

ONLY WAR™

FINAL TESTAMENT™



A MILITARY CAMPAIGN
FOR THE FATE OF HERVARA

WARHAMMER
40,000
ROLEPLAY

ONLY WAR™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM DARKNESS
OF THE 41ST MILLENNIUM



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CONTENTS

Gazetteer: Hervara

Environment	6
History	8
The War Effort	10
The Situation	12
The Ordinatus	13
Imperial Guard Forces	14
Waaagh! Grimtoof	16
Severan Dominate	17
Mission Briefing	18

Chapter I: Planetfall

Overview	20
Departure	21
Final Briefing	21
Rumours	23
The Crash	26
Into the Cockpit	28
Shattering the Earth	30
Breakout!	32
At the Dropship	32
Through the Garage	36
Into the Open	37
Withdrawal	38
Guerrilla Tactics	41
Ork Pursuit	42
Scouted	43
The Base	44
Debriefing	47
Facilities	48
Rewards	49
Recognise Your Allies!: Friendly Regiments	50
Know Your Enemies!: Traitors	51
Map of the Caverns of Hervara	52

Chapter II: The Night Path

Revised Duties	55
Guerrillas in the Smoke	58
Hervara-XV	60
Ambush	62
Elimination	64
The Encampment	67
Recovery	68
Alternative Approaches	69
Killswitch	69
Turn the Tide	71
Liberation	71
Wounded Bird	73
Stay On Target	74
Poison the Well	75
Across The Line	76
The Drury-Cobhan Line	77
Briefing	78
Assault	79
Consequences	81
Know Your Enemies!: Orks	82
Mission Briefings	83
Map of the Drury-Cobhan Line	86



Chapter III: The Horn of Mars

The Buck Stops Here	88
Judgment Comes	88
Questions and Answers	90
Saved by the Bomb	95
Taking Control	101
In the Open	101
Negotiations	103
The Assault	105
Levelling the Field	108
Preparation	108
Push the Button	111
The Last Gasp	112
An Offering	114
The Return	115
The Verdict	117
Intervention	118
Wrap-Up	118
Map of the Forces on Hervara	120

Appendix: NPCs and Adversaries

The Luggnum Sewer Rats	122
Rank and File	124
Hervara Excavatory Warriors and Severan Dominate	124
Imperial Guard	126
Key Dramatis Personae	133
Imperial Vehicles	138
Da Boyz	140
Ork Vehicles	144



INTRODUCTION

"In the end, only the Emperor can judge you. Only He is qualified to weigh acts of righteousness against deeds of vile treachery and find a verdict for your soul. It is merely my humble task to commend you to His final justice."

—Lord Commissar Salieri

FINAL TESTAMENT is an extended, three chapter adventure for **ONLY WAR**. Through the course of the scenario within, the characters come face to face with the tragedy of war and the harsh consequences of their own actions. At various points in the adventure, they must fight savagely against a variety of enemies to survive. They must also navigate debriefing and interrogation sessions that require them to tread carefully amidst powers beyond their reckoning. The Player Characters are constantly challenged to innovate and overcome unusual obstacles, even as they strive to uphold the honour of the Imperial Guard—and perhaps even survive!

The adventure is designed to accommodate Player Characters from a myriad of different regiments. As such, certain NPCs are deliberately left open, so that a Game Master can insert characters who he has already been established. Similarly, at different points throughout the adventure, there are suggestions for revising scenes to accommodate regiments with particular skills. Game Masters are strongly encouraged to thoroughly review the adventure prior to the first session of play, so that they can prepare any appropriate materials.

CHAPTER I: PLANETFALL

The adventure opens before the Player Characters arrive upon Hervara. This provides the players a chance to learn about the setting at the same time that their characters do. The earliest stages also present an opportunity for the PCs to interact with members of their regiment in an extended fashion, offering a contrast with later scenes in which the characters typically work on assignment far from their native regiment.

As their transport vessel prepares to enter the Hervara system, they receive their final briefing and mission gear. Then, as their drop ship makes landfall, disaster strikes. The vessel crashes to the planet's surface, coming to rest in the middle of an Ork encampment. The Player Characters must rally their company and escape from the camp. In the process, they discover Big Mek Noshdakka's major project: the refit of a long-lost Imperial Ordinatus for his own insane purposes, none of which bode well for the Imperial forces on Hervara.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on their escape from the Orks, as the company makes its way back to the nearest Imperial outpost—supply depot Hervara-XIX. At the base, the survivors are debriefed about their arrival and the artefact that they accidentally uncovered. During the final scene, the Player Characters also have an opportunity to become familiar with the Imperial base and the personnel stationed there.

Some of these NPCs play a critical role in the adventure as it continues into the next two chapters, and their interactions with the Player Characters can shape the tenor of the story as a whole.

CHAPTER II: THE NIGHT PATH

The second chapter opens as Captain Fordham—commanding officer of Hervara-XIX—informs the Player Characters that they are to remain with the Luggnum Sewer Rats at the depot. Most of their regiment made planetfall safely, but it is currently located too far away to safely reunite with the erstwhile Player Characters. Ork forces hold aerial superiority here, making a quick airlift impossible. For now, the Player Characters and their company are to remain at the base, under Fordham's authority.

Hervara-XIX is located near the Drury-Cobhan Line, a critical Imperial defence line that provides protection against both the Ork and Severan Dominate formations. Throughout this chapter, the Player Characters engage in a number of covert operations against Ork and Severan Dominate forces that are active beyond that line. During these missions, the characters come to know Captain Fordham, the base's officers, and other soldiers stationed in the region. This portion of the adventure includes a number of key missions and offers suggestions for additional missions that can affect the overall outcome of the war effort on Hervara.

Chapter II concludes after the Player Characters are sent on a mission to recapture several bunkers on the Drury-Cobhan Line. The Player Characters discover that Captain Fordham has been secretly working with the secessionist forces, and has used their squad to commit acts of treason. While they had been told that their targets were disguised rebels, this was not the case. The assaults weakened the line, allowing Ork and Severan Dominate forces alike to strike at the Imperial holdings.

CHAPTER III: THE HORN OF MARS

Chapter III opens when Lord Commissar Salieri arrives at Hervara-XIX with a sizable force of Death Korps soldiers. Salieri immediately captures Fordham and summons the Player Characters for an interrogation session. Throughout this session, he questions them to determine whether they were earnest traitors, or if they simply acted in accordance with their orders. While neither option is acceptable in his harsh eyes, the Lord Commissar fears that treason is spreading through the ranks on Hervara.

In the aftermath of the interrogation, Orks launch their attack. Soldiers dash everywhere to assume defensive positions against the huge force of xenos, giving the Player Characters a chance to make a break for it. Before they leave, they discover that Big Mek Noshdakka's work has come to completion. The Orks are piloting the Ordinatus towards the front line, presumably to use it against the Imperial forces, and—traitors or not—their lives are forfeit as well if the Big Mek fires the weapon.

The squad then has the opportunity to take the Ordinatus from the Orks, to prove their loyalty to the Imperium or earn a place in the ranks of the secessionist forces of the Severan Dominate. If they succeed, they have the chance to fire the weapon, eliminating most of the xenos forces, as well as a substantial portion of either the Imperial or secessionist armies. The Player Characters can then return to the Imperium or side with the rebels, having tipped the battle for Hervara steeply towards the side they chose.

GAZETTEER: HERVARA

"I don't mind fighting the Orks. At least I can tell them apart from us."

—Gunnery Sergeant Corbin Hayworth

The war effort to secure the Periphery Sub-Sector from the myriad threats that loom over it is an ongoing struggle for the Imperial forces of the Spinward Front. Holding Hervara has become essential to the forces of the Severan Dominate, but they are opposed by both xenos, the brutal and numerous Orks, and loyalists, in the form of the Imperial Guard and certain elements of Hervara's own military forces. This is, in large part, because the Administratum is well aware of the strategic value that this world holds for the secessionists. As the battles escalate, some wonder if the world and its human population can survive the conflicts. After all, this world is merely one among countless worlds from the perspective of the Imperium, but it could be key to the Severan Dominate's ability to continue the fight.

Because of this world's importance, the forces loyal to Duke Severus the Thirteenth have dug in their heels sharply upon Hervara. The Duke realises that without Hervara's mineral wealth, his war chest could soon be depleted. His only hope for a successful strategy is to make certain that the short term Imperial losses upon Hervara become so catastrophic that even the implacable Departamento Munitorum chooses to withdraw and redistribute its forces elsewhere rather than continue the direct assault. However, given the limited training of the Duke's troops and the finite resources of the Periphery Sub-Sector, the Severan Dominate has been unable to complete the necessary master stroke. He recently sent one of his best commanders—General Mikhail Augustus—to the world, with orders to achieve such a victory. To date, the General has met with little success in the ash-choked wastes of Hervara, but the renowned commander hopes to find the opportunity or tool to strike a telling blow upon the Imperial forces.

The Imperial Guard has had a much greater degree of success upon Hervara. Miraculously, many members of the local militia remained loyal to the Imperium. When the first transports arrived upon Hervara, a number of units of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors turned against their brethren and provided a secure landing zone for the Imperial forces. The initial beachhead enabled the Imperium to land a full battalion of troops. Unfortunately, that bloodless coup was the only one that the Imperial Guard enjoyed upon Hervara. Every battle since has cost the invading forces dearly in both steel and blood, as the remaining rebels have fiercely protected their homes. Meanwhile, the Orks have wantonly revelled in the world's endless conflicts.

For the Orks, Hervara is a fertile battleground. They take great pleasure in the chaos that has ensued across the world, but have secured few strategic objectives—at least, so far as the Imperium is aware. Even with the assistance of the native Ork population, the combination of Imperial Guard and Severan Dominate forces substantially outnumber the Orks present. However, there are at least as many Greenskins present as there are soldiers for either of the human factions alone. This



provides the Orks with ample opportunity to engage their lust for battle. If the combined human forces were to somehow ally against the Greenskins, they would be able to quickly turn the tide and eliminate them, but given the current climate of bitter hostilities, the Ork menace represents a significant wildcard. Drawn to any conflict, seemingly without rhyme or reason, the Orks frequently engage both sides simultaneously, spoiling the plans of attackers and defenders alike.

When additional forces from Waaagh! Grimtoof joined the conflict, they brought with them a significant number of Mekaniaks. The presence of these technologically-inclined Oddboyz, under the tutelage and guidance of the cunning and brutally inventive Big Mek Noshdakka, has substantially altered the ongoing war effort. The Mekboyz either built or converted several capable wings of Ork Bombers. Neither of the human forces was prepared for this turn of events, and it has significantly impacted the abilities of both to safely land reinforcements. While an Imperial Navy force could disperse the Ork aerial forces in short order, no appropriately equipped squadron has been dispatched to the system.

For now, both the Imperial Guard and the Severan Dominate have been forced to manage ground-based offensives as the crude Ork aircraft cut roaring trails of black smoke across the skies. The world's vast system of subterranean mines has allowed both sides to move their forces without fear of aerial assault, although it has also led to numerous savage conflicts between Imperial and Severan Dominate forces in the depths of the caverns. Of course, as long as the Orks hold air superiority, reinforcements face serious risks when landing.

GAZETTEER: HERVARA



ENVIRONMENT

"This fertile land shall provide ample food and resources for humanity for untold generations, and we shall flourish here."

—Duke Severus the First

Hervara is physically located along one of the Warp routes that lead between the heart of the Calixis Sector and the region which Duke Severus the Thirteenth claims as the Severan Dominate. Near the edge of the Periphery Sub-Sector, the world saw regular traffic from both the worlds of the frontier and those of the Sector. Prior to its secession, this included Imperial transports, which would often visit the world to transfer much of its mineral output to the hungry Forge Worlds of the Calixis Sector. This regular transport created a culture that was well aware of the dangers of the frontier and the security of the Imperium. As an important transit point, the world was also well-supplied with the resources necessary to curb the regular incursions of the native Ork population, which periodically reared its ugly and bellowing head.

Roughly sixty percent of the planet's surface is covered by landmasses. Relatively shallow, saltwater oceans dominate the remainder of the surface. More than ninety-five percent of the planet's land is divided, relatively evenly, among six major continents. Each is large enough to include a broad range of climates, many of which were well within the acceptable ranges for humanity before Hervara's decline. Hervara's orbit is roughly 456 days and its local days are 22 Standard Hours, with roughly 11 hours of light and 11 hours of darkness per day at the equator.

During the day, the light falls flat on the endless ash dunes and scrubland wastes on the due to the constant cloud cover, impairing depth perception on the surface. Hervara has no moons or other larger satellites, but nights are slightly lit by ambient light from surface bastions reflecting off of the toxic smog that fills the atmosphere.

Only the world's equatorial region consistently reaches temperatures too hot for an unprotected human. Near Hervara's equator, the temperature can exceed a searing fifty-two Celsius at midday. While some of the planet's native species are capable of sustaining blistering temperature, none of the imported terrestrial flora or fauna can tolerate such extremes. Consequently, almost all of the human population is isolated to a single continent in the southern hemisphere. That region's relatively mild seasonal changes maintain a temperature range of eighteen to thirty Celsius at midday. Flooding and severe winds during the annual rainy season were the only significant meteorological dangers in this region when it was settled by the Imperium.

Given their rugged and resilient physiology, Hervara's native Ork population was originally far more evenly distributed across the planet. However, a continued Imperial Navy presence kept the xenos from ever becoming particularly active on the world's surface. Any time they showed a significant concentration, orbital bombing quickly dispersed the forces. Imperial forces now believe that this led the Orks to move into the cavern networks where they could breed and plan more effectively.

Because Hervara primarily served the Imperium as a mining world, much of the human population also dwelt far beneath the surface. A seemingly endless labyrinth of natural and man-made caves extends through the planet's crust. Due to the extensive mining operations, these passages are constantly expanding, even today, as the miners dig in pursuit of the world's natural ore resources. Entire generations of mining families have lived within these caves, some tracing their ancestries back to Hervara's original colonists. Many of these people have never known the light of the system's star, living and dying in darkness, sustained only by artificial light and tales of the Emperor's divine radiance.

When Hervara was first colonised, its atmosphere was remarkably clean. The native vegetation—largely a form of massive, photosynthetic lichen—was able to effectively cleanse the atmosphere of any pollution or toxins put forth by geological activity. With humanity's arrival, settlers cleared a large portion of the world's flora to make way for agriculture and civilisation. While some of these native plants were domesticated and used for food, many were displaced by more commonly accepted Imperial food crops. These were far less capable of cleaning the atmosphere than the native plants, and so volcanic emissions and human industry alike have spread a sick, murky bruise of poison haze across Hervara's once-clear atmosphere.

The haze is in part a result of an unusually high level of volcanism upon the planet's surface. Limited Imperial geologic surveys have been unable to identify the cause for the activity, and have also failed to consistently predict the points of eruption. New mountains have emerged from the planet's surface frequently, following an unseen but regular cycle. Many of these have spewed a significant amount of mineral waste into the atmosphere, giving the world its characteristic rusty hue and contaminating the atmosphere. In some cases, these new mountain ranges have collapsed after only a few centuries of existence, though others have persevered. In other places, mountain ranges that show no sign of volcanic activity remain seemingly stable, though studies suggest that their mineral composition is decidedly different from surrounding regions.

Before the secession, Hervara's atmosphere was unpleasant, but largely breathable. Most of the waste from the mines was either contained or dumped into the world's oceans. While the surviving native plants were overburdened with the volcanic gases, it might have been another millennium before the atmosphere became dangerously toxic.

When the war of secession reached Hervara, however, the additional military engagements resulted in a substantial increase in the airborne pollution. Between the countless detonations from massive cannons and the additional waste pumped into the air by growling engines of war, Hervara's atmosphere has become increasingly toxic. The impacts of several Ork Rok's and two Imperial frigates upon the surface only made the situation worse. Over the past few years, the planet's atmosphere has gone from breathable to dangerous. Now, most valleys and lowland areas are permanently shrouded by toxic brown smog.

Humans are capable of surviving in the smog over the short term, though the smell is extremely unpleasant. Limited studies indicate that longer term exposure is exceedingly dangerous. The remaining natives who still dwell upon the surface make use of whatever rebreathing gear they can scavenge or build, and all Imperial Guard units and most Severan Dominate forces are issued respirators when deployed to Hervara's surface. Only the atmosphere within the world's caverns remains breathable. It is unclear if this is due to the efforts of the surviving native flora that thrive in these passages, or if the ancient filtration equipment employed by the mines is particularly effective. In either case, many of the surface dwellers are now jealous of the miners, who consistently enjoy access to uncontaminated air.



The combination of the world's polluted atmosphere and the ongoing mining efforts have also had ramifications on Hervara's oceans. For centuries, the vast majority of the rock extracted from the mines has been unceremoniously dumped into the sea. With the more recent increase in pollution, much of the smog has also begun to settle into the waters. In some shallower places, the ocean has begun to resemble a thick, toxic swamp rather than a proper sea. The long term consequences of this change are unknown, but they do not bode well for the native human population.

The one organism that seems to benefit most from the increased pollution is the native flora. The photosynthetic lichen, a symbiosis of plant and fungus, thrives under the toxic atmosphere, even with the relative decrease in available sunlight. It grows in massive, fronded structures all across the forlorn world, and has become the primary foodstuff for all of the world's human population. The flavour is unpleasant, infused with the tang of the atmospheric pollutants, but it is both digestible and high in protein. However, the dark green coloration stains everything it comes in contact with, including the teeth of those who consume it. This serves as a quick way of identifying veterans who have served on Hervara for a longer time from newer arrivals. Some of the veterans have taken to disparagingly referring to recruits as "white teeth."



HISTORY

"The dreams and thoughts of the ancients dwell beneath the surface. They move in a grinding pattern we cannot comprehend, ever churning in fevered slumber."

—Llewellyn Manos, Seer to Exalted General Augustus

Only recently have the Imperial forces of the Calixis Sector contested the Severan Dominate's control over the world of Hervara. Though the war for control of the planet remains young, countless lives have already been lost to the savagery of battle. Similarly, the planet's environment has been devastated by the expenditure of countless rounds of ammunition and immeasurable tonnes of explosives. This violence taints the memories of all who live, but many yet remember a time before the arrival of the current war—when the only foes were the Greenskins.

During the creation of the Calixis Sector, Duke Severus the First personally identified Hervara for colonisation. Over the course of his crusade efforts, the nobleman selected the world, based upon spectrographic analyses, advice from his personal Astropath, and its habitable atmosphere, as a prime location for an Imperial mining colony. Under his direction, tens of thousands of Imperial citizens transformed the planet from a place of verdant forests into a smog-shrouded planet, stained by the by-products of their mining.



As the humans took the surface, reserve forces of the Angevin Crusade began the process of cleansing Hervara of any significant Ork presence. Those xenos who dwelt upon the surface were virtually exterminated. However, the most potent of Imperial weapons were held in reserve, as the Duke wished to keep the surface fertile for the new waves of colonists. This caution allowed a significant number of Orks to flee into the labyrinthine tunnels beneath the world's surface. There, they have continued to multiply, providing a seemingly inextinguishable, if usually minor, threat to the human presence.

What neither the Duke nor any of the colonists realised was that they were not the first humans to civilise Hervara. Long before the foundation of the Calixis Sector, vessels associated with the Great Crusade had travelled through this portion of galaxy. At that time, agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus began the process of transforming Hervara into a Forge World.

During this time of rampant Imperial expansionism, they began the process of mining the world's rich mineral reserves and refining them into alloys more suited for manufacturing. Thanks to a miraculous technology far older than the Imperium itself, the agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus artificially accelerated the planet's geologic processes. New mountains rose from the planet's surface and erupted as volcanoes. Their magma served as a ready source of raw materials and supplied the refineries and manufacturums with the necessary power.

Hervara continued to produce materials for centuries, but after the Great Crusade faltered, the planet lost contact with the larger Imperium. Eventually, the Adeptus Mechanicus agents were forced to shut down their facilities and abandon them. Without the support of their miraculous machines, the changes that the Tech-Priests had induced began to falter. Most of the volcanoes went dormant. Geologic responses to the changes resulted in massive earthquakes and landslides, which buried most of these facilities. The few that remained near the surface either corroded over time, or were looted by Orks and pirates.

Though the current inhabitants do not realise it, the work of the ancients has been critical to their success as a mining world, as the ancient geological shifts bring vast stores of valuable ores much closer to the world's surface. Many of the planet's mines are based upon supposedly natural caverns—which were in truth carved out millennia ago. In fact, some of the most valuable veins of ore and rare "natural" alloys are the stores left behind when the Adeptus Mechanicus abandoned the planet. These extensive, long-forgotten reserves have made Hervara the most productive mining world within the Sub-Sector. At some point—possibly during the current war effort—the increased mining is certain to exhaust the ancient supply. When that happens, both the Severan Dominate and the Imperium may decide that the world has significantly less strategic value. Until that happens, the world continues to represent a key asset, desired by all of the factions active within the Sub-Sector.

Of course, even the unsophisticated workers who toil endlessly within Hervara's mines recognise that there is something unnatural about this place. The threat of an Ork incursion is ever-present, but legends of unknowable mechanical terrors haunt their dreams as well. While it is hardly common, there have been a number of discoveries of archeotech among the veins and caverns buried deep beneath Hervara's surface. In many instances, these powerful machines have led to tragedy for those who found them. However, legends among the menial workers also indicate that some have been greatly rewarded for such discoveries, at least in the short term, attracting the attention of local and foreign nobility with their finds. It is these tales that offer some semblance of hope to the miserable populace that they might someday rise above their wretched existence.

In spite of these rumoured archeotech discoveries, agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus have refrained from establishing a presence upon Hervara. Only the lowest ranking members of the order have ever been assigned to serve within the world's mines, and those who do manage to advance within the cult's mysteries have invariably been reassigned to other worlds within the Sub-Sector. Whether this is coincidence or conspiracy, none but perhaps the highest echelons of the Adeptus Mechanicus in the Calixis Sector, such as the Lords Dragon, can say for sure, but such matters occur far beyond the scope or view of the soldiers of the Imperial Guard.

While the reasons for their hasty retreat are unclear, the consequence for Hervara's technological base is substantial. Virtually all of the world's mining output is transferred off world, and only a limited amount of refining takes place conducted prior to shipment. There are very few manufactorums. Instead, virtually all technological devices, including basic armaments, are shipped to the planet in exchange for its mineral wealth. This trade only works because the ores obtained from Hervara are universally regarded as being of exceptional quality. The

world supplies a number of rare mineral compounds to the Sub-Sector's manufactorums, which are not available from any of the region's other planets.

The overall value of these raw materials makes Hervara a critical resource to the Severan Dominate. Departamento Munitorum analysts estimate that the mining world might provide as much as thirty-five percent of the Sub-Sector's raw metals. Without its resources, the Severan Dominate's overall manufacturing could be significantly impacted. If Hervara's exports were eliminated, the rebellion's military base could become constrained.

Of course, Duke Severus the Thirteenth is well aware of the danger posed by the potential loss of the mining world. He has taken a variety of measures to ensure the loyalty of Hervara's inhabitants to his cause. Chief among them was appointing his cousin to the position of Lord Governor. He has also taken measures to see that the world's nobility, and even some of its underclass, have been granted a variety of small luxuries.

In addition to the necessary supplies to maintain mining operations, the Lord Sub-Sector made certain that the world was well supplied with foodstuffs, including a variety of rare and almost luxurious items. While life on the planet is certainly challenging for the menial workers, mass starvation has been rare in recent years. As part of his move to power, Duke Severus has seen to it that the population is well aware that these supplies come from his reserves, rather than those of the Imperium. For much of the population—especially the less devout—this has worked to ensure their loyalty.

Tragically, the dangers of the mines have also had a significant effect upon those who toil in the depths. While the precise cause remains unclear, the mining population suffers from an unusually high incidence of mutation. To date, this information has been kept from the Inquisition and the forces of the Imperial Guard on Hervara alike. Were it to surface, it is likely that the Imperium might move to take more extreme action against the world's current population.

WHY DID THEY LEAVE?

The reasons for the Adeptus Mechanicus' departure from Hervara are lost to the mists of time, although it is unclear if these reasons were deliberately hidden or if they were lost due to the passage of the millennia. Few among the followers of the Machine God even realise that the planet was once sanctified to their service. While some Tech-Priests have demonstrated an interest in attempting to recover the fragmented archeotech hidden upon the world, there has been no concerted effort to do so. This could be a sign that some among the higher echelons are aware of an ancient curse associated with the world.

Some Game Masters might wish to make this mystery of Hervara a focal point. Here are a few possible answers:

- The ancients uncovered elements of some hidden corruption deep beneath the world's surface. Tampering with the world's tectonic plates awakened some dread sentience, which has only just resumed its rest after millennia. Further research—or violent conflict—upon Hervara might inadvertently trigger a significant danger to the entire Calixis Sector.
- The Ork presence upon Hervara predates the activities of Waaagh! Grimtoof. It could be that the Orks simply overcame the Adeptus Mechanicus and subverted the Imperial equipment for their own purposes. Over the course of time, the ancient technology was modified beyond recognition, and the human population was simply exterminated.
- A techno-plague swept through the population, slaying Tech-Priests and servitors alike. The few that managed to avoid contagion fled the world, leaving everything behind so that they might escape with their lives. It might even be that some strains of this virulent techno-plague remain within the ancient structures of the Machine Cult, lurking in ancient cogitators far beneath the surface, waiting to strike. Exploring the ruins that the Adeptus Mechanicus abandoned in their haste could inadvertently unleash the plague anew, creating a major crisis for everyone on Hervara.



THE WAR EFFORT

"Every planet's different, but every battle is the same. Keep your eyes forward, and keep shooting. You live ditch to ditch, lho stick to lho stick. In the end, it seems like there's nothing else left to life besides ditches and lhos."

—Corporal Dwayne Biehn

The war of retaliation against Duke Severus the Thirteenth for his secession from the Imperium has spread throughout the Periphery Sub-Sector and beyond, into worlds that have scarcely known the Emperor's blessings. The Imperium has consistently been on the offensive, simultaneously pressing dozens of worlds. At the same time, Severan Dominate forces have made a number of precise strikes against the Imperial supply chain, effectively limiting the ability of the Imperial Guard to maintain such a broad battlefield.

The presence of several xenos races, as well as forces allied to the Ruinous Powers, has further complicated the battles within the front. There are clear indications that some of these groups are working with the tacit approval of the Severan Dominate—further evidence of the Duke's heresy. However, other foes of the Imperium are present solely as opportunists. The Orks and Chaos forces, in particular, have come to the region purely to exercise their lust for battle, and any target is a viable one for these heedless blasphemers. The Departmento Munitorum recognises that treating or negotiating with such forces is impossible, which indirectly benefits the Severan Dominate, as such heretics and xenos sometimes provide a key distraction by presenting targets more worthy of the Imperial Guard's punishing wrath. Meting out the Emperor's Justice upon the renegade and the alien often stays Imperial Guard forces from assaulting secessionist strongholds, extending the war and giving more opportunists the chance to join the bloody fray while it drags on.

Hervara represents a crucial battlefield within the region, in no small part because of its location. Physically close to the major worlds of the Calixis Sector, and placed on a key Warp route, the planet represents a critical node in the supply lines that allow for the Imperial advance deeper into the core of the Severan Dominate. Until Imperial forces secure Hervara completely, they run the risk of having their supply chain severed, forcing them to maintain a significant Imperial Navy element within the region. Unfortunately, the Naval elements present are far better suited to striking against worlds still held by the secessionists, where orbital assaults do not risk scorching Imperial holdings. Thus, the Imperial Guard is highly motivated to subdue the threat on Hervara as quickly as possible, so that the warships in the region can move on to other targets.

As a mining world, Hervara's valuable ores are put to immediate use in supplying the armies of whichever side can hold it. The Severan Dominate is clearly more desperate in this regard, but with the ongoing commitment to the Achilles Crusade, even the vast reserves of the Calixis Sector have begun to wane. Both sides are anxious to secure these resources for their own purposes while preventing the opposition from doing the same.

Because of the obvious advantages that the world holds to the ongoing war effort, both human factions initially committed heavily to the war on Hervara. However, their evenly-matched might, along with the disruptions caused by Ork interference, has caused the battles to drag out for much longer than either side expected. The Orks have made all resupply efforts particularly challenging, but with the severity of the devastation, reinforcements have become increasingly necessary. If the Orks are able to reinforce their position with more fresh troops from Waaagh! Grimtoof, the Greenskins might push both the Imperium and the Severan Dominate from Hervara, dealing a crippling blow to both sides and helping to widen the path for the Waaagh!

The presence of the Orks has transformed Hervara into a veritable microcosm of the entire war across the Spinward Front. As the Imperial Guard attempt to reclaim resources for the Emperor—assets that are His by right—they are opposed by both human traitors and relentless, rampaging xenos. In order for the Imperium to triumph, the Imperial Guard must quickly overpower all of these foes, so that the assets can be justly returned to their mandated purpose—advancing the Imperial war effort in the name of the God-Emperor.

Key to this effort are the Imperial Guard regiments already in place upon Hervara. All of these units have sustained substantial losses, yet they remain combat effective. Working in conjunction with additional units should allow these forces to concentrate their efforts within their specialities and focus their forces. Ideally, reinforcements would possess a skill set that complements the expertise



FRAMING THE ASSIGNMENT

Trips through the Warp are notably unpredictable in length (among other things). Delays in communications and the overall inconsistency of astrotelepathic messages can also significantly impact access to solid military intelligence, particularly when a war effort is exceptionally broad, like in the Spinward Front. It is likely that the Departamento Munitorum deployed the PCs and their regiment to Hervara without a complete understanding of the current situation. In all likelihood, they were expected to secure a world that had already been conquered. It might even be that the assignment included significant medical supplies so that the regiment could provide rear guard support, as well as protection for more injured regiments transferred back from the front, instead of requiring the PCs to enter a brutal meat-grinder on a still-hostile world.

Of course, the GM should consider the nature of the PCs' unit when describing the initial assignment. If the PCs are part of a mechanised regiment or even a tank battalion, it is less likely that they would be deployed for a support assignment, as described above. An armoured regiment is far more likely to have been sent specifically to deal with the mechanised Ork forces, either by breaking open strong-points to cripple the Orks' air superiority, or by challenging the Ork aerial forces directly with vehicles like the Hydra Flak Battery. Game Masters who have a PC regiment equipped in this fashion might need to tailor the resistance forces to better accommodate the PCs' assets. Additional suggestions regarding appropriate changes for armoured regiments can be found throughout the volume.

of any of the forces present. However, High Command is seldom so fortunate as to have the ideal units in place to fulfil their needs perfectly, and so any kind of unit might fight its way to the desperate, grinding war on Hervara.

The Luggnum Sewer Rats have been deployed to Hervara with the specific intent of using their expertise to engage in tunnel fighting. The planet's vast network of caverns allows these warriors to effectively bring their expertise at close-quarters fighting to bear against the Orks and Severan Dominate alike. The regiment has received accolades for their efficiency when engaged with the secessionists, but they have been markedly less effective when engaging the Greenskins. The Sewer Rats have suffered significant losses against the Orks, leaving them well-motivated to seek vengeance against the brutal xenos.

In a stroke of luck, siege infantry from the Death Korps of Krieg were assigned to Hervara even before it became clear that the war would be such a savage and protracted one. These soldiers are well versed in fighting under conditions of toxic atmospheres. Respirators are frequently standard issue for them, so they are thoroughly trained in their use. Further, their ability to effectively man fortifications provides them some additional protection from the near constant strafing runs of the Ork Bombers. This combination has made them particularly well suited for the constant fighting on Hervara's surface.

In the less populated regions, particularly near some of the mineshaft entrances, a partial regiment of Tallarn Desert Raiders have been involved in a number of conflicts. Atypically, these forces have had to be issued respirators in order to endure the toxic winds. While the ash-filled environment is substantially different from their native deserts, much of their training remains applicable. Particularly relevant is their training to move through shifting terrain and make effective use of it as cover.

Initially, the Imperial Guard plan for Hervara was to seize the planet so that the war effort could make immediate use of the planet's resources. This includes the mineral wealth as well as the world's population. Historically, Hervara's defensive forces have been noted as particularly competent.

High Command believed that once the secessionists were defeated, loyalists could be quickly identified for immediate training to form a regiment for use against the Severan Dominate. Such a recruitment effort could run the risk of reducing the world's mining output, but most believed this would only be a temporary setback.

As the war for control of the mining world has continued, the Imperial Guard officers on hand have had to revise their plan. Some rumours indicate that unless the tempo of the war effort changes, more extreme measures might be necessary. Though none have spoken of Exterminatus yet—the mineral wealth of Hervara is simply too tempting to sacrifice—such a destructive sanction might not be completely off the table. At the very least, extensive use of orbital bombardments has been considered. Of course, given the current Ork air and space superiority, such an assault is not currently an option. In the event that additional Imperial Navy assets become available, it is likely that this option would be more seriously considered.

Though the sacrifice of the resources on Hervara would be a bitter draught for the Imperium to drink, it might ultimately be necessary in order to deny critical resources to the Severan Dominate as part of a campaign of raw attrition. For the time being, the Ork forces are preventing either human force from effectively accessing Hervara's mineral wealth, sowing chaos with gleeful impunity from their blazing, cacophonous aircraft. As a habitable world with worthwhile resources and a population which is, at least, partially loyal to the Emperor, annihilation remains an option of last resort. The Imperial hierarchy believes that any plan which can secure further assets to sponsor the war against the secessionists is the most viable. Imperial propaganda describing the mission and situation on Hervara to the Player Characters can be found on page 18.





THE SITUATION

"Every rebel we kill today is one who won't be shooting at us tomorrow."

—Lord Marshall Covington Pasheen

Currently, the most important asset in the war for control of Hervara seems to be patience. Both the Imperial Guard and Severan Dominate forces have become well entrenched. The Imperial Guard plan of battle called for a quick strike to overwhelm the native forces, but sadly, the Severan Dominate's resistance exceeded all reasonable expectations. This was, in part, because of the number of reinforcements that the secessionists had committed to the initial defence of the planet. Even when members of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors turned to ally themselves with the Imperial Guard, it was only enough of a shift in power to establish a foothold. Since the initial invasion, the Imperial advance has been a slow and exacting process.

While their initial landings would have been far more costly without Hervara Excavatory Warriors support, High Command has been reluctant to trust these forces. Initially, many of the officers were engaged for prolonged meetings with members of the Commissariat. A significant number of these soldiers were found to maintain secessionist leanings. Once judgment was completed, justice was swiftly meted out. Fortunately for both the native forces and the Guardsmen who have come to depend upon them, far fewer issues have been encountered among the men of the line.

Some of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors platoons have remained intact. High Command has generally integrated these elements into the Imperial Guard hierarchy, seconding them primarily to work in conjunction with the Luggnum Sewer Rats. Hervara Excavatory Warriors members are intimately familiar with the intricacies of Hervara's caverns, which has permitted the Imperial Guard forces to exploit lesser known passages so that they can move behind enemy lines, expanding the scope of these battles.

The fear, particularly among High Command, remains that the native forces still harbour spies for the Severan Dominate. In at least two instances, assaults that had high expectations for success were repelled by thoroughly entrenched defenders. It is unclear if this was a consequence of deliberate sabotage by Hervara Excavatory Warriors elements, or if it was merely the result of inaccurate military intelligence. Hervara Excavatory Warriors platoons continue to serve upon the front lines, but their intelligence reports are being called into question with increasing frequency. This could be a part of a larger plan to decrease reliance upon the native forces. It might also be a sign that the Commissariat is pushing to issue further motivational judgments towards the Hervara Excavatory Warriors.

It is now clear that the initial assessment of Hervara's defenders was woefully inaccurate. When High Command assembled the invasion forces, few of the groups targeted were operating at peak efficiency. In most cases, the regiments selected were partial units that had either been depleted through attrition or that were already split across multiple worlds. As a relatively quick

conflict was anticipated, the intent was that these units could reunite with their regiments once the conflict was resolved.

This strategy also placed several battalions under the direct authority of commanders who were unfamiliar with their fighting styles and equipment. While some of the blame for the slow advance and significant losses can be attributed to the unexpectedly stubborn resistance, it is also clear that the Imperial Guard tactics were inadequate to rapidly overcome the secessionist forces. As the battles have continued, their overall competence has certainly improved, but some fear that this improvement has arrived too late, as the Imperial Guard forces currently on the ground might not be sufficient to overcome the combined secessionist and xenos forces.

The initial deployment also failed to take into account the Ork presence on Hervara. The last xenos survey was quite dated and identified the Greenskins as having been cleansed from the mining world. Once battle was engaged, this proved incredibly inaccurate. In short order, a significant number of native Orks emerged to engage in the conflict. Unprepared Imperial Guard elements sustained significant losses when the Ork forces took them by surprise, depleting both the manpower and equipment of all of the Imperial forces. At the same time, the Orks began to seize some of the damaged Imperial vehicles, refitting them to be more consistent with their xenos technology.

Within just a few months, additional Orks arrived from Waaagh! Grimtoof, drawn to the warring planet by the promise of additional battle. Uncharacteristically, many, though hardly all, of the new arrivals remained aboard their vessels. This enabled the Orks to establish a fairly effective blockade against reinforcements, destroying or scattering all of the Imperial Navy craft that were in-system at the time of the xenos arrival. When the Imperial Navy craft withdrew, this left the Imperial Guard forces with very little air support, further limiting their ability to quickly respond to sweeping changes across the battlefield.

A significant contingent of Ork Kroozers and Roks remains within the system, targeting any Imperial or Severan Dominate vessel that enters the system. This has already led to the destruction of a number of unprepared supply transports. In order for Imperial Guard reinforcements to pierce the blockade, they must have the support of the Imperial Navy. Any standard transports would be significantly outgunned by the Ork craft, which could have tragic repercussions for the units unfortunate enough to be aboard.

The Ork forces that made landfall included a disproportionately high number of Mekaniaks. These xenos technologists were well-equipped and have begun to exploit the planet's bounty, refitting their vehicles and wargear with any natural resources—or salvage—that they can obtain. Unexpectedly, their presence also enabled the Orks to quickly secure air superiority over much of the planet. A number of wings of Ork Bombers have disrupted all Imperial efforts to retake the skies. Most recently, Ork Deffkoptas have also been seen on the fringes of several conflicts. These unstable, sputtering craft have been surprisingly effective, cutting dark lines across Hervara's polluted atmosphere and driving Imperial Guard and Severan Dominate elements on the surface to seek any available cover at the sound of their brutal, chopping blades.

The outcome of the war likely hinges upon which force can next gain the upper hand. A significant influx of reinforcements, or a new and unexpected weapon, might help to turn the tide, handing Hervara to the Orks, the Imperium, or the Severan Dominate. The Orks have a significant advantage in this regard, however, because of their blockade. If either human faction hopes to triumph, it must first break through that barrier.

THE ORDINATUS

"A weapon the size of a Titan. A near-perfect expression of the Ommissiah's grandeur and, of course, his puissance. Armies are thrown to the wind by its glorious song, and mountains themselves skitter aside at its demand. Nothing stands before a sacred Machine Spirit so mighty without its consent."

—Tech-Priest Garrulon Vyme

When the Adeptus Mechanicus shut down their operations on Hervara, they left behind a number of ancient devices. The vast majority of these were mundane items, many of which were devoted to the world's maintenance. Most were devices that were built upon the world, making them too unwieldy to remove. A few were relatively commonplace items, such as mining drills and ore extractors. One item, however, is particularly notable and relevant to the current war effort: the Ordinatus.

An Ordinatus consists of a particularly massive weapon, mounted on the back of what is most commonly a three-part chassis. Each of the three chassis components are arrayed consecutively, end to end. These massive treaded vehicles are each significantly larger than a Baneblade Super Heavy Tank, and the these great, tracked components often served as command centres for endless armies during days long-past. A reinforced and armoured scaffolding extends vertically from the rear two chassis, to support the massive weapon that grants the Ordinatus its true, terrifying power.

Histories of the Great Crusade indicate that the Adeptus Mechanicus constructed more than a dozen of these terrifying vehicles. Each was specially tended by the Centurio Ordinatus, a sect within the Cult of the Machine God. Each Ordinatus was a distinct construct, in much the same way as an Imperial Titan. The ancient devices were best characterised by their massive armaments—each Ordinatus supports only a single weapon, though its scale is comparable to those mounted upon the main vessels of the Imperial Navy. Known examples have included a nova cannon, a series of hellfire missiles, and a sonic disruptor.

The specimen hidden within Hervara's caverns is armed with the last of these. If repaired and activated, the sonic disruptor's intense blast should be able to shred every living thing over a field that extends to the planet's horizon. Physically, because of its armament, the Ordinatus most closely resembles the architectural style of the renowned Ordinatus Mars. While the whereabouts of that ancient vehicle are uncertain, there are no records of it ever having been in the Calixis Sector. Historical imagery also indicates several critical design variations from the Ordinatus present on Hervara.

Ordinatus weapons are normally named for either the world where they were constructed or the battle during which they first saw service. The origins of the one found buried upon Hervara are unclear. Consequently, its historical record remains unknown. In the event that the Imperial Guard were to recover the vehicle, it is certain that members of the Adeptus Mechanicus would make uncovering its history a priority.

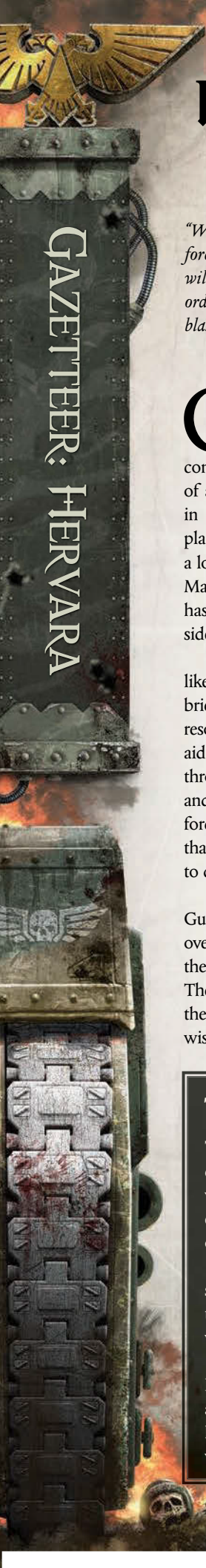
Most likely, the Ordinatus was sent to Hervara to be refit after seeing action during long-passed days of the Great Crusade. As there are no known records of activity upon the world from that era, the massive vehicle might even have seen service there. Alternatively, it might be that it was used elsewhere within the Periphery Sub-Sector, and transferred to Hervara because of the availability of certain raw materials or technical expertise at the time. Unless some documentation survives within the vehicle's machine spirit, the weapon's true history is almost certainly lost to time forever.

After his arrival upon Hervara, Big Mek Noshdakka became aware of the existence of the Ordinatus. The Greenskin was virtually overwhelmed by the glory of the awe-inspiring weapon. He immediately began devoting the majority of his attention and resources into preparing the vehicle for combat. Of course, a large part of this effort went into upgrading the Ordinatus with appropriately Orky glyphs, a red paint job, and an assortment of additional bolted-on weapons to give the incomparable weapons platform "even more dakka." Even given the vehicle's relatively pristine condition at the beginning of his work, the scale of the transformation is still a massive undertaking. By comparison, the construction of a massive Ork Gargant from scrap metal alone would be a minor project. The Big Mek's focus on the Ordinatus explains why the Orks have not yet begun constructing any Stompas, or other war engines of their own insane design, on Hervara.

At the beginning of the scenario, the human forces upon Hervara are completely unaware of the Ordinatus. The native human population had never discovered it, as it dwells within a portion of the caverns that is not directly attached to any active mining concerns. If the Orks are able to take control of the weapon and use it against the human forces, it could quickly end the war in the Orks' favour.



GAZETTEER: HERVARA



IMPERIAL GUARD FORCES

"We shall conquer this world swiftly for the Emperor, so that our forces may be dispersed elsewhere as needed. The Severan Dominate will see the folly of turning from the Emperor's light in short order, and from this victory we will drive our forces into their blasphemous heart without delay."

—Lord Marshall Pasheen, first month of the Siege of Hervara

Overall command of the Imperial Guard forces upon Hervara falls under the authority of Lord Marshall Covington Pasheen. A veteran of two prior planetary conflicts, this is Pasheen's first deployment as the sole commander of a planetary invasion. Pasheen earned his high rank at least in part because of his familial influence; the lesser son of a planetary governor, he spent only the briefest of time serving as a lower ranking officer before receiving his promotion to Lord Marshall. While he is far from incompetent, his inexperience has been a thorn in his more veteran subordinates' collective sides since his appointment to the position.

As Hervara was not expected to be a major conflict, it is likely that the Lord Marshall's assignment was intended to be brief. He had previously shown some degree of expertise in resolving diplomatic matters effectively, and most of his ranking aides suggested that he could likely return Hervara to the fold through diplomacy after a quick show of overwhelming force and accepting its unequivocal surrender. Sadly, the Imperial forces assigned to conquer the mining world proved to be less than overwhelming, and the Severan Dominate dug in its heels to defend the resources that Hervara promised.

The Lord Marshall retains control over all of the Imperial Guard forces upon Hervara. He and his aides have assembled the overarching strategy, though he has deferred specific tactics to the expertise of the commanding officers of the units under him. There are elements of three different regiments present upon the mining world, and Lord Marshall Pasheen has shown some wisdom in attempting to assign each of these in ways that best

take advantage of their skill sets. He has also made no efforts to integrate the different units; rather, he has chosen to allow them to function relatively independently, assuring that they continue to maintain their levels of camaraderie and effectiveness.

At the same time, the decision to cede command to the line officers provided the Lord Marshall with a convenient path of culpability. He is clearly out of his depth in fighting a protracted engagement. His previous experiences leave him unprepared for these sorts of tactics, and he seems incapable of designing a plan to deal with the savagery of the Orks. Ultimate success upon Hervara could ride on one of his underlings showing the necessary initiative to design and implement an effective plan using the Lord Marshall's authority for him.



THE COMMISSARIAT

The Imperial Guard forces on Hervara were hastily assembled from three regiments with very different backgrounds and combat philosophies, and Lord Marshall Pasheen has done little to establish a sense of unity between his disparate forces. At various points in the war effort, each of these groups has met with varying degrees of failure. Invariably, the commanders of each of these forces began to blame one another for the difficulties they have encountered. There are clearly significant levels of distrust due, at least in part, to the varied background cultures of each of these different Imperial Guard elements.

Both the Krieg and Tallarn forces initially feared that the Luggnum Sewer Rats might turn traitor and side with the secessionists. Conversely, the Desert Raiders and the Sewer Rats regiments both believed that the Death Korps were hiding in their fortifications instead of engaging the enemies. Finally, the Luggnum and Krieg forces became convinced that the Tallarns were careless for employing dispersed tactics on Hervara's surface in the face of Ork air superiority.

Were it not for the influence of the Commissariat, the separate regiments might have already fallen prey to infighting. Instead, the Commissars of the various groups have often bypassed High Command and communicated with one another directly. They have worked to instill discipline and a sense of unity among the forces. In fact, the Commissars have actually worked to carefully tailor the rumours and propaganda that are sent to each of the different units. In this way, mistrust has been leveraged to create a sense of competition, rather than a source of blame.

LUGGNUM SEWER RATS 3RD

Major Natalia Foudrang commands the battalion of the Luggnum Sewer Rats 3rd regiment assigned to Hervara. The entire regiment of light infantry is currently committed to the Spinward Front, but High Command chose to divide the regiment into several battle groups, which were each assigned to different campaigns within the ongoing conflict. As a light infantry regiment, their general battlefield role is well-suited to a variety of different environmental conditions and conflicts. High Command believes that soldiers from the mining world of Luggnum represent an effective reserve to bolster worlds where other regiments seem to be under-performing.

Prior to arrival within the system, Lord Marshall Pasheen specifically tasked the Sewer Rats with taking and holding all of Hervara's subterranean assets. He believed that they were best suited to the close-in fighting that was expected within the tunnel complex. However, this assignment was made prior to the discovery of the magnitude of the xenos presence upon the mining world. It also failed to factor the sheer number of secessionist Hervara Excavatory Warriors members who were stationed within the mines. The Sewer Rats have suffered substantial losses as they consistently face the stiffest resistance from both Orks and secessionist forces. Four of the five companies that arrived on Hervara have had to be consolidated down to two, due to the losses sustained through the close quarters fighting. In spite of these losses, they remain the most effective tunnel fighters among the Imperial Guard forces present.

To offer some relief from the endless darkness and harsh conditions of the mines, the Luggnum companies have been rotated to surface deployment on a monthly basis. At these times, they have worked most closely with members of the Death Korps of Krieg, providing support to the siege infantry. In these situations, the Sewer Rats have often come to appreciate the security of the caverns, where they were at least isolated from aerial bombardment and plummeting, exploding aircraft, courtesy of the Orks.

DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG 138TH

Lieutenant Colonel Heinrich Voorscht is the commanding officer for the four companies of mechanised infantry assigned to Hervara from the Death Korps of Krieg 138th. Shortly after their arrival on Sinophia, this battalion was temporarily split off from the remainder of the regiment, the intention being that they would reunite once Hervara was conquered. High Command considered the full regiment far too valuable to commit to what was expected to be a brief confrontation. The battalion selected for assignment to Hervara also consisted of the least battle-tested members. This mission was meant to blood these recruits in a low-grade conflict so that they would be better prepared when they later faced stiffer resistance.

Little about the assignment has gone to plan for the battalion. Shortly after the arrival of the Orks from Waaagh! Grimtoof, the Death Korps supply line was badly damaged,

limiting their access to critical siege equipment as a direct consequence of the Ork aerial superiority. While they have since taken steps to better defend themselves against aircraft, their ability to do so is somewhat limited. The lack of a resupply has further complicated matters, as the regiment is trained specifically to depend upon this equipment. Though they remain assigned to the surface, many of the companies are now largely assigned to garrison duties.

The Ork presence has also substantially changed the Death Korps's strategic responsibilities. Their initial assignment was to quickly capture and hold all of the Hervaran surface installations held by the forces of the Severan Dominate. While still tasked with this responsibility, they have also recently been charged with finding an effective means to contain and eliminate the Ork Speed Freaks that now freely roam the world's countryside. With a limited supply of vehicles, the Krieg forces are similarly limited in their abilities to catch and eliminate the xenos.

TALLARN DESERT RAIDERS 35TH

Major Laurein Al-Fasra commands the Tallarn Desert Raiders battalion assigned to Hervara. A veteran unit, these companies were sent to this world to serve as a quick-striking reserve. Given the expectations of minimal resistance, High Command assumed that the veterans would see little action. Considered a relatively innocuous assignment, the intention was that the unit would be able to recover from losses sustained during their last mission within the Spinward Front. This was supposed to give them ample opportunity to refit their Sentinels, finish the training of unused mounts, and complete the reconfiguration of their command structure, so that the reconfigured companies could get practice working together prior to receiving a more dangerous assignment. Obviously, things did not go as planned.

The Tallarns assigned to Hervara are part of a reconnaissance regiment. At the time of their deployment, they were initially well supported by a company of Sentinels and a full company of Rough Riders mounted upon Mukaali. After a year of deployment without support, the mounts for these forces—both reptilian and mechanical—have suffered serious losses. In spite of this, the Desert Raiders have shown no tendency to restrict their activities. Of the three regiments on Hervara, they have had the greatest success against the natives, while also suffering the most severe losses.

Their veteran presence and mobility have been a gift from the Emperor to Lord Marshall Pasheen. The unexpectedly high levels of resistance forced him to commit the Tallarns to the conflict from the very earliest stage. While this has meant that he lacks any additional reserves, it has enabled him to at least continue to prosecute offensive actions against the Severan Dominate. Working in conjunction with the Hervara Excavatory Warriors that allied with the Imperial Guard, the Desert Raiders have often travelled behind enemy lines, striking against unprotected settlements, far from any other Imperial support.



WAAAGH! GRIMTOOF

"Negotiate with them? Negotiate with the Greenskins? I'm tempted to order you to try, but even such a thick-headed question doesn't warrant that."

—Commodore Aloysius Kang

Were it not for the Ork invasion, the war for the Spinward Front might have been delayed by generations. Duke Severus the Thirteenth had little interest in publicly seceding from the Imperium, as he was already in the midst of secretly doing so without firing a single shot or even raising his voice. His domain was effectively isolated from the Imperium's worlds, leaving him capable of ruling with scarcely any interaction with the Calixis Sector. However, when the worlds of the Severan Dominate began to fall to the Ork forces, the Duke had no choice but to show his hand and beg for assistance. When Imperial forces arrived, they moved to crush the Orks and the newly-discovered secessionists in equal measure.

The initial Ork movement towards Hervara came in response to the brutal fighting that was already taking place between the human factions. The comparatively limited native Ork forces saw a tremendous opportunity for battle, and immediately began to join in the conflict. Their glorious battles resounded through the Warp like a siren's call. Orks throughout the Periphery began to sense the draw of a major conflict. Some of these xenos were in systems not far from Hervara, and those who were not already engaged in major conflicts were helpless to resist the call to arms.

Boss Garbark is a follower of warlord Grimtoof, the Git-Slayer. Acting upon his own initiative, the massive Ork assembled a small armada of Kroozers and Roks in preparation to join the conflict. They departed for the Hervara system in relatively short order, with most of the craft filled far beyond any safe level of occupancy. Due to the sheer scale of craft and warriors involved, it is likely that the Waaagh! has slowed in several other systems, as available reserve forces abandoned their assignments to join with Boss Garbark's small fleet.

Upon their arrival, the Orks dispatched or chased off all of the human craft within the system. Even as they completed that task, the mighty force of Ork passengers swiftly descended aboard Roks to the planet's surface. Once there, those who survived their meteoric entrance soon joined forces with the native Ork population. Boss Garbark took direct control over the Ork horde, while Big Mek Noshdakka began to consolidate resources to assemble the vehicles that have proven so effective in the conflict.

Boss Garbark also began the process of merging his newly arrived forces with those already present upon Hervara. Partly due to their isolation, and partly due to a lack of Mekaniaks, the planet's Orks were significantly less well-equipped than those that came from Waaagh! Grimtoof. Rather than grant these Orks additional supplies, they have instead continued to serve as close combatants, while the newly arrived forces fill more specialised roles.

Even after the ground forces were fully deployed, most of the Ork vessels remained within the system. This was part of Boss Garbark's strategy, which displayed the brutal cunning characteristic of those Orks who grow to the lofty rank of Warboss. By maintaining orbital security, he hoped to enable his mobs to more quickly dispatch the human population. Once the world was seized, it could provide Waaagh! Grimtoof with resources and a new launching point—one with direct access to the heart of the Calixis Sector. To facilitate the conquest, Boss Garbark made a somewhat unusual move, maintaining functional crews aboard the Ork voidcraft within the system. It is these additional forces that have made the blockade possible. Had they abandoned their craft to reach the war on the surface in their usual fashion, the Orks on the surface would have become easy targets for the Imperial Navy. Instead, they have forced the Imperial Guard into that same position, and dominated the skies with their sputtering but surprisingly lethal aircraft.

As much as Garbark depends upon the resources that Big Mek Noshdakka provides, he has also come to badly mistrust the Mekaniak. The Boss fears the influence that Noshdakka's success has bred. Many of the Speed Freeks are clearly loyal to the Ork whose vision provides them with their beloved (if ramshackle) vehicles, and a disproportionate number of Boyz have begun to show their allegiance to his cult—enabling the Ork air superiority and mobile tactics that have proven so effective against the human forces.

To combat this turn of events, Garbark has begun to closely supervise all of Noshdakka's projects. When a band of his Kommandos discovered the Ordinatus beneath Hervara's surface, it was Garbark who informed the Big Mek of its presence. Working on the massive war engine has effectively removed Noshdakka from direct involvement in all of the surface conflicts, and this grand distraction has enabled Garbark to reassert his dominance over the Ork forces on Hervara as his rival tinkers with the vast and deadly weapon in the dark. However, it has also delayed his domination of the world over the short term. As Noshdakka has diverted most of the assets at his command to working on the Ordinatus, Ork vehicles—both growling wheeled transports and screaming aircraft—have required an increasing amount of time for repairs after each conflict.

Noshdakka has also begun to press Garbark for additional resources to continue his modification of the Ordinatus. He wants Garbark to commit forces to plundering Imperial and Severan Dominate supply dumps so that he can scavenge the weapons and equipment for his own purposes. In contrast, Garbark prefers to join in existing battles or confront the human forces in the open field. Their conflicting goals have had ramifications visible on the battlefield, especially regarding the use of the Speed Frek cultists, who tend to pledge direct loyalty to the Big Mek and his Mekaniak disciples.

Imperial Guard forces have begun to notice the relative decrease in the numbers of Ork fliers over the course of the past month, but remain unaware of the cause behind this shift. Most believe that it is the result of their own tactical decisions in avoiding conflict with the fliers. The Imperial Guard forces have continued with this apparently successful tactic even as they prepare for a time when the Ork aerial attacks resume in full force.

SEVERAN DOMINATE

"Only loyalty to the Duke can protect you from the false idolatry of the Emperor!"

—Exalted General Augustus of the Severan Dominate

Duke Severus the Thirteenth is the latest in a long line of bitter men. His ancient forefather, Duke Severus the First, played an important role in establishing the Calixis Sector, but was overshadowed by the work of Saint Drusus. Duke Severus the Thirteenth, however, was the first to achieve a position of significant power within the Sector. Shortly after ascending to the position of Lord Sub-Sector over the Periphery, Duke Severus the Thirteenth began the process of transforming his region into one which was personally loyal to him alone.

Silently conspiring with the Dark Eldar, the Duke secretly sacrificed entire worlds to their depravities that he might justify an increased military build-up and eliminate those whose loyalty to the Imperium was without question. Over the course of a decade, his power increased dramatically as he gained control of all the Periphery worlds. The arrival of Waaagh! Grimtoof destroyed his plans, however. As they began to overwhelm the worlds of the region, the Duke discovered that even his best forces were insufficient to staunch the green tide.

Finally, in shame, the Duke turned to Sector Lord Hax for assistance. Already constrained by the resources committed to the Achilus Crusade, the Sector Lord was unable to make a commitment that would quickly eliminate the Orks and also justly punish Duke Severus. Instead, the available Imperial Guard forces were sent to attempt to staunch the Ork assault. Opportunistic Dark Eldar and Chaos forces moved to exploit this weakness. Seeing his precious domain collapse, Duke Severus united it as the Severan Dominate and seceded from the Imperium.

Now, the worlds of the Severan Dominate are besieged on all fronts by a myriad of foes. The vast majority of these soldiers were raised to revere the Emperor from earliest childhood, but now fight against his soldiers. Most are confused by the cause of the conflict, in spite of the works of propaganda that the Duke has attempted to distribute across his domain in an effort to cement the loyalty of his people. Many fear that surrender is not an option, as they are likely to face execution for their crimes against the Imperium even if they turn against their brethren. So, instead, they fight desperately to defend their homes from all who come. Others are unaware that the Severan Dominate has seceded at all, their commanders simply keeping the soldiers of the line blind to the truth of the conflict by calling the Imperial Guard traitors to the God-Emperor.

The soldiers on Hervara fight because they have nothing more to lose. They are well aware of the consequences of failure on Hervara. None of their foes have the slightest inclination towards mercy, so they cannot hope for clemency or survival. Anything less than complete triumph only assures the eventual destruction of their homes and families. Almost all of those stationed on Hervara are willing to become martyrs for their cause if it means that their loved ones might survive for another day.

THE LOYALTY OF THE HERVARA EXCAVATORY WARRIORS

Roughly seventy percent of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors remained loyal to Duke Severus, even after the arrival of the Imperial forces. The thirty percent who returned to the embrace of the God-Emperor and now aid his servants have given the Imperial Guard their initial success and caused dozens of crises since those first victories. When the Hervara Excavatory Warriors defending the spaceport allied with the Imperial Guard, the initial landing of all three battalions was completed with minimal losses. This enabled the Imperial Guard to gain a foothold on the planet, even in the face of extensive Severan Dominate defences. The Commissariat responded by questioning and punishing many of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors' ranking officers, which in turn drove many of the soldiers to question their decision to defect back to the Imperium.

While the Duke spent more than a decade building his forces in preparation for the secession, he was forced to exhaust a large portion of his resources during the initial Ork assault upon the Sub-Sector. As a consequence, the Severan Dominate forces are generally not as well equipped nor as well trained as any of the Imperial Guard regiments sent into the battle, and this has limited the tactics available to the rebel forces. While it might be most effective for them to make a series of guerrilla strikes behind Imperial lines, they lack the expertise to do so. Instead, they have continued to fight a fierce defensive war, ceding ground to the enemy only at the very highest price in blood.

The only significant offensive measures made against the Imperial Guard forces have come through deception and treachery. Even among the Hervara Excavatory Warriors who transferred their loyalty to the Imperium, there remain soldiers who fear the consequences of an Imperial victory. Many of these operatives are quietly acting as spies, transferring information back to the offices of Exalted General Augustus—the commander for Severan Dominate operations on Hervara. In several instances, this has enabled the secessionists to set ambushes for unprepared Imperial Guard forces or to strike at lightly defended outposts. While Hervara Excavatory Warriors members have certainly paid for their crimes in the various purges conducted by the Imperial Commissariat, these actions have had a significant impact against the Imperial offensive.

Notably, the Severan Dominate seems to be significantly less concerned about the Ork presence upon Hervara than they are about the Imperial one. The consequence of a loss to either faction is certain devastation, but the Hervarans have a history of overcoming the Ork threat. Even in the face of a vastly increased Ork presence, they hold out the belief that they can overcome the disorganised xenos with sufficient patience and firepower. In contrast, after generations of inculcation into the Imperial Cult, many fear the servants of their former deity, the God-Emperor, far more than the savage xenos who have inhabited Hervara for aeons.

GAZETTEER: HERVARA

Memorandum HV-1383F

TO: All incoming soldiers
FROM: The Office of Lord Marshall Pasheen
RE: Hervara Field Conditions

Due to the diverse nature of the forces stationed upon Hervara, it has come to this office's attention that some degree of background should be provided as regards those conditions upon the planet's surface. Variations exist across the sundry battlefields, but your unfailing trust in the Emperor will ever separate the vile traitor from the righteous servant of His will in your eyes. Still, certain precautions must be taken, and all soldiers of the Imperial Guard are expected to read and memorise the following material, that it may act as a beacon of His light and guide them on the field of battle. This guide does not constitute an excuse for a lack of faith in the Emperor, but rather should be seen as a small manifestation of His infinite wisdom.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLIMATE: Hervara's high levels of volcanism and dense atmosphere leave the planet's surface conditions uncomfortably warm for heavier fatigues. Only summer weight uniforms are recommended for use during the course of deployment to this world's surface. Despite the atmosphere's odd coloration, the Departamento Munitorum surveys have not acknowledged any long-term or short-term negative effects of breathing the local air in the tunnels or on the surface. Rebreathers are therefore technically unnecessary, but have been issued to certain squads and regiments for their comfort.

POLITICAL CLIMATE: The planet's population is believed to have an unacceptably high incidence of members who have turned from the majesty of the God-Emperor. Soldiers are discouraged from communicating with any native members of the planet's population unless they are designated as a secure point of contact for Imperial Operatives. Any such known safe individuals are expected to display an Imperial Eagle upon their person at all times.

KNOWN DANGEROUS FLORA: Hervara's plant life is largely fungal in origin. All tested specimens have proven to be well within human digestive tolerances, and are even considered pleasant by a nontrivial portion of the native population.

KNOWN DANGEROUS FAUNA: There are no known dangerous native animals actively dwelling upon Hervara's surface, with the notable and important exception of the -REDACTED-, the saliva of which can cause abrasions, blindness, and severe paranoid hallucinations.

Mission Briefing HV-1: Mission Code "Quiet War"

Assigned Regiment: Insertion Delta-324

Briefing Version: Alpha-001 mark 9.2

Departure Location: Launch Bay Seven, Devout Triumph

Arrival Location: Landing Field, Port Fontaine, Hervara

Objectives: Transfer the regiment to the surface of Hervara to reinforce the Imperial Guard elements already present upon the planet in pacifying any surviving secessionist elements.

Summary: The regiment must assemble, along with all of their provisions and supplies, within the Devout Triumph's landing bays. All equipment must be loaded aboard the dropships. In order to minimise the transport's stay within the system, all forces are to deploy through the course of a single transit. Each company is assigned to a single ship, along with their support vehicles and staff. Companies must carry an adequate supply of weapons and ammunition to engage in a brief conflict in the unlikely event of an ambush.

In the improbable event that Hervara's situation is further from pacification than expected, dropships may be reassigned during the course of re-entry. High Command will provide additional instructions to company commanders regarding their alternative landing sites and expected levels of enemy resistance. Field units must be prepared for immediate action in the event of such reassignments.



PLANETFALL

DEPARTURE

•

THE CRASH

•

BREAKOUT!

•

WITHDRAWAL

•

THE BASE

CHAPTER I: PLANETFALL

"We must meet the xenos and the traitor alike with the same mercy, with His Mercy. It is our duty to deliver it swiftly, relentlessly, and with joy in our hearts, that we may do His holy work by putting an end to such misguided heresies."

—Archcardinal Mayhew Phines, upon hearing of the secession

The Spinward Front encompasses a significant threat to the Calixis Sector. Already depleted by its commitment to the Achilus Crusade, the region's resources were stretched thin just by suppressing the many threats within the region's boundaries. Since the invasion of Waaagh! Grimtoof and the secession of the Severan Dominate, the Sector has had to reach beyond its boundaries for assistance in its own defence. The proud Lord Sector Hax has only reluctantly promised appropriate compensation to the Departmento Munitorum in return for its continued support.

The war for control of Hervara represents a significant factor in resolving this massive conflict, at least as it involves stamping out the secessionists. Without access to Hervara's assets, the Severan Dominate would be hard-pressed to manufacture the necessary supplies to maintain its war effort. If the forces of Duke Severus falter on this world, it could well trigger a domino effect, forcing additional worlds to return to the embrace of the God-Emperor.

OVERVIEW

This chapter focuses upon the arrival of the PCs and their regiment to Hervara. It opens as the PCs receive a final briefing, before departing their transport to shuttle down to the surface. The briefing provides basic background information about the world, the regiments currently stationed on the planet, and the current intensity of the conflict. At this time, the PCs might also hear a number of rumours about the state of things on the planet. These rumours are likely to be extremely inaccurate, as is much of the official briefing.

Once they depart the transport, their journey to the surface should be harrowing. Ork Kroozers and Bombers have effectively blockaded Hervara. When the PCs attempt to pass through the blockade, they encounter extremely heavy resistance, and in the course of their attempted landing, their dropship crashes far from its intended destination.

While their arrival seems catastrophic, clearly it is influenced by the God-Emperor's blessing, for in the course of their crash, they stumble upon the cavern which contains the ancient Ordinatus weapon. At this point, the vehicle still requires significant repairs before it could be fired or moved. However, the simple knowledge of its existence is a crucial point to all of the Imperial Guard, as recovering it becomes a very high priority.



With this knowledge in hand, and some notion of the direction of the nearest Imperial fortification, the PCs must first escape from the centre of the Ork encampment. If they survive this, then they can begin a trek through Hervara's wilderness. They are likely ill-prepared for the journey, as most of their supplies were lost in the crash and the ensuing fire fight. Through the course of their travels, the PCs must face ongoing resistance from both the Orks and the Severan Dominate.

The chapter concludes with their arrival at the closest Imperial base and their integration into its forces. Because of the damage to their ship, their flight path ended up taking them far from their intended destination. Instead of reporting back in with their regiment, the PCs are seconded to work closely with members of the Luggnum Sewer Rats. Integrating into this new regiment poses many challenges for them, including learning about the regiment's standard equipment, which differs sharply from the kit to which they are accustomed.

Note that, after this chapter, the PCs have very little interaction with their regiment if they follow the course of the adventure as written. Thus, if the Game Master wishes to stress the difference between their own regiment and those with which they serve during the adventure, he should emphasise the nature of their regiment during this chapter. Consider the **Adding Flair** sidebar on page 21.

DEPARTURE

"The only thing worse than being trapped in a foxhole during a war is being helpless aboard a transport a kilometre up. At least foxholes never crash."

—Gunnery Sergeant Corbin Hayworth

The adventure opens with the characters already en route to the world of Hervara. At this point, they have not yet been briefed about their destination, though countless rumours already circulate through the crew. This scene serves to set the tone for the remainder of the chapter. Aboard the vessel, surrounded by their regimental brethren, the PCs have likely achieved some level of comfort in the long calm before the storm. During the Warp transit, the biggest enemy that they can engage is boredom. From the moment the transport first encounters the Ork blockade, their enemy becomes far more threatening. While the characters gain clues about the threats they are soon to encounter, the only damage they might suffer at this stage is to their reputation.

FINAL BRIEFING

As the adventure begins, the characters are aboard a military transport, the *Devout Triumph*, en route to the Spinward Front. Their entire regiment—likely thousands of soldiers, plus support personnel, vehicles, and equipment—is aboard the massive vessel. Portions of its cargo hold have been reconfigured for use as a generalised training field, where the soldiers can go through calisthenics and routine drills. Firing ranges have also been set up for testing of non-heavy weapons. Most of the troopers have been assigned to crowded barracks spaces aboard the vessel, but a few are bivouacking in makeshift tents set up among the wooden transport crates of the cargo hold.

Only the regimental officers are aware of the fine details of their next assignment, so the Player Characters have not yet been briefed. They have spent the past several months in transit, undergoing endless drills and performing the routine maintenance necessary to make certain that all of their

equipment is at peak operating efficiency. In spite of the high levels of work required, the doldrums have certainly set in, and rumours have spread through the ship. This morning, word finally filtered down that they would be briefed today, and should begin preparations for deployment. The scene opens during that briefing. When all are assembled, read or paraphrase the following, adjusting for any cultural accents or attitudes associated with the regiment:

All of the members of your platoon took their seats in the lecture hall without incident. Fortunately, no one was late, and no one seems to have made a mess in the process—two of the Lieutenant's pet peeves. He called for quiet and then dimmed the lights. A brief song of devotion to the God-Emperor played over the comms, and the holotank at the front of the room lit up. In the back row, four troopers were already snoring when the Lieutenant began his lecture.

The Lieutenant is the commanding officer of the Player Character's platoon. This character's attitude and style should be consistent with that of the commanding officer created during Regiment Creation (see page 63 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). Note that this character is not the person who holds overall control of their regiment. He is instead responsible for a group of several squads, assembled into a platoon. For groups of experienced characters, their Lieutenant has likely already been defined. If not, refer to the Imperial Guard Lieutenant profile on page 127, modifying the description as is appropriate to be consistent with their regiment. The Lieutenant's name should be thematically and culturally appropriate to the regiment.

The meeting room is based aboard *Devout Triumph*. Ten rows of seats, with more than thirty seats in each row, can easily accommodate their full platoon and support elements. There are two entrances to the dimly lit room, one that leads back towards the barracks, while the other heads towards officers' quarters. As is the case throughout the craft, the room smells of faintly stale lho-stick smoke, unwashed bodies, and sacred unguents. It is dimly lit even before the Lieutenant lowers the sparking arc-candles, causing it to enter a state of near darkness. At that point, the holotank provides enough deep green luminescence to permit generalised vision after a few moments of adjustment.

ADDING FLAIR

Throughout this chapter—and the adventure as a whole—elements of the adventure must be tailored to fit the PC's regiment. This is the case regardless of whether they are using an existing regiment from one of the galaxy's most honoured units, or if they have chosen to create a novel home world and history of warfare. The Player Characters and all of the NPCs from their regiment share a number of common characteristics due to their time together and their planet of origin. When interacting with their brethren, it is important to make certain that these elements come into play.

Part of this should deal with the cultural nature of the regiment. Characters from a highborn world might view their fellows and Hervara very differently than those who came from a penal colony or a death world. Similarly, those used to serving under a supine commander might react very differently to combat situations than those who have worked with a maverick. When describing scenes or NPCs, try to keep such variations in mind. Playing off those subtle differences through words or a character's actions can play a major role in setting the campaign's tone.

The Player Characters' usual way of life might reflect a particular military philosophy. If they are accustomed to hand to hand fighting, every greeting might carry the undercurrent of a battle. If the Player Characters hail from a particularly devout background, then this should be reflected in the word choice and epithets of all of their regiment's commanders, which contrast sharply with those from other regiments. Mottos and regiment symbolism could be reflective of their tactics and their way of life. "Leave no man behind," could come into play in the field and when requisitioning supplies alike.

TYPES OF REGIMENTS

The adventure makes the working assumption that the Player Characters are part of a light infantry regiment. This certainly need not be the case, and advice on minor modifications to the scenario for different types of regiments is incorporated in sidebars throughout. As a general rule of thumb, there should be few required changes as long as the characters belong to any kind of infantry regiment which lacks vehicles. The variations in equipment might require tailoring approaches slightly differently, but this should seldom be dramatic.

Regiments that rely heavily on vehicles, on the other hand, do require the GM to make substantial changes to certain encounters, while other times, the nature of the Player Characters' missions might require them to adapt to fighting without them. Suggestions for modifying missions and scenes to better accommodate vehicles are offered throughout (such as in the **Challenging Tank Regiments** sidebar on page 39).

The Game Master would also have to tailor significant portions of this adventure to accommodate a drop troop regiment. Due to the Ork aerial superiority, there are very few opportunities to use Imperial aircraft written into the adventure as it stands. Drop troops can largely function in a similar manner to any other infantry company, but this campaign means that the Player Characters are missing out on the opportunity to show off their regiment's unique tactics and style. GMs who wish to accommodate their players' desires to utilise drop troops need to reconfigure some of the campaign's core tenets, perhaps reducing the emphasis on Ork air superiority and moving some of the subterranean missions to the surface.

Virtually all of the platoon's members are present for the briefing. This includes pilots for any support vehicles, aides, and specialists who handle routine needs. A Commissar attached to the platoon, occupies one of the seats up front. For a line infantry platoon, this totals close to one hundred members all together, leaving the conference room mostly empty. Other types of platoons should have roughly similar numbers of total members, though the specialities of the support staff might change.

The Lieutenant begins his presentation with a brief prayer to the God-Emperor and berates any stragglers who arrive late. He then provides a summary of Hervara, though unbeknownst to him (and the Player Characters), it is slightly inaccurate. Refer to the **Hervara Gazetteer**, beginning on page 5, for more information. The presentation contains the following data points, some more accurate than others. Those marked in *italics* are based on outdated reports, bad intelligence, or outright lies.

- Hervara is a mining world, which participated in the secession from the Imperium, under the authority of Duke Severus the Thirteenth, as part of the Severan Dominate.
- *The world's atmosphere has been slightly contaminated, but there are no long-term negative effects of exposure. Locals and deployed regiments use respirators for comfort or for cultural reasons.*
- *Its mineral resources are critical, so High Command wants their regiment to restore the God-Emperor's blessing to the world. Three partial regiments have been on station for months. They have largely defeated the rebels.*
- *The PCs' assignment is to assist with the final clean-up. This should be considered a plum assignment, as they are not expected to do much more than garrison duty.*
- *They are to be assigned standard issue equipment, plus a respirator. Nothing else should be necessary for the duration of such a low impact assignment. The respirator is not strictly necessary on the surface, but has been graciously provided by the Departamento Munitorum nonetheless.*
- The vessel should exit from the Warp tomorrow, with a foreseen margin of error of a mere six days. Within a few hours, the first shuttles should launch towards Hervara's surface. The Player Characters are expected to assist in loading the shuttles over the remaining time.

Again, note that the information marked in *italics* is inaccurate. The Lieutenant's commanding officer provided him with briefing materials that were created prior to the initial Imperial assault against Hervara.

The materials were created based upon knowledge which was current at that time, with modifications based upon the presumed effectiveness of the initial assaults. In the commander's defence, these were the only materials available to the regiment. However, they are now woefully inaccurate.

The Lieutenant then passes out three items to each soldier. These are part of a Munitorum-issue packet entitled *The Imperial Guardsman's Survival Guide to Hervara*, a few scraps of which have actually reached their intended recipients. See the **Know Your Enemy!** and **Recognise Your Allies!** handouts on pages 50-51, as well as **Memorandum HV-13831** and **Mission Briefing HV-1** on page 18. Once these are distributed, the officer takes a brief question and answer session. He attempts to assist his soldiers to the best of his ability, but he actually has little information beyond what he has already provided to the Guardsmen.

If anyone asks about a xenos threat, the Lieutenant smiles and states that there is no known activity on the world. He does admit, if pressed, that there have been a number of incursions within the Spinward Front by certain xenos, including the Orks of Waaagh! Grimtoof, so it would hardly be shocking if some paltry number of the brutes crop up, but he assures the assembled troops that it is nothing to be concerned about. After all, if there were Orks on Hervara, they would certainly have been given materials briefing them on how to recognise and deal with these foul xenos as they had with the traitors of the Severan Dominate and the Hervara Excavatory Warriors. If any of the rumours mentioned under **Preflight** (see page 24) are of particular interest, this session provides an early opportunity to introduce them, as a member of another squad might inquire about them. The Lieutenant attempts to firmly squash any rumours, but it should become obvious to the PCs that he really does not know any more about the situation than they do, but does not wish to reveal his lack of information to the troops, lest morale suffer as a consequence.



RUMOURS

Throughout their last few days aboard the transport, the characters begin to hear rumours associated with their current assignment. Many of these began as nothing more than speculation, but, through miscommunication, have spread through the crew as if they were the secret words of the God-Emperor. Other rumours are based upon erroneous accounts of past events. However, a few are based in truth, as they came from adjutants who overheard things that they should not have.

While aboard the *Devout Triumph*, the Player Characters are certain to interact with other members of their regiment, as well as members of the ship's crew. The Imperial Guardsmen are curious about their impending fate for very personal reasons. The vessel's crew often live somewhat vicariously through the lives of those they transport, and are curious as well. The stories that travel through the crew provide a valuable source of entertainment during the tedium of space travel.

Stories about upcoming deployments also play a critical part in determining the value of any contraband on the vessel's black market. Members of both the vessel's crew and the regiment engage in hoarding and trading a variety of different supplies. Some have very practical purposes, while others are more focused on providing various types of comfort. During the last few days before a deployment, the value of any items that might be useful on the target world skyrocket dramatically. Rumours tend to drive these values as well, particularly hints about the accuracy of the initial field condition reports. Some less reputable traders might even stoop to starting rumours of this sort.

During this stage of the journey, the regiment's officers are focused on packing things back up and making sure that the regiment is ready for deployment. For the soldiers, this means surprise inspections, readiness drills, and seemingly endless clean-up. On the plus side, this does effectively break-up the shipboard doldrums, but it means a lot of make-work that keeps everyone occupied, but hardly shows any progress in the end. Common responsibilities include laundry, swabbing the decks, repainting surfaces, inventorying and repacking supplies, testing equipment, and countless other minor duties.

Every time an officer passes by, a veteran soldier knows to try very hard to look busy. Otherwise, they are invariably recruited to assist with some mindless task that wastes time they might otherwise spend doing nothing. Even when the Player Characters are occupied with this drudgery, other members of the regiment and the *Devout Triumph's* crew might stop by to chat as the Player Characters undertake this tedious labour.

Some characters might have debts in the form of goods or favours that they either owe or are owed to other members of their regiment. These could be a consequence of gambling, or might be in repayment for a favour performed or a piece of equipment or luxury item that was traded or loaned. In the last few days before they depart the vessel, they might wish to recover such items, or their peers could request the return of such things—see **The Bookie** on page 25. Possible favours might require performing a prank on one of their fellows, retrieving illicit items, or any number of other actions that could draw the ire of the Commissariat. None of this should be physically dangerous, but any of it could draw the irritation of their commanders.

In the course of various discussions, rumours should continue to circulate and Guardsmen should continue their contraband trade. This provides the characters with an opportunity to acquire goods by making a **Challenging (+0) Commerce Test** for any items with an Availability up to Scarce. Note that this is not a Logistics Test; the characters' efforts here go completely outside the chain of command. One notable change to these Tests is due to the fact that any circulating rumours significantly modify the desirability of a particular item. Prior to making a Commerce Test, any character can work to spread a rumour to his trading partner by making an **Opposed Routine (+20) Deceive Test**. Each Degree of Success on that Test adds an additional +10 bonus to a Commerce Test for items that the rumour suggests are not important during the upcoming assignment.



In this way, just as the characters hear rumours about the upcoming assignment, they can also begin to spread them. For some characters, this might be done solely to provide themselves with additional advantages in trading or acquiring equipment, while others might simply be motivated to sow optimism or discontent among their brethren. Note that these rumours need not have any particular basis in reality—they are simply the tales that circulate aboard the crowded vessel. Game Masters are encouraged to create rumours that are particularly appropriate to the characters' regiment. A few examples of the circulating rumours include the following:

- The Severan Dominate forces have forsaken the God-Emperor and delve into sorcery. The only effective defences against such heresy are talismans and works of faith. Anything emblazoned with the Imperial Aquila (including most weapons and armour), any religious talisman, and any writing that offers spiritual direction, all become far more valuable. Add an additional –20 to any Tests to acquire such items and an additional +20 when trading such items away.
- It seems that there are some wretched xenos invading the destination world. The rebels have chosen to ally with these abominations and forsake their faith in humanity and the God-Emperor. Decide which xenos the PCs have most recently battled, if applicable. Otherwise, select one at random. Good advice about defeating such foes offers a +10 to any Deceive Test to start a related rumour.
- As, by all accounts, Hervara is practically secure, there should be little need for extra weapons, ammunition, or even field supplies. Exchanging such material for entertainment and luxuries might be a worthwhile way to keep themselves occupied as they wile away the days. Add an additional +10 to any Tests to acquire weapons, but an additional –20 to Tests to acquire luxury items.
- The climate reports about Hervara from the briefing are wildly inaccurate. The whole planet is filled with lush tropical islands. The whole deployment is simply going to be a matter of showing the aquila, scaring the locals, and enjoying a posting in a pleasant climate for once. If the PCs really want to enjoy it, they'll need a copy of a local language guide. This is a scam to try to deprive the characters of their resources and gear in exchange for relatively useless information. It requires a **Routine (+20) Scrutiny Test** to resist; any Player Character who fails this Test trades away one relatively trivial item or piece of equipment of his choice for the "local language guide," which offers esoteric pointers on a dialect that has not been in use anywhere of consequence since M38.
- The pollution reports about Hervara's environment downplays the severity of its atmosphere. The characters might want to carry additional respirators, plus first aid supplies and survival gear to deal with skin burns from exposure to the toxic atmosphere. No one has a chance to enjoy the environs; the whole trip is about getting through the deployment alive. Add an additional –20 modifier to any Tests to acquire survival gear, but an additional +10 modifier to Tests to acquire luxury items.

PREFLIGHT

In the last few days before the *Devout Triumph* is expected to reach the Hervara system, the pace of activity increases to near frantic levels. Officers and Commissars wander the decks, constantly charging the soldiers with new tasks. Many of these seem like they should be outside of the Player Characters' responsibilities. These could include things like packing cargo that belongs to other units, loading cargo aboard a shuttlecraft with no knowledge of its contents, or unloading cargo that some other unit just finished loading. This is largely pointless make-work, generated by officers who are either trying to look important or keep their soldiers too busy to break too many regulations during downtime.

Importantly, this represents the last opportunity that the Player Characters have to resupply their Standard Regimental Guardsman Kit from the ship's stores. While they begin the scenario with a fully stocked kit, they might have expended up some of their supplies during exercises aboard the vessel, or simply as consumables. Once they take possession of their kit, they are responsible for its entire contents until they reach a base on the surface where they can resupply. Difficulties in landing are a common occurrence, and soldiers are often forced to depend upon their rations and other supplies much longer than originally planned. However, the full kit is an unwieldy product to haul. Because of this, the characters likely wish to delay a last resupply as long as possible. If they wait too long, they discover long lines at the Quartermaster's station and a scarcity of sought-after items. Game Masters should use their best judgment in granting any last minute Logistics requests, keeping in mind the difficulties that they are likely to face over the remainder of this act.

In the last few hours prior to departure, Ensign Siobhan Mason (see page 25) tracks down the Player Characters. She is in charge of the loading of the Angantyr-Class Dropship to which their platoon has been assigned. As they are the ones who are expected to travel aboard it, she wants them to make certain that all of the correct gear is properly loaded and that all of the cargo is correct.

This provides the Player Characters with one last and important opportunity to make sure that they have just about any equipment that they desire, within reason. Ensign Mason is predisposed to help the Player Characters, and she is also willing to trust them if they explain that a particular item should be loaded aboard their dropship rather than one of the other ones. If there is a particular item that could reasonably be available for assignment to them, she is willing to try to make sure that they have it. This requires an **Opposed Easy (+30) Deceive, Logic, or Charm Test**. Any Weapons, Armour, or Wargear of Availability up to and including Scarce are available in sufficient quantity to outfit the squad. However, the squad should not be able to finagle Cybernetics, Vehicles, or any items of Availability Rare or higher at this stage.

Ensign Mason seems very appreciative for their help in pointing out the "missing" items. She is so earnest and helpful that the characters might ultimately feel a little bit guilty about taking advantage of her in this way. You might also want to remind them that anything which they acquire in this fashion likely came from another unit within their regiment. If they are too excessive in their selections, that other unit might come looking for their missing gear after they reach the surface.

Conversely, the Ensign is very determined to make certain that everything is properly stowed to best take advantage of the available space. This creates a conflict of interest, as the PCs are aware of the unstable nature of some of their gear—particularly ammunition and explosives. Have each of the characters make a **Routine (+20) Awareness Test** as they examine the loaded cargo. Each Player Character who succeeds immediately notes that several crates of explosives have been loaded in with the passenger area. If the landing gets bumpy, this could become quite dangerous. Persuading the Ensign to move the volatile gear to a less hazardous location—possibly including another shuttle—requires success on an **Opposed Hard (–20) Deceive, Logic, or Charm Test**.

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPCs play important roles as the characters complete their preparations to depart the *Devout Triumph*. Full game statistics for these characters are included in the **NPC Appendix**, beginning on page 121 of this volume or, as noted, in the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook.

THE BOOKIE

One of the many ways that soldiers can pass the time during a journey is by betting some small portion of their wages or small luxury items on completely mundane things. It might be a bet for how often the Company's Colour Sergeant spins the banner each day, the number of steps taken on the parade ground during a particular drill, or the colour of the corpse starch at dinner. The Bookie is the member of the company that

handles all of the bets. In terms of game statistics, he is a standard Guardsman (see page 372 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). However, his influence extends significantly beyond the normal bounds of a trooper of his station. As the journey nears its end, almost everyone in the company owes him something. The time has come to settle up. Depending upon the nature of the Player Characters, he might collect material debts from them, or he might seek them out so that they can repay their debt by helping to convince another member of the company to pay up.

ENSIGN SIOBHAN MASON

Ensign Mason is a junior Imperial Navy Officer who is assigned to see to it that the PC's Angantyr-Class Dropship is properly loaded prior to departure for Hervara's surface. She is a very young officer on her first assignment. She is surprisingly trusting and devout in her service to the God-Emperor—to the point that many veteran troopers might suspect that she is in fact pursuing some secret agenda, for herself or some higher powers. There is no evidence that this is true, but that need hardly restrain the paranoia of those who meet her.

Because of this, the Ensign wants to make certain that everything necessary is properly loaded and secured aboard the landing shuttle. While she does not entirely trust the Player Characters to see that everything is properly stowed, she does expect them to know more about what should be present than the cargo manifest that she has been assigned. The Ensign is willing to go to exceptional lengths to make certain that they have everything they might want for the assignment, especially if they can put in a well-placed word with the Lieutenant. See page 135 for the Ensign's full profile.



A LARGER SAGA

Some Game Masters might wish to incorporate **FINAL TESTAMENT** as part of a story arc with other published **ONLY WAR** scenarios. To a certain extent, this is challenging—few Imperial Guardsmen spend time reading about the retirement plan prior to enlisting. Despite the high rate of fatalities amongst those serving in the Imperial Guard, it is certainly possible that this might not be the first adventure on which the squad has embarked.

If the PCs participated in **Against the Savages**, the adventure from the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook, their regiment likely ended the scenario on the planet Skrynn. To begin this adventure, they would most likely have been recalled—probably unexpectedly and hastily—from that world, due to a greater need on Hervara. There should certainly be some degree of resentment regarding their recall from the commanding officers, though whether the PCs share this righteous indignation, or are simply relieved to have been moved from the front to a “more tranquil” assignment, is up to them. Otherwise, their experience fighting xenos offers them some tactical insights during the battles on the mining world.

Characters who survived *Eleventh Hour*—freely available at www.FantasyFlightGames.com—are members of the Catachan Jungle Fighters, and are experienced fighting on a death world, under brutal conditions. While Hervara is a foreign environment, the constraints of operating far from support against treacherous foes should hardly seem troubling. However, the additional protection required by its atmosphere and the desolate environs are foreign to these soldiers, who are not used to fielding environmentally protective equipment that restricts their motions and field of vision.

Characters who completed **Old Soldiers**, from **ONLY WAR: THE GAME MASTER'S KIT**, have been transferred from Virbius after an intense series of debriefings. The foes expected on Hervara are starkly different from those they have just engaged, and the transfer to this world seems like an easy assignment, on which they can recover from the brutality they faced when battling the Children of Thorns Kabal. Their familiarity with the Severan Dominate also grants them an edge in the coming conflict.



THE CRASH

"This is Imperial Flight Tau-Kappa Four Twenty-One. We've lost both engines and are in a barely controlled descent. We could really use someone to mark our impact site."

—Flight Captain Ebony Corvine, last words

During this scene, the Player Characters rather abruptly discover the severity of the resistance that they face on Hervara. The scene shatters any illusions that they might have about a relatively brief and simple assignment. Instead, it brings them face to face with the dangers of life in the Imperial Guard, even when the weapons are not pointed directly at them.

Depending upon how the scene plays out, it can have critical ramifications for the remainder of the chapter. Through the decisions that the characters make during this scene, they can gain access to an abundance of armaments and resources, or they could find that their access to equipment is sparse and limited. The equipment they secure at this stage is used to defend against both the Orks and the forces of the Severan Dominate. As they later travel across Hervara's hostile surface, every round of ammunition and every ounce of promethium is critical for a safe arrival at a secure Imperial Guard facility.

TRANSPORTING VEHICLE REGIMENTS

If the Player Characters are part of a vehicular regiment, they ride in the same dropship, but they are given one last opportunity to check the status of their vehicles on the lower deck prior to departure. This gives them an opportunity to stow everything, and it provides an additional place to conceal any contraband or extra gear within the vehicle's crew compartment. Note that there are typically fewer soldiers—but more support staff—within vehicle companies. The transport's passenger area is simply reconfigured to accommodate the reduced number of passengers, allowing more room for cargo.



FINAL BOARDING

This brief scene covers loading all of the PCs aboard the dropship, and their first encounter with the Ork aerial superiority. The material covered through this scene is largely narrative. While the Player Characters' decisions do have some effects, most of the action is beyond their control. During a landing, the soldiers of the Imperial Guard are at the mercy of the choices and actions made by the pilots of the Imperial Navy. Decisions about when to try to force a landing through enemy fire occur far higher up the chain of command.

The scene begins as the soldiers carry their gear from their barracks to their assigned Angantyr-Class Dropship. The passage through the *Devout Triumph's* corridors should carry a bit of relief at the completion of their travel, as well as some concern for the impending assignment. When the Player Characters are ready, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The Angantyr-Class Dropship is a massive, ponderous craft that resembles more than anything else a great leviathan from the sea of some primordial world, and is capable of carrying a full company and all of its support elements. The huge ship is nestled in the landing bay of your transport ship, along with dozens of nearly identical landing shuttles. Your company has formed up into several long lines, which lead up to the boarding ramps. A Commissar and an Officer both wait at the entrance, checking off names and serial numbers as soldiers enter the craft. Once through the doors, you quickly understand the reason for the lines—gear must be carefully stowed above and below each jump seat. The seats require assembling a web of buckles and belts to safely fit each fully equipped soldier into a space that seems far too small. Even trying to stow your gear in the unfamiliar confines while under the Commissar's watchful eye is a challenge.

An Angantyr-Class Dropship has two decks. The upper deck is generally assigned to transport up to a full company of soldiers, while the lower deck accommodates all of the support vehicles necessary for their deployment. This combination allows soldiers to have easy access to the full range of their gear in the event that the craft must land under hostile conditions—such as on this assignment. If the vehicles, heavy weapons, and ammunition were on a separate landing shuttle, the Guardsmen might become separated from this gear and be unable to use it to respond to hostile actions at the landing zone. Hatches and ladders connect the upper deck of the dropship with the lower, so that soldiers riding in the passenger compartment can quickly reach their vehicles for disembarking.

While the vessel is boarded from the sides, upon landing, the heavily armoured nosecone opens up, so that tanks can drive down an extendable ramp directly onto the field of battle. Similarly, soldiers on the upper level can use the vehicle's massive scale to maintain a broad field of fire from their elevated position. Of course, only the soldiers closest to the opening can fire. Further, once the nose cone opens, the soldiers and vehicles lose any of its protective benefits, as they are fully exposed to any incoming fire.

As soldiers board the dropship, they are seated sequentially, with those sent aboard first seated closest to the boarding gate. The Player Characters are herded to a set of seats near the



cockpit, where they are crammed in with the other troopers of the line while the dropship makes its descent through the atmosphere and to the landing zone. Naval personnel occasionally pass by to ensure that all of the guardsmen are remaining in their seats, lest they get underfoot.

Their entire company has boarded this single dropship. This includes all the members of their platoon, their platoon's Lieutenant and his command squad, the company commander and his command squad, plus all of the other platoons and their officers. Support staff, including Commissars, are also housed within the passenger compartment. Depending upon the size of the company, this group could number between one hundred and nearly one thousand individuals. Regardless of the number, the space within the passenger compartment has been optimally configured by the tireless scribes of the Departmento Munitorum so that everyone, from the lowliest trooper to the most renowned Lord Commissar, is tightly cramped.

Normally, troopers board the craft carrying only their Standard Regimental Guardsman Kit. If any of the Player Characters have supplemented the kit, particularly with anything unwieldy, fitting it into the available cargo space represents an additional challenge. Characters with heavy weapons do have additional space allocated for those weapons and ammunition, but the dropship has predesignated and fitted sites for these weapons. Consequently, the additional space is largely preassigned. Given that a Commissar (see page 374 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) is watching over them (either one with whom they are familiar, or a particularly no-nonsense individual they have not met before), they also run the risk of exposing any contraband that they might wish to conceal. Attempting to squeeze a modified kit into the storage compartments requires an **Ordinary (+10) Perception Test**. At the Game Master's discretion, the GM can increase the difficulty of this Test if any of the additional gear is particularly ungainly or obvious.

Characters who fail the Test to stow their contraband must immediately make an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Stealth Test** against the Commissar's Scrutiny Skill. If they fail the Test,

the Commissar brashly approaches them, seizes the contraband, and shoves their kit into place. He explains that they can discuss the consequences for their illegal actions once the vessel lands.

After everyone is seated, with all gear stowed, the interminable waiting begins. Imperial Navy crew walk through the passenger compartment, making certain that all of the gear is properly secured. They also seek to insure that all of the soldiers have been sufficiently battened down, so neither cargo nor troops can get loose during the descent to bother the crew with noisy clanks or petty complaints about head trauma that would interrupt more important work. Afterwards, the crew members exit the passenger compartment towards the crew area. Then, the shuttle airlock is mechanically sealed with a thud and a note of finality. A whirl indicates that the internal cabin fans are pressurising the dropship, and the speakers begin a series of prayers and anthems in praise of the God-Emperor. The cabin lights switch to a grim red light that splashes bloody shadows across everyone's face.

From the point that the characters are strapped in to their jumpseats, the situation is entirely out of their control. There are no viewports or screens to see outside of the vessel. After a few moments, they hear the thuds of the vessel launching from the *Devout Triumph*, and feel and hear the pressure and noise from the dropship's engines engaging. The rocket engines emit a deafeningly loud roar that reverberates through the crew compartment. It continues for at least fifteen minutes, and then is abruptly disrupted by a loud explosion, which shakes the vessel. After that, the sound of the engines and the air circulation systems completely cease. Even veterans of multiple combat drops have not had this happen before. Normally, the engines continue their roar from the moment the dropship departs the transport to the time that they land upon the target world's surface.

The explosion was the sound of an Ork strike hitting the dropship's main engines. At this time, they have been effectively destroyed. The pilots are preparing to enter the atmosphere, where they can attempt to land the badly damaged dropship using what little energy

remains to power the craft's anti-gravity systems. Under ideal circumstances, they are much less manoeuvrable and powerful than the main engines. Without the power of the engines, the shuttle is on its way to a very bumpy crash landing.

Note that the Imperial Navy crew are focused on the craft and are not paying any heed to their cargo, meaning the Player Characters, their company, and their vehicles. The passenger compartment remains tightly sealed, the red lights remain on, and the prayers and songs to the God-Emperor continue to play. Any characters who choose to leave their seats draw the immediate ire of their commanding officers and Commissars, along with stern warnings and dark glares from any Naval personnel who happen to pass by to prevent such attempts at wriggling free.

This changes abruptly when the dropship enters Hervara's atmosphere. A new roaring sound emerges, that of the craft's thin skin colliding with the planet's uppermost air currents. The temperature aboard the shuttle begins to slowly rise, as the roar gets louder. Everyone can also feel a sinking feeling as the craft starts to plunge towards the surface, tilting from side to side. Once they enter the atmosphere, Player Characters can make a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test**; if they succeed, they notice something that sounds suspiciously like gunfire or the loud sputtering of machinery, even over the titanic roar of the dropship's goliath engines. Attempts to make others aware of this noise, however, are dismissed by any nearby officers.

OPTIONAL SCENE

Please note that **Into the Cockpit** is optional. The Game Master can run it in response to the actions of the Player Characters if he deems it. This scene offers the Player Characters an opportunity to, from their perspective, avoid what seems a certain death. However, not every group of PCs is going to decide to get involved in such an unorthodox way. After all, their commanding officers and Commissars are likely to discourage them from taking any unsanctioned actions at this time, even in the face of apparently certain death. If the Player Characters decide to play things by the book and wait patiently within the passenger compartment, based on the presentation here, then they would certainly die without even realising the danger they faced.

Because of this, the scene is optional. If the Player Characters choose not to act, or if the Game Master simply does not wish to run this encounter, it is simple enough to assume that the Angantyr-Class Dropship's august machine spirit was able to bring the mighty vessel down in such a way that the Player Characters, their squad, and most of their compatriots from their company survive the impact. However, characters who do come to the vessel's aid receive additional notoriety for their actions. If they successfully activate the additional armour and guide the machine spirit in for a landing, then the word of their heroics spread throughout the company and the regiment. They are viewed as the salvation of their company. For the remainder of their time on Hervara, they receive a +5 bonus to all Logistics Tests.

INTO THE COCKPIT

As the badly damaged dropship enters the atmosphere, things begin to go terribly wrong. Without engines, the shuttle is scarcely able to manoeuvre. This makes it a very attractive target for the Ork Bombers that swarm through Hervara's atmosphere. As the craft dips into the atmosphere, it soon comes under fire. Its heavy armour is enough to resist most of the assault, but some portions of the craft are significantly less armoured—including the view screen attached to the cockpit.

The hammering Ork weapons manage to find even this small vulnerability and exploit it, either by uncharacteristic cunning, luck, or raw volume of unaimed fire. In a cataclysmic instant, an explosion ravages the dropship's cockpit. All of the trained Imperial Navy crew are slain. Without them, the massive craft's machine spirit is trapped in a moment of indecision. Its sacred directives call for it to use the engines as part of its landing procedure. As the engines are not responding, the machine spirit needs the direction of the crew in order to land. Without it, the vessel simply enters free-fall as it approaches Hervara's surface. If the impact does not destroy the craft, then the continued fire from the Ork Bombers might just do it.

The odd sounds and the increasing temperature unnerve the majority of the soldiers within the passenger compartment. Those who have survived previous combat drops have never been through one like this. The raw recruits take the situation even worse, as several have begun to fervently cry out their desperation to the God-Emperor. Even some of the hardened Commissars seem as though they might be ready to vent their concern by taking actions to keep the troopers in line. To help build the tension, paraphrase or read the following aloud:

The engines have been silent for what seems like an eternity. The temperature of the passenger compartment has risen to the point that everyone is sweating, and the stench of unwashed humanity has become potent. The arrhythmic swaying of the dropship has induced nausea in many of the members of your company, and the stench has only made the situation even more insufferable. Just as the situation seems to become even more deplorable, the hatch separating the crew compartment from the passenger section of the vessel unlocks and slams open. A wave of heat and the stench of burnt flesh assault your senses. By happenstance, your squad was placed closest to the opening.

The other side of the hatchway conceals a narrow passage which contains a ladder that extends vertically up to the ship's cockpit. The Player Characters can immediately see the ladder and feel the warm air and rank smells coming from it. They can also hear and feel the rush of wind coming through the passage—something that all but the least technically-inclined Guardsman would immediately realise should never happen, as the dropship should be atmospherically sealed. Any wind blowing through the passage is a sure sign that something catastrophic has occurred.

The Player Characters might try shouting out to the flight crew before they unstrap to investigate. If they do so, they receive no response. While this is because the flight crew is dead, they have no good way to be sure of this. There is no

intercom system located within the passenger compartment. If they act as if they are going to unstrap, their company Lieutenant as well as their Commissar order them not to do so. However, no weapons are drawn. An **Easy Scrutiny (+30) Test** reveals that the speaker is issuing the order out of obligation to the regulations, but really hopes the soldier might disobey it. Anyone who succeeds on the Test realises that, unless he somehow finds a very creative way to make their desperate situation even worse, he is unlikely to face any consequences for disobeying that order.

Player Characters who wish to ascend to the cockpit first need to unstrap from their jump seat. Given the packed quarters and the instability of the dropship, this is not a trivial matter, and from here until the situation is resolved (either by success on the part of the Player Characters, or in a fiery crash), the encounter is best handled in Structured Time, even though there is no direct combat, per se (see page 240 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). Anyone attempting to get loose must first succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use or Acrobatics Test** or a **Very Hard (-30) Strength Test**. If a character fails three consecutive times at this task, or by three or more Degrees of Failure on a single attempt, the straps become hopelessly knotted. Characters in this predicament must draw a knife to cut themselves free, if one is in reach, or depend upon one of their fellows for assistance with their extraction. Cutting a character free is a time-consuming endeavour as the dropship flutters through the sky, requiring another three Actions.

Once free of the jump seat, a character must carefully navigate the moving deck of the dropship to reach the hatchway. This requires a **Routine (+20) Acrobatics Test** for the character to make the trip without injury. Success on the Test gets the character through the hatch and to the base of the ladder. Characters who fail the Test fall to the deck, rather painfully, as the dropship twists and turns through Hervara's upper atmosphere. These characters suffer Falling Damage as though they had fallen from a height of one metre per Degree of Failure (see page 267 **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). Further, any unstrapped characters must continue to make an **Ordinary (+10) Acrobatics Test** at the beginning of each Round until they either reach the ladder or find an empty jump seat where they can strap in. Again, each time that they fail, they suffer Falling Damage. Player Characters should receive appropriate bonuses for using their resources cleverly during this scene—clamping down on a secure bulkhead with a utility mechaendrite, tying oneself to the Ogryn, calling upon the Sanctioned Psyker's telekinetic powers, or getting assistance from more nimble characters might help even the most graceless individuals survive this encounter.

Characters who reach the ladder must pass a **Challenging (+0) Athletics or Acrobatics Test** to safely ascend it. If the ship were stable, this would be a trivial task that need not require a Test. However, the current conditions are horrific, and reaching the cockpit requires a significant struggle. Those who succeed

reach the cockpit without incident. Failure again brings Falling Damage of one metre per Degree of Failure. Those who fall can either choose to return to their jump seat—with a **Difficult (-10) Acrobatics Test** as above—or attempt the climb anew.

In the cockpit, the characters discover a scene of recent disaster. All four crew members are dead, slain by a stray blast that struck the lightly armoured windshield. Many of the ship's control systems were also damaged in the assault. The crew deaths only partially explain the current crisis. The Player Characters need to first decipher the current situation, and then take action in order to resolve it.

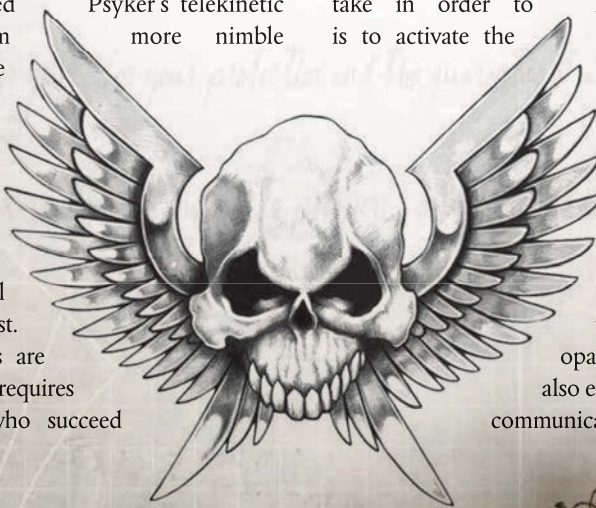
Depending upon the number of characters present, the cockpit could be extremely cramped. The area is filled with massive cogitators, complex machinery, and other devices with scant spare room for crew to manoeuvre. Keeping in mind that every seat is currently occupied by a badly scorched dead body, the characters have very little space. This complicates their efforts to reach the controls.

There are two significant factors that play in their favour at this stage. There are dozens of well-placed handholds throughout the cockpit area. Because of this, the Player Characters do not need to make any further Tests to manoeuvre around the cockpit. However, the dead bodies, howling winds, and destroyed control systems make all of their efforts awkward.

The second factor in their favour is that the dropship's machine spirit is capable of taking control of the vehicle and making a relatively controlled landing. When they enter the cockpit, its calm, synthesised voice immediately addresses them, asking for their assistance and directing their actions. It is looping a question towards them, which is barely audible over the sounds of the rushing wind. That question is, "Engines are not responding. Begin emergency antigravitic descent?" Understanding this sentence over the sounds of the winds swirling through the cockpit requires a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test**.

Even as the characters attempt to respond to the machine spirit, they can also attempt to manually gain some degree of control over the craft. Of course, it is improbable that any of the characters are skilled at Operate (Aeronautica). The scene assumes that they lack that Skill, and substitutes Tech-Use. As all of the required actions are routine flight measures, if anyone has the Operate (Aeronautica) Skill, they can use that Skill, with an additional +30 bonus to the Tests for specialised expertise.

There are three critical actions that the characters must take in order to land the dropship safely. The first is to activate the windscreen armour. This grants the cockpit some degree of protection against incoming fire, and blocks the swirling winds blowing within. Finding and activating this switch requires a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**. Failure on the Test simply delays finding it by another turn. Success seals the windshield behind an opaque barrier. The abrupt silence also enables the characters to easily communicate with the machine spirit.



The next necessary action is to explain the current situation to the machine spirit. It needs a pilot to confirm that the engines are non-functional. At the moment, there are dozens of warning glyphs flashing from the cockpit's view screens. The vast majority of the glyphs describe damage to the dropship's armour and critical systems, including the engines. Understanding that the engines have actually been sheared from the craft requires a **Difficult (–10) Tech-Use Test**. Of course, the characters can simply satisfy the machine spirit's questioning by informing it that the engines are non-functional, without passing this Test. Otherwise, it continues attempting to reactivate the engines.

Finally, the characters need to instruct the machine spirit to land the dropship using the antigravitics. They should also inform it that the craft is currently under enemy fire—which affects its flight plan, and the speed with which it attempts to reach the planet's surface. Once this directive is issued, the machine-spirit informs them that under these conditions, it is no longer able to safely reach the original target landing zone. It asks for permission to divert all reserve power to the antigravitics. It then informs them that they have one minute (twelve Rounds) to strap in and prepare for a bumpy landing.

At this point, the characters can begin to scramble to try to find available jump seats. As the dropship is currently descending in a more stable fashion, the Player Characters need not make Tests to descend the ladder back to the passenger deck. Removing a body from the piloting couches requires a Turn and a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**. Strapping back into one of these seats, or one of the jump seats below, requires the same amount of time and the same Test. Note that any characters who had to cut their way free of their safety harness need to either use a different jump seat or make the landing without one. When the time has elapsed, proceed to **Shattering the Earth**.

MANAGING FAILURE

Currently, the PCs are in a dropship that is out of control crashing to the planet's surface. Success during this scenario offers them the chance to significantly reduce the Damage that the PCs suffer, but in the end, these vessels are designed to keep passengers alive in the worst of conditions. Even if the PCs fail to do anything in the cockpit, they and a portion of their Company should still survive (though success ensures that far more of their Company makes it to the surface intact and combat-ready). Increase the Impact Damage that everyone suffers in the next scene by 1d5 if they do not even attempt to stop the crashing dropship.

SHATTERING THE EARTH

This scene covers the Angantyr-Class Dropship making a barely controlled crash landing into Hervara's surface. The vessel carries tremendous momentum with it and easily penetrates the planet's surface, ploughing at least partially into one of the world's many underground caverns.

The subterranean tunnel that the dropship enters just happens to be the location of a massive archeotech weapon from the time of the Great Crusade, and of the countless Orks who are currently working to refit it.

As the Player Characters emerge from the crash, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Those in the cockpit are warned by the machine spirit, when it calmly states "Prepare for imminent landing" an instant before all of the passengers hear and feel a momentous crash. The sensation of impact and brutal deceleration seems endless. Thousands of litres of safety foam flood the cockpit and passenger areas, as the roaring sound of impact continues. The ship is shaken in every possible direction, and the foam becomes increasingly restrictive and choking as the crash progresses. Then, with a last few creaks, the sound stops, and the dropship settles into place. The foam melts away, leaving a sticky slime coating everything it touched. The ship has landed, and at first blush, you seem to be miraculously alive.

The good news is that the PCs were fortunate. They suffered minimal damage in the course of the crash. If they failed to set up the machine spirit properly during the optional encounter, then they do suffer 1d5+3 Impact Damage that is not reduced by Armour from the crash. The bad news is that not everyone in the company was so fortunate. In spite of their heroic efforts, portions of the drop ship were sheared apart and destroyed in the landing. The force of the impact actually shredded the hull in places, and rent the dropship into multiple fragments.

The PCs were in the largest portion of the hull, but many other fragments are now dispersed far and wide across Hervara's surface. Tragically, among these are the remains of all of the company's officers and Commissars—excluding any who happen to be PCs, of course. The PCs now need to work with the surviving authority figures and assemble all of the remaining squads into an effective fighting force. They are likely to also want to inventory their available supplies, though they have little time to do so.

Depending upon their company structure, there are, at a minimum, ten surviving squads of soldiers. If this represents only a small fraction of the normal company size for their regiment, increase this number to forty percent of the healthy regiment. If the PCs acted quickly to gain control of the floundering dropship, add an additional two squads to this total for each piloting action they successfully completed during **Into the Cockpit**.

A quick inventory reveals that the survivors have an ample supply of lasguns and ammunition, and enough special and heavy weapons to assign one of the regiment's favoured type of both to every squad. There are also supplies that include rations, respirators, additional uniforms, armour, water, and other assorted routine supplies. Game Masters should mention each of these items and ask if the Player Characters plan to take the time to distribute them or load crates of these supplies onto vehicles. Of course, doing so takes time—which the survivors do not have in this hostile, unknown environment.

While the exit ramp mounted in the nosecone is buried, they can still access the vehicle deck, and it looks like there are large enough rents in the sides of the dropship to carefully drive the vehicles out of the ship. There are enough Chimeras present to transport all of the surviving squads—even if they are not normally a mechanised company. If that is the case, some of these were assigned to specialist groups, command elements, or were designated for assignment. In any case, the Player Characters and their fellow soldiers now take advantage of the happy coincidence. Alternatively, if the regiment is normally



dependent upon ground-based vehicles, the appropriate ones are present within the badly damaged hull. The condition of these vehicles is, of course, dependent on their success landing.

Hervara's planetary crust is high enough in mineral content that vox communications are unreliable when units are deployed into the world's tunnel network. In the course of the crash, the dropship's external antennae were destroyed. Currently, that leaves the PCs with access to any vox systems they carry, as well as those mounted upon their vehicles. The company is below the planet's surface, and far from the nearest human outpost. None of these systems are able to communicate effectively with other Imperial forces until the soldiers exit the Ork-filled labyrinth and reach Hervara's surface.

When the Player Characters exit the damaged vessel—or send others to scout outside of it—they begin to realise the full scope of the disaster. Only path leads out of the vessel, and that hole opens into a large cavern. The cavern is dominated by a weapon of massive scale, comparable in size to the greatest of Titans and armed with a strange array of unknown but nonetheless menacing purpose, including an ominous dish of startling scale. The Player Characters recognise that the enormous machine appears to be of Imperial design, but recognising its true nature requires success on a **Hard (-20) Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) Test** or an **Ordinary (+10) Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) or Forbidden Lore (Archeotech) Test**.

At the moment, a vast series of scaffolds surround the massive vehicle. These structures are clearly of Ork construction. Red paint has been splattered haphazardly across the structure,

and a number of Ork glyphs have been emblazoned upon the war engine in a similarly chaotic fashion. Based upon the current state of the disassembled treads and open access panels surrounding the vehicle's engines, it is clear to any viewer that the structure is not currently mobile. However, a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test** reveals that the vehicle could be restored to working order in a matter of a few weeks.

While the Ordinatus is within sight, it is not within easy reach, and for the moment, more pressing concerns are at hand. Nob Guzzmasha (see page 36) is in the midst of leading a mob of twenty Ork Lootas towards the vehicle, to see if anything “worth fightin’, lootin’, or eatin’ iz in ‘dere.” Five Mekboyz are also in the cavern, though they are focused upon their work on the Ordinatus, and hundreds of Gretchin mill about in the chaos. Most are preoccupied with various tasks for the Mekboyz, but a mob of twenty of the clever lesser Greenskins has advanced to the edge of the tear in the dropship's skin. They are just in the process of working up the courage to explore its interior, at their Runtherd's command, when the first Imperial Guardsman looks out through the tear. Combat immediately begins.

During this conflict, the Orks are attempting to eliminate the humans who have intruded upon their fortification. The primary goal for the Guardsmen should be to escape, preferably with as many of their brethren intact as possible. The desperate need for a quick escape can be illustrated quickly by several of the other squads immediately suffering massive casualties as the Orks begin their haphazard but enthusiastic assault, firing their inaccurate weapons in startling bursts, and slashing apart those who attempt to flee the crash site with their brutal chopas and other assorted melee weapons, of sundry but uniformly unpleasant form. One option is to take advantage of the vehicles that are available on the lower deck. While the Lootas' weapons present a threat to the Chimeras, the Gretchin pose little danger to armoured vehicles. However, the longer the Guardsmen dawdle, the more Orks begin to move towards the crash site to see what all the noise from the crash is about.

When the PCs decide to exit the dropship and engage the Ork forces, proceed to **Breakout!** (see page 32).

WHERE'S THE BIG MEK?

Big Mek Noshdakka is currently leading a scavenging run away from the Ork fortification. He has taken the majority of the Ork Speed Freeks and their vehicles with him. For the duration of the encounter, those vehicles and resources are unavailable to the Orks—though some of them come into play during **Withdrawal**, on page 44. This has the benefit of shifting the odds substantially, so that the PCs are not simply overwhelmed by the inhabitants of the Ork encampment. In spite of this, it should quickly become apparent that the Imperial forces have little chance of victory in a sustained battle.

Note also that Boss Garbark does not normally operate from the same base as Big Mek Noshdakka. He and his forces operate from one of the other Ork fortifications on Hervara. The PCs need not face him or his Nobz during this chapter, nor are they even aware of his presence on Hervara at this time.

BREAK OUT!

"The first time I observed one of the foul xenos commonly designated as 'Ork' terminate itself accidentally with a complex and dangerous contraption of its own fabrication, I nearly allowed myself the fleshy luxury of a laugh. However, when another one of the Greenskins picked the device up and discharged it into our ranks, eradicating the servitor standing next to me, I found the humour of the situation somewhat stifled. Of course, that creature was also killed by the device, but by the time the third brute lifted the weapon, I had ascertained that remaining in the open was a sub-optimal survival strategy."

—Tech-Priest Garrulon Vyme

Throughout this scene, the Player Characters come face to face with the foul xenos who have contaminated Hervara, and the traitors who have turned against the majesty of the God-Emperor. The Ork presence, which was never mentioned in their briefings, is substantial. As they emerge from the ruins of their dropship—destroyed by the Ork forces—they face a contingent of Orks that is well equipped, and substantially larger than the force they have on hand.

The Player Characters also have their first meeting with the forces of the Severan Dominate. These humans are every bit as willing to annihilate them as the xenos. Some might find it shocking that the opponents are so well equipped and so capable. After all, their previous briefing indicated nothing of the sort. More hardened characters may simply accept this as standard operating procedure and willfully engage their foes.

As they fight against Hervara's encroaching dangers, the characters have an opportunity to gauge the overall potency of their enemies. While this information is doubtful the first thing on their minds as they flee for their lives, the insight proves valuable later, once they make contact with Imperial assets. At the same time, they can take advantage of opportunities to sabotage the xenos assets.

Refer to the **Map of the Hervara Caverns** on page 52. In order to escape from the Ork encampment, the characters must first fight their way around the Ordinatus, and then through the vehicle garage. Beyond that is the only nearby exit from Hervara's tunnels which is large enough to accommodate their vehicles. This scene also encompasses the running battle through the Ork encampment, only ending after they encounter the Severan Dominate forces outside, who had been preparing to infiltrate the base.

AT THE DROPSHIP

The scene opens as the characters and their company first engage the Ork assets which had been working on the Ordinatus. While these Orks had been distracted by working on repairing the massive vehicle, the arrival of the dropship was a time consuming event. Unless the Imperial Guardsmen immediately emerged from the crashed dropship, the Greenskins have ample time to recover their equipment and prepare for a battle. Given that these are Orks, the necessary preparation time is extremely brief.



CHALLENGING TANK REGIMENTS

Guardsmen with heavy vehicles such as the mighty Leman Russ at their disposal can simply slam through many of the combat encounters as listed in this chapter, safely ensconced in their armoured fortress. However, there are many simple ways to make the encounters in this chapter more exciting:

- Orks can release herds of Bomb Squigs equipped with Tankbusta Bombs (crude Ork approximations of meltabombs, from page 202 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook), setting the creatures on the tank from many different angles so that the Player Characters must emerge to slay the beasts before they can get beneath its vulnerable treads.
- Orks and Severan Dominate forces alike can plant tank traps, such as dragon's teeth, trenches, or even pit traps. While a rugged Imperial tank would usually suffer little direct harm from such an obstacle, if the Player Characters fail to notice and avoid it with an appropriate Awareness Test (based on how well it is hidden), the tank becomes mired or stuck. To free it, the Player Characters must exit the vehicle and make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to remove the obstruction, an **Arduous (-40) Strength Test** accompanied by a **Hard (-20) Operate (Surface) Test** by the driver, or other appropriate Tests as determined by the Game Master. Of course, during this time, their enemies are unlikely to simply sit by and allow the Player Characters to get back on track. Terrain such as very rugged ground, quicksand, and the like can have similar effects.
- While in the caverns, especially if the Player Characters guide their tank into any of the smaller tunnels, discharging a weapon as destructive as a battle cannon could prove extremely dangerous to everyone and not just the hapless foes in its fire arc. If the Player Characters enter a side tunnel or other cramped area with a tank, missed shots with its main armament trigger a minor earthquake, forcing the driver to make a **Hard (-20) Operate (Surface) Test**. If he fails, the vehicle becomes trapped, as with tank traps (see above), and the Player Characters must work to free it. Further, if he fails by three or more Degrees of Failure (and at the GM's discretion), such a collapse completely cuts off the tunnel, forcing the Player Characters to seek an alternate route and face more perils and foes as they backtrack.
- Both Orks and Severan Dominate forces can deploy land mines, possibly in conjunction with the other traps listed here. These require a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test** to notice, and count as demolition charges.
- Once the Player Characters are on the surface, a large tank provides a large target for the Ork flyers, who enjoy unleashing their "dakka" on targets so large that even they are unlikely to miss. Unless their tank company fields a great number of anti-aircraft weapons, they Player Characters need to be clever to survive encounters with Ork aircraft. See **Guerrilla Tactics** on page 47 for ideas on how to use these attack craft to harass the Player Characters during an overland journey.

From their vantage point within the dropship, the characters do not have a great view of their tactical situation. There is only one way out of the ruined vessel, but beyond it, the growing swarm of Orks and the partially reconstructed Ordinatus block their view of much else. The cavern is vast and dimly lit. There are flickering torches, suggestive of Ork structures beyond, but until they take the time to really survey the area—a treacherous task with the incoming fire—they might not appreciate the full scope of their situation.

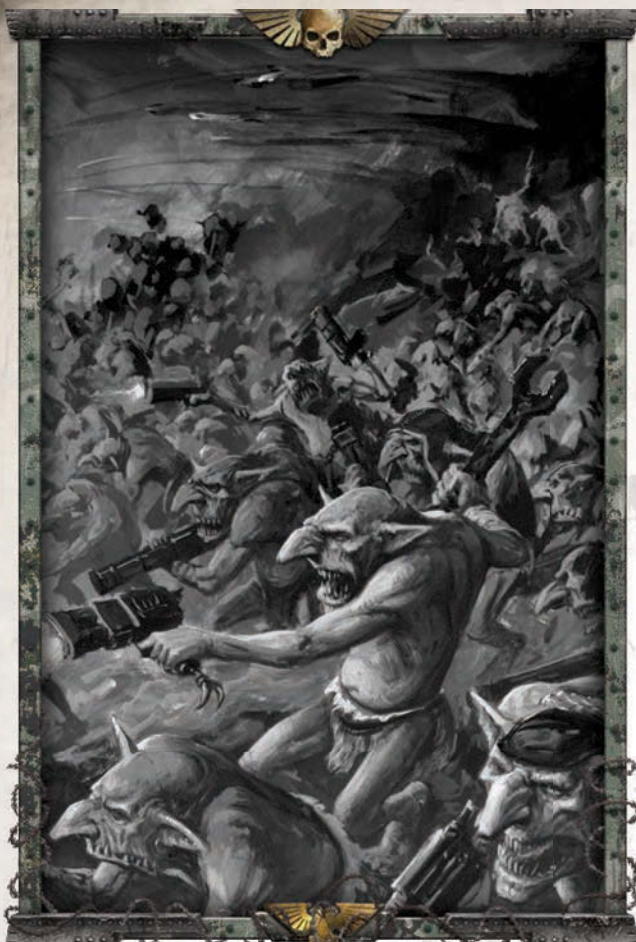
This situation leaves them with two obvious tactical options, one of which is more feasible in the long run. The simplest decision is for them to try to hole up inside of the dropship, resisting the Ork incursion while hoping for reinforcements. The alternative is to try and fight their way through the xenos forces, looking for an escape route. While both are dangerous, the former also has little hope of success against the nigh-endless hordes of Orks in the caverns.

An **Easy (+30) Common Lore (Imperial Guard) Test** points out several flaws in their plans. There is no safe way for scouts to leave the dropship and infiltrate the Ork camp. There is only one large opening between the dropship and the cavern beyond, and hundreds of Greenskins are watching it. Even if they were to cut another hole in the craft's outer skin—a time consuming process—their foes would likely hear and see it being cut. Any scouts in the company are extremely reluctant to attempt to exit the craft without the support of their company—there simply is not enough cover to try to sneak away. If the characters want to rig an explosion, see the **What about the Kaboom?** sidebar on page 37 for

more information. This tactic becomes a better option later in the scene, but there are still complications, including the company's likely destruction at this stage. While the Player Characters might choose to engage in a direct battle with the Ork forces, it should soon become apparent that this is a losing proposition. The xenos possess overwhelming numbers at this stage. As casualties quickly mount, the characters should realise that a careful retreat is their only option for survival.

If the Player Characters decide that sitting tight in the dropship is their best option, their fellows counsel against this strategy. There are several important factors to consider. The soldiers currently have no communications with their Imperial allies. Help could be en route already, but the presence of Ork forces makes it clear that they are behind enemy lines, even if they were unaware until reaching Hervara that these particular enemies were even present. There is simply no way to estimate just how long it might take for a rescue expedition to arrive. Until they reach the surface and consider their maps and tracking systems, they cannot estimate how far they are located from an Imperial outpost. Hervara is a sparsely populated world; it might take weeks to reach the nearest fortification.

Their allies might not even be aware that any of the members of their company survived. The Player Characters are well aware that they just survived a rough crash landing, and at least a portion of their ship is buried beneath Hervara's surface, probably behind enemy lines. Without some sign from the company about their current status, the Imperial forces on Hervara have almost certainly written them off as dead, another battlegroup lost to airborne Orks. If



that is the case, then no rescue operation is being mounted. Even if the company could manage to hold out against the encroaching Orks, they would eventually exhaust their rations and munitions in the process, leading to their isolated and untimely demise in the dark caverns of Hervara.

This leaves a strategic withdrawal as their only truly effective chance at survival. Most of the other noncommissioned officers favour this approach as well. Depending upon how the Player Characters choose to approach the situation, they might reach this decision well before they even examine the conditions of their crash. Alternatively, they might hold a huddled discussion about their best possible options with the other surviving sergeants, as they inventory their supplies and prepare to resist the Orks.

The remainder of this scene works under the assumption that the Player Characters drive their vehicles out of the dropship or depart on foot, engaging the Orks only as they attempt to escape the encampment. This is likely the most viable strategic choice available to them. Unfortunately, they are likely to still suffer monumental casualties in the process. Escaping the caverns is a bloody struggle, even with the best available strategies in place.

The Ordinatus and the xenos attending to it are the most immediate threat when the Imperial Guardsmen exit their dropship. The resistance forces include the Orks mentioned at the conclusion of the previous scene. This is the mob of twenty Gretchin with a Runtherd (see pages 365–366 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook), as well as Nob Guzzmasha and his mob of twenty Ork Lootas. Before the Imperial Guard vehicles can even exit the dropship, they need to clear these xenos out of the way.

Scattered around the portion of the cavern containing the Ordinatus, there are many Gretchin engaged in working on the machine. For the sake of convenience, assume that this amounts to roughly sixty mobs of Gretchin, containing twenty members each. The Game Master should feel free to increase this number if the Greenskins here cannot provide a sufficient threat to the Player Characters. There is an effectively endless supply of Gretchin, though the creatures are cowardly and prefer to attack in large groups, fleeing and regrouping as their numbers are whittled down in battle.

Countless Squigs also wander through the Ork settlement. However, these are generally a diverse mix of utility Squigs, devoted to fulfilling various roles in keeping the Ork community functional. Only a relatively small proportion of these are actual attack Squigs, and these creatures are disorganised even compared to the Orks and Gretchin. For those to effectively engage the Imperial forces, a Runtherd would need to first organise them into a mob formation, which is a time consuming process. Unless the PCs allow the Orks an inordinate amount of time to plan and assemble their forces, the Squigs provide little more than flavour for this encounter. Of course, few Squigs pass up an easy meal, and so the Player Characters could well be assaulted by individual opportunistic Squigs during their rush for freedom.

Beyond the Ordinatus is the Ork encampment. The majority of these buildings are currently unoccupied, but the Ork Speed Freeks dwell here when they are not sowing a swath of destruction upon Hervara's surface. Currently, there are only a few hundred Orks within the various huts and buildings. They are not immediately assembled into mobs, leaving them uncoordinated in their reaction to the Imperial vehicles. Assembling into a more functional force takes them 1d10+5 Rounds from the time the first weapon is fired. At the end of this time, the Orks assemble to form 10 mobs of Ork Boyz, with thirty members each (see page 364 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).

The poorly built stockade wall around the Ork encampment presents no functional obstacle to the tanks of the Imperial Guard. It stands five metres tall, and represents more of a concession to Ork habit than a military asset. As the settlement is functionally isolated by its location within Hervara's caverns, these walls are unmanned. The tanks can drive through the stockade, collapsing it, without suffering any damage or significant difficulty. If, for some reason, the PCs have chosen to leave the vehicles behind, then it does represent a greater danger, as they must either climb over it or fight their way to one of the open gates. This could significantly extend their transit, leaving them exposed to additional enemy fire.

Beyond the stockade wall, there are two possible routes the Player Characters might choose to take. The first is a large, well-lit passage to their right. This tunnel is more than wide enough to drive Imperial vehicles through, up to two abreast. The steady light source soon reveals that the large tunnel opens up into an Ork field hospital. A Mad Dok is contentedly tending to hundreds of Ork patients within the infirmary. Neither the maniacal surgeon and his orderlies, nor his patients, are currently in any condition to challenge a line of Imperial tanks should the Player Characters choose to drive through. However, if the Player Characters are on foot, this presents a more significant obstacle. Refer to the profile

RESOLVING THE BATTLES

Until the Player Characters emerge from the Ork-controlled tunnels, they are engaged in an ongoing fire fight against vastly superior numbers of Orks. They have the advantage of being better organised and having caught the Orks at least as unawares as they are, but there are potentially thousands of the brutal xenos engaged in the fight against, at most, several hundred Imperial Guardsmen. The number of dice rolls is certain to quickly prove unwieldy. Because of this, the conflicts between different NPC groups are most effectively resolved using narrative cues, rather than strict adherence to the game mechanics.

The Player Characters' actions should dictate the Degree of Success for their company as a whole. Each time one of the PCs successfully makes an attack against the Ork forces, one or two of the other squads should also successfully lash out, destroying one of the opposing mobs. Similarly, each time one of the Player Characters suffers significant damage, one of their allied squads should be destroyed.

Handle this in a proportionate way to the number of PCs and allied squads. If there are four Player Characters and ten allied squads, each PC success or failure should be tied to the success of roughly two squads of NPCs. There are a number of ways that individual success can have an influence upon the greater narrative: for instance, if the Player Characters disperse a mob of Orks pinning an allied squad, that squad might in turn rescue them later, and saving an allied squad's sergeant might mean that its members hold fast instead of fleeing and being slaughtered by the savage xenos in the dark. Though the NPCs take various independent actions during this massive pitched battle, the Player Characters should remain the focal point of the conflict.

for a Mad Dok on pages 367–368 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook. He is accompanied by a mob of thirty Gretchin, dressed in blood-stained aprons and carrying various medical tools, organs, and other unpleasant-looking items. Many of the Ork patients are unconscious, strapped to tables, or missing limbs, and are in no condition to join the battle. If the Imperial forces take the time to engage the Mad Dok, they face additional reinforcements, as more Ork Boyz emerge from the settlement and the tunnels closer to the Ordinatus and some infirmary patients rise exuberantly from their makeshift cots to lay about with whatever rusty medical tools, furniture, and severed limbs happen to be on hand. The tunnel beyond the infirmary leads to the garage, where the Speed Freeks' vehicles are normally stored (see **Through the Garage** page 36).

Alternatively, the Player Characters could head into the fungal orchard and farm, away from the Mad Dok's lab. This area is poorly lit, and further from the crash site of their vessel. It also offers little in terms of long term value for the Player Characters. There is no convenient escape route from the small fungal forest. It offers little cover from enemy fire. This area is actually a harvesting site, where Gretchin harvest the local lichen for their Ork masters, in the (usually vain) hope of avoiding a place on the menu themselves. The symbiotic organisms are also edible to humans, as they are essentially the same crops that have been cultivated on Hervara as a domestic staple for generations. Because this is their farm area, the Orks are familiar with the various paths through the massive fronded outgrowths.

The cavern walls and floors are peppered with dozens of small openings from this region. These small passages connect to other portions of Hervara's seemingly endless tunnel complex. Notably, none of these passages are large enough to drive a tank through. They are also universally unlit, and almost all of them head downwards, leading further from the planet's surface. If the Player Characters choose to descend into any of these passages, they must leave their Chimeras behind, and travel forth on foot. This is a viable option, but it significantly changes the remainder of the chapter. Rather than travelling along Hervara's surface, they must instead travel beneath the ground, towards the nearest Imperial controlled mine. While the themes of risk, desperation, and constant attack are comparable to those in the

scenes discussed later in this chapter, the specific locations and context differ. Game Masters who face this situation must adapt those scenes as appropriate for their players.

At the Game Master's discretion, additional mobs of 5-15 Ork Boyz emerge from the small tunnels periodically (see page 364 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook for the profile for Ork Boyz). These are Orks arriving from nearby settlements, or patrolling the nearby tunnels for humans. The sounds of conflict draw them to join in any battles that take place in this region with the savage enthusiasm of their ilk.





KEY NPCs

The following NPC plays an important role as the characters crash into the Ork depot.

NOB GUZZMASHA

For weeks, this Ork Nob has been furious that Big Mek Noshdakka keeps assigning him to take charge of a seemingly pointless guard duty. The Ork encampment is far from any signs of human civilisation. A surprise inspection by Boss Garbark is far more likely than any sort of assault. If that were to happen, the Nob knows that he could not hope to explain what sort of progress was made on the Ordinator, and would have to defer to one of the Mekboyz. That fact leaves him in a position where he has no hope of getting in a decent fight, but still faces decent odds of receiving a beat down through no fault of his own.

This situation has left Guzzmasha a raging ball of anger looking for an outlet. He has endlessly tormented the Boyz under his authority, to the point that they have begun to plot against him. All of the Gretchin cower in his presence, and try to flee to the shadows to avoid his attention and ire.

When the humans arrive, Guzzmasha is anxious to get into a battle. His mindset is currently such that he has no interest in considering tactics at all. He simply charges towards the first humans he sees and assaults endlessly. The Lootas, who were initially accompanying him, have little interest in joining such an assault. They prefer to stand back and let the foolishly brave Nob fight against far superior numbers, while they stand back and use their heavier weapons. See page 142 for his full profile.



THROUGH THE GARAGE

Beyond the Mad Dok's infirmary lies the garage where the Speed Freeks' vehicles are stored. A central roadway extends down the centre of the garage, which is largely clear of debris. To the left of that roadway, there are currently more than a dozen Ork Warbuggies and Trukks (see pages 370–371 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) parked in a disorganised array. There is also a large pile of more than twenty 200 litre drums filled with fuel for those vehicles stacked against one wall. Similarly, there are fifteen crates of ammunition—primarily rokkits—for the vehicles. There is ample room to park at least another forty vehicles of comparable size within this portion of the garage.

There are also stacks of additional parts for those vehicles. These include engine components, body parts, spare tires, and indecipherable components of Ork engineering. Numerous tools, including hammers, powered cutting implements, air pumps, and assorted wrenches, are scattered throughout. If the Player Characters wish to take the time to scavenge these tools or construct something while the Ork forces bear down upon them, they can probably find the necessary resources.

Against the opposite wall of the central roadway, three Ork Bombers are currently parked. As with the ground-based vehicles, there is an ample supply of tools, ammunition, and fuel for those vehicles. Again, there is plenty of space to house at least another ten of the Bombers.

As the Player Characters enter the garage, they find it surprisingly empty, despite the obvious signs of regular activity. All of the available Mekboyz had been working on the Ordinator, rather than these comparatively mundane vehicles. The camp's Speed Freeks are currently all out with Big Mek Noshdakka on a scavenging expedition. If the Player Characters wish to either take these vehicles or use them for an improvised explosive, they certainly have the opportunity to do so.

Note that piloting an Ork vehicle—either ground-based or aerial—is hardly intuitive for a God-Emperor-fearing soldier of the Imperial Guard. Any character who attempts to use one of these vehicles suffers a –20 penalty to all relevant Operate Tests. While the controls are similar, their function requires an extra degree of violence that is simply not inherent in Imperial training. Using these vehicles should be a measure of last resort. Destroying them is also a viable (and simpler) option.

Collapsing the roof of the garage requires a bit more effort than simply detonating all of the available supplies. The cavern is a very large area, which has been reinforced with Ork considerations in mind. For the characters to collapse the roof, they must take the time to carefully identify structural weak points and arrange the explosives to best take advantage of them. This requires a **Difficult (–10) Tech-Use Test** and a **Challenging (+0) Perception Test** to analyse the cavern's weak points, and both Tests together require a total of four Rounds, minus one Round per Degree of Success on the Test (to a minimum of one Round). A failure on either Test allows the Player Characters to trigger the explosion and destroy the vehicles, but they fail to collapse the roof in the process. If they fail either Test by three or more Degrees of Failure, they inadvertently trigger the blast early, destroying 1d5 of their company's Chimeras (other than their own) and slaying the soldiers aboard, or crushing that many other squads on foot beneath falling debris.

WHAT ABOUT THE KABOOM?

Enterprising Player Characters might want to apply a scorched earth policy to the Ork encampment, and the Ordinatus itself. To a certain extent, this is possible. However, their ability to destroy the entire base is limited by the explosives they have on hand or can find amongst the Ork facility. Neither the Ordinatus nor the ruins of their dropship are explosive at this stage. The Ordinatus has not yet been armed or refuelled. The dropship's fuel supplies were lost when the engines were destroyed. This leaves the (potentially considerable) assets of their vehicles and ammunition. The volatility of these items is entirely dependent upon how the regiment is equipped. They certainly arrived with enough ammunition to supply the company for an extended engagement. While the Player Characters have the option of using a large part of these reserves in the course of a large explosion, that is likely to leave them poorly equipped for the trek across Hervara's surface to the nearest Imperial base.

The other major source of explosives is the hangar area. There are ample supplies of unarmed rokkit, ammunition, and fuel. Detonating these resources can significantly damage the Ork vehicles within the cavern, possibly even collapsing the subterranean hangar in the process. The resultant explosion might even trigger a partial collapse of the massive cavern containing the Ordinatus. Keep in mind, however, that if the Player Characters wish to use these weapons against the Ordinatus and the remaining Ork fortifications directly, then they must first fight their way back to these locations after retrieving the Ork supplies. Along the way, additional Ork forces arrive to reinforce their position. This option is viable, but it rapidly turns into a suicide mission.

Game Masters must use their discretion in determining the full scope of any explosion that the Player Characters choose to rig. Ultimately, irreparably destroying the Ordinatus and the Ork camp is almost certainly beyond the scope of the equipment and time that the Player Characters possess. They certainly can damage both, which would grant the Imperial forces additional time to recover the Ordinatus, and might leave the Ork forces in this cavern in shambles for some time. An attempt to destroy either the Ordinatus or the cavern entirely, however, would almost assuredly spell the doom of the Player Characters—albeit perhaps a glorious one, though any renown might earn would be buried with them.

If the Player Characters willingly embrace martyrdom, then this does change their options significantly. It is entirely possible to rig a very large explosion—possibly destroying the entire Ork base—at the cost of the entire company's lives. This would essentially require rigging up their munitions to detonate and collapse the tunnel complex. Unless the players have some particularly insightful way to escape, this concludes their Player Characters' lives in the process. If they so choose, the Game Master and players could continue the campaign with new characters who heard about the crashed dropship and the huge explosion and have been sent to find out what happened, though obviously this would necessitate certain deviations from the plot as described throughout the adventure.

INTO THE OPEN

The hangar's roadway leads to a pair of massive, rusted doors which open out to Hervara's surface. The doors are made of corrugated steel, reinforced with rusting metal beams. They are not locked, but they are also little impediment to an Imperial tank or any heavy weapons fire.

Immediately beyond the door are two sandbag bunkers. A pair of Ork Boyz (see page 364 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) occupies each of the bunkers. Each pair mans a pintle-mounted dakkagun (Heavy; 75m; -3/5; 2d10+4 I; Pen 4; Clip 80; Reload 2 Full; Inaccurate, Unreliable) in addition to their personal sidearms. The dakkaguns are mounted so that they have a firing arc that covers the entrance to the hangar, but they can pivot to face back into it as a Full Action. The Boyz also have one more card up their sleeve: the entrance of the cavern is seeded with eight buried Bomb Squigs trained to attack vehicles in particular (Squigs, from page 367 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook, with the crude Ork equivalent of Meltabombs strapped to them), who the Boyz guarding the door release from their underground cages flanking the entryway if they are being overrun. Releasing the Squigs requires three consecutive Full Actions for one of the Boyz, and he must be in one of the bunkers to do it. As soon as an Ork Boy begins the process of opening the cages, observant Player Characters can determine that he is setting off some sort of trap with a **Routine (+20) Awareness Test**.

These bunkers represent the only Ork assets which are currently near the surface entrance to the compound. If the Guardsmen collapse the hangar behind them, they are free of Ork pursuit, at least until some of the xenos can find their way to the surface through one of the many other tunnel exits. Fortunately for the Player Characters, the nearest one is a few kilometres away. Notably, if the hangar and the vehicles within remain functional, the remaining Orks from the compound move to use those vehicles to pursue the surviving soldiers.

Just as the Player Characters overcome the Ork bunkers, they encounter their next challenge. A squad of Severan Dominate forces were preparing to infiltrate the Ork facility. After a significant amount of legwork, the rebels had identified this location as one of the key landing fields for the Ork Bombers. They were preparing to assault it in the hopes of learning all they could about the Ork plans, as well as reducing the threat posed by the Ork aircraft.

The Player Characters have just prevented the rebels from having any hope of success at their current assignment. If the Imperial forces bombed the hangar, the rebels do not even have the option to infiltrate into the Ork base, as there is no entrance remaining. Even if it remains standing, the Ork compound is now in a state of heightened alertness. Securing any sort of intelligence would require agents substantially more skilled than the Severan Dominate has on hand.



Out of frustration at their situation, the Severan Dominate troops are willing to go to extreme lengths to defeat the Imperial soldiers directly responsible for the failure of their mission. The number of surviving Imperial Guardsmen and their general disposition dictates their response.

The Severan Dominate troopers attempt to stop them, posing as an Inquisitor and his party of acolytes. Lieutenant Fitzsimmons attempts to deceive the Imperial Guardsmen into accepting his authority, using an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Deceive Test**. Note that the Player Characters' communications systems are now functional, as they have left the caverns. If anyone takes the initiative to verify Fitzsimmons' identity via the vox, they immediately discover the deception.

If the deception fails, the Severan Dominate troopers flee, and use demolition charges planted in the road to destroy the lead Chimera, killing any NPCs inside and wounding and disorienting any Player Character passengers.

Depending upon how this plays out, the characters could end up simply killing the Severan Dominate troops, taking Fitzsimmons and some or all of his squad prisoner, or he might gain the advantage on them if his deception works and he can lead them back to a Severan Dominate base. If Fitzsimmons ever comes to believe that his deception has failed, he attempts to break away with his squad, gathering whatever intelligence he can in the process. He and his squad are treacherous and vengeful. If they survive this scene, they are likely to dog the Imperial forces throughout **Withdrawal**, planting mines and grenade traps on the road, or launching strike-and-fade ambushes against vulnerable flanks.

KEY NPCs

The following NPC plays an important role as the Player Characters escape the Ork facility.

Note also that the sergeants of the other squads within the Player Characters' company play a crucial role throughout this scene and the one that follows. A generalised Sergeant character is presented on page 127. Suggestions for how to customise this character to better suit a custom regiment are also included. Game Masters might wish to sit down and discuss such characters with their players prior to the first session of play, so that some of the company's other key NPCs are reasonably well established.

LIEUTENANT AVERY FITZSIMMONS

The leader of the Severan Dominate infiltration squad, Lieutenant Fitzsimmons studied the *Tactica Imperialis* closely prior to enlisting with the Hervara Excavatory Warriors. His field of expertise is in infiltration and intelligence. Though he is not an expert at understanding xenos, he is extremely proficient at working deep behind enemy lines and not being seen. He is also a master manipulator of men, capable of effectively impersonating a member of the Imperial Guard hierarchy when necessary.

The Lieutenant is furious that the Player Characters and their company have accidentally stymied his plan to eliminate the Ork encampment. At the very least, they have stolen his glory. At the worst, they have also prevented him from obtaining an understanding of what the Orks were doing within the encampment.

He wants to find out what they have discovered, and is willing to go to great lengths to do so. Depending upon how the characters react to his presence, he can attempt to seize control of their company under the pretence of Imperial authority. If that fails to work, he attempts to secure prisoners for later questioning, most likely using guerrilla tactics. See page 135 for the profile for Lieutenant Avery Fitzsimmons. He is accompanied by a squad of twelve Severan Dominate Troopers, and can call up to two more squads of twelve guerrillas each to his aid if given several minutes to get these additional soldiers into position (see page 124).

WITHDRAWAL

"I've been to many worlds, Lord Marshall. Fought in hellholes across the galaxy, seen burning hives that stank of the scorched dead and jungle planets that kill you if you blink. Hervara does not seem so terrible or grand as those places, but it is perhaps more important in the grand scheme of things. Still, it would be an awfully dreary, disappointing place to die."

—Lieutenant Orson Graves, Adjutant to Lord Marshall Pasheen

Throughout this scene, the Player Characters have their first extended exposure to Hervara's unpleasant surface conditions. Considering that enemies are firing upon them, the terrain and atmosphere are not their largest concerns, but remain significant threats. They must either take action to deal with these challenges now, or face the consequences later.

At this time, the company can also re-establish communication with superior officers in the form of the relatively nearby Luggnum Sewer Rats base. Between communications systems and surface maps, the Player Characters and their allies should be able to reach that base so that they can finally report for duty. En route, they face Severan Dominate forces who use guerrilla tactics against them, as well as Ork patrols, with the potential for an even larger Ork attack.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

As soon as the characters exit the Ork encampment, two important changes occur to their situation. The characters are able to re-establish communication with Imperial authorities, and they face the toxic nature of Hervara's atmosphere. This section addresses both of those issues, setting up the characters to complete their overland trek to the nearest Imperial facility.

FINDING AUTHORITY

As soldiers of the Imperial Guard, the Player Characters are expected to respect the chain of command at all times. In some regiments, this means that they can never deviate from their orders. Others allow for some degree of independent thought, though even this is sharply tempered so that it stays well within the constraints of Imperial dogma and creed. With their crash-landing upon Hervara, their company's current chain of command has been shattered. At best, commanding officers are incapacitated; at worst, they have all been slain. Operating without the comfort of clear leadership puts the

company in an awkward situation, as the question of who has the authority to issue commands leaves them with little direction. Seeking out a new authority to fill the void should be one of their very highest priorities.

While they were underground, the company's vox systems were essentially silenced. Their pleas for help and command went unanswered. Activating these systems now runs the risk of drawing attention to their plight, but it is the surest way to at least become aware of the current situation. When the characters activate the vox—either a portable unit or a vehicle mounted one—they receive a response asking for their call signs, unit identification, and appropriate passwords in short order. Once this information is confirmed, the trooper managing the communications system is assigned an encryption key and a frequency to use for further details. When the characters establish communications, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

For the first time since your violent arrival, the vox emits the strained tones of connection. A woman's voice with a thick brogue crackles from the speakers, "This is Major Foudrang of the Luggnum 3rd. We received reports of your dropship's crash, but we did not think there were any survivors. We are currently engaged with hostiles and cannot send reserves your way. However, we do have a fix on your location. My aide will provide you with our best estimate of your current map location and a plotted overland route to our depot. We look forward to seeing you there soon."



If the characters have any questions for the Major, she does her best to answer them. These likely include the following:

- If questioned about their current location, the Major explains that their regiment was originally supposed to land more than a thousand miles away. Apparently, due to the damage their dropship sustained, they have arrived quite far from their target zone.
- If asked about the rest of their regiment, she explains that any specific information about casualty rates falls into the category of information that is not to be disseminated during the course of an ongoing battle. She does, though, confirm that the regiment suffered fully tolerable losses in the course of their insertion.
- As their survival comes as a surprise to all, including Imperial High Command, Major Foudrang does not know at this time how they might be reunited with the other members of the regiment. That is something that she has to pass up to High Command. For the moment, she just wants to see them safely returned to base so that they can be assigned where they are most needed.
- She can confirm that the characters are currently behind enemy lines. The journey to the Luggnum base requires that the company travel through contested territory. They should be prepared to encounter some resistance, though she is not currently aware of any active engagements along their most likely travel route.
- She does not want them joining into any battles until they have had an opportunity to be debriefed about their arrival and brought up to speed about the current conflict. Information that they received prior to landing is likely dated, and their involvement might hinder more than help.
- She was not aware of the precise location of the Ork complex that they just left, nor was she familiar with the Ordinatus. She asks that they not provide any further details over the vox, but rather that they prepare to provide a detailed report upon arrival at the supply depot.

Once their discussion is complete, the Major's aide, a Lieutenant MacGowan, comes on the vox to provide additional details. He provides the company with a set of map coordinates for their current location and the location of the base. The coordinates are encrypted using a prearranged algorithm. Once decoded using standard Imperial Guard techniques, they match up with planetary maps that were previously supplied to all of the Guardsmen as part of their Standard Regimental Guardsman Kit.

The Lieutenant again cautions them that they are behind enemy lines. He warns them that Ork aerial assaults have been particularly frequent near their location and suggests that they assign soldiers with the specific duty of watching the sky for incoming attacks. Of course, unless they happen to have weapons that are effective against aircraft, they either have to find a creative solution to the ramshackle flyers or try to avoid them entirely.

The Lieutenant also provides a suggested travel route that should minimise their vulnerability. He admits that the route is not the most direct path to the supply depot. Instead, it traces a path through a dense fungal forest for the first half of the journey, followed by travelling through a series of mined out canyons for the remainder. The

advantage to this route is that it reduces the amount of time that they might fall prey to aerial assault. The danger is that any ground-based forces could have ample time to set up an ambush from hiding. He believes this to be the safest route, but the characters are free to ignore his recommendations if they have some other preference.

The travel path is circuitous so that it can take full advantage of the available cover along the way. The actual distance involved depends upon whether the Player Characters are travelling on foot or if they have vehicles. On foot, the trip covers roughly seventy kilometres. Considering the rough size of their group, that should take about two days to travel, assuming they rest overnight. If the company is instead using vehicles for transportation, then the trip length increases to 150 kilometres. Because of the hostile terrain and the fear of incoming assault, making the trip safely requires that the tanks proceed at a conservative pace of roughly 20 kph. In this case, the journey is less about the time involved (roughly seven and a half hours), and more about managing the available fuel—their tanks were not fully fuelled prior to loading on the dropship, and a journey of this length completely exhausts their fuel reserves. If they go off-course badly, they need to complete the trip on foot, either abandoning their transports or splitting their forces so that some members of the company can retrieve fuel from the supply depot. If they leave their vehicles behind entirely without taking measures to sabotage them, canny GMs might want to consider having the Player Characters later encounter Orks driving suspiciously familiar looted vehicles, which would, at best, reflect very poorly upon the Player Characters for allowing materiel to fall into the grasping hands of the enemy.

During the course of their journey, have one character make a **Hard (-20) Navigate (Surface) Test** for each hour of travel. The planet's densely polluted atmosphere substantially reduces visibility, and the official Imperial surface maps offer very few landmarks for navigation. If the character succeeds, they continue their journey, following the course as outlined. If the character fails, he leads the group off-course and they fail to make any progress towards the

Imperial supply depot. If he fails by four or more Degrees of Failure, the navigator leads the group in the wrong direction, which actually reduces their progress by one hour. Prior to making any of these Tests, they can try to re-establish their vox connection with the Imperial Supply Depot. If they do so, they can triangulate their current position, which grants a +40 bonus to the Navigate (Surface) Test.

After an extended, running fire fight within an Ork compound, the tedium of an overland journey begins to wear on the minds of the surviving Imperial Guardsmen. Even if they are travelling aboard a transport, the continued stress and constant concern about pursuit is exhausting. If the characters are riding aboard a transport, characters suffering from Fatigue or injury can try their best rest inside the vehicle to recuperate, though they cannot maintain a watch for aircraft or other attack while recovering this way. If they are travelling on foot, characters cannot stop to rest without splitting up the company or halting everyone's progress and inviting attack by marauding Ork bands and lurking secessionist troops. Ork aircraft are particularly dangerous to the Player Characters at this time.

TO BREATHE

Hervara's atmosphere is toxic due to a high level of pollution. While the toxins are not instantly lethal, they represent a significant danger to anyone exposed to them for an extended period of time. The characters are unlikely to be well-prepared to face this threat, as it was not a focal point of any of their briefings.

For units mounted within enclosed vehicles, the atmosphere does not represent a significant threat. Any of the Imperial vehicles have inbuilt air filtration systems that are capable of removing the majority of the contaminants. There are consequences for extended exposure to each vehicle's systems, but those are beyond the scope of this scene. Essentially, someone might need to perform additional maintenance over the course of their deployment to the planet.

Of course, not every group is necessarily travelling aboard an enclosed vehicle. Some might be travelling on foot, while others might have an open topped vehicle. This could be a



characteristic of their regiment, or they might have stolen Ork Trukks from the hangar. In either case, these soldiers must breathe Hervara's air and inhale its pollutants.

Once assigned to surface duty on Hervara, respirators are assigned to Imperial Guardsmen precisely to avoid this danger. As the Player Characters had not yet finished their redeployment to the surface, this important piece of equipment was not yet issued to them. Some regiments might have respirators as part of their Standard Regimental Guardsmen Kit. If that is the case, then atmospheric concerns are a non-issue. For others, there were respirators included among the mentioned cargo on their dropship. That does not, however, mean that soldiers within the company necessarily took the time to inventory all of the cargo and bring it with them. As the soldiers were likely coming under fire from Ork forces, they might not have retrieved survival gear if it seemed less vital at the time.

If the characters have respirators, then they can employ them at this time and eliminate the effects of the atmospheric toxins. If they do not, then for every thirty minutes of unprotected exposure, characters must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test**. All who succeed suffer no Damage or ill effects. Characters who fail this Test suffer 1d5 Characteristic Damage to Strength (see page 257 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) each time this Test is failed. Characters do not begin to recover from this Damage until they are no longer exposed to the atmospheric toxins.

GUERRILLA TACTICS

Lieutenant Fitzsimmons' squad became aware of the Player Characters when they exited the Ork complex. If any of those troopers escaped the encounter, then the Severan Dominate is aware of the company's presence. Even if the Severan troopers were all slain without an opportunity to report back in, the Guardsmen are still likely to be discovered. This is because of the platoon of mechanised infantry which delivered the infiltrators close to the Ork complex. That platoon is known as the Howling Coyotes, from the second company of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors 89th regiment.

The ambushers include the following forces:

- Four squads of Hervara Soldiers (see page 124), each including nine members plus a Sergeant (see page 125).
- A Hervara Lieutenant (see page 125) accompanied by four Hervara Soldiers. These four are assembled into two heavy weapons teams. Each team is equipped with a Heavy Bolter (Heavy; 150m; –/–/6; 1d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip 60; Reload Full; Tearing).
- The four regular squads, plus the lieutenant and his command squad, are each mounted in a Chimera Armoured Transport (see page 217 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). All of these have identical weapons load outs of a turret-mounted multi-laser and a hull-mounted heavy bolter.

The Howling Coyotes are also carrying a case of forty demolition charges. These were originally intended to be a reserve, in the event that Fitzsimmons' squad needed to detonate a much larger target than initially planned. These prove extremely useful for the Hervara Excavatory Warriors, as they can use them to set up ambushes, potentially even incapacitating one or more of the vehicles that the PCs' forces are using.

At the beginning of this scene, the Howling Coyotes remained a few kilometres away, on high alert for any hostile activity in the region. They had detected the dropship crash, but assumed that there were no survivors. If the Guardsmen used their vox systems to establish communications with Imperial officers, then the Severan Dominate unit detected the communications chatter. Though they were unable to decipher the actual contents of the exchange, they were able to triangulate the source of the broadcasts. This allowed them to quickly realise that there was an Imperial Guard presence near the Ork encampment—most likely survivors of the dropship incident.

The mechanised company's primary responsibility is to recover Lieutenant Fitzsimmons and his squad at a prearranged pick-up point, two hours after the squad was to begin its insertion into the Ork compound. If the Player Characters eliminated or captured the Severan Dominate characters, then they obviously are not present for that meeting. However, the Howling Coyotes must maintain radio silence as they wait for some sign of their missing infiltrators. They continue to wait for an additional two hours after the scheduled pick-up time. This provides the Player Characters with a total of four hours time to drive away from the Severan Dominate forces.

If at least one member of Fitzsimmons' squad managed to escape, the survivor immediately sets out to meet up with the Howling Coyotes platoon. Once he reports in, the Severan Dominate troopers are able to much more quickly move to take action against the Imperial Guardsmen. It takes roughly thirty minutes for the NPCs to reunite. As soon as that time has elapsed, the Howling Coyotes begin moving to prepare an ambush, as described below.

If the PCs maintain complete radio silence for the entirety of the scene, then the Howling Coyotes lose any opportunity to interfere with the Player Characters, unless they make an extended stop. This is because the only means they have to identify their location is either through triangulation of their broadcast signal or by following their tracks. Their vehicles are most likely comparable in speed to those used by the Imperial Guardsmen. If they need to catch up to them by following their trail, then they are unlikely to make up four hours of travel time before the Player Characters reach the Luggnum supply depot.

Notably, if the Player Characters are travelling on foot, then the Howling Coyotes much more easily catch up to them. The vehicles are able to effortlessly maintain a much more rapid pace than the one that soldiers on foot can set. Further, upon their arrival, this encounter is substantially more difficult for the Player Characters, as the Howling Coyotes are equipped with vehicles, which are always at least somewhat effective against unprotected soldiers.

Alternatively, if the Player Characters make liberal use of their communications gear, the Howling Coyotes can use this to infer their route. After all, the Luggnum supply depot is the only Imperial Guard fortification in the region. They can use this information to take a more direct route over safer terrain in an effort to intercept the Imperial Guard company before it can rendezvous with the supply depot. This route enables them to push the speed of their tanks more, giving them the opportunity to catch up to the Player Characters. Their intent, of course, is to lay in an ambush, with the intent of decimating the newly arrived soldiers.

AMBUSH!

The Howling Coyotes use the following strategy to launch their ambush against the Player Characters:

- The Howling Coyotes use an established route through the fungal forest to quickly reach the upper levels of the canyons.
- Once there, they can entrench their Chimeras along the canyon's lip, so that they are not easily visible to aerial assault. From these firing positions, they should be able to target any vehicles or troops that pass through the canyons.
- Given adequate time, they use their available demolition charges to prepare two landslides, hoping to trap the Imperial Guardsmen between them.
- While they can continue to fire upon the trapped Guardsmen from this position, the noise and smoke from the explosion should be enough to draw the attention of Ork Bombers, which are likely to begin strafing runs. The trapped Imperial Guardsmen are the easier targets, lacking the preparations of the Howling Coyotes, and are thus more likely to fall victim to the spontaneous Ork attacks.

This combat is likely to involve forces large enough that individually tracking each unit could prove unwieldy. One way to resolve this is to approach the combat from a more narrative perspective. Not every attack should target the Player Characters, nor should their actions be the only ones to yield effective damage against the opponent. Instead, have the relative success of the Player Characters dictate the overall success of their company.

Begin the ambush with an **Opposed Hard (-20) Awareness Test**, using the Hervara Lieutenant's Stealth to oppose. If any characters succeed on this Test, they notice the demolition charges set to trigger the landslide in front of the column well before they are triggered. With two or more Degrees of Success, they notice the rear set of demolition charges prior to the company entering the ambush kill zone. With four or more Degrees of Success, they actually manage to spot one of the partially entrenched Chimera Armoured Transports in addition to spotting both sets of demolition charges.



If the Player Characters are fully aware of the ambush before it is triggered, then they can take actions against the Howling Coyotes prior to triggering the trap. This essentially requires climbing out of the canyon by hand and instigating their own ambush. As the Hervara Excavatory Warriors are intently focused on the troop transports within the canyon, sneaking up on these soldiers is an **Opposed Routine (+20) Stealth Test**. Climbing out of the canyon requires a **Difficult (-10) Athletics Test**, assuming the characters have the necessary gear. The canyon walls are too sheer for the Chimeras to ascend them.

If no one notices the ambush before it is triggered, have one of the characters make a **Hard (-20) Operate (Surface) Test** to avoid driving into the landslide. On failure, the lead vehicle is buried and destroyed under the landslide. Moments later, an identical Test with the same potential consequences must be made for the vehicle in the rear of the armoured column, as those charges fire as well.

Driving over the landslides requires a **Very Hard (-30) Operate (Surface) Test**. On success, a vehicle passes over it without incident. If the driver fails, the vehicle becomes stuck in the shifting rubble, and it requires ten minutes of a squad digging it free before they can attempt to continue across the landslides by repeating the Test. If the Player Characters press on and fail one of the subsequent Operate (Surface) Tests to cross the landslides by three or more Degrees of Failure, roll on **Table 8-26: Motive Systems Critical Hit Chart** to see the effects of their disastrous driving (see page 277 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).

The cliff face ascends vertically for 50 metres from the bottom. If the characters use a weapon with the Indirect Fire Quality, such as a mortar or grenade launcher, the defenders receive no cover from the cliff's edge. Otherwise, only their heads and chests are fully exposed to any incoming attacks. The rest of their bodies receive 10 Armour Points of cover from the sheer rock facing.

After one minute (10 Rounds) of combat, the first Ork Bommer strafes the field. A wing of three of these aircraft passes over the canyon floor repeatedly. Because of the Orks' aggressive mindset, each strafing run first requires the Ork pilot to succeed at a **Hard (-20) Operate (Aeronautica) Test** so that he can set up a trench run through the canyon. Failure on this Test damages the Bommer's wing enough that he is forced to depart the scene of the battle, either by uncharacteristic caution or by fiery crash. The Orks continue to press strafing runs until each of the craft has become damaged either due to the canyon walls or incoming fire. Another wing of Ork Bombers does not arrive until an hour later, hopefully providing the Guardsmen ample time to either escape or improve their defences.

ORK PURSUIT

In addition to the Severan Dominate forces, the Orks are also anxious to track down the Guardsmen who have dealt so much damage to their base. Their ability to do so is directly proportionate to the amount of damage that the Player Characters' company inflicted prior to leaving. If the garage was left a detonated shambles, then they do not have the means to follow them quickly. However, if the surface vehicles were left in a fully functional state and the garage was not effectively sealed shut, then the surviving Orks immediately rally and begin a pursuit effort.



The Ork vehicles are not any faster than the Imperial ones, but their drivers are far more familiar with Hervara's terrain features. Because of this, they should be able to catch up to the Imperial armoured column in fairly short order. The Ork pursuers have an even greater advantage if the Imperial Guardsmen are on foot. This encounter is likely to take place under the cover of the fungal forest, which begins near the entrance to the Ork hangar.

The forest is made up of thousands of mushrooms. The smallest are little more than ground clutter, while larger specimens extend up to forty metres into the sky, with huge caps that are nearly as broad as they are tall, and weigh thousands of kilograms. The massive caps effectively shield the column from the view of aircraft. However, because their caps are so broad, the huge fungi grow far apart. Consequently, they offer little cover from surface-based attacks, and scarcely any impediment to travel.

The Orks' primary goal at this stage is to delay the escape of the Imperial forces. These Orks assume that, if they slow the Guardsmen, then any Orks who are pursuing on foot can catch up and swarm their quarry. To accommodate this goal, they concentrate their fire on the rearmost vehicles, in an effort to disable them, one at a time. If a vehicle is disabled, or at least substantially slowed, they work their way up the column, attempting to slow each vehicle in turn. Only once all of the vehicles have been damaged and slowed do they move to engage the humans within. If the soldiers are instead moving on foot, slowing them is not a concern. The Speed Freeks only fire their vehicle weapons as they approach the humans, and then disembark their passengers (without stopping) as soon as they reach the fleeing Guardsmen.

The number of Orks involved in this assault is entirely proportionate to the remaining undamaged surface vehicles in the Ork hangar. There should have been more than ample Ork Boyz within the underground complex to fill any available Ork Warbuggies and Trukks to capacity—assume there were six functional examples of each, unless the Player Characters took specific actions to sabotage them. While all of the drivers of these vehicles are Ork Speed Freeks (see page 141), the passengers are Ork Boyz (see page 364 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).

This encounter involves an unwieldy number of units, once the members of the Player Characters' company and the Ork forces are taken into consideration.

Because of this, distribute the number of attackers

proportionately across all of the squads and vehicles. Each time a Player Character meets with success or failure against a foe, another squad should have a similar experience. In this way, the conflict remains focused on the triumph or defeat of the Player Characters.

If the Guardsmen successfully dispatch this batch of Ork forces, then they do not have to worry about additional Ork pursuit through the course of their journey to the Imperial supply depot. In this instance, the Orks are too busy recovering from the damage suffered to organise a swift pursuit. However, if the base's entry was disabled, preventing pursuit, there is an alternative optional encounter.

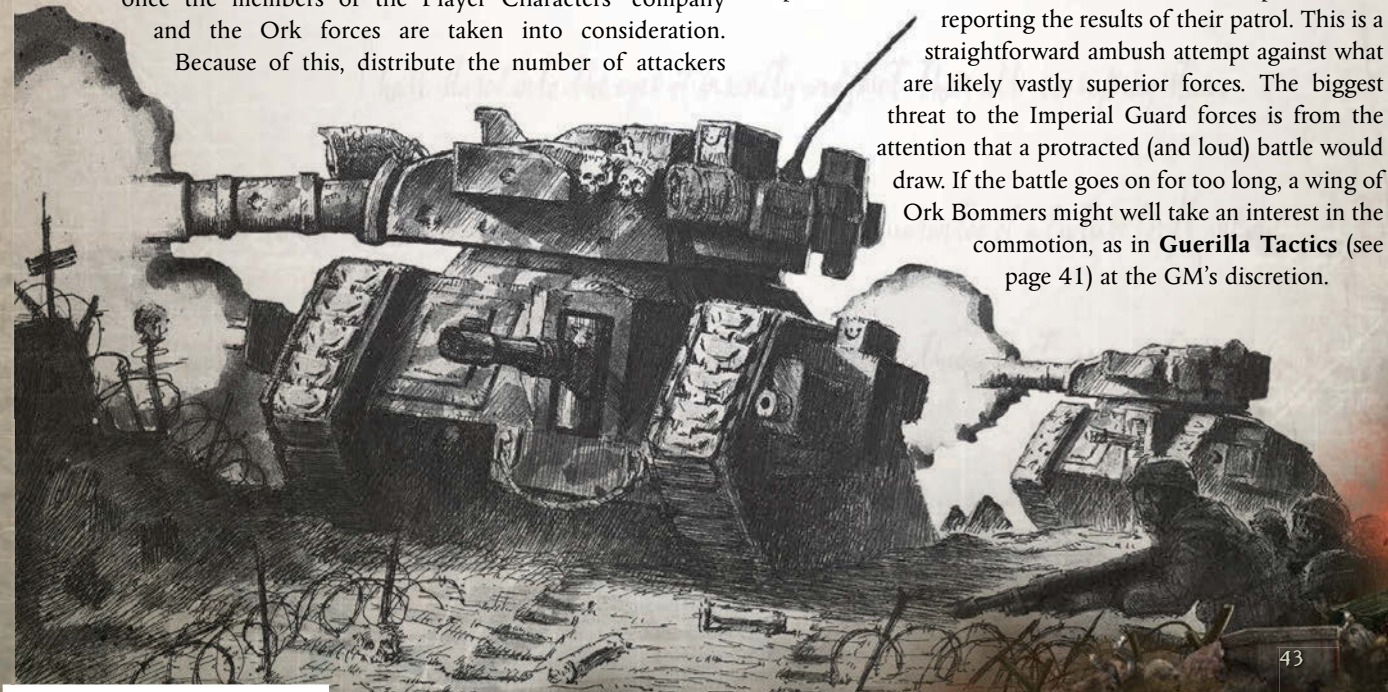
SCOUTED

This section presents an optional encounter for Game Masters who wish to focus on Hervara's Ork presence during the journey to the Imperial supply depot. It is a brief encounter, but brings the magnitude of the Ork threat into even sharper focus. While the Player Characters struck a decisive blow against the Greenskins, the hangar represented only a small portion of their total planetary assets. In this scene, the retreating column of Imperial Guard is assaulted by a routine Ork Speed Freek patrol. This is presented as an unfortunate coincidence for the humans. The Orks were on a routine patrol that just happened to spot the retreating line of tanks. These xenos remain unaware of the damage that the soldiers have already inflicted upon their home base.

The Ork patrol consists of twelve Ork Speed Freeks on Warbikes (see page 141 of this volume for Ork Speed Freeks and page 370 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook for the Warbikes). This attack takes place when the Warbikes spot the Imperial column advancing through the fungal forest. No Test is required for the Player Characters to spot the Orks long before they enter weapons range, as the Warbikes are loud, and producing a massive cloud of exhaust smoke. This provides the Player Characters with up to five Rounds to marshal their forces to repel the attack.

The Orks begin firing at maximum range and continue their direct approach until they pass through the column. After that, they turn their bikes for another pass. These speed-crazed xenos have no interest in self-preservation

reporting the results of their patrol. This is a straightforward ambush attempt against what are likely vastly superior forces. The biggest threat to the Imperial Guard forces is from the attention that a protracted (and loud) battle would draw. If the battle goes on for too long, a wing of Ork Bombers might well take an interest in the commotion, as in **Guerilla Tactics** (see page 41) at the GM's discretion.





THE BASE

"We thank the God-Emperor for the blessing of food and shelter that he has given us, even as we dwell within these hostile lands, seeking to spread his grace and kindness to the unbeliever."

—Missionary Lars Grissam, Chaplain to the Luggnum 3rd

This scene begins when the Player Characters finally reach the Imperial supply depot, designated Hervara-XIX. A battalion strength force of Luggnum Sewer Rats is ostensibly stationed at the base, but the majority of those soldiers are currently deployed in the field. A light company currently occupies the depot, maintaining its defences.

The facility represents salvation for the Imperial Guardsmen who have just escaped from the Ork encroachment and survived assault by the Severan Dominate. However, it is hardly paradisiacal. This is a wartime encampment, which is located very close to the front lines. Supplies and soldiers regularly pass through the base on their way to the front. Soldiers returning from the front typically stay only long enough to refit before they are once more deployed to maintain the war effort.

ABOUT THE BASE

The Hervara-XIX base is roughly rectangular in shape. Its northern and southern walls are each just over two hundred metres in length, while the western and eastern walls are roughly three hundred metres in length. This leaves an interior area of just over six hectares. A large gate is located in the centre of each of the four walls, each wide enough to accommodate the passage of a super-heavy tank. Tank traps, razor wire, and spiked trenches are arranged around the exterior of the depot, to a range of fifty metres. These impediments completely fill the remaining surface of the small plateau upon which the base is placed.

Its fortified walls stand fifteen metres tall and are made of reinforced plascrete. The walls are just over two meters thick and are heavily embossed with generalised Imperial Guard iconography. The only concessions to identify the units currently holding the depot are the company banners flying from the watchtowers, which are placed every twenty-five metres along the wall, for a total of thirty-six watchtowers. Each watchtower mounts a searchlight, an alarm bell, and either an autocannon or a heavy bolter. Two soldiers are stationed in each of the watchtowers. The facility is large enough to provide supplies for a full battalion of Imperial Guardsmen, but does not have much barracks space within its walls.

Twin-linked Hydra Autocannons are mounted atop eight anti-aircraft towers, which are the tallest structures within the supply depot. These towers stand more than thirty metres in height, and each is also equipped with a small radar dish. The anti-aircraft towers are the first portions of the depot visible above the horizon when the Player Characters first spot the base, providing them the first signs that this leg of their journey is nearing an end.

The supply depot is located behind the Drury-Cobhan Line. This separation provides it some relief from the heart of the Severan Dominate

forces, but it is hardly an impenetrable defence. The depot has come under separate attack numerous times over the past few months, by both the secessionists and the xenos. In spite of the best efforts of the base's command elements, it still shows the markings of the repeated assaults. The fortifications and buildings are heavily battle-scarred, as is the rocky terrain surrounding the base. Gentle, curving ramps lead up from the base of the plateau to each of the depot's entrances. Anyone travelling up one of these gentle slopes must pass at least six of the base's guard towers, leaving ground-based attackers subject to a significant amount of defensive fire.

The region surrounding the supply depot is ragged terrain. Hundreds of rocky spires emerge from the ash wastes, few much more than fifteen metres in height, and most scattered hundreds of metres apart, leaving open fields of fire for the base towards any forces advancing upon it. None of these spires are taller than the base's exterior walls, so there is no convenient way to directly fire into the facility from the ground outside of it.

Additional information regarding the structures, facilities, and personnel contained within the base are on page 48. Game Masters are encouraged to review that material before presenting the following scenes to the players. In the event that the Player Characters' regiment has a specific need, such as an expanded mechanical facility to accommodate an armoured regiment, or stables for mounts or pack animals, Game Masters are encouraged to use their own discretion about providing such a facility. It might make for a better play experience if the Player Characters need to scrounge supplies to develop their own makeshift structure inside the base's walls.

ARRIVAL

The Player Characters' company can arrive at the supply depot under a variety of different situations. In an optimal situation, they are able to reach the Imperial fortification aboard their Chimera Armoured Transports recovered from the dropship's wreck. The most positive reception also requires the company to arrive largely intact, with minimised casualties and loss of materiel.

It is, however, unlikely that the Player Characters and their company are able to emerge from the wreckage and travel through extremely hostile territory without suffering at least some losses. Some groups might have left behind vital equipment, possibly including their transports, among the dropship's wreckage. Other groups might have suffered substantial personnel losses to the Ork and Severan Dominate forces en route to the supply depot, leaving little of the original company except for the Player Characters and a few straggling NPCs.

Some groups could also have exhausted their vehicles' fuel during the course of their transit. This could be a result of ambushes, poor navigation, bad luck, or a combination of all three. In this case, they might have had to split their company, with some members remaining to guard the vehicles while the others headed to the depot on foot, or in a single vehicle that scavenged the last of their remaining fuel. Presumably, under such conditions, the unit would expect a fresh supply of fuel and vehicles to go recover their transports.

The company is justified in expecting some degree of assistance from the depot, but such an arrival is hardly good for the morale of the units already stationed there. After all,



the Player Characters and their regiment are expected to provide relief for the entrenched forces. Arriving at an already under-equipped base and immediately asking for significant levels of assistance makes for a poor first impression among the veteran units. Keep this reaction in mind when the Player Characters interact with the NPCs.

Alternatively, arriving at the base under their own power, with tales of their unlikely victory against overwhelming odds, has just the opposite effect. If the Player Characters successfully rallied their unit, even through the loss of officers and Commissars, they receive some of the respect that they are due by their fellows among the Luggnum Sewer Rats. By persevering and overcoming dramatic odds, the company certainly earns a reputation for valour among even the veteran units. The Luggnum forces are not only willing to lend a hand, they are also willing to offer a drink in exchange for a first hand recounting of their adventures.

Regardless of their situation, the characters should not expect to receive a hero's welcome at the depot. This is not an Imperial city, full of grateful citizens and zealous priests looking to shout their praises to the God-Emperor. This is a field base, full of soldiers who have been serving in the trenches for years. Every soldier at the base is a war veteran. These troopers have come face to face with the xenos and the traitor, and repeatedly emerged triumphant. They are battle-hardened and cynical, more drawn to embrace the Imperial Creed from a practical viewpoint than a religious one. At best, they respect the Player Characters and their fellows for accomplishing the same task. At worst, they view them as raw recruits who managed to stumble back to the base through luck alone.

When the characters first come in sight of the base, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The last five kilometres of the withdrawal have seemed to take forever. While you haven't seen any rebels or Orks, you have heard aircraft overhead twice. Fortunately, the thick surface fog and dust kept you obscured from your foes. Fifteen minutes ago, one of the men in your unit first noticed the dim signs of spotlights piercing through Hervara's contaminated atmosphere. Slogging up and down the endless small hills, you finally came into sight of the familiar Imperial fortifications. Within moments, you heard the distant clang of an alarm bell and your vox crackled to life, demanding that you identify yourselves.

Conveniently, Lieutenant MacGowan is once more the vox officer on station when the PCs come within sight of the supply depot. He likely recalls speaking with members of the company shortly after they escaped from the Ork base. The Lieutenant is cordial as he walks them through the standard series of recognition signs and countersigns. Once complete, he directs them to the western entrance ramp, which leads to the southern gateway into the facility. He explains that Captain Rupert Fordham should be available to receive and debrief the soldiers upon their arrival.

If the characters have further questions or requests, MacGowan attempts to accommodate them, though he is simply a communications officer, and has no authority regarding troop assignments or requisition requests. All he can do is attempt to pass such requests up the chain of command to the Captain. Unless any such requests are a matter of life

and death—such as units stranded in the ash wastes, awaiting fuel or other supplies—fulfilment of those requests are delayed until the unit has been thoroughly debriefed.

He and others at the base answer desperate pleas for immediate help, but reluctantly, and probably with less force of arms than requested. The base is not in a position to commit a significant portion of its forces to the field on short notice. At the moment, they have a single platoon of mechanised infantry prepared for emergency response assignments, and a single fuel transport available to deliver promethium to stranded forces, if necessary.

Such relief forces are not available if the Player Characters ask for help by vox communication without significant proof of their legitimacy (usually in the form of codes from a superior officer). On more than one occasion, the Severan Dominate has attempted to draw out isolated Imperial Guard units on supposed missions of mercy. In every case, the missions resulted in an ambush and a victory for the secessionists. It is now Imperial policy on Hervara to only respond to requests for aid from individuals outside one's own direct chain of command if those requests are delivered in person or via telepath. As the Player Characters belong to a regiment distinct from the Luggnum Sewer Rats, their hands are tied by this directive.

Upon their arrival, however, their status in the chain of command shifts rather substantially. Once through the walls, the Player Characters are directed towards the base's central parade ground. Captain Fordham (see page 49 for more information) awaits the company there. He patiently stands at attention with a Commissar and the members of his command squad as the company enters, disembarks from its vehicles, and lines up. His presence and stature make it abundantly obvious to the characters that this is his intent. The characters must make an **Easy (+30) Awareness Test** as they enter the parade ground; any characters who succeed immediately notice that all of the watchtowers have pivoted their heavy weapons so that they now face into the parade grounds. Such a show of force is hardly atypical, but it does represent an obvious danger to their company should a miscommunication occur.

Once the company is lined up, the Captain explains, through a loud hailer, that the company has arrived too far from the remainder of its regiment for reunification to be practical at this point in the war effort. As such, the company is being seconded to his direct command. He explains that he is performing an immediate inspection of the company and its assets. As soon as that is completed, he plans to have them disperse to the mess hall for a quick meal. At that time, the officer in charge of billeting should see to it that every soldier has a bunk space assigned. Finally, the Captain explains that he plans to debrief each squad separately, so that he can fully digest the reports of the difficulties they have endured. If, at any point, the Player Characters object to Captain Fordham's claim of authority over the survivors of their company, he first appeals to their common sense (the company's soldiers and resources are exhausted after the long trek, and far from their own regiment), then, somewhat halfheartedly, to their sense of duty (they have been placed under his authority by the Emperor's Grace, and neither he nor they have the right to question it). If they still object, he reminds them that, while he would vastly prefer to remain on good terms, he does have overwhelming force of arms at his disposal in the form of the base and the troops garrisoned there.

The inspection that follows is largely perfunctory. Captain Fordham is most concerned with checking how well their wargear has been maintained and the relative physical health of his new underlings. He does not expect gear to be properly cleaned, nor does he expect uniforms to be perfectly in line with regulations—especially considering that he is most likely unfamiliar with their regiment's uniform regulations. As he goes through the ranks, the Captain is personable and makes every effort to ingratiate himself to his new underlings. If any show clear signs of injury, he immediately dismisses those soldiers to the medicae so that they can receive prompt treatment.

Captain Fordham completes the inspection in record time. He attempts to leave the company feeling relatively at ease with his command, but is less forgiving if he feels that they incurred unnecessary losses during their retreat to the supply depot. The meal that follows in the commissary is marginally



better than the subsistence field rations they have had during their retreat, but is far from luxurious. The Player Characters are among the first to receive billets. They are instructed to report to the commanding officer's debriefing as soon as they drop off their gear at their newly assigned bunks.

DEBRIEFING

In this scene, Captain Fordham questions the characters regarding their arrival and the journey to the supply depot. He is particularly interested in any intelligence they can provide. He asks the Player Characters to recount their tale, beginning with their departure from the *Devout Triumph*. He makes no effort to correct them, and asks them to avoid speculation. Throughout the meeting, the Captain is relaxed, interested, and surprisingly courteous to the Player Characters, even going so far as to offer them a fresh cup of recaf to keep them attentive through the discussion.

The scene takes place within Fordham's office. For most of the discussion, he is the only person visible in the room with the Guardsmen, though a servo-skull floats over his desk, presumably recording the conversation. After the Player Characters report to his office, read or paraphrase the following:

Fordham's adjutant hardly made you wait when you reported to the camp commander's office. One of the other squads from your company gave you a smile as they exited, and then your group entered into his modestly appointed office. The room was scarcely large enough for the Captain's desk and the ten chairs tightly packed in before it. The walls are covered in maps and photographs of Hervara's surface, indicating the disposition of various unit and charts that track the stock levels of the depot's supplies. All of these papers stir when ventilation fans kick into overdrive because of the increased number of people in the room.

The Captain's first goal during their retelling is to make certain that the Player Characters are physically comfortable and mentally relaxed, as he believes that they are most likely to give a fully accurate and honest recounting if they are not in immediate fear for their lives. He does, however, expect them to attempt to conceal various details about their journey. Fordham works under the assumption that every soldier has some secrets—his goal is just to make certain that none of those secrets endanger the Imperial cause.

Throughout the interview, Fordham intently watches the Player Characters for any signs of deception. If the Player Characters feel that they need to be selective in their retelling, have them make an **Opposed Difficult (–10) Deceive Test**. On failure, the Captain believes that they are concealing something. He only calls them out on their falsehoods if he believes that the detail is likely to be relevant to his concerns about regimental security, or if it might conceal a weakness as regards the Ork forces.

Once the characters have achieved some degree of comfort in the course of their recounting, Captain Fordham begins to ask for clarifications on various points fairly regularly. Almost all of his questions are in regards to the disposition of the Ork forces, and the Ordinatus. He allows them to progress through their story, but asks far fewer questions when they touch on matters of the Severan Dominate forces. If anyone questions

his focus on the Orks, Fordham explains that the Luggnum forces have much better intelligence as regards the standard procedures of the rebels than they do in regards to the xenos. Captain Fordham has a few specific questions:

- What happened to your company's command officers?
- Roughly how many xenos warriors were present within their encampment?
- How many xenos vehicles did you observe within the encampment? What types were they?
- Were there any signs of xenos manufacturing at the site?
- How were the xenos armed?
- Did you see any indication of xenos training facilities?
- Were the xenos extracting the planet's mineral resources?

If the Player Characters are able to answer these preliminary questions in an informative way, then the Captain continues to press them on more specific matters, but in as relaxed a way as possible. He never takes an authoritarian tone with the characters. Rather, he tries to make it seem as if they are just having a relaxed and casual conversation. This approach might well raise the suspicions of the Player Characters, as it is hardly typical for an Imperial Guard officer. In spite of any concern, Captain Fordham appears to be sincere and genuine in his mannerisms.

After the Player Characters complete their story, he asks them to pause momentarily, and then goes to a different office door than the one through which Player Characters entered. He opens the door and gestures for a man wearing crimson robes to enter. Fordham introduces the man as Tech-Priest Hexon (see page 49 for more information). Hexon asks them to retell the portions of the story that dealt with the Ordinatus.

Hexon's mannerisms are decidedly less endearing and much less human than the Captain's. The Tech-Priest pursues a very precise and analytical line of questioning as regards the Ordinatus. His questions are extremely specific, calling for best estimates about paint scheme, sizing of the tracks, metallurgy involved, structural design elements of the vehicle, and how the Orks might have modified the original design. He expects the Player Characters to offer technical answers about matters for which they have no training, and to have observed details that are beyond the perceptions of natural human anatomy. Throughout these questions, the follower of the Machine God becomes increasingly agitated. It should become clear that he is very excited about the presence of the weapon, but extremely frustrated at the lack of precise details the Player Characters can offer.

The characters can take this opportunity to try to ingratiate themselves to the Tech-Priest. While they might not be able to offer him the precise details that he seeks, they can at least assuage his desires with whatever details they can recall. Getting into the Tech-Priest's good graces requires an **Opposed Difficult (–10) Charm Test**. On success, the Tech-Priest begins to show some consideration towards the Player Characters and their needs, possibly even considering them experts regarding the Ordinatus. On failure, he becomes suspicious that they even saw the ancient device. Ultimately, before the situation can come to a head, Captain Fordham steps in to defuse the questioning. He is polite, but firm with the Tech-Priest, cautioning him that perhaps the characters have simply exhausted themselves.

FACILITIES

Hervara-XIX is designed to be a functional supply depot, rather than an aesthetically pleasing structure. Its architecture is consistent with standard Imperial and STC design principles. The structures are only selectively decorated with Imperial iconography. The buildings are organised in a regimented and logical fashion, for ease of shifting vehicles and supplies between structures. However, the layout is not particularly convenient for pedestrians and often requires the base's residents to walk through or around huge piles of inventory that is in the process of being relocated.

Most of the base is dedicated to warehousing of supplies and barracks for the troops assigned on station. Over the time that the Player Characters and their company remain at the facility, the levels of both should vary, with little predictable pattern. Supplies are often shuffled through the base so that stock levels might seem precariously high—filling up every available square centimetre within the walls—for a few days, and then the warehouses might suddenly be vacant for weeks afterwards. Similarly, the barracks might seem empty one day and, that night, it could be full of soldiers from beyond its walls who have been temporarily redeployed in the area.

Note that the Hervara-XIX is not a recreational facility. Troops are sent to the base for an opportunity to obtain provisions, reassignment, refit, or for medical treatment. The base also operates close to the front lines, so a high level of discipline is maintained at all times. The emotional atmosphere is always high strung, as characters maintain a high level of wariness in preparation for another combat engagement.

A few of the base's key facilities are described below. In addition, Hervara-XIX includes watchtowers, warehouses, barracks, a communications centre, offices, and the mess hall. The Game Master can add additional facilities that he thinks would be useful or interesting at his discretion.

MEDICAE

The medicae is managed by several Imperial Guard medics with a minimum level of training. They work in conjunction with a single member of the Adeptus Mechanicus Divisio Biologis.

The Tech-Priest is ostensibly responsible for overseeing all major surgeries and the dispensation of all field drugs.

Functionally, the medicae is badly underequipped for the number of soldiers it treats on a daily basis. It is not uncommon for the small building to run out of bed space. When this happens, the adjacent barracks is temporarily transferred to the authority of the medicae

staffers. Additional soldiers are assigned to assist the trained medics with basic duties, such as patient observation and clean-up responsibilities.

Treatments at Hervara-XIX are kept to an absolute minimum. For the most part, the staffers attempt to stabilise patients and then refer them to more capable field medicae for any complex surgeries. Overall, the medicae has very poor success rates for complex, life-saving treatments, even by the standards of the Imperial Guard. This is, in large part, due to their preference for sending the wounded to more capable facilities whenever possible. Those who must be treated locally are generally the most grievously wounded and tend not to survive treatment.

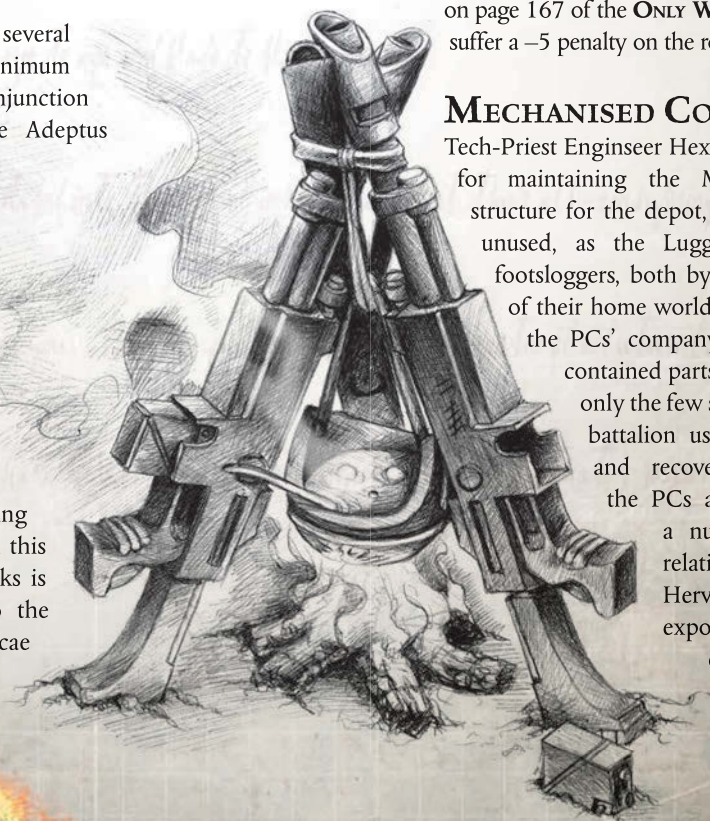
QUARTERMASTER

As a supply depot, the Quartermaster represents one of the most powerful soldiers within the military base. Every single ration, unit of fuel, or piece of wargear is received and assigned only with this officer's permission. Given the strictures and procedures of the Imperial Guard within the Calixis Sector, a Quartermaster who follows the relevant rules closely is responsible for filing a monumental amount of paperwork. Van Meering, like many of her counterparts, also assumes a great deal of personal responsibility for the materiel she presides over, an attitude that might be called into question by some agents of the Commissariat but is widely held nonetheless. Because of this, most Quartermasters' personalities are a seemingly incompatible mixture of superiority and insecurity complexes.

Supply Officer Von Meering (see below) is no exception to this rule. She is endlessly reluctant to give the Player Characters any gear that they might requisition, including their Standard Regimental Guardsmen Kit. This is, at least in part, because she is equipped to provide goods for the Luggnum Sewer Rats, who use a different standard kit than the Player Characters. Von Meering is exhausting in her attention to detail when it comes to filing forms, but far less so when it comes to actually delivering goods. Any time the characters roll on **Table 6-5: Random Issue Gear** on page 167 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook, they suffer a -5 penalty on the roll.

MECHANISED COMMAND

Tech-Priest Engineer Hexon has been responsible for maintaining the Mechanised Command structure for the depot, but it has been mostly unused, as the Luggnum Sewer Rats are footsloggers, both by training and by virtue of their home world. Up until the arrival of the PCs' company, the large garage has contained parts and repair facilities for only the few support vehicles that the battalion used during deployment and recovery operations. When the PCs arrived, hopefully with a number of vehicles, his relative importance to Hervara-XIX has increased exponentially, as has his extensive workload.



The Tech-Priest simultaneously revels in the new responsibility, while resenting the condition of the vehicles that he has received. Even if they sustained no damage from the time that they arrived, the members of the Machine Cult who cared for them prior to their delivery employed different rituals than his own. Every time members of the Player Characters' regiment make requests as regards the vehicles, he is disparaging of their condition. The surest way for them to get on his good side is through sharing information on the Ordinatus, or impressing him with knowledge of the proper maintenance procedures for the vehicles.

KEY NPCs

The following NPCs play important roles once the characters reach the Hervara-XIX depot.

CAPTAIN FORDHAM

As the man in charge of depot Hervara-XIX, Captain Fordham has a great deal of responsibility on his hands. He is ultimately responsible for the security of the supply line for the Luggnum units within a significant operational theatre. Fortunately, the Captain is capable of managing the stress well, and recognises that he is a more capable distribution officer than tactical mastermind. He depends upon building personal relationships and loyalties with other officers and the soldiers under his command, so that they are less likely to turn upon him when supplies become constrained.

The largest problem for the Captain is his memories of service within the Red Vaults of Luggnum. He remembers the terrible battles against his countrymen who had turned to the cause of Chaos. He saw firsthand the disastrous choices they made, but also the merciless slaughter that the Imperium inflicted. This has led the Captain to feelings of sympathy towards the Severan Dominate that could only be described as treasonous. His full profile can be found on page 135.

TECH-PRIEST ENGINEER HEXON

The Tech-Priest is a generalist, preferring to study the full breadth of the Omnissiah's workings rather than focusing upon a particular field. He has a strong interest in both archeotech and technologies less acceptable in the eyes of more conservative Tech-Priests, though he has never been granted permission by his masters to fully embrace these fields. For the past year, he has had little direct responsibility, due to the limited amount of repair work necessary at the supply depot. Instead, he has spent this time studying Hervara's mines and facilities, hoping for some key breakthrough that might both overcome the secessionists and the xenos and enhance his own prospects as a member of the Adeptus Mechanicus.

A brusque and mechanical exterior conceals a passionate individual who believes that he might play a key role in this world's salvation by his practice of the Omnissiah's august secrets. His dreams of glory leave him endlessly searching for the success that he can use to justify his advancement within the Adeptus Mechanicus. When presented information about the Ordinatus, he soon realises that this ancient vehicle could be the key that finally launches his career beyond the scope of this single frontier world. His full profile can be found on page 138.

SUPPLY OFFICER VON MEERING

Any requests for supplies—including those specifically allocated for a mission—must be fulfilled through Supply Officer Von Meering. Over the course of this adventure, she might become a constant thorn in the side of the Player Characters. With every round of ammunition or unit of fuel, she demands a complete accounting of those previously requisitioned. Her attention to detail goes far beyond that required by standard Imperial protocols.

The Supply Officer views every item in the depot's stores as her personal property. While she is reluctant to surrender any of these goods, she is always thrilled to add to them. If the company arrives with a substantial store of supplies for her warehouses, she is far more willing to actually allow them to use those goods than if they continue to use her limited reserves. Of course, if they can somehow scavenge additional supplies during the course of missions, they might even find their way into her good graces. Her full profile can be found on page 138.

REWARDS

This chapter concludes after the characters safely reach the supply depot Hervara-XIX and interact with the characters at that location. At this point, the Player Characters and their company have only just begun their mission upon Hervara. They have survived their first few encounters with the hostile world, but have scarcely begun to fully appreciate its dangers. The battlefield is vast and the opposition seemingly relentless. The Player Characters can now begin to understand the scope of the battles they face, and the desperation felt by the Imperial forces upon the world.

EXPERIENCE AND LOGISTICS

For surviving the act, each character receives an award of 1,000 xp. If they were able to successfully collapse the entrance to the Ork base upon their exit, they receive a bonus of 150 xp. For each conflict that they successfully overcame during their journey between the Ork base and the Hervara-XIX depot, the characters receive an additional 100 xp. At the Game Master's discretion, he can reduce these rewards if the characters suffered substantial losses to their company during the course of any of these encounters.

If the Player Characters successfully saved the dropship during the optional scene, they receive a +5 bonus to their Logistics Rating, as described on page 28. If they managed to also complete the journey to Hervara-XIX with all of the transport vehicles that they scavenged from the dropship in operational condition, they receive an additional +5 bonus to their Logistics Rating. If at only roughly half of their vehicles arrived in operational condition, this reward is reduced to +2. If the Player Characters made no effort to recover the Chimeras, or any of the other supplies aboard the dropship, they suffer a -3 to their Logistics rating for their thoughtlessness in leaving valuable supplies behind in xenos hands. If the GM wishes, he could even have the vehicles that they abandoned appear later in the adventure, now crewed covered in Ork glyphs and crewed by hostile Greenskins.

RECOGNISE YOUR ALLIES!

Unit: Death Korps of Krieg 138th

Commanding Officer: Lieutenant Colonel Heinrich Voorscht

Affiliation: Imperial Guard

Uniform Colour: Black and Grey

Uniform Components: Black and Grey Flak Coat, Black Flak Helmet, Respirator.

Unit Symbols: A stylised Guardsman with a Grenade Launcher, wearing a respirator mask.

Preferred Ranged Weapon: M36 Lasgun

Preferred Melee Weapon: Mono-knife

Preferred Heavy Weapon: Heavy bolter

Known Transport Vehicles: Chimera Armoured Transport

Regiment Speciality: Death Korps of Krieg regiments are renowned for their devotion to the Imperial cause and their willingness to embrace martyrdom in the name of defeating the enemy. A consequence of this philosophy is that the units almost never retreat. The Krieg 138th are prepared to spill their blood across Hervara to hold critical fortresses that allow other servants of the Emperor to deliver his will to heretics and xenos alike. All troops of other regiments should look to the noble Death Korps for inspiration, and attempt to emulate a modicum of their selflessness in the Emperor's Holy Name.

RECOGNISE YOUR ALLIES!

Unit: Tallarn Desert Raiders 35th

Commanding Officer: Major Laurein Al-Fasra

Affiliation: Imperial Guard

Uniform Colour: Grey and White

Uniform Components: Grey and white camouflage Flak Jacket and pants, White Turban.

Unit Symbols: A Mukaali rearing up over an Imperial Eagle.

Preferred Ranged Weapon: M36 Lasgun

Preferred Melee Weapon: Knife

Preferred Heavy Weapon: Missile Launcher

Known Transport Vehicles: Mukaali Mounts

Regiment Speciality: This regiment of Tallarn Desert Raiders has become known for their ability to travel at great lengths through hostile conditions using their Mukaali and Sentinel Walkers to quietly infiltrate deep behind enemy lines. They have set up countless ambushes in regions where there are no known Imperial assets, and will provide invaluable disruption and information in the course of their duties.

Inspirational Thought of the Day: A weapon's place is not to question the Emperor of light

DIAGRAM I: LUGGNUM SEWER RATS TROOPER

RECOGNISE YOUR ALLIES!

Unit: Luggnum Sewer Rats 3rd

Commanding Officer: Major Natalia Foudrang

Affiliation: Imperial Guard

Uniform Colour: Dark Green and White

Uniform Components: Green Flak Kilt, White Flak Jacket, Preysense Goggles (see Diagram III).

Unit Symbols: Steel sword held vertically by a hand emerging from a red trunk.

Preferred Ranged Weapon: Lascarbine

Preferred Melee Weapon: Sword

Preferred Heavy Weapon: Heavy Bolter

Known Transport Vehicles: None

Regiment Speciality: The Luggnum Sewer Rats are a regiment devoted to close quarters fighting. Battalions of the 3rd Regiment have had success suppressing rebellion within a Hive City, cleansing a Space Hulk, and fighting within the vaults of their home world. The Luggnum Sewer Rats have been chosen to secure the critical tunnels beneath Hervara's surface against assault by the traitor.



Inspirational Thought of the Day: Faith in the Emperor is the only true armour a warrior needs.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY!

Unit: Hervara Excavatory Warriors

Affiliation: Severan Dominate

Designation: Heretic

Uniform Colour: Officially black, but variants exist
Uniform Components: Helmet, Flak Jacket, bloused pants, boots, fingerless gloves.

Unit Symbols: Hervara Excavatory Warriors: Pickaxe and autogun crossed, upon a field of silver.

Preferred Ranged Weapon: Autogun

Preferred Melee Weapon: Pickaxe

Preferred Heavy Weapon: Autocannon

Known Transport Vehicles: Chimera Armoured Transport

Heresies: Foolishly attempting to steal Hervara despite the righteous claim of the Imperium upon this world. They have forsaken the light of the God-Emperor, willfully and wrongly embracing the ways of a mere human leader against the powers that have been preordained to protect humankind in perpetuity. For their treachery, all of these traitors must be purged.

—————[[For Officer's Eyes Only]]—————

Certain elements of the
Warrior
Command
assistant
Depending
some or
innocent
brethren
regardin

DIAGRAM II: SEVERAN DOMINATE TROOPER



KNOW YOUR ENEMY!

Unit: Severan Dominate

Affiliation: Severan Dominate

Designation: Heretic

Uniform Colour: Crimson and Tan

Uniform Components: Crested Helmet, Flak Jacket, Flak Skirt, armguards and legguards, boots, gloves
Unit Symbols: Severan Dominate: Stylised SD, gold, upon a field of black

Preferred Ranged Weapon: M36 Lasgun

Preferred Melee Weapon: Knife

Preferred Heavy Weapon: Lascannon

Known Transport Vehicles: Chimera Armoured Transport

Heresies: Uncounted atrocities against the Imperium of Mankind in their futile effort to secede. Duke Severus has made clear his intention to drag every human soul in his realm into damnation with him, and has even consorted with unclean powers to achieve his wicked ends. Each individual soldier who chose him over the God-Emperor did so knowingly, and should be treated as a traitor, eternally corrupt in the eyes of the Master of Mankind.

al Thought of the Day: When the
ns from the Master of Mankind, he
ck on his very humanity.



CAVERNS OF HERVAGA



1. Ramschackle Fortifications

2. Big Mek's Workshop

3. Ordinatus Weapon

4. Dropship Crash Site

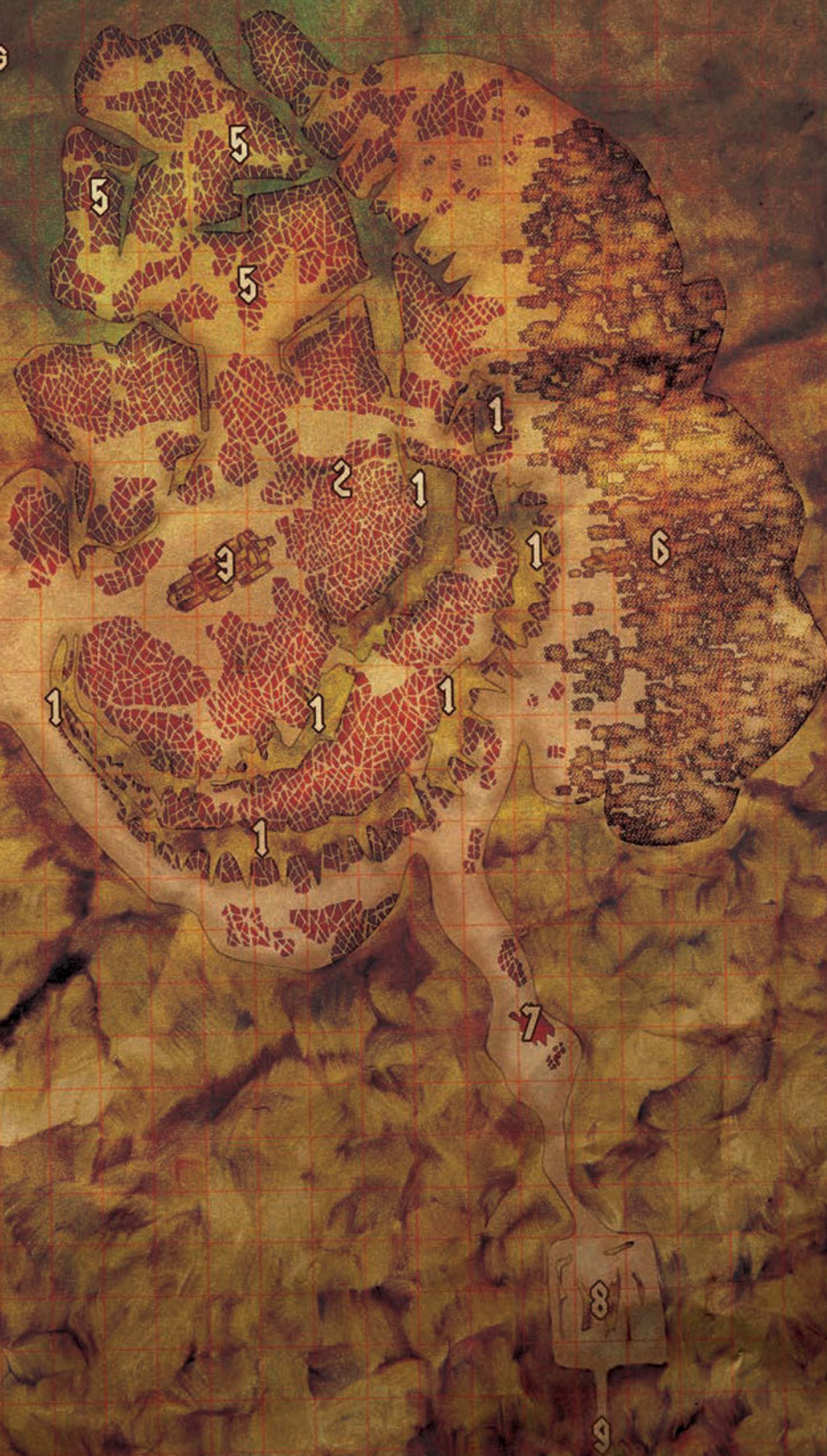
5. Ork Camp

6. Fungal Forest

7. Mad Dok's Lair

8. Hangar

9. Runway



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THE NIGHT PATH

REVISED DUTIES

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GUERRILLAS IN
THE SMOKE

•

ELIMINATION

•

ALTERNATIVE
APPROACHES

•

ACROSS THE LINE

CHAPTER II: THE NIGHT PATH

"Those who would betray the glory of the God-Emperor are just as likely to betray their allies in the heat of battle. Know ye that a traitor is doomed to a friendless life of scorn."

—Missionary Lars Grissam, Chaplain to the Luggnum 3rd

Throughout this Chapter, the Player Characters take a more active role in the Imperial war effort upon Hervara.

As they come to grips with the world, the Player Characters—generally working on detached duty with their squad—engage in a number of independent, covert missions. During these assignments, the squad reports directly to Captain Fordham, establishing a close working relationship with the base commander. In exchange, they soon discover the benefits of having a friend with authority, as they receive an unexpected level of support and gratitude from all of the other officers assigned to the base. However, they might begin to feel some justifiable doubts about the path they tread, as their foes, supposed “covert traitors,” seldom seem to look or act like secessionists.

Some Game Masters might wish to add additional scenes that give the Player Characters an opportunity to explore the Hervara-XIX base and its environs. This could be a great way to help develop the NPCs active at the base, and also helps to make the transition between the two Chapters flow more smoothly for groups who wish to explore these dynamics. In this way, the Player Characters have an opportunity to interact and build a rapport with the denizens of the base. They might gradually come to despise Supply Officer Von Meering’s knack for hoarding supplies, or enjoy discussing recovered archeotech with Tech-Priest Hexon. The Player Characters might even develop rivalries or friendships among members of the Luggnum Sewer Rats 3rd, either during meals or during watch duty. Obviously, certain groups of players are more disposed to these parts of roleplaying than others, and so the Game Master should consider (and consult) his particular group, when deciding how much time they spend around the base.

Game Masters who wish to take this route are encouraged to first review the scenarios presented in this act, as well as the descriptions of the key NPCs that feature throughout this act. In general, as Player Characters interact with these officers more often, they come to better understand and anticipate their personalities. Consistency in seemingly minor details can be very helpful in bringing a campaign setting to life.

Throughout this act, Game Masters can refer to the **Map of the Drury-Cobhan Line** on page 86. This shows the various objectives within the context of the Ork and Severan Dominate forces, as well as Hervara-XIX. Knowing the physical locations of these different sites influences when the Player Characters can act on each objective.

THE DRURY-COBHAN LINE

Many of the scenarios in this chapter require the characters to visit or pass through the Drury-Cobhan Line. This defensive bastion is more fully described in **Across the Line** on page 80. This important landmark stretches between the cities of Drury and Cobhan, a distance of more than a thousand kilometres. Bunkers, equipped with listening posts, vox systems, and heavy weapons, are located roughly every kilometre along its length. Above ground, a three-metre high wall made of plascrete extends the entire length, protected by tank traps, razor wire, and minefields. Below ground, tunnels run parallel to the wall, which are patrolled by the Death Korps of Krieg.

The Line was a critical resource for the secessionists during the first years of the war. Since its capture by Imperial Guard forces, they have used it as a staging point in their advances against both the Orks and the Severan Dominate. Through most of this Chapter, crossing the line represents travelling into unsecured, dangerous territory.



REVISED DUTIES

"Blind obedience is never a crime, provided that your obedience is to the God-Emperor and those who serve Him."

—Lord Commissar Salieri

Captain Fordham is impressed by the initiative the Player Characters showed in organising their company into an effective fighting force in the absence of leadership elements. He recognises that they have already shown tremendous courage and the ability to effectively use their training. In his eyes, the squad shows tremendous potential: potential that must be properly used.

As the company has already been seconded to his command, he has full authority to commit them to any assignments that he deems necessary within his jurisdiction. The Hervara-XIX depot is technically responsible for reinforcing Imperial forces within the current operating theatre. At his own discretion, the Captain decides that the company can best fulfil this responsibility by engaging in a series of covert assignments.

During this scene, the Captain explains this new role to the Player Characters. He also answers any questions that they might have, and explains the benefits that come with their new responsibilities. He does not, however, offer the characters any opportunity to avoid the assignment. Based upon their previous success, he has decided that they must volunteer for this role.

At least a few days pass between the arrival at Hervara-XIX and Captain Fordham's first formal mission assignment for the Player Characters. During this time, the Player Characters and their company have an opportunity to come to grips with the function of the supply depot. They will no doubt eat at the mess hall, requisition basic supplies from the quartermaster, and receive assignments at the watch towers and the warehouses. They should also receive numerous opportunities to interact with members of the Luggnum Sewer Rats during this time.

After this basic background has been set up, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Earlier today, a runner came to your squad's sergeant with a note from Captain Fordham, calling you to visit his office as soon as possible. After a quick clean up, you made your way to meet with him. The room is packed with chairs, just as it was during your first visit, and the smell of a fresh pot of recaf lingers in the air. Fordham looks up from behind his desk and gestures for you to help yourselves to a drink and a seat. As he waits for everyone to settle, Fordham pulls out a sealed pack of lho-sticks and starts absentmindedly tapping them.

Throughout this conversation, Captain Fordham fiddles with a pack of lho-sticks, an indicator of his stress and nervous tension. The Captain quit smoking years ago, a fact that the Player Characters might even have uncovered during their dealings with him, or in various encounters around the base, but as he becomes increasingly concerned about the morality of his actions, he feels drawn to the comfort of his discarded habit. During this scene, the package remains sealed, and there is no smell of smoke, or any sign of an ashtray or lighter. In later scenes, this should be gradually played up as a subtle cue to the Player Characters that something is changing. If any of the Player Characters request a lho stick in this scene, the Captain fiddles with the pack for a moment, attempting to open it, before haltingly passing the still-sealed pack over to the person who asked for it. He does not have a lighter on hand to offer once the pack is open. He encourages them to keep the pack after handing it over, mentioning that he quit some time ago.

Once everyone has taken a seat, Captain Fordham thanks the soldiers for coming to meet with him so quickly. He then reminds them that their company has been seconded to his command for the long term, and that his authority actually extends further than the domain of the supply depot. He explains that, because of their success while operating independently during their arrival, he would like to assign them further work in this same line. He believes, rather strongly, that the group is capable of functioning effectively on detached duty, without support elements.

THE CAPTAIN'S GOOD GRACES

This chapter begins based upon the assumption that the Captain was duly impressed by the characters' successes during the prior act, but this assumption is not necessarily valid. It could be that the characters required rescue, ignored orders, or returned to the base as the sole survivors of their company. They might have taken a hostile attitude towards Fordham as they underwent their debriefing, despite his general attempts to placate them after their ordeal.

If the Player Characters antagonise Captain Fordham in some way, or came across as overly unscrupulous or cowardly in their means of survival, it might be appropriate for the Game Master to insert an additional scene or two so that the Captain and the PCs can create a better working relationship. These scenes need not be overly complex, but must provide the Player Characters with an opportunity to win the Captain's respect. One possibility might be for them to thwart an assassination attempt on the Captain—one which might have been staged, given information revealed later in the adventure. Alternatively, the Player Characters might perform extremely effectively during one or more minor battles, possibly while supporting the Luggnum Sewer Rats. If necessary, such a scene could begin with the Player Characters leading a resupply convoy behind enemy lines, and conclude with them rescuing a company-sized force.

Some Game Masters might, alternatively, wish to explore the world of Hervara with the Player Characters prior to introducing them to this adventure's subplot—or even to disperse this subplot between missions of their own design. Following this path, the key element would be to build up the relationship between Captain Fordham and the Player Characters over the course of numerous adventures. Ideally, the Player Characters should come to like—or at least respect—the Captain over time, just as he comes to like and respect them.

THE NIGHT PATH

Captain Fordham gives them a moment to ask any basic questions or request clarifications about this before he continues. The assignments would need to be undertaken under the most secretive of conditions. The targets would be Severan Dominate fortifications. Because at least some of these assignments are likely to require infiltration behind enemy lines, the Player Characters must be able to work with only a minimum of recognition. Were they to become well known, even among the Imperial Guard, their ability to easily infiltrate the Severan Dominate holdings could be compromised. Given the raised concerns about Hervara Excavatory Warriors infiltrators, from High Command to even the supposedly secure supply depot's inhabitants, his worry seems reasonable enough.

Though he is reluctant to speculate on the precise nature of these assignments, he is confident that they are likely to be varied, and that many of them involve substantial risk. He suspects that some involve sabotage, recovery, and reconnaissance missions, with little opportunity for support. To broadly generalise, he expects to issue them assignments that require the ability to act independently and exhibit tactical acumen under stressful situations. He pauses and wistfully smiles as he admits that he cannot guarantee that all of the soldiers would necessarily return home safely from every mission. This could include some work that might only be described as extremely dangerous. Fordham goes on to explain that he is reluctant to issue assassination orders, at least in part because he does not have sufficient intelligence information to make those types of assignments practical.

Captain Fordham realises that without any hope of recognition, such risky activities certainly lose some of their lustre. He does explain that the God-Emperor would, in his wisdom, clearly be aware of their heroic efforts, but he can understand that they might also like some more tangible remuneration for the risks undertaken in their service to Him on Earth. With a smile, Captain Fordham explains that because they would be working so closely with him, he could see to it that they received a certain amount of specialised equipment, and perhaps some particular luxuries, for as long as these missions would prove necessary.

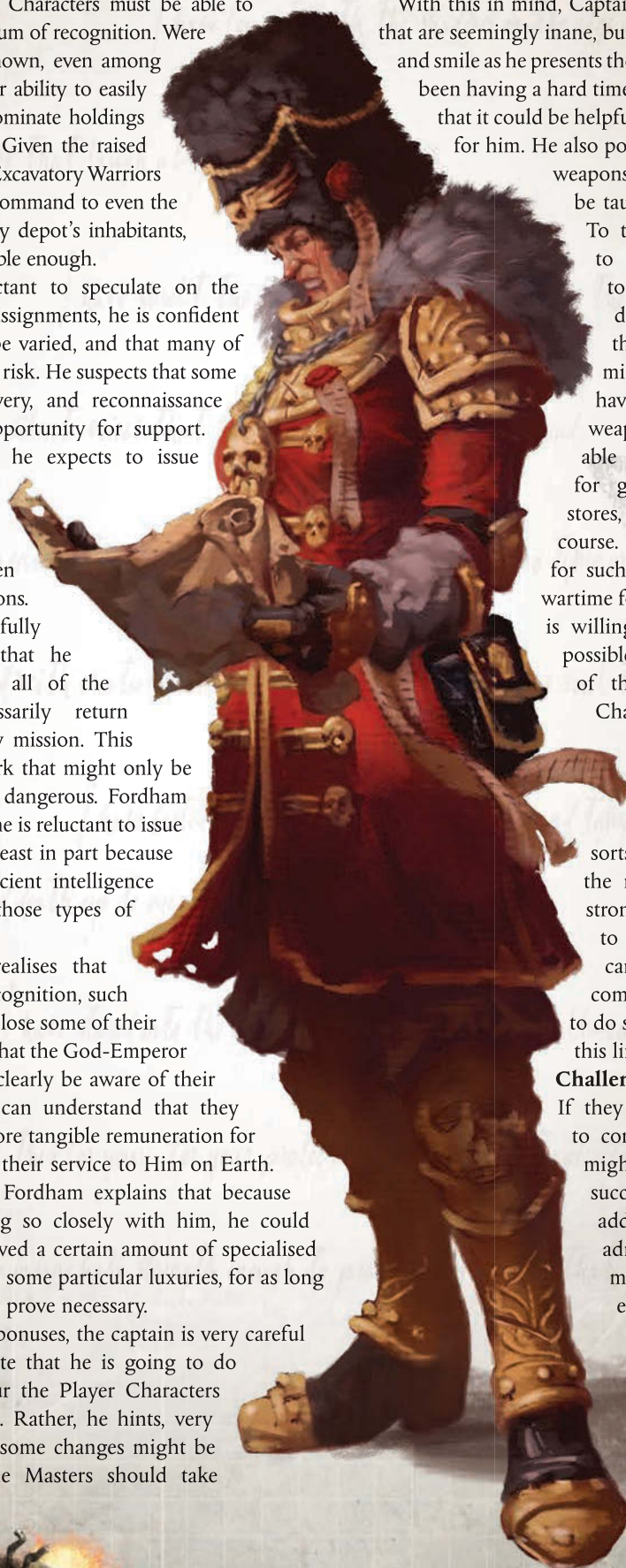
In describing such bonuses, the captain is very careful not to explicitly state that he is going to do anything to favour the Player Characters and their squad. Rather, he hints, very strongly, that some changes might be made. Game Masters should take

care in their word choice during this discussion. If the Captain were to offer the characters anything that was significantly beyond the privileges normally accorded to a member of the Imperial Guard with their rank and duties, then that might be considered a bribe. This could draw the attentions of the Commissariat, which would be disastrous for the Captain.

With this in mind, Captain Fordham suggests a few perks that are seemingly inane, but makes sure that he gives a wink and smile as he presents them. He explains that the cook has been having a hard time managing the menus lately, and that it could be helpful if they might see fit to review it for him. He also points out that their techniques for weapons maintenance should probably be taught to the Luggnum regiments.

To take care of that, he could see to it that soldiers were assigned to care for their gear, under their direct supervision. Similarly, in the interests of cross-training, he might want to make sure that they have access to a broader range of weapons and armour. He would be able to accommodate any requests for gear that was in the depot's stores, purely for training purposes, of course. There are endless possibilities for such perks within the context of a wartime footing. At this stage, the Captain is willing to hint at a broad range of possible compensation, in the hopes of thoroughly enticing the Player Characters with the potential for significant rewards.

The Captain is aggressively trying to persuade the Player Characters to accept these sorts of assignments. Because of this, the negotiations favour them quite strongly. Captain Fordham is willing to make any concessions that he can without running the risk of committing blatant heresy or treason to do so. If the characters actively push this limit, they can make an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Commerce Test**. If they fail, the Captain is unwilling to concede to requests that he fears might be seen as treasonous. If they succeed, he is willing to make some additional concessions, though he admits that he might not be able to make such exceptions for them on each and every assignment.



AND IF THEY REFUSE?

The Captain is recruiting the characters for assignments that are dangerous from the start and eventually become treasonous, though they have no way of knowing this for certain until it is too late. Still, it is entirely possible that in the early stages, they might refuse to accept these more dangerous assignments. As the adventure continues, it becomes even more likely that the characters might confront either the Captain or members of the Commissariat about the potential heretical or treasonous nature of their missions. Game Masters confronted with such a decision might well need to make significant changes to the remainder of the scenario.

One way to spin Chapter II would be for the characters to gradually become more and more aware of the Captain's treasonous nature. As they engage in support assignments, they also begin to hear rumours of the high casualty rates among his specialist squads, and the losses among Guardsmen of other units at the same time. Instead of becoming the traitors, the characters would need to take action to report the treason to ranking members of the Commissariat (without being implicated in the treason in the process—no small task, given the Commissariat's tendency to see the world in terms of orthodoxy, heresy, and complex, philosophical quandaries that are best untangled by way of a bolt pistol and a humble prayer that the Emperor render judgement as He sees fit).

If the Player Characters do discover the corruption before being implicated in it, however, Chapter III might then mean working in conjunction with higher ranking officers, where the squad's goal is to succeed in spite of Captain Fordham's treachery. Engaging the Captain in battle—after he is freed by his Severan Dominate allies—might become a compelling conflict near the scenario's conclusion. In such a case, a showdown with Captain Fordham might take the place of the battle to recover the Ordinatus near the conclusion as the emotional centre on which the adventure turns.

Captain Fordham does remind the Player Characters that these missions are normally the sort reserved for the most elite of units. He expects them to step up to the responsibility that goes hand in hand with such special treatment. The Captain does temper this approach with a grin, as he continues to fiddle with the packet of lho-sticks. It should be clear that Fordham has selected the squad because he already has faith in their abilities to accomplish these sorts of tasks. His comments about expectations should come with a bit of a smile and a nod, as though he is utterly confident in their capacity to fulfil these new responsibilities.

If the characters' biggest reason for hesitation in accepting the assignments is the additional risk involved, Fordham does attempt to play this down, but only moderately. Ultimately, the Captain does not want to trick someone into undertaking these jobs. He really does not wish to take any more lives than is strictly necessary, even those who are mindlessly loyal to the God-Emperor. Captain Fordham is mentally turning to the path of the zealot, and believes that time and understanding will soon enlighten those around him. While he does not want to risk the condemnation he might receive from the Player Characters if he were to reveal the truth at this time, he fully expects that they would embrace his allegiances if they realised the true nature of the Imperial cause.

A few days pass between the Player Characters' acceptance of the Captain's offer and the first assignment that he gives them. During this time, the characters can begin to enjoy their improved status within Hervara-XIX, even though they have not done anything to earn it. Word throughout the base spreads

quickly that they are Fordham's new favourites, and they receive far superior treatment and deference from their peers.

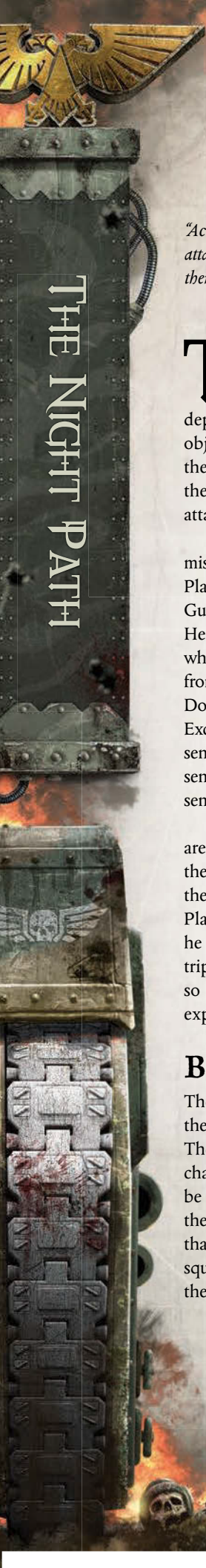
The remainder of this chapter focuses upon a number of different missions that Captain Fordham assigns to the PCs and their squad. These are of varying difficulty, but all are presented as dangerous and weighty tasks.

Several of these scenarios offer the potential for alternative related missions, which a Game Master might further develop at his own discretion. Because of the option for such missions, some Game Masters might wish to present these scenarios in a different order. Each of the assignments could well evolve into scenarios that could be run completely independently of Captain Fordham's plotting.

Adjusting the order of these scenarios and even tweaking their scope is perfectly reasonable. The only caveat is that the Game Master should place assignments first that are less likely to immediately reveal Captain Fordham's treason. That information, along with his nervous habits, should build gradually, over the course of the act.

With each successful mission, Captain Fordham lavishes the PCs with praise and recognition. They are awarded with accolades for their acts of heroism and granted reprieves from some of the more tedious duties around the base. They might also receive promotion through the ranks, as appropriate, and have their names added to the depot's roll of honour. By the end of the second or third mission, virtually all of the soldiers stationed at Hervara-XIX recognise the PCs as elite soldiers who are working closely with Captain Fordham to eliminate the important rebel threats.





GUERRILLAS IN THE SMOKE

"Actions against the foe must be relentless. The most effective attacks are those taken when the enemy is foolish enough to believe themselves safe from the fury of the God-Emperor."

—Lord Commissar Salieri

This scene presents the Player Characters with a mission to strike against another supply depot, which is ostensibly held by Severan Dominate forces. The depot contains substantial promethium reserves. Their objective is to assault the undermanned location, recover the fuel stores, and return them to Hervara-XIX. During the course of their return trip with the fuel, they fall under attack by a force of Ork Speed Freeks.

There are several complications over the course of the mission. One of the key points is that, unbeknownst to the Player Characters, the depot actually remains in Imperial Guard hands at the start of the mission. The depot in question, Hervara-XV, is assigned to the Tallarn Desert Raiders. The forces which had normally been tasked to man it are currently away from the facility, engaged in a series of strikes against Severan Dominate training facilities. At this time, only loyalist Hervara Excavatory Warriors are stationed at the base. Commands were sent to Captain Fordham, through circumspect channels, to send units to reinforce Hervara-XV. Instead, he has chosen to send the Player Characters to capture it.

The Speed Freeks, which ambush the returning convoy, are also a known quantity. They have been actively patrolling the area that constitutes the most direct travel route between the two depots. While Captain Fordham does not expect the Player Characters to encounter them on the way to the target, he fully expects them to ambush the convoy on their return trip. He has been impressed by the competency of the PCs, so he expects them to survive this encounter, but he does expect the fuel transports to be destroyed in the process.

BRIEFING

The scene begins when Captain Fordham's adjutant contacts the Player Characters to immediately report for a briefing. The call comes in the middle of the night. Unless the characters are currently assigned to watch duty, they should be asleep in their barracks. The adjutant attempts to wake them quietly, so as not to cause an undue disruption, and so that he does not have to explain things to any of the other squads in the barracks. He explains that they are to report to the Captain immediately for assignment.

Once the characters have dressed and made their way to Fordham's office, read or paraphrase the following:

The base was unusually quiet as you made your way to the Captain's office. Even in the still of the night, there are typically noises coming from the warehouse and the mechanised command, but tonight all were virtually silent. Only the whine of the base's generators and defensive systems disrupted the night's wind. When you enter the Captain's office, he hastily puts out a lho-stick with an embarrassed smile and tries to wave the smoke out of the way with his hand. Fordham grabs the ashtray from his desk—which only holds a single butt—and conceals it in a desk drawer as he gestures for you to take a seat and help yourselves to a cup of freshly brewed recaf.

Fordham makes some uncomfortable and apologetic small talk about the dead of night, the smell of the lho-stick, and the danger of the situation as the squad takes their seats. A **Routine (+20) Scrutiny Test** reveals that the Captain is clearly very unnerved about the situation. If any of the characters are so bold as to mention this, he tries to explain that he is just concerned for their well-being, as this is the first particularly dangerous assignment that he has sent their way. Fordham makes an **Opposed Easy (+30) Deceive Test** to try to pass off this credible lie. If the characters see through his lie, they know that he is withholding information, but they are not aware of the nature of the deception.

After the initial greetings, Captain Fordham begins briefing them for the mission. His first action is to present them with the following materials: **Mission Assignment HV-2** on page 83, as well as all of the **Know Your Enemy** materials for Orks on page 82. When providing the recognition sheets for the Ork forces, Fordham grins, and explains that those probably should have been issued prior to arrival. He cautions the soldiers that he expects only incidental contact with the Orks during this mission. Presenting those materials now is simply a matter of fulfilling standard orders for newly assigned troops. It should not be seen as a matter of presenting information necessarily relevant to the mission at hand. Fordham refers to **Mission Assignment HV-2** throughout his briefing, as well as a series of maps that he flips through on his desk as he speaks.

The Captain explains that another Imperial supply depot, Hervara-XV, has just fallen to Severan Dominate forces. According to the most recent data, the depot had an exceptionally large store of promethium. Unless that is recovered in short order, the rebel forces could have enough promethium to significantly enhance their tactical mobility. This cannot be permitted, so Imperial forces must recover the fuel with all possible haste. However, Fordham is not able to commit enough forces to both capture and hold the depot against enemy counter attack. With that in mind, he is assigning the squad to recover as much of the base's promethium stores as possible and then destroy any that cannot be safely transferred back to Hervara-XIX.

Any secessionists remaining at the base are to be eliminated without mercy. These men are murderers, and death is the greatest mercy that the Emperor could grant such traitors. Any fuel that cannot be transported should be used to detonate the base—once the Player Characters move to a safe distance, of course.





The route to the base can make use of the tunnels which lead to the Drury-Cobhan Line. There are Luggnum-held tunnels directly beneath Hervara-XIX, from which they can begin their journey. A former Hervara Excavatory Warriors member who has sided with the Imperium is scheduled to meet them at the line. He can direct them through tunnels, which are believed to be secure, the rest of the way to Hervara-XV. The Captain explains that their contact, one Brevet Corporal Kousenk, is very familiar with the tunnels in that region, and should be more than capable of providing them with safe direction.

The base should have multiple large fuel transports remaining. Intelligence cannot confirm if any of those transports have already left the base to supply other rebel efforts. If they have, then the remaining promethium must be destroyed. If they have not, then every available transport should be used to drive promethium back to the Drury-Cobhan Line, and then onwards to Hervara-XIX. Notably, the fuel transports are far too large to drive through the underground tunnels. This portion of the assignment necessitates an additional level of risk, as the characters are exposed to attack from ground-based and aerial assets. Any Orks encountered during this trip should be considered targets of opportunity; recovering the fuel is far more important than eliminating the xenos at this time.

Captain Fordham concludes the briefing at this point, and accepts any questions. If the Player Characters ask, he can allocate up to one additional item of up to Scarce availability. Otherwise, that exhausts the available supplies for the mission. Once other questions are answered, he asks that they grab their gear and depart immediately.

“GUERRILLAS IN THE SMOKE” MISSION ASSIGNMENT GEAR:

- One respirator per soldier.
- Two demolition charges per soldier.
- Two flamers per squad.
- One photo-visior per soldier.

TRAVEL

The trip to the Hervara-XV depot should be largely uneventful. Essentially all of their travel passes through locations held by Imperial forces. Even once they pass beyond the Drury-Cobhan Line, this region has largely been swept free of secessionists and xenos. As the characters are prepared for this trip, it should be fraught with far less difficulties than their last venture across Hervara’s surface.

Their mission should begin with a stop at the Quartermaster’s office. Supply Officer Von Meering keeps her personal quarters within the supply office. When the characters arrive, she is sleeping, but one of her underlings—a Luggnum private named MacGivens, who was assigned to work behind the lines after losing a leg—is on duty. He is half-asleep when they reach the office, and quite groggy.

MacGivens (use the profile for a Luggnum Guardsman on page 128) is initially uncooperative. He does not have the authority to actually assign any equipment, per Von Meering’s orders. Her standard protocol is to have him assemble any requisitions that come in during the night, so that she can sign off and deliver them after she gets up in the morning. She expects him to only awaken her for missions of dire importance. His list of acceptable conditions for awakening her is actually quite specific. These include orders from a higher ranking officer, if the base comes under attack, or a cataclysmic event. Otherwise, he has been told to let her sleep.

The Player Characters must either persuade MacGivens to let them take their gear without having Von Meering sign off on it, or to awaken her. Either option is likely to affect the long-term relationship the Player Characters have with the Supply Officer. She does not like having her rest interrupted, nor does she like soldiers taking their mission gear without her authorisation.

Once the Player Characters have acquired their equipment, they depart the base. Leaving the base through the tunnels is simply a matter of signing off on the exit log prior to departing. The passages that lead to the Drury-Cobhan Line are actually well marked



using standard Imperial sigils. This section of the tunnels even has small rail cars in place. The cars are intended to quickly transfer supplies between the defensive line and the supply depot, but passengers can certainly fit inside. This gives the Player Characters a few moments to snooze during a rather bumpy and clanking ride. It takes an hour to reach the line by rail or two to make the trip on foot.

When they reach the checkpoint at the Drury-Cobhan Line, soldiers in the uniforms of the Death Korps of Krieg (see page 129) greet them, asking for their identification and orders. This is a perfunctory check. Dawn is fast approaching, and the guards are nearing the end of their shift. Unless any of the Player Characters are obviously dressed as officers or Commissars, the Guardsmen have very little interest in them. They just want to get off duty and go back to bed.

Corporal Kousenk (see page 63 for more details) awaits the Player Characters just beyond the guard station. He received word through channels from Captain Fordham to expect the squad's arrival. If they are later than he expected, he has been waiting impatiently, and has thoroughly annoyed the guards on station with his nervous pacing and humming. If the Player Characters made the trip relatively quickly, Kousenk is busily going through his rucksack, making certain that he has all of the gear required for the journey.

After a brief introduction, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors soldier is ready to depart. If the Player Characters push to delay their journey into the unsecured regions, Kousenk reminds them about the tight time frame of the assignment. Secessionist reinforcements could arrive at the target location at any time. The sooner they reach the facility, the better their odds of securing it without any additional complications.

Their guide directs the squad to one of the railcars that run beneath the Drury-Cobhan Line. He explains that their target is some distance down the line, and that by using the car, they can reduce the portion of the journey that needs to be taken on foot. Over the next two hours, they ride in relative comfort, for a distance of just over a hundred kilometres, in the security of the Imperial emplacement. During this leg of the trip, the characters might notice the regularity of the line's checkpoints, with soldiers in Death Korps of Krieg uniforms manning each bunker, roughly once every kilometre. When the car finally settles to a stop, Corporal Kousenk leads them past more guards into a tunnel that extends away from the Imperial held side of the line.

The remainder of the journey through the tunnels is less comfortable than the previous ones, but not particularly complex. Their guide is very familiar with the route and can navigate it effortlessly. Have the Player Characters make **Challenging (+0) Navigate (Surface) Tests**. If any of them succeed, they learn the route well enough that they can safely make the return trip without too much difficulty. If they all fail, however, they become confused by the various twists and turns, and are uncomfortable with the prospect of trying to find a route back through the tunnels. With three or more Degrees of Failure, they are confident that Corporal Kousenk is leading them the wrong way—a sign that he might be a traitor.

On foot, the remainder of the trip takes roughly four hours. By the time they reach the camp, their chronometers indicate that the sun should be up, and soldiers should be about their duties. The Player Characters must decide if they wish to use an entrance that connects the tunnels with Hervara-XV directly or if they want to first exit the tunnels and scout the base from outside. Their guide knows of several nearby exits and is willing to accommodate either approach.

HERVARA-XV

Hervara-XV is located among one of the planet's many ash wastelands. The ash forms large dunes that constantly shift in the swirling winds. These make for dangerous travel, as an unexpected storm can easily bury an entire convoy. A vehicle unprepared for these conditions would quickly be lost and buried with its crew. The depot represents a lone sign of human habitation in this otherwise barren region. It is constructed atop a large rocky area, which offers some structural stability amongst the region's dunes.

As a point of reference, Hervara-XV is markedly smaller than the Luggnum supply depot where the PCs are normally stationed. Its walls are temporary structures, made of reinforced steel rather than poured plascrete. The watch posts are essentially makeshift ones, built from temporary construction scaffolding. There are no anti-aircraft emplacements. This is a forward outpost, meant to supply some reserves to the soldiers operating nearby—while it is defensible, no one has

taken the time to turn temporary defensive structures into more permanent structures, with far superior defences.

Three large fuel tanks dominate the base, each with the capacity to store roughly 150 kilolitres of promethium. The tanks are over seven metres in diameter and five metres high. A number of sigils are stencilled on to the structures warning of their explosive nature. At this time, all three of the tanks are filled to capacity. They are also covered in camouflage netting that is intended to help them blend into the ash wastes when viewed from an aircraft. At ground level, this does not provide effective concealment.

A number of fuel trucks equal to the number of soldiers in the squad are parked adjacent to the fuel tanks, also under the netting. These are the surest way to transport the fuel from the base. They are each capable of carrying 25 kilolitres of fuel. Only one of these trucks is currently filled. The remainder are currently empty.

The base's reinforced steel walls are each thirty metres in length and three metres tall. They are set up in a triangular alignment. At the midpoint of each wall is a reinforced steel door, large enough to accommodate any of the Imperial Guard tanks. The doors are opened at dawn and stay open until sunset each day, unless they have reason to expect an imminent attack. The fuel tanks occupy one tip of the triangle. One of the temporary watch towers is stationed at each point of the triangle. The remaining two corners of the triangle are filled by a barracks and a warehouse. The central portion of the triangle includes the commander's office, and an open area used for training exercises.

Two guards (see the Hervara Excavatory Warriors soldier profiles, on page 124) are stationed at each of the base's watchtower at all times. They remain on a state of relatively high alert, but the atmospheric conditions make it difficult for them to be constantly vigilant. If the Player Characters try to sneak into the supply depot, they can make an **Opposed Routine (+20) Stealth Test**. If they wait until nightfall, they gain an additional +10 bonus to this Test, as the Hervara Excavatory Warriors guards are not equipped with any gear to grant them night vision. Each of the watchtowers has a twin-linked missile launcher mounted upon it, and the soldiers have an ample supply of both frag and krak missiles for the launchers (see pages 182–183 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).

There are a total of eighteen Hervara Excavatory Warriors soldiers, plus two Sergeants and a Lieutenant (see page 125) holding Hervara-XV. This represents a skeleton crew for the supply depot. Considering that six soldiers are on duty in the three watchtowers at all times, this requires that each one takes an eight hour shift every day. The Lieutenant is the watch officer on the first shift, beginning at dawn. The two sergeants assume watch officer duties for each of the remaining shifts.

All Hervara Excavatory Warriors wear the same uniforms—both loyalists and those who have sided with the secession effort. This has caused problems for the Imperial Guard in the past, as they have, on several occasions, attempted to discuss tactics with traitors and shelled allies. In this instance, the troopers holding the base are, in fact, allies. However, they are not particularly well informed, nor are they particularly attentive to detail. These soldiers are stretched very thinly to try to hold Hervara-XV, and they engage in very little thought regarding intruders—especially

DEALING WITH THE GUARDS

The Player Characters were specifically ordered to kill all of the guards without mercy. In spite of this, they might choose to leave some alive for questioning, but the guards are not cooperative prisoners. Their first reaction is to believe that the Player Characters are soldiers of the Severan Dominate. As these members of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors have previously betrayed the secessionists, they can only expect death at their hands.

If the captured guards somehow realise that the Player Characters are loyalists, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors feel that they have been double-crossed. However, such cries of betrayal are common amongst true secessionists—after all, many of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors turned against the Imperium because they felt the God-Emperor had abandoned them.

In any case, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors leave the Player Characters with little option but to execute them. They fight fiercely, no matter which side they believe the characters to be on, for they have no reasonable expectation of survival. Corporal Kousenk also encourages the squad to quickly eliminate these traitors, for any survivors would certainly lead additional rebels to attack them during their trip back to Hervara-XIX with the fuel.

ones wearing uniforms that they do not recognise. From the moment that they make contact, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors aggressively attempt to eradicate their attackers. They do not negotiate, and they do not surrender.

Their core tactic is to attempt to secure the facility by closing the doors, and using the watchtower mounted missile launchers to annihilate any attackers. As soon as one of the launchers fires, the rest of the camp becomes ready to respond within two Rounds. If the attackers are still outside of the base, the soldiers inside begin to close the doors, a process which takes two full Rounds and the effort of two soldiers for each Round. All of the remaining troopers then climb to positions on the wall's ramparts, and begin firing their weapons towards the attackers. If the attackers are already inside the base, the soldiers who were off duty move to engage, taking advantage of any cover from vehicles.

The missile launchers can turn to fire into the base. As long as the attackers are far from the fuel tanks, they do not hesitate to take advantage of this fact. However, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors forces do not fire any weapons—not even lasguns—at targets within twenty metres of the fuel tanks. This idea was thoroughly stressed to them prior to their assignment. In fact, the soldiers are quite terrified of what might happen if the tanks were to be struck by a stray round. This fear is so extreme that if they have any reason to believe that the tanks might be struck—including a stray round from the attacking PCs—they immediately attempt to flee before what they fear could be a massive explosion. Note, however, that if the Player Characters somehow get the fuel transports out of the base while the Hervara Excavatory Warriors troopers still man the watchtowers, they enthusiastically fire the missile launchers at the transports as they leave.

In truth, the fuel tanks and the fuel transports (Synford-pattern "Firebomb" Prometheum Transports, on page 139) are actually unlikely to explode. While the fuel is explosive, the tanks are designed with safety concerns in mind. Each has Armour 30 (treat all facings the same). If an attack penetrates the armour, there is a chance the tank could explode. If the attack is of the Energy or Explosive types and causes 12 or more points of Damage after penetrating armour, the volatile fuel explodes.

Treat an exploding fuel tank as dealing 4d10+10 Explosive Damage with the Blast (20), Concussive (6), and Flame Qualities. Note that if one of these tanks does explode, it triggers a chain reaction with any other tanks and any fuelled transport trucks caught in the blast radius. As a reminder, only one of the fuel transports contains any fuel at the start of the scene. The others are only subject to explode if the Player Characters had taken the time to fuel them.

Other than the fuel and the ammunition for the missile launchers, there is little of interest remaining at Hervara-XV. They can scavenge some local foodstuffs, spare uniforms, or ammunition from the guards. They can also recover a few flasks of amasec, packs of lho-sticks, and other minor, forbidden luxury items. Finding these sorts of items requires the Player Characters to search the barracks, office, and dead bodies—a time consuming process. Corporal Kousenk, meanwhile, pushes the Player Characters to quickly detonate the

facility. The last thing he wants is for the squad to still be at the depot when a Tallarn force returns.

Fortunately, that is unlikely to happen. Rigging the remaining fuel to explode requires one character to make an **Easy (+30) Tech-Use Test**. If he succeeds, the base and all its supplies are utterly destroyed, and the characters have ample time to get away. If he fails, the fuel and ammunition are destroyed, but much of the base remains intact. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the characters are caught within range of a blast as described above when a fuel tank explodes.

No support units are expected to reach Hervara-XV for another week. Unless the characters set up camp here for an extended stay, they do not have any encounters with other forces. If they do make contact, the first group to arrive is a Company of Tallarn Desert Raiders (see pages 130–131).

AMBUSH

During their return from Hervara-XV, the Player Characters are presumed to drive the fuel transports across the planet's barren surface. If they wish to salvage fuel, as instructed by their mission parameters, this is essentially the only means they have to transport the supplies back to their base behind the Drury-Cobhan Line. The tunnels are simply too small to accommodate a fuel transport. They have no means of aerial transport, nor do they have access to any other vehicles at this time. While establishing some sort of pumping system might be an option, they do not have the kilometres of hose and pumps necessary to attempt such an action.

The fuel transports (see the Synford-pattern "Firebomb" Prometheum Transport profile on page 139) are well designed for travel through Hervara's ash wastes. They can handle the instability of the terrain and can filter the impurities from the air so that the engines continue to run smoothly. They are not, however, combat vehicles. The fuel transports are unarmed and have a minimal amount of armour.



While they are reasonably manoeuvrable for their size and mass, they are hardly agile enough to dodge weapons fire. These vehicles were never intended to be used in the manner that the squad must use them—driving through hostile enemy territory in the middle of a warzone.

The underground tunnels that the Player Characters took to Hervara-XV from the Drury-Cobhan line were far more direct than the surface route by which they must return. This is because the fuel transports need a relatively smooth surface upon which to drive. While they can easily make their way through the dunes of the ash wastes, they cannot drive through the many landslides that litter the shallow canyons of the region. This means that a surface transit, even with Corporal Kousenk's directions, takes them at least two hours. During this time, the Corporal asks that they maintain radio silence, so as to avoid drawing the attention of secessionist forces.

Note that, in most places, the fortification is designed to prevent transit through it. There are many places where it might be possible for a small unit on foot to cross, but even a light vehicle is stopped by the numerous barricades and land mines. There are really only two nearby locations which present openings large enough to accommodate the fuel transports, and one of these involves spending a significantly longer time—four hours—on the hostile side of the line than the other. Corporal Kousenk has chosen to take them by the most direct route, even though this risks an encounter with marauding Ork forces—a fact that he does not mention.

If the characters do not trust Corporal Kousenk, and wish to review the maps and try to plot their own course, have one Player Character make an **Ordinary (+10) Navigate (Surface) Test**. If he succeeds, the squad is able to plot both routes, but realise that the most direct risks an encounter with a Speed Freek patrol. If he fails, the squad errs, and determines that an indirect route is likely the best. If he fails by three or more Degrees of Failure, the squad believes that the shortest route is also the safest.

On either route, roll a 1d10 for every thirty minutes of travel time. On the shorter route, they encounter an Ork Speed Freek patrol (see below) on any result of 3 or less. On the longer route, they only encounter an Ork patrol on a result of 1. Note that if the characters' vehicles are destroyed, they can attempt to complete the transit on foot. In this case, triple the remaining travel time. Similarly, keep track of any time spent attempting to repair or consolidate vehicles. Such delays lead to additional rolls for Ork patrols.

If the Player Characters encounter an Ork Speed Freek patrol, it consists of five Ork Warbikes and two Ork Warbuggies (see **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook page 370). The Warbuggies are both armed with skorchas. The Warbikes initially focus on destroying the tires on the fuel transports, in an effort to slow or stop them. The Warbuggies first attempt to detonate fuel on the transports. When that meets with little initial success, they try to encourage the Speed Freeks on the Warbikes to perforate the fuel containers, so that they can more easily ignite the contents for "an 'uge kaboom!" Refer to the Synford-pattern "Firebomb" Prometheus Transport profile on page 139 for more information about detonating these vehicles.

Due to the relative differences in speed and handling, it is extremely unlikely that the Player Characters can simply outrun the Ork assault. The Orks do not retreat, even in the

face of withering fire, but if one or more of the fuel transports are abandoned, they do stop their attack so that they can seize the vehicle and its fuel for their own purposes. If the battle begins to go disastrously for the Player Characters, killing the NPC driver of one of the fuel transports might be an opportunity to let this method of escape play out.

Once the characters pass the Drury-Cobhan Line, they do not need to fear further attack. Corporal Kousenk also separates from them at this point, explaining that he needs to return to his duties on the Line. The remainder of their journey back to Hervara-XIX is uneventful. Their arrival is lauded by their companions, and by the members of the Luggnum Sewer Rats currently at the station. Everyone wants to hear the survivors' tales of the battle, regardless of how successful they were in their mission. Unless the characters completely failed to attack the base or left large quantities of intact fuel behind, Captain Fordham is impressed with their success. He makes certain that they have two days reprieve from watch duty, and that they get larger portions of rations and better service than usual in the commissary.



KEY NPCs

The following NPC plays an important role during the assault on Hervara-XV.

CORPORAL KOUSENK

Though the Corporal is deeply devoted to the Severan Dominate's cause, he has worked undercover as a loyalist since the earliest days of the Hervara invasion. His goals in working with the Imperial Guard forces have been two-fold. As an informant, he has been reporting Imperial Guard troop movements back to the secessionists on a fairly regular basis for quite some time. In addition, he has tried to identify sympathetic individuals within the Imperial forces, so that they might be turned to aid the rebel cause.

Captain Fordham is one of Corporal Kousenk's targets, and his efforts have begun to bear fruit. Throughout their interactions, the Corporal attempts to subtly feel out the attitudes the Player Characters have towards the secessionists. If possible, he tries to recount stories of his world and how it has suffered, in an effort to gain sympathy. He is not, however, overt about his efforts; after all, if he was not able to be subtle, he would have found himself before a firing line long ago. Kousenk is aware that his role as a spy is far too important to risk losing his life in an effort to recruit a handful of Guardsmen, even skilled soldiers like the Player Characters. He might grow to like the Player Characters on some level while serving with them, but ultimately always sees them as disposable, if it becomes necessary. See page 134 for the full profile for Corporal Kousenk.



ELIMINATION

"We dare not learn the heresy of our foes, but we must know how their minds work. For the paths of their minds holds their tactics."

—Lord Commissar Salieri

During this scene, the characters are charged with infiltrating a Hervara Excavatory Warrior training facility. The site is beyond the Drury-Cobhan Line, in territory held by forces loyal to the Severan Dominate. The facility is devoted to training soldiers, as well as training agents to infiltrate those companies that remain loyal to the Imperium.

It begins with Captain Fordham presenting them with a briefing and explaining their mission kit, which is loaded with explosives. Once they acquire their gear, they must travel to the Line, and then trek overland, accompanied once more by Corporal Kousenk, assuming he is still alive. After that, they are to infiltrate the base—either under the cover of stealth, or by posing as volunteers looking to join. Once they have identified the base's assets, they are to destroy them, preferably eliminating as many of the soldiers present as possible. It is fully expected that completing this process without compromising their cover could take some time.

The characters must also take care that when they return, they are not mistaken for hostile forces. A series of signs and countersigns are provided to identify them to Death Korps of Krieg units active on the Line. If they take too long on the assignment, these codes expire. This should provide some motivation for the troopers to complete the mission in as timely a fashion as possible.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Three days have passed since their last assignment, and the characters should just be getting back down to a routine. If anyone sustained serious injuries during their last mission, those might not have yet had time to heal. If new members were assigned to their squad due to casualties, the newer members might not have had the time to become fully versed on the squad's interactions. The last assignment that the squad completed was dangerous and challenging, and this one is even more treacherous, in part because they are probably not operating at peak efficiency.

The call from Captain Fordham arrives in the early hours of morning. The Player Characters are in the midst of their standard physical training regimen when the Captain's adjutant comes with orders for them to report to his office immediately. From his stance and demeanour, it is clear that the officer expects them to form up and follow him without taking the time to clean themselves or their equipment.



When the characters enter the Captain's office, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The smell of lho-stick smoke haunts the air from the moment you enter the room. The Captain is sitting at his desk poring over a map, with a cup of recaf in his hand. His uniform is rumpled, his face unshaven, and the hand holding the mug is visibly twitching. The finger nails of his other hand are discoloured with stains from a lho-stick. He looks up when you enter and forces a smile, though the dark circles beneath his eyes betray his grin as a polite fiction for your benefit. He gestures towards the recaf brewer and the chairs, then realises that the empty pot is still on his desk. With a snort, he shrugs for you to take your seats and close the door.

The smells of stale recaf, lho-stick smoke, and unwashed bodies rapidly fill the crowded and poorly ventilated room. Where previous meetings had an air of camaraderie, it is clear that this one is merely perfunctory. The Captain delivers the presentation with a series of indicators that he is exhausted, and that it has taken a toll on his mental faculties. At the same time, the characters are likely to become anxious to leave the room. Between the odours and their own exhaustion, the meeting is far less pleasant than those have gone before.

Once everyone is seated, Fordham raises his hand to start to speak, and notices that the hand is shaking. He slowly places his hand on the table, and then takes a moment to close his eyes and centre himself before continuing. He presents them with **Mission Briefing HV-3** (see page 83), which he refers to as he sketches out the mission. With a deep sigh, the captain explains that the next assignment he has for the team could take them a bit longer to complete. This is, again, a dangerous mission, which involves operating behind enemy lines. Corporal Kousenk is again their escort, but this time the targets are people rather than goods. Intelligence operatives have identified a Hervara Excavatory Warriors training facility; Fordham wants the Player Characters to destroy it, preferably recovering any intelligence information that they can in the process.

The training centre is beyond the Drury-Cobhan Line. The squad is to meet with Corporal Kousenk at the Line and proceed together to the base. Again, they are expected to use the tunnels to reach the encampment, though this time, once the mission is completed, they should also be able to use them to return. They are not expected to have to transport any sizeable objects with them on the return trip.

The most significant gear that they must carry en route to the objective is explosives. These will be granted as part of their mission assignment gear. Other than that, he asks the characters for their preferences in infiltrating the facility. Fordham believes that the easiest way to destroy the facility is to sneak in, plant the explosives, and then detonate them while the base is sleeping. Alternatively, the characters could pose as recruits, so that they might more easily gain access to the interior of the enemy base. Fordham believes that this tactic is decidedly more dangerous, as they run the risk of having their cover stories exposed.

On the other hand, it is likely that part of the training given to new Hervara Excavatory Warriors agents involves working with explosive devices. If they infiltrate the base, they might be able to gain access to some of these materials, so that they

would not need to bring as much gear with them. The Captain explains that the decision on their approach is up to them and offers to continue providing background information on the base before asking them to commit to an approach—their assignment gear will be based upon which tactic they choose.

The base is located within Hervara's Pele Mountains. The region is known for its volcanism and its rich reserve of rare ores and gems. It is also known for the heightened level of aerial pollutants, due to the amount of ash constantly generated by the nine active volcanoes. Travel to the region is treacherous, as overland and subterranean routes both risk running afoul of fresh lava flows. Aerial travel is almost impossible due to the volcanism. The only reliable way to make the trip is afoot, in the company of a veteran guide who is familiar with the region, such as Corporal Kousenk.

It is believed that the base currently houses approximately ten veteran Hervara Excavatory Warriors officers and sergeants who are working with a group of roughly fifty trainees. The novices are primarily former miners who have chosen to sign up with the Hervara Excavatory Warriors as part of the resistance effort. Their education focuses upon infiltrating Imperial outposts, sabotaging Imperial equipment, and designing explosives from scavenged materials. All of the members are believed to be fanatically devoted to their cause.

The base's resources are believed to consist of barracks, classrooms, and a bomb/volcano shelter. Live munitions are limited to those used in training. Consequently, it is possible, but unlikely, that there are sufficient explosive materials to destroy the base already on site.

The surest means of destroying the base is probably to divert the lava flow from one of the active volcanoes using an explosive device. That is one of the more dangerous approaches, as unless the characters setting the bombs are adept in both geology and explosives, they might fail to identify a safe zone properly. In that event, it would be all too easy to become trapped within the altered lava flow.

There are several alternative approaches. One is to collapse the tunnels beneath the complex, destroying it in the process. Liberal use of explosives on the base's buildings should also work effectively. Sabotaging the air filtration systems and any available respirators might also work, though this approach could leave the base usable by others once repairs were completed. Given the mountainous terrain, it might also be feasible to trigger a landslide to bury and annihilate the facility, rather than relying upon lava.

"ELIMINATION" EXTRA MISSION ASSIGNMENT GEAR:

- Five demolition charges per squad member.
- One telescopic sight per member.
- One grapnel and line per member.
- One signal jammer for the squad.
- If the squad plans to use stealth tactics to sneak into the base, include the following:
 - One chameleoline cloak per squad member.
 - One photo visor per squad member.

Fordham specifically directs the characters to minimise any exposure to the heretical teachings of these secessionists. He has been informed that texts pertaining to their political and religious beliefs play a key element in the materials indoctrinated into trainees. Possession of such information is certainly forbidden. Any documents found at the site are to be destroyed without review or recovery.

All personnel at the base are to be killed without question. Prisoners must not be taken, nor should any be permitted to escape to speak of the attack. All of the enemy must be slain, lest any survivors go on to start another training facility. Imperial forces are not concerned about any intelligence that these heretics might have, as their words cannot possibly be trusted. They must be annihilated without any sign of mercy.

At this point, he concludes the briefing by asking the characters their preferred tactic. If any state that they prefer to infiltrate the base, he cautions them that psykers would need to review and possibly censor their memories upon completion of the assignment. In any case, he accepts their decision and sketches out their mission assignment gear.

If the Player Characters ask, the beleaguered Fordham can allocate up to one additional item of up to Scarce Availability. Otherwise, that exhausts the available supplies for the mission. Once other questions are answered, he asks that they grab their gear and depart as soon as possible.

THE JOURNEY

Almost every mission begins with a trip to the Quartermaster so that the squad can obtain the wargear necessary to complete the assignment. Once that matter is out of the way, the characters can then proceed through the tunnels to meet with Corporal Kousenk. Finally, they must travel through hostile territory until they ultimately reach the target location. Every step of this process is fraught with challenges.

Supply Officer Von Meering's attitude to the Player Characters should be reflective of their past experiences. If the characters have brought her goods for her warehouse, she is more receptive to their arrival, and less reluctant to provide them with the materials that they are due. Alternatively, if they have abused Imperial requisition procedures, never provided her with goods, or possibly even failed to return equipment after completing a mission, she is far less helpful to them. The Player Characters are due more gear for this mission than they have previously been assigned. If she likes them, her process of distribution is routine. If she distrusts them, she demands additional biometric data, requests that the fragments of any used demolition charges be returned, and adds sundry other, seemingly pointless requirements. Game Masters are encouraged to apply modifiers to the Logistics Test which are proportionate to their relationship with the Supply Officer.

Once they have obtained their gear, the characters can begin their passage through the tunnels between Hervara-XIX and the Drury-Cobhan Line. As this is not their first trip through the passages, they should know what to expect by this point. The journey—probably using the rail cars—is once more uneventful. En route, they share a car with members of the Luggnum 3rd and the Krieg 138th. The other soldiers are happy to trade

rumours about the ongoing war effort. They have heard that the Orks are decreasing the frequency of their aerial attacks and concentrating their efforts towards penetrating the Line. So far, the Line has held, but unless more supplies and reinforcements head that way, it might not hold indefinitely. They have also heard whispers that a representative of the Commissariat, one Lord Commissar Salieri, has been making increasingly stringent and brutal reviews of the troops, looking for brazen secessionists distributing the hateful agenda of the enemy amidst even the ranks of the Imperial Guard. The Krieg troopers see the Lord Commissar's wrath as holy vigilance, while the Luggnum Sewer Rats take a less favourable attitude towards a man they believe to be chasing "phantom heretics" while the real threat grows outside.

At the Line, Death Korps sentries perform the check-in routine. The squad need only show their mission orders for the guards to direct them on to Corporal Kousenk, who is once more waiting beyond the checkpoint to meet with them. The Hervara Excavatory Warriors soldier greets them in a manner appropriate to their past interactions. If they have been receptive towards his advice, he treats them as brothers in arms. If they have been constantly wary of his potential for treachery, then the greeting is cold and distant; a clear sign that he cooperates because of orders, and not out of a sense of camaraderie. In either case, the corporal recognises that the squad is a valuable tool to his cause and intends to work with the Player Characters for as long as they remain useful.

This time, rather than taking a rail car down the length of the Line, Corporal Kousenk immediately directs them through the Line, into one of the adjoining tunnels. He explains that due to the twists in the Line and the indirect nature of the tunnels, starting on foot from here is just as direct as from anywhere else. He does caution them that this route is more labyrinthine and treacherous than those they have taken together in the past. He warns that they should try to keep note of the route, as there are regions of instability. In the event that they become separated, he might not be able to come back for them.

The remainder of the journey takes three days on foot, as long as the characters follow Corporal Kousenk's direction. This assumes that the Player Characters take routine rest breaks for sleep, meals, and other necessities. As Captain Fordham did not provide the squad with a map or directions to the target location, following any other method of finding it would be extremely challenging. During this time, for every twelve hours of travel, have one of the characters make a **Routine (+20) Awareness Test**. If the character succeeds, he notices the telltale signs of a hazard or of other warriors in the tunnels and can try to hasten or alter the squad's path to avoid contact with the potential danger. If the chosen character fails, the squad runs afoul of one of the challenges below, without sufficient time to avoid or prepare for it. Consult **Table 2-1: Tunnel Encounters**.

TUNNEL COLLAPSE

The characters hear and feel the shudder of a powerful groundquake, a clear sign of Hervara's geological instability. Dust and light gravel immediately begins to fall from the ceiling and rise from the floor. All characters must make an immediate **Challenging (+0) Acrobatics Test**. Any character who

TABLE 2-1: TUNNEL ENCOUNTERS

1d10 Roll	Encounter
1-2	Tunnel Collapse
3-5	Ork Patrol
6-8	Hervara Excavatory Warriors Patrol
9	Lava Flow
10	No Encounter

succeeds manages to avoid any Damage from falling rocks, and with three or more Degrees of Success, a character can also cancel out the failure of one of his companions. Each character who fails the Test suffers 1d10 Impact Damage with the Concussive (0) Quality from falling rock, and become partially pinned as the ceiling collapses behind them. Each character who fails with three or more Degrees of Failure suffers an additional 1d10 Impact Damage from falling rock (to a total of 2d10 Impact Damage), and becomes trapped by a cave-in that separates him from the rest of the party.

Excavating a trapped character requires one hour's time and a **Routine (+20) Tech-Use Test** to remove stones in an optimal fashion or a **Challenging (+0) Athletics Test** to simply drag them out of the way. Up to three characters can assist on this Test. Failure simply indicates that the rocks slid as the characters attempted to remove them, preventing a successful extraction. Note that if a character is trapped in tight quarters apart from the rest of the squad, he only has three hours of oxygen unless he has some sort of additional breathing apparatus. After that time, he must deal with the consequences of suffocation as normal (see page 267 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).

ORK PATROL

A mob of nine Ork Slugga Boyz and one Ork Burna Boy (see page 364 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) is traversing the same passage as the characters, from the opposite direction. In the darkness of the tunnels, the encounter begins at a range of thirty metres. Game Masters are encouraged to offer at least one side passage and one or more natural rock falls or stalactites that offer limited cover during the course of the engagement. The Orks attempt to close to melee range and fight to the last Greenskin, firm in their belief that they can "krump all dem 'umie gitz!"

HERVARA EXCAVATORY WARRIORS PATROL

A patrol of six Hervara Excavatory Warriors Soldiers, including a Sergeant (see pages 124-125), spots the squad before they see them. These troopers are loyal to the Severan Dominate. Have the enemy sergeant make an **Opposed Routine (+20) Stealth Test** against the Player Characters' Awareness. Player Characters who fail the Test are Surprised for the first Round of combat. The Hervara Excavatory Warriors forces begin the engagement at a range of twenty metres. They attack from a side passage and take advantage of some rubble strewn about the area for partial cover. Their targeting priority begins with any soldiers who bear signs of being Psykers, Officers, or Commissars, or who are carrying flamers, in that order.

The Hervara Excavatory Warriors forces fight until they lose two members, at which point they attempt to flee. If captured, they have no knowledge that is directly relevant to the current mission. In fact, they are completely unaware of the training facility. They do, however, know of several nearby openings to the surface, and are very familiar with the passages in the region. This might be useful for characters separated from Corporal Kousenk.

LAVA FLOW

The tunnel wall near the Player Characters rumbles and bursts open. All characters must make a **Routine (+20) Acrobatics** or **Dodge Test**, or be caught in the splash of molten rock and sulphurous gas. Characters struck by eruption of superheated gas and rock suffer 2d10+5 Energy Damage that ignores Armour and Toughness Bonus, and must Test to see if they are set on fire (see page 266 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). Characters within 10 metres of the burst who do not have proper respiratory protection must also make an **Arduous (-40) Toughness Test** or gain levels of Fatigue equal to their Degrees of Failure on the Test. After the initial burst, the flow slows, and the characters can walk around it to continue their journey.

THE ENCAMPMENT

Corporal Kousenk leads the squad out of the tunnels, into one of the many ash-filled box canyons of the Pele Mountain Range. Unless directed differently, he chooses an opening that looks down upon the target training facility. The characters can use this location to spy upon the base from a position of relative seclusion. The slope down from the tunnel opening is gradual enough that no Test is required to make the 250 metre trip to the camp without incident.

The air in this region is constantly filled with a fog of sulphuric gasses, intermixed with a near-constant rain of volcanic ash. Characters must wear respirators at all times, or else they begin to face immediate suffocation from the toxic atmosphere. However, the dense atmospheric conditions do offer a +30 bonus to any Stealth Tests made while travelling afoot through the toxic atmosphere.

The camp consists of five prefabricated hut structures, each six metres in width and fifteen metres in length. The buildings are arranged to form a pentagon, and are linked end to end by enclosed tunnels. A five-sided bunker is located in the centre of the encampment, occupying most of the space.

Any characters who take the time to closely examine the facility can quickly spot the location of the air ventilation and filtration systems, as well as heating and cooling units. Those who attempt to study the buildings further should make a **Routine (+20) Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) Test**. If they succeed, they can quickly infer the purpose of the various buildings. The central structure is clearly a bomb shelter, which also probably serves as a communications centre, based on the antennae. Based upon the additional ventilation systems and reinforcement elements, they are also able to make an educated guess that one of the other structures is the commissary, while another is probably a classroom for explosives training. Due to the size of the buildings and the estimated number of occupants, it is very likely that the



other three structures are primarily used for barracks.

Intelligence estimates concerning the number of occupants were accurate. There are fifty Hervara Excavatory Warriors Soldiers present as students, as well as six Sergeants and four Lieutenants (see pages 124–125) serving as educators. Due to the dangerous atmospheric conditions, these troopers only ever leave the buildings to reach their shifts at the communications centre and even these excursions are kept deliberately brief.

If the Player Characters have chosen to infiltrate the base, they must develop a convincing story for their arrival. It is very possible to just walk up and enter the camp without being noticed until they open a door. However, the moment they open the door, everyone within a given building notices their presence. No new arrivals are expected, and this is hardly a location that one is likely to just stumble upon. The inhabitants receive a +20 bonus to resist any Interaction Skills used to explain the intruders' presence. If the NPCs are not convinced, the infiltration attempt turns into a battle in short order.

If they do talk their way inside, the squad has an opportunity to interact with the base's residents and pilfer through the available supplies. These largely consist of basic survival gear, low quality rations, and explosives equipment necessary for training. Even if the players look for it, they find no evidence of any materials devoted to educating troopers towards the cause of the Severan Dominate—though there is plenty of Imperial propaganda. This is because the facility's trainees are actually Imperial loyalists. However, unless the characters manage to earn the trust of those at the camp, the issue of political



beliefs is extremely unlikely to enter the conversation.

If the Player Characters decide that their best option is simply to make the encampment uninhabitable, they can immediately infer that destroying the ventilation system presents an easy starting point by succeeding at an **Easy (+20) Logic or Awareness Test**. Only the bomb shelter has a self-contained air supply, while all of the other structures are dependent upon filtering exterior air. Shutting down the filtration systems on each of the structures forces the characters inside to don respirators until repairs can be completed. This would take an amount of time proportionate to the damage dealt to the filtration systems, but the Hervara Excavatory Warriors' forces do not have adequate supplies to repair damaged or destroyed air systems. In this event, they consolidate into the undamaged buildings, if space permits, or attempt to leave the area, through the tunnels—starting their journey at the tunnel entrance the Player Characters used to reach the area.

While the explosives they have carried are capable of damaging all of the buildings, they are unlikely to be able to destroy the buildings and all of their inhabitants, especially considering that one of the buildings is a bomb shelter. The most effective means to eliminate all six buildings with the demolition charges that they have is to trigger a lava flow directly into the camp. This requires a carefully placed and timed explosive charge to disrupt the flow from one of the nearest volcanoes.

The Player Characters must first identify a good location to place the charge. This requires a **Difficult (–10) Awareness Test** to find the ideal spot. Once a spot is selected, the explosives expert must then set the charges in that location with a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**. Characters receive a +10 bonus to this Test if they succeeded at the earlier Awareness Test, or a –10 penalty if they failed that Test. Success on setting the bomb indicates that the lava flow bursts out and destroys all of the huts and buries the bomb shelter. With three or more Degrees of Success, the explosive force of the lava is actually sufficient to destroy the bomb shelter. On a failure, the explosion fails to generate the desired flow, and the encampment survives without injury. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the bomb detonates while the character is setting it.

In terms of game mechanics, other attempts to destroy the base with explosives should be handled in a comparable

manner to using the lava flow. The key elements are finding the proper place for the key detonation, and then setting the demolition charges to take advantage of that. Game Masters can choose to modify the difficulties of the required Tests to reflect the relative difficulty of using different environmental effects in conjunction with the demolition charges.

If any of the trainees or officers leave the base in reaction to the attacks, their first reactions are to flee towards the tunnels. The journey from the encampment to the nearest tunnel entrance is 250 metres, through toxic air and fairly dense fog. The Player Characters can attempt to ambush these survivors with a variety of different techniques, taking advantage of the conditions for their own concealment, or exploiting the confusion of their victims, or using any other tricks that they come up with. Depending upon how the Player Characters convinced their foes to leave, the refugees might believe they are running from a natural disaster rather than an attack. This could substantially impact their preparedness to engage in combat.

RECOVERY

After the characters destroy the training facility, they must complete their journey back to Hervara-XIX so that they can present a mission report to Captain Fordham. Difficulties involved in the return trip should be proportionate to the route taken. Upon their return, Captain Fordham is very curious about the relative success of the mission and any additional details they might have uncovered regarding the facility.

If the characters pass through the same tunnels that they used to reach the training facility, then they risk comparable encounters (see **Table 2–1: Tunnel Encounters** on page 66) during the journey back to the Drury-Cobhan Line. If the squad becomes frustrated by the dangers of underground travel, they might instead choose to follow a surface route back to the Line. This requires the Player Characters to travel through mountainous territory for a comparable period of time, but also exposes the characters to aerial attack. If they wish to follow this approach, make rolls on the same Table, but ignore the “Tunnel Collapse” result, and replace the “Lava Flow” result with “Aerial Attack” (see the **Aerial Attack** sidebar).

Once more, Corporal Kousenk departs from the company of the Player Characters when they reach the Drury-Cobhan Line. They must continue back to Hervara-XIX without his direction. Fortunately, by this point, the Player Characters should be well versed in travelling that short route on their own.

Back at the base, the squad is expected to report in to Captain Fordham immediately. When they arrive at his office, he dismisses Tech-Priest Hexon, who was meeting with him at the time of their arrival. The Tech-Priest does not seem bothered by the affront, and gives the Player Characters a polite nod as he leaves the room to make space for them. The room continues to reek of stale lho-smoke smell and burnt recaf. Fordham's uniform still looks terribly rumpled, as though he has slept in it, and sweat stains are now starting to leak through it.

AERIAL ATTACK

A flight of two Ork Bombers (see page 144) spots the squad through a break in the fog as they travel across Hervara's hostile surface. The aircraft immediately launch an attack, but are limited by atmospheric conditions that affect their ability to sustain the assault. Each Round, after the aircraft have acted, the Ork pilots must make a **Challenging (+0) Operate (Aeronautica) Test** to navigate the smog-choked skies without losing sight of their targets or crashing. The Ork pilots suffer a cumulative –10 penalty on this Test for each Round beyond the first that their attack continues. After they fail such a Test, the Ork aircraft circle the region for another two Rounds before flying off, unable to continue their assault.

The Captain immediately congratulates them on their survival and offers them each a greeting that is uncomfortably personal, slapping backs and shaking hands. He seems tremendously relieved about their safe return, especially if the Player Characters took longer than expected to complete the assignment. Then he sits back, lights a lho-stick, and asks them to recount their story.

Fordham interrupts them regularly in the conversation, asking for further clarification about sundry points. Where his lines of questioning have always seemed precise and limited in the past, he now seems scattered and unfocused. For every success that they recount, the captain offers them congratulations that seem totally disproportionate to the success they enjoyed. For every difficulty the squad endured, he tries to downplay the severity. This could include reminders that fallen friends have gone on to continue their service to the God-Emperor in the afterlife, or the promise of posthumous promotions and increased death benefits for their families.

Success on a **Routine (+20) Common Lore (Imperial Guard) Test** reveals that Captain Fordham has begun to promise them compensation that he lacks the authority to deliver. Throughout the debriefing, the officer's mood seems to waver back and forth like a person intoxicated, from an attitude of barely suppressed ire to one of close friendship and camaraderie. There are no signs of excessive intoxication, but the Player Characters would be justified at this point in questioning his judgment.

ALLAYING SUSPICION

Some Player Characters might be particularly devoted to the God-Emperor's cause, and constantly on the watch for heresy. This could be an indicator of paranoia, or might be due to past experience with traitors. Exceptionally concerned Player Characters could have a substantial impact on the scenario. They might turn against Captain Fordham directly, refuse a mission, abandon an assignment, or even turn to members of the Commissariat for support. The GM must consider all of these possibilities.

Key to the issue is the fact that Captain Fordham is not only their commanding officer, but also the commander of the Hervara-XIX base. The Captain enjoys a good working relationship with the base's other residents, and they are unlikely to turn against him. Any effort to report the Captain to Commissars or Priests active at the base backfires upon the squad if they are not exceptionally persuasive and do not have conclusive evidence. Those characters gain a +30 bonus to resist any Interaction Skill Tests made to turn them against Fordham.

If the characters do convince an ally of Fordham's duplicity, that individual encourages them to make contact with members of one of the other companies, or with Major Foudrang. Either way, the characters are, through a chain of events, put in contact with Lord Commissar Salieri (see page 136). Once he hears their story, the Commissar heads to Hervara-XIX with a reinforced company of Death Korps of Krieg. This decision cuts the chapter short, beginning **Chapter III: The Horn of Mars**. Even if the Player Characters are the ones who turned in the Captain, Salieri must be convinced of their innocence.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

"There is but one true path in the service of the Emperor, but there are countless paths that can lead to lives of depravity and betrayal."

—Missionary Lars Grissam

Game Masters might want to present the squads with additional missions to further develop Captain Fordham's tension level. At the same time, these also provide the characters with a greater degree of interaction with the Severan Dominate allied forces. In this way, the characters can develop a better understanding of their cause, and possibly even a disenfranchisement with the Imperium. This section presents a number of optional scenes that serve exactly that purpose. Through the course of these scenes, the characters inadvertently hurt the Imperial cause while aiding the secessionists. When their actions are questioned during the final act, they might feel that these missions served a far more noble cause than ones they might have undertaken in the service of the God-Emperor.

Each of these scenes is presented in a more brief format than the others in this act. Game Masters must further sketch them out, as necessary. One possible way to do so is by reusing the elements presented in other scenes that take place during transit through the hostile warzone. However, Game Masters are encouraged to vary the precise nature of those elements, so that they do not become overly repetitive.

The Game Master can choose how many of these scenarios he wishes to include in his campaign, and can add or subtract scenes as they see fit. At the end of the chapter, the number of missions that the characters undertook determines the overall Experience Point reward.

Note that these optional encounters require some degree of framing, particularly as regards the preliminary briefing and the concluding debriefing. Game Masters should play up the nature of Captain Fordham's ongoing addictions and stress as the scenarios progress. The captain might even be absent for one or more of these briefings, instead deferring to his adjutant to meet with the Player Characters.

KILLSWITCH

When the squad reached Hervara-XIX, their debriefing included information concerning the Ordinatus that they had discovered. Tech-Priest Hexon compiled a report, which was passed on to other members of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Even though there are relatively few members of that order stationed upon Hervara, the discovery was notable enough to spark tremendous interest.

One senior Tech-Priest—Mech-Deacon Epsil Klax—began analysing their reports, as he sponsored a study into the planet's historical records. He has spent the vast majority of the time since the Player Characters' arrival on the planet continuing to investigate these claims from varied sources. At this time, he has begun to accept

the truth of their story, and is preparing to send a squad of Storm Troopers to investigate the reputed Ork encampment. He wants to confirm the presence and repair status of the Ordinatus, so that Imperial forces can begin to move towards recovering it before the Orks have time to do irreparable damage to the ancient artefact.

In the course of his investigation, Klax began a correspondence with Captain Fordham, to confirm various details. The majority of these were related to precise map coordinates within Hervara-XIX's theatre of operations; information that the Captain knew better than Tech-Priest Hexon. As he responded to these requests, Fordham became aware of the ongoing investigation, and grew very concerned about the potential for the Imperial Guard to recover such a devastating weapon as the Ordinatus.

The Captain soon came to the conclusion that the Mech-Deacon's investigation must be stopped, and his data destroyed. If Imperial forces managed to gain control of the Ordinatus, it would easily overpower all of the assets held by the Severan Dominate and the Orks. Even though the Orks might be likely to detonate it, rather than repair it, the risk of letting the xenos use the weapon is also substantial. In Fordham's mind, the only viable alternative is to recover the information that the followers of the Machine Cult have compiled, and turn those data over to members of the Severan Dominate.

Fordham can go through his secret channels to deliver the information, but he must rely up on the Player Characters to recover it first. The data is currently held by Mech-Deacon Klax, a member of the Adeptus Mechanicus who has been banished to Hervara due to a series of disastrously failed experiments. Ostensibly Tech-Priest Hexon's immediate superior, the two do not enjoy a good working relationship.

MECH-DEACON EPSIL KLAX

Klax is focused on finding an artefact that could be significant enough to persuade his superiors to assign him somewhere other than Hervara, and the Mech-Deacon firmly believes that the Ordinatus is just the machine to force their hands. He resents the fact that the Adeptus Mechanicus has abandoned a person of his expertise to this backwater world. From the moment he first heard of the device, he began requisitioning every bit of available data concerning it, along with all surviving records of Hervara's early colonisation and prehistory.

His greatest concern is that another member of the Machine Cult might also be actively pursuing the same lines of investigation. Consequently, he has sequestered himself from other members of his order, and from outside influence, so that he can conduct his research in privacy. By the time he encounters the Player Characters, he has become dangerously paranoid. He is unwilling to trust anyone with the information that he has acquired, and is confident that any intruders—including the Storm Troopers he himself has requested to aid in his work—are secretly working for other Tech-Priests, who wish to steal his research. See page 136 for his full profile.

Hexon has already provided Fordham with information about Klax's current research and whereabouts. Fordham plans to use this information as a basis for the squad's next mission.

During a briefing, he presents them with **Mission Briefing HV-4** (see page 83). Their primary mission objective is to go to Klax's research station and recover any data he might have regarding the Ordinatus. As a secondary objective, they should attempt to destroy any of the Mech-Deacon's cogitator systems that might store records regarding the ancient weapon. Assassinating Klax is another secondary objective, as he might be able to identify the troopers that attacked his facility if he remains alive.

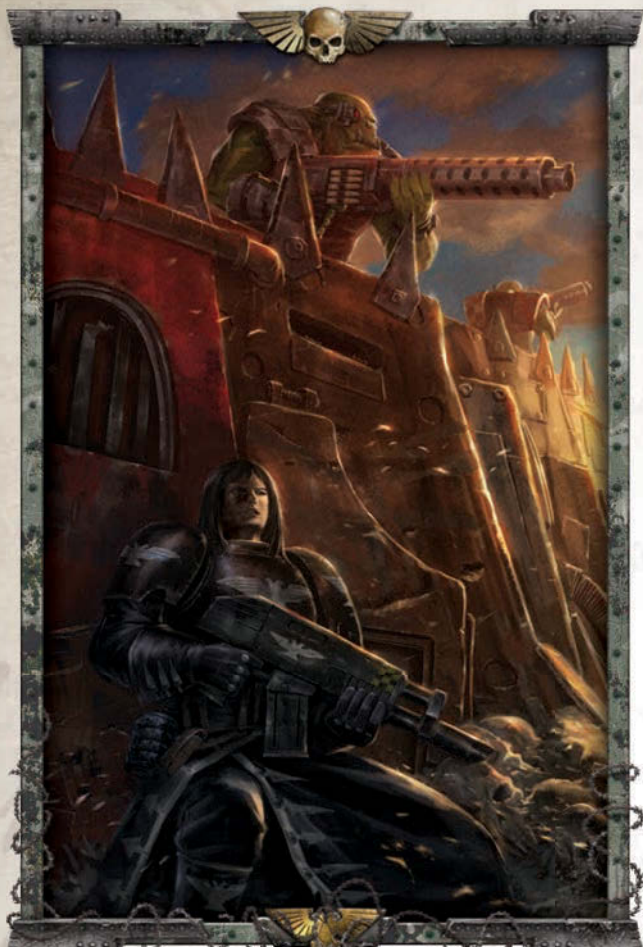
The base is located on the Imperial side of the Drury-Cobhan line. The squad is assigned a Chimera Armoured Transport to travel to the facility, and their trip should be relatively uneventful. Fordham explains that the base, which bears Adeptus Mechanicus iconography, but not any signs of the Imperial Guard, is currently in use by agents loyal to the Severan Dominate. The research station is defended by Mech-Deacon Klax (see page 136) and a crew of twenty Servitors (see page 372 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). However, Klax has modified the Servitors with a particular measure to account for his paranoia—see his profile on page 136 for details on the changes he has made to the cybernetic labourers.

From the surface, all that is visible of the base is a ten metre square bunker, with a communications array and a heavy bolter, manned by one of the Servitors. The interior of the bunker has the control panels for the communications system and the heavy bolter, as well as the air filtration system for the laboratories located below ground. A hydraulic lift descends to the lower level.

Below the surface is a laboratory, a library, and dozens of cogitators, that are busily processing the planet's records. Unless alerted to their presence, Klax is currently in the library, poring through seemingly endless boxes of records, clearly generated by auto quills. If the characters successfully overcome the Mech-Deacon and his servitors, they must then transport the correct records back to Hervara-XIX. There are dozens of large boxes filled with extensive notes, few of which are actually relevant to the Ordinatus.

Taking all of the boxes is an unreasonable task. There is simply no practical way to transport all of them back to Hervara-XIX in a single trip, even using the Chimera. Instead, they must first sort through them to try to find the appropriate materials. Sorting through the documents requires a total of 10 Degrees of Success on an **Extended Ordinary (+10) Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) Test**. Each Test takes an hour to complete. Every squad member present can make these Tests, as there are so many boxes to search, until the necessary number of Degrees of Success is obtained.

Note that six hours after the Player Characters arrive at the research facility, a squad of five Storm Troopers (see pages 373–374 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) arrives in a Chimera Armoured Transport. These soldiers were to undertake the mission to scout out the Ordinatus at the Ork camp. They arrive expecting to receive orders from the Mech-Deacon. If the squad is still rooting through the notes or preparing to detonate the complex, there is a clear basis for conflict. The Storm Troopers see the Player Characters as traitors.



TURN THE TIDE

Captain Fordham is aware that the Severan Dominate is beginning to lose the war. Between the increased Ork activity and the addition of the Player Characters' regiment, forces loyal to the Duke have begun to founder. The Captain's secessionist allies request that he take measures to intensify fighting between the Orks and the Imperial Guard, so that both sides might take heavier losses, providing the rebels an opportunity to recover. After examining a number of maps, Fordham devises this mission, as a means to intensify the Ork conflict.

During this optional mission, the Player Characters are charged with drawing the Ork forces into a conflict against what they are told should be Severan Dominate forces. Captain Fordham provides them with a map that is labelled with secessionist fortifications, and explains that he wants to deliver the map to the xenos. If the Orks review the materials, even they should be able to identify a weak point in the defences, allowing them to overrun those defences and quickly penetrate behind enemy lines. The hardest part of this operation is deciphering the best way to appeal to the xenos mind, as they often have no desire to engage in a battle where the foe is weak, because it represents the least chance for what they see as a glorious combat.

At the start of the briefing, Captain Fordham presents the squad with **Mission Briefing HV-5** (see page 84), and refers to it during the discussion. Their primary mission objective is to deliver the map to the Orks in such a way that the xenos do not realise that it is a plant. How the Player Characters go about this is up to them. Their secondary objective is to

eliminate as many Orks as possible in the process, leaving just enough to escape with the map intact. Finally, this must be accomplished in a timely manner—he needs results in the next few days, so that High Command can see an increased Ork offensive against the secessionists in the coming weeks.

If the Player Characters examine the map, their first impression is that it is a crudely drawn work showing a small portion of Hervara's surface. Unless they succeed at a **Very Hard (-30) Common Lore (Spinward Front) Test**, the characters do not recognise the region portrayed. This is in part because they have never studied Hervara's surface, and in part due to the poor quality of the illustration. Player Characters who succeed recognise portions of the Drury-Cobhan Line on the map. If anyone questions this to Fordham, he lies to them, explaining that they are misreading the map with an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Deceive Test**. If the squad catches their commanding officer in a bald-faced lie at this stage, it could have serious repercussions on the rest of the chapter. Game Masters are encouraged to consider the **Allaying Suspicion** sidebar on page 69.

In fact, the map is an attempt to persuade the Orks to attack the Drury-Cobhan Line at one of its weakest points. If the xenos are able to muster sufficient force, and exploit the tactical information presented, they should be able to penetrate the line, and wreak havoc on the Imperial supply chain. Deducing all of this from the limited information present requires a **Very Hard (-30) Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) Test**. If he fails, the Player Character firmly believes that this must be part of some larger strategy that the squad simply does not fully appreciate.

At this point, the Captain might be wary of their suspicions. As part of an effort to allay them—and in part because he has not come up with a great plan to deliver the map—Captain Fordham encourages them to devise their own plan for delivering the map. He joins in their discussion, offering helpful suggestions, and providing them with whatever equipment they need to complete it as part of their Mission Assignment Gear, up to and including equipment with a Scarce Availability.

The level of Ork resistance encountered should be proportionate to the methods the Player Characters devise to deliver the map. While this is likely to involve Ork Speed Freeks (see page 141) on Ork Warbikes (see page 370 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook), the squad could concoct a plan that causes them to encounter substantially greater threats. Game Masters are encouraged to use a xenos force that is similar to those encountered earlier in the adventure.

LIBERATION

Hervara Excavatory Warriors loyal to the Severan Dominate discover that over a thousand of their troopers have been captured by the Orks of Waaagh! Grimtoof. The former soldiers have become menial slaves, who are forced to work in the planet's mines, providing raw materials for the Ork Mekboyz. When Captain Fordham finds out about this, he decides that a mission of mercy is necessary. The Player Characters are charged with sneaking into the Ork encampment and liberating the prisoners.

Preliminary intelligence is based upon data from a survivor who managed to escape from the Ork slave camp. If her reports are accurate, the humans have been

THE NIGHT PATH

largely beaten into submission. An initial show of strength and violence has left the surviving prisoners thoroughly cowed by their captors. Because of this, only a few Greenskin guards are necessary to contain the human chattel. So few, in fact, that the wardens do not represent excessive opposition for even a lone squad of Imperial Guardsmen.

Based upon their previous success, Captain Fordham believes that the Player Characters are ideally suited to freeing the prisoners. They have demonstrated their capacity for working independently behind enemy lines. They have overcome numerically superior Ork forces. Because of all these successes, the Captain believes that they are well suited to finding the camp, overthrowing the guards, and liberating the prisoners. Once this feat is accomplished, he then expects the squad to lead the liberated prisoners across the ash wastes, back to the relative security of Imperial controlled territory.

When the Player Characters arrive for their mission briefing, Captain Fordham presents them with **Mission Briefing HV-6** (see page 84), and recounts the situation. He explains that the humans are native inhabitants of Hervara, who have been taken prisoner by the xenos. He makes no mention of their loyalties, but does note that at least some of the prisoners are believed to have been members of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors. The Captain indicates that current intelligence is sketchy regarding the number of captives, their current health, and how long they have been kept prisoner. Best guesses are roughly one thousand, nearly fifteen percent of whom have developed serious medical issues during their confinement due to malnutrition, dehydration, or inadequate air filtration. The prisoners have been held for at least six months, but some have been incarcerated for far longer.

The primary objective for the assignment is to reach the base and rescue as many prisoners as possible, then escort them back to Hervara-XIX for aid and reassignment. Secondary objectives are to annihilate any Ork forces encountered, and to recover any salvageable materials from the mine. Fordham cautions the squad that recovering mineral assets might be extremely challenging, as they are unlikely to have a good method for transporting those back through hostile territory. They are only to attempt this should they identify an efficient means of transport.

During this time, the xenos have forced the prisoners to mine the planet's natural resources. Many of the prisoners are veteran miners, who were already well familiar with the available tools and even the veins of ore that they are working. In turn, the Orks have been using the raw materials to keep their Mekaniaks well-supplied, as they continue to construct and modify new armaments for the xenos forces. By using the humans in this way, the Greenskins have reduced the number of foes in the field, and improved their own combat capacities—an exceptionally canny strategy.

Of course, the combat motivated Orks have little desire to do guard duty far from the front lines of battle. Because of this, Gretchin and a few Runtherdz are all that provide security for the prison camp. Though diminutive, the smaller Greenskins are adequately armed, and more than cunning enough to keep the broken and weakened prisoners in line. Fortunately for the Player Characters, these guards present a much less substantive threat to the trained and armed soldiers of the Imperium.



Because of the scope of this assignment, Captain Fordham has decided to place the squad in charge of three additional squads, effectively forming an under-strength platoon. Each squad is provided with a Chimera Armoured Transport, along with medical supplies, respirators, rations, and weapons for the liberated prisoners. Because of the quantity of supplies required to make this a successful endeavour, the cargo compartments on the transports are expected to be completely filled by the necessary supplies. The soldiers must advance on foot, either accompanying the transports, or separating from them by following a route through Hervara's tunnel complex.

The danger of splitting the group up in this way is that each force is far more vulnerable to attack. The foot soldiers should represent a significant fighting force while travelling through the tunnels, but on the surface, four Chimera Armoured Transports hardly represent significant opposition to a force of Ork Speed Freeks. Worse yet, a slow caravan across the ash wastes might be noticed by an Ork Bommer Patrol. In short order, the platoon could come under fire from both surface and aerial units, once the Bombers report their position. The return trip, while escorting a thousand refugees back to Hervara-XIX, is even more dangerous.

An alternative is for the Player Characters and the accompanying squads to carry the supplies with them through Hervara's tunnel network. In this situation, Tech-Priest Hexon provides the characters with a series of mechanised carts and a number of servitors to transport the emergency supplies. However, because of the uneven surfaces of the tunnels, this transit actually takes significantly longer than a surface transit. The major benefit

is that the characters can follow the same route back from the Ork encampment, far from the prying eyes of Ork Bombers.

Game Masters should use their discretion in assigning opposition during the trip to and from the prison camp. Note that Severan Dominate forces do not attack either caravan, as Captain Fordham has warned them of the mission of mercy. However, the Ork forces are on alert, waiting for attacks against such a valuable resource. Reaching the facility without being seen is critical to their success, and offers the only practical solution for escaping with the majority of the prisoners.

The prison camp is a series of large caverns beneath Hervara's surface. There are numerous passages that attach to the world's other caverns, which offer entrances to the Imperial Guardsmen, as well as potential escape routes for prisoners. The only surface exit opens on to a small landing field. A large, nearby cave also provides access to twenty, fully functional

Ork Trukks (see **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook page 370). The base is secured by one hundred Gretchin and five Runtherdz (see **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook page 366). The Gretchin are distributed throughout the base as a security force in groups of 20 (each with one Runtherd), to keep the prisoners in line. The Runtherdz, in turn, attempt to keep the Gretchin in line.

The Player Characters must go about swiftly and quietly eliminating these groups, which scatter in search of reinforcements if more than ten of the Gretchin (or the Runtherd and five of the Gretchin) perish in battle. If any Orks escape with the knowledge that the camp is under attack, they make contact with other Ork forces at a nearby. Squads of Ork Boyz and Speed Freeks begin to trickle in to the camp at a rate of 1 group per 1d5 minutes if they catch wind of the battle taking place there, thanks to either escaped Greenskins or truly excessive noise (such as detonating a large chunk of the cavern complex). Each group of reinforcements consists of 10 Ork Boyz (see page 364 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) in a Trukk (see pages 370–371 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) or 5 Speed Freeks (see page 141) on Warbikes (see page 370 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). At the GM's discretion, more Ork can join the fray as time goes on, or if more Orks manage to escape to call for reinforcements.

The prisoners are physically beaten and mentally broken. They have endured such punishment that they are unable to even believe that their salvation could possibly be at hand. Any effort to rally them to take action while xenos remain standing suffers a –30 penalty to the relevant Interaction Skill Test. Even after the Greenskins are defeated, persuading the humans that they need to flee does require some effort. No Skill Tests should be necessary at this stage, but the newly liberated prisoners are not prepared to just drop everything and run. They have seen countless failed escape attempts, and they know the terrible things that happen to escapees who are caught.



When the Player Characters and any liberated prisoners are finally returned to Hervara-XIX, Captain Fordham goes to great lengths to see to their comfort. The base goes on a reduced ration count to feed the extra mouths. Barracks become overcrowded to accommodate the refugees. This only lasts a few days, as Fordham quickly disperses the refugees amongst numerous Hervara Excavatory Warriors groups. Until that is completed, the characters receive a far amount of resentment from their brothers in arms for bringing so many people to overcrowd the base.

WOUNDED BIRD

For this mission, the characters are interrupted from their current tasks by a breathless runner. He gasps out instructions for them to report to Captain Fordham's office immediately. When they arrive, the Captain takes little time for pleasantries, immediately distributing their mission briefing (**Mission Briefing HV-7**, on page 84). He explains that an inbound shuttle has just gone down within Ork controlled territory.

The Player Characters must make their way to the wreckage in the fungal forest, rescue any surviving crew, and find the servitor pilot.

The shuttle was involved in a dangerous reconnaissance mission, to identify the position and strength of several Ork forces believed to be active near the Drury-Cobhan Line. During the mission, the shuttle observed radio silence, but after Ork Bombers shot it down, the three surviving crew sent out a distress signal. Based upon the brief vox communications, the pilot obtained the locations of several Ork Speed Freek forces.

The pilot reported that all of the data was moved from the shuttle's storage systems to their pilot servitor, so that it could more easily be transported away from the wreckage. After the crash, the pilot indicated that in order to get out of the toxic winds, they planned to take refuge in a nearby cave. The last communication was just over six hours ago. Captain Fordham is choosing to assign the Player Characters' squad—as the closest available unit—to rescue the survivors.

The primary mission objective is to recover the servitor, so that it can report all of the information stored within its systems to the Imperial Guard. Recovering any other surviving crew members is a secondary objective. Finally, the shuttle should either be quickly repaired for a return trip, or destroyed so that the xenos cannot salvage it for their own purposes.

Fordham recommends that the Player Characters take a Chimera Armoured Transport to reach the wreckage as quickly as possible. While the tunnels are clearly the safer route, time is of the essence. The crew members are untrained for dealing with the hostile conditions, and any hostile physical threats. Worse, he tells them, if forces of the Severan Dominate chance upon the wreckage or the crew, they might be able to secure all of the data before the Imperium can exploit it.

The Captain assigns the Player Characters a transport, extra medi-kits, respirators, and five demolition charges as Mission Assignment Gear. If they request additional equipment, he can spare up to two items of no more than Scarce Availability. At this time, he is far more

concerned that they execute the mission quickly and successfully than he is about the resources that might be expended over the course of the assignment.

As the Player Characters recall their own arrival upon Hervara—and the lack of assistance offered to them—they might feel little sympathy for the crash survivors. This is also an opportunity to play up inter-branch rivalry. The pilots and crew are mostly members of the Imperial Navy, with a single Imperial Guard liaison. The Imperial Guard expects their own troopers to defeat a horde of Orks before crossing the surface of an unfamiliar and hostile planet. The void-born Naval crew, on the other hand, are hardly able to handle such physical confrontations. Just having to breathe unfiltered air is enough to send them scurrying back to space. Situations like this call for the warriors of the Imperial Guard to rescue them (or rescue the liaison from the dubious company of said craven void-goers).

The trip to the wreckage requires passage through the Drury-Cobhan Line, though Captain Fordham has pre-cleared them, so the time required to pass is minimised. Because they are in such a hurry to complete their mission of mercy, the Player Characters are likely to cross Hervara's surface during the day without any sort of support. This leaves them incredibly vulnerable to aerial attack. Unless the squad takes specific measures to avoid the ever-present Ork Bombers (see page 144), a series of strafing runs are almost unavoidable. These represent a huge threat to the Player Characters, as a damaged transport might make it impossible to complete their mission. Game Masters are encouraged to be receptive to any reasonable countermeasures that Player Characters might attempt against the aerial attack.

The journey to reach the wreckage requires four hours of travel, under optimal conditions. If the Player Characters succeed on a **Challenging (+0) Navigate (Surface) Test**, they reduce the overall travel time by fifteen minutes per Degree of Success; if they fail, however, they suffer delays amounting to fifteen minutes per Degree of Failure. When the characters arrive, they find a squad of five Ork Lootas with their Trukk (see page 140 of this volume and pages 370–371 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook), and a Nob (see page 364 of the **Only War** Core Rulebook) poring through the wreckage, looking for salvage. The Trukk is completely filled with scrap from the remains of the shuttle.

Three survivors (including the liaison, a taciturn woman who seems irritated but largely unphased by this turn of events) and the servitor have hidden in a nearby cave, roughly thirty metres from the wreckage. All have suffered numerous minor injuries, but none are critical. The liaison explains that the Orks came upon the crash shortly after they sent their last distress message, roughly ten hours ago. While they have heard numerous vehicles come and go, none have managed to find them in the cave where they remain hidden. None of the survivors need significant medical treatment, but they have been breathing Hervara's air without filtration for all this time. They need to get respirators soon, or the long-term effects could be disastrous.

The trip back to Hervara-XIX is best presented as a running battle. If the transport was immobilised, this might take place as the Player Characters attempt to navigate the tunnels. Otherwise, the squad might be simultaneously chased by Ork Bombers and Speed Freaks, alternating attacks against the outmatched transport. In the course of their retreat, the Player Characters might even need to draw support from the Death Korps stationed at the Drury-Cobhan Line.

STAY ON TARGET

After their last few assignments, the Player Characters might be surprised that this task is substantially less hurried than the previous missions. Captain Fordham has been carefully planning this operation for months. He has devised a plan to take advantage of Imperial artillery assets to destroy Imperial facilities. He plans to blame the catastrophe upon friendly fire and botched communications—certainly a believable excuse, given the foggy disorder of the warfront on Hervara.

For the first time in the course of their assignments, Corporal Kousenk is present at the briefing with Captain Fordham. The Captain explains that the native Hervaran has been assigned to once more serve as their guide in travelling through the planet's labyrinthine tunnels. The mission depends heavily upon secrecy. As a consequence, they are expected to travel even deeper beneath the planet's surface than has been their custom, far from the more heavily travelled regions. The hope is that, by taking their time and following a more circuitous route, the squad can completely avoid contact with the enemy. If successful, this operation should improve the overall element of surprise, and ensure a higher casualty rate at the target location.

The mission (presented in **Mission Briefing HV-8** on page 85) is to infiltrate deep behind enemy lines. Upon their arrival, they are to plant a series of targeting sensors, which can be used to communicate with artillery batteries located more than ten



“STAY ON TARGET” EXTRA MISSION ASSIGNMENT GEAR:

- One telescopic sight per member.
- One chameleoline cloak per squad member.
- One photo visor per squad member.
- One signal jammer for the squad.
- Three targeting sensors for the squad to place.

kilometres away, beyond the horizon. The hope is that, even at this extreme range, the artillery can rout the targets with a coordinated series of blasts. Given the range, each gun in the battery must fire several rounds before the first ones even strike home, and so the opening salvo does not betray the brunt of the bombardment.

The primary mission objective is to plant the tracers and make sure they remain undetected until the target site has been obliterated by incoming ordnance. In order to complete this objective, it is critical that enemy forces remain unaware of the threat posed, so the Player Characters must not make any contact with the base's occupants prior to launching the attack. Finally, it is critical that everything at the site be annihilated by the bombardment. In the event that any vehicles or soldiers manage to escape the site, the Player Characters are asked to eliminate those threats as a secondary objective.

Captain Fordham recommends a specific order of events once the Player Characters reach the target location. Each night, precisely at midnight, the artillery battery is scheduled to check for any active targeting sensors. They only check at that time. The Captain believes that their best plan is to place the targeting sensors just prior to midnight, carefully distributing them around the facility, so that artillery can most effectively triangulate upon the central structures. Once the Player Characters have placed the devices, they must activate them a few minutes before the critical time. As soon as the Player Characters hear first inbound shells, they must trigger the signal jammer to prevent any survivors from signalling for help. Finally, after the shells have impacted upon the enemy stronghold, the Player Characters must visually confirm the success of the strike and recover the sensors if possible.

If the squad requests specific additional items, they can talk their way into receiving up to three items of Scarce Availability or less, as long as they make a compelling argument. Once the briefing on the assignment is complete, Captain Fordham explains that the squad, including Corporal Kousenk, needs to meet with Tech-Priest Hexon to receive training on using the targeting sensors. Activating these devices without training requires a **Very Hard (-30) Tech Use Test**. Spending a few hours to receive the necessary instructions from the Tech-Priest reduces the difficulty so that it becomes an **Ordinary (+10) Tech Use Test**. In either case, if the Player Characters fail by three or more Degrees of Failure, they damage the device in their carelessness, rendering it inoperable. The mission can be completed with just two functional devices, but if the squad manages to damage two of the devices beyond repair, the squad must find an alternate means of calling in the artillery strike.

Corporal Kousenk deliberately takes a circuitous route to reach the base. In spite of claims made during the mission briefing, the base is an Imperial asset, located within a secured area. The artillery units do not realise this important fact due to

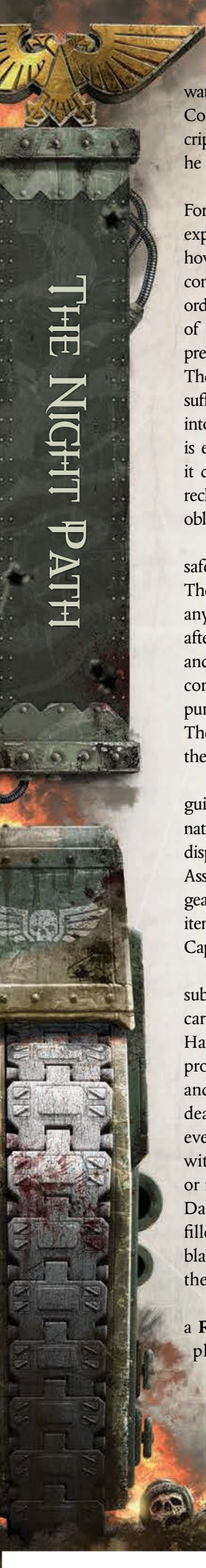
the ebbs and flow of the front line, as well as the intervening terrain and the automated nature of the targeting sensors. As the route is made deliberately complex, characters must make a **Very Hard (-30) Navigate (Surface) Test** to realise that they are targeting a location within controlled territory. If they do realise this fact, Kousenk attempts to convince them that the occupants of the base they are targeting have secretly turned traitor, and the Captain did not want rumours of sedition to spread through the ranks by revealing this information to anyone who did not need to know. If, however, this does not convince the Player Characters, then they must ultimately must decide for themselves upon the appropriate course of action.

The Player Characters have no reason to interact directly with the base or its inhabitants. If they choose to do so, they discover that the base is actually manned by troopers of the Tallarn Desert Raiders 35th Regiment. The troops are suspicious of the Player Characters if they do approach the base openly, as there was no announcement regarding their arrival, but do not open fire upon them unless the situation grows particularly dire. The soldiers staffing the base are loyalists, who dismiss the possibility that they would be targeted by Imperial Guard forces for elimination unless they find (or are handed) conclusive proof of the plan. If the squad chooses to abort the mission upon learning this information, Captain Fordham and Corporal Kousenk both claim that the order from above must have been in error, but must make **Opposed Difficult (-10) Deceive Tests** (opposed by the Player Characters' Scrutiny) to maintain the facade of sincerity with the Player Characters. If the Player Characters notice their insincerity, their reaction can have substantial effects upon the remainder of the chapter. If they confront the Captain or the Corporal about it, the two stick to their story vehemently, and eventually order the squad to drop the matter. If the squad appeals to the units stationed at the base for assistance, they are placed in contact with Lord Commissar Salieri (see page 136).

POISON THE WELL

Hervara's scorched and ashy surface has little potable water. Most of the water available for drinking and basic hygiene must be piped to the surface from the world's deep aquifers. In many instances, even these reserves are limited, as many of the subterranean water reserves have been contaminated through the course of the world's constant mining operations. On any world, water represents a crucial asset, necessary for the survival of virtually all known sentient life. Because Hervara's water reserves are constrained in this manner, many facilities are entirely dependent upon a single source for their water. If that source is eliminated, a base must either rework its supply chain or abandon the location in favour of one with a reliable source of water.

Through his time managing the supply depot, Captain Fordham has become well aware of this danger, and now seeks to exploit it in the ongoing conflict. One of the deep aquifers a few hours from Hervara-XIX is believed to be the primary water supply for the one of the groups of Ork Speed Freeks that threatens the Drury-Cobhan Line. The same aquifer, in a different location, also serves as the primary source of



water for a number of the Imperial bunkers located on the Drury-Cobhan Line. If they can contaminate the water reserve, it would cripple the Orks, and also the Imperial forces (though, obviously, he does not tell the squad about the latter consequence).

When presenting the assignment to the Player Characters, Fordham begins by giving them **HV-9** (see page 85). He then explains how the aquifer flows through the planet's crust, and how the mines have been drilled in such a way as to avoid contaminating it. Fordham then warns the characters that in order to reach the aquifer, they need to first travel through some of the planet's deeper tunnels, and then use a drill to insert a pressurised cylinder containing toxins into the groundwater. The tank contains a time-delayed release, which could supply sufficient quantities of poisons to transform the life-giving water into a deadly solution for months, if necessary. Once the tank is empty, water could be flushed through the aquifer, cleaning it quickly. In this way, the Imperium should be able to safely reclaim the region once the Orks evacuate it (or perish as they obliviously continue to drink the poisoned water).

Fordham clarifies that their primary mission objective is to safely insert the cylinder into the aquifer, and to conceal it there. Their secondary objective is to avoid detection and to eliminate any foes they do encounter. If they are observed, particularly after planting the tank, a foe might be able to retrace their steps and deactivate it. A fire fight prior to installing the pressurised container could also be extremely dangerous. If the tank were punctured, it would spray its contents over the immediate area. The pressure wave from the detonation would be dangerous, but the ensuing blast of toxins would almost certainly be lethal.

As long as he is still alive, Corporal Kousenk acts as their guide once again. If he is deceased, the Captain provides another native Hervara Excavatory Warriors member, with a comparable disposition. For the mission, the squad receives the listed Mission Assignment Gear. Captain Fordham is reluctant to offer additional gear for this assignment. If pressured, he can offer them up to two items of Common Availability. If they question his hesitancy, the Captain explains that the base is due for a Commissarial audit.

The complexity of the journey through the caverns is subject to the Game Master's discretion. A fire fight while carrying the toxin tank has tremendous potential for disaster. Have the players clarify what measures their characters take to protect it from damage. The container has 8 Armour Points, and if the armour is penetrated, it immediately ruptures, dealing 2d10 Impact Damage with the Toxic (8) Quality to everyone in a radius of 1d10 metres. In addition, anyone without proper protective equipment who begins his turn in or moves through the initial blast radius suffers 1d10 Impact Damage that ignores Armour and Toughness, as the air is filled with poison. Game Masters can choose to extend the blast radius if the explosion occurs in a narrow tunnel, where the toxin and energy could be channelled further.

Placing an intact container within the aquifer requires a **Routine (+20) Tech-Use Test** to dig the channel and place the device. If a character fails the Test, the channel was not dug properly, and needs to be bored out again. If the character fails the Test by five or more Degrees of Failure, his botched attempt to force the container into place triggers a detonation, as described above. Each attempt to bore a tunnel

"POISONING THE WELL" EXTRA MISSION ASSIGNMENT GEAR:

- One photo-visor per squad member.
- One grapnel and line per squad member.
- Three glow-globes per squad.
- One time-released tank of toxins for the squad.
- One portable, two-person drilling unit for the squad.

into the aquifer takes three hours, minus ten minutes per Degree of Success on the Tech-Use Test. During this time, the drilling unit is quite noisy. This might attract the attention of a patrol of enemy units.

The ultimate success or failure of this mission should come to light during the course of **Chapter III: The Horn of Mars**. If the Player Characters return victorious, Captain Fordham is generous in his displays of gratitude, apparently forgetting concerns about the audit. If the mission went poorly, he is sympathetic, and amazed that they managed to survive a failed attempt.

ACROSS THE LINE

"Behold the majesty of the Ommissiah. Through his blessing, there is no force that we cannot overcome."

—Tech-Priest Garrulon Vyme

This Mission should be the last one that the Player Characters undertake in the service of Captain Fordham. Through the course of the mission, they are most likely to come to the realisation that his loyalties no longer lie with the Imperial Guard. Over the course of some of the other assignments, the squad might have uncovered his deceptions, or might have dutifully ignored evidence of his treachery. During this final scenario, it is almost certain that they discover his duplicity, and how he has used them to strike at their own allies.

The previous missions have all involved weakening Imperial resources in various ways, and transferring assets to the secessionists—at the expense of the Ork forces, whenever possible. This mission is a no-holds-barred attack. In the aftermath, whether they succeed or fail, there is little opportunity for the Player Characters to excuse their actions. They are involved in a straightforward conflict with troops who are purportedly their allies. Justifying these actions to the loyalist Imperial Guard forces through the course of the chapter that follows would be nearly impossible, and atoning for them might not prove much easier.

In this scene, Captain Fordham presents the characters with falsified intelligence indicating that the Severan Dominate has seized control of several stations along the Drury-Cobhan Line. He warns them that the secessionists have gained access to Imperial Guard supplies, so are likely to be equipped and dressed as members of the Death Korps of Krieg. The Player Characters are assigned to infiltrate the bunkers, and eliminate the impostors.

In reality, no such attack has taken place. Captain Fordham wants the squad to destroy the fortifications so that a Severan Dominate attack can safely sweep past the entrenched defences,

moving the war into territory that the Imperial Guard believed was defended and secure. Without these defenders in place, such an attack would catch the loyalists unprepared, with devastating consequences for the Imperial war effort on Hervara.

THE DRURY-COBHAN LINE

Long before Hervara's secession and the ensuing Imperial invasion, the native forces constructed the Drury-Cobhan Line as a means to contain the planet's Ork population. The Line represented the last defensive structure between the cultivated and civilised portions of the mining world, and the region that could still fall under the sway of the Orks. The intention was for the structure to represent an impenetrable barrier between the two areas, so that the majority of the planet need never again fear attack from the savage xenos.

The fortification stretches for more than a thousand kilometres between two of the world's major population centres, the cities of Drury and Cobhan. The majority of this distance is an inhospitable ash waste, of little use to any sentient life. In a number of places, however, the terrain and environment shifts. Along several stretches, the Line extends through portions of Hervara's native fungus jungles. In other places, the Line extends across canyons and through rocky mountains. In designing the fortifications, concessions had to be made so that the structures could defend these various environments while remaining consistent, so that troops need not undergo significant training when transferred between the various stations.

The heart of the Line is a series of bunkers placed over its length. Slight variances are made to allow for terrain types across the length of the Line, but in most locations, only a one kilometre gap separates each of the bunkers. This lengthy series of manned outposts is further supported by a physical wall of plascrete, poured over a foundation of adamant. The wall averages three metres in height, though in places it exceeds this height due to the intervening terrain.

The outer side of the wall—which faced the region most likely to fall under Ork attack—was further supported by an extensive network of tank traps, razor wire, pit traps, land mines, and additional impediments to surface-based assault. The fortifications were expanded and revised by generations of Hervara's native inhabitants. These impediments extend for at least twenty metres from the base of the wall, but in some places it has been expanded to extend much further.

The Line was designed upon the inherent notion that there would never be an attack initiated across its entire length. Throughout Hervara's history, there are very few instances when a single Ork battlefield extended more than ten kilometres. Because of this, an extensive series of tunnels were carved beneath the Line. These contain redundant communications systems as well as a rail line, which is most commonly used to disperse supplies to the inordinate number of soldiers required to effectively man the fortification. During times of an attack, troops can use the railcars to quickly respond to assaults anywhere along the wall.

It takes more than fifteen thousand front line soldiers to adequately man the entire Line's fortifications at full combat readiness. This does not include the support elements necessary to keep those troopers fighting effectively. This combination

represents a major portion of the Death Korps of Krieg elements assigned to Hervara. Only by taking advantage of the built-in transportation and communications network can the Imperial Guard afford to man this outpost. Within minutes, troopers quickly redeploy from areas of relative calm during an attack, to reinforce locations where the fighting is most intense.

The Line's underground extensions are also critical to its overall function. For generations, battles fought upon Hervara have taken place both on the planet's surface and far beneath it. Defending only the surface was seen as managing only a small portion of the conflict. To address this, members of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors collapsed and backfilled countless tunnels and natural caverns near the fortification. At the time of its construction, every known passage that crossed beneath the Line required travellers to pass through a manned checkpoint beneath the fortification. Over the span of decades that have passed since its construction, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors have searched to identify any other passages that might represent security vulnerabilities, and eliminated them.

Conversely, because of Hervara's dense and poisonous atmosphere, aerial assaults were seldom seen to be a meaningful threat. The Line's design only offered minor concessions to deal with aerial assault. Only a small percentage of the bunkers were even equipped with an auspex capable of detecting aerial vehicles. None of the stations included heavy weapons specifically devoted to defending against aerial attacks, though the majority of the bunkers did at least include weapons capable of traversing vertically to fire upon airborne targets. This was wrongly considered irrelevant to the defensive effort.

Each of the more than one thousand bunkers follows a common architectural design, with accommodations made to address environmental variations. Every bunker includes various sensors to continually scan the nearby region for movement, noise, and chemical changes. Redundant systems allow for communication using a wired network located within the Line's tunnels, as well as a vox for use in the event of failures. Two heavy weapons are mounted at each bunker, along with accessible firing ports for smaller weapons. In most instances, the assigned weapons are autocannons or heavy bolters, though the mounts were designed in such a way that weapons could be swapped at the behest of a bunker's commander.

The Drury-Cobhan Line was a major point of pride for Hervaran forces prior to the invasion. It withstood countless Ork assaults, from the time of its construction until the decision was made to secede from the Imperium. Before the Imperial Guard first assaulted the mining world, General Augustus believed that the Line might hold against the loyalist forces for generations. Though his advisors cautioned him against such optimism, he saw it as a crucial early line of defence.

COLLAPSING THE WALL

Due to its design restrictions, the Drury-Cobhan Line has a number of significant limitations to its overall functionality. The most relevant of these is that the fortification is designed to fend off an attack from only one direction. Once an attacking army penetrates its barriers, the wall is of little use. The massive swath of barricades is entirely located on only one side. The firing ports of its bunkers only

face a single direction. In many places, the rear walls of the bunkers are far less armoured than the front walls. Even the checkpoints located within the tunnels beneath the planet's surface are designed to repel attack from only one side.

When the Imperial Guard forces made planetfall, their primary landing site was located within the area defended by the Drury-Cobhan Line. Because the secessionists redeployed their forces, it was many months before the war even reached the fortification. When it did, the generations of work proved to be of little value to the native defenders. Loyalist forces approached from the side of the wall that the designers had always expected to be secure. As a consequence, many of its structures were incapable of presenting significant resistance to the attackers. Worse yet, once the Imperium succeeded in securing the fortification, they were able to rebuild and reinforce it. In short order, Severan Dominate forces found that their masterfully constructed defensive fortification was preventing them from returning to their homes.

BRIEFING

The Player Characters are called to a briefing in Captain Fordham's office through more traditional channels than those to which they have become accustomed. When they review their morning's duty roster, they find that it includes a mid-morning meeting with the Captain. The assignment indicates that they have a pre-mission briefing, though no further information is available through the rumour mill. Notably, they have no further duty assignments listed on their daily schedule after the briefing. Presumably, the mission is due to begin immediately following the briefing. This offers the Player Characters some time to settle any outstanding debts or secure additional gear through less than official channels, prior to their meeting with the Captain.

When they arrive for their meeting, the room is hazy with a dense fog of lho-stick smoke. An ashtray overflows with ash and spent butts. Two empty amasec bottles are knocked over on Fordham's desk, and he is in the process of adding from a third to his cup of recaf. The Captain's complexion has turned sallow, his left eye twitches, and his hands shake as he stands to greet the squad. He offers each of them a cup of recaf, from a brewer that looks like it is in desperate need of maintenance and cleaning. With a defeated shrug, he also offers to let them "fortify" their recaf from his half-empty flask of amasec. After that, he passes them the physical copy of their mission briefing (HV-10 from page 85).

Once they have taken their seats, read aloud or paraphrase the following aloud:

Fordham inhales deeply from a lho-stick and sets it on the edge of his ashtray. He chases it down with a long pull from his recaf mug, and then starts shuffling through the numerous stacks of papers on his desk. As he looks up and notices your arrival, you can hear him muttering under his breath. He attempts to sort through the stacks, searching for a specific document, and his frown deepens, his movements becoming more frantic. Finally, when the Captain jerks a sheet out from a wavering stack, the remainder of it tumbles to the floor, spreading and drifting across the room. Fordham starts to let out a bellow of frustration, but abruptly stops himself, bows his head, and inhales deeply.

After a moment, he politely says, "I'm sorry. You shouldn't have to see me acting like this. This mission is vital, and its success could help define humanity's role on Hervara for generations to come. I appreciate all of the successes we've enjoyed together, and I think they have been building towards this." With that, he activates the small holotank on his desk, and takes another deep drink from his mug.

The tank's image zooms in to present an aerial view of the fortifications along the Drury-Cobhan Line. The captain then circles a series of the bunkers and explains that these particular locations have fallen prey to an unexpected secessionist assault. A small unit of Severan Dominate commandos managed to sneak into the tunnels on the Imperial side of the fortification. Intelligence has not yet identified how those troopers reached this side of the emplacement, but the best guess is that they might have only recently turned traitor.

It is believed that after securing the facility, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors forces seized the equipment of the Death Korps soldiers. They are most likely currently wearing the stolen weapons and armour as they now continue to hold the fortification, putting up the pretence that it has not changed hands. High Command has requested that Fordham take control of the situation from a local level by eliminating the encamped forces and restoring the bunkers to Imperial control.

The squad's primary mission objective for this assignment is to recover the three bunkers located along the Drury-Cobhan Line that have fallen to secessionist forces. At this time, the tunnels have been secured against further intrusion, and the nearest surface bunkers have been reinforced. However, conventional warfare has left the battle at a virtual standoff. The Player Characters must resort to nontraditional strategies so that they can retake the three bunkers. If at all possible, High Command would vastly prefer that the bunkers be recovered intact. Destroying them should only be considered a last possible resort.

"THE LINE" EXTRA MISSION ASSIGNMENT GEAR:

- One photo-visor per squad member.
- Five demolition chargers per soldier.
- Five frag grenades per soldier.
- One grapnel and line per squad member.
- One signal jammer for the squad.
- Choice of a flamer, grenade launcher, or meltagun for each Player Character.





The only secondary objective is to identify any nearby tunnels, to see if it is possible that the attackers might have created an alternative route around or through the fortification. If these exist, it is possible that the secessionists, or even Ork forces, might be able to bypass the defensive emplacement and strike directly at the Imperium's less well-guarded assets.

Note that both of these objectives are a bluff on Fordham's part. He has no reason to expect that there are any additional tunnels, nor have any actually been created. The bunkers have not fallen to a secessionist attack. Rather, the troopers holding the fortifications are the same Death Korps of Krieg soldiers who have held the location for many months. Captain Fordham is deliberately using the Player Characters and their squad (without their knowledge, of course) to make a direct attack against other Imperial Guardsmen.

Once the bunkers are taken, a force of Luggnum troopers (actually Hervara Excavatory Warriors in Sewer Rat uniforms) are slated to meet the Player Characters within the tunnels. These reinforcements are scheduled to arrive at a time of the Player Characters' choosing. They are not part of the initial attack, as Fordham prefers that the attack rely upon stealth and small numbers. He believes that committing a larger force makes it far too likely to compromise the assault. In the event that reinforcements arrive for the secessionist forces, the characters are expected to hold the bunkers until their own reinforcements arrive.

Fordham cautions the characters that they must maintain radio silence throughout the assignment. Intelligence suggests that the attackers managed to take the bunkers largely intact. As a consequence, they likely have access to Imperial Guard

communications equipment. Any broadcasts could easily be intercepted. Similarly, it is reasonable to assume that the three bunkers are in communication with one another—likely using both their vox, and the wired communications network that extends through the tunnels. Unless the squad plans to strike at all three locations simultaneously, they must sever those communication lines prior to beginning their strike.

Captain Fordham realises that this is likely his last gambit as commanding officer of Hervara-XIX. As such, he is willing to be very generous with the Imperium's resources. If the Player Characters request any additional Mission Assignment Gear, he grants their request. Note that Fordham can only grant requests for wargear that he actually has available at the supply depot. For example, unless the characters belong to an armoured regiment, there are no Leman Russ Battle Tanks stationed at Hervara-XIX, so he cannot assign one to them. On the other hand, most heavy weapons, any of the gear favoured by the Luggnum Sewer Rats (see pages 122–123), or even significant volumes of promethium, are all readily available for their use, with no questions asked except in the case of the most outlandish requests. If the players inquire as to his generosity, he assures them that it is because they have earned his trust, and because the Imperial cause on Hervara undoubtedly rests upon the result of this strike.

ASSAULT

The targeted bunkers on the Drury-Cobhan Line are roughly two hours journey by Chimera Armoured Transport from the supply depot. The three bunkers are arranged to impede transit of enemy troops through a sizeable canyon. The outer two fortified bunkers are adjacent to the cliff faces that form the canyon walls. The middle bunker is located near the centre of the canyon floor. The upper two bunkers are arranged so that they form a terminus to the plascrete wall, which resumes along the canyon floor.

At this point, the canyon floor is roughly thirty metres below the level of the surrounding terrain. The tunnel beneath the centre bunker represents one of the lowest points below the entire length of the fortification. It gradually ascends in both directions, to accommodate rail travel. To accommodate this descent, ladders are ensconced within narrow shafts that connect the subterranean portion of the line with the adjacent bunkers. For the outer two bunkers, these shafts are nearly thirty metres in length, which takes some time for even the most adept of climbers to ascend or descend safely. Using the tunnels allows the Player Characters to cover the kilometre between each bunker unseen.

Before the Player Characters launch their assault, it might be worthwhile to remind them that communications can take place using either the hard-wired communications systems or the vox. If the characters fail to take this into consideration prior to launching their attack, a substantial number of reinforcements descend upon the scene. The canyon echoes considerably, and so any excessive noise, particularly from explosives, is likely to be audible for more than a kilometre. The cloud of dust kicked up by an explosion would be easily visible in daylight, as would the accompanying flash of light at night. Even if communications are eliminated, each bunker can monitor its neighbours by sight and sound in the case of an overt attack.

To ameliorate the risk of reinforcements, Captain Fordham has sent a memorandum to all of the bunkers on the Line, save for those targeted for attack. The warning identifies the attack as a scheduled security drill using standard intrusion techniques. It indicates the date of the drill, but not the specific time. Soldiers on duty at the stations are instructed to disregard the use of ordnance and explosives at the targeted bunkers. In spite of this notification, if the defenders place a legitimate call for help, those at the nearby sites are certain to respond quickly.

All three bunkers are physically identical, as are their defences (see the Scutum-pattern Bunker on pages 138–139). The contested side is defended by a minefield, interspersed with extended stretches of accordion wire (see page 200 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). If the Player Characters need to navigate the minefield, a path through the field requires identifying a minimum of ten consecutive landmines, with a **Hard (–20) Awareness Test** for each. Failure to identify a mine means that the character triggers it. Treat each landmine as a krak grenade (see page 183 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).

Each bunker has a crew of five Death Korps Guardsmen (see page 129) and bunk space for five off-duty troopers to rest. Another five troopers stand guard duty within the tunnel beneath each bunker. One of these fifteen troopers is a Death Korps Sergeant (see pages 129–130). The subterranean area is not expected to see combat, so it typically includes a folding table, chairs, and an ongoing card game or other regiment-appropriate activity. A small pantry, kitchenette, and a lavatory complete each below-ground station. Each soldier is allocated three eight hour shifts: one on above-ground duty, one on below-ground duty, and a third to rest in the bunk room. The shifts normally change at 2400, 0800, and 1600 hours. The off-duty troopers usually take roughly thirty minutes to fall asleep after shift change and thirty minutes to complete their morning rituals before a shift.

In the upper levels, one trooper mans each heavy weapon, one stands on communications duty, and two stand guard to watch the wall between bunkers, one facing in each direction. Every thirty minutes, the troopers rotate duty stations, to reduce overall fatigue. The rotation only takes a single Round, offering little opportunity for the Player Characters to infiltrate. The troopers are expected to leave the bunker only if they must defend a portion of the wall that is out of range of the fortification's weapons. The location contains necessities for survival, plus heavy weapons.

In the event of an attack, one soldier is assigned to immediately use the communications network to notify adjacent bunkers of the new enemy activity. After that message is sent, a request is sent to the on-duty soldiers in the lower location to be prepared for action. If an engagement lasts more than a minute, the off-duty soldiers are roused to join in the combat. They require a full minute to don their gear and prepare their weapons. It only takes a single Round for guards to move between the tunnels and the central bunker, but it requires a full eight minutes to travel between the tunnels and the bunkers located atop the cliff face. Shooting at a character during the climb between locations grants a +20 bonus to the attacker and a –20 penalty to any Dodge attempts, due to the confined passage.

The bunkers' greatest vulnerability is the fact that no troopers are stationed to watch the secure side. This side also has the lightest armour and a hatch. If the Player Characters choose to exploit this vulnerability, the



major challenge is breaching the hatch before the troopers inside have time to recognise the attack and react—such as by rotating the heavy weapons and bringing them to bear.

If one bunker sends a call for reinforcements, additional Guardsmen also arrive at the two adjacent bunkers. As one of the bunkers is insecure, the number of soldiers on duty at each of these neighbouring stations doubles for all shifts. Reinforcements are never sent from the immediately adjacent bunkers. Instead, they are assembled from several locations, and use the railway to complete the transit. It takes a total of ten minutes for reinforcements to arrive. A reinforcement wave includes ten Death Korps troopers (see page 129), one of whom carries a meltagun.

DEFENCE

Once the characters capture one or more of the bunkers, they must be able to hold that location until the reinforcements sent by Fordham arrive to secure the site. The amount of time required is based entirely upon how the squad has chosen to signal their support units to arrive. If this involves some particularly showy display—a flare, smoke signals, or even a radio transmission—then Death Korps troopers stationed at nearby bunkers begin to inquire about the status of the captured bunker.

If no one responds to the inquiries, possibly due to an active jammer or to the communications wires being severed, then the nearby stations choose to send reinforcements based upon their own initiative. This is simply a precautionary measure, in spite of the warning that Captain Fordham circulated earlier.

Ultimately, this action conforms with standard operating procedures, a fact that Imperial Guardsmen are most often loathe to ignore. The groups sent in this situation are identical to those described previously (see above).

Only one squad is initially sent to reinforce the position. Upon arrival, the reinforcement squad only assumes a hostile stance in the event that there is clear evidence of violence—for example, dead bodies, blood stains, or the smell of weapons discharges. If the Player Characters have taken the time to quickly clear the scene and present the appearance of normalcy, the reinforcing Death Korps unit can safely leave the area without incident.

Conversely, if the squad finds a site in shambles, with obvious evidence of continued violence, their first action is to use their vox to call for additional reinforcements. This consists of a single squad which takes roughly ten minutes to arrive. In the event that a signal jammer is operational, the squad first retreats out of its range to send the call for reinforcements prior to beginning an assault action. In the event that they are ambushed and eliminated, the nearby units have a standard protocol for dealing with situations where all contact is lost.

After an hour without contact, a sergeant from one of the bunkers that sent reinforcements makes contact with the overall commander for the Drury-Cobhan Line. It is this officer's responsibility to decide whether it is appropriate to send a request for additional support to High Command. In all instances, once that hour has passed, the request has immediately been forwarded on. After High Command receives the request, they place a call for available support units to be sent to the line to investigate.

This process is agonisingly slow to complete. In a best case scenario, given the hour response time plus the assignment of troops from a nearby base, a support unit of appropriate size takes at least three hours to respond. In this instance, Captain Fordham would have the opportunity to serve as first responder, due to the relative location of Hervara-XIX, and he sends a unit of Hervara Excavatory Warriors soldiers to reinforce the base, if necessary.

Note that the reinforcements sent by Captain Fordham—in spite of all appearances, and regardless of whether it is in keeping with the original schedule, or at the request of High Command—are actually members of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors who have sworn fealty to the Severan Dominate. These traitors only remain in their Luggnum uniforms until the Player Characters have begun their return trip to Hervara-XIX. They then switch over to captured Death Korps uniforms. Their intentions are to impersonate members of the Imperial Guard until a secessionist offensive can pass through the breach in the Line. This deception is key to the events of the final chapter.

In the unlikely event that Captain Fordham is not able to intercept the communication, another commander would send a company sized unit to investigate the disruption. Based upon overall location, that group would most likely consist of members of the Death Korps of Krieg. However, their response time would be significantly longer than that of units coming from Hervara-XIX. Their forces require roughly six hours to respond.

The mission concludes once the Player Characters have successfully secured all three of the bunkers or have come to the realisation that they cannot do so. If the squad is captured, this could serve as the key point that triggers Lord Commissar Salieri's investigation into Hervara-XIX and begins **Chapter III: The Horn of Mars**. The Death Korps Guardsmen fight relentlessly,

but, at the orders of those devoted to purging corrupted elements of the Imperial forces on Hervara, they prioritise taking the apparent traitors prisoner over killing them if possible.

Resolving a situation in which the Player Characters are confirmed traitors is up to the Game Master's discretion. Player Characters realise their situation might choose to take extreme actions rather than face summary judgement from a Commissar. If the squad reacts in this way, the Death Korps soldiers respond accordingly. It might be wise for Corporal Kousenk—or his replacement—to suggest that larger events are taking shape, and that they could yet determine the fate of the war.

CONSEQUENCES

This chapter concludes once the characters return to Hervara-XIX after the end of their mission against the Drury-Cobhan Line. Captain Fordham's reaction should be proportionate to the measure of their success in this arduous mission. In any case, there is little opportunity for celebration or condemnation at this time. **Chapter III: The Horn of Mars** begins within a few hours of their return. This grants the Player Characters just enough time to finish their debriefing session with the Captain and to begin to dust themselves off and clean their wargear, likely for the last time prior to the chaos of the final chapter.

By this point in the adventure, the characters should have achieved some degree of fame among their fellows. Members of their regiment should respect their continued success. Visitors to the base are impressed by the tales that their fellows about the Player Characters' actions in the war. This could be evidenced by new duties around the supply depot or interactions with NPCs who ask for their "expert" opinions on sundry different subjects, regardless of their actual relevant knowledge.

EXPERIENCE AND LOGISTICS

Due to the episodic nature of this chapter, Game Masters might want to assign xp after each Mission. This gives Player Characters opportunities to purchase Advances in between. This section lists the total awards, plus advice for handling a granular approach.

For surviving the act, each character receives an award of 1,000 xp. For each primary mission objective that they completed successfully, the Player Characters receive a bonus award of 200 xp. For each secondary mission objective successfully completed, the characters receive an additional 50 xp. At the Game Master's discretion, these rewards could be reduced if the characters suffered substantial losses during their missions, or exhibited consistently poor tactical judgment. Conversely, if they completed their mission objectives efficiently and conserved supplies and lives throughout their assignments, the GM can assign additional xp as he sees fit.

For every assignment in which the Player Characters succeeded at the primary mission objective without suffering any casualties, they receive a +1 to their Logistics Rating. If the characters manage to return at least one piece of Mission Assignment Gear in fully functional condition at the conclusion of a mission, an additional +1 is assigned to their Logistics Rating. Conversely, for every mission in which they either failed at the primary mission objective or sustained more than fifty percent casualties, they suffer a -1 to Logistics Rating.



KNOW YOUR ENEMY!

Unit: Orks**Affiliation:** Sundry Primitive and Scattered Bands**Designation:** Xenos ("Ork")

Description: Orks are hulking humanoids, almost always more massive than humans. Their skin colour is generally a deep green. Their jaw line exhibits a significant underbite and tusks. Their weapons tend to be far bulkier, louder, and much less reliable than the elegant and powerful weapons employed by the Imperium of Man. Generally, they are more lightly armoured, but their constitution and thick skulls are such that they are somewhat more resilient to damage from Lasguns than a human. Fortunately, Orks are highly disorganised, and can easily be overcome with discipline and faith (see below).

Xenos Behaviours: Ork ranged weaponry is highly inaccurate and likely to misfire, frequently killing allies or even the creature pulling the trigger. Their armaments generally attempt to compensate for their inaccuracy through increased rate of fire, but the faithful need not fear their primitive, solid-projectile weapons, which are designed more to intimidate than to do harm. Guardsmen should always attempt to take advantage of this inaccuracy by standing firm and laying down steady and precise volleys of fire towards any incoming Ork forces. When these savages engage in melee combat, their hardheadedness frequently put even skilful human warriors at a small, but still notable disadvantage in protracted melee combats. With the exception of certain auxiliaries suited to the use of brute force, Imperial Guard forces should always attempt to avoid becoming embroiled in extended close-quarters combat with Ork forces, and make use of terrain features to delay an Ork advance when possible, to cleanse the xenos in the Emperor's name with regimented and unrelenting fire. Fortunately, Orks are slow and easy to outpace even at a modest march.

Allies: Orks enslave the wretched lesser Greenskins, including the diminutive Gretchin and the even more pathetic Snotlings. Despite their puny stature, all of these creatures have earned the Emperor's Contempt by their existence, and must be rewarded with his Wrath. Swarms of these creatures are best destroyed through the use of massed fire, flame-based weapons, or well placed boot heels.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY!

Unit: Ork "Speed Freaks"**Affiliation:** Sundry Primitive and Scattered Bands**Designation:** Xenos ("Ork")**Uniform Colour:** Red**Known Transport Vehicles:** Ramshackle Ground Vehicles and Aircraft

Xenos Behaviours: The Ork Speed Freak Cult is obsessed with the use of light vehicles and aircraft. They prefer to travel into battle at reckless speeds that almost always equal or exceed Mechanicus Techno-Savants' estimates of the maximum theoretical velocity of their vehicles. Fortunately, their vehicles are invariably loud and inefficient, and the clouds of exhaust and dust the ramshackle craft create make their vehicles easy to spot and dispatch from a distance. These foes are best engaged with massed heavy weapon fire at range. Most Ork vehicles crash and/or explode when destroyed, or simply at random, due to their shoddy construction. This disorients the beasts within and presents an ample opportunity for the servants of the Emperor to mete out His justice upon them before the creatures regain their already dull wits.

DIAGRAM I: ORK



Mission Briefing HV-2: Mission Code "In the Smoke"

Assigned Regiment: _____
Designation: Elimination Omnikron-093

Briefing Version: Alpha-003 mark 1.3

Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Arrival Location: As Departure Location (Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX)

Objectives: Primary: Eliminate targeted promethium supply depot. Secondary: Recover as much promethium as possible for Imperial use. Secondary: Eliminate any Severan Dominate forces at target site.

Summary: The squad must exploit Hervara's subterranean routes to reach the designated target location. A loyalist from the native population is designated to serve as a guide for the journey. The trip must be completed in a timely fashion, as the window of vulnerability is limited.

Upon arrival, all rebel elements must be overcome. No rebels may be permitted to escape the engagement. Any available transport vehicles need to be filled with promethium from the base. The transports should be moved off site prior to setting explosive charges. Once destruction has been confirmed, the fuel transports should return to Hervara-XIX.

Caution should be exercised during the return trip, as the journey requires travel into hostile territory and the fuel is highly valuable.

Mission Briefing HV-3: Mission Code "Elimination"

Assigned Regiment: _____

Designation: Elimination Phi-1628

Briefing Version: Beta-045 mark 2.1

Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Arrival Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Objectives: Primary: Destroy rebel training facility, designated Pele-9. Secondary: Eliminate all inhabitants at location with extreme prejudice. Secondary: Avoid contact with all heretical information used at the facility.

Summary: The squad is to travel, via subterranean passage, past the Drury-Cobhan Line and into hostile territory. Their destination is within the Pele Mountain range. Contact with hostiles should be avoided whenever possible. If unavoidable, all hostiles must be eliminated to avoid any potential for an intelligence leak.

Once the target location is identified, the squad must eliminate the location and all instructors and students in residence. The unit is encouraged to exploit the region's natural geologic instability and/or the readily available supply of lava to aid in the elimination. Squad members should be wary, however, that some portions of the facility may be engineered to be resistant to either of these threats.

After destroying the target site, the squad must ensure that there are no survivors or escapees. If either is identified, they must be eliminated.

Mission Briefing HV-4: Mission Code "Killswitch"

Assigned Regiment: _____

Designation: Recovery Alpha-194

Briefing Version: Gamma-014 mark 3.1

Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Arrival Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Objectives: Primary: Recover any data related to an archeotech weapon, designate Ordinus. Secondary: Destroy any data regarding the device that may not be easily transported. Secondary: Eliminate the renegade Tech-Priest.

Summary: The squad must travel via Chimera Armoured Transport to the vicinity of facility designate Rho-079. A stealthy close approach on foot to the target site is advised. The squad must insert into the target facility and recover relevant information as concerns the weapon.

The level of resistance at the target site remains indeterminate. Initial response to the threat at hand must take into consideration the potentially volatile nature of the records which the squad is tasked with recovering. Upon completion of the recovery actions, any hostiles should be eliminated and any information deemed redundant or incapable of transport must be destroyed. The Chimera Armoured Transport may be used to transfer all surviving records back to Hervara-XIX for dissemination to trusted resources.

Mission Briefing HV-5: Mission Code "Turn the Tide"

Assigned Regiment: _____
 Designation: Subterfuge Beta-003
 Briefing Version: Epsilon-157 mark 6.9
 Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX
 Arrival Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX
 Objectives: Primary: Deliver, through indirect means, map designate Resource-Rho 983 to xenos elements. Secondary: Eliminate as many xenos as possible.
 Summary: It has become necessary to deliver false intelligence to the xenos. The mechanism chosen is a map that purports to depict current allocations of troops along with planned reallocation dates. The relevant document must be presented to the Greenskins in such a way that they believe they have won it through battle, preferably due to an act of fate and uncommon fortune. It is vital that the materials not be surrendered lightly, as the xenos are far more likely to question something that was recovered without an obligatory conflict.
 The squad is responsible for determining an effective means of delivering the document and executing their plan. While tactical flexibility is offered, this flexibility must be exercised with care. The squad is expected to eliminate a significant number of xenos in the act of completing this assignment while sustaining a minimum number of casualties.

Mission Briefing HV-6: Mission Code "Liberation"

Assigned Regiment: _____
 Designation: Recovery Alpha-195
 Briefing Version: Alpha-001 mark 1.1
 Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX
 Arrival Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX
 Objectives: Primary: Recover as many surviving prisoners as possible from target encampment, designate Omnikron-IX. Secondary: Eliminate any xenos forces at Omnikron-IX. Secondary: Recover useful materiel at Omnikron-IX.
 Summary: Intelligence reports indicate that xenos elements are using a substantial number of native humans to complete mining operations at prison camp designate Omnikron-IX. The squad is assigned to travel to this location, using the planet's subterranean tunnel network, to liberate all prisoners. Available resources should also be recovered to prevent the xenos from exploiting those assets. Xenos assets should be eliminated, but not at undue cost. Rescuing the prisoners is a higher priority. A native guide is provided to assist with navigation.
 All survivors are to be returned to Hervara-XIX for treatment and assignment. Vehicular assets available to complete this task are limited. Travel from the target location must be completed on foot due to lack of resources.

Mission Briefing HV-7: Mission Code "Wounded Bird"

Assigned Regiment: _____
 Designation: Recovery Alpha-196
 Briefing Version: Alpha-001 mark 2.3
 Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX
 Arrival Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX
 Objectives: Primary: Recover the servitor containing intelligence records from crashed shuttle, designate Sigma-983. Secondary: Retrieve any surviving members of the crew. Secondary: Repair the shuttle for return to Hervara-XIX, or sabotage the remains of the shuttle to the extent that it cannot be salvaged.
 Summary: An Imperial Navy shuttle has been shot down by xenos elements. The shuttle was engaged in a mission to gather intelligence regarding enemy troop movements and installations. At least some members of her crew survived impact and transferred all records to the craft's servitor. Imperial forces have since lost contact with those survivors.
 The squad must proceed to the impact site, preferably using the assigned Chimera Armoured Transport. Note that this location is on the hostile side of the Drury-Cobhan Line. Upon arrival, the squad is expected to identify and assist any remaining survivors, as well as recover the servitor with its files intact. Due to the hostile environment, and the low preparedness of Imperial Navy crews for surface engagements, this mission must be executed with all due haste. If possible, also recover the Imperial Guard Liaison who was aboard the craft with the Navy personnel at the time that it crashed.

Mission Briefing HV-8: Mission Code "Stay on Target"

Assigned Regiment: _____

Designation: Reconnaissance Theta-462

Briefing Version: Delta-583 mark 4.2

Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Arrival Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Objectives: Primary: Plant targeting sensors directed towards enemy outpost designate Kappa-132. Secondary: Avoid detection by enemy assets. Secondary: Eliminate any enemy assets that survive the bombardment.

Summary: Newly assigned, las-assisted targeting systems are currently in testing for work with Death Korps artillery assets. The squad is being assigned a set of these for familiarisation and field testing. The target is an enemy encampment, placed deep behind enemy lines, where it is believed to be secure from Imperial attack. A native guide is assigned to assist the squad in travel to the target site. This journey must use less travelled subterranean passages to avoid detection by other native elements.

The squad is expected to travel to the target site without being identified by enemy assets. The targeting sensors must be placed and activated prior to 2400 hours during one of the nights in the allocated operational window. Upon completion of the bombardment, the squad is expected to recover the sensors, eliminate any surviving hostiles, and return to Hervara-XIX for debriefing.

Mission Briefing HV-9: Mission Code "Poison the Well"

Assigned Regiment: _____

Designation: Subterfuge Beta-004

Briefing Version: Delta-136 mark 1.6

Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Arrival Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Objectives: Primary: Insert the toxin cylinder into the aquifer, designated Alpha-942, and conceal the insertion site. Secondary: Avoid enemy contact or eliminate any forces encountered.

Summary: Intelligence sources have identified a critical aquifer that is used to supply at least one major xenos installation with water required for their survival. It is believed that if that water is poisoned, it may inflict serious casualties on the encampment or force it to relocate. The squad has been provided with a timed-release, highly pressurised cylinder filled with a deadly poison. It is critical that the team travel deep beneath Hervara's surface to implant the toxin within designate Alpha-942.

Enemy contact must be avoided or eliminated to prevent the enemy from identifying the delivery site and vector. A native guide is provided to assist the squad in locating site Alpha-942. The squad should be aware that the cylinder is extremely dangerous. If exposed to destructive forces, it could detonate, spewing hazardous materials over a wide area. The squad is encouraged to keep the cylinder from situations that might result in such a calamity.

Mission Briefing HV-10: Mission Code "Across the Line"

Assigned Regiment: _____

Designation: Recovery Omega-893

Briefing Version: Alpha-001 mark 1.0

Departure Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Arrival Location: Supply Depot Designate, Hervara-XIX

Objectives: Primary: Recover the three Drury-Cobhan Line bunkers that have fallen to secessionist forces. Hold them until designated reinforcements arrive. Secondary: Identify any unknown tunnels that connect with the bunkers.

Summary: Three bunkers of the Drury-Cobhan Line have fallen under the sway of Severan Dominate forces. These units are posing as Death Korps of Krieg members, using equipment stolen from that esteemed regiment. The squad must eliminate these hostiles and regain control of the bunkers. Once control is recovered, reinforcements will arrive rapidly, in response to a preset signal. The three bunkers are located across a canyon, with the central bunker occupying the centre of the canyon floor, and the others taking up adjacent locations atop the cliff face.

Communications play a crucial role, in that the squad must isolate the targeted bunkers so that they may not place a call for reinforcements. All hostiles are to be eliminated, but the bunkers must be recovered in the best condition possible, so that they may return to service immediately.



ARTILLERY TARGET 2

TRAINING CAMP

IMPERIAL
FORTIFICATIONS

ARTILLERY TARGET 1

TO SURFACE

HERETEK DIG SITE

TO SURFACE

STRATEGIC
VULNERABILITY

TO SURFACE



DRURY-COBHAN LINE

SHUTTLE CRASH SITE

TO SURFACE

IMPERIAL
FORTIFICATIONS

ORK CAMP

ASH WASTES

LUGGNUM SEWER RATS
3RD REGIMENT BASE

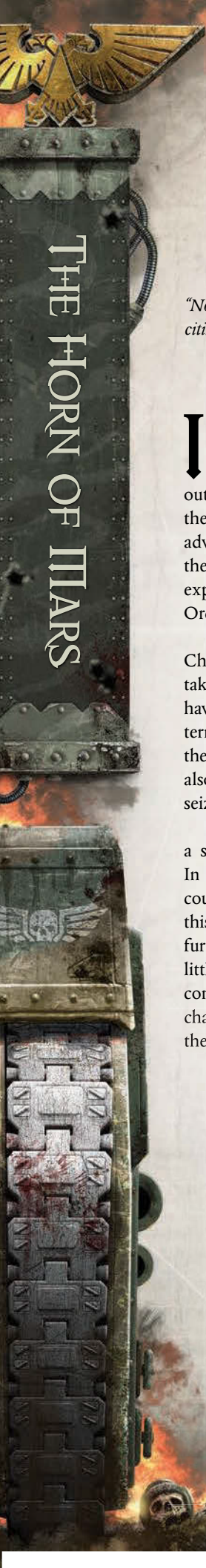
TO SURFACE

DRURY-COBHAN LINE



THE HORN OF MARS

THE BUCK
STOPS HERE
•
SAVED BY
THE BOMB
•
TAKING
CONTROL
•
LEVELLING
THE FIELD
•
AN OFFERING



CHAPTER III: THE HORN OF MARS

"No institution is as skilled or experienced at killing Imperial citizens as the Imperium of Mankind itself."

—Commissar Bennett, *Heresy and Retribution: Reflections upon the Tactica Imperialis*

In this chapter, Captain Fordham's treason comes fully to light, and the consequences of his actions come into play. Both Severan Dominate and Ork forces launch all-out assaults against the Drury-Cobhan Line, which affects the nearby Hervara-XIX base as well. These assaults take advantage of the intelligence the Captain provided, and the weaknesses that he has intentionally engineered and exposed. The Orks also begin their preparations to fire the Ordinatus against the combined human forces.

If there is any hope for humanity to prevail, the Player Characters must escape their Imperial captors and work to take control of the Ordinatus. The variety of missions they have completed leaves them with a unique knowledge of the terrain, particularly the many tunnels that extend throughout the current battlefield. Their familiarity with the Ordinatus also qualifies them better than any other group to attempt to seize control of the ancient weapon.

During the previous act, the characters embarked upon a series of missions that likely took months to complete. In contrast, the various scenes of this chapter are set over a course of roughly a day. Game Masters might wish to keep this in mind, as the scenes shift and the action develops at a furious pace. Because of this approach, the characters have little opportunity to rest and recover between the various conflicts that they face. This makes the final battles far more challenging than if the Player Characters had approached these conflicts with more time for recovery and preparation.



THE BUCK STOPS HERE

"Without unquestioning obedience, the Imperial Guard could never function. Yet, unquestioning obedience is no excuse for acts of treason. It is not a Guardsman's place to question this paradox, but sometimes he must die for it."

—Lieutenant Colonel Heinrich Voorsch

Just after the Player Characters return from their mission to recover "captured" bunkers from the Drury-Cobhan Line, Imperial forces roll into Hervara-XIX. The new arrivals are Death Korps troopers, led by Lord Commissar Salieri, who has been assigned to ferret out and eliminate all acts of treason within Imperial Guard units across Hervara. His mission is clear: to bring any and all traitors to justice.

Whether or not the Player Characters were aware of Fordham's treachery, they are among the Lord Commissar's primary suspects. Throughout this scene, they must discuss the crimes they may have committed, no matter how unwillingly. Their questioners make it clear that the only possible punishment for the crimes discussed is death. At this stage, it is appropriate for the Player Characters to believe that the negotiation is not for their lives, but for the means of their death. Those who conceal information might be forced to linger in agony for days or weeks of torture. Conversely, those who testify against others and are open about their crimes can perhaps face a mercifully brief sentence, which lasts only the time between pulls of a trigger and the impact of bolter rounds with their skulls.

While this scene introduces the stern Lord Commissar, it also presents the characters with Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle. The psyker retains some semblance of sympathy for the Player Characters, recognising that they are little more than cogs in a massive machine they cannot control, or even hope to understand. Though she can do nothing to protect them from their ultimate fate, she does attempt to make the interrogation less miserable than it might be without her intervention. Depending upon how the Player Characters choose to interact with the psyker, her assistance can be valuable to them in later scenes.

JUDGEMENT COMES

This scene begins only a few hours after the Player Characters return to Hervara-XIX from their mission to the Drury-Cobhan Line. Lord Commissar Salieri (see page 136) comes to the base to investigate evidence of treason. He brings a full company of Death Korps of Krieg soldiers (see pages 129–130) with him to the site. This includes ten platoons. Each platoon includes the following: Platoon Command Squad, consisting of a Death Korps Lieutenant and four Death Korps Guardsmen equipped with meltaguns, five Infantry Squads made up of a Death Korps Sergeant and nine Death Korps Guardsmen (two of the Guardsmen man a heavy bolter, while another wields a melta gun). Finally, it contains one Commissar (see page 374 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).

At the start of the scene, there is only a single partial platoon of Luggnum Sewer Rats on site, in addition to the base's essential support staff, and the surviving members of the Player Characters' company. It is likely that the Death Korps company outnumbers the standing forces stationed at Hervara-XIX. Even if it does not, the new arrivals are fully equipped and have their weapons at hand. In the event of a physical confrontation, it takes the company only a single Round to ready their weapons prior to attacking.

Prior to their arrival, messages were sent through encrypted channels to all of the base's Commissars (including any PC Commissars, at the Game Master's discretion). They were ordered to have all of the watch tower guards stand down until the Death Korps secured the base. The messages were explicit that there might be a traitor active within Hervara-XIX. No soldiers were to be permitted to leave, and the company en route must be allowed entrance to the facility without the potential for an incident.

When the Death Korps company arrives, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The murmurs started to spread through camp like wildfire more than ten minutes before you could hear the sound. The alarms didn't sound, but somehow, everyone seemed to know that there was an Imperial Guard troop column advancing toward Hervara-XIX. The approaching mass of soldiers marched in a strict lockstep, and it sounded like the beat of a distant drum. When they reached the gate, the column of Death Korps Guardsmen advanced directly to the base's parade ground without any challenge. A man dressed in the uniform of a Lord Commissar split from the ranks to walk towards Captain Fordham's office. A woman dressed in the robes of a Primaris Psyker followed in his wake.

As you emerge into the courtyard, the entire depot falls into a deathly silence. Less than a minute later, Fordham's adjutant emerges from the Captain's office. He quickly scans the base and makes eye contact with you, before breaking into a run directly towards you. Suddenly, you can feel the eyes of every soldier within the base staring directly at your squad...

It should be immediately clear to the Player Characters that the adjutant is coming to ask them to report to the Captain's office. Different groups of characters will likely respond in very different fashions. It might be worthwhile to remind the Player Characters that there are hundreds of Death Korps of Krieg troopers watching their every move. As there was little advance warning of the incoming column, the Player Characters might also realise that the guards stationed in the watch towers must be aware of the situation.

If the Player Characters attempt to flee or take hostile actions, the results are predictable. They are hideously outnumbered by a well-equipped force. Ultimately, the Commissariat wants to take them alive, but they are not willing to sacrifice countless lives to do so. Any fight should be phenomenally one-sided, as the Player Characters are physically overwhelmed. Initially, the loyalist forces attempt to secure the squad without using lethal force, as they want to question the Player Characters.

However, if the PCs quickly turn to lethal options, the Death Korps forces have little option but to escalate the engagement to that level. If it might affect the reaction of the Player Characters, Game Masters might choose to annihilate one of the NPC members of the squad first. If this seems necessary, it should represent the very last chance that the Player Characters have to acquiesce to the interrogation before undertaking truly extreme actions that will likely seal their demise.

If they try anything suicidally bold even in the face of such overwhelming odds, hundreds of lasguns erupt in fire in short order, the vast majority of them pointed at anyone in the squad who has chosen so poorly. Even the best-equipped of Imperial Guardsmen cannot shrug off or evade raw firepower of that magnitude. If the Player Characters choose to challenge such a force, there is little chance of survival. In the case of a mechanised or armoured regiment, the Player Characters might have been in an armoured vehicle observing the arrival of the Death Korps forces. In this case, they might attempt to flee in their vehicle, but the heavy bolters and autocannons in the watchtowers, as well as the meltaguns assigned to each Death Korps squad, limit the practicality of this approach as well.

If the players choose to cooperate with Fordham's adjutant, the situation should be tense, but not escalate beyond that point. When he reaches the squad, the adjutant gives a salute and explains that their squad has been identified as persons of interest in an ongoing investigation. He then states that Lord Commissar Salieri requests that they join him for a discussion in Captain Fordham's office. The man gives a shrug and a sympathetic half smile. It should be clear that he is in over his head, and really has very little appreciation for what is going on.

Have all of the Player Characters make a **Challenging (+0) Common Lore (Spinward Front) Test**. This Test reflects what information they recall about the Lord Commissar off-hand. Refer to **Table 3-1: Lord Commissar Salieri Information** on page 90 for the specific results. Characters who attain greater Degrees of Success also know all of the information from the chart learned by those who attained fewer Successes. While Player Characters can choose whether or not to discuss this information between one another as they walk to the Captain's office, it is worth reminding them that the majority of the base is watching their every move. It would reflect poorly upon them if anyone overheard a conversation that included insults directed towards the Lord Commissar.

Any information that they recall significantly impacts the decisions that the Player Characters make as they approach Captain Fordham's office. Ultimately, their decisions are somewhat limited by the company of soldiers with weapons ready to fire upon them. However, once inside the office, the odds are significantly better (or at least less suicidally miserable), as only the Lord Commissar and Primaris Psyker are present. Characters might have specific plans for after they enter the office. The few seconds between when they enter the building and when they pass through the adjutant's chambers into Captain Fordham's office is their sole opportunity to discuss any sort of plan while they remain out of earshot of the Lord Commissar.



TABLE 3-1: LORD COMMISSAR SALIERI INFORMATION

Results	Information Known about the Lord Commissar
3+ Degrees of Failure	The character is confident that Lord Commissar Salieri is actually a high-ranking member of the Severan Dominate. This is part of a pernicious and coordinated strike against the Imperium of Mankind.
1-2 Degrees of Failure	The character feels like he has heard of the Lord Commissar, but cannot recall why.
1 Degree of Success	The Lord Commissar is likely the person in charge of all of the Commissars directly stationed upon Hervara. It is very possible that his presence at Hervara-XIX might be following up on data that was accumulated at some time in the past. Further, if he heard about him from rumours earlier in the campaign, he remembers what he heard.
2 Degrees of Success	As 1, and further, the Player Character knows that one of the Lord Commissar's responsibilities includes identifying traitors to the Imperial cause. His presence is most likely because there are multiple sources that suggest there has been treacherous activity which began at the base. Of course, given the base's frequent turn-over, it is possible that someone could have triggered such a response and left quite some time ago.
3 Degrees of Success	As 2, and further, the Player Character knows that is unlikely that the Lord Commissar has requested their presence on a whim. As low-ranking members of the guard stationed at Hervara-XIX, they would only be summoned if there was relevant material in a report that they filed, or if the Captain suggested that they might be involved.
4+Degrees of Success	As 3, and further, the Player Character knows that the Lord Commissar is a bloodthirsty megalomaniac who never stops looking for traitors, and invariably finds one anywhere that he looks. The Player Characters should be aware that by entering an office with the Lord Commissar, they are likely forfeiting their own lives. Of course, attempting to flee at this point would only end their lives that much more swiftly and certainly.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Upon entering Captain Fordham's office, they find Lord Commissar Salieri sitting in the chair behind the Captain's desk. His posture is fiercely rigid, as he occupies only the very edge of the seat. Both hands are visible, resting calmly atop the desk, which has been completely cleared. The ashtray, the captain's seemingly endless piles of papers and maps, and the collection of amasec bottles overflows from the wastebasket next to the desk. His eyes calmly focus on each of the characters in turn as they enter the room. It is clear that he is evaluating them both for mental aptitude and physical capability with just a momentary look.

Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle (see page 137 for her profile) stands behind and to the left of the Lord Commissar. Each time Salieri turns his eyes to observe a character, hers follow a fraction of a second later. It seems as if even their blinks are synchronised. Player Characters can make a **Challenging (+0) Forbidden Lore (Psykers) Test**. Any Player Character who succeeds recognises that the Psyker and the Lord Commissar are currently engaged in some sort of intense mental communication. Further, he can infer that the Commissar has some degree of access to Cauldwelle's abilities, perhaps including an ability to discern the truth of statements made within her presence.

After all of the characters have entered the room, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Captain Fordham's office has changed significantly in the short time since you were last here. The desk has been swept clean, the chairs have been removed, and the windows opened, to clear the smell of smoke and stale recaf—though the polluted atmosphere of Hervara is scarcely an improvement. A stern man in the uniform of a Lord Commissar sits behind what was the Captain's desk. Behind him stands a woman dressed in the robes of a Primaris Psyker, her eyes glowing with a cold blue light, but her face less stern than that of her compatriot.

The Lord Commissar makes eye contact with each of you, in silence. Though you are sure the contact lasts for but an instant, you can feel the judgment of the God-Emperor behind his eyes, as the man clearly weighs each of your souls through that fleeting glimpse.

Finally, he shifts his focus to encompass all of you, steeples his fingers, and says, "I am Lord Commissar Salieri. Your Captain Fordham has been judged and found wanting. Based upon previously filed reports, I believe you have been working closely with him for some time. In the interests of completing my investigation, I need to ask you some additional questions. Know that your fate depends upon the veracity of your answers."

Salieri gives the Player Characters a moment's leave to speak and ask any critical questions before he continues. He refuses to answer specific questions about the case at hand.

As this is an open investigation, he feels that it would be horribly inappropriate for him to answer the questions of individuals who might be key witnesses. He can, however, offer a few insights regarding longer term ramifications.



The Game Master is encouraged to have Salieri answer any questions that are not directly associated with Fordham's crimes, although in a vague fashion. A few key elements that he is willing to address are as follows:

- Another officer should be appointed to take charge of Hervara-XIX in short order.
- Any members of the Player Characters' regiment found free of sin will be reunited with the regiment once the investigation is completed. It is unclear to Salieri why this was not done previously.
- The Death Korps soldiers are expected to remain on station until the current crisis is resolved.
- Salieri has no idea how long the investigation might take, as the full extent of the crimes has not yet been uncovered.
- He is unwilling to accept statements at this time, as he prefers to hear candid responses through the course of questioning.

In some cases, the Player Characters might have reached out to High Command with concerns about Captain Fordham's actions. This does not appreciably change the situation. The Lord Commissar is no less severe in his attitude toward those who have freely confessed their crimes or even identified a potential traitor. Ultimately, he is a fanatical zealot. Salieri believes that virtually every soldier is guilty of some crime against the Imperium. He sees it as his responsibility to identify those crimes, and issue appropriate judgment.

If anyone is bold enough to ask what happened to Captain Fordham, Salieri wraps smartly on the desk twice. The back door to the office opens, revealing the Captain. He is currently hanging from a hook mounted on the back of the door. Ropes bind his arms to his sides and his ankles together. Presumably, the hook is attached to the ropes that wind around near his shoulder blades. His head is bowed forward, but he is visibly blindfolded. When the door bangs open, the Captain shudders—he still lives, though he does not respond directly or speak during this scene.

Salieri is hardly patient with the squad, and he has a flair for drama. Once he shows them Fordham, he answers no further questions. If they choose not to ask about the Captain, after a few moments, he nods slightly, and explains that the time for him to answer questions has passed. It is now time for them to completely explain the situation to him.

It is entirely possible that some Player Characters panic over the course of the ensuing interview. If this is the case, their situation has scarcely changed from the previous scene. Both Salieri and Cauldwelle are capable combatants. An additional two Commissars (see page 374 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) and five Death Korps Guardsmen wait in the adjacent room. Outside, there are hundreds of additional Guardsmen. If a battle erupts, none of these NPCs attempt to preserve the Player Characters' lives. A combat encounter at this stage is likely to be brief and horrific, and all but the most oblivious of Player Characters can quickly see this reality.

INITIAL QUESTIONS

Salieri begins by asking them to recount the details of their arrival. He is well acquainted with the reports that have been filed, so he uses this story as a way to measure their honesty. Their approach to this initial question should be used to determine how easily he accepts their statements during the latter parts of the interrogation. If the Player Characters are



exceptionally cooperative, Salieri might even reward them for their sincere efforts by bringing in chairs for them to use during the remainder of the interview. Conversely, if they are clearly lying, he begins by executing an NPC member of the squad with a single shot from his quickly drawn bolt pistol. After the cold execution, with the body cooling in the room, the Lord Commissar explains that he would like them to start over, as "some of their points were unclear." The Commissar Lord maintains his cool throughout the interview, regardless of what they Player Characters say to him.

Once the Player Characters have recounted their arrival to Salieri's satisfaction, he next proceeds to ask them about their relationship with Captain Fordham. This should delve into their attitudes towards him, as well as how they suspected he felt towards them. He inquires about any actions that might have called Fordham's loyalty into question. He also asks them if they were aware of any rules violations that the captain might have committed within their view. If they offer specific incidents, he asks them to clarify, and also inquires as to when or if they reported the incident. If they made no reports, he inquires as to why they neglected the required reports. The GM should keep in mind that lho-sticks and amasec are contraband.

The Lord Commissar's questions about Captain Fordham are meant to serve as a test of the Player Characters' loyalty towards their former captain. Salieri hopes to determine whether they were loyal to him out of a misplaced sense of friendship, or if they were simply loyal to him in a way expected of any underling. Similarly, Salieri

THE HORN OF MARS

hopes that, through the course of these questions, he can determine whether or not they were sympathetic towards his cause. At the Game Master's discretion, Player Characters can make a **Challenging (+0) Scrutiny Test**. Those who succeed realise Salieri's goals in regards to this particular line of questioning. If they sincerely disliked or distrusted the Captain, they have no problems answering truthfully. Otherwise, Player Characters who succeed at an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Deceive Test** can selectively recount their relationship with the Captain in such a way as to strongly suggest that they did not care for him without betraying their true feelings about the matter, regardless of the truth.

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

Characters who are able to persuade the Lord Commissar that they were opposed to Fordham's actions receive the benefit of the doubt during the remainder of the interrogation. This has two functional effects. The first is that, when asking them questions, Salieri deliberately leads them towards the answers that he wishes to hear. He begins to assume that their actions, while wrong, took place because they adhered to treasonous orders. As long as they continue to impress the Lord Commissar in this fashion, he remains undecided as to their ultimate fate. Rather than issuing an immediate and brutal judgment, he remains willing to give them further consideration. If nothing else, he expects that they have further testimony to offer him regarding the activities of the Severan Dominate. The second effect is that the Player Characters receive a +10 bonus to all Interaction Skill Tests for the remainder of the interrogation.

Conversely, if the Player Characters are insistent in their loyalty to Fordham, and vouch for his good character, things are far more likely to go poorly for them. Salieri is surprised by their sincerity in the face of the authority that he wields. At the same time, he is horrified by the full extent of their treason. He realises that he must complete the questioning, as it is clear to him that the squad was far more deeply involved in the plots against the Imperium than he feared, and perhaps more so than they realised. In this situation, the Lord Commissar fears that the Player Characters' souls are already damned. He suspects that they have been honest in their answers, but he also looks for hidden meanings in every phrase, assuming that they were fully complicit in the plotting. In this situation, Salieri deliberately attempts to interpret their every word as having some tie to the secessionist cause. The Lord Commissar receives a +10 bonus to resist any Interaction Skills that the Player Characters use against him.

DELVING DEEPER

After the first round of questions, Salieri has already reached a preliminary judgment about the Player Characters. His greatest interest at this time is in discovering what else the squad knows. Some of that information, of course, pertains to the relative degrees of guilt of everyone else with whom the Player Characters have interacted. This includes everyone located at Hervara-XIX, but also extends far beyond the base's boundaries, to include anyone else on Hervara. Depending upon their

testimony, it might even include members of their regiment that they have not seen since they departed the decks of *Devout Triumph*. Ramifications of such a judgment could be significant for any friends who remain with the regiment, and for the overall Imperial effort on Hervara.

The other key type of data he seeks is related to information about Severan Dominate tactics and assets. The Lord Commissar is shrewd and confident in his ability to draw forth information, even from those who do not realise that they are surrendering it. As they recount their missions, he gathers whatever bits of intelligence he can in regards to the Severan Dominate's involvement in their activities. Knowing that essentially all of their assignments were undertaken with the knowledge of the secessionists, Salieri believes that specific directives can reveal at the larger goals of that organisation.

The remainder of the interview takes hours to complete. Game Masters can, at their discretion, choose to roleplay through this material, but some groups might find the discussions tedious. The Game Master must make a judgment call based upon the preferred play styles of the particular players. If the group enjoys tense verbal confrontations, then this scene provides an excellent opportunity to explore this side of roleplaying. In contrast, for groups who prefer to have the game focus on more active conflicts, he might wish to reduce the overall time involved in the interrogation, abstracting out much of the exacting process to return to the action more quickly. Ultimately, the Game Master should, as ever, try to create the most memorable and enjoyable experience for his unique group, whatever that might mean, even during a tense scene such as this.

In any case, the discussion should now move to focus on the missions that the Player Characters undertook since their arrival at Hervara-XIX. Salieri presents them with a copy of their original Mission Briefing (see **HV-2** through **HV-9** on pages 83–85) for each assignment in turn. Salieri has each Player Character—in turn—recount the story of one of their missions undertaken for Captain Fordham. During their summations, he asks them to clarify how they dealt with each of their primary and secondary objectives. Throughout, the Lord Commissar frequently asks whether specific decisions were made at their own initiative, or because of orders from Captain Fordham.

Characters giving their testimony make **Opposed Challenging (+0) Interaction Skill Tests** versus the Lord Commissar. Game Masters should select the appropriate Skill based upon how the Player Characters choose to spin their stories, and should feel free to grant bonuses or apply penalties based upon the relationship that they have built with Salieri, as well as the artistry of their storytelling. Achieving three or more Degrees of Success grants the characters a +10 bonus to any Tests recounting later missions. Conversely, three or more Degrees of Failure incurs a -10 penalty to the remaining Tests. Game Masters should keep track of the total Degrees of Success or Failure that the Player Characters achieve over the course of the interrogation.

Groups who wish to let the dice decide so that they can return to the action should have each Player Character make a single **Opposed Challenging (+0) Interaction Test** with the Interaction Skill of their choice against Lord Commissar Salieri. Each represents one Player Character recounting a mission to Salieri, but the players need not fill in details of how this occurs.

After all of the missions have been discussed, Salieri prepares to terminate the interrogation. To determine the final results of the discussion, tally up the total Degrees of Success and Failure across all of the Interaction Skill Tests. Then, consult **Table 3–2: Interrogation Results** on page 94.

PARTING WORDS

Depending upon the results of their discussion efforts, the outcomes from this scene vary substantially. Game Masters must take the squad's current disposition into account as the scenario moves to the next scene. The Player Characters should also realise that Salieri's favour is fickle. Even if they have managed to impress him up to this point, they should recognise that he might bring down the Emperor's judgment in an instant, if he has reason to suspect them of treason.

In any of these situations, the Lord Commissar's parting words to them at the conclusion of the interview should make that aspect clear. Unless he is forced to execute them, the Lord Commissar plans to have further words with them. Even under the best of circumstances, he intends to ask the squad a number of further questions before the investigation concludes.

KEY NPCs

The following NPCs present the direct opposition to the characters through the course of this scene's interrogation and beyond.

LORD COMMISSAR SALIERI

An officer once made the mistake of suggesting that the Lord Commissar lacked any human decency. Salieri immediately executed the man, claiming that accusing a member of the Commissariat of compassion was a clear sign of treason. On Hervara, Salieri has worked mercilessly to ferret out any signs of sympathy for the foe amongst the Imperial Guard. Countless stories have circulated about the hundreds of officers he has executed—numbers which have likely been inflated by rumour.

By all outward signs, the Lord Commissar is a steadfast loyalist who lacks any sense of humour or compassion. The tenets of the *Tactica Imperialis* and his faith in the God-Emperor are all he needs. He never cracks a smile during the interrogation, nor is he likely to offer sympathy. He seeks to harrow away all but the truth, so that justice can be served. See page 136 for Lord Commissar Salieri's full profile.

PRIMARIS PSYKER CAULDWELLE

A proud woman, Cauldwelle resents the fact that she must work with a man as blind to the world around him as Lord Commissar Salieri. Though she was assigned to Hervara with a number of other responsibilities, she feels that she has served as little more than his lapdog since he became familiar with her talents. Because of this, Cauldwelle strives to find

ways to prove the Commissar wrong. She revels (albeit subtly) in even his smallest mistakes.

She empathises with the fact that the squad is in a disastrous position that is not of their own creation. She also desperately wants them to be innocent, so that she can enjoy the vision of Salieri demonstrating mercy. While she cannot lie to protect them, she is willing to do what little she can to aid their efforts to escape immediate execution. Beyond that, she suspects that she has seen them in a vision previously, and that her own survival could well rest upon the Player Characters' subsequent actions. See page 137 for Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle's full profile.



THE HORN OF MARS



THE CURIOUS PSYKER

Throughout the questions that follow, Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle uses her abilities to discern the truth of all of the Player Characters' statements. Any time that she believes that they have told a lie (intentionally, as she can only detect whether or not the Player Characters believe themselves to be telling the truth), she alerts Salieri through the mental link that they currently share. However, Cauldwelle believes that it is beneath her abilities to use her powers in this fashion. She is well aware that the Lord Commissar scarcely needs her assistance to recognise the accuracy of anything a witness might state. She also feels that her rank entitles her to a greater degree of courtesy and respect from a member of the Commissariat. Because she is here against her will, she is reluctant to grant the Lord Commissar complete access to her considerable abilities.

Any time that one of the Player Characters commits a lie of omission, have that individual make a **Difficult (-10) Deceive Test** or a **Challenging (+0) Charm Test**. This is not an **Opposed Test**. If the Player Character succeeds, Cauldwelle chooses to let this slip past. If she fails, she indicates the lie to Salieri, so that he can ask additional questions. Ultimately, she is somewhat sympathetic to their situation, as she can relate to the position of feeling bullied by the imposing Lord Commissar.

TABLE 3-2: INTERROGATION RESULTS

Results	Consequences
5+ Degrees of Failure	The Lord Commissar prepares the treasonous swine for immediate execution. He summons the guards to bear witness as he draws his bolt pistol to perform the action personally.
4 Degrees of Failure	Salieri is horrified by the terrible acts that the squad has undertaken. He commands that they be imprisoned in complete isolation immediately, without food, water, or respirators.
3 Degrees of Failure	Salieri believes that they must be isolated to prevent spreading treason and places them in solitary confinement.
2 Degrees of Failure	The squad's testimony has convinced Salieri that they have strong sympathies for the Severan Dominate, and might be withholding additional information. He orders that they immediately perform twelve hours of menial labour under strict observation, prior to a confinement awaiting a more formal judgment.
1 Degree of Failure	It is clear to the Lord Commissar that the squad has been lying to him, but he is uncertain as to the full extent of the lies. He believes that time might loosen their tongues. They are assigned to hard labour prior to confinement.
1 Degree of Success	Salieri is unconvinced if the squad is sincere in their claims of manipulation. They are either fools or skilled liars. In either instance, he wishes to study them further once more critical matters are resolved. He has them tied up together and placed in the back of a Chimera Armoured Transport.
2 Degrees of Success	The squad's testimony has convinced the Lord Commissar that they are idiots, and he is not convinced of either their guilt or innocence. He has them imprisoned, under strict surveillance, within the barracks. However, he promises them that they might yet have a chance to repay their debt to the Emperor in with their blood holy toil, if the proper situation arises.
3-4 Degrees of Success	The Lord Commissar is confident that the Player Characters have made poor choices, but that they might yet offer significant intelligence, which could benefit the Imperial cause. He orders them confined to quarters.
5-6 Degrees of Success	Salieri believes the squad is a group of naive fools, who are likely incapable of committing serious crimes against the Imperium but might still cause considerable damage if allowed to fall into cunning hands once again. He suspects that much of their success is due to the Emperor's blessing. He confines them to quarters, but is willing to commit them to combat if necessary.
7-8 Degrees of Success	Their impassioned tale of woe has brought forth feelings of sympathy that have not existed within the Lord Commissar's hardened soul for countless years. He pardons the squad, and indicates that they should return to duty until he has further orders. He does, however, remand them strictly for their lapse in judgement, and urges them to cleave to the Emperor in the future.
9-10 Degrees of Success	The Lord Commissar is impressed by the degree to which the squad continued to exhibit their loyalty to the Imperium under even the most trying conditions. He issues them immediate field promotions, and informs them that they should assume formal command of their company, pending his orders for assignment.
11-14 Degrees of Success	Salieri is confident that the Player Characters are loyal to the Imperium, and that their reluctant work for Captain Fordham was actually a demonstration of their devotion to the Emperor. He offers to place their squad in charge of Hervara-XIX, and tasks them with the capture of the Ordinatus when the time arises.
15+ Degrees of Success	The Lord Commissar has concluded that the squad was only working with Captain Fordham to gather information about his schemes, possibly as part of an assignment to from the Inquisition or another Imperial organisation, or perhaps at their own impressive initiative. He offers them positions as part of his inner circle.

SAVED BY THE BOMB

"Time in lockup's pretty hideous, but it's still better than the front lines. It makes a great bomb shelter, if nothing else."

—Corporal Dwayne Biehn

As the scene opens, the Player Characters are leaving Captain Fordham's office, where Lord Commissar Salieri has seized control. Unless they were exceptionally persuasive during the interrogation, several members of the Death Korps of Krieg and a Commissar accompany them. These troopers are the guards escorting the squad to their imprisonment, until the Lord Commissar brings an end to his deliberations.

This scene begins in the moments just prior to their incarceration. Game Masters are encouraged to lead the Player Characters towards their fate, spelling out every detail, as a means to increase the tension. However, the GM should be aware that this also presents an opportunity and possible motive for the squad to do something suicidal, such as try to fight their way out of captivity. If they believe that they are about to be summarily executed, some Player Characters might choose to go down in a blaze of glory. The GM can introduce the following scene early, if necessary, to interrupt any excessively self-destructive plans.

After a few moments of travel towards the place of incarceration—the barracks, a Chimera, or shipping crates within one of the warehouses—the base's alarm sirens abruptly begin to blare. Soldiers begin to scramble to take up their designated posts. The Death Korps troopers, who had taken up security stances, hurry to resume their parade ground positions. The guards escorting the Player Characters pause for a moment of indecision, as they try to decide the best course of action. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The base's alarm system crackles to life, blaring sirens in the staccato fashion that warns an attack is imminent. An unknown force has launched an attack upon Hervara-XIX, a facility located kilometres from the front lines of the war effort. Everywhere, troopers drop what are been doing and scramble towards their duty stations, retrieving weapons and donning armour as they run. The door to Captain Fordham's office slams open, as Lord Commissar Salieri emerges to stand on the stoop and survey the depot. He pulls out a personal vox unit, and bellows over the base's system, Briefly replacing the blaring sirens with his echoing words.

"Watch towers have just identified a major xenos incursion. The enemy appears to have already bypassed the Drury-Cobhan Line, and is heading directly towards this facility en masse. These xenos forces include a significant number of surface vehicles. Artillery batteries and heavy weapons should prepare for immediate salvos. All other forces must assemble to repel the incoming assault."

The guards escorting you are torn in a moment of indecision as to whether they should continue leading your squad towards imprisonment as ordered, or if they should immediately move to repel the assault. Amidst the confusion, you cannot help but wonder if the collapse of the Drury-Cobhan Line was in part your doing.



Unless the Player Characters persuaded Salieri that they were completely innocent of any complicity in Fordham's actions, they are under guard. If the squad wishes to make a break for it, this is their best opportunity to do so. While they are no longer armed, all of the base's units are paying far less attention to them than they should be. This moment of indecision only lasts a few seconds. If the Player Characters wish to seize their chance, they must do so quickly.

The guards consist of a Commissar (see page 374 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) and four Death Korps Guardsmen (see page 129). If the Player Characters act at this time, their foes are Surprised for the first Round of any combat that ensues. They must then either seize weapons, or just run—the squad has not been physically restrained. Note that if they somehow obtain and begin to discharge weapons, they are certain to draw the attention of others within the base. The Player Characters must quickly subdue their opponents if they hope to make their escape. After two Rounds of conflict, though, the base's heavy weapons begin to fire, as do several Earthshaker Cannons. The cacophony of these batteries overwhelms any noise made by small arms fire or cries for help.

Alternatively, one or more of the Player Characters can try to persuade their guards to let them go. This requires an **Opposed Interaction Skill Test**, as appropriate to the strategy the acting player chooses to use. This Test should be made against the Commissar. The difficulty is proportionate to Lord Commissar Salieri's judgment upon them (see **Table 3-3: Guard Interaction Results**).



THE HORN OF MARS



If the Player Characters fail to persuade them, the guards decide that the best strategy is to just escort the Player Characters to their place of confinement before assuming their battle stations. If the Player Characters succeed, they tell the players to remain within the base, but leave them immediately. If they score three or more Degrees of Success, the Commissar decides that their assistance in the battle is more useful at this time. He tells them to assume their normal battlefield responsibilities, and that they will discuss imprisonment again after the battle.

If the Player Characters end up imprisoned, they are confined far less carefully than would normally be expected. Any ropes are tied hurriedly. Locks are imperfectly secured. Their guards are far more concerned about the current Ork assault than they are about imprisoning a group of potential war criminals. Escaping their confinement does not even require a Test—it is simply a matter of waiting until the guards leave, to assume their duties during the approaching battle.

At this point, the Player Characters might be torn on their next course of action. With an impending Ork assault and a full company of Imperial Guard predisposed to hate them, the squad might wish to flee Hervara-XIX. Alternatively, perhaps they feel a sense of duty and obligation to stop the xenos assault, or they might even feel a strong sense of loyalty to the Severan Dominate cause in general, or to Captain Fordham specifically. This scene attempts to address a variety of different options, but the Game Master might have to adapt sections as appropriate, based upon the actions of the Player Characters. He can use various NPCs to attempt to set them on track to capture the Ordinatus, as described below.

The squad can also choose to interact with a number of different characters at the depot—or they might be approached by those same characters. The different strategies of several important individuals follow. Note that almost everyone in the base observed the squad leave Captain Fordham's office under guard. If they are observed travelling freely throughout Hervara-XIX, it raises uncomfortable questions, and some individuals attempt to take them into custody.

CAPTAIN FORDHAM

Even if the Player Characters have persuaded Salieri of their innocence, access to Fordham (see page 133) is sharply restricted. Since the Lord Commissar's arrival, the Captain is universally regarded as a traitor. Even with the impending assault, Fordham remains imprisoned in a room near his office. A Death Korps Sergeant and two Korpsmen (see pages 129–130) are guarding him with weapons drawn. The Captain has been taken down from the door hook, but is tightly bound to a desk chair. The room they occupy is roughly a square, three metres on each side. Two of the walls face the building's exterior and have windows.

In order to make contact with the captain, the Player Characters must first return to the Captain's former office. The front door faces the parade ground, a highly conspicuous location for wanted criminals.

If the characters are

TABLE 3-3: GUARD INTERACTION MODIFIERS

Judgment	Difficulty Modifier
Solitary Confinement	–30
Hard Labour	–20
Imprisonment	–10
Confined to Quarters	+0

supposed to be imprisoned, travelling this route without someone stopping them requires success on an **Arduous (–40) Stealth Test**, though if the characters develop exceptional disguises, Game Masters are encouraged to be liberal with bonuses to the Test.

Alternatively, the Player Characters might try to enter through a window or service entrance. This approach requires an **Opposed Routine (+20) Stealth Test** against the Death Korps Sergeant to avoid detection.

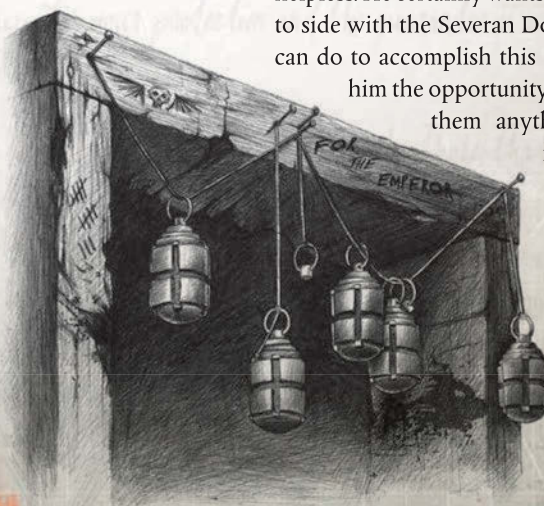
If they manage to enter the room without being detected, the characters have a single Round to act against the guards unchallenged, while their targets are still Unaware. Otherwise, combat most likely ensues, as the guards recognise the squad and are well aware that the Player Characters should not be in this location at this time. The only alternative would be if one or more of the squad members introduced a particularly compelling—and brief—explanation for their presence. The one edge that the Player Characters have in this situation is that any physical altercation is likely to go unnoticed. The sounds of heavy weapons and artillery fire are now booming constantly from the depot. Anything short of an explosion is likely to go unnoticed by those outside of the building.

Fordham's response to their arrival should be in line with to their previous relationship and their testimony to the Lord Commissar—as he dangled against the door, he heard every word of it. Consequently, he is completely aware of how they chose to display their loyalties when put to the question by Salieri. If the squad gave all appearances of betraying him, he suspects that they have come to assassinate him. Conversely, if they appeared to be loyal, he fully expects that they have come to his rescue. If they were conservative in their praises, and constantly hedged during the discussion, Captain Fordham is uncertain what to expect and wary of their presence.

If they want vengeance, at this point, there is little Fordham can do to defend himself. He is unarmed and functionally helpless. He certainly wants to stay alive, preferably by escaping to side with the Severan Dominate forces, but there is little he can do to accomplish this goal. If the Player Characters give him the opportunity to speak, he enthusiastically offers

them anything they might want in return for helping him to escape to the relative security of the secessionist forces. Of course, an **Easy (+30) Scrutiny Test** reveals that Fordham has no means to follow through on these promises.

The one thing that Fordham can realistically offer to the squad



is a fallback plan. His contacts within the Severan Dominate yet live. The former captain also still knows the vox frequencies, encryption codes, and passphrases to establish communication. Corporal Kousenk—or his replacement—can quickly respond to a distress call, though he cannot currently rally forces to come to the rescue. However, he can provide the Player Characters with directions to reach the nearest secessionist forces, so that they can join the battle in support of those units.

Note that if the Player Characters choose to ally with the traitors, Game Masters might need to revise the following scene as regards the approach towards the Ordinatus. While travelling through the tunnels is more direct, the resources available are likely to be substantially different. Suggestions regarding these necessary revisions are noted where appropriate.

TECH-PRIEST HEXON

Over the course of the adventure, the Player Characters are almost certain to have developed some sort of relationship with the base's Tech-Priest (see page 138 for Hexon's profile). As he is often required to assist them with the maintenance of any gear or vehicles, this relationship might have assumed an adversarial tone. Alternatively, if they have seen fit to provide him with interesting pieces of xenotech or archeotech—possibly including information regarding the Ordinatus—then he is actually in their debt. Note that this section presumes that Hexon and the Player Characters established a reasonably friendly relationship. If the Player Characters were consistently overtly hostile or insulting towards the Tech-Priest, he is unhappy to assist them at first, but can be persuaded to aid their cause.

The Player Characters can seek out Tech-Priest Hexon, or they might run across him in the midst of his own preparations to make his final peace with the Ommissiah. His reaction should be entirely proportionate to the degree of debt he feels towards the squad, but no matter the case, he is insistent that the Ordinatus, now in sight, will destroy the base and him along with it. Even fleeing cannot put him beyond its blast radius at this point, and so he stoically seeks to get things in order for the end.

Initially, the squad has little additional leverage in any discussion with Hexon. His ultimate goal is to flee Hervara, as he knows full well the power of the Ordinatus. When the Guardsmen arrive, however, either he or they might realise that if they can capture or destroy the ancient war machine, they can kill two birds with one stone—the squad can prove their loyalty, and also avoid being annihilated by the cataclysm unleashed by the Ordinatus. If they do not do so, he suggests a plan in which they capture the machine, and he offers his material assistance, as well as a description of its destructive capabilities. He estimates their chance of success to be minimal, but nonetheless throws his full support behind them unless he has come to believe that they are traitors and they cannot dissuade him of this view.

Depending on their regiment's preferred combat style, he can provide them with a vehicle that is well-suited to their needs. Alternatively, he might be able to grant them access to a specific piece of gear that he was in the process of repairing, if such an item is crucial to their plan. Any weapon procured from Hexon in this fashion suffers from the *Unreliable Quality*.

The other possibility is that the Player Characters could earn Hexon's ire for their crimes against the Imperium, or against him specifically. If he believes that they are

irredeemable foes of the Ommissiah's work, then he does not hesitate, venting his cold frustration at his imminent death upon the traitors before him. Rather than offering assistance, he summons all of the Servitors (see page 372 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) working in the Mechanised Command to assault the Player Characters. There are a total of 30 of the cybernetic creations actively in Hexon's service. At the Game Master's discretion, some of these mechanical terrors might even elect to use the heavy weapons mounted on the vehicles within the building.

If the Player Characters decide to undertake an attack on the Ordinatus, Tech-Priest Hexon is insistent that they try their utmost to capture it intact. If they promise to do their best in this regard, he offers his full support, though he does not accompany them on the mission, instead preparing his Servitors and equipment to receive the archeotech prize. If they ask about the wisdom of remaining in the base in case they fail, he notes with only the slightest hint of emotion that he cannot hope to outrun the destruction the device could unleash.

It might be appropriate for Tech-Priest Hexon to mention the debriefing that he conducted with the squad shortly after their arrival at Hervara-XIX. If they showed some understanding of the Ordinatus at that time, he is far more willing to accept their faith in it now. In contrast, if they were dismissive of the massive weapon, or simply demonstrated their complete lack of knowledge, he is more hesitant to accept that they have begun to understand its vast and majestic power. As a devout follower of the Ommissiah, the Tech-Priest expects the Player Characters to show him and his technology the utmost respect at all times.

Note that if the Player Characters are able to convince Hexon of their loyalty, it serves them well later in the scenario. An intervention on the Tech-Priest's part would enable them to survive the Lord Commissar's judgment at the conclusion of the adventure. Keep this scene in mind when determining if the Tech-Priest might choose to assist them later. If they have drawn his wrath or belittled him to this point, then that assistance is tremendously unlikely. However, if they have shown due deference towards the Machine God and the Tech-Priest, he speaks on their behalf so long as he is still alive and functional.

SUPPLY OFFICER VON MEERING

The Player Characters are likely to want to leave Hervara-XIX at this point. If that is their plan, then they almost certainly need to acquire additional wargear before their departure. If they were imprisoned, they probably lack even their basic Standard Regimental Guardsman Kit. Even if they managed to avoid confinement, it is likely that their basic equipment lacks a few items that could play a critical role in a successful escape. Key items might include a chameleoline cloak, photo visors, rations, or spare respirators.

Any of this equipment is readily available through the Quartermaster. The Hervara-XIX supply depot has a broad array of supplies, including many items that Captain Fordham never chose to share with the squad. Of course, to acquire any of it, the Player Characters need to either steal it or convince Supply Officer Von Meering (see page 138) that they deserve it.



BLAZE OF GLORY

It is certainly possible that some squads might decide that their fate has already been decided. Some groups who assume this attitude could choose to exit the scenario with a full frontal assault against their former allies. The exact strategy could vary, but the ultimate goal would be to destroy Hervara-XIX and as many of its inhabitants as possible. The methods might involve liberal use of explosives, the base's fuel reserves, ammunition dumps, or even tanks. Game Masters should consider using either Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle or Tech-Priest Hexon to intervene at this stage. Either of these characters could serve as a bridge to the later scenes involving the Ordinatus.

Ultimately, the Player Characters must decide their own fate. If they want to battle the other Imperial Guardsmen in the midst of an Ork assault, that is certainly one dramatic conclusion to the adventure. Of course, due to the overwhelming odds and the complete lack of any outside support, it is a doomed effort, and even the most bitterly stubborn Guardsmen should realise it. Whether they decide to fight on for spite's sake alone is their choice.



The simplest solution might be if the Player Characters were successful in their persuasive efforts towards Lord Commissar Salieri. In the event that he granted them field promotions of some sort, then they can requisition whatever gear they feel is appropriate for their task at hand. The conundrum here is that, if they were promoted, then they are much less likely to want to flee the supply depot. Of course, the free flow of gear might also be useful if the squad wishes to use it in the imminent battle with the Ork forces.

An alternative approach could be possible, if the squad has established a friendly relationship with Von Meering. Ultimately, she was every bit as duped by Fordham's treachery as the Player Characters. She firmly believed that his intentions were true to the Imperial cause, which is precisely why she continued to provide the appropriate gear to those undertaking missions that he had assigned. If they had previously returned equipment to her in good condition, or even acquired additional supplies for her stores, the Supply Officer is far more willing to put her faith in them. Any Opposed Interaction Skill Tests the group makes should receive a bonus (or penalty) that takes this working relationship into account.

If they are successful in their efforts to convince Von Meering of their innocence, she is willing to grant them the basic supplies they need. This can include essentially any weapons, wargear, and ammunition up to Scarce Availability. In addition, she can provide them with a fresh supply of any equipment that would normally be included in their Standard Regimental Guardsman Kit. With three or more Degrees of Success on their efforts, Von Meering concludes that the squad's actions are certainly for the wisest, and actually asks to join them. In this case, as long as they agree to let her accompany them, she provides them with any equipment up to Rare Availability which might be useful on the assignment.

Interacting with the Supply Officer also holds some risk. If they fail to convince her of their innocence—possibly due to a past hostilities—she refuses to provide them with equipment. With three or more Degrees of Failure, she even uses the communications system to notify everyone of their current location. Note that Von Meering does not try to put up a fight directly, however. She is well aware of the ammunition and explosives in her facility, and has no desire to start a fire fight inside a veritable powder keg.

One other possibility would be for the Player Characters to forge the appropriate paperwork to requisition the gear that they need. Note that Supply Officer Von Meering certainly recognises the characters on sight, and is aware of their current plight. Unless they use a disguise or have other assistance, bluffing their way past the Supply Officer is extremely difficult. Such an attempt at deception would certainly predispose Von Meering to distrust the squad.

Some Player Characters, due to interpersonal friction with Von Meering, or simply out of desperation, might attempt to break into one of the warehouses to secure supplies for their escape. This leads to a host of complications. The warehouse has only a single entrance. Entering requires an individual to walk within two metres of Von Meering's desk and then pass through a magnetically locked door. Making this trip without her noticing requires a significant distraction. The alternative would be to simply overpower the Supply Officer, which would assure unimpeded access to the warehouse.

Complicating matters, the warehouse is organised around a labyrinthine scheme of Von Meering's own invention. Unless some of the squad members have worked in the warehouse previously—possibly to earn the Supply Officer's favour, or as punishment—finding goods within the building is extremely difficult. Each time someone looks for a particular item, he must succeed on a **Punishing (–50) Awareness Test** in order to find it. Each Test requires thirty minutes to complete. With three or more Degrees of Success, the character actually stumbles across another item of interest in his search. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the character instead triggers a massive collapse within the warehouse, causing a squad of Death Korps of Krieg troopers (see pages 129–130), including a Sergeant, to investigate.

PRIMARIS PSYKER CAULDWELLE

Some squads might have picked up on the psyker's sympathetic nature during their interrogation. Others could be aware of a Primaris Psyker's direct connection with the Emperor, and see divine guidance as the surest path to salvation. This might be because they detected her desire to see the Lord Commissar proved wrong about them, due to failed attempts to interact with other NPCs at the base, or because they alienated many of those same NPCs earlier and hope that a new face might offer aid.

Alternatively, if the Player Characters are torn about what to do, Cauldwelle might even find them in their place of hiding and initiate a discussion. If necessary, she could even come to their rescue—either freeing them from a prison cell, or intervening with a set of guards. Ultimately, the psyker is very interested in speaking with the Player Characters. During her daily casting of the Emperor's Tarot, she had a vision of the squad. She had not realised the full significance of the reading until after the interrogation session began. That was when she realised that her divination had begun to edge towards fulfilment.

She has come to realise that the Player Characters are fated to play a critical role in the coming battle. Their part is so important that humanity's very survival upon Hervara hinges upon the decisions that they make. Without their assistance, all human life could be scourged from the planet by the explosive consequences of the Greenskins' tinkering with the deadly weapons platform that they found deep beneath the surface of Hervara. Cauldwelle's goal in seeking out the Player Characters is to motivate them to embrace this role. The enemy is approaching, and soon the battle will begin in earnest. She knows that if the characters flee or continue to suffer from indecision and inaction, they cannot possibly hope to succeed.

With these facts in mind, the psyker becomes the one character whom the squad need not convince to aid them. Simply put, she is not at all concerned with their past transgressions. She is well aware that the Ordinatus could destroy the Imperium's holdings on Hervara (herself and the Player Characters, regardless of their loyalties, included), and does not wish to let the xenos have their way. To aid them in their task, she is willing to go to extreme lengths. This could include freeing them from imprisonment, dismissing guards, and even helping them to obtain wargear.

However, Game Masters are discouraged from using Cauldwelle to overcome all of the squad's challenges. She is meant to aid them in their escape from Hervara-XIX, not to become the all-encompassing solution to be thrown at any problems they face. Ultimately, she is concerned with her own

survival as well. She realises that she needs to assist them to get the results she wants, but she also wishes to be able to deflect blame away from herself as she does so. The Primaris Psyker understands that, even if the Player Characters succeed, at some point Salieri is certain to conclude his investigation. If she is to be involved in that effort, she must have plausible deniability for any treasonous acts she commits in the process.

Similarly, if the Player Characters are aggressive towards her, she does respond in kind. Though she tries not to kill any of them, she is not willing to let them victimise her. She believes it is her duty to assist them, but she sees that assistance as also being a necessity for her own survival. Summoning Guardsmen or even a Commissar is a measure of last resort. Cauldwelle would much prefer to use her own abilities to overcome the necessary threats.

Through the course of any discussion, the psyker explains to the squad that they are fated to recover the cursed weapon of Hervara, the Ordinatus, from the enemies of the Imperium. She believes that the most viable tactic is for them to use the tunnels beneath. She even implies that this destiny is the reason that they endured so many missions travelling beneath Hervara's surface. The God-Emperor has prepared them for this task, so that they can defeat the xenos with this ancient symbol of his divine majesty. Her own faith in this prophecy is perhaps not as absolute as she implies, but she believes that it is the best way to motivate the squad to do what is necessary.

To expedite their journey, Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle can see to it that they have clear passage to the tunnel network, using the entry way attached to Hervara-XIX. Her authority is unquestioned by any of the other bases officers, save the Lord Commissar. In essence, she is the second highest ranking person at the supply depot, and her unique appearance assures that everyone recognises her. With little more than a glare from the psyker, the Player Characters can safely begin their journey with a reasonable load of equipment, without having to fear about sneaking through the base as they carry their bulky gear. Alternatively, if the Player Characters prefer to use a vehicle, she can provide them with access to a Chimera Armoured Transport. In this instance, Cauldwelle warns the squad that her vision included them travelling through tunnels to reach the Ordinatus. She fears that if they use a vehicle to reach the target, it might cause them to fail in their mission.

LORD COMMISSAR SALIERI

While some squads might be terrified of the Lord Commissar, others might choose to deliberately seek him out at this point. Some individuals might wish to seek vengeance against the Lord Commissar. This could be due to the punishment only just meted out, whether it was just or not. Others might believe that they can persuade him of their innocence through glorious service in the upcoming battle—service that might need to be undertaken within his line of sight if it is to be effective. A few might even have questions for Salieri, or decide that the middle of a major battle is the ideal time to negotiate with him.

Unless the Player Characters have been inducted into Salieri's inner circle, he has little time to address them—regardless of their relationship. At the moment, the Lord Commissar is attempting to coordinate an Imperial Guard defensive action

against an overwhelming number of Orks. Death Korps Guardsmen, Lieutenants (see pages 129–130), and even a few other Commissars (see page 374 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) are constantly meeting with Salieri. As he has not yet had time to appoint a formal commander, he is the most senior Imperial representative on the battlefield.

If the Player Characters are escaped criminals, trying to set up a private meeting with the Lord Commissar is a considerable—though not necessarily insurmountable—challenge. This situation is ultimately dependent upon what scheme the squad might choose to employ. If they have a plausible method to isolate Salieri from his guards and assistants, then it is perfectly reasonable for them to arrange a meeting in relative isolation. However, this should not be easy. As the conflict intensifies and the Ork army continues to advance upon the supply depot, the other officers and members of the Commissariat expect to be in constant communication with their leader.

If Salieri is out of contact with all of his assistants for more than a few minutes, a general call goes out that he is missing. In short order, any soldiers who are not engaged in suppressing the Ork advance immediately begin a manhunt to find the Lord Commissar. If the squad is holding him hostage, or even just attempting to have a brief discussion, the searchers are likely to present a substantial complication. As soon as one of the soldiers spots Salieri, he lets out a cry that the Lord Commissar has been found. If the Player Characters are recognizable, the soldier also calls out for reinforcements prior to opening fire.

In short order, this could lead to a situation where the squad is confronted by dozens of Imperial Guardsmen. Unless Salieri has some reason to call them off, the Player Characters are soon disastrously outnumbered. In the event that one of the squad members attempts to use Salieri's life as a bargaining chip for an escape, the Lord Commissar readily tells Death Korps Guardsmen to fire at the squad, regardless of personal risk.

In spite of the substantial risks to such a conversation, there is the potential for tremendous rewards as well. Salieri currently controls access to all of the supply depot's substantial assets. He is also preparing to command a major engagement with an encroaching Ork force, leaving him to ultimately decide upon the tactics used in that engagement. If the Player Characters can somehow persuade the Lord Commissar to assist them directly, their assignment is simpler. He is capable of providing them with any equipment or vehicles that they might need on their journey. Further, he could alter his tactics in such a way that particular routes through the Ork army might be better defended, possibly enabling the squad to travel across Hervara in relative safety.

If Salieri has any reason to believe that the Player Characters are criminals, his objective is to insure their immediate deaths. If the squad has already escaped the imprisonment that he ordered, they suffer an initial –40 Penalty to any Interaction Skill Tests against the Lord Commissar. At this point, he considers their escape as additional damning evidence of their treason. If the Player Characters hope to persuade him of their intentions, they need to provide some truly impressive evidence. Even Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle's testimony of their destiny is unlikely to be enough to offset Salieri's intrinsic bias. While he is willing to sacrifice their lives on an impossible mission, such as attempting to recover the Ordinatus, he would never entrust such a vital task to proven traitors.

The Lord Commissar also provides one other avenue of escape, though not in a direct manner. After a period of service with the Elysian 13th, the "Helldivers," he has taken to requisitioning Tauros Assault vehicles when possible, and sometimes even convinces adepts of the Machine Cult to up-gun his personal transports. The Tauros (see page 139) he managed to secure for the Hervara campaign, a vehicle formally dubbed "The Emperor's Pious Retributor" but quietly called "Drive Me Closer!" by guardsmen around the base, sits idle as he attempts to bring the chaotic situation to heel. Even if the Player Characters have earned his respect, he is unlikely to entrust them with this vehicle that he worked so hard to obtain. Of course, there are always other means of securing this nimble escape vehicle, especially in the confusion as the Orks attack.

CORPORAL KOUSENK

Over the course of their time on Hervara, the squad has endured miserable conditions, and most likely fought heroically in the service of the God-Emperor. At this point, it might seem that their ultimate reward could be torture and death for suspicion of treason. That could be enough to test anyone's faith. As such, they might be interested in turning away from the harsh path of loyalty, and embracing the secessionist cause.

Of course, some Player Characters might be fanatically devoted to the Imperial Creed. They could see the Lord Commissar's judgment as a test of their faith, mediated by the God-Emperor. If this is the case, they might continue to seek some means to prove their innocence and loyalty.

Corporal Kousenk could represent a solution to either one of these approaches. The traitorous Hervaran native is intimately familiar with the Severan Dominate cause, as well as the squad's previous actions. If they can track him down, then he can certainly be persuaded to help them in joining with the secessionist forces. Alternatively, through a bit of deception, they might be able to imprison the rebel. A thorough interrogation of the spy could provide critical evidence of their innocence, even to Lord Commissar Salieri. In either instance, the first critical step towards success would be to find their former ally.

A discussion with Captain Fordham provides the most direct path to contacting the Corporal. As mentioned previously, Fordham still knows enough about Severan Dominate security protocols so that he could establish contact with the secessionists. Throughout their previous missions, the Captain was invariably the person who set up contact with the Corporal. Of course, meeting with their former commanding officer is a rather challenging task. Further, just as he has resisted interrogation at Salieri's hand, he is also likely to resist condemning an ally to die. If Fordham believes that the Player Characters are seeking Kousenk to use him solely to prove their innocence, he refuses to cooperate.

Some groups might have previously established a back-up means of communicating with the Corporal. This could be an unusual vox frequency and encryption code, but it might also be a particular location within the planet's caverns. A few groups might even have taken the time to learn where the corporal normally dwells, when not assisting them on an assignment. In any of these instances, the characters certainly have a ready means to re-establish contact with Kousenk.

Other groups might rely upon investigative work (remember that Salieri threw away all of Fordham's records), discussions with

Hervara-XIX's communications officers, or psychic abilities to track down the corporal. None of these approaches should be easy, but any might succeed with a solid plan and careful execution. If the squad believes that contacting Kousenk is essential for their ultimate success, then Game Masters are encouraged to be accommodating in their efforts. In any case, the Corporal is not willing to enter Hervara-XIX, but the Player Characters can make direct contact with him by travelling into the tunnels.

Once contact is made, Corporal Kousenk's level of cooperation should be proportionate to their prior interactions. If the Player Characters were kind to him and sympathetic to his world's suffering, he is far more likely to aid them. Other squads might have constantly looked down upon him and belittled him, for his world's treachery and his role as a mere liaison to the Imperial Guard. In this instance, Kousenk is suspicious of their sudden approach, and unwilling to offer assistance. For the Player Characters to either threaten or persuade him to assist them requires an **Opposed Hard (-20) Interaction Skill Test** with an appropriate Skill and bonuses or penalties at the GM's discretion based on the nature of their relationship with the Corporal.

If the characters can persuade Corporal Kousenk that they wish to pledge their loyalty to the Severan Dominate, he is their best route to contact that faction. More information about joining the secessionist forces is presented later in the scenario (see page 116). Note that Kousenk is well aware of the Ordinatus moving towards the supply depot. He can also inform the Player Characters that secessionist forces are moving to capture it from the Orks. He knows that the squad has become familiar with the ancient device, and would certainly encourage them to go assist the rebels in capturing it. He is even willing to guide them on the fastest route through the tunnels to reach the massive weapon.

TAKING CONTROL

"There comes a time when faith is not enough. A man must take action in support of his beliefs, even in the face of overwhelming opposition."

—Ducal Legate Neville Godfrey

This scene presents the characters' journey to reach the Ordinatus and seize control of the archeotech weapon. If they did not discover its presence through discussions with characters in the previous scene, they find out about it at this time. Of course, in light of this new information, some squads might choose to initiate discussions with characters that they bypassed in the prior scene. The degree of complexity should be based on the squad's present location and earlier decisions.

Reaching the Ordinatus is made more challenging by the large Ork and Severan Dominate forces that have engaged the Imperial Guard. The line of battle between these three armies extends for more than ten kilometres (see **Map of the Forces on Hervara** on page 120). Unless the Player Characters have somehow managed to learn the disposition of all of the forces involved in the conflict, traversing the distance to reach the Ordinatus is a daunting task.

Upon their arrival, they must contend with Severan Dominate troops, in addition to Big Mek Noshdakka and the Greenskins that currently control the massive device.



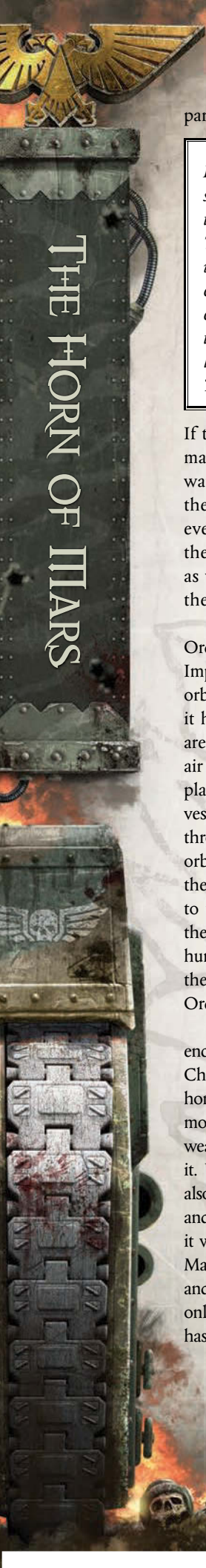
Depending upon their current allegiance, this could represent a nearly overwhelming force, or it could simply be a complex problem to address. In addition, a nearby force of Tallarn Desert Raiders could factor into the conflict. Once more, the squad's devotion (or lack thereof) might lead these other Imperial Guardsmen to offer assistance, or to present additional opposition.

IN THE OPEN

Even if Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle informed them of the Ordinatus' role in her divinations or Tech-Priest Hexon told them of its presence on the battlefield, the Player Characters now have an opportunity to confirm these reports. The subsection also offers some preliminary information addressing how they can approach the Ordinatus. If the Player Characters have already observed the massive approaching weapon, then Game Masters can choose to bypass the introduction.

The first sighting occurs before the Player Characters have an opportunity to depart Hervara-XIX. It should occur roughly an hour after the first signs of the xenos assault. The intervening time offers the squad a chance to speak with key NPCs, and to gather whatever gear they might need in order to leave the base. All of the Player Characters have seen the Ordinatus previously, as the Orks were refitting the machine, so they should have some notion of its scale and grandeur. Of course, having seen it prior to refurbishment is scarcely the same as seeing the massive machine approaching them, preparing to fire.





When the time arrives for its first appearance, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

For an instant, every weapon and voice in the supply depot falls silent. The munitions of the xenos forces continue to rain in, but the Imperial forces seem unable to muster any sort of response. Taking a moment to look towards the battle lines, you begin to understand why. The enormous tower of the Ordinatus has just crested the horizon. Its oversized, dish-shaped main weapon is clearly directed towards the supply depot. If that cannon fires, the entire complex is doomed. The instant passes when the loudspeakers crackle to life with Lord Commissar Salieri's voice: "All guns, resume firing. Suppress the foul xenos advance!"

If the Player Characters have access to some sort of vision magnification and sufficient height—such as one of the watchtowers—they can take their first detailed look at the functioning Ordinatus. Without vision magnification, even the massive tower is not easy to make out through the planet's smog. A moment of silence spills over the base as word of the distant dot's true identity spreads through the ranks of Imperial Guardsmen at the depot.

In a much larger engagement, the effectiveness of an Ordinatus might be at least partly compromised because of Imperial Titans and airborne vehicles. In extreme cases, an orbital bombardment could disable such a weapon before it had an opportunity to fire. However, none of these assets are available to the Imperial forces on Hervara. The Ork air superiority prevents any Imperial Titans from making planetfall, and keeps the skies free of Imperial aircraft. The vessels of the Imperial Navy have been unable to break through the Greenskin armada that surrounds the planet, so orbital bombardment is not an option, either. At the moment, the Imperial forces simply lack any proportionate response to the ancient weapon. The Orks have successfully repaired the Ordinatus, and so they can use it to freely devastate the human forces in its utterly vast firing arc. The only attack that the Imperial Guard can launch is one that seeks to disable the Ordinatus from the only place it is vulnerable—from within.

No Tests are required to realise the enormity of the encroaching weapon, or the threat that it represents. The Player Characters can simultaneously appreciate its grandeur and the horror that it threatens to unleash. Recognition of its scale is more than enough for them to know that their conventional weapons are simply too small to have a meaningful effect against it. Unless they have a means to flee off-world—which would also require a way to bypass the squadrons of Ork Bombers and the orbiting voidcraft—they cannot escape the devastation it would inflict. Whether they remain loyal to the Imperium of Mankind or wish to defect to the Severan Dominate, their allies and contacts everywhere should make it clear to them that the only path to survival is to seize control of the weapon before it has an opportunity to unleash its fury across the field of battle.

LEAVING THE DEPOT

Whether the squad accepts the mission to capture the machine, or simply seeks to escape its line of fire, they must first leave Hervara-XIX. Short of

blowing a hole in the base's plascrete walls, this requires them to either exit through the planet's tunnel network on foot, or pass through one of the depot's gates. All of these routes are currently secured, though the guards are certainly more focused on the approaching xenos than they are on securing the portals from threats already within the depot.

See **About the Base** on page 44 for a description of Hervara-XIX's gates, ramps, and associated armaments. Unless the squad has substantially delayed their departure, they should have adequate time to leave via the main gateways long before the Ork horde is within range of basic weapons. During this time, many of the supply depot's vehicles have departed the facility, so that they can deploy to positions where they can better harry the Greenskin advance. It is not at all difficult for the Player Characters to blend in with the other departing vehicles, if they have already obtained one. In fact, their presence is unlikely to be noticed unless they do something particularly egregious—for example, opening fire as they leave, crashing into another vehicle, or abruptly breaking formation to drive far from the battlefront.

Exiting the depot on foot is far more obvious. All of the Death Korps forces are fully committed to manning Hervara-XIX's walls. Some are manning artillery weapons, while others work the heavy weapons in the watchtowers, as well as those that have been hastily deployed to the walls or near the access gates. There is little effective cover for massed infantry in the surrounding terrain. Because of this, Salieri has chosen to keep all of his infantry stationed within the base. If the Player Characters attempt to exit the facility on foot, Guardsmen stationed near the gates are certain to notice, assuming that the squad is supposed to be imprisoned at this time.

Even if the squad bluffs its way past those individuals, others stationed atop the walls are certain to notice their exit. Without a vehicle, the squad is unlikely to travel out of weapons range before someone takes a specific interest in their retreat. If the Player Characters plan to use this escape route, Game Masters are encouraged to remind them of the organisation of the camp's lengthy ramps, and the relative range of the many autocannons currently firing from atop the wall.

The tunnels that depart the base certainly represent the safest route of escape. There are only two Guardsmen—both Luggnum Sewer Rats (see page 128)—stationed at the entryway to the tunnels. At the beginning of the engagement, Salieri is not even aware that this portal exists, so he has not chosen to reinforce those guards. The Player Characters can either overpower these defenders or rely upon their Interaction Skills to negotiate this encounter. In either case, the guards' responses should be proportionate to the Player Characters' scheme. If the squad are recognised as traitors, then the guards are certain to attempt to stop them, and to call out for assistance. This initial response is certain to be mitigated if the Player Characters rely upon stealth, or if they were widely considered heroes prior to Salieri's arrival.

The difficulties that the group encounters during their journey are directly dependant on their destination and the route chosen. Travelling towards the Ordinatus above ground is virtually suicidal, as there is a massive Ork army directly in their way. The most likely ways to make this approach feasible are through creating a distraction or by sweeping wide to move around the oncoming xenos prior to moving in towards the ancient weapon.

Unfortunately, such distractions are inherently unreliable. The characters must make a **Hard (-20) Stealth Test** to avoid inadvertently drawing the attention of Ork Speed Freeks from the horde's perimeter. If they fail, a group of three Ork Warbuggies (see **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook page 370) close to attack the squad. Even if the Player Characters overcome the initial threat, the sound of combat is very likely to draw other Ork forces. The squad must decide how best to deal with the arrival of additional elements.

Sweeping wide around the Ork force requires the squad to eventually pass through the Drury-Cobhan Line at a bunker which can accommodate their transport vehicle. While some vehicles might be able to blast their way through the physical wall, this still leaves the mine field and tank traps on the hostile side of the line. Travelling to the nearest safe transit point adds enough travel time to their route that they would arrive at the Ordinatus after it had already fired a first salvo, which anyone can determine with an **Easy (+30) Logic Test**. In order to arrive on time, the squad must find some way to shorten their trip.

A trip through Hervara's cave network, is the most likely way to reach the Ordinatus before it fires upon the area containing the supply depot unless they can procure a fast vehicle. The caves are actually only sparsely populated at this time, as most of the conflict is taking place above ground. As long as they used the tunnels for at least two of their previous missions, they are able to quickly decipher the appropriate routes to bypass the Ork forces with a **Routine (+20) Navigate (Surface) Test**. Any encounters with xenos forces at this time are completely subject to the Game Master's discretion based on the results of this Test, but unless they fail by more than three or more Degrees of Failure, most of the remaining defenders should be packs of Gretchin stragglers or sentries (see page 366 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). The Orks are ignoring the tunnels because they wanted a large-scale direct conflict, which was only available on the planet's surface.

There are no Imperial forces within the cave tunnels, presuming that the squad takes the most direct route towards the Ordinatus. Those who would have been stationed nearest the depot have been recalled to surface duty. Those who were defending the Drury-Cobhan Line died during the earlier stages of the Ork assault. This leaves the Player Characters with a relatively undefended route to the Ordinatus—one which permits them to reach the massive weapon long before it has a chance to fire.

NEGOTIATIONS

On the way to the Ordinatus, there are three groups of potential allies that the Player Characters might encounter. Depending upon their route, refer to **Map of the Forces on Hervara** on page 120 for the precise locations of the different groups. Each of these forces could have different motivations to assist (or

attack) the squad. The group might also decide to bypass these potential assets, and instead just commit the entirety of their effort toward reaching the Ordinatus with all possible haste.

This section addresses the different groups, and offers some explanation of what assets they might be able to offer the Player Characters. It also discusses the different motivations the squad might use to garner their assistance. Alternatively, a few potential complications are mentioned, in case the discussions go particularly badly. Note that any complications might lead to delays, preventing the Player Characters from reaching the Ordinatus in time. As such, the Game Master might want to be conservative in the number of additional difficulties that he introduces at this juncture.

SEVERAN DOMINATE

A Severan Dominate squad is also travelling through the tunnels towards the Ordinatus. Their intent is to capture the device so that they can use it against both the Orks and the Imperial Guard.



Unless the Player Characters have already established contact with him, Corporal Kousenk is scouting ahead for this group, choosing a route through the tunnels to the weapon. If he survived the events of **Chapter I: Planetfall**, Lieutenant Avery Fitzsimmons (see page 135) is leading the secessionist unit. If neither of those characters is available, substitute a Hervara Excavatory Warriors Soldier and Lieutenant (see pages 124–125). The remainder of the force includes a Ducal Legate (see page 126) and eight additional Hervara Excavatory Warriors Soldiers.

The natives are not at all interested in fighting with the Player Characters. They are utterly focused on reaching the Ordinatus as quickly as possible. If the squad assaults the rebels, the secessionists return fire as they attempt to flee. One of the members uses a demolition charge in an effort to collapse the tunnel, separating them from the Player Characters. In addition to the Damage the charge causes, it also triggers a collapse. Any characters who are within range of the blast must make a **Challenging (+0) Acrobatics Test**. Any characters who fail suffer an additional 1d10 Impact Damage (not reduced by Armour or Toughness Bonus) from falling rocks, as the cave collapses. The collapse also requires the Player Characters to take an alternative route to the Ordinatus, which requires a **Difficult (–10) Navigate (Surface) Test**. On failure, the alternate route causes them to reach the Ordinatus after the Severan Dominate squad has already engaged the Orks (see **The Assault**, page 105).

If the Player Characters instead approach the secessionists with at least the illusion of peaceful intentions, they are more receptive to discussion. If Corporal Kousenk is with the group, he reacts to any discussion in a manner consistent with their past interactions. As long as they worked together effectively, he encourages the Lieutenant to cooperate with the squad. If Lt. Fitzsimmons leads the forces, he recalls any previous dealings with the Player Characters, which also colour his outlook.

Through the course of any resulting discussions, the secessionists admit that they are moving to seize control of the Ordinatus from the Ork forces. Their intelligence suggests that the weapon is only lightly defended—few Orks were willing to remain far behind the front lines to defend it. If they can overpower those few xenos, the Lieutenant believes that they can fire the weapon to eliminate the Ork army as well as most of the Imperial Guard forces with a single blast. He also explains that a significant Severan force is currently flanking the Orks on the surface, so that the xenos are better drawn into line with the cannon's blast.

Depending upon their current allegiance, this might excite or horrify the Player Characters. An **Easy (+20) Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) Test** reveals that if the weapon could target both the Orks and the Imperial Guard, it could instead be shifted to devastate the Ork and Severan Dominate forces. Regardless of their allegiance, one of these possibilities is likely of tremendous interest to the squad.

Convincing Lt. Fitzsimmons and the Ducal Legate of their sincerity requires an **Opposed Challenging (+0) Interaction Skill Test**. The relevant Skill should be dependent upon the tactics that the Player Characters use in the discussion, and the GM should apply modifiers to this Test based upon any previous

interaction with the Lieutenant, as well as the influence of Corporal Kousenk. If the Player Characters succeed in negotiations, the secessionists agree to work with them, at least until the time comes to fire the weapon. If they fail, the natives refuse to work directly with the squad, though they do not oppose them at this time, instead following in their wake to capitalise on the chaos they create in their assault. If they fail by three or more Degrees of Failure, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors decide that they are too great a threat to allow to live, and attempt to collapse the tunnel on the Player Characters and depart to capture the Ordinatus, as described previously.

TALLARN DESERT RAIDERS

If the Player Characters choose to travel across the Ash Wastes, they encounter a small, company-sized group hailing from the Tallarn 35th. At the Game Master's discretion, a squad of these soldiers might also be exploring the tunnels beneath Hervara's surface. The unit is currently harrying the flank of the Ork army. These forces are not well equipped for an extended engagement against the Orks, as they lack any meaningful cover or heavily armoured vehicles. If the Player Characters encounter them on the surface, the group consists of roughly eighty Tallarn Imperial Guardsmen (see page 131). These are broken down into ten man squads. Each squad includes a Sergeant (see page 131), as well as a Missile Launcher team and a Plasma Gunner. An additional twenty Tallarn Rough Riders are mounted on Mukaali (see page 132). There are also nine Sentinel Scout Walkers (see page 219 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook), piloted by Tallarn operators. Note that neither of these mounts are present for subterranean encounters with the Tallarn. A Tallarn Lieutenant (see page 131) and three Commissars (see **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook page 374) lead the battle group.

The overall status of these Imperial Guard forces should be dependent upon the degree of success the Player Characters had when they assaulted Hervara-XV (see **Across the Line** on page 76). If the Player Characters destroyed that location during **Chapter II: The Night Path**, then the Tallarns are poorly equipped, low on rations, injured, and desperately in need of rest. If the depot survived its attack, then the Desert Raiders are still dishevelled from their time in the field, but they possess adequate supplies to continue pressing the attack against the Orks.

The Tallarns recognise the Player Characters from their regimental uniforms, but have little reason to know them beyond that. Operating independently, they have heard nothing of Salieri's seizure of Hervara-XIX. While they saw the tower of the Ordinatus, none of the members of their force recognised its significance, simply assuming that it is an Ork weapon that must be destroyed.

If the Player Characters attempt to garner assistance from the Tallarns, Game Masters must use their discretion to establish the overall difficulty of the task. These soldiers are hardened, but potentially still irate about the loss of their depot. If the Player Characters should somehow admit to having destroyed that location, a significant penalty should be imposed for any Interaction Skill Tests. Otherwise, the forces are already engaging the Orks, and are certainly willing to adjust their tactics if it increases the likelihood of overall success.

DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG

Death Korps of Krieg forces represent the largest mass of Imperial troops within range of the current battle. These forces are largely composed of two groups. The first are those troopers continuing to fight at the Drury-Cobhan Line. This represents hundreds of Guardsmen, as reinforcements are shuttled from other sections of the Line to assist in the conflict. There is also a battalion sized force of Death Korps nearby, stationed at a relatively close Imperial Guard field command element. This group moves to engage some of the xenos units after they spill around Hervara-XIX.

Unlike the other groups the squad might encounter, the Death Korps forces are well aware of the charges that Lord Commissar Salieri brought against Captain Fordham and his associates. Prior to taking action against the depot, the Lord Commissar circulated images of the Captain and his most likely associates, including the Player Characters, to all of the bunkers on the Drury-Cobhan Line, and to the Death Korps command elements. As a consequence, if the squad attempts to solicit any of these units for help, they are most likely to be detained under suspicion of treason, rather than receive the assistance they so desperately require.

The most likely way to avoid this is by being straightforward in any ensuing discussion. By this point, the Ordinatus is most likely visible as a slowly moving, bright red mountain on the horizon. If the squad explains that their current mission is to seize control of the massive weapon before it can be turned against the Imperial forces, they should receive a significant bonus to any Interaction Skill Tests. Of course, if they have somehow secured some proof of their innocence from Lord Commissar Salieri (or a convincing forgery thereof), they are far more likely to receive cooperation without incident.

In spite of their larger numbers, the Death Korps actually have some of the most limited assets available. All of their units are either engaging the enemy, or preparing to engage the enemy. There are not any units available that might be safely reassigned to assist them. If the Player Characters make a convincing argument, the Death Korps commanders might

be able to adjust their tactics slightly, to try to provide a better travel route for the Player Characters. Any other assistance is subject to the Game Master's discretion.

THE ASSAULT

After the squad has assembled any available allies and completed their journey around the front lines, they eventually reach the Ordinatus. At this point, they need to determine their final plan for attempting to seize the vehicle, and execute that plan. If the Player Characters came into conflict with the Severan Dominate squad, that unit is already engaged with the Orks, potentially limiting any opportunity for surprise. This section presents the enormous weapon's close-in defences, as well as the number and disposition of xenos units manning it.

Big Mek Noshdakka (see page 107) did not have adequate time to complete all of his planned modifications to the Ordinatus. While it is mobile, its speed and durability are far from that of a machine that had undergone full repairs at the hands of fully qualified members of the Centurio Ordinatus. Currently, it is only capable of moving at a speed of roughly five kilometres per hour. The tracks have been hastily reassembled, and it is clear that some of the plates have been replaced with scrap metal. Some of the links bear the signs of slipshod welding. While this is not the only reason for its ponderous pace, the tracks would completely give out if anyone attempted to accelerate the vehicle too violently. Miraculously, at Noshdakka's strict command, the Orks have refrained from doing so thus far.

The main weapon on the Ordinatus—its sonic disruptor—is not turret mounted. This is at least partly due to the enormous scale of the earth-shattering weapon. Because of this limitation, the entire vehicle must be brought to bear upon any target prior to firing. Given its extremely slow movement rate and massive scale, this is a time consuming endeavour. Further, the vehicle must come to a full stop prior to firing the cannon, as otherwise the huge vibrations it induces might shake the structure apart.

Another key failure in the vehicle's retrofitting is the work that Noshdakka and his underlings performed upon its secondary, defensive weapons. In keeping with typical



Orky design philosophy, his plan was to litter the exterior of the enormous vehicle with (at least) hundreds of weapons, ranging in size from pistols to battle cannons. Due to time constraints, however, few of these weapons were ever installed and none were prepared for use. The only close defences that the massive vehicle possesses are those carried by its crew.

This is because the amount of time required to get the main drive and primary weapon working—to the limited extent that they do function—completely exhausted any patience that Boss Garbark might have once possessed. When he demanded a display of the restored device and its power, Big Mek Noshdakka made the mistake of demonstrating that the structure was capable of moving. Within moments of that realisation, the Boss commanded an attack be launched against the human forces. At that point, there was no dissuading the massive Ork from his decision. The attack was launched in short order, targeting the weaknesses that the xenos had recently discovered in the human defensive structures.

For the purposes of this scenario, no game statistics are provided for the Ordinatus or its main weapon. Attempts to penetrate its armour directly with anything short of the main cannon of a super-heavy tank such as a Baneblade is a fruitless gesture. There is also nothing on this world capable of resisting its main weapon, and even an armoured bunker would simply be brushed by its thunderous call. Almost anything that comes in its path is utterly annihilated—with a few notable exceptions, presented in the following scene.

The ancient machine does have two significant points of vulnerability. The first is its tracks. As previously noted, they have been assembled from scrap materials in a ramshackle fashion, which is poorly suited to accommodating the vehicle's size and weight. If the Player Characters detonate two or more demolition charges on any track linkage, that linkage is immediately destroyed. The loss of a single track reduces the vehicle's speed to one kilometre per hour. The loss of two completely immobilises it, which also prevents the main weapon from being aimed. No Test is required to successfully place these charges—the tracks are simply that decrepit.

The second vulnerable point is the superstructure that supports the enormous sonic disruptor. If the characters wish to completely disable the main weapon, it is immediately apparent that the structure is its most fragile point. Destroying it requires the placement of at least three demolition charges or melta bombs. Accurate placement requires success on a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**. On success, the entire superstructure collapses, effectively destroying the sonic disruptor. On failure, the charges were imperfectly placed, and the structure was left functionally intact.



Complicating any efforts to sabotage or compromise the vehicle are Big Mek Noshdakka and his entourage. These Greenskins are primarily at the Ordinatus to crew the enormous vehicle. The Orks are obsessed with the weapon, and fight fiercely to protect it. The entourage includes ten Loota Boyz and fifty Gretchin (see page 140 of this volume and page 366 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook), and the Big Mek himself (see page 143).

Five of the Loota Boyz and ten of the Gretchin are currently stationed within the vehicle's cockpit area, which is located over its most forward set of tracks. The vehicle's windows are made of a specially constructed, reinforced armour-glas, which provides 35 points of Armour against any efforts to fire through it. The best testament to its rugged nature is the fact that none of the Orks have yet managed to smash the windows out. These forces are all very focused on piloting the vehicle, and they only leave their posts if the actual cockpit comes under fire. Entering the cockpit requires unlocking or blasting through the sealed hatchway. The hatch has an Armour value of 35. Picking the lock on it requires a **Challenging (+0) Security Test**, though the difficulty would be substantially increased if the characters are under enemy fire as the attempt is made. Big Mek Noshdakka also awaits inside the cockpit, tinkering with his giant, destructive prize.

The remaining five Loota Boyz and twenty of the Gretchin are deployed around the Ordinatus, walking on foot next to the slowly advancing vehicle. If the Severan Dominate forces advanced towards

the Ordinatus separately from the Player Characters, they are currently engaged in a fire fight with these Orks and Gretchin. If the squad does not get involved, the two forces eliminate each other. Otherwise, the results should be based upon the squad's involvement.

The last twenty Gretchin are currently crawling through the scaffolding that supports the sonic disruptor. Even as the vehicle lumbers towards battle, they continue to reinforce elements and fine-tune the machine. Because these xenos are distributed throughout the 40 metre tall structure, it takes them some time to join the fray, which they do sporadically, in packs of 2d10+5 Gretchin (see page 366 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).

One important fact to consider is the ramifications of using explosives or any other characteristically loud weapon during this fight. The Ork horde has left the Ordinatus largely undefended because they can sense the battle ahead of them. If the sounds of battle suddenly emerge, the Orks near the rear of the battle—especially those who have not yet encountered any foes—are drawn back by the sounds of combat. The nearest Orks are roughly a kilometre away. Even for the Orks on foot, it only takes a few minutes to run back to the fight. Unless the Player Characters take care to avoid arousing attention or slaughter every foe they meet, they might find themselves left with no option besides firing the main cannon to thin the Ork forces and buy themselves a chance to escape the irate crew in the confusion.

If the Player Characters manage to overpower the forces within the control room, they can gain control of the vehicle. If the squad prepares to use grenades or other area effect weapons, have them first make an **Easy (+30) Intelligence Test**. If anyone succeeds, remind the Player Characters that such attacks might damage the controls and compromise the vehicle. If they continue to attack in spite of that, note that the control room is eight metres long by five metres wide. All the walls are covered in control panels, as are three workstations within the room. Dealing 8 or more Damage to any panel destroys it. Each occupies one metre of wall space, and there are twenty-five wall panels, space for the hatch, and the three free-standing workstations. Game Masters should keep track of how many of these panels are destroyed, as it plays a key factor in controlling the vehicle.

If the players seize control of the room without using indiscriminate weapons such as grenades or flamers that would harm everyone inside, or if they enter the room prior to engaging the enemy, they see a human in the ripped and torn robes of a Tech-Priest tied up against one of the back walls, immediately to the right of the hatchway. This is Tech-Priest Enginseer Ohara. Boss Garbark captured the follower of the Machine Cult shortly after the Ordinatus was discovered.

The Ork leader gave the human prisoner to Big Mek Noshdakka, with the expectation that the human might accelerate the pace for refurbishing the Ordinatus. Since then, the Big Mek has beaten any information he could out of the pitifully outmatched human. The Tech-Priest is grateful for the squad's assistance, but completely terrified that other Orks could arrive at any moment.

KEY NPCs

The following NPCs play important roles as the characters attempt to seize control of the heavily modified Ordinatus.

BIG MEK NOSHDAKKA

When the Ork forces discovered the Ordinatus, word of its grandeur soon reached the Big Mek. In short order, Boss Garbark placed him in charge of repairing the grand device, so that it could become a key part of the Ork strategy to conquer Hervara. As a devotee of the Kult of Speed who has truly revelled in the glory of vehicles used on the ground and in the atmosphere, the Big Mek initially resented this assignment.

Once he saw the Ordinatus, he changed his mind completely. He now sees the chance to fire the massive sonic cannon as his life's masterwork, at least until the day he finds something "even shootier." The Ork genius believes that this battle represents but the first field test of the weapon—he expects there to be problems, but he knows that if he succeeds, the blast of the weapon will resound across the world of Hervara and beyond, carrying his name with it and wreaking incredibly impressive destruction in the process. He would gladly sacrifice the life of every other Ork on the planet if it meant that he could continue to refine and improve upon the ancient human creation, to which he has become extremely devoted. Its combination of noise, majestic scale, and power strikes the Ork as one of the most brilliant weapons ever designed, and he sees it as his destiny to make it use it to the greatest extent possible. See page 143 for Big Mek Noshdakka's profile.

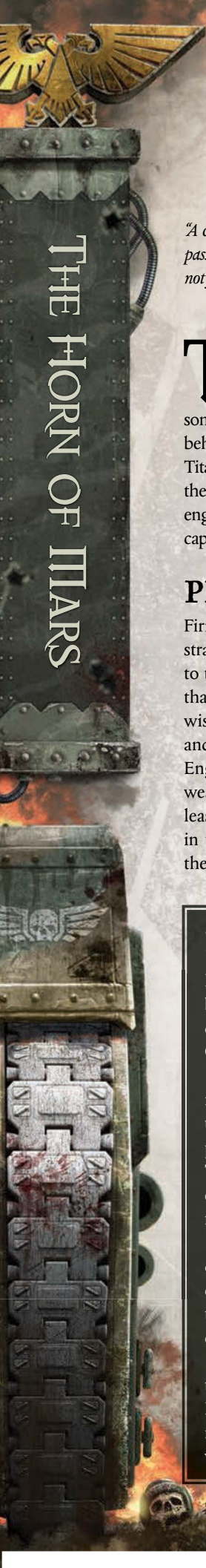
TECH-PRIEST ENGINEER OHARA

After months of torture at the hands of the Big Mek and his followers, Ohara is scarcely recognisable as servant of the Ommissiah. His Adeptus Mechanicus robes have been torn, stained, and charred in countless ways. Many of his cybernetics have been removed and forcibly replaced with products of Ork engineering. Rather than speaking in techno-binary, his systems have even been rewired to use the crude Ork tongue. The Tech-Priest's mind only remains intact by the faintest of margins.

When the Player Characters first encounter the Engineer, he scarcely believes that they are really there, and not the product of another fever dream. Convincing him of their existence and their intention to use the Ordinatus is a challenging undertaking. Trying to understand his rambling words does not make the task at hand appreciably easier. Once freed, however, Ohara does have one key goal—to prevent the Ordinatus from firing. He believes that the ancient

machine has been improperly repaired. He desperately fears the consequences of anyone using it without the proper rituals and anointing. See page 134 for Tech-Priest Engineer Ohara's profile.





LEVELLING THE FIELD

"A cursed sword sweeps across the whole of the battlefield, and where it passes, oblivion is its shadow. It devours not men, not machines of war, not fortresses. Its hunger can be sated by nothing less than the world itself."

—Text fragment from *Dream-Words of Heidrek the Prophet*

This scene begins with the Player Characters in control of the Ordinator. What they choose to do with the devastating weapon is entirely at their discretion. If they fire it, the sonic disruptor is certain to leave a swath of utter annihilation behind. The enormous weapon is designed to eliminate cities and Titans. As there are not even any super-heavy vehicles involved in the conflict, it is overkill against the limited armour present in the engagement. None of the forces on Hervera are even remotely capable of resisting the damage that it inflicts.

PREPARATION

Firing the sonic disruptor on the Ordinator is a surprisingly straightforward process, in part due to the Ork modifications to the weapon, but there are a number of steps leading up to that action. The Player Characters must choose whom they wish to target, decide what they consider acceptable losses, and be prepared for potential repercussions. Tech-Priest Engineer Ohara has a limited knowledge of the enormous weapon, as well as strong opinions regarding its usage. At least some of the proper rituals must also be observed, even in the face of the heretical changes the Orks have made to the weapon, so that it is capable of firing effectively.

Keep in mind that during this time, elements of the Ork horde are advancing upon the Ordinator as well. Though the first wave takes five minutes to arrive, additional waves are certain to follow if the first Orks to arrive become embroiled in a loud conflict. The Game Master can modify the time between waves at his discretion, to reflect distance between those particular foes and the ancient vehicle, as well as any other relevant conditions on the battlefield. There is also the possibility that the sounds of the major conflict with the core of the Imperial forces might completely offset the noise of a comparatively minor skirmish at the Ordinator itself.

If the Player Characters did not destroy the hatch to the cockpit during the previous scene, it continues to offer 50 points of Armour against any incoming attacks until they destroy it. Similarly, the windows of the cockpit continue to offer 35 points of Armour. The armoured hull of the Ordinator is functionally invulnerable, for the purposes of this scenario. The Orks simply do not have weapons available in this battle which are capable of penetrating them. Any of the Ork forces that would engage in this attack are not familiar with the potential of the main weapon, so they do not attempt to destroy the superstructure supporting it. They would, however, target any humans who might be on the superstructure, just for the sake of violent destruction and not because of any consideration for long-term effects.

When the Player Characters first start to explore the cockpit, they immediately notice the numerous ancient warning signs displayed throughout the area, interspersed with the remains of numerous Imperial propaganda posters. While the Orks defaced most of the posters in obscene ways, one of the warnings remains intact: "Observe Rites of Sonic Protection!" These edicts are located throughout the cockpit on most flat surfaces. At every control panel, there are several sets of earplugs dangling from the panel, in addition to bizarre devices that perhaps perform the same function for the massive ears of Orks.

PERSUADING OHARA

Even after the Player Characters manage to convince Tech-Priest Engineer Ohara that they are not a figment of his badly abused data tracks' imagination, their discussions with him are far from complete. Initially, the Tech-Priest is determined to stop them from firing the weapon. In his current state, he is not capable of resorting to physical violence. Of course, this does not prevent him from providing a coherent and compelling argument.

Ohara is afraid that attempting to fire the weapon without first properly aligning and carefully tuning all of its components would doom everyone to disaster. He is far from an expert on the device, but he has some limited understanding of the rituals involved in its function. Though he admits the limitations of his understanding, he has two primary concerns. The first is that the act of firing might trigger a feedback loop that completely destroys the Ordinator. This is a legitimate concern. Because of its imperfect retrofitting, after the weapon fires once, it is certain to require extensive and time consuming repairs before it can be fired a second time. The Tech-Priest can easily point out structural flaws due to corrosion and imperfect repairs at numerous places, in support of the argument.

His secondary concern is that the immeasurably intense vibrational frequencies from the improperly aligned sonic disruptor could have serious effects upon all who hear it. One theoretical outcome his damaged cogitators have concocted is that the vibrations could cause ripples throughout the physical realm and the Warp. Ohara fears that the planet might be transported into the Warp, or that creatures from beyond might be summoned in response to the cannon's call. This scenario is unlikely in the extreme, but convincing Ohara of that is no easy task.

If the Player Characters want the Tech-Priest to assist them with their preparations, they need to first convince him to discard these fears. They must succeed on an **Opposed Hard (–20) Interaction Skill Test** or an **Opposed Ordinary (+10) Logic Test**. The exact Test should be determined by the thrust of their argument. If the characters do an exceptional job of roleplaying, or can at least make a pretence of countering his logical arguments, Game Masters are encouraged to be generous with bonuses. If the Player Characters fail with three or more Degrees of Failure, the Tech-Priest panics and attempts to flee.

TABLE 3-4: DAMAGED CONTROL MODIFIERS

Surviving Panels	Penalties
0	The squad must either repair control panels first or fire the weapon and steer the vehicle manually.
1–2	The task of managing all of the functions through so few panels is monumental. This incurs a –40 penalty on all Operate (Surface), Tech-Use, and Ballistic Skill Tests.
3–5	The characters must manage several systems simultaneously through each panel. The difficulty of doing this incurs a –30 penalty on all Operate (Surface), Tech-Use, and Ballistic Skill Tests.
6–9	All of the characters are forced to use control panels that are not well-suited for the task at hand. This incurs a –10 penalty on all Operate (Surface), Tech-Use, and Ballistic Skill Tests.
10+	The squad suffers no penalties on Tests to control the vehicle.



The first obstacle to overcome is simply a matter of deciphering the remaining control panels within the vehicle. During their battle with Big Mek Noshdakka, there were quite a few Greenskins within the relatively confined space of the Ordinatus cockpit. The easiest way to eliminate this grouping of foes would certainly have been through the use of area effect weapons. Unfortunately, as indicated during that scene, the ancient and fragile control panels which surrounded the xenos were also subject to damage.

As long as at least one of the control panels survived the engagement, it remains possible to control the vehicle and fire the main weapon from the cockpit. However, the fewer panels that survive, the more challenging this task is.

There were initially twenty-eight operational panels in the room. Subtract the number destroyed from twenty-eight and consult **Table 3-4: Damaged Control Modifiers**. Note that due to space constraints, only a single character can work at each control panel. If there are more Player Characters and NPCs involved than there are available panels, those additional characters cannot assist.

Before the Player Characters even attempt to steer the Ordinatus or fire its sonic disruptor, Game Masters are encouraged to point out the state of the control panels, and explain the severity of the associated penalties. Some squads might decide that it is necessary to repair at least a portion of the control mechanisms prior to attempting to use the Ordinatus. Fortunately, there are many more control panels than are ultimately needed, and few are likely to have suffered identical damage. Because of this, the Player Characters can absolutely scavenge parts from several damaged controls in order to assemble a single functional one. The biggest complications is that none of the Player Characters have ever worked on a system quite like this one, and they are unlikely to have the appropriate tools on hand. Prior to considering any modifiers, repairing each control panel requires success on a **Hard (–20) Tech-Use Test**, and fifteen minutes.

Each Degree of Success on the Test beyond the first may be used to reduce the time required by five minutes. So, with four or more Degrees of Success, the repair is completed within a single Round—perhaps that panel merely had a loose wire. Three or more Degrees of Failure yields an irreparably damaged control panel, and requires the full fifteen minutes. Possible modifiers are as follows:

- If they can convince Tech-Priest Engineer Ohara to assist them, he can move between the workers, offering an effective +10 bonus to all of the Tech-Use Tests.
- If the Player Characters think to loot Big Mek Noshdakka's body, they find an assortment of different tools that can be used to assist with the repairs. There are enough different devices to offer a +10 bonus on Tech-Use Tests for up to three workers.
- If the squad members sorted through Mech-Deacon Klax's research (see pages 69–70), they have certainly seen schematics of these control panels. This yields a +10 bonus to any characters who searched through the materials during that mission.

The time required to complete these repairs is most important for determining the number of waves of Ork forces that might assault the vehicle as the squad frantically tries to ready the sonic disruptor. Characters that are engaged in repairing a control panel cannot dodge attacks, nor can they actively fire their weapons back at their foes. Performing the repair requires their complete concentration.

If the Player Characters decide that repairing the panels would simply require too much time, there is an alternative approach they can pursue. Tech-Priest Enginseer Ohara offers this suggestion if none of the characters think of it. Rather than using the panels, they can simply bypass the panels and control the various systems manually. If they choose this approach, the Player Characters do not suffer any of the penalties due to failed control panels. Instead, they must leave the cockpit and climb to various portions of the vehicle with manual control overrides. If the vehicle comes under attack by Ork forces as they attempt manual control, the Orks target any exposed characters.

There are three fire control systems and two steering control systems available for manual control. Changes made at these locations completely override the controls within the cockpit. If the Player Characters somehow know to seize control at these points, they can control the vehicle even as Big Mek Noshdakka and his crew remain within the cockpit.

The different fire control systems correspond to the three firing stages, as presented in **Push the Button** (see page 111). The two steering control systems are the manual steering linkage. There are two linkages, one set at each of the junctions between the three cars that make up the Ordinatus. To steer the Ordinatus using these systems, the acting characters must adjust a series of hydraulic pressure valves and levers, carefully coordinating the movement between the two linkages. This requires an operator in place at each junction. Any time an **Operate (Surface Vehicles) Test** is required, both characters must succeed for the Test to be successful.

The first firing system is the charging element. The manual overrides for this device are located directly beneath the centre of the superstructure that supports the sonic disruptor. This system transfers power smoothly from the Ordinatus' drive train to the energy storage cells, so that the sonic disruptor has the necessary energy to fire. If the charge is not transferred smoothly, it can either damage the drive train or short out the energy storage systems. The automated control panel has built in safety mechanisms to transfer power smoothly without damaging either system. The manual system lacks these safety features, however. If the character making the transfer suffers three or more Degrees of Failure on the Tech-Use Test to charge the weapon, the vehicle is either rendered immobile or the weapon breaks down until someone repairs its key power components (at the Game Master's discretion).

The second firing element is the frequency alignment control. Hundreds of components must be properly aligned before the sonic disruptor can release its devastating blast of energy. If they are out of alignment, the blast of sound could release imperfectly and affect the superstructure of the Ordinatus, as well as the dish-like structure that comprises the cannon's core emission element. Normally, ancient controls from the cockpit are used to make certain that all of the devices are in perfect alignment. Manually controls

are located at six points around the emitter dish. Using a system of laser markers and thumbscrews, a group of one to six characters can manually calibrate these systems to bring the weapon into (or out of) alignment. If they fail with three or more Degrees of Failure on the Tech-Use Test to align the sonic elements, one of the control systems falls from the emitter dish. The characters must retrieve and reattach the control element prior to realigning.

The final firing system is the safety release and weapons trigger. This is located at the rear of the emitter dish, at its most central point, directly behind the base of the emitter array. As part of the act of firing, the trigger is also capable of raising or depressing the angle of the emitter array by a matter of several degrees. Adjusting this angle sets the initial blast point of the devastating wave of sound that the sonic disruptor unleashes upon the foes before it. After making any final adjustments to the targeting angle, the character acting from this location is the one who makes the Ballistic Skill Test to see if the attack strikes the intended target.

After the squad has deciphered how to control the Ordinatus, they must next select a target. The sonic disruptor is tightly linked into the Ordinatus' critical design. When the Player Characters seize control of the vehicle, it is targeted so that it can arc a shot that avoids most of the Ork horde before it and deliver its doom to the bulk of the Imperial Guard forces, including the nearest command centre (see **Map of the Forces on Hervara** on page 120), far beyond the Drury-Cobhan Line.

The Player Characters can adjust the angle of the cannon so that, when it fires on the Imperial forces, it also blasts through the Ork army before it. Regardless of whether the Player Characters have chosen to ally with the Severan Dominate or the Imperial Guard, it is very possible to decimate the heart of the Ork horde in the process of blasting into their human enemies. The effects of this angle adjustment are reflected in the Ballistics Skill Test ultimately made to reflect the accuracy of firing the sonic disruptor.

In addition to adjusting the angle of the attack, one Player Character can adjust the angle of the vehicle, driving it so that it hits the correct enemy factions engaged in the battle. If the Player Characters wish to launch the attack against the Imperial Guard command centre, they do not need to adjust their angle of approach. The weapon is already targeting that site. Attacking the Hervara-XIX supply depot only requires a slight adjustment of attack angle. No Test is required to align the vehicle to this new heading, unless the Player Characters are using the manual controls, in which case it is a **Routine (+10) Operate (Surface) Test**. Angling the vehicle and the cannon to strike the Ork horde as well as most of the Severan Dominate forces requires a more dramatic shift of the vehicle. This requires a **Difficult (-10) Operate (Surface) Test** (or a **Hard (-20) Operate (Surface) Test** if the PCs are using manual controls) to angle the vehicle and target both appropriately. Either Operate attempt requires precise handling and five minutes of effort. If they fail, it leaves the vehicle inaccurately angled, and requires them to make a second attempt. If they fail with three or more Degrees of Failure, the vehicle has become stuck in its current position. The characters must first spend five minutes to straighten the massive vehicle's separate components before anyone can attempt another Operate (Surface) Test with the readjust it.



PUSH THE BUTTON

After the squad has selected a target and aimed the Ordinator and the sonic disruptor, they can finally fire the weapon. Because of the huge range of modifications that Big Mek Noshdakka performed, the blast of the weapon creates a sixty degree-wide cone of destruction that extends for more than ten kilometres. Essentially everything within that firing arc is utterly annihilated. As long as the characters appropriately adjusted the firing angle, this most likely includes the vast majority of the Ork army. It also includes the majority of either the Imperial or Severan Dominate forces, depending upon which side the characters chose to target. Throughout this section, take care to apply any modifiers for the state of the control panels.

The first step prior to firing the weapon is activating the charging system. This subsystem brings the massive vehicle to a complete standstill, as its engines begin transferring all of the vehicle's raw motive power into the sonic disruptor's energy storage cells. Once this system is activated, the vehicle can no longer move until after the main weapon fires. Successfully activating this system requires a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**. If the character fails the Test, the transition goes poorly, with gouts of sparks flying from all relevant panels. The character can begin the process again to make another attempt. If the character succeeds with three or more Degrees of Success, he activates the charging system in an exceptionally efficient matter. This adds one kilometre of effective range to the blast.

As the energy storage cells are charged, the sonic disruptor's frequency generation components must be brought into proper harmonic alignment. If this task is not properly completed,

firing the cannon could create a resonance disharmony through the weapon that might shake the entire Ordinator apart. These elements are extremely sensitive, and are easily disrupted by the vehicle's natural movement, so the attempt can only be made once it has come to a complete standstill. Successfully aligning the elements requires a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**. Player Characters should only be permitted to attempt this Test once, as they might not realise the true scale of the devastation they are about to wreak until after firing the weapon. If the character fails this Test, the weapon is tuned imperfectly, and the effect arc is reduced by fifteen degrees, to forty-five degrees. If he fails by three or more Degrees of Failure, when he fires the weapon, it unleashes its blast but also destroys itself in the process (see page 112). If he succeeds with three or more Degrees of Success, the harmonics are perfectly attuned, adding an additional kilometre of effective range to the blast.

Finally, one of the Player Characters can choose to release the safety and fire the sonic disruptor, laying waste to all that lies before him. This requires a **Challenging (+0) Ballistics Skill Test**. The key element to this action is making certain that the weapon is appropriately angled so that the xenos forces before the enormous weapon is also struck by the blast of sonic energy. If the character succeeds, all of the targets are essentially annihilated. If he fails, the weapon strikes the targeted human forces, but misses much of the closest third of the Ork army. If he fails with three or more Degrees of Failure, the blast was so badly angled that it completely misses all targets, instead sending the sonic attack

screaming into the sky, where it fizzles out impressively as it exits the atmosphere. If he succeeds with three or more Degrees of Success, the character has the option of increasing or decreasing the cone's arc by up to fifteen degrees as he adjusts the firing arc precisely to bring down annihilation on his foes without harming his allies.

When the Player Characters fire the sonic disruptor, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

An alarm immediately appears on any functioning control panels within eyesight, warning all users to verify their ear protection. Before anyone has a chance to do much more than read the warning, the weapon triggers. The noise strikes the entirety of each person's body like they have run full speed into a brick wall. The sound wave is not only heard, it is also felt, as though the God-Emperor himself had just unleashed a bellow of divine fury. It feels as if the Ordinatus actually moves in response to the energy expenditure, and all of the ancient vehicle's systems momentarily shut down.

Within a few breaths, which seem eternal, the sound stops, and the new silence is deafening. The vehicle's control panels, which had momentarily all gone black, begin to slowly return to full illumination. Countless lights which had earlier glowed green or yellow are now a mixture of red with the occasional yellow. Before the Ordinatus is a huge crater, that extends far beyond the horizon and over a hundred metres below the planet's surface. It seems unimaginable that anything might have survived the blast.

If any characters did not don ear protection prior to firing the weapon, they are now temporarily deaf. It takes 1d10 + 4 days, minus a character's Toughness Bonus days before his hearing begins to return. Those characters who are deafened should keep this in mind during any briefings, debriefings, or Interaction Skill Tests for the remainder of the adventure.

If any Player Characters were outside of the cockpit when the weapon fired—particularly those using manual controls to work the sonic disruptor or the vehicle—they are caught in the backblast of its firing. The amount of damage dealt is trivial compared to the devastation it yielded, but still significant to an unprotected human. Anyone caught outside of shelter suffers 1d10 Impact Damage. If the Player Characters were hanging from the superstructure, they must also make a **Difficult (–10) Acrobatics Test** to avoid falling from it. Anyone who mentioned that they were rigging some sort of climbing harness can bypass this Test.

Depending upon how well the Player Characters prepared the sonic disruptor to fire, it might collapse during the act of firing. If so, the destruction is near cataclysmic for the Ordinatus. The entire emitter dish separates from the supporting superstructure. As it falls, its massive weight shears through the connection between the second and third components that make up the length of the enormous vehicle. As it crashes to the ground, the entire dish collapses in on itself, destroyed by its own weight. While the first two components can still drive away from the wreckage, they are functionally disarmed. If one or more characters were standing beneath the superstructure, they must immediately make a **Hard (–20) Acrobatics Test**.

Any character who succeeds manages to get away

from the collapsing weapon. Any character who fails suffers 4d10+10 Impact Damage from the massive object thundering down to the ground and shattering there.

Even if they completed all of their preparations appropriately, the improper refit performed by Big Mek Noshdakka has consequences for the weapon. In spite of his adoration for the weapon, he had little understanding of the principles involved in its construction. Almost none of his replacement components were capable of resisting the feedback from the sonic blast that the enormous weapon unleashed when fired. Consequently, many of the underlying control systems are now rendered completely inoperable. In this situation, it is possible to repair all of the components necessary, so that the ancient device could again be returned to a functional state. However, this is a project that is certain to take months, if not years, to complete. That is far beyond the scope of this adventure, and far beyond the abilities of the Player Characters. Effectively, the Ordinatus is disabled for the remainder of the adventure.

In either case, a Player Character must disengage the charging element in order to return power to the drive train. Once that has been accomplished, the vehicle can once more begin to move at a speed of five kilometres per hour—assuming that the tracks have not been damaged previously. Given this limited mobility, it requires at least two hours for the vehicle to reach the Imperial Guard forces, if that is their destination. Alternatively, restoring contact with the Severan Dominate forces should take roughly an hour.

During the interim, the squad might wish to re-establish communications with their current allies, assuming any exist. This should not be a significant problem. With the destruction of the Ork army and one of the factions in the battle, the amount of radio chatter is dramatically reduced. The Player Characters can contact any Imperial or Severan Dominate authority that they wish. Further, while the Player Characters likely realise that the sonic disruptor is non-functional, it is unlikely that their allies are aware of this fact. Rather, any contact they make is likely to immediately begin discussions about what they should target next.

THE LAST GASP

In spite of all appearances, one small band of Orks managed to survive the blast that was unleashed upon the Greenskin army. When the weapon was fired, Boss Garbark was with a mob of Nobz travelling in his custom Battlewagon. The blast from the sonic disruptor flipped the Battlewagon and shattered it. However, the thick hull managed to provide enough protection for the Mega Armoured Orks that they were able to survive. Battered, bloodied, and thoroughly enraged, Garbark is determined to butcher the humans who dared to steal his weapon—or any humans he happens to run across while searching for the culprits.

The nature of this encounter is entirely subject to the status of the Ordinatus after it was fired. The vehicle might have been severely damaged in that act. Some groups might have chosen to abandon the wreckage, so that it could later be retrieved for repairs, choosing to retreat from the area on foot. Others might be piloting only the front portion,



after abandoning the superstructure that supported the sonic disruptor. Exceptionally successful squads might even have an intact Ordinatus to pilot back towards their allies.

In any case, their journey from the Ordinatus begins in the midst of an eerie silence across a ruined battlefield. Since the weapon was fired, all of the artillery that had been firing into the battle have ceased fire. The weapons fired between the surviving members of the Imperial Guard and the Severan Dominate are kilometres from the Ordinatus and out of earshot—especially given the potential hearing loss the characters may have suffered.

Within a few minutes of departing the vehicle, the silence is shattered—assuming any of the characters can hear—by an inhuman bellow. Roughly two hundred metres away, the characters can see an enormous Ork in Mega Armour sprinting towards them. He is flanked by five additional Orks dressed in the same type of armour, though all are appreciably smaller. This is Boss Garbark (see page 142) and his squad of Meganobz (see page 141). If all of the Player Characters are deafened, have them make an **Ordinary (+10) Awareness Test** to notice the incoming Greenskins. All who fail the Test are Surprised during the first Round, when the Orks open fire from Extreme range.

These Orks are the core of the small group who survived the blast from the sonic disruptor. Boss Garbark is rabidly furious that the weapon was turned upon his forces. He is not thinking clearly in the moments after the attack. Instead of trying to regroup, he simply wishes to unleash his fury upon those who

dealt such an overwhelming blow against his Boyz. All of the members of his Nobz were badly injured in the attack (already reflected in their starting Wounds). However, their rage has led them to ignore the damage, as they instead charge headlong towards their prey.

Because of their intense rage, the Orks' tactics are extremely limited, even for those of an Ork. As soon as they spot the humans, they begin firing their shootas and charging as they run. Their intention is to simply close with the squad so that they can rend them limb from limb with their power claws. Given the exceptional armour that they possess and their relative speed, this represents a significant threat to the Player Characters, in spite of the wounds that the Orks have already sustained.

In the event that any Greenskins still remain alive aboard the Ordinatus, these forces immediately join in with their Boss in assaulting the humans. Of course, if these xenos were outside of the cockpit when the sonic disruptor fired, Game Masters should consider reducing the number of Wounds that they might have remaining. While Gretchin are certain to wait until the squad is focused upon firing on the Mega Armoured troops to engage, any surviving Orks do not demonstrate a similar level of patience.

If the Player Characters are forced to retreat before the Nobz, a nearby cave opening might offer a safe escape route. When the sonic disruptor fired, it seriously disrupted Hervara's surface within its blast radius. In many places, the ground has collapsed, exposing tunnel entrances which could be used to flee from the enraged Warboss and his cadre.

KEY NPCs

The following NPC plays an important role as the characters attempt to escape after firing the Ordinatus.

BOSS GARBARK

Boss Garbark launched this assault against the human forces because he was utterly certain that it could not fail. He saw this battle as the beginning of the end for the humans upon Hervara. Not only did he have clear maps showing a distinct vulnerability in the human defences, he also had an inordinately powerful weapon to unleash against the vast human forces. With little more than two or three blasts from the Ordinatus, Garbark was certain that all of the humans would be turning tail and running from the might of the Greenskin forces.

With proof of his new weapon's power, Garbark knew that his success would be enough to impress even Warboss Grimtoof. After its utter failure, the Boss is desperate to take revenge upon whatever has betrayed him. His initial suspicion is that this was all a ploy by Big Mek Noshdakka, to steal control of the Waaagh! As soon as he realises that this is the treacherous work of humans, the Boss redoubles his efforts to eliminate them. While he begins attacking as soon as his weapons enter range, Garbark constantly continues his movement towards his foes, vastly preferring to engage in hand to hand combat. He ignores any opportunities to enter cover as he moves, depending entirely upon his Mega Armour for protection. See page 142 for Boss Garbark's profile.



AN OFFERING

"It is not man's place to grant reprieve to those who turn against the Imperium. Mercy can only come from the God-Emperor, in the next life."

—Missionary Lars Grissam, Chaplain to the Luggnum 3rd

After the squad has fired the Ordinatus and encountered Boss Garbark, they must return with the massive vehicle to reach friendly lines. With the Ork forces devastated and one of the human armies decimated, there are few survivors remaining in the region to actively oppose the Player Characters. Their journey towards the group whom they see as allies should be relatively uneventful. The complications arise when the squad attempts to surrender control of the Ordinatus and accept whatever judgment they might receive from their commanders.

This scene varies substantially depending upon with which faction the Player Characters have chosen to ally. If it is the Imperium, then this battle represents the major victory prior. The Ork forces on Hervara are now gutted, and the secessionist army has been devastated. The path towards victory is now far more certain. Conversely, for the Severan Dominate, victory in this battle is one of the rare major success in their enduring war for freedom. The rebels' chances of ultimately surviving against the Imperium of Man remain slim, but this success and others like it keep the guttering fire of their hopes alive.

IT DIDN'T FIRE

It is certainly possible that for any of a variety of reasons the Player Characters failed to fire the Ordinatus. If this is because they failed to capture it, then any resolution to the scenario is likely moot. The Orks are certain to have used it to destroy one opponent and then physically overwhelmed the other. If the squad remains alive, they are among the only humans living in a region controlled by Ork forces.

If they managed to disable the ancient weapon without anyone firing it, then the outcome is likely different. Unless the Player Characters somehow intervene, the two human forces eventually crush the Ork army between them. With the xenos cleansed, the surviving Imperial Guard turn their fire upon the secessionists, and overwhelm them in an open field engagement. In this situation, the Severan Dominate troops simply lack the manpower and armaments to compete. The victory does not come without cost, however. The Imperial forces suffer significant casualties, including the loss of Hervara-XIX with all hands. After the battle is complete, the Player Characters must decide whether to return to the Imperial lines or flee the region, in hopes of finding safety elsewhere on Hervara.

GREETINGS

If they sided with either human faction, the Player Characters might have already made a preliminary report of their status by vox communications. If this is the case, then their allies are prepared for the arrival of the squad and the slowly moving Ordinatus. Though it likely takes well over an hour for the massive weapon to reach the battle lines, allied troops come to greet them far more quickly. Firing the sonic disruptor completely shifted the flow of the engagement, enabling their allies to emerge, victorious, from what seemed like a losing situation. A caravan of enthusiastic survivors streams toward the Ordinatus with a festive atmosphere. If transport vehicles are available, the soldiers ride in them. Otherwise, the soldiers travel afoot, ignoring the hostile nature of Hervara's atmosphere as they rejoice in their survival. At this point, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

As you head towards the friendly lines, you experience a moment of panic when you see an army approaching and hear the sounds of gunfire. Then, you realise that this is not an attack; it's a celebration, although it is hard to tell the difference between the two in the dense, toxic fog. Survivors are discharging their weapons into the air, and hollering their victory cries. Many are rushing towards you, recognising that without your squad's actions, they might never have survived the battle. You see more than a few have already opened precious bottles of celebratory libations or lit lho-sticks. More than a few are even smiling through faces covered in grime and all the telltale signs of exhaustion.

At this point, the Player Characters are greeted by dozens of new friends—and possibly a few old ones too, if they remained loyal to the Imperial Guard. Ranking officers—including Commissars and Ducal Legates—are notably absent. It should



be clear that the commanders have permitted the line troopers some time to celebrate. All signs indicate that the area is reasonably secure. After winning a hard fought battle, the respite from discipline has been earned, and should improve morale.

The remainder of the journey back to the secure lines should have a festive atmosphere. Lho-sticks and amasec flow in abundance. Even though there were substantial losses during the battle, the troopers are revelling in the fact that they survived, as they try not to think about those who did not. Morbid humour plays a huge part in the quips and jests that ensue. All of the soldiers are well aware that their survival was due as much to good fortune as it was due to any amount of skill, though the Player Characters have certainly earned their bragging rights.

This brief moment of respite provides the Player Characters a well-earned opportunity to enjoy the role as heroes. Such opportunities are rare for members of the Imperial Guard. Let them enjoy their moment in the limelight. When they return to friendly lines, and the oversight of their commanders and morale officers, the celebratory air is certain to dissipate—a fact which all of the Player Characters and NPCs should recognise. This is a rare moment without discipline or supervision, and also without the threat of imminent death. The contrast with virtually every other moment in the adventure should come across as striking.

THE RETURN

Crossing over to friendly lines, the Player Characters are formally greeted by their commanders. If they are loyal to the Imperium, this is Lord Commissar Salieri, assuming he survived. Among the Severan Dominate, this is Captain Fordham, if they aided him in escaping from Hervara-XIX. For squads that have chosen to return to the Imperial Guard, the tone should shift dramatically, from one of joy to one of stark discipline. Among the secessionists, the contrast is noticeable but far less extreme. The rebels are happy and excited, and that fact still shows through their discipline.

In either case, the overall consequences and attitudes associated with their arrival are substantially different between the two different factions. The sections that follow present the two different groups and detail the initial reception that the characters receive. Game Masters only need to use the version that is appropriate for their group.

WITHIN THE IMPERIUM

If Lord Commissar Salieri remains alive, he is the character that formally greets the characters when they return to Hervara-XIX. If he has been slain, then Major Natalia Foudrang—the overall commander of the Luggnum Sewer Rats on Hervara—is the one to herald them upon their arrival. The personality contrast between these two officers is significant, but the overall consequences are similar. Ultimately, when the Player Characters left Hervara-XIX, they were most likely wanted criminals. In order to leave the base, they had to first escape internment, and then flee beyond enemy lines. While they ultimately provided salvation to the Imperial Guard units, they committed dozens of serious crimes in the

process. Those crimes cannot be easily overlooked.

Within moments of their arrival at Hervara-XIX, the Player Characters are summoned to a debriefing with their commanding officer. The tone of the meeting should be that of a hostile verbal confrontation. Unless they were specifically ordered to assault the Ordinatus, their actions were undertaken without the approval of the Imperium.

This sort of independent action, no matter how high the degree of success, cannot be easily ignored. Further, they most likely escaped from imprisonment to undertake their actions. Their return could—charitably—be seen as a sign of willingly accepting their punishment from the authorities. However, that hardly offsets their crime.

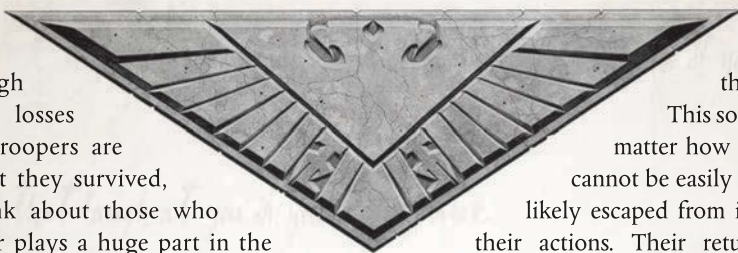
At this point, the Player Characters have an opportunity to defend their actions to their superior officer. This most likely requires an **Opposed Very Hard (–30) Charm Test**, though some squad members might choose to employ a tactic that invokes a different Skill. The difficulty on this Test is subject to a number of modifiers, based upon any proof that they might have brought back from their travels. Possibilities include:

- Returning with the complete Ordinatus: +30
- Returning with the partial Ordinatus: +20
- Carrying evidence of Boss Garbark's death: +20
- Carrying evidence of Big Mek Noshdakka's death: +10

If the Player Characters successfully persuade the superior in question, the officer tells them that they are confined to quarters, pending a more formal hearing later. If they succeed by three or more Degrees of Success, the commanding officer explains that the characters are to remain at the depot. If they fail, the characters are to be imprisoned within the supply depot's brig, set up within one of the warehouses. If they fail by three or more Degrees of Failure, they are sent to solitary confinement until the hearing, using storage containers from the warehouse. Their hearing is scheduled to take place the next day. At the moment, recovering from the battle is simply a much higher priority.

MAJOR FOUDRANG

A veteran of the Red Vault on Luggnum, the Major was only promoted to her current post after enduring an interrogation at the hands of an Inquisitor. Though her loyalty to the Imperium of Man was proven, some say that her mind scarcely survived the process. Foudrang is a study in contrasts, showing occasional flashes of sincere gratitude, which contrast with her typically stern outlook. Ever since the incident on Luggnum, Natalia has constantly sought and discovered treason and betrayal against the Imperium. She has consistently delivered judgment upon the guilty, but has been thorough in her investigations, to avoid punishing the innocent. At least, she is thorough when her patience is not tested excessively.



VICTORS WRITE HISTORY

Particularly devious or cold-blooded Player Characters might try a completely different tactic when firing the Ordinator and reuniting with humanity. When the squad is selecting its target, they might have chosen to fire upon the Imperial Guard forces for the sole purpose of eliminating Lord Commissar Salieri. As he is the person most certain of their treason, by eliminating him and all of the other inhabitants of Hervara-XIX, the squad might effectively eliminate any proof of their guilt or innocence.

Further, with the tens of thousands of dead, the squad members could easily swap identities with soldiers who died when the sonic disruptor fired. In this way, they can remain true to the Imperium of Man, but effectively assume completely new identities, leaving behind both their sins and their valour on the bloodstained wastes of Hervara. By doing so, the Player Characters could completely avoid any evidence of their past treason. Shuffling the necessary paperwork to complete the identity theft requires nothing more than a **Routine (+10) Deceive Test**.

AMONG THE REBELS

The secessionists recognise that the Player Characters wear the uniforms of their dreaded foes, but cannot question their actions, which delivered this key world into the hands of the Duke. As they reach the main battle line of the Severan Dominate, the characters continue to receive cries of support from the soldiers and officers of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors. Their nearest base is several kilometres away from the site of the battle, but soldiers have started to move in and occupy captured bunkers on the Drury-Cobhan Line. If Corporal Kousenk survived the various encounters, he joins the Player Characters during meetings with the secessionist officers.

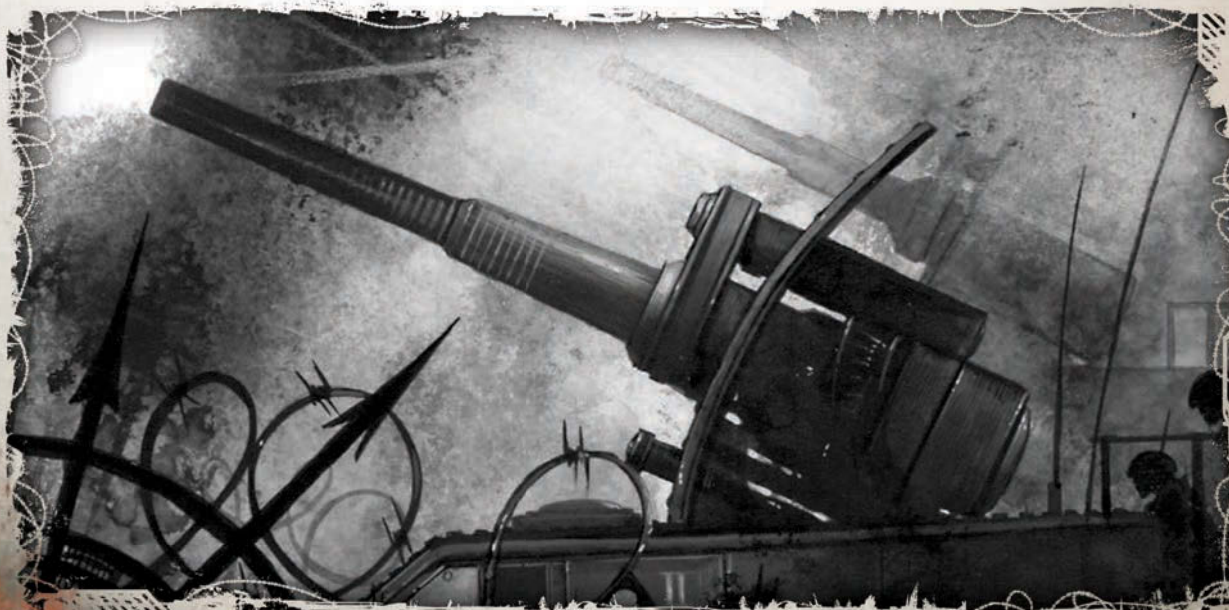
Unless another high-ranking Severan Dominate officer has been previously introduced, use Commander Jacoby (see **Commander Jacoby** on page 117) as their point of contact upon arrival. The Commander tremendously

appreciates the squad's efforts in eliminating both the Ork and Imperial forces. He is anxious to hear their story, but is hesitant to take the time to do so immediately. He fears Imperial reprisals for the destruction that has been wrought, and wishes to dig his forces in immediately.

In the short term, the Severan Dominate soldiers need to prepare defences for an eventual Imperial counterassault on Hervara. That is not to downplay the depth of their gratitude; the secessionists wish to repay the squad for its heroic actions. However, they simply do not have time or resources to properly repay the Player Characters at this point in time. The only things that they can really offer are their gratitude, the promise of leadership roles within the forces of the Severan Dominate. Once Hervara is fully brought under control, the Player Characters might be asked to command large numbers of soldiers, or perform lightning raids while equipped with the finest of equipment their side can offer in the name of the Duke. The only thing the Severan Dominate does not offer them is time, for it fights a desperate battle to hold on against a power it can only hope someday grows weary of this war.

The war against the Imperium is one against a foe with inexhaustible assets and utter willingness to expend them. The Player Characters have survived a campaign in the service of the Imperium—however, the battles they face as soldiers of the Severan Dominate will be even more taxing. Still, they have won a great victory for their new allies this day, and can expect accolades and promotions. The secessionists expect great things of them, and they must achieve new heights of prowess to survive.

At this point, the Player Characters are traitors to the Imperium. For Game Masters who wish to continue telling their stories, refer to **Wrap Up** on page 119 for campaign rewards. After that, future scenarios might see the squad taking on a very different role than they have previously. The characters earn immediate promotion through the Severan Dominate ranks, as they have substantially greater training than most rebels, and are seen as heroes to the cause. However, they are also unlikely to receive the materiel and logistical support to which they have become accustomed. Their new responsibilities—and their lack of resources—mean that they face challenges if they wish their new cause to survive.



COMMANDER JACOBY

Prior to the secession, Li Jacoby was a foreman working in one of Hervara's endless, winding mines. He was a member of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors, but served as a reservist in the corps, generally only called up to deal with the occasional Ork raid. When Duke Severus seceded from the Imperium, Jacoby was placed in charge of a company of Hervara Excavatory Warriors. Since then, he has been repeatedly promoted by the simple expedient of survival.

Jacoby is grateful for the Player Characters' actions during the engagement, but remains suspicious of them. He does not trust the fact that they have turned against the Imperium after purporting to serve it so well while at Hervara-XIX. He also recognises that the Imperium could readily sacrifice thousands of soldiers to plant a group of spies among the resistance.

THE VERDICT

Characters who have returned to Hervara-XIX with the intention of returning to service likely had some notion of the fate that awaited them. They had previously faced judgment for following orders without realising that those orders could harm the Imperium. Now, they face punishment for ignoring orders in order to save the lives of countless Imperial soldiers.

If Lord Commissar Salieri yet lives, he now sits in judgment before them. A tribunal is assembled to hear the case. It should consist of the Lord Commissar, Major Foudrang, and a high ranking officer from the Player Characters' original regiment. This last officer has just arrived, after being summoned shortly after the Player Characters were originally questioned. If Salieri is deceased, Major Foudrang heads the tribunal, and a lesser Commissar serves in the remaining position.

The trial should be presented as a formal deposition. Each character is asked to recount the squad's story, starting from the time they completed their previous debriefing with the Lord Commissar. The Lord Commissar and other members of the tribunal present questions about their actions and their motivations. In many cases, the Player Characters are asked about whose orders they followed as they performed specific actions. Any time the characters admit to having acted upon their own initiative, all of the tribunal members begin to take extensive notes.

If it comes to light that Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle—or any other ranking NPC—was involved in their liberation and mission to stop the Ordinatus, then that character is also brought to testify before the tribunal. Different NPCs obviously react in varied ways to such personal involvement in the trial—some might back the Player Characters no matter what, others might resent becoming involved, and many more would likely be ambivalent, given the complex nature of the whole affair. This

depends entirely on the relationship between the squad and the NPC, and should reflect how the PCs dealt with that NPC over the course of the adventure.

In short order, it becomes clear that the members of the tribunal are far more concerned with verifying that the squad members committed crimes, than they are with the consequences of the squad's actions. The Player Characters clearly recognise that the tribunal is far more concerned with enforcing the letter of the law than they are with making any attempt to enforce justice. This should hardly come as a surprise to veterans of the Imperial Guard, but is likely nonetheless disappointing. After all, the Player Characters are hardly in a position to deny their crimes. Similarly, they surely recognise that they have committed capital crimes. By returning to Hervara-XIX, they should have at least recognised the potential for such punishment.

Because of the tribunal's predisposition, the characters need to do something extreme to even have an attempt to persuade the tribunal of their innocence. There are several NPCs who might willingly come to the squad's aid (see Intervention, below). However, before this happens, the Player Characters should take an opportunity to attempt to resolve the problem for themselves. They should realise that they are in a dire situation. Different groups can take any of a variety of tactics. A simple apology or an attempt to justify their actions is insufficient. The action needs to be far more dramatic, though obviously not hostile.

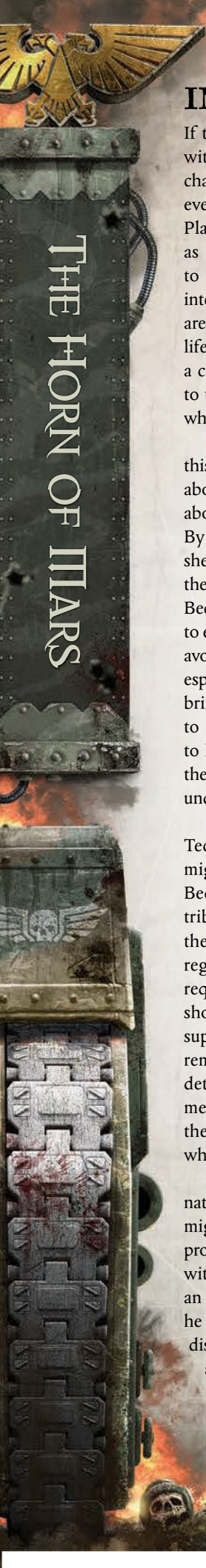
One possibility is invoking some physical proof of their loyalty to the Imperium. The intact Ordinatus, the heads of Boss Garbark or Big Mek Noshdakka, Tech-Priest Enginseer Ohara, or even a Ducal Legate or Severan officer as a prisoner are all excellent starting points. The Game Master might approve other novel approaches, as well, if he feels they are appropriate. If the Player Characters refer to any of these when making their argument, they receive an opportunity to make an **Opposed Hard (-20) Charm Test** against the head of the tribunal. For each additional piece of evidence after the first, the acting character receives an additional +10 bonus to this Test. If they succeed, they are cleared of their charges. If they fail, they remain sentenced to death.

An alternative possibility is for the characters to secure the testimony of one or more individuals in their favour. There are two significant challenges to getting such a sponsor. The first is that, if confined, the Player Characters have no real opportunities to communicate with the outside world. They must have employed some strategy to persuade an ally to come to the tribunal hearing, even while they were confined. The second challenge is that Salieri is likely to dismiss the word of anyone who has been consistently stationed at Hervara-XIX. Consequently, the individual in question would have to be a person of authority whose scope exceeds that of the supply depot.

Player Characters are likely to devise additional tactics. Game Masters must consider the characters' histories and previous interactions before deciding how the head of the tribunal might react. While Lord Commissar Salieri is extremely reluctant to be merciful, even he cannot willfully ignore overwhelming evidence of the squad's innocence.

Of course, he is more than capable of ignoring evidence which is less than overwhelming.





INTERVENTION

If the Player Characters have established good relationships with other NPCs, it is very possible that some of those characters might come to the squad's hearing. A few might even act upon their own initiative to testify in favour of the Player Characters' honour. This is an extraordinary action, as the character testifying is willingly subjecting himself to the full attention of the deposition. Any character who intercedes does so with the expectation that his own actions are very likely to come under scrutiny in short order, with his life potentially being placed in jeopardy. Consequently, only a character who feels deeply indebted to the squad is likely to take such a risk. This should most likely be an individual who owes his life—or his life's work—to the squad.

Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle could potentially intervene in this manner. Though she would resent being forced to testify about her assistance in their escape, she is willing to testify about the visions she had of them recovering the Ordinatus. By testifying on her visions and not her direct experiences, she can carefully avoid mention of her interactions with the Player Characters after they were sent for incarceration. Because of her own crimes, Cauldwelle is extremely hesitant to expose herself to testimony. While she believes that she can avoid directly incriminating herself, the possibility remains, especially if the squad should, for some reason, inadvertently bring up how she assisted them. In the event that she chooses to assist the squad, the head of the tribunal remands them to her authority. Effectively, this separates the troopers from their existing chain of command, and places them directly under the Primaris Psyker as her personal bodyguards.

Alternatively, if either Tech-Priest Enginseer Ohara or Tech-Priest Hexon remains alive, one of these characters might believe that he owes the squad a substantial debt. Because of this, either character could intervene with the tribunal, pleading the case that the characters are now the most knowledgeable experts in the Calixis Sector as regards the function of the Ordinatus. In response to the request, the head of the tribunal agrees that the characters should be transferred to work under Adeptus Mechanicus supervision. At the Game Master's discretion, they might remain members of the Imperial Guard serving an extended detached duty, or the squad might formally become members of the legendary Crimson Guard of the Lathes, the champions of the Forge Worlds of the Calixis Sector, to whom either Ohara or Hexon could easily have ties.

If the players had high-ranking contacts among their native regiment, it is possible that one of these characters might intercede on their behalf. This intervention might provide the best opportunity for the campaign to continue with the same characters functioning in comparable roles. If an Imperial Guard officer of sufficient authority intervenes, he might be able to persuade the head of the tribunal to disregard specific pieces of evidence. Without examples such as Captain Fordham's testimony, the entire case might have to be thrown out. Consequently, the characters would be released to return to their normal duties.

Other possibilities for key witnesses could be members of other regiments, the Commissariat,

or known traitors who fell prey to the squad's actions. These different approaches could achieve very different levels of success. In some instances, it might be most effective for the characters to receive a reduced sentence—several years of hard labour, or service on a death world—instead of death. In other instances, it might be most effective to completely eliminate any long-term repercussions.

WRAP-UP

This adventure concludes once the squad has returned the Ordinatus to their chosen allies, and earned any rewards or suffered any punishments for their actions. This represents a significant step towards concluding the war for Hervara, but it certainly does not end it. Depending upon the Player Characters' choices, this could mark a significant step forward in the effort to achieve compliance, or it might be the first major victory for the secessionists. In either case, it is likely that the Ork threat has been substantially mitigated, permitting the human forces to concentrate upon destroying one another, without xenos interference.

Some Game Masters might wish to continue telling the Player Characters' story on Hervara after the conclusion of this act. The precise nature of future missions is entirely dependent upon the choices that the characters have made. If the characters have shifted their loyalties to the secessionist cause or been transferred to work under the authority of the Adeptus Mechanicus, then their future adventures are likely



to be starkly different from those as members of the Imperial Guard. Similarly, if they accepted the assistance of Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle, they might be forced to endure a long-term separation from their regiment. This could substantially change their access to resources for the remainder of a campaign.

A few possibilities are as follows:

- For characters accepting service with the Adeptus Mechanicus, their short-term responsibilities focus entirely upon the Ordinatus. Even if the massive weapon survived the adventure largely intact, it requires a substantial amount of refitting before it can be pressed into service again. Over the next few months, their duties involve protecting it while Tech-Priests Hexon and Ohara begin the work of preparing it for off-world transport. A vessel is likely to soon take it to a forge world, where the Adeptus Mechanicus can fully refit it. Along the way, the squad might encounter any number of difficulties while assisting members of the Machine Cult in studying and recovering archeotech.
- Characters who have chosen to accept service under Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle are essentially assuming an extended, detached assignment from their regiment. While they remain within the Imperial Guard, they are not likely to be assigned with other members of their regiment. Rather, they serve as Cauldwelle's bodyguards—a role they are likely to assume for the remainder of their lives. As the psyker's responsibilities include many command roles, their responsibilities might leave them privy to critical intelligence as regards planning and tactics, but they might still be expected to work near the front lines.

- Those squads who have chosen to side with the Severan Dominate are in for an exceptionally challenging life. With the death of Boss Garbark, the Ork armada soon disperses. It only takes a few months before the Imperium is able to start landing troops in force upon Hervara. Unless the secessionists take some sort of extreme action to blockade Imperial movements within the system, the natives are likely to be overwhelmed and put to the knife. Ultimately, the Player Characters might be best suited by turning their allegiance back to the Imperium of Man, surrendering whatever information they can about the rebel strategies and tactics. Further, as known traitors, some among the Imperial Guard might choose to target the squad specifically for elimination. This might involve sending a squad of Storm Troopers after them, or other elite units.
- Characters who have remained loyal to the Imperium and somehow been cleared of all charges are unlikely to remain upon Hervara for long. With the successful use of the Ordinatus, the heart and soul of the Ork and human resistance forces have been eliminated. The remainder of the war effort should simply be a matter of eliminating stragglers. Forces in this front can soon be used to cleanse other portions of the planet, and ultimately achieve compliance within a few months. After that, the regiment is certain to travel to another front.

EXPERIENCE AND LOGISTICS

Characters who successfully complete this scenario earn Experience and Logistics Rating for their service. In addition to the rewards included here, Game Masters can always choose to grant additional awards for excellent roleplaying, as indicated in the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook (see pages 292-293).

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

Characters receive Experience Points for successfully navigating the challenges of this adventure. Consider how the soldiers overcame or avoided each of the following challenges, and award experience as appropriate. Below are some guidelines for xp rewards for particular achievements.

- Survived **Chapter III: The Horn of Mars**: 500 xp.
- Convinced Commissar Lord Salieri of their innocence: 100 xp.
- Convinced an NPC to help them at Hervara-XIX prior to departing: 100 xp per NPC (maximum 300 xp).
- Safely reached the Ordinatus Weapon: 100 xp.
- Defeated Big Mek Noshdakka: 150 xp.
- Successfully fired the Ordinatus, tipping the outcome of the war on Hervara: 200 xp.
- Defeated Boss Garbark: 200 xp.
- Won over the Tribunal Judges: 50 xp.

LOGISTICS AWARDS

As the Player Characters complete additional assignments for the Imperial Guard, their reputation for success becomes ever greater. As this process continues, officers become increasingly willing to entrust them with more wargear for their assignments:

- Retrieved the Ordinatus intact: +5 to Logistics Rating.
- Retrieved a damaged Ordinatus: +2 to Logistics Rating.
- Fired the Ordinatus against the Orks and Severan Dominate forces: +2 to Logistics Rating and +10 to Interaction Skill Tests with other soldiers of the line who have heard of their incredible exploits.
- Convinced the tribunal that they were innocent of all treasonous charges: +3 to Logistics Rating.





DRURY-COBHAM LINE

ORK-HELD CAVERNS

ORDINATUS WEAPON

ASH WASTES

SUPPLY DEPOT

CAMP

IMPERIAL GUARD HQ

ASH WASTES

TO COBHAM

- IMPERIAL GUARD
- (S)-----SEVERAN DOMINATE FORCES
- (R)-----ORK FORCES
- TALLARN DESERT RAIDERS
- (L)-----LUGGNUM SEWER RATS
- (L)-----ARMAGEDDON STEEL LEGION

APPENDIX: NPCs AND ADVERSARIES

"Say what you will about the Orks, but you have to admit they're filthy, foul-smelling, degenerate savages."

—Sergeant Lenser O'Konnor, Luggnum 3rd

Throughout the events of **FINAL TESTAMENT**, players encounter numerous NPCs, from barbarous Ork Boyz to mighty captains of the Imperial Guard. Most NPCs play only a minor role in the adventure, such as the dozens of soldiers in the Player Characters' regiment, or the masses of Orks and Severan Dominate troops who oppose them. There is no need to determine Characteristics and personalities individually for each of these minor NPCs, though it's always helpful to have a list of names handy in case the players decide to strike up an unexpected conversation. Other NPCs, such as Captain Fordham of the Imperial Guard and Big Mek Noshdakka, play crucial parts in the story. These important NPCs receive individual profiles.

The first section of the **Appendix** details general NPCs, the second covers named human NPCs—those who are important to the plot of the adventure—and the last deals with the Orks, including "all Da Boyz" as well as the named Ork characters. Strength and Talents have already been factored into weapon Damage in all profiles. As always, NPCs are considered to be capable of using all weapons listed in their profile without penalty, regardless of Talents.

The profiles for Ork Boys, Nobs, Gretchin, and Ork vehicles can be found in **Chapter XI: Adversaries** of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook, beginning on page 363. Separate profiles are presented in this appendix for Imperial Guardsmen from the Luggnum, Krieg, and Tallarn regiments, representing the distinct differences in equipment and training of these regiments. The Imperial Guardsman profile on page 372 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook can be used to represent Guardsmen from the player characters' company. See **Personalising NPCs** and **The Player Characters' Company** (see page 127) of this book for advice on tailoring NPCs to the players' regiment.

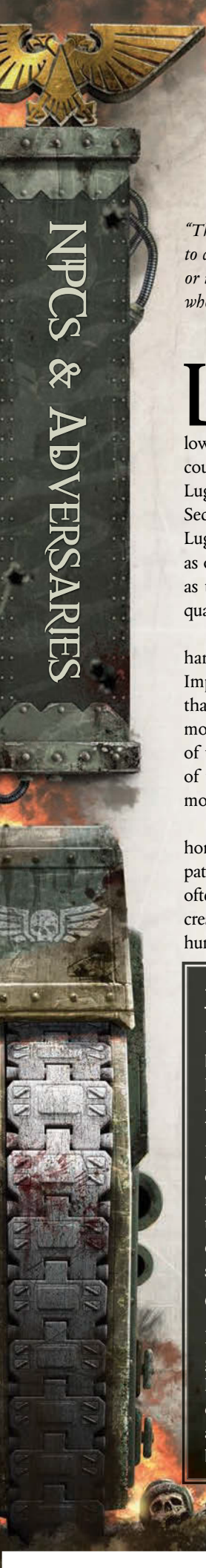
PERSONALISING NPCs

ONLY WAR's rules for regiment creation allow for an almost limitless variety amongst Imperial Guard regiments (see page 40 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). The possible variations among equipment and methods of warfare are such that many Imperial Guard regiments are all but unrecognisable as belonging to the same military organisation. Because of this diversity, **FINAL TESTAMENT** makes certain assumptions about the Player Characters' regiment, but



also leaves "blank spaces" to be filled in by the GM. Not only is this a necessity due to the variety of possibilities for player character regiments, but it is also a great opportunity for GMs to personalise the game for their players. This is most evident in Part I, but can persist throughout the adventure, assuming the players are able to keep some of their platoon alive! GMs are encouraged to modify events and encounters involving the Player Characters' regiment, so that they fit the background previously established by the players and Game Master. Because Guardsmen from different regiments can be extremely different in outlook, name, and ability, it is left to individual Game Masters to develop the personalities of NPCs amongst the Player Characters' platoon.

All this makes it impossible to provide any but the most perfunctory detail regarding NPCs in the players' platoon, as any such information would need to be replaced by the majority of Game Masters. It is left to individual Game Masters to detail the appearance, equipment, personality, and name of each important NPC in the Player Characters' regiment. GMs may find **Table 3–21: Demeanours** and the list of Commanding Officer personalities on pages 108 and 63 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook to be useful sources of inspiration when detailing these NPCs. They can also make valuable resources for a Game Master when creating NPCs for adventures of his own devising.



THE LUGGNUM SEWER RATS

"They're damn good with a blade, and no slouches when it comes to drinkin', either. There's none I'd rather have by my side in battle or in the barroom than a Sewer Rat. Only thing is, I can never tell when they're joking."

—Corporal Sein, Gunmetallican 35th

Luggnum is a backwater mining world situated in a relatively isolated region of the Golgenna Reach. The ores obtained through the backbreaking labour of Luggnum's lower classes are useful but unremarkable—a description that could be applied to the entire planet. As a mining world, Luggnum is often overshadowed by the nearby Sepheris Secundus. While the Imperial Guard regiments raised from Luggnum may not be as famed as the Brontian Longknives, or as oft-imitated as the Cadian Shock Troops, they are every bit as tough, as dependable, and as under-appreciated as the ore quarried from the depths of their home world.

The people of Luggnum are faithful, honourable, and hard-working. Luggnum's men and women take to heart the Imperial maxim that work earns salvation. The knowledge that they serve the Emperor is more than enough to content most of Luggnum's inhabitants as they toil in the darkness of the mines, but that doesn't stop them from envying those of their fellows chosen to serve the Emperor in a decidedly more heroic fashion—serving in the Imperial Guard.

In contrast to the bleak, monochrome landscape of their home world, the people of Luggnum prefer bright, colourful patterns for their garb. This extends to the Sewer Rats, who often personalise their blue and white uniforms with family crests, devotional sayings, and the occasional spot of gallows humour. The Luggnum uniform is characterised by a flak kilt,

which covers the upper legs and provides the same level of protection as a heavy flak coat. The patterns of these kilts are particular to each regiment, although many Sewer Rats add their own touches. The warriors of Luggnum maintain that their garb allows for great mobility and speed during combat, and more than one Guardsman serving alongside a Luggnum regiment has had to pick up his teeth after questioning a Sewer Rat's grit. The lack of a helmet is also notable—it's a common saying that a Luggnum native would as soon take a bullet to the skull as put on another helmet after getting out of the mines.

The moniker of "Sewer Rats" was bestowed on the Luggnum regiments centuries ago, and a number of different stories profess to explain it—some less flattering than others. Regardless of the truth, the people of Luggnum have adopted the disparaging name as a source of pride, characteristic of the dour humour for which they are known. Despite their relief at escaping the doldrums of mine work, Luggnum regiments are often assigned operations to which their experience is suited. These include such theatres of war as the depths of hive cities, the catacombs of Shrine Worlds, and, on occasion, the corridors of a void craft or space hulk. Logically, the Luggnum Sewer Rats are often called up to fight on mining worlds. Casualties during such missions are often jokingly chalked up to "a case of homesickness" by Luggnum Guardsmen.

Luggnum culture places high value on a man's ability to handle himself in a brawl, which perhaps explains the preference shown by many Luggnum regiments for close combat. The Sewer Rats are drawn from all levels of society, but from the highest noble to the lowliest labourer, each man brings with him his clan sword, a priceless family heirloom. It's a common saying on Luggnum that "even those who have nothing can still offer their blades." What's remarkable about this tradition, however, is the craftsmanship of all Luggnum familial blades. Even the poorest family of deep-miners can boast a blade of the finest workmanship and sharpest edge. This has led to rumours that the nobles of Luggnum hoard

EQUIPMENT OF THE LUGGNUM SEWER RATS

Uniforms amongst the Imperial Guard vary wildly, from utilitarian camouflage fatigues to embroidered greatcoats. Beyond their bloused shirts and shoulder bags, the Sewer Rats are distinguished by two unique items. While these can be considered standard kit for the Sewer Rats, neither is supplied by the Departmento Munitorum, and are provided by the people of Luggnum.

FLAK KILT

Each Guardsman raised from Luggnum is equipped with a flak kilt. This uncommon armour is made of the same ballistic cloth as the more prevalent flak cloaks and flak coats, and sometimes features additional rigid plates. Typically, Luggnum regiments are raised from amongst the subjects of a single Luggnum noble when possible. It is traditional for the liege to supply his departing subjects each with a flak kilt emblazoned with a variant of the noble's family crest. This unique emblem is adopted as a regimental marking. Mysteriously, since the Red Vaults incident, there have been no verified sightings of any of the three active regiments raised from the lands of the Grey family.

CLAN SWORD

Every true Luggnum family, no matter how high or how lowly, possesses a clan sword that is passed down through the generations. No true son or daughter of Luggnum would part with this clan sword; given the choice between selling this hereditary blade or starving to death, any would gladly starve. Most of these swords are centuries, if not millennia old, and crafted according to the highest standards. Clan swords are usually Good Craftsmanship swords, and are often engraved with a family crest or motto. Traditionally, the sword is bestowed on the eldest son or daughter of a family. Should the sword's bearer fall on the field of battle, it is the responsibility of his squad mates to retrieve the blade and return it to his family.

the finest ores for the use of their personal smiths, or even hide entire mines of rare material from Imperial surveyors, although investigation and testing has so far lent no credence to such stories. When a Luggnumite falls on the battlefield, his squad mates see it as a matter of gravest honour to recover his blade—in fact, placing a much higher priority on recovering his sword than his body.

Many Luggnum Sewer Rats have experience serving on deep mining operations back home, during which they might operate at lung-crushing depths for weeks or months without returning to the surface. Men serving under such conditions must learn a certain degree of self-sufficiency, as mine collapses, rock pirates, and other hazards can easily prevent the delivery of much-needed supplies. Luggnum miners tithed to the Imperial Guard often ply these skills on the battlefield, making the best of available resources and finding creative uses for common equipment.

Like many worlds in the Calixis Sector, Luggnum has its secrets. The planet is still haunted by the atrocities committed by Lady Orlea Grey many years ago, although they are seldom spoken of in polite company. Some believe that Luggnum was not the first world subjected to the Lady's heresies, and in near-empty taverns, in the dead of night, grizzled miners whisper that Orlea Grey was no native-born Luggnum noble at all. Despite attempts by the authorities to cover up the truth, there are few on Luggnum who have not heard whispers of the sadistic blasphemies committed by Grey and her courtiers in the once-fruitful Ironback Mines, though few know, or even suspect, the true scale of her crimes. The Ironback Mines are long since sealed by order of the Holy Inquisition, that the lingering taint of Chaos not pollute Luggnum's material output or its population. Rumours persist, however, of dark, twisted things glimpsed in the deepest shafts of Luggnum's other mines, ghoulish figures that may once have been human.

LUGGNUM SEWER RATS IN THE SPINWARD FRONT

In the Spinward Front, Luggnum Regiments are often assigned to battlefronts on mining worlds or orbital stations, where their experience in close-quarters combat can be used to full effect. The Sewer Rats have frequently been deployed to defend or retake the many orbital docks of Kulth. It's little surprise that a Luggnum regiment was assigned to Hervara, much to the chagrin of the men and women of the 3rd Light Infantry.

To the earnest people of Luggnum, the treachery of the Severan Dominate is anathema, and most Sewer Rats are more than ready to go to war against the traitors. As with all good Imperial citizens, the fire of hatred for the xenos burns in the hearts of the Luggnum Sewer Rats, and their skill with the blade gives many a fighting chance, slim as it is, in a close-quarters engagement with the Orks. Many Sewer Rats have been stationed for years on war-torn Kulth, and it's a common joke amongst the Luggnum Guardsmen that it's nice to get some fresh air after spending so much time in the mines.

THE LUGGNUM 3RD LIGHT INFANTRY

As much as any Luggnum regiment, the pall of the Red Vaults incident hangs over the men and women of the 3rd Light Infantry. Many were forced to turn their weapons on their neighbours and kinsmen who fell under the sway of Lady Grey and her unholy influence. Many more lost friends and family to the horrors of the Red Vaults, and the deadly pastimes of the Lady and her depraved court. A few were even subjected to the terrors of the Ironback Mines, saved only by the grace of the God-Emperor and the timely intervention of the Adeptus Arbites. Regardless of their connection, nearly every member of the 3rd Sewer Rats has been affected by that infamous event. The regiment's commanding officer, Major Natalia Foudrang, was forever changed by the incident. A woman of faith and devotion, her thorough interrogation by the Inquisition convinced the young officer that no one is beyond suspicion. Since that time, her paranoia has continued to grow, souring the climate of the 3rd Light Infantry.

CREATING THE LUGGNUM 3RD

The rules for the Luggnum 3rd Light Infantry were created using the rules from **Chapter II: Regiment Creation** in the **ONLY WAR CORE RULEBOOK**, as follows:

Home World: Hive World

Regiment Type: Light Infantry, but with the flak helmet replaced by a flak kilt

Doctrines: Hardened Fighters, Scavengers

Commanding Officer: Bilious

Total Cost: 12 points

REGIMENT RULES

Characters belonging to the Luggnum 3rd Light Infantry Regiment receive the following advantages.

Characteristic Modifiers: +6 Agility, +3 Perception, -3 Toughness, +2 Weapon Skill

Starting Skills: Common Lore (Imperium), Deceive, Navigation (Surface)

Starting Talents: Heightened Senses (Hearing), Paranoia, Sprint, Street Fighting

Wounds: -1

Standard Regimental Kit: One lascarbine and four charge packs, one Good Craftsmanship sword, one knife, preysense goggles, one flak coat and flak kilt, two frag grenades, two smoke grenades, uniform consisting of a bloused shirt and sturdy breeches, poor weather gear, bandolier, rucksack, one set of basic tools, one mess kit and water canteen, one blanket and sleep bag, one rechargeable lamp pack, one grooming kit, one set of ident coins, copy of the Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer, two weeks' supply of combat sustenance rations.

Favoured Weapons: Heavy bolter, meltagun



RANK AND FILE

"Casualties, Sir? Just the usual, I suppose."

—Corporal Lance Armego, Hervara Excavatory Warriors

The player characters stand to encounter numerous NPCs throughout the course of **FINAL TESTAMENT**. Most numerous of all are the ranks of infantry fighting alongside them or against them.

HERVARA EXCAVATORY WARRIORS AND SEVERAN DOMINATE

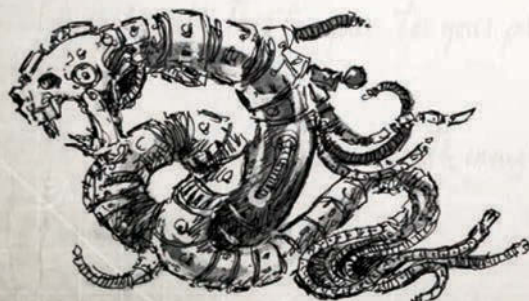
"If the forces of the so-called Emperor conquer your world, they won't stop at executing your leaders and generals. No, they will round up your families, your sons, your daughters, and they will make examples of them all. No, better that generations of Hervara's warriors die in noble battle, than that we surrender to those butchers."

—Sir Inigo Kleibel, Ducal Legate

As a key source of raw materials, the mining world of Hervara is crucial to the Severan Dominate cause. The unexpected arrival of the Orks—and their even more surprising air superiority—have ensured that Hervara is primarily garrisoned by its own Excavatory Warriors. These soldiers have lived most of their lives underground, some having never seen the sun before volunteering or being drafted. As such, they are capable of laying fiendishly effective ambushes for Imperial forces in the extensive tunnels and caverns below Hervara's surface. Equipped with the same Departamento Munitorum gear as the Imperial Guard and tasked with the defence of their home world, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors can be a formidable foe.

Due to its importance, the Severan Dominate has deployed a number of its officers and agents to oversee and direct the defence of Luggnum. Even more would likely have been posted were it not for the Ork blockade of the planet.

The game Characteristics for Hervara Excavatory Warriors Soldiers, Sergeants, and Lieutenants below can be used to represent local Severan Dominate forces, as well as Hervara Excavatory Warriors assisting the Imperial Guard. After all, as many Guardsmen have found, it is often impossible to tell the difference until it is far too late.



HERVARA EXCAVATORY WARRIORS SOLDIER

The standing armies of Hervara are well-suited to fighting in the caverns and tunnels of their world. After all, most were raised working in the very mines that make their planet worth defending to the Severan Dominate. While not generally as well-equipped as the Imperial Guard, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors received sufficient materiel from the Departamento Munitorum before their treachery that they are better armed than the forces of the Severan Dominate on many worlds. The majority of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors sided with the Severan Dominate, although those who remained loyal to the Emperor were instrumental in the early stages of the Imperial assault on Hervara. For the bulk of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors, regardless of whether they have a stake in the Severan Dominate cause or were simply following orders, every last one realises the price for treason, and fights desperately to hold on to their world.

The Hervara Excavatory Warriors's mining experience has proven quite advantageous in the struggle against the Imperial Guard. In addition to navigating the tunnels of their world more easily than the Imperial attackers, the Hervara Excavatory Warriors have found that the demolition charges used in mining, and their experience in using them, can be employed to deadly effect in ambushes, and also function as capable anti-tank weapons when properly deployed.

Hervara Trooper (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	35	35	37	30	27	36	23	25	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Armour: Hervaran flak armour (4 All).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Severan Dominate) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Rapid Reload, Takedown.

Weapons: Autogun (Basic; 100m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full) *or* lascarbine (Basic; 75m; S/2/—; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Half; Reliable) *or* shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/—/—; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter) *or* autopistol (Pistol; 30m; S/—/6; 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full), pickaxe (Melee; 1d10+3 I; Pen 2; Primitive 7; Unwieldy) *or* combat knife (Melee/Thrown; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload —; Blast [3]).

Gear: Hervara Excavatory Warriors Uniform, respirator, 2 clips for weapon, 1 kg demolition charge.

Sappers: All Hervara Excavatory Warriors soldiers have experience using explosive charges for mining work. As such, they are treated as possessing the Tech-Use Skill for purposes of setting and defusing explosives.

HERVARA EXCAVATORY WARRIORS SERGEANT

Most Hervara Excavatory Warrior Sergeants possess battlefield experience only against the Orks that plague their home world. For many, fighting against fellow humans is an unsavoury experience, at best. In addition to any moral misgivings, fighting the armies of the Emperor requires very different tactics and strategies than defending against the primitive Greenskins. While most Hervara Excavatory Warriors Sergeants followed orders when the secession began, others defied their superiors out of loyalty to the Emperor. Some of these loyalists were respected enough that their squads, and perhaps even others, followed their lead, as difficult as the choice was.

Many Hervara Excavatory Warriors Sergeants mimic the popular Imperial Guard choice of fighting with a pistol and chainsword, a combination that is particularly suited to the close-quarters combat occurring within the tunnels and chambers beneath Hervara's surface.

Hervara Sergeant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
37	37	38	40	35	30	37	28	30	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Armour: Hervaran flak armour (4 All).

Wounds: 12

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Severan Dominate) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Rapid Reload, Takedown, Sidearm, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Half; Reliable) *or* autopistol (Pistol; 30m; S/-/6; 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full) *or* hand cannon (Pistol; 35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Reload 2 Full) *or* shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter), pickaxe (Melee; 1d10+3 I; Pen 2; Primitive 7; Unwieldy) *or* chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 2 frag Grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

Gear: Hervara Excavatory Warriors Uniform, respirator, 2 clips for weapon, 1 kg demolition charge, accordion wire.

HERVARA EXCAVATORY WARRIORS LIEUTENANT

By and large, the officers of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors have more battlefield experience than those of many planetary armies in the Calixis sector, as they are regularly confronted by Hervara's native Ork population. As such, many Hervara Excavatory Warriors Lieutenants have had the opportunity to try different tactics, and adapt them to the situation at hand. Fighting against the savagely ferocious Orks has tested and hardened the Hervara Excavatory Warriors, meaning that only able warriors and leaders have been able to achieve and hold positions of authority. The attack by the Imperial Guard, however, has been an entirely new kind of test.

Hervara Lieutenant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
39	39	41	45	35	35	38	31	35	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Armour: Hervaran Flak Armour (4 All).

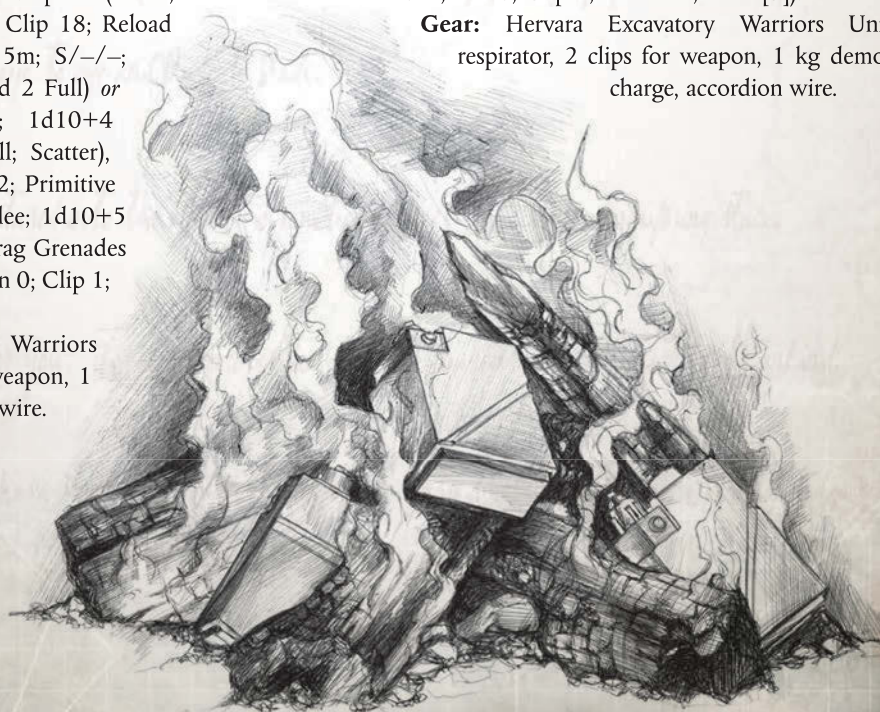
Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Rapid Reload, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Half; Reliable) *or* autopistol (Pistol; 30m; S/-/6; 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full) *or* hand cannon (Pistol; 35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Reload 2 Full) *or* shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

Gear: Hervara Excavatory Warriors Uniform, respirator, 2 clips for weapon, 1 kg demolition charge, accordion wire.



DUCAL LEGATE

Duke Severus the Thirteenth has declared himself the sovereign ruler of numerous worlds with a wide variance in local culture. In order to ensure that his subjects accept the Duke's authority and reject that of the Imperium, he must have loyal agents to oversee planetary governments and militaries to enforce his will. These loyal men and women are known as Ducal Legates. Answerable only to the Duke himself, Ducal Legates are empowered to take any steps necessary to ensure his will is obeyed. Many of the citizens of the Severan Dominate base their loyalty to the Duke on the belief that his methods are not so pitiless as those of the Imperium. To reinforce this belief, Ducal Legates rely foremost on diplomacy and dialogue. However, should a local ruler or officer prove intractable, Ducal Legates are empowered to serve as judge and executioner. In such cases, those same skills of diplomacy serve to smooth things over with the unfortunate's peers. Most Legates are not above fabricating crimes and evidence in order to remove undesirable elements quietly.

Ducal Legates are just as zealous and ruthless as Imperial Commissars. Whereas Commissars usually make this abundantly clear, Legates tend to conceal it beneath a veneer of cordiality and concern for the local populace. To preserve the reputation of the Duke, Legates prefer to operate through duplicity rather than overt violence. Legates often ask subtle or probing questions in order to direct the actions of local governments, which allows the local population to revel in its supposed "independence" without relinquishing any real control. Of course, they are hardly above using such methods to fulfill their goals if it proves necessary.

Ducal Legate (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
43	43	39	42	40	45	41	45	47

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 20

Armour: Legate's overcoat, carapace chest plate (6 Body, 4 Arms, 4 Legs).

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel), Common Lore (Calixis Sector, Severan Dominate, Spinward Front, War) (Int), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Fel) +10, Interrogation (WP), Intimidate (S) +10, Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Severan Dominate Codes) (Int) +10, Navigate (Surface) (Int), Parry (WS) +10, Scrutiny (Per).

Talents: Air of Authority, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Traits: Touched by the Fates (1).

Weapons: Bolt pistol (Ranged; 30m; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), power sword (Melee; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Severan Dominate uniform, micro-bead, 3 bolt pistol clips, signet ring.

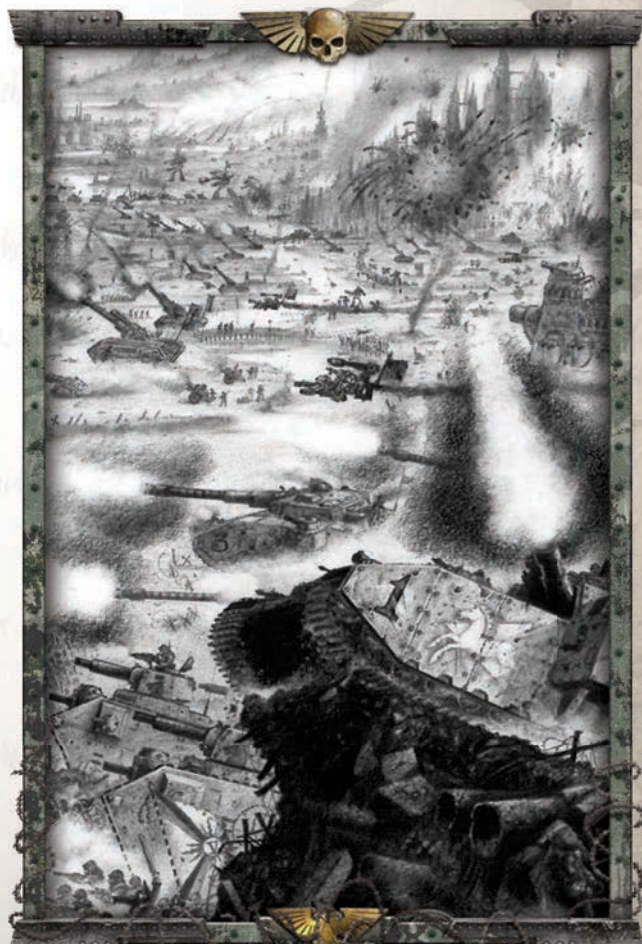
For Duke and Dominate!: As a Half Action, a Ducal Legate can inspire Severan Dominate forces. For every Degree of Success he scores on a **Challenging (+0) Fellowship Test**, affected allies gain a +5 to Willpower Tests for the duration of the encounter.

IMPERIAL GUARD

"I haven't seen the sun in weeks, there's danger around every corner, and my superiors expect the impossible of me. This place is just like home. On the bright side, I probably won't live much longer."

—Garreth Flinder, Standard Bearer, Luggnum 3rd

It is said that the Imperial Guard is the hammer of the Emperor, smashing aside the enemies of humanity in righteous battle. All too often, this enemy is humanity itself. Those who turn away from the Emperor's light make themselves the enemy of all good men. To let such insurrection prosper would be akin to the negligence of a surgeon who does nothing to stop a spreading cancer. As all good medicae know, a malady of the soul is at least as important as a malady of the body, and an infected limb must often be amputated in order to save the patient. The forces of the Imperial Guard stationed on Hervara must contend with the fact that their primary foe is just like them, and until recently, they were also loyal citizen-soldiers of the Imperium. Some Guardsmen might even find fighting the Orks preferable; at least the xenos wear their sin openly. Nagging doubts and heretical sympathies tend to vanish as a tide of green brutes descends upon a soldier, bellowing their obscene war cries, on the field of war.



THE PLAYER CHARACTERS' COMPANY

Particularly in the early parts of **FINAL TESTAMENT**, the player characters are supported by a host of additional Guardsmen from their platoon. While the bulk of the “grunts” can be consigned to the background, the field leaders deserve closer attention. Whether they go by “sergeant,” “axe-brother,” or one of a myriad other titles, these squad and platoon leaders rightfully expect to be included in any discussions and decisions regarding the actions of the platoon. The game Characteristics below cover a “typical” Imperial Guard Sergeant, but can and should be modified to reflect the Player Characters’ regiment. The Imperial Guard Sergeant profile presented here assumes a Line Infantry regiment, the most common kind amongst the countless regiments of the Imperial Guard. At the very least, Game Masters should swap the gear listed below for equipment appropriate to the Player Characters’ regiment. If their regiment is built around a different doctrine, GMs can modify the Sergeant’s Characteristics, Skills, and Talents appropriately. Most importantly, however, Game Masters should portray any Sergeants present in a manner corresponding to the culture of the regiment. For many groups, the game experience can be enhanced by further individualising key NPCs amongst the Player Characters’ platoon through personality traits, quirks, distinguishing features, and, of course, names. See **Personalising NPCs** on page 121 for more advice on this subject.

IMPERIAL GUARD SERGEANT

Imperial Guard Sergeants lead squads frequently consisting of nine other Guardsmen, in theory. During prolonged engagements and campaigns, it is often not feasible to reinforce depleted squads. In other cases, Departamento Munitorum officers turn a blind eye on regiments from warrior cultures that favour different squad configurations. Sergeants are expected to display courage that bolsters the resolve of their squad mates. To this end, they are often issued laspistols and chainswords, or other close combat weapons, better to fight at the forefront of their squad.

Imperial Guard Sergeant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
37	37	35	35	32	30	35	30	35	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Armour: Guard flak armour (4 All).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Takedown, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee/Thrown; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 4 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

Gear: Imperial Guard uniform, 4 clips for laspistol, Imperial Infantryman’s Uplifting Primer, standard regimental kit.

IMPERIAL GUARD LIEUTENANT

Though known by myriad titles amongst the diffuse regiments of the Imperial Guard, officers placed in command of a company are most commonly called “lieutenants.” While Lieutenants in many regiments earn their rank through display of leadership abilities and tactical acumen, others, particularly in regiments from feral worlds, are rated foremost on their strength and skill at arms. Lieutenants are usually accompanied by a command squad of four men. These soldiers are often selected from amongst the company’s veterans and specialists, and might include medics, weapon specialists, and sanctioned psykers. It is traditional among many regiments for the company standard to be borne by a member of the Lieutenant’s squad. Promotions are often seen as mixed blessings, for in addition to the burdens of command, Commissars often choose to accompany the command squad, standing as grim-faced reminders of the price of cowardice.

Imperial Guard Lieutenant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	42	35	35	32	35	38	38	40	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 16

Armour: Guard flak armour (4 All).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Takedown, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee/Thrown; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 4 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

Gear: Imperial Guard uniform, 4 clips for bolt pistol, Imperial Infantryman’s Uplifting Primer, standard regimental kit.



LUGGNUM SEWER RATS

3RD LIGHT INFANTRY

Hailing from a not-so-dissimilar mining world, the Luggnum Sewer Rats were a natural choice for the Imperial action on Hervara. The Sewer Rats' experience in tunnel-fighting has proved highly effective against the Severan Dominate forces, despite their encounters taking place on the Hervara Excavatory Warriors' home turf. While the Hervara Excavatory Warriors are also experienced in such environs—indeed, these are the tunnels of their own home world—Luggnum training places a higher emphasis on close-quarters combat.

As is the case with most Imperial Guard Regiments, the basic Luggnum infantry squad consists of ten men, led by a Sergeant, and usually including one weapon specialist with a melta gun—the preferred special weapon of the Luggnum 3rd.

LUGGNUM GUARDSMAN

The Imperial Guardsmen of the Luggnum Sewer Rats 3rd Regiment are well-suited to missions in the tunnels and caverns of Hervara. Each Guardsman carries a clan sword, of a craftsmanship that would mark out an officer among most regiments. The Sewer Rats disdain the use of helmets, but their standard issue preysense goggles provide a keen advantage in the dark caverns and tunnels of Hervara. This combination of equipment and expertise has also had the Sewer Rats selected for a number of night raids on surface installations. The uniform of the Luggnum 3rd consists of a dark green flak kilt and white bloused shirt under a flak vest. Equipment is stored in a slung rucksack, and ammunition, grenades, and assorted trophies and nonstandard kit hang from a bandolier. Many Sewer Rats add further personal touches such as clan slogans, emblems, or trophies.

Luggnum Guardsman (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
37	32	35	33	39	28	34	25	22	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Armour: Flak coat, kilt (3 Body, Arms, Legs). **Total TB:** 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Heightened Senses (Hearing), Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Rapid Reload, Sprint, Street Fighting.

Weapons: Lascarbine (Basic; 75m; S/2/—; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Reliable), Good Craftsmanship sword (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Balanced), knife (Melee/Thrown; 5m; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload —; Blast [3]), 2 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke).

Gear: Luggnum Imperial Guard uniform, preysense goggles, respirator, 4 lascarbine clips, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer, satchel.

LUGGNUM SERGEANT

It said that to hold the respect of his men, a Sergeant of the Luggnum Sewer Rats must be able to best any of them in a duel or drinking contest. While it seems unlikely that this always holds true in practice, the Guardsmen must have something to keep them busy between deployments. Luggnum Sergeants tend to have a good relationship with the men under their command—having learned from life in the mines that noticing the slightest details of the environment can make the difference between life and death. Luggnum Sergeants are usually open to their subordinates' suggestions. As with many Imperial Guard regiments, the Sergeants and officers of the Luggnum Sewer Rats are given the option of equipping themselves with a sidearm and chainsword, a perfect match for the close-quarters fighting style of the Luggnum people. Of course, no warrior of Luggnum would give up their clan sword, and because there is no Departmento Munitorum-accepted method of indicating this on the standard forms, the Sewer Rats' stores tend to accumulate a surplus of chainswords. Some enterprising Luggnum nobles have discovered that, with a few modifications, the adamantium-tipped teeth of Departmento Munitorum Calixis-issue chainswords work wonders for carving through the stone of Luggnum's mines.

Luggnum Sergeant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
40	35	37	33	39	30	34	30	25	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

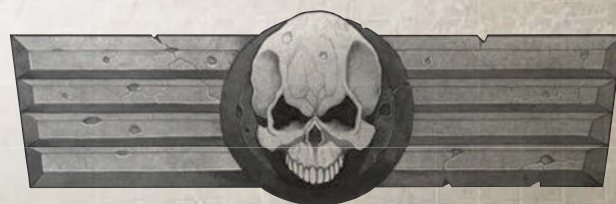
Armour: Flak coat, kilt (3 Body, Arms, Legs). **Total TB:** 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Heightened Senses (Hearing), Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Sprint, Street Fighting Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Lascarbine (Basic; 75m; S/2/—; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Reliable), Good Craftsmanship sword (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Balanced), knife (Melee/Thrown; 5m; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 Frag Grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload —; Blast [3]), 2 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke).

Gear: Luggnum Imperial Guard uniform, preysense goggles, respirator, 4 lascarbine clips, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer, satchel.



LUGGNUM LIEUTENANT

The officers of the Luggnum Sewer Rats often hail from Luggnum's nobility. As such, when a Luggnum regiment is raised, the men often find themselves serving under the command of the same nobles for whom they toiled in the mines. In some cases, squads correspond to work-teams of miners, with overseers given command of squads or platoons of the same men and women they previously supervised. Departmento Munitorum adepts have found this to be an agreeable system, as the trust and obedience developed during the dangerous mine work translates well to the command structure of the Imperial Guard.

Luggnum Lieutenant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
45	35	41	36	39	27	34	32	32	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 16

Armour: Flak coat, kilt (3 Body, Arms, Legs). **Total TB:** 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Blademaster, Heightened Senses (Hearing), Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Sprint, Street Fighting, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), Good Craftsmanship sword (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Balanced), knife (Melee/Thrown; 5m; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 2 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke).

Gear: Luggnum Imperial Guard uniform, preysense goggles, respirator, 4 bolt pistol clips, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer, satchel.

DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG 138TH

The Death Korps of Krieg seemed ill-suited to the initial mission on Hervara, as it was expected to be a brief engagement. Once the war on Hervara began to drag on, the Death Korps' talent for long-term siege warfare came into play, proving to be a valuable asset for the Imperial forces. Some of the more paranoid individuals among the other Imperial forces on Hervara wonder if the unexpected direction taken by the fighting is the result of deliberate sabotage by the Death Korps, that they might have a better opportunity to martyr themselves. Others suspect that the Departmento Munitorum's decision to deploy the Death Korps to Hervara in the first place speaks of a broader conspiracy. While most regiments find the Krieg to be off-putting, many Luggnum Sewer Rats find the Death Korps' dour outlook amusing, using them as a sounding board for their brand of grim humour. This relationship often puzzles both the Commissars and Tallarn.

When encountered in the field, the basic Death Korps infantry squad comprises ten Guardsmen, including a Sergeant and one Korpsman armed with a melta gun. In addition, two Guardsmen may work together to man a heavy bolter. Due to the demands of keeping the Drury-Cobhan line secure, Death Korps squads encountered by the Player Characters are usually under-equipped or under strength. Krieg Guardsmen on patrol duty make their rounds in pairs.

DEATH KORPS GUARDSMAN

The men of the 138th Death Korps, like those of all Krieg regiments, are grim individuals who obliterate any perception of self with skull-visaged respirator masks and unflinching devotion to the Emperor. Combat against the Orks on Hervara has provided plenty of opportunities for martyrdom, particularly early in the fighting. As their supply of transport vehicles has decreased, the Guardsmen of the Krieg 138th have been assigned primarily to garrison duties. The length of the Drury-Cobhan line is manned almost entirely by the Death Korps of Krieg, an assignment perfectly suited to the Krieg's penchant for siege warfare. It is fair to say that the sight of these grim, long-coated soldiers patrolling the walls of the very fortifications that the Hervara Excavatory Warriors once prided themselves on manning has not been good for their morale.

Death Korps Guardsman (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
32	35	35	40	32	28	30	25	25	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Armour: Guard flak armour (4 All).

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Takedown.

Weapons: M36 lasgun (Basic; 100m; S/3/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Reliable), Combat knife (Melee/Thrown; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 2 krak grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10+4 X; Pen 6; Clip 1; Reload -; Concussive [0]).

Gear: Death Korps uniform, micro-bead, respirator, 4 clips for lasgun, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.

DEATH KORPS SERGEANT

Beneath corpses hung from the fortified walls of the Drury-Cobhan line, marked with placards reading "Heretic," the sergeants of the Death Korps of Krieg 138th Siege Regiment lead drills and perform regular checks of their men's equipment and uniforms. Additionally, the responsibility for ensuring that the walls are structurally sound and all possible points of ingress are adequately defended often falls to these squad leaders. In the end, the walls of the Drury-

Cobhan line are not so different from those that crisscross the surface of Krieg. Watching for signs of structural instability is second nature for these experienced trench warriors.

Death Korps Sergeant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	38	35	42	32	29	30	30	30	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Armour: Guard flak armour (4 All).

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Jaded, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Resistance (Fear), Sidearm, Takedown, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 2 Krak grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10+4 X; Pen 6; Clip 1; Reload -; Concussive [0]).

Gear: Death Korps uniform, micro-bead, respirator, 4 clips for lasgun, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.

DEATH KORPS LIEUTENANT

The officers who lead the platoons of the Death Korps of Krieg are merciless individuals, as willing to sacrifice their own men as they are civilians, if it means gaining an advantage for the Imperium. As with all warriors of Krieg, Lieutenants are more than ready to martyr themselves in the name of the Emperor, but their awareness of their own value as leaders restrains them from taking unnecessary risks—most of the time.

Death Korps Lieutenant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	41	35	40	32	30	30	35	35	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 15

Armour: Guard Flak Armour (4 All).

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Jaded, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Resistance (Fear), Sidearm Swift Attack, Takedown, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1 d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 2 Krak grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10+4 X; Pen 6; Clip 1; Reload -; Concussive [0]).

Gear: Death Korps uniform, micro-bead, respirator, 4 lasgun clips, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.

TALLARN 35TH

The 35th Tallarn Desert Raiders have been stationed on Hervara for years, and the difficulties of resupplying their forces have taken a toll. Nevertheless, the hit-and-run tactics employed by the 35th Light Infantry have been extremely successful, largely due to strong support in the form of Sentinel Scout walkers and Rough Riders mounted on hardy Mukaali. Scarcity of materiel has had an unavoidable impact on the regiment's combat effectiveness, but in true Tallarn fashion, the 35th has refused to acknowledge this hardship. Many of the Tallarn's skills have translated well to the environs of Hervara. The caustic atmosphere helps conceal ambushes, just like the sandstorms of Tallarn. Tallarn Desert Raiders are also expert tunnel fighters, and they must rely on these skills more and more as losses mount.

The basic Tallarn Desert Raiders grouping is the ten-man infantry squad. Squads are led by a Tallarn Sergeant, and usually one Tallarn Guardsman is equipped with a plasma gun. Two Tallarn Guardsman can form a heavy weapons team armed with a missile launcher. As the 35th was under strength when deployed to Hervara, many squads do not match this configuration.



TALLARN GUARDSMAN

The Tallarn Desert Raiders are as known for their successful guerrilla tactics as for their capacity to operate effectively in the most inhospitable environments imaginable. Matching the ambushes and surprise assaults of the traitorous Hervara Excavatory Warriors forces with hit-and-run attacks of their own, the Tallarn have proven invaluable to the war effort on Hervara. They favour close engagements, which the poor visibility of Hervara's surface and the shifting tunnels both suit. The 35th Desert Raiders has earned a fearful reputation amongst the Severan Dominate forces on Hervara, as tales spread of entire squads or platoons of soldiers slain in their bunkers in the night by wicked, curved blades.

Tallarn Guardsman (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	35	35	35	38	28	34	25	22	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 11

Armour: Flak jacket, helm (3 All).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Surface) (Ag), Survival (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reaction, Sprint.

Weapons: M36 lasgun (Basic; 100m; S/3/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Reliable), mono-knife (Melee/Thrown; 1d5+3 R; Pen 2), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 3 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke [6]).

Gear: Tallarn uniform, magnoculars, micro-bead, respirator, 4 lasgun clips, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.

TALLARN SERGEANT

The Tallarn Desert Raiders often undertake daring hit-and-run missions, requiring them to operate behind enemy lines or otherwise far from any external support. For this reason, Tallarn Sergeants are known for being particularly decisive, and adept at operating independently of higher command. While this trait is valued by most Tallarn commanders, it has sometimes caused friction between Tallarn squads and Imperial Guard forces from other regiment.

Tallarn Sergeant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
36	37	35	35	38	30	36	30	27	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 13

Armour: Flak jacket, helm (3 All).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int),

Operate (Surface) (Ag), Parry (WS), Survival (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reaction, Sidearm, Sprint, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 3 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke [6]).

Gear: Tallarn uniform, magnoculars, micro-bead, respirator, 4 lasgun clips, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.

TALLARN LIEUTENANT

To command a company of Tallarn Desert Raiders requires grit, determination, and expertise. To command the respect of the men of Tallarn, an officer must be an expert rider, a consummate swordsman, a skilled marksman, and a fearless warrior. Almost without exception, Tallarn Lieutenants are fully prepared, even eager, to confront danger alongside their men, whether this means charging headlong into battle, or infiltrating deep behind enemy lines. The equipment used by Tallarn Lieutenants reflects the skill of Tallarn's artisans, from elaborately carved breastplates to gold-inlaid sword blades and decorative silken capes.

Tallarn Lieutenant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	38	35	35	38	32	38	35	32	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 17

Armour: Flak jacket, helm (3 All).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Surface) (Ag), Parry (WS), Survival (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reaction, Sidearm, Sprint, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 3 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke [6]).

Gear: Tallarn uniform, magnoculars, micro-bead, respirator, 4 clips for lasgun, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.



TALLARN ROUGH RIDER

The Tallarn regiments are famed for their Rough Riders, and rightfully so. The hit-and-run tactics employed by the Tallarn Desert Raiders are perfectly suited their mounts. Living steeds are often much more difficult for enemies to detect from afar than vehicles, allowing the Raiders to close on their enemies without being detected, leaving the enemy dumbfounded and flat-footed. As is the case with the Rough Riders of other regiments, the Tallarn wield fierce hunting lances, long polearms tipped with explosive charges effective even against the toughest targets. Although the explosive tip is only good for a single attack, the Rough Riders' charge is often enough to break the enemy line. Most Tallarn Desert Raiders prefer to ride Mukaali, whenever possible. These huge beasts, while not native to Tallarn, are perfectly adapted to arid environments such as the deserts of the Tallarn's home world and Hervara.

Tallarn Rough Riders use the profile for Tallarn Guardsmen, Tallarn Sergeants, and Tallarn Lieutenants, as appropriate, with a +5 to their Weapon Skill and Perception Characteristics and the following additional equipment: hunting lance (Melee; 2d10+3 X; Pen 7; Concussive [3] Single-Use), laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable). Sergeants and Lieutenants sometimes replace their hunting lances with power swords (Melee; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field). All mounted Rough Riders are considered Elite foes.

MUKAALI

Mukaali are hardy desert animals, native to the world of Goru-Prime. These animals, sometimes called Sand Pacers, are supremely adapted to survival in a desert environment, able to survive for extended periods without water or food. Though extremely docile, these beasts' hardiness and suitability to desert climates make them a favoured mount for the Tallarn, who import large herds from Goru-Prime on a regular basis.

Standing easily over two metres tall at the shoulders, Mukaali are hairless, quasi-reptilian beasts. Their tough, thick hide hangs in great folds, and is strong enough to not only provide protection from predators, but also offer a limited defence against weapons. Their sloped backs and long necks leave a perfect spot for a rider atop the Mukaali's shoulders, and while their gait is somewhat odd in appearance, their long legs allow them to travel at considerable speed. More important to the sorts of operations for which the Tallarn prefer the creatures, Mukaali can sustain their pace for long periods of time, even longer than horses. Mukaali have relatively small heads, barely broader than their thick necks, which are almost completely flat and featureless. From a distance, it is difficult to even identify the small, deep-set eyes and nostril holes. Due to their size and gait, Mukaali require a completely different approach to handling than the horses more commonly used by Rough Riders. Those riders willing to learn are rewarded with a dependable and durable beast of burden, capable of handling much heavier loads than other comparable mounts—a creature perfectly suited to long-term operations behind enemy lines.

Mukaali (Minion)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
21	--	55	45	22	10	35	10	12

Movement: 8/16/24/48

Wounds: 20

Armour: Thick hide (All 2).

Total TB: 5

Skills: Awareness (Per).

Talents: Iron Jaw, Hardy, Resistance (Heat).

Traits: Bestial, Natural Armour (2), Natural Weapons, Quadruped, Size (Enormous), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (+3), Unnatural Toughness (+2).

Weapons: Hooves (Melee; 1d10+1; Pen 0; Primitive [7]).

Desert Dweller: Mukaali are natural creatures of the desert, able to go for long periods of time without water or food. Mukaali gain a +30 bonus to any Toughness Tests for dehydration or starvation, and reduce Fatigue caused from such sources by half. However, the same adaptations leave Mukaali susceptible to cold; they suffer a -30 penalty to Toughness Tests due to cold.

Pacifist: Mukaali are naturally timid and completely averse to violence. Unless under the control of a rider or handler, Mukaali always fail the Willpower Test required by the Bestial Trait.

MOUNTED

The Rough Riders of the Tallarn 35th are mounted on Mukaali, beasts that are well-adapted to Hervara's inhospitable environment. Tallarn Rough Riders are accomplished riders, and have worked with the same Mukaali for years (a necessity, due to the difficulties of resupplying), beast and rider becoming well attuned to one another. As such, controlling their mounts requires no special Skill Tests or Actions, and the Mukaali's Bestial Trait is ignored if it has a rider. In effect, this means that mounted Rough Riders use the Movement rate of their mount when taking Movement Actions. Because Mukaali are such enormous riding beasts, Ranged attacks against a mounted Rough Rider gain a +20 due to the Mukaali's Size, but strike the Mukaali unless the attacker makes the Called Shot Action. In melee combat, an opponent can choose to attack either the Rough Rider or his Mukaali without penalty. A mounted Rough Rider gains a +10 to Weapon Skill Tests when attacking unmounted foes.

KEY DRAMATIS PERSONAE

"Heresy. Such a simple, grave word that covers such a broad swathe of unspeakable actions, words, and thoughts. Tell me, what have you been thinking, trooper?"

—Lord Commissar Salieri

The NPCs in this section play an important part in the plot of **FINAL TESTAMENT**. The roles of these NPCs, as well as the circumstances under which they are likely to be encountered, are thoroughly detailed in the adventure text. It is a good idea for Game Masters to familiarise themselves with these NPCs, and the particular part that each one plays in the story, so that they can modify the adventure as necessary to allow for unexpected actions on the players' part.

Many of the NPCs in this section possess the Touched by the Fates Trait—after all, they are important enough to be included here. GMs should not feel the need to keep an NPC alive just because they have Fate Points left, but, rather, allow the NPC to burn Fate Points if necessary to survive until their part has been played. For instance, if the PCs decide to kill Mech-Deacon Epsil Klax in **Chapter II: The Night Path**, the GM might wish to allow him to die, rather than burn a Fate Point to survive. Although, by the same token, if the GM wishes to have the paranoid Tech-Priest show up again later in the campaign, he certainly may wish to let him survive. Another key thing to remember about NPCs with Touched by the Fates is that they can spend Fate Points in the same ways the PCs can. Thus, even an NPC destined to die as part of the plot can spend Fate Points to remove Damage suffered or re-roll attacks or Evasion Tests, making for a more dramatic and exciting encounter.

CAPTAIN RUPERT FORDHAM

A lieutenant at the time, Rupert Fordham was amongst the initial wave of Luggnum troops called in to deal with the aftermath of the Red Vaults incident. Operating under the command of an Inquisitor whose name he never learned, Fordham witnessed first-hand the brutality with which the Imperium enforces the rule of holy law. While many depraved worshipers of dark gods perished on the witch-pyres, so too did many innocents who had simply been deemed contaminated due to proximity to the source of the corruption. Fordham clearly recalls the words of the Inquisitor, his face bathed in the flickering light cast by burning bodies, "Innocence proves nothing." This was a chilling moment that left an indelible impression. In the years since, Fordham's faith in the Imperium has continued to erode. The war on Hervara is the Captain's greatest test yet. As Fordham watched his men die, fighting against a foe who is no xenos abomination, untouched by Chaos, and whose only crime is the desire to withdraw from the Imperium, the final foundations of his loyalty have crumbled. When Corporal Kousenk reached out to him to try to draw him to the Severan Dominate cause, he found the Captain receptive to the separatist ideals he espoused.

Captain Rupert Fordham (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	42	37	42	35	41	42	39	45

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 20

Armour: Flak coat, kilt (3 Body, Arms, Legs). **Total TB:** 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +10, Deceive (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS) +10, Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Blademaster, Counter Attack, Heightened Senses (Hearing), Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Sprint, Street Fighting, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Traits: Touched by the Fates (2).

Weapons: Bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/—; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), Good Craftsmanship sword (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Balanced), Knife (Melee/Thrown; 5m; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload —; Blast [3]), 2 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke).

Gear: Luggnum Imperial Guard uniform, preysense goggles, respirator, 4 bolt pistol clips, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer, satchel, lho sticks.



NPCs & ADVERSARIES

COMMANDER LI JACOBY

For a man of his rank, Commander Li Jacoby has comparatively little military command experience, and owes his promotion to the high casualty rate amongst the Hervara Excavatory Warriors rather than to any initiative or outstanding ability on his part. Prior to the secession, Jacoby's only notable leadership experience was working as a mine foreman.

A man of middle age, Li Jacoby's greying hair and furrowed brow speak to the stresses of combat and responsibility. Commander Jacoby's black Hervara Excavatory Warriors uniform is patched in several places, and is generally covered in a patina of dust. Jacoby's loyalty is to his home world, and he views the Imperial forces as invaders. Nonetheless, he longs for the days when the only enemies were the Orks.

Commander Li Jacoby (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
36	38	33	38	4I	37	38	35	37	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 18

Armour: Guard flak armour (4 All).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Lightning Reflexes, Rapid Reaction, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Traits: Touched by the Fates (1).

Weapons: Hand cannon (Pistol; 35m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 2; Clip 5; Reload 2 Full), shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

Gear: Hervara Excavatory Warriors Uniform, respirator, 2 clips for hand cannon, 8 shotgun cartridges, 1 kg demolition charge.

CORPORAL KOUSENK

Since the commencement of the Imperial Guard action on Hervara, Corporal Kousenk of the Hervara Excavatory Warriors has had the Imperial forces convinced of his loyalty. In actuality, Kousenk is a committed servant of Duke Severus, and a trusted agent of the Severan Dominate on Hervara. His success as a spy for the Severan Dominate makes Kousenk a valuable asset, and the information he has passed to the Severan Dominate has resulted in the deaths of numerous Guardsmen. Ever since his mother was taken by the Black Ships, Kousenk has harboured a growing resentment of the Imperium and its dictates. Perhaps it was the necessity of hiding his heretical beliefs that forced Kousenk to develop his talents of dissembling and misdirection, but regardless of the reason, the corporal is a consummate liar as well as a skilled tracker. Corporal Kousenk is well aware of his value as an infiltrator, and takes every precaution to conceal his true allegiance. Were any Imperial Guardsmen to discover Kousenk's treachery, he would be more than willing to take any and all steps necessary to silence them.

Corporal Kousenk (Elite)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	40	4I	37	38	35	4I	35	39	

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 18

Armour: Flak Coat (3 Body, 3 Arms).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (War), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scrutiny (Per), Stealth (Ag), Survival (Per) +10.

Talents: Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Swift Attack, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Weapons: Shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter), laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Half; Reliable), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 2 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke [6]).

Gear: Chrono, Hervara Excavatory Warriors Uniform, respirator, 12 shotgun cartridges, 4 inferno shells, 2 laspistol clips.

ENGINEER OHARA

Once, Engineeer Ohara had a shining future before him. Sadly, he has met a fate far worse than death for an adherent of the Machine God—more wracking than the physical torture he has suffered, he has been forced to watch as the Orks desecrated far too many pieces of holy technology (including the Ordinatus) around him with their exuberant and heretical experimentation, flagrantly ignoring every ritual and protocol he exists to uphold. During his imprisonment, Ohara snapped, and revealed secrets about the workings of the most sacred device to the Greenskins.

The Engineeer is in a sad state. His Mechanicus robes are in tatters, and many of his implants have been damaged or replaced with Ork technology. A crude Ork glyph depicting "teef" has been painted over his respirator in his own machine fluid. The profile given below represents Ohara in this weakened state.

Engineer Ohara									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
19	15	28	3I	18	3I	2I	19	15	

Movement: 1/2/4/8

Wounds: 6

Armour: None.

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness, Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Tech) (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Archeotech) (Int), Linguistics (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Techna Lingua) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Cold Hearted, Ferric Summons, Luminen Shock, Orthoproxy, Technical Knock.

Traits: Mechanicus Implants.

Weapons: None.

ENSIGN SIOBHAN MASON

As a newly commissioned officer, Ensign Mason is eager to prove herself to her superiors, and, for that matter, her subordinates. Mason is dutiful and faithful to the God-Emperor and Imperial Navy. Naively, she assumes that all members of the Imperial Guard and Navy are equally committed, operating dutifully at all times.

Ensign Siobhan Mason									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
3I	3I	35	35	37	38	3I	29	38	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 10

Armour: Naval Uniform (All 1).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Common Lore (Imperial Navy, Tech, War), Linguistics (Imperial Codes, Low Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface, Stellar) (Int), Operate (Aeronautica, Void) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Trade (Technomat) (Int).

Talents: Rapid Reaction.

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/—; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Half; Reliable).

Gear: Imperial Navy uniform, micro-bead.

LIEUTENANT AVERY FITZSIMMONS

An ambitious young officer, Lieutenant Fitzsimmons views the secession of the Severan Dominate as an opportunity to further his military career. He hopes that by proving his abilities in a series of daring missions, Severan Dominate central command will take note and promote him to a position that sees him leaving Hervara for greater things. He fully believes that he is destined to command armies and travel across the stars. Lieutenant Fitzsimmons does not have any real commitment to the Severan Dominate, or to any ideals outside of his own ambition, for which he sees the fledgling separatist movement as the most efficient avenue.

Lieutenant Fitzsimmons' egotism extends to his fighting style, forgoing standard-issue las weapons in favour of a matched pair of customised stub revolvers. Fitzsimmons often brags of his marksmanship, showing off in front of new recruits or officers whenever he gets the chance.

Lieutenant Fitzsimmons (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
4I	47	33	38	4I	38	4I	36	36	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 18

Armour: Flak Greatcoat (4 Body, Arms, Legs).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (I), Deceive (Fel) +10, Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Stealth (Ag) +10.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Deadeye Shot, Gunslinger, Lightning Reflexes, Mighty Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Swift Attack, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Ranged).

Traits: Touched by the Fates (1).

Weapons: 2 stub revolvers† (Pistol; 30m; S/—/—; 1d10+5 I; Pen 0; Clip 6; Reload 2 Full; Reliable), mono-knife (Melee; Thrown 1d5+3 R; Pen 2), 2 blind grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; 2d10 E; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke), 2 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke [3]).

Gear: Hervara Excavatory Warriors Uniform, respirator, 18 bullets, 6 dum dum bullets, 12 man-stopper bullets.

†Fitzsimmons' revolvers both feature the Trigger Adjustment upgrade, adding +1 to his Initiative rolls, but inflicting a −5 penalty to Ballistic Skill Tests for anyone else who uses them.

MAJOR NATALIA FOUDRANG

Major Natalia Foudrang knows first-hand the cost of treachery, for the guilty and innocent alike. A tall, imposing woman with a duelling scar across her left cheek, Foudrang's apparent composure hides a deep-seated paranoia. Ever alert for sedition within the ranks of her forces, Foudrang's attention is as focused inward as it is toward the enemy. As with all Luggnum Sewer Rats, the major carries an ancient clan sword, with which she is expertly proficient—a requirement for any Luggnum officer.

The climate of paranoia which dominates amongst the Imperial leadership on Hervara has done nothing to ease Major Foudrang's own concerns of treachery. Captain Fordham's betrayal seems to confirm all of Foudrang's worst fears, and it's no surprise that she makes the situation at Hervara XIX her top priority as soon as she learns of what has transpired.

Major Natalia Foudrang (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
5I	42	4I	42	37	4I	46	36	47	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 21

Armour: Flak Coat, Carapace Breastplate, and Flak Kilt (6 Body, 3 Arms, 3 Legs).

Total TB: 4

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +10, Charm (Fel), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperium, Spinward Front War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (High Gothic, Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS) +10, Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int).

Talents: Ambidextrous, Blademaster, Counter Attack, Crushing Blow, Heightened Senses (Hearing), Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Quick Draw, Rapid Reaction, Sidearm, Sprint, Street Fighting, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

Traits: Touched by the Fates (2).

Weapons: Plasma pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/—; 1d10+6 E; Pen 8; Clip 10; Reload 2 Full; Maximal, Overheats), Best Craftsmanship sword (Melee; 1d10+7 R; Pen 0; Balanced), Knife (Melee/Thrown; 5m; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload —; Blast [3]), 2 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke [6]).

Gear: Luggnum Imperial Guard uniform, preysense goggles, respirator, 3 clips for plasma pistol, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer, satchel.

MECH-DEACON EPSIL KLAX

An aged Tech-Priest extensively blessed with the True Flesh, Mech-Deacon Epsil Klax's assignment to Hervara is an ignominious one, the result of disastrous experiments in years past. For the Mech-Deacon, the discovery of the Ordinatus is truly a blessing from the Ommissiah, an opportunity to redeem his past failures. Klax has devoted all of his resources to researching the Ordinatus, even calling in a favour with the Departmento Munitorum for a squad of Storm Troopers to confirm the presence of the Ordinatus and reclaim it. In his obsession, Klax has completely isolated himself, especially from others of his order, who he believes wish to interfere with his precious research into the Ordinatus. Swathed in the red robes of his order and encircled by undulating mechadendrites, Klax can only be identified as human by the withered flesh of his right hand.

While not a front-line combatant, Mech-Deacon Klax's augmentations make him formidable. His bionic body is very durable, and the finely-attenuated servos and fibre-bundles of his bionic limbs enhance his might beyond the limits of mere flesh. Klax's research into the Ordinatus has consumed him, and the paranoid Mech-Deacon would die before giving up his records.

Mech-Deacon Klax (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	38	42	47	28	61	45	52	19	

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Armour: Mechanical plates (All 7).

Skills: Awareness, Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Tech) (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Archaeotech) (Int), Linguistics (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Techna Lingua) (Int), Logic (Int), Operate (Surface) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Binary Chatter, Cold Hearted, Disturbing Voice, Ferric Summons, Luminen Shock, Mechadendrite Use (Utility, Weapon), Orthoproxy, Paranoia, Swift Attack, Technical Knock.

Traits: Machine (2), Mechanicus Implants, Touched by the Fates (2).

Weapons: Custom power axe (Melee; 1d10+11 E; Pen 7; Power Field, Unbalanced), drum-fed bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/3/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 16; Reload 2 Full).

Cybernetics: Good Craftsmanship bionic left arm, ballistic mechadendrite (Compact plasma pistol), Good Craftsmanship bionic eyes incorporating preysense goggles, ferric lure implants, Good Craftsmanship bionic legs, luminen capacitors, two manipulator mechadendrites, optical mechadendrite.

Gear: Robes of station, sacred unguents, dataslate, combi-tool, research materials on the Ordinatus, modified servitors†.

†**Modified Servitors:** Klax's servitors use the profile on page 372 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook, except for one thing: each one has been programmed to detonate upon the Mech-Deacon's command. As a Reaction, he can detonate up to 1d5 of them, each one exploding for an attack with the following profile: (1d10+6 E; Pen 4; Blast [3]).

Wounds: 22

Total TB: 4

LORD COMMISSAR SALIERI

The son of senior Departmento Munitorum adepts lost to the Warp, Ayus Salieri was raised from infancy by the tutors and drill-abbots of the Schola Progenium. After a brief period serving in the Storm Trooper companies, during which time he displayed a natural aptitude for leadership and a steely resolve, Salieri was inducted into the Commissariat. Salieri's career as an Imperial Commissar is long and distinguished, and it has been said that he can turn the tide of battle with a single shot. Of course, the shot in question is typically directed at a cowardly or incompetent Imperial officer. Salieri's uncompromising skill, courage, and prowess have gained him the recognition and respect of his peers and superiors, and the fear of those under his command. As zealous and by the book as he is, however, Salieri is no fool, and realises that, occasionally, circumstances warrant subtler methods.

In his heavy, black flak coat and peaked cap, emblazoned with a death's head, and the gleaming gas mask he has taken to wearing in Hervara's harsh environs, Salieri perfectly embodies the dread aspect of an Imperial Commissar. Icons of his faith and devotion to the Imperium adorn Salieri's armour and uniform as fury and fanaticism are engraved indelibly in his iron mind.

Lord Commissar Salieri (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
47	45	35	46	36	39	43	51	51	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Armour: Custom flak greatcoat (All 5).

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per) +20, Charm (Fel) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperium, Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Inquiry (Fel) +10, Interrogation (WP) +10, Intimidate (S) +20, Scholastic Lore (Judgement, Tactica Imperialis) (Int) +10, Scrutiny (Per) +10.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Air of Authority, Crack Shot, Deadeye Shot, Die Hard, Fearless, Nerves of Steel, Hatred (Traitors), Lightning Attack, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter, Sidearm, Summary Execution, Swift Attack, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged), Unshakeable Faith.

Traits: Touched by the Fates (2).

Weapons: Good Craftsmanship bolt pistol (Ranged; 30m; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Reliable, Tearing), Good Craftsmanship power sword (Melee; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field).

Gear: Commissar's uniform, personal encrypted microbead, refractor field, 4 clips for bolt pistol, rebreather.



PRIMARIS PSYKER CAULDWELLE

As one touched by the Warp but devoted to the Emperor, Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle knows better than most that the galaxy is not black and white. She also realises full well that had circumstances been slightly different, she might have been found wanting in the eyes of the Adeptus Astra Telepathica and condemned to death. Because of this, Cauldwelle is often willing to give others the benefit of the doubt that most commissioned officers of the Imperial Guard or senior Adepts of the Departamento Munitorum would deny. That said, Cauldwelle hates traitors just as any good Imperial citizen does, and realises the danger posed by mercy.

Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle has a perhaps unique insight into the minds of traitors, but by sifting through the deepest thoughts of such individuals, she cannot help but catch an occasional grain of truth amongst the misguided and blasphemous beliefs. As one who cannot help but understand on some level the motivations of the Severan Dominate, Cauldwelle is secretly troubled by the sanctions taken by the Imperium. Fortunately for her, there are few other psykers who would be capable of revealing her own thoughts.



Cauldwelle's most important use to the Imperium is as an instrument of interrogation, and can reveal even the best-concealed treacheries. The duty of delving into the minds and souls of madmen and heretics has been taxing on Cauldwelle, but she tries to conceal her exhaustion when dealing with others. Often in the company of Lord Commissar Salieri, the appearance of the pair is enough to cause even the most seasoned Imperial Guard commander's heart to sink.

Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	35	32	32	41	45	39	51	29	

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Armour: Flak armour (All 3).

Wounds: 15

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Adeptus Astra Telepathica, Calixis Sector, Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, Imperium, Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Forbidden Lore (Mutants, Psykers, The Warp), Interrogation (WP), Linguistics (High Gothic, Imperial Codes, Low Gothic), Psyniscience (Per) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Tech-Use (Int).

Talents: Lightning Reflexes, Psy Rating 5, Warp Sense.

Traits: Touched by the Fates (3).

Psychic Powers: Dominate, Hallucination, Invisibility, Mind Scan†, Psychic Shriek, Terrify.

Weapons: Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Half; Reliable), force staff (Melee; 1d10+9 I; Pen 7; Force).

Gear: Psy focus, data-slate.

†**Mind Scan:** Mind Scan is a psychic power that requires a **Challenging (+0) Opposed Willpower Test**, a Half Action to manifest, a Full Action to Sustain, and has a Range of 1 metre per Psy Rating. Each Round a target is affected, the psyker delves deeper into the target's mind, gleaning more information. The target may attempt to resist each Round, requiring another Opposed Willpower Test. If the target wins, the psyker is repelled from his mind and gains no further information. In the first Round, the psyker learns basic information, including the target's name, mood, and general state of health. In the second Round, the psyker has access to the target's surface thoughts, and learns his level of Insanity Points and Corruption Points. In the third Round, the psyker accesses the target's short-term memory, and in the fourth Round, his subconscious is revealed. Finally, beginning in the fifth Round, the target's mind is laid bare for the psyker to plunder at will.

GM Note: If the Player Characters have a Sanctioned Psyker amongst their number and are on good terms with Primaris Psyker Cauldwelle, the psyker might, at the GM's discretion, get the opportunity to learn the power from her for the cost of 400 xp. It counts as a Psychic Power from the Telepathy Discipline.

SUPPLY OFFICER VON MEERING

Supply Officer Von Meering generally uses one word to describe herself: professional. Well aware of the conflicting desires of the troops and the Departamento Munitorum, Von Meering does everything as “by-the-Manual” as possible, and long ago gave up on being friendly. She conducts her armoury with exacting precision, ensuring that everything is neatly organised—the better to tell when anything is missing. Von Meering guards her hoard jealously, and sees any theft or damage as not only a crime against the Departamento Munitorum, but also as a personal offence against her. Von Meering notices the slightest scratch when equipment is returned to her, and requires the errant Guardsman to complete the proper (and interminably long) forms.

Supply Officer Von Meering									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	41	36	34	38	27	39	35	24	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 14

Armour: Flak coat (3 Body, Arms, Legs).

Total TB: 3

Skills: Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

Talents: Heightened Senses (Hearing), Nerves of Steel, Paranoia, Rapid Reload, Sprint, Street Fighting.

Weapons: Lascarbine (Basic; 75m; S/2/—; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Reliable), Good Craftsmanship sword (Melee; 1d10+3 R; Pen 0; Balanced), knife (Melee/Thrown; 5m; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload —; Blast [3]), 2 smoke grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/—/—; No Damage; Pen 0; Clip 1; Smoke [6]).

Gear: Luggnum Imperial Guard uniform, preysense goggles, respirator, 4 clips for las carbine, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer.

TECH-PRIEST HEXON

As with many of those indoctrinated into the Cult Mechanicus, Tech-Priest Hexon is less than endearing to most humans who have not been so blessed by the Omnissiah. An ambitious individual, Hexon resents the circumstances that have led to his posting on the world of Hervara, but draws inspiration from the rare instances of archaeotech discoveries there.

Tech-Priest Hexon is easily identified as a disciple of the Machine God. Servos and pistons hiss like mechanical serpents beneath his robes, and Hexon's movements are unnaturally precise and measured, like those of a chrono. His face is wrought in several places with glistening cables and the grill of his respirator emits clouds of cold air at seemingly irregular intervals. The Tech-Priest retains his original eyes, which are perpetually bloodshot, unable to keep up with his cybernetically enhanced systems.

In the same way, he expects the impossible of the people around him, and has little patience for those who do not match his screeching pace.

Tech-Priest Hexon									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	38	41	48	26	51	33	45	18	

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 15

Armour: Mechanicus carapace (5 All).

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Tech) (Int) +10, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Archaeotech, Xenos) (Int), Linguistics (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Techna Lingua) (Int), Logic (Int), Operate (Surface) (Int), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Cold Hearted, Combat Formation, Disturbing Voice, Ferric Summons, Luminen Shock, Mechadendrite Use (Utility, Weapon), Orthoproxy, Technical Knock, Total Recall.

Traits: Mechanicus Implants, Touched by the Fates (2).

Cybernetics: Good Craftsmanship Bionic Left and Right Arms, Good Craftsmanship Bionic Legs, Ferric Lure Implants, Luminen Capacitors, Utility Mechadendrite.

Weapons: Omnissian axe (Melee; 1d10+8 E; Pen 6; Power Field, Unbalanced), laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/—; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Half; Reliable).

Gear: Mechanicus robes, sacred unguents, dataslate, combi-tool.

IMPERIAL VEHICLES

“Guardsman, your excuse that your deficient senses failed to detect and assess the presence of the foreign body which punctured the tyre is unsatisfactory. You have dishonoured the spirit of this noble machine—the Omnissiah requires penance. Cogitate upon your failure as I perform the sacred rites of rotational replenishment.”

—Tech-Priest Hexon

The Imperial Guard employs a dizzying array of vehicles in its wars against the alien, the mutant, and the heretic. Aside from the mighty battle tanks and artillery for which the Guard is known, a variety of less impressive, and often less standardised, vehicles are employed for various tasks in support of the war effort. The Severan Dominate forces press an even wider smattering of vehicles into service. In some cases, crew-served weapons are hastily mounted to industrial or civilian autocarriages and cargo haulers, while others must rely solely on their driver's skill and the prayer papers affixed to the engine to see them to their destination.

SCUTUM-PATTERN BUNKER

The Scutum-Pattern Bunker is a Departamento Munitorum standard throughout the Spinward Front, but the Scutum's basic design allows for modifications by Tech-Priest Engineeers when warranted. Over four metres high, seven across, and six deep, with 50 centimetre-thick plascrete walls, the Scutum makes a formidable defence for a squad of troops. A ladder within the bunker provides access to the roof, where the wall of the bunker provides cover for gunners manning the two pintle-mounted weapons. Most bunkers are equipped with vox and auspex systems.

Type: Immobile
Cruising Speed: N/A
Structural Integrity: 85
Armour: Front 40, Side 40, Rear 32
Vehicle Traits: Immobile, Enclosed, Reinforced Armour
Crew: 1 Watch Commander, 4 Soldiers
Carrying Capacity: 15

Weapons

Pintle-mounted Autocannon (Front Facing/Right Facing/Left Facing; 300m; S/3/—; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip 20; Reload 2 Full; Ogryn-Proof, Reliable)

Pintle-mounted Heavy Bolter (Front Facing/Right Facing/Left Facing; 150m —/—/6; 1d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip 60; Reload Full; Tearing)

SYNFORD-PATTERN “FIREBOMB” PROMETHIUM TRANSPORT

The Synford-Pattern Mk III Promethium Transport, a variant of the commonly used Cargo-8 STC design, is well-suited to its intended task: moving volatile fuel from one location to another. Unfortunately, the Synford-pattern lacks the heavier armour of promethium transports manufactured on the Lathes of the Calixis Sector, and was never intended for use in a combat zone. This has earned it the name “Firebomb” amongst many of the soldiers who use it. Officers frown on this joke, and veterans can attest that Tech-Priests also fail to see the humour in the name.

Type: Wheeled Vehicle
Cruising Speed: 70 kph
Structural Integrity: 25
Tactical Speed: 16 m
Manoeuvrability: +0
Size: Enormous

Armour: Front 25, Sides 25, Rear 20

Vehicle Traits: Dangerously Flammable†, Extremely Volatile, Rugged, Wheeled Vehicle

Crew: 1 Driver

Carrying Capacity: 2 Passengers in the cabin. Additional passengers can cling to the ladders bolted to the fuel tank.

Weapons

None

Special Rules

†**Dangerously Flammable:** Hits against the Turret Location from the vehicle’s Side or Rear facings actually strike the large fuel tank that extends for most of its length. The fuel tank has the same Armour as the Front Facing (25). If an attack penetrates the armour, there is a chance the tank could explode. The attack must do Energy or Explosive Damage. If the attack is of the correct type and inflicts 12 or more points of Damage after penetrating armour, then the volatile fuel does explode. An exploding fuel tank deals 6d10 Damage with the Blast (5), Concussive (3), and Flame Qualities. Additionally, Critical Damage to the Turret Location from any source that results in fire or an explosion causes the tank to detonate. Note that an exploding fuel tank deals Damage to the vehicle’s Hull Location.

CUSTOMISED TAUROS ASSAULT VEHICLE

During a period of service alongside the Elysian 13th early in his career, Lord Commissar Salieri became convinced that their rapid strike vehicle, the four-wheeled Tauros Assault Vehicle, was the pinnacle of Imperial Guard ground craft, as it allowed him to deliver the Emperor’s judgement with greatest haste.

Since then, the Commissar Lord has secured one of these vehicles whenever possible. Fitted space for extra passengers and a nonstandard heavy bolter, “The Emperor’s Pious Retributor,” as Salieri calls this Tauros, is a terror of the battlefield, speeding across the ash-choked dunes to deliver death to the heretics.

Type: Wheeled Vehicle
Cruising Speed: 90 kph
Structural Integrity: 20
Tactical Speed: 25 m
Manoeuvrability: +20
Size: Enormous

Armour: Front 20, Sides 18, Rear 16

Vehicle Traits: Enhanced Motive Systems, Galvanic Motor†, Open-topped, Rugged, Wheeled Vehicle

Crew: 1 Driver, 1 Gunner

Carrying Capacity: 3 Passengers in the extended cabin.

†**Galvanic Motor:** The Tauros’ wheels are each powered individually, allowing it to keep plowing forward to the bitter end. It ignores Critical Effects that would apply to its Motive Systems until it accumulates 6 or more points of Critical Damage.

Weapons

Turret-mounted Heavy Bolter (150m; —/—/6; 1d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip 60; Reload Full; Tearing)





DA BOYZ

"I donno why da 'umies is klobberin' each otha, but if da gitz was as smart wot they finks they is, they'd be more worried 'bout da Boyz. Dozzent matter ta' me none. We'z can just klobber 'em while dey'z klobberin' each otha jus' fine, but it doz seem kinda unsportin'."

—Boss Garbark

The arrival of Orks from Waaagh! Grimtoof was unexpected and disastrous for both the Severan Dominate and Imperial forces on Hervara. While the Hervara Excavatory Warriors pride themselves on their ability to push back the incursions of Hervara's feral Ork population, Hervara's defenders were unprepared for the numerous vehicles of the Speed Freeks and for the preposterous weapons cobbled together by Big Mek Noshdakka and his subordinate Mekaniaks. The native Orks have quickly taken to this new technological base, as few Orks grasp the finer points of operating machines, such as braking or steering, anyway. For information on the unique Ork Traits such as Might Makes Right, Make it Work, and Mob Rule, see page 364 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook.

KOMMANDOS

Some among the Ordo Xenos postulate that the effectiveness of Ork Kommandos is due primarily to the simple fact that their foes never expect Orks to engage in the stealth operations and ploys that Kommandos employ. Those who witness Kommandos in action, however, are forced to concede that they display a cunning and aptitude for stealth that is otherwise unheard of amongst the Greenskins. Daubed in mud or dried blood, Kommandos engage in hit and run and sabotage missions against targets. Unlike other Orks, who believe that louder is better, Kommandos are perfectly satisfied by the silent kill of a slit throat or broken neck. On Hervara, Ork Kommandos have been behind several strikes that Imperial forces have attributed to the Severan Dominate.

Kommando (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	22	46	45	38	28	35	26	21	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Armour: Sneakin' suit (All 2).

Total TB: 6

Skills: Intimidate (S), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Stealth (Ag) +10.

Talents: Ambidextrous, Bulging Biceps, Crippling Strike, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Jaw, Lightning Reflexes, Street Fighting, True Grit, Unarmed Warrior.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Make it Work, Mob Rule, Sturdy, Unnatural Toughness (2).

Weapons: Slugga (Pistol; 20m; S/3/—; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full; Inaccurate; Unreliable), choppa (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Tearing, Unbalanced), 3 stikkbombs (Thrown; 12m; S/—/—; 2d10+2 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Blast [3], Ogryn-Proof, Unreliable).

Gear: Grapnel, mantrap, 1d5 Ork teeth ("teef").

LOOTAS

Lootas are irrepressible scavengers and thieves, accumulating as much gear as they can from any sources available. Other Orks know to watch their stuff when Lootas are about, and Lootas are invariably the first to pick through the gear of defeated enemies. One unusual trait of Lootas is their preference for using weapons of non-Orky construction, although they never object when a Mekaniak offers "improvements." Some Lootas use their scavenged weaponry with only minor adjustments, while others prefer to use deffguns—shoulder-carried heavy weapons, constructed by Mek from numerous weapons the Loota has acquired. Depending on the weapons it incorporates and the whims of the Mek, deffguns display all manner of abilities, often changing with each pull of the trigger, as different barrels open fire and ammunition hoppers cycle.

Loota (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
31	26	42	44	30	25	33	24	21	

Movement: 3/6/9/18

Wounds: 12

Armour: Scavenged armour (1d5 All).

Total TB: 6

Skills: Intimidate (S), Sleight of Hand (Ag).

Talents: Bulging Biceps, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Jaw, Street Fighting, True Grit.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Make it Work, Mob Rule, Sturdy, Unnatural Toughness (2).

Weapons: Deffgun (Heavy; 90m; Special†; Special†; Pen 1d5; Clip 50; Reload 1d5 Full; Inaccurate) or any single weapon of the GM's choice, adding the Unreliable Quality if the weapon does not already possess it.

Gear: 2d5 Ork Teeth ("teef"), pilfered gear and assorted junk.

†Deffguns are unique constructions, cobbled together by Mek from the wide assortment of weapons acquired by Lootas. The effect of a pull on a deffgun's trigger is unpredictable. Each Round after a Loota selects his target, roll 1d10. On a 1, the Loota makes a Standard Ranged Attack, on a 2-5, the weapon fires a Semi-Auto burst with a value equal to the roll, and on a 6-10 the weapon fires the indicated number of shots in a Full Auto burst. A successful attack inflicts Xd10 I Damage with a Penetration of X, where X is equal to 1d5-1 (to a minimum of 0).

MORE DAKKA!

GMs who desire an additional level of unpredictability can use the following additional rules for deffguns.

Before making an Attack roll with a deffgun, roll on **Table 4-1: Deffgun Qualities** to determine what Quality the deffgun gains for that Attack. Obviously, these rules could add a considerable number of extra dice rolls to a prolonged combat, so Game Masters might find it more expedient to roll only at the beginning of combat, after a certain number of Rounds have elapsed, or whenever the deffguns are reloaded.

TABLE 4-1: DEFFGUN QUALITIES

1d10	Weapon Quality
1	Primitive (8)
2	Blast (3)
3	Concussive (2)
4	Flame
5	Shocking
6	Overheats
7	Recharge
8	Snare (3)
9	Smoke (8)
10	Melta

MEGANOBZ

In Ork kultur, might makes right, and the strong take what they want. However, the Greenskins do employ a limited economy, in which the only accepted currencies are “teef” and brute violence. These are the actual teeth of Orks, and since Orks continue to grow teeth for their entire lives, losing a few here and there is, at most, a painful inconvenience. Of course, the best way to acquire more teef is by knocking them out of another Ork’s skull. In the end, this means that the biggest and strongest Orks often end up with the most teef anyway, leaving the whole system as little more than another reason for Orks to pick fights. The result of this system is that the best equipment and prized loot ends up in the hands of the huge Nobz who lord over the Boyz, as they are the biggest and strongest Orks aside from the warband’s leader. One such prize is mega-armour, which, aside from Bosses and the Mekaniaks who construct it, is only available to the toughest, most skilled Nobz. Meganobz represent the best of the best, and are often selected to accompany the Boss into battle.

Mega-armour represents the pinnacle of Mekaniak expertise. Massive suits of thick armour plating that provide defence to rival even the power armour of the Adeptus Astartes, mega-armour is so heavy that even the biggest, toughest Orks cannot bear the load unaided. Crude servo-actuators and pistons propel mega-armour, fed by an unstable power plant that belches smoke. This contraption not only allows the wearer to move, but enhances an Ork’s already impressive strength to truly gratuitous levels.

Meganob (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
46	19	79	47	39	29	34	32	33	

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Armour: Damaged mega-armour (Body 12, Arms and Legs 7, Head 4)

Skills: Command (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +10.

Talents: Air of Authority, Bulging Biceps, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Discipline, Iron Jaw, Street Fighting, True Grit.

Traits: Auto-stabilised, Brutal Charge, Fear (1), Make it Work, Might Makes Right, Mob Rule, Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (5).

Wounds: 7†

Total TB: 8

Weapons: Power klaw (Melee; 2d10+17 R; Pen 7; Power Field, Unwieldy), twin-linked shoota (Basic; 60m; S/3/—; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Inaccurate, Twin-linked, Unreliable).

Gear: 1d10 Ork teeth (“teef”), spiky gubbinz, shiny bitz.

Mega-Armour: In addition to providing Armour Points, mega-armour adds +30 to the wearer’s Strength (already included above). Mega-armour is incredibly bulky, and the crude motive-systems installed by Mekaniaks often result in movements that can be described as erratic, at best. Mega-armour imposes a –20 penalty to Agility Tests. In addition, characters wearing mega-armour cannot Run (but may Charge normally).

†The Wounds total reflects the damage suffered by the Meganobz during the firing of the Ordinatus in **Chapter III: The Horn of Mars**. Under normal circumstances, Meganobz have 25 Wounds.

SPEED FREEK

The Kult of Speed, most prevalent amongst the Evil Sunz clan, consists of those Orks who feel an overpowering need for speed. Most Speed Freeks appreciate loud noises and hails of dakka as much as any other Ork, but also realise that everything is better when done at break-neck speed. Even by Ork standards, Speed Freeks are impatient, and most Bosses know better than to give them any orders that require staying still for any length of time. Big Mek Noshdakka has attracted numerous adherents of the Cult of Speed, who grant him the utmost respect (at least by Ork standards) due to the impressive modifications and “konvershuns” he makes to warbikes, warbuggies, trukks, and whatever other vehicles he can get his hands on. Many of the Big Mek’s followers think that his greatest achievements are the Bombers constructed during the early days of the assault on Hervara, and his recent obsession with the Ordinatus has led to a fair bit of grumbling amongst the Speed Freeks, as well as a great deal of infighting, as the supply of functioning aircraft and other vehicles has begun to dwindle.

Speed Freek (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
37	22	43	42	43	25	34	25	22	

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Armour: Levver jakket (Body, Arms 2).

Skills: Intimidate (S), Navigate (Surface) (Int), Operate (Aeronautica, Surface) (Ag).

Talents: Bulging Biceps, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Jaw, Street Fighting, True Grit.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Make it Work, Mob Rule, Sturdy, Unnatural Toughness (4).

Weapons: Choppa (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Tearing; Unbalanced), slugga (Pistol; 20m; S/3/—; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full; Inaccurate).

Gear: 1d5 Ork teeth (“teef”), shiny bitz.

USING ORKS IN FINAL TESTAMENT

At first glance, the Orks might look like an impossible foe for Imperial Guardsmen. After all, the average Ork is tough as nails. Fortunately, the average Ork is also about as tactically aware, insightful, and intelligent as said nails. While some of the higher ranking Orks such as Nobz or Bosses are more intelligent and cunning than the mobs of Boyz, they still lack the training, expertise, and knowledge of Imperial Guard officers. The average Ork is stronger and tougher than a Guardsman, and often equipped with deadlier weaponry. This is not a bad thing! The situation forces Guardsmen, and players, to approach combat more inventively, trying out new tactics and combinations. Not only is this more challenging and interesting than simple, “stand and shoot” combat, but it also keeps combat fresh, even when facing similar mobs of Boyz. Conversely, with a few exceptions, Orks are extremely predictable in combat. Even the more evolved Orks are likely to revert to their savage, animalistic instincts when provoked—a trait that clever Guardsmen can use to their advantage.

NOB GUZZMASHA

After weeks on guard duty at Boss Garbark’s orders, Guzzmasha is spoiling for a fight even more than usual. The Nob has been venting his frustration on the Boyz under his command, and is completely unable to temper his bloodlust when presented with ‘umie interlopers. After suffering so much abuse from Guzzmasha, his Boyz are also more than ready to unleash their pent-up aggression.

In battle, Guzzmasha dives right in, with little thought to tactics and none to his own defence, trusting in his prized Mega-Armour to protect him. Guzzmasha’s power klaw is a devastating weapon, augmenting his own strength. With it, the ferocious Nob is easily capable of ripping an armoured man apart in a single blow. After so many weeks of boredom, Guzzmasha is thrilled at the chance to hurl himself headlong into combat and rip his enemies apart. If Guzzmasha fires his shoota, it is likely only as an afterthought, or as a way to make more noise.

Nob Guzzmasha (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
48	19	80 ¹²	49 ⁹	37	29	37	35	33	

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Armour: Mega-armour

(Body 14, Arms and Legs 10, Head 6).

Skills: Command (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +10.

Talents: Air of Authority, Bulging Biceps, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Discipline, Iron Jaw, Street Fighting, True Grit.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Fear (1), Make it Work, Might Makes Right, Mob Rule, Size (Hulking), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (5).

Weapons: Power klaw (Melee; 2d10+17 R; Pen 7; Power Field, Unwieldy), twin-linked shoota (Basic; 60m; S/3/–; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Inaccurate, Twin-linked, Unreliable).

Gear: A sack of 2d10 Ork teeth (“teef”), spiky gubbinz.

Mega-Armour: See **Ork Meganob** on page 141.

Wounds: 26

Total TB: 9

BOSS GARBARK

Garbark is the Boss because he is nothing less than the biggest, meanest, killiest Ork in the warband. However, Garbark also displays a level of cunning exceeding that of most Orks, and an ability to plan ahead more than a scant few minutes into the future. While most of Garbark’s Boyz are simply having a good time on Hervara, seeing the fighting as an end in itself, the Boss hopes to enhance his already formidable reputation by conquering the planet. The discovery of the Ordinatus has lent even greater value to the invasion, as Garbark hopes that possessing it will grant him a decided advantage over the other Bosses in the eyes of the Warboss. This ambition is what drives Garbark, though that is not to say that he doesn’t also enjoy a good scrap for its own sake.

Like any true Ork, too much thinking puts Garbark in the mood to fight (although, so does just about everything else). In his suit of Mega-Armour, kustomized by Big Mek Noshdakka, Garbark is huge, terrifying, and nearly unstoppable.

Boss Garbark (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
54	20	55 ¹⁰	53 ¹⁰	39	32	35	45	36	

Movement: 5/10/15/30

Armour: Damaged mega-armour

(Body 12, Arms and Legs 7, Head 4).

Skills: Command (Fel) +10, Intimidate (S) +10, Parry (WS).

Talents: Air of Authority, Berserk Charge, Bulging Biceps, Combat Master, Crushing Blow, Fearless, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Discipline, Iron Jaw, Street Fighting, Swift Attack, Thunder Charge, True Grit.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Fear (2), Make it Work, Might Makes Right, Mob Rule, Size (Enormous), Sturdy, Touched by the Fates (2), Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Toughness (5).

Weapons: Power klaw (Melee; 2d10+20 R; Pen 7; Power Field, Unbalanced), twin-linked shoota (Basic; 60m; S/3/–; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Inaccurate, Twin-linked, Unreliable).

Gear: 4d10 Ork teeth (“teef”), pet attack Squig, spiky gubbinz, shiny bitz.

Mega-Armour: See **Ork Meganob** on page 141.

†The Wounds total reflects the damage suffered by Garbark during the firing of the Ordinatus in **Chapter III: The Horn of Mars**. Under normal circumstances, Garbark would have 45 Wounds.

BIG MEK NOSHDAKKA

As a long-time adherent of the Kult of Speed, Big Mek Noshdakka has spent his life inventing ever-faster vehicles, much to the delight of the Speed Freaks who congregate around the Mek. The Ordinatus, then, is something of a paradigm shift for Noshdakka. Despite the Big Mek's "improvements", the Ordinatus is a slow vehicle, yet its pure grandeur and the obvious "killiness" of the sonic cannon have driven Noshdakka to obsession. Noshdakka is as devoted to the Ordinatus as an Ork could possibly be, and is prepared to fight to the last to prevent anyone—Ork or human—from taking it away from him.

Noshdakka's title is apt, for he towers over the Mekaniaks and Boyz that attend his work, rivalling the fearsome Nobz in size. Noshdakka has extensive experience constructing outlandish weapons for the Lootas in the warband, and his own kustom mega-blasta represents the pinnacle of his weaponsmithing expertise. Though extremely temperamental, when it works, the weapon is undeniably devastating.

While Noshdakka is intelligent by Ork standards, his talents are more instinctive than learned, as with most Mekaniaks. Nevertheless, Noshdakka is cunning, and has access to the deadliest equipment in the Orks' arsenal. Combined with his loyal cadres of Lootas, Speed Freaks, and highly expendable swarms of Gretchin, Noshdakka is a deadly and unpredictable opponent to even the best-prepared squads.



Big Mek Noshdakka (Master)

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
45	27	45	45	34	38	37	41	29

Movement: 4/8/12/24

Wounds: 34

Armour: Orky flak armour

Total TB: 8

(Head 1, Body 3, Arms 3, Legs 3).

Skills: Command (Fel), Intimidate (S), Operate (Aeronautica, Ground), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

Talents: Bulging Biceps, Crushing Blow, Furious Assault, Hardy, Iron Jaw, Street Fighting, True Grit.

Traits: Brutal Charge, Fear (1), Make it Work, Might Makes Right, Mob Rule, Sturdy, Size (Hulking), Unnatural Strength (4), Unnatural Toughness (4).

Bionics: Bionic Left Arm, Bionic Eyes incorporating Targeter, Cranial Armour.

Weapons: Kustom mega-blasta (Basic; 100m; S/—/—; 4d10+7 E; Pen 6; Clip10; Reload 3 Full; Blast [2], Overheats, Recharge, Shocking), choppa (Melee; 1d10+10 R; Pen 2; Tearing, Unbalanced).

Gear: 3d10 Ork teeth "teef," shiny bitz, assorted springs, gears, circuit boards, and other tek gubbinz.



ORK VEHICLES

ORK BOMMER

Nothing goes faster than aircraft, so the Speed Freeks on Hervara have gleefully used the Bommers cobbled together by Big Mek Noshdakka to full effect. As with most Ork “invenshuns,” there is no single design for Bommers. Their designs range from screaming “Dakkajets” to prometheum-spewing “Burna-Bommers” to volatile “Blitza-Bommers.” Mekks use each Bommer they construct as an opportunity to try out new methods of “makin’ dem go fasta.” Flyboyz who run out of fuel tend to spend their time feverishly painting kill marks, slogans, and animalistic faces on their craft as they wait to be resupplied, further individualising each vehicle. Some Bommers are single-pilot craft, although some Mekks prefer to bolt on extra guns, which may require the addition of grot gunners. Inexplicably, some of these airborne feats of insane Ork engineering function both in atmosphere and in void, making for an extremely versatile vehicle.

Eccentric even by Speed Freek standards, Flyboyz make for dangerously reckless pilots. This suicidal disregard for basic user safety, matched with an inordinate number of aircraft, has ensured the Orks air superiority on Hervara, at least for the time being.

Type: Aircraft

Cruising Speed: 2,300 kph

Structural Integrity: 25

Armour: All 25

Vehicle Traits: Flya

Crew: 1 Ork Flyboy

Carrying Capacity: None

Tactical Speed: Special

Manoeuvrability: +15

Size: Enormous

Weapons

Two Fixed Supa Shootas (Front Facing; 120m; –/–/10; 2d10+5 I; Pen 2; Clip 500; Inaccurate, Twin-Linked).

RED PAINT JOB

All Orks know that “red unz go fasta”, but none enjoy this fact as much as the Speed Freeks. Orks affiliated with the Kult of Speed commonly paint their vehicles red. Autosavants and Tech-Priests in the field have observed a marked difference in speed between those Orkish vehicles which are painted red and those which are not, but tend to leave this out of official reports, lest such ludicrous statements mark them out for mind-scrubbing.

A Kustom Red Paint Job can be applied to any Ork vehicle, increasing its Tactical Speed by 3m and its Cruising Speed by 15 kph. Game Masters can assume that all Ork vehicles encountered in the course of **FINAL TESTAMENT** have Red Paint Jobs. After all, the Speed Freeks had to do something to keep busy during the voyage to Hervara!

Extra Bitz

A Bommer can be given any of the following, as dictated by the Mekboy’s (or the GM’s) maniacal genius:

- Grot Gunner (Adds a Gretchin (see page 366 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook to crew one weapon).
- Two Turret-mounted Big Shootas (120m; –/–/10; 2d10+5 I; Pen 2; Clip 500; Inaccurate, Twin-Linked)
- Rokkits (300m; S/2/–; 3d10+8 X; Pen 7; Blast [2], Concussive [3])
- 2 Boom Bombs (Range Unlimited†; S/2/–; 3d10+5 X; Pen 3; Clip 2; Blast [8], Concussive [2], Indirect)
- 2 Burna Bombs (Range Unlimited†; S/–/–; 2d10+7 X; Pen 6; Clip 2; Blast [6], Flame, Indirect)

†Bomms have an unlimited range, but in only a single direction: down.

NEW VEHICLE TRAIT: FLYA

Bommers behave in a decidedly different fashion from the tanks of the Imperial Guard, or even the ramshackle Trukks and Wagons of the Orks. Bommers move so fast that they cannot truly engage in a prolonged combat the way characters and ground-based vehicles do, typically unleashing a hail of bullets or barrage of bombs as they fly past at supersonic speed before turning and coming back for a second pass. To represent this, Bommers do not follow the usual rules for vehicle movement. Each Round, the Flyboy piloting the Bommer must expend at least a Half Action on an Action that keeps his craft airborne. This does not preclude the pilot taking a Full Action Movement, such as Evasive Manoeuvres. To represent this, the Bommer is effectively removed from the combat for at least one Round after each of its Turns. Therefore, a Bommer only attacks or can be attacked every other Round, and possibly longer if the pilot gets distracted or decides to take a detour. This also means that a Bommer generally alternates its attacks from roughly opposite directions each time. Ork pilots display a tendency to fly dangerously (some might say suicidally) low, giving even unprepared ground troops a chance to defend against aircraft. Ballistic Skill Tests to attack a Bommer have a base Difficulty of Punishing (–50), unless the weapon is specifically designed to be employed against aircraft, in which case the Difficulty is Hard (–20). This Difficulty represents the challenge of hitting the aircraft due to its speed, height, and altitude, and no additional modifiers for range or speed are applied. Weapons with a Range of less than 100m cannot hit a vehicle with the Flya Trait, unless the GM rules that the pilot is flying extremely low, even by Ork standards.

CRITICAL DAMAGE

Bommers only barely stay airborne in the best of situations; any damage to their wings or engines is typically enough to send them spiralling out of control or detonating in an impressive fireball. A Bommer that suffers Critical Damage is effectively removed from combat. This may represent the vehicle crashing violently to the ground a few hundred metres away from the Player Characters, resulting in a massive explosion, or it could simply be that the Bommer flies into the distance, out of control, thick black smoke pouring from its engines (thicker than usual, that is).

ONLY WAR™ FINAL TESTAMENT™

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The mining world of Hervara is beset by war, ravaged by the conflict between the Severan Dominate and the Imperium of Mankind.

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Fight to survive the blast of war and decide the destiny of Hervara!

A copy of the ONLY WAR Core Rulebook is needed to use this supplement.



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