

# DEATHWATCH™

## THE OUTER REACH™



A GUIDE TO THE DARKNESS  
BEYOND THE CRUSADE

**WARHAMMER**  
40,000  
**ROLEPLAY**





# ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM DARKNESS OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> MILLENNIUM



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# INTRODUCTION

As war rages throughout the Jericho Reach, the enemies of Man grow ever more numerous and daring. The Tau, the Tyranid, and the traitor all threaten to topple the forces of the Achilus Crusade and plunge the Reach into a second darkness. It is the duty of the Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch to strike out at these threats, to be humanity's sword in the void, and to eliminate the foes of man, quietly, from the shadows. But there are evils that lurk within those same shadows, malign forces beyond counting and more dangerous than the even the Deathwatch can fathom. Some weave tangled webs of lies and deceit, manipulating events from the shadows of the distant past, seeking to make humanity their puppets in the Reach. Others seek to eradicate the teeming masses of mankind, to drive the Imperium from the galaxy, and to return to the dominance they once enjoyed. Yet, whether these dangers be subtle or overt, the only scraps of evidence of their existence are the countless unexplained mysteries throughout the Jericho Reach.

The Crusade forces have fought to a desperate stalemate, progress all but grinding to a halt in the Reach, and it falls to the Deathwatch to combat these dangers in the darkness. Yet few, even among that vigilant brotherhood, care to tread the dead worlds and among the lifeless stars seeded throughout the Reach, instead focusing their attention on aiding the crusade as best they can. Thus, confrontation with these mysterious villains and enigmatic manipulators is left to those dedicated few who seek to drive them from the shadows and into the scouring light of the Emperor.

## WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

The previous supplements, **THE ACHILUS ASSAULT** and **THE JERICHO REACH**, examined, in great detail, the history and current events of the three salients of the Jericho Reach. **THE OUTER REACH** goes beyond the Acheros, Canis, and Orpheus salients, leaving behind the warfronts and the battlegrounds of the Achilus Crusade. This book delves into the expanse of the Jericho Reach beyond the scope of the Crusade and focuses on the role of the Deathwatch as the vanguard against the mysterious phenomena that lurk in the darkness. Each chapter of this book provides insight into a facet of those mysteries and provides both players and GM's with the resources necessary to integrate the themes of mystery, ancient evil, and twisted machinations into their campaigns.



## CHAPTER I: THE DEAD CABAL

The Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch have safeguarded the Jericho Reach for millenia, from the days of the Jericho Sector through the Long Night to the tribulations of the Achilus Crusade. As the longest-standing Imperial organisation in the Reach, the members of the Deathwatch have borne witness to events which defy explanation and possess records of phenomena unfathomable to even the most learned sages. A small number of the Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch and a single Inquisitor have dedicated themselves to unravelling these enigmas. This chapter contains a wealth of information concerning this circle of warrior-scholars, the Dead Stations they command, and the Battle-Brothers assigned to serve the Long Dead Vigil along side them.

## CHAPTER II: LOST WORLDS OF THE JERICHO REACH

There are worlds throughout the Jericho Reach that have, for one reason or another, never been settled, terraformed, or colonised by Imperial forces. Many of these worlds bear the marks of past xenos occupation, while others are little more than dormant rocks, devoid of all life or even geological activity. These are not the typical proto-planets that are found in every stellar system, but instead show signs of artifice and manufacture on a planetary scale. No sound explanation has ever been provided for these worlds, no theories have been put forth by the Magos Siderea of the Calixian Mechanicus, the first Explorators sent through the Warp Gate in the early days of the Achilus Crusade. Other unique stellar bodies, such as the Slinnar Drift star cluster and the Black Reef, are present within the Jericho Reach, providing yet more unanswered questions. These are the worlds to which the Dead Cabal turn their attention, to which they dispatch the Kill-teams under their command, in their search for answers. This chapter explores these worlds and phenomena, their past and their present, providing Game Masters with necessary information to build missions and campaigns centred around exploration into the lost and mysterious places in the Jericho Reach.

## CHAPTER III: A DYNASTY RETURNED

Emerging slowly from the shadows of many of the dead worlds throughout the Jericho Reach, the Necrons of the Suhbekhar dynasty represent one example of the many threats on which the Dead Cabal keep a close watch. Arrogant and merciless in the extreme, the Suhbekhar dynasty rises from its tombs into a galaxy it no longer recognises. Should these undying warriors be allowed to marshal their forces, they would present a dire foe for the Imperial forces in the Jericho Reach. This chapter delves into the history, influence, and machinations of the royal court of the Suhbekhar and includes information on the legions of Necron warriors at its beck and call.





# THE DEAD CABAL

THE FOUNDING

•  
A HISTORY IN  
THE SHADOWS

•  
THE DEAD  
STATIONS VIGIL

•  
DEAD CABAL  
RELICS

•  
DEAD CABAL  
CAMPAIGNS

•  
DEAD CABAL  
MISSIONS





# CHAPTER I: THE DEAD CABAL

*"It is said, 'That which is eternal can forever lie, and, with the passing of the aeons, even death may die...'"*

—Ancient Pre-Imperium Terran verse

It is with solemnity and honour that a Battle-Brother begins his deployment to stand watch over the Dead Stations of the Jericho Reach. These ancient strongholds of the Deathwatch loom throughout the Jericho Reach, standing sentinel against that which might lurk in the darkness, forgotten for millennia. While taking vigil on the Dead Stations, a Battle-Brother serves the masters of those bastions. Lead by an enigmatic Inquisitor, this handful of veteran Deathwatch Space Marines is known to their brethren as the Dead Cabal, and they are guardians of knowledge so ancient, secrets so dire, and a mystery so puzzling that, though they are few in number, they share a bond of fellowship rarely seen, even amongst others of the stalwart Adeptus Astartes.

The Dead Cabal has taken it upon themselves to study the great mysteries of the Jericho Reach and to better understand the events that are unfolding around them. Believing that numerous ancient prophecies foretelling of great strife and darkness are coming to pass in this area of space, the Dead Cabal see it as their job to be ready to combat these ancient threats. Of all the areas of study undertaken by the Dead Cabal, the greatest relates to the study of the Dark Pattern and its impact on the future of mankind. Members scour worlds throughout the Jericho Reach for the faintest scraps of information that they can use to broaden their understanding of this enigma. Through these searches, hundreds of new mysteries have been uncovered and the great convergence of past, present, and future has begun. The Dead Cabal has vowed to stand ready for what lies ahead, no matter the cost.

## THE FOUNDING

When the blind prophet Satarrion laid down his prophecy in 744.M33, the Jericho Reach became the centre of many Inquisitors' interpretations of this cryptic passage:

*"To the east of the Emperor's realm lie the damned worlds, a reach of cold stars and domains of death. The fires of war shall light these benighted planets, some ignited with faith, others devoured by darkness. Foes strike from within and without, all ignorant of the Dark Patterns waiting to arise and destroy until nothing remains but oblivion. Only those who stand watch in the depths of night may tip the balance."*

Some believe this prophecy was the reason the Deathwatch first came to the Jericho Reach. Others have dismissed this as nonsense, claiming the conclave that resulted in the creation of the Deathwatch occurred much earlier. These speculations remain simply that; and they are unlikely to ever be more than pure conjecture, for the Inquisition and Deathwatch do not speak of the matter. What is known is that the Deathwatch has stood vigil in the Jericho Reach for millennia and there have always been those amongst the Deathwatch who suspect a dread intelligence behind the events and stellar architecture of the Jericho Reach. Within the last three centuries, a handful of prominent members of the Deathwatch in the Reach have begun to actively investigate this Dark Pattern. Among their Deathwatch bretheren, these vigilant Battle-Brothers have become known as the Dead Cabal.

## AMONGST THE STARS

The earliest Imperials arriving in the Jericho Sector thousands of years ago quickly made many discoveries about this region of space. The abundance of "dead" worlds puzzled many of the earlier Mechanicus Explorator Fleets as they seemed out of place in relation to the rest of the habitable worlds within the sector. These reports caught the attention of the Inquisition and a team was dispatched to investigate in depth.

### USING THE DEAD CABAL

This chapter covers the founding, history, and areas under the auspices of a secretive group of individuals within the Deathwatch. This group consists of less than a half-dozen members, four high-ranking Deathwatch Space Marines and an Inquisitor working in service to the Ordo Xenos. While they are not an official organisation in any sense, these individuals are known collectively as the Dead Cabal by their fellows in the Deathwatch. The information presented in this chapter is intended to provide Game Masters with the resources to introduce the Dead Cabal and its goals and mysteries to their campaigns. In addition to the background information, this chapter also covers a new Advance Speciality, as well as Solo and Squad Mode abilities, Oaths, Demeanours, and Relics intended for characters taking the Dead Stations Vigil, or working with the Dead Cabal over the course of a campaign. Finally, a guide to running a Dead Cabal-centred campaign rounds out the section, giving Game Masters a multitude of ways their players may become a part of the grand mission of the Dead Cabal.

While the workings, missions, and discoveries of the Dead Cabal may be unknown to most, the members themselves are not—though they are not fully understood by many members of the Deathwatch. Players may be tasked to undertake a Dead Station Vigil—an assignment with the Dead Cabal at one of their Watch Stations. While assigned to this Vigil, Player Characters will be privy to secrets that many others in the Deathwatch are not and GMs should keep this in mind when planning their campaigns. The Dead Cabal can offer many new avenues and exciting opportunities for investigating the Jericho Reach.



Inquisitor Jarrell Sinclair of the Ordo Xenos led his team to many of the worlds on the fringes of the sector to investigate their history and secrets. Sinclair felt that these so-called dead worlds were not simple, blasted rocks hanging in space. Something once touched these places and their presence could still be faintly felt throughout the area. He initially had no idea who or what these ancient beings were, but every fibre of his being told him that these worlds held a significance that was entwined with the fate of mankind. However, he could find no direct proof that would satisfy his superiors within the Inquisition.

Sinclair's expedition lasted for nearly a decade and criss-crossed much of the sector, investigating the worlds catalogued by the Explorator ships. When his vessel exited the Warp near the world known now as Nunc, his worst fears were confirmed. An anomalous energy signature detected from the planet below urged Sinclair to set down and locate its source. Like so many worlds prior, much of Nunc was a barren, lifeless wasteland covered by windswept deserts and craggy mountains. What set this world apart lay deep in the southern hemisphere—an imposing edifice jutting from the wastes into the night sky. Deep scans revealed tectonic activity across the planet, and the core of Nunc was undergoing a slow, geothermal change unlike anything Sinclair had witnessed. Recent quakes had toppled a number of massive rock walls, exposing this long forgotten structure to the galaxy once more.

As his team analysed the ruins, they detected faint traces of power within. At first, Sinclair believed the readings to be an error, but the repeated scans showed that energy pulsed and fluttered, like an alien heart faintly beating in a near-comatose state. All entrances to the complex were tightly sealed and at first the Inquisitor was hesitant to attempt entry. Magos Turrin Eilix of the Adeptus Mechanicus paid no heed to his concerns and dispatched a number of servitors to exploit a weak structural point detected by his auguries.

What happened next is unknown to all, including Sinclair, who ostensibly lived through the event itself. His ship, the *Hand of Vengeance*, was found adrift near the Erioch system, far from Nunc and whatever transpired there. When the Imperial Navy boarded the vessel, it was empty of crew; only the Inquisitor remained, seated upon the command chair staring blankly into space. How the ship came so far, without any Navigator or crew, remains a mystery these many millennia later. Reports filed by the captain of the recovery ship state that when their boarding party approached Sinclair, he calmly turned towards them and smiled, seeming relieved to have finally been found, before collapsing from the chair.

Upon returning to Watch Fortress Erioch, the Inquisitor regained consciousness. Medical servitors diagnosed him with severe dehydration and exhaustion from his ordeal and, after days of trials and testing to prove his retained purity, he returned to full duty and a conclave of Inquisitors anxious to review his findings.

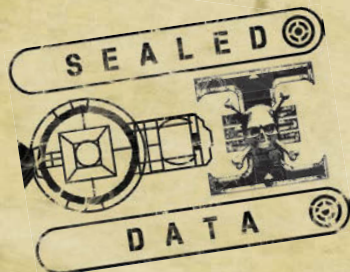
## A DARK PATTERN

Sinclair hoped that the information presented to the gathered members of the Ordo Xenos and the Deathwatch would shake the assembly to its core. Laying out a pattern of ancient xenos traces across much of the Jericho Sector, Sinclair called for his brethren to take up the mantle that was thrust upon them: to safeguard mankind against an evil whose influence could still be felt millions of years later. Sinclair charged them to investigate the matter further, and commanded the Deathwatch to form a dedicated brotherhood whose sole purpose would be the mystery of this pattern.

Sinclair proposed that this new organisation should function within the Deathwatch, as an elite force capable of investigating and dealing with the deeper mysteries present

42.M35

I know not what has walked these haunted places before me, but I can sense its passing still. On each world I have investigated here amongst the cold, ancient stars of the Jericho Sector, I find traces of something; though I cannot yet say what. Are these crumbled stones simply a fading reminder of those who died before mankind took its first steps? Or are these markers of something yet to come, of a force that slept for aeons until the galaxy was ready for its reappearance?



- Jarrell Sinclair, Ordo Xenos



*The lights grew dim as Inquisitor Sinclair sat writing in his journal. Looking up, he rubbed his eyes, hoping to banish the fatigue that threatened his work. Sinclair closed the book and pushed back from his desk; the rest of his notes would wait until tomorrow. Rising, he moved towards the globe illuminating the room to check for a malfunction.*

*He turned, realising he was not alone. A figure stepped from the shadows and stood before him. Sinclair recognised the woman as the mysterious speaker from the conclave earlier in the day.*

*"Greetings Inquisitor, I hope I am not catching you at an inopportune time?"*

*Sinclair cleared his throat and addressed the intruder. "How did you get into my chambers?" he asked, all the while intently studying the woman before him. Her garb marked her as a member of the Inquisition—baroque armour bearing the stylised "I" of that order, covered by a loose-fitting embroidered robe; purity seals hung from a number of areas; numerous trinkets and reliquaries adorned her person, including an intricate hourglass.*

*"A simple matter really, but that is of little concern. I come to you now as one who has seen the end result of your fears and I urge you to continue to pursue your goals. The Dead Cabal will be needed in the coming years with the utmost urgency."*

*"What does that mean, 'end result of my fears?' You speak as though you know the..." his voice trailed off. "Who are you? What Ordo do you represent?" A stark realisation began to set in and Sinclair took a step closer to the woman. "Can it be? Are you really of the Ordo..."*

*"We have no time for speculation my good Inquisitor Sinclair," the woman cut him off.*

*"What you must know is this—there are forces greater than anything you can imagine at work throughout the Jericho Reach. It will fall upon the shoulders of the Deathwatch to one day ensure that certain events do not come to pass if mankind is to survive. Choose wisely of those you would bring into this endeavour and above all things, beware the rising of the hollow sun."*

*Sinclair threw his hands up and turned from the woman, exasperation written across his features. "You speak in riddles. What is a hollow sun..." as he turned back, the woman was gone and the lumen globes in the room seemed to return to normal, dispelling the shadows that hung in its corners.*

throughout the Jericho Sector. These select individuals would study the Dark Pattern, as he referred to it, and learn its secrets. They would also be tasked with dealing with any threats that arose from this ancient evil, to keep the greater galaxy from finding out what hid in the darkness.

The gathered members were not convinced that Sinclair's fears had any merit. No direct evidence had been provided and everything the Inquisitor provided as proof was merely conjecture. Sinclair was dumbfounded. He railed against the gathering and was convinced that their short-sighted outlook would doom the Imperium. Several days of vicious debate followed.

As the heated discussions continued, a lone, robed individual stepped forth to address the gathering. None of the Adeptus Astartes or Ordo Xenos present recognised the woman, though here she stood, in their midst. She spoke clearly and her words carried a power felt by all in the room. Presenting no name to the assemblage, this unknown agent of the Emperor supported Sinclair's position, speaking of the horrors that would be unleashed on the galaxy if the ancients rose again unchecked. The stranger's calm but fiery oration urged the assemblage to unite behind Sinclair's directive and to begin preparations for the Long Watch ahead of them.

The Inquisitors and Deathwatch Commanders were not moved by the stranger's words. They attempted to apprehend this unknown speaker, but as the Space Marines moved to take her into custody, the stranger vanished in a flash of coruscating, emerald light. With a thundering impact, a massive tome fell to the ground where the Inquisitorial agent had stood, seemingly left behind in her haste. Upon its cover it bore the sigil of the Holy Ordos and embedded in the centre was a crystal hourglass. This tome was immediately taken to the Chamber of Vigilance for further study and analysis. To this day, the lock upon the book remains unbroken, its contents a mystery to all. A number of readings taken by auspex and other devices have noted similar properties between the lock and that of the Omega Vault itself. Perhaps in time, the book will also open on its own to reveal its secrets when needed.

## STRIKING OUT ON HIS OWN

With his proposal defeated, Sinclair was regarded with suspicion and apprehension by many of his peers. The mysterious woman and the book she left behind only added to the suspicion. Sinclair never wavered in his resolve and continued his investigation. He eventually left the confines of Watch Fortress Erioch and conducted his research throughout the Sector on his own. Over the years, Sinclair became an almost mythical figure, assisting Kill-teams with missions on many dead worlds throughout the Reach. Many within the Inquisition strove to brand Sinclair a radical, and have him censured. While no official actions were undertaken, his standing within the Inquisition continued to falter. This gave Sinclair little concern; he knew he served a greater purpose. The last reported encounter with Inquisitor Jarrell Sinclair was on the world of Kressid nearly a thousand years ago. Many consider this to be pure fiction, as Sinclair would have been dead for millennia at that point. Among the members of the Deathwatch that would one day fulfil his dream, those who would be known as the Dead Cabal, however, it is accepted that anything is possible deep within the Jericho Reach.



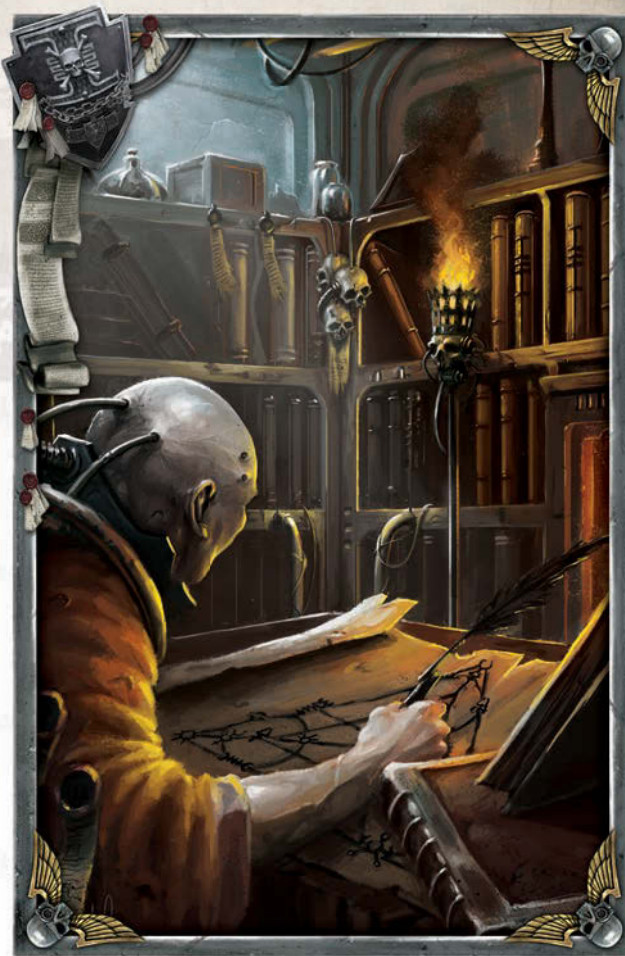
# A HISTORY IN THE SHADOWS

Though no formal investigation was sanctioned by the majority of the conclave after Sinclair's appeal, several individual members of the Deathwatch did agree that further study of the worlds and the strange happenings throughout the Reach was warranted. New Watch Stations were constructed to monitor the planets where the majority of these bizarre events transpired. These locations were chosen from worlds that were part of what would become known as the Dark Pattern, or that were within close proximity. The Deathwatch serving at these Watch Stations over the intervening years began to understand more and more of what Sinclair saw in his study of the worlds, yet they wisely kept these beliefs to themselves, lest they suffer the same scorn and scrutiny that plagued Sinclair.

Throughout the millennia that followed, a few members of the Deathwatch continued their study of the strange phenomena throughout the Jericho Sector. Continually cataloguing and tracking any occurrences from their Watch Stations, the Deathwatch settled in for the Long Watch to combat any threats that arose. However, during the turmoil of the Age of Shadow, these studies were forgotten and the new Watch Stations were all but abandoned, the importance of threats yet to come overshadowed by the anarchy of that age. With the discovery of the Warp Gate and the Jericho Reach reopened to the greater Imperium, the old mysteries resurfaced, hints to their existence found by newly arrived members of the Deathwatch. These hints have drawn a handful of inquisitive Deathwatch Space Marines back to the study of the nearly-deserted stations, now known as the Dead Stations, and the ancient traces of knowledge and prophecy they contained. These few members have since dedicated their lives to finally unravelling the enigma of the Jericho Reach. Thanks to their interest in the Dead Stations, their peers refer to them as "The Dead Cabal". The roster of the Dead Cabal is small, only a handful of Space Marines and a lone Inquisitor count themselves among the ranks.

The mission of the Dead Cabal is threefold. First, to investigate any incidents pertaining to the worlds of the Dark Pattern. This could be any structures discovered, reports of alien activity, or even strange phenomena encountered near these worlds. Second, the Dead Cabal is charged with pursuing and deciphering claims of prophecy, ancient scripture and text, and any xenos artefacts even remotely tied to the worlds of the Dark Pattern. Finally, to act as the vanguard against any actual xenos threats that requires direct intervention on these worlds.

For the past six decades since the Imperium's return to the Jericho Reach, the Dead Cabal have often been considered warrior-scholars by their brethren within the Watch. The majority of their time is devoted to interpreting prophecy, analysing ancient devices recovered throughout the Sector, and exploring long dead ruins while their Battle-Brothers hunt down the other xenos threats that plague Imperial worlds and interests.



## RESEARCHING THE DARK PATTERN

Over the millennia, many within the Deathwatch have devoted their time and resources to studying the Dark Pattern. What this strange sequence is and what it represents remains a mystery to this day and is a matter of great speculation and debate. The Dead Cabal has postulated a number of theories to their superiors since their emergence, but whether they are correct or not is yet undetermined.

Still, to most involved with the Deathwatch, it is a collection of worlds across the Jericho Reach identified by various Inquisitors and Deathwatch Battle-Brothers to have remnants of ancient xenos traces on them in some form. The placement of these worlds forms an indecipherable sigil across space and time. Why the worlds of the Dark Pattern were chosen continues to confound all who investigate it. Some of the more widely known theories amongst the Dead Cabal include the following:

### THEORY 1: THE LAIRS OF THE ANCIENTS

The theory concerning the Dark Pattern to gain the most attention claims that the worlds on the path are part of an ancient Necron empire. Even though the planets involved have been heavily scanned and explored with nothing found, many believe the advanced sciences of the soulless empire hide their presence. Obviously there cannot be huge repositories of Necron warriors on all these planets no matter how well they are hidden, so the



worlds must serve another purpose to the soulless ones. Knight-Captain Alric of the Dead Cabal insists that the worlds are part of a massive energy matrix that will be activated to fuel the Necrons' awakening. Others amongst the Dead Cabal have discounted his theory, yet the Black Shield doggedly maintains it.

## THEORY 2: THE DARK GATEWAY

A second theory postulates that the worlds of the Dark Pattern to be a doorway to another time and place. The Prognosticator Rennin Tri'el believes that his research proves these worlds are an ancient precursor of the mysterious Eldar Webway. Perhaps the Eldar used these worlds to test the earliest form of the Webway before perfecting it. He has found traces of long dead devices on these worlds that he believes can access the Webway to this day. If this theory should prove correct, it would provide the Imperium an advantage in its war against the Eldar unlike anything it has known before.

## THEORY 3: THE FIRST ONES

Another theory is put forth by a Dead Cabal Techmarine. Xerill of the Iron Hands claims that the worlds of the Dark Pattern could be massive genetic laboratories that were created by a long-lost race that ruled over much of the galaxy aeons ago. According to this possibility, these worlds were linked together as a series of outposts and research stations, which developed races and species for these ancient ones to use in their wars of conquest across the galaxy. When the empire failed, these worlds were scoured of all traces of technology and life to safeguard their last remaining strongholds. Others amongst the Dead Cabal put very little stock in this theory and claim that traces of other ancient civilisations elsewhere provide proof that these beings were not active in this part of the galaxy. Still, Xerill supports this possibility and searches for any ties to this lost race in their exploration of the Reach.

## THEORY 4: A GROWING STAIN

After witnessing an outburst of prophecy from the girl who would later become known as Saint Silexia, Watch Captain Mathias has begun to believe that he himself is somehow tied to the events unfolding around the Dark Pattern. He has recently theorised that the Dark Pattern is tied to the Ruinous Powers and that the worlds

that are part of it will lead to an expansion of the Hadex Anomaly, plunging countless planets into chaos, darkness, and despair. What part he is to play in these events, he does not yet know.

These are just a few of the ideas that have been put forth by the Dead Cabal. In the past, some theories have risen to prominence only to be completely disproved years later through new discoveries. Each cell of Battle-Brothers taking the Dead Stations Vigil continues to gather information and test their theories, all hoping to be the group that finally unlocks the great secret of the Dark Pattern.

## FAMOUS MISSIONS OF THE DEAD STATIONS VIGIL

When a Deathwatch member is assigned to one of the Watch outposts known as the Dead Stations, the Battle-Brother is embarking on a harrowing and trying experience. All manner of strange and challenging events have been reported through the years by Space Marines on these Vigils. Below are just a few of the missions these Kill-teams have undertaken while serving on the Dead Station Vigil.

### 780.M41: The Neeralla Incident

Deep within the Jericho Reach, the Deathwatch discovered a series of ruins on the world of Neeralla. This small, barren world lay on the outermost fringe of the Hadex Anomaly and was considered a haunted world by many voidfarers that braved that region of hazardous space. The world held little interest for the Mechanicus and other Imperial agencies since all scans showed little of worth. When a passing Mechanicus probe discovered the ruins in a location previously devoid of all structures, the Deathwatch was alerted and Forgemaster Xerill dispatched a Kill-team under his command to investigate.

Upon arriving on Neeralla, the team encountered no resistance as they entered the structures found sprawling across the surface. The complex was vast and encompassed nearly a kilometre. The architecture was entirely alien and none of the team, all veterans of countless campaigns, had seen its like before. The corridors were barren of any writing, hieroglyphics, or markings of any sort and all rooms and buildings were empty.

### *The Lost Labyrinth*

*Legends amongst the Deathwatch speak of Brother Telerion, a loyal servant of the Emperor and renowned scholar of the Dark Pattern, who vanished centuries ago while investigating a cryptic message emanating from a Watch Station near the Hadex Anomaly. Telerion was fascinated—some would say obsessed—with tales of an ancient structure known as the Lost Labyrinth. Scattered vague references in xenos texts spoke of this ancient location and the great power contained at its heart. Telerion spent nearly half a century of his life trying to locate this labyrinth and unlock its mysteries. When a garbled signal from Watch Station Midael arrived at Watch Fortress Erioch, it relayed a report from a Rogue Trader who claimed to have discovered a massive, hidden maze on a lost world often encompassed by the Hadex Anomaly. Perhaps Telerion found what he sought for so long, or perhaps he still wanders the haunted spaceways of the Anomaly, desperately searching for the Lost Labyrinth.*



*The voice was so faint, he was unsure of the direction from which it came. Mist obscured his surroundings as he stumbled blindly through the ruins. "You are chosen, young one. Chosen to be my messenger."*

*"Who speaks? What messenger?"*

*The mist coalesced into a vaguely humanoid shape before him. An outstretched hand touched his brow, and he could feel something... a thought... burrowing into his mind, an idea taking hold. "You shall help right an ancient wrong before all is lost."*

*With that, he collapsed and the strange being dissipated into the cloying mist. The last thing he heard before the darkness claimed his mind was the softly fading voice. "It is time for the dead to watch the sleepers."*

After spending nearly a day exploring the ruins, the Space Marines came to a large, central structure that dwarfed all others in the outlying areas. The doorway to the building hummed with a faint sound and an ominous green light emanated from beneath. As the team approached the portal, bolters at the ready, the door slowly opened to reveal a silhouetted figure standing within. The light that poured from the doorway nearly blinded the assembled Deathwatch and sent their autosenses into chaos. Each Battle-Brother who stood in that ancient place told the same tale—a voice whispered in their minds, warning them to leave this place and never set foot on the surface of Neeralla again. With that, the Kill-team blacked out, for mere moments as confirmed by their chronometers, and awoke on the barren alien landscape, all trace of the ruins gone. The Kill-team made haste back to their Watch Station to report their findings. Within a week, the world of Neeralla was gone—swallowed by an expansion of the Hadex Anomaly.

### 783.M41: Lovat IV

The world of Lovat IV lies near the Slinnar Drift and is one of many dead worlds throughout the Reach. Late in the 41st millennium, an unknown signal began transmitting from the planet. The signal was detected on many frequencies resulting in an alert for all Imperial vessels in the area. The Deathwatch was one of the first to discover the signal and dispatched a Kill-team to track down the source of the transmission. When entering the outer reaches of the system, Inquisitor Ramaeus intercepted the Kill-team's ship. Taking command of the mission, the Inquisitor and Space Marines proceeded to Lovat IV in search of this mysterious signal.

A small, unremarkable silver box was all that anyone could find upon the surface of Lovat IV. As the Inquisitor approached the item, a final massive pulse emanated from within before it grew silent. The Inquisitor claimed the box and locked it within a stasis field before returning to her ship. All members of the accompanying Kill-team were sworn to secrecy and returned to regular duty. The contents of the box are unknown to this day to all save the Inquisitor and the Dead Cabal.

### 787.M41: The Loss of the Errasticles

The Imperial battle cruiser *Errasticles* encountered an anomalous energy signature near the world of Kabiri while on a routine patrol in 679.M41. This strange energy field emanated from a patch of inky darkness near the planet and the cruiser made all haste to investigate.

The massive field encompassed thousands of kilometres and while the ship's sensors were able to detect the field, they could not penetrate it.

The ship's captain, Lord Albrecht Rovell, dispatched a probe into the field, but the device returned no information. After a heated debate amongst his bridge staff, the captain decided to dispatch a single fighter to investigate the area. The small craft entered the blackness without incident and was able to maintain communications with the cruiser. The last transmission *Errasticles* received from the fighter described a massive structure at the heart of the darkness; a structure of unknown design and impervious to augur scans. All contact was then lost with the scout ship. Captain Rovell sent an astropathic message to the nearest Imperial outpost indicating he was entering the field to investigate the structure, as well as the disappearance of his scout ship, and entered the strange darkness.

When word of this energy field and black patch reached Watch Fortress Erioch, a Kill-team was immediately dispatched to the area to investigate. Prognosticator Tri'el, a member of the Dead Cabal who wished to study this area closer, accompanied them to Kabiri. As they neared the world, a pulse of energy washed over their vessel, rendering all systems inoperable for hours. With power finally restored, the team continued onward to the area. All traces of the field, the *Errasticles*, and the mysterious structure were gone.

A half-dozen Battle-Brothers were assigned to the Dead Station on Kabiri in the wake of this incident to monitor the area. The Kabiri station has not detected any further appearances of the energy field or other anomalies to date.

### THE WARNING

When *Errasticles* vanished, a strange energy pulse swept through the Kabiri system. This pulse rendered vessels and other equipment powerless, destroying the intricate workings of many intensive sensor arrays. On the nearby world of Octavian, an astropath received a powerful psychic cry at the time of the pulse. The brief message, akin to a thousand voices screaming, sent the astropath into a week-long coma. When he awoke, he described the ordeal and the only words he could understand within. The screams of sheer terror contained two words: "They Rise."



**791.M41: The Messenger**

The frontier world of Pellor is accustomed to seeing visitors who are different. Many of the colonists are looking for a new start, eager to leave their old lives behind. When a cloaked individual entered the settlement of Renewed Hope, no one gave the stranger a second glance. Soon, the man began giving speeches in the town centre prophesising the return of ancient beings of terrible power. He described these beings of unimaginable malice as ones who had embraced corruption and mastered the roiling powers of the Warp; beings who could turn a man's own soul against him and devour his very will.

The speaker's charisma was undeniable and soon large crowds gathered to hear these dire warnings. Many of the town's council members grew increasingly worried about this new arrival and the discontent he was stirring. Sending word to the Imperial command in the area for Arbites support, they hoped to drive out this rabble rouser and return life to normal.

The nearby Watch Station on Vormos received this message as well and the detailed reports of the man's dire warnings. At the time, a Kill-team under the command of a Dead Stations Vigilant manned the station. Upon receiving these transmissions, Watch Captain Mathais took interest in the doomsayer's pronouncements and immediately sent a Kill-team to Pellor to find the mad prophet.

When the Deathwatch arrived in Renewed Hope, they found a ghost town. No signs of battle or destruction were evident on any buildings, yet all the colonists were gone. As the team searched the colony, they came to the town square. A lone, cloaked individual sat quietly awaiting the Space Marines. He issued a single statement to the approaching Battle-Brothers: "It has begun."

The Deathwatch moved to apprehend the man with all haste. When Brother Qajo of the White Scars reached out to take the man into custody, he came away with a cloak and nothing more. No trace of the man was found; just a discarded garment and his ominous message remained.

The colony of Renewed Hope was quarantined by order of the Inquisition for many years as teams from the Adeptus Mechanicus, Inquisition, and Deathwatch analysed every inch of the town. After nearly four decades, the Inquisition removed the quarantine and allowed new settlers to return to the world of Pellor.

**796.M41: The Beast of Resgulus**

While on a mission to the dead world of Resgulus, a Deathwatch Kill-team under the auspices of the Dead Cabal discovered a small complex buried in the frozen mountains. As the team inspected the ruins, a strange creature burst forth from the solid stone of the mountain and assaulted the Space Marines. Its adamantium-hard chitin seemed impervious to the blows of their weapons. Its countless tine-like legs carried its ten metres of bulk with an unfathomable swiftness. Battle-Brother Orill of the Ultramarines described the beast as able to pass through solid rock and left no trace of its passing. The creature's only intention seemed to be protecting the ruins and, after assessing the situation, the Deathwatch made a tactical withdrawal to consider their next course of action. When the Space Marines returned with greater numbers, the complex was gone, buried in one of the avalanches common to the treacherous mountains of Resgulus. An excavation has been ordered, but the limited resources available to the commanders of the Dead Stations has delayed any expedient action.

**807.M41: The Lone Watch**

The dead world of Castiel is part of an abandoned system bearing little of importance to the Imperium. The worlds of this system are little more than barren, lifeless pseudo-planetoids that contain no discernible resources that the surveyors of the Adeptus Mechanicus can detect. Yet, for all its unremarkableness, the Deathwatch maintains a Dead Station on the only whole planet of Castiel. Unlike many of the other Watch Stations throughout the Jericho Reach, the Castiel Station maintains a single-manned presence at all times. This vigil has become known as the Lone Watch.

At any given time, a lone Deathwatch Battle-Brother maintains a vigil at the Castiel Station, monitoring the data it gathers as well as guarding something deep in the heart of the fortress. The term of this assignment is usually one year, when the next candidate comes to relieve the previous guardian. Those who have undertaken the Lone Watch never speak of what lies within this station that requires a living guardian at all times. Its proximity to the Hadex Anomaly lead many to believe it is an ancient Chaos artefact. This remains speculation at best, for the Battle-Brothers who have carried out the Lone Watch remain ever silent on the matter.

**815.M41: The Encounter at Cosel**

While on a routine data retrieval mission, a Deathwatch Kill-team made planetfall on the dead world of Cosel to gather its Watch Station's data core. By all indications, the station still remained untouched and the Space Marines detected no sign of hostile forces. After successfully removing the data, the team began to make its way back to their vessel. As they crested a ridge, the battle-hardened Deathwatch members were awestruck at what lay before them.

Surrounding their ship were thousands of motionless, silent figures. All were arrayed in ordered ranks, standing at attention. Their cold eyes were fixed on the Space Marines who stood on the ridge line, debating their next move. A figure emerged from the ranks of the steel soldiers, bedecked in finery and carrying a staff that pulsed with power. This being possessed a menacing air of power that was palpable to the Deathwatch as he strode towards them.

Stopping fifty metres from the Space Marines, the figure planted his staff into the dust and addressed them. "Welcome to Irraleon. You trespass, without my permission, on the hallowed ground of an ancient dynasty. How do you answer for this transgression?"

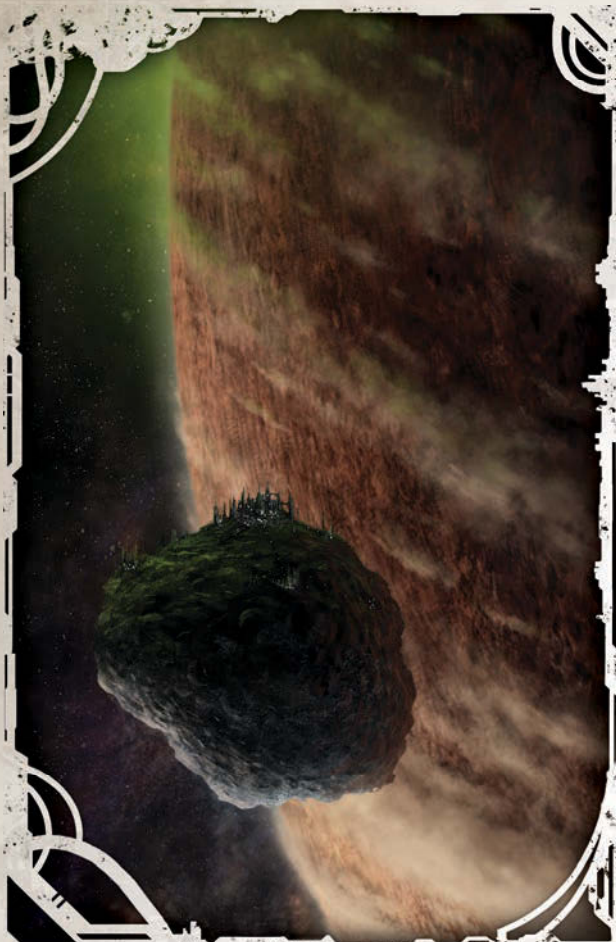
The Battle-Brothers had no intention of treating with the xenos before them. With a nod from his squad leader Brother Pellenea of the Storm Wardens, a master marksman, snapped his bolter up and fired a single round through the eye of the commanding figure, dropping him to the cold ground.

As one, the assembled warriors raised their weapons and opened fire on the Kill-team, obliterating much

*Movements In The Dark*

*For centuries it has waited. It was never anxious, never impatient; it just waited in the dark. The cold, silent hallways served as its home and its prison for far too long, but that was all about to end. They were coming to free it. They were coming to unleash hell upon the galaxy.*





of the ridge line. The Space Marines returned fire and quickly made a tactical retreat to the Watch Station. The armoured sides of the ancient station threw off the concentrated fire of the strange energy weapons as the Space Marines assembled inside and quickly rearmed. With oaths of unity and brotherhood, the Kill-team prepared to return to the fight knowing that their duty and lives may very well end that day in the face of overwhelming odds.

The constant thunder of the alien bombardment ended abruptly. The Space Marines trained the station's sensors on the gathered enemies only to find the field of battle empty. When the Adeptus Astartes exited the Watch Station, the regal figure once again greeted them. The hole from the bolter shell that split his head in two was gone, and he once more stood before them with power and arrogance. The legions of steel warriors were nowhere to be found.

With his cape fluttering in the wind, the Lord once more addressed the Space Marines, "your determination and zeal is impressive, warriors of the corpse-god. I would have you take a message to your masters. Tell the fledgling Imperium that the claim you hold on our planets is at an end. We will return to prominence and once more this galaxy will be ours."

With that statement, the figure faded from sight, leaving the dead world once more a blasted, windswept plain. The Kill-team was puzzled and disturbed by the warning they were given. They knew the greater battle for the Jericho Reach, if not all of the Imperium, was ahead. With haste they returned to their ship to deliver their newfound knowledge to their superiors in the Deathwatch.

## THE DEAD STATIONS: WATCH STATIONS OF THE DEAD CABAL

The Jericho Reach is a massive expanse and monitoring such a large area of space at all times is nearly impossible. To facilitate their duty in guarding the Reach, the Deathwatch utilise Watch Stations throughout the many systems and worlds to gather information far and wide. These fortified outposts stand as silent sentinels in the ever-present darkness listening to everything that transpires around them.

The Watch Stations that have become known as "Dead Stations" are largely dormant structures of adamantine, ferrocrete and plasteel. Their internal cogitators continue to hum with activity as their machine spirits keep a watchful eye on the worlds and phenomena in their vicinity. Left abandoned due to the relative inactivity of the regions they inhabit, the Dead Stations are nearly all closely related to the Dark Pattern and the worlds that make up that mysterious occurrence. Space Marines of the Dead Cabal have marked these locations as stations of importance and the data they provide has proven valuable in the ongoing research into the phenomenon over the centuries. The Dead Cabal analyses all Watch Station data they can gain access to, however these Dead Stations are considered especially vital in understanding and unravelling the mystery of the Dark Pattern. For this reason, Inquisitor Ramaeus and her associates have taken a direct hand in commanding the Dead Stations and those few Battle-Brothers who are sent to them on their Vigil.

### WATCH STATION CRESSID

**Known Information:** The Watch Station on Cressid recently came under attack by a group of Chaos Renegades, who believed they had discovered a treasure trove of powerful artefacts. With the aid of the automated defences of the station, a single Battle-Brother on patrol beat back the attackers, though the structure sustained a great deal of damage. The Battle-Brother repaired the damage before leaving the station to continue his vigil.

**Behind The Scenes:** The repairs performed on the station did not address all of the damage as previously believed. The Renegade's attack did substantially more damage than anyone could have discovered with standard auguries and analysis. The Chaos forces left behind a Warp entity on Cressid, a being of pure malice and hatred that wormed its way into the station's pathways and data core. The station now possesses a malign intelligence that guides its sensors and readings, searching the surrounding areas for something that only it knows.

To date, the information gathered by the station has been manipulated and altered by the daemon and all information relayed to the Deathwatch has been scrubbed of anything of value. To the Imperium, Cressid Station continues to monitor a dead world and its surrounding environments with little of value detected.

Should a Kill-team arrive on Cressid to utilise the station, they would find a common Watch Station with nothing out of the ordinary on first glance. However, if any length of time were spent inside its walls, the daemon's bloodthirsty nature would take hold and subject any within to a hall of horrors.



## WATCH STATION KLAHA

**Known Information:** Klaha has been under attack by factions of the Dark Mechanicus for many years. These fallen servants of the Machine God have come to mine the ores and minerals of the world for use in their war machines. The primary base of operations for the Dark Mechanicus rests atop a highly active volcano they have named Mount Pride, though they have recently established orbital stations above the planet. So far, the dark ones have kept clear of the Watch Station, not wishing to draw too much attention to their activities. They are not aware that the highly advanced sensors of the Watch Station have been monitoring their movements for some time, recording all their comings and goings throughout the Klaha system.

**Behind The Scenes:** The Watch Station has been able to monitor many of the Dark Mechanicus activities, but there is one major endeavour underway that it has not detected due to the Dark Acolytes' shielding—a deep drilling project to harness the massive amounts of energy in the planet's core. The Watch Station has detected fluctuations in the planet's electromagnetic field and an increase of seismic activity, but there has been no direct correlation between the two.

Seemingly independent of the unexplained phenomena, another distressing development has occurred on Klaha. The augur arrays of Watch Station Klaha have begun to register massive movements of energy and mass on the far side of the inhospitable world. Movement and numbers are consistent with massing life-forms or xenos migration and herd patterns. As there has been no recorded xenos activity in the Klaha system for nearly three centuries, these movements have become a serious topic of debate and speculation among the Battle-Brothers deployed on the Klaha Watch Station.

## WATCH STATION SKAPULA

**Known Information:** Skapula is a world under Tau occupation. As a dead world, there is little of value on the planet from a strategic point of view. The world is known to possess pockets of rare minerals used in a variety of crucial manufacturing processes throughout the Imperium, so the planet has been marked for reclamation by the forces of the Achilus Crusade in due time. The Tau have made a number of attempts to breach the Watch Station, but so far the structure has held. Its sensors are keeping the Deathwatch apprised of the situation on Skapula, which provides the Imperial forces with vital data for the future attack. There are pockets of human nomads on the world who used to work the mines when the world was under Imperial jurisdiction. These have been largely left alone by the Tau thus far, as they likely present little threat to the Tau Empire's interests on Skapula.

**Behind the Scenes:** The Tau have been losing warriors on Skapula for the past few months. What has happened to these missing Fire Warriors and Pathfinders is unknown, but the number of missing has been steadily increasing. The Commanders of the Tau forces have kept this quiet, only conferring on the matter with the Ethereal in charge of the forces. Almost all of the soldiers that have vanished disappeared in remote locations while alone or separated from their comrades. All patrols are advised to be especially vigilant while conducting patrols and to look for any suspicious activity.

The sensors of the Watch Station have detected intense seismic activity along the equatorial band of Skapula. These geological fluctuations include massive bursts of radiation that flare to life and vanish completely after only twenty to thirty seconds. There have been no Tau in the vicinity of these readings. Master of the Forge Xerill of the Dead Cabal would like to investigate the matter further, but the planet must first be reclaimed.

## WATCH STATION CX3119

**Known Information:** Watch Station CX3119 was established to study the Hadex Anomaly nearly 800 years ago. Due to the reported fluctuation of the Anomaly, this Watch Station was initially created to be mobile, that it might remain ever on the periphery of the Warp storm. In addition to the usual banks of archeotech sensors, this station also sported powerful Warp augurs to warn of any dangerous expansions of the Anomaly that may place the structure at risk. Sadly, these devices did not provide enough notice when the Hadex expanded to nearly half again its size, sucking the station into the Anomaly and cutting it off from the Deathwatch. At the time, the station was unmanned, and while the Imperium was loathe to lose a valuable monitoring tool, it considered the station gone and classified it as destroyed. One can imagine the consternation and surprise of all within the Deathwatch when Watch Station CX3119 reappeared in 815.M41.

The station's reappearance has provoked great debate amongst the Chamber of Vigilance and the Inquisition. The structure's new location is many light years from where it originally vanished, creating additional speculation on the nature of the Anomaly. Many wish to investigate the station to see what details the station's sensors have recorded during its time within. While the matter is debated, an elaborate system of quarantine beacons has been put in place warning all ships to keep a wide berth of the area.

**Behind the Scenes:** While the Chamber of Vigilance continues to argue over how to proceed with the Watch Station, unbeknownst to them, one man has already set foot on board the station. Master of the Forge Xerill discovered the station while travelling onboard a Deathwatch vessel to enact repairs on another Watch Station. His consuming desire for knowledge of the unknown led him into the bowels of the station and whatever lurked within. He has since returned to his post and so far, he has spoken to no one about finding the station or what waited inside.

## USING THE DEAD STATIONS

The information provided in this section is intended for GMs who wish to include the Dead Stations and the Dead Station Vigil as part of their campaign. The worlds that some of the Dead Stations reside on are detailed in the section entitled *Lost Worlds of the Jericho Reach*, but the information here is for Game Masters alone so that they can craft intricate story lines around the secrets the Dead Stations hold. Players should be aware of the general knowledge of each planet as provided in **Chapter II: Lost Worlds of the Jericho Reach**, but not privy to all the secrets contained herein.



An expedition is currently in the planning stages at Watch Fortress Erioch to investigate CX3119. Inquisitor Vann Trasz, the leading authority on the Hadex Anomaly in the Reach, is organising this mission. He has assembled a team of Deathwatch and Adeptus Mechanicus to scour every inch of the Watch Station. Trasz is convinced that the key to unlocking the full secrets of the Hadex Anomaly await aboard.

## THE IRON BASTION

**Known Information:** The Iron Bastion is a space-based Watch Station floating through the void in the heart of the Dark Pattern. The station is built into a massive planetoid that is part of a small asteroid belt known as the Kyvoll Belt. This fortification has studied the mysteries of the Dark Pattern for centuries and over time has become the main base of operations for the Dead Cabal throughout the Jericho Reach.

The augur arrays and cogitation engines fitted throughout the Iron Bastion are the most powerful anywhere in the Reach. They are capable of studying worlds far and wide in great detail. The Iron Bastion also collates and processes all reports from the Dead Stations in their ongoing analysis of the Dark Pattern.

The Iron Bastion differs from many other Watch Stations in that it is constantly manned by at least half a dozen individuals at any given time. This roster rotates frequently, as those assigned here venture out to investigate reports of strange happenings throughout the Jericho Reach.

**Behind the Scenes:** While the Iron Bastion serves as an expanded Watch Station operated by the Dead Cabal, there is a deeper mission that only select members in the Deathwatch know about. This mission is to guard, study, and analyse an artefact that has mystified many of the Imperium's best minds—the Jovaall Hedron.

Discovered on a classified world two centuries ago, the Jovaall Hedron has resisted all attempts to unlock its secrets. The only knowledge gleaned from the cube shows that a source of incredible power lies within, and that power has

not diminished at all in the centuries that the cube has been in the possession of the Deathwatch.

The Hedron is not without danger and some who have investigated it believe it should be destroyed—if even possible—or locked away permanently. During an analysis of the Jovaall Hedron, Brother Peregon of the Crimson Fists vanished from a secure chamber while conducting his investigation. Peregon was a Techmarine of unparalleled skill with a long history of unlocking the secrets of xenos artefacts studied by the Deathwatch. The only record recovered of the incident shows a massive burst of energy and light emanating from the cube before all pict-recorders in the vicinity went offline. When other members within the Bastion accessed the room, the Jovaall Hedron sat untouched on a worktable. No sign of Battle-Brother Peregon could be found. Since this incident, all further study of the xenos device has been conducted through remote servitors and equipment to safeguard against any further loss of life.



## THE JOVAALL HEDRON

There are many possible options for what the Jovaall Hedron might actually be and Game Masters are encouraged to create interesting story lines if they wish to include the artefact in their campaigns. For those who prefer more ready-made options for the box, below are possible explanations:

- **A Tesseract Labyrinth:** The maze-like prisons created by the Necrons are capable of trapping beings of energy inside small cubes. The Jovaall Hedron may be one of these rare devices that functions on a different wavelength than others. Instead of only being able to contain energy, this particular Labyrinth can also trap physical beings inside. Brother Peregon may have activated it by accident and found himself sucked into the device. Unlocking the secrets of the device in order to locate the missing Techmarine could lead to an exciting adventure for the Deathwatch members. Perhaps they could even venture into the device themselves to locate their missing comrade while an Inquisitor or another NPC await on the outside to aid in their escape. The myriad landscapes and challenges inside the Tesseract can provide an interesting challenge to a veteran group of Deathwatch Space Marines.
- **A Miniature Warp Gate:** Another option for the Jovaall Hedron is that it functions like a miniaturised Warp gate. This device could open a pathway to a distant land or a world within the Reach. This option allows for Game Masters to transport their campaign to another setting for a few sessions to explore new mysteries and combat new enemies.
- **A Power Source:** A third option for the xenos artefact is that it functions as a power source for a Necron tomb complex; a power source that is necessary for full awakening. Perhaps agents of a Phaeron who has awakened already seek out the stolen device so that he may bring his entire complex online and restore his empire to prominence. This option allows Game Masters to introduce the Necron threat slowly through a variety of intermediaries and other agents.



## THE FOREVER HOLD

**Known Information:** Through the dark reaches of space, an ancient vessel plies the stellar winds, always moving from world to world to gather and collect the items the Dead Cabal has deemed worthy of further study. This ship is known as the *Forever Hold*, a heavily-modified Cobra-class destroyer under the command of Inquisitor Nevin Graal. A veteran of numerous campaigns, Graal now commands this ship and oversees the safeguarding of devices and treasures discovered by Dead Cabal members relating to the Dark Pattern. While not counted among the Dead Cabal himself, Inquisitor Graal holds a great deal of affection and professional respect for Inquisitor Ramaeus, and when she offered him command of the *Forever Hold*, he jumped at the opportunity.

The concept of the *Forever Hold* was created only 75 years ago by Ramaeus to ensure that vital information gathered by the Dead Cabal remained available and easily accessible to all who sought to understand the Dark Pattern and the Ancients. Inquisitor Ramaeus was well aware of the standard Imperial policies relating to xenos knowledge and potentially dangerous artefacts even for the Deathwatch, so the *Forever Hold* serves as both a vault and library for the Deathwatch—and specifically Dead Cabal—while they are conducting their investigations. The ship has been specially outfitted with massive storage facilities inside its cargo holds that are capable of storing all manner of artefacts. It also boasts one of the most extensive libraries in the Jericho Reach. In its collection reside tomes of Eldar lore, ancient xenos texts describing the Reach long before humans ever set foot in it, and other volumes considered truly heretical.

**Behind the Scenes:** Graal's motives for captaining the *Forever Hold* run deeper than just gathering lore and devices for study. A great loss to the Imperium drives the Inquisitor to scour the Jericho Reach for an artefact that can save a honoured warrior from a grim fate. Inquisitor Lord Anchisus served the Holy Ordos of the Calixis Sector for near on four centuries, ferreting out corruption and heresy from the shadows. Ever one to work below the notice of his fellows among the Inquisition, Anchisus was a master of deception, obfuscation, and manipulation. The Inquisitor Lord kept a small, but close cadre of acolytes, of whom Graal was the



most senior. When the Jericho Gate was first opened, Anchisus and his acolytes were some of the first through, though they spent the first decades of the Crusade working alone, on the fringes of the Jericho Reach. While exploring an ancient ruin on the world of Hestus, the group was set upon by a swarm of mechanical insectoids that devastated most of the Inquisitor's cadre. As if drawn towards the intense psychic abilities of Anchisus, one of the strange creatures attached itself to the man's brainstem, fusing the two into one. Graal's master was completely overcome by the mechanical parasite, and he now had complete control over the other creatures. Unable to communicate with his lord, no matter how he tried, Graal was forced to incapacitate him and place the man in stasis.

Graal was given the rank of Inquisitor shortly thereafter, after presenting himself to the Ordo Xenos on Watch Fortress Erioch and accounting for the loss of his fellow acolytes and reporting his master dead. In the years since that day, Inquisitor Graal has served to Ordo Xenos faithfully, working closely with the Deathwatch to root out xenos threats throughout the Jericho Reach.

Graal now keeps his honoured lord deep within the bowels of the ship in a highly-secured stasis chamber. He believes that there is an answer somewhere in the Reach to freeing Anchisus, and he will do whatever he can to find that solution. So far, the Inquisitor has not shared his secret with anyone, and he has no intentions of doing so any time soon.

### THE FOREVER HOLD IN DEATHWATCH

The *Forever Hold* can provide many interesting options for your campaign. It can serve as a mode of transportation for a series of adventures with the Dead Cabal. It can also be a location at which players must perform research while they are attempting to unravel a mystery. Inquisitor Graal can be quite welcoming, but he is extremely guarded when it comes to discussing certain aspects of his ship. He goes to great lengths to keep people away from his master's stasis area, as well as certain artefacts. Game Masters should be prepared to introduce the *Forever Hold* to his players through other members of the Deathwatch and Dead Cabal. Only with proper introductions will Graal fully welcome them onboard his ship and provide them with access to the libraries and items.



## The Saint Silexia Prophecies

Throughout the Jericho Reach, strange phenomena warrant little attention by those who investigate such things. To the common Imperial citizen, the unexplained is a result of the Emperor's divine guidance or the many saints who serve in His name. So when a strange, silver-haired girl appeared on the hive world of Beseritor prophesying dire times ahead, many believed she spoke with the Voice of the Emperor.

The Ecclesiarchy of the Fordex Hive quickly took this young girl under their protection so that they could determine whether she was truly blessed by the Emperor, or a dangerous heretic to be put down. Over the course of a decade, the child, Silexia by name, spoke of numerous events that came to pass throughout the Jericho Reach. She foretold of the fall of Jerober to the Great Devourer, of the Uprisings on Rjes, and the Widening Gaze of the Great Eye.

In time, the Inquisition sent representatives to the Ecclesiarchy to meet with her. Chances to witness a true, living saint—as many believed she was—were few, and many amongst the Ordo Malleus and Ordo Hereticus were eager to see this girl for themselves. When the agents of the Inquisition arrived on Beseritor, an Honour Guard of Deathwatch, led by Watch Captain Mathias, escorted them. Silexia grew deathly still as the entourage entered the room, and many of the priests who attended her were gravely concerned for her health.

Before they could utter a word, the girl addressed the newcomers, her voice charged with power. "Dreams of the darkness stir him from slumber; his ancient battle with the Master of Man once more rekindled. He of the Black must steel his reserve and prepare his gaze of stone for the coming days. When the empty star rises, the soulless will walk once more on their ancient lands. Only one possessed of the Blood of She Who Has Fallen can stem the tide of darkness the Ancients will bring. His life must be given for man to return from the edge of night."

The moment passed and Silexia collapsed to the floor. When she rose the next day, Silexia could not speak to the previous day's events. She stated that what transpired must simply be the will of the Emperor. Many interpreted the prophecy delivered that day differently. For Captain Mathias, he was sure that Silexia spoke of him and his role in the great battles ahead against the returning Ancients. These events would shape the course of his life from that day forth, and he knew he must prepare.

Silexia delivered many other prophecies in the years that followed. Twenty years to the day of speaking to the assembled Inquisition, Deathwatch, and Ecclesiarchy, Silexia and her attendants embarked on a pilgrimage to the Shrine World of Eleusis. Their vessel never arrived; it was lost in the Warp soon after translation from real space. Silexia was canonised, becoming Saint Silexia, and to this day, many await her return. It is said that the currents of the Warp cause time to ebb and flow differently, and for this reason many believe she is still alive and will one day return to the Jericho Reach.



# WATCH CAPTAIN MATHIAS

## SONS OF MEDUSA

*"Only those who have peered into the darkness can be fully be prepared for the horrors that await us. We must be ever vigilant."*

—Watch Captain Mathias

### Watch Captain Mathias Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
60	45	62 <sup>14</sup>	47 <sup>8</sup>	41	53	55	51	60

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 25

**Distinctions:** Crux Terminatus

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel) +10, Ciphers (Chapter Runes, Dead Cabal) (Int) +10, Ciphers (Deathwatch) (Int) +20, Climb (S), Command (Fel) +20, Concealment (Ag), Demolition (Int), Dodge (Ag) +10, Drive (Ground Vehicle) (Ag), Drive (Skimmer) (Ag), Evaluate (Int), Intimidate (S), Literacy (Int) +20, Lore: Common (Deathwatch, Imperium) (Int), Lore: Common (Adeptus Astartes, War) (Int) +10, Lore: Common (Jericho Reach) (Int) +20, Lore: Forbidden (Adeptus Astartes) (Int), Lore: Forbidden (Xenos) (Int) +10, Lore: Scholastic (Codex Astartes) (Int) +10, Navigation (Surface) (Int), Pilot (Personal) (Ag), Search (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Tactics (Orbital Drop Procedures, Void Combat) (Int), Tactics (Assault Doctrine) (Int) +20, Tracking (Int) +10.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Astartes Weapon Training, Bolter Drill, Bulging Biceps, Call to Vengeance, Combat Formation, Deathwatch Training, Duty Unto Death, Hatred (Tyranids), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Hip Shooting, Hunter of Aliens, Iron Discipline, Iron Jaw, Killing Strike, Master Orator, Mighty Shot, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Resistance (Cold, Heat, Psychic Powers), Sprint, Storm of Iron, True Grit, Two Weapon Wielder (Ballistic, Melee), Unarmed Master, Unarmed Warrior, Unbowed and Unbroken.

**Traits:** Size (Hulking), Space Marine Implants, Tactical Expertise, Touched by the Fates (2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour:** Artificer Armour (12 All).

**Weapons:** Master-crafted Astartes plasma pistol (30m; S/2/—; 1d10+12 E; Pen 8; Clip 12; Rld 3 Full; Volatile), Master-Crafted Astartes power sword (1d10+20 E; Pen 6, Balanced, Power Field), Astartes combat blade (1d10+16 R; Pen 2; Balanced), 3x frag grenades, 3x krak grenades.

## HISTORY

For two centuries, Watch Captain Mathias has served the Deathwatch. From the battlefields of the Orpheus Salient to the dusty halls of long-lost Watch Stations, Mathias has devoted his service to the tenets of the Deathwatch and their guardianship of the Jericho Reach.

Mathias came to the Deathwatch from the Sons of Medusa Space Marines for what was to be a decade long assignment. Early during his tenure with the Watch, Mathias was assigned to guard Inquisitor Ramaeus during a tense encounter with a group of Eldar said to have valuable information about the Dark Pattern. The recently-seconded Battle-Brother found himself fascinated by the enigmatic Inquisitor and her mysterious prophecies and after this encounter he devoted a great deal of time to studying all he could learn about them. Mathias was intrigued by the relationship the Eldar seemed to have with the Dark Pattern and he quickly became convinced that these beings knew a great deal more than the Imperium knew about these worlds.

The interest that Mathias displayed in researching the Dark Pattern drew the attention of Inquisitor Ramaeus,





who approached the Space Marine and asked him to join her in her pursuit of answers. Mathias was eager to gain access to the Inquisitor's resources and information, so he quickly accepted her invitation and became the first member of the Dead Cabal.

After joining the Dead Cabal, Mathias quickly rose through the ranks of the Deathwatch, making Watch Captain in only twenty years. He distinguished himself on the field of battle against all manner of xenos throughout the Jericho Reach. He battled Tyranid monstrosities on Credos, unknown xenos on Vormos, and countless Tau adversaries all across the sector. Never once faltering or giving ground, Mathias earned a reputation as a skilled tactician and fearsome warrior. While he never wavered in the face of an enemy, it was the words of a mere girl who shook this mighty lord of battle to his very core. The prophecy uttered by Silexia of Beseritor spoke of a great war to come against the ancients, and Mathias was convinced that he was at the centre of this prophecy.

After hearing the Saint speak, the Watch Captain devoted most of his time to the mysteries hidden within her words. Pouring through ancient texts and forgotten tomes, Mathias worked tirelessly to find all that he could about She Who Has Fallen. Fleeting references and veiled mentions were all that he could find, however, and his search continues to this day.

As one of the highest-ranking members of the Dead Cabal, Mathias has repeatedly used his influence and position to assist other members in securing artefacts and knowledge that the Inquisition and senior Watch leaders would sooner see suppressed. He values this knowledge above any politics and despite any ill will he has gained, and has become a champion for the Dead Cabal. Many of the newer recruits to the brotherhood welcome this change, as it allows them to be better prepared for their battles against the xenos and heretics that populate the Jericho Reach.

## USING CAPTAIN MATHIAS

The Watch Captain is an excellent mentor for any Deathwatch member deployed on the Dead Stations Vigil. Time and again the Captain has brought new Vigilants under his wing and he is always willing to assist those who share his passion for knowledge of ancient civilisations and cultures. Mathias also uses his interactions with those in the Deathwatch and Dead Cabal to find a worthy replacement should the prophecy of Saint Silexia come to pass.

While Mathias does not often engage in politics or other more nuanced engagements, he does understand that at times his outspoken ways can undermine his overall goals. To this end, the Captain is working on his relationships within the Deathwatch and has made a number of new allies. This is an excellent way to bring Mathias into contact with the Player Characters and any NPCs they are already familiar with. Captain Mathias can serve as a valuable resource for players and can open many different options for a campaign.

Knowing that he may very well soon lay down his life in service to the Master of Mankind, Mathias has begun an extensive search for one to succeed him in the Dead Cabal. He takes a great deal of interest in any who show an aptitude for the ways of the Dead Cabal and a desire to understand the ways of the past. A shrewd judge of character, Mathias is known for making wise choices when requesting Battle-Brothers for the Dead Stations Vigil.

*Dreams of the darkness stir him from slumber;  
his ancient battle with the Master of Man once  
more rekindled.*

*He of the Black must steel his reserve and  
prepare his gaze of stone for the coming days.  
When the empty star rises, the soulless will walk  
once more on their ancient lands.*

*Only one possessed of the Blood of She Who Has  
Fallen can stem the tide of darkness the Ancients  
will bring.*

*His life must be given for Man to return from  
the edge of night.*





# MASTER OF THE FORGE XERILL

## IRON HANDS



### Master of the Forge Xerill Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	45	<sup>12</sup> 55	<sup>8</sup> 47	38	60	55	52	46

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 30

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Chem-Use (Int), Ciphers (Chapter Runes, Dead Cabal, Deathwatch) (Int) +10, Command (Fel), Concealment (Ag), Demolition (Int) +10, Drive (Ag), Evaluate (Int) +10, Inquiry (Fel), Literacy (Int), Logic (Int), Lore: Common (Adeptus Astartes, Deathwatch, Imperium, War) (Int) +20, Lore: Forbidden (Adeptus Mechanicus, Archeotech, Necrons†, Xenos) (Int) +20, Pilot (Ag), Scrutiny (Per), Search (Per) +20, Survival (Int), Tactics (Armoured Tactics) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20, Tracking (Int).

†New skill speciality, see page 30.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Armour-Monger, Astartes Weapon Training, Binary Chatter, Bolter Drill, Bulging Biceps, Combat Sense, Concealed Cavity, Deathwatch Training, Electrical Succour, Electro Graft Use, Energy Cache, Enhanced Bionic Frame, Ferric Lure, Gun Blessing, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Independent Targeting, Killing Strike, Last Man Standing, Luminen Blast, Machinator Array, Master Engineer, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Rite of Awe, Rite of Pure Thought, Servo Harness Integration, True Grit, Two-Weapon Wielder, Unarmed Master, Weapon Tech, Wisdom of the Ancients.

**Traits:** Size (Hulking), Space Marine Implants, Tactical Expertise, The Flesh is Weak (4), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour:** Artificer armour and The Flesh is Weak (4) (16 All).

**Weapons:** Exceptional Astartes Combi-flamer with fire selector (100m; S/3/5; 2d10+6 X; Pen 5; Clip 28; Rld Full; Reliable, Tearing, and 20m; S/-/-; 2d10+3 E; Pen 3; Clip 1; Flame).

**Gear:** Astartes servo-harness, bionic brm, bionic legs, cybernetic censes, MIU, Battle Servitor, 2 Servo Skulls.

## HISTORY

The concept of bionic enhancement and robotic integration has become deeply seated in the ways of the Iron Hands Chapter. Master of the Forge Xerill is a shining example of this belief and many consider him to be more machine than man. The Techmarine has served the Deathwatch for close to eight decades and in that time he has unlocked a number of secrets that have furthered the goals of the Dead Cabal. Xerill was inducted into their ranks fifty years ago after he recovered a series of Eldar Spirit Stones. His passion for understanding and unlocking the knowledge contained within xenos artefacts drew the attention of Inquisitor Ramaeus, who had him reassigned to permanent detail on the Dead Stations Vigil.

Since that time, Xerill has embraced the Dead Cabal and has dedicated his tenure with the Deathwatch to studying as many xenos artefacts as he can. He is especially fascinated by anything relating to the Necrons and has undertaken many missions based on the slightest inclination that there could be Necron activity involved. Xerill finds the Necrons so intriguing due to their idealistic similarity to his own Chapter, and the inevitable fall they suffered as a result of that pursuit. This represents the ultimate danger in Iron Hands lore, and

Xerill is anxious to understand how to avoid such grand disaster.





## USING MASTER OF THE FORGE XERILL

When any Player Characters interact with Xerill, it should be immediately recognisable that he is aloof and distant. The Techmarine is fiercely committed to his Chapter's dogma, as well as his belief that the flesh is weak. Xerill spends a great deal of his time sequestered away studying xenos artefacts and other technologies. These days it is rare for him to leave the Dead Station to which he has been assigned to undertake a mission unless there is any evidence that the Necrons are involved. When he does embark on a mission, he is direct and to the point in all dealings. Xerill has no time for any deviation from his goal and he will do whatever is necessary to succeed in his mission.

The Techmarine has recently had a number of personal confrontations with the Dead Cabal Librarian Rennin Tri'el of the Silver Skulls. The gregarious and outspoken Librarian takes issue with the Techmarine's gruff and unwavering nature. They also disagree greatly about the nature of the Dark Pattern and have had a number of heated debates about their theories.

Xerill has investigated many worlds of the Dark Pattern looking for Necron tombs and other signs. He has battled ancient remnants of their empire numerous times and he has become adept at overcoming their advanced technology and ancient science. On the world of Nunc, Xerill experienced something that would change his life drastically and put him at odds with his Deathwatch brethren should they ever learn the truth.

The dead world of Nunc has long held many secrets that the Imperium wished to exploit. From the earliest days of the Dead Cabal and the encounters Inquisitor Sinclair experienced, this ancient world has often brought the Deathwatch to its surface. Xerill and a Kill-team of experienced Deathwatch Battle-Brothers came to Nunc in pursuit of a group of Eldar corsairs. These troublesome xenos were responsible for crippling at least three Imperial vessels, so the Deathwatch was dispatched to bring this menace to an end. After a fierce space battle, the surviving Eldar fled to the surface of Nunc hoping to elude their executioners. The Deathwatch does not leave a mission incomplete, however, and they followed the corsairs to the dead world to finish off the kill.

## THE GALVANAX MISSION

Over the past decade, a number of Inquisition and Deathwatch Techmarines have begun preparing a series of long range probes to launch to the farthest areas of the Reach. This region, far beyond Belissar, has barely been explored and many wish to know what lurks in the dark corners of the galaxy. The purpose of this mission is actually twofold—in addition to mapping an unknown region of space, one of the probes is tasked to investigate a strange object that was detected by an Adeptus Mechanicus survey ship that was blown off course by a Warp storm. While this ship was tossed in the currents of the Warp, it was briefly spilled back into real space past Belissar. Long-range sensors detected a massive object at the farthest reach of the instruments right before the ship returned to Warp. Since that time, the Inquisition and Mechanicus have been very anxious to learn what this unknown object is and if it represents a threat to the Imperium.

The Dead Cabal has become involved in the Galvanax Mission—named for the Magos who detected the object—as they fear this has something to do with the Dark Pattern. An obscure text speaks of something that “will emerge from the eternal blackness that will ignite the Hollow Sun.” What this may mean has caused a great deal of speculation amongst the Dead Cabal and the Deathwatch. It is believed that the eternal blackness references the space beyond Belissar as there is a massive dark cloud that obscures the stars deep in space. Only time will tell what this mission will find.

During the prolonged firefight with the raiders, the Space Marines were pinned down in a rocky valley. Under covering fire, Xerill sought a way to circle around behind the Eldar to exploit their flank. While carrying this out, the excessive weight of the Techmarine's artificer armour and servo harness caused a weak point in the rocks to collapse, dropping Xerill into an underground cave. The fall did little damage to the Techmarine, but he was cut off from his comrades and trapped deep below the surface.

The cave that Xerill discovered was a natural formation, but it also contained many unnatural features. A large, metallic archway dominated one half of the cavern, a sealed door to something deep within the planet. The carvings and runes along the structure were instantly recognisable as Necron and Xerill quickly forgot about the raiders above. He began analysing and recording all the glyphs and runes he found, in hopes of discerning what rested beyond the doorway. While excavating the ground near the base of the arch to gain a better look at a series of glyphs, Xerill uncovered a strange silver box, seamless and perfectly cubical. Shortly after discovering this unknown device, the battle above continued to weaken the cave. Xerill knew that he must abandon his investigation or he would lose all that he had discovered should the cave collapse, burying him alive.

The Master of the Forge quickly located another weakness in the cave and breached this into a side tunnel. This allowed him to return to the surface with his newfound prize and reunite with his teammates who had broken the xenos firing line and were making quick work of the remaining eldar. Xerill concealed the silver cube in his servo-harness until he could study the device further.

Upon returning to Watch Fortress Erioch, Xerill sequestered himself away to devote his time to the artefact. After nearly a week of study, he was finally able to unlock it, though he has spoken to no one of what he found. He has recently begun sending a series of highly encrypted messages to his Chapter. These messages contain a great deal of research into robotics and also the basis of Necron physiology. He believes that out of anyone, the Chapter Council is best suited to understand the strides he has made in unlocking the secrets of transcending the flesh and becoming one with the machine. The leaders of the Iron Hands have entreated the Deathwatch to keep Xerill permanently assigned to his post within the Watch. To them, this is simply so that his valuable knowledge and expertise can be best utilised by the Imperium.



# PROGNOSTICATOR RENNIN TRI'EL

## SILVER SKULLS

### Prognosticator Rennin Tri'el Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
48	55	<sup>10</sup> 48	<sup>8</sup> 47	41	60	48	59	45

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 26

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Ciphers (Chapter Runes, Dead Cabal, Deathwatch) (Int), Climb (S), Deceive +20 (Fel), Dodge (Ag), Concealment (Ag), Drive (Ground Vehicle) (Ag), Intimidate (S), Invocation (WP) +10, Literacy (Int), Navigation (Surface) (Int), Lore: Common (Adeptus Astartes, Deathwatch, Imperium, War) (Int), Lore: Forbidden (Psykers, The Warp) (Int) +20, Lore: Forbidden (Xenos, Traitor Legions) (Int), Lore: Scholastic (Codex Astartes) (Int), Psyniscience (Per) +20, Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Survival (Int), Tactics (Defensive Doctrine) (Int), Tracking (Int).

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Astartes Weapon Training, Bulging Biceps, Hardy, Hatred (Dark Eldar), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Killing strike, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Psy Rating (7), Resistance (Psychic Powers), True Grit, Unarmed Master, Warp Conduit.

**Traits:** Size (Hulking), Space Marine Implants, Touched by the Fates (1), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Weapons:** Astartes force sword (1d10+19 E, Pen 9, Balanced, Special, see the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook, pages 155-156).

**Armour:** Astartes power armour (10 body, 8 arms, legs, head).

**Gear:** Psychic hood, Emperor's Tarot deck.

**Psychic Powers:** Augury, Avenger, Compel, Force Dome, Inspire, Possibility Shield, Reading, Vortex of Doom.

## HISTORY

Amongst the various members of the Dead Cabal, Prognosticator Rennin Tri'el stands out as the foremost authority on the Eldar. His knowledge is unmatched by anyone else in the Jericho Reach and he has dedicated his life to understanding and defeating this ancient menace.

Rennin Tri'el is an accomplished Librarian—or Prognosticator as they are called among his brothers of the Silver Skulls Chapter. He has been a member of the Deathwatch for nearly a century and a member of

the Dead Cabal for more than half that time. When he was called upon to serve the Deathwatch, Rennin proudly joined the august organisation to better serve the Emperor.

Before coming to the Deathwatch, Prognosticator Tri'el served with the Silver Skulls Third Company on the Eastern Fringe of the Imperium. The Third Company was on a long-term campaign against the Tau throughout the Ultima Segmentum and this ongoing war had reached a stalemate. The Tau had retreated to their planetary strongholds while the Imperial forces reinforced their holdings in the region. During the lull in the fighting, three squads of Silver Skulls were dispatched to investigate a world designated as PX3354D. This dead world had been given a wide berth by the Tau forces, and the Imperium wished to know why. While on this planet, the Space Marines were beset by a large force of Eldar raiders.

The battle was disastrous for the Silver Skulls as the vicious Eldar struck without warning and with savage fury. After losing nearly two-thirds of their forces, the Silver Skulls were finally able to fall back to their Thunderhawks and return to their strike cruiser. The raiders made no attempt to pursue the retreating Adeptus Astartes and the Space Marines returned to their staging area to regroup and honour their fallen brothers.





## USING PROGNOSTICATOR RENNIN TRI'EL

The Prognosticator is an extremely welcoming individual and can serve as a valuable ally for Player Characters in a Dead Cabal-oriented campaign. Rennin can serve as a mentor for new members of the Dead Cabal and can also be a source of knowledge for players investigating the Dark Pattern or the Eldar in the Jericho Reach.

Recently, the Prognosticator has developed an enmity with Master of the Forge Xerill, a fellow member of the Dead Cabal. Tri'el has become increasingly concerned by the Techmarine's attitudes and demeanour towards his brothers in the Deathwatch, as well as his all-consuming desire to study certain xenos technology. While he has no proof that the Techmarine has done anything wrong, Rennin has had a number of premonitions and felt psychic eddies that tell him things are not as they seem.

Rennin's recent discovery can provide an excellent opportunity for the Player Characters to accompany the Librarian on a mission to the lost worlds of the Jericho Reach. This mission could provide a way for the players to become active in the Dead Cabal.

After this encounter, Tri'el became obsessed with unlocking any and all knowledge about the Eldar. What did they want? What were their goals? Where did they come from? These questions would influence the Prognosticator's next two decades as he returned to the Chapter Fortress and began an extensive investigation into the history of the depraved beings. It was then that he discovered the rift in Eldar society and of the depraved Eldar of Commorragh. It had been these latter Eldar who had decimated the men under his command on PX3354D.

Rennin travelled across the breadth of the Imperium in his pursuit of knowledge, all while continuing to serve his Chapter on the battlefield whenever called. It was during this time that the Prognosticator drew the attention of the Deathwatch and the Dead Cabal. Inquisitor Ramaeus used her influence to have Tri'el called for service with the Deathwatch so that she could witness the Epistolary in his studies. For his part, Rennin gladly embraced the service with the Deathwatch as he knew this would provide him with access to even more knowledge of the xenos he sought to understand.

Once he had joined the Deathwatch, Rennin found himself involved in a number of missions against a variety of xenos. He battled the Tyranid hordes that attempted to consume worlds of the Jericho Reach, fought Tau forces throughout the region, and waged continual war against the heretics of the Acheron Salient. When not involved in an active mission, Tri'el spent much of his time in the massive libraries of the Deathwatch using their vast gathered knowledge to continue his pursuit of the Dark Eldar, for while the debased creatures were not particularly active in the Jericho Reach, Tri'el had found evidence

of webway activity in the Reach. After two decades of faithfully serving the Watch, he was approached by Watch Captain Matthias and asked to join him and his compatriots in the Dead Cabal. The Prognosticator graciously accepted their offer and a whole new avenue of information presented itself to him.

Since that time many decades ago, Rennin Tri'el has established himself as the foremost authority on the Dark Eldar and his insights into their movements, battle tactics, and weaknesses have proved invaluable to the Deathwatch. He has continued to expand his already considerable knowledge and is an outspoken member of the Dead Cabal and their goals. Tri'el believes that the Dark Pattern is, as he describes it, a sort of precursor of the webway. He has yet to elaborate on this theory to his superiors in Deathwatch, but they put a great deal of faith into his theories and his Brothers in the Dead Cabal are anxious to learn more of what he believes this means.

Rennin has specialised in using his psychic abilities to "read" a number of ancient artefacts and weapons in addition to the more traditional oracular powers at his disposal. Through the use of this psychometry, Rennin has divined a great deal of information relating to the use of the Eldar Spirit Stones and why such devices are so prized by them. He has also learned what little he can concerning the spiritual wasting that afflicts the Commorrite Eldar.

The Prognosticator has recently uncovered information that has opened a brand new avenue in his studies on the Dark Eldar and their plans. He has kept his discovery secret, and so far only one other in the Dead Cabal knows of his findings—Watch Captain Mathias. The two of them are working closely on a mission deep into the worlds of the Dark Pattern to find out exactly what Rennin's discovery portends for the future of the Jericho Reach.

## XENOS LORE OF THE DEAD CABAL

In the centuries since the Dead Cabal began taking up the charge to investigate the Dark Pattern and dead worlds of the Reach, it has compiled numerous volumes of lore on the various xenos races found therein. While most of these findings are entered into the general databanks of the Watch and Inquisition, the Chamber of Vigilance has deemed some of the other information highly classified, and denies access to all but the upper echelons of the Deathwatch. At odds with this decision, the Dead Cabal feels that this information is vital to the success of the Deathwatch and has a tendency to circulate their research and theories to other Space Marines when they encounter them. At times this practice brings the Dead Cabal into conflict with the wishes of the Watch Commanders and Inquisitors. They have a respected voice among the Chamber of Vigilance, in Watch Captain Mathias. So far, his dedication to the mission of the Dead Cabal has allowed them to continue their work without greater sanction.



# KNIGHT-WARDEN ALRIC

## BLACK SHIELD

### Knight-Warden Alric Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
53	46	<sup>12</sup> 54	<sup>8</sup> 45	47	52	48	49	46

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 30

**Distinctions:** Crux Terminatus

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Ciphers (Chapter Runes, Dead Cabal, Deathwatch) (Int), Climb (S), Command (Fel), Concealment (Ag), Dodge (Ag), Drive (Ground Vehicles) (Ag), Intimidate (S) +10, Literacy (Int), Lore: Common (Adeptus Astartes, Deathwatch, Imperium, War) (Int) +10, Lore: Forbidden (Xenos) (Int), Lore: Forbidden (Necrons†) (Int) +20, Lore: Scholastic (Codex Astartes) (Int), Navigation (Surface) (Int), Silent Move (Ag), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int), Tactics (Armoured Tactics, Assault Doctrine, Defensive Doctrine) (Int) +10, Tech-Use (Int), Tracking (Int).

†New skill speciality, see page 30.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Astartes Weapon Training, Blade Master, Bulging Biceps, Combat Master, Crushing Blow, Deathwatch Training, Fearless, Hatred (Necrons), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Killing Strike, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Swift Attack, True Grit, Unarmed Master.

**Traits:** Size (Hulking), Space Marine Implants, Touched by the Fates (1), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Weapons:** Power Flail (melee; 2d10+18 E; Pen 5; Concussive, Power Field, Unbalanced), Astartes Storm Shield.

**Armour:** Astartes Terminator Armour (14 body, right arm, legs, head; 18 left arm).

## HISTORY

In a brotherhood of secret-keepers and vigilant sentinels against the darkness, the Black Shield known as Knight-Warden Alric is, himself, a mystery come forth from the depths of the void. The Battle-Brother has proved to be indispensable to the Dead Cabal's goals, an unexpected source of wisdom concerning the Dark Pattern and the beings that may have created it. In particular, the Knight-Warden has provided the Dead Cabal with nearly prophetic insight into the working of the Subhekhar dynasty, his knowledge of the Necrons rivalling even that of Forgemaster Xerill.

How the reticent Battle-Brother came to know such things about the newly awakened foe remains a mystery.

Unlike Mathias, Xerill, or Rennin Tri'el, Alric was a Battle-Brother of the Deathwatch for naught but a day before he sought out Inquisitor Ramaeus by name and pledged his assistance to the Dead Cabal and their search for answers beyond the stars. Even the Knight-Warden's arrival at Watch Fortress Erioch defies explanation. He arrived, unheralded, aboard an unmanned Shark assault boat which had been filled to the gunnels with fuel for its plasma drives. As the ship possessed no capacity for Warp translation, such a journey must have taken centuries from even the nearest system and its engines had long since run cold. Found seated on the command throne, clad in his unadorned suit of steel-coloured terminator armour and deep in a state of self-induced suspended animation, Alric was taken to a holding cell on the outskirts of the Watch Fortress. Urged awake by chem-stimulus and psychic insistence, the Knight-Warden's first words were not of confusion or distress, but of firm acknowledgement. He insisted that he be brought before the Chamber of Vigilance and that Inquisitor Ramaeus would know of his urgency. Under close guard, Alric was granted the audience he requested. What the Black Shield divulged to the Chamber of Vigilance or what connection he has to the Inquisitor is unknown, though his brothers among the Dead Cabal have postulated a number of theories. Whether or not their guesses have





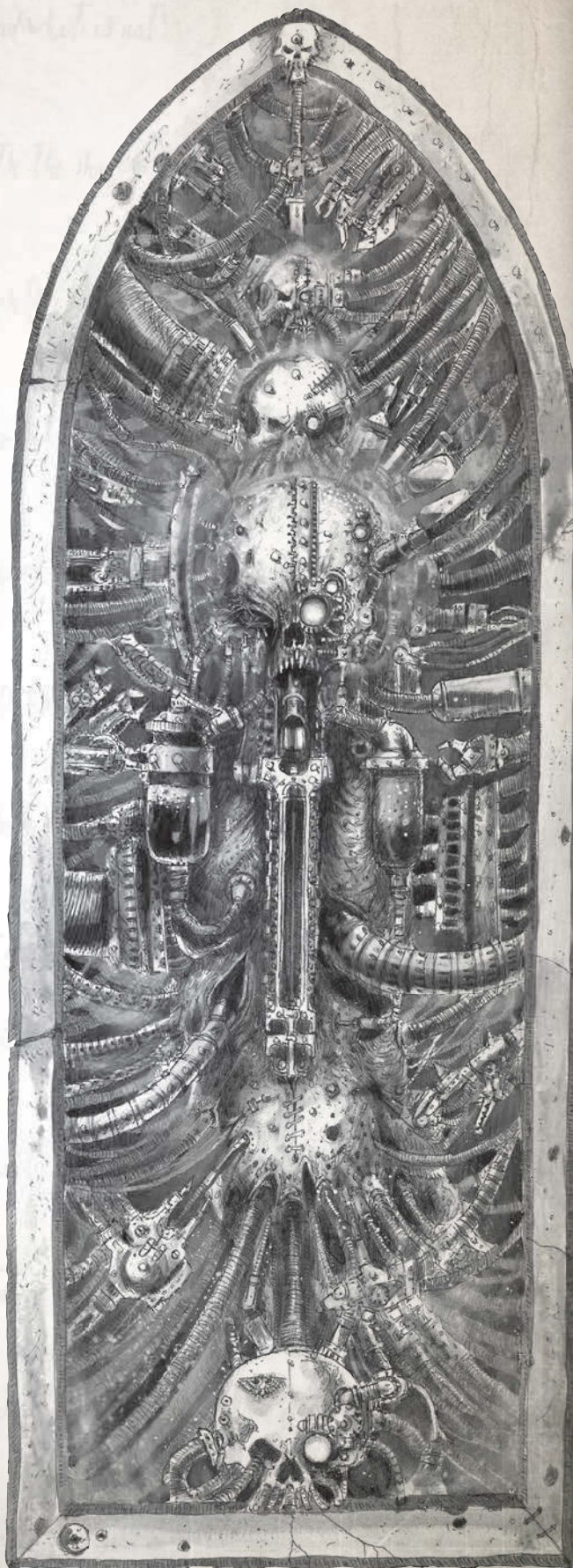
## USING KNIGHT-WARDEN ALRIC

Knight-Warden Alric is something of a contradiction to other members of the Deathwatch. While his demeanour and bearing are distant and cold, even by comparison to the surly Master of the Forge, the Black Shield is the only member of the Dead Cabal to treat all on the Dead Stations Vigil as equals, rather than his subordinates. Unlike his brothers in the Dead Cabal, Alric does not delegate tasks to the Vigilants serving on the Dead Stations, instead preferring to act on his own behalf. For this reason, despite his propensity for long, brooding silences, Alric is particularly well regarded among the Battle-Brothers serving the Dead Cabal, especially among those who have found themselves in need of his battlefield intervention.

The nature of the Knight-Warden's mission and the independence with which he is wont to operate make it unlikely that the Player Characters will ever encounter him in times of peace. Indeed, for these same reasons the Black Shield can act as a guardian to the Player Characters while far afield, undertaking missions deep in the stellar wilderness of the Outer Reach. In such situations, it is unlikely that the Player Characters will even be aware of his watchful presence, the Knight-Warden only revealing himself if truly necessary for the survival of his brethren.

come close to the mark, Alric remains silent on the matter. Despite this speculation, it is certain to all that the Chamber of Vigilance is satisfied with the Knight-Warden's account of himself and that they are convinced that his purpose is righteous. The Black Shield emerged from that council as a Battle-Brother of the Deathwatch and was immediately set to active service under the direct purview of Inquisitor Ramaeus herself. He has since made no account of his past or his Chapter, making no mention of where he came from or why he sought out the Deathwatch. If pressed, the taciturn warrior states only that his way was guided by the will of the Emperor.

Since taking the Long Vigil, Alric has laboured tirelessly to make safe the Jericho Reach from the horrors that rise from the depths of aeons past. While Mathias shepherds those newly sworn to the Long Dead Vigil and Xerill and Rennin Tri'el endeavour to learn ever more about the lost worlds of the Jericho Reach, the Knight-Warden takes it upon himself to stand as a bulwark against the darkness. Given operational discretion to roam the stars alone, Alric acts as a roving knight-errant, confronting evil where he finds it and safeguarding those who fall victim to the eldritch horrors of the Dark Pattern. During his tenure among the Deathwatch, the mysterious Battle-Brother has earned a reputation for arriving, unexpectedly and without warning, where he is needed most. The members of no less than a dozen Deathwatch Kill-teams owe their lives to the silent warrior, each facing insurmountable odds only to find salvation in the arrival of the Knight-Warden, his head bowed in silent salute and his power flail swinging. Not even his brothers within the Dead Cabal can say how the Knight-Warden knows where he is needed, though the unquestioning certainty with which he conducts himself defies the notion that his actions are without direction. The Black Shield, himself, offers little by way of explanation, only that he walks the road of fate, its winding course laid out in a time long-distant.



I: THE DEAD CABAL



# INQUISITOR VELAYNE RAMAEUS

## ORDO XENOS

Inquisitors are, by their very nature, subtle, inscrutable, and enigmatic. Most wear this mystery around themselves like a cloak, almost ostentatious in their guile. The same could be said about Velayne Ramaeus, though such sentiments would hardly do the mysterious Inquisitor justice. Little of certainty is known about the woman, though her credentials are of the highest order and as a result, her authority among the Deathwatch is all but limitless. None remember the details of her arrival in the Jericho Reach, though most assume that the Inquisitor rode in on the first waves of the Achilus Crusade, as few can recall her presence before that time. If asked directly about her service in the Deathwatch, the stewards of Watch Fortress Erioch react with puzzlement. Back through the centuries, scattered among the recollections of the older members of the Deathwatch are memories of a woman bearing her description, though no official record exists as evidence. It is almost as though she had always been there, but went unnoticed until the last several decades. Beyond her rosette and her authentication seal, no concrete record exists of her before the discovery of the Warp Gate. Despite this lack, the Chamber of Vigilance has reconciled her credentials and require no other confirmation of her devotion.

Since her arrival, Inquisitor Ramaeus has proved to be like many of her kind, not one for sloth or inactivity. In but a few short years, she had taken command of the Dead Stations and collected about her the four members of the Deathwatch that would become known collectively as the Dead Cabal. With her trusted Battle-Brothers positioned throughout the Jericho Reach and watchful for unusual phenomena and dire warning signs, the Inquisitor set about her own work, though what this is, few can say. The few times she has made her actions widely known, it was to provide evidence that the things which lurk between the stars of the Jericho Reach are stirring and to demand that the Deathwatch take action against them. Perhaps due to her intense secrecy and unwillingness to disclose what she has learned, these warnings and demands have largely fallen on deaf ears. As a result, Inquisitor Ramaeus spends little time actually aboard the Watch Stations of the Deathwatch and rarely, if ever, enters the confines of Watch Fortress Erioch. Despite her routine absence, she has a reputation for suddenly appearing where she is most needed and vanishing just as abruptly when the situation has passed; a habit that does little to inspire trust among her fellows. She has a habit of finishing the sentences of others and responding to their actions before they happen, almost as though she knows what one is about to say or do before they do it. Some speculate that this shows that the Inquisitor possesses some psychic talent. Other, highly learned scholars and adepts among the Deathwatch, whisper ever more

mysterious explanations, perhaps even a connection to the obscure Ordo Chronos.

What Velayne Ramaeus' true purpose is, not even the members of the Dead Cabal can accurately say. Many among the Deathwatch suspect that the outspoken Inquisitor knows a great deal more about the goings on of the Jericho Reach than she lets on, and a small few accuse her of outright sabotage and treason. She does little to acknowledge these accusations, simply dismissing them as the idle chatter of those who spend too little time taking action against the doom which lies ever at the doorstep of the Imperium. These days, the Inquisitor leaves the matters of the Dead Cabal to those whom she trusts, Watch Captain Mathais in the main.

There are a great many rumours concerning Inquisitor Ramaeus among the Space Marines and Inquisitors of Watch Fortress Erioch, but each is as unsubstantiated as the next. Some speculate that lack of recorded information concerning the Ramaeus is due to a coverup of the highest order; that perhaps all record of her has been expunged to conceal her place in a great conspiracy or to obscure her part in a failed operation. Others suspect that she is not who she says she is and that the Chamber of Vigilance has placed undo trust on the duplicitous Inquisitor. True paranoiacs among the Inquisition even claim to have evidence that Inquisitor Ramaeus is, in fact, a highly trained operative of the Officio Assassinorum, sent to infiltrate the Deathwatch until the day when her murderous arts shall be called upon.





## USING INQUISITOR RAMAEUS

In truth, Velayne Ramaeus does know a great deal more than she lets on. She has made it her purpose to prepare the Jericho for the awakening of the Dark Pattern and the beings behind its existence. She has done little to explain who that may be, stating only that a doom is coming and readiness is Mankind's only defence. She has had numerous interactions with the members of the Conclave of Tears, and clearly believes the Eldar to be her allies in these dark times, if she does not truly trust them.

Though her abrupt manner and air of mystery might suggest otherwise, Inquisitor Ramaeus has a great deal of respect for her comrades in the Deathwatch. When she has call to interact with those who have taken the Dead Stations Vigil, she treats each and every one of them as a trusted allies. She has is known to assign newly inducted Kill-teams to escort her on important missions just as often as she requests the aid of highly respected veterans, asserting that one's destiny determines his rightness for the job, not experience or honours.

Inquisitor Velayne Ramaeus serves as font of lore, mystery, and plot hooks for Game Masters. No statistical information is given for the enigmatic Inquisitor and, as such, her role in combat situations should be handled narratively. She is a highly competent and supremely clever individual, a fact which is apparent in both her breadth of knowledge and her combat capabilities.

Whispers between these sceptics claim that Ramaeus has learned the use of polymorphine from the Callidus Temple assassins and uses the transformative drug to take the form of any number of individuals throughout the Deathwatch in the Jericho Reach, thus explaining her mysterious comings and goings. For her part, Ramaeus does little to quell these rumours or explain herself, leaving her brethren to speculate while she girds the Imperial holdings in the Jericho Reach against what is to come.

In recent years, Inquisitor Ramaeus has become more active than ever before. She travels the Jericho Reach by her usual, unknown means, passing from one dead world to the next, with a haste and an urgency that has drawn the attention of the Battle-Brothers stationed aboard the Dead Stations. Where once she acted entirely alone, she has recently lead several separate excursions to the worlds of the Dark Pattern. Some of these missions end in conflict and bloodshed, as the Inquisitor and her chosen escorts unearth the slumbering horrors of these worlds. Others, prepared for similar action, find only dead rock and barren wastes, almost as if the Inquisitor were expecting some event that had yet to happen. Recently, Inquisitor Ramaeus has been conferring closely with Knight-Warden Alric, though the subject of those conversations remains unknown. Given their shared preference for working alone out among the scattered worlds of the Dark Pattern, such discussions suggest a discovery which may have dire implications for the Jericho Reach. As well, these interactions give some credence to the long-standing suspicions that the Inquisitor and the inscrutable Black Shield had a connection to one another prior to their time in the Deathwatch.

## Strange Bedfellows

*The Eldar vessel came to an abrupt halt a mere hundred metres from the Hunter-class destroyer.*

*Amid the crew of chapter serfs and bridge-servitors aboard the Deathwatch vessel, Knight-Warden Alric turned to Inquisitor Velayne Ramaeus. "Are you sure about this, Velayne?"*

*Alric asked his companion.*

*"I am. This will ensure that we are on the right course," the usually cheerful Inquisitor said with solemnity.*

*A few seconds later, a miniscule craft, no larger than a landspeeder emerged from the Eldar vessel. Within moments, the larger craft streaked away and was gone.*

*"It is time."*

*A lighter launched to escort the tiny craft to a landing bay aboard the destroyer. Ramaeus quickly moved to the bay to welcome the new arrival as Alric ordered the bridge servitors to take the ship out of the system.*

*In the landing bay, the Inquisitor stopped and examined the transport. It was constructed entirely of an exceptionally strong material resembling bone. A hiss of escaping air emanated from within the craft as its hatch swung outward.*

*A thin, gaunt being emerged and looked at the Inquisitor. Loose fitting robes hung upon its frame, and an ornate helm covered its face. Velayne bowed her head in respect and addressed the newly arrived individual.*

*"Welcome, Elerassalian. I trust that undertaking is worth what we both risk?"*

*The Warlock reached up and gingerly removed its helm. Long, night-black hair spilled down across the shoulders of a female who possessed an utterly alien countenance. She bowed her head in return and stepped fully from the craft.*

*"Greetings to you, Velayne Ramaeus," she spoke in heavily accented High Gothic. "The dangerous path on which we are about to embark is a mere pebble in a pond compared to the tide that is coming. We must make haste if we are to keep the galaxy from being swept away by the raging current."*

*With that, the two women made their way to the ship's bridge. As the Hunter exited the system and prepared to enter the Warp, only a few aboard knew that this mission might hold the fate of the entire Jericho Reach in the balance. To succeed they would need help.*



# DEAD STATION VIGILANT

## ADVANCED SPECIALITY

*"There are secrets man was not meant to know, things hidden beyond the stars and in the dark nothingness between them that have no place in the living and breathing world. These are the hidden truths which we seek, among the dead and the forgotten, the ancient enemies of man still slumber, their bones lying in shallow graves awaiting discovery, if only we can tame our fears and find them."*

—Interrogator Gydan Rost, missing and presumed deceased,  
Cressid Station 811.M41

The carnage and chaos of war hides darker truths within the Jericho Reach, secrets which have slumbered beneath alien empires and human outposts for years beyond counting. It was these mysteries that first drew the Inquisition, and later the Deathwatch, to the Reach. Here they followed rumours, signs and portents gathered over centuries of study and careful investigation. At first the Inquisition only had the barest notions of the peril that slept deep in the far regions of the Reach, hiding behind the aggression of young alien races, the insidious rot of the Dark Gods and later the ravaging presence of the Great Devourer. In time, and using knowledge gathered from other places and other times, the Holy Ordos slowly came to see links in the mysteries they were investigating, common connections between dead worlds and the first glimpse of what would become known as the Dark Pattern as it emerged from the void like an aquatic predator surfacing to feed.

While the Deathwatch in the Jericho Reach exists ostensibly to deal with the myriad of xenos threats assailing the crusade, aiding the warmaster against his legions of foes and attempting to turn the tides of war in the favour of the Imperium, there is an older, more vital task to which some of their number are drawn. This is the study of the Dark Pattern and the awakening of an ancient

and powerful foe, more fearsome than all the Imperium's enemies combined, and intent on its utter and complete destruction. For the purpose of studying and combating this enemy the Deathwatch created numerous outposts across the Reach, positioned around dead worlds or in the gulfs of space to monitor the Dark Pattern and try to understand it before those that created it return. Among the Inquisition and the Deathwatch these are known as the Dead Stations. Their true purpose hidden from the commanders of the crusade, only the Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch and the Inquisitors of the Ordo Xenos have any idea as to their true purpose, and then only those who serve on them understand their true and vital worth to humanity.

Not all who serve the Deathwatch will serve on the Dead Stations or be privy to the secrets of the Dark Pattern and the dead worlds over which these stations watch. Only those with a strong mind and the intelligence to understand the complex and maddening mysteries of the ancient enemies they must face are given the chance to serve, becoming a Vigilant of the Dead Station and discovering the true reason for the Deathwatch's presence in the Jericho Reach. Vigilants are chosen not just for their combat prowess or their ability to resist the corrupting influence of alien thought and design (both areas in which they must prove themselves above and beyond that of normal Battle-Brothers), but also for their ability to adapt and understand the nature of a foe about which the Imperium has precious little knowledge

and which, in every encounter, presents the Deathwatch with new horrors to overcome. In this way, knowledge is a key part of the role of a Vigilant, both in learning what has been uncovered thus far and also the ability to uncover more of the Dark Pattern and its creators before the true fighting begins.

Dead Station Vigilants will serve only for a relatively short time out among the far regions of the Reach, as even the Inquisition does not trust any human mind (even that of the legendary Adeptus Astartes) to know too much of the terrible truths they are assembling and the enemy which lurks behind them. Thus a Vigilant may spend only months or years beyond the reach of the Crusade and his former Watch Captains, his whereabouts and purpose unknown to them. After which time he will suddenly return, unable to speak of what he has been undertaking, his secrets left behind on the Dead Stations themselves never to follow him back. Though even while a Vigilant spends only a short part of his time in the Deathwatch serving the masters of the Dead Stations, he can never unlearn what he has discovered about the Dark Pattern, and the Ordos never forget his involvement, sometimes calling on "retired" Vigilants to undertake secret





TABLE 1-1: DEAD STATION VIGILANT ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Concealment	400	Skill	—
Cyphers (any)	200	Skill	—
Cyphers (any) +10	400	Skill	Cyphers (any of the same group)
Evaluate	200	Skill	—
Evaluate +10	400	Skill	Evaluate
Inquiry	200	Skill	—
Inquiry +10	400	Skill	Inquiry
Logic	400	Skill	—
Logic +10	400	Skill	Logic
Silent Move	400	Skill	—
Lore: Forbidden (Archeotech)	200	Skill	—
Lore: Forbidden (Archeotech) +10	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Archeotech)
Lore: Forbidden (Archeotech) +20	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Archeotech) +10
Lore: Forbidden (Inquisition)	200	Skill	—
Lore: Forbidden (Inquisition) +10	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Inquisition)
Lore: Forbidden (Inquisition) +20	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Inquisition) +10
Lore: Forbidden (Necrons) <sup>†</sup>	200	Skill	—
Lore: Forbidden (Necrons) +10 <sup>†</sup>	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Necrons) <sup>†</sup>
Lore: Forbidden (Necrons) +20 <sup>†</sup>	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Necrons) +10 <sup>†</sup>
Lore: Forbidden (Xenos)	200	Skill	—
Lore: Forbidden (Xenos) +10	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Xenos)
Lore: Forbidden (Xenos) +20	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Xenos) +10
Lore: Forbidden (Legends)	200	Skill	—
Lore: Forbidden (Legends) +10	400	Skill	Lore: Forbidden (Legends)
Survival	200	Skill	—
Combat Formation	600	Talent	Int 40
Infused Knowledge	1000	Talent	Int 40
Total Recall	800	Talent	Int 30
Peer (Ordo Xenos)	500	Talent	Fel 30
Wisdom of the Ancients	2000	Talent	Int 40

<sup>†</sup>New Skill speciality.

missions in the heart of the crusade or on worlds deep in Imperial space, where their unique knowledge and experiences will give them an edge against ancient slumbering enemies. Similarly the Vigilants are never the same once they have served on the Dead Stations, and the secrets learnt about the Dark Pattern can never be forgotten, changing the Battle-Brother forever.

Dead Station Vigilants are Deathwatch Battle-Brothers who have served on one of the Dead Stations and been inducted into the mysteries of the Dark Pattern by the Dead Cabal. While many within the Deathwatch are aware that the Inquisition has other concerns besides the Achilus Crusade, few have direct contact with these aspects of the Deathwatch's duties, instead working alongside the Imperium to subvert and stem the advance of alien and heretic forces within the Reach. A Dead Station Vigilant not only knows more about the Dark Pattern and the true enemies which face the Imperium within the Reach, but has most likely also faced them, and learnt the skills and techniques to deal with them more effectively. Knowledge is most certainly power for a Vigilant, and it is the secrecy of the enemies they face which is the greatest obstacle they must overcome. To this

end Vigilants are also well studied in xenos lore and knowledge, sometimes even beyond the Librarians of their own Chapters, learning things about races, like the mythical Necrons, which are practically unknown to any within the Imperium, and certainly any within the Achilus Crusade.

A Dead Station Vigilant mixes these specialised combat skills with extensive knowledge about ancient and forgotten alien races, making him the ideal soldier to combat the threats which lurk at the far reaches of the sector or sleep restlessly below its settle worlds. Often the Inquisition will call upon the Vigilants when they require assistance against such foes, knowing that their specialised abilities can make the difference between success and failure. In some cases Vigilants may be tasked with their own investigations, sent to remote worlds or hidden places to uncover some truth or find some forgotten foe. In these cases they can be supported by their Kill-team, even if many of its members are not Vigilants themselves; the Vigilant Battle-Brother guides them and leads them to victory without the need to explain the secrets they are unravelling.

**Requirements:** Rank 4 or higher, Intelligence 40+  
**Cost:** 2000xp



## DEAD STATION VIGILANT SPECIAL ABILITY: SHARPENING THE MIND'S EYE

Members of the Dead Cabal must be adept at fighting enemies of which mankind has little or no understanding, retaining the tactical flexibility that makes the Adeptus Astartes so fearsome while tempering their combat training with the ability to learn and adapt and, most of all, know when chainswords and boltguns are not enough. Every member of the Dead Cabal is an exceptional warrior, and the combat skills that led to their secondment to the Deathwatch are the same skills which the Dead Cabal requires of those serving it. However, the Dead Cabal also looks for other traits in their Battle-Brothers, for instance a keen intelligence and a razor sharp mind with which to cut through the mysteries it investigates and unravel the plots of its enemies. Intelligence is also one of the key weapons the Dead Cabal has against the returning Necron race, a legion of ancient and unliving warriors whose technology and power, should it ever fully awaken, far outstrips that of the Imperium.

Dead Station Vigilants are trained to use their understanding of the Dark Pattern and their exceptional intelligence to find alternative solutions to problems where even skilled Deathwatch Kill-teams might see only the application of force or impossible odds. Before a mission, a member of the Dead Cabal can turn his mind to a particular aspect of his training, depending on what kinds of opposition he will face in the field. The Battle-Brother chooses one of the following effects, which will remain in place until the end of the mission. This effect is chosen during the Arming and Oath-taking portion of the mission.

**Keen Marksmanship:** The Dead Station Vigilant spends his time studying the weak points of his enemies and how his weapon functions against them, gaining insight into its use against a certain foe. The Battle-Brother chooses a single type of xenos (i.e. Necron, Tau, Tyranid, etc.) and, for the duration of the mission, may use his Intelligence characteristic instead of his Ballistic Skill when making ranged attacks against this chosen foe. In addition, the Battle-Brother adds his Intelligence Bonus to all ranged attack Damage against this type of xenos.

**Xenos Anatomy:** Examining the vulnerable parts of an alien's anatomy, the Dead Station Vigilant notes where his blows will inflict the most harm and where the easiest killing strikes can be landed. The Battle-Brother chooses a single type of xenos (i.e. Necron, Tau, Tyranid, etc.) and, for the duration of the mission, may use his Intelligence characteristic instead of his Weapon Skill when making melee attacks against this chosen foe. In addition the Battle-Brother adds his Intelligence Bonus to all melee attack Damage against this type of xenos.

**Battle Awareness:** An understanding of the battlefield is as important as the battle itself, and the keen-minded can use this knowledge to their advantage. The Battle-Brother has a unique awareness of the terrain the mission takes place in, having turned his mind to its study before entering the fray, and can use it more effectively. For the duration of the mission the Battle-Brother may add his Intelligence Bonus to the Armour Points of any cover he uses (or the cover of his Kill-team while they remain within Support Range of him).

**Mental Fortress:** While there is often little defence against the insidious nature and power of xenos psychic powers, the members of the Dead Cabal can steel their minds by understanding the signs

## ADVANCED SPECIALITY ABILITIES

When a Battle-Brother takes an Advanced Speciality, he gains a special ability in the same way he gains a special ability at Rank 1 when he chooses his normal Speciality. This special ability works like a talent or trait and adds a new special rule to the character, reflecting specialised training or some other perk of taking the Advanced Specialities. Unlike standard Specialities, Advanced Specialities always provide the same special ability (rather than offering a choice), once again reflecting their specialised nature. Players do not pay a separate experience cost for these abilities as they are included in the cost of taking the Advanced Speciality itself.

and methods of such attacks. This allows the Battle-Brother to be better prepared to face psychic assault, and though it does not offer any kind of complete protection, it does increase his resistance. The Battle-Brother may use his Intelligence characteristic rather than his Willpower when defending against psychic powers.

**Heightened Knowledge:** Secrets and lore are at the core of the Dead Cabal, and these are the very essence of understanding the Dark Pattern and combating the enemies which seek to use it against the Imperium. A Dead Station Vigilant must be as adept at using this kind of knowledge as he is with his boltgun or chainsword, and as ready to employ the former as he is the latter. The Battle-Brother has set his focus on the obscure secrets of the Dead Cabal and for the duration of the mission gains a +20 bonus to all Lore: Forbidden and Lore: Scholastic Skill Tests.

## NEW SKILL SPECIALITY: LORE: FORBIDDEN (NECRONS)

The Necrons are an ancient and implacable foe which has slept beneath the worlds of the Imperium for millions of years. Long before human life even crawled from the oceans of ancient Terra, the Necrons ruled the galaxy with an iron fist, crushing all who stood before them with technology far beyond anything mankind as ever mastered and rivalling even races such as the Eldar for mastery of the stars. Eventually, when their existence was threatened by hungry gods and vengeful foes, they chose to seal themselves in their tombs to outlast them, where they have slept away the many millennia... until now.

### New Skill Special Use: Ancient Knowledge

Necrons and their ancient civilisation are among the least understood of all the Imperium's foes; only small numbers of the Inquisition and Adeptus Mechanicus have even begun to unravel the secrets of this ancient race. In situations where he faces Necrons, the Battle-Brother can use his rare knowledge to help resist the attacks and even the maddening presence of these enemies, hardening his mind by understanding how it will be assaulted. Whenever the Battle-Brother must make a Fear Test, or a Willpower Test to resist the effects of a Necron power or ability, he may make a **Challenging (+0) Lore: Forbidden (Necrons) Test**. For each Degree of Success the Battle-Brother achieves on this Test, he gains a +2 bonus to his Willpower Test against the Necron's effect.



# THE DEAD STATIONS VIGIL

The Battle-Brothers who serve on the Dead Stations become a brotherhood unto themselves, a close bond forged between them by the secrets they share and the unspoken enemies they fight. Part of this bond is training and experience that goes beyond that of the Deathwatch alone. This is fostered by the members of the Dead Cabal, so that its brothers might better face the darkness rising from the outer reaches of the sector. This training changes a Battle-Brother, and none who have served on the Dead Station and taken the oaths to unravel the Dark Pattern, have returned the same.

Characters which become Dead Station Vigilants, or serve the Dead Cabal for any length of time, will have access to specialised training and combat techniques, as part of their secret duty for the Ordo Xenos. This section encompasses the rules associated with the Dead Cabal and those Battle-Brothers which join them and their secret mission. These rules include many abilities normally reserved only for fully fledged Space Marine Chapters, such as the inclusion of Squad Mode and Solo Mode abilities as well as the introduction of a Dead Cabal Demeanour and Oaths. A Battle-Brother serving on the Dead Stations Vigil gains access to these additional benefits beyond what the Deathwatch alone would provide.

These options are available to Battle-Brothers who have taken the Dead Stations Vigilant Advanced Speciality. At the GM's discretion he may allow Battle-Brothers serving the members of Dead Cabal (but who have not taken the Dead Station Vigilant Advanced Speciality) to utilise some of these abilities, such as the Oaths and Demeanours.

## DEAD STATIONS VIGIL SOLO MODE ABILITY

Death's Bane is a new Solo Mode Ability that is available to Battle-Brothers who have taken the Dead Station Vigilant Advanced Speciality or are serving under the members of the Dead Cabal. See page 215 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook for details on using Solo Mode Abilities.

### DEATH'S BANE

**Action:** Half Action

**Required Rank:** 1

**Effects:** Battle-Brothers of the Dead Cabal face enemies that few of their peers even know exist, horrors and ancient enemies from the Jericho Reach's dim and distant past. Among these are the awakening Necron Legions and their various weapons and constructs encountered by the Imperium on long dead worlds scattered throughout the sector and along its far reaches. Part of a Dead Station Vigilant's training encompasses dealing with these unliving threats and how to combat the relentless advance of alien constructs and Necron machine warriors, choosing their targets with care and making sure every shot counts. When facing enemies with the Necron Trait (see page 119) or the Machine Trait (see

## USING DEAD STATIONS VIGIL ABILITIES

As part of a Battle-Brother's training as a Dead Station Vigilant he will also gain access to the Dead Station Solo Mode and Squad Mode abilities to reflect his new and unique fighting styles. These abilities do not replace those abilities provided by his Chapter or the Deathwatch but may be used instead of them (i.e. when in Solo Mode the player must choose whether his Battle-Brother is using his Chapter Solo Mode ability or Dead Cabal Solo Mode ability). For all other purposes Dead Cabal Solo Mode and Squad Mode abilities are treated the same as those from a Chapter.

This also applies to Demeanours and Oaths, and a Battle-Brother who has taken the Dead Station Vigilant Advanced Speciality may use the Dead Stations Vigil Demeanour in place of his own Chapter's Demeanour if he so chooses, reflecting his changing understanding of the Deathwatch and the effect the secrets of the Dead Cabal and the Dark Pattern have had on him. The choice of which Demeanour the Battle-Brother will use must be made at the start of a mission, and then cannot be changed until the mission has been completed, as it can be imagined he is entering into his duty with a particular mind set, either pushing aside the instincts of his Chapter to serve the Dead Cabal or reverting to his natural gene-seed gifted inclinations.

Oaths work in the same way and should the Battle-Brother take on the role of Squad Leader he may choose a Dead Stations Vigil Oath instead of any of the others he would normally have access to, as determined by his Chapter and Speciality.

page 133 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook) the Battle-Brother can choose to target weak points in his enemy's mechanical body, inflicting more Damage than normal and ignoring some of the target's armour. This counts as a Called Shot (suffering a -20 to hit) but inflicts an extra 1d10 Damage (of the same Damage type as the Battle-Brother's weapon) and increases the weapon's Penetration by 4. These attacks only work with single Melee or Ranged attacks and cannot be used in conjunction with Swift Attack, Lightning Attack or Semi- or Full-auto Burst.

**Improvement:** At Rank 4 the Battle-Brother increases the additional Penetration of the Attack by 4, raising it to 8. At Rank 7 the Battle-Brother does not suffer the -20 to hit normally associated with Called Shots when making this attack.





## DEAD STATIONS VIGIL SQUAD MODE ABILITIES

The following Squad Mode abilities are unique to characters who have taken the Dead Station Vigilant Advanced Speciality or are serving under the members of the Dead Cabal. The use of Squad Mode Abilities is described on page 219 of the DEATHWATCH Core Rulebook.

### DEAD STATIONS VIGIL ATTACK PATTERN: KILL SWITCH

**Action:** Full Action

**Cost:** 3

**Sustained:** Yes

**Effects:** Dead Station Vigilants must face some of the most powerful foes arrayed against the Deathwatch: the Necron threat. In addition to these ancient foes there are many terrible and forgotten horrors lurking in the dark corners of the Jericho Reach, and a Battle-Brother serving the Dead Cabal will never know just what vision of madness lurks in the depths of a dead world until he disturbs its slumber. To combat these threats, the Battle-Brothers of the Dead Cabal train to put down foes as quickly as possible, identifying weaknesses or vulnerabilities and exploiting them in an effort to kill or incapacitate. This is often the only response a Kill-team has to encountering a new foe when its abilities are unknown and indecision can mean annihilation for the Space Marines. The Battle-Brother and those within Support Range of him can use this ability to cripple or suppress a foe to make it easier for their companions to kill. Instead of making a normal attack, a Battle-Brother can attempt to target a weak point on the foe, distract it with fire or generally hamper its ability to attack the Kill-team. The Battle-Brother then makes an unmodified Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Test (depending on the weapon he is using to attack) as a Full Action. If he fails, there is no effect and his turn ends, while if successful he can choose to inflict one of the following effects on the target until the start of his next turn:

- Halves the Target's Movement.
- Impose a -20 Penalty on all Ranged Attacks made by the Target.
- Impose a -20 Penalty on all Melee Attacks made by the Target.
- Temporarily negate one of the Target's Traits (chosen by the GM from those most appropriate).

If the Battle-Brother becomes incapacitated, is killed, or moves out of range of the target with his weapon, the effect immediately end. Otherwise all other members of the Kill-team can benefit from the Battle-Brother's Action. If multiple Battle-Brothers choose to use Kill Switch on a target, multiple effects may be imposed on the target (i.e. reduced movement, penalty to hit with ranged attacks), but no single effect may be applied more than once.

**Improvement:** At Rank 5 a Battle-Brother can use Kill Switch as a Half Action rather than a Full Action. At Rank 8 a Battle-Brother can choose two effects to apply to the target rather than one.



### EXAMPLE

*Battle-Brother Pyras and his Kill-team are exploring a shadow-filled ruin in the depth of a tomb world when an unnamed horror bursts forth from the darkness. Without knowing the creature's strengths or weaknesses, Brother Pyras uses the Kill Switch ability, attempting to slow it down and buy his men some time. As a Full Action he targets what looks like the creature's legs and fires, making an unmodified Ballistic Skill Test. Passing the test he chooses to reduce the creature's movement by half to reflect his tactic. Next, one of his Battle-Brothers uses Kill Switch to target its limbs with his chainsword, passing a Weapon Skill test and inflicting on it a -20 penalty to hit. With the foe reduced in speed and melee ability, the rest of the Kill-team now make normal attacks to finish it off.*

### DEAD STATIONS VIGIL DEFENSIVE STANCE: LIVING DEATH

**Action:** Half Action

**Cost:** 2

**Sustained:** Yes

**Effects:** Secrets are not the only things which sustain a Dead Station Vigilant, and as part of the Dead Cabal a Battle-Brother is also inducted into an inner circle, closer and more subtle than anything he has experienced before. As part of this group the Battle-Brother strengthens his oaths to the Deathwatch and the Ordo Xenos and reaffirms his duty to the Imperium. No Battle-Brother can see the things



the Dead Cabal deal with or face the foes they must fight without finding his faith strengthened or his resolve grow. This is especially true when facing inhuman foes such as the Necrons, the Tyranids, and daemons, threats from which there can be no surrender and no retreat. The Battle-Brother and those within Support Range of him can use Living Death to reduce critical damage when facing inhuman foes, brushing off heavy damage so they can fight on. When the Battle-Brother suffers critical damage from a foe with the Necron Trait, the Tyranid Trait or the Daemonic Trait he reduces the amount (after reductions for Armour and Toughness Bonus) by 1 for every conscious and living member of his Kill-team within Support Range, drawing resolve from their presence. This reduction is taken into account before the total is halved by other abilities, such as the True Grit Talent.

If a Battle-Brother under the effects of the Living Death ability is “killed” (i.e. suffers a critical effect which results in death) then he can continue to fight on for a single Round before dying. During this Round the Battle-Brother can ignore the effects of Fatigue or crippled limbs, but still suffers ill effects from any missing limbs, lost eyes, or other absent organs after this Round, the Battle-Brother dies normally, though he may burn a Fate Point as normal to avoid death.

**Improvement:** At Rank 4, the Battle-Brother increases the critical damage reduction granted by this ability by an additional 1, plus 1 for every Battle-Brother within Support Range. At Rank 7 the Battle-Brother can fight on after “death” for a number of Rounds equal to the number of Battle-Brothers within Support Range (determined in the round he was ‘killed’).

## OATHS AND DEMEANOURS

*“The Tyranid and the Tau are but the snarling face of the xenos beast which threatens the entire Achilles Crusade. The body of the beast remains hidden; races yet unchallenged lurking in the darkness of the void, waiting silently in their tombs with a patience only dead things know.”*

—Inquisitor Falmus Hex, Ordo Xenos

Those who serve with the Dead Cabal are forever changed by the experience, the veil lifted from their eyes and the true horrors facing the crusade brought into focus. Dead Station Vigilants are inducted into the Dark Pattern and the terrible secrets that accompany it, learning things only a few within the Reach are ever privy to and discovering that an ancient enemy slumbers beneath the unsuspecting watch of Imperial forces. While Tau, Tyranids, and the servants of the Dark Gods vie for the attention of the Deathwatch and the Imperium the Battle-Brothers of the Dead Cabal know that these threats are but fleeting enemies, foes of flesh and blood whose time in this galaxy has been measured only in the barest breath by far older, far darker creations. The true enemy in the Jericho Reach is yet to be faced, still waking from a sleep that has lasted for millions of years and is only now coming to an end. These are the enemies which will bring about the end of the Imperium if left to reach their full strength: these are the Necrons.

A Battle-Brother that serves under the Dead Cabal or takes up the mantle of the Dead Station Vigilant makes pledges and

oaths to face these ancient enemies and the other forgotten foes of the Jericho Reach. They know that theirs is a sacred duty to fight in the shadows against an enemy that many of their peers will never even know of, for glory which can only be shared among the members of the Dead Cabal. This changes their outlook and the nature of their duty to the Emperor and the Deathwatch, as they feel the weight of the task placed squarely upon their shoulders. The Oaths listed below are intended to reflect this terrible knowledge and may be taken by a Squad Leader with the Dead Station Vigilant Advanced Speciality. The Demeanour that follows can be used by Battle-Brothers serving on the Dead Stations Vigil in place of those normally provided by their Chapter or their Speciality.

### OATH OF IGNORANCE

The Dead Station Vigilant steels his Kill-team against the terrible force of the enemies they face, laying out the knowledge he has learnt from studying the Dark Pattern and reinforcing the single purpose the Kill-team must embrace lest it give in to madness and doubt. Bolstered by this narrowed vision, the Kill-team accepts only the role it must play in coming mission and pays no heed to the greater darkness surrounding it, protecting them from the horror that would subdue their spirit or sway their conviction. It is an oath not taken lightly nor one that comes without risks, as choosing to embrace focus can cost the Kill-team its flexibility and its ability to react to sudden danger, though against certain foes ignorance is the only defence against madness.

**Prerequisite:** Dead Station Vigilant

**Effect:** Those that take the Oath of Ignorance choose to enter battle without embracing knowledge of their foe or dwelling on the nature and reality of their enemy. It brings with it dangers, but also benefits as ignorance can sometimes protect a Battle-Brother just as well as knowledge. All members of the Kill-team taking this oath focus their minds to the mission and are difficult to sway from their purpose. For the duration of the mission, the Battle-Brother are unaffected by the effects of Fear and Insanity (see pages 276 and 278 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook). In addition, for the duration of the mission, any Battle-Brothers suffering from the effects of their Primarch’s Curse (see page 280 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook) will also ignore its effects. The drawback of the Oath of Ignorance is that Battle-Brothers cannot spare any thought for issues outside the nature of their mission, and suffers a –20 penalty on all Lore Skill Tests for the duration of mission.

**Squad Mode Abilities:** Furious Charge, Kill Switch, Living Death.

### OATH OF INHUMANITY

The Imperium faces an enemy that has no concept of mankind’s right to exist, and this enemy views the Imperium as little more than a disease which has infected the galaxy in their absence. The Dead Station Vigilant reminds his Kill-team of this inhumanity in his enemies and their lack of empathy or understanding for the might of the Imperium, taking an oath to match the inhumanity of their foe with their own. The Battle-Brother casts aside any thoughts of mercy or



quarter for the foe, any thoughts of trying to understand or comprehend them, reducing them to mere targets and kills to be counted. This oath takes the Battle-Brother even further beyond the single-minded dedication to rid the galaxy of xenos instilled in him by the teachings of the God-Emperor and the training of his Chapter, to a place where there is nothing but sudden and instant death for all foes.

**Prerequisite:** Dead Station Vigilant

**Effect:** Those that take the Oath of Inhumanity focus their hatred for the alien until it is no longer even hatred at all; so great is the wrath the Battle-Brother embraces. As a rat catcher might see vermin as little more than an aspect of his profession, so does the Battle-Brother see xenos as no more than painted targets without minds or souls or even a people to mourn their passing. Battle-Brothers that have taken this oath gain a +30 bonus to Opposed Intelligence, Willpower, and Fellowship Tests against xenos, their minds closed tight against the insidious assault of the alien. These benefits extend not just to the battlefield, but wherever the Battle-Brothers must face xenos as “allies” or envoys, protecting themselves from the careful words and persuasive arguments of the alien just as effectively. The only slight disadvantage of the Oath of Inhumanity is that when making Fellowship Tests and Fellowship-based Skills Tests against xenos, the Battle-Brothers find it difficult to conceal their disdain and suffer a –20 penalty.

**Squad Mode Abilities:** Kill Switch, Living Death, Soak Fire.



## DEMEANOUR: SPECTRE OF DEATH

Spectre of Death is a Demeanour (see page 32 of the **Deathwatch** Core Rulebook) unique to Space Marines serving the Dead Cabal.

Humanity is still a young race in the eyes of the ancient enemy, and but children when measured against the frightful age of the galaxy and its many wonders and horrors. The Dead Cabal have peered behind the curtain of time and seen the darkness which lurks beyond, an empty pit of nothing, which can consume the mind of man and drive him to madness. A Battle-Brother of the Dead Cabal knows that he is but a flicker of light in this darkness, the briefest spark of defiance against an enemy that is the very darkness itself and yet fights on regardless. All material foes will fall before the march of time, the turn of years bringing their accomplishments to dust, and are thus little concern when measured against the Dark Pattern and its progenitors. Under such stresses an ordinary man would give in to despair, unable to comprehend the ageless foe and reduced to madness by the scale of its evil. However, Battle-Brothers are the greatest warriors humanity has ever fashioned and cannot accept such weakness.

Battle-Brothers of the Dead Cabal seem strange and distant at times, the knowledge behind their eyes unsettling even for members of the Inquisition who are used to the weight of terrible secrets. They have wandered into the dark places of the Jericho Reach, places where no man has ever set foot, to face horrors beyond a human mind's ability to fathom or reason, and walked back out again. This can make members of the Dead Cabal seem distant and cold, the knowledge they hold making all other enemies seem mundane and common, of little concern and holding only the shadow of threat when compared against the terror and evil of the Necrons. The secrets they keep can also be a weight driving a wedge between them and their Battle-Brothers, even those from their own Chapter who have not served with the Dead Cabal, the oaths of duty to their Chapter Master tainted by their oaths to the Dead Cabal, which keep them from speaking of the secrets of the Dark Pattern.

Dead Station Vigilants can also become infected with the shadow of death should they delve too often into the darkness of tomb worlds or uncover too much lore about their foes. After a time the Battle-Brother becomes burdened with the knowledge that the ancient enemy is older even than his entire race, and its long and bloody history is but a fleeting moment in the roll of endless years. Filled with such thoughts, the Battle-Brother sees death in all things, and the decayed state he will eventually embrace. Men and women are walking corpses while even the greatest city is but a pile of rubble and ash; such is the destiny of all things.



# DEAD CABAL RELICS

*"There are things best left undisturbed in the Reach, things left out of human memory for a reason..."*

—Magos Gynarn Tarni, Slinnar Drift Explorator Expedition

**D**uring its time in the Jericho Reach, the Dead Cabal and the Deathwatch of which they are a part have gathered together an impressive array of relics and curios from dozens of worlds and tombs. Many of these have found their way through the Warp Gate and back to the Calixis Sector, destined to the vaults of the Tricorn Palace on Scintilla, though many more still reside in the Watch Stations and outposts to which they were first returned. Many of these artefacts, xenos in nature, are considered too dangerous to see the light of day and remain sealed in status caskets, hidden away from sight. Others have proved their worth, and members of the Dead Cabal have even used them to shed light on the secrets of the Dark Pattern or to combat the ancient enemies of the Jericho Reach. Supplementing this supply of relics under the control of the Dead Cabal are objects taken from the Omega Vault, items which have spent hundreds of years if not millennia sealed away within the vault until their release. These wondrous and strange artefacts are often from the Imperium's past, and bring with them more questions and clues as to the nature of the Dark Pattern and the ancient minds that sealed them away in the first place.

The GM can use Dead Cabal relics either to supplement the abilities of his Player Characters or as the focal point of adventures themselves. Unlike the relics of a Chapter, which are often great weapons, ancient armour, or blood-stained standards, those of the Dead Cabal are all linked to the Dark Pattern and the Outer Reach, useful against its enemies or vital in uncovering its secrets. Such relics are never entrusted lightly, and always with good reason. As such the GM should have final say on whether or not the PCs can acquire a Dead Cabal relic for their mission. Equally the GM can grant the Kill-team care of a relic even if they do not meet the Requisition and Renown prerequisites, if it is central to the mission they are going to undertake or the foe they are going to face.

## THE BLADED SKULL

The Necrons have technology exceeding the understanding of man, devices and weapons terrifying and disturbing to behold. Some of them seem to mimic Imperial technology, power blades which cut through plasteel as easily as flesh or suspensor fields to keep their alien craft aloft, while others are completely alien, like their gauss flayer weapons, which can strip flesh and bone from a man in an arc of energy. One such artefact is a weapon known as the Bladed Skull, recovered from deep within the Slinnar Drift on an unrecorded world.

The Bladed Skull is a scythe-like weapon about seven feet in length from the base of its haft to the point where its long blade issues forth, carved from metal in the shape of a screaming skull. Despite its size and unwieldy appearance, the weapon is surprisingly easy to wield and can even be effectively used one-handed by a

TABLE 1-2: DEAD CABAL RELICS

Relic	Requisition Cost	Renown
Bladed Skull	20	Respected
Eternity Gate Boltgun	10	Respected
Seal of Achilles	15	Distinguished
Stone God of Rheelas	15	Distinguished
Syrshin Singularity Rounds	10	Respected

Space Marine. The weapon is shrouded in an apparent power field, seeming on first glance to be not dissimilar to a power axe or glaive. This is misleading, as the Dead Cabal has discovered, and the field surrounding the Bladed Skull is actually more akin to a stasis field than that used by power weapons. Unlike an Imperial stasis field, though, it has a reversed effect on objects it envelopes, accelerating entropy and leading to extreme decay. As a xenos weapon, use of the Bladed Skull is highly restricted, and only a handful of Inquisitors have even dared employ it in battle.

A Battle-Brother can requisition the Bladed Skull only if accompanied by an Inquisitor willing to use such xenos artefacts, and therefore willing to convince the Dead Cabal of its worth to complete his mission. Too large for a normal human to effectively use, the Bladed Skull will then be entrusted to a member of the Kill-team. The Bladed Skull counts as a Power Axe (see page 154 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook), though it does not suffer from the Unbalanced Special Quality. In addition, the entropic effect of the weapon's power field also means that anytime a target is hit, whether the blow penetrates its armour or not, the target loses 1 AP from the location struck (until its armour can be repaired or its hide heals). Enemies with the Machine or Necron Trait are especially affected by the weapon as its field ruins their internal workings, inflicting an additional 1d10 Damage for any hit that penetrates their Armour.

## ETERNITY GATE BOLTGUN

The Omega Vault holds countless secrets for the Deathwatch, its contents and their purpose as much a mystery to the Watch Captains of Erioch now as they were when the vault first opened its heavy doors. Some of the contents of the vault have no discernible purpose, such as scraps of blank parchment, broken unrecognisable machines, and devices or xenos objects with no apparent function, while others are clearly useful, like an ancient power blade or baroque suit of armour, though why they have been stored away remains unknown. Among these latter items there have been numerous weapons recovered from the Vault, often falling into the hands of the Inquisition or the Deathwatch commanders for further study where they find a home in trophy chambers and personal armouries. The Dead Cabal also has its share of such ancient weapons, counted among them an Adeptus Astartes boltgun of rare and exquisite construction thought to date back to the time of the Horus Heresy and the great battle for Terra ten thousand years in the past.

This gilt bolter is thought to have belonged to a loyalist Space Marine during the battle, an intricate engraving on its casing showing the deeds of its original owner as he fought against the Great Traitor's legion before the Eternity Gate. The sight of this



boltgun is enough to stir a Battle-Brother's loyalties, something deep inside his psyche triggered by its appearance and the weight of age and duty which seems to cling to it even after centuries held in stasis within the Omega Vault. Even though it cannot be said with certainty that the boltgun was present at the Battle of Terra, the aura stubbornly remains and a Battle-Brother wielding it in combat can still inspire those around him, the weapon's distinct golden casing flashing in the light as the engraving of the loyalists holding back the traitors seems to come alive with faded screams and the muted crack of gunfire.

A Battle-Brother carrying the Eternity Gate Boltgun into battle will inspire those around him, reminding them of their ancient duty to the Emperor and the bond all Space Marine's share. The relic counts as a Master-crafted Adeptus Astartes Boltgun (see the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook page 145). In addition, if the Battle-Brother is the Squad Leader of his Kill-team, he will increase the Cohesion of his squad by an extra amount equal to his Fellowship Bonus (this is in addition to any other bonuses). The bolter will also make other loyalist Space Marines react more favourably to the Battle-Brother, and he gains a +10 on Fellowship Tests when dealing with these NPCs, whether they are part of the Deathwatch or other Adeptus Astartes Chapters. Finally, the sight of the bolter can have an adverse effect on the enemies of the Imperium, most notably Traitor Legion Space Marines, who will be reminded of the fall of their warmaster and gain the Hatred Talent focused on the Battle-Brother if they do not already have it.



## SEAL OF ACHILUS

Warmaster Tiber Achilus, for whom the Achilus Crusade is named, was the father of the great Imperial invasion of the Jericho Reach and the military mind behind its opening moves. When he disappeared, presumed dead during a Warp transit in 786.M41, the crusade wept for their fallen leader and a great blow was struck against the morale of the Imperial forces. Though since that time the crusade has fought on and countless more Imperial soldiers have fallen in its name, the ghost of the old warmaster still lingers, his memory strong among those who knew him and those that served him loyally. Relics of the old warmaster can be found throughout the Imperial armies, from his personal banners still held aloft by the Imperial Guard regiments of the Calixis Sector to the sacred weapons of his office, which now reside with the new Warmaster Solomon Tetrarchus. The Deathwatch too has its relics of the old man, among them a signet ring, gifted to the Deathwatch and then given to the Dead Cabal to mark the meeting of the first elements of the crusade with the Dead Stations after their long vigil alone among the worlds of the Reach.

Known as the Seal of Achilus, it was an honour given to the stewards of the Deathwatch, who were present to meet the first scouts of the crusade as they emerged from the Warp Gate. The ingenious tech-adepts of Watch Fortress Erioch crafted a silver, left-handed gauntlet around the signet, its intricate engravings now embedded in the knuckle of the middle finger. Though even Tiber Achilus was not privy to the secrets of the Dead Cabal or the Dark Pattern, he welcomed the presence of the Deathwatch as a sign of the lasting presence of the Imperium and a good omen of the success of the Crusade.

The gauntlet, now known as the Seal of Achilus, allows the Dead Cabal rights within the Crusade and over its subjects, and even though Tiber Achilus is gone and Tetrarchus has no official links with the Dead Cabal, many commanders and planetary governors will recognise and respect the seal, allowing the Battle-Brothers that bear it special consideration for the favour the old warmaster must have shown them.

The Seal of Achilus is usually only entrusted to a Battle-Brother if the Dead Cabal believes he will need to use it to gain aid from crusade forces to complete his mission. It can be used by the Battle-Brother to potentially make any member of the crusade act more favourably towards him and even offer aid they would not normally release, not even to the Deathwatch. When the Battle-Brother shows the seal to a member of the Achilus Crusade, the GM should roll a dice: on a score of 1-7 the NPC recognises the gold disc and respect its power, while on an 8-0 they either do not know its significance or have no loyalty to the old man. The GM can dispense with the roll if it is obvious the NPC would respect the power of Achilus (such as offices in his old regiments or from his staff) or if it is obvious the NPC would not (such as those in Tetrarchus' inner circle or those who had extreme differences with Achilus, like Lord Ebongrave). If the seal works, the Battle-Brother's Fellowship tests and Fellowship-based Skill Tests are never harder than **Challenging (+0)** with that NPC, and the PCs will receive at least twice the normal amount of support from the NPC or support they would not normally have received (extra troops, information, supplies) as determined by the GM.

## STONE GOD OF RHEELAS

The world of Rheelas is one of those quarantined by Lord Ebongrave for suspicion of Tau secessionists. Once a thriving mining world, it has since fallen into ruin, its great floating cities and orbital platforms filled with starving citizens, punished by the paranoia of the commander of the Canis Salient. Before it fell on dark times, Rheelas was of interest to the Dead Cabal for the alien ruins which were rumoured to exist deep within its wastes. A volatile and volcanic world, the tectonic plates of Rheelas are always in constant and brutal motion, its continents literally reshaping themselves every year as they crash and collide into each other. The Dead Cabal was initially interested in the world because of its place in the Dark Pattern. Later, they came to believe that the world was not always in such a state of constant upheaval, and that this might be the result of some ancient weapon. Various expeditions to Rheelas uncovered little among the broken continents, any evidence of its original inhabitants seemingly long lost to the shifting landmasses. Finally, an Imperial mining operation uncovered an alien stone totem in the depths of one of its oceans, miraculously intact.



Upon inspection by the Ordo Xenos, the totem was revealed to have a psychic aura, implanted long ago by some ancient and powerful alien psyker to hold the collected memories of his people. Even after years of study by talented and determined Deathwatch and Inquisitorial psykers, much of the information in the stone remains locked away, a jumble of alien memories and disturbing xenos thoughts. After extensive research on the totem, the Dead Cabal believes that the Suhbekhar Dynasty had a hand in the death of Rheelas. Perhaps its original inhabitants destroyed their own world rather than give in to inevitable slavery under Necron rule. Because of this discovery, members of the Dead Cabal will sometimes meditate in a sealed chamber with the stone totem, tasting of its memories and hoping for a clue or guidance on combating the Suhbekhar, something glimpsed from ancient alien eyes that might influence the success of their mission.

A Battle-Brother and his Kill-team can meditate with the Stone God of Rheelas before embarking on a mission (this takes place during the mission preparation period when they would make oaths and spend their requisition). Even if none of the Battle-Brothers are psykers, they can still benefit from the memories in the stone, so vivid and strong are they. Concerning missions in which the Battle-Brothers must face Necrons of the Suhbekhar Dynasty, the effects of the Stone God can aid them in their mission. The Kill-team's Squad Leader should roll on **Table 1-3: Memories of the Stone God** to see the nature these memories take and the benefit they have.

**TABLE 1-3: MEMORIES OF THE STONE GOD**

1d5	Roll	Memory	Effect
1		An Ancient Council of War	Add 3d10 Kill Markers to any one objective.
2		A Bloody Encounter	Add 2 to the Pen of all weapons for one combat.
3		A Cunning Ambush	Add +10 to Silent Move and Concealment Tests.
4		A Powerful Overlord	Add +20 on all Opposed Rolls against Necron Overlords.
5		A Secret Location	Add +10 Renown if a Tertiary Objective is completed.

These effects last for the duration of the mission or until they are used. Such is the chaotic and fickle nature of the Stone God of Rheelas that a Kill-team may not use it for two consecutive missions in a row.

## SYRSHIN SINGULARITY ROUND

The Black Reef is counted among the most dangerous locations within the Jericho Reach, a deadly tangle of gravity whirlpools and Warp vortexes that can tear a ship apart in a matter of seconds. Only a few Imperial explorers have penetrated its edges and crossed its fluctuating boundary, known as the Stygian Break, to glimpse its secrets. Rumours tell of rogue worlds and macro systems hidden in its depths, the detritus of a thousand solar regions drawn together by the unimaginable gravity well that pulses at its centre. Those few who have returned from the Reef also speak of the ruins of a

great alien empire, long turned to rubble and dust scattered across the void, its home-worlds-turned-graveyards tossed and tumbling through the night in the wake of some terrible event. Information gathered by the Dead Cabal, and extracted from the mysteries of the Dark Pattern, point to a great war or battle that tore this part of the Reach apart long, long ago, and a xenos civilisation that died rather than face enslavement at the hands of an ancient foe.

Part of the stories of the Black Reef indicate that there is some great device still at its centre, manipulating the forces of gravity and even sending ripples through the Warp. Whether there is truth to this or not, it is clear that gravity behaves differently in the Reef, altered in some fundamental way. This change is the basis for the Dead Cabal's singularity rounds, or Syrshin Singularity Rounds, named for the xenos race native to the Reef and thought to be the last remains of its lost civilisation. These rounds are bolt shells, cast with scrap metal and debris scavenged from the Reef, metals which have resided in its reaches since time immemorial. Even such small flecks of steel seem to have an effect on the gravity around them, and with the right casting can cause a boltshell to alter its flight or even jink out of the way of enemy defences. At the very least a Singularity Round has an unpredictable flight that cannot be easily countered, finding its target along a zigzag path. Singularity fragments are also extremely destructive when they explode in flesh or metal, their gravity fields pushing and pulling tissue and innards, tearing and breaking matter around them.



A Battle-Brother can requisition Singularity Rounds from the Dead Cabal for special missions, especially if he is facing the Necrons and every advantage is needed to overcome their powerful mechanical warriors. A Singularity Round is identical to a normal bolt round and can be used with any bolt weapon, retaining the RoF, Range, and Pen of the weapon it is fired from. Due to the singularity shards, the rounds is more destructive and adds +4 to the Damage of the weapon. Singularity Rounds are also hard to avoid, though equally hard to fire accurately, and when making single shots with such a round the Battle-Brother can choose to suffer either a -10, -20, or -30 to his Ballistic Skill while imposing an identical penalty on any Dodge tests made by his target. If the Battle-Brother fires his weapon on semi- or full-auto then he has less control and will suffer a -20 to hit on all shots, but will also impose a -30 to any Dodge Tests. In addition, a Battle-Brother may attempt to fire the rounds around corners or over cover by making a called shot (-20 to hit), which if successful will ignore his target's cover bonus (though impose no penalty on the target's Dodge Tests).



# DEAD CABAL CAMPAIGNS

*"I never felt like the galaxy hated me, not until I sailed the Slinnar Drift and saw those red winking stars gazing down on me, like some kind of predator watching its prey."*

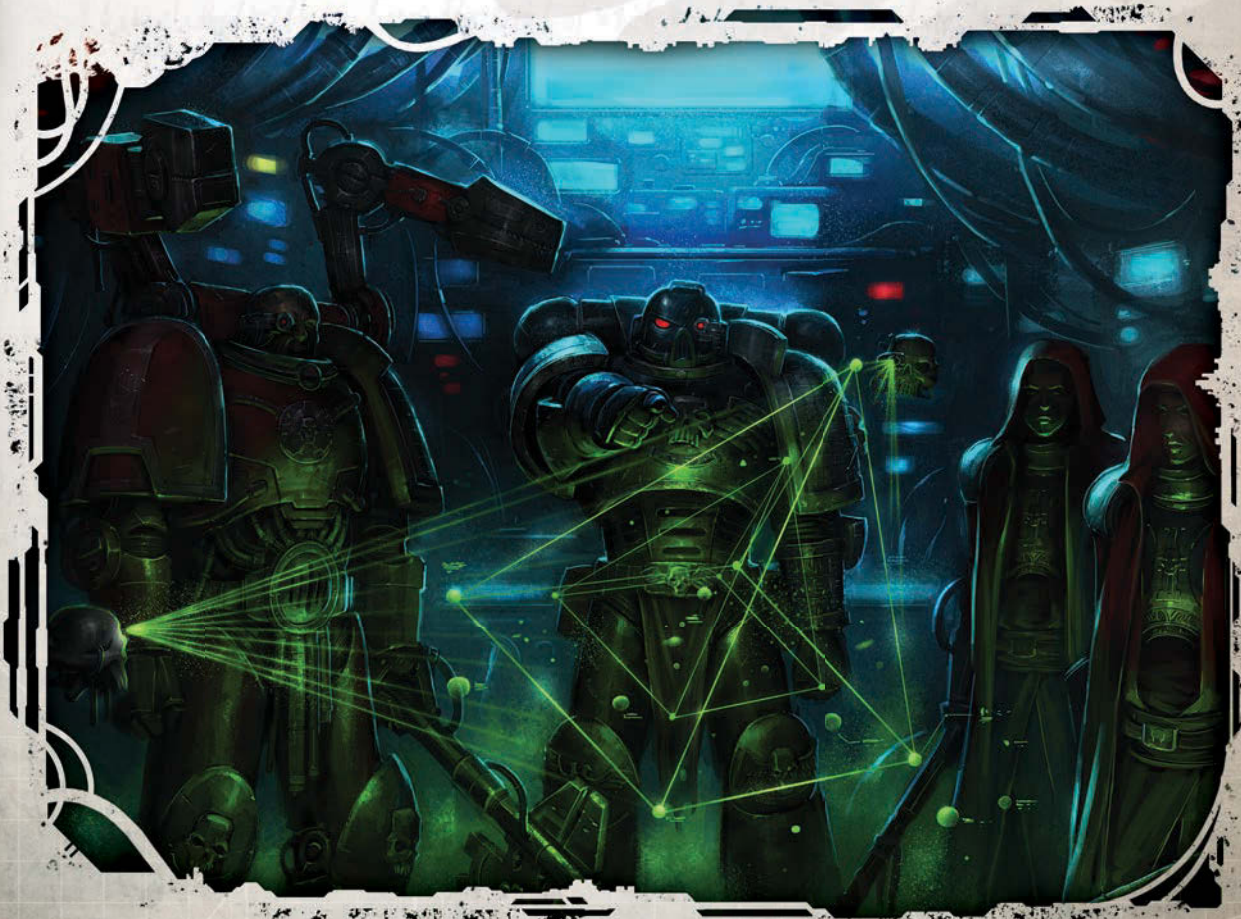
—Gydeon Denir, Lord-Captain of the *Lament of Corvus*

**T**he Outer Reach, the Dark Pattern, and the Dead Cabal all present a wealth of opportunity for Deathwatch missions and adventures. GMs and players can use these organisations and locales to create interesting and exciting games, drawing on the terrible secrets and ancient foes which lie deep within the Jericho Reach. This section covers ideas for creating campaigns set in the Outer Reach or against the Necrons, providing the GM with guidelines on themes and mission complications, as well as the framework for three Outer Reach adventures.

## THEMES OF THE OUTER REACH

The Outer Reach is a very different place than the rest of the Jericho Reach; beyond the bleeding edge of the Achilles Crusade and the great battles of the Orpheus, Archeros and Canis Salients there is a strange calm blanketing the stars. A less informed explorer or soldier might mistake this great stretch of celestial wilderness as of secondary concern to the worlds of the crusade, an empty nothing of dead and dying worlds without value and of no immediate threat to humanity. Such thoughts are, of course, in grave error and the vast regions of void reaching out towards the Eastern Fringe are anything but benign. This is the cradle for the most terrible of mankind's foes, the ancient enemy beside which all others fade to shadow and for which the Deathwatch was so long ago drawn to the Reach to investigate.

To capture the unique nature of the Outer Reach and inspire ideas on conducting missions on its desolate and haunted worlds, the GM can use any of the themes presented in the following section. These themes represent some of the core aspects of the Outer Reach and why it differs from core worlds and salients of the Jericho Reach. When creating adventures set within the Outer Reach, the GM can use these themes as a guide to give him an idea of what kinds of challenges a Kill-team investigating the Dark Pattern might face, as well as draw inspiration from them for his own campaigns.





## AN ANCIENT ENEMY

The Necron threat is like none the Imperium has ever faced and like no enemy it has encountered before. Mankind can only barely comprehend the size and strength of the Necrons, and many within the Dead Cabal, let alone the commanders of the Achilus Crusade, still believe these aliens to be no more than the faded remnants of some fallen civilisation, scattered and without purpose. However, the truth is a terrible thing. With the passing of years more and more Necrons are stirring in their tombs and returning to the galaxy, their cold dead minds set upon restoring their dominion and sweeping away those that would lay claim to their worlds. Unlike the reckless hatred of the Dark Powers, the mindless hunger of the Tyranids, or the subversive lure of the Tau, the Necron dynasties are both infinitely patient and organised, their actions part of a plan which has been in motion for millions of years and was set down long before the Imperium or humanity ever existed. Against this timeless evil the Dead Cabal only has the barest inkling of what is to come and how to combat it. Dead Cabal agents are still gathering precious information while the Necrons gather their strength, in preparation to claim back a galaxy that they see as rightfully theirs.

## THE UNQUIET DEAD

For the time being, the Necrons are still largely hidden among the shadows of the Outer Reach, their existence known to the forces of the crusade only through ghost stories and phantom tales, which speak of haunted worlds and ancient ruins inhabited by the spectres of long dead kings and warriors. This is the veil of legends that the Dead Cabal must pierce, sifting through the rumour to find the resting places of the enemy on worlds scattered by time and space. Even members of the Deathwatch new to the Dead Stations are likely to have only heard of the Necron threat through story and speculation, though unlike the bulk of the Imperial forces in the Reach they are wont take such stories seriously, the Adeptus Astartes having carefully documented its encounters with the ancient aliens. Only when a Battle-Brother is introduced to the secrets of the Dark Pattern and the horrible secrets of the Reach are fully revealed to him will he understand the truth about these haunted worlds and the terrible danger their slumbering foes present.

## A TIME BEFORE TIME

The Necrons are truly ancient, even by the standards of a civilisation that has measured its rise in millennia. As grand a history as the Imperium possesses, with its centuries of expansion and war, it is but a fleeting moment in time compared to the history of the Necron dynasties. Only the Eldar, among the most ancient of the races still inhabiting the galaxy, can hope to comprehend the time from which the Necrons come. For the Necrons of the Jericho Reach, awakening to the clamour the Achilus Crusade, everything they see is young and brief. They are surrounded by races and worlds that can only measure their existence in centuries, or millennia at most. This, more than anything else, is what sets the Necrons apart from the Imperium's other foes, and draws the attention of the Deathwatch to

them. To the Deathwatch the Necrons come from another time, before the existence of the Imperium, bringing with them terrible ancient technology and a war that was raging when Terra was still young.

## SECRETS AND LIES

The Dead Cabal exists shrouded in a web of secrets and lies; hidden within the Deathwatch and the Inquisition from the forces of the Achilus Crusade, it undertakes missions that go unrecorded against enemies that do not officially exist. It is the will of the Ordo Xenos that the enemies of the Dead Cabal and the secrets of the Dark Pattern, as well as the true reason for the Deathwatch's long vigil in the Reach, remain hidden from the crusade. This is, in part, to quell the panic that might arise from the knowledge of an ancient and powerful foe lurking in the midst of the Imperial sector, while a greater portion is due to how little is yet known of the threat—the Inquisition is loath to share information, especially when it possesses only fragments. The Dead Cabal also serves as a buffer between the Necron threat and the rest of the Imperial forces in the Reach, limiting the exposure of the crusade by dealing with tomb worlds and incursions as they occur. It is feared that if the crusade were to encounter the Necrons in any significant force it might trigger a reaction from the aliens, drawing their focus onto humanity as their primary foe and stirring them to terrible life as they set about purging the Reach once and for all.

## AWFUL TRUTHS

There is enough horror within the Jericho Reach to drive the average Guardsman mad several times over, without adding the knowledge that a race of soulless automatons are about to awaken and flay his flesh from his bones. Even the Adeptus Astartes are not fully aware of the Necron threat stirring in the Reach, their focus remaining on the Tyranids, Tau, and heretics facing the crusade. For the time being this is how the Inquisition wants to keep it, limiting the knowledge of the threat and the places where it resides to protect the morale and resources of the crusade. The keeping of these secrets also allows the Inquisition and the Dead Cabal to move about more freely, even compared to the Deathwatch. Little mind is paid to small groups of Battle-Brothers dispatched to far flung worlds for reasons unknown when larger battles draw the attentions of Imperial commanders in their own sectors. Even within the Inquisition, those of the other Ordos know to leave the Dead Cabal alone, keeping their minds turned to their own secrets and problems.

## OATHS OF SILENCE

The secrets a Battle-Brother must keep when part of the Dead Cabal can weigh upon his mind and strain his oaths of loyalty and duty to his Chapter. Service in the Deathwatch is a great honour for a Space Marine and a badge that he wears with pride when he returns to his Chapter. Serving on the Dead Stations and under the commanders of the Dead Cabal does not bring with it the same glory, since tales of the perils a Battle-Brother will face may never be repeated, not even to



the Battle-Brothers of his own Chapter. This can strengthen the bonds of a Kill-team, creating a common link between Battle-Brothers from different Chapters, serving together with the Dead Cabal. However, it can also cause rifts between a Battle-Brother and his own Chapter. While a good soldier of the Imperium understands that there are things he was not meant to know, the bonds of a Space Marine and his Chapter are unlike anything else anywhere among the fighting forces of the Imperium. Though a Battle-Brother's Chapter will usually respect his oath of silence on matters concerning the Dead Cabal, the fracture in the Battle-Brother's bonds of trust with his peers will remain for all to see.

## BEYOND THE GRASP OF MAN

The outer reaches of the Jericho Reach have always been a celestial wilderness, stretching out through uncounted light years of void towards the eastern fringe and the emptiness between galaxies. Since the Age of Shadows and the fall of the sector this has become even more true, and as one travels farther from the Warp Gate and the Iron Collar, so too the trappings of civilisation vanish to be replaced with isolated worlds and dangerous celestial phenomena. These regions are rarely travelled by humanity, and even the Tau or the servants of the Dark Gods can claim only limited knowledge and control of these empty stretches of space. Tyranids are also a threat here, as they are in many regions of the eastern fringe, but away from the bulk of the hive fleets they are scattered. Encounters with them are often more the result of chance than any grand plan by the Great Devourer. Instead these wilds belong to the past, fallen empires and lost colonies, cut off for millennia from man or having never known the control of the Imperium. Among these are countless ruins, many from races long turned to dust and forgotten by time, leaving behind only fragments to tell explorers they ever existed at all. Hidden among this wilderness are pieces of the Dark Pattern, and the ancient enemy that links them altogether.

## LOST WORLDS

Only a handful of worlds within the Outer Reach are properly documented, notably those which were once part of the old Jericho Sector or those which are known strongholds for xenos and heretic forces. The truth is that these are but a fraction of the systems that litter the path towards the eastern fringe, many either overlooked by exploratory fleets or their existence swallowed up by the bureaucracy of the Administratum. Many have never been able to support life, little more than cold rocks drifting around dying stars, waypoints for travellers on long journeys or as bases for pirates and smugglers willing to brave the perils of the Outer Reach. Others once held life, until they were stripped clean by solar catastrophe, and burned or froze as their stars perished and their atmospheres boiled away. On these worlds the remnants of civilisations might still remain; ghostly shells of cities and hives crumbling in the cold vacuum or the petrified remains of forests and jungles now devoid of even the smallest life. Some hold life still; hidden among the solar rubble or isolated from stable Warp routes, these worlds have existed since before the coming of man to the Jericho Reach and have yet to know the touch of war or ruin.



## A SOLAR WILDERNESS

From the Black Reef to the Slinnar Drift, the Jericho Reach is a perilous place for void-farers, especially those who wish to brave the wild stretches of space beyond the established Warp routes and settled Imperial worlds. Just as the open void and the deep Warp hold dangers for a vessel, so too does the endless expanse of the Outer Reach become more perilous the deeper a ship delves into it. While there are many sectors just as deadly to ships as the Reach, it is the unknown that poses the greatest threat to a captain. Beyond the edges of the crusading forces' Warp routes, worlds and celestial phenomena are all poorly documented, and charts and maps are often centuries if not millennia out of date if they exist at all. Few captains return from the far Outer Reach, meaning that only the barest information trickles back to the Imperium about what lies out there. A ship that braves the Outer Reach can never be completely sure of what it will find. Worlds marked on maps might have moved or vanished altogether, while a stable Warp route might no longer be viable, forcing a captain to find an alternative path to his goal. Perhaps, it is another danger shrouding the region in mystery, restricting travel among its stars and keeping more cautious travellers away.



# DEAD CABAL MISSIONS

*"There is a darkness gathering in the galactic east, an ancient storm waiting to break which will overshadow everything that has come before."*

—Inquisitor Hoath, Canis Salient Ordo Xenos Mission

There are a variety of missions and adventures GMs can set within the Outer Reach, both against the Necron forces as they awaken and against the other horrors hidden among its lost worlds. Missions could include exploration and recon into deep tomb and dead cities, pushing back the veil of the unknown for the Dead Cabal, or trying to piece together fragments of the Dark Pattern for its Inquisitorial masters. Kill-teams serving the Dead Stations may be called upon to support Imperial forces, or even Adeptus Astartes Chapters, which run afoul of the Necrons and require specialists to deal with the unknown alien menace. Below are some examples of these kinds of missions, which focus on the Outer Reach and the worlds touched by the hand of the Necrons as well as dealings with other alien empires and powers opposing the return of the ancient dynasties to the Jericho Reach. The GM can use these mission overviews either as the jumping off point for a more detailed adventure or use some of the ideas and themes presented within them for his own unique adventures.

## SLAVES OF RHEELAS

*"It might have been madness on Lord Ebongrave's part that quarantined this cursed world, but having seen it for myself and knowing what lurks at the bottom of that ocean I'll be damned if he wasn't right."*

—Captain Loris, Drusian 54th Forward Regiment

The world of Rheelas lies within the Canis Salient, just beyond the edge of the Iron Collar and the Well of Night. A loyal Imperial mining world, its citizens rejoiced when the Achilus Crusade stormed into the Jericho Reach and welcomed them back into the Imperium. It was a short lived celebration, however, as even as the people of Rheelas renewed their oaths to the God-Emperor and prepared to support the Crusade with their manpower and resources, the shadow of suspicion and doubt fell upon them from the Salient commander Lord Ebongrave. Paranoid of Tau sympathisers and seditionists, he first sanctioned the planet and then declared it fully quarantined, blockading its space ports and closing off its system to all trade. It was such a sudden and absolute order that it even gave the Warmaster pause, though in the end Tetrarchus chose not to counter Ebongrave and to instead accept the commander's fervent belief that the Tau would use Rheelas as a second front against his forces.

For years, the world of Rheelas has languished under the blockade, sinking deeper and deeper into ruin and chaos. Its once great mining cities, seaborne hive-like structures (the

continents of Rheelas being far too unstable for permanent settlement), have begun to rust and rot with no market for the ores they once drilled from the sea floor. During much of this time Ebongrave gave no mind to the people of Rheelas, considering them traitors and xenos cultists of no concern, focusing instead on the expanding war with the Tau around the Black Reef. It was only when faced with reports of a full-blown uprising and the capture of several orbital installations that Ebongrave grudgingly diverted resources to deal with the world. In the ensuing rebellion, a number of Space Marine Chapters were also drawn into the fighting on Rheelas, though for different reasons. As it happened, the majority of the population was not involved in the rebellion, and it was merely part of a larger plan by the forces of Chaos to extend their front and sow discord behind the Imperial lines.

In the aftermath of the rebellion, several of the great seaborne hive cities were sunk, among them Hellsmark, a centre for the fighting. The news of the uprising and its outcome drew some attention from the Dead Cabal, as the world had always been of interest to them, rumours of ancient xenos scattered throughout its history. It was only when survivors of Hellsmark dived down to the sunken city to scavenge mining equipment that they discovered something unusual, something which drew the attention of the Dead Cabal. It appeared to the miners that when the city struck the sea floor it broke through into a series of underwater caverns and tunnels, the ruined sections of the city merging with the ruins and draining many of them dry for the first time in thousands of years. Those few miners who managed to return to the surface reported things sleeping in the caves, and machines like they have never seen before. Taking a personal interest, Ordo Xenos Inquisitor Hoath and his retinue went to Rheelas to investigate, the Inquisitor already in the region dealing with Tau seditionists.

This was only a few cycles ago, and Hoath's final message that he had descended to the city and discovered something troubling reached the Deathwatch and the Dead Cabal. Fearing that this discovery could be linked to the Necron threat, the Dead Cabal has dispatched a Kill-team to find Hoath and either deal with the threat or seal it off for good. This is the task given to the PCs: to reach Rheelas, cross the blockade and find the location of the sunken city. Then they must travel down to the sea floor kilometres below the surface and find the Inquisitor and just what it was he discovered, before attempting to contain or deal with it.





## PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

**Kill the Dead God:** The threat below Rheelas is not the Necrons, but the remains of a race destroyed by them. Millions of years ago when the world was threatened by the Suhbekhar Dynasty, its forgotten peoples tried to construct a great engine of war to combat the aliens. Aliens themselves, at least by the standards of the Imperium, they chose to emulate the Suhbekhar, and created a mechanical monster known as the Dead God. Tragically for them they never got a chance to use their weapon; they were exterminated before it was finished and the mechanism was left buried deep underground. The Dead God was gifted with a cold machine intelligence, and even with the demise of its masters it sought to finish its own construction. For millennia the automaton remained trapped, until the sinking of Hellsmark breached its ancient tomb. Now the creation has awoken and is harvesting the wealth of material provided by the sunken city to finish its own construction and to create thralls to face any threat to its homeworld. The Kill-team must deal with the Dead God, finding its lair in the depths of the sunken city (where it merges with the undersea tomb) and destroy it. They must also deal with the thralls it has been creating from the countless dead in the city, gross parodies of servitors constructed as only an alien mind could envision.

**Find Inquisitor Hoath:** The Kill-team should attempt to link up with Inquisitor Hoath and his team and help them fight their way to safety. As they descend through the city, from its broken spire down to its base (corridors and chambers tilted at alarming angles and partially flooded), they will find signs of the Inquisitor's passing and fights he has had with the thralls of the Dead God. The Inquisitor has also left notes regarding his findings on the Dead God and its relation to the Necron threat. Hoath has become trapped in the ancient sub-aquatic tomb, a cave-in flooding his exit and leaving him stranded on an island in the midst of a great underground ocean. To reach him, the Kill-team must find a craft (perhaps scavenging scrap from the city) and sail it across this undersea ocean. Along the way they are confronted by the minions of the Dead God, and even the ancient machine itself as it rises from the water only to slip away before the Battle-Brothers can fully engage it. If they can reach Hoath, he will have his own ideas about killing the Dead God and try to convince the Battle-Brothers they need to seal off the tomb.

## SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

**Raise the City from the Depths:** Hoath wants the Kill-team to try to raise Hellsmark, tearing it free of the tomb and flooding it once more. This is no small feat, and will require the completion of two significant tasks: the first is that water must be forced out of the core of the city, and the second is that the great suspensor array at the city's base must be reactivated. To force out the water the Kill-team will need to find the city's airlock control nexus, a sealed chamber in the central spire where the lords of the city would govern the great gates, keeping the city watertight. Then they must figure out which chambers to flood and which to drain, trying to move the water from the centre of the city out to the edges. This may mean moving survivors and also personally going to open or close doors that do not respond to remote commands. Once this task is complete, the Kill-team will need to go out onto the sea floor (either in their power armour or using

scavenged mining rigs) to repair the pylons of the suspensor array, removing those damaged during the sinking or fighting beforehand and replacing them. The Dead God is almost certain to send dead thralls after them while they work, striking from the black depths and triggering a perilous underwater combat in which ranged weapons are practically useless. If they can raise Hellsmark, it will be a bumpy ride back to the surface, pieces of the city breaking off as it rapidly ascends on its suspensor field. The Kill-team might also discover, unless they plan carefully, that the Dead God has come along for the ride...

## TERTIARY OBJECTIVES

**Free the Dead God's Slaves:** Unlike Imperial servitors, the thralls of the Dead God are not permanently lobotomised by the process that controls them, and though many are simply corpses animated by xenos technology, thousands are living Imperial citizens (the survivors of the sinking of Hellsmark), and still valuable to the Imperium. Hoath is interested in saving these citizens for his own reasons (interrogation and study) and tries to prompt the Kill-team to come up with some plan to rescue them from the depths and the control of the Dead God. This means checking if a thrall is alive before gunning it down and then finding a safe place within the city for the survivors to gather while the Kill-team takes care of the Dead God. Some freed thralls might also prove useful to the Kill-team, their knowledge of the Hellsmark and its still functioning systems useful in finding their way around or repairing the suspensor array to raise the city.

**Recover the Dead God's Relics:** In addition to killing the Dead God, the mission is a chance for the Kill-team to explore the ancient xenos tomb beneath the sea and recover artefacts for the Dead Cabal. This is a strange and alien place of twisted corridors and weird Warped design, all of which test the Battle-Brothers' sanity. It is also where the Dead God spent millennia trying to escape and discern its purpose, each passing century becoming more and more insane. In addition to the recent experiments on humans and servitors from Hellsmark, the Kill-team discovers thralls crafted from sea life; deep sea predators given limbs and claws so they might drag their fishy bodies across dry land or carry weapons. Not as efficient as the human thralls, these slaves of the Dead God are still dangerous and disturbing to behold. The tomb also tells tales of the alien empire of Rheelas that existed so long ago, and the unmistakable image of the Necrons descending from their skies.

## COMPLICATIONS

**Nest of Traitors:** Not all of the humans trapped in the sunken city are eager to see the Kill-team and desire rescue. There still remains a nest of Chaos cultists left over from the uprising. They are led by a single Alpha Legion Traitor Space Marine known as Anthrais the Unbloodied, left behind when the city sank and was cut off from the war above. Anthrais and his cult can potentially cause the Kill-team plenty of trouble, sabotaging their efforts to raise the city and "leading" thralls and the Dead God itself to their location. Not foolish enough to take on the whole Kill-team alone, Anthrais instead attempts to isolate or divide them, laying traps and trying to flood sections they enter. His goal is to use the Kill-team to defeat the Dead God and then take it for his own, bringing its alien technology back to his legion.



**Water, Water Everywhere:** Hellsmark rests under thousands of metres of water on the floor of one of Rheelas' vast oceans. Much of the city has been flooded and the rest is slowly giving way to the immense pressure of the sea. Wherever the Kill-team goes there is always a danger of water crashing down around them or doors buckling and giving way to a flood. In some places, they may also have to swim underwater to get to different sections, the freezing waters filling whole levels of the hive city. It should be apparent that eventually the sea will claim Hellsmark and the presence of the sea should never be far from the minds of the Kill-team as it drips, trickles and bubbles into the city from a million tiny leaks.

## OUTCOMES

The Dead Cabal would be quite interested in the recovery of the Dead God (alive or destroyed), or failing this, one of its thralls. If they cannot study the xenos machine then they will be content if it is sealed away beneath the ocean with no means of escape. If the Kill-team brings the Dead God to the surface and it is not under their control, then the whole of Rheelas is in danger as it tries to get to one of the other cities and convert its population to thralls. Given enough time, it could even turn the planet against the Imperium and try to break the blockade, prompting a massive armed response. If the Kill-team leaves the machine on the ocean floor, then it is forgotten once more, though rumours from the miners of Rheelas continue to tell tales of things in the depths and there will always be a chance it finds its way into the cold light of day...

## A RAIN OF TEARS

*"These blue-skinned fools have no idea what sleeps beneath the ash and dust of that dead world. I would happily lead them to their doom if it is their choice, only it will be the Imperium which pays the price for their folly."*

—Magos Ethoan, 17th Lathe Explorator Fleet

The Kill-team are diverted while on a mission by the Dead Cabal to assist Adeptus Mechanicus Magos Ethoan, an Explorator venturing into the far reaches of the Canis Salient. The Kill-team will be informed that Ethoan has recovered something of great importance from the ruins of Sagacity and was transporting it back to the Imperium when he was captured by Tau scouts of the Velk'Han Sept. The Tau are now holding him on one of their deep space waystations, presumably awaiting transport back to Tsua'Malor along with his cargo. The Dead Cabal are aware, at least in part, of the Necron presence on Sagacity and from what reports Ethoan sent before his capture, they believe he has recovered an intact Necron Ghost Ark. It is not known what the Tau know of the purpose of the Ghost Ark, nor what they know of Sagacity and Ethoan's work, but it is feared they might trigger some kind of event that will accelerate the awakening of the Necrons on Sagacity, especially if they force Ethoan to take them back to his dig site.

To complicate matters (and unknown to the Kill-team) the Conclave of Tears has been behind the scenes manipulating Ethoan's work, and this is the first stage in their plan to create an encounter between Tau forces and the Necrons on

Sagacity. It was the Eldar that led the Tau scouts to the dead world, and they also had a hand in Ethoan's discovery, subtly manipulating events around both races to create their desired outcome. The Eldar intend for the Ghost Ark to be activated while on the waystation, the ensuing chaos destroying or crippling the installation and prompting an armed response by the Tau and then leading them back to Sagacity. To this end the Eldar have an agent, a human researcher on Ethoan's team called Tusa, who they have been using to guide the Magos. Tusa is set to slip away from the Tau and activate the Ghost Ark, though the Eldar have also deployed a group of Pathfinders to sneak onto the station should the human fail. The Pathfinders are also there to slow the Tau response and give the Necron Ghost Ark time to animate its cargo, leading to a far larger confrontation.

What neither the Conclave of Tears nor the Tau are expecting is the intervention of the Kill-team, both sides unaware that the Dead Cabal was secretly monitoring Ethoan. When the Kill-team arrive at the waystation, they have the choice to either fight their way in, use stealth or attempt to negotiate with the Tau and warn them of the danger of the Ghost Ark. They can then either recover Ethoan and leave the Tau to their fate or try to recover or destroy the Ghost Ark. Ideally the Dead Cabal wants the Ghost Ark intact, and cares little for the fate of the Tau, though this might all change if the presence of the Eldar is discovered and the impact this might have on the Dark Pattern and the role within a much larger Necron awakening is brought to light.

## PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

**Destroy or Recover the Ghost Ark:** The Ghost Ark is housed in one of the waystation's primary cargo holds at the base of the structure, still locked in the vast frame Ethoan used to transport it. Just as the Kill-team arrive at the waystation Tusa slips away and try to activate the Ghost Ark using what she knows of its operation from Ethoan. This still takes her some time and if the Kill-team manages to negotiate their way onto the station and go straight to the Ghost Ark they might still stop her (forcing the Pathfinders to intervene to buy her more time). More likely she activates it before they get on board and it starts building Necron warriors. During this time, the Pathfinders hamper the Tau's armed response, sealing doors, spreading false alarms and leading troops away from the Ghost Ark. This all probably makes things easier for the Kill-team, though they in turn also make things easier for Tusa if they attack, causing further distractions. Shortly after it is activated, the Ghost Ark begins to attack the station and Necrons begin to assault out of the cargo bay. At this point the Kill-team might find themselves allying with the Tau (perhaps minutes after trying to kill them) to stop the threat. It is mayhem as Necrons fight Tau, Tau fight the Kill-team, and the Eldar agents try to aid the Necrons, until it becomes clear the waystation might fall. Even if the Kill-team defeats the Necrons and disables or destroys the Ghost Ark they still need to escape the Tau, though from their position in the Tau cargo bay they might be able to steal a ship or have their own strike craft blast its way in and pick them up.





## SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

**Rescue Magos Ethoan and his Research:** While getting to the Ghost Ark is the primary objective of the Kill-team, the Dead Cabal also favours attempts made to rescue Magos Ethoan. Unfortunately for the Kill-team the Magos is held at the tip of the station, dozens of levels away from the Ghost Ark and under heavy guard. While the Kill-team might be able to negotiate his release if they talk their way onto the station, it is more likely they will need to sneak or fight their way there and blast him free, possibly even splitting up their team to send some Battle-Brothers after the Ghost Ark and some after the Magos (to rendezvous later in the cargo hold). If the Kill-team storms his cell, the Tau might attempt to kill him rather than see him go free, and this could lead to a standoff in which the Tau guards hold Ethoan at gunpoint between them and the Kill-team, forcing the Battle-Brothers to talk/threaten their way out or accept that Ethoan might get “damaged.” Rescuing Ethoan will also help them uncover the involvement of the Eldar, as he will be instantly aware of the absence of Tusa and is clever enough to know where she might have gone.

**Deal with the Tau Threat:** The Dead Cabal does not care about the fate of the Tau and they can be considered background to the mission; another threat to be dealt with in its completion. However, there remains a danger if the Kill-team escape that the Tau might pass on information about the Ghost Ark, Sagacity, and the presence of the Necrons, all of which being subjects the Dead Cabal would prefer they remained unaware of, or at least unresponsive to. Therefore,

the only sure way to keep the Tau away from Sagacity is to kill them all. This means blowing up the waystation and ensuring there are no survivors. The Kill-team can achieve this either by sabotaging the station’s reactor or setting off the ordinance in its ion batteries, then hammering the remains from their strike cruiser. Of course this needs to take place at the same time they are defeating the Necrons and fighting their way free of the Tau.

## TERTIARY OBJECTIVES

**Uncover the Involvement of the Conclave of Tears:** The Dead Cabal would be very interested to uncover the involvement of the Conclave of Tears and learn of its interest in Sagacity. For this to happen the Kill-team needs to capture Tusa (either in the act of activating the Ghost Ark or with the aid of Ethoan) or capture a Pathfinder. If they are looking, they might discover the Eldar involvement (perhaps by listening in to Tau transmissions or interrogating the Tau to learn they are not the only attacking force). The Pathfinders are highly skilled and try to slip away using the Tau and Necrons as cover if engaged and, even if captured, will give up nothing to the Kill-team (though they may be taken back to one of the Dead Stations for proper questioning).

## COMPLICATIONS

**Tau Reinforcements:** If the Kill-team does not cut off the waystation’s communications, it calls for reinforcements. The communications array is at the top



of the station in a spire above the command deck and can be attacked from the outside or from below, though the single elevator platform is difficult to capture and then dangerous to ascend, with Fire Warriors shooting down from above. Unless the communications are destroyed within the hour, a Tau cruiser arrives, greatly reinforcing the garrison and making escape via the void much harder. The cruiser also brings with it a platoon of Battlesuited Tau, presenting a significant challenge for the Kill-team.

## OUTCOMES

If the Kill-team can escape with the Ghost Ark then the mission is considered a great success by the Dead Cabal, though it might still be a long road back to Imperial space with the potential of further Tau, or even Necron attacks (if the Necrons decide attempt to get their Ghost Ark back). Otherwise, the Dead Cabal settles for the destruction of the waystation and the Ghost Ark, keeping the secrets uncovered by Ethoan. If they fail, the Conclave of Tears may well have sparked its encounter between the Velk'Han Sept and Sagacity, which might have far-reaching implications for the region and the Deathwatch.

## OUTER REACH COMPLICATIONS

Complications are a way for the GM to alter the nature of a mission, potentially change its objectives and add further challenges for the PCs. They offer a chance for the GM to represent the fog of war, and to observe the general maxim that no plan survives contact with the enemy. They also force the PCs to think on their feet as the nature of their mission changes around them and they must adapt and survive if they are to be successful. More details on Complications and their uses can be found on page 231 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook.

Presented here are a selection of Outer Reach-specific complications, focused on the Necron threat and the presence of the Dark Pattern. These are the major perils of the Outer Reach, but there are also other dangers, such as ancient alien civilisations, celestial phenomena, and xenos pirates, all of which can be equally deadly for Kill-teams trekking across its dark solar wilderness. A GM should feel free to use **Table 1-4: Outer Reach Complications** as he sees fit, either adding its results to his own missions, adding them to any of the missions in this chapter, or simply taking elements from them to further develop his adventures.

TABLE 1-4: OUTER REACH COMPLICATIONS

1d5 Roll	Complications
1	Ancient Weapons
2	Creatures of the Deep
3	Scavengers and Pirates
4	Shallow Graves
5	A Tear in the Void

## ANCIENT WEAPONS

The War in Heaven left heavy scars on many worlds of the Outer Reach, leaving planets themselves shattered, broken, and cracked by weapons of unimaginable scale. Just as a battleground between two fleets leaves the debris of war spread out across millions of kilometres of space, so too are the remains of weapons and their ordinance left behind by the Necrons and their enemies. The Kill-team might encounter one of these weapons or its effect while on a mission, perhaps not even realising the danger they face is caused by intelligent hands (such as the gravity storms of the Black Reef or the unstable mantle of Rheelas). While these weapons are no longer active and their power faded, the GM can use their effects to alter the nature of a world or a system. Perhaps a stasis veil pulls their craft from the Warp or a replicating ordinance platform targets their lander, its automated systems tracking their movements and triggering a response. A crater holding an entire hive city might be the result of such a weapon, fragments of the shell which caused it still humming with potent toxic power under its foundations, or a world might dwell in eternal darkness after its sky was scorched by atmospheric incineration. In most cases, the Dead Cabal will be interested in anything recovered from such weapons, their artefacts revealing more about the Necron threat and the mysteries of the Dark Pattern.

## CREATURES OF THE DEEP

The Outer Reach is home to many solar and indigenous creatures of vast and terrible size, whether they glide through space or slumber in the ruins of ancient dead worlds. These gargantuan monsters are the results of millennia of isolation from the Imperium and civilised worlds, as well as the remains of the Necron's many wars of domination and the residual effects of their continued presence on countless worlds. Some of the creatures are documented (at least in part), such as the legendary Void Kraken, which feeds on ships, or Warp serpents which break through into realspace where the veil between the Warp and real space grows thin. Others are completely unknown, horrors only heard of in the tales of void-farers. The Kill-team finds their mission complicated by such a creature, as they trespass on its hunting ground or where it slumbers. They must deal with it, or sneak past it, to continue, lest it destroy their ship or vehicle or force them far out of their way to avoid its mindless rampage. Brave and glorious Battle-Brothers might even attempt to slay the beast, but this will be a mammoth task, requiring weapons of terrible power or a cunning plan to lure the creature to its death.

## SCAVENGERS AND PIRATES

Pirates and scavengers are common along the edges of Imperial space, and the Outer Reach is no exception. Among these rogue warbands are xenos corsairs, human renegades and even deserters from the Achilles Crusade, fleeing deeper into the Reach to avoid punishment and death. While individually these scavengers are no match for the might of a Deathwatch Kill-team, they can cause



the Battle-Brothers trouble. While the Kill-team focuses on its mission, the scavengers might try to capture their vessel (especially if it is an Imperial transport crewed only by Naval personal), or try to kill or capture their allies (such as local defence force troops, specialists, and envoys). Cowards and opportunists, the scavengers might also try to kill or trap the Kill-team by sealing them in ruins and settlements or stranding them on a world by destroying their orbital transport. Generally scavengers are motivated by greed, and they can be bribed. After all, they are probably only trying to complicate the Kill-team's mission because they want what they are after, or are looking for some wealth in the region. Depending on the GM and the planning of the PCs, scavengers can either be a small nuisance or a major problem.

### SHALLOW GRAVES

Bodies litter the Outer Reach from countless wars, consisting of millions of years of xenos civilisation and the many explorers who have vanished into its dark expanse. The Kill-team might come across one of these resting places during their mission, like a downed transport still filled with skeletal corpses or the place of a last stand between two alien races, the ground littered with xenos remains and strange weaponry. These can provide both opportunity and danger. It is possible that the grave site holds secrets or equipment that is of use to the Kill-team, especially if it is Imperial, helping them on their mission or giving them additional ordinance to use against their enemies. Equally, there may well be unexploded ordinance or guardians protecting the grave site, ancient

servitors, or even partially operational Necrons that awaken and attack upon the arrival of the PCs. The GM can also use this complication to create plot hooks for further adventures or for additional mission objectives as the Kill-team uncovers lost charts, fragmented logs, and alien artefacts from the corpses of the ancient dead.

### A TEAR IN THE VOID

Celestial phenomena litter the void throughout the Jericho Reach, but none more so than in the Outer Reach and the regions beyond and around the Slinnar Drift. While it is accepted that the closer a vessel comes to the edge of the galaxy and wilds of the eastern fringe the more it suffers anomalies and solar perils, there does indeed seem to be a cluster of such dangers along the edge of the Reach. The Kill-team has fallen afoul of such a phenomena, either becalming their ship in the Warp or forcing it back to the materium to avoid terrible Warp storms. The anomaly might not be in the Warp, but instead real space, and the Kill-team could find themselves facing the raging radiation of a pulsar (periodically cutting off vox transmissions and making travel outside dangerous when it flares), a sudden powerful gravity well (pulling their vessel off course or forcing them down on an unknown world), or a violent shower of debris hurtling through the void (downing void shields, damaging ships, or—if they are on the surface of a world—raining down with the force of an orbital strike). The Kill-team is unlikely to be able to do anything to halt the phenomena, but must instead weather it and complete their mission as best they can.








LOST WORLDS  
OF THE  
JERICHO REACH



- MYSTERIES OF THE  
OUTER REACH  
•  
THE BLACK REEF  
•  
THE SLINNAR  
DRIFT  
•  
THE JERICHO  
WARP GATE  
•  
THE CONCLAVE  
OF TEARS  
•  
THE LOST  
WORLDS







# CHAPTER II: LOST WORLDS OF THE JERICHO REACH

*"So many times I've heard the warning 'here be dragons' said about one region of the galaxy or another. When it comes to the Outer Reach however, it's true, all of it. There really are things sleeping out there in the void 'twixt the stars. Leave 'em slumbering friend, leave 'em slumbering..."*

—Rogue Trader Melkiario Grik, to the light cruiser *Dutiful Scion* before her disappearance coreward of the Slinnar Drift

The chapter that follows presents Game Masters with a comprehensive source of mysteries and adventure seeds with which to take their campaigns into the xenos-haunted Outer Reach. The chapter sets the scene for much of the other material in this book, serving as the setting for many of the investigations of the Dead Cabal, as well as the hunting grounds stalked by the adversaries presented later on. Game Masters will find sufficient detail to set the tone for a campaign involving these elements, and to make use of them is to run a very different campaign than to which the players have become accustomed. While the three main salients of the Jericho Reach are boiling cauldrons of total war, the region beyond it—the Outer Reach—is very different. A Kill-team that breaks through the raging battlefields of the Jericho Reach and plunges into the Outer Reach finds a region haunted by silent death and unspeakable doom. The worlds of the Outer Reach are stalked by xenos hunters, and beneath many rest slumbering horrors from long before the rise of humanity.

Kill-teams that have become proficient in fighting the Traitor Legions and their mortal—or Daemonic—allies, the collectivist Tau or the ravaging Tyranids can expect far less predictable foes in the depths of the Outer Reach. Instead of crater-pocked battlefields or ruin-strewn cityscapes, the Kill-team might pass through silent tombs as old as creation, or fight on worlds created by the hand of long extinct xenos empires. Nothing can be taken for granted in the cold, silent depths of the Outer Reach, except perhaps for the fact that should the Kill-team encounter a foe they cannot defeat, help is very, very far away indeed.

## DEATHWATCH EYES ONLY

The chapter rounds off with a number of documents that Game Masters can use to seed numerous mysteries into their campaigns. Players should always be kept guessing as to exactly what is going on behind the scenes, and so allowing them access to such documents encourages them to make all manner of guesses. Occasionally, the players might reach an entirely unexpected conclusion if they have been allowed to read one of these documents, and shrewd Game Masters can use such speculation to further enrich their campaigns.

## INTO THE OUTER REACH

The first part of this chapter presents a broad overview of the mysteries of the Outer Reach, paying particular attention to the Slinnar Drift, the Black Reef, and the Jericho-Maw Warp Gate. These locations have already been introduced in the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook, and expanded upon in the **ACHILUS ASSAULT** supplement. Game Masters will find the information presented in this book ideal for use in campaigns that focus on unconventional battles in a region steeped in mystery and doom, and it introduces numerous elements that imaginative GMs can seed into the ongoing narrative of their campaigns.

## WORLDS OF MYSTERY

The second part of the chapter delves into greater depth by describing a number of specific planets of the Outer Reach. Each can be used as the setting for any number of Deathwatch missions, and numerous adventure seeds are included to provide GMs with ample fodder for their creativity.

## MYSTERIES OF THE OUTER REACH

*"Operations that far out are fraught with peril. Physical peril most certainly, but we are Adeptus Astartes and pain means nothing to us. The real peril is to our souls. Therefore, we arm our spirits as we arm our bodies, and none may stand before us."*

—Chaplain Xeres of the Minotaurs Chapter

The Outer Reach is a vast crescent of largely unexplored void lying beyond the borders of the old Jericho Sector, stretching from the worlds beyond the tip of the Orpheus Salient all the way down to the Black Reef. Even during the long-forgotten heyday of the sector, the spinward wastes were shunned and the subject of numerous superstitious tales and legends. When the Age of Shadows fell and the sector was plunged into isolation and despair, the Outer Reach was largely forgotten, though the legends refused to die entirely. Millennia later, the superstitions have grown and mutated out of all recognition. If they could ever have been said to bear any relation to the truth, they certainly do not now.

Long ago, voidfarers warned that the lambent depths of the Slinnar Drift were haunted by the restless ghosts of long dead xenos species. Millennia later, the Drift is said to be the domain of aliens somehow brought back from their own extinction. Once, it is rumoured, a species of inscrutable reptilians skulked amongst the outlying systems, yet millennia later they are said to have suffered some hideous death at the hands of other, still more terrible xenos foes. Some claim that entire empires have risen and fallen out beyond the borders of the old sector between the fall of the Age of Shadows and the



## USING THE OUTER REACH IN ROGUE TRADER

Experienced Game Masters and players of the **Rogue Trader** roleplaying game might like to consider using the Outer Reach as a setting for their campaign. The region is distinctly different from the setting of that game—the Koronus Expanse—and affords an opportunity to engage in a very different type of adventure. While the Koronus Expanse represents an uncharted region strewn with opportunity and fought over by numerous Rogue Traders and others, the Outer Reach is a very different. It is a cosmic tomb haunted by mysteries far older than humanity itself and guarded by sentinels of the direst sort. Much of the Jericho Reach is a raging warzone, presenting Explorers with the opportunity to engage in Endeavours centred around that theme, though with open warfare raging all about, such undertakings should be perilous indeed. In contrast, the Outer Reach is a region where little more than death awaits, though ambitious Explorers nonetheless seek their fortune amongst its slumbering stars.

Should Game Masters and Players of **ROGUE TRADER** wish to use this setting, there are numerous options available to them. Perhaps they have become embroiled in the Cold Trade and, having followed the trail of a particular opportunity, ended up voyaging through the Warp Gate and into the Jericho Reach. In this case the group should be well prepared to attract the attentions of numerous enemies of mankind, from the Traitor Legions to the bio-vessels of Hive Fleet Dagon, both foes the Explorers are unlikely to have encountered before. Only once they have faced the worst that the enemies of the Achilus Crusade can throw at them should the Explorers be allowed to plunge into the Outer Reach in search of their objective. Once there, the Explorers have the opportunity to travel to worlds not trod by man in millennia and face enemies that have slumbered since the dawn of time.

Perhaps the greatest threat the Explorers might face in the Outer Reach, however, is the Deathwatch. What better adversary for a group of high level **ROGUE TRADER** characters than a Deathwatch Kill-team intent upon ensuring that the hidden mysteries of the Outer Reach remain that way?

coming of the Achilus Crusade. There are tales of black-hulled and silent star ships able to slip through the most violent of Warp storms, yet not pausing to deliver the lost worlds of the Jericho Reach from the miseries of the Age of Shadows. Numerous myths speak of long dead kings waiting to return, of wizards older than time itself casting spells of cosmic horror across the vast gulfs of space. They talk of the curse of aeons, of dreams that echo across vast gulfs of time and space, of mirthless laughter audible at the very edge of hearing in the instant just before a vessel plunges into the depths of the Warp. Madmen rant of the stars expending an entire lifetime's energy in the blink of an eye, and in so doing, bringing cleansing oblivion to the Jericho Reach and all of its worlds. Starships lost in other regions of the galaxy have mysteriously appeared amidst the haunted stars of the Outer Reach, while at least one lost in its depths has reappeared on the other side of the galaxy. Furthermore, history states that the Jericho Reach is the home of the famous Haarlock Dynasty of Rogue Traders, a line that earned its Warrant of Trade during the long distant Reign of Blood and whose intrepid son Mordecai opened up the Calyx Expanse. For long millennia it was held that the Haarlocks voyaged across the length of the galaxy to reach the region that would one day be known as the Calixis Sector, but the discovery of the Jericho-Maw Warp Gate offers other, disturbing possibilities.

These and countless other tales are told of the Outer Reach.

Quite apart from the rants of Warp-touched voiders and the scratched writings of half-mad seers, the Outer Reach is host to numerous other mysteries. None can say, for example, why there is not a single life-sustaining world within the Slinnar Drift, or what bizarre process

led to the creation of the gravity-twisting Black Reef. Nor is it known what lies beyond the Outer Reach, for that region of unknowable emptiness is now the feeding ground of the all-consuming tendrils of Hive Fleet Dagon. If any worlds did exist beyond the Outer Reach, whether they harboured lost human colonies or autochthonic xenos cultures, they have almost certainly been reduced to barren, lifeless rocks by the passing of the Great Devourer. Nonetheless, such cosmic graves are ever an allurements to cosmic grave robbers, and there are those who would seek them out and plunder their secrets no matter the danger.

Of those who travel into the Outer Reach, few do so with the blessings of the High Lords of Terra or their duly appointed officers. Most are outcasts or heretics, those of the Jericho Reach who refuse to bow down to the returned Imperium yet who value their own hides too much to stand and fight. The Outer Reach is the haunt of brutal slavers, whether human, mutant, or xenos. Its depths are prowled by every manner of pirate and predator, ever ready to strike at those weaker than themselves. Its darkest corners are host to people and things that shun the light, for whom the Imperium is a distant irrelevance to whatever reality they occupy.

Some, however, ply the empty void with the Emperor's blessing, for when the Achilus Crusade was launched to reclaim the Jericho Reach a number of Rogue Trader Dynasties threw in their lot with the crusaders in the hope of plundering its riches. Most found only death or disappointment, for unlike regions such as the Koronus Expanse, the Jericho Reach is not some vast land of plenty waiting to be claimed by those with the courage to overcome its perils. Rather, those systems that once



## LITANY OF THE LOST

**006.M38:** An anomalous energy spike is detected on the spinward verges of the Slinnar Drift and a Deathwatch Kill-team is dispatched from Watch Fortress Erioch aboard the *Luminent Martyr* to investigate. The Kill-team is not heard from again, and the *Martyr* is found drifting dead in space almost a century later. No hint as to the Kill-team's fate is discovered, but over the centuries the archives given up by the periodic opening of the Omega Vault would make obscure references to the vessel's name, suggesting the mystery is far from cold.

**274.M38:** The Omega Vault opens and renders up a data-crystal of impossibly archaic pattern that can only be read by the most ancient of the Deathwatch's machine systems. On the crystal the Deathwatch finds nothing more than a set of astrographic coordinates. Upon investigation, the coordinates are determined to represent nothing more than an unhallowed tract of interstellar void spinward of Jove's Descent. The investigation vessel remains on station for ten days before setting out to return, but an instant before it plunges into the Warp, the ship's astropath suffers a terminal seizure, his last words a shrieked warning that mankind must never set foot in that reach of space again.

**735.M38:** On a dusty, lifeless world orbiting a nameless and dying star spinward of Polyphemnos, a Deathwatch Kill-team pursuing a murderous alpha-grade rogue psyker corners its foe in the ruins of a long dead alien city. At the climax of the mission, the witch attempts to awaken what he believes to be slumbering gods, only to be torn apart by a mass of writhing tentacles, each tipped with a slaving maw, that rises from the catacombs below. The Kill-team is forced to make a fighting withdrawal as more of the obscene appendages rise up from rapidly widening cracks in the ground. Upon making it back to their orbiting vessel the Kill-team expends its entire arsenal of ship-to-surface ordnance, though whether or not the bombardment was sufficient to destroy the lurking menace is unknown.

**769.M40:** The Deathwatch rapid strike cruiser *Scion of Lemuria* is engaged by an unknown foe whilst traversing the void spinward of the Wicked Sisters. Massively outnumbered and ravaged by energy weapons able to cut through the *Scion's* shields as if they were not there, the vessel is soon reduced to a burning wreck. For long centuries the *Scion of Lemuria's* fate is unknown and the deaths of the Battle-Brothers commanding her unrecorded, until a weak signal is discovered by an Explorator vessel surveying the outer rim of the Processional of the Damned in the distant Koronus Expanse. A Kill-team is dispatched through the Jericho-Maw Warp Gate, and the source of the signal determined to be the machine spirit of the *Scion of Lemuria*, transmitting from somewhere deep inside the vast cosmic graveyard of wrecks that makes up the Processional. To date, the wreck has not been located nor the *Scion of Lemuria* recovered, for more pressing concerns have diverted the Deathwatch's efforts.

**779.M41:** In the early days of the Achilus Crusade, several bold explorers attempt to penetrate the secrets of the Black Reef. One is a Rogue Trader and notorious braggart by the name of Khangus Gor, a man whose dynasty had conquered vast swathes of space on the southern galactic rim. Gor leads a mighty armada of his dynasty's most prized warships into the churning energies of the Reef, only for the entire fleet to be crushed in an instant as an unprecedented gravity front breaks upon it. Gor's last hours are captured in horrific detail as his vessel's bridge auto-picters remain active and transmitting throughout the whole event.

**789.M41:** A decade after the doom of the Gor Dynasty, a group of lesser Dynasties band together to attempt to recover the wrecks of the lost fleet. In an uncanny repetition of the gravity wave front that crushed Gor's ambitions, the scavengers suffer an identical fate and another score of Dynasties are made extinct in the blink of an eye.

**816.M41:** The intrepid Rogue Trader Telas Zai voyages to the Black Heart of the Reef, and returns to tell the tale. Lord Ebongrave orders preparations to be made for a second expedition, drawing units from the Imperial Navy, Imperial Guard and Adeptus Astartes. Many of Ebongrave's chiefs of staff harbour concerns but dare not voice them lest they suffer their commander's infamous wrath.

**816.M41:** An opportunistic and all but destitute Rogue Trader by the name of Stankher Mull attempts to trace the passage of Telas Zai through the raging gravitational storms of the Black Reef. While he fails to locate the Black Heart, Mull does encounter a Tau battle group scouting a route through the Reef towards the flanks of the Greyhell Front. Mull's astropath transmits a warning to Fort Wrath, which the Deathwatch intercept and act upon with speed to destroy the Tau encroachment.

**817.M41:** Plans for Zai's return to the Black Heart enter their final stages.

formed the core of the old Jericho Sector are now seething cauldrons of war, while those of the Outer Reach are either empty, the abode of ghosts, or have been devoured by the ravenous Tyranids. Compared to the Koronus Expanse and other such regions beyond the borders of the Imperium, the Outer Reach is a cold, lifeless place where most find nothing more than a lonely death. Astropaths that accompany Rogue Traders and other such explorers in their voyages into the outer darkness commonly describe regions like the Koronus Expanse as echoing with the thoughts and emotions of long dead, unknowable xenos

minds. The Outer Reach, so they claim, is empty, silent, and devoid of even a trace of such things. They describe travelling there as akin to intruding in a vast mausoleum, yet one where the silent dead are not dead at all, but suspended in an unnatural state between life and death. Because of this and the proximity of the wars raging on all three salients of the Achilus Crusade, few explorers dare enter the Outer Reach, and most who do so vanish into the whispers of legend without a trace.





## THE BLACK REEF

*"The stars are in the wrong place... they're wrong, don't you see?  
How could this be? What could possibly do this..."*

—Last recorded transmission from the destroyer *Ruchikarun*  
before she was lost to the Black Reef

Of the numerous mysteries within the Outer Reach, the Black Reef is in many ways the most inexplicable. In some regards, it is simpler to state what the Black Reef is not than what it actually is, for beyond its observable gravitational effects, it defies all rational explanation. Of course, the galaxy of the 41st Millennium is riven with numerous stellar phenomena that are the result of entirely unnatural processes, the Hadex Anomaly in the Jericho Reach itself being an example. But even these exist within a known context, albeit a highly esoteric one into which only the most learned of savants delve. In the case of the Black Reef, there is not even a consensus on whether the phenomenon is a natural one, something spawned of the Warp, the result of forbidden science, or something else entirely. The Adeptus Mechanicus have studied the Black Reef, within the limitations imposed by the war against the Tau in its vicinity, in detail, and numerous competing theories as to its nature and origins have been put forth. Many state a belief that the Black Reef must be a natural phenomenon, with possibilities ranging from a highly localised vacuum instability flux to it representing some remnant of exotic matter predating the creation of the very universe itself. So turbulent have some of

these debates become that several different factions have emerged within the followers of the Ommissiah of the Achilus Crusade and some have warned that a full scale schism is imminent. Most of the conflict revolves around the issue of how far into the matter the Tech-Priests should pry. The more reactionary elements call for a total interdiction of the region, while more radically minded adherents of the Cult Mechanicus are openly calling for more detailed study of the Black Reef. Such Tech-Priests hold that the Black Reef contains secrets that Mankind should possess, and warn that should the Tau be allowed to hold on to the region, the collectivist xenos would gain a weapon that could turn the war against the Imperium beyond all hope of recovery.

The matter of the nature of the Black Reef has recently been thrown into further upheaval by the return of the Rogue Trader Telas Kai from the region. So many vessels have been crushed or torn apart by the raging gravitational tides of the Black Reef that only a madman would attempt to enter it, yet Kai appears to have done so, and returned to tell the tale. What Telas Kai claims to have witnessed in a region of the Black Reef he has dubbed the "Black Heart" has only deepened the schism within the Adeptus Mechanicus of the Achilus Crusade. The Rogue Trader states that, at the very centre of the Black Reef, he bore witness to a vast, black orb, about which orbits a system of worlds torn from all over the galaxy. Upon each, so he claims, is a tribe of primitive reptilian aliens he called the Syrshin. These aliens, so he related, stand eternal vigil against the return of some terrible foe, though they fight bitter wars against their own kin as well.

Upon his return to the Iron Collar, the Rogue Trader sought





## THE RISE OF THE ANTIQUARTI

The Jericho Reach is host to numerous secrets and mysteries, and wherever such things exist there are always men and women who would seek to uncover them. One group—the Dead Cabal—is discussed in detail in **Chapter 1**, but there are other players working in the shadows. One of these is the Antiquarti, a group of Inquisitors and their servants and allies broadly co-aligned with the mysterious Inquisitor Thaddeus Hakk. This individual is an outcast of the Ordos Calixis and an erstwhile courtier of the Ocularians, a Radical faction of the Inquisition outlawed on pain of death. Hakk has scoured the Koronus Expanse in search of some unknown fate, and it is said that he and the other Antiquarti seek to unravel the secrets of the past in the belief that in doing so they will gain prescience of future events. Far from a philosophical matter of learning from past mistakes, the Antiquarti hold that the universe is governed by an underlying pattern, and all that transpires must adhere to this unseen scheme. Inquisitor Hakk and his peers are reported to have delved into the very darkest places of the Jericho Reach, and because many of them bear the Inquisitorial Seal, they have often done so alongside the Deathwatch and other forces of the Imperium. However, it appears that there are certain missions and certain places that the Antiquarti prefer to undertake alone, lest others denounce them as heretics, or worse.

Whatever secrets Inquisitor Hakk and his allies might be seeking in the depths of the Outer Reach, it is clear that he has earned the enmity of a number of other factions in the process. There is no shortage of Inquisitors of the Ordos Calixis ready to denounce him, though to date he has somehow managed to fend off the overt censure of his peers. Perhaps far more dangerous even than the enmity of other Inquisitors is the fact that the Antiquarti have made an enemy in the form of the Eldar Harlequins. These utterly lethal alien war dancers only rarely become involved in the affairs of mankind, but when they do it is almost never for the benefit of anyone but the Eldar. That the Antiquarti have earned such a foe suggests they have delved deep indeed into places barred to mortals since the dawn of creation itself. Such intrusions bring Inquisitor Hakk and his Antiquarti compatriots into conflict with other factions, not least of which is the Dead Cabal.

and was granted an audience with Lord Ebongrave. While the tales of alien savages haunting worlds scattered with ancient ruins was of interest to a few of his staff, it was the description of what lay at the heart of the system that piqued the interest of the Lord Militant. Kai's Explorator companions, all of them esteemed adepts of the Cult Mechanicus, swore the dark star was some form of artificially wrought device, one of them referring to it as a "singularity engine." Though the techno-arcane phrase meant nothing to Ebongrave, several of his Tech-Priest advisers expressed their astonishment at such a thing. Blessed with access to the most obscure of writings, this cadre of Tech-Priests knew that should such a device be real, it would surely harbour the power to move the stars themselves. Informed of this, Ebongrave bid Telas Kai to assemble a second expedition, and to return to the heart of the Black Reef.

## SCHISM AND AMBITION

In the aftermath of Telas Kai's revelations to Lord Ebongrave, the Adeptus Mechanicus of the Jericho Reach was riven with debate, which soon escalated to discord, and then to open conflict. While Ebongrave dreamed of the awesome power that might be his should this supposed singularity engine be somehow harnessed, the ranks of the crusade's Adeptus Mechanicus corps were split asunder. Many declared that if the object at the heart of the Black Reef was indeed what Telas Kai claimed it to be, it must be quarantined lest a calamity of cosmic proportions engulf the region. It was not just hubris, they warned, but anathema to the will of the Machine God. Such a device could only have been created by the hand of the xenos and was therefore inherently flawed.

Knowledge of Telas Kai's discovery and subsequent audience with Lord Ebongrave is limited to a few privileged factions within the crusade's high command structure, yet already others have learned something of it. Many amongst the Adeptus Mechanicus are blessed with machine systems that link them to others similarly equipped, enabling the

sharing of knowledge across entire worlds in the blink of an eye, but also making it almost impossible to keep a secret. The highest echelons of the Imperial Navy and the Imperial Guard, as well as several notable Space Marines Chapters, are involved in the planning and assembling of a force that, when fully mustered, will be tasked with entering the Black Reef alongside Kai's fleet. Many Inquisitors are, of course, fully aware of the plans, and no secret can be withheld from the omniscient Deathwatch. Numerous theories as to the nature of the object at the heart of the Black Reef have been proposed, while just as many voices have denounced Kai entirely.

One theory as to the nature of the object suggests it is a vast concentration of antimatter; some heretics even claim it could be something they deem "dark antimatter," and that it is contained by the gravitational forces that rage all about by the action of some unknown force. For this to be true, the entire Black Reef would have to be a deliberately created phenomenon, an assertion for which there is no known evidence. The notion that the object consists of antimatter is nothing more than rampant speculation, but there are those that find such a prospect alluring to say the least. The energetic potential in such a vast reserve would make it a staggeringly effective weapon. One Tech-Priest by the name of Magos Gholenkev has suggested the object could be detonated as a weapon of last resort, his "singularity bomb" touching off such energies as would destroy vast swathes of the Jericho Reach and make even a hypernova appear entirely insignificant.

Others are convinced that the object must be the work of the Ruinous Powers, and while there is no specific evidence to support this theory, it certainly cannot be discounted. Those versed in the works of the Chaos Gods harbour a suspicion that, even if the object is not the direct work of the great enemy of mankind, the touch of Chaos must surely be upon it. If it is a weapon, then it





is certain that the servants of Chaos desire it at least as much as the servants of the Emperor, or else they might use it as a trap to ensnare Imperial forces. Some amongst this faction believe the whole episode to be a grand lie intended to draw the attention and resources of the Lord Militant away from other warzones, and indeed, this is already happening. If the Rogue Trader cannot find a return passage back to the Black Heart, then he and all the forces accompanying him might become not just lost, but cast adrift within the gravitational cauldron of the Black Reef. In a crushing instant, a single lie might achieve what entire armies could not.

One last theory has surfaced of late, based in part on mad conjecture and in part on solid observation. The exact source of the theory remains unknown, though some think it likely to have originated amongst various allies or agents of the Holy Ordos operating in the Jericho Reach. This theory suggests that the gravitational flux of the Black Reef is exerting a profound tidal influence on star systems across the entire Jericho Reach and in particular in the Outer Reach. The procession of certain star systems appears to have been altered by the effects of the Black Reef, and certain long-foreseen alignments thrown off kilter. What configuration of stars the effects are forestalling, and whether or not it relates to the work of the group known as the Dead Cabal, is a matter of grave concern amongst certain well-hidden organizations.

# THE SLINNAR DRIFT

*"There are things that should exist, yet exist not, and there are things that should not exist, yet exist they do. The Slinnar Drift is host to both phenomena, and I would sooner lobotomise myself with an oxidised utility mechadentrite than tread the surface of a single world within it."*

—Arch Magus Lhusus Rek of Lathe Hesh

The single largest stellar object within the region broadly classified as the Outer Reach, the Slinnar Drift is a vast molecular cloud sown with countless protostars and seemingly devoid of any life-sustaining worlds. The drift is unusual for several reasons, and whether or not each of these is connected is a subject of some debate within the Adeptus Mechanicus of the Jericho Reach. Very few attempts have been made by the servants of the Machine God to investigate these mysteries further, for their resources are already stretched to the breaking point by the wars of the crusade's three salients. In addition, the Slinnar Drift lies a great distance beyond the front lines. To reach it, an Explorator Fleet would have to pass through regions boiling with corruption and under the control of numerous Chaos warlords, as well as risk attack by the queering tendrils of Hive Fleet Dagon closing on the Outer Reach.

## THE STILLBORN STARS

The first anomaly of the Slinnar Drift is that its numerous protostars appear to have existed in their current state for an unprecedented length of time. According to those magi steeped in knowledge of the unseen forces at work in the universe, the protostellar stage of a star's life should not last longer than a few hundred thousand years, yet those of the Slinnar Drift appear to be millions of years old. According to the forbidden texts, it is simply not possible for a star to exist in such a state before it collapses in upon itself or enters the next phase of its existence. According to the magi, the protostars of the Slinnar Drift should by now have become main sequence stars. To compound the mystery further, the cluster appears almost devoid of stellar winds, whereas the most learned of magi claim it should be a raging torrent of highly volatile forces. Nevertheless, it remains serenely, some say disturbingly, calm.

## TREASURES OF THE DEAD

Around each of the numerous protostars of the Slinnar Drift orbits a system of planets, asteroid fields, and other bodies, each of which represents a staggering reserve of natural resources. Ancient records from the time of the old Jericho Sector, rediscovered when the Achilus Crusade was launched, made reference to the stunning natural wealth to be found within the Drift. Needless to say, it was this fact that sold the endeavour to many of the Rogue Trader Dynasties that threw in their lot with the Imperium's forces. Several Rogue Traders were subsequently denounced for the undue haste with which they discharged their obligations to the Crusade before heading off into the Outer Reach to reap their reward and lay claim to as many of its worlds as they could. Of





these Rogue Traders, only a fraction are known to have returned, some unknown doom having befallen them on route to, or perhaps within the Slinnar Drift. Those Rogue Trader and Explorator vessels that did return confirmed the ancient surveys, reporting a vast realm of untapped mineral and metal riches just waiting to be exploited.

Upon closer examination of these explorers' preliminary and necessarily cursory surveys, the highest ranked magi of the Jericho Reach Adeptus Mechanicus noted an anomalous pattern in the distribution of those worlds bearing desirable resources. Instead of harbouring a range of resources, it has been noted that almost all of the worlds orbiting the protostars of the Slinnar Drift are host to one above all others. It is almost as if each world has been reserved for the production or storage of a given element, though no evidence of this being a deliberate process has been found. Some liken voyaging through the region to passing through a vast repository of grave goods, as if a god and all of his people have been entombed there and the resources of an entire cluster have been put into storage to aid him on his onward journey when he awakens. Ancient texts suggest that the very oldest of human cultures held such a belief, packing stone tombs with all of the resources the dead would need to complete their journey through the underworld to their eventual destination. Perhaps, so some whisper, the entire Slinnar Drift is some vast repository of a similar type, a theory that raises disturbing questions about the intended uses—and recipients—of these massive stores of grave goods.



## THE HAARLOCKS AND THE SLINNAR DRIFT

At the height of the Reign of Blood, during which the hated, mad Lord Vandire subjected the entire Imperium to a brutal and insane age of subjugation, the Free Captain Mordecai Haarlock of the Jericho Sector earned his Warrant of Trade by aiding the fight of Vandire's opponents in the region. It is said that Captain Haarlock's band of insurgents operated out of a base somewhere deep within the Slinnar Drift, and that the lost stronghold might still exist somewhere amongst the Stillborn Stars. Given the glories and the damnation the Haarlocks went on to earn, there are many who would plunder whatever treasures they might have secreted within the Drift. Equally, there are those who would kill to ensure those dubious treasures remain untouched, for the good of all mankind.

## THE SILENT ROAD

The Slinnar Drift is crossed by numerous stable Warp routes, making Warp travel through its lambent depths surprisingly straightforward. This in itself is yet another of the region's many great mysteries, and one that has concerned the Great Navigator Houses for millennia. While few Navigators have guided their vessels along the so-called Silent Road since the launching of the Achilles Crusade, those who have describe it as a region quite unlike any other they have travelled. Where on most Warp routes a vessel is buffeted by cyclones of raw hatred or drawn off course by riptides of lust, those that pass through the Slinnar Drift are eerily silent. Of the few Navigators who have passed along the Silent Road, most have reported a region almost devoid of the usual perils, yet soul-achingly threatening in entirely different ways. They claim the Warp routes of the Silent Road echo weirdly with the thoughts of intruders and are imbued with a weight of antiquity and doom quite beyond their experience.

Apart from being preternaturally calm, the Warp routes of the Silent Road are also strangely regular. Instead of winding their way through the Warp, the Silent Road appears carved from the roiling molecular clouds of the Drift, as if it were a processional way awaiting some vast, glorious army to pass along its length on its way to unimaginable victories and conquests.

While the Silent Road might be devoid of the usual risks inherent in any voyage through the Warp, this is more than made up for by the preponderance of another. The risk of a vessel finding itself becalmed is exponentially greater along the Silent Road than it is in any other region in the Jericho Reach. What fate befalls those vessels that become stranded in the glowing depths of the Silent Road remains unknown, for beyond initial astrotelepathic distress calls, no trace of them has ever been recovered. It is known that at least three Rogue Trader cruisers have been lost along the Silent Road, as has an Adeptus Mechanicus Explorator barque. It is likely that countless more unregistered or outcast vessels have also been lost too, though nothing is left to mark their passing. In each case where a deep-range rescue attempt has been made, the investigators have found only empty space and the echoes of the lost vessel's astrotelepathic distress pleas resounding plaintively along the length of the Silent Road.





## SEDU

Of all of the countless worlds within the Slinnar Drift, one is known to host life. This is Sedu, a barren dust pit of a planet lying at the very edge of the Drift. Those Navigators who have travelled the near reaches of the Silent Road claim that Sedu occupies an important astrographics nodal point along its route and that it is located at the very juncture of equal and opposing forces. The Warp leading to Sedu is subject to the usual, albeit unpredictable, perils, while beyond it, the otherworldly quietude of the Silent Road prevails. Some claim that Sedu must therefore represent some as-yet unused gateway, while others liken it to a victory arch of old, the likes of which ancient armies would pass on their return from conquering some far land. Prior to the fall of the Age of Shadows, Sedu was a frontier world of the old Jericho Sector, the base for prospectors and void miners working the fringes of the Slinnar Drift. When isolation and stagnation befell each world of the sector, Sedu suffered some doom not recorded by the galaxy at large. When leading elements of the Achilus Crusade attempted to make contact with its people, they found a world that appeared to have undergone a drastic transformation. One savant seconded from the Ordo Xenos claimed that Sedu had been sucked dry by something that had awakened deep within the Slinnar Drift, like a living sacrifice made to some slumbering outer god, or a paralysed prey creature left near an egg by a mother that knew it would not be alive to see its offspring hatch. Those forces despatched to investigate found only scattered tribes of feral Orks and the occasional band of devolved mutants wandering the deep wastes. Needless to say, Sedu is of little interest to the Achilus Crusade, in an official capacity at least.

In an unofficial manner, Sedu is very important indeed. As the only life-sustaining world within the Slinnar Drift, it serves as a jumping off point for those heading into its lambent depths. While the Imperium believes the place to be unoccupied by humans, this is far from the case. All manner of recidivists, outcasts and xenophiles call Sedu their home, for a time at least, the world serving as neutral ground to a number of equally reviled factions. A number of very well hidden settlements have sprung up of late, while a number have probably existed since the Age of Shadows, each of them host to a wide range of underworld scum. Cold Traders are known to ply their wares in subterranean markets, prospective purchasers of xenos-crafted weapons and objects des arts clamouring to bid for items that would see them burned on the pry for owning on any world in the Imperium. Slaves of all races are driven to concealed flesh-markets, paraded before those who would purchase men and aliens for a range of uses, many of them cruel or violent. Very few of those who attend such events acknowledge the Throne of Terra, and it is said that all manner of xenos are suffered to co-exist alongside the remnants of humanity that infest the place, a fragile peace existing between them, at least as long as it takes to conduct their vile business.

It is one such place that represents another of the mysteries of the Outer Reach, though very few are even vaguely aware of its existence. The greatest of the hidden settlements of Sedu is a subterranean city known as Rosenman's Refuge, a warren of caves and tunnels within

## TECH-HERESY IN THE DEEP DRIFT

An especially wretched, if little known mystery of the Outer Reach is the existence of the so-called Slinnar War Machines. These hideous devices resemble suits of archaic, rune-encrusted armour and must be animated by the soul of a willing supplicant. The Slinnar War Machines have earned their name because they are said to resonate on a range of frequencies readable only by the most lore-steeped Tech-Priest, identical to the protostars of the Slinnar Drift. While the link to the region is tenuous and ultimately unproven, it nonetheless suggests a source of great evil that several Inquisitors have attempted to investigate. The matter was of great concern to Inquisitor Horosa Barnabas of the Ordo Xenos before his untimely demise, and it is thought that his investigations were tantalisingly close to revealing the war machines' source. Though a taciturn man little given to sharing his findings with his peers, Barnabas left behind several tomes of diaries in which he likened the animated suits to the recently emerged Necrons. The forms of both, so he wrote, are driven by the will of an entrapped soul, and so must surely have more in common. Sadly, it is now believed that Inquisitor Barnabas fell under the dominion of some xenos influence shortly before his disappearance, and so no great store should be placed in his latter writings. This may indeed be nothing more than an elaborate plot intended to ensnare the unwary and sow discord amongst those who seek to uncover the secrets of the Outer Reach.

a huge mesa. Though its existence is known only to the city's rulers—a group called “the Council”—a huge relic of obviously xenos manufacture lies at the heart of Rosenman's Refuge. This relic is thirty metres in diameter and takes the form of a disc of dull metal, which pulses with a sanguinary illumination each time a vessel translates from the Warp in the vicinity of the planet. Key members of the Council attend the device at all times, treating it as if it was some sentient oracle blessing them with foreknowledge of the approach of enemies. The existence of the xenos device is as yet unknown to the Deathwatch, though it has actually been witnessed by several agents of the Holy Ordos who were uncovered by the Council attempting to infiltrate their city and interfere with the trade that provides their wealth. Several of these agents were sacrifices to the Council's alien oracle, as punishment, as well as to appease the alien thing and to ensure it continues to warn the Sedu underworld of external threats.





# THE JERICHO WARP GATE

*"And though we enter the mouth of the valley of death, we shall fear no peril of the Warp, for the Emperor is our guide and by his light are the foes of mankind struck blind!"*

—Last words of Navigator Tren Nostromo before the loss with all hands of the sprinter *Armour of Faith*

While not technically a mystery of the Outer Reach (for it lies far on the opposite side of the old Jericho Sector), there are those who believe that the Warp Gate must surely lie at the heart of the numerous unexplained phenomena that plague the region. The Achilus Crusade would not have been possible at all without the discovery of the Warp Gate, and the entire Jericho Reach would still be lost to the Imperium behind a veil of impenetrable Warp storms. Some regard the discovery of the Warp Gate as a highly suspicious event in itself, perceiving in it the hidden hand of unseen manipulators. Whether these conspirators are the servants of the Ruinous Powers or some xenos faction they cannot say, though numerous paranoid theories have been proposed over the decades since the beginning of the crusade. One particularly vociferous and determined exponent of the notion that the Warp Gate lies at the heart of a vast web of conspiracy is the Ordo Xenos Inquisitor Vils Andarion. This individual has travelled throughout the Jericho Reach and beyond in his quest to prove his theory, though he has yet to find the single thread that he believes must surely tie it all together.

The only fact considered beyond doubt is that the Warp Gate is the work of one or another alien species, though much debate rages as to which. Superficially, the Warp Gate bears many hallmarks of the Eldar, but some of the most learned xenos-savants have studied its form and declared they cannot be certain it is indeed the work of those pernicious aliens. Others have put forward the names of more obscure xenos, from the Xenarchs to the Yu'Vath, yet none have convinced more than a handful of their peers.

There are several bodies within the upper echelons of the Imperium's power structures paying especially close attention to the Warp Gate, believing it falls under their purview or sphere of influence. The artefact was first discovered by Rogue Traders, for whom it represented an opportunity to amass yet more wealth, and it quickly became known to both the Adeptus Mechanicus and the Inquisition. When the nature of the Warp Gate was learned, it became a matter for the very highest authorities in the Imperium, the High Lords of Terra themselves considering what implications it might have on the security of the entire Imperium. Each of these bodies has staked its claim on the Warp Gate and judged it according to its own perspective. Some factions have declared the Warp Gate anathema, while others have sought to utilise it to its fullest extent.

One particular feature of the Warp Gate has recently become known to the Adeptus Mechanicus of the Jericho Reach. For decades, the magi of the Omnissiah have debated the link between the termini at either end of the passage, for the Warp Gate is visible at both ends. It has recently been determined that the two gates are one and the same object, existing in two locations at once. This observation taxes the understanding of even the most learned of magi, calling into question numerous supposed laws of the physical universe. In an age long passed, such revelations might have resulted in entirely new branches of science and philosophy opening up, leading mankind to undreamed of progress. In the 41st Millennium, however, progress is synonymous with strife, and simple orthodoxy has long been supplanted by superstition. New discoveries lead not to open debate but to open conflict as diametrically opposed factions vie to suppress knowledge that does not fit the dominant paradigm, or to uncover wisdom others believe spells the doom of the entire human race.

## HIDDEN WAYS

A mystery rarely discussed openly but which nags at many in the Crusade's upper command is the question of the Deathwatch and their involvement in the Jericho Reach. Conventional history states that the old Jericho Sector became cut off from the Imperium at large during the so-called Age of Shadows, and remained entirely isolated from all contact with the Adeptus Terra for long and bleak millennia. While other threats assailed the region by way of other routes in and out, the Imperium at large had no knowledge of the Sector's fate, nor any way of communicating with it. It was only when the Warp Gate was discovered that contact was re-established and the Achilus Crusade launched to reclaim a once prosperous region of human space.

Yet, when the Imperium's lead forces first pushed into the bloodstained void of the Jericho Reach, they found the Deathwatch waiting, having stood the Long Watch for uncounted centuries. Beholden to none save the masters of the Ordo Xenos, the Deathwatch do not discuss the issue of how they maintained their watch over the Jericho Reach while the region was cut off, nor have they revealed much of the events that transpired during the dark Age of Shadows. Those who need to know must be party to something of the truth, while most of those that do not know better than to pry. Perhaps the Deathwatch knew of the Warp Gate all along, and used it to move silently between distant regions of the galaxy. Perhaps they know of other routes through the Warp storm that cut the Jericho Reach off for so long, or maybe they are blessed with some miracle of technology that allows for another mode of transport entirely. Needless to say, there are a number of outcast factions that would dearly like to know the Deathwatch's secret, however unlikely they are to learn it.



# THE CONCLAVE OF TEARS

*"An Eldar vessel you say, lieutenant? I think you will find that particular species is an enemy that does not plague these stars. Now, kindly check your instruments, appease the war spirits, repeat your scan and report back to me when you have decided to discharge your duty in a manner suiting the uniform you wear. Dismissed."*

—Transcript from the trial of Commodore Stanisvor, later executed for failing to halt an Eldar incursion that resulted in the loss of three Imperial Navy destroyers at high anchor over Wrath

The Jericho Reach is a region largely devoid of the presence of the xenos race known as Eldar. Though there exist a few small, scattered bands of Eldar Corsairs, no craftworld is known to operate within several thousand light years, save the scout-soldiers of Craftworld Alaitoc who safeguard the world of Mackensee, and no extant maiden worlds have been conclusively identified. Even the cruel Dark Eldar rarely set foot within the region, not even to plunder its numerous worlds for slaves and other prey. There are plenty within the upper echelons of the Achilus Crusade who regard this fact as a rare blessing in a war against three of the Imperium's bitterest foes. There are those within the Dead Cabal, however, who fear that it portends something very dire indeed. The Eldar were once masters of a stellar empire that stood for countless aeons and faded traces of their former glory are to be found the length and breadth of the galaxy. Why then, do they apparently shun the Jericho Reach?

This issue is one that has long been a grave concern for certain members of the Dead Cabal, for it seems to connect with so many other dread fears to be found in the war torn Jericho Reach and beyond. For generations, individual Inquisitors, as well as certain Battle-Brothers, have maintained a close watch for any clue as to why the region is so anathema to the Eldar

## THE CROOKED PATH

The Dead Cabal has long known of the presence of an Eldar outcast known as Syndillian the Traveller in the Jericho Reach, though beyond this title and his connection to the Jericho Reach they have very few details of his identity. A number of seers in the service of the Dead Cabal have attempted to trace the deeds of this individual, believing at first that he must surely be an agent of the Conclave of Tears. Some reached the conclusion that the Traveller was attempting to close the Jericho-Maw Warp Gate, or at least working towards a distant time when this objective might be achieved. Others have come to the belief that the Traveller's aims are somehow at odds with those of the Conclave of Tears, raising the intriguing possibility that the two factions are either opposed, or simply unaware of the full extent of the other's activities. For more information on the Eldar Ranger known as Syndillian the Traveller, see the DEATHWATCH supplement THE JERICHO REACH.

and all their kin. Certainly, there are slumbering horrors deep beneath the worlds of the Outer Reach that any sane species would avoid, and the depths of interstellar space are host to all manner of puissant terrors. But the same could be said for numerous other regions in the galaxy where the Eldar are known to be active, from the cursed systems bordering the Eye of Terror to the haunted marches of the Ghouls Stars. Over the years, these hidden masters of the Dead Cabal have come to detect the presence of a very small number of Eldar operating in a coordinated fashion in the Jericho Reach, but not in any manner that pernicious species is normally associated with. Ordinarily, Eldar craftworlds dispatch war hosts far and wide to challenge or punish the impudent transgressions of what they regard as lesser races, while the outcast Corsair fleets strike without apparent rhyme or reason wherever they may. The Dark Eldar launch their terrible real space raids according to their own dark drives, while the enigmatic Harlequins are known to focus their efforts upon those that serve the Ruinous Powers. In the Jericho Reach, none of these truths appear to hold, the Eldar making their presence known in an entirely different manner.

Instead of massing their forces according to their conventional martial traditions and values, those Eldar operating in the Jericho Reach do so in very small numbers indeed. They appear to operate in small bands, sometimes consisting of several different strands of Eldar culture. They do not pursue their typical objectives, military or otherwise, but instead follow a high impenetrable strategy that, to some within the Dead Cabal, can only be related to the phenomenon known as the Dark Pattern. As unseen events converge and the stars move ponderously towards some as-yet undreamed-of alignment, the Dead Cabal is starting to glimpse something of the Eldar's activities within the Jericho Reach. They have caught but a fleeting impression of a group that traces its roots to the end of the War in Heaven—the so-called Conclave of Tears.

## THE HIDDEN HAND

The Dead Cabal believes the Conclave of Tears to represent a convergence of several different factions within the Eldar, including, so far as they can ascertain, representatives of at least one craftworld, a corsair fleet and even a Dark Eldar Kabal. Though no direct evidence has been found to solidly confirm it, the Prognosticator Rennin Tri'el holds that the elusive Harlequins are actively allied with the Conclave of Tears. Perhaps unsurprisingly, no evidence of the reclusive Exodites having any part to play in the conclave's activities has been found, and it is not anticipated that any will be.

As war rages across the three salients of the Jericho Reach, the Conclave of Tears appears to concentrate its efforts upon the scattered systems of the Outer Reach, though it has on occasion operated elsewhere. By a tireless cataloguing of those of the Conclave's activities they have detected, various members of the Dead Cabal have formulated a number of possible explanations as to their agenda. Collating the reports of Kill-teams returned from missions into the Outer Reach with those of certain precogs, savants, and seers in the Dead Cabal's service, a vague picture has started to emerge, and one that portends ever more doom and bloodshed for the forces of the Imperium as they forge deeper into the benighted depths of the Jericho Reach.





The Eldar of the Conclave of Tears, so certain members of the Dead Cabal have come to believe, are intent upon fomenting war in the Jericho Reach on an unprecedented scale. The Prognosticator has identified dozens of events that have led to outright war that can be traced to the hidden hand of what must surely be this enigmatic Eldar faction. When an entire Imperial Navy transport squadron was scuppered at high anchor during a layover at Karlack, for example, a Stigmatus landing force was able to deploy to the Wicked Sisters unopposed, turning what should have been a straightforward counter-insertion operation into a full blown suppression that raged for the best part of three years. When a questing offshoot of one of Hive Fleet Dagon's vile tendrils was somehow drawn onto a seemingly insignificant clutch of worlds between Avalos and Treyan, it ran into an Imperial Guard task force mustering to deploy at Herisor, and wiped it out entirely. When a secret Imperial diplomatic mission was ambushed en route to a parley with Tau agents on an uncatalogued world near the Greyhell Front, both parties accused the other of duplicity, and many months of painstaking preparations were wasted. Individually, each of these events can be explained away as unfortunate accidents or coincidences. When taken together, however, they suggest to the Dead Cabal that the Eldar are deliberately bringing about as much bloodshed as they possibly can in the Jericho Reach, although for what ultimate end none have so far reached a conclusion.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE OUTER REACH

The Conclave of Tears appears not to be focusing its efforts on the main war zones of the Jericho Reach, although its deeds in these regions are obviously far easier to detect than in those beyond the Imperium's control. The Dead Cabal has now amassed a significant body of evidence that points to the Conclave of Tears being every bit as active out amongst the dead stars of the Outer Reach, and potentially more so. The targets of these activities can only be guessed at, although they must surely include the resurgent Necrons. The effects of these actions are far harder to perceive or predict, for they rarely involve the forces of the Imperium directly. None of the Dead Cabal can easily say what effect the Conclave of Tears destabilising the orbit of the third moon of a nameless body in an unlisted system might have, for example, nor why they would go to the drastic lengths of diverting a lava stream ten miles wide to flow down an ancient ravine on a dead world on the borders of the Slinnar Drift. On one occasion, the Conclave's agents are believed to have brought about the premature emergence from aeons-long hibernation of a nigh mythical void-ray, which proceeded to feed ravenously upon a primordial world spinward of Polyphemnos.

Regardless of the observable effects of these and more deeds, one thing is certain in the minds of the Dead Cabal's masters. The Conclave of Tears has been growing ever more active in recent years, as if working towards some end result which is rapidly approaching its culmination. What this end result might be none can tell, but none believe it can be anything beneficial to the Imperium, whose forces so often suffer from these machinations of the pernicious Eldar.

## THE DEATHWATCH AND THE CONCLAVE OF TEARS

The Dead Cabal has passed on much of its more solid intelligence to the Deathwatch and the Ordo Xenos and, therefore, those that stand the Long Watch in the Jericho Reach are aware of the ongoing threat these xenos present. It is not uncommon for Deathwatch Kill-teams operating in the depths of the Outer Reach to be briefed on suspected Conclave of Tears activities, though in most cases even the information they received is little more than conjecture. In some regions, members of the Deathwatch are deployed under the standing order that any Eldar encountered should be engaged as a matter of priority, though more often these sentries never encounter any of the enigmatic xenos. Far more often, Deathwatch vessels passing through the dark systems of the Outer Reach report back that it is they who are being observed or tracked, though it is rare for the Eldar to launch attacks of opportunity. The masters of the Dead Cabal have reached the consensus that the Conclave of Tears only ever launches deliberate attacks against the Deathwatch when they have been long-planned and serve some grand strategy. Clearly, the Eldar's numbers are too few and their agents too valuable to risk unnecessary attrition fighting the champions of mankind.

There have been many instances of the Deathwatch engaging in battle with small groups of Eldar in the Outer Reach, but it is rare for the enemy to be conclusively identified by the masters of the Dead Cabal as members or agents of the Conclave of Tears. The Eldar are regarded as amongst the most pernicious and wicked of alien species and they are all but impossible to catch unawares. Therefore, it must be concluded that each contact has some defined objective that the Eldar are working towards.

Even though the Deathwatch and the Eldar of the Jericho Reach have shed one another's blood on plenty of occasions, the two parties have occasionally worked towards a common goal. In most instances, the cooperation has been spontaneous and unplanned, on the Space Marines' part at least, and little in the way of actual communication has passed between the two. More often, the Eldar have appeared during a battle that is already raging, or at some key point during a mission, and performed some action that benefited both parties. Though few even with the organisation know it, the Eldar have established covert means of communicating with the masters of the Dead Cabal, though only at the very highest of levels and when faced with the most extreme of circumstances. None within the Dead Cabal, the Deathwatch, or Ordo Xenos at large are under any illusion that the Eldar are pursuing anything other their own interests, however, and they treat all contact and communication with extreme caution.

A fact known only to the innermost echelons of the Dead Cabal is that over the years, a handful of Eldar believed to be in the service of the Conclave of Tears have been captured and brought back alive to Watch Fortress Erioch. These have been subject to the most thorough of excoriations, the tender mercies of the Inquisition's most accomplished masters of interrogation lavished upon their frames. To date, none have rendered up any useful information whatsoever, and so almost all of the Dead Cabal's intelligence on the Conclave of Tears remains uncertain at best.



# ERANDEL VOIDSINGER

FARSEER OF CRAFTWORLD KAEOR

## Erandel Voidsinger Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
65	47	42	49	65 <sup>(12)</sup>	67	72	69 <sup>(12)</sup>	55

**Movement:** 6/12/18/36

**Wounds:** 42

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Ciphers (Xenos Markings) (Int) +20, Command (Fel) +10, Concealment (Agi), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10, Evaluate (Int) +20, Interrogation, Invocation (WP) +20, Literacy (Int), Lore: Forbidden (The Black Library, Daemonology, Psykers, Xenos) (Int) +20, Lore: Scholastic (Archaic, Cryptology, Legend, Numerology, Occult) (Int) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +10, Speak Language (All Skill Groups) +20, Trade (Cryptographer, Soothsayer) (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Assassin Strike, Bastion of Iron Will, Catfall, Combat Formation, Duty Unto Death, Exotic Weapon Training (Shuriken Pistol, Singing Spear, Witchblade), Favoured by the Warp, Foresight, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Infused Knowledge, Improved Warp Sense, Lightning Reflexes, Master Orator, Meditation, Nerves of Steel, Peer (Craftworld Eldar, The Conclave of Tears), Psy Rating (9), Precise Blow, Preternatural Speed, Rapid Reaction, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Sprint, Step Aside, Strong Minded, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Warp Conduit, Warp Sense.

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (3), Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Willpower (x2).

**Armour:** Eldar Rune Armour† (All 6).

**Weapons:** Best-Craftsmanship custom shuriken pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/3/5; 1d10+6 R; Pen 6; Clip 40; Rld 2 Full; Reliable), Best-Craftsmanship singing spear (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+17 R; Pen 14; Power Field) and (Ranged) (Thrown; 16m; 1d10+17 R; Power Field, Returns after being Thrown).

**Gear:** The Voidsinger's runes††, spirit stones†††, empty spirit stone.

**Psychic Powers:** Erandel Voidsinger knows all Psychic Powers from the Telepathy and Divination Disciplines, as well as the Crystal Prophet, Decree of Doom, and Twist Fate Powers.

†**Eldar Rune Armour:** Whenever the Voidsinger is struck by an attack, she may make a Focus Power Test with a -30 penalty as a Free Action. If she succeeds, reduce the Damage that she would suffer by an amount equal to her PR plus the Degrees of Success she scored. If the result of the Focus Power Test is lower than her PR, she simply negates the attack entirely instead.

††**The Voidsinger's Runes:** The Voidsinger reduces any Psychic Phenomena or Perils of the Warp rolls that she or any ally within 10 metres must make by -10.

†††**Spirit Stones:** Once per Combat Encounter, the Voidsinger may tap into the power of her fallen processors to use a Psychic Power as a Free Action.

## VOIDSINGER'S PSYCHIC POWERS

Erandel Voidsinger has access to the following unique psychic powers.

### CRYSTAL PROPHET

**Action:** Full

**Opposed:** No

**Range:** Self

**Sustained:** No

**Description:** Voidsinger calls upon her vast experience and the spirits of her ancient predecessors who reside within her spirit stones, allowing her to surpass the inconvenience known as linear time and use multiple potent psychic powers in the same moment.

The Voidsinger makes a Focus Power Test; if she succeeds, she may immediately make two Focus Power Tests to activate any Psychic Powers other than Crystal Seer as Free Actions. For every two Degrees of Success she scored on the initial Focus Power Test, she may make one additional Focus Power Test to activate another Psychic Power. These additional Powers cannot be used at a PR higher than the one used for Crystal Seer. The Voidsinger gains one level of Fatigue each time she uses this power.

### DECREE OF DOOM

**Action:** Half

**Opposed:** Yes

**Range:** 20 metres x PR

**Sustained:** Yes

**Description:** Channeling her ability to peer through the skeins of destiny and find the strings that serve her purpose, the Voidsinger changes the nature of causality itself, causing blows to find their targets and defences to fail.

The Voidsinger selects a number of targets up to her PR within range and makes a Focus Power Test. As long as she sustains the Power, all attacks made against each affected target automatically hit, regardless of the results of Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests, and the target suffers a -5 penalty to Dodge and Parry, with an additional -5 penalty for each Degree of Success the Voidsinger achieved on the Focus Power Test. Any affected character may spend a Fate Point to end this effect; if he does so, he becomes immune to this Power for the remainder of the encounter.

### TWIST FATE

**Action:** Reaction

**Opposed:** Yes

**Range:** Self

**Sustained:** No

**Description:** The Voidsinger has long practiced plucking the the strands of destiny to change her own fate, and her powers have grown inestimable as her own doom approaches.

When the Voidsinger is targeted by an attack or harmful Psychic Power, she may use Twist Fate as a Reaction. If she wins the Opposed Test against her attacker, she may choose a new target for the attack within PR metres.

II: LOST WORLDS OF  
THE JERICHO REACH



## HISTORY

It is said that the Eldar Farseer known as the Voidsinger is impossibly ancient, even amongst a species known to be all but immortal. Erandel has battled the enemies of the Eldar across countless thousands of worlds across the entire galaxy, from the boiling galactic core to the silent, night-haunted Halo Worlds and beyond. She is said to have witnessed sights that would blast the sanity of even the most strong-willed of her peers, and to have conversed with beings of such utterly alien consciousness that they barely comprehend the existence of even the high-minded Eldar. It is said that the Voidsinger was there when the Eldar fell, and that she foresaw the rise of the Imperium of Man. Certain lines in the few Eldar mythic cycles known to human savants even suggest she has trodden the sacred ground of Holy Terra, though none who have ascertained this fact would dare propagate it, for fear of being burned upon the pyres of the Ordo Hereticus. Most of these tales are in fact true, while countless more unbelievable truths are yet untold.

Throughout her impossibly long life, Erandel Voidsinger has fought alongside countless species and served in the war hosts of every one of the major Eldar craftworlds. She has watched from the bridge of corsair flagships as worlds have burned, tasted the pristine waters of untouched maiden worlds, and passed through the bone-strewn sub-realities of the Dark City of Commorragh. She has witnessed the great dance of the Harlequins more times than any other daughter of her craftworld, and shared counsel with at least one of the mysterious Solitaires. Some say she has leave to come and go at will from the Black Library at the very heart of the webway, the terrible guardian of that fell place barely stirring at her passing. Little wonder then, that Erandel Voidsinger should serve as the representative not just of Craftworld Kaelor, but of all Eldar craftworlds, on the Conclave of Tears.

An impossibly wise, sagely individual who speaks only to utter the most profound of truths, Erandel Voidsinger is, unknown to all but herself, approaching the end of her service to her species. As a Farseer, and therefore a prognosticator of unmatched skill, she knows well that the multitudinous threads of her own fate are weaving together as her ultimate end approaches. As yet, Erandel has not been able to scry the exact circumstances of her death, but she has followed the brightest strands to the Jericho Reach, and knows that it must be soon. For several decades, Erandel has heard the call of the crystal glades at the heart of her craftworld, wherein stand those of her predecessors who have become one with their home, transformed, as is their fate, into statues of solidified soul energy. In following the strands of her

fate to the Jericho Reach, Erandel is defying a preordained end that would see her take her place in those serene glades, choosing death over such an end.

Beneath her Farseer's raiment, Erandel Voidsinger's flesh is already transforming into crystal. Yet, the strand of fate that would lead her back to her craftworld to the crystal glades grows weaker with each passing day, while that which leads towards the Outer Reach grows stronger. That path is as yet convoluted and winding, and its ultimate destination unseen, yet Erandel follows it willingly.

Erandel Voidsinger's role within the Conclave of Tears is unclear to those few of the Dead Cabal who know of her involvement in its activities, yet knowing what they do of Farseers, it can only be to scry the future and to guide the deeds of this small band. It is upon the Voidsinger's counsel that most of the Conclave's missions are launched, the fates themselves realigned with each endeavour it undertakes. Though many of these missions see the agents of the Conclave deployed in battle against the lesser races, many are far more esoteric in nature. On occasion, the Farseer has seen that a specific object must be recovered, or a seemingly innocuous event prevented at all costs. In many cases the ultimate effect of each of these actions is unknown even to Erandel, yet their importance is clearly indicated by her reading of the runes.

Of late, the Voidsinger has become aware of a number of factions or powers working against her in the Jericho Reach, though she has yet to fully ascertain who or what these represent. Each is exerting its own influence upon the strands of fate converging in the depths of the Outer Reach, ripping some asunder and reshaping others according to numerous and unpredictable wills. In addition to these, the proximity of the vast lesion on space and time known to humanity as the Hadex Anomaly distorts the fates of almost every mortal being beneath its baleful glare. Even as Erandel resists the transmogrification of her body into a crystal statue with nothing but the sheer force of her indomitable will, the strands grow ever more intertwined and unreadable even as they converge on some as yet unseen world within the Outer Reach.





# VAKILLAR U'RISS

## DARK ELДАР HAEMONCULUS, MISTRESS OF THE THEATRE OF PAIN

### Vakillar U'riss Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
69	72	66	77	55 <sup>(10)</sup>	70	55 <sup>(10)</sup>	59	50

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 65

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +20, Awareness (Per) +20, Ciphers (Xenos Markings) +20, Climb (Ag) +20, Command (Fel), Concealment (Ag) +20, Contortionist (Ag) +10, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Inquiry (Fel), Interrogation +20, Literacy (Int), Intimidate (S) +20, Lore: Forbidden (Xenos) (Int) +10, Lore: Scholastic (Tech) (Int) +10, Medicae (Int) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Security (Ag), Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Eldar, High Gothic) +20, Survival (Int), Swim (S).

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Assassin Strike, Catfall, Foresight, Hard Target, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Infused Knowledge, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Master Surgeon, Peer (Dark Eldar, The Conclave of Tears), Precise Blow, Preternatural Speed, Rapid Reaction, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Sprint, Step Aside, Strong Minded, Sure Strike, Swift Attack.

**Traits:** Dark Sight, From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapons, Living Nightmare†, Multiple Arms (3), Power of Torment††, Quadruped, Regeneration, Touched by the Fates (1), Toxic, Undying, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Perception (x2).

**Armour:** Gnarlskin (8 All).

**Weapons:** Toxic limbs (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 6; Felling; Razor-Sharp, Tearing, Toxic).

**Gear:** Countless samples, specimens, and sundries stored in crystal-glass microphials, including a collection of eyes harvested from species across the galaxy.

†**Living Nightmare:** U'riss has twisted her body into a horror of the utmost artistry, each wicked curve or venomous barb optimised for both bloody efficiency and elegant terror. Worse still, her body is her living canvas, dynamic and ever-shifting as she changes and enhances herself to suit her present needs. U'riss may spend a Fate Point to gain the Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2), Unnatural Intelligence (x2), or

Unnatural Willpower (x2) Trait, or to increase the level of an existing Unnatural Characteristic Trait from (x2) to (x3). These effects last until the end of the encounter.

††**Power of Torment:** The Excrutiatress is not merely a mistress of slaughter and desecration, but an artist; her atrocities are pinnacles of twisted achievement and each one drives her on to greater heights. U'riss gains a temporary Fate Point, which may be spent but not "burnt," each time she inflicts Critical Damage upon or slays a living foe.

### HISTORY

Vakillar U'riss, called "the Excrutiatress" across a dozen and more sectors along the Eastern Fringe, is a being of whom bloody folktales have been told for several thousand years. U'riss is a Haemonculus, one of the caste of flesh-crafters and torturer-surgeons the Dark Eldar of Commorragh rely upon to shape their forms into ever more extreme parodies of life and to renew them should death come before they will it. U'riss takes great delight in her work, which she undertakes for any Kabal willing and able to pay her unearthly price. Frequently, that price is yet more flesh for her infernal theatre of pain, wherein she creates the most spectacular tableau vivants ever witnessed in the Dark City.

These gristly spectacles sometimes number many hundreds of participants, though only the most ennui-wracked of Dark Eldar would ever willingly offer themselves to perform the hideous scenes U'riss delights in reconstructing.

It is said that Dark Eldar nobles come from all over the Dark City to bear witness to a newly revealed piece, it being the height of fashion and privilege to do so before the actors start to rot even as they struggle in vain to hold their impossible poses.

Despite her unspeakable obsession with crafting such theatrical excess, U'riss is known by the inner circle of the Dead Cabal to be a member of the Conclave of Tears. Exactly what the Haemonculus seeks to attain by association with this mysterious group is not known, but certainly it must offer her some advantage or prize she could not otherwise attain for herself. The Dark Eldar are, after all, the most selfish of a species known for their limitless self interest, and so it seems unlikely in the extreme that she is acting out of altruism.







While it might seem unusual that a Dark Eldar should become embroiled in the activities of the Conclave of Tears at all, it makes a certain sense that should such a thing come about, it would be a Haemonculus that represents the denizens of the Dark City in this ancient coalition. U'riss and her peers generally exist outside of the eternal and lethal power struggles of the Kabals, selling their services to those most willing to meet their exorbitant prices. The Haemonculus move in circles other Dark Eldar would flounder in, having the ear of the very highest ranked of nobles, some even of Asdrubael Vect, the Supreme Overlord of Commorragh. Though U'riss would think twice before attempting to manipulate Vect, there are a great many lesser nobles willing to act upon whatever shreds of counsel she might offer. The Excrutiatress is therefore able to wield great influence, and at her word overwhelming raids into real space can be launched and thousands upon thousands of bloodthirsty murderers unleashed upon the galaxy.

It is not only large real space raids that are undertaken upon the Excrutiatress' command, for most of her activities are far smaller and more subtle, in keeping with the modus operandi of the Conclave of Tears. Accompanied by a small force of Wracks and Grotesques, U'riss has trod numerous forbidden places in the Outer Reach. She maintains an uneasy alliance with the Black Prince Lauma and on occasion the two have pooled their resources to act in concert. The Haemonculus is said to barely speak with Erandel Voidsinger, Farseer of Alaitoc, though the two maintain a cold civility in council.



# AILILL NUADA

## HARLEQUIN SHADOWSEER



### Ailill Nuada Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
67	50	46	46	(12) 67	60	69	(12) 67	69

**Movement:** 6/12/18/36

**Wounds:** 45

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +20, Awareness (Per), Ciphers (Xenos Markings), Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Concealment (Ag), Contortionist (Ag), Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Invocation (WP) +20, Literacy, Lore: Forbidden (The Black Library, Daemonology, Psykers, Xenos) (Int) +10, Lore: Scholastic (Archaic, Cryptology, Legend, Numerology, Occult) (Int) +20, Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Eldar, High Gothic) (Int) +20, Trade (Performer, Storyteller) (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike, Catfall, Combat Master, Counter Attack, Deflect Shot, Disarm, Double Team, Exotic Weapon Training (Fusion Pistol, Staff of Scathach), Hard Target, Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Hip Shooting, Iron Discipline, Jaded, Leap Up, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Master Orator, Meditation, Mimic, Nerves of Steel, Peer (Craftworld Eldar, Dark Eldar, Eldar Corsairs, The Conclave of Tears), Precise Blow, Preternatural Speed, Psy Rating (8), Step Aside, Swift Attack, Rapid Reaction, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Sprint, Strong Minded, Sure Strike, Takedown, Total Recall, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (4), Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Willpower (x2).

**Armour:** Best-Quality Holo-Suit (4 All, Field 35).

**Weapons:** Best-Quality custom fusion pistol (Pistol; 10m; S/-/-; 1d10+18 E; Pen 16; Clip 3; Rld 1 Full; Volatile), Staff of Scathach (Melee; 1d10+13 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Shocking, Volatile), 6 haywire grenades (Thrown; 12m; S/-/-; Pen 0; Haywire [3]).

**Gear:** Accoutrements of a Shadowseer's station, flip belt†.

**Psychic Powers:** Ailill Nuada knows all Psychic Powers from the Telepathy and Divination Disciplines, as well as the Veil of Sorrow Power on page 63.

†**Flip Belt:** The wearer of a Flip Belt gains the Hoverer (6) Trait and may re-roll failed Dodge Tests.

## HISTORY

As a member of the enigmatic Eldar caste known as the Harlequins, Ailill Nuada is a riddle even to her fellow members of the Conclave of Tears. The Harlequins are uniquely placed within Eldar society, for they rise above any stresses that might exist between the different factions. Where the Eldar of the craftworlds might be loath to seek the aid of their dark kin in Commorragh, for example, the Harlequins treat both exactly the same. Outsiders often make the mistake of assuming this is a matter of good and evil, with the people of the craftworlds somehow representing a morally pure side of the Eldar psyche, and the Eldar of the Dark City representing the polar opposite.



## AILILL NUADA'S PSYCHIC POWERS

Ailill Nuada has access to the following psychic power.

### SHROUD OF SORROW

**Action:** Free Action

**Opposed:** No

**Range:** 1 metre x PR

**Sustained:** Yes

**Description:** Ailill Nuada is capable of creating a psychic field that is part performance and part hallucination, surrounding herself and her allies in this protective veil and confounding her foes.

As long as she sustains the power, enemies attempting to use ranged attacks or ranged psychic powers against Ailill Nuada or an ally within range of her must pass a **Very Hard (-30) Awareness Test** before attacking. If they fail, their attacks fall short or miss entirely, regardless of their rolls. If an enemy fails by three or more Degrees of Failure, he falls into a stupor and is Stunned until the end of his next Turn.

This typically human point of view might amuse the Eldar were they to spare a thought for its existence, though it does contain a grain of relevance. Whatever the peculiar realities of each faction, whether they exist in a craftworld, Commorragh, or indeed on an exodite world, the Harlequins are far above any internecine struggle.

The Harlequins travel from one place to the next, performing highly formalised and ritualistic dances so as to remind the Eldar of the events of the Fall. As a species, the Eldar experience reality on a level no other mortal can imagine, and so these performances are far more than entertainment. They ritually bind together the entire species, and some say they provide a means of staving off the complete collapse of the Eldar people.

All Shadowseers are masters of the psychic arts. During their performances they play the role of the storyteller and the wizard, using their powers, as well as an array of psyk-active hallucinogens, to deepen the audiences' experience to an unprecedented, utterly immersive degree. On the field of battle, they use both abilities to sow terror and discord amongst the enemy, leaping from one confrontation to the next as a scintillating blur of cascading light.

Ailill Nuada is such a performer and a warrior, and she has travelled with the Harlequins for countless centuries and visited every last remnant of the once mighty empire of the fallen Eldar. She has performed for Eldrad Ulthuan under the pulsating violet luminescence of the Eye of Terror in the Dome of Lamentations on Crafteworld Ulthwe, and gone before the court of Asdrubael Vect in his throne room at the heart of Commorragh. Yet, Nuada appears to have taken leave of her role in order to focus upon the mission of the Conclave of Tears in the Jericho Reach. It is rare for her to know the company of fellow Harlequins, though on occasion they have answered her silent call to oppose the foes of the Eldar in the Outer Reach.

The Shadowseer is an utter mystery to the masters of the Dead Cabal, for none have laid eyes upon her and survived to

tell the tale. She is known to them only by certain portentous readings of the Emperor's Tarot, and by rumours torn from the minds of recalcitrant outcasts and reavers dragged from their lairs in the Outer Reach. All the Dead Cabal can ascertain of this mysterious individual is that she is, somehow, the binding force that keeps the Conclave of Tears united in its dread mission, whatever that may be. Though no one member of the Conclave can be said to be its leader in any accepted sense, Nuada is nonetheless its figurehead, or the fulcrum upon which the entire mission balances. Needless to say, the masters of the Dead Cabal have long considered what might happen were the Shadowseer to be removed and that balance upset, though in many ways they fear to attempt such a drastic course of action.

As with all Shadowseers, Ailill Nuada wears a featureless mask finished to a silvered, mirror sheen. Nuada has never removed this mask, and so none, even amongst her peers in the Conclave of Tears, are known to have looked upon her true face. Instead, when each looks upon that mirrored mask, that individual see something different. Some see what the wearer wants them to see, others what they themselves want to see. During a performance, this mask takes on a myriad of identities, as is appropriate to Nuada's role of the personification of fate. During battle, when Nuada is performing the so-called Dance of Death, the mask reflects back upon those unfortunates that see it a terrifying range of faces. It is said that many see their own deathmask in that reflection, though, if this is true, none have ever confirmed it, for all who gaze upon it die within moments.

Though none know it, Ailill Nuada is in fact the most active of all of the members of the Conclave of Tears. She travels extensively through the dead systems of the Outer Reach, seeking to piece together the separate elements of what she knows to be a dark fate slowly creeping across the region. Alone of all her peers, Nuada recalls the face of that which slumbers beneath the surface of the dead worlds of the region, for she looked upon it when last it stirred. She knows what is soon to awaken, and she knows the steps that have been taken to ensure the powers that hold sway in the galaxy remain in balance, though each will suffer undreamed of destruction in the process.

If the lesser races are to exterminate one another in their petty wars and conquests, so be it.





# EBAHN LAUMA

THE BLACK PRINCE OF SLINNAR, CORSAIR  
LORD OF THE BALESTORM AVENGERS

## Ebahn Lauma Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
65	67	45	43	59	50	53	49	60

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30

**Wounds:** 47

**Skills:** Acrobatics (Ag) +10, Awareness (Per) +10, Carouse (T) +20, Ciphers (Xenos Markings), Charm (Fel) +20, Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Lore: Forbidden (Xenos) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +20, Silent Move (Ag) +20, Speak Language (Eldar, High Gothic, Low Gothic) (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike, Catfall, Combat Master, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Counter Attack, Deadeye Shot, Disarm, Double Team, Exotic Weapon Training (Fragarach, Shuriken Pistol), Hard Target, Hatred (Necrons), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight), Hip Shooting, Independent Targeting, Into the Jaws of Hell, Iron Discipline, Last Man Standing, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Litany of Hate, Master Orator, Mighty Shot, Mimic, Nerves of Steel, Peer (Eldar Corsairs, The Conclave of Tears), Precise Blow, Preternatural Speed, Swift Attack, Rapid Reaction, Resistance (Psychic Powers), Sprint, Strong Minded, Sure Strike, Takedown, Total Recall, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged), Wall of Steel.

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (3), Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Perception (x2).

**Armour:** Corsair armour (Arms, Body, Legs 4).

**Weapons:** Pair of custom shuriken pistols (Pistol; 30m; S/3/5; 1d10+5 R; Pen 6; Clip 30; Rld 2 Full; Razor-Sharp, Storm) Fragarach, the Storm's Vengeance (Melee; 1d10+8 R; Pen 4; Razor-Sharp, Retaliator†, Tearing).

**Gear:** Nebulax cloak††, xenohide mantle.

†**Retaliator:** Fragarach deals an additional 1d10+6 Damage when used to Counter Attack after a successful Parry.

††**Nebulax Cloak:** The cloak of shining scale that the Black Prince wears provides formidable protection, allowing him to focus his efforts forward, safe in the knowledge that his back is covered. It provides a Field of 50 that never Overloads against attacks made from behind the wearer.

# KHOREN'SSHAI (GATOREX)

## Khoren'sshai Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
46	—	45	43	42	20	46	41	—

**Movement:** 12/24/36/72

**Wounds:** 31

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +20, Concealment (Ag), Silent Moves (Ag) +10, Tracking (Int) +20

**Talents:** Crushing Blow, Frenzy, Furious Assault, Fearless, Heightened Senses (Smell), Swift Attack, Takedown.

**Traits:** Bestial, Improved Natural Weapons, Natural Armour (Scaly Hide), Natural Weapons (Snapping Jaws), Quadruped (Hexapod, AB x3).

**Armour:** Scaly hide (All 4).

**Weapons:** Jaws (1d10+8 R; Pen 5; Razor Sharp, Tearing).

**Gear:** None.

## HISTORY

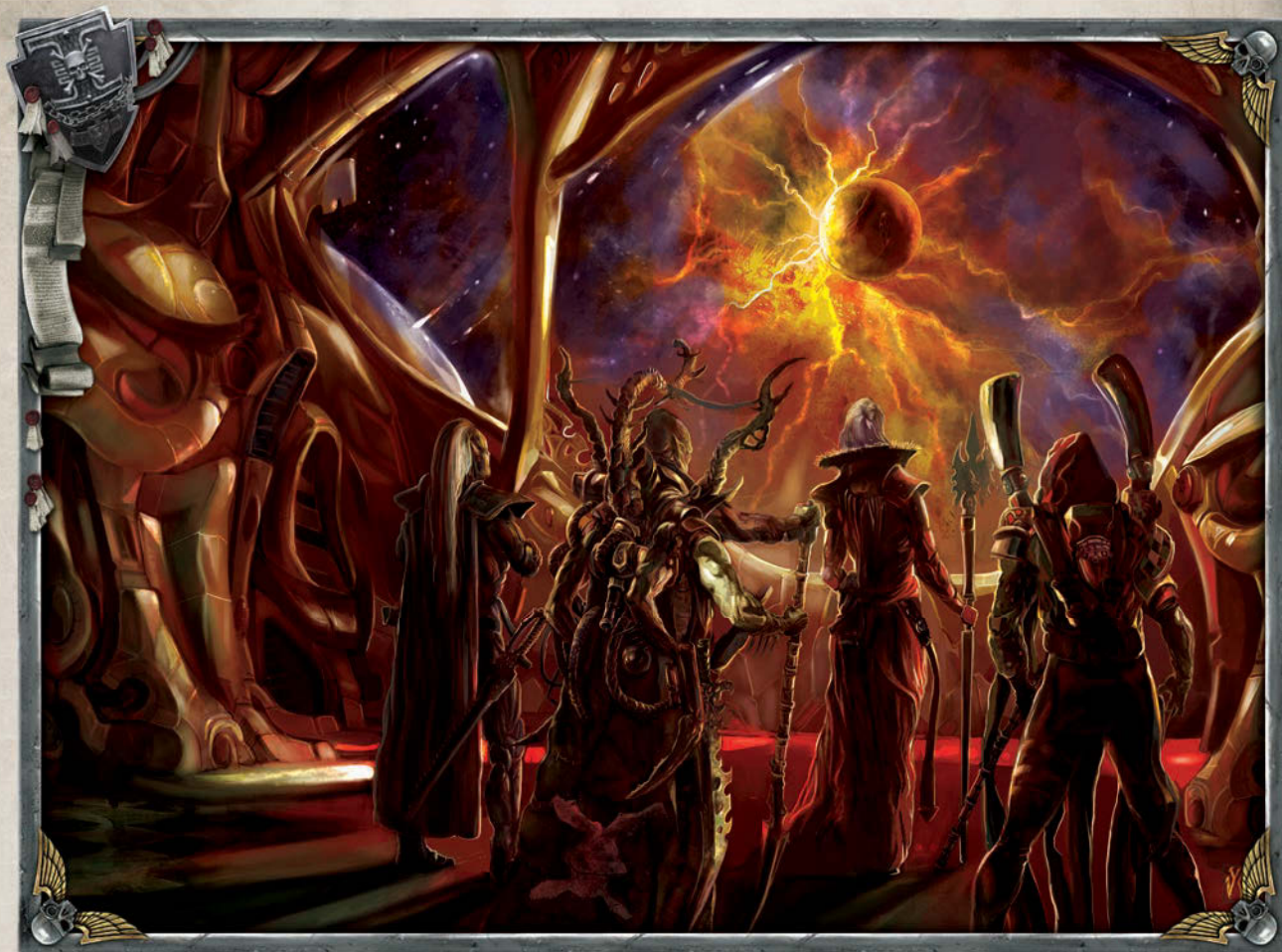
The Balestorm Avengers are one of the Eldar groups operating within the Jericho Reach, though the region is far from the only one they have haunted over the millennia. Since the Age of Shadow, however, the Avengers have concentrated their efforts in the Outer Reach and even established a number of havens on the outer verges of the Slinnar Drift. Far from using the lambent clouds of the Drift as a place to hide from vengeful enemies, the Avengers appear to be using them as places from which to

watch surrounding space. Exactly what these outcast, piratical

Eldar are watching for remains unknown, though some of the masters of the Dead Cabal hold that it must surely relate to the accursed Dark Pattern.







## II: LOST WORLDS OF THE JERICHO REACH

The master of the Balestorm Avengers is a being known to his enemies as the Black Prince of Slinnar, and to his wayward kin as Ebahn Lauma, meaning “night sky” in the tongue of the Eldar. Like his underlings, Prince Lauma is an outcast of an unknown craftworld, and he appears blessed of the skill to unite those of his species that might otherwise fall to the path that leads only to the gates of the Dark City under his banner. While outwardly jocular and bloodthirsty, Prince Lauma is in fact utterly dedicated to the welfare of his corsairs and entirely uncaring of the fate of those he preys upon. He wears an extravagant mantle of golden fur shorn from some mighty alien predator, and a cloak of glittering scale said once to have belonged to an uberlord of the Nebulax Diaspora. At the Black Prince’s side is Khoren’shai, a snapping, six-legged gatorex said to have crippled or slain a thousand would-be assassins over the course of Lauma’s tenure as master of the Balestorm Avengers.

It is known amongst the Dead Cabal that the Balestorm Avengers are one of the more capricious and unpredictable groups of corsairs, though the full extent of their anarchic existence has barely been glimpsed. The Black Prince harbours an abiding hatred of a rival corsair lord called Caeluthin Baharrudor the Stormchaser, and the two groups have fought a series of bitter wars for no reason the Ordo Xenos’ most learned xenos-savants can ascertain. In truth, the internal politics of the Eldar are labyrinthine and contradictory, and utterly impenetrable to mankind.

Despite his anarchic existence, the Black Prince of Slinnar is an active member of the Conclave of Tears, and his corsairs

are willing participants in furthering its mission. Eldar Corsairs maintain extensive fleets of warships well able to penetrate even the most well guarded star system, and so it is not surprising the Balestorm Avengers are frequently called upon to enact the Conclave’s will. The Black Prince himself often accompanies his forces, seeming to joyously revel in the act of ruining the long-dreamed of schemes and aspirations of lesser races.

In terms of the internecine politics of the Conclave of Tears, the involvement of the Black Prince of Slinnar presents something of an issue, yet one that appears to be crucial in the precarious balance of power. The Balestorm Avengers’ bitter war with the Twilight Swords of the Stormchaser causes friction with the venerable Farseer Erandel Voidsinger, for many of Caeluthin Baharrudor’s corsairs are drawn from Craftworld Kaelor, the Voidsinger’s home. In temperament, the Black Prince is closer to the bloodthirsty kin of the Haemonculus Vakillar U’riss, yet in truth his deeds are motivated not by cruelty or ennui, but by genuine exuberance. For some reason, unknown even amongst the Conclave of Tears, the Shadowseer Ailill Nuada barely utters a word to the Black Prince, suggesting that some further dark tensions have yet to fully reveal themselves.



# THE LOST WORLDS

*"These distant orbs of earth and fire, wind and water, provide us some insight into the greater design which lies just beyond our imagining. Let us pray that we might learn their secrets before it is too late"*

—Prognosticator Renin Tri'el

There are few among the Imperial forces in the Jericho Reach who know of all the secrets that lay within the boundaries of that contested realm. The holy Ordos of the Inquisition and Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch know that though they stand vigilant against the vastness, nightmares yet lurk in the darkness beyond the light of Imperial truth.

Those sworn to defend the Jericho Reach cannot afford to remain ignorant of these dangers, and yet knowledge of the enemy is the first step down the road of corruption. For those who have the strength of will to resist the taint, such knowledge serves as a weapon against the darkness.

The following worlds dot the stellar landscape of the Jericho Reach, and each has drawn the attention of the inquisitive and the learned within the Deathwatch and the holy Ordos. The Dead Cabal has taken a particular interest in these worlds and believe many of them to hold the keys to unravelling they mystery of the Dark Pattern.



# BELISSAR

*"It requires more than flame to eliminate that taint. Only time and purification can prevent this darkness from spreading."*

—Watch Captain Carlsworth

The world of Belissar has been badly contaminated and influenced by the forces of Chaos. Over the last few millennia, a world that was once believed to be a jewel in need of refinement has been transformed into a near worthless lump of rock. Those who continue to live among its ruins bear the marks of this destruction as contamination upon their flesh and souls. Yet in spite of this, there are those who believe that the world may yet hold tremendous hidden value. Belissar continues to hold mysteries for the Imperium. Even now, a few questions of any potential value are outweighed by the substantial risk such a contaminated world represents. Until those are better resolved, the Deathwatch believes that it must be observed and guarded rather than destroyed in the interests of security.

## HISTORY

At the height of the Jericho Sector, humanity's successes were paramount. The civilised worlds were unable to contain the region's bounty. Mankind outgrew the Sector's established worlds and began to colonise any worlds that seemed likely to contribute to its wealth. Those planets well suited to agriculture were selected in particular, as several of the hive worlds were extremely dependent upon the import of foodstuffs.

Records from this era are fragmented. After Verronus collapsed, there was no local surviving repository of data from the Jericho Sector, and few of the local records were ever transferred to blessed Terra. Most records have been scavenged and inferred from the few ancient reports that survive. Oral traditions of colonial worlds, including Belissar, are often contradictory and inconsistent. As a consequence, little of this information can be confirmed as fact.

Bearing that in mind, it is believed that the colony on Belissar was founded in the late thirty-third millennium. A younger son of one of Verronus's noble lines chose to establish the colony, using a combination of Imperial resources and mercantile investments. It is clear that someone with influence and significant resources took a direct interest in the colonisation process. Analyses conducted by Inquisition assets using samples obtained from the surviving mutant population indicate that the world had a much higher population than a typical colony world.

Some of the ancient legends indicate that members of the Adeptus Mechanicus were directly involved as well. These suggest that followers of the Machine Cult agreed to aid the world's agricultural development. Unfortunately, the precise nature of this development is unclear, and different legends contradict one another. The most likely conclusion is that substantial changes were made to the planet's atmosphere at the same time as several native plant and animal species were eliminated in favour of species adapted from Holy Terra.



## COLLAPSE

For many of the worlds that fell from the grace, the reasons are complex and unclear. This is not the case for Belissar. Simply put, the colony had not become self-sustaining prior to the sector's collapse. The world's civilisation was entirely dependent upon imported goods and technologies. Their agricultural facilities enabled the world to provide ample foodstuffs for its populace, but even these assets required maintenance from experts who only visited irregularly. Without a capable support network, the colonists were unable to maintain their technological base. In short order, the population fell to infighting as all became more and more desperate for life's basic necessities.

After thousands of years of isolation, there were few survivors upon the world. Those that remained were struck by an even greater tragedy during the latter years of the 40th millennium. Shortly after its manifestation, the Hadex Anomaly was prone to fitful movement and expansion. During a time of ill-portent, Belissar was swallowed by the Warp storm. After more than a century, the Anomaly moved into a different portion of the sector, and the planet emerged from the Warp, though horrifically changed.

In 22.M41, Deathwatch and Ordo Malleus forces committed to a joint effort termed the Belissar Suppression. The intent was to cleanse the planet of its contamination, so that this hideous taint might be removed from the galaxy. Many of the field reports from that action have been permanently sealed. It is believed that the worst of the Daemonic influences were eliminated from Belissar's surface. However, it is clear that the effort could not be deemed a triumph. The Warp's taint lingers upon this world, and none can say what measures might be taken to fully cleanse it.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

In spite of the best efforts of Inquisitorial forces, Belissar remains a world that has been severely contaminated by direct and extended exposure to the Warp. Unholy creatures from the Immaterium still maintain a strong hold upon the world and their influence is present everywhere. Descendants of the Imperial colonists now worship these foul creatures as cultists in servitude to the Ruinous Powers. Both physical mutations and extreme mental aberrations are common hallmarks of these unclean individuals. It is improbable that there are any surviving humans who could return to the Imperium's fold. Despite this deep-seated corruption, Belissar's isolated position, far from other worlds of the Jericho Reach, has kept it largely safe from full Exterminatus, though the Ordo Malleus has insisted on a strict quarantine to enforce that isolation.

After the events of the Belissar Suppression, the Deathwatch swore an oath to continue to oversee the world. Kill-teams are dispatched at least once a decade to investigate the world's contamination level. They are not expected to seriously attempt to cleanse the world of its Warp taint—a monumental task even for the Deathwatch. Instead, they are tasked with the responsibility to keep this contagion from spreading. To date, most believe that their

### Status Report: Belissar System

ATT: Watch-Commander Mordigael

Priority: ++Scarlet++

Date Code: 7992815.M41

++Encrypted data enclosed++

Commander,

I believe that my team may have identified a more significant enclave of mutants upon this world than was previously known. During the course of our reconnaissance mission, Battle-Brother Svennson was swallowed by an organic opening upon the planet's surface. We destroyed the orifice in short order, and followed him beneath the planet's surface.

Svennson suffered only moderate injuries, and seems to have uncovered something significant. The planet's contagion continues deep beneath its surface. The passageways most closely resembled digestive organs. As we travelled, we continuously heard and often felt the walls vibrate in a steady rhythm reminiscent of a heartbeat. Even many of the creatures we encountered bore a strong semblance to a body's immune defences.

Interspersed within these unusual creatures were a significant number of mutants and foul cultists. Our team eliminated many of them, but it seemed that the more we killed the greater the response we faced from the very environs. In short order, tunnels began to collapse upon us and floods of daemons emerged from the walls. I soon came to the conclusion that it was vital to return to the surface and file a report prior to continuing the investigation.

efforts have been successful. However, some argue that this ongoing contamination represents an unacceptable risk, and argue that more extreme measures must be taken.

There are no other colonised worlds near Belissar, nor are their significant Warp anomalies in the region. The world is far from the front of the Achilus Crusade, so it is unlikely to directly interact with the Imperium for some time. A few Inquisitors among the Ordo Malleus believe that this isolation presents an unusual opportunity for them to study the unholy. There are rumours that at least one Inquisitor visits the world even more often than the Kill-teams. If this is true, the precise motivations for the visits are unknown and extremely worrisome. Extended exposure to this level of corruption, even in the name of the Imperium's defence, might shatter the mind of even the most stalwart individual.

II: LOST WORLDS OF  
THE JERICHO REACH



## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

Ancient records and legends indicate that Belissar's atmosphere was once fully breathable and hint that it may even have been pleasant. While that may have once been true, this is no longer the case. Toxic compounds now flood much of the planet's atmosphere, water, and surface. These represent a substantial hazard to any humans who might visit the world. The poisons are also one of the key factors for ongoing mutations among the cultists who continue to inhabit the world.

In some regions, the toxins are so dense that they hang as a thick fog over the world's surface. The massive clouds are visible even from the void. Deathwatch tracking systems indicate that some of these clouds have been in existence for nearly a century, occasionally migrating but never dissipating. Within the clouds, filtration systems are necessary for breathing and vision enhancement is essential for any sort of navigation. Travel through these regions represents a significant risk, even for Space Marines, and must not be undertaken lightly.

At times, these toxic clouds form into complex weather patterns, often due to interactions with other nearby pollutants. The resulting storm systems can be deadly—not only from the wind shear and blinding rain—but also from the incredibly corrosive nature of these elements. Belissar's unstable nature makes predicting such catastrophic events nigh impossible. The storms erupt spontaneously and sometimes dissipate just as inexplicably.

Even more dangerous contaminants possess other portions of this foul planet. The taint of Chaos has Warped not only the world's inhabitants but the very essence of Belissar. There are countless enclaves of the Warp-spawned remaining on this world far from the Hadex Anomaly. The majority of these locales are made up of decidedly unnatural geographic features. The very surface of the planet may act against any who dare to tread upon it.

In some such places, the planet looks and acts like a living being. Ground has become flesh and massive hairs, feathers, or scales sprout from its surface in place of foliage. In a few places, the surface flows with blood and bile, creating loathsome rivers and lakes. The unholy Warp-spawn that inhabit such locations sometimes take on physical appearances that are consistent with these places—or it might just be a manifestation of the land itself. Kill-teams that have travelled into such “living” regions report attacks by creatures that resemble massive immune cells and mouths that spontaneously form and open before attempting to devour their Battle-Brothers.

Other regions, which first appear comparatively mundane, exhibit a more subtle Warp contamination. Such locations appear to be relatively clean of toxins and even exhibit signs of native flora. Closer examination inevitably reveals that the land itself is alive. The planet's raw materials comes to life and attempt to destroy intruders. Even a sacred bolter has limited efficiency against a cliff that makes a deliberate effort to collapse upon a Space Marine. Records suggest that regions such as this are most easily identified by their lack of visible pollution, but this is hardly a reliable benchmark.

## CULTURE

Deathwatch forces believe that Belissar's inhabitants are effectively isolated. There is no indication that they are capable of constructing a void-capable vessel nor have watch-satellites shown any indications of Warp-capable craft entering the system. While they continue to oversee the world's security, the Deathwatch only commits to sporadic involvement with its surface. Consequently, the Battle-Brothers possess only limited records about the known population. Even though the planet represents a significant danger, that threat is mitigated by its isolation and by requests from the Ordo Malleus to maintain its isolation.



*Author: Inquisitor Kalistradi*

*Date: 452789.M41*

*Subject: Belissar Activity*

*Recipient: Watch Station Erioch*

*Classification: Jericho*

*Xenos Code Amber*

*Recent interactions with an Astropathic Choir focusing on the Jericho Reach has manifested some information that may be of concern. During routine divinations and examinations, two of the choir's members let out abrupt shrieks of agony and died. Several other members were severely rattled by the experience. A later discussion with several members indicated that they had been drawn to portents of doom coming from the Belissar system.*

*I chose to open the sealed records and reports and review those materials. I fear that this may be an indicator that some entity may be making a concerted effort to unite the planet's various and disparate communities. If this is true, such an entity might be able to assemble a force of considerable power. The Ordo Malleus has limited resources within the Jericho Reach. I would consider it a personal favour if the Deathwatch could please send a Kill-team to investigate the planet for any signs of a unification effort.*



## USING BELISSAR

- Battle-Brother Joaquim Charing of the Grey Knights Chapter arrives at Watch Fortress Erioch without warning or fanfare. The Kill-team is soon called into a meeting with the visiting Astartes and their Watch Captain. They have been assigned to assist their fellow in completing a mission on the planet Belissar. The Imperial Tarot suggests that a Daemon prince could be rallying his forces on this distant planet. They must combine their efforts to eliminate this threat at an early stage. Otherwise, there may be severe repercussions for the Achilus Crusade. Divinations suggest that if either group were to act independently, the Crusade would face certain doom. (More information regarding the Grey Knights Chapter and the Ordo Malleus can be found in the **DARK HERESY** supplement **DAEMON HUNTER**.)
- The Kill-team's Watch Captain calls them into a meeting to present them with a recording of a recent Astropathic Choir divination. Review and analysis of the session indicate that the system may portend disaster for the Jericho Reach. Agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus have reported unusual anomalies in the system's gravitic alignment as well as indicators that Belissar's planetary orbit has wavered. Even though Belissar is not due for another reconnaissance mission for some time, the schedule has been accelerated. The Kill-team must travel to the world and stop whatever is causing this immediately. Upon their arrival, they discover a potent ritual devoted to the Ruinous Powers is already in progress. They must halt the ritual and eliminate the Daemons and cultists involved, before the planet leaves its orbit and travels throughout the Reach. At the same time, the Warp-spawned forces attempt to capture the Battle-Brothers to use them as fuel for the ritual.
- The Battle-Brothers are completing a mission against Necron forces within the worlds of the Dead Pattern. During their battle, several of the metallic xenos flee through a Dolmen Gate, which remains open just long enough for the Space Marines to follow. Those who pursue are transported to stand before an identical gate on distant Belissar. As they attempt to decipher their location and identify a means to leave the world, they are set upon by Daemons. Even as they battle the Warp-spawned forces, they must consider that this world might contain a repository of Necron forces, otherwise the Dolmen Gate is inexplicable. If such reserves do exist, how might a century spent within the Hadex Anomaly have transformed those xenos, if at all? The Kill-team may need to gather the assistance of reinforcements so that they can thoroughly explore the dangers posed by the combined Necron and Chaos elements.

It is believed that there are numerous tribal populations active upon the planet. Reports indicate that these factions generally maintain a high level of animosity towards one another during those times that they are not actively at war. This may be a consequence of the world's limited resources or a matter of differences in allegiance between those who follow the Ruinous Powers. Though the total number of inhabitants is unclear, as long as they remain effectively fractious, it is improbable that they could pose a meaningful threat to the galaxy at large.

These populations consistently maintain a primitive technological base. There are no known manufactorums of any significant size. Their primary armaments are mostly hand weapons constructed from stone, very limited amounts of metals, and the complex fungal structures

that serve as a wood analogue. There have been no recent reports of these mutants using firearms.

In addition to the human populations, there are also significant incursions of Warp-spawned creatures residing upon Belissar. It is unclear how these entities maintain their existence within the galaxy. It may simply be that the planet maintains a significant number of small rifts between the physical realm and the Immaterium. Such tears in the fabric of reality would allow for these terrors to cross into our world at will. If this is the case, it could simply be a matter of time before something more potent exploits these tears and posing a significant threat that extends beyond this isolated world. The Deathwatch continues to commit resources that monitor the world, so that such a threat might be identified and eliminated at the earliest possible stage.





# CRESSID

*"The coward represents as great a threat as the traitor. The traitor at least stands by his convictions."*

—Commissar Holt

The thin atmosphere on Cressid does little to insulate the world from the chill of the void. Before the Age of Shadow, records suggest that the great refineries may have warmed the world so that it could be safely inhabited. In the millennia since those shut down, the world has once more become a cold and barren wasteland. Those who choose to live upon its surface must endure miserable conditions as they attempt to eke out an existence. Such a fate is far too kind for those who have chosen to abandon their sacred responsibilities to the God-Emperor. Were it closer to the salients of the Achilus Crusade, dramatic action might be taken. As it stands, the resources necessary to conquer such an inhospitable planet are better spent in other environs for the time being.

## HISTORY

The Adeptus Mechanicus has maintained the most complete archives of records from the time of the Jericho Sector. While even those are fragmentary, analysis of the surviving supply and resource allocation reports strongly suggest the most significant sources of raw materials, warehousing, and manufacturing in the sector. Numerous surviving transaction reports indicate that Cressid represented a significant source for heavy metals, including a number of rare ores. It is difficult for anyone to precisely measure the quantity of materials obtained, but these records suggest that the world may have represented as much as 7% of the metals used by the Sector's numerous Forge worlds.

It is clear that at least one mercantile family worked to maintain assets on Cressid in conjunction with the Adeptus Mechanicus. The name of that family is lost to the ages, yet some portion of its legacy remains in the form of the countless ruined structures and unstable mines that litter Cressid's crust. Many bear an unusual iconography that overlaid the sigils of the Adeptus Mechanicus on the entrances to the structures and on surviving fragments of the ancient servitors that once worked there. Many of these components are not consistent with any current patterns, suggesting that these servitors may have been constructed using a template particularly focused upon mining work under these harsh conditions.

Analyses of the remains of the world's once vast structures suggest that the planet was never heavily inhabited. All indicators point to the systems being largely automated, depending primarily upon servitor labour, only relying upon humans for necessary maintenance and supervision. This may explain why there are no known surviving human populations that can trace their ancestry back to ancient times. Alternatively, Cressid's harsh environment could simply have killed any who tried to survive on the world without external support.



## COLLAPSE

Cressid was clearly incapable of functioning as a self-sustaining Imperial world. Once its support network was eliminated by the Sector's collapse, the few humans required to maintain operations were incapable of living under its harsh conditions. The planet supports very few native life forms. Most of those that have been identified are poisonous to humans without extensive processing. This lack of native life also means that there are no known local sources of promethium ore, necessary to power Imperial vehicles. In fact, with its relatively scarce amounts of organic substrates, there are a limited number of materials inhabitants can burn to generate heat and power.

It is believed that the mercantile interests were the first to collapse. Without their support, agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus attempted to keep the mines operational—largely through the use of vast numbers of servitors. Over time, as resources continued to dwindle, maintaining those servitors became a monumental task. Ultimately, there simply were not enough replacement parts to keep all of these critical systems fully functional. The Adeptus Mechanicus chose to concentrate its efforts on other worlds, effectively abandoning Cressid.

This left the world without any Imperial defences, save for the Watch Station maintained by the Deathwatch. The station's files confirm that even without Imperial assets, the planet was only rarely completely abandoned. The substantial concentration of relatively rare and complex minerals continued to command attention through the Age of Shadow. These included visits from several xenos races, including surveys of less than ten years duration by both the Eldar and the Tau. It is unclear why neither of these



racers remained upon the planet for an extended period of time. However, it is likely that both ultimately found the conditions far too unstable for colonisation. Records also indicate that there have been at least two attempts at colonisation by humans who actively oppose the Imperium, but neither of these groups has survived.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

In 801.M41, the Cressid Watch Station was attacked by human renegades. A routine Deathwatch patrol identified these renegades, and the Battle-Brother saw to their elimination. Unfortunately, later reports have suggested that those humans represented only a comparatively small portion of the renegades who currently inhabit the planet. Continued monitoring by the Watch Station indicates that there may be a sizeable population still resident.

Seismographic recordings from the Watch Station suggest that the renegades arrived when a significant impact hit the planet's surface. Corroborating that data with recordings generated by its auger arrays suggest that the impact was generated when an Imperial cruiser crashed upon Cressid's surface. Nobody has been able to get a precise count of the survivors, but they are likely to number into the hundreds. The vessel could well to be one lost from the Crusade. As the Watch Station has recorded no distress calls from these survivors, they are presumed to be deserters who turned away from their responsibility to the Imperium.

Crusade High Command routinely sends scout vessels out in search of any ships that have gone missing. While Cressid remains far from all three of the Crusade's Salients, it is present on Imperial charts. Presumably, Crusade vessels are obligated to investigate it for signs of life as part of these routine investigations. The Deathwatch is aware of this protocol, but—as they do not wish to have their Watch Station further disturbed—they have taken no action to accelerate this process.

These renegades suffered significant losses in the aftermath of their attack upon the Watch Station, but a few survivors have gone missing under other mysterious circumstance as well. It is unclear if these deaths were due to exposure to Cressid's inhospitable climate or if there might be other threats present on the world. There are no confirmed reports of xenos activity, but there may be elements that could have escaped notice. The Watch Station has been scheduled for more regular visits, so that the Deathwatch may respond to any new threats in a timely fashion.

## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

Cressid orbits near the edge of its star's habitable range, and is a frigid world as a consequence. It also has a remarkably low amount of surface water, most of which is concentrated as ice in the planet's small polar caps. Most of the remainder of the planet is a windswept desert. Powerful cyclonic windstorms regularly sweep across these barren regions, dramatically shifting the planet's sand and exposing hidden portions of bedrock. The Cressid Watch Station has recorded wind speeds in excess of 500 kilometres per hour, and they seldom drop beneath 100 kph.

The powerful storms have worn the surface of the planet virtually flat; there are no mountains and very few hills of any note. This factor undoubtedly contributes to the severity of the storms, as there are few surface elements to break them up. The changing geography also makes surface navigation extremely challenging. The Watch Station is the only feature on the planet that Imperial forces can consistently locate because of its triggered vox response. Often, even it is buried beneath hundreds of metres of sand. Other landmarks on the planet are most easily located based upon their position relative to the Watch Station.

## USING CRESSID

- The conflict between the renegade factions is over security. None of them are capable of explaining the disappearances of their comrades, especially given the purportedly barren nature of the planet. Each faction's leadership blames the other side for the deaths of their missing comrades. Both sides are wrong. Another group is on the world and has abducted the humans for their own purposes. The Watch Station has detected signs of xenos activity and transmits a request to Watch Fortress Erioch for Kill-team support. The Battle-Brothers must investigate among the renegades so that they can find out what other entities are active beneath the world's surface. Then, they must decide if it is worthwhile to defend these renegades from them, or if they can leave the human traitors to die to the treacherous xenos. In either outcome, the alien threat must eventually be purged.
- Elements of the Achilus Crusade have discovered the human renegade habitat on Cressid. The first group sent to retrieve them chose to join with the traitors rather than capture them. Rather than send endless additional forces, the Crusade vessel sends a request for Adeptus Astartes assistance to directly resolve the situation—a call which the Deathwatch intercepts. Why would anyone choose life under such nihilistic conditions over one of service to the God-Emperor? Tau, Tyranids, Enslavers, or even Daemons could be responsible for such unexpected changes of heart among even the most proven forces. Any of these threats would fall under the purview of the Deathwatch. The Kill-team is dispatched to identify the true source of this threat, as the influence of a foul xenos is the most likely culprit.
- Ever since the Imperial vessel crashed upon the planet's surface, the Watch Station has continued to detect low levels of minor seismic activity. The levels are not indicative of tectonic instability, but rather seem to indicate that something large—or many smaller things—is moving far beneath the world's surface. Did the massive impact wake something up deep below the planet's surface, or did some xenos creature arrive attached to the damaged vessel? Battle-Brothers must investigate the reports, to confirm the nature of this threat. In the process, they may need to investigate the remains of the Imperial craft and question some of the survivors. The threat might be burrowing Tyranids that were inadvertently carried to the world as spores, or it might be a Necron tomb world that has just begun to awaken.





The hostile conditions have left little opportunity for native life. Flora consists largely of fine scrub plants, which are as capable of growing while held aloft by the winds as they are when settled on Cressid's surface. During rare moments of calm, the plants settle to the ground and litter the surface of the endless desert. When the windstorms come, they are often blown and hurled by the sand. When the scrub becomes shredded by the storms, each part is capable of eventually growing into another plant. This adaptability has enabled them to become the world's dominant life.

Confirmed reports on native animal life recount little more than a variety of slow-moving insect analogues, which dwell within the sand dunes. These feed upon the fragments of scrub as well as one another. In principle, they could threaten the reserves of any humans, but they are extremely slow-moving and not known to swarm. Any stockpiled goods are far more likely to be lost to windstorm than they are to these small creatures. Visitors have little to fear from the predators—a rare mercy, given how deadly the weather conditions can be.

The planet's deep mines, however, represent a substantially different ecology from its surface. The environment remains absolutely frigid, but it is at least isolated from the scouring winds. Most of the passages were constructed millennia ago during the height of the Jericho Sector. Some of these interconnect with natural passages that are millions of years old. A variety of fungal life forms have taken root within these regions, taking advantage of the comparatively favourable conditions, though even these must function with very limited amounts of water. Cressid's unusual concentration of heavy metals dictates that the fungus-like growths have a biochemistry that is extremely toxic to humans. For humans to survive, even within the mines, they must have some means to synthesise food that is not dependent upon local agriculture.

Anecdotal reports suggest that there may be some larger fauna that dwell within the mine shafts. However, none of these reports are confirmed. This might represent a native life form that developed during a time when the world's surface had more favourable conditions or indicate that the planet's depths have a completely distinct ecology. Alternatively, due to the region's previous human habitation, these might be descendants of some organism that humanity inadvertently introduced during the mine construction.

## CULTURE

Even at the height of the Jericho Sector, Cressid was scarcely inhabited. Those who worked in the mines were brought from off-planet, as the costs of establishing a permanent colony were deemed irrecoverable. Most of the workers came as transfers from penal colonies. These poor wretches repaid their crimes against the Imperium by dying in the planet's depths.

A few of the remaining immigrant workers consisted of more highly trained miners and administrators. These individuals travelled to the world under contractual terms. A few were lucky enough to even survive, fulfil their contract, and flee the planet. The only others were followers of the Machine Cult who oversaw the necessary development and ongoing maintenance of the planet's mine system. Even among these devotees, service upon Cressid was considered a chore,

## MALLEUS VERITATIS

**Vessel Class:** Light Cruiser

**Launch Date:** 526.M34

**Crew Size:** 40,000 + Full Battalion

**Current Assignment:** Achilles Crusade

**Current Status:** At 942.789.M41, *Malleus Veritatis* was in orbit over Khazant, preparing to disembark a battalion of the Scintillan Guard for duty amidst the brutal conditions on the world's surface. Landing shuttles were prepped for launch when a significant force of Chaos vessels attacked from behind cover of one of the world's moons. The cruiser suffered the brunt of the attack as she had inadvertently separated from other Imperial fleet elements in preparation for the landing exercise.

*Malleus Veritatis* was observed to take substantial damage, when all contact was abruptly lost. However, there was no evidence of an explosion nor have any significant portions of the vessel been found in orbit. One observer's report indicates that the vessel's Warp engines may have been activated in the course of the damage, sending the craft into the Warp. Its current whereabouts remain unknown.

as the brutal winds left surface maintenance an endless and unrewarding task. Ultimately, none of these groups developed a significant culture and none left a legacy behind.

An enclave of Imperial deserters from the crashed vessel *Malleus Veritatis* represents the only current human habitation on Cressid. The community is not large, but over the past two decades it has become self-sustaining. This is largely due to the resources that survived their vessel's impact upon the world's surface. The light cruiser had a crew of thousands and was reasonably well provisioned for those numbers. It also had substantial capability for hydroponics growth as well as a corpse starch reclamation facility.

The majority of these deserters continue to live aboard the ruined hulk, which is now often buried beneath the world's endless sands. As the Watch Station has not detected any transmissions from the craft, it is assumed that either the astropath and the vessel's vox systems were both damaged or the current residents would prefer to dwell upon the planet rather than return to active duty with the Crusade. Under some weather conditions, Watch Station Cressid can detect transmissions from the internal vox systems on the ruined ship. Analysis of the recordings suggests that the deserters have divided into at least two factions, which are at war with one another. The reasons for this condition remain unclear but may simply be a consequence of their desperation.

When Battle-Brother Skorsa eliminated the renegades that attempted to attack Watch Station Cressid, his reports indicated that they were particularly well equipped. Further studies of the armaments recovered indicated that they were standard issue equipment for Scintillan Guard. There was little indication that any of the equipment had been defaced, so at least those units may have maintained their loyalty to the Imperium. His report has not yet been passed on to the Achilles Crusade. In the intervening years, the survivors may not have been able to maintain their loyalties. Encounters between Imperial forces and these deserters might turn decidedly violent.



# FALON'S LAMENT

*"The majesty of the Imperium's triumphs becomes ever more grandiose when it is compared against those efforts that have met with terrible failure."*

—Grand Missionary Agnar Clavan

Legends suggest that Falon's Lament is a cursed world. Over the millennia, every human effort to tame this beautiful world has met with terrible tragedy. No matter the benefactor, the era, or the resources invested, the efforts invariably lead to the loss of countless lives and a sense that all of the effort invested was squandered. In spite of this, the planet's natural resources and mysterious artefacts continue to make it an irresistibly tempting jewel. While it is currently under assault by Tyranid forces, these xenos are having little better luck with their attempts to seize the planet than humanity has had over the millennia. However, this time, the reasons for the difficulties have finally become clearer.

## HISTORY

Falon's Lament is inextricably tied with tale of Marquis Caleb Falon. During the height of the Jericho sector, he was the head of the Falon mercantile guild. The family maintained a powerful shipping trust that controlled the vast majority of intersystem commerce through nine of the Jericho Sector's richest worlds. The Marquis had a rather grand opinion of his own abilities and was believed to have substantially more money than sense. In an effort to establish new markets and ensure his legacy, Falon chose to sponsor the founding of a new colony world. After substantial research and bidding to obtain the rights, the Marquis received a writ of colonisation for a world designated X-alpha 782. Preliminary reports indicated that the world had ideal gravity, climate, and natural resources for human habitation.

The Marquis renamed the world Falon's Pride, and promptly committed a significant portion of his guild's resources to the colonisation effort. Initial efforts recruited a disproportionate number of members of noble families from the Jericho Sector. Many younger sons and daughters were granted substantial farmstead rights to the world in exchange for an agreement to numerous years of service. So many of these overly generous grants were made, in fact, that settlement rights to more than 80% of the planet's habitable surface were made prior to any vessel actually travelling to the system.

When colonisation efforts began in earnest, the true extent of this folly became obvious. Even with his substantial fleet of vessels, the Marquis was unable to provide necessary homesteading equipment to all of the colonists. Upon arrival the greater error was soon apparent—very few of the colonists had ever lived outside of a hive city. The majority of the new colonists were incapable of agricultural work or of successfully hunting any game animals.

By the end of the first winter, more than 90% of the colonists had died. The remaining 10% were desperate to escape from their contracts, but after investing so many resources into the initial effort, the Falon family lacked even the resources to retrieve the survivors. In the end, the Falon house collapsed and its members were sold into servitude. There were no known surviving colonists, and the residents of the sector renamed the world Falon's Lament.

## COLLAPSE

While Falon's attempt ended in catastrophe for his family and his colonists, it was not the last attempt to colonise the world. Tales of the effort, along with its catastrophic ending, spread

### Status Report: Falon's Lament

**ATT:** Watch-Commander Mordigael

**Priority:** ++Crimson++

**Date Code:** 7215817.M41

++Encrypted data enclosed++



Commander,

During deployment, our Drop Pods were subject to heavy fire from an unexpected source. A series of regular, massive black structures were visible from orbit. Upon atmospheric entry, these proved to include powerful anti-aircraft elements, which resulted in serious damage to two of the Drop Pods. When we examined one of the structures from ground level, we observed a number of insectoid drones, over a metre in length, crawling across the surface of the structures. We later saw the structures fire upon Tyranid forces. Consequently, we do not believe that these represent previously unknown Tyranid biomorphs.

Regarding the Tyranid forces, we were most surprised at their relative scarcity. We saw very few regions that appeared transformed to the characteristic Tyranid ecosystem. Further, there was no evidence of any locations with large concentrations of the creatures who mindlessly consume plant and animal life. It is unclear if this is because of the action of Falon's Lament's newly revealed defences or if it might be due to an unknown biological contaminant in the native life.

II: LOST WORLDS OF  
THE JERICHO REACH







## USING FALON'S LAMENT

- Since the arrival of Tyranid forces within the Falon's Lament system, the Deathwatch has had no automated systems capable of reporting on the invasion's progress. Regular updates can only be obtained by regularly inserting Kill-teams. The last group sent to the system failed to transmit a report of their mission and also missed their scheduled retrieval. The Battle-Brothers are tasked with compiling a current report on the invasion as well attempting to discover the fate of the last Kill-team. Any survivors, or at least the Progenoid glands of any fallen, must be recovered. When the Space Marines investigate their lost comrades, they discover a well-blazed trail leading to a massive cave system. Could this be a creation of burrowing Tyranids, or might it be connected to the world's newly revealed defenders?
- Preliminary analysis of the planet's defensive systems suggests that they might be associated with the Necrons. Visual reports are largely consistent with known examples of the xenos subtype designated as Scarabs. The Kill-team is charged with the task of capturing a Scarab, preferably alive. It is then to be returned to Watch Fortress Erioch for additional analysis. During the course of their mission, should the opportunity arrive, it is requested that they attempt to gauge the overall effectiveness of the defenders' weapon systems. If any of the armaments may be recovered, they should be. That way they may also be subjected to a rigorous analysis at the Watch Fortress.
- During the last Kill-team insertion, the transit vessel detected some incongruous readings from Falon's Lament. These strongly indicate that the world's orbit has shifted by more than five degrees. Such a change would require the exertion of extraordinary planetary forces and are likely to induce substantial climate change on the planet. The Battle-Brothers are charged with confirming this change and identifying its cause. If the change can be reversed, they are to take whatever measures are necessary to do so. If resolving this issue requires additional resources, those must be identified so that an alternative plan may be implemented.

swiftly throughout the Sector. So quickly, in fact, that many sought to follow up on it. After all, in spite of the deaths and the miscalculations, most believed that there may have been significant resources left behind on the planet.

Interstellar travel is expensive. Hauling heavy equipment in addition to passengers and vital supplies make the total cost of an interstellar trip astronomically expensive. The fact that the colony world had a waiting supply of agricultural equipment in place—even if it was spread unevenly across the planet's surface—made the world even more appealing. Numerous groups attempted to settle the world, each giving it their own new name. As the Jericho Sector began its rapid spiral into collapse, several groups of refugees even tried their hand at colonisation.

Ultimately, every single attempt ended in failure. For many, the lack of training was a substantial problem. For others, the amount and quality of the equipment that Falon had left behind led to disaster. In a few cases, groups that reportedly made landfall simply vanished without a trace. Some legends indicate that psychic echoes of the first colonists—or perhaps those of an ancient race long gone—led to the destruction of these newcomers. Others stories continue to proclaim the overall incompetence of these desperate colonists as the ultimate reasons for their failure. In any case, the world has remained Falon's Lament in Imperial records and in the sector's stories.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

In 811.M41, a Deathwatch Dark Hunter passed through the system as part of a routine inspection. During the course of its scans, the drone vessel discovered that there were numerous Tyranid void-capable organisms in orbit around Falon's Lament. In keeping with standard orders, the craft immediately made best time back to Watch Fortress Erioch. Analysis of its recordings identified a hive ship, at least three

cruiser-class organisms and too many escort drones to reach a consistent count. At this time, the world was unquestionably the target of a major invasion.

Falon's Lament is far from any of the Achilles Crusade's frontlines. Even if the Crusade were adequately supplied for its current objectives, it is improbable that the Crusade could send resources to this distant world in time to make a difference. The Deathwatch lacks the resources to repel a Tyranid invasion during its later stages, but concerted Space Marine efforts have successfully stopped Tyranid attacks in the past. As the time of initial attack and the success of the world's native defenders were unknown, a decision was made based upon the security of the Reach as a whole. If a substantial Tyranid subfleet were allowed unlimited access to the resources of this world, it might later sweep into either the Acheron or Canis Salients. As part of an effort to prevent this, the Deathwatch dispatched three Kill-teams to the world in the hopes that they might be able to repel or at least delay the Tyranid invasion.

When they arrived, the Space Marines were stunned by their discoveries. Initial imagery from space showed that the world's surface had substantially changed. Numerous large black stripes were visible that encircled the globe. There were few atmospheric signs of a successful Tyranid assault, even though it had been more than six months since the Dark Hunter's initial observations. Upon landing, the situation took an even more unusual turn. Those black lines visible from space were, in fact, automated defensive systems. These were clearly of xenos origin, and had been effectively blunting the Tyranid assault. The systems exhibited no reticence in regards to attacks upon the Space Marine forces, but the Battle-Brothers were able to exploit these systems in such a way that they managed to destroy the Tyranid hive ship. Since its destruction, the ongoing Tyranid assault has floundered.



## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

By most human standards, Falon's Lament is a beautiful and bounteous world. Its climate is largely temperate, its weather mild, and its growing seasons are much longer than its mild winters. The planet's native fauna is largely non-threatening. Preliminary tests have also shown that few of the native plants are capable of effectively competing against terrestrial strains. This combination suggests that the world should be ideal for colonisation—and also relatively easy prey for a Tyranid assault.

Of course, even these relatively mild conditions might seem overwhelming for those who are unfamiliar with life in an unforgiving environment. This factor certainly contributed to the collapse of several of the colonisation efforts. However, the planet's harsher seasons are exacerbated by the way that its water supply is organised. There are no major oceans upon the world's surface and only a limited number of significant rivers. Most of the fresh water on Falon's Lament is concentrated along those rivers and their estuaries. These provide areas that are most fertile for agriculture.

However, those same regions naturally have some of the densest concentrations of native life. Before these regions can be properly settled, they must be thoroughly cleared. The portions of the planet's surface that are less congested with native life only have adequate access to water during the world's rainy seasons—about half of its solar year. For the remainder of the year, there is no ground water and only limited access to well water. This dry period often begins abruptly and can be brutal to those who are not adequately prepared for it.

Because of this cyclic nature to world's water supply, many of its native life forms are migratory. These include vast flocks of flying herbivores, as well as a few ground-based predator species that stalk the airborne prey as they feed. Perhaps the greatest threat among these is one known as the stobrox. It most resembles a 20 kilogram cat with extended ears and powerful hind limbs, which grant it a vertical leap of more than 3 metres. A few of the surviving colonial reports indicate that these specimens may attack humans, but only when cornered.

Since 811.M41, two additional significant threats have factored into the world's ecology. When the Tyranid invasion began, the entire ecology of their xenos threats emerged. These included the broad range of hostile biomorphs characteristic of Hive Fleet Dagon in addition to the structural elements including spore chimneys and capillary towers. However, for reasons that remain unclear, none of these have been able to garner a consistent foothold. The massive structures that characterise a Tyranid attack are either absent or much smaller than normally observed. Without these structures to breed new specimens, the vast majority of the attacking biomorphs arrive via mycetic spore rather than breeding upon the surface. As the hive fleet has begun to deplete its resources, the ongoing invasion has faltered.

At the same time as the Tyranids launched their attacks, the world's hidden defences became active. Analysts suggest that these likely emerged from deep beneath the planet's crust. These devices—clearly of xenos origin—extend in linear fashion from pole to pole. Massive weapons batteries

have slowed the Tyranid assault and could be working to substantially restrict the incursion. Additional analyses have suggested that related subterranean structures might be responsible for the failure of the hive fleet's capillary towers and brood nests.

Based upon their structure, armament, and unexpected appearance, Deathwatch analysts believe that these defences are of Necron origin. However, there has been limited evidence to confirm this. There are no confirmed sightings of Necron Warriors or other more sophisticated specimens. A few sightings have been recorded which are suggestive of Necron Scarabs. These reports are purely verbal but did come from respected Space Marines of the Deathwatch, so are likely accurate. If so, it is simply a matter of time before additional Necron forces appear.

## CULTURE

Prior to the Tyranid attack, there were no known human inhabitants upon Falon's Lament. Both the attackers and the newly revealed xenos defenders are extremely hostile to any human habitation. With the exception of the occasional Kill-team, it is highly improbable that there are any surviving humans living upon the world's surface. Consequently, any discussion of the cultures upon this world must focus upon the xenos.

The Tyranid assault appears to have stalled at a relatively early stage of the invasion effort. The infestation has been largely incapable of establishing a solid foothold. There remains a relatively diverse spread of different biomorphs. However, these specimens are not present in the frequencies more typical of an established invasion effort. For example, there are a disproportionately high number of the larger Tyranid specimens, including Carnivores and Tyrannofexes, relative to the numbers of Termagants and Hormagaunts.

Analysts believe that this disparity is due to the limited number of brood nests and capillary towers upon the planet's surface. Those specimens that might normally be produced using the target world's biomass are dramatically reduced in frequency, while those introduced by Mycetic Spore as the invasion continues are still appearing. This suggests that the hive fleet may have begun to deplete its available reserves of biomass—or it could be a sign that this invasion effort is following an atypical pattern. Since these data were delivered to Magos Vatsoon of the Divisionis Biologis, he has repeatedly requested Kill-teams be deployed to the world to compile additional specific bits of data.

The recently revealed xenos defensive systems represent another threat, but the precise nature of this peril remains unclear. A previously unknown xenos civilisation active within the Jericho Reach represents a significant danger to the Crusade's efforts. If that force possesses technology sufficiently advanced to hamper a Tyranid incursion, the risk is even more substantial. Additional data regarding these systems must be compiled so that their origin, capabilities, and weaknesses can be identified.



# KLAHA

*"Fire cannot purge those who are of the fire."*

—Nil'kan, Battle-Brother of the Salamanders, seconded to the Deathwatch

Classified as a dead world by Imperial charts, some argue that Klaha has not yet begun to live. The planet is extremely active from a geological perspective. In addition to the frequent quakes, Klaha's surface is littered with active volcanoes, which spew steady streams of ash and sulphur into the atmosphere as they unleash lava upon its surface. This combination suggests that the planet is relatively young, or it might be a consequence of an unusual combination of minerals inherent in its nature. The high level of venting gasses and geothermal activities also pushes the planet's ambient temperature well beyond the range that is acceptable for an unprotected human. Only the world's substantial mineral resources have drawn any significant attention. Were it not for those resources, the world might well have been completely ignored.

## HISTORY

Even during the height of the Jericho Sector's golden age, there were more worlds suited for colonisation than there were people to send. Of all the teeming masses, only a subset is willing to leave the comforts of an established world and venture forth to an unknown wilderness. Of those who might choose such a life, only a smaller group has the necessary training and physical stamina to be effective in such a role.

It comes as no surprise, then, that only the most likely worlds for colonisation ever saw serious efforts. Nevertheless, in spite of its significant natural resources, there are no records of any serious Imperial efforts to colonise Klaha. This is also in spite of numerous recorded exploratory missions and dozens of reports concerning its mineral wealth.

It is clear that, at some time or another, there were multiple organisations interested in identifying some way to extract Klaha's natural resources. According to the aforementioned records, this included at least three mercantile houses, a group affiliated with the Adeptus Mechanicus, and agents of the Adeptus Administratum. Clearly, all of these organisations sought an effective means to extract the world's vast mineral wealth through some technique that had a manageable cost. Certainly, the exploratory missions were successful, as several offer insights into the beautiful phenomena associated with an eruption of the world's heavy-metal laden volcanoes.

However, there is no evidence that any group succeeded at actually establishing a settlement. The world's toxic atmosphere

*Classification: Achilus Resources*

*Date: 987816.M41*

*Author: Rogue Trader Covington Arcadius*

*Subject: Resource Rich Planetary Investigation*

*Recipient: Crusade High Command*

*My Lords,*

*Research into old survey information indicates that a planet within the Klaha system may present an extraordinary wealth of natural resources. These include a number of rare elements which could be instrumental in keeping the Crusade well supplied with vital equipment. As supply lines have continued to become ever more pressed, I believe that it is vital that additional local resources be identified and exploited with all due haste. With your permission, my Dynasty would like to launch an exploratory mission to that system with the intention of founding a new mining colony.*

*The Arcadius Dynasty has had significant historic success in such undertakings. Mining operations on three worlds in the Calixis Sector were begun by my ancestors. I believe that we continue to have the expertise necessary to initiate a similar operation with the resources we currently have at hand within the Jericho Reach.*

*I realise that the world is far from any of the active fronts and that there are a limited number of support elements available for such a mission. However, we would need a minimum of Crusade resources. Two or three escort vessels with their standard complement of armsmen should prove adequate defence for our initial exploration. When the colony is established, we would only need a skeletal force to provide us with additional defences. Once production begins, I am confident that we could reach an agreement to provide our requisite tithe to the Crusade at twenty percent over the standard rate.*

*Yours, in the light of the God-Emperor,  
Rogue Trader Arcadius*





in conjunction with its geologic instability clearly made the task overwhelming for any Imperial assets. Of course, given those same dangers, it is possible—albeit unlikely—that some group might have established a perilous foothold which vanished over the intervening millennia. Certainly, the world's environment is more than capable of destroying any evidence, but even given the fragmentary nature of the Jericho Sector's records, it seems improbable that such a massive feat of engineering could be completely forgotten.

## COLLAPSE

Over the millennia since the Jericho Sector's collapse, the world has seen more habitation than it ever did in known history. However, that habitation is not a product of the Imperium's efforts. Another organisation has successfully begun mining operations on this hostile world. Their success is due, in large part, to the fact that they are capable of using a technological base distinct from that of the Imperium. Heretek forces successfully established a mining outpost and manufactorum atop one of the world's most active volcanoes, which they have named Mount Pride. Only through their ties to the Immaterium and its tools have they been able to begin to effectively exploit this unforgiving world.

Deathwatch records indicate that this enormous manufacturing fortress has been in place at least as long as the world's Watch Station. That lone Imperial structure in this accursed system is located on one of Klaha's many

moons. The facility uses passive scanning capabilities and carefully regulates its power consumption, as part of the designer's efforts to keep it from being noticed by those devoted to the Ruinous Powers. There are no records of it having come under assault by Chaos forces, but, on at least two occasions, vessels sent to recover data from it ran afoul of the blasphemers. It is unclear if the Watch Station was placed in the system specifically to observe the facility at Mount Pride or if there may have been additional reasons for selecting this location.

Given Klaha's extreme conditions, it is hardly surprising that much of its surface is barren. In spite of this fact, other forces have shown a distinct interest in the world. Watch Station Klaha has recorded vessels of unknown xenos origin intruding into the system at least twice since its activation. In both instances, forces originating from the Heretek facility engaged and repelled the intruders during actions on the world's surface. Due to necessary limitations on the Watch Station's scanning capacity, little additional information is available about these conflicts.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

In 809.M41, Watch Station Klaha detected the first of a series of massive energy fluctuations from deep beneath the world's surface. A second, similar surge came two years later. Nineteen additional surges of varying magnitude, but increasing frequency, have been noted since that time. Each of these fluctuations has been associated with significant seismic and volcanic activity. This includes the reactivation of nine volcanic ranges, which had been inert through the entirety of Imperial records in the system.

Since the second spike, the Hereteks and their allies have begun the construction of a facility in geosynchronous orbit directly over Mount Pride. The capabilities and purpose of this satellite remain unknown, but Inquisitorial requests for additional information have been filed. It is likely that the ground-based facilities have suffered some damage during this time of geological instability, although there is no hard evidence to corroborate this theory.

Shortly before the Watch Station identified the orbital construction, it also detected evidence of additional surface activities. Due to the nature of the energy types, magnitude of the flow, and planetary location, it is unlikely that this activity was directly affiliated with the Mount Pride facility. Rather, analysts have begun to conclude that this activity must be affiliated with another group—most likely one of xenos origin or exploiting technology inconsistent with that of the Imperium or known Heretek techniques.

It has been more than three centuries since Watch Station Klaha last detected any unknown xenos vessels within the system. While possible, it is unlikely that any colonists have dwelt upon the hostile surface without detection for that length of time. This suggests that this is the work of a xenos force capable of interplanetary transit without the use of voidcraft, or that there is something that has lain dormant beneath Klaha's surface for a very long time.





## USING KLAHA

- Klaha's manuforum is far from the Crusade's fronts, effectively defended from its actions by this isolation. While it has significant defences, they are largely unprepared for the type of incursion that a well-drilled Deathwatch Kill-team could execute. Assigning a team to destroy either the incomplete orbital station or to compromise the massive refinery's protections against Mount Pride's heat could effectively eliminate either facility. Success on such a mission would have significant repercussions for the Achilus Crusade, as the Stigmartus would lose a critical component in their supply chain.
- Any unknown xenos presence within the Jericho Reach represents another threat that falls under the purview of the Deathwatch. A Kill-team might be dispatched to investigate this threat and, if possible, overcome it before it becomes any greater. Attempting to eliminate these foul xenos without attracting the attention of the Chaos-aligned forces would significantly complicate matters. Alternatively, the Kill-team might identify some means of intensifying the conflict between the xenos and the Heretek, so that one side would be substantially weakened and the other eliminated. In this way, the Kill-team could effectively destroy both threats over the course of a single protracted mission.

## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

By standard Imperial protocols, Klaha just barely falls within the range of habitable systems. Its location is well within the temperate range for its star type, the atmosphere contains enough oxygen to be breathable, and surface gravity is well within tolerance range for human civilisation. The toxicity of its atmosphere and geology, the scarcity of water, and the extreme weather patterns due to its constant geological activity scarcely factor into that analysis. The world's mineral wealth more than offsets the challenges imposed by the environmental issues.

Establishing more than a foothold, however, could be extremely challenging for any potential colonists. The toxic nature of the atmosphere would require any humans who lived on Klaha to constantly wear rebreathers or remain within an environmentally controlled space. More than eighty percent of the planet's surface is covered by dunes made up of sand and light-weight volcanic ash, which are poorly suited to large construction efforts. Water is a precious commodity; what little surface water exists is heavily contaminated by heavy metals that are toxic to humans. Most of the remaining surface is made up of mountainous regions, which also require careful planning and construction for any large-scale habitats.

Clearly, humanity is not the only species that has found the planet's environment challenging. There are few indicators of any native life on the planet. The earliest surveys of the system found only trace evidence of single-celled organisms. Even this evidence was initially inconclusive, and suggested that Klaha might simply be too dangerous for life as we know it to survive its environs. Later research, also dating to the Jericho Sector's golden age, showed evidence that more complex forms of life might have been present in the past and suggested that some might yet remain. Notably, all conclusions were inferences made based upon secondary data. No complex life forms were ever identified or recovered.

Much more recently, Watch Station Klaha has observed movement patterns upon the planet's surface. A number of these observations are in locations distant from the Mount Pride complex. This data is far more suggestive of a large group of herd creatures moving across the world's surface than of simple life forms. It is improbable that such a large group of creatures could spontaneously develop, but these recordings are the earliest

evidence of surface life. More precise information could offer far greater details and might present a credible explanation for this. However, due to Klaha's volatile atmospheric conditions, these observations would need to be made by agents sent to the planet's surface. The Heretek presence also represents too significant a threat for this to be a viable option at this time.

A previously unknown life form, particularly present in substantial numbers, most strongly suggests the presence of a sentient species intruding upon Klaha. Among known xenos, a Tyranid assault might be the most likely explanation for such movement, but Watch Station Klaha has recorded no evidence of any Tyranid craft within the system. Alternatively, it is possible that some native organisms might have hibernated beneath the planet's surface for thousands of years. If this is the case, it could be a survivor from an ancient and very different geological age. Alternatively, it might be that the specimens maintain an unusual developmental cycle that requires an extended period of isolation.

In any case, the presence of life could be an indicator that Klaha might have untapped organic mineral resources in addition to the known heavy metal ones. Such precious commodities would only enhance the world's value for mining and manufacturing purposes. Should this information reach the Achilus Crusade, some of its hierarchy might be interested in establishing a fortification on the world. As Deathwatch members prefer to keep the locations of their Watch Stations secret from the greater Imperium, attempts to study the system might be opposed by Kill-teams.

## CULTURE

The only confirmed sentient life upon Klaha is the Heretek complex known as Fury's Kiln. The fortification is centred atop Mount Pride, an active volcano whose crater lip is located more than eight kilometres above the planet's typical surface level. The thin atmosphere is superheated by the volcano's constant action and made toxic by the steadily venting noxious gasses.

Mount Pride's constant stream of lava serves as the primary source of energy and raw materials for the blasphemous manuforum of the complex known as the Weave of Fire. This enormous complex extends across the pool of molten lava and over the crater's lip. The gasses that emerge from



# MACKENSEE

*"Beware beauty as much as you fear the hideous, for beauty may hold you in contempt and destroy you after it lulls you into a false sense of contentment."*

—Grand Missionary Agnar Clavan

By all appearances, Mackensee should be a paradise for humanity. Her climate, gravity, atmosphere, and native life forms are all well suited to human habitation. Every exploratory craft that has surveyed the world has ranked the planet as an ideal candidate for colonisation efforts. In spite of that, during the height of the Jericho Sector, repeated attempts at colonisation all met with disaster. Ironically, Tyranid forces seem to be having little better luck as they attempt to devour the world for their own purposes. Legends suggest that psychic echoes of those who first visited the world yet defend it, but xenos forces are at work, attempting to hold the world against any who might take it from them.

## HISTORY

Over the course of M33 and M34, there were at least four discrete attempts to colonise Mackensee. The world's ideal climate, abundant natural resources, and stable planetary conditions all made it an ideal candidate. From an initial review, only its location, far from the more civilised worlds of the Jericho Sector, made it seem like a poor choice. However, many potential colonists viewed the relative isolation as a significant asset, hoping to find a place where there would be a minimum of oversight and interference.

In each of these instances, the initial landings went well. Colonists quickly established enclaves and began the process of taming the wilderness. By all accounts, the world was receptive to each attempt. Agricultural efforts using plants and animals of Terran lineage seemed well suited to flourish on this new world. Reports were sent back to the colony's sponsors indicating that initial signs suggested tithing might begin well ahead of schedule. None of these attempts reported any unforeseen difficulties, and all noted that they were capable of making use of the world's abundant resources much sooner than expected, minimising the requirements to import additional supplies.

Unfortunately, every one of these attempts later met with disaster. The entire population of the first effort died to a previously unknown native infection, their bodies discovered only when a supply vessel arrived. The second colony was destroyed when a previously unknown fault line gave way and the entire enclave sank deep beneath the world's oceans. The third colony inexplicably vanished, leaving no trace of their existence behind. Repeated investigations into its disappearance have yielded no clues, though ancient records suggest that theorists on many of the worlds within the Jericho Sector had explanations. There have been no further attempts at colonisation since that time, as the Sector began its descent into oblivion shortly thereafter.

the magma are captured so that trace components—which would normally contribute to the world's toxic atmosphere—are isolated for use in production. Other rare minerals are extracted directly from the lava, which is piped directly through the complex's enormous refinery systems.

Imperial sources have not confirmed the precise make-up of the refinery's staff. Imagery and intercepted communications obtained from Watch Station Klaha indicate that it includes several Dark Magos, an indeterminate number of servitors, and numerous Daemon Engines—including numerous Defilers and at least two Soul Grinders. A few Inquisitorial analysts believe that a number of the communiqués make reference to Daemons that assist with the facility as well, but that conclusion remains controversial.

Transports visit the station several times over the course of each solar year. These are believed to deliver necessary supplies for the facility and to accept delivery of materials for use by the forces of the Stigmaturs. The exact nature of these munitions is unclear, but—based upon atmospheric sampling data—they are likely to include a number of key components for plasma weaponry, as well as several varieties of armour. If that is correct, eliminating this facility would play a significant role in reducing the overall combat effectiveness of cultist forces near the Hadex Anomaly.

The orbital station, currently under construction, does not appear to be capable of adequately defending itself at this time. Reports indicate that several Wolfpack Raiders are kept in the system at all times to provide void-based protection to the satellite as it completes construction. Further analysis is necessary to determine the nature of this structure. It is likely intended to serve as both a defensive outpost and as a transit point so that transports can more swiftly transfer cargoes from the world. Eliminating such a station prior to its completion could strike a meaningful blow against the forces of the Ruinous Powers.

On two recent occasions, the Raiders committed a significant number of shuttles to action upon the planet's surface, far from the refinery. Watch Station Klaha detected the launches, and the return of those shuttles, but was unable to resolve the nature of any conflict upon the world's surface. Based upon the transit times and direction, it is likely that they travelled to a location at which the prospective xenos life forms are most active. This suggests, but does not confirm, that the Dark Magos are concerned about the identity and nature of the xenos threat.

## II: LOST WORLDS OF THE JERICHO REACH





## COLLAPSE

Once the Jericho Sector collapsed, there were few human institutions capable of attempting to establish a colonial outpost. As the world lacked any known sentient inhabitants, there is no record of any activity on this isolated world. However, those who dwelt within the region did not completely forget about Mackensee. Several cultures have legends of a deserted paradise world where people might flee to escape the collapse of their homes.

It is believed that more than one cult leader may even have assembled people and taken their precious resources to lead a colonial expedition to just such a paradise. If so, it is clear that none of these efforts ever amounted to a successful mission. In all likelihood, such hucksters either stole the assets or were exposed and suffered their just punishments. It is possible that one or more small groups of nobles might have launched an expedition with the last of their dwindling reserves, but if this was attempted it met with failure. Alternatively, a force affiliated with the Ruinous Powers might have travelled to this world and turned it into a corrupted pit of despair, but no traces of such efforts remain. Ultimately, there is absolutely no concrete evidence that any human groups have ever successfully established a foothold upon the world.

Instead, by all appearances, Mackensee's natural resources were left fallow for millennia. During this time, even the remains of those who had once attempted to tame this beautiful world deteriorated into dust. While it is possible that a xenos group might have visited the world at this time, there is no known evidence to confirm their intrusion. If such an effort was made, it clearly met with the same results experienced by humanity millennia earlier.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

In 652816.M41, a vessel carrying desperate refugees from Pilgrim's Loss arrived in the Mackensee system. The craft represented the last desperate efforts of a small outpost that had fled before the Tyranid forces in that system. Upon their arrival, they were horrified to discover that this world was also under assault by Hive Fleet Dagon. Rather than attempt to land within the system, they immediately fled once more, travelling this time to Beseritor, where they were able to report the attacks to Imperial authorities—both Pilgrim's Loss and Mackensee were under the influence of the Shadow of the Warp; communication from both locations was impossible.

The Deathwatch intercepted the reports that were sent on to Achilus Crusade High Command. In order to identify the full extent of the Tyranid infestation, Watch Commander Mordigael immediately dispatched a Kill-team on a reconnaissance mission to Mackensee. By the time of their arrival, it had been more than six months since the pilgrims initially visited the world. To their tremendous surprise, they discovered that the invasion force had made very little progress in its efforts.

The Kill-team's visit to Mackensee was necessarily brief. Their mission was to quickly survey the world and identify the stage of Tyranid progress, so that a decision could be made about the viability of future engagements. A consequence of



their quick assessment was that they missed a critical point of analysis. Eldar Pathfinders—of Craftworld Alaitoc—had actively defended the world from Tyranid assault. Mackensee is a Maiden World, which waits in pristine isolation for the day when the Eldar might have a need for it. These Craftworld Eldar fulfil their duty to protect the world from Tyranid incursion just as their ancestors defended it against human colonists. However, the Eldar's reserves are limited. It is unclear how long they can resist the boundless hunger of the Tyranid invaders.

## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

By virtually any measure, Mackensee's natural environment represents a world that could easily become a paradise for any humans fortunate enough to enjoy it. The soil, air, and water are all free from toxic contaminants. The oceans have a salinity level very close to that of ancient Terra's. The world's temperate zones are broad and filled with ample water. Its life forms are largely compatible with human biochemistry, such that the flora and fauna are almost all non-toxic and even well-suited to the human palate. Mackensee's seasons are relatively mild and her ecosystems are all quite stable. In short, any humans fortunate enough to live upon the planet would have very little reason to ever wish to leave it.

Mackensee's oceans are vast, covering more than half of the world's surface. While there are two large continents, a substantial portion of the world's surface area is made up of island chains. Most of these islands are spread within the



## USING MACKENSEE

- When members of the Divisio Biologis discovered how slowly the Tyranid invasion on Mackensee was advancing, they immediately began to pray that there could be a biochemical element that had slowed the advance. Several Magos have implored the Deathwatch to dispatch a Kill-team to identify the root cause behind this slowed assault. Soon after their arrival, the Kill-team discovers signs of the Eldar presence. However, the Eldar are no more willing to cooperate with potential human settlers than they are with the Tyranids. They intend to hold fast to a world that is part of their race's ancient tradition. Of course, if the Eldar are eliminated, the Tyranid assault can continue without interference. Further, the Eldar are unwilling to allow any humans to spread word of their presence on the planet. They are unwilling to permit to depart any Battle-Brothers who are aware of the true nature of Mackensee's defences.
- A Watch Station just beyond the boundaries of the Shadow in the Warp detects a small Tyranid fleet in transit towards Mackensee. A Kill-team is dispatched to prevent its cargo from reaching that world. For even if the Eldar still hold it, they have not attempted to spread their taint beyond its boundaries. In contrast, if the Tyranids successfully devour this world, its biomass could be used to devastate worlds currently occupied by citizens of the Imperium. At the same time, if any of the Battle-Brothers have managed to establish peaceful relations with Eldar forces, they might be able to persuade them to assist in their efforts to repel the Tyranid fleet. Otherwise, the Kill-team must attempt to overcome the hive ship and its drone defenders without the assistance of any significant voidcraft.
- During the course of a mission on a far distant world, the Kill-team discovers an unspeakably ancient plinth. Investigation identifies it as being of human construction, but it far predates the time of The Great Crusade. After thorough analysis, the Battle-Brothers discover a connection between the artefact and the world of Mackensee. When they reach the world, a party of Eldar immediately establish contact, as their coming has long-since been foretold. The Eldar are aware of the artefact and admit that there might be other reasons for their presence within this region of space. There is a greater threat beginning to emerge throughout the Sector—one which their people fought in an era long before the Fall. They are willing to assist the Deathwatch in their mission against this foe, in exchange for more immediate help against an expected rain of mycetic spores.

planet's temperate and tropical zones, and represent more than forty percent of the planet's arable land. These regions enjoy the constant, gentle breezes from her oceans as well as lengthy growing seasons. The second and third Mackensee colonisation attempts targeted island chains within this zone.

Most of the world's large plants, which are analogous to the forests of ancient Terra, are located upon the continents. The first and third colonial efforts targeted continental regions, with the intent of harvesting these plants for the early stage construction of their enclaves. According to initial reports, the woods were hardy and resistant to the planet's weather even after harvesting. They also appeared to be well suited for use within STC techniques, according to preliminary reports generated as part of repeated exploratory efforts.

There are two endemic threats on Mackensee, both of which present challenges to humanity. Neither of these are insurmountable, but both must be considered. The first is the world's microbiology. The world's moist air—particularly near its oceans—contains a broad range of microbes. While the vast majority are harmless to humans, a small subset can become extremely effective parasites. Of these, an even smaller portion is capable of inducing severe illness, which can lead to death if left untreated. Standard medicae protocols can easily overcome this threat, but such equipment is not always available to an isolated colony.

The second major threat includes a number of Mackensee's top tier predators. Just as humans are capable of feeding upon the native flora and fauna, these aggressive xenofoms are equally capable of surviving a meal of human flesh. The threats vary substantially across the world's surface, as different organisms seem to have adapted to the role within its varied ecosystems. However, most are fast moving, strong, extremely aggressive, and quite hardy. Many are also arboreal creatures, which are prone to launching swift attacks against prey on the ground. None of the

known species are resistant to weapons fire, but all can represent a significant threat to an unprotected and unprepared human.

Of course, the gravest of current threats is not from the world, but instead the one imposed by the Tyranid swarm. As these xenos continue to intrude upon the system, they have spread their foul spores upon its surface. Though the invasion appears to have stalled at a relatively early stage, their mark is present in many of the biomes across Mackensee's surface and deep below it as well. Dozens of capillary towers have already emerged. Seismological surveys can quickly reveal subterranean activity, the sky is often filled with Gargoyles, and there are portions of the planet where all of the native life has been eradicated.

## CULTURE

The Eldar of Craftworld Alaitoc have defended the world of Mackensee—a human designation—for millennia. Once a barren rock, in times long gone the Eldar seeded it, so that it could eventually develop into a world well-suited for colonisation by their race. Long ago, it completed its transformation, turning into one of the undisturbed Maiden Worlds reserved for use by the Eldar civilisation. Those of Craftworld Alaitoc see this planet as a portion of their birthright and defend it so that someday their descendants might be able to use it as their long dead ancestors foresaw.

Due to the stringent nature of Eldar culture, there are many individuals who turn away from its rigid path system. Those who leave their Craftworld, often to explore the galaxy, are known as Outcasts. Rangers are a subset of Outcasts, who travel the webway freely but maintain an allegiance to their Craftworld. In times of conflict, Rangers often assemble to scout out enemy fortifications and disrupt enemy forces from concealment.





Their skill is such that Eldar Aspect Warriors are often able to overcome their opponents much more quickly when working in conjunction with Rangers.

A subset of Rangers become so devoted to the path of the Outcast that they become lost upon it, just as Exarchs or Farseers become lost upon the path of the Warrior and the Seer. These Pathfinders become masters of concealment and incomparable snipers, through application of abilities that may be based upon the race's inherent psychic nature.

A small group of Pathfinders, in conjunction with a much larger group of Rangers, have maintained the responsibility of defending Mackensee against all attackers. It is their expertise that led to the failed human colonial efforts. They have also worked tirelessly to stall the Tyranid incursion upon the world. Their resources, however, have begun to flag against the untold hordes of encroaching xenos. Though their successes to date are impressive, unless the Craftworld begins to contribute additional resources to the world's defence, the future remains uncertain.

As the Eldar continue to oppose the invasion with precision and through carefully executed plans, the Tyranid presence appears to have become terribly disjointed. Normally, Tyranid assaults proceed in a systematic fashion. Different biomorphs appear at various stages in the process. Each new creature emerges to exploit opportunities created by the activities of those that have come before. This reproduction scheme is highly ordered and systematic, though it can be modulated by the actions of the controlling Hive Mind.

The assault on Mackensee has not been consistent with such an orderly assault. Lictors and Genestealers arrived on the world and successfully contacted the Hive Mind to send its fleet to the system, but these xenos were all but exterminated by Pathfinders prior to the hive ship's arrival. As the first wave of mycetic spores rained down upon the planet, Eldar were in place to eliminate many of these intruders even as they arrived. As a consequence, the Tyranids squandered a large portion of their reserved biomass during the early stages of the invasion.

Without a solid foothold, Tyranid forces were unable to quickly devour additional biomass from the targeted world. This led to reduced numbers of Gargoyles, Gaunts, and even Capillary Towers. Even as these began to emerge, the Eldar pressed their advantage and eliminated many of the first creatures to emerge. With few Capillary Towers to transport biomass back to the ships of the fleet, they were soon unable to contribute additional mycetic spores to the invasion.

Recently, additional void-capable Tyranid biomorphs have been directed towards the Mackensee system. It is likely that these massive creatures are supplied with resources that can be committed to renew the invasion. If these forces join in the assault, it could break the stand-off that has existed between the opposing xenos for most of the past solar year.

# MAHIR

*"The obvious mutant is nothing but a target. The mutant whose changes are subtle represents the greatest risk of contagion."*

—Apothecary Tarben Hovak, Howling Griffins

Historically, the world of Mahir has been of only limited interest to the Imperium. It has few resources of value and is scarcely habitable by humanity. Over the last two years, that has changed substantially. Tyranid forces have begun the process of invading and the Tau responded to the assault by sending their own forces. Trapped between these two xenos are the few human descendants of ancient colonial efforts. The interactions of these three groups have compelled the Deathwatch to gather additional information. Firsthand knowledge of the xenos conflict is invaluable to the Inquisition. It might even lead to a way to assure the destruction of both forces as they war with one another, leaving them vulnerable to later Imperial efforts. A decision needs to be made soon about passing this information on to the Achilles Crusade, as there could be significant ramifications.

## HISTORY

During the height of the Jericho Sector, there were numerous organisations interested in exploring new worlds and establishing colonies. Some did so out of simple greed—a successful colony could provide substantial profits to a merchant house or a noble family. Not every world can easily be made profitable, however. In fact, there are many worlds within the Jericho Reach that are habitable but that lack any resource that could be used to recoup the costs of colonisation. Mahir represents one such world.

The combination of limited resources and treacherous wildlife makes Mahir inimical towards humanity. In spite of this, there were at least four known colonisation attempts sponsored by different groups active during the Jericho Sector's Golden Age. Some of these colonists were staunch survivalists, who could not resist the challenge that the world presented. Others were motivated by the power and glory that came with an opportunity to expand the Imperium's reach to an unoccupied world. At least one is believed to have been an effort initiated by renegades who attempted to establish a foothold outside of the Imperium's direct control.

To say that all of these attempts ended in miserable failure would be an exaggeration. Descendants of at least one of these groups of colonists still dwell upon the planet, though it is unclear if they are descendants of survivors from one or several of those ancient efforts. However, this does not mean that any of the colonies were successful. Few records survive to recount these ancient efforts. Those that remain recount substantial expenses incurred by the colonisation attempts, but there are no existing records of any recovered expenses. Imperial records indicate a horrific death rate during each colony's existence. The cost to transport and provide for these citizens, all so that they could fail to found a colony, is staggering.



## COLLAPSE

Without regular support from the Sector, none of Mahir's colonies were self-sustaining as implemented. There were too few agricultural resources to begin to provide for all the humans who had been sent to Mahir. Few who lived on the world had the necessary training to either maintain the worlds' equipment or to fend for themselves in the face of the death world's countless threats. A few short months after the last supply transport departed from the world, the world's human population nearly died out.

Those who survived fled from the established habitats. Within them, the inhabitants soon turned against one another in desperate battles for food, energy, and the other necessities of Imperial life. With time, even the victors of those battles died out, as their last supplies ran low and technology continued to fail. Soon, the world's native wildlife intruded upon the ancient Imperial structures and destroyed virtually all trace of their ever having existed.

Among the distant outposts were many of the colony's most capable frontiersmen. The hunters and warriors who had adapted to the intricacies of Mahir's ecosystems were the ones most willing to learn to rely upon it. Lacking standard equipment and supplies, these hardy individuals devised ways to create basic weapons and eke out a subsistence existence. At least some of these survivors reverted to arboreal lifestyles, creating communities within the highest branches of the world's massive trees.

Clearly, many of these small communities perished. While none have thrived, a scarce few survived through the millennia without any external support. During this time, their cultural identity diverged substantially from the Imperial norm. However, their legends remained rooted in the teachings of the Imperial Cult. They continued to venerate the Emperor as the Sky-Father. This belief may have saved these primitives from the influence of Chaos that devastated so many other worlds of the Jericho Reach.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

During 814.M41, Tau forces sent an expedition to Mahir. The xenos incursion was little more than an exploratory mission. As past Imperial efforts have shown, all astronomical data suggest that the world might be an ideal candidate for colonisation. Tau environmental tolerances are sufficiently similar to humanity's that worlds well-suited for one species are often adequate for the other. All signs indicate that Tau forces reached the system with the intention of discovering whether it could be easily colonised and to determine what assets its world might offer. As there were no Imperial assets within the system at this time, Deathwatch forces did not become aware of the incursion until 815.M41.

They learned of the activity when a team in service of Inquisitor Ghraile was sent to the world to study its native inhabitants. Ostensibly, the agents were to examine samples of the world's native life forms as well as genetic material from the primitive humans. These were to be examined for any signs of contagion—possibly including any indications of Tyranid influence. Unfortunately, the agents discovered information that was far more disturbing. Upon their arrival, they soon detected the presence of voidcraft affiliated with the Tau Empire, as well as a small fleet of Tyranid craft in system.

The single Inquisition craft was forced to rely upon stealth to avoid a direct confrontation with either of the two much larger xenos forces. Through a series of slow and steady manoeuvres over the course of seven months, the vessel managed to obtain a supply of raw data regarding the activities on Mahir. It then fled back to Watch Fortress Erioch, so that the information could be presented to the Inquisitor and to the Deathwatch. The news of a direct conflict between these two xenos races has led to substantial disagreements among the Inquisitors present at the Watch Fortress. As of yet, there is no consensus regarding the most appropriate response.

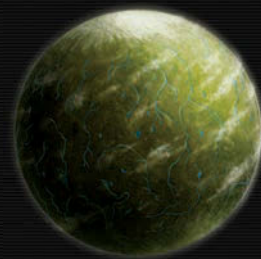
**Classification: Xenos Studies**

**Date: 472816.M41**

**Author: Tech-Priest Kobalt-3742**

**Subject: Additional Samples Request**

**Recipient: Inquisitor of the Chamber**



My Lord,

We have recently begun to identify several anomalies among the Tyranid organisms designated "Mahir Leapers." The specimens maintained for study and training purposes within the Watch Fortress have shown a marked instability. It is unclear if this is a consequence of their extended exposure from the Hive Fleet or if it may simply be a consequence of their development process. It would be most informative if additional samples could be obtained so that we could examine their long-term stability in the hopes of identifying a new weakness inherent in these accursed xenos.

I have already completed analysis of samples obtained from one of these specimens, which was destroyed as part of a training exercise. It would be particularly useful to compare the results obtained from this sample with ones newly procured in the field. As a consequence, if possible, I would very much like to accompany a Kill-team to Mahir so that I might work with a specimen that has not left that world or had time to decompose. Any other situation risks contamination, which might compromise the results.

II: LOST WORLDS OF  
THE JERICHO REACH





## USING MAHIR

- Mahir is far from worlds of Sept Velk'Han, yet the Tau have willingly chosen to make this the point at which they attempt to stop the Tyranid incursion. Understanding why this location was chosen might demonstrate some vulnerability in the Tau mindset that could be further exploited. The Kill-team is charged with identifying the reasons for this choice, preferably from a reliable source among the planet's Tau defenders. Because those defenders are actually slowing the Tyranid incursion, it would be best if they could be left alive to continue that defence, but this is not a requirement.
- One of Watch Station Erioch's visiting Inquisitors suspects that Mahir's native plants contain some characteristic substances inimical to the Tyranid swarm. The reasons for her logic are unclear, but the Watch Commander has given in to her repeated requests. The Kill-team is charged with providing security for the Inquisitor while she recovers various plant and animal samples from Mahir's surface—and tries to avoid any Tau or Tyranid interference.
- If the world's human population has not been contaminated, then the Imperium may have a responsibility to attempt to provide some degree of assistance to the arboreal humans. However, if those humans are mutants, no such obligation exists. The Kill-team must obtain samples from these descendants of the ancient colonisation attempts, preferably without damaging the population as a whole in case it is worth preserving. If these are contaminated in some way, it represent a greater threat to humanity than either the Tyranids or the Tau.

## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

Mahir positively teems with life. Its dense temperate forests cover virtually the entirety of the world's land. Only its rivers and oceans break up the seemingly endless foliage. In fact, the world is so burgeoning with life that much of it lives in defiance of gravity, as many of the world's enormous trees extend hundreds of metres above the ground and house their own ecosystems. However, the intrusions of the Tyranid swarm could render all of this life little more than biomass to feed the ravenous xenos. All of Mahir's unique characteristics still exist, but if the Tyranids triumph, the world would be left as little more than a barren wasteland.

Mahir's climate is remarkably consistent. It is unclear if this is a consequence of atmospheric anomalies, variance in its orbit and rotation, or an unknown characteristic, but there is very little temperature variation across most of the world's surface. From an area very near its polar caps and extending across the equator, the world's temperature consistently holds steady in a range between 20 and 30 degrees centigrade. The world's seasonal changes are subtle and primarily deal with the amount of precipitation during different months, but even this variation is not extreme. Such consistency has drawn the attention of members of the Adeptus Mechanicus as a planetary anomaly. There has been some speculation that this is an indication that the planet had been seriously manipulated at some point in its ancient history.

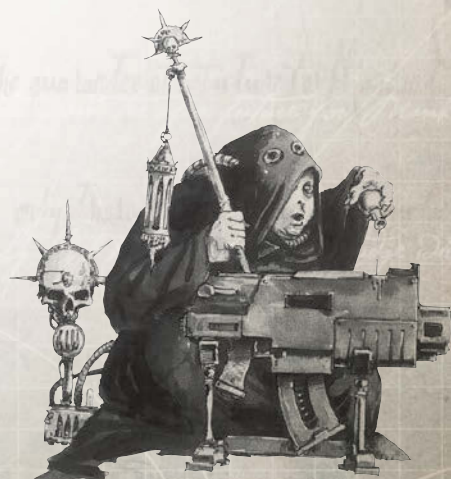
Some argue that the world's greatest failing is further evidence of such manipulation. Simply put, Mahir has an extremely limited supply of workable metals. While some exist at low levels within its native organisms, there are very few ore deposits within its crust. The Imperium's technology base lacks any efficient way to extract enough materials from Mahir to effectively construct a hive. This could also have played a key factor in the failures of past colonial attempts.

This limited selection of metals have also played a factor in the development of the world's biosphere. To state that all of its organisms are aggressive understates the severity of Mahir's indigenous species. All of the world's animals and many of its

planets are seemingly engaged in an unending drive to consume any source of metals that they can find. In their natural state, this primarily consists of other organisms, which carnivorous flora and fauna target for consumption. However, any visitor to the world is targeted, along with their metallic equipment. Mahir's organisms are extremely persistent in their attempts to use their acidic saliva to break down metals so that they can absorb them.

Excepting the massive tree analogues which make up the majority of the forest, much of the world's flora demonstrate some degree of motility. This is believed to be an adaptation to assist them in their endless quest to identify further sources of metals. While these sources include ores within the planet's soil, it also includes any slow-moving animals.

All of Mahir's animals are multi-limbed invertebrates. These organisms vary in size from near microscopic up to nearly 30 centimetres in length. All known specimens exhibit thick, organic carapaces. Many of these are extremely resistant to damage, including acidic attacks. This is most likely an adaptation to the world's aggressive plant life, but also to the efforts of the world's other animals. From an ecological niche standpoint, these animals occupy a diverse range of habitats. They are present throughout Mahir's various biomes and demonstrate a broad range of different adaptations. Most of these creatures are particularly active at night, because after the sun sets, the world's plants are typically much less motile and vulnerable to predation.





## CULTURE

The world's few surviving humans are descended from those who fled the Imperial colonies to establish their own outposts as the world's civilisations collapsed. These hardy folk know little of technology and only have the most rudimentary of language skills. Much of their technology consists of weapons and tools crafted from the shells of the world's countless insect analogues.

Extended exposure to Mahir's harsh environs and separation from Imperial medical technology has clearly had ramifications as well. Ultimately, these primitives are of human stock, but they have suffered enough minor mutations that the Inquisition might no longer deem them acceptable. Only a rigorous analysis of genetic samples could effectively resolve this concern. If such a study was completed and no anomalies were found, Imperial forces might be able to reintegrate these humans with the Imperium. Their beliefs are clearly derived from Imperial teachings, such that Missionaries could quickly purge the heretical elements and accept their devotion.

The Tau forces that initially travelled to Mahir did so with the intention of examining the planet. This contingent of xenos had only a minimal military presence, and instead was comprised primarily of members of the Earth Caste. It is unclear how long they were involved in their research prior to the arrival of Tyranid forces within the Mahir system. However, the Velk'Han Sept committed a substantial amount of resources to the world once they became aware of the Tyranid incursion. While the Tau have only a limited degree of historical experience fighting Tyranids, the presence on Mahir could swiftly change this.

By all indications, the Tau are engaged in a deliberate effort to completely repel the Tyranid attack without actually destroying the planet's biosphere. Currently, they lack the required forces within the system to succeed at this task. They would need to send additional troops to Mahir to aid in these battles, but doing so could be extremely advantageous for the Imperial forces within the Canis Salient. The Tau could be deliberately delaying from committing additional troops until they see how Lord Commander Ebongrave deploys his forces within that region of space.

The Tyranid incursion on Mahir is still at a fairly early stage, but it is clear that the world's ecosystem is incapable of directly contesting the xenos threat. Nearly twenty percent of the planet's surface has already been devoured by the swarm. Only those places that the Tau are actively defending are capable of standing up against the incursion. Were it not for these xenos, it is likely that Mahir would already have fallen to the Tyranids.

Indeed, the Tyranids have already begun to adapt to Mahir's environment. The Mahir Leaper is a notable gaunt variant first observed on this world. The creature is smaller than most known gaunt specimens, but is also faster and more agile. Reports suggest that the biomorph is an adaptation enabling it to more effectively wage war among the branches of the planet's massive trees. In these locations, the reduced size and added agility enable it to more effectively hunt in the arboreal habitats. This is likely to target some of the native life forms, rather than the limited human population—those humans are simply too poorly armed to offer any significant threat against the Tyranids.

## NUNC

*"The Dark Pattern is the unholy and artificial working of the ancients. By their awakening, they shall reveal their meaning, and all mankind may cry out in horror."*

—Last words of Astropath Qi Lamerne

Until recently, Nunc was a world that offered no interest to human forces within the Jericho Reach. Her climate is unappealing, her resources are limited, and her location is far from the major Warp passages. The world bears signs that it might once have been abandoned by some xenos species, but the evidence of that habitation is ancient and easily ignored. Without any technology to recover or significant resources to exploit, there was little reason to fully study or even attempt to colonise the world. In light of more recent discoveries, that decision has been called into question. Clearly, there are ample reasons for Imperial assets to be interested by the activities that have taken place on Nunc.

## HISTORY

During the height of the Jericho Sector, almost all of the region's habitable worlds received at least a preliminary survey. A few surviving references within limited surviving texts suggest that Nunc was of only academic interest. Even these initial studies indicated that it was inhospitable to life and offered few resources to make it an ideal candidate for colonisation. However, those second-hand references survived because of the anomalies present on the dead world. In spite of the absence of active life forms, there were clear indications that at some time in the ancient past, another race dwelt upon Nunc's surface.

Those anomalies included a number of geographical elements that were organised in a way suggestive of the ruins of ancient structures. Additional evidence—which is still visible from space—suggested that there were substantial roads connecting these structures. Notably, these structures are more readily recognisable from space than from the surface. At ground level, they appear to be little more than heavily corroded hills, piled high with the debris from the world's frequent sandstorms.

Standard protocols believed to be in place within the Jericho Sector should have led to a thorough study of the world, so that any surviving xenos contamination could be cleansed. However, there is no indication that any such surveys or cleansings took place. A few anecdotes do survive, which indicate that at least one Adeptus Mechanicus expedition ventured to the surface as part of a study to search for any xenos artefacts or technology. However, neither the few surviving sector records nor any known Adeptus Mechanicus records exist of this survey. That could either be an indicator that the individuals involved chose to remain secretive about their findings or that there were no findings of note.





## COLLAPSE

Prior to the Jericho Sector's collapse, there were no known permanent human settlements within the system. Since its collapse, there have been at least six different groups of refugees who attempted to establish colonies on the world. All came out of desperation, as they watched their home worlds collapse into anarchy. None of these groups had all of the supplies necessary to found a permanent colony, and few of the expedition's members had any of the training necessary to survive upon such an unforgiving world.

Not surprisingly, none of these colonies were able to survive on their own. The world's infertile land made agricultural efforts extremely challenging. The lack of significant wildlife meant that there was little game to hunt. The different groups of colonists chose the world because they hoped that they could escape from the teeming masses of humanity that had doomed the Jericho Sector. While they succeeded at escaping humanity, few found anything resembling salvation. Tens of thousands died as they tried to establish some sort of foothold on the arid world.

Fortunately, humans are a persistent lot. Out of those who travelled to Nunc, a few from each colony did manage to learn enough to survive before the planet could defeat them. These staunch survivalists took up residence within caves that dotted cliffs of many of the world's ancient mountains. Within these tunnels, they were able to find adequate shelter, harvestable fungus, and a limited supply of water.

Limitations on the available resources consistently kept the human populations quite small, but a number of these groups were able to persevere. Because of their struggles, the world's societies soon lost much of humanity's knowledge and culture. In spite of this, they were able to maintain a limited language closely related to Low Gothic.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

Within the past few years, some of the world's ancient geographic anomalies have begun to shift. At the same time, the world's weather patterns have also begun to change. What little water had been present has become an even scarcer commodity. This has significantly impacted the few human residents and could be a herald of even more severe conditions to come. Initially, as water dried up, many of the small communities began to battle over the limited resource. In a few short months, the world's small population had decreased by more than fifteen percent. As the shortages continued, there was little indication that this trend would change.

At that point, however, a new threat emerged. Ancient obelisks erupted from the world's depths and protruded once more upon its surface. These black structures were inscribed with complex geometric patterns. As they appeared, their initial tenders also began to emerge from deep beneath the world's surface. The small, mechanical creatures resembled scarabs. Initially, the drones appeared in small numbers, which were unable to threaten any but the weakest of humans. However, within weeks, massive swarms of the Scarabs began to emerge. These hideous forces were capable of rending the flesh from a healthy adult human before he could even attempt to flee.

In the months and years that have followed, additional xenos have continued to appear. Most of these mechanical soldiers have been of demonstrably human form. In short order, they exterminated the human population. One Deathwatch Dark Hunter passed through the system in 241816.M41. Its report indicated that there were several vessels of xenos origin in orbit above the planet. The unknown vessels fired upon the craft, but it was able to escape to file a report with Watch Fortress Erioch. These xenos clearly represent a significant threat to the Imperium.

## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

Nunc's average daily surface temperature in its temperate zones exceeds 40 degrees centigrade. Nearer the equator can be significantly warmer. The world's orbit approaches the inner boundary of habitable systems for its star. Its atmosphere's upper layers are also surprisingly thin in gasses that would protect it from cosmic radiation. Because of this, the world's surface is often struck by massive blasts of energy and particles that descend from the void and devastate its surface. This has left the world bathed in a level of background radiation that pervades all who dwell upon its surface. Virtually all life is subject to frequent and unstable levels of mutation. In order for humans to survive, anti-radiation drugs are a necessity—one which the unprepared human colonists lacked.

The amount of water available upon the planet's surface is also extremely low. The small polar caps actually hold the



## USING NUNC

- A visiting Inquisitor of the Ordo Xenos has recovered references to the research performed upon Nunc in the time of the Jericho Sector. She wishes to follow up on those data, as she believes there could be a link between the artefacts on this world and ones she has found in another portion of the galaxy. The imperturbable woman charges the Kill-team to travel with her on the journey to Nunc and provide protection during the course of her investigation. She pays no heed to any concerns that are expressed about current xenos activity on the world—to the potential detriment of all involved.
- Deathwatch resources have discovered that the Necron presence on Nunc might be even more substantial than previously expected. Reliable sources indicate that the xenos are in the process of building a massive shipyard in the planet's low orbit. If these reports are correct, the Necrons could muster a significant void-based presence within the Jericho Reach in disturbingly short order. The Deathwatch Kill-team is dispatched to confirm those reports. If the reports are accurate, the shipyard must be destroyed at all costs. The Imperial assets within the Reach are simply unable to adequately deal with such a significant additional threat at this time.

majority of the Nunc's surface water. There are no significant rivers or streams. The few small oases among Nunc's endless deserts are extremely high in arsenic salts. These contaminants make them toxic to humans, though most of the native fauna are capable of processing them—which also leaves these same fauna unsuitable to human consumption.

The sole accessible resource for water is the one that the human colonists eventually came to depend upon. Much of Nunc's surface is spotted with jagged mountains that break up the vast deserts. These irregular, bedrock structures jut from the planet at sharp angles, forming passages that often only concentrate the world's powerful winds. The cliff faces of many of these mountains are dotted with caves of uncertain origin. Many of these caves extend for kilometres into the mountains and extend deep into the planet's

crust. Far from the dry atmosphere, many of these hold pools of stagnant water. A few even connect to underground lakes and rivers, beyond the reach of the heat and the daylight.

Most of the caverns appear to be of natural origin—likely formed at a time when there might have been much more water flowing across Nunc's surface. Others seem to be extremely regular, as if some ancient race had constructed or modified them for its own purpose. The more regular tunnels often feature complex geometric depictions, even near the entrances. These symbols would likely have drawn significant attention from any researchers who might have visited the world during the height of the Jericho Sector.

Nunc's wildlife is quite limited. The vast majority of life forms dwell either within a few metres of the world's

Classification: Jericho Survey  
Date: 121816.M41  
Author: Tech-Priest Llorn-1171  
Subject: New Xenos Activity  
Recipient: Watch Commander Erioch

My Lord,

The Dark Hunter sent to perform a routine survey of worlds Spinward of the Hadex Anomaly has returned with some alarmingly anomalous results. Nunc is a dead world, located in the region along one of the significant Warp paths through the Sector. According to Watch Fortress records, a routine survey of this system has occurred at regular intervals for the past two thousand years without incident. Sadly, this most recently completed survey indicates that a change has come—one that the craft's machine spirit apparently had been adapted specifically to address.

Across the ages there has been little indication of any life upon the world's surface. In spite of this, the most recent visit identified several xenos craft of unknown origin in orbit. The Dark Hunter avoided contact with these craft and completed a brief scan during the course of a partial orbit. Numerous new structures were identified on the surface, newly emerged since the last scan completed in 452791.M41. Preliminary analysis of the structures and symbolism is consistent with the specimens recently reported by a Kill-team active on Karlack. This suggests that these xenos may represent a much more significant threat than previously expected.







limited oases or among caves. The largest of these are lizard analogues, which grow to roughly ten centimetres in length. They feed upon the small insects, which also live near the water sources. The lizards within the caverns are often edible, though their appearance is extremely similar to the specimens found nearest the oases, which are toxic.

The only plant life is found near the oases. These are mostly small scrub brushes that are capable of persevering through the planet's milder sandstorms. Under more severe conditions, these same plants are often uprooted and tumble with the winds. As the plants are covered in thorns, they can represent an additional minor hazard for anyone caught unprotected in a sandstorm.

Many fungal analogues grow among the world's cave networks. Some of these are mildly chemiluminescent. Because of this, those who travel through the cave network often have just enough light to proceed through the tunnels. Some of these are also safe for human consumption. While they are hardly appetising, they did represent the primary food source for the humans who dwelt upon Nunc.

Nunc's bedrock has a surprisingly high concentration of metal ores. If a serious effort were made to mine these, the many mountains could be converted to raw materials in a fairly straightforward manner. The largest expense of such an endeavour would be providing survivable conditions for any human workers and, of course, defending them against the newly emergent xenos.

## CULTURE

There is currently only one race active upon Nunc, and they are xenos. The mechanical Necrons have resumed their ancient role as the dominators of this foreboding desert world. The workings that they had once left dormant have begun to return to life. Various automatic systems have reactivated. The ancient mechanical life forms are in the process of gradually returning to full activity. Weapons systems and production facilities buried deep beneath the sands have returned to the surface and begun to create the process of full activation.

Nunc's reactivation is likely linked to the message that the Chanovokh sent to the Suhbekhar Dynasty. In ancient times, this planet served as one of the central hubs for the dynasty within the region of space now known as the Jericho Reach. Because of this, she was among the first to receive the command to awaken from her long-lasting slumber. All evidence suggests that this reawakening is proceeding with minimal difficulties. Unless something is done to avert it in extremely short order, Nunc could soon become a fully activated Necron world. This clearly represents a major threat to everything that dwells within this portion of the galaxy.

The system's initial activations proceeded according to ancient plans. Structures that had been concealed deep beneath Nunc's surface began to reconfigure so that they could once more emerge from their tombs. Scarabs were among the first Necron creatures to activate, so that they might re-establish function on the ancient systems in the correct order. As additional systems and facilities awoke, more complex and higher ranking members of the Necron race came online.

The human contamination was soon identified and the ranking members commanded Necron Warriors to dispose of them. The Warriors found little challenge in overcoming these primitives and the task was completed in a matter of days. Since that time, a veritable army has awakened. As more and more facilities have become activated, the pace has continued to accelerate.

Multiple Necron vessels have been reactivated and launched into orbit. A number of Dolmen Gates on the world's surface have also been activated. Defensive networks that have slept for millions of years are again activate and capable of protecting the world from any outside influence. Tens of thousands of Warriors, Immortals, and even members of the Necron aristocracy have come back online. The world's ultimate capacity and the full numbers of its populace remain unclear, but by all appearances they are vast.

Nunc now represents a significant threat against the efforts of the Achilus Crusade. The Necrons are virtually certain to oppose all life within the Sector. However, the Imperial efforts have been the most active in seeking to gain dominance in recent years. Unless something is done to prevent the world from achieving full activity, that could abruptly change. The Necron forces have vast assets at their disposal and are capable of travelling through their Dolmen Gates to many of the habitable worlds within this region of the galaxy, and beyond.

Once the Deathwatch comes to terms with the full nature of this threat, they must take drastic action to stop it. All available resources of Watch Fortress Erioch might need to be committed against this terrible foe. Additional resources from the Achilus Crusade would also be required to assist. Nunc represents a major infestation of a xenos species that actively seeks to obliterate humanity's encroachment. With their vast technological expertise, the severity of the Necron threat cannot be overstated. If Imperial assets are to overcome them, some action must be taken in short order to prevent these automatons from fully activating and exploiting all of their resources.





# SAGACITY

*"This world is hidden from the sight of the Warp in the same way that its surface is concealed by pollution. A fog of some sort conceals it, and surely some other dark secrets."*

—Codicier Miguel Gricalo

A horrific disaster struck Sagacity in the latter days of the Jericho Sector. As it attempted to recover from this crisis, the other worlds of the region began to enter their own crises. Without any external assistance, the survivors were unable to even fully restore the world's core functions. Over time, the world's human population reverted to a primitive culture that dwelt upon the world's terribly polluted surface. More recently, horrific creatures have begun to emerge from the planet's core to wreak havoc among the descendants of those survivors. The xenos presence continues to increase in severity. Unless some external forces join the conflict, the xenos could soon exterminate the limited remaining human presence.

## HISTORY

In the Golden Age of the Jericho Sector, Sagacity was a well-supported and productive hive world. The devotion of her population to the God-Emperor was unquestioned. She had raised at least six regiments of Imperial Guard Forces in addition to her native defence force. The three major hive cities imported vast quantities of foodstuffs to preserve a population of more than thirty billion souls, but Sagacity also produced huge quantities of refined goods for export and her natural supplies of valuable minerals also contributed to feeding the world's ravenous manufactorums. For generations, the world was considered a model of the Imperial ideal. Loyal, productive, and rapidly growing, many assumed that Sagacity might someday become the jewel of the Jericho Sector.

The inhabitants of many other worlds began to view Sagacity with a terrible envy. This was particularly true among the Sector's agri-worlds and many of her own colonies. The fruits of their labours went to Sagacity, but few of its manufactured products were sent off to these less sophisticated markets. Many viewed the hive world as an opulent paradise where many luxuries were taken for granted and few suffered from lives of menial labour. While this was hardly the case, it was certainly the perception.

In the early days of the thirty-seventh millennium, Sagacity was struck by cataclysm. A rogue planetoid impacted with the planet. The resultant devastation vaporised much of her oceans and turned the skies black with debris for centuries. Quakes rippled across the planet as its very tectonic plates were shattered by the force of the impact. All three of her hive cities collapsed when the structures were subjected to unprecedented geological shifts. Billions of human lives were lost as the very substance of the world was torn asunder.

The agri-worlds and colonies that might have been able to assist Sagacity's recovery refused to send assistance. Their leaders saw the collapse as its due comeuppance for centuries of arrogant dominance. A few of the sector's other



hive worlds prepared to send mercy missions, but only a few arrived and none were able to make a significant impact upon the massive crisis. Reconstruction would have taken centuries to complete, but as other worlds were subsumed by the Age of Shadow, this proved an insurmountable task.

## COLLAPSE

Without any external support, the vast majority of those who survived the initial cataclysm were unable to persevere on the remains of their shattered world. More than another sixty percent died off in the few years that followed. All were exposed to the world's toxic atmosphere and many prayed for the God-Emperor's mercy as they endured endless nights beneath a canopy of dense clouds. Food and potable water soon became the most precious commodities. Most of the world's stores and treatment facilities had been destroyed. Only a limited supply of new foodstuffs was provided to the survivors from off-world. Millennia of function as a hive world had devastated much of the planet's surface, so that it could no longer be used for agriculture.

As more and more of the population died, dark legends also began to circulate among the region's void travellers. Some said that the deaths were not just from living in the waste. Rather, these legends recounted hideous xenos that had emerged from the planet's depths, awakened by the cataclysm. Other stories suggested that the world's inhabitants had been cursed for their sin of pride. These myths also promised that any who interfered with their penance would suffer the same fate. The combination of these tales kept off-worlders from travelling to Sagacity and also prevented anyone from attempting to aid the refugees in escaping the devastated world.

None, however, knew the darkest of secrets. Millions of years in the past, Sagacity had been a significant Necron world. During the War in Heaven, one faction actually launched the rogue planetoid towards the world. Though they knew it would take millions of years to arrive, these ancient beings had foreseen that Sagacity could one day become a thriving centre for the Necrons. When the planetoid struck, it was intended to shatter the planet and destroy the tomb





world, preventing it from ever recovering. The attack failed. Though many of the world's stasis crypts were shattered, several reacted to the cataclysm by activating emergency defensive measures. For more than four thousand years, the world's Necron forces have been in the process of gradually activating and awakening.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

The sundering of Sagacity's crust was not as devastating for the Necron forces as it was for humanity, but it did inflict a significant amount of damage. Many of the world's stasis crypts were obliterated in the impact. Others collapsed as tectonic plates shifted in an unprecedented fashion. Huge amounts of cosmic radiation that slashed through the damaged atmosphere destroyed the ancient recordings on a few others, which held the memory engrams of some of the sleeping Necrons. The Necron forces realised that most of these disasters could be overcome, and they also accepted the fact that reconstruction would take an extremely long time.

For millennia, Necron scarabs struggled to repair the subterranean structures, using whatever equipment could be salvaged from damaged structures. At the same time, forces of Canoptek Wraiths explored the surface and began the tedious process of cleansing the world of any contamination—primarily, the human survivors. Due to the limited resources available, this process was agonisingly slow, even for a race as patient as the Necrons.

Recently, Sagacity's Necron forces have become much more aggressive. When the forces on Nunc began to awaken, a signal was broadcast to a select few of the Jericho Reach's other worlds. The signal was meant to activate a number of tomb worlds, so that their forces could prepare for a new Necron offensive. More and more of the surviving stasis crypts have activated since that message was received. Tens of thousands of Necrons have been activated and have joined in the reconstruction and cleansing efforts. The world's null field matrix has even been activated, to protect it against any contamination from the Warp.

## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

Ancient records indicate that Sagacity was once a bountiful and lush paradise. Her forests and seas were vast and teemed with life. The soil was rich and well suited to humanity's preferred agricultural crops. The temperature range and atmosphere were ideal over much of the world's surface, so that humans could enjoy the beauty of the planet's natural environment.

The completion of the first hive began to reduce the world's natural splendour. As additional hives were completed, the planet's population increased as did its level of pollution. Over the centuries, the world's atmosphere, soil, and waters all turned from benign to toxic. Much of the planet's native flora and fauna underwent severe mutations and a great deal of it died off.

However, that environmental damage was trivial compared to the devastation wrought by the planetary collision. In an instant, the seas boiled, the atmosphere exploded, and the plates that underplayed the continents were shattered. Even though this event took place millennia ago, Sagacity's atmosphere has

yet to recover from the sudden influx of pollutants. Most of the wildlife that had survived the pollutants introduced by the hive cities was unable to cope with the sudden new changes. During the centuries of darkness, almost its entire native flora died out. Without plants to replenish the world's oxygen and aid in the filtration of its pollutants, the atmosphere soon became even more toxic.

Over the millennia, little has changed. The world's natural environs remain inhospitable to any humans that attempt to venture across it without some protection. Most of the surviving human mutants rely upon filtration systems or rebreathers—some of which have been passed down through generations for millennia. At ground level, visibility rarely extends beyond 20 metres. Fungal scrub life and toxic swamp waters filled with aggressive, mutated animals represent the majority of Sagacity's living threats.

Few actual plants remain on the planet. Instead, a broad variety of different fungal life forms have emerged to fill that ecological niche. Some of these are even capable of sustaining the atmosphere, producing oxygen through a variety of biochemical reactions that draw their energy from sources other than sunlight. These include organisms that rely upon heat and unusual chemical sources. However, none of these processes are anywhere near as efficient as those of photosynthetic plants. As a consequence, the restoration has proceeded extremely slowly.

The Necron presence has done little to aid this process. Their approach to most of the world's life has been a systematic pattern of slash and burn. The biological consequences of a toxic atmosphere hold little meaning to these mechanical xenos. However, they realise that the long term ramifications are extremely damaging to all of the planet's biological population. The Necrons of Sagacity hold all such life forms in disdain. They consider the destruction to be a worthwhile pursuit and have committed significant resources to its completion.

As these xenos have continued their own reconstruction, the darkened skies have been a boon to their efforts. The thick cloud cover is impenetrable by visible life and resistant to most types of scans. Consequently, the Necrons have been free of the intrusions of most prying eyes. This has enabled them to devote all of their resources to the reconstruction of their shattered tombs without having to commit a significant portion of their forces towards defensive measures. With this in mind, they have often chosen to take measures that keep the atmospheric pollution in place until such time as they are prepared to commit their forces in their battles against the galaxy's other life forms.

## CULTURE

Since Sagacity's cataclysm, the world's human population has survived in the most primitive and barbaric state. Few remain, and those survivors are all horribly mutated. They survive only by tenacity and violence. Many of the small tribes devoted themselves to the Ruinous Powers in the hopes of finding divine intervention. Others have become so primitive that the very notion of worship is beyond their mental capacity. At the same time that they



## USING SAGACITY

- Recently, the Astropathic Choir stationed at Watch Station Erioch has been haunted by repeated visions that tie to the world of Sagacity. In spite of this, all of their efforts to focus their vision upon the world more tightly yield nothing. An Inquisitor active at Erioch believes that this may indicate some sort of psychic barrier has been put into place upon the world. The Kill-team is sent to investigate Sagacity so that they might identify and disable any device responsible for the psychic interference. When they arrive, the Battle-Brothers discover that Necron forces are preparing to activate a C'Tan Shard. The Kill-team must determine the best way to stop them without unleashing the ancient terror. If they can deactivate the world's null field matrix in the process, it might also offer the Imperium a substantial edge in any battle against the xenos forces.
- Through unknown means, one of the populations of mutant humans who yet dwell upon Sagacity managed to send a desperate astropathic plea for help. Though it is unclear how they might have received this cry, the Tau forces of the Velk'Han Sept have chosen to respond. The Kill-team is sent to recover the mutants from the Tau so that they may be interrogated rather than letting the Tau recover any military intelligence on the Necrons. At the same time, the Tau must not learn of any Imperial interest in this world. Ideally, it might benefit the Achilus Crusade substantially if the Tau could be drawn into a major conflict with the Necron forces. To facilitate this, the Battle-Brothers are charged with expanding the scope of the conflict between the two groups of xenos as a secondary objective.
- An archivist reviewing a few surviving records from the Jericho Sector discovered that many of the Sector's archives were duplicated upon Sagacity. If these files somehow survived the cataclysm, they could provide critical intelligence regarding the allocation of resources during the time prior to the Age of Shadow. As there are no known records of any teams investigating the archives of the fallen hives, it is entirely possible that some salvageable data might yet exist within those ruins. The Kill-team is dispatched to search through the hive's ruins as part of their effort to recover any surviving ancient information. Of course, they must avoid any xenos or mutant conflict during the course of their search, as a battle might increase the risk of compromising any data.

attempt to contend with the harsh ecosystem, the mutant populace has been culled by Necron forces. This has resulted in a population that is focused upon hiding from the xenos whenever possible and fighting desperately when necessary.

The humans largely exist as small isolated tribes. Some of these groups dwell within caves near the planet's surface. Others have reverted to an arboreal lifestyle. Very few dwell in exposed structures upon Sagacity's surface. Of those few that attempt it, all maintain a nomadic existence. Because of this constant movement and separation, any descriptions of a universal culture would be misinformed. Each tribe has its own collective personality. A few barely have any language capacity, while others retain a spoken language that is closely related to Low Gothic.

Of course, any attempt at communication with these miserable wretches ignores the mutations that have become commonplace. By any reasonable standard, these creatures are only nominally human. More realistic classifications would identify them as mutants that are only suitable for destruction. Imperial forces might visit Sagacity to combat the Necron threat, but it would not be to assist these humans. Rather, their extermination would be nearly as high a priority as the destruction of the xenos contamination.

Of note, the Necrons have not been as aggressive as might otherwise be expected of that mechanical race. Their efforts to destroy the human populace seem unfocused. This is likely because the majority of their resources have gone towards recovering from the cataclysm. Though it has taken millennia, it is likely that this task has been resolved to

whatever extent it is possible. Certainly, the Necron presence on Sagacity is less than it might have been had the planetoid never struck the surface, but these xenos do still maintain a major presence. If the intent of the ancients that launched the attack was to annihilate the Necron encroachment, the attempt must be considered a failure.

Most recently, all signs indicate that the tomb world has re-established contact with the Necron forces on Nunc. The presence on Sagacity is clearly much more limited than the one on that world, but it has also begun the process of reawakening all of its forces. Countless xenos structures have emerged from deep beneath the planet's surface, forming dozens of tomb cities. A significant number of the various subtypes of these xenos have begun to make their presence felt. At least two Dolmen Gates are also active upon the world's surface, and forces have been sent off-world. Neither the native humans nor the forces of the Imperium are yet aware of this fact. Only the Necrons themselves know where these units have been sent.

Over the course of the past year, continuously more complex Necron forms have begun to emerge from the stasis crypts. This may be an indication that the majority of the Necron Warriors and Canoptek Scarabs have already been activated. The complete nature of the world's holdings remains unclear. An increasing number of more sophisticated specimens, including a variety of xenos vehicles and specialist organisms, have begun to emerge. It seems likely that, unless this is part of some more complex strategy, the Necrons should soon move to secure their holdings. Such an initiative is likely to prove terminal to the surviving human tribes.





# SKAPULA

*"Medicae, know that thy life depends upon thy abilities. Failure to restore the Lord General to health is heresy punishable by death."*

—Lord Commissar Vance Theren

Once, the medicae of Skapula represented some of the greatest technical achievements within the Jericho Sector. Creating such a crucial resource required the assistance of many of the region's most profitable planets. To maintain such a level of advanced treatment required a steady stream of additional patients as well as a supply of test subjects. As the sector collapsed into anarchy and obscurity, the resources necessary to maintain those facilities were no longer available. Those who dwelt upon Skapula soon discovered that their society was not at all self-sustaining. When this world also collapsed, desperate pilgrims found no solution to their crises. Instead, they discovered that the world that might represent their salvation was just another bed of depravity.

## HISTORY

In the early days of the Jericho Sector, Skapula was a world held by the Adeptus Mechanicus and used primarily for the manufacture of medical supplies, advanced medical experimentation, and specialised medical treatments. Over the course of the millennia, its reputation grew substantially. Components for virtually every health monitoring device in the Sector came from the world. Those who worked in the medical field knew its name through the simple act of using the equipment manufactured there. Over time, the world's legends grew simply by the nature of its familiarity.

However, the myths surrounding Skapula were not entirely unfounded. The members of the Magos Biologis who worked and studied on this world were certainly the most talented in the sector and among the most talented in the Segmentum at the time. Their primary area of expertise dealt with implantation technology, but one particular focus included the revivification of necrotic tissue—returning dead tissue to a lifelike state. While this research was primarily used to extend the functional lifespan of servitors, some of the ancient legends suggest that it may have also seen limited use on human patients. According to these tales, when they approached their deathbeds, nobles on other worlds within the Jericho Reach would often attempt to arrange transport to Skapula. Their hope was that their lives might be even further extended.

A few legends even suggest that one or more individuals arrived upon Skapula within stasis chambers, mere moments from death. If these stories are accurate, the researchers were so talented that many such patients could be completely restored to a healthy life. Notably, there are no records to corroborate such reports. It is entirely possible that these stories arose from simple speculation based upon the world's well-deserved reputation as a highly capable treatment facility.

## COLLAPSE

At its height, Skapula was far more than a treatment and manufacturing centre. The talented members of the Machine Cult who worked upon the world were devoted to identifying the most effective ways to employ life-saving technology under a variety of conditions. Effective study of these techniques required a consistent supply of unusual patients, in addition to the raw materials needed for the world's manufactorums. When patients were not available, the Tech-Priests had to either study ancient records or create appropriate patients using prisoners or servitors. As the Jericho Sector's resources became more limited, several of the most skilled Magos left Skapula to travel to forge worlds beyond the sector where their expertise could be better used.

Without their most talented researchers, many of the remaining Tech-Priests fell to infighting and political manoeuvring. There was little effort to attempt to quickly exploit the remaining resources and rebuild their expertise. Instead, individuals took charge of separate factions, with each attempting to seize control of resources for their own purposes and neglected to share their information and equipment with one another. Secrecy and deception became paramount. Ultimately, none of these groups were able to effectively unify the Forge world with anything resembling effective leadership.

Skapula's collapse occurred just as the Jericho Sector's other worlds most needed a resource for charity and mercy. Many more members of the Adeptus Mechanicus left their world, seeking to establish new exclaves on the sector's other habitable worlds. A few stayed, but these groups became even more isolated from one another. In time, most of these groups—both on and off the planet—turned away from the Machine Cult's core teachings. They began to delve into forbidden areas of research, ultimately ignoring all of the warnings and studying materials that could only be considered heresy.

Those few humans who dwelt upon Skapula and were not affiliated with the Adeptus Mechanicus had no other functioning society. When the Tech-Priests left, they were unable to fend for themselves. These individuals soon formed primitive, isolated tribes who warred over the few remaining resources. In short order, the society was unrecognisable, and barbarians held sway.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

In recent years, there have been two significant events that could substantially alter Skapula's future. The first was when Watch Station Skapula detected the arrival of an expedition from the Velk'Han Sept. It is believed that these xenos discovered the ruins of the ancient Adeptus Mechanicus enclaves and have begun to explore them. Agents of the Tau have not yet shown any signs that they seek to establish a colony on the world. However, they have had numerous—often violent—interactions with the remaining Heretek enclaves, as well as the barbaric human tribes. These appear to have been associated with their efforts to study the ruins of Skapula's ancient manufactorums and medicae centers.



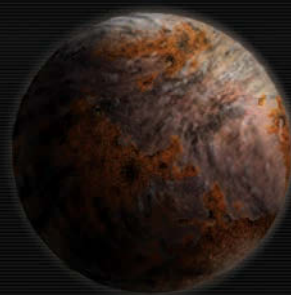
## Status Report: Skapula

**ATT:** Watch-Commander Mordigael

**Priority:** ++Punicea++

**Date Code:** 7635816.M41

++Encrypted data enclosed++



Watch Commander,

Our mission to retrieve the latest records from Watch Station Skapula has identified unprecedented levels of activity. Tau forces have recently arrived in system. Based on preliminary analysis of the records, it appears that they have only sent a single landing force to the planet. Their assets appear to have travelled to the ruins of several of Skapula's ancient manufactoriums. I fear that this could be part of an investigation to recover any lost data that the Machine Cult may have left behind after their exodus from the world. I believe that any archive of humanity's knowledge must be kept from these foul xenos. Thus, my Kill-team will engage in an operation to recover any data that these forces might have obtained and, if possible, eliminate the xenos as well.

In addition, another substantial group of structures has appeared on the world's Southern continent. The unholy buildings appear to be of xenos origin and are showing significant levels of activity, consistent with a large manufactorum. After my Battle-Brothers and I resolve the Tau situation, we plan to investigate this facility and identify the full nature of the unknown threat. As its scope is significantly larger, we may be limited in our abilities to fully cleanse this xenos infestation. I plan to send a follow-up report as soon as the mission is completed. However, in the event we encounter unexpected levels of resistance, it may be appropriate to send additional forces to investigate within the next fortnight.

Imperial records offer no clue regarding what information might have been left behind when these enclaves were abandoned. None know what data might have survived after several millennia of isolation and scavenging. However, if the Tau were able to gain access to these data, they might gain significant understanding into the complexities of human biology. If the Tau were to learn something that could be exploited on the battlefield, it would be disastrous for the efforts of the Achilus Crusade.

On 724815.M41, Watch Station Skapula also recorded another event which has raised concerns among the forces of the Ordo Xenos. A geological event was recorded near the world's equator. After more than three days of exceedingly rhythmic quakes, a sinkhole more than four kilometres in diameter opened. Within hours, an ancient cityscape emerged upon the world's surface. All of the structures were made of an unblemished metallic substance, and their surface writhed with complex glowing green symbols and gold circuitry. Deep beneath Skapula's surface, an ancient xenos crypt had begun to awaken. A few of the mechanical creatures from this lost city came into conflict with several of the human groups, as well as the Tau, in short order. However, the conflict has not yet escalated beyond chance encounters and skirmishes. By all appearances, these newly revealed forces are only in the earliest stages of emerging from their long sleep.

## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

Skapula is located well within the habitable zone for its star. Most locations within the world's temperate zones average a daily temperature of twenty-five degrees. The planet's weather patterns are seasonal, with a particularly severe rainy season that lasts for three months. During this time, the driving acidic rains can inflict substantial damage on anything that is unprotected from their influence. The rest of the year, clouds of toxic pollutants often roll across the world's surface as a thick and deadly fog. Those foolish enough to travel unprotected through the murk seldom survive to recount the dangers.

Skapula served the Jericho Sector and the Adeptus Mechanicus as a forge world for millennia. During this time, agents of the Machine Cult ruthlessly stripped the world of its varied resources and mercilessly unleashed waste products upon the planet. There are no records of the planet's biosphere prior to their arrival, but there remains very little native life today. While the world may have been chosen based upon the limited number of organisms that could be affected by the manufactoriums, it is much more likely that the indigenous creatures were simply unable to cope with the changed environs.

II: LOST WORLDS OF  
THE JERICHO REACH





## USING SKAPULA

- The last Kill-team sent to recover records from Watch Station Skapula has failed to provide an updated report to Watch Fortress Erioch. The Battle-Brothers are tasked with recovering the Watch Station's records, discovering the fate of the previous Kill-team, and countering any xenos resistance. Depending upon the nature of the conflict, it might be appropriate to attempt to instigate a conflict between the factions of any different xenos species, with the goal of eliminating at least one group and weakening the other. Discretion and secrecy are both critical to success, as the recovery of missing data and Battle-Brothers are the highest priorities.
- The data that the Tau forces recovered on Skapula are not the only remaining sources of Adeptus Mechanicus insight. The Kill-team is tasked with investigating the ruined structures so that they can identify and destroy or recover any additional information, lest it fall into xenos hands. If Tau forces remain upon the world, the Battle-Brothers must directly contend with them to complete this task in a timely fashion. While a direct conflict is not in the Battle-Brothers' best interest, it might be unavoidable. Extreme prejudice must be taken in keeping this information away from the Tau.
- Further analysis of the Watch Station's recordings indicates that the mechanical xenos pose a significant threat. could be significant. Some signs suggest that there are additional subterranean structures that represent a substantial reserve of additional assets. However, it appears that those assets remain in a catatonic state. During this early stage of their reanimation process, the xenos are vulnerable to a carefully targeted strike at their key facilities. The Kill-team is charged with destroying the active facilities. If that proves an insurmountable task, shutting down as many as possible would be acceptable, to delay their resurrection for as long as possible.

Though it has been millennia since the manufactorums were largely shut down, the planet shows little sign of having recovered from that ecological damage. Much of Skapula's surface is covered in toxic bogs. These foreboding locations are filled with oily water that varies in depth from a few centimetres to more than ten metres. A combination of pollutants and swirling murk makes it impossible to judge the depth by eye. Walking, swimming, or boating through these places can be extremely challenging, as the depth fluctuates wildly and inconsistently. A few mutated, amphibious predators haunt these bogs, hunting everything that moves. Their prey is mostly fish, insects, and smaller amphibians. However, they do not hesitate to attack much larger creatures, often co-operating to do so.

There are no forests, nor many tree analogues that yet survive upon Skapula. Most of the plants that have been observed are various low-growing scrubs. A variety of algae and more complex aquatic plants also grow among the world's seas and its countless bogs. Some of these plants are better adapted to tolerate the world's toxic conditions than others, but these are also invariably poisonous to humans. Unfortunately, few of these species are capable of effectively breaking down the broad array of complex toxins that entered the environment as waste from the medicae centers and manufactorums. Consequently, most just absorb the toxins through exposure, and then unleash them upon the ecosystem once more after their decomposition.

The largest structures upon the world are the ruins of the ancient Adeptus Mechanicus facilities. Some of these are still partially inhabited by the world's population of Hereteks and mutants. Far more, however, have been ignored for millennia and left to corrode in the absence of any maintenance. Even the ruins that are still in use are dilapidated, crumbling structures. Those who dare to enter the buildings to attempt to recover any ancient secrets incur substantial risk. Floors and roofs collapse without the slightest provocation. Ancient chemical

storage facilities have corroded, leaving pools of toxins, acids, and many flammable materials. Countless heavily mutated organisms reside within some of these facilities, descendants of experimental tests which abandoned in an age long past.

## CULTURE

Skapula is occupied by two distinct groups of xenos as well as two distinct populations of humans. These different groups each have their own objectives, which are clearly in conflict with one another. In spite of this, the populations are small enough and the world large enough that they have not yet had to enter a state of constant warfare. Depending upon how various issues come to a head in the coming weeks and months, that could change suddenly. None of these groups have significant resources in place for a conflict, but for the xenos populations, that situation could likewise change abruptly. If either faction commits its resources to an all out conflict, the shape and direction of Skapula could shift.

The surviving humans can largely be broken into two distinct groups. There are several small enclaves of Hereteks yet active on this world. These groups are largely isolationist and reasonably well defended. In the face of superior opposition, they might unite together, though some would attempt to flee the planet instead. The Hereteks have no known ties to Stigmartus forces, but if provided an opportunity, they might quickly turn to ally with them. Currently, they lack significant manufacturing capacity, but if provided with adequate raw materials, they might be able to reactivate some of the ancient abandoned facilities.

Several primitive human tribal groups are also active on the world's barren surface. These savages constantly war with one another over the most secure locations for communities and the world's limited resources. From a cultural perspective, they are scarcely recognisable as human. Most of their gear consists of equipment scavenged and repurposed from the ancient ruins. Some



of these groups have dedicated their lives to the Ruinous Powers, but others remain completely ignorant of any world or powers beyond their pitiful existence.

The Tau expedition to Skapula was initially little more than a minimally equipped exploratory mission. Their initial purpose in the journey to this world was simply to engage in a research and salvage expedition to the ruined Adeptus Mechanicus structures. During the course of their investigation, the massive earthquake heralded the return of the ancient mechanical xenos. In response, the Tau sent a plea for reinforcements to their leadership among the Sept. While reinforcements have not yet arrived, it is likely that some support elements could reach Skapula in fairly short order.

The mechanical xenos have only begun their process of reactivation. Watch Station Skapula has detected very high levels of thermal and electrical energy being used within those structures. The full nature of their actions remains unclear, but only a few small sorties have been confirmed as leaving the one known xenos habitat. The full nature of their resources has not yet been determined. The single habitat could represent the entirety of their forces. Alternatively, it might be a herald of things to come, as additional structures and forces might emerge from the bowels of the planet.

# SOVEREIGN

*"Their misplaced passions have led these people to stray from the God-Emperor's guidance. They can have no place within the Imperium and must be eliminated."*

—Inquisitor Qi Walthon, Ordo Hereticus

During the height of the Jericho Sector, Sovereign was an agri-world known best for the craftsmanship of its remembrancers. Because of its substantial agricultural assets, this distant world weathered the sector's political collapse far better than most. In fact, after its forced separation from the Imperium, its populace was able to maintain a comparable standard of living. The bountiful harvests kept its citizens well fed and a conservative feudal government prevented revolution and heresy from fomenting. Ironically, it was the return of Imperial power that ultimately led to Sovereign's devastation. For, as the Achilles Crusade began to rage, Sovereign became a target of first the Stigmartus and later the Inquisition. Without a human population, other forces have seized control of this world—powers that represent a significant threat to the Imperium.

## HISTORY

During the height of the Jericho Sector, Sovereign represented a valuable resource for the entire region. It did so in two primary capacities; the first was that it was a hugely successful agri-world. The planet's food output was capable of adequately supplying two hive worlds in addition to supplying its own needs and that of several other colonies. The output was considered stunningly productive. This was in part due to a year-round growing cycle, but was also aided by a dedicated workforce who believed that their magnificent farms were a sign of their devotion to the God-Emperor.

Sovereign was never densely populated. The vast majority of its bountiful land masses were devoted to the world's massive farms. Agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus had deliberately engineered massive machines that were capable of harvesting acres of farmland in moments, so the world's bounty could be rapidly harvested and fresh seeds quickly planted. In this way, the land's efficiency exceeded all reasonable expectations. Many of the world's citizens were capable of operating the machinery—under the guidance of the Tech-Priests—but through their efficiency, much of the population was far idler than would be expected on a typical Imperial world.

To fill the idle time, many of Sovereign's citizens began to dabble in the ways of the remembrancer. Initially, these were largely amateur efforts. However, in time, some of the works became quite accomplished. Even as the world continued to export agricultural goods throughout the region, many of the artistic works created by these remembrancers were also enjoyed. The vast majority of these works were focused on particular aspects of the Imperial Cult. Some were poetic or dramatic recountings of the Jericho Sector's few known saints. Others spun dramatisations of the first human colonists to the region. A few surviving examples of these works represent some of the best existing records of the region's early history.





## COLLAPSE

When the Age of Shadow began, countless worlds within the Jericho Sector fell into chaos and anarchy. Sovereign, however, was unusual in that it managed to retain much of its identity. Because of its agricultural footing, the planet was far less dependent upon interaction with other worlds for survival. Its capacity to manufacture food vastly exceeded its local needs.

The world's artistic cultural tendencies provided another substantial benefit. As other planets began to fall to the depravations of Chaos, Sovereign's population had constant reminders of the glory of the God-Emperor. Public artwork, well known plays, and even locally crafted prayers had become a core portion of the world's identity. Countless recitations and performances reminded the citizenry of the power of their faith. Over the millennia, there were minor incidents, but ultimately the populace remained true to the Imperial Cult.

The largest change was in the world's oversight. Without any external influences, there was no one capable of appointing a governor to oversee Sovereign in the Emperor's name. In the absence of such authority, the position became a hereditary one. For thousands of years, the governor's heirs oversaw the world's populace under the title of Interim Governor. The "temporary appointees" also lacked the authority to make permanent assignments to many of the world's government positions. These lesser titles also were filled by interim workers, who were most commonly descendants of the person that held the position dating back to the time of the Jericho Sector.

In this way, the Imperial government gradually transformed into a feudal society. Appointees became the effective nobles of the world. The agricultural workforce essentially became trapped in their jobs, as it became impossible to earn a promotion unless a dynasty died out. The only paths to power outside of the government lines were as a minister among Sovereign's Ecclesiarchy or through the natural talent required to launch a career as a remembrancer.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

Sovereign is far from the front lines of the Achilus Crusade. Because of this, it has not yet had any direct interaction with the forces of the Imperium aside from those based upon Watch Fortress Erioch. Had the Crusade not encountered significant difficulties near the Hadex Anomaly, Sovereign's population might have

survived to reunite with the Imperium in a glorious celebration. Tragically, that was not to be.

A heretical Magos of Samech discovered Sovereign's vast bounty and sought to use it for the forces of the Ruinous Powers. Magos Phayzarus, an avowed Heretek, deliberately introduced a dangerous contagion to the world's water supply. By design, the contagion was capable of laying dormant within the populace until the Magi chose to trigger its activation. In 193809.M41, he activated it in response to the arrival of a Deathwatch Kill-team. The world's human population were suddenly transformed from friendly farmers and artists into blood-crazed lunatics.

Deathwatch forces attempted to identify the cause of the sudden madness, fearing that Enslavers might somehow be involved. Before a definitive solution could be reached, agents of the Ordo Hereticus became aware of the issue. An Exterminatus was carried out, completely eliminating the world's human population and destroying the world's vast capacity for agriculture.

In the years since that destruction, Heretek forces have taken over much of Sovereign. Though the world remains incapable of agriculture, the Hereteks have been devoted to the study of signs of an ancient xenos presence. These Hereteks and their Stigmatius allies have established a substantial and defensible foothold on the world. Rumours, however, have begun to circulate that the ancient xenos artefacts could still be functional. A survivor of the Kill-team involved with the situation that led to

the Exterminatus reportedly discovered complex geometric designs on the walls of an enormous cavern complex. This xenotech could be what drew the Hereteks to Sovereign.

## PLANETARY ENVIRONMENT

Up until relatively recently, Sovereign was a temperate, bountiful world. Her oceans teemed with life and her seemingly endless plains produced a vast bounty.

The seasons were consistently mild and ideal for agriculture. The water was pure and pollution had been kept to a manageable level in spite of thousands of years of human habitation. If there was a major challenge for humanity, it had not been discovered since the colony world had been established.

When Exterminatus was executed in 809.M41, all of the planet's native life was completely purged. Sovereign became a barren wasteland. Though the planet's astronomical



II: LOST WORLDS OF  
THE JERICHO REACH



## USING SOVEREIGN

- In spite of its desolation, the Deathwatch is obligated to perform routine scans of the world's surface, to make certain that no xenos powers have dared to intrude upon an Imperial world. The Kill-team travels to Sovereign so that they might verify that no one has established a colony upon the world. To their surprise, the Battle-Brothers discover the presence of a significant force of Heretek. These traitors are in the process of establishing what appears to be a mining operation. The Kill-team must shut this colony down and cleanse the world of the Chaos insurgents. Of course, they might learn the situation to be far more complex than they initially suspected.
- Results of a planetary survey effort showed some unnatural power fluctuations emanating from the surface of Sovereign. When a Tech-Priest examined these data, he concluded that this could be an indicator of Warp technology, consistent with an active Dolmen Gate upon Sovereign's surface, far from the site of the Heretek base. Watch Fortress Erioch dispatches the Kill-team to confirm the presence of any such xenotech and to shut it down. When the Battle-Brothers arrive, they discover that there are a more significant number of Necrons on the planet than they had any reason to believe. The Dolmen Gate could also be actively connecting Sovereign to one of the other tomb worlds within the Jericho Reach.
- The Kill-team is in pursuit of a Heretek asset from elsewhere within the Reach, when they discover that the traitor's craft has arrived in the Sovereign system. Their vessel is in orbit around the planet, but it is little more than a hulk. The crew have been slain and all of her shuttlecraft are gone from the hangars. The interior and exterior of the craft shows a significant amount of damage. A thorough investigation reveals that Gauss weapons consistently caused this damage—a sure sign of a Necron presence. The Battle-Brothers pursue the traitors to the surface, but to recover information they need to rescue the Hereteks from the Necrons that currently hold them prisoner. Fortunately, Sovereign's Necron population is not yet fully awake, but there are enough xenos that subterfuge and stealth are vital for success.

coordinates are unchanged, its atmosphere and environmental characteristics have been transformed. Massive planetary strikes and devastating virus bombs destroyed the world. As firestorms swept across its surface, the explosions and toxins transformed every living thing into little more than ash. Huge quantities of carbon dioxide, along with many complex organic substances, were released into the atmosphere. Smoke filled the sky and the heat of the flames transformed Sovereign's weather patterns.

Over the intervening years, the planet's recovery has been negligible. Most of the changes induced by Exterminatus have not yet abated. The atmosphere remains heavily clogged with ash and toxins. Little light can reach the world's surface through these dense clouds. The world's weather patterns remain unstable and massive fronts of hot or cooler air still occasionally sweep across the planet. Where they clash, savage storms erupt, stirring more debris into the planet's upper atmosphere.

Without any life, there is little potential for the atmosphere to quickly change. There is too little free oxygen in the atmosphere to safely support human life—though with the atmospheric pollutants, a rebreather would be necessary even if there were enough. The concentrations of water vapour and carbon dioxide in the air leave it feeling sticky, as well. An increase in surface temperature, due to all of the atmospheric changes, has only intensified this unpleasantness. Most of Sovereign's temperate regions were once a comfortable twenty-four degrees during the day throughout most of the year. Now, those same locales average a daily temperature of more than thirty-three degrees.

There are no known surviving native species of plant or animal upon Sovereign's surface, in her skies, or under her seas. While it is possible that some might yet dwell deep beneath the planet's surface or at the very bottom of her oceans, any such creatures have not yet made

an impact on the world's environs. Without some sort of biological processes involved, cleansing the world's atmosphere and restoring its soils to a useful status could take millions of years.

Alternatively, some group might attempt to accelerate this process through a combination of technological and biological means. At this time, there are no Imperial forces within the Jericho Sector that have access to the necessary resources to restore the world to a habitable status. In order for the world to become fit for resettlement, substantial resources would have to be spent to seed the world with organisms that could be used to first restore the atmosphere to a sustainable level. Then, organisms more suited for long-term settlement could be introduced. Such a process would require at least a few thousand years if it were monitored closely, though settlers could be reintroduced much sooner if they were provided ample supplies and survival gear.

The conundrum, of course, is that Sovereign is far from the front of the Achilus Crusade, and it is no longer a desirable habitat for colonisation. Unless other valuable resources were discovered, there is little motivation for human forces to restore the world to habitability—as numerous other, more suitable worlds could be claimed and exploited during the thousands of years it would take to complete the restoration. As things stand, it is much more likely that a group opposed to the Imperium would begin such a restoration long before Imperial forces decided to devote the necessary assets to such a project.

## II: LOST WORLDS OF THE JERICHO REACH



## CULTURE

Since the completion of Exterminatus, there are no loyalist humans surviving upon Sovereign. The entire human population was completely executed. None were capable of surviving the devastation. The world is effectively abandoned, save for irregular patrols by Deathwatch assets. Not even a garrison is maintained upon Sovereign.

In the Imperium's absence, others have begun to encroach upon the abandoned world. While its atmosphere is toxic and its soil is inhospitable, Sovereign does offer one thing of value to its visitors—privacy. Few have visited the world, for any reason, since its devastation. The pollution-choked atmosphere is impenetrable to visual sensors and can even block more complex sensor systems. A group that seeks complete isolation could scarcely find a world better-suited to their shadowy purposes.

Key among these visitors is a substantial group of Heretekes and their followers. Taking advantage of the world's isolation, these corrupted technologists initially came to Sovereign in search of resources. The absence of any Imperial influence and its effective isolation made it an ideal place to create a forge world devoted to the Stigmartus cause—if they could find the necessary minerals. In the course of their first visit, they discovered a complex series of caverns beneath the planet's surface. These were exposed for the first time in millions of years after the Inquisition's bombs cratered the surface.

As they investigated these tunnels, the Heretekes were surprised to discover evidence of an ancient xenos culture. The first caverns they explored, nearest the planet's surface, showed ancient inscriptions and artistry. As they descended ever deeper beneath the planet's crust, the heathens first discovered complex security systems, which utilised technology that pushed the boundaries of their understanding. Taking great care to avoid tripping these systems, over the course of several years the traitors discovered how to disarm these traps.

Eventually, they discovered a vast complex storing thousands of inanimate mechanical humanoids. Clearly of xenos origin, the Heretekes soon began the process of investigating this ancient xenotech in the hopes of

seizing control of it to exploit its power. The research was conducted under the strictest of conditions. With the utmost care, they began by attempting to master the inscriptions and language used throughout the complex, even before they tampered with any devices. This was in part so that they could avoid inadvertently activating anything. This study lasted several years, during which time an extensive base camp was established within the caves, near the world's surface.

Before the Heretekes could complete their analysis, they were shocked when many of the ancient devices suddenly activated. Confident that they had done nothing to trigger the activation, they initially attempted to continue their survey. Elsewhere within the vast tomb complex, thousands of Canoptek Scarabs also returned to awareness. Their first command was to identify the intruders who had taken up residence within another of the Stasis Crypts.

In short order, a small swarm of scarabs descended upon the Heretekes and their servants. The ensuing conflict was brief, but definitive. The Heretekes were able to maintain a foothold within the xenos crypt, but they sustained substantial losses in the process. A vessel was immediately dispatched to obtain reinforcements—the potential knowledge was far too vast to so easily surrender.

The Necrons, in contrast, had awakened in response to a signal received from their throne world. They knew that the time to awaken from their sleep of aeons had finally come. However, they were also aware that another race had intruded upon their sleeping chambers. Fearing what might be lost, they began to activate additional defenders at the same time as they attempted to identify the severity of the intrusion. As soon as additional forces can be prepared, they plan to extract the most severe payments from those who would dare to disturb their rest.







A  
DYNASTY  
RETURNED



SECRETS OF THE  
LOST AEONS

•

THE GREAT  
AWAKENING

•

THE SUHBEKHAR  
DYNASTY

•

THE DARK  
PATTERN

•

THE SOULLESS  
HOST





# CHAPTER III: A DYNASTY RETURNED

*"And when the final seal is broken, when the final star is aligned, when the final drop of blood is shed, then shall those who sleep the sleep of the dead yet dream not arise, and the death shall cover the void..."*

—Disputed translation of pre-human runic text  
unearthed on the third moon of Freya IV

**A**cross the haunted depths of the Outer Reach, enemies stir and dark stars slide inexorably into alignment. Far beneath the surfaces of worlds that died hundreds of millions of years ago slumber deathless enemies of all that has and ever will live. Greatest amongst these enemies are the Necrons—relentless warriors of living metal that gave up their souls to shed their frail mortality countless aeons ago. Other things too stalk the cold stars of the Outer Reach, some of them at the behest of the Necron Overlords, others entirely unknowable but every bit as horrifying.

In addition to the soulless Necrons, the Outer Reach is subject to a curse far harder to ascertain or to combat. This is the so-called Dark Pattern, a phenomenon that has troubled the savants and masters of the Dead Cabal for decades. For countless ages, certain stars of unnatural constitution have progressed slowly but surely towards a long-predicted alignment, and all that perceive it know it must surely portend the direst fortune for the entire region. It is not only the Dead Cabal who seek to unlock the true meaning of this part-glimpsed doom, for there are even some amongst the Necrons that know only a small part of its true meaning.

And then there is the Conclave of Tears, a council of Eldar that has existed, so far as any can tell, since time immemorial. The agents of this shadow conclave roam far and wide, influencing events seemingly unrelated to the wars of the Jericho Reach but invariably connected to them by some invisible strand of fate only the Eldar can perceive. What objective the Conclave of Tears is ultimately working towards is unknown, but

there are those that hold that it must surely be connected to the existence of the Jericho-Maw Warp Gate, the invasion of Hive Fleet Dagon, the emergence of the Necron or, horrifyingly, all of these. What if the Warp Gate exists not as some long forgotten artifice of a long dead species, but as a dread allurements intended to foment war and discord on the galaxy's eastern fringe? But such are the rantings of Warp-blasted hellseers and mind-wasted prognosts, and the truth may never be known, this side of End Times at least.

This chapter of **THE OUTER REACH** presents Game Masters with a wealth of characters and factions to use in their campaigns. The newly (and only partly) awakened Necrons of the Subhbkhar Dynasty are described, providing GMs with a number of characters they can integrate into the ongoing narrative of their campaigns. The Dark Pattern is explored too, revealing one potential explanation of this dire phenomenon and what it might mean for the entire Jericho Reach and every living thing within it.

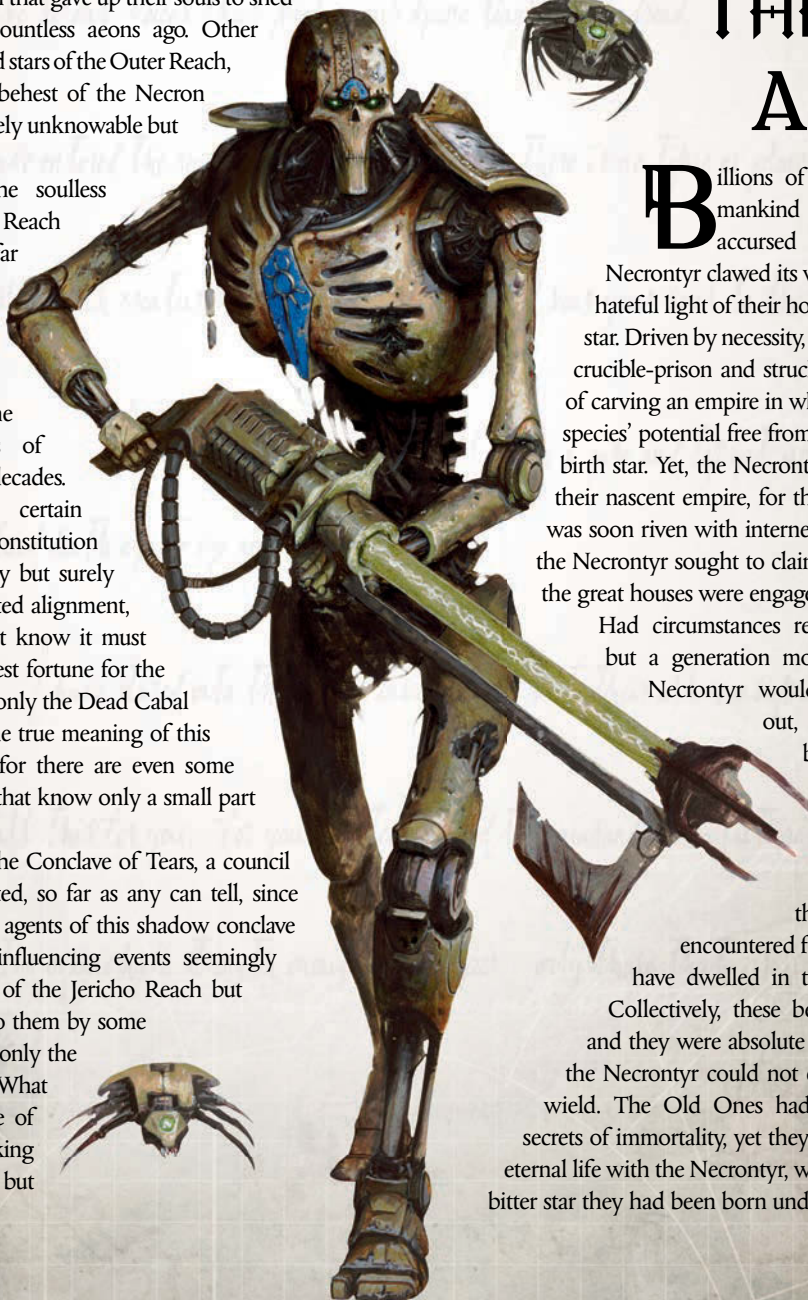
## SECRETS OF THE LOST AEONS

**B**illions of years before the birth of mankind on Holy Terra, a bitter, accursed species known as the Necrontyr clawed its way to sapience beneath the hateful light of their home world's baleful, flensing star. Driven by necessity, the Necrontyr escaped their crucible-prison and struck out for the stars, hopeful of carving an empire in which they could realise their species' potential free from the lethal energies of their birth star. Yet, the Necrontyr would not find peace in their nascent empire, for their highly stratified society was soon riven with internecine strife. Each dynasty of the Necrontyr sought to claim its own destiny and soon the great houses were engaged in all out war.

Had circumstances remained as they were for but a generation more, it is possible that the Necrontyr would have wiped themselves out, as so many species had before them and shall do in the future. Instead, as the Necrontyr's young and fractious empire sprawled outwards through the stars, it inevitably

encountered far older powers, beings that have dwelled in the galaxy for long aeons.

Collectively, these beings were the Old Ones, and they were absolute masters of forms of energy the Necrontyr could not even conceive of, yet alone wield. The Old Ones had long ago conquered the secrets of immortality, yet they refused to share the gift of eternal life with the Necrontyr, who yet bore the curse of the bitter star they had been born under.





## SECESSION AND HATE

As the Necrontyr empire spread still farther across the galaxy, its dynasties each pursuing its own independence from the Triarch—the ruling council of the empire headed by the Silent King, Szarekh—the entire species came to stand upon the very precipice of civil war. In an effort to unite his people under his rule, the Silent King formulated a plan that would change everything forever and have consequences that would echo through history for countless millions of years. In a typically bitter act of jealousy and resentment, the Silent King used the Old Ones' refusal to share the secret of immortality as a pretext for war, forcibly uniting the entire Necrontyr species beneath the rule of the Triarch against their common foe. War erupted across the stars, yet while the Silent King succeeded in uniting his hateful people, it was a war the Necrontyr could not win. Not on their own.

In a matter of scant centuries, the Necrontyr empire was reduced to a shadow of its former might. The Old Ones were masters of the Webway and could draw forth powers the Necrontyr could not hope to defend against. Soon, the armies of the dynasties were all but defeated, their masters at bay as they clung to those few worlds still remaining. With the Necrontyr all but defeated, the Old Ones had no need to sully their hands with the killing blow, for at that moment the dynasties turned upon one another in a second War of Secession. Resentful of the doom the Triarch had brought upon them, the dynasties rebelled against the Silent King and some might even have sued for peace had they been afforded the opportunity. Even as the fate of the entire species appeared sealed, salvation came, and from an unexpected quarter.

## THE AWAKENING OF LOST GODS

The exact circumstances of the Necrontyr's first contact with the godlike beings known as the C'tan are unlikely to ever be known. Perhaps they had always been there, suckling on the baleful energies of the Necrontyr's own sun, or maybe they were summoned into being from some abyssal outer darkness by the hate and bitterness the Silent King's short-lived people held for the immortal Old Ones. Whatever the truth, the oldest of the dynasties fell under the unknowable creatures' power and in order to fully engage with them, wrought magnificent vessels into which they could invest their immaterial forms and walk amongst mortals for the first time in aeons. That these forms resembled the half-remembered gods of the Necrontyr's pre-history might have been coincidence, but it might just as well have been a forewarning of the true nature of the C'tan.

Clad in its godlike, awe inspiring form, one of the C'tan—known to its kin as the Deceiver—came before the court of the Silent King. It spoke of a war fought long before the birth of the Necrontyr, in which the C'tan had been vanquished by the Old Ones and cast to the furthest reaches of reality. Now, the Deceiver claimed, the C'tan were ready to return and reap a harvest of grim vengeance upon the Old Ones and all their progeny. The Necrontyr could share in their victory, the Deceiver promised, and be granted the immortality the Old Ones had so resolutely, and perhaps presciently, denied them.

Overcome by a dark vision of unity and glory, the Silent King committed his people to the C'tan's scheme, ignoring the words of the only dissenter. It was the Silent King's court astrologer who foretold that unity and glory would indeed be attained, but only at the cost of the very soul of the Necrontyr species.

## THE PRICE OF IMMORTALITY

The immortality the C'tan promised would be delivered unto the Necrontyr by way of the arcane and terrible process of bio-transference. Vast bio-foundries were constructed, and into these the Silent King's peoples marched according to the terms of the pact he had made with the C'tan. What blasphemous procedures the Necrontyr were subjected to within the raging bio-furnaces cannot be known, but certainly, each was stripped of flesh and of soul, his body replaced by a shell of living metal animated by what remained of his guttering self. Above each furnace swooped and dove the ethereal true-forms of the C'tan as they glutted themselves on the spiritual detritus of an entire species. It was only when the Silent King himself emerged from the bio-transference process and looked upon what had become of his people that he saw the awful truth of the pact he had made. Though immortality and nigh godlike strength and vigour were his, it had come at the cost of his soul, the effluvial remains of which had already been sucked down the gullet of a circling C'tan.

Nevertheless, the Necrontyr species was united as never before. The process imbued in every one of the Silent King's subjects the command protocols with which he would rule over them with an iron hand. The entire species was his to command, and so it fell upon the Necrons to honour their side of their terrible bargain. Renewed by their devouring of the souls of an entire species, the C'tan were unstoppable, and with the legions of the Necrons marching in their wake, the Old Ones were doomed.

## THE WAR IN HEAVEN

The C'tan unleashed such powers upon the galaxy as had not been witnessed since creation. Planets were blasted to ashes upon the cosmic winds and stars were extinguished with but a word. Black holes were punched through the fabric of reality and the foot soldiers of the Old Ones slaughtered by the billion as the storm of the C'tans' wrath swept the galaxy. At the last, after an epoch of slaughter, the C'tan broke into the Webway. The vengeful star gods glutted themselves upon the souls of the Old Ones' servants and, probably unknowingly, but ultimately disastrously, they unleashed such Warp-spawned perils upon the galaxy that the Old Ones were at last overwhelmed and utterly defeated.



## THE GREAT BETRAYAL

All through the long War in Heaven, the Silent King had nurtured his hatred of the C'tan, even as he had led his armies against their foes. Knowing the Necrons could never defeat the Old Ones on their own he had done all that the C'tan had bid. Yet, with the war finally won, the Silent King enacted a betrayal long prepared for. Knowing it was no more possible to destroy a C'tan than to reverse the act of creation itself, the Silent King shattered each into countless shards, which he imprisoned in a tesseract labyrinth for all time. Thus fettered and enslaved, the C'tan were sundered into fragments, each a formidable power yet ignorant of the glorious being it once truly was. In ages to come, the Necrons would be forced to free these beings, for a time at least and only under the strictest of fail-safes, but for now, the War in Heaven was at an end and other forces were in the ascendant.

## THE SLEEP OF AEONS

Looking upon the galaxy-wide ruin the war had brought into being and seeing that the greatest of the Old Ones' servants—the Eldar—stood ready to inherit much of their masters' lost glory, the Silent King ordered the Great Sleep. While he himself departed for the black gulfs beyond the galaxy in search of a means of reversing the act of bio-transference and restoring the Necrons' souls, those that remained turned their cities into vast stasis tombs in which they would slumber away the aeons until the time was right for their return. The Silent King knew that one day the Eldar would decline. Then, he swore, the Necrons would rise again and reclaim their rightful dominion over the galaxy.

# THE GREAT AWAKENING

Having slumbered in dusty stasis crypts scattered across the galaxy, the Necrons have been slowly awakening, one tomb world at a time, for several millennia. The process is far from stable, however, for the legions have lain immobile and undreaming for sixty million years. It is a staggering feat of science that any tomb worlds have survived at all, and many have fallen prey to corruption in their arcane systems, planetary upheaval, and the actions of other species, most of them in ignorance but a few very deliberate indeed. Throughout the long aeons of slumber, the tomb worlds' systems have worked tirelessly to maintain these vast structures and to defend them against the intrusions of the lesser species. It is not known exactly when the first tomb world initiated its revivification protocols, and it is quite possible that some did so in error well before the ordained time. Only now, as more and more tomb worlds awaken, is a pattern becoming visible to those whose mission it is to stand watch upon the trackless reaches of the galaxy and beyond. Piecing together scattered

accounts of skull-faced reaper-machines rising from the dust of dead worlds the length and breadth of the galaxy, the xenos-savants of the Holy Ordos are faced with a stark realisation. What at first appeared to be unrelated alien raids serving no overall purpose were, in fact, the heralds of a disaster of galactic proportions.

Having slept so still and for so long, it is not possible for a tomb world to awaken quickly into a fully alert state. While dormant, each is controlled by a master program that oversees its essential maintenance and defence, mobilising what resources it judges appropriate to any given situation or threat. As the long awaited time of awakening nears, as best can be judged by the master program, more of its systems are brought online and more of the interred revived. Often, it is the lower order of Necrons, the Warriors and Immortals, that are awakened in the initial phases. These nearly mindless automatons following their lifeless protocols are brought online first, so that the way might be prepared for the more senior members of the dynasty. As each tier in the dynasty hierarchy is revived, each more intelligent and bearing more individuality than the last, the whole process gradually begins to appear more like the workings of an ancient civilisation and less like that of some great machine. At the allotted time, an Overlord is awakened, and upon his full revival the master program cedes power to its creators. From that point onward, a truly ancient mind leads the tomb world, and what happens next depends entirely upon his character and ambition.

Some Overlords are cunning and patient, seeking to muster every resource at their disposal before launching the legions into the void to fulfil the destiny of the Necron empire. Others are bellicose and impatient, launching a string of attacks before those settled in the region discover the tomb world's awakening. While most are likely to assault nearby worlds occupied by sapient races, some have been known to offer such worlds an ultimatum—serve the Necrons, or die.

The process of awakening presents a massive danger to a tomb world. If anything other than miniscule numbers of Necrons are revived at once, a staggering amount of energy is unleashed, which can be detected within light years and inevitably leads to investigation by ignorant and curious mortal species. Thus, should a tomb world awaken to find itself lying near (or even beneath!) the territory of a younger species, the massive energy spike might draw such attention that it is overwhelmed before its warriors are able to respond.

Having been awakened and control turned over to an Overlord, the tomb world must in time take its place in the domains of the dynasty that created it. While many dynasties have never awakened and, due to a variety of disasters never will, many are slowly piecing together their former domains. One world at a time, empires that vanished aeons ago are being rebuilt and long dormant hierarchies are reasserting themselves once more. At the centre of each of these risen empires is a crown world, the glorious capital and seat of the Phaeron of an entire dynasty. Below it are numerous lesser tomb worlds and other holdings, though rarely are these anywhere near as extensive as they were in their full glory.



# THE SUHBEKHAR DYNASTY

The region known to mankind as the Jericho Reach was once, numberless aeons ago, but a portion of the holdings of a great house of the Necrons called the Suhbekhar Dynasty. The last Phaeron of the dynasty—Ahmontekh, called the Crimson Scythe—was a general of great repute. It was Ahmontekh who, according to the Lamentations of Yr, defeated the proud Nuada, beloved of the Old Ones, and who plunged his mighty war-scythe into the hallowed ground of Xoth. As the War in Heaven neared its climax, it was Ahmontekh that breached the Walls of Ib and who was first to pass through the Dolmen Gate on the brink of the Ebon Void. It is said that Ahmontekh defeated beings the ancient Eldar revered as gods, and that even to this day the last of the Old Ones' progeny hold him in a unique blend of hatred and fear. Yet, of all the legends told of mighty Ahmontekh, none are repeated so often as that of his betrayal at the hand of his cousin Setii of the Charnovokh Dynasty.

It was the height of the war in the Webway and Ahmontekh's legions had suffered greatly traversing the cyclopean Halls of Oort. Ever eager, the legions of the Charnovokh engaged the Eldar holding the Great Ring, in so doing stealing the glory that was by right the Crimson Scythe's. When at last Ahmontekh's host carried the day and scoured the Halls of that meddlesome race, he confronted his cousin, furious at the breach in martial protocol.

Charnovokh dismissed

Ahmontekh's complaint, and so pressing were the events of the battle still raging that further confrontation was impossible. Much later, the Silent King set in motion his plan for the Great Sleep and Ahmontekh was forced to set aside the bitterness gnawing at the core of his being.

After much industry, those dynasties that had survived the calamitous War in Heaven set about enacting the Silent King's order, and at the last Ahmontekh passed into his stasis chamber, there to slumber through the long aeons until the Eldar were no longer a threat to the Necrons' rightful dominion over the galaxy. Yet, it was not to be thus. Unknown to all but Ahmontekh himself, that small core of his being that still raged at the petty betrayal of the Charnovokhs refused to slumber. It raged for sixty million years, the seed of jealous bitterness nurtured until all that remained of the Phaeron was an iota of reason adrift upon a surging ocean of madness.

The fate of Phaeron Ahmontekh might have gone undiscovered until the very moment of his revivification were it not for the actions of the command program tasked with watching over the dynasty's crown world as it slumbered through the aeons. As the program watched vigilantly over its silent charges, it detected a signal. Usually, it ignored such things, for they were invariably the incoherent ramblings of lesser species screaming their existence into the void, ignorant of the doom they were calling down upon their own heads. In this case, however, the signal was familiar, and aimed specifically at the crown world. It was a missive from another dynasty, and it bore the glyph-seal of the Charnovokh Dynasty.

As ancient engrams flared into being for the first time in aeons, the program set about a limited revivification process, seeking to tap into the lowest orders of its master's consciousness in order to prepare him for what was to come.

In the meantime, the program decrypted the missive, discovering it to be a plea for aid from the Charnovokh Dynasty's ruling court. The rival house's domains were being ravaged by an alien race descended upon the galaxy





from the depths of intergalactic space, and already countless of its holdings had fallen. The Suhbekhar's hated rivals were besieged and beleaguered, and willing to offer anything in return for deliverance from their plight.

Logic paths blazed and stasis seals parted as the control program delivered this news to the lower memetic orders of the slumbering Phaeron's soulless consciousness.

The result was devastating.

The instant the aeons-old seals were broken, sixty million years of distilled bitterness for the sender of the message burst through layer upon layer of failsafe protocols and the feedback surged unchecked through the entire system. Countless thousands of slumbering Necrons had their cortexes blasted by Ahmontekh's rage, even though he was only partially conscious. The last process the crown world's control program enacted before it's own logic gates were overwhelmed was to instigate a backup protocol. Even as it perished, one line of monolithic code at a time, the program sealed off the Phaeron's stasis crypt and selected a regent who would rule in his stead.

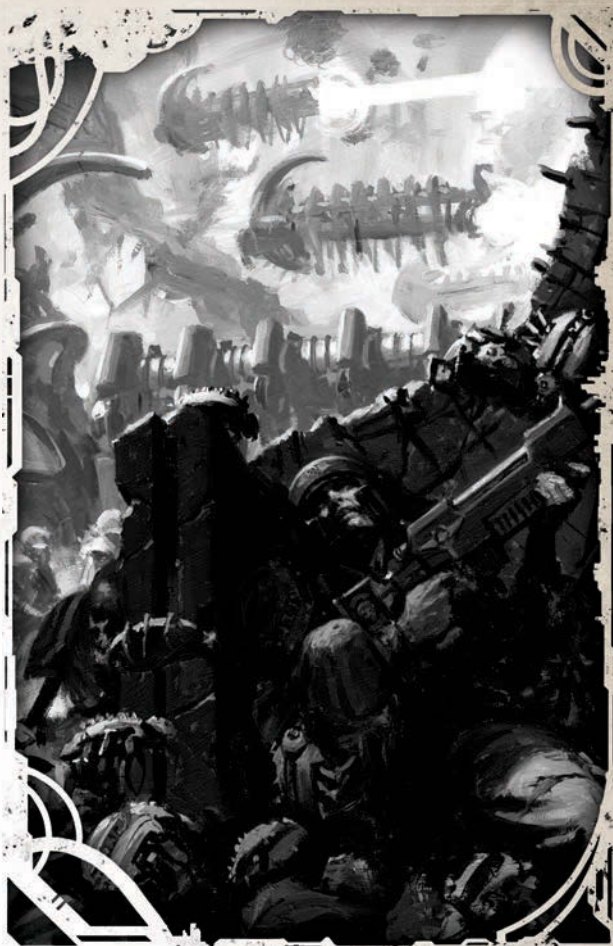
As the empty tomb resounded to the last of Ahmontekh's rage, his newly appointed regent awoke, to find himself alone, and unexpectedly on the throne of an entire Necron dynasty.

## THE AWAKENING OF THE SUHBEKHAR DYNASTY

The revivification of the Suhbekhar Dynasty's crown world—called the Hollow Sun—did not proceed according to any of the plans laid down sixty million years before. The Phaeron Ahmontekh the Crimson Scythe was crippled in mind, and the feedback of his aborted reawakening had destroyed the crown world's control program and reduced countless numbers of its slumbering legions to mindless husks. When the crown world's new regent, Ahhotekh, awoke, bathed in the cold light of his revivification chamber, it was to a tomb on the brink of failing completely. Instead of an ordered and systematic powering up of the tomb's systems, its arcane workings were in total disarray. Maintenance constructs wandered aimlessly about tunnels lit by guttering bulbs, bereft of the guiding will of the crown world's command program. Higher order servants staggered back and forth, turning their tools upon random systems or each other with no overriding purpose. A small number of the tomb's warriors had awoken too, and in their unguided system shock begun fighting one another as if they were bitter foes.

Knowing that he had to restore order to the anarchy that had befallen his realm, the Regent Ahhotekh ordered the wayward servants of his dynasty to shut down immediately. He was somewhat shocked when they totally ignored him, continuing blithely to wreak havoc upon the structure of the tomb and those Necrons still in stasis.

Furious that his words were going unheeded, Ahhotekh repeated his order, demanding that all of his servants power down and await further instructions. Once again, none did so, leaving the regent alone in a realm slowly descending into tragic chaos. Raging against the fate that had seen him awaken into undreamed of power, only to have his newly bounded servants rebel against him, the regent stalked the labyrinths, determined to find a means of exerting control over his subjects.



Exactly how long Ahhotekh wandered the catacombs even he cannot judge, for his mind was not yet fully awakened after his sixty million year slumber and the dark tunnels resounded with the mechanical shrieks of systems tearing themselves apart. At length, he stumbled past the crypt of one of his dynasty's chief servants, a Cryptek named Ozkan the Codifier. Pausing, the regent turned and gazed through the shimmering stasis gate, beyond which lay the slumbering form of the wise old master of codes. Even as his addled mind came into focus, Regent Ahhotekh realised why the wayward servants had not obeyed his word. The still slumbering Phaeron of the Suhbekhar Dynasty still bore the command protocols through which his legions of servants obeyed. The crown world's command program had not been able to transfer them to Ahhotekh when it anointed him Ahmontekh's regent, or else the mad Phaeron had somehow prevented it from doing so, clinging on to power even as he slumbered.

His lambent eyes narrowing, the Regent Ahhotekh knew what he must do. Initiating the revivification protocols of the stasis tomb before him, he set in motion the process of awakening the Codifier. Though it was many hours before Ozkan was sufficiently lucid to grasp the events into which he had awoken, the old Cryptek was at length able to communicate with his new master, and soon he had confirmed Ahhotekh's suspicions. The slumbering Phaeron of the Suhbekhar Dynasty still clung jealously to the command protocols. Though the Cryptek would in time be able to gain power over most of the servants that had awoken so far, reviving the millions of warriors still locked in stasis



would require the Phaeron to relinquish the full panoply of command protocols. That would only happen in the event of his death, but without the crown world's command program online, they would not be passed on, but destroyed for all time as his synaptic nodes grew cold.

Thus was the Regency of Lord Ahhotekh born, and it was only days before yet another event of great import occurred.

## CHARNOVOKH RETURNED

Even as he sat upon his newly acquired throne, his recently awakened court taking shape about him, the Regent Ahhotekh faced the second potential crisis of his short tenure. A stranger appeared at the gates of the Regent's capital and demanded entry. No servant of the Suhbekhar was this, but a ragged traveller from across the stars, bearing a message from his own Phaeron, the master of the Charnovokh Dynasty.

The regent bade the messenger approach the foot of his throne, and even as his Lychguards closed in, the stranger spoke. The Charnovokhs called upon their ancient allies to honour their kinship and answer the call to arms transmitted but days before. The message was no formal request between equals, but a threat, and a barely veiled one at that. In its arrogance, the Charnovokh Dynasty thought to order the Suhbekhar to their aid, and in an instant, a feud sixty million years and more ancient was reignited.

With a cold, barely noticeable gesture, the Regent Ahhotekh ordered his Lychguard to strike. A blazing warscythe lashed out with preternatural speed and, before he knew his fate, the messenger's head was skidding across the marbled floor of the throne room, his lifeless body crashing down a moment later.

The messenger's head was delivered back to his master and, because of its machine nature, it was able to deliver the Regent Ahhotekh's reply verbatim.

The decapitated head delivered Ahhotekh's message to the court of the Charnovokh Dynasty, "Damned be those who would deny the glory of the Suhbekhar Dynasty. The Second War in Heaven is coming, and damned be all who stand against us..."

## BEST LAID PLANS

By the counting of men, only a handful of decades has passed since the Regent Ahhotekh acceded to the throne of the Suhbekhar Dynasty to rule it in the name of its crippled Phaeron. In that time, he has bent his entire will to the endeavour of taking full control over his holdings. Ahhotekh's closest ally is the Cryptek Ozkan the Codifier, whose arcane technological skills were essential in gaining control of those Necrons that awoke alongside Ahhotekh. Without Ozkan, it is likely that these revivified servants would have slain one another and brought about the doom of the entire crown world, so blasted were their atrophied minds. Using the most esoteric of machine domination protocols, Ozkan brought the anarchic legions to heel, ensuring that his new master had the core of an army with which to begin the first phase of the resurgence of the Suhbekhar Dynasty.

Since that time, Ozkan the Codifier has strived to enact Ahhotekh's overriding order to awaken more of the slumbering hosts. Two issues prevent the Cryptek from doing so. The first

is the fact that vast numbers of the sleeping Necrons were blasted by the corrupted code of their mad Phaeron, and it is not apparent which is intact and which damaged beyond sanity until a revivification is attempted. The second issue is that no wholesale awakening is possible without the dynastic control protocols still held within the mind of the mad Phaeron. Thus, the reawakening of the Suhbekhar Dynasty's once glorious armies proceeds at a glacially slow pace.

To date, the Necrons' activities in the Jericho Reach have by necessity been cautious and gone largely unseen by the lesser races. The regent's legions grow more numerous with every breakthrough the Cryptek Ozkan achieves, yet their numbers are as nothing compared to those that slumber still. One day, Ozkan has sworn to his master, the command protocols locked away in the mad Phaeron's shattered mind will be uncovered, and then countless millions of Necrons will arise from dusty stasis tombs across the entire region. Until then, the regent must proceed with caution. His priority must be to ensure the continued security of the worlds of his dynasty and to act decisively when they are threatened. Already, a number of battles have been fought against those who would seek out and penetrate the dynasty's holdings, and the regent is certain there are individuals within the ranks of his numerous enemies who know far more than any mortal should of the Suhbekhar's doings. A cunning mind, the regent has set in motion numerous schemes to spread the influence of his dynasty far and wide, acting against those who would act against him. In so doing, the regent has become aware of a phenomenon he suspects is related to the command protocols yet secreted within the mind of his insane liege. He has detected a hidden hand at play, a grand scheme hinted at by the procession of ancient stars and glimpsed by his Cryptek vizier in stray lines of corrupted code still echoing around the systems of his crown world.

## THE HOLLOW SUN

The crown world of the Suhbekhar Dynasty is, like many Necron capitals, a marvel of arcane super-science the likes of which has not been seen in the galaxy for countless millions of years. No two crown worlds are alike, each reflecting something of the idiosyncrasies of those it was built to inter, but the Hollow Sun is no mere affectation of a monarch intent upon slumbering away the aeons in gaudy splendour. Rather, it reflects the erstwhile genius of the now insane Phaeron Ahmontekh, who upon commissioning its construction knew he was ordering his masons to build the impossible. And the impossible they gave him.

## HISTORY

The Hollow Sun crown world is, exactly as its name suggests, constructed deep within the raging, nucleonic furnace of a star. The star in question lies at the heart of the Slinnar Drift region of the Outer Reach and bears no outward sign of being any more or less unusual than any of the other countless stars in that vast mass. The artifice that keeps the necropolis from being consumed within the stellar core would seem as mind-shattering sorcery to even the most lore-steeped techno-magus



Inquisitional Record 23J3.544//XVII#

**Classification:** Dark Omega

**Transmitted:** 583.811.M41

**Astropath Originus:** +EXPUNGED+

**Astropath Terminus:** Adept Majoris Xin

**Sender:** +EXPUNGED+

**Recipient:** Inquisitor Graelon

**Thought for the Day:** The Rewards of Tolerance are Treachery and Betrayal

+++Begin Message+++

My Lord,

I believe you may find the following of interest. It is an excerpt from an after-action report of a Deathwatch mission to the world of Sovereign. The only extant copy of this report that I could locate was housed on a sorely neglected cogitator in the catacombs of Watch Fortress Erioch. (The story of how I managed this retrieval is quite a tale in itself, best told over a bottle of amasec.) The closest I can date this report is sometime between 321 and 567.M38. Unfortunately, the purpose and objective of this mission is also lost to antiquity. The account was penned by one Battle-Brother Firius, seconded from the Carcharodons Chapter. In cross-referencing this report, I have noted a distinct similarity to numerous accounts given by Rogue Traders and others, of cursed xenos ruins in the spinward expanses of the Jericho Reach. Whether certain Inquisitors' hurry to purge the population of Sovereign has any bearing on our own interests, I can only speculate at this time. However, I have reason to suspect that the Adeptus Mechanicus has gleaned more information on this matter through their Explorator missions than they have let on. I intend to explore this possibility further and will be in contact once I have further information.

Your Loyal Servant,

+EXPUNGED+

+++Begin Decryption+++ ...discovered a subterranean xenos structure of indeterminate age and origin. Upon breaching the ancient, black-stone walls, we were at first met by silence, and shortly by a rushing sound like an icy waterfall. +++Data Corrupted+++ ...before we could complete our initial scans and pict-captures of the strange machine, a swarm of small, metal insectoid creatures fell upon us. My fellow Battle-Brothers cut down the machines with controlled bursts of fire, but the constructs continued to pour into the chamber in a ceaseless swarm... +++ERROR+++ ...As ammunition ran low, I... +++End Log+++ +++End Message+++

of the Adeptus Mechanicus and it represents the very epitome of the Necrons' mastery over the fundamental powers of the universe. Somehow, the Subbekhar Dynasty has slept away the aeons within a tomb as cold as any grave, yet located within the fusion-wracked core of a blazing sun. There must surely be no power, whether technological or psionic, which could detect the presence of such a place, let alone even conceive that such a feat was possible.

Ahmontekh the Crimson Scythe did not go to such unimaginable lengths to hide his crown world on a mere whim. The Hollow Sun was constructed because the Phaeron of the Subbekhar Dynasty had every reason to suspect that numerous of his enemies would actively seek out his resting place throughout his aeons of sleep. So many of the Old Ones' servants had he slain during the War in Heaven that the Crimson Scythe was marked for death from one end of the galaxy to the other. The last of the meddlesome Oort might have fallen to his bloody scythe, the many-faced Proteans sent to the pyre and the pale Seers of Leng scattered to the corners of the galaxy, but the Eldar had emerged from the War in Heaven as an ascendant power. These former warriors of the Old Ones seemed content to allow the Necrons to retire, or perhaps they believed the C'tan's armies all slain. In the case of the Crimson Scythe, however, the Eldar were intent upon ensuring he could never return from whatever exile he had embarked upon. Ahmontekh, a master strategist as well as a fearsome warrior, knew the Eldar would not rest in their hunt for vengeance against the slayer of so many of their former masters' progeny, and took the most thorough of precautions to ensure his sleep went undisturbed. When he awoke, so the Crimson Scythe planned, he would turn upon what remained of the Eldar. Then the hunters would become the hunted and the stars would be stained crimson with Eldar blood once more.

The colossal undertaking that was the construction of the necropolis within the Hollow Sun was not limited to the necropolis itself. The Subbekhar Dynasty maintained holdings across the entire region, and while many of these had been reduced to atoms during the War in Heaven, others remained standing. It was impossible to replicate the creation of the Hollow Sun across so vast a territory, so the Crimson Scythe was forced to trust the lower order of royal masons to hide the lesser tomb worlds as best they could. Ever the military genius, Ahmontekh ensured that those tomb worlds that did survive the aeons-long stasis they were to enter would find the resources they needed to rebuild their strength close at hand. Thus, numerous worlds within the Jericho Reach, and in particular within the Slinnar Drift, appear preternaturally blessed by valuable elements. While the Crimson Scythe slumbers still, none of his underlings can be certain exactly which of these were placed to serve nearby tomb worlds yet to reveal themselves, which are naturally occurring, and which might represent caches put in place by other species entirely.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

Over the several decades since its disastrous revivification, the Hollow Sun has been coming slowly back online, but not in the manner that was originally intended. The vast stasis chambers and labyrinthine passageways are still largely empty, though swarms of Canoptek Scarabs scour them inch by inch in an



effort to repair the damage done when the command program attempted to awaken Phaeron Ahmontekh. The bulk of the effort is focused about the mighty stasis halls, wherein countless thousands, perhaps many millions of Necron warriors and war machines lay in cold sleep. The regent's Cryptek's have thus far succeeded in awakening but a portion of the overall number of Necrons interred within, but their industry is ceaseless and the most arcane processes are being brought to bear to bypass the lost Phaeron's command protocols and turn control over to his regent. Of those warriors the Crypteks have been able to awaken, there number many thousands of loyal soldiers of all types, from rank after rank of Warriors to the devastating Doomsday Arks. These muster in the great precincts of the necropolis, ever ready to pass through the massive Dolmen Gate at its heart and to make war upon the galaxy as they did sixty million years ago.

As it slowly awakens, the Hollow Sun is taking its place at the heart of the resurgent empire of the Suhbekhar Dynasty. The rule of the Regent Ahhotekh is as incomplete in the matter of his territory as it is in that of his legions, however, and the location of every single tomb world and other holding in the region is as yet unrevealed even to him. As with the revivification of his dormant servants, the regent is determined to locate and muster every tomb in which an underling might lay sleeping, and numerous of his most cunning and stealthy warriors are scouring the outer darkness for any and all signs of them. In doing so, they have discovered that others seek the cold tombs of the Necrons too, and a silent war is escalating in the dark places of the Outer Reach.

The Regent Ahhotekh is now well aware that others have marked his dynasty's awakening, though he is far from certain which of the numerous species plaguing the galaxy knows anything of substance. He sees the hand of the Eldar all about, though he was much gratified to discover that these erstwhile scions of the Old Ones are but a guttering remnant of their former glory. The presence of the Orks was of little surprise, for ever have their kind infested the universe. Of the Tyranids the Necrons knew little, but recognised them for the foe that had decimated the Charnovokh Dynasty. In the Tau, the regent saw traces of the work not of the Old Ones, but others of their progeny, determining that a more detailed examination would be necessary to ascertain their true heritage. The spread of humanity was something of a surprise to the regent and his court viziers, for it had not been predicted by the royal astrologer (who was formally disintegrated for his failure, another event he did not foresee). The spread of mortal beings enslaved to the powers of the Warp was less of a surprise to the Necrons, for one of the last things the Suhbekhar witnessed before closing the portals of their crypts on the galaxy was the taint of the beyond questing outwards from the bleeding wounds torn in the fabric of reality at the climax of the war in the webway. Though the Warp and all its spawn are anathema to the soulless Necrons, they are well aware of the threat such deluded slaves represent to the resurgence of the dynasties, and the regent's legions have already fought several battles against the forces of the Ruinous Powers.

One event that concerned the Necrons of the Hollow Sun greatly was their discovery of the Hadex Anomaly. The phenomenon put several of the regent's advisers in mind of the terrible things unleashed upon the galaxy by the C'tan at the height of the War in Heaven, but when they turned their

attention upon it they became quite certain that the anomaly itself was looking back at them. It is the regent's belief that the Hadex Anomaly represents a truly unknowable sentence entirely out of its own time and its own place, though to date the Necrons have not formulated a plan to confront the issue.

There are two pressing matters that the Necrons of the Hollow Sun must confront and which its forces are mustering against in ever increasing numbers. The first is the Eldar, for while this once-great culture has clearly fallen far, the regent is convinced the forces of the Eldar, or of those allied to them, are active in the Jericho Reach and working against the dynasty's holdings. The other issue is that of the Inquisition and the Deathwatch, for while the Necrons do not yet have the perspective to separate the two, they have discerned that Humanity has its champions and these too are active in denying the region to its true inheritors. While the Eldar prove an elusive foe, too cautious of loss to confront openly, the champions of Humanity have proven a thorn in the side of the Suhbekhar Dynasty. So formidable have the Space Marines proven that some amongst the Court of the Hollow Sun believe they represent a supreme evolution of the human genome. Some even hold them to be an entirely separate species, one deliberately created, perhaps even by the prescient Old Ones.

## ENVIRONMENT

The Hollow Sun is a staggering feat of arcane stellar-engineering and dimensional manipulation. The star itself is one of those for which the Slinnar Drift is well known, a protostar that appears to all external observations to have existed far too long in its present state. None can say whether the star was specially created for the purpose of secreting the Necron capital at its core or if the Suhbekhar Dynasty's masons somehow bored through its raging fabric to transplant their necropolis at the very heart of its core. Perhaps they created the necropolis elsewhere and transported it to its current location using dimension twisting processes lost even to the resurgent Necrons. In truth, none of those stellar masons have yet awoken, and so their lost art must remain that unknown.

The necropolis of the Suhbekhar Dynasty takes the form of a city as large as any world, located at the heart of its sun and protected by arcane machine systems that take up many times more space than the stasis crypts they protect from the raging fusion core. Vast, unidentifiable systems shield the necropolis, siphoning off the raw power of an entire sun so effectively that the chambers and labyrinths within are as cold as any grave. Vast, dusty chambers and hallways are lined with coiled machine components many hundreds of metres tall, throbbing with the power to displace dimensions and reshape reality. Within an outer layer of machinery hundreds of miles thick, rest the stasis chambers of the countless Necron constructs responsible for maintaining and defending of the Hollow Sun. Notably among them are the Canoptek Spiders and the many millions of Scarabs that scour the systems for even the slightest trace of malfunction. Deeper still lies the stasis chambers of the legions of the Suhbekhar Dynasty, hall after hall of slumbering Necron Warriors, almost all denied to the regent by his current inability to access the mad Phaeron's command protocols. Past the halls of the legions is the Royal Necropolis, a majestic realm wherein the most senior of the dynasty are interred in splendour, watched over by rearing statues wrought in the image



of the dynasty's masters. The most magnificent of all the mighty tombs is that of the Phaeron Ahmontekh, a mighty pyramidal structure now permanently attended by a small army of Crypteks tasked with unlocking the secrets held within his blasted, fitfully slumbering mind.

Perhaps the most impressive sight in the entire Hollow Star is the mighty central precinct. At the centre of a crescent plate of living metal so large that many hundreds of thousands of warriors could muster as one, stands the Dolmen Gate. This structure serves as the main means by which the Necrons of the Hollow Sun gain access to the galaxy around them. The gate takes the form of two mighty pillars of dark green, living stone, rearing several hundreds metres into the air. Crossing these is a mighty capstone bearing the glyph of the Subharkhar Dynasty, which pulses with baleful green malignance and casts the entire scene in actinic green light.

When the gate is activated, the empty space between the stones is transformed into a dimensional portal that glows with nigh blindingly bright, green illumination. Through this portal, the legions of the Hollow Sun will one day march to retake their lost domains within the Jericho Reach and beyond. For now, only smaller hosts pass through, intent upon the as yet secret work of the Regent Ahhotekh.

## THE DARK PATTERN

*"Ever has mankind sought solace in the alignment of the stars. How foolish... how pathetically foolish..."*

—Adept Orbo, xenoarchaeologist attached to the staff of Lord Commander Ebongrave

The Dark Pattern is a phenomenon that has long concerned the Deathwatch and their Ordo Xenos masters, and that may very well have led to the instigation of the Long Watch on the Jericho Reach. The arrangement is variably described as a web of death, of dead worlds torn from their celestial procession as if to array themselves in the heavens according to some entirely unnatural configuration. Other sources claim the worlds are host to elements that should not exist in such places, or have known the tread of xenos species that existed long before the birth of Humanity and should long ago have faded from the ken of mortals.

The Dark Pattern is a key concern of the Dead Cabal, and this secretive order is by no means of a single mind as to the nature and meaning of this web of intrigue. There have been numerous attempts to scry the identity of the creators of the Dark Pattern, and in this several species have been implicated, as have humans serving the fell denizens of the Warp. Of those potential non-human candidates, the Necrons have been implicated in several sources, though never conclusively.

One of the sources that links the Necrons quite emphatically to the Dark Pattern is known as the Derleth Lexicon, and if but a fraction of the claims it contains are true, the Jericho Reach is already standing at the very brink of a calamity of truly stellar magnitude.

## THE DERLETH LEXICON

The matter of the Derleth Lexicon first came to light a decade ago, when the Omega Vault at the heart of Watch Fortress Erioch unsealed itself in a most extraordinary manner. Many openings of the vault are in some way predictable, with Librarians and other psykers present in the watch fortress at the time receiving some form of premonition or at least an inkling that some portentous event is about to occur. In the case of this particular opening, no such warnings were received. Indeed, the Warp was noted as especially still, though, later on, this fact would be used to retrospectively identify that something was indeed amiss.

It was in the depths of watch secundus and the majority of the fortress was silent and still. Whether by coincidence or unseen design, an unusual number of Kill-teams were absent, having been deployed on a range of pressing missions the length and breadth of the Jericho Reach. Watch Captain Brand, a formidable and experienced veteran from the Storm Wardens Chapter, had the watch when, with no warning at all, the fortress's defence grid came to maximum alert and warned of an imminent assault by an as yet unidentified foe. Brand instigated a full response, and those Battle-Brothers present on the fortress mustered for what the wailing klaxons promised to be an attack of unprecedented scale. As automated defence turrets swept the darkness for any sign of a target, the Kill-teams armed themselves and swore that, should they fall, the Watch Station would be denied to their enemy. So overwhelming was the scale of the alert that Brand was forced by long codified protocol to unseal the outer wards of the fortress's plasma containment shields so that in the event of enemy victory the entire station might be destroyed, along with all of its terrible secrets.

Then, just as suddenly as it began, the alert was ended. Furious, Watch Captain Brand ordered an immediate investigation into what had triggered it, unable and unwilling to accept that the Deathwatch's defence grid had been triggered in error. Of course, the alternative was just as terrible to consider, for if an enemy had been so near to breaching the Deathwatch's defences, it had come closer than any ever had and survived.

In addition to ordering his Techmarines to conduct a full audit of the fortress's defence augurs, Watch Captain Brand set every available Battle-Brother and Chapter Serf to a complete search of the Deathwatch's space-borne citadel. No corner was left in shadow, and chambers and passageways not unsealed in long centuries knew the unfamiliar tread of the station's inhabitants. The possibility that something, no matter how seemingly insignificant, might have slipped through the Deathwatch's defences was simply too dreadful to contemplate, and with so many souls scouring the watch fortress it was not long before something was indeed discovered.

The portal to the Omega Vault was found open, an eerie, actinic glow emanating from its silent depths.

It was Watch Captain Brand himself that passed into the vault to recover the latest of its mysteries, for surely the activation of the fortress's defences at the moment of its opening could be no coincidence. That mystery proved to be a simple book bound in withered leather, a tome that would in time become known as the Derleth Lexicon after the individual identified as its compiler.



## A COSMIC HORROR

So portentous were the circumstances of the appearance of the Derleth Lexicon that it was decided immediately that only the most learned of scholars and strongest of minds should attempt to scry its secrets, and then only under the strictest of precautions. The Dead Cabal took an immediate interest in the tome, and so it is this secretive brotherhood that has come to serve as the sole custodian within the Deathwatch and the Ordo Xenos of the terrible claims found to lurk within. It is not known if any outside of the Dead Cabal know of the Lexicon's contents, though given their nature, it must be assumed that some do.

The writer of the Lexicon appeared to be a man of an age long, long passed, and one in possession of unutterably dark wisdom he felt compelled to consign to future generations. Whether this individual was mad or genuinely blessed of a unique perspective on the events of the far future will in all likelihood never be known. The very fact that his collected writings came to be interred within the Omega Vault must surely mark them out as uniquely portentous. It was this fact alone that led the Dead Cabal to take the contents of the Derleth Lexicon very seriously indeed.

The Derleth Lexicon is a description written in ages past of a region of space that most members of the Dead Cabal are certain to be the Jericho Reach. Though it speaks in riddle and allegory, the list seems to refer to the alignment of various star systems and other stellar phenomena that bear a startling, though not total, resemblance to key systems and locations within the region guarded by the Deathwatch. The text speaks of "men of metal," and "men of stone," and a great war between beings birthed in the outer darkness at the very dawn of creation. It speaks of a time of awakening triggered by the alignment of certain distant stars, and of a cataclysmic release of power that will mask the heralds of the end of all things even as it sweeps away the "watchers." After years of study, these riddles have rendered up several potential interpretations, the direst of which is as follows.

The "men of metal," who most agree can only be the Necrons, are described by the lexicon as emerging from a timeless slumber in cold tombs scattered across the stars. The "crippled king"—surely a Phaeron—of the men of metal is the architect of a great scheme, for he long ago foresaw that upon his own awakening a mighty font of power would be unleashed, and this would be visible to all who stood vigil. In order to dissipate this release and thus maintain his secrecy, the crippled king built a vast network of arcane nodes, his intention being that when he and all of his legions are fully awakened, the power that will mark his arrival will be unleashed through the network. The crippled king's capital will remain hidden, because the power unleashed by its awakening will surge forth from a hundred valves and in so doing overwhelm all.

If it is indeed true that, as the Derleth Lexicon asserts, the Dark Pattern represents a network of worlds that will each be utterly destroyed by the raw release of energy of a hidden Necron capital awakening, then the wars of the Jericho Reach must surely pale into utter insignificance compared to the devastation soon to befall the region. Scarce Ordo Xenos data confirms that when a Necron tomb world fully awakens, such a staggering amount of energy is unleashed that those suitably equipped to detect such things can do so from many light years in all directions. Such a method of dispersal as the Lexicon hints at would certainly blind any watchers to the tomb world's location and make a response impossible.

Of late, the Deathwatch has fought more and more battles against the Necrons, and so those of the Dead Cabal concerned with the interpretation of the Derleth Lexicon grow ever more certain that the time of awakening is at hand. They have placed great store in identifying each of the supposed nodes in the Dark Pattern, so that they can at least prepare for a time when those worlds might be destroyed. It can surely be no coincidence that many of the worlds of the Dark Pattern are already well and truly under the scrutiny of the Deathwatch, a fact that serves to many to confirm the awful accuracy of the dreadful text.

## THE FINAL EXECUTABLE

The fact that the Dead Cabal has gleaned as much information as it has from the Derleth Lexicon is both miraculous and tragic, yet several of its members note disturbing irregularities within the text when compared to events unfolding in the Outer Reach. It is almost as if, some claim, the impossible scheme of the "crippled king" is not proceeding to plan. For one thing, not all of the stars mentioned in the Lexicon are anywhere near the position it states they should be, and the difference cannot be accounted for by celestial procession. In particular, a number of systems within a dozen or so light years of the Black Reef are noticeably out of alignment, giving rise to the possibility that the gravitic storms afflicting this region are exerting a far wider and more powerful influence upon nearby stellar bodies than was previously imagined.

In addition to these discrepancies, the Dead Cabal has noted the fact that the Necrons themselves do not appear to be acting entirely according to the predictions of the Derleth Lexicon. While some might regard this as beneficial, others point out that the truth might be far darker. These claim that the Necrons are following only part of the plan because whatever guiding intelligence is at work is not itself party to the entire truth. If the so-called crippled king is the Phaeron of the Necrons of the Jericho Reach, then perhaps he is not in full command of his dynasty's activities. Perhaps another is in command, but not fully so, they assert. Perhaps then, humanity has but a small window of opportunity in which to act against the dread alignments of the Dark Pattern. Perhaps the Jericho Reach is at present frozen in a single moment, its fate as yet undecided, its doom held in check by equal and opposing forces of a truly cosmic order.

In this matter, the Derleth Lexicon offers one last, obscure warning. Locked in the blasted mind of the slumbering crippled king, the writer warns, is the final executable, the last line of a command order that, when parsed, will break the deadlock and bring into alignment the final elements of the Dark Pattern. When that happens, the lexicon warns, all hope is truly lost, unless the words of a blind prophet unborn when the lexicon itself was penned are heeded. That prophet was the venerated Satarrion, who in 744.M33 offered his dire prognostication:

"To the east of the Emperor's realms lie damned worlds, a reach of cold stars and domains of death. The fires of war shall light these benighted planets, some ignited with faith, others devoured by darkness. Foes strike from within and without, all ignorant of the Dark Patterns waiting to arise and destroy until nothing remains but oblivion. Only those who stand watch in the depths of night may tip the balance."



# OVERLORD-REGENT AHHOTEKH

## Overlord-Regent Ahhotekh (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	52	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	35	53	42	60	55

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 50

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Tactics (Air Combat, Assault Doctrine, Defensive Doctrine) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Air of Authority, Combat Master, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Swift Attack, Sure Strike, Wall of Steel.

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (10), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 10.

**Weapons:** Staff of Light (Ranged) (Basic; 25m; S/4/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 7; Clip -; Reload -; Volatile) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+13 E; Pen 4; Balanced, Power Field).

**Gear:** Resurrection Orb††.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††See entry under Necron Overlord on page 121.

Overlord Ahhotekh was raised as a senior member of his dynasty, serving in the Royal Court of the Crimson Scythe, but he never anticipated attaining high office. So total and uncompromising was his Phaeron's rule that none of Ahmontekh's underlings seriously contemplated any sort of disloyalty towards him, for all knew the fate that would befall them should they do so. After bio-transference, all treachery was rendered impossible due to the command protocols imprinted in the mind of every Necron. Instead of plotting against his lord, Ahhotekh therefore spent much of his time before the Great Sleep plotting against his peers. Throughout the War in Heaven, Ahhotekh manoeuvred those forces he was entrusted with leading in such a way as to advance his own position over his rivals, and always to the detriment of others. No matter how the dynasty's Phaeron conducted his wars, it always seemed that Ahhotekh's legions suffered fewer losses than those of any other Overlord. On numerous occasions, Ahhotekh's rivals for the Phaeron's favour sought to confront him, but somehow Ahhotekh always frustrated their efforts to call him to account. By the end of the War in Heaven, Ahhotekh had ascended to a position of great influence, although many of his peers were unaware of its true extent, for his hand was ever hidden. Somehow, it appears that throughout that last, epic confrontation within the depths of the webway, Ahhotekh's rivals suffered numerous set backs and disproportionate losses, which, it transpires, the Phaeron was somehow convinced were the fault of the Charnovokh Dynasty. Whether it was a deliberate

ploy on Ahhotekh's part or a case of him taking advantage of a rapidly unfolding situation can only be known by the overlord-regent himself, and he is unlikely to share the truth.

In character, the Regent Ahhotekh is a consummate schemer and a master of intrigue. He is utterly brutal in the persecution of his enemies, whether political rivals within his own dynasty, members of other Necron dynasties, or the lesser beings of the galaxy's numerous mortal species. He has never turned his hand against his own Phaeron, however, for the command protocols burned into his thought engrams during bio-transference remain in place and will as long as Ahmontekh lives. Like his fellow members of the Phaeron's royal court, Ahhotekh is utterly incapable of acting against his lord, despite the murderous carnage he has inflicted upon his peers.

Despite the regent's expertise as a master manipulator, there is one thing he is not, and that is a being overly keen to get blood on his own hands. It is not that Ahhotekh is incapable in battle, for as a senior courtier at the time of bio-transference he was gifted with a body as strong and tough as any opponent he might ever meet upon any field of battle. Rather, Ahhotekh has ever regarded physical combat as a crude affair practised by those of his servants incapable of much else. In practise, this means that when Ahhotekh does dirty his hands with bloodshed, he does so in what he regards as a highly refined manner according to the ancient martial codes of the Necrontyr. He has, in his time,





## DEATHWATCH INTELLIGENCE

While they are aware that the Necrons are active in the Jericho Reach, the Deathwatch and the Ordo Xenos have not yet been able to learn very much of the highest echelons of their command structure. The overlord-regent has taken to the battlefield in person on several occasions, but very few witnesses have been left alive to pass on much in the way of useful intelligence. Several members of the Dead Cabal have made it their business to attempt to correlate certain passages within the Derleth Lexicon, especially those calling into question the ability of the Necrons' ruler to command his legions. On several occasions the Dead Cabal has come tantalisingly close to engaging Ahhotekh and confirming that it is he who leads, only for the regent to withdraw or deploy according to some unknowable scheme that makes little sense to the Imperium's champions. The Deathwatch are currently treating the identification of the creature with overall command over the Necrons in the Jericho Reach as a matter of urgency, for having identified him, operations can be planned to decapitate this ancient and implacable enemy of all mortal life in the galaxy.

fought against numerous enemy champions, and prevailed against them all, yet he only indulges in the slaughter of lesser creatures when there is little other option. When possible, Ahhotekh uses the most expeditious method possible of disposing of lesser enemies, utilising arcane weapons of terrible mass devastation to rid himself of such foes. When faced with a creature worthy of battle, however, he revels in demonstrating the abilities of his C'tan-wrought mind and body.

Since his awakening and his unexpected ascension to the position of overlord-regent of the Suhbekhar Dynasty, Ahhotekh has worked tirelessly towards the full reawakening of the Hollow Sun crown world. The fact that the Phaeron Ahmontekh lives still, albeit in a limbo between life and undeath, has placed limits upon the regent's abilities to fulfil his unanticipated destiny and, thus, much of his energies are turned towards breaking this deadlock. The regent's most pressing concern is to somehow extract the command protocols from the slumbering Phaeron's mind without unintentionally slaying him (which would result in the permanent loss of the protocols) or causing him harm (which Ahhotekh cannot do, due to his own conditioning). The search for a means of doing so has taken the overlord-regent and the senior Crypteks of his court to numerous dread places within the Jericho Reach. In so doing, Ahhotekh has uncovered tomb worlds and other Necron holdings formerly known only to the slumbering Phaeron, and whether he knows it or not, his actions have contributed to the advancement of certain passages long foretold by the contents of the Derleth Lexicon.



# LORD ILLMAHNOKH

## GRAND VIZIER TO THE SUHBEKHAR ROYAL COURT

### Lord Illmahnokh (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	52	(12) 65	(12) 65	35	53	51	60	48

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 50

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Logic (Int) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Tactics (Air Combat, Assault Doctrine, Defensive Doctrine) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Combat Master, Combat Sense, Counter Attack, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Disturbing Voice, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Paranoia, Swift Attack, Sure Strike, Wall of Steel.

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (10), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 10.

**Weapons:** Warscythe (2d10+18 E; Pen 9; Felling [2], Power Field, Unwieldy).

**Gear:** Phylactery††.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††See entry under Necron Overlord on page 121.

Necron dynasties display a bewildering range of structures, all of them rigid and hierarchical with no two exactly alike. Beneath the Phaeron, there is generally a Phaeron's Court, made up of a number of highly ranked Overlords, each with his own courts below him in turn. The Royal Court of the Suhbekhar Dynasty is somewhat unusual in that its ruling court is formed up about the overlord-regent, but otherwise it is broadly typical of the convoluted ruling structures the ancient Necrontyr established and which have remained largely intact since before the War in Heaven. Beneath Overlord-Regent Ahhotekh is a Royal Court of half a dozen overlords, ostensibly devoted to ruling in the name of their slumbering Phaeron. In practice, the court serves Ahhotekh, who desires only to inherit the mantle of Phaeron of the Suhbekhar Dynasty. Lord Illmahnokh is the most influential of the overlord-regent's royal court, and in many ways typical of the individuals that comprise it.

Though Lord Illmahnokh bears the title "Grand Vizier," he is at present a minister without portfolio. This is true of many of the senior members of the dynasty, for the labyrinthine webs of power in place when they entered the Great Sleep were shown to be far less stable upon their awakening. Lord Illmahnokh was once the most senior of Phaeron Ahmontekh's counsellors, and was, prior to bio-transference, tied to his master by bonds of



## DEATHWATCH INTELLIGENCE

Of all of the Overlords of the Royal Court of the Subbekhar Dynasty, it is the Grand Vizier Lord Illmahnokh that the Deathwatch has the most solid intelligence on. Due to his secret missions to locate and awaken the lost tomb worlds of the Outer Reach, Illmahnokh is the most active of the dynasty's lords and he has been encountered on dead worlds across the entire region. Invariably, Illmahnokh is accompanied by a small retinue of Lychguard whose cortical engrams are closely synchronised with his own, making them the most devoted allies possible in his secret endeavours. With his silent guards at his side, Illmahnokh has entered crypts and stalked through ruins no mortal has witnessed since the War in Heaven, and in some he has called forth the slumbering ancients. Any Deathwatch Kill-team investigating newly discovered xenos ruins is well advised to be alert for his presence, for he may have tracked them to that which he seeks, and he may very well awaken the slumbering legions and bring them down upon the intruders' heads.

blood as well as fealty. Yet, he was not so closely related as Ahhotekh, and so he was passed over by the crown world's command program when the need to select a regent came about. Ahhotekh was cautious in the manner he awakened the individuals that would form his royal court, revivificating each in turn and being sure to secure their loyalty and support before awakening the next. Lord Illmahnokh was greatly consternated to learn of his Phaeron's fate, for he knew it placed himself in potential peril, and so he swore fealty to his new master as a matter of necessity. Though he went down upon one knee at the base of Ahhotekh's usurped throne and swore service to the overlord-regent, the words were as ashes in his mouth, cold ambition burning yet in his living metal heart.

Lord Illmahnokh's role within the Hollow Sun is to serve as its chief administrator, a responsibility that, in theory at least, extends beyond the crown world and places him above the individual rulers of the numerous lesser tomb worlds scattered throughout the Outer Reach and beyond. This position should place Lord Illmahnokh in a role of great power, for it should be through him that the overlord-regent's will is disseminated throughout the dynasty's holdings. The problem is the exact state and even location of many of those holdings are locked away within the blasted mind of the slumbering Phaeron, and so Lord Illmahnokh has very little in the way of real power. He is in effect a chief administrator with precious little to administer, and a chief advisor to a master who has no desire to hear his advice.

Sideline by the ascension of the overlord-regent, Illmahnokh's only hope of gaining real power lies in Ahhotekh overreaching his capabilities before the Phaeron's command protocols are extracted from his mind. Should the regent gain the codes that control the loyalties of all of his underlings, then his ascent will be complete and Illmahnokh will be utterly unable to oppose him, his hand quite literally stayed. It is therefore in the Grand Vizier's interest to see the Crypteks' efforts to extract the command codes stymied, and in this he has had some success. But Illmahnokh is

not content to constrict his efforts to the political, and he has ensured that, as is his prerogative given his senior rank, he takes what opportunities as present themselves to lead the legions of Subbekhar in battle. The Grand Vizier's secret intent in doing so is to uncover those tomb worlds yet unknown to the Hollow Sun, and to ensure that any interred within awaken to receive his commands and not those of the overlord-regent. Thus, Lord Illmahnokh is gradually building his own web of fealty and servitude and mustering his own legions, though to what end even he has yet to determine.





# DESTROYER LORD THULEKH

## THE BLOODY PRINCE

### Destroyer Lord Thulekh (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
62	50	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	<sup>(14)</sup> 72	52	50	45	60	36

**Movement:** 6/12/18/36 (Hoverer)

**Wounds:** 78

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Logic (Int) +20, Tactics (Air Combat, Assault Doctrine, Defensive Doctrine) (Int), Speak Language (Necrontyr) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Battle-Rage, Blademaster, Combat Master, Combat Sense, Counter Attack, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Frenzy, Hatred (All), Lightning Attack, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Wall of Steel.

**Traits:** From Beyond, Hoverer (6), Machine (10), Necron†, Regeneration (9), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Perception (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour:** Sempiternal Weave and Machine (10) Trait (All 10).

**Weapons:** Master-Crafted Warscythe (2d10+22 E; Pen 9; Felling [2], Power Field, Unwieldy).

**Gear:** Resurrection Orb††.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††See entry under Necron Overlord on page 121.

Long ago, Lord Thulekh was a valued lieutenant of his Phaeron, a commander of the Subbekhar Dynasty's legions in whose name numerous great victories were won. Ahmontekh trusted his underling implicitly and it was generally held that he would inherit the mantle of command should death one day claim the godlike Crimson Scythe. The only foe Lord Thulekh had was one of his own royal blood, the being that would one day become master of the dynasty in all but name—Ahhotekh, now overlord-regent of the Subbekhar. The two never openly came to blows, for the command protocols that moderated their loyalties forestalled outright violence. Instead, both maintained a relentless campaign of subversion against the other all throughout the long War in Heaven, a campaign which, thanks to his military prowess, Thulekh could be said to have won, outwardly at least. In reality, Ahhotekh's unseen agents had, by the time the Great Sleep began, closed in around Thulekh to such an extent that even as he lay down in his stasis casket to enter the sleep of aeons, he did not even realise he had lost.

### DEATHWATCH INTELLIGENCE

The forces of the Deathwatch have engaged the mad Destroyer Lord Thulekh and his pack on several occasions, and have traced references to these berserk Necrons attacking seemingly at random throughout the entire Jericho Reach. It appears that Thulekh has been active for many centuries, perhaps even millennia, scouring the worlds of the Outer Reach and drenching them in blood throughout its long history. The masters of Watch Fortress Erioch have attached a high level of priority to curtailing Thulekh and his pack, though to date they have found no accurate means of predicting where they will attack next. Some have come to believe that the Destroyer Lord is being used deliberately as a weapon of terror and mass destruction, and that a higher intelligence is setting the killers loose as a distraction from other, more subtle endeavours.

Many thousands of years before the Necrons of the Hollow Sun even began to awaken, Lord Thulekh's stasis crypt entered its revivification cycle. Upon awakening, the lord expected to be greeted by legions of servants, and to present himself at the throne of the Crimson Scythe, but it was not to be. The entire necropolis at the heart of the Hollow Sun was silent, its command program refusing or unable to acknowledge his presence. Even

the Canoptek Spiders and other constructs tasked with maintaining the fabric of the crown world ignored him entirely, and no other Necron had arisen but he.

Wandering the dusty labyrinths, Thulekh only slowly came to his senses, for the fugue of so long a sleep as he had endured was heavy indeed. Stumbling from one chamber to the next, his presence seemingly ignored by the crown world's mindless custodians, something like madness descended upon him and he never fully awoke. Instead, the once noble Thulekh fell to madness, which only deepened as the days turned to weeks, then to years and then to centuries. Though none were present to witness it, Lord Thulekh

had become what would later be termed a Destroyer—a Necron given over entirely to the pursuit of war as the only expression of that which had awakened from the sleep of aeons.

Thulekh's living metal body answered the call of twisted consciousness, slowly transforming itself into a form more fully suited to making war. The lower part of his body





transmogrified into the distinctive anti-grav hull of a Destroyer, while his limbs melded into the weapons they bore. His senses were augmented by targeting systems that had no utility in the necropolis of the Hollow Sun, but which would serve him well out amongst the battlefields of the galaxy. His transformation into a living engine of war complete, the insane Lord Thulekh somehow found his way to the great Dolmen Gate in the Hollow Sun's central precinct. From there, he came forth to wreak his bitter, fallen fury upon the pathetic mortal creatures that plagued the galaxy.

Since that time, the Destroyer Lord has sallied forth from the Hollow Sun on numerous occasions, always returning engorged on slaughter to sleep fitfully until next his madness calls. On one occasion, he rose to discover that others had done so too, and his initial reaction was one of unthinking violence. Thulekh slaughtered hundreds of his metal kin before Ozkan the Codifier managed to override his command impulses and bring him to heel. Now, he exists in a half life of bloodshed and slumber. The overlord-regent takes great pleasure in unleashing the murderous pet that was once his princely rival and setting him forth upon the galaxy, other Destroyers at his side. Ahhotekh must exercise supreme caution in doing so, for there exists some part of Thulekh's mind that recalls his long lost glory and hates his erstwhile rival with unimaginable intensity. To date, Thulekh's fury has been spent upon the lesser creatures of the galaxy and occasionally on other Necron warriors, and the overlord-regent has taken great pains to ensure it is not directed at him.

## PHAERON AHMONTTEKH

### THE CRIMSON SCYTHE, THE STAR-SLAYER

Phaeron Ahmontekh, called in ages past the Crimson Scythe for the blood in which he drenched the sector, is the once and future king of the Subbekhar Dynasty. The Phaeron was at one time counted amongst the most puissant of warriors and his name was feared across countless thousands of worlds. He fought at the side of the C'tan themselves, and is said to have once struck a blow that slew a god. He bore a warscythe of such potency that it is said to have shattered the planet Maldek into a billion chunks of rock in a single blow, an event which several of the Eldar's mystic cycle-singers make reference to many aeons later.

Were it not for the all consuming hatred in which the Phaeron holds his rival dynasty the Charnovokhs, Ahmontekh would in all likelihood be leading the reawakening of the Subbekhar Necrons as they rise across the Jericho Reach. But it was not to be, for that sliver of hate that the Phaeron bore inside his consciousness as he lay down in his stasis casket refused to slumber with him.

Distilled for sixty million years, that iota of resentment grew to consume the sleeping Phaeron's entire consciousness so that, when the Hollow Sun's control program attempted to awaken him in response to the transmission from the Charnovokhs, it burst forth like a tsunami breaking through a fatally breached dam. All that Ahmontekh had once been was gone, consumed over the aeons by his own hatred even as the last residue of himself looked on helplessly. Perhaps had the Necrons not sold their souls to the C'tan, something of him might have survived to fight back against the raging bitterness within, but it was not to be. Now, the Crimson Scythe of old is no more, and that distilled essence of his resentment of his own cousin dynasty is all that remains of his consciousness.

To the detriment of the Necrons of the Subbekhar Dynasty, however, there is far more locked up inside the living metal cranium of the slumbering Phaeron than the overlord-regent or most of his Crypteks are aware. The overlord-regent has guessed something of it, yet even he is not party to anything like the whole truth. The awful secrets lurking in the ruined consciousness of the Phaeron of the Subbekhar Dynasty are hinted at in numerous

disjointed sources, yet no one observer can see their entirety. The regent knows that the Phaeron bears the dynasty's command protocols, and is coming to see that Ahmontekh was the architect of far more than the Hollow Sun, his legacy cast across the countless systems of the Jericho Reach and beyond. Others still have glimpsed something more of the truth, including the aeons-dead compiler of the Derleth Lexicon as well as a number of the Crypteks Overlord-Regent Ahhotekh has tasked with attending to the blasted Phaeron. Unbeknownst to the regent, his most trusted counsellor, Ozkan the Codifier, has caught a glimpse of something an order of magnitude greater even than the miracle of stellar engineering that is the Subbekhar Dynasty's magnificent crown world.

Exactly what the Cryptek has glimpsed may or may not be the truth, for the Phaeron's consciousness may only be examined one blasted iota at a time. Initially, the venerable Cryptek feared that the Phaeron had fallen pray to the dreaded Flyer Virus, and in truth this fate remains a





## DEATHWATCH INTELLIGENCE

The Ordo Xenos is largely aware of the existence of the class of Necron masters known as “phaerons,” and so accept that such a powerful individual must surely lie slumbering in some unknown stasis crypt somewhere in the depths of the Jericho Reach. Neither the servants of the Holy Ordos nor the Battle-Brothers of the Deathwatch have thus far encountered such an individual in the Jericho Reach, though neither has any notion of the fate of the Phaeron of the Suhbekhar Dynasty.

Unbeknownst to the masters of Watch Fortress Erioch, however, the Deathwatch have in fact fought a battle against a being that the lone survivor of that bitter confrontation has identified as a Necron of the rank of Phaeron. Roughly a year ago, the Radical Inquisitor Thaddeus Hakk led a four-strong Deathwatch Kill-team into the spinward marches of the Slinnar Drift. The outcast alien-hunter intended to follow up on a passage of dark wisdom he had apparently unearthed in some dead world bordering the Hecaton Rifts in the distant Koronus Expanse, though the nature of this lore was never revealed. By all accounts, this small force intruded in places long forbidden to mortals and in so doing called down the wrath of a being of impossible power. All that is known of the incident is a psychic warning bellowed into space by the team’s leader, an Epistolary of the Red Hunters Chapter. The warning was later received by a fellow Librarian, who was wracked by visions of a being of living metal clad in blood-stained rags like those of a long interred corpse and wielding a scythe that splattered long arcs of bloody residue wherever it passed. Most of the few granted access to reports of this incident concluded that the Kill-team was lost to some manner of Daemonic incursion, though the Inquisitor has not been tracked down to confirm or deny this. Those of the Dead Cabal that have read the pages of the Derleth Lexicon suspect otherwise and keep their own, silent counsel on the matter.

possibility. The dark visions that have thus far been rendered up hint that the Crimson Scythe was blessed of terrible knowledge of the future. He saw that, because he had slain one of their gods and laid waste to vast tracts of the webway, the Eldar would never rest until he was hunted down. The Star-Slayer knew that the Eldar, or their heirs, would stand eternal vigil over any region they believed might harbour his secret resting place. So he set in motion certain contingencies to ensure that, when he awoke, the Eldar would be overwhelmed and the attentions of any other watchers drawn away from the Hollow Sun long enough for all of its serried legions to fully awaken.

To date, none can tell if these visions of dark splendour represent the truth or some scrap of intent drifting upon the ocean of raging bitterness that is the Phaeron’s slumbering consciousness. Ozkan has thus far kept what he has seen to himself, as have those other Crypteks attending to their lost Phaeron.

There is another facet of the Phaeron’s nature that the vast majority of his subjects are entirely unaware of. This is that fact that in addition to being a great warrior-king, Ahmontekh shared the grief that the Silent King, master of all the Necrons, felt at the terrible price paid in return for immortality. While he may, if the dark wisdom suggested by the disparate sources is correct, have set in motion a plan to devastate the enemies of his people, he also had some manner of plan to ensure that the Necrons would inherit all that they had lost. This indeed was the last promise of the Silent King before he took his leave of the known galaxy sixty million years ago, and it may well be that the Crimson Scythe, the Star-Slayer of the Suhbekhar Dynasty, shared that vision.

If so, what dark fate might yet await the Jericho Reach in the aftermath of the revelation of the Dark Pattern? Having scoured the stars themselves of his waiting foes, what darkly glorious future did Ahmontekh hold in store for his dynasty? Some amongst the Dead Cabal have voiced the opinion that the Necrons themselves might represent but a part of a still larger doom yet to be revealed.

Of course, it is entirely possible that this vision of dark slaughter is nothing more than the fevered construct of a mind that has fallen prey to the blight of the destroyed C’tan

known as the Flayer, whose final curse upon the Necrons was a slow-burning and lingering insanity that would only become manifest in aeons to come. The Crypteks cannot entirely discount the possibility that their Phaeron has fallen prey to this terrible malady, though if this is so it must surely be the first case of one so highly placed being afflicted by the insanity. If it is the case, what vile evils might be enacted upon the galaxy should the Necrons determined to disinter their accursed flayer king?

## THE CRIPPLED KING AND THE DERLETH LEXICON

There is a particular chapter in the forbidden tome that is the Derleth Lexicon that some amongst the Dead Cabal have related to the as yet unidentified slumbering Phaeron of the Suhbekhar Dynasty. This passage claims that the being that Derleth called the crippled king has arisen on several occasions throughout the ages, released by the hand of some unknown secret ally within his household. Indeed, there are numerous tales across the Jericho Reach of different godlike beings bearing blood red scythes falling upon those worlds cut off from the Emperor’s light during the Age of Shadow. What most take to be accounts of visitations by daemon princes of Chaos might in fact represent instances when the Crimson Scythe has arisen from his tomb, or been released from it, and set loose upon the worlds of the Outer Reach. In each instance, such utter slaughter has been unleashed that scant few witnesses have survived to record the awful truth of what transpired and, even if they had, most of these worlds were cut off from the Imperium or even in the grip of the Ruinous Powers. And yet, there remain certain passages within the Derleth Lexicon that hint at the dire possibility that the crippled king has risen to reap his bloody harvest across the Jericho Reach, and shall do so again. Can it be mere coincidence that many of the worlds this mysterious figure has scoured have been close to, or even part of, those of the aptly named Dark Pattern?



# CRYPTTEK OZKAN THE CODIFIER

HARBINGER OF TRANSMOGRIFICATION

## Crypttek Ozkan (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
51	38	<sup>(10)</sup> 53	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	30	65	45	60	25

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 42

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +10, Chem-Use (Int) +20, Dodge (Ag), Logic (Int) +20, Medicae (Int) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Lore: Common (Adeptus Astartes) +10, Lore: Scholastic (Astromancy, Chymistry, Numerology) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Concealed Cavity, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Ferric Lure, Maglev Grace, Swift Attack, Talented (Logic, Tech-Use).

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (8), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 8.

**Weapons:** Tremorstave (Ranged) (Special††) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+9 I; Pen 4; Balanced, Power Field).

**Gear:** Seismic Crucible††.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††See entry under *Crypttek Disciplines* on page 122.

Ozkan has served the Suhbekhar Dynasty with unstinting loyalty since the earliest days of the War in Heaven, providing sage counsel to the Crimson Scythe in those comparatively few moments when the Phaeron was not shedding the blood of entire species and laying waste to great swathes of the galaxy in the service of the C'tan. Ozkan was known as the only being his master would tolerate voicing anything other than soothing platitudes, for so often Ozkan was proven to be entirely correct in his advice, even when it gainsaid Ahmontekh's own intentions. There is one particular matter in which Ozkan advised his master that far overshadows all of the others, and that was the issue of bio-transference. Ozkan, the ancient and wise counsellor, saw through the C'tans' compact the moment it was offered, and despaired when the Silent King announced that it had been sealed. Ozkan knew, as no others

## DEATHWATCH INTELLIGENCE

The matter of the loss of the Kill-team assigned to the command of Thadeus Hakk is a great concern to the masters of Watch Fortress Erioch. For one thing, such a loss may not be born lightly, for the Deathwatch are elite warriors and their numbers are few. Secondly, the geneseed of the fallen was never retrieved, which in itself is a matter that can lead to tension between the Deathwatch and the parent Chapter of the fallen Battle-Brother. Lastly, the exact circumstances of the failed mission remain unknown, for the outcast Thaddeus Hakk has vanished once more. There are those within the Deathwatch, and particularly in the ranks of the Dead Cabal, who suspect foul play, and wish to see the rogue Throne Agent held to account for what transpired on the verges of the Slinnar Drift.

appeared to, that the process would leave the Necrontyr far less than they had been before, and he begged his master to disobey the Silent King's command.

Any other counsellor would have been struck down for such a display of disloyalty, but Ahmontekh knew that Ozkan had ever served his dynasty first, and himself second. The Crypttek and the Phaeron entered closed council together, the remainder of the dynasty's advisers and viziers sent away as the two debated the matter throughout the night. By morn, the Crypttek had been unable to convince his lord of a sound reason to reject the C'tan's compact, for Ahmontekh cared above all else for the slaying of the

foes of his people. The Phaeron simply could not envision any way the process might lessen the Necrontyr. And so the mortal multitudes of the Suhbekhar Dynasty walked into the bio-furnaces and the living metal legions of the Suhbekhar dynasty marched out. For Ozkan, to walk willingly into the blazing light of the furnace was the greatest act of loyalty to his dynasty he could possibly have ever performed.

The moment Ozkan emerged from the bio-furnace, his consciousness shattered as his soul was sucked away, he knew he had been correct. Yet, his master clearly revelled in the strength and vitality the process had granted him, barely waiting a day before testing his prodigious powers on the foes of





his people. It was only much later, after the calamitous events of the War in Heaven, that Ozkan's words would return to haunt the Phaeron, when the red tides of galactic slaughter finally receded and the preparations for the Great Sleep were begun. Only then, at the very last, were the Cryptek's words heeded, and by then, of course, it was far too late.

Despite what Ozkan took to be his great failure to turn his master against the Silent King's plan, he remained ever faithful to his Phaeron and, by extension, to the Silent King himself. Indeed, after bio-transference it was impossible to be disloyal, so embedded were the Silent King's command protocols. In Ozkan's case, his loyalty has remained so steadfast that he strives continuously to rouse his fallen sire, but not because he has been ordered by the overlord-regent to retrieve the command protocols locked inside his blasted mind. Rather, the Cryptek's tireless endeavours have led him into similar realms of thought as led the Silent King to take his leave of the galaxy in search of a means of reversing the soul-destroying fate of bio-transference.

Unbeknownst to Overlord-Regent Ahhotekh, Ozkan has remained loyal to his Phaeron throughout the tumultuous events of the awakening of the Hollow Sun. Under the guise of carrying out the regent's orders, the Cryptek has, in fact, been seeking a means of investing a Necron consciousness into a body of flesh and bone and, in so doing, of reclaiming all they once had. Ozkan's researches and secret experiments have led him to the conclusion that only a body as strong and as tough as a Necron's living metal frame will provide a suitable vessel for such a reawakening, and this can be attested to by the numerous failed experiments hidden deep within his chambers. Locked within the lambent glow of pulsing stasis chambers are to be found rank after rank of once sentient beings, including humans, Orks, Eldar, Tau, and a dozen others, each of which has had a Necron consciousness transferred into its mind. In each case, the body has proven too weak, or the mind too strong for the process, and the Codifier has failed, creating some hideous, mindless insane creature more terrible still than a Flayed One.

But of late, Ozkan the Codifier has come to believe he has discovered a mortal shell strong enough to contain the consciousness of a Necron. Though rare, he even holds that these apex specimens of organic perfection might even be sufficient to host the consciousness of the Crimson Scythe. The body Ozkan has identified is, of course, that of the Adeptus Astartes, the sacred, post-human form wrought by the Emperor himself to serve as the champions of mankind.

To date, Ozkan has not been able to capture a living Space Marine, so he has not had the opportunity to test the veracity of his blasphemous theories. He has, however, come into possession of the bodies of several fallen Battle-Brothers—those that fell undertaking the mission led by the outcast Inquisitor Thaddeus Hakk. Every moment he is not maintaining the pretence of following Overlord-Regent Ahhotekh's orders, Ozkan spends ensconced in his laboratory, delving into the wonders of Astartes biology, or else coordinating the hunt for a living specimen. When that happens, the venerable Cryptek hopes the process of properly reawakening the Phaeron of the Suhbekhar Dynasty can begin.

# CRYPTTEK RAHKOZ

## CHRONOMANCER OF THE SUHBOKHAR, HARBINGER OF ETERNITY

### Cryptek Rahkoz (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	43	(8) 48	(10) 55	25	70	50	55	25

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Wounds:** 35

**Skills:** Awareness (Per) +20, Deceive (Fel) +20, Dodge (Ag), Logic (Int) +20, Lore: Common (Deathwatch, Imperium, Jericho Reach) +10, Lore: Scholastic (Astromancy, Chymistry, Cryptology, Numerology) +10, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Scrutiny (Per) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Combat Sense, Concealed Cavity, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Foresight, Paranoia, Step Aside, Swift Attack, Talented (Logic, Tech-Use).

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (8), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 8.

**Weapons:** Aeonstave (Melee; 1d10+12 I; Pen 0; Balanced, Special††).

**Gear:** Chronometron††, Timesplinter Cloak††.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††See entry under Cryptek Disciplines on page 122.

As there are numerous and convoluted tiers of seniority, fealty, and responsibility amongst the lords of the Royal Court of the Suhbekhar Dynasty, so too are its Crypteks ranked according to a bewildering range of stations and fields of speciality. Of the dozen or so highly ranked Crypteks that directly attend the royal court, Ozkan the Codifier is most senior, but directly below him is Rahkoz, who holds among other titles the position of Court Chronomancer. Another of the Cryptek's titles is the Harbinger of Eternity, a term by which he is known and feared across numerous times and places.

As court Chronomancer, it is Rahkoz's duty to manipulate milestone historical events, whether past, present, or future, to the benefit of the Suhbekhar Dynasty. As the masters of arcane super science and party to esoteric wisdom granted by the C'tan that would shatter the minds of lesser beings, the Crypteks are uniquely positioned to alter the fabric of the universe in ways only the most accomplished of their number can fully comprehend. At the height of the War in Heaven, the C'tan and the Necron legions bound to their service were able to unleash such unknowable weapons that the very fabric of time and space was theirs to shape according to their will. Though much of this science is still locked up in sealed stasis chambers or lost with the fragmented





C'tan, some of it is returning as the Necrons rise across the galaxy once more. The Harbinger of Eternity is the foremost servant of the Subhekhar Dynasty blessed with knowledge of this perilous field, and he wields such power as not even the overlord-regent is fully aware.

Deep within the portions of the Hollow Sun turned over to Rahkoz are vast engines within which are generated forms of power entirely anathema to any known branch of science. The Chronomancer is said to be able to manipulate these incomprehensible energies and to influence events at almost any point in the space-time continuum, though exactly how, and how efficiently, remains a secret known only to him. Some of Rahkoz's peers suspect he is capable of physically traversing the abyss of space and time, and of directly interacting in ways that alter the otherwise inalterable flow of cause and effect. Others believe this to be impossible, though even they concede that Rahkoz has the power to observe past and future events, and that in so doing he must surely have the power to alter them.

The Chronomancer's role within the royal court is to collate the predictions of its astrologer and other prognosticators and to advise his master on how those events deemed contrary to the interests of the Subhekhar might be avoided or otherwise manipulated. How effective Rahkoz is cannot easily be judged, for there can be no evidence that a future calamity has been averted. Rahkoz makes frequent claims that the galaxy itself would have ended yesterday were it not for some

## DEATHWATCH INTELLIGENCE

The Deathwatch itself has little or no knowledge of the activities of the chronomancer, for thus far he has proven extremely adept in covering evidence of his manipulating key events. There are those within the Dead Cabal, however, who have become increasingly aware that someone or something is working against them. Whether or not it is the Dead Cabal that Rahkoz himself detects working against him remains to be seen, and it is entirely possible that other, as yet unrevealed intrigues are unfolding across the Jericho Reach and beyond.

bold deed he performed, especially when confronted by a sceptical rival. Nevertheless, the Necrons place great store in such things, and his position within the dynasty is for now assured.

Unbeknownst to all but Rahkoz himself, however, is the fact that the Chronomancer's powers are not nearly as total as he would have others believe. Rather, he has encountered an undercurrent of influence throughout the Outer Reach that appears interconnected with other times and places far and near. Key events appear fixed no matter what influence he might exert upon them, while he has become ever more certain that one or more others with a similar vocation to himself are active nearby. To date, the Court Chronomancer of the Subhekhar has kept his concerns to himself, for to admit he is anything other than omniscient would seriously erode his power and influence. Growing ever more paranoid, Rahkoz is now convinced a hidden hand he refers to in barely intelligible mutters as "the stranger" is working against him, and he is convinced that a confrontation that will sunder space and time itself is in the offing.

## REGENERATION AND HORDES

A Horde of creatures that have the Regeneration Trait acts differently than a single creature does. Each round, at the start of its turn, the Horde makes a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**. If successful, the Horde regains an amount of Magnitude equal to its Regeneration value plus its current Magnitude divided by 10. A Horde's Magnitude cannot be raised above its starting value as a result of Regeneration.

*Example: A Horde of 70 Necron Warriors has its Magnitude reduced by 20 on the first round of combat by a Deathwatch Kill-team, bringing its Magnitude down to 50. On the Necron Warriors' turn, they pass a Challenging (+0) Toughness Test for their Regeneration Trait. The Horde regains 10 Magnitude (5 for the Necron Warrior's Regeneration [5] Trait + 5 for Magnitude 50 divided by 10).*



## NIGHTMARE SCIENCE

The Necrons mastered every conceivable technology, and many more, long before the first apes strode the surface of Holy Terra. Inevitably, much of this advancement was in the name of warfare, for the Necrontyr always believed in conquering their foes through the application of superior firepower. Amongst the many deadly and impossible weapons wielded by the Necrons, gauss and tesla weapons are the most abundant. The fact that the lowliest Necron Warrior wields weaponry far beyond the ability of the Priesthood of Mars to explain, let alone produce, gives the Dead Cabal great cause for concern.

## NEW TRAIT: NECRON

As a result of the Biotransference, the Necrons possess an entirely unique psychology and physiology, neither of which is dependant on organic processes. This gives Necron beings several distinct advantages and abilities. Due to unfathomable technology from which their bodies are crafted, all Necrons have the Machine and Undying Traits. Similarly, as their thoughts are now dictated as much by subroutines and command protocols as they are by individuality and desire, all Necrons also possess the From Beyond Trait. In addition, many Necrons possess the Regeneration Trait. Those that do benefit from the Reanimation Protocols rule, listed below.

### REANIMATION PROTOCOLS

Even the lowliest Necron Warrior is capable of repairing crippling damage in moments, and it is common for seemingly “slain” Necrons to rise to their feet and continue the fight. At the end of every Turn, the GM rolls a **Hard (-20) Toughness Test** for each incapacitated or “dead” Necron possessing the Regeneration Trait. This test benefits from any rules that grant a bonus to Regeneration Tests, such as a Resurrection Orb or Canoptek Spyder’s Fabricator Array. If the Test is passed, the Necron immediately rises to its feet with a number of Wounds remaining equal to the value of its Regeneration Trait. A Necron that fails the test simply rolls again the following Turn, unless it fails by three or more degrees, in which case the Necron’s self-repair protocols have been overcome by damage and it teleports away in a blaze of green light.

Reanimation Protocols works similarly for Hordes of Necrons. Upon succeeding its **Hard (-20) Toughness Test**, a Necron Horde with the Reanimation Protocols immediately regains an amount of Magnitude equal to its Regeneration value. As it has no Magnitude at the time of the Test, no additional Magnitude is regained at that time. See the **Regeneration and Hordes Sidebar** on page 118 for more information concerning Hordes and regaining Magnitude.

## NEW WEAPON QUALITY: GAUSS

Gauss weapons use a form of electromagnetic projection completely unknown to humanity to strip away the constituent molecules of a target. In the case of more powerful gauss weapons, this process occurs so rapidly and completely that the emerald beam of energy may appear to punch through its target, though it may be more accurate to think of it as “digging” its way through. Whether the particles that previously made up a gauss weapon’s target are discarded or somehow stored for later use is unknown. A weapon with the Gauss Quality generates Righteous Fury on a roll of a 9 or 10. A weapon with the Gauss Trait is always capable of inflicting Righteous Fury, even in the hands of an NPC that would not normally benefit from the rule. In the hands of an NPC that normally benefits from Righteous Fury, it is automatically triggered successfully, without an additional roll. At the GM’s option, this rule may be suspended in the case of Hordes.

## NEW WEAPON QUALITY: TESLA

Tesla weapons are another example of the Necrons’ remarkable weapon technology. These weapons fire crackling bolts of electricity that some witnesses claim move as if with minds of their own. These bolts of lightning are incredibly hot, enough to char the flesh from a man’s bones in moments. In some cases, these energetic projectiles have even been observed to crack ceramite and plasteel. What is truly astounding about these weapons, however, is the manner in which the arcs of electricity leap from their initial target to others nearby. In some cases, the lightning makes this leap multiple times, such that a single direct hit from a Tesla weapon might incapacitate an entire squad. When a weapon with the Tesla Quality rolls a 9 or 10 for Damage, or kills or otherwise incapacitates a target, lightning arcs to an additional, randomly determined target within 5m of the first, scoring an additional hit against that target. This extra hit has the potential to score further “extra” hits in the same manner. No attack roll is needed for these additional hits, which are applied to the target’s Body location.

## NEW WEAPON QUALITY: PROVEN (X)

Weapons with the Proven Quality always inflict massive trauma and may treat any die roll for Damage that is lower than the Proven rating (as indicated by the number in parenthesis) as if it were the Proven rating instead. Thusly, a Proven (3) weapon would treat any die roll of 1 or 2 as a 3 for purposes of calculating Damage.



# THE SOULLESS HOST

“ ”

—The silent battle cry of a Necron Warrior

In the relatively short time since the first tombs of the Subhekhar began to stir, the war host of the Necrons in the Jericho Reach has grown to immense proportions. The grand army of the Subhekhar consists of mighty warriors and terrifying battle engines. Soldiers and vehicles alike are armed and fortified with the arcane sciences of the Crypteks and made fearless by the soul-stripping process of the bio-transference. This section provides Game Masters with rules for the legions of the Subhekhar Dynasty.

## THE ROYAL COURTS

*“It seems the galaxy has forgotten us, old friend. Ready my command barge; an example must be made of these interlopers.”*

—Lord Iohketh, the Vindicator of Gralehk, to Vargard Cahleh’ssti prior to the razing of Hive Ascalon

The strict hierarchy of the Necrontyr has been preserved in the courts of the deathless Necrons. The transition from flesh to machine has, in fact, resulted in an even more rigid hierarchy, one in which each Necron’s role is enforced not only by tradition, but by their very nature. The lower tiers of the Necron civilisation have no aspirations to improve their station in life, or any aspirations at all, for that matter—bio-transference made sure of that. This is far from the case, however, for the Necron nobility. Necron Lords and Overlords are the rulers of tomb worlds, and even clusters of star systems. Necron Overlords are surpassed only by the dynasty’s Phaeron in power and authority, while even the weakest Necron Lord commands hundreds or thousands of troops. Many Necron royals constantly seek to improve their station. All Necron Lords and Overlords have royal courts made up of lesser nobles owing them fealty, Crypteks in their service, and, in some cases, trusted bodyguards. These courts are commonly hotbeds of intrigue that would astound even the most conspiratorial of Imperial nobles. These royal courts often accompany their liege into battle, as well.

The noble in command of a tomb world’s army is known as a nemesor. Nemesors are often those nobles who prefer martial conquest to political intrigue, though this is not always the case. At a nemesor’s disposal are the wisdom of aeons and technology the likes of which has not been seen on the battlefield in 60 million years. Add to this legion upon legion of troops hard-wired for allegiance, and this is a force that few can stand against. If the generals and lords militant of the Achilus Crusade knew of the threat just beginning to stir, they would surely turn all available forces to stopping it. As it now stands, the Imperium may be blind to the peril until it is too late—which is surely as the Subhekhar dynasty intended.

## NECRON LORDS AND OVERLORDS

When the process of bio-transference forever transformed the Necrontyr into the cold, calculating Necrons, the most durable, powerful, and sophisticated bodies were reserved for the nobility. At least as tall as an armoured Space Marine and broader than a Necron Warrior, the skeletal frames of Necron Lords and Overlords possess the strength to crush plasteel in their bare hands, and can easily resist damage that would even fell lesser Necrons.

In battle, Necron nobles tend to favour weapons that speak to their status: staves, mighty warscythes, and even heavy, ornate gauntlets that crackle with green flame. Almost without exception, Necron Lords and Overlords are skilled warriors and commanders, completely capable of making split-second tactical decisions even as they cut their way through the enemy’s ranks. In fact, the advanced technological minds of the Necron nobles are capable of evaluating possible outcomes and computing the most advantageous tactical decision with a speed and accuracy that even the most accomplished autosavant could not hope to match. This powerful synthetic mind is at once both a great strength and, perhaps, the greatest weakness for many Necron rulers. The process of bio-transference and the long aeons have eroded the sanity of many Necron Lords and Overlords, whether by the sheer impossibility of a living mind preserved for eternity in an artificial brain, or due to simple mechanical faults. Despite the best efforts of the tomb guardians, the awakening from stasis is rarely flawless, save for the most fortunate of tomb worlds. Even a minor glitch in the process can result in drastic changes to the personality of a Necron royal, or even its very perception of reality. In some cases, this serves to exaggerate the personality quirks a Lord possessed in life, while others result in bizarre, aberrant behaviour, or even severe delusions. Perhaps one of the more extreme cases of this madness can be found in the so-called Destroyer Lords.

While Necron Lords and Overlords generally fight at the forefront of large armies of conquest, they are just as likely to take a personal hand in more delicate operations. After all, few of their servants possess the intellect, let alone the initiative, to lead such missions, which could range from sabotaging a rival’s own efforts, to infecting a nosy Inquisitor with Mindshackle Scarabs.





## Necron Overlord (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	52	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	35	55	48	65	40

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 80

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Deceive (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Tactics (Air Combat, Assault Doctrine, Defensive Doctrine) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Combat Master, Combat Sense, Counter Attack, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Lightning Attack, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Wall of Steel.

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (10), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 10.

**Weapons:** Staff of Light (Ranged) (Basic; 25m; S/4/—; 1d10+12 E; Pen 7; Clip —; Reload —; Volatile) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+15 I; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field), or Warscythe (2d10+20 E; Pen 9; Felling [2], Power Field, Unwieldy), or Hyperphase Sword (1d10+20 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field), or Voidblade (1d10+14 R; Pen 4; Felling [1], Razor Sharp, Tearing, Unbalanced), or Gauntlet of Fire†† (Ranged) (Pistol; 15m; S/—/—; 1d10+9 E; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Flame, Special) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+19 E; Pen 5; Tearing, Special).

**Gear:** A Necron Overlord may carry a Phase Shifter, a Phylactery, and/or Resurrection Orb.

**Phase Shifter:** The Necron Overlord is equipped with a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 45 that never Overloads. Additionally, if the Necron Overlord scores three or more Degrees of Success when rolling to hit with a melee attack, the attack cannot be Parried and Damage from the attack is not reduced by the target's Armour.

**Phylactery:** This small cylinder, worn by only the highest members of the Necron nobility, contains a swarm of sophisticated nanoscarabs. The bearer of a phylactery may use it with a Ready Action, releasing the nanoscarabs to swarm over its body, knitting tears in the living metal and bolstering the Necron's own self-repair abilities. For 1d10+5 rounds, the Necron increases its Unnatural Toughness Trait by one step and automatically passes Toughness Tests for Regeneration.

**Resurrection Orb:** This mysterious Necron artefact takes the form of a glowing, green sphere of unknown material. It focuses energy into the living metal bodies of nearby Necrons, enhancing their self-repair functions. All Necrons within 50m of a Resurrection Orb (including the bearer) re-roll all failed Toughness Tests.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††Melee attacks made with a Gauntlet of Fire can set enemies on fire. Damage suffered in subsequent rounds for being on fire is treated as possessing the Felling (1) Quality. All WS tests made with a Gauntlet of Fire have their difficulty reduced one step.

## Necron Lord (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	52	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	35	53	42	60	35

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 65

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Tactics (Air Combat, Assault Doctrine, Defensive Doctrine) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Combat Master, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Swift Attack, Sure Strike, Wall of Steel.

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (10), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

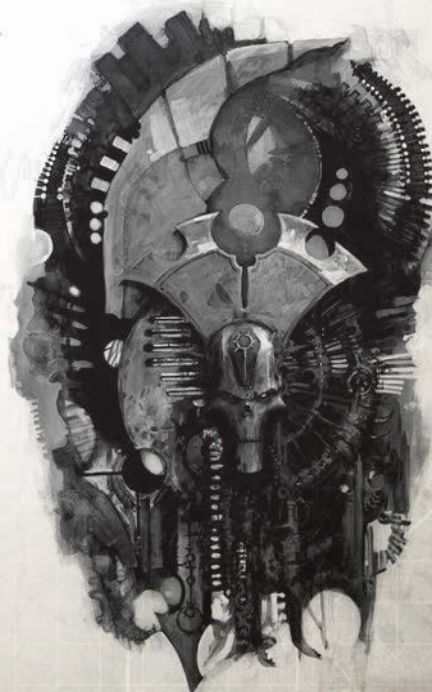
**Armour (Machine):** All 10.

**Weapons:** Staff of Light (Ranged) (Basic; 25m; S/4/—; 1d10+12 E; Pen 7; Clip —; Reload —; Volatile) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+13 I; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field), or Warscythe (2d10+18 E; Pen 9; Felling [2], Power Field, Unwieldy), or Hyperphase Sword (1d10+18 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field), or Voidblade (1d10+12 R; Pen 4; Felling [1], Razor Sharp, Tearing, Unbalanced), or Gauntlet of Fire†† (Ranged) (Pistol; 15m; S/—/—; 1d10+9 E; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Flame, Special) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+17 E; Pen 5; Tearing, Special).

**Gear:** A Necron Lord may carry a Resurrection Orb (see Necron Overlord on page 121).

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††Melee attacks made with a Gauntlet of Fire can set enemies on fire. Damage suffered in subsequent rounds for being on fire is treated as possessing the Felling (1) Quality. All WS tests made with a Gauntlet of Fire have their difficulty reduced one step.





## CRYPTTEKS

Crypteks are the undisputed masters of Necron technology, technology that is completely unknown and incomprehensible to the younger races. While all Crypteks share a broad base of knowledge in order to ensure proper functioning of the Necrons' war machines and weaponry, each specialises in a particular branch of techno-arcana. This secret knowledge includes an array of miraculous weaponry jealously guarded by the Crypteks, kept even from the hands of the mightiest Phaerons.

Crypteks share the same skeletal appearance as all Necrons, but are marked out by several distinct features. A single eye gazes out from a Cryptek's emotionless face, while its spine extends past its legs as a kind of tail. Crypteks are typically adorned with headdresses or tabards of segmented metal marking out their status.

Almost all Crypteks specialise in a particular branch of techno-sorcery. Since Canoptek Spydery and Scarabs are more than capable of repairing or even producing nearly any of the basic technology utilised by the Necrons, Crypteks have their entire, unending lives to pursue their particular obsessions. For reasons of tradition and practicality, all but the most demented of Crypteks hold to a single speciality, devoting their life to perfection of their chosen art. A Cryptek who dabbles in multiple disciplines is seen as dangerous by his peers and untrustworthy by the Necron nobility he serves.

### Cryptek (Master) Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	43	(8) 48	(10) 55	30	65	40	55	25

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 35

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Logic (Int) +20, Scholastic Lore (Astromancy, Chymistry, Numerology) Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Concealed Cavity, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Swift Attack, Talented (Logic, Tech-Use).

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (8), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 8.

**Weapons:** Staff of Light (Ranged) (Basic; 25m; S/4/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 7; Clip -; Reload -; Volatile) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+9 I; Pen 4; Balanced, Power Field).

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

## CRYPTTEK DISCIPLINES

The Crypteks have developed countless disciplines of techno-sorcery, down through the aeons. Further, each individual Cryptek makes its own unique advancements in its chosen expertise. As such, it is unlikely for two Crypteks to ever wield quite the same abilities and weapons. Five such disciplines are detailed below. To represent a Harbinger of a specific discipline, apply the Characteristic adjustments, Skills, Talents, and arcane gear listed (replacing the staff of light in most cases). GMs are encouraged to create additional abilities, gear, and fields of techno-arcana with which to confront their players.

### Harbinger of Despair

**Characteristics:** +10 Willpower, +5 Perception, and -5 Fellowship.

**Skills:** Intimidate (S) +20.

**Talents:** Disturbing Voice.

**Traits:** Fear (2).

### Abyssal Staff

As dark as onyx and decorated with symbols designed to prey on the subconscious fears of mortals, an Abyssal Staff blasts the sanity of a Psychomancer's foes. When used, an Abyssal Staff emits a gout of shadow out to the weapon's range, and is otherwise treated as a weapon with the Flame Quality except that it cannot set targets on fire. Any characters caught in the cloud of darkness suffer 1d10+3 Willpower Damage and 1d5 Insanity Points, both reduced by the target's WP Bonus to a minimum of 1.

### Nightmare Shroud

When this small, black cask is opened, the worst terrors of a thousand aeons are unleashed on the Cryptek's foes. A Harbinger of Despair may use its Nightmare Shroud as a Half Action, causing all characters within 50m, except those with the Machine Trait, to be affected as if confronted by a creature with Fear (4). Characters suffer the full effects of Fear each time the Nightmare Shroud is used. In the case of Space Marines operating in Solo Mode, the Willpower penalty lingers for 1d5 Rounds after the Nightmare Shroud is used.

### Veil of Darkness

With a simple wave of its skeletal hand, the Cryptek can summon a billowing sheet of almost tangible shadow, enveloping it and nearby allies before disappearing along with the enshrouded Necrons. Using a Veil of Darkness requires a Full Action. The Cryptek and any number of Necrons within 10m are teleported to any location within 300m. The Cryptek using the Veil of Darkness makes an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test**. On a failure, the teleported Necrons arrive 1d10m per Degree of Failure away from the intended destination in a random direction.







TABLE 3-1: CRYPTÉK DISCIPLINES

d100 Roll	Discipline
01-15	<b>Harbinger of Despair:</b> Psychomancers are masters of mind-affecting technologies, including high-frequency waves, neuron bombardments, and other, more esoteric sciences. With the correct application of their sciences, these Crypteks can manipulate a being's mind to such a degree as to rival the most powerful telepaths of the Imperium.
16-40	<b>Harbinger of Destruction:</b> Plasmancers are more direct in the application of their art than other Crypteks, forgoing the myriad arcane techniques in favour of sheer release of destructive energy. This is not to say that Plasmancers are any less cunning than their fellows—to underestimate one is a fatal mistake.
41-55	<b>Harbinger of Eternity:</b> Perhaps the most baffling of Cryptek disciplines, Chronomancers exhibit control over the flow of time itself. Temporal anomalies are not unknown to the Imperium; time dilation is a common effect of Warp travel, and some powerful psykers are able to localise the time-disrupting power of the Warp. These Crypteks, though, are able to directly and purposefully influence the flow of time with no recourse to the unnatural power of the Warp, but by sheer dint of scientific mastery.
56-80	<b>Harbinger of the Storm:</b> Ethermancers are masters of the elements, controlling the very sky above their enemies' heads. Many a primitive civilisation has bowed down in worship at the merest display of an Ethermancer's power.
81-00	<b>Harbinger of Transmogrification:</b> Complementing the ethermancers' control of the sky, these Crypteks wield the very earth as a weapon against their foes. The most accomplished of these geomancers can remake the very landscape with but a gesture, leaving none to doubt the Necrons' mastery of the physical universe.

### Harbinger of Destruction

**Characteristics:** +10 Ballistic Skill, +5 Weapon Skill, and –5 Willpower.

**Skills:** Demolition (Int) +10, Dodge (Ag) +10.

**Talents:** Combat Formation, Crack Shot, Deadeye Shot, Luminen Blast.

### Eldritch Lance

This long staff is laced with arcane circuitry, its flared tip studded with focusing crystals. An Eldritch Lance emits a beam of annihilating energy, compared to which the Staff of Light seems but a toy. For those rare cases when the Cryptek's enemies survive long enough to engage him in close combat, the Eldritch Lance can be wielded in a manner akin to a spear. An Eldritch Lance functions as both a melee and a ranged weapon with the profiles listed in **Table 3-2: Cryptek Weapons** on page 124.

### Gaze of Flame

Some Plasmancers choose to implant hidden weaponry within their own bodies. Many Necrons find this practice unsavoury, at best. Few, however, would question a Harbinger of Destruction to his face, particularly when that face may conceal all manner of terrifying weaponry. When in battle, the eyes of a Cryptek who has granted himself the Gaze of Flame burn with an unnatural, ghostly fire. In addition to granting the Cryptek Fear (2), each round that a character spends engaged in Melee with the Cryptek he must pass a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test** or catch fire. The emerald flames function as Fire on page 260 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook, except that damage counts as having the Felling (1) Quality.

### Solar Pulse

Often incorporated into an Eldritch Lance, the Solar Pulse unleashes a sizeable portion of the Lance's energy, not as a coherent beam, but as a flash of light bright as a solar flare. As a Half Action, the Cryptek can ignite the Solar Pulse, forcing all non-Necron characters within 1km to pass a **Very Hard (–30) Toughness Test** or be Blinded for 1d10+5 Rounds and

Stunned for 1d5 Rounds. This flash is bright enough to overload even Astartes power armour Auto-senses, though they do grant a +20 bonus to the Test to resist. Typically, a Solar Pulse is only used once per combat, for fear of draining the Eldritch Lance completely and leaving the Cryptek weaponless.

### Harbinger of Eternity

**Characteristics:** +10 Perception, +5 Intelligence, and –5 Agility.

**Skills:** Deceive (Fel) +20, Scrutiny (Per) +20.

**Talents:** Foresight, Step Aside.

### Aeonstave

The crystalline head of an Aeonstave generates a kind of low-level stasis field with each blow, encapsulating the Cryptek's enemy in a bubble of slow-time. A character struck by an Aeonstave, whether or not any Damage is suffered, has his Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Agility (and movement), and Perception reduced by half for 1d5 Rounds. In addition, the character loses one Half Action each Round he is affected. Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests made to attack a target under the effects of an Aeonstave receive a +10 bonus.

### Chronometron

The bearer of this arcane device exists slightly outside the flow of time, allowing him to glimpse possible futures and modify his recent actions accordingly. A Cryptek utilising a Chronometron appears blurred, its movements sudden and spasmodic like a primitive pict-reel or degraded hololith. As a result, all attacks against the chronomancer are made at –10. In addition, the Cryptek's attacks gain +10 to hit, and it can reroll one test each Turn. Finally, the Cryptek adds both its Intelligence and Perception Bonuses to its Initiative roll.

### Timesplinter Cloak

The most accomplished of chronomancers can weave together disparate strands of time, forming an unassailable shield against any attack that does not originate from the time stream corresponding to the precise moment of impact. A Timesplinter Cloak is a Field



with a Protection Rating of 70 and an Overload Roll of 01. In addition, whenever a Timesplinter Cloak successfully stops a Melee Attack, the attacker must make an Agility Test or be disarmed as his weapon is caught in another time stream and thrown slightly forward or backward in time. If the test results in two or more Degrees of Failure, the weapon cannot be retrieved for 1d5 Rounds, as it is thrown several moments into the future and hence does not exist during the interim.

## Harbinger of the Storm

**Characteristics:** +10 Strength, +5 Agility, and -5 Weapon Skill.

**Skills:** Intimidate (S) +10.

**Talents:** Luminen Shock.

## Ether Crystal

An Ether Crystal can control the fundamental forces of nature, summoning storms from tranquillity and lightning from clear skies. In seconds, the chosen area is assaulted by gale-force winds from nowhere as black storm clouds gather to block out the sky. The storm inflicts a -20 penalty on all ranged and melee attacks, and a -30 (or more, at the GM's discretion) on Perception-based Tests, and forces characters to move as if in a treacherous environment with a corresponding test difficulty of **Ordinary (+10)** (see page 206 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook). The Ethermancer using the Crystal sits in the eye of the storm, unaffected by the surrounding chaos. Each Round the storm is sustained, on a successful Willpower Test, the Cryptek may choose a target, plus an additional target for each Degree of Success, to be struck by a bolt of overcharged lightning. Unless the target successfully Dodges, it is struck for 3d10 Energy Damage with the Shocking and Haywire (1) Qualities. Sustaining the storm requires a Full Action each Round, including the first. The storm takes 1d5 Rounds to dissipate.

## Lightning Field

A Cryptek equipped with a Lightning Field is surrounded by crackling, incandescent electricity that arcs across his body and any nearby Necrons. The Lightning Field is treated as a Force Field in most respects, but works differently against melee and ranged attacks. Against melee attacks, it is treated as a Field with a Rating of 75 and an Overload Roll of 01-05, except that a successful roll, rather than stopping an attack, inflicts 2d10+7 Energy Damage with the Shocking and Devastating (1) Qualities against the attacker's Body Location. Against ranged attacks, the Lightning Field functions as a Field with a Rating of 45 and an



Overload Roll of 01-05, plus makes a spectacular light show when struck. All friendly Necrons within 5 metres also benefit from the Lightning Field.

## Voltaic Staff

Energy continuously crackles along the length of this heavy staff, arcing between exposed storage crystals. An ideal weapon for the Cryptek who wishes to demonstrate the superiority of Necron technology, the impossibly high voltages emitted by the staff are enough to fry even the most sophisticated Imperial technology. A Voltaic Staff can be used in melee or at range with the profiles listed in **Table 3-2: Cryptek Weapons**. Note that Necrons are *not* affected by the weapon's Haywire Quality.

TABLE 3-2: CRYPTEK WEAPONS

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Damage	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special
<b>Ranged Weapons</b>								
Abyssal Staff	Basic	35m	S/-/-	Special	0	-	-	Special
Eldritch Lance (Ranged)	Basic	200m	S/-/-	2d10+8 E	8	-	-	Accurate, Felling (1), Volatile
Harp of Dissonance	Basic	700m	S/-/-	2d10+3I	0	-	-	Concussive, Special
Voltaic Staff (Ranged)	Basic	30m	S/3/5	1d10+10 E	0	-	-	Haywire (1), Shocking
<b>Melee Weapons</b>								
Aeonstave	Melee			1d10+4 I	0			Special
Eldritch Lance (Melee)	Melee			1d10+4 E	6			Felling (1), Power Field
Voltaic Staff (Melee)	Melee			1d10+5 E	0			Haywire (1), Shocking



## Harbinger of Transmogrification

**Characteristics:** +10 Toughness, +5 Perception, and -5 Ballistic Skill.

**Skills:** Chem-Use (Int) +10.

**Talents:** Ferric Summons, Maglev Transcendence.

## Harp of Dissonance

Many an enemy has underestimated the power of this strange, alchemical weapon, most often fatally. An irregularly shaped metallic casket, a Harp of Dissonance is laced with numerous strings of different materials, each perfectly calibrated to a precise level of tension. A correctly played note, when amplified and focused through the arcane technology housed within the Harp, can burst the molecular bonds of nearly any material, transmuting it to brittle porcelain. A character or vehicle struck by an attack from a Harp of Dissonance loses 1d10 AP from the Location hit, applied before Damage is resolved, and loses the benefits of environmentally sealed armour.

## Seismic Crucible

A skilled geomancer with a Seismic Crucible may command the very earth beneath his feet and, more importantly, the feet of his enemies. As a Half Action Attack, the Harbinger of Transmogrification may precipitate a powerful, localised quake. The chosen epicentre must be within 50m of the Cryptek, though not necessarily in line of sight. The Cryptek chooses a radius of 5 to 15 metres for the quake, within which all creatures (except those flying or

hovering) must immediately pass a **Very Hard (-30) Agility Test** or be knocked prone. In addition, affected characters must pass a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**, increased to **Hard (-20)** for characters who failed the Agility Test, or be Stunned for one Round. The tremors continue for 1d5 Rounds, during which the affected area is a treacherous environment as detailed on page 206 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook.

## Tremorstave

A large staff enclosing numerous gyro-engines, grav-flux generators, and other sophisticated devices, a Tremorstave is as deadly a weapon as it is unconventional. When a Cryptek drives the tip of his Tremorstave into the ground, a wave of energy is released, travelling in a straight line directly towards his intended target, splitting the very ground open and sending shards of stone and sprays of dirt blasting out with deadly velocity. The fissure created by the Tremorstave is approximately one metre wide; all characters standing within two metres of the fissure who fail to Dodge are hit by the invisible energy wave for 2d10 Impact Damage with the Concussive Quality, ignoring Armour. When the wave reaches its target point within 50 metres of the Cryptek, it explodes with fantastic force, inflicting 4d10

Impact Damage with the Concussive Quality to all characters within 5 metres and leaving an impressive crater. The effects of a Tremorstave may vary based on the terrain, at the GM's discretion.





## C'TAN SHARDS

After the War in Heaven, the Necrons turned on the god-like beings that had made bio-transference possible. Even with the element of surprise and the most sophisticated weaponry the galaxy has ever seen, the Necrons could not hope to destroy the C'tan. The C'tan were shattered, however, and the Necrons bound these fragments in extradimensional prisons. Since that time, the C'tan Shards have been bound to the will of the Necrons. Even a shackled fragment of a C'tan holds unimaginable power, with abilities that defy physics and belief. Only called upon in the direst of circumstances, the C'tan Shards perhaps represent the ultimate weapon available to the Necrons. If the Subhekhar Dynasty possesses even a single C'tan Shard, the Deathwatch may represent the Jericho Reach's only hope for dealing with such a threat.

Even in their enforced servitude, C'tan Shards are apocalyptically powerful. This near-limitless power manifests in a variety of ways, perhaps based on the original, unbroken C'tan's preferences and tastes, or perhaps due to some unknowable, intrinsic property of each C'tan. Whatever the case, no two C'tan Shards are alike, and even shards of the same C'tan may exhibit different abilities.

To represent their unique and fantastic powers, C'tan Shards are generated by the following steps. The GM first generates Characteristics for the C'tan Shard. Then, certain Traits and Talents common to all C'tan Shards are applied. Lastly, the GM selects or rolls for one or more unique Manifestations of Power.

TABLE 3-3: C'TAN SHARD CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Value
Weapon Skill (WS)	35+3d10
Ballistic Skill (BS)	35+3d10
Strength (S)	45+4d10
Toughness (T)	45+4d10
Agility (Ag)	25+4d10
Intelligence (Int)	35+4d10
Perception (Per)	35+3d10
Willpower (WP)	50+3d10
Fellowship (Fel)	25+2d10
Wounds	150+5d10

### Skills, Talents, and Traits

All C'tan Shards possess the following Skills, Talents, Traits, and special rules.

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag) *or* Deceive (Fel) +20, Concealment (Ag) +20 *or* Charm (Fel) +20, Intimidate (S) +10, Speak Language (Eldar, High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int).

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Assassin Strike *or* Hatred (All), Combat Master, Lightning Attack, Preternatural Speed *or* Step Aside *or* Lightning Reflexes, Swift Attack.

**Traits:** Dark Sight, Fear (4), Flyer (4), From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapons (Almost Anything), Multiple Arms *or* Amorphous, Size (Enormous), Strange Physiology, Undying, Unnatural Strength (x3), Unnatural Toughness (x3).





TABLE 3-4: C'TAN SHARD POWERS

## d100 Roll Special Rule

01-15	<b>Event Horizon:</b> The C'tan Shard is surrounded by a nebulous, pitch-black aura which even the most sophisticated auspex or photo-visior is unable to penetrate. The C'tan Shard is always treated as being in darkness, inflicting the normal penalties to hit, etc., regardless of its surroundings or any gear which normally aids in detection. The C'tan Shard never suffers any penalties for darkness from his corona or any other source.
16-30	<b>Entropic Touch:</b> The C'tan Shard's touch degrades the works of mortals, inflicting the decay of aeons in scant moments. The C'tan Shard's natural weapons gain the Power Field Quality and can be used to Parry. Each time a character is hit by the C'tan Shard in melee, the AP of the location struck is permanently reduced by 1d5, whether or not any Damage is inflicted. Armour reduced to less than half of its original AP in any location loses any advantages from being environmentally sealed.
31-40	<b>Gaze of Death:</b> The C'tan Shard drains the very life force from its foes. Though it displays merely a fraction of the power and appetite of the ancient Star-Gods, only the strongest foes could hope to resist. As a Full Action, the C'tan Shard may force all living creatures within 15m to make a <b>Challenging (+0) Willpower Test</b> . A character that fails the test suffers 1d10 Strength and Toughness Damage, plus an additional 1d10 for each Degree of Failure. For each target that fails the Willpower Test, the C'tan Shard heals 1d5 Damage.
41-55	<b>Grand Illusion:</b> Some C'tan Shards use their god-like abilities to cloud and delude the minds of mortals. During mission preparation, the GM chooses or rolls for one additional Mission Complication from page 231 of the <b>DEATHWATCH</b> Core Rulebook. In addition, as a Half Action the C'tan Shard may force all characters within 20m to make a <b>Difficult (-10) Perception Test</b> . Characters who fail the test perceive the battle's progress completely divorced from reality—firing at non-existent targets, dodging phantasmal blows, and perhaps even responding to imagined injuries. For purposes of combat and similar activities, the character is effectively Blinded and Deafened (see page 260 of the <b>DEATHWATCH</b> Core Rulebook).
56-70	<b>Lord of Fire:</b> Wreathed in flame, the C'tan Shard suffers half Damage from Flamers, plasma weapons, melta weapons, and weapons that similarly rely on fire or heat for their effect. All such weapons within 25m of the C'tan Shard count as having the Unreliable and Overheats Traits, suffering the full effects of these Traits regardless of a weapon's craftsmanship.
71-85	<b>Transdimensional Thunderbolt:</b> Some C'tan Shards forgo the tricks and traps utilised by their brethren, instead focusing their reality-shattering powers for pure destruction. As a Half Action, the C'tan Shard may make a Ranged Attack with the following profile: (100m; S/-/-; 4d10+15 E; Pen 9; Blast [3], Concussive, Devastating [3]).
86-00	<b>Sentient Singularity:</b> The C'tan Shard's very presence disrupts the most basic laws that govern the physical world, including that of gravity. All characters within 30m are treated as being on a high gravity world (see page 210 of the <b>DEATHWATCH</b> Core Rulebook), and must pass a <b>Challenging (+0) Toughness Test</b> each round or suffer 1d5 Impact Damage with no reduction for Armour or Toughness. This gravity distortion may have additional effects depending on the surrounding environment.

**Immune to Natural Law:** C'tan Shards ignore Cover when attacking in melee or at range. A C'tan Shard's Natural Weapons have Pen 10, and add 10 to the Overload Roll of any Field struck (for that attack only). C'tan Shards are not affected by varying gravity conditions, or weapons such as a graviton gun. A C'tan Shard never suffers Damage or is otherwise negatively impacted by its environment, including such factors as exposure to an erupting volcano, a supernova, or a black hole. Finally, a C'tan Shard does not produce sound when moving if it chooses not to.

**Necrodermis:** The Necrodermis provides 7 AP to all locations and acts as a Force Field with a Rating of 45 that never Overloads. If a C'tan Shard is reduced to 0 Wounds, the Necrodermis is breached and the C'tan Shard's essence is released with devastating force, inflicting 4d10 Energy Damage, ignoring Armour, to all creatures within 16 metres.

### Manifestations of Power

C'tan Shards exhibit a variety of unique, seemingly impossible abilities. As the final step in generating a C'tan Shard, the GM rolls for or selects either two or three special rules from **Table 3-4: C'tan Shard Powers**.

## THE UNDYING LEGIONS

*"Look around you. These worlds are not ours. We are but squatters, living out our brief, insipid lives amongst the graves of the gods. Are you so blind that you see not their works? The dead ruled once, and will again."*

—Paxius Kleinert, the Wandering Prophet of Orlos.  
Burned as a heretic 999.M33

Though the Suhbekhar Dynasty is only beginning to stir, its presence has already been felt in isolated incidents across the Jericho Reach. Those Imperial Guard who have faced the Necron menace in battle have little or no inkling of just what they faced, but the survivors will never forget the advancing ranks of implacable metal skeletons. Even to the Deathwatch, the isolated encounters with these xenos are largely a mystery. Most likely, the greatest store of knowledge of the Necrons is possessed by the Dead Cabal. Holding such information, and putting the pieces together, however, are very different matters.

In battle, the inexorable advance of rank upon rank of steel skeletons makes for a chilling sight. The Necron legions know no emotion, no fear, no pain, and obey the



orders of their Lords without question. The living metal bodies of all true Necrons are capable of astonishing feats of self-repair, able to re-assemble themselves and continue fighting even after being dismembered. Yet, Necrons have been known on occasion to fall back after suffering heavy losses. Whether this is due to some instinct of self-preservation left from their previous lives, or simple logical expediency, none can say.

## NECRON WARRIORS

The rank and file of the Suhbekhar Dynasty are the Necron Warriors. Silent as the grave, Necron Warriors move with slow, erratic, yet exacting movements. Despite this sluggishness, Warriors are capable of great accuracy at range and devastating blows up close. Like all Necrons, a Warrior's living metal body is incredibly durable, capable of absorbing truly horrendous amounts of fire with hardly a scratch to show for it. When enough punishment is heaped on a Warrior to actually damage it, advanced self-repair protocols undo all but the most severe damage in moments. These seemingly indestructible machines carry weapons the Mechanicus has dubbed "gauss flayers." To date, no reliable sightings have been made of a Necron Warrior equipped with any other weapon. While an Imperial Guard commander may expect such uniformity and lack of specialised weaponry to be a weakness, this is far from the case for the Necrons. Gauss flayers utilise

theoretically impossible science to strip their target apart on a molecular level. These potent weapons can strip the adamantium from a battle tank's hull as surely as they strip the flesh from a man. Even power armour and the enhanced constitution of a Space Marine provide limited defence.

While the Necron nobility retained their personalities and intellects intact, Necron Warriors did not come through bio-transference so fortunate. Warriors possess but a dim spark of life, relying in battle on instinctual reactions and programmed attack patterns rather than any self-direction or intellect. In fact, Warriors deprived of leadership will simply continue carrying out the last order received, or even cease all activity other than firing on any enemies who happen too close. Likewise, Necron Warriors display not an inkling of personality. The billions of Necrontyr citizens who were transformed into Warriors, at one time each an individual with hopes, fears, and ideas, now form ranks of faceless, emotionless automatons. If any shred of their former selves remains, it is trapped behind walls of encoded subservience.

After initial encounters, Watch Captain Matthias made it a priority to capture a Necron, operational or otherwise, for study. This goal has thus far proved elusive, as a disabled Necron Warrior teleports away from battle in a blaze of green light. Certain, unconfirmed reports indicate that a disabled Necron prevented from phasing out in this manner actually self-destructs. If this is true, then the destruction is so complete that not a scrap remains for study, just as the Necrons surely intend. Some members of the Dead Cabal theorise that it may in fact be more feasible to take a Necron "alive," and have begun investigating the possibilities for achieving this feat. Forge Master Xerill has been deeply involved in these efforts, though his work has been performed in considerable isolation, even for the reclusive Iron Hands Battle-Brother.



### Necron Warrior (Troop) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	40	(8) 45	(8) 45	22	20	20	35	15

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Wounds:** 20

**Skills:** Logic (Int) +20, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Crack Shot, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Gauss).

**Traits:** Fire Drill (Horde), From Beyond, Machine (6), Necron†, Regeneration (5), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 6, Horde 6.

**Weapons:** Gauss Flayer (Ranged) (Basic; 100m; S/2/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Clip -; Reload -; Gauss) *or* (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+8 R; Pen 2; Unwieldy).

**Horde:** Necron Warriors can be used as a Horde (see page 359 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook). A Horde of Necron Warriors gains the Fear (2) Trait.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.



## NECRON IMMORTALS

In life, Immortals were the professional soldiery of the Necrontyr empire. In death, they surpass the Warriors in nearly every way. Possessed of even more resilient frames, Necron Immortals prove almost impervious to small arms. Their training and experience in combat survived the process of bio-transference undiminished, and Immortals seem to have retained a brighter spark of intellect than their less favoured brethren—although only in regard to the practice of war. Outside of combat, Immortals display about as much personality as a monotask servitor. Immortals are typically armed with gauss blasters, weapons even deadlier than the gauss flayers used by Warriors. In one recent incident, however, Brother Janos of the Crimson Fists reported his Kill-team having encountered Immortals armed with an entirely different sort of weapon, one that emits crackling electrical blasts hot enough to melt ceramite, and capable of arcing between multiple targets. These weapons caught the Kill-team entirely off-guard, as a single glancing hit on one Battle-Brother could prove lethal to another. This unexpected development nearly cost the mission, and it was only through the noble sacrifice of Brother Lars that the Immortals were defeated.

Immortals are similar in appearance to Warriors, but with larger, broader bodies, and spines that jut grotesquely upward from their backs. These living metal bodies are stronger and more heavily armoured than those of Necron Warriors, and even feature superior self-repair protocols. Yet, Immortals also possess faster reflexes, and their movements are not so ungainly as Warriors. When combined with their potent skill in combat, this makes for a foe that can pose a grave threat to even a Deathwatch Kill-team.

Unlike Necron Warriors, Immortals are capable of independently reacting to shifts in battle, adapting their tactics accordingly. This means Immortals are much better suited to countering the unconventional tactics often employed by Deathwatch Kill-teams. It even seems that Immortals are capable of issuing orders to Warriors, allowing a combined force to present a potent threat even when deprived of proper leadership. Still, Immortals must rely on ancient tactics and stratagems, and are little capable of true innovation.

As dangerous a foe as a single Immortal is, the Deathwatch would surely find cause for alarm were it to even suspect the vast numbers that slumber across the length of the Jericho Reach. Even now, with but a fraction of their number active, the ranks of Necron Immortals represent a dire threat. While Immortals are utterly loyal, as are all Necrons not of royal stature, different legions serve as vassals to different Lords and Overlords. Fortunately for the Achilus Crusade, these armies are unlikely to operate as a cohesive force until Ahhotekh has further solidified his control over the awaking Suhbekhar dynasty.

### Necron Immortal (Elite) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	45	(10) 55	(10) 55	32	35	35	40	15

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 30

**Skills:** Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Speak Language (Necrontyr), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Crack Shot, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Gauss, Tesla), Mighty Shot.

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (8), Necrons†, Regeneration (6), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 8.

**Weapons:** Gauss Blaster (Basic; 100m; S/4/-; 2d10+5 E; Pen 5; Clip -; Reload -; Gauss) or Tesla Carbine (Basic; 75m; S/-/-; 2d10+3 E; Pen 3; Clip -; Reload -; Shocking, Tesla), Combat Attachment (Melee; 1d10+10 R; Pen 2; Unwieldy).

**Eternal Veteran:** Once per combat as a Half Action, a Necron Immortal may attempt a **Challenging (+0) Logic Test**. On a success, all Necron Warriors within 50m gain +10 to BS for one Turn. If the test is failed by three or more degrees, they suffer -10 to BS instead.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.





## DEATHMARKS

While Necron nobility often scheme against each other, and occasionally even come to blows, ancient codes of honour forbid the employment of assassins against fellow Necrons. This provision does not extend to those enemies the Necrons consider dishonourable, however, and since no other race could hope to grasp the intricacies of Necron war etiquette, most nemesors see fully fit to unleash the Deathmarks against their alien foes.

In appearance, Deathmarks are more akin to Immortals in the craftsmanship of their mechanical bodies. They are distinguished by a single, large eye and the arcane orbs projecting from their spines. These orbs flare with an unnatural light as a Deathmark utilises its occult powers. In keeping with their role, Deathmarks display a propensity for stealth that is all but unique amongst the Necron ranks. Moving as they do with the eerie silence that is the hallmark of the Necron legions, Deathmarks can be surprisingly stealthy for their slow, deliberate movements.

Peerless snipers and assassins, Deathmarks utilise many strange and unique technologies to annihilate the enemies of the Subhekhar dynasty. Named for the emerald light with which they indicate their chosen targets, these indefatigable hunters can perceive and track a victim so-marked through any sort of terrain and, it is said, through the barriers between dimensions. The technology behind this signal further augments the Deathmark's deadly skills, ensuring that a marked target rarely survives for long. Even without this high-supernatural ability, Deathmarks would make for deadly opponents. Each is an expert marksman, armed with a cruel synaptic disintegrator. Those killed by a Deathmark's first shot are the fortunate ones, for a hit from a synaptic disintegrator that is less than fatal almost invariably leaves the victim an echo of his former self. Deathmarks possess the same skills in hunting and tracking they did in life, bolstered by their machine nature. Deathmarks have no need to eat, drink, or sleep, and can lie in wait as long as necessary for the opportunity to strike. Their mechanical ligatures can hold a rifle perfectly still and they draw no breath which might disturb their aim. As such, Deathmarks are capable of accurate, long range fire at a rate no human sniper could hope to match. As if these were not enough, Deathmarks are granted some of the most sophisticated and closely guarded of the Necrons' hyper-dimensional technology. This allows these peerless hunters to almost effortlessly leap back and forth from a pocket dimension outfitted with all manner of advanced surveillance and detection equipment. Deathmarks are able to lie in wait completely undetected by their foes, while monitoring communications, movement, and even the vital signs of their intended targets. Thus, Deathmarks time their attack perfectly to catch the enemy off-guard, making for easy prey.

Perhaps the only weakness of the Deathmarks is a decided lack of close combat ability. While more than strong enough to rip a man's jaw off with a skeletal hand, a Deathmark poses little threat to a power-armoured Space Marine up close. Deathmarks' skills and tools, however, ensure that they are seldom caught in a melee fight. On those rare occasions that they are, there are fewer more effective escape methods than retreating into another dimension.

### Deathmark (Elite) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
30	50	<sup>(10)</sup> 50	<sup>(10)</sup> 50	35	35	40	40	15

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 30

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Concealment (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Navigation (Surface) (Int), Silent Move (Ag) +10, Speak Language (Necrontyr), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Crack Shot, Dark Sight, Deadeye Shot, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Synaptic Disintegrator), Heightened Senses (Sight).

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (8), Necron†, Regeneration (6), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 8.

**Weapons:** Synaptic Disintegrator (Basic; 120m; S/2/-; 1d10+7 E; Pen 4; Clip -; Reload -; Accurate, Special††).

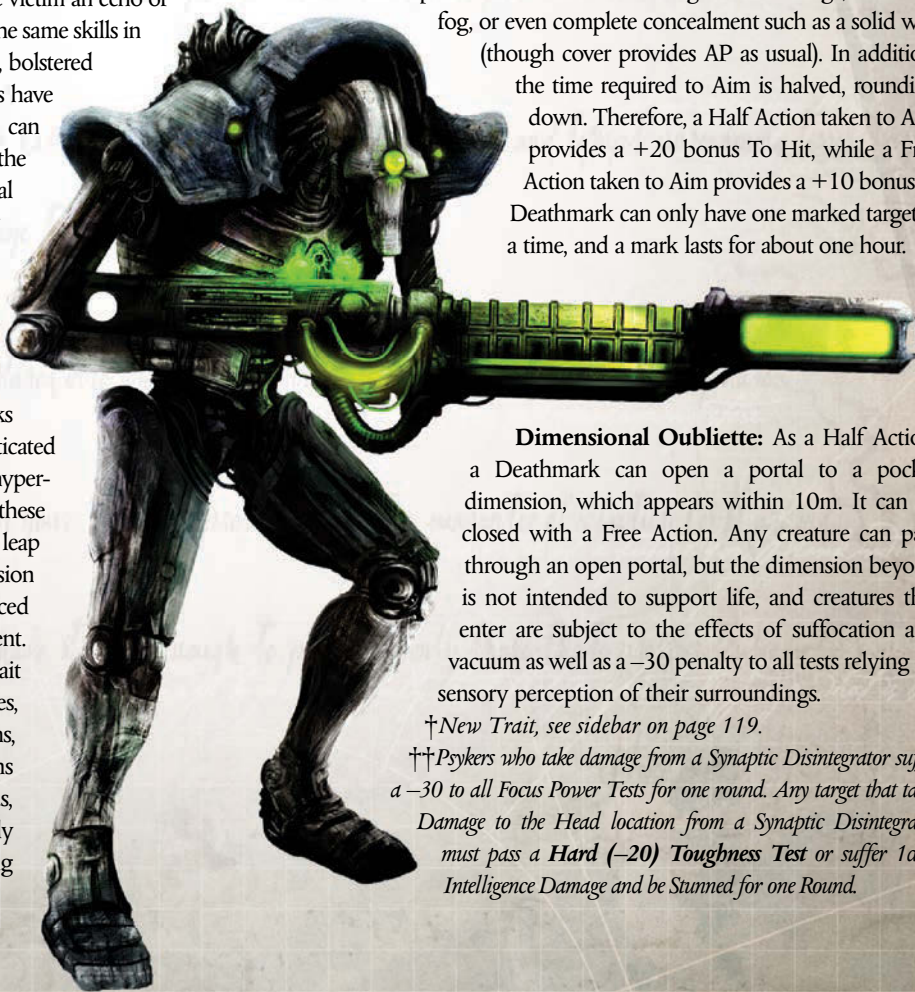
**Marked for Death:** With a gesture of its skeletal hand, a Deathmark can cast its namesake upon a chosen target. This requires a Half Action, and affects one target within 100m, who may attempt a **Hard (-20) Dodge Test** to avoid the mark. Deathmarks suffer no penalties to hit a marked target due to range, darkness, fog, or even complete concealment such as a solid wall

(though cover provides AP as usual). In addition, the time required to Aim is halved, rounding down. Therefore, a Half Action taken to Aim provides a +20 bonus To Hit, while a Free Action taken to Aim provides a +10 bonus. A Deathmark can only have one marked target at a time, and a mark lasts for about one hour.

**Dimensional Oubliette:** As a Half Action, a Deathmark can open a portal to a pocket dimension, which appears within 10m. It can be closed with a Free Action. Any creature can pass through an open portal, but the dimension beyond is not intended to support life, and creatures that enter are subject to the effects of suffocation and vacuum as well as a -30 penalty to all tests relying on sensory perception of their surroundings.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††Psykers who take damage from a Synaptic Disintegrator suffer a -30 to all Focus Power Tests for one round. Any target that takes Damage to the Head location from a Synaptic Disintegrator must pass a **Hard (-20) Toughness Test** or suffer 1d10 Intelligence Damage and be Stunned for one Round.





## LYCHGUARDS

The Lychguards are the elite protectors and emissaries of the Necron nobility. In order to serve as a bulwark against those who would harm their charge, Lychguards were gifted with the highest quality of living metal bodies, equal in resilience and power to those inhabited by the Lords and Overlords they protect. In addition to serving as wardens, Lychguards often act as messengers and envoys for their masters. In order to better serve in this capacity, the personality and intellect of the Lychguards was preserved through the process of bio-transference to a much greater extent than the rank and file. As with other Necrons, Lychguards fulfil the same roles in undeath as they did in life, and, as with other Necrons, the capability for disobedience has been removed. The Necron Lords and Overlords of the 41st millennium need never worry about a treacherous knife in the back from a supposedly loyal guardian, making the Lychguards the last defence against the machinations of rival nobles.

Owing to their powerful frames, Lychguards are taller and broader than Necron Warriors, with broad shoulder blades and a pronounced spine that extends above their heads. Reflecting their status and, perhaps, their individual preferences, Lychguards are often adorned with decorative headgear and segmented metal tabards. Lychguards are typically armed with warscythes, massive polearms with blades sheathed in a highly advanced and devastating power field. Backed up by the formidable strength of a Lychguard, a warscythe can split even an armoured warrior of the Adeptus Astartes nearly in two. The Subharkhar dynasty possesses a more limited number of dispersion shields with which the most powerful Lords and Overlords might equip their Lychguard servants. Almost invariably paired with a hyperphase sword, a dispersion shield produces a powerful force field capable of even redirecting projectiles and energy blasts back upon those who would attack the Lychguard's charge.

Lychguards have a well earned reputation among the Necron royal courts as consummate warriors, and seek always to meet these expectations. In keeping with the logical efficiency that drives many Necron activities, Lychguards make it a point to slay their enemies in a single, powerful blow. To this end, Lychguards often allow their nigh-indestructible form to weather the blows of their enemies until ready to strike a fatal blow.



Without a doubt, Lychguards present one of the greatest Necron threats a Kill-team might face. Even the mighty weapons of the Adeptus Astartes are hard-pressed to damage the living metal frame of a Lychguard, while a Lychguard's weaponry and abilities can fell even a Space Marine in a single blow. Perhaps what makes Lychguards even more dangerous is a capacity for independent thought not seen among the ranks of the dynastic armies. Like all Necrons, Lychguards have an unerring recollection of the most effective combat tactics ever devised. Unlike lesser Necrons, however, Lychguards are perfectly capable of deviating from these tactics and stratagems when necessary, adapting more quickly and effectively to new situations. Kill-teams combating Lychguards must contend with a foe that is more than a match for nearly any Space Marine in single combat, and can form an effective response to even the most unexpected route of attack.

### Lychguard (Elite) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
50	45	(12) 65	(12) 68	33	42	35	50	25

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Wounds:** 35

**Skills:** Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Blademaster, Combat Master, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Furious Assault, Precise Blow, Sure Strike.

**Traits:** From Beyond, Machine (10), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 10.

**Weapons:** Warscythe (2d10+20 E; Pen 9; Felling [1], Power Field, Unwieldy), or Hyperphase Sword (1d10+20 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field) and Dispersion Shield (1d10+14 I; Pen 0; Defensive, Special††)

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††A Dispersion Shield generates a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 65 and an Overload Roll of 01-05. When a Dispersion Shield successfully stops a Ranged Attack, the Lychguard may immediately redirect the shot at an enemy within 25m. This is treated as a Ranged Standard Attack requiring a Hard (-20) Ballistic Skill Test.



## THE GUARDIANS OF THE TOMBS

*"Look at these glyphs! I've never seen anything like this—it'll be worth a fortune! Wait, do you hear that? I think there's water behind this panel..."*

—Mebnos Jillick, Archaeovator and "Legitimate Trader"

As hardy as the Necrons are, and as sophisticated their technology, even they could not hope to survive the ravages of 60 million years without some manner of caretaker. Before entering the Great Sleep, thorough precautions were taken to ensure that the slumbering Necrons were protected from their enemies and from the ravages of time. Veritable armies of guardians patrol the Necron tombs, both defending against intrusion and ensuring that the countless machineries and subsystems of the crypt are kept in working order. Canoptek Spyders conduct the actions of Canoptek Wraiths and Canoptek Scarabs, and in turn are subservient to the tomb's master program. These various robots and systems are designed to work together in perfect harmony, coordinating efforts so that no enemy penetrates the tomb's defences and no system fails in its function.

The annals of the Deathwatch's history are filled with strange encounters with unknown xenofoms and catalogues of ancient ruins. In the darkest corners of Watch Fortress Erioch, mouldering tomes and dust-covered dataslates hold records of strange machines of alien origin that lurk within the bowels of dead worlds and in catacombs sealed since time immemorial.

### CANOPTEK SPYDERS

It is possible, even likely, that there have been many more expeditions into the Necron tombs scattered across the Jericho Reach than even the Dead Cabal realises. Brash explorers, colonists, and even the Deathwatch might enter a Necron tomb, or merely stray too close, and be forced to fight for their lives without ever seeing an actual Necron. While the Necrons of the Suhbekhar dynasty have only recently begun to stir, their servants have been active down through the aeons, guarding their slumbering masters and maintaining the complex stasis machines that house them. After the tomb's primary computer, Canoptek Spyders are the chief coordinators of the tomb's guardians. Canoptek Spyders are designed for maintenance, but are more than capable of dealing with intruders, and coordinating the actions of their subservient robots in defence of the tomb.

Canoptek Spyders are huge metal constructs, their immense weight effortlessly propelled by sophisticated grav engines. Their bodies are large and rounded in order to accommodate the internal systems that construct Canoptek Scarabs as needed. This, combined with their multiple limbs and compound visual sensors, give an arachnoid aspect that enhances the fearful appearance of these monstrous robots. The fabricator claws that allow Canoptek Spyders to effect repairs on nearly any of the tomb's systems also make for frighteningly destructive weapons, and they sometimes sport additional weaponry. When the Necrons do rise from their crypts, Canoptek Spyders often accompany them in battle, both for their combat abilities and their capability for repairing damage that is beyond even the abilities of their Necron masters' advanced systems.



### Canoptek Spyder (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	45	(15) 55	(15) 58	30	25	35	41	—

**Movement:** 5/10/15/30 (Hoverer)

**Wounds:** 75

**Skills:** Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Particle), Furious Assault, Talented (Tech-Use).

**Traits:** Auto-Stabilised, Dark Sight, Fear (1), From Beyond, Hoverer (4), Improved Natural Weapons (Fabricator Claws), Machine (8), Necron†, Size (Enormous), Undying, Unnatural Strength (x3), Unnatural Toughness (x3).

**Armour (Machine):** All 8.

**Weapons:** Fabricator Claws (Melee; 2d10+15 R; Pen 4; Tearing). Some Canoptek Spyders' mandibles also house a Twin-linked Particle Beamer (Heavy; 70m; S/—/—; 3d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Blast [4], Concussive, Reliable, Twin-linked).

**Gear:** Fabricator Array, Scarab Hive, Processor Link, or Gloom Prism

**Fabricator Array:** In addition to granting a +20 bonus to all Tech-Use tests, as a Half Action a Canoptek Spyder can attempt a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**. For each Degree of Success, one Necron within 5m automatically passes its next Regeneration Test and removes twice the normal Damage. When used in proximity to a Horde of Necrons, the



Horde automatically passes its next Regeneration Toughness Test and regains an amount of Magnitude equal to twice its Regeneration value plus its Magnitude divided by 10.

**Scarab Hive:** Canoptek Spyders contain internal systems which continuously construct Canoptek Scarabs to assist in their tasks. As a Free Action, a Canoptek Spyder can release these Scarabs to bolster a depleted Canoptek Scarab Horde within 20m, adding 20 to its Magnitude (this can take the horde over its starting Magnitude) or create a new Horde of Magnitude 20. After using this ability, the Spyder must attempt a **Difficult (-10) Toughness Test**. On a Failure, the Spyder has expended a dangerous amount of energy, and suffers 1d10 E Damage with no reduction for Armour or Toughness. It takes time for the Canoptek Spyder's internal facilities to construct additional Scarabs, and so this ability can only be used every 1d5 rounds.

**Processor Link:** When Canoptek Spyders operate together, their computerised minds combine to form an aggregate much more powerful than the sum of its parts, coordinating their efforts and those of their subservient robots with startling efficiency. If more than one Canoptek Spyders are within 500m of each other, all Canoptek Spyders, Canoptek Wraiths, and Scarabs within this range gain Unnatural Intelligence (x2). In addition, all Canoptek Spyders linked in this manner gain the Combat Formation Talent, the benefits of which can be utilised by any affected Canoptek Wraiths and Scarabs.

**Gloom Prism:** This green crystal, laced with arcane circuitry, creates an anti-psyhic field that severs the connection of Daemons and psykers to the Warp. Focus Power Tests and Warp Instability Tests within 50m of a Gloom Prism suffer a -30 penalty.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

## CANOPTEK WRAITHS

Many an intruder into a Necron tomb has lost his life to a Canoptek Wraith before ever realising the ancient crypt is not so empty at all. Canoptek Wraiths prowl the corridors of the Subhekhar dynasty's slumbering tombs, gliding silently through the cyclopean corridors, guarding against intrusion and ensuring the safety of its slumbering occupants. Large monsters with segmented, tail-like bodies bristling with bladed limbs and lashing tendrils, these robot servants of the Necrons lack the sophisticated repair protocols of their masters, but possess incredible strength and resilience. What's more, they seem to actually display more cunning than the lower ranks of the Necron legions. What makes a Canoptek Wraith such a fearful combatant, however, is the advanced phase shifter housed within its durable frame. This dimensional destabilisation matrix allows a Canoptek Wraith to selectively phase parts of itself, whether that be momentarily phasing its body to avoid a strike, or even phasing its vicious claws in order to bypass armour and rip into the flesh of enemies. The awakened Subhekhar nobility are fully aware that the deadly capabilities of the Canoptek Wraiths can be put to effective use in offence as well as defence, and some of the more imaginative nobles see the potential held by an assassin for which even the most heavily fortified bunker offers no hindrance.

It is likely that many tales of haunted ruins and cursed tombs across the Jericho Reach owe their genesis to the Canoptek Wraiths. Canoptek Wraiths are perfectly suited for stealth; their snake-like bodies and sophisticated grav-motors contribute to this, but again the phase shifter is key.

While phased, Wraiths are extremely difficult to detect, as they produce no sound and register no mass on auspex scanners. While the selective phasing that makes them such able combatants requires great reserves of energy, it is comparatively easier for a Wraith to remain completely in or out of our dimension. Thus, a Wraith may follow its prey as long as needed to ascertain the threat posed and communicate this information to the master program, before striking the fatal ambush. A Wraith might even conceal itself within solid walls until the time to strike. During times of alert, Canoptek Wraiths may patrol far beyond the confines of the tombs, ranging far and wide over the surface of a world in order to observe or eliminate trespassers.

### Canoptek Wraith (Elite) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	35	(12) 65	(10) 55	(8) 45	20	45	45	—

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48 (Hoverer)

**Wounds:** 40

**Skills:** Concealment (Ag) +10, Dodge (Ag), Silent Move (Ag) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Crippling Strike, Swift Attack, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee).

**Traits:** Dark Sight, Fear (2), From Beyond, Hoverer (8), Improved Natural Weapons (Claws), Machine (7), Multiple Arms, Necron†, Phase, Size (Hulking), Strange Physiology, Undying, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 7.

**Weapons:** Claws (1d10+12 R; Pen 4, Razor Sharp) and Whip Coils (1d10+10 I; Pen 0; Flexible, Snare).

**Phase Shifter:** In addition to possessing the Phase trait, Canoptek Wraiths count as possessing a Force Field with a protection rating of 45 that never Overloads. Additionally, if a Canoptek Wraith scores three or more Degrees of Success when rolling to hit with a melee attack, the attack cannot be Parried, and Damage from the attack is not reduced by the target's Armour.

**Wraithflight:** Canoptek Wraiths may use their Phase Trait during a Movement Action, effectively allowing them to pass through solid barriers without slowing their speed.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.





## CANOPTEK SCARABS

Canoptek Scarabs patrol the Necron tombs in great swarms, seeking both systems in need of repair and intruders in need of termination. Scarabs possess terrifying ability to consume nearly any material, living or dead, natural or artificial, and convert this material to energy for storage and later use. Even more impressively, Canoptek Scarabs can use such stored energy to fabricate nearly any device known to Necron science. Scarabs display no sign of intelligence, yet highly sophisticated auto-routines and construct-patterns allow them to build weapons and vehicles of immense power in a surprisingly brief time. Scarabs resemble metal insects, somewhat larger than an armoured Space Marine's fist, with a single, glowing eye and multiple clawed appendages. Scarabs are equipped with versatile anti-grav engines, allowing them to move rapidly and unhindered. The slight humming sound produced by this anti-grav motor is amplified a thousandfold in large Scarab swarms, producing a deafening, droning buzz like a plague of locusts, which can have a terrifying effect for the Necrons' enemies.

Individually, Canoptek Scarabs pose little threat. Given enough time, an unmolested Scarab could inflict great damage, but its rate of consumption is relatively slow, affording ample time for it to be destroyed. Scarabs' machine nature gives them a degree of resistance to damage, but they lack the real armour or the self-repair protocols employed by the Necrons. Nevertheless, Scarabs are almost never encountered alone, and the presence of a single Canoptek Scarab signals that dozens, if not hundreds more are close. In large swarms, Canoptek Scarabs can pose a significant threat to an unsupported Space Marine. For a Kill-team, the Scarabs themselves may not be a serious threat so much as an obstacle, but every round of ammunition fired against a Scarab swarm is one less round available for when their deathless masters are encountered. In addition to overwhelming their opponents, Canoptek Scarabs have a nasty habit of "eating" weapons, even as they slice through the swarm.

### Canoptek Scarab (Troops) Profile



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	05	25	35	35	10	25	35	—

**Movement:** 6/12/18/36 (Flyer)

**Wounds:** 8

**Skills:** Concealment (Ag) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Swift Attack.

**Traits:** Burrower, Dark Sight, Flyer (6), From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapons (Claws and Particle Slicers), Machine (4), Necron†, Overwhelming (Horde), Size (Puny), Strange Physiology, Undying.

**Armour (Machine):** All 4, Horde 4.

**Weapons:** Claws and Particle Slicers (Melee; 1d10+2 R; Pen 2; Razor Sharp, Tearing).

**Horde:** Canoptek Scarabs can (and usually should) be used as a Horde (see page 359 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook).

**Ravenous:** Whenever a melee weapon that does not have the Power Field Quality hits a Horde of Canoptek Scarabs, there is a 25% chance the weapon is destroyed.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.



## THE HERALDS OF OBLIVION

*"Copy that, we're unsealing the hatch now. Slippery in here; step careful and get those lamp packs on, men ... Uh, Captain? I think we've located the rest of her crew. Holy Throne of Earth, I think I'm going to be sick!"*

—Provost-sergeant Xavier Horst of the *Shieldmaiden*, while investigating the derelict *Prayer of Julios*

In 813.M41, the Rogue Trader vessel *Prayer of Julios* was found drifting derelict in the vicinity of Sagacity. The attackers were long gone, but their handiwork was evident. The crew of the *Prayer of Julios* had been butchered. Only after many days of sifting through the mutilated remains was it determined that a portion of the crew was missing. Since none of the ship's salvation pods or shuttles had been launched, it could only be presumed that they had been taken captive. Whether they were alive or dead was impossible to say, though it certainly seemed unlikely that whatever had visited this horror and destruction on the rest of the crew would be capable of restraint. The hideous massacre was at first presumed to have been perpetrated by the Disciples of the Dark Gods, likely the Stigmatus, as the extent of the mutilation could be attributed to no other forces known to operate in the vicinity. Yet, as the Inquisition investigated the matter further they found none of the symbolism or evidence of ritual usually associated with such attacks. Nor had the ship's cargo, or the ship itself, for that matter, been taken. With no evidence of ritual or piracy, it seemed that the motivation for the attack was simply the deaths of the more than 23,000 crew. This alone may have been enough to pique



the interest of the Dead Cabal, but further mystery was added by the unidentifiable nature of the attackers' weaponry and the inconsistency of the attack. While many of the crew had been reduced to little more than brittle skeletons, seemingly by some manner of energy weapon, others had been brutally slashed and torn apart. Whereas many corridors were flooded with blood, others were bare but for a fine layer of ash. The Dead Cabal's investigation into the matter is ongoing, though some members have already drawn a connection to numerous disparate massacres throughout the history of the Jericho Reach.

## DESTROYERS

The Necrons have no qualms about killing. It often seems that they view the younger races, particularly humanity, as little more than vermin to be exterminated once they become a nuisance. However, Necrons usually kill only in order to accomplish some goal, and while Lords and Lychguards may appreciate testing their skill in battle against a worthy foe, the vast ranks of Warriors kill only as commanded, and derive no pleasure from it (or anything else, for that matter). There is a glaring exception to this rule: the Destroyers. Necrons consumed by a kind of madness, Destroyers are obsessed with the eradication of all life in the galaxy. This one overriding desire drives their every action. They fight not to gain territory, not for the honour of the Suhbekhar Dynasty, nor even to protect their tombs. Destroyers fight only to extinguish life, and they do so wherever it is found.

To accomplish this hideous goal, Destroyers regularly perform modifications to their bodies that normal Necrons would consider self-mutilation. This commonly includes the replacement of legs with grav platforms and the permanent mounting of heavy weaponry in place of arms. These changes are frequently complemented by advanced targeting systems mounted on their skulls, and even modifications to their synthetic brains, trading any functions or knowledge that cannot be applied to the work of death for additional targeting parameters and attack patterns.

The madness of the Destroyers is not limited to any single dynasty or world, and as with all others, the Suhbekhar has its share of Destroyers. The madness can only take root in those Necrons capable of some degree of independent thought and action, such as Immortals, Lychguards, and Deathmarks. As such, Destroyers are deadly and hardy combatants even before their augmentations. After their transformation, Destroyers typically forsake their previous armaments in favour of the terribly destructive gauss cannons or the even more powerful heavy gauss cannons. In battle, Destroyers are as chillingly efficient as all other Necrons, as their mission to end all life is not based in emotion, but some terrible logic. Destroyers systematically destroy their enemies, seeking not a rout or any other victory save complete eradication.

As throughout the Necron empire, Destroyers within the Suhbekhar dynasty are feared and shunned by their fellows, forming their own courts under the rule of Lords or even Overlords afflicted by the Destroyer madness. These courts exist outside of Necron society, pursuing their agenda of slaughter regardless of the wishes and interests of the less homicidal nobility. For this reason, the rulers of many tomb worlds see fit to launch raids or otherwise provide targets for the Destroyers, in order that they might indulge their obsession without jeopardising the security of the tomb world.

The Dead Cabal is just beginning to draw correlations between what are now known to be a shockingly large number of seemingly motiveless attacks in the outer Jericho Reach. A few Inquisitors believe that the Tau have suffered these predations as well, though they are unwilling to divulge how they came about this knowledge.

### Destroyer (Elite) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	45	(10) 55	(12) 68	35	35	(6) 35	50	10

**Movement:** 6/12/18/36 (Hoverer)

**Wounds:** 50

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Intimidate (S) +10, Logic (Int) +20, Speak Language (Necrontyr), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Crack Shot, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Gauss), Hatred (All).

**Traits:** Auto-stabilised, From Beyond, Hoverer (6), Machine (8), Necron†, Regeneration (6), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Perception (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 8.

**Weapons:** Gauss Cannon (Heavy; 100m; 1d10+12 E; Pen 5; S/4/6; Clip –; Reload –; Gauss) or Heavy Gauss Cannon (Heavy; 200m; 4d10+10 E; Pen 10; S/2/–; Clip –; Reload –; Gauss, Proven [4]).

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

## DESTROYER LORDS

Even the Necron nobility are not safe from the madness of the Destroyers. When a Lord or Overlord of the Suhbekhar dynasty succumbs, a great threat to all life in the Jericho Reach is born. Ironically, the only reason the Imperium is not aware of the extent of this threat is precisely because these Destroyer Lords are so aptly named. No one has borne witness to the atrocities committed by these steel harbingers of apocalypse and lived, and so even the Dead Cabal can only guess at the threat stirring on barren worlds scattered across the Reach. While many Lords and Overlords are afflicted by “eccentricities,” the insanity that consumes the mind of a Destroyer Lord is something else entirely. Like other Destroyers, Destroyer Lords modify their bodies and minds, so that they might be better suited to their overarching purpose, to cleanse the stars of all life. While this most often includes the attachment of a suspensor platform in place of legs, Destroyer Lords tend to forgo the ranged weaponry favoured by other Destroyers in favour of melee weapons. The warscythe is a particular favourite, as a Destroyer Lord hovering above the heads of his enemies can take full advantage of the reach afforded by these massive weapons. Curiously, Destroyer Lords forgo the decorative finery commonly worn by Necron royalty. Whether this is representative of their single-minded obsession, an intentional statement, or a simple matter of practicality, none can say, for the Destroyer Lords are avoided by their former peers as much as the other Destroyers, and are not keen to engage in conversation (except to learn the location of potential targets).



In battle, Destroyer Lords are truly dangerous enemies. The modifications to their forms leave them even more resistant to damage than other Necron royals. The grav-platform with which Destroyer Lords are fitted grants manoeuvrability far greater than their more traditional brethren, while their power, skill, and determination to slaughter the living ensure few can hope to stand against them in battle. Even the mighty Deathwatch may be outmatched when they finally track down the cause of these "Destroyer Incidents." A charging Destroyer Lord can skewer even an Adeptus Astartes in tactical dreadnought armour on his Warscythe; lesser foes are as little more than wheat for the harvest.

Destroyer Lords rule over courts of Destroyers just as more stable nobles rule over their courts. These courts, these Destroyer Cults of the Red Harvest, are concerned not with politicking, or territory, or honour, or even power. They are concerned only with enacting their dread prophecy, with ensuring that the life which was denied them is denied the rest of the galaxy. Unlike other Necrons, Destroyer Lords and their followers have no desire for a return to the Time of Flesh; their transformation has shown them the weakness of the living and the hollowness of immortality. When the Destroyers are through with their bloody harvest, many Necron Lords fear that they will turn their aggression on their Necron brethren. To this end, some far-thinking nobles of the Subhokhar dynasty are already crafting contingency plans to ensure a continuing bounty to occupy the Destroyer Cults.

#### Destroyer Lord (Master) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	50	<sup>(12)</sup> 65	<sup>(14)</sup> 72	40	50	<sup>(8)</sup> 45	60	30

**Movement:** 6/12/18/36 (Hoverer)

**Wounds:** 70

**Skills:** Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel), Intimidate (S) +20, Logic (Int) +20, Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Tactics (Air Combat, Assault Doctrine, Defensive Doctrine) (Int), Speak Language (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Necrontyr) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Combat Master, Combat Sense, Counter Attack, Crack Shot, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (All Necron Weapons), Hatred (All), Lightning Attack, Sure Strike, Swift Attack, Wall of Steel.

**Traits:** From Beyond, Hoverer (6), Machine (10), Necron†, Regeneration (7), Size (Hulking), Undying, Unnatural Perception (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 10.

**Weapons:** Staff of Light (Ranged) (Basic; 25m; S/4/-; 1d10+8 E; Pen 7; Clip -; Reload -; Volatile) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+15 I; Pen 4; Balanced, Power Field), *or* Warscythe (2d10+20 E; Pen 9; Felling [2], Power Field, Unwieldy), *or* Hyperphase Sword (1d10+20 E; Pen 6; Balanced, Power Field), *or* Voidblade (1d10+14 R; Pen 4; Felling [1], Razor Sharp, Tearing, Unbalanced), *or* Gauntlet of Fire†† (Ranged) (Pistol; 15m; S/-/-; 1d10+9 E; Pen 5; Clip -; Reload -; Flame, Special) and (Melee) (Melee; 1d10+19 E; Pen 5; Tearing, Special).

**Gear:** A Destroyer Lord may carry a Resurrection Orb (see Necron Lord, page 121).



†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

††Melee attacks made with a Gauntlet of Fire can set enemies on fire. Whether caused by a Ranged or Melee Attack, the damage suffered in subsequent rounds for being on fire is treated as possessing the Felling (1) Quality. All WS tests made with a Gauntlet of Fire receive a +10 bonus.

## FLAYED ONES

Some Necrons are stricken with a curse even more heinous than the madness of Destroyers. The nature of this curse is little understood, even by the wisest of Crypteks, but its results are unmistakable. A victim of the Flayer Curse first loses its sanity. In the case of Necron Warriors, this may go unnoticed until far into the process, as a single malfunctioning Warrior amongst thousands is easily overlooked. This madness first manifests as a drive to kill that can cause a Necron to ignore commands to cease fire or hold a position. While this urge to kill is held in common with the Destroyers, the ultimate goal is quite different. Destroyers exist for the act of killing itself, exterminating life is both the means and the end. Flayed Ones kill in order to sate an unnatural hunger for flesh and blood; they kill so that they might feast. Of course, Necrons are incapable of consuming food or drink of any kind, and so this hunger can never be satisfied. Yet the Flayed Ones have devolved far beyond reason or logic, and as they cut down their prey they stop to smear meat across their unmoving jaws, as blood drips down their steel necks and dribbles through stained ribs to pool at their feet. This disease of the mind is accompanied by equally grotesque physical changes, as the living metal of the



Necron reconfigures to better serve its new purpose. The fingers of a Flayed One morph into wicked, knife-like claws, while their legs often grow an additional joint, allowing for greater speed and in some cases quadrupedal movement. Yet the final transformation that would allow a Flayed One to quench its thirst never comes, giving credence to the legend that the Flayer Curse was bestowed by one of the ancient C'tan in its death throes. Most bizarrely, Flayed Ones develop an ability to travel between dimensions. Many Crypteks believe the Flayed Ones inhabit an alternate reality all their own, inaccessible to other Necrons, in which they make their charnel palaces and heap the corpses dragged from battle.

Through unknown means, Flayed Ones are able to somehow sense when their Necron brethren are in combat, appearing to slaughter the enemy and take the grisly trophies from which they derive their name. Other Necrons do not welcome the presence of Flayed Ones, both for the risk of their passing on the Flayer Curse to others, and because they operate completely outside the chain of command. Even were a nemesor brash enough to issue orders to a pack of Flayed Ones, they would only be ignored. As Destroyers are engaged in battle more often than any other Necrons, Flayed Ones naturally tend to congregate around them. Destroyers, themselves shunned and avoided by their fellow Necrons, are much more likely to tolerate the presence of Flayed Ones than are traditional Necron forces. In the eyes of the Destroyers, the devolved Flayed Ones are accomplishing the same goal, and unlike a traditional Nemesor, Destroyer Lords have no objectives in battle which might be compromised by the frenzied slaughter of the Flayed Ones.

#### Flayed One (Elite) Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	15	(8) 45	(8) 45	(4) 25	15	32	37	01

**Movement:** 8/16/24/48

**Wounds:** 25

**Skills:** Concealment (Ag) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Silent Move (Ag) +10, Tech-Use (Int) +10.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Crippling Strike, Double Team, Lightning Attack, Lightning Reflexes, Swift Attack, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee).

**Traits:** Fear (2), From Beyond, Improved Natural Weapons (Blades and Claws), Machine (7), Necron†, Regeneration (5), Undying, Unnatural Agility (x2), Unnatural Speed (x2), Unnatural Strength (x2), Unnatural Toughness (x2).

**Armour (Machine):** All 7.

**Weapons:** Blades and Claws (1d10+12 R; Pen 2; Razor sharp).

**Stench of the Grave:** Flayed Ones indicate no awareness of the odours given off by the bloody skins and fleshy trophies with which they adorn themselves, typically keeping such scraps until completely decayed. Unless the GM rules that conditions mean otherwise (such as on a bloody battlefield), Awareness Tests to detect the presence of Flayed Ones may always be attempted using smell, and Tests based on this sense are considered one step easier than normal. Obviously, this does not apply to characters in environmentally sealed armour or wearing respirators.

†New Trait, see sidebar on page 119.

## THE ENGINES OF WAR

*"Have faith and fear not, men, this bastion is almost completely impregnable. Reinforcements will be here long before the xenos scum breach the outer walls. Eh? What do you mean, the astropath's tower is gone?"*

—Last words of Lieutenant Falvus Bathius, acting commander of Outpost Station Telum

Thus far, the Suhbekhar dynasty has made only limited use of vehicles. If their plans come to fruition, however, the Crusade will surely face the full onslaught of the Necron war machines and the worlds of the Jericho Reach will tremble. Even at this stage, the Necrons of the Suhbekhar dynasty will do whatever it takes to protect their interests and the secrecy of their tomb worlds. If the most logical method is via the destruction of an enemy though excessive firepower, before they can pass on information, then that is the course to be taken. A condensed version of the vehicle rules found in the **DEATHWATCH** supplement **rites of Battle** can be found in **Appendix** on page 142.

### ANNIHILATION BARGE

Not so much a tank as a mobile weapons platform, the Annihilation Barge is so-named for the extreme destructive potential of its deadly primary armament, twin tesla destructors. In battle, Annihilation Barges lack the speed commonly associated with anti-grav vehicles, their ponderous movement more akin to the progress of Imperial tanks. Mobility, however, is not the purpose of an Annihilation Barge, and the aptly named vehicle excels in its intended role. Like all tesla weapons, the tesla destructor fires arcs of crackling lightning, incinerating flesh and melting armour. The discharges of a tesla destructor, however, burn even hotter and brighter. Even heavily armoured Astartes vehicles are vulnerable to a tesla destructor. These devastating bolts leap forth from the barrel of a tesla destructor with shocking rapidity, a rate of fire that is multiplied as each coruscation arcs from target to target. One of these weapons would be deadly enough, but a matched pair backed up by a tesla cannon or gauss cannon means an Annihilation Barge is capable of eradicating entire formations of enemy infantry in moments, bolts of electricity incinerating target after target.

An Annihilation Barge is crescent-shaped in appearance, with its payload mounted atop and keel. It is difficult to imagine a vehicle more unlike those of the Imperium. In many ways, an Annihilation Barge bears even less resemblance to an Imperial battle tank than the vehicles of the Tau. Like the Necrons themselves, it is skeletal,

### NECRON CREW

The crew of Necron vehicles are especially suited to their role, with unique systems allowing for direct interface with the vehicle. This connection surpasses that of even the most advanced MIUs available to the Imperium; in many ways there is no meaningful distinction between the craft and its crew. This connection is reflected in the not-insignificant Manoeuvrability rating for the following Necron vehicles. To represent Necron crew, use the Necron Immortal profile with the addition of the appropriate Drive or Pilot Skill at a +10 bonus.



a mere frame supporting its weapons. While an Annihilation Barge does appear to lack armour, this is not quite true. The bulk of its armour plating simply exists only at the moment of impact, leaving the vehicle light and manoeuvrable. As with all Necron vehicles, an Annihilation Barge is constructed of living metal, not so dissimilar to that forming the bodies of the Necrons themselves. This leaves the seemingly fragile vehicle surprisingly resilient to damage. Even more impressively, a living metal vehicle can regenerate its hull and even its more delicate systems, metal plating knitting back together as circuits reconnect and weapons are brought back online. Many a foe has celebrated prematurely after landing a solid hit on an Annihilation Barge, only for it to exemplify its name after a few moments of self-repair.

While the Necrons' enemies may be dismayed to encounter an Annihilation Barge on the field of battle, it would hardly be of great surprise. Yet the Subhekhar dynasty has found additional use for these vehicles, as stationary defence weapons. With its grav engine disengaged, an Annihilation Barge might be placed in an alcove above one of the many cyclopean doorways in the depths of a tomb, concealed from intruders until they are perfectly within its sights. Any collateral damage from the discharge of heavy weapons within the tomb structure can be repaired in short order by the Canoptek Spyderys and Wraiths, and is well worth the annihilation of potential tomb robbers.

**Type:** Skimmer **Size:** Enormous  
**Tactical Speed:** 12m **Cruising Speed:** 65kph  
**Manoeuvrability:** +20 **Structural Integrity:** 30  
**Armour:** Front 28, Side 28, Rear 28  
**Crew:** Two Operators **Carrying Capacity:** None  
**Weapons:** Twin-linked Tesla Destructor (Facing Front/Sides; 100m; S/3/6; 3d10+5 E; Pen 2; Clip –; Reload –; Shocking, Tesla, Twin-linked), Tesla Cannon (Facing Front/Sides; 90m; S/3/–; 2d10+5 E; Pen 2; Clip –; Reload –; Shocking, Tesla) or Gauss Cannon (Facing Front/Sides; 100m; 1d10+12 E; Pen 5; S/4/6; Clip –; Reload –; Gauss).

### Special Rules

**Skimmer:** This vehicle hovers over the battlefield, allowing it to ignore terrain that might otherwise hamper movement. If it ever becomes completely immobilised due to damage, count the vehicle as destroyed instead as it crashes into the ground.

**Open-topped:** Enemies may target the crew and passengers of the vehicle by using a Called Shot Attack Action.

**Quantum Shielding:** A vehicle with Quantum Shielding is protected by additional armour plating that exists out of phase with the rest of the vehicle, until the moment the vehicle is hit. The vehicle benefits from an additional 10 points of Armour on all facings until it has suffered a Critical Hit (including a Critical Hit caused by Righteous Fury) at which point the Quantum Shielding ceases to function. While the Quantum Shielding is active, any crew or passengers benefit from cover providing 10 AP, which does not deteriorate.

**Living Metal:** When a Living Metal vehicle suffers a Critical Hit, halve the results, rounding up. This does affect rolls on the Critical Hit chart generated by Righteous Fury. In addition, the vehicle removes one point of Critical Damage each Round (the vehicle does *not* suffer the corresponding result on the Critical Hit Chart for the new Damage value). This can undo the effects of Critical Damage, such as restoring weapons, extinguishing flames, etc.

## CATACOMB COMMAND BARGE

Similar in basic appearance to the Annihilation Barge, the Catacomb Command Barge serves a very different purpose. While Annihilation Barges bring ruination upon the living from a distance, Catacomb Command Barges close on the foe as quickly in possible, so that they may be struck down by sword and scythe. These vehicles serve solely as conveyors for Necron nobility, particularly those with a propensity for melee combat. Catacomb Command Barges are far swifter than Annihilation Barges or Arks, so that the barge's master might be conducted to wherever he is most needed, and to ensure that no foes escape their fate.

It is a near-universal truth that nobility take every opportunity to showcase their status, and the Necrons are no exception. Catacomb Command Barges are first and foremost a way to show how (literally) far above their servants and enemies a Necron Lord or Overlord is. In more practical terms, it allows a Necron royal to swiftly engage his foes in close combat, as many Lords prefer. A Lord can even fight effectively from his seat atop the Command Barge, lashing out at foes as it sails overhead. With the momentum of a Catacomb Command Barge moving at speed behind the swing of his warscythe, an Overlord can even remove a Space Marine's head from his shoulders as he passes.

For those Lords who prefer to keep their skeletal hands clean, a Command Barge can hover above the battlefield, allowing them to survey the combat and issue orders while avoiding the swirl of melee and all but the most dedicated of ranged attackers. To this end, Catacomb Command Barges are equipped with sophisticated subfrequency broadcasting equipment, omnivoxes, and hyperspace transmitters. These allow the Lord or Overlord, who is directly linked to his Barge, to issue orders to any Necron forces in the vicinity and in orbit, regardless of conditions or interference that would render Imperial vox-operators deaf and mute. These systems do not require the Necron Lord to actually speak his orders, though many tend to shout above the din of battle, regardless. Whether this is out of vanity, nostalgia for the time of flesh, or a damaged synthapse, depends on the individual Lord.

While Catacomb Command Barges are typically employed in large-scale engagements, they might also be utilised whenever a Necron noble requires speed and manoeuvrability to accomplish his goals. The transmitters can be useful for a Lord who wishes to conduct a more delicate operation from a safe distance. For a Lord taking a more personal involvement, the Barge's speed ensures that no fleeing witnesses escape with their lives.

**Type:** Skimmer **Size:** Enormous  
**Tactical Speed:** 25m **Cruising Speed:** 245kph  
**Manoeuvrability:** +25 **Structural Integrity:** 30  
**Armour:** Front 28, Side 28, Rear 28  
**Crew:** Two Operators **Carrying Capacity:** One Necron Lord or Overlord

**Weapons:** Tesla Cannon (Facing Front/Sides; 90m; S/3/–; 2d10+5 E; Pen 2; Clip –; Reload –; Shocking, Tesla) or Gauss Cannon (Facing Front/Sides; 100m; 1d10+12 E; Pen 5; S/4/6; Clip –; Reload –; Gauss).





## Special Rules

**Skimmer:** This vehicle hovers over the battlefield, allowing it to ignore terrain that might otherwise hamper movement. If it ever becomes completely immobilised due to damage, count the vehicle as destroyed instead as it crashes into the ground.

**Open-topped:** Enemies may target the crew and passengers of the vehicle by using a Called Shot Attack Action.

**Quantum Shielding:** A vehicle with Quantum Shielding is protected by additional armour plating that exists out of phase with the rest of the vehicle, except for the moment the vehicle is struck by an attack. The vehicle benefits from an additional 10 points of Armour on all facings until it has suffered a Critical Hit (including a Critical Hit caused by Righteous Fury) at which point the Quantum Shielding ceases to function. While the Quantum Shielding is active, any crew or passengers benefit from cover providing 10 AP, which does not deteriorate.

**Living Metal:** When a Living Metal vehicle suffers a Critical Hit, halve the results, rounding up. This does affect rolls on the Critical Hit chart generated by Righteous Fury. In addition, the vehicle removes one point of Critical Damage each Round (the vehicle does *not* suffer the corresponding result on the Critical Hit Chart for the new Damage value). This can undo the effects of Critical Damage, such as restoring weapons, extinguishing flames, etc.

**Chariot of Ire:** The passenger of a Catacomb Command Barge may make Melee Attack Actions against targets adjacent to the vehicle (likely including the modifier for higher ground).

As long as a character is a passenger aboard the Catacomb Command Barge, he is treated as possessing the Berserk Charge Talent and Brutal Charge Trait. In addition, when a Catacomb Command Barge takes a Movement Action, the embarked character may sacrifice his next Turn in order to make a Charge Attack Action against any number of targets as the vehicle passes within 1m, or 3m if armed with a warscythe.

**Symbiotic Repair:** As a Free Action, an embarked Necron may voluntarily suffer any amount of Damage (but not Critical Damage) in order to remove double that amount of Damage (including Critical Damage) from the vehicle.

## DOOMSDAY ARK

The Domsday Ark shares a basic appearance with the Ghost Ark, but whereas the latter's primary purpose is to transport and effect repairs for the Necron soldiery, the Domsday Ark exists only to bring ruination on the Necrons' enemies. Not so much a tank as a massive, mobile platform, the Domsday Ark is no more or less than a carriage for a Domsday Cannon, perhaps the most powerful weapon in the Necrons' formidable arsenal. Powerful enough to bring down a Munitorum-standard M.39 "scutum" prefab bunker in a single bombardment, a Domsday Ark, when encountered, must be dealt with before it can move into firing position.

As overwhelming as the Domsday Cannon is, those who face a Domsday Ark may find small relief in the fact that its weapon draws on the same power reserves as the repulsor engines of the vehicle. As a result, a Domsday Cannon is somewhat



less effective when fired during or immediately following any significant movement of the craft. Then again, even a low-power blast from a Doomsday Cannon rivals the most hallowed of Adeptus Astartes plasma cannons for destructive potential. While those experienced in combating heavy vehicles may think to attack from the rear, typically the most vulnerable approach for Imperial and xenos vehicles, this tactic is only of minor effectiveness against a Doomsday Ark. Due to its living metal hull and extra-dimensional armour, a Doomsday Ark is in fact no more vulnerable to damage from the rear than from any other direction. While it is true that the rear is the one facing of a Doomsday Ark not brandishing weaponry, a mere few degrees of pivoting by the vehicle's pilot brings a broadside of linked gauss flayers to bear, ending all but the most determined assault. Further, all Nemesors realise the potential of a Doomsday Cannon to turn the tide of battle, meaning that the weapon is almost invariably defended by Necron Warriors or worse.

**Type:** Skimmer **Size:** Enormous  
**Tactical Speed:** 8m **Cruising Speed:** 50kph  
**Manoeuvrability:** +20 **Structural Integrity:** 35  
**Armour:** Front 30, Side 30, Rear 30

**Crew:** One Operator **Carrying Capacity:** None  
**Weapons:** Doomsday Cannon (Stationary)<sup>†</sup> (Facing Front; 300m; S/-/-; 6d10+8 E; Pen 12; Clip -; Reload -; Blast [8], Concussive), (Moving)<sup>†</sup> (Facing Front; 150m; S/-/-; 3d10+7 E; Pen 5; Clip -; Reload -; Blast [5]), Two Gauss Flayer Arrays (Facing Sides; 100m; S/4/8; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Clip -; Reload -; Gauss, Storm).

<sup>†</sup>A Doomsday Ark that is performing a Movement Action during the Turn it fires uses the Moving profile; otherwise it uses the Stationary profile.

## Special Rules

**Skimmer:** This vehicle hovers over the battlefield, allowing it to ignore terrain that might otherwise hamper movement. If it ever becomes completely immobilised due to damage, count the vehicle as destroyed instead as it crashes into the ground.

**Open-topped:** Enemies may target the crew and passengers of the vehicle by using a Called Shot Attack Action.

**Quantum Shielding:** A vehicle with Quantum Shielding is protected by additional armour plating that exists out of phase with the rest of the vehicle, until the moment the vehicle is hit. The vehicle benefits from an additional 10 points of Armour on all facings until it has suffered a Critical Hit (including a Critical Hit caused by Righteous Fury) at which point the Quantum Shielding ceases to function. While the Quantum Shielding is active, any crew or passengers benefit from cover providing 10 AP, which does not deteriorate.

**Living Metal:** When a Living Metal vehicle suffers a Critical Hit, halve the results, rounding up. This does affect rolls on the Critical Hit chart generated by Righteous Fury. In addition, the vehicle removes one point of Critical Damage each Round (the vehicle does *not* suffer the corresponding result on the Critical Hit Chart for the new Damage value). This can undo the effects of Critical Damage, such as restoring weapons, extinguishing flames, etc.

## GHOST ARK

More so even than other Necron vehicles, Ghost Arks bear a resemblance to their architects both in skeletal appearance and in their slow, inevitable progress. Looking somewhat like a fleshless rib cage pointing skyward, a Ghost Ark lacks the overwhelming firepower sported by many Necron vehicles; however, the rows of linked Gauss Flayers along each flank are more than capable of defending against most attackers. As with many Necron vehicles, a Ghost Ark's delicate appearance belies its robust manufacture, constructed as it is of living metal and protected by layers of Quantum Shielding. Ominously trawling the battlefield in the wake of a Necron advance, Ghost Arks provide yet further insurance that the legions continue their fight until the foe is utterly overwhelmed. While these sinister vehicles can serve as ordinary troop carriers, the true potential of the Ghost Arks only becomes apparent once the battle is in full tilt. As it glides ponderously across the battlefield, a Ghost Ark stops for each downed Necron, a veritable tide of minuscule repair Scarabs swarming over the dismembered soldier and carrying its components aboard the Ghost Ark. As the Ghost Ark continues its mission of dark mercy, so the scarabs continue their work, rebuilding all but the most thoroughly demolished Necrons in short order. Once its contingent of passengers is full, the Ghost Ark travels to wherever reinforcements are most needed to disgorge its payload, much to the dismay of the Necrons' foes.

While Ghost Arks seldom pose a direct threat, they often prove to be one of the greatest weapons in the Necron arsenal. Even when a foe begins to thin the ranks





of the Necrons, a Ghost Ark has the potential to undo all of their hard-won progress. For this reason, those few members of the Deathwatch who have previously encountered these high-tech hearses tend to make them a priority target, even focusing fire on them before turning weapons on the advancing Necron infantry.

**Type:** Skimmer **Size:** Enormous  
**Tactical Speed:** 10m **Cruising Speed:** 55kph  
**Manoeuvrability:** +20 **Structural Integrity:** 30  
**Armour:** Front 28, Side 28, Rear 28  
**Crew:** Necron Driver **Carrying Capacity:** Ten Necrons  
**Weapons:** Two arrays of five Gauss Flayers each (Sides; 100m; S/4/8; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Clip —; Reload —; Gauss, Storm).

### Special Rules

**Repair Barge:** Ghost Arks are host to swarms of constructor scarabs that recover and rebuild fallen Necrons. As a Free Action, the Ghost Ark's driver can command the Constructor Scarabs to gather any number of "dead" Necrons within 10m. These Necrons become passengers on the Ghost Ark and are returned to 0 Wounds. As long as a Necron is aboard a Ghost Ark, it automatically passes its Toughness Test for purposes of the Regeneration Trait and doubles the value of the Trait. When used on a Horde of Necron Warriors, this ability functions as the Canoptek Spyder's Fabricator Array found on page 132 though the pilot is not required to make a Tech-Use test to activate the ability.

**Skimmer:** This vehicle hovers over the battlefield, allowing it to ignore terrain that might otherwise hamper movement. If it ever becomes completely immobilised due to damage, count the vehicle as destroyed instead as it crashes into the ground.

**Open-topped:** Enemies may target the crew and passengers of the vehicle by using a Called Shot Attack Action.

**Quantum Shielding:** A vehicle with Quantum Shielding is protected by additional armour plating that exists out of phase with the rest of the vehicle, until the moment the vehicle is hit. The vehicle benefits from an additional 10 points of Armour on all facings until it has suffered a Critical Hit (including a Critical Hit caused by Righteous Fury) at which point the Quantum Shielding ceases to function. While the Quantum Shielding is active, any crew or passengers benefit from cover providing 10 AP, which does not deteriorate.

**Living Metal:** When a Living Metal vehicle suffers a Critical Hit, halve the results, rounding up. This does affect rolls on the Critical Hit chart generated by Righteous Fury. In addition, the vehicle removes one point of Critical Damage each Round (the vehicle does *not* suffer the corresponding result on the Critical Hit Chart for the new Damage value). This can undo the effects of Critical Damage, such as restoring weapons, extinguishing flames, etc.



## USING NECRON VEHICLES

It may seem that Necron vehicles are best suited for large-scale battles, and that is indeed a great time to use them. The destruction of a Necron vehicle makes for a great turning point in a massed battle (see page 141 of **MARK OF THE XENOS** for more on turning points and large battles). There are plenty of opportunities, however, to include Necron war machines in smaller engagements, and even in missions requiring the Kill-team to operate independently. Throwing in a vehicle can make the climactic combat of a mission involving Necrons that much more exciting (and challenging!). A Necron Lord is dangerous enough on foot, but when mounted on a Catacomb Command Barge, the Kill-team's only chance may lie in the careful application of Squad Mode Abilities. Even during an exploration mission deep into a Necron ruin, the Kill-team might find themselves pinned down by fire from an Annihilation Barge. Use caution when including vehicles, however, as an unprepared Kill-team may simply not have the firepower to destroy one (although this is a perfect time to reward clever thinking by players). In fact, Necron vehicles are so dangerous, and so strange, that they can easily form the basis for a mission.

### NECRON VEHICLE ADVENTURE SEEDS

**Techxorcism:** The Kill-team is assigned to rescue a Dead Cabal Inquisitor who, while investigating a strange xenos obelisk on a barren moon, was caught off-guard by a small force of Necrons. The Inquisitor's retinue has been whittled down, while the Necrons are rendered effectively indestructible by the presence of a Ghost Ark, forcing the Inquisitor into a defensive position that she can only hold for so long. After arriving, the Kill-team discovers that the Ghost Ark withdraws to conceal itself except when needed, swooping in to reverse any casualties inflicted on the Necrons, only to vanish before it can be dealt with. In order to accomplish their mission, the Kill-team must either devise a clever plan to destroy the Ghost Ark before it can escape, or uncover its hiding place. To complicate matters, the Inquisitor is unwilling to leave, and insists that the Kill-team deal with the Necrons so that she might finish her work before the moon's extreme orbit carries it inside the bounds of the Hadex Anomaly.

**Countdown to Doomsday:** Arriving at an unmanned Watch Station to perform a routine data-retrieval, the Kill-team unexpectedly finds the station under siege by a sizeable force of Necrons. Before long, a Doomsday Ark crests a nearby hillside, moving ponderously into range (which is considerable) of the Watch Station. The Kill-team must swiftly fight their way through legions of Necron Warriors in order to stop the Doomsday Ark before it is in position to fire on the Watch Station. What knowledge is housed in the uninhabited Station, that the Necrons are so intent on its destruction?



# APPENDIX: CONDENSED VEHICLE RULES

This appendix provides condensed rules for using vehicles in a Deathwatch campaign. These rules have been condensed to allow players and GMs to include the vehicles employed by the Subhekhar Dynasty. Full vehicle rules can be found in the **DEATHWATCH** supplement, **RITES OF BATTLE**.

## VEHICLE PROFILES

The vehicles presented in this book have a profile that is presented using the following statistics, providing players and GM's with all the relevant information needed to use them:

- **Type:** For the purposes of this book, the only relevant vehicle classification is Skimmer. Therefore only the rules which apply to Skimmers have been included in this appendix. Skimmers, or hover vehicles, use anti-grav technology to "skim" above the ground. Skimmers are not high-altitude vehicles, and slower than true flyers. However, since they do not rely on aerodynamics to keep them aloft, they are able to make sharp turns and even hover in place.
- **Size:** This describes how large the vehicle is. A vehicle's Size is in reference to the Size Trait, on page 134 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook.
- **Tactical Speed** and **Cruising Speed:** Vehicles have two speed modes, Tactical Speed and Cruising Speed. Tactical Speed represents how fast a vehicle moves in situations that require skilful handling, or when the vehicle is operating in a limited or specific area, such as a narrow canyon or small field. This is not the vehicle's full speed, but an abstraction of the distance it can move taking into account turns, acceleration, driver distractions, and terrain. Cruising Speed represents how fast a vehicle moves when its travelling long distances or involved in a high-speed situation such as a chase along a hive roadway or a mid-air dogfight.
- **Manoeuvrability:** Although much of a vehicle's manoeuvring depends on the skill of the driver, some vehicles are innately more manoeuvrable than others. This is represented by the vehicle's Manoeuvrability, which provides a modifier (either positive or negative) to the driver's Drive or Pilot Skill while operating said vehicle. This modifier is applied whenever a Drive or Pilot Test is made using the vehicle.
- **Structural Integrity:** This is a representation of how much damage a vehicle can sustain before being destroyed. Like Wounds, Structural Integrity is a fixed number, though, unlike Wounds, damage to Structural Integrity remains on a vehicle until it is repaired.
- **Armour:** A vehicle's principle defence is Armour. Armour reduces damage from attacks in the same manner as an individual's armour. Vehicles may also have different Armour Points depending on their facing. The front of a Leman Russ battle tank is nigh invulnerable, for example, but a shot to the weaker rear armour may have a devastating effect.

- **Crew and Carrying Capacity:** The crew section indicates how many people are needed to run the vehicle and lists their individual tasks. The passenger number and cargo capacity indicates how many passengers or how much weight the vehicle can handle. These numbers should be considered rough estimates, and the GM has final discretion on what a vehicle can ultimately carry.
- **Weapons:** All weapon entries include the statistics for the weapons mounted on the vehicle, as well as their firing arcs. The arc indicates whether the weapon can fire to the vehicle's front, left side, right side, rear, or any combination thereof.
- **Special Rules:** This section covers any qualities or rules that apply to the vehicle that are not covered in the above categories.

## DRIVING AND FLYING

To drive or pilot a vehicle, a player must have the relevant Drive or Pilot Skill. Players may be able to drive a simple ground vehicle untrained at the GM's discretion (with a suitable penalty to their Skill Tests, of course!) but driving a walker or piloting a flyer would be beyond them.

When piloting or driving a vehicle, a player with the correct Skills will not have to make Skill Tests to perform routine driving or flying. The player is also assumed to know how to take off and land.

Skill Tests come in when the player is attempting something particularly challenging, or is trying to operate his vehicle during combat or another high stress situation. Ramming one's vehicle into another vehicle during a high-speed chase would require a Skill Test, for example. High-speed evasive manoeuvring during an aerial dogfight may require several.

## VEHICLE COMBAT

Players operating vehicles may take Actions during their Turns in a Combat Round. These Actions vary from those available to players not operating vehicles, but still fall into the same categories: Half, Full, Free, and Extended Actions as well as Reactions.

Some vehicles have multiple crew members. In this case, the driver's Initiative roll will determine the Initiative of the remaining crew. The order of Initiative should be rearranged so the crew member who rolled the highest Initiative takes his turn immediately after the driver, then the crew member with the next highest Initiative, and so forth. Each crew member may take a different Action. For example, a driver may move the vehicle, while the gunners spray their targets with shots. Each crew member may only take up to one full Action, however, and some Actions may be precluded by others. If two potential Actions conflict, the driver's Action has priority.

## VEHICLE ATTACKS

A vehicle's gunner or passenger may take any Attack Action listed on **Table 8-1: Combat Actions** on page 237 of the **DEATHWATCH** Core Rulebook with the following restrictions. Any shooting from the vehicle suffers a -10 to hit if the vehicle moved its Tactical Speed in its previous turn. If the vehicle moved twice its Tactical Speed in its previous turn, shooting suffers a -20 instead. Gunners



or passengers may take Full Attack Actions even if the vehicle has moved. A driver may take an Attack Action only if he has not used his entire Action to move the vehicle.

## VEHICLE MOVEMENT

The following combat manoeuvres are available to operators.

### Dodge (Reaction)

The driver sees a threat and dodges, hopefully throwing his vehicle out of the line of fire. This action may only be taken if the vehicle has moved at least its Tactical Speed during its previous turn. The driver makes a Drive or Pilot Test, with a penalty equal to the vehicle's size modifier (someone attempting to dodge with an Enormous truck, which grants opponents +20 to hit due to size, would suffer a -20 to his Drive Test). For every success, he avoids one shot from a single source, as with a Dodge Reaction.

### Tactical Manoeuvring (Half or Full Action)

The vehicle moves its Tactical Speed as a half action, or twice its Tactical Speed as a full action. A vehicle must move directly forward or back at least its own length before turning 90 degrees in any direction (it may turn more than once, provided it makes the move each time). Walkers and skimmers may ignore this limitation.

### Evasive Manoeuvring (Full Action)

The vehicle weaves and dodges, presenting a hard target. The vehicle must move its Tactical Speed (following the limitations given for Tactical Manoeuvring above, however, it is assumed the vehicle is moving more erratically to get to the same location). While doing so, the driver makes a **Challenging (+0) Drive Test**. On a success, and for every additional degree of success, the vehicle imposes a -10 penalty on all attacks against it until the beginning of its next turn. Any shooting the vehicle performs during the turn suffers the same penalty.

### Floor it! (Full Action)

The vehicle moves twice its Tactical Speed, and may only turn once. The driver makes a **Difficult (-10) Drive Test**. If he succeeds, at the end of his move he may move an additional five metres, plus five metres for every additional degree of success. If he fails, the vehicle does not gain any additional movement. In either case, all shooting at or from the vehicle suffers a -20 penalty. Walkers may not use this Combat Action.

### Ram (Full Action)

The vehicle attempts to ram a person or another vehicle. The vehicle must move at least its Tactical Speed in a straight line and the Driver must make a **Challenging (+0) Drive or Pilot Test**. If he succeeds, his vehicle hits his target, doing Damage equal to the AP on the vehicle's facing that hit plus 1d10. If the vehicle moved twice its Tactical Speed, it does an additional 2d10 Damage. If the vehicle is ramming another vehicle (or something equally large and solid, such as a plascrete wall or promethium storage tank), it also takes damage equal to the AP of the vehicle it hit plus 1d5. For every point of Damage the ramming vehicle inflicts, it also moves its target 1 metre.

## VEHICLE WEAPONS

When firing a weapon mounted on a vehicle, it is important to consider the weapon's Facing. This determines the direction (relative to the vehicle) that the weapon may be aimed and fired. A pintle-mounted storm bolter on a Rhino APC, for example, has Facing All, since it can be spun in any direction. However, a Sentinel's autocannon has Facing Front, so it can only be used to fire on targets in the front of the vehicle. Facing is usually divided into four quadrants: Front, Left, Right, and Back (or some combination of the four). As a general rule, each Facing extends in a 90 degree arc from the side of the vehicle in question. If the target is inside a weapon's Facing arc, the weapon can shoot at it.

The Facing arc is also used to determine what side of the vehicle a given individual can shoot at (see the diagram below).

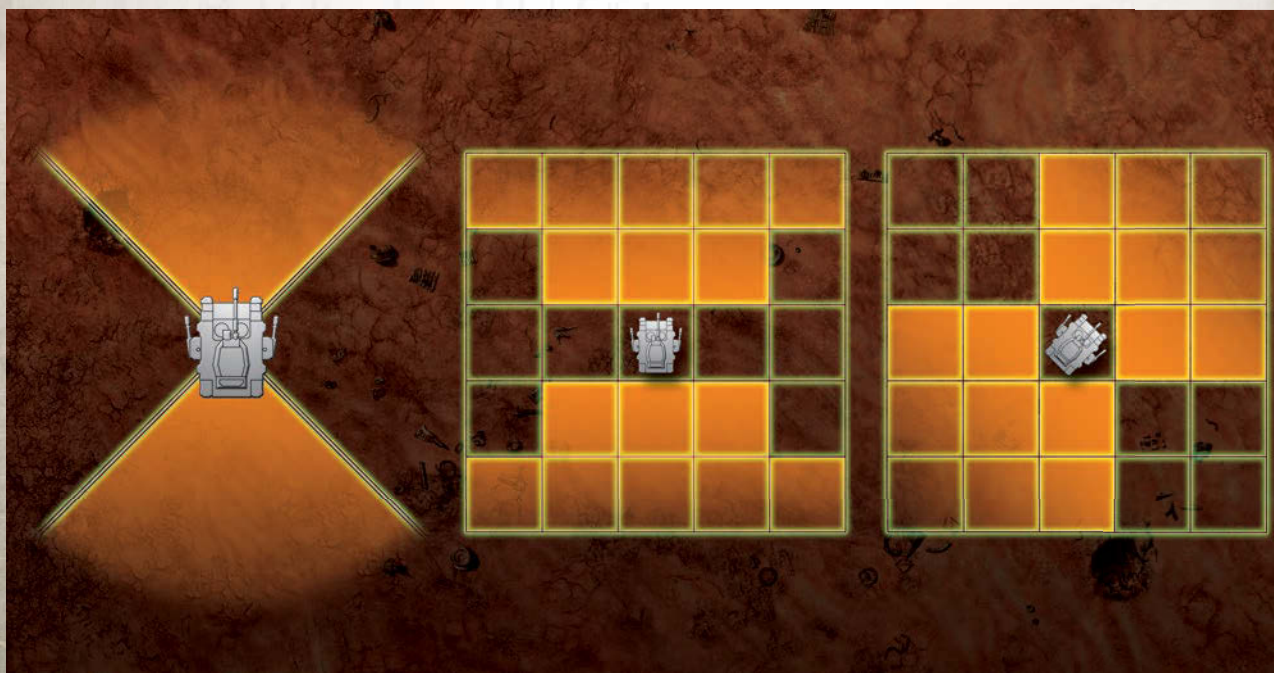




TABLE 3-5: VEHICLE CRITICAL HITS

## 1d5 Roll Result

1-2	<b>Jarring Blow:</b> The impact tosses the vehicle around. Any crew or passengers who are not strapped in or otherwise secured must make an <b>Ordinary (+10) Toughness Test</b> or be Stunned for 1d5 Rounds. All shooting from the vehicle during the next Round suffers -20 to hit as aims are knocked askew and shots go wide.
3	<b>Staggered:</b> A direct hit on the armour surrounding the driver's compartment leaves the pilot stunned and reeling. He must pass a <b>Challenging (+0) Toughness Test</b> or become Stunned and unable to drive or pilot for 1d5 Rounds. A skimmer will drift in the direction it last moved at its acceleration.
4	<b>Weapon Destroyed:</b> A randomly selected weapon on the vehicle is hit by the blast. The weapon no longer functions and there is a 25% chance of the weapon's ammo cooking off. If it does so, roll damage against the vehicle and any gunners manning the weapon as if the destroyed weapon had hit them, halving all damage rolled.
5	<b>Drive Damaged:</b> The hit tears off a tread, penetrates an air intake, or tears into the grav generator housing, doing severe damage. Reduce the vehicle's Tactical Speed by 2d10 (and the Cruising Speed by half). If this brings the Tactical Speed to 0, the vehicle is immobilised. Immobilised skimmers crash to the ground.
6	<b>Penetrating Hit:</b> The hit tears through the vehicle's armour. Reduce the vehicle's AP on this facing by half. If the attack was a ranged weapon, the shot rips through the interior of the vehicle as well. Each passenger and crew member has a 20% chance of being hit by the same shot and taking half of the rolled Damage.
7	<b>Fire:</b> The vehicle catches fire as its fuel stores ignite or power reserves overload. Anyone inside must make a <b>Difficult (-10) Agility Test</b> or catch on fire every Round they are inside the vehicle. In addition, each Round there is a 20% chance that the vehicle will explode.
8-9	<b>Destroyed:</b> The hit wrecks the vehicle, turning it into a shattered hulk. Anyone inside the vehicle takes 2d10 Explosive Damage and must make a <b>Difficult (-10) Toughness Test</b> or be Stunned for 1d10 Rounds.
10+	<b>Explodes:</b> A direct hit turns the vehicle into a raging fireball. Anyone inside takes 5d10 Explosive Damage. Anyone within 2d10 metres of the vehicle suffers 2d10 Explosive damage from the explosion. If the vehicle has an open top, sides, or hatches, then passengers or crew may make a Dodge Reaction to bail out at the last second. Anyone who succeeds at the Dodge Test only suffers the 2d10 Damage from the vehicle's explosion.

## DAMAGING VEHICLES

Attacking vehicles is very similar to attacking people or creatures. When firing at a vehicle, players should determine which side of the vehicle they can see and therefore hit. The side facing the players directly is the one they can shoot at (subject to the GM's judgement). Once they have determined the side they are attacking, players roll to hit, using Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill as appropriate to their weapon. Remember, vehicles have size modifiers, which will most likely provide a bonus to hit.

Vehicles have two primary defensive characteristics—Armour Points (also referred to as AP or Armour) and Structural Integrity (also referred to as SI or Integrity).

Armour represents both the innate hardness of the materials used to construct a vehicle, as well as the physical protection built into a vehicle to defend against attacks. Armour works in the same manner as the armour of a person or creature. When making attacks against a vehicle, roll Damage then subtract the number of Armour Points (AP). Be sure to take the weapon's Penetration value into account as well.

The remaining Damage is applied to the vehicle's Integrity. Integrity represents how solidly a vehicle is constructed, the number of redundant and back-up systems built into it, and how many hits a vehicle can take before exploding in a ball of fire. When a vehicle has sustained an amount of Damage equal to its Integrity, any additional damage is applied to **Table 3-5: Vehicle Critical Hits**. Like the Critical Hit Charts for individuals, any results on the Vehicle Critical Hit Chart are cumulative.

For example, if a vehicle takes two damage after already sustaining damage equal to its Structural Integrity, it will suffer the "2" result on the Critical Hit Chart. If in a later turn, the vehicle takes four more damage, it will suffer a "6" result on the Critical Hit Chart.

Attacks against vehicles also benefit from the Righteous Fury rules. Righteous Fury against vehicles is generated in the same manner as against individuals—if a character rolls a ten on a damage die against the vehicle, then confirms the attack by succeeding on a subsequent Ballistic Skill Test, he generates Righteous Fury. However, Righteous Fury affects vehicles differently than it does creatures or individuals. If a character generates Righteous Fury and confirms it against a vehicle, instead of rolling an additional die of damage, he rolls 1d5 on the **Table 3-5: Vehicle Critical Hits**, and applies the result to the vehicle. Note, that although the vehicle suffers the results of the roll, it does not count as having sustained a Critical Hit. Future damage is still applied to the vehicle's remaining Structural Integrity, and rolls on the **Table 3-5: Vehicle Critical Hits** generated by Righteous Fury are not cumulative with actual Critical Hits.



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