

WARHAMMER[®]

40,000



SENTINELS OF TERRA[™]

A CODEX:SPACE MARINES SUPPLEMENT

Codex: Adepta Sororitas

[Codex: Sentinels of Terra](#)

[Introduction](#)

[The Sons of Dorn](#)

[Lysander's Rise](#)

[Storm Clouds Gather](#)

[The Storm Breaks](#)

[The Crusade Begins](#)

[War in the Magor Rift](#)

[Infestation on Drashin](#)

[Vengeance Gathers](#)

[Fall of Malodrax](#)

[The 3rd Companys Triumph](#)

[Defenders of Terra](#)

[The 3rd Company at War](#)

[The Sentinels of Terra](#)

[Relics of the 3rd Company](#)

[Apocalypse The Crusade of Thunder](#)

[Cities of Death Stratagems](#)

[Planetstrike Stratagems](#)

[Altar of War - Sentinels of Terra](#)

[Altar of War - A Never-ending Crusade](#)

[Altar of War - Siege Warfare](#)

[Altar of War - Too Stubborn to Die](#)

[Echoes of War - Last Stand on Taladorn](#)

[Echoes of War - Strike Force Hammer](#)

[Echoes of War - Strike Force Anvil](#)

[Echoes of War - The Kommand Deck](#)

[Echoes of War - Confrontation on Drashin](#)

[Echoes of War - Retribution on Tamunash](#)

[Coming Soon](#)

[Copyright](#)



INTRODUCTION

The Imperial Fists have defended the Imperium since the days of the Great Crusade. They stood with the Emperor at the Siege of Terra, and have continued his life's work in the centuries since. They are indefatigable defenders of Mankind, and the foremost guardians of Terra itself.

For the Imperial Fists, the Great Crusade never ended, it merely changed form. Where other forces of the Imperium fight and die in order to preserve Mankind's dwindling holdings, the sons of Dorn blaze a trail of reconquest through the galaxy, bringing back into the fold worlds separated by Warp storms or xenos expansion. This implacable determination has not been without its price. The Imperial Fists have many times had to rebuild from the barest numbers in order that their mission may continue, yet continue it has. Nevertheless, their sacrifice of blood and bone is gladly given, for such is the calling of some of the Imperium's mightiest warriors.

THE SENTINELS OF TERRA

The Sentinels of Terra are the Imperial Fists' celebrated 3rd Company, a brotherhood of heroes who have forged many legends in their Emperor's service. Yet one campaign stands apart from the Sentinels' other achievements, a chain of desperate battles that saw a wounded company restored to greatness, and one of the Chapter's most honoured heroes absolved from the sin of pride. That campaign was the Crusade of Thunder, and its glorious account can be found within these pages.

HOW THIS CODEX SUPPLEMENT WORKS

If you are reading this codex supplement, then you have already taken your first steps into the Warhammer 40,000 hobby. The *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook contains all the rules you need to fight battles with your Citadel miniatures, while *Codex: Space Marines* contains everything you need to field a force of Space Marines in these games.

This codex supplement allows you to turn your collection of Space Marines into the unstoppable army of the Sentinels of Terra; the Imperial Fists 3rd Company. It recounts the pivotal year where the 3rd Company stood on the brink of annihilation, its struggle to reclaim honours and glories under the command of the famed Captain Darnath Lysander, and the ultimate triumph over one of the Chapter's greatest enemies.

You'll also find a showcase of Space Marines miniatures showing the colour scheme and iconography of the Sentinels of Terra. Finally, this book includes new missions, both to recreate the famous battles fought by the Sentinels of Terra, and to reflect their favoured tactics, as well as unique relics, Warlord Traits, and new stratagems to bring to bear in your games of Planetstrike and Cities of Death.







THE SONS OF DORN

The Imperial Fists were the most stalwart of the Space Marine Legions during the Horus Heresy, and their legend has grown with every passing century. Such heroism has always claimed its blood-price, but this is a burden the Imperial Fists bear with fortitude, for they know that their Primarch, Rogal Dorn, would have expected nothing less.

The Imperial Fists were the Emperor's praetorians throughout the Great Crusade, a duty they discharged with honour on worlds beyond count. Now, at the close of the 41st Millennium, the Legion is long gone, but the Chapter that bears its name maintains the duties and traditions of old. At the end of the Scouring, the Imperial Fists observed what they as saw the rest of the Imperium giving up on the Emperor's dream of a united Mankind, and swore that they would continue the fight – alone if necessary. Thus, the Great Crusade never finished for the Imperial Fists. Whilst other Space Marine Chapters, and the Imperium at large, have focussed their efforts on preserving what remains, the Imperial Fists continue to campaign across the galaxy, prosecuting war against the enemies of Mankind and reclaiming worlds lost many thousands of years ago.

'For others, the Great Crusade ended long ago. For us, it will not cease until all the worlds of Mankind are united once more, and the Emperor's golden age returns.'

- Captain Darnath Lysander

Yet though they are called to make war across the five segmentums of the galaxy, the Imperial Fists are the Defenders of Terra still. Their fortress monastery – the vast warship

known as *Phalanx* – holds station within the Sol System, and it is said the Chapter maintains a sequence of coded alert signals that allow them to withdraw from other battlezones with astonishing speed should Terra become threatened, just as they did once before.

It is commonly held that the Imperial Fists' finest hour came during the siege of the Emperor's Palace – a fortress that their Primarch, Rogal Dorn, had been pivotal in creating. The truth, however, is that the Imperial Fists have many times been vital to the Imperium's survival, though it is a point of honour amongst the sons of Dorn that such things are spoken of only out of need. Whilst the Chapter has never been afflicted with the same clandestine secrecy that is endemic to the Dark Angels, neither do they approve of the braggartism that permeates Chapters such as the Space Wolves. As individuals, and as a Chapter, the Imperial Fists seek their purpose in the performance of great deeds, not the recounting of the same. As a result, those who encounter the sons of Dorn are often left with the impression of sombre and cheerless warriors. Those that know them better – such as the Blood Angels – recognise the passion that all Imperial Fists keep under tight rein through adherence to protocol. This continual mortification is necessary, for pride has ever been the Imperial Fists' greatest weakness.

Pride is a powerful force. It can spur a warrior on to great deeds even whilst those around lose all hope. It dredges fresh strength from the most debilitating of fugues, and brings forth the flame of victory from the embers of despair. Yet pride is a sword that cuts both ways, as the Chapter has too often found to its cost. *Phalanx*'s librarius contains many tales of Imperial Fists who have died needlessly, driven to fight on when their Chapter and the Imperium both would have been better served by shamed, but living, warriors. Squads, companies – and if rumour speaks truly, a yet greater tithe of the Chapter's strength – have perished in this manner at one time or another. Such losses would have destroyed any other Chapter, but not the Imperial Fists, who maintain a recruit reserve far deeper than any other Chapter, in order that whole companies can be reconstituted at incredible speed when needed. It is a note of pride to all who serve aboard *Phalanx* that so long as one battle-brother yet stands to hold the Chapter banner high, then the sons of Dorn will never be truly defeated.

In an attempt to counteract these character failings, the Chaplains of the Imperial Fists preach credos intended to instil a more measured approach to war. Any defeat can be reversed, the Chapter's neophytes are taught, provided that there are warriors yet alive to see the matter done. Thus do the reclusiam teach, but at heart they know those words are just balms to soothe the incurable. Stubbornness is as much a part of the Imperial Fists as their Primarch's gene-seed, and it is a rare battle-brother who can resist its lure forever.

For an Imperial Fist, then, every battle is a test of will as much as anything else. Those who master their pride are able to embrace the strength it offers, but also have the wisdom to know when it tempts foolishness. Such Space Marines become heroes, but they can never truly escape the hubris of their blood. This certitude has been proven again and again in the long millennia of the Chapter's existence, but nowhere does it shine so true as in the Crusade of Thunder, also known in the Imperial Fists Liber Honoris as the 3rd Company's Triumph.

THE SENTINELS OF TERRA

The Imperial Fists 3rd Company – recorded in the Liber Honorus as the ‘Sentinels of Terra’ – have a long and storied history. To recount the roster of its captains is to speak the names of heroes past, warriors whose deeds are known far across the galaxy: Hellico, who held the Gate of Sanctity against the Word Bearers host; Meinhar, who scattered the Orks of Axarus and levelled their fortress; and Demetricos, the liberator of a hundred worlds in the Nebuchadnezzar Sector. The company has a weighty reputation to maintain, but each generation of battle-brothers does so with pride, seeking to honour their forebears whilst forging a legend of their own.



LYSANDER'S RISE

In the closing years of the 41st Millennium, there is one battle-brother who embodies the tenacity and determination of the Imperial Fists like no other. That man is Darnath Lysander, and it is impossible to tell of the Crusade of Thunder without recounting his story.

Lysander was marked for greatness from the very first, for he was recruited on Holy Terra itself. His presence at the Imperium's heart was the result of a long pilgrimage, started by his parents before his birth. It was a journey that took thirteen years to complete, and took the family through the devastation caused by Waaagh! Grozdakk as well as the tumultuous horror of the Quesarch Heresy. Lysander's parents perished along the way, murdered for refusing to recant their faith, but the boy survived. Living on his wits and the charity of the Imperial Cult, Lysander fought first to survive, and then to complete his parents' pilgrimage. Gradually, the tale of the stoic pilgrim boy had grown almost to a legend, doubtless exaggerated by priests furthering their own goals, but by the time he finally arrived on Terra, Lysander was welcomed as a true hero of the faith.

At that time, Chaplain Shadryss of the Imperial Fists was on Terra. He had heard the tales of the pilgrim boy and found Lysander before the Pillar of Bone. This was known to many as a monument to the Imperial Fists' courage in the wake of a long-forgotten disaster, but Shadryss knew its secret. The Pillar was the last remnant of the once-great Imperial Fists fortress monastery, destroyed in the Horus Heresy. Shadryss too was on a pilgrimage of sorts, to pay his respects to forebears long dead, and he took Lysander's presence as a weighty portent. When Shadryss returned to *Phalanx* once again, he did so with the boy at his side.

Lysander excelled on the harsh training fields of Juno and Ganymede, progressing through indoctrination and training with a speed seldom before witnessed. Under Shadryss' tutelage, he learned that the Emperor was not a god, as the Imperial Cult decreed, but a mighty warrior and visionary from whose mortal flesh the Space Marines had sprung. Lysander rejected this at first, for faith had been the only sustenance he had known for much of his young life. However, he soon came to embrace this new truth, realising that it made the Emperor no less a saviour. Like all those who had come before him, Lysander pledged his life to upholding the Emperor's works, not as the helpless worshipper he had once been, but as a warrior honouring the deeds of an illustrious forefather.

Years passed, and Lysander passed into Captain Jostin's 2nd Company, the Swords of Terra,

where he quickly rose to the rank of sergeant. Here, to the outrage of his peers, he cast out the official bolter drill honed over many thousands of years. Instead, Lysander trained his battle-brothers in the more unorthodox techniques he had learnt from Jonas Makan, the sombre Scout Sergeant who had inducted him into the art of war. When Jostin challenged Lysander about his breach of tradition, he refused to back down, arguing that effectiveness counted for more than blind adherence. However, in the end it was only Shadryss' intervention that prevented Lysander's demotion and censure.



A TRADITION OF DEFIANCE

Though *Phalanx* seldom leaves the Sol System, the Imperial Fists are often spread far and wide across the galaxy, the better to pursue their crusades against the Imperium's enemies. Once a crusade is launched, it can be years – or even decades – before the battle-brothers return to *Phalanx*. Defeat is not an option for those prosecuting such a crusade – either they return home in victory, or they do not return at all.

This implacable dedication means that crusades seldom have access to the near-limitless resources of other Space Marine strike forces. Once the crusade is incepted, its commander is expected to triumph with the resources at his disposal. This has bred a belief within the Chapter that a true warrior finds ways to triumph with the weapons at hand, which in turn has led to the Imperial Fists developing an almost zealous determination to employ superseded marks of armour and weaponry. Indeed, the Imperial Fists consider the use of such wargear to be physical proof that they haven't deviated from their mission for petty comforts such as needless resupply.

A HERO'S ASCENSION

It would not be until later that year, during the Battle of Colonial Bridge on Iduno, that Lysander would at last know vindication. There, three Tactical Squads from the 2nd Company held the bridge leading to the governor's palace against a cultist horde of some three thousand lost souls. Captain Jostin perished in the initial moments of the attack, a lucky

autogun shell smashing through his helm's left eyepiece to bury itself deep in his brain. With Jostin's death, Lysander took command, directing the survivors in the clockwork volleys first impressed upon him by Sergeant Makan. Unable to make headway through the storm of roaring shells, the cultists fell back in disarray, leaving a bloody rampart of their own dead behind.

The Battle of Colonial Bridge was the first time that Lysander's name was recorded in the Chapter's Liber Honoris, the same techniques that had once threatened to bring him ruin now earning him great honour. The battle also granted Lysander a first glimpse of one of the traitorous Iron Warriors. It had been their heresies that had wrought insurrection on Iduno, and one of their augmented warriors was later discovered amongst the dead. The renegade's presence was enough to bring the full might of the Imperial Fists down on Iduno, but no further traces of Perturabo's treacherous sons were found.

In the wake of Iduno, Lysander earned many more Imperial laurels. He became known as a warrior who could hold any position, no matter how indefensible it might appear to others. Yet he was no stranger to daring assaults, either. Indeed, it was following the capture of the Eldar cruiser *Blood of Khaine* that he rose to the command of the 2nd Company. When the Imperial Fists deployed to break the three-year Siege of Haddrake Tor, a planet in the merciless grasp of the Iron Warriors Warsmith Shon'tu, it was Lysander who commanded the Drop Pod assault onto the heights. Having secured the high ground, Lysander's strike force set up teleport homers to summon the Terminators of the 1st Company into the thick of the fighting.

Alas, the defenders had set a tremor in the Warp, and many of the Terminators materialised over deep chasms, or else in solid rock. Kleitus, Captain of the 1st Company, was one of these, his body reforming around solid stone. Before he died, Kleitus thrust his thunder hammer, the Fist of Dorn, into Lysander's hands, and bade him seek vengeance through victory.

This Lysander did, leading the survivors of the 1st Company alongside his own to shatter the Iron Warriors stronghold. Shon'tu fled from the planet in defeat, but he had left a mystery in his wake. Survivors spoke of how the Warsmith had concerned himself little with the despoliation of their world, and had instead buried himself in a search through its millennia-old archives. Unfortunately, there was no way to know what Shon'tu had been searching for, as he had destroyed the archives before making his escape.

In the reorganisation that followed Haddrake Tor, Lysander was elevated to the rank of First Captain, Master of the 1st Company, Overseer of the Armoury and Watch Commander of *Phalanx*. Chaplain Shadryss, now many centuries old, looked upon the path his recruit had walked, and saw his faith had been rewarded. Lysander seemed certain to rise one day to the supreme rank of Chapter Master, and perhaps lead the Imperial Fists into a new and glorious age.

A PRISONER OF CHAOS

Alas, this glorious destiny was not to be. As the 40th Millennium drew to a close, the Strike

Cruiser *Shield of Valour* was lost to the Warp. All hands, Lysander amongst them, were lost alongside, with slender hope for their return. For a time, the Imperial Fists nurtured the hope that the Warp would give up their battle-brothers, living or dead. In time, however, they had to accept the loss. Lysander's statue was raised in the Hall of Heroes.

Yet Lysander and his crew were not so dead as any supposed. Cast far off course by the whimsy of the Warp, they were flung forward through the centuries and far across the galaxy. When the *Shield of Valour* finally emerged into realspace, it did so in the fading years of the 41st Millennium and in the orbit of Malodrax – an Iron Warriors fortress on the Eye of Terror's fringe. Swiftly disabled by the world's formidable defences, the Strike Cruiser was boarded, and a handful of survivors – Lysander amongst them – taken as prisoners.

Lysander's captor, the Warsmith Shon'tu, believed himself a reincarnation of the legendary Dark Age warlord who had borne the same name. He had christened Malodrax after his predecessor's mythical fortress and, as he went about his bloody tortures, Shon'tu recounted 'his' glorious past deeds, ever boasting of the horrific legends he would reforge. He spoke endlessly of the spear Hydros, Bringer of the Swarm, and his search to reclaim the leviathan war barque *Tamunash*, whose weapons had laid waste to a thousand worlds and, Shon'tu boasted, would do so again.

Such was Lysander's force of will that he endured where few others could have done so. Though burdened by grievous harms, the captain tore free of his bondage scant weeks after his capture. Bereft of arms and armour, he wrought a storm of destruction on Malodrax's capital, seized control of a shuttle, and escaped with two of his battle-brothers.

When at last Lysander returned to *Phalanx*, the ranks of his Chapter were torn. Most rejoiced to see that a hero of the past had been returned to them, but a few were riven with doubt, for fear that Lysander's experiences had not left him without taint. In the months that followed, every fragment of Lysander's body and mind were subjected to the most exhaustive of investigations. Yet no matter how deep the Apothecaries, Librarians and Chaplains delved, no trace of corruption could be found. At the last, Lysander was restored to command of the 1st Company, an appointment met with almost as much celebration as his return.

Before a year had passed, Lysander returned to the unceasing war that had defined his life. His first target was Malodrax itself, where he repaid a thousandfold the indignities forced upon him in its dungeons. Though Shon'tu escaped that maelstrom of blood and fire, he did so weakened and beaten. Yet Malodrax was but the start – Lysander's vengeance had only just begun.





STORM CLOUDS GATHER

Following the scourging of Malodrax, Lysander threw himself into the extermination of the Iron Warriors. Within three years, the captain had masterminded and led the destruction of three other fortress worlds bordering the Eye of Terror, one of which – the Blackstar Redoubt – had ground three separate Cadian assaults into bloody paste across the previous decade.

In his works, Lysander had the vociferous approval of his Chapter Master, Vladimir Pugh, and a tacit devotion from the rest of his battle-brothers which bordered upon worship. Pugh was, if anything, slightly wary of Lysander, for he feared that the other might attempt to leverage his reputation in an effort to become the next Chapter Master. In another man, Pugh's concerns might have been the result of ego or pettiness, but such things were entirely alien to his nature. An honest and honourable warrior, even by the exacting standards of the Imperial Fists, Pugh would have readily stood aside for a worthy candidate.

However, the Chapter Master could not quite allay his concerns about Lysander, with whom he had clashed on several occasions since his return. Pugh found his First Captain a little too stubborn, a little too swift to recount the ways in which his experience exceeded that of his Chapter Master. Even discounting Lysander's lost millennium in the Warp, he had nearly a century of experience over any living Imperial Fist. Pugh did not wish to fight Lysander's ascension, which he saw as inevitable. He merely wished to delay that day until Lysander was truly ready for the Chapter's gilded throne. Pugh had always felt that his own ascension had come too early, that the deaths of one hundred and seventy Imperial Fists in the Boreal Planetstrike could have been avoided, but for his own stubborn refusal to fall back. Pugh had learnt from that disaster, but considered the price of that wisdom too steep.

For his part, Lysander was still coming to terms with life in a new millennium. Much was the same, for bureaucratic inertia and tradition had made it so, but almost every warrior he had known from before was now dead. Most had perished on the Emperor's battlefields, bringing his vengeance to the enemies of Mankind, and Chaplain Shadryss had passed on during the Siege of Moros, at last having found a foe canny enough to take his life. Joran Makan, Lysander's Scout Sergeant during his formative years, was now interred within a Dreadnought's adamantium sarcophagus, but his mind was so scattered that he no longer recognised his old student.

LORD VLADIMIR PUGH – MASTER OF THE IMPERIAL FISTS

Vladimir Pugh is as meticulous a planner as any Chapter Master in the Imperial Fists' history. In addition, he is a fine judge of his battle-brothers, and it is said that he can learn more from a single appraising glance than an extensive psychic probe will ever uncover. This peerless judgement has many times ensured that promotion or a strike force command has been granted to the ideal individual, leaving Pugh free to concentrate on the Chapter's overall strategy.

Like all Imperial Fists, Vladimir Pugh cleaves tight to tradition, to the teachings of Rogal Dorn and the wisdom of the Codex Astartes. He was once offered a seat upon the Council of the High Lords – perhaps the greatest honour any servant of the Imperium could ever earn whilst still drawing breath. However, Pugh did not believe himself worthy of such an honour, and unhesitatingly refused the position on precisely those grounds.

Pugh's faith in his Chapter is absolutely reciprocated by those who serve beneath him. Even the lowliest of recruits knows that the stern patriarch's actions are completely divorced from personal pride, and wholly in the interest of the Imperium. They also know that Pugh feels each of his Chapter's losses keenly, and they thus draw resolve from the knowledge that those of their number that die do so with a purpose. However, only a very few know that some of the Chapter Master's many scars are not wounds earned in battle, but bodily mortifications inflicted by Pugh's own hand, each one carved in memory of a battle-brother lost under his command.

AN OBSESSION WITH VENGEANCE

Such was Lysander's unrelenting ferocity in his pursuit of the Iron Warriors that the Imperial Fists often entered battle bereft of their 1st Company, which was all too often hammering yet another renegade fortress to dust many light years distant. Other Chapters – indeed, other Chapter Masters than Vladimir Pugh – might have sought to quell so personal a crusade lest it overtake a Space Marine's broader and selfless duties. However, the ten thousand year hatred between the Iron Warriors and the Imperial Fists was a powerful force, and Pugh found it fitting that a part of the Chapter's strength was ever dedicated to repaying the slights of the Iron Cage, and ten thousand other battles. In any event, Pugh could think of no better way to test Lysander's suitability for a more exalted rank.

The 1st Company did not always fight alone. As Lysander's plans grew ever more ambitious, Pugh assigned additional forces to his temporary command. At the Revold Maze, Lysander's strike force consisted not only of the 1st Company, but also demi-companies from the 2nd and 5th. At the Blackstar Redoubt, Pugh himself accompanied the 3rd and 9th Companies, content to serve as Lysander's strategic observer, the better to take full measure of his First

Captain's ability. Nevertheless, and despite his intended detachment, Pugh found himself fighting at Lysander's side in the final assault on the weapon-forges. He saw the Fist of Dorn shatter the vast black gates, and cheered as loud as any of his battle-brothers as Lysander smote the towering Daemon Prince who served as master of the forge. A day later, when Pugh watched from orbit as barrage bombs collapsed the Blackstar Redoubt's jagged iron spires, he knew that the time had come. Upon the return to *Phalanx*, Pugh would step down and take a captaincy. The future of the Imperial Fists would lie in Lysander's hands.

Then came the attack on Taladorn.

THE INVASION OF TALADORN

The Iron Warriors had not sat idly by whilst Lysander had levelled their holdings. An influential new warlord had risen to power amongst Perturabo's sons. With promises of revenge and dark glory, he raised a new army – the Sons of the Forge – from the remnants of warbands crushed by Lysander's hammer-blows. No one but this warlord knew why the manufactory world of Taladorn was chosen, save perhaps as an object lesson in needless malice. There was certainly no military goal beyond the stark application of terror, a reassertion of the Iron Warriors' might following a string of defeats.

The fleet of gunmetal battleships struck Taladorn without warning, pounding the world's defences into rubble before unleashing wave after wave of Dreadclaws onto the planet's surface. Drop ships in the shape of tentacled dragons followed, their coiled feelers flailing as they sought purchase amongst the manufacturums' upper towers. As the vessels settled into position, Warpsmiths struck runes of containment from the passenger bays, and snarling Daemon Engines spilled into the city streets.

Defence commanders mustered what forces they could, but troops recruited to confront the violence of gangs, smugglers and pirates were of little use against the monstrosities that now tore their regiments to red ruin. Valkyries, operating from a hidden airbase on the polar continent, screamed south to engage a second wave of renegade drop ships, but were swatted from the sky by the Heldrakes that swooped and dove upon Taladorn's volcanic thermals. Taladorn Primus, seat of the planetary governor, surrendered after less than a day's fighting. Before the week was out, almost all the other cities had petitioned for mercy. Only Taladorn Decimus, located in the extreme south, still stood unconquered. Built as it was into the side of an obsidian mountain, its defences had ridden out the bombardment better than those of its fellows. Any Dreadclaw that landed within range of Decimus' guns was blown apart by shellfire, and any drop ship or Heldrake that entered its skies risked obliteration by its impressive array of defence lasers. Yet, stalwart as it was, Decimus could not offer assistance to its fellows. Thus did its inhabitants watch helplessly as the Iron Warriors set about enslaving the population, praying all the while that the storm of iron would leave them untouched.

In the following weeks, the Iron Warriors wrought great change upon the planet. Taladorn Primus was overrun by coiling mecharoots, woven together to form a vast domed structure over the ruins. This had become the Forgeheart, an imposing citadel beneath which the Iron

Warriors' grafted bond-slaves – men and women who had embraced damnation for promises of mechanical apotheosis – fed the bellowing Daemon forges night and day. The previous inhabitants – those who still lived – now toiled beneath Taladorn Sextus. This blasted ruin was now little more than a forced-labour mining complex, squatting amongst the rubble and supplying precious ores to the rapacious Warp-foundries beneath the Forgeheart. By the time the Imperium responded, millions had perished in the mines, and the mecharoots had spread to cover almost the entire southern continent. Taladorn was well on its way to becoming a new fortress world.

THE COMING OF THE IMPERIAL FISTS

Taladorn had been under occupation for a little over two months when the Space Marines at last arrived. This was not a coordinated counter-strike, but a piecemeal response to Taladorn's garbled distress calls. Thus, when the Imperial Fists arrived, they found the world's orbit lit with lance flares and torpedo trails, and an impressive fleet of crimson Azkaellon-class frigates engaging the Iron Warriors fleet.

The Blood Angels vessels attacked with their customary bravado, ignoring the disparity in size and numbers. Already one of the Chaos battleships was afire along its length, puffs of atmosphere venting as escape pods hurtled out into the void. As Lysander watched from the bridge of the Battle Barge *Storm of Wrath*, a cluster of boarding torpedoes struck home against the aft section of a second Iron Warriors ship, and the First Captain knew them to contain Blood Angels boarding parties – a brave but reckless strategy. Deeming that the momentum of the Blood Angels' assault would soon dwindle, Lysander ordered the *Storm of Wrath* and its support fleet to join the battle.

The Iron Warriors admiral was quick to respond. Like Lysander, he knew that the *Storm of Wrath* was the single mightiest vessel so far engaged – its survival or destruction would determine where victory lay. At an unseen command, three Chaos heavy cruisers came about on an interception heading, swarms of Heldrakes boiling out of their fighter bays. Ignoring the Blood Angels frigates, they bore down on the *Storm of Wrath* with violent determination.



As the *Storm of Wrath*'s guns fired their first salvo, another force entered the growing battle, as the Ultramarines Strike Cruiser *Valin's Revenge* burst into realspace off the Battle Barge's port flank. The newcomer fired its prow guns in brief salute, then drove in hard beneath the *Storm of Wrath*, its dorsal weapon batteries roaring as they obliterated a vanguard wave of Heldrakes.

The prudent action for Lysander to have taken at that point would have been to obliterate or repel the Chaos fleet before initiating planetstrike. However, he quickly decided otherwise. When later recounting the battle to the Chapter Council, Lysander would cite his concern that every moment of delay was another moment in which the Forgeheart's defence systems could have been brought online, but the truth of the matter was that he had little patience for duelling amongst the stars whilst the Iron Warriors' grip lay tight about an Imperial world. Ordering the *Storm of Wrath* into a slow belly roll to bring its deployment chutes into alignment, Lysander left command of the Battle Barge with its commodore and ordered his assault force to their Drop Pods. As the heavy cruisers reached weapons-range and the Battle Barge's hull began to shudder under shell impacts, the Imperial Fists launched their assault on Taladorn.

The first wave of the Imperial Fists' planetstrike came as a storm of barrage bombs and lance strikes. They slammed into the Forgeheart like bolts of divine fury, collapsing sections of the dome to crush the smokestacks and Daemon forges below. Mecharoots flailed like wounded animals, the ends thrashing madly through the bombardment's dust clouds. A few defence batteries returned sporadic fire, but a second bombardment followed hard on the heels of the first, silencing these emplacements. Scores of Iron Warriors, and many hundreds of their bond-slaves, perished in those opening salvos, blown apart by shockwaves or crushed flat by falling rubble.



VORN HAGAN – CAPTAIN OF THE 5th COMPANY

Stern in aspect, resolute of will and utterly implacable upon the field of battle, Vorn Hagan exemplifies Rogal Dorn's vision for the Space Marines. By the time of the Taladorn Planetstrike, Hagan had held exemplary command over no fewer than half of the Imperial Fists' companies, coming to the 5th as part of the reorganisation that followed Lysander's return.

Hagan is notorious for his precision of word and deed. He is a strategist and disciplinarian by nature, little given to instinctive or ill-considered action. He sees an artistry in war that few of his battle-brothers acknowledge, and the only time his immaculate composure has been known to crack has been when confronted with recklessness on the part of his allies. One of

Hagan's favourite passages from the Book of Dorn concerns how a battle-plan of a month's forging can be destroyed by a moment's blunder.

Hagan's inflexibility is far from unusual within the Imperial Fists, but it is remarkable considering the hero from whom he drew his inspiration. Decades before, during his tenure as a Scout, Hagan closely studied each of the librarius' records concerning Lysander's exploits, taking from them every lesson he could. As he rose through the ranks, Hagan secretly saw himself as following in Lysander's footsteps, learning from a mentor of myth. Alas, no mortal could have matched up to the tales recounted in the Chapter's records and, upon Lysander's unexpected return, Hagan found the fallible and stubborn reality a stark contrast to the idealised legend.

THE PLANETSTRIKE BEGINS

The planetary assault began in earnest even as the aftershocks ceased. Lysander had given the honour of vanguard to Vorn Hagan's 5th Company, and they struck with a precision worthy of Dorn. Drop Pods screamed downwards, their retro-thrusters pinpricks of brilliant white against an angry red sky. They tore through weakened sections in the Forgeheart's dome, slamming into the rubble-strewn expanse below. Drop Pod hatches slammed down as one, and the battle-brothers of the 5th Company strode out into the debris-choked air, bolters blazing as they came. An instant later, the air flickered as Captain Lysander and three squads of the 1st Company's Terminators teleported into position. Lysander had ordered the rest of the 1st Company, under the command of Honoured Sergeant Julian, to capture the slave pens beneath Taladorn Sextus. Lysander was aware that splitting his already outnumbered force was something of a risk, but had few doubts about Julian's ability, and none at all about his own.

The counter-attack began almost immediately. Bolt-and auto-shells streamed from amongst the rubble, every weapon aimed by a hated Iron Warrior or a zealous bond-slave hoping to earn his master's favour. Still the Imperial Fists came on. Under Lysander's terse commands, they advanced across the shattered tangle of permacrete and adamantium, disdaining all thought of cover. Heavier weapon-fire split the air, lascannons and plasma guns crewed from the balconies of smoke-blackened spires and gantry lines spitting bright death. Devastators returned fire, missiles and heavy bolter shells hammering at the defenders' positions. A vast stone balcony all but disintegrated under the impact of two krak missiles, and screaming cultists plunged to their deaths amidst the rubble below, their bodies trampled beneath the advancing Imperial Fists.

All at once, the defenders' fire slackened as the bond-slaves retreated into the tangle of corridors, leaving their masters to fend for themselves. Not so much as a single Iron Warrior took a step backward. Planting their feet firmly amongst the wreckage, the traitors taunted their ancient enemies, daring them to come forward and die. The Imperial Fists' response came as another volley of boltgun fire, the roar of the guns drowning out their foes' raucous taunts.

Captain Vogen's 3rd Company did not deploy for another quarter of an hour, their launch delayed by a concerted bombing run on the *Storm of Wrath*. By the time their Drop Pods smashed home amongst the dead and dying, the battle had moved on. Comm-traffic told Vogen that Lysander had moved up into the fortress' command spire, and half of the 5th Company had gone with him. The rest, under Hagan's command, had spread out to secure the fortress' depths. Bolter-fire still raged in the middle distance – the battle was far from over.

The further into the Forgeheart the 3rd Company drove, the more twisted the environs became. Gone were the stark lines of an Imperial manufactorum. Instead, mecharoots pulsed and writhed around pillars fused from metal and flesh. Not all of Taladorn's inhabitants had survived to reach the mines. Many, infected by some machine contagion, had become the materials from which the Forgeheart had been fashioned. Their contorted faces stared out from walls, mouths open in silent screams at their horrifying fate. Veteran Sergeant Garadon – Vogen's second in command, and the company's most decorated warrior – broke his customary silence as he looked upon these tortured dead and swore to avenge them.

Under Vogen's command, the newcomers pushed on into the hellish maze of smelting pits and blazing forges. Lysander's trail of destruction was easily found, but following it was another matter. More Iron Warriors were converging on the battle, drawn to Lysander's presence as moths to a vengeful flame. They found the 3rd Company instead, and a vicious running battle broke out amongst the smelting pits. Some of the gantry lines and scaffolds were unstable, and many combatants' battles ended not in glorious volleys of bolter fire, but in seething pits of molten metal.

As the battle raged, a quadrupedal Daemon Engine charged out of the darkness. It leapt high onto a permacrete wall, then pounced down into Tactical Squad Renon. Five battle-brothers went down as the Maulerfiend struck, the survivors hurled away by the beast's flailing tentacles. The Daemon Engine was in motion again even before its victims had hit the ground, pistons driving it on towards Vogen. The captain had but a moment before the creature was on him, and it was not enough. Even as Vogen's crackling power fist came around, the Maulerfiend slammed into him. The beast's colossal mass bore the captain to the ground, and Vogen's gauntlet slammed into the side of its armoured skull. The blow smashed one of the monster's glittering eyes, leaving a livid scar of ruined metal in its place. The beast barely slowed. With a hiss of pistons, it punched a massive alloy fist down onto the captain's breastplate, shattering his power armour and pulping the Space Marine's chest. Vogen died instantly.

Tearing his attention from the Traitor Marines, Sergeant Garadon barked orders into his comm-link. Lascannons blazed, boring deep into the beast's Warpmetal torso. The Maulerfiend roared in pain and gathered itself for another pounce, but the lascannons flared for a second time, their devastating energies striking with precision and shearing off one of the Daemon Engine's forelegs. With a last terrible roar, the Maulerfiend slumped to its side, oily blood spilling from its wounds.

With the Daemon Engine's defeat, the Iron Warriors' determination faded. In ones and twos, they broke off into the darkened corridors. Detailing the remains of Squad Renon to carry

Captain Vogen's remains back to the drop zone, Garadon assumed command, and redoubled the company's pace.

At last, after what seemed an age, the 3rd Company emerged onto the pinnacle of the command spire – or what was left of it. What had once been the planetary governor's palace was now overcome by the coiling corruption of the Iron Warriors' technarcana. Scattered throughout alcoves, windows and gateways were vast, coil-encrusted hexagonal pods. At the apex of each, cables pulsed as they delivered vile fluids to whatever lay within.

But it was the battle raging at the chamber's heart that drew Garadon's attention. There, amongst the carbon-scored tangle of ruined machinery, some thirty warriors of the 5th Company fought alongside the bulkier Terminator-armoured veterans of the 1st. Gunmetal-clad dead were piled deep around them, but there was golden armour too amongst the grey. To Garadon's eye, too many battle-brothers had fallen, and more would perish before this battle was done. The Imperial Fists were severely outnumbered, and the air was full of the metallic roars of Daemon Engines. In the centre of the chamber, Lysander clashed with a hulking figure, clad in what had once been Terminator armour. Now both flesh and armour were merged, a horrific melding of man and machine. This was the warlord of the Sons of the Forge, come at last to face his domain's invaders. Garadon didn't hesitate. With a single barked word of command, he threw the 3rd Company into the fray.



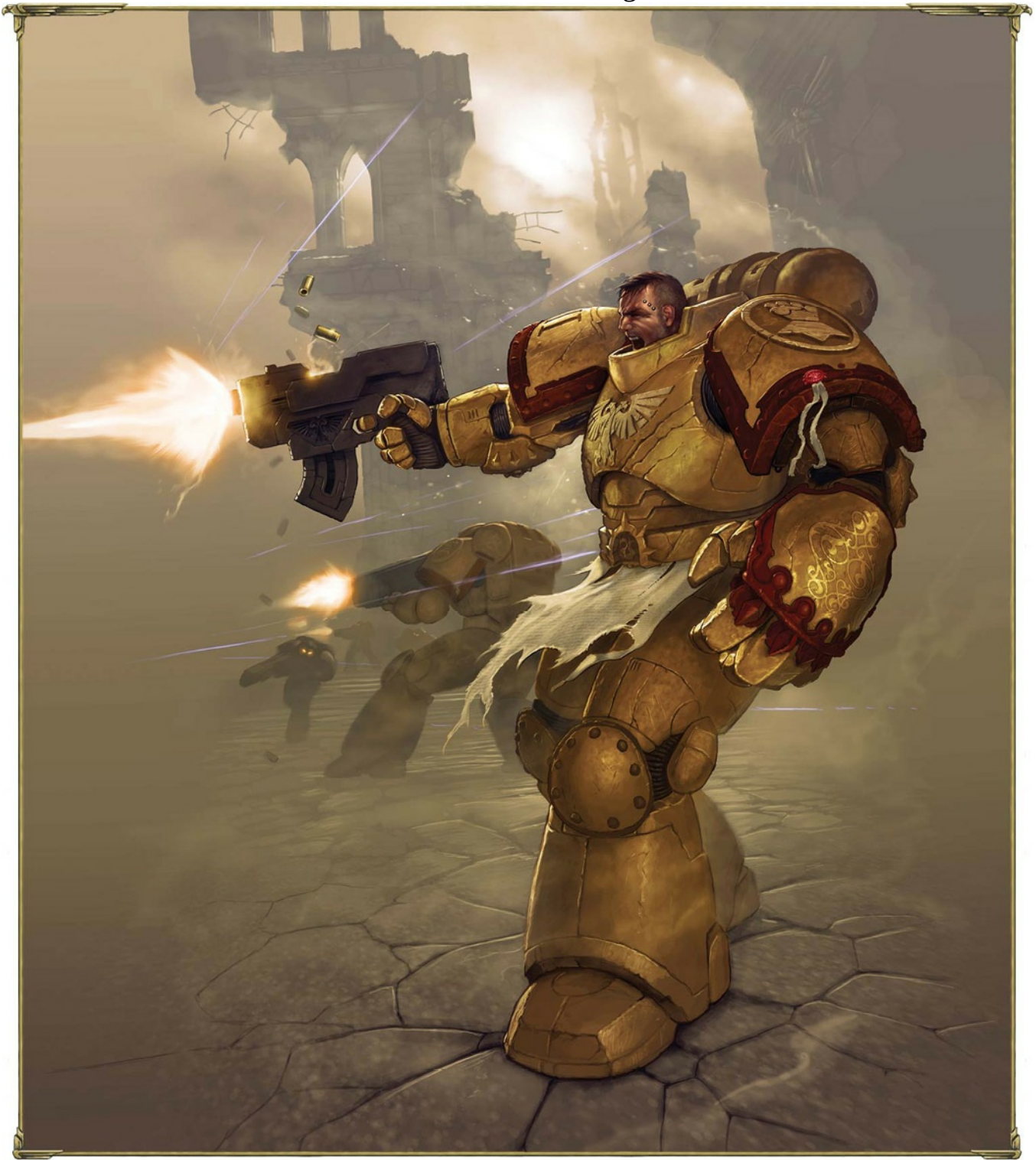
TOR GARADON – 3rd COMPANY SERGEANT

Tor Garadon was recruited to the Imperial Fists from the orbitals of Callisto. His wealthy family were only too glad to see him depart. Fate had cursed the young Garadon with a straightforward and stubborn nature ill-matched to the glittering societal circles his kin frequented.

During his first decade of service, Garadon earned commendation after commendation. Despite his deeds, Garadon never sought promotion, nor was it ever offered to him. Yet Garadon's silence concealed a sharp mind, if one little given to revealing itself except when absolutely necessary. The first time this truly came to the fore was during the Nosfer Planetstrike, when the 3rd Company was stranded behind the Necron force's lines. Chapter Command had no contact with the 3rd for nearly two Nosferan weeks, until sixty battered battle-brothers appeared out of the sulphur mists and provided vital support in the battle against Majestor Zangeneb's canoptek hosts. Brother Garadon submitted only the tersest of reports, but other survivors spoke of how he had taken command upon Captain Opara's death.

When Captain Julius Vogen took command of the 3rd Company, he judged there to be more to Garadon than others had allowed themselves to see, and took it upon himself to unlock the potential of his junior

battle-brother. By the time Garadon had earned a position in the hallowed 1st Company, he and Vogen shared an unbreakable friendship, one which would later see the younger Space Marine return to the Sentinels of Terra without hesitation to serve as a Veteran Sergeant.



A DUEL OF HATE

Lysander saw none of it, for he was lost to the battle with his hated foe. This was no mere

warlord he faced, but Shon'tu, ruler of vile Malodrax. The Fist of Dorn swung about, shattering Shon'tu's left shoulder guard, but still the warlord came on, a leer upon his face and a Daemon sword grasped tight in his left hand. Knocking Lysander's second blow aside, Shon'tu slammed his unwounded shoulder into Lysander's chest.

As the First Captain staggered backwards, Shon'tu pressed the fingers of his free hand tight upon his left gauntlet. Responding to this silent signal, the pods lined about the walls cracked open with a flare of greenish gas and the feeder cables tore free. Metallic roars echoed across the command spire, their timbre somewhere between rage and agony, and scores of glistening Daemon Engines lurched forth into the battle.

As Lysander threw himself at Shon'tu once again, his comm-link crackled into life. The blockade fleet had been driven off; the Ultramarines had made orbit, and Captain Sicarius now offered reinforcement. Lysander was incensed. This was the Imperial Fists' battle – honour decreed that they would claim victory from this adversity as they had many times before. Hagan's forces would soon return from the depths to join the battle, and Perturabo's cursed children would be annihilated. Catching the strike of Shon'tu's Daemon sword high upon his shield, the First Captain angrily refused the Ultramarines' assistance, and fought on.

Elsewhere, the newly-birthing Daemon Engines had seemed disoriented at first, and this gave Sergeant Garadon some much-needed time to react. The 3rd Company were still some distance from linking up with their beleaguered battle-brothers, so Garadon ordered his warriors to form a defensive ring in the heart of the nearest courtyard. From this living fortress, his Devastators could track and destroy the onrushing Daemon Engines – at least, that was the plan. As his battle-brothers took their positions, Garadon saw that these monstrosities were not quite the same as the creature that had slain Vogen. They were incomplete somehow, trailing metal tubing and viscous fluids. Some had stubby, half-formed weaponry; others had warped and mottled armour, the texture akin to molten wax. They were unfinished, Garadon realised, Shon'tu must have been desperate indeed. But half-forged or no, the newly-woken Daemon Engines quickly proved themselves fearsome foes.

A roar of engines from the skies above at last denoted the arrival of a flight of Imperial Fists Stormravens, the heavy rasping of their assault cannons a welcome sound amidst the carnage. The heavy shells tore into the Iron Warriors, driving them back from where the 5th Company who had accompanied Lysander stood their ground, but they made little impact on the Daemon Engines' armoured hides. With a screech, a Heldrake plunged from the bleak skies, its talons tearing deep into one of the Stormravens. Crippled, the flyer plunged groundward, its impact tearing a bloody furrow through the 3rd Company's position. As more Heldrakes arrived from the skies, the surviving Stormravens banked away to begin their own fight for survival. Nevertheless, between their intervention and the fortitude of the 1st Company's Terminators, the 5th would endure. The same could not be said for those who had thought to rescue them.



THE COST OF PRIDE

Its formation shattered by the Stormraven's impact, the 3rd Company was being mauled. Fire rained down from all sides, and two dozen battle-brothers had already fallen. The survivors fought on, teeth gritted against the pain of their wounds, but their foes were too many. A Forgefiend's autocannons blazed and three battle-brothers of Squad Tynon were torn apart. Brother Conrath, the lone Dreadnought assigned to the 3rd Company, turned his multi-melta on the monstrosity and reduced it to steaming slag, but his armour soon buckled as other Daemon Engines returned fire. Roiling gouts of Warp energy tore through the 3rd Company's position, the blistering clouds melting armour and incinerating flesh. Sergeant Garadon, his right arm shattered by an autocannon shell, saw his brothers dying about him and roared defiance.

Again, Lysander's comm-link crackled into life with an offer of assistance, but again he refused. Hagan, as yet unaware of the situation atop the spire, made no response, but Garadon looked around at the ruin of his battle-brothers, and came to a decision. Triggering his own comm, he made formal acceptance of Sicarius' offer. Lysander's bellow of rage flooded the channel and drowned out the Ultramarine's response. Garadon paid it no heed and triggered his teleport homer. A moment later, there was a flicker of motion as some

thirty Ultramarines Terminators materialised in the chamber, storm bolters and assault cannons already bellowing their anthem of war.

This new arrival marked the last turning point in the Battle for Taladorn. Shon'tu had no surprises remaining to him, and following Garadon's request for assistance, the forces marshalled against the Warsmith rose steeply. Next to arrive were the Ultramarines 2nd Company, the Thunderhawks *Gladius* and *Spatha* descending from the skies amidst a whine of turbo-laser fire. Hard on their heels, deploying from Stormraven Gunships at break-neck speed, were the vanguard of Captain Tycho's Blood Angels.

Where before the Space Marines had been outnumbered, now they had the upper hand. The Ultramarines advanced methodically through the rubble, their line of battle expanding and contracting to match the Iron Warriors' desperate counter-attacks. One of Shon'tu's lieutenants, a giant of a man named Marax, took refuge in the remains of the Divinitas Shrine. The brute directed his fellows' fire with such ruthless efficiency that any Ultramarine who approached was all but torn apart. This ended when Tycho loosed his Death Company against the ruins. Seemingly impervious to pain, the black-armoured warriors forged on through the storm of fire, hacking at the defenders with chainswords or tearing them apart with bare hands. Overwhelmed by their fury, Marax's makeshift bastion collapsed, the survivors left to the Ultramarines' guns.

By the time Captain Hagan's demi-company had reached the command spire – the force upon which Lysander had pinned his hopes of victory – the Iron Warriors were in full retreat. Shon'tu, seeing his cause lost, fled with his followers and escaped into the tunnels below.

It would take many more days to fully drive the Iron Warriors from Taladorn and to scour their works from the planet's surface, but no effort was spared until the task was complete. Dozens of traitors, and many hundreds of bond-slaves, were hunted down and slain, but of Shon'tu, no trace could be found.

Lysander said little in that time, and spoke not at all to Sicarius or Tycho, instead leaving Sergeant Julian to liaise with what he still saw as unwelcome allies. Once Shon'tu had fled beyond his reach, Lysander had at last awoken from his vengeful fever and was forced to confront the cost of his obsession. And it was a high cost. Over ninety of his battle-brothers had been slain, including Captain Vogen. Had Lysander waited to make a coordinated assault with the Ultramarines or Blood Angels, many of those deaths could have been avoided. Worse, had the Ultramarines not intervened, the tally of honoured dead would have been much higher.

As for Garadon, he and the 3rd Company played little part in the closing phases of the Taladorn campaign. The Apothecaries deemed scarcely a dozen battle-brothers of the Sentinels of Terra fit to fight, and the sergeant was not amongst them. Thus, as the 5th Company aided the Ultramarines and Blood Angels in scouring Taladorn, Garadon endured a frustrating period of convalescence. The inactivity gave him much time to think on the 3rd Company's fate and, by the time the *Storm of Wrath* was en route to *Phalanx*, Garadon was determined that Lysander's prideful folly would be brought to account.



THE STORM BREAKS

The return of Lysander's strike force to *Phalanx* should have been a time for sober celebration, but such was not to be. Shortly after the *Storm of Wrath* had taken formation with the rest of the Imperial Fists fleet, Sergeant Garadon had requested a private audience with Vladimir Pugh, and therein laid bare the story of the 3rd Company's near-demise.

Such a meeting was not altogether unusual amongst the Imperial Fists, for the warriors of that Chapter have ever held one another to the highest standards of deportment and discipline. Nevertheless, this was not a step that Garadon took lightly. For a sergeant to seek censure of a captain was unusual enough; to demand it of an honoured hero like Lysander? There would be no good outcome from such a challenge.

It said much of Garadon's unease at the situation that he had three times sought Lysander out during the homeward voyage. He had hoped to see some element of contrition from the captain, some sign that the follies of Taladorn would not occur again. On each occasion, Garadon was angrily dismissed, with Lysander threatening to strip the sergeant of his rank if he persisted. Garadon was perceptive enough to recognise that he was not the true target of the captain's anger, but wise enough to realise that matters had progressed beyond his ability to rectify.

Pugh was greatly displeased. His ire stemmed not from the sergeant's candour – indeed, he commended Garadon for speaking on the matter. Nor was the rendition of the Battle of Taladorn entirely new to him. Lysander had already given his own account of the engagement, a report that had been scrupulously honest in every detail from his audacious planetstrike, through to his repeated refusals of assistance. No, what concerned Pugh was the fact that Lysander showed no sign of remorse at the outcome his decisions had led to. The First Captain cared only that the Iron Warriors had been defeated and the world returned to the Imperial fold. Pugh found this attitude dangerous. There had been triumph at Taladorn, true enough, but bought with such needless sacrifice that another dozen such 'victories' would see the glorious traditions of the Imperial Fists ended altogether. Too often had the blood of Dorn guided his children down such a path. The Invaders, to name but one of the Imperial Fists' successors, ever risked annihilation because of their stubborn refusal to back away from the unwinnable. Moreover, Pugh knew that many of the Imperial Fists' captains looked to Lysander for example, rather than to himself, which could become problematic if the First Captain's deeds went unchallenged. After several days of silent meditation and with

heavy hearts, Pugh convened the Chapter Council to judge Lysander's conduct.

Thus did the other eight surviving captains of the Imperial Fists convene in the shadow-shrouded Cloister of Remembrance, to determine if pride – rather than duty – had come to rule Lysander's actions. This was an old tradition, the captains affirming their obligations beneath the gazes of the honoured dead. Golden statues, each many times the height of a man, stood silent in the tiered alcoves that lay around the chamber's circular perimeter. The flickering of the lumen in each alcove seeming to make expressions play upon the statues' faces. Some alcoves were empty, awaiting a battle-brother to prove himself worthy of such remembrance. It had been a thousand years since the last statue was raised, and a millennium more could march by before the honour was again bestowed.

There were no furnishings in the Cloister of Remembrance; no seats upon which the captains could rest and no council table to pound in support or detraction of a particular course. Each captain took his place at the room's perimeter, whilst Pugh, as head of the council, stood in the centre, pacing to address each of his brothers as need arose.

THE HOUR OF JUDGEMENT

Pugh had ordered Garadon's presence, and the sergeant now stood in the space set aside for the 3rd Company's captain. He was soon called upon as a witness to Lysander's part in his company's near demise. Garadon addressed the assembly calmly, for his anger had cooled with the passing weeks. Captain Hagan, commander of the 5th Company, was another matter. He had dwelt greatly on events and come to realise that his own company, though scarred during the Taladorn planetstrike, could easily have suffered in the 3rd's stead. Anger bubbled beneath his otherwise clinical account. Hagan gave projections of what would have happened had Lysander not divided the strike force's companies, and if he had not begun the planetstrike until the Ultramarines and Blood Angels could have provided support.

Yet it was Lysander's own testimony that was most damning in Pugh's eyes, albeit unintentionally. The First Captain spoke of the Imperial Fists' tradition of sacrifice, of their duty to crush the works of traitors wherever they took root. There could not be, he maintained, too high a price to pay in pursuit of this cause. The Iron Warriors were the Imperial Fists' burden to bear, and their honour to defeat. Without looking at Garadon, Lysander scorned the idea that assistance had ever been required, and moreover suggested that the Ultramarines' arrival had in fact created the distraction which had allowed Warsmith Shon'tu's escape.

As Lysander spoke, Pugh marked the approving expressions and nods of affirmation given by fully half of the captains present – as a mere acting-captain, Garadon had no vote upon the council. Lysander's words and demeanour had spoken to the Imperial Fists' selfless and self-reliant traditions, and those captains with whom such things resonated strongest were inclined to overlook where that path had led him. Pugh had hoped to salvage some unity from Taladorn by demoting Lysander, making him an example of pride gone awry, the lesson for generations to come. The Chapter Master was certain that the First Captain would have recovered from such a blow, and would have even emerged the stronger for it. Such a thing

was impossible now, for with the Chapter Council so evenly divided, an obvious rebuke would create division. On the other hand, to not act would drive a wedge between Lysander and those captains who disapproved of his actions at Taladorn. As Chapter Master, Pugh did not need the consent of his captains to take decisions, but he had long ago learned that leadership was more effective when wielded subtly. Dorn, for all his forthrightness, had understood that concept, and now Pugh resolved to emulate his forefather.

PHALANX

Phalanx is the mobile battle station that serves as both the Imperial Fists' home world and their foremost warship. In form and scale, it is nearer a planetoid than a conventional vessel; it is a mighty cathedral of war that dwarfs the largest Battle Barge, and wields the firepower of a formidable fleet.

The secrets of Phalanx's construction are long forgotten, though it is known that Rogal Dorn brought it into the Emperor's service at the time of their first meeting, and it has performed proudly ever since. In the days of crusade and heresy, its shadow fell across hundred of worlds, the fury of the Imperial Fists following close behind. Now it circles the Sol System, its orbit synchronous with that of Holy Terra, an ever-vigilant golden sentinel that safeguards the cradle of Mankind as the days grow ever darker.

Yet the passing millennia have not been kind to Phalanx, and constant vigilance and warfare have taken their inevitable toll. Despite the efforts of the Imperial Fists' Techmarines, more of the mighty vessel's systems fail each year, and the skill required to repair them has long passed out of living memory. Where once Phalanx bestrode the stars as a colossus of war, now it departs the Sol System but rarely, its venerable engines coaxed to life in service of great vengeance or dire need. Though Phalanx is but a thin shadow of its former glory, the starship's might still outshines any other vessel known to mankind, and its name strikes terror into the hearts of the Imperium's foes. Venerable Phalanx has many more battles yet to fight, and many more blows to strike in the name of Rogal Dorn.



LYSANDER'S PENANCE

Rather than put the matter to a vote, Pugh decreed that Lysander would set aside his duties as First Captain for a time, and take Vogen's place as commander of the battered 3rd Company. There was rebuke in that course of action, for it was an obvious demotion. However, Pugh pointed out that there was honour as well, and reminded all present that he could think of no one better placed to rebuild the shattered company from its current lamentable state. Lysander's skill as a drillmaster had not faded since his days as a sergeant, and there would be much work for him in the rebuilt 3rd. It was one thing to draft replacements from the reserve companies to replenish the 3rd's losses – it was another thing entirely to expect those warriors to act as a single unit from the very start. Pugh furthermore ordered that Sergeant Julian would assume command of the 1st Company until such time as Lysander's task was complete – though all noted that the Chapter Master set no timescale under which he expected this to be achieved.

Garadon frowned at his Chapter Master's words, but said nothing. He had hoped that his temporary command of the 3rd would become permanent, but was incensed that it would pass to the very man responsible for its near-destruction. Even Garadon's status as sergeant was now in doubt, for he recalled all too well that his last conversation with his new captain had ended with the threat of sanction. For his part, Lysander was careful to maintain an even tone as he accepted his Chapter Master's judgement. Moreover, he thanked Pugh for the opportunity to forge the 3rd Company in battle against the Iron Warriors as he himself had been forged. Shon'tu, Lysander insisted, would at last be brought to account for his crimes.

Lysander's expression stiffened noticeably when Pugh informed him that the 3rd Company would not be assigned to pursue the Iron Warriors. Rather, they would prosecute a new campaign – a Crusade of Thunder – against the Orks of the Magor Rift, whose threat had been growing for several years. Against these foes, the 3rd Company would hone their skills and prove themselves worthy of the traditions they bore. Lysander looked around the cloister for support, but found none. Without a word, he strode from the room and into his new future as captain of the 3rd Company.



THE CRUSADE BEGINS

With Vladimir Pugh's edict, momentum for the Crusade of Thunder began to grow. However, Lysander's command as yet consisted only of some thirty warriors and the Battle Barge *Storm of Wrath*. It was the foundation of a mighty force, but little more. The 3rd's losses would have to be replenished before the campaign could truly begin.

Seven sergeants had been lost on Taladorn and, for the most part, their replacements were chosen from those brothers who had survived that battle. Sergeant Garadon was surprised when Lysander consulted him about which of the 3rd Company's warriors were most suitable for promotion. As with almost every word that passed between the two at that time, the conversations were stilted and awkward, with both men making a poor show of hiding their mutual dislike. Nevertheless, Garadon experienced the first sparks of a grudging respect for his new captain, if only for the professionalism with which he took to his new duties. This grew further when Lysander confirmed that he was content for Garadon to remain in position as Squad Primus' sergeant, and even offered a grudging apology for the previously-threatened demotion. Garadon took both of these things with much the same ill-grace as they were offered. In the end, several of the vacant sergeants' positions were filled by survivors of Taladorn, two by sergeants from the 7th Company, and one by the respected Sergeant Odan, a 1st Company Veteran.

With the appointments determined, the replenishment draft began. Many of the 3rd Company's new warriors – some sixty battle-brothers in all – came from the reserve companies. Captain Jonas' 7th Company, which had itself recently returned from a campaign amongst the Ghoul Stars, contributed almost forty Tactical Marines, which at Lysander's instruction were divided amongst the battle-worn squads. Thus, no unit would be manned entirely by the less experienced warriors of the reserve companies. The remaining inductees were Scouts that Lysander personally selected from the 10th Company. He took only the most promising recruits, those that the irascible Captain Monteith considered ready to make the transition to full battle-brother. These, like the inductees from the reserves, were spread throughout the company.

All told, the flurry of drafting and reassignment brought the 3rd Company's roster up to its official strength of one hundred and five battle-brothers, plus support personnel and transport crew. Chaplain Markov, preserved from injury on Taladorn by the Emperor's grace

– and by the force field within his rosarius – relished his company’s restoration. He prowled the *Storm of Wrath*’s decks in search of infractions performed by battle-brothers used to the laxer ways of the Chapter’s other Chaplains, who Markov mistrusted for the weakness he imagined them to possess. Brother Conrath, preserved from a second death by his armoured sarcophagus, had been carefully restored to full function by the Chapter’s Techmarines. He was joined by another Dreadnought, Brother Makan, who had been awoken from slumber specifically to lend his might to the crusade. Upon learning that Makan had once been Lysander’s sergeant, Garadon wondered whether Pugh’s command stemmed from the desire to allow the captain an old comrade, or because the Chapter Master believed that Makan’s influence would ameliorate Lysander’s stubbornness.

With the ranks of the 3rd Company filled, Lysander requested – and received – an honour guard of 1st Company Terminators. He also requisitioned some thirty Centurion warsuits, several Vindicator and Predator battle tanks, and the Land Raider *Legend of Roma*. Not content with that, he then convinced Captain Monteith to assign three of his Scout Squads to the strike force, and Captain Hagan to part with three of the 5th Company’s precious Stormtalon Gunships. Only when the last of these attack craft were secured aboard the *Storm of Wrath* did Lysander at last order the Battle Barge to break formation with *Phalanx* and head out into the tides of the Warp.

The Crusade of Thunder had begun, but none of those who set out upon the voyage knew where it would end...



THE CRUSADE OF THUNDER

+++ ref: IF/VII/III/xx13a:e +++

+++Authorisation: Maxima Zeta Twelve+++

3rd COMPANY ‘SENTINELS OF TERRA’

Captain Darnath Lysander
Chaplain Ivor Markov
Command Squad *Rexam*
Tactical Squad *Garadon*
Tactical Squad *Odan*
Tactical Squad *Morix*
Tactical Squad *Tannar*
Tactical Squad *Ortez*
Tactical Squad *Loramar*
Assault Squad *Eshara*
Assault Squad *Spritas*

Devastator Squad *Tynon*
Devastator Squad *Connar*
Brother Conrath (Dreadnought)
 Brother Makan (Venerable Dreadnought)

AUXILIARY FORCES

Epistolary Xeros Darsway
Brother Micoleth Karazan (Techmarine)
Terminator Squad *Jordanis*
Assault Terminator Squad *Meinloth* Scout Reconnaissance Squad *Banna* Scout Reconnaissance Squad
Caldis Scout Sniper Squad *Kord*
 Stormtalon Squadron *Swords of Polux* ARMOURY REQUISITION

Vindicator *Emperor’s Will*
 Vindicator *Pride of Inwit*

 Predator *Glorious Redemption* Land Raider Crusader *Legend of Roma* Thunderfire
 Cannon *Terra’s Roar*

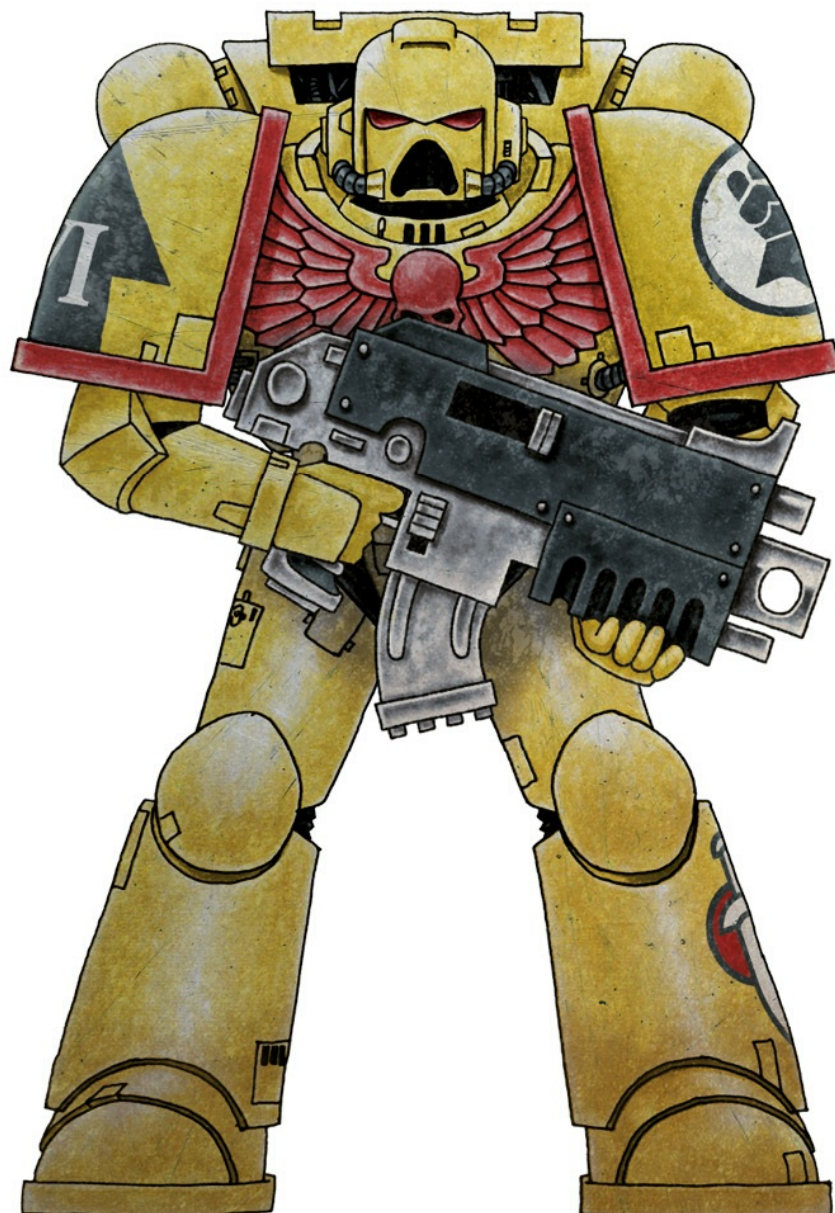
 12 Assault Centurion Warsuits

18 Devastator Centurion Warsuits

FLEET UNITS

Battle Barge *Storm of Wrath* Strike Cruiser *Triumphant*
Strike Cruiser *Drostican’s Deliverance* Gladius Frigate *Shield of Terra* Gladius Frigate *Will of Dorn* Nova Frigate *The Death of Lo Chang*





Battle-brother Abran, 3rd Company,



6th Tactical Squad

Campaign badge created to designate the forces assigned to the Crusade of



Thunder

Shoulder pad designation of

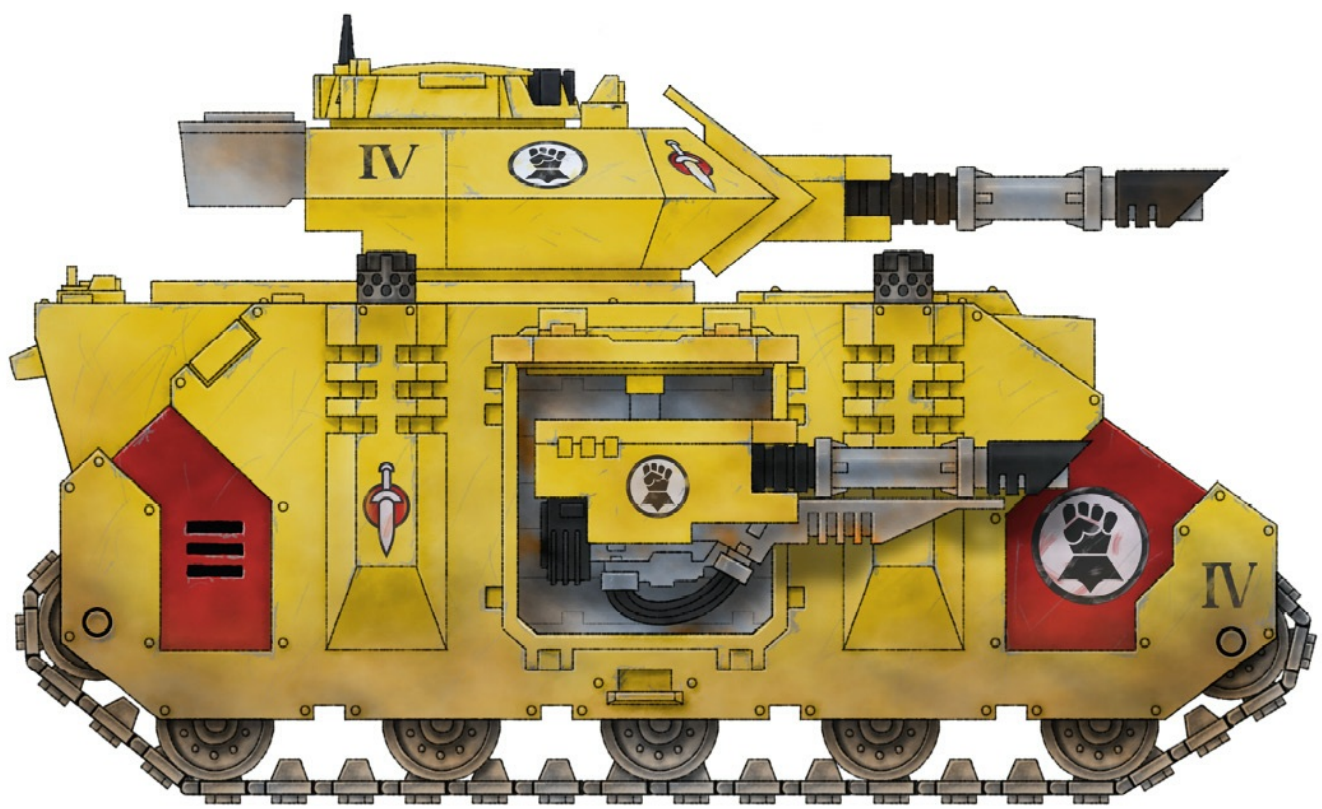


the 6th Tactical Squad

*Veteran Sergeant Garadon, 3rd Company,
1st Tactical Squad. The black helmet denotes that Garadon is a 'Sternhelm' – a
veteran sergeant.*



The company banner of the Sentinels of Terra, the Banner of Staganda was fashioned to commemorate their hard-won victory over an Ork despot in M34.



GLORIOUS REDEMPTION

Despite their undoubted valour at the Siege of the Emperor's Palace, the Imperial Fists share a collective burden of failure. Those who survived the assault on Horus' Battle Barge – Dorn most of all – cursed themselves for not being fast enough or strong enough to intercede in time to save the Emperor. It can be argued that this sense of guilt is as responsible for the Chapter's legendary stubbornness as much as any quirk of gene-seed. Glorious Redemption is named for this trait; not for the Imperial Fists' desire to atone for their failure on Terra, but to commemorate the death of Rogal Dorn, who perished outnumbered and alone upon the bridge of the Chaos cruiser, Sword of Sacrilege. Whilst the Primarch's passing is a matter of mourning for all who bear his heraldry, the fact that he did so in the face of such enormous odds, and in the defence of otherwise doomed worlds, provokes naught but the deepest respect. Glorious Redemption is a daily reminder that Rogal Dorn found peace where only a Space Marine can: fighting for Mankind's survival.



WAR IN THE MAGOR RIFT

As soon as the *Storm of Wrath* was underway, Lysander set aside all but the most vital of his captain's duties and assumed the role of the drill sergeant he had once been. At the best estimates of the Battle Barge's navigators, it would take fifteen days for the vessel to reach its destination, and Lysander intended to put every moment of that time to good use.

A portion of one of the Battle Barge's decks was given over to a firing range, and Lysander now pressed it into almost constant service. The walls of this chamber were lined with the same adamantium plating as the *Storm of Wrath*'s outer hull. Nothing short of a macro cannon shell could have dented it, and the boltgun volleys that now roared across the gloomy chamber did little more than scratch it.

Lysander worked ceaselessly, instilling into the 3rd Company's warriors the same lessons that Sergeant Makan had once drummed into him. Imperial Fists doctrine had long ordained twenty separate observances for the ritual of firing a boltgun, and a further six for the replacement of a spent magazine. Most were little things, silent litanies that the battle-brothers quickly learned to perform out of habit. Individually, they took little toll of time and concentration, but together they dulled reaction time and accuracy by a slender, but noticeable, margin. Squad by squad, Lysander announced the nullification of a full fifteen of these observances, and decreed substantial modifications to three others. He then drilled his battle-brothers ceaselessly until this new litany settled into their minds as firmly and instinctively as the old.

Lysander pursued his course with forthright passion, sleeping little and brooking no question to his orders. It was plain to Garadon that his captain was a driven man, but he could not divine whether that drive stemmed from a need to atone for the harm he had wrought upon the 3rd, or from a desire to be unshackled from the company and returned to command of the 1st. Whatever the reason, Garadon could not argue with the results. A week into the journey, reaction time and boltgun accuracy had markedly increased. As a result, when Chaplain Markov made angry complaint to the sergeant about Lysander's breach of tradition, Garadon found himself giving his captain full support – a standpoint that surprised him almost as much as it did the Chaplain.

By the time the *Storm of Wrath* emerged from the Warp, the 3rd Company was as fine a weapon of war as Lysander could make of it in the time available. Now it was time for the

weapon to be tempered in battle.

According to the Imperial Fists' records, the Magor Rift comprised two planetary systems in close proximity to a vast belt of debris; the remains, or so scholars had hypothesised, of a third system. A fourth system, Viashan, was thought to lie further to the galactic east, but Warp storms had severed it from the rest of the Imperium for more than forty years. Of the two systems that remained, the Jindara System was believed to be totally bereft of life, whereas the Kalin System was home to an Imperial agri world. Indeed, the lush agri-domes of Kalin II had for many years provided food not only for its neighbours, but also for several nearby hive worlds. By all accounts, it had been a rare paradise in a galaxy too often beset by terrors, a latter-day parallel to the Eden of ancient myth. Alas, it was paradise no more.

The *Storm of Wrath* and its support fleet re-emerged into realspace in close proximity to Kalin II and in the midst of a starscape clogged with drifting wreckage. Though no one aboard the Battle Barge yet knew it, the astropathic distress hymnal that had reached the Imperial Fists had been waylaid in the currents of the Warp. Thus, a conflict Vladimir Pugh had considered to be in its early stages had, in fact, raged for many months. As the Imperial Fists arrived, the remnants of the 95th Cadian battle group strove against a greenskin tide on the planet's surface. The surviving vessels of the Imperial Navy, despatched from the shipyards at Nemea, fought to blockade the near-constant flood of Ork kroozers that Warped in-system from an unknown base. This was not a Waaagh!, not yet, but if it were allowed to gain momentum it could yet threaten sectors further afield.

As the *Storm of Wrath's* captain guided the Battle Barge skilfully through the debris field, Lysander made contact with the general of the Cadian army. Or rather, he tried to. Gathering reports from several junior officers, Lysander learned that the defence of Kalin II was all but over, and the 95th battle group as good as destroyed.

Of some one hundred thousand Imperial Guardsmen that had deployed to the planet, scarcely three thousand remained. Most were entrenched around Shivanol, the planetary capital, giving the last of their strength to defend the refugees who were all that remained of Kalin II's civilian population. The rest of the planet lay in Ork hands, with ramshackle soot-belching factories nestled amongst the remains of the ruined agri-domes, providing a seemingly unending supply of wagons and walkers for the ongoing assault on Shivanol.



THE RECONQUEST OF KALIN

Without further delay, Lysander divided his command into two separate forces. Strike Force Anvil – containing the bulk of the 3rd Company's Tactical Squads, as well as its Stormtalons and battle tanks – bolstered the defences around Shivanol against the continuing greenskin assault. Meanwhile, the remaining warriors would fight as part of Strike Force Hammer and assault the Ork factory complexes, choking off reinforcements. Garadon expected Lysander to take command of this second force, for it was there that the greatest opportunity for glory lay. He was therefore somewhat surprised when the captain gruffly announced that he would instead assume command of Shivanol's defence. Thus, as much of the 3rd Company put their newly-honed bolter drill to use from Shivanol's battered ferrocrete rampart, Garadon led Strike Force Hammer out into the once-verdant wasteland.

Superficially, no two of the Ork factories were alike, with chimney stacks, Mek workshops and weapons emplacements arranged seemingly at random within the tumbled walls of the old agri-domes. Yet careful reconnaissance by Garadon's Scout Squads confirmed this assumption to be inaccurate. Beneath its skin of rusting buildings, the heart of each facility shared a certain commonality, constructed as it was around a sparking reaktor which fed everything from the piston-driven gates to the traktor kannon batteries that made orbital bombardment of the factory a suicidal proposition. Though the defences around the reaktors were sufficient to prevent simple sabotage by the Scouts, the novitiates were able to conceal locator beacons amongst the ramshackle structures, enabling a series of precision Drop Pod assaults into each factory's vulnerable heart.

During the voyage to Kalin, Lysander had not been satisfied with overturning the 3rd Company's established bolter-drill – he had also ordered one of the Thunderhawk Gunships retrofitted to accommodate a larger number of Centurions. The artificers and Techmarines aboard the Battle Barge were scarcely less appalled at the decision than Markov had been by the captain's other changes, but they had complied nonetheless. Now, Sergeant Garadon put them to good use.

As the rampart of greenskin dead and mangled wreckage around Shivanol grew ever higher, Garadon brought ruin to each of the Ork factories in turn. Each assault began simply enough, with the *Storm of Wrath* enduring the fury of a factory's traktor kannon batteries just long enough to fire its Drop Pods at the target. Descending too quickly for the Ork weapons to track, the Drop Pods slammed into the factory, disgorging Garadon's strike force into the very heart of the complex. There, Garadon's own Tactical Squad, as well as the strike force's two Dreadnoughts, destroyed the anti-air batteries, whilst the company's Assault and Devastator Squads – now piloting Centurion Warsuits – deployed via Thunderhawk Gunship and destroyed the reaktors. With the factory's remaining defence batteries silenced by power loss, Thunderhawk Gunships launching from the *Storm of Wrath* were able to extract the strike force before they were overwhelmed. Soon after, the Battle Barge moved into orbit once more to commence a saturation bombardment, pummelling the factory – and the half-finished war engines within – to dust.

Garadon's audacious assaults were carried out with incredible speed and precision, often with

only a matter of minutes between the first Drop Pod launch and the echoes of bombardment dissipating through the bedrock. Even so, there were casualties. A swarm of Dakkajets scrambled during the assault on the factory complex designated Kalin Epsilon, delaying the Thunderhawk extraction by several minutes. A number of Tactical Marines and Centurions were lost in that assault, although two of the pilots escaped by abandoning their warsuits before being overrun. Two Scouts were captured during their reconnaissance of Kalin Zeta and, though Garadon altered his assault plan to allow their rescue, one later died of his wounds, and Honoured Brother Makan sustained damage that took the *Storm of Wrath's* Techmarines many days to repair.

In the meantime, Lysander's demi-company had suffered its own losses. Chaplain Markov had lost an eye – though he swung the Angel of Sacrifice as wickedly as he ever had, and claimed he saw the foe better with one eye than he had with both. The Predator *Glorious Redemption* was irrecoverable scrap, blown apart by a Stompa's deff kannon. Veteran Sergeant Odan was dead, hacked to pieces whilst single-handedly holding a breach in Shivanol's outer wall, as were six of his battle-brothers, and every warrior who held the line at Lysander's side bore fresh scars as proof of their valour.

However, Strike Force Hammer's efforts had a swift and noticeable effect on the Ork war effort. With the Nemean blockade fleet denying reinforcement from off-world, and their factories destroyed one by one, the Ork assault on Shivanol slackened. This in turn allowed Lysander to assign ever more of his own forces to Garadon's command. By the time the last factory – designated Kalin Kappa – had been destroyed, Garadon's assaults were performed practically at company strength. Uniting once more under Lysander's command, the Sentinels of Terra brought the last remnants of the Ork invasion to battle on the Gansha Plains. The Warboss perished beneath Lysander's thunder hammer, and the survivors fled into the hills.

Though the Ork threat to Kalin was seemingly ended, Lysander and Garadon knew that the Crusade of Thunder was not yet done. Ork battleships still tested the Nemean blockade. The war would only be done when their origin point was located and destroyed.

THE CRUSADE CONTINUES

During the assault on Kalin Rho, Garadon's strike force had rescued a handful of human slaves. They had been pressed into service in the workshops, performing tasks too delicate for Orks and too important to be entrusted to unreliable grots. Less than half of the slaves were of Kalinese stock. The others had been brought from the hive world of Viashan. Some of the Kalinese distantly recalled they had provided supplies to Viashan some forty years previously, before the Warp storm had severed all contact. With the presence of the Viashan slaves on Kalin – none of whom were past their thirtieth year – that Warp storm had clearly ceased, and the 3rd Company's next destination was clear. Leaving Kalin's fate in the hands of the surviving Imperial Guardsmen and the Nemean blockade fleet, the *Storm of Wrath* left orbit, and set course for Viashan.

As the Battle Barge hurtled through the Warp, Lysander took stock of his casualties. At his

order, Scout Squad Banna was dissolved, and the composition of the remaining squads reordered. Eight neophytes who had already received the Black Carapace were granted the power armour and roles of fallen battle-brothers. Sergeant Banna himself assumed the late Sergeant Odan's command over Squad Secundus. Five of the Centurion warsuits had sustained heavy damage during the factory assaults. Of these, only three could be brought to reliable function, no matter how diligently the Techmarines performed the Rites of Repair, so Lysander ordered these suits sealed in the armoury until such time as they could be returned to *Phalanx*.

With no information concerning the forces awaiting them at Viashan, Lysander had ordered the *Storm of Wrath* to re-enter realspace beyond the system's edge, past the range of whatever detectors the Orks might have constructed. This quickly proved to be a prescient choice. No sooner had the Battle Barge arrived at Viashan than its auspex arrays lit up with greenskin vessels. A massive hulk hung in orbit around Viashan's innermost planet, and scores of other warships were scattered throughout the system. These ranged in size from kroozers similar to those that the Imperial Fists had witnessed in action at Kalin, all the way up to slab-sided battleships. Stormraven recon flights later confirmed that seven of the eight worlds were airless and uninhabitable rocks. Viashan I, on the other hand, swarmed with greenskins. Indeed, there were easily enough Orks on its surface to challenge a task force of the Crusade of Thunder's size; challenge, but not defeat – at least if all other things were equal. Sadly, this was not the case.

The Orks had not sat idle during their decades of enforced isolation. After crushing Viashan I's defences, they had ransacked the world of its mineral resource, causing such tectonic instability that the hive cities had long ago been consumed by angry seas of lava. However, in as close to geosynchronous orbit as the Orks could achieve, was a space station of vast size. Once the docking port for supply freighters carrying Viashan's ores to distant manufactorum world, it had now blossomed into a star fort bristling with shipyards and docking bays, and made planetary assault entirely impossible. Kroozers streamed to and fro between the system's outer edge and the star fort, returning with plunder from distant worlds. Clearly Kalin was not the only planet to have suffered the predations of Viashan's Orks.

As Lysander ordered the *Storm of Wrath*'s fleet into concealment orbit behind the meteor-battered ruin of Viashan VIII, Sergeant Garadon saw his own irritation mirrored in the captain's face. Operating alone, the Sentinels of Terra had little chance of driving the Orks from the Viashan System entirely, but it would take time for other forces to assemble, and in that time, the Ork fleet would continue to wreak havoc across the sector. Yet as Lysander ordered Epistolary Darsway to request assistance from the Nemean fleet still in blockade position around Kalin, Garadon had an idea.

Some time later, three Caestus Assault Rams departed the *Storm of Wrath*'s bays under Thunderhawk Gunship escort and bore down on a lone Ork vessel. It had taken several days – and much of Lysander's patience – before a suitable ship arrived. From its appearance, the kroozer was built around the hull of a captured Luxor-class freighter, and it was Garadon's hope that the vessel's original systems and engines would be intact. However, it was the

vessel's comparative isolation that made it a viable target. Approaching the kroozer from behind the sensor-shadow cast by Viashan VIII's moon, Garadon launched his attack. The Assault Rams struck the vessel amidships, and Garadon's breaching force charged forth to claim the ship. At the same time, the Thunderhawk escort soared ahead, their sensors reconfigured to jam any distress call sent from the beleaguered kroozer. In the end, such precautions proved unnecessary. The kroozer's kaptin, overestimating the tenacity of his crew, thought a mere thirty assailants could be easily overwhelmed, but was sorely disappointed. After a short but bloody fight, the kroozer was in Garadon's hands.

ASSAULT ON THE STAR FORT

With the vessel secured, Thunderhawks ferried the rest of the Company aboard, along with the *Storm of Wrath*'s first officer and enough autonomous servitors to man the ship's helm and engine room. Thus manned, the kroozer headed deeper into the Viashan System. It was a long and tense voyage. Everyone, from Lysander down to the rawest Scout, knew that the kroozer wouldn't last long if the ruse was discovered, at which point the four Thunderhawks now lashed down in its docking bays would be their only chance of survival. Nevertheless, fate smiled upon the 3rd Company; between the anarchic – and often erratic – behaviour of the Ork vessels in-system, and Epistolary Darsway drawing upon the mystical power of the Bones of Osrak to cloud the Orks' suspicions, the kroozer sailed on unharrassed.

Only when the 3rd Company's purloined vessel made final approach to the star fort's docking spur did discovery seem inevitable, but Garadon had planned for this. At the sergeant's command, Darsway contacted the *Storm of Wrath*, which had made its own leisurely way in-system to the very edge of the estimated Ork sensor range. Thus far, the Battle Barge had gone unnoticed, but that changed as its captain brought the mighty vessel's engine to full power and bore down on the nearest Ork battleship.

The response was immediate, the comm-channels instantly jammed as, driven by equal parts enthusiasm and outrage, dozens of Ork vessels came to new headings and moved to intercept the intruder. All at once, the 3rd Company's captured kroozer was forgotten amongst the anarchy. At Lysander's command, more power was coaxed into the engines, and the kroozer set on course for the central docking spur.

Millions of miles distant, the *Storm of Wrath*, the first stage of its mission completed, broke off from its attack run, and drove hard for the outer system. The Orks, unaware that the Battle Barge had only ever been intended as a lure, gave reckless chase, their vessels increasingly strung out as the fast pulled away from the slow.

No one aboard the captured kroozer had any inkling of the star fort's docking procedure, but it had never been Garadon's intention to make such an attempt. Instead, the kroozer tore into the docking spur in the manner of a vast boarding torpedo, its prow sheering through dozens of decks before buckling under the incredible pressure. Hundreds of Orks died in the impact, some crushed by the kroozer, others blasted out into the void by their own atmosphere before pressure doors clanged shut across the ravaged docking spur. Before the kroozer had fully come to rest, the 3rd Company blew its external hatches and began their assault. Minutes

later, they were through the first pressure door and into the undamaged sections of the docking spur.



GORMOK'S COUNTER-ATTACK

On the star fort's high-domed kommand deck, Warlord Gormok initially blamed the collision on the carelessness of the kroozer's kaptin, but his black mood shifted to anticipation as reports of intruders came in from the docking spur. It had been a long time since Gormok's last proper fight. He'd led raids against humie worlds, but it had been over forty years – long before the Warp storm had trapped him on Viashan – since he had last battled a Space Marine. The Warlord dimly remembered that particular fight, deep in the mines of some worthless world, as being one of the best he'd ever had – even if it had cost him one arm and most of an ear. Besides, Gormok decided, it would give his boys the opportunity to test out the weapons looted from his new ally. Bellowing orders, Gormok strode from the kommand deck and went to seek the intruders.

Klaxons blared as the Imperial Fists fought their way through the star fort. Lysander, the Dreadnoughts and the Centurions led the way, a vanguard of nigh-impenetrable armour and

blistering firepower that swept early resistance aside with almost no effort. They advanced at a relentless pace, boltguns and lascannons blazing, trampling wounded Orks as they came. Behind the Centurions came the Tactical and Scout Squads, senses alert as they slew any greenskins left alive by the Centurions' advance. Squads Orteiz and Loramar, both under-strength following their assault on the kroozer, had remained behind with the vessel's ersatz crew in order to protect the priceless Thunderhawks and prepare them for flight.



Every battle-brother knew that the advantage of surprise would carry them only so far, that the sporadic attempts at defence would soon coalesce into something much more dangerous. Nevertheless, they took heart from the fact that though they were outnumbered several hundred times over, the confines of the star fort prevented the Orks from bringing their numerical advantage to bear. Time and again, the greenskins came bellowing through the refuse-clogged passageways, only to perish by the score as boltguns roared and lascannons blazed.

Garadon's plan, as endorsed by Lysander, was a simple one. If the 3rd Company could fight their way to the kommand deck, they could use the star fort's own thrusters to set it on a doomed orbit, thus relying on Viashan I itself to destroy its despoilers. Once their mission was accomplished, the Imperial Fists would escape via Thunderhawk Gunship and rendezvous with the *Storm of Wrath*, which was due to turn in-system once more. With the star fort's formidable weaponry disabled and the Ork fleet spread out across the Viashan System, escape would prove difficult but, as Garadon had explained during his briefing to the rest of the company, the Imperial Fists did not waste their time on easy endeavours – those could be left to the Ultramarines.

The Space Marines encountered their first real resistance at the junction between the docking spur and the main body of the station. Hundreds of Orks waited in ambush amidst the cluttered wreckage of what had once been a shuttle bay. Following Lysander's lead, the Sentinels of Terra disdainfully advanced into the storm of shoota-fire, trusting to their power armour's fortitude even as their own weapons culled the foe. Heavier sounds joined the deafening chorus as snazzguns and kannons were brought to bear, but still the Space Marines came on. Yet the Imperial Fists were suffering casualties too, and flashes of yellow armour could be seen amongst the jagged scraps of metal and greenskin dead.

Brilliant light flared, and white-hot energy lanced across the chamber. Warned by some instinct, Garadon dove clear. Brother Corron's reactions were slower, and the beam punched clear through his breastplate, killing him instantly. The Ork who had fired the shot perished a heartbeat later, as one of Squad Kord's snipers put a bullet through his forehead. However, other greenskins brought up similar weapons and, for the first time, the 3rd Company's advance slowed as they were forced to seek cover.

Even as Garadon directed his squad's return fire, a part of his brain noted that the energy weapons were like no Ork technology he had encountered before. The design was more efficient than was typical for greenskin manufacture and, although each had undergone a degree of customisation by its owner, there was a common design visible beneath the extra sights, grips and barrel extensions. Garadon abandoned his analysis, sighting along the Spartean's barrel. The bolt pistol flared, and an Ork fell stone dead before its finger could tighten on the trigger.

The gunners were retreating now, driven back by the murderous volleys of boltgun fire, but the attack was far from ended. With an echoing cry of 'Waaagh!', a new wave of attackers came barrelling down one of the access corridors, sluggas firing wildly as they closed.

Without a word of command being uttered, the 3rd Company's fire shifted and dozens of Orks were thrown backwards into their onrushing fellows. A Deff Dread lurched out of the horde, buzz-saws swinging to decapitate Brother Menos. With a metallic bellow, the mechanical monster came on, crushing its fellows as it sought other intruders to kill. Unfortunately for its pilot, Lysander was the next Space Marine to cross its path. There was a screeching noise as the buzz-saws scraped across the Captain's storm shield. A trio of booming clangs quickly followed as the Fist of Dorn struck two of the walker's arms from its body, then stove in its torso. Then, as quickly as the attack had begun, it was over, the surviving Orks retreating deeper into the star fort.

Lysander drove his company hard after that, not wanting to give the Orks the time to mass another attack. Gormok was growing increasingly concerned. He had expected the intruders to fall back before his fearsome new weapons, but they had kept coming. Gormok himself had felled two of the attackers, and winged a third, but he had retreated with his boys when the Space Marines had refused to fall back.

Finally, Gormok made his last stand on the kommand deck itself. Built on a grand scale entirely typical of its Imperial origins, the chamber could have accommodated a Warlord Titan, had one been assembled within. Gormok had taken full advantage of the space and had mustered every Ork he could within, so that every platform and walkway was crowded with greenskins.

THE LAST STAND

As the Tactical Squads and Dreadnoughts laid down suppressing fire, Lysander and the Centurions formed up around their Techmarine, Brother Karazan. Without breaking step, they formed a marching wall of ceramite that escorted him to an instrument panel almost unrecognisable under its Orky 'improvements'. The escort held firm as Karazan worked, ignoring the shells crashing against their armour. Again and again, Gormok roused his lads into a roaring charge across the kommand deck, only for the assault to disintegrate as Garadon poured fire into their flank. Here and there, more of the strange energy weapons flashed, but no technology could fully compensate for Orkish inaccuracy. Many of the shots went astray, and no Ork managed a second – Sergeant Kord's snipers reserved their fire only for such targets.

Battle raged, and still Brother Karazan was at his work. Boltguns ran dry, and spare magazines were taken from the dead so that the living could fight on. Gormok drove floods of grots into the fight in the hope of making the Space Marines waste their remaining shots, but the maddened wretches were hammered down with fists and gun-butts. Deff Dreads and Killa Kans were unleashed, but the Devastator Centurions calmly targeted each in turn until it was reduced to smouldering and blackened metal. Nevertheless, the Space Marines were badly outnumbered – if Karazan didn't complete his work swiftly, they were sure to be overwhelmed. Then the orbital thrusters at last began to fire, their labour sending tremors through the deck.

Gormok didn't fully understand what the Space Marines had done. Nevertheless he saw the

stars beginning to move through the kommand deck's armourglass dome, and realised that his Mekaniaks needed to reverse the changes the invaders had made. That hope faded as he saw Lysander bring his thunder hammer down on the control panel, destroying it utterly. Realising that his star fort was doomed, Gormok roused his boys for one last charge. The Warboss' fury drove him on through the hail of bolter fire. Roaring with the joy of slaughter, Gormok tore a Centurion apart, but then the fallen battle-brother's squad-mates drove their siege drills forward, and the Warboss was torn to a mangled mess of flesh and bone. With Gormok's fall, the Orks' enthusiasm faltered, and the Sentinels of Terra quickly seized the opportunity to withdraw.

Already the air was filled with the tortured groaning of metal as a star fort never intended to enter atmosphere began to surrender to gravity's remorseless embrace. The docking spur, its integrity already undermined by the kroozer's impact, sheared off entirely and began its own lazy descent into Viashan's exosphere. Garadon felt a moment of dread – if the docking spur was gone, it was entirely possible that the extraction Thunderhawks had been lost as well, severing his company's escape route. Fortunately, comms-traffic quickly confirmed that the attack craft had left the kroozer's hold the moment the star fort began to shift.

Minutes later, carefully matching their approach to the star fort's lazy yaw, the pilots had set down in a hanger bay beneath the kommand deck, and the surviving Space Marines at last made their escape. A few defence batteries gave half-hearted volleys at the retreating Thunderhawk Gunships, but only a few. The vast majority of the Orks had abandoned their stations in search of escape pods or functional ships. Most would fail.

As previously arranged, the *Storm of Wrath*'s fleet was once more headed in-system. Behind it spiralled a trail of wreckage from where several Ork vessels, too eager for a kill, had strayed into weapons range. A score of greenskin vessels – a mixture of kroozers and battleships – still pursued the Battle Barge. However, most of the Ork starships were arrayed in battle formation against newcomers on the edge of the Viashan system. The tides of the Warp had been kind, and the Nemean fleet had arrived earlier than projected. Though there were not enough Imperial Navy vessels to bring the Orks to battle, there were too many for the greenskins to ignore. Now, like a wolf torn between a choice of prey, the Orks risked losing both. And so it proved. Soon after, the 3rd Company's Thunderhawks touched down in the *Storm of Wrath*'s forward bay. After a brief broadside duel with a battlekroozer, the *Storm of Wrath* entered the Warp, the Nemean fleet making a similar withdrawal moments later. Meanwhile, the dark silhouette of the star fort began to glow red as Viashan I took revenge on its despoiler.

A NEW THREAT APPROACHES

By the time the *Storm of Wrath* had returned to Kalin, Garadon had drawn plans to end the Orks of the Magor Rift for good. With their base of resupply destroyed, the greenskin starships would be easy prey for the Imperial Navy, and once the fleet was driven off, the Crusade of Thunder could retake Viashan from its brutish conquerors.

Lysander concurred with his sergeant's appraisal of the situation, and ordered the *Storm of*

Wrath to break orbit. As he did so, however, Epistolary Darsway received an urgent message from *Phalanx*. A Tyranid infestation had taken root in the Drashin System. At less than a hundred light years from Terra, this placed the rapacious xenos a mere stone's throw from the Imperium's heart. Accordingly, and at Vladimir Pugh's order, all Imperial Fists strike forces, including the Crusade of Thunder, were summarily recalled to confront this threat. The war against the Orks would have to wait.

A decorative header featuring a central Imperial Aquila with a golden eagle and a red banner, flanked by two crossed Imperial swords. The entire scene is set against a dark, metallic background with ornate, gothic-style architectural details and small, glowing red lights.

INFESTATION ON DRASHIN

When the *Storm of Wrath* arrived at Drashin, it found a world heaving beneath the mass of Tyranid swarms. The roots of the infestation could be seen even from orbit, millions of dark carapaces blending together to form roving lakes that left nothing but bare rock and wasteland in their wake.

At least there were no hive ships in orbit. In fact, no Tyranid bio-ships of any kind appeared on the Battle Barge's auspex arrays, only the blocky shape of an Ark Mechanicus, several Imperial Navy transport craft, and other Imperial Fists fleet elements – the *Storm of Wrath*'s sister ship *Spear of Vengeance* amongst them. They hung immobile beyond Drashin's skies, guns silent as the battle for survival raged on below. It was not long before Lysander discovered why. Crackling heat storms boiled through Drashin's atmosphere, making comms-contacts with the planet-side defenders broken and garbled to the point of incomprehensibility. However, ship-to-ship comms were another matter, and the *Spear of Vengeance*'s captain gave Lysander a succinct account of the tactical situation.

The crisis on Drashin had begun some weeks earlier, when an unnamed space hulk had materialised out of the Warp on a direct heading for the planet. Judging by its crude hull adornments, the vessel had lately been under Ork command, but other than a marked deceleration in its approach, there had been no sign of life aboard as it crashed through the Adeptus Mechanicus picket fleet and collided with Drashin itself. Much of the space hulk had been destroyed by the Mechanicus ships, or else had burned up in the planet's thick atmosphere, but enough of it had survived to wreak calamity on the planet below, causing the world to shift slightly on its orbit and throwing up a cloud of particulate matter that had choked away the sun. Drashin's planetary crust was incredibly brittle, and the impact had all but obliterated an entire continent, leaving jagged obsidian platelets scattered across a seething ocean of magma. Worse was to come. As a crust of cooling rock hardened around the space hulk's hull, the Tyranid swarms had emerged from rents in the vessel's flanks. The magma oceans around the impact site had provided little in the way of bio-mass, but the jungles further to the west had proved a more tempting target. Before help could arrive, a swarm already glutted on the space hulk's previous occupants had blossomed to many times its original size.

Under the circumstances, orbital bombardment – or even Exterminatus – would have been the prudent course. However, the relief force's orders had been explicit: the Tyranid infestation was to be ended with minimal harm to the planet itself. The *Spear of Vengeance*'s

captain did not know the reason for the order, only that it had come from Terra itself. It didn't matter; Lysander could guess. There was an Adeptus Mechanicus archaeological outpost on Drashin's northern pole, and had been since before the captain's unintended sojourn in the Warp. Whatever it was the servants of the Omnissiah were looking for, it was clear that they didn't want it accidentally destroyed – even in circumstances as dire as these. The price of such restraint was quickly paid. Even with the arrival of the Catachan XXXI, millions of Imperial citizens had perished, with millions more on the brink. By the time the Imperial Fists had arrived, the determined Jungle Fighters had slowed the Tyranid advance, but only at the cost of a further two cities and many thousands of their own warriors. Now the swarm was deep into Drashin's largest continent, and the Adeptus Mechanicus' polar base remained secure only through the efforts of Legio Magna's Titans, and a muster of Knights from House Krast.

As matters had transpired, Vladimir Pugh's task force – comprising some four companies of Imperial Fists – had arrived only one Drashin day before the *Storm of Wrath*. Pugh knew that there had been instances of Genestealer infestations aboard space hulks since the *Sin of Damnation* incident nearly four hundred years previously, but seldom before had there been any record of a full-fledged Tyranid swarm aboard such a vessel. Pugh had taken this to mean that the space hulk's mangled skin concealed at least one Norn Queen – though how one of the brood mothers of the Tyranid swarms had come to be aboard the vessel, he could not fathom – and had elected to lead a strike straight at the infestation's heart. Unwilling to risk a Drop Pod descent onto the space hulk's magma-strewn surrounds, Pugh had led an assault via Thunderhawk Gunship. Nearly half a day had passed, but no communication had been heard from him since. Brooking no further delay, Lysander vowed to follow in Pugh's path, to bring aid to his Chapter Master if he still lived and to avenge him if he did not. Yielding command of the Tactical Squads to Garadon once more, Lysander led the Centurions and his two Dreadnoughts to a Thunderhawk and departed into the atmosphere.

THE HEART OF THE SWARM

The crusade's Thunderhawks met resistance as soon as they entered Drashin's upper atmosphere. Winged bio-constructs flew shrieking through the skies, acidic venom spurting from their chitinous weaponry. The spray hissed and sizzled wherever it struck a Thunderhawk, and the pilots were forced into dizzying evasive manoeuvres. Smaller Tyranid beasts swirled around the descending strike craft. Their shots barely scratched the hull, but their brittle bodies clogged the innards of the turbofan engines.

With a shriek of tortured metal, Garadon's Thunderhawk plunged from the sky, avoiding collision with the ground below only through its pilot's deft skill. Undercarriage screaming and buckling, the front half of the craft slewed to a halt on one of the larger platelets. Its stern was not so fortunate, and was already threatening to sink into the magma, taking its precious cargo with it. Once again, the Thunderhawk's pilot proved his worth, coaxing enough life out of the craft's failing thrusters to hold the flyer stable whilst his passengers disembarked into the spore-choked air. By the time the thrusters finally gave out, the

transport bay was empty. Only the pilot perished as the Thunderhawk slipped beneath the surface of the burning sea, his life a small price willingly given so that his battle-brothers could fight on.

Garadon's demi-company had avoided death thus far, but it still waited to claim them. The rocky islands were swarming with Tyranids, and the nearest creatures broke off to engage them, effortlessly leaping the magma channels that lay in their path. Boltguns roared and the first wave of gaunts was blasted to ichor-spattered bone, but Garadon knew the volley had bought only a little time. He could see larger bio-beasts moving in his direction and he knew that to stand his ground was to be overwhelmed. Just then, a thermal current briefly parted the spore clouds, and the sergeant caught sight of the 7th and 9th Company banners standing proud on a nearby summit. Pausing only to slam another magazine home into his bolt pistol, Garadon ordered the advance.



THE RELIEF OF BLACK RIDGE

Meanwhile, on what the 7th Company's Chaplain had wryly referred to as 'Bleak Ridge' before a strangler-beast had torn him apart, Captain Jonas had resolved to die with pride. Before him lay the wreckage of three Thunderhawk Gunships; behind him, the space hulk's

flank towered into the sky. Hours earlier, Pugh had led the 1st and 5th Companies through a rent in the adamantium leviathan's hide, ordering Captains Jonas and Terrell to hold their battle-brothers back to act as rearguard.

Initially, the combined firepower of the 7th and 9th had been more than a match for the Tyranids but, about an hour previously, the swarms had grown in size and flown into a desperate frenzy. Jonas didn't care why; he knew only that he would keep firing until his magazine ran dry, and would then tear the beasts apart with his bare hands until strength finally left him. Captain Terrell could do little of either, for he had been blinded by a spray of acid, but still he took pride in his battle-brothers' efforts as he bellowed encouragement. It mattered not that they were Reserve Companies – that day they fought with vigour fit to shame the Veterans of a hundred younger Chapters.

Another wave of Termagants massed beneath Bleak Ridge, and Jonas prepared a sally to clear the slopes, as he had done a dozen times since taking up position. Tyranid Warriors and Carnifexes were advancing in the middle-distance and he wanted the chaff cleared away before they reached his line. The captain raised his power sword high, but before he could give the order, boltgun shells hammered out of the spore clouds to the west, and the 3rd Company crashed into the swarm of gaunts. Garadon led the charge; Chaplain Markov came close behind, his voice raised in a wrathful litany. Moments later, three banners stood proud atop Bleak Ridge, and the next Tyranid attack wave fared no better than those that had come before it. Taking up position amongst the 7th's battle-depleted squads, the 3rd sent salvo after salvo into the advancing Tyranid Warriors, leaving the heavier weapons of the 9th's Devastators to focus their fire on the monsters beyond.

Yet still the Tyranids came, hurling themselves at Bleak Ridge. Again and again bolters roared. The air whistled to the shrill reports of plasma guns and missile launchers, but still the swarm crashed against the Imperials Fists' line. Tyrannofexes stomped forward, their sprays of fleshborer beetles rattling against power armour before lascannons brought them down. Spore mines exploded upon the ridge, killing or injuring the Space Marines in ones and twos. Terrell was still at the rear, bellowing encouragement at his brothers, all the while ignoring the searing pain from his ravaged eyes. Jonas was still issuing orders, his voice brittle with his hatred for the creatures that mustered below. Increasingly, though, those Imperial Fists who fought on the heights now listened for Garadon's calm voice as he directed the defenders' fire with an efficiency learned over thirty years of service and honed under Lysander's tutelage. Then a bio-titan emerged out of the swirling spores, and Garadon knew that the ridge was lost. He was about to order his brothers to withdraw inside the space hulk, when an ear-splitting boom sounded overhead.

Lysander's Thunderhawk had fared better than Garadon's during the descent, but not by any great margin. A glancing collision with a Harridan had sent the flyer spiralling out of control and away from the battle. In the end, it had made a jarring touchdown some eighty miles from Garadon's position, and Lysander had watched with growing and impotent fury as Brother Karazan struggled to restore the wounded gunship to full function. The skies above had been kept relatively clear by the Stormtalons of the Swords of Polux, who had shredded

any winged bio-beast that strayed too close. Now, after a fraught delay, Lysander's Thunderhawk joined the Battle for Bleak Ridge. A barrage of fire from the Thunderhawk's turbo-laser and hellstrike missiles tore great holes in the bio-titan. The Hierophant gave a thunderous roar and brought its bio-cannon about to target the newcomer. It stumbled forwards as a volley of lascannon-fire from Bleak Ridge sheared off one of its forelegs. Before the beast could recover, a second shot from the Thunderhawk's turbo-laser tore its skull to ruin, and it toppled over into a pool of lava.

Coming in low, Lysander's gunship swept across the battlefield, its heavy bolters tracking synapse nodes and drowning them in heavy-calibre shells. At once, the Tyranid swarm shuddered as the feedback rolled through the Hive Mind. As the attackers recoiled, the Thunderhawk touched down on Bleak Ridge and Lysander led the Centurions out into the battle. After receiving reports from Garadon and Jonas, Lysander ordered his two Dreadnoughts to join the defence of the ridge, then led the Centurions into the space hulk's bowels.



INTO THE DARKNESS

Lysander soon lost track of time during his journey through the space hulk's corroded and pitted corridors. The captain could have been travelling for hours, or days, or weeks; he neither knew nor cared. All that mattered to Lysander was that his old company and his Chapter Master were somewhere in the darkness ahead. He still couldn't make comms-contact with Pugh, or any member of the 1st Company, though his sensors registered several other suits of Terminator armour several miles in the distance. Lysander made no account of the creatures he slew within the space hulk's tangled passageways. Gargoyles screeched out of the darkness, wings flailing madly. Genestealers dropped from ceilings or emerged from crawlspaces, talons lashing out at the intruders. All the attackers perished, pulverised under the crushing impact of the Fist of Dorn, or else blown apart by a Centurion's salvo.

After a close-fought battle in which a crackling Trygon claimed two Centurions' lives, Lysander's strike force found a working conveyer which carried them deep into the vessel at phenomenal speed. When they stepped off the conveyor, they found the walls subsumed by pulsating organic matter that spat acid and lashed at them with vestigial tendrils. Torn scraps of flesh marred the corridors – the remains of sphincter-portals shredded by the 1st Company's chainfists. The carapaces of tiny bio-forms crunched underfoot at every step, and seething fluid dribbled down the waxy walls to collect in folds and hollows. Lysander could hear the sounds of battle echoing through the corridors now, and the sensor outlines of his fellow Terminators were solid where before they had been hazy. At no point did the tide of Tyranids cease, but Lysander was too close to his destination to yield.

Smashing through a brood of Hive Guard, Lysander emerged at last into the chamber where his missing brothers fought on. It was a vast space, larger even than the Grand Basilica on Terra in which the Pillar of Bone stood. It was not a chamber aboard one of the vessels that made up the space hulk, but an empty hollow between two such ships, sealed tight by some incredible, unknown pressure. Rivulets of lava trickled down the walls from high above, reminding Lysander of how deep into the ship they had come. Before him, the 1st and 5th Companies fought amidst a roiling sea of Tyranids; their determination was sufficient to keep them from drowning beneath the screeching tide, but it was clear they could make no headway. Here and there, Lysander could see armoured bodies amidst the carnage – too many battle-brothers had fallen, and the goal was not yet accomplished. Sporadically, storm bolters sounded, but most weapons were spent, their wielders reduced to fighting with fists or combat blades. And yet their target was so close. There, in the chamber's very centre, suspended from a web of muscle and chitin, was the grotesque abomination that was the Norn Queen.

As Lysander's strike force began carving their own path through the swarm, the captain saw Pugh make another attempt to advance. A Hive Tyrant moved to block the Chapter Master's path, and he was hurled back in a spray of blood, but Pugh was not so easily thwarted. Rising to his feet, Pugh came forward again, the Hand of Judgement crackling as energy fields played around it. The monster's leg collapsed under Pugh's first punch, its torso under the second. High above the battle, a fresh brood of Genestealers burst forth from the Norn

Queen's birthing pouches to scuttle down the walls.

TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH

Three Terminators forced their way forward, thunder hammers crackling as they swept the packed waves of gaunts aside. A Carnifex slammed into them, the impact sending two staggering backwards as its claws slicing through the third's armour. But the intervention had bought Pugh time. Gathering the Hand of Judgement into a fist, the Chapter Master stepped over the Hive Tyrant's corpse and punched forward, buckling the chitinous plates that crowned the Carnifex's head and ravaging an eye cluster. As the beast reared back in pain, several Centurions found their mark. Lascannons blazed, burning a blackened hole through the Carnifex's torso. However, even as the beast collapsed in its death throes, its mace-shaped tail scattered Pugh's bodyguard and knocked the Chapter Master from his feet.

The Genestealers were on Pugh in a heartbeat, claws tearing at the ceramite of his armour. Other members of the 1st Company surged forward, acting-Captain Julian amongst them, but Julian was snatched to oblivion by a Trygon's flailing claw, and more Genestealers pressed forward to prevent the survivors' advance. Pugh lashed out again and again as he tried to regain his feet, but the foe were too many. The Hand of Judgement crackled furiously one last time, then the Chapter Master vanished beneath the betaloned tide and was torn limb from limb.

With a great cry of rage and loss, Lysander forged forward through the swarms, driving the Genestealers back from his slain Chapter Master. With him came the Centurions and the survivors of the 1st and 5th Companies, their limbs finding fresh strength as they vented their fury at Pugh's death. Yet though they reclaimed the bloody ground upon which his dismembered corpse lay, they could advance no further. High above, more birthing pouches split open, disgorging ever more and ever larger bio-constructs into the fight. Lascannons were now turned on the Norn Queen, but the shots glanced off her carapace. A chainfist could have done the job perhaps, or a thunder hammer, but with the target suspended so high it was impossible to bring the weapon to bear.

It seemed that the Imperial Fists would have to retreat or be overwhelmed, but neither Lysander nor Hagan were prepared to trade the lives of their fallen battle-brothers for so ignominious a defeat. Yet little by little, amidst the horror and fury of that cavern, Lysander realised that the situation was far too similar to Taladorn for his liking. Once again, he was surrounded and outnumbered; if he didn't order the retreat, more lives would be lost. Pugh had been correct, the captain realised – unthinking stubbornness served no one save the Imperium's foes. Yet still Lysander could not bring himself to fall back from the fray and, as battle raged around him, he sought an alternative. The captain's eyes tracked around the chamber, coming to rest on where lava trickled in from above. For a moment, he stared blankly, knowing he had hit upon the solution but did not yet know what it was. Then, as realisation dawned, he ordered the Centurions to ignore the Tyranids and concentrate their fire on the dully glowing trail of magma.

Lascannons fired as one, but to no effect. Twice, three times more they fired, but still nothing

happened. Then, on the fourth volley, the ceiling buckled and a viscous stream of magma dribbled down onto the Tyranid swarm below. Still the Centurions fired. The breach widened, and the stream became a flood. The Norn Queen hissed and shrieked as the searing rock splashed against her carapace and began to eat through, but she could not break free of her fleshy web. Magma was beginning to pool in the chamber's heart, and the Imperial Fists were at last falling back, dragging their dead with them and retreating to the higher levels where Lysander had entered the chamber. With a terrible crash, a span of the ceiling gave way, and the Norn Queen plunged into the spreading lava pool. She was already dying, her innards incinerated by the molten rock, but she fought for life nonetheless, her limbs thrashing madly amongst the magma until finally her body sank beneath the surface.

As the Norn Queen perished, so too did every synapse creature for hundreds of miles, killed by the shared agony of their brood mother's death. On Bleak Ridge, some broods scurried for cover as their instincts took over; others hurled themselves forward in a feeding frenzy. All perished – if not at that moment, then in the following days when the rest of the Imperial Fists arrived at Drashin and a thorough scourging of the world began. Far away, the Tyranids assailing Drashin's remaining cities rode out the agony of the Norn Queen's death, but the swarms withdrew all the same, vanishing deep into the jungles and caves to bedevil the planet for a long time to come. Though it had cost the Imperial Fists greatly, Drashin had been saved.



VENGEANCE GATHERS

Several days after the Norn Queen's death, the remainder of the Imperial Fists arrived from the Warp. Engaged in a war against the Orks of Antigon – a campaign dubbed the 'Crusade of Steel' – they had responded immediately to Pugh's summons, but had found their fleet harried by Eldar vessels launched from Craftworld Saim-Hann.

Faced with the choice of abandoning a portion of his strength to the raiders, or delaying his arrival at Drashin, the 2nd Company's Captain Helion had chosen to follow protocol and vanquish the immediate threat first. Had it not been for the interference of the Eldar, the Imperial Fists would have stood united at Drashin, and there was not a battle-brother in the newly arrived fleet who did not blame the Eldar for their Chapter Master's death. Unable to vent their wrath against those deemed most deserving of it, the Imperial Fists threw themselves into the purging of the surviving Tyranids from Drashin's surface, moving with such implacable vigour that little of the work was left for the hard-bitten veterans of the Catachan XXXI. Through it all, the Adeptus Mechanicus offered little assistance, although three Knights of House Krast did go against their orders and take the field at the Space Marines' side on several occasions.

THE COST OF VICTORY

As the purging of Drashin continued, more sombre duties were performed. Pugh's body was sent back to Phalanx so that his bones might be prepared as a relic for the ages to come. Some thought Lysander the perfect successor, considering that his errors on Taladorn had been washed away by his deeds since. Yet Lysander refused the honour, knowing that he had not yet learned the lessons of his recent past and could not take the Chapter Master's seat until he had done so. Instead, he reclaimed the captaincy of the 1st Company, which was now leaderless again following acting-Captain Julian's death at Pugh's side. The decision was therefore deferred until the business of Drashin could be concluded. However, Garadon's rise to the captaincy of the 3rd Company was immediate.

Pugh was not the only brother who fell to the Tyranids, but here the Imperial Fists had been fortunate. Dorn's legacy of blood and bone ensured that for every four warriors who had fallen, only one had perished. The others, coaxed back from oblivion's brink by the Apothecaries' skill, would yet live to serve their Chapter. Some would do so only with the aid

of bionic implants. Others – Captain Terrell amongst them – would be forced by their injuries to take up other duties on Phalanx, rather than continue as battle-brothers. Nevertheless, of some one hundred or so Space Marines who had fallen on Bleak Ridge or within the space hulk, near seventy would fight again.

As the unbloodied companies spread out across Drashin in search of Tyranid infestation, Captain Garadon oversaw the investigation of the space hulk's half-sunken remains. Working in concert with the polar base's Engineeers, Techmarines dug their way through the vessel, looking for some clue as to what had brought the vessel to Drashin.

At first, it was assumed that the Tyranids had merely infested the space hulk, but this was quickly discovered to be untrue. The site where Pugh had fallen was not an infested star vessel, but a mangled hive ship, concealed by the asteroids and spacecraft compacted around it. Clearly, the creatures had broken free during transit, and slaughtered the hulk's crew – who, in a development too unlikely to be coincidence, bore the same glyphs as the Orks of the Magor Rift. But who had captured the Tyranids in the first place, and why? The colouration of the beasts matched no configuration yet observed by Imperial forces, which was worrying enough. The hive fleet code-named 'Behemoth' had more or less run its course some decades earlier, and the thought that there were other Tyranid fleets converging on the galaxy was a worrying one.

After days of careful investigation, the searchers discovered the emaciated remains of a Navigator. He was imprisoned within the space hulk's drive units by a many-tendrilled cyber-cradle, and protected by a force field that withstood all attempts to breach it for more than a week. When the force field was finally dissolved, the Navigator died at once, killed by some suicide mechanism within the cradle. Further investigation of the Navigator's cybernetic interfaces revealed that Drashin had not been the space hulk's intended destination. The original course had been set for Terra, and it seemed likely that the Navigator had been able to resist his implants just enough to throw the vessel from its intended heading – though bound body and mind, still he had found a way to serve his Emperor. Garadon was sure the defences around the Sol System would have prevented the space hulk doing to Terra what it had done to Drashin, but that did not diminish the plan's audacity.

With the Navigator's death, it seemed that no one would ever know the architect of Drashin's woes. However, as the wreck of the space hulk was broken apart for salvage, a brass naming plaque was found emblazoned on the ancient Heresy-era cruiser embedded at its heart. It read simply 'Hydros'. The meaning of that name was lost on Garadon and his fellow captains, but not so on Lysander. It was a word he knew all too well. In the ancient legends upon which Warsmith Shon'tu had styled himself, Hydros had been the warlord's spear. When thrown, it had unleashed an all-consuming plague that devoured everything in its path. Lysander only knew of this because it had been one of the legends Shon'tu had recounted during the terrible days on Malodrax, but he knew at once it was no coincidence. If the Tyranid swarm had taken full root on Drashin, or worse yet on Terra, a new hive fleet might have one day grown in the Imperium's very heart.

Upon the Chapter's return to Phalanx, Lysander's fellow captains again made the attempt to

have him take Pugh's place. This time, Lysander gave the matter more careful consideration. The Imperial Fists needed leadership, that much was true, but some instinct gnawed at the First Captain's hearts. Unable to resolve the matter through conscious thought, Lysander spent many days silently meditating in the Cloister of Remembrance. On the fifth such day, Haldor Marzon, the Chapter's Chief Librarian and Pugh's closest confidant, intruded upon Lysander's gloom-laden solitude. There, the mystic explained that Pugh's order for the Crusade of Thunder to strike the Orks of the Magor Rift was not the censure that it had first seemed. During his long years of service, the Chapter Master had forged many allies throughout the Imperium – and possibly beyond. Since Shon'tu's escape from the destruction of Malodrax, Pugh had used those connections to uncover any information he could concerning Shon'tu's plans. Though the Chapter Master had never succeeded in locating Shon'tu's base of operations, he had uncovered many of the Warsmith's allies, and set his Chapter to the business of their destruction. The strike in the Magor Rift, Marzon explained, had been the latest in a long line of similar actions.

Lysander was unsure how to react to Marzon's words – to the revelation that, under the guise of reprimand, Pugh had engineered a manner in which vengeance could unknowingly be pursued. The captain didn't doubt for a moment that the Librarian had spoken truly. Within the Chapter, Marzon was known for his unflagging – and often outspoken – honesty, but moreover his words made sense of recent events. Lysander remembered the weaponry his battle-brothers had endured during their assault on Viashan's star fort, weaponry that could well have been provided by Shon'tu's Warpsmiths. He recalled that the space hulk loosed upon Drashin had borne the same glyphs as those he had seen on Kalin and Viashan. It had to be true. More than ever, Lysander knew he was not ready to take Pugh's place. He was too selfish, too single-minded in his pursuits. Were he in command of the Chapter, he would have set it solely to the purpose of Shon'tu's destruction, neglecting the Imperial Fists' broader duties.

A NEW MASTER IS CHOSEN

Thus, when Lysander convened the Chapter Council, it was to refuse the position of Chapter Master once again. To the surprise of all there gathered, the captain spared nothing of his pride, and explained what he had learnt of Pugh's actions, and of the flaws within his own character. Lysander announced that he would never serve as Chapter Master so long as Shon'tu still lived. So long as the Warsmith strode the stars, Lysander knew he could never be certain of his own judgement. The Chapter Council accepted his decision with reserved dismay, but could defer the matter of the Chapter Master's appointment no longer. After much debate, the rank was finally bestowed upon Vorn Hagan of the 5th Company.

No sooner had the appointment been made than Captain Garadon stepped forth. The 3rd Company wished to see their crusade completed, not against the Orks of the Magor Rift, but against he who had been revealed as their paymaster: Warsmith Shon'tu. Shon'tu had cast his spear, Garadon announced, but it had flown awry – it was now time for vengeance to find him. Techmarine Karazan had recovered fragments of nav-data from the Hydros' systems, and thus discovered the space hulk's point of origin was Malodrax – the Warsmith had

returned to his lair.

Garadon spoke forcefully and eloquently, reminding all that so many of the Imperial Fists' recent woes could be laid at Shon'tu's feet, that Pugh's blood lay as heavily on the Warsmith's hands as it did on the talons of the Tyranids. As Garadon spoke, he saw Lysander nod approvingly, and that affirmation made him doubt his cause. He had learnt much from the First Captain in recent months, but had he also been captured by Lysander's blind obsession?

It seemed that Hagan believed so, for he denied Garadon's request. He would not, Hagan said calmly, allow his inaugural act to bring about the ruin of his 3rd Company. Lysander muttered darkly at this response; Garadon, acutely aware of his recent elevation to captain's rank, remained silent. However, Hagan's next order surprised them both. Turning to Lysander, he bade the captain make Phalanx ready for departure. Pugh would be avenged, Shon'tu would be humbled and the Chapter would fight as one. The Crusade of Thunder would end as it had begun, in battle against one of the Imperial Fists' greatest foes.

Yet as the Chapter Council dissolved, and Lysander went to oversee the rituals that would rouse Phalanx from its decades-long dormancy, he realised that Hagan's manner likely hid a need for vengeance that burned at least as strong as Garadon's. Anything could await them at Malodrax, and even Phalanx was not indestructible. Thus Lysander sought out Epistolary Darsway. When the First Captain had faced Shon'tu in battle before, he had been too proud to request aid. He would not make that mistake again.

Lysander entered the Chamber of Storm to find his guests already there. They had accepted his invitation with alacrity, which the captain took as proof that he still had their respect.

'I know Shon'tu's location,' Lysander said without preamble, striding to the stone table in the centre of the room. His fingers closed around a goblet of ambrosin. His guests had laid claim to similar vessels, although Tycho's, Lysander noticed, was already all but drained. 'Do you stand with us?'

'Does proud Lysander at last ask for our help?' Tycho asked, with the merest hint of amusement.

'No, I offer the chance for vengeance.' Lysander paused, weighing up his next words. 'But were I asking for aid, I can think of no warriors to whom I would rather turn.'

Tycho's lips hooked into a knowing smile. He said nothing, but Lysander knew that the Blood Angel was not fooled.

Lysander shifted his attention to Sicarius. The Ultramarine gave a slow nod. 'It would be an honour to fight at your side once again, my brother. We will

be there.'

'And you?' Lysander asked of Tycho, who was now making no attempt to suppress a smile.

'We'll join you, of course,' the Blood Angel replied. 'I would never forgive myself if I denied Cato the honour of fighting at our side for a second time.'

Sicarius' expression darkened. Lysander wasn't sure if the Ultramarine had taken offence at the insult, or the over-familiarity of the address. Whatever the reason, Sicarius had the sense to hold his peace in the face of the provocation.

Lysander grunted with approval, mostly to conceal his own smile, and hoisted his goblet high. 'Then, brothers, in the name of our Primarchs, and of the Emperor, I give you vengeance!'



FALL OF MALODRAX

***Phalanx* arrived at Malodrax with the same tortured roar of metal and stone that had marked its every journey for over three thousand years. Those aboard had no inkling that this sound marked entropy's grasp growing stronger over the mighty vessel – they heard only a war-cry sounded by the fortress' machine spirits.**

No sooner had the ripples of *Phalanx*'s Geller fields faded away than its scores upon scores of defense lasers, torpedo tubes and macro cannon swung to readiness. Drive engines flared as the escort fleet – the Ultramarines cruiser *Valin's Revenge* and Tycho's three Azkaellon-class frigates amongst them – slipped their stasis-moorings and came about.

Malodrax lay directly ahead, a burnished orb lit with writhing fire. Clusters of Iron Warriors cruisers and Ork vessels – the survivors of Viashan – hung in its shadow. One craft loomed larger than the rest, hanging over Malodrax like an evil moon of jagged spires and contorted metal. Umbilical pipelines trailed from the vessel's aft, writhing like serpents as they vanished into Malodrax's clouds. It was vast, almost as large as *Phalanx* and, though he had never seen it before, Lysander knew its name. This was *Tamunash*, the ancient war barque built long ago by the warlord Shon'tu believed himself to have once been. After millennia of searching, the Warsmith had found it at last.

At Hagan's order, the Space Marine fleet closed on Malodrax, the first salvos of fire thundering across the void. Armour plates buckled under punishing volleys, ships spiralled away, their engines fitfully misfiring as their crews struggled to regain command of their wounded vessels. Ork ships dove recklessly into the fight, kannons blazing madly until their hulls shattered under the reciprocal fire.

A CLASH OF LEVIATHANS

Yet it was only when *Phalanx* came within weapons range of *Tamunash* that the battle could truly be said to have begun. In the opening moments of the engagement, the two mighty starships exchanged enough firepower to destroy a planetoid. Shields flared and went dead, armour crumpled and weapons batteries were unseated – and this was but the first exchange of what promised to be a long and gruelling match. As Hagan and his assembled captains watched from *Phalanx*'s command sanctorum, they saw a section of *Tamunash*'s prow splinter apart. Tycho, witnessing the battle from Garadon's side, made satisfied exclamation at this small victory. The Imperial Fists made no sound, but nor did any of them offer

reprimand for the Blood Angel's unseemly breach of protocol. As matters transpired, it became obvious that it was but a fleeting victory. Like clawed hands clasping each other, the ravaged plates of *Tamunash's* hull wove back together, their motions jerking fitfully in time to the pulsing of the ship's trailing umbilicals. Now the purpose of those conduits was clear. *Tamunash* was feasting upon whatever substance the umbilicals carried. They would have to be severed if the vessel they fed was to be destroyed.

Hagan swallowed a curse at that realisation. He had hoped to secure Malodrax's orbit before launching planetstrike – now it seemed that he would have to enact his plan in reverse. The umbilicals were too small and too distant a target for *Phalanx's* main weaponry, and no Thunderhawk could have hoped to survive the barrage of fire between the vying star fortresses. Coming to a decision, he crisply ordered his battle-brothers to commence a Drop Pod assault on Malodrax – the umbilicals would be severed at their tethering points on the planet's surface. Garadon argued for another course, requesting his Chapter Master's assent to attempt a boarding action of *Tamunash* itself. In the same way in which Drop Pods entered planetary atmosphere too quickly to be tracked by skyfire emplacements, boarding torpedoes could cross the gulf of space between the two vessels. Hagan did not much like Garadon's plan, but the logic was flawless, offering as it did twice the chance of destroying enough umbilicals to render *Tamunash* vulnerable. In the end, the Chapter Master's mind was swayed when both Sicarius and Tycho declared that they would also commit their companies to the boarding action.

Only Lysander's 1st Company would remain in reserve, standing ready to teleport strike wherever they were needed. The cluster of Imperial Fists boarding torpedoes struck *Tamunash* high on its starboard prow. Thus far, Garadon's gamble had paid off. Not one of the assault craft had been lost in their flight across the void, though the exit canopies of three had failed to detonate upon breaching the ship's hull, requiring that the occupants cut their way free from inside. Fortunately, Garadon had seen no reason to alter the company's configuration since he had taken command, and the Centurions' siege drills made short work of the rebellious hatches. Indeed, Garadon was most grateful for the presence of his warsuits. The confines of the boarding torpedoes decreed that the company's Dreadnoughts be reassigned to the planetstrike, and the Centurions would do much to compensate for the weakness caused by their absence. However, comms had been severed as soon as the torpedoes had breached *Tamunash's* hull. Worse, Epistolary Darsway reported that the Warp was roiling with turbulence, rendering him unable to contact either the other boarding parties or the rest of the strike force. Garadon could clearly recall the accounts of Haddrake Tor, where Shon'tu had used cultist witches to stir the Warp – clearly the same trick was at play here.

The counter-attack came at once. The accessways and corridors were tangled thick, not just with Iron Warriors, but with Orks as well. But numbers were on the Imperial Fists' side – at least for now. As Chaplain Markov intoned ancient litanies of vengeance, they advanced unflinching, driving greenskins and traitors back through sheer volume of boltgun-fire. However, as they fought deeper into the ship, past the endless banks of bond-slaves fused into the walls and through the blasphemous shrines, panels slid back in the chamber walls.

In their place, automated weapons jutted forward, their sights glowing red with fire, their barrels mimicking the snarling visages of Daemons. These larger chambers were a mixed blessing. True, they gave Garadon's battle-brothers room to fight in one another's defence and create overlapping channels of fire which drove their enemies into bloody retreat – but they also allowed Shon'tu to bring the Sons of the Forge's more formidable weapons to bear. Deck plates buckled as Helbrutes thundered forward, weapons blazing and voices raised in wordless bellows of wrath and agony in equal measure. Maulerfiends prowled the shrine-halls and intersections, the oily exhaust from their metal nostrils fogging the air as they sought the intruders' scent.

That it was Shon'tu who commanded the vessel seemed beyond all doubt, for with every step Garadon took, his mocking voice echoed from vox-units concealed by *Tamunash's* baroque design. The Warsmith was effusive in his enjoyment of the situation, betraying no concern for the vassals he sent to their deaths. Instead, he recounted tales from his supposed earlier incarnation; he spoke of the Poison Feasts, the Maze of Duzandor and, more than anything else, an endless roster of military triumphs – often at such volume that even the bark and bray of battle was drowned beneath the tide of self-aggrandisement.

Through it all, Garadon relied on Epistolary Darsway to guide them. The source of the Warp-tumult was like a black hole in the Librarian's senses – his thoughts could not penetrate it, but he could detect the epicentre. For Garadon, restoring communications was of the greatest priority. Until then, he could not request aid from Lysander's 1st Company, nor learn the fate of his allies, or of *Phalanx* and its fleet. For all Garadon knew, the battle could already be lost.

As the 3rd Company fought deeper into the ship, the fewer were the Iron Warriors who confronted them, and the more frequent the automated weapons emplacements became. It was not until the 3rd Company breached a vast plunder-hold, and were confronted by the largest horde of Orks they had yet encountered, that Garadon understood why. As the Orks surged forwards, the ferocity of their war cry drowning out Shon'tu's relentless monologue, the automated weapons-fire increased markedly. The defences had daemoniac entities fused within them, Garadon realised, and they fed upon the Orks' rage. The greenskins weren't crew; they were fuel, their crude psychic might feeding *Tamunash's* weaponry both without and within. Doubtless the Orks didn't realise their situation, having been promised only battle and plunder. It was genius, in its way. The chief danger to a vessel the size of *Tamunash* would always be from boarding actions like Garadon's. However, with the crew's rage harnessed to the vessel's guns, any shipboard assault would only make *Tamunash* more dangerous to its assailants – including *Phalanx*. That realisation galvanised Garadon into fresh action. Driving his battle-brothers even harder, he pressed on.

After what seemed like an age of fighting their way through corridors, the 3rd Company emerged into a chamber dominated by a ridged umbilical cable that burst through the floor and vanished into the ceiling. Far below Garadon, on the main deck and framed by burning Forgefiend wreckage, Erasmus Tycho's company strove with a greenskin horde. Even from that distance, Garadon could see that the Blood Angel's relaxed, almost jocose, nature had departed. In its place was a cold fury that had transformed the unmasked half of Tycho's face

into a rictus of hate. The captain bore a combi-melta, but he used the weapon as a club as often as not, lost to the dark joy of battle. He was not the only one. The Blood Angels had not met the Orks with feet planted and bolters blazing, as Garadon would have done, but had charged to meet them, striving against choppa and power klaw with chainsword, combat blade and fist. As Garadon ordered his battle-brothers into position, he saw a black-armoured Blood Angel tear a furrow through the horde, only to be dragged down and hacked apart.

At Garadon's signal, the Sentinels of Terra began to pour fire down into the melee, a near continual stream of bolter-shells, missiles and plasma that blew the rear ranks of encroaching horde apart. A large Ork at the back of the hangar bellowed at his lads to direct their fire against the Imperial Fists, but the combination of greenskin prowess and the uncertainty of firing at so extreme an angle meant that almost all of the shots went wide. Rokkits smashed into gantries and shells caromed off walls, but only a handful of Garadon's men were struck, and their trusty power armour saved all but two from lasting harm. The same could not be said for the Orks. Scores of howling xenos perished as the 3rd Company's shots slammed home, and the rest were thrown into such disorder that they fell back from the Blood Angels' fury.



THE FIRST STRIKE OF VENGEANCE

Once the chamber was secured, a collar of melta bombs was placed around the site where the umbilical cable emerged from the flow. As the charges were detonated, the cable ruptured. What spilled out of the breach was not fuel, nor indeed a liquid of any kind, but a swirling ethereal mass that shrieked across the chamber before dispersing. Darsway hypothesised that *Tamunash* was a Daemon-vessel of incredible size, and required harvested souls to perform the feats of self-repair they had already witnessed. As he spoke, *Tamunash* gave a small but perceptible shudder. Shon'tu's speech, which had harangued them almost from the first, lost its mocking tone. Now he began to curse and threaten, his voice raw and angry. It grew only more so when a second tremor rocked the ship a few moments later. Garadon knew that either the Ultramarines had severed another umbilical cable from within *Tamunash*, or his battle-brothers had severed one on Malodrax's surface.

Before the second set of tremors had fully faded away, a scraping of metal upon metal heralded the arrival of another Iron Warriors war party. They came from higher up in the chamber, descending through the same gantries that the 3rd Company had earlier used. They advanced at a dead run, firing as they came. Maulerfiends charged through the mass, shouldering and trampling traitors in their hurry to reach the fight, the thumping pistons in their limbs propelling the beasts forward with frightening speed. Garadon began to order the 3rd Company into position, only to be checked by Tycho, whose rage had subsided with the Orks' defeat. The Blood Angel pointed out that whatever was blocking the comms had to be cleared if there was to be any hope of withdrawal, and that his own Librarian had been slain in the previous battle. Reluctantly acceding to Tycho's logic, Garadon left the Blood Angels to their battle and continued deeper into *Tamunash*.

The passageways were quieter now, the vessel's defenders drawn off by the twin threats of the Ultramarines and Blood Angels. Only a few patrols barred the 3rd Company's path, and these were soon overcome. Shon'tu had fallen fully silent, the battle with *Phalanx* now taking all of his concentration. Twice more the vessel shook before Garadon reached the chamber containing Shon'tu's psychic choir, each shudder denoting another umbilical severed. The deck shook noticeably now, proof that *Phalanx*'s barrage was starting to tell.

The choral chamber was little more than a dungeon. After a pair of Assault Centurions had torn their way through a blast door, a stinking oily sludge spilled out into the corridor. Within, Garadon discovered nearly threescore psykers arranged in concentric circles around a central console. The psykers were suspended upside down from metal frames, their arms manacled across their chests with heavy chains, their heads invisible beneath close-fitting metal hoods. Clusters of tubes ran from their hoods and spines, unknown fluids passing back and forth to a coffin-like construct in the chamber's centre, the seepage from which pooled into the muck about Garadon's knees. Revulsed, the captain ordered everything in the chamber burnt.

Darsway reported that the Warp-tumult was slowly fading, but comms cleared almost immediately and Garadon at last learned the status of the battle. *Tamunash* now fought all but alone in a field of debris. *Phalanx* had taken a pounding, but with nearly a dozen

umbilicals now severed, either planetside or from within *Tamunash*, the battle between the two vessels was turning in the Imperial Fists' favour. From further starboard, along the flank currently facing away from *Phalanx*, Sicarius reported that he had captured a docking bay, and his Ultramarines were in the process of disabling or destroying that quadrant's weapon systems in order to allow extraction. Hagan, unwilling to unleash the full might of his star fortress whilst three companies of Space Marines were within its hull, ordered all boarding parties to withdraw. Garadon had every intention of obeying his Chapter Master's instructions. However, he could not abide the thought that Shon'tu might yet escape *Tamunash's* ruin, for the Crusade of Thunder could not truly end without the Warsmith's death. Thus did the captain order Darsway to divine Shon'tu's location.

Resistance to Garadon's advance was sporadic. He would later learn that Sicarius, having accurately guessed his fellow captain's intent, had sabotaged most of the conveyors in that quadrant of *Tamunash*, isolating hundreds of defenders in distant sections of the ship. Nevertheless, Garadon knew there was no chance at all that Shon'tu did not know of the intruders' approach. Every step to the command deck was marked by gunfire, or the wailing screech as siege drills cut through blast doors. Then, at last, the Centurions tore down the command deck's doors, and Garadon caught the first sight of his quarry since the Taladorn planetstrike.

Tamunash's command deck shared more in common with the palaces of legend than the austere surrounds of *Phalanx*. Tapestries hung from bulkheads, their colours dulled with age, the events they retold long forgotten by all save perhaps Shon'tu himself. In the centre of the room, set high above the rest of the chamber so that all would know who ruled the vessel, sat a throne of baroque iron. About the throne, a forest of jagged spear points thrust out of the deck. Atop each was a severed and sightless head, the remnants of those who had displeased their master. As the 3rd Company stormed into the chamber, Shon'tu rose from the throne. His mechatendrils thrashed like branches in a storm as he descended the stairs and led his personal guard into battle.

Shon'tu fought with the fury of a man denied his destiny, and his Sons of the Forge showed zealous determination. The battle soon became a brutal melee where age-old hatred was vented with every strike of blade and fist. Garadon struck down Shon'tu's personal champion before leaping to attack the Warsmith himself. Ducking beneath Shon'tu's axe-swing, Garadon levelled a punch that would have crushed his foe's head, had not Shon'tu's mechatendrils snaked about his limbs and held him fast.

Wrenching his left arm free, Garadon closed his power fist around the mechatendrils binding his right, but it was too late. Shon'tu's axe came down, cleaving through the captain's helmet and slicing into his skull. Knocked backwards by the impact, Garadon realised with disgust that he couldn't beat the Warsmith. It was then that Darsway's mind touched Garadon's, bringing a more welcome message than any the captain had yet heard: the Warp-tumult had at last receded. As his vision began to blur, Garadon thumbed the activation switch on his teleport homer and collapsed to his knees. As Shon'tu stepped forward, raising his axe high, he paid no heed to the captain's quiet laughter. The air shimmered as the blade came down to

take Garadon's head. Then, before the blow could land, the Fist of Dorn struck the Warsmith squarely in the chest, the impact flinging him across the room.



LYSANDER TRIUMPHANT

Scarcely two squads of Terminators had materialised on *Tamunash*. The rest had already deployed to Malodrax's surface in support of other companies, but Lysander had sensed that fate would be kind to him, that he would have another chance to slay Shon'tu, and had held some forces back in preparation for that moment. Yet two squads were undoubtedly enough. Assault cannons had begun spooling in the moment before transit, and now the heavy shells tore across the room, tipping the balance.

Through dimming eyes, Garadon saw Lysander bear down on Shon'tu, thunder hammer sweeping aside the Chosen who rushed to stall him. Shon'tu fought on, but without hope of victory. In their last battle, Lysander had been weary. He was not so now. Shon'tu's axe blade shattered beneath the Fist's strike, the fragments scattering across the deck. As the Warsmith staggered away, the hammer's backswing tore open his chest plate, leaving a mess of ruined armour and shattered bionics in its wake. Lysander closed to deliver the final blow, but the surviving Chosen surged forward and the indomitable captain was driven back.

As Garadon sank into darkness, he saw Shon'tu claw his way to his throne. The Warsmith give one last crowing speech, and then hammered at his control console. At once, *Tamunash* gave a mighty shudder. Explosions rocked the command deck, and a whole section of the chamber gave way as the decks below collapsed. Shon'tu's throne toppled into the chasm, taking the Warsmith with it. Garadon felt strong arms beneath his own, dragging him away from the mangled precipice. Then the captain's eyes closed at last.

When Garadon opened his eyes once again, he was aboard a Thunderhawk, his wound sealed. Throwing off the medic's assistance, Garadon made his way down the gunship's ramp and out onto one of *Phalanx*'s pressure-sealed fore-docks. In the distance, he could see the swirling, purple-hued vortex that had burst into life amidst *Tamunash*'s drive section. Slowly, inexorably, the vast vessel edged backwards into the rift's embrace, its superstructure rippling as the Immaterium reached out to claim its prize. When the rift closed, half of *Tamunash* was gone, snatched into the realm beyond realspace. The remainder of the vessel was spat out, torn apart by the fantastic stresses, the debris scattered across Malodrax's orbit.

As *Phalanx* moved into Exterminatus orbit around Malodrax, Garadon saw Lysander amongst the crowd and caught the other's eye. The First Captain gave a brief clasped-fist salute, then departed in the direction of the command sanctorum. Shon'tu had been defeated, his Ork allies scattered and *Tamunash* destroyed. The Crusade of Thunder had ended in glorious victory.





THE 3rd COMPANY'S TRIUMPH

The Crusade of Thunder was the beginning of a new age of glory for the Sentinels of Terra. In time, they would be considered the exemplars of what it meant to be a true Space Marine.

963.M41 A Hero Returns

The Shield of Valour re-enters normal space after being lost in the Warp for nearly a millennium, only to be disabled by the firepower of three Iron Warriors' orbital fortresses above the world of Malodrax. Captain Lysander and his bodyguard are captured, taken back to the Iron Warriors' citadel and tortured by the Chaos forces.

It is several months before Lysander and two of his fellows, with no armour or weapons, manage to escape and find their way back to the Chapter, which had long since given them up for dead. Lysander spends nearly a year undergoing exhaustive and ruthless tests of his identity and purity.

966.M41 The Scouring of Malodrax

Reinstated as Captain of the 1st Company, Lysander's first act of command is to lead the Imperial Fists to Malodrax and scour the Iron Warriors from the planet.

969.M41 The Taladorn Planetstrike

Lysander leads three companies to liberate the planet of Taladorn from the Sons of the Forge and his old nemesis, Warsmith Shon'tu. The captain is too proud to accept aid from the Ultramarines and Blood Angels, and his actions lead to unnecessary casualties for the Imperial Fists. Captain Vogen is killed, and his 3rd Company badly ravaged before Captain Sicarius' Ultramarines override Lysander's objections and intervene. Taladorn is freed, but Warsmith Shon'tu escapes.

'Victory begins and ends with the warrior, not his weapon.'

- From the Teachings of Dorn, Chapter XVIII

970.M41 The Crusade of Thunder

As penance for his actions on Taladorn, Lysander is stripped of his 1st Company command, and assigned as Captain of the 3rd Company, the Sentinels of Terra. At the direction of the Chapter Master, Vladimir Pugh, Lysander launches the Crusade of Thunder against the Orks of the Magor Rift, freeing the Kalin and Viashan systems from greenskin control.

In their hour of triumph, the Crusade of Thunder is recalled to join the rest of the Chapter as it converges on Drashin to combat a Tyranid incursion. The 3rd Company fights valiantly and the Tyranids are defeated, but Vladimir Pugh is slain. Lysander is elected to lead the Chapter, but he refuses the honour, knowing that his temperament would lead the Imperial Fists to ruin. Vorn Hagan becomes the Imperial Fists' Chapter Master, and Tor Garadon takes command of the 3rd Company.

971.M41 The Fall of Malodrax

Learning that Shon'tu had been responsible for the Tyranid incursion and the Ork predations on the Magor Rift, Chapter Master Hagan orders Phalanx to Malodrax to end the Warsmith's threat once and for all. While most of the Chapter assail Shon'tu's planetside strongholds, Captain Garadon, alongside Cato Sicarius' Ultramarines and Erasmus Tycho's Blood Angels, conducts a boarding action of the Chaos battlecruiser Tamunash. Together, the boarding parties manage to destroy enough critical systems for Phalanx to gain the upper hand. As Tamunash begins to break apart, Garadon is defeated by Shon'tu, but Lysander teleports aboard Tamunash's command deck and gravely wounds the Warsmith. The Space Marines escape by Thunderhawk Gunship, and the dying Tamunash vanishes into the Warp, taking Shon'tu with it. Though the Crusade of Thunder is ended with Shon'tu's death, Garadon maintains the strike force Lysander founded, a tradition that continues until the millennium's end.

975.M41 Blinding the Eye

Eighteen worlds along the border of the Eye of Terror rise up in heresy. Vorn Hagan dispatches the 3rd Company to join the battle group sent to reclaim those worlds. During the reconquest of Endrion, Castellan Lucos Mrak is so impressed with the speed and accuracy of the Imperial Fists' bolter drill that he requests that Garadon train his drillmasters. Though the Cadians are incapable of matching the Space Marines' efficiency, the lessons are far from

wasted, and Endrion is pacified almost twice as fast as any other world in the campaign.

Unfortunately, victory is soured after Veteran Sergeant Tynon's body is discovered, the words 'Shon'tu Lives' carved into his chest. Garadon takes this as proof that the Warsmith not only survived the battle at Malodrax, but is also somehow present on Endrion. However, no amount of searching uncovers a trace of Shon'tu, and Garadon is forced to return to Phalanx with mere suspicions.

981.M41 Incursion at Torricas

Alerted that Shon'tu's warband, the Sons of the Forge, are once again active on the border of the Torricas System, Darnath Lysander and Tor Garadon assemble a strike force. Upon assaulting the warband's asteroid battle station, they find only dead Iron Warriors. Macabrigon, the traitor who had taken command of the Sons following Shon'tu's supposed death, is found disembowelled and chained to the deck of a storage bay. The words 'Shon'tu Lives' are smeared in blood near the corpse.

As the Imperial Fists depart the battle station, they trigger a psychic trap; a Warp rift tears open, loosing hundreds of Daemons into the fire-blackened corridors. The Imperial Fists fight their way clear of the battle station, destroying both it and the Daemons with concentrated volleys from the Storm of Wrath. Upon returning to Phalanx, Lysander instructs Darsway, now Chief Librarian of the Chapter, to make contact with the Blood Angels and Ultramarines, and warn them that the vengeful Warsmith yet prowls the galaxy.

982.M41 Vengeance Thwarted

In the years that follow, Lysander searches ceaselessly for some trace of Shon'tu. None is forthcoming, and his mood grows ever blacker.

984.M41 The Crusade of Valorous Steel

The Warp storm around Pharos finally recedes, allowing the Imperium to renew contact. Unfortunately, the world scarcely resembles the prosperous realm referred to by ancient myth, having been left on the brink of survival by millennia of Commorrite raids at midwinter's height. Indeed, the Pharosians endure only because their tormentors wish them to provide further cruel amusements. Seeing little value in the blasted world, the Adeptus Terra refuse to send aid to Pharos. However, Vorn Hagan decrees that the Imperial Fists will reclaim the ravaged planet in the Emperor's name – alone, if necessary.

The Chapter arrives at Pharos just as midwinter again draws nigh, with each company tasked to the defence of one of the world's major cities. Arrogant even by the standard of their kind, the Dark Eldar think little of the newly-arrived defenders, but press their attack against the Space Marines as they would against their normal terrified prey. It is a decision that costs them dearly, and dozens of grav-craft are torn from the sky in the opening seconds of the raid. Fighting is thickest around the city of Tamashal, where the 3rd Company hold the line against Vhane Kyharc's kabalite elites. At the battle's height, Captain Garadon leads the charge that shatters Kyharc's bodyguard, and sees the Archon himself taken captive. Desperate to survive, Kyharc pledges to withdraw his troops and leave Pharos

unmolested forever. Though he knows the Commorrite to be treacherous, Garadon nevertheless agrees. However, as soon as the Dark Eldar have departed, the Imperial Fists begin to fortify the cities.

Next midwinter, Captain Monteith brings the Imperial Fists' scout company to Pharos. Sure enough, Vhane Kyharc breaks his word. This time, however, his raiders do not encounter sparsely-defended settlements, but hardened fortresses, manned by 10th Company initiates determined to prove their worth. This is a tradition repeated in later years, and Pharos is soon designated an Imperial Fists recruitment and training world. Nevertheless, the Dark Eldar attacks continue, with the Commorrites now treating it as a twisted contest of daring.

988.M41 The Campaign of Fire and Steel

Fighting alongside the Salamanders, the Sentinels of Terra bring an end to the ten-year Alpha Legion chokehold on Magnas Prime.

994.M41 Triumph at Victorix

Upon receiving a request for assistance from Cato Sicarius of the Ultramarines, Captain Garadon leads the Sentinels of Terra to the eastern rim, where the remnants of Hive Fleet Kraken flail hungrily through the void. Their destination is the shrine world of Victorix, where Roboute Guilliman and Rogal Dorn stood shoulder to shoulder against the Orks during the Great Crusade.

Upon arrival, Garadon instantly recognises the Tyranids as the same strain that Shon'tu unleashed upon Drashin nearly thirty years earlier. Fighting as a single flawless unit, the two companies preserve the shrine world from destruction, shredding wave after wave of bio-monstrosities with massed boltgun and lascannon fire. Not one stasis field around the shrine's treasured artefact – a chainsword supposedly wielded by Dorn during the legendary battle – is breached.

995.M41 A Hero Reforged

Chaplain Markov is grievously wounded in battle against the Orks of Evertus. The 3rd Company refuse to leave the field until his body is recovered. Markov is interred within a Dreadnought, which does little to cool his ardour or improve his temper.

997.M41 The Defence of Miral II

Ordered to hold the world of Miral II against the onset of Hive Fleet Leviathan, First Captain Lysander requests that Captain Garadon's 3rd Company be assigned to his battle group. The old comrades establish a series of strongpoints and tremor mines in time to meet the Tyranid onslaught. Under Garadon's expert eye, Tactical and Devastator Squads rain fire upon the swarm whilst Lysander's 1st Company Veterans bolster the battle line wherever the Tyranids are in danger of breaking through. Though the Imperium's tacticae predict the Imperial Fists can hold out for no more than six days, they stoically fight on until the last Tyranid dies to bolter fire at the walls of Bastion XVII on the seventh, and final, day of the war.

998.M41 The Vigilance Crusade

Following the death of Captain Ton Helion, Captain Garadon assumes command of the 2nd Company. The newly-promoted Captain Eshara leads the 3rd Company on the Crusade of Vigilance – a campaign that sweeps the Necrons of the Trozokh Dynasty from the hive worlds of Hanorius. After driving the invaders from the system, Eshara joins forces with Garadon's 2nd Company to perform a planetstrike that leaves the tomb world of Pharagaris in ruins.

999.M41 From the Ashes to the Fire

Whilst defending the world of Hydra Cordatus from the hated Iron Warriors, Captain Eshara is slain, and the Imperial Fists 3rd Company is wiped out to the last battle-brother. This tragedy echoes throughout the Chapter, but is felt most keenly by Lysander and Garadon – the captains who forged the Sentinels of Terra into the instrument of glory they became.

Determined to rebuild his old company, Captain Tor Garadon receives permission to leave the 2nd Company in order to rebuild the 3rd. This is a curious echo of Lysander's task long decades ago, and the irony is not lost on Garadon, who seeks the First Captain's advice on how to accomplish this monumental task. By this time, many of the Crusade of Thunder's surviving veterans have become dispersed throughout the Chapter, and were therefore not present at Hydra Cordatus, but all readily return, giving Garadon a core of experienced sergeants around which to mould his hastily assembled intake. In the meantime, Lysander and Hagan gather the Imperial Fists' fleet and lead five companies to the brink of the Eye of Terror, scouring the Iron Warriors from a dozen worlds in their Crusade of Vengeance. The 3rd Company recruits are considered too inexperienced for this campaign, and so Garadon is forced to remain behind in command of Phalanx whilst others fight what he sees as his battles.

As matters transpire, the 3rd Company does not stand idle for long. Warsmith Shon'tu and the Daemon Be'lakor, united in their desire to see Abaddon's Black Crusade upstaged, launch an attack on Holy Terra itself. Emerging from a Warp rift that appears in the centre of Phalanx, the unholy allies aim to corrupt the mighty vessel to their purposes and use it to bombard the Emperor's Palace.

Under Garadon's direction, the newly-formed 3rd Company fight with a determination that belies their inexperience, and the accessways and halls are soon choked with the broken corpses of Daemons. Ultimately, Garadon delays the incursion long enough for Phalanx to rouse its engines and enter the Warp, thus ending the immediate threat to Terra. The mighty vessel hurtles through the Immaterium, and neither side is able to contact their allies in realspace. Garadon and his company gather beneath the Banner of Staganda's tattered folds for one last effort, and Phalanx's lower decks are consumed with raging fire as the spectral warriors of the Legion of Damned join the battle. Taking their arrival as a sign that victory may yet be theirs, the 3rd Company counter-attacks, but the battle's outcome is far from certain...

DEFENDERS OF TERRA











Librarian with force axe and plasma pistol





Tactical Marines with boltguns (top and middle) Tactical Marine with plasma gun



This combat squad's insignia marks them as 5th Tactical Squad, 3rd Company.



This Imperial Fists Captain has been assembled using components from several kits, including the Venerable Dreadnought and Space Marine Commander.







Assault Marine with melta bomb Sergeant with plasma pistol



Assault Marines (top and middle) Assault Marine with frag grenade



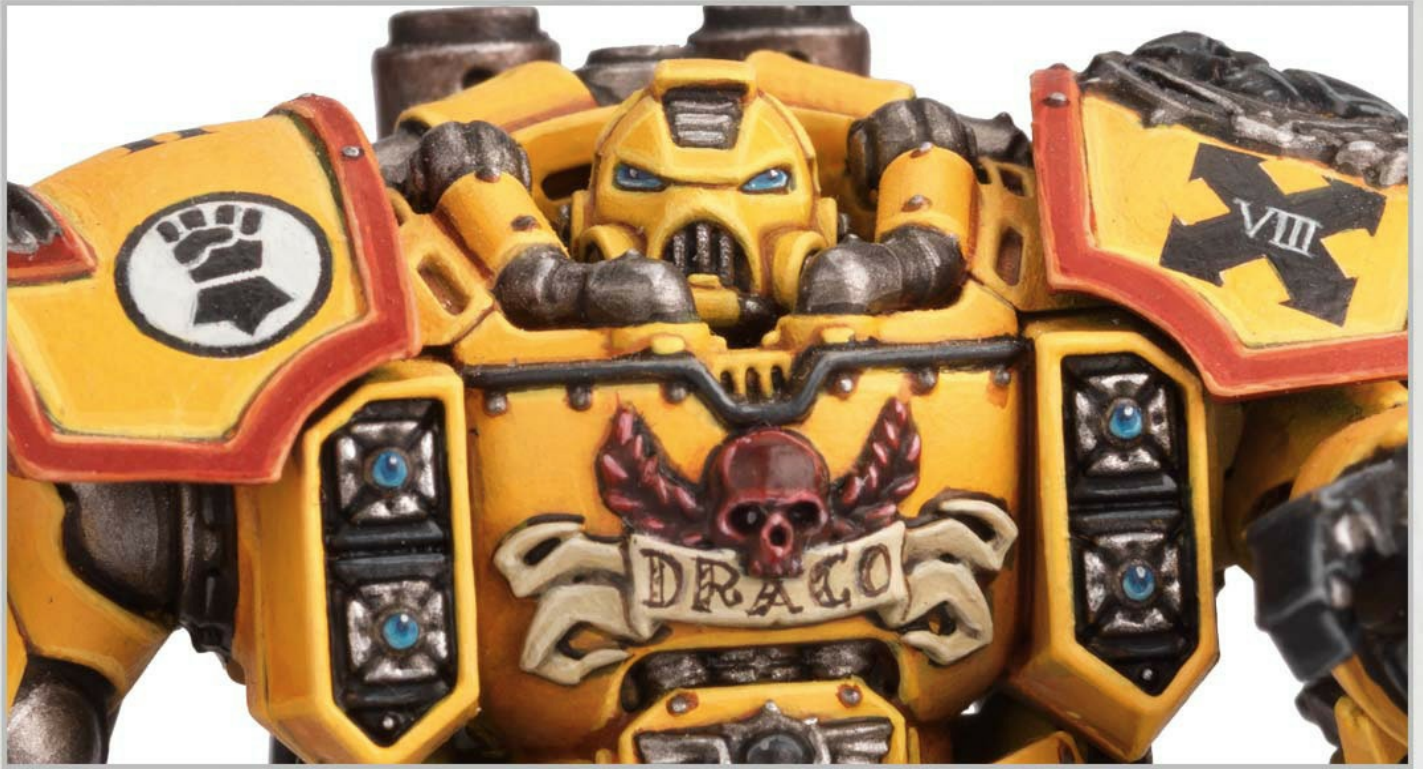
Devastator Sergeant

Devastator with plasma cannon



Devastator with multi-melta Devastator with missile launcher Devastator with heavy bolter







Assault Centurions with siege drills







Terminator squad

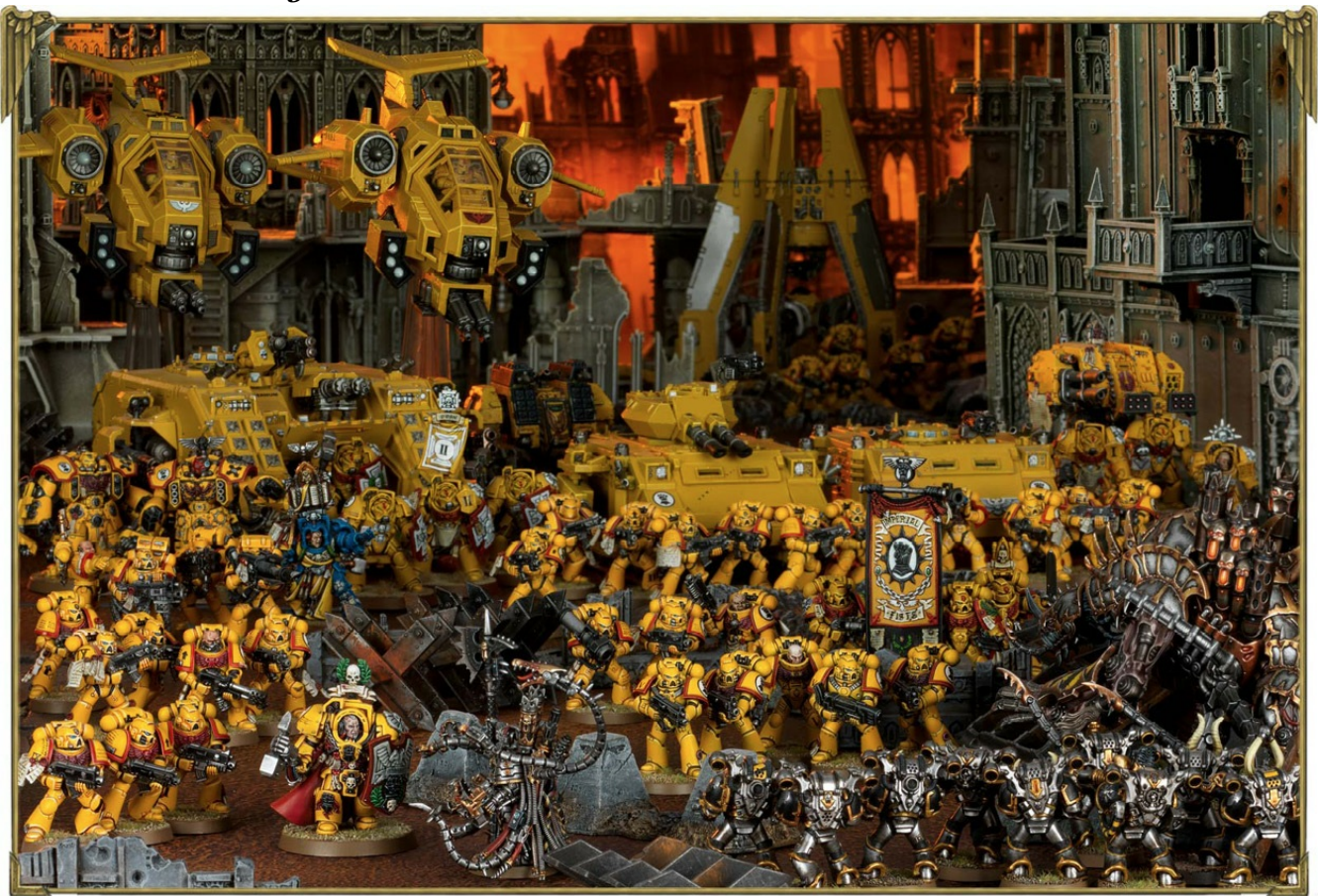


Rhino of the 2nd Squad, 3rd Company





Dreadnought with twin-linked lascannon and missile launcher





THE 3rd COMPANY AT WAR

On the following pages you will find all of the rules that you will need in order to field a Space Marine army based on the Imperial Fists 3rd Company as it fought during the Crusade of Thunder campaign. We have also included additional stratagems for Cities of Death and Planetstrike, as well new missions based on the battles that were fought during the crusade.

On the preceding pages you've read about the heroic deeds of the Sentinels of Terra – now it's your turn to unleash their wrath upon the enemies of Mankind. When used alongside *Codex: Space Marines*, this section of the book contains everything you need to transform your collection of Space Marines into the fearsome weapon of war honed by Captain Lysander and Sergeant Garadon.

HOW THIS SECTION WORKS

Within these pages, you will find:

THE SENTINELS OF TERRA

These pages present all of the alterations and additions to the rules given in *Codex: Space Marines* that will be needed to transform your collection of Citadel miniatures into an army based on the Imperial Fists 3rd Company during the Crusade of Thunder.

- Unleash Lysander's specialist bolter drill upon the foe.
- Recruit the mighty Sergeant Garadon to lead your strike force into battle.
- Bolster your company with additional Centurion warsuits to form the mailed fist of your attack.
- Equip your characters with the relics wielded by Chaplain Markov, Epistolary Darsway and other heroes of the Crusade of Thunder.
- Use the Crusade of Thunder Apocalypse datasheet to replicate the Imperial Fists 3rd Company in all its glory.



CITIES OF DEATH & PLANETSTRIKE STRATAGEMS

Here you'll find additional stratagems for your Sentinels of Terra army to use in games of Cities of Death. Wield weapons and tactics honed across ten thousand years of brutal siege warfare and planetary assault. Target weak points, deploy tremor mines and bombard the foe from orbit until victory is at last yours.

ALTAR OF WAR MISSIONS

Hone your battle-skills as you lead the Sentinels of Terra in a series of engagements crafted to match their fighting style. Do you have what it takes to master the Imperial Fists' way of war?

- **A Never Ending Crusade:** Strike from the stars to reclaim a lost Imperial world from the foul clutches of traitors and xenos.
- **Siege Warfare:** Wield the wisdom of Dorn as a weapon as you batter aside the enemy's feeble defences.
- **Too Stubborn to Die:** The Imperial Fists fight to the last, no matter the odds! Can you

lead them to victory in the face of an overwhelming foe?

Echoes of War Missions: Recreate pivotal battles from the Crusade of Thunder. Lead the 3rd Company from the brink of annihilation to their final, triumphant victory over Warsmith Shon'tu and the mighty *Tamunash*.

- **Last Stand on Taladorn:** Beset by an Iron Warriors force many times their size and denied reinforcements by Lysander's pride, can the Sentinels of Terra endure, or will their legend end amidst the wreckage of Taladorn?
- **Strike Force Hammer:** Command Sergeant Garadon's assault on the Ork-held factories of Kalin before the greenskins overwhelm the planet.
- **Strike Force Anvil:** Lead the defence of Shivanol, holding the greenskins at bay with an overwhelming hail of deadly accurate bolter-fire.
- **The Kommand Deck:** For the Ork menace to be ended, the Viashan star fort must be destroyed – but will the Sentinels of Terra escape the space station's fiery demise?
- **Confrontation on Drashin:** Recreate Vladimir Pugh's last battle as you confront Tyranid swarms in the bowels of a crashed space hulk.
- **Retribution on *Tamunash*:** The final showdown! With Shon'tu at last cornered, the Sentinels of Terra have the opportunity to fulfil their vengeance. Whether or not they succeed is up to you.

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THE SENTINELS OF TERRA

A Sentinels of Terra detachment is chosen using the army list presented in *Codex: Space Marines*, and uses the Chapter Tactics (Imperial Fists) special rule. It also has a series of supplemental rules that can be used in addition to the material found in *Codex: Space Marines*. Note that you can only use the options from one codex supplement when choosing a detachment.

CLOSE RANGED BOLTER DRILL

All units in a Sentinels of Terra detachment that have the Chapter Tactics (Imperial Fists) special rule use the following special rule instead of the Bolter Drill special rule presented in *Codex: Space Marines*.

Close Ranged Bolter Drill: Models with this rule re-roll all failed To Hit rolls made with bolt pistols, boltguns, storm bolters, heavy bolters, or combi-weapons that are firing as boltguns when firing at a target up to half the weapon's maximum range away. This rule does not apply to models firing Hellfire, Kraken, Vengeance or Dragonfire rounds.

CENTURION WARSUITS

Centurion Devastator Squads can be taken as elites choices as well as heavy support choices in a Sentinels of Terra detachment.

Centurion Assault Squads can be taken as fast attack choices as well as elites choices in a Sentinels of Terra detachment.

SERGEANT GARADON

Sergeant – later Captain – Garadon was second in command to Captain Lysander before being promoted to command of the company in the Crusade of Thunder's final stages. You can include him in your army by using the following rules.

One Sergeant from a Space Marine Tactical Squad can be upgraded to Sergeant Garadon for 75 points. Sergeant Garadon has the same profile as a Space Marine Captain, rather than the Veteran Sergeant profile. He is equipped with power armour, a power fist, frag grenades, Krak grenades and the Spartean (see the Relics of the 3rd Company), and may not take any other options or upgrades. If you upgrade a Space Marine Sergeant to be Sergeant Garadon, his unit's force organisation slot changes from troops to HQ.

SENTINELS OF TERRA COMPANY RELICS

Any character in your Sentinels of Terra detachment that can select Chapter Relics cannot select from those listed in *Codex: Space Marines*, but can instead select from the Relics of the 3rd Company section at the points cost shown.

SENTINELS OF TERRA WARLORD TRAITS

If Captain Lysander is your Warlord, then he has the Champion of Humanity Warlord trait (see *Codex: Space Marines*). If another model from the Sentinels of Terra detachment is your Warlord, you can either roll on one of the Warlord Traits table in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, or roll on the table below.



WARLORD TRAITS TABLE

D6 - Warlord Trait

1 - Siege Lord: *There are few who have a deeper understanding of the tenets of siege warfare.*

Your Warlord, and his unit, add +1 to the result when rolling on the Building Damage table.

2 - Tenacious Opponent: *This Warlord will keep on fighting even when all seems lost.*

Your Warlord has the It Will Not Die special rule.

3 - Wise Commander: *This Warlord knows how to get the most out of those under his command.*

Whilst your Warlord is alive, you can choose to add or subtract one from any of

your Reserve Rolls (state which before the dice is rolled).

4 - Indomitable: *The Warlord can never be driven back once he has set his mind to a task and planted his feet.*

If your Warlord and his unit do not move in their Movement phase, then he and his unit have the Fearless and Counter-attack special rules until the start of their next turn.

5 - Architect of War: *This Warlord has inherited the skill of his Primarch for designing defensive fortifications.*

Whilst your Warlord is embarked inside a building, all damage rolls against that building suffer a -1 penalty, to a minimum of 1.

6 - Fleet Commander: *This Warlord can call upon the firepower of orbiting spacecraft.*

Once per game, your Warlord can call down an orbital strike in his Shooting phase. This counts as firing a ranged weapon with the profile below. This does not prevent the Warlord and his unit from declaring a charge against the target unit that turn.

Range	S	AP	Type
Infinite	10	1	Ordnance 1, Barrage, Large Blast, Orbital

Orbital: If an arrow is rolled on the scatter dice, the blast marker scatters the full 2D6" – the Warlord's Ballistic Skill makes no difference.



RELICS OF THE 3RD COMPANY

The Relics of the 3rd Company are revered artefacts and trophies of war borne into battle by the Sentinels of Terra. Each may only be taken by a specific type of character in a Sentinels of Terra detachment, as noted in the rules for the artefact below. Only one of each of the following relics can be chosen per army.

THE EYE OF HYPNOTH - 15 points

The Eye of Hypnoth was presented to the Imperial Fists in late M39 in honour of the assistance they provided in defending the forge world of Hypnoth from Waaagh! Kromak. This device is a highly sophisticated and long-ranged auspex array; tradition dictates that it is best employed to detect hidden weaknesses in enemy fortifications during planetary assault. Techmarine Karazan of the Sentinels of Terra has been the bearer of the Eye of Hypnoth since 956.M41, and has formed such an accord with the device's machine spirit that no other can operate it with the same precision and efficiency.

A model with the Eye of Hypnoth can use it in place of making a shooting attack. If he does, target an enemy unit or building within 18" (this does not count as choosing a target for his unit to shoot at). A unit targeted by the Eye of Hypnoth has its cover save reduced by 1 until the end of the phase (this is not cumulative with the similar bonus granted by an Auspex – see *Codex: Space Marines*). A building targeted by the Eye of Hypnoth instead has all of its Armour Values reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 1) until the end of the phase.

THE ANGEL OF SACRIFICE - 10 points

During the Great Crusade and the Heresy that followed, many thousands of Imperial Fists fought for Mankind. In those days, every company's banner bore a golden crest, forged at the Emperor's decree and presented by Dorn himself. When the Imperial Fists Legion was dissolved, Dorn forbade that the crests be carried into battle until the Emperor himself returned to lead the reconquest of the stars.

Since that day, the crests have lain within Phalanx's stasis vaults, waiting for a day that may

never come. The one exception was the Angel of Sacrifice – the crest belonging to the 3rd Company. During the infiltrator Macellanos’ attempt to assassinate the Emperor during the Siege of Terra, Garos Hargrim, Chaplain of the 3rd, took up his company’s splintered banner and slew the traitor. Hargrim perished even as he struck Macellanos down, but Dorn ordered the golden crest be reforged as a crozius to honour the Chaplain’s memory. The Angel of Sacrifice has been borne by every 3rd Company Chaplain since, a weighty burden and an honour both.

The Angel of Sacrifice can only be taken by a Chaplain, and replaces the model’s crozius arcanum.

Range	S	AP	Type
-	+2	4	Melee, Concussive, Only in Death

Only in Death: If the bearer of the Angel of Sacrifice loses his last Wound in the Assault phase, he is not removed as a casualty until after all close combat attacks have been resolved, and can thus still attack if he is slain either by Overwatch or by a close combat attack made at a higher Initiative step.

THE BONES OF OSRAK - 25 points

The legends concerning Chief Librarian Malandar Osrak lie greatly shadowed by the passage of time, dating as they do from late M32 – a period on which Chapter records are notoriously silent. The stories of Osrak’s defeat of the nine Daemon Lords of the Maelstrom may well be apocryphal, as might his cleansing of the plague vessel Morbidity. Even the tale of the Exorcism of Phalanx is questioned by many, for few are prepared to believe so holy a vessel could fall to daemoniac possession.

Whatever the truth of these stories, none contest Osrak’s sheer psychic might. Even now, years after his death, the scrimshawed remains of his skull bones radiate a formidable power. With proper training, a Librarian of the same gene-seed can bend the Bones of Osrak to his will, accomplishing feats beyond the ken of his fellows.

The Bones of Osrak can only be taken by a Librarian. The bearer generates an additional Warp Charge point, and can re-roll failed Psychic tests.

THE BANNER OF STAGANDA - 25 points

The Battle for Staganda was one of the most gruelling campaigns ever undertaken by the 3rd Company. Staganda had been severed from Mankind since the Dark Age of Technology and, by the time an Explorator Fleet rediscovered the world in M34, the population had been

living under brutal Ork occupation for millennia. Avan Gorr, the Imperial Fists' Chapter Master in those times, determined that it was the duty of his Chapter to ensure that the Emperor's light fell anew upon Staganda, and that the greenskin yoke was cast from the world's shoulders.

Though the entire Imperial Fists Chapter was mobilised to reclaim the planet, it was the 3rd Company that bore the brunt of the fighting, and its captain that slew the Ork warlord at the pivotal point in the campaign. In the aftermath, a new company standard was fashioned in honour of the victory, and the 3rd Company was permitted to add 'the Liberators of Staganda' to their official titles.

The Banner of Staganda can only be taken by a model that may take a Company Standard. The bearer has the Counter-Attack and Crusader special rules. In addition, friendly units within 12" of the bearer, and with the same Chapter Tactics, re-roll failed Morale checks and Pinning tests.

THE SPARTEAN - 5 points

Sergeant Garadon's bolt pistol is a true work of the artificer's art. Since the Spartean's forging in M35, it has slain the enemies of Mankind at the direction of hundreds of warriors. Every wielder has said the same of the weapon: if the marksman's eye is true, then the Spartean's shot will be too, whatever obstacles lie in the way.

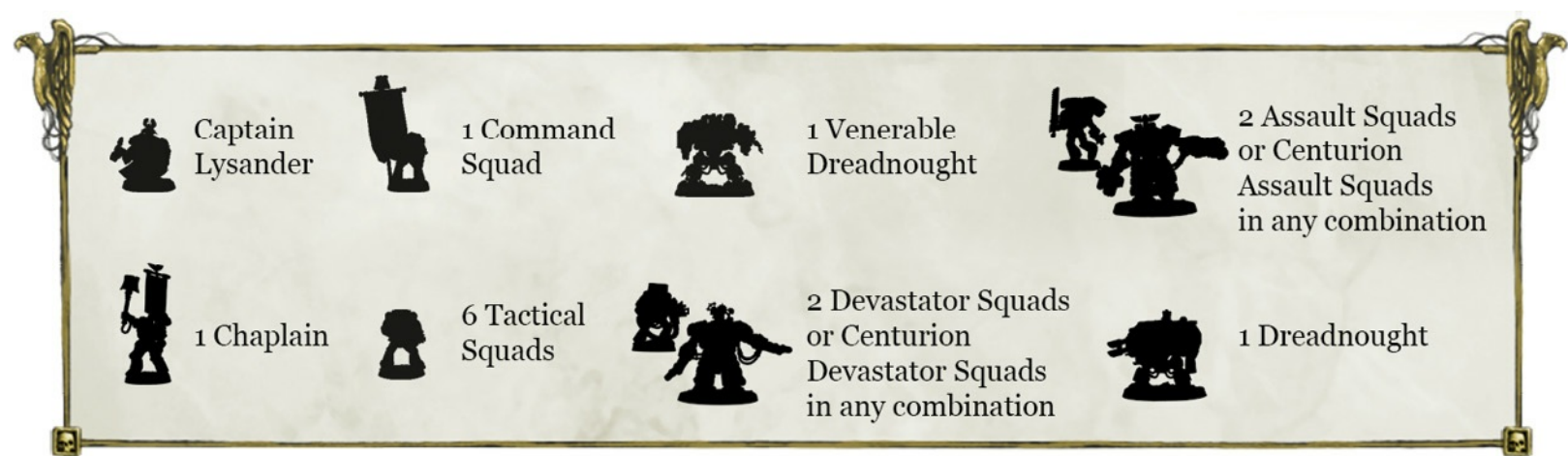
Range	S	AP	Type
12"	4	5	Pistol, Ignores Cover, Master-crafted

APOCALYPSE

THE CRUSADE OF THUNDER

The Sentinels of Terra were almost destroyed at Taladorn, but the company's remnants were reconstituted by the hero Darnath Lysander, who forged them anew to form the Crusade of Thunder against the Orks of the Magor Rift. Under Lysander's command, the Sentinels of Terra honed their bolter drill to the pinnacle of efficiency, ensuring the swift destruction of any who stray within their reach.





FORMATION RESTRICTIONS

All squads must include the maximum number of models possible. One Tactical Squad must include Sergeant Garadon. The Command Squad must take the Banner of Staganda. The Chaplain must take the Angel of Sacrifice.

SPECIAL RULES:

Comrades-in-Arms: If an enemy unit declares a charge against a unit in this formation, then any unengaged non-vehicle units from this formation within 12" of the charging unit's target can choose to fire Overwatch as if they were also targets of the charge (though they can still only fire Overwatch once per phase).

Company Bolter Drill: All models in the formation with the Chapter Tactics (Imperial Fists) special rule re-roll all failed To Hit rolls made with bolt pistols, boltguns, storm bolters, heavy bolters, or combi-weapons that are firing as boltguns. This rule does not apply to models firing Hellfire, Kraken, Vengeance or Dragonfire rounds.

Seize and Control: All units in the formation within 12" of a Strategic Objective have the **Stubborn** special rule.

Strike Cruiser: The player with this formation has an additional Orbital Strike Strategic Asset.



CITIES OF DEATH STRATAGEMS

These are additional stratagems for Cities of Death games. They can be used if you are using the supplemental rules given in the Sentinels of Terra section. To do so, simply add them to the list of available stratagems.

KEY BUILDINGS STRATAGEMS

Imperial Fists Strongpoint

The Sentinels of Terra create heavily fortified strongpoints to act as the lynchpins of their defensive lines. Buildings are reinforced and extra ammunition is made available to allow a prodigious rate of fire.

All Sentinels of Terra models in the Strongpoint add +1 to their cover saves. In addition, all Imperial Fists models in this building add one to the number of times they shoot when using a bolt pistol, boltgun, storm bolter, heavy bolter, or combi-weapon that is firing as a boltgun. This rule does not apply to Hellfire, Kraken, Vengeance or Dragonfire rounds.

DIRTY TRICKS STRATAGEMS

Tremor Mine

The 3rd Company sometimes employ mining vehicles to place tremor mines beneath the enemy line. When these mines detonate, they create localized earthquakes, damaging buildings and flooring infantry.

You can detonate the tremor mine at the start of any of your turns. Select a ruin, building or fortification in the enemy deployment zone. Enemy models in or within 6" of the ruin or building may not make Overwatch attacks for the remainder of your turn. In addition, if a building or fortification was selected, immediately make a roll for it on the Building Damage table.

Alternatively, you can detonate the mine, as described above, at the start of the enemy turn. If you do so, all units within 6" of the nominated structure treat open ground as difficult terrain for the duration of the turn. If moving through difficult terrain anyway, the unit rolls one less dice than normal (to a minimum of one) to determine its maximum move. Affected vehicles

must take a Dangerous Terrain test if they move in the Movement phase. In addition, if a building or fortification was selected, immediately make a roll for it on the Building Damage table.

Defensive Battleline

The Imperial Fists have been master engineers since before the Horus Heresy, and create unparalleled defensive positions.

Select a ruin in your deployment zone. Then select a second ruin within 6" of the first. Finally, select a third ruin within 6" of the second ruin you selected. Any of the ruins can be key buildings. Having selected the buildings, you may place up to two barricades. Each barricade can be up to 6" long, but must be placed so that it is touching two of the nominated buildings (i.e. so that it joins two of the buildings together, barricading the gap). Friendly Sentinels of Terra models in any of the nominated buildings have their cover save increased by +1, and ignore the effects of enemy grenades for the purposes of determining Initiative in an assault. Barricades are difficult terrain and provide a 4+ cover save. They are removed if passed through by a vehicle other than a skimmer or flyer.

Identify Weak Points

If they have enough time the Sentinels of Terra will carefully reconnoiter the enemy position, noting down any weaknesses in buildings and fortifications.

Add +1 to all rolls you make on the Building Damage table for targets located in the enemy deployment zone. This is cumulative with any other modifiers.

ARMOURY STRATAGEMS

Breaching Charges

The Sentinels of Terra often use specially constructed explosive devices, that are designed to reduce the defensive benefits of an enemy fortified position.

All of your Space Marine Tactical Squads and Scout Squads are equipped with breaching charges. Whilst they are within 6" of a ruin, building or fortification, all enemy models occupying that ruin, building or fortification reduce their cover saving throw by 1 (e.g. a cover save of 4+ becomes a cover save of 5+). In addition, whilst a unit with breaching charges is within 6" of a ruin, friendly models don't suffer the penalty to their Initiative for charging enemy models occupying that ruin.

DEPLOYMENT STRATAGEMS

Suppressive Orbital Bombardment

Sentinels of Terra detachments can call upon supporting fire from orbiting spacecraft. This can be used to pound an enemy position before an assault, forcing them to keep their heads down and allowing the Imperial Fists to advance.

All units in your army can redeploy in the same manner as a unit with the Scouts special rule (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook). Units that actually have the Scouts special rule can redeploy anywhere on the table that is more than 6" from an enemy model.

AMMUNITION STRATAGEMS

Thunderfire Barrage

When fighting in urban environments, the Sentinels of Terra often make use of Thunderfire Cannons to launch a devastating barrage before its battle-brothers march forth to mop up the stunned and dazed survivors. The Chapter's Techmarine gunners are typically supplied with extra ammunition for such a task, allowing their Thunderfire Cannons to unleash a devastating opening volley.

At the beginning of the game, select one of your Thunderfire Cannons. The first time that Thunderfire Cannon shoots during the battle, its weapon profile is Heavy 6 instead of Heavy 4, regardless of the type of ammunition that is being fired. This stratagem has no effect after it has fired for the first time.



PLANETSTRIKE STRATAGEMS

These are additional stratagems for Planetstrike games. They can be used if you are using the supplemental rules given in the Sentinels of Terra section. To do so, simply add them to the list of available stratagems.

ATTACK STRATAGEMS

Massive Bombardment - Stratagem Points: 1

When declared: Immediately before the firestorm

The Sentinels of Terra attempt to ensure that even a small battleforce is escorted by a formidable flotilla of spacecraft, so that any ground forces can be supported by overwhelming firepower.

The Sentinels of Terra player adds an additional D3 to the number of firestorm attacks he makes.

Focused Laser Blast - Stratagem Points: 3

When declared: Immediately before the firestorm

Defence Laser batteries on orbiting Imperial Fists spacecraft focus their energy blasts, unleashing a cataclysmic blast of coruscating energy against a key building.

Select a building or fortification anywhere on the battlefield. That building suffers D3 penetrating hits with no save of any kind allowed.

Firewall - Stratagem Points: 1

When declared: At the start of an enemy Shooting phase

The Sentinels of Terra's supporting fleet directs its fire to create a high explosive defensive screen, shielding friendly units from enemy fire by hiding them behind smoke and debris.

All friendly models add +1 to their cover saves for the duration of the Shooting phase, in addition to any other modifiers that may apply. Models on open ground will therefore receive a 6+ cover save.

Careful Reconnaissance - Stratagem Points: 1

When declared: Immediately before the firestorm

The Sentinels of Terra have mastered the art of carefully reconnoitring the enemy's defences, so that they can discover any weak points, and then fully exploit them in the coming battle
Add +1 to all rolls on the Building Damage table for Firestorm attacks.

Relentless Assault - Stratagem Points: 1

When declared: At the beginning of any of your turns

The Sentinels of Terra relentlessly press their attack, striding forward purposefully and laying about themselves with barely suppressed fury. Few enemies can withstand such an assault.

For the duration of the turn in which this stratagem is used, all friendly Sentinels of Terra models have the Rampage and Relentless special rules.

DEFENCE STRATAGEMS

Master-crafted Defences - Stratagem Points: 3

When declared: After you have deployed your units

The sons of Rogal Dorn have been long-since mastered the techniques needed to build all-but impregnable fortifications. Their defence lines have withstood the most devastating attacks for over ten thousand years.

Nominate any number of buildings. Subtract one from all rolls on the Building Damage table for those buildings to a minimum of 1. This is cumulative with any other modifiers.

Stubborn Intransigence - Stratagem Points: 1

When declared: At the beginning of any of your opponent's turns.

The Sentinels of Terra are renowned for their stubborn refusal to admit defeat. They will continue to fight, in dire circumstances and against overwhelming odds, when almost any other warrior would have conceded defeat long before.

All friendly Sentinels of Terra models have the Counter-attack and Fearless special rules for the duration of the turn.

Close the Breach - Stratagem Points: 2

When declared: At the beginning of any of your turns

The Imperial Fists 3rd Company are trained and prepared to close any breaches in their fortifications with astonishing speed. A variety of materials are kept close to hand, so that any hole or gap can be quickly sealed shut.

Nominate D3 buildings. Any reductions to the armour value of those buildings because of

Breach! or Catastrophic Breach! results on the Building Damage table are repaired.

Orbital Interdiction - Stratagem Points: 2

When declared: At the start of any enemy turn

An orbiting Imperial Fists frigate makes a swift interdiction run, targeting enemy flyers over the battle zone with deadly accurate fire from its weapon batteries.

Roll a D6 for each enemy model that completes a Zoom or Swooping move in the following Movement phase. On a roll of 1-3 the model completes the move safely. On a roll of 4-6 it suffers an immediate Strength 10 AP1 hit. Vehicles hit by this attack are hit on their side armour.

No Retreat - Stratagem Points: 2

When declared: After you have deployed your units

The Sentinels of Terra are one of the most determined fighting forces in the galaxy. When circumstances force them to plant their feet and hold their position, there are few more daunting enemies to face in the galaxy.

All friendly Sentinels of Terra units within 6" of a Planetstrike Objective have the Stubborn special rule.



ALTAR OF WAR: SENTINELS OF TERRA

INTRODUCTION

The *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook already includes a set of Eternal War missions, and when you multiply that by the different armies you might face, and the myriad different ways you can set up the terrain for your battle, there are hundreds, probably thousands of different ways to play. However, we feel that you can never have too much variety, so this book has three new missions you can use if you or an opponent has a Sentinels of Terra army. They can also be used by any army that uses the Imperial Fists Chapter Tactics if desired. The new missions illustrate the different sorts of strategies used by the Sentinels of Terra, and they will provide new tests of your tactical ability as a commander. Additional Altar of War mission books have scenarios for use by other armies from the Warhammer 40,000 galaxy.

STRATEGY

Different armies use different strategies when they go to war, which affects the types of battle that they fight. The Eldar, for example, are highly mobile, specialised and precise, and rely on the guidance of their Farseers and Autarchs to strike the enemy at exactly the right place and time to ensure a swift victory. Meanwhile, Imperial Guard regiments are immense, heavily armed formations that are perfect for grinding down an opponent in a war of attrition or defending a position in a prolonged campaign.

The missions found here are themed around the stubborn Sentinels of Terra and the way they fight. This gives you a chance to discover more about the strategies used by the Imperial Fists, and then to try these strategies out on the tabletop. It also means that the army you command can affect the types of battle you are likely to fight. This is highly appropriate – after all, you would expect to fight a very different sort of battle as Captain Lysander than you would as an Ork Warlord.

TACTICS

The three Altar of War missions included in this book are designed to provide players with games that will really challenge their tactical ability. We've gone to some pains to make sure that each mission is as balanced as possible, and that they provide both sides with a new set of tactical problems to overcome.

This means that, in order to win, you will need to be prepared to think on your feet and quickly adapt to the new circumstances the missions will throw at you. You may be called upon to spearhead an attack or fight to hold a defensive position deep behind enemy lines. Tried and trusted tactics will need to be re-thought in the face of these new challenges, and you will need to be ready to think outside the box in order to win.



A GALAXY'S WORTH OF CHALLENGES

That, then, is what this section is all about, and on the following pages you will find out how to put these ideas into practice on your gaming table. We'll start off with an overview of how to incorporate the new missions into the games you play, and then we'll provide the missions themselves. You'll also find plenty of background information about how the armies fight and how the missions we've provided fit into their strategies.

HOW TO USE ALTAR OF WAR MISSIONS

The Altar of War Missions part of this book is split into two sections: the section that you are reading now, which explains how to incorporate the *Altar of War: Sentinels of Terra* missions into your games of Warhammer 40,000; and the missions themselves.

It is very straightforward to use an Altar of War mission – it only requires a handful of minor modifications to the rules for fighting a battle in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. These changes are explained in detail next, but they boil down to: roll-off if you want to use an Altar of War mission; if you win, you can roll on an Altar of War mission table instead of the Eternal War mission table. And that's it!

THE MISSION

If either you or your opponent wish to use an Altar of War mission, then you must make a roll-off at the start of The Mission step of Fighting a Battle (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook). The winner of the roll-off can choose either to roll on the Eternal War mission table, or instead roll on the Altar of War mission table for their army. Other supplements also have new types of mission tables, and the winner of the dice roll-off could choose to roll on one of those, if they prefer and are allowed to do so. These rolls will determine which mission is used for the battle. Note that each set of Altar of War missions is linked to an army chosen from a specific codex; in order to use the missions, an army chosen from the appropriate codex must be the primary detachment. In the case of *Altar of War: Sentinels of Terra*, the missions are linked to armies chosen from *Codex: Space Marines*, using the additional rules found in this book if desired.

For example, Andy and Simon have arranged to play a game of Warhammer 40,000. Andy has brought along his Sentinels of Terra army and this book, while Simon is using his Iron Warriors Chaos Space Marines and has Eternal War missions from the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. They roll-off and Andy wins. He decides to roll on the Sentinels of Terra Mission table in this book. If Simon had won, he would have rolled on the Eternal War Mission table.

ALTAR OF WAR: SENTINELS OF TERRA MISSION TABLE

D6 - Mission

1-2 - A Never-ending Crusade

3-4 - Siege Warfare

5-6 - Too Stubborn to Die

THE BATTLEFIELD

The deployment map, deployment zones and deployment instructions for each *Altar of War: Sentinels of Terra* mission is included in the mission itself; do not use the deployment maps included in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

THE ENEMY

The player that won the roll-off and rolled on the Altar of War mission table is known as ‘the Sentinels of Terra player’ in the rules and missions that follow, and their opponent is known as ‘the enemy player’. Note that the player that loses the roll-off counts as ‘the enemy’ for the purposes of an Altar of War mission, even if they have a Sentinels of Terra army too.

RESERVES

Altar of War missions follow all of the rules for Reserves in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook; however, some specify different limits on how many units may (or must) be placed in Reserve rather than deployed at the start of the game.

CARRY ON AS NORMAL

These three changes aside, all of the rules for Fighting a Battle in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook are used as normal.

SELECTED BATTLE MISSIONS


As an alternative to rolling on a mission table, the players can agree to choose the mission they wish to fight. Picking missions is a great way to try out a particular mission you haven’t fought before or to hone your skills at missions you have previously fought.

ECHOES OF WAR

After the Altar of War missions, you will find a selection of Echoes of War missions inspired by the battles fought by the Sentinels of Terra during the Crusade of Thunder. The Armies section of each of these missions provide guidance on the forces present so that you can

replay the pivotal events using the armies, characters and war machines described in this book. Many of the Echoes of War missions include a map that depicts the battlefield on which the conflicts were fought.

For those with a mind to historical accuracy, you'll notice certain restrictions and rules that we use to replicate the conditions of the battle in question. Whilst the Echoes of War missions have been inspired by specific events, with a little imagination they can easily be repurposed to recreate battles of your own invention. If you choose to go this route, you can modify these missions so that they can be fought using any combination of forces and terrain in your collection.





ALTAR OF WAR: A NEVER-ENDING CRUSADE

‘This world we claim anew, as the Emperor did long ago. Yield it, or face our wrath.’

At the end of the Scouring, the Imperial Fists swore that they would continue the Great Crusade – alone if necessary. Whilst the Imperium has focussed most of its efforts on preserving what remains, the Imperial Fists continue to campaign across the galaxy, reclaiming worlds lost many thousands of years ago. To this end, they usually operate as numerous highly mobile and wide-ranging forces, each of only about company strength, but well supported by a powerful flotilla of spaceships. If they encounter extremely powerful opposition they will call for aid, but there are few foes that a full company of Imperial Fists cannot defeat. Typically, such wars of reconquest consist of a series of devastating attacks; the Imperial Fists will strike swiftly at a critical point, relying on surprise, their own skill and the support of their space flotilla to overwhelm and crush the foe. They will then withdraw back to orbit and strike again.

THE ARMIES

Choose armies as described in the Fighting a Battle section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. The Sentinels of Terra player must choose a primary detachment from *Codex: Space Marines* using the extra rules presented in this book.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Use the Deployment Map included with this mission. Set up terrain as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

DEPLOYMENT

Before any models are deployed, the players must roll to determine their Warlord Traits.

The Sentinels of Terra player deploys first, placing all of his units in the deployment zone depicted on the map. The enemy player then deploys his units anywhere in his deployment zone that is more than 18" from a Sentinels of Terra model.

FIRST TURN

The Sentinels of Terra player has the first turn unless the enemy player can Seize the Initiative as described in the Fighting a Battle section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of the game, the player that has scored the most Victory Points wins the battle. If the players have the same number of Victory Points, the game is a draw.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

At the end of the game, the Sentinels of Terra player receives 1 Victory Point for each enemy unit that has been completely destroyed. The enemy player receives 2 Victory Points for each Sentinels of Terra unit that has been completely destroyed.

Units that are falling back at the end of the game, and units that are not on the board at the end of the game, count as destroyed for the purposes of this mission. Remember that Independent Characters and Dedicated Transports are individual units and award Victory Points if they are destroyed.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

Slay the Warlord, First Blood.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Night Fighting, Reserves.

Fear and Confusion: During the first game turn, enemy units must pass a Leadership test in order to move in their Movement phase, shoot or Run in their Shooting phase, charge in their Assault phase, or shoot Overwatch.

Overwhelming Firepower: If the Sentinels of Terra player's Warlord has the Orbital Bombardment special rule, he is allowed to use an Orbital Bombardment in each of his turns.

Rapid Assault: Start rolling for the arrival of Sentinels of Terra units that are in reserves from the first turn, rather than the second turn as is normally the case. In addition, Sentinels of Terra units that arrive from reserves in the first turn can ignore the restriction against charging that normally applies to units that arrive from reserves.

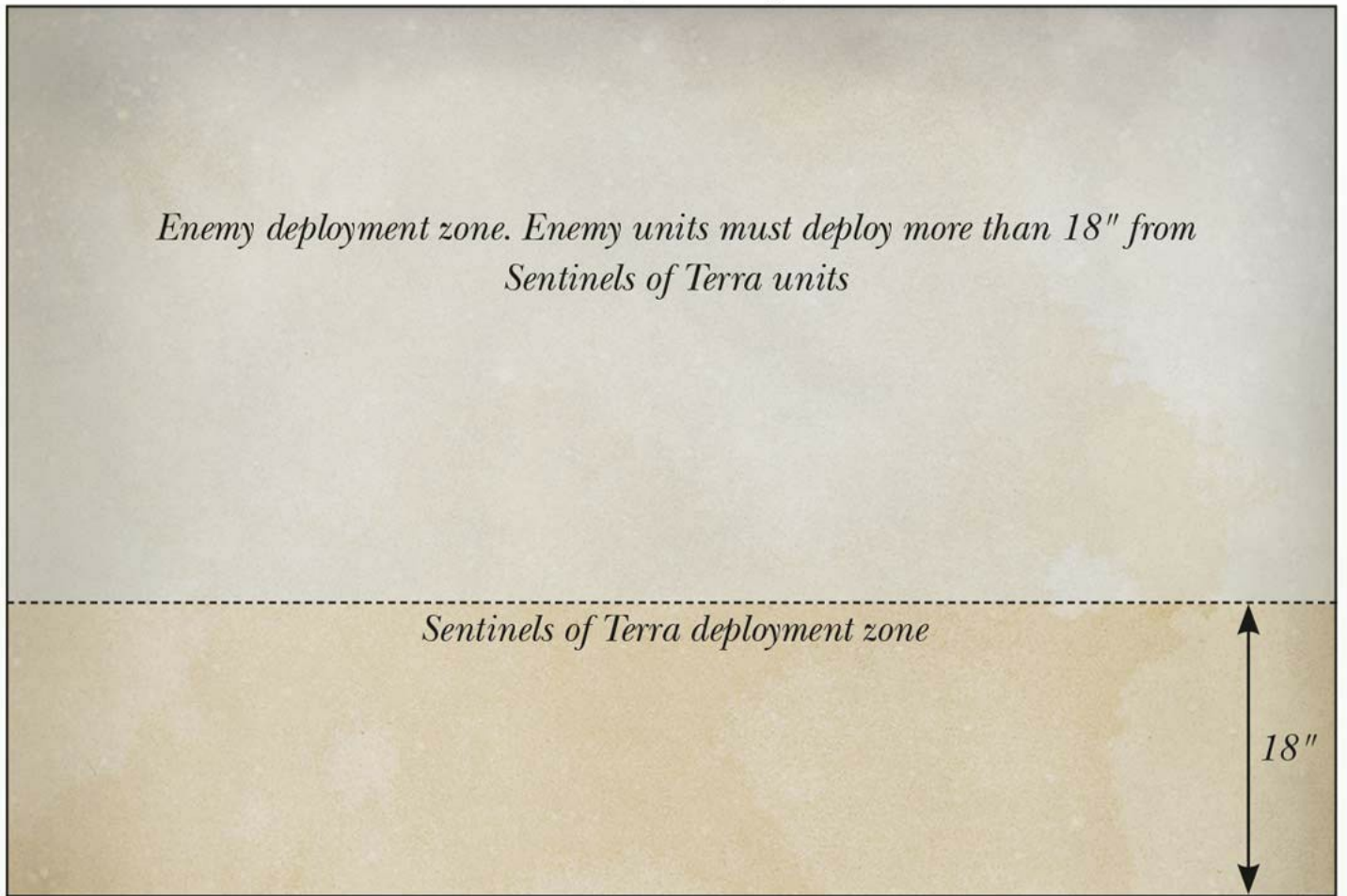
Enemy table edge

*Enemy deployment zone. Enemy units must deploy more than 18" from
Sentinels of Terra units*

Sentinels of Terra deployment zone

18"

Sentinels of Terra table edge







ALTAR OF WAR: SIEGE WARFARE

‘We are a fortress of bone, sinew and pride; let the foe break upon our walls.’

The Imperial Fists are renowned for their expertise in siege warfare. Ever since the days of the Horus Heresy, when Rogal Dorn helped to create the fortifications that protected the Emperor’s Palace, the Imperial Fists have been called upon either to help protect the Imperium’s possessions with their siegecraft, or to tear down the defensive fortifications created by Mankind’s enemies. This has brought them into conflict with the Iron Warriors time and again, so that now there is an undying enmity between these two masters of siege war.

THE ARMIES

Choose armies as described in the Fighting a Battle section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. The Sentinels of Terra player must choose a primary detachment from *Codex: Space Marines* using the extra rules presented in this book.

In this mission, one player is the attacker, and the other the defender. If one player has any fortifications in their army, and the other does not, then the player without any fortifications is the attacker. If both players have fortifications in their armies, then the player with the least number of points worth of fortifications is the attacker. If neither player has any fortifications, then roll again on the Mission table until you get a different mission result.

Designer’s Note: *This mission is designed to allow you fight out the types of battle described above. However, in order to play it, one or both players will need to have one or more fortifications in their army (see the army selection rules above). This makes it an ideal mission to agree in advance with your opponent that you will fight. That way you can make sure that suitably impressive fortifications are included in at least one of the armies for you to fight over!*

THE BATTLEFIELD

Use the Deployment Map included with this mission. Set up terrain as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

DEPLOYMENT

Players must first roll for Warlord Traits. The defender deploys first, placing all of his units in the deployment zone depicted on the map. The attacker then deploys his units anywhere in his deployment zone.

FIRST TURN

The Sentinels of Terra player has the first turn unless the enemy player can Seize the Initiative as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of the game, the attacker wins if he has destroyed or captured all of the defender's fortifications. Fortifications are considered to have been destroyed if they suffer a Total Collapse or Detonation! result on the Building Damage table.

A fortification is captured as follows:

A defender's unit controls a fortification if it is in base contact with it and no attacker's unit is in base contact with the fortification.

An attacker's unit controls the fortification if it is in base contact with it, regardless of the presence of the defender's units.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Night Fighting, Reserves.

Attacker's table edge

Attacker's deployment zone

Defender's deployment zone

Defender's table edge





ALTAR OF WAR: TOO STUBBORN TO DIE

‘There is no defeat whilst a Son of Dorn yet draws breath.’

The Imperial Fists are notoriously stubborn, a trait inherited from their Primarch, Rogal Dorn. This can often be a burden, compelling many of their strike forces to carry on with a task in the face of all reason, and even at the cost of their own lives. At other times, though, their fabled tenacity can allow them to endure where others would have failed or turned back, overcoming terrible odds through a sheer unwillingness to admit defeat. This mission depicts just such a situation. A Sentinels of Terra detachment has battled its way forward against almost impossible odds and captured a vital set of objectives. In doing so, however, they have been cut off from any help, and are now beset by a powerful enemy assault. Gritting their teeth, the 3rd Company set their feet firmly on the ground and prepare to repel the attackers. There can be no half-measures: this is a battle to the death, and the Imperial Fists will either hold on to the objectives, or die in the attempt!

THE ARMIES

Choose armies as described in the Fighting a Battle section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. The Sentinels of Terra player must choose a primary detachment from *Codex: Space Marines* using the extra rules presented in this book.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Use the Deployment Map included with this mission. Then, set up terrain as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

PLACE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

After setting up the terrain, the Sentinels of Terra player places 2 Objectives anywhere in their deployment zone, at least 12" apart.

DEPLOYMENT

Before any models are deployed, the players must roll to determine their Warlord Traits.

The Sentinels of Terra player deploys first, placing all of his units in the deployment zone depicted on the map. The enemy player then deploys his units anywhere in the remaining three quarters of the table that is more than 12" away from a Sentinels of Terra model.

FIRST TURN

The Sentinels of Terra player has the first turn unless the enemy player can Seize the Initiative as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

If, at the end of the game, the Sentinels of Terra control both Objectives, they win the battle. Otherwise, the enemy player wins the battle.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

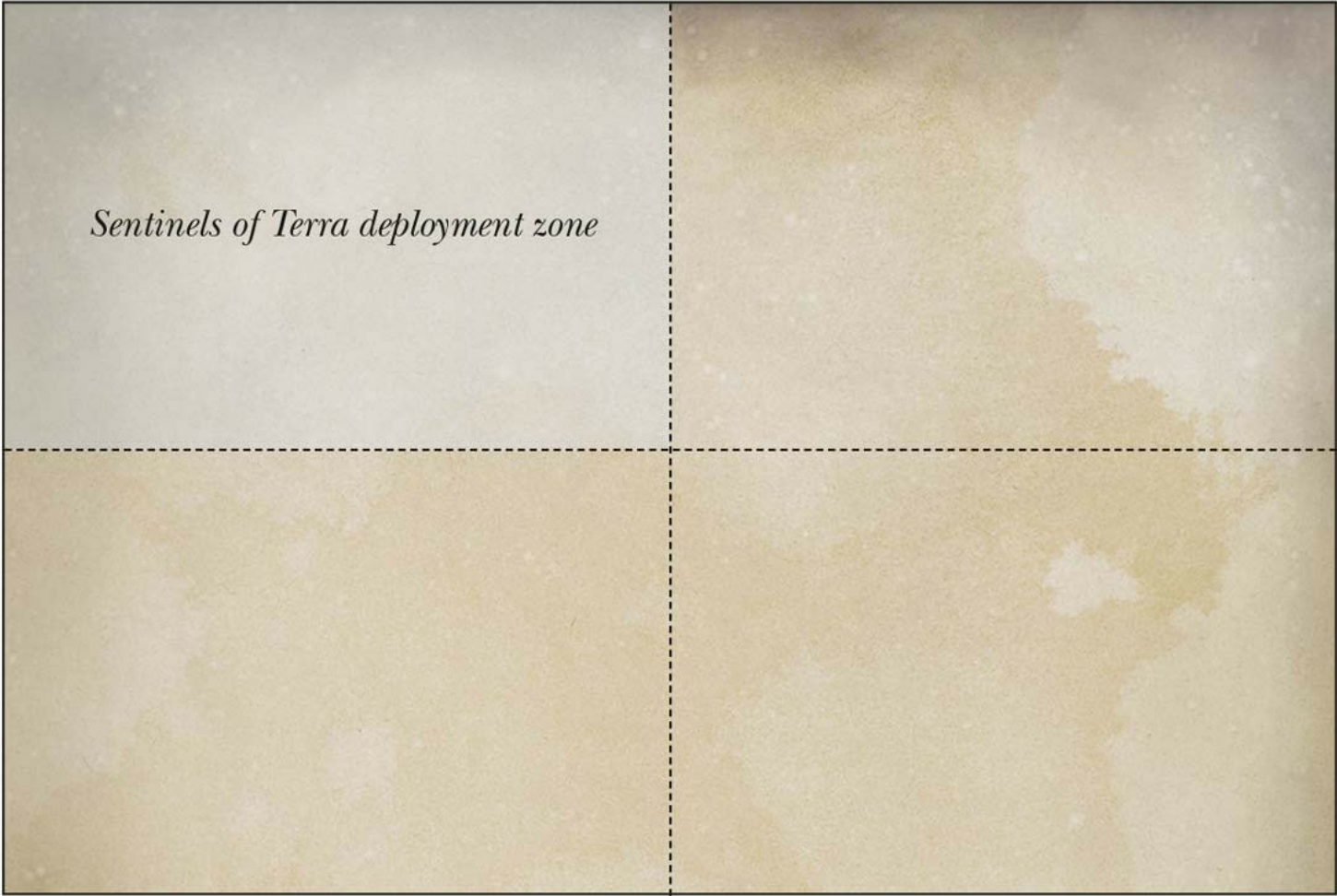
Night Fighting, Mysterious Objectives, Reserves.

Massive Assault Force: Any enemy troops units that are completely destroyed are replaced in Ongoing Reserves at their starting strength, and will be available to return to battle at the start of the enemy player's next turn.

Too Stubborn To Die: All models in the Sentinels of Terra army have the Feel No Pain (6+), It Will Not Die and Stubborn special rules.

Sentinels of Terra table edge

Sentinels of Terra table edge



Sentinels of Terra deployment zone

Enemy table edge

Enemy table edge





ECHOES OF WAR: LAST STAND ON TALADORN

At the closing stages of the Battle for Taladorn, the Imperial Fists 3rd company was surrounded on all sides by their most hated foes, the Iron Warriors. With their Captain dead, and unaware that Captain Lysander had proudly refused aid from the other Chapters sent to reclaim Taladorn, the remaining Sentinels of Terra prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Attacked from all sides, the company suffered terrible casualties before finally learning that assistance from the Blood Angels and Ultramarines Chapters had been at hand throughout their bloody ordeal.

THE ARMIES

One player commands the Sentinels of Terra, chosen from *Codex: Space Marines* and using the additional rules in this volume. The enemy player commands the Iron Warriors, chosen from *Codex: Chaos Space Marines*. Both players select forces to an agreed points limit.

The Sentinels of Terra player cannot include Captain Lysander or Captain Garadon in his army.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Set up terrain as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook, using the deployment map included with this mission.

DEPLOYMENT

Before any models are deployed, both players must roll to determine their Warlord Traits.

The Sentinels of Terra player deploys first, placing all of the non-Flyer units from his primary detachment and any fortifications he has taken in the deployment zone depicted on the map. All other units in his army start in reserves. The enemy player then deploys his units anywhere in his deployment zone.

FIRST TURN

The Sentinels of Terra player goes first unless the enemy player can Seize the Initiative as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Sentinels of Terra player wins if, at the end of the game, he has any models from his primary detachment remaining on the battlefield, including those in units that are falling back. The enemy player wins if there are no models remaining on the battlefield from the Sentinels of Terra player's primary detachment.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves.

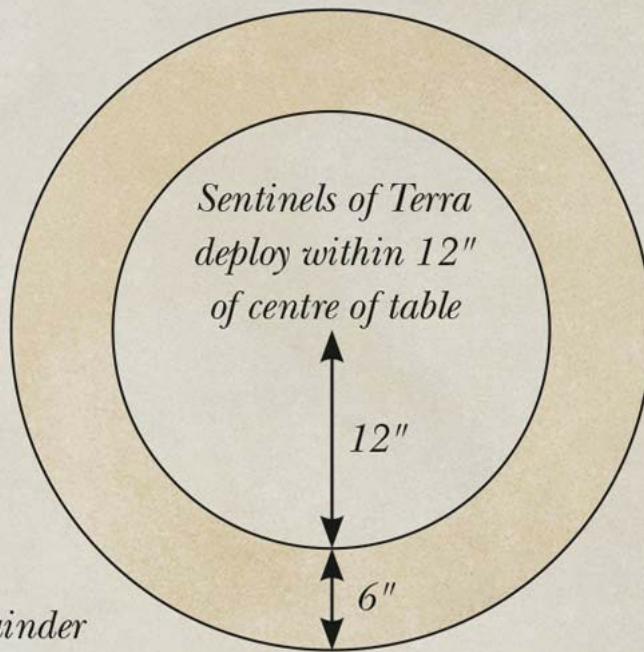
Delayed Assistance: The Sentinels of Terra player is not allowed to bring on any allied reserves until his third turn. Do not roll for reserves on the second turn, and ignore any special rules that would allow units that are in reserve to arrive any earlier than the third turn.

Fluid Battle: Both players may bring on units held in Reserve or Ongoing Reserves from any point on any of the table edges.

Full Might of the Iron Warriors: Each time an enemy troops, elites or fast attack unit is completely destroyed, remove it from play and place it into Ongoing Reserves, where it will be available to return to the battle at the start of enemy player's next turn.

Lines of Retreat: Any units from the Sentinels of Terra primary detachment that fall back must do so towards the centre of the board. Any enemy units that fall back do so towards the nearest short table edge.

No Retreat, No Surrender: Every non-vehicle unit in the Sentinels of Terra primary detachment has the Zealot special rule.



*Sentinels of Terra
deploy within 12"
of centre of table*

12"

18"

*Enemy deploy in remainder
of table, more than 18"
from centre*





ECHOES OF WAR: STRIKE FORCE HAMMER

When the Sentinels of Terra arrived at Kalin II, they found the Imperial Guard defenders in a desperate situation. The last remnants of the 95th Cadian Regiment were surrounded and cut off by a well-supplied Ork army. Lysander split the Sentinels of Terra into two contingents, one sent to reinforce the Cadians, and the other – named Strike Force Hammer – to destroy the factories that were supplying the Ork horde with weapons, armoured vehicles, and ammunition. Strike Force Hammer struck again and again from orbit, destroying Ork factories one after the other.

THE ARMIES

The Sentinels of Terra player chooses an army from *Codex: Space Marines* using the additional rules in this volume. The enemy player commands an army chosen from *Codex: Orks*. Both players select forces to an agreed points limit.

The Sentinels of Terra player is the attacker in this Planetstrike mission. Their army must not include Captain Lysander or Captain Garadon, or any Tanks or fortifications. The enemy player is the defender.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Set up terrain as described in the Planetstrike rules. There must be at least one ruin, building or fortification on the battlefield.

PLACE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The objectives rules from the Planetstrike rules are not used for this battle. Instead, after setting up terrain, the enemy player picks one ruin, building or fortification in his deployment zone to represent the Ork factory.

DEPLOYMENT

Before any models are deployed, both players must roll to determine their Warlord Traits.

The Attacker selects any one table edge to be his. The Defender's table edge is the one opposite the Attacker's.

Both players then deploy, as described in the Planetstrike rules. Both players have 3 Stratagem Points.

FIRST TURN

As the attacker, the Sentinels of Terra player goes first. The Sentinels of Terra player makes 3 Firestorm Attacks and makes Reserve Rolls from the start of his first turn.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

At the end of the game, the player who controls the Ork factory is the winner. If neither side controls the factory, the battle is a draw. Determine who controls the factory as follows:

- An enemy unit controls the factory if it is base contact with it and no Sentinels of Terra units are in base contact with the factory.
- A Sentinels of Terra unit controls the factory if it is base contact with it, regardless of the presence of any enemy units.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Scramble, Shock Tactics (see the Planetstrike rules for details of these).

Designer's Note: You will need a copy of the Planetstrike rules to play this scenario. These rules also allow you to represent the daring assault of Sergeant Garadon's Centurion spearheads, by deep striking right into the heart of the foe's position.



ECHOES OF WAR: STRIKE FORCE ANVIL

While Strike Force Hammer smashed Ork factories one after another, Lysander led the rest of the Company – designated Strike Force Anvil – in the defence of Kalin II's capital, the city of Shivanol. The city had been besieged by the Orks for months, and the greenskins had breached its outer walls in numerous places.

Running battles were taking place throughout the city when the Sentinels of Terra arrived, so their first task was to contain the Ork invaders, and then drive them back out of the city.

THE ARMIES

Choose armies as described in the Fighting a Battle section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. The Sentinels of Terra player is the attacker, and must choose a primary detachment from *Codex: Space Marines* using the extra rules presented in this book. The Sentinels of Terra army must include Captain Lysander, but may not include any Assault Squads or Centurion Assault Squads. The enemy player is the defender, and must choose a primary detachment from *Codex: Orks*.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Be sure to use lots of ruins when you set up your battlefield, to recreate the ravaged outskirts of Shivanol. Select a deployment map as described for Eternal War missions in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. Roll-off to see which player decides which table half the Sentinels of Terra will deploy in.

DEPLOYMENT

Before any models are deployed, both players must roll to determine their Warlord Traits. The players roll-off, and the winner deploys their army first, then the opposing player does likewise. Units may deploy anywhere in their deployment zone.

FIRST TURN

The player who deployed his army first goes first unless his opponent can Seize the Initiative

(see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

GAME LENGTH

This mission uses Variable Game Length as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The player occupying the most city ruins at the end of the game is the winner. If players occupy the same number of city ruins, the game is a draw. A city ruin is occupied if one or more friendly models are within 1" of the city ruin, and no enemy models are within 1" of the city ruin.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Night Fighting, Reserves.

Designer's Note: This mission works best if played using the additional rules presented in the Cities of Death supplement. If you have this book, agree the mission level and place terrain as described in Cities of Death, instead of using The Battlefield instructions here. The Deployment instructions from Cities of Death can also be used; remember to declare the use of Cityfighting Stratagems before deploying your forces.



ECHOES OF WAR: THE KOMMAND DECK

The Sentinels of Terra tracked the Ork attackers of Kalin II back to their lair, a vast star fort that orbited the ruined Imperial hive world of Viashan I. Heavily outnumbered, the Sentinels of Terra could not take on the Orks directly.

However, if the 3rd Company could fight their way to the kommand deck, they could use the star fort's own thrusters to set it on a doomed orbit, thus relying on Viashan I itself to destroy its despoilers. With the star fort's formidable weaponry disabled and the Ork fleet spread out across the Viashan system, their eventual defeat would only be a matter of time.

THE ARMIES

One player commands the attacking Sentinels of Terra, chosen from *Codex: Space Marines* and using the additional rules in this volume. The enemy player commands the Ork defenders, chosen from *Codex: Orks*. Both players select forces to an agreed points limit.

The Sentinels of Terra player must include Captain Lysander in his army, but may not include Captain Garadon, any fortifications, or any vehicles other than Walkers.

The enemy player may not include any fortifications, or any vehicles other than Walkers.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Set up terrain as described in the Fighting a Battle section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. The battlefield represents the kommand deck of the Ork starfort, a huge area, scattered with piles of half-built Ork machinery and debris, and we recommend that you use suitable scenery to represent it if you have such scenery available.

PLACE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Place a single objective marker at the centre of the table, as shown on the deployment map.

DEPLOYMENT

Before any models are deployed, the enemy player must roll to determine their Warlord Trait.

The enemy player deploys first, anywhere in his deployment zone. The Sentinels of Terra player deploys second, anywhere in his deployment zone that is more than 9" from an enemy model.

FIRST TURN

The enemy player goes first unless the Sentinels of Terra player can Seize the Initiative (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Sentinels of Terra player wins the game if the thrusters have been activated (see Activate Thrusters, below) **and at least half the units in his army have evacuated the table. Any other result is an Ork victory.**

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves.

Activate Thrusters: If a Sentinels of Terra model is within 1" of the objective marker at the start of a Sentinels of Terra turn, the thrusters are activated, and remain so for the rest of the battle.

Evacuation: Sentinels of Terra units are allowed to ‘evacuate’ the table. To do so, a unit must start their Movement phase within 6" of any point on their table edge. Remove all of the models from the unit from the game – they cannot return. Sentinels of Terra units that fall back off one of their table edges are also assumed to have successfully evacuated.

Note that units in reserves cannot evacuate the table; instead, they will need to enter play on one turn, and then evacuate as described above in an ensuing turn.

Enemy table edge

Enemy deployment zone

Sentinels of Terra deployment area

Sentinels of Terra table edge

Sentinels of Terra table edge

Enemy table edge





ECHOES OF WAR: CONFRONTATION ON DRASHIN

Before the Sentinels of Terra could complete their campaign against the Orks in the Viashan system, an urgent message was received ordering them to proceed immediately to the Imperial world of Drashin, where a crash-landed space hulk had unleashed a Tyranid horde upon the world. When the Sentinels arrived, they found most of the rest of the Imperial Fists Chapter embroiled in a furious battle. Lysander led the 3rd Company into the heart of the wrecked space hulk, arriving just too late to save Chapter Master Pugh as he bravely fought against hordes of Tyranid monsters. Furious to avenge Pugh's death, Lysander led his forces in a desperate assault on the Tyranid Norn Queen.

THE ARMIES

One player commands the Sentinels of Terra, chosen from *Codex: Space Marines* and using the additional rules in this volume. The enemy player commands the Tyranid invaders, chosen from *Codex: Tyranids*. Both players select forces to an agreed points limit.

The Sentinels of Terra player must include Captain Lysander in his army, but may not take Captain Garadon, any fortifications, or any vehicles other than Walkers.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Set up terrain as described in the Fighting a Battle section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. The battlefield represents a large open area in the interior of a space hulk that has been transformed and overgrown by Tyranid bio-constructs, and we recommend that you use suitable scenery to represent it if you have such scenery available.

PLACE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Place a single objective marker within 6" of the centre of the Tyranid table edge, as shown on the deployment map. The objective represents the position the Sentinels must reach in order to be able to attack the Tyranid Norn Queen (who is located just beyond the Tyranid edge of the table).

DEPLOYMENT

Before any models are deployed, the enemy player must roll to determine their Warlord Trait.

The Sentinels of Terra player deploys first, anywhere in his deployment zone. The enemy player then deploys his units anywhere in his deployment zone.

FIRST TURN

The Sentinels of Terra player goes first unless the enemy player can Seize the Initiative, as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Sentinels of Terra player wins the game if the Tyranid Norn Queen is destroyed (see below). Any other result is a Tyranid victory.

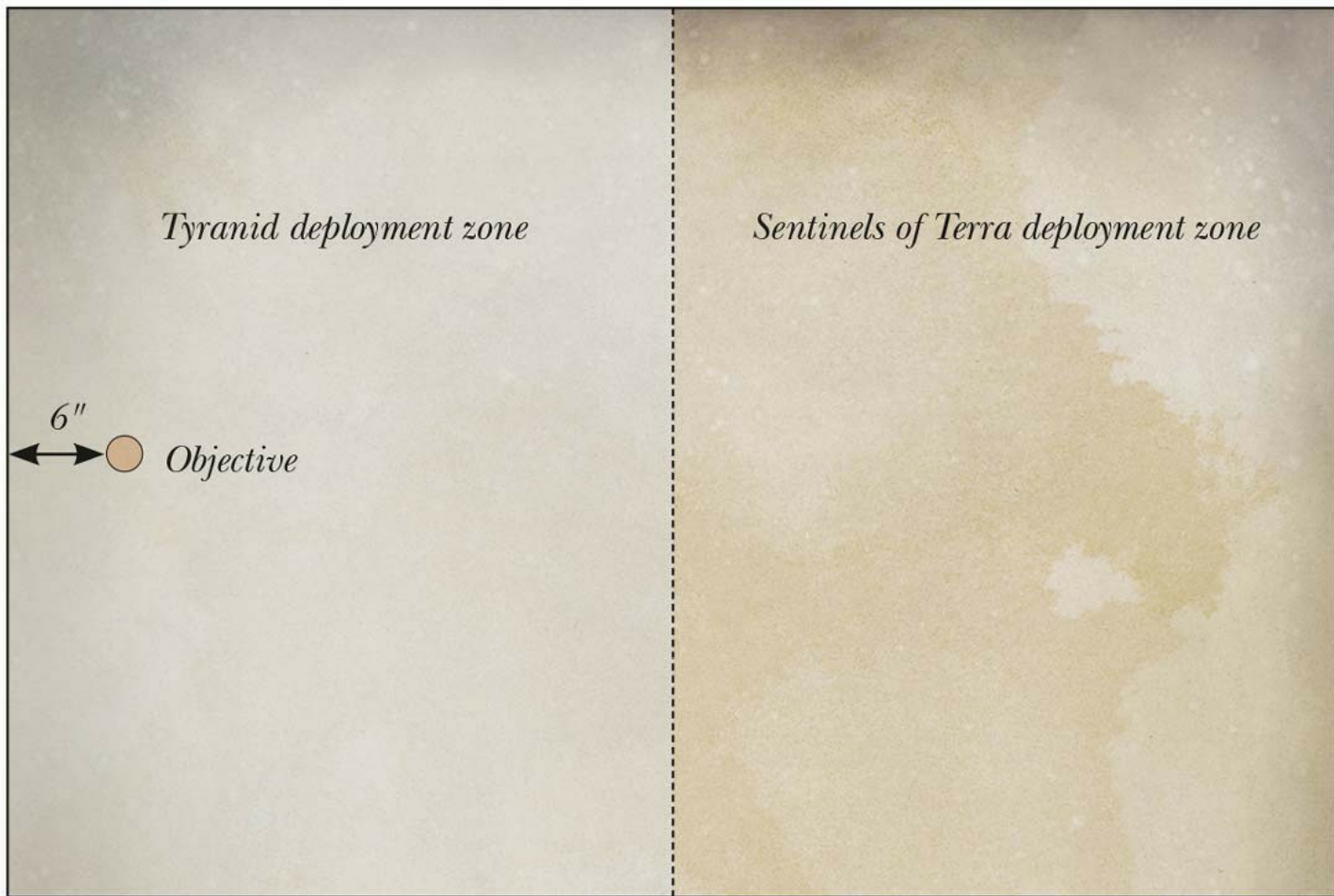
MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves.

Tyranid Norn Queen: Any Sentinels of Terra model within 3" of the objective marker can choose to direct their fire at the Norn Queen (or, more specifically, at a seam of magma that, if breached, will cause her destruction). They are considered to have a clear line of sight to a target that is 24" away, which has a Toughness of 8, no saving throws, and which has one Wound. Should the target be 'slain', then the Sentinels of Terra player immediately wins the game.

Inside the Space Hulk: Neither side may use the Deep Strike special rule in this mission, and no model is allowed to Zoom or Swoop during the game. Any models that must arrive from Deep Strike, or which can only Fly or Zoom, are considered to have been destroyed before the battle starts.

Tyrannid table edge



Sentinels of Terra table edge





ECHOES OF WAR: RETRIBUTION ON TAMUNASH

Following the annihilation of the Tyranids, evidence revealed the invasion to be part of a diabolical plan by the Imperial Fists' arch-nemesis, Shon'tu of the Iron Warriors. Determined to crush this heretic and traitor once and for all, the Imperial Fists, along with allied contingents from the Blood Angels and Ultramarines, launched a massive attack on Shon'tu's flagship, *Tamunash*. The Sentinels of Terra played a vital part in the bloody battles that took place in the twisted corridors of Shon'tu's flagship, finally cornering the rebel warlord on his command deck. A furious battle erupted in the chamber as Shon'tu hurled his forces at the Sentinels, determined to have their heads.

THE ARMIES

One player commands the Sentinels of Terra, chosen from *Codex: Space Marines* and using the additional rules in this volume. The enemy player commands Shon'tu and the Iron Warriors under his command, chosen from *Codex: Chaos Space Marines*. Both players select forces to an agreed points limit.

The Sentinels of Terra player must include Captain Lysander and Captain Garadon in his army, but may not take any fortifications, or vehicles other than Walkers. Any allied detachments in the Sentinels of Terra army must either be Blood Angels or Ultramarines. In this mission, Captain Lysander and any Terminator or Terminator Assault Squads that are taken as part of the Sentinels of Terra detachment do not cost any points.

The Chaos Space Marine army must include a Warpsmith with the Mark of Tzeentch, a sigil of corruption and a power axe to represent Shon'tu, and may not include any vehicles other than Walkers. Shon'tu does not cost any points.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Set up terrain as described in the Fighting a Battle section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. The battlefield represents Shon'tu's command chamber on *Tamunash*, and we recommend that you use suitable scenery to represent it if you have such scenery available.

DEPLOYMENT

Before any models are deployed, both players must roll to determine their Warlord Traits. In this mission, Captain Garadon is considered to be the Warlord of the Sentinels of Terra army until Captain Lysander arrives (see the mission special rules below), from which point Captain Lysander is the Warlord. Garadon can continue using his Warlord Trait even after Lysander has arrived.

The enemy player deploys first, placing all of his units in the deployment zone depicted on the map. The Sentinels of Terra player then deploys his units anywhere in his deployment zone. Shon'tu and Captain Garadon may not start the battle in reserves, and must each be set up more than 12" from the opposing side's deployment zone. Captain Lysander and any Terminator or Terminator Assault Squads in the Sentinels of Terra player's army must start the battle in reserves.

FIRST TURN

The enemy player goes first unless the Sentinels of Terra player can Seize the Initiative as described in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

GAME LENGTH

The mission uses Variable Game Length (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

If your Warlord slays the opposing Warlord while fighting them in a challenge, then you win the game immediately and the battle ends immediately. Otherwise, at the end of the game, the player who has scored the most Victory Points wins the game. If players have the same number of Victory Points, the game is a draw. Note that, for the purposes of this rule, Captain Garadon is the Sentinels of Terra player's Warlord until Captain Lysander arrives.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

At the end of the game, each player receives 1 Victory Point for each enemy unit that has been completely destroyed. Units that are falling back at the end of the game, and units that are not on the board at the end of the game, count as destroyed for these purposes.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

Slay the Warlord*, First Blood, Linebreaker.

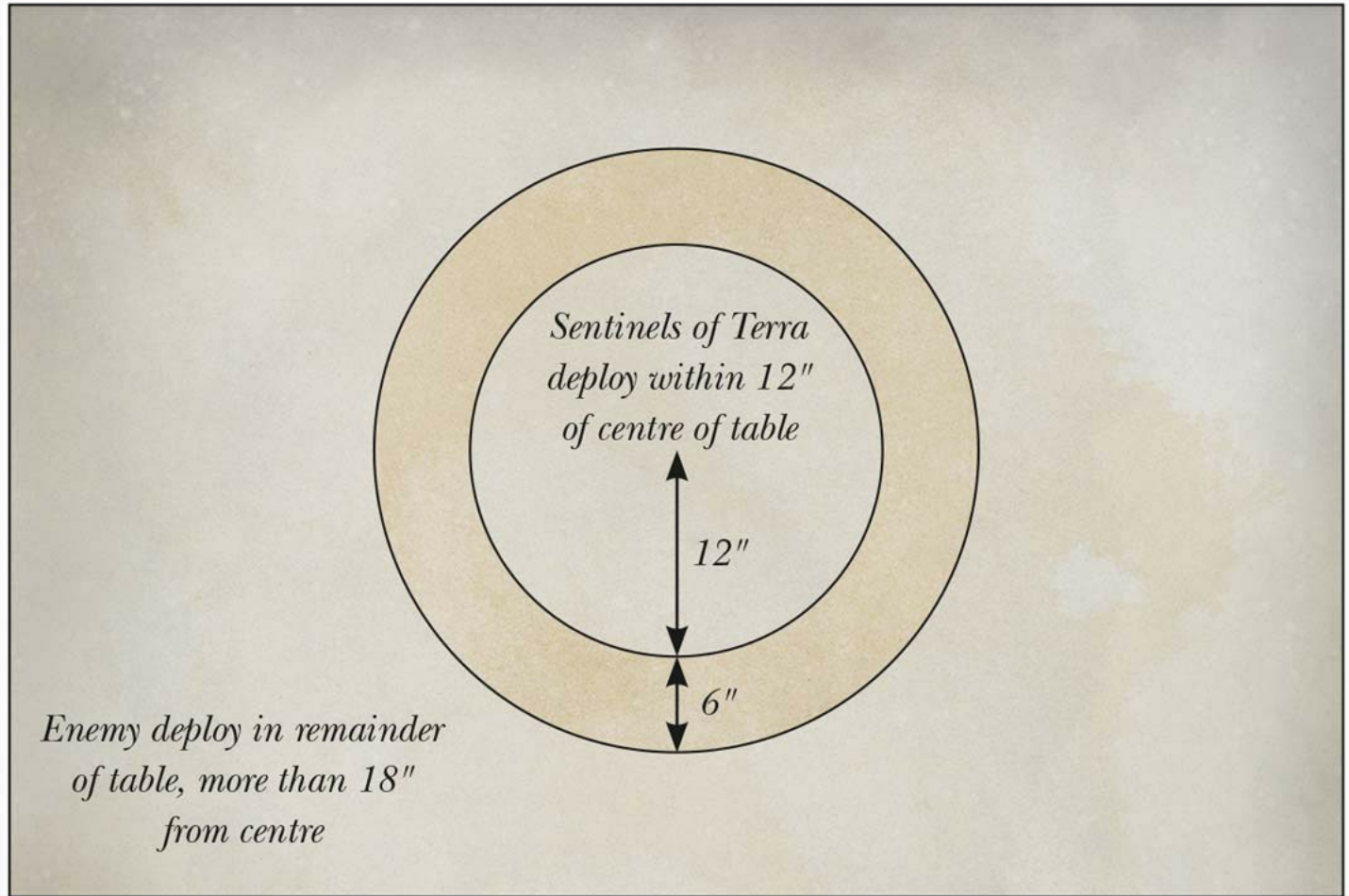
*In this mission, the Slay the Warlord Secondary Objective is worth 3 Victory Points.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

Reserves.

Battle to the Death: All Sentinels of Terra and Iron Warriors models have the Fearless special rule.

Lysander Intervenes: All Sentinels of Terra Terminator Squads and models with Terminator armour must start the battle in reserves. Do not roll to see if they arrive, as you would for other units in reserves. Instead, they arrive by Deep Strike on the turn following that in which Captain Garadon first suffers one or more Wounds. They do not scatter when they arrive, and can charge on the turn that they arrive from reserves.





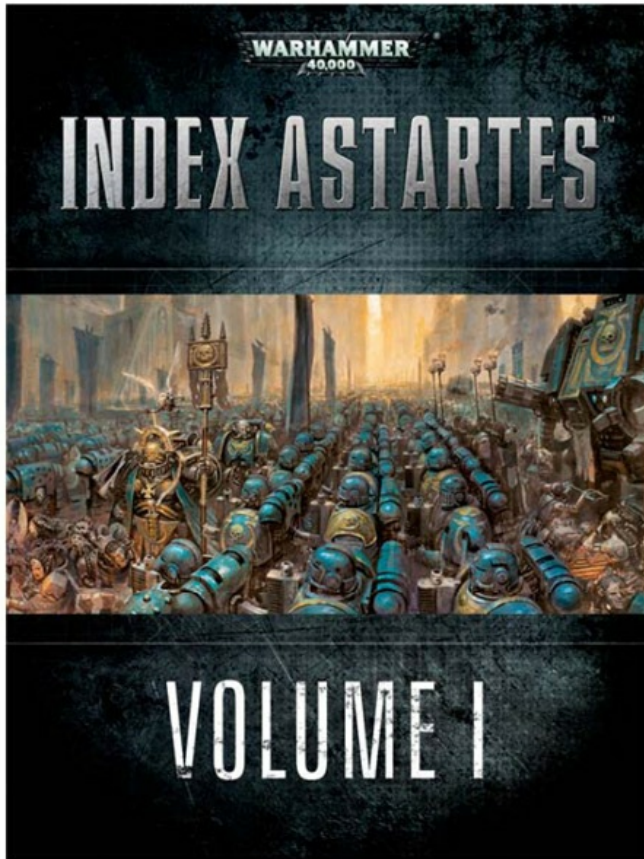






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