachea's other hive cities had already capitulated to the invaders, and its satrap worlds would swiftly follow.

Abaddon himself led the final assault on the Palace of Light, having deliberately spared it till last almost as a perverse joke so it could stand witness over the hive it had once ruled as the city was destroyed around it. Smashing his way inside with his Justaerin bodyguard at his side like a band of robbers come to plunder a defenceless home, the assaulters' savagery was done as much for sport as for military effect, as all that remained there were functionaries and wounded soldiers with nowhere left to flee to. The pict-recorders of the spire's command amphitheatre showed the pitiful end. Alone and defiant to the last, Pryamus Beket, Lord Protector of Manachea, met the killer of kings. To the face of the armoured giant he spoke his words of rebuke and died, broken by Abaddon as casually as a man might swat a fly. With him died the Manachean Commonwealth. In its place was now a domain of Horus, a newly acquired bauble of conquest for a spreading shadow empire—a realm that existed only to arm and equip its masters for but one purpose; the overthrow of the Emperor of Mankind.

**The Spoils of War**

Mortarion and the core of the Death Guard fleet had already long departed the region by the time the Manachean Commonwealth had fully submitted, and the Warmaster and his own fleet were soon to follow, the course of the war carrying them far away. His wrath was to be visited on a dozen other worlds in the years to follow, from shunned Gyrién, to storied Dwell and the vaunted fortress world of Molech, whose defences stood greater than even Manachea's, but would also be shorn in the talon of Horus in its turn. Behind them they left the Coronid Deeps sundered into fragments; a realm of broken cities and dead worlds, war zones still left bleeding and the unity of Imperial rule irrevocably severed. Port Maw was now his and rapidly was returned to order, serving as a resupply and repair base for Traitor forces in the northern Imperium; much of its armada was stripped from it, warships, turncoat troops and war machines dispersed to reinforce Traitor battle lines and attack fleets across a score of sectors where the war now raged. This had left only a skeleton fleet of perhaps sixty line warships at the Maw, strong enough to defend it from attack and to enforce dominion over the Manachean worlds, but far too small in number to ensure full mastery over the wider Coronid Deeps. Commanding this pocket empire in the Warmaster's name was a detached Sons of Horus battle company under Taloc Thorne,



*Archmagos Draykavac, Warlord of Cyclothrathe*

once a line captain of the Sons of Horus, now Tyrant of Port Maw. The seat of his power was the blood-bedecked *Triumph of Reason*, renamed *'The Lash'*. Under his rule, Port Maw's ship-forges worked in endless cycle to arm, construct and repair warships, as Dark Mechanicum emissaries took charge of the anchorage facilities in the Warmaster's name, and six cohorts of Chthonian Jackals, Solar Auxilia recruited from the Sons of Horus home world but judged unsuitable for Legiones Astartes conversion, were installed as Port Maw's garrison. Beneath this shadow, the hives of Manachea became little more than vast slave-camps run by those natives who had pledged themselves wholly to Horus and who now competed with each other to prove their loyalty by enforcing the brutal quotas demanded by their distant and merciless overlord.

Between Thorne's fleet and the Taghmata of M'Pandex, the embattled but still unconquered Forge World of Mezoa continued to be blockaded, but attempts to besiege it had failed, and it remained a threat whose influence would spread. Though the main warp routes to the galactic west stayed in the Traitors' hands, allowing Port Maw and Manachea to serve their function, much of the Cyclops Cluster around them was now little more than a war-ravaged wasteland. Here the Traitors' writ ran only where the shadow of their warships fell to extract tithe and plunder. Beyond, to the north, the Grail Abyss had sunk back into an all-encompassing darkness as before the coming of the Great Crusade; a haven for renegades, vengeance-seeking Loyalist survivors, marauders and far worse. To the west of the region, considered strategically less important than the core systems conquered in the war's initial bloody phases, in the area known as the Coronid Reach, conflict still raged unabated and matters were very much in flux. Here the Forge World of Cyclothrathe, spurning the direct involvement of the Sons of Horus garrison at Port Maw as much as it dared, was still prosecuting its own war of conquest, although it too had acquiesced to Horus and dispatched a significant portion of its Taghmata to join the Warmaster's armies elsewhere. What remained under the command of the baleful warlord Archmagos Draykavac was engaged in ongoing protracted battles to control Numinal and the surrounding star systems, while a number of Rogue Trader fleets, Death Guard poison ships and the reavers of the Traitor Knight House Ærthegn —all in theory operating under the Warmaster's banner, but each with their own agendas— were all active in the region, as was substantial and increasingly co-ordinated Loyalist resistance. Both sides were at turns both hindered and helped by the rising tides of warp turbulence which, having seemed to abate during Horus' invasion, were now rising again in temper.

By the dawning of 008.M31, the Coronid Deeps, once a stable outpost of the Imperium, had become in part a fractured series of Traitor-ruled domains in a wider galaxy riven with strife. But this too was soon to be challenged as the spirit of war that had been unleashed would not be so easily assuaged, and for some victory was to prove fleeting.

### Borne upon the Storm

The distant Agathean Domain, an autonomous cluster of Imperial worlds sitting outside the borders of the Ultima Segmentum in the stellar deserts of the northern Fringe, was in truth only part of the Coronid Deeps by accident of history and the vagaries of Warp travel. Isolated as it was —access was limited principally by somewhat tortuous and storm-prone warp routes from the Grail Abyss and Numinal— and strategically of no real import to their plans, the Traitors' attack on the region had bypassed it utterly, and the Agatheans' only involvement in the conflict thus far was to dispatch a cruiser squadron from its own small battlefleet in support of the general muster at Port Maw. This act, and its consequences, were however to have deep and unforeseen repercussions in the years to come. Of the eight ships which had set forth from Agathon the year previously, only a single cruiser, the *Telemachus*, returned, storm-wracked and battle scarred from the treachery at Port Maw. Having escaped by luck and bloody perseverance from the Traitors' trap, she bore with her not only a true account of the catastrophe at Port Maw and the perfidy of the Cyclothrathine Mechanicum, which had cost the lives of her sister ships, but also news gathered from her long and arduous journey home through star systems given up to war and anarchy. The *Telemachus* also carried the body of her captain, Jocasta MaSade, held in state, she having perished of her wounds after the Battle of Port Maw, having refused medical assistance until her ship was out of danger. The arrival of the *Telemachus* was the spark of ignition to a powder keg of fear and political division that had been fermenting on the hive world of Agathon, centre of the Agathean Domain, since the first word of the rising of Horus against the Imperium had become known.

Although a relatively minor hive world by the standards of sprawling Manachea or soaring Necromunda, it was ancient; its founding lost in the Dark Age of Technology, while its Compliance with the Imperium had not been without bloodshed. Its first Imperial rulers had been the Solar Auxilia officers of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet, whose final conquests these worlds had represented, and its first Imperial Commander had been Lord Marshal Ireton MaSade, grandfather to the slain captain of the *Telemachus*, and once master of the 60th. Quickly, the fleet's officer cadre had integrated with the local families of nobility and within a few generations the lines had blurred between the two, but the further down the social order, the more indifference and resentment was encountered regards Imperial rule on Agathon. Now the threat of encroaching civil war and universal fear of the whispered fates of worlds such as Moab and Manachea had given voice and power to that resentment, and Agathon's Parliament of Electors slipped into open conflict, caught between die-hard Loyalists, those who would cast their lot with Horus in fear of the consequences of not doing so, and those who would secede entirely and return Agathon to independence. Blackmail, threats and assassinations were rife, the wheels of government became paralysed, and the hive world teetered on the precipice of all-out civil war without a single Traitor's shadow falling upon its ground.

Into the warring chamber of the Parliament of Electors, convened in a last desperate attempt to prevent the outbreak of overt warfare, came Ireton MaSade, the old Marshal, former Imperial Commander, nearly two centuries in age and retired from public life, and all but a recluse for nearly two decades. With him he brought the body of his granddaughter upon a floating stasis bier, flanked by a troop of Solar Auxilia Veletaris armoured in a livery of ice white in deference to Agathon's traditional colour of mourning. The chamber was forced to listen in stunned silence as MaSade spoke, first of grief and sacrifice, and then of the dream of the Imperium, of human unity and the Imperial Truth. And as his oratory turned to rage at the moral weakness of his successors, he denounced the parliament and declared them traitors to the Emperor. Before the lords of Agathon could give reply or protest, the funeral guard turned their volkites on the nobles of the parliament and burned them to ash. In the days that followed, Agathon and the worlds around it were placed under martial law under the direct control of

the 'Old Guard' of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet and its direct descendants, and their entire economy and society placed on a war footing. The aim of this mass mobilisation was not merely to mount a defence, but to attack. Agathon would have its vengeance on the Traitors—MaSade would have his vengeance, no matter the cost.

### Retribution

It was not from the Agatheans that the first great blow against Traitor control of the Coronid Deeps would come, but from the outer darkness of the Grail Abyss. More than a year previously, the Gethsamaine System had submitted to Horus without resistance and this obeisance had thus far spared them the worst of the war's deprivations. The system's only inhabited world, Gethsamaine Colonus, had been forced to suffer newly imposed overlords in the shape of Tithe Aquistors bearing the serpent's eye of Horus, where once they had the raptor-headed Seal of Terra. Under their directions, the industries of Gethsamaine now laboured, and the planet's vast rain forests were being clear-cut to provide fodder for off-world export, but other than the Aquistors' harsh quotas, little in truth had changed for the people of Gethsamaine. But just as the unexpected arrival of a lone survivor from the Isstvan system in 006.M31 had gone on to herald the dawning of the terrible war that was to follow, so now with fell irony was a second survivor of that great treachery to herald a new wave of conflict.

When the ill-starred warp route from the haunted Grail Abyss tore open once more, the vessel that cut into realspace with dreadful purpose was no derelict caparisoned in Emperor's Children amaranth as that first survivor-ship had been, but a jagged and scar-hulled killer in black iron and blood crimson. It was the *Red Talon*, the ship of the Iron Hands Clan Morragul, and their master, Autek Mor. Gethsamaine had been stripped of much of its void defences in the Traitors' passing and now it stood all but naked before this spectre of the Imperium's grim retribution. The few remaining gun platforms which protected Gethsamaine Colonus were quickly swept away by the attacking grand cruiser, and a ruthless bombardment of the planet from low orbit immediately commenced preparatory to a ground assault. Then came the grim sons of Medusa to enact judgement.

Any resistance to the Iron Hands was swiftly obliterated, and an entire cohort of planetary militia and their Horusite overseers crushed beneath the treads of Clan Morragul's armour in less than an hour settled the matter into a general rout for the defenders. Wasting no time, seats of government were blasted to rubble, and those in positions of power that had aided the Traitors or sided with their cause were methodically hunted down and executed, save for a select number of prisoners deemed to have potentially useful information, who were dragged screaming back to the *Red Talon's* gunships. As the Iron Hands Thunderhawks blasted off from the surface, the bulk of the civilian population, which had fled into hiding during the sudden assault, nervously rejoiced and came forth, little knowing what would come next. In each of the five major cities of Gethsamaine, the Iron Hands had left behind an improvised atomantic device fashioned by the bloody hand of their Iron-Father, each bomb clad in layer upon layer of radioactive material designed to enrich and multiply the fallout generated by its detonation a hundred fold. The *Red Talon* broke orbit just as the cities bloomed into fire; sentence had been passed on both the Traitors and those who had knelt before them, and notice served that there could be no bystanders in this terrible war, no civilians to be given quarter, only Loyalist and Traitor to the death.

### The Hammer of the Deep

In the Coronid Reach, the Taghmata Cyclothrathe was also finding its conquests far more difficult to grasp firmly than it had anticipated. Despite almost a sidereal year of armed occupation, Numinal was still not completely under its control. The remnants of the Obed Cohorts of the Imperialis Auxilia that had defended it during their assault had splintered into a resistance guerrilla force, which used their expertise in the swamps and semi-aquatic terrain that dominated Numinal to their advantage, terrain that was an anathema to the Mechanicum's heaviest combat units. As a result, the Cyclothrathine forces were entangled in a continued campaign of opportunistic assaults and sabotage which required further deployments to counteract, slowing their plans of attack elsewhere in the region. Eventually, Archmagos Draykavac, Cyclothrathe's principal warlord, was forced to return from his Forge World's recently



**The Poison Ships**

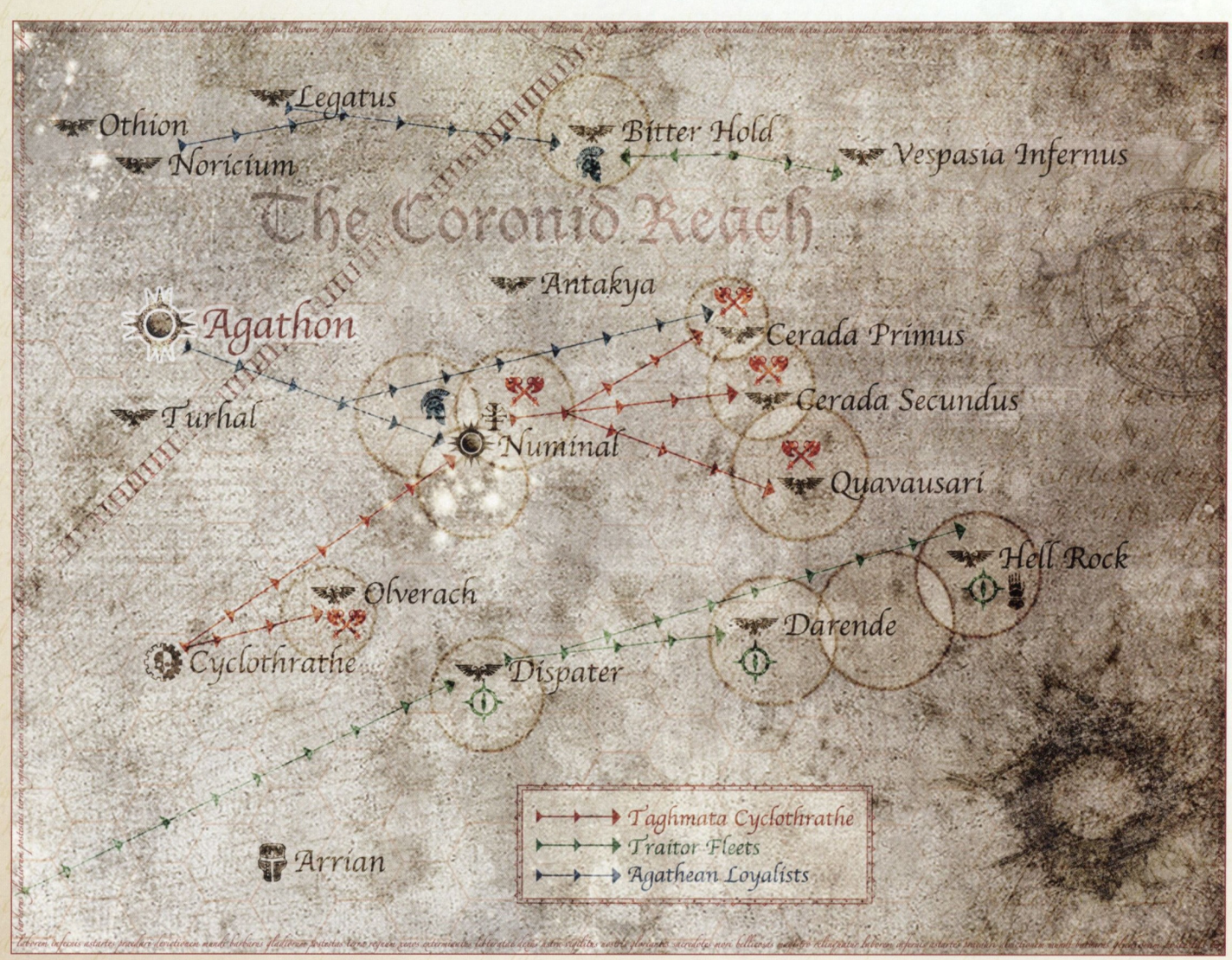
One of the most fearful developments of the engulfing '*Age of Darkness*' which followed the initial calamities at Isstvan, Phall and elsewhere in the early years of the war, was the creation of what have become known as the '*poison ships*'. These were Traitor vessels, many operated by members of the Death Guard Legion and the Dark Mechanicum, but not exclusively so. Most were either frigates or second line cruisers in classification, outfitted to operate alone on deep range independent missions and retrofitted to bear the deadliest cargos: toxic, pathogenic and viral weaponry. Their task was to each carry out a dark pilgrimage across the stars, conducting raids and visitations, often covertly, on isolated colony worlds, Imperial outposts and lynchpin sectors, spreading contagion, contaminating water supplies and tainting biospheres. Although these attacks were on many worlds to slay millions, not simply by plague and poison, but by the civil unrest, famine and anarchy that would often follow in their wake, their purpose was not one of wholesale annihilation. Instead it was to create panic, to spread fear, to wound and weaken the Imperium ahead of the Traitors' advance, rather than to outright destroy; for a wounded world demanded costly aid and assistance from its allies, whereas a dead world required nothing. Furthermore, a world already reeling from such a scourge that could not find succour from the Imperium was ripe to fall to the Traitors' cause. For this reason, Exterminatus class weaponry was rarely employed by the poison ships, but more insidious and subtle agents were instead used, many of them bred and manufactured by Magos Biologis in the Warmaster's faction or within the bio-weapon vaults and labratoria of the dreaded Death Guard world-killer, the *Mia Donna Mori*, which had been darkly infamous for its stockpiles of such weapons long before the outbreak of the war.

Once the nature and tactics of the poison ships became widely known to the Loyalists, they unsurprisingly became a priority target for destruction, and were hunted to destruction wherever they were encountered. The desire to purge the threat of the poison ships was so great that specific hunter-killer missions were launched against them by several separate Loyalist factions and Legions during the Age of Darkness, and Terra itself placed a high bounty on the destruction of such vessels, drawing the attention of avaricious Rogue Traders and even unaligned renegade and corsair forces to the task.

launched invasion of Cerada Secundus and command of the Taghmata war fleet to deal with a sudden and violent upswing in resistance and civil unrest from Numinal's population in response to an accelerated program of forced servitor conversion and adsecularis lobotomisation. Upon his arrival, Draykavac purged the sin of failure from his predecessor in charge of the suppression by ripping out what remained of her organic cortex and resubmitting her for purified reconstruction to the Magos Mortifex. He then immediately formulated a plan for the ordered processing of Numinal's entire population, dividing its many archipelagos and island masses up into sectors which would be dealt with in turn, and ordering the fabrication of huge amphibious crawlers for this purpose, outfitted within with servitor-controlled charnel-surgery chambers, corpse-sluice and protein recovery vats so that nothing would go to waste. These nightmarish machines went out with escort maniples drawn from Draykavac's own personal force of covenant-bound Knights, the thrall-House of Atrax. Against the power of these Knights and their hulking war machines, nothing left on Numinal could stand, and under this slow and mercilessly methodical pogrom, Numinal appeared doomed. But unknown to the inhuman Magos of Cyclothrathe, their actions were being observed and other hands were laying plans against them.

The attack came first not directly to Numinal, but to the system's astropathic relay station, a sprawling complex built into the polar rock plain on the barely life-sustaining dust moon of Numinal V, known as Quachil. The site had been extensively fortified by the Taghmata Cyclothrathe since their occupation, owing its strategic importance to their expansion efforts, and served now as the major Traitor-held navigational and astropathic communication nexus in the region, its transmitting power doubly important given the rising storms and turbulence plaguing the Warp. The first sign of danger was the arrival of an unexpected ramshackle flotilla of ships, mostly macro freight-haulers and warp dromons, but identified immediately as being led by the ruby-hulled galleass of the Rogue Trader Militant Charid Undine, a renowned and powerful vessel named the *Hammer of the Deep*, and one known to the Mechanicum as serving now the Warmaster's cause. The Cyclothrathine Magos on Quachil allowed the flotilla to approach slowly, mindful of their ultimate allegiance but warily so, and even after they were answered by vox with the relevant code cyphers and requests for trade and resupply, they would not allow the flotilla to close with the station. When it continued on its course however, they threatened to open fire; the reply to their ultimatum came from the prow lances of the *Hammer of the Deep*.

Battle was quickly joined, though the out-ranging firepower of the galleass, augmented as it was with technology rumoured to be stolen from the Eldar, was quickly proven the clear superior. Under the cover of the *Hammer's* guns, several of the huge warp dromons broke from the flotilla and made assault runs at Quachil's surface. Detaching from the lead dromons, where it had hung concealed and limpet-like, was a Legiones Astartes strike craft, slim and predatory; a



**The Draykavac Archive**

The infamous Dark Mechanicum Archmagos Yelav Draykavac first rose to prominence in the Horus Heresy during the wars of the Coronid Deeps, and would go on to become one of the most accursed and hated figures of the Dark Mechanicum. Declared '*Heretek Ultima*' by the Great Synod of Martian Unification, and held responsible for, among other atrocities, the Genocide of Goth, the Lucine Travesty and the death of the seventeen worlds of the Donia League, his long war would extend far into the Great Scouring and beyond, and his ultimate fate was yet to be ascertained when his warship the *Sacra Astra's* abandoned hulk would be recovered adrift in the Maelstrom. In its encrypted data-archive would be found much of the extant knowledge of the Dark Mechanicum now possessed by the Adeptus Terra. This dark archive contained many unexpurgated strategic reports, personal analysis and djinn-data from Draykavac's many battles, including a detailed account of the counter-invasion of Numinal, on which this record draws.

Pilum class corvette barely registerable as being clad in the azure and white of the World Eaters Legion. The strike ship raced ahead to strafe the way clear for a hostile landing in the dust dunes on the plateau directly beyond the relay station. Behind her, the huge dromons came in all but unopposed and landed with ungainly weight onto the dust, creating a minor quake with the force of their impact slamming into the moon's surface. As the tremors subsided, the dromons' vast cargo bay doors opened at once to disgorge scores of Dracosan super-heavy armoured carriers and with them dozens of supporting squadrons of augmented Solar pattern Leman Russ battle tanks. This ground attack wave, roaring into the dust storm thrown ahead of them, comprised a full armoured cohort operating as a single, unstoppable thrust. It bore the dull bronze and dark emerald heraldry that had once marked out the Solar Auxilia of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet of the Great Crusade and the white crested-helm sigil of Agathon.

Automated cannon turrets ringing the station's outer walls turned to track the attack, and tarantula batteries rose up from the dunes, weapons firing wildly into the wall of dust. The armoured attack column did not stop, the heavy tracked Dracosans smashing straight through the Tarantulas, pulverising the automated guns under their bulk and surging onwards, mine ploughs sending up bow-waves of debris and dust. As they closed, Demolisher cannon volleys battered and broke the station's curtain walls in a dozen locations, while the Vanquisher cannon of the Leman Russ formation punched armour-piercing shells through the turrets and gun embrasures which lined the walls. Under the onslaught, the curtain walls shuddered and suddenly collapsed, the attackers surging through the rubble as the war-scarred corvette hovered low above the station's auspex towers, grey armoured figures dropping on jump pack flares towards the devastation unfolding below. And in the void beyond, the *Hammer of the Deep* turned and its remaining flotilla followed with it, as gaining speed it made for Numinal.

**Counter-invasion**

Five sidereal hours had passed since the attack on the moon Quachil, and now all communication between the relay station there and Numinal had been cut. The truth that a full scale counter-invasion against a world they had only themselves recently conquered had not entered the strategic equations of the Taghmata Cyclothrathe, and the Magos were swiftly being forced to re-assess their position. Above Numinal, the *Hammer of the Deep* and its charges had already forced their orbital supremacy by destroying the protective Mechanicum escort squadrons, their warp dromons and macro-haulers having proved themselves armed and shielded far beyond what their design and appearance indicated. Further to the unfolding crisis, the Archmagos Draykavac had, only moments before the communications silence with Quachil, been forced to accede even to the retreat of his own orbiting warship, the Mechanicum forge-cruiser *Sacra Astra*, after it had proved heavily outmatched by the attacking galleass.

Precipitating direct command override over all Mechanicum forces on Numinal, Draykavac issued rapid commands through his Taghmata's djinn-skein to recall and amass his forces to meet the invaders, dispersed as they had been to carry out his general order for planet-wide population processing. As a result of this decision, the attackers made planetfall all but uncontested, the invaders concentrating their landings directly to the large and most sparsely populated archipelago chain in the planet's northern hemisphere a few hundred kilometres from the edge of the island cluster on which the Mechanicum was most densely based. At seven sidereal hours after planetfall the Taghmata, having amassed a sufficiency of force responded, swarming towards the area like antibodies to an open wound.

Slowly at first, but with increasing intensity, the two sides engaged—the Taghmata sending fast-moving reconnaissance servitor drones into the area initially to assess their enemy at close range. The invaders were identified as Solar Auxilia forces operating at multiple cohort strength; likely in the region of 30,000-40,000 infantry troops and several thousand armoured vehicles. Draykavac's analysis indicated that their iconography comported to the long decommissioned 60th Expeditionary Fleet, but used observed unit markings and numerals which did not match historical records. The invaders were also not, as he had first projected, launching an immediate attack, but rather digging in; rapidly preparing prefabricated defence lines and supply dumps, sowing mine fields and excavating trench works with remarkable speed and efficiency to meet the incoming Mechanicum forces.

This led Archmagos Draykavac to a series of observations from the data: firstly, that this was a hostile Loyalist army dispatched from the Agathon Domain and, in addendum to that observation, no known Agathean liveried warships had yet been sighted as part of the force. The attackers had also refrained from the mass use of orbital bombardment, limiting themselves to a few strikes only against anti-orbital batteries which might have impeded their landing and had not yet attempted to breach the void-shielded bastions of the Mechanicum control centres. This resulted in a single conclusion; that the Agatheans intended to take the planet in as intact a state as they possibly could. Logic and strategic prediction indicated then to Draykavac that this invasion force was merely a beachhead for a much larger contingent to follow, a force mounted and protected in the absent Imperial cruiser squadrons the Agathon Domain was still known to possess.

Based upon this analysis, Draykavac then drew his own plans accordingly. Determining that the beachhead should be destroyed at all costs, he reinforced the attacking waves en route to the landing site with the goal of maintaining pressure while he amassed a second force of sufficient power to destroy it.

**The Invader**

In the shale drifts and rocky wastelands of the northern archipelago, the Agathean Cohorts awaited their attackers. Cohort Lasrifle Tercios—interlocking squads of heavy infantry soldiers drilled to the highest order and discipline—and tracked rapier heavy weapons batteries dug in, formed up as firing squares and defensive echelons behind prefabricated redoubts and swiftly dug trench works. Under the watchful eye of Lord Marshal Ireton MaSade, every hill, shale bank and rock gully had been put to its most effective defensive use, providing channels of predicable advance and deadly killing grounds for what was to come. MaSade had fought upon a hundred worlds and against nightmarish xenos of countless forms and powers, and even the arcane technological might of the Mechanicum did not baulk him, for he had fought beside them in the past and knew both their strengths and their weaknesses. Back on Agathon, he had ensured above all else the manufacture and stockpiling of certain weapons in preparation for a battle such as this, the foremost being augmented blast-charger capacitors for his troops' las-weaponry. These devices —issued rarely and in dire resort against the most powerful of alien creatures during the Great Crusade— vastly increased the stopping power of his soldiers' small arms, but at the cost of near disastrously high stresses on the weapons that used them. But against the Battle-automata and augmented warriors of the Mechanicum, he knew they would prove invaluable. As the first waves of enemy forces began to batter against the Agathean Cohorts' defences, he would swiftly know whether or not his strategy would prove sound.

**The Iron Horde**

The Battle-servitors advanced pitiless and measured, without fear or remorse; hulking metallic bodies striding from the waters or clambering down from hover barges and short range transport lighters like an army of iron and brass statues come to life. Larger, manta-like Cyclothrathine aerodynes swooped in low, unleashing Triaros carriers and Krios tanks from their cage harnesses directly behind the advancing line. Silent save for the rumble of their engines and the rasp of their servo motors, answering



ghost-commands from their djinn-network, which would have been mere howling static to human ears, the Taghmata Cyclothrathe moved by a single all-encompassing will; the will of Draykavac.

Already, long range barrages from batteries of concealed Earthshaker cannon were falling among their ranks, sending up great sprays of sand and rock as their shells exploded. But up from the craters the Battle-automata and Thallaxii rose, scarred but indomitable, all but impervious to wounds that would have torn mortal flesh to rags. The fleshless army advanced across an eleven kilometre wide front, through the mines and on into a storm of cannon shells and las-fire that would have melted even a Legiones Astartes attack before it. Some of the Battle-automata staggered under the weight of fire; some fell, but few, very few. Now the guns of the Mechanicum answered; thundering bolt cannon spat fire and lightning guns jetted their incandescent fury, blasting gouges in the defence lines and sending sundered bodies spinning into fragments. Through it all the Agathean Cohorts did not waver, their ranks closing over the breaches made by the dead. They fired and fired again, answering the disciplined cries of their sergeants with measured volleys, making the very air crackle and burn before them. The duel went on, and the lines began to close.

The lines were only a few hundred metres apart now and from within the Taghmata ranks, Vorax-automata darted forward at breakneck speed on their sickle-gaited mantid-legs, power blades humming in expectation of the kill. Then MaSade at last issued the order. With practised haste, power feeds were jettisoned from steaming lasrifles and the bulky blast-chargers fitted in their place. As one, the infantry Tercio troopers primed, raised and fired. It was as if a destroying hand had slammed down from the heavens as the air burned with a crackling roar. The Vorax-automata at the vanguard caught the brunt of the fire, all but disintegrating in rippling explosions and sprays of molten metal. Behind them the Castellax stumbled forwards as if they were men caught in a sudden powerful headwind, defensive energy fields snapping like angry



hornets and their ceramite plates cracking and splintering in dozens of locations as overcharged lasbolts found their way through. The Auxilia firing line quickly rotated, one trooper stepping back to eject the smouldering and spent blast-charger as another took their place. Keen-eyed Agathean gunners zeroed in their rapier batteries on the Castellax which showed the most damage, focusing their heavy weapons fire until they were smashed to debris. Beside them, multi-lasers raked their staccato beams back and forth across the beaten ground where damaged servitors and shattered, smoke-bleeding automata strived to drag their broken bodies towards the Agatheans' lines. A second wave of blast-charger fire hammered into the Taghmata, then a third and a fourth, until suddenly only the heaviest of the Mechanicum units remained; the few surviving Krios tanks, their over-worked flare shields rippling, trading shots with the dug-in Auxilia support tanks, and behind them the hulking Thanatar Siege-automata, scorched-black and superficially damaged, but largely impervious even to the augmented fire of the Auxilia. The Thanatar held the line, but now advanced no further, their bulbous plasma mortars slinging white fireballs of gelid, high-density plasma into the Loyalist defence works, making a burning hell wherever they landed. The broken ground between the Siege-automata and the Agatheans was now a wasteland of ash, wreckage and fused silica glass whilst behind the bulwark of Siege-automata, the lesser Magos of the Taghmata Cyclothrathe lurked alongside their baroquely armoured bodyguards, unwilling to risk themselves in the storm before the Agathean fortifications, and unwilling to press forward until further reinforcements arrived. For the time being, the Mechanicum assault had been stymied.

**The Warlord of the Web**

A little over a hundred kilometres to the south-east, Archmagos Draykavac observed all. His sight was that of a thousand different war machines, Battle-automata and servitors all over Numinal's surface, relayed to him via his djinn-skein in a myriad of ghostly spectrums and augury shadows beyond the power of any unaugmented brain to fathom. Warning runes and anathematic equations ran through his cogitator-enhanced brain; already the first wave of attack on the Agathean landing zone had resulted in heavier losses than all of the Taghmata Cyclothrathe's military operations over the last two years combined, the Agatheans having displayed unprecedented and uncalculated levels of close range firepower, as well as superior deployment and tactical cohesion. Furthermore, secondary landings and incursions were now observed at a number of other locations, and the invasion had not gone unnoticed; native resistance movements were showing themselves in wholesale acts of aggression, while riots and revolts were reported at the majority of processing centres and still extant civilian population centres not yet having undergone total conversion. The data was incontrovertible; the Taghmata Cyclothrathe was losing control of the planet. Victory however, Draykavac concluded, was still possible so long as the landing zone could be purged of the invaders, forcing a stalemate in which the Taghmata controlled the surface and the Agatheans the void and system. Matters would then be decided by the scale and frequency of potential reinforcement. Above, if it tried to intervene, the Loyalist galleass could be held back at the cost of his own *Sacra Astra's* and the remaining Mechanicum escorts' sacrifice if needed to ensure the attack's success. It was the arithmetic of war.

It was now time for Draykavac himself to take a hand. Ascending from the command vault on his battle-Abeyant, he joined his acolytes and bodyguard covenant of Thallax at the centre of the amassed second wave of the assault mustering under a shimmering curtain of Triaros-Testudo generated mobile void shields to protect them from aerial attack. Around him were arrayed the grey-black armoured ranks of his personal cadre of Battle-automata, and beyond them the hulking ranks of the Knights of House Atrax and Freeblade raiders from House Ærthegn, some sixty armours in all. Hovering macro-hauler barges were even now waiting to forge the crossing to the landing zone archipelago, and against this gathering of might, even the firepower and defences of the Solar Auxilia would be as nothing.

### Regicide

Lord Marshal Ireton MaSade, the old general, kept alive by long-implanted augmentics of his own far past a normal human span, watched the gathering of force at the Mechanicum-held dockyards on the occularis viewers of his command tank, as calm and still as if graven in stone. The Magos warlord he faced was carrying out the most logical course of action, and the one most likely to succeed, as against such a concentration of Knights, his own forces, despite their strength and discipline, could not prevail in open battle. It was exactly why MaSade had formed his forces in this manner, why he had deployed them as he had, exactly why his home fleet was absent, and why the *Hammer of the Deep* stood ready with her deadliest cargo yet unleashed. He wanted such a concentration of Mechanicum forces, to engage them when they were together, not forced to hunt them down across an entire waterlogged world where every outpost and processing plant might become a fortress against him, and where his own troops would be at the disadvantage



against the tireless superhuman machines of the Taghmata. He had in his years fought outnumbered and outgunned against alien powers in a hundred campaigns; he had fought even at the side of Horus and his Legion in days past, and learned well from the master the value of the decapitation strike in warfare. With the Taghmata and their army of Knights moving towards the waiting hover barges under the rippling shadows of their mobile void shields, Ireton MaSade gave the order his staff had been tensely waiting for.

In close orbit, the *Hammer of the Deep*'s drives flared and the galleass' great kilometre-long over-bay doors swung majestically open like the spreading wings of a vast bird of prey. From within, two brutal-looking drop ships, ancient Khobol class heavy assault landers, emerged —relics older than the Great Crusade— and moved to make their burning descent into Numinal's atmosphere. The surviving Mechanicum warships on their own watchful orbit moved to intercept, the galleass turning and offering itself to battle so that the landers would go unchallenged, and the void burned between them.

**Manticore**

The twin landers burned down through the skies of Numinal, heavy flak missiles streaking up to strike them, but doing





nothing more than adding fresh scars to the slab-like armour plates which covered their blocky hulls. The landers came in fast and low on their powerful engines, but rather than slam directly into the roiling mass of Knights and Battle-automata quickly dispersing themselves from crushing attack, they roared overhead, skimming the crackling void shield mantle and sending shivers of blistering lightning coursing through the skies. In the wide scrubland wastes beyond the loading docks, the landers settled their vast bulks, side-ramps splitting open. Then across the wastes came a siren howl older than the Imperium, a complex, eardrum-splitting dirge. It was the ancient challenge, that of Knights to others of their warlike kind to partake in deadly combat.

The ground shuddered as the Knights thundered forth, the bulk —some fifty armours in all— cast in quartered sable and deep amethyst blue, bearing the golden Manticore heraldry of the dread House of Orhlacc, missing from their home world of Dark Haven since before the Warmaster's talon had touched the Coronid Deeps. They were not alone. With them came Freeblades and outcasts in liveries both gaudy and strange, a maniple of Knights in the crimson hued armour of House Hermetika, oath-sworn of distant Mezoa, and a warband of House Ærthegn, outcast from their brethren that had taken up the cause of Horus and now come to make war upon their kin in bitter feud. It had been the sinisterly told-of House of Orhlacc that had brought to the Agatheans' cause the galleass of the Rogue Trader that had in her folly come to Dark Haven to subjugate them and paid the price. It had been Valdemar Orhlacc, High Seneschal of his House, that Ireton MaSade had bargained with for his might on this day of reckoning, at a price no less than the dominion of the dim world of Wychval, far from prying eyes at the edge of the Agathean Domain, and the Knights of Orhlacc had come to make good that bargain in blood.

There was nowhere to hide from the savagery to come; the wasteland, and the dockyard span upon which it ended, were all but featureless, an expanse of emptiness that in an instant was transformed into a killing ground which no mortal creature could have crossed and lived. There was no room or opportunity for trickery or subtle tactic, no time even for orders to be given; there was only the storm of steel and fire. The Loyalists charged, their weapons blazing sun-heat and thundering deadly shell fire, and the Traitor forces turned as one to meet their oncoming attack, answering with their own shimmering arcs of pale volkite rays and cracking bolts of dark lightning.

The thunderous walkers closed the distance between the two and immediately Draykavac saw the danger. His Knights were marginally

outnumbered, but his oath-sworn Atrax were primarily equipped with the Mechanicum Styrix and Magaera pattern armours, superior in their protection from damage, but also slower than most of his foe's forces, many of which were equipped with the swift Cerastus patterns designed to outflank an enemy at speed. Even now the Orhlacc Knights' and their allies' faster units were breaking into two horns of battle to encircle his own forces, while the Loyalist Paladins and Errants made direct assault on his centre, formed up in fighting wedges so that their ion shields created an all but impenetrable overlapping barrier against incoming fire. Draykavac extended his will and his army moved as one, tessellating into a hexagon formation, its own ion shields presented outwards, defending the core within, at the centre of which hovered Draykavac and his bodyguard of dark armoured Battle-automata.

The complex manoeuvre was barely complete when the two tides of metal and fire met, the Orhlacc and their allies crushing round the Atrax in a murderous grip. The ground shook and rattled, the air was rent with an indescribable cacophony as Knight met Knight in shattering impact. Battle cannon roared at point blank range, power lances pistoned forth to smash explosively through armour plate, ion shields flared and guttered. The white-hot beams of thermal cannon speared through hulls, sending adamantium running like molten wax, and mighty metal limbs were torn from their sockets by crushing servo-claws and shimmering solar blades. Where the Atrax fought with cold, calculating brutality, the Orhlacc fought like madmen suddenly unleashed, but the bitterest savagery was the domain of the Ærthegn, as brother fought against brother to the death. In such a tumult of inhuman war and incalculable power even the Castellax Battle-automata of the Taghmata Cyclothrathe were as nothing compared to the fury unleashed, as the reaper chainblades of the Orhlacc lashed through them like kindling before a falling axe, and Draykavac's bodyguard of Thallax fell in droves as they were caught in an annihilating crossfire of Castigator bolt cannon shells.

The Archmagos was not without power of his own however, and the crimson armoured Knights-Castigator of House Hermetika which had made the attack found themselves slowly crushed under the weight of a fusillade of graviton cannon blasts, staggering to their doom. Swiftly they were swamped by murderous Vorax Battle-automata, their sickle-bladed arms hacking and slashing through joints and power cables, crippling them, until Draykavac himself tore the living pilots from the control thrones within and liquefied their bodies to dripping gore.

The clash of Knights, apocalyptic in its destruction, raged on, but even at the centre of this hurricane of chaos, Draykavac's half-machine mind was holding watch over a hundred other conflicts raging on Numinal. On the northern archipelago, his diminished second wave, robbed of their reinforcements, was being driven back into the sea as the invading Agathean Cohorts broke out of their fortified landing zone and attacked in full force. Obedite-led native resistance was destroying the Mechanicum's conversion crawlers all across the globe, vulnerable now that Draykavac had withdrawn their supporting Knights. New and unknown forces had also entered the fray as a trio of mismatched Javelin Attack Speeders, one in the umbral black of the Raven Guard and the others in the ochre yellow of the Imperial Fists, had flown in under the void shield mantle and were now striking at the machines that generated it, threatening the shields' integrity more with each passing attack. At one primary flesh-processing facility, no more than eleven kilometres away, a lone Legiones Astartes had appeared in armour scoured clean of all markings and was now systematically killing every servitor, Tech-Priest and automata in the complex. In orbit, the void battle had proved bloody too but inconclusive to both sides, and even now the *Sacra Astra* was badly damaged and on an outbound orbit to effect emergency repairs, and would not likely survive another close pass against the *Hammer of the Deep*. Were Draykavac one of the Emperor's Angels of Death, defeat would have been impossible to countenance and he would have fought on regardless of the odds of victory, but he was of the Mechanicum, and the cold equations of bloodshed told him he had lost.

Immediately, the Cyclothrathine Knights' hexagonal formation of defence began to shift, and what was a defiant battle became instead stalled, a fighting retreat with a single purpose, to deliver Draykavac to safety at any cost. Soon the dockyard complex running back to the Mechanicum command centre was a fire-strewn waste, littered with the burning hulls of broken Knight armour and the twitching, dismembered remains of Battle-automata as the House of Atrax and the Taghmata Cyclothrathe were sacrificed for their master. Once within the fortified bastion, Draykavac made good his escape off-world, his salvation-rocket blasting off from its position of concealment in one of the bastion's storage silo-towers, leaving fiery ruin in its wake. The last baleful command he issued to each and every surviving servitor, automata and Tech-Priest of the Taghmata was to kill, kill relentlessly and indiscriminately until their own destruction came. Numinal had fallen to the Loyalists.

### The Age of War

The counter-invasion of Numinal and the catastrophic destruction visited on Gethsamaine would only be the start of a new phase in the ongoing war for the Coronid Deeps. Four sidereal weeks after the successful liberation of Numinal, the Agathean war fleet, so notably absent, was in action at Cerada Secundus, skirmishing with the Cyclothrathine battlegroup attacking that world. Here, against the massed war arks of the Taghmata, it would not prove so victorious. But instead would be repelled with considerable loss, but their mere presence shifted the strategic landscape such that the Taghmata temporarily withdrew to reinforce its captured domains, and so another fault line of war was established. The 'raid' on Gethsamaine would prove only to be the first attack carried out by the *Red Talon* and other Loyalist survivors in the region, and Sons of Horus-led squadrons and battlegroups were soon dispatched from Port Maw to deal with a threat that struck throughout the Grail Abyss and the Cyclops Cluster, and even deep into the subjugated worlds of what was once the Manachean Commonwealth. What would follow throughout the Coronid Deeps would become a protracted and bloody series of campaigns and battles with no certain victor. Outposts were raided, planets laid to waste, convoys ambushed and murderous reprisals taken; the tables frequently turning so that the hunters became the hunted and back again, and where one side gained an advantage, it was quickly squandered or laid low by sudden reversal of fortune. Loyalist and Traitor clashed again and again; forces came and went from the region as the tides of the unquiet Warp allowed and battle waxed high and waned in bloody exhaustion, only to be taken up again.

So it was with the Coronid Deeps; so it was to be all across what was once the unified Imperium of Mankind. A grim age of war had been born at Isstvan that would never end in the lifetimes of those who were caught in its bloody embrace, an age of war that would outlast the Horus Heresy, outlast the Great Scouring and beyond, an Age of Darkness.



# The Principal Worlds of the Coronid Deeps

The following cartographical information gives a précis of the most strategically important areas of the region of the Imperium known as the Coronid Deeps and its nearby environs at the time of the Traitors attack in 006.M31, with particular reference to those worlds that would come under the assault.

# The Cyclops Cluster

**The Cyclops Cluster is one of the most heavily industrialised sectors in the northern Imperium, featuring as it does within a single stellar volume two Forge Worlds as well as sixteen primary grade industrialised worlds and ninety-three distinct resource extraction zones. It is then unsurprising, given the Cyclops Cluster's economic output and therefore strategic importance, that its priority as a target for the Warmaster's overall attack was secondary only to the Manachean Commonwealth. Widespread human inhabitation of the Cluster is however relatively recent, and owes its origins to the sixth decade of the Great Crusade when the hand of the Emperor himself is reputed to have determined the region as being suitable for mass exploration to further empower Imperial expansion. The Cyclops Cluster itself, while rich in minerals and ores, is however deficit in complex organics, with relatively few life-sustaining worlds among its stars. This factor, as well as the heavy hand of martial and Mechanicum law falling over the region, stifled any independent power in the Cluster, while breeding an embittered and often resentful population who lived and died at the orders of often unseen and uncaring masters, so long as production quotas were met. Resultantly, petty workers revolts were commonplace on outlying mining and extraction colonies long before the spectre of Horus' treachery was to rear its head, and as war was to come to the Cyclops Cluster, rebellions, secessionist movements and general outlawry became widespread.**

### Mezoa

**Classification: Forge World [Grade Secundus-I]**

Founded first as an outpost of the Lucien Mechanicum in 540. M30 before the Great Crusade, before rapidly gaining status as an independent Forge World in its own right, in 813.M30 Mezoa was from its inception a war-world; a fane of weapons and armaments solely intended to serve the needs of the ever-advancing frontline of the Great Crusade. Founded on a vast, highly volcanic world categorised as naturally incapable of sustaining life but hugely rich in metallic elements, the world was dedicated almost solely to the production of heavy arms and armour, its production ranging from battle cannon to warship hull plate. The Mezoan forges were built under the direction not only of the Archimandrites of the Cult Mechanicus, but also the minds of both the Emperor and, it was said, the Primarch Ferrus Manus in later years after joining the Imperium. They comprised great spindle-spires of metal, jutting like ziggurats kilometres in height from the magma flows and vast, naturally occurring lakes of molten iron; forge-fanes which encircled the planet like a garland of barbed wire. Above the ash and cinder-wreathed world, Mezoa was ringed with concentric layers of orbital docking platforms, habitation modules and transit tethers, and beyond those rings lay outer boundaries of autonomous planetary defence batteries, kill-satellites and spatial mine fields guarding the world's approaches. These formidable protections were far greater than those possessed by other individual Forge Worlds. They were not constructed out of simple caution or paranoia, but had been tested on many occasions, particularly during the decades-long xenocide campaigns against the Mitu Conglomerate —the warp-capable alien pocket empire which controlled much of the region of the Coronid Deeps before the coming of the Imperium— being besieged and bombarded on numerous occasions by the foul xenos before their eventual eradication. As militarily powerful as Mezoa had evolved to become during the years of the Great Crusade, one noteworthy idiosyncrasy of the Forge World was that it did not possess a sentinel Titan Legion, either of its own or as an ally. This was simply a consequence of the fluctuating and perilous terrain, which was entirely unsuited to Titan operations, both because of the planet's shifting topography and because where its scorched black surface was solid, such ground was likely to prove no more than a skin of solidified magma, treacherously unable to bear a Titan's weight. Though this geological instability arguably robbed Mezoa of its most powerful potential guardians, it was also itself a final and telling line of defence, as coming events were later to prove.

### Dark Haven

**Classification: Knight World**

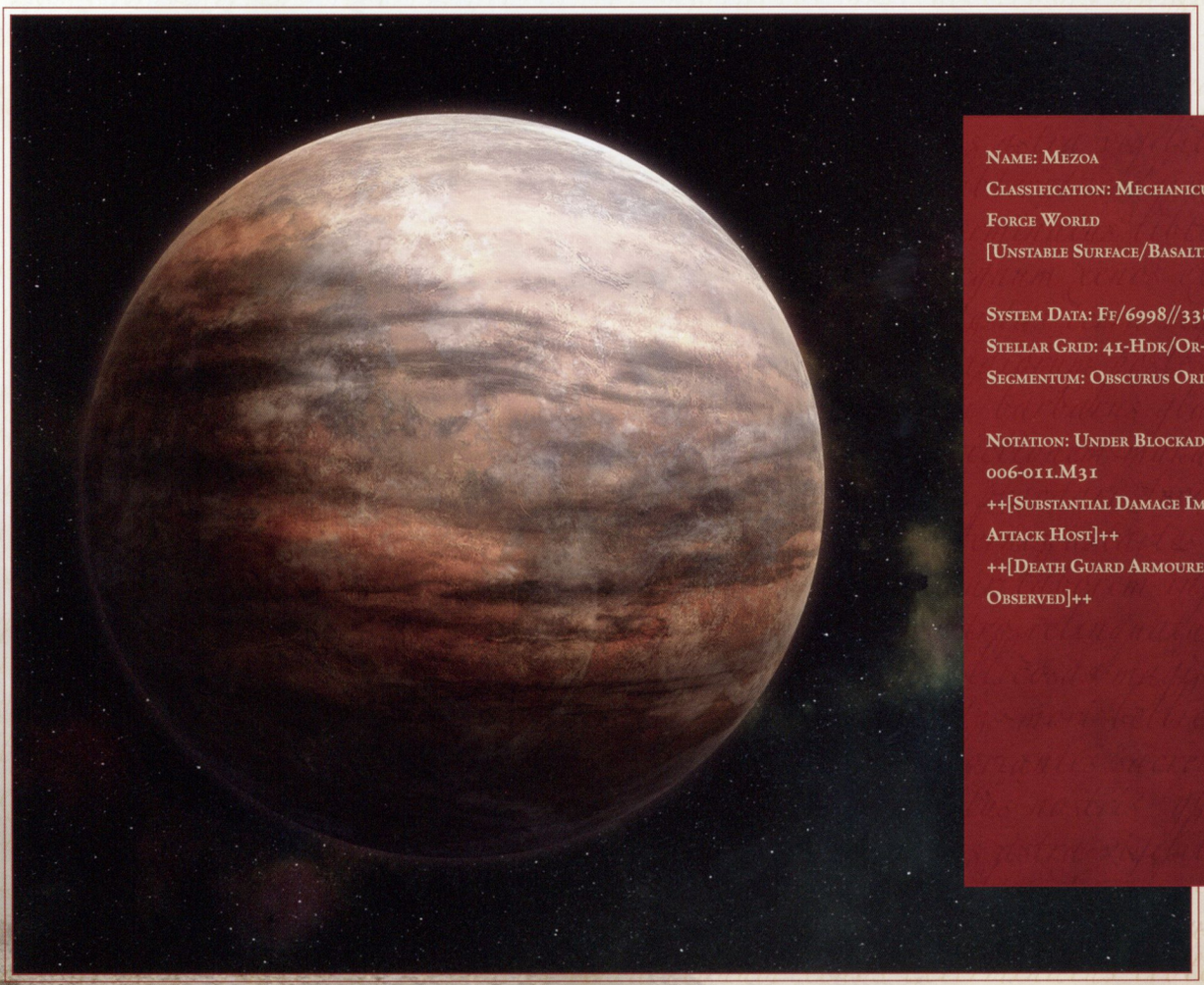
An anomaly in such a lifeless region as the Cyclops Cluster, Dark Haven was a fecund world teeming with life before the coming of humanity, albeit an unusual one. A shadowed, twilight world circling its pale blue-white star at the very edge of its habitable zone, the planet was covered in a world-spanning forest of vast fungal and pseudo-coral growths which swallowed up every iota of light, casting the grey earth beneath them into deep shadow and even shrouding its cold seas into sunless deeps. Aggressive and fast-growing, the



living web that covered Dark Haven was nevertheless organic, and therefore a precious resource to be used and harvested, although the planet's great toxicity for many years prevented this. This was a world of considerable hazard, as the planet presented its own predators in the shape of hulking ambulatory mycolidae and less well-understood fauna deep within its shadowed depths. During the time of Old Night, the Knight House of Orhlacc, originally of the Lucien Sector, rose to rule Dark Haven as its own. Orhlacc, previously a minor Household, flourished over the decades of its stewardship of Dark Haven before the coming of the Great Crusade. After the Knight World was restored to the Imperium, its valuable harvest along with certain exotic chemical compounds, were cultivated for export by legions of servitor-arachnid engines, creating a wealth which further increased the power and independence of this world.

**Gethsamaine**
**Classification: Colonised World [Uncategorised]**
A world only colonised sixty-four years before the outbreak of the Horus Heresy in 942.M30, Gethsamaine, on the far edge of the Cyclops Cluster, was founded with the hopes of becoming the cornerstone of a new spread of human expansion to further consolidate and exploit the nearby stars. Discovered accidently after a Chartist liner went off-course in an attempted passage of the void between M'Pandex and Zarnov, Gethsamaine was found to be a lush, primordial world of steaming rain forests filled with primitive flora, but where animal life had not yet developed. Immediately identified as a prime location for colonisation, numerous warp-arks were directed to the world, filled from the teeming hives of the Segmentum Solar, and much of the planet's western polar regions were soon stripped of rain forest, sprawling ferrocrete cities and manufactora being raised up to dominate the planet before the outbreak of the Heresy. These efforts, however, were increasingly stymied by growing warp turbulence in the region, making contact with Gethsamaine and the rest of the Imperium fractured and intermittent at best before the coming of the war which would ravage this world.

**Moab**
**Classification: Colonised World/Administrative Sub-capital**
A chill but life-sustaining world with tolerable, if high, local radiation levels, the otherwise unremarkable world of Moab, which would likely never have proved worthwhile enough to colonise elsewhere, became instead in a span of decades one of the most populous worlds of the Cyclops Cluster. This was entirely owed to the benefit of a series of relatively stable warp routes that connected it to the surrounding cluster, and made it a ready nexus for travel. First used as a way station as the Great Crusade pushed into the northern reaches of the Ultima Segmentum, it expanded to become a dormitory world for first soldiers and later for mining expeditions and labour armies heading outward. As it did so, administrational facilities expanded and grew into cities served by their own water reclamation infrastructure and dust-agriculture, and the planet eventually established a native population in the tens of millions. Granted the sovereignty of its own Imperial Commander in 897.M30 Moab, by the war's outbreak, had grown with a continual influx of colonists and imported workers, a human 'livestock' often involuntarily displaced from recently Compliant or resistant worlds, to over a billion inhabitants. Manpower then became Moab's sole export, asset and stock-in-trade; it was a harsh realm where clean water became used for currency and life expectancy was low, ruled over by an unforgiving legal code enforced by the lash.



Name: Mezoa
Classification: Mechanicum Sovereign Forge World
[Unstable Surface/Basaltic Sub-crust]

System Data: Ff/6998//3389/ΩΣ
Stellar Grid: 41-Hdk/Or-52
Segmentum: Obscurus Orient Extremis

Notation: Under Blockade by Traitor Forces 006-011.M31
++[Substantial Damage Imposed on Traitor Attack Host]++
++[Death Guard Armoured Incursion Force Observed]++

**Dominica Minor**
**Classification: Industrial World [Refinery Sub-type]**
Perhaps the foremost exemplar of the Cyclops Cluster's extensive mining and resource extraction worlds, Dominica Minor is entirely given over to gas and alchemical refineries. As the lone indigenously inhabited sphere, Dominica Prime sits at the centre of an extensive star system of more than nineteen worlds, the majority of which had chemical or gaseous atmospheres suitable for exploitation. Dominica Minor's output in billions of litres of refined and compressed chemicals was collected in vast orbital tanks strung out across its giant star's gravitational plane. These were periodically taken away by Mechanicum bulk transports to feed the hungry industries of the Cluster's Forge Worlds, while food and manufactured supplies were shipped in.

Owing to Dominica Minor's great wealth, it had become a regional power by the beginning of M31. The system was possessed of a substantial defence infrastructure and its own limited scale trans-orbital shipyards, which served as a military port for the Armada Imperialis, who used the system as a resupply and repair base on their patrols through the Cyclops Cluster and into the Grail Abyss beyond.

**M'Pandex**
**Classification: Forge World [Grade Secundus-II]**
The Cyclops Cluster's second Forge World, overshadowed in most regards by its neighbour Mezoa, was in fact considerably older in provenance, owing its origins to Martian explorator arks launched during the Age of Strife. The exact nature of its founding and its early history, however, remain shrouded in the lost anarchy of the past, and it seems the Forge World itself fell out of contact with both the Mechanicum and wider humanity for much of its history. In the long years of its isolation, it is evident that the Forge World went through several cycles of expansion and collapse, each cycle ending in environmental and/or civil calamity and progressively degrading its technological capabilities, the understanding of its Magos and the stability of its population's genome. Such was M'Pandex's fall that even its command of the Lingua-technis —the sacred language of the Machine Cult— suffered, leading to the widely held supposition that the Forge World's self-given name, sometimes variously rendered '*Mappandax*' and '*Zhaphadak*' in the local idiom, is in fact a corruption of an older, purer title. In the same manner, M'Pandex's few Titans had fallen, uncomprehended over the centuries, into ruin to serve as no more than inanimate idols to the machine priesthood. When M'Pandex was rediscovered by chance by the 90th Expeditionary Fleet, it was barely recognisable as a domain of the Mechanicum, ruled by fractious and superstition-bound warlords scarcely able to claim the lineage of the Magos, while much of its dwindling population had descended into abhumanity. Regardless of its parlous state, the Lords of Mars would not see a Forge World, however reduced, pass into oblivion, and considerable effort was spent by the Mechanicum rebuilding M'Pandex's infrastructure, re-educating its wayward inhabitants and weeding out the worst of them or driving them deep into the planet's long-petrified jungles. Much had been irrevocably lost unfortunately, and it may also be true that the Martian Mechanicum, despite their best efforts, did not entirely trust those of M'Pandex, and garrisoning forces of Skitarii and a demi-maniple of Titans of the Legio Mortis were stationed there not so much as protectors but as wardens, beholden to Mars, not the High Ourteka M'andii of the Golden Forge. The planet's rebuilt industries were notably primarily focused not on macro-weaponry, arms and armour as were the nearby and rapidly expanding forges of Mezoa, but on the mass production of items of logistical supply and prefabricated materials; just as vital to the Great Crusade, but clearly of less direct use in any potential revolt perhaps. Eager to prove its loyalty, the forges and maufactora of M'Pandex ran ceaselessly to show their worth, and by the time Horus was proclaimed Warmaster, their output rivalled those even of Lucius and Vannaheim in volume, yet the Forge World remained in the shadow of its upstart neighbour Mezoa, both in prestige and influence.

**Zavarich**
**Classification: Agri-world**
A feudal world, whose small native human population was brought bloodlessly into Imperial Compliance by the 611th Expeditionary Fleet in 876.M30, Zavarich had entered into operation as a fully managed agri-world by the time of the Heresy, and is notable for being one of a relative handful of such worlds in the region, and therefore retaining strategic significance because of this. The planet's principal product was high-yield tharac wheat, with secondary production bases involving grox and macro-krill herds, all of which had grown increasingly important to the Cluster's economy in the decades since Zavarich's Compliance. Recent Imperial census takings had recorded the human population as being under three million, with perhaps a quarter of this comprising recently arrived colonists and agri-workers imported to manage and improve production. This is noted to have been the cause of some significant unrest, while the Imperial Truth is yet to be embraced by the natives, who remain stubbornly adherent to ancient cultic and autochthonic belief systems.

**Bleak Harbour**
**Classification: Colonized World [Scavenger Sub-type]**
Bleak Harbour is the common Imperial designation for a world known on Dark Age of Technology navigational datacores as '*Auricalla*'. Once a fabled haven of civilisation and progress, Imperial Explorators despatched to this storied realm during the Great Crusade found only a semi-flooded wasteland of tumbledown ruins, seeded with the rusting wreckage of continent-spanning macro-machinery and the scattered bones of the dead. The fate of the lost civilisation of Auricalla is uncertain, but it has been judged most likely to have been due to societal collapse and regression as a result of cataclysmic climatic change, inundation and famine, rather than any outside agency or war. Long stripped of valuables and technological remains perhaps centuries before the Cyclops Cluster became part of the Imperium, the system was nevertheless colonised for bulk salvage purposes and as a transit layover and port of last resort in the region, which would serve to give it its present nomenclature. Although nominally an independent world with its own Imperial Commander, Bleak Harbour is a poor world, lacking both in stable population and the rule of law. Its government was noted as being similarly impoverished and embittered while its hinterlands and rust-wastes had become a notorious haven for outlaws, escaped prisoners and petty hereteks from across the Cyclops Cluster by the outbreak of the wars of the Horus Heresy.



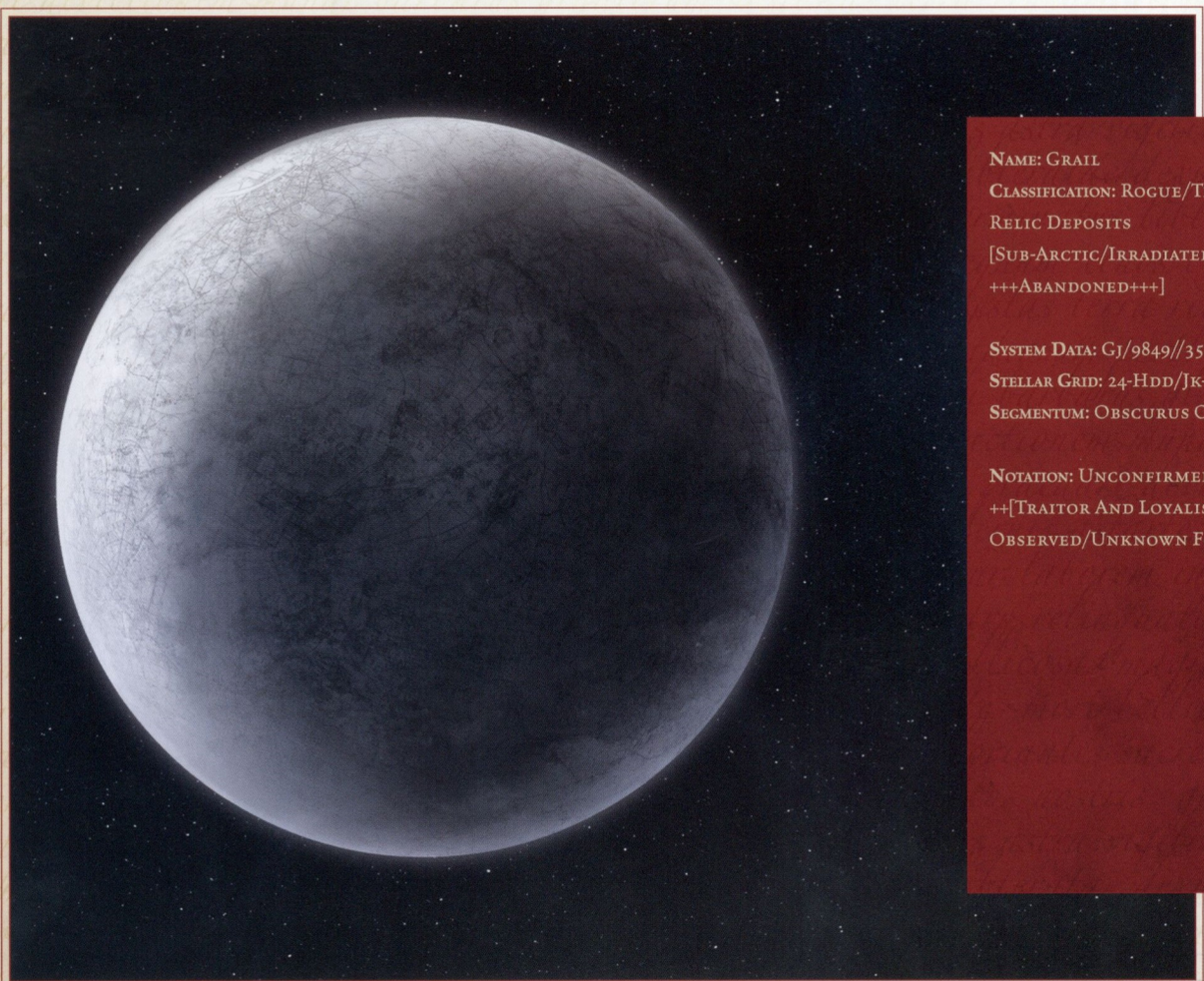
**Auxiliary of the 905th Solar Auxilia Cohort (the 'Ash Scorpions'):** Raised from the fearsome tribal warriors of Lethe, the 905th Cohort was known for its aggression and dedication, and earned numerous battle honours in pacification wars across the Coronid Deeps before its final, glorious sacrifice at Port Maw. This Auxiliary is equipped with the standard infantry panoply of the Solar Auxilia, including void-proofed padded undersuit, flexible armour plating and extensive integrated survival equipment.

# The Grail Abyss

**A celestial wasteland ranging between the galactic spiral arms, sparsely littered with stable solar systems, rogue planets and the bled-out remnants of cosmic detritus and other shifting navigational hazards, the Grail Abyss is aptly named. Forming the extreme border of the Segmentum Obscurus and the edge of known space, beyond its borders lie only the drifting stars and systems accessible purely owing to the vagaries of relatively stable warp passages from the galactic core (including such systems as the now infamous Isstvan, and Ultima Ectosa, the furthest star across the northern galactic plane known to hold an Imperial colony). Owing to the shifting topography of the Grail Abyss, and the psychic emptiness in local warp space that gives it its name and makes predicable interstellar travel in the region unreliable, travel within the region of the Grail Abyss is indeed more difficult in the main than reaching those furthest stars of Mankind, and likely has been long before the Imperium's birth. The human worlds of the Abyss are therefore few and far between, no more than candle-points flickering in a sea of night.**

**Keopsis**
**Classification: Sub-surface Hive [Mining World]**
An ancient and singular world set on the very edge of the Segmentum's boundary, Keopsis' human population is believed to stem back from the Dark Age of Technology, and to have predated the savagely over-active phase currently undergone by its star, Urtal. Frequently bathed in solar storms which lash the planet's surface with cosmic rays and blast-furnace temperatures, the human population, which maintained a considerable technological sophistication during the Age of Strife, has since descended to inhabit subterranean cities which extend many kilometres underground. The Keopsar, as the population refers to itself, have adjusted and even thrived, adapting their way of life to these frequent calamities, even building vast absorption towers to generate nearly boundless energy from the solar assaults. They walk their world's surface only during the brief planetary 'solar winters' afforded by the extreme range of their orbit and their sun's phase cycle to glean fresh water from coalescent steam and to assess what damage has been done to their workings on the surface. When Keopsis was discovered by a 1st Legion Expeditionary force, there followed a brief but bloody civil war, which was quickly won by the pro-Imperial party with the sable-clad Legiones Astartes' assistance. Afterwards, the world became a willing and loyal part of the Imperium, benefitting from technological exchange and exploiting its labyrinth of deep-core mines to garner rare crystal and mineral deposits for the Imperium, and becoming a frontier outpost and a 'last light' in the darkness on the edge of known space.

**Baroda**
**Classification: Knight World**
One of the many Knight Worlds seeded towards the end of the Dark Age of Technology, Baroda is a terrestrial type world with a variegated climate possessed of the typical saurid megafauna associated with such worlds. Isolated within the grip of the Grail Abyss, Baroda was spared from outside influence and alien assault during the Age of Strife, but suffered from a propensity to terrible climatic storms and dwindling quantities of easily accessible mineral resources, leading to frequent clashes between its Households for power and control. By the time Baroda was reclaimed by the Imperium, only a handful of Knight



Name: Grail
Classification: Rogue/Thesaurum-Grade Relic Deposits [Sub-Arctic/Irradiated/Sub-glacialHives +++Abandoned+++]

System Data: GJ/9849//3504/Ω
Stellar Grid: 24-Hdd/Jk-71
Segmentum: Obscurus Orient Umbra

Notation: Unconfirmed Activity Logged ++[Traitor And Loyalist Scouts Observed/Unknown Forces Present]++

Households, the Makabius, had endured, with their Knights reduced to fossil fuel-burning, ill-repaired hybrids of what had come before. While re-joining the Imperium and contact with the Mechanicum rejuvenated Baroda's technology and gave it a place in something far greater, its isolation in the Grail Abyss still served to keep it far from regular contact and influence. In the years that followed, the flower of Baroda's noble youth fled the world, its young Knights joining the forces of the Great Crusade as Questoris, never to return; many turning Freeblade if forbidden by their embittered lords in an attempt to stall the exodus.

**Shoar**
**Classification: Feral World**
If Keopsis is the Grail Abyss' world of fire, Shoar is its icy counterpart, a witheringly cold world at the edge of human tolerances, locked in orbit around a bloated and dying star. Its hardy and brutal native population reside primarily across the equatorial regions' coastal estuaries, and live lives locked in unremitting tribal warfare. Formidable physical specimens and able fighters, the Shoar were inducted in large numbers into the Imperial Auxilia, forming several 'skull taker' cohorts attached to the 7th and 60th Expeditionary Fleets, and it is believed several intakes were sent to Terra to determine their suitability for Space Marine Legion recruitment with unknown outcome before civil war was to shatter the Imperium.

**Lascal**
**Classification: Colonised World [Fleet Anchorage]**
A terrestrial world on the edge of the Grail Abyss, Lascal had been a feral Ork holding before the coming of the 7th Expeditionary Fleet under Lord Commander Suleiman Grimm of the 1st Legion. After the extermination of the Ork infestation, Lascal became a forward outpost of the Great Crusade, and later a naval fleet anchorage was constructed there in orbit under the auspices of the Lucien Mechanicum, with which the world would continue to maintain distant ties. For a time the world rose in prominence, however, the frontline of the Imperium's expansion in the region would soon move onwards and turn away from the darkness of the Grail Abyss into more fruitful territories, but the fleet anchorage, although downgraded, was maintained as a link in the binding chains of Imperial control of the galaxy. The planet itself maintained a relatively small but slowly expanding imported human population to service its orbital industries and, by 902.M30, had become an independent and self-sustaining Imperial colony.

**Grail**
**Classification: Dead World [Relic Sub-type]**
The errant world which has long given the Abyss its name, Grail is a dead world, a relic world, a place of hidden wealth and terrible danger which has long drawn Explorators and would-be treasure hunters to their graves. Given its name by the Rogue Trader Corthona Van der Veld in 891.M30, Grail is an enigma, a world clearly once teeming in life, human life in the billions to judge by the ruins of its continent-spanning hive cities as silent as tombs, but one now caught in an erratic orbit around a rogue star, a star whose trajectory is gradually taking it out into the intergalactic void. Scoured by radiation, its heat bleeding slowly into the darkness, its atmosphere already partly frozen into what will eventually become a final winter, no proof has ever been recovered of how it came to be so, or what ultimate fate killed its inhabitants, perhaps tens of thousands of years ago. It is likely that Grail would have remained one of an innumerable number of mysteries encountered during the Great Crusade's expansion and all but forgotten, except that much of Grail's human technological remains are curiously and inconsistently intact. Several STC remnants as well as numerous Dark Age of Technology artefacts have been recovered from its ruins, but such explorations are fraught with peril. Aside from the inhospitable climate, topographical instability can collapse entire sections of the ruins without warning, while it is also certain that non-indigenous xenos creatures have also been drawn to or become stranded on Grail, and reports of potential Psychneuein infestation have been persistent but remain unconfirmed.



# The Manachean Commonwealth

**This aggregate of advanced and populated worlds, set at the junction point where the Segmentum Obscurus ends and the north-eastern sweep of the Ultima Segmentum presses onwards to its outermost limits was, at the dawning of the war of the Horus Heresy, without doubt the most strategic vital area of the Coronid Deeps. Clustered with inhabitable stars, many of which had possessed human populations since before the Age of Strife, the Commonwealth served as a lynchpin of commerce and trade in this region of the burgeoning Imperium. Vitally, it was also a powerhouse of industry and military endeavour which held the shape of the Imperium's borders by anchoring much of the ongoing force projection of the Imperialis Armada in the wider region. The two principal axes of this power in the region were the Manachea system itself, comprising several inhabited worlds with a population reaching into the many billions, and Port Maw, a colossal naval base still under ongoing construction when the Warmaster's treachery came to pass, and set upon an ancient artificial planetoid believed to be of xenos construction and vastly ancient, long predating even the Eldar.**

### Manachea

Before the coming of the Great Crusade, the Manachea system held a technologically advanced society, a survivor state of the ancient human diaspora which, while it numbered in the hundreds of millions, also suffered under the inhuman overlordship of the Mitu Conglomerate. The Conglomerate, whose core worlds would eventually be purged by the fires of Exterminatus, was a cabal of several psychically empowered pseudo-actinaric xenos species believed to have evolved from a common stock. Warp capable and with advanced biologic and arcane technologies, the Mitu Conglomerate had forged a pocket empire, forbidding any attempts at space flight and ruthlessly purging any psyker within their domains. From Manachea, as well as other subjected star systems (both human and alien), they periodically demanded a culling of the population and a tribute of flesh to provide them, it was believed, with the basic components to construct their technologies. In answer to the existence of such creatures there could be no response but total annihilation, and the war the Imperium fought to end the Mitu Conglomerate was protracted and bloody. The conflict itself was fought largely in the void as a series of brutal close-quarters boarding engagements, interspersed with sudden and world-shattering planetary assaults by both sides, which involved the forces of several different Expeditionary fleets, and would require no fewer than three Space Marine Legions and hundreds of Solar Auxilia cohorts to successfully prosecute. The liberation of the Manachea system was a turning point in this great war, and for the masses who had lived so long under the oppression of inhuman intelligences and the constant threat of death, Imperial Compliance was taken up with open arms. Instituted as a commonwealth of the three inhabited worlds of the Manachea system under the rulership of a single Imperial Commander, Manachea prospered and soon came to dominate a score of nearby systems as a regional capital, becoming a shining beacon of Imperial civilisation and all the Great Crusade had set out to achieve.

- **Manachea Lux [M-II – Industrial World]:** An arid, heavily industrialised world Lux, named for its extensive silica dune seas, has seen an explosion in manufacturing and population since its liberation, and remains an orderly and highly productive world. The site of the last deadly battle of the war to liberate the system, it also contains a singular feature, the Bastion Kvet—a fortress watch station built and garrisoned by the Imperial Fists Legiones Astartes, both as an act of commemoration and as a guarantee of Rogal Dorn's promise that the system would never again fall under the sway of the xenos.

- **Manachea Vysidae [M-IV – Hive World]:** The principal world of the system, referred to simply as Manachea by popular convention, is a sprawling Sol pattern hive world whose terrestrial climate has not yet succumbed to the burdens of endemic urbanisation and macro-inhabitation. Dominated by a total of eleven aggregated hub metropoli distributed across its land masses and linked by continent and sea-spanning maglev transit systems, it forms a highly integrated and efficient civilisation with a total population ranging into the tens of billions. The technological heights of the Manachea Commonwealth and production capacities of Manachea Vysidae rival the hive worlds of the Segmentum Solar and it has readily become the home of several Imperial Administrative divisions serving this entire region of the Imperium, including both the Great Tithe and the Arbites Imperialis.

- **Manachea Mortis [M-V/II – Death World]:** This jungle-shrouded death world is in fact the moon of the gas giant Manachea Umbris, heated and impelled from within to life-sustaining conditions by gravitational forces from its parent. Categorised as a death world owing to its strange and lethal fauna, it nevertheless has a native and long standing human population descended, it is generally held, from refugees and outlaws who fled to its trackless jungle depths during the reign of the inhuman Mitu Conglomerate. At the time of the Horus Heresy, Manachea Mortis was being subjected to as-yet unsuccessful attempts to manage sections of its verdant jungles as an agricultural resource.

### Vlorlath Srader

**Classification: Colonised World**

A small, independent world with a temperate terrestrial climate, Vlorlath Srader is an Imperial colony established in 926.M30 in the aftermath of the region's Compliance. Although now well established, with a mixed economy, it has yet to progress from a developmental state to a particular role, however it has become heavily influenced both politically and culturally by Manachea. The system it occupies is unremarkable, except for the presence of an astrotelepathic relay station established in orbit during the latter stages of the Great Crusade's passage through the region. For unknown reasons, the relay has proven to be particularly effective in the re-transmission and reception of astrotelepathy between the outlying areas of the Ultima Segmentum and the Segmentum Solar, marking it as of considerable strategic significance beyond its population or locale.

### Port Maw

**Classification: Artificial World/Colonised World/Imperialis Armada Port Majoris**

Port Maw is a massive Imperialis Armada facility, under construction principally inside the hollow sphere of an ancient artificial planetoid. Its eponymous name, given to it by the ship captains of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet which discovered it, is due entirely to its outward appearance; the jagged five hundred kilometre wide aperture in the planetoid's skin granting it the appearance of a world with a vast, fanged mouth. Founded in 001.M31 at the direct behest of the Officio Astra, the Imperialis Naval facility's construction was set in motion as part of the strategic planning for the consolidation of

Armada Imperialis assets and operational structures following the Triumph at Ullanor and the appointment of Horus as Warmaster, and it is intended for the Port Maw facility to become one of the most powerful naval facilities in the northern Imperium. Aside from development within the artificial planetoid itself, which offers the core facility unparalleled protection from assault, the wider star system has become the site of vast trans-orbital dockyards, battle stations and provender belts, all of which were still under construction when the Horus Heresy broke out. Although this mighty work was far from complete, Port Maw was however already operational in a limited capacity as a naval supply base and muster station as the first blood was shed at the Isstvan system, while a population of workers in the hundreds of millions, alongside various planet-side administrational and support staff, were already firmly established on the surface of Æstellica, the life-supporting planet around which the Port Maw planetoid distantly orbits.

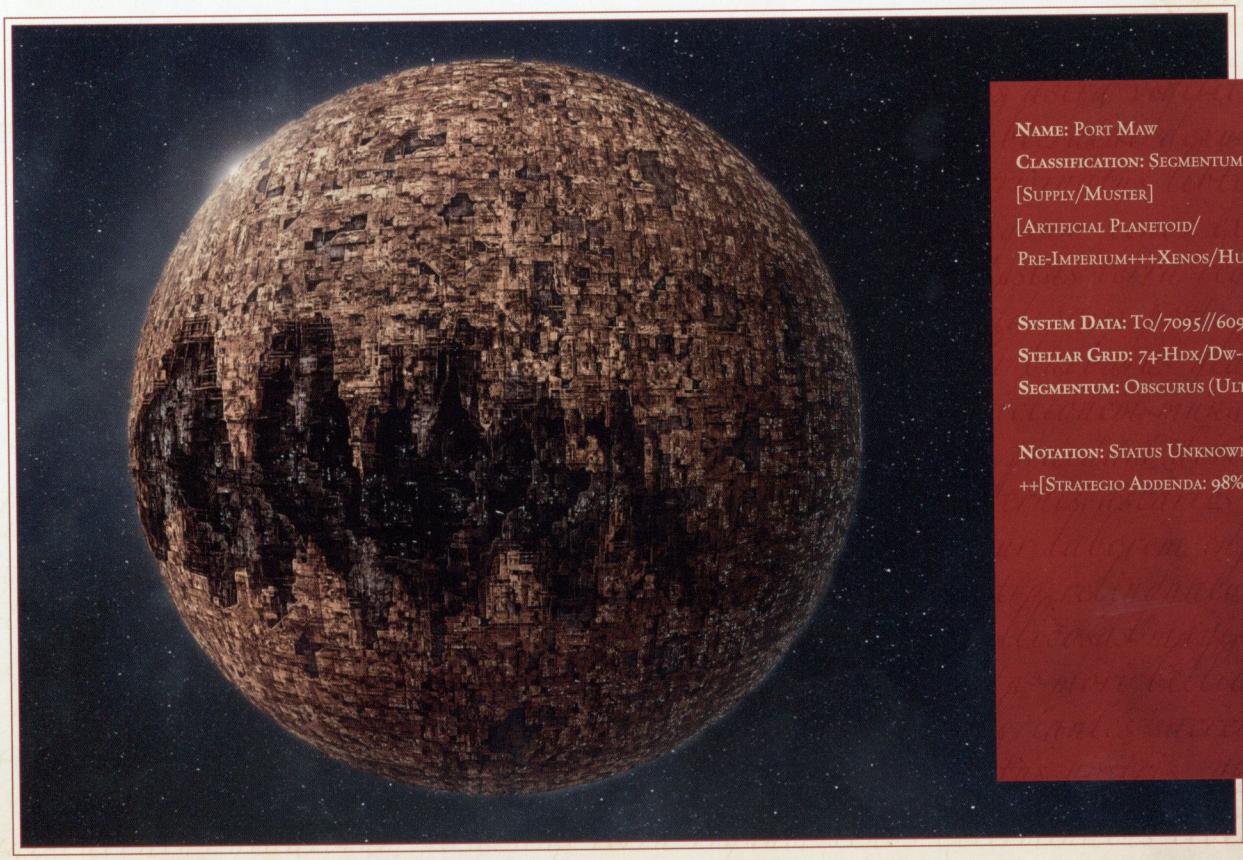
**Lethe**
**Classification: Colonised World [Undeveloped]**
Home to a human remnant civilisation which had decayed to a borderline pre-industrial state during the long night of the Age of Strife, Lethe was first contacted in 824.M30 by the Rogue Trader Vaspperly Elgin, ahead of the Great Crusade's advance in force into the region some years later. Used as an early staging point by Crusade fleets, the mist-shrouded, largely arboreal world, criss-crossed by an extensive network of rivers around which its population is clustered, remains still stubbornly a frontier world, without major industrial or economic power having developed there. Nevertheless, Lethe has served its part within the Imperial fold, and has also provided several elite pioneer light infantry cohorts for the Imperialis Auxilia, which have served with honoured distinction in the wars to further pacify the Coronid Deeps.



### The Coronid Prohibition Zone

An astro-navigational hazard of considerable size and uncertain borders, the Coronid Prohibition Zone, also commonly known as the Coronis Abomination and popularly to members of the Navis Nobilite as the "*White Darkness*", borders the central northern edge of the Coronid Deeps region and, by popular wisdom among the void-faring, presents the most obvious reason for the dividing point of the ancient Segmenta in human stellar cartography. This apparently all but empty region of space holds up neither spectacle nor warning to either the naked eye or auspex, while in the Warp it apparently represents itself as 'white out' to the Navigator's vision, akin to the blindness a man might encounter if trapped in a blizzard—a literal 'nothingness'. The cause or consequence of the danger this region entails remains entirely unknown, and long range astronomical auguries indicate that only a handful of solitary and unremarkable stars may be found within its otherwise empty volume, sitting as it does between the outermost galactic arm of our galaxy far from the dense clusters of stars which make up its celestial corpus. Ships which pass into or through the prohibition zone, either via realspace or the Warp, seldom return, and those that do often have been found to suffer severe chrono-distortion and displacement, itself often leading to fatal consequences for both the living and machines, as well as those who come into direct contact with them.

By direct order of the Emperor, the Coronid Prohibition Zone was established explicitly forbidding deliberate entry to this mysterious and deadly region of space, and a number of autonomous armed watch stations were created, roughly proscribing the region's borders. These stations establish and police the cordon around the zone, and dispatch Warp-capable hunter-killer Gholem-ships to engage and destroy any vessel or object detected leaving the zone.



**Name:** Port Maw
**Classification:** Segmentum Sub-fortress [Supply/Muster] [Artificial Planetoid/ Pre-Imperium+++Xenos/Human+++ Construct]

**System Data:** Tq/7095//6095/ΠΔ
**Stellar Grid:** 74-Hdx/Dw-93
**Segmentum:** Obscurus (Ultima Conjunction)

**Notation:** Status Unknown
++[Strategio Addenda: 98% Prop. Lost]++

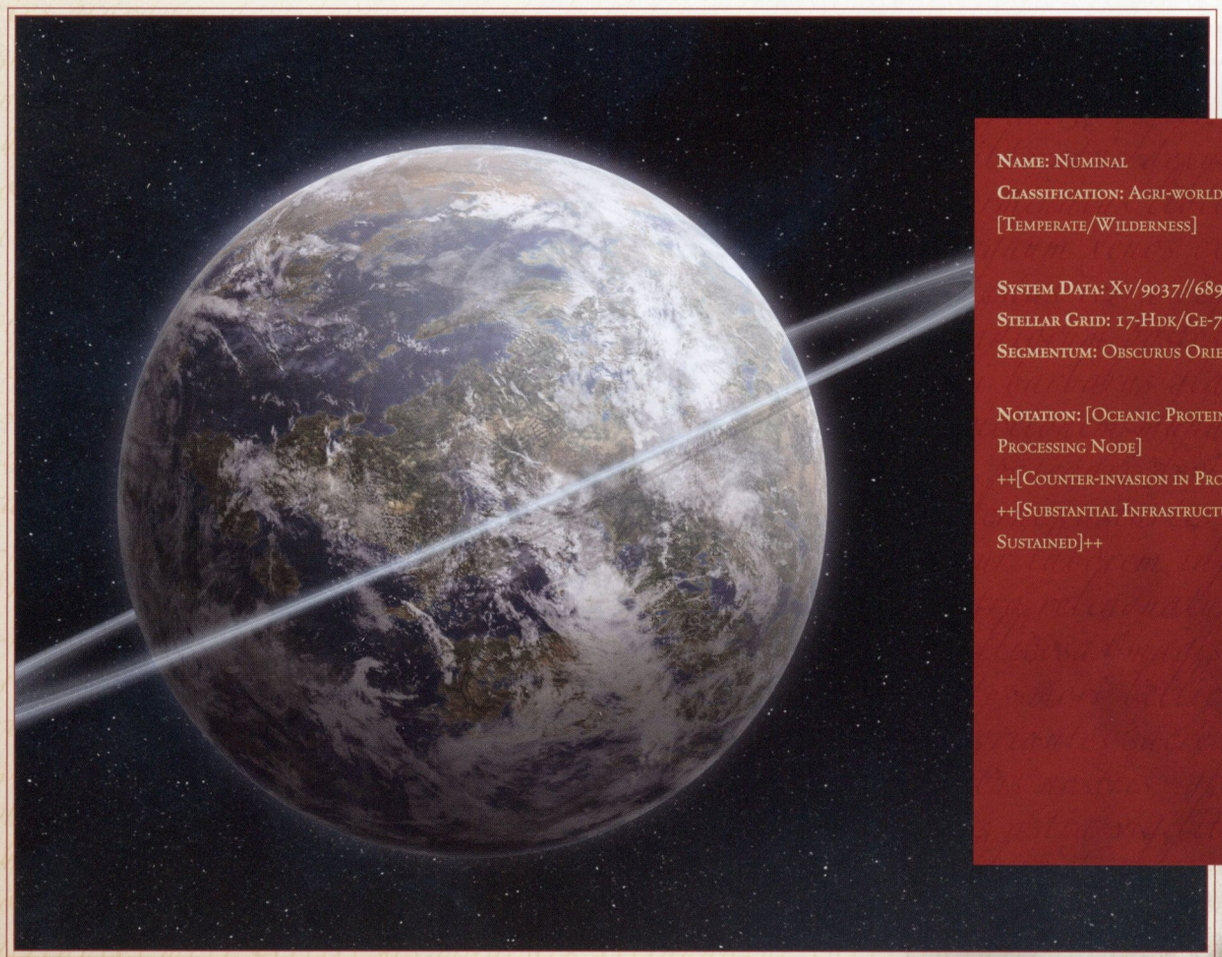
# The Coronid Reach

**The furthest anchor point of Imperial civilisation in the region, the Coronid Reach is rightly regarded as the very edge of the dark frontier of galactic space, beyond which little may be said for certain. Its centre of power is the hive world of Agathon, which dominates the region via its economic and military might, and represents the final conquest of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet before its disbandment. This highly autonomous Imperial region comprises a cluster of sixteen inhabited systems, the most prominent of which are précised here.**

**Agathon**
**Classification: Hive World [Spire Sub-type]**
An ancient centre of human habitation whose roots lie deep within the Dark Age of Technology, Agathon is a hive world dominated by a trinity of towering spire-hives which owe many similarities in form and structure to those of Necromunda or Khur, despite those worlds being many thousands of light years distant. Agathon vehemently resisted Compliance and successfully held out for nearly fifteen years against the assaults of various Rogue Traders and smaller Expeditionary forces before a larger and more potent assault could be sent to settle the issue. This last attack was to be under the direction of Lord Marshal Ireton MaSade and the 1522nd Solar Auxilia Cohort (*The Lord Marshal's Own*), who led the remnants of the all but exhausted 60th Expeditionary Fleet in a successful, if bloody, Compliance action. In reward for this action and a lifetime of glorious service, the fleet was disbanded and MaSade and his officers were given right of conquest over Agathon, replacing its purged cultic aristocracy, and given the task of stewardship over its five billion inhabitants, thus ensuring their induction into the Imperium. Agathon has since become a highly organised and productive hive world, with an overriding military aesthetic to its culture. Its sizable standing military, the Agathean Cohorts, bears direct lineal descent to the Solar Auxilia, and acts to dominate the region as the standing Imperial defence force.

**Legatus**
**Classification: Mining World [Penitentiary]**
Organised as a penitentiary mining world, originally used for the punishment of dissidents following the war of the Agathon Compliance, Legatus is a world of vast tundra plains in the closing stages of a climatic ice age. Important principally because of its wealth of high-grade metallic ores for use in Agathon's macro-construction industries and shipbuilding efforts, Legatus has been subjected to significant xenos raids three times since 940.M30; twice by Ork marauders and once by heavily mutated xenos cryptids originating, it is believed, from the extra-galactic void. As a result, the mining world had been reinforced with a substantial garrison of ground defences and an enlarged standing garrison of Agathean troops before the shadow of the Horus Heresy fell on the region, seeming far better prepared than many similar worlds in the Coronid Deeps for the hostilities to come.

**Othion**
**Classification: Feral World [Abhuman Sub-type]**
This arid cloudless world of heat and seemingly limitless silica dune seas is home to a native population of abhuman Ogryns. The population, though genetically stable, is divergent in morphology from the standard accepted types, having adapted to the unforgiving



**Name:** Numinal
**Classification:** Agri-world [Temperate/Wilderness]

**System Data:** Xv/9037//6893/∂Σ
**Stellar Grid:** 17-Hdk/Ge-72.3
**Segmentum:** Obscurus Orient

**Notation:** [Oceanic Protein Extraction and Processing Node]
++[Counter-invasion in Progress]++
++[Substantial Infrastructure Damage Sustained]++

climate and undergone severe metabolic alteration, including a pronounced devolution of the already limited Ogryn intellect, mental stability and social cohesion. A pronounced drive to cannibalism and irrational hunger are the dominating factors of their temperament, and their induction into Auxilia forces was only possible with extensive cranial surgery and the implementation of 'kill switch' systems to terminate them when needed, but they have otherwise proven to be a considerable asset for regional defence forces. As the sector militarised in preparation to resist the Traitors' assault, the Ogryns of Othion were a considerable strategic resource which was ruthlessly exploited by the Agathean forces.

**Numinal**

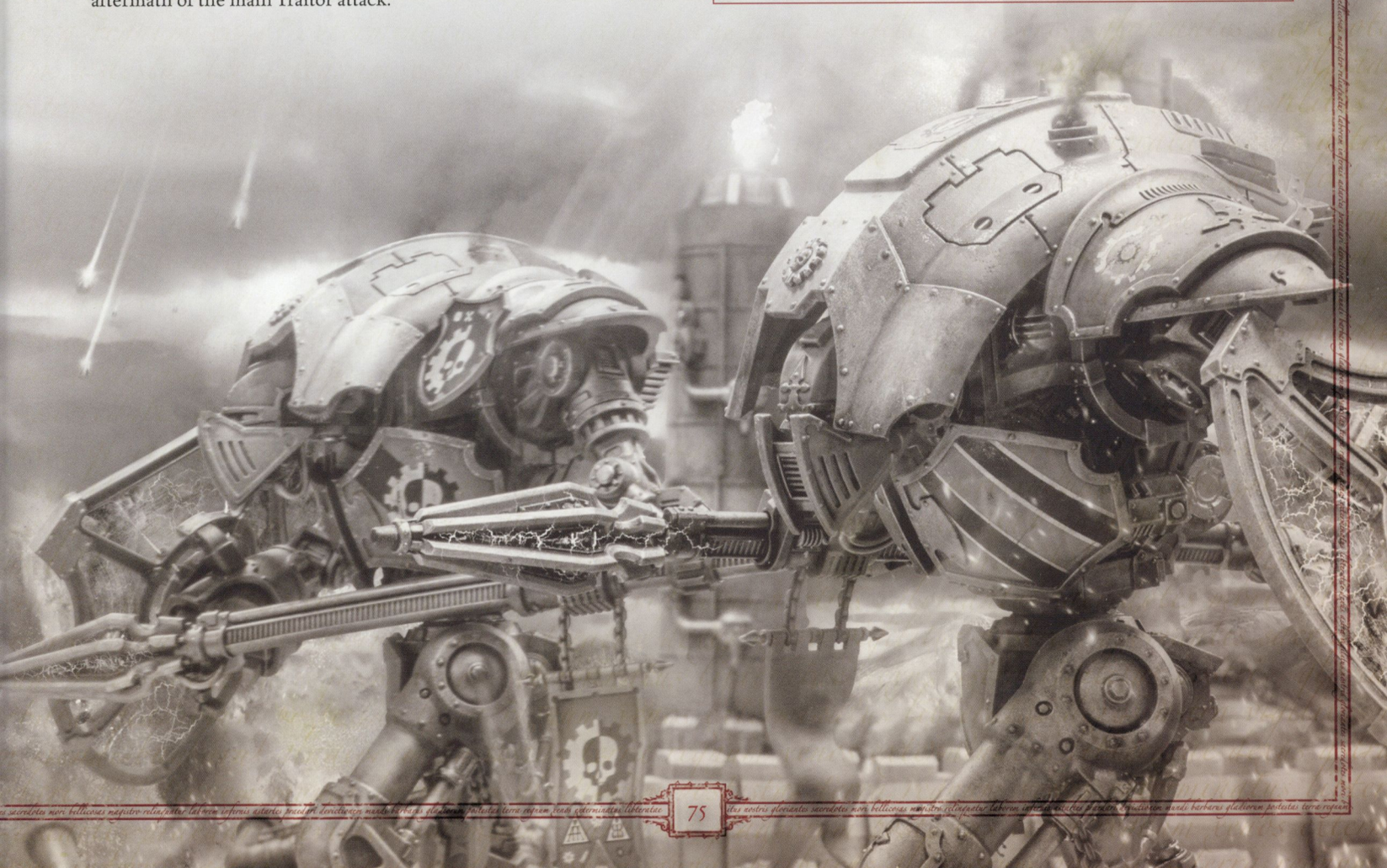
**Classification: Agri-world [Oceanic Sub-type]**

A terrestrial-type world colonised in the late 890s.M30 as part of an expansion effort by the Imperium to further secure the region's food supply and navigational channels, Numinal formed an important link in the chain of human civilization in the northern Imperium. A planet of world-spanning oceans and numerous volcanic islands and archipelagos, Numinal's exploitation was brought about, not only because of its environmental suitability, but also its access to several recently discovered stable warp routes through the region. These routes linked it to the Manachean Commonwealth, the Agathon Domain on the frontier to the galactic north, and the Cerada Trinity and the minor independent Imperial colony systems of Vespasia Infernus and Garella which made up the rest of the Coronid Reach. This network of warp routes at its most extreme then offered potential further access to several important worlds far out on the Eastern Fringe of the Imperium which could not normally be journeyed to without potentially many sidereal months of continuous travel via the illusive Hadexus Warp Channel, which reaches out as far as the Angelis and Honourum systems. These vital routes made Numinal a prime target in the civil wars which wracked the Coronid Reach in the aftermath of the main Traitor attack.

Considerable impetus had been placed on the establishment of the colony by the Segmentum authorities, and development of the world had been rapid. An implanted population of some forty million inhabitants was located to a number of rapidly constructed prefabricated cities and outposts, along with a well-developed, orbital trans-shipping infrastructure and geo-synchronous void station, which were present within the first decade of colonisation alone. Numinal's extensive saline seas had, as part of this process, been given over to aquaculture and epigenetic engineering by elements of the Mechanicum Biologis brought in expressly for this purpose. The exploration of the biological wealth of the seas was the population's principal industry and the planet was already producing large quantities of highly concentrated nutrient-rich compounds for extra-system export by the time of the outbreak of war. As an adjunct to this and further colonisation, several pseudo-intelligent native species, amphibious and ichthyoid in nature, were also undergoing suppression and extermination campaigns by specialised units of the 1023rd and 2774th Obed Cohorts of the Excertus Imperialis on extended deployment to the planet. These cohorts, along with a cadre of Solar Auxilia security forces assigned to defend Numinal's principal void station, were the only standing armed force of any note in the system when the region was overtaken by hostilities in 007.M31.

### Other Independent Worlds of Note

- **Cerada Primus** [Colonised world]
- **Cerada Secundus** [Mining world]
- **Quavausari** [Feral world]
- **Vespasia Infernus** [Explorator outpost]
- **Zarnov** [Industrialised world]
- **Taracanis** [Non-Compliant world]
- **Sagathi** [Feudal world]
- **Subinus** [Knight World]

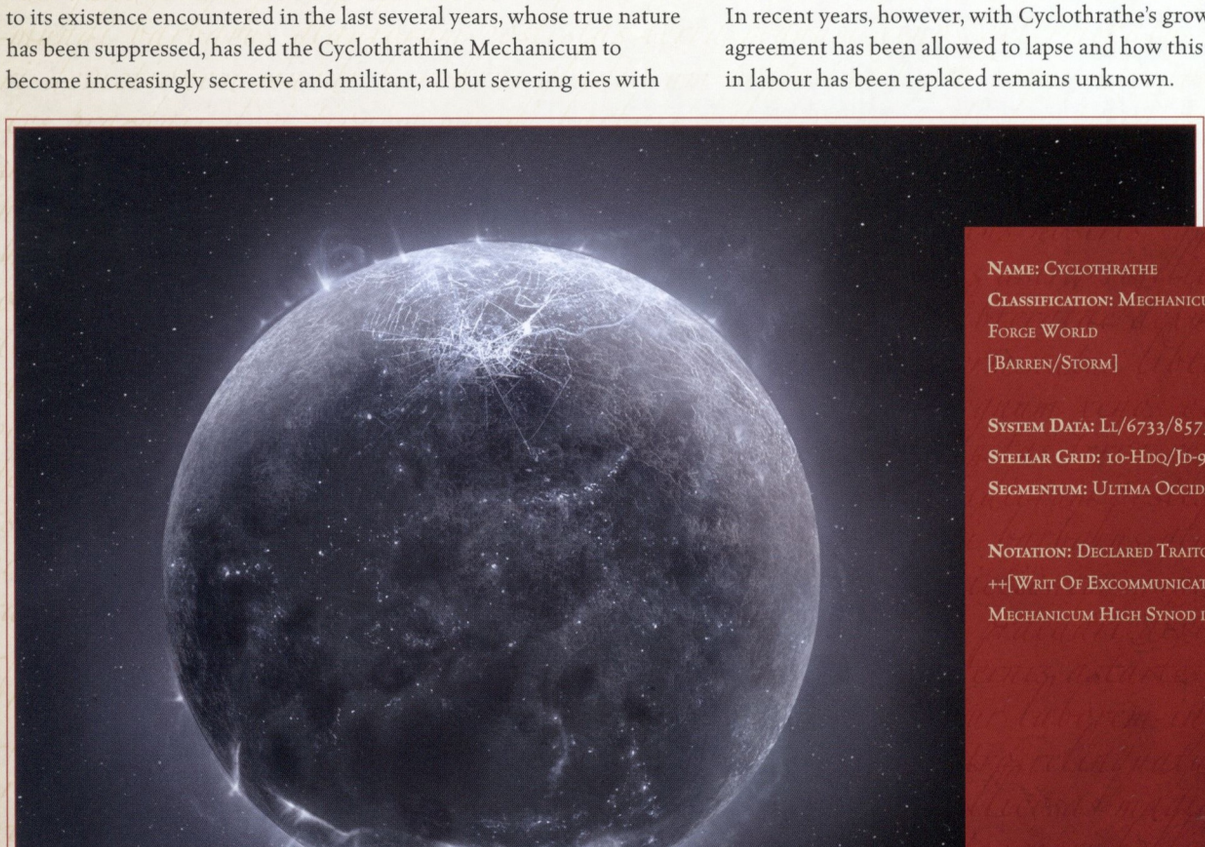


# The Cyclothrathine Holdfast

**A sovereign domain of the Mechanicum, the Cyclothrathine Holdfast was founded on two of the few life-sustaining planets left in a desert of dead worlds wrought by the hand of the Great Crusade. Set up in the ashes of what were once the core systems of the xenos empire of the Mitu Conglomerate, the Holdfast was created both to oversee scavenging operations and to serve as a weapons testing facility, as well as to ensure that all trace of the life forms which had made up the Conglomerate were utterly purged from existence.**

**Cyclothrathe**
**Classification: Forge World [Grade Tertius-II]**
Implanted on a rocky, barely life-sustaining orb wracked by violent electromagnetic storms, Cyclothrathe sits at the centre of the massacred home worlds of a once powerful xenos empire. Never itself inhabited by the Mitu Conglomerate —likely owing to the savage energies that plague it— Cyclothrathe is a forlorn and turbulent world. The newly founded forge complex slowly emerging from the broken plains of black granite of the planet's northern continent is centred around the hulk of the *Cyclopean Mind*, a Mechanicum war-barque badly damaged in the final battle against the xenos and judged too crippled to continue with the fleet. From the wreck of this vast warship, brought here to its final resting place, forge workings, bunker manufactories and lightning towers now snake in a growing spider web of ferrocrete and metal. Cyclothrathe's ruling synod is made up of Magos of the Autokrator Order, tasked to build up the outpost here under the writ of Mars, supplemented by those formerly of the Explorator taskforce who use Cyclothrathe as a base to scavenge the surrounding dead worlds of lore and relics. Progress for the newly created Forge World has proved difficult and slow, both due to environmental difficulties and distance from resupply and support. The Forge World's isolation, coupled with a number of serious threats to its existence encountered in the last several years, whose true nature has been suppressed, has led the Cyclothrathine Mechanicum to become increasingly secretive and militant, all but severing ties with other major worlds within the Coronid Deeps. Immediately before the Horus Heresy broke out, the matter was brought to the attention of the Conclave of Mars by emissaries of the Mezoan Mechanicum, but the matter is recorded to have been summarily dismissed by order of Kelbor Hal, the Fabricator-General. The future would decide for this world an infamy seldom matched in the ranks of Forge Worlds.

**Arrian**
**Classification: Mining World [Mechanicum Fiefdom]**
Arrian is a sulphurous, poisoned world with an atmosphere thick with chlorine gas, and therefore utterly inimical to human life. Rich in minerals and easily accessible chemical deposits, large scale mining and extraction facilities have been rapidly constructed across the world's surface to meet the industrial needs of Cyclothrathe, of which Arrian was a directly administered possession. Lacking a native population, Arrian's miners have been directly imported by the Magos of Cyclothrathe, their hellish existence made only possible by extensive augmentic adaption, despite which mortality rates are disastrously high. For many years, the demand for new labour was met by treaty arrangement between Cyclothrathe and the distant worlds of the Manachean Commonwealth, trading convicts by the thousand in return for arms and other advanced products of Cyclothrathe's forges. In recent years, however, with Cyclothrathe's growing isolation, this agreement has been allowed to lapse and how this presumed shortfall in labour has been replaced remains unknown.



Name: Cyclothrathe
Classification: Mechanicum Sovereign Forge World [Barren/Storm]

System Data: Ll/6733/8575//Ωæ
Stellar Grid: 10-Hdq/Jd-99Ω
Segmentum: Ultima Occident Rescending

Notation: Declared Traitoris Perdita ++[Writ Of Excommunication Issued by Mechanicum High Synod in Exile]++



**Castellax Battle-automata, Cyclothrathine Taghmata:** This Battle-automata was deployed as part of Archmagos Draykavac's assault on Numinal, and extant battlefield pict-captures depict it sustaining multiple hits from the rapier batteries of the 1522nd Solar Auxilia before it was eventually destroyed upon the lance of a House Orhlacc Cerastus Knight-Lancer.

The icon on the automata's right shoulder marks Cyclothrathe's alignment to the Warmaster, while that on the left is one of the arachnid-glyph signifiers of its home Forge World. Also of note are what appear to be kill markings in the form of skull symbols, although it is unknown where, when and against what enemy these might have been earned.




# The Solar Auxilia

*"Let my epitaph be this; I was born nameless and abandoned in the gutter of a sunless pit, but I have died a conqueror of worlds."*

*Reputed last words of Lord Militant Erais Slaithe*
*Commander 74th Expeditionary Fleet*
*The Fall of Golgothea Terax*
*0322884.M30*

Of the myriad regiments and battalions of the Imperialis Auxilia, more commonly referred to as the '*Imperial Army*', the Solar Auxilia are among the most elite, disciplined and well-equipped fighting forces, widely considered by many second only to the superhuman Legiones Astartes in their military effectiveness in battle. While some observers may point to singular units and individual regiments whose skill, power and reputation may arguably exceed that of the Solar Auxilia, such as the legendary Lucifer Blacks or the gene-wrought Marnean Armsmen, what marks the Solar Auxilia apart is they are not simply a single regiment raised from a particular culture or displaced from a warlike Compliant world to serve the Imperium, but a pattern; a culture of warfare and an order of battle which had successfully been replicated on hundreds of worlds. As a result, the Solar Auxilia Cohorts and regiments have formed the backbone of the Imperium's military forces since the dawning of the Great Crusade. While the Space Marines of the Legiones Astartes have been both the standard bearers of the Great Crusade, and without doubt its principal and unstoppable strength, the Solar Auxilia have often been its indispensable pathfinders and its most reliable foot soldiers. And, as the Imperium expanded to encompass thousands of worlds, its first line of protection against those who would destroy it from without or disturb its peace from within.

## The Origins of the Solar Auxilia

As their name might suggest, the origins of the Solar Auxilia lie in the Sol System and on Terra in the earliest days of the Great Crusade. No doubt from the very beginning, the Emperor realised that while his Legiones Astartes would be his foremost agency of war and conquest, the sheer scope of the undertaking of the Great Crusade —no less than the liberation of the entire galaxy— would require far more manpower, spread over a wider area, than even hundreds of thousands of Space Marines could hope to achieve, simply because they could not be everywhere at once, nor would they be best served by undertaking roles ably filled by ordinary humanity. From this reality the Excertus Imperialis was born; billions of second line and support troops, functionaries, labourers, void crew, logisticians, almoners, adepts and staff officers, and the countless quantities of weapons, equipment and war machines, void conveyances and warships they needed; all to make the Great Crusade a reality. Within this vast body of men and women under arms, organised and formulated by the Emperor's own transhuman intelligence, were many highly specialised divisions, each created to serve a singular purpose, each a vital cog in the vast Imperial war machine. The Solar Auxilia was one such purpose-created division.

The parameters of this creation were exact; the raising of a large body of frontline soldiers whose principal theatre of war would be the void and hostile environments of all kinds, both to support the Legiones Astartes in battle, and by deployment free them for concentrated frontline operations. Where the Space Marines were to be foremost the hammer of the Great Crusade, the Solar Auxilia were to be its pathfinders and its watchmen. They were to garrison the great warships and frontier outposts; they were to serve alongside the Rogue Traders and in the Expeditionary fleets both as aggressors and as explorers, and as such they would need to be disciplined, trained and well equipped considerably beyond the level of the average militia solider. Once Compliance over an area of space had been achieved, and the battlefronts of the Great Crusade had moved on, it was also to be the Solar Auxilia, with their own fleets and assigned warships, that would guard those worlds and star systems that were now part of the growing Imperium from marauders from without and rebellion from within. While a Solar Auxilia taskforce would not, indeed could not, match the power and force of the Legiones Astartes, these compact fleet-based armies of colonial control were more than capable of dealing with most 'petty wars' and local conflicts that might occur on their own. Where a threat proved stronger than a Solar Auxilia taskforce could match alone, they were conditioned and equipped to stalwartly hold the line no matter the odds, until aid could be summoned and the Emperor's Angels of Death unleashed on the transgressors.

### The Saturnyne Ordo

In laying out the strategic formulation and pattern of organisation for the Solar Auxilia, the Emperor, in his wisdom, appears to have drawn on two principal sources: the great military forces of the Unification Wars of Terra and the Saturnyne Ordo. Warfare had been the general condition on Terra and in its star system for thousands of years, and the home world of humanity had seen many great empires rise and fall, and with them great armies and warrior cultures form and meet their destruction. From this crucible of battle, the Emperor drew much that would inform the structure and tactics of all of his armies, and the Solar Auxilia would be no different in this, but it was the highly militarised tech-enclaves of Saturn, whose expertise in void warfare was of peerless temper, that would most greatly inform the nature of the Solar Auxilia.

The Polities of Saturn had formed during the Age of Strife; they were a disperate league of independent domains and kingdoms formed from scores of asteroid-enclaves, orbital arcologies and lunar colonies around the gas giant which gave them their name. Over time they had established a common technologically advanced culture, and although inter-state conflict, competition and vendetta was rife among them, spurred on by survival, they quickly banded together in the face of outside threat, be it the baleful influence of Mars, or the horrific privations of xenos and mutant raiders come to plunder the wealth and resources they had so long strived for. Their military, combining by far the most powerful fleet in the Sol System prior to Unification and elite armed forces known as the Saturnyne Ordo, had honed the weapons and tactics of void warfare for centuries and until the coming of the Legiones Astartes, in such techniques they were unsurpassed. Many have argued that it was only after the Polities of Saturn joined voluntarily with the Imperium that the Great Crusade truly began, their fleets, shipyards and void expertise fundamental to the speed and scale of the early years of Imperial expansion. The Solar Auxilia were also born in this moment, and the first ten regiments raised, known collectively as the '*Saturnyne Rams*', were no more or less the Void Hoplites of the Saturnyne Order, reorganised and expanded —their arms and armament all but unchanged— and sent out with the first deployments of the as then only numbered Space Marine Legions to conquer the stars.

Soon, more regimental raisings were to follow, with Terra and Luna both providing many newly raised regiments in the same pattern as those of Saturn to meet the strategic demand. These regiments were deployed with the same proven types of weaponry and equipment taken from the Saturnyne prototypes and rendered to the Mechanicum for approval, modification and mass production, including the highly effective and robust Saturnyne void armour, which would serve to single out the Solar Auxilia's particular appearance throughout the Great Crusade. This wargear was supplemented with additional variant weapons and equipment designed with hazardous environment and void use by an unaugmented human in mind; these became known as '*Solar*' pattern, a designation

provided by the Mechanicum in keeping with the 'Solar' Auxilia forces for which they were intended.

**Liberation and Conquest**

As the Great Crusade progressed, the effectiveness of the Solar Auxilia as a distinct military concept and coherent fighting force was proved time and again, and the strategic demands of the ever expanding Expeditionary fleets and the galactic territory they conquered demanded that Solar Auxilia regiments be raised in increasing numbers. The Terran system alone could not meet this growing demand and so the Solar Auxilia pattern was used as an imprint elsewhere, and soon regiments and larger cohort formations were being raised across the Imperium, often set up around corps of experienced junior officers and non-commissioned ranks from existing regiments. These raisings were most common in star systems with an established tradition of void-capable military and privateer forces, and in many cases served to absorb such a culture more readily into the Imperium, particularly if armed struggle had been needed to subdue it into Compliance.

Such Solar Auxilia Cohorts were normally then sent far from their origin stars, thus severing ties with their home worlds and reducing any potential for later rebellion there. This was not however a unique practice, and with the introduction of mental and physical aptitude tests to a wider intake of recruits, Solar Auxilia regiments were also raised successfully from feral and feudal worlds without an overall high technological sophistication or void-operable tradition, often alongside more conventional regimental raisings. The most successful of these cohorts combined the savagery and élan often found on such warlike worlds with the discipline and firepower the Solar Auxilia was rightly famed for, forming a truly deadly combination. Famous incidences of this include both the Chthonian Headhunters which were to accompany the 63rd Expeditionary Fleet of Warmaster Horus, and the Carak'tal Scarborn who entered into legend as the only non-Legiones Astartes force to survive the Khrave onslaught at Perdition's Gate.

**The Tradition of Service**

By the second century of the Great Crusade, Solar Auxilia pattern forces formed perhaps 20%-25% of the overall human strength of the Imperialis Auxilia's void faring first line armies, with numbers ranging into the tens of millions. By the time of the Horus Heresy, in terms of deployment this force was split, with about two thirds of the Solar Auxilia Cohorts stationed permanently within the Imperium's boundaries divided into taskforce and garrison commands, and the other third separated out into various Expeditionary fleets, Rogue Trader detachments and deep-range pathfinder ships on the ever-expanding and increasingly remote frontier. As they were particularly suited and organised so that they had few ties to home and could easily operate as detached commands, it became common for many smaller-scale Expeditionary fleets which did not feature any substantial Legiones Astartes presence to be led by a core of Solar Auxilia under the particular authority of a Lord Marshal appointed by the Imperial War Council. The temporal power and authority of these Lords Marshal (and the most senior among them, the Lords Militant Imperialis) was formidable in its own right, and from them and the ranks of their subordinate staff and warship captains it was common for future colony Imperial Commanders to be drawn, and Rogue Traders also warranted. With the potential prize of absolute power under the Aquila over whole worlds as a draw, it is then unsurprising that commissions of rank within Solar Auxilia Cohorts destined for the frontier became a thing sought after by ambitious officers, petty nobles and the scions of great houses of Terra alike. Some such commissions were earned and others acquired by more direct, means, but fate and the limitless dangers of battle and alien worlds unnumbered served in most cases to weed out those whose ambition outweighed their aptitude swiftly enough. Regardless of this, it is the salutary truth that the pursuit of plunder as well as the quest for personal wealth and power were motivations that often served the Great Crusade just as well as duty and the desire for glory and belief in the unification of humanity. For those of the lower ranks, the lure of service ultimately may have been more prosaic, but no less valuable; fine living standards, pay and the respect of the Imperium for their life's blood with, if they desired it, upon retirement after serving a minimum tour of thirty years' service, full citizenship and commensurate land, money and position in a newly founded or newly Compliant colony world. For the many that choose to serve several tours and for whom the Solar Auxilia became a consuming way of life, the eventual reward was greater, and they were furnished with basic anti-agthaics and medicae treatments to extend their lifespans and military usefulness accordingly.

At its core, the Solar Auxilia became and remained a hardened body of professional

*Historia Terra Regnum*

**The Numberless Ranks of the Excertus Imperialis**

The Excertus Imperialis of the Great Crusade era was a vast organisation whose numbers in a literal sense are uncounted; no accurate measure of it has ever been possible, so numerous is it, widespread across the stars and in flux as units are disbanded or suffer attrition, and fresh units, recruits and indentures are added to its ranks. As a structure, it is almost unfathomably complex. It formed the incomprehensibly vast support structure of the Great Crusade, including in its sweep the Expeditionary fleets' front line auxiliary and second line reserve forces (known collectively under the sub-title of the Imperialis Auxilia—or Imperial Army informally) and the billions of planetary militia-raised provincial defence. It also included the myriad support organisations, colossal labour hosts, penitentiary legions, the warships and crew of the Imperialis Armada, the vast Æxactory, Notary and Tithe corps, and nominally the Remembrancers, the Iterators and the enforcers of the Imperial Truth—all were bound by its writ. Although notionally it was to the Officio Militaris on Terra and via them the Imperial Court to whom the numberless ranks of the Excertus Imperialis answered, it was always in truth subordinate to the principal agents and independent powers of the Great Crusade who commanded it on a daily basis: the Legiones Astartes and their Primarchs, the Mechanicum and their Titan Legions, the Knight Houses, the Rogue Traders Militant, the Imperial Commanders who governed the Imperium's worlds, the Navis Nobilite and the Collegia Psykana, all had better and more immediate call on the Excertus Imperialis to obey. So it was when the Imperium was riven by the Horus Heresy, so also was the Excertus Imperialis; turning traitor or remaining loyal with long accustomed masters to lead them, while even its more independent arms were forced abruptly to choose sides in a war not of their making. As the Great Crusade died, so did the organisation that served it, supplied it and fed its growth come to an end, split by division and torn in blood.

soldiery, equipped and trained to the highest standards of the Imperium's human forces, and a keystone of the Great Crusade's tremendous progress.

### Strategic Organisation

According to the measure of the Officio Militaris of Terra, the Solar Auxilia Cohorts are the definitive example of a heavy void infantry formation of the Excertus Imperialis. As such they are fully trained and equipped to take on void war zones, hazardous planetary environments and operate both as 'interface' troops (meaning transitioning from void to ground operations in combat conditions) and fight heavily contested boarding actions. Early Solar Auxilia forces were ranged in the standard fashion of a *Principia Belicosa*-teneted regimental structure, comprising a nominal 5,000 soldiers-at-arms under the formal command of a Legate-Colonel and a dedicated staff and discipline cadre of around 300 officers and specialists. However, as the Great Crusade entered its expansion phase and the role of the Solar Auxilia to the wider war effort became more pronounced, and the demand for Solar Auxilia pattern units increased, the Officio Militaris High Command reconfigured the Solar Auxilia into larger, highly autonomous cohort formations. These '*Solar Cohorts*' were intended to be highly compartmental and owed something both to the structures employed by some of the elite forces of the Panpacific Empire during the wars of Unification as well as elements also used to organise the nascent Space Marine Legions. A Solar Cohort at muster would form a nominal fighting force of 120,000 individuals, with several thousand additional support staff of various types on permanent attachment to the unit, under the command of a Marshal Solar. This would be broken down into a number of sub-cohorts, each with a nominal fighting strength of 1,200 under a Legate-Commander, Commander or Sub-Commander depending on seniority and the sub-cohort's particular type.

The fundamental building block of the Solar Cohort at the tactical level is the Tercio, a formation made up of three 'sections' of Auxilia, whose nature was defined by their weaponry and battlefield role. Tercios collectively could be assembled and deployed in a variety of ways and numbers to meet a particular strategic need. By far the most common Tercio formation is the Infantry Tercio, made up of three lasrifle sections; each comprising twenty void armoured, lasrifle-equipped infantrymen, commanded by a junior officer. Alongside these fight elite '*Veletaris*' Tercios, each made up of three squads of ten veteran troopers equipped with augmented short range weapons such as volkite chargers or flamer units, and Fire Support Tercios, commanding three batteries each of three crew-served infantry support weapons platforms, of which the tracked rapier type is the most common.

Each Tercio is itself a self-contained unit, and every Auxilia within the Tercios trained not simply as a front line solider, but also to be skilled in void craft, fundamental combat engineering, hostile environment survival and in the basic planetary exploration protocols. This particular combination of capabilities has marked the Solar Auxilia out as an elite among the human soldiery of the Imperium since the early days of the Great Crusade and has always been a source of great pride within their ranks.

### Military Doctrine

The tactical doctrine of the Solar Auxilia has grown up organically over the operations during the Great Crusade, and is the direct result both of the unusual environments in which they commonly operate and in part the particular qualities of their arms and equipment. Each member of the Solar Auxilia must reach an expected height of skill and aptitude to bear void armour. Co-ordination and discipline is to them of paramount importance; infractions of discipline and rule on a void ship can lead to swift disaster for all, and in void warfare this is doubly true. Those who fail to meet these standards in training will be dismissed to serve as naval ratings or in a less selective Auxilia formation, those who fail them on active service are harshly punished, and those who fail them in battle face summary execution by their officers.

The coherence and discipline of the Solar Auxilia is key to their principal tactics; close order formations both in open field warfare and in the confines of a Zone Mortalis, concentration of firepower and stubborn defence. Strategies of 'aggressive defence' are common both at the small unit and field level. This can be typified by aggressively seizing superior defensive ground (or manufacturing it with prefabricated defence lines, etc) and inviting enemy attack on preferred terms, feigned retreat in order to drag opponents into pre-prepared fire zones and slow 'rolling' advances under cover of close armoured and air support, and protected by mechanised transportation. Also common are asymmetric 'lightning' assaults which commit massed forces against a divided portion of an enemy line in order to achieve localised victory while minimising loss. These strategies are enabled by the Solar Auxilia Cohorts' discipline and the sophistication of their armaments, and born primarily from the Solar Auxilia Cohorts' use as long range pathfinder units for Explorator and Expeditionary forces, as well as rapid-response forces; in such roles the Solar Auxilia can often expect to fight alone and outnumbered, and face unknown terrain as well as potentially unknown enemies. The famed discipline and ability to 'hold the line' of the Solar Auxilia in such circumstances can be seen not simply as a matter of martial ability, but as a simple survival trait; on an alien world or within the hull of an enemy warship, breaking and fleeing is pointless where there is no safe haven to flee to, and doing so dooms one's self as surely as it does one's comrades.

**Core Hierarchical Rank Structure of the Solar Auxilia Cohorts**

The following illustrates the principal command and rank structure of a Solar Auxilia Cohort, descending from the highest to lowest. Note that only primary tactical ranks are included – considerable variation in title for specialist sub-units (Medicae, Provender, Strategium, etc) also occurs.

**Strategic Command**
- Lord Marshal (reserved for Expeditionary commanders)
- Cohort Marshal
- Legate Marshal

**Cohort (Staff)**
- Tribune
- High Commander

**Sub-Cohort (Commissioned)**
- Sub-Commander
- Lieutenant
- Sub-Lieutenant
- Ensign

**Tercio (Non-Commissioned)**
- Troop Master/Primus
- Void Sergeant

**Tercio (Enlisted)**
- Veletarii
- Auxiliary
- Sub-Auxiliary

## Panoply of War

One of the most clearly defining features of the Solar Auxilia is their unique panoply of war, which sets them aside from the myriad different forces within the wider Imperialis Auxilia, and is informed both by their history and their particular role in the Imperium's vast war machine.

### Personal Arms

The most singular and perhaps iconic piece of wargear utilised by a member of the Solar Auxilia is their void armour; a carapace-reinforced, full environmental combat body armour with a fully integrated life support unit. The void armour worn by the Solar Auxilia, eponymously classified as '*Solar pattern*' is itself a mass-produced modification of the ancient void armour worn by the Void Hoplites of the Saturnyne Ordo. The armour is fully sealed and capable of resisting small arms fire, ballistic impacts and shock trauma, is self-healing against minor penetrations and lacerations, and is particularly resilient against radiation and thermal effects, making it highly effective for combat operations in hostile environments of many kinds, not simply the open void. Although efficient and resilient, void armour however should not be considered to be a match in regards to durability or sophistication to Legiones Astartes power armour, which operates at a greater order of magnitude in terms of defence and endurance.

Just as the void armour worn by the Solar Auxilia is greater in terms of sophistication and material cost, so is its small arms weaponry, the most common of which is the Kalibrax V-I pattern lasrifle. The Kalibrax operates within the standard assigned power ranges set down by the Officio Militaris for Imperialis Auxilia weaponry, but is notable both for its heavily reinforced energy transfer capacitors, overall durability and superior heat dissipation qualities over more common patterns such as the Mars MkII lasgun or the Ursh-Vantovka lascarbine. These factors make it highly desirable for the hazards of void warfare, and also easily able to handle a variety of modifications and augmentative systems, such as bolt-collimator arrays and induction blast-chargers, without the fatal strain such devices might impose on lesser weapons. Historically, in terms of light support and specialised weaponry, the Solar Auxilia has always favoured various forms of directed energy weapons, including flamers, meltas, multi-lasers and lascannon, particularly for their suitability to void combat and to simplify maintenance and munitions supply, although bolt and rotor cannon-type weapons were far from unknown in the cohorts, particularly when a Solar Auxilia Cohort had operated for long periods alongside other Imperial forces.

Once the standard armament of a significant number of infantry sections, volkite weapons became increasingly rare as the Great Crusade had worn on, and by the Horus Heresy became the preserve only of the most elite of their Veletaris units, and to carry such a weapon became a thing of great distinction in the ranks of the Solar Auxilia, the weapons themselves passing from solider to solider as time went on. The weapons of the Solar Auxilia's officer class have a tendency to be highly idiosyncratic in nature, with each officer allowed to furnish their own personal arms, allowing for considerable variation and indeed competition between them to do so, with the sword of various forms being held commonly as the mark of an officer. Duelling between officers of similar rank outside of active war has always been permitted within certain parameters within the Solar Auxilia, both as sport and more lethally over matters of honour (with a commanding officer's permission). For this the Terran Charnabal sabre is the most common implement, and the training and skill this encourages is seen as being purely beneficial to those involved and the cohorts they serve.

### Tactical Support

Every Solar Auxilia Cohort is intended to operate as a self-contained force, and it is organised and supplied with additional infrastructural support based on its assigned role. For example, if on exploration duty or in open warfare, the cohorts almost always operate as a mechanised force, utilising large numbers of heavy, all-environment armoured transports as mounts and rally points for their troops. Most common of these is the Dracosan Armoured Transport, which possesses both the transport capacity to carry entire lasrifle sections in a single vehicle and is possessed of both considerably more armour and inherent rad/alchem protection than the ubiquitous Rhino, as well as a life support system of greater endurance. Alongside this primary ground vehicle, a specific armoured and often armed variant of the Arvus Lighter serves as the Solar Auxilia's most numerous support transport. This STC pattern is a robust and reliable orbital interface craft whose trusted design predated the Imperium's founding by unknown centuries, and is used in a variety of roles from troop transport, to reconnaissance craft, to supply conveyor and even as an impromptu gunship.

As might be expected given the Solar Auxilia's close relation to void warfare and orbital assault, additional naval support by fighter craft, heavy gunships and orbital landers is also very closely factored into the Solar Auxilia Cohorts' sphere of operations, with the Auxilia possessing its own cadres of pilots and void ratings integrated into a given cohort's own chain of command to facilitate its operation. Almost uniquely among the Excertus Imperialis, Solar Auxilia Cohorts stationed upon ships of the line also make use of specially modified Shark pattern boarding rams for void assault actions, a deadly form of engagement usually assumed to be the sole province of the mighty Legiones Astartes.

### Heavy Armour and Ordnance

The Solar Auxilia Cohorts make extensive use of support armour and mobile artillery units in open battle, and unlike the forces of the wider Imperialis Auxilia, these are invariably patterns designed and proofed against void and hostile environment operation, including radiological shielding and internal life support systems. These include the notably advanced Mars-Solar pattern Leman Russ battle tanks, created specifically to the Auxilia's specifications by the Lords of the Red Planet —both swifter and more sophisticated than their more commonly encountered counterparts— as well as semi-automata variant Basilisk and Medusa artillery tanks mounted on those same environmentally sealed Leman Russ chassis. Solar Auxilia Cohorts are also renowned for their routine deployment of prefabricated defence works, fortifying any encampment they make or outpost they construct, however temporary; a standard operating procedure born of extensive deployments on unknown worlds far from ready aid.

Most Solar Auxilia Cohorts also feature at least one fully equipped super-heavy armour sub-cohort within its ranks, whose armoury contains numerous types of general battle units such as the Malcador and the Baneblade, as well as vehicles reserved for more specialised roles such as the Shadowsword and Stormhammer. It is notable, however, that more specialised siege formations, such as static artillery batteries, are rarely included within a cohort's regular order of battle, as siege duty and attrition warfare was largely considered a waste of the Solar Auxilia's particular capabilities by strategic command during the Great Crusade, and left to other, more specialised formations of the Excertus Imperialis.

# Forces of the Great Crusade: Excertus Imperialis
## Strategic Disposition: Macro-Command Level – Expeditionary Fleet/Dedicated Battlegroup

Primary: Lord Militant/Lord Solar [I]
Secondary tier by deployment type

Lord Marshal
[Expansion/Battlegroup Command]

Lord Castellan
[Garrison/Defence Command]

Lord Admiral
[Primary Fleet Command]

Individual assets of a Lord Militant of any kind will vary widely, but will commonly include personal flag ship (Capital class), various escort vessels, retainer cohorts, life guard elite, specialised irregular regiments, full general staff and analytical cadres, indentured servants and hirelings, bursary and iterator trains, emissaries from various potentates and divisions of the Imperium's body politic, etc.

**Strategic Operational Command**
*Centralised resource of strategic operations and general staff for the Expeditionary fleet/Battlegroup, as distinct from private retainer counterparts operating as part of the Lord Militant's personal retinue.*

Tribunes General and Subordinate Staff Officers, Officio Locum Strategos, Senior Representatives of the Armourium, Artillerists, Munitoria, Officio Medicae, Lectato and Discipline Corps.

**Subordinate Office of the Admiralty & Fleet of the Armada Imperialis**
*Includes all detached vessels, stations, crews and assets of the Armada Imperialis under the purview of the Lord Militant, including its commensurate parallel Naval strategic chain of command (Admiral Primaris and subordinate). Also, any attached high ranking members of the Astra Telepathica and Navis Nobilite.*

**Mechanicum Assigned Detachment**
*Comprising the independent command structure of permanently or semi-permanently detached Mechanicum forces, and their sub-factions.*

[Primary] Magos Militant, Enginseer Covenant Excertus, Emissaries Mechanicum

[Secondary] Allied Taghmata, Ordo Reductor, Legio Cybernetica, Legio Titanicus

**Extra-Incorporate Assigned Forces**
*Varied and diverse operatives, agencies and irregular forces operating under the authority of the Lord Militant, but outside of the usual chain of command, are notionally located in this division of authority.*

- Agents of the Imperial Court, Agents of the Assassinorum, Plenipotentiary Representatives of the Council of Terra, {prohibited}
- Assigned detachments of the Legiones Astartes, Households of the Knights Questoris
- Rogue Traders Minoris, Chartist Captains, Reflugators, Ordnancers Assay & Provender, Justicars Arbites and their respective staffs and cadres
- Deputations of the Orders of Iterators, Remembrancers and Savants Logos
- Warden Charonate, {prohibited}, {prohibited}

Cohort and Regimental Command Structure
[Simplified Overview]
*The bulk of the Excertus Imperialis armed forces are made up of independently operating regiments, Militia Legions Minoris and Cohort structured 'sub-armies'. Each of these varies by their internal structure, size, muster and strategic use (and thereby their equipment and training) as well as their world/system of raising and/or origin. These are broadly classified and ranked in order of military power and seniority by the Principia Militaris as follows:*

**Cohorts and Regiments Primus [II]**

**Cohorts and Regiments Secundus [III]**

**Militia Legions Minoris [IV]**

**Provender & Labour Auxiliaries**

**Penitentiary and Punishment Cohorts and Legions Minoris**

*Depending on their size and deployment, battlegroups and Expeditionary fleets may order between a dozen and over a hundred such independent formations, potentially therefore numbering in the tens of millions of men and women under arms.*

Additional Notation
[I] *A Lord Militant ranks as one of the highest authorities in the Imperium, equal to the Imperial Commanders of major worlds, and highest officers of the Imperial Court, in effect, subordinate only to the will of the Emperor, his personal representatives and, by extension, the Primarchs.*
[II] *Primary level Cohorts and regiments are the most powerful forces within the Excertus, comprising elite formation such as the Solar Auxilia, Pioneer Regiments, Armoured Cohorts and Regiments of Renown.*
[III] *Secondary level Cohorts and regiments represent a second tier of ability and force, including many indentured forces from Compliant worlds, lightly equipped 'regular' forces intended for non-critical Compliance garrisons, as well as frontline auxiliaries considered to be liable in some way, such as feral worlders and abhuman regiments.*
[IV] *Militia Legions Minoris are forces raised in extremis from subordinate local populations, and are often poorly equipped and poorly trained, often for the purpose of planetary defence emergencies, etc.*

# Strategic Disposition of a Solar Auxilia Cohort

## Notional Organisation Late Great Crusade Era

## Exemplar Unit: 278th Cohort 'Arkadian' Muster, Solar Pattern

278th Arkadian Cohort

**Cohort Level Assigned Strategic Assets**

- Warships of the Line (Light and Heavy Cruiser, Frigate, Bastion and Corvette classes)
- Warp-capable Troop Transport Vessels
- Boarding Craft (Shark pattern – most common)
- Planetary Landers and Combat Drop Vessels, Orbital Lighters and Shuttle Craft
- Light Interface Gunships and Strike Fighter Wings
- Void Interceptors
- Super-heavy Tank Detachments
- Support Artillery and Ordnance Corps
- Medicae Corps
- Assigned Mechanicum Enginseer Covenants

### Cohort Strategic Hierarchy

*Comprising the overall independent strategic and battlefield command and control functions of the Cohort, as well as its general governance and logistical directorate.*

**Cohort Supreme Command**
Cohort Marshal/Marshal Solar
Legate Marshal/Tribune Ordinate

**Cohort Vexillarius**
*(Core of veterans and retainers entrusted with the relics and standards of the Cohort; Standard Bearers, Signifiers, Subalterns, Bodyguards and Equerries).*

**Cohort Operations Command**
Tribunes (Dictatus, Strategos or Logos)
High Commanders
Legate Commanders
*(Cohort general staff officer and functionary cadre, also attached advisors and representatives of other arms of the Excertus Imperialis/Armada Imperialis, etc.).*

**Officers of the Fleet**
*Officers and parallel command structure of any vessels of the Armada Imperialis given under the Permanent authority of the Cohort's Marshal. Commonly of no higher independent rank than Captain of the 2nd rating (Captain-Commander) operating at equivalent rank to a Cohort Tribune.*

### Sub-Cohort Tactical Command

Sub-Commander
Lieutenant/Strategos
Sub-Lieutenant/Proclaimator
Ensign/Declurion/Vexillarii (Sub-Cohort)

### Tercio Structure of Cohort's Rank and File

*The bulk of the Cohort is divided up into Tercio pattern troop formations as its essential building blocks of tactical use and logistical support.*

**Tercio Class: Optimate**
Veletaris Squads and other elite formations
Veteran Infantry Units
Dedicated Transportation Crew

**Tercio Class: Militaris**
Line Infantry Sections (Lasrifle, I-III)
Dedicated Transportation Crew
Pioneer Sections

**Tercio Class: Ancillary**
Special Weapons Sections
Assigned Light Field Support Weapons (Rapier, Tarantula, etc)
Dedicated Transportation Crew
Ogryn Charonite Units and other irregular forces attached to general structure

**Nominal Strength**
**278th Solar Auxilia Cohort**

Lasrifle Sections (70,000)
Veletaris Sections (3,000)
Specialist Weapon Sections (7,000)
Crew, Ancillary, Pioneer, Labour and Support (22,000)
Staff and Command Cadre (1,200)
Fleet Officer Cadre and Voidsman (10,000)
Other (5,000)



**Auxilia of the 6633rd Solar Auxilia Cohort:** The 6633rd was one of many Cohorts deployed at Manachea that fought in the eleven-day Battle of Hive Ilium. Anticipating the need to conduct Expeditionary warfare against xenos remnants across the region, these units were founded according to the Solar template and were granted the right to bear the blue and yellow livery of the Ultima Segmentum Armada Imperialis. The variant of the winged icon of the Excertus Imperialis specific to the Solar Auxilia is worn on the chest and left shoulder, with individual sub-unit markings on the right shoulder.



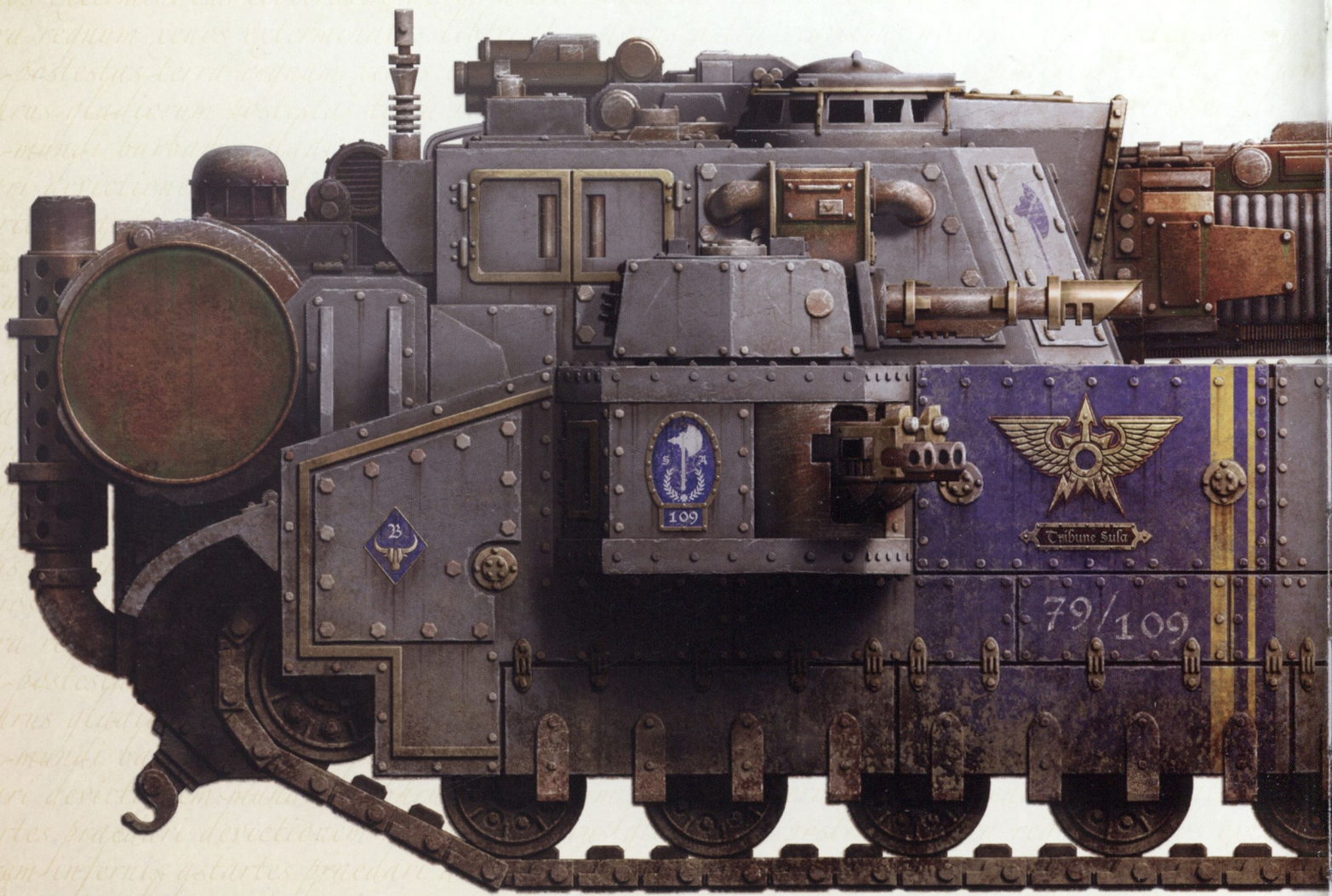
**Veletarii of the 6629th Solar Auxilia, Defence of the Palace of Light, Fall of Manachea:** Though volkite weapons were being supplanted by other, more easily manufactured weapons across the armies of the Imperium, many Veletaris units retained what examples they held, and they would prove more effective than any other tactical armament against the Traitor Legiones Astartes the Loyalists would now face.

# War Machines of the Solar Auxilia

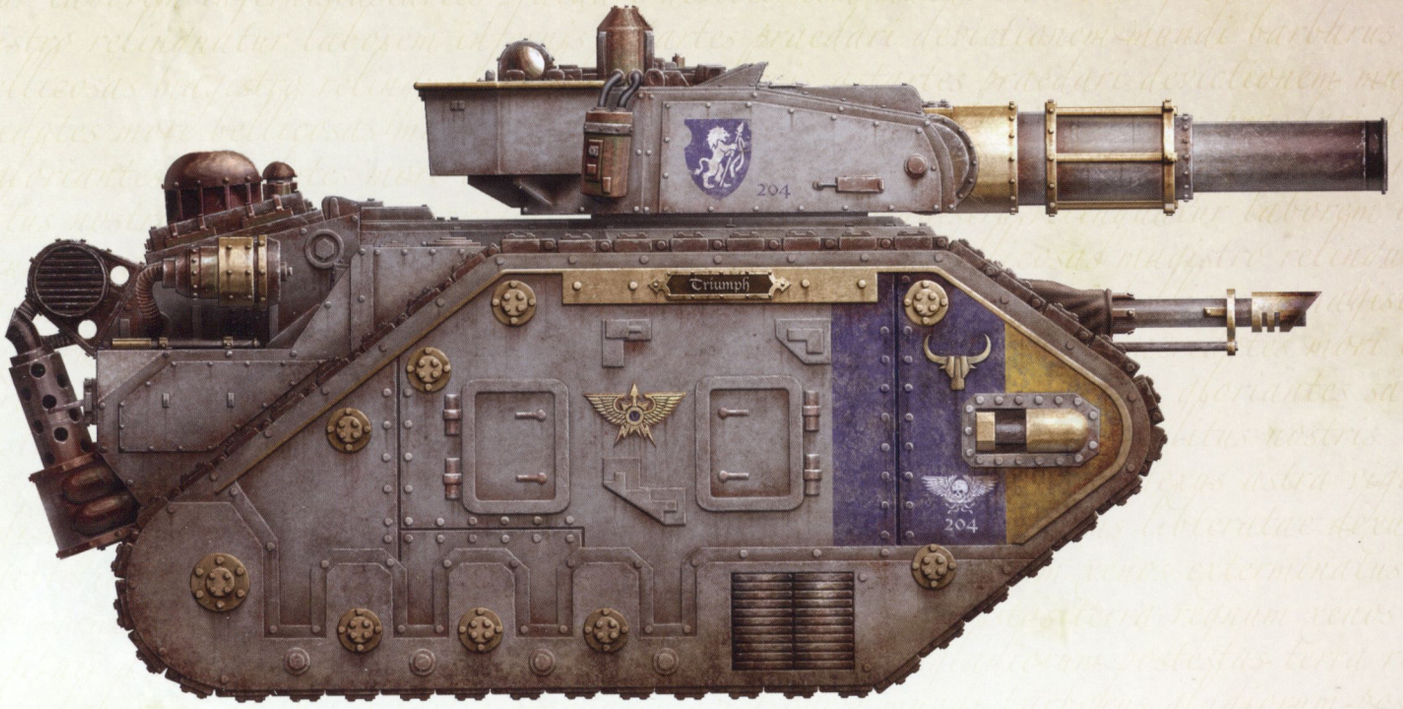
The Greater Orders of Battle of the Solar Auxilia make provisions for a wide range of force types, most describing a cohort built around a core of infantry supplemented to varying degrees by armoured units, from self-propelled artillery to super-heavy tanks. These documents are nothing if not extensive in their addressing of every possible contingency the Solar Auxilia might face in war, and even go so far as to stipulate the livery they should bear.

The armoured vehicles of the Solar Auxilia are mainly liveried in a utilitarian white-grey, the same surface coating applied to the armoured flanks of the mighty war ships of the Armada Imperialis Ultima. Unlike the mass-produced war machines of the majority of the Imperial Army however, those of the Solar Auxilia are not only constructed from superior quality materials usually reserved for Legion war machines, and also lavished with fittings and details of semi-precious metals, such as brass, bronze or copper which, even when the bulk of the vehicle accumulates dirt and wear, are kept shining as a matter of pride. Solar Auxilia tank crews are known for their attention to detail in this regard, and it is common for them to spend long hours in between other duties fastidiously maintaining their war machines; a practice that also reveals any micro-fractures or hidden damage that might compromise the vehicle in hostile environments. This tradition is derived from the pre- and post-battle protocols of the Saturnyne Ordo, where warriors would be detailed to perform such repetitive tasks in order to focus minds, dissipate tension and maintain discipline.

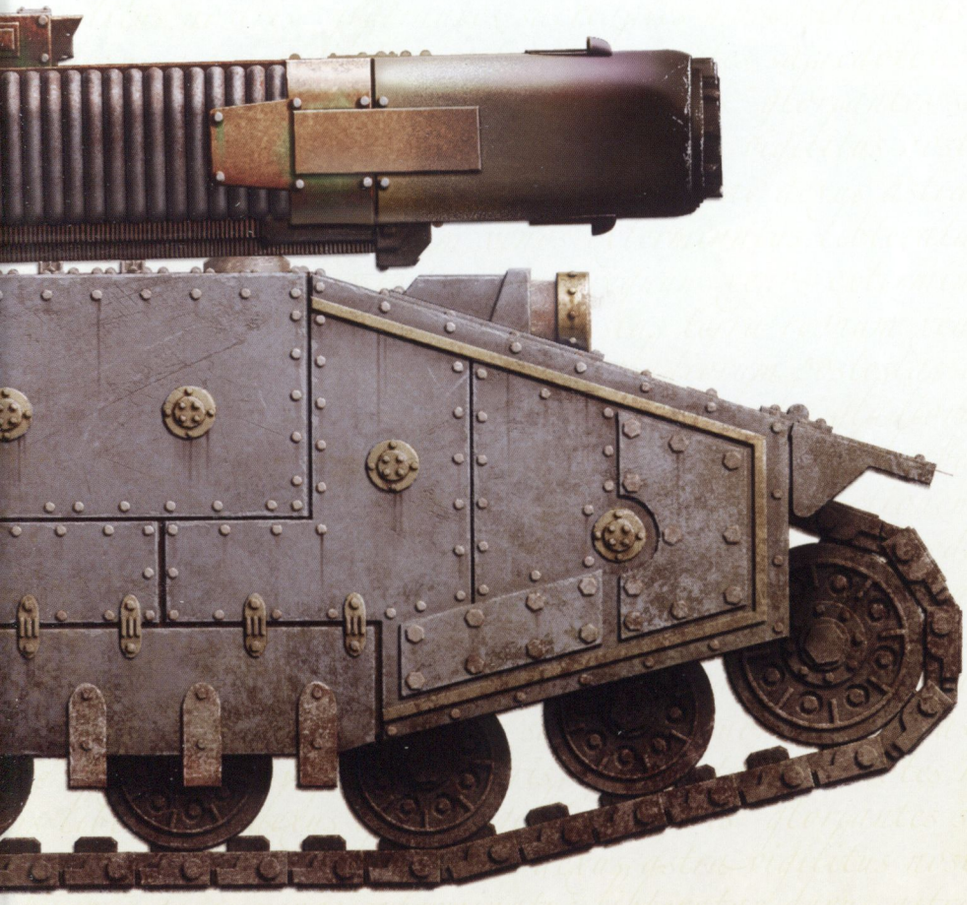
In addition to their basic panoply, Solar Auxilia armoured vehicles commonly also bear the colours of their particular cohort's livery, applied in bands of varying configurations across the sides, prow or turret. The colours are those by which the cohort is known, and may be drawn from the culture of the world from which it was raised, or earned throughout its years of service to the Imperium. They appear on banners and uniforms, and the warriors of the cohort derive enormous pride from bearing them into battle.




**Stormblade '*Tribune Sula*', Solar-Arkuria pattern, 109th Armoured Corps:** This super-heavy tank bears the blue and yellow banding of the Solar Auxilia Cohorts raised from the Manachean Commonwealth. The axe icon indicates that the Stormblade belongs to a dedicated armoured unit (rather than being individually assigned to support another formation), and the wreath and cruciform veterancy symbol below marks it as a command vehicle bearing a senior Solar Auxilia tank commander of the cohort.




**Leman Russ '*Triumph*', Solar-Ryza pattern, 204th Solar Auxilia Veletaris Corps:** The Solar Auxilia makes extensive use of armoured vehicles enhanced to the 'Solar' specification. Visible on this Leman Russ, manufactured on Ryza, are some of the extensive array of equipment that allows it to operate in the most hazardous of environmental conditions. The turret bears an icon showing a lion with spear, mounted on a shield, indicating that the vehicle is permanently attached as armoured support to an elite Veletaris formation.

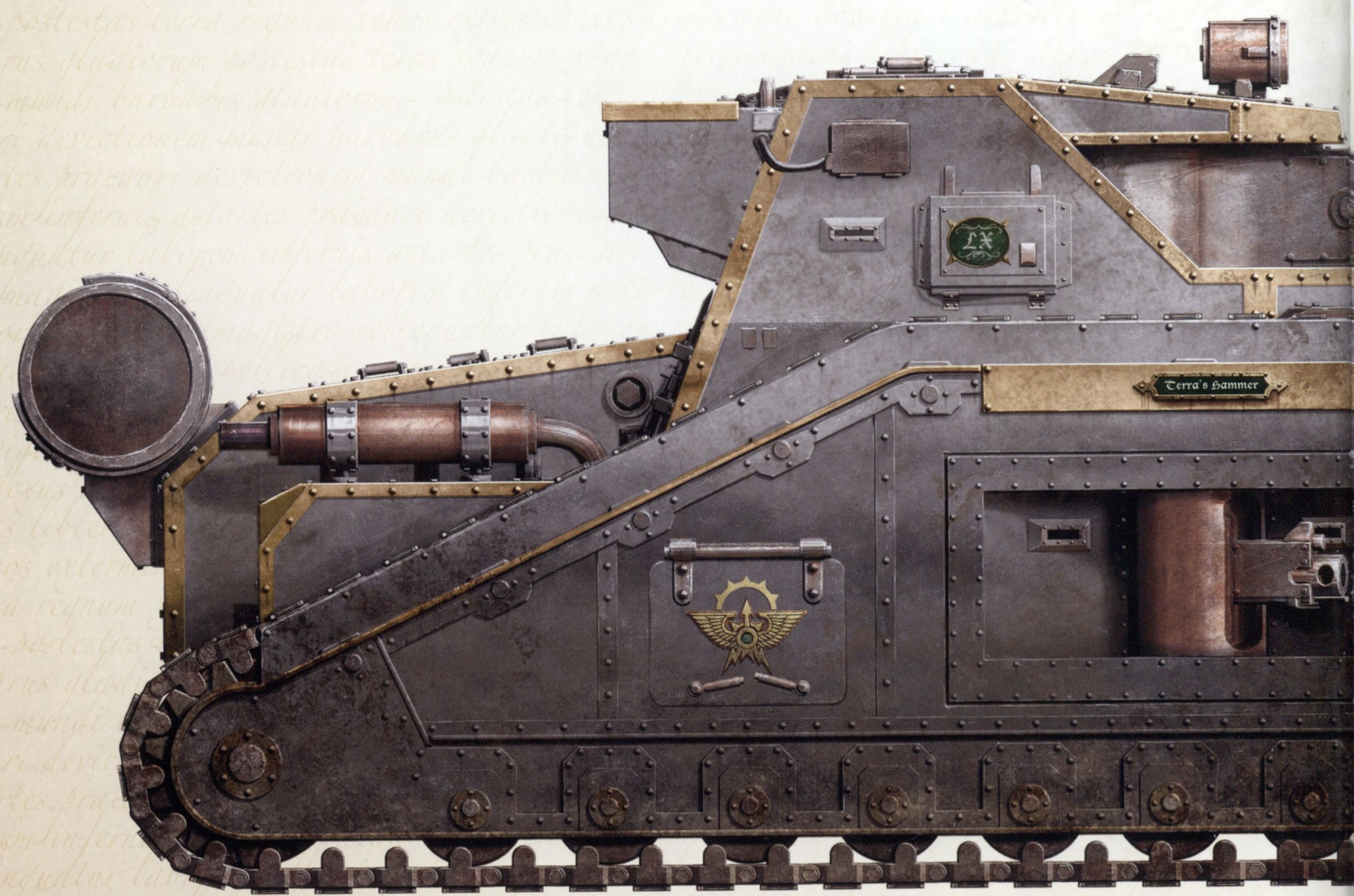


# War Machines of the 'Lord Marshal's Own'

The Solar Auxilia of the world of Agathon are the direct descendents of the proud and glorious 1522nd Solar Auxilia, the '*Lord Marshal's Own*'. This much-honoured cohort fought at the vanguard of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet for many years, before finally breaking the stalemate at Agathon and bringing the world to Compliance. Claiming Right of Conquest, Lord Marshal MaSade occupied the world and replaced its ruling aristocracy with his own officer corps. For an entire generation, the force served as a household army to the MaSade dynasty, Iraton MaSade himself still thriving thanks to rare and costly life-prolonging treatment until the 1522nd was reconstituted to confront the forces of betrayal sweeping through the Coronid Deeps.

The Lord Marshal's Own is an extremely well appointed cohort, thanks to its master's nigh-bottomless coffers. The entire infantry complement is mounted in Dracosan Armoured Carriers and each infantry sub-cohort is supported by a dedicated armoured support squadron. At High Command level, the 1522nd can field a number of dedicated armoured and artillery sub-cohorts, including a heavy armoured assault formation of two dozen Malcador Heavy Tanks and three mobile artillery support sub-cohorts, each of around three dozen artillery vehicles of varying types.

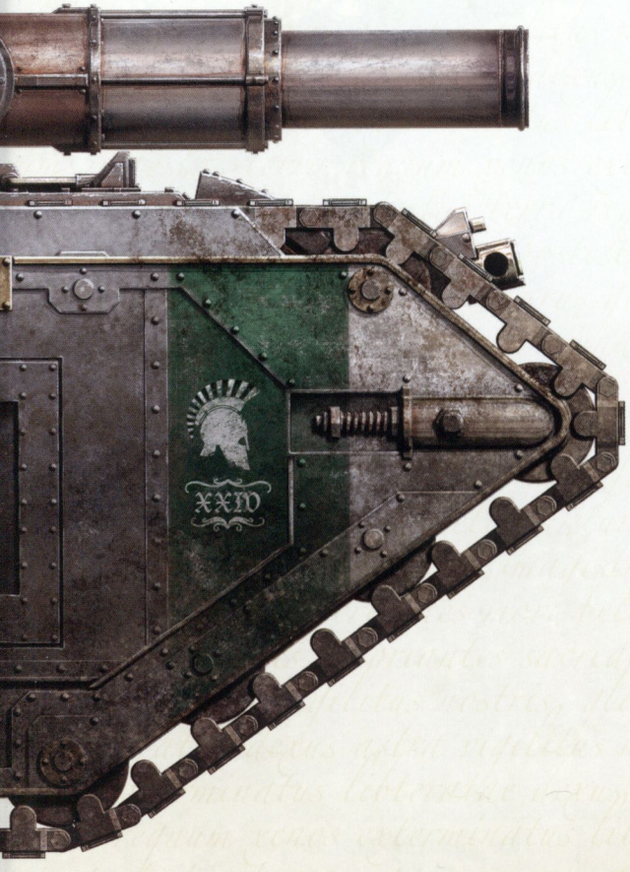
The war machines of the 1522nd bear the green and white livery of the MaSade dynasty, displayed in prominent bands at each vehicle's prow. These colours were granted to the Lord Marshal for his dynasty to use in perpetuity when he was invested with his Warrant of Dominion by the ruling Council of Terra, and they were carried on to the massively expanded Loyalist forces of Agathon during the wars of the Heresy.




**Malcador Heavy Battle Tank '*Terra's Hammer*', Mars-Solar Pattern:** *Terra's Hammer* is a veteran of the Agathon Compliance, and as such bears the original horse head icon worn by the Solar Auxilia Cohorts of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet at that time. In addition, the heavy tank bears the winged icon of the Solar Auxilia surmounted by a half iron halo, indicating the veteran status of its crew.




**Basilisk Artillery Tank, Mars-Solar Pattern:** This vehicle belongs to the 220th Independent Artillery Battery, a formation held as a Cohort Reserve to support and exploit breakthroughs by the Dracosan-mounted infantry Tercios as they occur. The vehicle bears the crested helm icon of the planet Agathon, as well as a crossed axe symbol that is likely to be an informal badge conceived and applied by the crew of the 220th's vehicles.








**Auxiliary of the 48th Infantry Tercio, 1522nd Solar Auxilia Cohort (the 'Lord Marshal's Own'):**
A unit reformed with the colours and designations of the pride of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet, the 48th Infantry Tercio sustained heavy losses during the opening stages of the Battle of Numinal, standing resolute against the waves of Battle-automata unleashed upon MaSade's lines. Later in the battle, the remnants of the 48th Tercio amalgamated with three other war-ravaged units to join the pursuit and destruction of the Cyclothrathine Taghmata after Archmagos Draykavac evacuated.



**Veletaris of the 108th Veletaris Tercio, 1522nd Solar Auxilia Cohort (the 'Lord Marshal's Own'):** The elite of the Lord Marshal's Own, the most senior ranked of the Veletaris Tercios, formed a newly constituted guard to Lord MaSade and his command staff. The 108th Tercio deployed to Numinal and provided close security to MaSade's headquarters, repelling three attempted infiltrations by Vorax Attack-automata cohorts of the Traitor Draykavac's Cyclothrathine Taghmata.

# Solar Auxilia Heraldry

The Cohorts of the Solar Auxilia are known by a combination of heraldry and a numeral that, in theory at least, is in use by only a small family of Cohorts at a time – names such as the '*Lord Marshal's Own*', the '*Ash Scorpions*' or the '*Gate Keepers*'. Where a Cohort has strong associations with a particular world – either that from which it was raised or one it is tasked with guarding – it may also carry the name and other icons of that world.




1522nd Solar Auxilia Cohort
'*The Lord Marshal's Own*' – Agathon




204th Solar Auxilia Cohort,
Manachean Commonwealth




142nd Solar Auxilia Cohort (one of multiple
'*Cthonian Head-hunter*' Cohorts)

## Solar Auxilia Cohorts



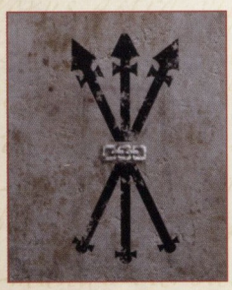
Reconstituted 1522nd Solar Auxilia Cohort '*Lord Marshal's Own*' – Agathon.



Solar Auxilia Cohorts raised to defend the Manachean Commonwealth.



905th Solar Auxilia Cohort '*Ash Scorpions*'.



Arkadian Solar Auxilia. Numerous Cohorts raised from the trans-Solar hive worlds of Arkadia.



Cthonian '*Head-hunter*' Solar Auxilia Cohorts under Rogue Trader Militant Valerius, 63rd Expeditionary Fleet.



The '*Raptor Imperialis*' icon borne by many veteran formations of the late Unification Wars and early Great Crusade.



'*Equis Astra*' – the original icon borne by Solar Auxilia Cohorts of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet.



1st to 10th Solar Auxilia Cohorts (collectively the '*Saturnyne Rams*').



'*Eye of the Serpent*' icon borne by units sworn to serve the Warmaster against those loyal to the Emperor.

# Solar Auxilia Tactical Markings

## Shoulder Insignia

Shown here are common iterations of the shoulder markings worn by Solar Auxilia of all ranks. The first exemplar shown is of the Manachean Cohorts.


Supreme Command


Sub-Cohort Command


Tercio Command


Section Command



Cohort Numeral


Tank Crew


Veteran


Artillery Crew


Pilot


Medicae


Arkadia Tank Crew


Ash Scorpions Veteran


Agathon Artillery Crew


Agathon Pilot


Cthonion Head-hunter Cohort

## Vehicle Insignia

Most Solar Auxilia vehicles are clad in standard '*militaris grey*', with details in semi-precious metal and the colours of the Cohort applied in bands at the prow and sometimes the turret.



Bull's head and livery of a Cohort of the Manachean Commonwealth. Skull motif of an artillery battery.



Horse head and green and white banding of the 1522nd Cohort. Lion icon of a Veletaris formation.



The badge of the 233rd Armada's elite Reconnaissance Wing appears alongside the blue and yellow bands of Solar Auxilia Cohorts raised from the worlds of the Manachean Commonwealth.



Claw symbol and red and black bands of a Cthonian Head-hunter Cohort. Axe symbol of an armoured corps.

## Vexilla

The Cohorts of the Solar Auxilia utilise a wide array of icons, standards and banners, collectively known as '*Vexillas*' and carried into battle by the most skilled, trusted and honoured of Auxiliaries.

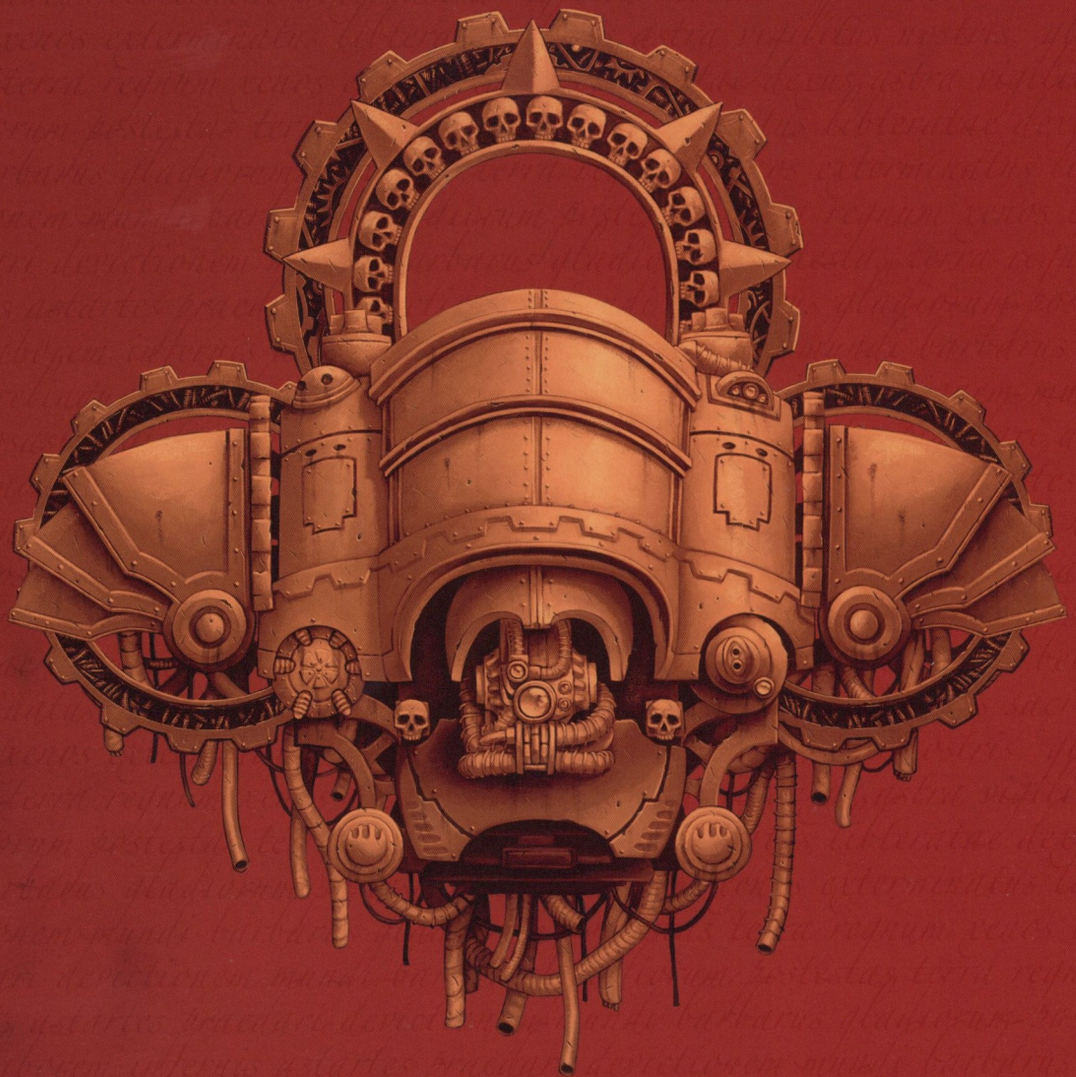


The icon used by all Imperial Army units – the variant shown here is specific to Solar Auxilia units. The central plaque mounts the Cohort's numeral.


The '*Imperialis*'; originally issued in recognition of bravery and loss. Later, a badge of honour borne by Loyalist units.



Troop Vexilla, borne with pride by all infantry sections. Winged lions hark back to the early Unification Wars and plaques indicate specific battle honours or the names of the glorious dead.



# Oath-bound Vassal Households of the Mechanicum

*"These Knights are vital components of the Taghmata that protect Forge and Fane, yet despite their pride, they are but one tool among many and they will bend to the Omnissiah's will or be broken by it."*

*Noted comments of Archmagos Draykavac upon the rediscovery of House Atrax 3447853.M30*

At the core of every Knight Household is a panoply of arcane artefacts that defy the understanding of all but the most learned adepts of the Mechanicum. From the mind-impulse thrones from which the Knight armours are guided, to the ion shields that ward the enemy's wrath from their imposing hulls, without these mysterious technologies the noble scions of the Knight Households would be utterly powerless against the larger foes they might face; and so it is far from surprising that many Knight Households have such strong ties to the Mechanicum.

Few Forge Worlds would spurn the loyalty of such a mighty force, representing as it does both a devastating weapon to wield as well as a potent symbol of the divine machine-spirit, and many a bargain has been brokered between Forge and House.

Unlike their more independent brethren, those Households sworn to the service of the Mechanicum are often a strange breed, centuries of service to the creed of the Magos who dominate their patron Forge having warped their traditions and appearance. Often these Houses stride to battle in machines far different from the ancient Paladin-type armours, bearing strange and terrible weapons not seen upon the battlefield since the Dark Age of Technology. Some are even rumoured to have been inducted into the baser mysteries of the Mechanicum's secret arts, studded with esoteric augmetics, or even sealed eternally within the tomb of their Knight armour. When the Taghmata of the Mechanicum muster for war, they are joined by these secretive warriors and the thunder of their war-horns heralds the victory to come.

### The Sidon Protocols

Those Knight Households that remained in contact with one of the far-flung Forge Worlds of the Martian Cult during the Age of Strife have most often fallen into a symbiotic relationship with their patron, receiving technological and spiritual guidance from the Magos, while themselves acting as a potent shield for the Forge World. Many Forge Worlds might have faded from history during the Age of Strife were it not for the tireless efforts of the Knight Households bound to their service. Such a joining of the cold logic of the Mechanicum and the impassioned zeal of the more typical Knightly Houses led to many widely varying oaths. Most common among these oaths is the form that has come to be known as the Sidon Protocols, a complex web of obligation and duty that binds both House and Forge in a dangerous accord, whose tangled precepts can easily lead to the loss of any semblance of independence for a Knight Household that fails to uphold the protocols.

Among the more well known rights provided by the Sidon Protocols is the right of the Knight Household to bear the symbol of the Opus Machina, the cog wheel-set skull, as part of their panoply of arms. This is both a sign that they carry with them the authority of Mars and the Cult Mechanicus, as well as a mark of their duty as part of the Taghmata of their patron. This also serves to set them apart from their Imperial brethren, though both may take upon themselves the title of Questoris and join the Expeditionary fleets of the Great Crusade, the mark of the Opus Machina shows that ultimately they owe allegiance to the Mechanicum and the ambitions of their patron Forge World and not to the Emperor. This subtle distinction has in the past led to some strife amongst the armies of the Great Crusade, and led to those Households pledged to the Mechanicum gaining a sometimes misleading reputation for untrustworthiness amongst Imperial Commanders.

The Sidon Protocols also allow the Forge World to assign an Archmagos Prelate to the home world of the Household. Ostensibly, the Prelate serves as an advisor and observer within the Household, seeing both to the wellbeing of its Knights and training of its Sacristans, but in some cases stands as a quiet tyrant behind the throne of the Household's master. The Prelate also functions as a link between the scions of the Household and the amorphous structure of the Forge World's Taghmata. To the Household he is a representative of the Forge World, but within the constantly fluctuating network of prestige and alliance that is the Mechanicum Taghmata system, he is the representative of the Household. Considering the military power of a Knight Household, such a position brings great influence to the Archmagos Prelate, and many a Household has become inadvertently enmeshed in the intricate plots of a Forge World's Synod as its members vie for the position.

The majority of the remaining common precepts within the Sidon Protocols deal with the interplay of House and Forge; with the number and type of armours to be supplied and the conditions and duration of a Household's service under the banner of the Taghmata. It is this co-dependency, the exchange of the irreplaceable machinery of war for trained and seasoned warriors whose skills are superior to those of brute automata, that binds the two disparate organisations together. Such a close relationship has led to many of these Houses developing curious hybrid cultures, often retaining much of the independent nature of their neo-feudal origins but alongside often bizarre interpretations of their patron's brand of the cult of the Omnissiah, much to the consternation of the Archmagos Prelate.

### Gilded Fetters of Blood and Iron

Only a few Households maintained contact with the domains of the Mechanicum during the Age of Strife. Undoubtedly many of those that did not have long since perished, overwhelmed by the terrors of Old Night, or have lost the last of the Knight armours that marked them out, devolving into simple feral worlds that maintain only the neo-feudal traditions of their origins. Those few that survived the trials of the Age of Strife, prevailing alone and unaided, were much sought-after prizes for the expanding armies of Mankind.

The Expeditionary fleets of the Great Crusade went to great lengths to secure such a world, prizing the skill of a Household's warriors and the power of their Knight armour. However, it has long been the Imperium's policy to secure the loyalty of these rediscovered Households directly to the Emperor and for Imperial factotums to represent the Household in all dealings with the Mechanicum. For, while the common citizen may see this great Imperium as one realm, it is more akin to a loose alliance of competing powers and ever does each seek to outdo the others. Yet, despite the efforts of the Emperor's servants, some few Knight Households escaped the Emperor's servants, only to be chanced on by Mechanicum Explorator vessels alone or ceded to the control of a Forge World in exchange for some portion of its industrial output or the services of its assembled Taghmata.

Such rediscovered Knight Worlds, often sorely in need of new armours and lacking any long association with their new patron Forge, find themselves caught in something of a devil's bargain. Their dire need for technological expertise and replacement armours serve as a simple leash for the coldly logical Archmagos to wield in order to seal the Knight Household to its service, and one that is applied with chilling efficiency. Where in some cases the Sidon Protocols served to bind together House and Forge in amicable alliance, in such instances the complex terms of debt and duty were manipulated to strangle the independence of the Household. This was itself a pale reflection of the worst excesses of the Mechanicum in this regard during the anarchy and desperation of the Age of Strife, when Households bound to such a fate could expect little courtesy from their new masters, and inevitably functioned as the vanguard of any military operation conducted by their patron Forge World's Taghmata, serving as an ultimately expendable shock assault force. Nor did they expect to receive the resources the Mechanicum granted to those Households able to leverage either long standing alliance, or an established force of arms, and were purposefully kept short of fully functional armours and often only supplied with older patterns and less powerful configurations of arms. The least fortunate of such Households are rumoured to have been forcibly 'enhanced' by the shunned adepts of the Lachrimallus on particularly wayward Forge Worlds, leaving them literal slaves to the will of their Archmagos Prelate; unsleeping, fearless warriors whose only desire is the final escape of death. It is believed that during the horrors of the Horus Heresy and the Great Scouring, this practice, suppressed during the Great Crusade, saw a hidden revival, though if this was the case on the Loyalist side, then such Thrall-Houses have long since been destroyed or hidden from the sight of the Emperor's servants.

### The Blade of the Omnissiah

Regardless of the means by which a Forge World exerts control over those Knight Households in its sworn service, its seasoned warriors and their arcane mounts are precious assets and quickly incorporated into the forces available to that Forge World.

The Archmagos Prelate assigned to the House will normally represent them within the Forge World's Synod, a gathering that is neither meant for those unindoctrinated in the higher mysteries of the Cult Mechanicus, nor easily understandable to the unaugmented, and decide on their deployment should the time come that they are summoned to war.

Most commonly, a Mechanicum-oathed House bound by the Sidon Protocols will be required to assign a cadre of Knights to any significant mustering of the Forge World's Taghmata, serving for the duration of the campaign under the overall command of the Archmagos leading the Taghmata, but serving under their own officers. Within the Taghmata of the Mechanicum, Knights serve a vital role as shock assault troops, valued for their independent initiative as much for their raw power. In massed battles, their first role is as line breakers, breaching an enemy's ranks to enable the cybernetic legions of the Cult Mechanicus to sweep forward and engage the weakened foe, or serving as escorts to the gigantic war machines of the Ordinatus Locum and Ordo Reductor. There are few Forge Worlds willing to commit to wholesale battle without the support of at least a single allied Knight House, and many of the most well established Forge Worlds can call on several should the need arise.

**Knights and the Titan Legions**

It is also common practice among those Forge Worlds that maintain a Titan Legion to assign allied Knight detachments to Titan maniples as skirmishers and scout elements. These Knights are expected to screen the larger Titans from infantry formations and strike tanks, and many Magos view such an assignment in support of the god-machines as a distinct honour. It is common practice amongst those Knights granted the privilege of fighting alongside Titans to apply elements of the Legion's heraldry to their own armour. In such actions during the Great Crusade, the most terrifying and powerful xenos races were purged from existence in deadly combat, and few Knights survived long in the shadow of the mighty war machines they guarded in such battles. The princeps of the Legio Titanicus were proud to honour the sacrifice of the scions that marched to war with them in this manner, and afforded their allied Knight Houses great respect, and those who returned to their home worlds on both sides often retained elements commemorating their fellowship in their personal heraldry as a mark of honour.

**The Knights Questoris**

Those Households that maintained some measure of autonomy, whether through strength of arms or steadfast loyalty, may well retain the right to sanction independent military operations or to join the ranks of the Ordo Questoris—the Household forces independently detached into the service of the Expeditionary fleets and the Great Crusade armies. Such Houses were driven to seek glory among the far flung stars of the galaxy far from the Taghmata of their patron Forge World, or even engaged in their own conquests; as loyal to the ideals of unity and the Emperor as ever they were to their Mechanicum patrons. The riches and reputation brought from such independent martial endeavours served in some cases to aid them in gaining greater autonomy from their Mechanicum patrons, which is why many Archmagos were loathe to grant such rights as part of the Sidon Protocols.

### Notable Mechanicum-oathed Houses

**The Bound House of Atrax**

Bound in servitude to the grim Forge World of Cyclothrathe, the once-proud warriors of the House of Atrax have suffered much since Archmagos Draykavac blasted their home world into submission. The Household of Atrax survived all the horrors of Old Night through stubborn force of arms, but over two decades under the direct control of Draykavac has left them a hollow and distorted reflection of their former glory. Systematic and bloody purges of those scions who display any hint of rebellion has left the scions of Atrax a grim and brooding people in whom their Mechanicum overlords have fostered a disturbing hatred of those who have escaped the fate that has befallen them.

The poisoned husk of House Atrax's home world, Arrian, now serves the Magos of Cyclothrathe as a source of raw materials for their wars of conquest and expansion, with legions of imported slaves tearing the ore from the blackened rocks. The remaining scions of Atrax are confined to the armoured vaults that lie beneath Arrian's scorched surface, released from this virtual captivity only when Draykavac summons them to war. The Knight armours of the House are kept separate from the scions, ministered to by Cyclothrathe-trained Sacristans as hostages for the scions' loyalty, for in the case of any armed revolt, the Archmagos of Cyclothrathe can destroy all of the House's Thrones Mechanicum with but a word. With Cyclothrathe pledged in tacit support of Horus' treacherous campaigns in the northern reaches of the sundered Imperium, Draykavac unleashed the warriors of Atrax on the worlds of the Coronid Reach. There, the twisted scions took a measure of revenge by slaughtering those who had not suffered over the years as they had, exulting in the freedom to stalk the surface in their armour before Cyclothrathe caged them once again.

**The Grand Order of Hermetika**

The secretive lords of Kaldeia, the Household of Hermetika has long been allied to the Forge World of Mezoa, serving alongside their Taghmata in uncounted battles during the Age of Strife. Numerous and well furnished with the Cerastus pattern Knight armour, the Hierarchs of the Grand Order of Hermetika stand more as steadfast allies of, rather than clients of, Mezoa, too powerful to be coerced by force and too reliant on trade with the Tech-Priests to stand apart. Long centuries of exchange have seen both Forge and House grow more alike, with elements of the strange ascetic and meditative practices of the Hermetikan Hierarchs slowly infiltrating the orthodox rites of the Mezoan Tech-Priests, while the Hermetikan Sacristans replace the traditional '*perfect being*' of Hermetikan mythology with a distorted interpretation of the Omnissiah. It is far from coincidence that both the Tech-Priests of lava-locked Mezoa and the Hermetikan recluses in the sulphurous caverns of Kaldeia both append flame iconography to the traditional Mechanicum cult symbols.

With the blockading of Mezoa by forces loyal to Horus, the warrior-monks of Hermetika have once again taken up arms en masse in support of Mezoa. Well over a hundred of the Hierarchs stand ready among the Mezoan Taghmata to repel any who dare to assault the Forge World, and many more are engaged in hit-and-run warfare in the labyrinthine tunnels of Kaldeia.

**The Suzerain House of Col'Khak**

Newly founded alongside the Forge World of Atar-Median, the Col'Khak Collective were seeded onto the frigid world of Atar-Planitia during the early years of the Great Crusade, itself newly conquered and life-stocked as an agri-world. Locked into the strictures of the Sidon Protocols since their inception, the warriors of Col'Khak have trained to function flawlessly alongside the Atar-Median Taghmata and the Titans of the Legio Atarus, and have benefitted from the continuous supply of Magaera and Styrix pattern armours from the forges of Atar-Median. Such is the level of integration between the new House and its Mechanicum allies that the Archmagos

Prelate, or lead Princeps of a battlegroup to which the warriors of Col'Khak are assigned, is treated with some veneration and granted full authority over the assembled Knights. Indeed, the warriors of Col'Khak have long since adapted many of the rites and practices of the Cult Mechanicus for their own use, treating all technological artefacts as precious relics and heirlooms of the Collective. Many even voluntarily accept extensive levels of augmentation, although aesthetically choose to remain human in overall appearance. It is said that many of the oldest scions of Col'Khak are little more than preserved cerebral matter and life support systems. Outside their Knight armour, they appear as almost animate statuary to some in the most extreme cases, their gilded and argent plated bodies matching an ideal of human form.

After the Dropsite Massacre and the sacrifice of a full demi-Legion of the Legio Atarus and their supporting Knights, the warriors of Col'Khak are clamouring for assignment to mustering maniples of Titans, eager to seek revenge for their brethren slain in the opening moves of Horus' rebellion.

**The Pact of Morbidia**

Originating on Mars during the earliest days of the Age of Strife, House Morbidia began as one of the early rivals of the Houses of Taranis and Zavora for power and the favour of the Omnissiah's priesthood. During those dark and lost centuries however, House Morbidia erred, and for crimes the truth of which has been long suppressed within the vast and ancient datacores of the Red Planet was pronounced excommunicate by the Fabricator-General and condemned. There followed a series of bitter and bloody battles which brought the defiant scions of the House at last to their knees in surrender, their power broken. As the price of their survival, the Household of Morbidia was forced to accede to crippling demands of servitude imposed by their new overlords, not least of all submission to the office of the Fabricator-General, "*…until such times as the stars themselves burned cold…*".

Since that time, the Knight House of Morbidia has formed a cadre of what could almost be described as slave-warriors, its scions condemned to live and die at the will of the Fabricator-General of Mars for the dim and forgotten sins of their forebears many generations before. Never suffered again to become large in number, House Morbidia nevertheless was equipped with Knight armours of the highest standard, and used by their ultimate master to punish those who would dare to stray from the doctrines of Mars, often fighting alongside the dreaded Legio Mortis in such punitive actions. The ranks of the House were also on rare occasions swelled by individual scions of other oath-bound Houses condemned by the Consistorial Courts of Mars for infractions of dogma and tech-heresy, although seldom to sentences so severe as to the House to which they were drafted.

As the Horus Heresy dawned and the Fabricator-General of Mars sided with the Traitors, so too did House Morbidia, most of its number being then scattered throughout the Traitor Expeditionary fleets across the galaxy, assigned to the Legio Mortis and Legio Magna, as well as to independent Dark Mechanicum battlegroups such as the Taghmata Satarael.





**Questoris Knight Magaera '*Orphaeon*'**: In use among the scions of the Grand Order of Hermetika for centuries, *Orphaeon* is renowned for the number of times those who gird themselves in the armour are struck down in the midst of glory. Despite this, competition to claim the armour is fierce, as the enigmatic Hierarchs of Hermetika believe that those who meet their end at the controls of such a perfect expression of the Omnissiah become one with the machine and are elevated to a higher plane of existence.

Unlike many Knight Houses, the warriors of Hermetika place little store in the ostentatious display of personal achievements, instead placing the emphasis of their heraldry on their sworn oaths and duties. *Orphaeon's* pauldron armour carries the symbol of the cogwheel clenched in an armoured fist, the traditional symbol of those Houses sworn to the Sidon Protocols, and the skull and cog wheel of the Mechanicum itself; an icon commonly adopted when the Knights of the Hermetika muster to fight alongside their ancient allies of Mezoa. *Orphaeon's* banner carries the twin lightning bolts of the scion Phokas, displayed discretely alongside the text of the *Hierarch's Litany*. Also prominently displayed on the banner is the flame eternal, the symbol of Mezoa, and the sinuous rune that the Hierarchs of Hermetika use as their emblem, its meaning known only to the inner circle of their dogmatic cult.








**Questoris Knight Styrix '*Rhadamanth*'**: Released from its confinement on Arrian to the control of the Atrax scion Andar Thon for the assault on Numinal, *Rhadamanth,* whose Throne Mechanicum was tainted with aberrant malefic-machine spirits, claimed four confirmed Knight kills during the fighting. Despite the bleak fury of Scion Thon and the other Atrax warriors, for whom defeat and death in battle held perhaps little terror when compared to servitude to Cyclothrathe, *Rhadamanth* was eventually surrounded and destroyed during the retreat of Draykavac's forces, Scion Thon battling on even as his armour was torn apart by Loyalist Knights and Battle-automata.

*Rhadamanth*'s pauldrons bear the symbol of House Atrax, three daggers on a field of crimson, alongside the symbol of the Forge World of Cyclothrathe; the blood-red sigil of that dread Forge more a mark of ownership than a symbol of alliance. *Rhadamanth* is typical of many Knight armours operated by House Atrax in its lack of adornment and personal icons; the dour tech-adepts of Cyclothrathe see little military use in such extravagance and have forbidden the Thrall-Knights of Atrax its use. The upper dorsal plating bears the mark of the Sidon Protocols, though House Atrax suffers under a particularly harsh interpretation of this pact. The attached banner carries the arms of Andar Thon: the House symbol, its colours inverted, adorned with triple lightning bolts. Note that on the banner, the emblem of Cyclothrathe is placed surmounting the personal arms of the scion to indicate the primacy of Forge over House.








**Cerastus Knight-Acheron '*Crucible of Enlightenment*'**: *Crucible of Enlightenment* was part of the Grand Muster of the Hermetika that rallied to the defence of Mezoa. Under the control of Magister Thenus Apeo, the Knight armour was responsible for the slaying of the Makabius scion and renegade hero of the Great Crusade, Sirus Arkhen, gutting his armour, the *Gloriam Eternus*, with a single sweep of its reaper chainfist.

Pictured here at the Grand Muster on Kaldeia, the armour *Crucible of Enlightenment* makes repeated use of the Opus Machina, the symbol of the Sidon Protocols and the seal of Mezoa. Such a display of loyalty to its patron Forge is common among the scions of Hermetika, especially when called to war in defence of their ancient ally. *Crucible of Enlightenment* displays the emblems of both Mezoa and the Hermetika on its banner, alongside an excerpt of theological writing from the unique sub-cult of the Mechanicum followed by the scions of House Hermetika. Curiously, *Crucible of Enlightenment* displays no personal arms for Magister Apeo, other than the name engraved upon the dorsal plating, possibly in deference to the House's submission to Mechanicum control for the duration of the Mezoan siege.









# House Makabius

**Title:** The Imperial Knight Household of Makabius

**Household Grade:** Secundus

**Patent:** Warrant of Imperial Immediacy re-instated by the Imperial Court in late M30. Litterae Patentes duly recorded by the Officio Militaris College of Arms.

**Warden Domain:** Baroda

**Allied Legions/Forge Worlds:** Initial ties to Mezoa, later supplanted by sworn oaths to the Warmaster.

**Allegiance:** Traitoris Perdita

It is one of the forgotten tragedies of the Horus Heresy that the bitter valour of the scions of House Makabius was to lead to both their utter destruction and eternal dishonour. Overshadowed even in death by the greater tragedies of an Imperium wracked by war and betrayal, the warriors of House Makabius were ever at the forefront of battles, eager to prove their courage and determined to forge a greater destiny for themselves. The grim determination in the face of impossible odds that was their hallmark was instrumental in the success of many Imperial campaigns in the northernmost regions of the Imperium, and yet this same determination and implacable desire for greatness was also to see those conquests broken and laid to ruin.

Born of the storm-wracked world of Baroda, mired deep within the clutches of the Grail Abyss, the Household of Makabius began the 30th Millennium in the grip of a slow and inglorious death. Though the vagaries of the unstable warp currents in the Grail Abyss had sheltered the many Knight Households of Baroda from the terrors of Old Night to a large extent, they also held them prisoner on a world whose natural wealth had long since been stripped away. Where once the proud scions of the Houses of Baroda had ridden to battle encased in the finest Knight armours forged by Martian arts, now they strode the battlefields of that world in clumsy parodies of the ancient Knights, belching clouds of crude petro-chem fuel and ill-forged iron plating covering once gleaming ceramite. The ancient histories of House Makabius do not record which of Baroda's Houses first struck against their brothers, taking by force the resources they could no longer claim

by labour, but they do tell of the ferocity of the conflict that followed, of battles that sundered the earth and set the sky ablaze. For centuries the Houses of Baroda thus warred, spending the lives of their scions in the hundreds over the control of the few remaining bore-mines and storm-proof fortress refineries, and extinguishing the bloodlines of many of their number. As each House fell, the victor added its arms and lands to its own, until only one Knight House remained.

The assembled might of House Makabius overran the last holdout of House Wentorth in 831.M30, some decades before Imperial contact, ending almost eight hundred years of bloody civil war in a handful of final hours of internecine destruction. For a few brief years the Makabius alone ruled supreme across the rugged hills and storm-tossed oceans of Baroda, secure in their assumption of what to them seemed a position of daunting power. With control of the remaining Knight armours on the planet, and the incorporation of many of the defeated scions of the other Houses, the ranks of House Makabius swelled. Ritual combat for rank and position became commonplace and the ruling elite looked hungrily to the stars seeking fresh conquests. However, such expansion was denied to them by the nature of the Grail Abyss and their own degenerate technology, that was until the Imperium arrived at Baroda.

The Imperial fleet that chanced across Baroda was a small one by the standards of the Great Crusade, barely a hundred void craft with only a few dozen regiments of the Excertus and a thousand-strong company of the Imperial Fists, yet it put to shame all the vaunted power the Makabius had gathered unto themselves. Conditioned by centuries of war to expect only violence from those not of their Household, and fearing the power of any force that could traverse the empty void, the Makabius launched what few long-neglected orbital defences they had. The pitiful handful of long obsolete missiles and ancient servitor-guided drones were swatted aside by the Imperial fleet's guns and the skies of Baroda darkened under the blanket of drop ships, disgorging an army on the lightning-scoured plains outside the fortified cities of the Makabius the likes of which Baroda had never seen.

Despite the overpowering force on display, the Lord Martial of the House, Sirus Lenthale, refused to simply bow to Imperial authority. In an act typical of the grim pride of his House, the Lord Martial issued a challenge to the Imperial Fists Seneschal—an open battle to decide the fate of Baroda; the pride of his House against that of the VII$^{th}$ Legion. Keen to avoid the wholesale destruction of a newly discovered Knight House, as well as the need to engage in a protracted campaign of pacification, the commander of the Imperial Fists readily agreed. The two sides met in the midst of the ever-present storms that wracked the world, on Arbren Moor, the bright heraldry of the VII$^{th}$ Legion's Fellblades and Terminators arrayed against the drab, clanking, steam-belching veterans of Makabius' long civil war. In a brief, horrifyingly one-sided battle, the Legiones Astartes destroyed the Lord Martial's hand-picked force of ancient, ill-maintained and under-equipped Knights, in many cases blasting them apart with short range demolisher cannon fire or dismembering them in massed Terminator assault as the warriors of Makabius refused to surrender while they could still move and fight. For this, the Imperial Fists praised the valour and determination of their foes, even as they granted them their hard fought for and bloody end.

In the aftermath of what became known as the Battle of Arbren Moor, House Makabius and the world of Baroda swore loyalty to the Imperium. Along with the traditional rights and privileges of an Imperial Knight Household, they also gained the patronage of the Forge World of Mezoa, which undertook to re-equip the battered Household with Knight armours worthy of an Imperial Household. However, this process was not to be completed overnight. Not only did the forge-fanes of Mezoa have to construct the required armours, a painstaking process of much ritual, as befitted such a complex expression of the Machine God's will, but they also had to transport them across the daunting Grail Abyss to Baroda. As a result Baroda and the Makabius languished for many decades in a state of neglect, unable to join the glorious Great Crusade of the Emperor's armies across the stars and redeem their humbling defeat, yet forever tormented by news of grand victories won on distant worlds by other generals and Houses.

As new Knight armours were presented to the Household by the forge wrights of Mezoa, fierce competition arose to claim them and many of those who triumphed in such contests chose to join the Emperor's armies that passed by Baroda in small bands, seeking glory far from their world. The Lord Martial and the ruling body of the Household, the Magna Concilium, imposed a ban on taking up the role of Questoris without the approval of a scion's immediate liege, hoping to stem the tide and keep their grip on the House's slowly growing military power. Yet this only served to see those young Makabius scions desperate to take part in the shaping of the new Imperium turn Freeblade and abandon their House.

Out amongst the stars of the expanding northern borders of the Imperium, many of the armies of the Emperor boasted a few errant scions of House Makabius amongst their ranks. Whilst these sons and daughters of Baroda often lacked the numbers to fight as a massed unit, they earned fearsome reputations as shock troops and siege-breakers. Always first to volunteer to spearhead an assault and fighting with reckless courage in the face of overwhelming enemy forces, they were often known as the '*Forlorn Hope*' to the Great Crusade armies they fought beside, a gesture of respect and a dark comment on the value some commanders put on the wandering scions of House Makabius. Despite the scorn their actions earned in some circles, moving as they did from army to army in the search for glory in battle, the scions of House Makabius fearlessly led Imperial assaults where others balked, buying fleeting glory with their blood and lives. Such was the case during the pacification of Skarron, where it was the actions of Markan Hrotham —scion of the Makabius— that turned the tide of battle, laying low several of the skittering multi-legged automata that defended the debased forge-crypt, and turning what seemed like a rare defeat for the Luna Wolves force into a resounding victory. The deed propelled him into favour with Ezekyle Abaddon, First Captain of the XVI$^{th}$ Legion, and earned him a place within the Expeditionary force's upper echelons, many of whom Markan spoke to at length regarding the untapped potential of his neglected Household. This was an elevation which in turn stoked Markan's already overweening hubris and lust for power.

Bled of their best and brightest over the course of the century and a half of rebuilding and exodus that followed Arbren Moor, a rot had set in amongst many of the scions of the Makabius who remained on Baroda. Murmurs of discontent spread further with the dawning of the 31$^{st}$ Millennium, as other Knight Households rose to positions of renown and importance in the Imperium while the Makabius were stymied in near-exile by the slow trickle of new armours that

Mezoa managed to ferry through the wild space of the Grail Abyss. Tension with other nearby Knight Houses grew, in particular with the recently rediscovered Household of Vyronii on Dametus III/II, which was seen by the Makabius as a rival both in Imperial favour and its influence over the few inhabited outposts of humanity in the Grail Abyss. Only the lack of available armour suitable for off-world campaigns among the forces on Baroda averted an outbreak of hostilities between the two Households, such was the avarice with which the Lord Martial and the Magna Concilium looked upon the estates of the Vyronii.

Into this strife Markan Hrotham returned in glory to Baroda in the months before what was to become the Isstvan III Atrocity, accompanied by many of his brethren who had left their home world decades before. He bore with him sealed missives from the Warmaster, who secretly sought to court the loyalty of House Makabius with promises of future glory and revenge on those they perceived to have slighted them. Though rebuffed by the Magna Concilium and Lord Martial, who feared the implications of Markan's ambition, Markan found support among the younger scions of the Makabius, many of whom yearned for the same fame Markan and his companions had enjoyed. With the support of these members of the House, Markan forced the old guard from power, through means both fair and foul. With the recalcitrant members of the House eliminated or driven into exile, he took the title Lord Protector and secretly pledged his House to the Warmaster's personal service. In return, agents of the Warmaster contrived to divert shipments of Knight armour and other armaments to Baroda, an action that served to both reinforce and bind the Makabius to Horus' hidden cause as well as to weaken possible Loyalist elements on the front lines of the Great Crusade.

On Baroda, Lord Protector Markan quickly issued a summons to those of his kin off-world with the various fleets of the Great Crusade, covertly gathering them to their home world to await Horus' call to arms. By the time of the battles in the Isstvan System and the opening salvoes of Horus' rebellion, Markan had gathered the vast majority of House Makabius to Baroda to receive the gifts of Horus' largesse. However, not all of his returning kin were willing to countenance the price of Horus' favour, many having forged binding ties with now Loyalist elements among the Great Crusade fleets. Adopting the title of '*Knights of the Covenant*', recalling the oaths of allegiance they had sworn to the Emperor, these warriors took up arms and seized the Black Tower, Baroda's astropathic sanctum. In a brief and brutal conflict that was a grim echo of the Isstvan massacres, the Lord Protector led both those Knights loyal to him and the dark emissaries of the Warmaster to destroy the Loyalists, whose sacrifice would go unknown until long after the war.

Only a few months later, in 006.M31, a great war fleet arrived in orbit of Baroda, dark and terrible of aspect. As the Knights of House Makabius assembled, ready to join the army of the Warmaster, they were instead confronted by Mortarion—lord of the Death Guard, fresh from the corpse-strewn plains of Isstvan. Granted the Warmaster's authority, Mortarion took command of House Makabius and all its assets, ordering Baroda stripped of all remaining resources, both mineral and human, in order to supply his fleets and assigned the warriors of the Knight House as shock assault troops for his grim Legion. Lord Protector Markan was summoned to attend the Primarch personally, never to return to his brethren, though his gene-seal countersigns all of Mortarion's decrees to the Household and his personal Knight armour, its throne chamber sealed from the outside, was sighted in several battles during the Heresy fighting with a measured savagery. Lacking Markan's direct leadership, the only option for the Makabius was Dark Compliance, despite the dire reputation of the XIV$^{th}$ and the rumoured fate of other auxiliary units in the wake of their campaigns. As the warriors of House Makabius left Baroda behind, its gutted carcass remained as a grim example of the Reaper's methods, all their dreams of glory subsumed instead into Mortarion's campaigns of genocidal destruction.

### Materiél Strength

In the earliest years of House Makabius' incorporation into the Imperium, it fielded few Knight armours considered battle-worthy, most of those armours that had survived the Age of Strife and Baroda's decline were barely functional, mis-repaired amalgams of several different machines. What House Baroda did not lack was warriors or experience —most of the surviving scions were veterans of the civil strife that had engulfed Baroda for centuries, including those bitter warriors incorporated into the Makabius from fallen Houses— yet without armour, these warriors were forced to wait out many of the battles of the Great Crusade in near exile on that world.

As new Knight armours began to arrive on Baroda from the Forge World of Mezoa, the Makabius entered a period of slow rebuilding, and by 000.M31 had received nearly a hundred new Knight armours, including several of the more advanced Cerastus pattern. However, due to the inherent difficulties of warp travel through the treacherous Empyrean currents of the Grail Abyss, these armours arrived in small consignments via Explorator cruisers rather



than larger Mechanicum arks, which the Mezoans would not risk in the region. Worse, once bonded to a Makabius scion, the Knight in question often left Baroda at the first opportunity, either alone or as small Households, to join the vast forces of the Great Crusade.

Thus, by the time of Markan's return to his home world, barely two dozen fully equipped Knights were present as its garrison, and these were mostly controlled by members of the old guard and the Magna Concilium, whilst the vast majority of House Makabius' strength was scattered in small contingents across dozens of Expeditionary fleets.

With the instalment of Markan Hrotham as Lord Protector of Baroda, the House of Makabius cut its tenuous ties to the Forge World of Mezoa, and began a covert relationship of supply via the Warmaster's agents, whose sources not even they truly knew. Within a few short months, their ranks had swollen to nearly two hundred fully equipped Knights, and a sizable host of retainer troops and support war machines. Most likely these arms were largely diverted from shipments intended for other sources, and it is notable that several convoys of munitions and armour bound for Damaetus III/II vanished in the months prior to events at Isstvan.





**Questoris Knight Errant '*Black Saker*'**: Claimed by the Scion Bendrik in the aftermath of the assault on the Black Tower of Baroda, its previous claimant was slain by Bendrik after she declared for the Loyalist cause. Bendrik himself is listed as having been slain in battle only months later, when Mortarion ordered the warriors of Makabius to force a breach in the stubborn Loyalist defence of Dominica Minor.

Following the austere Barodan heraldic tradition, *Black Saker* bears the arms of House Makabius, the twin warhammers set over a red star, set on its left pauldron, while the right shows the barbed bar set on a bend-sinister that denotes that the scion currently claiming the armour is a member of the Implacable Order. The armourial shield and banner display the campaign badge adopted by the House after pledging itself to the service of Horus, the House arms set beside the Eye of Horus, party-per-pale. As is traditional amongst the Knights of Baroda, Scion Bendrik's personal arms, a crowned skull in black, feature only on the banner. *Black Saker*, along with the majority of House Makabius' armour, retains the symbol of the Imperialis on its armoured cowl despite the House pledging its allegiance to the Warmaster.





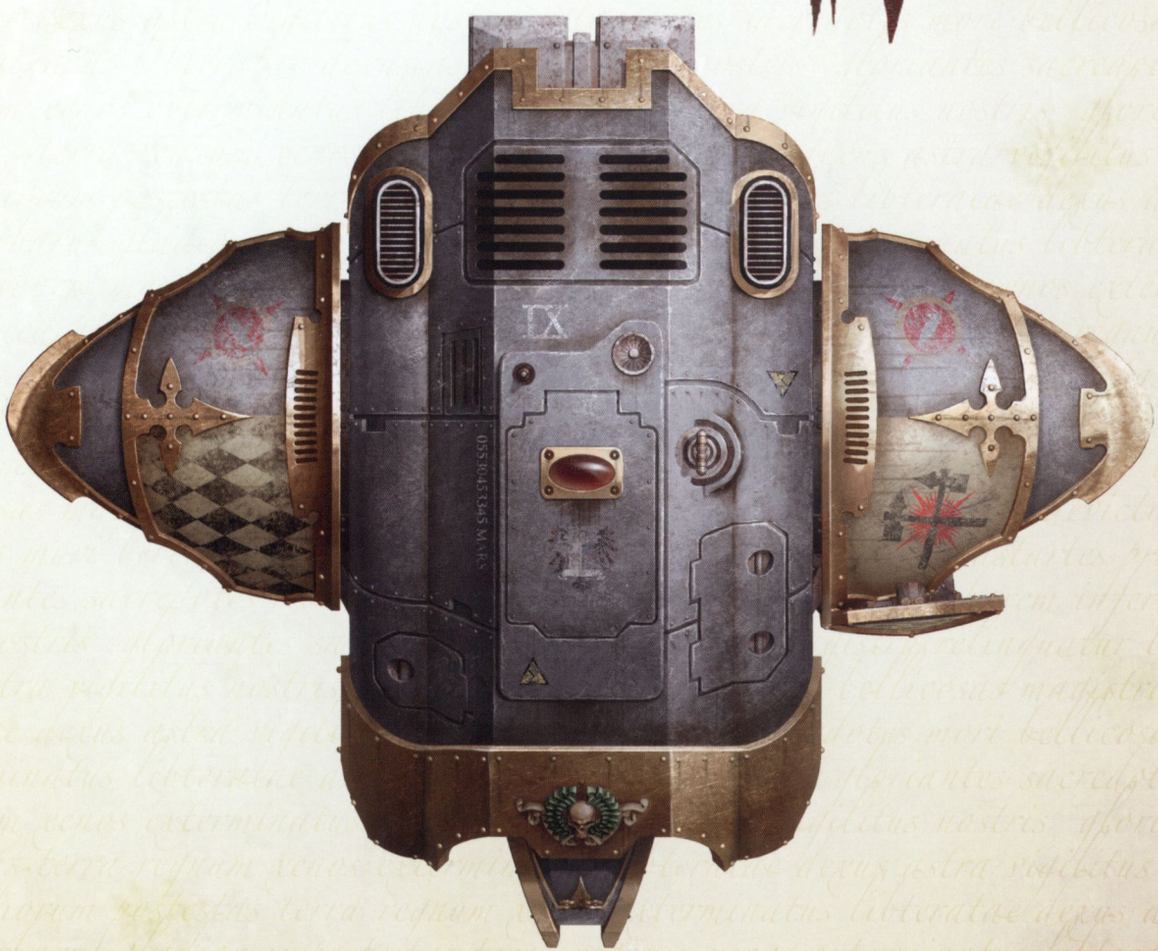




**Cerastus Knight-Lancer '*Vindex Magnar*'**: Lauded for its role in the defence of Akre Primaris during the Great Crusade, where the armour's title was granted it by the Primarch Guilliman himself, *Vindex Magnar* was to gain a far darker renown in later years, notably for its role in the genocidal assault on Lascal, where hundreds of the bodies left to rot were rendered unrecognisable by the tread of its metal feet.

As with other Knight armours used by the Household of Makabius, the markings shown on *Vindex Magnar* follow the strict rules of heraldry that evolved on Baroda during the Age of Strife. These rules emphasise unity of purpose and submission to the will of the House over the flamboyant display of personal icons and honour markings. With their induction into Mortarion's dread fleet and the innumerable atrocities the House was later party to, this tradition appears to have gained much favour, and by the later years of the Horus Heresy, many Barodan Knight armours feature so few identifying marks, they are difficult to tell apart. *Vindex Magnar* is shown bearing the arms of the scion Julius, the crossed black swords upon the banner, and the diamond patterned pauldron that signifies his role as an Aucteller.








# House Vyronii

**Title:** Ancient and Resolute Order of the Knight House of Vyronii

**Household Grade:** Secundus

**Patent:** Autonomous, Warrant of Ancient Domain and Arms (recognised 891.M30, ratified 904.M31).

**Warden Domain:** Damaetus III/II, de facto system rights recognised upon Compliance.

**Cognomen:** Wardens of Felweather, 'God-eaters' (informal, self-referential).

**Allied Legions/Forge Worlds:** No formal bonds, reciprocal ties established with the Forge World of Mezoa.

**Allegiance:** Fedelitas Tenax

Hailing from the Knight World of Damaetus III/II, House Vyronii was allied to the Imperium in the bitter war against the Traitors of Warmaster Horus. One of the most ancient of Knight Houses in the Segmentum Obscurus, the Vyronii shed so much of their noble blood during the Age of Strife that their numbers and resources were perilously depleted by the closing of the Great Crusade and the outbreak of galactic civil war. Determined not to become mute spectators to their own destiny, the nobles of House Vyronii swore they would stand firm against the arch-Traitor, or else perish.

The nobles of House Vyronii are noted for their uniquely sorrowful mien, a manner born of the knowledge that their ancestors' five thousand year vigil against the terrors of Old Night might be rendered utterly meaningless or obliterated entirely at the hands of a warrior who was at one time the Emperor's most beloved son. It is a demeanour bred into the bloodline by the lonely, forlorn moon orbiting a bloated emerald green gas giant the Vyronii call home. Damaetus III/II, found in a star system at the junction of several minor but stable warp routes, is a world of deep, twisted forests and mist-shrouded swamps, above which towers the imposing Felweather Keep, a vast fortress edifice erected when the planet was settled from the corpse of their founding colony ark.

When first discovered, Damaetus III/II was found to harbour a vast array of autochthonic life forms. Its dark forests were populated largely by cephalopod-mammalian hybrid forms, many of prodigious size, lurking in the trackless swamps or nested in the hollow boughs of colossal yet rotting trees, some of which were possessed of a malevolent, alien intelligence. These most malign creatures were capable of communication and demanded obeisance from the newcomers, like hungering chthonic deities from Mankind's forgotten pre-history, just as they had from other races and travellers that had happened upon their world before, and now whose mutilated remains were sunk beneath the loam. The Knight-colonists were of a different temper and power though, and an age of war ensued, the settlers drawing upon the STC system at the heart of Felweather Keep to battle the hideous creatures that would feast upon them. When battle was joined, the swamp-seas boiled and the vine-wrapped forests burned black as the two sides fought, the emerald skies turning to a night that lingered for decades until, at length, the god-things were cast down or driven into the most remote depths of the trackless wastes to become the object of noble quests by Knights yet unborn.

By then, Mankind's golden age was at an end and an era of damnation was upon the galaxy. Throughout the long darkness of Old Night, the Knights of Damaetus stood firm against countless invasions, many by species not encountered since and which must remain nameless, others by infamously familiar enemies such as the piratical slaver-caste of the Eldar and brutal Orkoid marauders. One strain of xenos in particular turned its gaze upon the Damaetus system with deadly consequence—the Mitu Conglomerate, under whose long shadow vast swathes of the Coronid Deeps had already fallen.

For many lonely centuries, the Knights of Damaetus stood resolute against the hated Mitu. Though they cared not for conventional invasion as such, their periodic attentions brought unspeakable destruction, and when a fresh wave of alien horror descended from the emerald skies, the noble keeps built across the surface of Damaetus III/II were reduced to ruins and ashes, and soon even the mighty Felweather Keep was itself irrevocably wounded and riven. Still the Vyronii would not give ground, and it became so that even the most shattered ruin would still be defended by a noble who refused to foreswear his oaths or abandon his people, most of whom were forced to take shelter amidst the ruined, overgrown fortresses when the nightmare came. So far as the masters of House Vyronii were concerned, they stood alone in the ruins of a galaxy lost to xenos domination, the last humans alive. Eventually, with barely two hundred functional Knight armours in their service where once three times that number had been theirs, their supplies all but exhausted and not a single fortress undamaged, House Vyronii stood at the edge of the precipice. Resigned to their inevitable doom, they renewed their oaths and took their places to await the attack all thought would finish them; in what they had every reason to believe was the death vigil of humanity itself.

But the doom of the Vyronii never came. There was nothing but silence in the heavens until, at length, a new star appeared in the firmament. An unfamiliar contrail speared downwards to the surface of Damaetus III/II and the craft set down amidst the forests, having blasted a landing zone clear of the dense undergrowth. The Knights of House Vyronii strode out to meet it, suspicious but ready to sell their lives dearly should the end be revealed. It was not to be however, for the craft was a Stormbird of the 1st Legion, the Dark Angels, and represented an outrider of the Great Crusade in the region, which was even now piercing deeper into the surrounding void having scoured the stars of the xenos Mitu Conglomerate.

Had providence afforded them the luxury, the masters of the Vyronii might have considered themselves betrayed by cruel fate, denied both the glory of a last stand against and the vindication of victory over their ancient foe. The enemy they and generations of their forebears had shed so much blood simply to hold at bay was gone, exterminated with almost contemptuous ease as the Imperium swept through the Segmentum Obscurus. But instead, the Vyronii were carried up in the fire and fury of the Great Crusade, bound to a debt of liberation they believed they could never repay.

The Vyronii took their place amongst the great hosts of Mankind, adhering to the established chains of command, albeit never fully committing themselves to the ambitions and intrigues that came with them, and always maintaining a respectful and honourable distance born of countless years of isolation. They served alongside the Dark Angels Legion that had found them, then later with the Word Bearers and the Imperial Fists Legions in turn, as well as a dozen Excertus Imperialis commands. They gained great honour and the respect of their peers, if a reputation for melancholy and withdrawn reserve. Beneath the harsh light of alien suns, the nobles of the House saw their armour for the dull ceramite it truly was, not the shining emerald green it had appeared under the reflected light of the lambent gas giant about which their home world slowly spun. So it was that Crusading scions ordered their Sacristans to apply emerald green heraldry to their armours in memory of their home, a livery that soon became established as theirs by sole right by the Officio Militaris College of Arms as the Great Crusade ground inexorably onwards.

A period of assimilation and rebuilding began whilst the bulk of the Household was away fighting amid the stars, during which delegation after delegation came before Grand Master Jahk of the Vyronii and his Court. The visitors' shock at the decrepit state of the holdings was impossible to conceal as envoys came from the domains of the Mechanicum, including Mezoa and the recently established Cyclothrathine Holdfast, both reasonably close to the Damaetus system, but also from Forge Worlds much more distant and illustrious such as Lucius. All desired that the House swear themselves as feudal subjects, and in return offered to replace the ancient and oft-repaired Knight armours with newly-minted war machines of more advanced and potent classes. These would-be benefactors desired more than service though, for they coveted the ancient crystal data-stacks buried beneath Felweather Keep. Scornful of the undisguised avarice of some and the strange dogma of others, Jahk sent the envoys from his Court on the pretext of pondering their many solicitations.



Even as the Grand Master considered his House's future, those nobles serving in the armies of the Great Crusade were winning untold glories across the stars. Serving across five different Expeditionary fleets in the closing decades of the Great Crusade alone, the Crusading Knights of House Vyronii fought with distinction in the costly Orthrus Extermination, the Kusarikku Nebula Suppression and the Calistaria Compliance campaign, word of each victory bolstering Jahk's position with regards to the pacts he must eventually enter into with the greater Mechanicum, whose emissaries still pressed for an audience many years now since they had first appeared. The wars fought out amongst the stars, however, garnered not just honour, but an ever more pressing need to replace those Knight armours lost in battle.

The point of decision eventually arrived, and Jahk determined that to survive, his House must finally align itself to a Forge World. Expediency determined his choice and he settled with Cyclothrathe, whose offers of materiel aid had been by far the most generous of those received. Little did the Vyronii nobles know that the hour they had picked for such an allegiance was an ill-chosen one, for it was the year 005.M31 and unknown to them, already events were unfolding at Isstvan III that would plunge the Imperium into civil war.

The act of bonding between Knight World and Forge World was to take place on Damaetus III/II, before the crumbling and vine-swathed Felweather Keep. Those scions assigned to the Great Crusade who could be contacted had been recalled, and mustering in the landing zone first blasted by the 1st Legion's Stormbird years before, almost the entire Household awaited the coming of one of the High Magos of Cyclothrathe and his honour guard of House Ærthegn Knights.



An hour before the appointed time, a lander plummeted from the skies belching flames and boiling black smoke from a blasted thruster. It bore the crowned skull emblem of the Vyronii, and before its engines had even cycled down, its access ramp lowered on stuttering hydraulics and a lone, limping figure emerged. The assembled nobles recognised the figure immediately, for it was Gios, eldest son of Grand Master Jahk. Gios limped across the landing zone and fell to his knees before his father's Cerastus Lancer, one word upon his bloody lips – "*Betrayal*". Thus was House Vyronii unknowingly plunged into the fires of Horus' rebellion.

The delegation from Cyclothrathe was not an emissary bearing gifts but a strike force, loyal not to Mars but to the Warmaster, and if not for the desperate bravery of Gios, its surprise attack might have been overwhelming and unstoppable, but instead now the Vyronii were roused to war. The battle that followed was brief, but amongst the most destructive and desperate ever fought by the Knights of Damaetus and saw the death of the old Grand Master at the hands of a murderous storm-grey Cyclothrathine Knight Aucteller. In the end, the Taghmata landing force had been driven off but at a terrible cost, with nearly a quarter of the Vyronii fighting force shattered and broken.

In the aftermath of his father's ignominious death, it would fall to the wounded Gios to lead House Vyronii, an oath he swore in addition to promising to exact bitter vengeance upon his father's killer. But alone, the Vyronii had no chance to strike back against a sovereign Forge World, and when news of the attack reached the Imperial authorities, it was met with spurious counter-claim, forestalling action, while the rising tide of fear and war soon drowned out the Vyronii's call for justice in an affair which to many seemed a bloody squabble between equally eccentric and partisan forces. Only on the Forge World of Mezoa did they find their outrage echoed and answered, and where an alliance with Cyclothrathe had been betrayed, a similar pact with Mezoa was hastily agreed in need and the thirst for vengeance, although the Vyronii would not give up their independence in formal submission, even when faced with the very real threat of destruction.

When the war came in earnest to the Cyclops Cluster, for the Vyronii the lines had already been drawn in blood long before. To the Emperor they owed a debt that could never be repaid; even though every life they had was laid down to meet it and His enemies were those of the Vyronii no matter the odds. That the hated Magos of Cyclothrathe would soon openly declare for the Warmaster would only confirm to the Vyronii that theirs was the just cause, and the Knights of House Vyronii would stand bloodied but resolute amongst the ranks of the Loyalists.

### Materiél Strength

At the time of the coming of the Warmaster to the Coronid Deeps, House Vyronii was grievously understrength. Its numbers stood at just below 100 operational Knight armours, predominantly of the Cerastus and Questoris classes. As a consequence of the former Grand Master's reluctance to forge bonds with the Mechanicum, few of its ancient armours had been replaced and almost every one was a relic of the Dark Age of Technology and a veteran of the wars of the Age of Strife, repaired and rebuilt countless times. As such, the machine-spirit residing within each was possessed of a singular anima, at once bellicose and brooding, and this demeanour was inevitably transmitted to the scion pilots via their integration with the Thrones Mechanicum. Only very recently, in the aftermath of the vicious attack by the Cyclothrathe and its consequent pact with the Forge World of Mezoa, has House Vyronii received limited re-armament from the Mechanicum. In particular Grand Master Gios, who was mortally wounded in his brave mission to bring news of the Warmaster's betrayal to his father ahead of the treacherous Cyclothrathe Taghmata host, was gifted by the Magos of Mezoa with a precious Questoris Knight Magaera, dubbed '*Dei-phagia*' in reference to the Knight House's extermination of the autochthonic god-things of Damaetus III/II. The armour's artificer-wrought systems not only saved his life, but rendered him all but immortal in a manner not unlike a hero of the Legiones Astartes interred within the sarcophagus of a Dreadnought.

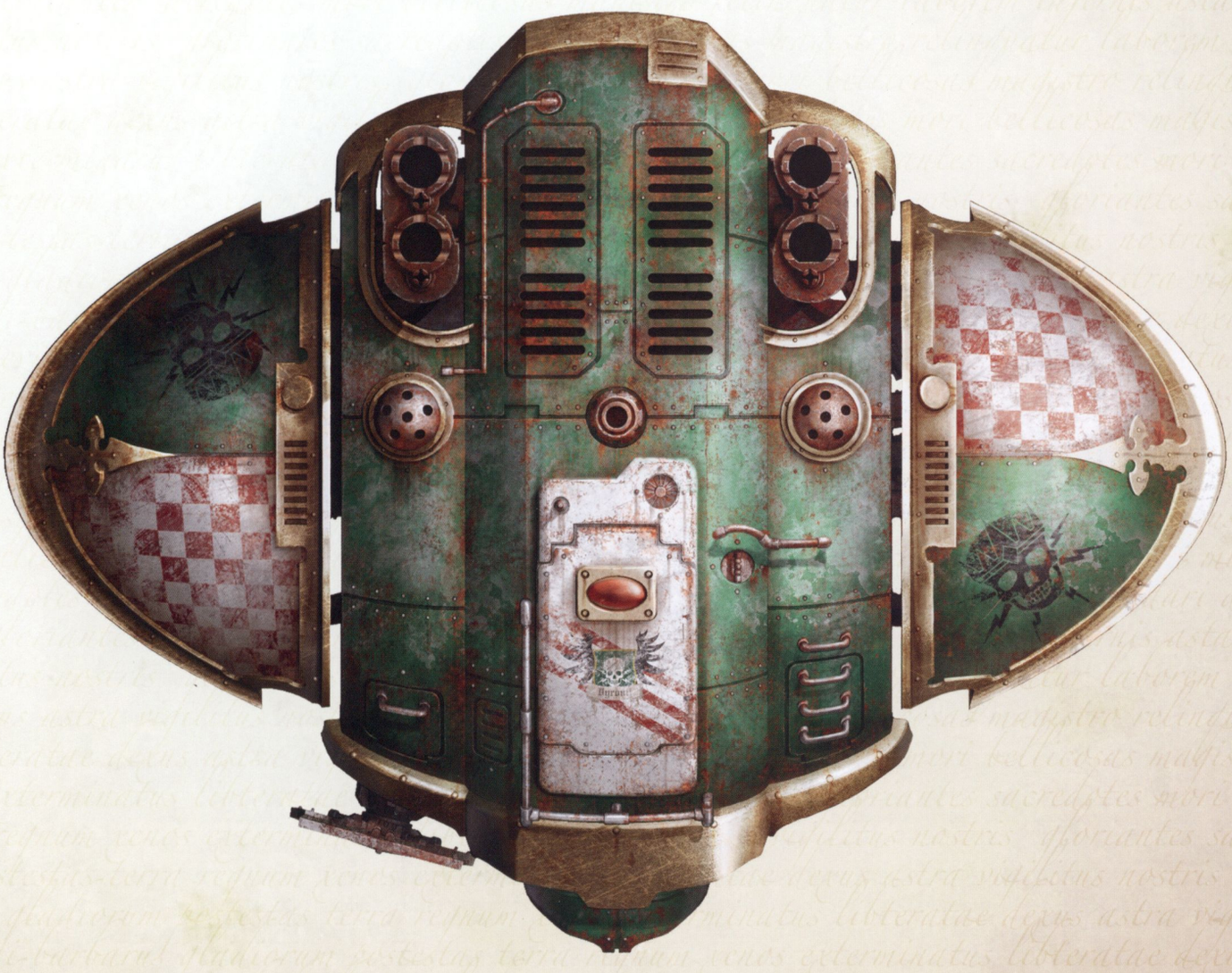
At the time of the Warmaster's march on the Coronid Deeps, the bulk of the House's scions were concentrated once more on Damaetus III/II, with a handful of other Households serving in far distant Expeditionary fleets. This included those House Vyronii Knights which were known to be fighting at the Siege of Sebundapor alongside a chapter of Blood Angels on Feron III, while contact with those Knights serving with the Death Eagles Millennial of the Emperor's Children Legion was lost around the time of the Isstvan III Atrocity, and it would be many years until it was re-established. As war gripped the Coronid Deeps, the Vyronii would not shirk their duty as exposed as the Damaetus system was, deploying Households to bolster Imperial force concentrations at Lascal, Manachea and Port Maw, while at least one Household is known to have been trapped behind the closing blockade of Mezoa before the reaper's shadow fell across the Cyclops Cluster. Of the remaining scions of Vyronii, perhaps no more than 50 in number, each stood to defend their home world against the doom which now came for it across the blackness of space with a resolution born of generations of such dark watches against the horrors of the night.




**Questoris Knight-Paladin '*Artemisia*'**: At the outbreak of the war in the Coronid Deeps, the *Artemisia* was deployed to the twelfth moon of Sagathi X to support the 1233rd Cohort of the Solar Auxilia in suppression operations against xenos raiders. Despite suffering significant casualties in their routing of the reaver warbands, the entire force was recalled to Manachea, where *Artemisia* took part in the defence of Hive Ullan.

*Artemisia* is depicted here bearing the colours of House Vyronii and the personal heraldry of Scion Jasstan – '*the Thrice-Slain*'. The three diagonal red bands on the shoulder-mounted tilting shield (inverted in the honour banner) denote the three dire wounds Scion Jasstan has received in service to his House. Other elements include the crowned skull born by all scions of the Vyronii as the emblem of their House, the fortified tower icon denoting a battle honour won in defence of Felweather Keep, and the red on white chequered field denoting Jasstan's position as chancellor to the High Court of the Knights of Vyronii, an ancient and honourable office within the Household.



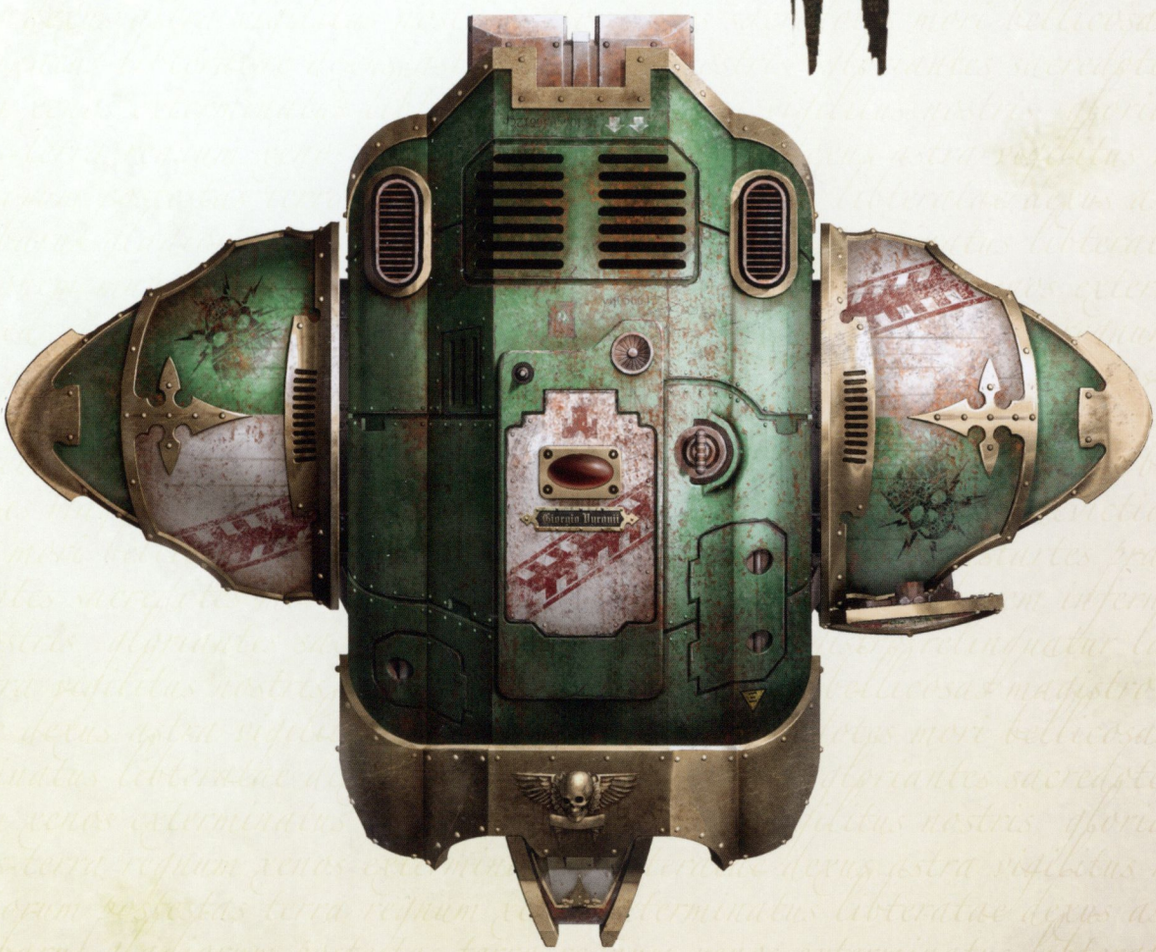





**Cerastus Knight-Lancer '*Apsinthos*'**: The favoured armour of the House Vyronii Scion Elsbet Vorr, *Apsinthos* is known to have participated in the charge against the Traitor Legio Tempestus Reaver class Battle Titan '*Raxvalian*' at Hive Ilium. Though successful in laying low the mighty *Raxvalian*, the fate of *Apsinthos* and Elsbet Vorr remains unknown, but it is likely her mortal remains are entombed within the rubble of the shattered hive.

*Apsinthos* is depicted bearing the personal heraldry of Elsbet Vorr over the emerald and white of the Vyronii. The most prominent feature of this heraldry is the jagged red diagonal band (referred to as a '*raguly bend sinister*' by the Adepts Pursuivant of the Officio Militaris College of Arms), signifying a hardship of a particularly challenging nature overcome by the bearer. In the case of Elsbet Vorr, this relates to an attack by one of the abominable autochthonic xenos of Damaetus III/II, during which Vorr was subjected to wave after wave of psionic domination before throwing off the being's god-like will and slaying the vile creature upon *Apsinthos*' lance.






# House Orhlacc

**Title:** The Dread and Wise House of Orhlacc

**Household Grade:** Secundus

**Patent:** Warrant of Imperial Immediacy issued by the Imperial Court in 833.M30. Litterae Patentes duly recorded by the Officio Militaris College of Arms under rights feudal attested and sponsored at the behest of the 1st (Dark Angels) Legion.

**Warden Domain:** Dark Haven (Prime), Wychval (Secondary)

**Cognomen:** The Knights of the Manticore

**Allied Legions/Forge Worlds:** Right of support and succour granted to the House by an act of Imperial Warrant Bellicose by Lord Commander Suleiman Grimm, 7th Expeditionary Fleet. Further lesser treaties of mutual exchange and accord ratified with deputations of the Forge Worlds of Mezoa, Kalibrax and Lucius.

**Allegiance:** Fedelitas Constantus

The history of the strange and some would say sinister Knight House of Orhlacc is a well-documented one, at least in its generalities, with highly detailed records surviving with the House's Sacristans and Lexmechanics through the ages. It was founded during the latter part of the period of humanity's expansion across the stars, the starting point of its founding ark's journey being recorded as originating from what is now known as the Forge World of Lucius. The House's *Chronicle of Founding* holds that a lonely, shadowed world teeming with strange but abundant life had been discovered deep within a mineral rich but otherwise barren region of the void, and in order to exploit and

colonise this region for humanity, it had been selected to become a Knight World. And so the House of Orhlacc first came into being, and its domain known for reasons of literal truth as well as poetic observation came to be called Dark Haven.

This place was indeed almost supra-abundant in life, but within days of the colonising ark's planetfall, a terrible truth had been discovered; the fruits of this benighted world were inimically poisonous to man. The shadowed world was at the very edge of its aged star's habitable zone, and life there had flourished millions of years ever before it had on distant Terra. Here the dominant form of that life was akin to fungus-like organisms, but infinitely more varied and complex than that of most worlds, forming a planet-spanning web of life. Its patterns varied from towering pseudo-coral-like structures kilometres high, comprising billions of microscopic creatures, which overshadowed the land and covered the seas, stealing the light, to colossal, ambulatory predators whose venom could sear ceramite and eat through plasteel. All of it was to humanity virulently and fatally toxic when consumed, even given the most stringent methods available for its processing. Dark Haven was a death world, misjudged as a paradise of life.

Undeterred, the colonisation went ahead; keeps were built into the few jutting mountain ranges which fought to clear the vast living canopy, attempts were made to clear-cut for settlements and introduce off-world agriculture, supplies were rationed, and additional Magos Biologis (this is used here as a term of convenience, shrouded as the truth of such things is by time) brought in to attempt to address the difficulties with the certain hope of an eventual solution to the planet's toxicity. During its founding decades progress was slow, and life for the settlers a continuous struggle for survival, but one which they held at bay, at least until the coming of the Age of Strife. With exterior contact and the chance of resupply lost, Dark Haven should have been doomed and as things were, matters rapidly worsened for the dozen Knight Households and their retainers who had made it their cause to dominate the strange world. Soon famine was the enemy, as stockpiled supplies dwindled or became mysteriously tainted. As if sensing the humans' weakness, the planetary ecology itself seemed to turn on them in a violent spurt of aggressive growth unprecedented in its suddenness or speed, and whole settlements were choked and overrun in a matter of hours by berserk fungal growth, their inhabitants slain by ravaging predators or consumed from within by parasitic life. Knightly keeps were only preserved by great trenches and pits filled with volatiles and turned into walls of fire, and the continuous counter-attack of the Knights themselves against the forest and the monstrous creatures within it. Soon, as matters worsened, the Knight Houses of Dark Haven began to turn on each other for supplies and to assuage their hunger, and it is said that the most unspeakable acts were forced on those who would survive.

This age of violence and decay would last for centuries and should ultimately have been the death of the Knight colony, regardless of the tenacity and bravery of its scions, save for the actions of the House of Orhlacc. This House, accounted as but one of the settlement's minor Households —renowned more for its learning and the skill of its Sacristans rather than its might— had offered sanctuary to the Magos Biologis enclave stranded on the planet once the great decay had begun, just as others had turned against them. Within Orhlacc Keep, the Magos and their acolytes had laboured long, obsessively pursuing a solution to the problem they had been given when they had first been assigned to the world, even as darkness swallowed and separated the Knight Houses and the monstrous biosphere closed in. The solution when it at last came was a radical one; rather than adapt the world to humanity, they adapted humanity to Dark Haven, and House Orhlacc was their canvass. It would take generations and many tragedies before their work bore fruit, but they were successful, and as the other Houses of Dark Haven dwindled and in some cases died out entirely, the Orhlacc waxed strong and slowly multiplied. Soon they fought not simply to survive but to dominate, and many of the other surviving Households looked on them as saviours and joined them through alliances of blood, while others who saw them as enemies —as something no longer fully human— perished. Within a dozen generations, only House Orhlacc and its kin remained as stewards and masters of this shadowed and deadly world.

**The Pact of Angels**

Aside from its inherent hostility, Dark Haven had lived up to its name during the Age of Strife, and through this long era of trouble and torment it had endured without being subjected to serious outside attack. Such xenos and human marauder traffic which did rarely find their way to the world suffered as badly from the local environment as they did from the bellicose Knight House's resistance, while the Orks, long a menace to the worlds of the Cyclops Cluster, avoided the planet as if it was a profound anathema to them. As a result, the House of Orhlacc's dominion of their world went all but unchallenged, while affairs of honour between them and the constant battle to master their home world served to hone their fighting skills.

When the forerunners of the Great Crusade first contacted Dark Haven, it was by accident, but they found their vox-hails readily answered in ancient and formal courtesy, and Imperial emissaries were both impressed as well as somewhat disturbed

**The Blood of Orhlacc**

The transfiguration of the House of Orhlacc was the work of Biologis gene-wrights over generations, and has since become a self-sustaining and stable sub-type of humanity, whose divergence borders as a qualification of abhumanity all of its own—a stigma thus far avoided by the population of Dark Haven. The bloodlines of Orhlacc are uniformly gaunt and pale, with a feral look by common observation and striking, darkly golden eyes adapted to the dimness of their world. They shun strong light and possess a phenomenal tolerance to toxins that rivals even that of a Legiones Astartes, but as a striking quirk of their adaptation to their poisonous world, can gain no sustenance from most forms of food save animal protein and the fungal provender of Dark Haven. In character it has been noted that they exhibit uncommon intelligence and are believed to be very long lived without the need of additional medical intervention, though high degrees of mental and emotional instability are also rumoured to be common in them, while their birth rates are comparably low. What they have become cannot be undone, so ingrained is their adaption, which might be taken as a bitter irony as the coming of the Great Crusade has elevated its need, both with new techniques for the processing of Dark Haven's organic bounty now making the world's long sought-after purpose a practicality, and the fruits of Compliance many, but to the Orhlacc they are what they are, and their altered human nature no more than the visible emblem of their will to survive.

by the macabre and formal reception they received on the sinister planet, of which dim legends had already reached them during their exploration of the region. Despite some misgivings, initial relations went well, and Dark Haven's sealed Compliance was attained bloodlessly by the 7th Expeditionary Fleet led by Lord Commander Suleiman Grimm of the 1st Legion in 833.M30, during the fleet's first journey through the region, at a time when much of the Coronid Deeps were still entirely uncharted and under xenos control. To the Angels of Death, it is said that Dark Haven seemed a shadowed reflection of Caliban itself in some ways, while its masters, the Orhlacc, represented a culture at once familiar to them and utterly strange. What most provoked the 7th Expeditionary Fleet's interest, however, was House Orhlacc's military strength, which was largely undecayed in sophistication and extremely extensive in range, including several hundred fully operational Knight armours and a moderate but reliable independent capacity to construct and arm more; a rare jewel of discovery indeed.

Mechanicum emissaries were equally impressed, but these the Orhlacc —perhaps remembering their abandonment long ago— politely but firmly rebuffed, extracting at best a high price in 'gifts' for access to their own techno-arcana, and then only as they saw fit and with much always kept secret. Any acrimony this might have created was quickly and thoroughly forestalled by the authority of Lord Grimm, who ensured the world's smooth path to Compliance and the granting of full rights and titles under the Aquila to House Orhlacc in return for a full third of the Knight House embarking directly under his command as part of the 7th Expeditionary Fleet.

This first pact of arms and alliance was to last for nearly thirty years of service, and marked only the beginning of the House of Orhlacc's involvement with the Great Crusade, which would see them fight in hundreds of war zones alongside forces as diverse as the Ist, VIIIth and IXth Legions, the Sisters of Silence during the Jutharathine Pysker-crisis, and the Ordo Reductor at the infamous last stand at Bloch during the final Rangdha Outbreak. In recognition of this last battle, where 48 of their Knights were destroyed desperately holding the line against the faceless tide of grey abomination in order to buy time for the Imperium to gather its forces and counterstrike, House Orhlacc was awarded a Memento Mori as a gift of the Emperor himself. This rare and potent honour also served to grant the Orhlacc a seal of official respect and further independence, enough to avoid circling suspicions and ill-rumours that had for some time dogged them despite their enviable military record. Such rumours had circulated not least of all because of the polite but inviolable distance the Orhlacc kept between themselves and their fellow soldiers of the Great Crusade, a deserved reputation for morbid eccentricity and swift temper in their scions, as well as clear deviations in their genetic structure and physiology from the widely accepted human norm.

When the Age of Heresy came, House Orhlacc's carefully maintained reserve and independence would see it kept out of the direct machinations of the Warmaster and free of the orbit of forces that would turn Traitor, as well as distrusted somewhat by those of the local Loyalist cause which might quickly turn to it as ally. When the matter came to the press, House Orhlacc kept largely its own counsel. It viewed the growing factional conflict within the Mechanicum warily, and received news of the cataclysmic Dropsite Massacre first-hand by a Loyalist survivor ship which had laid over at Dark Haven for supplies, rightly believing that the often shunned port would provide a safe and hidden place of rest. Because of this, they were forewarned and had prepared their response when an emissary of the Warmaster visited them in the shape of the prideful Rogue Trader Charid Undine, demanding their obedience to Horus' will.

The strutting Rogue Trader's heavily armed landing party was met with overwhelming force and destroyed, while the Rogue Trader herself was slain and her ships subjugated to the will of the House of Orhlacc. This had been the House's plan all along, and it used the fleet, as well as its own flotilla of transport ships garnered over its years of service in the Great Crusade, to effectively evacuate Dark Haven, leaving only an all but untraceable contingent behind and allowing the ever-growing canopy of fungal life to cover their domains until their eventual return.

The Orhlacc in their wisdom had known that Dark Haven, alone as it was, could not be defended against a full Traitor invasion fleet or a Space Marine Legion, and this made them a sitting target; a fate they declined. From this point until the end of the terrible wars of the Heresy that were to follow, the House of Orhlacc would remain loyal to the Imperium, but they would fight their cause on their own terms as a nomadic Knight House —even after gaining territories within the Agathon Domain— with an eye to their own survival and an eventual return to their shadowed home.

### Materiél strength

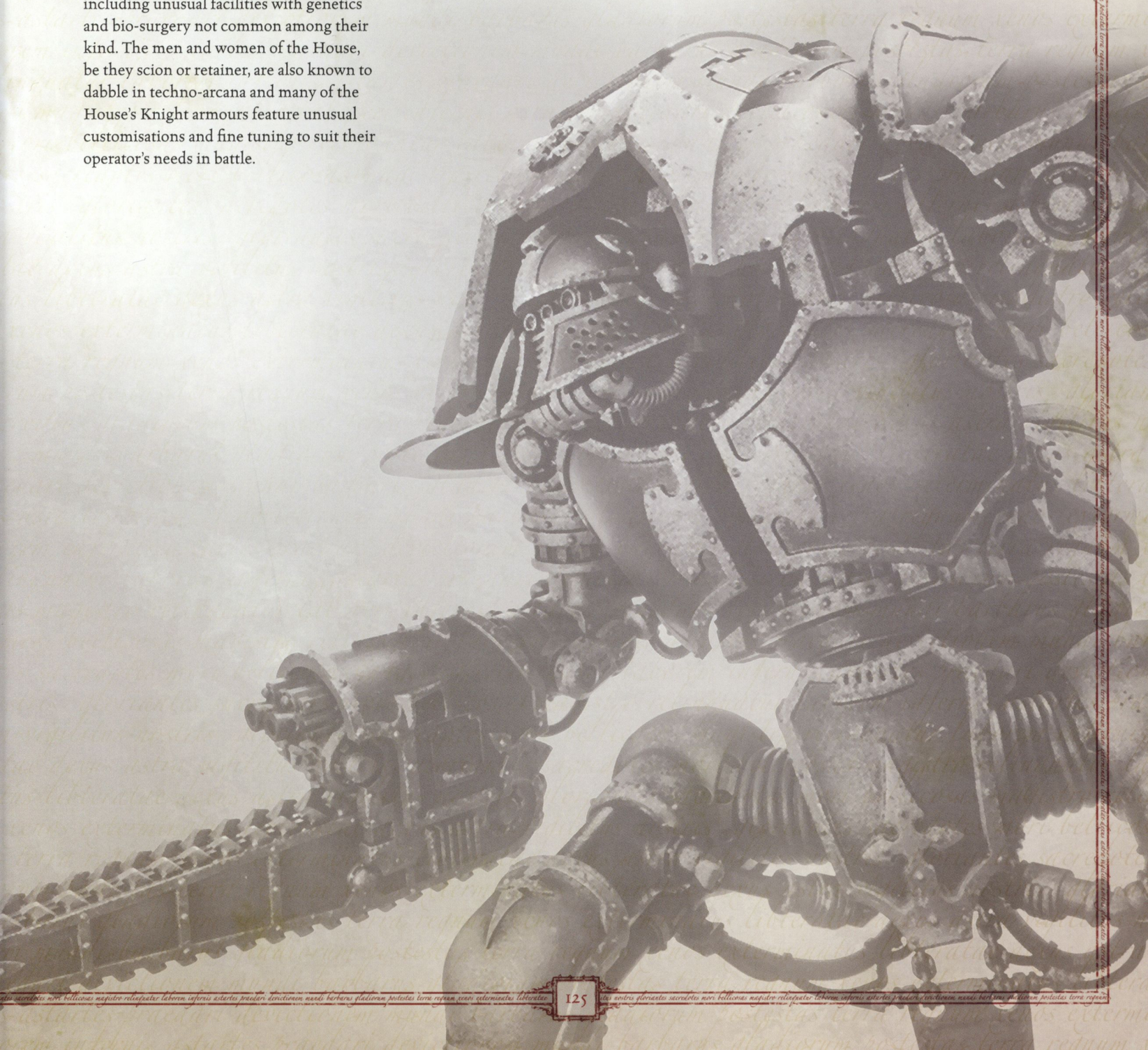
Decades operating in the outer reaches of the Great Crusade served to strengthen House Orhlacc, not weaken it. Its scions gained a wide experience in warfare, while the influx of new weapons, technology and wargear from the Expeditionary fleets with which they served further strengthened the House. This, along with gifts of new Knight armours from the Mechanicum and their own independent production abilities in this regard, was to see their forces deal well with battlefield losses, unlike some of their peers. For these reasons, it is generally believed that at the time of the outbreak of the war of the Heresy, House Orhlacc was of the higher end of the Secundus rank, with perhaps as many as 300 Knight armours in viable condition under its command, and perhaps would have been greater yet had the relatively

low population of Dark Haven been able to support more. This nevertheless put them as one of the stronger of the frontier Knight Houses, although others closer to the Imperium's core could claim far greater strength. At the outbreak of the Heresy, several Household detachments were off-world, fighting far across the galaxy and cut off from any chance of return during the war's early years, leaving perhaps 150 Knight armours at Dark Haven for the conflict in the Coronid Deeps.

The survival of the technology of Dark Haven's original foundation is a marked factor in House Orhlacc's power, with its own Seneschals retaining a very high degree of interdependent arcana forms, including unusual facilities with genetics and bio-surgery not common among their kind. The men and women of the House, be they scion or retainer, are also known to dabble in techno-arcana and many of the House's Knight armours feature unusual customisations and fine tuning to suit their operator's needs in battle.

A wide number of Knight armours and classes are utilised by the House, the most common perhaps being the Knight Errant type; a development likely to have been spurred by the effectiveness of thermal weaponry against Dark Haven's native fauna and the relative ineffectiveness of blast and fragmentation weaponry against the same. Since their inclusion within the ranks of the Great Crusade, the types of Knight armour available to House Orhlacc increased somewhat, with the number of Acheron and Castigator patterns in particular seeing increase, while the spoils of the battlefield of Numinal would see them add a number of armours originating on Cyclothrathe to their Household's arsenal for the ongoing war.

As well as relatively few military retainers of their own (at least initially), House Orhlacc maintained a number of unique servo-automata types, devices of their own Seneschals' design intended for use in harvesting the dangerous life forms on Dark Haven, which also proved to have very effective military applications. During the opening stages of the war for the Coronid Deeps, House Orhlacc also acquired control of the largely intact flotilla of Rogue Trader Charid Undine, including the powerful galleass of war *Hammer of the Deep*, which would form their principal flagship and combat transport for the duration of the war.





**Questoris Knight Paladin '*Sorrowful Dawn*'**: Operated by Ravael Orhlacc, this Knight armour was part of a generation of armours created for his House subsequent to their rejoining of the Imperium. It saw action alongside the IX$^{th}$ Legion in the Great Crusade before being recalled to its home world of Dark Haven, where it remained as part of the garrison stationed on the planet until the war in the Coronid Deeps.

Ravael Orhlacc's heraldry as displayed by the *Sorrowful Dawn* is an exemplary illustration of the arms of his House. His Knight armour is blazoned with the Manticore, which serves as his bloodline primary sigil, and the sectioned deep azure and sable is said to represent the darkness of his benighted world's skies. Also displayed is the stylised eclipse honorific borne by scions who have undertaken a questing purge of Dark Haven's deadly megafauna, and a personal cipher pertaining to the initials of his name – the primary and traditional means of the iteration of personal heraldry by the House of Orhlacc. This presents in part the House's character, as they consider the excessive display of personal heraldry other than by those of the highest rank as vainglory and hubris.







**Cerastus Knight-Lancer** '*Pilgrim of Dread*': Operated by Alsahr Orhlacc, this Knight-Lancer was an armour of ancient provenance which saw its first use under the hand of its new scion during the counter-invasion of Numinal during the wars of the Coronid Reach. During this battle, the impetuous Knight is known to have slain three Knights of House Atrax before succumbing to damage, later to be salvaged to fight again.

The relatively uncomplex heraldry displayed by the *Pilgrim of Dread* is both indicative of the heraldic tradition of House Orhlacc and the relative youth and inexperience of its pilot Alsahr Orhlacc. Though tellingly the use of his cipher in crimson blazoned upon the shield indicates the sworn oath to be the first to shed the blood of a foe in open battle, while the only indication of the age and prior honourable record in war of the *Pilgrim of Dread* itself is the numeral XIV upon its upper carapace denoting, it is believed, that Alsahr is the fourteenth scion of their line to have bonded with its Throne Mechanicum.








# HOUSE ÆRTHEGN

**Title:** The Imperial Knight Household of Ærthegn

**Household Grade:** Tertius*

**Patent:** Warrant of Imperial Immediacy issued by the Imperial Court in early M31 at the personal request of Horus. Litterae Patentes duly recorded by the Officio Militaris College of Arms.

**Warden Domain:** The Hrethmael Drift

**Cognomen:** The Wrækan Dreor (Autochthonic Household language)

**Allied Legions/Forge Worlds:** Binding oaths of loyalty seal the House to Horus' personal service and they maintain ties with the Forge World of Cyclothrathe under his auspices and through his agents.

**Allegiance:** Traitoris Perdita

** Grade assigned by Divisio Militaris based on data provided by the officers of the Warmaster's command, now believed erroneous.*

Accepted amongst the ranks of the Imperial Knight Households by the writ of Horus, and treated by their peers with disdain and wary hostility, the Knights of House Ærthegn (lit: Ay-er-thay-en) were masters of the marauder's bloody trade. Striking unannounced and with overwhelming force, the stark black machines of these border reavers hunted with brutal efficiency first for their own ends, and later under the authority of the Warmaster's command, placing no value on honour duels or other Knightly ideals which have been for so many centuries the cornerstone of a Knight World's culture. Survival alone on the cold, dark fringe of the galaxy had, by necessity, forced the Knight

House to become more fearsome than the monsters that surrounded it, and in the wars of the Heresy was to prove a deadly weapon in the Traitors' arsenal.

The savage warriors known to Imperial records as the Knight House of Ærthegn were first encountered in the northernmost fringes of the galaxy, beyond the edge of the Ultima Segmentum; a region rife with the broken corpses of planets stripped bare by centuries of brutal warfare during the Age of Strife. This desolate region was far removed from the Emperor's advancing armies during the Great Crusade, and the few Rogue Traders and agents of the Imperium to venture into this region and return, often brought with them tales of the '*Wrækan Dreor*', a phrase in the curious proto-gothic dialect of the region which translates as '*pilgrims of blood and ashes*'. This warrior band were reavers with access to primitive warp travel through enslaved and tortured psykers, and were known to be the terror of the surrounding stars, descending from orbit with terrible weapons, slaughtering those who opposed them and stripping cities bare of men and materiél before vanishing again into the black depths of the void. As the Great Crusade advanced closer to this bleak frontier during its second century, it quickly became clear to Explorator investigation that the Wrækan Dreor were in fact the descendants of a lost Knight World, much changed by the hardships of Old Night, and while a number of smaller Imperial expeditions fell prey to their depredations, the agents of the Mechanicum were eager to reclaim the House, or if it prove too debased, cleanse and retrieve its engines of war. This, however, was but one matter among many that would be forced to wait for resolution, as the Ullanor Campaign and a dozen other major operations were then fully underway.

It was not until the departure for Terra by the Emperor, and the re-organisation of the Imperium's forces under the strategic command of Horus as newly appointed Warmaster, that elements of the Space Wolves Legion were tasked with the subjugation or destruction of the Wrækan Dreor as was warranted, deeming them too dangerous a threat to the safety of the Imperium's northern marches to ignore any longer. However, a series of unexpected warp turbulence events was to see the punitive Space Wolves fleet unable to make significant headway, with several of its ships lost, and ultimately its orders were countermanded as the Wrækan Dreor attacked Altus Ferro, a world recently claimed by agents of the Mechanicum Forge World of Cyclothrathe. As the fates would have it, at this time a division of the 63rd Expeditionary Fleet, that of Horus himself, was bound for resupply at the nearby facilities of Port Maw and Manachea, and it was Horus and his Sons that would answer the call.

Confronting the ebon-armoured Knights of the Wrækan Dreor in battle atop the frozen seas of Altus Ferro, Horus is said to have personally torn apart the Knight of the enemy commander, while a phalanx of Justaerin Terminators and Spartan assault tanks held back the rest of the foe. This mighty feat of arms ended the battle and the surviving warriors of the band of Wrækan Dreor, seeing in the Warmaster a powerful lord, swore loyalty to Horus in the traditional manner of their people, naming him their patron and '*ring-gifter*', and informing him that they were but one band among many of their kind. What was to follow remains unknown, but it is believed that Horus took only a single ship and its company as he travelled into the heart of Wrækan Dreor territory, to the blasted shards of their home world where the various bands of Wrækan Dreor fought internecine, savage wars for resources and blood-soaked glory. With both his own Sons of Horus and the Knights now sworn to his service, the Warmaster embarked on a campaign of diplomacy and controlled violence that pitted each petty warlord against his neighbours, and ended with each band either sworn to serve Horus or scattered and broken in his wake.

On his return to Imperial space, the Warmaster's unquestionable authority saw the swift incorporation of the Wrækan Dreor as a Knight House of the Imperium. They were entered in the Imperial College of Arms under the title of '*Ærthegn*', a name selected from their legends by Horus to represent them to the Imperium. Yet behind the mask of House Ærthegn, these savage warriors remained true to their old ways, prowling the non-Compliant sectors beyond the Imperium's growing borders at Horus' command, honing their skills and awaiting his call to war.

Almost no records exist to tell us of the horrors endured by House Ærthegn during the Age of Strife that forged them into the Wrækan Dreor. Few save the officers of the XVIth Legion and their close allies had met with them other than to bring them to battle, and those records submitted to the Officio Militaris prior to the outbreak of the Horus Heresy have proved, at best, misleading.

It is known that the original home world of House Ærthegn was destroyed in some unknown calamity, reduced to splintered obelisks of rock to which now cling the barest wisps of atmosphere. The planet's shards formed part of the Hrethmael Drift, which the remnants of House Ærthegn claimed as their domain, maintaining an unknown number of heavily fortified complexes buried within them. That the scattered remnants of this once-proud House possess the technological aptitude to build and maintain such enclaves, as well as their own void craft and Knight armours, does much to belie the outwardly primitive appearance and mien of the House's warriors. Each of their enclaves acted as the base for a single sub-division of the House, as well as the store house for the multitude of chattels and other supplies seized in the unceasing raids perpetrated by each enclave upon the nearby systems, both human and xenos. These continuing attacks were the primary method by which the House survived, and such was the competition for resources that fighting between enclaves was a common occurrence, and any sign of weakness a signal to others of their kind to descend and strip the failing enclave bare of usable materiel.

The fighting strength of House Ærthegn was formed into a number of warrior bands, each centred on a single war leader of recognised bravery, martial prowess and, most importantly to the warriors of House Ærthegn, proven generosity fuelled by conquest. The rank and file of these warrior bands looked to their Chieftains for both leadership in combat and lavish gifts chosen from the spoils of their raids, and in return were fearless on the battlefield and loyal unto death. Many are the legends amongst the Wrækan Dreor which celebrate loyalty in grim adversity and amongst their wild and savage ranks, oath-breakers are held in particular contempt.

On the battlefield, the warriors of House Ærthegn have been little changed from their days as bloody-handed reavers, Horus' attempts to civilise them little more than a blind pulled briefly across the eyes of the Divisio Militaris. Led by Chieftains that hold a similar position to the Seneschals of other Houses, the warriors hold the strict hierarchies of others in disdain. Few official ranks exist amongst them, but many of the more experienced warriors hold informal honour titles gained by popular acclaim for their deeds in battle; the younger warriors follow the lead of these veterans, eager to share in their glory. Orders from those

outsiders who might consider themselves in authority are rarely heeded, but when one of these veterans advances, his brethren fall in about him, the host reacting to the flow of battle as a pack of wild canids on the hunt.

It is apparent that the incorporation of the Wrækan Dreor into the Imperium as the Household of Ærthegn did little to change their brutal ways, and in fact perhaps only served to make them more dangerous under the Warmaster's sponsorship. Contact with the Imperium before the Heresy was conducted almost exclusively by the Sons of Horus and its retainer forces, and the Forge World of Cyclothrathe and a select few Rogue Traders with ties to the Warmaster replenished those weapons of war held by House Ærthegn whose numbers had been depleted by incessant raids and feuding, and restored technologies that time had ravaged.

Unhindered by their appointed Chieftain, Kynerak Gravewalker, whom Horus named as House Master, armed competition between the hosts of the Wrækan Dreor only intensified in order for them to prove



their worth both to their Chieftain and their new overlord. Whenever they gained an opportunity to test themselves in bloody duels against other Imperial Knight Houses and Freeblades, the Wrækan Dreor seized them, often offering deliberate provocation in order to ensure such duels were mortal affairs—a practice which soon gained them a fell reputation with their 'allies'.





**Thrones of Blood**

Some among the ranks of the Mechanicum have advanced the theory that the destruction of their home world left those Thrones Mechanicum salvaged from the shattered Communion Dome of House Ærthegn irreparably damaged or the House's Templates of Repair somehow mangled. The complex neural circuitry contained within them, once set to instil in those bonded to them the need to protect their ancestral domain, now torments them with the overpowering need to rebuild that which was shattered beyond repair. So, over the centuries of the Age of Strife, the warriors of the Wrækan Dreor are believed to have been driven to raid and pillage by the impulses of their Thrones Mechanicum, dragging men and resources back to the broken fragments of their realm, seeking past sanity to restore what was sundered and replace that which had been lost.

Even before the outbreak of the Heresy, there were many who sought that Kynerak suffer official censure, both for the actions of what Horus claimed to be 'rogue elements' of the Household and his own personal deeds, such as the sacking of the world of Altus-Legia, where 100,000 citizens only newly brought to Compliance were believed slaughtered or doomed to a lifetime of servitude among the Wrækan Dreor. The only action taken by Horus to alter the warriors of House Ærthegn was the dispatch of a contingent of Davinite Lodge Priests and Sons of Horus overseers in late 004.M31 to "*...aid in their acclimatisation to Imperial culture*". These Crow Priests seem to have had a profound impact on House Ærthegn, based on the addition of crow symbology to many of their armours. However, rather than strengthening their links to the Imperium, this would appear to have only strengthened their loyalty to the Warmaster and played a role in their later descent into madness and flight beyond the bounds of Imperial vengeance.

### Materiél Strength

In the years before their unification, the Wrækan Dreor were thought to have operated well over 150 Knights split between sub factions, supported by a large force of marauder infantry and slave-catchers aboard shuttlecraft and other small interface vehicles. While some of those who resisted Horus when he arrived at the hidden home system of House Ærthegn perished in battle, it seems the majority survived, and being the charismatic warlord he was, Horus was able to bind them to his sway rather than needing to destroy them.

As the Knight House was taken into Imperial service, official records submitted to the Divisio Militaris by officers of the Sons of Horus attest that the total fighting strength of House Ærthegn numbered at around 100 Knight armours, mostly of ancient Paladin or Errant designs; an estimate which places them amongst the smaller Knight Households incorporated into the Imperium. After the beginning of Warmaster Horus' rebellion, it quickly became apparent that these numbers were far from accurate; even as the first fratricidal acts of the Horus Heresy were undertaken, hosts bearing the colours of House Ærthegn, whose numbers were far in excess of those reports held by the Divisio Militaris, were unleashed upon Imperial outposts and isolated garrisons who had declared themselves for Terra, or had held to a naive claim of neutrality. The warriors of House Ærthegn, their numbers concealed at Horus' orders, may have numbered closer to 300, rivalling some of the most ancient Knight Households that were in Imperial service.

Those few destroyed Knights recovered from battles along the vanguard of Horus' advance across the northern reaches of the Imperium, often Cerastus Lancer armours of recent manufacture, bear the distinctive marks of the forge-wrights of Cyclothrathe. That such forces were concealed in plain sight and bolstered with the most advanced of technologies in secret speaks of the hidden subtleties and long planning of Warmaster Horus' rebellion.

It is, however, quite possible that these suppositions and reports do not hold the whole truth. Several reports from embattled Loyalist commands on the northern rim have detailed the intervention of bands of Knights whose markings and tactics match those of the Wrækan Dreor of old, before the arrival of the Imperium. Unpredictable and savage, these warriors seem equally likely to set about the annihilation of those fighting under Horus' banner before departing as they are to slaughter both sides and strip the battlefield clean once the fighting ends; yet in the dark days of the Horus Heresy, even the most unpredictable of allies made welcome news.



**Questoris Knight Magaera '*Kerberos*'**: Seized in battle from House Atrax at the height of the fighting on Numinal, the Magaera mark armour *Kerberos* now bears the heraldry of the Ærthegn Chieftess Ædalflae Redwroth. Ædalflae's warband were one of the few to spurn Horus' attempts to dominate their House, returning to the old reaving ways of the Wrækan Dreor. Bloody raids by Ædalflae and other bands of Wrækan Dreor were to be a constant thorn in the side of both Cyclothrathe and Agathaon forces during fighting in the Coronid Deeps.

Depicted as it appeared during a raid on the world of Arrian, several months after its capture on Numinal, the Knight armour *Kerberos* wears the distinctive black and red of the Wrækan Dreor, and its attached banner bears the white axe and runic insignia of Ædalflae Red-wroth. The patterning of red and black chosen by Wrækan Dreor warriors for their armour follows no known scheme of heraldry recorded by the Officio Militaris College of Arms, with no apparent correlation between the pattern's complexity and the rank of the bearer. More telling among the barbaric warriors of House Ærthegn is the application of often surprisingly artistic emblems, such as the spread-winged crow applied to *Kerberos* – a symbol of prophecy and fate among the Wrækan Dreor.









**Cerastus Knight-Lancer '*Great Thunor*'**: This pict-capture shows the Knight armour *Great Thunor* bearing the insignia of the Ærthegn warrior Grædan. It was recovered from the burning hulk of a Mezoan void ark sacked by a raiding band from House Ærthegn, whose sealed Knight armours allowed them to board and assault the craft while it was still in deep space and far from aid.

Prominently displayed on *Great Thunor's* core hatch and right greave are the personal arms of Scion Grædan, a skull surmounting two crossed spears. The combination appears to indicate his position within the House sub-cult of the Anhaga, known among other houses as the Scions Dolorous. The tapered banner carries the emblem of a crow slaying a serpent, synonymous in Ærthegn myth with triumph over adversity, the inclusion of the Eye of Horus into this ancient symbol of victory suggests the impact his arrival had on the Wrækan Dreor. Another notable feature is the prolific runic inscriptions in the autochthonic script used by House Ærthegn, displayed prominently on *Great Thunor's* central carapace plating and greaves. These inscriptions declaim the bearer's past triumphs in a ritualised and archaic style.







# Legio Tempestus

**Title:** The Legio Tempestus Ordo Titanica (referred to in some post-008. M31 archives as the Legio Tempestor)

**Militaris Grade:** Secundus

**Patent:** Pre-Imperium, Martian Mechanicum

**Warden Domains:** Estaban III, Mars (former), Orestes Colonia

**Cognomen:** The Stormlords, the Thunder Raptors

**Allied War Houses:** Numerous Freeblade associations, Martian division – House Taranis

**Allegiance:** Unconfirmed (major element Traitoris Perdita)

The Legio Tempestus is a Titan Legion of the Collegia Titanicus, its towering God-engines counted amongst the mightiest and most accomplished of the Emperor's Crusading hosts in the years before the Horus Heresy. The Legio fought for decades at the leading edge of the Imperium's expansion alongside the most celebrated of the Legiones Astartes. Countless worlds were brought to Compliance and numerous xenos empires cast down during the devastating planetary assaults for which the Legio became so well known, earning it the epithet '*Stormlords*'. Later, however, the loyalties of the Legio Tempestus would be cast in doubt and the shadows of treachery attain its name. For while their lord and his retainers fought valiantly against the Traitors during the Martian civil war, others in their ranks, who had spent years on the dark frontier fighting under the flag of Horus, would be counted amongst the most dedicated of the Warmaster's treacherous forces during the wars of the Heresy.

One third of the fabled 'Triad Ferrum Morgulus', the Legio Tempestus (or Tempestor as some later accounts term the Order) was founded alongside the Legio Mortis and Legio Ignatum in the distant Age of Strife on Mars. Throughout the blood-soaked insanity of that age, the Legio Tempestus stood firm against all foes, from machine-mutant abominations rising from the waste-strewn oxide deserts to rival Titan Orders marching from their own strongholds to do battle.

Their home fortress, cut from the red basalt of Ascraeus Mons, one of the mightiest of Mars' many volcanoes, remained inviolate. Concentric rings of impregnable fortifications rose atop each of the solidified lava ridges surrounding the fortress, whilst below, Tempestus God-engines walked from towering armoured gates and scoured the surrounding plains of the tides of degenerate tech-savagery that broke continuously against them.

Much of the anarchy that befell Mars during the long Age of Strife is lost to history or sealed away in forgotten data-crypts beneath the industrial wastes—with the treachery revealed in the opening years of the 31st Millennium, few can imagine a complete history will ever be composed. It is known, however, that the region claimed and defended by the Legio Tempestus bordered that of the Legio Mortis —the Death's Heads — and on countless occasions the two Orders came to blows over territorial rights and access to the priceless caches of archaeotech to be found beneath the rust dunes of the Tharsis region. The engines of these ancient Orders battled across the oxide deserts until, at length, the region was divided by the Tempest Line. To cross this line in the red sand was to unequivocally declare war, an act that the Legio Mortis initiated on many more occasions than Tempestus if rumour is to be believed, and though both Orders shared a common enemy in the Cy-Carnivora and other phantasms of Old Night that plagued Mars throughout the age, a deep and mutual loathing developed between them that would later bear truly bitter fruit.

With the coming of the Emperor to the Red Planet and the signing of the Treaty of Mars, the Legio Tempestus took its place in the glorious hosts of Mankind's all-conquering armies. Tempestus engines walked upon worlds the length and breadth of the ever expanding Imperium, serving alongside some of the most celebrated forces of the Great Crusade. Individual maniples were detached to Mechanicum Explorator fleets and Rogue Trader Militant pathfinder squadrons, but the bulk of the Legio's most celebrated battle honours were earned during service with the 12th Expeditionary Fleet, in what some historians later dubbed the '*Long March to Ultramar*'. Later on, when the Lord of Ultramar, the Primarch Roboute Guilliman, took personal command of the 12th Expeditionary Fleet, the Tempestus played a pivotal role in the arduous wars of the Epsiloid Binary Cluster. It was during this epic conflict that the Legio's master, Indias Cavalerio, earned the title '*Stormlord*', a name soon used by allied Imperial soldiery to refer to the entire Legio and was thought to echo ancient myths. The term was appropriate, for the Stormlords had proven themselves masters of planetary assault under enemy fire in hostile circumstances many other princeps would never have allowed their own forces to be risked at such hazard. Cradled in the shielded holds of the very heaviest classes of drop transport constructed in the orbital void-foundries on Mars, the Legio's brutal descents into battle, shrouded by the fire and storm-turbulence of the drop ship's almost suicidal trajectories, became legendary. They caused atmospheres to burn and made such ruin of the skies that on some worlds the storms they caused would not fully abate for years. Where the Stormlords walked, cities were shattered and battlefields were swept of the foe by a blistering hail of ordnance.

After an unabated campaign of six decades on the forefront of the Great Crusade, the Legio Tempestus suffered heavy losses — including *Victorix Magna*, the Warlord Titan of the Stormlord himself— and needed time to regroup and rearm or risk destruction. Having claimed warden rights over key worlds in the Estaban and Orestes systems, the Legio's master, Cavalerio, returned to Mars with those of his Legio's God-engines in most need of repair and refit, entrusting command of the remainder of a reorganised demi-Legio to his lieutenant, Princeps Maximus Karania. Thus would begin a chain of events that would lead to a growing rift, more a development of circumstance and distance than any actual acrimony or malice, between the two halves of the Legio Tempestus. In the years that followed, two separate commands developed, with little direct contact between them, each being supplied separately and fighting their wars apart under the light of far distant stars. The Martian Tempestus began to be deployed as a heavy reserve, called to battle from their base on Mars to re-enforce the line in the most precarious war zones and to punish rebellious worlds before swiftly returning to their home, while Karania's command would pass from the order of battle of one far-flung Expeditionary fleet to another, never seeing the light of Sol.

The events that unfolded on Mars decades after Cavalerio's return to the Red Planet, formed a crucial fulcrum in the Warmaster's conspiracy to unmake that which the Emperor had built during the Great Crusade. When the Schism of Mars tore the Mechanicum in two, the entire planet was consumed by war. Ancient forges that had endured the long millennia of Old Night were cast down and the great fanes of All-Knowledge were lost for all time. So too was the Legio Tempestus, for Cavalerio and his princeps fell in the defence of Magma City, standing defiant to the last against the God-engines of the Legio Mortis, whose betrayal of the Imperium was at last revealed. The heroic deeds performed in that final battle will never be fully honoured, for most who witnessed them perished themselves as Magma City sunk into the Red Planet's savage fiery mantle. After the tragedy on Mars, there remained only a scattered handful of Loyalist Legio Tempestus Titan maniples and detachments who had not been present on the Red Planet, free and in the Imperium's service, but left leaderless and bereft, and soon to face the double blow of the news that their distant brothers had themselves turned Traitor.

While leading his own division of the Legio Tempestus, Karania proved himself a strategist whose cunning served as a formidable force multiplier and elevated the Legio to the highest tiers of the Warmaster's servants. This rise in favour, however, was ever checked, for its oldest foe, the Legio Mortis, remained of all the Traitor Titan Legions always first in Horus' service. Despite their common cause in the ranks of the arch-Traitor, Tempestus and Mortis, long rivals, slowly became bitterest enemies even as they fought alongside each other, a diametrical opposition that would at length become horribly evident as the unspeakable powers each had sworn themselves to exerted their hideous influence.

### Materiel Strength

The *Principia Glorianus Episloidae* records that the Legio Tempestus accompanying the 12th Expeditionary Fleet was possessed of around 170 God-engines at the height of the victory over the Orks of the Epsiloid Binary Cluster, with at least 30 Titans lost by the end of those wars. When the Legio divided, perhaps a score of battle Titans, along with a dozen badly damaged God-engines injured past use or repair, are believed to have returned to Mars with the Stormlord to form the core of the Legio Tempestus there—this force being perhaps doubled in strength by the outbreak of the Horus Heresy. Of these, almost all were lost in the opening battles of the Schism of Mars and the destruction of Magma City, along with the bulk of the bonded Knight House of Taranis that fought alongside them. Elsewhere, the demi-Legio under the traitor Maximus Karania was able to field between 80-120 Titans of various classes over time, most of them of the Warlord, Reaver and Jackal pattern Warhound classes, with the forges of Estaban III able to produce new Warlord class Titans for Karania's forces in limited numbers.

The Legio had once counted a number of Nightgaunt, Maines and Carnivore class Titans amongst its God-engines during the Great Crusade, as well as at least one mighty

Nemesis Titan, but most of these older patterns were believed destroyed on Mars. The latter God-engine is not known to have taken part in the battles of the age and may be ranked amongst those of the Order's forces still unaccounted for beyond the Imperium's ravaged borders.

The body of the Legio Tempestus on Mars was able to call upon three Skitarii Auxilia Legions, one of which comprised entirely armoured cohorts, all in the Martian pattern panoply of war and counted among the most respected of their kind, while its Expeditionary cadre relied on allied forces primarily for infantry support, enhanced on occasion by Taghmata forces from the world of Estaban III.

In terms of allied Knight Households, the Martian Loyalists of the Legio could count upon the resolute allegiance of the powerful House Taranis, whereas Karania's force replaced this with a host of itinerant, masterless Freeblade Knights who fought alongside them, first on the dark frontiers of the Great Crusade, and then later under the banner of the Eye of Horus.

As the Horus Heresy unfolded and the Legio Tempestus joined the massed hosts of the Traitors, still more elements were drawn to their banner. Freeblade Knights from a score of Houses and more swore service to the Tempestus, most obscuring their erstwhile colours in favour of darker heraldry. Later, an entire Household of outcast Knights, fleeing the wrath of their staunchly Imperial liege, bent knee to the Traitor Stormlords. These demonstrated the extent of their allegiance by incorporating the heraldry of the Legio and submitting themselves to their new chain of command. This process is believed to have been begun in the aftermath of the assault on Hive Ilium at Manachea, where several of the Stormlords Titans were laid low by the Loyalists of House Vyronii, revealing a vulnerability to such war machines which they strived to counter by acquiring allied Knights of their own. Such Knights, whether bearing the personal heraldry of a Freeblade or the fractured blue and argent of the Legio Tempestus, would serve in future battles as a skirmish line when the Tempestus took to war, particularly where the war zones involved encapsulated shattered cityscapes where their God-engines proved vulnerable to ambush.



**The Treachery of Maximus Karania**

After the division of the Legio into two commands, control of the Order's Expeditionary force was invested in the senior Princeps Maximus Karania. Where the Stormlord was known for his disdain of the political and doctrinal infighting that had befallen the Mechanicum in the later years after Unification, Maximus Karania was his mirror, subtle and secretive, although with an unimpeachable war record. So adept at intrigue was he that he had long hidden his machinations and strange preoccupations in plain sight. Unknown to most, beneath a professed orthodoxy Karania was a disciple of a certain strand of esoteric machine lore called Teleologicalica, itself a form of arcane numerology, a discipline that purported to predict imminent and all-consuming doom by reference to the patterns of past cataclysms. Perhaps these beliefs might have had little impression were it not for prevailing attitudes amongst the Tech-Priests of Estaban III, the Mechanicum domain where the Legio was mustered at the conclusion of the Epsiloid Binary Cluster campaign. The Tech-Priests of Estaban III had not accepted the prevailing Mechanicum doctrine that the Emperor was one and the same with the divine being they referred to as the Omnissiah, and paid only lip-service to the Martian Doctrines. Karania's native political cunning in discovering this and his own schismatic doctrine enabled him to make private and secret alliance with the Tech-Priests of Estaban III long before the outbreak of the Horus Heresy. The result was a poisonous cocktail of lies that, now in retrospect, can be seen to have led the Legio Tempestus into the service of the most ruinous powers of the Great Enemy.

As time progressed, Karania moved to purge his princeps cadre according to the patterns revealed to him by the doctrines of cataclysmic teleology, ensuring that only those inducted into the discipline's innermost secrets remained within his demi-Legio, but was careful to keep such apostasy shrouded from outsiders, although it had not escaped the attention of the Warmaster's agents, who worked upon it to secure Karania to their cause. When at last he received word of Cavalerio's death on Mars, Karania believed it as nothing less than the fulfilment of his own occult prognostications, and he pledged his demi-Legio to the cause of the Warmaster body and soul. The treachery of Maximus Karania would at length lead the Legio Tempestus to the hallowed ground of Terra itself in bloody war, and then would the true extent of the Stormlords' fall and the nature of the power behind that fall, be made evident.

Having received word from Mars that he was now the de facto master of the Tempestus loyal to the Traitors' cause, Maximus Karania pronounced that his allied Forge World of Estaban III would henceforth and for all time enjoy the full protection of the Legio in return for the bounty of its mighty foundries. Karania, at the behest of the Traitor Magos, led a purge of any Imperial servants on Estaban III that would not bend knee to the Warmaster's cause. Executing a series of actions that crushed all Loyalist opposition with, it appears, reference to his cultic numerological beliefs, Estaban II and its macro-manufactora were quickly subdued. In barely a week of brutal fighting, the rest of the planetary system around it followed, and by the time orders for the Legio's redeployment to the Warmaster's invasion fleet bound for the Coronid Deeps came, the Traitor Stormlords had firmly established a new power base to supply and strengthen them.

A single archival entry, recovered years after the event, suggests that even with the full extent of Karania's treachery revealed, elements of his own Legio serving further afield declined his recall order and refused to share his betrayal. These he vowed to hunt down and slay, for their very existence made a lie of the teleological precognostications by which Karania was planning and executing, his Legio's future causing him to delve ever deeper into his occult practices. In the aftermath, this hunt would lead Karania and the Traitor Tempestus along many dark and winding paths never before travelled by any Legio of the Collegia Titanicus.

**The Shattering of Spyre Zero**

Six decades into the mighty endeavour of the Great Crusade, a sub-armada of the 28th Expeditionary Fleet came upon a xenos dominated world of strange majesty and indescribable material value. This world orbited a dying red star known on ancient stellar cartographs as '*Spyre Zero*', and was quite unlike any the Expeditionary fleet had ever before encountered. Spyre Zero was a world constituted entirely of a jagged, blood red, homogenous mass of a crystalline substance the accompanying Mechanicum Explorators theorised could serve the needs of a hundred Forge Worlds if claimed. Two factors delayed the immediate attack of Spyre Zero, however. The first was its orbit, which was so close to its star that the crystal world actually plunged through its corona and skimmed across the boiling surface at its closest approach. The second was the presence of a previously unknown xenos strain of entirely novel form, which the armada's scouts immediately dubbed the '*Corposant*', after their habitat in their birth star's irradiated corona.

History does not relate the true nature of the xenos Corposant, for in the event of their discovery, it was entirely impossible to study them in any way. They were variously described as ambulatory shadows, dark silhouettes moving across the bright red background field or simply as gaps between tones where no natural light appeared to fall. They were encountered first by Mechanicum Explorator parties travelling in heavily shielded transports across the crystalline surface of Spyre Zero and then, as hostilities erupted, by the Space Marines of the IIIrd Legion that answered the Explorators' distress calls. Even the mighty Space Marines could not fight upon the super-heated surface however, and as the planet neared its closest approach to the star and the heat and radiation increased still further, it was determined that all surface units should be withdrawn.

Yet the High Magi of the 28th Expeditionary Fleet's Mechanicum Explorator contingent refused to surrender the world, attempting in vain to convince the Primarch Fulgrim of the IIIrd Legion of the value of the raw stuff of which Spyre Zero was formed. The Primarch disagreed, but when the senior princeps of the Legio Tempestus accompanying the 28th presented his own proposal, he agreed to allow the Mechanicum one chance at capturing their glittering prize.

With Fulgrim's blessing, the Legio Tempestus set a daring plan in motion. The massed heavy landers aligned themselves so as to approach Spyre Zero in its wake, thus using the bulk of the planet to shield themselves from the worst of the baleful star's fury. As the world approached its periapsis, the landers crashed down, in so doing shattering vast crystal spurs into clouds of radiant dust which trailed out behind the world like a comet's tail. As the God-engines of the Tempestus strode forth, the Corposant attacked, shadows the colour of congealed blood closing in against the blazing red of the star, the supergiant's mass now so close it filled the entire sky. The power of that star was so intense that even the impossibly dense armour of the Warlord and Reaver Titans could barely withstand it, and a dozen of the lesser Warhounds were crippled as joints seized, hydraulic fluid boiled and sensors blew out. The score of attendant Knights of House Taranis were rendered to slag, though they stood resolute against the Corposant even as they died, the aliens' fury tearing at the God-engines, blasting them with focused photonic lances. The Titans were confronted by foes the likes of which no human had ever witnessed, jagged shadows that swarmed about them and which with each touch tore a ragged chunk of armour plating, lessening the God-engines' ability to withstand the ravening heat and radiation still further.

And then the crystal world reached full periapsis, soaring across the blinding photosphere. In that instant, the Corposant fled, their shadowed forms dissolved into the towering red crystal spires all about. The senior princeps saw his opportunity even as the engines under him were pushed beyond the limits of operational tolerance, their blue and silver livery burning away to leave each clad in scorched ceramite. The vox channels were dead, the comms antennae burned away, and so the lead princeps set the example which all others soon followed. He blasted the nearest crystal tower to shards, exposing the Corposant sheltering within to forces even they could not withstand. In seconds, the entire Legio opened fire and soon an area many kilometres across was levelled flat, the screaming Corposant boiling away under the unbearable touch of their own birth star.

The shattering of Spyre Zero was complete; the action judged a great victory for the Legio Tempestus and one which Fulgrim himself acknowledged despite that his own warriors could not possibly have contributed to it. The Mechanicum had won an invaluable resource, the material mined from the world fuelling the reactors of Titans, warships and the foundries of countless Forge Worlds throughout the remainder of the Great Crusade, before being placed under such strain during the Horus Heresy that they would be entirely played out by time the Warmaster's treachery reached its bloody conclusion on Terra.

The Legio Tempestus would spend the better part of a decade recovering from the damage suffered under the touch of Spyre Zero's star, but when they did, they would once more take their place in the ranks of the Great Crusade and go on to attain numerous battle honours before the horrors of the Martian Civil War consumed them.




The Mars Pattern Reaver class Battle Titan
*"Odrysian"*

# War Maniple "Telos Epsilon"

Traitoris Perdita Element,
Legio Tempestus
Battle of Hive Ilium, Fall of Manachea




Banner of Princeps Nero Cotys ++deceased++




Kill banner on Reaver class Battle Titan *Odrysian* volcano cannon (Moderatus Titus Teres ++deceased++)




Reaver Titan *Raxvalian*



*Scorillion*



*Durasi*

War maniple "*Telos Epsilon*" participated in the Manachea planetary assault, its macro landing craft deploying to the west of Hive Ilium. The maniple's advance was opposed by the massed armour of the hive's Solar Auxilia defenders, and within an hour the maniple's Titans had accounted for over three dozen confirmed armour kills. As the maniple advanced through the hive's outer precincts, it came under ever more intensive fire, until the Reaver *Odrysian* was disabled by weapons fire from a Solar Auxilia Shadowsword super-heavy tank and the Warhound *Durasi* was heavily damaged by melta-armed infantry and forced to withdraw. The Reaver Titan *Raxvalian* was later destroyed at Block Fortress 77-4 by a massed charge by House Vyronii Knight-Lancers, while the fate of the remaining Warhound *Scorillion* remains unconfirmed.



# The Traitor Legions and their Allies

*"Fear not that I am come to demand your surrender. There is in me no such gift of mercy. I am come to deliver not words, but fire."*

*Baron Armelan, Emissary of the Warmaster to the planetary council of Subinus*

As the time of galactic bloodshed and tumult that would come to be known as the Age of Darkness came to pass, the myriad forces of Warmaster Horus were set moving by him as the playing pieces of a game, each with their own tasks and objectives, each with their own part to play in a much larger, labyrinthine plan of conquest. Who they were and the powers they possessed were as much a product of history —of the Great Crusade and the countless wars to unify Mankind and purge the horrors of the alien from existence— as they were of the acts of treachery that brought them to the Traitors' cause. The forces of the Traitor Legions and their allies then were a vast, shifting power; a beast with many heads, which beset the body of the Imperium and the throats of its defenders, each part having its own nature and its own motivations, as well as its own role to play in the terrible slaughter that was to come.

## The Dawning of the War

The opening acts of the great civil war which would become known as the Horus Heresy were played out upon the blood-soaked surface of Isstvan III, where the Warmaster purged his Legion, as well as those of his brother Primarchs Mortarion, Angron and Fulgrim, of those who would refuse to follow him into rebellion against the Emperor. The deed was executed with brutal efficiency and tens of thousands were purged in the first,

and some would say darkest, act of the entire rebellion. As extensive as it was however, the betrayal failed to entirely scour the four Traitor Legions. Among those few who escaped, a handful of loyal Legiones Astartes had captured the frigate the *Eisenstein*, and with it carried word of the Warmaster's heinous treachery to Terra.

With the element of surprise lost, the Warmaster's plans for a swift strike against Terra shifted, for Horus had long prepared for the dethroning of his father and had numerous contingencies in place. A surprise assault on the Throne world was no longer possible, but Horus yet retained the initiative. The Imperium was reeling and uncertain of who was ally and who betrayer. The Warmaster had yet to reveal the full extent of his hold upon the Space Marine Legions, and had set in motion a plan to sunder the Emperor's realm still further. Upon the black, blood-soaked sands of Isstvan V, Horus all but destroyed three entire Loyalist Legions, a feat of arms no enemy of Mankind had ever achieved throughout the entire bloody epoch of the Unification Wars and the Great Crusade. It was achieved not just by military strength, but by guile, for three of the six Legions ordered by Terra to Isstvan V to confront the Traitors had been secretly turned to Horus' cause. When the Word Bearers, Iron Warriors and Alpha Legion revealed their true allegiance, the Raven Guard, Salamanders and Iron Hands were all but destroyed in the most brutal, bitter and destructive three hours ever endured by any of the Legiones Astartes. At a stroke, the Imperium was on its knees and although Horus could no longer march directly upon Terra, the pendulum of war had swung inexorably in his favour.

Horus' next act was to ensure that he retained his hard-won advantage, and to this end he convened a council of arch-Traitors, which gathered even as the spilled blood of three entire Legions dried upon the blasted ground of the Urgall Depression. During this council, Horus tasked each of the Traitor Primarchs, as well as numerous other servants and allies, with a task to perform in the next phase of the coming war. Only a mind as powerful as that of a Primarch could have fully comprehended this, for it conceived and orchestrated not just the missions of the Traitor Legiones Astartes, but of multitudes of other servants, from traitorous Imperial Army Regiments of the Line to individual demagogues across thousands of systems the length and breadth of the Imperium.

## Visions of Conquest

Foremost in the ranks of infamy were the Sons of the Horus. The Warmaster's own Legion would form the leading edge in the conquest of great swathes of the northern Imperium. They would subjugate entire sectors to his cause, turning industries to serve the Traitors' war effort and pressing entire populations into the Warmaster's armies in the infamous process which has since become known as the Dark Compliance. This conquest would ultimately be directed towards Terra, and instead of the originally conceived rapid strike from an unexpected quarter, would form an indomitable advance that would both feed the Traitors' strength and slowly tip the balance of power against the Imperium as more sectors declared for or were forced into the Traitors' camp. This would only however be a small part of Horus' master plan, or indeed his own Legion's part in it.

The Death Guard of the Warmaster's brother Primarch Mortarion would reinforce this effort, the *'Reaper of Worlds'* casting a deathly shadow across system after system. In particular, those worlds that refused to bend knee to the Warmaster would know the coming of Mortarion, and in his wake he would leave a trail of dead worlds, their surfaces scoured by radiation, skies poisoned and the bones of entire populations left to bleach in the light of uncaring suns. In such, Horus kept the Death Guard a key component of his plans, believing them both wholly joined with him in his cause, and utterly reliable and determined as a key part in the great war he had unleashed.

Conversely, knowing that the Emperor's Children were embarked upon a path of excess and abandon which was transforming the Legion into something unpredictably dangerous and perhaps now no longer trusted, the Warmaster let slip the III[rd] Legion to their own devices and their own increasingly mysterious ends—within certain bounds, knowing that they would wreak havoc as they went. In this they still served the greater cause, as on such worlds they attacked, horrors would be perpetrated that would serve as a warning to others.

As for the other Traitor Legions, the Warmaster began to immediately put them to purposes and campaigns meant both to destabilise the Imperium and to draw off and degrade the vast numbers of Loyalist forces and defences arrayed against them, all with the ultimate goal of paving the way to a decisive and apocalyptic assault on Terra.

As part of this, the Warmaster tasked his brother Primarch Perturabo with casting these down. In particular, the many key systems of the outer Segmentum Solar, which were defended by small Imperial Fists Castellan forces, were to be the Iron Warriors' to destroy. Each such holding was a heavily fortified bastion from which the VII[th] Legion could potentially rally Loyalist units of the Imperialis Auxilia to sally forth and threaten Traitor lines of attack, and so could not be suffered to exist. Perturabo and his Iron Warriors Legion were known for their bitter resentment of the Imperial Fists, and the Warmaster was well aware that his brother Primarch would relish the opportunity to strike at the works of his rival, the Primarch Rogal Dorn. As with his orders to the III[rd] Legion, Horus was adamant that the Iron Warriors should conclude such destruction as swiftly as possible, for in the assault on Terra, their specialist skills would be most needed. Indeed, it is likely that without the Iron Warriors and the genius of their bitter Primarch, the already planned-for attack on Terra might be all but untenable.

Other Traitor Legions the Warmaster dispatched further afield. In particular, the Word Bearers of the Primarch Lorgar and the World Eaters of his brother Angron were tasked with engaging the Ultramarines of the Primarch Roboute Guilliman and ensuring the XIII[th] Legion, still powerful even after the treacherous attack of the Word Bearers against them at Calth, could not intervene decisively in the war. This so-called Shadow Crusade would serve another, still more sinister purpose in addition to its military objectives. In laying waste to hundreds of worlds and dedicating the deaths of millions to those powers to which he was pledged, the Primarch Lorgar would precipitate such turmoil in the Immaterium that the galaxy would be split all but in two by an impenetrable warp storm. In this Lorgar was successful, bringing into being the Ruinstorm and making movement and astropathic communication between the two sundered regions all but impossible.

The Night Lords too were dispatched on a mission far from Terra to the galaxy's Eastern Fringe, leading some to suspect that Horus was still uncertain of the motives and even allegiance of his brother Primarch and lord of the VIII[th] Legiones Astartes, Konrad Curze. The mission of the Night Lords was twofold; it first was to destroy and harrow extensive strategic resources in the region in which Horus held little sway, denying them to the Imperium as a potential source of

reinforcement or attack against the Traitors' flanks once the push towards Terra was launched. These elements were grouped principally around the Thramas Sector, and key among them were three stubbornly independent and now Loyalist Forge Worlds: Triplex Galatia, Triplex Thule and Triplex Phall, which between them accounted for almost all of the Loyalists' large warship-building capacity in the Ultima Segmentum (and had indeed supplied both Ultramar and Nocturne with much of their Legions' fleets). Secondly, the proximity of Thramas to where the Dark Angels Legion had been dispatched before the war's outbreak would also serve the purpose of drawing them into battle; forced to defend its vital worlds. The Dark Angels Legion and their master remained something of a supremely dangerous unknown quantity, and not one that Horus could afford to neglect unchallenged. So it was that the Warmaster's orders to the Night Haunter were unequivocal; Thramas must be silenced and the Dark Angels drawn into a war that would preclude their intervention in the assault on Terra at any cost.

The Alpha Legion was tasked with a mission for which they were well disposed – the harrowing of desperate enemy forces and worlds across the southern and western Imperium. As a key part of this, the destruction by any means the Primarch Alpharius deemed appropriate of the Loyalist Legions in the area. They were to sow chaos behind the Loyalists' lines, but also to strike in force at targets of opportunity where they could; again keeping the Imperium from massing its defence-in-depth against the Traitors. As a part of this, hundreds of Traitor Auxilia regiments (which Horus considered entirely expendable to the cause), as well as numerous detachments of the Traitor Legio Titanicus and Traitor-aligned Taghmata were nominally released to their command. The Space Wolves Legion, having suffered greatly in their ravaging of Prospero and near-destruction of the Thousand Sons Legion, were one of the Alpha Legion's principal targets, situated as they were in the Alaxxes Nebula recovering and rearming. Also in the vicinity were the White Scars Legion of the Primarch Jaghatai Khan, which had not yet been touched by the war, and were known to have recently concluded their long campaign against the Orks of the Chondax System and therefore within the Alpha Legion's baleful sphere. Both were to suffer at the hands of the serpents of Alpharius.

## Unholy Alliances

The Traitor Legions were the single greatest power and strength of Horus' armies, but they were far from alone. To achieve the ultimate aim of laying siege to Terra and casting down the Emperor, the Traitors would have to call upon and fight alongside a wide array of other forces, some simply obeying the will of masters of long association, while others were brought into the Warmaster's fold through bribery, pacts of alliance, coercion or the infamous progress of the Dark Compliance. As early as the Traitors' defence of the Urgall Depression during the Isstvan V Dropsite Massacre, Auxilia troops were used with unspeakable callousness by their Space Marine masters, herded towards the enemy as bullet-soaks on which the foe's ammunition would be expended before battle was truly joined, and such disregard for the purely human component of the Warmaster's forces would be shown time and again throughout the bloody years that were to follow. This was not however universal, as at other times, Horus and his principal subordinates entrusted vital missions to the more reliable of his mortal allies, and split entire battlegroups of Traitor Auxilia and Armada units on independent operations either of conquest or destruction, although it was not uncommon for him to assign an officer or cadre of the Sons of Horus, Iron Warriors or Alpha Legion to oversee such forces in the field.

### The Traitor Auxilia

By far the largest numbers of human troops under the Warmaster's command were drawn from the Imperialis Auxilia, and ranged from the massive Imperial Army Regiments of the Line to the elite ranks of the Solar Auxilia. In addition to these experienced and well equipped forces, the Warmaster also exercised command over native militias, planetary tithe-hosts and Rogue Trader Conquestor companies.



The latter were able to range far and wide, often serving as emissaries of the Warmaster and delivering in person demands for planetary governors to swear loyalty to his cause, or suffer the ruin of their worlds. Some accounts even suggest Traitor Rogue Trader Conquestor forces continued their exploration of the outer darkness even as the Heresy consumed the Imperium, claiming untold worlds not in the name of the Emperor, but of the Warmaster. Some even established pocket empires far beyond the Imperium, crowning themselves as the Warmaster's suzerains over realms that lingered beyond the Heresy and well into the age of the Great Scouring.

**The Traitor Fleets**

In addition to these ground forces, the Warmaster's mighty host was bolstered still further by entire fleets of warships turned to his service, whether willingly or otherwise. The need for such a vast armada only became more apparent after the events of Isstvan when the shortest route to attack Terra was no longer available, and the wars of the so-called Age of Darkness had begun. Without an aggressive expansion in the number of warp-capable craft in the Traitors' hands, Horus' war would simply not have been possible, for while the Legiones Astartes controlled their own ships, and thousands more besides as part of the great Expeditionary fleets, in scale alone they were insufficient to move and supply the vast hosts of all kinds that Horus had now gathered under his banner and to fight the battles flaring up across a war zone that was the galaxy entire.

To ensure the continued service of these vessels and their crews when separated from his Legions' direct control, the Warmaster emplaced numerous hidden agents, cults, spies and assassins. Many a Traitor shipmaster who attempted to renege on his oaths to Horus whilst thinking himself beyond the Warmaster's gaze, found himself cut down by a deck officer who was in fact a sworn agent of Horus, while those who displayed ruthless ambition in the Warmaster's service or who embraced the strange and sinister teachings promulgated by the dark forces that walked in Horus' shadow were rewarded.



**The March on Terra**

Each of the orders bestowed by the Warmaster upon his myriad servants, each assault, invasion, raid or conquest was done with the ultimate goal of bringing about the fall of Terra. It was an objective that could only be attained by the overwhelming application of force on a galaxy-wide scale. It required not just that the Traitor Legiones Astartes unleash the full destructive potential bred into them by the genius of the Emperor and skill bred by centuries of crusade, but that they did so with the goal of neutralising the potential of the Loyalist Legions to resist the Warmaster and defend Terra; the most impregnable fortress ever created by Mankind. Ultimately, and despite the sworn loyalty of countless other factions, from Traitor Solar Auxilia to Titan Legions, this final battle was to be between blood-kin, between Space Marines, and would only be concluded by the bitter struggle of brother against brother, son against son, and son against father.

**The Dark Mechanicum**

Aside from the human component in the Traitors' ranks, the powers of the Mechanicum and their kin were also of great importance to the war. Within the ranks of this '*Dark Mechanicum*', as they became known, could be found powerful elements of the Martian Priesthood, the Ordo Reductor and the Legio Cybernetica, along with many of the feared Myrmidon Destructor Cults and a number of sub-cults which had operated for long years on the edge of tech-heresy, all drawn together by Fabricator-General Kelbor Hal. With them had come the support of more than half of the legions of the Titanicus as well as dozens of allied Knight Houses, and now Mars itself was lost to the Loyalists, while the output and military power of Forge Worlds such as Sarum, Voss, Cyclothrathe and Stygies had declared for the Traitors, with others such as Anvilus, Incaladion and Ryza paralysed by civil war.

**Hidden Forces**

As the fires of the Heresy consumed ever greater swathes of the Imperium, other, less conventional forces fought alongside the Traitors. Aside from legions of long-implanted spies, agents, terrorist cells and mercenaries, many were cultic in origin. These were drawn from the vast numbers of fanatics steeped in the insanity of the Immaterium that were rising up on world after world where the disciples of the Dark Apostle Erebus and the Davinites that had followed in the Warmaster's wake —among others— had seeded unspeakable blasphemy before the war. Most were frenzied zealots who threw themselves upon their erstwhile lords screaming the praises of entities then unnamed, but which became all too familiar as the Heresy ground on. Few worlds were untouched by the presence of these deluded cults, but it is notable that many of the Traitor Legiones Astartes avoided direct contact with them. The Word Bearers in particular factored the cult forces into their battle plans, and it is notable that many appeared to venerate the warriors of Lorgar as demi-gods or angels, prostrating themselves upon the ground in their presence or laying down their own lives in battle without question.

There was one further ally the Warmaster could call upon, one most often encountered where the warp cults had previously risen up or where the greatest amounts of blood had been shed, though as the war ground on, incursions grew ever more widespread and unpredictable. These were the entities of the Warp, known by some by the arcane term '*Daemons*', though many thought of them as aliens that simply existed within the Immaterium much as the dreaded parasite Psychneuein did, or as psychic phenomena—mortal insanity given physical, albeit temporary form with the rise in warp storm activity across the galaxy.

Few perceived the true danger or power of such creatures, nor would they for some time yet. Eventually, many of the Traitor Legions would fight side by side with the legions of the abyss, sharing their sins and chanting the names of the same powers. But at the time of the Warmaster's conquest of the northern Imperium, most of the Legiones Astartes, with the notable exception of the Word Bearers, still considered them anathema to their principles or disregarded them as mere dangerous Warp phenomena, although particularly within the ranks of the Emperor's Children that was rapidly changing, even in the early years of the Age of Darkness. The truth —often now overlooked— is that for many years after Isstvan, most of the Traitor Legions were concerned more with a political rebellion and with imposing a new order on the Imperium than with surrendering it to the anarchy and Warp-rent chaos that would descend in the latter years of the Heresy.

# Sons of Horus Terminator

Unnamed Legionary
*Vengeful Spirit* Legion Reserve
Boarding of the *Triumph Of Reason*
The Battle of Port Maw

This depiction of a Sons of Horus Legionary clad in Tartarus pattern Tactical Dreadnought Armour is based on one of the few extant images from the fall of the *Triumph of Reason* during the Battle of Port Maw. It is surmised that the Legionary was a member of an elite Legion Terminator reserve detailed to operate on the *Vengeful Spirit*, the flagship of the Arch-Traitor Horus. This unit, it is thought, was a recent configuration, displaying as it did post-Legion insignia, but not the sable livery of the feared Justaerin.

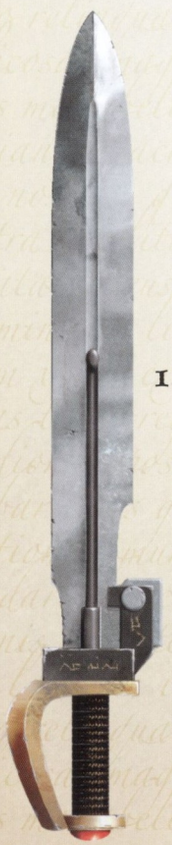
The Legionary's armour is extensively adorned with Cthonian gang-script, possibly applied as part of warrior lodge rituals. Note also the use of Cthonian 'mirror-coins' and the 'Eye of the Serpent' icon mounted on the Legionary's chest armour, which was used as a signifier of the bearer's allegiance to the Warmaster, a dark mirror of the Loyalists' increased use of the 'Imperialis' as their own totem.

**Panoply of War**

**1. Power sword, Charatran sub-pattern:** Recent battle wear and artificer-applied Cthonian rune-script.

**2. Tigrus pattern combi-bolter**



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# Sons Of Horus Reaver Chieftain

Chieftain K'lathall
Sons of Horus 7th Assault Company
Assault on the Palace of Light
Fall of Manachea

According to a stele, later recovered on Goth after the war, dedicated to this war leader, Chieftain K'lathall served in a Despoiler squad at Isstvan III, proving by the exceptional savagery of his deeds that he was deserving of a more honoured appointment. Being placed in command of a Reaver attack squad of the 7th Assault Company, he participated in the final assault on the gates of the Palace of Light at Hive Ilium on Manachea. To Chieftain K'lathall fell the honour of being the first to breach the palace's inner bounds. This was merely the beginning of this Sons of Horus Legionary's rise within his Legion, as the Stele of Goth attests.

Chieftain K'lathall is depicted here wearing a variant pattern of MkIV Astartes power armour, initially issued to Reaver squads around the time of the Isstvan V Dropsite Massacre. The pattern incorporates elements of armour design reminiscent of the warring gang-tribes of Cthonia and the Eye of the Warmaster icon in its form. K'lathall is further equipped with an advanced Phaeton pattern heavy lift jump pack.

**Panoply of War**
**1. Charatran pattern chainaxe**

**2. Ryza 'Sunspite' pattern plasma pistol**





1.

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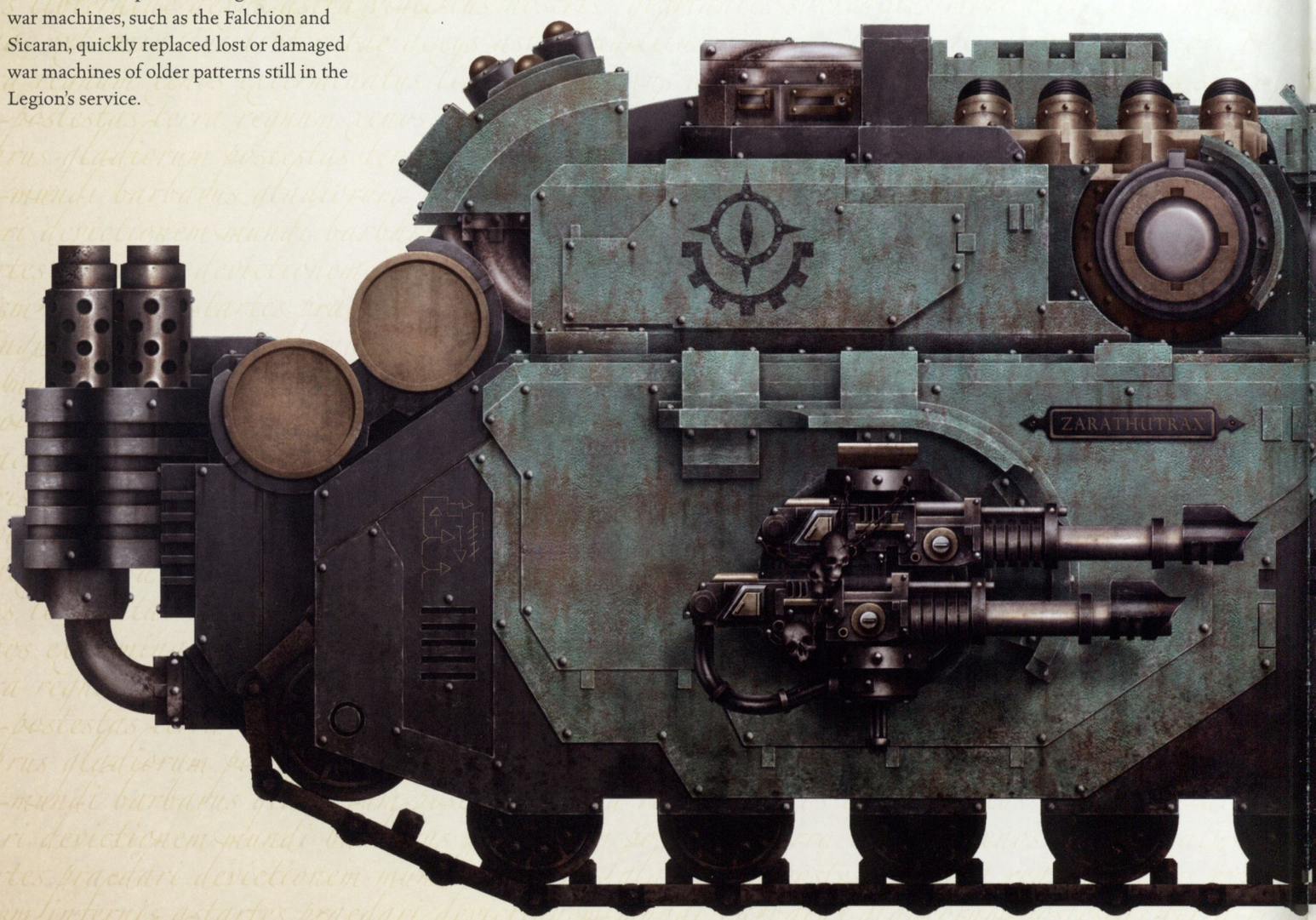
# Sons of Horus Armoured Formations

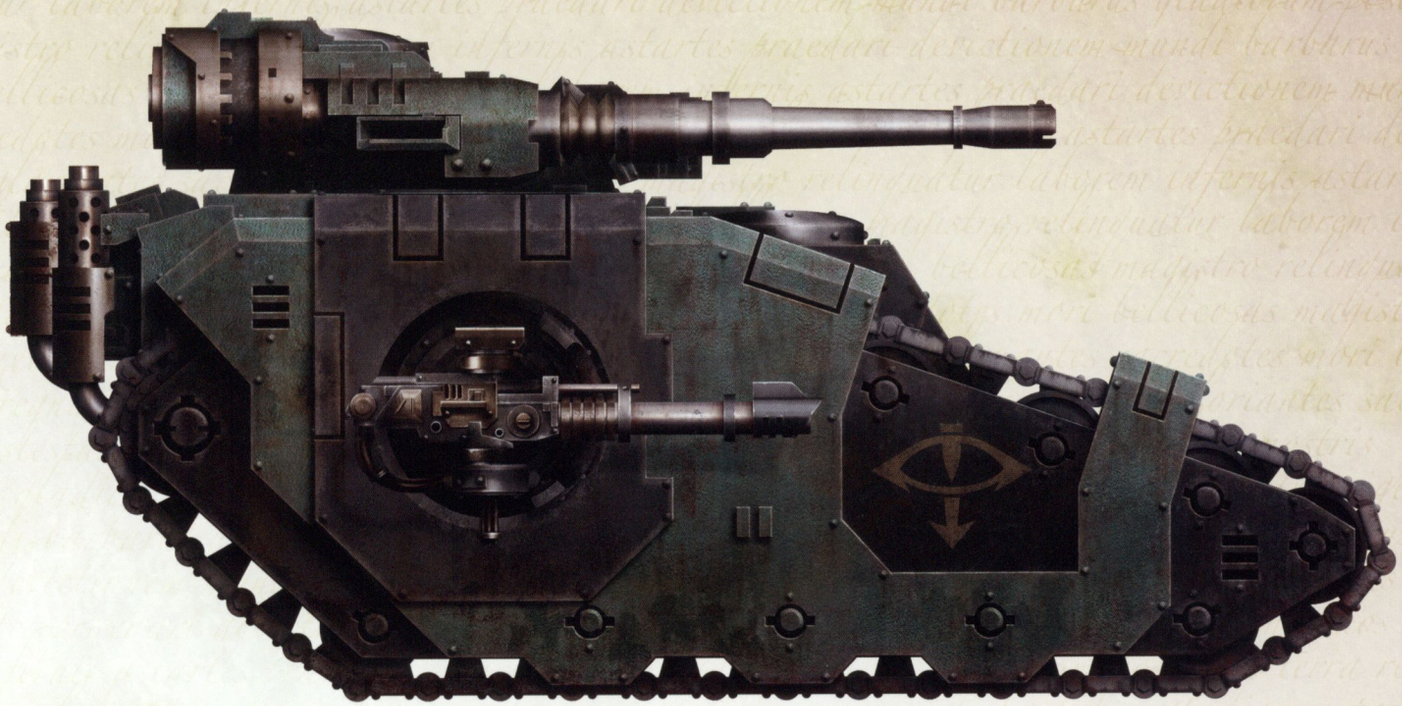
At the time of the Warmaster's advance on the Coronid Deeps, his Legion's armoured forces had been replenished substantially, having been severely depleted during the conflicts at Isstvan III and Isstvan V. In part this was because the Sons of Horus, and to some degree all of the Traitor Legions, had been able to salvage a treasure trove of war machines and materiel from the wreckage laid out upon the sands of the Urgall Depression in the wake of the Isstvan V Dropsite Massacre. It was also because the Warmaster's lieutenants ensured that, as the Traitor armies progressed, the efforts of the Dark Mechanicum and the brutal tithe extracted from the worlds they subjugated were first set to the supply of Horus' own above all others. This ensured that the latest and most powerful Legiones Astartes war machines, such as the Falchion and Sicaran, quickly replaced lost or damaged war machines of older patterns still in the Legion's service.

**The 28th Armoured Assault Company '*The Back Breakers*'**

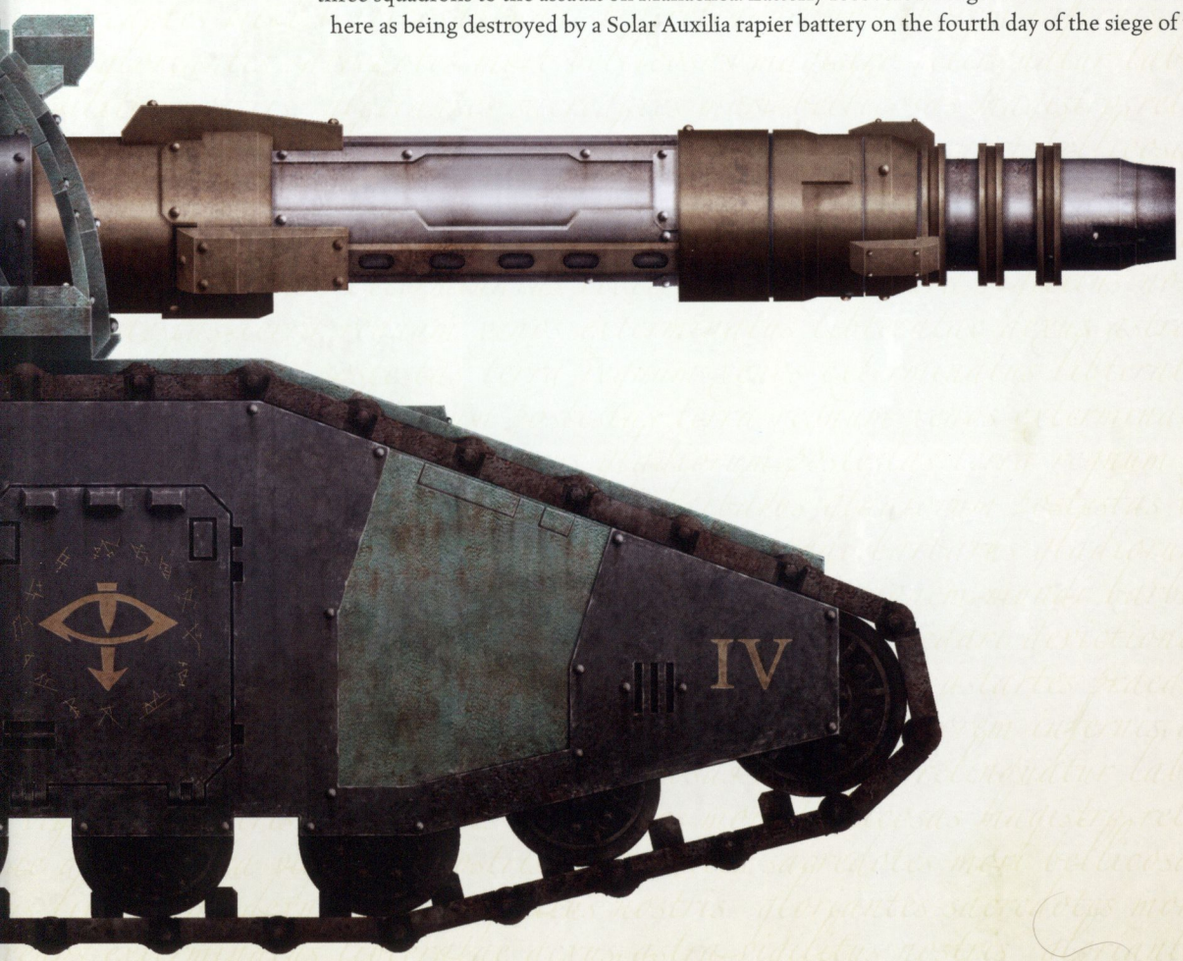
During the Warmaster's invasion of the Coronid Deeps, the armoured formations of the Sons of Horus were deployed across multiple war zones. In particular, the 28th Armoured Assault Company (known by the informal cognomen of the '*Back Breakers*' for their use as a heavy assault attrition unit) claimed battle honours at Lascal and Taracanis, broken up into smaller, ship-based battlegroups, before taking part en masse in the final destruction of Hive Ilium on Manachea. In this conflict, the Sons of Horus deployed an enormous range and variety of armoured formations, maintaining a fluid command structure that allowed them to operate as a highly mobile reserve capable of reinforcing successful breakthroughs and delivering the final, crushing blow to a collapsing enemy defence. In particular, as the bulk of the Legion committed to the assault on Hive Ilium penetrated the hive city's dense environs, it split fluidly into multiple smaller strike groups. Each of these was assigned a squadron of tanks or an individual super-heavy tank to force a way through the heavier choke points and city nexuses, crushing defended positions and engaging enemy armour even as the Sons of Horus infantry counter-attacked any enemy that attempted to outflank the war engines and bring melta weaponry to bear.




**Falchion Super-heavy Tank Destroyer '*Zarathutrax*'**: This war machine, imaged as being attached to the 28th Armoured Assault Company during the attack on Hive Ilium, does not appear on any previous Sons of Horus orders of battle. Imperial strategio-savants estimate this action was its baptism of fire, having been created by an as-yet unknown Dark Mechanicum Forge World specifically for the Warmaster's Legion. The eye and half cogwheel icon reinforces this notion, as it saw extensive use amongst Dark Mechanicum elements operating directly under the Warmaster's command, and was intentionally isolated from the influence of Kelbor Hal and the Traitor Martian Synod.



**Sicaran Battle Tank (Unidentified):** The Sicaran was still a relatively recent addition to the arsenal of the Legiones Astartes in the opening first few years of the Horus Heresy, and the Sons of Horus deployed at least three squadrons to the assault on Manachea. Latterly recovered images show the unidentified vehicle depicted here as being destroyed by a Solar Auxilia rapier battery on the fourth day of the siege of the Palace of Light.



# Sons of Horus Tactical Markings and Heraldry



Cthonian Serpent Glyph, Elite Units



Sons of Horus Legion Icon



Alternative Sons of Horus, Legion variant

### The Luna Wolves

This earlier, white-armoured iteration of the XVI[th] Legion used more standardised tactical markings than the later Sons of Horus. By the time of the conquest of the Coronid Deeps, its wolf and moon icons were a rare sight.



Chieftain's Personal Heraldry



Destroyer Variant



Reaver Variant



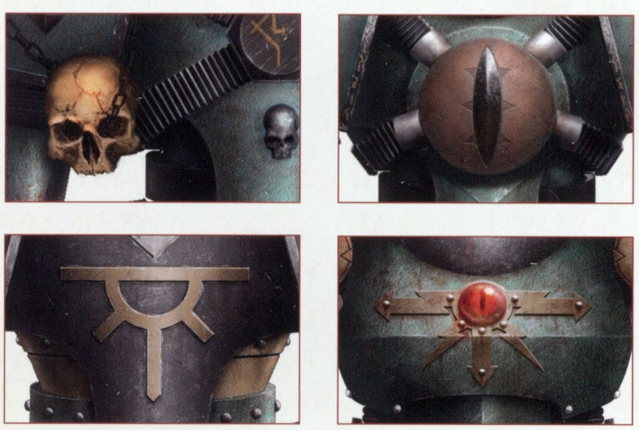
### Sons of Horus Legion Helm Markings

Helm markings are often applied by the bearer and follow formal tactical schemes far less often than amongst other Legions. Cthonian glyphs applied by hand indicate the Legionary has been '*blooded*' in combat according to the kill-rites of the Cthonian head-hunter gangs.



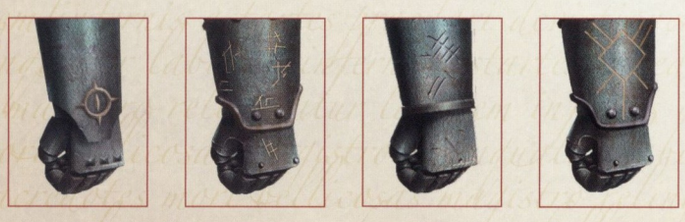
### Honourium Armouria

A wide variation of idiosyncratic battle plate is used. Note gang-derived tradition of decapitating defeated enemy champions and dipping the flensed skull in liquid gold as a personal trophy.



### Battle Plate Armourial Icons

Officers in the Sons of Horus Legion use relatively few markings of rank and when they are required, they tend to be derived from the personal glyphs of senior leaders or an individual company's captain or Chieftain in line with the traditions of the Cthonian gangs. Note Crow Cult icon (right) in place of more common Serpent Cult eye.

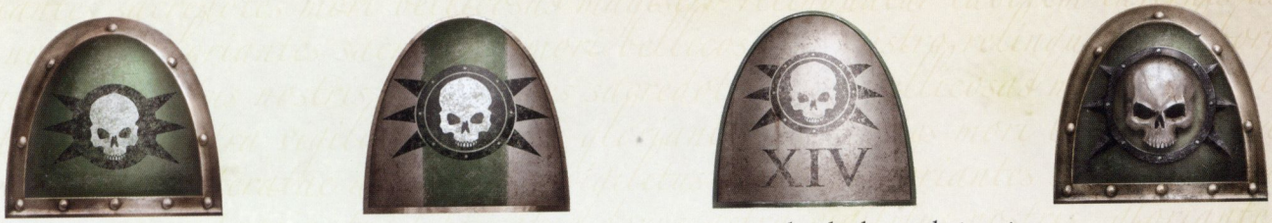


### Dreadnought Armourial Icons

As veterans of numerous campaigns, Dreadnoughts often display mementoes of their greatest deeds. Some, such as the '*Black Eclipse*' campaign badge shown below, hark back to previous iterations of the XVI[th] Legion, in this case the Luna Wolves' victory against the Khrave of Morduna.



# Death Guard Tactical Markings and Heraldry



Legion markings with variations showing Legion numeral and sub-unit designation.



Great Company Command, 2nd Great Company



Tactical with Squad Numeral, 2nd Great Company



Heavy Support with Squad Numeral, 2nd Great Company



Veteran Squads, 2nd Great Company



Assault with Squad Numeral, 2nd Great Company



Destroyer Variant



Command with Legion Numeral and Veteran Honour

### The Dusk Raiders

An obsolete iteration of the XIVth Legion, the Dusk Raiders' storm grey battle plate and blood red right shoulder and arm armour re-emerged on unidentified Loyalist Astartes.





High Command, Primarch's Commendation



Destroyer Variant, Death Guard Poison Ships



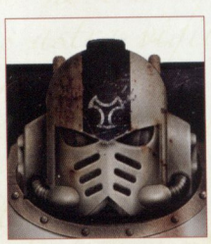
Warmaster's Service Veteran Honour

### Death Guard Legion Helm Variation





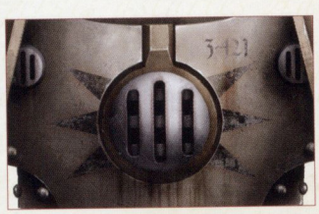




The use of vertical helmet stripes to denote seniority is believed to have originated with the Legion's re-organisation as the Death Guard, and become common as a mark of veterancy and tactical command.

### Death Guard Legion Armour

Battle damage that does not compromise armour systems is retained as a mark of honour. Additional Legion iconography and Eye of the Serpent (indicating Traitor allegiance).









# Death Guard Grave Warden

Legionary Koloth Vorr
Heavy Assault Reserve,
7th Great Company
Scouring of Lascal IV

This depiction is based on data recovered by an Imperialis Armada landing party combing the ruins of Lascal IV for any clue of the force responsible for the eradication of its colonists. It formed part of a report later transmitted to Terra as an example of the strategies being employed by the Legiones Astartes Death Guard at that time. The Legionary is identified as a member of the 7th Great Company's '*Grave Warden*' cadre, a body of warriors specialising in the extremes of bio-alchemical warfare and used in ever-increasing numbers throughout the entirety of Mortarion's Legion. He is further identified as Legionary Koloth Vorr by what little personal heraldry is visible on the Cataphractii pattern Terminator armour, which has been modified with the distinctive technological adaptations of the Grave Wardens. This armour features the integrated Deathcloud chemical projector, its distinctive discharge stacks visible on the bearer's back.

Of particular note is the crossed scythe icon worn on the right shoulder – when displayed in this manner, this symbol denotes that the bearer or his unit has received the personal commendation of the Legion's Primarch in recognition of a notable deed of destruction performed in battle.

**Panoply of War**

1. **Assault grenade launcher:** Artificer wrought, pattern unique to Grave Warden cadre.

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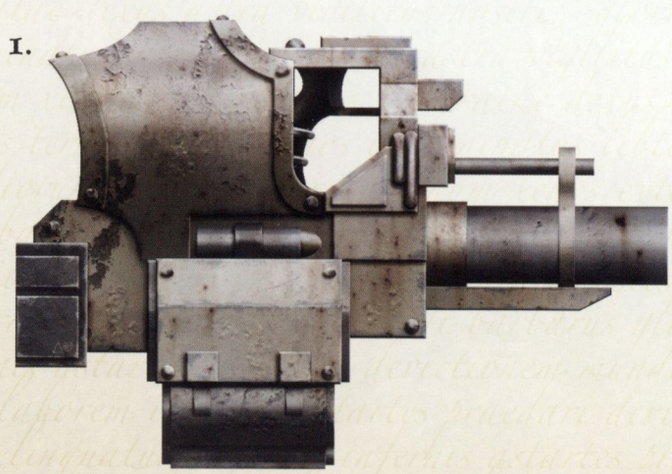

# Death Guard Tactical Legionary

Legionary Sollan Gath
33rd Tactical Squad, 6th Great Company
Harrowing of Dominica Minor

Legionary Gath is depicted here equipped in the 'Despoiler' role – a Tactical Legionary armed specifically for close-quarter fighting. In this instance, the favoured weapons combination is a utilitarian high strength combat blade and the bolt pistol. Analysis of the Death Guard Legion's crushing assault on Dominica Minor suggests that many line units, such as the 33rd, deployed directly into the civilian sectors, ruthlessly and dispassionately slaughtering everything they encountered, be they planetary militia or fleeing civilians.

Legionary Gath's power armour is a hybrid pattern incorporating elements of MkIII Astartes battle plate, combined with sections wrought especially to his Legion's specifications. The exact source of these modified armour components has never been ascertained, but some artificer-savants of the Mechanicum believe they may have been conceived either on the Forge World of Anvilus IX, or perhaps even by the Primarch Mortarion himself. Observed modifications include augmented filter apparatus, reinforced frontal armour and other devices of unknown function.

**Panoply of War**

**1. Phobos pattern bolt pistol**

**2. Combat blade:** Monomolecular-edged '*Death's Head*' sub-type.

**3. Melta bomb, krak and frag grenades**



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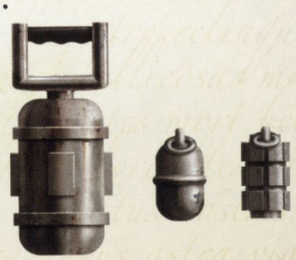




# The Loyalist Legions

*"The measure of true glory is not to give battle in the bright noon of war, surrounded by brave comrades upon the field of victory, but to valiantly fight on alone in darkness, with no hope of aid or even remembrance, and to spit defiance in midnight's eye."*

*Lion El'Jonson*
*Primarch of the Dark Angels*
*Reflections in the Mirror of War*
*Vol III*

In the aftermath of the Dropsite Massacre, the Imperium was plunged into a period of anarchy that future historians would know as the '*Age of Darkness*'. To those still loyal to Terra, all had at a stroke been cast into confusion, for none could tell who was ally and who Traitor, and so grievous a blow had been dealt, it called into question the Imperium's survival itself. Increasingly, the Warp was in turmoil, making voyages across the void hazardous and protracted, while communication by astrotelepathy over any extended distance was all but impossible. This left the defenders of the Imperium sundered from each other, shorn of direct contact and separated not simply by distance, but by insurmountable hazards and vulnerable to attack.

## The Disposition of the Loyalist Legions

For Rogal Dorn, on whose shoulders the fate of Terra and possibly the entire Imperium rested, this was a period of intense frustration as he attempted to assay his forces and coordinate their stand. Dorn had committed the bulk of his own Legion's fleet to the retribution force sent to Isstvan to confront the rebels, but it had become stranded by the tumultuous conditions in the Warp and then attacked by the Traitor Iron Warriors. Though ordered to return to Terra with all possible speed, Dorn's Legion was far from a coherent force as individual vessels struggled through the raging Empyrean, arriving at the Sol System in ragged and wounded flotillas instead of the glorious, hundreds-strong fleet that had departed months before. Though the remnants of the Imperial Fists at Terra benefitted from the vast military assets located there, including such elite forces as the Legio Custodes, and the powerful Armada Imperialis Battlefleet Solar-based Saturnyne shipyards. Mars, however, having risen in civil war in support of the Warmaster, was now forbidden to them, and worse yet had become a deadly thorn in the Loyalists' side, needing constant watchful blockade, and so further diverted Dorn's

attention, and the decision was taken for him to concentrate on building Terra's defences for the inevitable onslaught to come.

What little Lord Dorn knew of the calamitous events that had unfolded at Isstvan came directly from the Primarch Corax, Lord of the Raven Guard. Upon breaking free of the bloodshed of the Dropsite Massacre, Corax had led the shattered remnants of his Legion in a ninety-eight day battle for survival, culminating in its miraculous rescue from the very jaws of the foe. Ignorant of the extent of the Warmaster's betrayal and aware that Horus might expect him to immediately return to his Legion's home world of Deliverance to fortify and regroup, Corax made directly through the turbulent Warp for Terra, and there recounted the awful scope of the Dropsite Massacre. Having done so, Corax then took the last few thousand of his warriors home with the desperate hope of rebuilding his ravaged command.

**Shattered Legions**

Of the other Legions betrayed during the Dropsite Massacre, still less was known for certain. Corax had confirmed the bitter news of the death of his brother Ferrus Manus of the X[th] Legion at the hands of their brother Fulgrim of the Emperor's Children, news that had shaken Malcador and the members of the Council of Terra to the core. Of the Iron Hands Legion itself, it was known that many had been driven to stark madness by witnessing their father's end and thrown themselves wholesale into the crucible of war as if to absolve their loss in their own deaths. Yet, a substantial number of Iron Hands Legionaries had extricated themselves from the massacre, and while few had made it off the surface, many more had survived the calamitous void ambush of the Legion's fleet, breaking away and scattering across the stars. Some would form isolationist bands, fighting their own private wars against the Traitors, such as the infamous '*Red Talons*' of Autek Mor, or refuse any master save their own will as did the company known to some records as the '*Heart of Stone*'. Others, such as those who came to follow Shadrak Meduson, would form a series of ad-hoc, cell-structured forces slowly cohering into a single loosely knit organisation; a shattered Legion army shot through with elements of other forces that had been wrecked by the base treachery at Isstvan.

Of the fate of the Legiones Astartes Salamanders, still less was known. Witnesses had watched in horror as the entire sector in which the last of the XVIII[th] Legion had fought was consumed in atomic fire. Of all three Legions betrayed at the Dropsite Massacre, the Salamanders suffered the worst, scant few of their number escaping. Of these, most would join the bitter shadow-war against the Traitors either as part of shattered Legion warbands, or more rarely as coherent forces of their own entirely, such as those who followed the so-called '*Prophet of Fire*' at the Siege of Mezoa and the liberation of Goth, while the small guard force of Nocturne acted in the aggressive defence of their native region in accordance to their oaths, continuing to raise recruits in their Primarch's name and their Legion's traditions unchecked. Of the Primarch Vulkan, it was assumed through much of the Age of Darkness that he had perished.

**The Loyalists Scattered**

It might have been assumed then, that the defence of the wider Imperium might have fallen to others whose Legions held equal or greater power to Dorn's own, but who had not felt the scourge of the Dropsite Massacre. The most obvious candidate for this supposition perhaps was the indomitable Roboute Guilliman and the Ultramarines, who in number ranked above all other Legions. Here too the fell genius of the Warmaster was revealed. In the months before the Isstvan III Atrocity, when Horus still concealed the treachery that had consumed his soul, the Lord of Ultramar and almost the entirety of the XIII[th] Legion were ordered by Horus back to the Eastern Fringe to muster in the Veridian system to counter an anticipated attack by the Orks of the Ghaslahk Empire. The Ultramarines Legion was completely beyond communication when the Traitor's hand struck there in the guise of a bloody assault by the Word Bearers and, unknown to Terra, after this Guilliman had himself reached the awful conclusion that the Throne world had fallen.

The feared Blood Angels Legion too were beyond Terra's reach, for in preparation for his betrayal, Horus had met with his brother Primarch Sanguinius and tasked him and the bulk of his Legion with pacifying the Signus Cluster, and as with other such orders, this too was a trap. The Blood Angels would not emerge from that terrible war until much later, and when they did, would be transfigured by the experience. For now at least, the status of the sons of Sanguinius was unknown to Rogal Dorn, and he had little choice but to assume his brother Primarch would not be able to aid him in the defence of Terra.

The status of the Dark Angels was also largely unknown to their fellows, the I[st] Legion having been deployed far to the galactic east across the dark frontier of the Shield Worlds to quell trouble there for several years. Whether this war had also been engineered by Horus as a means of ensuring the Dark Angels were far away from Isstvan when his betrayal was unveiled or whether its enigmatic Primarch Lion El'Jonson had motivations of his own for this is unknown. Whatever the truth, the Dark Angels would become aware only after the fact of the Dropsite Massacre of the catastrophe that had unfolded, and would not play their full part until their savage confrontation with the Traitor Night Lords during the Thramas Crusade. Until then, the Dark Angels would remain consigned to the outer void, and Terra and the core worlds of the Imperium beyond their aid.

Despite the silence of both Guilliman and the Lion, Dorn had some limited success communicating with others of his brother Primarchs that yet remained loyal. The Wolf Lord Leman Russ, Primarch of the VI[th] Legion, had previously been tasked with calling his brother Magnus the Red of the Thousand Sons to account for the crime of using his psychic powers against the Emperor's direct proscription. Again showing his far-reaching cunning, the Warmaster had intervened and manipulated Russ into changing his mission from bringing Magnus back to Terra alive to bringing him back dead —if at all— and purging his Legion. The battle that followed was an apocalyptic one, and despite the allied forces of the Sisters of Silence and Legio Custodes that fought alongside the Space Wolves, the VI[th] Legion took severe losses in the action, while their enemy was all but destroyed. Having razed the Thousand Sons home world of Prospero and driven the defeated Magnus and the remnants of his Legion to take sanctuary where none could follow, Russ had retreated to Alaxxes to bind his Legion's wounds and, after the civil war broke out, had established contact with his brother, Jaghatai Khan.

The Lord of the White Scars and his V[th] Legion had themselves been engaged against Orks in the Chondax system, not far from the Space Wolves, and when the Space Wolves came under direct assault by a formidable Alpha Legion fleet and in dire need of reinforcement, the White Scars came to their aid. When at last the storms relented just enough to allow tenuous contact between the Khan's fleet's astropaths and Terra, Dorn,

appraising the situation in light of the ongoing war instructed that Russ should draw the Alpha Legion fleet away into the depths of the void.

War was now spread the length and breadth of a chaotic and now largely unseen Imperium, and as far as Lord Dorn and the Sigillite were concerned, the Imperial Fists alone of all the Legiones Astartes would have to shoulder the burden of the defence of the Throne world. Until such time as the storms relented or those Legions still unknowingly enacting the Warmaster's duplicitous orders could fight their way through them, the defenders of Terra would stand alone while around them the galaxy burned.

### Uncertainty and Allegiance

The treachery of the Legions that prosecuted the Dropsite Massacre was a stark crime against all the Great Crusade had striven so hard to achieve, and the names of these Traitor Legions spread far and wide. From the very beginning, however, the division between Loyalist and Traitor was never as clearly defined as later generations might believe. It was certainly true that the Warmaster and his co-conspirators had turned hundreds of thousands of once staunchly loyal Legionaries against the Imperium and their brothers, but his reach was never truly total. The nature of the Emperor's immense Great Crusade was such that, while each of the Legions often fought as a whole army under the direct leadership of its own Primarch, smaller contingents were detached across the entire Imperium and into the deep void beyond. The ceaseless and ever-varying demands of numerous ongoing Compliance campaigns, suppression actions against recidivist regimes and the bolstering of Rogue Trader Militant pathfinder forces caused Space Marine detachments of all sizes, from individual squads to entire battalions, to operate beyond even the reach of the Warmaster's agents whilst the poison was spreading through their parent Legions.

In most cases, these contingents were simply too far distant to be infected with the malady of treachery. By the time they eventually returned to communication range with the Imperium at large, such as it was with astrotelepathy made all but impossible by the tortured Warp, the die was cast and events had moved on. Confronted with outright betrayal, these contingents saw the Warmaster for what he truly was and their brothers for base traitors, and could do nothing but renounce their erstwhile kin. Records do not relate how many of these recalcitrant bands were destroyed by their own upon returning from detached duty.

It is likely the case that, as events unfolded and the Warmaster's betrayal took its course, some in the Traitor Legions must have reconsidered their allegiance. The Warmaster's treachery spread through the Legions at a shocking rate, but its effect on individual warriors was often subtle and varied. A Legionary might agree, for example, that the Emperor had abandoned his Legions and that Horus, and not the Council of Terra, had the right to rule in his stead. That same warrior might then see the necessity of a brief but decisive inter-Legion war in order to purge the Legiones Astartes of those lacking the strength and vision to make a stand against the forces taking control of the nascent Imperium.

As the Warmaster's true loyalties became evident, however, even those who followed his orders at Isstvan and elsewhere might have reconsidered. As those forces called upon by Erebus of the Word Bearers and others became more familiar, and the secular truths to which so many had clung to for so long were proved a lie, some warriors must surely have wavered in their position. Not all could cross the final rubicon into open alliance with the forces underpinning the entire rebellion and for many, the final realisation of the true nature of those forces must have come tragically late, long after all hope of salvation or redemption had passed.

Despite the paucity of records, accounts of small warbands that were once part of the known Traitor Legions fighting independently persisted throughout the war. A handful of extant accounts, now sealed beyond all retrieval, make reference to a loosely-termed and non-formal class of warrior known as the '*Blackshields*'. The majority of Blackshields appear to have been of the Legiones Astartes, though some may once have belonged to other factions. In some cases the term was a literal description, the warriors having obscured the livery of their parent Legion, painting some or all of their armour's panels black to hide all former associations. In other cases, outcast forces proudly bore their original colours and may have regarded themselves as the true inheritors of their Legions. Thus, for example, the 34th Millennial of the Emperor's Children (the '*Death Eagles*') bore the purple and gold of their parent Legion with pride, refusing to abandon their heraldry. It is thought that the Death Eagles Millennial clashed with their Traitor kin at Lethe and at Revorthe Keep in the Coronid Deeps, but their ultimate fate, like that of so many others, remains unknown.

*Historia Terra Regnum*

**An Age of Storms**

The Age of Darkness was an age riven by warp storms, the web of stable routes plotted through the galaxy by the Navigators of the Great Crusade consumed in a raging ætheric tempest. Even at the best of times, travel between systems even a dozen light years apart was a hazardous endeavour, but when the warp storms descended, it became all but impossible. Entire fleets were simply swallowed whole and entire armies were torn to shreds upon their riptides. The warp storms hampered not just travel, for they made astrotelepathic communication almost entirely impossible too. Worse, the denizens of the Warp would often seize upon such telepathic projections and alter them, sometimes in horrific, but obvious ways, but all too often in a subtle and manipulative manner not immediately evident to the recipient.

Though few systems were entirely unaffected by the tumults and ætheric eddies they generated, most were cut off from swathes of their neighbours into pocket regions or isolated entirely. The greatest such Empyreal storm front cleaved the Imperium in half; this was the Ruinstorm, through which only the most skilled Navigators and the most dedicated servants of the Great Enemy could plot a course.

Not many could have suspected the full and awful truth at the time as it is only in retrospect apparent that the Ruinstorm was no randomly occurring phenomenon. Though few knew it at the height of the Age of Darkness, the Ruinstorm had in fact been brought into being as a result of a hideous compact sealed with the powers that dwell within the Warp. Sparked by the promise of bloodshed on a galactic scale and fuelled by the hatred that erupted between erstwhile brothers, Lorgar's Ruinstorm grew so fierce and massive it became all but impenetrable, exactly as the Warmaster had planned.

# Iron Hands Legionary

Unknown Legionary
Order Tertii, Clan Felg
The Lascal Massacres
[*Taken from a pict-capture recorded as part of the Loyalist investigation into the massacre of Lascal during the outbreak of fighting in the Grail Abyss.*]

The body of this Legionary, along with that of a number of local auxilia, was discovered sealed within one of the fortified redoubts in the capital from the inside. Blood on the walls and vault doors, as well as damage to the Legionary's armour, suggests a ferocious battle. However, the occupants all died from extreme exposure to necro-toxins after the chamber was sealed.

Markings on his chest plate identify the Legionary as a member of Clan Felg, and faint insignia on his right pauldron suggest he was part of the Order Tertii, 25th Cohort, a seeker-killer formation deployed to the surface of Isstvan V, but additional iconography has no confirmed identification. However, the piecemeal nature of his armour, with components obviously scavenged from several sources, may cast doubt on these findings. How he came to be present on Lascal at the time of the Death Guard Legion's assault is unknown.



**Panoply of War**
**1. Thunder Edge pattern chainsword**

**2. Umbra pattern bolt pistol**

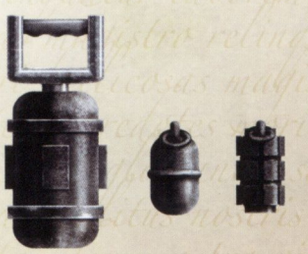
**3. Melta bomb, krak and frag grenades**



1.



2.



3.

# Imperial Fists Terminator Sergeant

Veteran Sergeant Valtus Moran
21st Occupation Echelon, 42nd Company
Manachean Commonwealth Garrison

The small Imperial Fists contingent posted at Lethe to forewarn the Commonwealth of attack was utterly outnumbered when the Sons of Horus came to claim it for their gene-father. Struck from orbit by sustained bombardment, only its deep, triple-shielded bunkers built into the bedrock yet endured. The few survivors were quickly assailed by a full cohort of Cthonian Headhunter Auxilia and Sergeant Moran and his Terminator brethren led a breakout attempt, successfully seizing several short range void craft and escaping the death of Lethe at a high cost in lives. It would prove a cruel irony of war that their blood-bought warning was without purpose, as Manachea itself had already fallen.

Pictured here in the aftermath of the breakout, Sergeant Moran's armour shows the ferocity with which their foes fought. Of the fifty-two Imperial Fists that survived the orbital bombardment, only twenty-three were able to fight their way to freedom, all of them wounded.

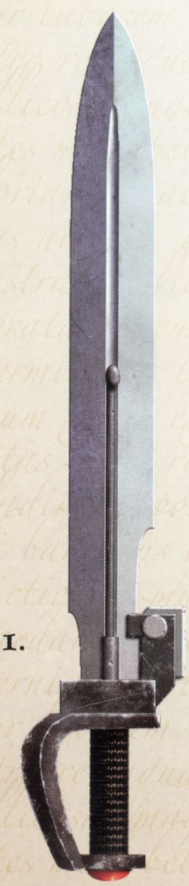



**Panoply of War**

**1. Tartaros pattern power sword**

**2. Tigrus pattern combi-melta.**

1.



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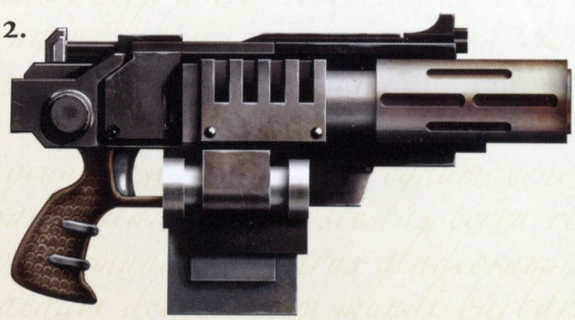


# Iron Hands Contemptor Dreadnought




## Veneratii Oberas

### Order Secundii, Clan Morragul, The Gethsamaine Raid

The inscriptions on the sarcophagus of this Contemptor Dreadnought identify the occupant as Centurion Calen Oberas, one of many officers whose flawed temperament earned him rebuke and transfer to Clan Morragul under Ferrus Manus' harsh regime. Centurion Oberas fell in battle defending the *Red Talon* from a World Eaters boarding party during the Traitors ambush at Isstvan V.

This pict was recovered from one of the ruined cities of Gethsamaine, by which time Oberas had been interred into a Dreadnought shell to continue his service to Clan Morragul. His frenzied rampage through the ill-trained Gethsamaine troops is a testament to the consuming fury that engulfed many of the Gorgon's children after his death at Isstvan V.

# Salamanders Pyroclast

Legionary Karo Nar'Shak
Battlegroup 'Revenant',
Ad-hoc Loyalist Company
Liberation of Numinal

Legionary Nar'Shak is one of the few loyal Legiones Astartes known to have escaped the Dropsite Massacre aboard the Thunderhawk *Ohidoran*, and participated in the seizing of the Night Lords vessel *Warlock* before that craft left the Isstvan system under heavy fire. The arrival of the *Warlock* and its cargo of Legiones Astartes at Agathaon, having evaded capture and destruction for nine months, was near miraculous.

Pictured here during the fighting on Numinal, Legionary Nar'Shak bears the emblem of the ad-hoc Battlegroup 'Revenant' on his right kneepad, as well as the many Nocturnean glyph-badges that symbolise the great deeds of his career. Battlegroup Revenant conducted a series of pin-point orbital assaults on key Cyclothrathe installations on Numinal, successfully disrupting the unity of the Dark Mechanicum forces.

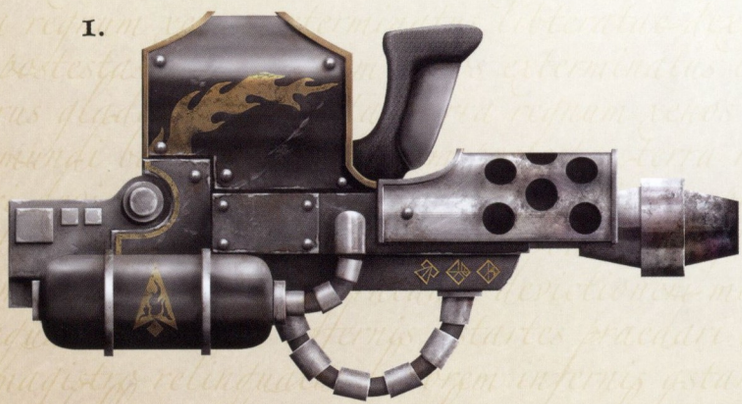
**Panoply of War**

**1. Pyroclast flame projector** (Legion Forge artificer manufacture).

**2. Combat knife, melta bomb, krak and frag grenades**



1.



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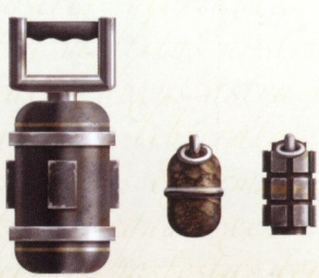


# Salamanders Contemptor Dreadnought



## Ancient Grenn

Attached to the Survivors of Cadre Sulphaeon at Dominica Minor

Once, Ancient Grenn was Consul-Centurion Shar'rac Grenn of the Realm of Epithemus, well respected in the Legion for his devotion both to duty and the teachings of Vulkan. The honour markings on his kneepads and the embossed seal of Nocturne on his chestplate recall the glories of his long career, which culminated in the brutal fighting on Isstvan V from which he barely escaped, alongside a handful of his brethren. It was on Dominica Minor that the tattered survivors heard rumours of Vulkan's death and the total destruction of their Legion, and when the dread fleet of Mortarion appeared in orbit of their refuge, they pledged to die in its defence rather than flee before their gene-father's murderers.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Conquest Campaign System



# Introduction

The Conquest campaign system is a set of gaming tools for Forge World's Battles in the Age of Darkness expansion for Warhammer 40,000. Unlike the campaigns presented in our previous Horus Heresy books, the Conquest campaign system does not attempt to portray the events of an exact narrative, but rather it has been designed to be a 'toolbox' of rules and options.

These allow players to recreate the many bloody battles and desperate last stands that occurred during Warmaster Horus' sweep through the sectors of the northern Imperium in the years after the treachery at Isstvan, but can equally be used to create campaigns covering different theatres of the war, including entirely original ones of your own devising.

Using the core campaign system presented here, a group of players can construct a unique war zone, representing a world targeted by Horus for invasion (or perhaps counter-invasion by Loyalist forces), and fight a string of battles based around the control of vital strategic objectives that will decide the fate of that world. The Conquest campaign system's optional rules then expand on this premise, offering a wealth of additional campaign options, such as rules for character progression, expanded City Fight and Raid missions, unique Strategic Warlord Traits for army commanders, ancient relics of the Dark Age of Technology, and a wealth of dramatic and characterful rules for fighting in a myriad of battlefields and war zones, so you can bring the epic destruction and scope of the Horus Heresy to life on your tabletop.

### What is the Battles in the Age of Darkness Expansion?

This expansion is a narrative framework and series of different interlocking campaign systems for your games of Warhammer 40,000 set in the deadly milieu of the Horus Heresy. It presents its own distinct way of playing based on the armies which fought each other for control of the nascent Imperium and the battles which decided Mankind's fate in this dark age of war. More general information on Force Organisation charts, army selection and special rules for Battles in the Age of Darkness games can be found in this section and in the Solar Auxilia list, as well as in the previous volumes of the Horus Heresy series. The Conquest campaign system has been designed with the use of these rules in mind.

# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Running a Conquest Campaign

The Conquest campaign system can be used, at its simplest, by two players, each with an appropriate Horus Heresy army and by playing as few as four games. However, the system can easily be used by larger groups of players incorporating many more games. As the campaign's length in terms of games played is determined by the number of Reserves points held by each side, it can easily be scaled to suit any size of group and any length of play, from a few friends over the course of an evening to over a dozen players over the course of a month or more.

In addition to the flexible and easy-to-master core mechanics of the system, these rules also present optional rules which allow players to further customise the campaign to suit both the narrative and organisational needs of their gaming group. Additional optional rules can be found both within this section and the appendices included in this book which can be easily imported into a Conquest campaign, allowing for an even more detailed gaming experience for those involved.

Obviously, as the size and complexity of the campaign increases, so do the requirements for appropriate terrain and gaming tables – especially when attempting to play large numbers of games within a relatively short period of time. While these larger campaigns are great opportunities to run exciting games, they also require more time and commitment from the players involved.

When running a Conquest campaign with a larger group, or even with a smaller group, if a large number of optional campaign rules are being employed, it may be beneficial to designate a single person as the referee and organiser instead of a player. A Campaign Referee can then impartially record results and organise games to ensure the campaign runs smoothly, allowing the other participants to fully enjoy the campaign (while everyone else involved should be at pains to help out and support, not to mention thank them!).

## How the Battles in the Age of Darkness: Conquest Campaign System Works

During the course of a Conquest campaign, the players involved will be divided into two groups: Traitors and Loyalists. These groups need not be balanced in number as the amount of games that can be played by any side is not dependent on the number of players involved, and any disparity between the sides will not confer an undue advantage.

Once the two sides have been assembled, an appropriate war zone will need to be constructed (or one of the example war zones included in this section selected instead), and a Reserves Points Pool decided upon.

### War Zones

A war zone is essentially a collection of Strategic objectives used to define the planet or area over which the campaign is being fought, allowing players to customise the size, key features and unique elements of their campaign; control of the objectives that make up the war zone will then decide the victor of the campaign once all Reserves points are exhausted.

### Reserves Points Pool

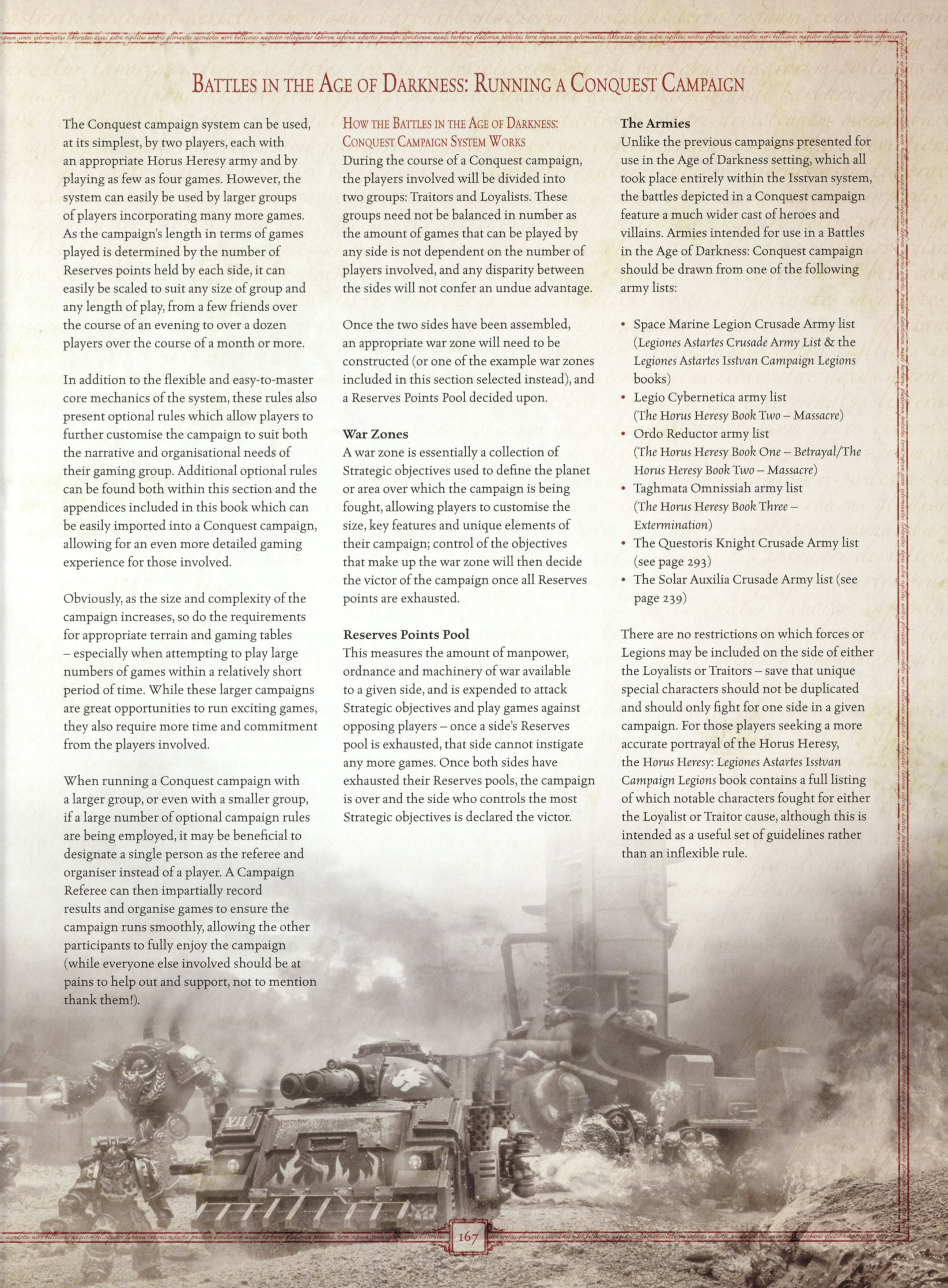
This measures the amount of manpower, ordnance and machinery of war available to a given side, and is expended to attack Strategic objectives and play games against opposing players – once a side's Reserves pool is exhausted, that side cannot instigate any more games. Once both sides have exhausted their Reserves pools, the campaign is over and the side who controls the most Strategic objectives is declared the victor.

### The Armies

Unlike the previous campaigns presented for use in the Age of Darkness setting, which all took place entirely within the Isstvan system, the battles depicted in a Conquest campaign feature a much wider cast of heroes and villains. Armies intended for use in a Battles in the Age of Darkness: Conquest campaign should be drawn from one of the following army lists:

- Space Marine Legion Crusade Army list (*Legiones Astartes Crusade Army List* & the *Legiones Astartes Isstvan Campaign Legions* books)
- Legio Cybernetica army list (*The Horus Heresy Book Two – Massacre*)
- Ordo Reductor army list (*The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*/*The Horus Heresy Book Two – Massacre*)
- Taghmata Omnissiah army list (*The Horus Heresy Book Three – Extermination*)
- The Questoris Knight Crusade Army list (see page 293)
- The Solar Auxilia Crusade Army list (see page 239)

There are no restrictions on which forces or Legions may be included on the side of either the Loyalists or Traitors – save that unique special characters should not be duplicated and should only fight for one side in a given campaign. For those players seeking a more accurate portrayal of the Horus Heresy, the *Horus Heresy: Legiones Astartes Isstvan Campaign Legions* book contains a full listing of which notable characters fought for either the Loyalist or Traitor cause, although this is intended as a useful set of guidelines rather than an inflexible rule.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Core Conquest Campaign Rules

This section presents all of the core rules for organising and running a Conquest campaign. All of the optional rules provided later in this book can be included as part of a Conquest campaign, either in part or in their entirety, as chosen by the players taking part in the campaign.

## War Zone Creation

The first step in setting up a Conquest campaign, after assembling the players and dividing them into two sides, is to create or select a war zone in which the campaign will take place. War zones are intended to represent a single planet or moon which either the Loyalist or Traitor forces have marked for invasion rather than simple destruction. Each war zone at its most basic is made up of two distinct components:

- **Reserves Points:** Each side has a pool of **Reserves points**, indicating their total resources available for the prosecution of the coming campaign in local space. In a basic campaign, both sides will have the same total and optional rules will offer choices for altering the number of points which are available.

- **Strategic Objectives:** Each war zone is made up of a number of **Strategic objectives**. During the campaign, players have the opportunity to stage attacks on the various objectives, gaining Control points for that particular objective. At the campaign's end, whichever side has the most Control points at a given objective controls that objective.

The most basic Conquest campaign assumes that at the start of play neither side has yet consolidated control over the target world. The Attackers have yet to begin their assault and the Defenders are caught unprepared by their foes – leaving both sides with equal totals of Reserves points. Some of the optional rules included as part of the Conquest rules set will allow players to vary this starting situation for increased tactical challenge, and will be discussed separately.

**War Zone Reserves Points**

The first step in creating a war zone is to decide on the Reserves points total available to each side, with the Reserves points total representing the level of the conflict in the campaign, as well as the material resources and will to fight of the two forces involved. Smaller totals would indicate either opportunistic attacks on outlying worlds or large scale raids, while larger totals would represent the mobilisation of hundreds of thousands of fighting men and armoured vehicles.

Players should, by mutual agreement, feel free to vary the Reserves points used in the campaign to fit both their personal preference and the requirements of their gaming group. When selecting a Reserves points total, bear in mind that it will determine the overall length of the campaign, with each point representing a single game to be played, for example, a campaign in which each side has 8 Reserves points will consist of 16 games. Using the table below, by common consent or by the organiser's decision, an appropriate Conflict level for the campaign should also be chosen – it is best to select a Conflict level that fits the frequency with which your group meets to play games.

| Conflict Level | Recommended Reserves Points Per Side | Recommended Total Players |
|---|---|---|
| Isolated Skirmish | 3-5 | 2-4 |
| Opportunistic Assault | 6-8 | 5-8 |
| Planetary Conquest | 9-12 | 9-12 |
| System-wide Assault | 13-15 | 12+ |

**Strategic Objectives**

These represent the key portions of the target world, both vital facilities such as defence emplacements, communications centres or manufactorum, as well as larger areas of strategic or moral importance, such as monuments, hive cities or large scale defensive terrain features. The control of these Strategic objectives will decide the overall victor of the campaign.

The core Conquest campaign rules do not consider where or how the Strategic objectives are dispersed across the target planet nor their specific function, and assume that military forces from both sides can launch attacks on these points as required. Optional rules presented later allow for more in-depth uses of Strategic objectives, including specific types of objectives and the difficulty of attacking more distant objectives. Each Strategic objective should be identified in some way (the simplest option is to number them) in order to allow players to identify them during play.

Unlike Reserves points, the number of Strategic objectives will not influence the length of a campaign, but as each game can only target one such objective, including too many in smaller games could lead to a confusing conflict. As such, it is recommended that the number of Strategic objectives in use is determined using the chart below:

| Number of Reserves Points | Recommended Strategic Objectives |
|---|---|
| 1-5 | 3 |
| 6-11 | 5 |
| 12-14 | 7 |
| 15+ | 9 |

# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Playing a Conquest Campaign

Once a war zone has either been selected from the various examples or created using the rules provided, the campaign can begin. Game play during a Conquest campaign is organised into Campaign turns, each of which allows the two sides to make attacks on Strategic objectives of their choice with the goal of accumulating Control points for that objective. Campaign turns continue to be played until both sides have exhausted all of their Reserves points, at which time the campaign ends and victory is decided based on which side has gained control of the most Strategic objectives. We have included examples of how different types of Conquest campaigns can be played on page 229.

Each **Campaign turn** is composed of three phases: the **Mustering phase**, **Conflict phase** and the **Consolidation phase**. This represents a special way of arranging and organising games that takes precedence over the usual way a game is arranged and played. Both sides must perform the noted actions in each phase of the Campaign turn before moving on to the next.

**Mustering Phase**
At the beginning of the Mustering phase, one player from each side must roll off, with the side who rolled the highest gaining the Initiative. The side with the Initiative may then issue a single Challenge before passing the Initiative to the opposing side, which may then make its own Challenge (see below). The two sides continue to make Challenges until both sides choose to decline the opportunity to Challenge (whether due to a lack of players or Reserves points), at which point the Mustering phase ends.

A **Challenge** is issued as follows:

- The side with the Initiative nominates a target Strategic objective and one of its own players as an Attacker. Note that it is only in games in which they are designated as the Attacker that players can score **Control points** at a Strategic objective – when defending you gain no Control points if victorious.
- The opposing side nominates one of its players to defend the chosen Strategic objective.
- The side with the Initiative must then reduce its Reserves Pool by one, while the opposing side pays no cost (note that a side that has no remaining Reserves points may not issue Challenges, but may defend against those made by the opposing side).

Each Challenge represents a single game of Warhammer 40,000 which is played during the Conflict phase. Note that while players may participate in as many games as they wish in any one Campaign turn – it is recommended that where possible they participate in only one in order to make book-keeping more manageable.

**Conflict Phase**
Once each player has chosen their role, ie, Attacker or Defender, has organised at least one game and all Reserves points costs have been paid by the Attacking players, each game should be played and the results of the games noted for the Consolidation phase. When using only the core Conquest campaign system rules, players will need to record which objective was being fought over and which side was the victor in the game – some optional rules may require additional information be recorded. Once all games have been played and their results noted, the Conflict phase ends.

**Consolidation Phase**
Once the Conflict phase has ended, the results of the games should be made available to all of the players in the campaign. Each game in which the Attacker was victorious will score the Attackers' side one Control point at the Strategic objective that was targeted in the game. Once this is complete, a new Campaign turn begins as long as at least one side still has Reserves points remaining to spend.

If in any Consolidation phase neither side has any Reserves points remaining, then the campaign ends. The side with the highest total Control points at each Strategic objective is considered to have gained control of it, and the side that controls the most Strategic objectives is declared the victor, gaining control of the war zone and driving off their enemies.

If both sides claim control of an equal number of Strategic objectives at the end of a campaign then players are encouraged to organise and play one final game (an excellent opportunity for a large scale, multi-player game if ever there was one!) to decide which side has won instead of simply declaring the campaign a draw.

**Campaign Missions**
There is no set list of missions available to players during a Conquest campaign. Players involved in the campaign may instead decide on which missions they wish to include as part of their campaign before beginning play. Both the Eternal War missions from the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook as well as the missions presented in the Horus Heresy Books One and Two are appropriate for almost any campaign, but gaming groups may well find others more useful in their own campaigns. In those missions where one player is designated as the Attacker or other offensive role, the player who is designated in the Mustering phase as the Attacker should always take this role.

**Warlords in this Campaign**
In campaigns that include a large number of players, it may be beneficial to nominate one player on each side as that side's Campaign Warlord. The Campaign Warlord takes responsibility for tracking their side's pool of Reserves points, for organising and recording Challenges and the results of those games during the Conflict phase.

A Conquest campaign that includes a Campaign Warlord may also choose to forego the more structured approach presented earlier for organising games during the Mustering phase, relying on the Warlord to track expended Reserves points. Other options that may appeal to groups include allowing the current Campaign Warlords or Campaign organisers to arrange all games for available players; allowing players to arrange games amongst themselves based on availability and time, or selecting where a side wishes to attack and randomly assigning players from the appropriate sides to attack and defend.

The inclusion of a Campaign Warlord is intended as a tool to ease the burden of book-keeping and to allow the Mustering phase to proceed smoothly by having them act as arbiter for their side's choices – not as an excuse for dictatorial control over other players' games. Campaign Warlords are encouraged to be fair and even-handed, and players on their side are encouraged to support them during play.

# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Conquest War Zone Traits & Strategic Objective Traits

Conquest War Zone Traits are a set of optional rules intended for use with the Conquest campaign system as detailed on page 166. These optional rules add more options to the creation of a war zone by allowing players to assign it one or more special Traits that modify all games played there during the course of the campaign. This enables players to recreate specific planets or to create interesting challenges for their games. Each War Zone Trait presents a special rule which is applied to all forces during any game played at a war zone or Strategic objective to which that Trait has been assigned.

When used as part of a Conquest campaign, players should assign 1-3 of the listed Traits to the war zone. Each game played as part of that campaign is affected by the rules for each of the Traits assigned to the war zone.

As well as simply assigning Traits to the entire war zone, Traits can be assigned to individual Strategic objectives, affecting only games played which target that Strategic objective. When assigning Traits to Strategic objectives, it can be done either in addition to assigning Traits to the war zone as a whole, or instead of. If both the war zone and the specific Strategic objective targeted by an Attacker have Traits, then all of those Traits will affect the resulting game.

Enterprising Campaign Referees, in those campaigns that feature one, will also be able to make use of Traits – introducing new ones at objectives as play progresses to reflect events or as part of some overarching plot.

What follows is a list of War Zone Traits and Strategic Objective Traits for use in Conquest campaigns, divided into several categories for ease of reference. However, players should not feel limited to only using those presented here and are encouraged to invent new ones as needed for their campaigns, as long as all players involved approve of the addition.

## War Zone Traits

These Traits are intended primarily to be assigned to an entire war zone, but could also be assigned to a single Strategic objective.

**Burning Desert**
This is a war zone covered by an expanse of unforgiving desert and blasted by extremes of temperature that test the limits of both man and machine. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, on any turn in which a unit Runs or charges, or a vehicle of any type moves at Cruising Speed or moves Flat Out, immediately roll a D6 for that unit/vehicle. On the roll of a 1, a single model in the unit (chosen by the controlling player) loses a single wound with no saves allowed, or the vehicle loses 1 Hull Point.

**Ferocious Storms**
Whether howling arctic winds laden with shards of diamond-hard ice, or burning gales and blazing cinders that speed ahead of colossal firestorms, the great storms that dominate this region are a real danger to the combatants. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, designate one board edge at random as the source of the storm-winds. All models moving towards this board edge, including vehicles, move 1" less than normal (this includes both Run moves and charges), and models that move in any direction using jump packs or jet packs, or which are Skimmer or Flyer type vehicles, must make a Dangerous Terrain test when they move.

**Endless Forests**
War zones blanketed by tangled and overgrown forests, whether of familiar flora or more exotic forms, can create a nigh-impregnable natural fortress. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, all Twisted Copses or other terrain features representing woods are replaced with Tangled Forest terrain pieces – at least half of the terrain on the table must be Tangled Forests.

**Battlefield Terrain – Tangled Forest (Difficult Terrain):** A terrain piece of this type counts as difficult terrain, and all models on the base of the terrain piece receive a 4+ cover save regardless of whether or not they are 25% obscured. In addition, while models within a Tangled Forest may be targeted normally, no line of sight may be drawn through a Tangled Forest and vehicles moving through a Tangled Forest fail Dangerous Terrain tests on the roll of a 1 or 2.

**Broken Ruinscape**
Already ravaged by war, either recently or in times now long passed, this world is covered by a maze of crumbling and blasted ruins and long forgotten traps. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, at least half of the terrain pieces deployed onto the table must be Treacherous Ruins, and all other terrain pieces intended to represent ruins of any kind are treated as Treacherous Ruins.

**Battlefield Terrain: Treacherous Ruins (Ruins):** A terrain piece of this kind counts as a ruin and is considered to be difficult terrain. Models in a Treacherous Ruin receive a 4+ cover save, regardless of whether or not they are 25% obscured. In addition, whenever a unit moves within a Treacherous Ruin and rolls a double on their Difficult Terrain test, they encounter a relic of the war that devastated the area (note that for units with the Move Through Cover special rule, only the final result counts) as shown on the table below.

### Treacherous Ruins: Relics of War Table

**Difficult Terrain**

| Test Result | Relic of War Found |
|---|---|
| **Double 1 or 2** | **Unexploded Warhead:** All models currently in this Treacherous Ruin suffer a single Str 4 AP 5 hit with the Rend and Pinning special rules. |
| **Double 3 or 4** | **False Alarm:** Every unit with at least one model in this Treacherous Ruin must take an immediate Pinning test. |
| **Double 5 or 6** | **Munitions Cache:** All friendly models in this Treacherous Ruin gain the Twin-linked special rule for this game turn. |

**Hive Cities**
One of many such sprawling cities that fill the ever-growing Imperium, this region is home to thousands, or possibly millions, of Imperial citizens – and any fighting here will exact a terrible toll in human lives. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, at least half of the terrain pieces deployed onto the table must be Hive Hab Blocks.

**Battlefield Terrain – Hive Hab Block (Building):** A terrain piece of this kind is an Armour value 12 building of any size (decide at the start of the game which size based on what is available to players, and thus the Transport Capacity and Hull Point value of each building) with Access points and Fire Points as shown on the model and no weapons. As the hab blocks often still contain terrified Imperial citizens unable to flee the war zone, at the start of play each of these buildings has its Transport Capacity reduced by a number equal to its starting Hull Points from the normal Transport Capacity for a building of its size For example, a small-sized Hab Block will have its Transport Capacity reduced to 7 (ie, its 3 Hull Points subtracted from its original Transport Capacity of 10). If at least one Hive Hab Block is on the table at the start of play, then each player in the game can choose one of the following Necessities of War Secondary objectives, which apply only to the player who chose them during this game.

**Necessities of War Secondary Objectives**
**Slayer of Cities:** Any time a player with this Secondary objective scores Victory points for the destruction of an enemy unit, they score 1 additional Victory point if that unit was embarked in a Hive Hab Block building at any point in the phase in which it was destroyed.

**Defender of the Weak:** If, at the end of the game, a player with this Secondary objective claims control of more Hive Hab Block buildings than their opponent, the player with the most buildings scores 1 extra Victory point.

**Grasping Mire**
An all but impassable and hazardous mire covers this whole area, and whether of natural origin or the result of industry or warfare, the unseen sinkholes and predators within pose a disgusting challenge for those assigned to fight in it. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, the entire tabletop, except for those areas covered by the base of a terrain piece, are assumed to be within the Grasping Mire.

Any Infantry units in the Grasping Mire may not Run and must roll a D6 before moving. On the roll of a 1, the unit suffers D3 Str 4 AP - hits with the Pinning special rule. Jump Pack or Jet Pack Infantry that either Jump or Thrust count the Grasping Mire as dangerous terrain, as do all non-Super-heavy vehicles, except Walkers, Skimmers and Flyers.

**Seas of Fog**
Blanketed by an ever shifting sea of fog that confounds even the technological arts of the Mechanicum, fighting in this area is often limited to savage close range fire-fights, and incidents of friendly fire become ever more common. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this particular Trait, all units targeted by Shooting attacks are considered to be 3" further away than they actually are (for example, a Shooting attack targeting an enemy unit 12" away must count the range as being 15" while this Trait is in play).

**Seas of Fog – False Fire (Optional):** The use of this additional rule for Seas of Fog must be agreed upon by both sides before the battle as it allows for the confusion caused by the fog banks to create incidents where allies fire on each other. While this rule is in effect, any unit or vehicle that begins the Shooting phase 12" or closer to any friendly units must roll a D6. On a 1, every model in the unit must make a Snap Shot attack, if possible, at the nearest friendly unit, mistaking them for an enemy in the miasma. A unit that is forced to fire on a friendly unit by this rule may not make any further attacks in that Shooting phase, nor does the attack or its results count for scoring Victory points in regards to Primary or Secondary objectives.

**Rad Wastes**
The glassy plains and rad-wracked landscapes of this war zone are scars left behind by an orbital bombardment intended to scour all life from its surface. Even now, long after whatever battle called for such measures, it is still inimical to all but the hardiest forms of life and wracked by unpredictable rad storms. In a game played in a suitable war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, for any units not equipped with Hardened Armour, Void Hardened Armour or an invulnerable save, the opposing player must roll a single D6 against the majority Toughness of that unit at the end of its controlling player's turn. If the result is greater than the unit's majority Toughness value or a natural 6, then the unit takes D3 wounds with no armour saves allowed.

Vehicles, or units embarked within a vehicle or building, are unaffected by this rule. In addition, at the start of each game turn, both players must roll a D6. If the total score of the two dice is 7 or greater, then the player whose individual dice score was highest must place a Large Blast (5") marker anywhere on the table and scatter it. This Large Blast marker will always scatter the full distance, and all models under its final position suffer an attack using the following profile:

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rad Strike | - | 4 | 3 | Heavy 1, Fleshbane, Rad-phage |

**Unending Night**
Whether a tidally-locked night world or a location obscured by less grand means, no light reaches this place and those who fight here do so in sanity-sapping eternal darkness. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, the Night Fighting special rules are always in effect for the entire game. In addition, any unit that is required to take a Morale check at the end of the Movement, Psychic or Shooting phases due to casualties incurred suffers a -1 penalty to their Leadership value for that Morale check. Note that units with the Night Vision special rule ignore all effects of the Unending Night Trait.

**Bloodthirsty Flora**
The xenos-tainted plants of this war zone are almost as much of a threat to an army in the field as the enemy, armed with a bewildering variety of ways to inflict pain and death on an unsuspecting foe. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, all Twisted Copses or other terrain features representing woods are replaced with Xenos Forest terrain pieces.

**Battlefield Terrain – Xenos Forest (Difficult Terrain):** A terrain piece of this type counts as difficult terrain, and all models on the base of the terrain piece receive a 4+ cover save regardless of whether or not they are 25% obscured. In addition, any unit that ends its turn either within a Xenos Forest or within 6" of one is targeted by a Shooting attack at BS 2 and uses the following profile:

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Xenos Forest | 6" | 1 | - | Assault D6+1, Poisoned (4+) |

**Frozen Wasteland**
The killing-cold of these frozen plains is beyond that encountered on any terrestrial world, where the very air is congealed into a freezing, dense, murderous fugue more dangerous even than the vacuum of space. These frigid gasses can damage machinery and sap the strength from the strongest warrior, regardless of whatever technological means they are using to survive.

- In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, at the beginning of each player turn, before the Movement phase, each unit of Infantry (of any type), Beasts or Monstrous Creatures without the Cybernetica Cortex special rule, must make a Toughness test. If this test is failed, the unit must reduce its Initiative, Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill and all Movement (including Run moves and charges) by -1 until the beginning of its controlling player's next turn. Place a marker or counter next to the unit to show this is the case.
- Weapons with the Gets Hot special rule ignore its effect for the first game turn.
- Successful Dangerous Terrain tests for vehicles must be re-rolled.
- All close combat attacks gain the Rending special rule in addition to any other rules they possess.

**Blackened Lava Plains**
Rivers of molten lava and lakes of fire scar the landscape of this war zone, deadly obstacles to even the most well-equipped army that attempts to fight within it, as even those who avoid the searing flames fall prey to the toxic fumes that rise from its depths. In a game played in a war zone or Strategic objective affected by this Trait, all terrain pieces representing rivers, lakes or other water features are considered to be made up of lava or other super-heated material and, in addition to any other special rules those terrain pieces might have, they also gain the following special rules:

- **Super-heated:** Any model which moves onto the base of a piece of terrain which possesses this special rule immediately suffers a Str 8 AP 3 hit with the Rending special rule, in addition to any other effects the terrain piece may have. Note that if the terrain piece includes a bridge or other protected area, then no hits are sustained by models on those areas – such areas should be noted and agreed upon by the players before the beginning of the game.
- **Toxic Fumes:** Any Infantry unit (of any sub-type) that is not embarked on a Transport vehicle or building and begins its turn within 12" of the base of a piece of terrain with this special rule, must take a Pinning test before the beginning of the Movement phase.

When using this Trait, it is recommended that as many games as possible feature some kind of appropriately fire-like river system, or at least a few lakes, placed across the board.

### Strategic Objective Traits
These Traits are intended for use only by being assigned to Strategic objectives. While they could be assigned to entire war zones, it may require some additional work to balance them for play. Many of these Traits will only affect the side that currently controls the Strategic objective they are attached to. Control of a Strategic objective is decided by the number of Control points a side has at that objective, with the side with the higher total claiming control – remember that these Control points totals are not updated during the Conflict phase, but in the Consolidation phase. Note that though Strategic Objective Traits often describe a facility of some kind, that does not mean that it must be represented on the tabletop. Often, defensive forces will seek to engage foes at a distance from the objective they seek to protect, but as these objectives are grand in scale, their effects will still be felt at a distance!

**Planetary Spaceport**
Titanic spaceports are often the central feature of many Imperial worlds, serving as their only link with the expanding Imperium of Mankind. Such facilities serve as both massive fortresses, crucial transport links and administrative centres, and are among the most vital of targets for any invasion force. In a game played at a Strategic objective affected by this Trait, all units belonging to the side which currently has the highest total of Control points at this Strategic objective may deploy using the Deep Strike special rule if held in Reserves (they are assumed to have airdropped from craft stationed at the spaceport), and all failed rolls to bring Flyers on from Reserves may be re-rolled. In addition, as long as the controlling player's side has the highest total of Control points at this objective, a single additional Flyer of any kind available to the army list that makes up the player's core detachment may be included in the army, paying the usual points cost, but without using up a Force Organisation choice of any type.

**Armoury Vaults**
Many worlds, both Imperial and those yet to be brought into the Emperor's domain, stockpile staggeringly vast quantities of arms and munitions for use both in defence and attack. Unsurprisingly, the massively fortified vaults in which these stores are kept are the prime targets of any invading force. In a game played at a Strategic objective affected by this Trait, all units belonging to the side which currently has the highest total of Control points at this Strategic objective may re-roll a single failed To Hit roll in each Shooting phase. In addition, as long as the controlling player's side has the highest total of Control points at this objective, the Warlord deployed by that player in any game, at any Strategic objective may upgrade one weapon they carry to have the Master-crafted special rule for no additional cost in points.

**Manufactorum Complex**
All across the Imperium, vast factory complexes supply the machinery and munitions of the Great Crusade, and as Horus' legions begin their march towards Terra, these facilities become vital targets if he is to overwhelm those who remain loyal to the Emperor. In a game played at a Strategic objective affected by this Trait, the side which currently has the highest total of Control points at this Strategic objective may roll a D6 every time a friendly vehicle is removed from play. On the roll of a 6, the controlling player may add that vehicle into Ongoing Reserves instead of removing it as destroyed (though the enemy player responsible for its destruction still scores any relevant Victory points) as the nearby Manufactorum diverts part of its production run straight into combat. In addition, as long as the controlling player's side has the highest total of Control points at this objective at the beginning of any Campaign turn, an additional vehicle with the Tank type (of any kind available to the army list) that makes up the player's core detachment, may be included in the army, paying the usual points cost, but without using up a Force Organisation choice of any type.

**Macro Weapons Battery**
The first line of defence of many of the Imperium's border worlds are batteries of mighty defence lasers, or other more exotic weaponry of massive calibre and huge destructive potential. These installations are intended to wreak havoc with any attempt to land troops upon the world they are based on, but if captured by an attacking force, are equally able at stalling attempts to reinforce the defenders. Due to the massive scale of these weapons, any attempt to use them as tactical weapons is doomed to failure as their targeting systems are calibrated to target kilometres-long starships in orbit, not

infantry formations, and even near misses can annihilate both an attacking force and any troops stationed in its defence. However, the side that has the highest total of Control points at this Strategic objective can, at the start of each Mustering phase, roll a D6 for the Macro Weapons Battery. If it scores a 5+, then the opposing side must reduce its Reserves Points Pool by -1 (this may not be used to reduce the opposition's Reserves Points Pool to 0) as the macro weapons destroy drop pods and transport ships carrying troops and supplies.

**Fortified Bastion Complex**
An imposing line of fortifications has been constructed here, one of such grand scale that it is intended to act as a bulwark for more vulnerable areas of the war zone. In a game played at a Strategic objective affected by this Trait, the side which currently has the highest total of Control points at this Strategic objective may deploy up to D3+1 Wall of Martyrs Imperial Defence Lines or Wall of Martyrs Imperial Bunker Fortifications, with no options and for no points cost. These fortifications are claimed by the side that controls this Strategic objective at the start of the game.

**Concealed Bunker Complex**
With weapons capable of scouring any world clean of life, many of the most heavily defended planets or secretive outposts have moved their command elements and vital reserves to specially prepared underground, or otherwise concealed, bunker complexes. A game played at a Strategic objective affected by this Trait should be played as a Zone Mortalis mission—using the special Zone Mortalis board sections to represent an incursion into the sealed halls of the bunker complex. In addition, the side that has the highest total of Control points at this objective can, at the start of each Mustering phase, roll a single D6 for the Concealed Bunker Complex. If it scores a 5+, then that side increases its Reserves Points Pool by +1 (this may not be used to increase the Reserves Points Pool above its starting value) as the command staff reallocate supplies more efficiently or release troops from hidden reserves barracks.

**Designer's Note**
These lists represent an example of the kind of War Zone Traits and Strategic Objective Traits that can be used in a Conquest campaign. When designing war zones for a gaming group, players are encouraged to get together and pool their ideas for exciting and characterful Traits to represent the worlds over which their armies will do battle!



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Strategic Warlord Traits

Strategic Warlord Traits are an optional set of abilities which players can use to represent the strategic vision and martial genius of their army's overall commander.

Normal Warlord Traits focus on a warleader's personal or tactical skills, enabling them to influence the battle in which they are fighting in a very immediate fashion. Strategic Warlord Traits are used to influence the campaign at the highest possible level, bringing an entirely new facet of a character's command ability into play.

**Commander-in-Chief**

At the start of the campaign, players may generate a single Strategic Warlord Trait for one of their War Zone-assigned Characters – who is referred to as their '*Commander-in-Chief*', although players might like to refer to them as the Lord General, High Lord or even Warmaster as appropriate. The character retains this new Trait for the rest of the campaign. If the character suffers a Fatality result when rolling on the Casualty Survival table, the controlling player may choose to pass the same Strategic Warlord Trait on to another War Zone-assigned Character (representing the master passing on the baton of command to a favoured pupil), or can choose to roll for a new Trait for a new Commander-in-Chief. In a Campaign turn in which a new Strategic Warlord Trait is rolled for a new character, it has no effect until one complete Campaign turn has passed, representing the new Commander-in-Chief imposing a new style and structure on their forces. If the same Strategic Warlord Trait is chosen, the transition of command is flawless and takes effect immediately.

## Strategic Warlord Traits

1 **Master of Contingencies**

*The Master of Contingencies has long planned for and rehearsed every possible eventuality, and their subordinate commanders are fully briefed on their tasks even should command conduits be compromised.*

This Strategic Warlord Trait is used in the Mustering phase. After determining which side is to be the Attacker and which the Defender, the Commander-in-Chief's controlling player may decide to reverse these roles by rolling a D6 in any single game a member of their side is playing in. On a roll of 4+, the roles are swapped.

2 **Logistician Prime**

*The Logistician Prime is a master at providing their forces with exactly the weapons and supplies they need for the task at hand, and in ensuring the correct weapon is deployed to the correct war zone long before the enemy even attacks.*

This Strategic Warlord Trait is used in the Consolidation phase. In one single game in which a loss has been suffered, if the other side gains a Control point, roll a D6. On a roll of 4+, the Commander-in-Chief's side gains a Control point too.

3 **Master of Timing**

*The Commander-in-Chief is adept at launching large scale, theatre-wide operations timed to perfection so that the enemy is overwhelmed by numerous assaults and rendered unable to reinforce key sectors.*

Whenever a roll is made on a table to determine which of a set of missions is to be played, the Commander-in-Chief's controlling player may insist that the dice is re-rolled. The second result indicates the mission that must be played. For example, if the players have agreed to play one of the Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight missions presented in this book, the Master of Timing may force a re-roll on the Mission Selection chart on page 191.

4 **Marshal of Hosts**

*This general is the unsurpassed master of committing forces to the most vital objectives in a war zone, identifying the key location that, when taken, will bring about the rapid collapse of the entire enemy force.*

This Strategic Warlord Trait is used in the Mustering phase. Having spent their Reserves points, the player rolls a D6. On a roll of 5+, the spent Reserves point is regained.

5 **Master of the Field**

*This commander has learned how to use the battle zone itself as a weapon to bring to bear against the foe, drawing the enemy to battle in environments that friendly forces are well equipped to fight in, but in which the enemy are not.*

When defending, the player may choose any one War Zone Trait (see page 170) to apply in the upcoming mission. If both sides have this Strategic Warlord Trait, roll off to determine who has the upper hand.

6 **Spymaster**

*The spymaster knows that the most effective weapon in any war is intelligence, and is expert at both gathering information and in sowing mis-information in the enemy command structure.*

This Strategic Warlord Trait is used in the Mustering phase. The Warlord's controlling player may identify a single Strategic objective and roll a D6. On a result of 4+, that Strategic objective may not be targeted in this Conflict phase.

# Masters of the Legions

Of all the many generals, lords and marshals to serve in the armies of the Emperor and the Warmaster, the Primarchs were created to be the most potent leaders of Mankind's hosts. If a Primarch is present in a player's army, this should be the Commander-in-Chief, in which case instead of rolling for Strategic Warlord Traits, the following apply. Note that some Primarchs gain more Traits than others, for as history relates, not all sons of the Emperor were created equal as leaders. If more than one Primarch is present on one side, the players should agree between them which is to serve as Commander-in-Chief.

| Primarch | Strategic Warlord Traits |
|---|---|
| **Lion El'Jonson** | Master of Timing<br>1 Random |
| **Fulgrim** | 2 Random |
| **Perturabo** | Logistician Prime<br>1 Random |
| **Jaghatai Khan** | Master of the Field<br>1 Random |
| **Leman Russ** | Master of Timing<br>1 Random |
| **Rogal Dorn** | Logistician Prime<br>Spymaster |
| **Konrad Curze** | Master of Timing<br>Master of Contingencies |
| **Sanguinius** | Master of the Field<br>1 Random |
| **Ferrus Manus** | 2 Random |
| **Angron** | None* |

**On a roll of 4+, the enemy Commander-in-Chief may not use theirs that Campaign turn.*

| Primarch | Strategic Warlord Traits |
|---|---|
| **Roboute Guilliman** | 3 Chosen |
| **Mortarion** | 2 Random |
| **Magnus the Red** | Master of Contingencies<br>Spymaster |
| **Warmaster Horus** | Spymaster<br>2 Random |
| **Lorgar** | 2 Random |
| **Vulkan** | 2 Random |
| **Corax** | Master of the Field<br>Master of Timing |
| **Alpharius** | All 6† |

*†Each may only be used once per campaign.*





# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Strategic Raid Missions

The following six mission types represent some of the smaller scale attacks launched by both sides as part of the expanding conflict of the Horus Heresy as Horus loosed his Legions and their allies upon the unsuspecting Imperium. Whilst many of these attacks were massive invasions, involving armies numbering in the hundreds of thousands with massed fleet support, many other actions were to involve smaller forces – often a company or less attached to a single cruiser. These forces were dispatched to cripple dangerous targets before they could enter the war, or to destroy or appropriate resources vital for one or both sides where larger forces could not be spared. Often, for those Loyalist forces who had escaped Horus' initial strike, they simply did not have the manpower available to mount larger scale offensive actions, and were forced to resort to pinpoint strikes in order to retain any momentum in the war that had erupted.

When playing a game using the Battles in the Age of Darkness expansion for Warhammer 40,000 using the Strategic Raid missions, roll once on each of the following tables, or select a result acceptable to both players, to determine the mission to be played and the deployment map to be used:

| D6 | Deployment Map |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | Combat Drop |
| 3-4 | Spearhead Assault |
| 5-6 | The Hidden Blade |

| D6 | Strategic Raid Missions |
|---|---|
| 1 | Diversionary Strike |
| 2 | Scorched Earth |
| 3 | Combat Extraction |
| 4 | Forlorn Hope |
| 5 | Headhunting |
| 6 | The Hunters at Bay |

Unless otherwise specified in this section, all the rules and advice given in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook and Battles in the Age of Darkness expansion regarding playing missions apply when playing a Strategic Raid (this includes, but is not limited to, the rules for setting up terrain, placing objectives, scoring units and deployment, the first turn, game length and victory conditions).

In all cases, in addition to the listed victory conditions for any particular Strategic Raid mission, completely destroying the enemy force is always a complete victory.

## Alternative Strategic Raid Missions Force Organisation Charts

This section presents two new Force Organisation charts that may be used in conjunction with the Strategic Raid missions. Any force designated as the 'Raider' or Attacker when playing a Strategic Raid mission may choose to use the Raider Detachment Force Organisation chart when selecting their army, and any force designated as the Defender or 'Garrison' force may use the Garrison Detachment Force Organisation chart. Both Force Organisation charts use all of the rules presented in the Battles in the Age of Darkness expansion, and players using them gain the following benefits and restrictions:

**Raider Detachments**

**Fast Moving, Hard Hitting:** A detachment which is selected using the Raider Force Organisation chart must consist of models from a single Faction, and no other detachment included in the same army may take any Fortification choices. In addition to this, any Lords of War choices which are selected as part of a Raider detachment must fulfil at least one of the following criteria or they may not be selected:

- The unit has the Super-heavy (Fast) type.
- The unit is a Super-heavy Vehicle or Super-heavy Walker with 6 or less Hull Points.
- The unit has the Super-heavy Flyer type.

In addition to this, all Elites units selected as part of a Raider detachment are counted as scoring units, with Troops choices selected as part of a Raider detachment counted as denial units only.

**The Element of Surprise:** Before any units are deployed onto the table, or rolls are made to determine which player will take the first turn, a player whose core detachment is chosen using the Raider Detachment Force Organisation chart may select one of the following options for this game, informing their opponent of their choice before beginning play:

- Night Fighting rules are automatically in effect for the first game turn, and continue in the second game turn on the D6 roll of a 4+.
- Grant D3+2 of the Raider player's units (of the controlling player's choice) the Infiltrate and Outflank special rules.
- The Raider player may re-roll any dice rolled to decide which player takes the first turn, and Seizes the Initiative on the roll of a 4+ instead of the usually required score.

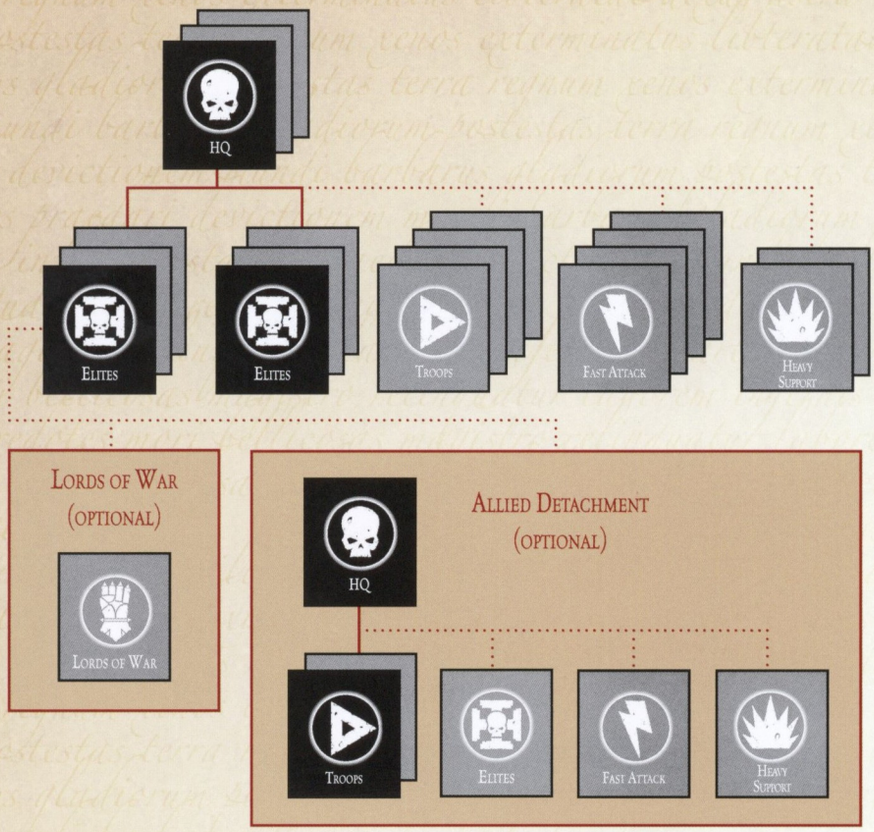
**Garrison Detachments**

**Prepared Ground:** In games where objectives are in use, a player whose army includes a Garrison detachment as its core detachment may reposition all placed objectives by up to 6" in any direction before beginning the first turn, as long as this does not place them outside of the play area, within impassable terrain or within a vehicle, building or fortification.

**Fortress-bound:** Each fortification deployed onto the table by a player using the Garrison Detachment chart as their core detachment must be occupied by at least one Infantry unit from the same detachment during deployment if it has either battlements or a Transport Capacity. Fortifications which may be occupied by a Vehicle unit, such as a Skyshield Landing Pad, may instead satisfy this restriction by deploying an appropriate vehicle onto the fortification instead. In addition, all models in a Garrison detachment must be from the same Faction.

## Raider Detachment Chart

### Primary Detachment (Required)




**Primary Detachment (Required)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 2 Elites
- **Optional:** +2 HQ, +4 Elites, +4 Troops, +4 Fast Attack, +2 Heavy Support

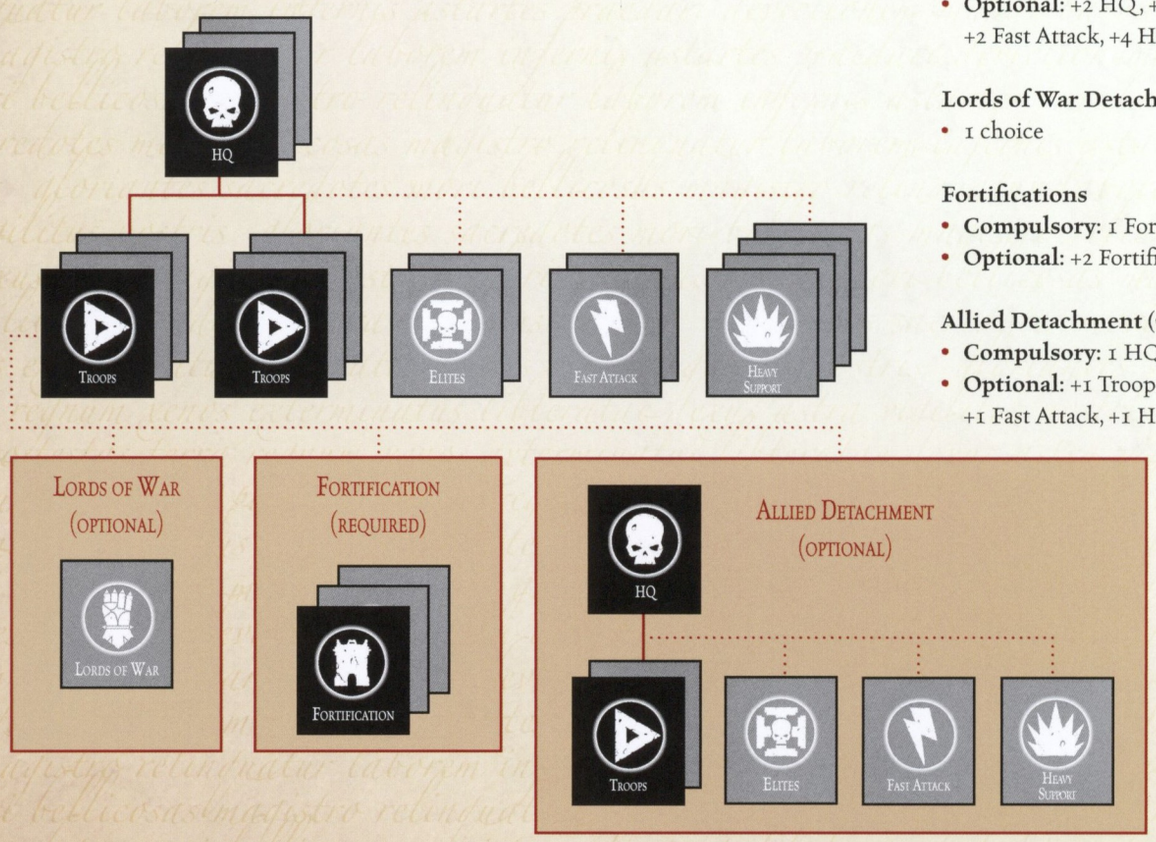
**Lords of War Detachment (Optional)**
- 1 choice

**Fortifications**
- None

**Allied Detachment (Optional)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 1 Troops
- **Optional:** +1 Troops, +1 Elites, +1 Fast Attack, +1 Heavy Support

## Garrison Detachment Chart

### Primary Detachment (Required)




**Primary Detachment (Required)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 2 Troops
- **Optional:** +2 HQ, +4 Troops, +2 Elites, +2 Fast Attack, +4 Heavy Support

**Lords of War Detachment (Optional)**
- 1 choice

**Fortifications**
- **Compulsory:** 1 Fortification
- **Optional:** +2 Fortifications

**Allied Detachment (Optional)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 1 Troops
- **Optional:** +1 Troops, +1 Elites, +1 Fast Attack, +1 Heavy Support

# Strategic Raid Deployment Maps

**Combat Drop**

*Whether dropped from sub-orbital transport craft and descending using advanced grav-chutes, arriving via the use of arcane and dangerous teleport technology or ancient and long-lost webway tunnels, many raiding parties prefer shock and aggressive action over more subtle means.*

If the Raider player deploys first using the Combat Drop map, they choose three points anywhere on the table, marking them with a counter. Each of these counters is then scattered and, once their final position is determined, the Raider player may deploy any of their units within 6" of any of them. Units which cannot fit within this area must begin play in Reserve.

The Defender may deploy their units anywhere on the table that is either within a fortification or building or at least 12" away from any of the Raider player's deployment markers. If the Raider player deploys second then the Defending player may deploy their units anywhere on the table. Once the Defender has finished deploying, the Raider player chooses three drop points as noted above, but must place these counters at least 12" away from any enemy models if possible. If it is not possible for the Raider player to select a point at least 12" away from any enemy models, then they may choose to either not place one or more of their counters (if no counters are placed then all units must begin play in Reserve) or to place one or more counters within 6" of any enemy models, but none of the Raider player's models may be deployed within 2" of an enemy model under any circumstances.

In addition, whichever player deployed first must choose a single table edge as their home table edge for the purposes of determining the direction of Fall Back moves and for units entering play from Reserve. The opposing player uses the opposite table edge to the one chosen as their own home table edge.

**Spearhead Assault**

*Where some commanders prefer the subtle arts of stealth, others place their faith in more direct tactics. Such commanders, when tasked with the prosecution of an attack upon the enemy, will make no attempt to hide their intent and will focus all available units on breaking through enemy lines using sheer force of arms.*

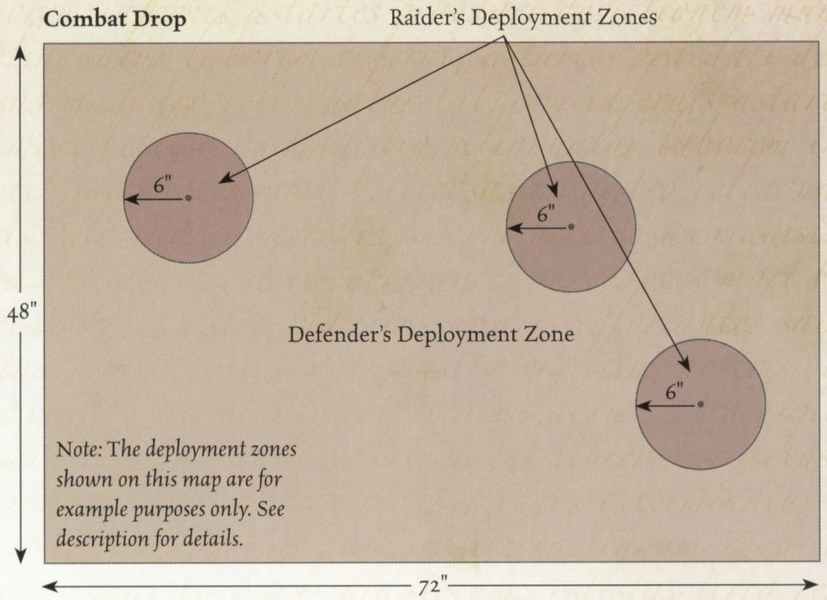
When deploying using the Spearhead Assault map, both the Raider and Defender use the marked deployment zones provided.

**The Hidden Blade**

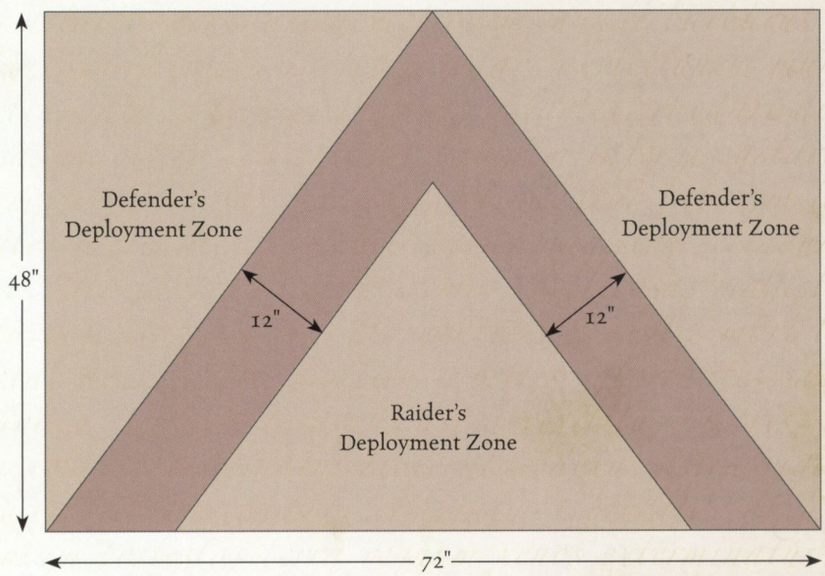
*When faced with overwhelming enemy force, many commanders opt to make a silent approach on their target – hoping that surprise and concealment will make up for any disadvantage in sheer firepower.*

When deploying using the Hidden Blade map, both the Raider and Defender use the marked deployment zones.

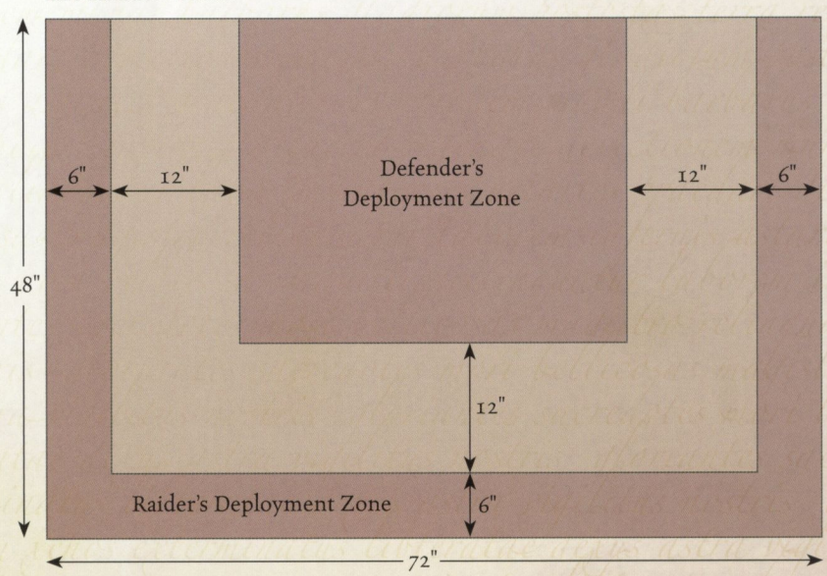
**Combat Drop**




**Spearhead Assault**




**The Hidden Blade**



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Strategic Raid Mission – Diversionary Strike

*"Do not think you hold the advantage, that we are brought to bay in the open and vulnerable. We stand here by our choice, and while you strive to slay these few of us, our brothers strike unopposed elsewhere."*

*Strike Leader Tare Reihan, Pale Nomads Chapter of the Raven Guard*

*As the vast armies of the Great Crusade were brought to bear on the new war that had erupted within the Imperium, direct assaults on a target often quickly escalated into massive and costly battles. Both sides quickly adapted, employing strikes by small elite forces to lure the defenders into committing their reserves to battle early before attacking elsewhere.*

**The Armies**
Strategic Raid missions are best suited for games of 1,500 - 2,000 points. Before beginning play, one army should be identified as the Raider force and the opposing army as the Garrison force, either by the choice of the players involved or by rolling off, with the winner picking which side they will represent.

**The Battlefield**
Players should determine the deployment map to be used, as noted on page 179, and deploy any player-owned fortifications before setting up terrain. For games using the Strategic Raid missions, it may be advantageous to use a generous amount of terrain, placed to provide a variety of tactical opportunities to both sides.

Once all terrain and fortifications have been placed, the Garrison player should place a single objective anywhere on the table that is at least 12" away from any table edge. The Raider player may then move the objective up to 2D6" in any direction.

**Deployment**
Before deploying their forces, each player should first roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. The Raider player deploys their entire force first. The Garrison player must then split their force into two groups, both consisting of an equal number of units where possible; one of these groups, chosen by the Garrison player, must begin the game in Reserve and the other is deployed onto the table within the appropriate deployment zone.

Rules for deploying into fortifications and Transports or using the Infiltrate or Scout special rules can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**First Turn**
The Raider takes the first turn, unless the opposing player can Seize the Initiative (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
A diversionary strike targets a single defensive position in an enemy's lines, attempting to draw out the defending force into a blunting diversionary assault, while other forces strike at other targets now stripped of their defenders. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If both players score the same number of Victory points, the game is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of each game turn, the player who controls the objective scores 1 Victory point.

**Secondary Objectives**
First Blood, Slay the Warlord and Attrition.

**Attrition:** The side which has destroyed the highest number of enemy units at the end of the game gains an additional Victory point.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves, Night Fighting and Operational Reserves.

**Operational Reserves**
During missions with this special rule, the Defender may only bring units into play from Reserve on the D6 roll of a 5+. The score required to bring units into play from Reserve is reduced by -1 for each Victory point the Raider player has accumulated up to this point in the game (i.e., if 3 Victory points have been scored, the Defender would need to score a 2+ to bring units into play from Reserves). If this reduces the score needed to 1 or less, then a roll is still required for the Defender to bring units into play from Reserves, as an attempt will always fail on a natural roll of a 1.

In addition, whenever one of the Defender's units is completely destroyed by an enemy unit, it is immediately placed into Reserve instead of being removed from play – it may re-enter play from Reserve normally, at full strength and with all the wargear the original unit possessed. Units may re-enter play multiple times if they are destroyed several times over the course of the game.



**Cerastus Knight-Castigator '*Banquet of Ashes*'**: The Knight armour of Seneschal Viktor Orhlacc, renowned for his service with the 7th Expeditionary Fleet, and who stood as deputy commander of the forces of his House during the Invasion of Numinal. He and his armour would meet their final end locked in deathly struggle with a maniple of Thanatar class Siege-automata, a catastrophic reactor explosion making a funeral pyre for the lauded Knight.

# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Strategic Raid Mission – Scorched Earth

*"Simple slaughter is not the apex of war. The enemy must be burned out of his every bolt hole, his stockpiles destroyed and every last hope he has trampled into the dust of his cities."*

*Chieftain Sidrik Nathmel of the Sons of Horus*

*As both sides began to stockpile the resources necessary for making war and gathering to them rare and precious assets, they also dispatched elite forces to destroy those that their enemies had acquired before they could be used against them.*

**The Armies**
Strategic Raid missions are best suited for games of 1,500 - 2,000 points. Before beginning play, one army should be identified as the Raider force and the opposing army as the Garrison force, either by the choice of the players involved or by rolling off, with the winner picking which side they will represent.

**The Battlefield**
Players should determine the deployment map to be used, as noted on page 179, and deploy any player-owned fortifications before setting up terrain. For games using the Strategic Raid missions, it may be advantageous to use a generous amount of terrain, placed to provide a variety of tactical opportunities to both sides.

After placing all terrain and fortifications onto the table, the players should first determine the nature of the objectives using the table on page 183 and then deploy D3+2 objectives of the type shown – rolling off to see which player will place the first one and then alternating until all the objectives have been placed. All of the rules regarding the placement of objectives in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook should be observed when placing objectives for this mission.

**Deployment**
Before deploying their forces, each player should first roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

Rules for deploying into fortifications and Transports or using the Infiltrate or Scout special rules can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**First Turn**
The player who deployed first takes the first turn, unless the opposing player can Seize the Initiative (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

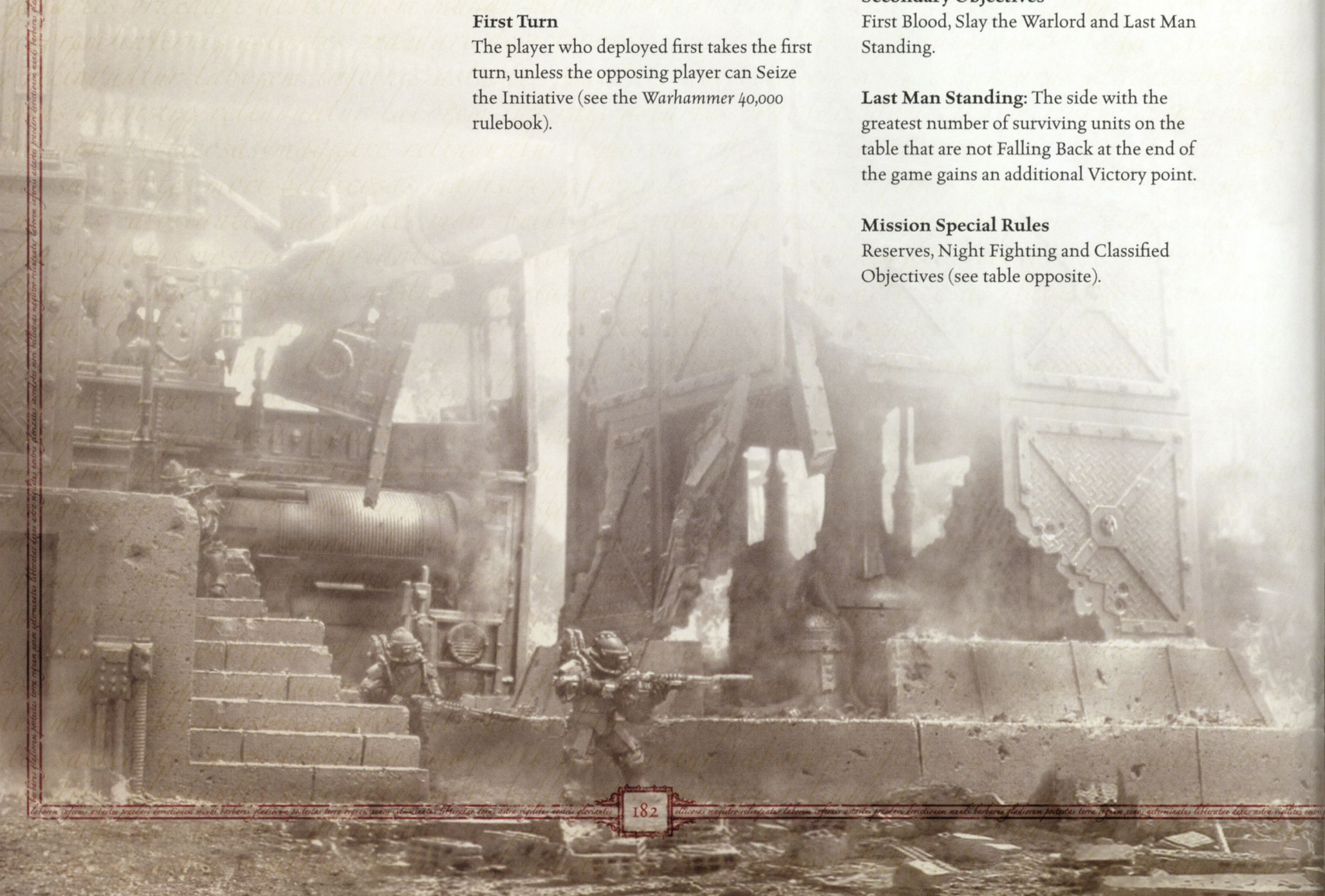
**Victory Conditions**
A Scorched Earth mission represents an attempt by a small force to destroy some key stockpile of resources maintained by their foe in order to cripple their ability to conduct combat operations across a wider front. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If both players score the same number of Victory points, the game is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of the game, the Raider player scores 3 Victory points for each objective that has been destroyed (an objective counts as destroyed if it is reduced to an Armour value of 0, is Wrecked, reduced to 0 Wounds or removed from the table for any reason), while the Defender scores 3 Victory points for each objective that remains on the table.

**Secondary Objectives**
First Blood, Slay the Warlord and Last Man Standing.

**Last Man Standing:** The side with the greatest number of surviving units on the table that are not Falling Back at the end of the game gains an additional Victory point.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves, Night Fighting and Classified Objectives (see table opposite).



### Classified Objectives Table

When playing a Scorched Earth mission, players should determine the exact nature of the objectives by either rolling on the following table before placing any objectives, or selecting an entry that is acceptable to both players before deploying them. Unless otherwise agreed by the players involved, only a single result should be determined using the table – this result is applied to all objectives in play:

| D6 | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Munitions Stockpiles:** The enemy has used this area to assemble enough munitions to supply nearby armies for some time, and their destruction could alter the course of the war across the sector. Each of these objectives is treated as an immobile vehicle with Armour 12 on all facings and 5 Hull Points. If one of these objectives suffers an Explodes! result on the Vehicle Damage table, increase the radius of the resulting explosion to 4D6" and if one is Wrecked (or otherwise reduced to 0 Hull Points without Exploding!), it inflicts a single Str 3 hit on all models within 2D6". |
| 2 | **Phosphex Reserves:** Large quantities of deadly phosphex have been stockpiled here in preparation for a major assault; their destruction would cause the attack to flounder before it can begin. Each of these objectives is treated as an immobile vehicle with Armour 12 on all facings and 5 Hull Points. After one of these objectives has been removed from the table, either due to being Wrecked or due to an Explodes! result on the Vehicle Damage table, replace it with a Large Blast (5") marker centred on the position previously occupied by the objective. At the end of each following player turn, the Defending player may move this Large Blast marker D6" as long as it covers more models (friendly or enemy!) after it has been moved. Any models, friendly or enemy, that are covered by the marker at the start of any Shooting phase take a single hit using the following profile: |

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phosphex inferno | - | 5 | 2 | Ordnance 1, Poisoned 3+, Lingering Death (see page 277) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | **Encrypted Data:** Enemy commanders in this war zone have recently intercepted important Astropathic communiqués detailing the deployment of friendly forces. Obviously, these documents must be destroyed at all costs, lest the enemy seize a decisive advantage in the war. These objectives are not represented by separate objective markers, but instead each must be assigned to one of the Defender's Character sub-type models. Players alternate assigning objectives to characters in the Defender's army until all objectives have been assigned. These objectives are counted as destroyed when the character model they are assigned to is removed from play as a casualty. |
| 4 | **Officio Militaris Tacticians:** A cadre of Officio Militaris advisors loyal to the enemy has been helping to co-ordinate troop deployments in this sector. Their sudden removal would leave enemy formations in chaos for weeks. Each of these objectives is represented by a single 60 mm base with the following profile (each base representing several Officio Militaris officials) and is under the control of the Defending player: |

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Military Advisors | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 4+ |

**Type:** Infantry (note that as these bases do not have the Character sub-type, they may not issue or accept challenges).

**Wargear:** Close combat weapon and refractor field.

**Special Rules:** Independent Character and Bulky.

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 | **Hardened Bio-phage Vaults:** This heavily guarded sector holds the forward reserves of ancient and proscribed weaponry brought up to break enemy resistance. If it can be destroyed, then defending forces will be spared a grim death. Each of these objectives should be treated as a small building with an Armour value of 12 and a Transport Capacity of 0. Whenever one of these objectives has its Armour value reduced due to a roll on the Vehicle Damage table, all non-vehicle units (friendly and enemy) within 12" suffer D6 Str 2 hits against which no Armour saves or invulnerable saves may be taken. |
| 6 | **Petrochem Silos:** The enemy's armoured columns rely on this petrochem dump to refuel between battles; if it can be destroyed then friendly forces can seize the initiative in coming battles. Each of these objectives should be treated as a small building with an Armour value of 12 and a Transport Capacity of 0. Whenever one of these objectives has its Armour value reduced due to a roll on the Vehicle Damage table, the Defender may place a single Large Blast (5") marker anywhere within 6" of the objective, representing a spill of flaming petrochem. This Large Blast marker remains in place until the beginning of the next Shooting phase of the player who caused it to be placed, until that point the area it covers is counted as both difficult terrain and dangerous terrain, and blocks all lines of sight that pass through it due to the billowing smoke clouds. |

# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Strategic Raid Mission – Combat Extraction

*"Not all wars are decided by feats of arms. In a struggle such as that we have embarked upon, subterfuge, deception and intrigue may well decide the fate of the galaxy, while the greatest warriors ever known stand impotent."*

*Unidentified Alpha Legion Commander*

*Some resources are too valuable to simply destroy. Unique and ancient examples of lost technology, enemy battle plans and even defectors are all opportunities to bring the Imperium's first civil war to a swift conclusion – opportunities neither side can afford to ignore.*

**The Armies**
Strategic Raid missions are best suited for games of 1,500 - 2,000 points. Before beginning play one army should be identified as the Raider force and the opposing army as the Garrison force, either by the choice of the players involved or by rolling off, with the winner picking which side they will represent.

**The Battlefield**
Players should determine the deployment map to be used, as noted on page 179, and deploy any player-owned fortifications before setting up terrain. For games using the Strategic Raid missions, it may be advantageous to use a generous amount of terrain, placed to provide a variety of tactical opportunities to both sides.

After placing all terrain and fortifications onto the table, the players should determine what type of objectives are to be used (see page 185) and deploy D3+2 objectives, with the Defender placing the first and then alternating until all the objectives have been placed. All of the rules regarding the placement of objectives in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook should be observed when placing objectives for this mission.

**Deployment**
Before deploying their forces, each player should first roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

Rules for deploying into fortifications and Transports or using the Infiltrate or Scout special rules can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**First Turn**
The player who deployed first takes the first turn, unless the opposing player can Seize the Initiative (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

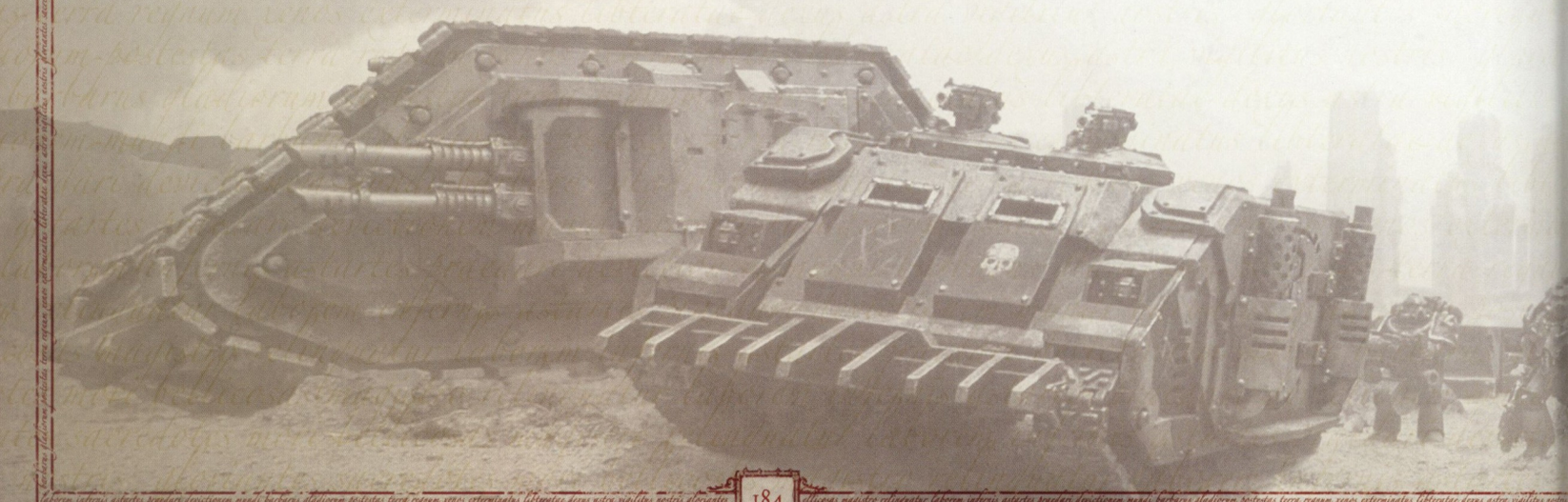
**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
A Combat Extraction mission represents a precision assault with the intent of seizing and escaping with an item of extreme tactical value. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If both players score the same number of Victory points, the game is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of the game, the players score 3 Victory points for each objective that is both under their control and within their deployment zone.

**Secondary Objectives**
First Blood, Slay the Warlord and Linebreaker.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves, Night Fighting and Strategic Assets.



**Strategic Assets**

Objectives in a Combat Extraction mission represent small objects (or in some cases people) that are far more portable than most objectives used in other Warhammer 40,000 missions. Unless otherwise stated in the objective's specific rules, any unit that has at least one Infantry model in contact with an objective in a Combat Extraction mission and no models in contact or in combat with an enemy model or enemy unit may take possession of the objective. Whilst a unit has possession of an objective, the objective moves with them and remains on the table in base contact with one of the models in the unit. If a unit in possession of an objective is destroyed as part of a shooting attack, the objective is left in place on the tabletop and is considered to be controlled by neither player. If a unit in possession of an objective is destroyed in close combat, then the objective is transferred to any one of the enemy units in combat with it when it was destroyed.

A unit in possession of an objective may transfer the objective to a friendly Infantry unit within 2" and at the beginning of the Movement phase before any units have been moved, as long as the target unit is not engaged in close combat, embarked on a Transport or in a building or fleeing (note that an objective may only be transferred in this fashion once per game turn!). An objective may be present inside a Transport vehicle or building as long as it does not have the Flyer type and as long as it is present with a unit of Infantry models. An objective may not leave the table under any circumstances (the raiders must await extraction in their deployment zone), and if in the possession of a unit that flees the table, it is left on the table at the point at which the unit exited. In order to claim control of an objective in a Combat Extraction mission, an objective must be in the possession of a friendly scoring unit that is not within 3" of an enemy denial unit.

When playing a Combat Extraction mission, players should determine the exact nature of the objective by either rolling on the following table before placing any objectives on the battlefield, or selecting an entry that is acceptable to both players involved before deploying them. Unless otherwise agreed by the players involved, only a single result should be determined using the table – this result is applied to all objectives in play:

| D6 | Objective Type |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | **STC Imprint Ark:** *This delicate device is used to hold full technical specifications for the rarer vehicles and weapons employed by the armies of the Imperium and is a valuable prize, one that can easily be used to turn the tide of any campaign.* In addition to all other rules regarding objectives in a Combat Extraction mission, whenever a unit in possession of an STC Imprint Ark objective takes wounds as either part of a Shooting attack or whilst in combat with an enemy unit, roll a D6. On the score of a 1, the objective is worth one less Victory point at the end of the game – this can reduce the value of an objective to 0. |
| 3-4 | **Encrypted Battle Plans:** *Whether contained on officially sealed parchment, encrypted data-slates or the vague impressions of an Astropath's telepathic sending, the details contained within these plans would be enough to ensure victory in battles across the sector.* In addition to all other rules regarding objectives in a Combat Extraction mission, any unit that declares a successful charge on an enemy unit in possession of an objective gains the Furious Charge special rule for the remainder of that game turn. |
| 5-6 | **Vital Defectors:** *Many non-combatants have been deemed vital for the prosecution of the war, either due to strategic information in their possession or due to their unique skills. Willingly or not, these individuals must be removed from the enemy's reach.* In addition to all other rules regarding objectives in a Combat Extraction mission, any unit in possession of an objective must roll 2D6 whenever it moves, moving a distance equal to the highest rolled dice and may not Run. In addition, if an objective of this type is present in a unit that attempts to embark on a Transport vehicle, then the objective is treated as a separate Infantry model when determining if the unit will fit inside the Transport. |



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Strategic Raid Mission – Forlorn Hope

*"The strength and disposition of a defending force can only be determined by an expenditure of lives; this is the blood-red arithmetic of war."*

*Perturabo, Primarch of the Iron Warriors Legion*

*When an enemy goes to ground, surrounding himself with high walls and fell weapons, an attacker faces an unknown gauntlet that can reduce even an overwhelming assault to tatters. Before committing the bulk of his forces, a canny general will first dispatch a small force to test the enemy's defences and map their strongpoints. Such an attack is often named a 'forlorn hope' as there is little chance those chosen can defeat the enemy or return alive.*

**The Armies**
Strategic Raid missions are best suited for games of 1,500 - 2,000 points. Before beginning play, one army should be identified as the Raider force and the opposing army as the Garrison force, either by the choice of the players involved or by rolling off, with the winner picking which side they will represent.

**The Battlefield**
Players should determine the deployment map to be used, as noted on page 179, and deploy any player-owned fortifications before setting up terrain. For games using the Strategic Raid missions, it may be advantageous to use a generous amount of terrain, placed to provide a variety of tactical opportunities to both sides.

After placing all terrain and fortifications onto the table, the players should deploy D3+2 Strongpoint objectives, with the Defender placing the first and then players alternating until all the objectives have been placed.

Once all Strongpoint objectives have been placed, the Defender should place a single Breach objective anywhere in their deployment zone. This Breach objective may be placed within any distance of either a board edge or another objective, otherwise all of the rules regarding the placement of objectives in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook should be observed when placing objectives for this mission.

**Deployment**
Before deploying their forces, each player should first roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

When deploying, the Defending player must place at least half of their units into Reserve.

Rules for deploying into fortifications and Transports or using the Infiltrate or Scout special rules can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**First Turn**
The player who deployed first takes the first turn, unless the opposing player can Seize the Initiative (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
A Forlorn Hope mission represents an attack made by a small, expendable force with the intent of testing the defenders' resolve and scouting his positions. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If both players score the same number of Victory points, the game is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of the game, the players score 1 Victory point for each Strongpoint objective under their control.

In addition, if the Attacker claims control of the Breach objective at the end of the game, that player scores an additional 4 Victory points. The Defending player scores no Victory points for controlling the Breach objective.

**Secondary Objectives**
First Blood, Slay the Warlord, Enduring Hope and Linebreaker.

**Enduring Hope:** The Attacking player scores an additional Victory point if at least half (rounding down) of the units they began the game with are still in play at the end of the game.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves, Night Fighting and High Alert.

**High Alert:** Whenever one of the Defender's units is completely destroyed by an enemy unit, it is immediately placed into Reserve instead of being removed from play – it may re-enter play from Reserve normally, at full strength and with all wargear the original unit possessed. Units may re-enter play multiple times if they are destroyed several times over the course of the game.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Strategic Raid Mission – Headhunting

*"When you battle a serpent, the surest path to triumph is to tear off its head. This is just as true for armies as it is for the great kraken of Fenris."*

*Urnar Half-hand, Huscarl of the Space Wolves Legion*

*Amongst the enemy force are warriors whose fame and feats of arms inspire their comrades and intimidate those sent against them. The removal of these champions could easily tilt the balance of fighting, demoralising the foe and in turn lending new zeal to allies.*

**The Armies**
Strategic Raid missions are best suited for games of 1,500 - 2,000 points. Before beginning play, one army should be identified as the Raider force and the opposing army as the Garrison force, either by the choice of the players involved or by rolling off, with the winner picking which side they will represent.

**The Battlefield**
Players should determine the deployment map to be used, as noted on page 179, and deploy any player-owned fortifications before setting up terrain. For games using the Strategic Raid missions, it may be advantageous to use a generous amount of terrain, placed to provide a variety of tactical opportunities to both sides.

**Deployment**
Before deploying their forces, each player should first roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

Once all models have been deployed, the Defender must roll for and select a number of Champions – the Attacker's targets in this mission – see Primary Objectives for more details.

Rules for deploying into fortifications and Transports or using the Infiltrate or Scout special rules can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**First Turn**
The player who deployed first takes the first turn, unless the opposing player can Seize the Initiative (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
A Headhunting mission represents a small force attempting to eliminate those members of an enemy army that have achieved some renown amongst their fellows, damaging both the enemy's morale and ability to fight. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If both players score the same number of Victory points, the game is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
Before beginning play, roll D3+1. The Defending player must nominate a number of models among their force with the type Infantry (Character) or Vehicle (Character) equal to the total rolled – these are the Champions that the Attackers are seeking to slay. Each of the Champions begins play worth 1 Victory point each. The value of a specific Champion increases by +1 each time that Champion causes an enemy model to be removed as a casualty, up to a maximum value of 6 Victory points. Players may find it useful to mark the current value of each Champion with a D6 during play.

During play, each Champion may re-roll any one missed To Hit roll in either (but not both) the Shooting or Assault phases of each player turn.

At the end of the game, the Attacking player scores a number of Victory points equal to the total value of all Champions which have been removed from play as casualties, while the Defending player scores a number of Victory points equal to the total value of all surviving Champions on the table who are not Falling Back.

**Secondary Objectives**
First Blood and Slay the Warlord.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves and Night Fighting.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Strategic Raid Mission – The Hunters at Bay

*"Those few survivors of our glorious victory at Isstvan are but gnats, buzzing to and fro until we deem fit to crush them once and for all."*

*Lieutenant Arven Damascine, Emperor's Children 17th Chapter Command Echelon*

*Some raids go badly wrong, leaving troops trapped and cut off from their extraction point by a prepared and well organised enemy. The only hope for such a force is to break through enemy lines and attempt to rendezvous with friendly forces outside of the kill zone.*

**The Armies**
Strategic Raid missions are best suited for games of 1,500 - 2,000 points. Before beginning play, one army should be identified as the Raider force and the opposing army as the Garrison force, either by the choice of the players involved or by rolling off, with the winner picking which side they will represent.

**The Battlefield**
Players should determine the deployment map to be used, as noted on page 179, and deploy any player-owned fortifications before setting up terrain. For games using the Strategic Raid missions, it may be advantageous to use a generous amount of terrain, placed to provide a variety of tactical opportunities to both sides.

Once all terrain is set up, but after deployment zones have been decided, the Raider player must place three objectives along any point on the table edge that is within the Defender's deployment zone. None of these objectives may be placed within 12" of each other; if any objectives cannot fit, then they are not placed.

**Deployment**
Before deploying their forces, each player should first roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. The Defender deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the Raider player deploys in the same manner.

Rules for deploying into fortifications and Transports or using the Infiltrate or Scout special rules can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**First Turn**
The Defender takes the first turn, unless the Raider player can Seize the Initiative (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

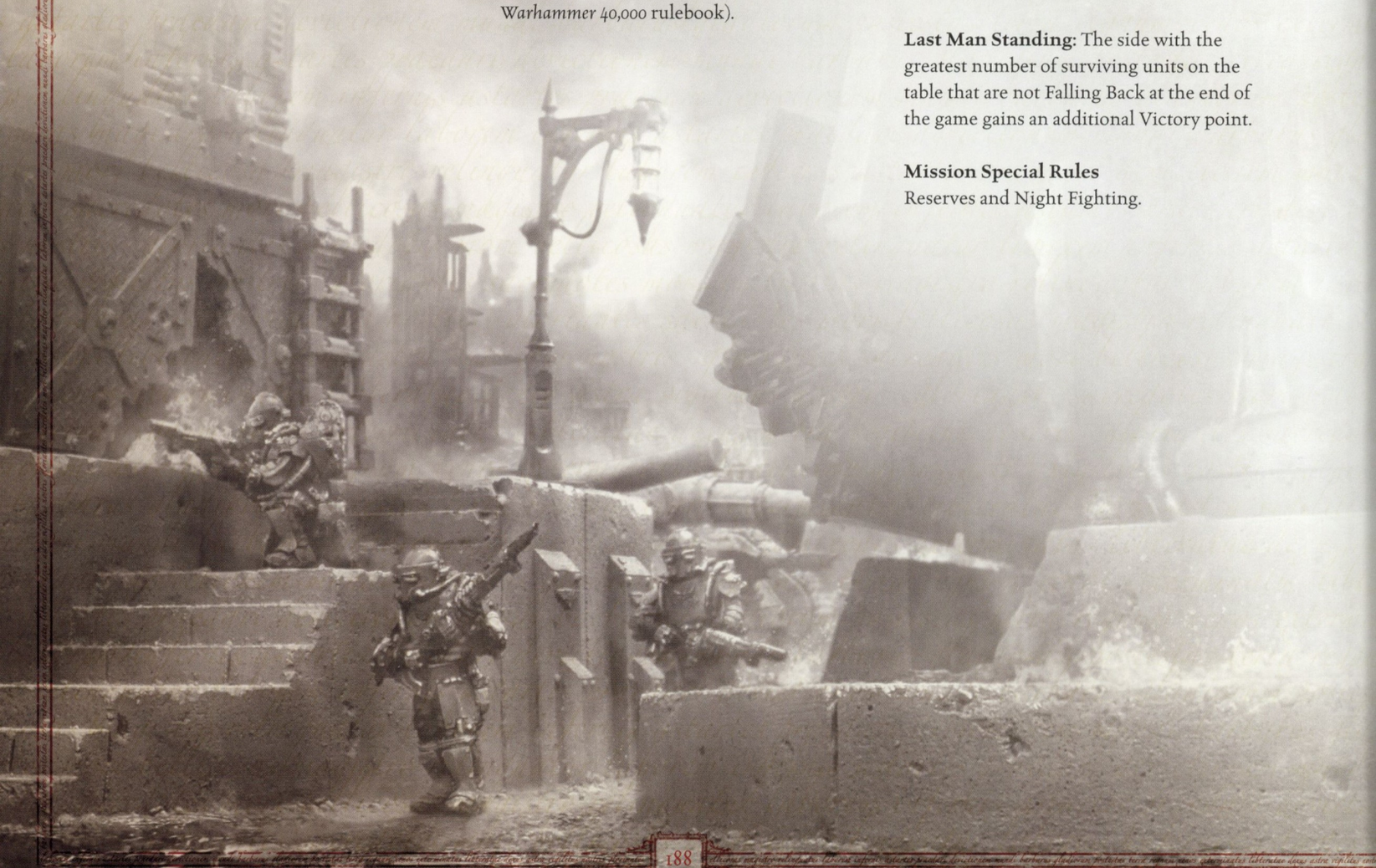
**Victory Conditions**
The Hunters at Bay mission represents the desperate attempts of the trapped raiding party to break through enemy lines and escape, with each objective representing one possible avenue of escape. At the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory points has won the game. If both players score the same number of Victory points, the game is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of the game, the Raider player scores 3 Victory points as long as they control at least one of the objectives. The Defending player scores 1 Victory point for each of the objectives they control.

**Secondary Objectives**
First Blood, Slay the Warlord and Last Man Standing.

**Last Man Standing:** The side with the greatest number of surviving units on the table that are not Falling Back at the end of the game gains an additional Victory point.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves and Night Fighting.



# Imperial Fists Tactical Support Sergeant

Sergeant Reinor
28th Squad, 135th Demi-Company
Bastion Kvet, Manachea Lux

The 135th Demi-Company was a detached Imperial Fists unit based at Bastion Kvet on Manachea Lux, a fortress designed to hold out against attack until relief arrived. The 135th was configured around a core of Tactical and Heavy Support squads, supplemented by Tactical Support squads such as the 28th. The bastion came under heavy attack when the Warmaster's hosts smashed into the Manachea Commonwealth. The Traitors pinned the small garrison units down with wave after wave of human troops, driven by demagogues later identified as warrior lodge serpent priests, prior to attack by Sons of Horus assault units. On the ninth day, Reinor assumed command of the dwindling bastion. Of his fate, little is known, other than he continued to lead the 135th Company, fighting atop the sundered fortifications until the end, by which time the Imperial Fists were the last Loyalists to give their lives in the Manachea system.

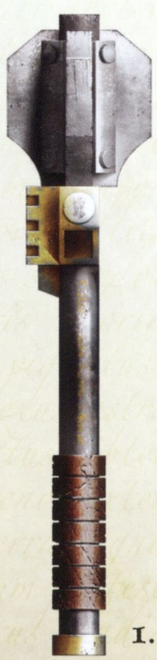
Sergeant Reinor is depicted here as per a pict-image recovered from Traitor forces. He is clad in Mk III Astartes power armour, with the crossed mace personal heraldry he was granted in recognition of his actions during the defence of the frigate *Eon of Stone* in 856.M30. Note extensive battle damage sustained during the defence of the Bastion Kvet, including evidence of heavy injury.



**Panoply of War**

**1. Power maul:** Artificer wrought, Reinor's signature weapon.

**2. Mars-Omega pattern Volkite Charger**



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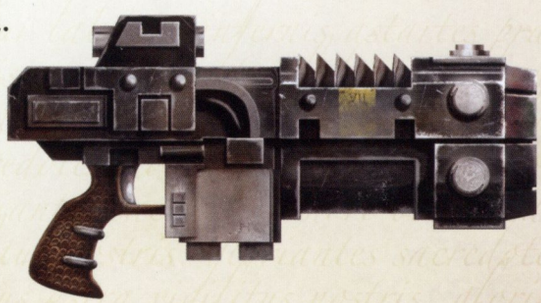

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# Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight

The wars of the Horus Heresy were fought across a staggering range of battle grounds, from the airless void to subterranean vaults. The bloodiest battles, however, were fought where Mankind was most established, in the cities of the worlds of the Imperium. Some were continent-spanning hives and proto-hives, relics of the lost Dark Age of Technology where planetary populations had long huddled together for mutual protection against the ravening horrors of Old Night, while others were newer, brasher monuments of architectural glory, the fruits of the Great Crusade and a new age of human colonisation. Thus, warfare in the dense environs of once mighty, now swiftly ruined cities was common throughout the wars of the Horus Heresy and the Scouring which followed it, as the vast armies of Loyalists and Traitors ground one another to dust for possession of such vitally important centres.

Only a fool would fight for possession of a city simply to claim it as a trophy, for the cost in blood and treasure of taking one is astronomical. Rather, such places represent strategic assets in their own right and their taking is guaranteed to have a wider effect upon the general war effort. If a city is the capital and seat of government of an entire world, system or even sector, taking it will send an incontrovertible message to any aligned with that government and may precipitate the capitulation of entire worlds. The city may be built around a well-established spaceport vital for moving supplies to and from that planet, in which case taking it reasonably intact will not only deny its use to the enemy, but bolster the victor's own resources. Perhaps the city is host to some other prized asset, which an attacker might wish to claim for themselves or deny to their foe.

Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight missions present a set of missions, as well as a number of alternative Force Organisation charts, designed to take advantage of the unique challenges and opportunities presented by setting a game in the rubble-choked environs of a city being consumed by total war. The missions represent the types of battles that were waged throughout the Horus Heresy as defined by the overarching goals of the factions involved. In this sense, they are more focused in scope and narrative in nature than the missions presented in other Warhammer 40,000 supplements, and players should, of course, feel free to use one or both forms of game in their campaigns, as befits their own tastes.

# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Playing a City Fight Mission

These missions can be played as one-off games if both players wish to do so, or they can be played as part of an ongoing campaign as appropriate to the structure of that campaign. There are six missions to choose from, and like other types there are three possible forms of deployment, meaning no two games need be the same. Players can agree between them which combination of mission and deployment will be used in a game, or roll on the following tables:

| D6 | City Fight Mission |
|---|---|
| 1 | Crucial Ground |
| 2 | Judgement of Battle |
| 3 | Purge by Fire |
| 4 | Vital Prize |
| 5 | Fortress of Blood |
| 6 | The Death Throes |

| D6 | Deployment Map |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | High Ground |
| 3-4 | Domination |
| 5-6 | Deadly Ground |

The rules and advice regarding playing missions presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook also apply to Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight missions, unless specifically stated otherwise. The guidance for placing terrain is different however, to reflect the dense environs in which these battles are fought.

In all cases, in addition to the listed victory conditions for any particular Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight mission, completely destroying the enemy is always a complete victory.

### Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Secondary Mission Objectives

In addition to the Secondary Objectives described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, some Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight missions feature several additional Secondary Objectives:

**Take the City**
At the end of the game, every ruin on the battlefield that is occupied earns the occupying unit's side 1 Victory point.

- An individual ruin is counted as occupied if one or more scoring units have the majority of models within the ruin, and no enemy scoring units can claim likewise.

**Last Man Standing**
The side with the greatest number of surviving units at the end of the game gains 1 extra Victory point.

**Attrition**
The army which has destroyed the highest number of enemy units at the end of the game gains 1 additional Victory point.

### Attacker and Defender

Some of the Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight missions identify one side as the Attacker and the other as the Defender, placing specific set-up or victory conditions on them. Because a battle to control a city can rage constantly back and forth and switch in an instant, these roles need not be taken too literally. An army which has attacked a city and penetrated deep into its interior might find the tables turned as enemy reserve units close in upon it from all directions, forcing the lead units of its advance to dig in and assume a defensive stance.

In a campaign, the role of the Attacker or the Defender can be determined by the ongoing strategic situation, or players can agree between themselves or roll off to determine which side will take which stance.



# Alternative City Fight Force Organisation Charts

This section presents two new optional Force Organisation charts that players might like to try when playing a Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight mission. These charts reflect the different ways armies might organise themselves or adapt to the specific challenges of this environment and present the player with an additional range of options. Both types' use is subject to the general rules for using detachments as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook and, in addition, gain the noted Command Benefits. Both of these charts present the only detachments, both in type and number, which may be employed while these optional charts are in use.

## Incursion Force

An Incursion Force is a focussed, ad hoc grouping of units intended to afford one another mutual support in the dense setting of a ruined city. On such a battlefield, conventional formations break down as squadrons of tanks, for example, are easily outflanked by melta bomb-armed infantry, artillery batteries are unable to effectively target foes they cannot observe and infantry units struggle to bring heavy weaponry to bear on fortified positions. One answer to this problem is to form small battle groups that represent a microcosm of an army and operate for mutual support and protection. A single tank protected from enemy infiltrators by experienced allied infantry squads makes a formidable force much more potent than its small size might suggest.

The Incursion Force detachment is appropriate for use by attackers and defenders alike, representing as it does veteran warriors with experience or training in operating in the fraught and treacherous environment of an urban war zone.

**Restrictions**

All units chosen must be of the same Faction (or have no Faction). Only a single Praetor may be taken, and no Legiones Astartes Rites of War may be employed.

**Command Benefits**

**Objective Secured:** All Troops units from this detachment have the Objective Secured special rule. A unit with this special rule controls objectives and occupies a ruin, even if an enemy scoring unit is within range of the objective marker or has models in the ruin, unless the enemy unit also has this rule.

**Close Coordination:** Infantry units from this detachment gain the Interceptor rule when within 6" of any vehicle from the same sub-detachment, but only when firing at enemy infantry models.

## Entrenched Force

This detachment type represents an army that has 'gone to ground' in the shattered remains of a city, taking full advantage of the dense, confused environs and forcing the enemy to engage them on their own terms. The warriors of this force know every rat run and bolthole in the area and have organised themselves to fully exploit the brutal, bloody-handed tactics necessary to fight and win in such an unforgiving battle ground.

This detachment is most appropriate to those defending their own city, representing forces which have taken shelter from a massive bombardment and emerged to make a stand against the enemy armies forced to weed them out one ruin at a time. Having said that, in a prolonged city fight either side could become entrenched as even an attacker initially unfamiliar with the lay of the land soon learns how best to take advantage of it, or else perishes.

**Restrictions**

All units chosen must be of the same Faction (or have no Faction). The compulsory Heavy Support choice must be a unit with the Infantry type.

**Command Benefits**

**Objective Secured:** All Troops units from this detachment have the Objective Secured special rule. A unit with this special rule controls objectives and occupies a ruin, even if an enemy scoring unit is within range of the objective marker or has models in the ruin, unless the enemy unit also has this rule.

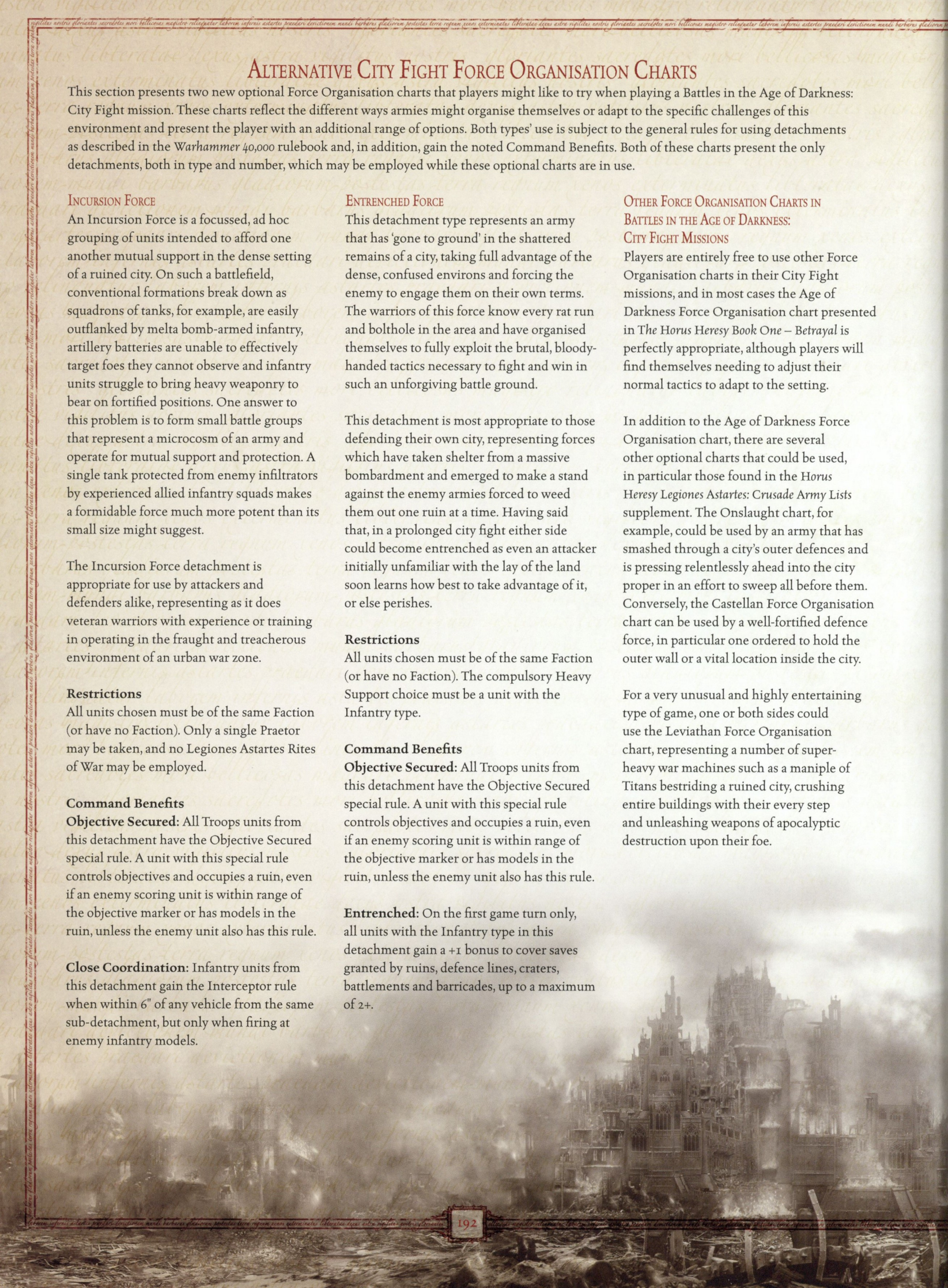
**Entrenched:** On the first game turn only, all units with the Infantry type in this detachment gain a +1 bonus to cover saves granted by ruins, defence lines, craters, battlements and barricades, up to a maximum of 2+.

## Other Force Organisation Charts in Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Missions

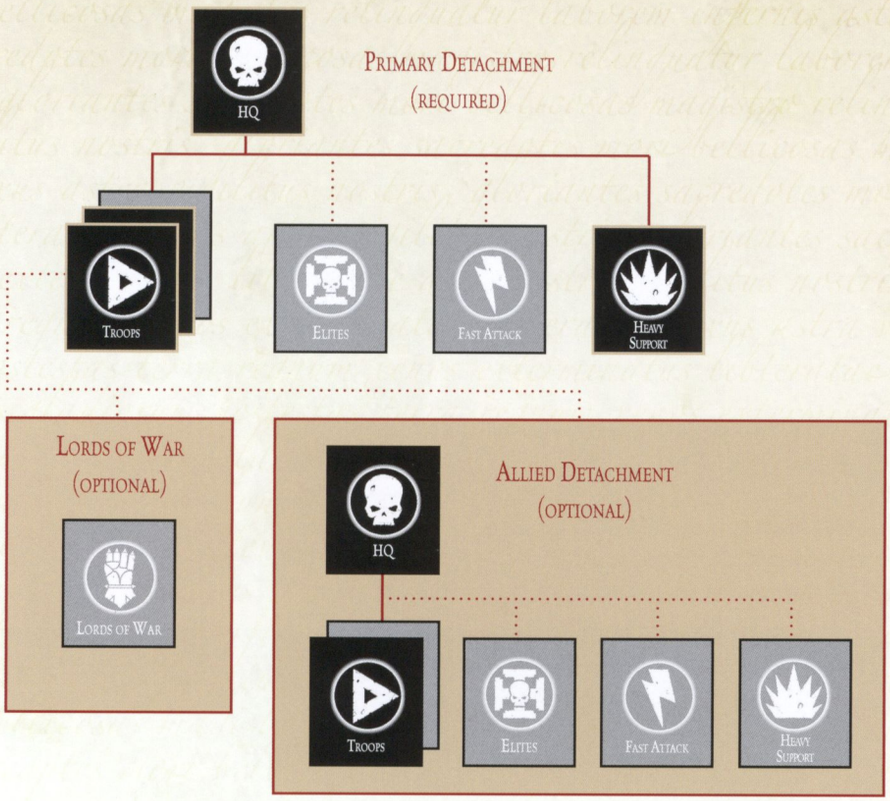
Players are entirely free to use other Force Organisation charts in their City Fight missions, and in most cases the Age of Darkness Force Organisation chart presented in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal* is perfectly appropriate, although players will find themselves needing to adjust their normal tactics to adapt to the setting.

In addition to the Age of Darkness Force Organisation chart, there are several other optional charts that could be used, in particular those found in the *Horus Heresy Legiones Astartes: Crusade Army Lists* supplement. The Onslaught chart, for example, could be used by an army that has smashed through a city's outer defences and is pressing relentlessly ahead into the city proper in an effort to sweep all before them. Conversely, the Castellan Force Organisation chart can be used by a well-fortified defence force, in particular one ordered to hold the outer wall or a vital location inside the city.

For a very unusual and highly entertaining type of game, one or both sides could use the Leviathan Force Organisation chart, representing a number of super-heavy war machines such as a maniple of Titans bestriding a ruined city, crushing entire buildings with their every step and unleashing weapons of apocalyptic destruction upon their foe.



## Optional Incursion Force Organisation Chart




**Primary Detachment (Required)**
- **Compulsory:** One sub-detachment, which must contain 1 HQ*, 2 Troops, 1 Heavy Support
- **Optional:** +1 Troops, +1 Elites, +1 Fast Attack

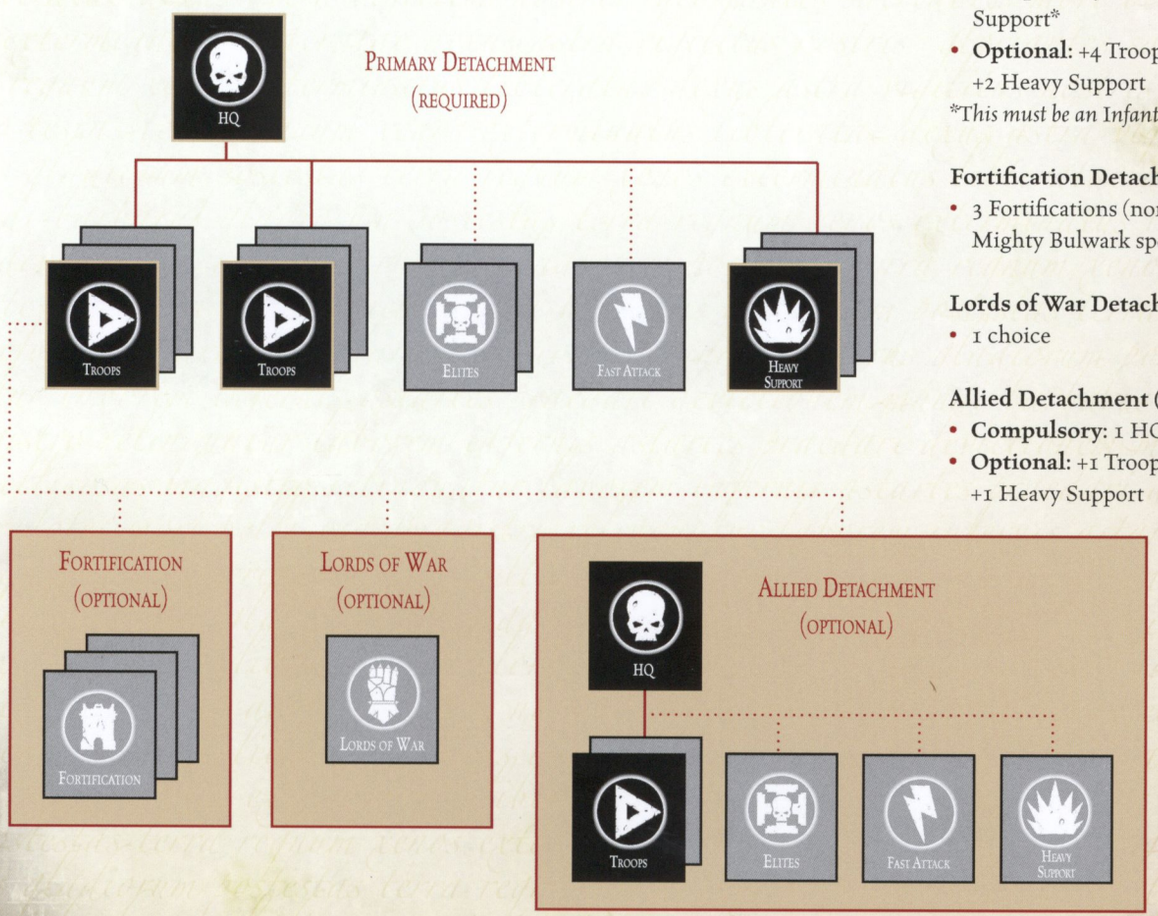
**Optional Additional Sub-detachments:**
- +2 sub-detachments as above.

**Only one HQ choice may be a Praetor. No Legiones Astartes Rites of War may be used in conjunction with this Force Organisation chart.*

**Lords of War Detachment (Optional)**
- 1 choice

**Allied Detachment (Optional)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 1 Troops
- **Optional:** +1 Troops, +1 Elites, +1 Fast Attack, +1 Heavy Support

## Optional Entrenched Force Organisation Chart




**Primary Detachment (Required)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 2 Troops, 1 Heavy Support*
- **Optional:** +4 Troops, +2 Elites, +1 Fast Attack, +2 Heavy Support

**This must be an Infantry unit.*

**Fortification Detachment (Optional)**
- 3 Fortifications (none of which may have the Mighty Bulwark special rule).

**Lords of War Detachment (Optional)**
- 1 choice

**Allied Detachment (Optional)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 1 Troops
- **Optional:** +1 Troops, +1 Elites, +1 Fast Attack, +1 Heavy Support

# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Placing City Fight Terrain

When setting up battlefield terrain to represent the dense environs of a war-shattered city, the ideal is to have the tallest buildings clustered close to the centre of the table in order to break up lines of sight and encourage both sides to get to grips with one another to achieve their objectives.

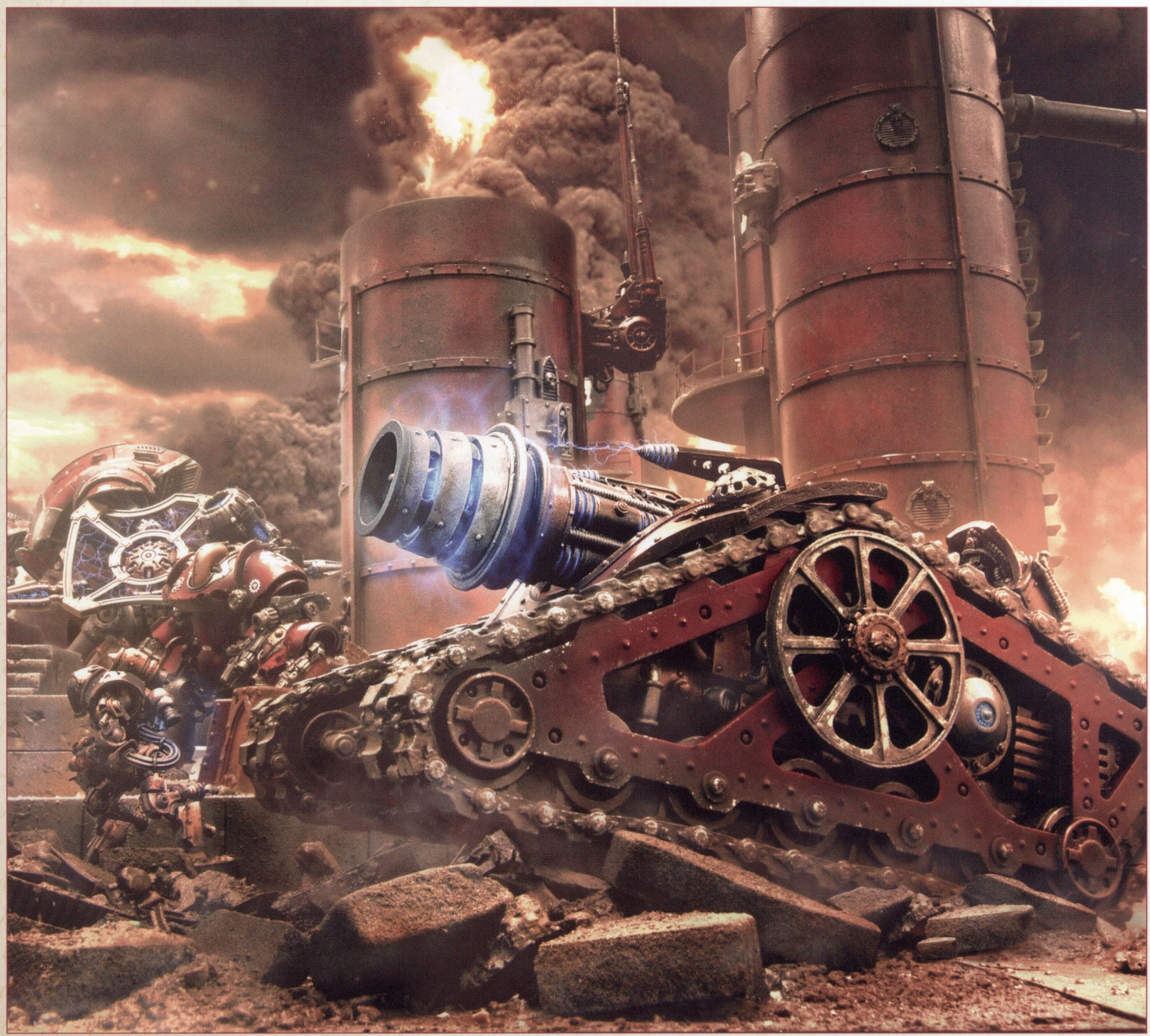
The majority of the missions that follow call for the capture of one or more ruins, and the alternative deployment maps will often define one or both sides' deployment zone not as an area on the tabletop, but as a number of ruins.

Players are free to set up terrain in any manner they wish, but might like to use this system to achieve a suitable set-up. First, the players should roll off, and the winner should select the tallest city ruin they have available and place this in the centre of the table. The players then take it in turns to place any other ruins they wish between 2" and 12" of another (2" makes for an alleyway only infantry can negotiate, and 12" allows a super-heavy vehicle to rumble through the city). Once all of the ruins are placed, players can place other items, in particular rubble, craters and other debris, rules for which can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. In addition to these, the Mysterious Terrain described in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal* can be utilised, as can the Mysterious Wreckage detailed on page 206.

If players have access to the Realm of Battle Cityscape tiles made by Forge World, they might like to adjust the set-up slightly to take advantage of the topography of these sections, some parts of which represent open areas such as roads or plazas, while others are ideal for placing city ruins on.

**Home Table Edge**
Whichever deployment type is used, the player who deployed first must choose a single table edge as their home table edge for the purposes of determining the direction of Fall Back moves and for units entering play from Reserve.

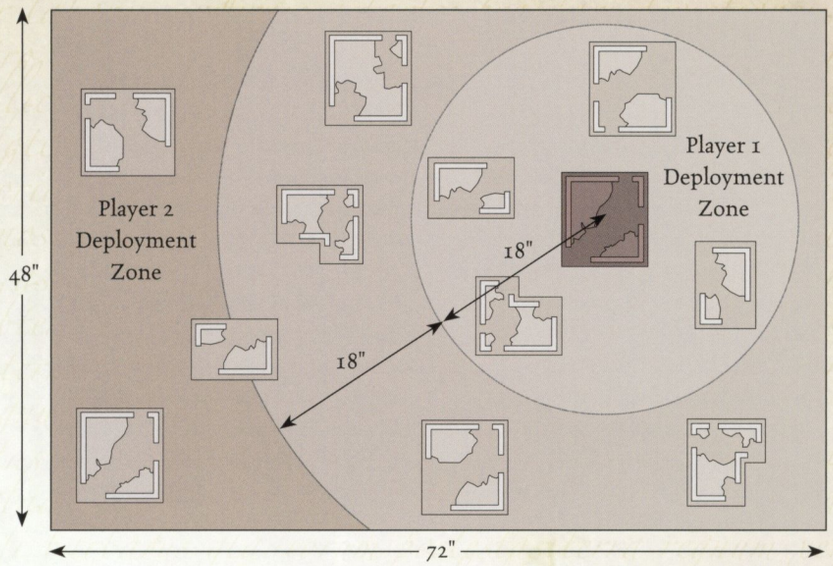
The opposing player then uses the opposite table edge to the one chosen by the player who deployed first as their own home table edge.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Deployment Maps

**High Ground**
If players are using this deployment map, they should mutually agree or roll-off to determine which player's force is holding the High Ground at the start of the game. This player chooses a single ruin anywhere on the table. The entire area within 18" of the centre of this ruin is that player's deployment zone.

The other player's deployment zone is anywhere on the table not within 18" of the first player's deployment zone.



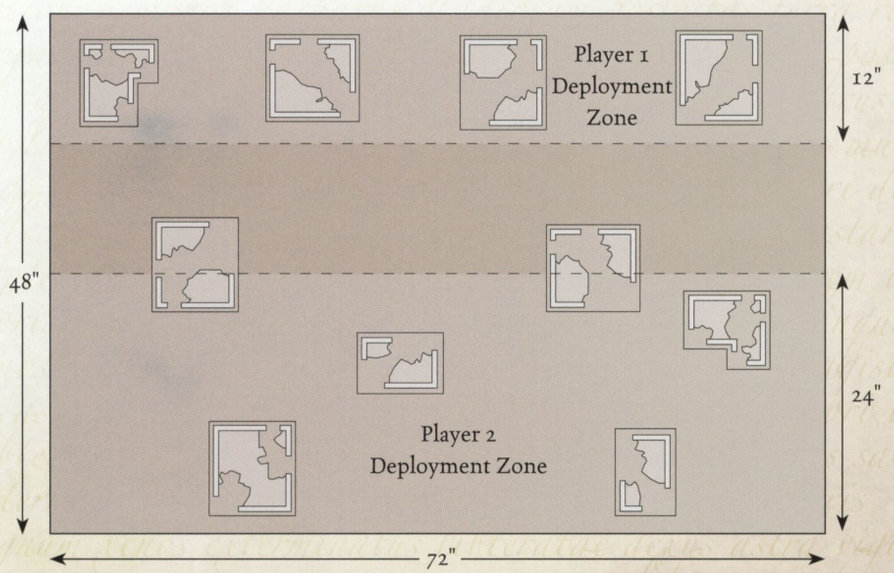

**Domination**
When using this form of deployment, roll off to determine which player's force is dominating the area at the start of the game. This player chooses up to half of the ruins on the table as their deployment zone. Note that the open ground between each ruin is not part of this deployment zone, only the interior of the ruins themselves.

The other player then chooses any remaining ruins as their deployment zone.

Players may find it convenient to mark the ruins they have each chosen to deploy into with a marker or counter of some sort, until deployment is complete.




**Deadly Ground**
When using the Deadly Ground deployment map, roll off or agree on which player's force is holding the so-called safe ground and which is stuck out in the deadly ground. The player whose forces are occupying the safe ground chooses a long table edge and has as their deployment zone all ruins entirely within 12" of this edge. The same player may now re-position up to D3 ruins anywhere on the table not in their own deployment zone, so long as there remains at least one ruin in that area. The other player's deployment zone is the area up to 24" on from the opposite long table edge.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Mission – Crucial Ground

*"It wasn't the largest hab on Manachea, but its promethium transit nodes made it the key to the entire Ullan Plateau. They say that the night Kessanir Spire fell, it was transformed into a funeral pyre and the fires of its death could be seen from orbit."*

*Master Sergeant Gregario, 933rd Solar Auxilia Cohort (The King-Makers)*

*This city is host to numerous vital installations, from defence arsenals to industrial storage depots. Inevitably, such sites attract the attentions of those who would claim them for themselves, Traitors and Loyalists alike fighting to the last drop of blood to take and control such crucial ground.*

**The Armies**
Armies are chosen according to the guidelines described in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*. Games can be played within any agreed points limit, but the dense terrain and wide availability of cover makes it most suited to armies of between 1,500 - 3,000 points.

**The Battlefield**
Terrain is placed according to the guidance given on page 194, and the deployment map chosen (see page 195).

The players then take it in turns (rolling off to determine which player does so first) identifying a total of D3+1 ruins or buildings (which may not be player-controlled fortifications) anywhere on the table. These are the key buildings which both sides are attempting to control in the battle, and as each is identified, the player that does so chooses one of the building types on the table on the opposite page and applies any special rules it possesses.

**Deployment**
Before deploying any forces, each player should roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

**First Turn**
The player who deployed first may choose to take the first or second turn. If they decide to take the first turn, their opponent may attempt to Seize the Initiative (as explained in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
At the end of the game, the player who has earned the most Victory points wins the game. If both players earn the same number of Victory points, the result is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of the game, each occupied target building earns the controlling side 2 Victory points.

**Secondary Objectives**
Slay the Warlord, Attrition and Last Man Standing.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves.



The player defending a key building chooses any one of the following special rules to apply to it. Each type of building is numbered on the chart, allowing for the result to be randomised should both players wish.

1 **City Defence Armoury:** *What remains of this structure is littered with ammunition cases, power packs and feed lines, allowing troops within to maintain a prodigious rate of fire without consideration of expending their own supplies.*
A unit occupying a City Defence Armoury re-rolls To Hit rolls of 1 in the Shooting phase.

2 **Promethium Storage Depot:** *The shattered rockcrete of this ruin is threaded with exposed promethium conduits fed from bulk storage tanks sunk in the ground below. By bleeding off controlled amounts of fuel, troops can overcharge the pressure on certain weapons, if they are willing to risk the perils of doing so.*
Any flamer weapon fired by a non-vehicle model occupying the Promethium Storage Depot in the Shooting phase can change its weapon type from Assault to Heavy, or from Pistol to Heavy. If it does so, the weapon gains the Torrent special rule until the end of that phase.

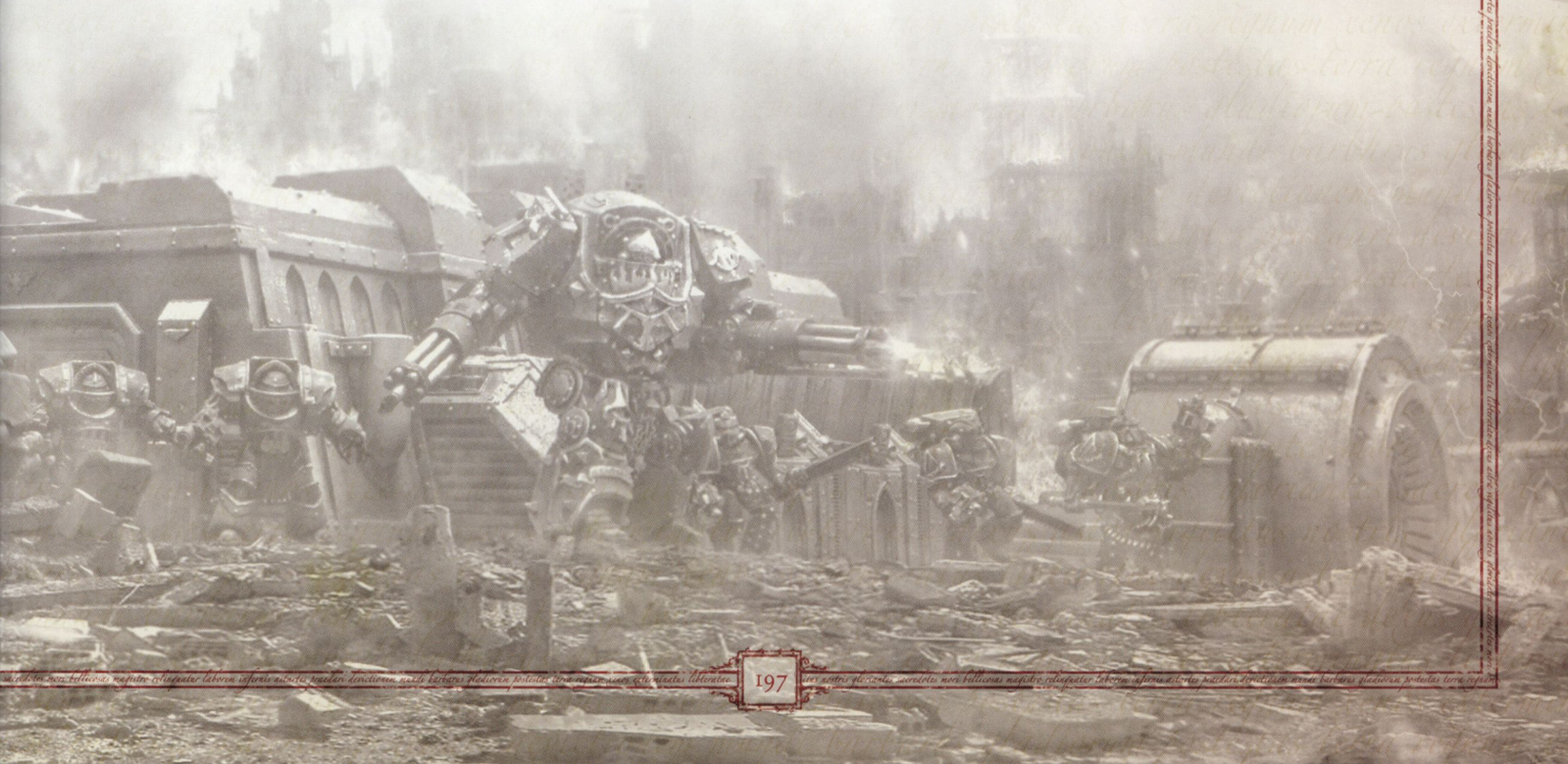
Each time a unit successfully makes a cover save on a roll of 6 while inside the depot, roll a further D6. On a roll of 1, the shot has breached a fuel conduit and the unit which made the cover save immediately suffers an additional D6 Str 4 AP 5 hits with the Ignores Cover special rule. These additional hits use Random Allocation, and vehicles are hit on their Rear Armour facing.

3 **Vault of Strife:** *Within the ruin are scattered numerous artefacts of the Age of Strife, locked away with the coming of Imperial Truth, but now released by the unleashing of war. They include the writings of madmen and despots, accounts of their horrific deeds and relics of their awful crimes. To look upon evidence of such times is to be reminded of the horrors of Old Night and to risk the loss of sanity itself.*
All units occupying the Vault of Strife cause Fear.

4 **Medicae Facility:** *Though devastated like so much of the city, this medicae facility still contains sufficient automated chirugenic machines and apothecarion supplies to tend the wounds of the most grievously injured who can reach sanctuary there.*
All units occupying the Medicae Facility gain the Feel No Pain special rule. If they already have this special rule, they gain a +1 bonus to it, up to a maximum of 3+.

5 **Generatorum:** *The ruin is host to what remains of a power generator facility and some of its sub-systems remain functional. Shunting power from these feeds into the intake of an energy weapon is hazardous, but when the situation dictates, some warriors will take that risk.*
Las weapons, melta weapons and plasma weapons (as listed in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook and *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*) may add +1 to their Strength when fired by a unit occupying the Generatorum. However, if this bonus is used, they gain the Gets Hot rule (or in the case of weapons that already have it, the model suffers damage on a To Hit roll of 1 or 2).

6 **Vox Relay Node:** *The smashed pict-slates and hissing vox-grilles adorning the interior of this structure mark it as the remains of a communications hub. Those warriors with the training to do so can patch into what remains of this network and use it to coordinate the deployment of allied units.*
A player with a unit occupying a Vox Relay Node may re-roll Reserves, Outflank and Deep Strike Scatter dice (in the latter case it is only the Scatter dice itself that is re-rolled, not the distance).



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Mission – Judgement of Battle

*"I care not to take this place. I care only to slaughter its defenders and to cleanse its worthless streets with their weakling blood."*

*Assault Captain Tyran Mirr, 45th Company, Legiones Astartes Sons of Horus*

*The order has been given – the city is to be destroyed one building at a time, no stone is to be left standing upon another. Whether it is the vengeful servants of the Warmaster setting all to the torch, or Loyalists determined to deny the city to the Traitors, the attackers swarm through the city one sector at a time, a wave of devastation left in their wake.*

**The Armies**
Armies are chosen according to the guidelines described in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*. Games can be played within any agreed points limit, but the dense terrain and wide availability of cover makes it most suited to armies of between 1,750 - 3,000 points.

In this mission, one side should take the role of the Attacker and one the Defender. Which side takes which role can be agreed between the players or rolled for randomly. If the mission is being played as part of an ongoing campaign, this may be determined by the campaign's own rules.

**The Battlefield**
Terrain is placed according to the guidance given on page 194, and the deployment map chosen (see page 195).

**Deployment**
Before deploying any forces, each player should roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

**First Turn**
The player who deployed first may choose to take the first or second turn. If they decide to take the first turn, their opponent may attempt to Seize the Initiative (as explained in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
At the end of the game, the player who has earned the most Victory points wins the game. If both players earn the same number of Victory points, the result is a Draw.

**Primary Objective: By Flame and Shell**
Every building that is aflame (see Mission Special Rules below) at the end of the game earns the Attacker 1 Victory point. Every building that is demolished earns the Attacker 2 Victory points (which is not cumulative with being set aflame).

Every building that has neither been set aflame nor demolished at the end of the game earns the Defender 1 Victory point.

**Secondary Objectives**
Slay the Warlord and Attrition.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves, Setting Ruins & Buildings Aflame, and Demolishing Ruins & Buildings.

**Setting Ruins & Buildings Aflame**
In order to set a ruin or building aflame, an Attacking infantry unit must end its Movement phase with at least one model within or in base contact with the terrain piece. When this occurs, roll a D6. On a 1, the flames have failed to catch this turn. On 2+, the target is set alight and should be marked as such with a token or other suitable marker. The terrain piece immediately becomes dangerous terrain if it was not already. In addition, the terrain piece now blocks line of sight entirely for any model shooting through it (targets within may still be targeted normally but gain the Stealth special rule if they do not have it already while within the terrain piece).

**Demolishing Ruins & Buildings**
In order to entirely destroy a ruin, an Infantry unit must spend an entire turn within or in base contact with it without performing any other actions at all, representing them placing a demolition charge. At the start of each of the Attacker's subsequent player turns, roll a D6 for each charge placed. On a result of 4+, the charge explodes and the ruin is demolished. A demolished ruin should be replaced with a suitable area of rubble if one is available, but if not (or if the terrain piece cannot be physically removed from the table) its cover save is reduced to 6+, and it is ignored for the purposes of drawing line of sight. Models may still occupy its levels, but it is assumed these are so ramshackle as to afford very little cover. Buildings are destroyed as per the rules given in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, or alternatively by the rules found in the *Stronghold Assault* expansion – decide which by mutual agreement before the game begins.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Mission – Purge by Fire

*"The defenders of Ice Hive Borea were afforded a rare luxury. They were given the chance to surrender. They spurned my generosity and so the offer is withdrawn. They shall not have a second chance."*

*Warsmith Karovon, Legiones Astartes Iron Warriors*

*The city must be taken in as intact a state as is possible, every last defender cleared from its buildings with flame, bullet, blast and shell. The Warmaster demands cohorts of workers to tend his weapons-forges, while those still loyal to Terra seek to cling on to what they can.*

**The Armies**
Armies are chosen according to the guidelines described in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*. Games can be played within any agreed points limit, but the dense terrain and wide availability of cover makes it most suited to armies of between 1,750 - 3,000 points.

**The Battlefield**
Terrain is placed according to the guidance given on page 194, and the deployment map chosen (see page 195).

**Deployment**
Before deploying any forces, each player should roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

**First Turn**
The player who deployed first may choose to take the first or second turn. If they decide to take the first turn, their opponent may attempt to Seize the Initiative (as explained in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
At the end of the game, the player who has earned the most Victory points wins the game. If both players earn the same number of Victory points, the result is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of the game, each side gains 2 Victory points for each enemy unit with the Infantry type (other than Independent Characters) that they have completely destroyed. For any other unit they have destroyed by the end of the game, they earn 1 Victory point.

**Secondary Objectives**
Take the City, Slay the Warlord and Linebreaker.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Mission – Vital Prize

*"What we found in the ruins of Sector 99-Z changed the course of the whole campaign. A single data-crystal, sealed with the highest cipher, which I myself held in my very hand, opened up the route to the outer systems and brought about the defeat of seven entire Traitor army groups."*

*Lasrifleman Euristi, 178th Solar Auxilia Cohort (The Gate-Keepers)*

*Amongst the anarchy of battle, one side discovers an item of indescribable value to the ongoing war effort and determines to deliver it to safety at any cost. The enemy learns of the item's existence at the last moment and commits all available resources to intercepting it. Perhaps the item will prove vital to the Warmaster's labyrinthine plans, unlock the next phase of a murderous campaign of conquest, or perhaps even prove key to the ultimate defence of the crucible of Humanity.*

**The Armies**
Armies are chosen according to the guidelines described in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*. Games can be played within any agreed points limit, but the dense terrain and wide availability of cover makes it most suited to armies of between 1,750 - 3,000 points.

In this mission, one side should take the role of the Attacker and one the Defender. Which side takes which role can be agreed between the players or rolled for randomly. If the mission is being played as part of an ongoing campaign, this may be determined by the campaign's own rules.

**The Battlefield**
Terrain is placed according to the guidance given on page 194, and the deployment map chosen (see page 195).

The Defender then places an objective marker representing the object of the hunt in a single ruin or building anywhere they wish on the table, and declares its exact nature (see 'The Prize' mission special rule opposite).

**Deployment**
Before deploying any forces, each player should roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner. Neither side may deploy within the ruin/building that contains the mission's single objective marker.

**First Turn**
The player who deployed first may choose to take the first or second turn. If they decide to take the first turn, their opponent may attempt to Seize the Initiative (as explained in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
At the end of the game, the player who has earned the most Victory points wins the game. If both players earn the same number of Victory points, the result is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of the game, the objective marker representing the Prize is worth 2+D3 Victory points to the player who controls it.

**Secondary Objectives**
Slay the Warlord, First Blood and Last Man Standing.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves and The Prize.

### Campaign Rule: Grand Strategy
If this mission is being played as part of an ongoing campaign played using the system presented in this or other Forge World supplements, the side that has possession of the prize at the end of the game earns an extra D3 Campaign points on top of any other points they would have earned.



### The Prize

The object of the mission is a relic, treated exactly as per the rules given in the Eternal War: The Relic mission in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

The player who places the objective marker representing the object of the battle may choose any one of the following special rules to apply to it. Each option is numbered, allowing for the result to be randomised should both players wish.

1 **Carta Bellicosa:** *The bearer has access to recent and highly accurate reports and cartographical projections of the state of the battlefield, and can use these to negotiate their route and stay ahead of the advancing foe, as well as provide vital intelligence to their High Command.*
The unit carrying the Carta Bellicosa gains the Move Through Cover and Fleet special rules if they did not have them already.

2 **Espionage Datacore:** *Having learned of the enemy's assault plan and their latest tactical codes, the bearer can avoid their foe's pattern of attack and issue false orders to the lead units in their advance.*
Enemy units may not enter play via Deep Strike or Outflank within 12" of the unit carrying the Espionage Datacore, and Deep Striking enemy units which scatter to within this distance suffer a Deep Strike Mishap on any 'double' rolled for their Scatter distance.

3 **Strategic Intelligence:** *The bearer's compatriots have learned the enemy's plan for moving their forces about the city, and can use these details to anticipate and counter the advance of individual enemy units.*
While in a player's possession, once per game turn they may force a single enemy Reserves roll to automatically fail by themselves rolling a D6 and scoring a 4+.

4 **Viral Lode:** *The prize is a biochem warhead, sub-Exterminatus grade but still incredibly potent. The bulk of this invaluable viral sample must be delivered to High Command, but its bearers know that a small amount syphoned from the testing port of the chamber can prove lethal even to the Legiones Astartes, and is unlikely to be missed…*
The close combat attacks of the unit carrying the Viral Lode gain the Fleshbane special rule.

5 **Crucial Missive:** *The prize is a vital message which must be carried to their high commanders no matter the odds, and no matter the price in lives and war machines. The bearer is so determined to fulfil their duty that, for a time at least, they are able to ignore even grievous injuries, at least while their task remains unfinished.*
The bearer of the Crucial Missive and their unit have the Feel No Pain (5+) special rule (or add +1 to a Feel No Pain ability they already possess up to a maximum of 3+).

6 **Cursed Artefact:** *So steeped in the unknown touch of the forbidden powers is the prize that an aura of darkness and inhuman horror surrounds it, an aura so potent that it even makes it arduous for battle-trained psykers to employ their powers against those who bear it.*
The unit carrying the Cursed Artefact gains the Fear and Adamantium Will special rules.



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Mission – Fortress of Blood

*"A dozen Legionaries fell to take that tower, and twice that number were grievously wounded. But take it we did, and in doing so secured a sector, a city, a peninsular and, at length, an entire world."*

*Unknown Legionary, Legiones Astartes Imperial Fists*

*At the heart of the city once stood a splendid palace, fortified defence headquarters or some other erstwhile seat of power, sometimes guarded or attended by a still-loyal servant. When the war reaches this location, one side seeks to tear it down, whilst the other swears to protect it at all costs.*

**The Armies**
Armies are chosen according to the guidelines described in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*. One side should take the role of the Attacker and one the Defender, with the exception that the Attacking player should have a force 25% larger than that of the Defender. This deliberate imbalance takes into account the unusual victory conditions of this mission. Games can be played within any agreed points limit, but the dense terrain and wide availability of cover makes it most suited to armies of between 1,750 - 3,000 points for the Defender.

As stated, in this mission one side should take the role of the Attacker and one the Defender. Which side takes which role can be agreed between the players or rolled for randomly. If the mission is being played as part of an ongoing campaign, this may be determined by the campaign's own rules.

**The Battlefield**
Terrain is placed according to the guidance given on page 194, and the deployment map chosen (see page 195).

The Defender then nominates a single ruin or building (which may not be a player-controlled fortification) within (or forming) their deployment zone and not closer than 6" from any table edge. This is their Headquarters and the target of the attack. The Defender may choose one of the Headquarters types shown in the mission's special rules and apply them to the ruin or building they have chosen.

**Deployment**
Before deploying any forces, each player should roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. The defending player deploys first. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

**First Turn**
The Attacking player may decide to take the first turn or to go second; their opponent, the Defending player, may attempt to Seize the Initiative (as explained in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**
At the end of the game, the player who has earned the most Victory points wins the game. In this case this is likely to be the player in control of the Headquarters at the end of the game. Other outcomes are possible only if Victory points are generated by unusual means (such as the Price of Victory special rule). In the unlikely event that both sides have the same total of Victory points, or none at all at the end of the game, the game's outcome is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**
At the end of the game, the side occupying the Headquarters earns 5 Victory points.

**Secondary Objectives**
None.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves and Headquarters.



### Headquarters

The side defending the Headquarters may, if they wish, choose any one of the following special rules to define its exact type. Each option is numbered, allowing for the result to be randomised should both players wish. If possible, the terrain model in question should visually represent the type of Headquarters selected or, if this is not possible, a token or objective marker should be placed within its boundaries to clearly mark its importance.

1 **Governor's Palace:** *The ruin is that of a portion of the mansion once occupied by the planet's high ruler; its erstwhile luxury and opulence now scattered across the fire-blasted ground. The ruler, or perhaps an heir or consort, has taken refuge amongst the ruins or stands in their midst, defiant of the destruction of their world.*

- The ruins are fortified, increasing the cover save they grant to 3+.
- Should a suitable model to represent the Governor or other worthy be available, the Defender may place this in the ruin when they deploy their army (use the Legate Commander profile on page 256 with no additional equipment). This model has the Fearless special rule, and while in the ruins of the palace confers this to all of the Defender's units that have at least one model inside the ruin.

2 **Defence Force Headquarters:** *The planet's headquarters are all but destroyed, its generals fled and its guards long ago slain, but some vital systems remain functional among the ruins, and a lone, badly wounded strategos officer refuses to abandon their post whilst they remain active.*

- The ruins are fortified, increasing the cover save they grant to 3+.
- Should a suitable model to represent the last Strategos officer be available (see page 258 for his profile and basic equipment), the Defender may place this in the ruin when they deploy their army. The Strategos may not voluntarily leave the ruin, and if they are forced to Fall Back away from it, they are counted as being killed and removed as a casualty.

3 **Astropathic Relay:** *The ruins once housed a relay station or broadcast chamber of the planet's Astropathic Choir. All of the adepts have long since fled or been slain, and the arcane gear which once allowed them to transmit messages across the stars now bleed warp-static to plague the area with weird phenomena, and unnatural corposant balefire clings to and glimmers from every surface. The psychic echoes from the terror of the slain Astropaths' desperate warnings of the oncoming slaughter linger yet, staining the ruins with a palpable aura which few can withstand.*

- The ruins are fortified, increasing the cover save they grant to 3+, and any unit which makes an assault into the ruin is forced to make a disordered charge while doing so.
- All psychic powers manifested within 24" of the Astropathic Relay are only successfully manifest on rolls of 5+ rather than 4+ when taking a Psychic test as normal (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

4 **Hidden Sub-crypts:** *The ruin appears nondescript from afar, but in fact hides the entrance to a network of underground tunnels known only to the planet's highest rulers and reserved for their own use.*

- The ruins are fortified, increasing the cover save they grant to 3+.
- Once per controlling player's turn, a single unit with the Infantry type that has been held in Reserve may use the ruin itself as their point of entry on to the battlefield rather than normally via Reserves, exiting its environs as if they were disembarking from a Transport vehicle. There must be sufficient space for the unit to be placed if this ability is to be used however.

5 **Atomantic Power Node:** *The ruin is one of the primary junctions for the city's wrecked energy grid. Still active and rendered dangerously unstable by bombardment, the node is nevertheless a potent asset to the defenders' resistance against the invasion.*

- The ruins are fortified, increasing the cover save they grant to 3+.
- The ruin grants any unit inside it the Night Vision and Interceptor special rules.
- Once per game, the ruin's controlling player can create a mass power surge, picking one quarter of the table to affect with the surge. For the duration of the game turn, all open ground in that quarter of the table is classed as dangerous terrain.

6 **Doomsday Vault:** *Hidden beneath the cracked stone floor of the ruin is an armoured chamber, within which is secreted an archaeotech device of unimaginable potency, whose lethal power is a hazard even to those who would defend it. The vault is attended by an ancient and wizened tech-savant, by whose efforts the terrors within are imprisoned and who, with but a word, has the power to activate the defensive measures designed to mercilessly slay whoever would breach the vault's defences.*

- The ruins are fortified, increasing the cover save they grant to 3+, and granting any unit within a 5+ invulnerable save against shooting attacks originating outside the ruin, regardless of line of sight.
- At the start of each game turn, roll a D6. On a roll of 1, all models within the ruin must take a Toughness test or suffer a wound.
- Once per game, so long as the ruin is in the possession of the Defending player, and at least one of the Defender's units is inside the ruin and neither are Falling Back or engaged in an assault, a special attack may be made in the Defending player's Shooting phase. Every model outside of the ruin and within 12" of it sustains a Str 4 AP 3 hit with the Fleshbane and Rad-phage special rules (see page 245 for details of Rad-phage).

# Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight Mission – The Death Throes

*"The moment the sky fell, I knew I was dead. That somehow I continue to draw breath has no relevance. I remain still dead, a silent shade amongst the living. I will pass through the gates of eternity only with the Traitors ahead of me."*

*Unidentified Legionary, Legiones Astartes Raven Guard (unconfirmed)*

*Uncaring of the cost even to their own warriors fighting in the ruined city, one side's High Command has signed the city's execution warrant and death rains from the skies. Desperate, frenzied or stoically resigned to their fate, the combatants close in on one another in a mutual final embrace of death, amid a sea of destruction and a hellish and unrelenting fog of war. These are the death throes; this is how a city perishes at last.*

**The Armies**

Armies are chosen according to the guidelines described in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*. Games can be played within any agreed points limit, but the dense terrain and wide availability of cover makes it most suited to armies of between 1,750 - 3,000 points. As a particularly cataclysmic battle, this mission is also suitable to be played as a larger battle and for team games, where if space and available terrain allows, multiple tables can be placed next to each other to simulate one vast battlefront in the death throes of a great city.

**The Battlefield**

Terrain is placed according to the guidance given on page 194, and the deployment map chosen (see page 195).

**Deployment**

Before deploying any forces, each player should roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary. Then, roll off to decide which player chooses to deploy first or second. The player who deploys first deploys their entire army, except any units that are held in Reserve, after which the second player deploys in the same manner.

**First Turn**

The player who deployed first may choose to take the first or second turn. If they decide to take the first turn, their opponent may attempt to Seize the Initiative (as explained in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**

This mission uses the Variable Game Length rules, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Victory Conditions**

At the end of the game, the player who has earned the most Victory points wins the game. If both players earn the same number of Victory points, the result is a Draw.

**Primary Objectives**

**Utter Destruction:** At the end of the game, each player receives 1 Victory point for each enemy unit that has been completely destroyed. Units that are falling back at the end of the game, and units that are not on the table at the end of the game, count as having been destroyed. The rules presented in the Battles in the Age of Darkness expansion for gaining additional Victory points for destroying Lords of War models are in effect (see the Age of Darkness Battles section of *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*).

**Secondary Objectives**

Take the City, Slay the Warlord and Linebreaker.

**Mission Special Rules**

Reserves, Night Fighting (this lasts the entire battle) and Fire from the Skies.

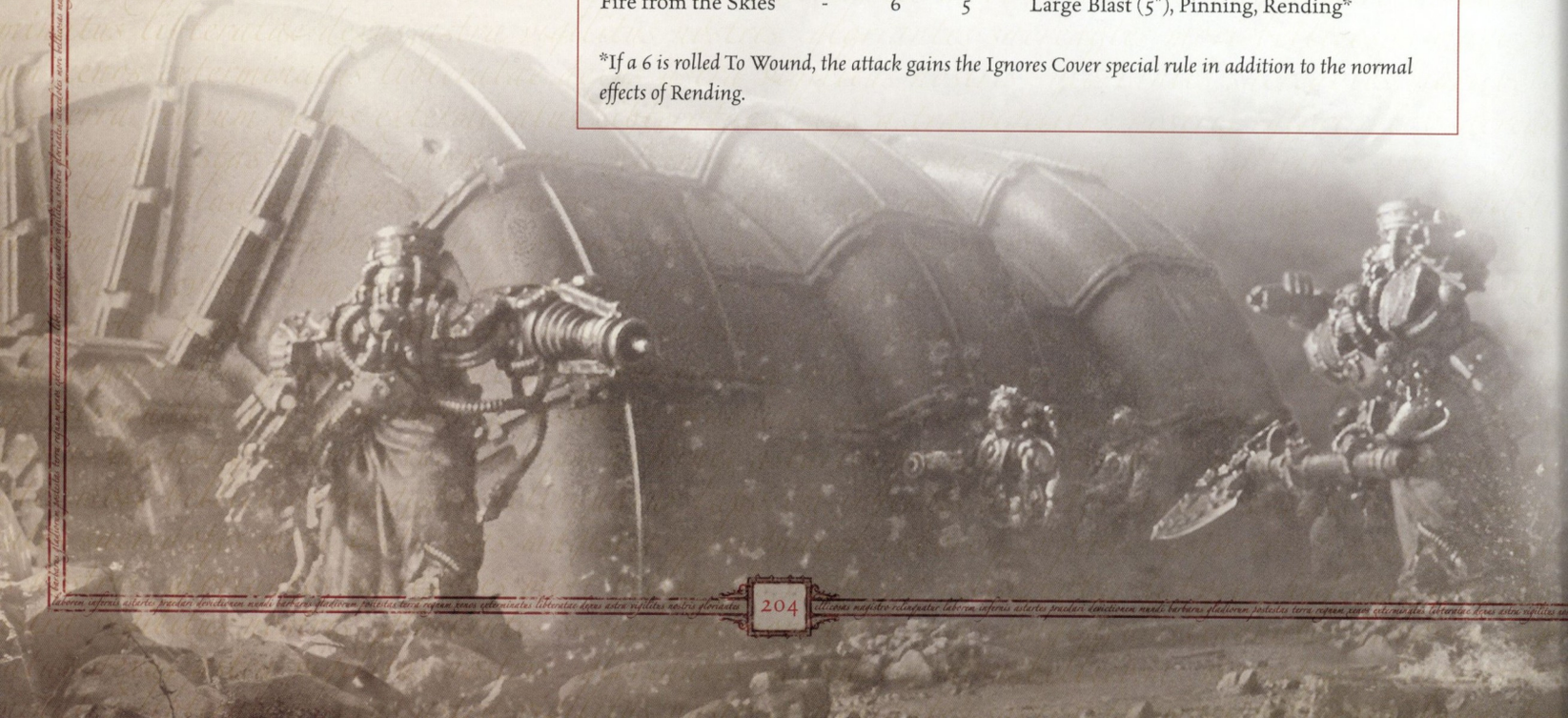
**Fire from the Skies**

*The battle is being fought even as the city's death is upon it, bombs raining down indiscriminately upon friend and foe alike.*

At the beginning of every Shooting phase, the player whose turn it is places a Large Blast (5") marker anywhere on the table, and scatters it 4D6", resolving damage with the following profile:

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fire from the Skies | - | 6 | 5 | Large Blast (5"), Pinning, Rending* |

**If a 6 is rolled To Wound, the attack gains the Ignores Cover special rule in addition to the normal effects of Rending.*





**Death Guard Legion bonded Thallax:** This Thallax was provided to the Death Guard by Traitor Ordo Reductor Magos of the Dark Mechanicum, the application of Legion and post-Isstvanian Traitor heraldry indicating the attachment was a permanent one and likely assigned to the Legion to bolster its strength once war had broken out. This pict capture is taken from the wreck of the Loyalist destroyer *Cymbaline*, indicating the use of the Thallax by the Death Guard as boarding assault shock troops.

# The Wreckage of War (Optional Rule)

The following section details specific rules for the blasted debris left behind in the calamitous ongoing battles between Loyalist and Traitor as the planets of the Imperium become war zones littered with the carnage of slaughtered men and shattered machines. This is represented by a specific set of Mysterious Terrain rules which can be applied to any Age of Darkness battle which you choose to play.

**Mysterious Wreckage**

The blasted war zones of the Horus Heresy are strewn with twisted, blackened debris, from the burned-out hulks of destroyed Titans to the wreckage of warships fallen from orbit. Neither Loyalist nor Traitor can afford to ignore such wreckage, for it represents a range of features, some deadly and others beneficial.

## Mysterious Wreckage on the Battlefield

Mysterious Wreckage may be included in any game. You may simply decide that a suitable piece of terrain is Mysterious Wreckage while setting up the battlefield. Alternatively, you might leave it to chance, in which case when setting up your battlefield roll a D6 and consult the following table to determine how many pieces of Mysterious Wreckage there will be. Then nominate the indicated number of pieces of battlefield terrain as Mysterious Wreckage.

**Mysterious Wreckage Table**

| D6 | Result |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | No Mysterious Wreckage |
| 3-4 | One piece of Mysterious Wreckage |
| 5 | Two pieces of Mysterious Wreckage |
| 6 | Three pieces of Mysterious Wreckage |

Mysterious Wreckage can take many forms, but generally it is best to nominate large items of debris, craters, vehicle wrecks and the like. It will prove easier to remember in the heat of battle which terrain is counted as Mysterious Wreckage if the classification starts out with the largest item and works its way down or, alternatively, players can use tokens to remind themselves which are counted as such.

## Exploring Mysterious Wreckage

Mysterious Wreckage is impassable and Mysterious Terrain, and unless stated otherwise in the description, affords models taking cover behind it a 5+ cover save. The wreckage is counted as explored when a model ends its move within 2" of it, at which point roll on the Mysterious Wreckage table opposite to determine what is found.



**Mysterious Wreckage Table**

| 2D6 | Mysterious Wreckage Type |
|---|---|
| 2 | **Fuel Spill:** *The wreckage is half submerged in highly volatile fuel, which has saturated into the ground all around it.* The wreckage and the area within 2" of it is dangerous terrain. In addition, if the Flamer template is ever placed so as to cover any part of this area, every model within 2" of the wreckage takes an immediate Str 5 AP 4 hit straight after the original damage is resolved. |
| 3 | **Warp Drive Fragment:** *The wreckage is that of a section of warp drive, shorn from a warship at the moment of its catastrophic death. Having plummeted through the atmosphere and crashed into the surface in a fiery conflagration, the wreckage radiates the unreal taint of the Warp as the explorers approach.* Massive fluctuations in the ebb and flow of the Empyrean are unleashed across the entire battlefield. From this point on, any Psyker killed by a Perils of the Warp attack explodes with raw, sorcerous energy. Place a Large Blast (5") marker over the Psyker. The Strength of the attack suffered by affected models is equal to the dead Psyker's Leadership value, which instead of being compared to the target's Toughness is compared to their own Leadership value. No saves of any kind are allowed. Vehicles are unaffected. |
| 4 | **Declaration of Heresy:** *The wreckage has been piled high with polished white skulls, each of them harvested from a slain Loyalist. The scene induces anger in all Loyalists who witness it, but worse, fires unreasoning bloodlust in the hearts of all who approach too close.* Units with at least one model within 2" of the terrain feature have the Hatred special rule. |
| 5 | **Unexploded Ordnance:** *Upon investigation, the wreckage is revealed as a huge, half-buried shell fired by a super-heavy tank, a Titan or even a warship in orbit. For whatever reason, the shell has failed to explode, but its fuse remains active, making it an extremely dangerous hazard yet.* The area within 2" of the Mysterious Wreckage becomes dangerous terrain. For every model that suffers a wound as a result of a failed Dangerous Terrain test caused by this feature, roll a D6. On a result of 4+ on any of the dice, the disturbance causes the ordnance to explode. Every model within D6+2" of the terrain feature suffers a Str 6 AP 4 hit. After this damage is resolved, remove the terrain piece and, if suitable terrain is to hand, replace it with a crater. |
| 6 | **Smouldering Debris:** *The debris is the unidentifiable detritus of war. A tall column of dense, black smoke rises high above, and tainted ashes and red hot cinders are cast to the winds all about.* No model may trace a line of sight over the feature. Open ground within 2" becomes dangerous terrain, and all models within this range have the Shrouded special rule. |
| 7 | **Traitorous Atrocity:** *Atop the wreckage is mounted the broken form of a Loyalist Space Marine, the tortures inflicted upon him evidenced in a thousand cruel and unspeakable wounds.* Roll a D6. On a result of 4+, the tortured Space Marine is still alive. While he lives, all Loyalist units with at least one model within 2" roll an additional D6 for Morale checks, discarding the lowest. The unfortunate victim may be granted mercy by a unit spending a Shooting phase in contact with the terrain, at the end of which the effect ends. |
| 8 | **Supply Cache:** *Amongst the wreckage are to be found usable supplies, making it a treasure trove of enormous value in the ongoing battle.* Units with at least one model in base contact with the Supply Cache may re-roll To Hit rolls of 1. However, taking shelter from incoming fire behind a large pile of ammunition is, by its very nature, perilous. Any model that claims a cover save from the terrain and rolls a 1 in doing so is subject to the Instant Death special rule should they sustain a wound. |
| 9 | **Reactor Fragment:** *The wreckage is a segment of plasma reactor conduit, its heat still fierce as it pumps radiation and poisonous gases into the tortured atmosphere.* The ravening interference pulsing from the Reactor Fragment causes all ranged weapons fired within 2" to be subject to the Gets Hot special rule while within that range. |
| 10 | **Survivor:** *The sight of a limb draws the explorers' attention to a Space Marine trapped under the wreckage, his body having entered a state of catatonic dormancy thanks to his sus-an membrane implant.* (Re-roll if no suitable spare Legiones Astartes model is available). Each side rolls off. The winner places a single Legion Centurion, armed and equipped as per the default entry given for this character in the Space Marine Crusade Army list, in base contact with the Mysterious Wreckage and not touching any other models. At the beginning of the next game turn, this model comes fully under the control of the player who won the roll-off, doing nothing until that point and any other Legiones Astartes special rules in play apply to them. If the Centurion survives the game, the controlling player earns an additional Victory point, and if the model is slain, the opposing player gains this bonus. |
| 11 | **Dormant Automata:** *The wreckage is revealed to be the mighty form of a Legio Cybernetica Battle-automata. Having become separated from its masters, the beast of iron followed ingrained machine engrams before its blasted cyber-cortex shut down to a dormant state. As the warriors approach, it stirs once more, contradictory commands firing through its shattered control nodes.* (Re-roll if no suitable spare model is available). The player controlling the unit that explored the Mysterious Wreckage places a Castellax Battle-automata, armed and equipped as per the default entry given for this unit, within 2" of the terrain feature and not in contact with any other models. This model does not have any upgrades. At the beginning of the next and every subsequent game turn, both sides roll off. The side that rolls highest controls the automata for the whole of that game turn. |
| 12 | **Psy-tainted Debris:** *This wrecked section of crashed warship once housed a Navigator or an Astropath, who died in immense pain and terror as their armoured sanctuary plummeted through the burning skies. The psychic taint of that death is a palpable thing, affecting the minds of all who approach the wreckage.* Every unit with at least one model within D6+2" when the wreckage is first explored must make an immediate Pinning test. In addition, any unit that begins its turn within 2" of it must make a Pinning test before taking any other actions. |



# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Conquest Campaign – Optional Special Rules Appendix

This appendix presents a wealth of additional options and alternative rules for the Battles in the Age of Darkness: Conquest campaign system found on page 166 – including the following optional special rules:

- System Conquest
- Hostile War Zones
- Lines of Attack
- Priority Targets
- Blood and Steel

Each of these special rules is intended to be self contained and players can choose to use some, all or none of these in their campaigns as best suits their group, preferences and available time. These optional special rules can substantially increase the complexity of your campaigns, and so have been deliberately included here as options rather than as part of the core Conquest campaign rules, and should always be agreed on by all players before they are used. When combining multiple optional rules in a single campaign, players may need to make some judgement calls on how they interact. In these cases, all such rulings should be made before play begins and all players involved in the campaign made aware of them – in such campaigns an impartial Campaign Referee can be invaluable!

# Campaign Option: System Conquest

The System Conquest special rules allow players to expand the scope of their games from the conquest of a single world to warfare across multiple war zones. System Conquest presents a single simplified method of doing so, each war zone is tackled in sequence, with the outcome deciding the disposition of forces in the next war zone. Ambitious players may wish to undertake campaigns with multiple war zones in place simultaneously – such a campaign is beyond the scope of this book, although the various optional special rules presented in these appendices may prove useful in the creation of such a campaign.

In a System Conquest campaign, most of the details of actual play remain the same as for a standard campaign – however, before the game begins, the players will need to do the following steps:

1. Decide upon the total number of war zones in the campaign.
2. Generate and name each war zone, as per the core Conquest campaign rules and any optional rules in use (including setting a Reserves Points Pool for each war zone representing available assets for each side at that war zone).
3. Determine the Disposition of each war zone. Each war zone must begin the campaign with a Disposition of Neutral, Loyalist or Traitor (those designated as either Loyalist or Traitor are worth additional Control points if captured by the opposing side).
4. Randomly determine which side selects the first war zone to be fought for.

**Fighting for the First War Zone**
Once the first war zone is selected, play continues as described in the core Conquest Campaign rules (and any optional rules the players have chosen to use), with the two sides gaining a number of Reserves points equal to the set Reserves Points Pool for that war zone (see page 167), except that instead of playing until all Reserves points are exhausted, either side can choose, at the end of any Consolidation phase, to retreat from the war zone.

Once all fighting in a war zone has ended, either due to one side retreating or both sides fighting to the exhaustion of all available Reserves points, the victorious side gains 1 Campaign Victory point, and an additional Campaign Victory point if the war zone had previously been the opposing side's territory.

**Voluntary Retreat**
If a side chooses to retreat from the war zone then the opposing side is automatically victorious, but the retreating side can carry half of its remaining Reserves points over to the next war zone – evacuating surviving troops and war materiel to fight another day. The victorious side does not carry across any remaining Reserves points, its surviving forces being tied down in garrison duties in the conquered war zone.

**Continuing Play**
The side that was victorious in the previous war zone picks which war zone to fight for next, unless the defeated side can steal the strategic initiative by rolling a D6 and gaining a result of a 6, in which case they may instead choose the next war zone to be fought over.

If one side is able to achieve a string of victories in successive war zones, it may place the opposing side in a situation where they can no longer gain enough Campaign Victory points to win. In such a situation, the players involved can choose to either call a halt to the campaign, granting victory to the side that has built up an overwhelming lead, or it can choose to implement the following Against the Odds special rule.

**Against the Odds**
This allows one final war zone, chosen by the side currently winning in the campaign, to be played. In this final war zone, the side currently winning the campaign gains a number of bonus Reserves points equal to the number of Campaign Victory points it has acquired thus far. The side that emerges victorious from the final war zone is the overall victor of the campaign.

This process is repeated as described until all the war zones in the campaign have been resolved, and the side that has accumulated the highest total of Campaign Victory points is declared the Victor, with the opposing side being slain or driven from the region.



# Campaign Option: Hostile War Zones

The Hostile War Zones special rule changes the balance of resources allocated to the two sides at the start of a campaign to allow players to replicate battles between dug-in and fortified defenders or overwhelming invasion forces. Three versions of Hostile War Zones are provided here: Fortress Worlds, Desperate Sieges and Ignorant Armies, and it is recommended that only one is used at any one time.

**Fortress Worlds**
*In those systems where the defenders are forewarned of the impending assault, and have both sufficient time and resources to fortify all likely targets of an invading force, the attackers face a daunting challenge.*

When using this variant set-up, the Defending side begins the campaign with a number of Control points (see page 169) equal to half the Attacking side's total number of Reserves points (determine the Reserves points totals normally). These Control points may be distributed between the various Strategic objectives as the Defending side chooses, with the proviso that no single Strategic objective may have more than half of the total available Control points allocated to it.

Once play begins, both sides gain Control points normally, however players on the Defending side may only choose to attack Strategic objectives that the Attacking side has gained Control points at.

**Desperate Sieges**
*In some cases the attacking forces are so overwhelming that the defenders stand little chance of victory – only through truly legendary feats of arms can they hold out until reinforcements can reach them.*

When using this variant campaign set-up, the Defending side does not begin play with any Reserves points (determine the Attacker's total normally), but does gain a number of Control points equal to one third (rounding down) of the Attacking side's total Reserves points, which must be distributed as evenly as possible across the Strategic objectives present in the war zone.

From the second Campaign turn onwards, during the Consolidation phase, the Defending side must check to see if their relief force arrives. Roll a D6, adding +1 for each Strategic objective where the Attacking side has more Control points than the Defending side. On a 6 or higher, the relief force arrives and the Defending side gains a number of Reserves points equal to one third (rounding down) of the amount the Attacking side began the campaign with. Note that if the Attacking side expends all of its Reserves points before the relief force arrives, the campaign will end!

**Ignorant Armies**
*This variant of the rules is intended to provide more tactical interplay with war zone set-up, and uses a bidding mechanic to represent the fog of war, where the activities, strengths and goals of their enemy are unclear, as are the dangers of the war zones being fought, and each general must take care to apportion their forces to the war as much by instinct as through intelligence.*

Using this option, the two sides bid against each other for which Strategic objectives will begin play under their control, and it is most useful when used in conjunction with the Strategic Objective Traits optional special rule (see page 172). It is highly recommended that either a Campaign Referee is involved or 'sealed bidding' involving the players writing down bids in advance and revealing them simultaneously is used to facilitate this process.

**The Bidding Process:** Once the number and type of Strategic objectives present in the war zone has been decided, each side may then choose to bid for control of one or more Strategic objectives by secretly recording a number of Reserves points that they bid for control of the objective from their Reserves Points Pool. Once both sides have had an opportunity to record the bids for all available Strategic objectives, then the bids are revealed with the following results:

- If only one side has bid for a particular Strategic objective, then the bidding side gains 1 Control point at that Strategic objective at the start of the campaign.
- If both sides have bid for the objective, then the side that has made the highest bid gains 1 Control point at that Strategic objective at the campaign's start.
- If neither side has bid or the total is deadlocked, neither side has control.

All Reserves points bid for Strategic objectives are used up, whether or not the bid was successful. Some groups may therefore find it beneficial to increase the size of the Reserves Points Pool when using this optional special rule.

# Campaign Option: Lines of Attack

The Lines of Attack special rule changes how and when players may target specific Strategic objectives, providing a simple method of representing their distribution across the surface of the target world by using a map. Unlike in the core Conquest campaign rules, where players can choose to attack any objective, this limits which ones can be targeted geographically and requires some additional changes to the acquisition of Control points, as well as requiring more record keeping during the Mustering phase in order to keep track of the location of each player.

### War Zone Map Creation

When using this optional special rule, a war zone map will need to be prepared prior to beginning play, this map will be used during the Mustering phase to track the position of each player and which objectives they can attack. During war zone creation, all of the Strategic objectives and their connections to the other objectives will need to be plotted on this map, and one or more objectives assigned to each side as starting points for their players. The simplest way to do this is to allow the Campaign Referee (if one exists) to arrange the Strategic objectives as they desire, linking each Strategic objective to at least one other and assigning start points. If a Campaign Referee is not in use, or the players prefer the use of a more impartial system, the pre-determined layouts shown opposite can be used for war zones composed of five, seven or nine Strategic objectives.

### Campaign Gameplay Changes

Once a map of the Strategic objectives has been created, the campaign can begin. The following changes to the Conquest campaign core rules should be used:

### Before Play Begins

- All players should be marked as present at one of the Starting objectives (shown as the darker circles in the opposite example maps) assigned to their side.

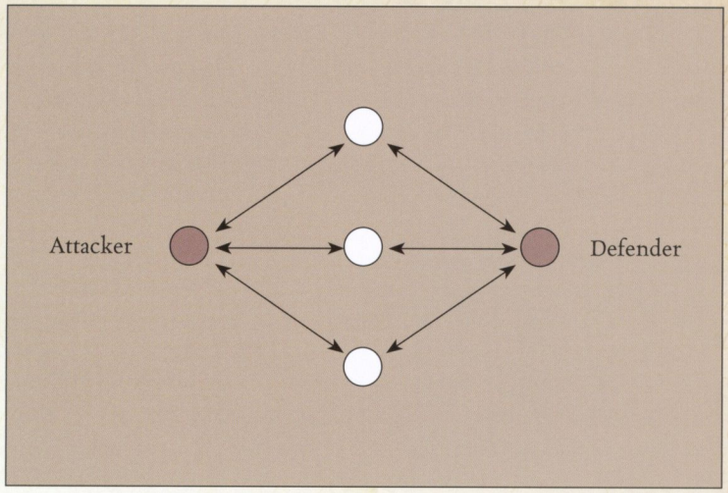
### The Mustering Phase

- During the Mustering phase, a player may only target either the Strategic objective which they are currently at, or one adjacent to it, as long as that Strategic objective is also occupied by an enemy player too.
- Any enemy player either at or adjacent to a targeted Strategic objective may opt to play a game to defend that objective. If no player chooses to defend it, the Attacker immediately gains 2 Control points for that objective.

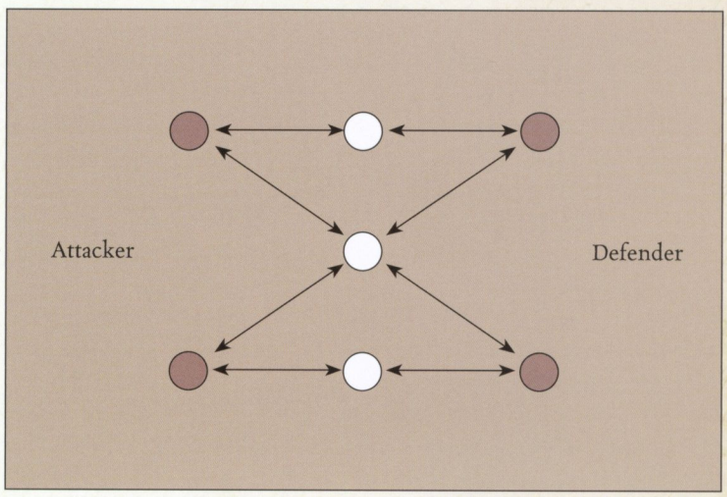
### The Consolidation Phase

- When using this optional special rule, any games won score 2 Control points at the target Strategic objective.
- Players who elected to attack a Strategic objective, regardless of the result of the game, must be moved to the Strategic objective they targeted.
- If a player did not participate in a game during the Conflict phase, that player may choose to move to any Strategic objective adjacent to the one they currently occupy, as long as no enemy players are present at the Strategic objective they move to.
- If any Strategic objective is occupied by only players from one side after all movement has been completed in the Consolidation phase, that side scores an additional Control point for each player at that objective.

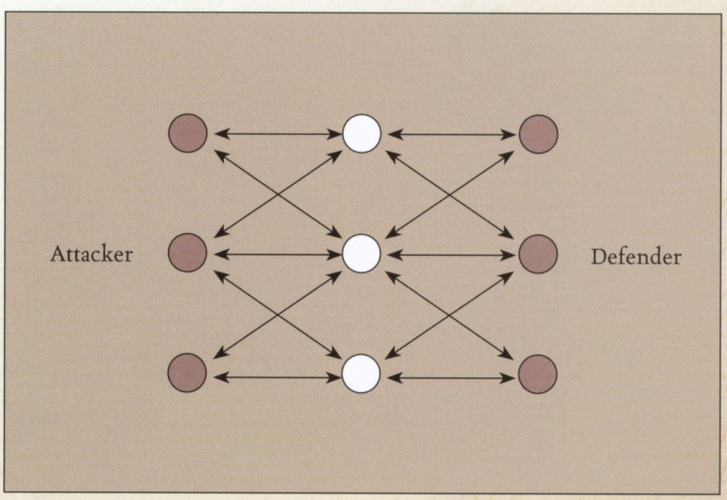
**Five Strategic Objectives**




**Seven Strategic Objectives**




**Nine Strategic Objectives**



## Campaign Option: Priority Targets

The Priority Targets special rule alters the value of the various Strategic objectives, making some of them more valuable than others and adding a little more tactical interplay to the Mustering phase as players must decide whether to concentrate their efforts on the most valuable objectives, or to strike at the likely more vulnerable lesser priority objectives.

The easiest way to implement this option is to assign each objective a value at the start of play when creating the war zone. Once all Reserves points are exhausted, the side which controls the highest total value of Strategic objectives is deemed the winner. The Recommended Objective Value table offers some recommendations on potential values for each objective depending on the number in use.

Another option is not to assign objectives a value at the beginning of the campaign, but instead to randomly generate a value for each objective after the campaign has ended, adding more suspense and doubt to the end of any campaign. In this case, once all Reserves points have been exhausted by both sides, each side scores D3 Campaign points for each Strategic objective they control.

The greater the range in value for each Strategic objective, the more uncertainty you add to the result of the campaign as lucky rolls at the end of the campaign can negate all of an opponent's hard won victories. For this reason it is recommended that players keep the potential value of each Strategic objective low enough to affect close run wins, but not high enough to overturn landslide victories.

Recommended Objective Value Table

| Number of Strategic Objectives in use | Individual Strategic Objective Values |
|---|---|
| 3 | 1, 1 and 2 |
| 5 | 1, 1, 1, 2 and 3 |
| 7 | 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3 and 4 |
| 9 | 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3 and 4 |

## Campaign Option: Blood and Steel

The Blood and Steel special rule changes the way Reserves points work. Rather than having them indicate the number of games that can be played, they instead equate to a value of troops that the side can put into battle. This adds a small amount of complexity, but brings with it a sense of realism and tension to the Mustering phase.

To implement this optional special rule, Reserves points will need to be assigned a value in points which can then be used to select models for use in games. It is recommended that each Reserves point be valued at 250 points worth of models and the base number of Reserves points in use multiplied by five for both sides, but this can be increased or decreased depending on the preference of those involved.

In each Mustering phase when players are organising games, instead of paying 1 Reserves point for each game a side wishes to play, they may instead commit any number of Reserves points to each game, the number of Reserves points committed determining the points value of the army they can deploy in the upcoming game. Once committed to a game, these Reserves points are gone and cannot be used again. The opposing side can choose to commit any number of Reserves points of their own to the game, erasing any points spent to deploy troops in the upcoming game.

Another variant of this rule, which requires a little extra book-keeping and some trust between the various players, is to keep the number of Reserves points committed to each game secret until the Conflict phase. This option is best used alongside an impartial Campaign Referee, but can lead to exciting games and fraught decisions in the Mustering phase.





# Battles in the Age of Darkness: Conquest Campaign Character Advancement – optional rule

"Before this Age, it was said of heroes that they were not born, but created, forged in the fires of adversity and war.

In these days in which we now live, however, heroes are indeed born, in the gene-forges of the Emperor's genius. To be a hero amongst such warriors as these is true achievement, and one even the most elevated of our forebears could never have dreamed of."

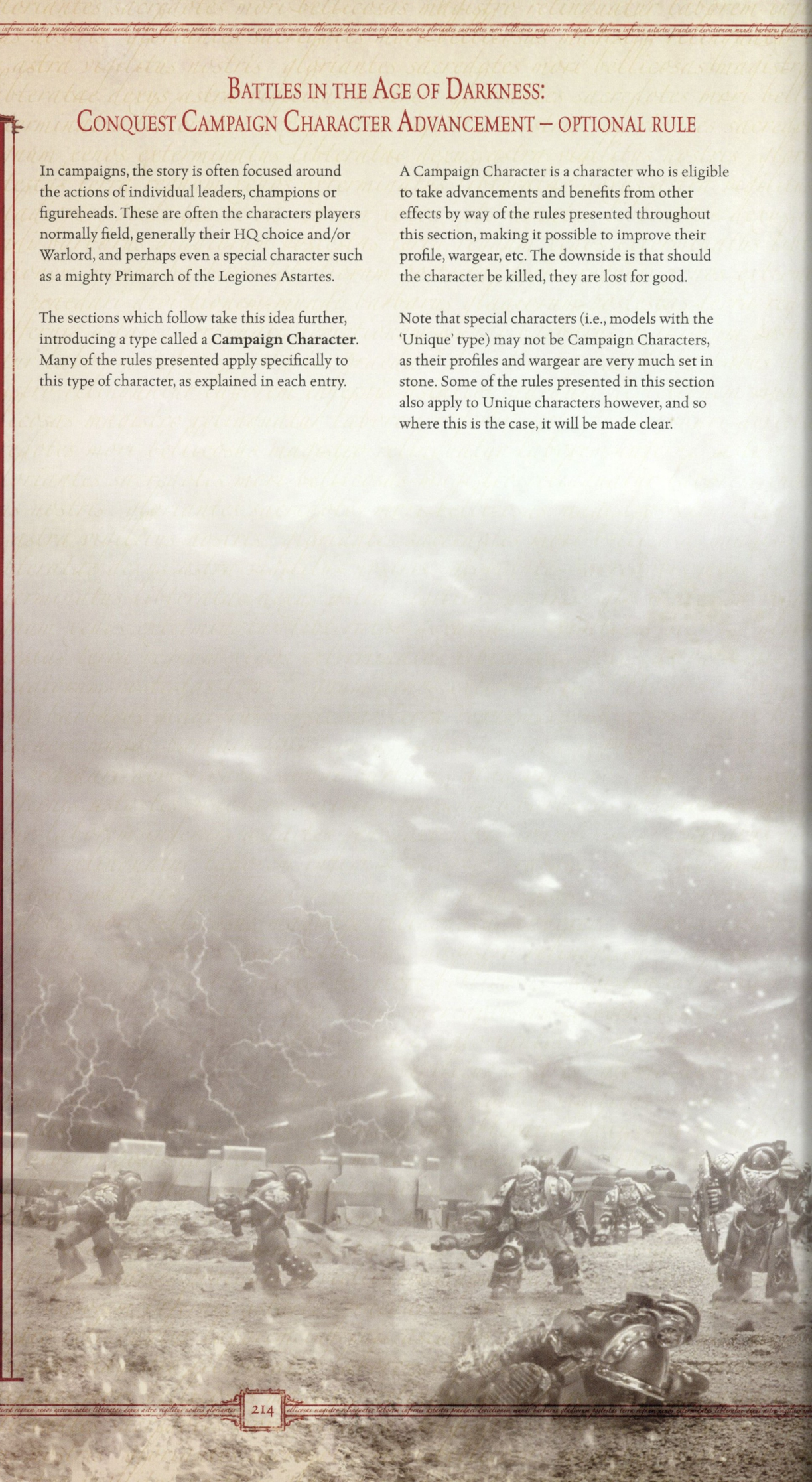
Orsan Lakk, late of the Order of Remembrancers

In campaigns, the story is often focused around the actions of individual leaders, champions or figureheads. These are often the characters players normally field, generally their HQ choice and/or Warlord, and perhaps even a special character such as a mighty Primarch of the Legiones Astartes.

The sections which follow take this idea further, introducing a type called a **Campaign Character**. Many of the rules presented apply specifically to this type of character, as explained in each entry.

A Campaign Character is a character who is eligible to take advancements and benefits from other effects by way of the rules presented throughout this section, making it possible to improve their profile, wargear, etc. The downside is that should the character be killed, they are lost for good.

Note that special characters (i.e., models with the 'Unique' type) may not be Campaign Characters, as their profiles and wargear are very much set in stone. Some of the rules presented in this section also apply to Unique characters however, and so where this is the case, it will be made clear.



# War Zone-assigned Characters

When playing a campaign featuring multiple war zones, Campaign Characters and Unique Characters should be assigned to an individual war zone, representing the main generals and war leaders fighting in that region. Such chosen generals may then only be used within the particular war zone to which they are assigned in advance and not in other ones, and each side only has a finite number of these pivotal characters to employ. This means that while these named characters have benefits, normal 'run of the mill' independent characters do not and once slain or otherwise put out of action, they may suffer debilitating injuries between games. In addition, these characters become a finite resource in the campaign and their use can potentially turn the tide of battle.

War Zone-assigned Characters make for excellent modelling and converting opportunities, and are a fantastic way of creating exciting narratives and personalising your armies in order to make your games unique. If players are playing a Conquest campaign with a single war zone, but wish to make more use of the War Zone-assigned Character rules, they can assign them at the Strategic objective level instead. This represents powerful warriors limiting themselves to fighting in a tightly defined area, but allows for more character development should that be the sort of campaign the players prefer to pursue.

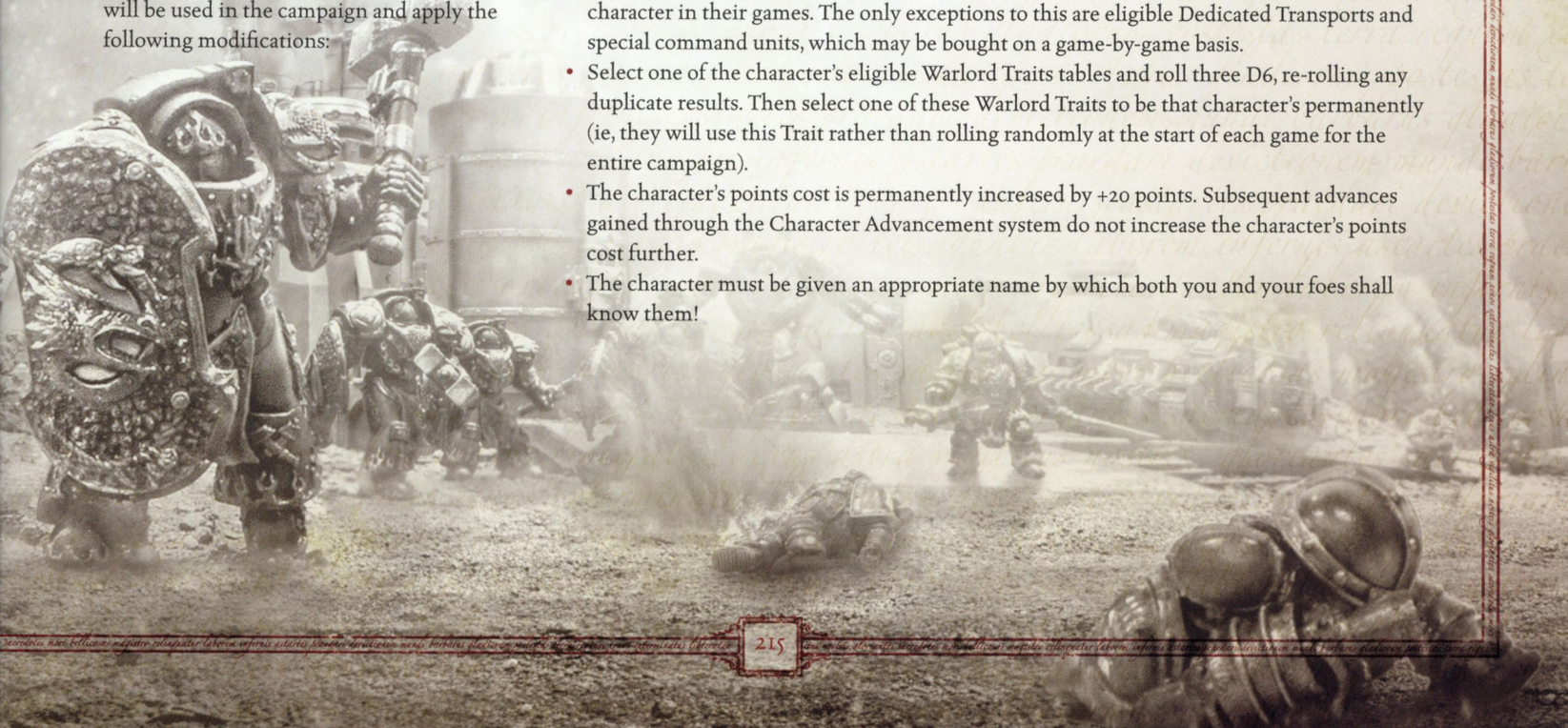
If you choose to use this optional rule, the following effects apply:

- Each side gets one Assigned Character per player, and one additional Assigned Character per war zone to make up their pool of Assigned Characters (eg, in a campaign with five war zones and three players a side, each side can construct a pool of 8 (5+3) Assigned Characters). When using the Core Conquest campaign system, most campaigns will feature only a single war zone, and will therefore include two Campaign Characters per side. If the optional System Conquest rules on page 209 are in use, then there is likely to be more.
- Assigned Characters may be either Unique Characters eligible for an army's HQ (such as Draykavac or MaSade) or standard Independent Characters eligible to be taken as HQ choices from an army list (such as Praetors or Consuls). In the case of non-Unique Characters, these become Campaign Characters and are given a 'free' advance, rolled for according to the instructions in the Character Progression rules on page 218.
- Assigned Character pools are created after sides have been determined, but before any games are played. In the interests of fair play, a list of each side's Assigned Characters should be given to the opposing side before the campaign begins.
- Other than as Assigned Characters, Unique Characters and Campaign Characters may not be used in games in the campaign (whereas 'generic' HQ choices may be).
- How Assigned Characters are used in games, and by who, is entirely up to the players over the course of a war zone's battles, but a particular Assigned Character should not be used more than once in any two games being played simultaneously by a group (they can only be in one place at a time!). In the aftermath of a battle where an Assigned Character has been 'killed', use the Casualty Survival rules on page 220 to determine their fate. The results of the roll should be immediately made known to the opposing side.
- Keep a tally of the battles involving Assigned Characters across all war zones and whether or not they have been victorious for a side. At the end of the campaign, the side whose Assigned Characters have presided over the largest number of victories gains +D3 Strategic points.
- Keep a tally of how many Assigned Characters have met with the Fatality result on the Casualty Survival table. For each such Fatality result a side has suffered, it loses 1 Strategic point from its total at the end of the campaign.

### Creating a Campaign Character

To create a Campaign Character, select a non-Unique Independent Character eligible as a HQ choice from one of the armies that will be used in the campaign and apply the following modifications:

- Roll once on one of the Character Advancement tables presented on page 218 and permanently apply the listed effect to the character.
- Select wargear and options for the character. This combination must be taken for them throughout the campaign and forms part of their points cost whenever a player takes the character in their games. The only exceptions to this are eligible Dedicated Transports and special command units, which may be bought on a game-by-game basis.
- Select one of the character's eligible Warlord Traits tables and roll three D6, re-rolling any duplicate results. Then select one of these Warlord Traits to be that character's permanently (ie, they will use this Trait rather than rolling randomly at the start of each game for the entire campaign).
- The character's points cost is permanently increased by +20 points. Subsequent advances gained through the Character Advancement system do not increase the character's points cost further.
- The character must be given an appropriate name by which both you and your foes shall know them!



# Unknown 'Black Shield' Legionary (Designation 'Redemption')

Battlegroup 'Revenant', Ad-hoc Loyalist Company, prior affiliation unknown
Liberation of Numinal

This unknown Legionary, referred to in some records by the post-event designation '*Redemption*', his armour scorched and blackened, was present with one of the small ad-hoc formations of Loyalist Legiones Astartes that fought at the counter-invasion of Numinal. He is credited with the killing of over fifty Tech-adepts, Thallaxii and other lesser combat-automata during a solitary assault targeting one of the immense flesh-processing crawlers. The self-applied Loyalist icons that adorn the Legionary's armour conform to no known pre-civil war pattern or scheme, but served to mark him as present at numerous other engagements, both major and minor, across what became known as the Age of Darkness, his ultimate fate unknown.

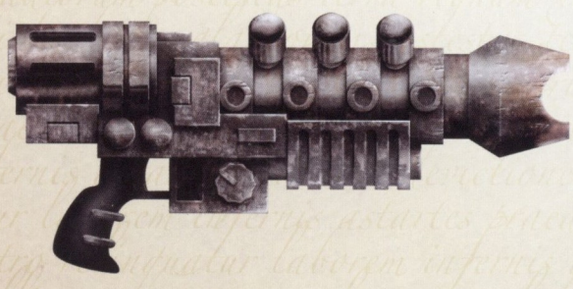
**Panoply of War**

**1. Autotellurian pattern graviton gun**

**2. Tigrus pattern bolt pistol**



1.



2.



# Hidden Campaign Objectives

In war, beyond the obvious clash of survival and conquest, each side will have their own vital objectives which, for reasons both practical and arcane, they will fight and strive for, often without their foe ever knowing their psychological or material importance until after the last drop of blood is spilt.

If players opt to use a hidden campaign objective, each side selects a Fortune of War in secret at the start of the campaign before any games are played. In the interests of fair play (and drama), this should be either noted down and sealed in an envelope and given to the Campaign Referee (if one person is fulfilling this role), a neutral third party or kept inviolate by some other mutually agreed means until the end of the campaign at the point when Strategic points are tallied up. At this point, the Fortunes of War are unveiled and applied!

Several Fortunes of War are supplied as follows, and players fortunate enough to have a neutral organiser running their campaign might like to propose or negotiate more with them. A single Fortune of War is chosen by each side. If the criteria of the Fortune of War is met then its Strategic points effect is applied. If not, then it has no effect on the outcome of the campaign.

**By the Last Drop of Blood, it shall be Ours!**

- Select a single named war zone when this fortune is decided on. If you are victorious there, you may double the Strategic points the war zone gains you.

**Book of the Dead**

- Select a single named war zone. Every enemy War Zone-assigned Character slain there (ie, one that suffers a Fatality result on the Casualty Recovery table) earns you an additional D3 Strategic points for that war zone.

**Figurehead**

- Select a single war zone and one of your own War Zone-assigned Characters fighting there. If this character survives all of that war zone's battles without becoming a campaign fatality, the Strategic points you earn in that war zone are doubled.

**Decapitation**

- If the enemy Commander-in-Chief (as explained on page 174) is removed from the campaign as a campaign fatality, you earn an additional 2D6 Strategic points, added to your total after all war zone results have been tallied.

**The Ashes of Martyrdom**

- Select a single named war zone when this fortune is decided on. If you are defeated there, your enemy must halve the Strategic points the war zone gains them.

### Control Points and Strategic Points

These rules make occasional reference to Control points, which are explained in the context of the Core Conquest campaign rules on page 169. If players wish to use these optional rules in other systems presented across the various Forge World Warhammer 40,000 supplements, they can be read as and count as Strategic points too.



# Character Progression

One of the best things about playing in a campaign is watching the story of favourite characters unfold from one battle to the next. In normal games of Warhammer 40,000, characters remain the same across battles, never learning from their mistakes but never suffering the consequences of defeat either. Campaigns introduce the possibility of characters improving their skills as the story progresses, becoming tougher, faster or braver depending on the unique trials and travails they face. Campaigns also introduce an element of jeopardy, because a hero who has climbed the heights of glory can still be laid low by the vagaries of war – wounded by a still mightier foe or even slain outright. Players tracking the fate of their War Zone-assigned Characters can grow very attached to them as they watch them gain new skills and abilities, and they feel the loss all the more keenly should their heroes fall in battle. Thus are legends made, making a campaign an unfolding story that players are likely to reminisce about long after the last dice are rolled.

**Improving a Campaign Character**
Characters can improve in many different ways, gaining hard-won experience in battle and translating it into skills and abilities that allow them to fight all the more effectively in the future. Gaining such advantages is simple: every battle which earns the character's side a Control point earns a Campaign Character that fought in the battle three Character Advances. Every game they take part in that results in a draw earns them two progressions. As lessons can still be learned even in defeat, a character that takes part in a battle their side loses, earns a single character progression.

If these rules are being used in a campaign presented in another of Forge World's Warhammer 40,000 supplements, an alternative method of assigning progressions can be used. For every Campaign point a player earns from playing a game, one or more War Zone-assigned Characters that fought in that game may receive one or more progressions. These are distributed between them in any way the owning player wishes. For example, if Stuart fielded two War Zone-assigned Characters (the maximum in most cases) in a game in which he earned two Campaign points, he could award two advances to a single character, or give one to each of them.

Character advancement should be carried out immediately after a game if possible, with both players witnessing the rolls. To generate an advance, the owning player chooses one of the following tables and rolls to determine exactly which skill or improvement the character earns. This allows the player to choose from a broad range of advances, but acknowledges that the fates are fickle when it comes to the fortunes of war. The categories from which the player can choose are:

- Characteristics Increases
- Command Advances
- Morale Advances
- Melee Advances
- Movement Advances

In the case of the Characteristics Increase table, players must accept the result of the roll unless it takes them above the limit to which that characteristic can be increased, as explained in the box below, in which case roll again until an allowed result is arrived at.

In the case of the other tables, if the player rolls an advance the character already has, the result should be re-rolled until they gain one the character has not yet earned.

### Characteristics Increase Table

| D6 | Advance |
|---|---|
| 1-3 | Roll again: 1-2 +1 WS, 3-4 +1 BS, 5-6 +1 A |
| 4-5 | Roll again: 1-2 +1 Ld, 3-4 +1 I, 5-6 +1 W |
| 6 | Roll again: 1-3 +1 T, 4-6 +1 S |

**Maximum Characteristics Advances**
This system makes it possible for Campaign Characters to become the most skilled of fighters, mighty in strength and indomitable in will. Even the Legiones Astartes have limits, however, and so the table below provides the maximum by which any Campaign Character may be improved using this system. Remember, models of the 'Unique' type may not take any advances at all – see page 215 for eligible Campaign Character types.

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Legiones Astartes | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Mechanicum | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| Solar Auxilia | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 10 |
| Other | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 10 |



### Command Advances Table

| D6 | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Flank March:** So long as the character is on the table at the start of the controlling player's player turn, all units in the same detachment may re-roll the dice roll to determine which table edge they enter from when using the Outflank special rule. |
| 2 | **Rapid Assault:** The controlling player may re-roll Seize the Initiative rolls in games in which this is relevant. |
| 3 | **Coordinated Reserves:** All units in the character's detachment entering play from Reserves add +1 to their Reserves rolls. |
| 4 | **Night-stalker:** If the Night Fighting rule is in effect in game turn one, roll a D6 at the beginning of game turn two. On a 5+, Night Fighting continues in game turn two. If it is in effect in game turn two, roll again at the beginning of game turn three. On a 6+, it continues for one more game turn. |
| 5 | **Ever Onwards!:** Having made a Difficult Terrain test or a Run roll for the character, should the controlling player wish then all subsequent Difficult Terrain tests or Run rolls made by units in the character's detachment in that player turn may use the same result. If used, all eligible units must use the result and it may not be modified in any way. |
| 6 | **Coordinated Strike:** So long as the character is on the table at the start of the controlling player's player turn, Deep Striking units which are in the character's detachment may re-roll the Scatter dice. |

### Morale Advances Table

| D6 | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Rallying Cry:** Once per game, at the start of any turn in which the character is on the table, all units in the character's detachment that are falling back automatically regroup. Instead of making the normal 3" Regroup move, they may move, shoot, charge, etc, normally. |
| 2 | **Overrun:** The character and their unit add +1 to their Initiative characteristic when rolling off in a Sweeping Advance having won a close combat. |
| 3 | **Leap Back:** The character and their unit add +1 to their Initiative characteristic when rolling off in a Sweeping Advance having lost a close combat. |
| 4 | **Hungry for Victory:** The character and their unit roll 2D6" to determine how far they move when Consolidating. |
| 5 | **Here I Stand:** The character and their unit add +1 to the result of any Leadership test taken in their own deployment zone. |
| 6 | **Enemy Ground:** The character and their unit add +1 to the result of any Leadership test taken in the opposing player's deployment zone. |

### Melee Advances Table

| D6 | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Ferocious Escalade:** The character and their unit cause Fear when charging enemies that are occupying battlements and defence lines. If they already cause Fear, the enemy must take their Leadership test on 2D6, discarding the lowest dice. |
| 2 | **Master of Blades:** The character and their unit add +1 to their Weapon Skill characteristic in the phase they charge. |
| 3 | **Unseen Strike:** The character and their unit add +1 to their Initiative characteristic in the phase they charge. |
| 4 | **Headsman:** Once per game, declared at the start of the Fight sub-phase, all of the character's melee attacks cause Instant Death for that phase only. |
| 5 | **Heroic Sacrifice:** When fighting in a challenge that the character themselves issued, excess wounds inflicted by the enemy character are not carried over to the character's unit and are not counted towards combat results. |
| 6 | **Preternatural Reactions:** When firing using the Overwatch rule, the character may make an Initiative test. If the test is passed, the character's Overwatch fire, as well as that of their unit, is resolved at their normal Ballistic Skill. If the test is failed, the Overwatch fire is conducted as Snap Shots as normal. If playing a Zone Mortalis game, if an Initiative test to make Reaction Fire is passed, the unit's weapons gain the Twin-linked special rule. |

### Movement Advances Table

| D6 | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Ruin-strider:** The character and their unit do not have to take Difficult Terrain tests when moving through ruins of any type. |
| 2 | **Ruin-shield:** The character and their unit add +1 to their cover save when inside ruins of any type. |
| 3 | **Glade-strider:** The character and their unit do not have to take Difficult Terrain tests when moving through woods, jungles or any similar terrain type. |
| 4 | **Glade-shield:** The character and their unit add +1 to their cover save when they are inside woods, jungles or any similar terrain type.* |
| 5 | **War-shield:** The character and their unit add +1 to any cover save derived from Battlefield Debris.* |
| 6 | **Field-sense:** The character and all models in their unit re-roll failed Dangerous Terrain tests.* |

**Cumulative with Stealth and Shrouded, Gone to Ground, etc, up to a maximum of 2+.*



## Casualty Survival

Watching a Campaign Character develop from one game to the next can be incredibly entertaining and rewarding, but can be made all the more so by introducing an element of risk. Ordinarily, a character who falls in battle is assumed to have been lightly wounded, stunned or knocked unconscious and returned to full health in time for the next confrontation. If there is a risk that a War Zone-assigned Character removed as a casualty in this way might suffer some longer term injury, or perhaps even be captured by the enemy (necessitating a perilous rescue mission!), then victory will taste all the sweeter and defeat take on new meaning altogether. Ideally, the rules that follow should be used alongside those for character advancement, but there is no strict requirement to do so and so the final decision is left up to players to decide at the outset of their campaign.

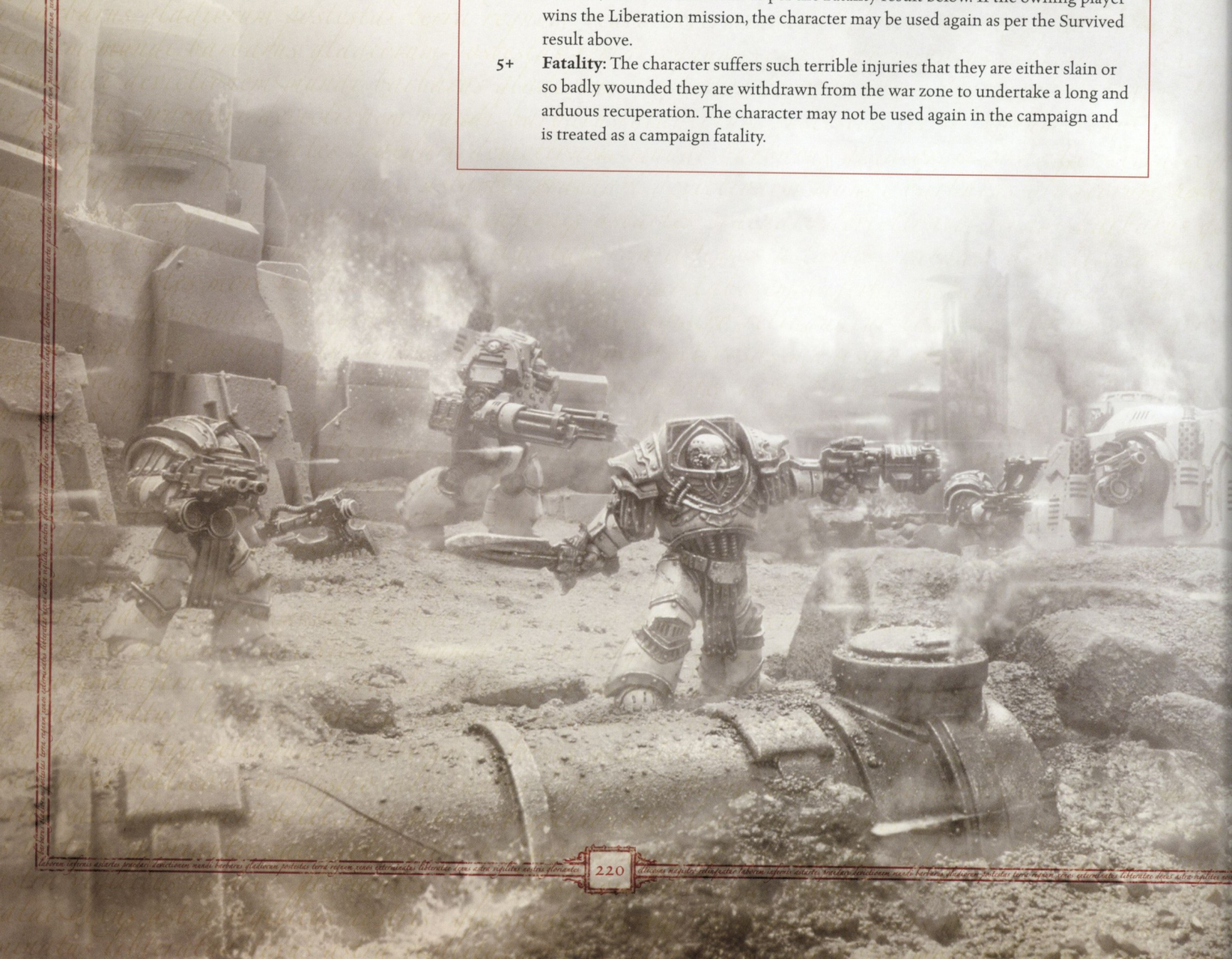
Immediately after a game in which a War Zone-assigned Character has been removed as a casualty or Fallen Back off of the table, roll on the Casualty Survival table opposite.

This roll is modified according to the circumstances of the character's demise. These modifiers are cumulative where more than one applies:

- -1 If the character Fell Back off of the table.
- -1 If the character was caught in a Sweeping Advance.
- -1 If the character was killed during a Tank Shock.
- +1 If the character was slain in a Challenge.
- +1 If the character was killed by an attack that caused Instant Death.
- +1 If the character was killed by a Destroyer type weapon.

### Casualty Survival Table

| D6 | Result |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Survived:** The character escapes lasting injury and may be used again in its next battle without penalty. |
| 2 | **Shaken:** The character is pained by their injuries, but not physically injured. In the next game in which the character is fielded, they suffer a -1 penalty to their Leadership characteristic. |
| 3 | **Wounded:** The character suffers a grievous wound, from which they have yet to fully recover before battle is joined once more. In the next game in which the character is fielded, they suffer a -1 penalty to their Wounds characteristic. |
| 4 | **Captured:** The character is injured beyond the capacity to resist capture by the enemy and is carried off deep behind enemy lines to be interrogated, tortured or perhaps even executed. The character's owning player may declare that the next game played is to be a Liberation mission (see page 221), to decide the character's fate. If the player passes up this option, or if that player loses the Liberation mission, the character is lost as per the Fatality result below. If the owning player wins the Liberation mission, the character may be used again as per the Survived result above. |
| 5+ | **Fatality:** The character suffers such terrible injuries that they are either slain or so badly wounded they are withdrawn from the war zone to undertake a long and arduous recuperation. The character may not be used again in the campaign and is treated as a campaign fatality. |



# Liberation Mission

*"In my darkest hour, I placed my fate entirely in the hands of my brothers. I found that in the total abandonment of my own fate I was truly free, so that when deliverance came, it was a revelation beyond revelations."*

*Strike-Captain Ulhan Mytha, Legiones Astartes Raven Guard*

**The Armies**
The side whose Campaign Character is to be rescued is the Attacker. The side holding the captive is the Defender.

The armies are chosen according to the Age of Darkness guidelines given in *The Horus Heresy Book One - Betrayal*, or those in use for the campaign being played. The Campaign Character to be rescued does not cost any points or use up any Force Organisation slots. However, the Attacker may not take any Fortifications or immobile units.

**The Battlefield**
Deploy as per the map presented below and then set up terrain for the battlefield. If this mission is being used in one of the campaigns presented in a Horus Heresy expansion, further rules affecting the type and placement of terrain may be in effect.

In addition to any other terrain being used, the Defender should place a single building of any size and type they wish and have available in their deployment zone. This building may not have the Mighty Bulwark special rule, unless the captive is a Lords of War choice (ie, a Primarch). This building is being used to hold the captive.

**Deployment**
Before deploying their forces, each player should first roll for their Warlord Traits and psychic powers where necessary.

The Defender deploys their army in their deployment zone. They may deploy units inside the same building as the captive should they wish.

The Attacker then deploys their army in the areas indicated on the map.

**First Turn**
The Attacker has the first turn, unless the Defender can Seize the Initiative (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Game Length**
This mission uses the rules for Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

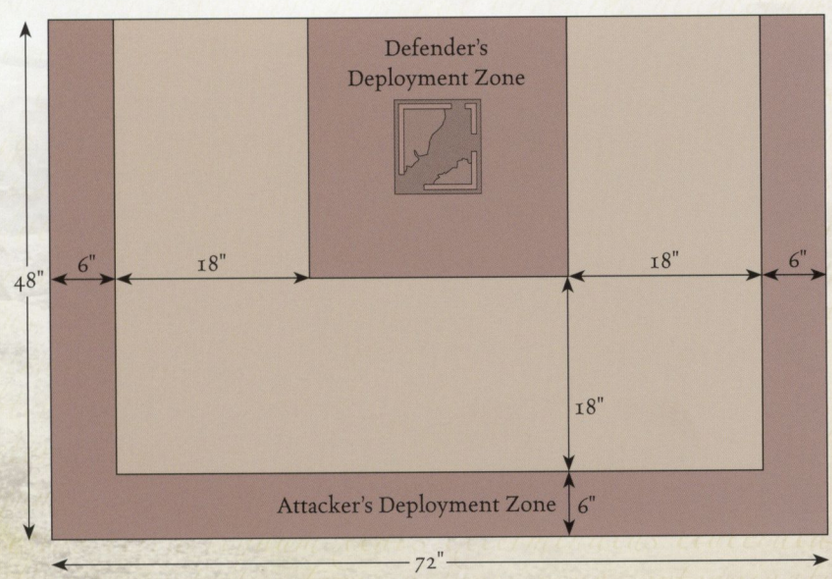
**Victory Conditions**
The Liberation mission is a win or lose situation – there can be no draw when the stakes are this high! If the captive is freed as described as follows, the Attacker is the winner. Any other result is counted as a victory to the Defender. Note that even should the captive be freed and subsequently slain, this is counted as a victory (albeit a pyrrhic one) for the Attacker. This may trigger subsequent rescue attempts if the Captured result is rolled on the Casualty Survival table.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves, plus any special rules relevant to the Campaign phase being played.

**The Captive**
The character whose rescue is the object of this mission begins the game inside the building as indicated previously. The character counts towards the building's Transport Capacity as appropriate and can be injured should the building suffer damage (randomise hits between the character and an occupying enemy unit), but is in all other respects ignored until freed. Until they are freed, the character does not impose any special rules on any other units, friend or foe, and any special rules that affect army selection are ignored.

The captive is immediately freed should the building ever be claimed (as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook) by the Attacker. The character immediately joins the unit that claimed the building and is treated as they normally would be from that point on. It is assumed that the character's weapons and equipment were being stored inside the building and these are reclaimed as soon as the captive is freed.

Should the building suffer a Total Collapse or Detonation! before the character has been freed, they are slain. Their fate must be determined by a roll on the Casualty Survival table – they might crawl from the ruins and rejoin their side, or vanish under the rubble, never to be seen again.



# Relics of the Dark Age of Technology

The Great Crusade came in the wake of the Age of Strife, a long and terrible era during which Mankind unleashed and was laid low by weapons of star-razing destructive power and genocidal scope, many born of the preceding Dark Age of Technology. When the Emperor's Crusading forces pushed back the darkness that had befallen the worlds of Mankind, evidence of these ancient and terrible artefacts were found and studied by the tech-savants of the Mechanicum, who coveted them greatly. Occasionally, one of these examples of ancient archaeotech would be recovered and taken up by the heroes of the Great Crusade itself, becoming a potent relic, its name and legend as widespread and celebrated as the Crusaders who bore it.

As the Great Crusade continued ever onwards, multiple examples of some types of relic were encountered and great effort was committed to cataloguing their class, understanding their nature and replicating their function. Often, however, the Mechanicum could fathom the technology underpinning a relic, but could not create a functioning copy. Nonetheless, the effort to decode the ancient technological foundation of such artefacts continued, with other discoveries made in the process expanding the canon of the machine exponentially.

Many of these relics of the Dark Age of Technology have passed through numerous hands throughout the decades of the Great Crusade, becoming associated with one particular body or institution. In some cases, individual bodies have come to favour specific classes of relic, finding they complement their own battle doctrines or demeanour. This is particularly true of the Legiones Astartes who, having found utility in a particular class of relic, devote great efforts to obtaining other examples of that type, even taking advantage of their elevated status within the Emperor's armies to coerce other bodies to surrender relics they have come into possession of.



## Using Relics of the Dark Age of Technology

Relics of the Dark Age of Technology may be purchased by Independent Characters at the points cost provided and within the limitations stated in each. They may not be taken by special characters (i.e., models with the Unique type). Only one of each relic may be chosen per army.

If playing a campaign, only one character per player may take a Relic of the Dark Age of Technology and this must be purchased for the character at the start of the campaign.

**Death of a Relic Bearer**

Should a character equipped with a Relic of the Dark Age of Technology become a campaign fatality, the relic itself is not necessarily lost with them. In this case, the side that slew the character may choose to play the Relic Hunt mission, provided on page 228. The winner of this mission recovers the lost relic and it is permanently assigned to a character of their choice. Note that this may result in a character gaining a relic normally reserved for another army. If the mission is a Draw, neither side claims the relic and it is lost to history once more, perhaps to be uncovered by future generations.

**Uncovering New Relics**

Once per Campaign phase, at the beginning of that phase, each side may decide to commit resources to scouring the region for archaeotech. In order to do this, one War Zone-assigned Character is reassigned to lead an expedition to find such artefacts, drawing on ancient wisdom and employing the services of the most skilled Rogue Traders Militant, itinerant void-trackers or even xenos guides, the enemy on their trail throughout the entire endeavour. In this case, the Relic Hunt mission is played. The War Zone-assigned Character must be fielded in this mission and may not be used in any other missions played that phase.

The winner of this mission rolls on the following table to determine which relic is uncovered. Note that this can result in the same relic being carried by multiple characters in an army – this is acceptable and a rare example of more than one of the given type being uncovered. Relics obtained in this fashion do not cost the bearer any points.

**The Relic Uncovered Table**

| D6 | Relic Uncovered |
|---|---|
| 1 | Nanyte Blaster |
| 2 | Warp Shunt Field |
| 3 | Phase-walker |
| 4 | Combat Augment Array |
| 5 | Cloaking Array |
| 6 | Void Shield Harness |

### Nanyte Blaster (40 points)

*This is a bullet-shaped weapon of gleaming metal that hosts a hive containing many millions of nanoscopic machines. Upon release, they are capable of stripping any target to its constituent atoms in an instant. The Mechanicum understands the principles on which the nanytes operate, but not how they replicate within the hive, for all who have attempted to study the process have been attacked themselves, the machines seemingly unwilling to surrender the secrets of their creation.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nanyte blaster | 12" | 5 | 2 | Assault 1, Fleshbane, Uncontrolled Replication |

**Uncontrolled Replication:** Should a model be slain by the nanyte blaster, roll a D6. On a 4+, centre a Large Blast (5") marker on the model's position and resolve a Blast marker attack at Str 5 AP 2. Further casualties may themselves trigger further Uncontrolled Replication results.

### Warp Shunt Field (35 points)

*A fearful hybrid of displacer field and void shield technology, the warp shunt is a relic of the Dark Age of Technology that the Mechanicum have failed to replicate despite understanding the principles of its function (although countless test subjects have been incinerated, rendered to biological sludge or turned inside out in the attempt). The device projects a localised warp interface field, which is activated when it detects an incoming high energy attack. Enemy shots are absorbed through extremely short-lived, microscopic warp openings, saving the bearer from harm. Furthermore, when the micro-portals open to absorb the enemy attack, they project a brief but intense lance of pure immaterial warp-stuff along the trajectory of the enemy's shot, withering their body under the baleful gaze of the abyss.*

The warp shunt field provides the bearer with a 3+ invulnerable save against Shooting attacks only. In addition, for every 6 rolled when saving against an enemy attack that draws a direct line of sight between shooter and target, the enemy unit that fired the shot takes D6 Str 5 AP- hits.

### Phase-walker (45 points)

*Very few examples of this technology have been recovered and those that have are highly coveted by the limited number of Imperial servants to have somehow gained possession of one. The relic utilises a phase dilation generator that allows the bearer to 'phase-walk' from one location to the next in an instant and without passing through the intervening space, making it highly prized by assassins, saboteurs and others with need and cause to move unseen through an enemy's defences.*

Instead of moving normally in the Movement phase, the bearer may be removed and replaced anywhere else on the table, so long as they are not engaged in an assault or inside a transport vehicle or building. If the model is to be repositioned in a location that is within their line of sight, they are simply positioned where the player desires. If the target location is outside of the character's line of sight, make a Dangerous Terrain test for every solid object along the path (including all models, vehicles, terrain pieces, buildings, etc) and so long as the character survives, place them in the desired position. Having been moved, the character counts as having deployed via Deep Strike, and so counts as having moved, but may shoot, run, etc, as normal.

### Combat Augment Array (35 points)

*It is posited that this device was once used to transform entire planetary populations into killing machines at a single command, enabling simple colonists to become unstoppable super-soldiers during the incessant wars fought long before the rise of the Imperium. Though dangerous to use due to the array's invasive manipulation of nerve pathways, adrenal glands and musculature, extant examples command a high price indeed, though many regard their use as dishonourable or foolhardy.*

Once per game, declared at the beginning of the controlling player's player turn, the character may count any dice roll as automatically rolling a 6. At the end of that player turn, the model should make a Toughness test for every wound they have remaining. Each failed test results in the character sustaining a wound, with no saves of any kind or Feel No Pain rolls possible.

### Cloaking Array (40 points)

*This relic generates a highly localised refraction field that distorts light and many other forms of electromagnetic radiation in such a way as to render the bearer invisible to the naked eye and most forms of machine sensor.*

Once per game, at the beginning of any game turn, the cloaking array may be activated. For that entire game turn, the bearer may not be targeted by shooting or declared as the subject of a charge. Enemy models with the Psyker or Daemon rule are not affected by the cloaking array, as they have other means of perceiving their foe. Should such a model shoot or assault the bearer, the cloaking array ceases to function immediately. The bearer may not use the array if joined to another unit, or engaged in an assault, and may not move, shoot, charge or declare any other actions while it is in effect.

### Void Shield Harness (40 points)

*Though bordering on the esoteric, void shield technology is broadly understood by the Mechanicum and used to protect static installations and large war machines such as Titans. This particular example, however, recovered by Mechanicum Questors at the leading edge of the Great Crusade, represents a miniaturisation of the technology that to date has not been successfully replicated. The harness-mounted generator projects a nigh-impenetrable force shield that protects the bearer and those nearby, but which can be dangerous to all if catastrophically overloaded by enemy fire.*

The void shield harness has an area of effect equal to a Large Blast (5") marker, centred on the bearer. Any shooting attack that originates from outside of the protected area and hits a target inside it instead hits the void shield – which has an Armour value of 12. A glancing or penetrating hit (or any hit from a Destroyer weapon) causes it to collapse. Once the shield is collapsed, further hits strike the original target instead. If the shield is collapsed, at the end of each of the controlling player's player turns roll a D6. On a roll of 5+, the shield is instantly restored.

When rolling to penetrate the void shield, a result of Explodes! indicates a catastrophic overload. In this instance, resolve a Large Blast (5") attack centred on the bearer at Str 6 AP 4 Pinning, after which the shield may not be used again for the remainder of the game.

### Contagium Mechanica – Mechanicum only (30 points)

*This relic is the subject of much doctrinal schism within the many cults and sects of the Mechanicum. Many tech-adepts regard its very existence as heresy, while others look upon it as a wonder passed down from a long lost age. The Contagium Mechanica is a 'machine virus' transmitted by motile nanytes and able to overwhelm the mechanisms of almost any artificial system it comes into contact with.*

The virus is directed at a vehicle using the profile below. If the damage results in the vehicle losing a Hull Point but not being destroyed, there is a chance the virus will spread to another vehicle. So long as the vehicle is still in play in the bearer's next Shooting phase, every vehicle (friend or foe) within 12" of the original target sustains a single Haywire attack. The process is continued in each of the bearer's Shooting phases, with every vehicle that loses a Hull Point but which is not destroyed 'infecting' the next, until no more vehicles are eligible to be infected.

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contagium Mechanica | 12" | - | - | Assault 1, Haywire |

### Cortica Primus – Mechanicum only (30 points)

*The Cortica Primus is a bionic implant that replaces most of a Tech-Priest's largely unutilised temporal lobe and sends invasive neuro-probes throughout their brain and central nervous system. At the expense of some degree of subjectivity, the device facilitates a high level of integration with cybernetic systems such as the mighty automata fielded by the armies of the Mechanicum.*

The Cortica Primus counts as a Cortex Controller. In addition, if the bearer uses a Cybertheurgy power to target a friendly unit, the effect of the power used applies not to one model in that unit, but to all eligible models in the unit. If the power is failed however, the subsequent roll on the Cybertheurgy Mishap table is modified by the number of models over the first it was attempted on. For example, if the target unit consisted of three Battle-automata, the roll on the Mishap table would be modified by +2.

### Metaphasic Reader – Solar Auxilia only (45 points)

*The metaphasic reader utilises an input device able to detect almost every form of energy known to the Mechanicum, as well as several the Magos of the Omnissiah have no knowledge of at all.*

The unit, as well as any Solar Auxilia unit from the same detachment within 12", gains the Interceptor special rule.

### Apex Digital Weapon – Solar Auxilia only (35 points)

*Amongst the Imperium's burgeoning aristocracy, digital weapons are highly sought after as a sign of prestige and wealth, and of these the apex class weapons are the most coveted of all. Though each appears to be a harmless decorative ring of the rarest metal surmounted with the most precious of gems, they are in fact miniaturised weapons of the most fearsome potency, able to unleash the power of suns and incinerate any foe with but a gesture.*

The apex digital weapon counts as a normal digital weapon. In addition, once per game it may be fired as either a lascannon, multi-melta, plasma cannon or volkite caliver.

### Pyrix Extasis – Dark Angels only (40 points)

*A small but weighty casket manufactured at the very close of the Dark Age of Technology, it is held by some that the Pyrix Extasis was meant as a super-weapon for holding at bay the oncoming horrors of the Age of Strife. The Pyrix contains a psycho-disruptive resonator that acts upon the most primal regions of a victim's brain to induce feelings of utter dread and in their mind transform the bearer into a figure from nightmare.*

Once per game, at the start of the Fight sub-phase, the bearer may open the Pyrix Extasis and subject their foe to its effects. Every enemy unit engaged in an assault with a unit from the bearer's side must make a Fear test.



### Lucid Blade – Emperor's Children only (40 points)

*But a handful of these supremely balanced and masterfully wrought weapons are known to exist, and to date all have been acquired, by fair means or foul, by the champions of the Legiones Astartes Emperor's Children. The Lucid blades are possessed of a puissant machine-spirit which some say veers dangerously close to transgressing the ancient proscription against self-aware machines. By integrating with the bearer's power armour via its auto-senses, the movements of both weapon and bearer are coordinated at a level none but the most accomplished swordsman can hope to emulate.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lucid blade | - | +1 | 3 | Melee, Master Parry, Specialist Weapon |

**Master Parry:** When fighting in a challenge, the bearer may exchange attacks they have yet to make that phase for bonuses to any invulnerable save they have (or to gain an invulnerable save of 6 if they have none). For example, a model with four attacks and an invulnerable save of 5+ might sacrifice one attack to improve their invulnerable save to 4+, two to improve it to 3+ and so forth. No invulnerable save may be improved to more than 2+.

### The Blind Helm of the Black Judges – Iron Warriors only (40 points)

*The Blind helm was torn by the sons of Perturabo from the corpses of the Black Judges, and is a bionically-assimilated armoured helmet that integrates with Astartes power armour thanks to shared Standard Template Construct heritage. The helm contains a compact resonator that generates a di-electric coronal discharge which is unleashed at any foe that attempts to strike the wearer.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Blind helm | 12" | 5 | 3 | Assault 2D6* |

**The Blind helm is used to make Overwatch attacks only, and these are resolved at the bearer's full Ballistic Skill.*

### The Parthinian Serpent – White Scars only (50 points)

*Recovered from the quantum-sealed tribute-vaults deep beneath the Khum Karta mountains of Chogoris, the Parthinian Serpent is a bow that is the equal of many highly advanced ballistic systems. The weapon fires bolts of highly energised matter generated and unleashed by the bearer, releasing a projectile through a highly localised micro-gravitational lens array.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parthinian Serpent | 24" | 6 | 2 | Heavy 1, Skyfire, Precision Shots, Interceptor, Pinning, Preternatural Targeting |

**Preternatural Targeting:** The Parthinian Serpent is always used at the user's full Ballistic Skill, even when making Snap Shots.



### Burning Claws – Space Wolves only (40 points)

*The wickedly curved, super-conducting tines of these relic lightning claws burn with a heat so intense, they can cut through rock with contemptuous ease. The armoured cowling of each claw conceals a compact fusion reactor and a powerful magnetic containment field, and the secrets of its construction have not yet been revealed to the Mechanicum, for the Legiones Astartes Space Wolves have no intention of depriving themselves of this truly mighty weapon of war.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Burning claws | - | +1 | 3 | Melee, Shred, Specialist Weapon, Master-crafted, Armourbane |

### Indomitan Mantle – Imperial Fists only (50 points)

*A long cloak of heavy chainmail, the few Indomitan mantles known to exist were all recovered from the sub-strata sinks of the hives of Inwit. Each and every link is inset with micro-sigils capable of bleeding off and dissipating many different forms of energy, including thermal, kinetic and radiant attacks.*

The Indomitan mantle grants the bearer the Eternal Warrior special rule, as well as a 3+ invulnerable save against any weapon with the Melta type.

### Nostraman Mancatcher – Night Lords only (40 points)

*The origins of the mancatcher remain a mystery, though some claim that it was wrought not by human hands, but was created deep within the Ghoul Stars, a region of space known to be haunted by countless alien horrors entirely anathema to sanity. Several examples of the device have been recovered and the Night Lords have found particular use for them when they would sooner take their foe alive, but for what fell purpose only they know.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nostraman mancatcher | - | +1 | 3 | Melee, Two-handed, Ensnare |

**Ensnare:** A character bearing the Nostraman mancatcher nominates a single enemy infantry model in base contact before any attacks (including Hammer of Wrath and the like) are resolved at the start of each Fight sub-phase. The target must make a Strength test for every attack it is eligible to make that phase. For each test failed, the target loses an attack that phase.

### Photonic Blade – Blood Angels only (50 points)

*This sword is a double-handed weapon so heavy that only the mightiest of warriors can heft it, but its potency lies not in its mass but in the searing white photonic refraction that wreathes its metal and which few victims can withstand. The weapon is thought to have been created by one of the two sides fighting in the civil war that consumed the Baal system as Old Night fell, and the few examples recovered from the irradiated wastes of that world are greatly prized by the noble warriors of the Legiones Astartes Blood Angels.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Photonic blade | - | User | 2 | Melee, Soul Blaze, Fleshbane, Fear, Blind |

### Grav Gauntlet – Iron Hands only (40 points)

*A heavy, wrist-mounted iteration of the graviton gun, the first known examples of the grav gauntlet were recovered by Mechanicum Explorator forces probing the eastern marches of the galactic core. Witnessing the weapons' potent effect upon xenos bastions, they were later ceded to the Primarch of the Iron Hands in recognition of the aid his Legion granted to the forces of the Mechanicum in that arduous campaign.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grav gauntlet | Template | * | 3 | Assault 3, Concussive, Graviton Pulse*, Haywire, Ruination |

**The template is left in place after the attack as described in the Graviton Pulse special rule, see page 245.*

**Ruination:** Unlike normal Haywire attacks, this weapon may be used against buildings as well as vehicles. The weapon adds +D3 to any result rolled on the Building Damage chart. If the attack damages a bulkhead or wall section of terrain and destroys it, remove that section from play if possible.

### The Earth Breaker Trident – World Eaters only (50 points)

*This weapon's overlong haft is inset with a potent seismic accumulator and when it is cast to the ground and its mighty tines plunged into the earth, the planet's crust itself heaves and cries out in agony as ever more powerful seismic waves radiate outwards in all directions. The World Eaters made devastating use of this weapon in the extermination of the horror-shrouded exo-strains of the Larkar Rift.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Earth Breaker trident | | | | |
| (Melee) | - | +2 | 2 | Melee, Unwieldy, Specialist Weapon |
| (Thrown) | 18" | 10 | 1 | Assault 1, Instant Death, Seismic Destructor, One Use |

**Seismic Destructor:** Once per game, the Earth Breaker trident may be used as a missile weapon, after which it may not be used (in melee or as a thrown weapon) again in that game. Should this attack slay a foe or destroy a vehicle or building, place a marker to represent the trident's final position. All ground within 12" of this point is counted as dangerous terrain and any buildings in this area automatically lose a Hull Point at the start of each and every subsequent game turn.

### Gladius Invictus – Ultramarines only (40 points)

*This broad-bladed, artificer-wrought short sword has been carried by the champions of Ultramar for many generations, having been recovered from ancient human ruins on one of the outer worlds of the Prandium system. The weapon integrates a cunning gyroscopic inductor that makes it fiendishly difficult to master, but which makes thrusts nigh impossible for the enemy to predict or counter.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gladius Invictus | - | +1 | 3 | Melee, Rending, Shield-mocker, Duellist's Edge |

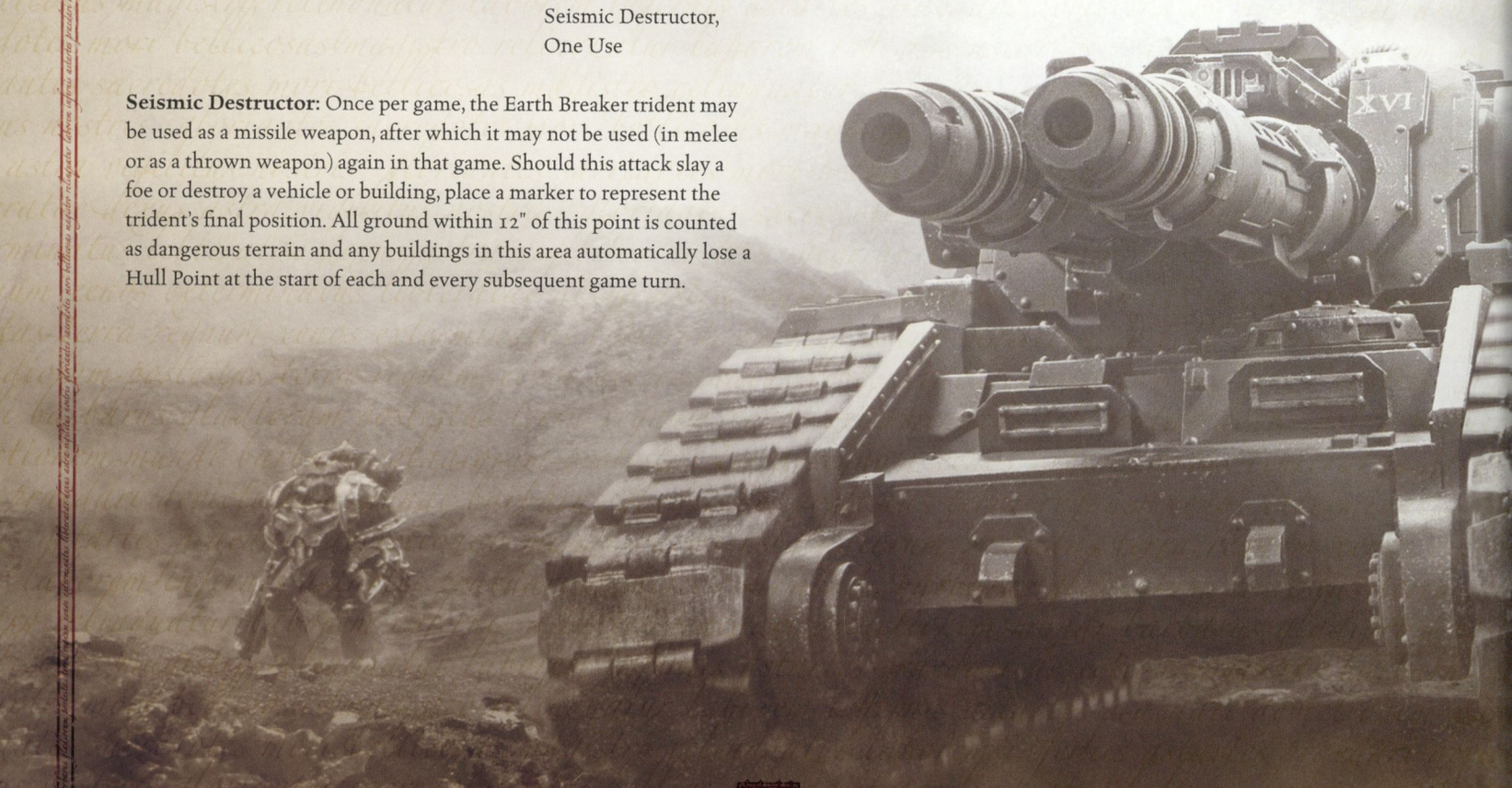
**Shield-mocker:** Enemy models may not claim saves of any kind that are derived from carried shields, including combat shields, boarding shields, etc.

**Duellist's Edge:** When fighting in a challenge, the user gains a +1 bonus to their Initiative value.

### The Barbaran Thurible – Death Guard only (40 points)

*This takes the form of a heavy iron haft, from the top of which hangs on a chain a large perforated metal sphere. This contains a complex atmospheric filtration and extraction mechanism that draws even microscopically small quantities of toxic elements from the atmosphere. These concentrated elements are then projected in a wide area about the bearer, slaying any one not suitably protected in a hideous, painful and lingering manner.*

All units without the Legiones Astartes (Death Guard) special rule within 6" of the bearer suffer a -1 penalty to their Toughness – this does not affect a model's Instant Death thresholds. In addition, any enemy unit that sustains even a single casualty from shooting whilst their Toughness is modified in this way must make a Morale check at the end of that phase, regardless of how many casualties are caused.



### Luminiferous Resonator – Thousand Sons only (35 points)

*This lambent crystal device is worn about the neck or set into the palm or brow, and used to focus the bearer's native psionic capability or to substantially amplify that of a practitioner of the psychic arts, allowing them to blast their foes with raw mental force. Several examples have been recovered across the scattered worlds of humanity and the warrior-savants of the Thousand Sons Legion go to great lengths to recover them in the furtherance of their ceaseless quest for knowledge.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Luminiferous resonator | 12" | 10* | 3 | Salvo 3/6 |

**The relic's Strength value is compared to the target's Leadership instead of Toughness. The weapon has no effect on vehicles or any model without a Leadership characteristic.*

### The Cataphractii Primus – Sons of Horus only (50 points)

*The Cataphractii Primus represents the very earliest example of Cataphractii armour, modified from suits which were designed to survive inside operational plasma reactors. While one of these suits is retained by the Martian Mechanicum and another in the Legion's own Forge, the third is traditionally worn by a Sons of Horus assault captain who has risen through the ranks of the Justaerin Terminator elite, its superior power generation and transmission systems granting the wearer protection far above that of other patterns of Terminator armour.*

The Cataphractii Primus is a suit of Cataphractii armour. In addition to the standard rules for this armour type, the wearer gains the Eternal Warrior special rule and adds +1 to their Toughness characteristic against Shooting attacks.

### Conversion Dissonator – Word Bearers only (40 points)

*This entirely novel, some tech-savants would say esoteric, device interferes with a wide spectrum of field effects, including those generated by the little-understood alien creatures said to dwell within the dimension of raw energy that is the Warp.*

Use of the conversion dissonator is declared at the start of any game turn, and is used for that one game turn only. While in effect, all invulnerable saves, applicable to friend and foe alike, within 12" of the bearer suffer a modifier of -2 (a save of 5 or 6+ is negated entirely).

### Zeroth Conductor Shield – Salamanders only (50 points)

*This huge shield houses a thermic conductor discovered by Magos Kleel of the Corpuscarii Cult, and while he never successfully replicated its function, other examples were uncovered throughout the course of the Great Crusade, including several by the Legiones Astartes Salamanders. When the Zeroth's reactor is activated, the shield's outer face is transformed into a searing white plane so intense that any weapon that strikes it is rendered to slag in an instant, assuming the attacker is not blinded attempting to land the blow.*

The Zeroth conductor shield is counted as a combat shield. Any enemy unit that charges the bearer of the Zeroth conductor shield sustains D6 Str 8 AP 2 Blind hits at Initiative step 10.

### Fractal Harrow-blade – Raven Guard only (35 points)

*The ultimate iteration of the mono-molecular edged weaponry used throughout the Imperium's militant forces, several examples of this weapon type were discovered as the Great Crusade pressed outwards into the galaxy. The very first, however, was recovered long before the Unification Wars, for they were highly valued by the Xeric tribesmen from whose ranks the earliest recruits into the XIX[th] Legion (latterly the Raven Guard) were drawn.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fractal harrow-blade | - | +1 | 3 | Melee, Rending, Bloody Ruin |

**Bloody Ruin:** Every wound caused by the bearer of the fractal harrow-blade is counted as two wounds for the purposes of determining assault results.

### The Drakaina – Alpha Legion only (45 points)

*The Drakaina is a singular pistol weapon, its pattern entirely unknown to STC canon and possibly even of xenos provenance. Not unlike a needle pistol in operation, the Drakaina fires a hybrid virus-toxin so virulent it can slay in seconds and leap to the next victim before what remains of the body has even struck the ground. How the Alpha Legion obtains or synthesises this toxin is but one of countless mysteries surrounding this most shrouded of Legions.*

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Drakaina | 12" | 4 | 4 | Pistol, Poisoned, Rending, Flesh-phage |

**Flesh-phage:** A unit which suffers one or more casualties from this weapon must take D6 Toughness tests at the start of every subsequent Alpha Legion Shooting phase. Each failed test results in a wound being sustained, with no saves of any kind. This effect ceases should a Shooting phase pass without any such wounds being sustained.



# Relic Hunt Mission

*"The bone-dust of that ancient field of war was stirred by a gust of hot, irradiated wind and the object of our hunt was finally revealed to us. They said the device was ten thousand years old, though they never named it, nor explained its function, not to the likes of us at least. Even before the troop master had voxed the High Commander, the wind stirred again. On it we heard the unmistakable sound of a Knight's footfall, and in minutes the Traitors were upon us."*

*Lasrifleman Mhidfal, Auxiliary, 234th Field Army*

In this mission, one side has learned of the general location of a priceless relic of the Dark Age of Technology, their advance units already scouring the ground for its exact hiding place. Their enemies have not been idle, however, and have remained close on the hunters' trail throughout their search. Even as the hunters sense that victory is near, their foe strikes, determined to claim the prize for themselves.

**The Armies**
When this mission is played as part of an ongoing campaign, the side that instigated the search for the relic is the Hunters side. If the mission is being played as a one-off encounter, either agree beforehand or roll off to determine which side is the Hunters. The other side is referred to as the Pursuers.

The armies are chosen according to the Age of Darkness guidelines given in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*, or those in use for the campaign being played.

**The Battlefield**
This mission is played on a 6' x 4' board. If the mission is being played to recover a relic lost in a previous game, the players might consider setting the battlefield up to represent the same general area in which it was lost. If the mission is being played to search for a previously undiscovered relic, then players may set the terrain up in any mutually agreed fashion.

**Place Primary Objectives**
After terrain is placed, but before any forces are deployed, the players take turns placing six objective markers, starting with the Hunters side. No objective may be placed within 12" of a table edge or within 6" of another marker.

**Deployment**
The Hunters side then chooses a long table edge as their own table edge and deploys their army, less any forces held in Reserves, up to 12" on from that edge.

The Pursuers side's table edge is that opposite the Hunters', and they now deploy their army, less any units held in Reserves, up to 6" onto the table from that edge.

**First Turn**
In this mission, the Pursuers side gets the first turn, unless the Hunters can Seize the Initiative.

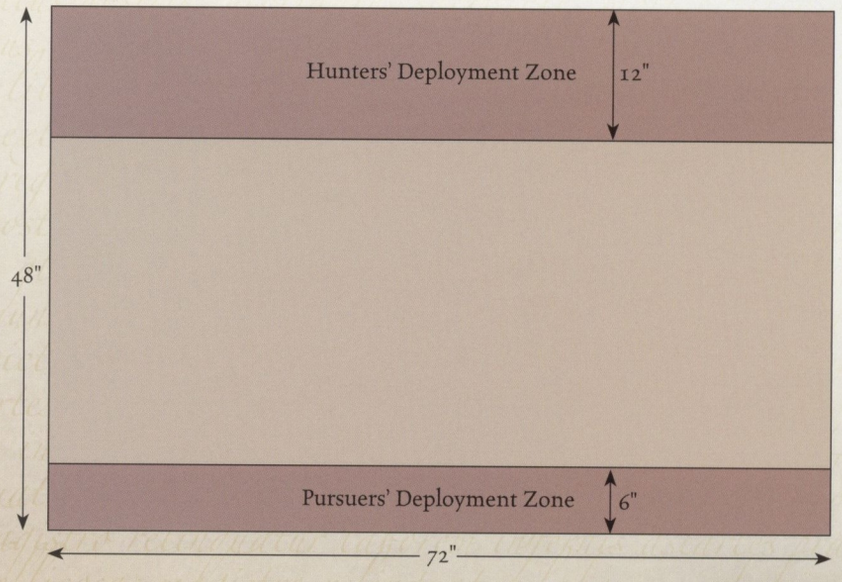
**Game Length**
This mission uses the rules for Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

**Victory Conditions**
**Location Unknown:** Each of the objective markers represents a potential location of the relic both sides are seeking, but neither side knows the true location where the relic is hidden. Each objective must be 'identified' as per the rules in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook for Mysterious Objectives. Instead of rolling on the Mysterious Objectives table however, roll a D6. On a result of '6', the relic has been discovered and no more objectives are identified. If only a single objective remains to be investigated and the relic has yet to be found, the last one is automatically the relic's location.

The winner of this mission is the side that controls the objective marker that represents the relic at the end of the game. If neither side controls the objective at the end of the game, the result is a Draw.

**Mission Special Rules**
Reserves and Mission Accomplished.

**Mission Accomplished:** A unit that controls the relic once it has been identified gains the Fearless and Counter-attack special rules while controlling it.



# Example Campaigns using the Battles in the Age of Darkness: Conquest Campaign System

The additional campaign rules we have presented in this book can be used in a number of different ways and form something of a 'tool box' approach to narrative games. Using some or all of these rules in your own games may seem intimidating at first, or a little difficult to understand in terms of how they interlock and how to select what you want and ignore the rest. With this in mind, this section presents a number of example campaign set-ups, drawing on the Core Conquest campaign system presented earlier as well as many of the optional rules provided, all with narratives based upon the history of the war for the Coronid Deeps detailed in this book as their background.

To varying degrees, each section discusses which rules the example gaming group involved intends to use and why, how the players organise themselves into sides and how the war zones over which the games will be fought are created. You can use these examples simply for reference or of course as templates you yourselves can play. As these examples make detailed references to the rules found previously in the Conquest Campaign section of this book, it's recommended that you have some familiarity with these rules before you read through the following examples.

The first example is the most basic; a simple set-up based on the story of the attack at Numinal. It uses the basic Conquest campaign rules and War Zone Traits, with two players fighting across three Strategic objectives. It is ideal for use as a template by players who haven't played a campaign before. A campaign set up to run in this way would suit people who want to add a simple element of strategic play to their games, but who lack the time or resources to run a more involved campaign, or whose available time to play might be limited. With a little preparation, for example, this kind of campaign could be easily played start to finish over the course of a weekend.

The second example is more detailed and based on a campaign for a larger gaming group. It involves eight players divided into two teams of four, playing across four separate war zones: Keopsis, Shoar, Grail and Lascal, to represent the Traitors' invasion of the Grail Abyss. It makes use of a variety of special rules, including System Conquest, War Zone Traits, Hostile War Zones and Priority Targets, as well as some house rules. While on the face of it such a campaign might appear complicated, so long as everyone is committed and the number of optional rules are kept to a manageable level, a campaign structured like this should progress towards a satisfactory conclusion within a sensible time frame.

The third example is much more involved and shown as an illustration of perhaps the most comprehensive use of the rules presented here. This very detailed approach can be used by a handful of friends or by a large gaming group such as a club, but it is recommended that the majority of those involved have played in campaigns before and are willing to invest time and effort into the campaign to see it reach a successful conclusion. This example also demonstrates how one player assuming the role of impartial campaign organiser (or Campaign Referee) can add an enormous amount to a series of games.

It also explores the decision making process behind which optional rules might be chosen and how these can be inspired by the story presented earlier in this book. Lastly, this example provides a summary of how one such campaign actually played out and how some of the optional rules chosen affected the ebb and flow of events.



# Example Conquest Campaign I: The Assault on Numinal

This example campaign is intended to depict a short and relatively simple use of the Conquest Campaign system, demonstrating how the basic campaign structure works and how it can be adapted to fit various different gaming groups.

Having just read the The Darkness Descending narrative section of this book, two friends decide to use the Conquest Campaign system to refight the assault of MaSade and the Agathean troops of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet on Numinal. Keen to put the various rules and new units to use, the two players decide to stage their campaign over the course of a weekend. The Loyalist player, having recently completed a force of Solar Auxilia and several Cerastus Knights, will use these to represent MaSade's forces while his opponent will use a force constructed using the Space Marine Crusade Army list, with the Sons of Horus Legion Traits, with an allied contingent of Mechanicum forces as the Traitor army.

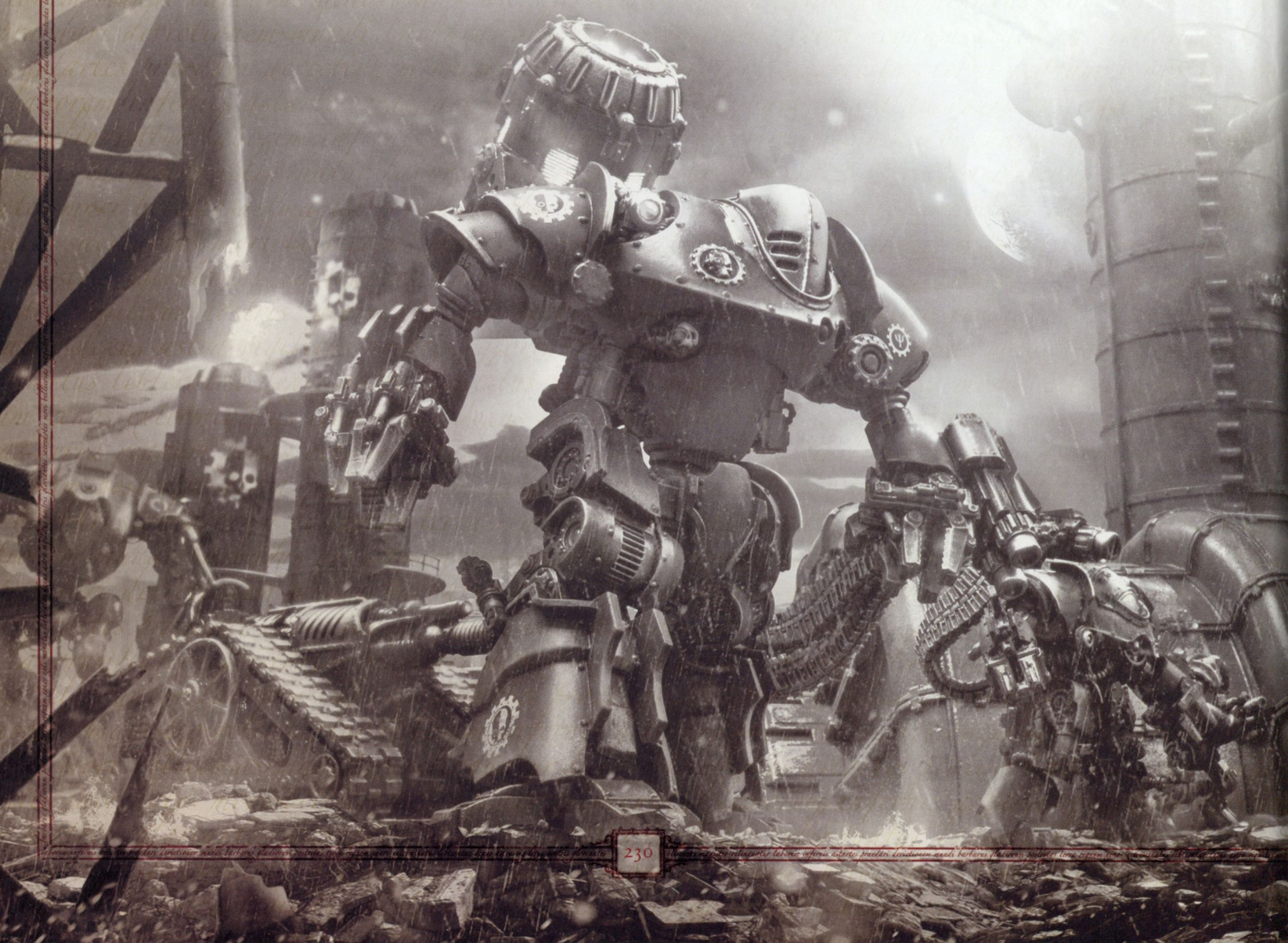
## Campaign Set-up

Constructing a war zone to represent Numinal is the players' first task. As there are only two players, the Conquest rules recommend a fairly small war zone. The players decide that this means the campaign itself represents a single part of the larger battle on Numinal, a flanking thrust by a Sons of Horus detachment on an isolated detachment of Agathean troops defending the Loyalist landing zones. The players also assign the recommended number of Reserves points for a quick two player campaign, 3 points each, and use the recommended number of three Strategic objectives.

The players agree that the first Strategic objective represents the Sons of Horus staging area aboard a gigantic Conversion Crawler approaching the Loyalist forces. They give this Strategic objective the Concealed Bunker Complex War Zone Trait, and determine that all games played at this objective should be Zone Mortalis games. The second Strategic objective will represent the Rock Strewn Beaches of the northern archipelago defended by the Loyalist forces and receives no special Trait. The final Strategic objective is agreed to be the Landing Zones themselves, a vast field holding the various bulk landers and fighter squadrons that accompanied MaSade's forces, and is assigned the Planetary Spaceport War Zone Trait to represent the various aerial assets available. The players decide not to assign any War Zone-wide Traits and so begin play.

## The Campaign in Action

As previously decided, both players begin the first Mustering phase with 3 Reserves points each, which is the total allotment for each player over the course of the entire campaign. Both players roll-off to decide which of them will have the Initiative for the first Mustering phase, with the Loyalist player winning. As the player with the Initiative, the Loyalist player issues a Challenge; selecting the Landing Zone as his target and expending 1 Reserves point. As this campaign has only two players, there is no need to decide which player on the opposing side will meet this challenge, but in a larger campaign, the opposing



side could assign any of its players to this game. Initiative now passes to the Traitor player who selects the Rocky Beaches as his target and who also expends 1 Reserves point, passing the Initiative back to the Loyalist player. Not wanting to expend too many Reserves points early on, the Loyalist player chooses to pass and issues no more Challenges. Initiative now returns to the Traitor player, who chooses to issue one final Challenge, targeting the Conversion Crawler and expending another Reserves point before ending the Mustering phase. At the end of the first Mustering phase, the Loyalist player has made a single Challenge and now has a total Reserves Pool of 2 and the Traitor player has issued two Challenges and has a total Reserves Pool of 1.

During the following Conflict phase, all Challenges made during the Mustering phase are resolved. As only two players are participating in this campaign, they will both be involved in all games. The two players agree to use the Eternal War missions from the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook and armies of 2,000 points each to resolve all of the games. The first Challenge pits the Loyalist force against the Traitors at the Imperial Landing Zone Strategic objective, and is resolved with a Crusade mission using the Vanguard Strike deployment map. As neither side currently has any Control points at this Strategic objective, no special rules apply from the Planetary Spaceport Trait, and the game proceeds as normal with the Loyalist player, who issued the Challenge there, emerging victorious. The second Challenge was issued by the Traitor player and targeted the Rocky Beaches Strategic objective which has no special Trait – it is resolved with a Scouring mission and uses the Hammer and Anvil deployment map, but ends in another victory for the Loyalist player. The final Challenge, also issued by the Traitor player, targets the Conversion Crawler Strategic objective; again as neither player has any Control points at this objective, no special Trait rules are used. The game is resolved as a Zone Mortalis game due to the Strategic Objectives Trait. The game ends in victory for the Traitor player, who had issued the Challenge there in the Mustering phase.

With all Challenges resolved, the Consolidation phase begins. As he was victorious in his Challenge at the Landing Zones, the Imperial player gains 1 Control point at that Strategic objective, and as he now has the highest total of Control points at that objective, he may now make use of its special rules. Likewise, the Traitor player succeeded in his Challenge at the Conversion Crawler and gains a Control point and access to its special rules. However, as the Traitor player was unsuccessful in his Challenge at the Rocky Beaches Strategic objective, he gains no Control points there, though as the Loyalist player did not issue this Challenge, he gains no Control points either as his successful defence merely thwarts the ambitions of his rival. Having noted the changes in Control points, the Consolidation phase ends.

The players decide to begin the next Mustering phase on the following day, having played for several hours to resolve the first Campaign turn. At the beginning of the second Mustering phase, before determining who has the Initiative, the Traitor player rolls a D6, scoring a 5 and gaining an additional Reserves point due to the Concealed Bunker special rule, increasing his Reserves Pool to 2. Next, the players roll-off again to determine which of them will begin with the Initiative, resulting in the Traitor player gaining the Initiative. The Traitor player begins by issuing a Challenge targeting the Rocky Beaches. The Loyalist player does the same when the Initiative passes to him, and both players then reduce their Reserves Pools by 1. The Traitor player then uses his last Reserves point to issue a Challenge against the Landing Zones Strategic objective and passes the Initiative to the Loyalist player. With only 1 Reserves point left, and knowing that his opponent has spent all of his own Reserves points and that this will be the final Campaign turn, the Loyalist player chooses to issue a Challenge targeting the Landing Zones Strategic objective, reasoning that if he tries to attack the Conversion Crawler, the game will be played as a Zone Mortalis mission, denying him access to the special rules which are provided by the Planetary Spaceport Trait.

The Conflict phase begins with the two Challenges targeting the Rocky Beaches Strategic objective. The Traitor player rolls a Relic mission with the Dawn of War deployment map for his Challenge and is defeated by the Loyalist player's canny use of the additional Flyer granted by the Planetary Spaceport Trait. The Loyalist player's Challenge is resolved as a Crusade mission using the Hammer and Anvil deployment map and is another victory for the Loyalist player.

Next, the Traitor player resolves his Challenge against the Landing Zones Strategic objective with a Scouring mission using the Vanguard Strike deployment map, this time with a Talon of Contemptor-Mortis Dreadnoughts to counter the Loyalist player's reliance on Flyers, and emerges victorious. Noting his opponent has adapted to his earlier tactics, the Loyalist player chooses to instead take fewer Flyers and instead field a Questoris Knight Crusade army and resolves his final Challenge which targeted the Landing Zones Strategic objective as a Big Guns Never Tire mission using the Dawn of War deployment map, emerging victorious after a hard fought battle.

In the Consolidation phase, the final totals of Control points are noted. At the Conversion Crawler Strategic objective, the Traitor player has 1 Control point and the Loyalist player 0, at the Rocky Beaches Strategic objective the Traitor player has 0 Control points and the Loyalist player 1, and at the Landing Zones Strategic objective the Traitor player has 1 Control point and the Loyalist player has 2. As the Loyalist player controls 2 Strategic objectives and the Traitor player only 1, the Loyalist player is declared the campaign victor, driving the Sons of Horus forces from the war zone and securing MaSade's flanks from attack.



# Example Conquest Campaign II: Assault on the Grail Abyss

This example campaign is intended as a demonstration of a more complicated use of the Conquest Campaign system, involving a variety of special rules and modifications to the standard system. While many of the modifications used are based around the example campaign being played, they will hopefully serve as a source of inspiration for those players looking to utilise the Conquest campaign system to craft unique campaigns of their own.

Eight friends gather to play a series of Battles in the Age of Darkness games using the Conquest campaign system. The players agree on playing a fairly ambitious campaign representing the attack of Horus' armies through the Grail Abyss towards the Imperial stronghold of Lascal. All of the participants are well versed in both the rules for Warhammer 40,000 and the Battles in the Age of Darkness expansion, but decide to appoint one player from each side to act as Campaign Warlord in order to speed up book-keeping during Campaign turns – especially as the group is interested in running a more involved campaign with several optional rules.

The group organises into two sides, with four players each on both the Loyalist and Traitor sides, and after some discussion decide to use the following optional rules as part of the campaign:

- Conquest War Zone Traits
- Hostile War Zones
- Priority Targets
- System Conquest

As they meet irregularly, they decide that they will gather as a group once every other week to perform each Mustering phase and decide on games, which will then be fought at the various players' houses and local clubs, and the results reported back at the next bi-weekly gathering. The two Campaign Warlords will be responsible for making sure the players remember to play games as needed and for tallying results and tracking remaining Reserves points. They will also make any dice rolls for their side as well as arbitrate any group decisions in order to speed up play.

Having decided on which rules are to be included, the group begins setting up their campaign. As the group is using the System Conquest special rules, multiple war zones must be created; the group decides on four war zones, representing the Traitors' attack corridor through the Grail Abyss towards their ultimate target of Lascal: Shoar, Grail, Keopsis and Lascal.

## Campaign Set-up

Each war zone will need to be fully created before play begins. The core Conquest rules require that each war zone has a Reserves Pool for each side and a set number of Strategic objectives; however the various optional rules in play also require that each war zone be set a Disposition (System Conquest), a number of Traits (Conquest War Zone Traits) and possibly an alternative set-up (Hostile War Zones). In addition, the Priority Targets rule allows the group to set different Campaign point (CP) values to the Strategic objectives in each war zone.

The group begins with Keopsis, assigning it five Strategic objectives and 8 Reserves points for both sides – standard values for the size of group. Based on the description given in The Principal Worlds of the Coronid Deeps section of this book, the group assigns the War Zone Trait Blackened Lava Plains to the entire war zone, so that all games played at Keopsis will be affected by it, and the Concealed Bunker Trait to one of the five Strategic objectives (only games played at that objective will be affected by this Trait). Using the Priority Targets rule, the group decides to set the value of the Concealed Bunker Strategic objective to 3 CP, leaving the others at 1 CP each. Finally, the group decides not to use any of the alternative set-ups from the Hostile War Zones rule with the Keopsis war zone and sets its starting Disposition as Neutral – not yet controlled by the Traitors, but also without a heavy garrison of Loyalist troops.

Moving on to Shoar, the group decides this is likely to be similar to Keopsis, an early target for the Traitor forces with a minimal Imperial garrison, and assigns it five Strategic objectives and 8 Reserves points for each side. Its description is quite different to Keopsis, with harsh arctic weather and tribes of rugged feral inhabitants, and the group assigns it the War Zone Trait Frozen Wasteland, which will affect all games played at Shoar. Searching through the list of Traits provided in this book, the group finds nothing appropriate for representing Shoar's savage population, previously used as recruiting stock for the Imperial Auxilia, and decides to invent something appropriate to the occasion. After getting the approval of the entire group, the Trait Mustering Fields is assigned to one of the objectives in the Shoar war zone. This allows the side which controls this Strategic objective to include a single Troops choice from the Solar Auxilia army list in any detachment they field for the usual points cost if they wish. This objective is assigned a CP value of 3, the others are left valued at 1 CP. As with Keopsis, Shoar is set to a Neutral Disposition and uses no alternative set-up from the Hostile War Zones optional rule.

The group decides that Grail is less a potential conquest for either side and more a possible treasure trove of resources to fuel the rest of the conflict – a rich but dangerous prize. As such, Grail is assigned three Strategic objectives and only 6 Reserves points for each side; the fighting here will be short but vicious. To emphasise the danger of the richest areas of the planet, the group assigns the Broken Ruinscape and Frozen Wasteland Traits to the entire war zone and the Rad Wastes Trait to a single Strategic objective. The Rad Wastes Strategic objective is assigned a CP value of 3, while the others are left at 1 CP and no alternative set-up is used at Grail. Its Disposition is set as Neutral – likely untouched by either side at the start of the conflict. As the players all feel that Grail should be special, the group decides that whichever side conquers this war zone will receive an additional 2 Reserves points in the next war zone they attack – naming this house rule *'Treasures of Grail'*.

The final war zone is Lascal, the stronghold of Imperial resistance on the edge of the Grail Abyss. As the main target of the Traitor forces, the group assigns Lascal seven Strategic objectives and 14 Reserves points. The War Zone Trait Hive Cities is assigned to one Strategic objective to represent Lascal's burgeoning colony and the Trait Planetary Spaceport to another – both of these are set to a value of 3 CP, while the other five are left at 1 CP. As the Imperial stronghold, Lascal's Disposition is set to Loyal and the group decides to use the Fortress World alternative set-up in this war zone, with the Loyalist side as the Defender.

With war zone creation completed, the group can begin play. The two Campaign Warlords roll off, with the Loyalist Campaign Warlord winning and thus gaining the right to select the first war zone to be fought over. After some discussion, the Loyalists choose Shoar as the first war zone and the players all gather to begin the first Campaign turn.

### Campaign War Zones Overview

**Keopsis**
**Disposition:** Neutral
**Reserves Points Pool:** 8
**Strategic Objectives:** 5
**Traits:** Blackened Lava Plains (War Zone), Concealed Bunker Complex (attached to Strategic Objective No.1).
**Priority Targets:** Strategic Objective No.1 set to 3 CP value for control, all other objectives worth 1 CP.
**Hostile War Zones:** No alternative set-up used.

**Shoar**
**Disposition:** Neutral
**Reserves Points Pool:** 8
**Strategic Objectives:** 5
**Traits:** Frozen Wasteland (War Zone), Mustering Fields (attached to Strategic Objective No.1).
**Priority Targets:** Strategic Objective No.1 set to 3 CP value for control, all other objectives worth 1 CP.
**Hostile War Zones:** No alternative set-up used.

**Grail**
**Disposition:** Neutral
**Reserves Points Pool:** 6
**Strategic Objectives:** 3
**Traits:** Broken Ruinscape (War Zone), Frozen Wasteland (War Zone), Rad Wastes (attached to Strategic Objective No.1).
**Priority Targets:** Strategic Objective No.1 set to 3 CP value for control, all other objectives worth 1 CP.
**Hostile War Zones:** No alternative set-up used.
*Note that the Treasures of Grail house rule applies to this war zone.*

**Lascal**
**Disposition:** Loyalist
**Reserves Points Pool:** 14
**Strategic Objectives:** 7
**Traits:** Hive Cities (attached to Strategic Objective No.1), Planetary Spaceport (attached to Strategic Objective No.2).
**Priority Targets:** Strategic Objective No.1 & No.2 set to 3 CP value for control, all other objectives worth 1 CP.
**Hostile War Zones:** Fortress World (Loyalist side as Defender).

### The Campaign in Action

The players decide that this war zone represents Traitor fleets bypassing the Imperial forces at Keopsis to strike at Shoar, hoping to establish a forward position within the Grail Abyss. As previously decided, both sides gain 8 Reserves points for the fighting in the Shoar war zone, representing forces in and around the planet at the time of the Traitor attack, and they will use these to contest five Strategic objectives.

Seizing the Initiative in the first few Mustering phases, the Traitors focus on building Control points at the Mustering Fields objective. They spend 5 of their Reserves points over several Campaign turns to gain 4 Control points there and claim the use of Imperial Army units recruiting from among the savage inhabitants of Shoar in later games, and thus hold the most valuable Strategic objective. Meanwhile, the Loyalist players instead spend those turns establishing Control points at the other four Strategic objectives, staging no attacks on the Mustering Fields. With only 3 Reserves points remaining and the more aggressive tactics favoured by its players being hampered by the Frozen Wastelands War Zone Trait, the Traitor Campaign Warlord decides to cut his losses and retreat during the Consolidation phase of the third Campaign turn. By choosing to retreat, he grants automatic victory to the Loyalist side, which as Shoar's Disposition is Neutral, grants the Loyalist side 1 Campaign Victory point. However, as the Traitors evacuate their remaining forces in an ordered retreat, they carry half their remaining Reserves points on to the next war zone, in this case a single Reserves point.

As the Traitors side was defeated at the Shoar war zone, the Loyalist side would normally choose the next war zone. However, the Traitor Campaign Warlord manages to roll a 6 on a D6, allowing him to do so instead. The Traitors choose to fight at Keopsis next, which the group decides is the Traitor fleet falling back to regroup while being pursued by the vengeful Loyalist forces.

As with Shoar, both sides receive 8 Reserves points, although the Traitors increase this pool to 9 Reserves points due to their retreat from Shoar, and will contest five Strategic objectives. In the Keopsis war zone, the Loyalists gain an early lead, establishing Control points at several minor objectives; however, the Traitors quickly gain a minor foothold on the Hidden Bunker objective, excelling in the Zone Mortalis games this objective calls for, before moving to contest those objectives where the Loyalist sides have gained control. By avoiding focusing too heavily on a single objective and some excellent luck with the Concealed Bunker Complex special rule allowing them to gain extra Reserves points, in addition to the bonus received for retreating, the Traitors are quickly able to overturn the initial Loyalist advantage. Both sides expend every Reserves point they have, but the Traitor side has more to spend due to their retreat and control of the Hidden Bunker. Once all Reserves points are spent, the Loyalists control three Strategic objectives, each worth 1 Victory point, while the Traitors control a total of 4 Victory points (the Concealed Bunker is worth 3 Victory points due to the Priority Targets special rule) and claim a narrow victory. As Keopsis has a Disposition of Neutral, the Traitor side gains 1 Campaign Victory point and as neither side retreated, no Reserves points are carried over to the next war zone.

As the victorious side, the Traitor Campaign Warlord may now select the next war zone. The Loyalist Campaign Warlord attempts to override this with a D6 roll, but does not score a 6. The Traitor Campaign Warlord selects Grail as the next war zone to be fought over.

Unlike the first two war zones, Grail offers both sides only 6 Reserves points each to contest three Strategic objectives, one of which is worth 3 Victory points. The group decides that the conflict reflects the actions of raider fleets dispatched by both sides to seize the various ancient relics to be found on Grail for their own use while fighting grinds on at Keopsis. Both sides focus their efforts on the control of Strategic Objective 1, due to its increased value under the Priority Targets special rule. However, the combination of the Frozen Wastelands, Broken Ruinscape and Rad Wastes Traits at this objective complicates battles fought there and leaves neither side able to claim an overwhelming advantage. Once all Reserves points are expended, both sides have an equal number of Victory points. Rather than declare the fighting a Draw, the group decides to play a last battle involving all four players from each side to decide control of Strategic Objective 1 and thus the war zone. Played using all three of Grail's assigned Traits, the battle is bloody and hard fought, but ends in a Loyalist victory. As Grail is also Neutral, this grants the Loyalist side 1 Campaign Victory point.

With the running total of Campaign Victory points now at 2 for the Loyalists and 1 for the Traitors, only the Lascal war zone remains to be fought over. Unlike all of the previous war zones, Lascal has been set a Disposition of Loyal, meaning that victory here will be worth 2 Campaign Victory points to the Traitors side. Lascal also requires the group to use the Fortress World set-up from the Hostile War Zones optional rule; this rule allows the Defending side, which the group agrees is the Loyalists, to begin the war zone with Control points equal to half the total Reserves points allotted for the war zone, but limits that side to only attacking those objectives targeted by the opposing side. In this case, the Loyalist side will gain 7 Control points (14, Lascal's allotted Reserves Pool, divided in half), which they must allocate before beginning play in the war zone, with no single Strategic objective having more than half the available Control points allocated to it. The Loyalist Campaign Warlord chooses to allocate 3 Control points to both Strategic Objectives 1 and 2 (both of which have attached special Traits and are worth 3 Victory points) and a single Control point to one other Strategic objective (worth 1 Victory point).

Play now begins at Lascal with the Traitor side gaining 14 Reserves points, and the Loyalist side gaining 7 Reserves points (14 minus the total Victory points value of all objectives to which Control points were assigned). During the first Campaign turn, the Traitor side launches attacks against all of the Strategic objectives the Loyalists chose not to assign Control points to, gaining Control points at each of them, and as this is the first turn and the Traitor side has made no previous attacks, the Loyalist side, as the Defender, cannot make any attacks. In the following Campaign turn, the Traitor side switches its tactics and focuses all of its attacks on the Planetary Spaceport objective, managing to gain 4 Control points there and seizing control of its special ability. The Loyalists are limited to attacking those objectives the Traitors targeted in the previous turn, committing a single Reserves point to each, but only managing to win one of those games. In the final Campaign turn, the Traitor side commits its last 4 Reserves points to attacks of opportunity on the Strategic objectives of lesser value, trying to consolidate control on as many as possible, while the Loyalist player can only target the objective the Traitors attacked on the previous Campaign turn, and spends all 3 of their remaining Reserves points in battles to regain control of the spaceport, but is only successful in gaining a single Control point. With both sides having expended all of their Reserves points, fighting at Lascal is over, the Traitors have control of four Strategic objectives, each worth a single Victory point, and the Loyalists holding only the Hive Spire, worth 3 Victory points, with the Planetary Spaceport and one other objective contested by both sides. Lascal ends as a Traitor victory and they score 2 Campaign Victory points for victory due to its designation as a Loyal war zone.

At this point, all war zones have been fought for and the group gathers to compare the current Campaign Victory point totals. The Loyalists have scored 2 Campaign Victory points, one each for control of Shoar and Grail; however the Traitors have accrued 3, 1 for control of Keopsis and 2 for control of Lascal. The Traitors claim victory in the campaign, driving the Loyalist defenders from their stronghold at Lascal and claiming dominion over the scattered worlds of the Grail Abyss.



# Example Conquest Campaign III: The Battle for Manachea Lux

This last example campaign is inspired by the story of the fall of Manachea Vysidae. Having read the account of this part of the fall of the Coronid Deeps, a gaming group decides to play through the fall of another world in the same system – Manachea Lux, mentioned in The Principal Worlds of the Coronid Deeps section of this book, but whose exact fate is not detailed in the story. Having been intrigued by this background for this world and the battles fought around it, they've decided to determine its fate through some exciting games of their own!

**The Campaign Referee**
Ed, one of the players in the group, wants from the beginning to serve as the Campaign Referee, but he hopes to take part in at least one game along the way if the opportunity presents itself. Having recently purchased a Reaver Titan, Ed reads the background on the Legio Tempestus and decides to paint the model in the blue and silver of that Titan Order. Because Tempestus was split in its allegiance, Ed decides that which side it will fight on would only be determined later in the campaign.

**Player 1 (Loyalists): Imperial Fists**
Kevin has an Imperial Fists army of around 2,000 points, which he began after reading about them in *The Horus Heresy Book Three – Extermination*. In addition to this, he has a sizable collection of Warhammer 40,000 Bastions, Defence Lines and other such fortifications. Given the Imperial Fists presence on Manachea Lux as a garrison force in the background, these are highly appropriate and their use boosts his army substantially beyond its starting 2,000 points.

**Player 2 (Loyalists): Solar Auxilia**
Gareth has enthusiastically thrown himself into collecting a Solar Auxilia army. His force includes a substantial infantry element as well as tanks, artillery and a Stormhammer Super-heavy tank. This army comes in at around 3,000 points.

**Player 3 (Traitors): Sons of Horus**
Mark has been collecting his Sons of Horus army since the publication of *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*, and is able to field in excess of 4,000 points worth of units. He even has his Legion's Primarch – Warmaster Horus himself – and he decides that he will hold off fielding this most potent of warriors until the climax of the campaign, representing Horus intervening at the crucial moment in the war.

**Player 4 (Traitors): Solar Auxilia**
Neil has only recently started collecting his Solar Auxilia army, making him an ideal match-up with Mark and his Sons of Horus. In agreement with Gareth, Neil decides that his force will represent a turncoat element of the same Solar Auxilia regiment, painting his models in a colour scheme derived from those Gareth has used on his. In addition to his small Solar Auxilia force, Neil has a Cerastus Knight-Lancer and a Questoris Knight Errant, both of which he has painted in House Orhlacc livery. He will use these as an allied contingent using the Questoris Knight Crusade Army list.

**Player 5 (Unassigned): World Eaters**
Mike has a large collection of World Eaters Space Marines, but because he is unable to commit to a regular schedule of games, he will take on the role of an occasional player as and when he is able. He played his army on the side of the Loyalists in the Isstvan III campaign presented in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal* and decides that his force could have broken out and attempted to link up with others still loyal to Terra in the Coronid Deeps. The Campaign Referee thinks this is a great idea, and so asks Mike not to reveal his force's loyalties to the other players until the time is right.

**Player 6 (Unassigned): Mechanicum**
Paul is new to Horus Heresy gaming but has already collected and painted some Mechanicum units, including a number of Castellax Battle-automata and a Thanatar Siege-automata. As with Mike, Paul will take part in the occasional game as his schedule and the flow of games allows, affording him the chance to field his nascent force and get an idea of how it plays and what units to expand it with in the future.

### War Zone Creation

With four main players, it is agreed that five Reserves points per side is appropriate, equating to three Strategic objectives over which the sides will fight for control. In all, this classes the battle for control of Manachea Lux as an Isolated Skirmish. This seems appropriate, as the Traitors' intent will be to tie down the Imperial Fists garrison so that they are unable to intervene in the battle at Manachea Vysidae, the main target of the Warmaster's invasion of the system. Reading the background for Manachea Lux, the Campaign Referee decides the war zone as a whole would be subject to the Burning Desert War Zone Trait.

**Strategic Objective 1 – The Silica Dune Seas:** The bulk of the planet consists of shifting dune seas that burn the entire landscape with blinding reflected light. Though of little strategic value in themselves, the seas will have to be traversed by forces travelling between other, more vital locations. Therefore, the Silica Dune Seas will count as a single Strategic objective – battles fought in them representing the ongoing struggle to keep supply routes open and drop zones clear.

**Strategic Objective 2 – The Bastion Kvet:** The Imperial Fists garrison fortress and the area around it will form the second Strategic objective. The Campaign Referee thinks that this location should form a vital lynchpin in the war, and so decides to use the Priority Targets rule from page 212. This makes Strategic Objective 2 worth two Control points (and the others 1 each). This decision alters how the overall victor of the campaign is determined from total Strategic objectives controlled to the total value of controlled Strategic objectives.

**Implementing the Burning Desert War Zone Trait**
This War Zone Trait makes battle in the depths of the silica dune seas of Manachea Lux a hazardous and arduous affair. It can be imagined that the area is bathed in searing light reflected from the gleaming dunes and from clusters of solid crystal, heating the air to high temperatures. However, the group feels that the rule would lose some impact if used in every single game, and rationalises this by suggesting that some areas might be protected by energy domes that absorb or compensate for the light and heat.

Therefore, the Campaign Referee decides that the Burning Desert War Zone Trait will always be in effect in Strategic Objective 1, but in games fought at Strategic Objectives 2 and 3 only on a D6 roll of 5+, rolled before the game. This represents fluctuating environmental conditions as well as the energy domes becoming unreliable as war rages across the surface.

The Campaign Referee also determines that this location will use the Fortified Bastion Complex Strategic Objective Trait, representing the extensive fortifications the Imperial Fists had constructed there.

**Strategic Objective 3 – Quartz City:** This Strategic objective represents a vital, sprawling metropolis of macro-habs housing the multitudes of workers that toil in the industrial installations and silicate processing plants spread throughout the deserts. Battles fought in this location will use the Battles in the Age of Darkness: City Fight rules.

## Developing the Campaign

As Campaign Referee, Ed drew up a rough plan to add some additional flavour to the campaign, inspired by the stories presented in this book and that of the Horus Heresy as a whole. Many of these additional elements would draw on the involvement of other players, and make use of their collections.

One element the Campaign Referee wants to explore relies on Mike with his World Eaters army. When the time is right, the World Eaters will make an appearance in the campaign on the side of the Loyalists, possibly in a large team game alongside the Imperial Fists.

Paul and his Mechanicum present a similar possibility, and one the Campaign Referee decides to have some fun with. Paul and Ed decide that Paul's force's loyalties will remain undetermined at the start of the campaign. The player likes the idea that his force hails from the Forge World of M'Pandex, and its Magus is a disreputable scoundrel who inspires a deep sense of distrust in all who meet him. Paul would not have to decide which side he would play on until the time comes to do so.

Having committed to painting his Reaver Titan in the colours of the Legio Tempestus, Ed determined that he will play it in the final game, on the side that has the most total Control points by that stage, and he informs the players of this before play begins. This adds an element of tension to proceedings, as it can be imagined that both sides know that a Legio Tempestus Titan transport vessel is inbound to the Manachea system, but none will know its loyalties until the moment the Titan strides forth from its mighty drop barge at the climax of the campaign.

These are just examples of the sorts of additional elements that can be introduced to a campaign when one player is willing to fulfil the role of Campaign Referee. Many people find this role every bit as enjoyable as actually playing in the campaign, and as demonstrated, there's no reason they can't join in the action for special games.

## Optional Rules

Reading through the various rules presented in this book, the players agree which of the optional rules to use. Firstly, everyone feels that it is highly appropriate to make use of the Character Advancement rules. With the campaign being fought over a single war zone between two teams of two players each, this makes for three Campaign Characters per side. They also decide at this stage that they will make use of the Relics of the Dark Age of Technology special rules.

For his Imperial Fists Campaign Character, Kevin chooses a Praetor, who he names Castellan Albarik, and chooses to take a Morale Advance, rolling Hungry for Victory. For a Relic, he chooses the Indomitan Mantle, an iconic artefact of the Legiones Astartes Imperial Fists. For a Warlord Trait, which would apply throughout the entire campaign, Kevin rolls Tactician.

Kevin's fellow Loyalist player, Gareth, is fielding a Solar Auxilia force, which he dubs the 344th Auxilia Cohort, the 'Proconsul's Own'. For his campaign character, Gareth chooses a Lord Marshal who he names Lord High Colonel Surena, and then rolls the Rapid Assault character advance and the Shattering Bombardment Warlord Trait. Lastly, looking over the list of Relics of the Dark Age of Technology available to Solar Auxilia characters in this book, he decides that the apex digital weapon will make for a highly entertaining and powerful extra weapon for Lord High Colonel Surena to keep up his sleeve.

The Loyalist players decide it will be fun to take an Expeditionary Navigator as their third Campaign Character, who they name Adept Mahesha. They also decide that they will count Castellan Albarik as the Loyalists' Commander-in-Chief. Kevin rolls for his character's Strategic Warlord Trait, resulting in Castellan Albarik gaining Spymaster.

Mark chooses a Praetor as his Sons of Horus Campaign Character, who he names Assault Captain Marduk. Mark then rolls the Void Walker Warlord Trait and chooses the Combat Augment Array Relic, hoping to use its special abilities in concert with a paragon blade in the campaign.

Mark's fellow Traitor, Neil, is playing a turncoat Solar Auxilia force, which he names the Magister's Oldbloods, after its leader, Lord Magister Karanus. Neil rolls the Siege Master Warlord Trait and decides that for a Relic of the Dark Age of Technology, his Lord Marshal will take a void shield harness, affording unprecedented protection as he leads the Traitors' assault on their objectives.

The Traitors choose the special character Maloghurst the Twisted as their third Campaign Character. As a Unique model, Maloghurst can't improve his profile, but it seems appropriate that he would be put in overall command of the attack on Manachea Lux by the Warmaster, and so he will also be the Traitors Commander-in-Chief. The Strategic Warlord Trait rolled for Maloghurst is Master of Timing.

The Campaign Referee also determines that it is appropriate to use the Mysterious Wreckage rules, in particular once the campaign has progressed a few turns. This represents the hazardous detritus of war building up in areas over which several devastating battles have been fought. It also presents an opportunity to pool everyone's modelling talent in order to make individual pieces of specially themed terrain which all of the players could benefit from, and so these will be introduced in later games as and when they become available.

## The Campaign in Action

With the campaign's structure broadly planned out and the players and armies assembled, all that remains is to get playing. The first Strategic objectives to come under attack are Bastion Kvet by the Sons of Horus and the Silica Dune Seas by the Loyalist Solar Auxilia. The Loyalists win both battles, getting them off to a strong start in the war for control of Manachea Lux.

The next two Campaign turns see the Traitors regain some ground, so that going into the fourth turn, the Loyalists control the Silica Dune Seas and the Traitors control Quartz City. The fourth turn sees the Traitors begin to make headway as they win battles at Quartz City and the Silica Dune Seas and, in addition, slay the Imperial Fists Castellan Albarik. Kevin rolls on the Campaign Casualties table,

resulting in Castellan Albarik surviving, but being taken captive by the Traitors. An extra mission is fought to attempt a rescue, but in the event, the Imperial Fists player is unable to play a game that week, real life intervening as it will. However, this presents the Campaign Referee with an opportunity, which with Kevin's agreement he seizes on. Mike's Loyalist World Eaters will come to the Castellan's rescue, and the Traitor Solar Auxilia player, Neil, will remain ignorant of this fact until the agreed time of the game.

The Liberation mission proved highly entertaining for both players, the Campaign Referee managing to keep the fact that a World Eaters, and not an Imperial Fists force is attempting the rescue a secret right up until the game. The battle was won by the World Eaters and Castellan Albarik was rescued in what proved a hard fought and tense battle.

The fifth campaign turn sees the Traitors maintain the momentum, winning at Quartz City and the Silica Dune Seas. Things don't go entirely their way however as Neil's Campaign Character, Lord Magister Karanus, is slain – Neil rolling 'Fatality' on the Campaign Casualty chart. With the character bearing a Relic of the Dark Age of Technology, this presents the option of playing an additional Relic Hunt mission to recover it, which the players decide to do. At this point, the Campaign Referee asks Paul if he would like to field his Mechanicum, playing the role of an avaricious Magus of Forge World M'Pandex hearing of the lost void shield harness relic and seeking to recover it before anyone else can do so.

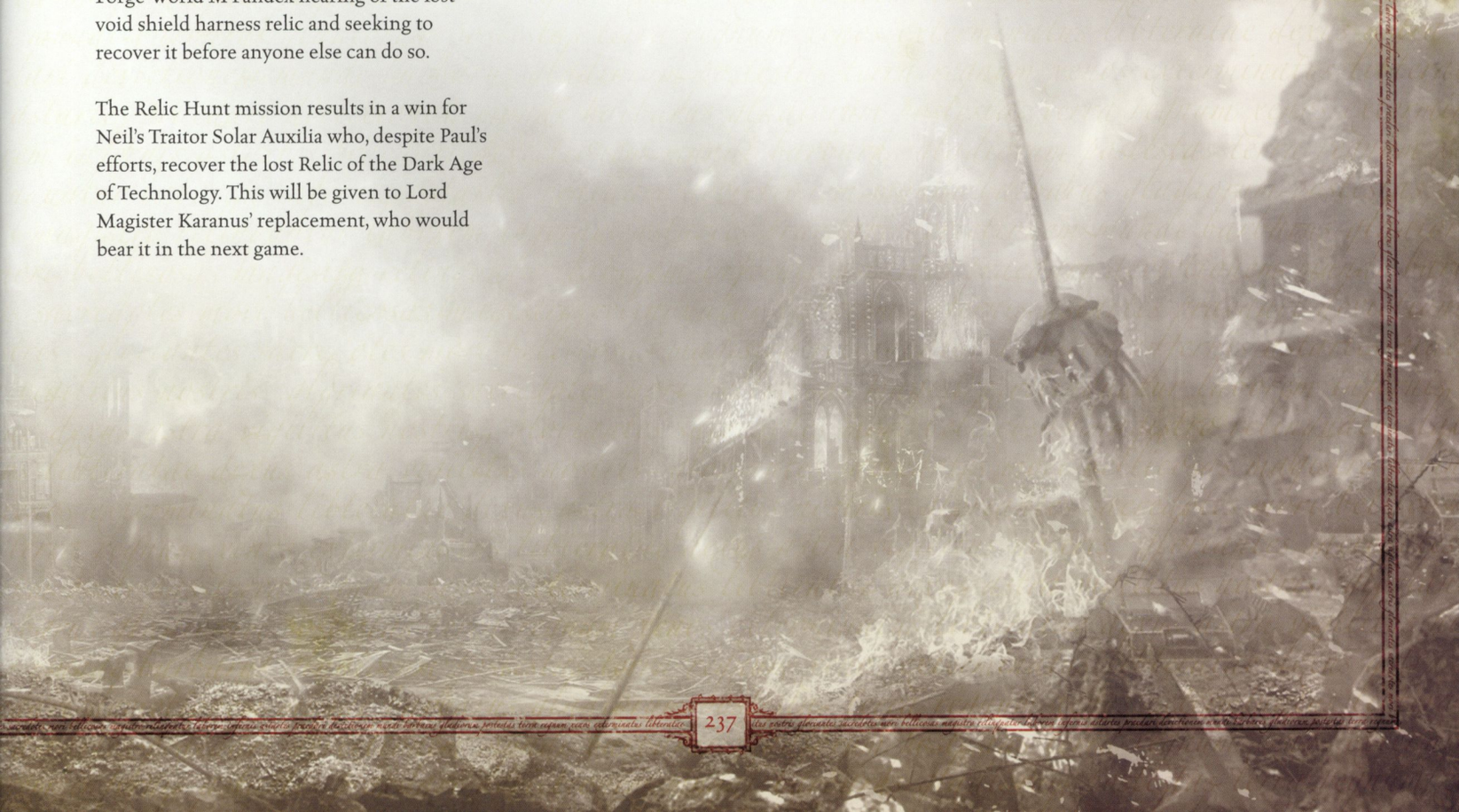
The Relic Hunt mission results in a win for Neil's Traitor Solar Auxilia who, despite Paul's efforts, recover the lost Relic of the Dark Age of Technology. This will be given to Lord Magister Karanus' replacement, who would bear it in the next game.

By campaign turn six, the Loyalists have depleted their Reserves points, while the Traitors have just one left, so it is clear that unless it results in a draw for Strategic objectives, this will be the last Campaign turn. Before the Traitors announce the target of their attack however, the Campaign Referee asks Paul which side his Mechanicum force will be fighting for. Even though the servants of Forge World M'Pandex opposed the Traitors in the previous Relic Hunt mission, they declare for the Warmaster and will be fighting alongside the Sons of Horus and the Traitor Solar Auxilia in the final game. In addition, the Campaign Referee announces that he too will be playing in the final game, controlling his Reaver Titan, having completed painting it in the colours of the Legio Tempestus, revealed at this stage to be Traitors.

Finally, with just a single Reserves point remaining to them, the Traitors can only attack a single Strategic objective. They announce it will be the Bastion Kvet, and that the Sons of Horus, the Traitor Solar Auxilia, the Legio Tempestus Titan and the Traitor Mechanicum will all be attacking the Imperial Fists keep. It therefore seems appropriate that a large team game will be fought for the final result, and Mike is able to return with his World Eaters. Mark also decides that now is the time to field the Primarch Horus, reasoning that the Warmaster has completed the destruction of the capital world of the Manachea system and will oversee the Traitors' attack on Manachea Lux in person. Pooling scenery to make a table large enough to accommodate six armies and a Titan, the players gather for the final, climactic battle for possession of Manachea Lux.

The battle plays out as a suitably epic clash of erstwhile allies, featuring six armies of varying sizes, a Primarch, several Knights and a Reaver Titan. Though the action swings back and forth numerous times, it reaches a climax when Warmaster Horus breaches the Imperial Fists defences and slays Castellan Albarik in single combat. Though the Loyalists fight doggedly on for another two turns, the tide of war is against them and at the last, all the bold defenders could do was commend their lives to their cause and prepare to die in the name of the Imperium.

The result of the final game, and therefore the campaign as a whole, was a victory to the Traitors. All agreed the result was fitting and appropriate given the story of the fall of the Manachean Commonwealth. After the events of the campaign, everyone felt that they'd had a unique game experience, and that they had played their own part in determining the fate of Manachea, and in so doing had something of a hand in the unfolding events of the Horus Heresy on the tabletop. What's more, in some cases, they were already plotting their revenge or cashing in their bragging rights as victors!






# The Solar Auxilia Crusade Army List

# The Battles in the Age of Darkness Warhammer 40,000 Expansion

The Battles in the Age of Darkness expansion is a narrative framework and series of different, interlocking campaign systems for your games of Warhammer 40,000 set in the deadly milieu of the Horus Heresy. It presents its own distinct way of playing based on the armies which fought each other for control of the nascent Imperium and the battles which decided Mankind's fate in this dark age of war. Battles in the Age of Darkness games use all of the core rules presented in the Warhammer 40,000 rules except where noted in this précis of general rules, and where shown in the various campaign rules found in the Horus Heresy volumes. These take precedence over the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook where exceptions to the rules found there are made.

**Army Selection/Force Organisation Charts:** Battles in the Age of Darkness games use their own special core Force Organisation chart (see page 241), as well as special optional charts found in the various Horus Heresy volumes. These replace the standard Battle Forged army system presented in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. Each Battles in the Age of Darkness army is composed of a single Primary Detachment, and may also contain a number of optional (Secondary) Detachments as shown on the relevant Force Organisation chart. Unless specified by a particular mission, all of the units chosen as part of the Primary and Lords of War detachments must be from the same army list and same Faction (in the case of a Space Marine Legion, they must also have the same version of the Legiones Astartes special rule as well where relevant). Allied Detachments should be chosen according to the Allies in the Age of Darkness chart and be of the same Faction (see page 253). Fortification Detachments may be chosen from any Imperial-type fortifications shown in the *Warhammer 40,000 Stronghold* expansion as well as those in Forge World's Imperial Armour and Horus Heresy books.

**Designer's Note:** Other Force Organisation charts (as well as formations and detachments) from the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook and other game expansions, as well as Unbound armies, are not designed with Battles in the Age of Darkness in mind and should not be used in Battles of the Age of Darkness games, unless by the mutual prior consent of all the parties involved. Note that using Unbound armies, etc, can be a great deal of fun and make for a range of interesting options, but will likely throw up rules anomalies and inconsistencies between play styles and the close narrative framework of the Horus Heresy campaign rules, so caveat emptor!

**Scoring Units:** Unless specified in a particular mission, in Battles in the Age of Darkness games, only units taken from the Troops choices and those specifically noted in their entries (other than Dedicated Transports) are counted as scoring units. They may only score Victory points for objectives if present within 3" of that objective so long as enemy scoring and denial units are not also present in this radius.

**Denial Units:** All other units in the game which are not scoring units, immobilised, currently Falling Back, Zooming Flyers/ Super-heavy Flyers or Swooping Monstrous Creatures/Gargantuan Monstrous Creatures are counted as denial units. This means that if they are present within the listed scoring range of an objective, an opposing unit cannot score Victory points from the objective or claim it.

**Size of Battle:** A points total of around 1,750 - 3,500 points per player is an ideal game size for use with the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules, battles of a larger size may benefit from using the Apocalypse rules or standard games using the rules found under the Choosing Your Army section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook instead. Smaller games may benefit from the use of a more restricted Force Organisation chart such as that provided by the Strategic Raid mission rules found on page 176 of this book or the Zone Mortalis rules found in *The Horus Heresy Book Three – Extermination.*

**Factions**
The Factions system found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook is not used in conjunction with the Battles in the Age of Darkness expansion. Instead, during the Horus Heresy there are in effect only two Factions: Loyalist and Traitor, and an army's forces must be chosen from one or the other of these (but never both). In the various Age of Darkness army lists, certain characters and units are marked with either an Aquila (Loyalists) or the Eye of Horus (Traitors) meaning that they can only be chosen by armies of that Faction. If a character or unit is shown without one of these marks, they may be selected by either Faction.

**Lords of War**
The Lords of War system, originally developed by Forge World, has since been expanded into other formats within the Warhammer 40,000 range, however the bespoke version which is presented here is designed to be used in conjunction with Horus Heresy gaming.

In addition, in Battles in the Age of Darkness games, Lords of War use the following special rule: The Price of Failure.

**The Price of Failure**
**(Lords of War Secondary Objective)**
As well as being colossally powerful and destructive units capable of turning the tide of battle on their own, a Lord of War also represents a substantial strategic asset to their own side, the loss or destruction of which can have dire implications for their army's cause.

As a result, unless specifically exempted or modified by the special rules of a Battles in the Age of Darkness mission, destroying an enemy Lords of War choice always represents a secondary objective in the game. This secondary objective is worth 2 additional Victory points to the destroying side in the case of an Engine of Destruction, Great Beast or Primarch or 1 additional Victory point each per vehicle/creature in the case of War Machine Detachments, Monstrous Hordes and Sub-orbital Strike Wings.

**Psychic Powers**
During the latter days of the Imperium's Great Crusade and the early wars of the Horus Heresy, the secrets of Malefic Demonology were known to only a select few, and the grasp of the Ruinous Powers on the galaxy had waned. As a result, unless specifically noted in their entry, Malefic Demonology psychic powers are not available to any model with psychic powers.

**Lords of War availability**
In a Battles in the Age of Darkness game of 2,000 points or greater, Lords of War choices will be available to an army based upon the specific Force Organisation chart being used. These choices must be bought from the army's points total as normal, and may not make up more than 25%* of the army's total points cost for each Lords of War choice, unless specified as being otherwise by the mission that is being played. Lords of War are only available to an army's Primary Detachment.

***The 25% rule:** This means that the maximum points value of a single Lords of War choice in a Battles in the Age of Darkness game for some common army sizes is as follows:

- 2,000 points – 500 points
- 2,250 points – 563 points
- 2,500 points – 625 points
- 2,750 points – 688 points
- 3,000 points – 750 points
- 3,250 points – 813 points
- 3,500 points – 875 points

*"What truth can a man ever know but treachery? Fathers betray sons, sons their fathers, brothers turn upon brothers, master cuts down servant, servant murders master. Whether by malice, by weakness, by fear, by jealousy or by hate; the dagger cuts just as deep."*

*The Dramaturge Bylok the Reviled, M25*

## Battles in the Age of Darkness Force Organisation Chart

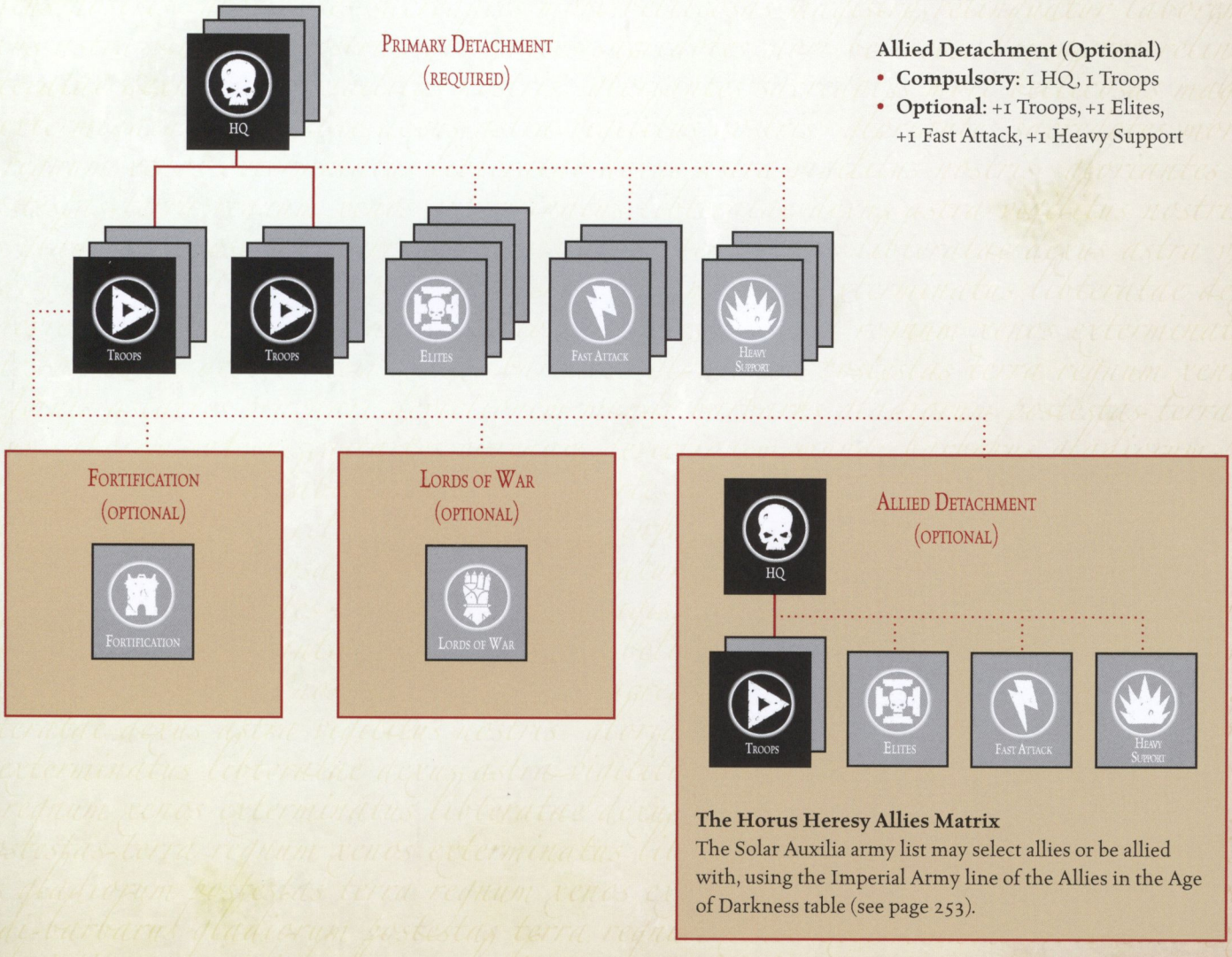
Games which are played based upon the Battles in the Age of Darkness rules expansion use the following Force Organisation chart, which offers the widest degree of flexibility and should be considered the standard form of play while using this rules expansion. The various army lists presented in Forge World's Horus Heresy series have been designed with this Force Organisation chart in mind. Further advice on selecting your army and its composition can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. However, note that the Force Organisation charts presented in the Horus Heresy series take precedence over those listed in the rulebook.

**Primary Detachment (Required)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 2 Troops
- **Optional:** +2 HQ, +4 Troops, +4 Elites, +3 Fast Attack, +3 Heavy Support

**Fortification Detachment (Optional)**
- 1 Choice

**Lords of War Detachment (Optional)**
- 1 Choice

**Allied Detachment (Optional)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 1 Troops
- **Optional:** +1 Troops, +1 Elites, +1 Fast Attack, +1 Heavy Support




**The Horus Heresy Allies Matrix**
The Solar Auxilia army list may select allies or be allied with, using the Imperial Army line of the Allies in the Age of Darkness table (see page 253).

*"I care not if my troops consider me a tyrant or a saint; I care only that they obey my orders."*

*Lord Marshal Konstin Shillesse, Legate Commander of the 187th Cohort (the Death's Heads)*

## Using the Army List Entries

Each unit entry in the army list contains the following information:

**Unit Name:** At the start of each army list entry you will find the name of the unit alongside the points cost of the unit without any upgrades.

**Unit Profile:** This will show the profile of any models the unit can include, even if they are upgrades.

**Unit Type:** This refers to the Unit Type rules in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. For example, a unit may be classed as Infantry, Monstrous Creature or Vehicle, which will subject it to a number of rules regarding movement, shooting, assaults, etc.

**Unit Composition:** Where applicable, this section will show the number and type of models that make up the basic unit, before any upgrades are taken. If the Unit Composition includes the word 'Unique', then you may only include one of this unit in your army.

**Wargear:** This section details the weapons and equipment the models in the unit are armed with. The cost for all these models and their equipment is included in the points cost listed next to the unit's name.

**Special Rules:** Any special rules that apply to the models in the unit are listed here. These special rules are explained in further detail subsequently, or in the Special Rules section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Options:** This section lists all of the upgrades you may add to the unit if you wish to do so, alongside the associated points cost for each. Where an option states that you may exchange one weapon 'and/or' another, you may replace either or both provided you pay the points cost for each.

**Dedicated Transport:** Where applicable, this option refers to any Transports the unit may take. These have their own army list entries. Dedicated Transports do not use up any Force Organisation chart choices, but otherwise function as separate units. The Transports section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook explains how Dedicated Transports work.

**Warlord Traits:** Sometimes an entry will have a specific Warlord trait, in which case it will be listed here in their army list entry.

**Lords of War and the Solar Auxilia:** The Solar Auxilia has access to a number of Super-heavy vehicles as shown in its army list as Lords of War choices. In addition, it has access to Super-heavy Walkers from the Legio Titanicus (see *The Horus Heresy Book I – Betrayal*) or Knights chosen from the Questoris Knight Crusade Army list (the Household ranks in this case are not used). These may comprise either a War Machine Detachment (1-2 Super-heavy vehicles with the same unit type, with 8 or less Hull Points) or a single Engine of Destruction (a Super-heavy vehicle of any type with 9 Hull Points or less).

Note that several 'lighter' Super-heavy vehicles are already integrated into the Solar Auxilia army list as standard Heavy Support choices – these do not count as Lords of War for the army (nor are they subject to the Price of Failure special rule). It should always be made clear to your opponent at the start of the battle where this is or is not the case!



# Solar Auxilia Special Rules

The tactics of the Solar Auxilia have long been formulated on active defence; the expectation that in battle they are most likely to be outnumbered and under direct attack, with the basic response of drawing the enemy onto their guns and to break upon their lines like waves against unyielding rocks. It is this that has won the Solar Auxilia their fierce battlefield reputation and has seen them survive on many hostile worlds, where none, save the Legiones Astartes, might be expected to prevail, albeit often at great cost. Key to this is their ability to stand shoulder to shoulder and maintain volleys of disciplined fire with rapidity and accuracy regardless of what unholy terrors are boiling down on them. This regime and tactical doctrine is as unwavering as it is harshly enforced.

**Disciplined Fire**
Models with this special rule may fire Overwatch Snap Shots at BS 2 when using Pistol, Assault and Rapid Fire weapons.

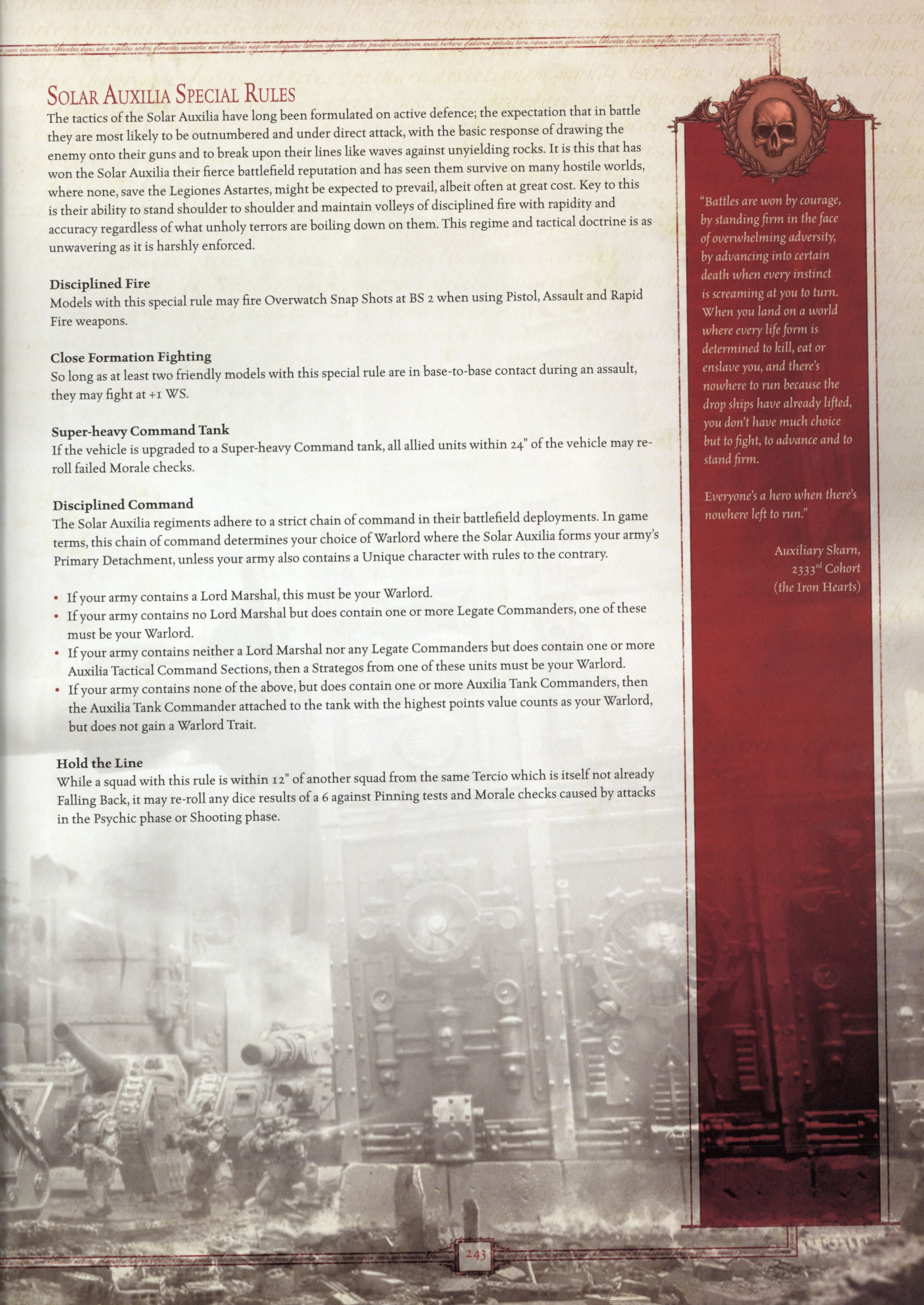
**Close Formation Fighting**
So long as at least two friendly models with this special rule are in base-to-base contact during an assault, they may fight at +1 WS.

**Super-heavy Command Tank**
If the vehicle is upgraded to a Super-heavy Command tank, all allied units within 24" of the vehicle may re-roll failed Morale checks.

**Disciplined Command**
The Solar Auxilia regiments adhere to a strict chain of command in their battlefield deployments. In game terms, this chain of command determines your choice of Warlord where the Solar Auxilia forms your army's Primary Detachment, unless your army also contains a Unique character with rules to the contrary.

- If your army contains a Lord Marshal, this must be your Warlord.
- If your army contains no Lord Marshal but does contain one or more Legate Commanders, one of these must be your Warlord.
- If your army contains neither a Lord Marshal nor any Legate Commanders but does contain one or more Auxilia Tactical Command Sections, then a Strategos from one of these units must be your Warlord.
- If your army contains none of the above, but does contain one or more Auxilia Tank Commanders, then the Auxilia Tank Commander attached to the tank with the highest points value counts as your Warlord, but does not gain a Warlord Trait.

**Hold the Line**
While a squad with this rule is within 12" of another squad from the same Tercio which is itself not already Falling Back, it may re-roll any dice results of a 6 against Pinning tests and Morale checks caused by attacks in the Psychic phase or Shooting phase.



*"Battles are won by courage, by standing firm in the face of overwhelming adversity, by advancing into certain death when every instinct is screaming at you to turn. When you land on a world where every life form is determined to kill, eat or enslave you, and there's nowhere to run because the drop ships have already lifted, you don't have much choice but to fight, to advance and to stand firm.*

*Everyone's a hero when there's nowhere left to run."*

Auxiliary Skarn,
2333rd Cohort
(the Iron Hearts)

*"Fear not death, for it is nature's sole intent. Fear instead a death devoid of meaning."*

*Ancient Terran proverb*

# Solar Auxilia Regiments Warlord Traits

When generating their Warlord Traits, a Solar Auxilia Regiment may either roll on one of the Warlord Traits tables in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, or instead roll on the following table:

## Solar Auxilia Regiments Warlord Traits Table

| D6 | Warlord Trait |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Uncanny Survivor**<br>*The Warlord has outlived many enemies by fair means and foul, and both the cruel claws of the xenos and the blades of rivals and courtly assassins have failed to lay them low.*<br>The Warlord gains the Eternal Warrior special rule. |
| 2 | **Shattering Bombardment**<br>*The Solar Auxilia's armoured reserves are infamous for the deadly effect to which their firepower can be put, and the Warlord is a master of such tactics.*<br>While the Warlord is alive, select a single weapon in a unit within 6" of them in the Shooting phase that has the Ordnance special rule. That weapon counts as being twin-linked for this player turn. |
| 3 | **Bitter Blood**<br>*Whether a black-hearted duellist of deadly repute or simply a ferocious killer of inhuman skill, the Warlord's abilities in hand-to-hand combat are not to be underestimated.*<br>When fighting in a challenge, the Warlord gains the Hatred special rule. |
| 4 | **Blind Barrage**<br>*One tactic often employed, whether in attack or defence, is to precede battle with a heavy barrage of smoke and blind shells, blanketing the battlefield in a thick obscuring fog more impenetrable than the darkest night, in which the Solar Auxilia have already prepared their fields of fire ahead of time to deadly effect.*<br>The Warlord's controlling player may choose to unleash a Blind bombardment at the start of the game. If this is done, all friendly Solar Auxilia units gain the Shrouded special rule for the duration of the first game turn only. |
| 5 | **Void Master**<br>*The Warlord has fought alongside Rogue Traders (or perhaps has even been granted such a letter of marque themselves) and faced strange perils on distant and nightmarish worlds besides which the horrors of the battlefield hold little fear.*<br>The Warlord gains the Stubborn special rule, and they and any unit they join gains the Move Through Cover special rule. |
| 6 | **Siege Master**<br>*The Warlord is a veteran of uncounted sieges and knows, with almost preternatural skill, the vulnerabilities in his enemy's defences.*<br>At the start of the game, after deployment but before the game begins, nominate a single piece of terrain in the enemy's deployment zone (note that this cannot be a Fortification purchased for their army). The cover save provided by this terrain is lowered (ie, made worse) by -1 (eg, 5+ becoming 6+, etc). |

# Solar Auxilia Wargear

## Ranged Weapons

### Archaeotech Pistol

Despite the renaissance of human power in the galaxy that the Great Crusade has created, there remains much of Mankind's ancient might and arts that is lost to myth and legend, save for a few relics that have survived Old Night. One of the more common types found are sidearms of surpassing firepower and elegance. Be they bespoke slug throwers utilising micro-atomic munitions or searing kill-rays that draw power from a planet's ambient magnetosphere; such priceless artefacts of war find their way into the hands of the Emperor's chosen agents and the most senior officers of the Solar Auxilia.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Archaeotech pistol | 12" | 6 | 3 | Pistol, Master-crafted |

### Demolisher Cannon

A short-ranged but destructive weapon designed for line-breaking and smashing enemy fortifications, the huge, rocket-propelled shell fired by the Demolisher cannon is enough to pulverise bunkers and collapse buildings around their defenders in a tide of rubble and dust.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Demolisher cannon | 24" | 10 | 2 | Ordnance 1, Large Blast (5") |

### Solar Auxilia Support Weapons

The Solar Auxilia utilise a variety of support weapons as needed, including shell-firing heavy guns of different calibres, directed energy weapons and missile launch systems.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Earthshaker cannon | 36"-240" | 9 | 3 | Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5") |
| Medusa siege gun | 36" | 10 | 2 | Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5") |
| Quad mortar (Frag) | 12"-60" | 5 | 5 | Heavy 4, Barrage, Blast (3"), Shell Shock |
| (Shatter) | 36" | 8 | 4 | Heavy 4, Sunder |
| Quad heavy bolter | 36" | 5 | 4 | Heavy 6, Twin-linked |
| Hellstrike missiles | 72" | 8 | 3 | Ordnance 1, One Use |
| Exterminator autocannon | 48" | 7 | 4 | Heavy 4, Twin-linked |
| Vanquisher battlecannon | 72" | 8 | 2 | Heavy 1, Armourbane |
| Colossus Bombard | 24"-60" | 6 | 3 | Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5"), Ignores Cover |

**Shell Shock**
Due to the repeated rapid impact of the quad mortar's shells, Pinning tests taken because of its attacks are made at a -1 Leadership penalty.

**Sunder**
Attacks with this special rule may re-roll failed Armour Penetration rolls.

### Graviton Weapons

Little understood even by the Tech-Priests of Mars, the term 'graviton gun' refers to a group of gravity projector devices whose sophistication is such that the few that now remain are relics of a lost age. Such weapons prove extremely useful when fighting on a starship or in a null gravity environment. The power of the graviton gun's highest settings is sufficient to rupture organs and crack bones even inside armour, but its primary use is to impede the enemy and damage machinery without the risk of secondary explosions.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graviton gun | 18" | * | 4 | Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Concussive, Graviton Pulse*, Haywire |
| Graviton cannon | 36" | * | 4 | Heavy 1, Large Blast (5"), Concussive, Graviton Pulse*, Haywire |

**Graviton Pulse**
Instead of rolling To Wound normally with this weapon, any model caught in its blast must instead roll equal to or under their Strength on a D6 or suffer a wound (a roll of '6' always counts as a failure). After the graviton pulse weapon has been fired, leave the Blast marker in place. This area now counts as both difficult terrain and dangerous terrain for the next turn thanks to the gravity flux.

### Irradiation Projectors

'Irad' or 'Rad' projectors are potent anti-personnel weapons and relics of the Dark Age of Technology used exclusively by the militant forces of the Mechanicum. They commonly comprise a bulky generator unit terminating in a dish-like projector that unleashes a powerful blast of deadly cross-spectrum radiations. Victims caught in the blast of such a weapon suffer an appalling death as they are boiled alive from within – their tissues blasted apart on a cellular level. Thick barriers of solid matter between the beam and the target provide some protection from this effect, though victims who survive the initial blast will often die later of extreme radioactive contamination.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lucifex | 6" | 2 | 5 | Pistol, Fleshbane, Rad-phage |
| Rad/Irad-cleanser | Template | 2 | 5 | Assault 1, Fleshbane, Rad-phage |
| Irradiation engine | Template | 4 | 3 | Heavy 1, Fleshbane, Rad-phage, Torrent |

**Rad-phage**
A model which loses one or more wounds to an attack with this special rule and survives has its Toughness value reduced by -1 for the rest of the battle.

### Lightning Gun

This aptly named weapon takes the form of a baroquely designed carbine either connected to a micro-reactor or, in the case of an Ordo Reductor Thallax, their firer's own cybernetic power core. It fires an ionizing las-beam down which a powerful phased discharge of electromagnetic force is unleashed, and is equally effective at slaughtering the living and overloading machine targets.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lightning gun | 18" | 7 | 5 | Heavy 1, Shred, Rending |

### Mauler Pattern Bolt Cannon

A field-support weapon found within Skitarii tech guard formations and mounted on certain Battle-automata, these baroque and bulky automatic cannon differ from the more common heavy bolter only in calibre, with the Mauler using substantially larger and denser shells, with a proportionally larger and stronger gun-frame needed to handle the firing stresses involved. These are powerful weapons whose secrets are jealously guarded by the Mechanicum.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mauler bolt cannon | 24" | 6 | 3 | Heavy 3, Pinning |

### Needle Pistol

A favoured weapon of the assassins of the Terran Courts during the days before Unification, needle pistols are sophisticated and elegant handguns whose operation is silent, invisible and deadly. The finest examples use a combination of a flashless laser to pierce flesh, followed by an impellor-shot of virulent poisons delivered instantaneously into the open wound. This combination can lay low the toughest foe with ruthless efficiency.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Needle pistol | 12" | 2 | 5 | Pistol, Poisoned, Rending |

### Photon Thruster Weapons

The arcane secrets of these deadly but unstable beam weapons are jealously guarded by the adepts who hold them, leading some to believe the technology is xenos in origin. When fired they unleash howling, needle-thin beams of utter blackness able to pierce the densest matter, slashing and slicing armoured men and machinery apart like razors, leaving pulsing waves of darkness in their wake. The exotic power sources of these unearthly weapons are extremely unstable, and catastrophic failure can lead to their firers being consumed by raging black flames until only dust remains.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Photon gauntlet | 12" | 5 | 2 | Assault 2, Blind, Gets Hot |
| Photon thruster | 48" | 6 | 2 | Heavy 2, Lance, Blind, Gets Hot |
| Darkfire cannon | 60" | 7 | 2 | Heavy 2, Lance, Blind, Gets Hot |

### Plasma Weaponry [Great Crusade Era]

In addition to the Imperial plasma weapons listed in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, such technology was far better understood during the dawning age of the Imperium, if still somewhat unsafe. As a result, three additional rarer types of sophisticated plasma weapons are listed below, which would become all but unknown in later ages.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Plasma blaster | 18" | 7 | 2 | Assault 2, Gets Hot |
| Phased plasma-fusil | 24" | 6 | 3 | Salvo 2/3 |
| Executioner cannon | 36" | 7 | 2 | Heavy 3, Blast (3") |

### Rotor Cannon

Favoured by many Imperial Army formations, rotor cannon are multi-barrelled stubbers, using electric motors to maintain an extraordinary rate of fire from their spinning barrels. The simple, medium calibre solid slug projectiles they fire lack the power of bolt shells, but the hail of shot they unleash can be particularly useful against unarmoured hordes of foes and fleshy xenoforms. The newly prototyped assault cannon technology represents a more effective and powerful implementation of this principle.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rotor cannon | 30" | 3 | 6 | Salvo 3/4 |

### Volkite Weapons

'Volkite' is an arcane Martian term for a variety of powerful ray weapons whose origins date back to the Age of Strife. Possessed of considerable killing power surpassing most armaments of their size, volkites were difficult to manufacture, even for the most able of the Mechanicum's forges, and the demands of the expanding Great Crusade swiftly overwhelmed supply of these relic guns. Once relatively common within the fledgling Legions, they had fallen largely from favour by the time of the Horus Heresy, and had been superseded in the Space Marine Legions by the far more flexible and utilitarian Terran bolter. Those few that remained in service were the purview of only a few specialised units at the outbreak of the conflict that rent the Imperium asunder.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Volkite serpenta | 10" | 5 | 5 | Pistol, Deflagrate |
| Volkite charger | 15" | 5 | 5 | Assault 2, Deflagrate |
| Volkite caliver | 30" | 6 | 5 | Heavy 2, Deflagrate |
| Volkite culverin | 45" | 6 | 5 | Heavy 4, Deflagrate |
| Volkite demi culverin | 45" | 7 | 5 | Heavy 5, Deflagrate |

**Deflagrate**

Deflagrating attacks have a devastating effect on organic matter, explosively burning flesh into ash and jetting fire. After normal attacks by this weapon have been resolved, count the number of unsaved wounds caused on the target unit. Immediately resolve a number of additional automatic hits on the same unit using the weapon's profile equal to the number of unsaved wounds – these can then be saved normally. Models in the targeted unit must still be in range in order for these additional hits to take effect. These additional hits do not themselves inflict more hits!

**Solar Auxilia Las Weaponry**

While first the dreaded volkite, and later the powerful bolter, were the standard tactical armaments favoured by the Space Marine Legions, the serried ranks of the Imperialis Auxilia from the beginning favoured las weapons as the pattern for their standard small arms. Adaptable, environmentally resilient, readily manufactured and — given their technological basis— extremely readily supplied and maintained by Great Crusade forces as they expanded out from Terra, las weapons were patterned to fit every conceivable need, from officer's sidearms to tactical rifles to armour-breaching heavy weapons. Within these broad categories were innumerable variations in patterns and models, from the Mars-Luminal, whose core design predated even the Age of Strife and was replicated to exacting tolerances by the priesthood of the Machine God, who considered it a prayer made solid, to the crude Gethrik '*Fireshot*' lascarbine, lacking even the most basic of safety functions or fire selector modes, and furnished in local stonewood for the use of the deeply superstitious and feral savages of Jub'bala after their induction into the Imperial war machine.

The Solar Auxilia, in particular, favoured the use of some of the most advanced and adaptable las weapon designs in mass-produced Imperial service, usually sourcing their arms directly from Terra, Mars and latterly also from Voss, Telastoria and Triplex Phall when possible. Such was the elite status of the Solar Auxilia within the wider Excertus Imperialis, and indeed often the personal wealth and political power of their commanders, that the Solar Auxilia commonly employed additional modifications to improve the overall firepower and capability of their standard issue weaponry. These included, most commonly, lasrifles fitted with advanced beam collimators to increase their effective range and accuracy, while many Solar Auxilia regiments sanctioned the use of forced-chamber over-compression cells, more commonly known as '*blast-chargers*'.

These devices imposed a kind of contained overload on a lasgun's firing chamber, resulting in the expulsion of an unstable pulse of energy far more powerful than that of a standard las-discharge. Crude jury-rigged modifications fashioned for this effect had always been known, but at the Lords Solar's request, refined mechanisms of this type were put into production for special issue, particularly where large and deadly xenos species such as the Orks were expected to be encountered. Even so, such a massive increase in firepower on even the best manufactured lasgun frame was not without a price and every time it was used, the weapon risked catastrophic overheating and in the worst case, the total burnout of the weapon. Such risks meant that in practice blast-chargers were employed only by express order and in the direst of situations.

A similar technology was employed far more reliably in a range of artisan-produced las weapons known commonly as 'blast pistols'. These bespoke weapons were able to fire only a handful of shots before reloading, but their stopping power rivals that of arcane volkite weaponry. Produced in the main by master weaponsmiths for the officer class and the colonial nobility, they promised extreme lethality at short range should the life of their bearer be threatened, either by an enraged predator during a beast hunt in some far-flung alien jungle or by a hulking Ork Skarboy breaking the defensive line amid a pitched battle. Blast pistols were seen as an emblem of wealth and prestige, and many were works of art in their own right, thus they also became a widely used form of decoration and reward for extreme gallantry and commendation within the Solar Auxilia regiments.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Laspistol | 12" | 3 | - | Pistol |
| Blast pistol | 6" | 5 | - | Pistol, Twin-linked, Gets Hot |
| Auxilia lasrifle | 30" | 3 | - | Rapid Fire |
| (Collimator) | 36" | 3 | - | Heavy 2 |
| (Blast-charger) | 18" | 6 | 6 | Heavy 1, Charger Burnout |
| Multi-laser | 36" | 6 | 6 | Heavy 3 |
| Quad multi-laser | 36" | 6 | 6 | Heavy 6, Twin-linked |
| Lascannon | 48" | 9 | 2 | Heavy 1 |
| Laser destroyer array | 48" | 9 | 1 | Ordnance 1, Twin-linked |

Note that the use of collimators and blast-chargers on lasrifles is optional. Their use should be stated by the player before any models in the unit are fired, and all of the lasrifle-equipped models must use them or none at all.

**Charger Burnout**

If a lasrifle is used with a blast-charger, it may not be used again at all until after the owning player's next player turn (in essence you must skip a turn firing the unit's lasrifles). In addition, after the blast-chargers are used, roll a D6. If a 1 is rolled, the blast-charger cell has fused and the option may not be used again in this game. Place a marker by the model to indicate this is the case. In the case of a unit with more than one model with this special rule, roll once and apply the outcome to the whole unit.

**Grenade Launcher**

The grenade launchers used by the Solar Auxilia are advanced, selective fire weapons proofed for use in void conditions and able to deploy a variety of munitions types not normally encountered in the Excertus Imperialis.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kinetic grenade | 24" | 4 | 5 | Assault 1, Blast (3") |
| Tempest shell | 24" | - | 6 | Assault 1, Haywire |
| Krak grenade | 24" | 6 | 4 | Assault 1 |

## Close Combat Weapons

### Battle-automata Power Blades

Fitted to the primary weapon-limbs of some Battle-automata, these sabre-like bladed weapons use molecular disruption fields super-charged with power from the Battle-automata's core. They are a close combat weapon with the following profile:

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Power blades | - | As User | 2 | Melee, Rending |

### Charnabal Sabre

With their origins tracing back to the ancient duelling societies, assassin cults and bloody vendettas of the Terran Courts during the Age of Strife, these elegant and deadly weapons rely on speed and dexterity rather than brute force for their lethality. The pure metal of their blades is press-folded and stamped scores of times over before being micro-serrated with a fractal-sharp edge. The master swordsmiths of Terra are each said to have their own rituals of forging, impressing a distinct pattern in each bespoke blade as legible as a signature to those with the wit to read them. As well as the nobles of the Terran Court, certain senior officers of the Solar Auxilia favour the Charnabal sabre over more 'clumsy' power weapons as they see them as being more responsive to true martial skill, while others think them effete and decadent weapons.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Charnabal sabre | - | As User | - | Melee, Rending, Duellist's Edge |

**Duellist's Edge**
When fighting in a challenge, the user of this weapon gains a +1 bonus to their Initiative value.

### Digital Lasers

Incredibly sophisticated miniaturised weapons of xenos origin, these devices are extremely short ranged but potent enough to kill despite being small enough to be concealed in a ring, gauntlet, sword hilt or helm. With a skilled user they are particularly effective in close combat, where they can be used to deliver a deadly strike to a foe already occupied in fending off the fighter's blows.

Digital lasers provide +1 Attack in close combat.

### Heavy Chainblade

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Heavy chainblade | - | +2 | 5 | Melee, Two-handed |

### Paragon Blade

Weapons forged of consummate artistry or irreplaceable relics of the ancient might of the Dark Age of Technology, Paragon blades are few in number and may take many forms. The most common Paragon blades are two-handed power weapons of extraordinary balance and durability, although even more rare and unique chain weapons wrought from the teeth of terrifying xenos beasts and certain night-black sickle swords found on remote death worlds on the edges of the Halo Stars have been known to hold similar phenomenal killing power. Regardless of their form, Paragon blades are valued beyond price by the Imperium's warriors.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paragon blade | - | +1 | 2 | Melee, Murderous Strike, Specialist Weapon |

**Murderous Strike**
Attacks with this special rule cause Instant Death on a To Wound roll of 6. Roll any viable saves against this Instant Death-causing wound separately to any other wounds the attack inflicts.

### Shock Chargers

Used to augment the combat power of Legio Cybernetica Battle-automata, these amplify the force of the Battle-automata's blows with powerful electrostatic discharges which detonate like thunderclaps when striking their target.

A model equipped with shock chargers gains the Concussive special rule added to all of their close combat attacks regardless of type (including Hammer of Wrath, Smash, etc).

## Equipment

**Armoured Ceramite**
Additional heavy ceramite plating fitted to a vehicle allows it to withstand extremes of heat and radiation. Plating of this kind is commonly fitted to orbital strike craft to enable them to withstand the rigours of 'crash' re-entry from space into a planet's atmosphere, and also to certain siege vehicles to protect them from thermal energy weapons.

A vehicle with this wargear is not subject to the additional D6 armour penetration caused by weapons with the Melta special rule.

**Armoured Cockpit (Flyers)**
A vehicle equipped with an Armoured Cockpit may ignore results of Crew Shaken and Crew Stunned on a roll of 4+.

**Artificer Armour**
Artificer armour confers a 2+ Armour save.

**Augury Scanner**
This energy scanning device has the effect of alerting the user to the concealed presence or imminent arrival of enemy troops in the vicinity, even if concealed, and can detect the tell-tale electro-gravitic disruption effect on local space that presages teleport transfers.

Models cannot be deployed using the Infiltrate special rule within 18" of a model which is equipped with an augury scanner. Enemy models deployed using Deep Strike within this range can also be attacked by a unit carrying an augury scanner in the Shooting phase as if their Rapid Fire and Heavy type weapons (if they have any) had the Interceptor special rule.

**Auxiliary Drive**
The standard patterns of Imperial vehicles are often customised by the regiments that field them, and in some cases are test beds for technology either designed or recovered in the field by the Magos and crew that maintain them. One common form of such customisation is the fitting of back-up and auxiliary drive systems, such as secondary galvanic motors or outrigger thrusters, to keep a vehicle mobile for short periods even if its main motive drive becomes damaged.

A vehicle with an auxiliary drive may repair Immobilised results it suffers on a D6 roll of 4+ at the start of the controlling player's Movement phase.

**Cognis-signum**
An advanced array of sensory devices, cogitator-assisted communications and telemetry arrays, the Cognis-signum enables the wearer to co-ordinate battlefield data with blinding speed.

A model with this wargear automatically counts as being equipped with an augury scanner and has the Night Vision special rule.

In addition, in lieu of the model equipped with the Cognis-signum firing a weapon in the Shooting phase, a single designated unit of the controlling player's choice within 6" of the Cognis-signum-equipped model (other than Independent Characters or Super-heavies) gains a bonus of +1 to their BS for that Shooting phase.

**Cortex Controller**
This control and signalling device uses data-djinn to command Battle-automata fitted with cybernetica cortex systems, allowing the wielder to witness the battlefield through the automata's own senses, as well as monitor their status and exact precise control over their actions. Only the most highly experienced and specifically augmented adepts of the Mechanicum and the Forge Lords of the Legiones Astartes can hope to fathom the use of these fractious devices and successfully interpret the storm of data streaming from their un-living minions.

The presence of a cortex controller within 12" of part of a unit of friendly models with the Programmed Behaviour special rule at the start of any phase means that special rule is negated for that phase and their controlling player is free to use them as any other unit.

**Cyber-familiar**
Utilised by Techmarines and the Adepts of the Mechanicum, cyber-familiar is a term that encompasses a variety of semi-autonomous devices such as servo-skulls, mek-spiders and other smaller drone units and lesser haemonculites tied into the direct neural control of their operator. These minion-drones are an extension of their master's will and provide them with a host of additional senses and capabilities.

A Cyber-familiar adds +1 to its owner's invulnerable save (to a maximum of 3+) or an invulnerable save of 6+ if they do not already possess one. In addition, they allow them to re-roll failed characteristic tests other than Leadership tests and failed Dangerous Terrain tests.

The Cyber-familiar may either be modelled as part of the character equipped with them, or on separate bases and kept in coherency; however they are discounted as models for game purposes, have no separate profile, make no attacks, need not be transported, etc, and are simply moved out of the way in combat or if they interfere with the game.

**Displacer Matrix**
These relics of xenos technology are one of a number of arcane 'displacer' devices known to exist. These particular matrixes, taking the shape of glassy black amulets, are found in the hands of certain Rogue Traders and are said to pre-date even the Eldar, being found sometimes on dead worlds far out on the edge of explored space. They incorporate a shield generator system which uses a teleportation effect to protect the bearer from harm, displacing the energy of any impact into the void beyond or, if this fails, serves to remove the bearer from harm instead, returning them nearby some moments later… hopefully! Such devices are, it must be said, shunned and considered an anathema by the Machine Cult of Mars as being flawed and dangerous to their users but for some, this is a risk well worth taking.

The displacer matrix provides a 3+ invulnerable save. In addition, if any results of a 1 are rolled for the save, the model is removed from play and enters Ongoing Reserves. They must then return to play using the Deep Strike rules, but if any Deep Strike Mishap occurs, they are destroyed.

**Djinn-skein**
An Archmagos Prime operating as a battlefield commander is not simply a general whose orders are carried out, but the governing will of the Taghmata; a spider at the centre of a web of data-djinn and stolen perceptions from across the battlefield that enables them to make tactical predictions based on inhumanly swift calculation and accuracy. In order to use the abilities of the Djinn-skein, the Archmagos Prime must be present on the table and not currently taking part in an assault. The Djinn-skein provides the Archmagos Prime with the following abilities:

- At the beginning of their Shooting phase, the Archmagos Prime may nominate a single unit which is a part of their Primary Detachment (including themselves) within 6" of them or any Cyber-occularis purchased as a part of their wargear to benefit for +1 BS.
- Deep Striking units which are part of their Primary Detachment choosing to arrive within 6" of the Archmagos Prime do not scatter.
- Barrage weapons in the same detachment may use the Archmagos Prime and any Cyber-occularis purchased as part of their wargear to draw a line of sight from for their attacks. Note that direction of fire, range, etc, is still drawn from the firing weapon.

**Enhanced Targeting Array**
Certain Battle-automata are fitted with additional slaved cogitators and sub-incunabula machine-spirits devoted to relentlessly tracking and targeting any and all potential threats in range. A model with this upgrade has its BS increased by +1 and the cover saves of enemy targets are reduced by -1.

**Flare or Chaff Launchers (Flyers)**
These are a single use item. A vehicle equipped with flare or chaff launchers has a 4+ invulnerable save against any damage inflicted by missile weapons.

**Flare Shield**
A flare shield operates against shooting attacks that strike the vehicle's front arc. It reduces the strength of attacks by weapons with the Template or Blast type by -2, and other shooting attacks' Strength by -1. A flare shield has no effect on close combat attacks or attacks inflicted with the Destroyer rule.

**Grav-wave Generator**
A strange archaeotech device found in the plundered inventories of certain ancient pre-Imperial void craft, these small portable gravitational wave generators send out pulses of force from a field that coheres several metres away from the bearer. This has an effect akin to any moving object striking the field as if hitting an invisible sandbag wall. The field collapses temporarily when struck by any object with sizable mass, but by then it has usually served its defensive purpose.

Any model charging the bearer or the unit they are with suffers a penalty of D3" to their Charge rolls (note this is cumulative with any other modifiers) and cannot make Hammer of Wrath attacks this turn.

**Ground-tracking Auguries**
A Flyer equipped with this system gains the Strafing Run special rule.

**Illum Flares (Flyers)**
A vehicle equipped with illum flares may drop a single flare per turn. They are fired in the same manner as Bombs (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook), a marker being placed where the flare lands after it has scattered. Leave the marker in place until the end of the turn. Any unit targeting an enemy unit within 12" of the flare marker gains the Night Vision special rule for that Shooting phase. If the firing unit also has the Split Fire special rule, it only gains the benefit of Night Vision when firing at units with at least one model within 12" of the flare marker.

**Imperialis Vexillas**
The Vexillas —the banners, icons and standards of the Solar Auxilia— serve as a focal point on the battlefield, both for the fighting troops' morale and as a reminder of their oaths of duty and service. Whether a Troop Vexilla represents a single fighting section or one of the elaborate company banners bedecked in the names of past worlds fought for and conquered during the Great Crusade, it is a point of bloody tradition and pride that the colours and icons of the regiment never fall.

- **Troop Vexilla:** A unit that contains a model with a Troop Vexilla counts as scoring an additional wound for the purposes of calculating close combat results, and may always attempt to regroup regardless of having been reduced to below 25% casualties.

- **Cohort Vexilla:** A unit which contains a model with a Cohort Vexilla has all the benefits of a Troop Vexilla (see previously). In addition, any friendly unit from the Solar Auxilia army with models within 24" of the Cohort Vexilla may ignore casualties when taking Morale checks.

**Infravisor**
Any Auxilia Infantry character may be given an infravisor as an option for +5 points. This grants the model the Night Vision special rule. However, the model and any unit they have joined count as having an Initiative of 1 when taking Blind tests.

**Lorica Thallax**
A Lorica Thallax provides a 4+ Armour save and Feel No Pain (6+), and a model equipped with it may not make Sweeping Advances.

**Machinator Array**
- A machinator array adds +1 to its user's Toughness and provides the Night Vision special rule. It also incorporates a flamer and an inferno pistol, and the user can either opt to fire both of these weapons in the Shooting phase, or one of them and another ranged weapon the model is carrying.
- A model with the Battlesmith special rule may add +2 to their Repair roll result if also equipped with a machinator array.
- A model equipped with a machinator array may make two additional attacks per turn in close combat as well as any they would normally be eligible to make.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Machinator array | - | +1 | 2 | Melee, Shred, Unwieldy Armourbane |

**Mechanicum Protectiva**
This term covers a variety of energy field and defensive shield projectors devised by the Magos of the Mechanicum to protect themselves both on the battlefield and from assassination by their rivals. For this reason, the frequency and modulation of each device is a closely guarded secret.

- A model equipped with a Mechanicum Protectiva gains a 4+ invulnerable save.

**Nuncio-vox**
If one of the controlling player's units wishes to arrive on the battlefield via Deep Strike and chooses to do so within 6" of a unit equipped with a nuncio-vox, it will not scatter. When barrage weapons are being used by the controlling player, line of sight may be drawn from any model in their force equipped with a nuncio-vox as well as the firing model itself (range is still drawn from the firing model, etc). Note that the nuncio-vox equipped model must already be on the table at the start of the turn for it to be used (and cannot be used from inside a vehicle).

**Psi-jammer**
Often either examples of prohibited and little understood technology, or even xenos artefacts, these devices generate a passive field which impedes psychic energy directed at the wearer and hides their mind from telepathic contact.

Psi-jammers grant the bearer the Adamantium Will special rule.

**Refractor Fields & Iron Halos**
These devices are defensive field generators designed for personal protection. They encompass the wearer in an energy field or force barrier which serves to refract or deflect impacts and energy discharges, although the need for the wearer to move and fight, as well as their power consumption, prevents them from being anywhere near inviolable to attack. Devices of this nature are relatively rare, and are the province of commanding officers and honoured champions, where they are often incorporated into armour or amulets and gifted as a mark of favour and rank.

- Refractor fields provide a 5+ invulnerable save.
- Iron halos provide a 4+ invulnerable save.

**Servo-arm**
A model with the Battlesmith special rule (see page 252) may add +1 to their Repair roll result if they are also equipped with a servo-arm.

A model equipped with a servo-arm may make an additional single attack per turn as well as any they would normally be eligible to make. This is done using the weapon profile shown below:

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Servo-arm | - | 8 | 2 | Melee, Unwieldy |

**Shroud Bombs**
These canister bombs unleash a shimmering grey fog of dense smoke and multi-spectrum electromagnetic charge that foils scanners and surveyors just as easily as it does vision.

Shroud bombs count as defensive grenades in combat (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook). In addition, with the exception of vehicles, Daemons, Gargantuan Creatures and units which have the Night Vision special rule, units must pass a Leadership test in order to charge a unit equipped with shroud bombs.

**Siege Wrecker**
This is a general term given to a specialised form of massive close combat weapons intended for Legion Dreadnoughts and Mechanicum Battle-automata. Wreckers are designed to enable these heavy assault units to smash through fortifications and easily crush armoured barricades and defences in siege warfare. The most common form of this weapon is a hydraulic ram or massive disruption field-augmented hammer, although specialised forms of heavy claw or drill systems are also used.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Siege wrecker | - | 10 | 2 | Melee, Concussive, Wrecker, Specialist Weapon |

**Wrecker**
Weapons and attacks with this special rule may re-roll failed Armour Penetration rolls against fortifications and immobile structures (such as bunkers and barricades), and add +1 to any result rolled on the Building Damage chart. If this attack damages a bulkhead or wall section of terrain and destroys it, remove that section of terrain from play if possible.

**Void Armour/Reinforced Void Armour**
Based on designs ceded to the Imperium by the Saturnyne Domains during the unification of the Sol System, the void armour of the Solar Auxilia regiments has become largely synonymous with the fighting force itself. Offering a degree of environmental and combat protection exceeded only by the power armour of the Legiones Astartes, void armour, as its name implies, is intended to enable a human soldier to survive the deadly travails of space battle and the harshest of exo-planetary conditions.

**Void armour:** This provides a 4+ save and counts as being Void Hardened in games of Zone Mortalis and other missions where this will be relevant.

**Reinforced void armour:** In addition to the benefits provided by void armour, the wearer of reinforced void armour must re-roll failed saves against Template and Blast type weapons.

## Additional Special Rules

**Automated Artillery**

Unlike standard artillery, automated artillery does not require crew in order to function. It is not removed from play due to a lack of crew and each gun must be destroyed normally before it is removed. Automated Artillery cannot move and cannot charge. If assaulted they do not Pile In and cannot be locked in combat; their attackers will hit automatically, but must roll To Wound normally.

If a unit of Automated Artillery loses an assault nothing happens, there are no Sweeping Advances, no Pile Ins and no Consolidation moves. The Automated Artillery remains in place and may fire normally in future turns.

If the Automated Artillery wins an assault, the enemy must take a Morale check as normal, although the artillery piece cannot Consolidate or make a Sweeping Advance.

**Battlesmith**

Those versed in the secret arts and teachings of the Mechanicum, whether Techmarine, Forge Lord or Magos, have the skill and ability to reconstruct and effect field repairs to war machinery in the very heat of battle.

If a Battlesmith is in base contact with, or embarked upon, one or more damaged vehicles during the Shooting phase, they can attempt to repair one of them instead of firing a weapon. Roll a D6. If the result is 5 or more, you may do one of the following:

- Restore a lost Hull Point
- Repair a Weapon Destroyed result
- Repair an Immobilised result to the attendant vehicle

If a Weapon Destroyed result is repaired, that weapon can be fired in the following Shooting phase. The Battlesmith cannot use this ability if they have Gone to Ground or are Falling Back.

Models with the Battlesmith rule that also possess a cortex controller may, instead of the above, restore a single lost wound to a Battle-automata as a use of this ability.

**Explorator Adaption**

Many of the combat vehicles of the Solar Auxilia are modified during construction to operate freely in the most dangerous alien environments, providing fully sealed life support systems and are fabricated with materials and component systems far superior in the quality of their materials than those commonly possessed by the Excertus Imperialis.

Vehicles with this special rule have an invulnerable save of 6+ against any attack with the Blast or Template special rule, and count as Void Hardened in games where this might have an effect. Failed Dangerous Terrain tests by vehicles with this special rule must be re-rolled.

**Cybernetica Cortex**

Comprising a synthetic 'brain' of sorts of the most advanced Battle-automata, a cybernetica cortex consists of an armoured casing containing a complex bio-plastic mass which extrudes nerve-like grey tendrils into the body of the robotic frame into which it is housed, invigorating it with strange false-life. Far beyond a simple cogitator in capacity, it is neither truly alive nor sapient like the dread and inhuman '*Silica Animus*' feared of old. Instead, it is akin to a primal web of bellicose instinct, guided not by self-awareness and reason, but by a programmed framework of encoded behaviour, comprising simple and exacting instructions and commands. The result is a superior, self-guided weapon; a machine-predator that will actively and instinctively pursue its foes as well as act with a degree of tactical sense and self-preservation beyond anything a servitor is capable of, but without the dangers of revolt and the development of blasphemous intelligence—or so the Legio Cybernetica claim.

**Special Rules:** Models with a cybernetica cortex have the Programmed Behaviour, Fearless, Cybernetic Resilience and Adamantium Will special rules.

**Programmed Behaviour:** Unless within 12" of a friendly model equipped with a Cortex Controller, the following restrictions are placed on the unit's use in the game. These restrictions do not apply if the chosen model is already locked in an assault:

- **Methodical:** The Battle-automata may not make Sweeping Advances or Run moves.
- **Target Priority:** If enemy models are within 12" and within line of sight during their Shooting phase, the Battle-automata Maniple must fire all its weapons against the closest enemy unit it is able to harm. If this is not the case, they are free to select targets as normal.
- **Onslaught:** If enemy units are within 12" during their Assault phase, the Battle-automata must attempt to charge the closest enemy unit if able. Note that the Battle-automata may still only charge the same unit it fired at if it fired in the Shooting phase. If consolidating after combat, they must do so towards the nearest enemy model if one is present within 12".
- **Fire Protocols:** A model with this rule may fire up to three of its weapons once each in the Shooting phase – this must be against the same target.

**Cybernetic Resilience:** Models with this special rule straddle an existence between machine creature and synthetic life, making them both resilient to the particular frailties of the organic, but also partly subject to the vulnerabilities of the pure machine.

- Successful wounds scored by attacks with the Poisoned or Fleshbane special rules must be re-rolled against this model.
- In addition to any other effects they cause, attacks with the Haywire special rule will cause an additional wound on a D6 result of a 6 against the model. Roll for this wound separately, saves may be taken as normal.

# Allies in the Age of Darkness

In the tumult and warfare of the Age of Darkness, the forces of the Imperium and the Traitors alike were torn apart by war and suspicion. During these times old arguments, suspicions and rivalries were bought to the fore. This is represented by the Age of Darkness Allies chart which works in a similar manner to the Allies chart in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, but rather than depicting relationships between alien races and forces, it offers a more nuanced web of relationships and discords between the Space Marine Legions at the start of the Horus Heresy. Note that the chart is not split along the lines of Traitors and Loyalists, as in many cases the Legions were in themselves spilt into factions for either side, and so instead in particular campaign battles, who plays the Traitor and who plays the Loyalist in your version of the Heresy (and such additional limitations this poses) is left up to you.

In any game where the Primary Detachment is built using an army list presented in one of Forge World's Horus Heresy books, Allied Detachments should be chosen using the table presented here. The rules presented here for the effects of alliance are used rather than those found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. Note that for the purposes of this table, forces with different Legiones Astartes special rules are treated as being different armies as shown by the name of their Legion.

**Note:** The Mechanicum line of the table is used for an army selected from the Ordo Reductor, Legio Cybernetica, Taghmata Omnissiah and Questoris Knight Crusade army lists. The Solar Auxilia Crusade Army list uses the Imperial Army line.




### Sworn Brothers

*The closest of allies who have fought beside each other many times.*

The two forces are considered 'friendly units' in all regards. These means, for example, that Sworn Brothers may be joined by allied independent characters, are treated as friendly units for the targeting of psychic powers, special abilities, Warlord Traits and so on, and may also benefit from nuncio-vox carried by allied units.

**Note:** Not even Sworn Brothers can embark in allied transport vehicles, and rules that affect a particular force owing to its Legiones Astartes special rule do not carry over to an allied force.

### Fellow Warriors

*The two forces are willing to fight together for common cause against their foes.*

Units in your army treat Fellow Warriors as not being part of their army with the exception that they may not be deliberately targeted, attacked, targeted with psychic powers, etc (note that blasts, psychic powers and the like may still scatter over allied forces and adversely affect them). Fellow Warriors cannot benefit from the effects of allied Warlord Traits or be joined by allied independent characters and are not counted as friendly units for the purposes of psychic powers. In essence, the two forces fight alongside each other without any additional positive or negative effect.

### Distrusted Allies

*The two forces can make common cause against an enemy, but never fully trust each other due to long-standing feud or inherent antipathy.*

Distrusted Allies are treated exactly like Fellow Warriors except that the allied units are never counted as scoring units.

### By the Emperor's (or the Warmaster's) Command

*Two forces with this relationship will only ever fight beside each other in the direst of circumstances or by the direct command of their overlord, be they the Emperor or the Warmaster.*

In this case the two forces are dealt with exactly like Distrusted Allies (see previously), but, in addition, at the start of each of the player's Movement phases, a D6 must be rolled for every unit (except those already engaged in combat) within 6" of an allied unit. On a roll of a 1, that unit may not move, shoot, run or assault that turn (being too busy watching for betrayal). Make a note or place a counter to indicate which units have been so affected.

### Agents

In addition to the forces shown here, some units in later volumes will be described as being either Agents of the Emperor or Agents of the Warmaster. These forces are always treated as being Sworn Brothers to either all Loyalist or all Traitor forces respectively.

## Solar Auxilia Weapons Summary

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Archaeotech pistol | 12" | 6 | 3 | Pistol, Master-crafted |
| Atomantic imploder | - | D | 1 | Ordnance 1, Blast (3"), Blind, Instant Death |
| Auxilia lasrifle | 30" | 3 | - | Rapid Fire |
| (Collimator) | 36" | 3 | - | Heavy 2 |
| (Blast-charger) | 18" | 6 | 6 | Heavy 1, Charger Burnout[1] |
| Baneblade cannon | 72" | 9 | 2 | Primary Weapon 1, Apocalyptic Blast (10") |
| Blast pistol | 6" | 5 | - | Pistol, Twin-linked, Gets Hot |
| Charnabal sabre | - | As User | - | Melee, Rending, Duellist's Edge[2] |
| Charonite claws | - | +1 | 3 | Melee, Flesh Ripper[3] |
| Chem inferno gun | Hellstorm | 3 | 2 | Heavy 1, Poisoned (2+), Pinning, Armourbane, Torrent (18")[4] |
| Colossus Bombard | 24"-60" | 6 | 3 | Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5"), Ignores Cover |
| Darkfire cannon | 60" | 7 | 2 | Heavy 2, Lance, Blind, Gets Hot |
| Demolisher cannon | 24" | 10 | 2 | Ordnance 1, Large Blast (5") |
| Demolition charge | - | 9 | 3 | Ordnance 1, Large Blast (5") |
| Dual battlecannon | 72" | 8 | 3 | Ordnance 2, Large Blast (5"), Twin-linked |
| Earthshaker cannon | 36"-240" | 9 | 3 | Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5") |
| Electromagnetic storm charge | - | 3 | 4 | Bomb 1, Large Blast (5"), Haywire, Concussive, One Use |
| Executioner cannon | 36" | 7 | 2 | Heavy 3, Blast (3") |
| Exterminator autocannon | 48" | 7 | 4 | Heavy 4, Twin-linked |
| Graviton cannon | 36" | * | 4 | Heavy 1, Large Blast (5"), Concussive, *Graviton Pulse[5], Haywire |
| Graviton gun | 18" | * | 4 | Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Concussive, Haywire, *Graviton Pulse[5] |
| Heavy chainblade | - | +2 | 5 | Melee, Two-handed |
| Hellstrike missiles | 72" | 8 | 3 | Ordnance 1, One Use |
| Hyperios missile | 48" | 8 | 3 | Heavy 1, Skyfire, Interceptor, Heat Seeker[6] |
| Icarus lascannon | 96" | 9 | 2 | Heavy 1, Interceptor, Skyfire |
| Incineration charge | - | 5 | 4 | Ordnance 1, Massive Blast (7"), Ignores Cover |
| Inferno gun | Hellstorm | 7 | 3 | Primary Weapon 1, Torrent (18")[4] |
| Inferno pistol | 6" | 8 | 1 | Pistol, Melta |
| Irradiation engine | Template | 4 | 3 | Heavy 1, Fleshbane, Rad-phage[7], Torrent |
| Kinetic grenade | 24" | 4 | 5 | Assault 1, Blast (3") |
| Kinetic piercer missile | 48" | 6 | 2 | Heavy 1, Armourbane, Heat Seeker[6], One Use |
| Krak grenade | 24" | 6 | 4 | Assault 1 |
| Kraken penetrator heavy missile | 36" | 8 | 1 | Heavy 1, Armourbane, One Use |
| Lascannon | 48" | 9 | 2 | Heavy 1 |
| Laser destroyer array | 48" | 9 | 1 | Ordnance 1, Twin-linked |
| Laspistol | 12" | 3 | - | Pistol |
| Lightning gun | 18" | 7 | 5 | Heavy 1, Shred, Rending |
| Lucifex | 6" | 2 | 5 | Pistol, Fleshbane, Rad-phage[7] |
| Machinator array | - | +1 | 2 | Melee, Shred, Unwieldy, Armourbane |
| Mauler bolt cannon | 24" | 6 | 3 | Heavy 3, Pinning |
| Medusa siege gun | 36" | 10 | 2 | Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast (5") |
| Multi-laser | 36" | 6 | 6 | Heavy 3 |
| Needle pistol | 12" | 2 | 5 | Pistol, Poisoned, Rending |
| Neutron beam laser | 36" | 10 | 1 | Ordnance 2, Concussive, Shock Pulse[8] |
| Paragon blade | - | +1 | 2 | Melee, Murderous Strike[9], Specialist Weapon |
| Phased plasma-fusil | 24" | 6 | 3 | Salvo 2/3 |
| Phosphex bomb cluster | - | 5 | 2 | Bomb 2, Barrage, Bomb Cluster, Blast (3"), Poisoned (3+), Crawling Fire[10], One Use, Lingering Death[11], Deadly Cargo[12] |
| Photon gauntlet | 12" | 5 | 2 | Assault 2, Blind, Gets Hot |
| Photon thruster | 48" | 6 | 2 | Heavy 2, Lance, Blind, Gets Hot |
| Plasma blaster | 18" | 7 | 2 | Assault 2, Gets Hot |
| Plasma blastgun (Rapid) | 72" | 8 | 2 | Primary Weapon 2, Massive Blast (7") |
| (Overload) | 96" | 10 | 2 | Primary Weapon 1, Apocalyptic Blast (10") |
| Power blades | - | As User | 2 | Melee, Rending |
| Precision Bombardment | Unlimited | 9 | 2 | Ordnance 1, Barrage, Pinning, Large Blast (5") |
| Quad gun | 48" | 7 | 4 | Heavy 4, Interceptor, Skyfire, Twin-linked |
| Quad heavy bolter | 36" | 5 | 4 | Heavy 6, Twin-linked |

## Solar Auxilia Weapons Summary

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quad mortar (Frag) | 12"-60" | 5 | 5 | Heavy 4, Barrage, Blast (3"), Shell Shock[13] |
| (Shatter) | 36" | 8 | 4 | Heavy 4, Sunder[14] |
| Quad multi-laser | 36" | 6 | 6 | Heavy 6, Twin-linked |
| Rad/Irad-cleanser | Template | 2 | 5 | Assault 1, Fleshbane, Rad-phage[7] |
| Rotor cannon | 30" | 3 | 6 | Salvo 3/4 |
| Servo-arm | - | 8 | 2 | Melee, Unwieldy |
| Siege wrecker | - | 10 | 2 | Melee, Concussive, Wrecker[15], Specialist Weapon |
| Stormhammer cannon | 60" | 9 | 2 | Primary Weapon 1, Massive Blast (7"), Shred, Pinning |
| Stormsword siege cannon | 36" | 10 | 1 | Primary Weapon 1, Apocalyptic Blast (10"), Ignores Cover |
| Sunfury heavy missile | 36" | 6 | 3 | Heavy 1, Large Blast (5"), Blind, Gets Hot, One Use |
| Tempest shell | 24" | - | 6 | Assault 1, Haywire |
| Vanquisher battlecannon | 72" | 8 | 2 | Heavy 1, Armourbane |
| Volcano cannon | 120" | D | 2 | Primary Weapon 1, Large Blast (5") |
| Volkite caliver | 30" | 6 | 5 | Heavy 2, Deflagrate[16] |
| Volkite charger | 15" | 5 | 5 | Assault 2, Deflagrate[16] |
| Volkite culverin | 45" | 6 | 5 | Heavy 4, Deflagrate[16] |
| Volkite demi culverin | 45" | 7 | 5 | Heavy 5, Deflagrate[16] |
| Volkite serpenta | 10" | 5 | 5 | Pistol, Deflagrate[16] |
| Vulcan mega-bolter | 60" | 6 | 3 | Heavy 15, All Power to Weapons![17] |

[1]**Charger Burnout:** If a lasrifle is used with a blast-charger, it may not be used again at all until after the owning player's next player turn (in essence you must skip a turn firing the unit's lasrifles). In addition, after the blast-chargers are used, roll a D6. If a 1 is rolled, the blast-charger cell has fused and the option may not be used again in this game. Place a marker by the model to indicate this is the case. In the case of a unit with more than one model with this special rule, roll once and apply the outcome to the whole unit.

[2]**Duellist's Edge:** When fighting in a challenge, the user of this weapon gains a +1 bonus to their Initiative value.

[3]**Flesh Ripper:** Any rolls To Hit of a 6 should be separated out from the Hit pool and dealt with separately. These are treated as having AP 2 and the Instant Death special rule.

[4]**Torrent (18"):** This uses the Torrent rule (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook), but with a Template range of 18" rather than 12".

[5]**Graviton Pulse:** Instead of rolling To Wound normally with this weapon, any model caught in its blast must instead roll equal to or under their Strength on a D6 or suffer a wound (a roll of '6' always counts as a failure). After the graviton pulse weapon has been fired, leave the Blast marker in place. This area now counts as both difficult terrain and dangerous terrain for the next turn.

[6]**Heat Seeker:** Jink saves may not be taken against attacks with this special rule.

[7]**Rad-phage:** A model which loses one or more wounds to an attack with this special rule and survives has its Toughness value reduced by -1 for the rest of the battle.

[8]**Shock Pulse:** Any vehicle (including Super-heavy vehicles) that suffers a Penetrating hit from a weapon with this rule may only fire Snap Shots on the following game turn.

[9]**Murderous Strike:** Attacks with this special rule cause Instant Death on a To Wound roll of 6. Roll any viable saves against this Instant Death-causing wound separately to other wounds the attack inflicts.

[10]**Crawling Fire:** After the blast marker for a weapon with this rule is placed, the firer may move the marker up to 2" in any direction so long as this would cover more models than previously.

[11]**Lingering Death:** When a Blast weapon with this rule is used, after the attack is resolved leave the Blast marker in play for the rest of the game and mark it with a counter of some kind. This area is now treated as dangerous terrain for all models with a Toughness value and open-topped vehicles.

[12]**Deadly Cargo:** If the Flyer carrying unused weapons with this special rule takes hull damage but is not destroyed, roll a D6. On a 6, the Flyer suffers an Explodes! result on the Vehicle Damage chart.

[13]**Shell Shock:** Due to the rapid impact of the quad mortar's shells, Pinning tests taken because of its attacks are made at a -1 Ld penalty.

[14]**Sunder:** Attacks made with this rule may re-roll failed Armour Penetration rolls.

[15]**Wrecker:** Weapons and attacks with this special rule may re-roll failed Armour Penetration rolls against fortifications and immobile structures (such as bunkers and barricades), and add +1 to any result rolled on the Building Damage chart. If this attack damages a bulkhead or wall section of terrain and destroys it, remove that section of terrain from play if possible.

[16]**Deflagrate:** After normal attacks by this weapon have been resolved, count the number of unsaved wounds caused on the target unit. Immediately resolve a number of additional automatic hits on the same unit using the weapon's profile equal to the number of unsaved wounds – these can then be saved normally. Models in the targeted unit must still be in range in order for these additional hits to take effect. These additional hits do not themselves inflict more hits!

[17]**All Power to Weapons!:** If the Stormlord does not move, it may fire its Vulcan mega-bolter twice in the following Shooting phase (either at the same target or at different ones).

# Legate Commander

45 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Legate Commander | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 4+ |
| Lord Marshal | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 10 | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Legate Commander

**Unit Type**
- Infantry (Character)

**Wargear**
- Void armour
- Close combat weapon
- Laspistol
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Refractor field

**Special Rules**
- Disciplined Fire
- Independent Character
- High Command
- Close Formation Fighting
- Disciplined Command
- Household Retinue (Lord Marshal only)
- Forged in War (Lord Marshal only)

**Options**
- One Legate Commander in the army may be upgraded to a:
  - Lord Marshal ..... +35 points
  (gaining the improved profile shown). The Lord Marshal retains the same options as listed for a Legate Commander.
- The Legate Commander may exchange either their laspistol and/or their close combat weapon for the following options:
  - Blast pistol ..... +2 points
  - Charnabal sabre ..... +5 points
  - Needle pistol ..... +5 points
  - Volkite serpenta ..... +5 points
  - Hand flamer ..... +10 points
  - Plasma pistol ..... +10 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
  - Power fist ..... +15 points
  - Inferno pistol ..... +15 points
  - Archaeotech pistol (Lord Marshal only) ..... +20 points
  - Paragon blade (Lord Marshal only) ..... +25 points
- The Legate Commander may take any of the following:
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points
  - Digital lasers ..... +5 points
  - Infravisor ..... +5 points
  - Grav-wave generator (Lord Marshal only) ..... +10 points
  - Psi-jammer ..... +5 points
  - Cyber familiar ..... +10 points
- The Legate Commander may exchange their refractor field for one of the following:
  - Iron halo ..... +10 points
  - Displacer matrix (Lord Marshal only) ..... +15 points
- The Legate Commander may exchange their void armour for:
  - Artificer armour ..... +20 points
- One weapon possessed by the Legate Commander may be:
  - Master-crafted ..... +10 points

**High Command**
So long as a model with this special rule is on the table (including being transported in a ground vehicle or when inside a friendly fortification) and not either Falling Back or engaged in an assault, all friendly units from the same detachment may use this model's Leadership value rather than their own when taking Morale checks and Pinning tests (all normal modifiers apply).

**Household Retinue**
In an army with a Lord Marshal as its Warlord, Veletaris Storm Sections may be taken as Household Retinue squads in addition to their usual role. Such squads are WS 4 but do not have the Hold the Line special rule. In addition, they have the Preferred Enemy (Infantry) special rule while the Lord Marshal is present on the table and not Falling Back. Household Retinue squads are Elites choices (and not Tercio Troops choices) for the army, and may take either a Dracosan Armoured Transport or an Auxilia Arvus Lighter as a Dedicated Transport choice.

**Forged in War**
A model with this special rule may select rather than roll for its Warlord trait using the tables it is normally eligible for, if they are chosen as the army's Warlord.

HQ

Auxilia field officers are known by many titles, but each is an individual with a unique history, demeanour and command style. Some are despots hated and feared by their troops in equal measure while others are strutting martinets, seemingly more concerned with parades than with battle. Both are equally deadly, for to reach their station they have proven themselves able leaders indeed and survived the many deadly rivalries of high office.

Legate Commanders often bear noble patent in addition to military rank, and many are motivated by the promise of planetary settlement rights at the end of a hard fought campaign. Some attain such high acclaim that they are granted Warrants of Trade by the Council of Terra itself, affording them the unparalleled status, power and personal wealth of a Rogue Trader Militant.

Regardless of their roots, Legate Commanders are tough and experienced fighters, masters of tactics and strategy and, most importantly, inspirational leaders upon whose orders the Solar Auxilia would march into hell itself.

# Lord Marshal Ireton MaSade

## The Old General, Protector of Agathon, former master of the 60th Expeditionary Fleet

155 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MaSade | 3 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 10 | 2+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 (Unique)

**Unit Type**
- Infantry (Character)

**Wargear**
- Master-crafted power sword
- Archaeotech pistol
- Iron halo
- Ambulator frame
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Psi-jammer

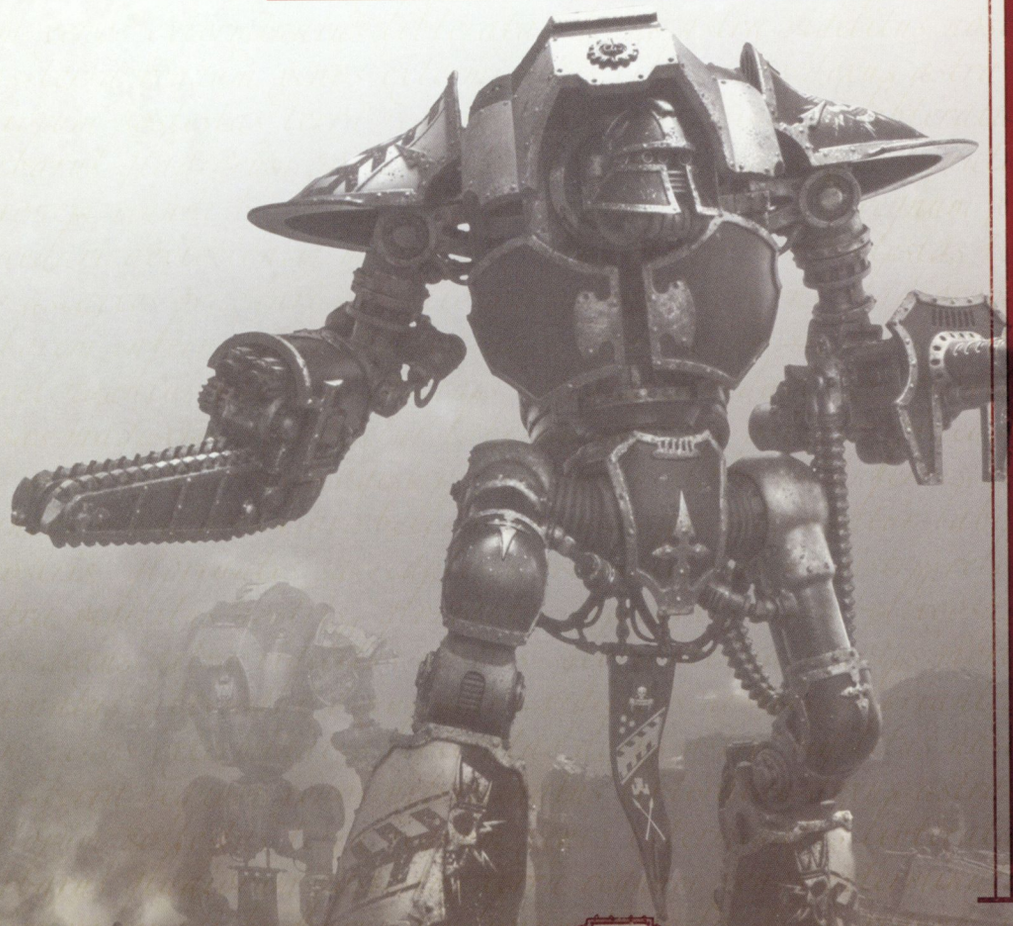
**Special Rules**
- Hatred (Traitor forces)
- Independent Character
- Disciplined Fire
- High Command
- Close Formation Fighting
- Household Retinue
- Protector of Agathon
- Warlord (If MaSade is your army's Warlord, he has the Master of the Battlefield trait rather than rolling randomly)

**Warlord: Master of the Battlefield**
After both sides have been deployed but before the game begins, MaSade's owning player may redeploy D3 units of their choice – this may take units already deployed and place them in Reserves or vice versa.

**Protector of Agathon**
Ireton MaSade has the might and industrial power of an entire stellar domain to call upon to serve his military needs, and the wit to employ such resources effectively to the battlefield. The first time any unit (other than a Dedicated Transport, Lords of War or Unique unit) in the same detachment as Ireton MaSade is destroyed, roll a D6. On a roll of a 5 or 6, a new identical unit is placed in the owning player's Ongoing Reserves.

**Ambulator frame**
This life support exoskeleton uses irreplaceable relic technology of the Dark Age. It counteracts the infirmities of his years and acts as Artificer armour (2+ armour save), and gives him the It Will Not Die special rule.

*Loyalist Faction: Lord Marshal Ireton MaSade may only be chosen as part of a Loyalist Primary Detachment and must be its Warlord.*



HQ

One of the many human warlords of the Great Crusade whose own meteoric career and martial glories were largely overshadowed by the superhuman warriors of the Legiones Astartes, Ireton MaSade was nevertheless something of a legend among the Solar Auxilia.

Born to the scavenger tribes of the Talacra Silt Wastes to the west of Old Albia on Terra, as a young man he, like millions of others, joined the muster of the Great Crusade as it first broke free of the Terran system. Assigned to the Solar Auxilia as a common void-soldier, over decades of frontline service he ascended swiftly through the ranks by dint of great intelligence, cold-blooded bravery and a phenomenal natural talent for warfare. Eventually, he gained the rare honour of the command of an entire Expeditionary fleet of the Great Crusade after its previous master died in battle, a brevet command later ratified by the hand of the Emperor directly.

His lifespan extended by Imperial augmetics, MaSade eventually went into retirement as the first Imperial Commander of the hive world of Agathon at the end of his long service and was all but forgotten by his peers until the wars of the Horus Heresy would see him rise again to war, driven by vengeance.

# Auxilia Tactical Command Section

75 points

HQ

Solar Auxilia Tactical Command Sections are specialists in battlefield command and control. They facilitate the flow of orders, direct the Tercio's actions and co-ordinate artillery and orbital operations.

The Section comprises a Proclaimator, equipped with communications equipment linked to every node in the chain of command. A Strategos, a Junior Officer (or more rarely a seconded fleet officer or even an Expeditionary Navigator or Astropath) tasked with issuing tactical orders and co-ordinating orbital support fire as well as the movements of drop vessels, shuttles and logistics transports. The Section also includes a Vexilarius, a warrior who has earned the honour of bearing the unit's standard. The Vexilarius might be chosen for this signal honour having performed an act of bravery or feat of arms, or because their skills are so renowned that should the standard touch the ground, the battle is already lost.

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strategos | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 4+ |
| Vexilarius | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4+ |
| Proclaimator | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4+ |
| Veteran Auxiliary | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Strategos
- 1 Proclaimator
- 1 Vexilarius
- 2 Veteran Auxiliaries

**Unit Type**
- Strategos/Vexilarius/ Proclaimator: Infantry (Character)
- Veteran Auxiliary: Infantry

**Wargear**
- Void armour
- Close combat weapon
- Laspistol
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Cohort Vexilla (Vexilarius only)
- Cognis-signum (Strategos only)
- Nuncio-vox (Proclaimator only)
- Auxilia lasrifle with collimator and blast-charger (Veteran Auxiliary only)

**Special Rules**
- Disciplined Fire
- Close Formation Fighting
- Precision Bombardment (Strategos only)
- Disciplined Command

**Dedicated Transport**
- The unit may take either a Dracosan Armoured Transport or an Auxilia Arvus Lighter Orbital Shuttle as a Dedicated Transport.

**Options**
- The squad may include:
  - Up to five additional Veteran Auxilia ..... +5 points each
- The Strategos may exchange either their laspistol and/or their close combat weapon for the following options:
  - Blast pistol ..... +2 points
  - Charnabal sabre ..... +5 points
  - Needle pistol ..... +5 points
  - Hand flamer ..... +10 points
  - Plasma pistol ..... +10 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
  - Power fist ..... +15 points
- Up to two of the Veteran Auxilia in the unit can exchange their lasgun, blast-charger and collimator for one weapon from the following:
  - Volkite charger ..... +5 points each
  - Grenade launcher (kinetic, tempest and krak) ..... +5 points each
  - Flamer ..... +5 points each
  - Rotor cannon ..... +10 points each
  - Meltagun ..... +10 points each
  - Plasma gun ..... +15 points each

**Precision Bombardment**

Once per game, in lieu of firing a weapon, the Strategos may call in a Precision Bombardment with the profile listed below. This attack may not be carried out if the Strategos is engaged in an assault or Falling Back.

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Precision Bombardment | Unlimited | 9 | 2 | Ordnance 1, Barrage, Pinning, Large Blast (5") |



# Auxilia Tank Commander

## 55 points + Cost of Tank

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Auxilia Tank Commander | - | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Auxilia Tank Commander

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (as per Tank, Character)

**Special Rules**
- Armoured Warfare
- Tank Ace
- Disciplined Command
- Support Officer

**Options**
- The Auxilia Tank Commander has no specific options. Their tank, however, may receive options as normal for its type.

**Armoured Warfare**
The Auxilia Tank Commander must be attached to either an Auxilia Leman Russ tank (of any type), Malcador tank, Valdor Tank Destroyer, Baneblade, Stormblade, Stormlord, Stormhammer or Shadowsword which is also present in the army. Note that this means there must be at least one of these vehicles available for each Auxilia Tank Commander in order for them to be taken as part of an army.

The Auxilia Tank Commander cannot leave their vehicle during the game and is slain when their vehicle is destroyed.

The vehicle to which the Auxilia Tank Commander is attached automatically gains the Command Tank special rule and uses the Tank Commander's BS score of 4, the cost of which has been included in the Tank Commander's own points cost.

**Support Officer**
If chosen as part of a Primary Detachment, an Auxilia Tank Commander cannot be taken as a compulsory HQ choice.

**Tank Ace**
A vehicle commanded by an Auxilia Tank Commander may fire Overwatch with any weapons eligible to do so and, in addition, must choose a single special rule from the following list which applies to the tank:

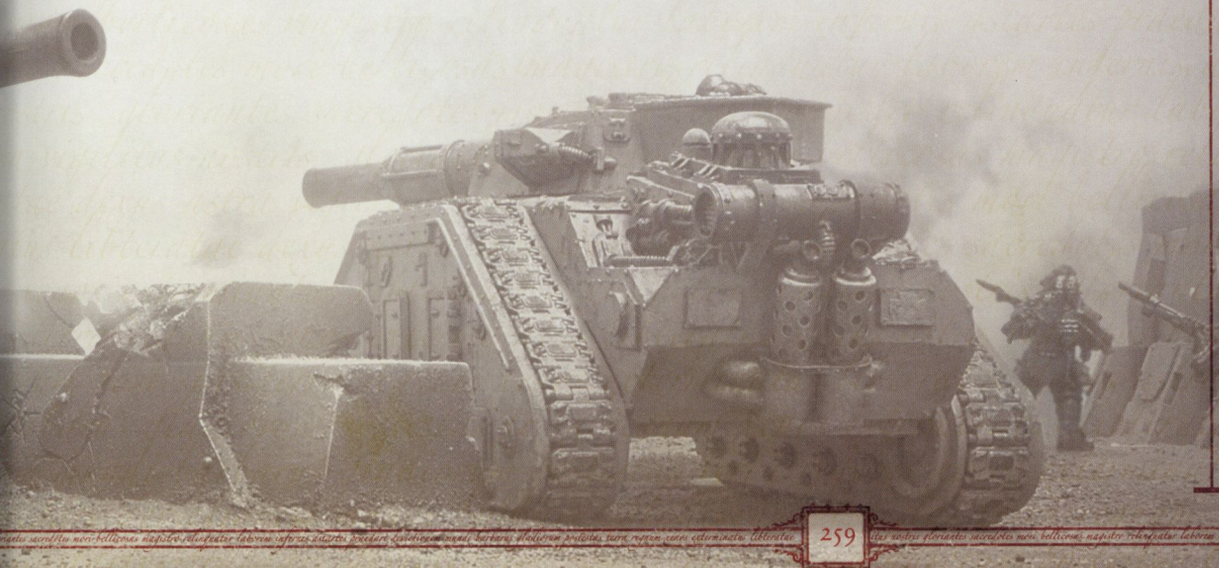
- Tank Hunters
- It Will Not Die
- Scout and Move Through Cover
- Preferred Enemy (Infantry)
- Monster Hunter
- Precision Shots (Note that this does not apply to Blast or Template weaponry)

HQ

The greater orders of battle of the Solar Auxilia include several templates formulated for the prosecution of armoured warfare and all senior officers are well versed in their application.

Tank Commanders are Solar Auxilia officers who specialise in leading armoured assaults, rapid advances and the exploration and domination of worlds too hazardous even for the well equipped Solar Auxilia to explore on foot. These officers are renowned for leading from the front, their attitudes and tactics not unlike the cavalrymen of Ancient Terra. The crews that serve under the Tank Commanders regard themselves as an elite within an elite, though the line auxiliaries often look upon them with barely disguised derision.

The most famous of Solar Auxilia Tank Commanders take to battle in the command turrets of super-heavy tanks. From there they lead entire regiments or even cohorts of tanks of all classes, crushing the enemies of humanity beneath the treads of their fearsome beasts of steel.



# Auxilia Medicae Detachment

60 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Medicae Orderly | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 3 Medicae Orderlies

**Unit Type**
- Infantry (Character)

**Wargear**
- Void armour
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Medi-pack

**Special Rules**
- Disciplined Fire
- Attached Deployment
- Close Formation Fighting

**Options**
- The Medicae Detachment may include:
  - Up to three additional Medicae Orderlies ..... +15 points each
- Any Medicae may be equipped with a:
  - Needle pistol ..... +10 points per model

**Attached Deployment**
Before deployment, each Medicae Orderly must be attached to one of the other Auxilia units in the army, and may not leave that unit for the duration of the game unless that unit is destroyed. If the owning player wishes, multiple Medicae Orderlies may be attached to a single unit.

The following units are eligible to be joined by Medicae Orderlies:
- Auxilia Tactical Command Section
- Auxilia Lasrifle Section
- Auxilia Flamer Section
- Veletaris Storm Section

**Medi-pack**
Comprising a sophisticated array of battlefield medical equipment and triage materials, backed with the skills to best employ it, a medi-pack grants its bearer and any unit they have joined the Feel No Pain (5+) special rule.

The Medicae Orderlies of the Solar Auxilia perform a number of vital functions, for which they receive extensive training and are issued with highly specialised equipment. Firstly, they are responsible for keeping at bay the single most deadly enemy of any human warrior outside of the Legiones Astartes – disease. With the Auxilia operating upon worlds tainted with all manner of ravenous alien microbes, a force could be rendered entirely ineffective before battle is even joined, even with the formidable survival equipment the Solar Auxilia are so well known for.

Secondly, they are responsible for treating combat injuries as they occur, ensuring a unit's effectiveness is maintained even in the heat of battle.

Lastly, they hold the solemn duty of administering the final mercy to a fatally wounded auxiliary. At battle's end, Solar Auxilia Medicae Orderlies are often covered in the blood of those they have euthanised, making them in equal measure figures of respect and dread.



# Auxilia Rapier Battery

35 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rapier | - | - | - | 7 | 2 | - | - | - | 3+ |
| Auxiliary | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Rapier team comprising 1 Rapier Carrier and 2 Auxiliaries

**Unit Type**
- Rapier: Artillery
- Auxiliary: Infantry

**Wargear (Auxiliaries)**
- Void armour
- Lasgun
- Close combat weapon

**Wargear (Rapier)**
- Quad multi-laser

**Special Rules**
- Extremely Bulky (Rapier combined with Crew)
- Disciplined Fire (Auxiliaries)
- Close Formation Fighting (Auxiliaries)

**Options**
- The Rapier Battery may take:
  - Up to two additional Rapier teams ..... +35 points per team
- Any Rapier may exchange its quad multi-laser with one of the following:
  - Laser destroyer array ..... +15 points each
  - Quad mortar (frag & shatter shells) ..... +25 points each
  - Graviton cannon ..... +35 points each



ELITES

The Solar Auxilia makes extensive use of the Rapier weapons carrier, its rugged track assembly able to transport support weaponry too heavy for an auxiliary to carry. The Rapier and other similar classes used throughout the Imperium's military fulfils a number of battlefield roles in both attack and defence, and can be deployed alongside all manner of different force types, from vanguard exploration to full scale planetary assault.

The Solar Auxilia mounts a number of different weapons systems on their Rapier carriers, from the anti-armour laser destroyer to the beloved 'Thudd Gun' multi-launcher. The most common however is the quad multi-laser. This weapon has become synonymous with the Solar Auxilia's victories and many a battle has been won by the Infantry Tercios forming around supporting Rapier batteries as numberless hordes of aliens or feral world primitives close in from all directions, only to be scythed down by the hundred by the unyielding servants of the Imperium.

# Auxilia Ogryn Charonite Squad

185 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ogryn Charonite | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 3 Ogryn Charonites

**Unit Type**
- Infantry

**Wargear**
- Void armour
- Charonite claws

**Special Rules**
- Hammer of Wrath
- Stubborn
- Very Bulky
- Dead-man's Switch
- Feel No Pain (6+)
- Brutal Fighters
- Mind-slave

**Options**
- The unit may take:
  - Up to six additional Ogryn Charonites.....+55 points each

**Dead-man's Switch**
When the Charonite Ogryns unit fails a Morale check, and their owning player has at least one unengaged HQ unit from the same Primary Detachment on the table, they may choose to employ the Dead-man's Switch. The Charonite Ogryns unit immediately negates the failed test but suffers D3 wounds with no saves of any kind allowed – each wound is randomised among the surviving models in the unit.

**Mind-slave**
All Ogryn Auxilia Charonites have been subject to extensive cranial surgery and implanted chemical controls. While this removes the possibility of inattention and mutiny, it makes them incapable of little else but brute obedience. Units with this special rule cannot voluntarily Go to Ground and are never counted as scoring units.

**Brutal Fighters**
Models with this special rule must always attempt to make Sweeping Advances, and when consolidating after combat must always move towards the closest enemy unit.

**Charonite Claws**
These devices —heavily constructed servo-claws and matched augmetic implants, purpose built and surgically bonded in place of the Ogryn's own hands and forearms— have an obscure origin in the early days of the Great Crusade and are principally intended for use in the murderous confines of shipboard combat. Designed to amplify and take advantage of the Ogryn's already superhuman strength and physical stature, they can crush and rip through armour plate and ceramite with ease, and if the Ogryn Charonite can gain purchase with both 'hands', they are designed to retract apart from each other with flesh-rending force, savagely dismembering their victims.

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Charonite claws | - | +1 | 3 | Melee, Flesh Ripper |

**Flesh Ripper:** Any rolls To Hit of a 6 should be separated out from the Hit pool and dealt with separately. These are treated as having AP 2 and the Instant Death special rule.



## ELITES

Living weapons whose dark origins lay lost within the Age of Strife, Charonites are biochemically and cybernetically altered Ogyrn abhumans, mutilated in mind and body and left entirely creatures of brute obedience and drug-induced frenzy by remote control.

Found among the arsenals of several void-capable human pocket-civilisations within the Segmentum Solar, the difficult and unstable technologies used in their creation were deemed proscribed and unholy by the Mechanicum and may in part have had alien origins. Despite this the Solar Auxilia, thanks to their strong connection both with the Saturnyne enclaves of Terra and the celestial keeps of Pavonis, both of whom retained much of their independence after Imperial Compliance, retained a dispensation for the creation and use of Charonites in limited numbers, despite the opprobrium of Mars.

As the Horus Heresy raged, many Loyalist Solar Auxilia commands, particularly those cut off from Terra, turned to the creation of Charonites to strengthen their forces, particularly as a match against the power of Traitor Legiones Astartes and Dark Mechanicum forces, although the difficulty of their creation ensured that such products of Old Night did not become widespread.

# Enginseer Auxilia

65 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enginseer Adept | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 3+ |
| Servo-automata | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 5+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Enginseer Adept
- 4 Servo-automata

**Unit Type**
- Enginseer Adept Infantry (Character)
- Servo-automata (Infantry)

**Wargear (Enginseer Adept)**
- Power armour
- Laspistol
- Power axe
- Servo-arm

**Wargear (Servo-automata)**
- Close combat weapon

**Special Rules (Enginseer)**
- Battlesmith
- Servo-automata Support

**Special Rules (Servo-automata)**
- Cybernetica

**Options**
- The unit may include:
  - Up to two additional Enginseer Adepts.....+20 points per model
- The unit may include:
  - Up to four additional Servo-automata.....+5 points each
- The Enginseer Adept may take any of the following:
  - Nuncio-vox.....+10 points
  - Augury scanner.....+5 points
  - Volkite charger.....+10 points
  - Cortex controller.....+15 points
  - Graviton gun.....+15 points
  - Infravisor.....+5 points
  - Refractor field.....+10 points
  - Cyber-familiar.....+10 points
- The Enginseer Adept may take melta bombs.....+5 points each
- Any Servo-automata may take one of the following weapons:
  - Servo-arm.....+5 points
  - Flamer.....+5 points
  - Phased plasma fusil.....+10 points
  - Rotor cannon.....+10 points
  - Grenade launcher (kinetic, tempest and krak grenades)...+10 points
  - Heavy bolter.....+15 points
  - Multi-melta.....+15 points

**Cybernetica**
If the Servo-automata are no longer accompanied by an Enginseer or Magos, they must take a Pinning test at the start of each Movement phase unless they are already engaged in combat (in which case they fight on normally).

**Servo-automata Support**
For each additional servo-arm armed Servo-automata in the unit, the Enginseer gains +1 to their Battlesmith rolls (note that a roll of '1' will still fail regardless of this bonus).

**Battle-automata:** If one or more Cortex Controllers are present in the detachment, then additional Battle-automata units become available for the army (see page 291).

## ELITES

No army in the Emperor's mighty hosts can prosecute the wars of the Great Crusade or the Age of Darkness without the support of the Mechanicum, for only the adepts of the Omnissiah are capable of maintaining the staggering array of weapons, war machines and specialised wargear employed. To this end, Solar Auxilia Cohorts are accompanied on campaign by a host of adepts, a wide range of the many orders and sects of the Mechanicum represented in their ranks and performing a myriad of different roles.

Sometimes, these adepts deploy to battle alongside the Solar Auxilia, where their mastery of the arts of the machine can be brought to bear in the most destructive manner. Some are accompanied by a retinue of servo-automata, bolstering their firepower and affording them additional protection from the enemy. Quite aside from the fearsome array of deadly weapons an Enginseer can bring to bear in battle, they are able to repair damaged war machines and upgrade field defences, as well as issuing machine-cant commands to the various classes of Mechanicum Battle-automata that might also accompany the force.

## TROOPS

The mainstay of the Auxilia are the Infantry Tercios, groupings of up to three Lasrifle Sections trained and equipped to fight in close formation as part of a larger company force. They can also fight as armoured infantry, mounting each section in a Dracosan Armoured Transport, a formidable carrier that serves as a section's base of operations throughout a campaign and which combines a potent array of weaponry with substantial armour, extensive life support systems and extended operational range.

When deployed as a colonial Expeditionary force, the Solar Auxilia is called upon to prosecute a landing in a hostile zone, which they rapidly fortify in expectation of swift and overwhelming enemy counter-attack. To this end, they are accompanied by pioneer companies that prepare the ground for defence within hours of landing, erecting defence lines augmented with weapons points, ammunition stockpiles and communications nodes. When the inevitable counter-attack arrives, it is met by a wall of plasteel bristling with steel and manned by warriors for whom retreat is not an option and victory the only means of living to see another day.

# Auxilia Infantry Tercio (1-3 Sections)

The basic military division of the Solar Auxilia is the Infantry Tercio, a flexible arrangement of three sub-units or 'Sections' of armoured infantry of various battlefield roles. When selecting forces using the Solar Auxiliary army list and when using detachments, a Tercio of up to three Sections comprises a single Troops choice on the Force Organisation chart being used.

All the Sections comprising a Tercio must be deployed simultaneously or, if held in Reserves, count as a single unit, with all of its Sections required to enter play at the same time. After deployment, however, each Section is considered a separate Troops choice for the purposes of scoring or denying objectives, and yields up Victory points if destroyed as per the Victory Conditions for the mission being played.

Each Tercio must contain at least one Section, and may contain up to another two Sections as desired. The points cost for the Tercio is equivalent to the combined cost of its Sections.

**Troop Master:** One Sergeant in the Tercio's Sections may be upgraded to a Troop Master. A highly experienced soldier and field commander, the Troop Master uses a separate profile but retains the options of a Sergeant.

**Support Section:** An Auxilia Infantry Tercio may only contain Sections with this rule if it already contains at least one Auxilia Lasrifle Section.

**Dedicated Transports:** The Auxilia Infantry Tercio as a whole may be bought up to three Dracosan Armoured Transports as Dedicated Transports (see page 270 for details).

**Special Fortifications:** So long as no Dedicated Transports are selected for the Auxilia Infantry Tercio, then when using the Battles of the Age of Darkness Force Organisation chart as your Primary Detachment for this army, the player may also take a single Aegis Defence Line (see page 269) for each section in the Tercio for the appropriate points cost. These defence lines take up no Force Organisation choices for the army and may be upgraded normally. If this option is taken, the Tercio must be deployed on the table at the start of the game and may not be held in Reserves.



# Auxilia Lasrifle Section

100 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Troop Master | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 4+ |
| Sergeant | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 4+ |
| Vexilla Bearer | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4+ |
| Vox Operator | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4+ |
| Auxiliary | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Sergeant
- 1 Vexilla Bearer
- 1 Vox Operator
- 17 Auxiliaries

**Unit Type**
- Troop Master /Sergeant: Infantry (Character)
- Auxiliary/Vexilla Bearer/Vox Operator: Infantry

**Wargear**
- Void armour
- Auxilia lasrifle
- Collimator
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades
- Nuncio-vox (Vox Operator)
- Troop Vexilla (Vexilla Bearer)

**Special Rules**
- Disciplined Fire
- Close Formation Fighting
- Hold the Line

**Options**
- The Sergeant may take melta bombs ..... +5 points
- The Sergeant may exchange their lasgun and collimator and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Laspistol ..... Free
  - Blast pistol ..... +2 points
  - Charnabal sabre ..... +5 points
  - Needle pistol ..... +5 points
  - Hand flamer ..... +10 points
  - Plasma pistol ..... +10 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
  - Power fist ..... +15 points
- One Sergeant in the Tercio may be upgraded to be a:
  - Troop Master ..... +15 points
- The entire section may be given:
  - Blast-chargers for their lasrifles ..... +25 points

**Zone Mortalis Deployment**
In games of Zone Mortalis, an Auxilia Lasrifle Section must be broken into two equally sized squads of ten models before play. These are treated as separate units during the game, but still count as being part of the same Tercio.



TROOPS

Solar Auxiliaries are recruited from all over the Imperium, from void born asteroid miners to underhive scum, and such cultures are the fuel of the Imperium's growth. While most pressed into the Emperor's armies join the line regiments of the Imperial Army, those who display the right combination of aggression, discipline and skill-at-arms are earmarked for the Solar Auxilia Cohorts, affording them an undreamed-of escape from the gutter into a life of service across the myriad battlefields of the war-torn galaxy.

The image of Auxilia Lasrifle Sections arrayed in multiple, disciplined ranks standing firm against hordes of alien foes is a celebrated one, but it is far from the only way in which they are deployed. Infantry Tercios are adept at fighting in loose order in 'Zone Mortalis' missions or launching massed assaults across the most hostile of the galaxy's battlefields, and it is said that a Solar Auxiliary is second only to a transhuman Astartes, an elite amongst humanity's many fighting forces.

# Veletaris Storm Section

115 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Prime | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 4+ |
| Veletarii | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Prime
- 9 Veletarii

**Unit Type**
- Prime: Infantry (Character)
- Veletarii: Infantry

**Wargear**
- Reinforced void armour
- Volkite charger
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades

**Special Rules**
- Disciplined Fire
- Move Through Cover
- Hold the Line
- Close Formation Fighting

**Options**
- The Prime may take melta bombs.....+5 points
- The Prime may exchange their laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Blast pistol.....+2 points
  - Charnabal sabre.....+5 points
  - Needle pistol.....+5 points
  - Hand flamer.....+10 points
  - Plasma pistol.....+10 points
  - Power weapon.....+10 points
  - Power fist.....+15 points
- One Veletarii may carry a nuncio-vox for.....+10 points
- The entire Section may be equipped with:
  - Shroud bombs.....+25 points
- The Section's Veletarii may exchange their volkite chargers for one of the following weapon types. If this option is chosen, all of the Veletarii must be upgraded to carry the same weapon. If this is done then the Section's Prime may also exchange their weapon for the same type as the Section, although this is not compulsory:
  - Rotor cannon.....Free
  - Power axe.....+5 points each

## TROOPS

The Veletarii are the most skilled and dedicated warriors in the Solar Auxilia, issued with the most potent weaponry and tasked with the most arduous of battlefield missions. Veletaris Storm Sections are often gathered together into special, cohort-level reserves which serve as their commander's household under his direct command, or they may be raised on a company-by-company basis. On occasion, they serve as a formal guard of honour for the Legate Commander, bearing ceremonial power axes which they sometimes even use in battle.

The Veletaris are deployed in a number of roles. Some commanders use them as shock troops whose discipline and firepower can overwhelm even the most fearsome of enemies. Others utilise them as a line reserve, able to react quickly to enemy breakthroughs and bolster a wavering defence.





**Veletaris of the 905th Solar Auxilia Cohort (the '*Ash Scorpions*'):** The elite Veletaris squads of the Ash Scorpions formed the speartip of the 905th's assault on the Traitors that had taken control of Port Maw. They fought with savage bravery against Battle-automata of Archmagos-Astral Mercuric in the plasma coil chamber, laying down their lives in the battle to disable Port Maw's reactor control.

TROOPS

Flamer Sections are configured and equipped to provide close support to the Lasrifle Sections, armed with flamer units that project a searing wave of alchemically-fuelled fire capable of incinerating dozens of lightly armoured enemies such as Orks with each blast.

The sections' exact deployment depends on the nature of the battle being fought. In large, set piece actions they are often held just behind the main Lasrifle line, and moved up at the last moment to receive the enemy charge, unleashing a wall of flame through which the foe must assault. Flamer Sections make ideal tactical reserves, beating back any enemy penetration of the Tercio's lines with concentrated blasts of fire. In Zone Mortalis actions, the Flamer Sections are often assigned to lead the way through the dark, cramped passageways, which their weapons can flood with fire the instant an enemy presents itself.

# Auxilia Flamer Section

125 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sergeant | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 4+ |
| Auxiliary | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4+ |

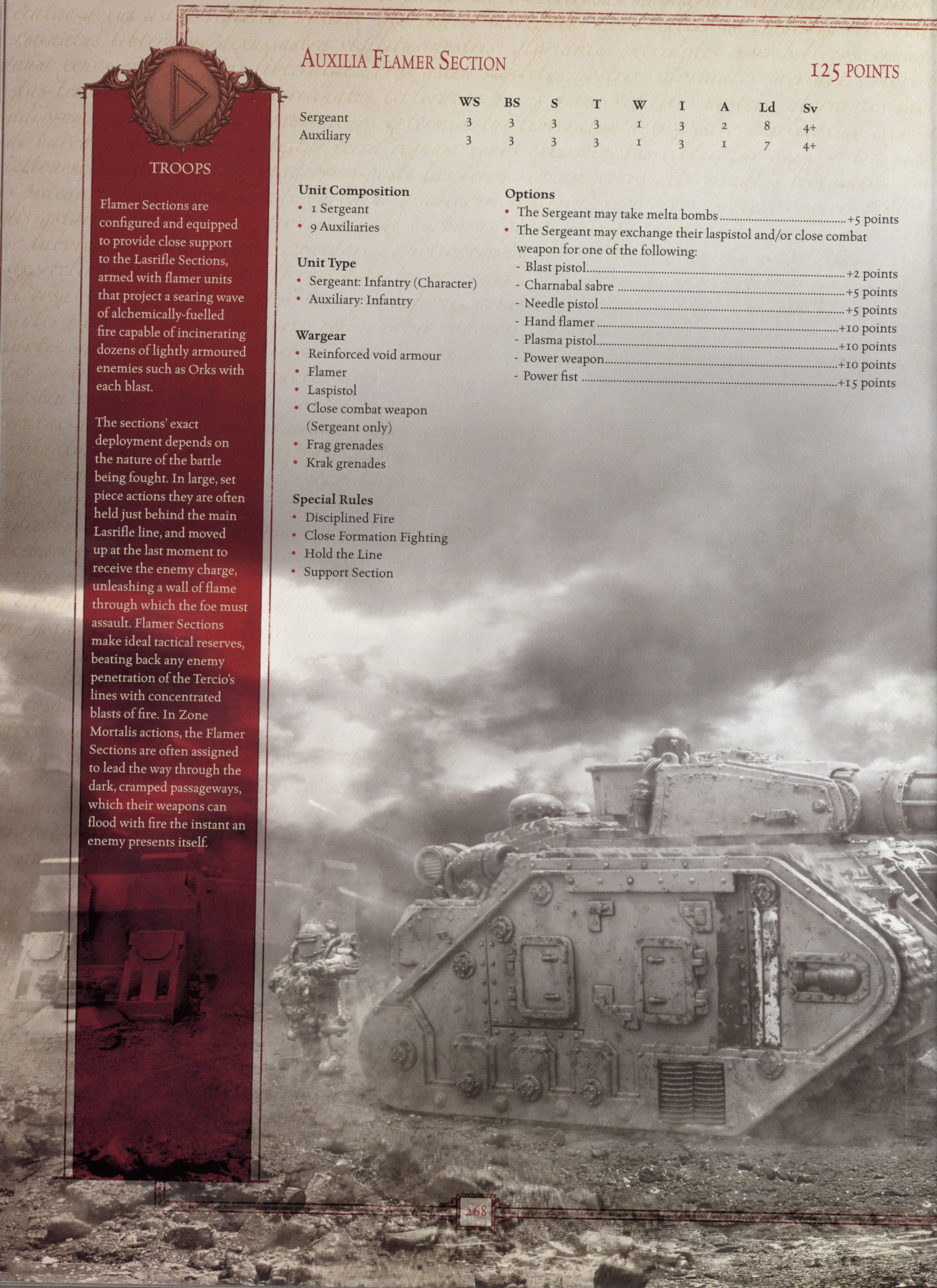
**Unit Composition**
- 1 Sergeant
- 9 Auxiliaries

**Unit Type**
- Sergeant: Infantry (Character)
- Auxiliary: Infantry

**Wargear**
- Reinforced void armour
- Flamer
- Laspistol
- Close combat weapon (Sergeant only)
- Frag grenades
- Krak grenades

**Special Rules**
- Disciplined Fire
- Close Formation Fighting
- Hold the Line
- Support Section

**Options**
- The Sergeant may take melta bombs ..... +5 points
- The Sergeant may exchange their laspistol and/or close combat weapon for one of the following:
  - Blast pistol ..... +2 points
  - Charnabal sabre ..... +5 points
  - Needle pistol ..... +5 points
  - Hand flamer ..... +10 points
  - Plasma pistol ..... +10 points
  - Power weapon ..... +10 points
  - Power fist ..... +15 points



# Aegis Defence Line

50 points

**Composition**
- Up to 4 long and 4 short Aegis Defence Line sections. Each section of Defence Line must be placed in contact with at least one other section.

**Terrain Type**
- Battlefield debris (Defence Lines)

**Weapons**
- None

**Options**
- Any Aegis Defence Line can take one of the following upgrades:
  - Ammunition dump ..... +20 points
  - Comms relay ..... +20 points
  - Icarus lascannon ..... +35 points
  - Quad gun ..... +40 points

**Defence Line**
Models in cover behind Aegis Defence Lines gain a 4+ cover save. If a unit in cover behind an Aegis Defence Line Goes to Ground, it gains a +2 bonus to this cover save. For more information, see the Terrain section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Icarus lascannon | 96" | 9 | 2 | Heavy 1, Interceptor, Skyfire |
| Quad gun | 48" | 7 | 4 | Heavy 4, Interceptor, Skyfire, Twin-linked |

**Ammunition Dump**
A ready supply of ammunition is always welcome in a fight, especially when the dead man's click of a weapon's empty magazine is heard.

Any model within 2" of an ammunition dump re-rolls failed To Hit rolls of 1 in the Shooting phase. A model in cover behind an ammunition dump has a 5+ cover save.

**Comms Relay**
A working comms relay can be crucial to the coordination of reserves, and therefore to a swift victory.

Any player with an unengaged model within 2" of a comms relay can re-roll Reserves rolls. A model in cover behind a comms relay has a 5+ cover save.

## SPECIAL

Aegis Defence Lines are barricades built from crenelated armoured sections that link together into a solid shield wall. Their simple design means that they can be built and deployed at great speed onto a battlefield, leading to their widespread employment in the Solar Auxilia Cohorts, especially in the immediate aftermath of a planetary interface operation.

They are ideally suited for commanders wishing to hold ground in enemy territory or establish defensive perimeters until such time as larger, more permanent fortifications can be constructed.

# Dracosan Armoured Transport

135 points

| | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Dracosan | 3 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 5 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Dracosan Armoured Transport

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Tank, Transport)

**Wargear**
- One twin-linked lascannon
- Searchlight
- Extra armour
- Smoke launcher

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

**Transport Capacity**
- The Dracosan Armoured Transport can transport 20 models, but may not transport Bulky or larger models.

**Fire Points**
- None

**Access Points**
- The Dracosan Armoured Transport has two access hatches, one on each side of the hull.

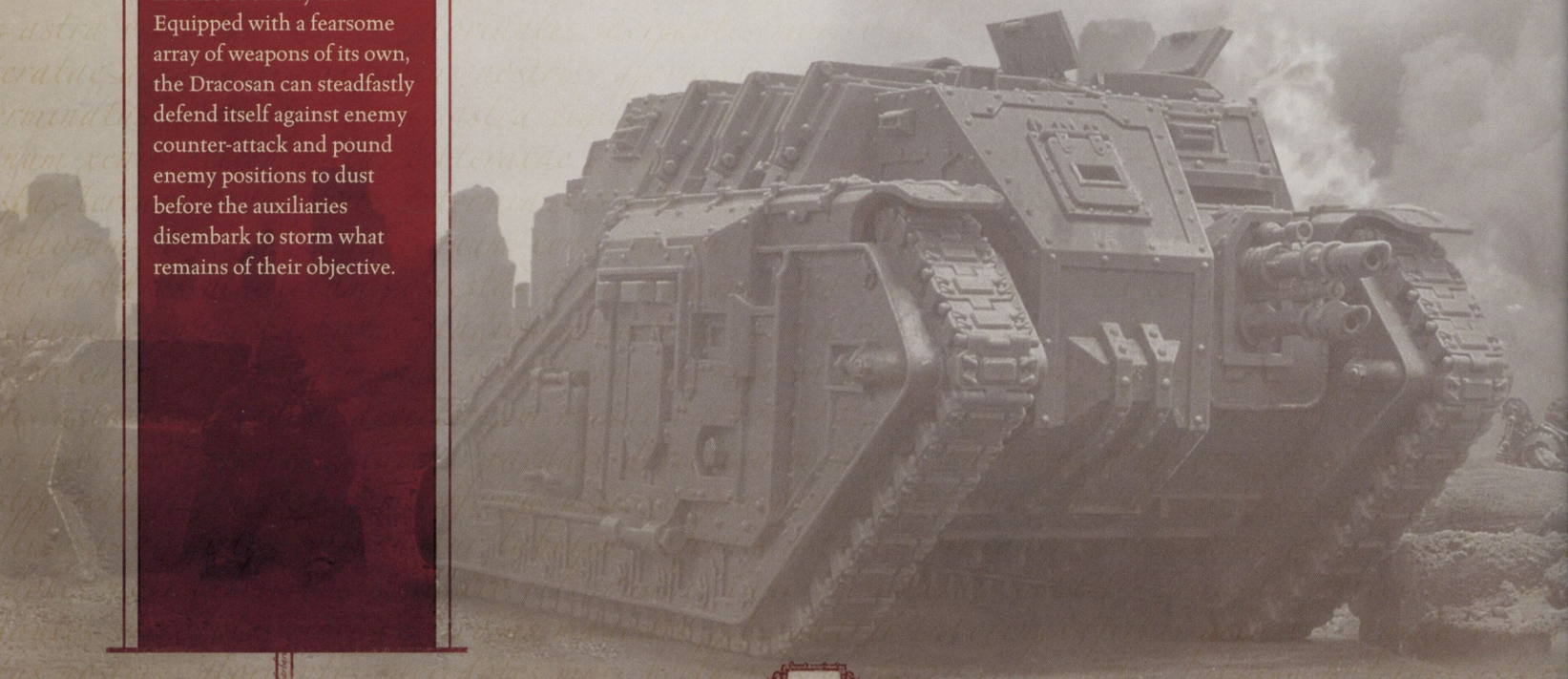
**Options**
- The vehicle may take any of the following:
  - Flare shield ..... +25 points
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +20 points
  - One pintle-mounted multi-laser or heavy flamer ..... +10 points
  - Up to two hunter-killer missiles ..... +10 points each
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points
  - Auxiliary drive ..... +10 points
  - Extra Armour ..... +10 points
- The twin-linked lascannon may be exchanged for a:
  - Demolisher cannon ..... +30 points (if this option is taken, the vehicle's Transport capacity is reduced to 10 models)

## DEDICATED TRANSPORT

The Dracosan is employed almost exclusively by forces configured in the Solar Auxilia pattern, whether these are 'regular' Excertus Imperialis units or other forces following the same order of battle, such as the household troops of certain Rogue Traders Militant or, occasionally, the elite retainers of high status Imperial Commanders.

A heavily armed and armoured carrier, the Dracosan is manufactured under compact by several dozen Forge Worlds across the Imperium to standards only usually required of war machines destined for service with the Legiones Astartes. The Dracosan is large enough to accommodate a full strength Solar Auxilia Infantry Section of twenty auxiliaries, and heavily armoured enough to protect them from all but the most intense of enemy fire. Equipped with a fearsome array of weapons of its own, the Dracosan can steadfastly defend itself against enemy counter-attack and pound enemy positions to dust before the auxiliaries disembark to storm what remains of their objective.





# Auxilia Arvus Lighter Orbital Shuttle

## 75 points

| | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Auxilia Arvus Lighter Orbital Shuttle | 3 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 3 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Auxilia Arvus Lighter Orbital Shuttle

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Flyer, Hover, Transport)

**Wargear**
- None

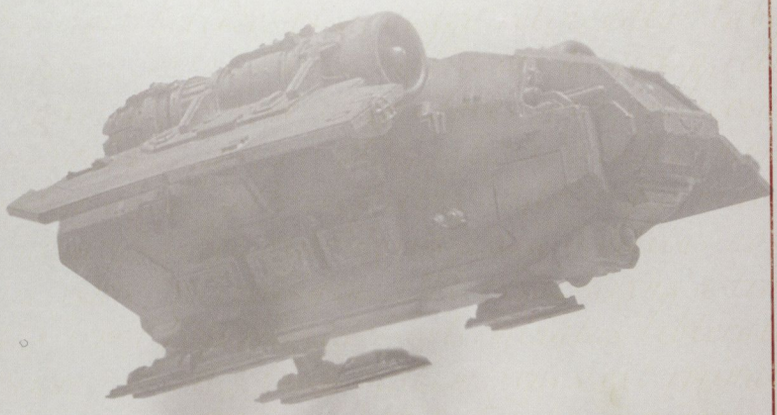
**Special Rules**
- Deep Strike

**Transport Capacity**
- An Auxilia Arvus Lighter Orbital Shuttle has a Transport capacity of 12 models.

**Fire Points**
- None

**Access Points**
- An Auxilia Arvus Lighter Orbital Shuttle has a single access hatch on the rear.

**Options**
- An Auxilia Arvus Lighter Orbital Shuttle may take any of the following:
  - Flare/chaff launcher ..... +10 points
  - Armoured cockpit ..... +15 points
  - Illum flares ..... +5 points
  - Searchlight ..... +1 point
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points
  - Flare shield ..... +20 points
- An Auxilia Arvus Lighter Orbital Shuttle may take one of the following:
  - Multi-laser ..... +10 points
  - Autocannon ..... +10 points
  - Lascannon ..... +20 points
  - Twin-linked multi-laser ..... +15 points
  - Twin-linked autocannon ..... +15 points
  - Twin-linked lascannon ..... +25 points
  - Two hellstrike missiles ..... +20 points



### Dedicated Transport

The Arvus is a light utility shuttle used by the Imperialis Armada for transferring supplies or small groups of personnel from ship-to-ship or ship-to-planet. It is a solid and reliable workhorse shuttle, squat and durable with powerful engines for carrying heavy loads. The utility model of the Arvus is unarmed as it is not a combat vehicle and is not expected to engage the enemy.

The Solar Auxilia makes extensive use of an armed variant of the Arvus and of several similar orbital shuttles, using them to insert infantry sections and command units into a war zone with pinpoint accuracy. Because its carrying capacity is limited to twelve passengers, larger units such as full strength Lasrifle Sections tend to deploy to a world's surface in drop ships able to carry entire Tercios or even companies, leaving the faster and comparatively more manoeuvrable Arvus to fulfil the role of inserting smaller units with specific battlefield tasks to perform.

# Tarantula Sentry Gun Battery

30 points per gun

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sentry Gun | - | 3 | - | 6 | 2 | - | - | - | 3+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1-3 Sentry Guns, forming a battery

**Unit Type**
- Artillery (Immobile)

**Wargear**
- Twin-linked heavy bolters

**Special Rules**
- Automated Artillery
- Firing Modes

**Options**
- Any Sentry Gun in the battery may exchange its twin-linked heavy bolters for:
  - Twin-linked multi-laser ..... Free
  - Twin-linked heavy flamers ..... Free
  - Two twin-linked rotor cannon ..... Free
  - Twin-linked lascannon ..... +10 points per model
  - Multi-melta and searchlight ..... +5 points per model
- The entire Sentry Gun Battery may exchange its twin-linked heavy bolters for a:
  - Hyperios air-defence missile launcher* ..... +20 points per model
- Any Sentry Gun equipped with a Hyperios missile launcher may exchange it for a:
  - Hyperios command platform* ..... +10 points per model
- The entire battery may be upgraded to have one of the following:
  - Concealment ..... +10 points per model
  - Forward Deployment ..... +5 points per model
  - Drop Capsule ..... +20 points per model

**A unit of Sentry Guns with Hyperios missile launchers or Hyperios command platforms does not have the Firing Modes special rule.*

## FAST ATTACK

Possessed of formidable firepower, automated weapons platforms and sentry gun batteries are used by many of the Imperium's diverse armed forces to take on the mundane duties of point defence and security, both planet-side and aboard ship. The most common of these designs is the Tarantula, whose ease of construction, multiple weapons configurations and general reliability have made it a staple of the arsenals of the Great Crusade and a well-regarded, if perhaps inglorious, tool of war.

The Solar Auxilia use the Tarantula to guard exposed flanks and rear line positions where it is judged less likely, but nonetheless possible that an enemy will attack. They are sometimes pressed into service in the front line itself when manpower is stretched dangerously thin. The histories of some of the oldest cohorts contain tales, no doubt elaborated over the decades, of Tarantula weapons batteries granted honorary induction into a regiment following a close fought battle where their presence contributed greatly to the tally of enemy dead.



**Deployment**

- **Forward Deployment:** The Sentry Gun Battery has the Scout special rule (note that it still may not be deployed from Reserves).
- **Concealment:** The Sentry Gun Battery has the Shrouded special rule until the first time it fires its weapons, afterwards the effects of this rule no longer apply.
- **Drop Capsule:** The sentry gun must be deployed via Deep Strike. Each gun in the battery is treated as a separate unit for this, and Reserves rolls, etc., are made separately for each gun.

**Firing Modes**

A Sentry Gun can fire in one of two ways and the controlling player must decide which mode it will be set up in before the start of the game. They cannot change its mode once it has been decided, it remains in that mode for the rest of the game.

- **Point Defence Mode:** The Sentry Gun is set up with a fixed firing arc. In this mode the gun will engage enemy targets up to 36" away which are in a fixed 90° arc to its front.
- **Sentry Mode:** The Sentry Gun is programmed for close defence and may target enemy models within 18" to which it can draw line of sight and can fire all around itself.

**Targeting:** Which enemy unit within range is the Sentry Gun's preferred target is determined by its armament. If no preferred target exists in its line of sight, it will simply attack the nearest enemy target in range:

- A heavy bolter, heavy flamer or rotor cannon-equipped Sentry Gun will fire at the nearest enemy non-Vehicle target according to its firing mode.
- A lascannon or multi-melta equipped Sentry Gun will fire at the nearest enemy Vehicle or Monstrous Creature according to its firing mode (note that immobilised vehicles still count as viable targets, only wrecked vehicles will be ignored).

This means that while a preferred target type is within range, it is possible for a unit of differently armed Sentry Guns to fire at two separate targets.

**Hyperios Air-defence Missile Launcher**

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hyperios missile | 48" | 8 | 3 | Heavy 1, Skyfire, Interceptor, Heat Seeker |

**Heat Seeker**

Jink saves may not be taken against attacks with this special rule.

**Hyperios Command Platform**

As long as the Hyperios Command Platform is on the table, all Hyperios air-defence missile launcher-equipped sentry guns in the same unit receive the Split Fire special rule (the unit automatically passes any Leadership tests it is required to take to use the Split Fire special rule without rolling any dice).

*"Vengeance it is said is the preserve of the gods; gods we in our folly denied ever existed."*

*Captain-General Orson Souzerin III, introit to The Last Cohort*



# Auxilia Leman Russ Strike Squadron

## Points: See below

FAST ATTACK

The Leman Russ battle tank is a reliable and proven armoured vehicle named after the Primarch of the Legiones Astartes Space Wolves in honour of his savage ferocity in war.

Numerous sub-patterns mount a wide array of weapons and in the service of the Auxilia are often enhanced to the 'Solar' pattern, fitted with supplementary survival and exploration systems. Leman Russ tanks in Auxilia strike squadrons are fitted with extended fuel reserves and their engines enhanced with forced induction chargers. These combine to increase the tanks' speed and operational range substantially, allowing them to make wide flanking advances in order to engage an enemy at the moment the infantry sections launch their own attack.

| | | Armour | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP | Points |
| Auxilia Leman Russ Battle Tank | 3 | 14 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 175 |
| Auxilia Leman Russ Exterminator | 3 | 14 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 170 |
| Auxilia Leman Russ Annihilator | 3 | 14 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 170 |
| Auxilia Leman Russ Vanquisher | 3 | 14 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 175 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Auxilia Leman Russ of the types shown

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Tank)

**Wargear**
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers
- Auxiliary drive
- Induction charger
- Battlecannon (Auxilia Leman Russ Battle Tank only)
- Twin-linked lascannon (Auxilia Leman Russ Annihilator only)
- Exterminator autocannon (Auxilia Leman Russ Exterminator)
- Vanquisher battlecannon (Auxilia Leman Russ Vanquisher only)

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption
- Outflank

**Options**
- The squadron may include up to two more Auxilia Leman Russ from the list shown for the cost listed in their profile.
- Any model may exchange its heavy bolter for one of the following:
  - Multi-laser ..... Free
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
  - Lascannon ..... +10 points per model
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +20 points per model
  - One pintle-mounted multi-laser or heavy flamer ..... +10 points per model
  - One hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra Armour ..... +10 points per model

**Induction Charger**
This may be used once per game – declare at the start of the owning player's Movement phase. The squadron counts as having the Fast special rule for this player turn.



# Auxilia Thunderbolt Heavy Fighter

200 points

| | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Thunderbolt | 4 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 3 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Thunderbolt Heavy Fighter

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Flyer)

**Wargear**
- Two twin-linked autocannon
- Twin-linked lascannon
- Armoured cockpit
- Chaff launcher
- Four kinetic piercer missiles

**Special Rules**
- Simulacra Repair
- Supersonic
- Deep Strike
- Combat Interdiction

**Options**
- The Thunderbolt can be equipped with any of the following options:
  - Ground-tracking auguries*.....+10 points
  - Flare shield.....+20 points
- The Thunderbolt may exchange its four kinetic piercer missiles for:
  - Four hellstrike missiles.....Free
  - Four Sunfury heavy missiles*.....+20 points

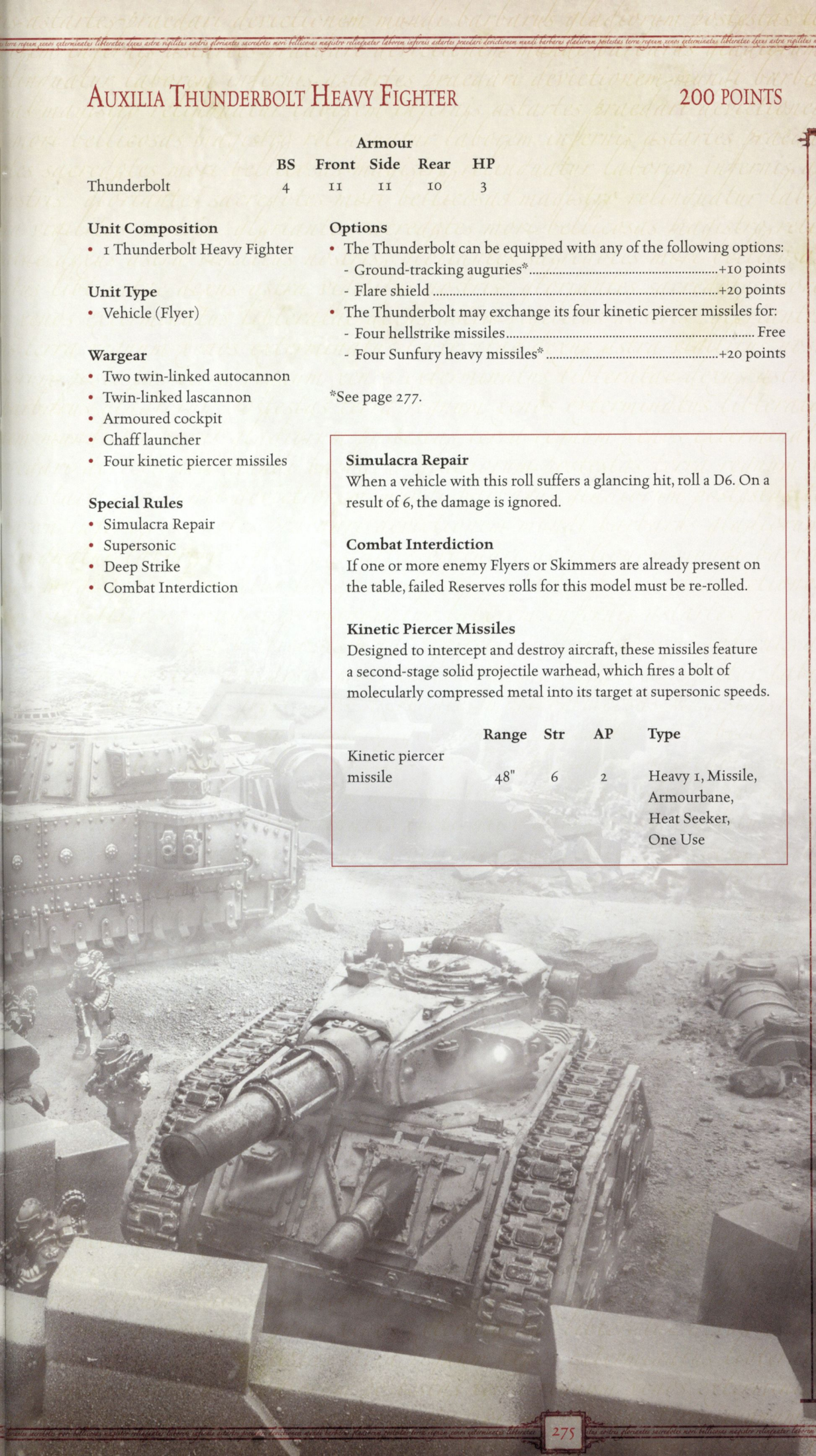
*See page 277.

**Simulacra Repair**
When a vehicle with this roll suffers a glancing hit, roll a D6. On a result of 6, the damage is ignored.

**Combat Interdiction**
If one or more enemy Flyers or Skimmers are already present on the table, failed Reserves rolls for this model must be re-rolled.

**Kinetic Piercer Missiles**
Designed to intercept and destroy aircraft, these missiles feature a second-stage solid projectile warhead, which fires a bolt of molecularly compressed metal into its target at supersonic speeds.

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kinetic piercer missile | 48" | 6 | 2 | Heavy 1, Missile, Armourbane, Heat Seeker, One Use |



FAST ATTACK

A heavy fighter combining devastating strike potential with a high degree of speed and manoeuvrability, the Thunderbolt forms the bulk of the Imperialis Armada's intra-atmosphere fighter aircraft. The Thunderbolt is a true workhorse, with a rugged and reliable design, beloved of its crews and feared by its enemies.

The Thunderbolt's versatile array of armaments enables it to tackle all manner of missions, making it ideal for dominating the skies of alien worlds as the Solar Auxilia land, and supporting them in battle as they advance. The Thunderbolt can fulfil a range of missions, from hunting tanks and ground strikes, yet its main role is that of an air-superiority fighter, engaging enemy craft in dogfights or hunting down enemy bombers. Its most famous characteristic, however, is sheer resilience and it is not unusual for a Thunderbolt to land riddled with damage that would have downed a lesser craft.

# Auxilia Primaris-Lightning Strike Fighter

135 points

FAST ATTACK

A relatively recent addition to the armouries of the Great Crusade, the Primaris-Lightning Strike Fighter is a high-speed sub-orbital fighter craft designed for rapid interception, interdiction and surgical-strike roles. Created by the Archmagos-Arbiter Sykosk Thule, master of the sovereign Forge World of Voss, the Primaris-Lightning represented a new paradigm in aero-warcraft, being built around a powerful forced-plasma ramjet drive and optimised for the most sophisticated munitions and avionics systems available.

While exceeding all similar patterns in service of its size for speed and payload capacity, it was extremely costly to produce, proved difficult to maintain and difficult to handle by all but the most experienced pilots —flaws Sykosk attributed purely to the failure of weak flesh. These factors, however, saw the pattern's issue limited to elite close support units, while a 'degraded' —if more easy to operate and maintain— version of the Lightning was rumoured to be under consideration just prior to the outbreak of the Horus Heresy, although this reduced pattern played no part in the conflict.

| | | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Auxilia Primaris-Lightning | 4 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 2 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Auxilia Primaris-Lightning

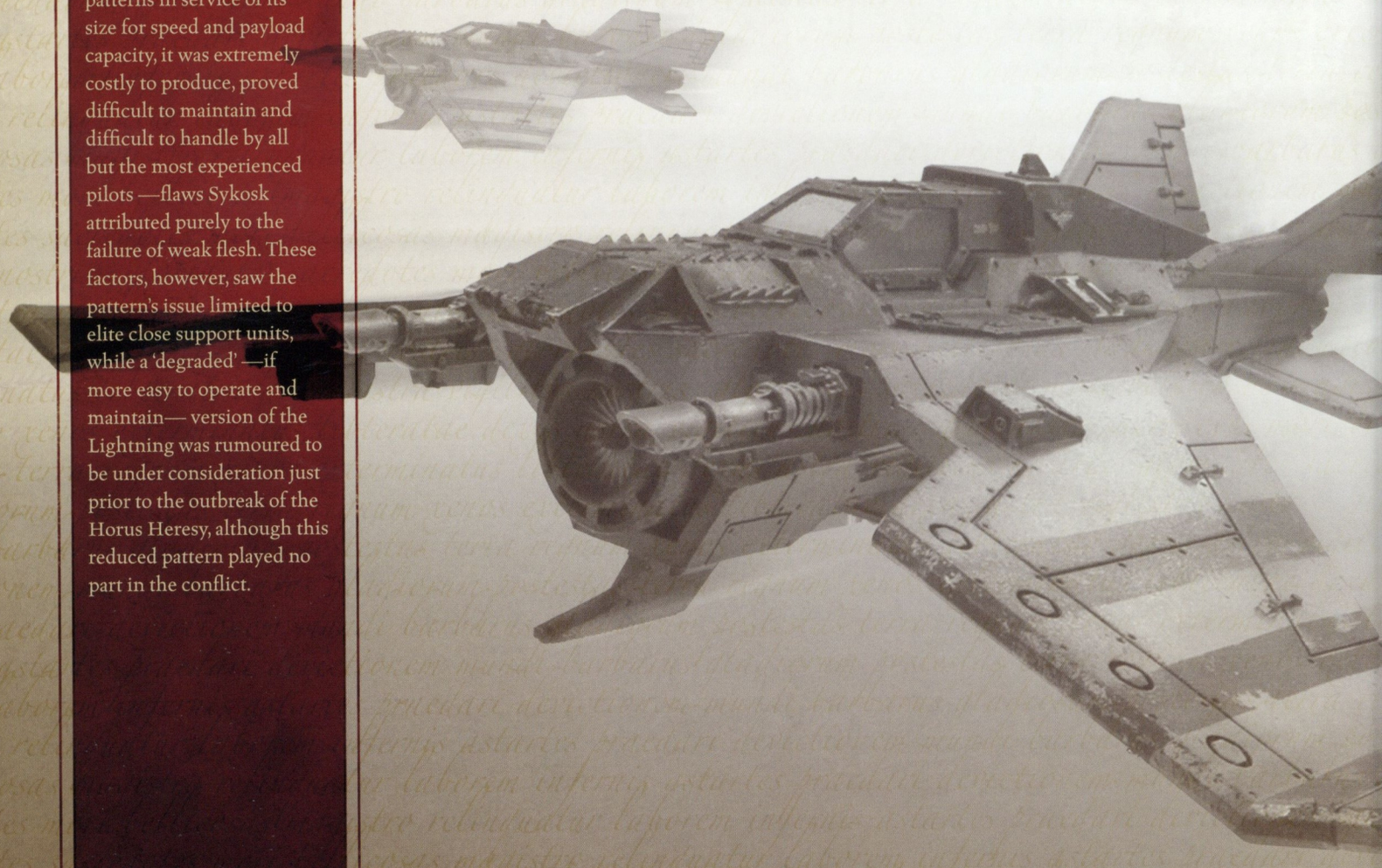
**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Flyer)

**Wargear**
- Chaff launcher
- Twin-linked lascannon
- Armoured cockpit

**Special Rules**
- Agile
- Deep Strike
- Supersonic
- Missile Barrage

**Options**
- The Auxilia Primaris-Lightning is equipped with three dual hardpoint mounts, each of which can be equipped with one of the following payload options at the cost listed:
  - Twin-linked autocannon ..... +20 points
  - Twin-linked multi-laser ..... +20 points
  - Twin-linked missile launcher (equipped with frag and krak) ..... +25 points
  - Two Sunfury heavy missiles ..... +15 points
  - Two Kraken penetrator heavy missiles ..... +25 points
  - Phosphex bomb cluster ..... +25 points
  - Two electromagnetic storm charges ..... +20 points
- The Auxilia Primaris-Lightning may be equipped with any of the following:
  - Battle Servitor Control ..... +15 points
  - Ground-tracking Auguries ..... +10 points
  - Ramjet Diffraction Grid ..... +20 points

**Special Ordnance: Rad Missiles**
If the Auxilia Primaris-Lightning is equipped with one or more twin-linked missile launchers, these may be upgraded to further carry rad missiles for +15 points per twin-linked launcher.



**Agile**
A unit with this special rule increases any cover saves granted by the Jink special rule by +1.

**Ground-tracking Auguries**
A Flyer that is equipped with this system gains the Strafing Run special rule.

**Deadly Cargo**
If the Flyer carrying unused weapons with this special rule takes hull damage but is not destroyed, roll a D6. On the result of a 6, the Flyer suffers an Explodes! result on the Vehicle Damage chart.

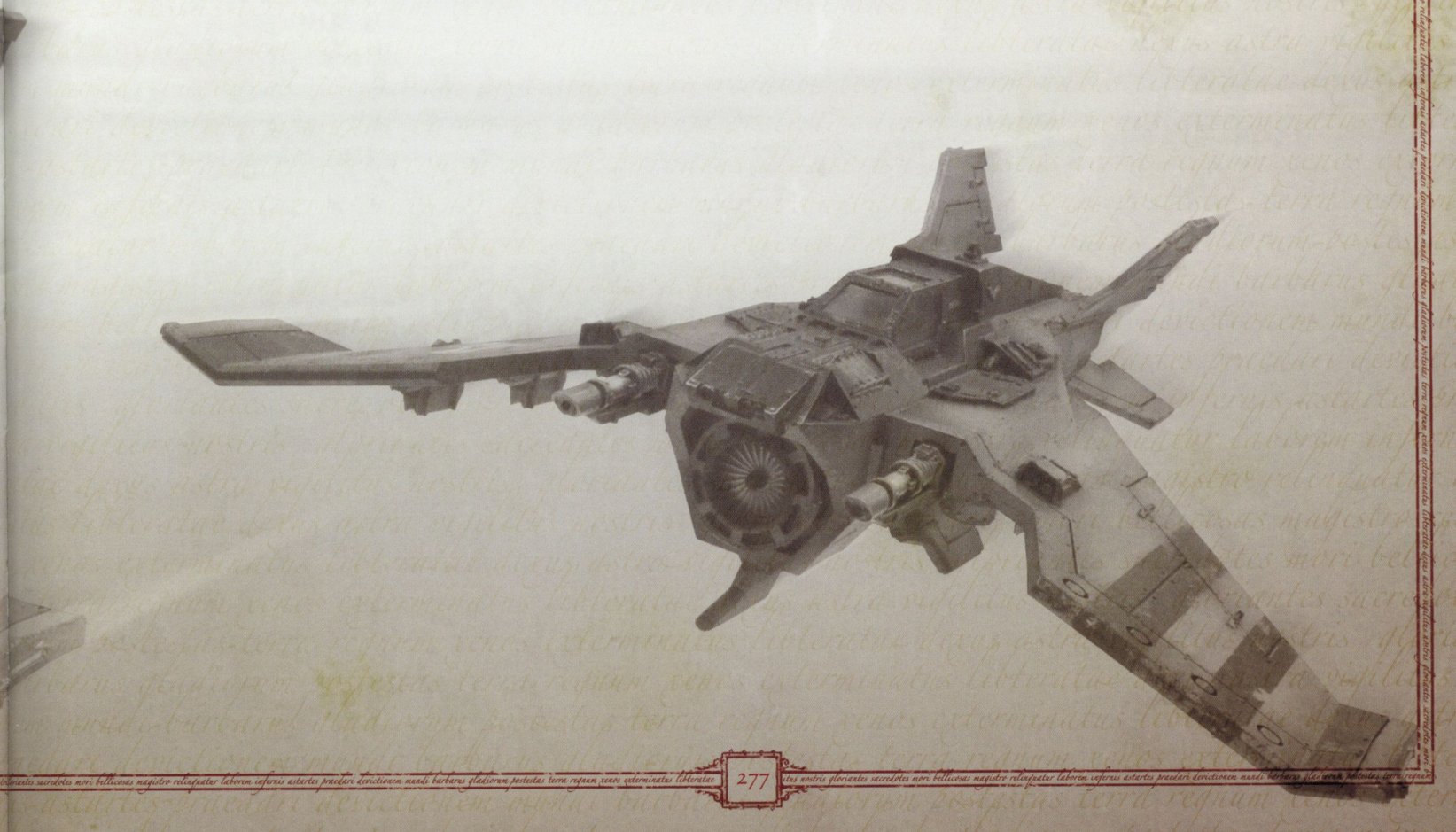
**Battle Servitor Control**
A Primaris-Lightning may replace its human crew with hard-wired servitor control and dedicated cogitator targeting arrays, designed to identify and target weak spots on enemy vehicles. This upgrade gives the Primaris-Lightning the Tank Hunters special rule.

**Lingering Death**
When a Blast weapon with this rule is used, after the attack is resolved leave the Blast marker in play for the rest of the game and mark it with a counter of some kind. This area is now treated as dangerous terrain for all models with a Toughness value and open-topped vehicles. Note: It is advisable to have multiple spare blast markers when using this rule!

**Crawling Fire**
After the blast marker for a weapon with this rule is placed, the firer may move the marker up to 2" in any direction so long as this would cover more models than previously.

**Primaris-Lightning Weapons**
The Primaris-Lightning was specifically intended to operate some of the most advanced and savage munitions in the arsenal of the later Great Crusade era—sometimes unstable weapons of baleful design and born of the darkest arts of the Mechanicum's priests of the machine.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sunfury heavy missile | 36" | 6 | 3 | Heavy 1, Missile, Large Blast (5"), Blind, Gets Hot, One Use |
| Kraken penetrator heavy missile | 36" | 8 | 1 | Heavy 1, Missile, Armourbane, One Use |
| Phosphex bomb cluster | - | 5 | 2 | Bomb 2, Barrage, Bomb Cluster, Blast (3"), Poisoned (3+), Crawling Fire, Lingering Death, Deadly Cargo, One Use |
| Electromagnetic storm charge | - | 3 | 4 | Bomb 1, Haywire, Large Blast (5"), Concussive, One Use |



# Auxilia Leman Russ Assault Squadron

## Points: See below

HEAVY SUPPORT

Leman Russ Assault squadrons consist of heavily armoured variants of the Solar pattern Leman Russ tanks re-configured for direct assault against fortified enemies. They lack the speed of the strike Russ squadrons but are formidably durable.

Their main weapons are comparatively short ranged in relation to the artillery batteries, but they are used in a direct assault role or in close support of the Infantry Tercios, in particular those mounted in Dracosan Armoured Carriers.

The plasma destroyer mounted on the Executioner and the volkite demi culverin with which the Incinerator is armed are rare and highly prized weapons more commonly seen on the war machines of the Legiones Astartes, and they must be painstakingly calibrated and intensively ministered to by Tech-Priests assigned to the cohort to ensure their continued operation.

| | | Armour | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP | Points |
| Auxilia Leman Russ Demolisher | 3 | 14 | 13 | 11 | 4 | 195 |
| Auxilia Leman Russ Incinerator | 3 | 14 | 13 | 11 | 4 | 185 |
| Auxilia Leman Russ Executioner | 3 | 14 | 13 | 11 | 4 | 200 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Auxilia Leman Russ of the types shown

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Tank)

**Wargear**
- Heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers
- Auxiliary drive
- Demolisher siege cannon (Auxilia Leman Russ Demolisher only)
- Executioner plasma cannon (Auxilia Leman Russ Executioner only)
- Twin-linked volkite demi culverin (Auxilia Leman Russ Incinerator only)

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption
- Co-ordinated Fire Protocols

**Options**
- The squadron may include up to two more Auxilia Leman Russ from the list shown for the cost listed in their profile.
- Any model may exchange its heavy bolter for one of the following:
  - Multi-laser ..... Free
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
  - Lascannon ..... +10 points per model
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +20 points per model
  - One pintle-mounted multi-laser or heavy flamer ..... +10 points per model
  - One hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Extra armour ..... +10 points per model

**Co-ordinated Fire Protocols**
So long as two or more tanks from the same squadron are firing at the same target unit, the tanks firing at that selected target gain +1 BS.



# Auxilia Artillery Tank Battery

## Points: See below

| | Armour | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP | Points |
| Auxilia Basilisk | 3 | 13 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 160 |
| Auxilia Medusa | 3 | 13 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 175 |
| Auxilia Bombard | 3 | 13 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 180 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 of the following: Basilisk, Medusa or Bombard

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Tank)

**Wargear**
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers
- Earthshaker cannon (Auxilia Basilisk only)
- Medusa siege gun (Auxilia Medusa only)
- Colossus siege mortar (Auxilia Bombard only)

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

**Options**
- The battery may include up to two more tanks of the same type for the cost listed in their profile.
- Any model may take one of the following:
  - Pintle-mounted heavy bolter ..... +10 points per model
  - Pintle-mounted heavy flamer ..... +10 points per model
  - Pintle-mounted multi-laser ..... +10 points per model
- Any model may take any of the following:
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +20 points per model
  - One hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points per model
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points per model
  - Auxiliary Drive ..... +10 points per model
  - Extra Armour ..... +10 points per model
- Any Auxilia Bombard may replace its usual siege shells for:
  - Seismic shock shells ..... +25 points per model

**Seismic Shock Shells**
The Auxilia Bombard gains both the Sunder and Concussive special rules.



## HEAVY SUPPORT

Many Solar Auxilia Cohorts maintain their own mobile artillery batteries, favouring a class ideally suited to their particular battle doctrines. The most common types used by the Solar Auxilia are the Basilisk, Medusa and Bombard, each of which is substantially different to those utilised in the wider Imperial Army and other fighting forces of the galaxy-spanning Imperium.

Auxilia artillery tanks feature weapons mounted on a hull derived from the Leman Russ, in a pattern sometimes referred to as the Mars-Solar Alpha. These vehicles' fighting compartments are enclosed and sealed against hazardous atmospheric conditions, affording the crew protection in battle and when exploring the surface of hostile alien worlds.

The Auxilia employ their artillery tank batteries to support general advances by the Infantry Tercios. Being self-propelled and well protected they are able to keep pace even with Dracosan-mounted sections, engaging the foe with a fearsome weight of fire as the main line units close to engage the survivors.

# Auxilia Malcador Heavy Tank

235 points

| | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Malcador Heavy Tank | 3 | 13 | 13 | 12 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Malcador Heavy Tank

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy, Fast)

**Wargear**
- Traverse-mounted battlecannon
- Hull-mounted autocannon
- Two sponson-mounted autocannon
- Searchlight
- Smoke launcher

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

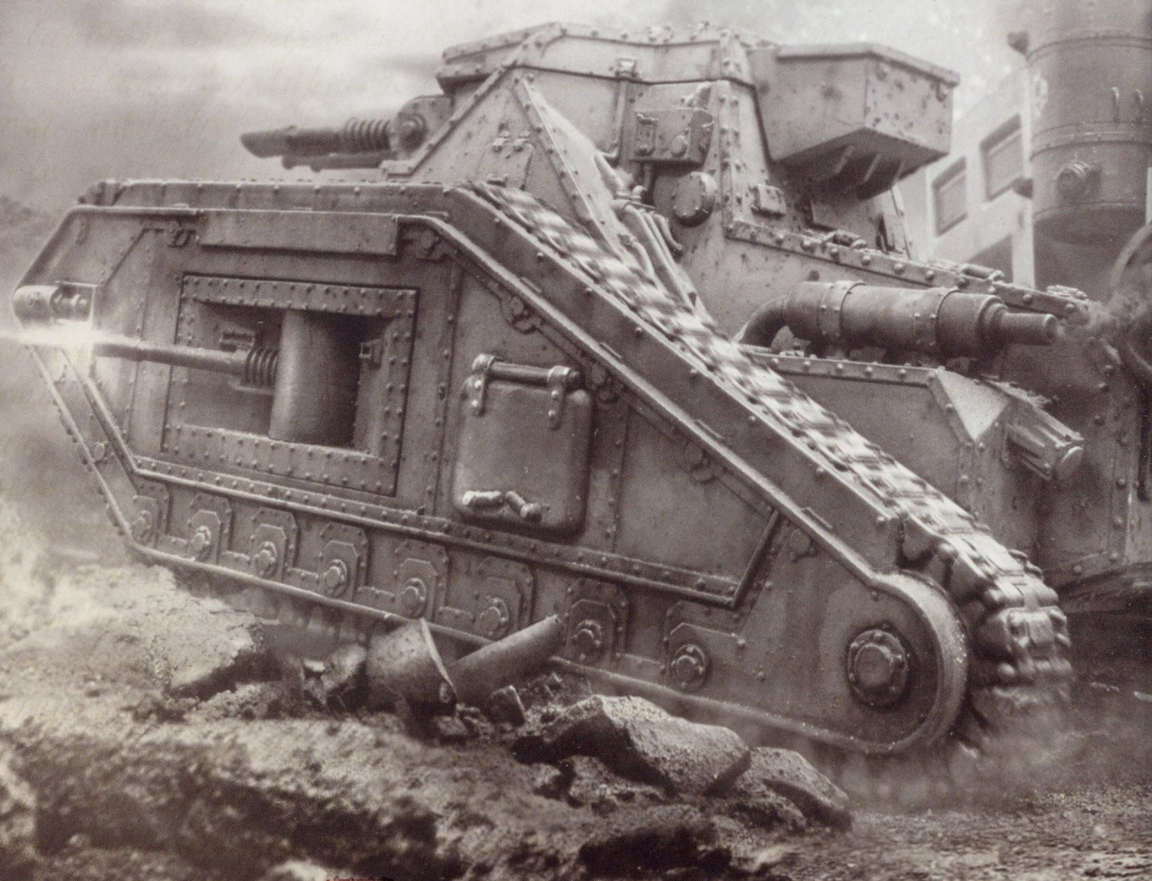
**Options**
- The vehicle may exchange its traverse-mounted battlecannon for a:
  - Twin-linked lascannon ..... Free
- The vehicle may exchange its hull-mounted autocannon for one of the following:
  - Multi-laser ..... Free
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
  - Lascannon ..... +10 points
  - Demolisher siege cannon ..... +30 points
- The vehicle may exchange both sponson-mounted autocannon for one of the following:
  - Multi-lasers ..... Free
  - Heavy flamers ..... Free
  - Lascannon ..... +20 points
- The vehicle may take any of the following:
  - Flare shield ..... +25 points
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +20 points
  - One pintle-mounted multi-laser or heavy flamer ..... +10 points
  - Up to two hunter-killer missiles ..... +10 points each
  - Siege Armour ..... +10 points each
  - Dozer blade ..... +5 points
  - Auxiliary drive ..... +10 points

**Siege Armour**
The Front Armour value of the Malcador is increased to 14, but the tank loses the Fast special rule.

## HEAVY SUPPORT

A truly ancient design dating back to the wars of the Age of Strife on Terra, the Imperial production model of this heavy tank pattern was given the name of Malcador the Sigilite, right hand of the Emperor, during the early days of the Great Crusade when thousands of these war machines rolled off the production lines of Mars and Voss. Although not as heavily armed as goliaths such as the Baneblade or the Stormhammer, the Malcador nevertheless possesses a number of advantages to its design, the principal of which is its battle speed, which is truly formidable for a tank of its size thanks to a highly sophisticated, if somewhat temperamental, drive system.

By the time of the Horus Heresy, many Malcador Heavy Tanks had been relegated to strategic reserves and second line Imperial Army units, replaced by larger numbers of smaller, more tactically flexible tanks such as the Leman Russ and its many variants. The demands of the galaxy-wide civil war soon brought them back into the fray however, while their availability saw them used as test-beds for a variety of new variants designed to plug gaps in supply and resource.



# Auxilia Malcador Infernus Special Weapons Tank

## 265 points

| | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Infernus | 3 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Auxilia Malcador Infernus Special Weapons Tank

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy)

**Wargear**
- Hull-mounted inferno gun
- Two sponson-mounted autocannon
- Searchlight
- Smoke launcher

**Special Rules**
- Highly Flammable
- Chemical Ammunition
- Explorator Adaption

**Options**
- The vehicle may exchange both sponson-mounted autocannon for one of the following:
  - Multi-lasers ..... Free
  - Heavy flamers ..... Free
  - Lascannon ..... +20 points
- The vehicle may take any of the following:
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +20 points
  - One pintle-mounted multi-laser or heavy flamer ..... +10 points
  - Auxiliary Drive ..... +10 points
- The vehicle's inferno gun may be equipped with:
  - Chemical ammunition ..... +25 points (using the alternative weapon profile shown below).

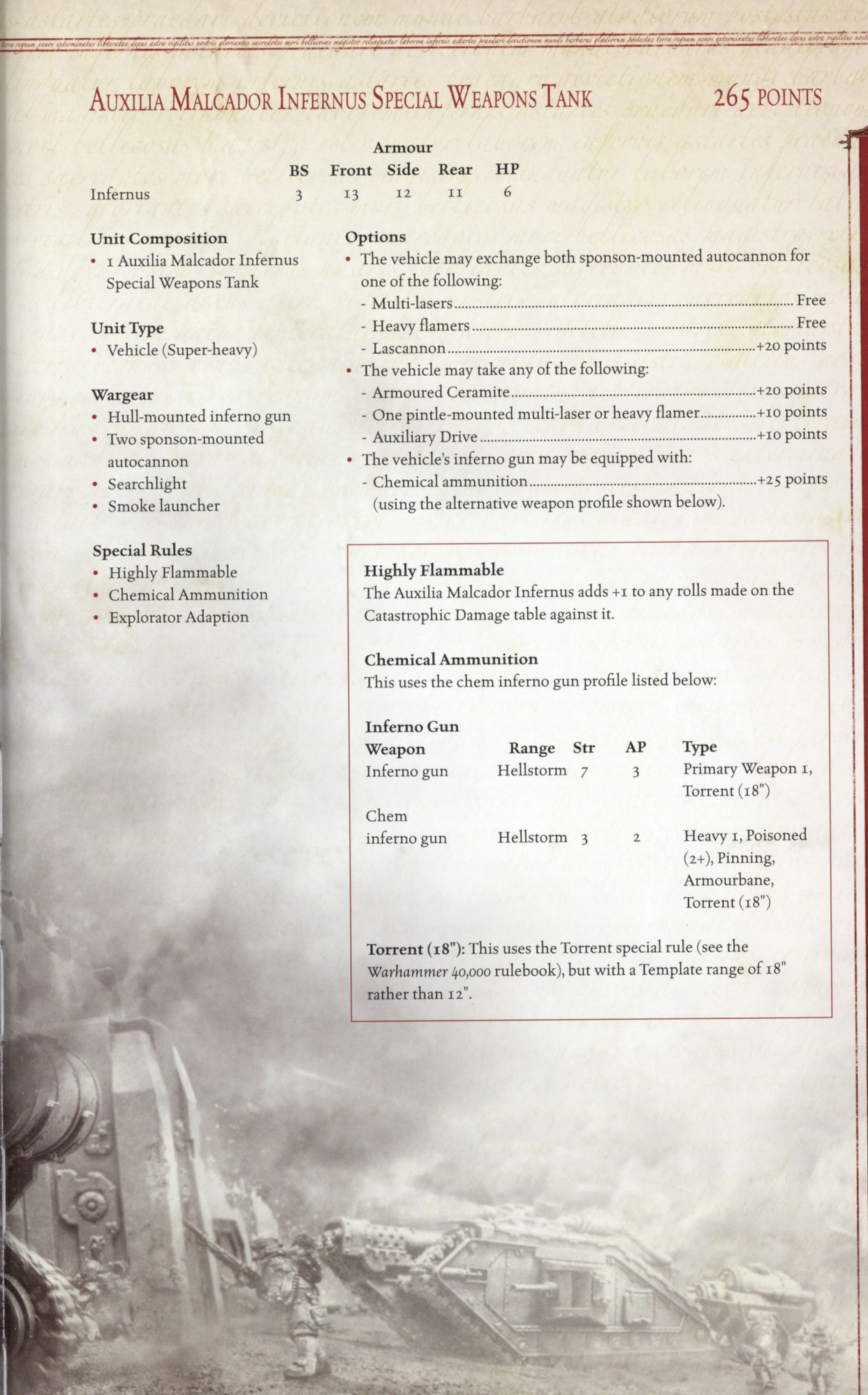
**Highly Flammable**
The Auxilia Malcador Infernus adds +1 to any rolls made on the Catastrophic Damage table against it.

**Chemical Ammunition**
This uses the chem inferno gun profile listed below:

**Inferno Gun**

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Inferno gun | Hellstorm | 7 | 3 | Primary Weapon 1, Torrent (18") |
| Chem inferno gun | Hellstorm | 3 | 2 | Heavy 1, Poisoned (2+), Pinning, Armourbane, Torrent (18") |

**Torrent (18"):** This uses the Torrent special rule (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook), but with a Template range of 18" rather than 12".



## Heavy Support

The Malcador is a flame thrower tank, in effect a huge flamer on tracks, with a fuel trailer towed behind it. Within the trailer the promethium fuel is stored as separate chemicals. These are mixed together in a chamber just behind the barrel to create a 'jelly' that is projected out, ignited as it does so and which sticks to any surface. The massive gout of flames launched from the inferno gun is also effective at clearing mines, the sudden heat detonating mine fuses and making large areas safe much quicker than alternative methods.

The Solar Auxilia employs the Malcador Infernus in specialist reserves held at the Cohort level. They are generally deployed to lead advances against enemy forces occupying especially dense terrain, such as trench lines, city ruins or heavily forested areas.

# Auxilia Valdor Tank Hunter

300 points

HEAVY SUPPORT

The Valdor is a heavy tank destroyer, named for the legendary Emperor's guard, Constantin Valdor, which was only just entering service with the Excertus Imperialis in limited numbers and on a trial basis when the Horus Heresy began. Initial production runs have been channelled to the Solar Auxilia, in particular those cohorts operating against foes equipped with heavy tanks or in the case of the myriad xenos enemies still infesting the stars, tank analogues.

While utilising a familiar chassis on which several other armoured vehicles in the arsenal of the Solar Auxilia are based, the Valdor mounts a devastating neutron laser, each a meticulously wrought iteration of a recently recovered relic of the Dark Age of Technology. While not yet in common use, Imperial logisticians have projected that its services are likely to be required in ever greater numbers, especially where Loyalist Solar Auxilia are called upon to fight the Traitor Legiones Astartes and the heavy armoured vehicles they have ready access to.

| | | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Valdor | 3 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Auxilia Valdor Tank Hunter

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy)

**Wargear**
- Hull-mounted neutron beam laser projector
- One sponson-mounted autocannon
- Searchlight
- Smoke launcher

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption
- Dangerous Reactor Core

**Options**
- The vehicle may exchange its sponson-mounted autocannon for one of the following:
  - Multi-laser ..... Free
  - Heavy flamer ..... Free
  - Lascannon ..... +10 points
- The vehicle may take any of the following:
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +20 points
  - One pintle-mounted multi-laser or heavy flamer ..... +10 points
  - Auxiliary Drive ..... +10 points

**Neutron Beam Laser**
One of the most advanced weapons in the Solar Auxilia's arsenal, the Valdor was only made possible by the Archmagos Jun Hadyxis of Phaeton in the closing decade of the Great Crusade, a potent armour-destroying energy beam almost as powerful as a Scout Titan class weapon, but incredibly compact for its size.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Neutron beam laser | 36" | 10 | 1 | Ordnance 2, Concussive, Shock Pulse |

**Shock Pulse:** Any vehicle (including Super-heavy vehicles) that suffers a Penetrating hit from a weapon with this rule may only fire Snap Shots on the following game turn.

**Dangerous Reactor Core**
The powerful reactor containment vessels needed to power the Auxilia Valdor Tank Hunter's primary weapon confer considerable risk of catastrophic explosion should the tank's armour be severely breached. If an enemy unit inflicts a Penetrating hit on the Auxilia Valdor Tank Hunter, then they may re-roll results of a 1 on the Vehicle Damage table against it. In addition, should it suffer an Explodes! result, add +D3" to the explosion's radius.



# 0-1 Cyclops Remote Demolitions Unit

70 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cyclops | - | - | - | 6 | 2 | - | - | - | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Cyclops Demolition Vehicle

**Unit Type**
- Infantry (Special)

**Wargear**
- Demolition charge

**Special Rules**
- Extremely Bulky
- Fearless
- Remote Control
- Detonation

**Options**
- The unit may take:
  - Up to four additional Cyclops Demolition Vehicles.....+70 points each
- All of the Cyclops Demolition Vehicles in the unit may exchange their demolition charges for the following payloads. All must carry the same payload:
  - Incineration charge.....+10 points each
  - Atomantic imploder.....+50 points each (May only be taken if a Lord Marshal is present in the army)

**Remote Control**
The Cyclops unit is deployed together, but as soon as the game begins, the Cyclops Demolition Vehicles that are part of the unit may immediately be individually detached from the unit and act separately. Each Cyclops cannot function more than 36" away from another Solar Auxilia model with the Character rule. If they become separated by a greater distance than this, the Cyclops stops and can do nothing until such a model is back within 36".

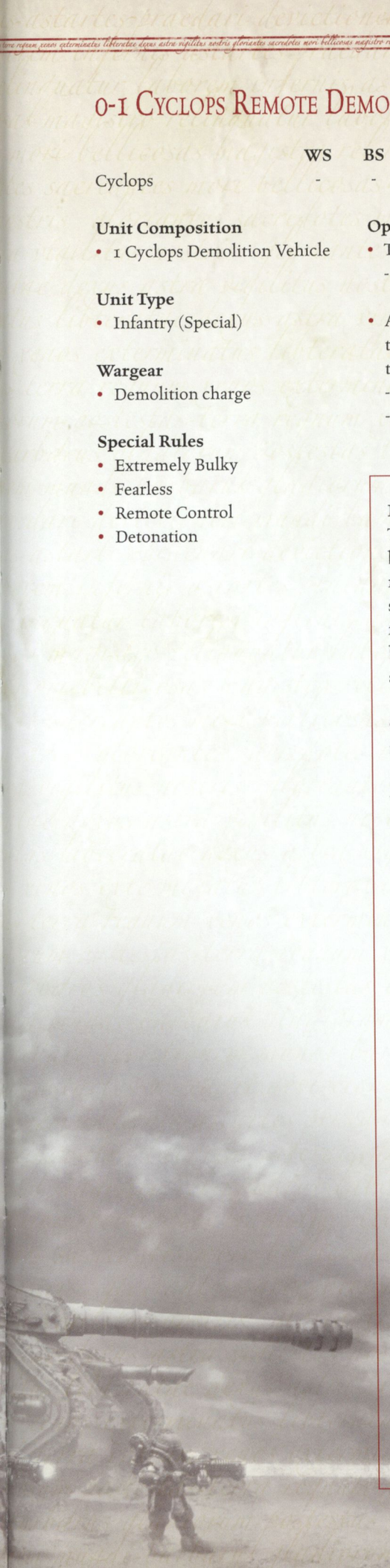
Cyclops carry no ranged weapons and cannot fight normally in assaults, but can themselves be targeted normally, being hit automatically in assaults. They may however carry out charges – this is to bring them in range to detonate! Cyclops Demolition units can never make Sweeping Advances in combat. Cyclops Demolition units cannot be joined by other models and never count as scoring units.

**Detonation**
The Cyclops can be detonated by remote control in any of its controlling player's Assault phases regardless of whether it is in combat, and in any of their opponent's Assault phases in which the Cyclops is in combat. This detonation occurs on Initiative step 10 of the Fight sub-phase.

When the Cyclops detonates, first centre the listed Blast marker on its model and resolve the attack as shown on the profile below. Then remove the Cyclops model, which is automatically destroyed by its detonation.

**Accidental Detonation:** If a Cyclops Demolition vehicle is destroyed by any means, roll a D6. On a result of 6, it detonates.

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Demolition charge | - | 9 | 3 | Ordnance 1, Large Blast (5") |
| Incineration charge | - | 5 | 4 | Ordnance 1, Massive Blast (7"), Ignores Cover |
| Atomantic imploder | - | D | 1 | Ordnance 1, Blast (3"), Blind, Instant Death |



HEAVY SUPPORT

A range of remotely controlled demolition vehicle, the Cyclops is deployed by the Solar Auxilia to breach heavy fortifications and destroy key enemy-held positions in circumstances where a direct assault is judged too costly and engagement from afar is made impossible by dense terrain.

The Cyclops is transported to the front line in a Dracosan Armoured Carrier or an Auxilia Arvus Lighter, and unloaded under cover a safe distance from the intended target. It is then controlled by an operator equipped with a vox control unit, and initiated into the outer tiers of the machine arcana, granting them sufficient knowledge to guide the Cyclops to its target and to detonate its internal charge when it is close enough to inflict the requisite damage.

The unit can be configured with a variety of munition types for use against different types of target, one of which, the atomantic imploder, is so powerful it is sometimes employed against apex xenos-forms and similar foes when all other means have failed.

# Auxilia Baneblade Super-heavy Battle Tank

535 points

| | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Baneblade | 3 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 9 |

**Unit Composition**
- One Baneblade

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy)

**Wargear**
- Autocannon
- Turret-mounted Baneblade cannon
- Hull-mounted Demolisher cannon
- Twin-linked heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

**Options**
- May take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +25 points
- May add up to two pairs of side sponsons, each with:
  - One lascannon & one twin-linked heavy bolter ..+50 points per pair
- May take one of the following pintle-mounted weapons:
  - Twin-linked bolter ..... +5 points
  - Combi-weapon ..... +10 points
  - Heavy flamer ..... +15 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +15 points
  - Multi-laser ..... +15 points
  - Multi-melta ..... +20 points
- May be upgraded to a Super-heavy Command Tank ..... +25 points

**Baneblade cannon**

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baneblade cannon | 72" | 9 | 2 | Primary Weapon 1, Apocalyptic Blast (10") |

## LORDS OF WAR

The Baneblade ranks amongst the most recognisable super-heavy tank of the Great Crusade, produced in the tens of thousands for service with the Excertus Imperialis all across the ever-expanding Imperium. The majority of Baneblades are produced on Mars, and the Lords of the Red Planet hold the Mars class vehicle as the inalienable iteration of the Machine God's vision and it galls them greatly that certain other Forge Worlds produce their own patterns. To the untrained eye the differences between vehicles appear superficial, but the Tech-Priests of Mars preach otherwise, furthering the many schisms that have developed between the various Forge Worlds throughout the final decades of the Great Crusade.

Regardless of its provenance, the Baneblade is a stately iron beast, its iconic turret-mounted Baneblade cannon the bane of countless foes over the years. Its armour is nigh impenetrable and many of those in the service of the Auxilia have been upgraded to the 'Solar' sub-pattern and fitted with extensive exploration and survival equipment to allow operation in the most hostile of environments.



# Auxilia Stormlord Super-heavy Assault Tank

## 490 points

| | BS | Armour: Front | Side | Rear | HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stormlord | 3 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 9 |

**Unit Composition**
- One Stormlord

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy, Transport)

**Wargear**
- Vulcan mega-bolter
- Hull-mounted twin-linked heavy bolter
- Two hull-mounted heavy bolters
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

**Transport Capacity**
- The Stormlord can transport 40 models.

**Fire Points**
- 20 models can fire from the troop bay.

**Access Points**
- The Stormlord is treated as Open-topped for embarking and disembarking purposes. The +1 damage modifier for Open-topped vehicles does not apply to a Stormlord.

**Options**
- May take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +25 points
- May add up to two pairs of side sponsons, each with:
  - One lascannon & one twin-linked heavy bolter .. +50 points per pair
- May take one of the following pintle-mounted weapons:
  - Twin-linked bolter ..... +5 points
  - Combi-weapon ..... +10 points
  - Heavy flamer ..... +15 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +15 points
  - Multi-laser ..... +15 points
  - Multi-melta ..... +20 points
- May be upgraded to a Super-heavy Command Tank ..... +25 points
- May replace any of its sponsons' twin-linked heavy bolters with:
  - Twin-linked heavy flamers ..... Free

**Vulcan mega-bolter**

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vulcan mega-bolter | 60" | 6 | 3 | Heavy 15, All Power to Weapons! |

**All Power to Weapons!**: If the Stormlord does not move, it may fire its Vulcan mega-bolter twice in the following Shooting phase (either at the same target or at different ones).



### Lords of War

The Stormlord is often employed more as a mobile fortress than a super-heavy tank, for its prodigious anti-infantry firepower and its large troop bay make it an ideal complement to the Solar Auxilia's infantry sections when prosecuting one of the types of warfare for which they are most well known – Expeditionary incursions onto the surface of hostile worlds in anticipation of massive counter-attack.

The Stormlord can be deployed by super-heavy lander along with the second or third wave of a planetfall operation, and used as a mobile bulwark around which infantry squads muster. When the inevitable counter-attack develops, the Stormlord forms the centre of the Auxilia's firebase, its twin Vulcan mega-bolters producing a wall of fire through which few enemies can advance.

Stormlords are sometimes used as a command platform by Solar Auxilia High Commanders, being more capacious and better armoured than a Dracosan and more manoeuvrable and faster than a Leviathan.

# Auxilia Shadowsword Super-heavy Tank

455 points

LORDS OF WAR

The Shadowsword is one of the most potent armour destroyers in the arsenal of the Excertus Imperialis and its reputation amongst the enemies of Mankind is dark indeed. The opening battles of the Horus Heresy have seen the vehicle deployed to stand against the god-engines of the Traitor Titan Legions and while there have been victories, they have only been won at considerable cost to Loyalist armoured regiments.

The Solar Auxilia has only recently added the Shadowsword to its orders of battle, for it has in the past only rarely confronted an enemy it would be needed against. When it did, the High Commander would invariably call in a dedicated Imperial Army super-heavy tank regiment, but since the eruption of the galactic civil war all has changed. Now regularly confronted by Traitor Titans, Knights, Siege-automata and other super-heavies, many Solar Auxilia Cohorts have integrated Shadowswords into their tactical reserves.

| | | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Shadowsword | 3 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 9 |

**Unit Composition**
- One Shadowsword

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy)

**Wargear**
- Hull-mounted Volcano cannon
- Hull-mounted twin-linked heavy bolter
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

**Options**
- May take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +25 points
- May add up to two pairs of side sponsons, each with:
  - One lascannon & one twin-linked heavy bolter ..+50 points per pair
- May take one of the following pintle-mounted weapons:
  - Twin-linked bolter ..... +5 points
  - Combi-weapon ..... +10 points
  - Heavy flamer ..... +15 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +15 points
  - Multi-laser ..... +15 points
  - Multi-melta ..... +20 points
- May be upgraded to a Super-heavy Command Tank ..... +25 points
- May replace two of the lascannon on its side sponsons with:
  - Targeters (+1 BS) ..... Free

**Volcano cannon**

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Volcano cannon | 120" | D | 2 | Primary Weapon 1, Large Blast (5") |



# Auxilia Stormsword Super-heavy Siege Tank

485 points

| | Armour | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BS | Front | Side | Rear | HP |
| Stormsword | 3 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 9 |

**Unit Composition**
- One Stormsword

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy)

**Wargear**
- Hull-mounted Stormsword siege cannon
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

**Options**
- May take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +25 points
- May add up to two pairs of side sponsons, each with:
  - One lascannon & one twin-linked heavy bolter ..+50 points per pair
- May take one of the following pintle-mounted weapons:
  - Twin-linked bolter ..... +5 points
  - Combi-weapon ..... +10 points
  - Heavy flamer ..... +15 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +15 points
  - Multi-laser ..... +15 points
  - Multi-melta ..... +20 points
- May be upgraded to a Super-heavy Command Tank ..... +25 points
- May replace two of the lascannon on its side sponsons with:
  - Targeters (+1 BS) ..... Free

**Stormsword siege cannon**

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stormsword siege cannon | 36" | 10 | 1 | Primary Weapon 1, Apocalyptic Blast (10"), Ignores Cover |



## Lords of War

The Stormsword represents an implementation of STC canon upon which many within the Cult Mechanicus diverge. The vehicle is more invariably the result of modifications made by Tech-Priest Enginseers in the field. Most often, they are created by salvaging the hulls of otherwise heavily damaged super-heavy tanks, in particular a number of variants derived from the Baneblade, replacing a destroyed main weapon with a heavy siege gun. The result is a super-heavy tank that is almost unparalleled in the urban assault role, its massive main gun able to bring down any building and scour defenders from even the heaviest cover.

Because of their origins, few Stormswords are exactly the same. Certain Tech-Priests claim however that some perfectly functional Shadowswords and other super-heavies have been deliberately converted into Stormswords for use by the Solar Auxilia Cohorts in urban war operations. If true, this is a significant transgression of a number of rigid doctrines by which the Mechanicum operates and a potential cause of costly doctrinal schism.

# Auxilia Stormblade Super-heavy Tank

465 points

| | BS | Armour: Front | Side | Rear | HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stormblade | 3 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 9 |

**Unit Composition**
- One Stormblade

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy)

**Wargear**
- Hull-mounted plasma blastgun
- Searchlight
- Smoke launchers

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

**Options**
- May take any of the following:
  - Hunter-killer missile ..... +10 points
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +25 points
- May add up to two pairs of side sponsons, each with:
  - One lascannon & one twin-linked heavy bolter .. +50 points per pair
- May take one of the following pintle-mounted weapons:
  - Twin-linked bolter ..... +5 points
  - Combi-weapon ..... +10 points
  - Heavy flamer ..... +15 points
  - Heavy bolter ..... +15 points
  - Multi-laser ..... +15 points
  - Multi-melta ..... +20 points
- May be upgraded to a Super-heavy Command Tank ..... +25 points
- May replace two of the lascannon on its side sponsons with:
  - Targeters (+1 BS) ..... Free

**Stormblade Plasma Blastgun**

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Plasma blastgun (Rapid) | 72" | 8 | 2 | Primary Weapon 2, Massive Blast (7") |
| (Overload) | 96" | 10 | 2 | Primary Weapon 1, Apocalyptic Blast (10") |

## Lords of War

The Stormblade came into being in a manner that demonstrates the feudal nature of the Forge Worlds and their relationship with one another and Mars. Certain Forge Worlds lacked the necessary STC imprints to construct the Shadowsword super-heavy destroyer and, due to internecine differences, were unable to secure them from the Red Planet. The magi of another great Forge World, Ryza, perceived a means of circumventing the issue and gaining power for themselves in the process. Ryza, known for its mastery of plasma technology, built the first of the Stormblades, a weapon to rival the Shadowsword, and ceded its pattern to those lesser Forge Worlds who would enter into mutually beneficial compacts with them.

The Solar Auxilia maintains treaties of provender with many of these domains, and while Shadowswords are a rare commodity often reserved for the dedicated super-heavy regiments of the Imperial Army, Solar Auxilia cohorts have ready access to the Stormblade.



# Auxilia Stormhammer Super-heavy Assault Tank

555 points

| | BS | Armour Front | Side | Rear | HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stormhammer | 3 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 10 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Stormhammer

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy)

**Wargear**
- One turret-mounted Stormhammer cannon
- One co-axial-mounted multi-laser
- Six sponson-mounted multi-lasers
- One hull-mounted dual battlecannon
- One hull-mounted lascannon
- Searchlight
- Smoke launcher

**Special Rules**
- Explorator Adaption

**Options**
- The vehicle may exchange any of its multi-lasers for one of the following options:
  - Heavy flamers ..... Free
  - Heavy bolters ..... Free
  - Lascannon ..... +10 points each
- The vehicle may take any of the following options:
  - Armoured Ceramite ..... +25 points
  - One pintle-mounted multi-laser or heavy flamer ..... +10 points
- The vehicle may be upgraded to have Targeters (BS 4) ..... +20 points
- May be upgraded to a Super Heavy Command Tank ..... +25 points
- The vehicle may take up to:
  - Four hunter-killer missiles ..... +10 points each

**Stormhammer Weaponry**

| | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stormhammer cannon | 60" | 9 | 2 | Primary Weapon 1, Massive Blast (7"), Shred, Pinning |
| Dual battlecannon | 72" | 8 | 3 | Ordnance 2, Large Blast (5"), Twin-linked |



## Lords of War

The Stormhammer is the super-heavy tank of choice for the Solar Auxilia, and most cohorts maintain at least a single example, while some field entire companies of these vehicles.

The Stormhammer is armed with a massive array of turret- and sponson-mounted weapons, that can be fired on multiple fire arcs. They are configured to serve at the vanguard of expeditions into areas considered hostile not just because of the presence of an enemy force, but due to perilous environmental factors. They can tread the surface of worlds with skies of searing acid, seas of boiling lava and winds laced with toxins that would scour flesh from bone in seconds, and can survive these hazards and give battle to the foe as well, thanks to extensive survival and exploration systems.

In battle, the Stormhammer has at times been likened to a destroyer of the Imperial armada, for it is capable of extended independent operation as well as holding a key part in a coordinated battle plan.

# Thallax Cohort

135 points

OPTIONAL HEAVY SUPPORT

Heavily augmented cyborg shock-troops of the Ordo Reductor faction of the Mechanicum, the Thallax are sometimes attached to Auxilia forces to bolster their effectiveness and replace heavy losses.

Within their armoured torso is encased the major organs, nervous system and cerebrum of a human, the skeleton and limbs entirely replaced with armoured mechanical systems powered by an internal reactor core. The agony of this process, along with the replacement of the human sensory apparatus, is so traumatic as to require the surgical excision of the pain centres and emotions, leaving the Thallax a cold, calculating killing machine, yet retaining a certain degree of independent human thought, although for some within the Mechanicum this skirts the edge of abomination.

Thallax conversion is a process laden with difficulty, its effectiveness often depending on the subject's will to live. Sometimes, mortally wounded Auxiliaries are harvested from the field of battle and offered another chance to continue in service, albeit at a cost few understand until after the process is complete.

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thallax | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 4+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 3 Thallax

**Unit Type**
- Jet Pack Infantry

**Wargear**
- Lorica Thallax
- Lightning gun
- Close combat weapon
- Frag grenades

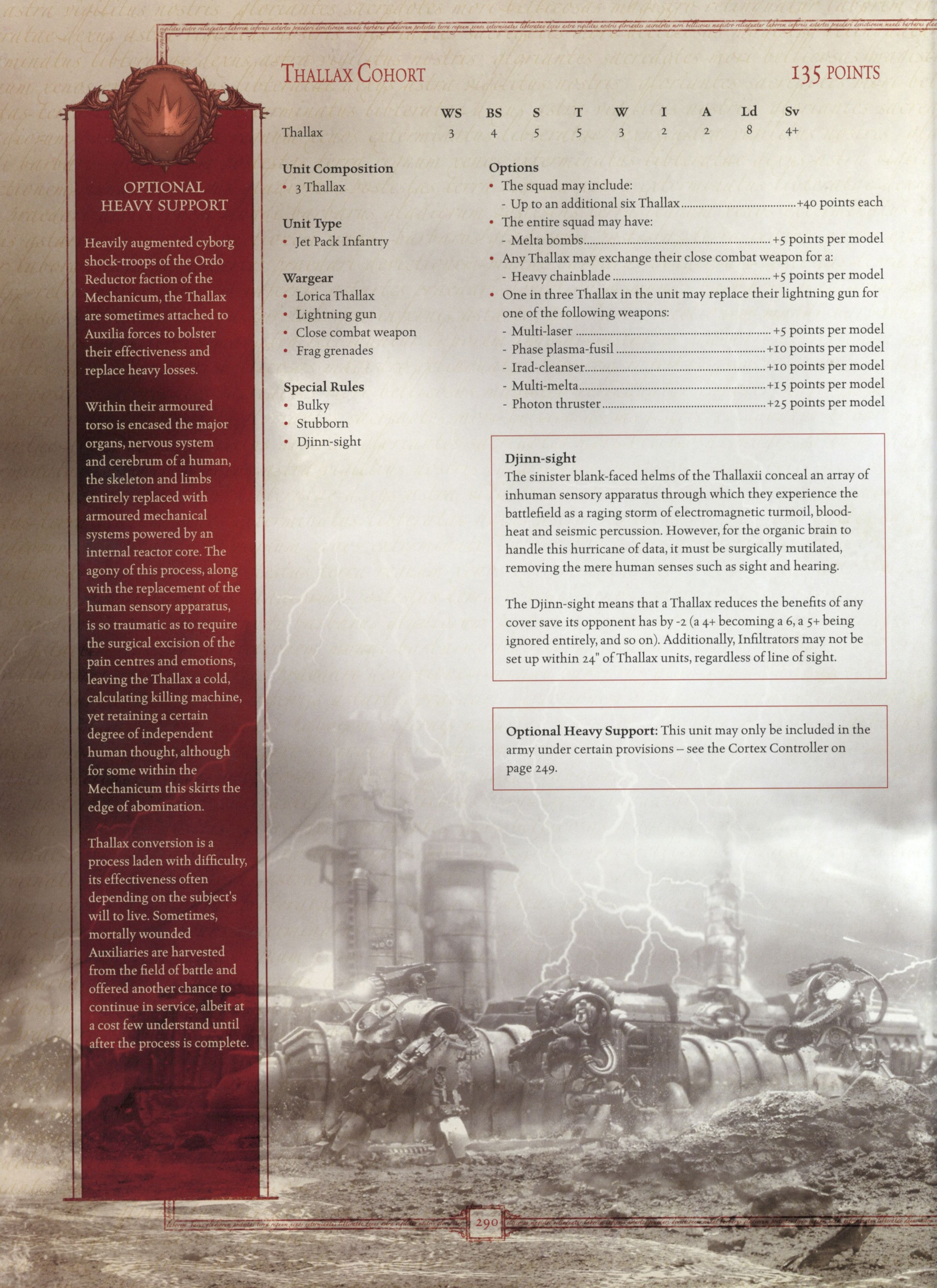
**Special Rules**
- Bulky
- Stubborn
- Djinn-sight

**Options**
- The squad may include:
  - Up to an additional six Thallax ..... +40 points each
- The entire squad may have:
  - Melta bombs ..... +5 points per model
- Any Thallax may exchange their close combat weapon for a:
  - Heavy chainblade ..... +5 points per model
- One in three Thallax in the unit may replace their lightning gun for one of the following weapons:
  - Multi-laser ..... +5 points per model
  - Phase plasma-fusil ..... +10 points per model
  - Irad-cleanser ..... +10 points per model
  - Multi-melta ..... +15 points per model
  - Photon thruster ..... +25 points per model

**Djinn-sight**
The sinister blank-faced helms of the Thallaxii conceal an array of inhuman sensory apparatus through which they experience the battlefield as a raging storm of electromagnetic turmoil, blood-heat and seismic percussion. However, for the organic brain to handle this hurricane of data, it must be surgically mutilated, removing the mere human senses such as sight and hearing.

The Djinn-sight means that a Thallax reduces the benefits of any cover save its opponent has by -2 (a 4+ becoming a 6, a 5+ being ignored entirely, and so on). Additionally, Infiltrators may not be set up within 24" of Thallax units, regardless of line of sight.

**Optional Heavy Support:** This unit may only be included in the army under certain provisions – see the Cortex Controller on page 249.



# Castellax Class Battle-automata Maniple

85 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Castellax | 3 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 3+ |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Castellax class Battle-automata

**Unit Type**
- Monstrous Creature

**Wargear**
- Mauler pattern bolt cannon
- Two boltguns
- Shock chargers
- Atomantic shielding

**Special Rules**
- Cybernetica Cortex
- Reactor Blast
- Rage

**Options**
- The Maniple may include:
  - Up to four additional Castellax class Battle-automata ..... +85 points each
- Any Battle-automata Maniple may be given any of the following options – all Battle-automata in the Maniple must have the same upgrade:
  - Searchlight ..... +1 point each
  - Infravisor ..... +5 points each
  - Frag grenades ..... +5 points each
  - Enhanced targeting array ..... +15 points each
- Any Castellax class Battle-automata may exchange its Mauler pattern bolt cannon for one of the following:
  - Darkfire cannon ..... +20 points per model
  - Multi-melta ..... Free
- Any Castellax class Battle-automata may exchange one or both of its boltguns for:
  - Flamers ..... +5 points each
- Any Castellax class Battle-automata may exchange its shock chargers for one of the following options:
  - Two Battle-automata power blades ..... +10 points per model
  - Siege Wrecker ..... +20 points per model*

*A *model equipped with a Siege Wrecker loses one of its boltguns.*

**Reactor Blast**
When a Battle-automata loses its last wound, roll a D6. On the result of a 6, the Battle-automata explodes, inflicting a Str 4 AP - hit on all models within D6".

**Optional Heavy Support:** This unit may only be included in the army under certain provisions – see the Cortex Controller on page 249.

## Optional Heavy Support

The most common of the Castellan-type battle-automata, the Castellax is a general battle unit developed during the Great Crusade from its ancient forebear. Primarily intended for siege work and shock assault, the Castellax Battle-automata is a hulking humanoid machine thrice the height of a man, with a notoriously aggressive and responsive machine-spirit and an enviable reputation on the battlefield. Its armoured endoskeleton is proof against small arms fire and highly resistant to damage thanks to its durable design and the same atomantic shielding technology used on the Legiones Astartes Contemptor class Dreadnought. The Castellax, employed in large numbers by the Legio Cybernetica, has a standard configuration of bolter and bolt cannon armament, and is able to maintain a punishing barrage of firepower as it advances. Rarer configurations, however, include Battle-automata equipped with flamer units or the arcane and powerful Darkfire heavy photon thruster cannon.

Many Solar Auxilia cohorts go to war accompanied by attached Cybernetica maniples. Some are bonded by compacts forged in the crucibles of war, the Battle-automata even bearing the same colours and heraldry as the auxiliaries themselves.






# The Questoris Knight Crusade Army List

# The Questoris Knight Crusade Army List

The following army list and unique Force Organisation chart represents the Knight Households during the Age of the Great Crusade and the opening years of the Horus Heresy. This structure works very differently from the way usual Force Organisation charts work in that rather than using units to occupy each choice on the chart, a Knight Scion, a noble of the Household, is selected using the Household Rank rules instead and then given a particular type of Knight armour to pilot. Just as when selecting an army normally using the Detachment method, Compulsory choices must be made first, and each time this is done, a particular Knight armour from the army list is chosen for them at the points cost shown in the army list profile. Then Optional choices are made, until the points value for the game you're playing has been reached. This means that, in effect, any of the different Knight armour types can be taken in any role, but the skills and abilities of the nobles who pilot them determine their position in the line of battle.

Depending on the Household rank being chosen, there may also be particular modifiers applied to the profile of the Knight selected, or additional special rules applied, as well as a change in the unit's points cost.

## Using the Army List Entries

Each unit entry in the army list contains the following information:

**Unit Name:** At the start of each army list entry you will find the name of the unit alongside the points cost of the unit without any upgrades.

**Unit Profile:** This section will show the profile of any models the unit can include, even if they are upgrades.

**Unit Type:** This refers to the Unit Type rules in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. For example, a unit may be classed as Infantry, Monstrous Creature or Vehicle, which will subject it to a number of rules regarding movement, shooting, assaults, etc.

**Unit Composition:** Where applicable, this section will show the number and type of models that make up the basic unit, before any upgrades are taken. If the Unit Composition includes the word 'Unique', then you may only include one of this unit in your army.

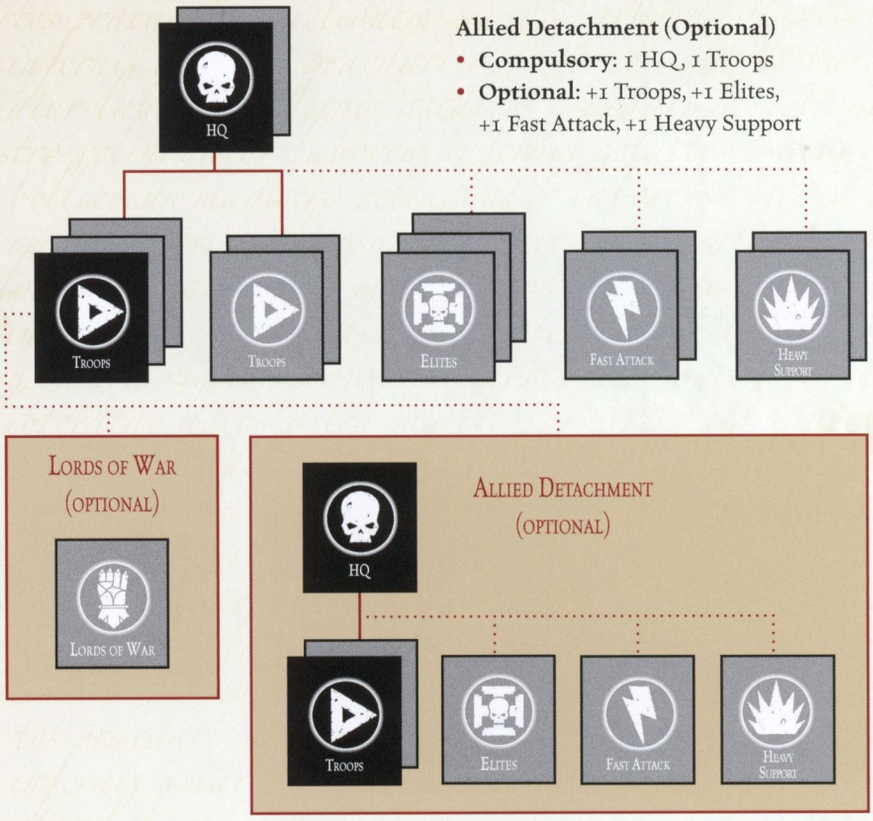
## Questoris Knight Crusade Army Force Organisation Chart

This detachment type is a unique type of core Detachment for use in Battles in the Age of Darkness games. It is only for use with the Questoris Knight Crusade army list and may not be used with other army types.

**Primary Detachment (Required)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 1 Troops
- **Optional:** +1 HQ, +4 Troops, +3 Elites, +2 Fast Attack, +2 Heavy Support

**Lords of War Detachment (Optional)**
- 1 Choice

**Allied Detachment (Optional)**
- **Compulsory:** 1 HQ, 1 Troops
- **Optional:** +1 Troops, +1 Elites, +1 Fast Attack, +1 Heavy Support




**Restrictions**
- All units chosen must be taken from the Questoris Knight Crusade Army list and be from the same faction (i.e., be Traitor or Loyalist).
- The Titans of the Legio Titanicus are available as Lords of War choices for this army only.
- The Household Rank rule must be used where relevant for all units within the detachment.

**Allies Matrix**

When using the Allies in the Age of Darkness chart (see page 253), the Questoris Knight Crusade army uses the 'Mechanicum' line on the chart for determining any relationship of alliance.

**Wargear:** This section details the weapons and equipment the models in the unit are armed with. The cost for all these models and their equipment is included in the points cost listed next to the unit's name.

**Special Rules:** Any special rules that apply to the models in the unit are listed here. These special rules are explained in further detail subsequently, or in the Special Rules section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

**Options:** This section lists all of the upgrades you may add to the unit if you wish to do so, alongside the associated points cost for each. Where an option states that you may exchange one weapon 'and/or' another, you may replace either or both provided you pay the points cost for each.

**Warlord Traits:** Sometimes an entry will have a specific Warlord Trait, in which case it will be listed here in their army list entry.

# Questoris Knight Crusade Army Special Rules

## Household Rank

Each noble, referred to heraldically as a '*Scion*', within a Knight Household is a warrior with their own *Chronicle of Battle* and the traditions and glories of their forebears to uphold. Each Household's bloodline ranges from the Scions Aspirant, freshly raised up to command their armour in battle and wreathed in dreams of would-be glory, to the Scions Martial, the experienced fighters who make up their Household's line of battle, to the upper echelons of the House who hold the traditional ranks of the Household's command and who have already writ their own legends in battle. In times of open war, when a Knight Household takes to the field en masse, each will have their own roles to play, roles founded as much in ancient tradition as in the individual record and reputation of the Knight armour and the warrior piloting it. Unleashed, such a tide of iron and fire is a force few powers in the galaxy can withstand.

**Note:** The Household Rank special rule is only in effect when using a force selected from the Questoris Knight Crusade Army Force Organisation chart as your core detachment or as an Age of Darkness allied detachment only. It should not be used in conjunction with other detachment types or Unbound armies.

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## HQ Ranks

**Nobles of the following ranks are HQ choices for the Questoris Knight Crusade army.**

### Seneschal (0-1).....+50 points

*The martial traditions and aristocratic rule of the Knight Households demand a rigid hierarchy in battle and at the apex of this order is the Seneschal. Commonly, this august title is conferred on either the head of a particular Household's mustered forces in the field or on the master of a particular fortified keep on the Knight Worlds themselves. In both cases it is heavy not only with symbolic authority but also might, as to have attained such a rank, a Knight must have proved their worth both in personal combat and tactical command, as well as the more subtle but no less dangerous battlefield of dynastic struggle.*

*In the case of the Questoris Knight Crusade forces, the role of Seneschal further involved both practical generalship and an understanding of the myriad strengths and natures of the vast forces of the Imperium, as well as the countless dangers of the cold stars and the foes that awaited there.*

**Master Knight:** Add +1 to the Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill shown on the Knight's profile, and increase any invulnerable save the Knight has by +1. For example, a Questoris Knight Errant piloted by a Seneschal would have WS 5, BS 5 and an ion shield invulnerable save of 3+.

**Ideal Mission Commander:** If a Seneschal is chosen as the army's Warlord, the owning player can choose to re-roll the result on the Warlord Trait table.

### Lord Scion (0-1).....+25 points

*The term Lord Scion here is used as a collective term that encompasses the upper echelons of a Questoris Knight Crusade force, be they in fact titled baron, margrave, siridar count, thane or one of a number of local sub-variations in peerage and rank, and ordered below the supreme authority of a Seneschal on the battlefield. They are each a war-tempered veteran whose position has not simply been bought with age and lineage, but with blood and fire upon the battlefield. A Lord Scion's mettle and record are known to all under their command, just as it is blazoned by the heraldry that adorns their Knight armour; an open challenge to any who would oppose them.*

**Veteran Knight:** Add +1 to the Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill shown on the Knight's profile. For example, a Questoris Knight Errant piloted by a Lord Scion would have WS 5 and BS 5.



## Elites Ranks

**Nobles of the following ranks are Elites choices for the Questoris Knight Crusade army.**

### Preceptor.....+25 points

*It is unusual, but not unknown, for a Scion to display a particular facility for technology, sometimes even serving time observing and learning from their Household's Sacristans, although always retaining their distinction and rank. These Scions, once they have become veterans of warfare in their own right, also make for the most able instructors of the Household's Aspirants, able to impart not only the lore of arms but also to teach a deeper understanding of the Knight armour, its scope of operations and the division of machine and man, earning themselves the honoured title of Preceptor within the Household. The Preceptor's lore can be put to use on the battlefield, allowing them to use advanced augury and auspex equipment which would be beyond those without their learning, and serve the role of tactical co-ordination and communications for their Household in battle.*

**Oracle of Battle:** While at least one Preceptor is on the table, Knights from the same detachment may add +1 to their Reserves rolls. In addition, the Preceptor and any Knight models that are part of the same detachment and within 6" have the Interceptor special rule and may fire Overwatch with any eligible weapons until their next player turn. Note that this is an exception to the normal special rule for Super-heavy Walkers, and in the case of Hellfire template weapons, D6 hits are scored rather than D3.

### Aucteller (0-1).....+35 points

*The Aucteller is an archaic rank whose traditions flourished in ancient days when Knight Houses battled bloodily for supremacy with one another. Though on many Knight Worlds feuds and affairs of honour were settled through highly ritualised and formalised duels, when the matter was pressed, either with bitter wrath or pure desperation of survival, mass battle was inevitable. In such warfare the Aucteller served not as a champion, but as a forlorn hope, oath-sworn to strike down the foe's greatest warriors at the cost of their own lives if needs be. In the Age of the Great Crusade such desperate tactics were suppressed, but there were still Houses that bore this bitter tradition well, and as the desperate wars of the Horus Heresy unfolded, the need for such sacrifices was born again.*

**Sworn Enemy:** After set-up but before the game begins, the Aucteller's owning player must specify one of the following as the Knight's 'Sworn Enemy': the enemy Warlord, a Lords of War unit other than a Flyer, a Super-heavy Walker or ground vehicle, or a Gargantuan Creature. Should the Aucteller destroy this unit (i.e., cause its last Hull Point or wound to be lost, or the unit to flee from the table), the Aucteller's owning player gains an additional D3 Victory points (this is in addition to any other provision of the mission, such as Slay the Warlord). If the Sworn Enemy unit is destroyed or removed from play by any other means, no additional Victory points are scored for the Sworn Enemy unit by either side.

If the Sworn Enemy still remains in play at the end of the game, its owning player gains +1 Victory point.

**From Death I Strike:** If the Aucteller's Knight is destroyed in an assault against their sworn foe, before any other effects take place (for example, a roll on the Catastrophic Damage table), the Knight may immediately make an additional single close combat attack using its normal profile and weapon against their Sworn Enemy.

### Legendary Freeblade.....(Special: See Individual Costs)

*Drawn out from the ranks of their former Households, either willingly owing to the lure of adventure or the unquenchable lust for battle, or unwillingly as outcast, renegade or last survivor, Freeblades are Knights Mendicant, owing no alliance and no fealty. Of these, many were drawn to the Great Crusade, lured by the thirst for glory or the unceasing clangour of war on the frontier, joining the Questoris Crusade forces and fighting on countless worlds in support of the Emperor's great work.*

Most of these Freeblades may be accounted for by the Household Ranks elsewhere in this list, their distinction marked by their heraldry rather than their role, but there are exceptions. Some Freeblades are so remarkable in skill and reputation that they have forged their own legends, both valiant and bloody.

Legendary Freeblades are unique units with their own particular characteristics and are bought as complete with a particular type of Knight armour rather than by matching a Household rank with a Knight type as is normal for the Questoris Knight Crusade Army list. Legendary Freeblades are selected as individual Elites choices for the detachment.



## Troops Ranks

**Nobles of the following ranks are Troops choices for the Questoris Knight Crusade army. In addition to any other rules they possess, all Knights bought as Troops in a Questoris Knight Crusade army also gain the Objective Secured special rule if used in Maelstrom of War and Eternal Battles missions.**

### Scion Martial .....Free

*The Scions of the Knights Martial, also known in common parlance as the Household's 'banners', form the main strength of the Knights' battleline; experienced in warfare and expert in the use of the powerful war machines they command.*

The Scions Martial represent the meridian of skill and power on which the Knight armour profiles in the army list are based and therefore impose no modifiers on the profiles shown in the army list.

### Scion Aspirant.....(minus) -35 points

*The Knight Households are not simply a military force but a hereditary bloodline of war, a bloodline whose sons and daughters must be tempered in the fires of battle from a young age. Such an apprenticeship is a dangerous one, but vital to the sustenance of a Household's strength across the generations. Only the most desperate of battles would force a Household to endanger all of its Aspirants at once however, and so competition among the youth of fighting age to be picked to join their kin in the field is fierce.*

**Aspirant:** Subtract -1 from the Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill shown on the Knight's profile and also reduce any invulnerable save the Knight has by -1. For example, a Questoris Knight Errant piloted by a Scion Aspirant would have WS 3, BS 3, and an ion shield invulnerable save of 5+.

**Young Blood:** The number of Scions Aspirant chosen as part of a Questoris Knight Crusade army may not exceed the total number of all other Household Ranks in the army within the usual limitations of the Force Organisation chart. So, for example, in an army comprising six Knights, up to three could be Scions Aspirant.

**Objective Secured:** A unit with this special rule controls objectives even if an enemy scoring unit is within range of the objective marker, unless the enemy unit also has this special rule.

## Fast Attack Ranks

**Nobles of the following ranks are Fast Attack choices for the Questoris Knight Crusade army.**

### Scion Dolorous .....+25 points

*A title bestowed upon the most famed beast-killers and slayers among the Knights of the Household, the epithet 'Dolorous', from the ancient tongue encoded into the great Arks which bore the Knights to their founding worlds, means 'grievous' or 'mournful' in its true form. But within the society of the Knights it has since grown to have a doubled-edged meaning; of Scions who have proved themselves time and again against the mega-predators which populate many of the Knight Worlds, gaining for themselves a tally of trophies and kills worth the envy of their peers. It also implies one perhaps to whom battle and slaughter have become an addiction to the exclusion of all else, and for whom life beyond the confines of their Knight armour is a pale and hollow thing, and mortal danger their only wine and meat.*

*Such Knights often seek to be deployed in the forefront of battle and will often charge ahead irrespective of any orders to the contrary. While their actions in combat by some are judged to be little more than the madness of a death wish, the power of their battlelust is a devastating force in combat. Those who survive long enough after falling into the strange malady that afflicts the Scions Dolorous learn to temper their fury but not the restless desire for continuous battle, and many will become Freeblades, should they not fall in battle first.*

**Dolorous Charge:** A Knight with this special rule must re-roll failed charges and, in addition, must re-roll failed Sweeping Advances.

**Worthy Foe:** If there is an eligible target for the Knight to charge in its Assault phase which is either an enemy Knight, Walker, Monstrous Creature, Primarch, Super-heavy Walker or Gargantuan Creature, it must attempt to do so. If multiple options for this charge are available, then the owning player decides which it will attempt to charge.

### Scion Uhlan.....Free

*The Uhlan tradition is one followed by the most hot-blooded and impetuous Knights, both off and on the field of battle. In war they seek above all the glory of rapid victory and delight in high speed manoeuvre, destroying their foes in a fury of close range fire and swift assault. Caution is to them an anathema and valour lies only in the close press of battle. Within the Questoris Crusade forces, the Scions Uhlan are used by the wiser Household commanders as advanced scouts, raiders and reavers, either to form the front skirmish line of the Household in the open field or as flanking forces to encircle a foe and run down an enemy once it breaks. As a result of their preferred tactics, many Scions Uhlan covet the use of the less common Cerastus pattern Knights, owing to their superior battle speed.*

**Impetuous Advance:** Scions Uhlan have the Scout and the Hit and Run special rules, however, in order to achieve these abilities, they have the Sacristans strip down the armour of their Knights in order to lighten them for speed. In all cases, the Scions Uhlan reduce the Armour value of their Front armour by -1.

**Uhlan's Scorn:** Scions Uhlan commonly deride long-range bombardment as a dishonourable mode of warfare unbecoming of a Scion of a Great House and, despite orders to the contrary, they suffer such a mode of attack with ill-grace. Scions Uhlan may only make Snap Shots with their weapons at targets greater than 24" away.



## Heavy Support Ranks

**Nobles of the following ranks are Heavy Support choices for the Questoris Knight Crusade army.**

### Scion Arbalester ..... +25 points

*An Arbalester excels at dealing death and destruction at a distance, utilising their Knight's firepower to its fullest and most devastating effect. Skilled gunners, while some of their more impetuous or glory-hungry brethren may scorn their tactics as unworthy, they undertake a vital role in the Household's battleline, identifying and destroying enemy heavy weapons emplacements to screen their comrades' advance and help shield their fellows from aerial attack.*

**Weapon Calibration:** The weapons-mountings and targeting systems of a Knight Arbalester have been finely attuned by their pilot and are extremely responsive to their skills. The Knight has the Tank Hunters special rule and, in addition, so long as it has not moved in its preceding Movement phase, it may, if its controlling player wishes, count all its weapons as having the Skyfire special rule in the Shooting phase.

### Scion Implacable ..... +35 points

*An epithet applied to a Household Knight who has shown a particular aptitude for siege warfare, an 'Implacable' is an invaluable warrior in such situations as heavy assault against fortified positions and also in the desperate maelstrom of cityscape warfare. In situations such as these, a Knight, despite its power, might become undone if unexpectedly surrounded and swarmed by an enemy, but not so the Implacable, who though may be marked as far more cautious than their brethren in battle, is adept at crushing infantry like vermin.*

**Wall Breaker:** A Knight with this special rule adds +1 to any results rolled on the Building Damage table as a result of any of its attacks (this is cumulative to any bonus for a weapon's AP).

**Infantry Crusher:** The Knight may re-roll results on the Stomp table (the result of the re-roll must be taken even if it is worse than the first). In addition, the Knight has a 5+ invulnerable save against grenade and melta bomb attacks in an assault. The Knight, however, may not make Sweeping Advances.

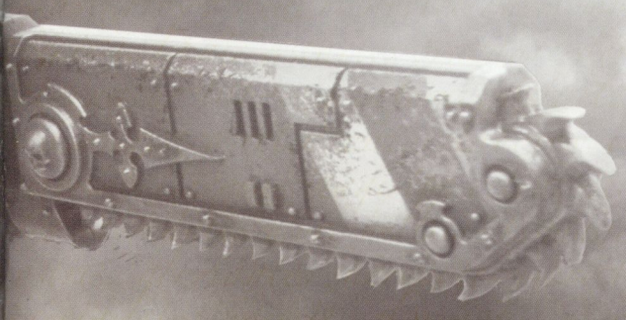


# Questoris Knight Crusade Army Warlord Traits

When generating their Warlord Traits, a Questoris Knight Crusade Warlord must roll on the following table. Note that they may not use the Warlord Trait tables in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

## Questoris Knight Crusade Army Warlord Traits Table

| D6 | Warlord Trait |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Hell Rider**<br>*The Knight is renowned for their command on a score of burning battlefields, and the ashes of war are as garlands of victory to them.*<br>The Knight Warlord and all other Knights in their detachment within 12" gain +1" to their Movement and +1 on any To Wound and Armour Penetration rolls on the first turn of the game. |
| 2 | **Glorious Renown**<br>*The fame of the Knight goes before them, a terror to their foes and a boon to their allies.*<br>Fear tests taken against the Knight Warlord suffer a -2 penalty to the Leadership value, while allied units within 12" may re-roll failed Morale checks. |
| 3 | **Favoured of Mars**<br>*The Knight has won the favour of one of the great Forge Lords of the Mechanicum, who has blessed their Knight armour with their arcane lore.*<br>One of the Knight Warlord's weapons, chosen by the owning player, gains the Master-crafted special rule. |
| 4 | **Lord of the Abyss**<br>*The Knight has travelled the depths of the unknown stars with the forces of the Great Crusade and has slain strange creatures, both nightmarish and savagely powerful, in single combat.*<br>The Knight Warlord gains the Monster Hunter and Adamantium Will special rules. |
| 5 | **Puissant Commander**<br>*The Knight is not merely a great warrior, but a cunning general, wise in the intricacies of warfare.*<br>The owning player may add +1 to their Seize the Initiative roll in missions where this is relevant, and while the Knight Warlord is on the table, enemy Reserves rolls suffer a -1 modifier. |
| 6 | **Indomitable**<br>*The Knight will not yield, no matter the foe, no matter the harm they suffer, whilst a single enemy remains on the field of battle.*<br>The Knight Warlord gains the It Will Not Die special rule. |



Housed in the labyrinthine expanse of the Emperor's Palace, within the Palace of Banners, the Officio Militaris College of Arms is an ancient institution whose Adepts-Pursuivant monitor, catalogue and approve the bewildering array of heraldic devices used by the various military arms of the Great Crusade. As the ultimate authority on all matters pertaining to sigils and marks of rank, and official arbitrators of the ownership of such marks, these adepts wield much power within the ranks of the Imperial Court, and the Lord Adept-of-Arms maintains an advisory position within the Emperor's Council itself.

Among the many duties of the adepts of the College is that of cataloguing and recording the near-endless array of heraldry used by the recognised Imperial Knight Houses. These adepts, sometimes known as '*Matriculators*', are common sights on worlds controlled by Knight Households, and are always accompanied by the stern Claviger Guard, who are sworn to see that none interfere with their duties. Such is the importance placed upon the sanctity of their heraldic emblems and the privilege of use of coveted designs and insignia that many within a Knight Household are willing to resort to violence to ensure their claim is honoured by their peers.

# Archmagos Draykavac

## Warlord of Cyclothrathe, Sovereign-Prelate of House Atrax, Bringer of Perfection

240 points

| | WS | BS | S | T | W | I | A | Ld | Sv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Archmagos Draykavac | 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 10 | 2+ |

HQ

Though he would become one of the most reviled of the Dark Mechanicum, Draykavac was an all but unknown figure before the civil war of the Warmaster's betrayal sundered the Imperium. This bestially masked and black-robed Magos served as the chief military emissary of the Forge World of Cyclothrathe and the foremost field commander of its Taghmata, answerable only to the sinister and hidden tribunal which ruled his lightning-wracked world. As part of Draykavac's command, he also held the rank of sovereign-prelate of the Knight House of Atrax, which was fully oath-bound to Cyclothrathe which, while nominally it still had its own seneschals and master, was in reality little more than puppets of the utterly callous and inhuman Archmagos Draykavac.

With the outbreak of war within the Coronid Deeps, Draykavac was at the forefront of the campaign of invasion and conquest Cyclothrathe carried out in the name of the Traitors, swiftly amassing a tally of atrocities and massacres to his name that set him apart as one of the most hated of his kind.

**Unit Composition**
- 1 (Unique)

**Unit Type**
- Infantry (Character)

**Wargear**
- Paragon blade
- Machinator array*
- Djinn-skein
- Mechanicum protectiva
- Cortex controller
- Graviton gun

**Toughness increase already included in profile.*

**Special Rules**
- Stubborn
- Fear
- Battlesmith
- Liquifractor
- Relentless
- Warlord (If Archmagos Draykavac is your army's Warlord, he has the Death of the Flesh trait rather than rolling randomly)
- High Techno-arcana (Stataraga)

**Options**
- Archmagos Draykavac may take up to:
  - Four Cyber-occularis ..... +15 points each

(see *The Horus Heresy Book Three – Extermination*)
- Archmagos Draykavac may be mounted in an:
  - Abeyant ..... +25 points

**Warlord: Death of the Flesh**
All units within the detachment have the special rule Preferred Enemy (Infantry – all types) when within 3" of an objective.

**Liquifractor**
Draykavac may exchange all his attacks in an Assault phase for a single special Liquifractor attack. This attack may be used against a single model in base contact and occurs at Initiative step 1 of the Fight sub-phase. No To Hit rolls are made and the attack hits its targets automatically.

To resolve the attack, Draykavac's player rolls 2D6. If the target has a Toughness characteristic, they suffer a number of wounds equal to Draykavac's roll minus their Toughness value with an AP value of 2. If the target has an Armour value, deduct the number rolled from half the score of the Armour value being struck; the result is the number of penetrating hits the vehicle suffers. Eg, if Draykavac's player rolls a result of 6 against a Land Raider with an Armour value of 14, one penetrating hit is inflicted – 7-6=1.

**High Techno-arcana (Stataraga)**
All units with the Walker, Super-heavy Walker or Monstrous Creature types in the same detachment as the Warlord gain +1 to their charge distances and Sweeping Advance results.

### Using Archmagos Draykavac in your Games

Draykavac may be chosen as an HQ choice for either the Taghmata Omnissiah army list or as part of a Questoris Knight Crusade Army list (in this case representing his bound Knight House of Atrax). As part of a Questoris Knight army, then Castellax Battle-automata maniples may be chosen as non-Compulsory Troops choices and Vorax Battle-automata Maniples as Fast Attack choices for the army.

*Traitor Faction: Archmagos Draykavac may only be chosen as part of a Traitor primary detachment, and must be its Warlord.*

# Questoris Knight Paladin

## 375 points

| | Armour | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WS | BS | S | Front | Side | Rear | I | A | HP |
| Questoris Knight Paladin | 4 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Questoris Knight Paladin

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

**Wargear**
- Questoris battlecannon
- Two heavy stubbers
- Reaper chainsword
- Ion shield

**Special Rules**
- Household Rank
- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown

**Options**
- The Questoris Knight Paladin may exchange its Questoris battle cannon for a:
  - Rapid-fire battlecannon ..... Free
- The Questoris Knight Paladin may be upgraded with:
  - Bio-corrosive rounds for its heavy stubbers .....+10 points each
- The Questoris Knight Paladin may be upgraded with:
  - Occular augmetics .....+10 points

**Household Rank**
The model is subject to the Household Rank special rule, which may grant it an alteration to its basic profile and additional special rules as shown in the Questoris Knight Crusade Army Special Rules section on page 295.

**Ion Shield**
When a Questoris Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases, the Questoris Knight's controlling player must declare which facing each Questoris Knight's ion shield is covering. The choices are: front, left side, right side or rear.

The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of the opposing side's next Shooting phase. Ion shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase and may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

**Occular Augmetics**
The Knight has the Night Vision special rule and may re-roll results of a 1 on the Vehicle Damage table and Destroyer Weapon Attack table which are inflicted by their shooting attacks at a range of 12" or less.

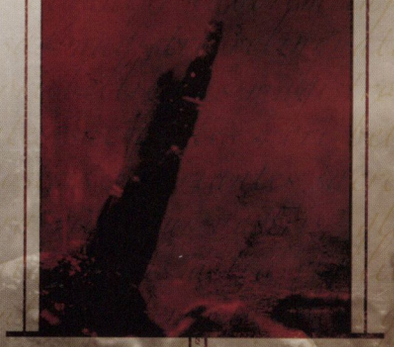
**Questoris Knight Paladin Weapons**

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rapid-fire battlecannon | 72" | 8 | 3 | Ordnance 2, Large Blast (5") |
| Questoris battlecannon | 72" | 6 | 3 | Ordnance 3, Large Blast (5") |
| Heavy stubber | 36" | 4 | 6 | Heavy 3 |
| (Bio-corrosive rounds) | 30" | 2 | 6 | Heavy 3, Poisoned (4+) |
| Reaper chainsword | - | D | 2 | Melee |



Amongst the most widely used mark of Knight armour, the Paladin is renowned for its rugged dependability and the versatility of its weapons array. There are few challenges on the battlefield that cannot be met and overcome by the combination of brute force, agility and stubborn resilience represented by the Paladin armour. A Scion mounted in Knight Paladin armour can lay down a withering hail of blast and shrapnel, yet despite the utility and firepower of the battle cannon, many Scions still favour the use of the reaper chainsword, considering it more honourable to stand face-to-face with their enemy.

These armours are little different from the ancient war machines carried to the stars by the first Long March colonists. Only the hand-forged and intricately embossed armour plating separates them from those early exo-armours, and many of these machines have fought in the defence of Mankind for long centuries, bearing honour markings from wars long since forgotten on their plating.



# Questoris Knight Errant

370 points

| | Armour | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WS | BS | S | Front | Side | Rear | I | A | HP |
| Questoris Knight Errant | 4 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 4 | 3 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Questoris Knight Errant

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

**Wargear**
- Thermal cannon
- Heavy stubbers
- Reaper chainsword
- Ion shield

**Special Rules**
- Household Rank
- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown

**Options**
- The Questoris Knight Errant may be upgraded with:
  - Bio-corrosive rounds for its heavy stubbers ..... +5 points
- The Questoris Knight Errant may be upgraded with:
  - Occular augmetics ..... +10 points

**Household Rank**
The model is subject to the Household Rank special rule, which may grant it an alteration to its basic profile and additional special rules as shown in the Questoris Knight Crusade Army Special Rules section on page 295.

**Ion Shield**
When a Questoris Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases, the Questoris Knight's controlling player must declare which facing each Questoris Knight's ion shield is covering. The choices are: front, left side, right side or rear.

The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of the opposing side's next Shooting phase. Ion shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase and may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

**Questoris Knight Errant Weapons**

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thermal cannon | 36" | 9 | 1 | Heavy 1, Melta, Large Blast (5") |
| Heavy stubber | 36" | 4 | 6 | Heavy 3 |
| (Bio-corrosive rounds) | 30" | 2 | 6 | Heavy 3, Poisoned (4+) |
| Reaper chainsword | - | D | 2 | Melee |

## Knights

Based on the same ancient frame as the Paladin armour, the Errant mark armour mounts an imposing thermal cannon in place of a battlecannon and this terrifying weapon is more than capable of vaporising even the most resilient of armour in an instant. Most often employed to hunt down and destroy enemy super-heavy armour or the most monstrous of xenos creatures, Errant mark armours are assigned to the more aggressive scions, and in turn often develop a belligerent anima.

Few Errant armours carry the long lineage of many Paladin Knights as only the most skilled survive for long, though such armours often carry with them a collection of battle honours that few others can match. Some of the oldest Errant armours, veterans of many lifetimes of battle, are so fractious of spirit and spiteful of temperament that only the most iron-willed of scions can master them, bending their bloody instincts to the service of the Household.



# Questoris Knight Magaera

395 points

| | WS | BS | S | Armour Front | Armour Side | Armour Rear | I | A | HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Questoris Knight Magaera | 4 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Questoris Knight Magaera

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

**Wargear**
- Lightning cannon
- Phased plasma-fusil
- Reaper chainsword
- Ionic flare shield
- Blessed autosimulacra

**Special Rules**
- Household Rank
- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown
- Overtaxed Reactor

**Options**
- The Questoris Knight Magaera may upgrade its reaper chainsword for a:
  - Hekaton siege claw with a twin-linked rad cleanser .....+25 points
- The Questoris Knight Magaera may be upgraded with:
  - Occular augmetics .....+10 points

**Household Rank**
The model is subject to the Household Rank special rule, which may grant it an alteration to its basic profile and additional special rules as shown in the Questoris Knight Crusade Army Special Rules section on page 295.

**Ionic Flare Shield**
When a Questoris Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases, the Questoris Knight's controlling player must declare which facing each Questoris Knight's ionic flare shield is covering. The choices are: front, left side, right side or rear.

The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of the opposing side's next Shooting phase, and the strength of any Shooting attack against it is reduced by -1, the effect increasing to -2 if the weapon has the Blast or Template rules (note however that this strength reduction has no effect on Destroyer or Haywire attacks). Ionic flare shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase and may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

**Blessed Autosimulacra**
If a vehicle has suffered Hull Point damage at the end of the controlling player's turn, roll a D6. On a 6, one lost Hull Point is restored.

**Overtaxed Reactor**
When destroyed, the Knight adds +1 to the result rolled on the Catastrophic Damage table.

**Questoris Knight Magaera Weapons**

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lightning cannon | 48" | 7 | 3 | Heavy 1, Rending, Large Blast (5"), Shred |
| Phased-plasma fusil | 24" | 6 | 3 | Salvo 2/3 |
| Reaper chainsword | - | D | 2 | Melee |
| Rad cleanser | Template | 2 | 5 | Assault 1, Fleshbane, Rad-phage |
| Hekaton siege claw | - | D | 2 | Melee, Wrecker |

**Rad-phage:** A model which loses one or more wounds to an attack with this special rule and survives has its Toughness value reduced by -1 for the rest of the battle.



## KNIGHTS

Amongst the rarest examples of Knight armour currently produced in any numbers by the Forge-fanes of the Mechanicum, the Magaera is a marvel of lost technology. Within its armoured frame are housed relic devices understood by only the most learned tech-savants in the Mechanicum, from dedicated repair autosimulacra to the nigh-impregnable ionic flare shield. However, the strain placed on the armour's atomantic reactors leads to dangerous levels of radiation seeping past the containment shields and in the event of heavy damage, potentially catastrophic internal explosions.

Magaera type Knights are most often used as shock assault units, breaching the most heavily defended enemy positions, while shrugging off heavy weapons fire and self-repairing even devastating weapon strikes in a few minutes. To aid in this role it is armed with a complex lightning cannon, using focussed electro-magnetic beams to vaporise infantry and blast apart armour.

# Questoris Knight Styrix

405 points

| | WS | BS | S | Armour Front | Side | Rear | I | A | HP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Questoris Knight Styrix | 4 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 2 | 3 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Questoris Knight Styrix

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

**Wargear**
- Volkite chieorovile
- Graviton gun
- Reaper chainsword
- Ionic flare shield
- Blessed autosimulacra

**Special Rules**
- Household Rank
- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown
- Overtaxed Reactor

**Options**
- The Questoris Knight Styrix may upgrade its Reaper chainsword for a:
  - Hekaton siege claw with a twin-linked rad-cleanser.....+25 points
- The Questoris Knight Styrix may be upgraded with:
  - Occular augmetics.....+10 points

**Household Rank**
The model is subject to the Household Rank special rule, which may grant it an alteration to its basic profile and additional special rules as shown in the Questoris Knight Crusade Army Special Rules section on page 295.

**Ionic Flare Shield**
When a Questoris Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases, the Questoris Knight's controlling player must declare which facing each Questoris Knight's ionic flare shield is covering. The choices are: front, left side, right side or rear.

The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of the opposing side's next Shooting phase, and the strength of any Shooting attack against it is reduced by -1, the effect increasing to -2 if the weapon has the Blast or Template rules (note, however, that this strength reduction has no effect on Destroyer or Haywire attacks). Ionic flare shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase and may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

**Overtaxed Reactor**
When destroyed, the Knight adds +1 to the result rolled on the Catastrophic Damage table.

**Questoris Knight Styrix Weapons**

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Special |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Volkite chieorovile | 45" | 8 | 3 | Heavy 5, Deflagrate |
| Graviton gun | 18" | * | 4 | Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Concussive, Graviton Pulse*, Haywire |
| Reaper chainsword | - | D | 2 | Melee |
| Rad cleanser | Template | 2 | 5 | Assault 1, Fleshbane, Rad-phage |
| Hekaton siege claw | - | D | 2 | Melee, Wrecker |

*See page 245.

**Rad-phage:** A model which loses one or more wounds to an attack with this special rule and survives has its Toughness value reduced by -1 for the rest of the battle.

The Styrix mark knight armour is the equal of the Magaera in technological sophistication, but has been meticulously designed to facilitate the efficient eradication of infantry formations and supporting vehicles. Blasts from the Styrix's integral graviton gun pin hapless targets in place while scything volkite beams and flesh-boiling rad-cleanser discharges reap a heavy toll of lives. The anima of these armours, steeped in slaughter and death in its most visceral sense, often develop distinctly malevolent machine spirits, and have garnered something of a dark reputation in many of the more conservative Households, who view the wanton slaughter of impotent infantry as beneath a true Knight.

Among Mechanicum-oathed Households, the Styrix is held in higher esteem, especially among those scions who have undergone extensive augmentation in honour of their enigmatic patrons and share their antipathy for the weakness of flesh. The pitiless thrall-Knights of House Col'Khak are renowned for fielding entire formations of these machines in support of the Legio Atarus, sweeping clear enemy infantry from the Titan's feet in a furious blast of energy beams and cleansing radiation.

# Cerastus Knight-Lancer

## 400 points

| | Armour | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WS | BS | S | Front | Side | Rear | I | A | HP |
| Cerastus Knight-Lancer | 4 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Cerastus Knight-Lancer

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

**Wargear**
- Cerastus shock lance
- Ion gauntlet shield

**Special Rules**
- Flank Speed
- Household Rank
- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown

**Options**
- The Cerastus Knight-Lancer may be upgraded with:
  - Occular augmetics.....+10 points

**Household Rank**
The model is subject to the Household Rank special rule, which may grant it an alteration to its basic profile and additional special rules as shown in the Questoris Knight Crusade Army Special Rules section on page 295.

**Flank Speed**
If the Cerastus Knight-Lancer opts to make a Run move rather than firing a weapon in the Shooting phase, it may move 3D6".

**Cerastus Shock Lance**
The shock lance mounted on the Cerastus Knight-Lancer is a magneto-hydraulic power spear of prodigious size, whose disruption field may also be projected as a powerful electromagnetic plasma blast over short ranges. The weapon has two profiles, one of which is used in close combat, the other can be used in the Shooting phase:

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shock lance | | | | |
| (Melee) | - | D | 2 | Melee, Swift Strike |
| (Shock blast) | 18" | 7 | 2 | Heavy 6, Concussive |

**Swift Strike:** The weapon gains a +1 bonus to Initiative on any turn it charges into close combat.

**Ion Gauntlet Shield**
The ion gauntlet shield generator mounted in the Cerastus' right gauntlet assembly is more concentrated than the directional ion shield mounted on the Knight Paladin, but lacks its tactical flexibility. The ion gauntlet shield is used just as a standard ion shield is (see page 301), but may not offer protection to the Cerastus Knight-Lancer's rear. However, the ion gauntlet shield also provides a 5+ invulnerable save against attacks in close combat and forces close combat attacks by other Super-heavy Walkers and Gargantuan Monstrous Creatures to suffer a -1 to hit.



KNIGHTS

The Lancer is the most widely known variant of the Cerastus type Knight armour, a highly sophisticated chassis whose speed and agility far exceed the clumsier Errant and Paladin types. The Cerastus type Knights appear to have been designed solely for war, not as protectors but as bloody-handed conquerors and tools of destruction, a legacy of the violence that marked the beginning of the Age of Strife.

The Lancer is held in high esteem by the more impetuous of a House's scions, its potent ion gauntlet and shock lance perfectly suited to battling the foe face to face, where only a perfectly timed thrust of the lance stands between a scion and death. In particular those scions who follow the Uhlan traditions favour the speed and ferocity of the Lancer, and when rival Knight Houses meet in combat, these warriors race ahead of the Household to clash in single combat with the enemy's champions.

# Cerastus Knight-Castigator — 380 points

| | Armour | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WS | BS | S | Front | Side | Rear | I | A | HP |
| Cerastus Knight-Castigator | 4 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Cerastus Knight-Castigator

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

**Wargear**
- One twin-linked Castigator pattern bolt cannon
- Tempest warblade
- Ion shield

**Special Rules**
- Flank Speed
- Household Rank
- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown

**Options**
- The Cerastus Knight-Castigator may be upgraded with:
  - Occular augmetics ..... +10 points

**Household Rank**
The model is subject to the Household Rank special rule, which may grant it an alteration to its basic profile and additional special rules as shown in the Questoris Knight Crusade Army Special Rules section on page 295.

**Flank Speed**
If the Cerastus Knight-Castigator opts to make a Run move rather than firing a weapon in the Shooting phase, it may move 3D6".

**Ion Shield**
When a Questoris Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases, the Questoris Knight's controlling player must declare which facing each Questoris Knight's ion shield is covering. The choices are: front, left side, right side or rear.

The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of the opposing side's next Shooting phase. Ion shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase and may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

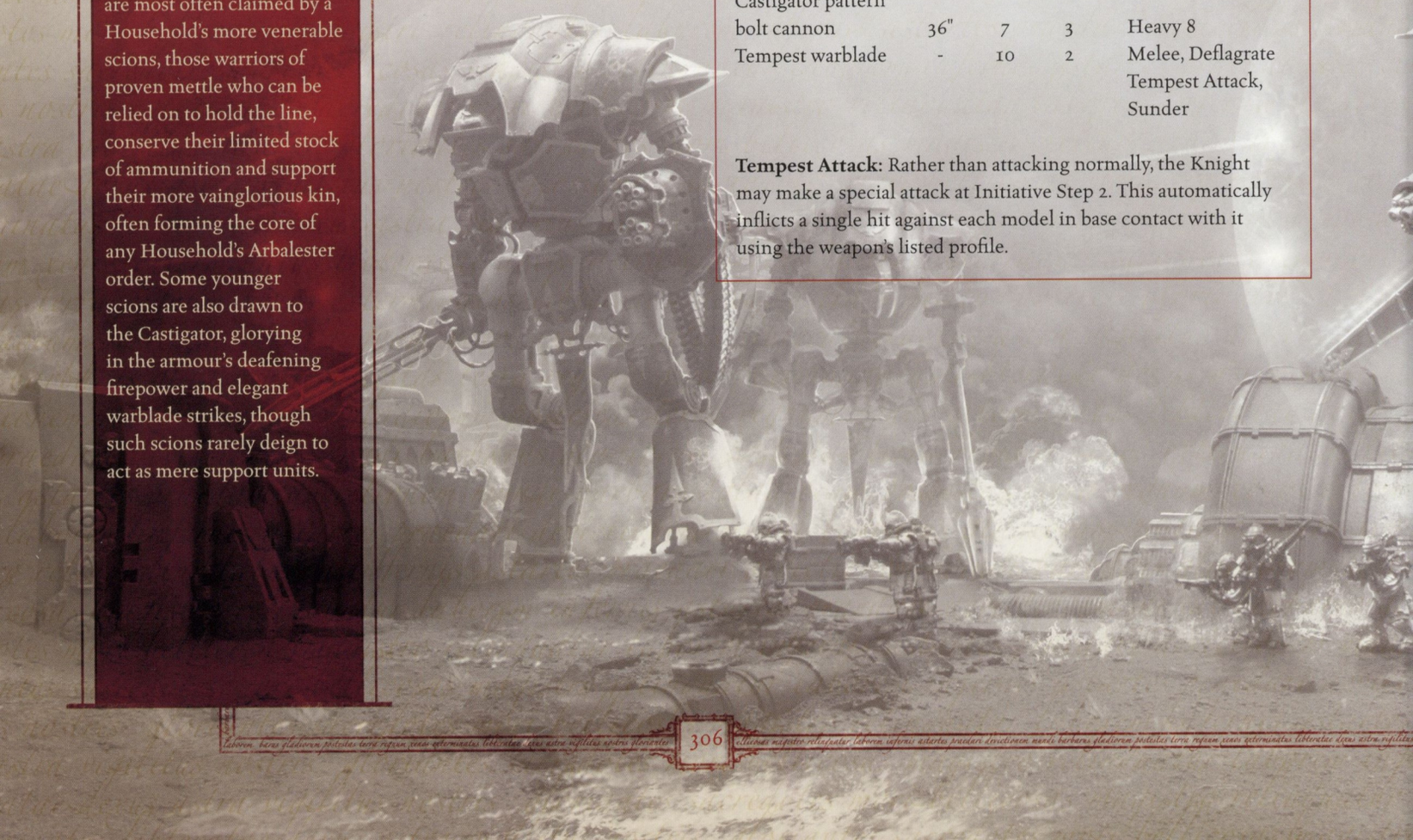
**Cerastus Knight-Castigator Weapons**

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Castigator pattern bolt cannon | 36" | 7 | 3 | Heavy 8 |
| Tempest warblade | - | 10 | 2 | Melee, Deflagrate Tempest Attack, Sunder |

**Tempest Attack:** Rather than attacking normally, the Knight may make a special attack at Initiative Step 2. This automatically inflicts a single hit against each model in base contact with it using the weapon's listed profile.

Armed with the fearsome castigator pattern bolt cannon, the Cerastus Knight-Castigator is a favoured by those households faced with hordes of lesser foes that might otherwise overwhelm even a mighty Knight through their sheer numbers. Capable of obliterating infantry formations in a thunderous rain of mass reactive explosions and whirling power blades, or carving apart light vehicles with ease, the Castigator is a formidable combatant. Notably amongst their ilk, the Castigator is also renown for the stoic nature of the machine spirits within, whose vigour is difficult to rouse, but almost impossible to ignore.

Castigator mark armours are most often claimed by a Household's more venerable scions, those warriors of proven mettle who can be relied on to hold the line, conserve their limited stock of ammunition and support their more vainglorious kin, often forming the core of any Household's Arbalester order. Some younger scions are also drawn to the Castigator, glorying in the armour's deafening firepower and elegant warblade strikes, though such scions rarely deign to act as mere support units.



# Cerastus Knight-Acheron

## 415 points

| | Armour | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WS | BS | S | Front | Side | Rear | I | A | HP |
| Cerastus Knight-Acheron | 4 | 4 | 10 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 6 |

**Unit Composition**
- 1 Cerastus Knight-Acheron

**Unit Type**
- Vehicle (Super-heavy Walker)

**Wargear**
- Acheron pattern flame cannon
- Reaper chainfist with an inbuilt twin-linked heavy bolter
- Ion shield

**Special Rules**
- Flank Speed
- Household Rank
- (Super-heavy Walker) Fear, Hammer of Wrath, Invincible Behemoth, Move Through Cover, Relentless, Smash and Strikedown

**Options**
- The Cerastus Knight-Acheron may be upgraded with:
  - Occular augmetics.....+10 points

**Household Rank**
The model is subject to the Household Rank special rule, which may grant it an alteration to its basic profile and additional special rules as shown in the Questoris Knight Crusade Army Special Rules section on page 295.

**Flank Speed**
If the Cerastus Knight-Acheron opts to make a Run move rather than firing a weapon in the Shooting phase, it may move 3D6".

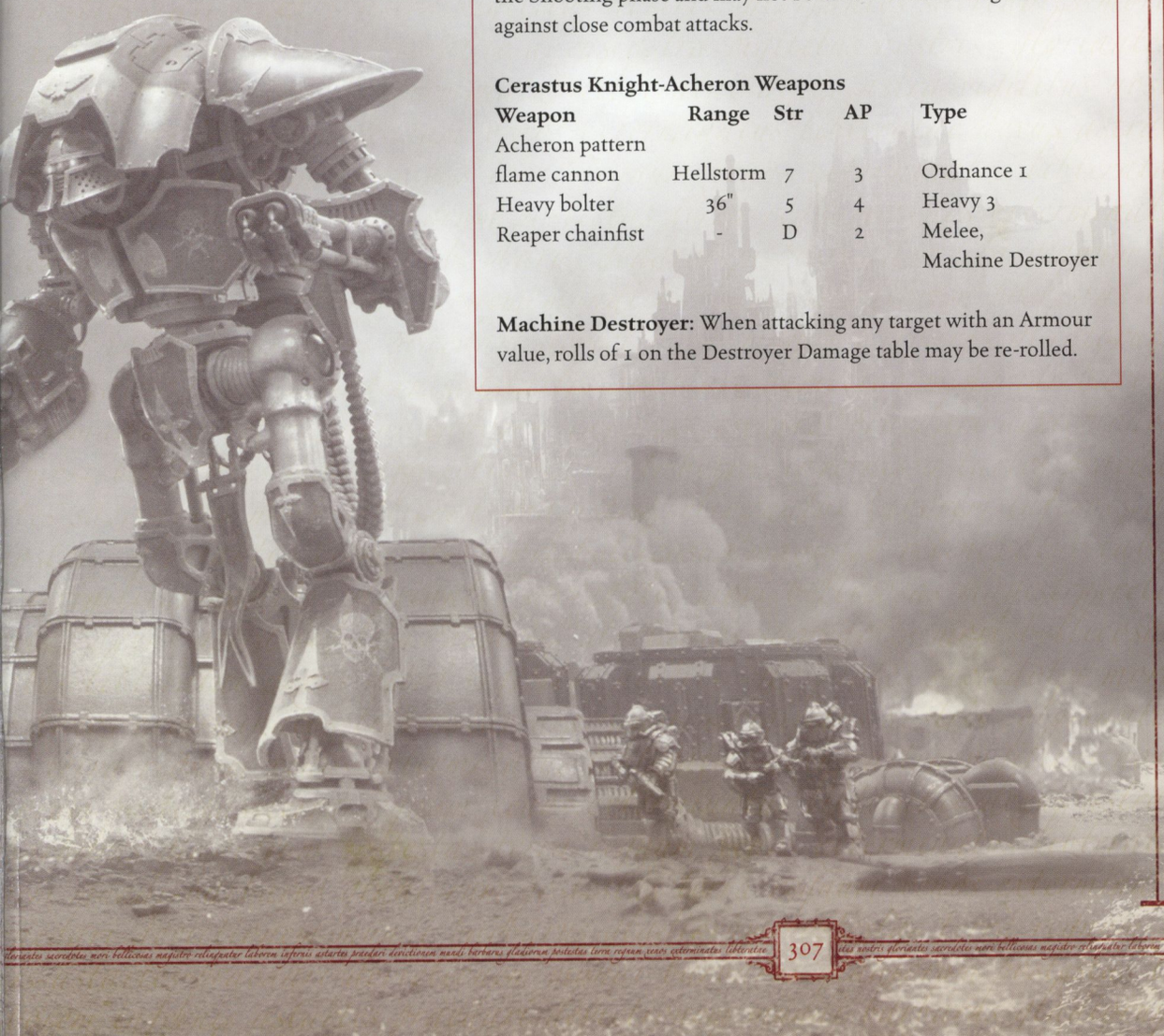
**Ion Shield**
When a Questoris Knight is deployed, and subsequently at the start of each of the opposing side's Shooting phases, the Questoris Knight's controlling player must declare which facing each Questoris Knight's ion shield is covering. The choices are: front, left side, right side or rear.

The Knight has a 4+ invulnerable save against all hits on that facing until the start of the opposing side's next Shooting phase. Ion shields are repositioned before any attacks are carried out in the Shooting phase and may not be used to make saving throws against close combat attacks.

**Cerastus Knight-Acheron Weapons**

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acheron pattern flame cannon | Hellstorm | 7 | 3 | Ordnance 1 |
| Heavy bolter | 36" | 5 | 4 | Heavy 3 |
| Reaper chainfist | - | D | 2 | Melee, Machine Destroyer |

**Machine Destroyer:** When attacking any target with an Armour value, rolls of 1 on the Destroyer Damage table may be re-rolled.





The Cerastus Knight-Acheron is a fearsome sight on the battlefield, a reaper of lives carefully designed not only to destroy, but also to inspire terror both in appearance and the manner in which it undertakes its grim task. The presence of an Acheron mark armour in the battlelines of a Household warns the foe to expect no mercy, for such weapons are only deployed for missions of extermination, to topple the works of the enemy and scour clean his lands with flame.

Scions rarely choose to ride into battle in Acheron armour voluntarily, accepting the task instead as an arduous duty to be undertaken for the good of the House, for the anima of these armours are often awash in the inherited memories of massacres and slaughters uncounted. Those few scions who prefer such grim mounts are either warriors of iron will, capable of suppressing the sinister whispers of the armour's machine spirits, or tortured souls who relish the armour's malicious impulses and the carnage it wreaks on the field of battle.

## Questoris Knights Weapons Summary

| Weapon | Range | Str | AP | Type |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Acheron pattern flame cannon | Hellstorm | 7 | 3 | Ordnance 1 |
| Castigator pattern bolt cannon | 36" | 7 | 3 | Heavy 8 |
| Graviton gun | 18" | * | 4 | Heavy 1, Blast (3"), Concussive, *Graviton Pulse[1], Haywire |
| Heavy bolter | 36" | 5 | 4 | Heavy 3 |
| Heavy stubber | 36" | 4 | 6 | Heavy 3 |
| (Bio-corrosive rounds) | 30" | 2 | 6 | Heavy 3, Poisoned (4+) |
| Hekaton siege claw | - | D | 2 | Melee, Wrecker[2] |
| Lightning cannon | 48" | 7 | 3 | Heavy 1, Rending, Large Blast (5"), Shred |
| Phased-plasma fusil | 24" | 6 | 3 | Salvo 2/3 |
| Questoris battlecannon | 72" | 6 | 3 | Ordnance 3, Large Blast (5") |
| Rad cleanser | Template | 2 | 5 | Assault 1, Fleshbane, Rad-phage[3] |
| Rapid-fire battlecannon | 72" | 8 | 3 | Ordnance 2, Large Blast (5") |
| Reaper chainfist | - | D | 2 | Melee, Machine Destroyer[4] |
| Reaper chainsword | - | D | 2 | Melee |
| Shock lance | | | | |
| (Melee) | - | D | 2 | Melee, Swift Strike[5] |
| (Shock blast) | 18" | 7 | 2 | Heavy 6, Concussive |
| Tempest warblade | - | 10 | 2 | Melee, Sunder[6], Tempest Attack[7] |
| Thermal cannon | 36" | 9 | 1 | Heavy 1, Melta, Large Blast (5") |
| Volkite chieorovile | 45" | 8 | 3 | Heavy 5, Deflagrate[8] |

[1]**Graviton Pulse:** Instead of rolling To Wound normally with this weapon, any model caught in its blast must instead roll equal to or under their Strength on a D6 or suffer a wound (a roll of '6' always counts as a failure). After the graviton pulse weapon has been fired, leave the Blast marker in place. This area now counts as both difficult terrain and dangerous terrain for the next turn thanks to the gravity flux.

[2]**Wrecker:** Weapons and attacks with this special rule may re-roll failed Armour Penetration rolls against fortifications and immobile structures (such as bunkers and barricades), and add +1 to any result rolled on the Building Damage chart. If this attack damages a bulkhead or wall section of terrain and destroys it, remove that section of terrain from play if possible.

[3]**Rad-phage:** A model which loses one or more wounds to an attack with this special rule and survives has its Toughness value reduced by -1 for the rest of the battle.

[4]**Machine Destroyer:** When attacking any target with an Armour value, rolls of 1 on the Destroyer Damage table may be re-rolled.

[5]**Swift Strike:** The weapon gains a +1 bonus to Initiative on any turn it charges into close combat.

[6]**Sunder:** Attacks with this special rule may re-roll failed Armour Penetration rolls.

[7]**Tempest Attack:** Rather than attacking normally, the Knight may make a special attack at Initiative Step 2. This automatically inflicts a single hit against each model in base contact with it using the weapon's listed profile.

[8]**Deflagrate:** After normal attacks by this weapon have been resolved, count the number of unsaved wounds caused on the target unit. Immediately resolve a number of additional automatic hits on the same unit using the weapon's profile equal to the number of unsaved wounds – these can then be saved normally. Models in the targeted unit must still be in range in order for these additional hits to take effect. These additional hits do not themselves inflict more hits!



# AFTERWORD

Welcome to the Age of Darkness.

*The Horus Heresy Book Four – Conquest* continues the story of the wars that shaped the Imperium of Man in the wake of the Isstvan massacres, detailed in the initial Forge World Horus Heresy trilogy, and brings you the swooping panorama of a galaxy at war.

Where the first volumes of the Horus Heresy series have covered only the events occurring at the genesis of the rebellion, in the Isstvan system, *Conquest* broadens the stage of the Horus Heresy and treads new ground in this well known corner of the Warhammer 40,000 universe. The events described in *Conquest* encompass the fighting that engulfs not only the northern reaches of the fledgling Imperium, but also acts as an example of the strife that grips the entire Imperium. With the wealth of gaming tools provided in this volume, any of the emerging conflicts that mark the early stages of the Horus Heresy can be re-played in their full glory – or even can be played as entirely original campaigns based on the events presented within.

More than any of the previous books of the Horus Heresy series, *Conquest* is a toolbox intended to allow players to fully explore the battles of the Age of Darkness on the tabletop, and to enable more than simple re-enactment of already famous events. Not only does it present a full and highly customisable campaign system, but it takes the first steps towards providing players and collectors access to the full range of the Imperium's vast array of hosts. The initial versions of the Questoris Knights and Solar Auxilia army lists are the first glimpses of the full glory of the Imperium's armies and future books will expand not only these lists, but also the other varied forces that fought for both the Loyalists and Traitors.

As the range of Horus Heresy books and miniatures continues to expand, the enthusiasm with which gamers have embraced them is an ongoing delight, and the entirety of the Forge World team wishes to express its thanks for our customers' support. This book, now finished after much hard work by a veritable legion of writers, artists and designers, is but a stepping stone to new and exciting battles, miniatures and events on the long road to Terra, with many more exciting tomes to follow.

**The Forge World Studio**

A Forge World supplement for

WARHAMMER 40,000

*The Horus Heresy Book Four – Conquest is a supplement for Warhammer 40,000 dealing with war and battle in the dark age of the Horus Heresy, when the fledgling Imperium of Mankind was torn apart by bloody civil war and treachery. This book, lavishly illustrated in full colour, contains extensive background information on the Warmaster's invasion of the northern Imperium having revealed his treachery at the Isstvan System. Also detailed are the histories of four Knight Houses, the elite Solar Auxilia of the Imperial Army and an extensive campaign system that allows you to play out the all consuming war in your own exciting tabletop battles. This book also contains two entirely new army lists – the Questoris Knights Crusade Army and the Solar Auxilia Crusade Army, including unique special characters central to the story of the fall of the Coronid Deeps.*

*The Horus Heresy Book Four – Conquest is a complete expansion for the Warhammer 40,000 game - it requires the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook to use its contents.*

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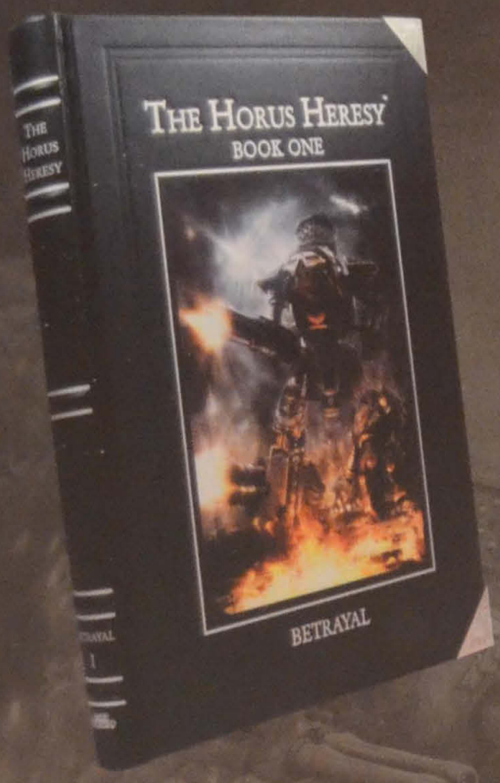
# The Horus Heresy®

## Book One - Betrayal




*The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal* is a supplement for Warhammer 40,000 dealing with war and battle in the dark age of the Horus Heresy, when the fledgling Imperium of Mankind was torn apart by bloody civil war and treachery.

This book, lavishly illustrated in full colour, contains extensive background information on the Imperium as it stood at the end of the Great Crusade, the foundations of the Space Marines of the Legiones Astartes and the dark deeds of the Battle of Isstvan III. Also detailed are the histories of the four Legions who took part: the Sons of Horus, Emperor's Children, World Eaters and Death Guard, and an extensive campaign system that allows you to play out the conflict on Isstvan III in your own exciting tabletop battles.

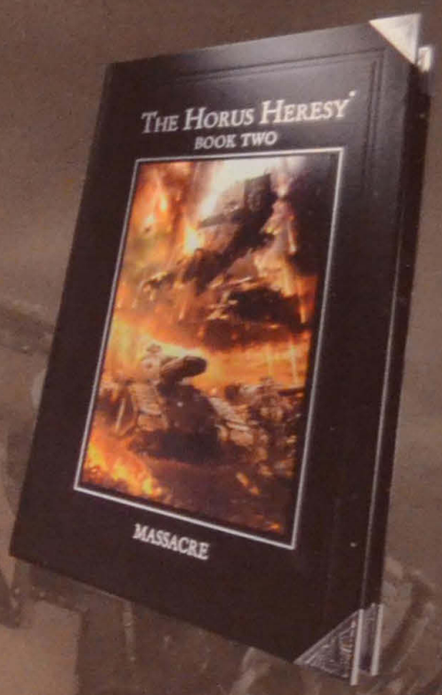
This book also contains a complete Space Marine Legion Crusade Army list as well as game rules for the Primarchs of the four Legions, super-heavy vehicles and special characters featured in the story.

*The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal* is a complete expansion for the Warhammer 40,000 game and requires only the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook to use its contents.



# Book Two - Massacre

*The Horus Heresy Book Two – Massacre* is a supplement for Warhammer 40,000 dealing with war and battle in the dark age of the Horus Heresy, when the fledgling Imperium of Mankind was torn apart by bloody civil war and treachery. This bonded leather bound hardback book, lavishly illustrated in full colour, contains extensive background information on the dark deeds leading up to the terrible slaughter that unfolded during the Isstvan V Dropsite Massacre.



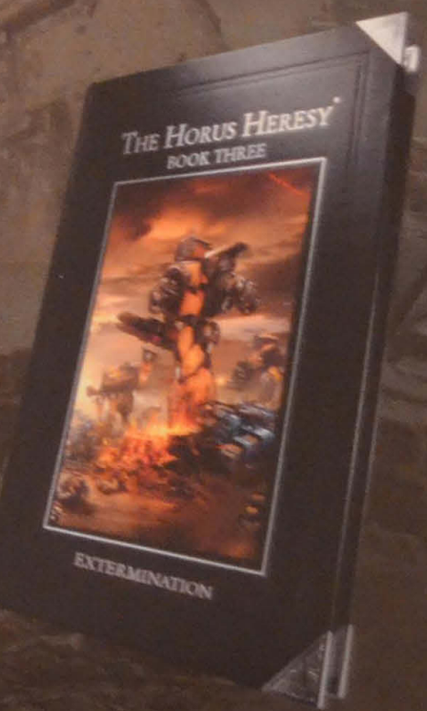

Also detailed are the histories of four of the Legions who took part: the Iron Hands, Salamanders, Night Lords and Word Bearers, and an extensive campaign system that allows you to play out the conflict on Isstvan V in your own exciting tabletop battles.

This book also contains additional entries for the Space Marine Legion Crusade Army list presented in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*, as well as game rules for the Primarchs of the four newly described Legions, super-heavy vehicles and special characters featured in the story.

*The Horus Heresy Book Two – Massacre* is an expansion for the Warhammer 40,000 game and requires the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook as well as *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal* to use its contents.

# Book Three - Extermination

*The Horus Heresy Book Three – Extermination* is a supplement for Warhammer 40,000 dealing with war and battle in the dark age of the Horus Heresy. Detailed within are the histories of four Legions: the Raven Guard, Iron Warriors, Alpha Legion and Imperial Fists. It completes the story of the Dropsite Massacre as well as two other battles erupting at the start of the war: the Invasion of Paramar and the Battle of Phall, and also features an extensive campaign system that allows you to play out a number of the conflicts described in your own exciting tabletop battles.

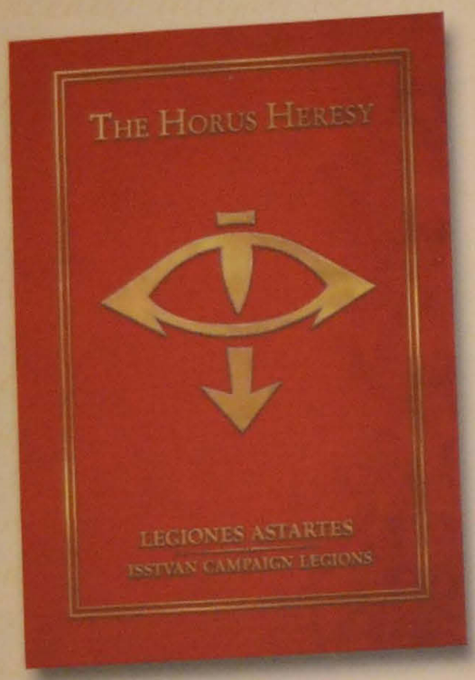



This book presents a complete army list for the Mechanicum, the Taghmata Omnissiah, including rules for a range of their fearsome new Battle-automata and mighty and arcane war machines. It also features additional entries for the Space Marine Legion Crusade Army list presented in *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal*, from game rules for the Primarchs of the four newly described Legions to super-heavy vehicles and special characters featured in the book's stories.

*The Horus Heresy Book Three – Extermination* is an expansion for the Warhammer 40,000 game which requires the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook and *The Horus Heresy Book One – Betrayal* to use its contents.

# The Horus Heresy®
## Legiones Astartes

### Isstvan Campaign Legions




This book provides you with updated and revised rules to field units, characters and even the mighty Primarchs of the Legiones Astartes in your Space Marine Crusade army in games of Warhammer 40,000 set during the galaxy-wide civil war that was the Horus Heresy.

Compiled within are rules for the Primarchs of twelve of the Legiones Astartes, allowing you to field these demigod-like warrior-leaders in your Space Marine Crusade army, whether it is a Loyalist or Traitor Legion, as well as numerous special characters who fought on the side of the Emperor or the arch-traitor Warmaster Horus, and special units and vehicles unique to individual Legions.

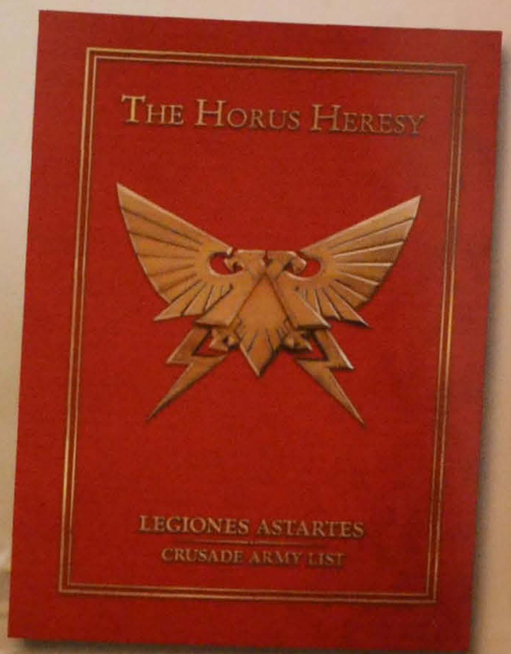
Also included are Legion-specific special rules that allow you to represent the special tactics and demeanour of each, as well as individual Rites of War that enable you to modify the organisation of your army in order to represent specialised forces such as an unstoppable World Eaters Berserker Assault or a sudden and lethal Raven Guard Decapitation Strike.

### Crusade Army List

This book provides you with updated and revised rules to field the armies of the Legiones Astartes – whether Loyalist or Traitor – in games of Warhammer 40,000 set during the tumultuous Horus Heresy.

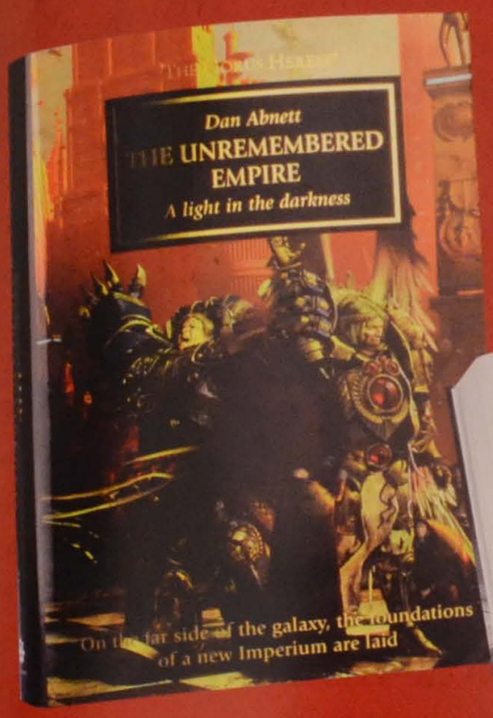
Compiled within are rules for the Space Marine Legions as they fought at the close of the Great Crusade and throughout the opening confrontations of the Horus Heresy. Included are unit entries for such mighty leaders as Praetors and Consuls, elite warriors such as Terminators and Destroyers, and line units such as Legion Tactical, Support and Assault Squads. Furthermore, numerous specialist units are included, such as Breacher Squads, Seekers, Techmarine Covenants and Apothecarion Detachments.

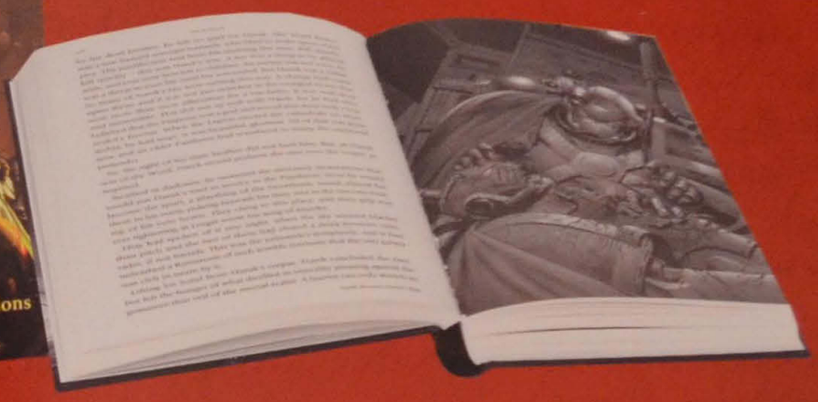
The army list also contains some of the most destructive and ingenious engines of war used by the Legiones Astartes as they prosecuted the Emperor's Great Crusade – vehicles such as the Glaive Super-heavy Tank, the Javelin Attack Speeder, the Sicaran Venator Tank Destroyer and numerous other vehicles, weapons and units for your Space Marine Crusade army.



# THE HORUS HERESY®

## HORUS HERESY® COLLECTOR'S EDITIONS



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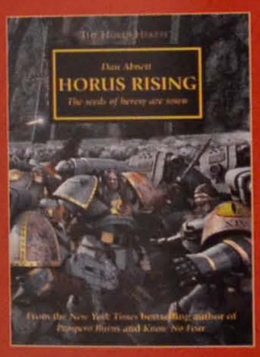


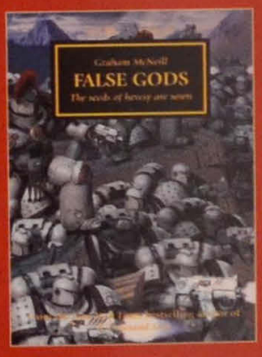


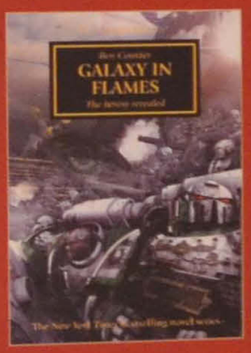


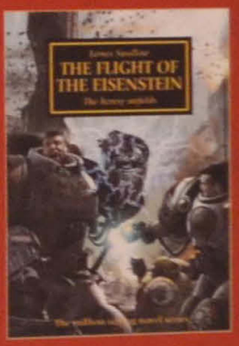


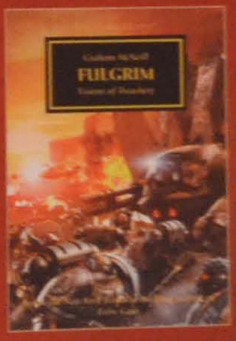


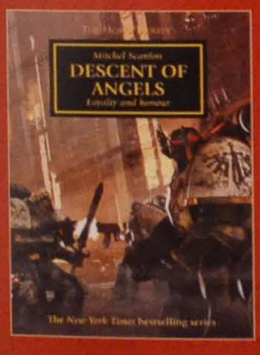


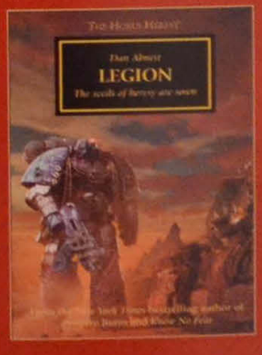


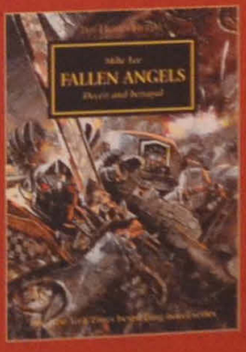


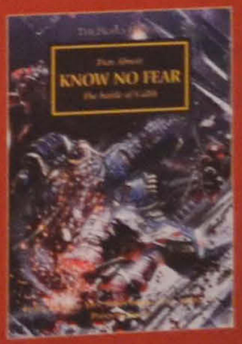





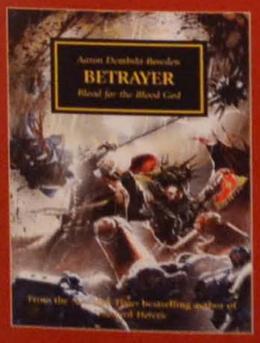


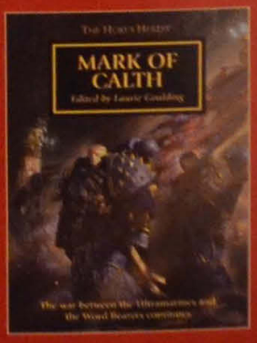


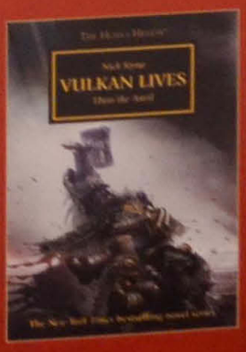


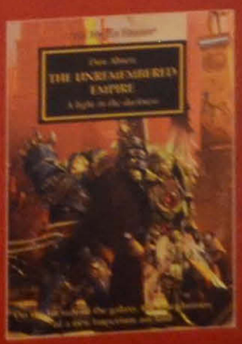





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