



NOVA  
OPEN



# THE VIRTUE OF FREEDOM

The 2016 NOVA Open Warhammer 40,000 Narrative Campaign

September 1-4  Crystal City, Virginia



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THE VIRTUE SOCIETY WAS FOUNDED AMID CHAOS AND BLOODSHED,  
WAR AND BETRAYAL. SPECIES FOUGHT SPECIES, WORLDS FOUGHT  
WORLDS, BEINGS FOUGHT BEINGS. VIOLENCE WAS UNCEASING,  
RUTHLESS. THE VIRTUES AND OUR ADHERENCE TO THEM SAVED US.  
DISCIPLINE, ORDER, PEACE, THESE GAVE US A PATH FORWARD.

AND YET, ALONG THAT PATH, WE FORGOT ONE:  
THE VIRTUE OF FREEDOM.

- SANCTIONED POET-IN-EXILE SHOSSOLA,  
COMMENTARIES

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to another year of the NOVA *Warhammer 40,000* Narrative!

The NOVA 40k Narrative is a high quality wargaming experience based on an ongoing story in an original science fiction universe. It is team-centric, with players organizing into two alliances and collectively making strategic decisions such as match pairings and targets. Most importantly, it is a narrative campaign, not a tournament. Stellar play and notable achievements are recognized, but the focus is on social gaming with a strong narrative tilt. Missions aren't necessarily symmetric, and some of them aren't even fair. Opponents also may or may not be working toward covert objectives of which you're not even aware, or have a secret resource or stratagem that they or their alliance won in earlier battles. If your driving motivation is competition and winning games, this event is not for you. If your main interest though is having fun, playing good games with great people, and making your mark on a multi-year story built by hundreds of fellow 40k gamers, then this is where you want to be September 1–4, 2016.

Going into its fifth year, our player-created storyline continues with The Virtue suffering the after-effects of its failed assault on Earth, defeated by Humanity over the course of the previous events. Whether you're a new rookie or a returning veteran: Strap in, check your ammo, and brace for impact—eons old, galaxy spanning civilizations don't change easily. Join us now for the 2016 NOVA 40k Narrative:

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### UPDATES

This year's 40k Narrative is going to continue the things you love about it. But a number of changes and improvements are also being made. Primary gameplay updates of which to be aware include the following:

- Registration will be simplified and balancing of the sides improved, with players signing up for the event as a whole and then joining a side on opening night.
- Codex-specific Narrative Supplements have been dropped. They're too unwieldy to balance and maintain under Games Workshop's current hectic release schedule, as likely to imbalance armies as balance them, and skewed registration toward one or the other side in order to get specific boosts.
- Players will instead customize their armies through selecting a Technical Skill, such as Field Medicine, Electronics, or Assassination. These will provide small, thematic in-game boosts; notable advantages toward specific narrative mission objectives; and a player-specific campaign progression.
- Not everyone will be playing the same mission in each round, instead choosing from several options to meet the strategic needs of their side and to best match their technical skill and army list.
- Superheavy vehicles and gargantuan creatures with at most 9 HP/Wounds are permitted.
- An optional Quick Reaction Force detachment is made available to use in army lists.

# THE VIRTUE OF FREEDOM

## RELEASE SCHEDULE

There are a number of significant components to the NOVA 40k Narrative. This player guide will be extended over the coming months as they are developed, tested, and released. The following milestones are the latest by which you can expect details on those components.

Date	Changes
January 1	Event schedule and basic army selection rules
March 1	Background story, campaign mechanics, and sample mission
May 1	Technical skills list, personal scoring, and painting contest rules
July 1	Public mission book, resources and stratagems samples
September 1	<i>Game on!</i>

## CHANGELOG

This table summarizes what has been changed in each release of this document.

Date	Changes
January 31, 2016	Schedule tweaked to better accommodate seminars. Quick Reaction Force detachment made more restrictive. Basic gameplay rules were added (invisibility, rerollable 2+ saves, team games).
January 1, 2016	Initial public release.

# EVENT SCHEDULE

There are two registration and participation tracks in the NOVA 40k Narrative:

- **Warlords.** Six amazing, storyful games, from Thursday night to Sunday mid-day, and war council meetings to make strategic decisions such as match objectives and pairings.
- **Nightfighters.** Three great games on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night. This is a good option for players who want to participate in the 40k Narrative, but also play in NOVA 40k GT or other events.

The following table provides the detailed schedule for both tracks.

Day	Time	Participants	Activity
Thursday	20:30	Warlords & Nightfighters	Joint Briefing & Match Pairings
	21:30	Warlords & Nightfighters	<b>Battle Round 1</b>
Friday	10:00	Warlords	Alliance War Councils
	10:30	Warlords	Match Pairings
	11:00	Warlords	<b>Battle Round 2</b> (to 13:30)
	16:30	Warlords	Joint Briefing
	17:00	Warlords	Alliance War Councils (to 18:00)
	20:30	Warlords & Nightfighters	Joint Briefing & Match Pairings
	21:30	Warlords & Nightfighters	<b>Battle Round 3</b>
Saturday	10:00	Warlords	Alliance War Councils
	10:30	Warlords	Match Pairings
	11:00	Warlords	<b>Battle Round 4</b> (to 13:30)
	16:30	Warlords	Joint Briefing
	17:00	Warlords	Alliance War Councils (to 18:00)
	20:30	Warlords & Nightfighters	Joint Briefing & Match Pairings
	21:30	Warlords & Nightfighters	<b>Battle Round 5</b>
Sunday	10:30	Warlords	Joint Briefing
	11:00	Warlords	Alliance War Councils
	11:30	Warlords	Match Pairings (to noon)
	13:00	Warlords	<b>Battle Round 6</b> (to 15:30)
	16:30	Warlords & Nightfighters	Joint Briefing: Outcomes! (to 17:00)

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## ARMY SELECTION

Each player must prepare two army lists:

- **Campaign Force.** For your individual battles, the majority of the campaign. *Up to 2000 points.*
- **Strike Force.** For your team games, of which there will be at least one. *Up to 1000 points.*

Both army lists must be battle forged. No model with more than 9 hull points or wounds is permitted. Superheavy vehicles and gargantuan creatures are otherwise allowed.

The strike force list need not be a subset of the campaign force list, but cannot include any factions not utilized in the campaign force list. As detailed below, in team games you will have your own warlord, and your units will count as allies of convenience to those of your partner(s), regardless of factions.

No other requirements or constraints are placed on detachments, formations, or force organization. An optional Quick Reaction Force detachment is made available for this event, described below.

### SOURCES

Forgeworld units and armies eligible for standard *Warhammer 40,000*, i.e., not *Apocalypse*, are permitted. Units and armies from Forgeworld's Horus Heresy *Age of Darkness* books are also permitted.

All up-to-date, official *Warhammer 40,000* army sources are permitted that are available in current publication. This does include White Dwarf entries, which are available via back issues, and current campaign books. It does not include limited edition dataslates and formations, e.g., those included in mega-bundles. Contact the tournament organizer(s) beforehand about any questions. Remember that you must have all sources on hand, electronically or digitally.

For any codex or supplement re-released within two weeks preceding the event, you may choose whether to use the old or new edition. You may not use both editions of a single source within the event.

### MODELS

Models must be WYSIWYG, but identifiable and thoughtful conversions and proxies are welcome. Indistinguishable or confusing proxies are not acceptable. Contact the organizer(s) beforehand for any questions.

In addition, models need not be painted, but is *very strongly* recommended in order to not impair the experiences of all other participants. A painting component will be applied to personal scores to reward finished armies, following the standardized NOVA metrics.

### QUICK REACTION FORCE

Players may optionally employ a Quick Reaction Force detachment in their army lists, defined as follows.

### FORCE ORGANIZATION

An army may only contain a single Quick Reaction Force detachment. All units in the detachment must have the same faction, or no faction. The detachment is comprised of the following battlefield roles.

HQ	Troops	Elites	Fast Attack	Heavy Support	Lords of War
1–2	2–6	1–4	*	*	0–1

A Quick Reaction Force detachment must include one Fast Attack and one Heavy Support choice. It may include up to three selections in one of those roles, but must contain one and only one selection in the other role. I.e., the detachment must adhere to one of the following options:

- 1–3 Fast Attack and 1 Heavy Support
- 1 Fast Attack and 1–3 Heavy Support

As usual, dedicated transports are not counted toward these quantity limitations.

## COMMAND BENEFITS

The following advantages are granted for utilizing this detachment:

- **Objective Secured.** All scoring units in this detachment except superheavy vehicles and gargantuan creatures gain Objective Secured. A unit with this special rule controls objectives even if an enemy scoring unit is within range of the objective marker, unless the enemy unit also has this special rule.
- **QRF Commander.** If this detachment is your primary detachment, instead of rolling a random warlord trait you may choose a warlord trait from the tables in the main *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. If you wish to use a different table of warlord traits, i.e., from a codex, then you must roll a random trait, but may reroll the result.

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## GAMEPLAY RULES

This section defines the basic gameplay rules applied in the 40k Narrative.

### CORE RULES

The following rules apply to all games in the NOVA 40k Narrative.

Matches are scheduled for 2.5 hours, but players may take more time as long as they mutually agree to do so. Please discuss and come to a decision on playing long or not at the start of each match, or at least well before the time limit, so that there are no assumptions or mismatched expectations. This flexibility ensures that players may participate in seminars and other NOVA events without hindering their Narrative experience, but have the option to play at a relaxed pace if they have no schedule constraints. Results must be submitted at least half an hour before the next activity on the Narrative schedule.

The Invisibility psychic power is amended to be:

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*Invisibility* is a blessing that targets a single friendly unit within 24". While the power is in effect, enemy units shooting at the target unit do so at BS 1, and in close combat will only hit models of the target unit on To Hit rolls of 5+.

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For any failed 2+ save that may be rerolled, the reroll only succeeds on a 4+.

### TEAM RULES

The rules in this section apply to team games in the 40k Narrative.

All players in a team field their strike force lists as separate armies. **Regardless of factions, teammates consider their partners' units and models to be allies of convenience to their own army.** In addition, all players on a team nominate a warlord for themselves as usual.

Results rolled by a player on the Warp Storm table (*Codex: Chaos Daemons*) do not affect their teammates' armies and models unless specifically dictated by the table, i.e., other Chaos Daemons or marked Chaos Space Marines.


In the psychic phase, a single D6 is rolled by the current team to determine the base warp charge from which each player on both teams generates their own individual pools, applying the usual rules to their own models. Players all use their own warp charge pool; teammates cannot combine or share warp charge. Any opposing player with models on the table may attempt to deny the witch, caveat that if a specific unit of enemy models is targeted, their player alone may attempt to block the spell.

Units may not shoot at close combats even if none of their player's units are engaged.

Teams are not eliminated unless there are no models of any member on the table.

For all other gameplay purposes the combined forces of a team are considered a single army comprised of multiple detachments, and the team considered a single player for all rules except when specifically distinguished by the missions here. How units belonging to different players in a team interact are thus governed by the rules for allies of convenience, on page 126 of the main *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.





WHO COULD HAVE GUESSED THIS AGE, ITS UNPRECEDENTED DISCORD  
AND DISSENT, WOULD START WITH ONE SMALL, UNREMARKABLE BLUE  
PLANET, ITSELF ALREADY ALL BUT FORGOTTEN?

- PREMIERE THYX,  
TRANSCRIPTS OF GOVERNANCE ENCLAVE TTTLAV.0



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## STORY SO FAR

We pick up our tale in the future...

*The Virtue is the greatest civilization ever arisen in the galaxy. More than a species, more than an empire, more than a philosophy; The Virtue is a way of being. Its culture and technology are unsurpassed. Its will is absolute. The Virtue is perfect.*

*The Virtue was perfect.*

*It has been two hundred years since The Virtue fought Humanity. Their pacification forces were smashed, but at great cost to the human defenders. Earth is a barren husk. Its mighty war fleets have vanished, scattered to the solar winds if not lost entirely. A paltry few survivors' colonies have integrated into the ignored, disordered, minor societies along the fringe worlds and outlaw regions at the edge of The Virtue's control, enduring as best they can in the shadow of the colossus.*

*The Virtue, for its part, has retreated into itself. Effects of that failed conquest echo still, slowly rippling across the staid society. For the first time in millennia, murmurs of disquiet have been heard in the governance enclaves. Questions flitter across the dataplane. How could a perfect society be defeated by such an unenlightened race? In a universe where everything is known, what could be unknown?*

*Spawned from this moral crisis, disparate elements on the perimeter of The Virtue's space have begun fomenting open rebellion. Branding themselves the Coalition of the Free, their messages have appeared across message boards and even hastily graffitied in public spaces on the outer worlds, praising a new virtue:*

*The virtue of freedom.*

## THE PAST

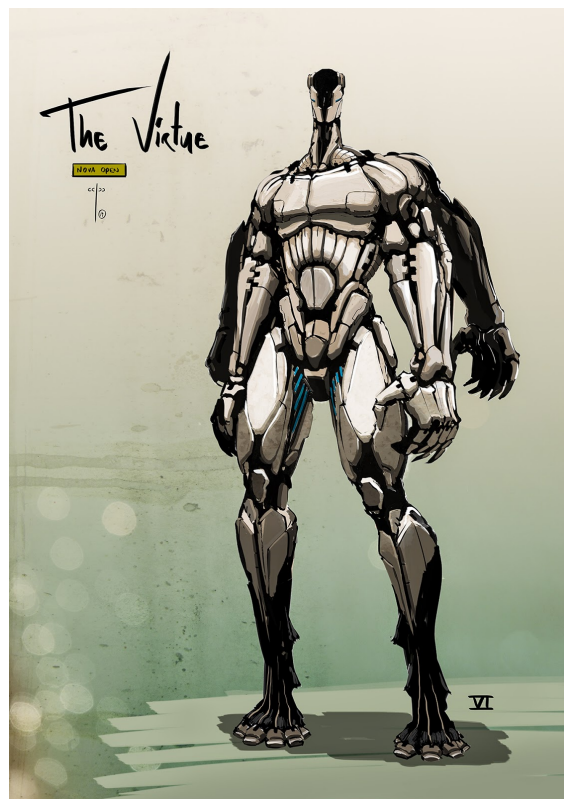
The 2016 40k Narrative continues the ongoing NOVA story of The Virtue and Humanity.

**NOVA 2012: First Contact.** After a brush with global nuclear war in 2194, humanity stepped back from the brink. The millennia-old dreams of scholars, tyrants, and preachers became a reality as all the people of Earth finally set aside their differences. That peace was shattered a mere eighteen years later when thousands of alien craft struck the planet without warning. Millions died before any response could even begin. Eventually though a resistance formed. Taking its last stand in Washington, D.C., the defenders were dumbfounded when the invaders inexplicably retreated.

**NOVA 2013: Cataclysm.** Learning what they could from alien captives and technology left behind, humanity strove to rebuild and prepare. Their caution was well founded: In 2312, one hundred years to the day of the first invasion, the invaders struck again. Against much improved resistance and plagued by doubts, they once more though faltered even as millions died. Faced with defeat, their commander rammed his flag-ship into Earth in a final ignominious gesture, igniting its antimatter cores in the planetary mantle. The blast and shock-waves killed billions, with billions more lost in catastrophic aftereffects. Humanity survived merely through those few population centers shielded enough to outlast the trauma.

**NOVA 2014: Descension.** Regrouping in the aftermath, humanity began a two-pronged offensive. Space fleets began pushing outward from Earth, learning much about the invaders and from where they had come. Forces on Earth meanwhile attempted to cleanse the planet of the numerous aliens still fighting on. This fight however was doomed. The planet had simply sustained too much damage, and the numerous invaders still extant on the surface were only working to further its destruction. Eventually the cold truth became clear and inevitable: The Earth was truly lost.

**NOVA 2015: Ascension.** Building on their successes, humanity's remaining military focused their efforts on the war in space. A massive invader space station was discovered and captured, yielding access to the Bend gates through which they warped time and space to travel the void. Meanwhile, ground forces fought to rescue and protect what remnants of Earth's remaining population they could. Although a tremendous evacuation was enacted, its scale was tragically dwarfed by all those necessarily left behind. Their hand forced by the ongoing fighting, the survivors waited as long as they could before closing and destroying the Bend gate inbound to Earth before launching on their exodus through the outward gate into the stars...



## THE VIRTUE

The alien invaders that beset Earth in 2212 were eventually revealed as warriors of The Virtue. For thousands of years The Virtue have ruled much of the galaxy, encompassing innumerable worlds and species. Built on fundamental, inarguable virtues and morals, over millenia the tenets of their society have progressed to become part of their collective genetic makeup itself. The Virtue society can do no wrong, and its citizens need not question if they might do wrong in following its dictates.

As such, none of The Virtue warriors encountered in the fighting over Earth had ever questioned their task. For all of known history The Virtue had stood in judgement over all the fledgeling races of the galaxy. As those species reached the threshold of relevance, The Virtue applied a standard protection and inclusion protocol: Were they a destructive cancer to be eliminated, or a desirable new element to be incorporated into The Virtue? Humanity was simply found wanting, no further explanation needed.

But those colossal, four-armed warriors encountered on Earth are but one face of The Virtue, just one of its militaries tasked with pacifying young races. The Virtue society is truly vast, and deep within its

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governance structures another conclusion had been derived from the protocols. From that initial crack, the events at Earth have slowly emerged as a growing fault line in the very foundations of The Virtue society. Never before has The Virtue been turned back from its objectives, least of all by such an insignificant young race as Humanity. For those that have truly considered the implications, the sheer outrageousness of the defeat calls into question the very essence of The Virtue. Eons-old civilizations don't fall often or easily, but when they do, it comes from doubts such as these.

## THE FREE

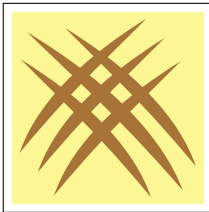
Two centuries later, those doubts have flickered into wisps of open dissent. On a far flung edge of The Virtue's territory, a group labeling itself the Coalition of the Free has developed as if from nowhere and taken increasingly provocative actions. It began on the public forums of the dataplane, messages citing discouraged texts and raising questions from hijacked sockets beamed into from unrecognized space. Emboldened by faint stirrings of doubt, Coalition-sponsored covert meetings began appearing on worlds of The Virtue themselves, disseminating their message and recruiting to their beliefs. Recently, the most brazen cells have shockingly defaced government buildings and even sabotaged pacification assets.

Operating within the strictures of their philosophy and being, local Virtue officiants have been unable to truly process and address these events. Most hazily interpret the Coalition of the Free as outside attackers feared to be on the verge of invading The Virtue space. Although almost wholly unprecedented, this is at least a largely understandable concept. Deeper, darker corners of The Virtue though better understand the true threat. Worse, they suspect and fear that the Coalition has been helped by traitorous elements within the government. Elements that might even explain mysterious aspects of the defeat at Earth.

Within the Coalition of the Free itself, hopes and passions run rampant as wildfire. Twinned rumors circulate among its cells. One tells of the discovery of a mighty weapon with which to fight The Virtue. Another posits an opportunity in the near future to make a daring strike at a very pillar of The Virtue's control in the region. True or false, the whole of its decentralized structure buzzes with activity and preparation...

## THE FUTURE

The NOVA 2016 40k Narrative begins at this moment on the precipice, and players must choose a side:



Fight for **Humanity** as a leader and instigator of the Coalition of the Free, striving to capture the rumored weapon and strike at The Virtue to preserve your race and release many others from its oppressive grip.

Command a military of **The Virtue**, directing a pacification force dispatched to uncover the traitor, quell rebellion, hunt down outside agitators, and restore peace and order by smashing the Coalition of the Free decisively.







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