WARHAMMER™
40,000



Δ INQ.REF SEGMENTUM OBSCURUS V-3267

WAR ZONE NACHMUND

VIGILUS ALONE

'They say the Despoiler fled. They say the monster took his minions and scurried away in fear. Why then does Saint's Haven still burn? Why has no word come from Dontoria for months? Why do nightmares still swarm the skies?

They say the war is almost over, that the holy task of the Space Marines is concluded and they now spread the Emperor's light to more distant worlds. Why then does darkness and horror close in ever more like a death shroud? Why does it feel as though they are leaving a lost cause and not a saved realm?

They say the God-Emperor's warriors killed all the Orks in the sprawl, threw them from the walls and pounded those that remain in the Wastes unto death. Why then do few forces yet dare to cross that arid wilderness? Why do those who do never return?

I could whisper of victory to the shades of my dead comrades, honouring their memory and sacrifice. But I cannot tell it to myself, not when I know we are lost, not when I tremble through night after bloody night. Not when the Rift grows closer.'

- final journal entry of Lieutenant Asker Burrengar, 125th Vigilant Guard, employed as post-sentence evidentiary item 34-Li in support of his execution for cowardice

WAR ZONE NACHMUND:

VIGILUS ALONE



CONTENTS

Introduction 3

War Zone Vigilus 4
Beasts and Nightmares 6
Vigilus Lost 12
Abaddon the Despoiler 14
The Catalyst of Hope 16
Inquisitor Cartavolnus 20
Ultimatum at Storvhal 22
Escaping the Rift 24
Wardens of the Gauntlet 26
The Coronal War 30
Sacrifice and Revelation 32
The Fate of Vigilus 34
Forces of the Imperium 40
The Despoiler's Dreadkin 42
The Xenos Threat 44

Campaign Rules 46
War of Faith Campaign 48
War Zone Abilities 52
Legendary Missions 54
The Purging of Dontoria 54
The Crowning of Storvhal 56
The Corruption of Hearthlack 58
Campaign Master's Edicts 60
Crusade Relics 61

Army Rules 62
Introduction 64
Datasheet: Captain in Gravis Armour 66
Datasheet: Primaris Ancient 67
Army of Renown: Vanguard Spearhead 70
Relics 71
Tools of the Vanguard 72
Stratagems 72
Codex Supplement: Order of the Bloody Rose 76
Warlord Traits 76
Relics 77
Stratagems 78

Crusade Rules 83
Banners of Renown 84
Army of Faith Crusade Rules 88
Army of Faith Crusade Relics 89
Fervour Stage 90
Agendas 90
Requisitions 90
Retribution Stage 91
Agendas 91
Battlezone: Fronteris 92
Theatre of War: Fronteris 93
Atmospheric Effects 93
Terrain Traits 94

Glossary 96

PRODUCED BY THE WARHAMMER STUDIO

With thanks to the Mournival and the Infinity Circuit for their additional playtesting services

War Zone Nachmund: Vigilus Alone © Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2022. War Zone Nachmund: Vigilus Alone, GW, Games Workshop, Space Marine, 40K, Warhammer, Warhammer 40,000, the 'Aquila' Double-headed Eagle logo, and all associated logos, illustrations, images, names, creatures, races, vehicles, locations, weapons, characters, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are either ® or TM, and/or © Games Workshop Limited, variably registered around the world. All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this book are fictional, and any resemblance to real people or incidents is purely coincidental. British Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library. Pictures used for illustrative purposes only.

Certain Citadel products may be dangerous if used incorrectly and Games Workshop does not recommend them for use by children under the age of 16 without adult supervision. Whatever your age, be careful when using glues, bladed equipment and sprays and make sure that you read and follow the instructions on the packaging.

Games Workshop Ltd, Willow Rd, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2WS
warhammer.com



INTRODUCTION

Vigilus is a world on the brink of destruction. First attacked by bestial xenos hordes from within and without, its parched hivesprawls then trembled before the nightmarish assaults of Chaos worshippers. War continues to ravage the planet, bringing it ever closer to doom. Its people cling to their waning faith, many praying for salvation as the warp storms of the Great Rift draw ever nearer.

Vigilus and its neighbouring systems within the Nachmund Sub-sector are the last islands of Imperial resistance at the northern end of the vital Nachmund Gauntlet. This huge corridor of space is one of the few known channels that connects the two halves of the galaxy, now divided by the Cicatrix Maledictum – the Great Rift. No one knows for certain how this seemingly stable region came about, though there are whispers of towering, black obelisks that pulse with arcane power buried deep under Vigilus' surface. While the surrounding violent storms have rent reality and swallowed entire sectors and thousands of worlds in their seething embrace, the Nachmund Gauntlet remains navigable. Yet it is no sanctuary. To the Imperium, it is a last, desperate lifeline – their best means of breaking through the Great Rift from the Imperium Sanctus, and sending aid to the nightmarish and embattled region of the Imperium Nihilus.

However, this lifeline – stretching from the relative sanity of the Imperium Sanctus – is also an exposed artery to its beating heart. Imperial commanders, planetary governors, keen-minded strategos and even the High Lords of Terra themselves understand the immense strategic importance of holding the Gauntlet. It must be held not only for the sake of Mankind's future across the galaxy, but also to protect Holy Terra itself. Yet a keener intellect still – darker and far more ancient – has other plans for the Nachmund Gauntlet, and Vigilus is only the latest step in a long-crafted scheme of conquest. Abaddon the Despoiler, Warmaster and Lord of the Black Legion of Heretic Astartes, first invaded Vigilus in the wake of Ork hordes and Genestealer Cults uprisings. The warlord unleashed a devastating apocalypse against the planet, but his swift conquest was averted by the Imperium through the sacrifice of a great hero and a blow to Abaddon's pride.

Now, the Warmaster's plans have refocused on his wider strategy. Abaddon seeks to control the entire Nachmund Gauntlet, stranding Imperial forces on either side and luring them into a war to retake it that they can ill afford. There are some who even think he seeks to understand by what means the Gauntlet is held open at all. While his ambition stretches out, Abaddon has issued edicts to conquer Vigilus in his name. Though his initial invasion was rebuffed, the planet's defences were sorely weakened. Xenos raiders still plague Vigilus. Many companies of Space Marines have left to redeploy to other war zones. At the same time, many surrounding systems have been overwhelmed, and Vigilus has become a haven for surviving forces of Astra Militarum, Knight households and the Adeptus Mechanicus. The Wardens of the Gauntlet still maintain a defensive presence around Vigilus and will not see it lost without a fight. Darkness and despair crowd around the guttering beacon of hope that Vigilus once embodied, circling like vultures sensing the end of a dying beast. If Vigilus falls, the last hopes of those within the Imperium Nihilus could be snuffed out.

WAR ZONE VIGILUS

'We are Abaddon's gauntlet, poised before the snapping maw of a dying beast. We need only reach down its bleeding gullet to grab the rotten heart. Then we squeeze.

This creature – this world – still has teeth, mind. But they are rotted and broken fangs: strength-sapped soldiers, terrified weaklings serving a false corpse-god. Show them what it means to serve a worthy master. Show them the power, the superiority and the blessings of the Warmaster's Legion.

Show them death!'

- Vask Rorgaddos the Serpentblade, Exalted Champion of the Black Legion





BEASTS AND NIGHTMARES

After the Cicatrix Maledictum tore into being, it became visible in the skies above Vigilus. It was an open sore through which madness poured, and edicts were issued to avoid looking at it – on pain of death. Such precautions did not save the planet's citizens, however. The Imperium's enemies came in waves: from the heavens, from the ground and from the warp. Xenos, mutants and heretics tore into Vigilus in a war that dragged on for months, and then years.

The war for Vigilus began with a sudden and violent invasion of Orks. With the emergence of the Great Rift scrambling the system's scanning stations, there was little warning of the greenskin fleet's approach. The Orks intentionally crashed several of their huge ships into the Wastes of Vigilus. Many of the xenos perished, but far more survived; hordes of Orks poured from the ready-made fortresses of their mangled ships. Roving bands of speed-crazed Orks quickly dominated the arid wasteland in swarms of ramshackle vehicles. At first, Vigilus' fortified hivesprawls were safe behind their curtain walls and energy shields. But the brutal Speedwaaaghs! grew in number as the Orks looted their own ships, as well as the iron carcasses of any tanks sent against them. Soon, they attacked the massive hivesprawls themselves.

The hivesprawls were continent-sized urban and industrial agglomerations and contained the majority of Vigilus' teeming billions, amongst whom another major threat soon arose. The Ork invasion triggered a planetwide uprising of Genestealer Cultists, an infestation that had spread unseen for more than two centuries. Xenos-tainted zealots infiltrated the towering residences of Vigilus' nobility, poisoned water stores, inveigled their way into defence forces and even sabotaged the energy shields around Dirkden Hivesprawl. They and the Orks were not the only foes to assail Vigilus, however. Drukhari raiders attacked the polar regions, daemonic manifestations of the Gellerpox marched alongside Plague Marines of the Death Guard, and enigmatic Asuryani arrived in an attempt to avert what would prove the planet's gravest threat: a Chaos uprising that heralded the arrival of the Heretic Astartes.

The first warning Imperial commanders had of Chaos Space Marine presence in the system was a discovery on Nemendghast. In response to Vigilus' pleas for aid, strike forces from several Space Marine Chapters had battled through the warp storms to fortify the system. At Nemendghast, Vanguard elements of the Ultramarines Chapter uncovered a gruesome flesh factory that became known as the Forge Infernus. The Daemonkin – corrupted Black Legionnaires and vile Daemon Engines under the sway of Vorash Soulflayer, Master of Possession – were perfecting the creation of their Noctilith Crowns. These pan-dimensional portals seethed with warp energy and would later appear on Vigilus. Only the Ultramarines' Librarian Maltis escaped to bring news of Soulflayer's dread works to Vigilus, yet it was enough to warn Chapter Master Calgar of the lurking threat.



The war for Vigilus intensified day by day. Some of the Ork fleet remained in orbit, conducting bludgeoning duels with Navis Imperialis ships. On the ground, the Orks revelled in the increasing violence as Space Marines and Knights arrived to hold them back and conduct swift counter-attacks against the greenskins' scrap cities. Chaos worshippers summoned daemonic entities to ravage entire city sectors. Genestealer Cultists seized the Omnissian Hoist: the star-scraping edifice used to convey water and other resources harvested from asteroids in space down to the surface. Though politicking amongst Vigilus' rulers slowed the Imperial response, the countless threats were just about held back. Then, the winged silhouettes of Chaos Space Marine Raptors began to be seen amongst the cities' spires. As the airborne warriors murdered their way through Vigilus' noble families, their leader, Haarken Worldclaimer, heralded the arrival of Abaddon and claimed the planet in his master's name.

Abaddon's approach – led by his enormous flagship, the *Vengeful Spirit* – galvanised the Imperial defenders and they redoubled their efforts. However, the massive Chaos armies poised to crush the world drove many insane with fear. Millions flocked to cults dedicated to the Chaos Gods or the Genestealer Curse, desperately seeking salvation from Abaddon's forces, no matter the cost. The Warmaster's ships engaged Imperial vessels throughout the system. Many moved into low orbits with the planet, disgorging warband after warband of Heretic Astartes, possessed mutants, frothing devotees and the ruthless lords who led them. Like a shadow of death, their forces swept into war zones already fought over and bled upon by Imperial warriors. Millions more died during what became known as the War of Nightmares. Noctilith Crowns appeared amongst the hivesprawls, erected by those faithful to the Despoiler. As the Crowns drew the raw forces of the warp to the planet, daemons summoned by warpcraft and bloodshed surged forth. The energies coursing through these arcane structures warped the areas around them and, in the smog and fire-laced skies above, the dread scar of the Great Rift seemed to loom closer. Abaddon's forces were on the brink of overwhelming Vigilus.

SACRIFICE AND SPIRIT

As Chaos Space Marines attacked with ever greater ferocity, the Orks jubilantly destroyed anything that came in sight and Genestealer Cultists ripped Vigilus apart from within, few amongst the Imperial defenders saw any hope of survival, let alone victory. Marneus Calgar ordered the destruction of huge swathes of towering spires, denying Abaddon's forces a quick victory amongst the cities' upper reaches. Where Chaos forces drove in from the Wastes, Imperial leaders waged campaigns of misdirection, luring xenos forces into conflict with the armies of Chaos. Calgar knew they were delaying tactics and nothing more. In secret, with a tentative alliance forged with the suspicious Asuryani, the Ultramarines' Chapter Master wrought a scheme he hoped would end the war at a stroke. Sourcing apocalyptic munitions from stockpiles on Vigilus, Marneus Calgar had them loaded aboard an advanced Aeldari stealth ship that was then set on an attack vector toward the *Vengeful Spirit*.

The Imperial Navy played their own doomed role. Much of their remaining strength in the system made straight for the Chaos fleet in a suicidal attack run to pull attention from the stealth ship and its deadly payload. Calgar, in a display of selfless heroism, openly challenged the Despoiler to personal combat, aiming to prick the Warmaster's ego and thus draw him into a costly duel. The epic battle that ensued between the two champions was fought amongst the spires of Saint's Haven, high above the burning world. Though Calgar fought heroically, Abaddon was infused with empyric might and at last the Chapter Master fell, his armour cracked and his hearts slashed open. Many loyalist warriors believed they had witnessed their noble champion's demise. The tale of his death and sacrifice spread like wildfire.

But Calgar had kept Abaddon fighting for long enough. The Aeldari ship, *Vaul's Ghost*, reached its target and the missiles in its hold detonated in a chain explosion. They ripped a gaping hole in the flank of the millennia-old traitor battleship. The vortex warheads created a warp maelstrom that ate away at the vessel. In desperation, the ship's master initiated an emergency warp translation, seeing it as the only way to escape the tear in reality. When Abaddon received the news, he teleported back to his prized battleship just as it vanished. *Vengeful Spirit* was as much a symbol of his authority as his taloned gauntlet, just as ancient and steeped in corruption. Abaddon would not see it lost forever.

Though some of Abaddon's Legion followed him in his withdrawal, many warbands remained upon Vigilus. The Orks too, though denied victory within the hivesprawls, continued to dominate the Wastes, while Genestealer Cultists fought their shadow war upon hundreds of battlegrounds at once. Vigilus had been spared immediate execution, but its existence still hung in the balance.

NACHMUND SUB-SECTOR

The Nachmund Sub-sector is a region within the Segmentum Obscurus that Imperial astrocartographers are unable to clearly define from one cycle to the next. Within its argued boundaries, which are subject to political arguments almost as much as the tumultuous and shifting edges of the Great Rift, all authorities tend to agree on the inclusion of the eponymous Nachmund Gauntlet. It stretches from Sangua Terra at its galactic southern extremity to the region around Vigilus in the north, and remains the most stable channel from one side of the Great Rift - the Cicatrix Maledictum - to the other. The reasons for its existence are not fully understood by any within the Imperium and, of those who have even heard of it, many believe it simply a miraculous manifestation of the Emperor's beneficence.

CARTOGRAPHIC RETRIEVAL RD/0AE:

All areas of note designated for primary recognition; data on other map items may be possible on request. Refer info-slave servitors to embedded nodal citations and begin system trawls through data-strata 23/1a to 6-LV.

SCARLET TRINARIUS
(Triple Stellar System)

AB2nD

1qJ01

LIGOM
(Hive World)

CICATRIX MALEDIC

VHORLIS REEF
(Gravitic Sink // Wreck Swarm)

SEPTUM VERDA
(Industrial World)

GU6Ok

OKOMEIA
(Imperial Knight World)

FELHART DOMAIN
(Black Templars
Recruiting World)

NONAVORE
(Bastion World)

7LAG6

v5lSm

GP6sZ

SANGUA TERRA
(Fortress World)

FORT CYBALTUS
(Departmento
Munitorum Arsenal)

uE8Dw

ESSAU
(Industrial World — cf
'Essau Flesh Fields' M39)

SABELLAAX
(Civilised World
- Tithe 41-79I)

TIDES OF THE EMPYREAN

Imperial estimates of the Great Rift's dangers, coloured by martial, economic and political concerns, are in constant flux.

- *Alpharum (Realspace)*
- *Betaris (Temporal Orthodoxy Breach // Gravitic Flux Augury)*
- *Deltic (Aberration {Class Ψ} // Paternoval Embargo)*
- *Gammafex (Warp Channel Rupture // Emanatus Manifestation)*
- *Morbidus (Diabolus Extremis // Empyric Anomaly Confirmed)*
- *Ultima (Maledictum Majoris)*

<Anomaly 5x-011>

Q'ARL'S RIM (Asteroidal Mining Colony)

GEORGIUS VII (Auto-seminary)

SHERN (Forge World)

DHULSA (Starfort - Besieged)

VORILLA FEN (Xenos Colony — cf Report cvl-k3)

WIDER VIGILUS CONFLICT ZONE

8cqkf

PUVASTA (Hive World)

HKc5a

5fAWh

VIGILUS (Bastion World)

f3udt

GpMk9

SKEMASS (Hive World)

TRATULAN (Hive World)

076ZK

fxm4X

VORANOS (Explorator Way Station)

DHARROVAR (Chaos Knight World)

37FUL

CHOLARIS (Immaterium Surge Station)

ILLADIS <records expunged>

THE CHORAPLEX (Pirate Haunt — cf Files 223.a — 9z:Ultima 'Hoec's Grave) and Daethe (Exodite World)

VORANDIUM (Agri World)

UTANN'S WORLD (Civilised World — Tithe Eh-2)

OzWbG

CICATRIX MALEDICTUM

THE EYE OF TERROR

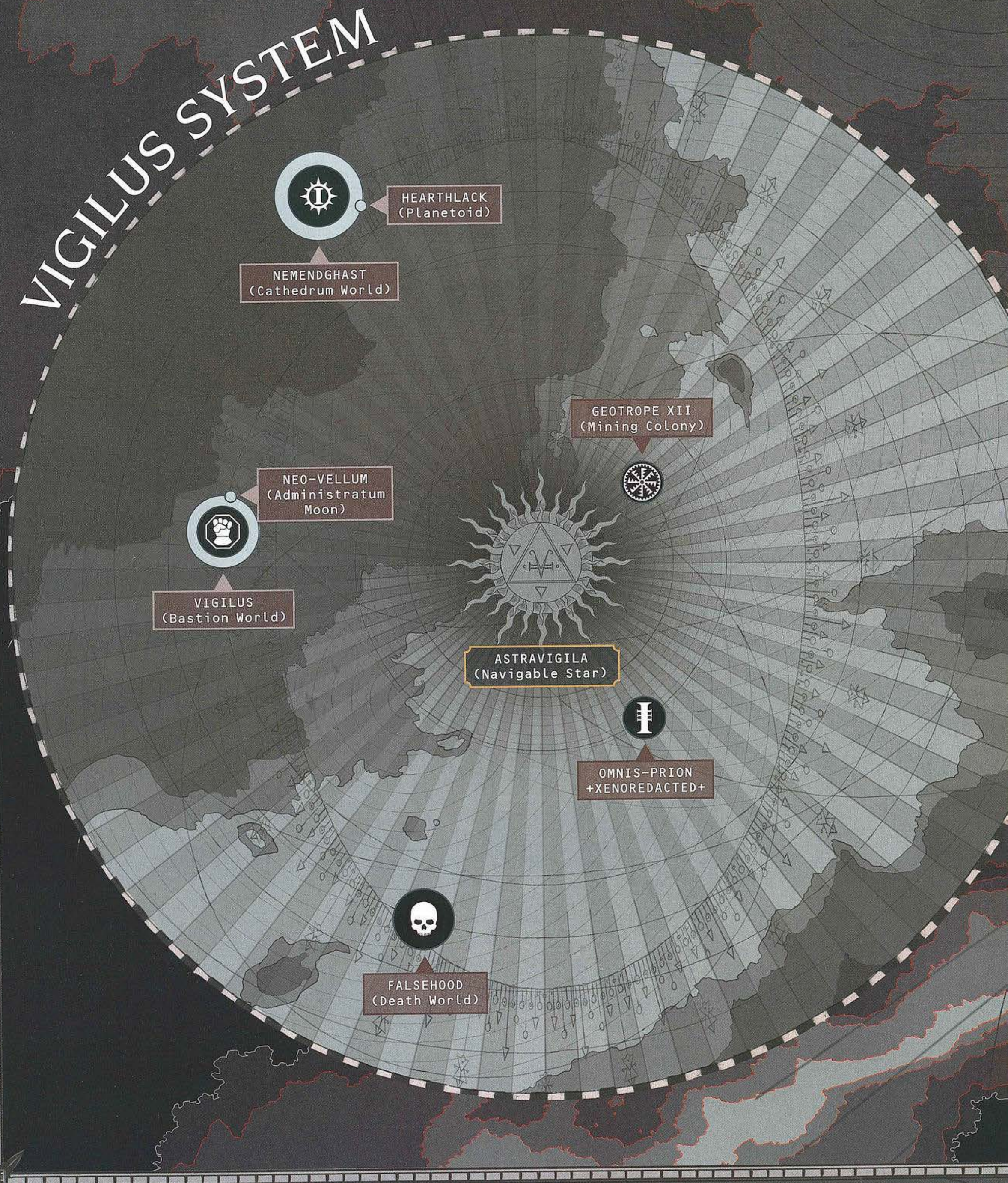
NACHMUND GAUNTLET

HOLY TERRA

FRA' VERMIS (Adepta Sororitas Sanctuary World)

VIGILUS BESIEGED

The Vigilus System has been in a war for survival for years, suffering beneath continued assaults from Chaos Space Marines, Orks, Genestealer Cultists and heretical sects. The corruptive boundaries where the Nachmund Gauntlet meets the nightmarish region of the Cicatrix Maledictum close in, visible in Vigilus' skies. The system's position is of pivotal strategic importance; beyond its southern limits stretch the relative sanity of the Nachmund Gauntlet, which offers a route towards Holy Terra. Before it to the galactic north lie the unknown terrors of the Imperium Nihilus. The network of Imperial systems at the northern reach of the Nachmund Gauntlet – once a thriving web of trade, military support and pilgrimage – is buckling too, as Abaddon's unrelenting armies press their attacks against a host of neighbouring systems.



NEIGHBOURING SYSTEMS

Amongst the Vigilus conflict zone, the bastion world's neighbouring systems were under deadly pressure from Abaddon's armies, as well as incursions of raiding xenos. The tides of the Great Rift made warp travel and communication slow, unpredictable and far more dangerous. Hindered by the absence of the Astronomican's light within the Imperium Nihilus, some Imperial fleets were delayed, emerged from the warp in the wrong location or else disappeared without trace.

Imperial System

Warp Route

KENNET MAJORIS
(Hive World)

VENDIGAST
(Mining Colony)

QUARTH
(Imperial
Knight World)

YOLARIS
(Civilised World —
Tithe x102)

VEITHEIM II
(Forge World)

THE TWINS OF FUNDIS
(Binary System, Adeptus Astra
Telepathica Luminarchy)

THORT
(Civilised World
— Tithe RT-36/v)

VAGESHIZZAR
(Astra Militarum
Muster World)

ORGALNAFOR
(Industrial World)

VIGILUS
(Bastion World)

ST MARINUS' HALO
(Fortified
Accretion Disc)

DEVERRES
(Mercantile
Commune)

URASTOR
(Death World)

AGROFAR
+ INQUISITORIAL SEAL+

JAGDETH MAGNA
(Agri World)

TOWARDS VORANOS

VIGILUS LOST

Nowhere on Vigilus had escaped the devastating touch of the Imperium's enemies. From sweat and blood-drenched ghettos squeezed together in the dense hivesprawls to the parched equatorial wastes and the frigid polar regions, war continued to rage between Imperial defenders and monstrous invaders. Beyond the world's surface, too, on its moon and sister planets, the reek of death and desperation grew stronger.

Few of Vigilus' front-line commanders were informed of Abaddon's withdrawal in the days that followed. Only later did rumours of it – and of Calgar's fall – seep into the fighting hierarchy. It made surprisingly little difference. Heretic Space Marines still attacked in fresh assaults. Horned and taloned monstrosities still bounded alongside armoured battle tanks bearing sigils of the Traitor Legions, including Abaddon's own. Power-armoured butchers, Genestealer-infected thralls and overly-muscled Orks killed more Guardsmen and Battle Sisters every day, all over the planet and beyond. Abaddon's withdrawal was no reprieve.

MAJOR HIVESPRAWLS

Megaborealis was the sovereign domain of the Adeptus Mechanicus, ruled by Tech-Priests from Stygies VIII under ancient treaties with the planet's ruling nobility. In the face of massed invasions by the daemonic machineries of the renegade Brazen Beasts, Genestealer Cultists and Orks, the cybernetic priests had ignored calls to abandon their vast mine networks and fall back. Megaborealis stood atop untapped deposits of blackstone, and the Tech-Priests sold their cyborg soldiers' lives freely to keep their iron grip on such a prize. Skitarii cohorts unleashed barrages of fire from esoteric weapons against rampaging Ork warbands. Over time, hunting groups of Sicarians had descended into the honeycomb mines; many had become trapped, ambushed by mutated hybrids or lured into labyrinthine networks and never seen again. In the north-east districts, a miles-wide slew of twisted wreckage at the base of the snapped Omnissian Hoist had become a maze-like hunting ground. The jumbled mountain of torn rebar, plascrete boulders, shattered buildings, tangled corpses and flattened vehicles was fiercely fought over by the Pauper Princes and loyal warriors of the Omnissiah.

The once-verdant hivesprawl of Mortwald – home to medicae facilities and biosanctic fleshplants – was now a blood-slick hellscape. Black Legion Terminators and Daemonettes of Slaanesh, who appeared in blazes of warp power that allowed them to bypass defensive lines, had met outmatched and exhausted regiments of Astra Militarum soldiery in uneven battles. The false continent's chem-processing industries had long since ceased production. Defences on the outskirts of Mortwald – once held by Adeptus Astartes forces – were now pinned between assaults by Orks from the Wastes outside, and attacks by the forces of Chaos from within. Several Space Marine companies had been drawn away to even-more-pressing battles and Astra Militarum regiments replacing them were being torn apart. Many Imperial commanders from their strategiums in the capital, Hyperia, already saw Mortwald as a lost cause. Penal contingents and under-strength companies formed the majority of those few spared to man its perimeter. Many were swallowed whole by the fighting – but prisoners under the ruthless leadership of the self-proclaimed Corpse-rat King, a former gang boss, survived, and scored a number of unlikely victories against the Traitor Space Marines.

Hyperia had been the seat of Vigilus' lords and ladies and, during the initial stages of the war against Abaddon, it was where commanders coordinated their global strategy. The hivesprawl had suffered tremendously. Infiltration by the Death Guard had spread from Dontoria. Thousand Sons traitor warbands brought their incendiary sorcery to bear as they moved north from Kaelac's Bane. The two Legion forces had clashed, but the horrific punishment they wrought upon Imperial defenders was far worse. Hyperia itself had also suffered as the planet's crust trembled and buckled in the wake of a warp anomaly that, though seemingly now dissipated, was still not understood amongst Imperial commanders. Spires had cracked and crumbled, crushing and burying millions. Imperial command had shifted multiple times as Hyperia was desperately defended, staying one step ahead of Chaos kill teams seeking to butcher them outright. Oteck Hivesprawl, by comparison, was officially declared lost. Its reservoirs of potable water had been made toxic by Genestealer Cultists, who had tainted it to spread their genetic curse. Imperial command no longer sent any fresh reinforcements into its districts, but impassioned bands of Space Wolves and Adepta Sororitas ignored the order to withdraw, instead continuing to hunt enemy cultists above and below Oteck's ruined surface.

MINOR HIVESPRAWLS

Dirkden Hivesprawl, likewise, had been abandoned by conventional Imperial forces. Viewed as cursed before the invasion due to a long-standing political stand-off with Hyperia, it was a poverty-stricken continent packed with slums and criminal gangs: the perfect recruiting ground for the Cult of the Pauper Princes. So infested with Genestealer Cults had Dirkden become that attacks by the Scourged renegade Chapter made little progress for months. The xenos cultists viewed Dirkden as their fortress, counter-attacking Scourged and Night Lords formations with such success that they soon threatened to spill into the fringes of Hyperia.

Storvhal was an ash-choked and lava-encrusted waste. A reckless gambit by its overseeing Tech-Priest had unleashed the molten fury beneath Storvhal upon his enemies. Though cults, cackling daemons and Genestealer hybrids alike had been crushed by boulders and consumed by molten rock in their droves, so too had entire cohorts of Skitarii. After months of desertion, the charred slag-heaps and blackened ruins were again lit by the fires of battle. Remnant Skitarii forces and Genestealer Cultists in possession of tectonic fragdrills now competed with looting warbands of Orks from the Wastes, all seeking to claim the lost technological treasures beneath the cooling crust.

Of all Vigilus' centres of industry, the southern polar region of Kaelac's Bane had been the only one so far to successfully see off its invaders and return to a semblance of vital activity. Even then, the margin of victory had been slim and the resources harvested there only a fraction of what was

required. By this stage in the conflict, the polar ice of Kaelac's Bane represented the only major source of potable water that remained on Vigilus. Imperial forces had managed to drive off the raiding parties of Drukhari and Chaos-worshippers that tormented them, but much damage had been done. Ice-mining operations resumed in appalling conditions, with indentured labour press ganged from amidst hivesprawl refugees. Output was low, accidents frequent and the lure of Chaos worship or the freedom promised by the Pauper Princes grew daily.

THE WASTES

Ork warbands continued to assault some of the fortwall breaches at the edges of several hivesprawls, though many had been pushed back into the arid wastelands. In the Wastes, however, the Orks dominated. Their crashed ships – rebuilt into scrap cities – had grown and spread into imposing fortresses. Imperial convoys fleeing fallen hivesprawls or racing across the deserts to reinforce fresh battlefronts found themselves hunted down by vast numbers of ramshackle Ork vehicles. Loot from these clashes, and from raids into the hivesprawls, was quickly put to use creating ever larger greenskin war engines. The scrap cities of Tanka Spill, Skumtown and the Mekmaze (amongst many others) sent out dozens of warbands every day, hurling them into fights against Imperial defenders, alien hosts or heretic invaders, and even rival Ork hordes from other scrap cities. Greatest amongst them was Fort Dakka, whose Speedlord, Krooldakka, remained the most powerful Ork on Vigilus. Having avoided countless assassinations, Krooldakka and his warbands were ever on the move, keeping his enemies guessing as to where he would strike next.

Krooldakka's latest scheme was to supplement his capital at Fort Dakka with a new fortress. Formerly hidden beneath a gigantic, centuries-old dust storm known as the Vhulian Swirl, an ancient stronghold had been revealed shortly before Abaddon's departure from Vigilus. It had been the site of a clandestine operation by Space Marines of the Dark Angels Chapter against unknown Heretic Astartes. Stripped of all bodies and the esoteric technology that once existed there, the installation had now become a prize furiously fought over. Warpsmith Venghaz of the Iron Warriors and his packs of Daemon Engines did battle with rival bands of speeding Orks to the north and west of the sinister fortress, each competing warlord seeking to deny the other access to its interior.

A VOID OF BLOOD

Beyond the planet's war-torn surface, remaining Ork and Chaos Space Marine ships continued to pose a serious threat, both to Imperial vessels and to forces fighting on the ground. Throughout the system, too, armies of Heretic Astartes remained fighting. Vigilus' moon, Neo-Vellum, was the site of its astropathic Lunar Choir. Their surviving astropaths had established a fitful connection towards the Imperium Sanctus, but their psychic communion was beset by continued attacks by Genestealer hybrids from deep within the moon's twisting bowels. Meanwhile, Hearthlack, a satellite planetoid at the system's fringe, was occupied by zealots of the Word Bearers. The once-pristine cathedrum on its surface had been defaced, its priests murdered and their chanting replaced with hateful prayers to the Dark Gods.



THE POXSPRAWL

Alone amongst the hivesprawls, Dontoria remained ominously silent, its fate unknown amongst the mayhem of the planetwide war. Regiments sent to man the miles-wide quarantine zones surrounding mass transitways connecting Dontoria to Megaborealis were not informed of what they were guarding against. A pestilent haze had hung over the vast false continent since the last recorded regiments were thought to have fallen fighting there. Rumours of an unnatural plague, spread by infected monstrosities, have grown widespread amongst the soldiers charged with maintaining the cordon. Reports of kill teams sent towards Dontoria's interior having never returned are passed amongst the continent's uneasy sentinels too, but still no one knows exactly what horrors are brewing inside the bloated hivesprawl. At least, no one willing to share the truth...

ABADDON THE DESPOILER

Master of the Black Legion; Chosen of the Dark Gods; Breaker of Daemons; Orchestrator of the Black Crusades – Abaddon is honoured with many titles by the millions that serve him. To some amongst the Ordo Malleus – and even amongst the Traitor Legions, who at turns worship, fear and hate him – he epitomises the Long War the Heretic Astartes have fought against those loyal to the Emperor.

The name of Abaddon, Warmaster of Chaos, has become a bitter curse. During the Great Crusade, Abaddon rose to Captain of the First Company of the Luna Wolves Legion. Such was his tactical skill and physical prowess, it was rumoured that he may have been a clone-son of Horus. When the Heresy came to a head, it was clear that Abaddon's loyalty lay with his Primarch. He led the Terminators of the Sons of Horus across Isstvan, Yarant, and Terra itself. Abaddon's anguish at his master's death drove him deeper into madness and hatred than any mortal should ever sink. Inwardly cursing Horus for the Primarch's weakness, Abaddon led the Legion in a fighting withdrawal before the Emperor's armies.

The warlord has remained their master ever since. They are now the Black Legion, having ritually abandoned their former livery. Though they still bear the Eye of Horus as their emblem, it is solely to Abaddon that they swear their lives and their allegiance. He dreams of creating an empire of Chaos upon the ruins of Mankind, with himself upon the throne and the entire galaxy quailing before him.

Abaddon's Black Legion were at the forefront of his attacks when he returned to plague the Emperor's realm, but they were not alone. During the first of Abaddon's Black Crusades, he formed many bloody pacts with the other Legions that fought against the Imperium, as well as with the Chaos Gods. In the millennia since the Heresy, each of the Dark Powers has attempted to lure Abaddon into swearing his soul to them and becoming their champion. So far, he has refused their honeyed words and promises of unimaginable power. Abaddon remains his own master, and will not bend the knee even to beings so powerful that they are considered gods. Instead, the Despoiler makes use of the Dark Gods' boons at times of his own choosing, and never at the cost of his soul.

A BLOODY ROAD

During the early stages of the war around Vigilus, the Warmaster used his forces as agents of disruption, anarchy and despair, allowing them to spread the fires of war as they wished. Ultimately, Abaddon considered the front-line engagements, executions and intricacies of the Long War to be distractions. His works, and those of the Daemon Primarchs, had torn Imperial space in half. He fully intended to make good on the promise of damnation he had written across the skies of the galaxy. To do so, he would need to bathe Vigilus in such intense madness that its defenders had to fight on all fronts, at all times. Only then could he pursue his greater agenda without fear of a coherent counter-attack.

Abaddon sees in himself the capacity to become obsessed with crushing a particularly resistant foe. He made this mistake before, hurling attack after attack against the bastion world of Cadia, and allowing its destruction to consume far more of his time and forces than any one planet deserved. In accepting Calgar's challenge on Vigilus, he almost fell into that trap again. Worse to his mind, his behaviour had echoed that of other champions of Chaos that he so despised, seeking to personally lay low a powerful foe in the name of his own hatred and self-aggrandisement. That mistake almost lost him not only the war for Vigilus, but also the *Vengeful Spirit*, one of the most powerful warships in the galaxy and a potent symbol of his power. Abaddon vowed not to make such a mistake again, to keep his eye fixed firmly upon his grand plan for galactic conquest and revenge. Others would take Vigilus in his name – take it or die. Already the other pieces in his strategy moved into position, from one end of the Nachmund Gauntlet to the other. He would transform that region into a vast charnel trail of blood and bones that led directly towards Terra – one of many red roads to be laid before the galaxy was his.

THE SPIRIT RETAKEN

Abaddon's emergency teleportation back to the *Vengeful Spirit* was accompanied by a wailing storm of gheists and warp entities that bore the Despoiler safely to his prized battleship. The ancient vessel limped on a winding course through the immaterium. An immense rupture in its armoured belly spewed deck fragments, noxious chemicals and hundreds of crew into the warp. Abaddon was unconcerned with the dire wound his ship had taken; he knew it would survive. The malicious spirit at its heart was almost as stubborn and unforgiving as he was. His prime goal was to reach the bridge and retake his ship. No matter how his shipmaster Khragan had justified the drastic step of emergency warp translation, the fact remained that he had effectively attempted to steal Abaddon's flagship. Such an insult could not be borne.

Hundreds of Legionnaires remained aboard, as well as tens of thousands of cultists, slave cyborgs, Beastmen and less identifiable mutants. Whole armies existed within the ship's daemon-haunted bowels. The missiles' explosion, the warp translation and rumours of Abaddon's fall had caused great confusion, and champions had turned on each other as they all sought dominance. Abaddon stalked through the *Vengeful Spirit*'s miles of transit ways, killing those who dared to stand in his way while countless others pledged their souls to him anew. Word of his presence spread, carried by tremulous vox broadcasts, whispered by formless entities and seeping back into the ship's very fabric. The news reached the bridge before Abaddon's arrival. When he finally entered, the flayed, living form of Shipmaster Khragan greeted him – stretched and hung in barbed chains by the rest of the bridge crew who dared not meet the Despoiler's gaze. Abaddon rewarded their belated loyalty by ordering their swift deaths, before retaking his seat upon the enormous command dais and formulating his next move.





THE CATALYST OF HOPE

Calgar's fall had unforeseen consequences on Vigilus and throughout the system, both for good and ill. It lit the touchpaper of angry rebellion and fervent zealotry, arousing faithful passions in some and numbing despair in others. If the venerable Chapter Master had underestimated anything in his risky ploy to attack Abaddon, it was the extent to which his own loss would affect the defenders remaining on Vigilus.

The survivors of Marneus Calgar's personal bodyguard recovered their lord swiftly and bore him away from the battle that still raged in Saint's Haven. Only Ultramarines had witnessed the fight, but still the news spread. Psychic echoes of Ultramarine communiques, buffeted and scattered by the Great Rift and the effects of Noctilith Crowns, were heard by Astropaths serving Astra Militarum officers or Vigilant nobles. Strategic and logistical demands made to the Chapter were rebuffed or ignored, and their senders whispered amongst themselves as to the reason. Stories claiming to explain the Chapter Master's absence arose throughout the surviving hivesprawls. Some claimed Calgar had chased Abaddon onto his ship, continuing the duel as it tumbled through the warp. Others whispered that Abaddon had been slain and Calgar delivered into the warp by the Emperor to slay the Chaos Gods in turn, or that Calgar had walked into the sky – there to pull the ragged edges of the Great Rift together with his mythical gauntlets and end the nightmare forever. The most pervasive and mundane tale was that the Lord Macragge was dead.

Though in truth Marneus Calgar still lived despite his horrendous wounds, no stern rebuttal to the rumours of his death was heard from the Ultramarines. Some would later blame the tainted comms network or the impolitic demands for information from arrogant Militarum officers. Even if the truth had been issued, the news of the Chapter Master's death was now rife amongst the common soldiery and citizens, and had even spread to other Space Marine Chapters still fighting on Vigilus. The last remnants of the Aquilarian Council – the martial committee of Vigilus' senior commanders, over whom Calgar had assumed authority – broke apart. Space Marine officers and Astra Militarum generals splintered into a handful of factions that looked to their own victories, no longer offering each other the coordinated support they had done under the Chapter Master.

The story of Calgar's death began to take on other attributes. Many Imperial soldiers and some coldly calculating Tech-Priests came to believe it was the death knell of Vigilus; that if even their greatest champion could not prevail, they were all doomed. This was compounded by the redeployment of many Space Marine forces, either to other hivesprawls, to their ships for resupply or even to other systems in the northern end of the Nachmund Gauntlet. The splintered lines of communication meant that the aghast Imperial forces they left behind had no idea of the reason why, and notions of abandonment took root. Morale broke down amongst citizens' militias and battered Astra Militarum regiments, a weakness that xenos and Heretic Astartes forces rabidly exploited. Individual platoons rebelled, attempting to commandeer whatever space-worthy craft still remained at the handful of landing sites still under Imperial control and flee the war zone. Others even turned traitor, siding with the Chaos invaders or falling to embedded xenos cultists in their midst and embracing the Genestealer Curse.

Yet for all the doom-mongers and traitors that Marneus Calgar's supposed death enabled, there were also faithful loyalists who saw his actions as a holy sacrifice. A growing number of adherents promoted a cult of adoration of the Lord Macragge, identifying him as a virtuous knight who had died so that others might live. Soon, prayers to 'Saint' Marneus Calgar were being heard throughout the hivesprawls. Graffiti in the form of a broken, five-fingered gauntlet or a bloody wreath appeared on ruined walls, and even some tank armour. Lay preachers and Adeptus Ministorum priests alike invoked the Chapter Master's name, and growing faith in their fallen protector gave thousands of Vigilus' defenders heart that not all was lost.

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Vigilus remained of high importance to the Imperium, but it was far from the only world to be fought over at the northern end of the Nachmund Gauntlet. The majority of Space Marine strike forces that left the planet in the wake of Abaddon's personal withdrawal redeployed to neighbouring systems. There they fought battles not only to secure their worlds and the armies upon them, but also to prevent yet more of Abaddon's armies funnelling towards Vigilus. The systems of Urastor, Jagdeth Magna and the Twins of Fundis were all reinforced and contained, or else Imperial forces conducted reclamation invasions of their own.

The last communication received from the Yolaris System described a large fleet heading towards the inhabited worlds from the void beyond, seemingly straight out of the Great Rift itself. Yolaris lay near a substantial warp channel that led to Vigilus, a channel still believed to be navigable. Acting on the fear that the system's execution might already be underway, a force of several thousand Battle Sisters of the Order of the Bloody Rose moved to secure the system, and to consecrate it anew to the God-Emperor in the enemy's blood.

The fleet that bore the Adepta Sororitas included nine capital ships, dozens of powerfully armed escorts and several armed carriers converted from aging bulk haulers. Comprising Navis Imperialis vessels responding to ancient accords, alongside Adeptus Ministorum-owned invasion cathedrums and mixed



ships donated in lieu of tithes, or by wealthy patrons seeking to absolve a lifetime of sin, the fleet was anointed with Ecclesiarchal dispensation as the Crusade of Mina's Consecration. Entire spearheads of Castigator battle tanks and holy Exorcist missile carriers in the visceral livery of the Order were carried to war in the ships, alongside ranks of ancient Paragon warsuits – each ritually maintained in its own sacred shrine. The Sisters of the Crusade honed their deadly skills during the turbulent passage in worshipful combat simulations, punishing rituals of endurance and spittle-flecked prayer sessions. Barely a thousand of the Sisters' forces remained behind to guard their sanctuary, and many times that number were amongst the Crusade of Mina's Consecration, led by their terrifyingly aggressive Canoness Preceptor Corinn Hrethnar.

Canoness Hrethnar's hundreds of passionate warriors formed the steely heart of the Crusade, but their fiery skill in the press of combat was supplemented by a conclave of frothing killers shepherded by Pastor Gerth Krebb. Arco-flagellants, penitent engines, Emperor-worshipping murder cultists and gang fighters from his home world of Arcadis – whom he had charitably ennobled as his Frateris Militia – were consigned to their own carrier, lest their fervour lead to confrontations with Hrethnar's Sisters.

Yolaris existed far closer to the dangerous liminal zones at the Gauntlet's edge where, as far as frequently unreliable astronavigation could ascertain, the riotous storms of the Great Rift swelled and churned. The Crusade's fleet had made good progress as they neared the point at which the ships would translate into realspace at the edge of the system. This unlooked-for period of relative safety – one which the Sisters unequivocally attributed to their faith – was cut brutally short as final preparations for translation were made. The warp heaved and spasmed; the Great Rift swelled and its storms expanded to swallow the Yolaris System whole.

Three of the fleet's Navigators – including that of the flagship – were killed by what they saw in the warp's depths, their psychically sensitive third eyes bursting in their heads. A concussive bow wave of empyric energy scattered the ships, destroying several in an instant. The venerable Mars-class battlecruiser *Halo of Sol* snapped along its miles-long spine as the ship's Geller fields overloaded. A following warp current swept the surviving vessels along with it, as their Navigators screamed that the death cries of Yolaris' billions of souls could be heard on the tides. Yolaris – if its planets had not been physically torn apart – had been claimed by the warp.

For months, the Crusade's remaining ships toiled in the tumultuous swells and flows of the Great Rift's fringes, fighting echo-tides of the violent swell that had overtaken Yolaris. More than half of the ships had survived the initial surge, but more were swept away by rogue currents as the timeless days wore on. Nothing could be seen of the psychic beacon of the Astronomican; formless swirls of energy and malevolent, phantasmal flickers surrounded the shrunken fleet. Eventually, their abused Navigators reported a faint but steady illumination. With no other point of reference, and despising her Crusade's indolent inaction, Hrethnar bade her shipmasters make for the beacon.

When the fleet finally emerged from the warp, the ancient ships battered and even fewer in number, astromechanics and stellar seers proclaimed they were on the fringes of the Vigilus System. Canoness Hrethnar wasted no time in ordering her forces to the besieged planet. She knew of its importance, and though her blade had been denied heretic blood at Yolaris, she vowed to quench its thirst on Vigilus. The Canoness Preceptor was disgusted by what she found on the surface, not only the presence of vile traitors to the God-Emperor and abominable xenos monstrosities, but the anarchy and confusion in the wake of Calgar's departure. Hrethnar contacted the remnants of the Bloody

> 'There is faith here, as there is wherever true servants of the God-Emperor spill their blood in His service. But it is a lukewarm belief, thin and insubstantial. Stoke your faith with ire! Let it burn red hot like the fires of His holy wrath! Praise His name with every blow you strike, and beg to give your life for His realm! Let every fallen warrior be a sacrifice to fuel your fervour, and thank your immortal Lord for the chance to tread where His noblest champions fought their last!'
>
> *- Canoness Preceptor Corinn Hrethnar, Crusade of Mina's Consecration, Address to the commanders of Hyperia-South*



Rose preceptories already fighting on Vigilus, learning of their tragic losses and dwindling numbers. She took the remnants of the Crusade of Mina's Consecration to the surface, her two functioning capital ships blasting a route through the orbiting Chaos and Ork ships, and landed them near the southern end of Hyperia Hivesprawl. Here, Hrethnar absorbed the remaining Bloody Rose forces and led the combined army of several thousand souls in counter-attacks on the front line, driving Chaos Space Marines further and further south. Her impassioned speeches and furious battle anger inflamed the hearts of Hyperia's defenders. They forced the Heretic Astartes into a fighting withdrawal, pushing them street by street into the southern curtain wall and choking off break-out attempts at every turn. Finally, the Chaos Space Marines fled, escaping into the Wastes by blasting huge holes in the fortified walls of the hivesprawl.

THE BREAKER OF CROWNS

Canoness Hrethnar's bloody Crusade was amongst the first of many Imperial forces arriving at Vigilus in the months after the *Vengeful Spirit* vanished. Though few had been as brutalised as the Crusade by the dangers of the Gauntlet, none reached the system unscathed. Some, like the Vageshizzari 87th Army Group, should have arrived over two years previously, while most were refugees and army remnants fleeing neighbouring systems, caught in the surrounding warp storms yet somehow having found their way to Vigilus. Some of their crews whispered tales along intership vox networks of their Navigators sensing a pale beacon in the midst of madness, just as the Crusade had.



One of those arriving at Vigilus, however, had sought the system out purposefully. Erasmus Cartavolnus was an Inquisitor of the Ordo Malleus. The learned daemon hunter had gathered knowledge of the foul Noctilith Crowns erected across Vigilus by means of his menagerie of psychic penitents and bound witches. The enslaved seers sniffed out the Crowns' taint from beyond the southern end of the Nachmund Gauntlet. Spending their powers – and often their lives – freely, Cartavolnus believed he had discovered the warp-infused structures' fell purpose and foreseen their disruptive effects upon the Nachmund Gauntlet. He intended to employ his elite forces and all his accumulated forbidden lore to tear the Noctilith Crowns down, and sever the warp's hold on the world.

At the Inquisitor's command were the Black Iconoclasts, an elite force of warriors, hunters and dead-eye shots. They were drawn from a number of locations, the sites' existence as recruiting grounds for Cartavolnus unknown to any who ran them. Militarum Tempestus training hubs; unregistered penal colonies; isolated Adeptus Mechanicus cybersurgical outposts and Departmento Munitorum execution forts – these were just some of the unknown, and sometimes unknowing, caches of skilled specimens available to the secretive Inquisitor. Regularly scrutinised physically and spiritually for any trace of corruption, and equipped to a degree only an Inquisitor of the Holy Ordos could afford, they were Cartavolnus' mailed fist with which he could reach out and crush the daemon swiftly and secretly.

There was little chance of the Inquisitor being able to conduct his offensive

entirely unseen on Vigilus, however. The over-inquisitive Tech-Priest, the foolishly brave Rogue Trader – these were minor threats he had safely eliminated in the past without his malevolent quarry knowing about it. Leading an army of his selected bondsmen into a tempestuous war zone with multiple battling factions was a different matter. Cartavolnus' arrival in Megaborealis fomented distrust and unease from the very beginning. The Stygian Tech-Priests conjectured he was here either for their blackstone or for them, to haul them off for torture and execution for the uses they had put it to. When the Inquisitor requested cartogrammatic data on the planet, the Omnissian adepts wavered and delayed, scrutinising every scrap of information before they passed it to him, lest something betray them. With his heavy cowl hiding his face, Cartavolnus cut a sinister figure as he moved from district to district, searching for clues to locate the first Noctilith Crown. Astra Militarum units from off-world and even the planet's own Vigilant Guard became suspicious of each other, wondering if the Inquisitor had come for one of them, and weighing up whether it might not be safer to throw some green conscript before him like a sacrificial offering.

The Inquisitor's keen empyric senses, questing out through his network of psychically attuned servants and retinues as they spread from forge temple to city spire, finally caught the taint he was looking for. Amongst the clouds of warp energy saturating the planet, drawn there by the web of Noctilith Crowns, he detected a nexus. At the southern end of Megaborealis, near Grisport, he found one of the coronal structures. It was still surrounded by cultists in the service of the Word Bearers, former labourers and serfs of the Tech-Priests who had cast their lot in with the Chaos Gods in exchange for false promises of freedom and power. They were ferociously resisting the attempts of an Imperial Guard detachment to box them in and cut them down, surges of mutants and frothing fanatics attacking the Imperial line at several points.

Cartavolnus ordered the Black Iconoclasts into flanking positions where they used reinforced Chimera transports to crash through walls weakened by months of war. His snipers took up position in ruined eyries, their Inquisitorial training allowing them to pick out those marked by mutation and cursed sigils as the traitors' champions. The Inquisitor confronted the startled officer in charge of the Astra Militarum attack. Revealing his identity to the frightened man, Cartavolnus ordered him to commit his entire force in an all out push against one enemy flank. As the Astra Militarum forces ground ponderously into action, the Inquisitor and his most battle-hardened veterans followed in a second wave.

Most of the Guardsmen died within minutes, felled by volleys of rattling weapons fire or with throats cut by ritual daggers. But their show of force had triggered a similar response from the cultists, the traitors' deluge of firepower and assaults revealing where their strength of numbers had been hidden. Now, Cartavolnus' flanking reserves burst into the firefight, Chimeras crashing through hastily erected defence lines and unleashing streams of heavy las-fire and explosive bolts. Cartavolnus tore through the enemy's core as they realised the trap, many executed as they turned to run. As the Black Iconoclasts hunted down those few too insane or terrified to yield, the Inquisitor strode into the plaza the cultists had rushed from. There, the baleful Noctilith Crown stood, impotent to stop the Inquisitor as he opened a skin-bound tome of diabolic lore and began incanting the Rite of Unbinding.

HEARTHLACK, THE HALO WORLD

At the outer fringes of the Vigilus System, Hearthlack was a moon devoid of any meaningful resources or strategic value. Its thin atmosphere was artificially created, the product of castellum-sized chemical processors. These giant engines pumped out just enough breathable air for the meagre population to survive. Small augur outposts and listening stations were the only military assets placed there, the primary structure being the vast Cathedrum of Accession, built millennia ago to honour Sebastian Thor when he became Ecclesiarch. This symbol of Imperial faith was attacked by Heretic Astartes of the Word Bearers, who killed the petitioners, martyring the attendant priests and displaying their remains on the edifice's ornate frontage.

In the weeks after Abaddon's withdrawal from Vigilus, a vengeful strike force of Battle Sisters from the Order of Our Martyred Lady and pious Guardsmen drawn from the regiments of the Vigilant Guard retook the planetoid in a bloody war that claimed martyrs without number. In the battle's wake, the Battle Sisters saw it as their divine duty to reconsecrate the cathedrum. Aided by accompanying Adepta Sororitas warrior-conservators from one of the Orders Pronatus, the blasphemous runes were abraded away, the taint of Chaos incinerated with promethium and sanctity restored. When news of Calgar's supposed death reached Hearthlack, the Canoness in command rededicated the cathedrum in his name. The atmospheric engines – damaged in the war – continued to pump out their air, but it had become so inexplicably tinged a strange shade of ochre, that the world became shrouded in a golden haze. The engines strove to overcome this failing, pumping out more and more, until the weak gravity could hold the golden fog no more and streamers of it swept behind the planet with each orbit.

Thousands of refugees arriving in the system were awed by the spectacle of the haloed moon trailing a golden tail like a cleansing thurible. To those upon Vigilus, the Great Rift they were forbidden from looking at seemed somehow more distant. Commissars noted a drop in needful executions for insanity. No longer was the threat of empyric annihilation a certainty. A determined few braved the depredations of enemy ships and flocked to worship at Hearthlack and the Cathedrum of Saint Calgar. The fug permeated the world's surface and wound through the unfinished restorations of the cathedrum, the building's galleries and shrines open to the elements. Pilgrims who stayed more than a few hours experienced a holy elation. In truth, the golden mist was toxic, and servitors were employed to gather up the corpses of those who had inhaled too much, beatific smiles of adoration fixed on their faces in a rictus.

INQUISITOR CARTAVOLNUS

Erasmus Cartavolnus is a dread Inquisitor of the Ordo Malleus. He specialises in tracking down daemons, traitors and fell artefacts whose presence weakens the boundary between realspace and the warp. To Cartavolnus, the sanctity of the Imperium is paramount, and he will go to almost any lengths to see it cleansed of the warp's influence.

There are few amongst Inquisitor Cartavolnus' peers who are as learned and wise in the malevolent rituals used by his enemies. Over three hundred years old, Cartavolnus has devoted his long life to the study and recognition of unholy wards and bonds, how the diabolical break them and how they can be made secure. He condemns the creation of Daemonhosts and the use of possessed artefacts, and has served amongst execution teams sent to hunt down those radical members of his Ordo who employ such perfidious methods. Yet Cartavolnus courts danger himself, risking his unfettered power and his life by amassing several secret libraries' worth of arcane lore.

Cartavolnus does not shirk from facing the daemon in person, girded in his artificer-wrought suit of embellished power armour and wielding his masterwork force sword. Unlike some of his fellow daemon hunters, however, Inquisitor Cartavolnus is steeped in the forbidden arenas of dark mysticism, ancient occult texts of long-dead xenos races and the rites and rituals of proscribed cults. He avoids execution and damnation – or so he believes – by the holy ends to which he applies this hard-won knowledge. Where such cursed wisdom in the hands of his enemies can rip apart the fragile skein that holds back the warp, Cartavolnus uses it to mend and seal such rents. Where sorcerous incantations bind daemonic essences into screaming hosts, he can use them to break such chains. To subvert the tools of the daemon in this way requires a mind of unalloyed purpose and absolute conviction in one's rectitude, but though Cartavolnus walks a narrow path of sanctity, he is ever at risk.

On Agrofar, the Inquisitor battled the Grolgafax, a mutation-bloated sorcerer that led a cult dedicated to the Chaos God Nurgle. The foul warlock had brewed within its corpulent form a link with the immaterium. Having swallowed rune-marked slaves whole and consumed gallons of tainted concoctions, a miniature warp fissure had formed within its gut. Cartavolnus' Black Iconoclast squads attacked the sorcerer's cultists and tore down their sacrilegious icons and fanes, while the Inquisitor faced the glutinous mass of the Grolgafax itself. With his force sword, Cartavolnus decapitated the creature, but that only killed the man it had once been. Wreathing his hand in a scintillating green fire as he chanted a damning hexorcism from the Second Book of Kadith, he reached inside the ruined neck of the creature and clamped his hand over the fissure. The fracture sealed, but the borborygmic convulsions of the warlock's fang-lined oesophagus gouged and tore at Cartavolnus' arm. It took years to fully purge the tainted rot from the remaining stump, but the Inquisitor bears the loss as a reminder of what must be sacrificed if the Emperor's realm is ever to be cleansed.



Inquisitor Cartavolnus is known by a number of epithets and titles, at least amongst those who know of him at all. These are not exactly aliases; they instead represent the fact that the Inquisitor is a man of exceedingly wide interests, talents and contacts. Cartavolnus is a Reclamator-Emeritus of the Dzijeni Conclave, a loose affiliation of Ordo Malleus Inquisitors that operate in the Nachmund Sub-sector and its adjoining regions. He is a Magister of the Three amongst the even-more-secretive Khandar Brotherhood of Inquisitors, bound by their shared philosophical views and drawn from several Ordos. To the Tech-Priests of Veitheim II, he is the Representative of the Vorkhan Defenders, while the mercantile leagues of Deverres honour him as the Three-eyed.

After the Great Rift opened, Cartavolnus saw it as his holy duty to combat the effects of the apocalyptic chain of warp storms in whatever way he could. The Inquisitor could not hope to fight the Rift itself, but sought to deny any works by the servants of the Dark Gods to intensify its influence. As he sought ways to push back against the Rift's overwhelming presence, Cartavolnus began to piece together disparate slivers of information many of his peers would have destroyed and dismissed out of hand. Rambling prophecies spat by insane demagogues, discredited reports of Navis Imperialis watch officers, after-action accounts humbly requested from the Grey Knights and the incarceration logs of dozens of Adeptus Arbites precinct fortresses; no scrap of data was too unimportant to ignore. It was a drunken diatribe of a Rogue Trader's first mate that drew many of these pieces together, leading Cartavolnus to the world of Nemendghast in the Vigilus System.

Cartavolnus infiltrated the surface, his presence masked by telesthesic obfuscation. There, he uncovered the initial, horrifying works of a deranged Master of Possession and the traitor's Black Legion bodyguards. The hulking Chaos Space Marines and abhorrent Daemon Engines were beyond his means to destroy. Fortunately, the war already underway on Vigilus had drawn in the Imperium's own elite. Cartavolnus psychically contacted the Ultramarines Librarian Maltis and requested the Chapter's aid. The Inquisitor had seen enough at Nemendghast to realise the Noctilith Crowns' diabolic potential. He left Nemendghast to prepare himself and gather his forces. The Vigilus System had not seen the last of Erasmus Cartavolnus.





ULTIMATUM AT STORVHAL

As quickly and insidiously as tales of Calgar's death had spread, so too did a renewed sense of faith. It was a fervid, fearful faith, grasped at like a lifeline by a drowning man, rather than serenely embraced. Between open worship of the noble 'martyr', terrified prayer meetings in the wake of purges conducted by Canoness Hrethnar's Sisters, and the crawling unease that blossomed wherever Inquisitor Cartavolnus went, Vigilus' defenders were near accepting any dire task if it meant salvation.

Fear was a weapon that Cartavolnus knew well. It was a tool that the Ordo Malleus Inquisitors had skilfully employed for millennia and he was a master at fanning the flames of terror. He had cowed nobles and generals into doing his bidding, had physically and psychically tortured daemon-worshippers into giving up their secrets, and incited whole populations to turn on their loved ones in efforts to root out suspected diabolists. Cartavolnus was adept at capitalising on the fear the Inquisition caused by making certain such fear was warranted.

At Megaborealis, Cartavolnus had discovered the first of the Noctilith Crowns he had vowed to destroy. The dangerous ritual he had undertaken was intended solely to sunder the creation's connection to the warp, and unmake the tangled webs of runic wards that held it in place. As the final words of power left his lips, the Inquisitor inadvertently tapped into an empyric network. In a momentary vision, he glimpsed countless channels of unholy energy wrapping themselves around the planet. Snaking wisps of warp-stuff stretched from one dark node to another, and new ribbons of energy appeared, constricting the world in a mesh of foulness. The vision evaporated as Cartavolnus completed his ritual and broke the Noctilith Crown's power, but he had also seen something else. He realised the burning nodes of his vision were other Crowns. Though most of their connective ley lines of dark power were seemingly haphazard, there was a central nexus, an origin of sorcerous influence.

There were far more Noctilith Crowns than Cartavolnus had suspected and their numbers were still growing; he could not be everywhere at once. Acting as swiftly as circumstances permitted, Cartavolnus issued orders to his Black Iconoclasts and Inquisitorial Acolytes. He split his forces into a number of secret armies, dispatching them to strike at the revealed locations of several Crowns. The Ordo Malleus Inquisitor also called upon the unquestioning authority of his position to demand the acquiescence of other armies. At Cartavolnus' command, Astra Militarum divisions, Adepta Sororitas missions and even a battered strike force of Imperial Fists Space Marines were given coordinates to assault. The Inquisitor did not share with them the true nature of the targets. Should any survive long enough for such dangerous knowledge to become a problem, he reasoned, he would take steps to ensure that information did not leave the planet.

Cartavolnus himself made for Storvhal, the location of the nexus of warp power he had glimpsed in his vision. With him went the most skilled and steadfast of his Black Iconoclasts: men and women who had faced down horrors that would drive ordinary soldiers insane. As the Inquisitor's commandeered transports approached the false continent, a vast cloud of sulphurous smoke and ash still hovered over the ruined hivesprawl. Storvhal was strewn with numerous active volcanoes and energy farms. Much of its industry now lay melted and buried beneath tons of cooling lava fields and thick layers of dark ash. Although the Tech-Priests' desperate act in unleashing the world's lifeblood there had slaughtered countless pyroclast cultists, xeno-mutants and daemonic entities, Storvhal's sanctity was not yet assured. During the War of Nightmares, many other heretics in service to the Dark Gods attacked the hivesprawl. Butcher squads of the Brazen Beasts renegade Chapter had arrived via thunderous drop ships. The Octed Brotherhood, a warband of Black Legionnaires, fought Genestealer Cultists and Skitarii alike as the Chaos Space Marines sought sacrifices to their gods. Meanwhile, decadent cultists drawn from Storvhal's nobility and calling themselves the Scintillating Union of the Spyre-born had emerged to prey upon the devastated throngs of labour serfs. Although the armies of the Dark Gods had swollen to outnumber their Imperial foes, Abaddon's departure saw many renounce any pretence at unity. In Storvhal, individual warbands waged their own campaigns of slaughter for personal glory. Some even fought each other, bonds of unity forgotten in the face of petty rivalries and the hunger for power.

The greatest threat to Storvhal's survival, however, had been attacks by packs of Daemon Engines and gangs of cybernetic thralls fused with capricious warp entities. They emerged from the south, from the direction of Phaestos Mound and Mount Colossid. These two ancient volcanoes had erupted explosively in the wake of the Tech-Priests' gambit. Though the pyroclast cultists occupying their upper calderas had perished in the eruption, a warp gate opened by the fire-worshipping cultists atop Phaestos Mound still remained. Here, a cabal of Black Legion Warpsmiths and Masters of Possession accelerated the dread work Cartavolnus had first witnessed on Nemendghast. In the ruins of an Adeptus Mechanicus temple complex, a Daemonforge had been erected. Tortured screams, pounding warp hammers and moaning gheist winds could be heard emanating from the flame-lit edifice. Suckling upon the lifeblood of the planet and fusing the geomantic energies with the unfettered power of the immaterium that poured through the warp gate, the soulsmiths of the Black Legion created new Noctilith Crowns and dispatched them to empyrically significant locations around the planet.



Imperial forces within Storvhal were in disarray. Transit routes and entire cities were blocked with smoking deposits of blackened lava flows, forcing them to redeploy en masse and limiting engagements to narrow choke points. Knights of House Raven became boxed in, unwilling to trample the hallowed forge complexes to reach more of the foe. Companies of the Vigilant Guard toiled through drifts of ash, held back by their armoured vehicles as they got bogged down in the cloying pumice. Into this mire of frustrated leadership and halting advances, Cartavolnus' arrival was like a meteor. He and his Acolytes erected a torture engine before the great gates of Hive Magmathermid. He strapped the nearest officers he could find into the embrace of its servo-blades, neural-shriveners and psychotrauma amplifiers.

Transmitting to every Imperial vox in range, Cartavolnus excoriated their efforts. The wretches in his torture engine, he told the Imperial defenders, were not exemplars of Mankind. If they were, they would already be leading their armies to victory in Storvhal. If the noble Marneus Calgar had sacrificed his very life for victory on this world, the Inquisitor roared, then by what right did lesser servants of the God-Emperor offer any less sacrifice? Cartavolnus' sinister actions, terrifying presence and castigating words whipped up the ragtag forces before him into a fearful frenzy. He did not offer them salvation, mercy or even victory. With excruciating clarity, Cartavolnus offered the hospitality of the Inquisition to every living soul in Storvhal if they did not follow him.

Within an hour, companies of Guardsmen, cohorts of Skitarii and many thousands of labourers poured out of Hive Magmathermid in a mass of terrified zealotry. Sisters of Battle moved amongst them, parched voices raised in shouted prayer, while Knights strode purposefully forward, callously crushing friend and foe underfoot where they barred the Nobles' path. Cartavolnus' crusade advanced from district to district, losing swathes of warriors as they scrambled over rocky lava deposits and hundreds more to enemy attacks.

Despite these loses, their numbers grew with every mile they pushed on, as more of Storvhal's citizens and defenders who had heard the Inquisitor's edict flocked to fight.

One by one, the champions of the Dark Gods and their dedicated followers fell. Had they attacked the fervid army of the Inquisitor in coordinated assaults – bleeding them dry and corralling them into traps – then a costly victory might still have been achievable. But their faith was as disjointed as their affiliation to each other. The Scintillating Union of the Spyre-born pridefully refused to fight alongside what they viewed as bands of lesser heretic mongrels. As Cartavolnus' growing army swept towards Glimmerspire Point, the Slaaneshi cultists were surrounded and ripped limb from limb. The Brazen Beasts slaughtered hundreds of the Inquisitor's faithful, but when the Octed Brotherhood chose to capitalise on their focus and attack their Khornate rivals in the rear, berzerker heretics were caught between two enemies and destroyed in short order.

Only when the bloody crusade reached the still-smoking foothills around Phaestos Mound did the Daemon Engines and possessed cultists slow the Imperial assault. Cartavolnus chose this moment to enter the fray alongside his Black Iconoclasts. The Inquisitor's psychic fortitude and host-cleansing other-worldly powers tore the heart out of the heretics' attack. Desperate to be seen fighting by the dread Inquisitor in their midst, hundreds of his loyalists flung themselves forward and paved the way for his advance with their deaths. The Daemonforge roared for the last time that day, fed with the corpses of those soulsmiths who had not fled in time. As the merciless Inquisitor prepared his soul to ritually seal the warp gate that fed the furnace, his Black Iconoclasts carried out their standing orders and began rounding up those who had survived to grant him his victory.

ESCAPING THE RIFT

Though a surge in faith within the Vigilus System had helped to renew its defenders' spirits, neighbouring systems in the Nachmund Sub-sector fared far worse. Countless worlds were overwhelmed by Abaddon's armies or consumed by convulsions of the Great Rift's warp storms as they pushed against the limits of the Nachmund Gauntlet. On many worlds, such as Orgalnafor, a desperate race for evacuation overrode strategies of digging in and holding out.

Initially at Orgalnafor, mass Astra Militarum deployments had commenced just in time. They fanned out from multiple landing zones to counter planetary uprisings from countless cults of Chaos-worshippers, apocalypticists, doomsday revellers and roaming gangs of criminals and traitordefence militia. Led by the Cadian 203rd Regiment under General D'hosar, the Imperial Guard's forces included demi-regiments, specialised companies and auxilia from Mordian, Krieg, Santosh and Keruvar. The planet's single, temperate continent had once been a sea of rolling grassland and fertile delta basins, rising to a plateau of steppes in the interior. Scattered city states, mere termite mounds compared to true hive cities, lay connected by ferrocrete transitways. The planet's capital of Gerondis lay on a defended promontory at the landmass' western extreme, surrounded by armoured shuttle ports and vast landing sites. Beyond the continent's coastlines, oceans of ferric salts were so toxic and corrosive that they coated the rust-red beach heads with desiccating, crystalline deposits. Anti-grav engines suffered terminal feedback from the arcing currents generated by the sludge-like seas. Those shuttles and lighters that ditched in the water were corroded in a matter of minutes, while anything living shrivelled in agony upon contact with the liquid. This natural defence enabled many large islands surrounding the continent to survive in isolation.

THE UNITY OF HATE

The Imperial commanders hoped for disunity amongst the countless heretic cults that had emerged across Orgalnafor. Yet the presence of cells of Black Legions warriors provided the renegade masses with coordination. Black Legionnaires undertook guerrilla strikes against Imperial positions and supplied grander strategies for their servile cultists. After months of grinding advances, however, the Imperial war machine had gathered momentum. Miles of trench systems cut across the continent's face like vast ribbons of scar tissue. Hundreds of fortified bunker networks – both on the surface and below it – served to reinforce Imperial communications lines and provide firepoints. Slowly, the city states succumbed to repeated bombardments. Front after front opened up, thousands of miles in length, turning the continent into a bloody quagmire strewn with corpses. Ruined megalopolises were secured by fresh companies of Guardsmen. Island forts were converted into vast ordnance sites, bristling with cannons and missile silos, defended by the natural barrier of the lethal oceans. Though cultists died in their thousands and kill teams of Heretic



Astartes were eventually hunted down, the war of attrition that the Imperial Guard were close to winning had taken too long. The Legionnaires' reinforcements arrived and the slaughter reversed.

Black Legion cruisers drove into the system and clashed with Navis Imperialis vessels holding station above the world. Spiked dropships plummeted to the surface – first alongside the remaining strongholds in the east and then closer and closer to the front lines. Precision lance strikes from gunships obliterated ferrocrete fortresses erected by combat engineer companies. Enormous mass conveyors slammed into the stinking mud at dozens of key sites, disgorging Chaos Space Marines, powerful battle tanks, Daemon Engines, possessed Legionnaires and hulking, mutation-wracked monstrosities. Several companies and thousands of men and women were lost in the first few days, caught between the suddenly reinforced cultists and the Black Legion drop assaults hitting their line of retreat.

In a week, the Astra Militarum's second line, stretching from one end of the continent to the other, was all but overwhelmed. Contact was lost with General D'hosar and his command of over fifty staff officers. Their monolithic Capitol Imperialis super-heavy command tank was intercepted by Raptors and Maulerfiends who tore their way inside, butchering everyone within. Wholescale rout of the Imperial forces was prevented by Brigadier Van Telost who assumed surface command, while overall seniority was taken up by Rear Admiral Fhallen in orbit. Together, Van Telost and Fhallen made skilful use of the extensive defensive networks it had taken Imperial forces many gruelling weeks to erect. The official line handed down to junior officers was of redeployment, restructuring the Imperial offensive in the face of pathetic attempts by the enemy to counter-attack. Van Telost and Fhallen knew Orgalnafor was lost, however, and strove to extract as many soldiers and tanks as possible before the inevitable overtook them.

Outside the industrial sprawl of Fabricant in the south, heavy weapons teams employed labyrinthine tunnel grids – unleashing barrages of firepower, redeploying unseen and firing again. Specialist teams of tunnel-fighting combat engineers were assigned to them, protecting them from Chaos Space Marines that hunted them down in the dark burrows, or lured them into dead ends and collapsed entire sections. Imperial commanders wrought hasty deceptions to draw enemy forces away from the massive movement of troops westward. Forlorn Hope companies were airlifted in suicide missions deep into already-overrun territory, their true goal to give the impression that the Imperial Guard had massively outmanoeuvred their foe. At Merr-Castellum, Tech-Priest Enginseers, praying to the Omnissiah for forgiveness at their almost necromantic activities, hastily created whole divisions of dummy tanks from the gutted iron corpses of destroyed vehicles. From the island fastnesses, ordnance was redirected to give the impression these tank formations were fully functional and opening fire. Supporting companies of Guardsmen, many of which were the Tech-Priests' own Servitors in reality, unleashed their own desultory fire as the Black Legion engaged them.

Soldiers were marched to the point of exhaustion through the night, or else were forced to cling dangerously to the hulls of battle tanks in the organised flight towards Gerondis. Dedicated transports – their machine spirits wailing in protest at their overwork – made excruciatingly long shuttle runs as often as they could. When transports broke down, gangs of heavily equipped Ogryns and Guardsmen auxilia broke them down into ready firepoints, guarding the exodus as it trickled past. As the truth of the situation dawned on some of the more cynical veterans, the city and its space ports began to be viewed as the escape route they truly were. Stories of a haven beyond its boundaries circulated. Panic and terror bubbled beneath the surface, but it was assuaged by growing feelings of hope. Officers accompanied by Imperial Tarot readers shared tales in their briefings of beacons and golden haloes they swore were omens sent to reassure them.

Rear Admiral Fhallen kept his evacuation corral of ships in orbit as long as he could. Several escort ships and light cruisers were ultimately sacrificed keeping the extraction point clear; mass conveyors and hundreds of shuttles ferried back and forth, heaving thousands of men and women – and countless tons of materiel – up from the planet's surface every hour. Eventually, he gave the order to leave. After unloading their cargoes of flesh and steel, empty dropships were hastily sealed for warp transit in their berthing cradles. The Rear Admiral sent a personal message of regret and admiration to the surface, promising that the deeds of those that remained to hold back the heretical forces would be entered into his ship's logs. Over two hundred thousand soldiers waited at Gerondis for shuttles that would never arrive.

More ships and even more Guardsmen were lost during the desperate breakout from the Orgalnafor System. Black Legion cruisers and escorts hunted the fleeing Imperial ships like gigantic oceanic predators. The *Sword of Judgement*'s plasma drives were hit as it manoeuvred for the warp translation point. Listing to one side, the venerable cruiser contacted the turbulent interface separating realspace from the warp channel, ripping apart and condemning six thousand souls either to the frozen void or the warp itself. The reduced fleet and survivors of the Orgalnafor Massacre, as it became known, endured a horrendous passage through the immaterium. Their Navigators claimed they could see nothing but a faint glow that matched no astronomical beacon known in the region. Some of Fhallen's advisors, grim void-hardened sailors not known for faith-fuelled superstition, bade him make for it. Some claimed to have heard a saintly voice during brief snatches of sleep. Others felt inexplicably drawn to the light's presence in hololithic displays, warmed and reassured by it in equal measure. The survivors of Orgalnafor did not know they were headed for Vigilus, nor did any of the other stragglers, steering by that same beacon in a warp bereft of all landmarks.



WARDENS OF THE GAUNTLET

Though the majority of the Ultramarines forces had left the planet Vigilus, they and other Chapters continued to fight for the region in neighbouring systems. Many Chapter forces fighting throughout the Nachmund Sub-sector came to be known as the Wardens of the Gauntlet – a collective name they had taken for themselves. They had sworn vows to cleanse the dangerous channel and to defend it with their lives.

The Wardens of the Gauntlet comprised numerous Space Marine forces operating within the Nachmund Gauntlet. Their crusade-like confraternity originates in a powerful astropathic message sent by the Castellans of the Rift Chapter. This brotherhood of the Ultima Founding had defended the Nachmund Gauntlet with their entire strength since their inception – a dire duty granted to them by Roboute Guilliman. Yet they alone could not hold so vital a strategic passage. Communication with Terra became more difficult and risky – warp storms along the Gauntlet's ill-defined edges twisting and tainting psychic messages, thus preventing easy calls for reinforcement. The Chapter had suffered heavy losses at Vigilus and more so in their numerous actions around the heretical Knight world of Dharrovar. Their sacred duty was in danger of failing entirely. Instructed by their Chapter Master, astropathic choirs sent out a psychic call to arms. This message was reinforced by the Chapter's Librarians, its power boosted and its symbolic meanings tailored to speak to the gene-wrought warriors of the Adeptus Astartes. Through this psychic signal, the Castellans of the Rift broadcast a cyclic request to join them, to hold the Gauntlet at all costs and to swear to its defence.

Of those Space Marine forces who heard the rallying cry, few were able to coordinate their response with brother Chapters. The turbulent warp storms prevented most from responding directly to the Castellans of the Rift; many swore their oaths nonetheless, and where they encountered each other the name of the Wardens of the Gauntlet gained currency. Several of these Space Marine forces took the image of a gauntleted hand as a visual seal of their vow. The psychic vision of a gauntlet within the message had been interpreted in many ways, with some forces bearing abstract palm prints, heavily illuminated images of armoured gloves, or even skeletal hands. Others bore sculpted fists upon their greaves or added embroidered gauntlets to their sacred standards, and some even ritually repainted one of their own armoured gloves in symbolic affirmation of their selfless duty.

The Space Marines pledged to the Wardens of the Gauntlet had numerous origins. Some were entire Chapters, whose home world lay within the Nachmund Gauntlet yet were miraculously spared the devastation of the Great Rift. Some forces were portions of fleet-based Chapters, shorn from their parent fleet. Many were fragmentary armies, remnant strike forces who had survived the fall of systems to Abaddon's countless traitors. Others had tumbled out of the terrible storms of the Great Rift itself, displaced in space and time from the rest of their Chapter and grasping the chance to strike back at the Imperium's enemies after enduring the horrors of the warp.

The Castellans' psychic summons pushed ever outwards, battering against the dread boundary of the Cicatrix Maledictum. New forces swore vows to the Nachmund Gauntlet's defence, pledging to hold it in the face of overwhelming numbers of powerful enemies and standing resolutely alongside the Castellans of the Rift. Perhaps the Chapter's sacred duty would yet prevail.

INSPIRATIONAL HEROISM

The reported fall of Marneus Calgar on Vigilus, alongside many other storied heroes of the Adeptus Astartes, had a significant impact on the Chapters fighting throughout the region. They spoke to their ingrained warrior codes. Those heroes' deeds and sacrifices – even while many of the Wardens refused to believe that the Chapter Master himself had perished – became mythologised. They were reinterpreted through the Chapters' own traditions, serving as examples to spur their own acts of martial valour. Within the Vigilus System and beyond, a common cause of faith and inspiration was forged between strike forces of Space Marines and other Imperial armies. The Black Templars of the Ghorlas Crusade were especially active amongst such multi-faceted forces; they fought beside others who shared their strength of faith and drew zealous warriors to their banners on the battlefields of Aakin, Thorest III and Mundorsat.

In their final campaigns on Vigilus, Chaplains of the Praetors of Orpheus were witnessed extolling the deeds not only of their own slain heroes, but those of their Ultramarines progenitors as well. Allied Priests of the Adeptus Ministorum raised their own voices in prayer alongside them, hailing the worthy dead of Macragge as their zealous followers fought in the Praetors' wake.

Vanguard forces of the Imperial Fists fought bravely to recover the fallen Lieutenant Halsor. Battle Sisters of the Order of Our Martyred Lady and soldiers of the Vigilant Guard – alive thanks to Halsor's noble sacrifice at the Shrine Elucidum – piously stormed the shrine's outer perimeter in a diversion that resulted in many horrific casualties, all to allow the Space Marines to reach the body of their commander unnoticed. The Chapter's traditions of bearing scrimshawed bones of their dead was said to have spread in their honour.



CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT

Rather than a single home world, the Castellans of the Rift maintain a string of fortified bastion worlds and hidden rearming stations running the whole length of the Nachmund Gauntlet. They know the region like few others do, having dedicated their entire existence to its preservation. They share their knowledge and tactical expertise of the sub-sector with every new force that joins the Wardens of the Gauntlet.



ANGELS OF DEFIANCE

A demi-company of these Dark Angels' successors have been witnessed fighting scant light years away from Dharrovar, bearing a bone-white gauntlet as a campaign badge. Few amongst the Wardens of the Gauntlet have had any direct contact with the Angels of Defiance; their motives to hold the region for the Imperium has been questioned at times, as they have curtly refused offers of assistance from allied forces.



BLACK TEMPLARS

The warriors under Marshal Korvain were once the Ghorlas Crusade, sent to purge the Ghorlas Cluster before the Great Rift swallowed their fleet whole. Spat out of the liminal zones around the notorious, pirate-haunted region of the Choraplex - battered but alive - Korvain's fleet picked up echoes of the Castellans' message. Now the Marshal leads his fervent warriors in puritanical rampages through the Gauntlet's central region.



RIFT STALKERS

While many Rift Stalkers fleets patrol distant reaches of the Cicatrix Maledictum, hunting down abominations that emerge from its depths, the Chapter's forces within the Nachmund Gauntlet have a more specific task. This force fulfils its vows to the Wardens of the Gauntlet by seeking out new routes through the region, striking swiftly against Chaos armies blocking warp channels, and even launching blistering boarding assaults against enemy ships.



SALAMANDERS

The astropathic choir of *Pyrelight*, a strike cruiser of the Salamanders' Chapter, received the psychic message while their masters concluded the Sunderance of Borax. The noble and indomitable warriors had witnessed such vile torture and bloody sacrifices of Boraxine citizens that they vowed to hold the Gauntlet with the strength of Vulkan himself. Not until their dying breath, they swore, would Abaddon's armies inflict such atrocities again.



SABLE KNIGHTS

Strike Force Vorgas of the Sable Knights' Chapter have fought through fire, blood, death and madness in their gruelling passage through the Nachmund Gauntlet. They have sworn to hold the channel against all comers, but only for as long as it takes their limping vessels and few surviving Navigators to travel its length. Captain Vorgas is responding to an old, distorted astropathic summons, and desperately seeks to break through into the Imperium Nihilus, where he intends to make for Baal.

TIDES OF THE GAUNTLET

++Cryptograph-amalgam rendering <cf. empyric compression matrix 7f-1// a> of detected warp channels within the region of the Nachmund Gauntlet. Commended to shipmasters of the Wardens of the Gauntlet for no more than three standard cycles' use. Destroy upon termination. Chronofixed via Vigilus [26.34 post], subsequent rendering in preparation.

- Epistolary Fornost, Rift Stalkers++

RIFT HOLLOW

Augured location of Sondax V // +243.1z

The Hunt of Shen — Space Wolves Chapter // +630.1

Karta Sol (Castellans of the Rift Boundary Fort)

Disassembl Ferrumites N — Iron Ha Chapter //

Storming of Perdiitas Keep — Howling Griffons Chapter // +9.1.a

Augured location of Sondax V // +81.F7

Muralbar (Castellans of the Rift Scry Station)

Vacuo Stagnum — immaterial inertia

Contra Empyric Anomaly

Resistance of Idex Incursion - Ultramarines Chapter // 5.w4-NUL

Xenos Incursion — Channel Integrity Failing

IMPERIUM SANCTUS

SANGUA TERRA

Conjectured razing of Fortis Citadel — Angels of Defiance Chapter // +6.1-99

Boarding of Lament of Ages - Castellans of the Rift Chapter // +X5.3.1.1

IMPERIUM NIHILUS

Defence of the Folan Portal — Rift Stalkers Chapter // +38.1.k6

Unstable Geller Node

Ghorlas Crusade <cf Black Templars> warp signature detection // +2.7.1B3

Empyric Tempest 'Vhorlix' — Designate Class Upsilon 5

<incomplete warp-echo> — Praetors of Orpheus Chapter // +3.1

Dharrovar (Chaos Knight World)

Battle for the Vaults of Blood — Salamanders Chapter // +14.87N

Forennis (Castellans of the Rift Relay Arsenal)

The Choraplex — fragmentary access // +743.3.IX

Kreel Massacre — Sable Knights Chapter // +91.77[x]

<collated projection Alpha-23 // strata immaterium profundis>

THE CORONAL WAR

The destruction of the Noctilith Crowns upon Vigilus was Inquisitor Cartavolnus' sole, self-appointed task. The organisation of Imperial forces across the planet to accomplish this, however, was far from easy. The daemon hunter had located many of the Crowns' sites, though the positions of some still eluded him. He wasted no time in capitalising on his knowledge. Across Vigilus, the war zones of what the Inquisitor privately termed his Coronal War flared into ugly life.

Without Marneus Calgar, centralised strategy and mutually supportive missions and logistics were no longer de rigueur amongst Vigilus' surviving Imperial forces. The Aquilarian Council – formerly the planet's ruling body and co-opted by the Chapter Master into his strategic hierarchy – had shrunk to a handful of individuals. Combat losses, Commissariat executions and assassinations by treacherous soldiers had further fractured the interlinked command structures of several Imperial forces. Across the planet, Imperial forces within hivesprawl districts operated autonomously. Cartavolnus made contact with officers in each of the hivesprawls which his information on the Noctilith Crowns had led to. Some commanders were approached by sinister teams of his Black Iconoclasts, some received psychic summonses delivered by the Inquisitor's personal Astropaths and some he confronted face to face. Cartavolnus drew these commanders' forces into his scheme, whether willingly or not. Even the rumour of the Inquisitor's presence was enough to terrify Imperial Guard officers into ready subservience, and his authority as an agent of the Emperor's Holy Ordos meant his word was swiftly obeyed by Adepta Sororitas Canonesses and Space Marine Captains alike.

In concert with the grim-faced officers of his Black Iconoclasts, Inquisitor Cartavolnus assessed the merits and strengths of the Imperial forces available to make his intended strikes. He let it be known that he only redirected certain formations away from their current deployments so as not to disrupt Saint Calgar's established strategy. Those warriors left to hold their original positions were buoyed by the knowledge that they were enacting a destiny granted to them by one of the Emperor's chosen. In reality, the Ordo Malleus Inquisitor selected for his war those most suitable to his purpose in terms of experience and materiel. Many of these requisitioned forces, too, whether they knew of the Inquisitor or not, came to believe they were fulfilling some holy task, one which had been appointed to them by the God-Emperor.

Amongst those Imperial officers who had so far survived the years of war upon Vigilus was Proctor Commander Threneddis, who had assumed leadership after the suspicious disappearance of her predecessor, Commander Venedar. Threneddis, the uncompromising veteran officer of the Vigilant Guard, had earned respect from the Ultramarines, White Scars and Stygian Tech-Priests for her inspired and efficient tactics throughout Hyperia Hivesprawl. As casualties mounted over the course of Abaddon's invasion, Threneddis had made dozens of field commissions, replacing fallen officers with proven veterans and instilling in them her tactical genius and pious convictions. The Proctor Commander was one officer to whom Inquisitor Cartavolnus presented himself in person. The religious fervour growing throughout the planet's forces was most evident amongst the Vigilant Guard. This piety and fanaticism was claimed by some to be the source of the Vigilant Guard's discipline and iron will. The Inquisitor had long known the benefit of such devotion in the face of the horrors that fought for the Dark Gods. He took several of the Proctor Commander's boldest captains and bid them lead their companies not only in Hyperia, but in other hivesprawls as well.

Cartavolnus also presented himself to Canoness Preceptor Hrethnar of the Order of the Bloody Rose. He met her alongside Canoness Blaise of the Order of Our Martyred Lady; Blaise had commanded her Order's warriors on Vigilus since the earliest xenos invasions and continued to coordinate other Adepta Sororitas forces after the collapse of a martial hierarchy. Between them, Hrethnar and Blaise commanded thousands of holy warriors, equipped with the finest arms the Ecclesiarchy's nigh-infinite coffers could afford and imbued with a red-hot belief in the God-Emperor. The Inquisitor secured the Canonesses' aid – sworn in tandem over a reliquary saved from the destruction at Saint's Haven – without divulging anything of the forbidden knowledge he had accrued. That Cartavolnus' enemies were heretics of the God-Emperor, turncoat recipients of his greatest gifts and dabblers in unclean sorcery was enough to bind a portion of Hrethnar and Blaise's forces to his cause.

Many of the armies and strike forces Cartavolnus wove together – or in some cases roughly yoked to his will – were a motley disposition. Skirmishing platoons supported armoured companies. Surviving Astra Militarum complements worn down over years of warfare were forced together into conglomerate mixed regiments. Imperial Guard columns of flak-armoured soldiers marched side by side with cohorts of cybernetic Skitarii and choirs of Battle Sisters. Adeptus Astartes forces conducted lightning-fast strikes leaving enemy positions unable to repulse following waves of Vendetta gunships and Valkyries bearing squads of Tempestus Scions. The Inquisitor gave his growing number of ad hoc armies orders and coordinates, dispatching them to locations he believed contained one of the Noctilith Crowns. Some of these armies supported tactical strikes spearheaded by Black Iconoclasts, like the Ellerophosus Assault and the Action at Glacia Omicroid during what was formerly observed as Greigalia. Others served as sledgehammer blows



that bludgeoned their way through enemy defences while specialist teams of assassins, saboteurs and sappers infiltrated blind spots in the foe's battle lines to attack the Crowns like a stiletto to the heart.

THE BREAKING OF CROWNS

At the northern end of Oteck Hivesprawl, Inquisitor Cartavolnus personally led an attack against dug-in Heretic Astartes of the Word Bearers Legion. His psychic abilities tore possessing daemons from their armoured hosts, leaving them as hollow husks of mutated traitors, and unpicked the sorceries of Chaos Space Marine daemon whisperers. Major LeGantz, one of the senior commanders of the Inquisitor's Black Iconoclasts, masterminded a stunning multi-pronged attack. He employed Aeronautica assets and conscript companies to draw in Ork forces that had previously been suppressed by Imperial barrages. Together with cavalier regiments from Tallarn, a phalanx of the Tekarn Iron Men and Bullgryn brute-teams attacking on three fronts, the anarchic deluge of threats split the Word Bearers' firepower and counter-attacks. Cartavolnus was able to reach the Noctilith Crown and his soldiers executed the few Legionaries guarding it before setting hexagrammic mines in arcane patterns and destroying it utterly.

Such relatively swift successes were vanishingly rare. The daemon hunter vehemently cursed each new missive that reached him of precisely planned strikes that ground on for days, swallowing ever more reinforcements and delaying his hopes for victory. With each set back, he knew he had handed the vile creators of the Noctilith Crowns time to erect yet more of the abominable structures.

At Bore-Hive Ultris in the supposedly secure western reaches of Megaborealis, miscommunication and unforgivable errors in leadership saw a small but veteran cadre of Black Legionnaires blunt and thrust back their Imperial attackers. More and more forces poured into the war zone, thousands perishing in firestorms and kill zones organised by the vastly superior skills of the Chaos Space Marines. After more than a week, victory – at least as far as Cartavolnus was concerned – was eventually achieved. Yet it was secured at a horrendous cost. The massacre had drawn in forces from across western Megaborealis, leaving countless districts open to attack by reaving heretic warbands, opportunistic Genestealer Cults and Orks, who were now free to pour in through the weakly defended Maruvian Gatefort.

Inquisitor Cartavolnus was under no illusions that he had accurately identified the location of all the Noctilith Crowns. At the eastern outskirts of Mortwald, a combination of empyric investigation and local reconnaissance had hinted to him of the existence of such a structure. There, his psychic inquiries misled him. Jagger's Devilskins, a company of the 105/412th Catachan Infantry Regiment, renowned for their dark fatigues and even darker humour, spent three days pushing through Mortwald without ever closing in on one of the warp-fuelled structures. Fed by irrigation networks ruptured during fighting against the Orks and pools of alchemical overspill from devastated medicae centres, the hivesprawl's untended expanse of gene-forced megaflora had spread into a dense forest; poisonous cacti in vast branching forms, carpets of spiny vines and spore-laden lichen had grown amongst empty hab-blocks and cracked transitways.

The Catachan Guardsmen entered the hivesprawl at night, hundreds of them scaling an abandoned section of cliff-like fortifications from the Wastes. The Guardsmen's initial assaults revealed Genestealer Cultists attempting to secure a foothold upon the gigantic curtain wall defences. Deadly skirmishes in the dark were briefly lit by flashes of lasfire. These were swiftly followed by the barks of automatic weapons, blood-curdling screams and shouted warnings as curved daggers and talons were pitted against bayonets and enormous knives. The Devilskins fought with insane bravery and brutal efficiency, losing hundreds of men and women amongst the blood-caked ruins and vegetation. They pursued the remnants of the Genestealer Cultists underground, losing more of their number every day in tunnel ambushes and deadfall traps. Eventually, the remaining Catachans slaughtered the final members of the region's cults. They were abominably mutated, swollen craniums pulsing while their atrophied limbs twitched. A further week of scouting the district uncovered no presence of the heretics the Inquisitor had sent them to find.

A NEW DAWN

Despite heavy losses and delays, Inquisitor Cartavolnus' scheme to tear down the Noctilith Crowns reaped a growing tally of successes. The lies, half-truths and inspiring tales he had woven around the necessity for these missions came to be held as evidence of their outcome. Glorious victories were ascribed to the belief that it had been looked upon with beneficence by the Emperor or by the fallen hero Marneus Calgar, or else attributed to the victors' strength of conviction in the Imperial Creed. Likewise, crushing defeats – or at least the few that came to light – were denounced as the inevitable result of insufficient faith or even punishment for heresies known only to the Emperor.

Belief – passionate and fervid – grew with the victories, spreading and feeding into the already increasing faith across Vigilus. The Inquisitor felt it too, and he was privy to evidence few others saw. Via his own empyric senses, and through conducting arcane rites he had devised to probe the intangible boundaries of the warp, Cartavolnus witnessed an increasing stabilisation of realspace around the system. Insanity and terror, he felt, no longer had so strong a hold on those who fought within sight of the Cicatrix Maledictum. He knew his war had helped, but could not in all conscience attribute all the manifestations of a lifting pall to his work. In his heart, Inquisitor Cartavolnus believed that the grace of the Emperor had shone on Vigilus in its darkest hour, that the Master of Mankind had been drawn to his people's growing devotion and that only by his majesty was the world's doom being driven back.





SACRIFICE AND REVELATION

None of the Imperial forces coerced or manoeuvred into the Inquisitor's shadow war truly knew what its goals were, but its cost and results were recognisable to all those indoctrinated into the Imperial Creed. The God-Emperor demanded sacrifice, and in return the faithful – living or not – received his benevolence. The message spread. Now, at the darkest hour, when the system was threatened with being swallowed up by damnation, was the time to pay that cost in ever greater numbers.

Mad-eyed street preachers, screaming from shattered pulpits or beneath grisly trophies left by vanquished foes, shouted themselves hoarse with rebukes and condemnation of the living. Their dogma spoke of the sacrifice all of Mankind must make upon the altar of war. Their frothing mantras declaimed that every moment of continued existence was an affront to the Emperor of Mankind. Though many were ignored or occasionally denounced as heretics themselves and executed, their message was only one amongst countless similar tenets. Graffiti daubed in the blood of martyrs called for the populace to abandon defences and submit themselves to their enemies' weapons as the only way to atone for unspecified sins. Prayer sessions – especially amongst the devout ranks of the Vigilant Guard and their accompanying Ecclesiarchal Priests – lauded the millions of Vigilus' dead, claiming only they knew of the God-Emperor's mercy. Variations of the call for glorious deaths in his name appeared in Commissariat propaganda and yellowed chapbooks passed from soldier to soldier. They were heard in the rousing choruses of Adepta Sororitas plainsong that drifted from distant battlefields and were present in the holy algorithms of the Tech-Priests' binharic cant.

These calls espoused a growing cult of martyrdom. Many pointed squarely at the widely known sacrifice of Saint Calgar, now openly worshipped via dozens of newly founded martial traditions. They were particularly prevalent in Hyperia Hivesprawl, home to Saint's Haven where Calgar had fallen fighting Abaddon the Despoiler. Somewhere within that high-walled, gun-studded city state, so scrawled pamphlets vowed, was the spot upon which the noble Chapter Master had given his life in the name of the Emperor; the Master of Mankind had responded by banishing the traitorous heretic. Whispered talk ran rampant of a dread agent of the Inquisition who demanded the deaths of the most skilled warriors. Such tales often finished with descriptions of their souls being handed to the Emperor by his robed servant, who then set them into Vigilus' night skies as sentinel stars.

Though some reports claimed to have witnessed heretic vessels leaving the system in growing numbers, the slaughter on Vigilus continued unabated. There was no shortage of grist for the mill of martial sacrifice. Whether refugees from fallen neighbouring systems, survivors of the Great Rift's warp storms or lost armies ejected from the Cicatrix Maledictum itself, Imperial forces converged on Vigilus from countless directions. Some repeated the strange tale of a saviour beacon, glimpsed in dreams. Though their descriptions of these visions were carefully transcribed, it did not alter their fate. Every new influx of bloodied, maddened or exhausted travellers became yet another shovelful of fuel to feed the planet's pyre of sacrifice. Most were rounded up by quartermasters and logistics officers, and many had the bloody weapons of fallen warriors thrust into their hands before being pressed into immediate front-line service. Of these, some were granted the dubious honour of their service being recorded – termed Salvator Reciprocatus, a saviour system's right to recoup losses while providing safe harbour. Most were not.

THE FIRES OF DONTORIA

The manifestation of Saint Celestine in Hyperia Hivesprawl was hailed as nothing less than the will of the God-Emperor to deliver his most ardent followers from annihilation. That the form of this deliverance might be a brutal death in his service drove the nascent cults of martyrdom into paroxysms of religious ecstasy. Crowds of undisciplined soldiers and unruly militia stampeded out of the safety of their defences, desperate to be seen by their deity fighting for their creed. The Black Legion's advance did not slow. The Chaos Space Marines ground over them, few Legionaries bothering to expend ammunition on them. In the martyrs' wake, Celestine led an inspired defence of the more disciplined forces. Her example and those of the fallen inflamed the passions of the Imperial warriors. Selfless last stands, heroic sallies from those heedless of their own lives and individual moments of legendary bravery in her presence eventually turned the tide against the traitors. The remaining Black Legion quit the field, having massacred huge numbers of Saint's Haven's defenders. In all, tens of thousands of Imperial servants died – a beatific rictus on the faces of many – at Saint's Haven in the wake of Celestine's divine arrival.

While the victors of Saint's Haven's embarked on grand funeral rites for the martyrs, the Living Saint departed the city state. With her went a young warrior of the Order of Our Martyred Lady, Sister Ana, anointed by the Living Saint as a shield bearer, one of the Geminae Superia. None saw them leave, but Celestine was next reported at the northern edges of Megaborealis, where the fortwall leading to Dontoria stretched away across the Wastes. Within a repurposed ruined overseer's correction chamber, Canoness Hrethnar of the Order of the Bloody Rose had established a crude command post. The Canoness spent little time within the halls in person. The presence of Celestine, however, instantly drew her back from the front lines where she was leading her ferocious Sisters in campaigns to support Fabricator Vorsch's reconquest of his hivesprawl.

In conclave with Hrethnar, Celestine firmly commanded that the entirety of the Bloody Rose's forces in Megaborealis



ANNUNCIATION OF THE AUTO-MARTYR

As the site of the Ultramarines Chapter Master's ardently believed ascension, Saint's Haven – and by extension the whole of Hyperia Hivesprawl – was hallowed ground for the hero's growing cult of adoration. Hyperia was becoming a focus of Vigilus' newly passionate ardour for sacrifice to the God-Emperor and his holiest instruments. It was a sacred stronghold, a false continent rising to a new position as a physical embodiment of the strength of faith. Some of the refugee forces that had arrived on Vigilus in recent days had been barracked at Saint's Haven. Their experiences during their horrific journeys to reach the planet marked them out as prophets of the Emperor's designs for the world, their words hung upon by gaggles of devoted adherents.

Hyperia's dense cities, industrial enclaves, macro-yards and slums still rang to the sound of battle. In the wake of Abaddon's departure, Saint's Haven had loomed in the sights of both the righteous and the repugnant. To the bloated Adeptus Ministorum presence, personified in corpulent Pontifex Slyne Galluck, Saint's Haven was the seat of their power. To the forces of the Black Legion at Hyperia, Saint's Haven represented a way to strike at the loyalists' very soul. The traitors' Dark Apostles and Sorcerers orchestrated a concerted attack against the well-defended enclave. They made blasphemous appeals to the Dark Gods, promising the most horrific defilements for the holy city and vowing to sacrifice the choicest of Ministorum Priests to the warp's glory.

Some amongst the adherents to Calgar's memory believed that a confluence of belief had come to bear at Saint's Haven. The Imperial Faith there was now imperilled. Anguished prayers were submitted in their millions to the God-Emperor, seeking his intercession. In a twilight congregation of supplication on the city's battlements, as faithful warriors and priests prepared their souls to face death at the enemy's hands, a miracle manifested within the Tower of St Barthom. The three cracked bells at the tower's summit suddenly chimed in concert, untouched by any adept's hand according to later testimony. An eruption of golden fire consumed the bell tower, fading to a pyre that illuminated the battlements like a warden's torch. In the blaze's midst – heedless of the fire – stood the Hieromartyr of the Palatine Crusade. Celestine, the Living Saint, had come at the turning of the tide when the God-Emperor's servants had the most need.

immediately cease their operations. She revealed to Hrethnar the sacred mission she was to carry out. There was a foulness in Dontoria, Celestine told the Canoness, one which had been allowed to fester unchecked and now threatened to swamp the entire planet. Hrethnar knew of the loss of contact with companies guarding the fortwall's termination at Dontoria, but no news had yet reached Megaborealis of actual enemy activity along the many miles of its length. She could not refuse the Living Saint, however, for Celestine was a vessel of the God-Emperor's will.

The first signs of the malaise inhabiting Dontoria Hivesprawl became visible as the congregation of Adepta Sororitas reached the fortwall's terminus with the hivesprawl's defence walls. For millennia, they had been blackened and flaking with the industrial emissions from within. Now, a green-grey haze blanketed the horizon ahead. The massive vaulted fortress serving as the entrance to Dontoria was obscured, its upper reaches by the murk and the way ahead by a throng of thousands. A crowd of decaying Poxwalkers, stretching across the immense width of the fortwall, became visible as Dontoria's citizens: hive scum, low-life gangers, menial labourers, fabricators. Amongst them, Canoness Hrethnar also spied the uniforms of those regiments tasked with guarding the fortwall's northerly reaches.

Celestine spoke to the surrounding Battle Sisters. Dontoria's people were lost, she told them, and the entire false continent with them. Sorcery and corruption now ruled there. In passionate and irresistible tones, Celestine commanded every one of Hrethnar's Sisters to join her in cleansing Dontoria, with fire and blade, with bolt and fist, but most of all with their faith. With the Living Saint, Sister Ana and Canoness Hrethnar (now fighting as Celestine's Geminae Superia) at their fore – and with furious exclamations on their lips – the warriors of the Bloody Rose charged into the shambling crowd of decaying creatures. At the last moment, Celestine raised her eyes to the sky and the dark haze parted. Hrethnar's remaining ships, coordinated into a low orbit, unleashed a devastating lance strike at the fortress. The massive edifice exploded in bright light, flames and sprays of molten stone. The advancing mobs of Poxwalkers evaporated in a storm of holy fire, with those at the blast's periphery rent apart and smashed aside by the fury of the Battle Sisters' attack.

The Sisters of the Bloody Rose forged on through the ruin and into Dontoria's outer districts. Hundreds of the shambling, unnatural Poxwalkers had been obliterated, but the true horror of Dontoria's fate was revealed as tides of yet more of them poured from every alleyway and building. Screaming squads of Battle Sisters unleashed volleys of explosive bolts and sheets of holy promethium into the hordes they faced. Belied by their fury and aggression, Hrethnar's Sisters worked methodically, purging district by district of the taint. Over the course of several days, more of Hrethnar's ships achieved orbital synchronicity over Dontoria. They fired heavenly bolts of lance fire and building-sized conflagration warheads in a procession of fire and destruction ahead of the advancing Sisters. Subsprawls, hive cities and whole factorum districts blazed with gigantic firestorms.

The burning of an entire continent was not lost on the rest of the world. The growing pyre, along with miles and miles of black smoke, was visible from orbit. On Vigilus' surface, horizons in the direction of Dontoria were lit by flame both day and night. There were some who feared it boded the return of Abaddon, or that some terrible calamity had come to claim them all. Amongst the impassioned cults of sacrifice, whose message spread ever stronger from Saint's Haven in the wake of the massacre there, the interpretation was clear. This was a beacon of faith, lit by the devout. However turgid the Great Rift, they believed, Celestine's efforts would shine out all the way to Terra; the God-Emperor would see his faithful servants had kept his covenant and it would stand as a warning to Abaddon that Vigilus was not his to take.

THE FATE OF VIGILUS

Vigilus no longer shuddered in the throes of warp anomalies. The resurgence of faith in the Imperial Creed, bolstered by belief in the purifying halo emitted by Hearthlack, helped to hold back the threat of extinction. Some Imperial commanders were fearful of how long such fanaticism could be maintained, or even if Abaddon would reappear. For now, they exhorted their armies to capitalise on the victories that belief had brought them.

The Imperial command structure on Vigilus, which had fractured in the wake of Marneus Calgar's fall, began to be reassembled. With every narrow victory, and each determined holding out, precious time and space to manoeuvre was won. Lines of communication were re-established. Reconnaissance parties were freed from front-line duty to gather information on enemy movements and discover the fate of forces thought to have disappeared. Fabricator Vorsch oversaw the reignition of forge temples his Skitarii had managed to retake in Megaborealis, increasing the haphazard trickle of fresh resources and materiel to a steady stream. A new conclave of war was established – the Synod Vigilant – taking up the mantle of command and control from earlier incarnations such as the Vigilus Senate and Aquilarian Council. The Synod Vigilant firmly established the Ecclesiarchy's prominence in a new hierarchy that was still evolving. With piety and fanatical adherence to the Imperial Creed on Vigilus at its strongest in centuries, the priests and Canonesses of the Adeptus Ministorum now wielded far greater influence than the remnants of Vigilus' nobility and the surviving Tech-Priests of Stygies VIII. With the exception of the Black Templars, the Adeptus Astartes on Vigilus viewed the surge in zealotry with a wary eye, but they too felt a resurgent strength of spirit. For Vigilus to have survived to see its forces once more on the offensive, and that so many of their heroic number had fallen to achieve this state – no less Marneus Calgar himself – was an inspiration. Space Marine battle-brothers made oaths to the glorious dead as much as to their Chapter ideals.

Within all but one of Vigilus' massive hivesprawls, military coordination and religious fervour went hand in hand. Hyperia Hivesprawl, its status as the world's capital and central authority assured by the miracles that had occurred there, was held up as the model to which to aspire. Great swathes of its outlying districts were still viciously contested by Heretic Astartes, their allied cultists and traitors. Xenocultist saboteurs and Kommando strikes by Orks from the Wastes were also ever-present threats, but many of the central hive cities and factorum plazas were secure. At Dirkden, a conglomerate army of Astra Militarum from Cadia and Torranis, Sisters of Battle from the Order of Our Martyred Lady, and squads of Black Templar Space Marines crusaded into the hivesprawl's western reaches. Known as the Assembly of Sol Magnificus and led by Castellan Avar Siedrand, the army thrust like a dagger into Dirkden's Genestealer Cultists, cutting off the xeno-hybrids' advances towards Hyperia.

The terrified zealotry whipped up by Inquisitor Cartavolnus at Storvhal had disappeared along with those who had fought for him. An indirect consequence of his secret war, however, had been the elimination or disruption of several heretical forces. Elite reinforcements dispatched via squadrons of Archaeopters from Megaborealis

EMBEDDED CLAWS

The once-vast armada of Ork ships was now virtually gone. Drifting hulks of its kroozers still contained pockets of atmosphere in which many thousands of Orks survived, however. Some of the wrecked ships were caught in the gravity wells of Vigilus' sister planets, others were gutted and remade by ingenious Meks from the inside, eventually fracturing into dozens of smaller craft made from their parent ship's wreckage. The Orks on Vigilus' surface were apparently stranded there, but few greenskins entertained any notion of leaving, not when the planet still presented the opportunity for mass warfare against numerous foes. Orks were capable of digging into a world, turning native and becoming a fixed threat to be dealt with for centuries to come. The scrap cities grew larger, their workshops able to churn out ever more ramshackle war engines. Servo-spies from Megaborealis had also surveyed the construction of a new scrap city, deep in the Wastes. The Orks had discovered an ancient fortress, ignored or abandoned by the Humans of Vigilus, and here Bootstompa Ghalgutz began building an impenetrable bastion.

The cultists of the Pauper Princes, their Maguses unable to explain the non-appearance of the Star Children after years of fighting their oppressors, began to make preparations to spread to more distant systems. Grand oratories spread by their Clamavuses claimed this was only the beginning of a prophesied quest, a series of trials to be overcome before the Star Children deemed them worthy enough to be granted ascension. The cult's spies and informants witnessed the new found religious focus of Vigilus' armies and citizens. The Maguses saw such belief as ripening the unfaithful, preparing them to more ably accept the truth of Grandsire Wurm's glorious message. With fierce zealotry spreading across the planet, its subtle corruption could make it possible for the whole world to fall at the Patriarch's cloven feet.

Outside the fortwalls of Dontoria, a giant sinkhole appeared. A small band of hardy survivors, the Genestealer Cultists of the Brethren Dontoria, had survived both the sorcerous pox and the devastating firestorms deep underground. Welcomed with joy by their brethren in other hivesprawls, their survival was seen as a great blessing, tempered only by traces of sores and boils that many of Dontoria's survivors now bore. Those with visible signs of disease were swiftly and mercifully killed, but many of the remaining Brethren Dontoria unknowingly carried the disease into the dense warrens of other gene-sects.

took the Voschian Canals in a series of shock assaults along Storvhal's north-eastern districts. In the meantime Dontoria burned, the corpses of its cities and shanties blazing unchecked. The firestorms unleashed by Saint Celestine and her Sisters of Battle, not to mention the devastating strikes from Canoness Hrethnar's ships, continued to rage. Abandoned caches of unrefined promethium, chemical vapours from cracked macro-pipes and bursts of intestinal gases from bloated corpses fed the flames. In some districts, the corpses of those infected with warp-borne disease had been piled so high by the Sisters that they rose above the height of buildings. The roar of the flames, coupled with metallic groans as the heat buckled nearby structures, was deafening. Nothing above ground now lived.

WAR WITHOUT END

While the Imperial commanders upon Vigilus attempted to exploit both the power of their warriors' faith and the refugee forces arriving in-system, the champions of the Dark Gods still held the upper hand in terms of sheer numbers. Lords of Chaos, warp-wielding Sorcerers and arcane Warpsmiths throughout the Vigilus System did not pare back the frequency or severity of their assaults. Amongst them, Lord Korval the Nightspear and the sorcerer Xagramothis of the Black Legion, as well as Borgha the Red Hand originally of the World Eaters, had received their orders directly from Abaddon before his departure. They, as well as many other warlords, were to continue the war on Vigilus come what may – to butcher and bleed the world's defenders until either their armies fell or their enemies did. These were champions the Despoiler trusted to do what was bid of them, those who knew the extent to which Abaddon would go to punish failure.

Xagramothis commanded an army of experienced warriors, amongst whom were large numbers of ancient Chosen and warped Possessed. In the privacy of his mind, the Sorcerer had at first questioned Abaddon's motivations for seemingly casting his veteran warriors into what increasingly looked like an unwinnable conflict. Xagramothis had come to sense opportunity at Vigilus, however: Inquisitor Cartavolnus. He had followed the Inquisitor's attacks against the Noctilith Crowns and prepared his plans to capture the loremaster and tear the secrets he had learned from his living mind.

Other warlords that continued to carry out Abaddon's designs for Vigilus undertook campaigns of subversion, misdirection and decimation. Human operatives bound to the Alpha Legionnaire Master Omicron infiltrated open-air religious sermons in the ruined shells of newly consecrated shrines. Their whispers wore away at the growing sense of security, stoking schisms amongst the faithful and reopening old divisions. At the outermost fringes of the Vigilus System, Iron Warriors escorts belonging to the Warsmith Veszrax preyed upon refugee ships arriving at the Mandeville Point. Selected targets were run down and paralysed by transmitted bursts of mutated scrapcode. Iron Warriors boarding specialists would butcher the occupants, before the Warsmith's techno-arcane skills were used to alter and overwrite the ships' systems. These ghost ships were sent on their way towards Vigilus, as disruption tools; they broadcast blasphemous chants underlaid with scrapcode to infect listening posts, and those who boarded them found not only a horrific charnel house but system logs that told of armadas of Chaos vessels heading towards Vigilus. Chaos Space Marine warbands reduced in numbers instead used their greater tactics and experience to draw Imperial forces out of position, leaving them overstretched and more vulnerable to others, or else lured them into far larger conflicts with rampaging Ork warbands.

Abaddon's strategic plans for the Gauntlet went far beyond Vigilus. Though he wanted the planet to suffer, for having had the temerity to survive so far, it represented an irritant to him now and nothing more.

THE STORM ABATED

Amongst the wider sub-sector around Vigilus, the systems occupying the northern end of the Nachmund Gauntlet had not fared as well. Dozens of worlds, outposts and stations had fallen, either in fire and blood before yet more of the Despoiler's armies or amidst apocalyptic energies as the warp storms of the Great Rift swallowed them whole. The Thort Ascendancy – a mercantile coalition of trading stations that Vigilus' nobility had used as a source of information and exotic contraband for generations – was reported to have been torn apart by a large Chaos fleet. Its habitats and sub-stations were severed from one another and sent hurtling into the Thort star or into the frozen void of interstellar space. The shipyards of Proxiten Rhule; the mining colonies beneath Vendigast and amongst the accretion disc of St Marinus' Halo; the Jericus-class star fortress Gorheim – all of them had been destroyed and their defenders brutally massacred. Tales of a repeating voice screaming in the warp channels near Qu'arth suggested it was the Astropath Senioris of Strike Fleet Lucretius which had disappeared en route to relieve the hive world of Kennet Majoris. The fleet's twenty four cruisers and three dozen escort squadrons had simply vanished in a sudden surge of the Great Rift's periphery.

The fluctuating tidal zones of the Great Rift edged closer to each other, yet passage remained just possible into the Imperium Nihilus. Around Vigilus itself, the unnatural warp scar was still visible in the sky, but astrometrists and stellar divinators claimed it had slowed to a halt in its approach. Inquisitor Cartavolnus' plan to sunder the Noctilith Crowns had stopped whatever warp energies were being funnelled onto Vigilus from accumulating, thereby halting their influence on the Cicatrix Maledictum; a small mercy for the planet.

The refugee ships that finally reached Vigilus – those that avoided Veszrax's pickets – told their own tale. They bore within their holds but a fraction of the Imperial forces defending these systems. The coalescing hierarchy upon Vigilus saw the mounting evidence of a new, grim reality. Within the holy circle described by Hearthlack, the Vigilus System was more alone than ever, held in a state of siege by Abaddon's armies, and its avenues of escape being closed off one by one. Such was the potency of the idea of Hearthlack that hundreds claimed to be able to see a thread of shining gold in Vigilus' night skies. Though the trail of tainted atmosphere was barely visible even to optical augurs in orbit above Vigilus, the concept of a gilded halo encircling the system and shielding it from the horrors of the Great Rift had nevertheless become an accepted fact. Millions of Vigilus' surviving citizens and defenders took this as yet another sign of the God-Emperor's approval of their deeds.

Vigilus was now alone, assailed but surviving. Abaddon turned his attention to the rest of the Nachmund Gauntlet. With the *Vengeful Spirit* once more at his command, he drove his armies further south down the gullet of the Gauntlet, his cold eyes fixed firmly on Dharrovar.



Like the churning innards of some ancient and terrible deity, the tremors of vast machinery pulsed throughout the Vengeful Spirit. *There were rhythms amongst the vibrations that no Tech-Priest would have been able to account for. There were shivers that beat unnatural tattoos on loose fixtures, set up syncopathic loops that drove mortal slaves insane and wove ripples in pools of ruddy oil that conformed to no natural law. Abaddon's crew of* Black Legionnaires *believed that the* Vengeful Spirit *– more ancient than any of them – had long since become a living entity. Many of them viewed the teeth-aching, subsonic cacophony as the contented growls of a great beast welcoming back its true master.*

The Warmaster of Chaos held court within an octagonal chamber above the upper levels of the *Vengeful Spirit*'s primary bridge. Until very recently it had been a scrying cell used by one of Abaddon's seers. Though the space was large, the chamber's atmosphere was close. It stank like an abattoir. The potency of the visceral smell was cut through with wafts of forbidden incense and polluted seepage from hidden engineering ducts. At its black perimeter, fetishes on gore-crusted chains swung in breezes none could feel or hear.

Spread throughout one half of the room, several blade's lengths from each other, were over a dozen obscured figures. Their exact number was difficult to determine. In the dim, claustrophobic atmosphere, they all appraised each other for weaknesses to exploit. Their signature bulk and silhouette marked most as Heretic Astartes, but several figures near the chamber's darker recesses were more indistinct; whether humanoid or not, their form fixed or fluid, or even whether they were physically present, was not certain.

Apart from a handful of glowing helmet lenses, the flicker of hololith haze and the occasional shiver of eldritch energy, the only illumination came from the chamber's very centre. A large psychic construct hung there above a ritual fire pit in which the remains of the chamber's former occupant burned with crackles of puce flame. The empyric creation was a multi-dimensional strategic map, a host of shimmering strands and witchlights formed of dancing warpflame. It moved like a nest of insects in a lattice of connections that changed moment by moment. The motes of light bore signifiers and runes, identifying them as systems, fleets, warp routes, anomalies and a host of strategic minutiae.

Scant feet from the chamber's centre, the Despoiler stood like an immovable titan of old. All eyes were on him, all hung on his orders, sought his approbation and feared his wrath. His armoured mass buckled the sigil-carved deck plates beneath his form. They creaked as he leaned forward into the glow before him, his features underlit. On the other side of the psychic construct, three figures stood in its light. To Abaddon's left, a champion of the Black Legion stood to rigid attention. As Abaddon leaned forwards, his gaze did not shift, merely boring deeper into the warrior.

'And?'

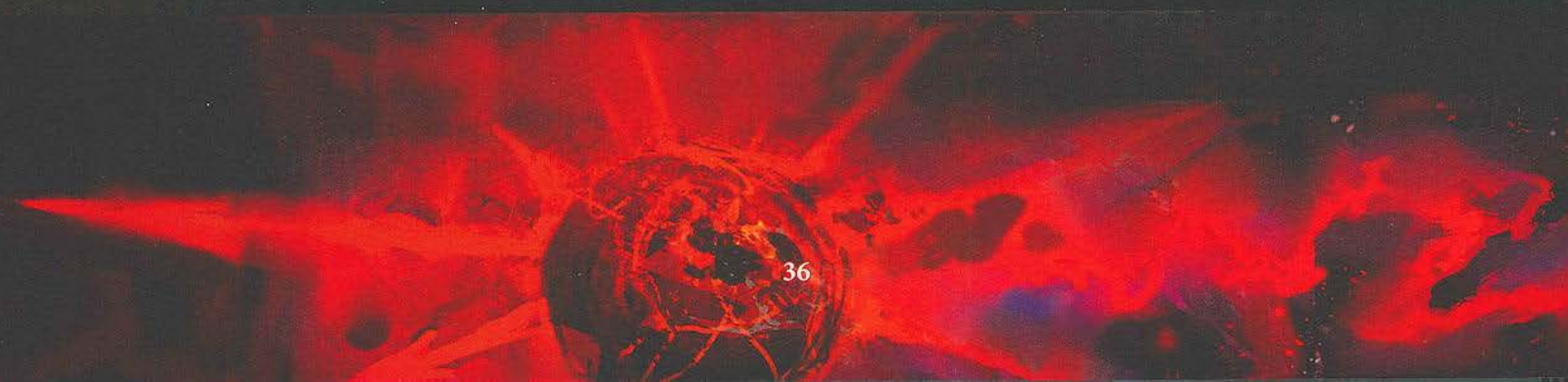
The newly appointed Chainmaster Dorrek Xarrimand, his black armour still flecked with the now-drying blood of his predecessor, had never heard so much threat laden into so small a word. Behind Warmaster Abaddon, the shadowed chamber was seemingly empty, but Xarrimand knew there would be dozens of his master's ruthless Terminator bodyguard poised to kill at Abaddon's merest gesture.

'Repairs from the emergency translation are nearing completion, Warmaster. Former gangmasters have been reassigned as bilge assets or rendered for feed. The purging of formerly disloyal decks proceeds apace.' Xarrimand appeared ready to make a further remark but lapsed into uncomfortable silence.

'Increase purge of loyal decks adjacent to the traitors',' Abaddon replied, never taking his eyes from Xarrimand. 'They will know what it means to allow betrayal one bulkhead away.'

Abaddon let the implicit accusation hang, knowing that Xarrimand's previous command had been only one step further removed. It would only take one wrong move from the new Chainmaster for the fiery wrath of his master's ire to spread further, to any of those damned by their perceived inaction in the face of betrayal.

The Warmaster's hard eyes flicked suddenly to the obscured figure on his right. Appearing above a squat mechanism of metal joints and daemon flesh was the hololithic transmission of the Warsmith Veszrax. The dais-like Daemon Engine on which the hololith emitters were mounted took an involuntary step back at Abaddon's stare, jolting the hard-light image of the Iron Warriors warlord. Veszrax, evidently stood on the bridge of his own flagship, appeared not





to notice, and bowed his head to acknowledge Abaddon's attention.

++The noose tightens, Warmaster. I have personally razed the bastions of Barentis and Vageshizzar to the bedrock. I have secondary confirmations of thirteen more systems to coreward having surrendered or been obliterated.++

As the Warsmith's gutteral voice ground on, listing victory after victory, he gestured at something unseen aboard his own ship. After a moment, a slew of the brighter, purer sigils in the psychic construct dimmed, turning the colour of burnt flesh. From them, spidery tendrils of darkness reached out as the warlord continued.

++Our rigged pyrebarques, laced with cyberblight of Lord Perturabo's own design, have reached the forges at Veitheim. Their Magi will be incapable of stemming its spread.++

The Warsmith paused to give a grimace of gloating satisfaction. Abaddon did not blink. The Iron Warriors warlord incautiously pushed further, misreading the Warmaster's mood.

++The Imperial reinforcements to Fundis, delayed by our bought pirates, arrived only in time to witness their failure. We captured three battlecruisers intact and scattered the remnants into the Twins' fiery embrace. Vigilus remains besieged; refugee ships attempting to reach the system are being intercepted on my orders and their vessels repurposed as void mines. However . . .++

Abaddon clenched one armoured gauntlet, the talons that tipped the other sliding together to produce a scissoring whine in the silence left by Veszrax's unfinished sentence. It was an invitation not to waste the Warmaster's time, but to be infinitely wary of how to continue.

++Warmaster, our victories in the galactic south afford us more than enough assets for a full invasion that will wipe all life from Vigilus.++

'Do not forget whose victories these are, Veszrax, nor whose assets you would so freely employ. They have their orders, my orders. There are prizes your fettered calculus cannot comprehend.'

Abaddon lifted his gaze to the psychic construct. As he spoke, dark burning sigils converged along black webs toward the shining crevice that represented the throat of the Nachmund Gauntlet. Other shadowy nodes moved in their wake, until it seemed like a black wave of warpflame was encroaching on the increasingly isolated bright sparks of Imperial resistance.

The Despoiler looked through the construct to the third figure directly in front of him. This one didn't stand. It was a crumpled, sore-marked slave, shackled to the decking by heavy iron bands and rune-etched chains. The mortal spasmed as much as its bonds allowed, gagging as a thick slurry poured from its mouth and nostrils. The ooze fountained from the unfortunate's mouth, trickling over their upturned face before seeping away to who knew where. An opening appeared in the gushing sludge like a mouth and a voice issued from within. At odds with his hideous means of communication, Varhas Quor'vain's words were dry and smooth. There was an unsettling echo to them, as if the Mirror-Mage spoke with more than one tongue, slightly out of sync.

'My coven has expended much power on your behalf, lord. The Sea of Souls is awash with whispers, but we have parsed the truth from them. The emissaries of the Great Sorcerer are ever eager to aid you; they assail the Gauntlet's liminal zones, wracking worlds in mutating pyroclasms as the Great Ocean erodes the power that holds it back.'

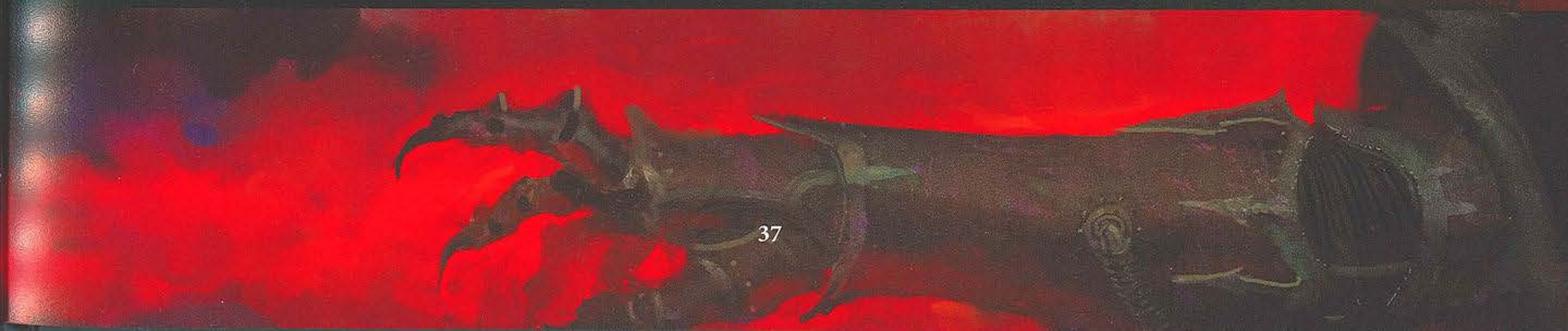
Quor'vain paused as the surrogate mouth appeared to inhale deeply. The slave, still vomiting the viscous substance, arched its back in agony.

'This vessel is almost empty,' Quor'vain said. 'There is a pillar of resistance around Vigilus, however, but it is a radiance the emissaries tell me cannot last forever. As always, the Reflected Ones are at your command, my Warmaster.'

The Mirror-Mage's voice faded and the torrent of black sludge ceased to flow. The slave jolted once before falling dead; its abused flesh swiftly disintegrating from the inside.

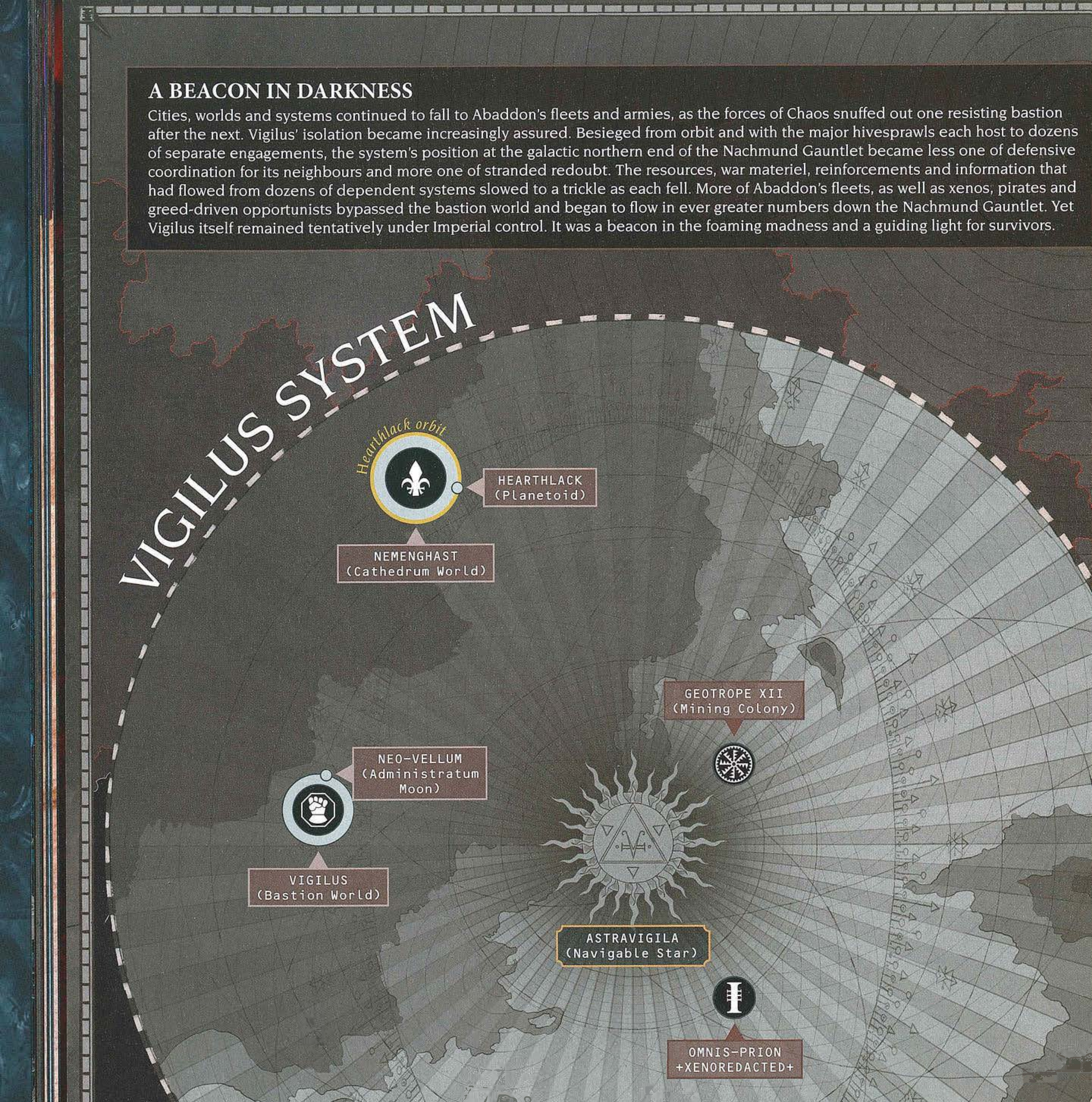
Abaddon stared up at the psychic construct, as if daring it to defy him. All the pieces were in motion. Systems fell, Imperial fleets swallowed or scattered, smaller and smaller flickers of purity illuminating fewer redoubts against his implacable armies. The already dark chamber dimmed further. Abaddon's face was barely visible as a dark red visage as he turned the black pits of his eyes to a large warrior who had stalked from the chamber's rear, a huge polearm striking the decking with his heavy footsteps.

'And the response from Kaligius, Haarken? What of Dharrovar?'



A BEACON IN DARKNESS

Cities, worlds and systems continued to fall to Abaddon's fleets and armies, as the forces of Chaos snuffed out one resisting bastion after the next. Vigilus' isolation became increasingly assured. Besieged from orbit and with the major hivesprawls each host to dozens of separate engagements, the system's position at the galactic northern end of the Nachmund Gauntlet became less one of defensive coordination for its neighbours and more one of stranded redoubt. The resources, war materiel, reinforcements and information that had flowed from dozens of dependent systems slowed to a trickle as each fell. More of Abaddon's fleets, as well as xenos, pirates and greed-driven opportunists bypassed the bastion world and began to flow in ever greater numbers down the Nachmund Gauntlet. Yet Vigilus itself remained tentatively under Imperial control. It was a beacon in the foaming madness and a guiding light for survivors.



Imperial System

System Lost – Empyric Engulfment

Fallen System

Warp Route

Unnavigable Warp Route

KENNET MAJORIS (Hive World)

YOLARIS (Civilised World — Tithe x102)

VENDIGAST (Mining Colony)

QUARTH (Imperial Knight World)

VEITHEIM II (Forge World)

THE TWINS OF FUNDIS (Binary System, Adeptus Astra Telepathica Luminarchy)

THORT (Civilised World — Tithe RT-36/v)

VAGESHIZZAR (Astra Militarum Muster World)

ORGALNAFOR (Industrial World)

VIGILUS (Bastion World)

DEVERRES (Mercantile Commune)

ST MARINUS' HALO (Fortified Accretion Disc)

Panspectric Wake Detection – Heretic Astartes fleets ++ cogitation breaking down, vessel estimates 250-2500 and rising++

URASTOR (Death World)

AGROFAR + INQUISITORIAL SEAL+

JAGDETH MAGNA (Agri World)

TOWARDS VORANOS

FORCES OF THE IMPERIUM

The forces of the Imperium on Vigilus were not as rigidly organised, nor as numerous, as they had been during Marneus Calgar's generalship. Individual strike forces and temporary logistics agreements in the aftermath of the Chapter Master's fall focused on short-term goals and immediate objectives. With the resurgence in the Imperial Creed, however, Vigilus' defending forces began to take advantage of their enemies' own fractured cohesion.

Vigilus' already devastated infrastructure had been given little reprieve since Abaddon had disappeared. Smashed by destructive warfare and tectonic activity, sabotaged by Genestealer Cultists and pillaged by Orks, the hivesprawls' supply lines and manufacturing output was almost non-existent. Only in Megaborealis, where Fabricator Vorsch had managed to carve out a limited means of production amongst his retained holdings, was the planet's industry able to partially support the war. Supply lighters and armoured landers continued to make daring runs from orbit, past enemy vessels to the surface, though the transit was perilous and some of the Imperial ships had almost run dry of ordnance and materiel.

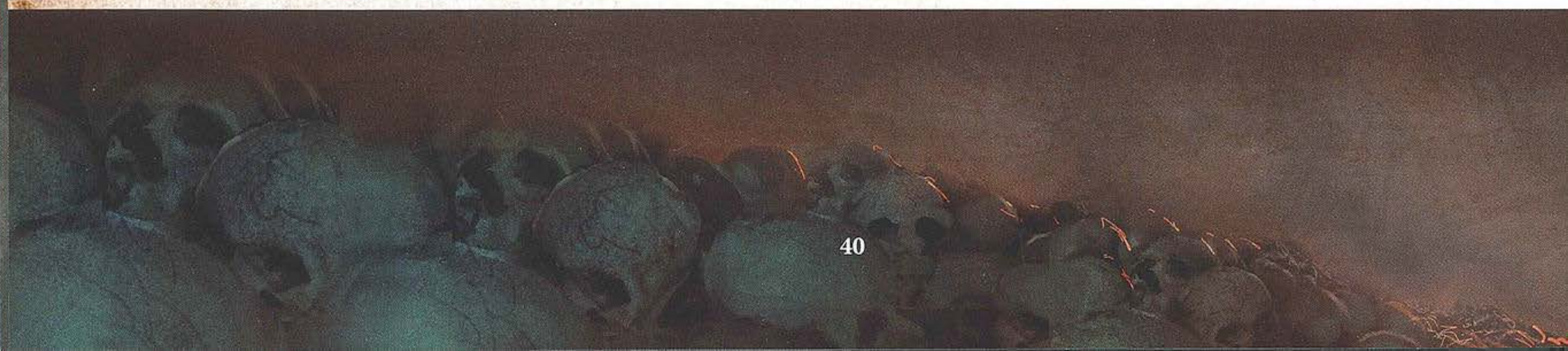
Astra Militarum forces on Vigilus had been particularly savaged. Large numbers of armoured vehicles operated by several regiments had been destroyed in the Wastes by Orks or Heretic Astartes as they attempted to forge reinforcement corridors between the continents. Contact had been lost completely with the regiments fighting in Dontoria. When Celestine and Canoness Hrethnar broached the foetid environs of that hivesprawl, they discovered none alive and incinerated any that had been brought back to hideous unlife by the sorcerous contagion there. Regiments from Cthonol, Ventrillia, Cadia and Tallarn continued to fight upon the fortwalls against Ork spearheads and infiltrators. Others, such as skirmishing formations from Catachan and Dharan, alongside abhuman auxiliaries drafted from Anark Zeta, waged deadly campaigns of street fighting. From block to block, amongst ruined ghettos and industrial districts in Oteck, Hyperia and Mortwald, ambushes and counter-attacks continued day and night. Genestealer Cultists and Heretic Astartes were pushed back from their hidden strongholds in several places, but every victory bore a heavy cost in blood for the Astra Militarum.

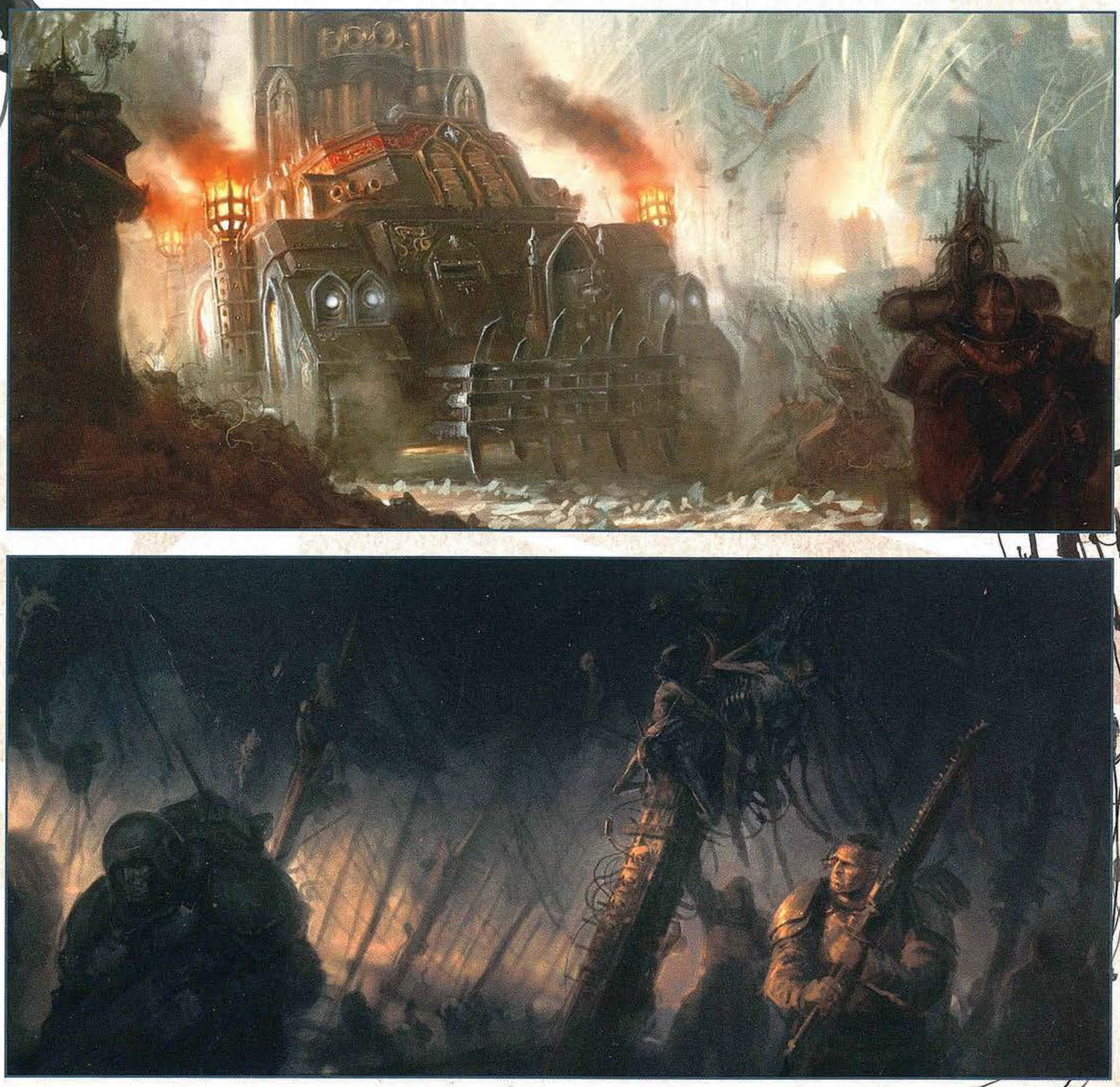
While some of the Imperial Guard's formations were left to consolidate and amalgamate – or simply to die – as best they could, others were reinforced with conscripted refugees arriving in the system from other, fallen, war zones. Many of the refugee survivors and even some of the ships' crews, however, disappeared. Some were believed to have turned traitor or been abducted by xenocultists, but many in fact found their way into the hands of Fabricator Vorsch and his tech-magi. Either mindwiped to serve as replacement servitors or indoctrinated with brutal swiftness and transformed into Skitarii cyborgs, the Tech-Priests fed them into their waning ranks of servants. A few refugee warriors – seemingly selected at random – were escorted from their landing shuttles by squads of Cartavolnus' dark-clad elite. What the Inquisitor hoped to extract from them, none could say or dared to guess.

Astra Militarum defence lines and armoured columns across Vigilus were reinforced with elite Imperial forces. Canoness Hrethnar's Sisters of the Bloody Rose comprised both the remnants of her original Crusade and those elements of her Order they had absorbed upon reaching Vigilus. Massed squads of Battle Sisters, absolution-seeking Repentia and squads of hallowed Paragon Warsuits undertook missions to relieve other Imperial armies, or give them the time to redeploy without being routed wholescale. Battle Sisters of the Order of Our Martyred Lady, their numbers in several hivesprawls insufficient to conduct unsupported attacks, instead fought shoulder to shoulder with their Astra Militarum allies. The cult of sacrifice was especially visible amongst those who fought alongside the black-armoured Battle Sisters. Platoons of Imperial Guardsmen from Mhortan took to tying black and scarlet rags around their rifles and stencilling black skulls on their tanks as a way of honouring the pious Battle Sisters they fought with.

Then there were the strike forces of numerous Chapters of the Adeptus Astartes. Imperial Fists, Silvered Blades, Space Wolves, Mortifactors, Iron Hands and many more besides fought their own campaigns of brutal assaults. Not all the Ultramarines had left Vigilus with their Chapter Master and many of them were drawn into Inquisitor Cartavolnus' Coronal War. Chapters who had pledged their service to the Wardens of the Gauntlet fought both on Vigilus and in the void war throughout the system, conducting violent boarding actions and teleport assaults against Chaos and Ork vessels. Nobles of House Terryn were amongst the dozens of Imperial Knights present on Vigilus, as were several Freeblade Knights hailing from the fallen world of Dharrovar who sought to eclipse the stain of that traitor world with noble heroism. Alongside Warhound Titans of Legio Voltus, the Knights were the principal Imperial forces fighting the Orks in the Wastes beyond the hivesprawls.

A renewed religious purpose, fuelled by the morbid cult of sacrifice, gave fresh vigour to Imperial forces in several key battle zones. Districts once lost to Abaddon's armies were retaken. Resurgent Genestealer Cultists were driven back into their hidden lairs. Greenskin assaults crashed against newly fortified defences, and a fragile aerial superiority was achieved over Hyperia against the Orks' fightas and bommas. Aeronautica Imperialis pilots, kept combat-ready via cocktails of stimms sourced from hidden reserves at Mortwald, flew near-continuous missions.







THE DESPOILER'S DREADKIN

Abaddon's sudden departure from the Vigilus war zone may have disrupted some of his armies' unified assaults, but the champions, warlords and conquerors who had heeded his call did not need the Despoiler's presence to continue their slaughter. Most warbands indulged their own dark desires for destruction, vengeance and the corruption of the Emperor's servants, though now for their own agendas rather than Abaddon's.

The forces of Chaos present in the Vigilus System after Abaddon's disappearance comprised many factionalised warbands with anarchic – sometimes opposing – goals. The champions of the Dark Gods seek power not only in the material sense via conquest, enslavement and bloodshed. Their vile atrocities and acts of destructive carnage are also the means by which they hope to attract the attention of their Chaos God patrons and thereby gain the supernatural boons of the warp. So it was in the Vigilus System, with many of the traitor war-leaders returning to acts of barbarism and massacre that solely fuelled their own agendas. Some traitor warbands – amongst them some of the Black Legion and others who were unswervingly loyal to Abaddon – were ordered away from Vigilus by their master once he had regained control of the *Vengeful Spirit*. They took ship to push on toward Dharrovar, or deeper into Nachmund Gauntlet as part of the Despoiler's wider plans. Yet many more forces of Heretic Astartes had arrived to take their place. Imperial strategos could not divine whether these more recent arrivals represented another phase in Abaddon's schemes or if, like sharks scenting blood, they were predatory reavers drawn from the void to glut on the ravaged planet.

The core of Vigilus' attackers comprised dozens of Black Legion warbands. Warriors of the Despoiler's own corrupted brotherhood, the commanders of these forces ultimately served no one but Abaddon. The Despoiler had ordered his warlords – such as Grethin Vorlok (who ruled the largest warband on Vigilus), Dharn the Umbral and the Sorcerer Morswain Skarthule – to destabilise Imperial attempts at regaining control of Vigilus. Coordinating their assaults more than most Heretic Astartes on the planet, these warbands planned to fulfil their master's commands. The greater coherence and discipline of the Black Legion's widespread forces made them one of the most dangerous threats to Vigilus' defenders. Black Legion forces – such as the elite Hounds of Abaddon, the Ironspines and the Bringers of Decay – conducted savage assaults against Imperial forces across the planet. The highly mobile hosts known as the Crimson Hurricane, their Black Legion panoply accentuated with blood-red sigils, hunted Imperial convoys and Ork



speedmobs alike through the world's arid wastelands. Warbands of the Sixth Rapture were amongst the few Black Legion formations that committed to temporary pacts with warriors outside their traitorous brotherhood, joining forces in several theatres with those of the Flawless Host Renegade Chapter.

Elements of other renegade Chapters, including the Scourged and the Red Corsairs, continued to attack targets of opportunity – as they had done from the earliest days of the War of Nightmares. As well as the elite warriors of these traitor brotherhoods, dread harbingers from the ancient Traitor Legions were present. Corrupted warbands of Death Guard, secret-seeking kill teams of the Thousand Sons and shadowy infiltrators believed to belong to the Alpha Legion joined the attack. Supporting the assaults of the Death Guard were legions of reanimated Poxwalkers and mutated horrors carrying the Gellerpox, a mechano-sorcerous plague that warped flesh and technology alike. Slaughtering warbands of the World Eaters Legion operated not only on Vigilus' surface, but also in the ongoing void battles throughout the system. Delivered in mass Dreadclaw boarding assaults, warbands such as the Bloody Dawn, Vresk's Hunters and the brass-clad Soul Butchers conducted boarding actions against both Navis Imperialis and Ork ships. The World Eaters had been promised a war overflowing with blood and skulls by Abaddon, and his absence meant nothing to them while they brutally collected their due.

The corrupted Legions and Chapters of the Heretic Astartes were far from the only agents of Chaos assembled at Vigilus. The legendary behemoths of the traitor Titan Legions, including god-engines hailing from the Death's Heads and Legio Decapitorum, evoked terror and unleashed apocalyptic destruction wherever they strode. In recent cycles, Chaos Knights forces had made planetfall in gigantic mass conveyors, and lances under the command of powerful Fallen Nobles – such as Lady Lucretza from House Lucaris and Zir Sturmund of House Khymere – poured their hatred and firepower into the planet's defenders.



Entire regiments of Militarum Traitoris, millions strong, had also been deployed, either from the holds of numerous capital ships belonging to the Traitor Legions or from bulk troop transporters. Unlike the forces of the Heretic Astartes, these Traitor Guardsmen often allied themselves with the insidious cults of Chaos-worshipping fanatics who had festered upon Vigilus since before the opening of the Great Rift. Though countless numbers of Traitor Guardsmen had been exterminated by Vigilus' armies, sizeable contingents of Jenen Ironclads, Feresk Truthsayers and Gobril Divine Indenturists managed to hold districts in Hyperia, Megaborealis and Storvhal. Many of these regiments were in thrall to one of the Traitor Legions present on Vigilus, such as the 243rd Pillasan Pantheistic Corps who all bore a representation of the Talon of Horus on their mismatched uniforms to signify their utter loyalty to Abaddon. Worshipper hosts such as the Devout Horde and remnants of the Pyroclast Cults, which had been thought eliminated by Fabricator Vorsch, infiltrated citizen-holds and gang territories, swelling their numbers with deserters or by performing proselytic rituals of forced conversion. Though the waning of the Great Rift's influence had seen a reduction in daemonic incursions, many of these cults practised debased summoning rites or submitted to possession by warp spawn, and their assaults were often accompanied by baying packs of terrifying daemons.

DEFILERS OF SANCTITY

New alliances and pacts were forged amongst many of the Chaos forces present on Vigilus. At a string of war zones across the world – and also notably on the planetoid Hearthlack – Chaos Space Marine warbands of the Word Bearers and Night Lords attacked in concert with one another. What connected them were their targets: newly reconsecrated shrines and forge temples, cathedrums where the strength of Imperial faith held out, and sites of heroic martyrdom used as rallying points for the Imperium's armies. Coordinated attacks by Daemon Engines and Possessed Chaos Space Marines of the Word Bearers, supported by Raptors, Terminators and armoured assaults by the Night Lords, snuffed out many of these nexuses of faith and hope.

The Word Bearers Dark Apostle, Vandek Kathar, struck one such accord with Clawmaster Tharn Regerrin of the Night Lords. Kathar's disciples, the Crimson Tenet, knew of Hearthlack's recapture by Imperial forces and its status as a miraculous beacon of hope, but the Word Bearers did not have the strength for more than a precision strike. The zealous apostle of the Dark Gods trusted the Night Lord not one iota, but had banked on the Night Lords to accept an opportunity to inspire terror and crush the renewed hope held at Hearthlack. For his part, Regerrin despised Kathar and his warriors, viewing them as dangerous fanatics who needlessly justified atrocities with their own cursed faith; Regerrin knew such acts needed no justification. His murderous warriors, the Stalkers of the Eclipse, were experienced surprise attackers, employing teleport strikes and massed aerial deployment alongside distraction hordes of cultists and Traitor Guardsmen. These wretches were driven forward in their thousands to soak up the enemy's fire, under threat of becoming the personal playthings of their masters.

THE XENOS THREAT

The years-long war upon Vigilus had started with xenos invasions from both above and below. Orks and Genestealer Cultists amongst others sought to take the world, first from Imperial armies and then from Chaos warbands. Their attacks engulfed Imperial forces, Chaos warbands and each other, aiding Vigilus' descent into an anarchic nightmare of constantly shifting maelstroms of war.

ORKS

With typical greenskin resilience and enthusiasm, the Ork tribes upon Vigilus had not only endured but thrived in a near-constant state of war since their arrival. Though the Orks' remaining ships – both around Vigilus and throughout the system – had been pummelled by Imperial and Chaos squadrons to a fraction of the armada's initial size, the Orks on the surface had swollen in both numbers and strength over the years. Their scrap cities, formed around a nucleus of crashed kroozers and roks, had similarly grown. From these, Ork warbands of every clan conducted loot-hungry raids, hunting mobs that tracked convoys and immense stampedes of greenskins that fed ever-escalating battles. As Orks, they were undiscerning in their choice of target. They initially attacked the Imperial defenders of Vigilus and the xenocultists of the Pauper Princes, then Abaddon's armies and rival Ork warlords, as well as daemons and mysterious bands of Aeldari. Scrap cities served as bases from which to raid, as well as giant hives of industry and stinking squig farms of enormous size. Each was ruled by whichever brutal Ork had fought their way to pre-eminence, his tribe having the pick of any spoils over the fortress' countless other subservient tribes.

The foetid dominion known as Runthive contained tens of thousands of Gretchin and entire mobs of Runtherds under the regime of the Snakebite chieftain Ogrokk Bitespider. The Warboss' armies contained hordes of Killa Kans, and his squig farms provided truly monstrous creatures used as mounts by warbands of Beastsnaggas. Bitespider's Meks had also created artillery mobs in greater numbers than many hivesprawl defenders could muster. Fort Dakka had grown to become the largest of the scrap cities; Speedlord Supreme Krooldakka had solidified his hold over the fortress and ruled over dozens of speedmobs of bikers, battlewagons, buggies and flyboyz. Krooldakka's repeated assaults against the frontiers of Oteck, Hyperia and Mortwald not only expanded his territory but brought back the huge amounts of looted weapons and armour he needed to build his forces into the greatest Vigilus had ever seen. To the west of Fort Dakka was Drogzot's Crater. This vast crater was filled near to the brim with millions of tons of scrap amassed by the Lootas of Big Mek Drogzot. To better get from one pile of rusting riches to another, most of Drogzot's legion of Meks used rokkit packs, initially running on the fuel from their broken flagship – the *Fistful of Spannas* – but later supplemented with promethium stolen from Imperial armoured columns who had dared to cross the Wastes. Drogzot's rival Boss Mek, Big Tanka, prioritised brute strength over speed and style, hoping to impress Speedlord Krooldakka with sheer might. His city, Tanka Spill, was devoted to the creation of massive walkers, and his Boyz especially loved hunting Chaos Space Marine forces in order to festoon their Deff Dread and Stompas with trophies of spiked helms.

Skumtown apparently remained under the dominion of Mad Goff Murk. Several reports of his assassination were made to Imperial commanders. Whether the warlord who continued to lead assaults of mobs from Deffstomp's Goff Krushas and Da No-Mess Kill Krew was the same Ork or a successor was unknown. The dire reputation of Mad Goff Murk made him feared by almost all other Orks – apart from his ally Ragzakka. The self-styled Loota King, Bad Mek Ragzakka ruled over Hurrikane Rek. His Loota hordes provided the means for his countless Mekaniaks to build-up large forces of super-heavy walkers, but he was canny enough to also use his material wealth to pay off or bribe the warlords of other scrap cities.





GENESTEALER CULTS

The Cult of the Pauper Princes had lurked amongst Vigilus' impoverished and hard-worked labour force long before the Ork invasion. In thrall to their alien Patriarch, Grandsire Wurm, tens of millions of tainted hybrids with varying measures of the Genestealer Curse were spread across the planet. The teeming population Vigilus supported – at least before the war – had been dense and widespread enough to support a number of coexisting gene-sects of the Pauper Princes, hidden from those they viewed as oppressors. The gene-sects of Oteck and Mortwald were exceptionally well organised, their strategies already finely honed many years before war ever came to Vigilus.

Yet it was in Dirkden Hivesprawl that the Pauper Princes' vast numbers and superior planning had brought the Imperial authorities and savage invaders alike to their knees. Within its wider gene-sect, the hivesprawl harboured multiple sub-sects, such as the Flock Beneath, the Halfbrothers and the Grand Throng of Horga Threnst. These and others secured vast amounts of stolen materiel and had co-opted so many defence militia, Imperial Guardsmen, labourers and gangers to their cause, that they were able to field teeming broods of fanatical converts with the skills and experience to utilise their purloined equipment. At the Harlan Arsenal in Dirkden's southernmost district, Genestealer Cultists commanded by the Primus Felkus Roshenn butchered countless Tech-Priest Enginseers, servitors and regimental overseers. When the tanks and armoured carriers the Tech-Priests had been working on were next seen, it was at the other end of Dirkden, bearing cult sigils and hammering those warriors they should have been defending.

Though the members of these gene-sects had little contact with the xeno-hybrids of another, they were all genetically and psychically connected to each other through their shared Broodmind with Grandsire Wurm. Thus, all of Vigilus' hybrids bore chitin in various shades of the same sickly turquoise, and similar rubicund complexions in their flesh. Diversity between gene-sects of different hivesprawls was often displayed through the use of cult tattoos or armbands as unifying insignia, easily hidden under clothing and uniforms until the day of ascension. The Petitioners, an offshoot of the gene-sect within Megaborealis, employed a series of inked designs that imitated the electoos carried by the Tech-Priests' servants. A notable aberration was amongst the faithful of the Cult of the Bladed Cog. These cultists had arrived on Vigilus from off-world, unconnected directly to Grandsire Wurm but welcomed as 'delegates from beyond'.

Each gene-sect had its own war leaders, including a Magus, Primus and other specialists. On Vigilus, the cult's first Magus, Velleron of Megaborealis, was in psychic communication with the Magus of Dontoria Hivesprawl, Brothermagus Darrague. So close were they in thought and deed that they and their fellow Maguses – known collectively as the Conclave of the Wurm – occasionally requisitioned transit lifters and banded together to fight in the same place at the same time if they deemed it necessary. They had done so at Oteck, fighting the Astra Militarum within the Trevig Hollow. The Conclave were able to shield their loyal brothers and sisters from the enemy commander's pet sanctioned psykers, but also to terrorise and mentally flay the enemy forces.

CAMPAIGN RULES

'Servants of the God-Emperor! Heed the words of the Master of Mankind. We fight for District Fortannis-Delta, through ruin and filth - but He is with you! He is the lash at your backs, and the scourge unleashed by your weapons!

He is with you here, aye, but His realm encompasses far more. Fortannis-Delta is but one district. The hivesprawl beyond just one continent, the bastion of Vigilus. He calls you all to give everything you have, and we His servants can do nothing less.'

- *Pastor Krebb, Preacher-Profundis of Arcadis*





WAR OF FAITH CAMPAIGN

The ongoing war in the Nachmund Gauntlet had been grinding for years, neither side able to finally achieve the killing blow and drive their foe out of the region. Over the following pages, you will find a campaign system that allows you and a group of players to retell the events of the War Zone Nachmund Gauntlet story for yourselves, in the onslaught within the Vigilus System.

Where one-off games against favoured opponents and new foes alike offer plenty of fun and enjoyment, campaigns are something special, adding even more excitement, consequence and narrative to every tabletop clash. By entering a campaign you get to play not just one game, but a series of interlinked battles. You're not just playing to see who wins, but to seize hard-fought territory or resources, avenge an earlier defeat or earn fresh rewards for your army. Before each battle, you determine context; where the conflict is taking place, why, and what stakes and consequences it will have. At each game's end you discover what cost the battle has levied on your forces, and what experience or potent relics they have gained. If participating as part of a team, you play knowing your fellow campaign commanders are battling at the same time on nearby tabletops, all of you fighting for the same goal. It is an exciting and immersive experience.

At its heart, playing in a campaign is a narrative experience that forges war stories you and your fellow commanders will share for years to come. It can be the highlight of an entire gaming year and can spawn future events where you revisit old grudges or beloved settings. Whether you're completely new to campaign gaming, or a veteran looking for a new thrill, all you need to do is gather your armies and read on to discover how to get the most out of *War Zone Nachmund: Vigilus Alone*.

INTRODUCTION

A War of Faith campaign allows a group of players to get together, form alliances and play a series of games. It is split into campaign phases, each of which takes part in the key regions of Vigilus, or on the symbolically critical planetoid of Hearthlack. There can be any number of campaign phases, split across the three locations as the Campaign Master sees fit. Each battle will be fought with unique rules inspired by the key stages in War Zone Nachmund Gauntlet. At the end of each campaign phase, the balance of power in each locale will shift, the alliance with the most war zone points achieving victory in that phase and pushing back their foes. A new phase then begins, with each alliance trying to keep their foe on the back foot or stem the onslaught.

CAMPAIGN MASTER

A War of Faith campaign is best run with a Campaign Master. This is a heroic individual who takes on the mobilisation and organisation of the campaign so that the other players can focus on playing games. A Campaign Master is in a privileged position that offers a degree of leadership to the individual who takes on the role; however, its primary purpose is to facilitate a smooth and enjoyable experience for all players involved. A Campaign Master can indeed play in the campaign, but in larger campaigns that include a multitude of players, it may be they prefer to solely oversee the campaign rather than play in it.

Over the following pages we will refer to the Campaign Master and how they can go about organising a War of Faith campaign. On page 60, you will also find Campaign Master Edicts, which are useful tools and rules ideas that the Campaign Master can use to add further excitement to the campaign. If this is the first campaign for many of the players, or they would otherwise prefer to keep things as simple as possible, then these are not necessary for a War of Faith campaign. Otherwise, they are a useful tool for players to get the most out of a War of Faith campaign.

WAYS TO PLAY

The first step in the War of Faith campaign is for the Campaign Master to determine the type of play for the campaign: open, matched or narrative play. The Campaign Master will also need to determine the battle size (or battle sizes) that will be used in the campaign, and which mission packs they will draw missions from. It is important for the Campaign Master to specify these from the outset so that each player knows what to expect from the campaign before committing to it. We would always encourage a Campaign Master to take advice from their proposed group of players on which type of play is preferred, and what size armies players are able to muster for the Faction or Factions they wish to use for the duration. Taking part in a campaign of this type is a collaborative effort and requires agreement and cooperation from all involved to ensure that it runs smoothly, and that the maximum amount of enjoyment can be experienced by each participant.

PLAYERS AND ALLIANCES

Once a Campaign Master has stepped forward, their first task in organising a War of Faith campaign is to gather the players and sort them into alliances. The system is flexible enough to support various numbers of people; an experienced Campaign Master could run the campaign for dozens of gamers, and equally just two players could use the system to tie the results of their regular games together into a greater whole. The campaign is at its best, however, with a small group of like-minded and enthusiastic players who can meet on a regular basis, and who can be evenly distributed across two alliances.

The two alliances should be organised evenly and, where possible, based on the Faction being played, so have a chat with the group to determine this. Once players are assigned to an alliance, their army is committed to the cause and will do their all to achieve victory. For this reason, players should play the same Faction throughout the campaign. If they wish to change their Faction, they can do so at the Campaign Master's discretion. The alliances are as follows:

Imperial: Vigilus and its surrounding system are still nominally held by the Imperium, with their forces engaged on all fronts ensuring the tide of traitors does not overwhelm them. These desperate defenders draw upon strong reserves of faith and determination to ensure that the system is not lost forever to the servants of the Dark Gods. Any army with the **IMPERIUM** keyword is best suited to this alliance, as well as any who would seek to thwart the machinations of the gods of the warp.

Chaos: The many varied forces of Chaos share a strong need to subjugate Vigilus once and for all. Alongside these, many other forces would benefit from the disruption a Chaos victory would bring, from the Orkish hordes, who seek constant warfare against the strongest foes, to the Drukhari raiders, who would seek to take advantage to reap a toll of captives and terror from the population. Any army without the **IMPERIUM** keyword is best suited to this alliance.

These alliances allow for a well-rounded campaign, with each side battling back and forth for dominance.

ALLIES OF CONVENIENCE

Note that the options opposite are guidelines on how to organise players into an alliance, rather than a requirement. If it suits the group better to organise the alliances differently, then the Campaign Master should feel free to do so. For example, if many of the players in the group play armies associated with a single alliance, then to make the alliances more evenly numbered some of them may have to fight for a different alliance than we have recommended. This is fine. You could always create some interesting narrative to explain why that side chose to fight for a different alliance. Here are a few examples:

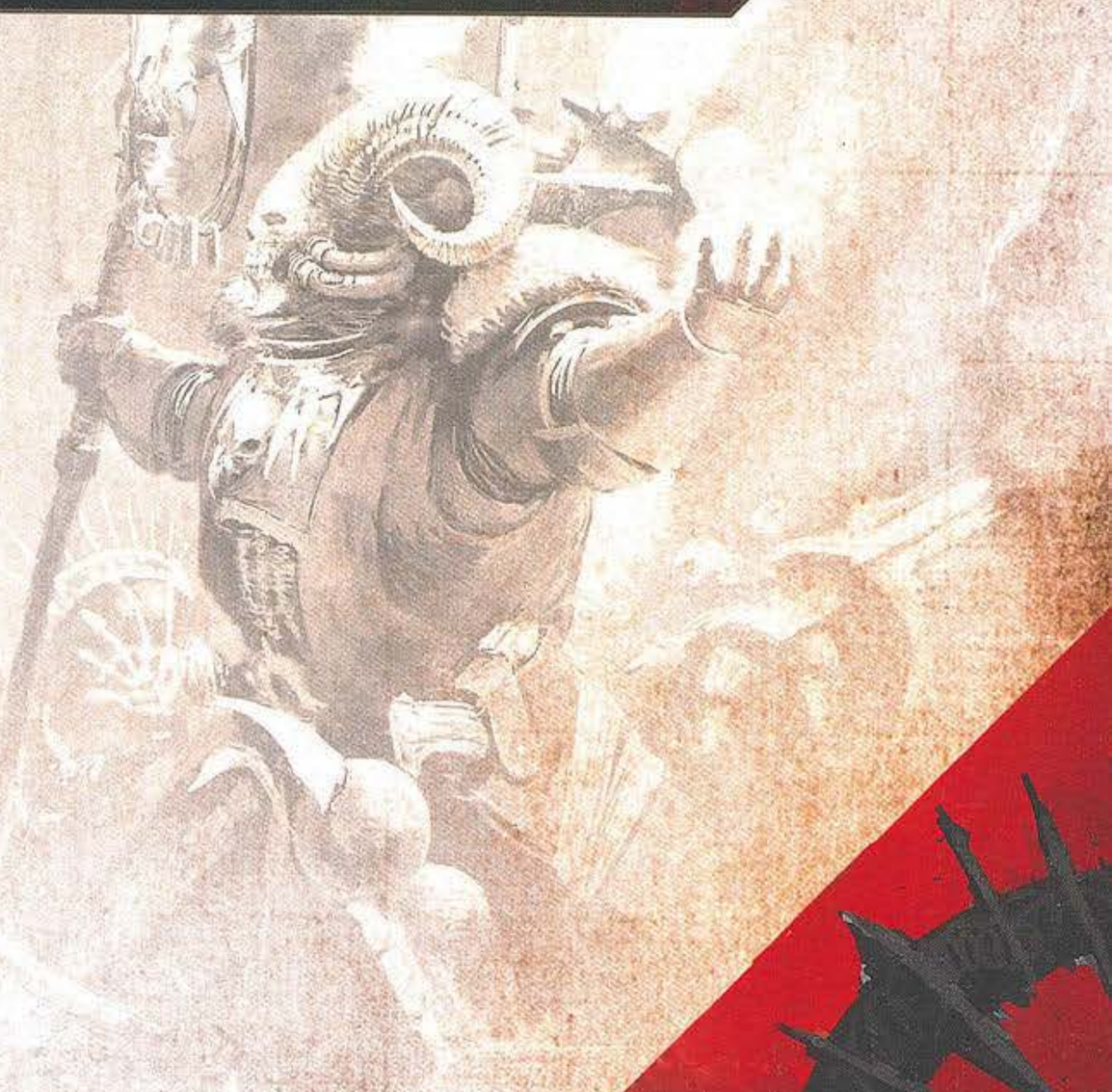
- The Aeldari seek to thwart the desires of the servants of Slaanesh. They appear from webway gates and fight on the side of the Imperial alliance, then disappear again before the worshippers of the Dark Gods are able to bring forces to bear against them.

- The Necrons view the increasing number of Noctilith Crowns as a threat, bleeding uncontrollable warp energies into their future domains. Emerging from hidden gateways, or fleets that appear suddenly in orbit, the relentless phalanxes of undying warriors destroy these structures wherever they find them.

- A Genestealer Cult, thus far unrevealed, works alongside the advancing Chaos forces to overwhelm the entrenched Imperial defenders, casting down their edifices. Seeing the fractious Chaos factions as an easy target, they are sure they can drive them off easily once the Imperial oppressors are defeated.

- A force of Orks have detected the ongoing battles and want their share. Sensing their ships arrive in orbit, the Chaos forces move aside and allow the Orks to land and slake their thirst for battle on the Imperials below, confident they can mop up the survivors, whoever they may be, in the aftermath.

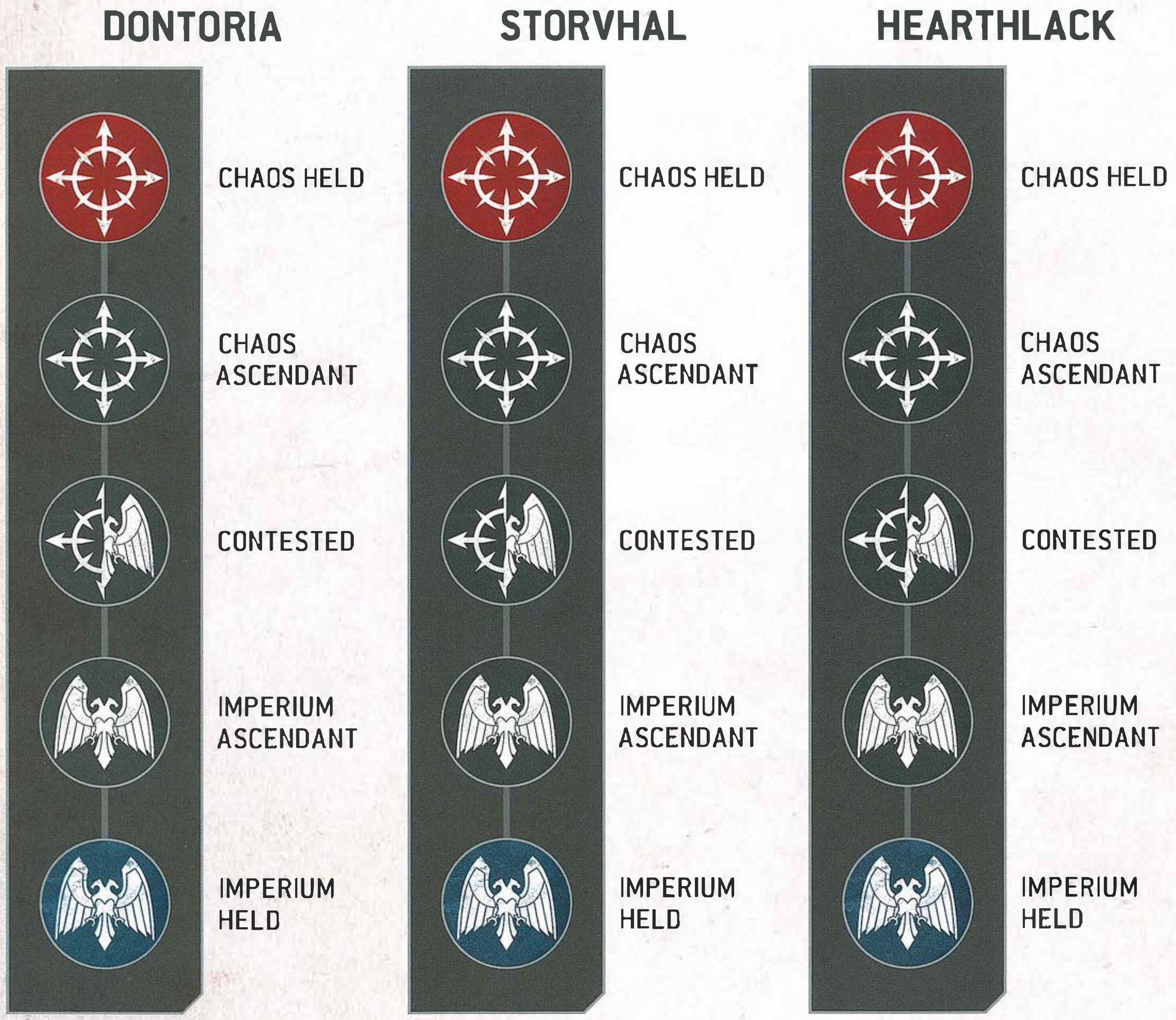
Equally, if it is just not possible to arrange alliances evenly, then the system will still work with a little extra organisation from the Campaign Master, as described later.



THE CAMPAIGN TRACKER

A War of Faith Campaign uses a tracker, found below. This tracker features three war zones, each crucial to victory. Every war zone features a victory track, and will require a marker to indicate the current status of that war zone. This marker will start in the contested area of each war zone.

At the end of each campaign phase, the Campaign Master will reveal which alliance has been victorious in each war zone. If the Imperial alliance is victorious in a war zone, the Campaign Master moves the marker a number of steps downwards on the appropriate tracker. If the Chaos alliance is victorious in a war zone, the Campaign Master moves the marker a number of steps upwards on the appropriate tracker.



CAMPAIGN LENGTH

A War of Faith campaign is split into a number of phases. Before the campaign begins, the Campaign Master should determine the number of phases in the campaign. Once the final phase ends, the winning alliance is determined and the campaign ends.

A campaign can be a long and expansive experience where each campaign phase takes place over a month, with many battles fought and mighty heroes lost to the fires of war. Equally, it can be a short and focused campaign played over a weekend, with each campaign phase consisting of just one battle representing the key moments of the conflict. Ultimately, the Campaign Master should determine a campaign length that best suits the gaming group taking part, thinking about how regularly they can meet and how many games they are likely to play.

As a guide, we recommend ensuring that each participant is able to play at least one battle in each phase. Whilst it is tempting to plan out an epic campaign for galactic domination, we recommend keeping your campaign to 5-7 phases. If, at the end of the final phase, all the players are thirsting for more war, the Campaign Master can always decide to add an extra phase (or start a new campaign altogether).

CAMPAIGN PHASES

During each campaign phase, any player can play more than one battle if they wish. The result of each battle is about more than just personal glory. Your presence contributes to the success of your alliance in the greater war. This is achieved with war zone points. Each time you play a game, your alliance earns war zone points as follows:

WAR ZONE POINTS

	COMBAT PATROL	INCURSION	STRIKE FORCE	ONSLAUGHT
Play a game	1	1	1	1
Draw a game	1	2	3	4
Win a game	2	3	4	5

For example, if you play a Combat Patrol game and win, your alliance earns a total of 3 war zone points. It is the players' responsibility to determine how many war zone points are earned. They then report their results and which war zone their battle took place in to the Campaign Master, who keeps a record of each alliance's total war zone points for each war zone. Once the current stage of the campaign phase comes to an end, the Campaign Master then moves the marker for each war zone along the track one space based on which alliance scored the most war zone points in that war zone. If an alliance's war zone points total for a war zone is double or more the war zone points total of the other alliance, the Campaign Master moves that marker two spaces instead. If the alliances are tied for the most war zone points, that marker does not move at the end of that phase.

UNEVEN ALLIANCES

If an alliance has an uneven number of players, the Campaign Master is at liberty to reward extra war zone points to make up the inherent deficit. Perhaps they could set a challenge for one player in each campaign stage, with extra war zone points awarded to their alliance for playing that game, and a greater points return if they achieve victory.

ARRANGING GAMES

To play a game, a player must arrange one with a player from the opposing alliance. When they meet on the battlefield, they follow the battle sequence as specified in their mission pack, with the following exception:

- At the start of the Determine Mission step, the players should agree which war zone their battle will take place in. If the players cannot agree, they should roll off. The battle takes place in the winners' preferred war zone.
- Instead of selecting a mission as normal, the players can then select to play that war zone's Legendary Mission (pg 54-59).

Once the players have finished their game and determined the victor, they earn war zone points for their alliance, as detailed above.

The Campaign Master has a few options concerning how players are matched up for games. They can leave the players to arrange games themselves, with challenges thrown down and honour at stake. This is perhaps the simplest way of arranging games, and lets the campaign progress naturally with plenty of friendly rivalries to go with it!

Alternatively, it may be appropriate to introduce more structure to the matchups. For example, a matchup schedule will ensure that everyone gets an equal amount of games. Or, in campaigns with a large amount of players, breaking each alliance into smaller subgroups that are then matched against their enemies can make arranging games even simpler. The Campaign Master might also choose to ignore part of the additional step above, and allocate each pairing or group to a specific war zone. This can also add to the narrative, as you can imagine each group battling in a different area of the Vigilus System, wherever their commanders send them!

ADDITIONAL KEYWORDS

While a player is part of the Imperial alliance, units from that player's army are considered to have the **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** keyword.

While a player is part of the Chaos alliance, units from that player's army are considered to have the **CHAOS ALLIANCE** keyword.

If you are using the Crusade system for your campaign, the first time a unit from your Order of Battle is included in your army roster for a battle as part of this campaign, that unit gains the appropriate keyword instead. Make a note on that unit's Crusade card. These keywords are not lost at the end of the campaign.

WINNING THE CAMPAIGN

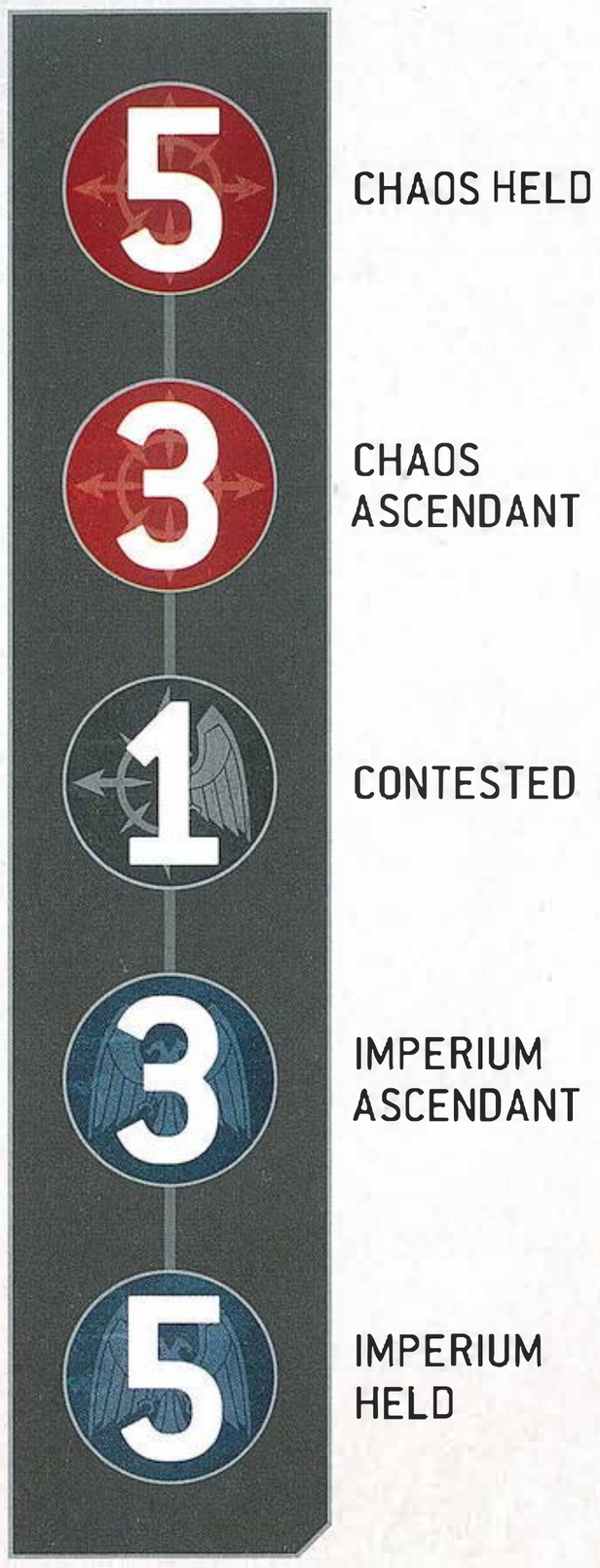
Once the final phase of the campaign ends, the campaign has reached its conclusion. Alliances have had victories in the various campaign phases, and these victories determine the overall winner of the War of Faith campaign. The final position of the markers in each war zone provides each alliance with a number of Strategic Victory points (see below).

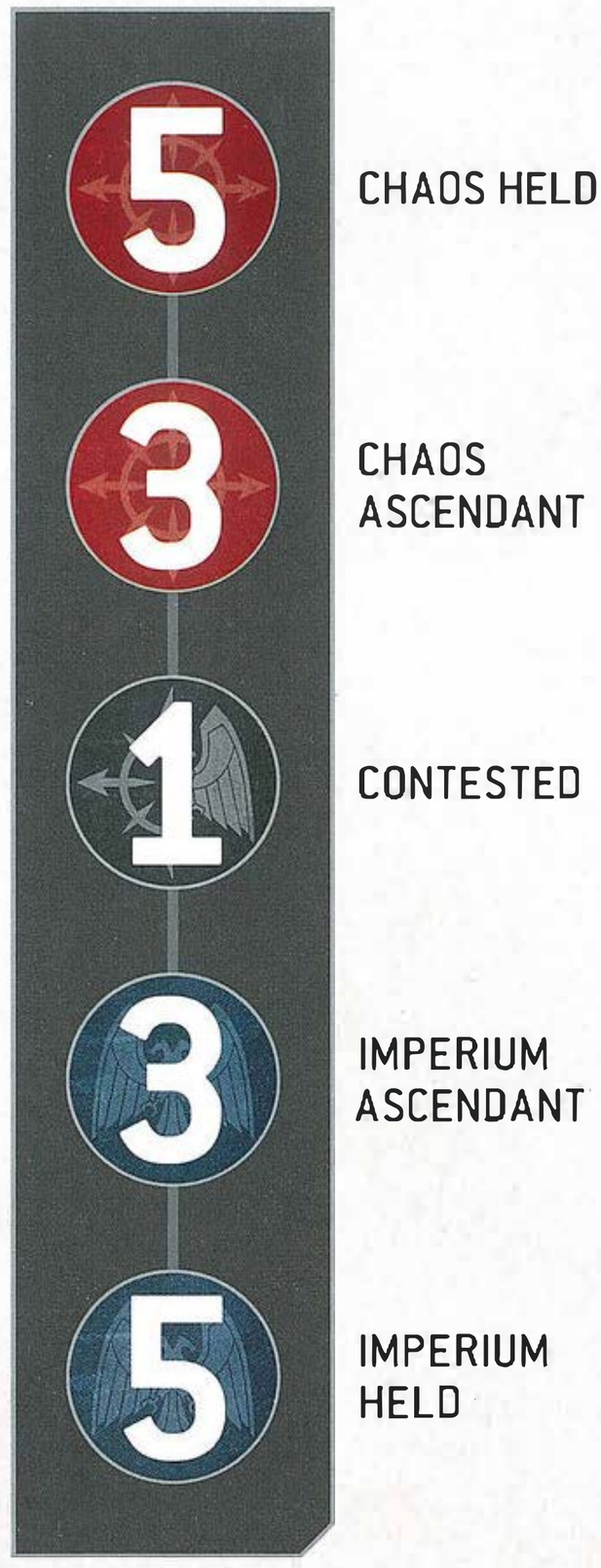
ALLIANCE STRATEGIC VICTORY POINTS

- If the final position of the marker for a war zone is in a red space or contested space, the Chaos alliance scores a number of Strategic Victory points equal to the number in that space (pg 52).
- If the final position of the marker for a war zone is in a blue space or contested space, the Imperial alliance scores a number of Strategic Victory points equal to the number in that space.









The alliance with the highest Strategic Victory points total is the victor. If both alliances have the same score, use the war zone points total for the final phase as a tiebreaker. If this is still tied, use the war zone points total for the previous phase as a tiebreaker and so on until a victor is crowned.

WAR ZONE ABILITIES

Before each battle, players agree which war zone their battle is taking place in. If those players wish, they can use the following additional rules during battles taking place in each of these war zones as described below and opposite.

DONTORIA

BURNING CONVICTION

Inspired by the Living Saint and repulsed by Dontoria's corruption, the Imperial forces in this region are sure of the righteousness of their cause.

Once per turn, when an **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** unit within 6" of an enemy unit is selected to shoot or fight, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, you can re-roll the hit roll and you can re-roll the wound roll.

RAMPANT CORRUPTION

The hivesprawl has endured a long time in the malignant grip of Chaos. Its very transitways seep with corruption, and even the purest are overwhelmed by the horror of this once-holy continent.

Once per turn, during a Chaos alliance player's Command phase, that player can select one **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** unit that is not within the controlling player's deployment zone and roll one D6: on a 2+:

- That unit suffers 1 mortal wound.
- Until the start of that Chaos alliance player's next turn, subtract 2 from that **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** unit's Leadership characteristic.

STORVHAL

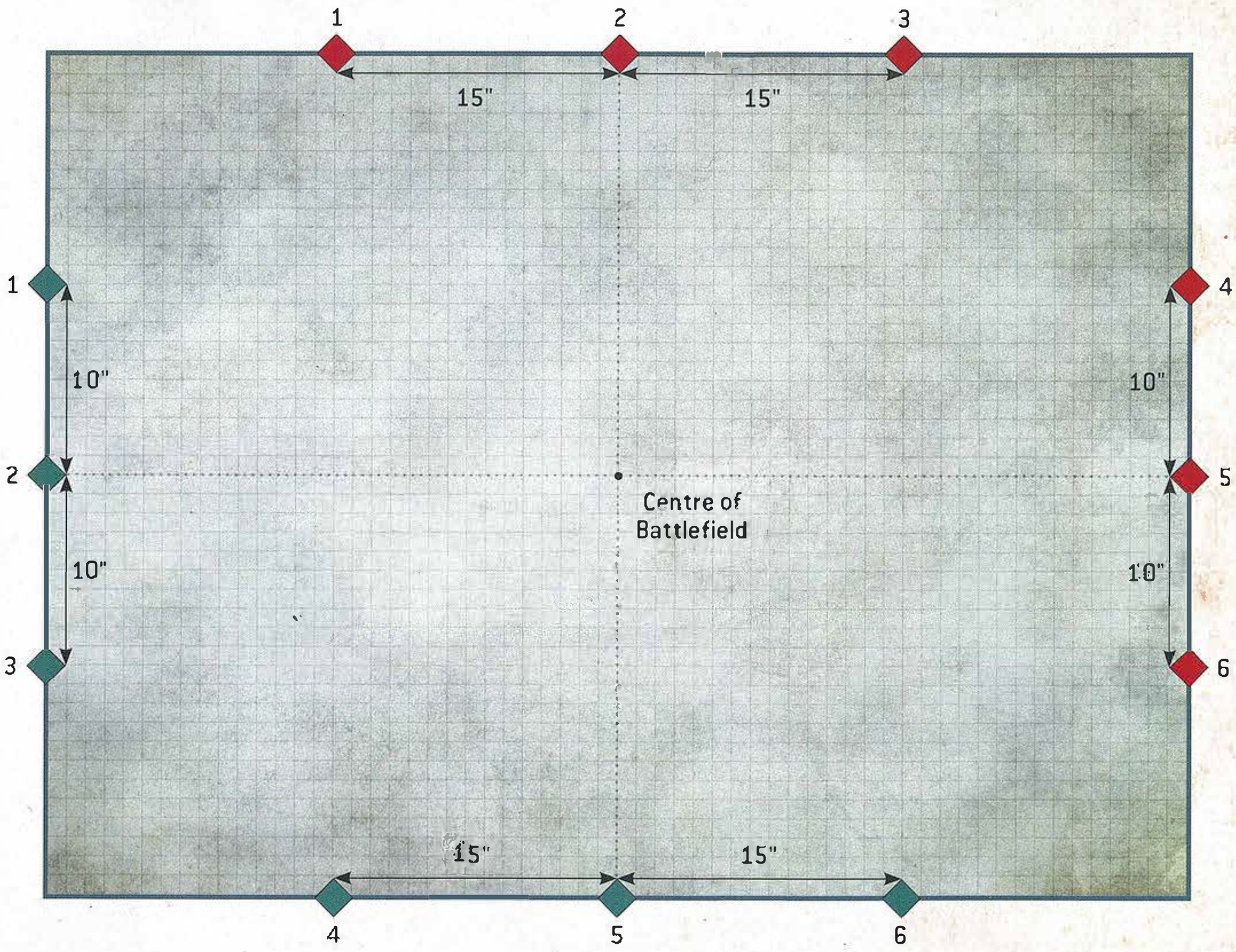
TECTONIC INSTABILITY

Though the lava fields of Storvhal no longer echo with the screams of the daemonic, the tortured landscape rumbles with unstable tectonic energy in the wake of Fabricator Vorsch's great gambit.

If you are using this war zone ability, at the end of the Creating the Battlefield step, players should set up two sets of markers and number them 1-6, as shown on the map below. These are known as tectonic locations. Each player has 6 tectonic locations (Imperial alliance player's tectonic locations are shown in green, Chaos alliance player's tectonic locations are shown in red).

At the start of each battle round, the player who is taking the first turn rolls one D6. On a 5+, a tectonic event has been triggered. If a tectonic event is triggered, each player randomly determines one of their tectonic locations by rolling one D6. Once both tectonic locations have been determined, draw a line between those two points on the battlefield. For each unit this line passes over (excluding **AIRCRAFT** units):

- That unit suffers D3 mortal wounds.
- Until the start of the next battle round, halve the Move characteristic of models in that unit.



HEARTHLACK

HOLY ELATION

This golden orb transiting the sky is of great spiritual importance. Hearthlack's artificial atmosphere trails in its wake like emanations from a holy censer; the moon's defilement would cause incalculable damage to morale across the entire system. Filled with a fervent desire to prevent this, or intoxicated by the atmosphere's miasma, the Imperium's defenders there are emboldened to a zealous degree.

Each time a Combat Attrition test is taken for an **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** unit, add 1 to that Combat Attrition test.

DESPERATE TO DESPOIL

To the dark forces of Chaos, there is no greater prize than seeing an enemy's hope sputter and die. Each idol and symbol cast down, whether still living or carved from stone, is a step towards victory over their hated foe. Displaying these shattered icons as trophies only lends further impetus to their unholy assault, and they stop at nothing to do so.

Each time a **CHAOS ALLIANCE** unit makes an attack against a **CHARACTER** unit, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.

LEGENDARY MISSION – STRIKE FORCE

THE PURGING OF DONTORIA

MISSION BRIEFING

Imperial forces descend on the tainted hivesprawl like the avenging wrath of the God-Emperor himself – purging every alcove and fissure where corruption could fester, and cleansing every stronghold available to the forces of Chaos. As Imperial armies stoically advance, their enemies seek to smother the fires of their faith, and spread their malignancy ever further.

MISSION RULES

Forces

When playing this mission, the player from the Chaos alliance should be the Defender. The player from the Imperial alliance should be the Attacker.

Corrupted Strongpoints

If the mission pack you are playing has the Place Objective Markers step before the Create the Battlefield step, swap the order of these two steps for this mission. During the Place Objective Markers step, the Defender sets up 5 objective markers on the battlefield. Each must be set up within an Area Terrain feature if possible, or within 1" of a non-Area Terrain feature. A maximum of two of these markers can be set up in the Defender's deployment zone. While a unit from the Attacker's army is within 3" of a terrain feature that has an objective marker that is not aflame (see below) within 1" of it, each time a Combat Attrition test is made for that unit, subtract 1 from that Combat Attrition test.

Units from the Attacker's army can perform the following action:

Purging Fire (Action): One **INFANTRY** unit from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Command phase if it is within range of an objective marker. This action is completed at the end of your turn. If this action is completed, that objective marker is considered to be aflame.

At the end of each battle round, each player rolls one D6 for each unit from their army that is within 1" of a terrain feature that has an aflame objective marker within 1" of it. On a 1, that unit suffers 1 mortal wound for every 5 models that unit contains.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

FEND OFF THE ASSAULT

Progressive Objective

At the end of the Defender's Command phase, they score 5 victory points for each of the following conditions they satisfy (for a maximum of 15 victory points):

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control two or more objective markers.
- Three or less objective markers are aflame.

This mission objective cannot be scored in the first battle round.

PURGE IN FLAME

Progressive Objective

At the end of the Attacker's Command phase, they score 5 victory points for each of the following conditions they satisfy (for a maximum of 15 victory points):

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control two or more objective markers.
- Two or more objective markers are aflame.

This mission objective cannot be scored in the first battle round.

DONTORIA BURNING

End Game Objective

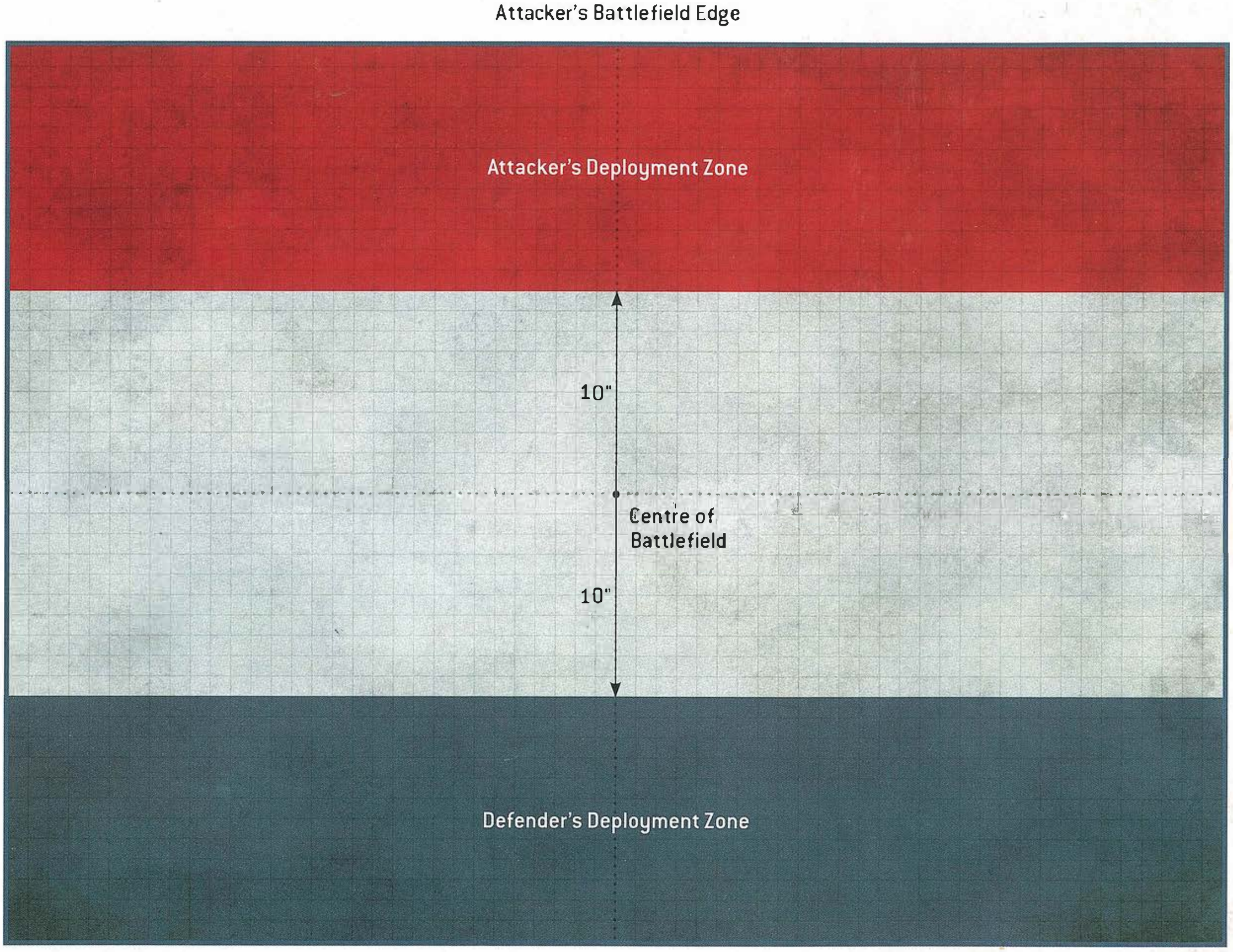
At the end of the battle:

- The Defender scores 5 victory points for each objective marker that is not aflame (for a maximum of 15 victory points).
- The Attacker scores 5 victory points for each objective marker that is aflame (for a maximum of 15 victory points).

VICTOR BONUS

If this battle was a Crusade battle, the victor of this mission increases their Requisition points to 5. If the Attacker is the victor, and three or more objective markers were aflame at the end of the battle, the Attacker's **WARLORD** is Marked for Greatness (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book) in addition to any other units. If the Defender is the victor, and two or fewer objective markers were aflame at the end of the battle, the Defender's **WARLORD** is Marked for Greatness in addition to any other units.

Attacker's Battlefield Edge



Defender's Battlefield Edge



LEGENDARY MISSION – STRIKE FORCE

THE CROWNING OF STORVHAL

MISSION BRIEFING

The forces of Chaos have taken advantage of the apocalyptic, volcanic landscape of Storvhal to raise a nexus of Noctilith Crowns. A completed network would flood the area with warp energy. Imperial forces directed by Inquisitor Cartavolnus have launched a desperate spearhead thrust into the region to disrupt the energy nodes focusing power into these nascent Noctilith Crowns, and prevent them being fully activated.

MISSION RULES

Forces

When playing this mission, the player from the Chaos alliance should be the Defender. The player from the Imperial alliance should be the Attacker.

Deactivated Crown Objective Marker

The deactivated crown objective marker has the following ability. The range of this ability is equal to 6" for each remaining energy node objective marker:

Abyssal Energies (Aura):

- While a **CHAOS** unit is within range of this ability, each time a Psychic test is taken for that unit, add 1 to that Psychic test.
- Each time a unit from the Attacker's army that is within range of this ability suffers Perils of the Warp, that unit suffers 3 mortal wounds instead of D3.

Units from the Attacker's army can perform the following action:

Demolish Energy Nodes (Action): One unit from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase if it is within range of an energy node objective marker. It cannot start this action while there are any enemy units (excluding **AIRCRAFT** units and units with the Fortification Battlefield Role) in range of the same objective marker. This action is completed at the end of your turn. If this action is completed, that objective marker is considered to be demolished.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

CHANNELLED ENERGY

Progressive Objective

At the end of the Defender's Command phase, they score 5 victory points for each energy node objective marker that has not been demolished.

This mission objective cannot be scored in the first battle round.

DESTROY THE NODES

Progressive Objective

At the end of the Attacker's Command phase, they score 5 victory points for each energy node objective marker that has been demolished.

This mission objective cannot be scored in the first battle round.

THE CROWN ASCENDANT

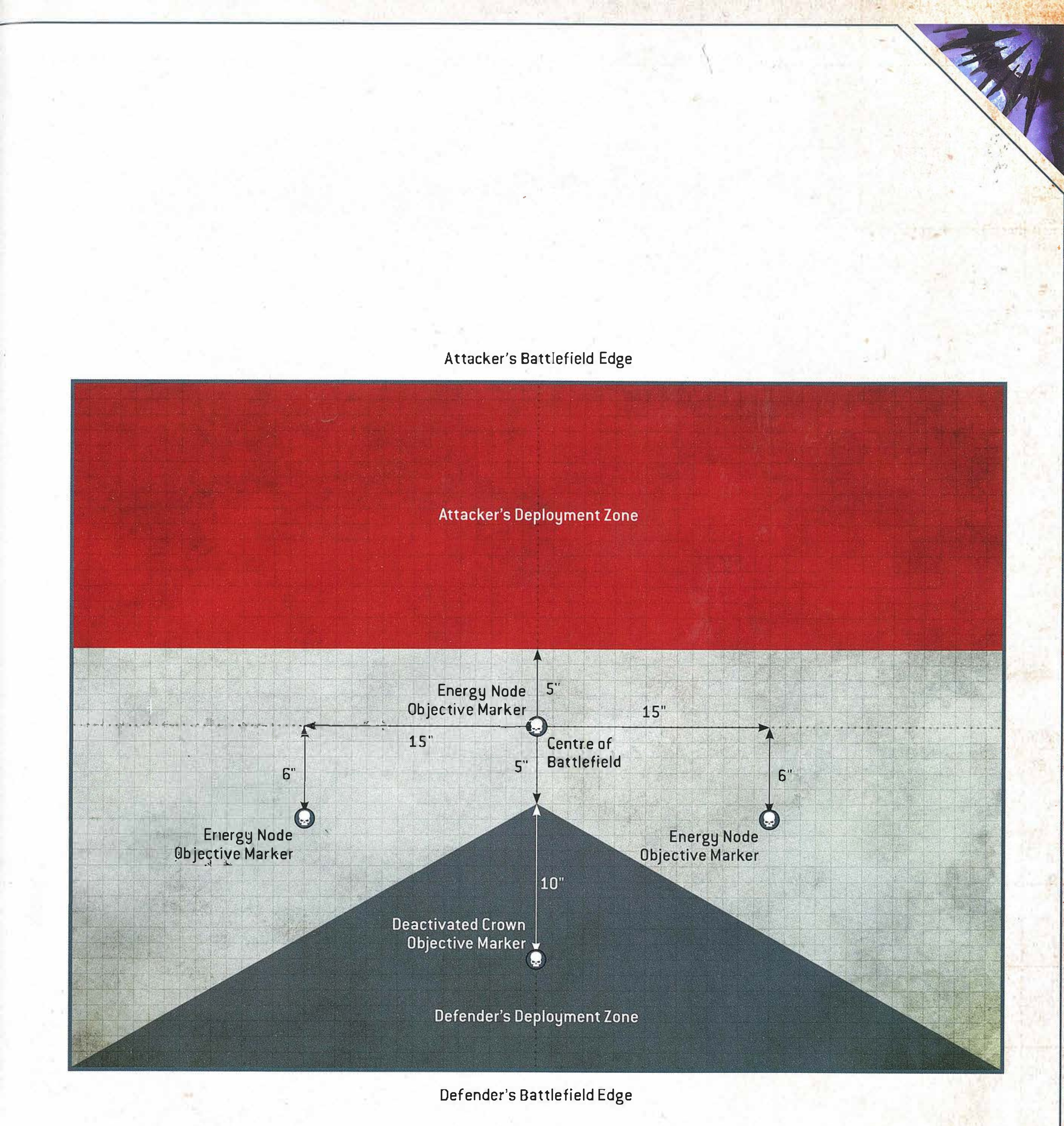
End Game Objective

At the end of the battle, the player who controls the deactivated crown objective marker scores 15 victory points.

VICTOR BONUS

If this battle was a Crusade battle, the victor can select one unit from their Order of Battle. If that unit can gain a Battle Honour, it gains a Battle Trait of the victor's choice (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book). Make a note of it on that unit's Crusade card and increase its Crusade points accordingly.




Attacker's Battlefield Edge
Attacker's Deployment Zone
Energy Node Objective Marker
5"
15"
15"
Centre of Battlefield
5"
6"
6"
Energy Node Objective Marker
Energy Node Objective Marker
10"
Deactivated Crown Objective Marker
Defender's Deployment Zone
Defender's Battlefield Edge



LEGENDARY MISSION – STRIKE FORCE

THE CORRUPTION OF HEARTHLACK

MISSION BRIEFING

Though strategically a planetoid of little significance, the trailing atmospheric vapours left behind as it crosses the heavens have led to this rock being held as a symbol of potent religious power to the system's defenders. Sensing a chance to cripple Imperial morale, the forces of Chaos have launched an assault to corrupt the atmospheric generators; with daemonic nanophages, sorcerous infections and malicious spirits, they hope to turn the encircling halo into a terrifying noose around the system.

MISSION RULES

Forces

When playing this mission, the player from the Chaos alliance should be the Attacker. The player from the Imperial alliance should be the Defender.

Objective Markers

The objective markers in this mission represent atmosphere generator control panels. During the Create the Battlefield step, we recommend setting up a building or ruins terrain feature adjacent to each objective marker.

Units from the Attacker's army can perform the following action:

Corrupt Generator (Action): One unit from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase if it is within range of an objective marker you control. This action is completed at the end of your turn. If this action is completed, that objective marker is considered to be corrupted.

Units from the Defender's army can perform the following action:

Purge Generator (Action): One unit from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase if it is within range of a corrupted objective marker. This action is completed at the end of your turn. If this action is completed, that objective marker is no longer considered to be corrupted.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

CORRUPTING FUMES

Progressive Objective

At the end of the Attacker's Command phase, they score 5 victory points for each of the following conditions they satisfy (for a maximum of 15 victory points):

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control one or more corrupted objective markers.
- Two or more objective markers are corrupted.

This mission objective cannot be scored in the first battle round.

PURIFYING FUMES

Progressive Objective

At the end of the Defender's Command phase, they score 5 victory points for each of the following conditions they satisfy (for a maximum of 15 victory points):

- They control one or more objective markers.
- They control one or more objective markers that are not corrupted.
- Two or more objective markers are not corrupted.

This mission objective cannot be scored in the first battle round.

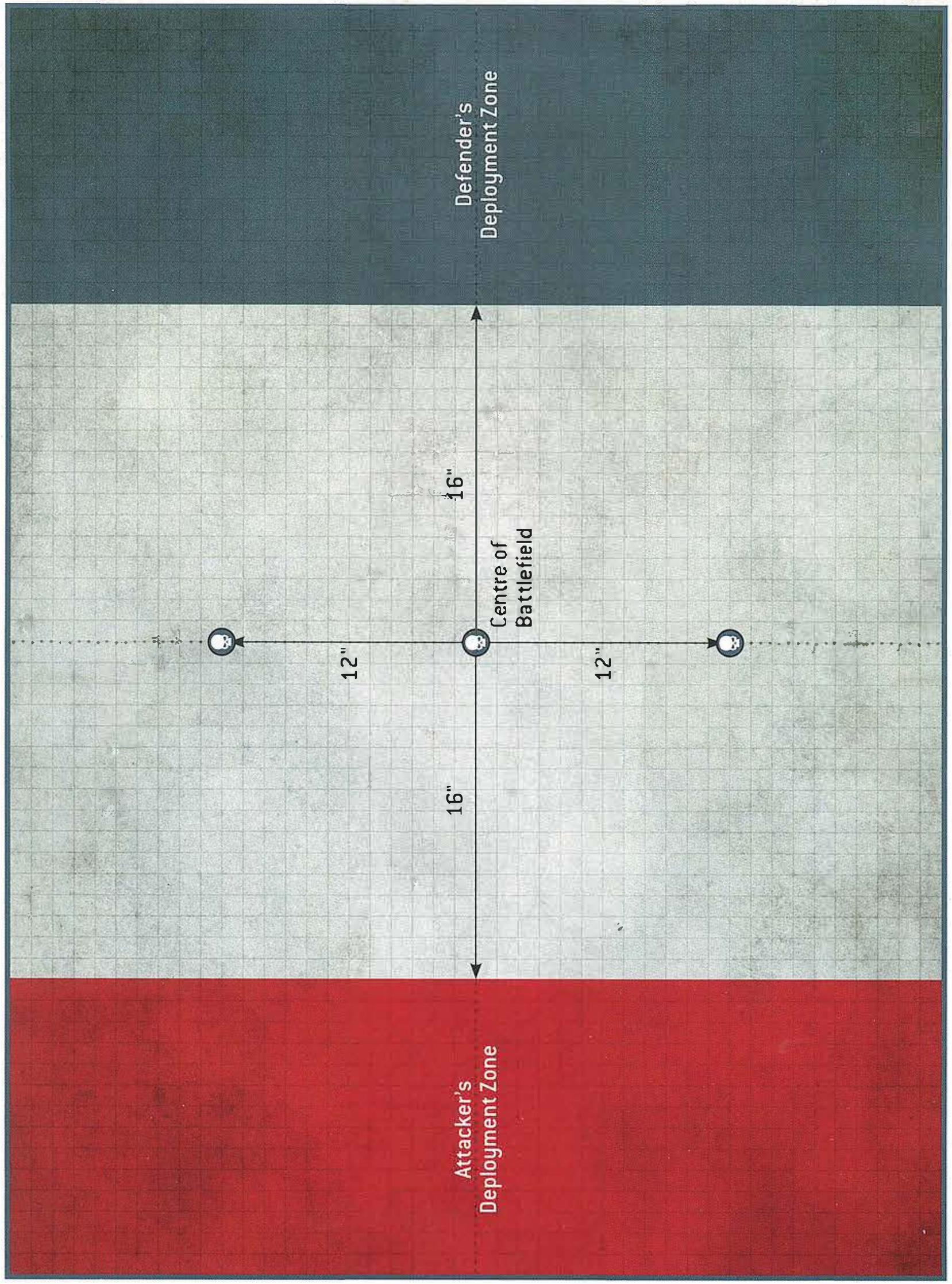
VICTOR BONUS

If this battle was a Crusade battle:

- The victor of this mission gains 2 Requisition points after this battle, instead of 1.
- The unit from the victor's army that destroyed the most enemy units during the battle gains 3 additional experience points. If two or more units are tied, the victor can select one of these to gain this bonus.



Defender's Battlefield Edge



Attacker's Battlefield Edge

CAMPAIGN MASTER'S EDICTS

CRITICAL LOCATION

High command has dictated that a specific war zone holds significant military value. Whether some vital resource has been discovered, a senior enemy commander has been spotted there, or the region has become an iconic symbol of the war's outcome is not yet clear. What is certain is that your forces must be poured into this region to wrest and maintain its control at all costs.

At the start of any campaign phase, the Campaign Master can declare one or more war zones to be critical locations to one or more of the alliances. They may do this to encourage more players to fight battles in a certain war zone, or to help one alliance which was being overwhelmed in the previous campaign phase.

When the Campaign Master declares one or more critical locations, they should also declare the bonus for victory in this location, as well as which alliance or alliances that bonus is available to.

This bonus is entirely at the Campaign Master's discretion, but examples could include:

- Additional war zone points for winning or playing a game in the specified war zone.
- If the campaign is using the Crusade system, the Campaign Master can award additional Victor Bonuses, Experience points or Requisition points for victories in the specified war zone.
- Victories of particular magnitude earn additional war zone points.
- The victor in a specific war zone during a phase gains a bonus in the next phase. This could be bonus war zone points or could be an in-game ability, such as the ability to use certain types of Stratagems for 1 fewer CP, or if you are using the Crusade system, additional Requisition points for victories in that war zone.

CONCEALED DEPLOYMENT

Many battlefields throughout the system are cursed with drifting ash clouds, empyric miasmas or dense atmospheric fumes. Armies from all sides have been known to take advantage of this, opportunistically moving troops into position under cover of these conditions, while fire lines are obscured and sensors befuddled, before signalling the attack.

Concealed Deployment is a means by which one or both sides have chosen to deploy their forces in hiding at the start of the battle, forcing their foes to commit to battle without truly knowing what they will face. At the start of a phase, the Campaign Master can choose for this rule to be in effect in one or more war zones, at their discretion. These rules explain how to place units into Concealed Deployment, as well as how to reveal them and set them up on the battlefield.

PLACING UNITS INTO CONCEALED DEPLOYMENT

You can only place units into Concealed Deployment if your army is Battle-forged (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book). Before the battle, at the start of the Deploy Armies step of the mission, you can select one or more units from your army to be placed into Concealed Deployment (**TITANIC** units, **AIRCRAFT** units and units with the Fortification Battlefield Role cannot be placed into Concealed Deployment). You must pay Command points (CPs) to place your units into Concealed Deployment; the number of CPs required depends on the combined Power Ratings of all the units you wish to place into Concealed Deployment (including those embarked within **TRANSPORT** models that are themselves placed into Concealed Deployment), as shown in the table below. If you do not have enough CPs for your current band, you must reduce the number of units you wish to place into Concealed Deployment until you do have sufficient CPs.

CONCEALED DEPLOYMENT

COMBINED POWER RATING OF UNITS PLACED INTO CONCEALED DEPLOYMENT	CPS TO PLACE UNITS INTO CONCEALED DEPLOYMENT
1-14	1
15-29	2
30-44	3
45-59	4
etc.	etc.

CONCEALED DEPLOYMENT COUNTERS

Next, you must assign a unique number for each unit from your army that you placed into Concealed Deployment, and make a note of this on your army roster. During deployment, instead of setting up a Concealed Deployment unit on the battlefield, you instead set up a counter with that unit's number on it face down (you can alternatively place a number or dice next to the counter, just so long as it corresponds to one of your Concealed Deployment units and is kept secret from your opponent for now). These counters must be set up within your deployment zone – if the unit has a rule that enables it to be set up elsewhere on the battlefield, that rule cannot be used.

REVEALING CONCEALED UNITS

Once both players have finished deploying, but before either player uses any rules that would trigger 'at the end' of deployment, the players must reveal their concealed units. To do so, starting with the Attacker, the players alternate selecting one of their Concealed Deployment counters, flipping it over to reveal its number and setting up the corresponding unit. Each time they do so, the first model in the unit being set up must be placed touching the corresponding marker, and the entire unit must be set up wholly within the player's own deployment zone. That Concealed Deployment counter is then removed. If one player has no Concealed Deployment counters left to reveal, their opponent then reveals all their remaining counters in any order they choose, as described above.

CRUSADE RELICS

The following Crusade Relics are all treated as Artificer Relics, and can only be selected for **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** or **CHAOS ALLIANCE** units during a War of Faith campaign. These Relics are retained by that unit after the campaign ends.

LIGHT OF DONTORIA

This simple icon, worn upon the bearer's armour or around their neck, was seen carried by some who showed particular zeal during the Purging of Dontoria, or who were inspired by the hivesprawl's distant inferno to conduct violent purgation of their own. Its holy form was thrice-blessed by Saint Celestine herself, and is anathema to the corrupt and the diabolic. It blazes with a burning light, fired by the warrior's soul, searing and blinding the servants of darkness that stand against them.

IMPERIAL ALLIANCE model only.

At the end of the Fight phase, roll one D6 for each enemy unit that is within 3" of the bearer, adding 1 to the result if that unit is a **CHAOS** unit, and 2 to the result if it is a **DAEMON** unit. On a 6+, that unit suffers 1 mortal wound.

THE ARMOUR OF STORVHAL

This single, embossed plate is all that remains of a masterwork war suit crafted by the Tech-Priests who guarded the energy farms of Storvhal. Its esoteric alloys were smelted in the hivesprawl's volcanic forges, and quenched in sigma-grade coolant. Inlaid with microactuators and thermo-harmonic emitters, this plate is nigh-unbreakable.

IMPERIAL ALLIANCE model only.

- Improve the bearer's Save characteristic by 1 (to a maximum of 2+).
- Each time an attack is made against the bearer, roll one D6: on a 4+, subtract 1 from the Damage characteristic of that attack (to a minimum of 1).

VIAL OF THE HALO WORLD

This small ampoule – filled in the Cathedrum of Saint Calgar with a small portion of the golden atmosphere of Hearthlack – is held in great regard by the pious, its radiance blessing their holy strikes.

IMPERIAL ALLIANCE model only. The bearer has the following ability:

Vial of the Halo World (Aura): While a friendly **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE CORE** unit is within 6" of the bearer, each time a model in that unit makes a melee attack, re-roll a hit roll of 1.

THE NOCTILITH EYE

This rune-carved talisman appears to be nothing more than a small trinket. The dark stone at its centre is carved from pure noctilith, however, marking the bearer as a locus for the energies of the warp, and granting them murky visions of a possible future.

CHAOS ALLIANCE model only.

- The bearer has a 4+ invulnerable save.
- At the start of your Command phase, if the bearer is on the battlefield, roll one D6: on a 5+, you gain 1 Command point.

THE CROWN OF VONTHAK

Originally torn from the brow of a defeated Dark Apostle, this ichor-slick wreath of daemonic horns melds with the wearer's own skull, and projects a sinister nimbus of terrifying dominance.

CHAOS ALLIANCE model only. The bearer has the following ability:

Crown of Vonthak (Aura): While an enemy unit is within 6" of the bearer, each time a Combat Attrition test is taken for that unit, subtract 1 from that Combat Attrition test.

THE BURNING SKULL

This blackened skull – found in Storvhal after one of the Coronal War's deadliest battles – is pocked with mutation, barbed spurs of extruded bone growing from its obviously Astartes form. When words of power are spoken over it, glowing runes appear across its surface and jets of flame blast forth from its empty eyes, like an accusatory stare of wrath from beyond the grave.

CHAOS ALLIANCE model only. The bearer is equipped with the following weapon:

	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
The Burning Skull	12"	Pistol 1	5	-2	3

Abilities: Each time an attack is made with this weapon, if a hit is scored, draw a straight line between the closest point of this model's base (or hull) and that of the closest model in the target unit. Make one wound roll against the target unit, and one wound roll against each other unit this line passes over.

ARMY RULES

'Were I not before you now, Colonel, were my soldiers not ready to execute every one of your kneeling officers, you would still have no choice. This is a holy task - forswear it and your soul itself is forfeit. Thank the God-Emperor you have no inkling of the stakes this world represents. Thank Him for delivering you from me, and again as you and your division crawl through the heretics' fire and wade through the blood of your vanguard. Thank Him when you take. That. Ridge.'

- Inquisitor Erasmus Cartavolnus



INTRODUCTION

Over the following pages you will find a host of new rules for armies from Space Marines and Adepta Sororitas, including datasheets and a Codex Supplement.

DATASHEETS: SPACE MARINES (PG 66-67)

Here you will find new datasheets for the Space Marine Captain in Gravis Armour and Primaris Ancient. These replace the Datasheets found in *Codex: Space Marines* with the same names.

ARMY OF RENOWN: VANGUARD SPEARHEAD (PG 70-73)

A Vanguard Spearhead is a Space Marines Army of Renown (see opposite) that contains only models equipped with Phobos armour and their support equipment, waging war behind enemy lines. On these pages, you will find a list of restrictions required to forge such an army, and a list of additional rules and benefits that such an army gains.

CODEX SUPPLEMENT: ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE (PG 76-79)

The Order of the Bloody Rose is one of the most vicious of the Orders Militant, its furious warriors ever-eager to wage wars of faith in the Emperor's name. The rules in the Order of the Bloody Rose section supplement those found in *Codex: Adepta Sororitas* with a collection of army and Battle-forged rules, such as Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems, for Adepta Sororitas warriors that are drawn from the Order of the Bloody Rose.





ARMY OF RENOWN

An Army of Renown is a specialised force that has earned fame or infamy across the 41st Millennium, the experience of which has given its warriors unique skills to use on the battlefield.

An Army of Renown is a variant army list for a particular Faction in Warhammer 40,000 that is themed around a particular disposition of forces. Each imposes certain restrictions on what units can be included, but it also grants access to a wider range of rules such as Stratagems, Relics etc. to reflect that Army of Renown's unique methods of waging war in the 41st Millennium.

If you wish for your army to become an Army of Renown, it must first adhere to all the restrictions laid out for that Army of Renown, it must be Battle-forged and it must not include any Specialist Detachments. You can then make a note in the Army Faction section of your Army Roster of which Army of Renown your army is. Some, or all the units in an Army of Renown then gain the benefits listed, such as new keywords, abilities, Stratagems etc. Note that your army does not automatically become an Army of Renown just because it happens to abide by the restrictions – you must choose for it to be an Army of Renown.

Crusade Army of Renown

You can use any of the rules listed in an Army of Renown to make a Crusade Army of Renown when you start a Crusade force. In this case, the Restrictions and Benefits apply to your entire Crusade force – replace all instances of 'army' listed in the Restrictions and Benefits sections to instead say 'Crusade force', and make a note in the Crusade Faction section of your Order of Battle of which Army of Renown your Crusade force is. Note that means that certain units can never be added to your Order of Battle; but it will result in a particularly focussed and themed collection. Whenever you select a Crusade army from such an Order of Battle, it must be Battle-forged and cannot include any Specialist Detachments.



Clad in a suit of indomitable Gravis armour, a Space Marine Captain can fearlessly stride into the very fiercest battlefield firestorms. To don Gravis armour is to demonstrate the greatest determination to crush the enemy, no matter how deeply they are entrenched.

CAPTAIN IN GRAVIS ARMOUR

6 POWER

No.	Name	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	A	Ld	Sv
1	Captain in Gravis Armour	5"	2+	2+	4	5	7	5	9	3+

A Captain in Gravis Armour is equipped with: boltstorm gauntlet; Astartes chainsword.

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D	ABILITIES
Boltstorm gauntlet (shooting)	18"	Pistol 3	4	-1	1	-
Astartes chainsword	Melee	Melee	User	-1	1	Each time the bearer fights, it makes 1 additional attack with this weapon.
Boltstorm gauntlet (melee)	Melee	Melee	x2	-3	2	Each time an attack is made with this weapon, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
Power fist	Melee	Melee	x2	-3	2	Each time an attack is made with this weapon, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
Power sword	Melee	Melee	+1	-3	1	-

WARGEAR OPTIONS

- This model's Astartes chainsword can be replaced with one of the following: 1 power fist; 1 power sword.

ABILITIES

Angels of Death (see *Codex: Space Marines*)

Iron Halo: This model has a 4+ invulnerable save.

Rites of Battle (Aura): While a friendly <CHAPTER> CORE unit is within 6" of this model, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, re-roll a hit roll of 1.

Gravis Fighting Styles:

- If this model is equipped with an Astartes chainsword, each time the bearer fights, it can make 2 additional attacks with that weapon (for a maximum of 3).
- If this model is equipped with a power sword, each time the bearer fights, it can make 2 additional attacks with that weapon.
- If this model is equipped with a power fist, each time the bearer fights, it can make 1 additional attack with that weapon.

This ability cannot be used with a Relic which replaces any of these weapons.

FACTION KEYWORDS: **IMPERIUM, ADEPTUS ASTARTES, <CHAPTER>**
KEYWORDS: **INFANTRY, CHARACTER, PRIMARIS, MK X GRAVIS, CAPTAIN**



PRIMARIS ANCIENT

4 POWER

No.	Name	M	WS	BS	S	T	W	A	Ld	Sv
1	Primaris Ancient	6"	3+	3+	4	4	5	4	8	3+

A Primaris Ancient is equipped with: bolt pistol; bolt rifle; frag grenades; krak grenades.

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D	ABILITIES
Bolt pistol	12"	Pistol 1	4	0	1	-
Bolt rifle	30"	Rapid Fire 1	4	-1	1	-
Power sword	Melee	Melee	+1	-3	1	-
Frag grenades	6"	Grenade D6	3	0	1	Blast.
Krak grenades	6"	Grenade 1	6	-1	D3	-

WARGEAR OPTIONS

- This model's bolt rifle can be replaced with 1 power sword.

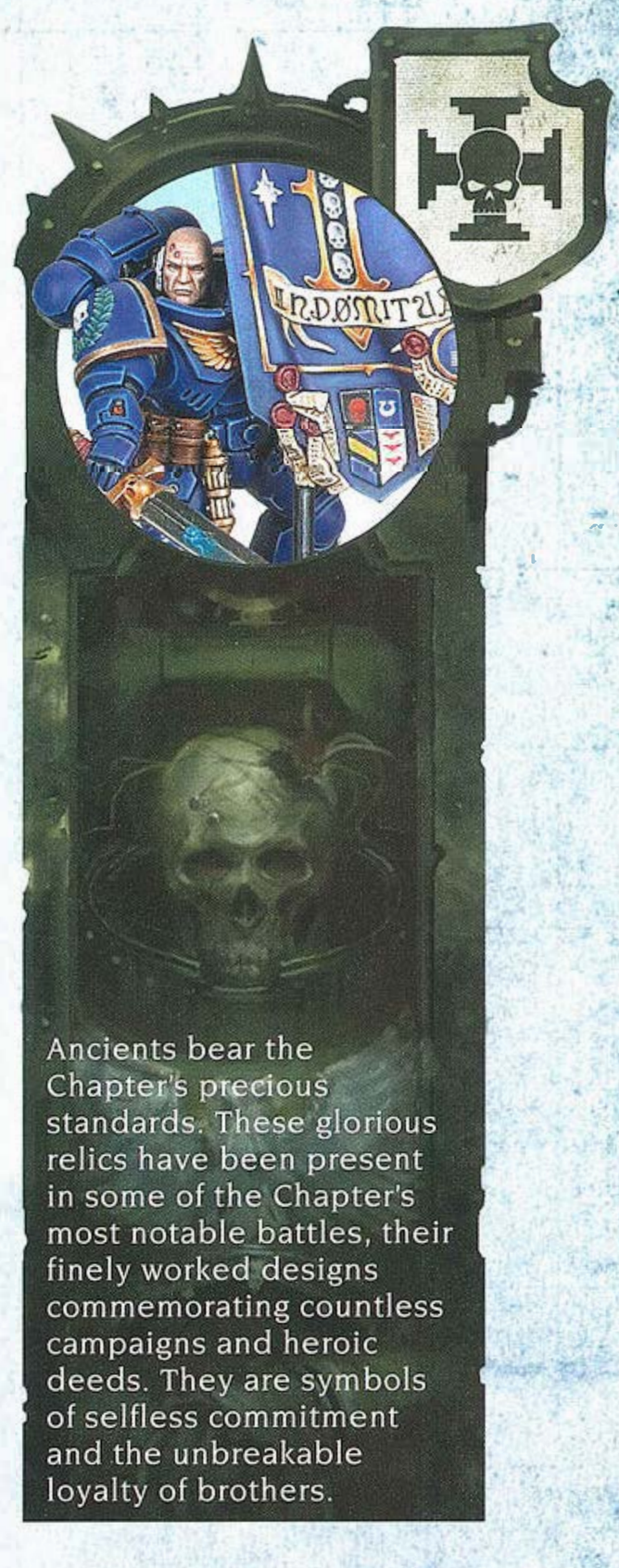
ABILITIES

Angels of Death (see *Codex: Space Marines*)

Wolf Guard: If this unit is from the Space Wolves Chapter (or one of its successor Chapters) it has the **WOLF GUARD** keyword.

Astartes Banner (Aura): While a friendly **<CHAPTER> CORE** unit is within 6" of this model, add 1 to the Leadership characteristic of models in that unit. In addition, each time a model in such a unit is destroyed by an attack made by an enemy model, roll one D6. On a 4+, do not remove the destroyed model from play – it can, after the attacking model's unit has finished making its attacks, either shoot with one of its ranged weapons as if it were your Shooting phase, or make one attack with one of its melee weapons as if it were the Fight phase. After resolving these attacks, the destroyed model is then removed.

FACTION KEYWORDS: **IMPERIUM, ADEPTUS ASTARTES, <CHAPTER>**
KEYWORDS: **INFANTRY, CHARACTER, PRIMARIS, ANCIENT**



Ancients bear the Chapter's precious standards. These glorious relics have been present in some of the Chapter's most notable battles, their finely worked designs commemorating countless campaigns and heroic deeds. They are symbols of selfless commitment and the unbreakable loyalty of brothers.



POINTS VALUES

HQ

Captain in Gravis Armour

Unit size ..... 1 model
Unit cost ..... 120 pts

ELITES

Primaris Ancient

Unit size ..... 1 model
Unit cost ..... 80 pts
- Power sword ..... +5 pts




CADIA
CADIA

ARMY OF RENOWN

VANGUARD SPEARHEAD

Drawn from a Scout Company, the warriors of a Chapter's Vanguard contingent sometimes deploy en masse in mobile and adaptable Spearheads. Trained in full-spectrum superiority, these forces outmanoeuvre their foes at every turn and are masters of the precision strike.

Vanguard Spearheads employ all the advanced training and hard-won experience their warriors have gained supporting their Chapter's more conventional assaults, but brought to the fore as an overarching strategy to dissect and disrupt far larger enemy threats. Masters of convoy elimination, assassination, sabotage and terror tactics, a full strike force of these specialists conduct extended guerrilla wars to take their enemies apart piece by piece. Their warriors strike with sudden power and shocking speed, and then fade into the shadows before the enemy's remaining strength can be brought to bear.

A Vanguard Spearhead is an Army of Renown (pg 65).

RESTRICTIONS

- Your army can only include **PHOBOS**, **SUPPRESSOR SQUAD**, **INVICTOR TACTICAL WARSUIT** and **IMPULSOR** units.
- Your army cannot include any **DEATHWATCH** units.

BENEFITS

- All of the units in your army gain the **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD** keyword.
- You have access to the Vanguard Spearhead Chapter Relics, Stratagems and Tools of the Vanguard.
- **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD** units in your army gain the Vanguard Operations ability (see below).
- If your army is Battle-forged, **INCURSOR SQUAD**, **INFILTRATOR SQUAD** and **REIVER SQUAD** units in your army gain the Objective Secured ability (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book).

VANGUARD OPERATIONS

Battle-brothers that fight as part of a Vanguard Spearhead utilise covert hit-and-run tactics, continually repositioning and raining precision shots into their bewildered foe from the shadows before retribution can be brought to bear.

- This unit never gains a Chapter Tactic (see *Codex: Space Marines*).
- Each time a ranged attack is made against a unit with this ability, if the attacker is more than 18" away, the unit with this ability is treated as having the benefits of Light Cover against that attack (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book).
- Each time an **INFANTRY** unit with this ability is selected to make a Normal move, if every model in that unit ends that move at least 4" away from where it started, until the end of the turn, each time a model in that unit makes a ranged attack, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.
- Each time a unit with this ability consolidates, each model can move up to 6" instead of 3".

'The enemy will fire at phantoms, shrink at shadows and advance where we drive them.

When they finally perceive our presence, it will be too late.'

- Infiltrator Travian, Ultramarines Chapter



RELICS

These Relics can be selected by **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD CHARACTER** models instead of any other Relics they have access to. They are considered to be Chapter Relics (see *Codex: Space Marines*) in all regards.

THE NIGHT'S BLADE

This non-reflective blade lacks the ornamentation seen on many Adeptus Astartes legendary weapons. Its seemingly humble design belies its dreaded power, and a number of dark myths surround reports of Space Marines wielding such a weapon. The killing edge of The Night's Blade contains a neural-shock net. This device overloads the victim's senses as it pierces their flesh, silencing unsuspecting sentries who fall without so much as a whimper.

VANGUARD SPEARHEAD model equipped with a combat knife or paired combat blades only. This Relic replaces a combat knife or paired combat blades and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
The Night's Blade	Melee	Melee	User	-3	2

Abilities: Each time an attack is made with this weapon against a unit that is not a **VEHICLE**, an unmodified wound roll of 2+ is always successful.

THE ARMOUR UMBRAL

This artificer suit of Phobos armour is not near-silent like others of its kind. While its power plant and fibre bundles operate with hardly a whisper, the Armour Umbral projects a barely-perceptible aural rendering of the surrounding soundscape, masking the wearer's presence with the sigh of the wind and the rustle of vegetation. Coupled with a shrouding field that returns a wash of false signals to targeting systems, the warrior is as good as a ghost.

VANGUARD SPEARHEAD model only.

- Each time a model makes an attack against the bearer, an unmodified hit roll of 1-3 fails, irrespective of any abilities that the weapon or the model making that attack may have.
- The bearer is eligible to charge in a turn in which it Advanced.

SHADOW'S TOUCH

The psycho-crystalline matrix at this blade's core responds to the bearer's mastery of psychic shadow and deceit. Just as the bearer is able to pass the barriers of the foe unseen, so this blade passes through his opponent's defences in kind, slipping through armour, energy fields and flesh with ease.

VANGUARD SPEARHEAD model equipped with a force sword only. This Relic replaces a force sword and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Shadow's Touch	Melee	Melee	+3	-4	2

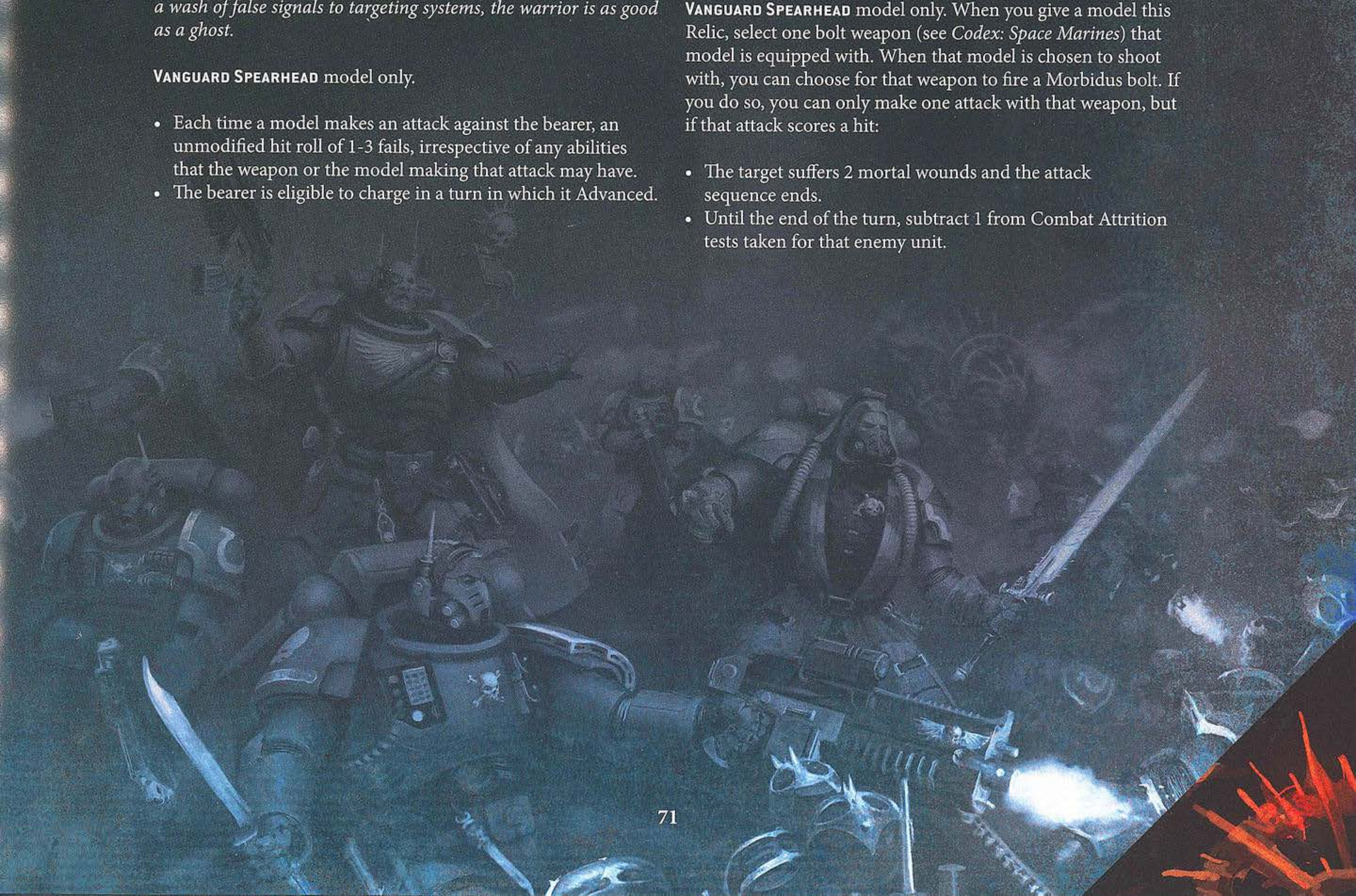
Abilities: In your Psychic phase, if the bearer manifests any psychic powers from the Obscuration discipline, then until the start of your next Psychic phase, each time an attack is made with this weapon, invulnerable saving throws cannot be made against that attack.

MORBIDUS BOLTS

Morbidus bolts are a perfection of the specialist shells used by Reiver operatives behind enemy lines. These silent projectiles streak unseen, and unerringly through the weak spots of a foe's armour before shattering and dispensing potent toxins through their ruined flesh, slaying them instantly and silently. From the wound, the shell's final act is to expel a gaseous hallucinogen, rendering the silent victim doubly horrific to their shocked allies.

VANGUARD SPEARHEAD model only. When you give a model this Relic, select one bolt weapon (see *Codex: Space Marines*) that model is equipped with. When that model is chosen to shoot with, you can choose for that weapon to fire a Morbidus bolt. If you do so, you can only make one attack with that weapon, but if that attack scores a hit:

- The target suffers 2 mortal wounds and the attack sequence ends.
- Until the end of the turn, subtract 1 from Combat Attrition tests taken for that enemy unit.



TOOLS OF THE VANGUARD

When engaged on special operations, Space Marines can make use of a variety of additional pieces of equipment alongside their standard Phobos armour and weaponry. Usually carried by a specialist with the squad, such tools are employed to deadly effect by their users.

INFILTRATOR SQUAD

If your army is a Vanguard Spearhead, then when you are mustering your army, you can upgrade models within **INFILTRATOR SQUAD** units with the following additional wargear options:

- 1 Infiltrator that is not equipped with a helix gauntlet, Infiltrator comms array or voxbreaker auspex can be equipped with 1 saboteur explosive pack.
- 1 Infiltrator that is not equipped with a helix gauntlet, Infiltrator comms array or saboteur explosive pack can be equipped with 1 voxbreaker auspex.

OTHER WARGEAR	ABILITIES
Saboteur explosive pack	The bearer's unit has the **SABOTEUR EXPLOSIVE PACK** keyword.
Voxbreaker auspex	The bearer's unit has the **VOXBREAKER AUSPEX** keyword.

INCURSOR SQUAD

If your army is a Vanguard Spearhead, then when you are mustering your army, you can upgrade models within **INCURSOR SQUAD** units with the following additional wargear options:

- 1 Incursor that is not equipped with a haywire mine can be equipped with 1 marksman target-tracker.

OTHER WARGEAR	ABILITIES
Marksman target-tracker	The bearer's unit has the **MARKSMAN TARGET-TRACKER** keyword.

STRATAGEMS

If your army is a Vanguard Spearhead, you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

A STORM OF DEATH 1CP

Vanguard Spearhead – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Reiver Squads attack in a barrage of disorienting roars and a storm of stabbing blades. With their foes reeling under the assault, every weak spot of their foe is identified and exploited.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when a **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD REIVER SQUAD** unit from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes a melee attack against an **INFANTRY** or **BIKER** unit, an unmodified wound roll of 6 inflicts 1 mortal wound on the target in addition to any normal damage (to a maximum of 6 mortal wounds).

OCULAR NETWORKING 1CP

Vanguard Spearhead – Battle Tactic Stratagem

When fighting as part of Vanguard Spearhead, Space Marines utilise the sophisticated ocular systems of their Phobos armour to greater efficacy. Sharing combat data across inter-squad networks, they identify weaknesses in even the most resilient foe, deficiencies which precise attacks can take advantage of.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase or the Fight phase, when a **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD** unit from your army is selected to shoot or fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack that targets a **MONSTER** or **VEHICLE** unit, on an unmodified wound roll of 6, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 2 (this is cumulative with the bonus gained from the Combat Doctrines ability).

DISPERSAL PROTOCOLS 2CP

Vanguard Spearhead – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Vanguard squads are trained to rapidly disengage from their foe, moving to new positions before attacking once more.

Use this Stratagem at the end of the Fight phase. Select one **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD** unit from your army that is within Engagement Range of any enemy units. That unit can Fall Back as if it were your Movement phase.

SABOTEUR EXPLOSIVE PACK 1CP

Vanguard Spearhead – Wargear Stratagem

Infiltrator saboteurs often carry a deadly array of munitions for breaching enemy structures and other demolitions work. These packs can also be used against enemy war engines or hulking monstrosities, clamped onto their foe before remote detonation.

Use this Stratagem when a **SABOTEUR EXPLOSIVE PACK** unit from your army is selected to Fall Back. Before that unit moves, select one enemy **VEHICLE** or **MONSTER** unit that is within Engagement Range of that unit and roll one D6 (adding 3 to the result if that enemy unit is a **BUILDING** unit): on a 2-5, that enemy unit suffers D3 mortal wounds. On a 6+, that enemy unit suffers D6 mortal wounds.

VOXBREAKER AUSPEX 1CP

Vanguard Spearhead – Wargear Stratagem

Equipped with an elaborate auspex unit, some Infiltrator specialists are skilled in cracking the foe's transmissions and scanning for threats. Relayed information from the data-spectral realm enables their allies to anticipate enemy activity.

Use this Stratagem in your Command phase. Select one enemy unit that is within 18" of a **VOXBREAKER AUSPEX** unit from your army. Until the start of your next turn:

- Each time a model in that enemy unit makes a ranged attack, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
- If that unit declares a charge, you can select one unit from your army that is a target of that charge to Hold Steady or Set to Defend (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book).

MARKSMAN TARGET-TRACKER 2CP

Vanguard Spearhead – Wargear Stratagem

Specialised target acquisition devices coupled with their bearer's exceptional marksman instincts enable their squad to identify key enemy combatants, feeding targeting data directly to their visors.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase when, a **MARKSMAN TARGET-TRACKER** unit from your army is selected to shoot. Until the end of the phase, each time you select a target for an occulus bolt carbine a model in that unit is equipped with, you can ignore the Look Out, Sir rule.

TACTICAL AUGURY 1CP

Vanguard Spearhead – Wargear Stratagem

Vanguard Spearheads utilise advanced scanning equipment and orbital augurs to grant them an awareness of the battle-sphere's layout few forces can match. With such tactical advantage, they make pinpoint shots into enemy strongpoints and through dense defence lines, driving the foe out of cover and onto the blades of the Spearhead's encircling executioners.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD** unit from your army is selected to shoot. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes a ranged attack, the target does not receive the benefits of cover against that attack.

PIVOTAL MOMENT 2CP

Vanguard Spearhead – Epic Deed Stratagem

There comes a crucial juncture in many battles where opportunity presents a key enemy target for the perfect shot. Whether the culmination of patiently outmanoeuvring the enemy or sheer fate, if the moment is seized, it can turn the tide of whole wars, sending far larger forces into rout.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD CORE** model from your army is selected to shoot. Until the end of the phase, each time that model makes a ranged attack against an enemy **WARLORD**, a successful wound roll inflicts a number of mortal wounds equal to the Damage characteristic of the weapon used for that attack, and the attack sequence ends.

'For good or ill, blood will out. There is no hiding from it, nor from us.

The spoor of the heretic and traitor is like a crimson trail left behind by a soul as it bleeds away everything that was noble. All thatremains is to execute such filth.'

– *Brother Raldaeo, Blood Angels Incursor*





Iron Hands Incursor



Salamanders Infiltrator Helix Adept



Imperial Fists Eliminator



White Scars Reiver

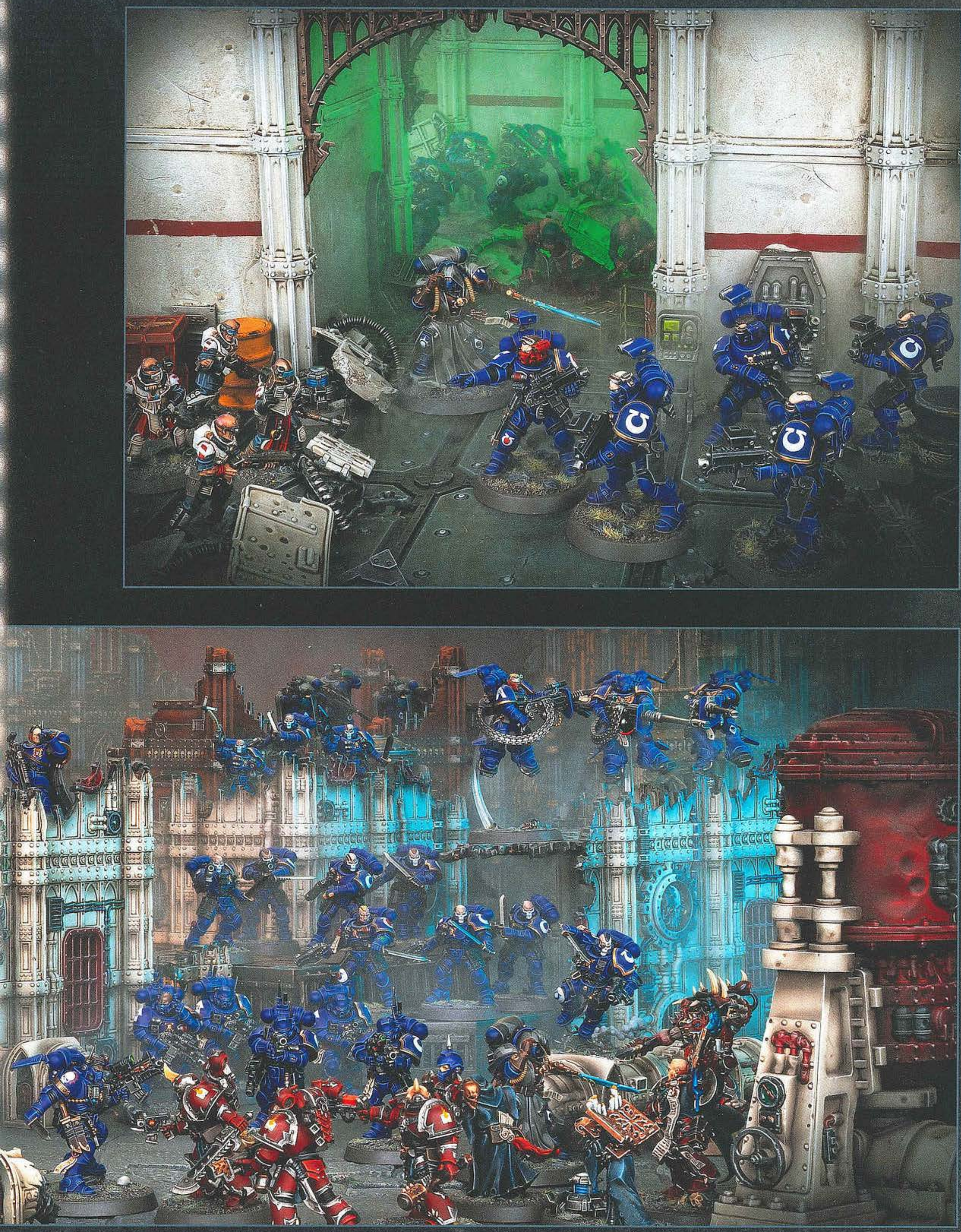


Space Wolves Eliminator



Blood Angels Incursor Sergeant



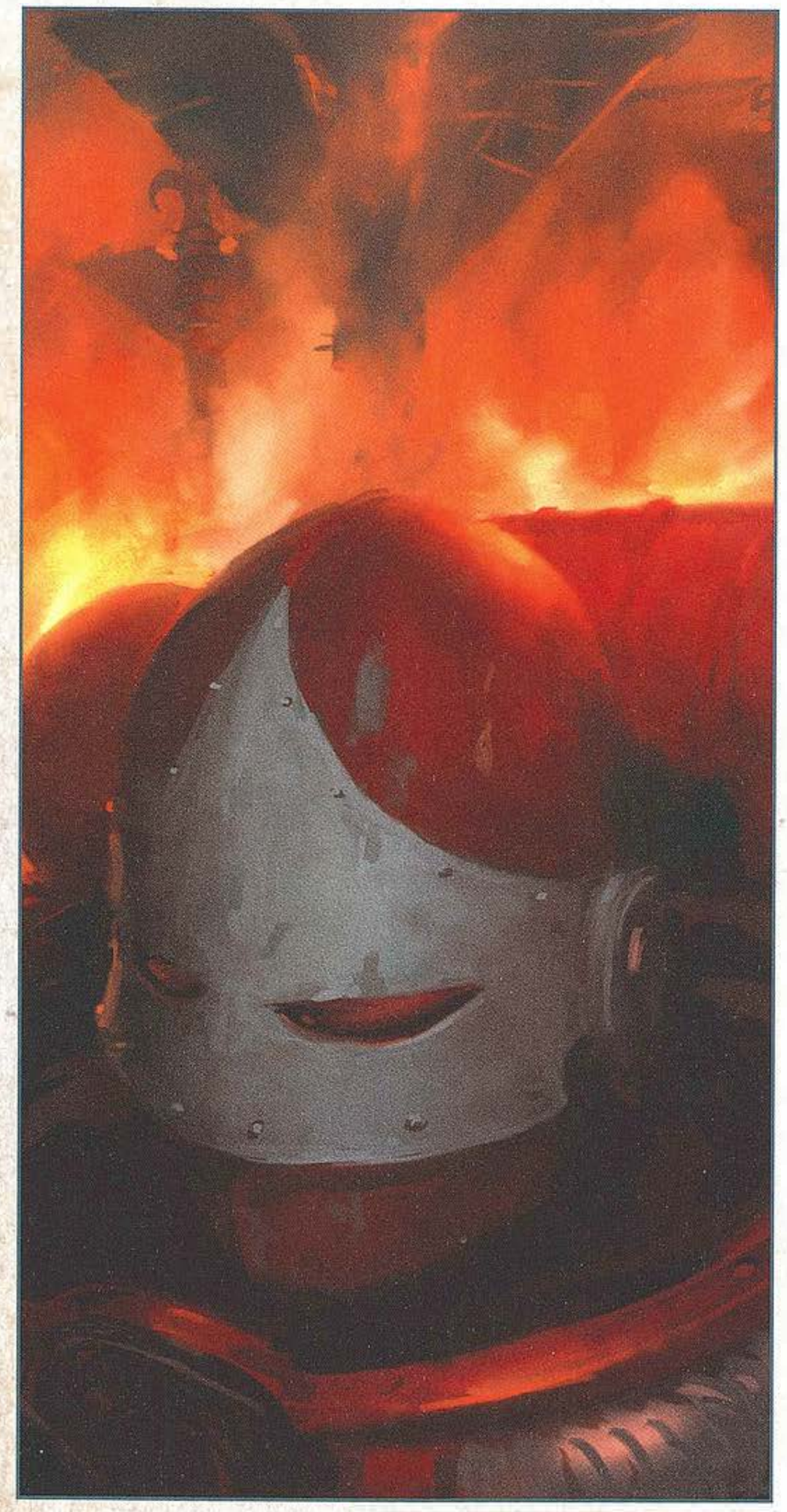


CODEX SUPPLEMENT: ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE

Over the following pages you will find Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems for Adepta Sororitas units that are from the Order of the Bloody Rose.

Codex: Adepta Sororitas describes how most of the Adepta Sororitas units belong to an order, and how you can use the <ORDER> keyword to specify which order such a unit is from. The rules in the following section are for **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE** units.

Some rules in this section refer to an **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE** Detachment. This is one that only includes units with the **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE** keyword (excluding models with the **CULT IMPERIALIS, AGENT OF THE IMPERIUM** or **UNALIGNED** keywords).



WARLORD TRAITS

If an **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE CHARACTER** model is your **WARLORD**, you can use the Order of the Bloody Rose Warlord Traits table below to determine what Warlord Trait they have, instead of one from another source. You can either roll one D3 to randomly generate one, or you can select one.

1. FIERY EXAMPLE

This warlord leads by example, plunging into the foe without hesitation, seeking out the most execrable of heretics and laying them low in the name of the God-Emperor.

- Each time this **WARLORD** makes a melee attack against a **CHARACTER** unit, add 1 to that attack's wound roll.
- Each time this **WARLORD** destroys an enemy **CHARACTER** unit, you gain 2 Miracle dice (see *Codex: Adepta Sororitas*).

2. INCANDESCENT REPRISAL

Even the mightiest strike cannot stay the inflamed passions of this warlord. Many a would-be impious executioner has struck what they believed a killing blow, only to be cut down in their turn.

- Each time this **WARLORD** would lose a wound, roll one D6: on a 5+, that wound is not lost.
- Once per phase, after an enemy unit shoots or fights, if this **WARLORD** suffered any wounds as a result of those attacks:
  - If this **WARLORD** is not within Engagement Range of any enemy units, this **WARLORD** can shoot with one ranged weapon it is equipped with. It can only target that enemy unit when doing so, and only if that enemy unit is an eligible target.
  - If this **WARLORD** is within Engagement Range of any enemy units and has not already been selected to fight during this phase, it can immediately be selected to fight. It can only target that enemy unit when doing so, and only if that enemy unit is an eligible target.

3. RED-HANDED CASTIGATOR

As this zealous commander cuts down the foe, their bellowed prayers echo across the tumult of battle, fuelling the holy rage and devout determination of their fellow Sisters.

- Each time you gain a Miracle dice (see *Codex: Adepta Sororitas*) at the end of a phase as a result of the Vengeance ability, if this **WARLORD** destroyed any enemy units during that phase, that Miracle dice is automatically a 6.
- Each time this **WARLORD** makes a melee attack, if this **WARLORD** made a charge move, was charged or performed a Heroic Intervention this turn, you can re-roll that attack's hit roll.

RELICS

If your army is led by an **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give one of the following Relics to a **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE CHARACTER** model from your army instead of giving them another Relic. Named characters cannot be given any of the following Relics.

Note that some Relics replace one of the model's existing items of wargear. Where this is the case, you must, if you are using points values, still pay the cost of the wargear that is being replaced. Write down any Relics your models have on your army roster.

MINA'S WRATH

The energy field of this graceful sword radiates a ferocious heat, said to be the ire of the Order's Matriarch. Tech-Magi instead whisper that its machine spirit is aggravated. Yet when shouted prayers are made to Mina, the sword's capacitors flood it with barely-suppressed energy and when it is driven into heretic flesh the super-heated blade immolates its victim.

ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE model equipped with a power sword only. This Relic replaces a power sword and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Mina's Wrath	Melee	Melee	+2	-3	2

Abilities: Each time the bearer makes an attack with this weapon, on an unmodified wound roll of 6, the target suffers 2 mortal wounds and the attack sequence ends.

ARMOUR OF TRUE SACRIFICE

This blood-red suit of battleplate bears the marks of centuries of war. When worn in battle, it is a potent symbol of the wearer's fervent piety, and every drop of scarlet blood shed in the God-Emperor's name is said to draw his holy gaze to the noble soul.

ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE model only.

- The bearer has a Save characteristic of 2+.
- If the bearer loses one or more wounds during a phase, at the end of that phase, you gain 1 Miracle dice (see *Codex: Adepta Sororitas*).

ICON OF THE CRIMSON MARTYR

Saint Mina's martyrdom came at Hydraphur and though none witnessed it, the gory remnants of her attackers that surrounded her body told their own story. Of all the sacred statues raised to honour Mina's final battle, the Icon of the Crimson Martyr is held in special reverence by her Order. Imagifiers who bear it to battle have been known to fight on through seemingly mortal wounds, their stentorian voices conveying the truth of Mina's martyrdom to those around. With shouted conviction, they tell their Sisters how, when the hour is darkest and foes close upon them, then will ferocious dedication, faith and skill at arms see even the most indomitable foe cast down in bloody damnation.

ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE IMAGIFIER model only.

- Add 1 to the bearer's Wounds characteristic.
- The bearer's Litany of Deeds ability has the following additional tale, which can be selected instead of one of the ones listed on the bearer's datasheet:

  Tale of the Martyr: At the end of any phase (other than the Morale phase) in which any friendly **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE CORE** units that were within 6" of the bearer were destroyed, you gain 1 Miracle dice (see *Codex: Adepta Sororitas*). This is in addition to any Miracle dice gained at the end of a phase in which a **CHARACTER** unit was destroyed.

STRATAGEMS

If your army includes any **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE** Detachments (excluding Auxiliary Support, Super-heavy Auxiliary or Fortification Network Detachments), you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

SCOURGE OF THE PENITENT — 1CP/2CP

Order of the Bloody Rose – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Neural whips lashing, the Repentia Superior of the Order of the Bloody Rose are a particularly vicious breed, driving their charges into their enemies in a rush of holy anger.

Use this Stratagem in your Command phase. Select one **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE REPENTIA SUPERIOR** model from your army and one **SISTERS REPENTIA** unit within 6" of that model. Until the end of the turn, add 1 to charge rolls made for that **SISTERS REPENTIA** unit. If the **SISTERS REPENTIA** unit contains 5 or fewer models, this Stratagem costs 1CP; otherwise, it costs 2CP.

WADE INTO THE FOE — 1CP

Order of the Bloody Rose – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The holy spirits said to reside in the Order's sacred paragon warsuits are held to be every bit as wrathful as their pilots. As one, warrior and war suit stride purposefully into the packed ranks of heretics, destroying them with mighty sweeps of their weapons.

Use this Stratagem in your Fight phase. Select one **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE PARAGON WARSUITS** unit from your army that made a charge move this turn. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack that targets an enemy unit that contained 6 or more models at the start of this phase, an unmodified hit roll of 4+ scores 1 additional hit.

CLEAR THE FLANKS — 1CP

Order of the Bloody Rose – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The Order of the Bloody Rose employ disciplined heavy firepower to open up the flank of their enemy, before driving their swift-moving forces into the gap created, and corralling the God-Emperor's foes into a deadly kill zone.

Use this Stratagem at the start of your Shooting phase. Select one enemy unit that is within 6" of a battlefield edge that is not a player's battlefield edge. Until the end of the phase, each time an **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE** model makes an attack with a Heavy weapon that targets that enemy unit, re-roll a wound roll of 1.

OUTRAGE OF THE MATRIARCH — 1CP

Order of the Bloody Rose – Epic Deed Stratagem

Confronted with the most fell of foes, the spiritual descendants of Saint Mina pray to be granted a portion of their Matriarch's ferocity. Positively glowing with rage, tears of blood streak their cheeks as they focus their inner hatred into a miraculous strength.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase when an **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE CHARACTER** model from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time that model makes an attack that targets an enemy model with a Wounds characteristic that exceeds its own:

- Add 1 to that attack's wound roll.
- On an unmodified wound roll of 6, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 2.

CARRY FORTH THE FAITHFUL — 1CP/2CP

Order of the Bloody Rose – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Congregated within a transport, these Battle Sisters recite bellowing prayers so that the whole vehicle echoes to furious piety. Speeding towards the foe, the crew eagerly deliver their deadly cargoes.

Use this Stratagem at the start of the first battle round, before the first turn begins. Select one **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE TRANSPORT** model from your army that has any models embarked within it (this cannot be a model that has any **DOMINION SQUAD** models embarked within it). That model can make a Normal Move as if it were your Movement phase, but must end that move more than 9" away from any enemy models. If both players have units that can move before the first turn begins, the player who is taking the first turn moves their units first. If a **RETRIBUTOR SQUAD** or **SISTERS REPENTIA** unit is embarked inside that **TRANSPORT**, this Stratagem costs 2CP; otherwise, it costs 1CP. You can only use this Stratagem once.

FUELLED BY RAGE — 1CP/2CP

Order of the Bloody Rose – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The Sisters of this Order enter a fanatical rage, continuing to fire their holy weapons into the faithless despite grievous wounds, before finally succumbing, their calling fulfilled.

Use this Stratagem in your opponent's Shooting phase, when an **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE CORE** unit from your army is selected as the target of a ranged attack. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit is destroyed by an attack made by an enemy model, roll one D6. On a 4+, do not remove the destroyed model from play – it can, after the attacking model's unit has finished making its attacks, shoot with one of its ranged weapons as if it were your Shooting phase. After resolving these attacks, the destroyed model is then removed. If the selected **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE** unit is a **RETRIBUTOR SQUAD** unit, this Stratagem costs 2CP, otherwise it costs 1CP.

CATECHISM OF WRATHFUL DEFIANCE 1CP/2CP

Order of the Bloody Rose – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Sisters of the Order of the Bloody Rose bellow hymnals at their foe. Most fighters baulk in the face of such fanatical devotion.

Use this Stratagem in your Command phase. Select one **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE INFANTRY** unit from your army. Until your next Command phase, that unit gains the following ability:

Wrathful Defiance (Aura): While an enemy unit is within 6" of this unit, each time a model in that enemy unit makes an attack that targets this unit, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.

If you select a unit that has 11 or more models, this Stratagem costs 2CP; otherwise, it costs 1CP.

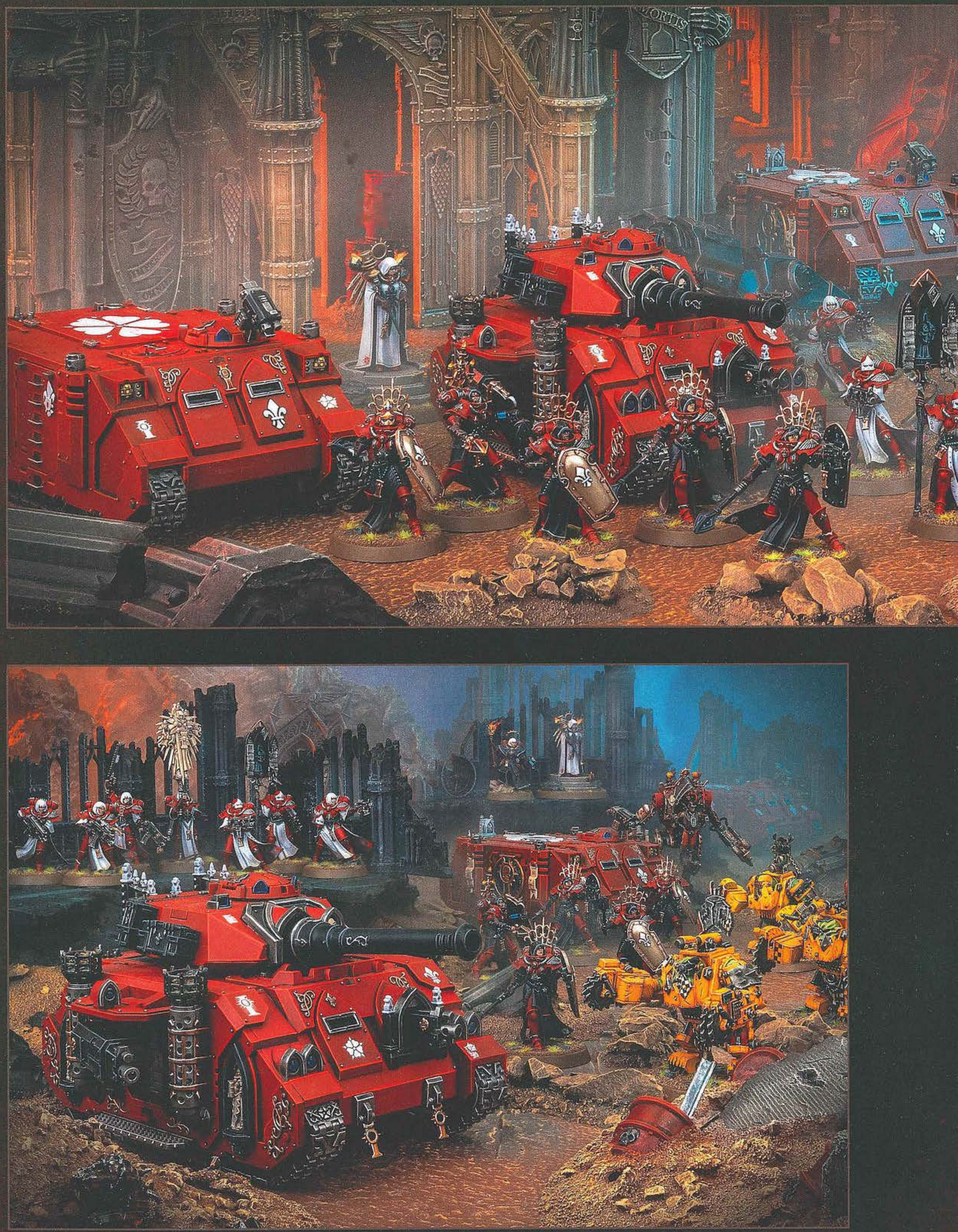
SAVAGE TWIST 1CP

Order of the Bloody Rose – Wargear Stratagem

The Sisters of this murderous Order are experts with the deadliest tools of their craft. When the sharp edges of their blades pierce armour and flesh, the warriors twist and tear them free, opening gaping, ragged wounds from which the foe's lifeblood pumps out in a flood.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase when an **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE INFANTRY** unit from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack with a melee weapon (excluding a close combat weapon), on an unmodified wound roll of 6, increase the Damage characteristic of that attack by 1.











CRUSADE RULES

In this section you'll find additional rules for your crusade armies, themed around the War of Faith, including rules for representing ancient relic standards, as well as rules for creating deadly armies of zealous Imperial defenders. You can find out more about Crusade armies in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

This section contains the following additional rules:

BANNERS OF RENOWN

Many of the banners that flutter above the Adeptus Astartes as they make war are ancient and storied relics that have stood over battlefields for millennia and seen victories uncounted. These new Crusade rules supplement the Crusade rules found in *Codex: Space Marines* and allow you upgrade Ancients with powerful upgrades to the banner they carry into battle.

ARMIES OF FAITH

All across the Vigilus system, ragged survivors of the ongoing war against the forces of Chaos band together, held together by their common faith in the Emperor of mankind. This section contains rules for creating an Army of Faith Crusade army. Here you will find a list of restrictions required to forge such an army and a list of additional rules and benefits that such an army gains.

BATTLEZONE: FRONTERIS

The frontier worlds of the Imperium are often inhospitable, requiring buildings of rugged construction to survive their adverse conditions. In this section you will find rules for these new terrain features, as well as a Theatre of War for battlefields that use them, and a series of new Agendas for use in Crusade games on battlefields featuring these imposing constructs.



BANNERS OF RENOWN

The banners carried by the hosts of the Adeptus Astartes are often storied relics, carried by the Chapter's warriors into battles uncounted. These banners have seen more battlefields than the veteran warriors that carry them, and are potent symbols of the indomitability of the Space Marines and the righteousness of their cause.

In this section you will find a series of rules for your Adeptus Astartes Crusade army allowing your Ancients and the banners they carry to accrue great renown for their deeds on the battlefield. Whether the Chapter banner, carried by the Chapter's warriors for millennia, or a crusade banner, created to inspire the Chapter's warriors on their current engagement, these simple pieces of cloth provide inspiration to humanity's greatest warriors in their darkest hours, as well as proudly displaying their achievements.

If your Order of Battle includes any **ADEPTUS ASTARTES ANCIENT** models, you can spend Requisition points on the Banner of Renown Requisition (see right).

BANNER OF RENOWN 1RP

The Ancient carries a banner of unmatched glory or humbling prestige. Its intricate design has been restitched countless times after being borne onto the deadliest battlefields. The warriors who march to war in its shadow do so inspired by the renowned battles it commemorates.

Purchase this Requisition at any time. Select one **ADEPTUS ASTARTES ANCIENT** model from your Order of Battle. That model gains the **BANNER OF RENOWN** keyword.



ANCIENT STANDARDS

While your Army Roster contains any **BANNER OF RENOWN** models, keep a Renown tally for each such model.

At the end of each battle round, add 1 to a model's Renown tally if any of the following apply (to a maximum of 10 per battle):

- That model is within range of an objective marker you control.
- That model is within 6" of any enemy units.
- That model destroyed any enemy **CHARACTER** units during that battle round.
- That model is wholly within your opponent's deployment zone.
- That model performed the Plant the Standard action as part of the Honour the Standard Agenda (see *Codex: Space Marines*).

At the end of the battle, add 1 to a model's Renown tally for each of the following that apply:

- That model lost any wounds during the battle, but was not destroyed.
- You won the battle.

After each battle, each **BANNER OF RENOWN** model gains a number of Renown points equal to that model's Renown tally. Renown points can be spent to purchase Banner of Renown upgrades (pg 86). Each time you purchase any of the following upgrades (excluding Artisanal Ministrations), increase that unit's Crusade points total by 1.

'Bear witness, brothers, to the Standard of the Aquilarian Oath. By its design are the deeds of the 2nd Company upon Vigilus commemorated, the glorious dead lauded and their sacrifices commended to the annals of Chapter history.'

Ancient Marrias looked over the ranks of his Chapter's warriors facing him. More than sixty were present. Most hailed from the 2nd Company itself, their pride in the Standard's litany of achievements visible in their ramrod posture and unwavering attention. Warriors from other companies – seconded Neophytes, too – deployed to the embattled bastion world stood amongst them. It was just as important that they understood the banner's import. They all needed to know the inspirational actions of the Company, and that such deeds were recognised, glorified and permanently inscribed into legend.

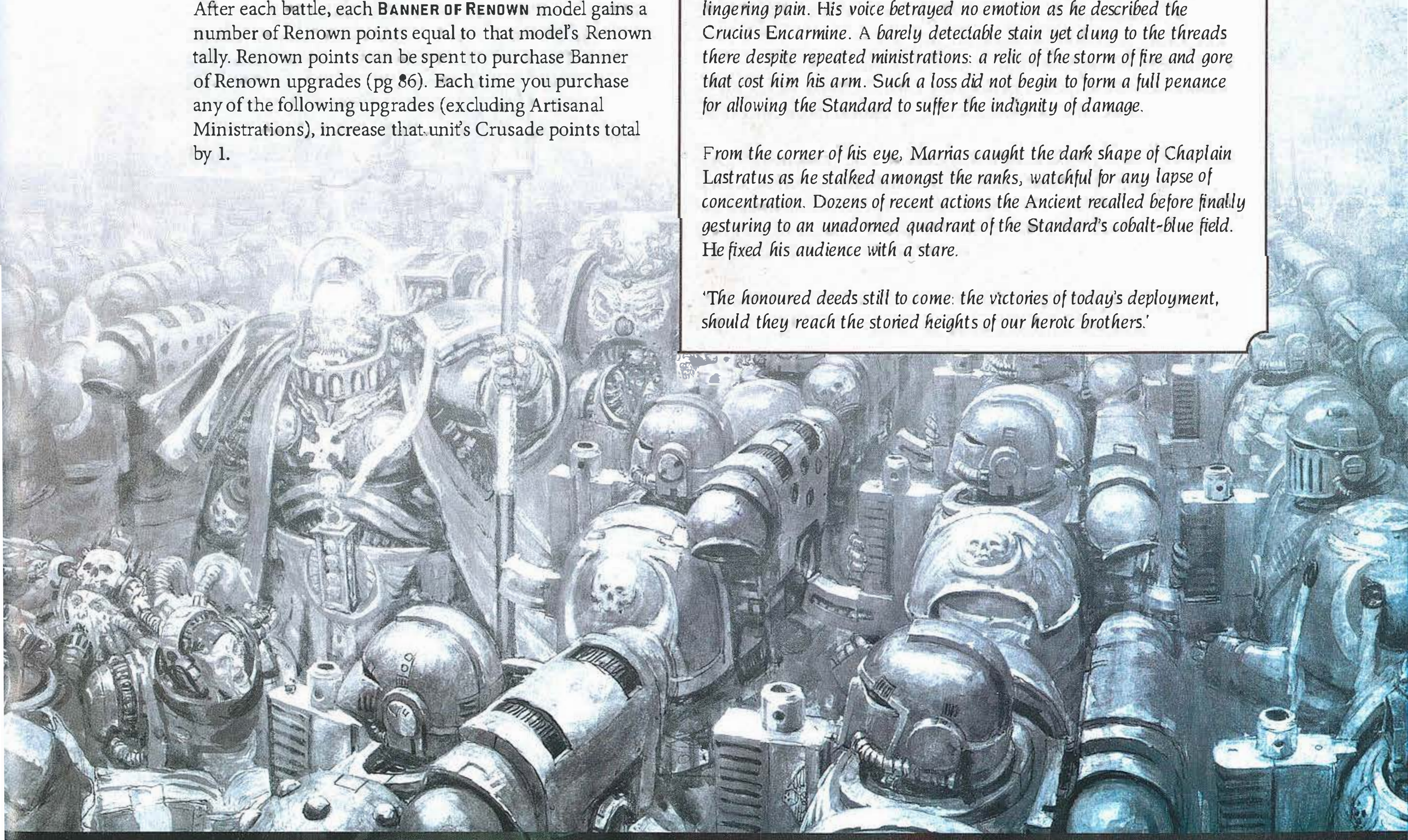
As he intoned the meanings of each element of the Standard's design, Ancient Marrias gestured with a ceremonial baton to the relevant quarters, charges and emblems in a ritually rehearsed order.

'The Halo Invictus: the three-day defence of District Quartus-Non, bereft of reinforcements. The Catechismal Script: the rallying cry of Sergeant Falxos at the Scriptorum Massacre. The Nimbus In Astra: the salvation of the battlecruiser Indomitor Rex, though the boarding action was ambushed...'

Marrias' recently-fitted bionic arm whirred as he signalled, and the unguents where its implants joined sutured flesh failed to salve the lingering pain. His voice betrayed no emotion as he described the Crucius Encarmine. A barely detectable stain yet clung to the threads there despite repeated ministrations: a relic of the storm of fire and gore that cost him his arm. Such a loss did not begin to form a full penance for allowing the Standard to suffer the indignity of damage.

From the corner of his eye, Marrias caught the dark shape of Chaplain Lastratus as he stalked amongst the ranks, watchful for any lapse of concentration. Dozens of recent actions the Ancient recalled before finally gesturing to an unadorned quadrant of the Standard's cobalt-blue field. He fixed his audience with a stare.

'The honoured deeds still to come: the victories of today's deployment, should they reach the storied heights of our heroic brothers.'



BANNER OF RENOWN UPGRADES

ARTISANAL MINISTRATIONS — 10 POINTS

While some highly trained Chapter thralls can effect a reasonable repair to any damage this banner suffers, a few are considered to be true artisans with vexillor-needles and cleansing oils, the damaged sections nigh-indistinguishable from the original.

Remove one Banner Damage effect (pg 87) this model has.

GLORIOUS FINIAL — 25 POINTS

This elaborate emblem surmounts the banner and incorporates an energy field generator. Those who fight in the shadow of the glories depicted on this banner are held to be warded in the victory's radiance.

The bearer has the following ability:

Glorious Finial (Aura): While a friendly <CHAPTER> CORE or <CHAPTER> CHARACTER unit is within 6" of this model, models in that unit have a 5+ invulnerable save.

ROLL OF HONOUR — 15 POINTS

Painstakingly etched upon strips of neo-parchment, ritually purified xenos hide or perhaps wafer-thin steel, the names of every honoured bearer of this banner hang from this standard, save only its current custodian. The tally of such worthy guardians is a potent reminder to the Ancient of their privileged duty.

Once per phase, after making a hit roll or a wound roll for an attack made by this model, you can change the result to a 6. This is not a modifier.

ENERGISED STAFF — 15 POINTS

This banner's artificer-wrought staff contains a potent energy generator. Wielded as a deadly pole arm in extremis – should the standard itself be in danger – even a glancing blow from the hyper-dense alloy of the stave can crack armour and bludgeon the foe into submission.

Each time this model fights, it can make 1 additional attack using the close combat weapon profile (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book). If that attack scores a hit, the target suffers D3 mortal wounds and the attack sequence ends.

SYMBOL OF PURITY — 20 POINTS

Often represented as a gilded halo that radiates an auric light, these sculpted symbols reflect the purity of the deeds illuminated upon the banner and blind any who stand against the Emperor's chosen. Those with the temerity to aim at warriors marching below this banner find themselves averting their gaze.

While an enemy unit is within 6" of this model, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.

AQUILA OF SPIRITUAL FURY — 15 POINTS

Within a graven aquila, a grim death's head or one of many symbols employed by the Chapter are fitted micro-vox transmitters. These broadcast bellicose sermons penned by the Chaplains, ensuring that the righteous rage of the banner's defenders is never quenched.

The bearer has the following ability:

Aquila of Spritual Fury (Aura): While a friendly <CHAPTER> CORE unit is within 6" of the bearer, each time a model in that unit makes a melee attack, on an unmodified hit roll of 6:

- Add 1 to that attack's Strength characteristic.
- Improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1. This bonus is cumulative with Combat Doctrines.

ADAMANTINE THREADS — 20 POINTS

While this banner may originally have been composed of more mundane textiles, each successive repair has incorporated woven threads of adamantine, tinted by arcane thermochromatic processes by the Chapter's Techmarines. After centuries of battle and hundreds of restorations, it is now creation of rippling resilience capable of enduring the worst the foe can unleash.

- Improve this model's Save characteristic by 1 (to a maximum of 2+).
- Each time this model suffers any Banner Damage (pg 87), roll one D6: on a 4+, that Banner Damage is ignored.

TASSELS OF DUTY — 20 POINTS

Golden cords or streamers hang from this banner or its stave, each woven in a complex tri-fold braid denoting the intertwined responsibilities expected of a warrior of the Adeptus Astartes: the destruction of their foe; the defence of their allies; and completion the mission granted by their commander, each filtered through the unique traditions of their Chapter.

The bearer has the following ability:

Tassels of Duty (Aura): While a friendly <CHAPTER> CORE unit that is performing an action is within 6" of the bearer, that unit can make ranged attacks without that action failing.

ICON OF CRUSADE — 30 POINTS

Woven into the standard's tapestry, this potent symbol depicts the Ancient's current campaign. While those who stand beneath it fight, none are in doubt about the righteousness of their cause, and none will take a step back until their crusade is complete.

- The bearer has the Objective Secured ability (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book).
- The bearer has the following ability:

Icon of Crusade (Aura): While a friendly <CHAPTER> CORE unit is within 6" of the bearer, that unit has the Objective Secured ability (if this unit already has the Objective Secured ability, then for the purposes of determining which player controls an objective marker, each model in this unit counts as two models).

BANNER DAMAGE

Each time a **BANNER OF RENOWN** unit from your army is destroyed, when taking an Out of Action test for that unit, take an additional Out of Action test for their banner. If that test is failed, that unit suffers Banner Damage and gains one of the Banner Damage effects opposite. Each time a unit gains a Banner Damage effect, roll one D3 and consult the table to the right to randomly determine which Banner Damage effect is gained, or choose the one which you think best suits the narrative for your unit.

A unit can have more than one Banner Damage effect, but it cannot have the same Banner Damage effect more than once (if a duplicate result is rolled, roll again until a different result is rolled). If a model gains three Banner Damage effects, remove that model from your Order of Battle.

Make a note of any Banner Damage effects a model has on its Crusade card and subtract 1 from that unit's Crusade points for each Banner Damage effect it currently has (this can mean a unit has a negative number of Crusade points). If a model gains three Banner Damage effects, remove that model from your Order of Battle.

BANNER DAMAGE EFFECTS

1. SCORCHED FORM

This banner's material, heavy and resilient as it is, has been set ablaze, burning large areas of it into unrecognisable charred ruin.

The bearer has the following ability:

Scorched Form (Aura): While a friendly **<CHAPTER> CORE** unit is within 6" of this model, subtract 1 from the Leadership characteristic of models in that unit.

2. DIMINISHED MAJESTY

Whether reduced in stature, faded of colour or torn despite the Ancient's devoted efforts, this standard has lost much of its glory.

Reduce the range of this model's aura abilities by 3".

3. RAGGED TAPESTRY

This banner has been damaged and hastily repaired too often, awaiting the dedicated attention of artisans away from battle. It resembles more a collage of colour than a proud battle standard.

Each time a friendly **<CHAPTER> CORE** model is destroyed within range of this model's Astartes Banner ability (pg 67), subtract 1 from the roll to determine whether that model can shoot or make a melee attack.



ARMY OF FAITH CRUSADE RULES

An Army of Faith Crusade force functions a little differently to a normal Crusade force. Consisting of fractured Imperial forces fighting in any number of protracted war zones and shorn from central command, the warriors that form this force are held together by their common faith in the Emperor.

Fighting as a loosely organised force, this Crusade army relies on zealotry to maintain momentum and prevent its forces dispersing or becoming overwhelmed as it builds religious fervour during the Fervour stage.

Once a player decides their Army of Faith force has built up sufficient fervour, they can enter what is called the Retribution stage. During this part of the campaign, their army strikes out in aggressive attacks against their hated foes, fuelled by their fervour. Eventually this righteous anger may dissipate, and the player can choose to enter the Fervour stage again to rebuild their army's momentum, before once more entering the Retribution stage, and so on.

When creating an Army of Faith Order of Battle for the first time, and when adding units to it, you can only include the following:

- **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** units (excluding **DEATHWATCH** units).
- **ADEPTUS MINISTORUM** units.
- **ASTRA MILITARUM** units.

Each time a unit is added to an Army of Faith Order of Battle, it gains the **ARMY OF FAITH** keyword.

After creating your Army of Faith Order of Battle, it immediately starts in the Fervour stage.

MUSTERING AN ARMY OF FAITH ARMY

- An **ARMY OF FAITH** Detachment is one that only includes models with the **ARMY OF FAITH** keyword.
- An **ARMY OF FAITH** Detachment counts as an **ADEPTA SORORITAS, ADEPTUS ASTARTES** and **ASTRA MILITARUM** Detachment for the purpose of any Detachment abilities your army gains (e.g. Stratagems you can use).
- When mustering your army:
  - Your army must contain at least one **PRIEST** unit.
  - In order to include any **ADEPTA SORORITAS** units that do not have the Troops Battlefield Role, your army must contain at least one **ADEPTA SORDRITAS** Troops unit.
  - In order to include any **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** units that do not have the Troops Battlefield Role, your army must contain at least one **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** Troops unit.
  - In order to include any **ASTRA MILITARUM** units that do not have the Troops Battlefield Role, your army must contain at least one **ASTRA MILITARUM** Troops unit.

RELIGIOUS FERVOUR POINTS

An Army of Faith Crusade force will accumulate Religious Fervour points during the Fervour stage. At the start of your first Fervour stage, begin a Religious Fervour points tally for your Crusade force (the Crusade goals, notes and additional information box is ideal for this).

Once you have accumulated sufficient Fervour points, you can enter the Retribution stage. Over the course of the Retribution stage, your army will expend the accumulated fervour until it runs low or runs out, and the army must rebuild its fervour. When you gain any points, add the appropriate number to your Crusade army's tally. When you lose any points, delete the appropriate number from your Crusade army's tally.

- At the end of any battle during the Fervour stage, if your army has 20 or more Religious Fervour points, you can choose for your army to move to the Retribution stage.
- At the end of any battle during the Retribution stage, if your army has 5 or fewer Religious Fervour points, the Retribution stage ends and your army moves back into the Fervour stage.
- Your total cannot go below 0. If an ability would potentially take you below 0 (e.g. an ability which requires you to lose D3 Religious Fervour points when you have fewer than 3 available) that ability cannot be used.

GAINING RELIGIOUS FERVOUR POINTS

At the end of each battle during the Fervour stage, gain Religious Fervour points for each of the following. When you do so, add that number to your tally.

- If you won or drew the battle, gain D3+3 Religious Fervour points.
- If you lost the battle, gain D3 Religious Fervour points.
- If the enemy **WARLORD** was destroyed, gain D3 Religious Fervour points.
- If any enemy **CHAOS** units were destroyed, gain D3 Religious Fervour points.

LOSING RELIGIOUS FERVOUR POINTS

At the end of each battle during the Retribution stage, lose Religious Fervour points for each of the following. When you do so, subtract that number from your tally.

- If you lost or drew the battle, lose D6 Religious Fervour points.
- If your **WARLORD** was destroyed, lose D3 Religious Fervour points.
- If any units from your army that were destroyed by a **CHAOS** unit failed an Out of Action test, lose D3 Religious Fervour points.

ARMY OF FAITH CRUSADE RELICS

When an **ARMY OF FAITH CHARACTER** gains a Crusade Relic, you can instead select one of the Relics listed below. All the usual rules for selecting Crusade Relics, as described in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book, apply.

ARTIFICER RELIC

The Blood of Saint Calgar

It is said that when Saint Calgar was laid low by the Despoiler, his blood flowed like a river. Following the battle, some of this divine blood was collected in small ampoules by fervent adorants. When the bearer holds one of the surviving phials tightly a portion of Saint Calgar's might is imparted, allowing even the mightiest foe to be struck down.

ARMY OF FAITH model only.

- Add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of the bearer.
- While your army is in the Fervour stage, if this model is on the battlefield at the end of the battle, gain 1 Religious Fervour point.
- While your army is in the Retribution stage, once per battle, in your Command phase, you can lose D3 Religious Fervour points. Until the end of the turn, add the result to the bearer's Strength characteristic.

ANTIQUITY RELIC

An **ARMY OF FAITH CHARACTER** model of Heroic rank or higher can be given the following Antiquity Relic instead of one of the ones presented in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book. Add 1 to a unit's total Crusade points for each Antiquity Relic it has – this is in addition to the +1 from gaining a Battle Honour, for a total of +2.

Penitent's Band

This thin metal circlet, taking the form of an ornate garland of thorned briars, is worn around the brow of one who feels that they have been found wanting in their duty to the Emperor. Responding to the warrior's fervent emotions, the psychoreactive metal tightens, causing rivulets of blood to run down their face – the pain fuelling their determination to right their perceived wrongs.

ARMY OF FAITH model only.

- Each time the bearer makes a melee attack, re-roll a hit roll of 1 and a wound roll of 1.
- While your army has 20 or more Religious Fervour points, the bearer has the following ability:

Pious Example (Aura): While a friendly **ARMY OF FAITH CORE** unit is within 6" of the bearer, each time a model in that unit makes a melee attack, re-roll a hit roll of 1 and a wound roll of 1.

LEGENDARY RELIC

An **ARMY OF FAITH CHARACTER** of Legendary rank can be given the following Legendary Relic instead of one of the ones presented in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book. In addition, in order to give a model a Legendary Relic, you must also pay 1 Requisition point (if you do not have enough Requisition points, you cannot give that model a Legendary Relic). Add 2 to a unit's total Crusade points for each Legendary Relic it has – this is in addition to the +1 from gaining a Battle Honour, for a total of +3.

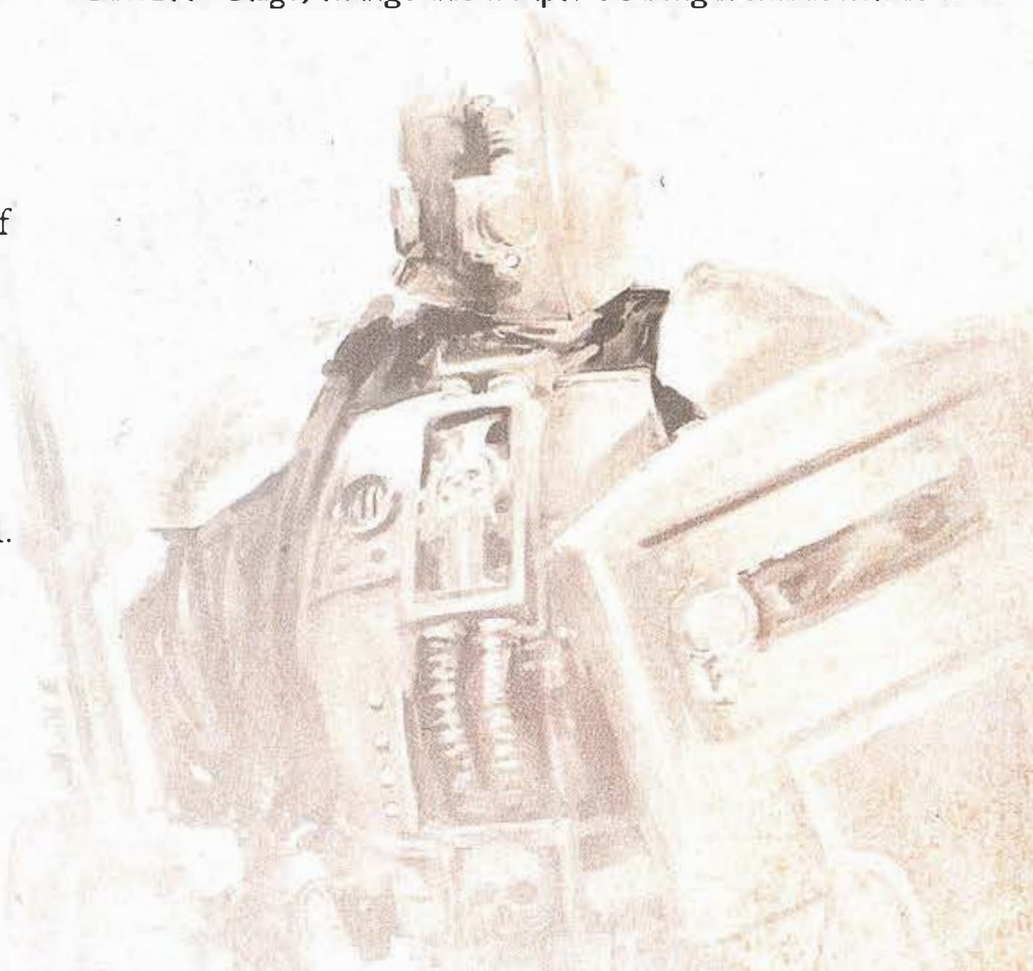
The Blade of Retribution

This large power sword has variously been identified as the double-handed blade wielded by Canoness Hrethnar's most senior Palatine, the duelling sabre carried by a warrior of the Black Templars as they fought the Black Legion at Saint's Haven and the heirloom weapon of vanished Proctor-Commander Venedar. When discovered, the broken blade was buried in the chest of a hulking traitor of Abaddon's legion. Reverently gathered, the shards were laid before the altar of the Tower of St Barthom, and a prayer of retribution spoken over the fragments. After Celestine's miraculous appearance, the sword was found reformed, glowing with an inner light, ready to destroy the foul heretics anew.

ARMY OF FAITH model with blessed blade, power sword or master-crafted power sword only. This Relic replaces a blessed blade, power sword or master-crafted power sword and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
The Blade of Retribution	Melee	Melee	+2	-4	3

Abilities: While the bearer's army is in the Fervour stage, add 1 to the bearer's Attack's characteristic. While the bearer's army is in the Retribution stage, change this weapon's Strength characteristic to +4.





FERVOUR STAGE

ABILITIES

During the Fervour stage, instead of any Chapter Tactics, Order Convictions or Regimental Doctrines, **ARMY OF FAITH** units from your army have the following ability:

Faith in the Emperor

- Add 1 to the Leadership characteristic of models with this ability.
- Each time a unit with this ability is selected to shoot or fight, you can re-roll one hit roll when resolving that unit's attacks.

AGENDAS

If your Crusade army is in the Fervour stage and includes any **ARMY OF FAITH** units, you can select the Army of Faith Agenda, listed below. This is a new category of Agendas, and follows all the normal rules for Agendas (for example, when you select Agendas, you cannot choose more than one from each category).

RECLAIM THE RELIC

Army of Faith Agenda

In order to gain momentum, an Army of Faith will seek out fallen relics for reconsecration, bringing them to a safe haven where they can be used in acts of divine worship, as intended.

If you selected this Agenda, then after both sides have finished deploying, your opponent must set up one Relic of the Faithful objective marker anywhere on the battlefield that is not within 9" of any battlefield edge. This objective marker represents a Relic of the Faithful that must be reclaimed, but does not count as an objective marker for any rules purposes other than for this Agenda.

The Relic of the Faithful can be carried if a unit successfully completes the Carry Relic of the Faithful action (see right). If this model is destroyed (even if it is subsequently resurrected or returns to the battlefield), place the Relic of the Faithful objective marker as close as possible to the spot where the destroyed model was. While it is carrying the Relic of the Faithful, that model's unit cannot embark within a **TRANSPORT**, nor can it use any rule that enables it to be removed from the battlefield and set back up again.

Carry Relic of the Faithful (Action): One **INFANTRY** unit from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase if it is within 1" of the Relic of the Faithful objective marker. The action is completed at the end of your turn so long as the unit performing it is still within 1" of that objective marker and there are no enemy units (excluding **AIRCRAFT** units) within Engagement Range of it. If completed, remove the Relic of the Faithful objective marker from the battlefield and select one model in the unit that completed this action– that model is carrying the Relic of the Faithful.

At the end of the battle, if you control the Relic of the Faithful objective marker, or a model from your army is carrying the Relic of the Faithful, your Crusade force gains 3 Religious Fervour points.

At the end of the battle, you can select one unit from your army that is within range of the Relic of the Faithful objective marker, or the unit that is carrying the Relic of the Faithful. That unit gains 4 experience points.

REQUISITIONS

If your Army of Faith Crusade force is in the Fervour stage, you can spend Requisition points (RPs) on any of the following Requisitions in addition to those presented in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

MARTYRS TO THE CAUSE 1RP

Warriors in an Army of Faith will think nothing of their own lives, their sacrifice setting a potent example to their allies about the righteousness of the cause.

Purchase this Requisition when an **ARMY OF FAITH** unit from your army fails an Out of Action test. Gain a number of Religious Fervour points equal to the number of Crusade points that unit has, then remove that unit from your Order of Battle.

'Faith is your shield and your blade. Mantled in the most adamant of conviction, the greatest strength of the heretic is insufficient to strike you down. The cleaving blows of your own weapons, meanwhile, given force by the God-Emperor, are enough to shatter the traitors' very souls!'

- Canoness Hrethnar, Order of the Bloody Rose

RETRIBUTION STAGE

ABILITIES

During the Retribution phase, instead of any Chapter Tactics, Order Convictions or Regimental Doctrines, **ARMY OF FAITH** units from your army have the following ability:

Crusading Wrath

- Add 1" to the Move characteristic of models with this ability.
- Each time a unit with this ability is selected to shoot or fight, you can re-roll one wound roll when resolving that unit's attacks.

AGENDAS

If your Crusade army is in the Retribution stage and includes any **ARMY OF FAITH** units, you can select the Army of Faith Agenda, listed below. This is a new category of Agendas, and follows all the normal rules for Agendas (for example, when you select Agendas, you cannot choose more than one from each category).

BRINGING LIGHT TO THE DARKNESS

Army of Faith Agenda

An Army of Faith at peak fervour is a deadly proposition for any foe, its forces surging across the battlefield, their absolute belief in their cause unbreakable.

If you selected this Agenda, keep a Bringing Light tally for each **ARMY OF FAITH** unit from your army. Add 1 to a unit's Bringing Light tally each time that unit destroys an enemy unit that was within 12" of it. Add 2 to the tally instead if that enemy unit was within your opponent's deployment zone when it was destroyed.

Each unit gains 1 experience point (to a maximum of 3) for each mark on its Bringing Light tally.

At the end of the battle, add the total of all Bringing Light tallies from your army together. For every 5 marks, gain 1 Religious Fervour point.

DIVINE RETRIBUTION

During each battle during the Retribution stage, you can spend Religious Fervour points to use the Divine Retribution abilities listed below. When you do so, select which Divine Retribution ability you wish to use from those listed below, and subtract the listed number of Religious Fervour points from your tally. You can only use each Divine Retribution ability once during each turn.

DIVINE RAGE — 1 POINT

Use this ability before an **ARMY OF FAITH** model from your army makes a melee attack. Add 1 to the Damage characteristic of that attack (to a maximum of 3).

DIVINE AIM — 1 POINT

Use this ability before an **ARMY OF FAITH** model from your army makes a ranged attack. You can ignore any or all modifiers to the hit roll for that attack.

DIVINE INSPIRATION — 1+ POINTS

Use this ability in your Command phase. Select one **ARMY OF FAITH CHARACTER** model from your army. Until your next Command phase, that model has the following ability:

Divine Inspiration (Aura): While a friendly **ARMY OF FAITH** unit is within 6" of this model, each time a Combat Attrition test is made for a model in that unit, add a number to the result equal to the number of Religious Fervour points spent to gain this effect.

DIVINE FURY — 1+ POINTS

Use this ability after making a charge roll for an **ARMY OF FAITH** unit from your army. Add a number to the result equal to the number of Religious Fervour points spent to gain this effect (to a maximum of 3).

DIVINE INTIMIDATION — 2 POINTS

Use this ability at the start of any turn. Select one enemy **CHARACTER** unit that is within 6" of an **ARMY OF FAITH CHARACTER** model from your army. Until the end of that turn, halve the range of that enemy **CHARACTER** unit's Aura abilities.





BATTLEZONE: FRONTERIS

Many Imperial worlds are not perfectly adjusted to habitation, but contain important resources that are too valuable to ignore. On such worlds sturdy and thoroughly reinforced buildings are the norm, whether built in their hundreds, or simply used for small outposts and containing extensive tunnels below ground.

In this section you will find guidance and additional rules for using Battlezone: Fronteris terrain features in your games of Warhammer 40,000. Whether using only terrain features from this set, or simply including one on a battlefield with other terrain features, the following rules will provide interesting new challenges for these battles.

BATTLEZONE: FRONTERIS CRUSADE AGENDAS

If you are playing a Crusade battle and the battlefield features any Battlezone: Fronteris terrain features, you can select an Agenda from the Battlezone: Fronteris Agendas, listed below. This is a new category of Agendas, and follows all the normal rules for Agendas (for example, when you select Agendas, you cannot choose more than one Battlezone: Fronteris Agenda).

TRANSMIT SIGNAL

Battlezone: Fronteris Agenda

When conditions become especially difficult, personal communications devices are inadequate. To communicate with commanders in orbit, vastly distant outposts or far-ranging allied forces, reconnaissance information, pleas for aid and intelligence vital to a campaign must be transmitted through larger arrays.

CHARACTER units from your army can perform the following action:

Transmit Signal (Action): At the end of your Movement phase, one CHARACTER unit from your army that is on a Vox-Antenna terrain feature (pg 95) and not within Engagement Range of any enemy models can start to perform this action. This action is completed at the end of your turn. If completed, that model is said to have transmitted a signal. Each time this action is completed, roll one D6, subtracting one from the result if any Theatre of War: Fronteris abilities are in effect (see opposite): on a 4+, that signal is acknowledged by the recipient.

At the end of the battle, each unit that has transmitted any signals gains 1 experience point. If any of those signals were acknowledged by the recipient, that unit gains 2 additional experience points.

DOWNLOAD ORDERS

Battlezone: Fronteris Agenda

While short orders can be pushed through dangerous atmospheric conditions relatively uncorrupted, in order to retrieve more detailed intelligence, a larger receiver is required. Once tapped in, warriors can download this information onto portable data-slates before moving off to carry out their instructions.

CHARACTER units from your army can perform the following action:

Download Orders (Action): At the end of your Movement phase, one CHARACTER unit from your army that is within 1" of a Auspex Shrine terrain feature (pg 95) and not within Engagement Range of any enemy models can start to perform this action. This action is completed at the end of your turn. If completed, that unit is said to have downloaded new orders. If this action is completed by your WARLORD, you can select one of your Agendas (excluding this one) and replace it with a new Agenda selected as normal as if it were the Select Agendas step. Any tallies for the replaced Agenda are lost, and units from your army cannot gain any experience points for the replaced Agenda.

At the end of the battle, each unit that has downloaded new orders gains 2 experience points.

THEATRE OF WAR: FRONTERIS

Fronteris worlds are often wracked by terrible storms, making travel difficult and disrupting communications. Those who do battle in these environments find themselves fighting not only their foe, but also the weather itself.

Theatres of War offer a unique and exciting way to represent a wide array of different battlefield environments on the tabletop, some more extreme than others, and can be incorporated into any games of Warhammer 40,000 that you might play. The Fronteris Theatre of War is highly customisable, offering options to replicate many of the oppressive conditions assailing warriors on these worlds. When incorporating a Theatre of War into your games, you can choose to roll randomly on the various tables that it contains, thereby ensuring a different experience every time you play, or you can select the options that you find most appropriate for the conflict that you and your opponent are trying to represent.

ATMOSPHERIC EFFECTS

Before the battle, after the battlefield has been created, one player should roll one D6 and consult the table below, or agree on the most suitable option. The result is an additional rule for the battle.

1. ACIDIC DELUGE

The atmospheres of some worlds are dangerously corrosive, ensuring that any structures must be sturdily built and chemically resistant. Troops battling on these worlds find even the most sturdy protective equipment disintegrating under the incessant erosion.

After the battlefield has been created, players should agree which Area Terrain features on the battlefield should be considered to be sheltered (this should be terrain features which are covered from above, have a roof, or otherwise would allow models to be covered from above) and if necessary, adjust the terrain set up to ensure these are evenly distributed across the battlefield. Each player should also keep a Corrosion tally for each unit from their army. At the end of each battle round, each unit that is not wholly within a sheltered terrain feature gains 1 mark on their Corrosion tally. Once a unit has three marks on its Corrosion tally, until the end of the battle, each time you make an armour saving throw for a model in that unit, subtract 1 from the result.

2. LIGHTNING STRIKES

Beneath especially turbulent atmospheres, deploying large war engines to the battlefield that attract numerous bolts of cracking power is especially dangerous, not just for the crew, but for those who fight alongside such potent conductors.

At the end of each battle round, roll one D6 for each unit from your army that contains any model greater than 6" in height, or is within 1" of a terrain feature which greater than 6" in height. On a 1, that unit suffers D6 mortal wounds.

3. ABRASIVE DUST STORM

Deadly, high-speed dust storms that can abrade even rigid structures are common on many Fronteris worlds that lack dense habitations to shelter within. While rugged buildings can often resist the effects for years, newcomers to these worlds find exposed flesh is quickly torn, their equipment clogged with gritty dust, blocking heat vents and causing dangerous munitions to jam.

Each time a model makes a ranged attack, on an unmodified hit roll of 1, roll one D6: on a 1, that model suffers 1 mortal wound after resolving all of its attacks.

4. BLASTING GALES

Subject to complex solar and magnetic interactions, this world is prone to particularly violent winds, demolishing lighter structures. These cyclonic gusts hamper the movement of warriors in their path, and affect the accuracy of ranged weaponry fired at anything over the shortest distances.

- Each time a model makes a ranged attack, if the target is more than 12" from that model, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.
- Subtract 1 from charge rolls.

5. CHILLING BLIZZARD

On certain worlds, far from a star's warmth or subject to strange endothermic phenomena, thick and well-insulated structures are required to overcome the biting cold atmosphere. Such weather also grips warriors on the ground, as blizzards restrict visibility and freezing temperatures foul delicate communications gear.

Subtract 3" from the range of Aura abilities.

6. BATTERING HAILSTORM

On this planet, a millennia-old hailstorm is a deadly threat to life. Shards of ice, some razor sharp and the size of a fist, blaze from the skies at terrific speeds. While they might shatter against a sturdy structure, exposed warriors find themselves pulverised or sliced in two by these deadly projectiles.

After the battlefield has been created, players should agree which Area Terrain features on the battlefield should be considered to be sheltered (this should be terrain features which are covered from above, have a roof, or otherwise would allow models to be covered from above) and if necessary, adjust the terrain set up to ensure these are evenly distributed across the battlefield. At the end of each battle round, roll one D6 for each unit from your army that is not wholly within a sheltered terrain feature. On a 2-3, that unit suffers 1 mortal wound. On a 1, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds.

TERRAIN TRAITS

On this page you will find suggested terrain traits for each Battlezone: Fronteris terrain feature, as well as an additional Narrative Play ability. We recommend agreeing with your opponent before using any of these Narrative Play abilities in your games.

Designer's Note: *It is possible to combine several of these terrain features together to form one larger feature. If you do so, we recommend discussing with your opponent which of the following abilities and terrain traits that larger terrain feature should use.*

FRONTERIS LANDING PAD

Many cargo fronteris landing pads contain servo-shutters which can be opened, allowing small craft to land and cargo to be deposited in safety away from furious meteorological conditions, or watchful excise-enforcers.

Terrain Category: Area Terrain

Terrain Traits: Light Cover, Scaleable, Exposed Position, Obscuring

Narrative Play Ability

Hidden Supplies: At the end of the Movement phase, one unit that is on top of this terrain feature and not within Engagement Range of any enemy models can attempt to access the cargo hold. Roll one D6: on a 5+, that unit finds additional supplies. Until the end of the turn, each time a model in that unit makes a ranged attack, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.

STC HAB-BUNKER

Armoured structures exist in many forms across the breadth of the Imperium – their brutal, martial appearance accepted as part of the landscape. Some are designed purely to protect from enemy fire, while others ward against dangerous environments. Those found on fronteris worlds are sturdy enough to fulfil both roles.

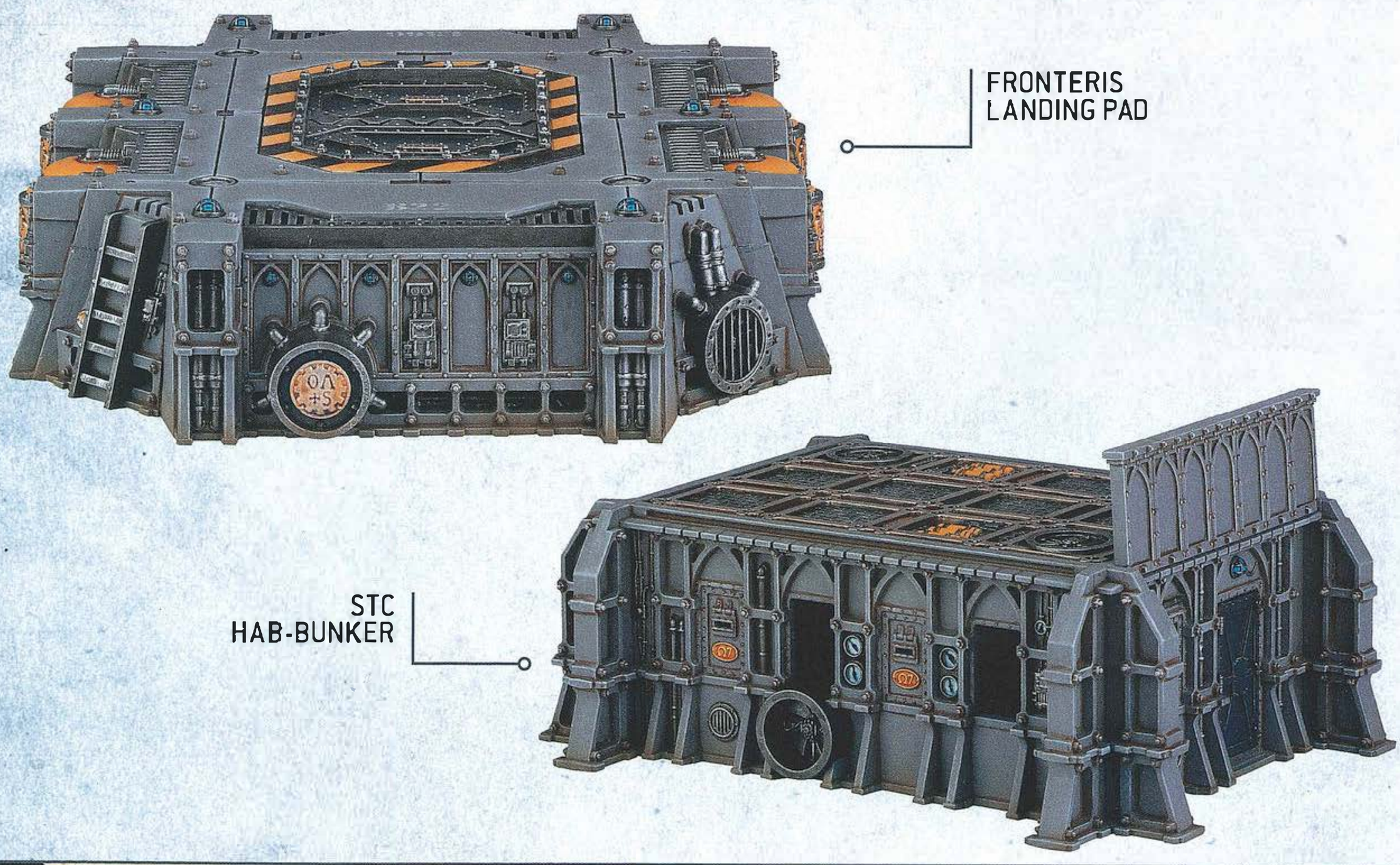
Terrain Category: Area Terrain

Terrain Traits: Light Cover, Scaleable, Exposed Position, Obscuring

Designer's Note: *We suggest that even though this terrain feature is not at least 5" in height, models should not be able to see through this terrain feature, though they can see over it as normal.*

Narrative Play Ability

Take Shelter: If the Acidic Deluge or Battering Hailstorm Theatre of War: Fronteris effects are in use, when determining which units are sheltered, you can roll one D6 for each **INFANTRY** unit from your army that is within 1" of this terrain feature's door and not within Engagement Range of any enemy units. On a 2+, that unit is considered to be wholly within a sheltered terrain feature.



AUSPEX SHRINE

Large receiver arrays are vital on fronteris worlds, able to capture data-packets of defensive, mercantile or esoteric information from a host of sources. They are also a means by which emboldening catechisms and surreptitious propaganda is disseminated that can keep an outnumbered force in the fight against aggressors.

Terrain Category: Obstacles

Terrain Traits: Light Cover, Unstable Position

Narrative Play Ability

Download Propaganda: CHARACTER units from your army can perform the following action:

Download Propaganda (Action): At the end of your Movement phase, one CHARACTER unit from your army that is within 1" of a Auspex Shrine terrain feature and not within Engagement Range of any enemy models can start to perform this action. This action is completed at the end of your shooting phase. If completed, until the start of your next turn, while a unit is within 6" of this terrain feature, each time a Combat Attrition test is taken for that unit, ignore any or all modifiers.

VOX-ANTENNA

Many fronteris installations feature large and robust vox-antenna – fitted with an array of aerials and antenna– able to remain undamaged in the abject weather conditions they are placed in, while still broadcasting its signal clearly through storm clouds and atmospheric interference.

Terrain Category: Area Terrain

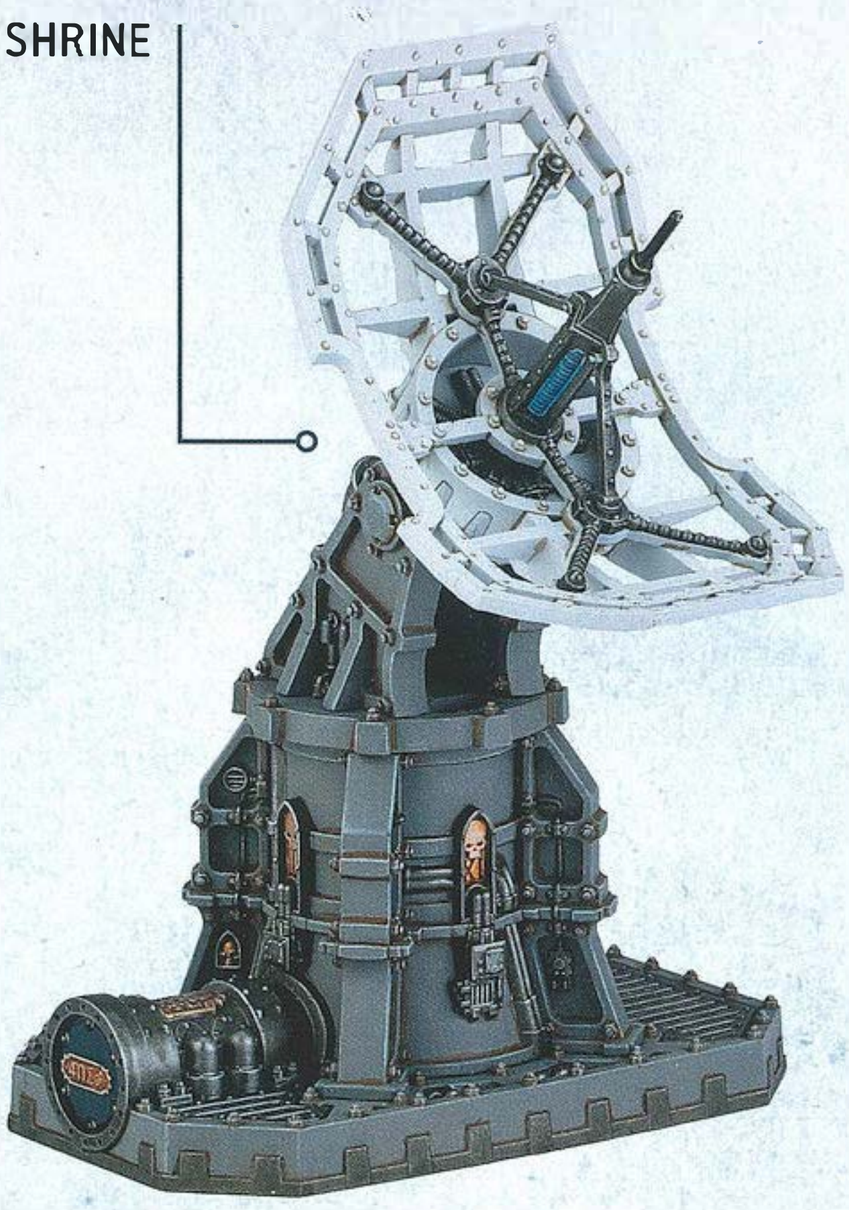
Terrain Traits: Light Cover, Scaleable, Exposed Position, Obscuring

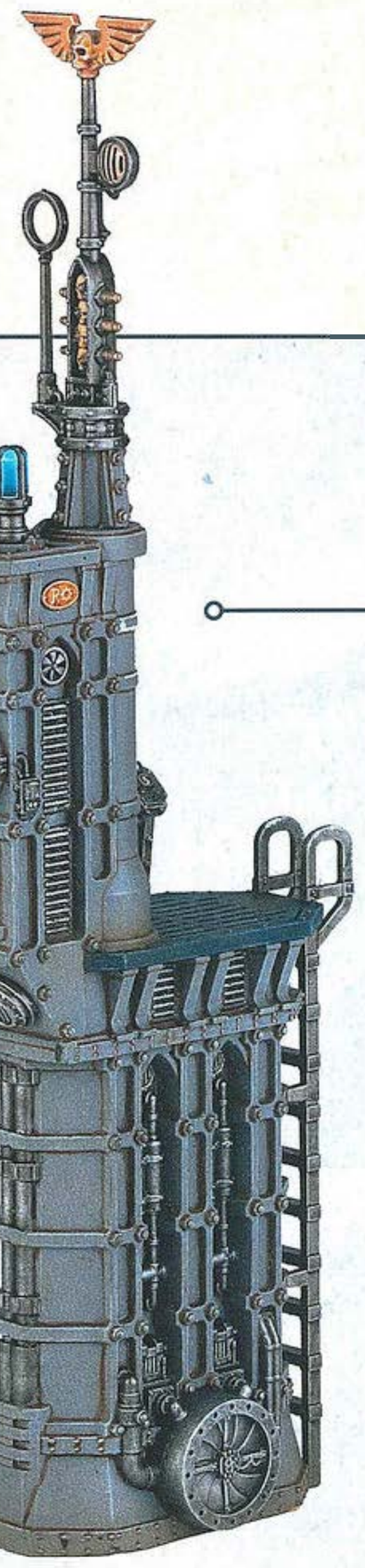
Narrative Play Ability

Rousing Broadcast: CHARACTER units from your army can perform the following action:

Rousing Broadcast (Action): At the end of your Movement phase, one CHARACTER unit from your army that is within 1" of a Vox-Antenna terrain feature and not within Engagement Range of any enemy models can start to perform this action. This action is completed at the end of your shooting phase. If completed, until the end of the turn, while a friendly unit is within 6" of that Vox-Antenna terrain feature, each time you make a charge roll for that friendly unit, you can re-roll the result.

AUSPEX SHRINE





VOX-ANTENNA

GLOSSARY

Below you will find a glossary that contains a number of terms used in this book.

Alliances (pg 49): For a War of Faith Campaign, players are organised into teams, known as alliances. The results of each of their games contribute to their alliance's overall result.

Army of Faith (pg 88): A series of rules for Imperial Crusade armies, made up of various Factions unified by their strength of faith in the Emperor.

Army of Renown (pg 65): A variant army list for a Faction that can be used in your games of Warhammer 40,000 to represent a specialised force. It must be Battle-forged, cannot include any Specialist Detachments, and will have other specific restrictions that must be adhered to. Doing so, however, will provide you with unique benefits.

Banners of Renown (pg 84): A series of additional Crusade rules allowing **ADEPTUS ASTARTES ANCIENT** models to gain upgrades and damage effects for their mighty banners.

Campaign Master (pg 48): The individual who organises and runs a War of Faith campaign.

Campaign Master's Edicts (pg 60): Optional rules for a Campaign Master to use when running a War of Faith campaign.

Campaign Phase (pg 51): A War of Faith campaign is split into a number of phases, determined by the Campaign Master, in which players play games.

Codex Supplement: Order of the Bloody Rose (pg 76-79): Additional rules for **ADEPTA SORORITAS** Detachments drawn from the Order Militant of the **ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE**.

Fervour Stage (pg 90): A stage for an Army of Faith Crusade army in which it accumulates Religious Fervour points.

Legendary Missions (pg 54-59): Unique missions played as part of a War of Faith campaign inspired by a key event from *War Zone Nachmund: Vigilus Alone*.

Theatre of War: Fronteris (pg 93): Unique atmospheric effects for use in your battles on battlefields featuring Battlezone Fronteris terrain features.

Tools of the Vanguard (pg 72): Additional wargear options for **INFILTRATOR SQUAD** and **INCURSOR SQUAD** units as part of a **VANGUARD SPEARHEAD** Army of Renown.

Retribution Stage (pg 91): A stage for an Army of Faith Crusade army in which it spends its accumulated Religious Fervour points.

Strategic Victory Points (pg 51-52): At the end of a War of Faith campaign phase, each alliance scores a number of Strategic Victory points based on the position of each war zone tracker. These determine the overall winner of the campaign.

War of Faith Campaign (pg 48): A campaign system for your games of Warhammer 40,000 inspired by the events of *War Zone Nachmund: Vigilus Alone*.

