

THE BATTLE OF THE COLD PASSAGE

A battle from the files of Tempestus Biblotek

*A new scenario and experimental rules for a fast battleship
by John Lambshead*

The Battle of Cold Passage occurred as part of a determined effort by Battlefleet Bakka to combat the prolific Chaos raids throughout the segmentum. Here, John Lambshead recounts the battle and a scenario to refight it, along with some experimental rules and background of one of the near unique vessels to take part in it – the Invincible Class Fast Battleship, the Huud.

Refighting Historical Battles

There are two important notes about historical battles. The first is that they are rarely as well balanced as competitive scenarios. If you have an inferior force then regard it as a challenge to your skills as an admiral. The second point is that the scenario is written with the exact ships that participated, rather than fleets chosen to a certain points value but few of us have every ship variant ever made or conceived by Games Workshop. So what do you do if you want to try the scenario but lack one or more of the appropriate models? The two key words here are 'represents' and 'substitutes'. One way is to use a different model from your collection that is as close to the historical ship as is possible to represent the historical ship. Alternatively, if you are a purist you can substitute a warship of similar capabilities from your collection. Please do not be put off historical scenarios simply because you do not have every model immediately available.

"The Emperor is master of the galaxy
but the captain is master of his ship."

Popular naval saying

Introduction

The Chaos Desolator Class Battleship, *Soul of Hate*, mounted a series of raids into Segmentum Tempestus. The battleship was easily able to overwhelm normal convoy escorts and local orbital defences of provincial worlds. It left a trail of destruction that stretched the resources of Battlefleet Bakka to the limit. Old battleships were recommissioned to escort convoys and a series of battleship hunter groups were formed.

One of these groups consisted of the battleship *Prince Issus* and the fast battleship *Huud*. This group was allocated a quiet sub-sector, Formis, as its patrol area, well away from the predicted course of the *Soul of Hate*. In truth, the flotilla was barely combat worthy. The *Prince Issus* was a new ship that had not completed a single tour of duty. Many of its crew were inexperienced and its primary weapons had not been properly tested.

Against all expectation, the *Soul of Hate* was detected by the light cruiser *Faithful* in transit through the sub-sector. The *Faithful* shadowed the Chaos raider flotilla at a safe distance, skillfully staying in its plasma wake to avoid detection as the astropaths broadcast the flotilla's path.

IMPERIAL FLEET

Fleet Admiral Draconis

Ld 8, 2 re-rolls
aboard the *Huud*

Huud

Invincible Class fast battleship

Prince Issus

Victory Class battleship, Leadership 6

The *Prince Issus* has problems with its weapons. Its lances hit on a 5+ rather than a 4+ and its weapons batteries suffer from an additional shift one column to the right. The nova cannon uses the normal rules.

Faithful

Dauntless Class Light cruiser, Leadership 8

CHAOS FLEET

Chaos Lord Aratah

Ld 8, Mark of Chaos (player's choice)
aboard the *Soul of Hate*

Soul of Hate

Desolator Class Battleship, Leadership 8
Mark of Chaos (player's choice).

Tormentation

Repulsive Class Grand Cruiser, Leadership 7.

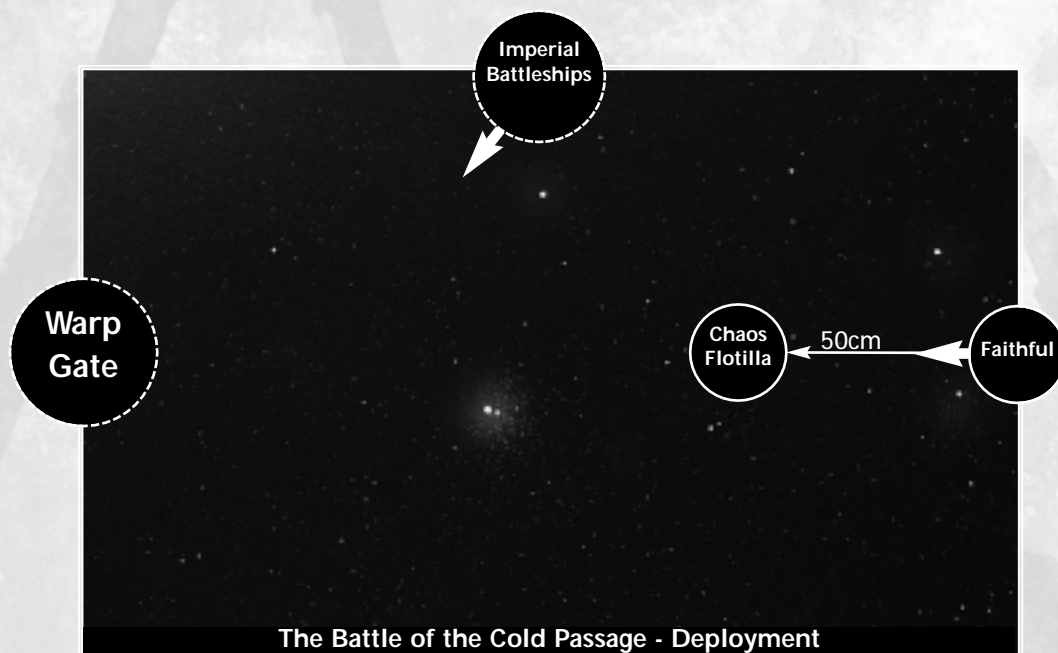


Refighting the Battle

Deployment

The battle takes place in deep space in the Senso system. Roll on the deep space generator on p. 43 of the Battlefleet Gothic rulebook for the deep-space celestial phenomena generator and place them on the playing area according to the usual rules. The *Soul of Hate* is trying to avoid combat and run for the warp gate on the edge of the system to continue its campaign of terror among the shipping lanes. The *Faithful* is following the Chaos flotilla and the Imperial battleships are on an intercept course.

The Imperial ships are placed within 5 cm off the table edge on the bearings shown and the Chaos flotilla is placed within 50 cm of the table edge on the bearing shown. The warp currents are particularly violent in the Cold Passage and the warp can only be entered via warp gates. The warp gate is a circular area the size of a nova cannon template placed touching the table edge. Any ship entering the gate disappears into the warp.



IMPERIAL INVINCIBLE CLASS FAST BATTLESHIP 290pts

"There is something wrong with our ships today."

- Admiral Lekan at the Battle of Swetz Climb

The Invincible fast battleship class was the brainchild of Admiral Kisher. Segmentum Tempestus suffers from heretic raiders sliding from the empty space between its far-flung star systems. In particular, Chaos and Eldar large raiding ships were often faster than the escort flotillas of the Tempestus fleet. Kisher dreamed of a ship class that was as fast as a light cruiser but carried the firepower of a battleship. Such a ship, he reasoned, would be capable of swiftly hunting down heretic raiders and then dispatching them equally swiftly with massed long-range firepower. He pressured the Fleet Techmagii until, much against their will, they conceived and developed the fast battleship class. The Techmagii protested in vain that severe compromises were inherent in the class' internal compartmentalisation and back-up

redundancy in vital systems, especially the power distribution grid. Kisher brushed aside such pessimism claiming that the fast battleships would be faster than ships that were stronger and stronger than ships that were faster. Up to a point the theory worked and the fast battleships won a series of ship-to-ship actions with heretic and xeno cruisers. The problem was that because they were as large as battleships, were armed like battleships and looked like battleships, tacticians were tempted to use them as battleships. In the battle-line they proved horribly vulnerable; fast battleships could dish it out but not take it. They were like heavyweight boxers with glass jaws. Fast battleships were not popular with fleet officers being known with traditional naval black humour as 'Kisher's Kombustibles'.

Fifteen of the class were ordered but only ten were produced after three exploded in fast succession at Swetz Climb.

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	TURNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Battleship/8	25cm	45°	2	5+/6+ front	4
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED		FIREPOWER/STR	
Port Weapons Battery		60cm		12	
Starboard Weapons Battery		60cm		12	
Dorsal Lance		60cm		4	
Prow Torpedoes		30cm		6	
				Left/right/front	
				Front	

FAMOUS SHIPS OF BATTLEFLEET TEMPESTUS

Invincible

Inflexible

Huud

Immortal Emperor

Notes: Every time a fast battleship takes a hit roll two dice, not one, to check for critical hits. It is possible to have to roll twice on the Critical Hit table if a double 6 is rolled. The ships can use 'Come to new heading' orders as they have a much higher power-to-weight ratio than other battleships

Including an Invincible Class

An Invincible Class counts as a battleship choice in a Bakka fleet. You may include one battleship in your fleet for every three cruisers or battlecruisers.

Modelling an Invincible Class

A Retribution Class Battleship can represent the ship quite well. It looks better if the superstructure is cut down somewhat to represent the sleek lines of the lightened fast battleship hull.

Special Rules

The *Soul of Hate* cannot disengage, the gods of Chaos have a mission for it, but any other ship can attempt disengagement.

Ending the Scenario

The game ends when the *Soul of Hate* is destroyed or enters the warp through the warp gate. When the Chaos battleship enters the warp, the Imperial player rolls a dice. If the

number rolled is equal to or greater than the total number of hit points remaining then the *Soul of Hate* is ripped apart by warp turbulence and demons feed on the souls of its crew.

Winning and Losing

The Imperial player wins if the *Soul of Hate* is destroyed but the Chaos player wins if the ship successfully enters the warp.

Historical Outcome

Historical Outcome

Admiral Draconis ordered general chase at full speed and the *Huud* surged ahead of her consort at full speed in an attempt to score a hit and slow the *Soul of Hate* so that the *Prince Issus* could catch up.

The *Faithful* attacked the *Tormentation* from behind. The *Tormentation's* captain, on *Spleensplitter*, gibbered with rage. He lost all sense of the greater objective and ignoring his orders swung the grand cruiser around to engage the impudent *Faithful*. In the following encounter the light cruiser was destroyed but the *Tormentation* lost contact with the *Soul of Hate* and never re-engaged in the main battle. The sacrifice of the *Faithful* was not to be in vain.

The battleships exchanged fire at maximum range. Hits were scored on the *Soul of Hate* but she moved purposefully towards the warp gate, seemingly undamaged. The *Huud*, in the van of the Imperial attack, received the lion's share of the heretic firepower and took serious damage.

With great skill, Admiral Draconis 'crossed the T' of the Chaos battleship, the Imperial ships in line astern. That was the moment Aratah had been waiting for. He unleashed a storm of fire on the *Huud* at point blank range, raking the ship from stem to stern and then fired a full

spread of torpedoes into the flanks of the fast battleship. At this range, evasive manoeuvres were ineffective and five torpedoes engaged. All burst through the *Huud's* depleted defences and smashed the hull of the ship, setting it on fire from seemingly every deck.

The bridge crew of the *Prince Issus*, watched in horrified fascination as the *Huud* burned, there was no hope of damage crew putting the multiple fires out. Incredibly, the Admiral was still alive on the bridge and he gave one last order, to blast the *Soul* with every weapon still capable of firing. The dying *Huud* clawed the heretics with a maelstrom of shells, lasers and plasma, carving great chunks out of the battleship's armour. Then the *Huud* exploded in a rain of plasma hotter than the surface of a star. Only three survivors in an escape pod were ever found.

The *Prince Issus* turned parallel to the enemy and traded shots but the inexperienced crew had problems targeting their opponents. The new warship got the worse of the exchange and sheered off to long range. The *Soul of Hate* plunged into the warp gate and disappeared, never to be seen again. Observers on the *Prince Issus* were convinced that the battleship was flaring plasma from her ventral engines as she entered the warp and speculate that she failed to survive warp entry.

