WARHAMMER 40,000

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WAR ZONE NACHMUND

RIFT WAR







‘Heed my words! Hear each and every one!

The Nachmund Gauntlet belongs to the Despoiler! He has decreed it so!

To me he has given the task of claiming it. To me he has entrusted the mightiest fleet, and the mightiest army. Countless millions now follow my command.

And my commands are this: destroy; seize; enslave; kill.

You simpering weaklings of the Imperium will see the towers of your cathedrums toppled, your cities burned to the ground and your worlds turned over to the stuff of Chaos.

You will tremble; you will cry. You will beg for relief that shall never come. You will plead for a mercy we will never give.

I am Haarken Worldclaimer, Herald of the Apocalypse and Mouthpiece of Abaddon.

I am your doom.

I am coming.’

- Haarken Worldclaimer

WAR ZONE NACHMUND:

RIFT WAR



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INTRODUCTION

A rare corridor of realspace, the Nachmund Gauntlet crosses the Great Rift. It links two sides of the galaxy together: the southern region known to Mankind as the Imperium Sanctus and the northern region known as the Imperium Nihilus. After its discovery, it swiftly became one of the most strategically vital locations in the entire galaxy.

The Nachmund Gauntlet is the most navigable known route through the Great Rift, and is therefore an essential communications and transport link between the two halves of the Imperium. As a result, the worlds on either side of it have become as strategically important as the route itself – whoever controls them, controls access. On the Imperium Sanctus side, the most important world is Sangua Terra; its counterpart is the planet Vigilus on the Imperium Nihilus side.

Though narrow in galactic terms, the Nachmund Gauntlet is still enormous. Worlds, moons, asteroids, alien megastructures and artificial satellites lie within it. These locations are often buffeted by empyric winds or even drowned in the raging warp tides that ebb and flow in unpredictable patterns from the Gauntlet's edges. The discoverers of the Nachmund Gauntlet – who also gave it such names as the Helpass, Despair's Gap, Hope's Crossing and the Canyon of Woe – found all manner of places turned to madness by mutations, warp taint and daemonic invasion. They were attacked by vessels possessed of evil sentience and insatiable hunger.

Beyond this, they also found that the Gauntlet was a haven for pirates, traitors, mutants, criminals, mercenaries and aliens of countless kinds. Though they still found worlds and enclaves loyal to the Emperor, they were as pebbles standing against crashing ocean waves. Many of the Human populations had turned to traitorous or xenos causes in order to survive. Pirates and raiders plundered, slaved and fought as mercenaries along the Nachmund Gauntlet's length, depth and breadth – plaguing the inconstant warp channels and making all but well-armed convoys vulnerable to attack. In some cases these forces fought over scraps, in others over great caches of wealth that had become available in the aftermath of the destruction brought about by the Great Rift's emergence. They waged war on asteroid mining outposts, warp-tainted vessels, abandoned moon clusters and clouds of shipwreck debris for all manner of agendas.

It was not long before the eyes of the Imperium's greatest enemy, Abaddon the Despoiler, set his eyes upon the Nachmund Gauntlet. Controlling it would be an important step in his quest to destroy the Imperium, for doing so would isolate the Imperium Nihilus – already cut off from the Emperor's light by the Rift – even further.

WAR ZONE NACHMUND

'Let them come. For ten thousand years have we readied ourselves for this moment, when the Imperium comes to avenge our ancestors' so-called betrayal. Our forebears fought for what we fight for now – that which has always been ours by right since time immemorial. Our freedom. Our independence.

Knights of House Mandrakor, we fight for our right to control our own destiny. Upon this world, our world, Dharrovar, we shall break our would-be oppressors and declare with the barrels of our cannons and with the teeth of our blades that we shall not be owned!'

- High King Kaligius of House Mandrakor


144
31
Gloriam



THE WAR FOR VIGILUS

The armies of Abaddon first made for the world of Vigilus, the bastion world defending the northern entrance to the Nachmund Gauntlet. The Despoiler's forces caused untold death and destruction, their advance stalling only when Abaddon was forced to leave the campaign after a titanic clash that resulted in Chapter Master Marneus Calgar of the Ultramarines being rumoured dead. Despite these events, the war was far from over.

Abaddon's invasion, and the apocalyptic clash that followed, was known as the War of Nightmares. But when the Despoiler struck, Vigilus had already been wracked with conflict. The world's defenders had been embroiled in what was called the War of Beasts for many local months by the time of the Chaos invasion. They had fought Drukhari and Asuryani raiders, an uprising of the Pauper Princes Genestealer Cult as well as having faced invasion from the Orks of Speedwaaagh! Krooldakka. When Abaddon's armies invaded the planet, they had to contend not only with the Imperial defenders but also the xenos presence. The resulting war was incomprehensibly brutal as warriors from all factions fought one another for survival.

By the time the Despoiler withdrew from Vigilus, nearly entire planet was devastated. Few areas of the world were left untouched by the ravages of battle. Major hivesprawls such as Dirkden, Storvhal and Megaborealis were reduced to ruins. Dontoria was ringed with quarantine zones and a pestilential haze hung over it. When Abaddon departed he had left large armies of Heretic Astartes, mutants, cultists and Militarum Traitoris behind, and greenskins and Genestealer Cultists were still at large in considerable numbers. Vigilus' moon, Neo-Vellum, was barely able to maintain contact with Sangua Terra after its astropathic choir was attacked by warriors of the Arch-enemy and a great many of them were killed. Noctilith Crowns – dotted all over Vigilus' surface – drew upon the power of the warp, unleashing empyric turmoil across the planet and adding to the misery and suffering of the people there.

Though Marneus Calgar survived his duel with Abaddon, the Ultramarines never rebutted rumours of his death and word spread rapidly. The belief had an enormous effect on the morale of Vigilus' population. The news caused people to despair and rebel, seeing it as the death-knell of Vigilus. The Aquilarian Council, established by Calgar to manage the defence of the planet, broke apart and the world's defenders became disunited. But for many the rumours inspired them to great heights of zealotry. To them Calgar was a martyr, a symbol of heroic sacrifice every Imperial citizen should aspire to. Soon many citizens were offering up prayers to 'Saint Calgar'.



Vigilus was far from the only planet in its region of the Imperium Nihilus to come under attack from the forces of Chaos. World after world was lost, despite the efforts of many to prevent their fall. A crusade spearheaded by Sisters of Battle from the Order of the Bloody Rose travelled in vain to the Yolaris System but, while in transit, their fleet was thrown into the warp. Suffering terrible losses, they emerged near Vigilus. Refugees and retreating forces both flocked to the planet in large numbers alongside the Sisters.

With the reprieve granted to Imperial forces by Abaddon's departure, Sisters of Battle and Astra Militarum troops conducted an operation to retake the moon of Hearthlack at the edge of the Vigilus System. Despite suffering huge losses, they were successful and reconsecrated the moon's large cathedrum in dedication to Saint Calgar. The vast atmospheric generators, which produced its artificial atmosphere, had been damaged in the fighting. It was now pumping out ochre-coloured air, and to make up for this failing, worked harder to produce more. This resulted in it being bathed in what appeared to be a golden fog. Refugees fleeing to the Vigilus System thought Hearthlack resembled a haloed moon with a golden trail, as the great gouts of yellow air trailed behind its orbit. To the people on Vigilus, this effect seemed – somehow – to make the Great Rift appear more distant. The world's Commissars even noted a marked decrease in the number of executions for insanity they needed to carry out. Soon, Hearthlack became known as the Halo World, and it became a place of worship for pilgrims and refugees alike.

Though many reached Vigilus out of desperation, or to flee danger, others travelled there deliberately, with certain goals in mind. Among these was Inquisitor Erasmus Cartavolnus of the Ordo Malleus, who also brought his elite troops known as the Black Iconoclasts. He sought to destroy the Noctilith Crowns that Abaddon's forces had raised in large numbers all over the planet, and that were distorting realspace around the world. After an initial victory, destroying one of the black edifices near Grisport in Megaborealis, he used all his power as an Inquisitor to draw more Imperial forces over to his cause. He successfully melded an enormous variety of forces together with a combination of wit, guile and threats – and over time



succeeded in destroying enough of the Crowns that local realspace began to stabilise. Cartavolnus truly believed that the Emperor had shone his light upon Vigilus in its darkest hour, and many others attributed their victories to the beneficence of Saint Calgar as well. Any Imperial defeats were dismissed as inevitable consequences of insufficient faith or punishment of heresies known only to the Emperor.

Over time, belief, zeal and faith magnified and spread throughout Vigilus' population, with Saint Calgar worshipped openly. The ever increasing number of refugees pouring in from neighbouring systems reported a saviour beacon that had somehow led them there. Many of these people were immediately pressed into service by Cartavolnus, who capitalised on the great swell of faith to build the armies needed to defeat the xenos and forces of Chaos that still blighted Vigilus in huge numbers. The Imperial military position was still tenuous, despite the gains achieved, and it was expected that every Imperial citizen played their part in the name of the Emperor and Saint Calgar.

Saint's Haven, the fortress where Marneus Calgar was said to have died, became hallowed ground. The mighty defensive work was seen by many on Vigilus as a physical embodiment of the strength of their faith. This made it a natural target for the warriors of the Black Legion, who sought to destroy it, and thus the faith of the defenders, with it. During the siege, blood flowed in great rivers and corpses piled up in vast mountains. Millions of citizens and defenders prayed to the God-Emperor, beseeching him for salvation in the face of the Heretic Astartes' determined assault. For days they begged for deliverance. Then, suddenly, the three cracked bells at the summit of the Tower of St Barthom chimed together. There was an almighty eruption of holy fire, and there stood Celestine, the Living Saint. With her arrival the Imperial defenders rallied and threw off the Black Legion assault.

Celestine's work was not yet done, however. Travelling to quarantined Dontoria, she declared it must all be purged. Ships of the Order of the Bloody Rose unleashed enormous bombardments upon it, creating a path for Celestine and a host of Sisters to purge all its districts. Such an act of destruction was visible from all over Vigilus, as enormous clouds of ash and smoke billowed skyward and spread around the planet. Many feared Abaddon had returned. For most, however, the great pyre that was all that was left of Dontoria was a beacon of faith that would shine all the way to Holy Terra.

Slowly but surely, the Imperium regained its hold over Vigilus. Communications were restored. Forge temples were reignited. Command structures reformed. The importance of faith to the people had given the Ecclesiarchy a new dominance in the hierarchy, and the Synod Vigilant was formed as the world's ruling body. The tally of victories against the forces of Chaos and the xenos grew longer, buying more time and space for the Imperium to consolidate and rebuild. Each battle won only served to prove the value of the defenders' faith even more. Though Imperial forces on Vigilus seemed to be in ascendant, and asserting some order on their world, the truth was that they were more alone than ever. World after world outside their system had been conquered by the forces of Chaos. Abaddon cared little for Vigilus itself, keeping his attention firmly on the wider strategic picture. He wanted the Nachmund Gauntlet, and the first real step to conquering it was relieving the fallen Knight world of Dharrovar, which was currently under siege from Imperial forces.

THE NACHMUND GAUNTLET

The Nachmund Gauntlet 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 as yet fully discovered and recognised by Imperial authorities. 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. Regardless of the truth, its strategic significance cannot be overstated, a fact that both senior Imperial military bodies and Abaddon the Despoiler both recognise. Abaddon realises that not only would securing the Gauntlet give him unfettered access to the Imperium Sanctus in the galactic south, but also any invasion of it would draw in Imperial forces from elsewhere, leaving many areas stripped of much of their garrisons...

CARTOGRAPHIC RETRIEVAL SD/PBF:

Arrows indicate very approx. movements of heretic forces. Accurate data-gathering almost impossible, many long-range augurs have been destroyed. Relative state of warp-tides also impossible to deduce accurately.

THE GREAT RIFT

GARGAZEL (Starfort)

GHORALIK (Hive World)

PRENZIN (Explorator Way Station)

GREAT HOPE (Refugee Fleet)

SEPTUM VERDA (Industrial World)

NONAVORE (Bastion World)

TO SANGUA TERRA

TO VIGILUS

CONSEKRATOS SANCTA
(Ecclesiarchal Haven)

DHARROVAR
(Traitor Knight World)

CHOLARIS
(Immaterium Surge Station)

BADE
(Civilised World)

HELSOR
(Starfort)

CENTOR'S LANDING
(Shrine World)

ENKELLION DRIFTS
(Asteroid Field)

PARATHIS
(Hive World)

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

THE GREAT RIFT

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*)



DHARROVAR

Dharrovar, home to the traitorous Knights of House Mandrakor, had been a threat to Imperial shipping through the Nachmund Gauntlet since the first captains navigated paths through the region. The world's conquest had swiftly become a priority for the Castellans of the Rift Space Marine Chapter, a brotherhood ordered by the returned Primarch Roboute Guilliman himself to pacify the Gauntlet.

The Castellans of the Rift had an arduous duty, one that was truly too much for a single Space Marine Chapter to accomplish, even before the Vigilus System was completely besieged and the worlds around it were snuffed out one by one. Their brotherhood was overstretched, fighting hard at Vigilus to the north, garrisoning the southern end of the Gauntlet as well as bringing battle to Dharrovar. They called for aid. Their Chapter Master, Ba'stien Grix, ordered the sending out of a psychic call to arms. Many other Chapters answered. Some had fought on Vigilus and since departed; others had newly arrived in the region. Some only came to the Gauntlet after hearing the psychic message.



For ten thousand years have we been hidden... no more. Now we finish what was started all those millennia ago. The blood of the Emperor's lackeys will drench our steeds.

These Space Marine forces collectively became known as the Wardens of the Gauntlet, and they were number enough that the Castellans of the Rift believed a full-scale siege and invasion of Dharrovar could be attempted. The Space Marines called upon other Imperial forces to join them. Some of these were redirected from a course to Vigilus. Others were pressed into service from Imperial-held regions within the Gauntlet. Many came specifically to reinforce the Wardens and see Dharrovar fall. Hosts of Battle Sisters, lances of Imperial Knights, regiments of Astra Militarum and squadrons of Navis Imperialis ships came to play their part.

Even with these forces, besieging Dharrovar was a daunting prospect. The world itself was situated close to the edge of the Nachmund Gauntlet. Warp energy flared and fluctuated there in completely unpredictable ways and made surrounding Dharrovar almost impossible. The world was rendered harder to access by the enormous debris fields which had collected in the planet's near and distant orbits. These treacherous zones were made from the wreckage of hundreds of ships, some destroyed by House Mandrakor or spit out by the warp. Over time, the fields had become populated by renegades, aliens and cultists that fought a guerrilla war against Imperial attackers, and were left alone by House Mandrakor provided they did not attack Dharrovar. The Dark Mechanicum forge moon of Omega-Threx also lay in the system and was Dharrovar's long-time ally. Omega-Threx's dark magi had laced the debris fields and other areas with void mines and provided supplies and additional warriors to the defence of Dharrovar. The challenges faced by the Imperial attackers did not end there – Dharrovar was further defended by a number of warp anomalies that made direct assault by large forces only possible through relatively narrow channels of space.



There was only one real route by which an attacker could assault Dharrovar in force. Chapter Master Ba'stien Grix ordered that the main assault be made as swiftly as possible. The largest warships were at the tip of the spear to smash aside any resistance, with transports following closely behind. As the Imperial assault fleet closed with its target, more warships would form a cordon against any alien and heretic forces that might pour from the debris fields, ensuring that the transports reached Dharrovar's surface unmolested. This wall of vessels would in the same process create a narrow avenue by which Imperial troops could withdraw if necessary. A number of elite forces, including Space Marines and Tempestus Scions, also launched surgical strikes into the debris fields to disrupt potential flanking attacks while others were deployed to secure landing zones on Dharrovar's rocky surface.

Grix finally established another force of elite troops and assigned them a flanking mission around Dharrovar, between the western debris field and the warp anomaly named Portus Diabolis. Its task was to launch secondary attacks against Dharrovar but primarily intercept supply convoys heading to the planet from Omega-Threx. If these could be choked, House Mandrakor would fall more quickly.

OF ROCK AND STEEL

Dharrovar itself was barren, cold and mountainous. Much of its land mass was covered with lines of jagged ridges made of razor-sharp rock. Deep ravines ran between these natural walls, with fast-flowing icy streams at their bottom that commonly featured treacherous rapids and currents. Close to the edge of the Great Rift, Dharrovar was touched by the powers of warp. Local wildlife mutated into abhorrent varieties and became much more predatory. Cave entrances became giant maws eager to consume any who would wander within. The skies, once always a miserable grey, flickered with blues, reds and greens.

The hardy people who inhabited Dharrovar were fanatically loyal to – and utterly terrified of – the Knights of House Mandrakor in equal measure, and were offered protection in exchange for servitude. Millions toiled on behalf of their masters, sworn for life to die for the Nobles if required. House Mandrakor was not alone in defending its holdings, however. In the aftermath of the Great Rift's emergence, High King Kaligius and High Queen Kaligia had made pacts with warbands of Heretic Astartes, who brought with them armies of abhumans and cultists. Omega-Threx delivered more Daemon Engines to Dharrovar with each passing week. All could be thrown into battle against enemy forces, and their hate for the armies of the Imperium could be relied upon to see them exact a terrible toll on invaders.



After Grix launched his ground assault, his troops made initial gains, securing their landing sites and expanding outwards to what they believed were the traitors' primary holdings. But not long after this, they met ferocious opposition.

STALEMATE

The harshness of its terrain made Dharrovar highly defensible, and over the millennia House Mandrakor had constructed layer after layer of fortifications, tunnels and weapons emplacements to protect their holdings from invaders. Cave entrances not taken over by malign spirits were guarded by steel barricades that could be moved aside to make room for heavy weapons manned by the Knights' militia; these could then be concealed easily. Every cave entrance was within multiple firing arcs, making storming them a near-suicidal exercise. The cave networks were so extensive that Knights and troops of House Mandrakor entering one cave could emerge from any one of dozens more. For the Imperial invaders, it was all but impossible to tell where one Noble fortress ended and another truly began – it was as if much of the entire planet had been fortified. Every inch of ground seized by Ba'stien Grix's forces was paid for in blood. Caves deemed secure suddenly became alive with foes days, sometimes weeks, after they had been declared purged. Despite the speed urged by Grix at the outset of his campaign, soon the war became a bloody stalemate. His armies were forced to accept a painstakingly slow grind of a campaign, and the High Monarchs of House Mandrakor lacked the numbers to throw off the Imperial invaders in decisive battle.

WORLDCLAIMER

Though neither the legions of the High Monarchs or the armies of Ba'stien Grix were aware, the stalemate would soon be broken. Abaddon the Despoiler entrusted command of a thousands-strong fleet to Haarken Worldclaimer to seize the Nachmund Gauntlet, and now the Herald of the Apocalypse was en route to Dharrovar to lift the siege. He did not do so out of desire to help a potential ally. Abaddon's host was so large that even the addition of a Knight world and forge moon was not a great enough bounty to hinge the success of a campaign on. Instead, he saw Dharrovar as the anvil upon which to break what was, according to his spies, the largest single concentration of Imperial military strength in the Nachmund Gauntlet. Though Abaddon had impressed upon him the importance of speed in his campaign, Worldclaimer knew he could not bypass the siege. If he did so, he would be leaving a large Imperial force behind him that could form a resistance movement to his rear, wreak havoc among his supply lines and slow down his campaign in the long run.

THE DHARROVAR SYSTEM

RENEGADE FORCES

RENEGADE FORCES FLANKING FROM DEBRIS FIELDS

MAIN IMPERIAL ATTACK FORCE

FLANKING IMPERIAL FORCES

+++

THIS IS CHAPTER MASTER BA'STIEN GRIX OF THE CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT ADEPTUS ASTARTES. WARRIORS OF THE IMPERIUM, WE ARE ARRIVED. AT DHARROVAR, THE ROTTEN HOLE IN WHICH TRAITORS, MUTANTS AND HERETICS OF EVERY STRIPE IMAGINABLE COWER AND SKULK.

WE WILL SEE THEM UNDONE. WE WILL SEE THEM BROKEN. WE WILL SEE THEM PURGED. HOLD TRUE TO THIS CONVICTION, FOR OUR FOE WILL NOT RELINQUISH THEIR GRASP UPON THIS PLACE LIGHTLY. EXPECT TO FACE THE TACTICS OF COWARDS. EXPECT TO BE TAUNTED AND BAITED. GIVE THEM NO SATISFACTION.

GIVE THEM NO QUARTER. GIVE THEM ONLY DEATH.

+++

DEBRIS FIELD
The debris fields surrounding Dharrovar itself make attacking the planet even more dangerous. They are home to renegades, pirates and xenos of many kinds.

DHARROVAR
Home of House Mandrakor. Barren. Mountainous. Populated by slaves and thralls of the heretics. Traitors all. Consider every last one lost. Should any remain loyal to the Emperor, He will find his own among the souls of the dead. Now is no time for mercy.

++ WARP ANOMALY ++
RAGE INFERNUM

++ WARP ANOMALY ++
PORTUS DIABOLIS

++ WARP ANOMALY ++
VORTEX OF WRATH

++ WARP ANOMALY ++
FURY OF MADNESS

FORGE MOON OMEGA-THREX
Allied with Dharrovar, supplies heretic Knights with munitions, expertise for repairing and constructing new Knight suits as well as soldiers and engines for battle.

TO SANGUA TERRA

TO VIGILUS

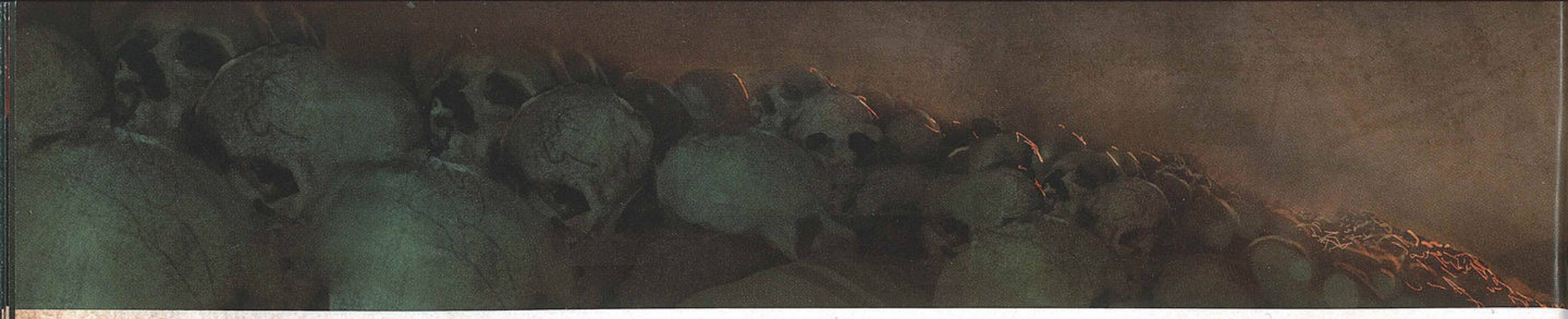
++ WARP ANOMALY ++
ABYSSUS TENEBRAE

WARP ANOMALIES
Many of these exist within the system. Reasons for their location, size and existence unknown. They present great danger, thus hampering our movements through the system. The Arch-enemy is perfidious indeed. We shall see them all slain.

++ WARP ANOMALY ++
BURNING HATE

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THE GREAT RIFT



THE SIEGE OF DHARROVAR

Abaddon gave over command of a vast army to Haarken Worldclaimer. It was his desire that his herald conquer the Nachmund Gauntlet as swiftly as possible. The Herald of the Apocalypse was determined that his master would see his order fulfilled. He conceived a plan that would see numerous Imperial and alien-held worlds fall in rapid succession.

Worldclaimer initially set his hordes upon any and all Imperial outposts between him and Dharrovar – where he expected to fight his first major battle of the campaign. Heretic Astartes, Militarum Traitoris troops and cultists in enormous numbers swept over the sparsely defended arsenal fortress of Holden, controlled by the Castellans of the Rift Chapter. They destroyed and looted the Inquisitorial bastion of Agrofar, slaughtering the soldiers and agents based there as well as taking scores of dark relics, haunted weapons and forbidden tomes. The astropathic relay at the Hazrine Gap also fell to the Worldclaimer's troops, its psychic messengers brutally tortured for information before being put to the gutting knife.

The Herald of the Apocalypse was keenly aware that the Nachmund Gauntlet was a warren of strange warp routes filled with planets, moons, asteroids and artificial stations of every kind. He knew that he would lose all cohesion and speed if he elected to conquer each and every one of them thoroughly. Many of these locations were defended well enough that they could significantly slow down his progress through the Gauntlet. Thus he formed a powerful vanguard force, made up of three loose coalitions – the Bringers of Plague, the Bringers of Terror and the Bringers of Doubt. Each was made up of Heretic Astartes warbands and their armies of mortal followers, and their task was to wreak havoc ahead of Worldclaimer's primary advance. They acted independently – killing, enslaving, harrying, destroying and stirring up cults against the Imperium. In addition to these forces, Worldclaimer sent out agents provocateur, fifth columnists, spies and demagogues to further undermine Imperial rule. Haarken's plan was that, by the time his armies pushed down the Gauntlet, these covert assets would see to it that many potentially hostile locations were fatally undermined. This would aid his forces' progress, allowing him to pounce all the more swiftly upon the loyalist forces mustering to the so-called Sanctus Wall at the Gauntlet's southern end. The quicker he could launch this attack, the fewer defences he would have to overcome and he could make greater inroads into the Imperium Sanctus. He looked to achieve victory through the rapid application of overwhelming force.

With his plan sent into motion, Haarken Worldclaimer made for Dharrovar. Even with dozens of warbands despatched away from his host, he still commanded thousands of ships and tens of millions of warriors. He knew the Imperium had no chance of stopping him.

ATTRITION

By the time the first of Worldclaimer's ships entered the Dharrovar System, the siege had already raged on for months. Imperial forces, under command of Ba'stien Grix, had suffered tremendous casualties fighting the incredibly well dug-in forces under command of High King Kaligius and High Queen Kaligia of House Mandrakor. It was all but impossible for Grix's troops to establish battle lines due to the harsh and uneven terrain, with units holding on to ground with their flanks exposed where allied forces could not secure them. Their frontal assaults suffered catastrophic casualties and gained little to no ground for the trouble. Supply lines were almost impossible to maintain, not only due to the endless series of ravines and ridges, but also because the forces of the Arch-enemy struck from deep cave networks sometimes kilometres behind what was considered the front. These attacks kept troops back from the main line of advance to protect supply columns, making it more difficult for gains to be fully secured and to withstand the daily counter-attacks ordered by House Mandrakor's High Monarchs. The tall and mighty Chaos Knights strode across the treacherous landscape, which they knew formidably well, with impunity. They knew which terrain they could not negotiate effectively and avoided it, whilst maximising their efforts where they could move more freely. Few of the Imperial forces could match it, and were frequently outmanoeuvred or overrun.

Though Ba'stien Grix devoted as many of the Imperial void ships as possible to support the ground war, having them deploy Aeronautica Imperialis divisions as well as conduct bombardments, he maintained a rearguard near the system's Mandeville Point. A besieging force was always vulnerable to be trapped between the defenders and any enemy reinforcements. Though Grix had done what every commander should have done, he and his forces were not remotely prepared for what was coming.

THE HERALD STRIKES

Haarken Worldclaimer fully expected there to be an Imperial rearguard fleet defending the Nachmund System's Mandeville Point. As such, he planned to strike mercilessly, to shatter the ships placed against him and give no room for them to reform. At the forefront of his fleet he deployed those ships belonging to the most bloodthirsty and aggressive of his warlords, many of them Khorne worshippers. The many daemon ships of his fleet also took position there, their insatiable hunger driving them ever on to where they expected the fighting to be fiercest.

Had Chapter Master Ba'stien Grix had his entire fleet watching over the system's Mandeville Point, they could have inflicted terrible damage on Worldclaimer's armada as it poured into realspace from the warp. But the Imperial ships were overstretched supporting the invasion and patrolling the outer edges of the debris fields to



THE FALL OF HOUSE MANDRAKOR

House Mandrakor first turned against the Imperium during the dark days of the Horus Heresy. After the Warmaster's defeat, those Nobles fighting away from Dharrovar made swift retreat to their home world and began a process of fortifying it, expecting Imperial retribution. In all the confusion, anarchy and horror of the Scouring, that never came, though the House never learned why. High Monarch Karakalis destroyed any evidence of their rebellion and believed they could be attacked at any time. He devised a policy of strict isolationism, slowly rebuilding their strength thanks to supplies from Omega-Threx. For ten thousand years, the Nobles of House Mandrakor never lost the fear that any day a huge Imperial fleet might come to wipe them from existence for their ancestors' betrayal, only making rare forays from their home world.

The Imperium did not rediscover House Mandrakor until explorers navigated the Nachmund Gauntlet for the first time. They extended the arm of friendship to the Nobles, believing they had found powerful allies in a dangerous region of space, completely ignorant of the treachery ten thousand years before. By this point, the House's Nobles were paranoid in the extreme, their distrust only heightened by the ravages caused by the Great Rift's emergence, which many saw as a portent for the return of Old Night. Seeing the peaceful entreaties of the Imperial explorers as a ruse to lure them into some false sense of security and make them ripe for destruction, High King Kaligius destroyed many of the envoys and moved to arm and fortify his world even further. He formed agreements with Heretic warbands and other enemies of the Imperium, launched pre-emptive attacks on Imperial shipping that drew too close and had refugee vessels that came to Dharrovar seeking salvation destroyed. A small number of House Mandrakor's Nobles believed that their rediscovery was an opportunity to rejoin with the Imperium. Kaligius named them all as traitors, and those who managed to escape Dharrovar went on to defend Vigilus alongside other Imperial forces.

prevent raiders from breaking out. Those ships defending the point stood little chance. The Dominator-class cruiser *Defender of His Stars* was boarded by Heretic Astartes from four vessels, every one of her crew butchered by the rampaging madmen. The Mercury-class battle cruiser *Righteous Might* destroyed three warp-mutated daemon ships in quick succession before a fourth attacked it from the rear. This additional corrupted vessel opened its bow to reveal dozens of layers of barbed teeth. It clamped on to the stern of the *Righteous Might*. Thousands of loyalist crew were eaten alive, and thousands more cast out into the void, when their deck was ripped open and exposed to vacuum. The R*ighteous Might*'s captain ordered the destruction of his ship's magazines in a suicidal act that destroyed the daemon ship. The World Eater battleship *Gore Drenched* harpooned multiple Imperial ships with its ursus claw. As it dragged its victims back towards it with enormous chains, its bloodthirsty warriors swarmed them with boarding craft. The Night Lords of the battle barge *Horror of Garselil* tortured hundreds of their slaves to death,psychically broadcasting their agonised screams to shatter the minds of Imperial Navy astropaths and weaken their foes' communications.

The loyalist rearguard responded as well as could be expected when faced with overwhelming force, claiming many kills. But the Imperial Navy and Basilikon Astra craft did not have nearly enough resources to stand against the sheer brute power of Worldclaimer's fleet. Within hours almost half of their ships were destroyed or crippled. Vice Admiral Herena Egless ordered the retreat. A handful of ships remained behind to cover the withdrawal, including those too seriously damaged to escape. The Nemesis-class carrier *Harrier of the Heavens* advanced into the tide of Heretic vessels; its captain, Jakila Rovacov, evacuated as many of her crew as possible beforehand. Once she was deep within the mass of traitor ships, she detonated her warp drive, destroying over a dozen and damaging dozens more. The crews of the heavy frigates *Foespite* and *Angel's Sword* both made their vessels to appear as if they had been neutralised. They waited until heretic ships surrounded them before opening fire with every weapon they had.

Once the Imperial resistance crumbled, hundreds of Worldclaimer's ships flowed into the system unhindered. They pursued the withdrawing Imperial Navy and Basilikon Astra ships relentlessly, destroying or capturing all those they reached. Loyalist vessels charged with maintaining a watch over the debris fields folded away before the onslaught of Haarken's armada, knowing that to resist at this point was futile. With the debris fields left unprotected, Worldclaimer diverted some of his forces into them. They were as full of potential dangers to him as they were to the Imperium. He ordered the destruction of any who opposed his warriors. Cultists and renegades who did not swear fealty to him were simply destroyed.

By this point, the Herald of the Apocalypse was ready to say that his host had won the orbital war over Dharrovar, even though scores of Imperial ships were still fully operational. He turned his attention to the upcoming ground campaign, and issued missives to High King Kaligius and High Queen Kaligia of House Mandrakor. He was coming. They were not to attack.

ORDERING THE RETREAT

Ba'stien Grix was on Dharrovar's surface, overseeing Imperial operations in the Gharaghed Heights, when he received word of the colossal Chaos fleet arriving in-system. It was unlike anything he had ever heard of or seen. Even more experienced Space Marine officers



operating beside him were aghast at the sheer scale of the threat. Grix wasted little time in sharing the knowledge with his senior commanders. All agreed that if they remained on Dharrovar, not only would they all be killed, but that they would be unlikely to inflict any lasting damage on their enemies. Even Canoness Preceptors Yozelin Tabat of the Order of the Silver Lilly and Kessola Amael of the Order of the Crimson Chalice, accepted this reality. Admiral Yelgaratir of the Imperial Navy, overall commander of naval forces, argued that now victory was to be measured in Imperial lives saved, rather than enemy ground conquered. Ba'stien Grix agreed. Their duty now was to escape to fight another day. He recalled the vessels tasked with intercepting the supply columns coming to Dharrovar from Omega-Threx. They would need every ship available.

With no time to spare, Grix ordered that as much of the Imperial ground forces as possible were to retreat to the Dylerion, Gomoro, Anak, Izakar and Gizzar Plateaus, as well as other landing zones they had used when they first invaded Dharrovar. These locations were defensible, already had garrisons and supplies in situ and were accessible to the troop landers and drop ships that would be evacuating the withdrawing armies. Grix knew that many lives would have to be sacrificed if the retreat was to be remotely successful. Troops would have to stand their ground against the pursuing Knights of House Mandrakor – as well as any of the newly arrived Chaos forces – to buy time for others to reach safety. There was no time to be selective. Those units already at the front lines, who would find it harder to withdraw, were ordered to hold their positions. Some Grix even ordered to launch attacks, so as to keep the forces of House Mandrakor on the defensive. Air crews, strung out on stimms, launched sortie after sortie to pin the foe in place and offer as much support as possible to those troops who would never leave Dharrovar. Artillery crews unleashed enormous bombardments against enemy-held positions. They exhausted their supplies to deny them to a pursuing enemy and to provide cover to the unfortunate troops that would be left behind. Once they fired the last of their shells, the crews destroyed their own guns. They were too heavy and difficult to move with at the pace required to successfully evacuate, and could not be left for the foe to capture. Armoured units did much the same.

Ba'stien Grix decreed that his Space Marines would be amongst the last to leave. The other Adeptus Astartes commanders, including Captain Nikkal Arishat of the Sons of the Phoenix, Captain Julianis Mikon of the Void Tridents and Captain Miloni Takta of the Necropolis Hawks make the same declarations. They were determined they would make the foe bleed.



COUNTER-ATTACK

Kaligius and Kaligia were well aware of the Imperial retreat. The High Monarchs led their warriors from the front, smashing into Imperial defensive lines time and time again in devastating hit-and-run attacks. House Mandrakor's Knights broke apart the strongest Imperial positions, using their enormous armoured might to root out entrenched forces that otherwise could hold back militia and other household troops. In just one such action, Kaligius and a handful of his Baronial Court annihilated several Astra Militarum companies of the 13th Histolaran Cataphracts defending the Cartazol Pass. This paved the way for battalions of his militia to pour through the gap. They surrounded thousands of Imperial troops and butchered them as they were readying to pull out. Kaligia and her followers were also instrumental in breaking through Imperial lines, smashing through missions from the Orders of the Adamant Halo and the Ivory Blade to reach retreating vehicle columns. All over Dharrovar, front line Imperial units came under severe pressure, greater than any they had encountered thus far in the campaign.

THE WITHDRAWAL

As the armies of House Mandrakor and their allies surged against the Imperial troops, the skies were filled with landing craft, gunships and drop pods launched from Haarken Worldclaimer's armada. The Herald himself deployed with his warriors, racing to the surface at the head of an immense flock of Black Legionnaires equipped with jump packs. In their eagerness, some of Worldclaimer's forces got too close to Imperial forces and were blown out of the sky. Most, however, deployed in good order. They threw themselves into combat, striking at the exhausted Imperial troops across dozens more fronts.

Though the Herald of the Apocalypse had the resources to destroy the Imperial fleet in orbit, he sought the destruction of the False Emperor's followers on the ground. Giving them room to reach their vessels made it more likely they could escape. Additionally, by deploying armies to the surface Worldclaimer asserted dominance over the Knights of House Mandrakor. He would leave them with no doubt that opposition to his forces would result in their annihilation. He would not tolerate removing one potential thorn from his side in the form of the Imperium, only to find another there in the form of House Mandrakor.

The forces of Haarken Worldclaimer and the High Monarchs drove the Imperial troops back over ground they had spent months, as well as hundreds of thousands of lives, claiming. Soldiers were forced to dig into the mass graves of their dead comrades in the retreat, and used the tunnel networks originally dug by the



serfs of Kaligius and Kaligia against the forces of Chaos. The 18th Megorin Jackals, a regiment designated as part of the rearguard, used the caves to fight a guerrilla war against the forces of the Arch-enemy. They were so successful that their foes in the Militarum Traitoris mustered entire companies of flamer-bearing troops and threw them into the tunnels en masse in an attempt to burn them out. The Megorin Jackals were not alone in this. Adepta Sororitas missions and Space Marine squads also used the caves against their pursuers, inflicting significant losses and buying precious time. These elite troops used the sections of the networks not demolished when the Imperial troops captured them to sneak into enemy territory to destroy ammunition stockpiles, vehicle depots and fuel dumps. In one mission, Tempestus Scions from the 33rd Kappic Raptors caused a landslide which destroyed a column of a hundred traitor tanks. In another, Tempestus Scions of the 82nd Lambdan Tygers infiltrated a traitor anti-air battery, captured the guns and turned them on heretic landers. Both Militarum Tempestus forces were later wiped out by vengeful Black Legionnaires known as the Disciples of Doom.

For all of these small successes, however, the forces of Chaos ground on inexorably. Their overwhelming numbers were impossible for Imperial troops to hold back. The 356th Larzen Warheads, 43rd Gephlyean Geardogs and 299th Dactaalis Furies all made desperate last stands to slow the advancing hordes and were wiped out. Hundreds of Battle Sisters of the Orders of the Sublime Adoration and Burning Light were surrounded and annihilated after the much-depleted battalions of the 901st and 905th Dataggan Dragoons guarding their flanks were overrun by hordes of screaming cultists. Space Marines operating behind enemy lines found their underground routes of escape blocked because the troops guarding the cave entrances had been slaughtered and now cultists or Heretic Astartes held them. Ba'stien Grix found himself in one such situation. He and a force of his Castellans of the Rift had to cut their way through a warband of Black Legionnaires to rejoin rapidly retreating Imperial lines, losing almost half their number in the process. Overhead, the skies were filled with the sounds of battle. Aeronautica Imperialis and Space Marine aircraft had enjoyed a modicum of air superiority during the siege of Dharrovar. No more. Traitor gunships and winged Daemon Engines now met every sortie and patrol. Dogfights involving hundreds of craft on each side occurred as the Imperium desperately tried to protect the evacuation zones from aerial attack.

Eventually the remaining Imperial forces were driven back to their landing zones, leaving a trail of dead soldiers and destroyed or abandoned vehicles and guns behind them. These areas became fiercely contested battle zones in their own right, with fierce fighting in some cases less than a kilometre from where landers took off, packed to the brim with exhausted and wounded troops. Despite valiant efforts on the parts of the defenders, not all of the landing zones held before the evacuations taking place there were ended. The Anak Plateau fell to the Black Legionnaires of the Crimson Hurricane and the Hounds of Abaddon as well as Knights from House Mandrakor. The heretics shot down the last drop ships leaving the evacuation zone as they tried to escape. One by one, evacuation zones were overrun by the forces of Chaos or abandoned by the Imperium. There was rampant disorder as Worldclaimer's armies surged on the sites. Some pilots fled with only a fraction of their drop ship's capacity for troops filled. Others were so overloaded with soldiers their mass was too great for them to break out of Dharrovar's atmosphere and they fell back to the ground. Countless landers and ships were filled with a mix of Space Marines, Battle Sisters and Astra Militarum troops from multiple regiments who had managed to get on board. Ba'stien Grix was on one such vessel, which was one of the last to leave the Dylerion Plateau. The last Castellans of the Rift dropship was filled with as many souls as the pilot dared to allow on board.

PER YOUR WISE INSTRUCTIONS, LORD, I HAVE MOVED TO PRESERVE THE WORLD KNOWN TO THE MON-KEIGH OF THE CORPSE-GOD AS 'BADE'. YOU WERE, OF COURSE, CORRECT IN GUIDING US TO DO SO.

THE BLOOD-WORSHIPPERS ENDEAVOURED TO MAKE PLANETFALL AND BUTCHER THE INHABITANTS, WHICH ARE YOURS BY RIGHT. SHOULD THE INFORMATION BE OF VALUE TO YOU, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE 'AXES OF KHARAGUN'.

I ORDERED MY CREATURES TO WIPE THEM OUT. MANY OF MY FINEST SPECIMENS WERE SLAIN, BUT I SEIZED A DOZEN OF THE BRUTES FOR USE AS PAIN SLAVES. A FEW LOCAL INHABITANTS WITNESSED THE ACTIONS. I HAVE HAD THEM SLAIN ALSO, IN LINE WITH YOUR ORDERS. BADE REMAINS SECURE.

EVER YOUR MOST HUMBLE AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

QUVELICH ANACHROI







'No longer do we skulk in the shadows. No longer do we hide. The Imperium dares to threaten us – we shall show them what happens when you poke at the hornet's nest.'

- Baron Kommodar

HOUSE MANDRAKOR

For ten thousand years, House Mandrakor has lain low upon Dharrovar, waiting for Imperial vengeance that never came. So much time spent in hiding had a tremendous impact on the household, warping and corrupting its character.

With few external enemies to fight during their long period of isolation, except for the relatively few permitted campaigns, the Nobles of the various families of House Mandrakor turned much of their focus towards politicking. Those who pushed too hard for more off-world campaigns or broke secrecy rules were executed. Over the millennia, bloodlines became increasingly distrustful of each other, and while civil wars have broken out in the past, the ruling Monarchs have ruthlessly stamped them out. With little honour to be won through combat due to a lack of campaigning, advancement could largely only be achieved through politics. Bribery, intrigue and deceit became rife. Chivalry and honour were warped into self-interest and easily wounded pride as every Noble looked ever more inward. Every family now nurtures complex plots and continually works against others. They do all this whilst publicly projecting the image of household solidarity expected of them all – it has been insisted by all High Monarchs after Karakalis that the families be ready to stand together in the event the Imperium attacked.

Every bloodline fears losing its wealth and prestige so, to secure both, arrange marriages between closer and closer relatives. Traits of deviousness and physical sickness have thus become more prevalent amongst the inbred Nobles, and with each generation psychic abilities have manifested more frequently. Many Nobles spend greater proportions of their time within their Thrones Mechanicum to make up for their frailties, with some never leaving. Their scheming as well as psychic abilities has resulted in many worshipping Tzeentch, while many of those deformed by their breeding have come to worship Nurgle.

The Nobles of House Mandrakor train in war-making as much as any other Knight household, practising over and over their responses to potential Imperial invasions and honing these tactics in select campaigns specifically sanctioned by later Monarchs. Believing they would face overwhelming numbers, they have learned to favour ambushes, baiting and hit-and-run attacks, in the hope that they can bleed an attacker dry. The Nobles will gladly accept short-term loss if they are sure it will result in longer term gain, and have all the tenacity of those who spend each day fighting to maintain their grip on whatever power they have.

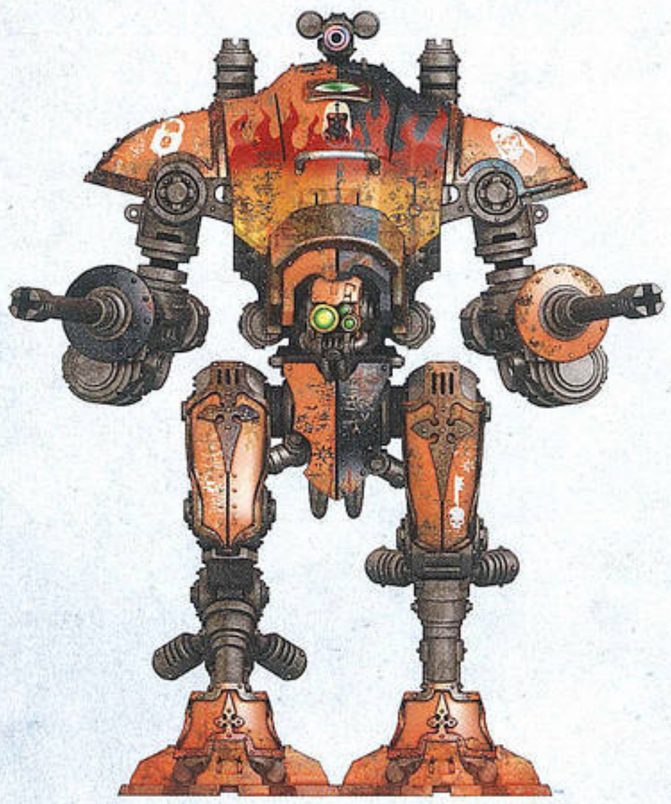


'Discipline. It is what has held us together for ten thousand years. By the iron fist of my bloodline we have kept the families united, and our household together. They bicker, squabble and demand attention, but blood – theirs or an external foe's – only ever spills if my brother and I permit it so. If our order fails, Dharrovar will fall. If Dharrovar falls, they will lose everything, and they know it.'

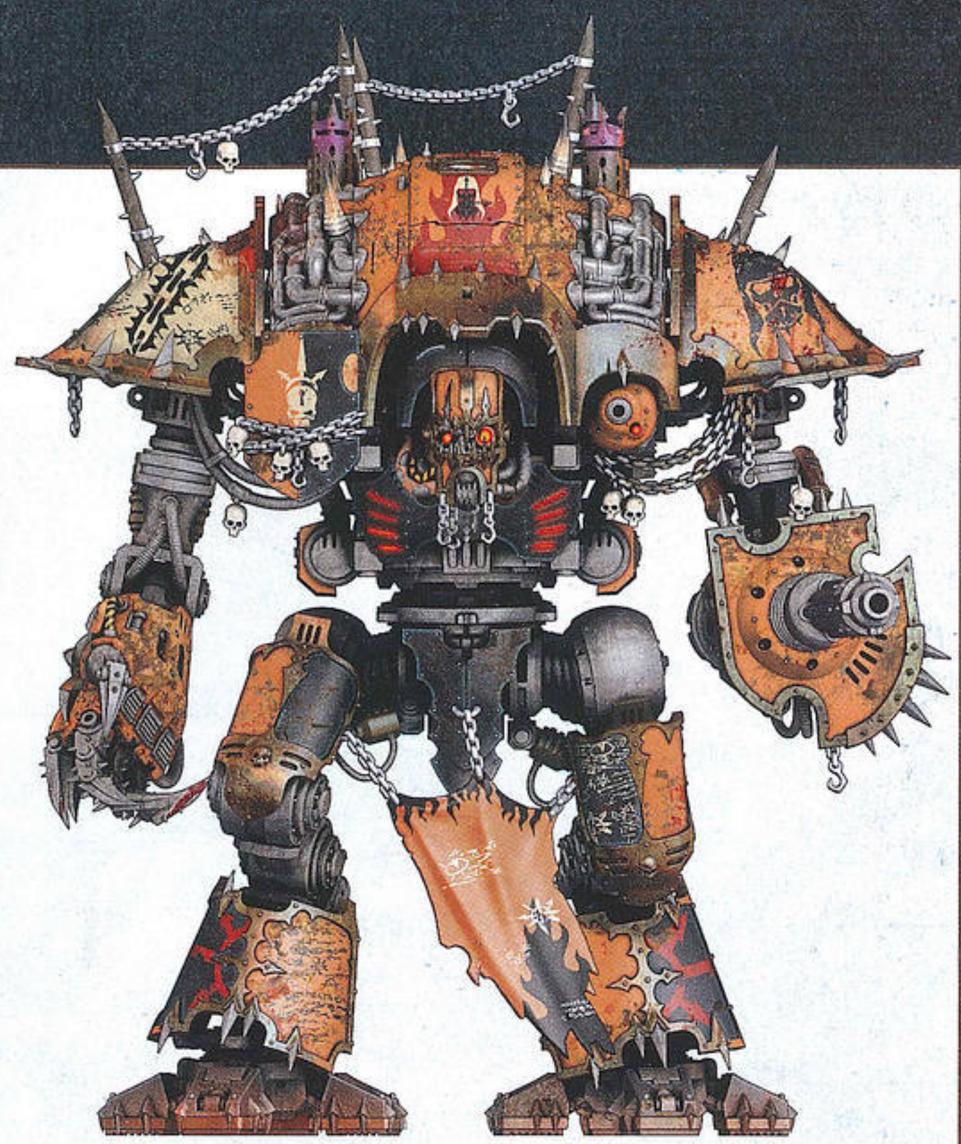
- High Queen Kaligia

HIGH QUEEN KALIGIA

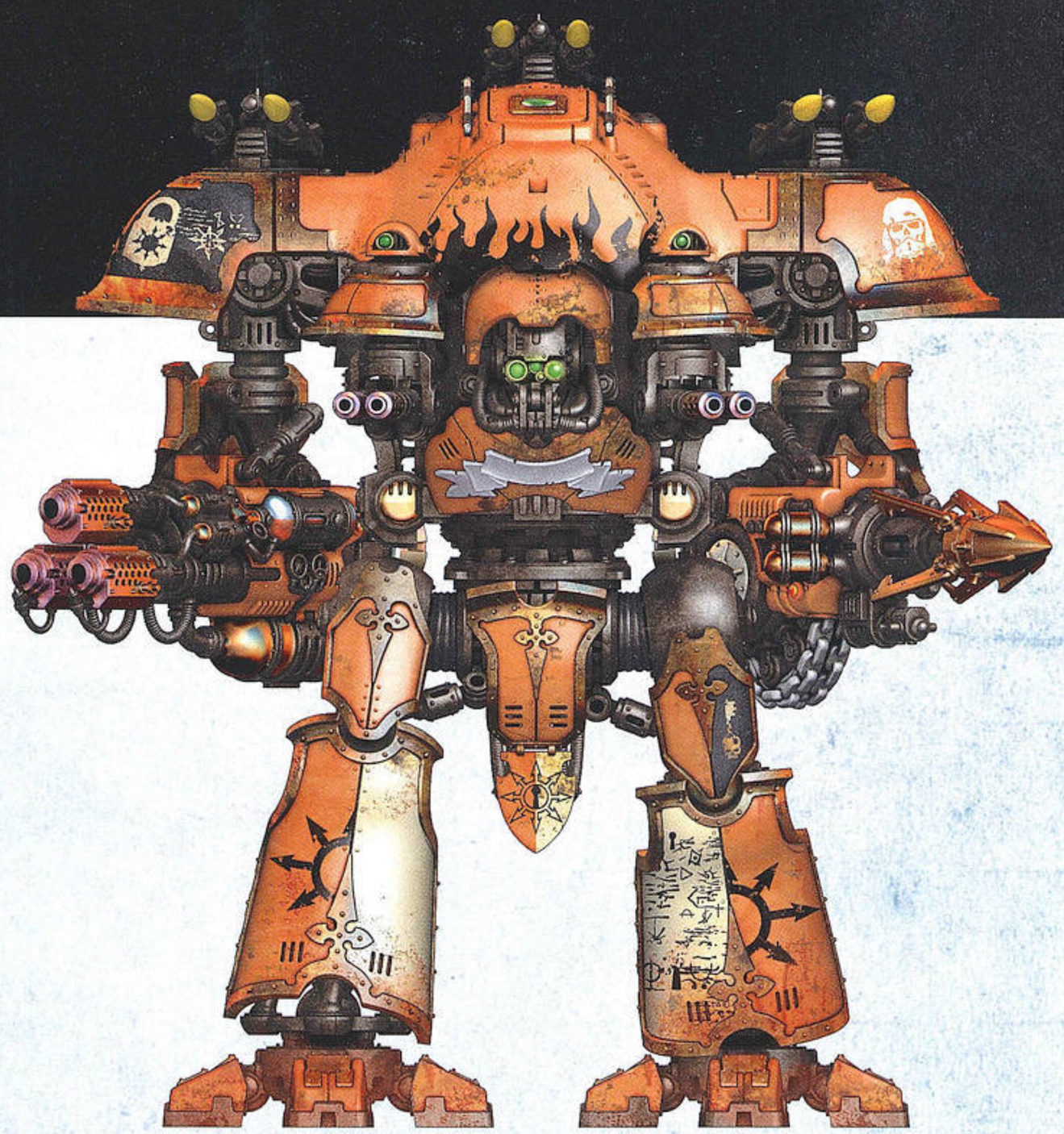
Wife and sister of High King Kaligius, and direct descendant of Karakalis, High Queen Kaligia is devoted to preserving Dharrovar, House Mandrakor and her family's line. She sees the constant politicking of the Noble families as a necessary release of energy that would otherwise cause destructive infighting. As paranoid and suspicious as any self-respecting Noble of House Mandrakor, she knows how dangerous her position is. She has rendered herself immune to over two hundred poisons thanks to taking small doses over time. Kaligia is a willing participant in disputes herself, using agents to manipulate the balance of power among the families of Dharrovar in such a way that her and Kaligius' standing is maintained.



The War Dog Stalker Gorehound *was piloted by the strong-willed minor Noble Egabula. Highly ambitious, he desperately sought the regard of senior Nobles. He fought ferociously pursuing retreating Imperial forces, claiming many kills.*



Baron Kommodar was the pilot of the Knight Despoiler Bloodslake. *Incredibly violent, Kommodar had long pushed for House Mandrakor to go on the offensive. When Dharrovar came under attack, Kaligius unleashed him on the invaders.*



High Queen Kaligia pilots the Knight Tyrant All-hearing, *and she spends as much as two-thirds of her time embedded in its Throne Mechanicum. There she converses often with the presences of the former High Monarchs of her House who used to pilot the suit, learning much from them. During the Siege of Dharrovar, Kaligia fought within the Ug'borogol Razorbacks, a maze of sharp ridges, scree and outcrops of dense, gnarled woodland. She was accompanied by her three handmaidens. Each was the daughter of a powerful family, serving as a hostage to guarantee the loyalty of their bloodline. They piloted a Knight Despoiler, Desecrator and Rampager respectively. Between them, the four Knights used their knowledge of the terrain and the extensive cave networks to defeat a lance of House Khord supported by a demi-company of the Void Tridents and multiple missions of the Order of the Bloody Rose.*



STORMING THE GAUNTLET

Dharrovar was successfully relieved. Haarken Worldclaimer's armies salvaged thousands of Imperial vehicles, guns and ships for their own use. The High Monarchs of Mandrakor added their strength to the Herald of the Apocalypse's host, as did the dark magi of Omega-Threx. It was time to conquer the rest of the Nachmund Gauntlet.

The Imperial forces who had fled Dharrovar were devastated. Barely a fifth had escaped the planet, and those that did were in a state of disarray. Some ships made for Vigilus, their Navigators seeing a ghostly beacon of hope flickering amidst the maelstrom of that region. Others made in the direction of Sangua Terra. Many had sustained damage which meant they could not travel far, and instead took refuge nearby. The fleet lost all cohesion. In the confusion of the withdrawal, Astra Militarum regiments, Adepta Sororitas Preceptories and even Space Marine Companies had been broken up and scattered across numerous vessels. Though they had escaped destruction on Dharrovar, the survivors' troubles were far from over. War had come to other places in the Gauntlet, brought to it by the Bringers of Plague, the Bringers of Terror and the Bringers of Doubt.

VANGUARD ONSLAUGHT

Haarken Worldclaimer's vanguard of raiding Heretic Astartes warbands proved to be immensely effective. The Herald of the Apocalypse had chosen these forces carefully. Among them were warbands such as the Purge, who worshipped Nurgle, the secretive Shrouded Hand and the sinister Terror Lords – he knew the particularly independent nature of their warlords meant that all of these would perform best operating on a long leash. Other forces Worldclaimer believed he could trust to deal with particular threats due to their skills, fighting preferences and loyalty. Among these, Haarken tasked the Ebon Fist, a warband of the Black Legion, to capture the astropathic relay station 8-3-7-A. He ordered the Scions of Medrengard, an Iron Warriors warband, to destroy the Castellans of the Rift relay arsenal known as Forennis. The Bringers of the True Light, a renegade force which had turned from the Emperor a mere century before, was charged with infiltrating the Hexagatos and nurturing cults there. This last was a group of six large space stations situated at the crux of several warp routes and had become a hub for merchants, smugglers, refugees and pirates.

Another such force was a thrallband of the Thousand Sons known as the Reflective Ones. Their task was to capture the Choralis immaterium surge station. Built around technologies older than the Imperium itself, the structure had once kept in check the surges of the warp storm Diabolik Monstram, before it was subsumed into the Great Rift. Within the Nachmund Gauntlet, the Choralis still held warp fluctuations in check, preserving the only warp route to the heavily defended bastion world of Kherik III. Worldclaimer wanted the planet isolated to ensure his host's rear was protected, and so ordered the Reflective Ones to disable Choralis and let the world be cut off from the rest of the Gauntlet. The Thousand Sons, who saw realspace as an imperfect mirroring of the warp, relished the opportunity. During their assault, the thrallband's sorcerers weaved a mutagenic spell that saw many of the Choralis' garrison of storm troopers turned to Chaos Spawn. The Thousand Sons swiftly overwhelmed the survivors and took control of the station. Thanks to their Dark Mechanicum allies and an arcane ritual, they not only succeeded in turning off the strange technology that absorbed warp energy surges, but actively reversed it, unleashing all the energy the esoteric machinery had stored over the millennia. Kherik III was soon drowned in successive tsunamis of warp power. Billions of daemons poured over the surface and millions of citizens were turned to gibbering monsters.

IMPERIAL RESPONSE

Word of Worldclaimer's advance quickly reached the ears of Imperial commanders deployed in the systems around Sangua Terra. The defensive systems created became known collectively as the Sanctus Wall, and a hurried effort began to make systems originally serving as supply hubs for the fighting on Vigilus and beyond to be fortified in their own right.

The mustering of the Sanctus Wall was not the only effort made by Imperial commanders as a part of their strategy to absorb Haarken Worldclaimer's attack. Knowing that there was no Imperial force within the Gauntlet strong enough to contain the oncoming hordes, they made a brutal calculation of war. Taking all of the best known cartographs of the Nachmund Gauntlet, they drew a line across it at the point where the shrine world of Centor's Landing sat. All Imperial holdings beyond that, in the half closest to Vigilus, were to weather the storm and hold out as long as possible. They were deemed too distant for a successful evacuation south to be possible, given the rumours of the heretic forces' progress. All Imperial holdings south of the line were ordered to evacuate as many of their people as possible, with priority given to military forces and personnel deemed essential. Though this inevitably carried the risk of bringing cults and spies into the systems that made up the Sanctus Wall, Imperial commanders deemed it a necessary one.

WORLDCLAIMER'S HOST

With the way paved for him, Haarken Worldclaimer left Dharrovar at the head of his fleet. He needed to move quickly. His army of spies and the warbands of the vanguard reported to him the most recent developments of events within the Gauntlet, as well as providing him with the best intelligence of navigable warp routes.

Wherever Worldclaimer's hosts struck, they inflicted untold slaughter and devastation. Many worlds and outposts had already been so ravaged by the



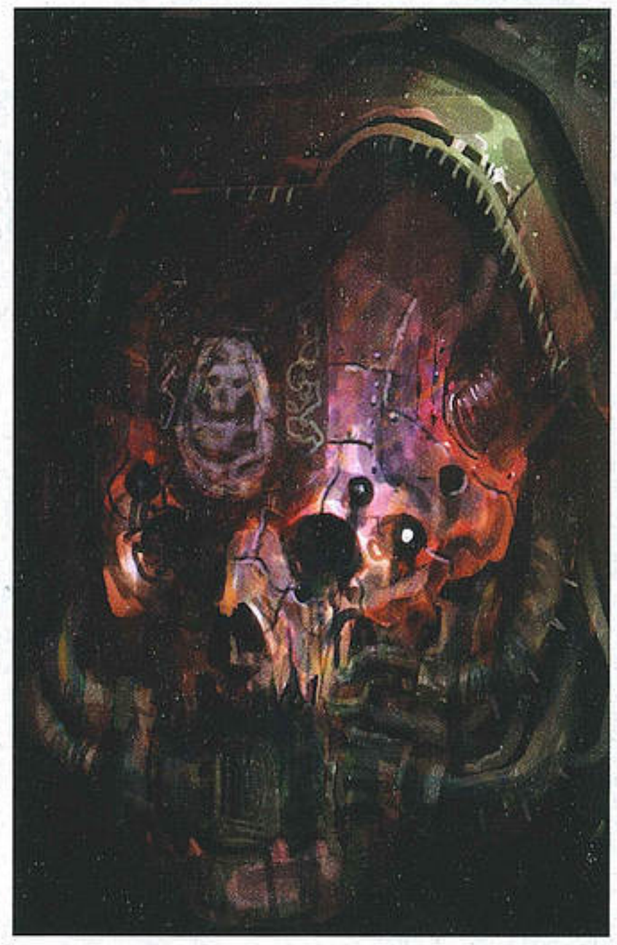


after-effects of the Great Rift's emergence: pirates, anarchy, mass psychic outbreaks, mutant uprisings. Thanks to the actions of Worldclaimer's vanguard warbands, they were all but incapable of putting up an effective resistance. Others had been stripped of troops to fight on Vigilus or other worlds, and were completely defenceless – many of these submitted themselves willingly in the hope of receiving a mercy that never came. Worldclaimer's ships liberated some worlds from xenos invasion. The citizens of these planets had little idea in some cases that their supposed saviours were not loyal Angels of Death, and joined in league with them. Throughout the Gauntlet, Worldclaimer's fleet looted weapon caches, captured ships, took millions of slaves, destroyed those who wouldn't join them and absorbed armies of mutants and cultists into their ranks.

For every world, moon, asteroid and station the Chaos armada descended on, they ignored another. Time was of the essence, and many places lacked either the resources to be worth sacking, or a threatening defence force that had to be neutralised. Worldclaimer bypassed the pirate-infested region known as the Choraplex in its entirety. The Worldclaimer's generals never even learned of some locations.

Despite Haarken's best efforts, the process of bringing an invasion fleet as large as his along the length of the Nachmund Gauntlet took many months, and was not without challenges. Without Abaddon's direct presence, maintaining the enormous coalition of Heretic Astartes – which hailed from every Traitor Legion and dozens of non-Legion warbands – was all but impossible. Some hated each other; others stayed with the host only until the moment its purpose had served itself for them. A handful were so deranged that not even the promise of an orgy of bloodshed at the other end of the Gauntlet could keep them from surging into the first large battles they could find, and miring themselves in carnage.

The Chaos armada, though immensely powerful, still suffered from attacks, which drew off valuable reserves and disrupted the already stretched supply lines. Isolated warbands and ships were attacked by Ork Freebooterz of Grand-hat Admiral Gragutz Ship Smasha, Kaptin Zargbrog da Iron Ork and others. The Aeldari of Craftworlds Saim-Hann, Ulthwé and Kinshara as well as various Grand Masques of Harlequins did likewise, striking hard and fast before disappearing. Drukhari marauders struck on slave raids and even Heretic Astartes attacked, such as the Oath-broken and the Warriors of Mayhem, who had little desire to support Abaddon or Haarken Worldclaimer. Imperial commanders resorted to guerrilla tactics to defend themselves. They made extensive use of decoy vessels to lure unsuspecting raiders into ambushes, and destroyed vessels whilst they were being repaired or taking on board slaves and loot from raids.



Meanwhile, the Wardens of the Gauntlet were a thorn in Worldclaimer's side. Space Marines from dozens of Chapters, including the Black Templars, Angels of Defiance, Silver Skulls and Solar Hawks, all launched daring boarding actions and ambushes to help reduce the size of Worldclaimer's host. Despite their heroics, the Herald of the Apocalypse's invasion fleet was so enormous that there was nothing that could be done to stop it reaching the end of the Gauntlet.

DESPERATE HOPES

Refugees reaching the Sanctus Wall brought with them tales of the enormous heretic throngs. They told stories of doomed Imperial defences, desperate last stands and total defeat. There were precious few accounts of victories over the forces of Chaos, and all seemed trivial when compared to the losses suffered. The only hope was to build up strong enough defences at the Sanctus Wall that the traitor armada could be driven back.

Though few Imperial commanders dared to admit it out loud, that hope was thin indeed. Most of the planets that made up the Sanctus Wall faced varying levels of civil strife. If the stories being told of the size of the enemy host was to be believed, the number of troops and ships that had thus far arrived were far too few. Regardless, Imperial commanders all strove to do their duty to the Emperor and ready their worlds for the coming storm.

Fresh hope was kindled amidst the defenders, however, when word came of reinforcements drawing near. Strike forces of Battle Group Lambdax, part of the wider Indomitus Crusade Fleet Secundus, were said to be speeding to reinforce the Sanctus Wall. They were close by, but according to Imperial data-savants and strategos, were not so close that they would arrive before the heretic fleet. Lord Admiral Quirin Prisca proposed a solution. She would lead as many ships as possible into the Nachmund Gauntlet and head to the Grakiliod Narrow and intercept the Chaos fleet there in an attempt to slow them down. They hoped they only needed to buy a few days, and prayed fervently to the Emperor it was so. The incoming strike forces between them had more than enough vessels to make up the inevitable losses Prisca's mission would sustain. Knowing there was no other option, Imperial command granted Prisca permission. She pressed scores of civilian vessels into service as fire ships and sought additional support from the Adeptus Astartes, Adepta Sororitas and Militarum Tempestus. When the hastily mobilised Imperial fleet weighed anchor, those aboard knew most of them would never return.

The tide of black! Like a tsunami that never recedes, it destroys all in its path! Darkness and death and madness does it bring! Beware! Repent! Beg for mercy! Beg for forgiveness!

THE SANCTUS WALL

While the Worldclaimer's immense hordes surged through the Nachmund Gauntlet, the Imperium was hurriedly building up defences in the Gorandahl Sub-sector, at a defensive line it called the Sanctus Wall. Troops and ships flooded the Imperial systems closest to the southern entrance to the Gauntlet, and planetary governors desperately built up fortifications.

MY LORD RAKARTH, I COMPOSE THIS TO INFORM YOU OF A RECENT DEVELOPMENT ON THE MON-KEIGH WORLD OF [redacted]. MY VESSELS INTERCEPTED A QUARTET OF DAMAGED HUMAN SHIPS FLEEING FROM THE WORLD KNOWN TO THE MON-KEIGH AS DHARROVAR ENTERING LOCAL SPACE. WE INTERCEPTED THEIR COMMUNICATIONS WITHOUT THEIR REALISING AND USED OUR MIMIC ENGINES TO DRAW CLOSE BEFORE BOARDING. THEY BORE MANY WOUNDED AND WERE EASY TO OVERPOWER. MY SLAVE HOLDS ARE NOW FULL.

EVER YOUR HUMBLEST AND MOST OBEDIENT SERVANT,

MAKAXEV XORL-THODT



Despite the continuous arrival of fresh troops into the Gorandahl Sub-sector, the Sanctus Wall was very much still a dream in the eye of its creators rather than a vision turned to reality. As word spread of the sheer size of Worldclaimer's fleet racing towards them, those responsible for defending the Sanguis, Jaghaal, Coryxx and Leonid Systems knew they were still woefully unprepared for the storm that was coming. Virtually every world, from pollution-choked Enchus in the Jaghaal system and storm-wracked Badowinne in the Leonid System, was stockpiling arms, munitions, medicae supplies and foodstuffs. Labourers, soldiers and servitors dug trench lines, prepared minefields, drew up razor wire, constructed fortresses and built bunkers. Manufactorums, promethium extraction rigs and harvesting units were pushed to the limit, with whip-carrying overseers squeezing every ounce of efficiency out of their workers and machines. On the majority of worlds in the region practically every able-bodied adult was pressed into service as either a soldier or to join the work gangs. Water allowances, food rations and sleep quotas were cut to a minimum for all in an effort to preserve resources and maximise output. Refugees pouring into the region were processed quickly, given what was known colloquially as the 'lasgun or the shovel' before even setting foot on what was supposed to be a planet of sanctuary. Prayers and hymnals recited by esteemed bishops from the Coryxx System's cardinal world of Orori were broadcast over immense vox networks every minute of every day to firm up morale and remind citizens of what they worked for. Yet they did not stop the riots and civil strife on the worlds of Moroch and Marhdukk in the Jaghaal Systems, which required much violent action, and even Space Marine intervention in some cases, to be put down.

To feed the Sanctus Wall's insatiable hunger for weapons, ships, vehicles, bodies and other supplies, nearby planets deemed to be behind the lines were stripped of resources, leaving many incredibly vulnerable. Days after ninety-five percent of the Ridaeg System's Astra Militarum forces were deployed to the Coryxx System, it came under attack from the Orks of Waaagh! Guzkrog, practically defenceless. So many weapons were pulled from the armouries of penal colony GD-38-B that the Genestealer Cult growing there began its uprising early, fearing what it considered 'its' weapons were being taken. For decades, Imperial Navy patrols had kept the mining riggers of the asteroid field known as the Giara's Necklace safe from xenos raiders. When the ships were pulled away to join the Sanctus Wall, the miners were beset, facing attacks from Kroot mercenaries, Gnostari ore-thieves, Drukhari slavers and Dvorgite blood-hunters. Production in the region collapsed to nothing as miners were killed, captured or fled.

Abaddon the Despoiler was well aware that if the Sanctus Wall was permitted to solidify, it had the potential to threaten his plans to conquer the Nachmund Gauntlet and unleash his forces against the Imperium Sanctus. Even as Haarken Worldclaimer led his fleet and army along the Gauntlet, Abaddon's agents were already at work among the planets of the Sanctus Wall, undermining the Imperial war effort. Warbands of the Alpha Legion and Word Bearers Traitor Legions worked to stir up cults and spread unrest, doubt and sedition in response to what they called Imperial oppression. They communicated with and supported hidden mutant colonies



and unsanctioned psykers, offering them hope and purpose. In its attempt to divert enough resources to the Sanctus Wall, adepts of the Munitorum cut corners, reducing faith-vetting and other checks, which in turn created weaknesses that were readily exploitable by the heretics. Astra Militarum reinforcements were infiltrated by traitors and cultists; this led to all-out war on Leopolde in the Leonid System, as well as other worlds, as regiments turned traitor and attacked on their once-allies. Scores of other regiments slowly rotted from within, more and more of their number aligning with Abaddon in secret, ready for the order to turn against the Imperium. The Despoiler's agents conducted work as spies and saboteurs, to undermine the Imperial war effort. Traitors deliberately left weak points in fortress walls, poisoned water towers and stored weapons for eventual revolt. They damaged communication lines, collected information about troop deployments, tampered with official documents and some even conducted rituals dedicated to the Dark Gods.

Even though the work of Abaddon's agents happened far from the eyes of most Imperial governance, it did not go unnoticed among the more astute of the Imperium's defenders. The agents and informants of numerous Inquisitors spread word to their masters of what was happening. For many of these powerful individuals, preventing the Sanctus Wall from collapsing due to the activities of scheming heretics and traitors became their priority. Many Inquisitors formed conclaves and cabals with like-minded individuals. These included the Sanctus Entente, made up of Derelei Melcho, Okal Nusa and Atuwe Kikiya of the Ordo Militarum and an Inquisitor of the Ordo Hereticus known only as 'Bataivah'. A second such alliance was the Septagrammaton Sanguis, which included seven Inquisitors from the Ordos Hereticus, Malleus, Aegis, Astartes, Maledictum and Scriptorum.

The Inquisitors were successful again and again in finding heretics and foiling their schemes. Inquisitor Anaha Don'esh discovered and killed a dozen unsanctioned psykers working together on Leopolde. Pietrov Mensk of the Ordo Aegis rooted out and purged a growing mutant colony of thousands on Dark Pit in the Coryxx System. Inquisitor Tirszesh Eridi successfully contained an outbreak of the zombie plague on Eradisz in the Leonid System, limiting its spread to a mere eighty thousand citizens. On Sangua Terra, Ignatious Garradan of the Ordo Scriptorum seized a very high ranking official after a long investigation; the individual had a minute tattoo of a multi-headed serpent on her neck and refused to explain its meaning, speaking only in riddles. Inquisitor Paeok Ziracah foiled a nefarious plot of a traitor gang to sabotage the artificially cooled macro-granaries on the agri world of Bount in the Coryxx System, and his follow-up investigations resulted in the executions of several hundred heretics.

Despite these successes, for every cell Imperial agents stamped out, there were more. Intelligence trails turned into rabbit warrens, with too many potential leads to investigate even for a large number of Inquisitors, numerous agents and their private armies of elite troops. Not only was there too much evidence to follow up on, inevitably they also failed to identify a great many threats altogether. The heretics continued to wreak havoc throughout the Sanctus Wall. The Imperium failed to stop the hijacking of the light cruiser *Strength of His Name*, which raced away into the Gauntlet. Inquisitors and Enforcers were caught by complete surprise when a tunnel on the sea floor of Badowinne was breached by an explosion and then flooded, destroying hundreds of hauler-servitors bearing military supplies. No Inquisitor, military officer or bureaucrat learned that every single soldier of a dozen regiments of Priskian Expedrines, who were brought to garrison one of the new fortresses being constructed on Sangua Terra, was a worshipper of the Dark Gods. Inquisitors themselves became targets. The cabal known as the Gorandahl Accord was wiped, out with open battles raging between agents and cultists.

Even the staunchest of Inquisitors recognised that the threat they were up against was too great for them to overcome. In private discussions, they acknowledged that they had little idea of how deep the level of rot truly went. Even as the Sanctus Wall took shape – as more bastions were raised, orbital defence stations were built, regiments were mobilised and defensive strategies were developed – the Arch-enemy was at work. Though not one Inquisitor gave but a moment of thought to giving up, and sought out traitors, heretics and mutants with as much determination and fury as they always had, an increasing sense of foreboding fell over them all. It grew to the extent that several requested aid from the Sisters of Silence.

As more and more refugees arrived, the picture of the Chaos hordes approaching became clearer. Morale among the Sanctus Wall's population fell, despite the arrival of priests and missionaries, and the visible presence of the Adeptus Astartes among the defenders. Fear was in the air and cases of insanity quickly rose; it became common to witness madmen in the streets, ranting at their fellow citizens to repent before being taken aside and silenced.

Many Imperial officers, governors and Inquisitors praised the God-Emperor in relief when they learned that strike forces from the Indomitus Crusade were coming to the Sanctus Wall. They not only desperately needed reinforcements, but the hope these forces brought with them strengthened the faith of every citizen. Many believed the oncoming fleets were a sign of the Emperor's divine protection. Overblown rumours spread of the returned Primarch himself coming to aid them. Word of the incoming forces spooked some traitor cells, who tried to take drastic action, triggering plans too soon and made mistakes, all of which made them easier to destroy. Nonetheless, the Sanctus Wall's security was far from assured. When Lord Admiral Quirin Prisca departed with all but a fraction of the Wall's fighting ships, the region was left incredibly vulnerable. Everything depended on her actions. If she failed to slow the advance of the Chaos fleet for long enough, the Sanctus Wall was doomed.



GORANDAHL SUB-SECTOR

Imperial System

Warp Route

Defence Station

JAGHAAL SYSTEM

ENCHUS
(Hive World)
(Factory World)

MOROCH
(Industrial World)
(Fortress World)

MARHDUKK
(Mausoleum World)
(Shrine World)

THE GREAT RIFT

PENTERIS SYSTEM
(Destroyed)

CORYXX SYSTEM

BOUNT
(Agri World)

DARK PIT
(Hive World)
(Night World)

ORORI
(Cardinal World)
(Fortress World)

JAGHAAL SYSTEM
All-out civil war with traitor militarum regiments occurring on Moroch. Adeptus Astartes forces intervening.

All reinforcing units being brought to the region MUST be spiritually vetted, lest traitors undermine the Wall.

SANGUIS SYSTEM

SANGUA TERRA
(Fortress World)
(Civilised World)
(War World)

SANGUIS SYSTEM
Multiple uprisings. Civil unrest widespread. Open battle in several locations. Expected to be the first system struck by heretic fleet slaughtering its way through the Gauntlet. 70.83% of adult population under arms, 42.71% deemed 'combat ready'.

THE GREAT RIFT

LEONID SYSTEM
Prisoner population of Eradisz falling by 0.1% per day as direct result of increased work demands. Output increased by 42.79% month on month. Governor Rorsplatz requires more labourers. Find them. Her methods are effective and cost-efficient.

JUBATOR SYSTEM
(Destroyed)

LEONID SYSTEM

BADOWINNE
(Refinery World)
(Ocean World)

LEOPOLDE
(Mining World)
(Quarry World)

ERADISZ
(Industrial World)
(Penal World)
(Fortress World)

CORYXX SYSTEM
Armed forces strength increased by 29.14% after arrival of troops from the Ridaeg System. Inquisitorial activity considerable. Many heretics burn here. Food production increased by 24.99% as response to increased demand. Insufficient.

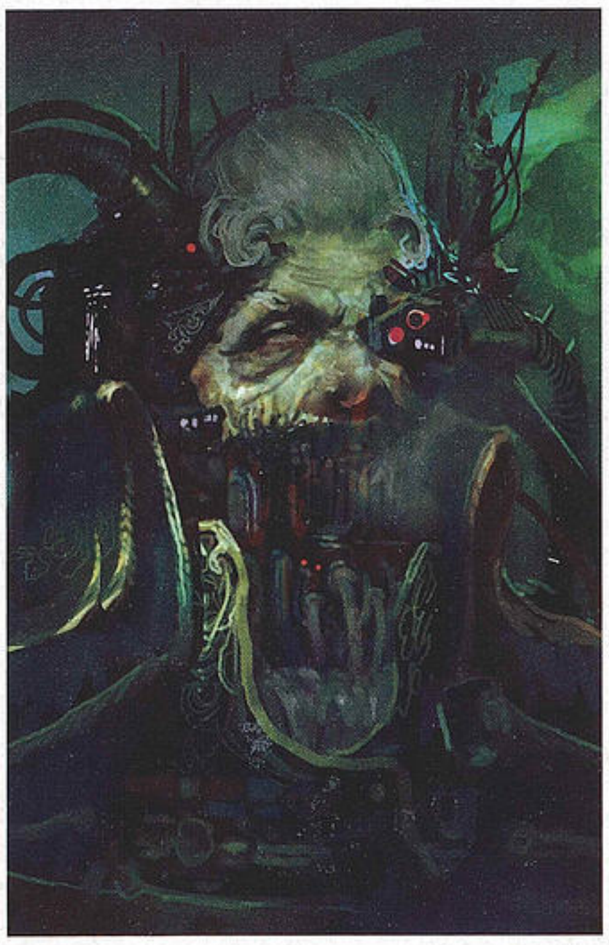
BATTLE OF THE NARROW

Lord Admiral Quirin Prisca led her fleet of warships, converted transports and civilian vessels straight to the Grakiliod Narrow. There she would make her stand to buy time for the Sanctus Wall and aim to cause as much damage as possible to the Chaos fleet storming through the Nachmund Gauntlet.

Lord Admiral Prisca knew that a sizeable Imperial fleet progressing through the Nachmund Gauntlet in obvious challenge would draw the attention of the heretic armada. She knew that if Haarken Worldclaimer could not bypass her for several reasons. First and perhaps most importantly, he would look weak and afraid. Second, he would be leaving a powerful force to his rear that could harry his forces, cut his supply lines and result in his invasion fleet being caught between hammer and anvil – the Sanctus Wall to his front and a vengeful and well-positioned Imperial force to his rear.

When the Imperial armada arrived at the Narrows, there was no sign of any opposition. Admiral Prisca deployed her fleet in a standard defensive formation that gave no hint of the plan she had devised before departing the Sanctus Wall. Every shipmaster had a sealed letter in their possession, waiting to be opened only when Prisca gave the command. Until then her scheme would remain hidden even from her own subordinates. This would not be Prisca's first battle against the forces of Chaos, it would not even be her tenth. She knew that the larger the force, the more likely it was to be a loose collection of alliances that was not as coherent as it might first appear. She also knew that she had to turn the enemy armada's strengths – such as its overwhelming numbers – into a weakness.

Admiral Prisca's fleet waited for days with no sign of the enemy. They used the time to sow the region with void mines, vox-disruption satellites, null-amplifiers and lurking fire ships, hoping that Worldclaimer's fleet would be caught amongst them and suffer at least temporary discord. Tension grew, even with ship crews kept busy with preparations. At any second Worldclaimer's fleet could appear. It was too much for some of the ratings and officers. Many were sent to brigs or tied to bunks to stop them from causing trouble. Fights broke out amongst the exhausted crews. Chapel services were trebled and vox networks continually blasted out reassuring prayers. Still, even Lord Admiral Prisca herself felt on edge. Even as she told her officers and crews to be strong and calm, part of her wondered if somehow Worldclaimer had found a way past or around the Narrow, and whether she had left the Sanctus Wall defenceless. More agonising days crawled past. And then, without warning, the first Chaos ships appeared – *Herald of Damnation,* flagship of Haarken Worldclaimer, commanding at their head.

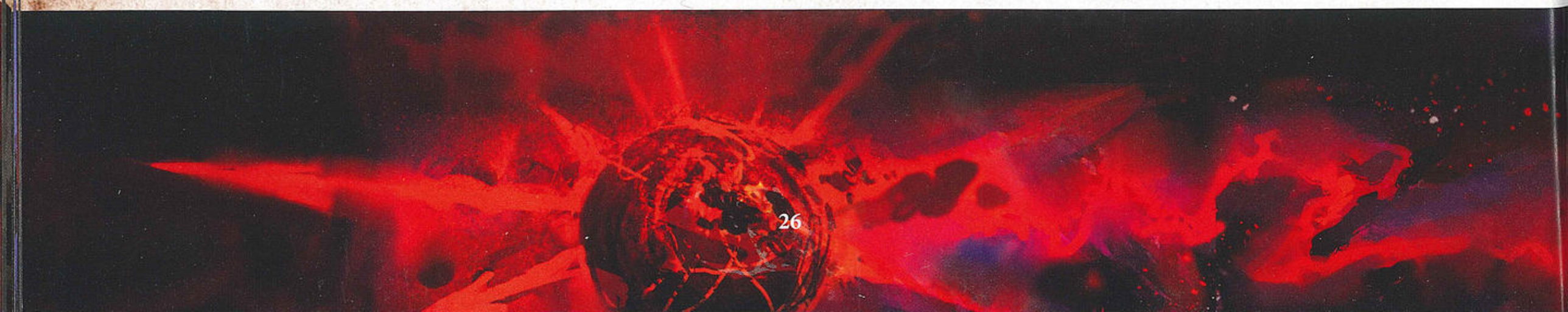


As Admiral Prisca had hoped, the first wave of ships were caught directly by the disruptive measures deployed against them. Scores of mines detonated, crippling and destroying outrider vessels, whilst the null-amplifiers and vox-disruptors made communication between ships all but impossible. As more and more of the enemy fleet arrived, they found themselves translating into space already ripe with anarchy. Prisca ordered her captains to unseal their orders.

The count of heretic vessels increased with each passing minute, without any apparent sign of stopping. Servitors on several Imperial vessels burned themselves out trying to list every ship recorded on naval augurs. Virtually every class of vessel imaginable formed the traitor fleet, including many that the Imperium had ceased producing millennia before. A handful of the Imperial ships fled, their captains ordering emergency warp translation rather than face this unstoppable tide of foes. Even Prisca barely kept her composure as, for the first time, she fully absorbed the sheer scale of the task that lay ahead of her forces. She had always believed that defeat and death were all but inevitable in this battle; only now did she fully appreciate just how true that was. Prisca remained steadfast however. Her delaying tactics had stopped the traitor vessels from bearing down on her fleet and broken their order, at least for the time being. Enough time had been bought for her plan to unfold as intended.

Following their orders, her fleet formed into a long, thin, diamond-shaped wedge. Her largest ships formed each edge, with the smaller vessels, converted carriers and escorts in the centre. Prisca ordered them to charge at full speed into the front of the slowly forming right wing of Worldclaimer's much-disrupted armada, while unloading salvo after salvo of macro-cannon and lance fire into it.

The first blood of the battle went to the Imperium. The renegade cruiser *Blood of the Eight* was ripped apart by a succession of macro-cannon shells fired by the Imperial battleship *Hammer of the Emperor*, Prisca's flagship, while its captain was coordinating with his escorts. Thousands of heretics were



spilled into the void, and chunks of traitor vessel span off into its escorts, damaging the *Goredog*, *Poxcrow* and *Changefire*. Admiral Prisca punched her fleet through the gap created by *Blood of the Eight*'s destruction but she didn't celebrate the kill. There was much more work to be done as her forces speared through the heretic armada. Prisca's plan ensured most of Worldclaimer's ships couldn't target her own because too many of their allies obscured lines of sight and her ships were always moving targets. The Imperial fleet claimed more kills in their charge. The Black Legion cruiser *Doombringer* was caught in the broadsides of several Imperial ships as they shot past. Its void shields rippled under so many successive explosions before failing, letting the final rounds through which destroyed it. The Imperial grand cruiser *Holy Light* smashed straight through the light escorts *Dark Fang* and *Black Venom*, which both failed to get out of the enormous vessel's way in time.

The Imperial fleet did not carry out their charge without loss, however. The heretic ship captains were brutal practitioners of void warfare. The Emperor's Children strike cruiser *Sweet Release*, equipped with enhanced engines, lunged into the fray and blew apart the frigate *Honourable*. The *Sweet Release* took the frigate's place in the formation, crippling Imperial vessels around it with barrages of cannon fire and seizing others in brutal boarding assaults in which the unluckiest crew were those who survived. Lord Argar Saveroz, commander of the Black Legion Gladius-class frigate squadron known as the *Dark Triad*, calculated the reloading patterns of the Imperial cruiser *Mightsword*. He ordered his ships attack the gun decks while the weapon crews reloaded. Salvoes from the *Dark Triad's* plasma projectors and cannons crippled the *Mightsword's* weaponry, paving the way for an onslaught of boarding torpedoes and bombers from the Black Legion battle cruiser *Hell's Fist*. The battleship of the Ironspines Black Legion warband was packed to the brim with hulking Terminators. Wave after wave of them marched into teleportation bays and were deployed on to Imperial ships. They carved their way through the crews of the light cruiser *Hero of Belladon*, the heavy frigate *Steel Baron* and the cruiser *Imperial Justice*.

Despite losses, Prisca's fleet maintained enough momentum to break through Worldclaimer's formation and burst through it on the other side. As the ships broke through, they peeled off left and right, unleashing waves of fighters and bombers as they attacked the rear of the Chaos fleet. The majority of Worldclaimer's armada was changing position. Many of the ships jostled and pushed to engage with the Imperial fleet, with captains issuing all manner of threats to their underlings and rivals to reach prime battle positions. As the Imperial fleet picked at their enemies, launching hit-and-run attacks against capital ships and endeavouring to evade responses, Worldclaimer asserted order. The Imperial forces were too small to defeat him, it was clear from the sheer imbalance in numbers, but they could do considerable damage, and he would not permit the rivalries of his warlords to weaken his strength unnecessarily.

Prisca took every advantage she could with the initial disorder amongst Worldclaimer's fleet. She struck again and again at Chaos capital ships, her vessel flanked by the *Holy Light* and the Furious-class grand cruiser *Knight Aeterna*, before retreating swiftly. She exhorted all her captains to keep moving, and to make every effort to avoid being surrounded, even if it meant not destroying an enemy ship. Kills were good, but the Sanctus Wall needed time more than anything else. That meant staying alive, and prolonging the battle for as long as possible. Prisca delegated as much authority to her capital ships as she could, expecting them to wreak havoc, inflict damage and support each other as and when necessary. Escorts and lighter vessels pounced on traitor ships damaged by broadside salvoes from the cruisers and battleships. Imperial crews on the cusp of being surrounded by heretics were aided with daring counter-attacks from other ships and wriggled free. The Space Marines who joined Prisca fought ferociously, launching the most daring assaults against Worldclaimer's ships, as well as the most dangerous rescues of Imperial ships that had become isolated.

The space of the Grakiliod Narrow was alight with explosions and muzzle flash. Debris clouds the size of continents soon formed.

Worldclaimer was impressed by the Imperial fleet's effort. They fought with ferocious determination and had achieved an impressive kill ratio indeed. But their doom was close at hand. They had done well to not already have been overwhelmed and surrounded, but they were too few in number to prevent it in perpetuity, and their numbers were growing fewer by the minute. The Herald of the Apocalypse laughed when reports reached his ears of the destruction of *Glorious Hunt*, a Space Marine strike cruiser of the Destroyers Chapter, and the capture of the Victory-class battleship *Triumph*. As he kept one eye on the active battle, he steered a whole portion of his armada that had not yet been engaged – those ships which had been on the left wing of his formation – into position. His fleet was so enormous that hundreds of his ships could move wherever needed without hindrance from any Imperial craft and were wholly apart from the battle. Worldclaimer was content with allowing the Imperial forces to believe that they were performing well, but he knew he would have final victory, and that he would crush them. After many more hours of ferocious battle and manoeuvre, in which scores of ships were boarded, destroyed and captured on both sides, Worldclaimer had positioned the rest of his fleet. They were deployed in such a way that they resembled the jaws of an enormous space-bound ursun trap. One that was ready to close.

Haarken Worldclaimer gave the order: kill. Finally let off their leash, hundreds of ships bore down on the battered Imperial fleet, eager for blood. The World Eaters battle barge *Fury of Khorne* sped ahead of the rest of the fleet, heading straight for the Castellans of the Rift battle barge *Bulwark*. The Adeptus Astartes aboard, exhausted after hours of battle, stood little chance. They fought to the last, but when the fight was done their ship resembled a charnel house. One by one, two by two, the other Imperial ships were overwhelmed. The few loyalist survivors fled. The battle was over.



EPILOGUE

Only a fraction of Lord Admiral Quirin Prisca's ships escaped the battle. A handful limped back to the anchorages and ports of the Sanctus Wall, or fled into the Gauntlet. The few survivors brought word of the battle back to the Imperial defensive lines, and found much had changed in the days they had been away.

THE IMPERIUM

The captains of the handful of surviving ships reported their defeat to Gorandahl Sub-sector command. Lord Admiral Prisca, they explained, had surely died heroically, leading her ship and others into the teeth of the foe to kill as many as possible. But they also bore grim tidings. The heretic fleet was larger than any armada any of them had ever seen. Not only that, but it had likely recovered many of the losses Prisca's fleet had inflicted, because so many of the Imperial ships were boarded and captured.

For all that however, the survivors learned that they had been successful. Their mission, which had resulted in near-total losses, had indeed bought enough time. The Indomitus Crusade strike forces had arrived. Not only that, but the sacrifice of Admiral Prisca and her fleet had enabled more citizens and troops to escape the Gauntlet. Every world of the Sanctus Wall was reinforced with Battle Sisters, Imperial Knights, Space Marines and forces of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Hundreds of ships now patrolled the Wall's space, reinforced by other detachments sent to the region from neighbouring territories. In honour of her sacrifice, Lord Admiral Prisca was declared a saint, and a mighty battleship of the Sanctus Wall's new defensive fleet was named *Saint Prisca's Defiance* in her honour.

Lord Castellan Alibet Ayaneva and High Admiral Rowlan Abery Wolston XIV, the commanders of the arriving task forces, were deeply disturbed by reports from the survivors of the Battle of the Narrow, as the event had become known. In private council, they both agreed that even with all Imperial forces in the area combined, victory against the oncoming hordes of the Arch-enemy was far from certain. They had no way of telling if, even if they defeated the attackers, more fleets may come in their wake. They both knew just how rampant heresy, mutation and sedition had become since the Great Rift emerged. There was no shortage of traitors that could be thrown against Imperial holdings, especially as close as they were to the Great Rift and the Eye of Terror. Regardless, they committed their forces to digging in, garrisoning bastions, patrolling shipping lanes and training fresh levies. They also went to work in aiding the purgation of worlds dealing with rebels and resistance movements.

Though many more cells of traitorous agents and operatives were rooted out and destroyed, there seemed no end to them. Tactics used by units in some places were oppressive enough to push otherwise loyal citizens to resistance. In certain areas, increased Imperial military activity provoked heretic groups to strike more often, more publicly and more violently. Insurrections erupted and running battles broke out among some defence lines.



WORLDCLAIMER

Haarken Worldclaimer left one of his trusted champions behind to scavenge the wreckage from the Battle of the Narrow. Imperial ships that were still functional after the battle were already folded into his fleet, under the command of those who seized them as spoils of war. Captured Imperial sailors and soldiers were sacrificed by the thousand in rituals by Dark Apostles to draw the gods' favour ahead of the upcoming offensive, or were forced to work on the ships of their captors. Worldclaimer had, in an act of lordly beneficence, declined his right to a share of the plunder from the battle as master of the host, appointed by the Despoiler himself. He hailed the triumph of his warlords and said the rewards belonged to them this day. Though some would think him weak for this, Worldclaimer knew his actions would reveal those most likely to betray him. Besides, once they had broken the Sanctus Wall, the prizes available there would far exceed anything they recovered in the Grakiliod Narrow. There would be billions of slaves, hundreds of ships, thousands upon thousands of tanks and guns, millions of mortal followers and – most crucially – the praise of his lord, Abaddon, for completing the task he had been assigned. The rewards for that, he knew, would be beyond his wildest expectations. For Worldclaimer, his only prize after the Narrow was a certain Lord Admiral, who he held in one of his flagship's excruciatoris cells. She knew much, and he was determined he would learn it all.

If Prisca's forces were all the Imperium could muster against him, he knew how truly weak and desperate his enemies were. Their failed counter-attack proved to Worldclaimer that his strategy was working, that moving at such speed was making it difficult for the Imperium to react to him. The Herald of the Apocalypse decided to make more use of the defeated naval officer. He was sure her fellows thought her dead. When the time was right, he would prove them wrong, and the Sanctus Wall would know a fear that even now they had not yet experienced.

There was only one thing left to do – strike at the Sanctus Wall itself. Once he was through that, there was surely nothing that could stop him from terrorising swathes of the Imperium Sanctus. He relished the thought of driving his spear through foe after foe, of seeing world after world burn, of countless trillions of mortals screaming his name in terror and trillions more screaming it in adulation. As he pondered this, he stood on the bridge of the *Herald of Damnation* and gave the order to make warp for the Sanctus Wall.

A dark hour of dark hours is almost upon us. Every wall and trench must be defended. Every gun must be readied. Every ship must be brought to arms. Every man, woman and child must be ready to give their all.

THE FATE OF BADE

The Forces of Abaddon and the Imperium were far from the only ones active in the Nachmund Gauntlet. For those with an opportunistic eye and a dark bent, this was a time ripe for achieving all manner of sinister goals. Just one of those individuals was Urien Rakarth, Drukhari lord of the Haemonculi coven known as the Prophets of Flesh.

Known to some as the Sculptor of Torments, Urien Rakarth was a depraved genius in the fields of bodily manipulation, fleshcraft, anatomical sculpture and in composing symphonies of pain. In his flesh-pens he maintains a vast menagerie of repugnant creations, a stock which he increases in both size and variety with each passing day. Such exploits require a vast amount of flesh, and in the Nachmund Gauntlet Rakarth found ample supply of fearful beings ripe for plucking.

Knowing the population of an entire Human planet would supply his endeavours for many months, as well as provide him with many slaves for trade with the Wych Cults for any of their more bizarre and intriguing specimens, he selected a world. The Humans had named it Bade and it was home to some twenty billion souls terrified by news of nearby wars. In addition to its decent population size, Bade was isolated enough within the Nachmund Gauntlet from both Imperial holdings and the forces of Chaos that few other parties would interfere with it. Finally, for Rakarth there would be much amusement and intrigue to see just how easy it might be to have an entire Human population come over to him willingly.

As a part of his plan, Rakarth despatched lesser Haemonculi to Bade to ensure it was kept free from outside influence. They intercepted communications going to and from the planet, destroyed any vessels that came close and silenced any of the population who may have seen the Drukhari. Rakarth's underlings were permitted to keep any prisoners they captured in these activities, and they filled their pain-holds.

As this went on, Rakarth toyed with ideas as to how he would have billions of souls willingly hand themselves over to him. Threatening them with violence would have been trivially straightforward. No, he wanted them to want him. He wanted them to be grateful to him for the opportunity, to revere him. That would make it sweet. To see their faces in Commorragh when they realised their peril – that would be a moment to relish.

Rakarth decided that he would allow one enemy through to attack the planet. One strong enough to put it in real danger, but not so strong he could not defeat it. Once the planet was enveloped in war, he would arrive, save the population, and offer them sanctuary. The plan would cost many of the Humans their lives, but he deemed the overall gain worth the loss. When his agents discovered an Ork fleet prowling close to Bade, he knew this was the foe he would save the Humans from. He directed his servants to goad the greenskins into following them to Bade by attacking them and withdrawing in the direction of the Human world. The Orks duly pursued the Drukhari, and ploughed straight into the mon-keigh planet, embroiling it in war.



Rakarth watched on in satisfaction as the greenskin host slowly beat back the mon-keigh soldiers. Their psychic messengers sent out increasingly desperate pleas for aid. Rakarth however had set up scores of null-absorbers around the planet. These pain engines each contained a Human or other alien blank – a being with no spiritual presence in the warp – cerebrally linked to a hideous torture device that amplified their abilities over a vast area. These machines made long-distance psychic communication impossible.

Rakarth observed with patience. He deemed that the mon-keigh were not desperate enough yet. They needed to suffer more. His armies waited for many weeks. When the greenskins laid siege to a fourth of the world's capital cities, Rakarth decided to intervene. The Prophets of Flesh, allied covens and Kabalite and Wych Cult forces, who wished for a slice of the spoils, launched a planet-wide surprise attack both from orbit and from concealed webway portals. All were under strict orders not to lay a finger on any of the mon-keigh. The Drukhari assaulted the greenskins relentlessly, rescuing Human garrisons on the point of collapse, civilian columns being chased down and settlements on the verge of being overrun. They butchered the Orks by the thousand in ambushes and hit-and-run attacks. The greenskins were no easy target, however, and they claimed many Drukhari lives with their large guns and heavy blades. Rakarth merely ensured that those of his allies he liked or trusted the least ended up in the most dangerous areas.

With the Drukhari achieving successes, Imperial troops moved to fight beside them, ignorant of the fate that awaited them. Combined, the two forces eventually defeated the greenskins, and in a great victory celebration the governor of Bade honoured Rakarth for saving them. The governor had no way of knowing if the Imperium even still existed, and feared for his people. Rakarth said that he could offer the people sanctuary on his home world, if they would accept it, and transport them there safely, away from Orks and other dangers. The governor hastily agreed. Rakarth deployed scores of immense transports and opened up webway portals. Over months, billions of people were transported to his flesh farms in Commorragh. What they believed to be sanctuary, was a place of torment. People became the playthings of the cruellest sadists and subjects of depraved experiments. From them, Rakarth yielded many new horrific creations with which to prove once again his mastery of his craft. All the while, the abandoned planet became overrun with greenskins, and the Nachmund Gauntlet became yet more lawless.

Whilst on the one hand the potential activity of so many Space Marine Chapters in the region is reassuring... what areas are neglected to allow such a large deployment of the post-Auspan warriors in and around the Nachmund Gauntlet?

+++ Classified Document 888-910 +++
Forces of the Imperium

[For further information and expanded lists of Imperial forces fighting in the Nachmund Gauntlet, see file RXF//456//NMD/2. Note that all records are to be deemed as potentially unreliable due to potential empyric distortions that affect our ability to calculate numbers and identify different forces.]

THE WARDENS OF THE GAUNTLET

The Wardens of the Gauntlet are a body of Space Marine forces who have vowed to keep the Nachmund Gauntlet in Imperial hands. Their number includes whole Chapters as well as elements of others who went to fight there and committed to staying. Due to the corrupting influence of the warp, unreliability of witness testimonies and lack of other evidence, knowing the overall strength of this force, or the individual contributions made by each Chapter, is impossible. That being said, we believe that the following Adeptus Astartes Chapters belong(ed) in full or in part to this alliance (there may well be more):

Castellans of the Rift; Black Templars; Sable Knights; Salamanders; Rift Stalkers; Angels of Defiance; Colossi of Kranos; Wrathhost; Brazen Claws; Solar Hawks; Sons of the Phoenix; Void Tridents; Necropolis Hawks; Silvered Blades; Novamarines; Genesis Chapter; Praetors of Orpheus.

THE BESIEGERS OF DHARROVAR

[For further information and expanded lists of Imperial forces taking part in the siege, see file RXF//867//NMD/5.]

ADEPTUS ASTARTES

THE CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT CHAPTER

Chapter Master Ba'stien Grix
Captain Krenel Pors of the 2nd Company
Captain Oppidus Glaukis of the 5th Company
3 Librarians of varying rank
2 Chaplains
250-300 battle-brothers from the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 9th Companies
67 supporting armoured vehicles
Battle barge: *Eternal Watchman*
2 Strike cruisers: *Night Guard, Twilight Sentinel*
6 Gladius-class escorts: *Poleaxe, Halberd, Fauchard, Voulge, Glaive, Bizarme*

THE SONS OF THE PHOENIX CHAPTER

Captain Badron Aqhat
Captain Nikkal Arishat
Reclusiarch Tanithos Izavel
3 Chaplains
Lexicanium Baltzur Hammon
180-250 battle-brothers of the 3rd, 4th and 6th Companies
42 supporting armoured vehicles
2 Strike cruisers: *Karth Victoris, Lattachia Triumphan*
4 Gladius-class escorts: *Ember, Ash, Cinder, Blaze*

THE VOID TRIDENTS CHAPTER

Captain Julianis Mikon of the 5th Company
Epistolary Caius Vibion
Chaplain Larus Ennekis
90+ battle-brothers of the 5th and 7th Companies
15 supporting armoured vehicles
Strike cruiser: *Spear of Glaudor*

THE NECROPOLIS HAWKS CHAPTER

Captain Miloni Takta
Lieutenant Caelun Durus
Epistolary Hozidik Opolio
Chaplain Barbateion Zer
130+ battle-brothers of the 2nd, 4th and 6th Companies
19 supporting armoured vehicles
Strike cruiser: *Death Talon*

THE WRATHHOST CHAPTER

Windcaptain Dogodis Eg'oi
Windcaptain Verbtir Quebis
5 Librarians of undisclosed rank
4 Chaplains
220-300 battle-brothers from the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 9th and 10th Companies
110 supporting armoured vehicles
2 strike cruisers: *Gale, Gust*
6 Gladius-class escorts: *Great Stag, Mauling Bear, Howling Wolf, Galloping Horse, Striking Cobra, Soaring Raptor*

OTHER CHAPTERS

While impossible to say with certainty, it is quite possible that warriors from all of the Chapters listed earlier as part of the Wardens of the Gauntlet also played a role in the Siege of Dharrovar. Space Marines have a degree of operational autonomy and a modus operandi that means they can move from battlefield to battlefield with a rapidity that can outpace our ability to track and observe them. Unverified witness statements and inference suggest it not impossible for warriors of the following Chapters to have been involved in the fighting at Dharrovar, or at least played a part elsewhere in the fighting for the Nachmund Gauntlet: Consecrators, Space Wolves, Iron Hands, White Scars, Howling Griffons, Silver Skulls, Crimson Fists, Sons of Medusa, White Consuls, Blades of Vengeance, Angels of Redemption, Ultramarines, Minotaurs, Silver Templars. It should be noted that all of the Chapters cited in this paragraph played a role in the defence of Vigilus until at least Abaddon the Despoiler's withdrawal from the war zone.

ADEPTA SORORITAS

Order of Our Martyred Lady.....6 preceptories
Order of the Adamant Halo .....7 preceptories
Order of the Ermine Mantle..... 5 preceptories
Order of the Silver Lilly .....8 preceptories
Order of the Bloody Rose..... 11 preceptories
Order of the Stoic Countenance .....4 preceptories

Note: smaller forces from the Orders of the August Pyre, Blessed Martyr, Blessed Suffering, Burning Light, Crimson Chalice, Divine Lamentation, Ivory Blade, Sable Robe, Silver Veil and Sublime Adoration also believed present.

ASTRA MILITARUM

Scores of Astra Militarum regiments fought in the siege of Dharrovar. A considerable number belonged to forces en route to Vigilus or retreating from the surrounding area, pressed into service by the Castellans of the Rift to help seize the traitorous Knight world. Thus there was an enormous variety of units, ranging from highly trained Harakoni Warhawks and Kaddaghan Ballistae to the savage Lorgan Berserkers and Ka'rath'ras Bushmen. Deep-faithed Argolishian Creedsmen stood shoulder to shoulder with the beautifully uniformed Pallatanian Bluebloods, and Gobiske Dustcowls bled alongside the blank-masked Gehennun Silents. Fighting against traitor Knights, Heretic Astartes as well as all manner of brutal and fanatical hordes of Militarum Traitoris, the Militarum's casualty levels were staggering. Many regiments were wiped out in their entirety, with no known survivors. Note that file RXF//867//NMD/5 also includes details of Militarum Tempestus forces involved, of which the 88th Lambdan Pythons, 101st Thetan Gargoyles and 4th Psian Wolverines were among the number.

QUESTOR MECHANICUS/QUESTOR IMPERIALIS

HOUSE HAWKSHROUD

Baron Gathonel Ydrik, pilot of *Steadfast* - led 7 Knight suits and pilots of one operational lance with 1 Following of Household Yeomen, 52 Sacristans with armoured aerial transport and 1 macro-conveyor ark.

HOUSE BARRAGON

Baron Teirch Dorigov, pilot of *Restless Avenger* - led 47 Knight suits and pilots of 4 operational lances with 5 Cohorts of Household Palatial Guard, 305 Sacristans with armoured aerial transport and 3 macro-conveyor arks.

HOUSE CALLIVANT

Baroness Matanai Peromil, pilot of *The Brave* - led 62 Knight suits and pilots of 5 operational lances with 7 Vigils of Household Joviann Watchmen, 400 Sacristans with armoured aerial transport and 4 macro-conveyor arks.

HOUSE HASBURG

Baroness Dobosh Laanszil, pilot of *Bestious* - led 30 Knight suits and pilots of 3 operational lances with 3 Squadrons of Household Netsmen, 305 Sacristans with armoured aerial transport and 2 macro-conveyor arks.

HOUSE KHORD

Baroness Sponsia Karmeni, pilot of *Chainbonder* - led 51 Knight suits and pilots of 4 operational lances with 5 Births of Household Genebound, 389 Sacristans with armoured aerial transport and 4 macro-conveyor arks.

OTHER KNIGHTLY ELEMENTS

Numerous Freeblades

ADEPTUS MECHANICUS

Naval and surface assets from forge worlds Stygies VIII, Voss Prime and Mars were all identified among the forces besieging Dharrovar. It has been all but impossible to decode the bizarre organisational structures used by the Tech-Priests from the three forge worlds, as one might expect. Archmagos Arkimede Thron led the Martian contingent, with Magos Omekron Vrekh leading the forces of Voss Prime and Magos Solomonh Voloros commanding the assets of Stygies VIII. All included numerous Skitarii macroclades and support auxilia. Some reports suggest that Legio Cybernetica battle robots such as Thanatars and Voraxes were deployed as well as Titan-class assets. It is possible that the particular attraction of Dharrovar to the Tech-Priests was the possibility of claiming archeotech from the world.

IMPERIAL NAVY

Admiral Yukonis Elgaratir
Flagship: Emperor-class battleship: *Foesmite*

15 cruisers (Gothic-, Dictator-, Dominator-classes)
16 light cruisers (Dauntless-, Defiant-, Stygies-classes)
7 battle cruisers (Dominion-, Mercury-classes)
5 carriers (Nemesis-, Retribution-classes)
22 heavy frigates (Turbulent-class)
73 frigates (Firestorm-, Sword-, Tempest-classes)
61 destroyers (Cobra-, Viper-classes)
208 support and logistics vessels
100+ Aeronautica Imperialis divisions

FLEET OF THE GRAKILIOD NARROW

IMPERIAL NAVY

First in command: Lord Admiral Quirin Prisca
Flagship: Graia-class battleship *Hammer of the Emperor*, captained by Phiros Yorn

Second in command: Lord Admiral Bertizon Smye
Flagship: Furious-class grand cruiser *Knight Aeterna*, captained by Lyrion Vorn-Keats

Third in command: Lord Admiral Hethra Stroheimme
Flagship: Exorcist-class grand cruiser *Holy Light*, captained by Torazia Esganar

3 battleships (Victory-class)
36 cruisers (Cardinal-, Dominator-, Tyrant-classes)
51 light cruisers (Dauntless-, Enforcer-, Siluria-classes)
10 battle cruisers (Armageddon-, Overlord-classes)
25 heavy frigates (Inexorable-, Invictor-classes)
103 frigates (Falchion-, Sword-, Havoc-classes)
152 destroyers (Cobra-, Constrictor-, Viper-classes)
10 Targeters (Constellation-class)
100+ Aeronautica Imperialis divisions

OTHER ASSETS

In addition to the fighting ships listed above, Lord Admiral Prisca pressed hundreds of logistical and support vessels, civilian tugs, privately owned cutters, craft marked for decommission and others into service. These she had fitted with armaments, rigged as fireships and q-ships or loaded with troops for boarding actions. Such classes of vessel included Tarask-class merchantmen, Viper-class support sloops, and transport vessels of a dozen or more marks.

SPACE MARINE NAVAL FORCES

Minotaurs battle barge *Fidelitas Omicron*
Castellans of the Rift battle barge *Bulwark*
Wrathhost battle barge *Fury of the Seven Winds*
Destroyers strike cruiser *Glorious Hunt*
Storm Reapers strike cruiser *Howl of the Tempest*
Hawk Lords strike cruiser *Irontalon*
White Consuls strike cruiser *Hero of Sabatine*
Mortificators strike cruiser *Headtaker*

+++ Classified Document 888-912 +++
Forces of the Arch-enemy

[For further information and expanded lists of heretic forces fighting in the Nachmund Gauntlet, see file RXF//568//NMD/4. Note that all records are to be deemed as potentially unreliable due to the treacherous nature of the foe as well as potential empyric distortions that affect our ability to calculate numbers and identify different forces.]

THE FORCES OF HAARKEN WORLDCLAIMER

THE VANGUARD

Ahead of his advance, Haarken Worldclaimer sent many warbands of Heretic Astartes to pave the way for his main host. Their primary roles were one of three – to bring plague and pestilence, to spread terror and panic, and to foster the growth of Chaos-worshipping cults. None of the warbands listed below necessarily deployed in full strength but were accompanied by armies of mutants, Militarum Traitoris and other mortal followers. The list is not exhaustive. See also file RXF//543//NMD/1 for expanded information of heretical fifth columnists, agents provocateur and infiltrators that played a role in weakening Imperial defences ahead of Worldclaimer's main advance. Some of these forces also conquered smaller Imperial outposts and strategic assets in their entirety.

THE BRINGERS OF PLAGUE

The Purge; Death Guard elements [Inc: the Poisoned Chalice; the Sons of the Maggot; the Tainted]

[Identified at Parathis (hive world), Zertun (civilised world), Begulil (industrial world), Yarzon's World (agri world), Gargazel (star fort), Nonavore (bastion world)]

THE BRINGERS OF TERROR

Nightwing; the Sanctified; the Sensorians; the Terror Lords; elements of the Night Lords and World Eaters

[Identified at Centor's Landing (shrine world), the Enkellion Drifts (asteroid field), Prenzin (explorator way station), Helsor (star fort), Nonavore (bastion world)]

THE BRINGERS OF DOUBT

The Oracles of Change; the Shrouded Hand; the Invocators; elements of the Word Bearers, Thousand Sons and assumed Alpha Legion

[Identified at Septum Verda (industrial world), Ghoralik (hive world), Great Hope (refugee fleet), Consekratos Sancta (Ecclesiarchal haven), Nonavore (bastion world)]

THE CONQUERING HOST

HERETIC ASTARTES

THE BLACK LEGION

We have successfully identified scores of known Black Legion warbands amongst the hosts led by Haarken Worldclaimer in his campaign to conquer the Nachmund Gauntlet for Abaddon the Despoiler. These include Athkor's Destroyers, the Black Brethren of Eyreas, the Children of Torment, the Corpsemakers, the Crimson Claws, the Crimson Hurricane, Drakkoth's Destroyers, the Heralds of the Inevitable End, Hounds of Abaddon, the Ironspines, Lord Kadros' Champions, the Oathed, the Sarissan Iron Pact, the Sixth Rapture, the Skull-eaters, the Sons of Carnage, the Sons of the Cyclops and Thaskor's Chosen. It is all but impossible for us to know whether or not the full strength of these forces fought in the campaign, or if merely a fraction of their number took part. Indeed, while we cannot give anything close to precise numbers of Black Legion warriors under Wordclaimer's command, repeated datavore, cogitatum-spector and katalogian assessments suggest their numbers may have even been in excess of tens of thousands.

THE WORD BEARERS

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list not expected to be complete and is no indication of total number of Word Bearers present): The Bringers of Enlightenment; the Holy Sons of Lorgar; the Iconoclastic Brotherhood; the Ivory Fang; the Runic Blazon; the Screaming Mind; the Sons of Damnation.

THE IRON WARRIORS

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list not expected to be complete and is no indication of total number of Iron Warriors present): The Anathraxis Warhost; the Hammers Relentless; Metal Claw; the Pitiless; the Siege-masters Olympian.

THE DEATH GUARD

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list not expected to be complete and is no indication of total number of Death Guard present): The Apostles of Contagion; the Bilious Ones; Bringers of Putrid Salvation; the Brotherhood of Reaping; the Festerlung Brotherhood; the Filthfavoured; the Prophets of the Seven; the Putrid Brotherhood; the Putrid Choir; Selminster's Curse; the Carrion Hounds.

THE WORLD EATERS

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list not expected to be complete and is no indication of total number of World Eaters present): The Sanctified; Angron's Chosen; Bonescar; the Crushers of Bone; Dhorngar's Goredrinkers; the Foresworn; Gladiator Group 138; the Gorehunters; Pistonhand's Daemoniforge.

THE EMPEROR'S CHILDREN

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list not expected to be complete and is no indication of total number of Emperor's Children present): The Thirsting Brethren; the Ripping Nails; the Flickering Blades; the Mirrorhost; the Hex-clawed Phoenix.

THE NIGHT LORDS

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list not expected to be complete and is no indication of total number of Night Lords present): The Baleful Eye; the Blades of Sevasdus; Bleak Claw; the Whispering Shadow; Vreanus' Killers; the Darkblood.

THE THOUSAND SONS

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list not expected to be complete and is no indication of total number of Thousand Sons present): The Reflected Ones; the Brothers of Retaliation; the Fractal Blades; the Masters of Magnus' Will; the Scions of the Great Architect; Xenash Capensis' Rubric Phalanx.

THE ALPHA LEGION

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list not expected to be complete and is no indication of total number of Alpha Legion present. Note, Alpha Legion renowned for deceit, consider this information especially unreliable): The Sons of Deception; 20th Alpharians; the Armoured Serpents; the Ironhydras; the Scaled Fang.

RENEGADES (NON-LEGION HERETIC ASTARTES]

Warriors identified from the following warbands (list incomplete and is no indication of total number of renegades present): Steel Brethren; Flawless Host; Crimson Slaughter; Brazen Beasts.

INFERNAL AND ICONOCLAST HOUSES

HOUSE KHOMENTIS

Archduchess Nyatali Garrunov, pilot of *Infernal Spear* - led 167 Knight suits and pilots, of 17 operational lances with 12 Chains of Household Indentured Militia, 803 Idolators with armoured aerial transport and 5 magna-freighters.

HOUSE KHYMERE

Baron Vaerskis Brancid, pilot of *Raging Inferno* - led 214 Knight suits and pilots, of 20 operational lances with 40 Regiments of Household Iron Guard, 917 Idolators with armoured aerial transport and 6 magna-freighters.

HOUSE LUCARIS

Lord Azaforth, pilot of *Venom Dragon* - led 252 Knight suits and pilots, of 22 operational lances with 35 Fangs of Household Wyrm-guard, 1,128 Idolators with armoured aerial transport and 6 magna-freighters.

HOUSE BLACK

Dominatus Supreme Mavros Karbo, pilot of *Impenetrable Dark* - led 411 Knight suits and pilots, of 38 operational lances with 28 Phalanxes of Household Night Watchmen, 2,914 Idolators with armoured aerial transport and 7 magna-freighters.

OTHER KNIGHTLY ELEMENTS

Lances from House Drakon; House Drear; House Ghast; House Iattol; House Mesmr; House Mykorphas; House Thryn; House Vrachul; dozens of Dreadblades.

THE LOST AND THE DAMNED

There is almost no limit to the foul variety of mortal followers that formed the vast bulk of Haarken Worldclaimer's enormous host. They included billions of mutants, heretics, rogue psykers, cultists, abhumans of seventeen recognised strains and countless other undocumented aberrations. In addition to this, Worldclaimer commanded hundreds of Militarum Traitoris regiments – including Jenen Ironclads, Feresk Truthsayers, Antivigil Bloodcorps, Hazakh Plaguetakers, Vanitine Hedonites, Kardone Changeseekers, Gagrik Ironspines and numerous others. Some of these forces carried sigils and icons which vid-capture cogitators have matched certain specific – and inaccessible-- files of religious heresy, others appear to display little unifying iconography. Whilst many served as little more than cannon fodder, others were as well trained as any Human force can be expected to be - some even to the same levels as the troops of the Militarum Tempestus.

DARK MECHANICUM

Thousands of Dark Magi and immense legions of their abominable slaves, cyborg soldiers, Daemon Engines and traitor Titans [see addenda on Legios Abhorrax, Damnosus, Decapitorum, Fureans, Krytos, Lacrymea, Mortis, Suturvora, Vulcanum, Vulcanum II] joined with Haarken Worldclaimer. Heretical Tech-Priests were represented on most of the traitor vessels, serving as vital crew as well as advisors.

FLEET ASSETS

Flagship: Black Legion battleship *Herald of Damnation*
18 Heretic Astartes battle barges
67 Heretic Astartes strike cruisers
114 Heretic Astartes escorts
37 battleship and equivalents
200-300 heavy cruisers and equivalents
Est. 120-150 light cruiser and equivalents squadrons
Est. 450-600 escort squadrons
Est. 1000+ transport, logistics and support vessels
6 Silver Towers
3 Space Hulks

There have also been many gheist-returns, system anomalies and bizarre crew reports which some described as vessels with supernatural traits. Further analysis has revealed little more than more mystery.

DAEMONIC HOSTS

++REDACTED++

THE DEFENDERS OF DHARROVAR

HOUSE MANDRAKOR

High King Kaligius, pilot of the *All-seeing*, and High Queen Kaligia, pilot of the *All-hearing*, Master and Mistress of the Bastion Mandrakoris, led 600-700 Knight suits and fallen Noble pilots, of 66 operational lances 58 Battalions of Household Immortals (regular mortal troops), along with 6,234 Idolators and millions of indentured serf militia.

DREADBLADES

15-30 believed to be present, including Hope's Shroud, Empyrean Scythe *and* Litany of Destruction. *Dharrovar appears to have become a magnet for all manner of renegades, rogues and traitors looking to spill Imperial blood. Many of these Dreadblades were accompanied by their own retinues of Idolators as well as mortal followers and worshippers.*

HERETIC ASTARTES

Many warbands, including the Nightkillers, Silver Guards, the Pyre and the Rotworm Brotherhood are believed to have formed pacts with House Mandrakor. Their combined strength, we believe, was at least equal to that of a loyalist Adeptus Astartes Chapter, and all had armies of mortal followers, void ships, combat aircraft and armoured vehicles at their disposal. These forces operated both on Dharrovar's surface as well as in the vast debris fields that were close to the planet.

DARK MECHANICUM

The Tech-Magi of Omega-Threx used their millennia of isolation from the Imperium to fashion all manner of corrupt machines. Outside of the sancto-regulatory bounds placed upon them by Mars, they conducted experiments and devised many innovations. Unstable weapons technologies [cf: hyper-grav; radiactoid; photonik] and rare examples of battle robots [cf: Venetar-; Gholamm-; Harpax-; Errax-classes] were staples of Omega-Threx.

Though orbital scans suggest that as much as a third of the forge moon's infrastructure was destroyed after the natural satellite was deluged in warp energy when the Great Rift fluctuated, the wave of empyric power only corrupted the surviving Tech-Magi further. We have identified scores of previously unknown Daemon Engines which we believe to have originated from Omega-Threx. Some are the size of common canids – others as large as Titans. Thousands of these creatures were unleashed on Dharrovar, against the fleet attempting to outflank the traitorous Knight world, and in the debris fields.

Self-titled Fabricator General Astamorkhus Grine-Theta rules Omega-Threx. Intelligence collected by our data-sprites as well as prisoner excrucigation suggest that years in isolation have made him no less paranoid than his allies, High King Kaligius and High Queen Kaligia, and has ensured his world is heavily militarised. Though most forge worlds of the Imperium produce much required for civilian use, almost 95% of Omega-Threx's production capacity has been turned over to producing arms. Many of its Archmagi have devoted much of their physical function to war [cf: Magos Dominus Sagarekha Poltix, 'Eightswords'; Archmagos Bartolomus Kroll, 'the Living Baneblade'; Magos Decima Rhombor, 'the Transphasic Assassin'].

The Returned Primarch must be notified. The forces of the Arch-enemy are deploying in numbers / believed all but impossible for them to muster in one location. The Sanctus Wall must be reinforced further.
Priority Vermilion-Alpha.

CAMPAIGN RULES

'Sacrifice. There is no greater statement of faith. To be a loyal servant of the God-Emperor in such times as ours is to be one of untold quadrillions. None is more important than the whole, and each must play their part if our species is to survive the dire perils it faces. Today we are all asked to sacrifice. We are asked to give our lives to protect this great Imperium of ours, forged by our Holy Emperor and maintained by His own sacrifice. I feel neither sadness nor regret at what is expected of me now. I feel only gratitude. And so I sail forth into glorious oblivion, knowing that by my actions is the great legacy of Mankind preserved for longer.'

- Lord Admiral Quirin Prisca


12

WAR OF DESPERATION CAMPAIGN

The war for the Nachmund Gauntlet was vicious, bloody and long. 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 battle for the Dharrovar System and Haarken Worldclaimer's drive along the length of the Gauntlet to secure it for the forces of Chaos.

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: Rift War*.

INTRODUCTION

A War of Desperation campaign allows a group of players to get together, form alliances and play a series of games. It is split into campaign phases, during which players will fight it out in the three key war zones of the Dharrovar conflict. Each battle will be fought with unique rules inspired by the location that it is taking place in. At the end of each campaign phase, the balance of power in each of these locales 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 Desperation 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 Desperation campaign. On page 50, 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 Desperation campaign. Otherwise, they are a useful tool for players to get the most out of a War of Desperation campaign.

WAYS TO PLAY

The first step in the War of Desperation 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 Desperation 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: Imperial forces desperately need to maintain control of the Nachmund Gauntlet, a vital strategic point that helps Imperial authorities in the Imperium Sanctus stay in contact with the worlds of the Imperium Nihilus. 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 Worldclaimer's warbands have one goal, to smash through Imperial forces in the Nachmund Gauntlet to reach the worlds at the other end. 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.

THE WAR ZONE TRACKERS

Each of the war zones in a War of Desperation Campaign uses its own tracker, found on pages 40-42, to keep track of the tug of war between the two alliances for control of that locale. At the start of the campaign, the Campaign Master will place a marker in the Contested spot on each tracker.

At the end of each campaign phase, the victorious side at each of the locales will be able to move the marker a number of spaces on that war zone's tracker based on their level of success. When moving the marker one space on the tracker, the victorious alliance can move it from the current position to any other connected position on the tracker. We recommend that each alliance nominates a commander from their side for each of the war zones, whose responsibility it is to decide where to move the marker on the war zone tracker in the event of their victory. Note that if the winning alliance is happy with the current position of the marker on the war zone tracker, they are not required to move it to another position.

Each space on the various war zone trackers will award one side or the other a number of Strategic Victory points at the end of each campaign phase, which are used to ultimately determine which alliance wins the overall campaign. However, some spaces on the war zone trackers also feature rules that can affect battles taking place during the next campaign phase within that war zone, or even within a different war zone. Players must remember that the key to ultimate victory may mean winning the war, at the expense of losing an individual war zone.

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.

CAMPAIGN LENGTH

A War of Desperation 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. While 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, for each of the war zones, the Campaign Master tallies the war zone points earned at that locale for each alliance. If one side has scored more war zone points than the other, then they are that war zone's winning alliance. If the winning alliance scores at least twice as many war zone points as the opposition at that war zone, then they can move the marker two spaces on the war zone tracker. Otherwise, the winning alliance can move the marker one space on the war zone tracker. The Campaign Master should co-ordinate with the winning alliance's commander for that war zone to determine where they want to move the marker to on the war zone tracker.

ALLIANCE STRATEGIC VICTORY POINTS

For each war zone, after the war zone tracker marker has finished being moved (if at all), the Campaign Master checks whether the position it is on rewards either of the alliances with any Strategic Victory points and keeps a record of these.

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 44-49).

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

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, wherever their commanders send them!

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 for the inherent deficit. Perhaps they could set a challenge for one player in each campaign phase, with extra war zone points awarded to their alliance for playing that game, and a greater points return if they achieve victory.

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. After tallying up any Strategic Victory points earned from the final phase, the alliance with the highest Strategic Victory points total across all phases is the victor. If both alliances have the same score, use the total war zone points 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.



THE SURFACE OF DHARROVAR

Dharrovar was home to the Chaos Knights of House Mandrakor and posed a significant threat to Imperial shipping through the Nachmund Gauntlet.

WAR ZONE ABILITIES

When playing a battle in this war zone, if both players wish, they can use the following additional rules during the battle.

HARSH TERRAIN

Much of Dharrovar's landmasses were made up of dense rock formations that made hasty movement extremely difficult. Troops moving quickly were often exposed to enemy fire from multiple directions and vantage points.

In your Movement phase, each time a unit is selected to make a Normal Move, Advance or Fall Back, until the start of your next Movement phase, that unit cannot receive the benefits of cover.

DUG-IN ZEALOTS

House Mandrakor and their slave armies were fighting to defend their home world. With no where to retreat to, they fought all the more fiercely to drive away Imperial troops and to win the favour of the Dark Gods.

- Each time a Morale test is taken for a **CHAOS ALLIANCE** unit from your army, you can ignore any or all modifiers to that unit's Leadership characteristic.
- You can re-roll Morale tests taken for **CHAOS ALLIANCE** units from your army.

FIERY DETERMINATION

The armies of the Imperium are determined to wipe out for the forces of the Arch-enemy on Dharrovar.

Each time an **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** unit from your army Advances, you do not have to make an Advance roll. Instead, until the end of the phase, add D3+3" to the Move characteristic of models in that unit.

THE SURFACE OF DHARROVAR WAR ZONE TRACKER

KEY TARGETS HELD

Strategic Victory points: Chaos +4
Special Rule: Chaos alliance gains Munition Supplies (see right)

FALLEN TO DARK

Strategic Victory points: Chaos +5

CHAOS DUG IN

Strategic Victory points: Chaos +2

CONTESTED

Strategic Victory points: None

IMPERIAL ADVANCE

Strategic Victory points: Imperial +2

SILOS RELIEVED

Strategic Victory points: Imperial +4
Special Rule: Imperial alliance gains Munition supplies (see right)

LIBERATION

Strategic Victory points: Imperial +5

Munition Supplies: If an alliance has Munition Supplies, each time a player from that alliance plays a battle in the Dharrovar Mandeville Point war zone, at the start of the first battle round, that player gains 1 Command point.

Legendary Mission: Seek the Light (pg 44)

MANDEVILLE POINT OF DHARROVAR

When Imperial forces assaulted Dharrovar, they left a sizeable contingent of ships around the system's Mandeville Point, knowing that they were vulnerable to a rear attack if this region was left unguarded.

WAR ZONE ABILITIES

When playing a battle in this war zone, if both players wish, they can use the following additional rules during the battle.

DEFENSIVE POSITIONS HELD

Imperial ships were placed around the Mandeville Point on high alert, ready for any Chaos ships which might pour through.

If you are not playing a Legendary Mission, the **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** player gets to decide which of the deployment zones they will use.

STRIKE OF THE WORLDCLAIMER

The Imperial forces could never be sure if, or when, a Chaos armada might pour through the Mandeville Point to assail their lines.

If you are not playing a Legendary Mission, after determining who has the first turn, the **CHAOS ALLIANCE** player can roll one D6: on a 5+, they can change who takes the first turn.

MANDEVILLE POINT OF DHARROVAR WAR ZONE TRACKER

THRALLBANDS OVERRUN
Strategic Victory points: Chaos +4

RELIEVE GROUND FORCES
Strategic Victory points: Chaos +1
Special Rule: Chaos alliance gains Orbital Dominance (see right)

DEVOUR FLEET
Strategic Victory points: Chaos +3

CONTESTED
Strategic Victory points: None

SUPPORT INVASION
Strategic Victory points: Imperial +1
Special Rule: Imperial alliance gains Orbital Dominance (see right)

SECURE MANDEVILLE POINT
Strategic Victory points: Imperial +3

MANDEVILLE POINT HELD
Strategic Victory points: Imperial +4

Orbital Dominance: If an alliance has Orbital Dominance, each time a player from that alliance plays a battle in the Dharrovar Surface war zone, at the start of the first battle round, they can select up to three units from their army. Remove those units from the battlefield. That player can then set them up anywhere on the battlefield that is wholly within their deployment zone.

Legendary Mission: Scorched Stars (pg 46)

THE GRAKILIOD NARROW

The Battle of the Grakiliod Narrow was the Imperium's last ditch effort to hold back the forces of Haarken Worldclaimer long enough for Indomitus Crusade reinforcements to reach the Sanctus Wall.

WAR ZONE ABILITY

When playing a battle in this war zone, if both players wish, they can use the following additional rule during the battle.

LED BY MIGHT

Both the forces of Chaos and the Imperium were led by mighty warriors, skilled generals and adept admirals.

In your Command phase, if your **WARLORD** is on the battlefield, roll one D6: on a 4+, you gain 1 Command point.

THE GRAKILIOD NARROW WAR ZONE TRACKER

SANCTUS FALLEN
Strategic Victory points: Chaos +6

AGGRESSIVE GAINS
Strategic Victory points: Chaos +2
Special Rule: Chaos alliance gains Fanatical Belief (see below)

SOLIDIFIED BREACH
Strategic Victory points: Chaos +4

CHAOS ADVANTAGE
Strategic Victory points: Chaos +1

CONTESTED
Strategic Victory points: None

IMPERIAL ADVANTAGE
Strategic Victory points: Imperial +1

INDOMITABLE DEFENCE
Strategic Victory points: Imperial +4

MARTYR'S VICTORY
Strategic Victory points: Imperial +2
Special Rule: Imperial alliance gains Fanatical Belief (see below)

CHAOS ABATED
Strategic Victory points: Imperial +6

Fanatical Belief: If an alliance has Fanatical Belief, each time a player from that alliance plays a battle in the Grakiliod Narrow war zone, that player can use the Insane Bravery Stratagem (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book) up to three times that battle, and each time that player uses that Stratagem, it costs 1 CP.

Legendary Mission: Last Stand (pg 48)



LEGENDARY MISSION – STRIKE FORCE

SEEK THE LIGHT

MISSION BRIEFING

During the fight on Dharrovar, Space Marines of the Castellans of the Rift had to fight their way clear of an underground cavern complex through countless enemies.

Designer's Note: *This mission takes place underground in an open cavern buried amidst a twisted network of caves and tunnels. As such we recommend using a mix of terrain consisting primarily of tall, line of sight blocking rock structures and pieces of Area Terrain that have the Difficult Ground terrain trait, to represent the uneven ground and unstable stone scree.*

MISSION RULES

FORCES

When playing this mission, the **CHAOS ALLIANCE** player should be the Defender and the **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** player should be the Attacker.

DESPERATE ESCAPE

The Attacker has the first turn.

CLOSE CONFINES

Neither army can contain any units with the Flyer Battlefield Role.

TRAPPED BELOW GROUND

- The Attacker cannot make use of any rules that allow them to remove a unit in their army from the battlefield, other than to embark that unit within a **TRANSPORT** model.
- The Attacker cannot place units in Strategic Reserves and cannot set up any units from their army in locations other than on the battlefield.

DESTINED CHAMPIONS

At the start of the first battle round, the Attacker selects five units from their army (if the Attacker has less than five units in their army, they select as many as possible) to be Destined Champion units.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

DEATH BELOW GROUND

Progressive Objective

The Defender scores 15 victory points for each of the following:

- Each time a Destined Champion unit is destroyed.
- If the enemy **WARLORD** is destroyed and not subsequently returned to the battlefield.

ESCAPED

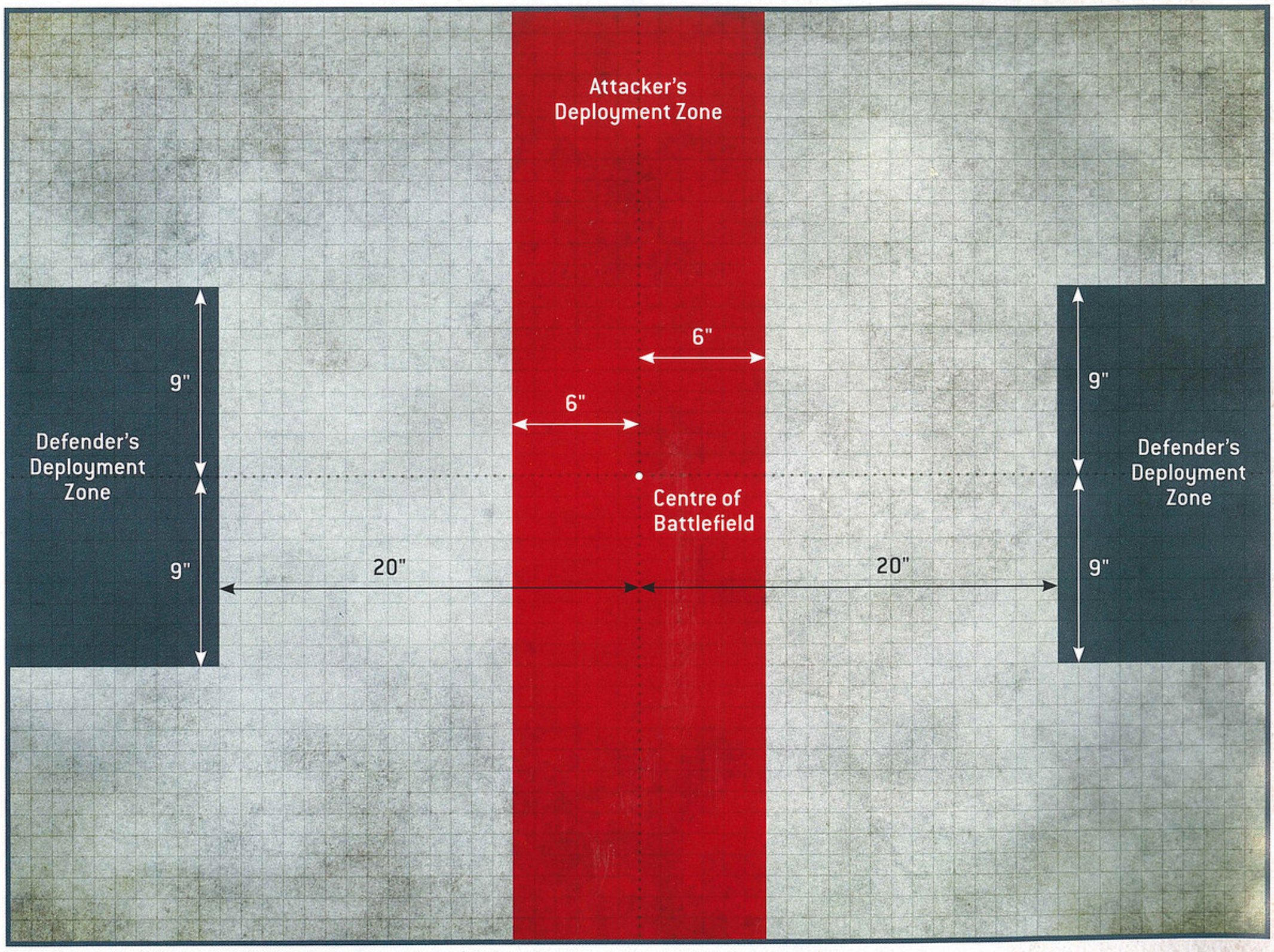
End Game Objective

At the end of the battle, the Attacker scores 20 victory points for each Destined Champion unit that is wholly within their opponent's deployment zone (to a maximum of 90 victory points).

VICTOR BONUS

If this battle was a Crusade battle:

- If the **CHAOS ALLIANCE** player is the victor, the unit from their army that destroyed the most Destined Champion units gains 3 experience points.
- If the **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** player is the victor, they gain 2 Requisition points after the battle, instead of 1.


Attacker's Battlefield Edge
Attacker's Deployment Zone
Defender's Battlefield Edge
9"
Defender's Deployment Zone
9"
6"
6"
Centre of Battlefield
20"
20"
9"
Defender's Deployment Zone
9"
Defender's Battlefield Edge
Attacker's Battlefield Edge



LEGENDARY MISSION – STRIKE FORCE
SCORCHED STARS

MISSION BRIEFING

A Chaos ship in possession of a great, tooth-lined maw has seized a mighty Imperial vessel, slowly consuming the warship. With little left to lose and a determination to ensure no other Imperial Navy ship suffers the same fate, the crew strive to detonate their munitions stores and warp drive to destroy their predatory foe.

Designer's Note: *This mission takes place deep within the bowels of an Imperial vessel. As such we recommend using a dense collection of industrial scenery when setting up the battlefield to represent the inner manufacturing and maintenance bays of this warship.*

MISSION RULES

FORCES

When playing this mission, the **CHAOS ALLIANCE** player should be the Attacker and the **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** player should be the Defender.

EVERY SHIP IS AN ISLAND

The Defender has the first turn.

CLOSE CONFINES

Neither army can contain any units with the Flyer Battlefield Role.

RIG TO BLOW

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

Rig To Blow (Action): One or more **INFANTRY** units from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase. Each unit from your army that starts to perform this action must be in range of a different objective marker that is not rigged to blow. A unit cannot start this action while there are any enemy units (excluding **AIRCRAFT** units) in range of the same objective marker. The action is completed at the end of your turn. If this action is successfully completed, that objective marker is said to be rigged to blow.

DEFUSE EXPLOSIVES

In the Attacker's Command phase, for each objective marker they control that is rigged to blow, roll one D6: on a 3+, that objective marker is no longer rigged to blow.

GRINDING DESTRUCTION

At the start of the battle round, for each unit on the battlefield, if that unit is within Sawing Range (see the table below) of any battlefield edges, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds. If that unit is also within Grinding Range of any battlefield edges, that unit suffers an additional D3 mortal wounds.

BATTLE ROUND	SAWING RANGE	GRINDING RANGE
1	3"	0"
2	6"	0"
3	9"	3"
4	12"	6"
5	15"	9"

MISSION OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

DETONATION

End Game Objective

At the end of the battle, each player scores the number of victory points shown in the table below:

NUMBER OF OBJECTIVE MARKERS RIGGED TO BLOW	DEFENDER'S VICTORY POINTS	ATTACKER'S VICTORY POINTS
0	0	90
1	20	70
2	40	50
3	70	20
4	90	0

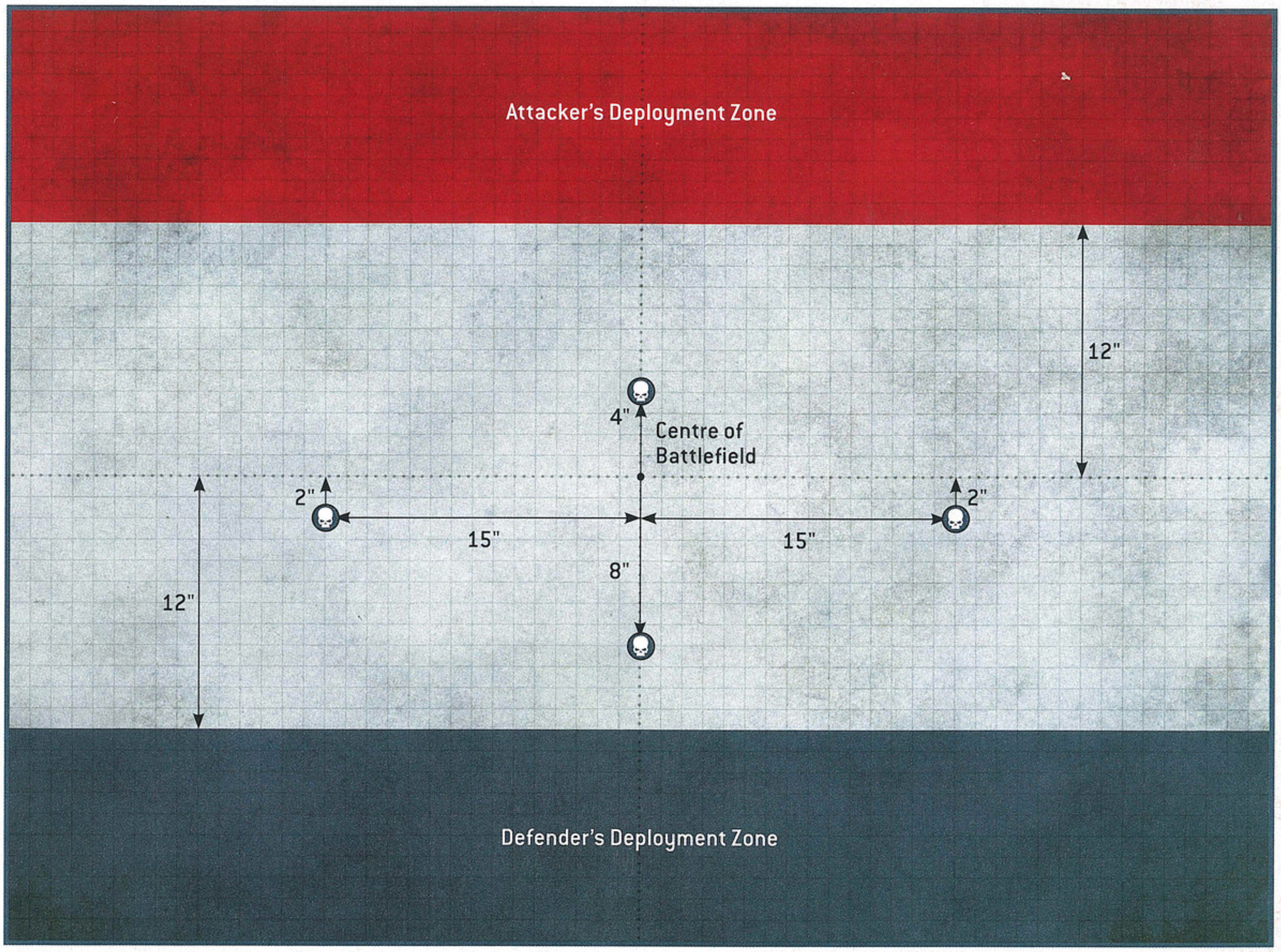
VICTOR BONUS

If this battle was a Crusade battle:

- If the **CHAOS ALLIANCE** player is the victor, they can use the Increase Supply Limit Requisition once for free (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book).
- If the **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** player is the victor, the unit from their army that rigged the most objective markers to blow gains 3 experience points.



Attacker's Battlefield Edge



Defender's Battlefield Edge

LEGENDARY MISSION – STRIKE FORCE

LAST STAND

MISSION BRIEFING

At the Grakiliod Narrow, Imperial forces made one last effort to stall the advance of Haarken Worldclaimer, determined to buy every second for the defences at the Sanctus Wall to be raised higher, and for desperately needed reinforcements to arrive.

MISSION RULES

FORCES

When playing this mission, the **CHAOS ALLIANCE** player should be the Attacker and the **IMPERIAL ALLIANCE** player should be the Defender.

COMMIT ALL FORCES, FIGHT TO THE LAST

It does not cost a player any Command points to place a unit from their army into Strategic Reserves. However, no more than half the total number of units from a player's army can be Strategic Reserve and/or Reinforcement units, and the combined points value of all their Strategic Reserves and Reinforcement units (including those embarked within **TRANSPORT** models that are Strategic Reserves and/or Reinforcement units) must be less than half of their army's total points value, even if every unit in their army has an ability that would allow them to be set up elsewhere.

ATTACK SWIFTLY! GIVE THEM NOTHING!

Each time a Strategic Reserves unit is set up on the battlefield, in addition to the usual rules for setting that unit, it can also be set up anywhere on the battlefield wholly within 6" of an objective marker controlled by that unit's player. This cannot allow a unit to be set up within Engagement Range of any enemy models.

RIGHTEOUS INSPIRATION

Each time a unit is destroyed as the result of an attack, the attacker's unit becomes Righteously Inspired until the end of the battle. While a unit is Righteously Inspired, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, on an unmodified wound roll of 6 improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.

MISSION OBJECTIVES

Victory points are awarded as follows:

DENY THE ENEMY

Progressive Objective

At the end of each player'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.
- They control more objective markers than their opponent controls.

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

HIGH STAKES

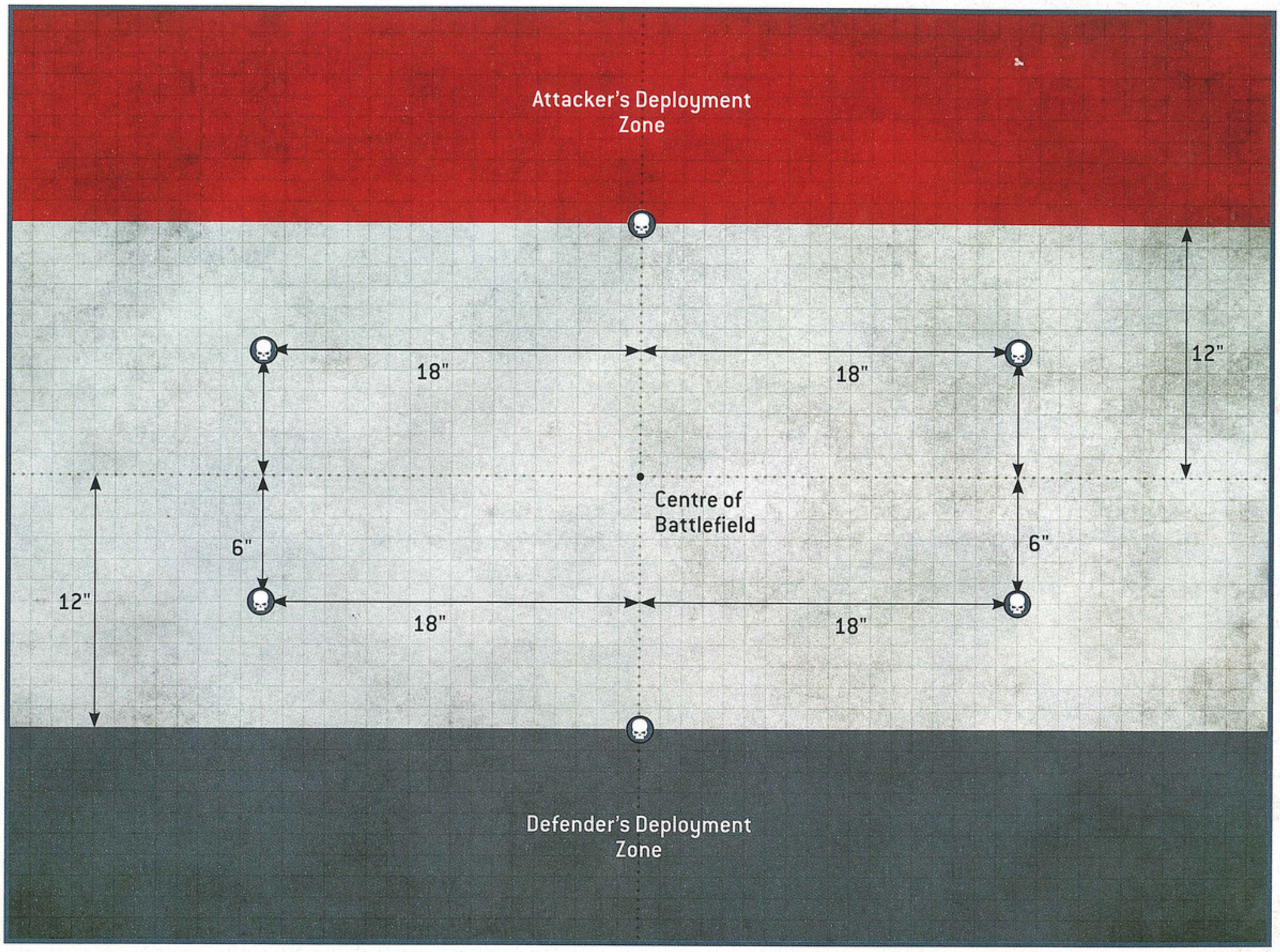
End Game Objective

At the end of the battle, each player scores 5 victory points for each objective marker they control.

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



Defender's Battlefield Edge

CAMPAIGN MASTER'S EDICTS

Campaign Master's Edicts are tools the Campaign Master has at their disposal to add further depth to a campaign. The Campaign Master should use these at their discretion, if it is appropriate for their gaming group and the circumstances the campaign is built upon. To use them, the Campaign Master simply declares to the players which of these edicts will be active, where they will apply and for how long – be it the rest of that phase, or longer. Once active, the selected edicts apply to all games played in that war zone for that duration.

INSPIRING COMMAND

Across battle zone after battle zone in the Nachmund Gauntlet, disparate forces waged bloody campaigns. Among these, leaders emerged, urging their warriors on to victory.

At the start of the first battle round, each player can select one **CHARACTER** model from their army that does not have a Warlord Trait and then select one Warlord Trait that model can have. Until the end of the battle, that model gains that Warlord Trait. That model is only regarded as your **WARLORD** for the purposes of that Warlord Trait. Each Warlord Trait in your army must be unique (if randomly generated, re-roll duplicate results).

FULL-SCALE BOMBARDMENT

With such large forces at work, heavy fire support is plentiful, whether from emplaced artillery behind the lines or even orbital assets. These are not limitless, however, and command over their application is assigned to more senior officers within a force, and with a direct view of the battle at hand.

Each army can perform a number of bombardment attacks during the battle, based on the total combined Power Rating of the units with the HQ Battlefield Role and **SUPREME COMMANDER** keyword within your army. Add up the total combined Power Ratings of the units with the HQ Battlefield Role and the **SUPREME COMMANDER** keyword from your army that are on the battlefield, or embarked within **TRANSPORT** models that are on the battlefield at the start of the first battle round, then consult the table below to determine how many bombardment attacks you can make during the battle.

FULL-SCALE BOMBARDMENT

COMBINED POWER RATING OF UNITS ON THE BATTLEFIELD WITH THE HQ BATTLEFIELD ROLE AND SUPREME COMMANDER KEYWORD	FULL-SCALE BOMBARDMENT ATTACKS
1-10	0
11-20	1
21-30	2
31+	3
etc.	etc.

Each turn, in their Command phase, a player can resolve one bombardment attack. Once a player has resolved all of their bombardment attacks, they cannot resolve any more for the rest of that battle.

To resolve a bombardment attack, that player selects a point on the battlefield that is visible to a unit with the HQ Battlefield Role and **SUPREME COMMANDER** keyword from their army, or a **TRANSPORT** model that has one of these units embarked upon it, and places a marker on that point. The players then roll off, with the player resolving the attack adding 1 to their roll. The winner can move the marker a number of inches equal to the difference between the rolls. If the roll is tied, the marker does not move. Once the final position of that marker is determined, roll one D6 for each unit that is within 3" of the centre of that marker, subtracting 1 if that unit is an **INFANTRY CHARACTER** unit. On a 5+, that unit suffers D3 mortal wounds.



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 Desperation campaign. These Relics are retained by that unit after the campaign ends.

THE LIGHT OF SISTER JEMRETA

When the correct prayers are made, this card, the only one still in existence of the Emperor's Tarot deck once used by the martyr, Sister Jemreta, glows with a bright, holy light. None know how this occurs, only that surely Sister Jemreta was truly a blessed daughter of the Emperor, a woman of such holiness that even the most loyal citizens could aspire to.

IMPERIAL ALLIANCE model only. Once per battle, in your Command phase, the bearer can use this Relic. If it does, until the start of your next Command phase, it gains the following ability:

The Light of Sister Jemreta (Aura): While an enemy unit is within 9" of this model, each time an attack is made against that enemy unit, it does not receive the benefits of cover against that attack.

VIAL OF BLESSED TEARS

This vial contains miraculous tears that fell from the eyes of the statue of Saint Bethin the Blind during a time of great doubt among the people of the statue's world. In the same way those citizens repented their sins, so now are the carriers of this vial filled with hope and conviction, fighting more surely than ever.

IMPERIAL ALLIANCE model only. In your Command phase, select one friendly unit within 6" of the bearer. Until the start of your next Command phase, each time that unit is selected to shoot or fight, you can re-roll one hit roll, you can re-roll one wound roll and you can re-roll one damage roll when resolving that unit's attacks.

ASHES OF SAINT SVETANUS GOLDENHELM

Though killed saving the lives of hundreds of comrades after the emergence of the Great Rift, already this hero's name is shrouded in legend. Those holding his ashes seem to be shielded from the power of the Arch-enemy. Indeed, such is the radiance emitting from the urn that it actively harms the enemy.

IMPERIAL ALLIANCE model only. Once per turn, when a friendly unit within 6" of the bearer passes a Morale test, the bearer can use this Relic. If it does so, the closest enemy unit to the unit that passed the Morale test, if it is within 9" of that unit, suffers 2D3 mortal wounds.

PENDANT OF RORKRAS THE DAMNED

Rorkras was once a loyal captain of the Imperial Navy. When his ship veered too near to a wave of warp energy emanating from the Great Rift, he begged any being who would listen to save him. A daemon answered his pleas. Now, it wants the favour returned…

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

Pendant of Rorkras the Damned (Aura): While an enemy unit is within 6" of the bearer:

- Subtract 2 from the Leadership characteristic of models in that enemy unit.
- Each time that enemy unit fails a Morale test, the bearer regains 1 lost wound (to a maximum of 3 regained wounds per phase).

THE WARP-BLESSED REMNANT

This fragment is all that remains of a suit of power armour that spent millennia drifting among warp tides, its original owner long since killed in some horrific incident in the immaterium. It has absorbed so much empyric power that it offers incredible protection to whoever holds it.

CHAOS ALLIANCE model only.

- The bearer has a 4+ invulnerable save.
- Each time the bearer would lose a wound as the result of a mortal wound, roll one D6: on a 4+, that wound is not lost.
- Each time the bearer suffers Perils of the Warp, subtract 1 from the number of mortal wounds suffered (to a minimum of 1).

TWILIGHT ORB OF KHARAXIIS

The origins of this bizarre device are unknown to even the most learned of scholars of the immaterium and the daemon. Perfectly smooth, the sphere appears to be hollow, containing an ever-roiling swirls of energy in countless shades of grey. Empyric power radiates from it, blurring the bearer's form to such an extent that they appear to be little more than a mirage to even those standing right next to them.

CHAOS ALLIANCE model only. Once per battle, in your Command phase, the bearer can use this Relic. If it does, until the start of your next Command phase:

- Each time an attack is made against the bearer, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll and subtract 1 from that attack's wound roll.
- Each time an attack is allocated to the bearer, subtract 1 from the Damage characteristic of that attack (to a minimum of 1).

RULES

'Between us, Task Forces III and XII have hundreds of warships and tens of millions of fighting troops. Our forces are battle-hardened, strong in faith and know just how important victory is. I have never led such a mighty, courageous and convicted force. And yet now, knowing what races towards us, what uncountable strength our enemy has, I feel doubt. Can we even hold our ground against such a force, let alone throw it back into the dark?'

– Lord Castellan Alibet Ayaneva, Commander of Task Force II, Battle Group Lambdax, Indomitus Crusade Fleet Secundus



INTRODUCTION

Over the following pages you will find a host of new rules for armies from Space Marines to Thousand Sons and Drukhari, as well as a series of new rules for use in Crusade games.

CODEX SUPPLEMENT: CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT (PG 58-61)

The Castellans of the Rift are a Chapter of Adeptus Astartes containing only Primaris Space Marines. Founded by Roboute Guilliman during the Ultima Founding, they formed the spearhead of the Indomitus Crusade. The rules in this section supplement those found in *Codex: Space Marines* with a collection of army and Battle-forged rules, such as Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems, for Adeptus Astartes warriors that are drawn from the Castellans of the Rift Chapter.

WARDEN RAIDERS (PG 62-64)

Trapped behind enemy lines, bands of Adeptus Astartes form rapid strike teams, launching lightning raids on the Chaos forces that have swarmed the Gauntlet. This section contains rules for creating such an assault group in your Crusade games and provides unique Battle Traits that can be learned by experienced raiders.

ARMY OF RENOWN: WARPMELD PACT (PG 68-70)

Warpmeld Pacts are an Army of Renown for the Thousand Sons that specialise in mutagenic powers, their ranks filled with foul Tzaangor and twisted Chaos Spawn. The rules in this section provide new Stratagems, a Warlord Trait, Cabbalistic Ritual and Relic to represent the unique make up of this army on the battlefield.

ARCANE RITUALS (PG 72-75)

As the Thousand Sons grow their hoards of sacred tomes and magick-imbued artefacts, they come across many powerful pieces of arkana that can be used to perform ancient, arcane rituals. These new Crusade rules supplement the Crusade rules found in *Codex: Thousand Sons* and allow you to carry out rituals, currying favour with Tzeentch and earning new, powerful abilities.

ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED CRUSADE RULES (PG 76-81)

All across the Gauntlet, the Chaos warbands brought together by Haarken Worldclaimer ravage the planetary systems. Unified by their mutual hatred of the Imperium, these diverse groups of Chaos worshippers fight alongside one another in servitude to their dark deities. This section contains rules for creating an Army of Chaos Undivided Crusade army. 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.

ARMY OF RENOWN: COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI (PG 84-87)

The Haemonculus Covens contain some of the cruellest and most depraved elements of Drukhari society. The rules in this section provide new Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems to represent the unique capabilities of an army solely comprising the members of these malicious groups.





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.



Black Templars Neophyte



Black Templars Initiate



Black Templars Marshal



Castellans of the Rift Intercessor



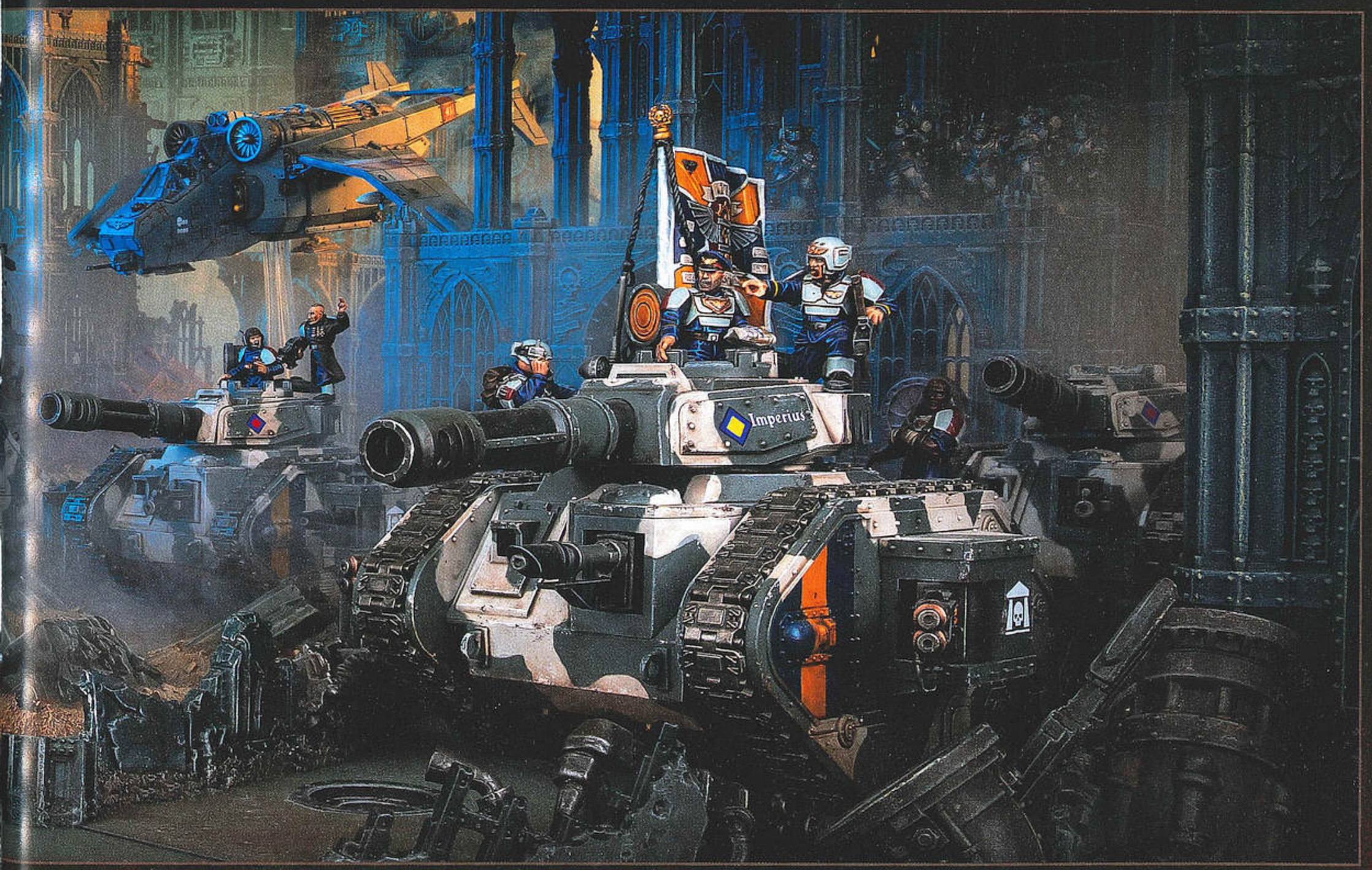
Salamanders Veteran Sergeant

In the Nachmund Gauntlet, forces of the Alpha Legion and Chaos Knights ambush an Astra Militarum tank company as it advances through the battle-scorched ruins of an Imperial city.



Salamanders Space Marines of the Wardens of the Gauntlet battle forces of the Black Legion in the process of conducting a heinous ritual on an Imperial factory world.





CODEX SUPPLEMENT: CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT

Over the following pages you will find Warlord Traits, Relics and Stratagems for Adeptus Astartes units that are from the Castellans of the Rift Chapter.

Codex: Space Marines describes how Adeptus Astartes units belong to a Chapter, and how you can use the **<CHAPTER>** keyword to specify which Chapter such a unit is from. This section presents the rules for fielding an army formed from the Castellans of the Rift Chapter, an Ultramarines successor Chapter. If your army is Battle-forged and includes any **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** units, the rules in this section can be used in addition to those presented in *Codex Supplement: Ultramarines*.

ADEPTUS ASTARTES units can only be drawn from the **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** Chapter if they have at least one of the following keywords: **GLADIATOR; IMPULSOR; PRIMARIS; INVICTOR TACTICAL WARSUIT; REDEMPTOR DREADNOUGHT; REPULSOR; REPULSOR EXECUTIONER; STORM SPEEDER.**

Some rules in this section refer to a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** Detachment. This is one that only includes units with the **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** keyword (excluding **AGENT OF THE IMPERIUM** and **UNALIGNED** units).

CHAPTER TACTIC

The Chapter Tactic gained by **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** units is the following:

UNYIELDING RESISTANCE

The Castellans of the Rift are dedicated to the task given to them by Roboute Guilliman to hold the Nachmund Gauntlet. They are as stalwart when defending as they are furious in the assault.

- Each time a model with this tactic makes a melee attack, if that model's unit made a charge move this turn, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.
- Each time an attack is made against a unit with this tactic, an unmodified wound roll of 1 or 2 always fails, irrespective of any abilities that the weapon or the attacker may have.

WARLORD TRAITS

If a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT CHARACTER** model is your **WARLORD**, you can use the Castellans of the Rift 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. HIT-AND-RUN MASTER

Even when pulling back, this warlord ensures that the enemy pay in blood for every inch of ground they take.

In your Command phase, select one friendly **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** unit within 9" of this **WARLORD**. Until the end of the turn, that unit is eligible to shoot in a turn in which it Fell Back.

2. EXEMPLAR OF THE CHAPTER

This warlord embodies each of the Chapter's ideals; they are a furious fighter in the attack, and nigh impossible to bring down when defending.

- Add 1 to the Attacks characteristic of this **WARLORD**.
- Each time an attack is made against this **WARLORD**, an unmodified wound roll of 1-3 always fails, irrespective of any abilities that the weapon or the attacker may have.

3. TIP OF THE SWORD

This warlord never hesitates in taking the fight directly to the enemy, inspiring warriors around them to do the same.

At the end of your Movement phase, select one enemy unit within 12" of and visible to this **WARLORD**. Until the end of the turn:

- Each time a friendly **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT CORE** unit declares a charge, if that enemy unit is one of the targets of that charge, you can re-roll the charge roll.
- Each time a friendly **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT CORE** model makes a melee attack against that enemy unit, add 1 to the Strength characteristic of that attack.

RELICS

If your army is led by a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give one of the following Relics to a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT 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.

MURUK'S WRATH

This heavy bolt rifle was wielded by Captain Artung Muruk, the first Castellan of the Rift killed during the Chapter's first battle after it was given its name and colours. The fallen Captain slew a dozen Heretic Astartes with this weapon during that engagement, and it has since been embellished by the Chapter's Techmarines.

CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT model equipped with a heavy bolt rifle only. This Relic replaces a heavy bolt rifle and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Muruk's Wrath	36"	Rapid Fire 2	6	-4	1

PRIMARCH'S CODEX

This copy of the Codex Astartes was gifted to the Chapter by Roboute Guilliman himself.

CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT PRIEST model only.

- Each time the bearer rolls to see if a litany is inspiring, you can re-roll the result.
- Each time the bearer recites a litany, add 3" to the range of that litany (to a maximum of 12").

GAUNTLET OF THE IMPERIUM

None know the name of the Greyshield who used this boltstorm gauntlet to kill the World Eaters warlord Laarsakh the Reaper. All that remained of him after that battle was the weapon itself, and all of his squad were wiped out. It has since become a symbol of the Chapter's defiance, as well as its honoured dead.

CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT model equipped with a boltstorm gauntlet only. This Relic replaces a boltstorm gauntlet and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Gauntlet of the Imperium	12"	Pistol 3	5	-2	1
Gauntlet of the Imperium	Melee	Melee	x2	-3	3

ARMOUR OF PHOURION

This suit of Tacticus armour was modified by the Chapter's Techmarines specifically for the first captain of the Chapter's 8th Company, Argis Phourion. The skilled warrior and bladesman desired even greater speed and flexibility in his armour.

CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT model only.

- At the start of the Fight phase, if the bearer is within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can fight first that phase.
- The bearer is eligible to perform a Heroic Intervention if it is within 6" horizontally and 5" vertically of any enemy units, instead of 3" horizontally and 5" vertically. Each time the bearer makes a Heroic Intervention move, it can move up to 6". All other rules for Heroic Interventions still apply.



'We are Castellans of the Rift. Our task is to hold the line, hold the Gauntlet. This has been given to us by the Primarch himself, Roboute Guilliman. No matter the numbers arrayed against, no matter the horrors, no matter the abominations, we shall not falter. We are the creation of a Primarch of the Emperor, our foes cowards and weaklings all. Guard the gate! Hunt the hell spawn!'

- Chapter Master Ba'stien Grix, addressing his warriors before the assault on Dharrovar

STRATAGEMS

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

UNFAILING NERVE 1CP

Castellans of the Rift – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The Castellans hold firm in the face of charging foes, waiting until they can see the white of their eyes before opening fire.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT CORE** unit from your army is selected to shoot. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack with a bolt weapon (see *Codex: Space Marines*) that targets a unit within half range, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.

LET THEM COME 1CP

Castellans of the Rift – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Castellans of the Rift drill and train relentlessly, and have honed their reflexes to almost preternatural levels.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT CORE** unit from your army is selected to fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, if that unit was charged this turn, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.

UNBROKEN AND UNBOWED 2CP/3CP

Castellans of the Rift – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Even when under extremely heavy fire, the Castellans of the Rift hold their ground.

Use this Stratagem in your opponent's Shooting phase, when a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT CORE INFANTRY** unit from your army is selected as the target of an attack. While that unit is within range of an objective marker, each time a model in that unit would lose a wound, roll one D6: on a 5+, that wound is not lost.

If that unit has 5 or fewer models, this Stratagem costs 2CP; otherwise, it costs 3CP.

PUSH THEM BACK 1CP

Castellans of the Rift – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Refusing to give their secured ground easily, Castellans of the Rift defend Imperial territory with all their might.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase, when a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** unit from your army is selected to shoot. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack that targets a unit within your deployment zone, you can re-roll the hit roll.

REGROUP AND STRIKE 1CP

Castellans of the Rift – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The Castellans regroup to launch a new strike at the enemy, retaining the initiative and keeping the foe on their toes.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase or in the Fight phase, when you select a **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** unit from your army to shoot or fight. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack:

- If that unit is below its Starting Strength, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.
- If that unit is below Half-strength, you can re-roll the wound roll.

THIS IS OUR GROUND! 2CP

Castellans of the Rift – Epic Deed Stratagem

When fighting to secure key ground, the Castellans of the Rift tap into their last reserves of strength to ensure victory.

Use this Stratagem at the end of your Charge phase. Select one **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** unit from your army within range of one objective marker. Until the start of your next Charge phase, that unit gains the Objective Secured ability (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book). If a model in that unit already has this ability, it counts as one additional model when determining control of an objective marker. You can only use this Stratagem once.

TAKE THE FIGHT TO THEM — 2CP

Castellans of the Rift – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Once the Castellans of the Rift set their minds upon a goal, only the most resolute of foes can stop them.

Use this Stratagem in your opponent's Charge phase. Select one **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** unit from your army. Until the end of the phase:

- That unit is eligible to perform Heroic Interventions as if it were a **CHARACTER**.
- That unit is eligible to perform a Heroic Intervention if it is within 6" horizontally and 5" vertically of an enemy unit.
- Each time that unit makes a Heroic Intervention move, its models can move up to 6" instead of 3". All other rules for Heroic Interventions still apply.

DEFENCE IN DEPTH — 2CP

Castellans of the Rift – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The Castellans of the Rift set up forward positions, creating a defensive line as part of their tactics to halt the enemy advance.

Use this Stratagem at the start of the first battle round , before the first turn begins. Select up to three different **CASTELLANS OF THE RIFT** units from your army. Each of those units can make a Normal Move. They cannot end this move within 9" of any enemy models or within 9" of your opponent's deployment zone. If both players have units that can do this, the player who is taking the first turn moves their units first. You can only use this Stratagem once.



WARDEN RAIDERS

Haarken Worldclaimer's rapid advance along the Nachmund Gauntlet saw many Space Marine strike forces, from numerous Chapters of the Wardens of the Gauntlet and others, scattered in the wake of the heretic hordes. Unable to reach the Sanctus Wall, they fought a guerrilla campaign to slow Haarken Worldclaimer down.

In this section you will find a collection of rules that allow the **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** units in your Crusade force to launch daring raids on Chaos forces from behind enemy lines. By participating in these raids, the Space Marine models in your army will become experts in lightning strikes and guerrilla warfare, and will gain access to a unique set of Battle Traits that they can work towards.

When mustering your army from your Order of Battle, you can choose for it to be a Warden Raiders Force. A Warden Raiders Force has the following rules:

- It can only contain **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** units.
- It cannot contain units with the Lord of War Battlefield Role.
- It cannot contain **VEHICLE** models with a Move characteristic of less than 10".
- Every **INFANTRY** unit must start the battle either embarked within a **TRANSPORT** model, or be set up using the Death From Above, Concealed Positions, or Teleport Strike rules (see *Codex: Space Marines*).
- It cannot include any Spearhead Detachments (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book).

RAID POINTS

At the end of the battle, instead of gaining 1 experience point from the Battle Experience rule (see the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book), units in a Warden Raiders Force gain 1 Raid point. If a unit does not have a Raid points tally, start one for it on its Crusade Card.

Raid points function in a similar manner to experience points. If a unit has accrued enough Raid points, it will gain a promotion and go up a Raider rank (from Raider to Hardened Guerrilla to Reaver). Each time a unit gains a Raider rank, it will gain one Raider Force Battle Trait (pg 64); make a note of the unit's new Raider rank and its Raider Force Battle Trait on its Crusade card.

RAID POINTS	RAIDER RANK	RAIDER FORCE BATTLE TRAITS
0-5	Raider	0
6-10	Hardened Guerrilla	1
11+	Reaver	2

Additional Raid points can be earned for units by selecting Agendas from those found on page 63.



RAIDER FORCE AGENDAS

If your Crusade army is a Warden Raider Force, you can select one Agenda from the Raider Force 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 from each category).

GUERRILLA STRIKE

Raider Force Agenda

Space Marine Chapters recognised that their numbers were too few to defeat the forces of Chaos in the Nachmund Gauntlet. They resorted to guerrilla tactics, determined to cause as much damage as possible.

Keep a Guerrilla Strike tally for each unit from your army.

- During the first battle round, each time an enemy unit is destroyed by a model from your army, add 1 to the Guerrilla Strike tally of that model's unit.
- From the second battle round onwards, each time an enemy unit is destroyed by a model from your army, if that model's unit was set up on the battlefield for the first time during its previous Movement phase, add 1 to the Guerrilla Strike tally of that model's unit.

Each unit from your army gains a number of Raid points equal to its Guerrilla Strike tally.

CRITICAL TARGETS

Raider Force Agenda

Warden Raiders made a point of striking rapidly to kill enemy commanders and elite troops before withdrawing.

If you selected this Agenda, then after both sides have finished deploying, your opponent selects three units from their army (if your opponent has less than three units in their army, they select as many as possible). Each time one of those units is destroyed by a model from your army, that model's unit gains 2 Raid points.

SABOTAGE SUPPLY LINES

Raider Force Agenda

Cutting enemy supply lines was a vital task for the Space Marines caught behind Worldclaimer's armies. Without resources, the forces of Chaos could be slowed down.

Keep a Sabotage Supply Lines tally for each unit from your army. Add 1 to a unit's Sabotage Supply Lines tally each time it successfully completes the Sabotage Supply Lines action (see below). If you selected this Agenda, then **INFANTRY** and **BIKER** units in your army can attempt the following action:

Sabotage Supply Lines (Action): One or more **INFANTRY** or **BIKER** units from your army can start to perform this action at the start of your Movement phase. Each unit from your army that starts to perform this action must be in range of a different objective marker that has not been sabotaged by your army (see below). The action is completed at the end of your turn. If this action is successfully completed, the objective marker is said to have been sabotaged by your army.

Each unit gains a number of Raid points equal to its Sabotage Supply Lines tally.

MECHANISED ASSAULT

Raider Force Agenda

Warden Raiders were as adept at lightning assaults with battle-tanks and light vehicles as they were on foot.

Keep a Mechanised Assault tally for each Strategic Reserve **VEHICLE** unit from your army.

Add 1 to a unit's Mechanised Assault tally each time:

- A model in that **VEHICLE** unit destroys an enemy unit.
- A model that started the battle embarked within that **VEHICLE** unit destroys an enemy unit.

At the end of the battle, each unit with a Mechanised Assault tally that is not destroyed gains the number of Raid points shown in the table below:

MECHANISED ASSAULT TALLY	RAID POINTS EARNED
0	0
1-2	1
3+	2

We are few. That much is true. Can we halt the tide of heretics in its entirety? No. But we are Adeptus Astartes, bred for war. We will make them bleed and bleed until every one of us is slain or victory is won.

RAIDER FORCE BATTLE TRAITS

When an **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** unit gains a Raider Force Battle Trait, you can use one of the tables below instead of one of the tables in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book to determine what Battle Trait the unit has gained. To do so, roll one D3 and consult the appropriate table, or choose a Battle Trait from the appropriate table that tells the best narrative for your unit. All the normal rules for Battle Traits apply (e.g. a unit cannot have the same Battle Trait more than once). As with any Battle Honour, make a note on the unit's Crusade card when it gains a Battle Trait and increase its Crusade points accordingly, as described in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

RAID BIKER UNITS BATTLE TRAITS

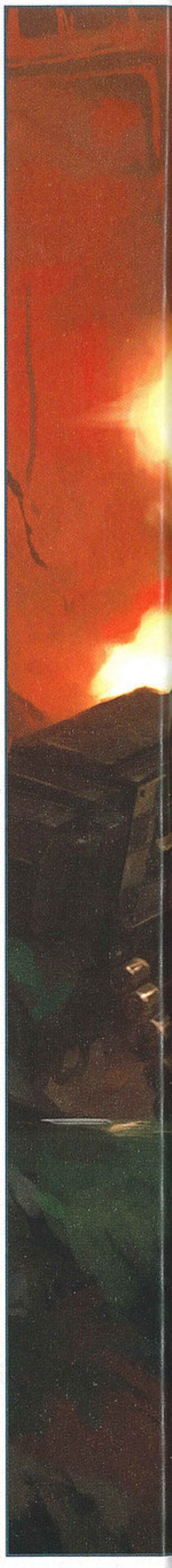
D3	TRAIT
1	**Vicious Fighters** *Capitalising on every advantage, these raiders have become experts at hitting the enemy hard and fast.* Each time this unit fights, if it made a charge move, was charged, or performed a Heroic Intervention this turn, you can re-roll one hit roll and you can re-roll one wound roll when resolving this unit's attacks.
2	**Deepened Hatred** *With every battle against the forces of Chaos, the raiders' hatred only grows.* Each time a model in this unit makes a melee attack against a **HERETIC ASTARTES** unit, you can re-roll the hit roll.
3	**Skilled Flankers** *These raiders have mastered the art of the decisive flanking manoeuvre.* Each time you set up this unit from Strategic Reserves, you count the battle round number as one higher than the current battle round number for the purpose of determining where this unit can be set up, regardless of any mission rules.

RAID INFANTRY UNITS BATTLE TRAITS

D3	TRAIT
1	**Swift Attackers** *Momentum is everything in a raid, these warriors have learned to maximise it.* You can re-roll Advance rolls made for this unit.
2	**Rapid Disembarkation** *These raiders can disembark from a transport vehicle incredibly quickly and efficiently.* The first time this unit disembarks from a **TRANSPORT** model during a battle, until the end of the turn, you can re-roll charge rolls made for this unit.
3	**Drilled Shooters** *Even when disembarking from their vehicles, these raiders are able to lay down an accurate barrage of fire.* The first time this unit disembarks from a **TRANSPORT** model during a battle, until the end of the turn, each time a model in this unit makes a ranged attack, re-roll a hit roll of 1.

RAID VEHICLE UNITS BATTLE TRAITS

D3	TRAIT
1	**Thundering Chargers** *The drivers of these vehicles are especially eager to get into the fray and destroy the enemy.* At the start of the first battle round, models in this unit can make a Normal Move of up to 9". They cannot end this move within 9" of any enemy models or within 9" of your opponent's deployment zone.
2	**Dead-eyes** *Gunners of this vehicle can unleash a hail of accurate fire even if their mount is moving at high speeds.* Each time this unit is selected to shoot, models in this unit can treat Rapid Fire and Heavy weapons that they are equipped with as if they are Assault weapons instead.
3	**Flank Roller** *This vehicle always arrives in the nick of time to roll up a foe's flank and turn the tide of battle.* Each time you set up this unit from Strategic Reserves, you count the battle round number as one higher than the current battle round number for the purpose of determining where this unit can be set up, regardless of any mission rules.



My blade is blunted and broken. My last bolt has been fired. My armour is cut and worn and pierced. I bleed from a dozen wounds. But still, I fight on against the Arch-enemy, for breath remains in me yet.

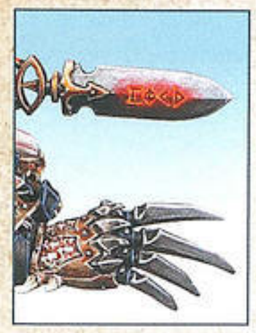


With heavy covering fire from their ancient Land Raider, Terminators of the Iron Warriors Traitor Legion of the Heretic Astartes storm positions held by the Black Templars Space Marines.



Imperial troops fighting in the Nachmund Gauntlet engaged the full gamut of warriors and weapons in the worshippers of Chaos' arsenals. Daemon Engines and Chaos Knights by the hundreds crushed all who opposed them, joined by thousands of Heretic Astartes.



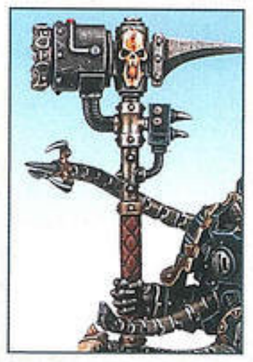






Haarken Worldclaimer







Black Legion Warpsmith



ARMY OF RENOWN

WARPMELD PACT

Some Thousand Sons warbands see realspace itself as an affront to the power of the warp, or as an imperfect reflection of the immaterium.

These forces, sometimes known as Warpmeld Pacts, specialise in mutagenic powers. They unleash them upon their foes, turning them into Chaos Spawn, Tzaangor or worse. Many Tzaangor join them, delighting in the use of such reality-twisting magicks.

The Warpmeld Pact is an Army of Renown (pg 68).



RESTRICTIONS

- Your army cannot include any named characters.
- All units in your army must have the **THOUSAND SONS** keyword.
- Your army cannot include any **VEHICLE**, **DAEMON** or **THOUSAND SONS CULTIST** units.
- Your army cannot include any units that know any psychic powers from the Discipline of Vengeance.
- Detachments in your army do not gain the Mere Servants ability (see *Codex: Thousand Sons*).
- Your army must include more **BRAY** units than the total number of **RUBRIC MARINES** and **SCARAB OCCULT TERMINATORS** units in each Detachment.

BENEFITS

- All units in your army gain the **WARPMELD PACT** keyword.
- You have access to the Warpmeld Pact Warlord Trait, Relic, Stratagems and Cabbalistic Ritual (see *Codex: Thousand Sons*).
- Units in your army do not gain the Brotherhood of Sorcerers ability (see *Codex: Thousand Sons*).
- **EXALTED SORCERER**, **INFERNAL MASTER**, **SORCERER**, **TZAANGOR** and **CHAOS SPAWN** units in your army gain the Touched by Tzeentch ability (see below).
- **TZAANGOR** units (excluding **CHARACTER** units) in your army gain the **CORE** keyword.
- **TZAANGOR SHAMAN** units in your army gain the Strength of the Brayherd ability (see below).

TOUCHED BY TZEENTCH

Blessed Tzaangor and Chaos Spawn seem to blink in and out of existence in multiple locations. This makes it hard to strike and injure them, and somehow they advance at formidable speeds, almost teleporting across the battlefield.

- Models in this unit have a 5+ invulnerable save.
- Each time a model in this unit would lose a wound as the result of a mortal wound, roll one D6: on a 5+, that wound is not lost.
- At the start of the first battle round, before the first turn begins, models in this unit can make a Normal Move of up to 6". They cannot end this move within 9" of any enemy models. If both players have units that can do this, the player who is taking the first turn moves their units first.

STRENGTH OF THE BRAYHERD

If near other Tzaangor, the Shaman channels the raw magicks flowing through them to augment its powers.

At the start of your Psychic phase, if this unit is within 6" of friendly **WARPMELD PACT TZAANGOR** units whose combined model count is 15 or more, this unit generates 1 additional Cabal point.

WARLORD TRAIT

If a **WARPMELD PACT CHARACTER** model is your **WARLORD**, they can have the Warlord Trait below instead of one from another source.

MANIPULATOR OF REALITY

Some Thousand Sons sorcerers have learned that sometimes, the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line. This knowledge is a great boon when deploying their troops for battle.

At the start of the first battle round, after any units from your army have performed any Normal Moves as a result of the Touched by Tzeentch ability (pg 68), you can select up to three friendly **TZAANGOR** units. Remove those units from the battlefield, then set them up anywhere on the battlefield that is wholly within your deployment zone. If the mission you are playing uses the Strategic Reserves rules, you can place any of those units into Strategic Reserves instead, without having to spend any additional CPs, regardless of how many units are already in Strategic Reserves.

RELIC

If your army is led by a **WARPMELD PACT WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give the following Sorcerous Arcana Relic to a **WARPMELD PACT CHARACTER** model from your army instead of giving them another Relic. Named characters cannot be given the following Relic.

DIAMOND OF DISTORTION

This precious gem is infused with a strange energy that distorts reality around the bearer, making them all but impossible to strike.

TZAANGOR SHAMAN model only. In your Command phase, select one friendly **WARPMELD PACT TZAANGOR** or **WARPMELD PACT CHAOS SPAWN** unit within 9" of the bearer. Until the start of your next Command phase, models in that unit have a 4+ Invulnerable save.

CABBALISTIC RITUAL

If your army is the Warpmeld Pact, you have access to the Cabbalistic Ritual below in addition to those found in *Codex: Thousand Sons*. All the usual rules for using Cabbalistic Rituals listed in *Codex: Thousand Sons* also apply to the one found here.

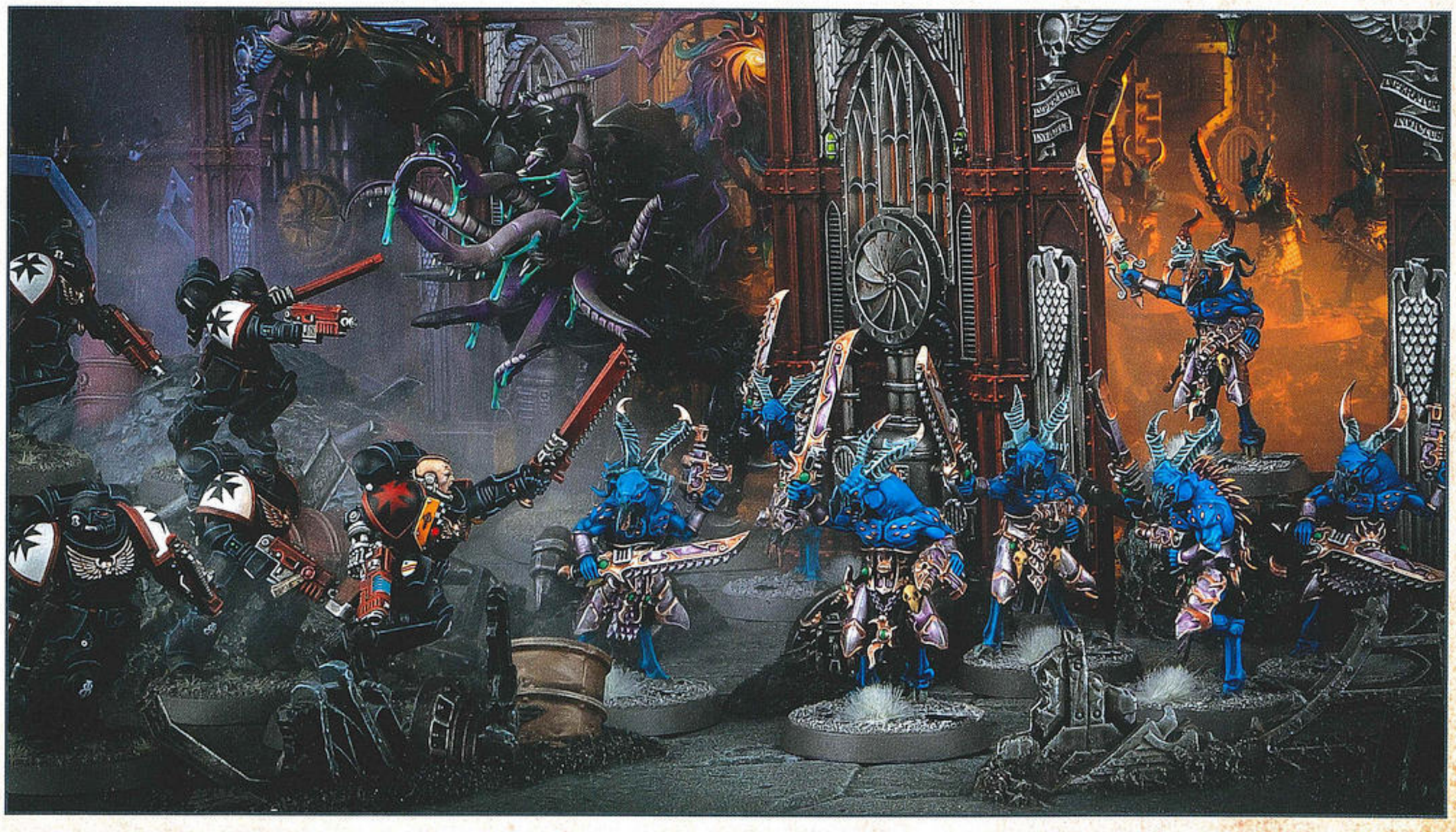
THE BRAYCHANGE

6 Cabal Points

Sorcerers of Warpmeld Pacts pride themselves in the use of the spells that can fashion Tzaangor from raw warp energy, or mutate living creatures into the avian beastmen.

Use this Cabbalistic Ritual before taking a Psychic test for a Blessing or Malediction psychic power. When taking that Psychic test, roll one additional D6. If the result of that Psychic test is 10 or more and it is not denied, select one friendly **TZAANGOR** unit within 9" of the **PSYKER** manifesting the psychic power:

- If that unit has the **BRAY** keyword, return up to 2D3 destroyed models to that unit with their full wounds remaining.
- Otherwise, return up to D3 destroyed models to that unit with their full wounds remaining.



STRATAGEMS

If your army is the Warpmeld Pact, you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

REALITY UNBOUND 1CP

Warpmeld Pact – Battle Tactic Stratagem

The power of Tzeentch can unbind reality, enabling weapons to pass through multiple planes of existence simultaneously, bypassing armour.

Use this Stratagem in your Shooting phase or the Fight phase, when a **WARPMELD PACT TZAANGOR ENLIGHTENED** 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 with a fatecaster greatbow or divining spear, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 2.

TZAANGOR ONSLAUGHT 1CP

Warpmeld Pact – Battle Tactic Stratagem

Tzaangor gather in great numbers when the power of warp energy is strong, swiftly overwhelming their foes.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase. Select one **WARPMELD PACT BRAY** unit from your army. Until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes a pile-in or consolidation move, it can move up to an additional 3".

GIFT OF CHANGE 1CP

Warpmeld Pact – Epic Deed Stratagem

The energies of the warp can swiftly remake a being they have destroyed in their own image…

Use this Stratagem in your Psychic phase, when an enemy **CHARACTER** unit is destroyed. Set up a new **WARPMELD PACT CHAOS SPAWN** unit from your army on the battlefield within 6" of that unit and not within Engagement Range of any enemy units. That **CHAOS SPAWN** unit contains 1 model, and, if you are playing a game that uses a points limit, does not cost any Reinforcement points. If you are playing a Crusade game, at the end of the battle, that **CHAOS SPAWN** unit is not added to your Order of Battle. You can only use this Stratagem once per battle.

WARPMELD SPAWN 1CP

Warpmeld Pact – Requisition Stratagem

Thanks to a mastery of mutagenic powers, the Chaos Spawn of Warpmeld Pacts are particularly powerful as the magicks of change grants them even greater strength and resilience.

Use this Stratagem before the battle, when you are mustering your army. Select one **WARPMELD PACT CHAOS SPAWN** unit from your army:

- Add 1 to the Strength characteristic of models in that unit.
- Add 1 to the Toughness characteristic of models in that unit.

BLESSED TRANSMUTATIONS 2CP

Warpmeld Pact – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

When the energy of Tzeentchian magicks flow so strongly, not only can Tzaangor once slain be restored to life, but more can be created from pure warp power.

Use this Stratagem in your Command phase. Select one **WARPMELD PACT PSYKER** model from your army. For each friendly **TZAANGOR** unit within 6" of that model:

- If that unit has the **BRAY** keyword, return up to D3+1 destroyed models to that unit with their full wounds remaining.
- Otherwise, return up to 1 destroyed model to that unit with its full wounds remaining.

TWISTED MIRAGE 2CP

Warpmeld Pact – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The sorcerers and magick-wielders of the Warpmeld Pacts are wreathed in psychic energy. They may well appear to be in one place to their foes, but things are not always as they seem.

Use this Stratagem in your opponent's Charge phase, when a **WARPMELD PACT PSYKER CHARACTER** unit from your army is selected as a target of a charge. If that unit is not within Engagement Range of any enemy units, it can make a Normal Move of up to 6". Until the end of the phase, that unit cannot fire Overwatch or Set to Defend. Your opponent can then select new targets for that charge.

EPHEMERAL EXISTENCE 1CP

Warpmeld Pact – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Through their connection to the Changer of Ways, Tzaangor move through obstacles as if they weren't there.

Use this Stratagem in your Movement phase, when a **WARPMELD PACT TZAANGOR** unit from your army is selected to move. Until the end of the turn, each time that unit makes a Normal Move, Advances, Falls Back or it makes a charge move, until that move is finished, models in that unit can move horizontally through models and terrain features (they cannot finish a move on top of another model, or its base).



ARCANE RITUALS

The Thousand Sons carry out many arcane rituals, crafting powerful spells for their own ends. Often to conduct these evil ceremonies successfully they require the bringing together of many resources, whether that be ancient texts with the correct words for recital, or sacrificial victims and artefacts suffused with unholy energies that have long and dark histories.

In this section you will find a collection of rules that allow the **THOUSAND SONS** units in your Crusade force to scour the galaxy, searching for the necessary materials they need in order to craft powerful spells and ritual incantations that can bolster your units. In addition, there are more Crusade Relics that you can spend Arcane points on to add to your Order of Battle (see *Codex: Thousand Sons*).

If your Order of Battle has any **THOUSAND SONS SORCERER** or **THOUSAND SONS INFERNAL MASTER** units then you can begin your search for these arcane components.

ARCANE MATERIALS

There are three kinds of Arcane Materials that your Crusade force will have to hunt for; each serves a different purpose and different rituals will require these in different amounts.

- **Inscriptions:** Whether they take the form of ancient scrolls or tomes of dark knowledge, these provide the words of power needed to invoke the malefic.
- **Souls:** The souls of the enemy can be bound and offered up to Chaos to curry daemonic favour.
- **Offerings:** The sacred icons and symbols of the enemy carry great weight and their destruction creates waves in the warp.

When your Crusade force begins its search for these items, start a tally, beginning at 0, for each of them on your Order of Battle. You can accrue Arcane Materials through the following means:

- The Agendas found on page 73.
- Each time your Crusade force gains an Arcane point, you can choose to roll one D6. If you do, on a 4+, your Crusade force has found an Arcane Material. If it does, instead of gaining that Arcane point, roll one D3 and consult the table below to see what Arcane Material you have accrued.

D3	ARCANE MATERIAL
1	Inscription
2	Soul
3	Offering

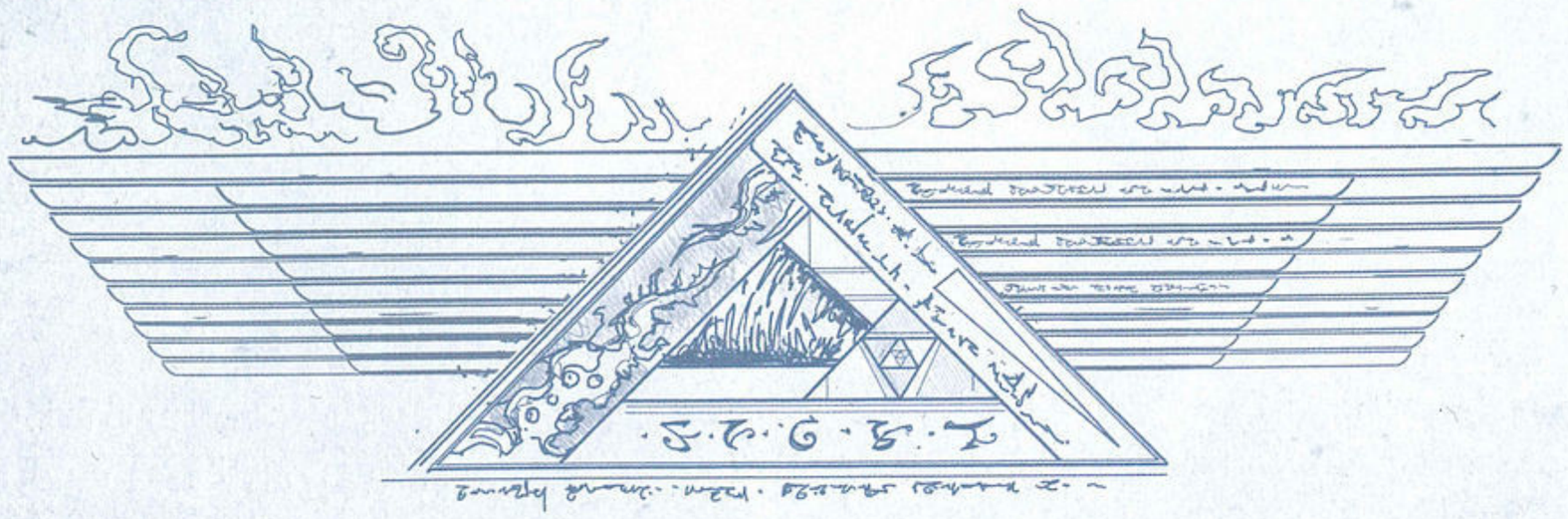
PERFORMING RITUAL INCANTATIONS

Ritual Incantations can be performed after a Crusade battle has been fought. Your Crusade force can only perform one Ritual Incantation per battle.

Each Ritual Incantation will specify which Arcane Materials it requires and how many are needed. In order to perform a Ritual Incantation, your Order of Battle must contain at least one **THOUSAND SONS SORCERER** or **THOUSAND SONS INFERNAL MASTER** unit and you must have enough of each Arcane Material type specified by that Ritual Incantation. On your Order of Battle, reduce your number of each of those Arcane Material types by the relevant amount and make a note of whether any additional Arcane Materials were spent in the process.

Each Ritual Incantation will have two effects:

- A Basic Effect that takes place each time that Ritual Incantation is performed.
- An Elevated Effect that takes place only if additional Arcane Materials are offered up to Tzeentch in the ritual. The extra Arcane Materials required to do this are specified in the Ritual Incantations themselves on pages 74-75.



AGENDAS

If your Crusade army includes any **THOUSAND SONS** units, you can select one Agenda from the Arcane Hunt 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 from each category).

BIND THEIR SOULS

Arcane Hunt Agenda

Some Thousand Sons bind the souls of powerful warriors they kill to objects and weapons. These objects become potent tools in arcane rituals.

Keep a Soul Binding tally for each unit from your army. Each time a **THOUSAND SONS** unit from your army destroys an enemy **CHARACTER** unit, add 1 to its Soul Binding tally.

At the end of the battle, the unit from your army with the highest Soul Binding tally gains 4 experience points and your Crusade force gains 1 Soul for each of the following:

- The enemy **WARLORD** is destroyed.
- All of the enemy **CHARACTER** units are destroyed.

UNCOVER LOST TOMES

Arcane Hunt Agenda

The galaxy is replete with lost tomes filled with knowledge of the warp. The Thousand Sons seek these out to further increase their power.

If you selected this Agenda, then at the start of the battle, your opponent secretly selects two objective markers, at least one of which cannot be within their deployment zone (if possible), to be locations of hidden tomes. Keep an Uncovered Tomes tally for each unit from your army. **THOUSAND SONS INFANTRY** units in your army can attempt the following action:

Search For Tome (Action): One **THOUSAND SONS INFANTRY** unit from your army can start to perform this action at the start of your Command phase if it is within range of an objective marker. This action is completed at the end of your turn. Once completed, your opponent reveals if that objective marker was the location of a tome. If it was, add 1 to the Uncovered Tomes tally for the unit performing this action.

At the end of the battle, each unit gains a number of experience points equal to four times their Uncovered Tomes tally and your Crusade force gains a number of Inscriptions equal to the combined total of all of your units' Uncovered Tomes tallies.

RANSACK SHRINES

Arcane Hunt Agenda

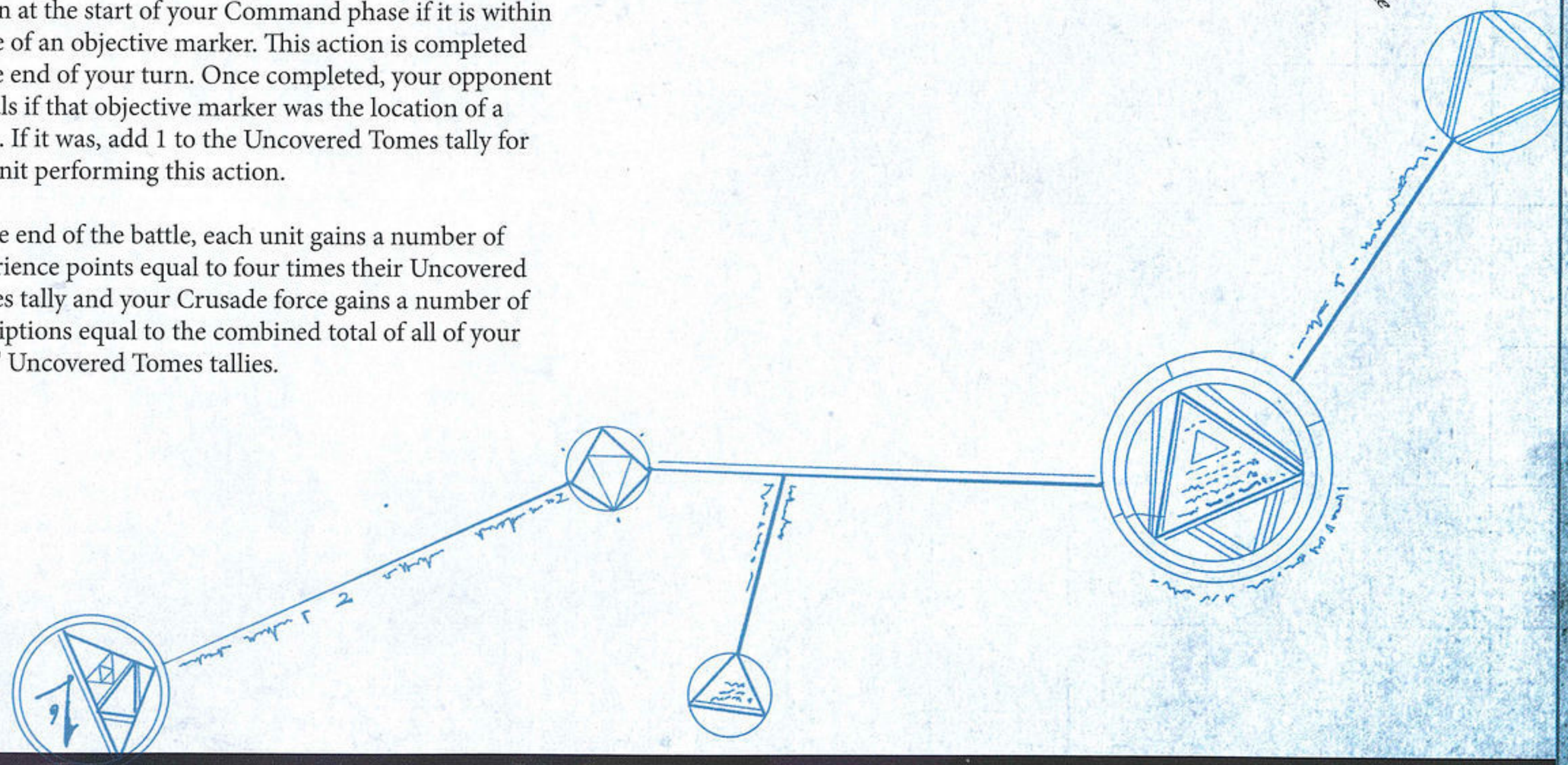
For some Thousand Sons, it is not enough to revere and worship Tzeentch. No, for them they feel they must be seen by their deity to desecrate the shrines of the foes and steal statues, icons and symbols from them for corruption in rituals.

If you selected this Agenda, then at the start of deployment, before any units are set up on the battlefield, your opponent sets up two Shrine objective markers anywhere on the battlefield not within 9" of any battlefield edges. These objective markers do not count as objective markers for any rules purposes other than for this Agenda. Keep a Ransacked Shrines tally for each unit from your army. Add 1 to a unit's Ransacked Shrines tally each time it successfully completes the Ransack Shrine action (see below). **THOUSAND SONS INFANTRY** units in your army can attempt the following action:

Ransack Shrine (Action): Any number of **THOUSAND SONS INFANTRY** units (excluding **CHARACTER** units) from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase. Each unit from your army that starts to perform this action must be in range of a different Shrine objective marker set up by your opponent that has not been ransacked. This action is completed at the end of your turn. Once completed, that objective marker is said to be ransacked.

At the end of the battle, each unit gains a number of experience points equal to double their Ransacked Shrines tally and your Crusade force gains a number of Offerings equal to the combined total of all of your units' Ransacked Shrines tallies.

I have it! I have it all! The Soul Periapt of Anguish, the Souls of the Two and the Seven, the Last Cache of Prakhut Ke Fyath the Traitor! See my devotion, oh Changer of the Ways!



RITUAL INCANTATIONS

The following Ritual Incantations are available:

ARCANE MATERIALS NEEDED			
RITUAL INCANTATION	INSCRIPTIONS	SOULS	OFFERINGS
Summon Daemon	1	3	2
Blessing of Tzeentch	2	1	3
Ethereal Learnings	3	2	1

SUMMON DAEMON

Through the power of sorcerous rituals, a sorcerer of Chaos can summon daemons and bind them to their will.

Basic Effect: Add one **TZEENTCH DAEMON** unit with a Power Rating of 8 or less to your Order of Battle and increase your Crusade force's Supply Limit by the Power Rating of that unit.

Elevated Effect (+2 Souls): When adding the **DAEMON** unit to your Order of Battle while performing this Ritual Incantation, that unit does not have to have a Power Rating of 8 or less.



BLESSING OF TZEENTCH

The sorcerers beseech Tzeentch to bless their warriors with gifts and boons.

Basic Effect: Select one **THOUSAND SONS INFANTRY** unit from your Order of Battle. That unit gains one Battle Trait. All the normal rules for Battle Traits apply (e.g. a unit cannot have the same Battle Trait more than once). As with any Battle Honour, make a note on the unit's Crusade card when it gains a Battle Trait and increase its Crusade points accordingly, as described in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

Elevated Effect (+2 Offerings): When giving a unit a Battle Trait while performing this Ritual Incarnation, you can choose to give them one from the table below instead of using one of the tables in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book to determine what Battle Trait the unit gains. To do so, roll one D3 and consult the table to randomly determine what Battle Trait the unit gains, or choose a Battle Trait that tells the best narrative for your unit.

BATTLE TRAITS	
D3	TRAIT
1	**Tzeentch's Ward** *Tzeentch appears to grant a measure of divine protection.* Once per battle, when this unit is selected as the target of an attack, it can use this blessing. If it does so, until the end of the turn, models in this unit have a 4+ invulnerable save.
2	**Boon of Foresight** *When the enemy draws close, the unit is able to predict their movements and detect weak points in bodies and armour with uncanny accuracy.* Each time a model in this unit makes a ranged attack that targets a unit within 12", re-roll a wound roll of 1.
3	**Warping Form** *Warp energy wreathing the blessed troops helps protect them from severe damage or wounds.* Each time a model in this unit would lose a wound as the result of a mortal wound, roll one D6: on a 4+, that wound is not lost.

'Change. The galaxy's only true constant. The reality is, however, change happens in some places faster than others. I see it as my task to hasten it wherever I can. The Nachmund Gauntlet is a fulcrum, one of galaxy-spanning importance. It is only fitting, then, that I contribute to events there. The powers of the warp flow more strongly in that narrow strait than I have seen almost anywhere beyond the Eye or the Maelstrom. So much can be done. And if the Worldclaimer should win for his master… and the Terran side of the Rift becomes open to us… the things I do shall be truly magnificent.'

- Astorthas the Inconstant

ETHEREAL LEARNINGS

Some rituals give the Thousand Sons who conduct them formidable knowledge into the nature of the warp and how to manipulate it.

Basic Effect: Select one **THOUSAND SONS SORCERER** or **THOUSAND SONS EXALTED SORCERER** unit from your Order of Battle. That unit gains one Psychic Fortitude. All the normal rules for Psychic Fortitudes apply (e.g. a unit cannot have the same Psychic Fortitude more than once). As with any Battle Honour, make a note on the unit's Crusade card when it gains a Psychic Fortitude and increase its Crusade points accordingly, as described in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

Elevated Effect (+2 Inscriptions): When giving a unit a Psychic Fortitude while performing this Ritual Incantation, you can choose to give them one from the table below instead of using one of the tables in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book to determine what Psychic Fortitude the unit gains. To do so, roll one D3 and consult the table to randomly determine what Psychic Fortitude the unit gains, or choose a Psychic Fortitude that tells the best narrative for your unit.

PSYCHIC FORTITUDES

D3	PSYCHIC FORTITUDE
1	**Power Unbound** *This psyker has learned how to make the spells they unleash all but unstoppable.* Each time this unit attempts to manifest a psychic power, if the Psychic test includes a double and is successful, that psychic power cannot be denied.
2	**Witchfire Shards** *Able to shape residual psychic energy into small warp projectiles, the psyker fires them at the enemy.* Each time this unit successfully manifests a psychic power, select one enemy unit within 18" of this unit and roll one D6: on a 3+, that enemy unit suffers 1 mortal wound.
3	**Multi-plane Form** *When casting a spell, this psyker can temporarily move in and out of multiple planes of existence, a state in which it is extremely difficult to cause them injury.* The first time this unit successfully manifests a psychic power in each of your Psychic phases, until the start of your next Psychic phase, each time a model in this unit would lose a wound, roll one D6: on a 5+, that wound is not lost.

ARCANE REWARDS

You can spend Arcane points on the Crusade Relics shown below in addition to those found in *Codex: Thousand Sons*. In addition to Arcane points, these Crusade Relics also cost a number of Arcane Materials as specified.

WARP BLADE

15 Arcane Points, 2 Offerings

The energies this blade is imbued with enable it to bypass some of the most potent wards.

Model equipped with force sword or Prosperine khopesh only. This Relic replaces a force sword or Prosperine khopesh and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Warp blade	Melee	Melee	+2	-3	3

Abilities: Each time an attack is made with this weapon, the Damage characteristic of that attack cannot be reduced and the target cannot make use of any abilities that allow them to ignore wounds.

AETHERIC SYPHON

10 Arcane Points, 2 Inscriptions

This arcane relic enables the psyker's mind to leave the mortal realm, returning to his body re-energised and healed.

Each time the bearer successfully manifests a psychic power or denies a psychic power, it regains 1 lost wound.

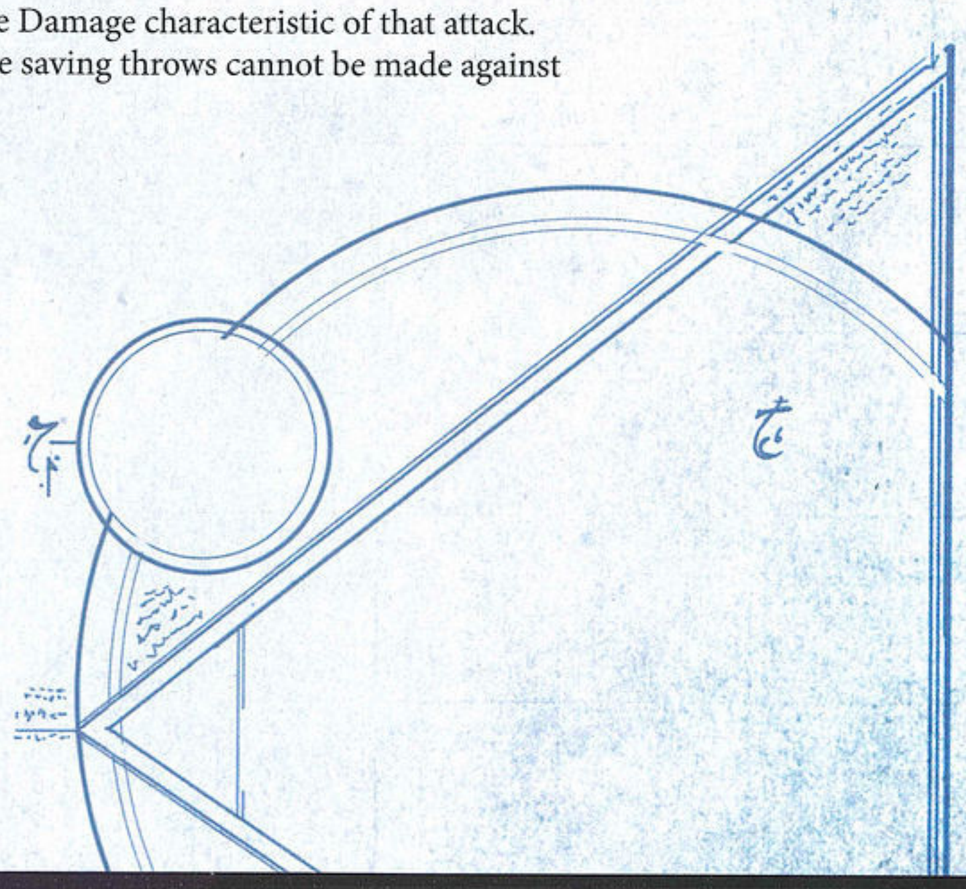
ENSORCELLED MAGAZINES

5 Arcane Points, 1 Soul

Any bolt rounds loaded into these magazines are warped and filled with twisted energies, making them far deadlier than they were before.

Each time the bearer makes an attack with a bolt weapon (see *Codex: Thousand Sons*), excluding Relics:

- Improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 2.
- Add 1 to the Damage characteristic of that attack.
- Invulnerable saving throws cannot be made against that attack.



The power of the impaterium... is incomparable. Any weapon or piece of equipment is made more potent for it. With our mastery over such energies, how can we ever be defeated?

ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED CRUSADE RULES

An Army of Chaos Undivided Crusade force functions a little differently to a normal Crusade force. Consisting of cults and bands of thralls in service to Haarken Worldclaimer, they ravage the Nachmund Gauntlet on their way to smash the Sanctus Wall.

Fighting their way from one end of the Nachmund Gauntlet to the other, this Crusade army pillages and desecrates in the name of the Chaos Gods, gaining favour from the dark deities as they do so and beseeching them for their warp-given gifts.

When creating an Army of Chaos Undivided Order of Battle for the first time, and when adding units to it, you can only include **CHAOS** units.

Each time a unit is added to an Army of Chaos Undivided Order of Battle, it gains the **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED** keyword.

After creating your Army of Chaos Undivided Order of Battle, begin a Dark Patronage tally on your Order of Battle (starting at 0) for each of the following Chaos Gods: Khorne; Nurgle; Slaanesh; Tzeentch.

MUSTERING AN ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED ARMY

- An **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED** Detachment is one that only includes models with the **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED** keyword.
- An **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED** Detachment counts as a **HERETIC ASTARTES** and **CHAOS DAEMON** 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.
  - An **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED** Detachment that contains at least one **THOUSAND SONS** Troops unit counts as a **THOUSAND SONS** Detachment for the purpose of any Detachment abilities your army gains (e.g. Stratagems you can use).
  - An **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED** Detachment that contains at least one **DEATH GUARD** Troops unit counts as a **DEATH GUARD** Detachment for the purpose of any Detachment abilities your army gains (e.g. Stratagems you can use).

GAINING AND LOSING DARK PATRONAGE POINTS

You can gain Dark Patronage points using the Agendas found on page 77. In addition, at the end of each battle:

- If you won the battle and your **WARLORD** has the **KHORNE**, **NURGLE**, **SLAANESH** or **TZEENTCH** keyword, add D3+1 Dark Patronage points to the respective tally on your Order of Battle.
- If you lost the battle and your **WARLORD** has the **KHORNE**, **NURGLE**, **SLAANESH** or **TZEENTCH** keyword, subtract 1 Dark Patronage point from the respective tally on your Order of Battle (to a minimum of 0).
- If the enemy **WARLORD** was destroyed by a unit from your army with the **KHORNE**, **NURGLE**, **SLAANESH** or **TZEENTCH** keyword, add D3 Dark Patronage points to the respective tally on your Order of Battle.

AGENDAS

If your Crusade army includes any **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED** units, you can select one Agenda from the Army of Chaos Undivided 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 from each category).

SEED PLAGUES

Army of Chaos Undivided Agenda

Heretics who worship the Plague God Nurgle delight in being catalysts for the spreading of diseases and maladies.

Keep a Seed Plagues tally for each unit from your army. Add 1 to a unit's Seed Plagues tally each time it successfully completes the Seed Plagues action (see below). If you selected this Agenda, then **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED NURGLE INFANTRY** units in your army can attempt the following action:

Seed Plagues (Action): One **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED NURGLE INFANTRY** unit from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase if it is more than 12" from any Plague Seed objective markers (see below). This action is completed at the end of your turn. Once completed, place an objective marker anywhere within 1" of the unit that completed this action. This objective marker represents a Plague Seed objective marker, but does not count as an objective marker for any rules purposes other than for this Agenda.

At the end of the battle, each unit gains a number of experience points equal to their Seed Plagues tally, and your Crusade force gains half the number of your Plague Seed objective markers (rounded up) as Nurgle Dark Patronage points.

CHAMPION OF VIOLENCE

Army of Chaos Undivided Agenda

The only way to assert dominance as a follower of Khorne, the Blood God, is to kill, kill and kill again.

If you selected this Agenda, then after both sides have finished deploying, select one **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED KHORNE CHARACTER** model from your army. Keep a Champion of Violence tally for that model.

In the Fight phase:

- Each time that model destroys an enemy unit, add 1 to its Champion of Violence tally.
- Each time that model destroys an enemy **CHARACTER** unit, add an additional 1 to its Champion of Violence tally.

At the end of the battle, that model gains a number of experience points equal to double its Champion of Violence tally, and your Crusade force gains a number of Khorne Dark Patronage points equal to its Champion of Violence tally.

BEGUILING INFLUENCE

Army of Chaos Undivided Agenda

The influence of Slaanesh hangs over the Prince of Excess' followers like a musk that is both horrifying and tempting. It takes strong warriors to overcome this distracting power.

Keep a Beguiling Influence tally for each unit from your army. If you selected this Agenda, then **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED SLAANESH CHARACTER** units in your army can attempt the following action:

Beguiling Influence (Action): One or more **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED SLAANESH CHARACTER** units from your army can start to perform this action at the end of your Movement phase. Each unit from your army that starts to perform this action must be within 12" of and visible to a different enemy **CHARACTER** unit that has not been influenced. The action is completed at the end of your turn. If completed, roll 3D6: if the result is greater than that **CHARACTER** unit's Leadership characteristic, add 1 to the Beguiling Influence tally of the unit performing this action and that **CHARACTER** unit is considered to be influenced. Each time an influenced enemy unit starts to perform an action, roll one D6: on a 5+, that action fails.

At the end of the battle, each unit gains a number of experience points equal to double their Beguiling Influence tally, and your Crusade force gains a number of Slaanesh Dark Patronage points equal to the combined total of all of your units' Beguiling Influence tallies.

GIFTED SORCERERS

Army of Chaos Undivided Agenda

The blessings of Tzeentch find their way to skilled witches and users of magicks.

Keep a Gifted Sorcerers tally for each **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED TZEENTCH** unit from your army.

- Each time a unit successfully manifests a psychic power, if the result of the Psychic test was 9 or more, add 1 to that unit's Gifted Sorcerers tally.
- Each time it successfully denies a psychic power, if the result of the Deny the Witch test was 9 or more, add 1 to that unit's Gifted Sorcerers tally.

At the end of the battle, each unit gains a number of experience points equal to half their Gifted Sorcerers tally (rounded up), and your Crusade force gains a number of Tzeentch Dark Patronage points equal to half the combined total of all of your units' Gifted Sorcerers tallies (rounded up).

The eyes of the Four are upon us this day! What a gift! What a blessing! See that we honour them this day – pile the sacrifices high!



REQUISITIONS

If your Crusade force includes any **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED** units, you can spend Requisition points (RPs) on any of the following Requisitions in addition to those presented in the Warhammer 40,000 Core Book.

THE DARK PATH 1RP

Casting aside any other goals or ambitions, this army dedicates itself to the furthering of the wills of the Dark Gods.

Purchase this Requisition at the Select Agendas step of the battle. You can select one additional Agenda to use during this battle and up to two of your Agendas can be selected from the Army of Chaos Undivided Agendas (pg 77). At least one of the Agendas you select must be from the Army of Chaos Undivided Agendas.

CEREMONY OF DEVOTION 1RP

A champion of Chaos seeks to demonstrate his devotion to their dark patron, and thus gain a blessing from the deity.

Purchase this Requisition at any time. Select one of your Dark Patronage tallies that has at least 5 Dark Patronage points. Reduce that tally by 5 points and select one **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED CHARACTER** model from your Order of Battle that has the keyword of the respective Chaos God. That model gains that god's Blessing of Chaos (pg 80-81).

TRUE KNOWLEDGE 1RP

A priest of Chaos reaches an inner circle of understanding for their chosen god, gaining new tools to bring their patron's will to their subjects.

Purchase this Requisition at any time. Select one of your Dark Patronage tallies that has at least 8 Dark Patronage points. Reduce that tally by 8 points and select one **ARMY OF CHAOS UNDIVIDED PRIEST** model from your Order of Battle that has the keyword of the respective Chaos God. You can select one of the prayers presented on page 79 for that model to know in addition to any they already do. Increase that model's Crusade points by 1.

'The portents are good! The priests say the Gods smile on us! I can feel it! There will be much blood spilled for the eight, much blood, and so very soon. The False Emperor will fall because of us, I know this to be true. We will take this Gauntlet, kill everyone in it, turn the worlds over to the immaterium and keep going. They won't call the Imperium Sanctus that when we're done with it, no they won't, because they'll be dead! Our bayonets will be in their guts and daemons will eat their souls!'

- Rexus Bilne, soldier of the traitor 99th Vivicune Guard regiment

PRAYERS

The following additional prayers can be learned by **CHAOS PRIEST** models using the True Knowledge Requisition (pg 78).

IMBUEMENT OF STRENGTH

The priest beseeches Khorne to imbue his followers with might.

KHORNE PRIEST only. If this prayer is heard, select one friendly **KHORNE HERETIC ASTARTES** unit within 6" of this **PRIEST**. Each time a model in that unit makes a melee attack, you can re-roll the wound roll.

THE SICKENING BLESSING

Channelling Nurgle's spirit, the Priests's prayer causes some of the Grandfather's followers' skin to break out in hardened lesions.

NURGLE PRIEST only. If this prayer is heard, select one friendly **NURGLE HERETIC ASTARTES INFANTRY** unit within 6" of this **PRIEST**. Add 1 to the Toughness characteristic of models in that unit.

PRETERNATURAL REFLEXES

The blessings of Slaanesh give their followers an uncanny ability to know exactly where a foe's attacks will land, and how to avoid them with minimal effort.

SLAANESH PRIEST only. If this prayer is heard, select one friendly **SLAANESH HERETIC ASTARTES** unit within 6" of this **PRIEST**. Each time a melee attack is made against that unit, subtract 1 from that attack's hit roll.

THE ENNEANID (AURA)

Should Tzeentch deign to grant its followers a mote of its power, then those psykers find their spells immeasurably easier to cast.

TZEENTCH PRIEST only. If this prayer is heard, then while a friendly **TZEENTCH HERETIC ASTARTES PSYKER** unit is within 6" of this **PRIEST**, add 1 to Psychic tests taken for that unit.

'Long has my lord and master waited. So great is his patience, that he has watched for ten thousand years, gathering his forces, witnessing the decline of the empire he himself helped forge before the False Emperor became one with his corpse throne. Attack, attack, attack, those are now his orders. On scores of fronts and more, we assault with all the fury we have and with the power of the Octed behind us. The numbers clamouring Abaddon's name outnumber the stars themselves. None can stand against us. Our time has truly come.'

- Haarken Worldclaimer

The gods hear us! They hear our prayers, hear our words, hear our thoughts, hear our wishes! What do you desire? Name it, and serve the gods well, and they will grant you more than you could ever imagine!

Praise be to the Gods! May their realms stretch through all of space, both real and warp! May every world feel their touch, every star yield to their power!

BLESSING OF CHAOS

If a model earns the favour of their chosen deity, they will gain an additional ability from one of the Blessing of Chaos tables. However, the Chaos Gods are fickle and they can turn their backs on their mortal servants as readily as they bestow their gifts. As such, when a model gains a Blessing of Chaos, the ability that model gains will only last for the duration of the next battle that they fight in, after which, the roaming eyes of their deity will move on to another would-be champion.

Each time a model gains a Blessing of Chaos, roll one D3 and consult the relevant table.

- That model gains that ability during the next game in which they are a part of your army.
- While that model has that ability: if it has a Power Rating of 10 or less, increase its Crusade points by 2; otherwise, increase its Crusade points by 4.
- After they have taken part in a game, they lose that ability and their Crusade points return to normal.
- A model can never have more than one Blessing of Chaos at any one time.

KHORNE BLESSING OF CHAOS

D3	BLESSING OF CHAOS
1	**Raw Ferocity** *The fury of this favoured fighter cannot be contained.* • Add 1 to this model's Strength characteristic. • Add 1 to this model's Attacks characteristic. • Each time this model makes a melee attack, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.
2	**Wall of Anger** *This individual becomes an all but unstoppable force, smashing aside all in their path.* • You can re-roll charge rolls made for this model. • Each time this model finishes a charge move, select one enemy unit within Engagement Range of it and roll one D6: on a 2-4, that enemy unit suffers D3 mortal wounds; on a 5+, that enemy unit suffers 3 mortal wounds.
3	**Bastion of Violence** *On occasion, the warrior seems filled with the living wrath of Khorne itself. When this happens, few foes will survive their brutal attacks.* Once per battle, in the Fight phase, when this model is selected to fight, it can use this ability. If it does so, then until that fight is resolved, each time this model makes a melee attack: • Add 4 to the Strength characteristic of that attack. • Improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 3.

NURGLE BLESSING OF CHAOS

D3	BLESSING OF CHAOS
1	**Hive of Parasites** *This warrior is surrounded by a cloud of parasites that not only consume incoming enemy fire but also coat rounds fired so they might infect targets.* • Each time a ranged attack is made against this model, subtract 1 from that attack's wound roll. • Each time this model makes a ranged attack, add 1 to that attack's wound roll.
2	**Unbound Vitality** *The favoured's body is constantly growing and generating new plagues. Such rapid growth keeps them alive even after suffering grievous injuries.* Each time an attack is made against this model, an unmodified wound roll of 1-4 for that attack fails, irrespective of any abilities that the weapon or the model making the attack may have.
3	**Virulent Rot** *So much rot infects their form that it can corrode away even powerful close combat weapons in a matter of seconds.* Once per battle, in the Fight phase, when this model is selected to fight, it can use this ability. If it does so, select one melee weapon that an enemy model within Engagement Range of this one is equipped with. Until the end of the battle: • The Strength characteristic of that weapon is 'User'. • The Armour Penetration characteristic of that weapon is reduced by 2.

SLAANESH BLESSING OF CHAOS

D3	BLESSING OF CHAOS
1	**Whirlwind Reflexes** *Incredibly agile and nimble, this warrior is capable of avoiding what should be killing blows at the last second.* Once per battle round, when a saving throw is failed for this model, it can use this ability. If it does so, the Damage characteristic of that attack is changed to 0.
2	**Whip-like Limbs** *Gifted by Slaanesh, this favoured fighter keeps up a never-ending barrage of swift attacks and strikes.* Each time this model is selected to fight, select one enemy unit within Engagement Range of it and roll one D6: on a 2-4, that enemy unit suffers D3 mortal wounds; on a 5+, that enemy unit suffers 3 mortal wounds.
3	**Blur of Death** *Lightning fast, they are a blur of movement and blades, attacking with ferocious speed and darting out of the fray at will.* Once per battle, in your Movement phase, when this model is selected to Fall Back, it can use this ability. If it does so: • For each enemy unit within Engagement Range of it, roll one D6: on a 2-5, that enemy unit suffers D3 mortal wounds; on a 6, that enemy unit suffers D3+3 mortal wounds. • Until the end of the turn, this model is eligible to charge in a turn in which it Fell Back.

TZEENTCH BLESSING OF CHAOS

D3	BLESSING OF CHAOS
1	**Living Flames** *Tzeentchian flames encircle this blessed warrior, snapping out and striking any unwary foes that foolishly come too close.* Each time a melee attack is made against this model, on an unmodified hit roll of 1, after the attacker's unit has finished making its attacks, that unit suffers 1 mortal wound.
2	**Psychic Puppetry** *Able to insert their consciousness into another, this favoured champion can bury a psychic conduit into an ally and use them as an arc node.* At the start of the first battle round, select one other friendly **TZEENTCH PSYKER** model. Until the end of the battle, each time this model manifests a psychic power, when resolving that psychic power, you can measure distances and visibility from the selected model instead of this one.
3	**Temporal Rift Corridor** *Using the gifts of Tzeentch, this skilled fighter has the ability to rip a hole in realspace and use it to reappear wherever they want. None are safe on the battlefield when distance means nothing.* Once per battle, at the end of your turn, this model can use this ability. If it does so, remove it from the battlefield and set it up on the battlefield anywhere that is more than 9" away from any enemy models.





Urien Rakarth



Wrack



Wrack





Haemonculus







Cronos Parasite Engine



COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI

The Coteries of the Haemonculi feed on agony as a leech feeds on blood. When the armies created by these demented flesh-sculptors are released upon the galaxy, whole worlds are plunged into madness.

It is far from unheard of for the Haemonculi to bring mercenary forces into their employ, such as Incubi and Scourges. These warriors add their own lethal powers to those of their paymasters, and few can stand against such combined evil.

A Coteries of the Haemonculi is an Army of Renown (pg 55).

RESTRICTIONS

- All units in your army must have the **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN>** or **BLADES FOR HIRE** keywords.
- Your **WARLORD** must have the **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN>** keyword.

BENEFITS

- All units in your army gain the **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI** keyword.
- You have access to the Haemonculus Coven Warlord Traits, Stratagems and Relics.
- **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN>** units in your army gain the Driven by Fear ability (see below).

DRIVEN BY FEAR

The Haemonculi have a deep hold over their servants. On the one hand, they can offer immortality to the faithful, and an endless supply of agony and misery to feast on. On the other, they are capable of inflicting the most excruciating tortures upon those they deem to be failures. Such things provide ample motivation for a servant of a Haemonculus to fight fiercely in battle and never give up in seeing their liege's desires become reality.

- This unit never gains a Drukhari Obsession (see *Codex: Drukhari*).
- Each time this unit is selected as the target of an attack, if this unit is below Half Strength, when resolving that attack, if a model in this unit would lose a wound, roll one D6: on a 4+, that wound is not lost.
- Each time a model in this unit would lose a wound as the result of a mortal wound, if this unit is below Half Strength, roll one D6: on a 4+, that wound is not lost.
- This unit is eligible to declare a charge in a turn in which it Fell Back.

WARLORD TRAITS

If a **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI** model is your **WARLORD**, you can use the Haemonculus Coven Warlord Traits 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. CALCULATING GAZE (AURA)

A Haemonculus always keeps a close eye over their followers. Knowing they will be punished severely for failure, the Haemonculus' lackeys work and fight all the harder.

While a friendly **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN> CORE** unit is within 6" of this **WARLORD**, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, re-roll a hit roll of 1.

2. SCHEMER SUPREME

Haemonculi meticulously plan their schemes, anticipating every enemy movement.

While this **WARLORD** is on the battlefield, each time your opponent spends a Command point to use a Stratagem you can roll one D6: on a 5+, you gain 1 Command point.

3. ARTIST OF DARK ALCHEMY

The Haemonculus is supremely skilled in developing the most effective chemicals, effluents and other foul solutions for their warriors' weaponry.

Once per turn, after rolling to determine the number of attacks made with a weapon by a friendly **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN> CORE** model whose unit is within 6" of this **WARLORD**, this **WARLORD** can use this ability. If it does so, you can re-roll the number of attacks made with that weapon and, until the end of the phase, each time you roll to determine the number of attacks made with a weapon by a model in that unit, you can re-roll the result.

RELICS

If your army is led by a **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI WARLORD**, you can, when mustering your army, give one of the following Artefacts of Cruelty Relics to a **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI 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 Artefacts of Cruelty Relics your models have on your army roster.

TRANSFUSER OF EXCRUCIATION

This ichor injector was crafted by Urien Rakarth himself. The chemicals it discharges sends its victims into major bouts of muscle spasms.

COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI model equipped with an ichor injector only. This Relic replaces an ichor injector and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Transfuser of Excruciation	Melee	Melee	-	-	-

Abilities: Each time the bearer fights, no more than one attack can be made with this weapon. Each time an attack is made with this weapon, if a hit is scored, the target suffers 1 mortal wound and the attack sequence ends. Each time a unit (excluding **VEHICLE** units) suffers a mortal wound from this weapon, until the end of the battle, that unit is poisoned. While a unit is poisoned, subtract 1 from the Ballistic Skill, Weapon Skill and Strength characteristics of models in that unit.

MASK OF TORMENT

This skin mask changes to take on the features of the opponent's loved ones, begging them not to attack.

COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI model only. At the start of the Morale phase, select one enemy unit within 12" of the bearer. Until the start of your next Command phase, subtract 4 from the Leadership characteristic of models in that unit.

STINGER-ENGORGER PISTOL

Those struck by the toxin-coated stinger darts of this weapon are bloated so severely that they become much larger targets.

COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI model equipped with a stinger pistol only. This Relic replaces a stinger pistol and has the following profile:

WEAPON	RANGE	TYPE	S	AP	D
Stinger-engorger pistol	12"	Pistol 5	2	0	1

Abilities: Poisoned Weapon (2+) (see *Codex: Drukhari*). Each time the bearer is selected to shoot, after resolving its attacks, if any models in an enemy unit (excluding **VEHICLE** units) lost one or more wounds from those attacks, until the end of the turn, each time a friendly model makes an attack against that enemy unit, improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of that attack by 1.

BIOTARGETING ORB

This orb scans biomarkers of warriors on the battlefield and identifies to the bearer the ideal candidates for experimentation.

COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI model only. At the start of the first battle round, select one enemy unit on the battlefield (excluding **VEHICLE** units). Until the end of the battle, the bearer gains the following ability:

Biotargeting Orb (Aura): While a friendly **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN> CORE** or **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN> CHARACTER** unit is within 6" of this model, each time a model in that unit makes an attack against the enemy unit you selected at the start of the first battle round, add 1 to that attack's hit roll.



STRATAGEMS

If your army is a Coteries of the Haemonculi, you have access to these Stratagems, and can spend CPs to use them.

RULE THROUGH FEAR 1CP

Coteries of the Haemonculi – Requisition Stratagem

The Haemonculi inspire as much terror in their servants as they do their worst enemies.

Use this Stratagem before the battle, when you are mustering your army. Select one **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI CHARACTER** model from your army. Until the end of the battle:

- Add 3" to the range of aura abilities of that model.
- Each time that model uses an ability in your Command phase (excluding aura abilities), add 3" to the range of that ability for that usage.

You can only use this Stratagem once, unless you are playing a Strike Force battle (in which case, you can use this Stratagem twice) or an Onslaught battle (in which case, you can use this Stratagem three times).

ART OF POISONRY 1CP

Coteries of the Haemonculi – Requisition Stratagem

The Haemonculi of this coven have concocted particularly virulent poisons for their weaponry.

Use this Stratagem before the battle, when you are mustering your army. Select one **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI CORE** unit from your army. Until the end of the battle, for each model in that unit, if that model is equipped with a weapon that has the 'Poisoned Weapon (4+)' ability (see *Codex: Drukhari*), that weapon is treated as having the 'Poisoned Weapon (3+)' ability instead.

You can only use this Stratagem once, unless you are playing a Strike Force battle (in which case, you can use this Stratagem twice) or an Onslaught battle (in which case, you can use this Stratagem three times).

WEALTH AND POWER 1CP

Coteries of the Haemonculi – Requisition Stratagem

Many Coteries of the Haemonculi are so wealthy and powerful they have connections throughout Commorragh, letting them buy, barter and blackmail their way to acquiring the finest wargear.

Use this Stratagem before the battle, when you are mustering your army. Select one **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI CORE** unit from your army. Until the end of the battle, each time a model in that unit makes a ranged attack, add 1 to the Strength characteristic of that attack. You can only use this Stratagem once, unless you are playing a Strike Force battle (in which case, you can use this Stratagem twice) or an Onslaught battle (in which case, you can use this Stratagem three times).

BRUTAL VIVISECTION 1CP

Coteries of the Haemonculi – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The servants of the Haemonculi always strive to impress their lieges. One such tactic is to carve up their foes in particularly revolting and inventive ways. Such a deed also inspires much fear in the enemy.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when a **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI** model from your army destroys a model in an enemy unit (excluding **VEHICLE** units). The next time that enemy unit is selected to fight, until the end of the phase, each time a model in that unit makes an attack, subtract 1 from that attack's wound roll.

VISIONS OF BUTCHERY 1CP

Coteries of the Haemonculi – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The mutilated appearance of the Haemonculi's servants, combined with the general fear of battle and death, deeply unnerves foes.

Use this Stratagem at the end of your Charge phase. Select one enemy unit within Engagement Range of one or more **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI** units from your army. Roll one D6: on a 2+, until the start of your next Charge phase, that enemy unit loses the Objective Secured ability.

MERCIES OF THE HAEMONCULUS 1CP

Coteries of the Haemonculi – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

Some Haemonculi surgically graft pain-suppressors and vials of rapid healing agents into their servants, which the Haemonculus can cause to come into effect whenever they will. Should any of their creations particularly impress them, the Haemonculus may feel inclined to activate these grafts, helping grant them more life to serve longer.

Use this Stratagem in the Fight phase, when an enemy unit is destroyed by an attack made by a model in a **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI** unit from your army. Until the end of the battle, each time a model in that **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI** unit would lose a wound, roll one D6: on a 4+, that wound is not lost.

PROTECT THE GREAT ONE 1CP

Coteries of the Haemonculi – Strategic Ploy Stratagem

The servants and creations of a Haemonculus will do all they can to keep their liege safe.

Use this Stratagem in any phase, when a **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN> HAEMONCULUS** model from your army loses one or more wounds as a result of an attack made by an enemy model. Until the end of your next turn:

- Each time a friendly **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN> CORE** unit declares a charge that targets that enemy model's unit, you can re-roll the charge roll.
- Each time a friendly **<HAEMONCULUS COVEN> CORE** unit makes an attack against that enemy model's unit, you can re-roll the hit roll and you can re-roll the wound roll.

VENOMS OF AGONISING ATROPHY 1CP

Coteries of the Haemonculi – Wargear Stratagem

The poisons, toxins and venoms employed by this Coteries of the Haemonculi are especially potent, sapping the enemy's strength and will to fight.

Use this Stratagem in any phase, when an enemy model (excluding **VEHICLE** models) loses one or more wounds as a result of an attack made with a poisoned weapon by a **COTERIES OF THE HAEMONCULI** model from your army. Until the end of the next turn, subtract 1 from the Attacks characteristic of models in that enemy unit.



'Fear; pain; disorder; misery. The galaxy is rife with it all. Truly these are bounteous times. My flesh vats have never been more full; the slave pens are bursting. But there is always room for more, and one must always acquire stock in times of plenty ready for times of famine, which must surely come. But where to source it? So many options are available, one finds it hard to choose. My spies tell me much of this so-called 'Nachmund Gauntlet'. Many species dwell in it, and they say the mon-keigh there are in anarchy. Yes… that will do.'

- Haemogarch Xulfur, Prophets of the Flesh

GLOSSARY

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

Alliances (pg 36): For a War of Desperation Campaign, players are organised into teams, known as alliances. The results of each of their games contribute to their alliance's overall result.

Arcane Materials (pg 72): A resource that can be earned by **THOUSAND SONS** units from Crusade battles and that can be spent on Ritual Incantations. There are three types of Arcane Materials: Inscriptions; Offerings; Souls.

Army of Chaos Undivided (pg 76): A series of rules for Chaos Crusade armies, made up of various Factions unified by their strength of faith in the Chaos Gods.

Army of Renown (pg 55): 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.

Campaign Master (pg 36): The individual who organises and runs a War of Desperation campaign.

Campaign Master's Edicts (pg 50): Optional rules for a Campaign Master to use when running a War of Desperation campaign.

Campaign Phase (pg 38): A War of Desperation campaign is split into a number of phases, determined by the Campaign Master, in which players play games.

Campaign Tracker (pg 37): Each war zone in a War of Desperation campaign uses a campaign tracker to keep track of each alliance's relative power in that war zone.

Codex Supplement: Castellans of the Rift (pg 58): Additional rules for **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** units drawn from the Castellans of the Rift Chapter.

Coteries of the Haemonculi (pg 84): An Army of Renown for Drukhari.

Driven by Fear (pg 84): An ability for units from a Coteries of the Haemonculi Army of Renown.

Legendary Missions (pg 44-49): Unique missions played as part of a War of Desperation campaign inspired by a key event from *War Zone Nachmund: Rift War*.

Raider Force Battle Traits (pg 64): A type of Crusade Battle Trait that can be gained by **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** units in a Warden Raiders Force.

Ritual Incantations (pg 74): A means of upgrading **THOUSAND SONS** units in a Crusade Order of Battle using Arcane Materials.

Strategic Victory Points (pg 38): At the end of a War of Desperation 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.

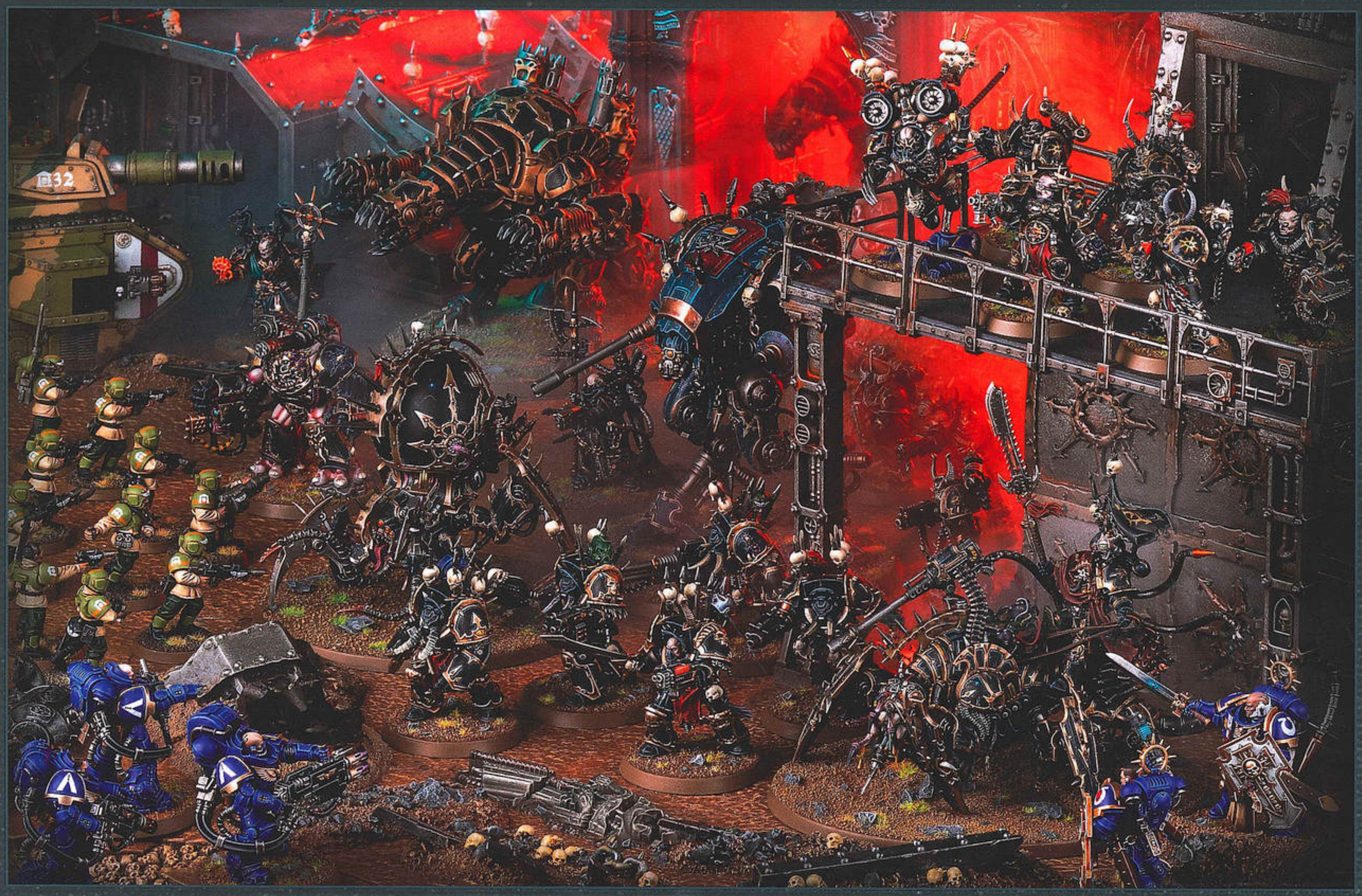
Strength of the Brayherd (pg 68): An ability for **TZAANGOR SHAMAN** units from a Warpmeld Pact Army of Renown.

Touched by Tzeentch (pg 68): An ability for some units from a Warpmeld Pact Army of Renown.

Unyielding Resistance (pg 58): Chapter Tactic for **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** units from the Castellans of the Rift Chapter.

War of Desperation Campaign (pg 36): A campaign system for your games of Warhammer 40,000 inspired by the events of *War Zone Nachmund: Rift War*.

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