

The background of the cover is a dramatic, high-contrast illustration of a battle scene from the Warhammer 40,000 universe. In the foreground, a large, dark, metallic structure, possibly a tank or a piece of heavy machinery, is partially visible, with bright orange and yellow flames and smoke rising from it. In the mid-ground, a large, dark, multi-limbed creature, likely a Chaos Daemon, is engaged in combat. The background is filled with a chaotic battle scene, with bright orange and yellow flames and smoke rising from the ground. A bright, glowing light source, possibly a lightning bolt or a powerful energy source, is visible in the upper right corner, casting a bright glow over the scene. The overall atmosphere is one of intense, apocalyptic warfare.

THE HORUS HERESY

Alan Merrett

THE HORUS REBELLION

An apocryphal tale
from Saberlooth Games

Foreword

Between 2001 and 2008, Sabertooth Games developed collectible card games under license of Games Workshop, using its intellectual property of the Warhammer 40,000 universe...

These three successive games were *Warhammer 40,000 Collectible Card Game* (2001), *Horus Heresy* (2003) and *Dark Millenium* (2005). The first and last one were developed to play in the classic 41st Millenium universe but the second one was aiming at recreating the great schism of Horus.

So, with the second game came an arc story by the pen of Alan Merett, nowadays overseer of all intellectual property development of games Workshop.

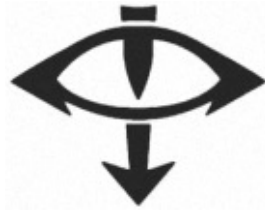
This small series of short stories - we freely tiled *The Horus Rebellion* – covers the events from the betrayal of Istvaan to the Terra assault...

Only time will tell if we face an apocryphal text or a wide synopsis of the future of the Horus Heresy series...

In 2008, Sabertooth games ceased activities, the company dismantled and the website disappeared... Here is the story of the *Horus Rebellion* from The Sabertooth 31st Millennium card games.

The Horus Rebellion

by Alan Merrett



In the Wake of the Dropsite Massacre

THE FORCES OF the rebel Warmaster Horus have won a great victory on the bloodstained plains of Isstvan V. Almost the entirety of three loyal Legions of Space Marines have been annihilated by Horus' traitorous army. The Primarch Ferrus Manus is dead - killed at the hands of his former friend Primarch Fulgrim of the Emperor's Children Legion. The Primarchs Corax and Vulkan are missing, also presumed dead by the victors, though their bodies have not been recovered from the corpse-strewn battlefield.

Horus convenes a summit of his most senior officers to outline his plans for the forthcoming assault on Terra. With him are the Primarchs Mortarion, Fulgrim, Angron, Night Haunter, Perturabo, Alpharius, the rebellious Fabricator-General Kelbor-Hal, Dark Apostle Erebus of the Word Bearers Legion and various high-ranking Sons of Horus officers.

"We have achieved much but there is still more for us to do. Our victory here will count for little if we do not press onwards. Now is the time for us to take the war to the Emperor himself. We are to make immediate preparation for an invasion of Terra and an assault on the Imperial Palace. This will be no easy task. Despite all we have achieved so far the Emperor and his followers will fight hard. Doubtless much blood has yet to be spilled, theirs and our own. But the prize is the Galaxy. Are you with me?"

The assembled warriors cheered as one, "Aye! Victory for Horus! Death to the Emperor! Death to the Emperor!"

Fulgrim and the Warmaster

THE WARMASTER MET with Fulgrim in his command bunker.

"You requested a private audience with me Fulgrim. What have you to report?"

"My Esteemed Lord and Master of Isstvan I have brought you a trophy."

At this the Primarch held up the severed head of Ferrus Manus. He casually tossed the grisly object at the feet of Horus.

"So you have fulfilled your oath to me. Good. But I fail to see why this presentation required so private a meeting. All of my captains should share in this triumph."

"With the greatest respect mighty Horus I am afraid that Fulgrim did not entirely fulfil his oath to you. He did strike down his old friend and comrade but he could not find the strength within himself to complete the task. I did it for him!"

"You... you are not Fulgrim? Who are you? Are you some kind of spy or assassin? Should I call my guard or do you think you can best me? Do not think me weak like Ferrus... I can break you like a straw!"

"Perhaps this is true but I have no desire to test either you or I in such a wasteful and fruitless trial of combat. Nor do you have need to call your guardsmen. I am here to pledge myself to your cause. Who am I? It should clear to one so powerful as yourself that I am a creature of the Warp - a humble servant of the Great Power that is Slaanesh. I have claimed this mortal shell as mine own - and I must say how pleasing it is to me. The sensations are quite unique though I shall no doubt have to make some adjustments to it in time."

"What has happened to Fulgrim?" Horus asked of the Daemon now inhabiting the body of his Primarch underling.

"Fear not he is safe, quite safe. He and I have a long history and I wouldn't wish him any lasting ill. You see I have been his conscience for many years – quietly talking to him through the long nights. Advising him, comforting him, cajoling him, pleading with him, steering his course of actions. I was the voice

that persuaded him to take your side in this conflict of mortals – yes, you have me to thank for his dutiful obedience. But at the end he was weak, too weak to deal the deathblow to his old friend. In his pain he cried out to me for help. I could not but help him; after all we have been so close for so long he is like a brother to me. Of course I could not help him as a voice so we made a little pact. I would have his body, do that which he could not and he would have eternal peace. A shame but there you have it."

"Is he dead? Answer me damn you! Answer me!"

"No he is not dead. He is here inside me, utterly aware of all that transpires. His cries of anguish are a great comfort to me. He and I have much to talk about. He is not really happy I suppose but I am unwont to let him fade away. I enjoy our discussions too much. I don't suppose I will ever tire of them."

Horus was appalled at this. But he said nothing. The Daemon-Fulgrim had pledged its allegiance to him and it was patently a powerful entity. Best to keep it as an ally he thought and he certainly could not do without the Emperor's Children Legion at this juncture. However Horus resolved to destroy the daemon and rescue Fulgrim from his torment when the time was apt. Horus and the Daemon-Fulgrim agreed to keep its true nature to themselves. The Daemon had no particular desire to reveal itself and Horus was convinced that such a revelation would create many problems for him at this time.

Horus Plans the Invasion

HORUS IS PREPARING his forces for the invasion of Terra and the attack against the Imperial Palace. The Primarch Lorgar has joined him and assumed command of those Word Bearers who took part in the Dropsite Massacre. The rest of Lorgar's Legion is still fighting the Ultramarines at Calth in Ultramar.

"We are to make immediate departure for the Solar System. My agents inform me that Mars has at last fallen to us. Our allies within the Mechanicum have been successful in their struggle to free the manufacturing facilities thereon from the thrall of the Imperials. As I speak they are repairing the systems damaged in the fighting and those deliberately sabotaged by our enemies and are reactivating the munitions and armaments factories. The Legions of Mortarion, Fulgrim, Angron, Lorgar and my own Sons of Horus will rendezvous at Mars. Our allies on Mars have been instructed to make available to us supplies of any and all newly fabricated armours and weapons for our Space Marines. As soon as our Legions have been resupplied we shall launch our invasion of Terra. I shall personally command the operation from the aboard The Vengeful Spirit.

Night Haunter is to take his Legion to the planet of Tsagualsa within the Eastern Fringes. From this base he is to strike at the Imperial strongholds of Heroldar and Thramas. These two systems present a clear danger to our operation. If not dealt with they could provide the enemy with an opportunity to outflank us. Thramas in particular needs to be neutralised as the system contains a number of Forgeworlds who remain loyal to the Emperor. I have also received reports that the Dark Angels have been sighted in the sector. If these reports are true you will have more than enough to worry about Curze."

Night Haunter winced at Horus' use of his near-forgotten former name but nodded his understanding of the duty he had been given.

Horus addressed the traitor Primarch Alpharius of the Alpha Legion.

"Alpharius. You have a vital duty to perform for me. Despite our glorious victory on the plains of Isstvan V our enemy can yet call upon the services of a number of powerful Legions. I am sure that Lorgar's Word Bearers can keep Gulliman and his Ultramarines busy at Ultramar for some time to come but I am

concerned about those Legions rather closer to Terra. The White Scars Legion has been operating in the Chondax systems close to Prospero where we know the Space Wolves have been active.

The White Scars are almost at full strength and so represent a danger to us. We do not know what kind of condition the Space Wolves are in after their attack on Prospero but we must assume that they also could prove to be somewhat of a problem for us. Certainly the two Legions together would be a grave threat.

You must seek out and engage the White Scars Legion of Jaghatai Khan and the Space Wolves Legion of Leman Russ and prevent them from joining forces. If it is at all possible you must annihilate them or at the very least damage them such that their threat is removed. In any case it is imperative that you do not let either Legion reinforce the defenders of Terra."

Horus turned his attention to the Primarch Perturabo of the Iron Warriors.

"Master of Olympia your task is straightforward. There is a large force of Imperial Fists making headway for the Isstvan system. Rogal Dorn despatched these troops to reinforce the Imperials on the third planet. Our allies within the Warp have been able to delay their transit for many months - long enough that they can never complete their original mission nor have they been able to participate in the battle here on Isstvan V. Now they must be dealt with. We cannot allow such a strong complement of Space Marines to infiltrate our space. They could seriously disrupt preparations for the attack on Terra.

You must take your Legion to the Phall System where Dorn's loyalists are regrouping and smash them! Do not seek to fight a protracted battle 'gainst them! Cripple their fleet and eliminate their ability to manoeuvre! As soon as you have achieved this move immediately to the Solar System and report to me at Terra! In the aftermath of our victory there I will have need of your special skills – the Palace fortifications will need to be repaired and bolstered lest any remaining Imperials try to win back what they will surely soon lose."

Magnus the Red Contacts Horus

AS THE WARMASTER was preparing his forces for the coming attack against Terra he received an unexpected communication. It was from Magnus the Red, Primarch of the Thousand Sons Legion. Horus knew that eventually Magnus would join him - his allies within the Warp had foretold as much - he was nevertheless surprised that he had made contact now. This was a good omen thought Horus as he scanned the transcript of the message.

"Hail Warmaster! I offer you grim tidings of events that have destroyed fair Prospero and I offer you my services in the coming invasion of Terra. Though you and I have never been close it now appears that we share common cause. The Emperor, who I had ever admired and loved, has spurned me and set his dogs on me as if I were but a petty criminal. The barbarians of Russ have destroyed my precious Prospero and foully murdered many of my dearest kith and kin. Only through the grace of a mutual ally was I able to escape the carnage and mine own death at the hands of the Wolf Primarch.

I never sought to become embroiled in your disagreement but they have driven me to your side. I vow to make them regret that they should have treated me so. I am much changed, our mutual ally has bequeathed me power beyond any mortal means to measure. You will find me a most useful and loyal servant.

Even as you receive this communiqué the remnant of my Legion and I are marshalling at the moons of Fasdahn-Oryx in preparation for transit to the Solar System. We await your orders to move on Terra."

The Fall of Mars

ROGAL DORN HAD ordered his four companies of Imperial Fists veterans to Mars to aid the loyalist faction of the Mechanicum and secure the munitions factories from falling into the hands of the traitors. The Imperial Fists led a large force drawn from various Imperial Army garrisons scattered across the Solar System. Captain Camba-Diaz of the Second Company was in command.

The initial phase of the action had gone well for the loyalists and they successfully secured a swathe of territory across the northern hemisphere of the planet. Within this arc of loyalist control lay the important munitions factories of Mondus Gamma and Mondus Occullum. Within these two vast industrial complexes the Mechanicum fabricated the weaponry and power armour for the Space Marines.

It was a temporary victory. The loyalist Mechanicum faction was much smaller than had been guessed at by those on Terra. The loyalist forces on Mars found themselves to be massively outnumbered. In addition to the greater portion of Tech-priests the traitors could also call upon the services of seven Titan Legions. Within hours of securing the munitions factories the loyalists were being pressed back. It was clear that they could not win this battle.

Camba-Diaz ordered an emergency evacuation. Barely a thousand loyal warriors are able to escape from the planet's surface before the factories falls into the hands of the traitors. The desperate rearguard action of the loyalists and the sacrifice of many thousands of lives at least secures the shipment offworld of many tens of thousands of newly fabricated Mk5 and Mk6 Space Marine armour suits.

Rogal Dorn Assumes Command of the Loyalists

THE PRIMARCH OF the Imperial Fists Legion had been charged with commanding the defence of Terra. The Emperor had warned Dorn of the impending invasion of the Earth by the traitor Horus and his army of rebels. This information had caused much despair amongst the loyalist High Command for it implied that the attack against Horus at Isstvan V had failed. Dorn and his confidants feared the worse regarding the fate of the seven Legions they had sent against the Warmaster. These fears were more than realised when the first of the Isstvan V survivors arrived back at Terra and told of what had happened there.

The survivors numbered but a few dozen battle-scarred Salamanders, Raven Guard and Iron Hands Space Marines. These warriors had barely escaped from the carnage with their lives and only through acts of supreme courage and their innate strong will had they been able to fight their way off planet and make the perilous journey back to the Solar System. They reported the betrayal of the Iron Warriors, Alpha Legion, Word Bearers and Night Lords Legions. They also reported the death of Ferrus Manus - struck down and beheaded by the treacherous Fulgrim.

Corax of the Raven Guard was alive, barely, having been critically wounded in the fighting. His damaged body had been rescued as the few survivors of the massacre had fled the battlefield and brought henceforth to Terra entombed within a stasis tube. Of the Primarch Vulkan the Dropsite survivors had no news at all and all feared that he too had been killed.

In the wake of the Dropsite Massacre on Isstvan V, and as the full horror of what had transpired there became clear to him, Rogal Dorn realised he had to do everything he possibly could to bolster the Earth's defences. The traitors had won control of Mars, from which planet an enemy force could easily strike at the very heart of the Imperium. Worse still, the battle to try and wrest control of Mars from the rebels had all but exhausted Dorn's available Space Marine units. Ancient Terra, Capital World of the Imperium and Seat of the Emperor's Palace was dangerously exposed.

Dorn had no choice but to assume that the Legions not involved in the

massacre at Isstvan V remained loyal to the Emperor. Of these the White Scars of Jaghatai Khan were the closest Legion and had already been ordered to return to Terra prior to the launch of the ill-fated Isstvan mission. The Imperial Fists Primarch sent Jaghatai an urgent message impressing upon him the need to not let anything prevent him from getting his Legion to Earth. Similar communications were despatched to Leman Russ, Sanguinius, Roboute Guilliman and Lion El'Jonson ordering them to move to Terra with some urgency. There was no way Dorn could know if any of them received these orders.

Dorn also tried to recall the rest of his own Legion, who had been attempting to reinforce the loyalists on Isstvan III. He had no information of their progress there or of their current status. The Primarch pleaded with Malcador to do everything he could to make contact with his warriors.

The Angel Sanguinius

SIGNUS PRIME WAS a charnel house. The occupying daemonic horde had enslaved or murdered the indigenous population and had made no effort to clear away the millions of corpses that littered the streets of its once thriving cities and townships. Added to this unspeakable carnage were the broken bodies of hundreds of dead Space Marines – Blood Angels who had been drawn into a trap of Horus' devising.

Even worse for the Blood Angels was the fall of Sanguinius their angelic Primarch. The winged Primarch had fought a bloody aerial duel with a mighty daemonic Lord of Khorne as his warriors battled a daemon army on the field below. Sanguinius had dealt the creature a terrible wound and in response the Greater Daemon had crushed his legs, cast him to the ground and with a howl had slaughtered near five companies of the Blood Angels as it fled the scene. The trauma of this act of malevolence had stunned the Primarch into unconsciousness.

An army of ordinary men faced with such events would have surely been swiftly defeated. However, Space Marines are by no means normal men and the Blood Angels do not falter. Rather they redouble their efforts to banish the daemon horde. Filled with vengeful fury the Legion fights as it had never fought before, the Blood Angels go berserk and in their mania they smash the daemons asunder.

The Blood Angels Legion had all but annihilated the daemonic horde of Signus Prime. In a berserk fury, unmindful of any personal injury, the Space Marines had swept across the planet destroying any daemon, mutant or cultist they could find. The brutal violence of the daemon Ka'bandha had unleashed something dark within the psyche of the Space Marines, a thirst for blood that would not be slated until every taint of Chaos had been erased from the planet. The Blood Angels were unstoppable, the hordes of Chaos could not resist them and they crumbled before them.

As the planet was cleansed the rage of the Blood Angels subsides. Their fury ebbs and they slowly begin to realise that they had won a great victory. The

daemonic horde and its cultist allies has been utterly destroyed - those demons they had not killed had fled back into the Etherium. Even the mighty Kyriss of Slaanesh, self-proclaimed Master of Signus, has been banished.

The Blood Angels free Signus from its thrall – but they have little stomach for celebrating. The cost of victory is far higher than any could have wished. Hundreds upon hundreds of Blood Angels had been killed in the fighting, their Primarch lay broken upon the ground and the berserker rage they experienced had left a brooding shadow on their souls.

The Angel Sanguinius was a Space Marine Primarch and as such he had powers and abilities beyond even those of his Blood Angels Space Marine warriors. Created ages ago in the furnace of the Emperor's laboratories, fashioned from the Emperor's own genetic material and forged through myriad trials of battle, he and his fellow Primarchs bestrode the galaxy like gods. Even as Sanguinius regained consciousness his crushed legs were beginning to heal. The pain was excruciating but was naught compared to the searing anguish he felt as he remembered the heinous slaughter of his troops at the hands of the fell daemon Ka'bandha.

Within a few days the Angel was able to walk, though not without discomfort. The physical pain was nothing to him but the agony in his heart would not abate. As his legs grow stronger and the pain from them slowly subsides he notices a change in his Blood Angels. When he had first woken from his comatose state a dark mood was on the Legion. The Space Marines were sullen and despairing. Now, despite the trauma they had only recently suffered, they had regained their composure and optimism. Sanguinius thought that his Blood Angels must be affecting this brighter mood to help him since his own thoughts were dark and torrid, his mood grim. Whatever befell him in the future he vowed to himself that he would have his vengeance on the daemon Ka'bandha.

The call from Rogal Dorn to return to Terra was cheered by the Blood Angels. They fully understood the gravity of the situation facing the Imperium. That the coming defence of the Earth and the Imperial Palace would decide the fate of the Galaxy was in no doubt to them. That the fighting would be hard and that yet more of the Legion's precious blood would be spilled was also clear. But Sanguinius and his warriors want rid of Signus – the place holds only dark memories for them and they yearn for vengeance against those who had set the trap into which they had fallen.

For Sanguinius the return to Terra could not happen soon enough and he immediately gave orders to his commanders to prepare for the evacuation of

Signus. The last of the Blood Angels corpses had been stowed aboard the fleet – they would receive honourable burial on the slopes of Mount Seraph on Baal Secundus. Sanguinius orders that nothing of the Legion remain on Signus, or any of the other planets and moons of the system. There will be no memorial, no mausoleum, no gravestone and no inscription there to tell of what has happened to the Legion. The scarce few surviving indigenous people of the system are arranged passage to nearby human systems. Warning beacons are stationed at the warp-jump points to ward off any future unwary visitors from setting foot on any of the planets or moons. Signus would be left lifeless and rotting.

And so Sanguinius and the Blood Angels return to Terra.

The Warfleet of the Imperial Fists

WHEN ROGAL DORN of the Imperial Fists had chanced upon the becalmed frigate Eisenstein, and met with the loyal Captain Garro of the Death Guard, he had ordered his Warfleet to Isstvan. His troops had been tasked with reinforcing the loyalist effort upon the third planet. Dorn had personally escorted the loyal Garro to Terra taking with him only his elite veteran companies. The rest of Dorn's Legion had made for Isstvan. It was a significant force of arms – over thirty thousand Space Marines aboard a fleet of seventeen battle barges and assorted cruisers with a host of smaller supporting craft.

The Imperial Fists Warfleet could deal a hammer-blow to the traitors gathered at the Isstvan system. But Horus had powerful allies in the Warp and the fleet's Navigators could not penetrate the warpstorms that plagued the Etherium at their behest. The days turned to weeks and the weeks to months as they try again and again to plot a course through the maelstrom of swirling energies. Each attempt to move the fleet through the Warp seemingly places it even further away from Isstvan. Furthermore, they are unable to navigate a course back to Terra.

The violent storms also cripple their Astropaths' abilities and they cannot send nor receive any communication from either Terra or their Primarch. But it is not in the nature of Space Marines to give up and so the Imperial Fists stubbornly keep trying to penetrate the storms.

The Imperial Fists Warfleet established a base of operations at the Phall System. The two habitable planets of Phall were unremarkable agrarian worlds, lightly populated and of no great strategic importance. In the normal course of events there would be no reason for a backwater system like this to host such a mighty force of Space Marines and their battleships. However, for reasons they could not ascertain, the Warp was calm in this region and the Imperial Fists find that they can navigate to and from the system with some surety. The Legion's commanders decide therefore to use Phall as a base for the fleet whilst they sent ships to scout the surrounding space and probe the Warp for routes to either Isstvan or Terra.

The Legion quickly establishes a routine. Whilst regular scouting missions are

launched into the Warp the Legion's Astropaths busy themselves with trying to break through the warpstorms and make contact with the rest of the Imperium and in particular the loyalists at Isstvan and their own Primarch on Terra. The fleet is kept at full battle-stations and the Space Marines are ready to move into action as soon as communications can be re-established.

The Warfleet of the Imperial Fists is stationed at the Phall System. The Legion has been cut off from communication with the rest of the Imperium for many months. Attempts to penetrate the storms of the Warp had failed and the Legion's Astropaths were blind. As time wore on the Legion's commanders had grown increasingly frustrated. They knew that something terrible had happened at the Isstvan System and that loyal Space Marines were in grave danger. They were also aware that their own Primarch carried news of the betrayal of Horus to the Emperor on Terra.

The attack by Perturabo was sudden and devastating. The Iron Warriors Primarch commanded a fleet of over twenty large warships. Before the Imperial Fists' Astropaths can relay news of the rebel fleet's appearance at the warp jump points it is firing upon the loyalist ships orbiting the second planet. Within minutes three Imperial Fists battle barges have been crippled, the Hammer of Terra exploding as a salvo of torpedoes smashed into its aft section, setting off a chain reaction in the plasma engines. A dozen smaller craft are simply ripped apart by the hail of fire from the traitor vessels.

The traitors push onwards, driving into the heart of the loyalist fleet, reaping death and destruction all around them. Their attack threatens to overwhelm the Imperial Fists before they can even fire back.

The traitor Primarch Perturabo of the Iron Warriors Legion is attacking the loyal Warfleet of the Imperial Fists Legion. The traitor leads a strong force of over twenty large warships and in a surprise attack they have already destroyed three of the loyal Legion's battle barges and a host of smaller craft. Perturabo's strategy is to plunge his fleet into the midst of the loyal fleet, scattering its formation and then to destroy it piecemeal ship by ship. His plan is dependent upon the loyal ships not been able to fight back quickly enough to break the momentum of his thrust.

However, as they recover from the shock and suddenness of Perturabo's attack the Imperial Fists do fight back. Despite their long sojourn at Phall the loyal fleet has been kept in a state of constant battle readiness and this policy now pays off for the Imperial Fists. The loyal ships begin firing at the traitors as soon as they break into their formation. The Imperial Fists concentrate their fire at the leading

ships of Perturabo's fleet. The impact of this is devastating to the traitors as their lead ships are torn apart in the firestorm. As the lead ships are battered the following ships of Perturabo's fleet break off their attack to regroup.

This gives the loyalists the chance to go on the offensive but before they do so the fleet's Astropaths relay a critical message to the loyal commanders. Finally they have succeeded in making contact with Terra and the Imperial Fists have urgent orders to return to there. These orders have the highest priority. They must not let anything delay them.

After many long months of being isolated from any communication with the rest of the Imperium the Imperial Fists have finally made contact with Terra. Unfortunately the loyal Legion is fighting a space battle against the traitors of Perturabo of the Iron Warriors Legion as it receives its orders to quit the Phall System and head for Earth.

The Imperial Fists have gained the initiative in the battle and managed to repel the traitors' surprise attack, despite severe losses at the start of the engagement. The loyalists have an opportunity to force the issue and launch a counterattack against Perturabo's fleet. The Imperial Fists demonstrate remarkable discipline as they resist the urge to chase down the scattering rebels and instead set course for Terra.

As the loyalist ships break orbit and manoeuvre to their jump points the traitor ships turn back towards them and begin a new assault. A number of Imperial Fists light cruisers move to intercept the fresh attack. These few ships are no match for the battle barges of Perturabo and are cut apart by laser fire from the prows of the heavier ships. Their sacrifice is well judged and delays the traitors long enough for the rest of the loyal Legion to make the jump points, enter the Warp and set course for Terra.

The Wolf and The Khan

JAGHATAI KHAN AND his White Scars Legion had spent the last few years campaigning in the Chondax System. The Space Marines had been battling against a large army of Ork raiders originating from the moons of Throll-Henderson. After defeating the main Ork force the Legion had spent the last few months hunting down and destroying the scattered remnants of the alien army.

The Legion was in good shape having had plenty of time to replace the losses it had suffered in the early weeks of the campaign. That it had been unable to contact Terra or make any long warp trips because of the warpstorms had not been a particular concern to the Khan. These kinds of disturbances were quite commonplace in this region of space and he had no reason to see anything significant about it.

His attitude changed when he was finally contacted by Rogal Dorn and told of the events at Isstvan V. The Khan's immediate reaction was to request that his Legion be sent to Isstvan to participate in the attack on Horus. Dorn however is adamant that he return to Terra as soon as possible. Reluctantly the White Scars Primarch agrees to the order and instructs his fleet to make ready for transit to Earth.

The White Scars Legion is preparing to return to Terra under instructions from Rogal Dorn. The Imperial Fists Primarch had been appointed commander-in-chief of all the loyal forces of the Imperium and so Jaghatai Khan accepts the order, even though he would rather make for Isstvan and a confrontation with the traitors.

As the Khan's fleet are making final preparation for the warp jumps they receive urgent astropathic signals from an unexpected quarter. It is the Primarch of the Space Wolves, Leman Russ. The Wolf Primarch told of his mission to Prospero, which was relatively close to the Chondax System, and of the rebellion of Magnus the Red. The Khan had been unaware of Russ' attack on Prospero and hearing of the treachery of the Thousand Sons added to his growing sense of unease. Worse still was the news that the Space Wolves had intercepted a traitor fleet bound for Chondax. Russ told Jaghatai that his fleet was now battling the

rebel ships and warned him that some elements of their armada had broken away and were heading his way.

The two loyal Primarchs exchange communications and discuss the options open to them. They agree that combined their two fleets can easily defeat the traitors, who Russ identified as the Alpha Legion. However either of the loyal fleets is at grave risk of defeat if they try to fight alone. Russ tells the Kahn that he is only able to avoid being overwhelmed by adopting hit and run tactics. This is stopping Alpharius from being able to bring his greater number of ships to bear but it was doing little to slow the advance of the traitor fleet.

Jaghatai Khan has a hard decision to make. He has been sent very specific orders to return to Terra and deploy his Legion in defence of the Imperial Palace. These orders come directly from Rogal Dorn who speaks with the authority of the Emperor and is therefore not lightly dismissed. On the other hand his fellow loyal Primarch Leman Russ has requested his aid in combating a traitor fleet that is bound for his current position. Russ is a great friend of the Khan and the rebel ships heavily outnumber his fleet. If the Khan does not aid him it is likely that the traitors will not be stopped or worse the Space Wolves' fleet could be destroyed.

It is a difficult choice for the Khan to make. He sends urgent communications to Terra requesting that Dorn amend his orders in the light of this latest revelation and allow him to support his old friend. While he is waiting for a response from Dorn the White Scars Primarch orders his fleet to make ready to support the Space Wolves. Even as the great battle barges swung into position leading elements of the traitor fleet of Alpharius appear on their scanners. Within moments the traitor ships are upon them. The battle had come to the Khan!

The leading ships of Alpharius' fleet are small, fast cruisers and escorts. It does not appear to the White Scars that these will present too much of a threat to them and so it proves. The massed gunnery of the White Scars battle barges rips the smaller ships to pieces. The Khan and his officers are confused. They cannot understand what the traitors are trying to achieve. As long as they attack piecemeal and with their smallest ships the loyal fleet is virtually invulnerable. It does not make any sense.

It makes even less sense to the Khan when the larger Alpha Legion warships start to appear. These vessels do not attack but hold station at the edge of the system whilst their smaller comrades continue to commit suicide. As the Khan pours over the tactical charts and scanners aboard his flagship trying to glean the intent of his foe his officers plead with him to give the order to attack. The

Primarch resists their calls – he does not want to commit himself to a full-scale battle with the traitors unless it is absolutely necessary.

At this is happening the Space Wolves Legion is fighting a losing battle against the rest of the Alpha Legion fleet. Even though the ships of Russ are trying to evade the much larger traitor fleet they are taking terrible punishment from their gunnery. Again Russ sends furious communications to Jaghatai Khan requesting his urgent assistance.

Jaghatai Khan's reluctance to fully engage the traitor fleet of Alpharius is vindicated when he receives a reply to the signal he had sent to Rogal Dorn on Terra. Dorn's new communiqué is clear and unequivocal – the Khan is instructed to move his Legion to Terra without delay and regardless of any and all other considerations. Dorn's orders also tell the Khan to relay this order to Leman Russ of the Space Wolves with the added codicil that the Space Wolves Legion is to draw the enemy fleet as far from Terra as possible and that if, and only if, he is able to break contact with the rebels should he attempt to Warp jump to Terra.

The Khan relays the orders to Russ as commanded and adds his own personal message of apology to his old friend that he is unable to offer him any further help. With this his fleet breaks off from the harassing traitor escorts and jumps into the Warp bound for Terra.

The Space Wolves are on their own facing an enemy that outnumbered and outguns them and that is intent on destroying them. Russ simply shrugs his shoulders when he gets the Khan's communication. Of the fate of his Legion he could not foretell but he was quite sure that his warriors and ship crews will fight as hard as they had ever fought before. The traitor Alpharius would soon remember that an injured wolf was the most dangerous foe of all, he thought.

Horus Orders His Armada to Terra

THE WARMASTER HAD ordered the Legions of Night Haunter, Perturabo and Alpharius to carry out certain missions in preparation for the attack against Terra. The rest of his forces have been commanded to travel to the Solar System and rendezvous at Mars. When his invasion armada is in place Horus intends to launch an attack on the weakened Terra and lay siege to the Emperor's Palace.

As soon as the Night Lords, Iron Warriors and Alpha Legion have been despatched on their various missions the traitor armada sets course for the Solar System. Even with the help of Horus' allies within the Warp the journey will take some time to complete. Horus instructs that this time is well spent by his Primarchs and commanders preparing for the coming battles. Plans for the attack are scrutinised and finessed, their troops drilled and trained.

Horus is pleased with the turn of events. In a short time he will confront the Emperor, defeat him, and claim lordship over all human space. It will be the dawn of a new age for Mankind.

The Doom of the Death Guard

MORTARION WAS TYPICALLY silent on receiving his orders from Horus detailing the role his Legion would take in the coming battle for Terra. The grim Primarch passed on the orders to his command staff with the minimum of ceremony. He delivers a short speech to his troops explaining that this battle would decide the fate of the Imperium and that they had proved themselves worthy of the chance to be a part of the inevitable triumph it would be for Horus. If he had any doubts at all about their mission he kept such thoughts to himself.

With his entire fleet, Mortarion crossed into the Warp and straight into nightmare. The Death Guard fleet was sucked into a warpstorm, a deadly vortex that battered the ships to and fro and made navigation impossible. Frantic efforts by the fleet's navigators and helmsmen to stabilise the ships are for naught and they can do nothing save ride out the storm and hope that the fleet was not scattered within the Warp.

In time the storm abated and the fleet lay becalmed, its ships slowly drifting through the Immaterium, unable to find its bearings. And then the Destroyer came upon them and they were changed for all time.

For Mortarion and the Space Marines of the Death Guard there is nothing so terrifying as the plague that renders their legendary resilience meaningless. These were warriors who were immune to the diseases, contagions, toxins and pollutions that bedevilled normal men. This pestilence races through the entire fleet, roiling in their guts, bloating and distending their superhuman bodies, transforming them into horrible, pustulent grotesques. They are made corrupt within and sickening to behold without. They grow sicker by the minute, their incredible constitution becoming their worst enemy as their bodies refuse to die and they are wracked with the agony of their macabre transformation.

What the Death Guard endures is unimaginable yet none suffers more than Mortarion himself. For the Primarch it is as though he were upon the mountaintop of Barbarus once more, surrendering to the poison, without the mercy of unconsciousness to claim him or the Emperor to come to his salvation as he had done all those years ago.

Whether he perceives, in these terrible hours, the loss of what he had once stood for, the damnation he has now wrought upon himself and his Legion, the final sundering of any vestigial loyalty to the Emperor or to Mankind, only Mortarion will ever know. Unable to endure the suffering any longer, the Primarch offers himself and his Legion to the Warp in exchange for deliverance from their torment. His call is answered by a presence in the Immaterium, as though it had been waiting all along. From the stygian depths of the Warp the great entity that was Nurgle, Lord of Decay, Father of Disease, opens his arms and embraces Mortarion and the Death Guard, drawing them to his breast and making them his own.

What emerged from the Warp when the Death Guard fleet broke out bore little resemblance to that which had entered. The gleaming white armour heraldry of the once-Imperial champions was no more, in its stead was a sickly pall of greenish hue. Bloated, corpulence replaced the sleek proud form of the Space Marine and every warrior was pock marked with boils, scabs and putrescent sores. Maggots writhed in their unhealing wounds and the air about them was clouded with swarming flies. They bore the stink of corruption.

Even their weapons and war machines had been mutated and were now powered by the sickly sorcery of Chaos, glowing with lambent green energy and oozing gangrenous pus. The Death Guard have become creatures of Nurgle, walking pestilence carriers, they have become the Plague Marines.

Mortarion himself is also changed. He has grown taller and gaunter, as if stretched on a rack. His power-glaive now bears the hallmarks of the reaper's scythe. In return for rescue from the torments of the plague Nurgle has set him on the path to daemonhood and transformed him into the very image of death.

Beyond the Golden Throne

THE WAR WITHIN the Webway is going badly for the Emperor. Even though at first the army of the Custodian Guard and their supporters, the Silent Sisterhood, had managed to push back the daemonic invaders they had taken many casualties. The Imperial forces had never had the advantage of numbers and each death weakened them whereas the daemons appear to have a numberless horde at their disposal. Despite thousands of daemons and their allies having been destroyed or banished back into the Warp there are thousands more to take their place.

As the battle within wears on the daemons began to gain the advantage. Now their assaults regularly reach deep into the Imperium held defences – more than once approaching dangerously close to the human-built conduit that leads to the warpgate of the Golden Throne. On one occasion a mighty Bloodthirster, greatest of the daemons of Khorne fought its way through the Imperial defenders to the gate itself – only the last minute intervention of Sister Celia Harroda of the Sisters of Silence was able to stop the beast from crashing through the gate and into the Imperial Palace dungeons. Sister Celia confronted the huge daemon, her presence chilling the air around it and stifling its otherworldly power, and silently she dispatched the monster with swift strokes from her blade of frost. The effort utterly exhausted her and with the final, banishing stroke of her sword she collapsed upon the threshold between the Warp and realspace ne'er to breath again.

The death of Sister Celia, at the threshold of the warp portal that is the Golden Throne, was but one of many acts of brave sacrifice by the loyal warriors of the Webway. Eventually, after many long days of bloody battle, these deaths take their toll and the defenders are forced to draw back to within sight of the Golden Throne. Here they are bolstered by the presence of the Emperor who appears as a brightly burning star to those within the alien conduits. The Emperor draws on his reserves of power and his star burns ever brighter; the daemons, unwont to approach the shining nimbus, are held back.

The star of the Emperor gives the defenders respite enough that many are able

to cross through the portal and retreat into the Imperial Palace. At first all of the tech-priests and workers are evacuated and then, reluctantly, the Silent Sisterhood and the Custodian Guard withdraw from the battle and into the Palace dungeons.

The Gate will remain closed to the daemons for as long as the Emperor is able to power it from his Throne atop the Golden Portal. Only the mightiest of psykers has the power enough to do this and even then most would be exhausted and fail in a short time. Only the Emperor has the might to keep the gate closed permanently and for him the effort gets harder as the daemon forces gather about him. For as long as the daemon horde threatens to breach the portal the Golden Throne has become his prison.

Terra is Reinforced

ROGAL DORN WAS concerned. He had recalled all remaining known loyal Legions to Terra to face the impending threat of invasion by Horus and his traitor army. Early responses to his signals suggested that the traitors had anticipated this move and were actively trying to prevent these Legions from reinforcing the defences of Terra.

The Space Wolves Legion had been attacked and thus prevented from transiting to the Solar System. The loyal defenders of Terra would miss the strong arm of Russ and his Legion. However their actions at least allowed the White Scars Legion of Jaghatai Khan to make headway for Earth. Even allowing for the vagaries of warp travel Dorn expected the Kahn and his fleet to arrive within days. He pressed Malcador to maintain the highest Astronomicon beacon at peak efficiency to give them as much aid as possible and reduce their chance of mis-navigation.

The Blood Angels had sent communications to Dorn but warp disturbances had garbled the content and it was unclear to Dorn if, and when, they would be able to get back to Terra. The Legion of Sanguinius was one of the strongest of all of the Legions and their presence would be a tremendous boost to the loyalists. Dorn fervently prayed that they would indeed arrive soon.

Rogal Dorn's own Legion had been split earlier in the war. His veteran companies had accompanied Dorn to Terra to break news of Horus' treachery to the Emperor. These companies had been severely mauled during the Mars Battles and were down to less than half strength. The greater part of Dorn's Legion had been despatched on a futile mission to the Isstvan System. It was clear from what communications had been received from them that this mission had failed. The Imperial Fists Primarch was deeply concerned about the state of his Legion.

Dorn's anxiety about the Imperial Fists increases when more news is received from the Legion. They had been becalmed for some months, unable to communicate or navigate through the Warp. Suddenly they had been able to make contact with Terra but were being subjected to an attack by a traitor fleet

led by Perturabo of the Iron Warriors. Frantic signals from their fleet indicates that the Imperial Fists are attempting to break off from their attackers and make the warp jump back to Terra. These were the last messages received from the fleet and so Dorn can do nothing but wait in hope for them to arrive.

Of the Ultramarines and the Dark Angels Rogal Dorn has received no information. If these Legions are heading for Terra or intend to do so he cannot know. Dorn again impresses upon Malcador the importance of making contact with these Legions but the Sigillite can offer him no answers. Dorn resolves to plan the defence of Terra without these two mighty Legions.

At long last Dorn's wait is over as firstly the Imperial Fists fleet breaks warp near the Uranus jump point and then the White Scars and the Blood Angels fleets appear on long-range scanners. It is with some relief that signals are sent to the fleet commanders detailing their deployment patterns around Terra. Dorn requests that Sanguinius and Jaghatai Khan transport directly to the Imperial Palace for an immediate summit. Even as the loyal ships move into Earth orbit reports are received of traitor ships assembling near the space-docks of Mars. It appears that Horus has begun mustering his forces for the invasion of Terra.

The loyal Primarchs quickly assess their forces. In addition to their three Legions of Space Marines the loyalist defenders include nearly 1,500,000 troops of the Imperial Army and three entire Titan Legions of the Mechanicum. All of these would be deployed in defence of the Imperial Palace complex on Terra. The loyal fleets are stationed as a first line of defence in orbit above the Earth. A string of Mechanicum Orbital Gun Platforms, Missile Stations and clouds of Space Mines reinforces this ring of battleships. The traitor will not find Terra a weak target.

News from within the Imperial Palace gave Dorn and his command staff some additional solace. The Custodian Guard have been redeployed in the upper levels of the Palace apparently under the direct orders of the Emperor himself. If the Emperor himself were able to lead them then Horus would indeed have cause to regret his actions, thought Dorn.

The Siege of Terra

ON THE THIRTEENTH day of Secundus, the bombardment begins. From Orbit the Warmaster's ships lay down an unrelenting barrage of missiles and deadly energy beams. Horus' aim is to cripple the defences around the Emperor's Palace and make possible a massive invasion of the Earth. Striking from Mars the traitor ships have destroyed the lunar bases, smashed Terra's orbiting defences and scattered the protecting loyal fleets.

Horus attack is a call to arms to all of his followers and on countless worlds across the Galaxy forces loyal to the Warmaster rise up and attack those still sworn to the Emperor. The Emperor's realm is in turmoil and some of the greatest battles humanity has ever known are being fought. The Imperium is bathed in flames as the bitter civil war envelopes the stars but it is on Earth, Holy Terra, that the fate of the Galaxy and of Humanity will be decided.

The skies of Earth are black with dust and ash thrown up by the barrage. The land is split with gigantic fissures and the tectonic plates groan with stress. Mountain chains shiver and seas evaporate to become barren deserts. Rains of blood and ash drip from the darkening sky. Astropathic choirs sing of evil portents and men go mad with fear. The fleet of Horus hangs in orbit over the ravaged world. Shielded by the cunningly wrought defences of the tech-priests the pitiful few defenders of Terra stand ready to repel the invaders.

The loyal defenders of the Imperium gather their thoughts and prepare to meet the onslaught. Within the Imperial Palace itself the Emperor's personal bodyguard, the Custodians, stand ready to fight. At their side are the Blood Angels Legion with their Primarch the Angel Sanguinius. Beyond the Palace walls the White Scars Legion of Jaghatai Khan is arrayed and beneath the ruins of the Imperial Basilica the Imperial Fists Legion of Rogal Dorn make final preparations for the coming battle.

As the earth shudders under the bombardment, tank divisions roar across the tortured landscape to take up their position against the coming invasion. Brave men check their weapons and offer up last prayers to the gods of battle. Defence lasers swivel to face the turbulent threatening sky. Suddenly the night is streaked

by the plasma contrails of drop-pods.

The pods touch the ground and from them erupt a mass of traitor Space Marines who charge at the Imperial defenders, guns ablaze with fire, roaring the name of Horus. At head of the invading army are the Primarchs Angron, Mortarion and Lorgar.

Mighty Angron bellows orders to his blood-crazed followers, the World Eaters, driven insane by the buzzing of the neural implants they had surgically grafted to their brains. Brandishing his great runesword, crackling with newly acquired power, Angron leads his troops against the defenders of the Eternity Wall Spaceport. Around his red-armoured warriors bolter shells whine. Unflinchingly they advance, determined to take the fortified construct and put its defenders to the sword.

At Mortarion's rasping command, the Death Guard emerge silently from the festering cocoons of their warped drop-pods and advance upon their terror-stricken foes. The dread runes on Mortarion's scythe glowed eerily in the night as he gestures for the Plague Marines to advance.

The giant figure of Magnus the Red glares triumphantly about him with his one watchful eye before ordering the mage-warriors of the Thousand Sons to hurl their spells of death and destruction at the enemy before them.

A hail of deadly bolter fire cuts down dozens of the Emperor's Children Legion. Undeterred they plough forward singing the praises of their Primarch Fulgrim. The traitor Legion surges onwards carving a path of devastation through their foes.

As the battle rages perhaps some defenders go mad with fear. Perhaps the corruption of Chaos that Horus had unleashed runs deeper than any might have suspected. Perhaps some are foolish enough to think that they can negotiate with the enemy. Whatever the reason, one last vile treachery is to take place. Many units of the Imperial Army that had pledged loyalty to the Emperor now turn against him, even as the traitor Space Marines make their drop. It is almost as if it were a pre-arranged signal for them to act as they turn their weapons against their fellow warriors and cut them down with withering fire. This is surely one of the basest acts of treachery in the history of Humanity. The Lions Gate Spaceport falls to the invaders. As the traitors chant the name of Horus and mad prayers are howled out the air shimmers and a host of slaving daemons emerge from the Warp to spread terror and dismay.

If there was ever doubt as to which masters Horus served then the appearance of the daemonic horde dispells them. For the defenders it seems as if this truly is

the end of all that had been – that they are witnessing the last days of Mankind.

The Warmaster orders the rest of his army to the battle and at his signal the troop transports of his fleet begin to make planetfall. A veritable host of great ships drift down through the atmosphere of Earth, hoping to overwhelm the defenders by sheer weight of numbers. Unlike the drop-pods that had carried the traitor Space Marines, these vast bloated ships present fine targets for the weapons of the defenders. And thus did the battle for Terra begin in earnest.

Defence lasers blast many renegade ships from the sky, sending thousands of tons of fused metal death raining down onto the ground below. Crippled vessels crash into buildings or are vaporised in flight by the lancing energy beams of the huge Terra guns. As quickly as the surviving ships land they disgorge their cargoes and tens of thousands of traitor troops surge forth to attack the bastions of the defenders. The traitors' first objective is to silence the defence lasers that are still firing at the descending fleet and causing such havoc amongst the attackers.

The loyal defenders of Terra fight back tenaciously. Across the wide swathe of the Imperial plateau a hundred or more battles are being waged as the traitors repeatedly assault the strongholds that comprise the Palace Complex and the loyalists doggedly repulse them.

The defenders of Eternity Wall Spaceport cannot resist their attackers and are swept aside by the merciless assault. The hordes of the Warmaster are in total possession of the space field. More and more drop-ships descend from orbit, towering above the landing ground like nightmarish skyscrapers, dark runes on their hulls glowing evilly in the gloom.

Hundred-metre high doors open along the flanks of these monstrous ships and from within their stygian holds the Titans of Chaos emerge. They are warped giants; the armour of their carapaces fused and moulded into new macabre designs by the power of Chaos. Some of these Titans have been equipped with strange and potent weapons, others have become a bizarre hybrid of the organic and the machine. Metal tentacles lash, spiked tails whip back and forth. Engines roar like the bellowing of ancient beasts. Banners unfurl bearing the foul runes of Chaos and the Titans of the Storm Lords and the Flaming Skulls Legions march to war.

At Lions Gate Spaceport the traitors herald the arrival of the towering black engines of the Khornate host. Monsters, mutants and cultists seeth like angry ants around the bases of the mighty war machines.

The traitors sweep onwards, reinforced by the arrival of the Chaos Titans and

death-dealing war machines of Khorne, they push through the demoralised and exhausted loyal troops until they face the walls of the Emperor's Palace itself.

The raging World Eaters race towards the marble and steel outer ring of the Palace façade. Hordes of unstoppable Thousand Sons march relentlessly forward, their bolter fire raking the defenders. The Emperor's Children Legion sweep aside the Imperial Army divisions facing them and approach the Saturnine Gate. All round the walls bitter fighting ensues as the Imperial defenders sally forth, trying to drive back their attackers before the traitors can bring their main force to bear.

From their pillbox emplacements along the Palace walls loyal gun crews rain death down on the relentless attackers. Again and again the plazas and walkways outside the Palace are cleared of traitors. Again and again new foes step forward to take their place.

Within a few scant hours the forces of Horus have seized control of the Palace Complex's spaceports, destroying thousands of Imperial war machines and killing many tens of thousands of loyal warriors. Now the hordes of the Warmaster press forward against the Palace walls. Even as his army lays siege to the Emperor's Palace Horus orders even more of his waiting fleet to land and disembark their troops.

The number of traitor soldiers is so great that huge columns stretch from the Lions Gate and Eternity Wall Spaceports to the Emperor's Palace. As well as Space Marines the great army of Horus includes many Titans, traitor Imperial Army units, cultists, mutants and daemons. Thunderhawk Gunships fly overhead and the massed tank brigades that drive on towards the Palace throw up great clouds of dust.

The Palace is surrounded by the Warmaster's army and around its entire circumference they attack, driven on by the urgent commands of the traitor Primarchs and by Horus' own mad ambition.

Meanwhile in the depths of the Imperial Palace the Emperor sits on his Golden Throne and broods on the events occurring far above him. The great edifice of machinery upon which he sits has become his prison. His psychic might is needed to keep the Warp portal tightly shut against the hordes of Chaos that pound at the doorway from within the Webway beyond. If he relents and lets slip his focus then the daemoniac forces of Chaos will be able to pile through the gateway and into his Palace.

But the Emperor knows he must soon relinquish his hold on the Throne and confront Horus in person. The Warmaster can only win the victory he seeks by

vanquishing the Emperor – everything he has done and is doing is intended to bring about that goal. The battle above is merely a sideshow – a deliberate act of provocation whereby Horus is attempting to goad the Emperor into dropping his guard and facing him.

The Emperor is patient. He will meet Horus soon enough. For now he waits and bides his time. Horus will become impatient and act rashly – then, and only then, will the Emperor face him.

Day by day the Siege of the Palace wears on, casualties rising from the thousands to tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands. Chaos Titans blaze at the walls, specially constructed missiles ripping great chunks from the masonry. The Titans of the Fire Wasps answer their fire with volcano cannons. The smell of burning flesh fills the air as the corpses of the dead are incinerated in funeral pyres a hundred feet high. Obscene ash parches the throats of the defenders. The World Eaters, now driven irrevocably insane, build a pyramid of scorched skulls sixty feet high in Temple Square. By night the chants of degenerate cultists echo through the darkness and daemonic entities flit among the ruins of Earth.

Slowly, foot by torturous foot, the defenders are forced back. The great Palace walls are riddled with endless corridors and bulkheads and within this maze there is constant skirmishing and bitter hand-to-hand fighting. The passages are becoming blocked with the bloated corpses as the fighting intensifies.

Horus orders his army to push on. They must take the wall he demands. The Death's Head Titan Legion is commanded to break the walls. The fell Titans begin to demolish entire sections of the bastion. The defenders inflict upon them dreadful carnage - three, four then five massive titans are destroyed in as many minutes. The Chaos Titans will not relent and they keep hammering away at the walls.

The Siege of the Emperor's Palace has gone on for many days. Days of countless assaults, counter-attacks, sallies, shelling and death. The battle rages on and on. Slowly, very slowly, the walls are beginning to crumble and the defenders' fire is waning.

The daemon that was Fulgrim was bored by it. His plots and schemes had not been designed so that he could simply spend time waiting around for these petty mortals to break down a wall. He craved action, he yearned for something to happen. Yet still the defenders of the Palace repulsed their attackers. No matter how many troops are thrown at the walls, the daemon thinks, still they stand. The daemon decides he can bear it no longer and that there must be easier prey on the planet.

With this the daemon-Fulgrim gathers his Legion about him and sets off on an orgy of destruction across the Earth. With so much of the loyal efforts directed towards defending the Emperor the traitor Legion of the daemon-Fulgrim find the rest of Earth largely unprotected and weak. The carnage they inflict upon the population of the Earth is immense – the violence completes the Emperor's Children Legion's descent into Chaos.

While the traitor army has been battering at the Palace walls Jaghatai Khan and his White Scars Legion have been harassing their flanks in a series of hit and run attacks. Now the Khan changes his plans and rather than continue futile attempts to draw the traitors away from the Palace he launches a lightning raid against Lions Gate Spaceport. The attack is launched during the night hours under cover of darkness. The Khan's force includes his own White Scars Space Marines, the remnants of the 1st Terran Tank Division and a large number of surviving loyal Imperial Infantry regiments. The loyalists easily defeat the traitor garrison and reclaim the spaceport in the name of the Emperor. The Khan throws a defensive perimeter around the space field and despite furious attempts by the Warmaster's army to counter-attack is able to hold the position. The Khan orders that the defence lasers are re-manned and they soon fire at the rebel drop-ships that are still attempting to land. The Khan's actions stem the flow of warriors and war machines from the Spaceport to the Palace.

Buoyed by this success other loyalists begin to attack the Eternity Wall Spaceport, but here the forces of the Warmaster are better prepared. Traitor Space Marines ambush the loyalist attackers; thousands of loyal warriors are killed and they are driven back in confusion. The Spaceport remains in the hands of the Warmaster. Their lines of communication secured the traitors once more turn their full attention towards the Palace.