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The Depths of Tredecimnia

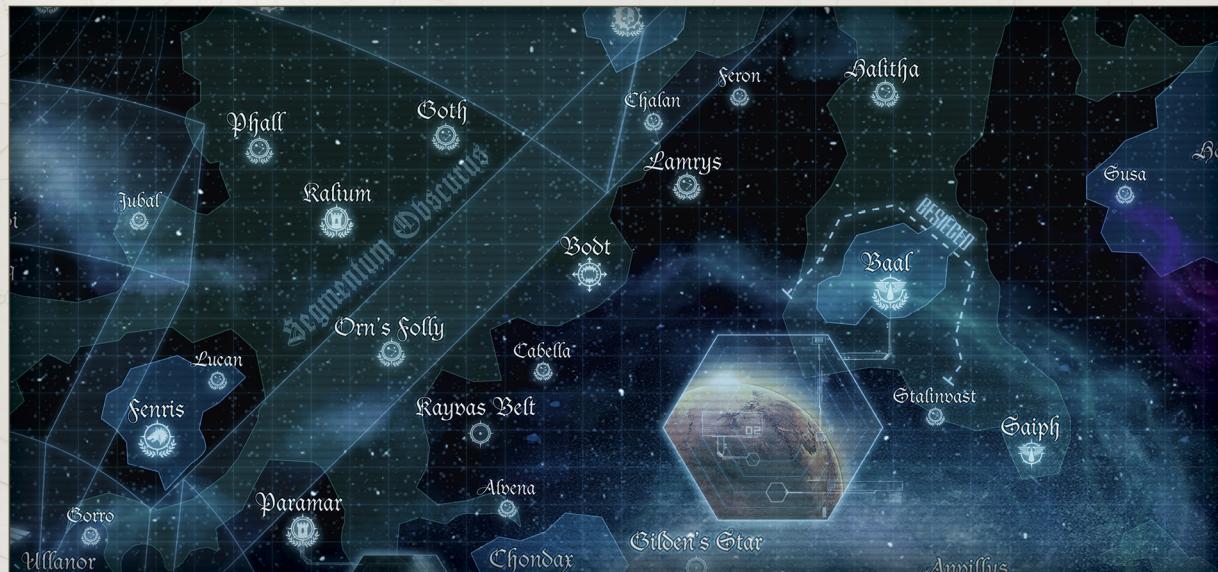


EXEMPLARY BATTLES OF
The Age of Darkness

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THE DEPTHS OF TREDECIMMIA

As the Age of Darkness ground ever onwards, the fires of war would spread throughout the entire galaxy, consuming everything in their path. Armies and worlds were reduced to nothing more than ash, in many cases leaving no one alive to bear witness to the sacrifices made or the atrocities committed. During this time, each Legion employed unique formations to prosecute their own style of war, whether by choice or through necessity, making use of unconventional, often abhorrent, tactics and weapons. Many of these formations would be lost during the dark years following the Horus Heresy, their traditions wiped out and the last stockpiles of their weapons exhausted. Some, however, have been preserved in these records, that future generations may learn of the terrors unleashed upon the galaxy by the Emperor's turncoat sons and the valiant heroes who stood against them.



One of the oldest fief worlds of the XIIth Legion – the savage World Eaters – Bodt was transformed from an arid world into a toxic hellscape by decades of unrestrained weapons testing by the Legion and its allies. Tredecimmia, Bodt's primary city, served as a mustering ground and defensive bastion for the XIIth Legion, while the rad-wastes around it were a crucible in which World Eaters aspirants were tested in battles waged between the gun clan auxiliaries that had taken root upon the planet. As the Great Crusade progressed, elements of the Legio Audax

and the so-called Crimson Priests of Sarum established bases upon Bodt, cementing the planet as a stronghold of the XIIth Legion's power. By the late Great Crusade, Bodt had grown in infamy, largely due to suspicions amongst the luminaries of Terra of unsanctioned experiments related to the Butcher's Nails augments utilised by the World Eaters and the research of Sarum's tech-priests. In the Age of Darkness, the planet became a staging ground from which the Legion unleashed a tide of bloodshed and destruction across the Ultima Segmentum.

In the eighth year of the 31st Millennium doom came to Bodt, heralded by a baleful halo of light that enveloped the planet's moon. The moon's sudden transformation into a flaming orb in the night's sky ignited a collective atavistic terror amongst the gun-clanners that infested Bodt's rad wastes, driving them mad and causing them to rise up in a primitive fury, the wastes erupting with gunfire and explosions as they unleashed their arsenals upon one another. This was but a prelude of the destruction to come. From behind the moon emerged a fleet of warships that speared towards Bodt, commanded by Autek Mor of the Iron Hands, a warlord possessed of sinister reputation for the ruthless manner in which he waged war. By his hand had the moon been transformed, the burning halo a by-product of the moon's orbit being shunted by his fleet, setting it on a collision course with the planet. Moving into Bodt's orbit, the fleet then unleashed precision bombardments on targets across Tredecimmia, consuming chains of surface-to-orbit batteries in fire and plasma and opening the way for planetary assault.

As the doomed moon waxed in the heavens and the night sky was lit up by its hellish orange glow of the atmosphere's resulting perturbation, Tredecimmia's augur arrays detected scores of smaller shapes falling towards the planet. These were the gunships and drop pods of the invaders' first assault wave and Tredecimmia was their target. The descending craft divided into several assault forces that dispersed across the city, striking at defensive strongholds and Mechanicum facilities to plunder the wealth of Legion materiel stored there and open the way for a secondary deployment. One such splinter group was formed of squadrons of Xiphon Interceptors and a wing of Storm Eagle transports and Fire Raptor gunships, which turned their wrath upon Tredecimmia's primary defence bastion standing tall within the adjacent poisoned sea. Its void shields had withstood the concentrated orbital bombardment but were rendered useless against the low-flying aircraft, who swept in below the shield envelope and unleashed such a dense storm of explosive ordnance that no trace of the bastion was left standing and the

sea became so agitated that tsunami waves were sent crashing against the nearby coasts, flooding the lowland and drowning thousands of warring gun-clanners still battling in the rad wastes. Having reduced the central bastion to burning wreckage, the attacking aircraft turned northwards. There, they linked up with two Thunderhawk insertion wings – one the gunmetal black of the Xth Legion – the Iron Hands; the other the yellow of the VIIth Legion – the Imperial Fists, flotsam of war that Mor's forces had absorbed. Together, they descended upon a chain of mountaintop defences wreathed in plumes of smoke from the destruction of its defence batteries; it was within the mountain that the attacker's intelligence placed Tredecimmia's primary command centre, the destruction of which the strike force was tasked with. Nearing the objective, the Thunderhawk wings separated, the Imperial Fists moving east and the Iron Hands west, disgorging the embarked warriors onto the landing pads nestled in mountain valleys. In almost perfect synchronicity, the two strike forces breached the defences' external doors, marching into its subterranean depths.

In the east, Centurion Eberhart, of the 171st Imperial Fists Company, led twoscore warriors clad in Tartaros armour, with two hundred Legionaries marching in their wake. The oncoming moon and the destruction it would bring lent haste to their march, due caution discarded in favour of reaching their target as swiftly as possible. Frenzied mobs of World Eaters spilled forth from parallel accessways that fed into the mag-rail tunnel that linked the surface defence emplacements and bunkers, charging the fore of the Imperial Fists' phalanx. Devoid of ordered formation, the XIIth Legion warriors charged recklessly at the Imperial Fists, their battle cries all but drowned out by the roar of bolters. Legionaries in white and blue fell as they threw themselves at the VIIth Legion phalanx, the Imperial Fists slinging their bolters at the last moment to meet their foe with blade and shield. The savage howl of chainswords joined the cacophony echoing around the tunnel, then the screech of metal on ceramite,

and the cries of the injured and dying. As the din rose, amplified by the confines of the tunnel, a new sound joined it, the screech of distant creatures whispering across helmet-voxs drowning out Eberhart's attempts to direct his warriors from the centre of the phalanx. Unable to lead with words, Centurion Eberhart moved forwards, utilising the bulk of his Terminator armour to shoulder his way through the press of Imperial Fists. Stepping over the corpse of a fallen brother to stand at the fore of battle, Eberhart lashed out with his solarite gauntlet, disruptor field flaring as it crushed the armour of a XIIth Legionary and pulped the flesh within. A step forwards and the Centurion swung again, claiming the life of another Traitor, then another step, another swing and another ruined body, slaughtering his foes with methodical brutality. Chainaxe teeth broke against his armour as the Centurion pushed deeper into the mass of Traitors, his retinue following into the gap he'd created. This wall of Terminators pushed forwards, battering their way through the World Eaters and breaking through the other side. Free from the press of battle, Eberhart and his warriors began to encircle the Traitors, trapping them against the Imperial Fists' phalanx.

As he did, the tunnel's shadows were dispelled by a flash of blue light, the energy field of the Centurion's storm shield flaring into life, a barbed harpoon embedded within it. Before Eberhart could disengage the shield's maglocks, the harpoon's trailing metal cable snapped taunt, hauling the Centurion from his feet. Rails buckled as the Centurion was dragged over them, his armour's servos screaming as Eberhart sought to gain purchase. From a side tunnel ahead, a mechanical beast loomed from the shadows, hunched in form yet rivalling a Contemptor Dreadnought in size, five more emerging from behind it. Later records would name such constructs 'slaughter-engine', a

mechanical creation protected by segmented crimson armour plates forming a beetle-like back and carried forwards on bladed limbs. In the tunnel, the first pounced upon the Centurion to pin him beneath its bulk. Its bladed limbs rained blows upon the Centurion, gouging his armour plating yet failing to cut through. In return, Eberhart's gauntlet lashed out, the first blow crushing the construct's leg, the second denting its underbelly plates. Another blow and the metal caved in, a fourth and the construct staggered, slumped and fell silent. The harsh orange glow emitting from eye sockets wrought into a bestial face of iron faded as the construct collapsed, pinning the Centurion beneath its dead weight.

As Eberhart summoned his strength to heft the crushing mass of the slain construct from him, the remaining slaughter-engines surged past, charging into the fray between Loyalist and Traitors. With violent abandon the constructs slew Imperial Fists and World Eaters alike, blades carving through power armour as if it was but parchment, each swing severing limbs and bisecting warriors. Unrelenting in their advance, the slaughter-engines cut their way through the Imperial Fists, sword blows and bursts of bolter fire denting armour yet unable to fell them. Legionaries that brought heavier weapons to bear were pounced upon and crushed beneath the constructs' bulk, or impaled upon harpoons and torn apart in a flurry of blades. The slaughter-engines' advance only stalled when opposed by Eberhart's retinue, Terminator armour proving more resistant against their blades. Ranks of Imperial Fists lay dead before one of the rampaging slaughter-engines fell, its head crushed by the repeated blows of a Sergeant's power fist. A second was slain by melta blasts from a dying Legionary impaled upon his target's blade, a third pinned against the wall by a trio of Terminators and destroyed by chainfists. The remaining constructs withdrew, carving their way out of the rear of the Imperial Fists' formation and disappearing



once more into the accessways; deprived of the slaughter-engines' strength, the few World Eaters left standing were swiftly overwhelmed by the Imperial Fists' superior numbers. Silence fell within the tunnel, but Eberhart brooked no respite and ordered his warriors to press on towards the heart of the complex, forced against their nature to abandon the dead and those too wounded to move. The phalanx was reformed, its numbers depleted, and marched onwards, once more favouring haste over perfect vigilance. The price for such tactics was blood.

As the Imperial Fists moved deeper into the complex, yet more packs of predatory slaughter-engines emerged to harry them, striking at both ends of the phalanx, dividing the Legionaries' attention and halting their march. These attacks displayed feral cunning, the constructs adapting their tactics in response to the Imperial Fists. Legionaries bearing heavy weapons were skewered upon harpoons fired from the shadows, their killers disappearing into the access tunnels with their prey before the Imperial Fists could retaliate. Small bands of World Eaters would emerge to slam into the Loyalists, slaughter-engines behind them, shielded from weapons fire by the bodies of Legionaries. Each skirmish wasted precious time, a commodity of which Bodt possessed little, and saw handfuls of Legionaries in yellow slain each time.

Thirty minutes had passed, twice as long as pre-invasion assessments had predicted, before the strike force neared the complex's central command bunker, emerging from the mag-rail tunnel into a cavern lined with storage

containers. A single accessway broke off, while the rail lines carried on westward into a second tunnel, from which came the echoes of distant battle, evidence of the Iron Hands strike force engaged in its own bloody march on the command centre. From behind, a pack of slaughter-engines emerged having given chase to the Imperial Fists. Eberhart readied for renewed battle yet the constructs only prowled the boundary of the mag-rail tunnel, howling and tearing at the ferrocrite with bladed limbs, moving only to duck out of sight when the Imperial Fists opened fire as if reluctant to cross some imperceptible barrier into the cavern. Accepting the small respite he had been granted, Eberhart ordered a rearguard formed at the entrance to the northern accessway, leaving behind all bar his retinue as he pressed forwards, seemingly intent upon reaching the target before the approaching Iron Hands.

The narrow tunnel down which Eberhart travelled was lit by the glow of distant lumens and echoed with the sound of binaric chants, curving right at its end to reveal a chamber beyond. Within, tech-priests, the sigil of the Crimson Priesthood of Sarum stark upon their robes, prostrated themselves before a blast door, flanked by an alcove either side of the ingress. Within each alcove stood a bipedal construct, matching a Leviathan Dreadnought in size and bulk, and bound to the walls by rune-graven chains that pulsed with harsh light. The tech-priests offered no resistance as Eberhart ordered his warriors to cut them down, the constructs beginning to stir and shudder, their runes pulsing with increased frequency.

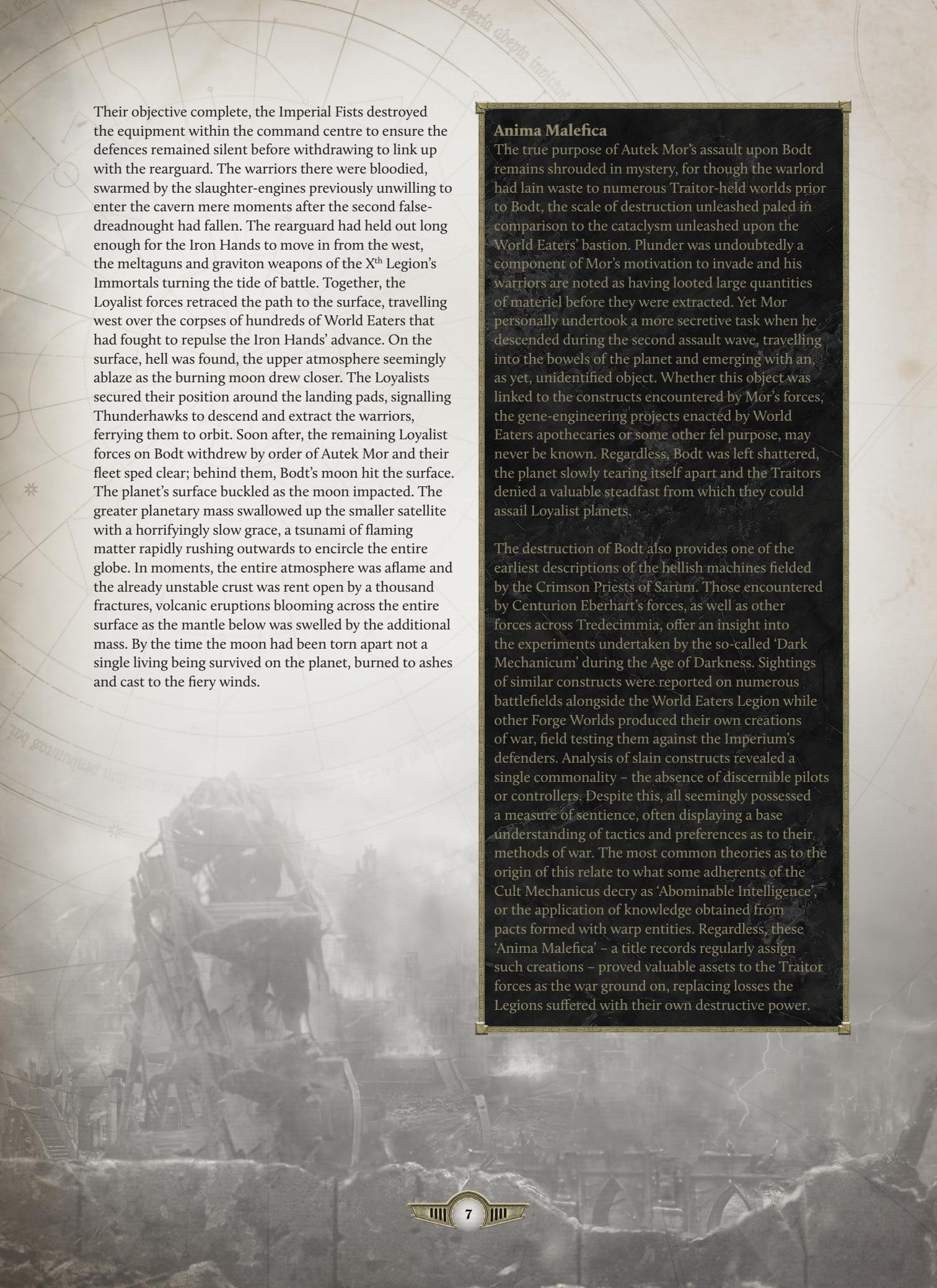


Blood pooled around the constructs' feet, coalescing into two currents that slithered across the floor, each one coiling around the legs of a bound construct before flowing into its form. The air stood still for the briefest of moments, then was split by the sound of crashing metal and the roars of distant beasts as the constructs woke. The chains tore free from the wall as the constructs walked forwards, emerging from their alcoves and rising to full height. Slab plates bound together with scar-like welds formed their skin and each arm ended in a brutal four-pronged claw. Crimson mist plumed in a steady breath-like pulse, emitted from vents set in a hunched head resting below each construct's shoulders. With steps that echoed like thunder within the chamber, and which cracked the ground they walked on, the constructs closed the gap between them and the Imperial Fists.

For all the armoured mass of Legionaries in Terminator armour, it paled in comparison to that of the false-dreadnoughts. Terminators were tossed aside as the constructs barrelled into their midst and those left standing faced being torn asunder by raking siege claws that rent storm shields and carved through armour with ease. Any semblance of formation amongst the Imperial Fists was broken as the constructs rampaged amongst them, killing a warrior with each sweep of their claws. Terminators attempted to get in close to the false-dreadnoughts yet, shoulder to shoulder and possessed of greater reach, the constructs pushed their foe back. Stray blows that bypassed their defences ripped free chunks of armour from which infernal light shone yet the constructs appeared unaffected, as if they revelled in the slaughter and welcomed the damage wrought upon their forms. Sensing defeat, Eberhart ordered his warriors to withdraw into the tunnel, seeking to isolate the constructs within its confines. There, his warriors reformed, their Centurion at the centre. Giving chase, the first construct pulled its way into the tunnel, armour scraping gouges into the ferrocrete as it pushed down the tunnel, the second lurking at the tunnel's entrance behind it. Three abreast, Eberhart's retinue faced down the oncoming behemoth, two striking as the third was torn apart. A grinding blow from a chainfist rendered its left arm inert before the right pulped the body of the perpetrator. The first two ranks

were slain before the construct collapsed, its legs crushed by the relentless blows of the Terminators. Eberhart urged his warriors to push forwards, clambering over the construct's prone form as it stilled. Once more they pushed into the chamber beyond, forcing back the second construct through weight of numbers. Though less than half their starting strength remained, enough still stood to allow Eberhart and his retinue to encircle the false-dreadnought, assailing it from all sides. Each swing of the construct's claws took another life yet outnumbered and surrounded it could not resist forever. As the blows rent armour, its movements became increasingly sluggish, its crimson breath ragged. Infernal systems failing, the construct claimed its final victim, its siege claw punching through Eberhart's shield, into the armour and flesh beyond. The Centurion's retinue surged forwards but too late; raising Eberhart's broken corpse aloft, the construct at last fell silent, the Centurion's blood raining down upon its face.

The Imperial Fists had emerged victorious but at a great cost, the lives of Eberhart and two-thirds of his retinue, each one a veteran of the Great Crusade, expended to slay the constructs. The inexorable descent of Bodt's moon allowed no pause however and Eberhart's second-in-command, the Optae Albrich, assumed command, directing the remaining warriors to breach the blast door and seize the command centre beyond. Chainfists carved through the armoured bulwark, and the World Eaters in the room beyond were gunned down in a brief, bloody firefight. The Traitors slain, the adjunct interfaced with the centre's communication equipment, sending messages to orbit to inform their commanders that the bunker had been cleared and any remaining surface defences disabled, opening the way for the second assault wave. Missives were also dispatched to other deployed Loyalist forces warning of the constructs the Imperial Fists had encountered. Affirmations were received in kind, along with tales of mechanical horrors fielded elsewhere, including towering engines fashioned in the image of Terran scorpions that destroyed squadrons of super-heavy tanks, and Knight-like war machines armed with gargantuan rune-engraved axes scything through infantry and armour alike.



Their objective complete, the Imperial Fists destroyed the equipment within the command centre to ensure the defences remained silent before withdrawing to link up with the rearguard. The warriors there were bloodied, swarmed by the slaughter-engines previously unwilling to enter the cavern mere moments after the second false-dreadnought had fallen. The rearguard had held out long enough for the Iron Hands to move in from the west, the meltaguns and graviton weapons of the Xth Legion's Immortals turning the tide of battle. Together, the Loyalist forces retraced the path to the surface, travelling west over the corpses of hundreds of World Eaters that had fought to repulse the Iron Hands' advance. On the surface, hell was found, the upper atmosphere seemingly ablaze as the burning moon drew closer. The Loyalists secured their position around the landing pads, signalling Thunderhawks to descend and extract the warriors, ferrying them to orbit. Soon after, the remaining Loyalist forces on Bodt withdrew by order of Autek Mor and their fleet sped clear; behind them, Bodt's moon hit the surface. The planet's surface buckled as the moon impacted. The greater planetary mass swallowed up the smaller satellite with a horrifyingly slow grace, a tsunami of flaming matter rapidly rushing outwards to encircle the entire globe. In moments, the entire atmosphere was aflame and the already unstable crust was rent open by a thousand fractures, volcanic eruptions blooming across the entire surface as the mantle below was swelled by the additional mass. By the time the moon had been torn apart not a single living being survived on the planet, burned to ashes and cast to the fiery winds.

Anima Malefica

The true purpose of Autek Mor's assault upon Bodt remains shrouded in mystery, for though the warlord had lain waste to numerous Traitor-held worlds prior to Bodt, the scale of destruction unleashed paled in comparison to the cataclysm unleashed upon the World Eaters' bastion. Plunder was undoubtedly a component of Mor's motivation to invade and his warriors are noted as having looted large quantities of materiel before they were extracted. Yet Mor personally undertook a more secretive task when he descended during the second assault wave, travelling into the bowels of the planet and emerging with an, as yet, unidentified object. Whether this object was linked to the constructs encountered by Mor's forces, the gene-engineering projects enacted by World Eaters apothecaries or some other fel purpose, may never be known. Regardless, Bodt was left shattered, the planet slowly tearing itself apart and the Traitors denied a valuable steadfast from which they could assail Loyalist planets.

The destruction of Bodt also provides one of the earliest descriptions of the hellish machines fielded by the Crimson Priests of Sartum. Those encountered by Centurion Eberhart's forces, as well as other forces across Tredecimnia, offer an insight into the experiments undertaken by the so-called 'Dark Mechanicum' during the Age of Darkness. Sightings of similar constructs were reported on numerous battlefields alongside the World Eaters Legion while other Forge Worlds produced their own creations of war, field testing them against the Imperium's defenders. Analysis of slain constructs revealed a single commonality - the absence of discernible pilots or controllers. Despite this, all seemingly possessed a measure of sentience, often displaying a base understanding of tactics and preferences as to their methods of war. The most common theories as to the origin of this relate to what some adherents of the Cult Mechanicus decry as 'Abominable Intelligence', or the application of knowledge obtained from pacts formed with warp entities. Regardless, these 'Anima Malefica' - a title records regularly assign such creations - proved valuable assets to the Traitor forces as the war ground on, replacing losses the Legions suffered with their own destructive power.



THE DEPTHS OF TREDECIMMIA LEGENDARY MISSION

BREACH THE COMMAND CENTRE

A s Loyalist forces fell upon the region of Tredecimmia, a joint Imperial Fists and Iron Hands strike force was tasked with assaulting the northern defence line and slaying the World Eaters commanders garrisoned within. To achieve this task, the Loyalists were faced with traversing the subterranean tunnel complex beneath the defence line and overcoming the tide of deadly constructs unleashed by the Traitors.

In this mission, one player will be the Defender, representing the Traitor forces attempting to repel the assault upon their command bunker, and the other will be the Attacker, representing the Loyalists attempting to break through the enemy force and slay their commanders.

This Legendary Mission is a Zone Mortalis Mission.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: SHATTER THE DEFENCES

Victory in this mission is decided by two Objectives and the status of the Attacker's Warlord. This mission uses an Objective zone and a single Blast Door Objective. Each Objective has different effects on the Victory points total of both players, as well as having other in-game effects:

- **Objective Zone:** The Defender's deployment zone is also the Objective zone. At the end of each player turn, both players calculate the total number of Wounds models within the Objective zone have – this is the current total number of Wounds not the starting number of Wounds total. The player with the higher Wounds total controls the Objective zone. The player who controls the Objective zone at the end of each player turn scores 2 Victory points during Turns 1 and 2, D3+1 Victory points during Turns 3 and 4, and D3+3 Victory points during Turn 5 onwards.
- **Blast Door Objective:** The Blast Door Objective is a piece of terrain that may be targeted by any of the Attacker's models, and is treated as a Building with no Fire Points or Battlements, a Transport Capacity of 0, and a single facing with Armour Value 12. The Blast Door Objective has 8 Hull Points, however, when a Penetrating Hit is inflicted on it, it loses D3 Hull Points and no roll is made on the Building Damage table. If the Blast Door Objective is reduced to 0 Hull Points, it does not suffer a Total Collapse result. Instead, it is destroyed and removed from the battlefield. If, at the end of the battle, the Blast Door Objective has been removed from the battlefield, the Attacker scores 5 Victory points; otherwise, the Defender scores 5 Victory points.
- **Attacker's Warlord:** If, at the end of the battle, the Attacker's Warlord has been removed as a casualty for any reason, the Defender scores 2 Victory points. If the Attacker's Warlord is still on the battlefield, the Attacker scores 1 Victory point instead.

At the end of the battle, if the Attacker has a higher total of Victory points then they have broken through the command centre's defences and the Attackers secure victory. If the Defender has a higher total of Victory points then they have held the invaders off long enough for the Defender to secure victory.

Players may not score Victory points for any Secondary Objectives, or any special Objectives granted by other special rules, Warlord Traits or Rites of War.

SELECTING ARMIES

Both players should select armies with a points limit of 2,500 points, using the Zone Mortalis Engagement Force Organisation chart found in *Warhammer – The Horus Heresy: The Siege of Cthonia*. Both armies must obey the rules for selecting forces for Zone Mortalis games.

The Defender may include units with the Corrupted Engine Unit Sub-type (see page 126 of *Warhammer – The Horus Heresy: The Martian Civil War*) within their Primary Detachment, as if they were part of the same faction as the Primary Detachment, so long as no unit with the Corrupted Engine Unit Sub-type is selected as a Compulsory choice. Models with the Dreadnought Unit Type and Corrupted Engine Unit Sub-type do not count towards the maximum number of allowed models with the Dreadnought Unit Type as part of the Behemoths of Destruction special rule.

SETTING UP THE MISSION

This Legendary Mission uses the Zone Mortalis Mission Strategium Assault deployment map (see page 194 of *Warhammer – The Horus Heresy: The Siege of Cthonia*). A network of tunnels and doors should be placed within 24" of the Attacker's battlefield edge to represent the tunnel leading up to the command centre. Only barricades and debris should be set up on the remainder of the battlefield.

OBJECTIVES

The 6" either side of the centre of the Defender's Battlefield Edge is the Blast Door Objective.

REINFORCEMENT POINTS

This battle does not use Reinforcements points – both players deploy their full armies during deployment, and no units may be placed in Reinforcements.

DEPLOYMENT

The Defender deploys their entire army within their deployment zone, ignoring the rules for Reinforcement Points normally used during Zone Mortalis missions. The Attacker then deploys their entire army in their deployment zone.

No units may be placed in Reinforcements and no units may make a Flanking Assault, Deep Strike Assault or other similar special deployment from Reserves.

FIRST TURN

The Attacker takes the first turn, unless their opponent successfully rolls to Seize the Initiative.

GAME LENGTH

The battle lasts for five Game Turns. At the end of the fifth turn, the player with the highest total of Victory points wins – if both players have the same total of Victory points, the Attacker is considered to have won.

MISSION SPECIAL RULES

This Legendary Mission has the following special rules:

- **System Override**
- **Lockdown Protocol:** At the start of the first turn, before any models are moved, the Attacker may select up to three pieces of Door Terrain to be Locked.

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