

# ONLY WAR™

# NO SURRENDER™



A MILITARY CAMPAIGN FOR  
THE LYCURGOS STAR FORT

WARHAMMER®  
40,000  
ROLEPLAY

# ONLYWAR™



ROLEPLAYING IN THE GRIM DARKNESS  
OF THE 41ST MILLENNIUM

# CREDITS

## LEAD DEVELOPER

Tim Flanders

## WRITING AND DEVELOPMENT

Tim Cox and John Dunn

## EDITING AND PROOFREADING

Mark Latham and Dave Johnson

## MANAGING RPG PRODUCER

Chris Gerber

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

Michael Silsby and Edge Studios

## GRAPHIC DESIGN MANAGER

Brian Schomburg

## COVER ART

Imaginary FS Pte Ltd

## INTERIOR ART

Dimitri Bielak, Alberto Bontempi, Alex Boyd,  
Matt Bradbury, Kevin Chin, Ioan Dumi, Dave Gallagher,  
Illich Henriquez, Nikolaus Ingeneri, Jason Juta,  
Nuala Kinrade, Karl Kopinski, Sam Lamont, Mark Molnar,  
Marco Morte, Ameen Naksewee, Adrian Smith,  
David Sondered, Javier Garcia Urena

## MANAGING ART DIRECTOR

Andrew Navaro

## ART DIRECTION

Andy Christensen and John Taillon

# CREDITS

## PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT

Eric Knight

## LICENSING & DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

Deb Freytag

## EXECUTIVE GAME DESIGNER

Corey Konieczka

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Michael Hurley

## PUBLISHER

Christian T. Petersen

## SPECIAL THANKS

Playtest Coordinator Ronald DeValk. "No Guts No Glory!" Sean Connor with Stephen Pitson, Mathieu Booth, Barry Sprying, Andrea Pitson, and Rachel Booth: "You Bid Babies?!" Jordan Millward with Keri Harthoorn, Kyle Harthoorn-Burton, Kieren Smith, Julia Smith, Malcolm Douglas Spence.

## GAMES WORKSHOP

### LICENSING MANAGER

John French and Graham Nicoll

### HEAD OF LICENSING

Jon Gillard

### HEAD OF LICENSING, LEGAL, AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Andy Jones

### HEAD OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Alan Merrett



FANTASY  
FLIGHT  
GAMES

Fantasy Flight Games  
1995 West County Road B2  
Roseville, MN 55113  
USA

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# INTRODUCTION

*"They will wish to take this star fort from us, men. The Imperial dogs fear our glorious Duke. Seeing the rightness of our lord's cause, they cannot but question their own claim to the Emperor's domain and tremble at the realisation that they are unworthy. We stand guardian against those who fear change out of ignorance. We will teach the Emperor's misguided children to embrace their fate, or accept our judgement!"*

—General Frederique Constantine, commander of the Severan forces aboard the *Lycurgos* Star Fort

No SURRENDER is an extended, three-chapter adventure for **ONLY WAR**. Through the course of the scenarios within, the characters face situations, locales, and personalities their training could never have prepared them for. The entirety of this adventure centres around the *Lycurgos* star fort, a titanic orbital fortress used by the Severan Dominate in their war of secession from the Imperium of Man. This setting provides the Imperial Guard with unique challenges as they attempt to reclaim the ancient battle station.

The circumstances change, however, when the Imperial Guard and the forces of the Severan Dominate find that they are no longer the greatest threat to one another aboard the star fort. A terror from the last days of the Horus Heresy, a Chaos Space Marine Warpsmith, is loose in the twisting corridors of the *Lycurgos* and seeks to twist the archaic fortress to his own ends.

The adventure is designed to accommodate Player Characters from myriad different regiments. As such, certain NPCs are deliberately left open, so that the Game Master can insert characters whom he has already established. Similarly, at different points throughout the adventure, there are suggestions for revising scenes to accommodate regiments with particular skills. Game Masters are strongly encouraged to thoroughly review this adventure prior to the first session of play so that they can prepare any appropriate materials.

## CHAPTER I: THE BEACHHEAD

The adventure opens with the Player Characters inbound to the objective of their mission, the *Lycurgos* star fort. Amidst overwhelming opposition and through withering fire, the Player Characters make their landing aboard the orbital station. Fighting alongside the Vostroyan 1054th company, the "Void Shrikes," they must secure a landing zone for the remainder of the attacking force. Their efforts are stymied as much by the Severan Dominate troops aboard the fort as by ill fortune.

Their beachhead secured, the Player Characters take part in the action to cordon off a defensive perimeter around the makeshift base and defend against the single-minded counter-attack of the star fort's forces.

## CHAPTER II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

The second chapter begins as the Player Characters face stiff opposition from the Severan Dominate soldiers. This takes the form not only of all-out attack, but sabotage and infiltration as well. Once free from these threats, the Imperial Guard must investigate their surroundings and reconnoitre the numerous twisting corridors that wind their way around the secured landing zone.

During their expeditionary forays, the Player Characters find evidence of a much greater evil aboard the star fort. A hellish Daemon Engine being brought to a vile form of life deep in the bowels of the star fort hints at a much more sinister heresy than political dissidence. Under orders to apprehend General Constantine, the commander of the Severan Dominate forces aboard *Lycurgos*, the Player Characters take part in a massive infiltration of the station to bring him to justice. The chapter comes to a close as the Player Characters come upon the Severan General, and must rescue him from attack by the Daemonic monstrosities they suspect him of creating.

## CHAPTER III: MECHAMORPHOSIS

With the general in their custody and the truth of the Chaos presence uncovered, the Player Characters make their way back to headquarters to report their findings to their commanders. From there, they are sent into the belly of the star fort to find the extent of the corruption and to deal with the Warpsmith behind it.

To their horror, the Player Characters discover that the corruption runs much deeper than they suspect. The Warpsmith, Arkturian, has begun the ritual to spread the Warp-taint throughout the star fort and to take the fortress as a weapon for his warband. Armed with this knowledge, the Player Characters must set in motion the destruction of the station, lest it fall to the servants of the Ruinous Powers. The climax of the adventure comes as the players and their allies make their desperate escape from the *Lycurgos* in the last moments before the star fort, and the foul beasts that now prowl its corridors, are annihilated.

# WARZONE EPSILON

*"There can be no glory in the absence of the Emperor."*

—Commissar Horace Barrgraves

**O**riginally named Helena II, Warzone Epsilon was a moderately colonised world in the Periphery Sub-Sector. Initially discovered by St. Drusus during the Angevin Crusade, it remained largely forgotten for several centuries. During a period of Calixis expansionism in late M40, Helena II was colonised at the same time as several other highly regarded worlds within the Periphery. Administratum projections gave the colonisation effort a high probability of success due to its amenable agricultural conditions. Consequently, the Administratum sent a large initial wave of colonists. Additional supplies and the protection offered by a small Imperial Navy presence enabled the colonists to transform Helena II into a thriving agri-world in a remarkably short period of time.

Over the course of just a few centuries, the planet's harvests began to provide adequate supplies for several of the Periphery's worlds. Some even dared to hope that it could eventually become

a breadbasket for the Periphery, while still providing much needed foodstuffs to the greater Calixis Sector. Additional assets were accorded the world, including the manpower to revitalise the *Lycurgos* star fort that had been abandoned in the system during the Angevin crusade. With the star fort's refit complete, Helena II was regarded as one of the most productive and best defended worlds within the sub-sector. Even the most aggressive xenos forces in the region recognised the star fort's might and chose to target worlds less well defended.

Not surprisingly, maintaining the relative prosperity of Helena II and its continued security required additional colonists from within the Calixis Sector. The Administratum gathered population-tithes from dozens of surrounding worlds and reassigned them to the agri-colonies of Helena II. Those tithe-serfs constituted a massive influx to the population of the isolated planet. The world's existing resources were soon strained trying to accommodate the newcomers. Settlements that had been intended for hundreds of colonists had to instead serve as residences for thousands. Many who appeared to have escaped the overcrowded hive worlds from which they had been plucked began to despair at their newfound conditions.

The planetary governor's initial reaction to this new population was despair; after all, how could they be fed without affecting the amount of foodstuffs exported to other

## A LARGER SAGA

Game Masters can choose to use **NO SURRENDER** as a standalone campaign in three acts. Over the course of the segments, the Player Characters have ample time to develop their abilities. The resistance they face is consistently relentless, posing sufficient threat to novices as well as more experienced Player Characters. Once the campaign to retake the star fort is complete, Game Masters could easily continue the story arc by focusing on the recapture of the Warzone Epsilon agri-world that it orbits.

Alternatively, some Game Masters may prefer to integrate these adventures with a preexisting campaign. This could involve one of the Game Master's own design or ones that have previously been published. If using this approach, modifications may be necessary to the adventures based upon the rank that the Player Characters have previously achieved. If the characters command a platoon or company, their roles in coordinating the campaign are very different than if they all belong to a single squad.

Game Masters who choose to add this adventure to an existing campaign are encouraged to use their own discretion in connecting the different segments. A few possible suggestions on different methods follow, but these may need to be modified based on the past experiences of the Player Characters.

**Eleventh Hour:** Characters who participated in the sample adventure—freely available for download from [www.fantasyflightgames.com](http://www.fantasyflightgames.com)—fought a battle against a seemingly endless tide of Orks on the jungle moon Aeryas. After this scenario, High Command may have reassigned their regiment. Perhaps the Imperial Navy's merciless orbital bombardment was enough to break the Ork infestation. Cleaning up the few survivors proved a manageable task.

**Against the Savages:** The adventure included in the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook includes battles against the Ork hordes on the planet Skrynn. As an important frontline world in the battle against Waaagh! Grimtoof, a recall from this world requires extenuating circumstances. This could be due to the critical nature of the battle for Warzone Epsilon. Alternatively, if a regiment more experienced or specialised in fighting Orks became available, High Command might have decided that the Player Characters' unit could be safely reassigned.

**Old Soldiers:** The adventure packaged with the **ONLY WAR GAME MASTER'S KIT** presents battles against the combined Dark Eldar and Severan Dominate forces on Virbius. In the scenario, the characters have an opportunity to capture a key secessionist general and discover the Dark Eldar presence. If the general is taken into custody, the intelligence he provides could transform the war. High Command might decide to withdraw the regiment, as their presence is no longer deemed necessary.

**Final Testament:** This standalone set of three adventures introduces the mining world of Hervara, where Ork forces have captured an Imperial Ordinatus. Characters who remained loyal to the Imperium severely damaged both the secessionist and xenos armies. They could have been transferred from the world as heroes. Characters who chose to change their allegiance to the Severan Dominate might also have been desperate to flee. They might now be serving with the forces aboard *Lycurgos*—playing this adventure from the opposite side.

## INTRODUCTION



worlds? The initial focus became to expand the planet's cultivated land, so that food production could be dramatically increased. Labourers worked around the clock, some in fields hundreds of miles from their assigned residence. Over the course of the next several harvests, Helena II increased its production enough to offset the newfound demand.

Additional habs were never actually constructed for the new residents. Instead, the new colonists—and many of the original serfs—became wandering hordes of conscripted labour. Land was set aside for tent cities around the borders of all of the planet's cultivated land. Labourers would work a field during the planting and sowing seasons, then move on to work another field during the next season. Sometimes they might return to a field at harvest time, but in other instances they would continue to migrate as other labour-hordes would arrive to harvest and process the fruits of their rivals' drudgery.

As a colony world, Helena II had only limited access to technological resources. Domestic animals were also a precious commodity. Consequently, the labour force was expected to travel on foot from place of toil to place of toil. Over the course of generations, most of the world's inhabitants became nomadic clans. They would work a few weeks at each farm, and then travel to another farm where they could pitch their tents and live. Over the course of each year, these tribes would migrate thousands of kilometres, often crossing the planet's equator so that they were always in a place that had an active growing season.

With such a nomadic lifestyle, the colonists acquired few physical possessions. Most owned only their clothing, their family tent, and a few symbols of their faith in the Emperor. In return for their daily backbreaking labour, the planetary government provided the bare necessities for life. Each tent city was provided with a supply of fresh water and food—the nomads were forbidden, on pain of excruciation, from eating any of their harvest.

Annually, the planetary governor demanded that the planet provide a tithe of capable men and women into the Helena II Harvest Guard. All members of the guard were expected to be familiar with the standard Imperial armaments provided as part of the regular Imperial deliveries to the colony. Their primary role was to remain prepared to defend the planet against any xenos incursion. As part of their continuing physical training, these units remained active in the effort to plant and harvest Helena II's crops. Their secondary role was to assist the governor in dealing with any dissident uprisings. Fortunately, due to the exhausting nature of life on the agri-world, any attempts at revolution have been ineffective and swiftly crushed.

## THE WARP JUNCTION

Over the centuries since the agri-world was first colonised, traffic to Helena II gradually increased. Initially, the only regular traffic was vessels retrieving foodstuffs for export to other worlds. However, the proximity of *Lycurgos* earned it a reputation as an ideal location in the Periphery for Imperial Navy and Rogue Trader vessels to refit prior to their exploratory expeditions towards the systems beyond the sub-sector.

This soon revealed that the system's location was ideally proximal to the Warp route to the Scarus

Sector. Vessels travelling to the Calixis Sector or preparing to embark on a voyage the other way would often refit in the system. Within a few decades, the system garnered a reputation as a key Warp junction. Consequently, most vessels travelling through this region of the sub-sector at least make a brief transition into the system prior to continuing their journey. Though hardly well trafficked by the standards of a more civilised region, the number of vessels passing by the planet were uncommonly high for a colonial world.

Some of these craft—particularly those owned by Rogue Traders—began to engage the colony world with trade as their vessels underwent refit at the star fort. A broad range of unusual objects—including some xenostech—began to enter circulation within Helena II's cities. Merchants were satisfied with the surprising quantities of foodstuffs that they could obtain for seemingly minor trinkets. The colonists, in turn, soon became obsessed with these otherworldly artefacts.

Prior to the formation of the Severan Dominate, Helena II was well on its way to becoming a key port in the Cold Trade. Naval officers manning the star fort, and the local rulers, turned a blind eye to the crimes, which took place with a disturbing frequency. Some rumours indicate that the very artefacts they were meant to prohibit had corrupted the rulers and officers. Were it not for the secession of the Severan Dominate as a whole, it is likely that this influx of anathema devices might have eventually led to a major Inquisition cleansing of the world. As it stands, many among the Imperium have made clear that once the world returns to the Imperium's fold, an extensive investigation will be required.

## THE SECESSION

When the Severan Dominate seceded, the Imperial forces in the Spinward Front immediately recognised the strategic value of the Helena system. Designating the agri-world Warzone Epsilon, a substantial contingent was assigned to recapture the world quickly. The fate of that force was never discovered, as it was never known to complete its Warp transition—even several years after departing from the heart of the Calixis Sector. Yet, as long as the Severan Dominate controlled Warzone Epsilon, they could use it as a way point for deliveries to and from the Scarus Sector. As commerce with that region had become a critical element to the fledgling domain's stability, security had become absolutely vital. Were control of the system and the associated Warp junction to fall out of the hands of the Severan Dominate, it could prove disastrous for the Imperium.

This combination increased the value of the asset in Imperial eyes as well. Disrupting the secessionist's supply lines could cause the secession to crumble far more quickly. The capability to more easily connect with Imperial assets in the Scarus Sector could be a tremendous boon to the war effort. Initial projections indicated that the Helena II Harvest Guard would be incapable of resisting the might of the Imperial Guard. Early expectations were that the planet could be swiftly retaken with a minimum of loyalist losses. In reality, fighting on the planet has been brutal. Further, Severan Dominate forces have been better supplied and more quickly replaced due to the tactical advantage that the star fort offers.

# THE LYCURGOS STAR FORT

In the waning days of the Angevin Crusade, there were, at times, more Imperial assets available than ideal systems for continued expansion. On some occasions, the fleet was badly dispersed and some groups became uncertain about the prioritisation of remaining targets. The repeated successes enjoyed by St. Drusus and communications breakdowns led to situations where fleets arrived in systems that had already been conquered. At other times, poor strategic estimates sent entire armies to worlds that were later deprioritised.

Some of the advance craft remained dutifully in these systems until they met with disaster, or were lost due to insufficient supplies as they waited patiently for contact from the fleet. Others returned to their launch site, where they were executed for treason for daring to abandon their assigned posts. The *Lycurgos* star fort is one example of a station that remained in the unexplored regions of the Periphery, waiting patiently for the advance of a crusade that had already ended. Dozens of Imperial Navy vessels had towed the enormous Ramilles-class star fort to the Helena II system, with the expectation that the crusade would eventually make use of it. Early plans intended for the system to be a critical junction for the next step in the crusade's expansion.

Instead, the crusade petered out. The vessels that had towed the station into place were reassigned to other vital missions. Soon, there were insufficient craft in the sub-sector to undertake the challenge of moving the fort, and its relocation remained on the Imperial Navy's roll of unassigned tasks for decades. All the while, other higher-priority tasks that required fewer craft were assigned to duty rosters for immediate resolution. Many of the station's crew were reassigned to other locations. Eventually, an Administratum scribe removed *Lycurgos* from its listings of active facilities, assuming that its continued presence was nothing more than an ongoing typographic error. An enormous and powerful piece of Imperial infrastructure was functionally discarded.

Without any support or supplies, the star fort's crew simply grew old and died during the centuries of isolation. The command staff maintained a skeleton crew by strictly rationing the remaining supplies, though by the time the station's commander decided that an attempt should be made to return *Lycurgos* to the more civilised worlds of the Calixis Sector, there were not enough functioning vessels in the system to transport it. Instead, the enormous star fort attempted to hold station in orbit around Helena II, for centuries. There it remained, with barely enough power to maintain but a fraction of its atmosphere and a subset of its systems, drawing what resources it could from the nearby habitable planet.

When humanity once more began active expansion into the Periphery sub-sector, explorers rediscovered *Lycurgos*. By that point, only a few of the station's servitors remained operational. These tireless automatons had continued to perform their last orders, keeping the station's essential systems functional, scavenging whatever equipment they could to do so.



## REDISCOVERY

With the colonisation of Helena II, Imperial Navy craft could hardly ignore the existence of the derelict star fort. Its presence in the planet's orbit was enough to alter the world's tidal patterns. Augur arrays immediately indicated that, contrary to all appearances, the enormous station still had active plasma generators. The commanders of several vessels began scouring ancient logs of the system as they scurried to claim temporary authority over the station.

It was clear to all that successfully recovering the star fort could lead to rapid promotion. Even if that were not the immediate result, holding such a potent resource in such an isolated region would garner enormous prestige. Certainly, anyone who could assume command would be able to use their own vessel as well as the station to persuade others to back down from any confrontation.

Rogue Trader Captain Jacoby Meddington of the light cruiser *Blind Faith* was the first captain to successfully identify the star fort as the *Lycurgos*. With that knowledge, he committed his craft and crew to a docking attempt with the station. As he approached, he broadcast a claim of authority to the station, stating its name and citing his warrant of trade. His command broadcast was scarcely sent before Howarth Kenningsly, Rear Admiral of Imperial Navy broadcast his battlefleet's claim to the star fort. Unwilling to relinquish his new, and valuable, acquisition, the Rogue Trader opened fire on the Navy's vessels.

## INTRODUCTION



The ensuing combat saw the complete destruction of two Imperial Navy cruisers and the crippling of another before the Rear Admiral successfully assumed command of *Lycurgos*. Fifty of Meddington's commanding officers and dozens of bridge crew were executed in the aftermath, all found guilty of treason and piracy. Kenningsly requisitioned additional assets from Calixis Sector Naval Command, which were delivered so that the star fort could begin the reconditioning process. After Naval Command asked for their assistance, the Adeptus Mechanicus willingly committed a significant task force to the reconstruction effort, even sending two of their own vessels, fully crewed with anointed tech-magos to aid in the repair effort. Rumours indicated that the Rear Admiral provided the members of the Machine Cult several potent and unusual archeotech artefacts scavenged from the star fort's holds as a means of repaying their timely service. However, this was never confirmed, nor did the legends describe these devices with any consistency.

It is clear, however, that the Machine God's faithful went to great lengths in completing their work. After only a few decades of labour, they had restored *Lycurgos* to its original intended glory. All defensive systems appeared to be functioning properly, the station had a full crew of servitors, and enough members of the Adeptus Mechanicus remained aboard so that the craft could effectively refit most Imperial Navy craft, up to the size of a battle cruiser.

A single large craft, or multiple smaller vessels, can easily be accommodated at each of the four docking arms. In this way, even when a ship was undergoing an extensive refit—a process that can take years—the star fort remained capable of defending itself as well as accommodating the arrival of a number of other craft. Of course, when numerous craft were involved, it required a substantial increase in the workload of all of the station's crew. Most commonly, this served as a larger limitation in terms of completing work than the station's actual facilities.

## STAR FORT CAPABILITIES

Over the centuries since its restoration, *Lycurgos* has remained well supplied in terms of technology and materials. However, allocating enough Imperial Navy personnel—or even adequately trained members of the Adeptus Mechanicus—has been a larger issue. To date, much of the station's functionality remains highly dependent upon the work of servitors. Representatives of the Administratum within the Calixis Sector have been reluctant to devote enough trained personnel to the Periphery sub-sector to keep the star fort adequately staffed. As a consequence, it is inferred that many of the station's functions still operate at far less than their intended levels of efficacy. It is clear that this includes several of the station's manufactorums, as the Imperial Navy does not have enough available Tech-Priests to oversee the required number of menials. Similarly, the station's supply of ammunition, including ordnance, is substantially lower than would be expected for a front line station. Admittedly, this would only be an issue during an extended campaign, but it is still a violation of standard Imperial Navy readiness regulations.



The precise functions and capabilities of *Lycurgos* were slightly modified in its refit. Because the station was located so far from any major battlefronts, it was expected that equipment designed for use during a major crusade could be deprioritised. Similarly, due to the low level of traffic compared to a star fort serving in a major engagement, Rear Admiral Kenningsly decided that it would be necessary for the station to remain self-sufficient. Consequently, many of the systems and storage facilities were redesigned so that the station could make productive use of the space that was initially intended to store components for warships.

In spite of these changes, the station remains largely consistent with the Ramilles STC used for its initial construction. The station's defensive capabilities are all believed to remain fully functional, certainly unhindered by the refit. Each of its quadrants is armed with a massive ordnance battery capable of wreaking significant damage upon even the most potent of Imperial ships. These are supplemented with lance batteries and myriad launch bays. The largest limitation to the star fort's launch bays is that the Severan Dominate forces currently holding the station lack sufficient pilots and small craft to fully exploit these numerous bays. Pilots loyal to the secessionist cause, along with their craft, were largely transferred to more mobile assets with the arrival of the war. Less than half of the launch bays currently hold even a single fully functional squadron. Of those squadrons, most of the pilots have flown few, if any, missions.

From its position in orbit, *Lycurgos* is more than capable of conducting a thorough bombardment of Helena II if such a thing were to prove necessary. To date, the officers controlling the star fort have ordered no such actions. However, the planetary authorities are certainly well aware of the threat that looms in the void above. The *Lycurgos'* potency is such that if it were to unleash its full power, Helena II could sustain damage that might cripple its output for centuries. Given the limited experience of its current crew, members of the Dominate command body are extremely hesitant to bring the star fort's fury to bear upon the planet. They fear that any attempt at a selective strike might either miss the chosen target or cause more significant damage than intended. Some have speculated that the secessionists are too afraid of the star fort's capabilities to ever use it effectively.

Conversely, some members of the Imperial Command in the Spinward Front fear that this belief is an invitation to disaster. The secessionists can ill afford to sheathe a weapon as versatile and powerful as *Lycurgos*. While they may not yet have worked up the nerve to use it effectively, they are certain to attempt to exploit its capabilities, as their situation becomes increasingly dire. For this reason, the Imperium has decided that the star fort must be removed from Severan Dominate control as quickly as possible.

# INTRODUCTION

## THE SPINWARD FRONT

Duke Severus never admits it, but he realises that he is fighting a losing battle against the Imperial and Ork forces that have intruded upon the region he hoped to rule. His initial assets were scarcely enough to mount an effective defence against the intermittent xenos raids that have plagued the region since its discovery. Regardless of his efforts to improve the overall infrastructure, he could not hope to enact sufficient change within the available time frame. As such, the worlds of the Severan Dominate are only barely internally self-sufficient. Fighting the ongoing wars seems destined to utterly impoverish all of the worlds involved. Even as they sacrifice untold thousands of lives in the war against the Imperium of Man, they have ever fewer assets to protect.

To the Severan Dominate, the Helena system is a critical asset. The agri-world is more than sustainable in terms of food production. In fact, many of the worlds involved in the secession are dependent upon food grown on the planet. At least six discrete systems currently receive more than fifty percent of their food rations directly from Helena II. If this world were lost, it is likely that a significant portion of the populations of those worlds would begin to starve. Duke Severus might be able to reallocate reserve resources as a temporary stopgap, but any permanent solution would likely take far longer to implement than those reserves could last.

Even with the arrival of the Imperial Guard in the Helena system, the Severan Dominate has continued to grow, harvest, and export significant amounts of food from Helena II. This is at least partly due to the presence of the star fort. Though it is not capable of completely securing the system, its presence is certainly potent enough to restrict the number of Imperial vessels that can safely insert troops into the planet's atmosphere. Instead of the multiple companies that would be necessary to take the planet, the Imperium has only been able to land a few dozen companies at a time. The Imperial Guard has had a clear impact on the planet, but they have lost more than a dozen beachheads already. Even as the secessionists continue to defend their world, they are still able to exploit its agricultural wealth in the face of such a restricted assault.

If food shipments were to stop, it is very likely that at least some of the dependent worlds might attempt to return their loyalties from the Severan Dominate to the Imperium of Man. Others—more loyal to the Duke's cause—would instead suffer massive losses in productivity as their population underwent a substantial decrease. The combination of these blows could easily trigger a swift downward spiral in the Severan Dominate's ability to resist both the Ork and Imperium forces. Essentially, victory on this world could prove a major pivot point in the ongoing war effort. It is unlikely that it could persuade the Duke to completely capitulate his cause, but it is almost certain that many of the existing war fronts would transform into easy victories for the Imperium.

In addition to its food production, the location of the Helena system also represents a vital asset to the Severan Dominate. Over the millennia since its discovery, ships have frequently travelled and explored using the Helena II system as a known junction. Even though the Departmento Munitorum had written off the star fort, many ships' captains recognised

its location and used it as a reliable way point. The system eventually became a key point in the established Warp routes that connected the known worlds beyond the Periphery. When the Warp conduit to the Scarus Sector was discovered, the level of traffic increased once more. Every vessel that travelled through that passage also used the Warp routes that passed through the Helena system. From the perspective of the Navigator clans, the system became a well-known point of reference. Most Navigators plotted courses that passed through the system, often stopping at the star fort to resupply. This increased usage transformed the location into one that soon became critical for Warp jumps in or near this region.

If the Imperial Navy were to gain complete control over the junction, Severan Dominate-controlled transports would have to avoid the system. Similarly, any ships travelling towards more centrally located secessionist worlds would need to find an alternative route. Clearly, loyalist craft would not permit a transport to continue its journey if it were destined for a secessionist world. Unfortunately for the rebels, there are no well-established Warp routes that currently avoid the system. Starships and their Navigators would need to explore alternative routes that skirted the system, if it were to fall to the Imperium of Man. This is a time-consuming and dangerous process. It would certainly represent a significant short-term hindrance for the secessionists.

The combination of losses in both food production and transit times could be a powerful double impact to the secessionist cause. The Duke and his followers would lose the ability to send reinforcements or supplies to many worlds in the Trailing portion of the Spinward Front. Without that support, it is almost certain that some of these worlds would once more return to the Imperium's fold.

## THE STAR FORT'S ROLE

*Lycurgos* represents a key tactical asset in any discussion of the system's security, but it is far more than that. In addition to being a potent weapons platform, it is also capable of refitting and resupplying voidships. Further, it possesses the ability to manufacture a number of crucial vessel components that are otherwise unavailable within the Spinward Front. These factors combine to represent an asset that the Severan Dominate simply must hold at all costs.

To date, the secessionists have done a remarkable job of continuing to hold the planet, in spite of the Imperium's recognition of its value, largely due to the successful use of the star fort's defensive capabilities. A few salvos from its immense plasma batteries are more than sufficient to deter the advance of even the boldest captains. At least two Imperial capital ships were utterly annihilated when they attempted to make an orbital insertion on Helena II.

In response to these failures, the Imperial Navy revised its tactical approach. Rather than attempting to put vessels into orbit, they have begun launching landing shuttles from a significantly further distance. While a star ship is virtually irreplaceable, the Imperial Navy views these landers, their crew, and cargoes as substantially less precious. The landing craft, which must virtually exhaust their fuel supplies to make the safe transits, are much too small to be easily targeted by the station's systems. Instead,



*Lycurgos* must depend upon its limited wings of fighter craft to engage the shuttles. To date, these flights have met with very minor success for the Imperial forces, but they remain far more effective than a direct confrontation between the station and an Imperial Navy cruiser.

The star fort also represents the most capable repair yard that the secessionists control. Considering the limited nature of their naval forces, *Lycurgos* easily has the facilities and resources to enact repairs on all of their vessels. The Severan Dominate has no other facilities that are even adequately equipped for completing a full refit of an Imperial battle cruiser. Docks exist for smaller craft, as well as escorts, as these are significantly more common. However, the prize jewels in the Severan fleet become far too precious to even endanger without the knowledge that the star fort can repair them. Without its presence, any serious damage to one of those vessels would force the secessionists to abandon them.

Similarly, the ordnance ammunition that the largest class of ships require is not easily created, stored, or loaded onto one of the massive cruisers. A Ramilles-class star fort has the capacity to fulfil all of these requirements. Very few can even correctly load the ammunition into the storage bays on a docked vessel. Consequently, if the station were lost to Imperial hands, the Severan fleet could completely lose the ability to reload the heaviest weapons at their disposal. Without an effective space dock, the secessionists would also be incapable of refitting those craft. Over the course of a few larger scale engagements, the fleet could irreplaceably lose as much as twenty percent of its offensive capabilities just by expending ammunition.

## CURRENT STATUS

Though the battles are fought on a limited number of fronts, Helena II has more than earned its Imperial designation as Warzone Epsilon. The fighting on the surface has been utterly relentless. The soldiers of the Imperial Guard have established and lost more than a dozen different beachheads on the world. Each assault has inevitably faltered when the Imperium's armies were unable to reinforce and resupply their units. Consequently, each new wave has had to weather brutal anti-aircraft fire as it attempted a landing, and then tried desperately to dig in against the hordes of secessionist soldiers.

Best estimates number the combined casualties into the hundreds of thousands. The threat of an orbital bombardment from *Lycurgos* represents an ever-present distraction in the minds of the Imperial forces on the ground, though the Severan Dominate has not yet relied upon its potency. Instead, waves of bombers from the star fort's limited fleets, in conjunction with heavy artillery fire and an unending push by the under-equipped and under-trained rebels, has been sufficient to eliminate each Imperial assault.

Both sides clearly recognise the critical value that this world represents to the Severan Dominate, and have thus been relentless in their efforts to deny a strong foothold on the warzone to their enemy. The secessionists have repeatedly sent reinforcements from other systems. These craft have managed to land without issue, as the threat posed

by the star fort has to date been sufficient to prevent a significant Imperial Navy presence in the Warzone Epsilon system.

Further, the Severan Dominate assets on Warzone Epsilon have been exceptionally well equipped by secessionist standards. In addition to a vast mass of foot soldiers, the rebels also include several companies of battle tanks. Geran Bostrok, the commander of the secessionists on the surface of Helena II, has been particularly efficient at redeploying these units to counter each Imperial landing. This has led some to some speculation among Imperial forces about the sheer quantity of armoured units available. Some now suspect that the star fort may have been reconfigured to actually manufacture the Leman Russ STC. If this is correct, it adds an even greater value to the asset for any force that could control the station.

Bostrok has also shown an exceptional degree of efficiency in the utilisation of artillery assets. Imperial ground forces have consistently reported extremely heavy and precise shelling from the moment of their arrival upon the surface. The precise numbers involved are unclear, but it suggests that there is at least a company of mobile artillery vehicles. If this estimate is accurate, then it is likely that these vehicles were diverted from another Severan Dominate world to Warzone Epsilon. If these forces can be eliminated or recaptured, it could represent a critical blow to the planet's efforts to resist the Imperium.

At the same time, both sides have also remained reluctant to significantly damage the agricultural foundation that makes Helena II so valuable. There have been countless casualties among the planet's population. In spite of these losses, millions of acres of land continue to grow crops that are used to feed the loathsome rebels of the Severan Dominate worlds. Harvests and plantings have been delayed, as fewer workers were available to perform the necessary labour. The reinforcing secessionist armies have also increased the planet's consumption. In spite of these difficulties, the world's bounty has been adequate to fulfil those requirements and still export massive quantities of food to the Severan Dominate's other needy worlds.

Though the High Command of the Spinward Front recognises this problem, they have been reluctant to fully address it. This is because they also desperately seek to gain control of the agri-world. If they could exploit its resources, the food supply lines to the armies sent into the Spinward Front could be dramatically shortened. Supplies that have been brought from the heart of the Calixis Sector might no longer be needed. Warzone Epsilon could significantly reduce the drain on the sector's economy. This could enable the war effort to continue more efficiently, with far less of an impact on the sector's worlds and even the Achilus Crusade that the sector also sponsors.

It is a certainty that if the world were to return to the Imperium of Man, a significant portion of its population will be co-opted into Imperial Guard service, and a large portion of this force would be transformed into a Penal Legion. The population losses could have a negative effect upon the world's agricultural productivity, but this could certainly be countered through stricter rationing and more intensive work requirements.

Instead, the Imperium has begun to consider a different approach towards taking the world. The current strategy seems to be a losing one. They have finally recognised that the lives sent directly to the surface are being spent with little hope of

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a reward. Until *Lycurgos* is removed from the equation, there can be little hope of a complete victory for the Imperium of Man. Consequently, the decision has been made that the star fort must be taken prior to the capture of the planet. Once that threat is eliminated, then an overwhelming force could make planetfall on the surface of Warzone Epsilon. With such a massive army in place, it is inevitable that the secession forces would renew their loyalty to the Imperium. It is hoped that this action could be undertaken in such a manner that the planet's infrastructure might even survive, so that loyalist forces could effectively exploit the world anew.

This is hardly the first star fort to have fallen prey to rebellion forces since the Great Crusade. In all instances, they have posed a significant threat to the Imperium, but loyalist forces have developed tactics to overcome even their substantial capabilities. The primary issue is that the Departmento Munitorum's preferred strategy is to defer to the Adeptus Astartes in these matters. Many of their specialised assets are far better suited to inserting a select force of troopers into the station's relatively confined space. With this approach, the station can often be recovered in a condition that can be refitted to proper function and Imperium control.

If the station need not be salvaged, the Imperial Navy would simply pound it to little more than debris. Their vessels have been known to utilise overwhelming salvos to batter through a star fort's defences. Repeated assaults are typically sufficient to transform a potent station into a ruin in short order. Unfortunately, in these instances the wreckage is seldom useful for more than scrap.

The conundrum for High Command of the Imperial forces is that they desire to retain the station's functionality, leaving the usual Imperial Navy solution no longer viable. The star fort represents an asset that could play a pivotal role in resupply efforts for the Imperial Navy craft already active in the region. Just as the agricultural assets from Helena II could represent a boon to the war effort's supply chain, so too could *Lycurgos*. Similarly, there are only a limited number of Space Marines active within the Spinward Front. All of them are currently active in higher priority warzones than this station. There are simply no Adeptus Astartes forces available to recover the star fort, though whether this is because they are otherwise engaged or simply because they have a higher purpose in the Spinward Front depends on the Space Marine Chapter in question.

Instead, the Imperial forces have had to consider options that have a lower likelihood of success, and most likely a significantly higher cost in terms of both material assets and human lives. The best candidate currently under consideration is an unusual regiment of Imperial Guard soldiers—the 1054th Vostroyan Void Shrikes. Trained for years specifically in low

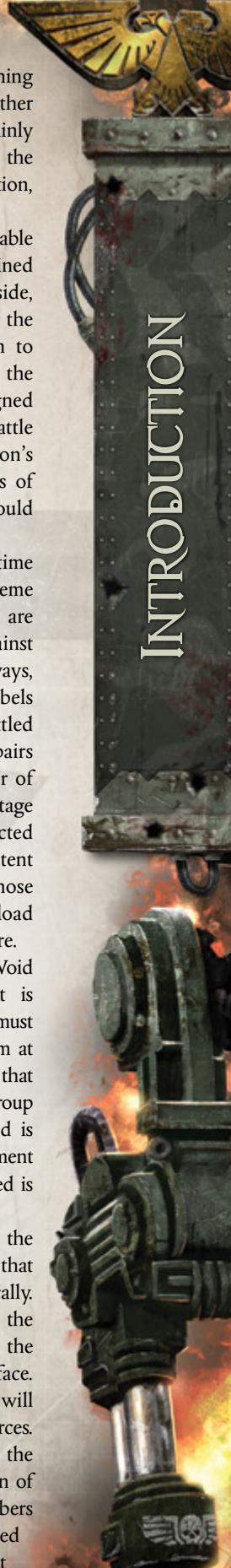
gravity situations, the regiment is specialised in breaching attacks and actions aboard space stations, star ships, and other isolated targets. A landing upon the station would certainly remain a significant challenge, particularly considering the impressive firepower of such a target. In spite of this restriction, the Vostroyan regiment remains the most viable option.

By reinforcing the Void Shrikes with other available Imperial forces, High Command hopes that the combined units can weather the star fort's defensive fire. Once inside, those who successfully make the landing must still have the wherewithal to overcome its defenders. This is certain to involve a series of extended pitched battles throughout the station. Fortunately, its major thoroughfares are designed to handle enormous naval ship components. Even the battle tanks of the Imperial Guard can easily travel the station's massive corridors. Yet there remain countless kilometres of corridors within the station's heart, and any of these could hold extensive secessionist reserves.

The Void Shrikes have proven themselves capable time and again of overcoming overwhelming odds in extreme conditions. On board the vast star fort, their opponents are many; each a desperate rebel fighting for their survival against their perceived "oppressors." In the unfamiliar skyways, hab-blocks, and servo-hangars of the *Lycurgos*, the rebels hold all the cards. The Void Shrikes have certainly battled aboard Ramilles-class star forts before, but refits and repairs invariably lead to changes in the structure of the interior of the station. This variation offers another significant advantage to the defenders. Even establishing a landing zone is expected to be a major challenge, as many of the station's most potent armaments run along the docking arms. A vessel that chose to dock with the station, in order to most efficiently unload its passengers, would be subject to withering ordnance fire.

Best estimates currently indicate that the number of Void Shrikes currently available within the Spinward Front is insufficient for the task at hand. Consequently, the mission must be supplemented with assistance from Imperial Guard from at least one other regiment. As no additional units are available that are known to have low gravity training, the secondary group must be assigned based upon availability. High Command is likely to favour a group whose expertise could complement the Void Shrikes, but a regiment that is currently unassigned is certain to receive higher priority for the task.

If the Void Shrikes, the accompanying regiment, and the Imperial Navy successfully secure the station, it is believed that the battle for Warzone Epsilon will accelerate dramatically. Without the star fort's ability to repel enemy vessels, the Severan Dominate forces will have no recourse when the Imperial Guard lands a substantial force upon the surface. Further, the propaganda value of overcoming the station will strike a devastating blow to the morale of the secessionist forces. Even though the warriors on Helena II are quite loyal to the Duke's cause, they recognise the overwhelming opposition of an unrestricted Imperial Guard landing force. Some members of the Spinward Front High Command have even speculated that Helena II might surrender without a battle. If that were to happen, then the world's assets would be swiftly utilised for Departmento Munitorum purposes.



# FACTIONS OF WARZONE EPSILON

*"The men of distant Terra do not know us or care about us. We fight because they would destroy our world on a whim without recompense if it could satisfy the least of their desires."*

—General Frederique Constantine

**C**ontrol of Warzone Epsilon has been a conflict involving only humans—albeit millions of humans. The forces of the Severan Dominate continue to contest the system against soldiers who remain loyal to the Imperium of Man. The Orks, so active in other portions of the Spinward Front, have not yet penetrated this system. Duke Severus never brought his Dark Eldar allies to the world, as he could ill-afford to risk its bounty. To the outside observer, this has made the battle a veritable mirror's image of similarly armed and equipped forces assaulting one another with comparable tactics. Both sides have a strategic background grounded in the ancient traditions of the Imperium of Man. They recognise the approaches that their opponents take, and they recognise the counter moves as well. The war has had few surprises, as each side brings to bear equipment and tactics that the opponent expected.

## THE SEVERAN DOMINATE

As the heir to the Severus dynasty, Duke Severus XIII began his life as a member of the Calixis Sector nobility. However, he had little chance to retain anything more than the title. His family's assets had been squandered over the centuries since the Angevin Crusade. The majority of those losses came as part of futile attempts to gain revenge against the blessed St. Drusus. His tremendous successes had taken all of the glory and grandeur from the triumphs of the first Duke Severus, which left the capable warrior an irate and disconsolate shell of a man.

His heirs constantly sought to somehow reverse this misfortune. They believed that with appropriate efforts, history could be rewritten, so that their line might be the one praised for service to the Emperor. Through a combination of hubris and incompetence, these plans never met with success. The ducal line squandered holding after holding as part of their futile quest.

As he came to maturity, Duke Severus XIII recognised the mistakes that his line had made. Instead of continuing to tread that same path, he chose to take a decidedly different approach. Perhaps the shrewdest and most conniving member of his lineage, the Duke knew that he must first achieve some notoriety for himself within the Imperium. Through hard effort and false shows of loyalty, he managed to earn the rank of Lord Sub-Sector of the Periphery. At last, a member of the Severus clan had attained control over the worlds that the line's founder had worked so hard to conquer for the Imperium centuries earlier.

Of course, this was scarcely enough to satisfy the Duke's ego. Recognised authority was a beginning, but he remained answerable to Imperial authorities. In his twisted mind, this could never be acceptable, for in the traditions of the Severus line he felt that he

owed no debt of allegiance to any higher power. To further his quest, he began the lengthy process of consolidating his holdings and assuring its self-sufficiency. Expanding his contacts within the Periphery sub-sector and the worlds beyond it, he began to exert his influence on those worlds. Production was gradually shifted on many worlds and military enrolment was gradually increased, so that he could carefully create a military force.

His plan met with its first major catastrophe when Waaagh! Grimtoof erupted into the region. The military assets he had begun to assemble were unable to resist the endless green tide. World after world fell to the xenos, and the Duke became incapable of engaging those forces while meeting his obligations to the Calixis Sector. In an act of desperation, he reached out to the Imperium for assistance against the hordes.

Of course, when those forces arrived, they could hardly miss the changes the Duke had already begun to enact. Rather than face the consequences of his crimes, the Duke seceded from the Imperium, forming the Severan Dominate. Imperial forces sent to battle the Orks now faced a two-front battle against both the human rebels and the xenos threat. The Calixis Sector had no choice but to send in additional units, so that the rebellion could be put down.

Some worlds had already been restored to the Imperium, but the war effort is multifaceted. In his desperation, the Duke reached out to the Dark Eldar for assistance. He willingly sacrificed hundreds of thousands of the Severan Dominate's citizens to the xenos so that he could sustain his struggling interplanetary domain. As he has battled to retain power, the Duke and his advisors have had to reprioritise the importance of his holdings. Defenders and military assets had been transferred from many less vital worlds to those that must be held.

Warzone Epsilon is a system that fell into the vital category. With its location as a Warp junction and its agricultural fecundity, the Severan Dominate cannot afford to lose control over the system. Assets were transferred from worlds deemed far less likely to come under either Imperial or Ork assault. Several of these were left functionally defenceless, scarcely capable of repelling a serious attack by any invading force.

On some worlds, the physical assets were more vital than the population. In these instances, Duke Severus could readily sacrifice a portion of the inhabitants to his xenos allies in exchange for assistance against the Imperium of Man. However, the citizens of Warzone Epsilon are an absolute necessity. Without their presence, it would be impossible for the planet to maintain its agricultural productivity. In spite of the need for additional defenders—the Duke's advisors soon realised that the Imperium would eventually make a concerted push to take the world—the Dark Eldar have not been involved on Helena II. If the Imperium were to gain the upper hand, the Duke could become desperate enough to change that. However, that crisis point has not yet arrived. Of course, if the situation were dire, it is certain that the xenos would increase the amount of compensation expected for a rapid intervention.

When the Imperium first began their reclamation of Helena II, the majority of the planet's defenders were agricultural serfs. However, the Helena II Harvest Guard proved to be a less than capable defensive force. Their tactical acumen and combat training was hardly a match for the disciplined soldiers of the

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## IMPERIAL FORCES IN WARZONE EPSILON

Battles for control of the Warzone Epsilon system have been an unmitigated disaster for the Imperium of Man. Due to the presence of *Lycurgos*, every landing upon the planet has met with unmitigated disaster. At the time of **NO SURRENDER**, the Void Shrikes and the Player Characters' regiment are the only Imperial Guard forces in the system. Imperial Navy craft are also present to serve as both transports and to offer some assistance with the landing upon the star fort.

The commanders of the Imperial forces must recognise that they are in a terribly dangerous situation. The past commanders in the system were granted the Emperor's mercy after their failures to secure the system. The current commanders have analysed those past failings and are the first to attempt a new strategy—that of taking the station prior to the planet. Risking this variant strategy would lead to a proclamation of heresy as well as incompetence, but it is clear that another assault that began upon the planet instead of the station would be doomed to the same sort of failure as the past attempts.

Imperial Guard. Severan Dominate forces were not surprised by this fact, but they were willing to sacrifice the local serfs to verify its accuracy. After the first failed Imperial landing on the world, the secessionists quickly moved to reallocate a much larger base of troops, armour, and air support to the system. The remaining soldiers stationed on both the planet and *Lycurgos* are a mix of soldiers from several different worlds of the Severan Dominate. Their shared characteristics are a loyalty to the secessionist cause internally at odds with a deep reverence for the Emperor. They also share a common uniform, as the interplanetary nation's manufactorum have worked ceaselessly to provide them in hopes of establishing a shared vision of service.

In part, because of the star fort's manufacturing capabilities, these secessionist troopers are better equipped than would typically be expected. They have ample armaments and supplies, including a range of heavy vehicles that were hastily assembled from Severan Dominate resources on numerous worlds. Uncharacteristically, the soldiers have access to an adequate supply of foodstuffs, which were stockpiled on Helena II prior to the beginning of the war effort.

Though their backgrounds are diverse, these soldiers have been inundated with the Duke's propaganda. They believe strongly that the only way their home worlds can survive is under the guidance of the Severan Dominate. The citizens and soldiers fear the xenos, but they fear the Imperium of Man as well. They believe that a strong military presence would ultimately destroy their cultures and their worlds.

Their greatest failing is their limited tactical acumen and their ignorance of the truly awe-inspiring force which stands poised to eradicate them. Many of the soldiers had seen only limited combat experience prior to their arrival on Warzone Epsilon. To date, they have vastly outnumbered the Imperial resistance, allowing for repeated victories against their foes. In the event that the Imperium of Man can utilise their typical tactics and field a large scale fighting force, it is clear that the Severan Dominate has little hope for a successful resistance.

The issue is compounded by the decisions of General Frederique Constantine, the overall commander of Severan Dominate forces in the system. He is a pragmatist, who recognises the limitation of his forces in the face of the better-trained Imperial Guard. However, he also considers himself a progressive-minded tactician, and he has bought in to Duke Severus's claims of the fledgling realm's capabilities.

His forces have yet to encounter any issues with discipline and morale—largely because they have had the upper hand throughout the engagement. Because of this, he has eschewed

the tactic of using Ducal Legates, the moral and political officers of the Severan Dominate. Instead, he expects his soldiers to fight on bravely, based entirely upon their loyalty to the secessionist cause. If the Imperial forces begin to achieve a significant advantage, the secessionists may throw down their arms in panic. Without political officers to enforce the Duke's will upon the soldiers, they may quickly abandon any pretence of resistance.

The general is also reluctant to fully exploit the presence of the star fort, fearing the damage a misplaced bombardment could wreak upon the planet. Yet he does recognise its capabilities and the tactical advantage it grants. In defence of the station, he is willing to go to extreme lengths. Constantine also realises that the Imperial Navy considers the *Lycurgos* a precious asset, and they are unwilling to cause it excessive damage. Its unique nature within the Severan Dominate, however, makes it even more valuable to him. It has become his personal centre of operations, so that he can be on hand to swiftly address any threats posed to the star fort. To date, he has even begun reassigning troops from the planet's surface to assist in its defence.

## THE 1054<sup>TH</sup> VOSTROYAN VOID SHRIKES

On most Imperial worlds, each new tithe of Imperial Guard soldiers is raised as a new regiment. Past regiments are memorialised in the world's history when possible, but their traditions are not imparted upon any that are newly assembled. The Vostroyans break with this practice, instead sending each new generation of soldiers to reinforce their existing regiments. New regiments are only founded when there is an excess of suitable candidates or when all of the active ones are believed to be at full capacity. Not surprisingly, neither of these situations occurs with any regularity.

While the vast majority of the Vostroyan regiment partakes in sieges and pitched urban battles, the 1054th have something of a divergent history. For the past several centuries, the soldiers of the 1054th Void Shrikes have fought and died, suffered defeat and achieved victory, all in a realm most fighting men and women of the Imperial Guard would consider remarkably alien. The Vostroyan 1054th earn their glory in the cold, vacuous depths of space.

Desperate times call for desperate measures, so it is said, and the history of the Void Shrikes is proof enough of that. Called upon by the Departmento Munitorum to besiege the fortified void station of the wayward Imperial system lord Korsus Lenx, the 1054th had,

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until that time, fought with ferocity and vigour on numerous hive-worlds. They had partaken in several lengthy campaigns with their boots firmly on the ground of whatever world drew the ire of the Imperial Guard. When the time came for the Hammer of the Emperor to crush Lenx beneath its might, the 1054th was chosen for the job. The bureaucrats of the Departmento Munitorum selected the 1054th on the merits of their classification as a siege regiment, overlooking the inherent differences between sieges in the cold depth of space and grounded planetary assaults.

As a result, the 1054th suffered massive losses, both from the poor command decisions of officers inexperienced in void combat and from equipment and weaponry ill-suited to the nature of conflict, the come to be mismatched Vostroyan void fortress, devotees, and system lord. Those gutted star fort were the best of the best the regiment had to offer. Each and every survivor stood tall having earned his place as a veteran of the Imperial Guard. From this time forward the veterans of the 1054th and the subsequent replacements their regiment received from their homeworld have served the Emperor as a dedicated void siege force. Marshalling their hard-won environmental expertise and ingrained technological savvy, the 1054th Void Shrikes provide the Imperium of Man with a powerful weapon against those who would think themselves untouchable among the stars.

The members of the 1054th have developed an almost preternatural awareness and possess an acuity and cunning born of years of service in zero-gravity environments. Void Shrike equipment is also specialised to better accommodate the unusual environmental requirements of the regiment. All members are issued rebreathers as part of their standard regimental kit. In addition, their flak armour is modified so that it can be made airtight for brief periods of time. While it is hardly as effective as a dedicated void suit, the modified armour is capable of keeping the wearer alive and uninjured for a few minutes. This is typically enough time for the soldiers to breach an airlock or pass through an area that has become depressurised.

Many of the soldiers within the regiment make further personal modifications to their flak armour to increase its effectiveness in such situations. However, those

Void Shrikes—as the 1054th had known—were victorious. The men and women of the 1054th had breached the dispatched Lenx's personal captured the maniacal who emerged from the

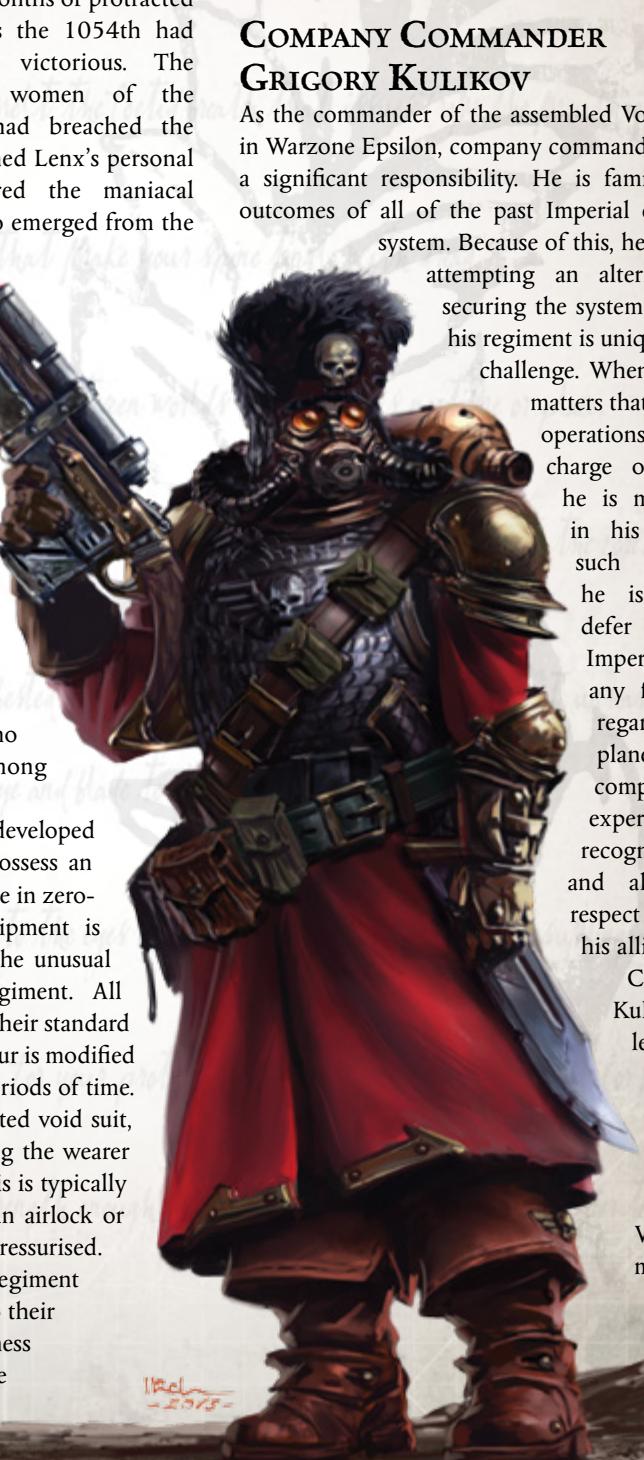
modifications invariably limit the soldier's manoeuvrability. The regiment's officers do not officially sanction such adaptations, as the changes are inconsistent with the Void Shrike's stated doctrines. In spite of this, many of the noncommissioned officers make it a regular practice to overlook the modifications. They recognise that, in many cases, the changes are traditions associated with platoons and companies that have served the regiment for millennia. Attempting to enforce the official doctrines could have serious consequences for overall morale. Some officers turn a blind eye to this practice, while others still attempt to enforce the official strictures, a futile task without the support of their noncommissioned officers.

## COMPANY COMMANDER

### GRIGORY KULIKOV

As the commander of the assembled Void Shrike companies in Warzone Epsilon, company commander Kulikov shoulders a significant responsibility. He is familiar with the failed outcomes of all of the past Imperial efforts to retake the system. Because of this, he is enthusiastic about attempting an alternative approach to securing the system, and recognises that his regiment is uniquely qualified for the challenge. When it comes to tactical matters that involve zero-gravity operations, he prefers to take charge of the situation, as he is more than confident in his own expertise in such conflicts. However, he is more willing to defer to an accomplished Imperial Guard officer in any fields of battle that regard combat upon a planet's surface. The company commander is experienced enough to recognise his limitations, and also appreciate and respect the capabilities of his allies.

Company commander Kulikov is a conservative leader who is reluctant to take undue risks in order to take an objective. Like every other officer and soldier of the Void Shrikes, he is more than willing to surrender his life in the service of the Emperor. At the same



# INTRODUCTION

## REGIMENT RULES

Characters belonging to the Vostroyan 1054th Void Shrikes gain the following advantages:

**Characteristic Modifiers:** -3 Intelligence, +6 Toughness, +3 Willpower.

**Starting Aptitude:** Willpower.

**Starting Skills:** Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium, War), Linguistics (Low Gothic), and Tech-Use.

**Starting Talents:** Nerves of Steel.

**Blessed Ignorance:** Imperial citizens know that the proper ways of living are those tried and tested by the generations that have gone before. Horror, pain, and death are the just rewards of curiosity, for those that look too deeply into the mysteries of the universe are all too likely to find malefic beings looking back at them. Their wise blindness imposes a -5 penalty on all Forbidden Lore (Int) Tests.

**Void Specialist:** Void Shrikes do not treat zero-gravity environments as Difficult Terrain for determining movement. Additionally, the Agility Test to stay on-target when making a Charge or Run Action is Difficult (-10).

**Wounds:** Members of the Void Shrikes regiment generate their starting wounds normally.

**Standard Regimental Kit:** 1 M36 lasgun and six charge packs, knife, flak armour, 2 frag grenades, 2 photon grenades, 1 smoke grenade, 1 demolition charge, Good Craftsmanship void suit, uniform, poor weather gear, sling bag, basic toolkit, mess kit and water canteen, blanket and sleep bag, rechargeable lamp pack, grooming kit, cognomen tags, Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer, 2 weeks' rations, respirator, micro-bead, drop harness, four empty sandbags, entrenching tool—they are classified as a Siege Regiment, after all.

**Favoured Weapons:** Missile launcher, meltagun.

time, he believes that those lives should not be sacrificed lightly; he realises that it is far better to sacrifice the lives of those heathens who would dare to oppose the Imperium of Man. Because of this, he has strong opinions about differentiating between acceptable and unacceptable losses. If casualties among his regiment begin to mount, the company commander becomes increasingly willing to transfer combat responsibilities to any other regiments active within Warzone Epsilon.

## CONSTRUCTING THE VOSTROYAN 1054<sup>TH</sup>

The Departmento Munitorum has seldom been effective in delivering the Void Shrikes to appropriate theatres of combat. Ultimately, this is because the regiment does not fit well with their expectations. Not only are the 1054th Void Shrikes different in disposition from other Vostroyan regiments, they are also quite different from any other regiments of siege infantry—the category into which the Administratum classifies the regiment. This has led to a broad range of assignments that were wildly inappropriate for the regiment's expertise and training. In some of these instances, the Void Shrikes completely lacked equipment required to complete an assignment. In other cases, the regiment met with high levels of casualties due to the nature of their mission objectives. Examples have included subterranean assignments on mining worlds, missions to make aerial assaults upon an ocean world, and numerous deployments to face rebellious forge worlds.

Not surprisingly, the Departmento Munitorum has also been incapable of providing the regiment with the necessary wargear to function effectively. Supplies are seldom accurate, making logistics an on-going concern for the regiment. As much of their equipment is more analogous to shipments made to Imperial Navy crews, numerous logistical waivers are required to deliver these supplies through traditional channels. Consequently, the Void Shrikes attempt to rely

upon direct shipments of supplies from Vostroya whenever possible. As the Spinward Front is a distant journey from their home planet, these deliveries are infrequent. To compensate, the supply officers of the regiment are exceptionally active in trading equipment with their counterparts in other regiments and even aboard their Imperial Navy transport vessels.

Throughout the regiment's history, it has served on many fronts and most often on its own, in part due to its specialised nature. Mission objectives that include a planet-sized location with unpredictable gravity effects are relatively uncommon. Most objectives that have gravity anomalies are far smaller than would be the target of multiple regiments. Of course, a history of such independent action has created a regiment of highly capable and perhaps slightly insular soldiers.

The Departmento Munitorum is understandably reluctant to withdraw a unit that is having success from a battlefield until all of the objectives are fulfilled. They are also understandably hesitant to leave a regiment unassigned for any longer than is absolutely necessary, or to commit an excessive number of forces to any particular mission.

## CREATING THE 1054<sup>TH</sup> VOSTROYAN VOID SHRIKES

The rules listed for the Vostroyan 1054th Void Shrikes have been created using the Regiment Creation rules in the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook, page 58. The following doctrines have been used:

**Home World:** Imperial World, but with the Kill the Mutant Trait replaced with the Void Specialist Trait as described in the Regiment Rules.

**Commanding Officer:** Phlegmatic

**Regiment Type:** Siege Infantry

**Doctrines:** Iron Discipline

**Standard Regimental Kit:** 5 points

**Total Cost:** 12 points

As a consequence, the practice of deploying the 1054th all but alone has continued unchanged for the majority of its history. Only when the regiment is engaged in a task that proves to exceed their grasp are they provided with the support of another regiment.

After several thousand years of fighting on its own against all manner of foes, the Vostroyan 1054th has become supremely capable of functioning in an independent fashion. Their service record is such an honour roll of glory and their assignments so far-flung that in recent centuries, the company commanders of the Void Shrikes have only rarely received their regiment's orders in person. Communications were maintained through a network of astropaths, and it was only through the undeniable evidence of their success that the Void Shrikes were guaranteed to have received their orders at all.

This independence has served as a further complication for resupply of equipment and provisions and replacement of losses by newly trained soldiers from Vostroya. Often, these replacements can take decades to reach their target regiment. In some instances, this is because the units were initially shipped to as many as four locations where the Void Shrikes had been assigned at the time of shipment. By the time the soldiers or wargear finally arrived, the 1054th had been reassigned.

Further, newly trained troopers are supposed to report to the regimental commander prior to duty assignment, per standing Vostroyan protocols. With the various series of redirections, this has left some newly assigned soldiers to travel for years before finally reaching their designated post. In a few instances, due to severe losses, some long-standing companies within the 1054th had to be combined or entirely disbanded, due to a successive series of missions with high levels of casualties.

## THE 1054TH IN THE SPINWARD FRONT

The Void Shrikes regiment has been actively serving within the Calixis Sector for well over a century. When the Achilus Crusade began, sector command assigned several companies to join in that effort. Those that remained behind were kept as a reserve force for dealing with situations best suited to their speciality. Though that is seldom how they were actually employed, they have recently dealt with a variety of missions involving low-gravity situations. Most of these targeted smaller-scale orbital habitats. Of course, some were wildly inappropriate for their training. Most recently this included deploying to the surface of different desert worlds and one to a feral death world.

When news of Waaagh! Grimtoof arrived from the Periphery sub-sector, High Command began a thorough analysis of all available assets in the Calixis Sector. The Vostroyan Void Shrikes were flagged as a potentially available and useful regiment. In an uncommon move, the sector's commanders chose to specifically reassemble several companies into a larger than usual group. Notably, this reassembly was made without regard for logistical concerns or tactical approaches.

## PLAYER CHARACTER VOID SHRIKES

If a Game Master is using **No SURRENDER** to launch a campaign, he might wish to have the Player Characters be members of the Vostroyan 1054th Void Shrikes regiment. This offers the benefit of exploiting the NPCs presented within the adventure as the leaders of the Player Characters' regiment, instead of needing to create new NPCs tied to another possibly custom derived regiment. Deaths among the regiment's members should also be far more compelling to Player Characters who knew them as brothers than it might for soldiers within a regiment that had never previously interacted with the Void Shrikes. If the players agree to this approach, they could use this example regiment rather than constructing their own.

Using Player Character Void Shrikes also links the Player Characters strongly to the adventure. The assignment to recapture a star fort is an intrinsic part of their cultural heritage. Any other regiment facing the challenge is much less likely to have the necessary training. In that case, rather than being deliberately assigned to this task, their presence would most likely be a matter of convenience and availability.

In some of the adventure's scenes, sidebars suggest that the players might want to use alternative characters. This is largely to present an opportunity for troupe play, so that the players could learn about specific events without Player Character involvement. In most of those instances, the substitute characters are likely members of the Void Shrikes. Because of this, Game Masters who choose to utilise these scenes can use this regiment description to create the temporary Player Characters.

As the most senior officer of the reassembled companies, company commander Kulikov assumed command of the operational group of Void Shrikes. In addition to working to learn the names and histories of his new body of underlings, he has also focused on a study of the recent actions of each company, that he might make use of his men to the best of their abilities.

Since their first engagement against Severan Dominate forces, the Void Shrikes have engaged in a variety of missions poorly suited to the regiment. This is largely because the secessionists are very limited in terms of assets. Their infrastructure includes only a few orbital stations. They possess few naval vessels of any significant size. Consequently, High Command of the Imperial Forces in the Spinward Front has generally used the Void Shrikes as though they were a dedicated siege regiment, rather than a series of companies best focused in specialised assignments. As this issue continues, company commander Kulikov has focused on trying to maintain the morale of his officers and soldiers, while he continues to plead with High Command for assignments better suited to the regiment's training.



# THE BEACHHEAD

- FINAL PREPARATIONS
- THE BREACH
- SECURE THE LANDING ZONE
- COUNTER ATTACK
- REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE

# CHAPTER I: THE BEACHHEAD

*"We have come to retake what belongs to the Emperor from those who dared to turn against him. Know that you serve a just and divine cause. Your faith in Him shall shield you from any attack."*

—Preacher Wyatt Dreeble

**W**arzone Epsilon is a critical lynchpin in the effort to retake the Spinward Front from the Severan Dominate. Without its resources, the traitors are likely to crumble before the Imperial forces. Key to their presence within the system is the incredible power contained within *Lycurgos*, a Ramilles-class star fort. To date, it has prevented the Imperial Guard from landing a sufficiently large force upon Helena II in order to retake the agri-world. The commanders of the Spinward Front recognised the necessity of securing the station prior to attempting another landing. They have committed a substantial task force of Imperial Navy vessels and Imperial Guard companies so that the station may be captured and restored as an Imperial fortification.

The Player Characters and their unit are members of this task force. The High Command of the Imperial forces in the Spinward Front is using them to supplement a sizeable company of Vostroyan Void Shrikes, who specialise in securing void-based targets. Their intended role is to work with the Vostroyan regiment, reinforcing them in whatever means they can. At various points in this adventure, the allied regiment is certain to take significant levels of casualties. When that occurs, the Player Characters' regiment is expected to expand their role in the capture of the star fort.

The characters are charged with securing one of the star fort's docking arms. Until this has been accomplished, Imperial troops are incapable of landing in sufficient numbers to completely recapture *Lycurgos*. As resistance is significantly more intense than High Command projected, the characters should face a broad range of challenges, and some of those engagements have the potential to be overwhelming. Game Masters are encouraged to adapt the level of resistance so that it is proportionate to the assets that the Player Characters have available. In any case, the characters have their regiment in addition to the Void Shrikes. These allies are devoted to the mission and are certain to provide the Player Characters with some assistance.

The precise role of the Player Characters in this effort is dependent upon their experience and upon the type of regiment. If the characters are novices, then their squad is likely to embark upon a

## THE LIEUTENANT

Every group of Player Characters is answerable to a superior officer. For the purposes of this scenario, that officer is designated as a lieutenant, though his actual rank and title may differ based upon their regiment's cultural background as well as the rank they have achieved. For starting characters, he is the commanding officer of the Player Character's platoon. If the characters are higher ranking, with greater authority, then he is simply the next officer up in the chain of command. This character's attitude and style should be consistent with that of the commanding officer created during Regiment Creation (see page 63 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). Note that this character is not the person who holds overall control of their regiment. Rather, he is just the next officer above the Player Characters in the chain of command.

Experienced characters should already have a prescribed commanding officer, who has appeared in previous adventures. If game statistics are necessary, refer to the Imperial Guard Lieutenant profile on page 124, modifying the description as is appropriate to be consistent with their regiment. The lieutenant's name should be thematically and culturally appropriate to the regiment.

variety of different missions as they gain access to *Lycurgos* and work to secure it. More experienced Player Characters may have a greater leadership role within their regiment. Depending upon that role, they could be commanding a full platoon of soldiers, or even a company. If they are officers commanding a larger unit then they should have a greater say in the disposition of their forces and the types of missions involved. For simplicity's sake, this adventure consistently refers to the Player Characters collectively as a squad and their larger unit as a platoon or company. Game Masters must substitute the larger-sized units as appropriate. Game Masters are encouraged to be flexible and incorporate the input from such Player Characters in the overall design of the missions presented throughout the adventure.

Because of the sheer scale of the star fort, it is very possible for characters in regiments that depend upon vehicles to exploit those assets within the station. The vast majority of corridors are easily navigable by even a main battle tank. However, the passages within the station are not large enough to accommodate aircraft. If the Player Characters belong to a drop troop regiment, they are effectively deployed as though they were line infantry, though they may have opportunities to exploit their Operate Skill during some scenes. Suggestions about modifying various scenes to better accommodate different types of regiments are included where appropriate.

# FINAL PREPARATIONS

*"A Guardsman must be ready to engage any foe at any time in any environment at the whim of the Emperor. Preparedness is not something that happens before a mission. It is the core of service."*

—Major Kreed Jaarkus, The Maccabian Janissaries 1322nd

The Player Characters begin the adventure aboard an Imperial Navy cruiser—*Vox Belli*. Their regiment has been reassigned to a new front, and all members of their company are aboard this enormous vessel. This includes the soldiers, officers, and support personnel. Their vehicles, wargear, and personal effects are also on board. Over the weeks that they have spent travelling through the Warp, portions of the cruiser have been transformed into a training camp. Barracks were constructed within one of the cargo bays when they arrived. Other portions were reconfigured into training fields and firing ranges. If their regiment makes extensive use of vehicles, a depot has been established so that the characters can periodically visit those for training purposes.

To date, the company's officers have not revealed any information about the upcoming assignment. This is, in part, because the nature of the next assignment has yet been revealed to these officers. An enormous cargo bay has been sealed

and purged of all atmosphere and artificial gravity. Combat training has focused on airless and zero-gravity missions for the duration of the trip. The central theme has been to teach the soldiers how to function while in full void suits and how to make use of these conditions to their best advantage. To date, only a handful of the regiment's soldiers have died during the training simulations. Training in these conditions has been physically exhausting, leaving the characters with little energy or time on their hands for mischief.

As the scene opens, the Player Characters are currently engaged in one of the routine zero-gravity drills. The characters are to traverse the airless, gravity-less hold, to a suspended platform sixty metres from their starting position. Servitors, mounted on the platform, are firing practice lasguns at the soldiers as they traverse the zero-gravity hold. These weapons are set only to tag their targets as casualties, not to cause any lasting harm. Player Characters must make **Very Hard (-30) Athletics Tests** to determine how well they are doing in the drill. Should they succeed, they begin their advance towards the platform, avoiding the incoming fire. Those who achieve three or more Degrees of Success set off strongly and should reach the raft shortly. Should they fail, they have been struck by a simulated lasgun blast. Any who suffer four or more Degrees of Failure have suffered some sort of mechanical failure of their void suits or rebreather mechanisms and suffer the effects of suffocation or depressurisation (see page 267 and 268 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook).



## I: THE BEACHHEAD



## I. THE BEACHHEAD

### Memorandum WE-Y94238

TO: All incoming soldiers  
FROM: The Office of Lord Overseer Thovington  
RE: The Lycurgos Star Fort

"IN WAR, FAITH IS THE TRUEST ALLY"



*Control of Warzone Epsilon is entirely dependent upon the successful capture of the Ramilles-class star fort currently stationed within it. This station is believed to have arrived in the system at the time of the Angevin Crusade. Over the centuries since that time, the station fell into a significant state of disrepair. It is believed that the Severan Dominate lacks the technical resources to have restored it to a fully operational status. As a consequence, the station's defences are believed to be well below the standards that the Imperial Navy expects from such a star fort. Further, the limited tactical abilities and training of any secessionist forces involved in holding the station are also expected to be substantially subpar. As their morale must falter without the proper devotions to the Emperor, the traitors are certain to quickly throw down their arms and concede victory to the combined might of the Imperial Navy and the Imperial Guard.*

*In spite of this, even a partially operational star fort of this construction represents a significant strong point. Even without the essential knowledge of its workings, the defenders are clearly capable of at least operating its weapons and activating its void shields. These assets alone represent a significant barrier to the vessels of the Imperial Navy. Consequently, inserting an adequate supply of troops onto the star fort is expected to be a moderate risk endeavour. All landing craft involved in the initial landing are expected to come under some degree of enemy fire. Troops travelling aboard these craft must be prepared for the possibility of hull breach due to incoming fire. Consequently, all units are to be issued void suits, with additional training in their use.*

*Similarly, there remains the distinct possibility that the Severan Dominate forces may have the capability to make use of the star forts ordnance and lance batteries. If this is the case, it is reasonable to suspect that some of the Warp-capable Imperial Navy vessels may come under fire. Due to the nature of the battles for control of the Spinward Front, High Command of the Imperial forces is unwilling to sacrifice any of these craft in the effort to secure the station. Standing orders therefore dictate that any vessels of frigate class or larger must remain beyond the effective range of those weapons. As a consequence, landers have been reconfigured to sustain an extended transit time to the star fort. Intelligence analysis indicates that the secessionist crew is unlikely to be able to target a landing craft with most of the star fort's armaments. While the threat of a hull breach remains, it is tremendously unlikely that the larger scale armaments pose any significant risk to the smaller craft.*

*To date, intelligence resources have been unable to determine how well-manned the station is. Best estimates indicate that the majority of the station's crew is comprised entirely of servitors. These should offer only token resistance to a concerted Imperial assault. If these are encountered, Engineers are to override the servitor's standing orders, so that these assets may be maintained once the station is restored to Imperial control. Similarly, whenever possible, any manufactory or defensive installations must be captured intact, so that the station can once more serve the purpose of the Emperor. In the unlikely event that the secessionists have stationed some of their soldiers aboard the star fort, there could be light to moderate levels of resistance from those forces. As these traitors have already chosen to take up arms against the Emperor, there can be no show of mercy. Unless the foe appears willing and capable of offering a substantial level of intelligence about the station's military assets, all traitors are to be eliminated with extreme prejudice.*

Before the drill can continue further, it abruptly ends with an important announcement over the voidcraft's internal communications network. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The buzzing of incoming lasgun fire abruptly ceases. The opening harmonies of a sacred anthem to the Emperor ring forth from the Vox Belli's communications network. A few officers bellow for silence, and a voice comes from the speakers. "Warp translation will occur in two hours from this time. Final mission briefings take place in one hour. Mission scrolls are currently en route to all officers. All units must immediately prepare for briefings." Officers start shouting for everyone to exit the training chamber and make ready for their briefings, as servo skulls carrying scrolls fly into the encampment, seeking them out.*

The characters have thirty minutes to exit the zero-gravity hold, get out of their void suits, and prepare for a briefing. The Guardsmen should have no particular difficulty safely reaching their bunks to retrieve uniforms in time for the mission briefing.

The group's lieutenant briefs each platoon on the upcoming mission separately. Game Masters should begin the meeting by distributing **Memorandum WE-Y94238** (see facing page) to the players. The lieutenant then explains that High Command of the Imperial forces has decided that the time has finally come to seize the Warzone from the Severan Dominate. The campaign for the system is to begin with the capture of *Lycurgos*, a star fort in orbit around the system's only inhabited planet. He explains that another Imperial Guard regiment—the Vostroyan 1054th Void Shrikes (distribute the **Field Recognition Guide** from page 22 to the players)—is leading the initial wave. The Player Characters' company is to assault as part of the second wave of incoming soldiers.

Guardsmen in the second wave are being delivered to the site aboard Imperial landers. The assault boats are heavily armoured, lightly armed, and not particularly manoeuvrable. These craft are being used for the wave because the Void Shrikes are expected to have eliminated most of the star fort's defences prior to the launch of this wave. Each lander is capable of holding a full platoon. If the Player Characters belong to a vehicle-based unit, then the assault boat is capable of holding a squadron of tanks or transports. Alternatively, it can hold several squadrons of Sentinels or other lighter mounts.

Landers are expected to launch from *Vox Belli*'s landing bays in eight hours. Imperial Navy pilots have already been assigned to these craft. The lieutenant provides each unit with a lander assignment, so its members know which landing bay and which craft is theirs. During this time, the Guardsmen are expected to complete final preparations, including obtaining their mission equipment, as well as loading and boarding the landers.

With that information delivered, the lieutenant then delivers the Mission Objectives. They are as follows:

- **Primary Objective:** Secure a landing zone for additional Imperial Guard landers. This objective is shared with the Void Shrikes regiment. Due to their experience, members of the Player Characters' regiment are expected to defer to the strategic expertise as regards the necessary tactics.
- **Secondary Objective:** Prevent the secessionists from firing any of the star fort's armaments at the incoming Imperial landers. Weapons are to be disabled, but not destroyed, whenever possible.
- **Secondary Objective:** Eliminate all defenders that are within range of the landing zone.
- **Tertiary Objective:** Destroy any secessionist targets of opportunity.
- **Tertiary Objective:** Secure, rather than destroy, any supplies the secessionists might have stored near the landing zone.

At this stage, the lieutenant provides each squad with a requisition for their mission assignment gear. In addition to their standard kit, each soldier is issued a void suit and a rebreather. Each squad is also issued a lascutter and a grapple & line. The lieutenant reminds the squad that he expects them to return this equipment upon the successful completion of the mission.

With objectives and gear covered, the lieutenant then takes any questions from the assembled squads. Keep in mind that he has had little access to any information beyond what he just provided. Any answers he provides are likely to be based simply upon his best judgment and past experience. It is likely that the Guardsmen already have a greater insight into the situation at hand.

When the characters go to obtain their mission assignment gear from Supply Officer Gaspar (see page 132), they receive a +10 bonus to the Logistics Test, because the supply room is currently well stocked. The supply officer also has access to some of the supplies stored aboard *Vox Belli*. As these are not officially on her record books, if the Guardsmen can make a reasonable argument for how any of this equipment might benefit the mission, she offers to provide it. Game Masters are encouraged to be relatively generous during this Logistics encounter. For the remainder of this chapter, the characters must rely only on the equipment they acquire at this stage and any gear they can later scavenge. There are no further opportunities to directly access their regiment's supplies prior to the end of the chapter.

When the Player Characters are issued their void suits, the supply officer also hands them a pamphlet containing the instructions for their use. The directions provide useful schematics, but the clasp and sealing mechanisms do not match the diagrams. Further, the text is written in Techna-Lingua. Some groups may choose to ignore the potential issue, while others become decidedly concerned. The supply officer is of no help in the matter. If the characters have previously used void suits or can translate the directions, then donning the suits becomes a straightforward manner. Alternatively, any Imperial Navy rating can demonstrate how to make the void suits work. Otherwise, the first time a character needs to don the suit, they must make

## I: THE BEACHHEAD

# Field Recognition Guide

Unit: 1054th Vostroyan Void Shrikes

Commanding Officer: Company Commander Grigory Kulikov

Affiliation: Imperial Guard

Preferred Ranged Weapon: M36 Lasgun

Preferred Melee Weapon: Mono-bayonet

Preferred Heavy Weapon: Missile Launcher

Known Transport Vehicles: None

Uniform Colour: Red and Black

Uniform Components: Red and gold flak coat, black flak pants, tall cylindrical fur-covered flak helmets, black respirator.

**Regiment Speciality:** The Void Shrikes regiment are specialists in low gravity engagements, particularly as regards space craft and star forts. Their training and equipment serve to prepare these soldiers for engagements in quarters that can be tight, difficult to navigate, and easily laid bare to the cold of the void. Key to their training is a heightened degree of familiarity with low and null gravity situations. The regiment's soldiers are adept at functioning without gravity, and maintain a heightened awareness of threats coming from any angle at any time during an engagement.

The regiment's storied history contains successful cleansings of high threat environments, including, but not limited to, space hulks, star forts, and enemy vessels. Its members recognise the vulnerabilities inherent in such designs, and are more than capable of exploiting such weaknesses to overcome an opponent or avoiding them when it would represent significant risk to the Imperium's forces.

The Void Shrike's characteristic uniforms are designed in such a way that the soldiers can sustain exposure to the cold of the void without significant impact. In situations where they are expected to function under such extreme conditions for an extended period of time, they are also extremely capable of utilising void suits. In fact, several of their past successes have included engagements where the soldiers endured in their protective garb for days at a time, continuously engaging the Imperium's foes from the exterior of a space craft or star fort.

Raised upon the Imperial World of Vostroya, the regiment has continuously overcome the xenos and the traitor for well over seven millennia. During this time, it has earned countless commendations from the Departmento Munitorum. Throughout its time in service, that world has continuously kept the regiment adequately supplied with brave new soldiers, devoted to the Imperium's cause. They have never faltered in their devotion and sacrifice for the Emperor.



TABLE 1-1: BEACHHEAD MISSION RUMOURS

Roll	Rumour	Difficulty	Accuracy
1-2	More than a dozen assaults have been made on the Warzone Epsilon planet. All of them have failed, and all of the Guardsmen sent on them have died.	Challenging (+0)	True
3-4	The briefing's a lie. The regiment is actually working with Space Marines. High Command wouldn't send Guardsmen to breach a star fort.	Hard (-20)	False
5-6	Imperial Navy reports say that the secessionists have reinforced Warzone Epsilon. This could get ugly.	Difficult (-10)	True
7-8	The Void Shrikes are a bunch of egotists that are impossible to work with. They're more likely to shoot their allies in the back than help them.	Ordinary (+10)	False
9	The Tech-Priests are desperate to get their hands on the star fort. They think the secessionists might have something secret cooking inside.	Ordinary (+10)	True
10	The whole briefing was a lie. Xenos have secured the star fort; we're in for it this time.	Hard (-20)	False

a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**. Should they fail, the suit is not properly sealed, and offers little protection against the void. Luckily for the Player Characters, any Vostroyan Void Shrikes that witness their failure correct the mistake, belittling the character as an inexperienced recruit.

Throughout the remaining time before departure, the characters can attempt to discover any rumours circulating about the mission, the theatre of war, and their allies. These can be acquired fairly easily simply by discussing the topic with their fellow Guardsmen. No Tests are required to obtain these rumours. Each time the characters contact a new person, they may roll on **Table 1-1: Beachhead Mission Rumours**. The bigger challenge is determining the veracity of each rumour. Each rumour also includes a difficulty rating and an accuracy as to whether it is true or false. The difficulty is the modifier for a **Common Lore (Spinward Front) Test**. Characters who succeed on that Test recognise the rumour's accuracy. Characters who fail are uncertain. Those who achieve three or more Degrees of Failure are confidently incorrect about the veracity of a rumour.

## WAITING TO LAUNCH

This scene is largely about building tension as the characters prepare to launch towards *Lycurgos*. It starts with them loading their wargear aboard the vessel, but then takes an abrupt shift for the worse when *Vox Belli*'s plans for the assault change abruptly. Instead of riding the landers onto the star fort, they must instead rush through a badly damaged warship to reach the airlock connecting with the station.

Loading and boarding the shuttles should proceed without issue. The shuttles have ample room for all of the company's gear, including heavy weapons and vehicles if applicable. The only potential issue is if the Player Characters attempt to smuggle gear that is clearly inappropriate. For example, if a squad of infantry were to attempt to bring hunting lances, trying to fit them aboard the lander would be a problem. The lander's flight crew have only a limited familiarity with the regiment's standard equipment. Unless something looks terribly out of place, they do their best to assist. However, if something does look egregiously inappropriate, they ask the unit's lieutenant to assist in the matter.

## RATCHETING THE TENSION

Throughout this scene, the Player Characters are largely unaware of the events taking place aboard *Lycurgos*. Because of this, they have no good way to understand how disastrously wrong the early stages of the invasion have gone. While that can work for some groups, others might prefer for the players to be aware of the situation, even if the Player Characters are not. There are a few different ways to address this issue.

- Game Masters could narrate a series of cut scenes, interweaving them with the role play of the Guardsmen. While they sit quietly aboard their lander, waiting for it to launch, wave after wave of Imperial Navy fighters and the landers for the Void Shrikes are utterly annihilated by defensive fire. The Guardsmen in the first wave are gunned down passing through airlocks by dramatically superior numbers of Severan Dominate soldiers.
- Alternatively, the Game Master could present the players with character sheets for a squad of Void Shrikes. The players could use these temporary characters to play through the first wave of the assault upon *Lycurgos*. Game Masters are encouraged to describe the horror as the Guardsmen see landers containing their brethren destroyed as they approach the station. When the badly damaged lander finally reaches the station, the platoon of Void Shrikes discover just how badly they are outnumbered.
- Another approach could be to have each of the players take the role of an Imperial Navy fighter pilot or lander pilot within a squadron. Over the course of a brief scene, the pilots and their craft are utterly annihilated by the star fort's dramatically superior firepower. There is little hope of success, as both *Lycurgos*'s defensive weapons and the hundreds of fighters it launches engage the small craft.

As the characters sit in the lander, they can see a chronometer gradually counting down to the time of launch. Their mission briefing indicated that the unit was to be boarded and waiting in their seats twenty minutes prior to their launch window. Just as the countdown ticks over to ten minutes, *Vox Belli*'s warning chimes ring across the ship's intercoms. A voice then commands the crew to secure all loose objects and to proceed to battle stations immediately. From the interior of the launch bay, the only sign of activity is when the bay's servitors move to each lander, manually securing the craft to the bay's deck with massive mag-clamps. These are in place to prevent the craft from sliding in the event of a gravitational shift.

A few minutes later, the crew begins shutting down the lander's engines and auxiliary systems. Cabin lights, which had been dimmed in preparation for a launch, return to normal brightness. If any of the Player Characters inquire with the crew, they are informed that there has been a change of plans. The launch has been aborted. At this time they have no further information.

Moments later, cataclysmic pounding sounds are heard throughout the voidcraft. Any Imperial Navy members immediately recognise the sound as an indication that the cruiser has come under enemy fire. If none of the Player Characters think to ask, an **Easy (+30) Common Lore (Imperial Navy) Test** reveals the sound's source. The pounding does not abate, but instead increases in both intensity and frequency. As it continues to grow, the lieutenant indicates that he has also received a change of orders. He then commands the platoon to evacuate the lander, with all of their wargear (and, as appropriate, vehicles). The plans for reaching the station have changed.

At this point, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*The pounding sound on the cruiser's hull continues as you scramble to exit the lander, grabbing your gear and a share of the platoon's common supplies as you exit. All of the soldiers form up on the deck, and everyone is clearly loaded down with equipment. The lieutenant explains that the cruiser is going to attempt to dock with the star fort instead of launching landers. The company needs to move from the landing bay to Exterior Airlock 49. That's up two levels and roughly 1400 metres from the landing bay's entrance. You need to proceed as quickly as possible and be ready to enter the station as soon as a seal is secured. The vessel's crew is uncertain how long they can hold position while they sustain this level of fire from Lycurgos.*

The lieutenant attempts to hurry the squad, but their pace is ultimately up to their own discretion. The characters have two important decisions at this stage, which affects the difficulty of the following scenes. If they wish to hurry, they must make an **Ordinary (+10) Athletics Test** or an **Ordinary (+10) Operate (Surface) Test** as appropriate to accelerate their pace through the cruiser's corridors. Tally up the total Degrees of Success or Failure for the group. The second choice regards the means of ascending two deck levels. The unit can either

take stairs or ramps—a procedure recommended during a naval engagement—or make use of the ship's lift system.

On foot, the tubes are certainly more appealing, and should be faster. In a vehicle, the difference in time and effort is less of a concern.

After the characters have made their decision and begun to ascend the steps or engaged the lift, crisis strikes. A terrible wrenching sound is heard throughout the ship. The deck begins to turn and toss terribly. A roaring sound, which seems to be growing in volume, is also audible in the distance. Any Imperial Navy crew immediately recognise the sounds and motion as a sign that the vessel has taken severe damage.

All characters on foot must make a **Difficult (-10) Acrobatics Test**. Any who fail suffer 1d5 Impact Damage per Degree of Failure on the Test, as they are thrown about violently. If the characters were aboard the lift when this happened, increase the Damage to 1d10 Impact Damage per Degree of Failure. Anyone piloting a vehicle must make a **Difficult (-10) Operate (Surface) Test**. Should they fail, their vehicle suffers the same damage described above to a random facing. Characters or vehicles riding in a lift count each Degree of Failure as two Degrees of Failure. The increased value for these penalties is due to the lift being pushed out of alignment and continuing its ascent at a much slower pace after the cruiser is damaged.

Game Masters should then tally the total Degrees of Failure and Degrees of Success achieved on this Test and the original Test the players made to move quickly through the ship. At this point, the Game Master should compare all Degrees of Failure achieved to all Degrees of Success. The Game Master should consult **Table 1–2: Transit Time to Airlock 49**. The table indicates the amount of time required for the unit to reach the airlock, as determined by the comparative number of Degrees of Success or Degrees of Failure achieved. The consequences of that time are covered in **Breaching Lycurgos**, below.

## BREACHING LYCURGOS

This scene of the adventure focuses on the characters escaping the flaming wreckage of *Vox Belli*. Once they escape, of course, they emerge into the hostile combat environment that is *Lycurgos*. Neither location is safe, by any stretch of the imagination. However, the possibility still exists of surviving within the star fort, as it is possible to overcome the enemy resistance. The ruined Imperial Navy cruiser offers no reasonable chance for survival.

The volley of ordnance that induced the tearing metal and the roaring of wind essentially shattered the structural spine of the vessel. Its command officers had made the deliberate decision to risk the ancient vessel so that it could deliver its passengers to the star fort. Now, trapped aboard the bridge, they willingly give their lives to the Emperor so that the Imperial Guard may complete its mission. With its dying gasps, *Vox Belli* slams its broadside into the end of *Lycurgos*'s docking arm. Both the station and the vessel sustain major damage from the impact, but most critically, the station can no longer fire its weapons upon the Imperial Navy cruiser. As the cruiser is physically in contact with the station, any detonation could also cause serious damage to the docking arm. This leaves an entire quadrant of the station open for Imperial craft to approach without sustaining direct ordnance fire.

While this is a tremendous boon for the Imperial forces, the Player Characters are in a decidedly more dangerous

situation. *Vox Belli* is already leaking atmosphere, though this is unlikely to impact the characters at this stage. Further, its spine is already shattered, leaving the engines incapable of accurately manoeuvring the vessel. Any attempts to steer the craft would most likely result in the fore and aft ends separating. Numerous fires have already ignited, and more than forty percent of the crew are already dead. Its last mission is to deliver the Imperial Guard to the station. With that complete, the surviving crew may also attempt to evacuate.

The Guardsmen's options and decisions are restricted by the amount of time required for them to reach Airlock 49. This was determined at the end of the previous scene, based upon the total Degrees of Success read on **Table 1–2: Transit Time to Airlock 49**. Player Characters who reach the airlock more quickly

have the opportunity to scavenge additional

**TABLE 1–2: TRANSIT TIME TO AIRLOCK 49**

Excess Degrees of Success or Failure	Transit Time
More than four excess Degrees of Success	10 minutes
One to four excess Degrees of Success	15 minutes
No excess Degrees of Success or Failure	20 minutes
One to three excess Degrees of Failure	25 minutes
Four to six excess Degrees of Failure	35 minutes
Seven to ten excess Degrees of Failure	45 minutes
More than ten excess Degrees of Failure	60 minutes

wargear and help surviving members of the vessel's crew onto the star fort. Those who took too long to reach the airlock have to travel through fires just to safely reach the exit. In any case, all have the opportunity to interact with Ensign Violetta Jorgens (see page 130) prior to exiting the cruiser. She can advise them about the locations of various items and the current situation, leaving matters at their own discretion.

Compare the time that the characters spent reaching the airlock with the **Doom of the Vox Belli**. If the characters took an excessive amount of time, then they have to deal with the consequence of the vessel's deteriorating atmospheric conditions. In extreme cases, they could face issues as the vessel itself begins to crumple from the damages inflicted by the weapons of the star fort. These circumstances must be addressed prior to the Player Characters' arrival at the airlock.

If the total Degrees of Failures were significant, some of the complications could put the Player Characters in an extremely dangerous situation. This is particularly true if the characters are dismounted and for some reason unable to make use of their void suits or their respirators. At their discretion, Game Masters may choose to have Imperial Navy crew assist the Guardsmen to reach the station. By this point the *Vox Belli* and her crew have already surrendered their lives to deliver the Guardsmen. They are ready and willing to offer further assistance.

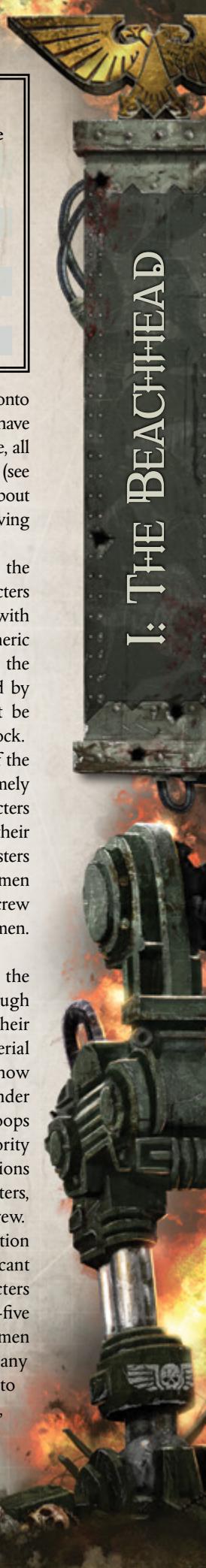
If the characters reach the airlock swiftly—within the first twenty minutes—they can either choose to pass through immediately or wait to assist with the evacuation of their comrades in the regiment or even some of the Imperial Navy crew members. This is largely dependent upon how heroic the characters wish to be. The ship's crew are under standing orders to not leave the vessel until all of the troops have successfully disembarked. Because of this, the majority continue to man their stations. Those at the furthest portions of the vessel are clearly unreachable, but the Player Characters, at their discretion, could attempt to rescue some of the crew.

Player Characters who took longer to reach the station encounter a complication. The airlock forms a significant bottleneck for the company to pass through. Characters who arrive less promptly—taking twenty-five or thirty-five minutes—must essentially wait in line as the Guardsmen ahead of them navigate the narrow passage. If the company

is on foot, then the airlock requires them to proceed single file. If they have vehicles, then it is only large enough to accommodate a single vehicle at a time. This requires an additional



## I. THE BEACHHEAD



## DOOM OF THE VOX BELLi

- **5 Minutes:** The Imperial Navy Cruiser sustains critical structural damage from an ordnance blast fired by *Lycurgos*. Many of the ship's sections are completely destroyed. Flames begin to spread throughout the ship as it leaks atmosphere.
- **10 Minutes:** The command deck's last desperate action proceeds to its logical consequence. The starboard side of the vessel impacts at a relatively low speed with the star fort's docking arm. Airlocks connecting the craft and the station can be activated for soldiers to pass in either direction.
- **20 Minutes:** Members of the Player Characters' company begin crossing through airlocks, entering the station. Finding that the Void Shrikes have advanced less than 100 metres from the end of the docking arm, many of these units move to immediately support the allied forces.
- **30 Minutes:** Combat escalates aboard *Lycurgos*, as the company rallies to assist the Void Shrikes. Roughly half of the company has now passed through the airlock, though there are still stragglers far behind. Ensign Jorgens begins asking for volunteers to assist with aiding the crew.
- **40 Minutes:** Air conditions aboard *Vox Belli* are fouled by smoke, flame, and problems with air circulation due to the ship's damage. Any characters outside of an airtight vehicle must use respirators. Otherwise they suffer from Suffocation (see page 267 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). Three quarters of the company has now passed through the airlock.
- **50 Minutes:** *Vox Belli* no longer has significant atmospheric pressure. The interior of the vessel now constitutes a vacuum (see page 268 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). Any surviving members of the company, with the possible exception of the Player Characters and their unit, have passed through the airlock. The decks have begun to crumple, and passage between them requires extraordinary measures.
- **1 Hour:** The ship begins to crumple and the fore and aft sections move off in separate directions. The vessel starts to pull away from the station's airlock, and parts of the destroyed vessel start to impact *Lycurgos*, triggering further damage. At this point characters have 1d10 combat Rounds to pass through the airlock, or they are trapped aboard the cruiser's wreckage as it drifts away from the star fort.

ten-minute wait from the time they reach the airlock. During this time, the cruiser's condition worsens. At their discretion, heroic Player Characters may also wish to use this time to assist some of the Imperial Navy crew.

Groups that arrive after a much longer journey through the bowels of the damaged vessel need not contend with a delay at the airlock—the surviving members of the company have already hurriedly made their way onto the star fort. Unfortunately, they do have to deal with the problems of the ship's incipient demise, as outlined in **Doom of the Vox Belli Sidebar**, above. By this point, the Imperial Navy crew members are also anxious to depart the dying wreckage. Units that arrive this late are the last stragglers of their company. Once they cross through, several hundred members of the cruiser's crew attempt to pass through as well. If the Guardsmen decide to selflessly let them go first, this could lead to a catastrophic delay. Player Characters trapped aboard the vessel as it pulls away from the star fort must scramble to find some means of reaching it.

## RESCUING THE CREW

Ensign Violetta Jorgens is a young officer aboard *Vox Belli*. She serves as a liaison officer between the vessel's crew and the Imperial Guard cargo. During the evacuation efforts, she takes up position at one of the main docking hatches and stands guard against any panicked crew attempting to leave the ship. She fiercely safeguards this passage for the use of the soldiers of the Imperial Guard, knowing full well that those soldiers are the entire reason her captain sacrificed this vessel and her fellow crew-members.

She is determined to make certain that as many of the troopers make it out alive as possible, and has resigned herself and her fellow crew to the fate

that her captain has chosen for them. If necessary, Jorgens can answer any questions that the characters might have about the current situation, though she has bigger concerns on her mind at the moment.

There are more than a hundred ship's personnel stationed within twenty metres of the airlock. This includes crew currently on watch at an armsman's post, an auxiliary armoury, and several gunners' stations for secondary weapons. The captain's orders are for none of the crew to leave the vessel until the Guardsmen have evacuated. The Player Characters can choose to force the crew to evacuate, or could work to try to speed up the remaining soldiers of their company, so that the crew have a chance of escaping with their lives.

Persuading their fellow Guardsmen to move more quickly requires an **Easy (+30) Command Test**. For every Degree of Success achieved, the characters reduce the total time needed to transfer the company through the airlock by five minutes. The base time for the entire company, excepting the Player Characters, to reach and pass through the airlock is forty-five minutes.

The crew put up little resistance if forced to evacuate. Any reasonable threat is adequate. Ultimately, the crew do not want to stay aboard the doomed ship. If the Player Characters attempt to countermand their orders, they recognise it as in their best interests to cooperate.

If the Guardsmen investigate either the auxiliary armoury or the gunners' station, they can find a variety of potential assets. The ammunition for the ship's auxiliary weapons can be easily jury-rigged into an explosive. The amount available is limited more by the time the characters have and the quantity they can carry. Similarly, there are numerous lasguns, lascannons, and stun batons in the auxiliary armoury as well as the appropriate ammunition. Other equipment may be available at the Game Master's discretion. Again, time and



lifting capacity are more limiting than the quantity of assets at hand. It is vital to track the time the characters spend finding these locations and transferring materials from them, in order to remain aware of the vessel's current status.

## ENTERING THE STAR FORT

The airlock connecting *Vox Belli* with *Lycurgos* is a temporary one, intended for boarding actions. It is hardly stable, and is set less than perfectly. As the cruiser shakes and reverberates with its death throes, the airlock responds even more dramatically. The deck of the passage is retractable, folding plasteel plate, which is unstable under ideal circumstances. The outer walls of the lock are constructed of a very thin and flexible plasteel layer. Neither is resistant to any meaningful impact or attack.

If the Guardsmen cross within the first forty minutes of the timeline, they encounter no difficulties. As the timeline progresses, however, the increase in use and the instability of the cruiser complicate matters. Each Player Character on foot must take a **Challenging (+0) Acrobatics Test**, while each driver must take a **Challenging (+0) Operate (Surface) Test**. Should they succeed, they encounter no difficulties. Should they fail, the character or vehicle suffers 1d5 Impact Damage as they are hurled against the floor. If a character suffers three or more Degrees of Failure, he is hurled into the airlock's sidewall and rips through it. Air rapidly vents from the airlock until the film self-seals in three combat Rounds. Unless the character succeeds at a **Difficult (-10) Athletics Test** to pull himself back inside, he is hurled into the void as the airlock reseals. Other Guardsmen may assist with this Test, if they are nearby.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPCs play important roles as the characters prepare to depart *Vox Belli*.

### SUPPLY OFFICER ADELINE GASPAR

Gaspar is thrilled beyond words to know that they have finally reached their destination and is uncharacteristically upbeat in issuing equipment to the Player Characters. If anyone asks, she is sick of having to deal with the same Imperial Navy officers for months on end, and longs for the relative freedom of just having to fight with Imperial Guard officers about what equipment should be present within her stores. She remains diligent about making certain that only the appropriate equipment is issued to each unit, but is willing to listen to additional requests. With a wry wink, she could even include an item or two that "fell off" an Imperial Navy supply truck and found its way into her stores.

### ENSIGN VIOLETTA JORGENS

A competent young officer, Jorgens is far more devoted to the letter of the rules than the spirit of the intent. When working with the Guardsmen, she attempts to exert her authority and is fond of reminding them that as long as they are aboard an Imperial Navy vessel, they must heed its officers. She wishes to do anything she can to aid them in their mission, but she wants to make sure that rules and orders are properly followed in the process. As the ship crumples about them, she becomes almost suicidal in her willingness to give her own life to aid them.

# THE BREACH

*Show the enemy no mercy, but know that if thou art overcome, the Emperor shall remember thy sacrifice.*

—Confessor Wyatt Dreeble

Throughout this scene, the Guardsmen must cooperate with the Void Shrikes to overcome the Severan Dominate resistance in the docking arm where they have landed. The Void Shrikes had already established a minimal beachhead at the time the allied forces arrived. The additional support makes it possible for the combined units to overcome the resistance. Matters become far more complicated when *Vox Belli*'s plasma engines detonate adjacent to the station. The massive blast seriously damages the docking arm. The existing beachhead begins to crumple and vent atmosphere, forcing the Guardsmen to advance deeper into the station.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

In leaving the ruins of the Imperial cruiser, the Guardsmen escaped certain death. Yet entering *Lycurgos* has hardly improved their situation. The Severan Dominate forces are well armed and have excellent defensive positions, as they attempt to repel the Imperial invasion force. The air is filled with the smells and sounds of weapons fire, punctuated with the occasional scream of human agony. The sides of the entry corridor are piled with dead Void Shrikes. It is immediately clear that thousands died in the first wave, as they met extremely heavy secessionist resistance.

Game Masters should refer to **Map I: The Beachhead** on the facing page for detailed schematics applicable throughout this scene. When the Guardsmen arrive—regardless of the time they spent aboard *Vox Belli*—the Void Shrikes have only secured about twenty-five metres of the station, from the airlock where the Player Characters' company arrived. Even allowing for the massive width of the station, this is scarcely enough space to accommodate the newly arrived Guardsmen—and potentially their vehicles.

Because of the sheer number of individuals crammed into the limited space, there is little opportunity for strategy and no time for regrouping. Other than the bodies of the fallen—and potentially the wrecks of destroyed vehicles—there is little cover to be found. If the Guardsmen carried crates of equipment from the cruiser, they might be able to use that gear for cover, providing a moment to assemble heavy weapons or remove bulky void suits. The only realistic option beyond that is for the Guardsmen to try to press their attack swiftly, and hope that they can overcome the opponents with sheer weight of numbers.

The entry to the docking area is just over 100 metres in width. The outer skin of the station is peppered with locations for airlocks of various sizes to attach. Many are no larger than a conventional doorway, but some are much larger, including one that is more than twenty metres across.

A work area extends roughly twenty-five metres forward from the doors, and it is littered with

the bodies of Void Shrikes, and the equipment crates that the surviving members have used for cover. Chains descend from the ceiling, ending in hooks, used to manipulate any cargo that might need to be moved through the area. All of these are currently retracted to a height of several metres off the floor.

The inner wall of the docking area has two levels. If the Player Characters are to advance into the station, they must first overcome the resistance forces on at least one of these levels. The upper level is a mezzanine deck roughly ten metres in depth. Two-man teams of Severan Dominate soldiers armed with heavy bolters occupy this area. Stairs lead up to the deck mounted on both outer walls, and they are littered with the bodies of enemies and allies. The Void Shrikes have already cut down many of these heavy weapons teams, but the survivors continue to pepper the docking area with fire. Sealed hatches are visible in the walls behind the heavy weapons teams. At ground level, beneath the upper deck, additional Severan Dominate units are operating behind hastily constructed defensive emplacements. Hallways running along both of the outer walls of the docking arm are visible behind those emplacements.

## ALLIED FORCES

The Void Shrikes have been mauled by the Severan Dominate resistance. As the scenario starts, they have less than a company of combined forces assembled. This amounts to roughly 300 foot soldiers and an additional fifteen heavy weapons teams. These Guardsmen are fighting capably, but the significant incoming fire pins them down. The secessionists also have the benefit of good defensive positioning, which has dramatically decreased the efficacy of the Imperial Guard's return fire.

In addition, the Player Characters have the surviving members of their company, who have escaped from the cruiser. The numbers here are dependent upon the point in the order in which the Player Characters left the vessel, as well as any precedents that have previously been established. If the group has previously discussed the size and make up of the regiment's company, then the numbers present must be consistent with that. Further, different types of regiments are assembled very differently. Game Masters may wish to review the **Company Size sidebar** (see page 30) when considering the numbers of allied soldiers present.

The other major factor to consider is at what point in the order the characters boarded *Lycurgos*. If they led the charge, then the remaining Void Shrikes substantially outnumber the members of their regiment, at least initially. Refer to the **Doom of the Vox Belli Sidebar** (see page 26) for the pace at which additional forces enter the star fort. As the battle continues, both allied groups suffer casualties from the secessionist fire, but the Player Characters' company should prove more than adequate to turn the tide. If the Player Characters choose to wait until most of their brethren have already boarded the star fort, then the battle for the docking area is almost certainly resolved by the time they arrive. In this case, it is reasonable to assume that the Imperial forces achieved a victory, but that both the Void Shrikes and the Player Characters' company suffered a further twenty-five percent casualty rate.

# MAP I: THE BEACHHEAD

Landing zone

Killing field

central storage area

storage continues for more than 100 meters

10 m

## COMPANY SIZE

The composition and fighting strength of Imperial Guard regiments can vary dramatically, even between regiments founded upon the same world. Prior to the start of the adventure, Game Masters are encouraged to discuss the size of the Player Characters' regiment with the game group. This way, the numbers presented throughout the adventure can be consistent with their expectations. Otherwise, the number of Guardsmen and vehicles present could be wildly inconsistent with their mental visions, leading players to believe that they had suffered far more or far fewer casualties than intended.

The numbers can vary so much between different regiments that the examples presented in this scenario are only accurate for a very small sampling. In fact, if the regiment uses companies that are dramatically larger than the one described in the scenario, it could be appropriate for *Vox Belli* to have only carried a company. The most important consideration is that the enemy resistance is proportionate to allied forces. Otherwise, the battles could become impossible, or far too easy.

If the regiment is entirely on foot, then assume that a company has roughly six platoons of approximately fifty soldiers each. A sample complete company could include four companies, for a grand total of roughly 1,200 Guardsmen. Roughly five to ten percent of the company's soldiers could be split off into heavy weapons squads, providing a significant punch if the teams have the opportunity to set up their weapons for use.

If the regiment incorporates support vehicles—such as Scout Sentinels or Hellhounds—these are typically present at a ratio of three per platoon. That works out to 72 support vehicles. In this instance, the sheer number of transports would not easily fit into the docking area previously described. Game Masters must increase the overall scale of the area in order to allow for this many vehicles to easily fit.

A mounted regiment could contain four transports per platoon, with six platoons per company and four companies per regiment. This works out to a total of 96 transports, carrying approximately 1,000 Guardsmen. Again, the scale of the docking area is likely too small for this many vehicles in addition to the Guardsmen passengers.

An armoured regiment could have three tanks per squadron. Groups of six squadrons can be formed into a platoon. A company would then have four such squadrons, for a total of 72 tanks. Again, the Game Master would need to increase the size of the docking area—and the nature of the resistance—to accommodate this many heavy vehicles.

## OPPOSITION FORCES

All estimates for Severan Dominate forces are for the stage of the battle when *Vox Belli* first begins disgorging Guardsmen into the docking area. As the battle progresses—with or without the assistance of the Player Characters—these forces are gradually whittled away. The progression of secessionist losses should start out gradually, and then crumple in larger groups as the survivors lose the support of their allies. Because of this, unless the Player Characters enter the combat very late, there should still be a sizeable level of resistance for them to target.

The upper level of the docking area has twenty two-man weapons teams of Severan Dominate soldiers (use Imperial Guardsman, **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook page 371). Each team mans a single heavy bolter. They have ample supplies of ammunition, and are continuously firing the weapons with Full Auto Burst actions. They preferentially target any squads that are on foot and outside of cover. If the Player Characters belong to a regiment that includes heavy tanks, replace the twenty heavy bolter teams for ten teams armed with lascannons.

On the lower level, a Hellhound Flame Tank (see page 218 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) blocks the entrance to each of the two passageways leading from the docking area. Four sentinels (see page 219 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook), armed with multi-lasers fire from behind cover hastily constructed from scrap plasteel (12 Armour Points). This covers the walkers' legs. Forty Severan Dominate soldiers (see page 120), all armed with lasguns, are also making use of the cover and firing on any soldiers on foot. If the Guardsmen belong to an armoured company, replace the Hellhound Flame Tanks with Leman Russ Demolishers and arm the sentinels with lascannons instead of multi-lasers.

## NAVIGATING THE BATTLE

Because of the sheer scale of this engagement, Game Masters are encouraged to resolve the conflict using the Battlefield Awareness and Battlefield Manoeuvres rules (see page 301 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). The Severan Dominate had not previously committed any officers to this particular docking arm, and this sets the difficulty for any Battlefield Awareness Tests at Challenging (+0). In this case, a Test would be used for the characters to assess the weakest points of the Severan Dominate defences. Should they succeed, they recognise that any advance begins with clearing the tanks blocking one of the side passages, and then advancing along the appropriate wall. A swift advance could move a unit out of the field of fire for the heavy weapons teams on the upper level. The sentinels would also block one another's line of sight and eliminate the cover that the foot soldiers are currently exploiting.

There is clear evidence that the Void Shrikes have attempted this strategy already. A line of casualties is clearly present along each of the outer walls, leading to the Hellhound Flame Tanks. Due to the severe losses that the regiment has already suffered, the survivors are unlikely to press on with this tactic, unless officers of the newly arrived forces command them to do so.

If the Player Characters are the field commanders of their regiment, they may take command of the conflict, and begin issuing commands to other squads to undertake Battlefield Manoeuvres. The difficulty for these commands is Difficult (-10). While the ground is clear, the incoming fire is withering and there is ample evidence of Imperial casualties. Even the bravest of guardsmen are hesitant to charge under these circumstances.

Alternatively, the Guardsmen may choose to act on their own initiative. In this case, Game Masters should use their best judgment. Unless they take actions that clearly demonstrate

an exceptional degree of threat, they should not receive a disproportionate amount of the incoming fire. If they attempt to remain concealed, a Battlefield Awareness Test may be the best way to determine how much attention they draw.

Some of the players may also view the battlefield and determine that they would prefer to employ an alternative strategy. This is a significant engagement and a broad range of different approaches could meet with success. Game Masters must use their own discretion to appropriately respond to alternative tactics. Possibilities could include directing fire to collapse the upper deck onto the lower level, compromising and detonating one of the Hellhound Flame Tanks, or even liberal use of explosives.

In any case, the combat cannot occur indefinitely. *Vox Belli* is badly damaged, and its plasma engines are doomed to fail dramatically in short order. Ten combat Rounds after the **Doom of the Vox Belli** (see page 26) ends, the Imperial Navy cruiser detonates dramatically. The explosion shakes and severely damages the docking bay arm. Regardless of the status of the combat in the docking area, proceed to **The Explosion** at that point.

That does leave a fairly large window of time. If the characters chose to swiftly board the station, they could have ample time to overcome the defenders. In this case, the lieutenant has the Guardsmen move to hold the docking area against a counter assault. The regiment prefers to have the entire unit successfully exit the cruiser prior to advancing within the star fort. This time could also be used to aid the

Void Shrikes, and possibly meet with Lieutenant Nikishin (see page 132) to discuss tactical matters. Alternatively, the Player Characters might prefer to return to the cruiser, to aide their brethren and the Imperial Navy crew members in escaping at this time. Any Severan Dominate assault at this point is purely at the Game Master's discretion.

## THE EXPLOSION

When *Vox Belli* finally succumbs to its massive damages, it does so in a dramatic fashion. With its spine shattered, the torque from its continued momentum eventually tears the ship apart. The instant it shears away from the docking bay, Severan Dominate teams resume pounding the vessel with relentless fire from the star fort. This is clearly massive overkill for the already wrecked ship, but the secessionists hope to clear their field of fire, so that they can target any other incoming transports.

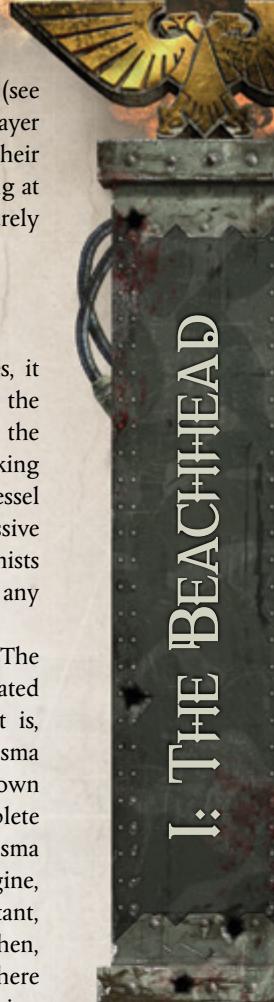
The vast majority of these volleys have little effect. The ship's armour is further shredded and already devastated components are reduced into ever-smaller rubble. That is, until a lance blast strikes one of the ship's massive plasma engines. The engines had begun an automated shutdown process, but the severe damage left them unable to complete it. Each of the engines remained partly charged as its plasma cores remained volatile. When the lance breaches the engine, the plasma erupts in a truly dramatic fashion. For an instant, the wreckage ignites as it is consumed by the blast. Then, shrapnel and a wave of plasma energy extend in a sphere kilometres-wide. The wave, of course, impacts the docking bay arm, where the Guardsmen are busily fighting the Severan Dominate defenders.

## INITIAL IMPACT

The blast flays the station's armour and severely damages its outer hull. The airlocks facing the ruined cruiser are immediately breached, as are the walls of the docking area. Everyone needs to scramble for footing as the entire docking arm sways violently in the wake of the explosion. Emergency airlocks part way up the docking bay arm immediately slam shut, but the air for a full third of the arm rushes out through the breached hull, creating a massive wave of pressure.

Anyone on foot needs to take a **Difficult (-10)** **Acrobatics Test** to grab onto something and hold their ground. If they fail, they are swept off their feet and slam into the debris already crashing into the shattered walls of the star fort, suffering  $1d10 + 2$  Impact Damage. With four or more Degrees of Failure, they are actually swept out of the station through the shattered airlocks. Fortunately, they suffer no damage as they are sucked into space. Unfortunately, they are now unprotected in a hard vacuum. They likely need to work with any brethren who were not hurled off the station to be rescued—if they're wearing a void suit. Assume that half of the allied foot soldiers failed the Test, with ten percent having been hurled into the void.

Player Characters who succeed at the initial Test can perform a Half Action during the Round in which they pass the Test. Afterward, they have two Rounds before the atmosphere in the outer third of the docking arm



is entirely depleted. During this time, they may act freely, but the pressure of the air rushing outwards remains a substantial hindrance. Any who have the wherewithal to immediately use a line to secure themselves to an immobile object are safely secured during these two Rounds—this includes all of the Void Shrikes. Those who do not must succeed at a **Difficult (-10) Athletics Test** the first Round, and a **Challenging (+0) Athletics Test** the second Round, to maintain their grip as the air pressure gradually decreases. Those who fail these Tests suffer the same consequences as for failure of the initial Acrobatics Test.

The blast was adequate to shake any tracked vehicles, but not powerful enough to damage them. Similarly, the onrush of atmospheric pressure is not enough to hurl them from the star fort. The situation does, however, affect Sentinels. Any operators present must make the same Tests described above, substituting their Operate (Surface) Skill. Failure incurs the same consequences.

When the blast strikes the star fort, it shatters countless relays as well as structural elements in the outer portion of the docking arm. After the third combat Round is complete, the area is a complete ruin. It has no atmosphere, power, or gravity. Any characters that are not in a sealed vehicle must don void suits to survive in the barren conditions. For vehicles, the loss of gravity presents another significant complication, as none of these vehicles are designed to operate without it. All Operate (Surface) Tests suffer a -20 penalty until the characters return to a location with nominal gravity.

At this point, the overall situation could vary substantially based upon the group's previous decisions. If the Imperial forces have not defeated the Severan Dominate, then the secessionists seize upon the confusion to inflict additional damage upon the invaders. This could leave the Player Characters more focused on the immediate threat of incoming fire than on rescuing their allies from the void. If the Imperial forces had ample time to regroup, they might have suffered minimal casualties from this situation. In this situation, the first challenge becomes rescuing any who were hurled into the void, and then trying to make way to the portions of the station that remain airtight and functional.

## COLLAPSE

After the air is evacuated from the outer portion of the docking bridge arm, the company has only moments to assess its damage and begin to recover before tragedy strikes once more. This time, the crisis comes in the form of the fallout from the damage *Lycurgos* sustained in the explosion. Gradually, the docking arm's extreme end begins to buckle and sway in response to the blast. With very little gravity and damaged supports, the continuing pendulum action eventually triggers a structural collapse in the wall. If the Imperials hope to survive, they must fight their way deeper into the station, to a portion less affected by the cruiser's detonation.

The initial warnings come in the form of sounds rather than motion. There are few visual cues to indicate that the docking arm is moving, and the motion is initially gradual enough that none can sense the subtle shifts.

Without any atmosphere to conduct noise, the Guardsmen hear the sounds conducted through

## LIFE PODS

If all else fails, the Guardsmen may decide that survival outweighs the importance of the mission. This is hardly an approach that is likely to please their commanding officers, but it is understandable. The ancient star fort is equipped with an adequate number of life pods to accommodate a very large crew. The majority of these remain functional, and are mounted on the dorsal and ventral spine of the docking bay arm. Player Characters can easily identify these, enter them, and launch them. There are enough to accommodate the surviving members of the company. Game Masters must use their own discretion to decide if this is enough to ensure survival. The station might fire upon these pods, as its commanders could recognise that the contents were largely Imperial soldiers or Severan deserters. Alternatively, they could rescue the pods, but then take the Guardsmen prisoner. The best possible outcome might be for the Guardsmen to land upon Warzone Epsilon. Of course, in that situation, they would immediately face hostile Severan Dominate troops who would prefer to execute them rather than take them prisoner. At this point, the Imperial Navy would only attempt a rescue mission if the circumstances were extraordinary.

the station's decks to their vehicles and void suits. The noise is initially a series of sharp popping sounds, as structural elements in the docking arm's framework give way.

Over the course of roughly thirty minutes, the sound shifts in volume and tone. The thick armour plates flex, releasing whining and scraping noises as they bend and distort in ways that the star fort's design cannot accommodate. Similarly, the pattern of motion begins to compress the ceiling and floor of the outer level, visibly reducing the height.

Have all of the Player Characters make a **Routine (+20) Awareness Test** to notice the unusual grinding noises. If they succeed, they not only hear the sounds but also recognise them as a sign of structural instability. At this point, their largest concern likely becomes how much time they have before things become critical. Success on a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** is enough for anyone to realise that they likely have less than fifteen minutes to move out of the damaged portion of the docking arm. Should they fail, their estimates are significantly less than that. With three or more Degrees of Failure, however, they estimate that the time could be measured in hours rather than minutes.

At this point, the Imperial officers must decide how to proceed. If the Player Characters have a leadership role, leave this decision to their discretion. There are well over a hundred soldiers adrift in the void outside of the star fort. Survivors are intermingled with the bodies of those who were slain during the combat. Identifying those still alive is certainly challenging, but it takes several minutes to haul each person back to the vessel. Even with a concerted effort by all available Guardsmen, the effort can save roughly a hundred survivors in the ten minutes available, which leaves only five minutes for

the Imperial forces to scramble towards safety. This is due to the combination of a limited amount of physical space from which to launch lines, the difficulty in discriminating the dead from the living, and the swaying of the docking arm. Company leaders may make a **Challenging (+0) Command Test** to try to increase the overall efficiency. Every Degree of Success saves an additional ten soldiers, though every Degree of Failure decreases the number saved by ten.

Some groups may wish to try an alternative strategy to preserve as many of their brethren as possible, without sacrificing those who have remained aboard the star fort. Possibilities could include leaving soldiers behind on the exterior of the star fort, launching a vehicle into the void, or even simply trying to tie off groups of survivors and providing them with lines and grapples. Game Masters must use their discretion to consider the feasibility of all of these approaches. Note that the characters floating in the void are generally too small to represent viable targets for the star fort's defensive systems. Unless a very large group is somehow assembled, its weapons emplacements are not turned upon them. Additionally, all of the shrapnel and rubble from the *Vox Belli*'s wreckage makes it impossible for the secessionists to launch fighters or even transports into this region. The characters trapped in the void need only deal with the dangers inherent in the void and the physical collapse of the docking arm.

If a group does somehow reach the exterior surface of the star fort and travel upon it, they can safely proceed through the void to an airlock further up the docking arm. This can present an opportunity to reunite the survivors with the forces still fighting inside of the star fort. Players can use the sound conductance of the station's surface to detect the sounds of nearby battle, estimating the best time to join the fray with a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test**.

## TRAPS

The Severan Dominate forces recognised that an Imperial attack on *Lycorus* was likely when they detected the series of Warp translations that accompanied the fleet's arrival. The forces already aboard the star fort had adequate time to prepare its defences and deploy to all reasonable entry points. Additional secessionist soldiers remain at their duty stations throughout the facility. Knowing that they would be deploying for a likely attack, some of these soldiers may have chosen to set traps for any incoming forces. The logic being that, even if they were to die, they could still succeed in taking additional enemies with them. The adventure does not explicitly place any traps along these passages, as the time constraint associated with the imminent collapse of the docking bay arm provides adequate tension. However, Game Masters who desire an additional degree of verisimilitude may wish to place numerous explosive traps along the journey through the hallway. The most likely plan would be for one hallway to be trapped, while the other remained completely clear.

## ADVANCING UNDER FIRE

Those who remain within the *Lycorus* can see the side walls of the docking arm begin to buckle from the slow swaying. With each shift of direction, the floor rises slightly and the roof descends further. By the time ten minutes has passed, it is abundantly clear that the surviving Guardsmen need to start advancing towards the central core of the star fort. Otherwise, they are certain to be crushed when this portion of the docking arm collapses in on itself.

There are no Tests for this. The collapse is functionally inevitable. Of course, Game Masters should use their discretion at this point. If one of the Player Characters manages to devise some brilliant feat of engineering, it might be possible to delay the collapse. Keep in mind, of course, that there are countless tons of structural elements and armour in motion. Even the hull of a Leman Russ Battle Tank lacks the structural integrity to sustain this kind of pressure for more than an instant. The Player Characters must recognise the very real danger that this situation presents.

The lack of gravity and light further complicates this matter. While the Void Shrikes are comfortable working under conditions without gravity, the Player Characters' company is most likely less adept in this situation. Any vehicles involved in the regiment are not designed to move without gravity. Their speed and turning ability are severely compromised by the situation. Further, none of the squads are intimately familiar with the layout of the star fort. Even those who have been on similar stations realise that there could be significant departures in design with each construction project. They can make best guesses, but these could be grossly inaccurate, or the secessionists might have left traps to delay any advance.

In order to reach safety, the surviving members of the company must proceed down either of the massive hallways along the outer wall of the docking arm. Along the inner wall, the rooms on both levels are storage facilities. The majority of these are supplies waiting to be loaded onto vessels for resupply. That includes basic foodstuffs, clothing, ammunition, and miscellaneous equipment. A few of the storage rooms also contain materials that have been brought to Warzone Epsilon by visiting craft.

Signs point towards hatches in the floor and ceiling of the corridor, indicating the location of various weapons crew stations. These are the crew ports for the star fort's massive ordnance weapons, intended to devastate any encroaching vessels. The hatches are all badly damaged by the explosion, with many shifted from their hinges. The weapon crews—and the weapons—are utterly destroyed.

Beyond the time constraint, the largest issue while travelling along the broad hallways is the lack of gravity. The swaying motion, which is collapsing the deck and ceiling, is not a significant impediment to travel at this stage. The lack of gravity makes walking challenging and driving a vehicle extraordinarily difficult. Refer to **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook page 38 for information on moving within Zero Gravity. Piloting a vehicle at anything faster than half Tactical Speed requires a **Hard (-20) Operate (Surface) Test**. If the pilot attempts any Vehicle Movement Actions while under Zero Gravity, those Tests suffer an additional -20 penalty.

## THE HATCH

After the company has travelled roughly a kilometre through either passage, they reach the massive emergency hatch that sealed to prevent any further escape of air. The hatchway is nearly 100 metres in width, and extends into ceiling, ten metres overhead. It is constructed of plasteel nearly half a metre thick, which is reinforced at many points. Creating a man-sized opening requires destroying it as cover. For these purposes it is considered to have 20 Armour Points. If the Guardsmen wish to create a larger opening, they must repeatedly create man-sized openings. Alternatively, the soldiers may use lascutters, meltabombs, or demolition charges to cut through or demolish the wall. Lascutters require no Test, but explosives require a **Routine (+10) Tech-Use Test** just to verify that they do not detonate prematurely.

Alternatively, if the allied forces include a talented Engineer, that character might be able to access the cogitation core and beseech the Omniaiah to open the hatch itself. This requires a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**, as the machine is reluctant to open when it recognises the difference in pressure levels on each side. Note that this approach offers a comparable degree of warning to the defenders on the other side of the hatch. As part of its emergency override ritual, lights flash and klaxons blare to warn those on both sides of the imminent rush of atmosphere.

When the hatch falls, there are two immediate complications. The first is the sudden pressure wave, as the interior of the star fort once again vents atmosphere into the void. This time, the officers expected it and warned the Guardsmen to take appropriate measures. All soldiers should be tied down either to grips on the walls, or to vehicles if appropriate.

The officers also provide the Guardsmen with ample warning of the second complication.

Everyone needs to take cover, as they expect

Severan Dominate resistance to open fire

the moment the hatch falls. After all, the star fort's defenders have ample evidence of the intrusion and had plenty of time to martial their reserves. Imperial forces have access to any cover they have carried with them. This could be crates, scavenged doors, or even their vehicles. The defenders, in turn, did not have the wherewithal to bring defensive structures. Their forces, which lacked any officers, are deployed largely in the open, in a block formation.

Unless the Imperial Guard have already suffered extreme losses, they should massively outnumber the defenders at this point. This is intended to be a relatively easy victory for the Guardsmen. It is the last barrier that the company must overcome before it can earn a brief respite. Once through the hatch, they have an opportunity to either close it once more, allowing atmospheric pressure to return, or they could patch it if they cut through or detonated it. In either case, this portion of the station can be made structurally and atmospherically sound.

With this in mind, if the attackers are foot soldiers, then the defenders should be no more than two platoons of foot.

Against an armoured company, six sentinels would constitute an appropriate level of resistance. There should be just enough secessionists to cause some damage, but not enough to actually constitute a significant threat.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPC plays an important role as the characters first fight their way aboard *Lycurgos*.

### LIEUTENANT SAVA NIKISHIN

The highest-ranking officer among the Void Shrike survivors, Lieutenant Nikishin has been through hell, watching his comrades die. In spite of that, he has seized command of the survivors, and through force of will assembled them into a functional unit. He is a capable officer, but he is physically and emotionally exhausted throughout this scene.

His patience for the officers of the Player Characters' regiment is limited, as he suspects that they are ill trained for the current environment and battles. He attempts to, respectfully, maintain control of the battle, unless a higher-ranking officer exhibits an exceptional degree of familiarity with the situation.





# SECURE THE LANDING ZONE

*"The star fort's gunners have all the skill of servitors. If we pilot into the landing bay at full acceleration, we can evade their defensive fire."*

—Captain Seona Devvae, Imperial Navy pilot

The Imperial Guard have penetrated the station, but the docking bay arm is effectively destroyed. There is no way to land reinforcements through it. For the company's mission to be considered a success, they must secure a different docking bay arm. This scene focuses on the battle around the perimeter of the star fort and down another arm. In the Player Characters' favour, the defenders are prepared to fight attackers coming from the other direction. In spite of this, the Guardsmen are incredibly outnumbered.

Further, there can be no failure in this mission. The characters are functionally trapped within the star fort, as the Imperial Navy has no way to send shuttles to evacuate them. If they hope to survive, they must capture a bay and eliminate its defences, so that reinforcements can arrive. Only then can they hope to live long enough to secure the star fort for Imperial forces.

## ESTABLISHING CONTACT

This scene begins with the Guardsmen in a comparatively secure situation compared to the last scene. At this point, they should be within the station, and not under immediate assault. This portion of the station is also not in danger of imminent collapse. In fact, it even has atmosphere, so they may choose to shed their void suits and respirators. This gives the Imperial forces a few moments to regroup, quickly tend to casualties, and consider their next moves.

Protocol demands that the commanding officers move to contact the overall mission commander. If the characters are in command of the company, they should recognise this and make the appropriate contact. Vox communications remain functional between their location and the remainder of the Imperial fleet—the Severan Dominate use comparable frequencies, so cannot afford to block them. That does lead to a concern; the secessionists could easily listen in on any transmissions between the Guardsmen and the fleet. In addition to overhearing the conversation—which is certainly encrypted and makes use of call signs and code phrases—they might be able to triangulate the Imperial Guard location. This is likely not a significant issue, as the noise from the recent fire fight and any escaping defenders certainly alerted them as well. Nonetheless, it is a factor to consider.

Spinward Front High Command is relieved to know that the mission was at least partly successful but also frustrated by the final outcome. Currently, the Player Characters and their company are in an ineffective position. The original plan called for further Imperial Guard forces to secure the beachhead once it had been captured. While they do now have a beachhead, they do not have a secure landing

zone. There are not enough airlocks to bring in significant reinforcements at the current location. Further, it remains vulnerable to weapons fire from the docking arms in the star fort's adjoining quadrants. Without the landing zone, it is currently impossible for additional troops to reinforce the held position.

For the company, this means a revised set of orders. They must continue to press the fight against the Severan Dominate. The mission can only be considered complete when the bay at the end of one of the station's docking arms is completely secured. The weapons in that docking arm must be functionally silenced, and they must fight any remaining secessionists in that region to a standstill. There can be no opportunity for rest, as no reinforcements can arrive at this time. Instead, they must stretch their resources and assault the secessionists once more. This is hardly an ideal situation, as the Imperial Guard forces are likely to be grossly outnumbered. The only advantage that they can have is faith in the Emperor, some small element of surprise, and a certain degree of manoeuvrability.

If the Player Characters have command, then the strategy for this new assault is entirely at their discretion. Their first step is likely to review their assets by verifying how many soldiers survived the scramble through the vacuum of the damaged docking arm and the last battle against the Severan Dominate. After that, they need to check the supply levels for their forces. This includes mission critical components such as ammunition and air tanks for the void suits, but also sundry items such as rations and medi-kits.

In general, the news on this front should be tolerable. The last engagement should not have incurred significant casualties. Unless there were significant complications, the Imperials should not have suffered any major casualties since *Vox Belli*'s explosion. In fact, if they were able to reunite with some of the survivors who trekked across the star fort's exterior, they might have more troops than they did at that time. Ammunition and sundries may be a larger issue. Much of their wargear was certainly left aboard the cruiser, and more was likely blown into space by the detonation. Unless the Player Characters have taken measures to capture supplies or deliberately brought extra equipment, they have an issue. The entire regiment can be brought back to full ammunition and equipment levels at this time by distributing everything on hand. After that is done, there are no further supplies until they can reunite with other Imperial forces. In the event they are caught in an extended fire fight, this could become a substantial issue. Fortunately, such a fight is to be avoided, as the secessionists could then press their significant numerical advantage.

Beyond that, the Imperial Guard soldiers must continue to press the battle until they reach the star fort's core, where the docking bay arm meets the station's centre. Once there, they can skirt around *Lycurgos*'s outer edge, where the route is relatively straightforward, rather than attempting to navigate through the many regions in the central core. At this stage, they must decide which docking arm to target. Presumably, that would be either of the adjacent ones, as the arm on the opposite side of the station would be more difficult to reach.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES?

Characters may wish to start scrambling to find supplies and ammunition at this stage. This portion of the docking bay arm largely serves as living quarters for menials. If a vessel were docked, they would be working to shuttle cargo to and from the craft. Currently, they are actively working within the star fort's manufactorums. Their quarters have little of military value. Food is not stored here. The most the Guardsmen could hope to find is poor quality clothing and sheets that could be used for makeshift bandages or disguises.

If any of the characters wish to try to go back into the damaged portion of the docking arm to secure supplies from the storage facilities, they can attempt to do so. However, this is a mission with a very low probability of success. The continued swaying movement has essentially flattened the roof and the deck together. Trying to scavenge any equipment would first require cutting through the roof and hoping that the wargear was undamaged. This is complicated by not knowing in advance what equipment they might be retrieving from any given storage compartment. Further, the characters would need to wear void suits, exhausting more of their already limited supply of atmospheric tanks.

That decision is a moot issue at the moment. Before the Imperial Guard can worry about that, they must first battle their way to the end of the docking arm where they initially landed. Secessionist forces have been redeployed from other portions of the station—including the adjacent docking arms—to try to eliminate the Imperial Guard threat. These forces are more fully addressed in **Through the Defences**. Only after they have overcome those defenders must the officers decide upon a further strategy for capturing a landing zone.

If an officer who outranks the Player Characters yet survives, then he or she must decide the company's strategy for advancing and completing the mission. The initial tactics are as follows:

- The officer sends out a scouting party to identify any traps and pockets of resistance along the most direct path towards the star fort's central core. They are to report back as soon as the enemy is discovered.
- As that unit advances, the remaining forces redistribute ammunition and supplies, so that no Guardsmen are responsible for carrying an excessive load.
- Any members of the company that have suffered serious injury are set up at the current location. All walking wounded are expected to defend the more seriously wounded. Able-bodied squads are ordered to set up cover and firing positions, making use of any scrap material that can be obtained—including critically damaged vehicles.
- Once temporary fortifications have been established, all able-bodied units are to begin their advance towards the base of the docking arm. They can reunite with the scouts en route, to devise a strategy for eliminating or bypassing the secessionist defenders.

If the Player Characters are particularly well suited for a scouting mission, then their squad is sent off with that assignment, see **Through the Defences**, below, for details. Otherwise, they are expected to assist with building fortifications for the wounded. In the event that the squad has already suffered significant casualties among their members or comrades, their squad is combined with another. If any badly wounded soldiers wish to continue to advance, they must succeed at a **Routine (+10) Opposed Deceive Test** against their lieutenant.

Unless the Guardsmen choose to set up camp for an extended period of time, the Severan Dominate do not press an assault at this time. They prefer

to use this time to establish effective defences of their own within the inner part of the docking bay arm. However, if the company spends an exceptionally long time preparing to advance—more than twelve hours—the secessionists do take some action. In this case, they seal another set of hatches and terminate the air circulation to the portion of the docking arm where the Imperial Guard forces continue to prepare. Then, they begin to evacuate the atmosphere from that region. As the Imperial Guardsmen should have access to void suits and respirators, this should not represent a lethal action, but it is a clear inconvenience for their advance.

## THROUGH THE DEFENCES

The Severan Dominate forces have ample time to prepare for the oncoming Imperial Guard forces. They are aware of the presence of hostiles, and if any Severan survivors broke and escaped, they have a very good idea of the types and numbers of intruders aboard the station. With this in mind, they have the tactical wherewithal to establish an effective defence. Game Masters should consider the numbers and types of units presented in this scene as a recommendation, which can be freely modified. The number of soldiers, as well as the types of weapons and vehicles, may be modified based upon any intelligence information that the secessionists have available.

Keeping that in mind, the adventure presents three different types of resistance, depending upon whether the Guardsmen are footsloggers, mechanised infantry, or in an armoured company. For purposes of considering the enemy resistance, ignore the presence of the Void Shrikes. At this point, their numbers have been reduced to less than the size of a company. They should certainly present a factor in the upcoming battle, but they are a minor element relative to the surviving members of the Player Characters' company.

In all of these instances, the defenders set up a killing ground in a broad corridor that represents the junction between the docking bay arm and the station's core structure. The killing ground is just over 100 metres in width, and fifty metres across to the beginning of the two outer corridors and the hab facilities that fill the centre of the docking bay arm.

Some groups might consider the possibility of bypassing the killing ground by using maintenance passages located above or below the main deck. These certainly do exist, but they are small passages, which are cramped for a person with only a

## VENTING ATMOSPHERE

At this point, Game Masters or even players may consider that venting the atmosphere from a significant portion of the star fort could be an effective strategy. After all, *Lycurgos* is certainly equipped with massive atmospheric processing facilities in order to keep the station liveable. There are a number of reasons to avoid this approach.

The Severan Dominate forces have several reasons to eschew this tactic. The first is that it was clearly ineffective against the forces during landing. The Imperial Guard managed to traverse the damaged docking arm when there was no atmosphere present. Further similar actions would only force the Severan Dominate troopers to operate in void suits—a tactic for which they are poorly trained. The Tech-Priests controlling the star fort's technological centres are also resistant to this approach, as they recognise that it could take decades to fully recover enough atmosphere to restore full function. Finally, many of the weapons that the secessionists rely upon are not designed to work effectively within the void.

Tech-Priest Engineers affiliated with the Imperial Guard have similar objections to this tactic, recognising the limitations of both their ally's armaments and the station's atmospheric processing capabilities. While the Guardsmen do have some very basic training in operating without atmosphere, only the Void Shrikes remain fully functional in this environment. Any advantage that they achieved with this approach is limited.

Game Masters are, of course, encouraged to use their discretion in considering situations where a portion of the station might lose pressure. This could occur if a particularly large weapon missed its target and impacted upon one of the station's exterior walls. Such situations should be reserved for a single use, as repeated instances would quickly reduce the overall dramatic tension.

modicum of tools. Soldiers carrying their full rucksacks and gear are too physically encumbered to even fit in the passages. Further, attempting to quietly sneak an entire company through these passages would require a massive feat of stealth—**Very Hard (-30) Opposed Stealth Test**. Smaller groups might be more feasible, but even this would require a bit of distraction, as the noise of movement through the passages is certain to reverberate through the star fort's open areas.

## Foot Soldiers

The secessionists recognise the threat and deploy weapons well suited to eliminating large numbers of foot soldiers. This begins with an infantry company of roughly 300 soldiers broken into thirty ten-man squads. Each squad includes a flamer. Fifteen two-man heavy weapon teams are split off, and each is armed with a heavy bolter.

As they waited, the soldiers constructed makeshift bunkers (8 Armour Points), to provide cover from incoming fire. Squads and heavy weapon teams are universally deployed within these bunkers. All are set up to provide a maximum amount

of crossfire. The squads do not advance towards the Imperial forces, even if the Imperial Guard forces break and run. They recognise that their defensive structure creates a strong point of lethal fire. They have no intention of sacrificing it when the Guardsmen are effectively cornered.

In order for the Player Characters and their allies to overcome these emplacements, they must either advance without cover through a wild field of fire, or determine some means to create cover. This could involve using scavenged crates, bulkheads, or other scrap materials taken from the station's walls. Alternatively, indirect fire weapons could be used, keeping in mind that the ceiling in the area is roughly ten metres in height. Grenades are certainly an option, but any character throwing one would be tremendously exposed to fire due to range restrictions.

## Mechanised Infantry

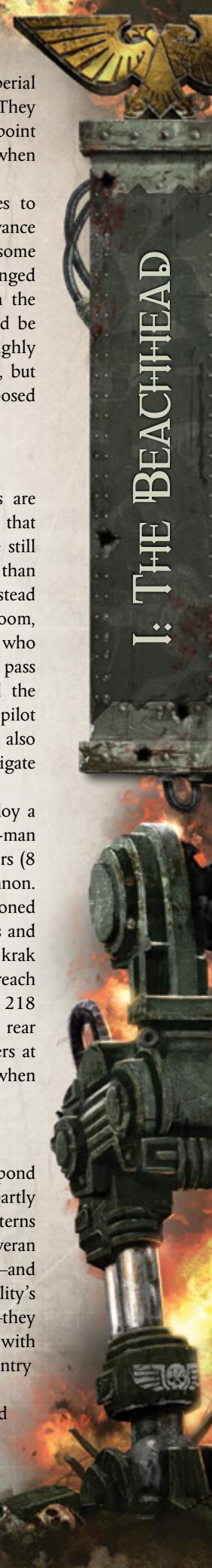
If the Severan Dominate recognise that the attackers are dependent upon vehicles, then they alter their tactics so that they may compromise the vehicles' effectiveness, while still presenting a significant organised resistance. Rather than establishing an open killing ground, the kill zone is instead scattered with tank traps. These completely fill the room, all the way back to the hallway entrances. Any pilot who attempts to traverse the traps in a tracked vehicle must pass an **Arduous (-40) Operate (Surface) Test**. Should the pilot fail, the vehicle becomes immobilised. Should the pilot achieve four or more Degrees of Failure, the vehicle is also flipped. Walkers or dismounted soldiers can easily navigate between the traps or clear a path.

In addition to these obstacles, the secessionists deploy a mixed force of vehicles and foot soldiers. Thirty two-man heavy weapon teams are set up within makeshift bunkers (8 Armour Points). Each team is armed with a M34 Autocannon. Twenty additional ten-man squads of soldiers are stationed in makeshift bunkers. Each squad is armed with lasguns and krak grenades. Their primary target is infantry; the krak grenades are reserved for any vehicles that manage to breach the tank traps. Three Hellhound Flame Tanks (see page 218 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) are stationed at the rear of the enemy line. These initially fire their heavy bolters at any oncoming forces, using their Inferno Cannons only when Imperial soldiers come within close range.

## Armoured Company

The secessionists can be unusually well equipped to respond to an incursion by an armoured company. This is partly because of the highly specialised STC vehicle patterns that are manufactured aboard the star fort. If the Severan Dominate forces recognise the presence of heavy tanks—and considering the way noises reverberate through the facility's structural components, this is tremendously likely—they have ample time to prepare for the assault. This begins with spreading tank traps as described in the Mechanised Infantry section (see above).

In addition, the defensive forces are better equipped specifically to counter a heavily armoured assault. The defenders begin with thirty two-man heavy weapons teams, each set up within makeshift bunkers



(8 Armour Points). The teams are all armed with man portable lascannons. Six Devil Dog tanks (see page 134) support these units. Because these tanks are relatively poorly armed compared to a battle tank, they are waiting out of direct line of sight, deeper within the star fort's central core. They only move into line of site once any enemy tanks have advanced to within firing range. The secessionists consider the melta tanks a precious resource, so they try to keep them moving between cover to minimise their exposure to enemy fire.

## OVERCOMING THE TRAITORS

By no means should this be an easy combat for the Imperial forces. As they exit the broad hallways, the killing ground is enormous and the amount of enemy firepower is substantial. Even though the hallways are twenty metres wide, this still creates a limited bottleneck for a force as large as the surviving Imperial Guard. Because of this, the Imperial forces must determine some effective means to bring a maximum amount of fire to bear, without completely exposing their forces to enemy fire.

Assessing and responding to the defences may be accomplished through a combination of Battlefield Awareness and Battlefield Manoeuvres. A relatively competent officer commands the Severan Dominate forces, making all Battlefield Awareness Tests Difficult (-10). Game Masters must use their discretion to decide on the weakest points, depending upon the composition of the resistance and Imperial forces. One possible solution might be to take the extreme approach of triggering explosive decompression by annihilating one of the outer walls. A more conservative tactic could be to attempt to destroy the deck plate (Armour Value 25) from beneath the enemy bunkers. Advancing under a withering hail of fire—possibly pushing a hastily constructed barricade—could be another possibility.

Because of the conditions, the base difficulty for Command Tests to have squads execute Battlefield Manoeuvres is Hard (-20). If the target squads are already exceptionally loyal—or particularly disenfranchised—the Game Master may modify this difficulty as appropriate. Potential battle events should hinge largely upon the tactics that the Player Characters choose to employ. Key possibilities could be charging a bunker near the edge of the encampment or scrabbling through the open killing fields.

Game Masters must use their own judgment to resolve the final outcome of the battle, though it should hinge on the actions the Player Characters (and their subordinates, if applicable) take. If commands are issued effectively, or the Guardsmen are largely successful in their tasks, then the secessionist forces can be overcome with only ten to fifteen percent casualties. Conversely, if the tactics utilised seem unnecessarily dangerous or if the Player Characters repeatedly fail in their actions, then the victory may come at a cost of fifty percent casualties. Imperial forces should only lose if the Player Characters choose to take a deliberately foolish approach—in which case they are executed to a man.

The biggest concern for the Imperial forces may be how to deal with any Severan survivors after a victory. If any are allowed to escape, they are certain to rally additional Severan



Dominate forces. With information about the number and composition of the Imperial Guard, the secessionists could assemble a taskforce to prevent the mission from succeeding. Not only do the Imperial forces need to stop the traitors from escaping, they also need to stop them from reporting in via vox. Ideally, a captured prisoner might be interrogated, so that a Guardsman could radio in false data to the traitors, using the communications network to disrupt the star fort's security.

## ONWARD AND INWARD

The overall confusion of the battle leaves the corridors around the perimeter of *Lycurgos* only lightly guarded. The Imperial Guard soldiers can easily pass through this area, encountering only light resistance. The troops that might be patrolling this region have been reassigned to defend docking bays, secure internal structures, or man the star fort's weapons. Menial workers, servitors, and couriers are the most likely encounters through this portion. These individuals either flee or immediately surrender in the face of an overwhelming number of Imperial soldiers, except the servitors, of course, who can do neither.

The star fort's docking bay arms form a cross through the station's central core. With one compromised, there are three that remain viable targets. The arm directly across the station would require the longest journey around the station's outer perimeter, or a fight through the central core. The Void Shrike officers—particularly Lt. Nikishin—are adverse to such a battle, as they believe that navigating that section could be very



## THROUGH THE CORE

The Void Shrike officer understands the nature of the star fort's core. This is where the most enemy soldiers are located along with the best support elements. Trying to battle through this section with the troops and resources currently available is functional suicide. If the commanding officer is an NPC, he takes the force around the core's perimeter to an adjacent docking bay arm, regardless of any advice to the contrary. If the Player Characters have command, they may stubbornly decide to ignore the advice of their underlings and fight through the core. If they do so, they face overwhelming and fatal opposition. This should include more than a company of Severan Dominate soldiers, a further company of tanks, and at least a squadron of super-heavy tanks. Game Masters can use their discretion, but should essentially hurl an endless supply of secessionist units at the Guardsmen. By following this tactic, they have made a very poor decision.

difficult. The adjacent arms in either direction are equidistant. The choice to assault one over the other is largely irrelevant. For game purposes, they are considered identical.

At this stage, there is no real benefit for trying to capture more than one docking arm. The disabled docking bay arm provides a reasonably secure approach to reach one of the adjacent arms. Even with two arms secured, Imperial Guard forces control far less than half of the station. The secessionists still maintain a significant advantage in terms of space, resources, and raw numbers. Consequently, any decision to divide the force to attack the two adjacent arms would represent an unwise division of resources. Seizing both docking arms is simply not practical with the number of resources currently available to the Imperial Guardsmen aboard the fort. Any Player Character can recognise this information with a **Simple (+40) Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis)** Test.

Scouts sent to check the levels of resistance on either docking bay arm find comparable levels of resistance. The key initial reveal is the absence of any significant resistance in the station's perimeter corridors. This is the case in both directions. Once scouts begin to descend either of the docking arms, they can first recognise the basic designs are identical with the one through which they just fought. Essentially, these different arms are mirror images of one another, constructed using the same STC pattern. The only variation is incidental equipment and the contents of the different storage facilities and habs.

The second item of note is the presence of defenders, both in the arms and at the various weapon stations located throughout the arms. Unlike the previous docking arm, all of the weapon stations for the star fort's external weapons are actively manned, and the weapons are currently firing upon Imperial Navy vessels. Because of the intense heat and noise built up within the cramped weapons firing quarters, the hatches are left open. As the stations are normally considered secure locations within the star fort, no guards are posted.

This makes it a trivial matter for the Imperial Guardsmen to seize control of the weapons. The weapons operators are functionally oblivious to any threat and can be overcome with hardly a fight.

Guards have, however, been posted to defend the docking bay arm. One group is set up at the point where the docking arm meets with the central core. A second is set up at the arm's terminus, where a visiting ship would normally attach multiple umbilicals. The composition of these forces is essentially the same as the crews assembled to stop the company during its advance along the length of the docking arm. (See **First Impressions** page 28 and **Through the Defences** page 36.)

Fortunately for the Imperial forces, there is one significant factor that has changed. The secessionists are posted so that their weapons point down the docking bay arm, facing away from the star fort's core. Their bunkers are also established to defend against attacks made from that orientation. If the characters advance upon them, the heavy weapons need to be moved and braced prior to firing. None of the Severan Dominate forces have any cover against attacks from behind. Further, if the company makes a reasonable attempt to use stealth, they can surprise the secessionists.

The overall difficulty for both of these battles should be proportionate to the strategies that the Player Characters utilise. All Battlefield Awareness Tests against the group at the base of the docking bay arm are considered Challenging (+0). The secessionists have not set up a killing field behind them—they intended to retreat through the hallways if necessary. Cover is readily available in the form of various massive pipes, support structures, and conduits integrated into the star fort's structure. As the Imperial Guard soldiers can take advantage of this cover, Battlefield Manoeuvres also have a difficulty of Challenging (+0).

If the Player Characters wish, some elements of the Imperial forces may also be deployed upon various gantries and structural elements within the hallway that encircles the star fort's perimeter. These locations can offer foot soldiers an opportunity to rain fire down upon the secessionists, while presenting a minimal target. The reinforced plasteel construction also offers cover (14 Armour Points) to any who fire from a prone position.

The secessionists at the terminus of the docking arm are likely to hear the sounds of combat from the base of the arm, but they are ordered to hold their stations. Because of the noise, this group is likely to make some limited adjustments in terms of cover, but their highest priority remains preparedness for an assault from the void. Because no attack has yet been launched against the docking bay, a lieutenant still has charge of the operation. This sets the difficulty for both Battlefield Awareness and Battlefield Manoeuvre Tests to Challenging (+0).

In both of these engagements, the Imperial Guardsmen have a significant advantage for the first time since the adventure began. They outnumber their opponents and have a superior tactical position. They may even have the element of surprise on their side. Their opponents lack cover, while they have an opportunity to find their own. These remain large-scale engagements, so it is expected that the Imperial Guard should suffer some casualties.

## EXPLOSIVES

Some groups may lean towards a philosophy that involves the heavy use of explosives. This could take the shape of ordnance fire, krak missiles, melta bombs, or simply demolition charges. Before the Player Characters begin to make liberal use of these tools, remind them that their orders call for taking the station intact. These weapons certainly have situational applications in the battles against the secessionists. However, if applied too generously, the blasts could easily inflict serious damage upon this docking bay arm. Severe damage might even rupture the hull, venting atmosphere to the void and again making the docking arm functionally useless for landing reinforcements. If that were to happen, the company would be charged with capturing yet another arm after this one. Such a challenge would inevitably tax the available manpower and their reinforcements further, likely beyond their ability to succeed.

in the course of the battles. Fortunately, those losses should be relatively manageable.

The Severan Dominate soldiers, in contrast, recognise that the Imperial forces must have already overwhelmed their brethren at the previous junction. The attack comes from a direction that they were told was already secure. This weakens their morale and substantially reduces their willingness to fight. Without Ducal Legates, the Severan Dominate's political officers (see page 31 of the **ONLY WAR** Sourcebook **ENEMIES OF THE IMPERIUM**), to keep control of the units, many of these soldiers may surrender or simply break and flee before the overwhelming might of the Imperial Guard.

Unless the Imperial Guard deliberately choose risky tactics, they should emerge from each combat with casualties of ten percent or less. Game Masters should make use of their own judgment regarding the overall efficacy of the Player Characters and the unit's strategy to determine the manpower costs in these engagements. This should also impact the amount of ammunition expended in the conflict, though some of this might be recovered from weapons and vehicles seized from the foe.

## ESTABLISH A PERIMETER

After the Imperial Guard has cleared the Severan Dominate from the docking arm, they must prepare to defend it. By this point, the secessionists are clearly aware of the strategy employed by the Imperial Guard. They recognise that the Imperial Navy can now land additional forces upon *Lycurgos* without having to face the star fort's defensive weapons. Their only chance to prevent further landings is to move quickly to retake the docking arm and man its armaments again.

It takes more than three hours for landing shuttles to reach the docking arm. This is because the Imperial Navy vessels had to remain beyond the effective range of the star fort's ordnance. This provides the secessionists with ample time to retake the arm and recover the

massive weapons. During this time, the survivors of the first and second waves must prepare to desperately hold onto the station that they have secured.

Mercifully for the exhausted Imperial Guard soldiers, it does take some time for the Severan Dominate to organise their forces prior to launching an assault. The secessionists have suffered serious damage, both in the explosion and through the Imperial Guard assault. Further, they can ill-afford to leave other portions of the star fort undefended. After all, the Imperial Navy has a huge number of landing shuttles. If any docking arm were left vulnerable, the guardsmen might be able to seize it instead.

This situation grants the Guardsmen a brief reprieve. It is hardly enough time for a meaningful rest, but it does give them an opportunity to set up defences of their own. The sandbag bunkers that the secessionists used may be repositioned. If tank traps were employed, those might also be reused. Guards could be stationed at each of the weapons stations. Additional bunkers might be built by using scrap taken from the walls or from the storage facilities.

Prior to departing the damaged docking arm, the company almost certainly left its wounded behind. A company or more of soldiers may now be sent to escort these Guardsmen to the company's new position. This stage need not have any significant engagements but must be tense. Some of the wounded can scarcely survive transport, as the slightest jostle triggers further bleeding. Others are coldly determined to die in the Emperor's service, and try to fight their way free of their stretchers so that they can try to charge towards enemies that only they see. Dealing with the badly injured can resonate with the stark severity of battle, in ways that go unnoticed in the midst of a larger conflict.

Some groups could take this opportunity to scavenge through the cargo present in the docking bay storage areas. Game Masters are left to their own discretion about what might be available. Keep in mind that the Severan Dominate is hardly well equipped with military assets. Excessive armaments and wargear are likely rare. Anything that was designated for use in Warzone Epsilon has certainly been dispersed to the soldiers or assigned to armouries. The vast majority of equipment manufactured aboard the star fort is retrieved at the earliest opportunity, in order to feed the ravenous war machine that the secessionists attempt to maintain. Conversely, agricultural goods should be present in abundance. The planet produces significantly more food than it can use, and transporting it off-world is a constant struggle. It is very likely that the storage areas would be constantly filled with goods awaiting transport to other secessionist worlds.

There are ample tasks to assign at this stage and many command decisions to make. The Void Shrikes might even volunteer to patrol the star fort's exterior surface, in fear that the Severan Dominate might try to send a unit to attack through an insecure airlock. Depending upon the Player Characters' roles within the company, they may have significant input as regards these choices, or they could be the boots on the ground sent to stand watch or build defences. Ultimately, the key to concluding the act requires keeping tensions high, even as the mission transitions from a state of constant battle to one of increased preparedness.

# COUNTER ATTACK

*"Do not bandy words with the traitor. For, in hearing, you risk opening your mind to his perversions. Heed only the words of the Emperor and his servants."*

—Commissar Bernadine Tophinke

This scene covers a brief, but intensely focused period of time. Imperial forces have seized control of one of the star fort's docking arms. They can use that secure location to land additional forces, without those units having to come under fire from the massive weapons of *Lycurgos*. Those units could be enough to finally turn the tide, letting the Imperium eliminate the secessionist threat on the station. A clear victory here could be enough to turn the tide against the Severan Dominate throughout the Spinward Front, for the loss of the star fort could cause the planet below to fall. Without those resources, a downward spiral towards doom seems inevitable.

The secessionists recognise the danger they face, and realise that they must recapture those weapons at all cost. By rallying their reserves throughout the station, they launch an all out assault to cleanse the docking bay arm, and retake its weapons. If they can regain control of the ordnance in time, these could be used to substantially thin the incoming Imperial Navy shuttles. Additional forces could then be scrambled to hold off those who managed to land.

This is an act of desperation for the secessionists. General Constantine—the Severan Dominate commander of the entire system—prepares to assemble the troops and oversee the battle directly. He recognises that this is not the absolute last chance for victory—that battle lays at the heart of the station. A triumph here, however, could be enough to save thousands of lives among the secessionists and avoid a desperate last stand. He feels forced to make a concerted effort to retake the arm. His only restriction is that he cannot leave other portions of the station unsecured. If he were to move soldiers from the other docking arms, then the Imperial reserves might be able to divert, making landing at either of those instead.

Because victory is so crucial, the General prepares several different tactics. These are executed in a near simultaneous fashion by a variety of different units. Each poses a significant threat to the forces aboard the station, as well as those en route. Imperial forces must overcome all of these new attacks to hold their position. Player Characters may encounter some or all of these threats, based upon their disposition and the Game Master's preference.

## DEFENSIVE POSTURE

All of the enemy actions are based upon their knowledge of the defensive positions taken up by the Imperial Guard. This section briefly summarises how NPC Imperial Guard officers are most likely to set up the perimeter. Game Masters can choose to modify the tactical approach to better fit the personality of the commanding officer. Alternatively, if the

Player Characters have command, the secessionists must adapt their tactics to target any vulnerability in the defences that the guardsmen have chosen.

The Imperial Guard commander only considers two possible routes of entry to the docking bay arm. The first is that the secessionists could unleash an all out assault upon base of the arm. A rolling force of secessionists—particularly if mounted—could rapidly smash through any defenders stationed at the base of the arm, then move down its length, recapturing weapons stations as they moved. Alternatively, he recognises that the star fort has many other launch bays. They might load forces onto a landing shuttle and then dock the shuttle with the airlocks at the bay arm's terminus. A concerted push could secure that area, and prevent the landing of Imperial Guard reserves.

The lieutenant also recognises that the weapon emplacements present a tempting secondary target. If the secessionists were able to regain control of the ordnance mounted on the arm, then they could use those weapons against incoming soldiers. With control of those weapons, they might not need to immediately retake the arm's terminal airlocks. Instead, they could simply use the weapons to eliminate any incoming landers. Surviving guardsmen could then be eliminated at the secessionist's convenience.

To oppose these threats, the officer reluctantly divides his forces, so that they can deal with any of these threats. He first splits off a single squad—or light vehicle, if appropriate—to each of the docking arm's ten weapon emplacements. The squads are ordered to defend the stations at all costs. If an attack comes, they are to make as much noise as possible, so that reinforcements can be quickly dispatched. They are also issued explosives—of a type appropriate to the regiment's background—and told to place these within the weapon stations. The explosives should be detonated only if the enemy is certain to gain control of the weapon. Until that outcome is certain, the unit must hold out for reinforcements, preserving the weapon for later Imperial use as needed.

Once those forces have been assigned, the commander then splits his remaining force into thirds. One group is sent to hold the base of the docking arm. This group is composed of the heaviest weapons and vehicles available. He orders them to establish the best defensive posture that they can. This should include setting up temporary weapons emplacements and building cover from the star fort's basic structures. They are encouraged to scavenge from any supplies the Severan Dominate forces left behind—including makeshift bunkers and possibly tank traps.

Another third is stationed at the docking bay area of the station. These forces include the majority of the unit's mainline troopers. As appropriate, he orders them to don their void suits or at least their respirators. They are to construct temporary cover, and then make certain to tie themselves off to structural elements. He recognises the danger that countless interweaving cables could present, but after prior losses the commander is more concerned about explosive decompression. These soldiers are to hold the area until reinforcements arrive. They must keep the area from coming to harm, so that the remaining members of the regiment can safely land upon the station.

The remaining third of the forces include the most mobile members of the company. This should include any transports, higher speed tanks, and mounted units. They are stationed at the docking arm's midpoint. When the enemy assaults, they are expected to respond to the point of greatest threat. The commanding officer intends to be very conservative in sending a response. He is afraid that an initial assault could be a feint, designed to draw his reserves away from their station. As a consequence, he is likely to only send out the full reserve unit once either of the defensive groups has suffered serious casualties.

## THE SCOUTS

As soon as he recognised the monitoring systems were out of service, Constantine took action. He dispatched a ten-member squad of Severan Dominate soldiers (see page 120) with orders to scout out the Imperial positions and report back. He also instructed the squad to avoid direct conflict. Blending into the enemy forces and obtaining intelligence information is a far higher priority than actually attacking the foe. Due to time constraints, he gave the squad two hours to scout the arm and report back, limiting their ability to be thorough, but still presenting an opportunity for Constantine to choose his strategy appropriately.

The sergeant leading the squad makes it a point to consider stealth their highest priority. He believes that if discovered, violence is unlikely to solve any issues. He has ordered his

soldiers to actively avoid engaging the foe. They are to take direct action only against isolated soldiers. Even then, they must be confident that no one will detect the attacks. The squad's precise actions are a reaction to the defensive measures that the Imperial Guard have established in the docking bay arm.

The secessionist's first move is to secure enemy uniforms and equipment. The infiltrators have no difficulty in obtaining these regardless of the history and tradition of the Player Characters' regiment or the severity of previous losses. If the guardsmen have left a trail of bodies extending back to the collapsed docking arm, then obtaining blood-stained uniforms is trivially easy. Likewise, even if the regiment has a proud tradition of proper funereal rites, there have been far too many losses during the course of the incursion for the regiment to have policed them all. The duty of preparing the bodies for a last service might even have already been undertaken and regiment confessors could have incinerated bodies and uniforms or launched them from airlocks at the same time as other guardsmen prepared the defences. Yet, despite this all, a handful of prisoners or casualties must have slipped their notice, for the infiltrators have acquired convincing disguises regardless.

By this stage of the adventure many members of the Player Characters' regiment have suffered superficial wounds. Damaged uniforms and field dressings can easily conceal the fact that their outfits were scavenged from the dead. A significant complication is that the Severan Dominate soldiers



are not familiar with the complexities of donning a foreign regiment's uniforms. Buttons are almost certainly incorrectly hooked, knots improperly tied, and pins worn inverted. A Player Character who notices one of the scouts, recognises the uniform issues on a **Routine (+10) Awareness Test**.

To enter the docking bay arm, the scouts must pass by Imperial soldiers stationed to defend its base. If they can secure Imperial uniforms prior to entry, this job becomes far more feasible. A cover story that they were sent on patrol or separated during the advance is readily believable. Without an appropriate disguise, it is obviously far harder for them to blend in. This portion of the star fort does not maintain a day-night cycle. The lights in the passages always keep the area brightly lit.

Depending upon their assigned responsibilities within the docking arm, the Player Characters could directly encounter the scouts, or they might have no interaction at all. If they capture them, they might be directly involved in an interrogation effort, or they could simply turn the secessionists over to a superior officer. Questioning the scouts offers little information about the current Severan Dominate plan. The scouts can reveal General Constantine's name. They can also reluctantly admit that they believe they were the only scouts sent to investigate the defences. They are certain that the general plans to press an attack as soon as possible, but they do not know the nature of the attack. Beyond that, they only know that their forces have a sizeable contingent of both foot soldiers and vehicles. They lack the clearance to gather an accurate count of the total assets, yet their observations can provide useful information.

## THE BIG PUSH

General Constantine is impatient to begin his assault against the remaining guardsmen. He wants to exterminate the Imperial presence so that the star fort can once more be a bastion of the Severan Dominate. Waiting for his scouts to report sorely tries his patience. If the deadline for their return passes without any intelligence, he begins the process of marshalling his forces. Without detailed information about the enemy forces, the General assembles a relatively diverse task force. His intent is to be able to overcome most resistance efforts. If the scouts did manage to survive and report back quickly, Game Masters are encouraged to adapt Constantine's troop selections to more effectively oppose the Imperial Guard's structure. Weapons and support vehicles could play key factors in revisions to the general's force.

Even without obtaining information from the scouts, the secessionists do have some general ideas about their opponent's force composition. Essentially, they recognise if their prey are largely foot soldiers, mechanised forces, or an armoured company. The general, however, lacks the ability to fully vary his troop composition. He has limited resources that he can bring to bear on this engagement without sacrificing his defences in other portions of *Lycurgos*. Consequently, his only concession to the different types of Imperial Guard is a tweak to the weapons carried by his foot soldiers (see the **Secessionist Weapon Choices** sidebar).

### SECESSIONIST WEAPON CHOICES

General Constantine reassigns special weapons and heavy weapons to his foot soldiers based upon the expected types of resistance. His selections are as follows:

- Against foot soldiers, each squad's special weapon is a flamer. Its heavy weapon is a heavy flamer. All soldiers are issued an additional pair of frag grenades. Support vehicles are Hellhound Flame Tanks.
- Against mounted forces, each squad's special weapon is a grenade launcher. Its heavy weapon is an autocannon. All soldiers are issued an additional pair of krak grenades. Support vehicles are Sentinel Scout Walkers, equipped with lascannons.
- Against tank companies, each squad's special weapon is a meltagun. Its heavy weapon is a missile launcher. All soldiers are issued krak grenades. Support vehicles are Devil Dog Melta Tanks.

Very reluctantly, the General decides at the last minute to remain within the station's central core rather than leading the expedition into the docking arm. This decision only comes when one of his advisors points out that the collision with the cruiser has damaged the station to such a degree that the structural integrity of the peripheral corridors could collapse at any moment, evacuating all of the air into the void. The general reluctantly proclaimed that his life was too critical to the military effort to risk. He decided to remain at the rear and coordinate the advance via the vox network. A servo skull accompanies the secessionist officer commanding the counter strike, and the general nervously watches its feed. As new information becomes available, the general provides a constant stream of largely unwanted advice to the field commander.

General Constantine has secured a Stormlord super-heavy tank (see page 135) from the star fort's manufactorums to lead the assault. The massive tank can scarcely fit down the docking arm's broad corridors. Its crew are also poorly trained in its usage, suffering a -10 penalty to all Tests. In spite of both of those factors, its impressive armour and broad range of weapons presents a powerful threat to the Imperial forces. Its huge scale is also large enough that it can blithely ignore tank traps, crushing them instead of becoming entrapped upon them.

Two full companies of Severan Dominate soldiers form the core of the general's counter strike. This numbers roughly 600 soldiers, broken down into ten-man squads. Each squad includes two soldiers assigned to work as a heavy weapon team and one soldier equipped with a special weapon. The soldiers advance behind the Stormlord. Whenever possible, they move onto gantries and catwalks, attempting to rain fire down upon the Imperial Guard forces from a raised firing position.

Finally, four support vehicles are attached to the companies. These are used at the discretion of the Severan field commander under General Constantine's advice. During the advance, they are initially interspersed with the foot soldiers. As tactics and



space permit, the lighter vehicles may move to flank the Stormlord, providing crossfire with its weapons.

The Severan field commander's strategic decisions are best resolved as Opposed Battlefield Awareness Tests. The General's remote advice serves as more of a distracting hindrance than an actual asset. Consequently, the secessionist commander receives no bonus to any of these Tests.

The outcome of this battle is subject to the Player Characters' role in the conflict. By default, the attack is highly successful against the Imperial Guardsmen stationed at the base of the docking arm. The Stormlord's broad range of weapons inflicts heavy casualties. Its massive armour likely proves nearly impenetrable to the weapons of the guardsmen present. The Guardsmen should only manage to overcome the super-heavy tank after the entire reserve is redeployed from the arm's midpoint. Should it be brought down, the enemy morale is quickly depleted, and the remaining soldiers crumble, fleeing in terror.

This default outcome is severe for the Player Characters' company, as they do lose more than a third of their forces. In spite of this, they ultimately remain victorious. The general's counter attack constitutes a failure, and the Severan Dominate must retreat to the central core of the star fort.

Player Characters may modify this outcome by taking direct actions or more effectively coordinating the defensive effort. Game Masters should use a combination of Battlefield Awareness and Manoeuvre Tests to indicate the effective placement of troops and their ability to follow orders. If the Player Characters have a great deal of success in this, they can disable the Stormlord far more quickly, and may even be able to compromise secessionist morale even sooner. Every Degree of Success achieved on a properly executed Battlefield Manoeuvre Test reduces the total Imperial casualties by five percent from the default of thirty-five percent. Each Degree of Failure increases the casualties by an additional five percent. If this raises the casualty level to more than fifty percent, the secessionists succeed in retaking the docking arm. Over the course of the combat, the Player Characters may attempt three such Tests.

If the Player Characters took a direct hand in coordinating the defences, they might have installed additional obstructions to the secessionists' advance. Possibilities could include traps, but might also have included further defensive structures. Game Masters must take such modifications into account when calculating the difficulty for Battlefield Manoeuvre Tests.

## FORWARD ELEMENTS

At the same time as General Constantine launches his assault against the station's terminus, he also launches a secondary attack. This one depends upon guile and stealth rather than the brute force of a super-heavy tank. The general dipped into the station's supply of void suits as part of a desperate gamble to regain control of the docking arm's weapons. His available Tech-Priests quickly gave a hurried and rudimentary course on their use to ten squads of Severan Dominate soldiers. These soldiers were then sent onto the station's external surface with maps identifying the locations of the station's airlocks as well as the weapon emplacements. No heavy or special weapons were assigned to these squads. Their orders were to take one of the emplacements and defend it for as long as they can against the Imperial Guard, firing it against the oncoming Imperial landers all the while.

The plan is a desperate gamble. The Severan troopers are only poorly trained in using void suits. Navigating on the station's surface is challenging for those who are competent in the use of magnetic grapples. With minimal training, it is a confounding task. Between damages and any traps that the Void Shrikes might have set, the Severan soldiers could face an overwhelming amount of resistance. Their best hope for success is only if the Player Characters have made the specific choice to keep all of their soldiers within the station's confines.

Of course, even if the Severan Dominate soldiers manage to re-enter the star fort, they have little chance of their mission being a complete success. By default, guardsmen are deployed at the entrances to each of the weapons firing stations. The secessionists have no practical opportunity to deceive these soldiers. Instead, they must overwhelm them, and then try to retake the intact weapon system. Even if they manage this feat, the soldiers have very little familiarity with the process of firing and aiming the targeting systems for a macro cannon.

Finally, the act of firing those weapons is extraordinarily loud. Anyone located in the docking bay arm can easily overhear the sound of a defensive weapon firing. Many members of the regiment expect that the weapons fire came at Imperial orders. Those who succeed at a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test** recognise that there are not supposed to be any secessionist craft within the range and firing arc of the macro cannons. If they are firing, then the Imperial landers are endangered.

By default, the Severan Dominate platoon successfully retakes a single weapon station only to find they are unable to fire the weapon, due to their own ignorance as to how they are operated. Coercing the terrified weapon crews, the platoon does manage to unleash a few volleys from the station's macro cannon. These destroy nearly a dozen Imperial Navy landers, killing thousands of relatively defenceless Imperial Guard, which amounts to around ten percent of the regiment. Eventually, reinforcements within the docking arm respond to the noises and eliminate the enemy troops. Over the course of the brief engagement, the control system for the weapon is destroyed, along with the infiltrators.

Player Characters can directly influence this outcome if they are assigned to guard a weapons station, are part of the reserve contingent, or have overall command of the Imperial Guard forces. From a command perspective, the situation is most likely

to change if the officers choose not to deploy a segment of their forces to defend the weapons stations. Without defenders, far more of the Severan Dominate soldiers can successfully retake the combat stations. The increased level of fire is enough to seriously blunt the Imperial Guard assault. The remaining portions of the regiment suffer near 90 percent losses. This leaves the Imperial Guard with insufficient forces to capture either *Lycurgos* or the planet below. The Imperial Navy prepare to evacuate the system until another attempt can be made, leaving the Player Characters stranded aboard the star fort.

Conversely, any increase in the number of soldiers stationed to watch the weapon stations, airlocks, or exterior surface of the star fort is adequate to completely blunt the external attack. If the Player Characters have the authority to commit additional forces to this effort, their presence manages to preserve the lives of thousands of their brethren. With this approach, the only casualties that the reinforcements suffer come from the fighter craft launched against their landers.

If the Player Characters were assigned guard duty, then they may fight their counterparts in a traditional encounter. These soldiers initially attempt to make a stealthy assault upon the weapons emplacement. Their efforts are certainly made more challenging by the need to pass through the airlock, and the fact that their uniforms are quite distinctive from those worn by the Imperial forces. In order to detect the attack, Player Characters may make an **Opposed Routine (+10) Awareness Test** against the Severan troopers' Stealth Skill. If the Players Characters should fail, they are Surprised for the first Round of combat. Otherwise, combat proceeds normally. The Severan soldiers try to move close and overcome their foes as quickly and quietly as possible. They realise that any loud noises are likely to draw further Imperial attention to the area, reducing their ability to fire the star fort's massive weapons. Conversely, the Guardsmen have the option of making additional noise so as to attract the attention of their reinforcements.

Similarly, if the Guardsmen were stationed among the reserve unit, they may overhear and respond to a Severan Dominate assault early enough to prevent one of the star fort's weapons from being put into use. Noticing the intruders at an early enough stage to intervene requires success on a **Difficult (-10) Opposed Awareness Test**. If they succeed, they hear the sound of the airlock cycling, or the tread of magnetic boot steps on the outer surface of the star fort. This provides ample time for the Imperial units to reinforce the guards stationed at each of the weapons. Once more, overcoming the Severan Dominate soldiers can be a straightforward battle. Of course, if the Imperial Guard dispatches more than a squad to each of the weapon stations, then the overwhelming numbers of Severan Dominate troops are less likely to overwhelm those on guard duty.

If the Player Characters are in a position to notice the presence of the Severan troopers, each Degree of Success on an opposed Test provides earlier warning of the attack. If any of the squad members have the foresight to warn units guarding all of the weapons stations, the warning provides the soldiers with a significant advantage. With four Degrees of Success on the Test and a broadly announced warning, Imperial forces can repel the attack without suffering serious casualties, or damage to the star fort's weapons.



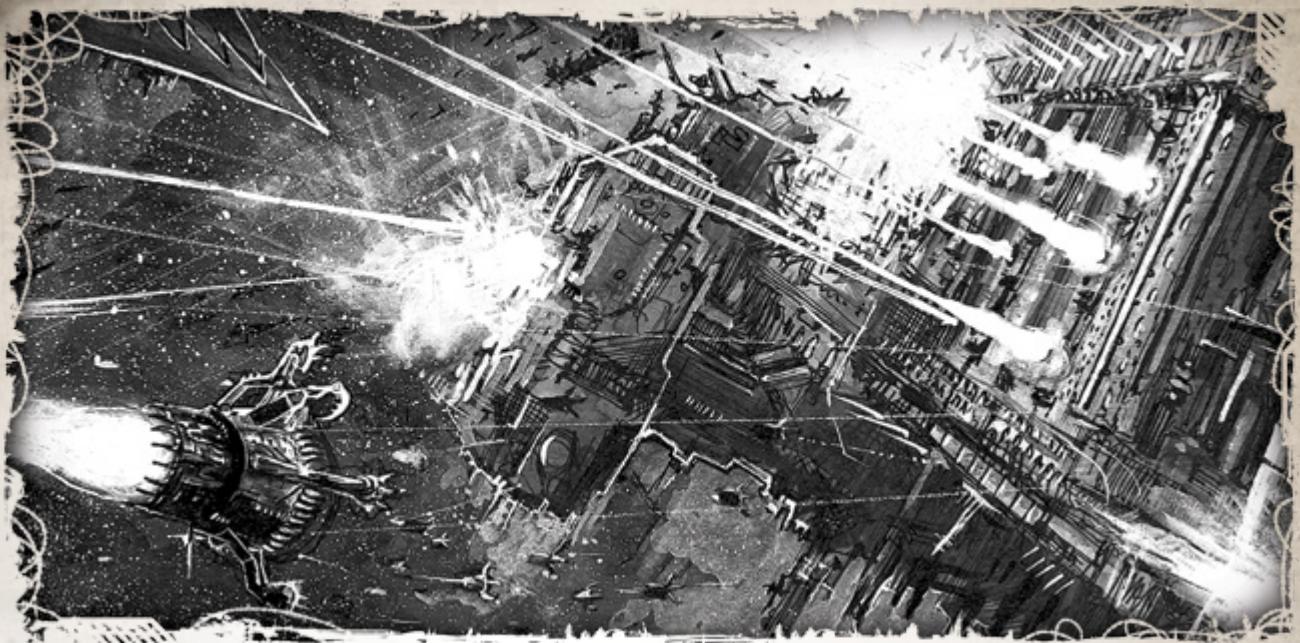
## SCRAMBLED FIGHTERS

With his assault blunted, General Constantine only has one remaining option if he is to eliminate the incoming fleet of Imperial Navy landers: he moves to scramble every available wing of fighter craft. Even if the star fort's weapons cannot be brought to bear on the landers, the smaller ships still pose an effective threat to the landers.

In fairness, Imperial Navy officers were cognizant that the star fort was certain to include several wings of fighter craft. They recognised the potential for this type of threat, and so have launched their own fighters to escort the landers to the docking bay. The issue, however, is that they grossly underestimated the number of fighter craft in the imminent engagement. Best estimates had previously placed the available fighters in the range of ten to twenty small craft. In reality, the Severan Dominate launched more than 100 fighters. Their pilots are not particularly skilled or experienced in space combat, but the numerical advantage more than offsets the ability gap.

If the fighters are not stopped, they can exploit their advantage to inflict significant damage upon the Imperial forces. Specifically, without some degree of intervention from the Guardsmen aboard the star fort, the regiment suffers twenty percent casualties, as the secessionist fighters eliminate the sluggish landers. In the process, more than a quarter of the fighters are also destroyed. Of course, each fighter holds a single pilot, while each lander holds hundreds of Imperial Guard. The ratio in terms of trained soldiers is hardly comparable.

# I: THE BEACHHEAD



The Imperial Guard troops aboard the station are not pilots. At first blush, it seems there is little they can do to aid their brethren aboard the transports. However, they do have a few possible tactics available. Unless the Imperial Guard recognise the imminent threat, all of these options are moot. Identifying the entanglement can happen through one of two possibilities. If the company's communications officer is listening in on the star fort's command frequency, he can overhear the order to launch the fighter squadrons. Alternatively, if the Void Shrikes are deployed to the star fort's exterior, they can see the unusually large launch of fighter wings. Unless the Player Characters have specifically countermanded attempts at intelligence gathering or assigned the Void Shrikes to duty elsewhere, both of these methods can work.

One possible strategy to draw off the attack is to attempt to relay false orders to the enemy squadron. This requires that the communications officer has secured the proper frequencies and encryption. Considering that the Imperial Guard and Severan Dominate forces use identical equipment and very similar protocols, capturing that information is actually quite likely. In fact, it is safe to assume that a member of the command staff has already acquired this information for intelligence gathering purposes. Redirecting the squadron already in flight is more challenging. A Player Character must succeed at a **Hard (-20) Opposed Deceive** Test. Should they succeed, the squadron aborts its flight long enough to permit the Imperial Guard forces to land.

Alternatively, the Guardsmen could scramble additional forces to the star fort's exterior surface. Quick and decisive action would enable them to fire heavy weapons on the fighters as they launched and made their way towards the incoming Imperial Navy landers. Of course, not all weapons would be well suited for making such an attack. Lascannons and autocannons are really the best option. If the company has only a limited number of those weapons, this may not be an effective strategy. Game statistics for the fighters are not provided. If the Player Characters wish to attack the enemy craft, they must make a **Very**

**Hard (-30) Ballistic Skill Test** utilising the weapon they are currently manning. This Ballistic Skill Test is modified by any bonuses and penalties provided by equipment, Talents, and Traits the Player Characters might possess. If Player Characters succeed on this Test, they disable a single enemy fighter and take it out of the fight. While this is an inefficient method, the Player Characters can repeat this so long as the landing action persists.

A final option is to try to use the star fort's own weapons to eliminate the fighters. This requires effective use of the ordnance and the macro cannons, but it also requires communication with the oncoming Imperial Navy landers. If the Guardsmen can persuade the landers to alter their course, the Severan Dominate fighters can be tricked into flying directly through the firing arcs of the docking arm's weapons. A single volley fired simultaneously from several of the arm's macro cannons should be adequate to inflict significant casualties upon the fighter wing. Firing without first establishing communications is far more dangerous for the Imperial craft. They would certainly be caught within the weapon's firing arc, inflicting damage upon both the enemy and the allied forces.

Successfully enacting any of these strategies is enough to effectively eliminate the threat posed by the fighter squadron. Game Masters can, at their discretion, work with some other strategy that the Player Characters might propose and implement. Ultimately, the biggest concern with another tactic is the chance of success and the likelihood of it deterring the enemy fighters from completing their run. Keep in mind that the Severan Dominate pilots are not particularly well trained, and can easily be dissuaded from engaging in a protracted space battle.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPC plays an important role as the characters attempt to hold the docking arm against the oncoming Severan Dominate soldiers.

### LIEUTENANT SAVA NIKISHIN

The lieutenant is anxious to incorporate the Void Shrikes and their unusual techniques into the defensive plans. He approaches the entire process from a non-traditional perspective. Some of his ideas may seem absurd to a more traditional tactician, while others offer useful ideas. Options could include deliberately planting demo charges to trigger explosive decompression as needed, deploying some of the Void Shrikes onto the arm's exterior surface, or even flying landing craft loaded with explosives into the midst of the enemy fighters. The lieutenant is earnest and sincere in his advice. Those who laugh off his suggestions earn his ire.

## REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE

*"The foes of the Imperium are legion, but so too are the Emperor's adherents. Those who persevere in their faith shall ever receive succour from Him and His followers."*

—Chaplain Vladislav Bingham, Vostroyan 12th Regiment

If the Guardsmen have succeeded in repelling the Severan Dominate attacks, then the Imperial reserves eventually manage to dock with the external hatches present in the docking arm. The total number of soldiers and equipment that arrives is based upon the overall size of the Player Characters' regiment. This should include at least one additional company, but it could easily include several. The key factor is that the number of units that arrive in this wave increases the total number of Imperial forces upon the station substantially.

The arrival of the reserves offers a brief respite for the Guardsmen. They have successfully completed their assigned mission to secure a landing zone. This does not complete their overall assignment within the theatre of war, but it does at least present them an opportunity to resupply. If the characters have a leadership role—or if they were forced into one because of casualties—their superior officers will need to debrief them. Reports must be filed, mission assignment gear must be returned and performance evaluations for exceptional courage or wanton cowardice may be necessary.

## THE ARRIVAL PROCESS

Transporting the remainder of the regiment to the star fort is a massive and time-consuming undertaking. Each of the landers can only carry a few hundred infantrymen or far fewer vehicles, as appropriate. Because the landers can only dock instead of entering a proper hangar, all forces must disembark through narrow airlocks. Even under the strict supervision of the regiment's officers and commissars, this is a tedious process. With hundreds of landers transporting tens of thousands of troops and vehicles, the full transfer requires a great deal of time indeed.

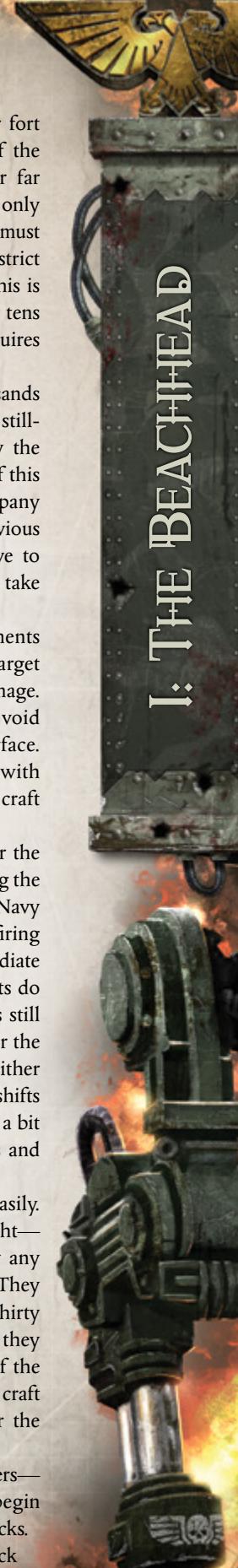
The secessionists can hardly afford to sit idle as thousands of additional Imperial Guardsmen pour into the still-contested station. Consequently, they attempt to harry the landers waiting their turn to dock. The relative success of this action is strongly dependent upon how well the company fared against the Severan Dominate fighters in the previous scene. If the majority were destroyed, then few survive to damage the landers. Otherwise, the Guardsmen must take action to aid in the defence of the landers.

At such short range, the star fort's weapon emplacements are no longer useful. It is essentially impossible to target the fighters without inflicting massive collateral damage. Lascannons are the best option, as soldiers wearing void suits can fire them from the star fort's exterior surface. Alternatively, the Guardsmen could coordinate with Imperial Navy fighters to try and bait the secessionist craft into carefully coordinated hails of fire.

The largest risk in such an engagement is actually for the soldiers still aboard the landers, rather than those engaging the fighters. Neither the Severan Dominate nor the Imperial Navy pilots are willing to fire upon the star fort. Guardsmen firing from that position have little reason to fear any immediate repercussions for their actions. However, the secessionists do begin to angle their attacks so that some of the landers still waiting to dock block line of sight from the station. After the first few fighters are lost, the Player Characters must either cease their attacks or risk hitting an allied craft. Further shifts in strategy might become necessary. This should involve a bit of a back and forth, tallying up losses to both fighters and transports in the process.

The secessionist fighters do not yield the attack easily. There are at least forty enemy craft involved in the dogfight—more if the Player Characters were not able to destroy any fighters during **Scrambled Fighters** (see page 45). They continue to press until the Imperial fighters—who have thirty craft at the start of the fight—outnumber them, or until they lose numerous craft in an unduly short period of time. If the Player Characters manage to shoot down three fighter craft in a single turn, that provides adequate motivation for the secessionist fighters to flee the combat.

With the fighters dispersed, some of the landers—those carrying troops and man-portable wargear—begin to travel down the docking bay arm to ancillary airlocks. This increases the rate at which the shuttles can dock and disembark passengers. The use of these airlocks significantly reduces the time required to deliver the entire regiment to the star fort.

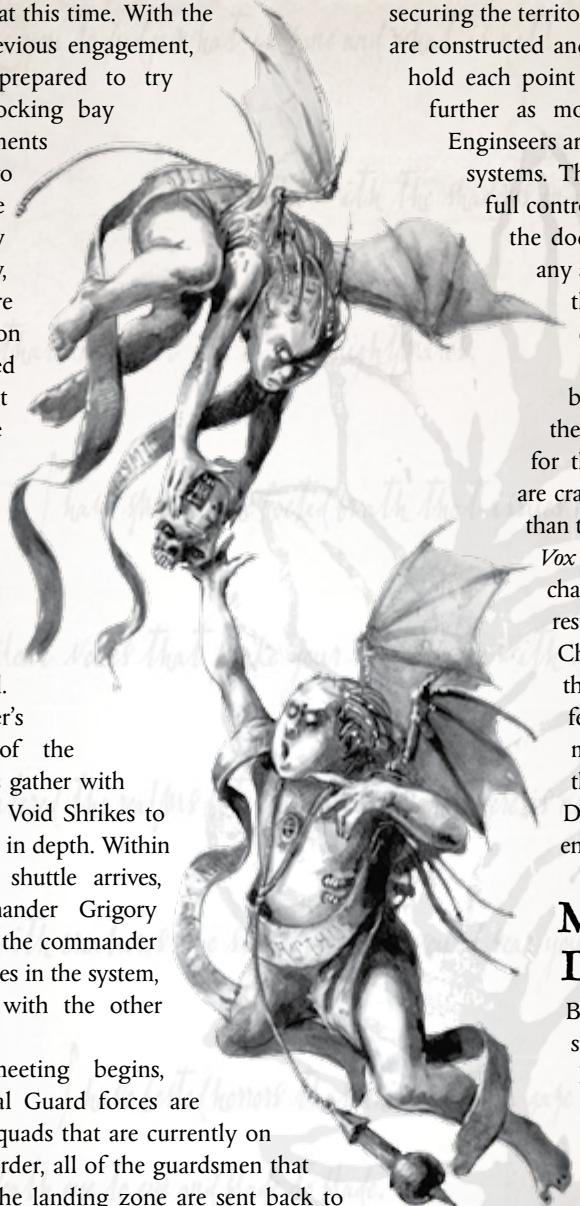


Surprisingly, the Severan Dominate forces do not press a ground assault at this time. With the losses sustained in the previous engagement, they are not currently prepared to try another attack on the docking bay arm. Instead, reinforcements are sent to the other two docking arms to secure them against any secondary invasion attempts. Similarly, forces from the station's core are moved into the region closest to the captured docking bay. This is meant to be a countermeasure against any unexpected Imperial advance.

The regiment's overall commander arrives aboard one of the first few shuttles to dock. With his arrival, the company commanders are relieved of command. One of the commander's adjutants takes charge of the defence, as the two officers gather with Lieutenant Nikishin of the Void Shrikes to discuss the current situation in depth. Within a few moments, another shuttle arrives, carrying company commander Grigory Kulikov (see page 130). As the commander of the Void Shrike companies in the system, he joins in the meeting with the other commanding officers.

Shortly after that meeting begins, the newly arrived Imperial Guard forces are dispatched to relieve the squads that are currently on watch. In relatively short order, all of the guardsmen that participated in capturing the landing zone are sent back to the docking bay area. New arrivals continue to pour past, carrying additional supplies and hurrying to newly assigned duty stations.

Depending upon their role within the company, the Player Characters may have an opportunity for respite, or they may be tied up in meetings for several hours. If they are company commanders, the regimental commander needs a thorough status update immediately, see **Mission Debriefing**, below. Otherwise, their responsibility for the moment is to make sure that any soldiers under their authority are relieved of duty. Once that has been accomplished, they are also temporarily relieved.



The regiment spends this time consolidating its forces and securing the territory already covered. Perimeter fortifications are constructed and the numbers of guardsmen stationed to hold each point are initially doubled and then increased further as more units become available. Tech-Priest Engineers are assigned to commute with the star fort's systems. They work to make certain that they have full control of the machines that are resident within the docking bay arm. This averts the danger of any additional traps or larger-scale actions that the star fort's resident adepts might take to eliminate the intruders en masse.

All of the relieved soldiers are assigned billets within the docking bay arm. They use the habs that had been previously designated for the star fort's menial workers. The rooms are cramped and dirty, but not appreciably worse than the living quarters the company had aboard *Vox Belli*. After hours of intense fighting, the characters may enjoy a short reprieve and rest prior to their debriefing. Give the Player Characters the choice to sleep, eat, or clean their gear, and then explain that they have a few hours to do so. At the same time, they must remain prepared to respond to any threat or a summons from a superior officer. Debriefing is certain to come soon, unless an enemy attack comes first.

## MISSION DEBRIEFING

By the time the Player Characters are summoned from their billets, a functional Imperial Guard depot has begun to take shape. The remainder of the regiment has arrived, and the landers have begun their return trip back to the Imperial Navy vessels. Much of the arm's storage facilities have been moved, with the contents dumped through airlocks into the void. The newly emptied space has been used to designate an armoury, an infirmary, a mess, and a vehicle depot. Guardsmen have worked hard to construct habs and chambers for briefing rooms. Company and regimental commanders even have assigned offices.

The presence of the Void Shrikes creates an unusual dynamic in the encampment. Even with their newly arrived company, they still make up a comparatively small portion of the total number of Imperial soldiers assigned to the base. Because of this, the two regiments have chosen to share facilities. Each facility has two ranking officers, one from the Player Characters' regiment and another from the Vostroyans. In the interests of efficiency, the officers at most of the locations seem to be cooperating and sharing their burdens. In the wake of the fighting, a spirit of camaraderie has begun to grow between the two regiments. For the moment, the respective Commissars have not interfered, but this could change once the intense fighting resumes.

## I: THE BEACHHEAD



At this point, the characters are summoned to meet with their commanding officer. If they have charge of the company, that is the regimental commander. He meets with them at the moment of his arrival, seeking an update about the current situation. His primary concern regards the losses that the company sustained during the battles. While he is glad to see that the mission was a success, he needs a detailed accounting. Even though a significant portion of those losses were due to the detonation of the *Vox Belli*, the losses suffered are most likely to have reached an unacceptable level. He is concerned both with the fact that the company may be crippled and that the station also lost one of its docking arms, when orders called for capturing the station intact. This should be a tense discussion, even if the commander is on relatively good terms with the Player Characters. He initially believes that the situation arose from a series of poor decisions, and must be convinced that this was not the case. Allow the Guardsmen to present their case, and then make a **Challenging (+0) Opposed Charm Test**. Game Masters are encouraged to modify the difficulty based upon how well the questions were answered, as well as the relationship the Player Characters might have with the regimental commander. Should they succeed, he is pleased with their response and accepts it at face value. Should they fail, he demands a more detailed accounting as soon as possible. With three or more Degrees of Failure, he finds the officers in question personally guilty of gross negligence and incompetence. He demands them to a commissar for further questioning.

If the characters hold command over a platoon, their commander would be the commanding officer for the company. Unlike the Player Characters, he has not had an opportunity to rest. Instead, he meets with the squad immediately after completing his own debriefing before the regimental commander. His meeting was not a disaster, but it hardly went well, leaving the commander in a foul mood. He demands a careful and concise recounting—both verbal and written—of every action the company took, how every loss was sustained, and the status of all of their wargear. Any equipment lost must be explained in detail through paperwork submitted to him as well as to the supply officer. Only once that has been completed can their mission assignment gear be returned to the supply depot. Player Characters achieving success on a **Difficult (-10) Opposed Charm Test** can reduce the demands to a manageable level. Should they fail, the Player Characters are expected to fulfil all of these requests. With three or more Degrees of Failure, he waits for the reports, and then takes personal issue with their actions. He demotes the squad to command of a single platoon.

Any further down the chain of command, the debriefing is essentially the same. The squad meets with the lieutenant, who has recently completed an interview with his commanding officer. He had an opportunity to rest briefly after the reserves arrived, but he is hardly well rested. It should be clear that his last meeting was a frustrating and exhausting one. Depending upon his relationship with the Player Characters, he might choose to take some of his frustration out on them, or he could be more merciful. This should be consistent with their previous interactions. The majority of his questions focus upon their trip from *Vox Belli*'s launch bay through to the time the vessel exploded. He wants to know if they recall any rumours from the Imperial Navy crew members about why the captain chose to sacrifice the vessel. The combination of its loss and the damage it inflicted upon the star fort seem to be his largest concern. If there were any other incidents that led to a significant loss of resources within the squad or platoon, the lieutenant also focuses on these. If the Player Characters were clearly guilty of negligence or incompetence, they need to scramble to come up with a reasonable explanation to justify their actions. This can be accomplished through an appropriate Interaction Skill Test. The skill involved must be adjusted based upon the tactics used in the debriefing and their relationship with the lieutenant, though the Test is at a **Hard (-20) Difficulty**.

Once the characters have answered all of their commanding officers' questions to the best of their ability, they are expected to return their mission assignment gear to the supply officer. Somehow, Supply Officer Gaspar survived the explosion and the ensuing series of battles. She is very concerned about her precious goods, as she lost so much of her stores aboard the cruiser and is focused on seeing as much equipment as possible restored quickly to the company's supplies.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPCs play important roles after reserve forces arrive aboard *Lycurgos*.

### SUPPLY OFFICER ADELINE GASPAR

Gaspar fought her way through with the other members of the company, constantly berating soldiers for needlessly expending critical company resources all the way. In spite of this, she somehow managed to avoid suffering a friendly fire incident. Now, she is happy to once more have control of the company's supplies, so that she can oversee that none of them are needlessly wasted. She is more relieved than excited at the fact that the regiment has brought in further supplies and is happy to have a chance to pillage through the materials secured from Lycurgos. If the Player Characters failed to take adequate care of the gear they were assigned she is furious. This ire, however, can be somewhat mitigated if they played any part in rescuing equipment from *Vox Belli*.

### COMPANY COMMANDER

#### GRIGORY KULIKOV

The company commander is relieved to see that at least some members of the Void Shrikes survived the invasion effort. He had feared that his men would perish without any experienced units to support them. He credits the Player Characters' regiment with an unexpected degree of competence and is willing to work with them further. He is very interested about developing tactics to take the remainder of the station and collecting evidence about the secessionist opposition encountered to date. He suspects that the commanding officer of the Severan Dominate forces may be far cannier than anyone had expected. Kulikov does not try to take charge of the overall operation, but he is clearly uncomfortable deferring to the regimental commander.

## REWARDS

This chapter of the campaign concludes after the Player Characters have completed their debriefing and returned their mission assignment gear. The regiment has boarded *Lycurgos*, though not without substantial cost. Lives have been lost and vehicles destroyed. The Severan Dominate forces are obviously committed to defending the facility, recognising its tactical significance for the system and the larger war. The Imperial Guard has a mission to complete, and these traitors cannot be permitted to stop or even delay it. This operation does not appear to be the easy victory that High Command expected. It seems the war for control of the station could be a protracted series of battles against a foe that is prepared for the assault.

Depending upon their role in the various battles, the Player Characters had opportunities to commit acts of tremendous heroism. If they did so, then their commanding officer could have recognised the potential of leadership. With the serious casualties that the company suffered, it is very possible that it could either be disbanded—its members transferred to other units—or that supplementary forces could be rolled into the regiment. As recognition for their actions, this reorganisation could present an opportunity for promotion. At the Game Master's discretion, the Player Characters may be shifted up to a higher level of authority within the company. This could mean leadership of a platoon or an entire company. Unless their company commander was slain in the battles aboard *Lycurgos*, it is very unlikely that they would be promoted to that level of authority.

## EXPERIENCE AND LOGISTICS

If the Game Master is offering experience rewards at the completion of each chapter, rather than at the end of each session, the rewards are as follows. For surviving the incursion, each character receives an award of 1,000 xp. If they were able to successfully defend the reserve landers from coming under significant enemy fighter attack, they receive a bonus of 150 xp. For each conflict that they successfully overcame during the invasion of the star fort, the characters receive an additional 100 xp. At the Game Master's discretion, he can reduce these rewards if the characters suffered substantial losses to their company during the course of any of these encounters. At his discretion, the Game Master can also issue bonus awards for exceptional roleplaying throughout the chapter, but these should not exceed 500 xp in total.

If the Player Characters deliberately focused on rescuing supplies from either *Vox Belli* or the damaged docking bay arm, the company certainly expended the additional supplies during its ongoing battles. These likely played a critical role in their continued mission success. Their comrades within the company recognise this, including the supply officers. They receive a +5 bonus to their Logistics Rating for each time they went out of their way to rescue additional supplies for the company. If the Player Characters made no effort to recover any of the additional supplies in either situation, they suffer a -5 penalty to their Logistics rating for their thoughtlessness in permitting crucial supplies to be lost.

SOMETHING  
WICKED  
LURKS

SECURING THE  
DOCKING ARM

•  
PURGING  
LYCURGOS

•  
GENERAL  
CONSTANTINE



# CHAPTER II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

*"There are no minor sins. The slightest deviation from the Imperial Creed leads to eternity spent outside the Emperor's grace and light. Keep your minds as narrow as the path ahead."*

—Preacher Wyatt Dreeble

**T**hrough the course of this chapter, the Imperial Guard begins to appreciate the true majesty of *Lycurgos*.

Its construction incorporates long lost archeotech, making it a shrine to mysteries over which humanity once ruled. Both the Severan Dominate and Imperial forces recognise the tremendous value contained in these wonders, and strive to control it. Yet, as the battles continue, a terrible threat is revealed to lurk within the star fort. A servant of the Ruinous Powers has escaped imprisonment, and the unholy forces it serves have turned their dark vision upon the station, sealing its fate.

In Chapter I, the Player Characters' company managed to secure a landing zone upon the star fort. This later led to the arrival of the remaining soldiers in the regiment. This was a monumental feat, as the odds were stacked against the Imperial Guard. Of course, their success required the sacrifice of an ancient and massive Imperial Navy cruiser, along with the deaths of almost all on board.

The Imperial Guard doubtless found the challenge of gaining a foothold on the *Lycurgos* difficult, and yet the task ahead of them is no easier. Yet, if the mission is to become a success, they must be far more careful, for further loss of life and resource can be ill afforded. The loss of the cruiser is an enormous blow for the Imperial Navy and for the war effort in the Spinward Front. To lose an entire regiment—or worse yet, *Lycurgos* itself—could be a disaster that would have repercussions for years to come. The regiment must prosecute a responsible and efficient war effort, but they must also make certain of victory.

## SECURING THE DOCKING ARM

*"The traitors' souls burn with the dark fury of their heretical overlords. Let your faith outshine their unjust ire, so that you can easily overcome their treachery."*

—Commissar Horace Barrgraves

**T**he Imperial Guard holds only a small portion of the massive star fort. The docking arm offers them a base of operations and the capacity to land additional supporting forces. As both of these elements are crucial for continued success, the Imperial forces must be careful to properly secure it before they expand their hold. This is partly completed in the early stages, as the regiment establishes additional fortifications and watch schedules. Those are only temporary measures. A longer-term solution requires the regiment to expand the scope of its construction and security.

Two key aspects to this approach are reinforcing the arm's physical security as well as making certain that it is capable of surviving—at least briefly—with the support of the remaining portion of *Lycurgos*. Adepts of the Machine Cult have devoted all of their current efforts to accomplishing this. The first stage is to bring in a powerful plasma generator and an atmospheric processing unit. These two enormous machines are intended to keep the atmosphere breathable, and the gravity and light within the arm functional. The devices remain aboard an Imperial cruiser, as they need a secure escort to reach the star fort. Upon arrival, extraordinary measures may be necessary to break down the huge machines so that they can pass through an airlock.

The docking arm's exterior armour and interior structure are also in the process of being reinforced. The facility suffered some damage when *Vox Belli* exploded. Those issues must be repaired, but further armour is considered essential, lest the secessionists attack the arm with their own spacecraft. As things stand, estimates are unclear as regards how long the arm could survive a concerted bombardment by Severan Dominate capital ships.

The Severan Dominate forces within *Lycurgos* are loath to tolerate the Imperial Guard's presence aboard their star fort. The traitors have made at least a dozen attempts to insert espionage agents into the Imperial forces. With that many failed attempts, regimental command is legitimately concerned

### THE COMING OF CHAOS

During this chapter, the greater threat to the Imperial Guard is revealed to be the Warpsmith Arkturian. Freed from his imprisonment during the Imperial attack on the star fort, the Chaos Space Marine has wasted no time in enacting his plan to seize the star fort for himself and to convert the massive battle station into a hellish war machine for his warband. The Warpsmith is first introduced to the Player Characters in the last act of this chapter, yet evidence of his presence is seeded throughout the earlier acts. As this evidence is the first hint the Player Characters get as to the true horror behind their actions on the star fort, the Game Master should make sure to play up the tension of the scenes and encounters in this chapter. This serves to make the reveal of the Daemon Engine in the **Unplanned Maintenance** encounter on page 77 a truly terrifying event and should put the Player Characters in fear for not only their lives, but also for their souls.



## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

### A NEW COMMAND

At the conclusion of the previous adventure, the Player Characters may have been promoted to a position of greater authority. In this case, they could suddenly have authority over a number of soldiers who had previously been peers. Alternatively, after the massive casualties the company sustained, then a promotion could include a transfer to a situation where they know almost none of their soldiers.

In either circumstance, it is appropriate for a few brief role play scenes to give the Player Characters a chance to meet the new NPCs. If the squad committed great acts of heroism during the first adventure, then their reputation could precede them, and their underlings might be initially in awe of their abilities. If that seems inappropriate, then the lower ranking soldiers might instead be concerned about the fact that all of the Player Characters' closest allies were slain in the recent conflict. Suspicious guardsmen could suspect that the new unit might be doomed from the start.

A mix of different personalities with different initial expectations could create a characterful organisation, offering a broad range of different possibilities. Game Masters are encouraged to experiment with these individuals. If some do not seem to work out well initially, then those characters can easily be eliminated in the next major conflict. Which could have longer-term repercussions for the Player Characters.

about how many might have succeeded. Commissars are on high alert, actively questioning any soldiers that they do not recognise at first glance. Several preliminary assaults have also taken place. The secessionists have not yet committed all of their assets to an attack, but that may come with time.

Until those preparations are complete, the Imperial forces cannot feel truly secure in their hold upon the docking arm. Even when they have completed those measures, there is still much work to do. The defensive weapons mounted upon the docking arms and upon the central core can still fire freely at Imperial Navy vessels. The manufactorums located in the central core are still producing weapons to arm the secessionists. Those assets must be overcome, so that the Imperial Guard can bring the full might of the Imperial Navy to bear upon the star fort and the planet below. As it stands, cruisers are forced to remain out of range of the star fort's weapons, significantly increasing the amount of time that it takes for supply landers to arrive. It also leaves the commanders of those vessels extremely reluctant to dispatch their shuttles, as they justifiably recognise the enormous risk of losing them.

Throughout this scene, the Player Characters can observe the steady work of the Adeptus Mechanicus and the constant interrogations undertaken by Commissars. Those activities are simply part of the background of activity that brings the temporary base to life. Any time the squad is between activities, they may wish to look busy, as otherwise they will likely be drafted for a work crew or become the subjects of a routine interrogation. There is ample work for all, but the officers who would normally assign it are frequently drawn into tactical meetings as the overall strategy for retaking the star fort is revised and adjusted based on additional intelligence.

At this stage of the adventure, there are two primary types of missions assigned to the Imperial Guard units. The first missions are assignments to secure various portions of the docking arm. The arm is enormous, and it contains many small storage facilities, in addition to the weapons emplacements. During its hasty capture, some of these areas were not thoroughly searched, and a few small pockets of resistance may be holed up there. Secondly, a few of the more trusted squads are sent out to scout the surrounding areas. This includes expeditions into the nearest portion of the core,

but it also entails surveillance measures for the two intact docking arms. All unassigned guardsmen are expected to aid with setting up the camp while remaining prepared to defend the beachhead against secessionist attacks.

All of the missions presented here are considered optional encounters. Game Masters should pick the ones that seem most appropriate for the disposition and rank of the Player Characters. With a few exceptions, these work best if the Player Characters have command of a company or smaller unit. If the characters hold a higher command position within the regiment, it may be appropriate for them to undertake the mission with only a portion of their available forces. This could be due to the fact that a portion of the unit is needed for another assignment, or they might simply be needed to assist the work crews at the encampment.

### COUNTER STRIKE

One of the standard duty assignments for each unit is a guard posting at the base of the docking bay arm. Even in the first few hours after the regiment arrived, guardsmen began reinforcing and expanding their defensive positions. This remains a work in progress, but it is already far more functional than it was initially. Units are regularly rotated through guard duty posts, as the regimental commander wants to ensure that all guards remain vigilant. Each shift lasts only four hours, and it takes a full company worth of soldiers to adequately man all the posts at once.

The Player Characters could become involved in this conflict if they were posted to the fortification wall, or if they were summoned to help repel the attack. If they are involved from the beginning, then the overall Imperial Guard response is likely in their hands, depending upon their degree of authority. If they instead come in response to the assault, the amount of damage is dependent upon the time that they arrived.

### DEFENSIVE STRUCTURES

The regiment's Engineers have coordinated the guardsmen in the construction of an expanded defence line, which stretches across the entire width of the docking bay arm. Dozens of the regiment's heavy weapon teams



are positioned along this armoured wall (22 Armour Points of cover). Guardsmen are stationed all along its length, with weapons staggered roughly every two metres. The three-metre tall fortification has two interior levels. The first incorporates firing slots at ground level, where roughly half of the weapons teams are stationed. The second incorporates a two-metre wide catwalk, set two metres above ground level. Heavy weapons teams are stationed on platforms attached to the catwalk. Guardsmen equipped with lasguns and special weapons patrol this catwalk. The entire structure requires a full company of 300 men to adequately manage all fifty of the heavy weapon stations and man the ramparts.

There is only a single doorway in the wall, located at its centre. From the attackers side, the seams and hinges are functionally concealed. The door can be opened just wide enough to accommodate the largest vehicle in the regiment's arsenal. If they are entirely on foot, then it is a single metre in width.

The area outside of the wall is littered with razor wire and tank traps. Any time that Imperial forces are sent beyond it, the fortifications are carefully moved aside and replaced as the unit advances. This leads to very slow trips beyond the defences. During this time, the Guardsmen on watch must remain attentive to provide cover fire for the exposed squads.

When returning, the time involved in crossing the obstacles is potentially lethal for any units that are under pursuit. The caveat is that this system offers the best possible defences against any intruders.

Scout Sentinels can use the wall for cover or fire over it, if they so choose. Other vehicles may only fire turret mounted weapons over the wall, as hull mounted weapons are too low to accurately target foes over it.

In the event of a major assault, additional soldiers may be stationed on raised platforms either attached to the storage units or suspended from the docking arm's ten-metre ceiling behind the fortification. These soldiers would have substantially less cover (8 Armour Points) from any attackers. The major advantage to their presence is simply to bring additional weapons to bear against any assaulting force.

## THE ASSAULT FORCE

Severan Dominate forces have seen the improvements in the defences, and recognise that they are certain to become even stouter in the days to come. General Constantine has assembled a fresh assault force, and is determined to make certain that the defenders fall before his might. Roughly thirty hours after the reinforcements first arrived, he launches the attack.

## Recognise the Commander

Name: Grigory Kulikov

Rank: Company Commander

Affiliation: Vostroyan 1054th Void Shrikes, 7th Company  
Identifying Characteristics: Pale complexion, bald, full white moustache and beard, vicious scar over left eye, bionic right eye.

History of Service: The company commander has served with the Void Shrikes for more than sixty years. Upon his arrival to reinforce the regiment, he was appointed second in command of the assault, and took command of the 5th platoon in 7th company. He has earned dozens of accolades for bravery and devotion to the Emperor. When the officers he followed fell, the young lieutenant proudly seized command so that the company would not falter. His appointment to company commander came as a natural progression prior to the Void Shrikes' assignment to the Spinward Front. It is simply the regimental commander's response to the bravery that Kulikov had previously demonstrated in the field. When the tactical group was assembled in Warzone Epsilon, the commanding officers of the Void Shrikes 2nd and 14th companies readily ceded command to his expertise for the duration of the mission.

During his decades of service, Kulikov led and participated in the successful capture of countless orbital stations, traitorous spacecraft, and a broad variety of extra-planetary xenos installations. His tactical acuity for engagements within these environments is unparalleled and his expertise is highly regarded. Officers from other regiments are expected to pay his advice full heed as regards any of these matters.

The battle that follows is intended to be a focused secessionist assault. The desperate traitors are determined to break through and force the Imperial Guard off the star fort. They are not yet willing to devote all of their assets to the cause, but they are certainly prepared to invest a significant portion of their resources to finally cleansing the docking arm. At this stage, they have come to the conclusion that the best tactic available is to make use of some of the armour they have available aboard the star fort.

Regardless of the regiment's composition, the attacking force's composition remains the same. The Severan Dominate has chosen to focus their assault around a squadron of three super-heavy tanks. Three Stormlords (see page 135) lead the assault upon the fortification. In addition to having tremendously heavy armour and a broad range of devastating weapons, they are also incredibly massive and powerful vehicles. The tank traps are far too small to provide an obstacle to these vehicles. Instead, the massive treads either collapse the obstacles beneath their weight, or the vehicle's hull passes over them without issue.

A squadron of nine Devil Dog melta tanks (see page 134) follow in the wake of the Stormlords. During the initial phase of the attack, the smaller tanks attempt to use the larger ones for cover. Once they can advance far enough that their melta cannons are within range of the fortifications, they expose their front hulls so that they can attempt to destroy the fortification itself. At this stage, the tanks are concerned far more with the defensive wall, the tank traps, and the razor wire than they are with the defenders. This assault continues until the fortification has been sufficiently damaged that the super-heavy tanks can drive through it without being trapped in its shattered remnants.

Two full companies of Severan Dominate soldiers wait to press the attack from within the perimeter corridor of the station. This represents a total of 600 soldiers, plus a handful of officers. 120 of these soldiers are mounted aboard the three Stormlords. They wait to deploy until after the tanks have bypassed

the Imperial defences. The remainder stay out of sight until the fortification wall has been breached, and the engines of the tanks are loud enough to prevent easily overhearing the troops. Only at that point does the company advance. These soldiers are armed with lasguns, along with a single flamer in each ten-member squad. The soldiers do not attempt to eliminate the fortifications. Instead, they selectively fire upon any enemy guardsmen, preferentially targeting any that are exposed without cover.

## BATTLE ELEMENTS

Refer to **Table 2–1: Counter Strike Default Progression** on page 57 for how the battle proceeds without Player Character involvement. By default, the initial assault goes very poorly for the Imperial forces. They are significantly outgunned. The attack was launched unexpectedly and swiftly. This gives the secessionists ample time to press their initial assault before the Imperial forces can rally supporting units to repel them. Unless that happens quickly, the fortification may be lost entirely and the Severan Dominate forces could have time to inflict significant damage upon the unprepared forces working behind the defensive front.

If the Player Characters are stationed at the fortification, the most important decisions they could make would be to quickly call for reinforcements and to also dictate what armaments those reinforcements should bring. Soldiers that rush to the front armed with flamers are significantly less useful than those who choose to bring a multi-melta or lascannon.

Another important tactic for the Imperial Guard is to concentrate their fire upon each tank in turn, disarming it quickly, so that it has less opportunity to shatter the bulwarks. This strategy could be sufficient to delay the secessionist advance.

Squads that have a command position could have also made decisions to significantly alter or expand the fortifications. If this included explosives, those might have been planted in such a way that they could target the comparatively vulnerable underbelly of the tanks. Remote triggers and careful timing could eliminate a significant portion of the threat, provided the characters had sufficient foresight to implement this approach. Alternatively, deploying soldiers to somehow rappel onto the tops of the tanks and directly charge the



## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS



interior might work. This assumes that those units could avoid the incoming fire from the super-heavy tanks as well as the foot soldiers that eventually move to support them.

The Game Master may decide that the Guardsmen are among the units summoned to reinforce the defensive position. Assume it takes at least two minutes for word to reach them of the attack. Then, track the amount of time it takes for them to acquire their gear and redeploy to the front lines. Refer to **Table 2-1: Counter Strike Default Progression** to determine the relative progress the Severan Dominate forces have made prior to the Player Characters' arrival. At this point, they can begin to influence the course of the battle.

In spite of the surprisingly well-equipped offensive force, the Imperial forces are in a good position and may possess many weapons that can effectively repel the attack.

This defensive positioning sets the difficulty for Battlefield Awareness and Battlefield Manoeuvre Tests at Challenging (+0). With success on the former Tests, they can recognise weak points in the armour on the Stormlords (reducing it by 5 points per Degree of Success for Called Shot Actions). These exist because the super-heavy tanks were rushed from the manufactorum's work lines against the advice of the Tech-Priests. The latter Tests can be used to redeploy their forces or to provide a bonus to attacks.

If the Imperial Guard manages to rally quickly, they could turn the tide against the Severan Dominate forces, leading to a dramatically different outcome than the default. This is likely to have a huge impact on the enemy morale. At the Game Master's discretion, some of the enemy foot soldiers might immediately throw down their weapons and attempt

## Know thy Foe

Name: Frederique Constantine

Rank: General

Affiliation: Severan Dominate

Identifying Characteristics: Swarthy complexion, receding hairline, bionic right hand, favours a fur-lined flak cloak.

History of Service: The traitor called General Frederique Constantine has no recognised history of military service within the Imperium of Man. His identity does not show on any known rolls of officers nor is it consistent with that of any known candidates within recognised officer training facilities collected over the past two centuries in the Calixis Sector. He is believed to be a native of one of the secessionist worlds now affiliated with the so-called "Severan Dominate." Savants strongly suspect that he is a personal acquaintance of Duke Severus XIII-most likely one of the sycophants who advised the traitor to turn from the light of the Emperor.

Departmento Munitorum savants have performed an extensive review of records obtained from secessionist propaganda, as well as records of engagements in which he was a known participant. Preliminary findings suggest that he may have trained alongside the Duke in a military academy, under the guidance of the Duke's father, Severus XII. As the former Duke was regarded as utterly incompetent in all matter of tactics, there is every reason to suspect that General Constantine has a comparable lack of expertise.

This traitor has had little success in opposing the superior tactical acumen of his Imperial Guard counterparts. It is safe to assume that his tactics are primitive at best, and may easily be circumvented. Further, officers may safely assume that the general is likely to flee in the face of any sort of significant Imperial encroachment. As a personal acquaintance of Duke Severus XIII, it is quite likely that the general is a coward, receiving his title through nepotism and cronyism over personal worth or strength of spirit.

Constantine's relationship with Duke Severus makes him a high priority target. His clearly feeble willpower complements this further. If at all possible, he must be taken alive so that he can be thoroughly interrogated for any information regarding the secessionist's military assets.



## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

TABLE 2-1: COUNTER STRIKE DEFAULT PROGRESSION

Time	Event
0 Minutes	Stormlords enter fortification's line of site. Alarms sound.
5 Minutes	Fortification has man-sized holes. Devil Dogs begin firing upon fortification.
10 Minutes	Fortification has tank-sized holes. Defending company at 50% casualties. First reinforcements arrive. One Stormlord disabled.
15 Minutes	Fortification toppled. Defending company lost. Initial reinforcements at 50% casualties. Second Stormlord and three Devil Dogs disabled. Imperial Guard supplies 25% destroyed.
20 Minutes	Second reinforcements arrive. Third Stormlord and all Devil Dogs disabled. Initial reinforcements at 75% casualties. Imperial Guard supplies 50% destroyed. Imperial Guard ammunition 25% destroyed.
25 Minutes	Third reinforcements arrive. All enemy tanks disabled. Foot soldiers engaged. Initial reinforcements eliminated. Second reinforcements at 25% casualties. Imperial Guard supplies 75% destroyed. Imperial Guard ammunition 50% destroyed.
30 Minutes	Severan Dominate foot retreat. Third reinforcements at 25% casualties. Second Reinforcements at 50% casualties. Imperial Guard supplies 75% destroyed. Imperial Guard ammunition 75% destroyed. Imperial Guard wargear 25% destroyed.

to surrender. In this situation, the Player Characters must decide if they wish to accept the surrender, or if they must immediately deliver the Emperor's justice to the traitors.

Game Masters who choose to skip this encounter are encouraged to have the battle's outcome affect the regiment, even if the Player Characters were otherwise occupied at the time. They could return to the base only to find that the regiment has suffered substantial casualties as well as a significant loss of gear. This could have a major impact on later scenes during the continued battle for the star fort.

## WEAPONS CHECK

General Constantine strongly believes in the importance of infiltration and espionage to a successful campaign. In keeping with this strategy he has committed a significant force of soldiers to infiltrate the Imperial encampment. Some have snuck in wearing captured enemy uniforms, posing as survivors of the most recent battles in the collapsed docking arm. Others wear void suits and attempt to enter the docking arm at the same time as patrols returning from the exterior. Many have been captured and interrogated by the Commissariat. Scant few, however, have managed to blend in to the Imperial camp. These infiltrators have formed tightly knit cells and work to destroy the Imperial forces from within.

The components for the atmospheric processing unit are being delivered aboard a small flight of several shuttles. Agents of the Adeptus Mechanicus have slaved for weeks leading up to the attack to break down a machine so that it could be reassembled and remained functional. Precious ship components were donated to the effort from the Imperial Navy's limited reserve stores. The device is crucial to the Imperial assault, but it is also practically irreplaceable. Tech-Priests have only agreed to deliver it now that the docking arm has been secured and the secessionist threat has been minimised.

Unfortunately for the Guardsmen, the secessionist infiltrators managed to learn of the plan to bring the massive device to the docking arm. Recognising its importance to the Imperial Guard hierarchy, the traitors realised that destroying it could strike a significant blow to the enemy's morale. To do so, they quickly devise a plan to recapture one of the docking arm's massive lances. If they can gain control at just the right moment, they could use the arm to destroy the incoming landers. If they are lucky, they might even manage to score a few hits on an Imperial Navy vessel when it moves in to launch the transport craft.

If the Player Characters do not intervene, the secessionists succeed in their scheme. They manage to briefly gain control of one of the star fort's lance battery. Even though they only manage to unleash a single round from the cannon, that is enough. The blast rips through more than half of the transports, striking home on the Imperial Navy cruiser that launched them. The cruiser survives the impact, though it is badly damaged. The transports that weather the attack are undamaged, but they do not carry enough components to construct the atmospheric processing unit. Without it, the Imperial Guard commanders become far more concerned about the security and stability of the docking arm. Throughout the remainder of the adventure, they are less willing to commit forces to offensive actions, as they fear the possibility of completely losing their base of operations. If that were to happen, they know that they would also lose their ability to resupply from the fleet.

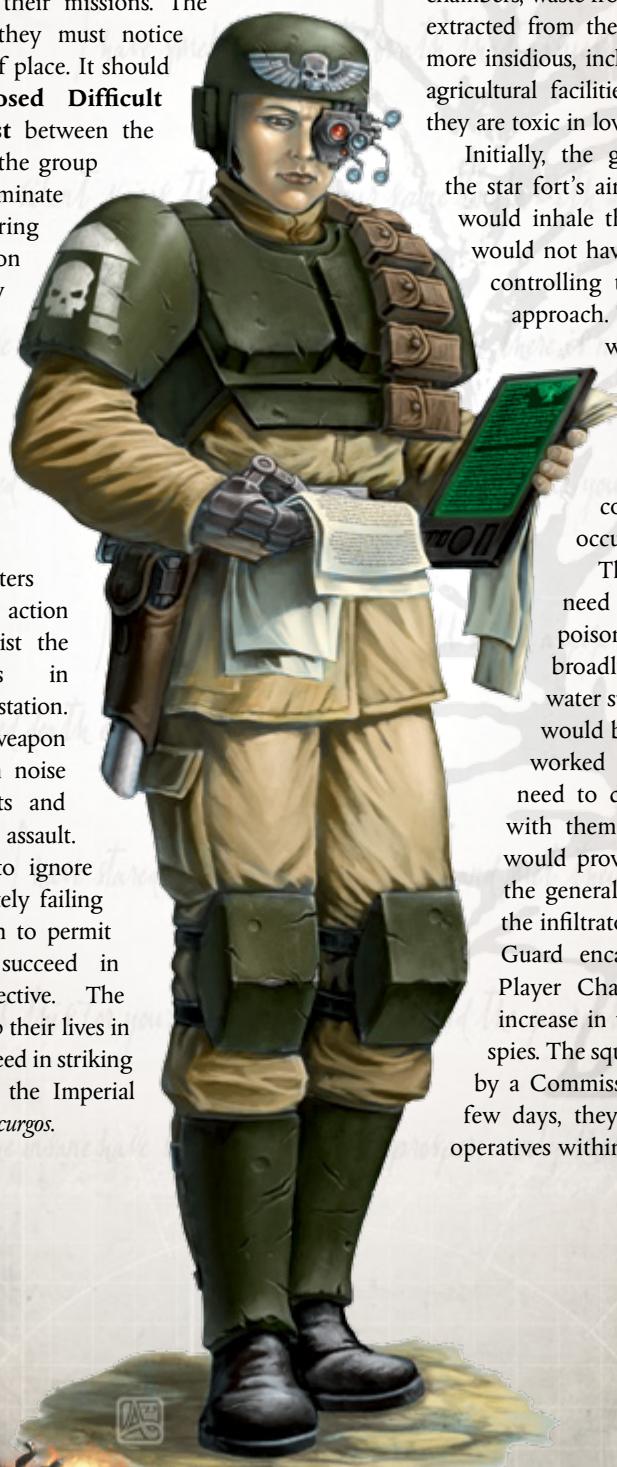
The Player Characters could intervene when they are assigned to patrol or secure facilities within the docking arm. This could be presented as a routine procedure. In general, the patrols are idle time, as behind the defensive fortifications it seems there is little chance of an enemy insertion. The diligent eyes of the regiment's Commissars certainly seem more than adequate to dissuade anyone from mischief.



Alternatively, if the squad has a leadership role within the regiment, they might conduct routine inspections of different facilities. As these individuals would certainly be aware of the importance of the impending delivery, they could have taken additional measures to secure the weapon stations. Squads that do not have such a leadership role might even simply notice something amiss as they went through their daily routine within the encampment. The weapons station that the secessionists target is not in the centre of the Imperial base of operations, but it is located between that base and the defensive structures at the base of the docking arm. That is not a high traffic area, but soldiers certainly have reason to pass by the weapon station regularly.

This scene could be presented as a brief interlude between other missions, or even take place as the squad prepares to embark upon one of their missions. The key element is that they must notice something seems out of place. It should start with an **Opposed Difficult (-10) Awareness Test** between the Player Characters and the group of five Severan Dominate soldiers who are preparing to capture the weapon station. The enemy are attempting to remain inconspicuous. They wear Imperial uniforms and are discrete in their preparations to use their weapons against the stationed guards.

If the Player Characters recognise the enemy action in time, they can assist the unsuspecting guards in holding the weapon station. Even discharging a weapon could generate enough noise to draw reinforcements and prevent the enemy assault. Conversely, choosing to ignore the attack—or completely failing to notice it—is enough to permit the secessionists to succeed in achieving their objective. The traitors certainly give up their lives in the effort, but they succeed in striking a crucial blow against the Imperial Guard occupation of *Lycurgos*.



## SABOTAGE THE SUPPLIES

As he works to control the station and the world of Helena II, General Constantine is constantly reminded that his army can only survive if it is adequately fed. As an agri-world, Helena II is vital to this element for the entirety of the Severan Dominate. The agricultural facilities within *Lycurgos* must be constantly tended both to aid the atmospheric processing system and to contribute to the secessionist's water supply. The constant monitoring of these systems gave Constantine the idea of compromising the enemy's supplies.

The star fort has an ample supply of toxic materials that could incur substantial damage upon anyone who would unwarily digest them. Many are sufficiently noxious as to be immediately recognisable, such as cooling fluids for the plasma chambers, waste from the bioprocessing facilities, and materials extracted from the atmospheric processing core. Others are more insidious, including many of the chemicals used for the agricultural facilities. These make ideal candidates, because they are toxic in low doses and are not easily detected.

Initially, the general planned to disperse them using the star fort's air processing system, hoping that his foes would inhale the poison and the lives of his own men would not have to be risked in battle. The Tech-Priests controlling the station proved uncooperative in this approach. They stated firmly that the machine spirits would not condone the release of such toxins within the station. They further indicated that even if such dispersal were undertaken, the machines would likely be seriously damaged, and the toxin could inadvertently be spread to portions occupied by the secessionist forces.

Thus, the general decided that he would need to use his infiltrators to disperse the poison. Because the poisoning would be done broadly—leeching into all of the Imperial Guard water supplies—he recognised that his infiltrators would be engaging in a suicide mission. Any who worked among the guardsmen would certainly need to drink more water than they could bring with them over the course of their mission. This would prove lethal. In order to minimise his losses, the general first attempted to recall and draw down the infiltrators currently stationed within the Imperial Guard encampment. From the perspective of the Player Characters, this could be indicated by an increase in the number of loyal soldiers mistaken for spies. The squad might even be called in for questioning by a Commissar. At the same time, over the span of a few days, they would have no encounters with enemy operatives within the camp.



## SETTING UP THE BASE

Under some commanders—particularly those who are strict about following regulations—establishing a properly functioning Imperial Guard base is an exacting and complicated process. Assets must be allocated in very precise ways. Defences must be created to an exacting standard. Tech-Priests often work for extended periods to make sure that everything is set up in a fashion that is pleasing to the Omnisiah. For Guardsmen who must answer to these authorities, the work is tedious and endless. One command group might issue orders to move gear to a specific location, which can later be countermanded by another authority figure. In some instances, the same pile of crates—which could even be empty, or only contain waste—might be moved back and forth between two locations endlessly for weeks. Some soldiers are constantly assigned duties to scrape and repaint portions of the star fort. Others can be called upon to help inventory the armoury, swab the decks, or man kitchen patrol. Compared to many of these tasks, guard duty at the defensive fortifications or the airlocks is relatively glamorous.

After this time of relative calm, the general begins to execute his plan. He sends Severan Dominate soldiers to infiltrate using the star fort's airlocks. They travel across the star fort's outer hull from secessionist held areas to the docking arm held by the Imperial Guard. Most attempt to blend in with patrols that the Imperial Guard sends out. Their void suits are identical to those worn by the Imperial Guard, obscuring the faces of the wearers. Distinguishing the secessionists requires a precise count of the number of patrol members and taking stock of which void suits are requisitioned by the patrol teams. During the first few days of patrols, sergeants were rigorous about enforcing these standards. As the occupation has progressed and void suit patrols became routine, the attention to detail has lapsed. If the Squad is part of a patrol, noticing an infiltrator in addition to their expected squad members requires a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test**. If they are standing guard at an airlock when a squad with an infiltrator enters, noticing that something is out of place requires a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test**. Should they succeed, the Player Character recognises small signs that something is not what it seems. The secessionist could be questioned, which could reveal the plans about the poisoning effort.

Otherwise, the Player Characters would need to encounter one of the traitors in the act of dispersing the poison. This could happen at any of the supply areas where the regiment's water is stored. In this case, no Test would be required. Seeing a soldier in a void suit in such an environment is odd enough to cause suspicion. However, guards are not normally stationed at the water

storage areas. Rather, the soldiers assigned to patrol are expected to maintain an eye on the facilities, to make certain that guardsmen are not taking excessive rations for personal use. Each of the void suits contains two external air tanks. The infiltrators have filled one of these tanks with the toxin—relying on only a single tank for breathable air. The mission is to deliver as many of these toxin-filled tanks as possible to areas where water is stored. By simply releasing the toxin into the atmosphere, all of the water is effectively poisoned. Any who later consume it suffer from debilitating cramps and internal bleeding. If this attack succeeds, the Imperial Guard forces are soon unable to field enough healthy troops to man the defensive fortifications.

There are more than two-dozen Severan Dominate infiltrators assigned to this task. The general fully expects many to give their lives travelling across the star fort's surface or during their attempts to sneak into the Imperial Guard camp. His hope is that at least a few of the agents could succeed in their mission, compromising a portion of the Imperial Guard soldiers or at least their water supply. If the Player Characters succeed in identifying a traitor and his mission, then guards are posted to prevent any reoccurrence. If they fail to notice any of the traitors in action, then it takes several days and costs thousands of lives before the regimental officers recognise the cause of the poisoning and take measures to test all rations before use.

## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

## INTO THE ARMOURY

The docking arm is a very large structure. Securing it is not simply a matter of sending soldiers to scout its main corridors. In fact, each room must be searched and countless partially hidden corridors must be mapped. The Guardsmen are unable to discern any more rational explanation for the twisting passages and hard to navigate corridors. Clearly the construction took advantage of the fact that gravity did not constrain the massive structure. At many points, the builders installed gravity generators at angles inverted or perpendicular to the station's main deck. In these locations, corridors shift orientation relative to the expected gravity, creating an experience that can induce vertigo or nausea in the unprepared.

Regimental command is understandably concerned that many of these partially hidden or uneasily accessed corridors could conceal secessionist forces. To combat this issue, they disperse any unassigned squads to conduct rigorous searches of each of the corridors. Thoroughly searching the docking arm requires a massive and sustained effort. Over the first few days of the search, many of these squads fail to return. Some succumb to hidden dangers—both those inherent in the star fort's structure and enemy soldiers. Others simply become hopelessly lost and wander the maintenance tunnels until their supplies of food and water finally give out. In general, for these missions the greatest danger lies in the archaic and confusing layout of the star fort. However, some very real opponents do still secure a few of these hard to find locations.

Travelling through the star fort presents its own set of dangers, as outlined above. Game Masters are encouraged to offer challenges appropriate to getting lost in the twisting passages and navigating through changing gravitational fields. Squads that include a Tech-Priest may discover a variety of unusual features, including hidden airlocks, controls for various docking tools, and possibly even specialised defensive systems. All of these findings could be of interest to the regiment, but should be secondary to the discovery of the Severan Dominate armoury.

During one exploration mission, the Player Characters have an opportunity to discover and possibly secure an armoury filled with Severan Dominate supplies. The important caveat is that traitors also still hold the facility. They recognise how precarious their current situation is—holed up among explosives only a few hundred metres from a major Imperial Guard encampment. These secessionists believe in their cause, but they also believe strongly in the Imperial Creed. They are not in a tremendous hurry to needlessly surrender their lives, even if a tremendous explosion could strike a huge blow for the Severan Dominate cause.

The armoury is loaded with secessionist armour, lasguns, and an assortment of heavy weapons and ammunition. These are munitions intended to serve the soldiers stationed aboard the star fort. Nonetheless, they are certainly capable of inflicting incredible amounts of damage if detonated. The squad of ten soldiers guarding these materials have been completely cut off from any communications with the star fort's commanding officers. When the docking arm fell to the Imperial Guard, they became trapped in no-man's land. Since that happened, they have remained uncertain as to what they should do.

Lieutenant Kraig (see page 133) has attempted to keep things functioning as they would under normal conditions. He has kept the squad performing routine maintenance on the stores, and kept them fed through the use of field rations. He has not attempted to communicate with the Imperial forces, but he has also not made any attempt to reunify with the secessionists. Instead, he is trying to assume a very pragmatic approach, with the belief that whatever strategy might keep his soldiers alive is the best one to follow at this point.



When the Player Characters encounter the armoury and its guardians, the secessionists do not immediately attempt to engage in combat. Instead, the lieutenant tries to negotiate a surrender. He uses a detonator and the ample supply of ammunition as the negotiating point. If the characters launch an all-out attack, he simply detonates the armoury, which ultimately pierces the star fort's hull. This presents an unmitigated disaster, venting the equipment and many of the soldiers in the area into the vacuum. A well-aimed shot might slay the lieutenant before he can detonate the explosives, but a missed shot could strike the charges, with disastrous consequences.

Negotiations with the lieutenant, however, should be surprisingly simple. The lieutenant is prepared to make a conditional surrender. He is perfectly willing to provide all of the goods in the armoury as well as all the information he has about the Severan Dominate forces aboard the station. The only thing he seeks in return is humane treatment for himself and his squad members. Depending upon the types of characters present, this may be considered a reasonable request or a demand that borders on heresy. The difficulty for the negotiations should begin at Routine (+20), but can vary based upon the approach the Player Characters take as well as the philosophical beliefs that they have espoused throughout the course of the adventure.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPCs play important roles as the Imperial Guard secures its initial holdings aboard *Lycurgos*.

### COMPANY COMMANDER

#### GRIGORY KULIKOV

As the leader of the Void Shrikes, the commander demands input on any missions that involve his units. He readily cedes authority to a regimental commander, but he argues that he should have at least as much authority as any other company group. As a veteran of countless battles fought aboard spacecraft and star forts, the commander has a high degree of expertise for this sort of situation. He expects his allies to heed his advice. If allied commanders ignore his input, he soon becomes antagonistic. This has ramifications throughout the invasion effort, as the Void Shrikes move to support their commander and distance themselves from the Player Characters' regiment. Unless actions are taken to mend bridges, the two different groups of Imperial Guard could soon continue the invasion completely independent of one another. Fights could even break out within the encampment over which regiment has the rights to particular materials or duties.

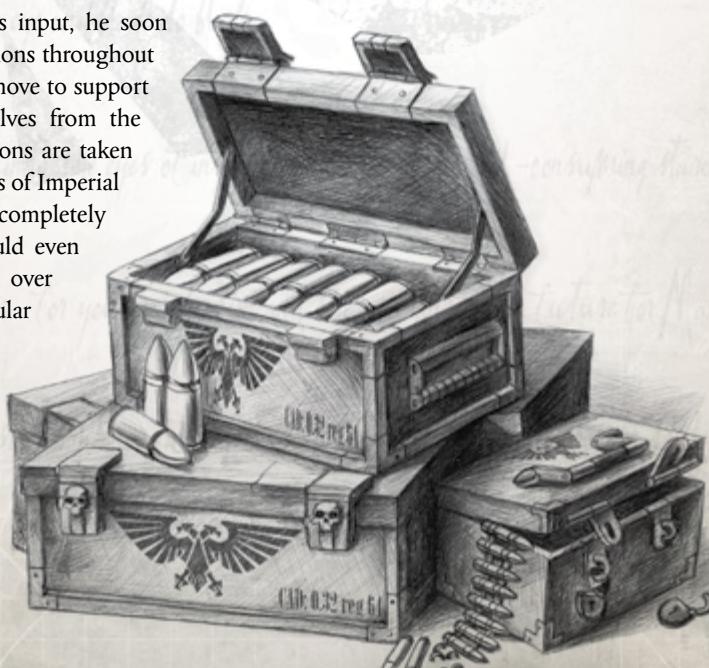
### SUPPLY OFFICER ADELINE GASPAR

The Supply Officer is interested in acquiring any additional wargear or supplies that can be secured from the star fort's reserves. This could include mundane items that might still serve some purpose within the regiment. Gaspar is a veteran and recognises that many unusual foodstuffs or seemingly pointless objects could sometimes be traded for critical supplies or even luxuries. She is interested in anything that the Player Characters can bring to her depot, and is willing to be generous with future Logistics requests for those who assist her. At the Game Master's discretion, Gaspar may even send the Squad on unusual missions to recover supplies that other units have already reported.

### LIEUTENANT RODERICK KRAIG

An officer of the Severan Dominate, the lieutenant is the leader of the forces that hold an armoury, which is now behind Imperial lines. He is familiar with the station's layout as well as the usual disposition of troops. He is not particularly loyal to the secessionist cause, valuing his own life and the lives of his soldiers far more than the Duke's creed. If the PCs can offer him any reasonable chance of survival, he becomes amenable to turn from the secessionist cause, initially as a prisoner. As long as he and his men are all treated with a bare modicum of respect, the lieutenant willingly provides intelligence on the Severan Dominate forces. Later missions can receive a +10 bonus for any Battlefield Awareness Tests if the Player Characters participated in a successful interrogation of the lieutenant.

## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS





## MAP II: PURGING LYCURGOS

II: DUNGEON  
WICKED LURKS



# PURGING LYCURGOS

*"Kill them all! Purge the heresy. If they deserve mercy, the Emperor can grant it in the afterlife."*

—Sergeant Mikhail Nodens

Once regimental command feels that the docking arm is reasonably secure, then the time of consolidation is completed, and the next stage in the invasion effort must begin. The regiment must begin the process of cleansing the secessionist presence from the star fort. As with the capture of the docking arm, they must be conservative in their violence. While they cannot allow the traitors to live, they must at least attempt to preserve the station. The Imperial forces recognise the incredible value inherent in the station.

This section focuses on several different strategies that the regiment invokes in their effort to secure the station. Ultimate success requires a concerted effort that combines a range of tactical approach. For some of the challenges, direct assaults are the only possible solution. In other instances, covert actions taken from deep behind enemy lines can be a better tactic. Given the vast scale of the station and the sheer number of decks and interconnecting passages, the front lines of the conflict can become incredibly blurred. At times, squads may discover that they are functioning deep behind enemy lines only after they have attempted to re-establish contact with their superior officers. Similarly, a steady advance can be easily compromised if forces emerging from a previously unidentified maintenance passage cut off an advancing platoon.

With the ongoing conflict on a variety of fronts, the regiment is simultaneously engaged in a number of different actions to overcome the Severan Dominate presence. A number of these engagements are presented to set the tone of the war for control of the star fort. The first three of these are intended to set the overall tone for this section. Game Masters are encouraged to make use of all of these. Several additional scenes are also described in less detail. These may be included at the Game Master's discretion. Alternatively, Game Masters may devise their own conflicts, which might be better suited to the specialities of the Player Characters and their regiment.

## ORDNANCE MANUFACTORUM

The star fort is a highly specialised facility capable of refitting and resupplying a wide variety of Imperial Navy vessels. Because of its intended role, the engineers that built it in ages long past recognised that it must be capable of constructing many of the supplies required by those warships. Many of its decks are devoted to working to this purpose. Due to its age and isolation, some of the patterns that were deployed with *Lycurgos* are now considered less common, or even rare.

From the time of its initial construction, the star fort included the capability to build the enormous and rare shells fired by the nova cannons aboard some of the Imperial Navy's most powerful vessels. As the star fort also included these weapons on two of its docking arms, this provided the station with an added tactical advantage.

Building even a single one of these shells requires the effort of countless servitors and menial workers. Tons of explosives and highly specialised materials must be carefully assembled into the core of each heavily reinforced shell. The final product is so massive and unstable that specialised transports are used to transfer the completed shells. The entire manufactorum only has the capacity to store twelve completed shells. Others are typically transferred directly to the ammunition depots nearest the star fort's nova cannons or to a waiting vessel.

When the star fort and any docked vessels are adequately supplied with these enormous shells, the ordnance manufactorum turns its services to the creation of comparatively mundane ammunitions. The manufactorum also creates shells utilised by many Imperial Guard tanks. This includes munitions for traditional battle cannons, as well as a range of other ordnance. The Severan Dominate has made extensive use of this capability, shipping countless tons of ammunition directly to Warzone Epsilon. Without this production, it is unlikely that the secessionist tanks upon the former agri-world could continue their resistance efforts.

### ROLE AND REGIMENT

Two platoons of Severan Dominate foot soldiers hold the ordnance manufactorum. Regimental command commits a company-sized force to capturing it. Depending upon the Player Characters' role, they might represent just a small portion of that force, or they could have overall command. If they are not in a leadership role, Game Masters must select what part they play in the overall conflict.

Regiment type should play no significant part in the disposition of this mission. Enemy forces remain the same, regardless of the Imperial force's composition. For regiments that use tanks or troop transports, those vehicles are not capable of fitting through the four man-sized entrances to the manufactorum. They may, however, be used to block the corridors outside of the manufactorum that connect to those entrances. Such vehicles can also enter the manufactorum through either the raw materials entrance or through the munitions unloading port.

II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS



# II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

The construction capability represents a precious jewel to both the Severan Dominate forces and to the Imperium. By controlling it, either side dramatically increases the capabilities of both its naval vessels and its ground-based artillery. Consequently, the commanders on both sides of the conflict wish to hold the manufactorum for their own purposes. Neither force wishes to see the manufactorum destroyed as anything but a last possible measure.

High Command of the Imperial forces in the Spinward Front is aware that *Lycurgos* has this facility, but does not know its precise location or capabilities until after the invasion force begins to explore the star fort. One of the regiment's earliest missions after securing a beachhead is to identify the location of the ordnance manufactorum and to secure it for Imperial use. Every hour that the secessionists are permitted to control it can only cost additional guardsman lives, as the traitors create more munitions to use against those who remain true to the Emperor.

## BRIEFING

The Player Characters' lieutenant brings the mission to them only after the regiment's scouts have already located the ordnance manufactorum. They are charged with securing the facility from the secessionists. At the time of their initial briefing, they are instructed that the facility must be captured intact. The most recent reports indicate that it is currently in active use, but that Severan Dominate soldiers have secured it. Imperial forces must capture the manufactorum intact, with only a bare minimum of damage to the equipment. Further, as many of the menial workers are to be kept alive as possible.

Their primary objective is to capture the manufactorum intact, eliminating any Severan Dominate soldiers within the facility. Three secondary objectives are noted. The first is to make certain that the civilians and servitors are captured alive. The second is to try to prevent the traitors from destroying or stealing any additional munitions from the facility. Finally, the unit must hold the location until additional regimental elements can be dispatched to relieve the unit. No additional gear is assigned to them for this mission.

Because of the volatile substances that the ordnance manufactorum constantly uses, any assault upon its facilities must be considered an extraordinarily dangerous challenge. A single stray shot could set off a huge chain reaction. Tech-Priests familiar with the facility offer assurances that the completed ordnance should be stable. Artillery shells are intended to be stable for long-term storage and transport. While nova cannon shells are dangerously unstable, they ought not detonate to usual small arms fire. Unless they are properly armed, a process that requires a complex ritual which is only completed when the shells have exited the barrel of a massive starship-mounted weapon. Of course, even the most ardent Tech-Priest admits under pressure that a stray lascannon blast could have unexpected consequences.



## LOCATION AND OPPosition

The ordnance manufactorum is a very large room located within the central core, several decks above the main level where the docking arms attach. The room is more than 200 metres in length, and well over 100 metres in width. Its vaulted ceiling is roughly forty metres in height. The space is filled with conveyor belts, open storage tanks, and racks of both completed munitions and raw materials. Servitors and menial human workers scurry through the area constantly, working at various stations and making adjustments to their procedures. Massive machines connect the conveyor belts, mixing chemicals and producing various components that are assembled by the hundreds of workers.

There are six entrances to the room. Two are located on each of the longer sides. Both of these are man-sized double doors. Massive retractable doors on each of the room's shorter sides are used to deliver raw materials and to remove the completed products, including the enormous nova cannon shells. These doors are well over twenty metres in width and height. When the Player Characters approach an entrance, read or paraphrase the following:

*The stench of explosives and sweat intermingle with a wave of heat that emerges from the manufactorum. You can hear the clanking sounds of countless machines and labourers working furiously at an assembly line. Scouts indicate that the traitors have set up a checkpoint at each entrance to the manufactorum. Capturing the facility quickly means fighting through the enemy, but it also means avoiding hitting any of the munitions. A detonation here could be catastrophic for the whole star fort, and doubly so for any soldiers who happen to be nearby.*

A single ten-man squad of Severan Dominate soldiers (see page 120) guards each of the smaller doors. They have empty crates used to hold explosive materials to construct sandbag-like bunkers, which they use for cover (6 Armour Points). Three additional ten-man squads are stationed at each of the larger doors. These have also built bunkers from crates of explosives and munitions. Two four-man squads and two ten-man squads patrol the centre of the factory. A Severan Dominate Lieutenant (see page 121) accompanies each of the four-man squads. Each of these squads has a single member equipped with a grenade launcher and a two-man team committed to running a M34 autocannon.

Any stray shots that strike the stored ordnance could trigger a detonation. This has the potential to set off a chain reaction, which could destroy the entire manufactorum. In a potential worst-case scenario, this might even cause serious damage to the star fort. To represent this, any failed Ballistic Skill Test during a ranged Attack has a chance to miss wildly and strike the ordnance. If a Player Character fails a Ballistic Skill Test and achieves four or more Degrees of Failure, the shot has hit one of the dangerous containers. The Player Character rolls Damage as normal for the attack. The containers have 9 Armour Points. If the attack should deal Damage in excess of the container's Armour Points, the unstable munitions detonate. The explosion deals  $3d10+4$  Explosive Damage to anyone within five metres and  $1d10+4$  Explosive Damage to anyone within ten metres. At this time, the Game Master should roll a d100. On a result of 91-00, the explosion sets off a chain reaction with the other unstable substances in the manufactorum. Over the following six Rounds, a series of massive explosions take place that transforms the facility into a crumbling, flaming ruin. Each Round, the Player Characters and their adversaries must each make a **Challenging (+0) Agility Test**. Anyone who fails this Test takes  $1d10+4$  Explosive Damage.

If the Player Characters can bring overwhelming force to bear upon the situation, they might attempt to force the secessionists to negotiate rather than settling the matter through violence. The secessionists are hostile to any such attempts, and are extremely loyal to their cause. These forces are unlikely to cooperate unless they are offered some impressive level of both security and compensation.

Alternatively, Imperial forces might eschew the use of ranged weapons, reverting instead to melee attacks. This certainly reduces the likelihood of any inadvertent explosion. However, the secessionists, who are not firing towards explosives, remain willing to use their lasguns and other ranged weapons. This should lead to an interesting situation as the characters try to assault foes from surprising directions, using maintenance ducts and concealed passages.

Game Masters must use their discretion in deciding how the enemy responds to a concerted multi-front approach. If the Imperial Guard offers an opportunity for some of the forces to escape, they do so when it becomes clear that the Imperial Guard has the upper hand. At this point, they attempt to steal as many munitions as possible, or at least eliminate any of the servitors and workers. The Severan Dominate troopers only call for reinforcements after the lieutenants realise they have lost at least two squads. Additional forces, subject to Game Master discretion, can begin to arrive five minutes after a call is placed. The reinforcements do not attempt to press an attack if it is clear that there is a significant risk of detonating the manufactorum.

## FLIGHT DECK

There are many launch bays located on *Lycurgos*, which are capable of launching attack craft to support the station. With the loss of one docking arm and the capture of another, some of these decks were compromised. However, a number remain active. One of these is located near the captured docking arm and has represented a consistent thorn in the side of the Imperial assault. The crew of this particular flight deck has managed to time the launch of its attack craft in a particularly effective fashion. These small craft have damaged or destroyed more than two dozen Imperial landers sent to the star fort with various supplies and passengers. Due to the relative distance between the flight deck and the docking bay arm, Imperial Navy craft have been unable to take adequate defensive postures prior to the attack craft engagements.

Imperial Navy forces and regimental command have decided that these are unacceptable losses. The only reasonable response is for the ground forces to secure the flight deck. It is believed that if the Severan Dominate lose control of this deck, Imperial attack craft could use it instead. By both landing on the flight deck—where they would have some protection from secessionist attack—and launching attack craft from it as well, the Imperial Navy craft would be much less susceptible to attack. This combination could provide a far better support network for any Imperial Navy landers approaching the star fort.

The Imperial Guard has accepted the task of securing the flight deck. Once the mission has been successfully completed, the Imperial Navy forces are willing to commit the vehicles and manpower necessary to keep the deck adequately staffed. The regiment has agreed that this mission must be given highest priority, as the Imperial Navy is delaying all transfers between its vessels and the star fort until after the flight deck has been secured. The lack of reinforcements or additional supplies provides a strong motivation for the Imperial Guard to follow through on its side of the agreement.

## BRIEFING

The relevant flight deck and landing bay is located within the core portion of the star fort. It is two decks down from the main docking arm section that the Imperials have already secured. Exterior visualisations and Imperial scouts within the station have confirmed its location. However, they have not yet identified a best possible route for moving large numbers of soldiers or vehicles to the bay. Currently, the known routes make use of maintenance shafts, which would require the troops to move in single file formations. Regimental command believes that securing the flight deck would require a large allocation of troops, making that approach an unacceptable option.

Prior to securing the flight deck, the company is charged with first finding a secure route to reach the deck. Once that has been accomplished, they are to proceed to the target location with all possible speed. The deck must be captured intact so that Imperial forces can use it as a landing zone. The Player Characters need not seize any enemy soldiers or materiel. Consequently, the Guardsmen are cleared to use area weapons, as long as those weapons are unlikely to do irreparable harm to the star fort.



## WICKED LURKS II: SOMETHING

Capturing any crew and staff for questioning is considered a secondary objective. *Lycurgos* may have unknown or unusual security measures in place to secure the flight deck. If this is the case, a thorough interrogation of any crew or pilots might reveal those measures prior to the arrival of the first Imperial Navy craft. Capturing existing craft, consumables, and tools is also considered a secondary objective. It is very possible that any vehicles or supplies could be contaminated or trapped. This risk makes capturing the devices a much lower priority.

Severan Dominate units should not be permitted to use any of these devices further, if the possibility can be avoided. If any of the craft attempt to launch during the assault, the Guardsmen are expected to prevent successful launches, or to destroy the vessels as they clear the flight deck. The briefing officer reminds the Player Characters at this point that any such destruction must not incur significant damage to the flight deck. Similarly, if any of the secessionists attempt to flee the flight deck with tools, ammunition, or other equipment, they must be stopped, so that the tools cannot be used to further the secessionist agenda.

The lieutenant is not adverse to a strategy that incorporates approaching the flight deck from the outside. The secessionists are unlikely to expect a significant number of soldiers to simultaneously enter the deck from the star fort's outer hull. However, if this approach is used, the secessionists might be able to quickly move supporting units to the flight deck from the interior of the star fort. Consequently, he advises that such an approach must have measures included to defend the flight deck from such an assault. If they strongly advocate this approach, he makes certain to include void suits as part of their mission assignment gear. Otherwise, there is no special equipment included.



Captain Mordecai Horatio (see page 129) is particularly helpful during any discussions regarding the flight deck. He offers his advice about the likely make-up of attack craft present, as well as the support crew and equipment that should be in use. He can also offer insight as regards the expected time required for Imperial Navy craft to reach the flight deck from any of the ships that remain in the region.

### LOCATION AND OPPPOSITION

Reaching the flight deck through the maintenance tunnels is a difficult process, but hardly an overwhelming one. The greatest danger is that the secessionists patrol these passages as well as the star fort's main corridors. Because soldiers must traverse the tunnels in a single file fashion, trying to move a large force of foot soldiers through them is an agonisingly slow process. Enemy forces can also inflict significant damage within the constrained location through the use of explosives, flamers, or other area weapons. The preferred approach is to first scout out an appropriate lift, and make use of that to transfer to the level where the deck is located.

Game Masters can use their discretion for the difficulty in securing a lift.

Any force occupying the station requires these massive machines, so the Severan Dominate forces are hesitant to inflict severe damage to one. Each is capable of moving several super-heavy tanks, or a company of vehicles, or more than a thousand soldiers at a time between the star fort's decks. Less than a dozen of these lifts remain functional aboard *Lycurgos*, and the closest working one to the secured docking arm and the targeted flight deck is two kilometres away from the docking arm. The Severan Dominate has at least a platoon of fifty soldiers holding the lift.

If the Guardsmen attempt to overpower them to secure it, the secessionists immediately call for reinforcements, comprising an additional two platoons of foot, or two squadrons of three vehicles each. They take roughly ten minutes to arrive. If the Imperial forces hurry, this provides just enough time for the lift to descend a level prior to the arrival of the enemy forces.



## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

### ROLE AND REGIMENT

Regimental command wishes to commit a single company to securing the flight deck. They are also willing to put another company on standby status, to provide reinforcements in the event of a counter attack. If the flight deck is quickly secured and kept largely operational, the Imperial Navy is prepared to send a flight of attack craft with crew to man the location. Once secured, a single company is expected to provide security for the location until such time as the Severan Dominate forces are removed from this section of the star fort.

If the Player Characters have command of a company, then at the Game Master's discretion they could either have the assignment to capture the flight deck or represent the standby company to reinforce it in the event of a Severan Dominate attack. As platoon commanders, it would be their judgment that determined the best possible approach to seizing control of the location. If the characters have responsibility for a larger group, then they might dictate the strategy that the assigned company employs. Alternatively, if they have a lesser role, then the Game Master must determine what facet the Player Characters play in the larger conflict.

If the characters proceed with an attack from the exterior of the star fort, then vehicles are largely useless, as they cannot easily traverse that surface. Attacks that proceed through the star fort's interior can make use of vehicles, with one important caveat. Tanks, transports, and even sentinels are far too big to travel through the maintenance hatches. In order to bring these vehicles to the battle, the Guardsmen must first find and control one of the station's lifts so that the vehicles can travel to the lower deck.

Notably, the secessionists do attempt to pursue to regain control of the lift. If the Guardsmen choose to leave this route unsecured, then they may be functionally cut off from the docking bay arm. This is certain to delay the arrival of any reinforcements, as well as supplies. Player Characters may recognise this risk with success on a **Routine (+10) Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis)** Test. This would also delay the transfer of any supplies brought in aboard Imperial Navy shuttles from the captured flight deck back to the docking arm. For the mission to be a complete success, the unit must somehow capture and secure the lift.

Once the lift has either been bypassed or secured, the Guardsmen may attempt to seize control of the flight deck. The secessionist forces do not believe that the location is easily subject to attack from inside of the star fort. Consequently, it is only lightly defended from a ground-based assault—numerous flak cannons located on the star fort's surface are intended to provide protection against any incoming attack craft. Two ten-man squads provide security for the flight deck. Each includes a two-man heavy bolter team and one soldier carrying a flamer. They are not set up

within bunkers, though they do move to use the nearby attack craft and assorted maintenance equipment for cover from attack. When the Player Characters reach the flight deck, read or paraphrase the following:

*Six attack craft and a lander are on standby to launch, but the deck otherwise appears to be fully loaded with craft. You are uncertain if any are about to fly a mission, as maintenance workers and countless servitors scurry from vessel to vessel, performing arcane rituals and applying sacred substances to assure their function. You spot two squads of guards near the entrances, but they seem to be lounging, hardly prepared for an attack. The workers, conversely, are so focused upon their labours that they might not even notice if they were actually under fire.*

The deck is roughly 100 metres in width, but only twenty-five metres deep. The ceiling is fifteen metres above the deck level. There is no exterior wall to the flight deck. Instead, an energy field keeps the atmosphere within the star fort, permitting attack craft and shuttles to launch from the deck or to land upon it. A control panel near the wall can be used to change the field's status or to close a set of reinforced armoured doors in the event of an energy failure. Three armoured hatches, wide enough to accommodate a tank or transport, connect the interior wall of the flight deck with the star fort's perimeter corridor. Unless the flight deck has been placed on an alert status, these hatches are retracted into the floor and ceiling when the Guardsmen arrive. Armoured glass viewports (Armour Rating 6), are present between the hatches, offering a clear view into the flight deck's interior.

Several flights of Fury Interceptors are stowed close together, with wings folded inward around the perimeter of the deck. A single flight of six Furies and one Aquila lander stand ready to launch, already fuelled. The pilots of these craft are on standby in a bunk room attached to the flight deck. Dozens of maintenance workers and servitors are busily engaged performing prep work on the ready ships as well as numerous other craft. Each of the attack craft has twin-linked lascannons mounted upon its wings. Once the pilots realise the deck is under attack, they attempt to reach their Furies so that they can turn the vessels and fire those weapons upon the Guardsmen.

If the outcome of the attack seems inevitable, the attack craft attempt to scramble. The maintenance crew move towards the shuttles, while the attack craft take off, removing themselves from the reach of the Imperial Guard as quickly as possible. The lander's interior is small enough that a single grenade or blast weapon could cause significant damage to anyone caught inside of the craft when it detonated.

If the Player Characters have not gained control of the nearby lift, the Severan Dominate moves to launch a counter attack as soon as the flight deck falls. Six Leman Russ Battle Tanks comprise the attacking force. They try to avoid inflicting structural damage upon the flight deck, but are more than willing to use their battle cannons against the occupying Imperial forces. If the lift is secured or the tank squadron is eliminated, then the secessionists do not have a quick response to the loss of the flight deck.

# FINDING A PATH

When each of the docking arms fell to Imperial forces, the secessionists lost a significant portion of the armaments built into the star fort. The core certainly remains well armed, but the docking arms offer a broader range of weapons. In order to consolidate further their grasp—and reduce the secessionists' ability to resupply—High Command wants to secure an additional docking arm. First, however, they need to secure a clear route between the existing holdings and one of the other arms.

Regimental scouting reports suggest that the badly damaged docking arm has been completely abandoned by the traitor forces. Imperial forces have repeatedly scouted the area but have not encountered anything but the occasional maintenance servitor. Because of this security gap, regimental command believes that this could leave the perimeter corridor around the station's core far more lightly patrolled near that arm. They suspect that it might be easier to approach the other docking arm adjacent to the damaged one than it would be to approach the intact one nearest the currently secured arm. If that approach has actually been left abandoned, then the Imperial Guard must strike quickly, before the secessionists have time to recognise their folly.

To confirm this theory, they have decided to send out a reconnaissance force. The commanding officers are of the opinion that a trap set for a larger group might not be sprung by a small group of scouts. A larger force—in this case a platoon-sized group of soldiers—should be sufficient to trigger any alarms or armed response. If the expedition can safely navigate through the evacuated area without any issue, then it is likely that an assault could be launched upon the opposite docking arm with minimal consequence. However, if the advance triggers a significant response, then sending a smaller group risks fewer resources. It is hoped that a smaller unit will be able to evacuate more quickly in the face of an overwhelming response.

## BRIEFING

The lieutenant explains to the Guardsmen that this mission is focused on stealth, mobility, and observation. Regimental command needs a group to perform a detailed reconnaissance of the area around the collapsed docking arm. They have reason to believe that the secessionists are completely ignoring that portion of the star fort. If this is true, then it could be reasonable to extend the Imperium's grasp by moving some of their forces into that region to better seize control.

A major concern is that some of the facilities may have been brought off-line. In fact, scouts believe that a portion of the star fort's perimeter corridor may have been removed from the atmospheric processing system. There is also some concern that the secessionists may have deliberately trapped this region, likely with mines or other explosives. If this is the case, the reconnaissance mission must identify any such threats and eliminate them, prior to sending an attack force through the section of the star fort.

## ROLE AND REGIMENT

The scouting units sent to search out this area were squad-sized or smaller. If the Player Characters only command a single squad, then their commanding officer is the one in charge of the expedition. Alternatively, if the Guardsmen command a platoon or even a company, they are placed in charge of the operation. Regimental command is reluctant to risk an entire company on the scouting expedition, but grudgingly does so, if the Guardsmen push for that approach. If the Player Characters are not in command, the strategy is simply to move through the region quickly, en masse, searching for any anomalies.

This mission should be equally applicable for all types of regiments. Regiments that do not make use of any vehicle options are simply at a higher degree of risk when it comes to amount of time required to retreat before any enemy forces. At their discretion, Game Masters may choose to select weapons better at damaging armoured vehicles for the secessionist forces if the Player Characters belong to an armoured regiment.

The primary mission objective is to verify the security of the perimeter corridor. The unit is charged with finding and triggering or deactivating any traps that might be present. As a secondary mission, any available information about secessionist activities in the area must be confirmed. If there are signs of recent activity, then the nature of that activity must be identified. If there are no indicators of activity, then a thorough search must be conducted to verify their absence. If enemy forces are encountered, then the unit is expected to terminate those forces provided the Guardsmen have numerical superiority. In the event that a larger secessionist unit is encountered, the highest priority is to report that group's presence so that regimental command has the opportunity to decide how best to proceed.

Gear is allocated in such a way as to provide the unit with the most manoeuvrability possible. Regimental command is not looking for a significant engagement. Instead, they want a successful reconnaissance mission and an accurate report. If the regiment has transports or light vehicles available, then the entire group should be mounted. Similarly, if the regiment has both heavy and light tanks, then the faster ones are used for this assignment. Other than transportation, multi-tools, auspexes, and void suits are included for each soldier as part of the mission assignment gear.

## LOCATION AND OPPosition

The earlier scouting reports prove to be terribly inaccurate. The Severan Dominate are monitoring the perimeter corridor near the damaged docking arm. In fact, they have attempted to keep this monitoring as subtle as possible, in the hopes that they might be able to launch a successful ambush upon any Imperial forces that use it for an advance. To date, they have not observed a group large enough to make use of the trap—only scouts have explored the area to date, and all who discovered the secessionists were slain before they could report the threat.

The traitors have taken some additional measures to make the area seem more derelict. These efforts are the primary reason that the scouts have reported the presence of servitors in the region. In addition to offering some additional concealment for an ambush, these measures are also intended to mitigate any further damage to the star fort. Should the Severan Dominate succeed in eliminating the Imperial presence, these changes could also play a factor in eventually repairing the damaged docking arm.

The first key measure is the addition of new walls and airlocks into the perimeter corridor. This forty metre wide passage completely lacked any sort of seals. Extending along the entire outer perimeter of the star fort's core, a single breach could vent an enormous quantity of atmosphere into the vacuum beyond. If the secessionists have any intentions of repairing the broken docking arm, they must first have an effective means to enter the region without venting a large quantity of additional air. To address this concern, they implemented temporary pressure walls made of plasteel (16 Armour Points) that stretch the entire breadth of the corridor. These contain airlocks large enough to accommodate the passage of a super-heavy tank. Servitors have constructed five of these walls. Two are located on either side of the collapsed docking arm. An additional one seals off the outer perimeter corridor from a passage that leads deeper into the core region.

The secessionists working on the station repairs have also shut down all ventilation systems to this region, sealing the ducts in the process. With its high, vaulted ceilings and its forty-metre width, the corridor still contains an enormous volume of atmosphere. However, as the air is not circulating, it has begun to grow stale. Each breath of air drawn within the confines of these pressure walls makes the air increasingly toxic, though it may take days or weeks for a volume this large to become unsafe, given how few inhabitants have entered the region. Within the most central section—immediately adjacent to the damaged docking arm—the atmospheric pressure has begun to drop. This is a gradual process, due to a number of imperfections in the seals between the collapsed docking arm and the corridor. Currently, the pressure is about seventy percent of normal, but it is dropping at a rate of one to two percent daily. At this rate, soon anyone crossing through the region is certain to need a void suit. Collapsing the pressure walls would restore normal air pressure to the region, at the expense of a significant loss of atmosphere throughout *Lycurgos*.

Within the walled-off region, Severan Dominate forces have taken further measures to ensure that they can more easily set up an ambush, and have a major edge against the Imperial forces. The first change was to completely shut off all of the ambient lighting. All of the lighting panels set into



the walls have either been removed or deactivated. Beyond the pressure walls, the station is in utter blackness, save for any starlight that comes through the occasional porthole.

Assorted scrap materials have been placed in a seemingly random fashion throughout the corridor. These are damaged hull plates, the wreckage of vehicles destroyed in the earlier combat, and even some piles of waste materials from the star fort's manufactorums. In a few instances, the materials have been deliberately removed from the corridor's interior walls, though most of the scrap had to be transferred to the region by servitors and labourers. This junk is meant to impede progress through the region, as well as to offer cover for the Severan Dominate forces in an ambush attempt. In conjunction with the poor lighting and stale atmosphere, any hurried movement or piloting Tests through the rubble and scrap is considered Very Hard (-30).

To add one final level of complexity, the Severan Dominate commander has had his Tech-Priests insert a kill switch into the station's systems so that he can shut down gravity within the region. As all of his soldiers are equipped with magnetic boots, he expects them to be able to deal with the issue with only minor difficulties, whereas intruders caught unawares will be seriously impeded. The secessionists hope that their foes could even launch themselves from the deck inadvertently and at inopportune moments. If the Player Characters have Good Craftsmanship or better void suits, then theirs also have magnetic boots to counter the absence of gravity.

## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS





A significant force of Severan Dominate soldiers and vehicles lie in wait in the inner section at all times. The foot soldiers are stationed in the maintenance shafts, awaiting orders to move forward and launch the assault. Vehicles are concealed behind cover, or painted to appear as if they were badly damaged wrecks. The secessionists wait for all of the Guardsmen to pass through the airlock into the inner region before launching their attack. When this happens, read or paraphrase the following:

*From the darkness, you suddenly hear the whine and crack of enemy fire. Preparing to find cover and return fire, you realise abruptly that the gravitic plates have been shut off. The traitors have gone to great lengths to set up the ambush. Even trying to escape to report back to regimental command means holding out long enough for the airlock to cycle numerous times—with a three-minute wait each time.*

The sounds of the tanks manoeuvring their turrets to fire and the enemy soldiers moving into firing positions is enough to spoil the element of surprise. By the time the Imperial forces have all passed through the airlock, they recognise that an attack is imminent, even if they cannot easily estimate the number of enemy forces involved. In truth, the secessionist force consists of two Devil Dog meltagun tanks (see page 134), two Leman Russ Battle Tanks, and fifty Severan Dominate soldiers on foot. Ten of the soldiers are set up as two-man weapons teams, each equipped with an autocannon. Each ten-man squad includes one member equipped with a meltagun. All of the soldiers are wearing void suits and equipped with photo-visors.

During the ensuing battle, the secessionist tanks do not attempt to move, due to the complications of null gravity. Moving with confidence due to their magboots, the Severan Dominate infantrymen seek cover and maintain their firing positions. Unless the Imperial forces are well equipped, both the darkness and the zero gravity could pose significant complications for the ensuing battle.

If the secessionists incur more than fifty percent casualties in the fight, before incurring comparable losses upon the Imperial Guard, they retreat from the battle. In this case, note that the traitors abandon their tanks, so that all forces can retreat through the narrow maintenance ducts. Otherwise, they fight on until a conclusion is reached. The Severan Dominate troops try to avoid destroying either the airlock or the pressure wall, but they do attempt to prevent their opponents from escaping through the airlock. If Imperial forces successfully activate the airlock, a ten-man squad of secessionists withdraws from the battle, and moves through maintenance passages to the other side of the pressure wall. They attempt to continue the battle against any isolated forces on the far side of the wall.

## OPTIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Game Masters can incorporate any of the following scenes into the adventure at their discretion. Alternatively, they can choose to design alternative scenes that are customised to best fit the background of the Player Characters' regiment. These scenes are briefer than the ones previously designed, and are intended to represent smaller scale conflicts, typically only incorporating a single squad of guardsmen.

Rather than focusing on the larger scale war for control of the star fort, each of these scenes presents some of the minor elements. The conflict has had a significant impact upon the station. Many of the organisations present have begun to fracture under the diverse pressures, and some of these scenes focus on those elements.

### BEYOND THE SKIN

Severan Dominate forces have made little effort to secure the exterior of the star fort. They have the equipment to function in zero-gravity and vacuum, but they have little expertise in that area. The remaining members of the Void Shrikes regiment are well trained for this environment, and Company Commander Grigory Kulikov (see page 130) believes that an approach from across the outer hull could bypass much of the secessionist defences. A successful trip across the surface of *Lycurgos* could gain entry through airlocks to regions deep behind enemy lines. If this mission occurs after the flight deck mission, the lack of defences at that location strongly supports his argument.

Before mounting a major expedition, the commander wants to attempt several reconnaissance missions to find the best potential targets. He also orders the Void Shrikes to train the Player Characters' regiment in zero-gravity and null-atmosphere combat conditions. It is his strongly held belief that additional experience in the field should dramatically improve the abilities of the Guardsmen to function in space. With adequate preparation, the hostile conditions should barely impede their combat effectiveness.

For the first few missions, the primary objectives could be as simple as training, with reconnaissance representing a secondary concern. As the Guardsmen grow in experience, the primary mission objectives could become increasingly critical, to the extent that the Player Characters might eventually assist Void Shrike groups in supporting missions that take place within the star fort's interior. Mission assignment gear must consistently include a void suit, and could often include at least one grapnel and line for the squad. Additional equipment should be based on the precise nature of the missions.

There are two major concerns with these exercises. The first is that any encounters with the secessionists in other portions of the station could give away their tactical advantage in later expeditions. If the secessionists became aware of such intrusions, they might ramp up their security levels behind the front lines. The second concern is that the explorers could encounter Severan Dominate attack craft while exposed on the star fort's surface. If this were to happen, they might be subjected to strafing runs, while essentially defenceless. Of course, in these combat circumstances, even a minor wound could be enough to pierce a space suit and slay its occupant as the suit's



## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

atmosphere supply and pressure were rapidly exhausted.

Initial exercises should focus on refining the Guardsmen's abilities to function in the vacuum environment more than on the star fort's defenders. As they improve their knack in the environment—represented by the decrease in penalties rather than gaining any skill—missions could include some exploratory efforts towards more distant parts of *Lycurgos*. This could reveal just how severely the battles have affected the secessionists.

Evidence of the damages could include empty barracks—which include obviously abandoned personal effects, surprisingly large stores of personnel supplies, or even a gathering of secessionist soldiers bowed in deep prayer, begging the Emperor for deliverance. At the Game Master's discretion, it could be made clear that the war has also seriously impacted the lives of many civilian labourers who work within the star fort's facilities. Many have lost their homes with the destruction of one docking arm and the capture of another. All have been forced to work extreme hours in the many manufactorums located throughout *Lycurgos*.

All of these expeditions must incorporate some degree of risk as well, in addition to any revelations about the enemy. Key among these should be the dangers inherent in existence beyond the safety of a vessel. During early expeditions, guardsmen might be launched into the void of space due to a missstep or when some portion of the star fort is briefly reconfigured. As missions progress, additional complications might arise, including issues with void suits, enemy fighter strafing runs, or even air locks that are malfunctioning or trapped. The void should represent a significant and constant threat that the Player Characters cannot ever afford to ignore.

When the secessionists inevitably become aware of the void-based reconnaissance, they must respond. The nature and potency of this response should be largely subject to Game Master discretion. The traitors are unlikely to engage the guardsmen in a protracted fire fight upon the surface of the star fort. The enemy recognises that they are ill equipped to pursue direct confrontations against foes that are more comfortable in such an environment. However, they are willing and able to set

traps, particularly ones that focus on breaking an enemy's mag-seal with the exterior hull or damaging the surface of an enemy void suit. In response, the Player Characters could scramble to devise ways to repair a suit or to rescue their companions before they can be lost beyond their reach.

### AT THE DUMP

Scouting reports have identified the location of a Severan Dominate munitions depot located relatively near the battle lines. At this time, the facility remains within a contested area, but it is not believed that the depot is actively manned. Regimental command has requested that a Tech-Priest evaluate the facility as soon as possible. The hopes are that at least some of the munitions can be extracted and added to regimental stores. This could both reduce the munitions available to the foe while also increasing the regiment's overall assets.

Due to its relatively insecure location, command wishes to send out a small force to accompany the Tech-Priest. The concern is that a larger group is far more likely to draw attention that a single squad might avoid. The lieutenant presents the mission to the Player Characters. When he has concluded the briefing, the lieutenant thanks the Player Characters for "volunteering" for this mission and commends their enthusiasm and dedication to the Imperium of Man.

The primary mission objective is to escort the Tech-Priest to the depot so that he can assess and inventory the munitions present, and then report those data back to regimental command. One secondary objective is to retrieve any readily transportable munitions, which are in higher demand for the regiment. This includes ammunition for both flammers and meltaguns. Another secondary objective is to avoid enemy contact, or at least eliminate any enemies encountered before they can report. Regimental command is justifiably concerned that if the Imperial forces attempt to occupy the depot, the Severan Dominate might begin the process of transferring all of the supplies to a more secure storage location. For mission assignment gear, the squad is issued an automated hauler-cart, which can be used to transport supplies. The cart can accommodate up to a ton of mass. While it is



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largely self-propelled, the hauler's machine spirit is not capable of determining its own route or orders. The Player Characters must direct the relatively sluggish hauler.

The journey to the munitions dump need not be particularly challenging. As long as the squad follows the instructions provided during their briefing, they need not encounter any enemy forces. The route has been well scouted and takes advantage of a circuitous route through maintenance ducts. It is slow going, but otherwise safe. Even the Tech-Priest assigned to the mission is relatively cooperative. He is not interested in engaging in combat, nor does he have any particular desire to architecture. He simply

study the station's wishes to complete the mission in as timely a fashion as possible, so that he can return to his normal regimental responsibilities.

The first complication occurs when the characters safely reach the munitions depot. As it turns out, supplies have been repeatedly deposited at the location with little thought for organisation or inventory. A wide variety of disparate munitions have simply been tossed into large baskets. Fully charged packs are

interspersed with discharged ones, without consideration for later sorting. In addition, different types of munitions are interspersed with no concern for safety. A collapsed stack could easily trigger a spark from a charge-pack, which could ignite a leaking flamer canister. Any characters that assist the Tech-Priest—who asks for and expects their aid—must be extraordinarily careful.

During the course of their inventory, three ten-man squads of Severan Dominate soldiers (see page 120) arrive at the depot. Their intent is simply to drop off their empty ammunition packs and grab fresh ones from the depot. Of course, given the condition of its inventory, this is hardly a speedy process. Believing that the facility is secure, the arriving soldiers make no attempt to conceal their approach. They are fairly raucous in the hallway. From the sounds of their conversation, it should be clear that they are returning from a challenging, but successful, mission.

At this point, the Player Characters must decide how to respond. Their uniforms clearly distinguish them as Imperial Guardsmen, but there are adequate secessionist uniforms located in the depot for a quick swap. Alternatively, the Guardsmen could hide, set a trap, or attempt an ambush. The largest concern is what measures they might take to ensure the Tech-Priest's safety, as well as considering how they could deal with a force of secessionists that significantly outnumbers them.

The outcome of that encounter likely sets the tone for the remainder of the scene. If the Guardsmen are forced to beat a hasty retreat, the enemy might continue to enclose them, attempting to trap them far from secure lines. Note that the squads they encountered at the depot had nearly exhausted their available ammunition. Resupplying from the depot is hardly a swift affair, given the haphazard distribution of the full and empty ammunition packs there. They might simply experience a harrowing chase as they attempt to hurry the Tech-Priest through the maintenance shafts, while trying to delay their pursuers for as long as possible.





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### THE MEDICAE

Regimental command has begun to recognise that they are making progress against the Severan Dominate. The number of attacks launched against the secured docking arm has markedly decreased. Encounters with the secessionist forces have shown a decreased number of defenders and even those defenders have not been optimally equipped to fight the threats they face. This could be a sign that the resistance effort is beginning to falter.

With this in mind, the commanding officers have decided that the next step in the attack must be carefully calculated. Before they can attack, they need to have a solid understanding of the enemy's disposition. This is challenging in part because they still do not have a complete map of *Lycurgos*. A further complication seems to be that intelligence gathered from prisoners has been inconsistent. In many cases, the information has proved out-dated, suggesting that the secessionists are rapidly reorganising their deployment and may be moving some of their facilities. Other intelligence has proved to be little more than a setup for an ambush. The interrogators generally believe that their methods were secure. This suggests to the Spinward Front High Command that at least some of the information extracted is provided to the enemy officers as false leads, which can later be used to trap Imperial forces.

Regimental Command has concluded that the only reasonable response is to increase the number of scouting missions. To expedite this process, they are splitting companies into squads, and sending them to perform reconnaissance missions. Many of these groups are assigned areas based upon information acquired through interrogation, but others are sent to target regions that have not been included in those reports.

The officers suspect that success now hinges on accurate and current intelligence information.

In assigning the mission, the lieutenant makes it clear that the highest priority at this stage is to identify the enemy's disposition and all available assets. At the same time, it is vital that the Guardsmen avoid detection. Based upon previous indicators, it is clear that the secessionists are willing and able to quickly reorganise the way they have their facilities set up.

If the enemy becomes aware of any successful scouting missions, it is extremely likely that the mission data will be irrelevant within hours of

the mission's successful debriefing. For this same reason, they are discouraged from even eliminating targets of opportunity, unless those targets are clearly officers or critical supplies. The secessionists are certain to realise that any losses are associated with enemy activity, leading to the recognition of successful scouting activity.

As part of their mission assignment gear, the lieutenant provides a map of maintenance shafts leading to the target area. If the Player Characters command a platoon or larger group, the entire unit is assigned to target a large, interlinked region. That way, the squads can rely upon another in the event of a catastrophic situation. Vox silence is to be maintained, unless the unit is clearly doomed or an absolutely vital piece of intelligence is uncovered. Additional mission assignment gear includes a climbing harness, an auspex, a multikey, and a grapnel & line.

The journey through the maintenance shafts can be as easy or difficult as the Game Master chooses to make it. Severan Dominate soldiers have certainly planted numerous traps throughout the regions that interconnect between the Imperial and secessionist sections of the star fort. These are dangerous both in the physical threat they represent, but also the noises triggered by any explosion. In addition to guards in the corridors, the secessionists also use dozens of servo-skulls to patrol their facilities. These devices are equally capable of reporting any intrusion, though the majority of them are not equipped to engage in combat.

When searching their designated region, the Guardsmen discover a huge secessionist medicae. Within it, hundreds of wounded Severan Dominate soldiers and officers are heavily bandaged and medicated. All of the injured enemies have sustained wounds that require healing time before cybernetics can even be installed. Between their grievous wounds and their medication, the enemies are completely incapable of defending themselves. Medical charts posted at the end of each gurney list the patient's name, rank, and field of expertise. Medical servitors are currently tending to the wounded at the time the Player Characters arrive. These automatons effectively ignore the Guardsmen, unless they show clear signs of serious wounds.

The Player Characters must decide how to deal with the wounded enemies. They can easily perform summary executions, especially of the officers, whom their orders already allow for



destroying. Alternatively, they could try to capture any of the patients, with the intentions of interrogating them later. Some psykers might even be able to scan their memories, though the haze of strong sedatives may add a degree of complexity to any such efforts. Even if the patients were captured and brought back to the regiment's base for questioning, it is not necessarily clear if they would survive the journey or if the regiment would be willing to expend resources to keep the wounded enemies alive.

## BEG FORGIVENESS

This scene is intended as an interlude, for a portion of a larger mission. Game Masters can incorporate it into one of the previously detailed missions, or interject it into one of their own design. It is intended to hint at the desperate circumstances that the secessionists currently face, but it can also inadvertently offer complications for later scenes. This is the first real hint of the Warpsmith's (see page 136) actions within the star fort's core.

Ideally, this scene should be inserted into a fire fight, preferably one where the Player Characters are outnumbered and in fear for their lives. Ideally, the enemy force should be no larger than a platoon. Anything larger than that may seem unreasonable, depending upon the scope of the engagement. Just as the situation seems exceptionally dire, the secessionists suddenly drop their weapons and offer an unconditional surrender.

This is certain to raise the suspicions of the Player Characters. After all, the opponents appeared to be in a superior tactical position at the time of their surrender. Regardless of the techniques that the Guardsmen use to secure the enemy, the secessionists make no efforts at all to resist. They accept corporal punishment, and even willingly let some of their allies be executed. If questioned, they explain that recent events have suddenly brought into clarity the fallacies of the path they have been following. The leader of the secessionists offers to provide detailed information about the Severan Dominate forces and resources, but is only willing to present this information to a commanding officer—under no conditions does he agree to do this over vox nor does he accept the rank of any of the characters present.

The apparent secessionists are attempting to get at least one member of their group into the Imperial Guard camp. They do not have any unusual gear, nor is it their intention to unleash any sort of direct military action. This is because these soldiers are not, in fact, still devoted to the Severan Dominate. Instead, these are soldiers who have fallen prey to the corruption of the Warpsmith and the Ruinous Powers. They believe that if they can infiltrate the Imperial encampment, they might be able to sow a great deal of chaos and disrupt the Imperial Guard's headquarters at a time most convenient to their cause.

Until that time is reached, the traitors are willing to be as cooperative as necessary in order to assure a successful infiltration. In their minds, there is no unacceptable level of sacrifice to attain their goal. At this point, the traitors do not yet bear any obvious marks of their newfound unholy allegiance. The only way to truly detect their treachery would be with a telepathic scan. In the event that a psyker is on hand to accomplish this feat, the traces of heresy and contamination become obvious. Otherwise, the treachery should be extremely challenging to uncover.

If any of the prisoners are returned to the Imperial Guard camp for later interrogation, Game Masters should simply keep a note of this fact. The cultist presence within the camp affects the events of Chapter III. There are no further repercussions for the Imperial forces during the remainder of this Chapter.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPCs play important roles as the Imperial Guard begins to expand its control of *Lycurgos*.

### CAPTAIN MORDECAI HORATIO

The captain is an accomplished Imperial Navy flight commander whose squadron of attack craft has been temporarily attached to the Imperial Guard forces. He is available to offer counsel in any planning sessions that involve attacks on the station's exterior or that could affect the ongoing battle between the star fort and the Imperial Navy. The captain is void born and has little patience for those who do not inherently understand the dangers and inherent nature of life aboard a spacecraft or star fort. He is also extremely arrogant about the role he plays as a pilot, considering himself far more important than the menial soldiers of the Imperial Guard. In a tactical discussion, he is always more willing to suggest near-suicidal infantry actions than he is to put his precious spacecraft in danger.

### COMPANY COMMANDER

#### GRIGORY KULIKOV

Many of the scouting missions involve a close interaction with members of the Void Shrikes. During the planning stages, the commander plays a critical role as he accepts the responsibilities assigned to his companies, or attempts to secure additional work for them. His forces are also critical in helping to train the Player Characters' regiment in working beyond the bounds of their vessels, for any missions to areas where gravity or atmosphere might be compromised. The commander is respectful of his allies, but is very slow to accept that they could have any competency in matters that he considers his field of expertise.

# GENERAL CONSTANTINE

*"Heresy is a hydra with ten thousand heads. Cutting off one is never enough to truly slay a beast that would turn from the Imperium of Man."*

—Commissar Horace Barrgraves

Intelligence has confirmed that General Frederique Constantine remains aboard *Lycurgos*. If the Imperial Guard could successfully eliminate or even capture him, it could play a major turning point in the war for control of Warzone Epsilon. As the overall commander of all Severan Dominate forces in the system, he is extremely familiar with all of the enemy's resources and their overall disposition. Even if he refuses to surrender that information, his loss could certainly disrupt all of the secessionists' plans and strategies.

Beyond the *Lycurgos*, the Severan Dominate have only limited orbital assets in the system. The Imperial Navy vessels currently have a significant upper hand. Imperial Navy command has committed several vessels and their wings of attack craft to establish a blockade against the star fort. While this is likely to have a significant cost in terms of both personnel and starships, the hope is that a quick strike could substantially decrease the time required to gain control of the star fort and the system. Currently, any craft that leave *Lycurgos* must pass through a hastily assembled embargo. Analysts for both the Imperial Navy and the Imperial Guard agree that the general is unlikely to personally risk travel through the embargoed regions. The Imperial forces aboard the star fort must now attempt to capture the general before he can bring in reinforcements from elsewhere.

With this information and support, the Imperial forces aboard *Lycurgos* have altered their strategic focus. Instead of attempting to secure the station, they are beginning to move to capture the enemy general. This substantially changes their current objectives and overall strategy. A relatively patient war effort has been suddenly accelerated, and the overall scope has been substantially narrowed. Every available asset is now committed to finding and attempting to capture the enemy general.



## A NEW BRIEFING

The scene begins as word filters through the Imperial Guard ranks that there is a change of plan. All units assigned to explore the orbital station are recalled to the secured docking arm. Any plans for offensive missions are abruptly halted. Assignments to build additional structures, inventory equipment, or patrol the base are halted pending revised orders. Even the number of soldiers manning the defensive fortifications are reduced to half, as the command staff begins the process of freeing up soldiers for revised duties.

This initial process only takes a few hours, but it is ample time to cause confusion and a significant uptick in the rumours that circulate throughout the encampment. Some soldiers speculate that the Imperial forces are pulling out from the star fort. A few believe that the secessionists might have surrendered—some even begin premature unauthorised celebrations. The more experienced troops take the abrupt shift as a sign that there has been a change at the command level, and fear that their regimental officers have been killed. Rumours circulate like wildfire, especially as soldiers return from assignments and stand idle when officers are unprepared to debrief them. In short order, the encampment should feel more crowded than it has ever felt. Confusion begins to reign, as all of the soldiers and line officers effectively do nothing, instead awaiting revised orders.

Unless the Player Characters are officers commanding at the company level or higher, they are not initially privy to the truth of the matter. Regimental command only recently completed its formal discussion with the Imperial Navy about the change in strategic direction. Orders were given to recall all soldiers to the encampment at the same time as the Imperial Navy vessels and attack craft began to move into position. It was only after those orders were issued that the

## ROLE AND REGIMENT

If the Player Characters are sufficiently high-ranking members of their regiment, they may find out about the change in strategy at an early stage. If they have somehow earned command of a company, they could even interact directly with their regimental commander to discuss the revised strategy. In this instance, the scenes would need to be adapted to accommodate any changes in strategy from those outlined as existing.

Regiments that are heavily dependent upon vehicles must explore the star fort in a different fashion than those that consist primarily of foot soldiers. Transports, tanks, and even Sentinels cannot fit through the station's maintenance shafts. Some structures—especially makeshift bridges used to span chasms—are certainly not capable of supporting the weight of a vehicle. For the most part, additional complexities should arise as the Player Characters complete their scouting missions. This is partly because the early resistance should pose little threat to Imperial Guard vehicles, though they offer a meaningful danger to typical dismounted soldiers.

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company commanders were brought into a meeting with regimental command for a high-level briefing on the new orders. This meeting takes more than three hours, as every company commander needs to clarify the precise role played by the soldiers under his authority.

Only after that meeting is completed do the company commanders meet with their platoon commanders to brief them about the revised strategies. Each of these meetings also takes several hours. Consequently, an entire eight-hour shift passes before platoon commanders are informed and prepared to brief their soldiers about the revised assignments. During this time, the Commissars work tirelessly to maintain order within the encampment, as unassigned soldiers begin to stir up mischief. Game Masters are encouraged to use their imagination to devise an assortment of challenges within the encampment at this time. Oddly—at least from the Imperium's perspective—the secessionists do not take any action against the Imperial Guard.

The Player Characters must wait until the briefings have informed all of the officers that are responsible at a higher command level than their own. When their turn finally arrives, read or paraphrase the following:

*The lieutenant surveys the assembled platoon with a tired but determined look upon his face. Loud-hailers mounted on his podium blare Imperial anthems, as he prepares himself to speak to the assembled group in the temporary briefing room. He holds up a dataslate, and his eyes track across it, as he hurriedly re-reads it. From his facial expression, you're certain that he's dumbfounded by what he sees. After another moment, he silences the music mid-crescendo, and speaks. "It seems that the secessionist general is currently trapped with us aboard the star fort. We're to drop all other activities, devoting our entire force to finding and capturing him. We need to take him alive, if possible." He then begins distributing pict of the general throughout the squad. "The first step is scouting out every inch of the station, avoiding direct combat wherever possible. Questions?"*

The lieutenant sketches out the details of the mission to all of the platoon members. The platoon is to be divided up into squads. Regimental command is working from reference maps of the entire station. Each platoon is assigned a region to search, in the hopes that they can find the general as quickly as possible. Individual squads are to search areas near one another, so that they can move in to support one another.

The primary objective for the mission is to identify the current location of General Constantine. If he is vulnerable, then the Imperial forces are to spare no expense in capturing him alive. Intelligence expects the General to be accompanied by a significant force of Severan Dominate soldiers at all times. Unless he is isolated from these troops, any squads that identify the target should call other squads for assistance until an overwhelming force can be assembled. Once he is located, squads must attempt to constantly monitor his location, lest he be permitted to escape prior to capture.

Enemy engagements are to be avoided whenever possible. Because of the plans to diffuse the regiment throughout the star fort, it is very likely that Imperial Guard units might be outnumbered in any encounter. Unless another target is identified which seems to be an exceptionally high priority, Imperial forces are expected to give ground rather than engage the enemy. In these situations, the locations of massed forces must be identified, so that reconnaissance in force may be conducted at those locations.

Securing any Severan Dominate assets for Imperial Guard usage is considered a tertiary mission objective. This is only to be attempted if the equipment appears to be fully functional and it can be secured with a minimum of risk. Enemy wargear that cannot be secured may be destroyed, but only if the act of destroying it is unlikely to draw significant reprisals.

Speed is a significant priority in this mission. Regimental command is uncertain how long the Imperial Navy's blockade of the star fort can last. When it falters, the general could have an opportunity to escape. The regiment must locate and capture their target before that can happen. Otherwise, the mission is certain to fail.

Each squad is issued an auspe, a vox, a multikey, and a lascutter. Squads are expected to make due with their typical armaments, as combat is not a primary focus of this mission. Any squad that has reason to believe their target location is likely to be vented into the abyss may request void suits as part of their gear. If the supply depot has sufficient suits available, these are allocated in the order of requests, subject to review and approval of the supply officer.

The platoon's target location is within the star fort's central core. The regiment has assigned them to the central core that begins near the damaged docking arm. The individual squads are to coordinate with the lieutenant, regarding the order in which regions are to be searched, and the exact methods involved in assigning each area to each squad.

After the Player Characters have discussed their strategy and target location with the lieutenant, the scouting can begin. The mundane portion of the scouting is not described in detail. In general, the characters can freely encounter small groups of Severan Dominate soldiers. For the most part, the enemy soldiers are also reluctant to engage the Imperial Guard forces. In fact, they often turn to flee as soon as contact is made. Supplies—especially food and ammunition—are clearly in short supply. The labourers who work in Lycurgos's many facilities are frightened, insisting that the secessionists have been fleeing without explanation. Many areas are abandoned, though there are clear signs of combat throughout the star fort.



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TABLE 2-2 INCOMING VOX TRANSMISSIONS

d10	Roll	Message
1		The vox broadcasts screams of humans in agony, and then a burst of static. The command operator comes on the line, but is unable to raise any response from whatever squad sent the initial transmission.
2		A squad requests immediate heavy backup. A Severan Dominate Stormlord has their platoon pinned down.
3		Several reports filter in that a platoon has discovered empty secessionist sleeping quarters. The area appears to be hastily abandoned, suggesting that they have moved their base recently.
4		Several squads report in that locations set up as enemy defensive fortifications appear to be abandoned. All indicate that emplaced heavy weapons have been left behind at the fortifications.
5		A platoon commander reports heavy resistance on deck Epsilon. He recommends that squads attempting to avoid direct conflict stay away from that area, until a larger reconnaissance force is assembled.
6		The sounds of sustained lasgun fire come over the vox, as a squad reports in asking for support. He indicates that his unit has identified what appears to be a high-ranking secessionist officer, though the physical description is not consistent with the general's. Moment's later, command denies the request for support and orders the soldiers to withdraw.
7		A squad reports that they discovered several hundred of the star fort's labourers cowering in a maintenance area. The labourers fled when discovered; the guardsmen did not pursue.
8		A very frightened man—who identifies himself as a lieutenant—reports in that his platoon has just completed scouting manufactorum designate Gamma-394. The location is littered with the badly mangled corpses of thousands of labourers. None show lasgun wounds.
9		An out of breath vox operator—clearly running while transmitting—gasps out a report that his unit has encountered a previously unidentified walker vehicle. The unit has suffered heavy casualties, in spite of its best efforts to avoid a direct confrontation. The enemy did not bear Severan Dominate markings. The transmission abruptly ends with a burst of static.
10		An inhuman voice begins chanting an arrhythmic, repetitive phrase over the vox in a foreign tongue. After several repetitions, the sound is abruptly squelched. A Commissar's voice transmits moments later, ordering anyone who heard the chanting to immediately forget it.

If the Player Characters have successfully captured a Severan Dominate officer prior to this scene, it improves their available intelligence at this stage. Any officer who willingly surrendered assists by indicating the regions of the star fort where the general had kept his quarters at the time of his capture. The more recently the prisoner was taken, the more likely that information remains accurate. If the Guardsmen were the ones to secure this information, then they can be reassigned to the region that their informant recommends they search first. Travel to that location should not be trivial, and can still include the scenes described below prior to the unit finding the general.

As the squads split up to search the station, they make extensive use of the vox systems to communicate with High Command. Many of the transmissions take place on open channels. In spite of their orders to avoid conflict, many of the squads are forced into battles that they do not seek. At irregular intervals—roughly two to three times per scene—Game Masters should roll on **Table 2-2 Incoming Vox Transmissions** or just choose an interesting message. On hearing the broadcast, the Player Characters can decide if it is appropriate to alter their current approach to scouting.

### UNPLANNED MAINTENANCE

During the course of their scouting, the squad discovers a group of roughly twenty servitors actively working on one of the rooms. This room is one that the squad must search for any signs of enemy activity or clues that could lead to the general. The area appears to have been a maintenance facility prior to the construction work, and measures fifteen metres by twenty metres. A drop ceiling had been set in place three metres above floor level. There are four doorways from the room.

Large pipes for ventilation connections are visible where ceiling panels have already been removed. Massive pipes filled with water and coolant remain in the room, and liquids observably flow through some of them. As the squad watches, servitors are busily stripping the room of all equipment. This includes the sundry machines and light maintenance equipment stored in the room, but soon turns to actually dismantling the bulkheads and removing the wiring behind them.

Each time a servitor removes a large object, it exits the room, carrying the object with it. Roughly fifteen minutes later, the servitor returns to continue its work. Between the number of servitors and the amount of work, they are constantly cycling through the area disassembling all of its equipment. Smaller pieces—bits of wire, loose bolts, and similar items—are tossed into a bin. Each time this bin is filled, a servitor transports it out the same doorway.



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If the squad patiently watches for long enough, the room is completely stripped bare, including the control panels for the atmospheric and waste recycling systems. Any characters observing may attempt a **Routine (+10) Tech-Use Test**. Should they succeed, they recognise that the servitors are not specifically removing damaged equipment. They are also not making any effort to repair anything. Instead, the machines and structures that they are disassembling appear to have been completely intact and functional prior to the work. If this process is permitted to continue unabated, the star fort is certain to eventually sustain some degree of damage. As it stands, without this maintenance room, the air recirculation to this region is certain to function much less efficiently. If other servitors are performing similar functions in other parts of *Lycurgos*, it is possible that the atmospheric processing or waste recycling systems could already be significantly damaged.

The servitors do not interact with the Guardsmen of their own accord. They are specifically focused upon their work of disassembling the room and carrying its components deeper into the star fort's central core. Unless the Guardsmen go out of their way to interfere with the servitors, they simply continue their work, transporting the components out of the room after they are disassembled. They do not use force against the Player Characters. If their route from the room is blocked, they use a different exit and an alternative path. If all exits are blocked, they wait patiently until one opens.

If the Player Characters ask about their duties, the servitors simply report that they are performing their assignment as ordered, and rattle off the name of a Tech-Priest who assigned the duties. Overriding the servitors' instructions requires success on a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**. The Test represents deciphering the level of authority necessary to countermand the servitor's current orders. Once this is deciphered, the same command can be issued to any of the servitors. After which, they may be issued a new set of orders.

The servitors do not know what is being done with the materials that they are removing from the star fort, nor do they know why these materials were targeted. They are simply acting in accordance with the directives that they have been given. The Tech-Priest who provided the instructions had sufficient authority to issue them, and they complied as is consistent with their underlying directives.

To try to better decipher the servitors' actions, the Guardsmen can either follow active servitors or request one of the ones whose commands were countermanded to lead them to the site where the materials were taken. This requires a several minute long trip through the star fort's passages. Along the way, they see a number of other servitors either carrying components in the same direction they travel, or heading back from their destination, presumably to disassemble other portions of the star fort. The orders for any of these servitors may be countermanded in the same way as described above.

As the characters approach their destination, they hear the sounds of a large active machine that is not running smoothly. The noise of a blustering machine, with the occasional misfire, is even louder than the noise from the star fort's atmospheric processing systems. A strong smell of chemical smoke is also in the air, and vision is slightly hazy from it. The smoke even has a somewhat oily feel to it. The cramped corridor ends at an open hatchway. The source of the noises and smoke are clearly coming from the room beyond.

When the Guardsmen examine the room, read the following:

*A large form moves in thrashing, jerky motions. Its mechanical spider-like limbs clamouring on the decking as it struggles to stand. With each halting motion, foul ichor drips from its joints and sizzles on the decking. A stylised mask of polished steel rests atop the bulky frame of the vile construct's torso, the inanimate lines of its tortured face seeming to twist and writhe as it screams in what can only be described as the agony of birth. Faintly glowing sigils stand out from the dull metals of the thing's armoured plating, symbols and runes so foul that your eyes water and burn from simply beholding them.*

*All about the struggling creature, servitors labour diligently. Mindlessly, they collect materials from the heaps of scrap and salvaged machinery they have been gathering from the mass of the star fort itself. The frames of two more mechanical beasts lay, partially constructed, deeper into the chamber. Servitors toil about these half-made monstrosities, affixing armoured plates and connecting fibre bundles. No loathsome runes yet mark these machines, and neither stirs with the unholy life of the first.*



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What the Player Characters have witnessed is a newly-created Defiler (see page 141) struggling to come on line. The frames of two other partially constructed Defilers are nearby. Servitors are busily labouring to modify Imperial Guard vehicles, using the star fort's components, so that the frames more closely resemble the mechanical portion of a Defiler.

If the Daemon Engine becomes aware of the Player Characters, it immediately moves to engage them. Consumed with fury, it does not cease its attack until they are destroyed. The hideous machine is too large to physically fit into the corridor from which the Guardsmen entered the work space. If they retreat into it, the newly-created Defiler uses its ranged attacks against them as it tries to rip apart the hatchway to enlarge it. This is a time consuming process, especially considering that the hallway beyond is also too cramped for the enormous heretical entity.

After the characters flee or defeat the machine, command officers are surprised and horrified by the reports. Additional forces are readily allocated to purge the heretical machine, as well as the area where it was constructed. As the regiment continues to scout the star fort, similar reports of other hellish constructs begin to filter through the vox network. Engineers and Ministorum clerics are sent to safeguard the machine spirits and souls of all involved. NPCs among the platoon guess that the Severan Dominate forces have finally revealed their true nature and are now revealing their hidden allegiance to the unholy.

### TRUST NOTHING

Throughout their explorations of *Lycurgos*, the Guardsmen frequently encounter servitors at work. This should be a consistent theme. Some of the automatons are at work within the Imperial controlled portion of the star fort, performing routine maintenance and securing the regiment's equipment. Others are operating under the authority of the Severan Dominate. In general, these perform the maintenance necessary to keep the star fort operational. Normally, this would repair the damage that occurs over the massive installation's millennia of continual operation. With the ongoing war for control, their efforts have been substantially increased, as they must constantly repair structures damaged by stray weapons fire. In many cases, they have also had to perform repairs to atmospheric systems, compromised by the atmospheric venting as well as the smoke and other chemicals released by weapons fire.

The servitors should not be an uncommon sight. They are the very backbone of Imperial maintenance efforts. For the most part, the Guardsmen are inured to their presence. Work crews are normally just a part of the typical background operations within every facility. If this encounter takes place after the **Unplanned Maintenance** (see page 77), the Player Characters may be exceptionally wary. After a battle with a Daemon Engine, such concern could certainly be justified.



To offset this concern, Game Masters are encouraged to have the squad notice several routine servitor groups in action as they scout. Calls for **Routine (+10) Tech-Use** and **Routine (+10) Awareness Tests** are appropriate at this stage. If they should succeed, the characters recognise that the star fort is clearly in need of repair, and it is perfectly reasonable for the units to be undertaking these efforts. Most of the teams number four to eight servitors. In the less important encounters, their actions are clearly recognisable. Some are buffing out weapons damage to bulkheads. Others are replacing conduits that have been destroyed, or support structures that show signs of deterioration. A few could be replacing broken lumen globes, or adjusting ventilation grates and ducts. These are clearly routine maintenance procedures.

The moment of interest occurs when the Guardsmen spot a larger group of fifteen servitors in transit within one of the star fort's main hallways. At initial glance, the group appears to be simply moving from one area of the station to another, engaged on some programmed errand. Game Masters should call for a **Challenging (+0) Awareness Test**. Those who succeed recognise that these are not normal servitors. Instead, they are murder servitors (see page 138). Success reveals the additional weapons that the automatons attempt to conceal within their countless cybernetic attachments.

If none of the Guardsmen succeed on the Test, then the murder servitors appear harmless. The group may choose to ignore them, bypassing the automatons. Some squads might even attempt to question them about their current assignment. As soon as the Guardsmen either attempt to interact with the murder servitors or have turned their backs upon them, the machines reveal their true nature and attack. All characters must make a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test**. Those who fail are Surprised for the first Round of combat.

The murder servitors are merciless in their attack and have prepared well for the combat. If the Player Characters are on foot, the servitors engage in melee combat immediately. If the Player Characters are mounted in a vehicle, the murder servitors have an ambush in store for them. In this case, during the first combat Round, they trigger a collapse of the corridor's walls and ceiling. Those piloting vehicles must make a **Hard (-20) Operate (Surface) Test** to avoid the collapse. Should the pilot succeed, the vehicle avoids damage, reversing at the last moment. Should he fail, the vehicle suffers  $3d10+9$  Impact Damage to the vehicle's Rear Armour as the bulkhead collapses onto the top of the vehicle. Should the pilot fail the Test and achieve three or more Degrees of Failure, the vehicle also suffers a Motive Systems Destroyed Damage Condition (see page 285 of the **ONLY WAR Core Rulebook**). In this case, removing the vehicle from the rubble requires another vehicle to tow it free.



After the collapse, the murder servitors attempt to quickly eliminate foes. They initially concentrate their attacks and fire against the characters and vehicles that represent the greatest obvious threats. They have no concerns for morale, damage to comrades, or to themselves. Instead, they fight mercilessly to the brutal end, until all are destroyed or their foes are vanquished. If the Guardsmen attempt to flee, the murder servitors pursue to the best of their ability. Their strategies are mindless and unaffected if the soldiers manage to bring reinforcements to the conflict.

If the squad reports this encounter over the vox network, orders are issued to eliminate any servitors encountered within the star fort from this point of the battle onward. They are henceforth to be considered hostile targets. Units should use ranged weapons to attack, and only approach once all signs indicate that the targets have been completely incapacitated. The regimental command recognises the objections that Tech-Priests might take to this approach, but the risk to the regiment overrides those concerns at this time. Orders also indicate that the servitors located within the Imperial encampment are to be shut down at this time, and left inactive until further notice. Tech-Priests that remain in the encampment are ordered to begin the process of deactivating all servitors immediately.



## CULTISTS EXPOSED

The threat posed by the enemy soldiers is no longer limited to those who have turned to the cause of the Severan Dominate. Instead, the presence of a powerful follower of the Ruinous Powers has begun to sway the traitors to a new cause. As the soldiers have turned, the battle for the station has turned into a tripartite one. The previous battle against the newly-created Defiler was but a warning of the dangers to come, as the star fort erupts into an even more hostile environment for all of the humans aboard.

Through this encounter, the reason for the decreased secessionist presence becomes clear. A battle with a group of apparent secessionists seems normal, unless the Guardsmen recognise that these soldiers no longer wear the symbols of their traitorous allegiance. Instead, they wear the ultimate heretical symbol—the eight pointed star of Chaos. As the battle proceeds, more of the newly turned cultists join the fray, hoping to quickly overwhelm the Guardsmen. A Renegade Psyker (see page 351 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) accompanies this later group. Formerly a Severan Dominate soldier, this fool pledged his soul to the Ruinous Powers and as a result has shattered his mind and unleashed newfound dark powers.

The scene begins as the characters are scouting through a storage facility. The room is filled with crates containing routine supplies, such as clothing, blankets, and assorted sundries. None of the material is explosive nor does it have obvious combat applications. The room is more than thirty metres in width and sixty metres in length. There are multiple entrances to the room, each the size of a double door. The ceiling is fifteen metres in height. Several Sentinel Powerlifters (see page 134) are stationed throughout the room. The star fort's labourers normally use these machines to move the crates between stacks, or transfer them to other locations as ordered or needed.

The crates are organised based upon their contents into rows and columns. The organisational system certainly makes sense to the labourers who work here regularly, but to the uninitiated, the crates form a confusing maze. Each crate is a cube, two metres per side. They are stacked, edge-to-edge, in rows from two to six crates. These crates are also stacked vertically atop one another. In many places, these stacks are up to five crates in height.

A catwalk encircles the room's perimeter, suspended two metres from the ceiling. Six control stations on the catwalk are used to control the six mechanical crane arms that are suspended from the ceiling. Each of these arms terminates in a massive servo-arm, which would normally be used to lift the crates and stack them.

Two full squads of ten Chaos Renegade Militia (see page 351 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) are hiding in the shadows of the catwalk. The Militia are attempting to hide in the shadows, making an unskilled **Easy (+20) Opposed Stealth Test** against any Player Characters who search the room. The cultists open fire on the Imperial Guard once the squad has all entered the room, or as soon as any of the Guardsmen fire upon them.

If the Guardsmen move to take cover within the crates, the Militia attempt to use the robotic arms to knock over stacks of crates upon them. As the Militia are not skilled in the use of the cranes, their efforts are clumsy at best. The Imperial soldiers may avoid the crates with a move action and success on a **Routine (+10) Acrobatics Test**. If they fail or do not use the move action to get out of the way, they suffer  $1d10 + 3$  I damage from the crate crashing and shattering upon them. Characters who achieve three or more Degrees of Failure on the Test are pinned beneath a crate, and must succeed at a **Difficult (-10) Strength Test** or have another character assist them in getting free.

After five Rounds of combat—or after half of the Militia are slain, whichever comes first—one of the other doors to the storage facility opens. Another squad of ten Chaos Renegade Militia enters through the doors and joins the battle. A Chaos Renegade Psyker (see page 351 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) leads this squad. He issues orders both to the squad he accompanies as well as those in the catwalks, attempting to coordinate the battle against the Guardsmen. The newly arrived squad moves into the passages between the crates, attempting to use them for cover, while generating crossfire with the soldiers in the catwalk. The psyker exploits his Life Leech and Terrify powers to first enhance his own defences and then render his foes incapable of effective resistance.

If the psyker is overcome, the remaining cultists attempt to flee. If his followers suffer more than fifty percent casualties, the psyker attempts to flee the battle, commanding any soldiers still in the catwalk to give him time to escape. If the Chaos Militia seem likely to win, they press their advantage mercilessly, as they have no reason to believe that the Imperial soldiers would join their cause.

## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

## THE COMMAND DECK

The climax of the chapter begins when the characters make their way to the star fort's command deck. This might happen simply through a matter of persistence. As the Player Characters continue exploring *Lycurgos*'s abandoned section, they are certain to eventually discover the escape path that many of the secessionists took. Alternatively, intelligence acquired from prisoners could point the way to this section. General Constantine has worked hard to keep his location, as well as the location of his forces, variable, so that the Imperial Guard forces could not easily target and eliminate the secessionist presence. The command deck, however, is an integral part of the star fort. Entirely too many of its components connect exclusively to this location for it to be easily moved. While he could set up temporary secondary decks, when the situation turns critical—as it certainly has now—he had no choice but to move towards that most secure location.

The complication at this point is the presence of Warpsmith Arkturian (see page 136) and his followers. Since the Chaos Space Marine's escape, the Severan Dominate forces have been haemorrhaging heavy losses. Many have been slain in the battles with the servants of the Ruinous Powers, but even more have turned from the secessionist cause to the unholy one that the Warpsmith endorses. The general is unsure which of his forces he can even trust, leaving his tactical options compromised, and forcing him to consolidate with only those troops that he is certain are loyal.

Another major complication is the fact that the star fort's mechanical subsystems proved to be an easy prey for the Warpsmith. The Tech-Priests working to maintain *Lycurgos* had done nothing to prepare for the escape of their unholy counterpart. With his masterful understanding of the forbidden ways, he was able to quickly wrest control of numerous subsystems away from those who remained true to the Omnia. Now, many of the star fort's inherent systems are preparing to purge huge portions of the station of any living inhabitants. Unless action is taken quickly, the Warpsmith might be able to render large portions of the star fort unliveable. At the same time, he has begun the process of creating dozens of Daemon Engines. These nigh-unstoppable entities are readily embracing his cause to eliminate the lives of any Imperial or Severan Dominate troops that yet live on the *Lycurgos*.

The command deck is physically located at the heart of the star fort's central core. The massive octagonal room is more than 150 metres wide. Its arched ceiling extends more than twenty metres from the floor. Innumerable stations line the many levels along the deck's outer walls. Hundreds of naval serfs and servitors would normally man these stations, tracking every bit of information available to the star fort's sensors, while directing its weapons, power, and communications systems. The upper sections are made up of interconnecting catwalks, allowing the controllers to quickly move between the different regions. A huge holographic display occupies a central deck. The flickering, three-dimensional display is cylindrical in shape and stretches over ten metres high. Normally the general would use this as a location to coordinate his forces throughout the entirety of the Helena system.

The command deck has four separate entrances.

One is oriented to face each of the star fort's docking arms, though there is no direct passage from any of the arms to the command deck. The three-metre wide doorways are clearly reinforced and numerous weapon barrels nearby indicate that they are heavily defended. However, as the Guardsmen come within eyesight, they can see that the defences have been deactivated. All of the weapon barrels point limply towards the ground. The doors are swung open, their reinforced structures serving no defensive purpose at all.

As they approach the command deck, the soldiers can hear the sounds of combat and weapons fire. When they eventually enter the facility, the Player Characters discover a scene very different from what regimental command initially expected. The general and his personal guard are pinned down within the large area. They are using every available control panel, bit of grating, and even the recessed holographic tank for cover as they fight a battle against an initially unseen opponent. The sounds of rapid and sustained lasgun fire are readily audible. Heavier weapons regularly bark out as the secessionists fire upon a foe that is beyond the Guardsmen's field of vision.



## II: SOMETHING WICKED LURKS

### ENEMIES UNDER SIEGE

The secessionist forces consist of General Constantine (see page 133), five ten-member squads of Severan Dominate Soldiers (see page 120), each led by a Severan Dominate Sergeant (see page 121), and two ten-member squads of Severan Dominate Shock Troopers (see page 122). The squads of soldiers are dispersed throughout the right side of the command deck as the Player Characters approach. They are focused on firing at out of sight enemies coming through the entrance to the Imperial Guard's left. The Shock Troopers are crowded around the general, clearly attempting to provide him with as much direct protection as possible. Any Player Characters who take the time to observe the situation can easily tell that these soldiers are trying to persuade the general to retreat from the command deck. He is obviously unwilling to do so, even though the path to the entrance behind his forces seems clear.

The Player Characters approach the secessionists from a flanking position. They initially have a clear line of fire on the general and the Shock Troopers that accompany him. Communications, through the heat of an intense fire fight, are difficult to achieve at best. Notably, the secessionists are clearly focused upon their enemy. Unless the Imperial Guard forces open fire on the Severan Dominate troops, they continue to focus on their current targets.

When the Guardsmen reach the entrance to the command deck, and look inside, the reason for the secessionist focus becomes clear. A Maulerfiend (see page 143) supported by four ten-man squads of Chaos Cultists (see page 137) are currently engaged in combat with the Severan Dominate forces. As the Player Characters arrive, the Maulerfiend is tearing its way through the doorway and surrounding wall. The massive Daemon Engine is simply too large to fit through either the corridor or the entrance. To overcome this issue, it is deliberately tearing at the corridor entrance, ripping and gouging huge rents in the hull as it tries to make its way into the corridor. Two squads of cultists are already in the facility, firing wildly upon the secessionists. The other two squads are trying to squeeze past the Daemon Engine, so that they can reach their prey. However, the crazed engine cares little for their actions, and its flailing tendrils frequently strike its allies as it attempts to force entry into the room.

The outcome of the conflict remains very much in flux. The forces allied with Chaos are equally interested in destroying the Severan and Imperial forces. They have little interest in attempting to gain control of the command deck or its machinery. Instead, they are possessed of a mindless drive to inflict slaughter upon all those before them. The Maulerfiend is even less selective. It is equally willing to destroy anything within reach, including its supposed allies. From the time the Player Characters arrive, the Daemon Engine requires three full combat Rounds to destroy the doorway so that it can enter the room.

During that window of opportunity, the Severan forces focus all of their firepower upon the Maulerfiend, though this seems to have little overall effect. Their lasguns are simply incapable of penetrating the Daemon Engine's massive armour. Even with their continued focus and the entity's temporary immobility, it is clear that they are losing the

conflict. Essentially ignored by the secessionists, the cultists quickly advance and begin to assault the distracted soldiers.

If the Guardsmen watch idly, they eventually observe the Daemon Engine work its way free and attack the secessionists, with the assistance of the cultists. A few of the cultists are slain, and a few of the Severan Dominate soldiers eventually flee. Without any Player Character intervention, the secessionists are overrun. The Maulerfiend slays Constantine and the shock troopers who desperately attempt to sacrifice their lives in his defence. Only after this battle is complete do the agents of Chaos turn their attentions towards the Imperial Guard.

If the Guardsmen intervene and join the battle, the outcome can be substantially changed. Neither of the enemy forces have available reinforcements. Depending upon their actions and commands, the Maulerfiend could be destroyed or the Severan Dominate soldiers could be swiftly cut down. The key elements for consideration are changes the Imperial presence can have upon the existing battle.

All of the Chaos-aligned forces are simply focused on mindless slaughter. They move to attack the nearest visible opponents, without consideration of the enemy's allegiance. If the Imperial Guard soldiers move forward, then the cultists and the Daemon Engine move to attack them instead of the secessionists.

The general and his followers, however, recognise that the Daemon Engine is a far greater threat than the Imperial Guard. They recognise the blasphemy before them, and though they have ideological differences with the Imperial soldiers, choose to focus their firepower upon the agents of Chaos. If the Imperial forces demonstrate that they have weapons capable of damaging the Maulerfiend, then the secessionists turn their attacks upon the cultists. Otherwise, they continue their ineffectual attacks at focusing their fire.

Notably, Constantine is unwilling to give up his current location. He feels that the command deck represents the centre of the star fort. If he loses it, he is essentially surrendering his command. This is more an ideological and philosophical issue than a functional one. Nonetheless, he has chosen this as his the site for his last defensive stand. He does not willingly retreat from this location, preferring to die rather than surrender it. The only circumstance under which he would leave the deck is if he is physically forced to do so. If the Guardsmen attempt to persuade him to leave, even offering to cover his escape, he remains steadfast in his decision to hold the command deck.

Even if the agents of Chaos are slain, the Severan Dominate forces do not immediately turn their weapons upon the Imperial Guard. They recognise that these soldiers—though they remain enemies—have essentially just saved their lives. They are willing to parlay, at least temporarily, to discuss the current situation. If the Guardsmen have a significantly superior force, the general willingly surrenders, in exchange for preserving the lives of his men. In the event that the secessionists have a superior force at that point in the battle, they instead demand that the Guardsmen surrender. Only if the Guardsmen refuse is battle resumed. Note that regimental command is willing and able to send reinforcements to assist in the capture of Constantine, if the Player Characters use the vox to request support.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

These characters play pivotal roles when the Guardsmen finally uncover the true nature of the threats posed to *Lycurgos*.

### GENERAL FREDERIQUE CONSTANTINE

As the overall commander of all Severan Dominate assets in the Warzone Epsilon system, the general is most concerned with the overall survival of those assets. He is devoted to the secessionist cause, but he only believes in its philosophy out of a loyalty to the people that inhabit the region. General Constantine is reluctant to needlessly sacrifice the lives of his people or their resources. He is initially determined to repulse the Imperial Guard presence. When his efforts begin to falter, he attempts to turn to strategies that might better preserve his assets and the lives for which he is responsible.

The presence of the Warpsmith prisoner aboard the star fort terrified the general from the beginning. He recognised the Duke's desperation but disagreed about the necessity of such actions. He felt that any move to align with these blasphemers could only be the first step to the ultimate destruction of the Severan Dominate. Since learning of the Warpsmith's escape during the Imperial Guard attack, he has devoted all of his efforts to eliminate him. He is uninterested in battling the Imperial forces, as he believes a far greater threat is now present. Unfortunately, many of his forces have already turned from him to embrace the Ruinous Powers. The general is now fighting a battle to overcome the devotees of Chaos, and is willing to undertake any sacrifice necessary to protect his forces from its unholy taint.

### WARPSMITH ARKTURIAN

During one of the Imperial Guard attacks, the star fort's internal power systems sustained serious damage. An errant surge caused a massive overload that briefly cut power to the security cells. Though the outage was brief, it provided enough time for the most powerful prisoner to make his escape. This was Warpsmith Arkturian, a member of the Praetors of Ruin Warband. The Severan forces had captured this Chaos Space Marine when a lucky shot disabled his vessel and left him all but defenceless. Some among the secessionist command wished to utilise his vile arts to gain an advantage over the Imperial forces. Stripped of what weaponry the Severan forces could remove from his unholy panoply, the traitor was left with his armour and the vast majority of his cybernetic implants, these being integrated so thoroughly into his flesh that removal would likely kill him. When the overload released him from his prison, Arkturian quickly recovered his instruments of death and set about his blasphemous work corrupting the star fort's ancient and proud machine spirits and twisting its very structure to his own ends.

By corrupting many of the star fort's machines—along with thousands of the humans aboard—the Warpsmith has already made significant progress towards gaining control of the massive facility. If he can succeed in binding a force of Daemon Engines, he may be able to purge the Imperial and secessionist presence from the massive installation. With those goals met, the star fort could soon become a critical resource for the devotees of the Dark Gods. If successful, this could lead to a massive surge in the Chaos presence in the region, opening an entirely new front in the ongoing war.

## REWARDS

This chapter of the campaign concludes after the Player Characters have captured General Constantine. With his capture, the Imperial Guard has effectively eliminated the largest threat posed by the Severan Dominate. However, the threat posed by the Warpsmith represents an even greater danger to all involved. The regiment must reconsider its strategies as it continues its plan to conquer *Lycurgos* and Warzone Epsilon. If the Warpsmith has already begun his efforts to contaminate the star fort, it may no longer be possible for the Imperial Guard to properly secure it. The sacrifices made to date may not have been necessary. Unfortunately, until the true heresies became clear, there was no way to recognise that fact.

As things stand, the Imperial Guard must still complete their mission. The parameters have changed and the threat has been expanded, yet the core mission to return Warzone Epsilon to Imperial control remains a central focus. It may now be necessary to sacrifice the star fort, which would certainly limit both the Imperial and secessionist capability in the region. Of course, its destruction would be substantially less damaging than permitting the forces of the Ruinous Powers to gain control of the valuable asset.

Both the secessionists and the Imperial forces have suffered serious casualties. Depending upon the outcome of the previous battle, the Player Characters may have to assume command of an even larger group. If this is the case, their duties may focus upon reassembling their platoon or larger unit into a functional group prior to contacting regimental command. If they take the time to do so, Game Masters may choose to grant the characters a temporary battlefield promotion when they speak with regimental command at the start of Chapter III. This is subject to their level of success as well as the heroism and loyalty they have shown throughout the course of the adventure.

## EXPERIENCE

If the Game Master is offering experience rewards at the completion of each chapter, rather than at the end of each session, the rewards are as follows. For surviving the chapter, each character receives an award of 1,000 xp. If they were able to successfully capture the general, and prevent his death at the hands of the Maulerfiend, they receive a bonus of 250 xp. For each mission that they successfully completed during the efforts to secure the star fort, the characters receive an additional 100 xp. At the Game Master's discretion, he can reduce these rewards if the characters suffered substantial losses to their platoon during the course of any of these encounters. At his discretion, the Game Master can also issue bonus awards for exceptional role play throughout the chapter, but these should not exceed 500 xp in total.



MECHANMORPHOSIS

COMMAND  
DECISION

•  
UNCOVER  
CORRUPTION

•  
THE ENGINARIUM

•  
ESCAPE



# CHAPTER III: МЕЧА- МОРФОЗИС

## III: МЕЧАМОРФОЗИС

*"They sense our presence and seek us out. Beware their arrival! If they breach the barrier, there can be no future."*

—Astropath Joachim Geordania, upon reaching the Warzone Epsilon System

Warzone Epsilon has a new foe, and its arrival presents an unexpected threat to all who dwell within the Helena system. The forces on both the planet and the star fort were ill prepared for the arrival of the agents of Chaos. All of their defences were focused upon fending off the Imperium. To be caught so unawares and unprepared would, were the defenders still loyal to the Imperium, be tantamount to treason. As matters stand, their resources have been stretched so thinly that the crime is understandable, if not forgivable. Of course, the very fact that Severan Dominate high command allowed a Chaos Space Marine to live, with the intention of possibly finding an ally, is a damning act. If they were not already guilty of the heinous crime of secession, the fools would have consigned their souls to an eternity of torment.

From the perspective of the Imperial Guard, the Chaos presence is simply another challenge to overcome. Those who lead the Imperial war effort in the Spinward Front seldom differentiate between the traitors who have devoted their souls to the Ruinous Powers and those who have allied with Duke Severus. Any who would turn from the Imperium have also turned away from the eternal light of the Emperor. This is but the first step on the path towards an allegiance to the entities of the Warp. All such traitors can only be considered enemies of Humanity, and they must be brought to justice.

In the immediate circumstances aboard *Lycurgos*, the largest concern from the perspective of the Imperial Guard is how to deal with the newly-revealed threat. With the escape of the Warpsmith, Daemon Engines have begun to appear upon the star fort. These massive mechanical horrors represent a significant threat to the Imperial forces. Troopers armed with lasguns are poorly equipped to overcome these creations. Instead, the Imperial Guard must rely upon more specialised weapons and vehicles to fell the beast. Depending upon the regimental composition, redeploying these assets could be difficult. In some instances, the Guardsmen might only survive by pilfering the necessary equipment from Severan Dominate armouries.

Throughout this chapter of the campaign, the Player Characters must focus on the Chaos threat. From the very beginning, the Imperial Guard holds General Constantine as their prisoner. The secessionists are essentially compromised, no longer capable of effectively defending *Lycurgos* from the Imperial Guard. Yet as one enemy is eliminated, another rises—the

Warpsmith and his minions pose a much more immediate threat. Through his heresies, the Chaos Space Marine has gained control of many of the star fort's core systems. Those he has not already dismantled to create Daemon Engines have become his tools to control the star fort. The Guardsmen must determine whether they have the available resources to overcome this new threat and cleanse the star fort of contamination. If this proves impossible, they must destroy the star fort, lest it become a tool of the dark gods.

## COMMAND DECISION

*"We serve the Emperor by the instruction of those who know His will. They tell us how and what we should think. It is not your place to attempt to understand or think for yourself."*

—Commissar Horace Barrgraves

The Warpsmith's machinations have caused countless problems throughout *Lycurgos*. Many of these threaten the overall stability of the facility, leaving sections without power and lighting, while exposing others to entities that have been summoned forth from the Warp. A less immediate danger poses a significant complication for the Guardsmen as the act begins.

The corruption sown throughout the facility has substantially contaminated the star fort's internal communication systems. Its laud-hailers, which typically conveyed messages of the Emperor's guidance, now emit strange gurgling noises, random shrieks, and forecasts of certain doom. None of the controls for these systems respond to any efforts, as they have been tainted to respond only to the Warpsmith and his followers.

The vox communications network remains functional, but the communications system is not well encrypted. If asked, any of the captured secessionists reveal that they had been able to listen to the Imperial communications without any difficulty. If the Player Characters attempt to communicate over that same network with regimental command, the Warpsmith and his followers are certain to be able to locate the Guardsmen. As the Imperial Guard currently holds the general prisoner, they can ill afford another encounter with a large force of Chaos devotees. Until some means of communications is restored, the Guardsmen must act upon their own initiative—a quality that is normally not favoured as part of their training.

Given the relative insecurity of the vox network, the fact that they currently have the general in their custody could also be a dangerous revelation. If there are surviving Severan Dominate soldiers, they might move to intercept the Guardsmen. The Warpsmith is also interested in targeting them, as he seeks vengeance against Constantine, for the general's impudence in taking him captive. Transporting such a valuable prisoner through territory that could be rife with hostile units poses a substantial risk that must be carefully analysed and overcome.

## THE GENERAL'S OPINION

He is a traitor to the Imperium and an enemy leader, but General Constantine holds no love for the forces of Chaos. He is every bit as anxious to see the taint removed from the station as the Player Characters. In all likelihood, his forces suffered more serious losses than the Imperial soldiers during the battle with the Maulerfiend. Even if they did not, the Guardsmen are probably better equipped than the secessionists. Due to these factors the general finds imprisonment preferable to freedom amidst a hostile and nigh insurmountable foe.

At the same time, the general is an experienced leader of soldiers, despite what the Imperial leadership has told the Guardsmen. He has some familiarity with the Warpsmith, as his star fort imprisoned the Chaos Space Marine. Between his past campaigns and his personal knowledge of the Warpsmith, he has a number of valuable insights into the current situation. If the Guardsmen are willing to listen to his guidance, it could make the task at hand substantially easier. Of course, until very recently the general was an enemy and yet remains a traitor to the Imperium. Choosing whether to ignore his advice as the word of a heretic or to heed his advice as one with greater experience than themselves should present a conundrum to all of the Player Characters, especially those who are more politically and philosophically motivated.

Constantine is of the opinion that immediate action needs to be taken against the Warpsmith. The Maulerfiend was not the first Daemon Engine that he has encountered aboard the star fort. In his mind, the only way to stop the Warpsmith completely is to confront him directly, as quickly as possible. He strongly encourages the Guardsmen to use the vox to gather a force of Imperial Guard troopers and work with any available Severan Dominate forces to find and eliminate the Chaos Space Marine and his allies. Of course, such an approach would violate countless Imperial Guard directives.

The general is willing and able to provide the Player Characters with the means to establish vox communications with the remaining Severan Dominate forces. If they agree to cooperate, the Guardsmen could potentially move against the Warpsmith far more quickly than if they were to first establish contact with regimental command, and go through proper channels. This dramatically increases the chances that they could stop the agents of Chaos before the plan goes too far. Notably, the Player Characters should also recognise that such action—particularly when undertaken in cooperation with a traitor—could have serious consequences. Even if they succeed at saving the star fort and eliminating the Chaos contamination, they are likely to be severely sanctioned. If the Guardsmen proceed upon this path regardless of that risk, Game Masters should refer to **Table 3–1 The Warpsmith's Timeline** (see page 92) and adapt the remaining battles based upon the force that the Guardsmen and Severan Dominate units can collectively field.

The squad is currently located far from regimental command. There are an indeterminate number of Daemon Engines and cultists that separate them from the Imperial Guard encampment. Their orders ended with the mission to capture the general and did not account for the Chaos presence within the star fort. Now, the characters must decide how to proceed.

If the Player Characters choose to immediately resort to the vox, then the Game Master is encouraged to use his own discretion in devising an appropriate enemy response. It is reasonable to assume that both the Severan Dominate and the Chaos forces could overhear the report and use it to triangulate the location of the Guardsmen. It is also reasonable to assume that both of these groups would be willing to commit a significant force to recovering General Constantine. The largest difficulty that either of these groups face is the challenge inherent in mobilising a large force and transferring it through the star fort. As the Warpsmith has now gained control of many of the mechanical systems, he is currently much more capable of assembling his limited forces than the Severan Dominate.

Any forces sent to assault the Guardsmen should be proportionate to the assets they have available. If the Player Characters chose to disclose their full troop disposition over the vox, then the enemy forces should be optimised to overcome that disposition. At the Game Master's discretion, enemy forces from both factions may arrive almost simultaneously. This could lead to an interesting three-way battle. During the course of the conflict, General Constantine

could be persuaded to attempt to draw the secessionists in as allies against the forces devoted to the Ruinous Powers.

Note that regimental command are hesitant to respond to any queries sent over the vox network. They attempt to keep the communications brief and also commit some reinforcements to assist the Guardsmen—likely other squads that were also involved in the scouting effort. The orders from regimental command are very clear. The unit is to avoid all further use of the vox, barring emergencies, and return to the encampment as quickly as possible so that the current situation can be analysed and new orders issued.

An alternative potential complication must also be considered at this point. If the characters captured the traitors during the previous, optional scene **Beg Forgiveness** (see page 74), those traitors have now begun to reveal their true nature. One of the prisoners is, in fact, a Renegade Psyker (see page 351 of the **Only War** Core Rulebook), who has broken the others free. At this time, the traitors make a concerted effort to eliminate as many of the regiment's leadership elements as possible. At the Game Master's discretion, this could include the company commander for the Player Characters, or even their regiment commander. With these losses, the chain of command breaks down and communications become even less reliable. This could even result in a situation where the various Imperial Guard located upon *Lycurgos* are uncertain who is actually in charge of the operation at this time. If the Guardsmen are high ranking officers, they could have to seize control to resolve the situation to the best of their own abilities.

## USING RUNNERS

Savvy Guardsmen may recognise that attempting to use traditional communications is not a secure option at this time. Some may decide that the best possible approach is to make use of the hundreds of squads of guardsmen currently dispersed throughout *Lycurgos*. The squads could relay a message from one to another using runners much more securely than anything sent over the vox network. Of course, a written message runs the risk of being lost and a verbal message is much less secure, considering the number of potential relays. Yet both options remain more secure than the compromised communications networks.

Transferring either type of message all the way from the command deck back to regimental command in the docking arm is a time consuming process. Almost none of the squads remain at a fixed location. Instead, they are constantly on the move. If word has not yet been sent out about the general's capture, then the various squads believe their orders to scout out the star fort remain active. Using a chain of single soldiers to deliver the message and return to the command deck is much faster than trying to force-march a coordinated force. A runner takes two and a half hours to make the round trip. This includes the time that regimental command spends considering what order to issue. If the message sent to command is a verbal one, then the squads can either assume a fixed position, awaiting the return of their runner and follow up orders, or the Player Characters might recall them to reinforce their position at the command deck.

Either of these options is viable. If the squads hold their position, then the return communication takes place much more quickly. Runners are able to send a message from regimental command on the docking arm to the command deck using the same runners who originally carried the initial message. If their squads did not move, then less time is spent searching, and the message can be returned. Conversely, if the squads are unified at the command deck, the Player Characters can soon assume a position of relative security, as numerous squads of Guardsmen reinforce their position. Depending upon the regiment's composition, this could include a variety of vehicles in addition to the foot soldiers. In many cases, the actual number of soldiers do not actually fit in the command deck, forcing the Guardsmen to expand their region of control, and potentially opening those forces up to attack on multiple fronts.

Game Masters must decide based upon the complexity of the message and its storage medium, as to whether or not it can safely reach regimental command. This is entirely a matter of discretion. A lost message leaves the characters trapped in the command deck, wondering if support—or at least further orders—might ever arrive. This is certainly truer to the setting, but is hardly the most exciting outcome possible. Conversely, if comms are delivered without a hitch the characters may feel more secure in their direction from regimental command. This frees them from any sense of personal responsibility and limits their need to act upon their own initiative.

If the message safely reaches regimental command, the orders are brief and direct. The characters are to proceed with maximum haste to the secured

docking arm. A vox broadcast is also sent out to all soldiers, demanding an immediate recall. Regimental command delays the broadcast of these orders, hoping to provide the Player Characters and their unit adequate time to begin a retreat, before the enemy can become aware of this decision. However, if the message does not safely arrive, then the broadcast would arrive first.

Orders included with the reply indicate that General Constantine must be kept alive at all costs. All soldiers are considered expendable as long as the enemy commander is returned alive. In addition, the guard detail is authorized to expend any and all resources at their disposal. Because of this heightened priority, the unit is also ordered to avoid all enemy contact during their retreat. The potential rewards of a successful victory are more than offset by the potential risk associated with losing the general.

The orders also indicate that the unit should, if sufficient soldiers are available, make extensive use of scouts during their return to the docking arm. Any intelligence regarding the disposition and numbers of enemy forces—particularly Daemon Engines—is considered critical information. The Player Characters certainly garner additional respect from regimental command for finding an intelligent means to restore contact. Unfortunately, their ultimate mission is no easier than it would have been if they had just chosen to return directly to the docking arm. The only advantage they could have is if they have managed to assemble additional forces to the command deck, so that their retreat is at least accompanied by a larger body of soldiers.



## PSYCHIC COMMUNICATIONS

A Sanctioned Psyker might have the means to communicate with another psyker stationed among regimental command. Game Masters must decide whether this makes the scene too simple. If they like the idea of leaving the Player Characters forced to make their own decisions, then the disturbance in the Warp caused by the activity of the Daemon engines could be severe enough that psychic communications become limited and unreliable. However, that approach runs the risk of leaving the player of the Sanctioned Psyker feeling as though his character has been unfairly deprived of his powers and speciality.

An alternative is to provide this as a communications option, but to introduce complications due to the Warp anomalies active within the star fort. These difficulties could present a very real threat to the psyker, making his actions even more heroic. They could also leave some of the communications slightly muddled, leading to multiple possible interpretations. This option for interpretation could leave the Guardsmen and their allies forced to act upon their own initiative as they seek to secure General Constantine.

## RETURN AND REPORT

Groups who make the journey back to the docking arm directly—either of their own initiative or under orders—must overcome a variety of challenges along the route. The severity of these hazards is directly proportionate to the amount of information that the enemy has about the Guardsmen, including their location and their force composition. Several of these challenges are largely static, as the environmental conditions and the creation of Daemon Engines occur without regard to the Player Characters' actions. Other challenges can vary based upon Game Master discretion.

By default, the journey from the command deck back to regimental headquarters requires two hours. This number can change substantially depending upon the measures that the Player Characters choose to pursue. If they consistently keep moving forward, avoiding detours and trying to move through combats as quickly as possible, they could potentially even decrease the required time. Alternatively, if they take opportunities to rest or delay moving as they continue discussing different potential strategies, it could take much longer.

Three specific challenges are presented here. The first is a physical obstacle culminating in an attack from a vicious Warp-forged monstrosity. The second is an unexpected attack from cultists posing as allies of the Player Characters. The third and final challenge comes in the form of a Severan Dominate attempt to rescue General Constantine. Game Masters are encouraged to introduce additional complications proportionate to the situation that has developed. This could include confrontation with enemy soldiers, as well as reinforcements from other scouting squads or even soldiers specifically sent to make contact with the unit. The journey back to the encampment should be fraught with danger, but ultimately achievable.

## THE CHASM

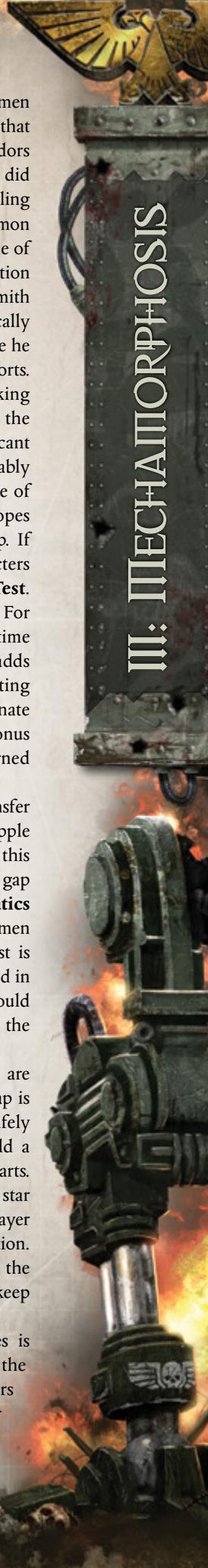
During their trip back to the docking arm, the Guardsmen encounter a gaping chasm more than thirty metres across that extends nearly a hundred metres down, revealing the corridors on lower decks. During their earlier scouting this chasm did not exist. The servitors who have been busily dismantling the star fort to find components for the Warpsmith's Daemon Engines created it in the process of their scavenging. None of the star fort's building materials removed from this location had a significant structural effect on *Lycurgos*. The Warpsmith recognised this factor in the station's structure, and specifically directed the servitors to target this area. In the hours since he issued the command, they have been thorough in their efforts.

There is no easy way to get across the gap. Looking along the chasm across in either direction, it is clear that the gap extends through numerous rooms, at least a significant distance through the star fort. Observers can reasonably conclude that bypassing the gap would require a change of direction and navigating through the star fort in the hopes of finding a route that is not blocked by a similar gap. If the Guardsmen choose this approach, any of the characters can attempt a **Difficult (-10) Navigate (Surface)** Test. The detour adds an additional two hours to their trip. For every Degree of Success they achieve reduce this travel time by thirty minutes. Each Degree of Failure, however, adds an additional fifteen minutes to the journey. If the acting character chooses to consult with the Severan Dominate soldiers prior to making the Test, they receive a +20 bonus to the Test. However, wary characters may be concerned that the secessionists could lead them astray.

A potentially faster alternative is to use ropes to transfer foot soldiers across. If the characters still have the grapple and line that were part of the mission assignment gear, this presents an obvious solution. With the line, crossing the gap without assistance requires a **Challenging (+0) Acrobatics** Test. After the first few soldiers have crossed, Guardsmen on either side can assist in the crossing, so that no Test is required. Depending upon the number of soldiers included in the unit, this may take only a few minutes to cross, or could require more than half an hour, as it takes time to pass the ropes back and forth and secure each soldier.

Vehicles pose a larger problem, as the grapples are incapable of transporting tanks or even Sentinels. The gap is also far too wide for even a super-heavy tank's treads to safely reach across. A reasonable conclusion might be to build a bridge, but the servitors have scavenged most available parts. In this instance, finding an alternative route through the star fort might be far faster than attempting construction. Player Characters, however, may devise an alternative solution. Game Masters must use their best judgment to determine the amount of time required for any construction effort, and keep this in mind when analysing the overall transit time.

Naturally, the physical challenge that the gap poses is not the only danger. As the Guardsmen delay to study the chasm—either to construct a bridge or to allow foot soldiers to swing across—the agents of Chaos intrude upon their efforts. With a metallic roar, a newly-created Heldrake (see page 139) emerges from a cross corridor at the bottom of the chasm. It ascends the chasm, wreaking



### III: MECHANOMORPHOSIS



havoc and destruction upon any soldiers who happen to be crossing at the moment of its arrival.

Game Masters may choose to have this attack take place after a portion of the forces have already crossed the chasm, potentially dividing the unit. Alternatively, if the unit has chosen to construct a bridge, this might take place before construction is complete. Otherwise, the characters would need to find additional components to repair it after the Daemon Engine appeared and—almost certainly—destroyed the structure.

If the characters are part of an exceptionally large or particularly well-equipped unit, Game Masters may choose to add a second newly created Heldrake to the battle. However, given the relatively small size of the chasm relative to the size of the massive Daemon Engine—even in its nascent form—this results in a very awkward fight for the two mechanical horrors. They are unlikely to even be able to manoeuvre around one another within the confines of the chasm. An alternative possibility could be to have a squad of cultists, armed with appropriate heavy weapons, appear upon one of the lower corridors. This unit could create a crossfire, working with the Daemon Engine, to keep the Guardsmen occupied and endangered as they attempt to cross the gap.

### FALSE REINFORCEMENTS

Throughout their journey back to the encampment, the Guardsmen are certain to encounter and recruit several scouting parties. After the first few times this happens, the process should begin to feel relatively mundane. Regimental command did send orders out to the scouting units to attempt to consolidate as they returned to the docking bay arm. There were well over a hundred squads dispersed across the star fort. It has taken a significant amount of time for all of these groups to begin working their way back towards the encampment. For those that paused to reunify with allies—or for those delayed by the terrain and enemy conflicts—the journey has taken much longer.

Consequently, it is hardly a surprise that some of the groups have arrived at different times than others. It is also not unusual to see a group arrive with damaged uniforms, due to the dangers inherent in the ongoing conflict. So, by the time the twentieth or thirtieth small group approaches, offering to consolidate with the Imperial Guard forces, it is expected that the typical security protocols are imprecisely followed. With the communications breakdown, by this point, most of the soldiers are perfectly comfortable just relying upon the iconography of the uniforms that they see.

Note that this scene assumes that the Player Characters are not the ones directly handling contact and integration with each new group encountered. It instead assumes that one of the other officers travelling with their hastily assembled unit is taking care of that responsibility. In the event that they have decided that any such scouting units must pass through them directly, or if the Game Master has the commanding officer choose to assign them this responsibility, then the scene should be dependent upon the Guardsmen first having an opportunity to pierce the disguises and deception efforts made by the infiltrating foes.

This scene takes place shortly after a platoon-sized unit of soldiers join in with the Guardsmen returning to the docking arm encampment. Based upon the state of their uniforms, it is immediately clear that these soldiers have seen heavy fighting prior to meeting up with the unit. Even a casual observer can note that their uniforms are badly dishevelled, and that a disproportionate number of the soldiers bear bandages. Their weapons bear the markings of heavy and recent use.

If any of the Player Characters take a moment to give these soldiers more than a casual glance, have them make a **Difficult (-10) Awareness Test**. Should they succeed, they are struck by the sight of an unknown soldier wearing the obviously stolen uniform of a trusted comrade. This should immediately set off warnings, and may prompt immediate action.

If the Player Characters do not take notice of the incongruence or do nothing in the event that they do notice, the group integrates into the organisation with little fanfare. They initially take up security positions and perform the tasks assigned. They have little enthusiasm for their duties, but at this point in the campaign, that is a characteristic description that applies to most of the Guardsmen. Essentially, these soldiers have little difficulty blending into the unit. In short order, their positions are integrated and distributed throughout the group's marching order.

As the inappropriate uniforms indicate, these soldiers are not, in fact, members of the Imperial Guard. They are former members of the Severan Dominate who have joined the Warpsmith's cause as cultists. They stole their uniforms from Imperial Guard forces whom they previously ambushed. Their goal is to integrate with the enemy organisation so that they may join the fight at the most opportune moment. For the remainder of the trip to the encampment, this platoon of cultists eagerly awaits a chance to launch an all-out attack against the Imperial Guard soldiers. Their goal becomes to eliminate the highest profile target possible. Unless the Player Characters are company level commanders, this target becomes General Constantine.

Game Masters must decide when to launch the attack. If running this scene prior to **The Chasm** (see page 89), then the undercover cultists could strike at the same time that the Heldrake launches his attack. Alternatively, when the Severan Dominate soldiers attempt to rescue the general in **Rescue Attempt** (see below), they could close around the General, pretending to guard him before striking a fatal blow. If neither of these options seems like the best possible solution, then the cultists could attack at a moment when the unit becomes dispersed due to a twisting corridor or when crossing an area that the majority of the soldiers are focused upon another issue—perhaps as they fear an ambush coming from the shadows. Surprise is the central focus in their attack. Unless one of the Player Characters is actively watching them, the cultists should be able to gain a Surprise Round, specifically targeting General Constantine, before anyone has an opportunity to react.

The cultists willingly sacrifice their lives to accomplish their mission. They are willing martyrs in the cause of the Ruinous Powers. Their mission is to sow confusion and destruction among the Imperial Guard ranks. It is their hope that this could be enough to prevent the Imperial forces from stopping the Warpsmith's mission.

## RESCUE ATTEMPT

Communications among the Severan Dominate soldiers have broken down even worse than among the Imperial Guard. Of the soldiers who remain loyal to their cause, none believe that General Constantine has willingly surrendered to the Imperial Guard. Instead, they maintain their faith in his leadership and his ability to overcome the Warpsmith. Even as many of their comrades in arms have been swayed into joining the Ruinous Powers, these blindly devoted secessionists expect that somehow they can work with the general to retain control over the star fort and Warzone Epsilon.

The first step to achieving their goals is to free the General from his Imperial captors. In order to do so, they have set up an ambush along the route that the Imperial Guard are most likely to travel back towards the docking arm they hold. These secessionists are intimately familiar with the star fort's architecture, and can make use of its countless maintenance ducts—even more effectively than the cultists or the Daemon Engines.

This should play out as an ambush scenario. The secessionist soldiers begin from hiding, along maintenance catwalks located above a passage that the Imperial Guard travel. The enemy soldiers make an **Opposed Routine (+10) Stealth Test**. If the Severan Dominate Troops are successful, they may take a Surprise Round against the Guardsmen. By default, there is a full platoon of fifty soldiers, led by a Severan Dominate Lieutenant. All are armed with lasguns, though their armaments may be improved at the Game Master's discretion, if the regiment is currently mounted.

Their objective is simply to concentrate fire so that they can quickly eliminate the soldiers closest to General Constantine. At the same time that they open fire, three of the troopers rappel down from the maintenance scaffolding suspended from the corridor ceiling using grapple and line to the general's location. The next Round, they grab him, and are pulled back up to the catwalk by some of their compatriots.

The situation is complicated by the simple fact that the General has no desire to be rescued. He believes that the only possible way to defeat the Warpsmith is to work with the remaining Imperial Guardsmen. Consequently, he fights back when they attempt to grab him. If any Player Characters are nearby—or if they successfully command any of their allies to act—helping the general avoid being taken can transform the rescue attempt into an extended combat.

Even if the General is grabbed, the enemy soldiers do not initially believe that he is unwilling to depart. With his skill set, he can persuade them of his intentions once they listen, but in the heat of combat, there is little opportunity for him to speak or for them to pay attention. This situation cannot be easily resolved with shouting as weapons are fired. Instead, a moment of real communication is required. If the Player Characters can devise a way to provide the general an opportunity to speak, the secessionists willingly listen, and eventually give up on their rescue attempt. In fact, they willingly surrender and offer to take up arms working with the Imperial Guard against the agents of the Ruinous Powers. However, coordinating a ceasefire in the midst of a heated battle requires some rather difficult communications. Game Masters must use their discretion to determine what strategies the Guardsmen use to accomplish this task, and assign appropriate difficulties to it.

If there are any Commissar NPCs present among the units, this situation could prove a further point of conflict. The political officers are certain to have voiced their opinion loudly against cooperating with the Severan Dominate forces. During the battle at the command deck, it is likely that there was no direct conflict between the Imperial Guard and secessionist soldiers. At the conclusion of the battle, a key point to any discussions may have been the fact that the secessionists were no longer firing upon the Imperial soldiers. The ambush, however, is a clear sign of direct conflict, which could trigger a huge degree of resentment. Commissars are unlikely to feel any mercy towards these traitors. Depending upon how the regiment's interactions have already been established, this could potentially even extend the conflict after the ambush, as another combat could erupt between the Guardsmen and their supposed allies.

TABLE 3-1: WARPSMITH'S TIMELINE

Time	Action
0–3 Hours	Initiate creation of additional Daemon Engines, so that the remaining corrupted servitors and cultists can complete them.
3–6 Hours	Assembles cultists and Daemon Engines outside of the enginarium, assigning them defensive positions to maintain until his return.
6–9 Hours	Enters a period of isolated calculation, in preparation for the ritual.
9–12 Hours	Begins to enact the ritual of transformation, to fuse a Warp entity with the physical reality of the star fort.
12–13 Hours	Enacts the ritual. The star fort begins its transformation.
13 Hours	The transformation is complete. <i>Lycurgos</i> is a single massive Daemon Engine.

## THE WARPSMITH'S RITE

Warpsmith Arkturian has very large-scale plans for the star fort. He believes that it is not merely enough to seize control of the Imperial outpost. Instead, he wants it to become a physical embodiment of the forces of Chaos. His corrupted understanding of technology has brought him to an unholy revelation. He believes that it could be possible to transform the entire facility into one massive Daemon Engine. Having already worked with his cultists and servitors to summon dozens of Daemon Engines onto the star fort, he now begins the process of unleashing this most horrific of all rituals.

Achieving this goal requires many steps and the utmost focus. Before he can begin the ritual, he must take measures to ensure that he has the time, materials, and relative isolation necessary to commit this blasphemous act. The Chaos Space Marine recognises that if the Imperial Guard is able to penetrate his security at an inopportune moment, it could be enough to prevent him from achieving his goals. Even though he remains relatively secure, an interruption to the ritual could be enough to anger the Ruinous Powers and sway their focus from his action. Because of this, he first focuses on setting his defences, with the goal of preventing any interruption.

The Warpsmith has little desire to exterminate the soldiers of the Imperial Guard and the Severan Dominate aboard *Lycurgos*. He recognises that they pose a threat, but he also is certain that they could make an ideal sacrifice to the star fort at the moment of its transition into a massive Daemon Engine. He would prefer that they remain alive and uncorrupted, so that their souls could be given to the Ruinous Powers later. With this in mind, he focuses his plans upon defensive actions rather than attempts to annihilate his enemies. That can certainly come later, after his plans reach fruition.

The timeline for the Warpsmith's plan presented in **Table 3-1: Warpsmith's Timeline** covers the actions he undertakes in this scene through the conclusion of the adventure. Game Masters may need to modify the timeline based upon any actions that the Player Characters initiate against him. The timeline begins at the start of the act, when the Player Characters are deciding upon how they should proceed after capturing the general at the command deck.

## DEBRIEFING

Upon their return to the encampment, the Guardsmen's reception is somewhat mixed. Regimental command does appreciate their success, but cannot afford to ignore the current situation. If applicable, the officers are also understandably concerned about the presence of armed secessionists in the camp. Depending upon the outcome of the **Beg Forgiveness** scene (see page 74), regimental or company command could have suffered serious losses. Essentially, the unit does not receive the heroic welcome they had hoped for. Instead, they discover that the regiment is in a poor position to overcome this new foe, so drastically beyond their ken, that has unexpectedly arisen within the star fort.



Depending upon their overall authority within the regiment, the Guardsmen might be called into a debriefing meeting with a Commanding Officer who remained at the encampment. If this is the case, they could also need to take a key leadership role in planning the regiment's strategy for overcoming the unexpected Chaos threat. In this case, Commander Kulikov of the Void Shrikes (see page 130) and General Constantine both play major roles in any discussions. They recognise the necessity of striking quickly against the Chaos threat, for it is clear that the Warpsmith has already begun to enact plans that could irreparably damage *Lycurgos*.

If the squad does not have a significant leadership role, then their debriefing is largely routine. The biggest concern is the presence of a Commissar who demands a succinct explanation for why any of the Severan Dominate soldiers were taken prisoner—other than the general. If these individuals were permitted to return to the camp while armed, this is considered an even more egregious offense. The characters can work together to try to convince the Commissar that their actions were both necessary and justifiable. Doing so requires success on an **Opposed Hard (-20) Charm or Deceive Test**, depending upon the strategy that they pursue in the discussion.

By default, the debriefing and planning session requires two full hours. If the Player Characters have a leadership role, they may attempt to hurry this process along, through a series of social Tests, with difficulties modified by their approach and tactical savvy. If the Player Characters are not in a leadership role, they have little ability to influence the time required.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPCs play important roles as the characters return to the encampment in the docking arm, and prepare their plans to move against the Warpsmith.

### GENERAL FREDERIQUE CONSTANTINE

At this stage, the general has reluctantly accepted the necessity of his imprisonment. He recognises the threat of Chaos and realises that it poses a far greater danger to the worlds beyond the Periphery than the Imperium. Because of this, he is willing to cede his lives and the lives of his prisoners to the Imperium, if it means they can turn their focus to destroying the Warpsmith and his forces.

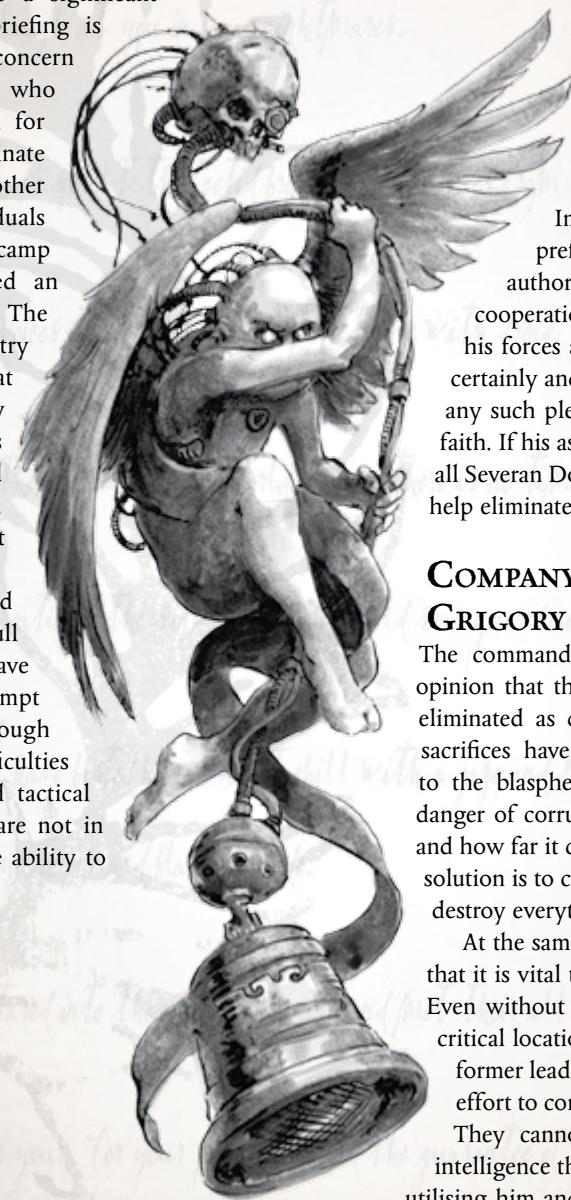
Ideally, General Constantine would prefer to work with the Imperial Guard against this threat, preferably in a role with some authority. He is willing to pledge his full cooperation, and to ensure the cooperation of his forces as well. Imperial Guard soldiers are certainly and understandably reluctant to accept any such pledge, but he does intend it in good faith. If his assistance is accepted, he fully utilises all Severan Dominate assets aboard the star fort to help eliminate the threat of Chaos.

### COMPANY COMMANDER

#### GRIGORY KULIKOV

The commander of the Void Shrikes is of the opinion that the Warpsmith must be stopped and eliminated as quickly as possible. His regiment's sacrifices have been far too extreme to give in to the blasphemers now. Kulikov recognises the danger of corruption and knows just how quickly and how far it can reach. He is certain that the only solution is to cleanse it swiftly, lest it be allowed to destroy everything within the system.

At the same time, the commander does believe that it is vital to keep General Constantine secure. Even without the star fort, Warzone Epsilon is a critical location. By thoroughly interrogating the former leader, the commander is certain that the effort to conquer the planet could be simplified. They cannot risk losing the general or the intelligence that he possesses, even if it means not utilising him and his assets in the battle against the Ruinous Powers.



# UNCOVER CORRUPTION

*"The stench of blasphemy is often cloaked by the false justifications of preservation, emancipation, or elucidation. Beware these sins, lest ye tread the path to damnation."*

—Missionary Sarama Vitz

**A**s the Guardsmen who successfully reached the command deck and captured General Constantine, the Player Characters are some of the most knowledgeable Imperial Guard soldiers on the star fort. Not only have they spoken with the former leader of the enemy, they have also seen the facility used to control *Lycurgos* and encountered a number of the Chaos forces now active. Depending upon their actions at the command deck, they could have recovered the station's schematics. Alternatively, they could have obtained this information—potentially along with the Severan Dominant force disposition and intended assignments—from the general.

This degree of familiarity makes them prime candidates to lead the actions against the Warpsmith and his forces. Evidence obtained from the General, his surviving officers, and even a few cultists who could be questioned are all in agreement about the Chaos Space Marine's current location. He has seized control of the station's enginarium. Located within the star fort's central core, deep in its bowels, this facility controls nearly all of the facility's systems. From this location, the Warpsmith can use his blasphemous knowledge to further his control over *Lycurgos*, turning its mechanical systems against any who would dare to oppose him.

Regardless of their rank, this degree of expertise is highly regarded by regimental command. Because of this, their unit is assigned a central role in the plan to stop the Warpsmith. If the characters have no authority, then their squad must fight at the very front of the battle. The squad's past successes indicate that they are capable of recognising threats and clearly responding. Consequently, putting them in a position to repeat those same actions is the best way that they can serve the Imperium.

## A MATTER OF TIME

The trip back to the encampment took a significant amount of time. Debriefing, planning, and a new mission briefing requires even more time. All the while, the Warpsmith continues to prepare his ritual. Game Masters must keep a record of the time that the preparations require, so that they can track just how far the Chaos Space Marine's plans have progressed. If the ritual is completed, the situation turns dire for all living things that remain within the star fort. Warpsmith Arkturian continues his ritual, even if the Guardsmen are imprisoned for criminal incompetence by a regimental Commissar. The Player Characters are the only ones who have the potential to stop his plans, by either saving or destroying *Lycurgos*.

If the Guardsmen normally have some command authority, then regimental command moves to place them in charge of the central mission to stop the Warpsmith. This puts them in charge of a company-sized unit, which includes six full platoons of soldiers—or a proportionate number of vehicles for an armoured company. In this instance, there assignment is made abundantly clear from the very beginning. Their group is to find the Warpsmith and eliminate him. If he has a larger strategy already in place, then they must prevent him from fulfilling that strategy.

Note that other units are assigned to deal with peripheral issues. Even after their recent losses, there are many companies of loyal soldiers operating within the star fort. Almost all of these are assigned to tasks that should support the Player Characters. These include missions to stop Daemon Engine production, destroy the enemy's supplies, and even to eliminate any hostile Severan Dominate soldiers. The Imperial Guard has not captured the star fort. Rather, it remains an insecure site filled with humans and Daemon Engines who seek to destroy the Imperial soldiers. With the Warpsmith's interference, now even some of the star fort's integral components are targeting them for destruction. With the support of these other groups, regimental command hopes to reduce the losses that the Player Characters and their company suffer as they advance towards the enginarium.

This plan has its merits, but there remain far too many dangers within the star fort for any unit to pass through unscathed. This is particularly true with the Warpsmith's focus on preventing any forces from reaching the enginarium. Further, many of the cultists who had served as Severan Dominate soldiers until they turned to the Ruinous Powers remember the paths through the star fort's maintenance shafts. Consequently, they can move with relative isolation to places that are behind the enemy lines. This enables them to strike against the Player Characters and their company, even at those times when the other units are succeeding in buffering them from outside assault.



# MISSION BRIEFING

The lieutenant gathers the squad, and explains the nature of their newest assignment. Regiment command recognises that the squad is exhausted and that they have already fought valiantly in the Emperor's name. However, there can be no time for rest when the enemies of the Imperium are still active. They must quickly prepare to continue their battles, before the foe can consolidate its position and threaten the small victories that have already been won.

As previously explained, the squad is placed in charge of a company-sized group for this mission. If they normally have a greater degree of authority, their commitment is reduced. Regimental command assumes that the group is capable of managing a smaller number of soldiers, as assets are required to support their mission.

The primary mission objective is to find and stop the Warpsmith, at all costs. Beyond all else, he cannot be permitted to control the star fort. If necessary, it is better to destroy *Lycurgos* than to permit the resource to fall into the hands of Chaos. This is obviously not a desirable sacrifice, but if it is necessary, so be it.

Vox communications are to be avoided unless absolutely necessary. It is assumed that the enemy agents have the ability to eavesdrop on any vox frequency or through the star fort's communications systems. In the event contact is necessary, the unit should try to use runners. If that is suspected to take too long, then the vox should be used, but only for emergencies. A sheet of code phrases is provided to the unit.

The only secondary objective is to eliminate any Chaos threats that are encountered during their journey to the enginarium. A map of the recommended route to that location is provided. The regiment's intelligence officers compiled the route through information obtained by the scouting expeditions and through interrogation of Severan Dominate prisoners. Based upon recently observed data, intelligence has little faith in the map. Agents of the Ruinous Powers have almost certainly disassembled at least some portion of the corridors and rooms that make up the route. The lieutenant warns the soldiers that any deviations from the route, no matter how necessary, could lead to the group having less than optimal support from other Imperial Guard units.

Under no circumstances should the group ally with any Severan Dominate forces encountered during their travels. At this point, it is expected that any remaining soldiers within the star fort are either hopelessly devoted to the secessionist cause or under the influence of the Ruinous Powers. The risk associated with any temporary alliances more than offsets any potential benefits.

Similarly, the unit must not rely upon assistance from any additional Imperial Guard units contacted. Regimental command fears that some units may have become corrupted. Many units have not yet reported in after their earlier scouting assignment. Any units sent out to support the Player Characters are also provided with the updated sheet of code phrases. If it proves vital, any runners or support requests must use those codes, so that the unit knows to provide support and communications assistance. Of course, those supporting units do have their own responsibilities.

Countermanding those orders to obtain additional assistance could compromise the mission.

At this point, the regiment's assets are open to the Player Characters. This mission has the absolute highest priority. Any equipment within the stores is available as Mission Assignment Gear. Game Masters must use their own discretion in deciding what equipment is available. For example, if the regiment is comprised of foot soldiers, then a Baneblade super-heavy tank is unlikely to be present within their stores. However, rarer heavy weapons, such as a multi-melta, could be available, assuming the characters have the ability to carry and wield it effectively.

The lieutenant then answers any questions to the best of his abilities. He almost certainly knows less about the dangers that the unit faces than those who have recently returned from the command deck. He is willing to offer any advice that he can, but his knowledge of the situation is limited.

## BACK INTO THE FIRE

After the characters complete their briefing, they can obtain any necessary supplies from the regiment's stores. Then, they must assemble their company and set out into the star fort. Initially, this may seem very similar to the assignment to find the general. After all, the unit is travelling through hostile territory in the star fort to find an enemy leader. The key difference in this situation regards the circumstance of the mission and the nature of the opposition.

With the previous assignment, the units were largely unaware of their destination. They were also operating in a very dispersed fashion, with unsupported squads searching out the enemy. Their orders were abundantly clear that enemy contact was not the priority. The general tone of those missions was one of confusion and mystery, as unexpected challenges were gradually revealed.

This mission contrasts sharply in that their destination is in a known location, and the unit is operating on a larger scale. Additional units, whose primary goal is to ensure their safe arrival, support the company-sized force. All now recognise that the forces of Chaos have a powerful presence within the star fort, and those enemies must be eliminated with extreme prejudice. Where the unit was previously equipped with a limited selection of wargear focused on stealth, they now have almost unlimited access to the most potent weapons that the Imperium can supply.

Throughout this scene, the characters must engage in a series of running battles as they fight their way onward towards their destination. Just as they recognise that reaching their objective is absolutely vital for the survival of the star fort, the defenders also believe that the Guardsmen must be stopped. The cultists fighting against them are in awe of Warpsmith Arkturian and his grand vision, and are willing to sacrifice their very existence to stop any who would dare to oppose him, while the Daemon Engines are leashed to his will, their own desires and will broken by the Warpsmith.

Because of their unfailing devotion, the enemy is present in significant force along any avenues of approach to the enginarium. To attain their goal, the company must battle through layer after layer of

### III: MECHANOMORPHOSIS

## MAP III: PURGING LYCURGOS



Chaos forces. In the event they backtrack or delay their advance, other units are likely to move into the positions to replace any that have been previously eliminated. The only chance for success relies upon a consistent and rapid advance. Game Masters are encouraged to enforce all of the opposition conflicts presented below during the course of the journey to confront Warpsmith Arkturian. By the time they reach their destination, the company is certain to have expended many of their resources and to have sustained grievous losses. This should make the final battle all that much more challenging and satisfying.

For some groups, the players could devise an alternative strategy to reach their destination. They might employ weapons to breach bulkheads, travel through maintenance passages, or even wilfully destroy military assets to clear a path. Game Masters must use their discretion in deciding which enemy forces this could compromise or permit the unit to bypass. In any case, it remains vital to track the time required to complete these alternative strategies. Any efforts that require extensive planning or preparation work also grant the Warpsmith additional time to prepare and complete his unholy ritual.

By default, the journey to the enginarium is a bit longer than the trip from the command deck. This trip normally takes three hours to complete. This is partly because the Player Characters' unit is not the first to leave, with other units sent before them to scout. The Game Master must track and modify the time required, based upon their strategy and pattern of movement. If the unit somehow devises a means to move more quickly—possibly using supercharged troop transports or even somehow designing an alternative route—then this time could be reduced. An excessive number of combats, rest periods, or strategic sessions could significantly increase the necessary time.

## THROUGH THE SKIN

The unit sets out upon its mission from the relative security of the docking arm. Within its confines, the Player Characters should feel the illusion of security. After all, the agents of the Machine Cult have already isolated its systems from the remainder of the station. Imperial forces have held the security checkpoint near the docking arm's base securely for some time. Even when the Severan Dominate attempted to force their way through, the Imperial Guard eventually repelled the attacks. In essence, since their arrival upon the station, the encampment has represented the security of the Imperium. The unit should feel that within its confines they are safe from enemy attack. This is absolutely an incorrect and unjustified assumption.

The company that the Guardsmen command is one of the latter ones to depart towards the enginarium. The other units need a bit of lead-time, so that they can thin out the enemy resistance for the unit devoted towards stopping the Warpsmith. During this time, the Player Characters may engage in some last minute planning or meetings with the regimental command officers. Of course, even as some of the soldiers stand idle, the forces of the enemy continue their preparations to control the star fort.

The Heldrake that the Guardsmen encountered within the chasm was not the only example of its kind amongst Warpsmith Arkturian's creations. However, there are few



places within *Lycurgos* where such a massive Daemon Engine can freely travel. Instead of staying within the star fort's confines, several of these mechanical terrors have broken free from the bulk of the star fort, and begun to fly through the gulf of space surrounding the station. Well aware of what is necessary to complete the plans in service of the Ruinous Powers, the Heldrakes dare to continue their service from the exterior of the star fort.

The Daemon Engines are aware that the majority of the Imperial assets are based upon one of the docking arms. They are even able to recognise which arm poses the greatest threat, as its location relative to the damaged arm is clear. Knowing that an unexpected strike could inflict significant damage upon the fragile humans, the Heldrakes prepare to assault that docking arm. If they can quickly penetrate the hull, they might be able to eliminate many of the humans within the star fort. With their potent weapons and powerful limbs, the horrors expect to rend many of their prey, while hurling others into the cold embrace of the abyss, far from the station. Any guardsmen who were not wise enough to wear void suits within the docking arm are certain to suffer the consequences of depressurisation.

The technological horrors have one flaw in their strategy. The units stationed upon the star fort's exterior recognise the threat within minutes of the Heldrakes exiting the station. Within the docking arm, warning klaxons blare their alarms. Runners rush to inform the command officers of the nature of the threat, and alarms are quickly spread for everyone to immediately don void suits.

### III: MECHANOPHOBIA

Moving as quickly as possible, regimental and company command officers direct soldiers to pass through airlocks so that they can defend the docking arm from its exterior. Hurried commands direct the soldiers to grab lascannons, as they are the only portable weapons believed to pose a reasonable threat to the fast moving Daemon Engines. The Player Characters and their unit are specifically directed to avoid participation in this stage of the defence. Their role is too critical for them to participate in such a risky manoeuvre at this juncture. The Guardsmen can, of course, choose to disregard these orders, and rush to the nearest airlock to help engage the enemy. Alternatively, they could wait as directed, or prepare to leave the docking bay, so that they might avoid the potential disaster of explosive decompression.

If the unit chooses to pass through the airlocks to engage the Daemon Engines, they arrive just as three Heldrakes (see page 139) begin their assault upon the docking arm's exterior. Due to their size and manoeuvrability, the star fort's defensive systems are inadequate to repel the attack. Fortunately, unless the regiment has previously sustained extremely heavy losses, the guardsmen oppose the mechanical terrors in significant numbers. In addition to the unit that the Player Characters command, there are two full companies of Guardsmen—including at least one of Vostroyan Void Shrikes—already prepared to defend the exterior. These soldiers have already set up their lascannons—at least twenty per company—and fire freely upon the Heldrakes as they approach. The mechanical terrors can inflict substantial damage upon the defenders, but they suffer grievous wounds in the process. One of the three attackers notices the Player Characters and their unit, moving to target them with its attacks.

In spite of the serious damage they suffer, the Heldrakes retain some focus about the nature of their purpose. They believe that it is far more important to damage the star fort than to punish the humans who would attempt to defend it. The Daemon Engines recognise that explosive decompression could cause far greater damage than the powerful weapons they wield. Because of this, after two Rounds of combat with the Imperial forces, they change their strategy to directly attack the docking arm, attempting to penetrate the star fort's armour and tear its hull apart.

The Heldrakes exhibit the self-discipline to focus upon their purpose, in spite of the Daemonic rage that burns within their mechanical hearts. However, they do not demonstrate the tactical acuity to cooperate and support one another's actions in this effort. Each of the three entities attempts to rip through the star fort's hull and armour (30 Armour Points) independently. Destroying this structure requires a significant effort, even for creatures as massive as the Daemon Engines. As they undertake it, they remain vulnerable to weapons fire from the companies dispersed across the star fort's surface. The battle becomes a race between the Imperial Guardsmen attempting to destroy the technological horrors and the Daemon Engines who wish to expose the docking arm's interior to the vacuum beyond.

If this battle lasts more than three Rounds, the Imperium's agents manage to obtain the upper hand. Attack craft stationed at a nearby launch bay finally join the battle. Employing their heavier weapons, these ships are able to finally eliminate the Daemon Engines, if the Guardsmen have been unable to do so.



For soldiers within the station, the cacophony from the exterior represents a terrifying backdrop of doom. Based upon the orders that regimental command issued, the Player Characters should be aware of both the presence of the Heldrakes and they should suspect that explosive decompression is the ultimate goal. The Guardsmen are aware of the measures taken by the Tech-Priests to secure the docking arm, but the atmospheric processing units and repair servitors are not intended to overcome the direct actions of a Daemon Engine. The unit must decide how to best respond. This could include taking up firing positions, finding cover, or ultimately fleeing the docking arm. Game Masters must use their discretion to determine how much damage the Heldrakes suffer prior to penetrating the hull, and the damage that the soldiers could suffer. When the hull is penetrated, if the Guardsmen lacked the foresight to secure themselves to bulkheads and structural elements, they must make **Hard (-20) Athletics Tests** to avoid being hurled into the clutching depths of space, as the star fort's atmosphere begins to vent.

Due to the modifications, once the Heldrakes are eliminated, any damage to the hull is quickly repaired. Servitors move into position with specialised equipment to swiftly apply patches, and the atmospheric processing units restore the docking arm to normal levels. Unfortunately, any soldiers hurled beyond the star fort are not rescued before these repairs are implemented. Guardsmen on the star fort's exterior must work to recover them—potentially further delaying the mission to the enginarium.

## FORCEFUL CONFRONTATION

The servants of the Ruinous Powers have taken the time available to implement significant defensive measures along the most likely paths to the enginarium. They recognise that the Imperial Guard is unlikely to stand by idly as Warpsmith Arkturian enacts his unholy ritual. Because of this, they have assembled every available asset to their cause, with the intentions of giving their lives to the Warp entities that already own their souls. They are prepared to suffer any sacrifice and are willing to exact serious damage to the star fort in the process.

Knowing this, the traitors gleefully embark on a path that they hope should lead to the destruction of the Imperial Guard soldiers. Their attacks and strategies vary throughout the advance, but the overall mission is merciless and almost relentless. The maniacal cultists willingly sacrifice ten or more of their own if it can mean the death of a single Guardsman. They embrace their destiny with the certainty of the mad zealots that they have become. Every death they inflict and every moment that they manage to delay the Imperial Guard advance improves the chances that their leader could succeed in his mission. They know that his triumph could mean a dramatic victory for the unholy and a grievous loss to those who would dare to oppose their power. The cultists are enthusiastic about giving their lives to aid that cause.

The assaults should take a variety of forms, and should be almost unending. Game Masters can choose to pass some of these conflicts in narrative time. Essentially, the cultists are zealous, but they are poorly coordinated. In some instances, a single cultist or a group of just a few could attack the full company of Imperial Guard. In these cases, a single soldier might be lost, but the overwhelming firepower quickly eliminates the threat. Encounters of this nature need not involve dice to resolve. Instead, Game Maser could select to seed such attacks into the descriptions of the advance. In most instances, minor attacks such as this are indicative that another unit has failed in their attempts to clear the path for the Player Character's company. This could be a sign that the allied force has been eliminated. Alternatively, this could indicate that just a few members of a huge attack wave managed to get past the allied force. In these instances, the trickle of attacking cultists is all that remains of a much larger force.

More effective assaults can come from maintenance ducts interwoven among the star fort. Many of the cultists remain intimately familiar with this network from their time as Severan Dominate soldiers. Now, they use this same knowledge in the service of their new masters. A horde of dozens of cultists emerges unexpectedly from maintenance shafts, onto catwalks located far above the main passages. From these positions, the corrupted hurl grenades and open fire upon their foes. Most of these soldiers are only equipped with lasguns, but as the corridors offer little cover from above, even these weapons can present a potent threat.

At the same time, the catwalks offer very little cover (4 Armour Points) to the soldiers that stand upon them. Further, the structures are hardly stable. If any of the guardsmen choose to focus their fire upon the catwalks proper, this can easily cause them to collapse, dumping the frail structures and the cultists to fall more than a dozen metres to the star fort's deck.

The fall is enough to kill the cultists, but the collapsing catwalk can injure any exposed Guardsmen. Before opening fire, a Player Character can attempt a **Challenging (+0) Battlefield Manoeuvre Test** to clear soldiers from the spot where the catwalk is certain to fall. Should they succeed, the soldiers in the area clear out of the way. Should they fail, a full squad is slain when the catwalk crushes them beneath its weight.

At the Game Master's discretion, some of these infiltrating cultists can be better equipped—particularly if the Player Characters belong to a mounted regiment. Their lasguns and even the collapsing catwalk are little threat to a tank or even a troop transport. In these cases, heavy weapons could be smuggled through the maintenance ducts, damaging a vehicle and delaying the company's advance. Another possibility could be to assign demolition charges to the cultists. When the catwalk gives out, the suicidal traitors could choose to trigger the weapons, inflicting even more substantial damage when they impact than just the catwalk might have inflicted. A Rogue Psyker might even be included among the ranks of these snipers, to offer an additional means of inflicting damage upon the Guardsmen.

A few isolated cultists and even a platoon of suicidal snipers represent a momentary diversion to a full company of Imperial Guard soldiers. They are only worth a few moments of time, and a brief exchange of weapons fire. These opponents are a reminder of the dangers present in the star fort, but not a true threat to success. However, there are larger groups equipped with more potent weapons, which do present a true obstacle for the company.

When the Severan Dominate soldiers embraced devotion to the Ruinous Powers, almost all of them took their vehicles and weapons with them into their new service. A significant portion of their wargear was used in the creation of the Daemon Engines that now plague *Lycurgos*. However, neither the army of corrupted servitors nor the best efforts of Warpsmith Arkturian were sufficient to transform all of them. Those who still have intact vehicles are now using these to stop the Imperial Guard advance towards the enginarium.

In many cases, battles have been fought between the other Imperial Guard companies and these craft now manned by Chaos devotees. With their maniacal devotion and little care for their lives, the more disciplined guardsmen have been generally successful in overcoming the threats that they pose. Essentially, the vast majority of the Severan Dominate vehicles are destroyed long before they can threaten the Player Characters.

A few, however, are simply too resilient and too powerful to be easily dismissed. This is particularly true for a group of two surviving Stormlord super-heavy tanks (see page 135) that the Chaos cultists still control. These enormous engines of destruction have been possessed through the vile tech-sorcery of the Warpsmith, reducing the Ballistic Skill of the "crew" of the lumbering behemoths to 20. Within the relatively constrained corridors of the star fort, even the most disciplined of Imperial Guardsmen are reluctant to maintain a firing position while one of these massive vehicles bears down upon them. Those few who have the devotion to do so all too often find that their weapons are incapable of penetrating the tanks' armour.



The Chaos forces have placed these two tanks in a large passage that leads towards the enginarium. The passage was once a series of interior structures, but it has been disassembled and gutted to create an area more than seventy-five metres wide and more than a hundred metres deep. Servitors removed the structural elements, as they scrounged for components to build Daemon Engines. The massive room is now a key location between the docking arm and the defended location where the Warpsmith conducts his ritual. It is possible for the Player Characters to detour their company around the area, but it adds another hour to the journey. Further, the detour impacts the defensive measures that other Imperial Guard companies have undertaken, leaving the Player Characters' advance less well defended.

Even before the soldiers reach the room, the stench of gunfire and death is readily apparent. When they first view the passages approaching the entrance, they can see the wreckage of one of the other companies that had supported them. Its members lie in ruins, the massive firepower of two possessed Stormlords proved more than they could overcome. There are other entrances to the room, and the super-heavy tanks have sustained some light damage.

The tanks represent a significant threat to the Imperial advance. The room essentially offers no cover for the units on either side. The soldiers must devise and implement an effective means of quickly overcoming these foes without sustaining significant losses in the process. Otherwise, they might not have the resources necessary to overcome the Warpsmith—or even the other defenders that still await them.

## THE STAR FORT REBELS

Warpsmith Arkturian and his followers control portions of *Lycurgos* in a way that the Severan Dominate never could have imagined. With his affinity for technology and ability to corrupt it, the star fort has begun to respond to his blasphemous rituals. The machine spirits that control many of its components have already been deactivated or destroyed so that corrupted entities can fulfil those roles. Servitors—now controlled by the Chaos Space Marine—eagerly destroy those same components that they laboured to maintain for centuries.

As the corruption spreads, so too does the Warpsmith's ability to use these tools to inflict harm upon the Imperial Guard. Soldiers bold enough to enter places that are now firmly under his sway must overcome the shifting morass of machine, flesh, and pure Warp-stuff the star fort is becoming. In many instances, these can be overcome with simple strategic conflict, such as the hundreds of murder servitors newly created from the bodies of fallen Severan Dominate soldiers. In other cases, however, the star fort's very architecture turns against the servants of the Imperium. With a combination of traps and writhing structural mutations, an environment confronts the Imperial Guard that is designed to be deadly.

These challenges form an outer perimeter around the enginarium. The Chaos cultists have been instructed to stay clear of this region. For the most part, they have stayed true to this directive. This is largely because the first few who disobeyed quickly fell prey to the star fort's destructive capabilities. In essence,

this portion of the star fort has been reconfigured so that it is lethal to any living thing that attempts to pass through it.

The only mobile objects that the Player Characters and their unit could encounter in this region are servitors. These scavengers are busily obtaining components that could be used to construct additional Daemon Engines. These are largely materials taken from the star fort's structural elements, as well as its manufactorums. The servitors are delivering these materials to the corridor surrounding the enginarium, where other servitors are busily at work. Note that the star fort is capable of recognising the servitors, so it does not trigger its traps when they pass through them, unless they are also accompanied by a significant number of guardsmen.

Throughout this region, the star fort's corridors and rooms have been stripped out and newly reconstructed. What was once an area of processing facilities and residential space has been transformed into a maze. Sparking cables writhe and twist on the periphery of the Player Characters' vision, servitors stand fused to the walls, their lobotomised brains providing rudimentary processing power to the corrupt machine, and foul, glowing script seems to crawl across the walls, only to vanish if looked at directly. The Guardsmen find this change more than a little unsettling. The new construction also makes it nearly impossible to identify any landmarks. Each corridor is five metres wide, and physically identical to the one behind it. Every twenty to thirty metres, new corridors branch off or change directions. None of the corridors ever extend for more than fifty metres in a single direction. The design is clearly intended to leave a unit wandering for hours or even days, as they attempt to decipher the best route through the maze. Doing so requires a **Hard (-20) Logic Test** on the part of someone making their way through the maze.

In order for the Guardsmen to survive, they must keep their wits about them, prepare for the most deadly possibilities, and rely upon their technological understanding of *Lycurgos*. In some instances, a talented Tech-Priest can offer the most favourable solution. Once he recognises the risks present, he could potentially deactivate the deadly components, or even attempt to restore the machine spirits, so that they can resume control, and spare the lives of the Imperial Guard forces. In other cases, the threats are simple mechanical modifications. To overcome these, the best defence that the Guardsmen can have is a group of observant scouts, capable of recognising any unusual features.

Prior to the start of this scene, it may be worth considering whether or not the company has chosen to deploy scouts. To a certain extent, it could be reasonable for them to have avoided this tactic. With other units providing some degree of protection, the scouts were not necessarily essential. Further, spreading the company out within the tight confines of the star fort could pose an additional risk, especially in the event of sniper attacks. At the same time, if the regiment's traditional approaches called for scouts, no amount of situational information would necessarily alter that approach. If the issue has not been discussed since the unit departed the docking arm, then assume that the company has followed typical regimental protocol. If no such standard exists, then have the lead character make

**a Routine (+10) Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis)**

**Test.** Should he succeed, he may choose whether or not scouts have been deployed.

If scouts have been deployed ahead of the main portion of the company, then those soldiers have an opportunity to discover—or trigger—some of the traps newly integrated into the star fort's structure. This is important because the traps are capable of inflicting substantial damage to the company as a whole. A scout can redirect the unit around the dangers, or identify them so that a Tech-Priest can overcome the threat. Alternatively, even if an entire squad of scouts is lost to any of these traps, that is a far more manageable sacrifice than the damage any of the traps could inflict upon the entire company.

There are three different types of traps established in the middle ring around the enginarium. The Warpsmith and his agents have constructed each of these numerous times along multiple routes towards that central place. If the Guardsmen follow the most direct route, they need only encounter each of these once. However, if they attempt to divert around a trap, they might encounter another instance of that same trap or a duplicate of one previously encountered. Game Master discretion should be the ultimate arbiter of duplicate or alternative traps. Note that by the time the unit reaches this portion of *Lycurgos*, it is reasonable to assume that they no longer have any other units of Imperial Guard scouting ahead of them. Consequently, these traps remain set when the company arrives. There is no evidence that a portion of the hallway might have previously eliminated a unit of guardsmen. By default, each of these traps is designed to affect a twenty-metre length of corridor. Unless the units are dispersed in an unusual fashion, this should cover at least three squads of soldiers or two tanks or troop transports.

Identifying a trap requires success on a **Hard (-20) Awareness Test**. With success, the acting character recognises a barely discernible feature that signals the presence of a trap. With two or more Degrees of Success, the character also identifies a concealed panel, which can be used to disable it. Successfully disabling any of the traps requires a **Very Hard (-30) Tech-Use Test**. Should they succeed, the trap is permanently disabled. Should they fail, it is disabled only briefly—the last squad crossing over it is still struck by the trap. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the acting character incorrectly disabled the trap. It continues to function normally, though he is confident that he has shut it down. All of the traps depend upon a combination of visual and mass sensors. They require both a minimum of two vehicles or twenty foot soldiers to activate, and are designed to function when the trap is fully loaded with targets.

**Trap 1: Gravity Mire**

The servitors have modified the gravity in this portion of the hallway. When the trap's sensors detect an ideal presence of targets, the gravity increases by a factor of ten for everything within the hallway. Characters adjacent to the boundary may make a **Hard (-20) Acrobatics Test** to roll out of the trap as it activates. Everyone else is pinned to the ground, immediately suffering  $1d10+4$  Impact Damage. This Damage is not reduced by Armour, though it is reduced by Toughness Bonus as normal. This includes anyone mounted upon a vehicle. The vehicles within the trap's range are immobilised for the duration of the effect.

None of the Imperial Guard vehicles are designed to move within these conditions. For the soldiers, simply attempting to move a number of metres equal to Agility Bonus requires success on a **Very Hard (-30) Athletics Test**. Failure indicates the character remains immobilised.

The trap remains active for five Rounds after triggering. During each of these Rounds, the deck plate discharges a blast of electrical energy that affects everything in contact with it. It automatically deals  $1d10+5$  Energy Damage, with the Shocking quality. Game Masters may decide if any vehicles are insulated against the massive energy discharges. Insulated vehicles protect the soldiers mounted upon them as well as the vehicles' machine spirits. Vehicles that lack the appropriate insulation pass the damage on to any mounted soldiers. Their control systems also suffer serious damage, leaving the vehicles in need of major repairs before they can continue on. After the trap is fully discharged, the Guardsmen must devise some means of moving any damaged vehicles out of the way, so that those further behind in the column may pass.

After activation, the trap requires twenty minutes to recharge before it can activate a second time. If the Guardsmen spend this much time attempting to move a vehicle out of the way—or if their column moves exceptionally slowly—the same trap could strike different parts of the company. Game Masters must pay close attention to the time spent attempting to assist those injured by the first activation or to remove any vehicles that obstruct passage.

**Trap 2: Vacuum Ventilation**

At the direction of the Warpsmith, servitors set up the ventilation system in a segment of the passage so that it can rapidly reverse its flow. By shutting a pair of concealed hatches—hidden within the bulkheads of the passage—twenty metres of corridor become isolated. Once the systems activate, all atmosphere is rapidly removed from the passage, transforming it into a vacuum. Characters without void suits or respirators begin to suffocate (see page 267 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). Once sealed, the hatches are permanently shut. There is no locking or hinging mechanism accessible from within the corridor.

The Player Characters can either destroy the hatches or cut through them with breaching equipment. They can either be broken from range, per the damaging cover rules or they can be cut through with a lascutter. For these purposes, treat them as having 16 Armour Points.



Deactivating the trap requires that a character succeeds on a **Hard (-20)** Tech-Use Test. Should they succeed, the character spends fifteen minutes disabling the trigger mechanism from outside the trapped area. Should they fail, fifteen minutes are exhausted, without any progress. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the acting character accidentally triggers the trap.

### Trap 3: Collapsing Tunnel

Servitors have installed detonation charges within the structural elements surrounding a twenty-metre portion of the star fort's corridor. When a target group enters this region, the charges trigger, and the corridor becomes physically detached from the surrounding structural sections. For a few moments, the tunnel simply falls through a chasm, previously cleared by the servitors, at the Warpsmith's instruction. This continues until its momentum carries it through a massive hatch opened on the star fort's ventral surface. The corridor—and its occupants—is ejected from the star fort into the cold hell beyond. Moments later, the massive hatch shuts, leaving the trap's victims trapped beyond the star fort, moving away from the *Lycurgos* at a rate of more than fifty metres per second.

Soldiers caught near the edges of the trap may make a **Challenging (+0)** Acrobatics Test to dive free of the trap as the explosives trigger. Should they succeed, they avoid the trap's consequences. Those caught in the trap must devise some means to return to the star fort and attempt to re-enter it. Otherwise, they

are doomed to die when they run out of air or crash into Warzone Epsilon's atmosphere.

Due to the size of the chasm, soldiers left behind are not affected by the loss of atmosphere when the massive hatch opens to let the corridor out of the star fort. They certainly hear and feel the rush of air, but it is sufficiently dispersed that the region is not significantly impacted. Foot soldiers can easily pass through the area left behind by the trapped corridor using a grapple and line. Vehicles, however, have no easy means to cross. The company can either attempt to find an alternative route, devise a bridge, or wait for the trap to reset—without knowing for certain whether that is going to occur.

After fifteen minutes, new corridor bulkheads and deck plate descend from the corridor ceiling, effectively resetting the trap. Note that this replaced trap does not push any temporary bridges or lines out of the way as it moves into place. The reset trap, much like a deactivated trap, is completely stable until triggered. The structural elements eliminated by the detonation charges are fully capable of supporting the weight of any of the company's vehicles.

### ENEMY ENGINES

Warpsmith Arkturian has chosen to reserve his precious Daemon Engines for the final line of defence outside of the enginarium. To provide the massive creatures with adequate space to effectively oppose his enemies, a huge torus has been hollowed out surrounding the enginarium. While that facility still requires a massive amount of space—roughly 500 metres



in diameter—a huge corridor more than fifty metres wide and fifty metres tall now encircles it.

With that change, the central corridor is almost completely clear of any obstacles, the only cover available comes from the inner walls that surround the enginarium, and even those offer little due to the extended lines of site in the massive area. The only entrances into the ring come from the multiple levels of the trapped maze that surrounds it. There is a single entrance to the enginarium from this ring of destruction. To reach it, the characters must first overcome the forces that attempt to block access to the entrance. This presents the last significant barricade to access the Warpsmith's inner sanctum, but it remains an imposing threat.

Circumnavigating the corridor is a journey of more than 1500 metres. Because of this, the Player Characters' company does not need to overcome every single Daemon Engine active within the region. Further, some of these mechanical horrors can be reserved to join in the battle within the enginarium (see page 104). Game Masters can use their discretion in deciding just how far the characters need to travel. Keep in mind that the battle within the enginarium is not a trivial matter. The company has also likely suffered significant losses during their journey to this location. However, if the unit is of any significant size, it takes time just to cross the fifty metres of open ground between the outer and inner walls of the corridor. This is ample time for at least a small group of Daemon Engines to take note of the company's presence within their domain.

The Daemon Engines are the only functional opposition that dwell within the region, but they are not the only signs of activity. Hundreds of servitors and the machines and components with which they work are present within the corridor, offering a small smattering of additional cover. Held in the thrall of the Warpsmith, the servitors use the components that their fellows constantly deliver in an endless stream. Various mechanical devices are hurriedly disassembled, modified, and reassembled to form the mechanical cores of the Daemon Engines. Without the direct assistance of the Warpsmith, the servitors are incapable of completing the horrific terrors, but they can prepare them so that the Chaos Space Marine can complete their creation quickly, after he finishes his current ritual.

The curved corridor includes a broad spectrum of Daemon Engines. As they need not pass through it directly, the company need not battle all of them. However, they must overcome a few, and those few are certain to draw others into the fight. After all, the mere sounds and smell of combat are certain to draw the attention of the horrific machines that constantly crave battle and destruction. At a minimum, their conflict should include a wave each of Forgefiends (see page 142), Maulerfiends (see page 143), and Defilers (see page 141). Another wave consisting of a single Soul Grinder (see page 355 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook), or a Soul Grinder accompanied by a number of Defilers present the final obstacle as the unit approaches the entrance to the enginarium. The imposing array of terrors is distributed fairly evenly around the region. Unless the Player Characters and their company spend an excessive amount of time within the region, a single instance of each of these waves should be

adequate. If they choose to delay—possibly to manoeuvre a badly damaged vehicle—additional elements are certain to assault them.

There is no upper limit for the number of Daemon Engines that the Game Master can use during this scene. The Warpsmith did not create an infinite supply of mechanical terrors, but he did create enough to inflict substantial damage upon all of the enemy forces within the star fort. Since he has chosen to concentrate them as his last defensive barrier, it is reasonable to assume that there is more than enough to pose a significant threat to the Guardsmen.

The minimum number of Daemon Engines should be based upon the current status of the Player Characters and their company. If the company is near full strength, then the Forgefiend wave should include at least two specimens. If the company is mounted or armoured, Game Masters should consider increasing this to three. If the company has already suffered fifty percent or more losses, reduce this to one specimen for all types of companies. For a company near full strength, six Defilers constitute a reasonable wave, though this can be increased to eight for an armoured company. If the company has already suffered more than fifty percent losses, reduce this to three for all types. A healthy company must overcome a Soul Grinder accompanied by three Defilers. Conversely, if the unit has suffered serious losses, this can be reduced to as little as a single Soul Grinder.

## MANAGEABLE THREATS

By this point in the adventure, some groups may have already suffered serious losses. The traps and enemy opposition are hardly trivial, and could have left the attacking company almost crippled. If this is the case, the Game Master can choose to reduce the severity of the forces that oppose the Guardsmen. Instead of using Forgefiends and Defilers, it is acceptable to substitute the Newly-created version (see **Daemon Engines** on page 139 of the Appendix) of each of these Daemon Engines. In this case, the Warpsmith did not have the time to fully complete the creation of these hideous monstrosities before embarking upon his arcane ritual. For groups that lack a significant number of heavy weapons, particularly foot units, regiments that favour a heavy bolter as their heavy weapon of choice, or units that have already lost their vehicles, this could make the final encounters of this scene substantially more manageable.

Conversely, if the unit seems undaunted by the numbers of Daemon Engines, Game Masters are encouraged to up the ante. The most reasonable way to approach this is either to increase the number of waves of attackers, or to have additional enemies join the battle, prior to the fall of each wave. This turns the battle into an ongoing conflict, which should give it a more unrelenting feel. Such an approach is also much more relevant if the Guardsmen assume a static position, where the enemy could be drawn in than if the unit is actively charging towards their destination.



# THE ENGINARIUM

**B**y the time the Guardsmen have fought their way to the enginarium, their company has most likely suffered serious losses. As the remaining Daemon Engines continue to circle the corridor outside of its entrance, they are likely to rush towards whatever protection the enginarium might offer from the remaining mechanical horrors. With the mounting casualties, if they are to still have enough surviving squads to overcome the Warpsmith, they must be prepared to act swiftly. Depending upon the amount of time since the beginning of this act, his ritual could be nearing completion (see **Table 3–1: Warpsmith’s Timeline** on page 92). If they are to prevent its fulfilment they must act quickly. If they have disastrously taken too long, then they must enter the enginarium in the hopes of finding some means to undo the foul act that the Chaos Space Marine has wrought.

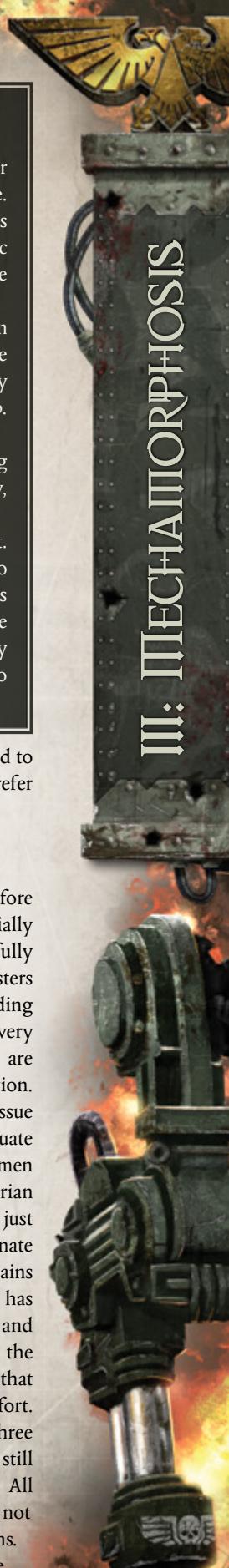
The entrance to the enginarium is free from any hindrances to passage. The single entrance is an enormous door more than ten metres in width, which that can recess more than twenty metres into the ceiling. A five-metre ramp slopes up a metre from the deck of the corridor to the slightly elevated lower deck level of the enginarium. A hatch is set within the larger enginarium door, designed for the passage of a single soldier. Opening the larger door requires activation from a signal located only within the gauntlet of the Warpsmith. Overriding this requires a character to take ten minutes and succeed at a **Hard (-20)** **Tech-Use Test** to open the massive door. Doing so, of course, alerts anyone inside, as the door is massive and moves loudly. The smaller hatch set within it is not locked, trapped, or further guarded. The Warpsmith is comfortable with the security measures he has already taken. He trusts that his agents should be adequate to repel any attack. Consequently, he sees no reason to impede his own passage in or out of the chamber with any further security. This is simply an act of convenience, for which the Guardsmen may be grateful. The larger door, however, is only needed when Daemon Engines, or large equipment, are brought into the enginarium.

Warpsmith Arkturian prefers that he has manual control over its use. If the Player Characters decide

that they need to destroy either of the doors, treat them as having 16 Armour Points.

Of course, an apparently unsecured hatch could leave the soldiers even more wary. Some might wish to take the time to extensively search it for traps, listen through the hatch for any signs of a Daemon Engine waiting to devour them, or other similar measures. The characters may act in any manner they see fit, but Game Masters must continue to monitor the time involved in taking these steps. The longer the company stands on the threshold, the more likely they are to encounter a further wave of Daemon Engines from the surrounding corridor. The horrific machines continue their patrol and become even more vigilant when they see the signs of a recent combat. Spending more than a few minutes outside of the door—such as the time necessary to open the larger door or to plant explosives—is essentially certain to draw another attack.





## TRANSFORMED STAR FORT

In some instances, the Player Characters may have been delayed en route to the enginarium. This might be due to poor dice rolls, a misunderstanding of the time constraints, or simply taking too long over preparations for the coming battle. If the journey took thirteen hours or more, they arrive too late to prevent the ritual. Instead, Warpsmith Arkturian has already completed it, and a being of raw rage and hate has moved to possess the star fort, transforming it into a horrific construct of destruction in the process. This has clear repercussions for the remainder of the adventure, as well as for the overall progress of the battle to control Warzone Epsilon.

The most immediate ramification is that the star fort abruptly becomes very much alive, and very much focused on the annihilation of all guardsmen dwelling within it. In earlier scenes, the star fort's machinery functioned against the Guardsmen, but only through the machinations of the Warpsmith and his servitors. Now, it need not trifle with any restrictions imposed by the laws of physical reality. Instead, it can freely twist its very nature using the power of the Warp. In essence, the entirety of the star fort's architecture becomes one vast weapon, which can rend the inhabitants at will.

The one key restriction for the ritual is that it only affected *Lycurgos* proper. Any vehicles—and of course the living inhabitants—were not transformed. If the Guardsmen could somehow hurry through its hallways to reach a landing bay, they might be able to escape aboard a shuttle.

If the Player Characters are determined, there remains one reasonable way to physically destroy the possessed star fort. The Daemon's spirit is still in the process of adapting to its new residence. With a facility the size of the star fort, coming to grips with all of its different components may take the new Daemon Engine days before it can intuitively monitor all of its systems and function fully effectively. At the Game Master's discretion, the Player Characters could potentially still infiltrate locations without the star fort realising their actions, as it might be distracted by some of its other systems. In this way, they could potentially gain control of the hyper-plasmatic energy conduction system, and undertake the Machine Prayer of Auto Annihilation. Of course, this would require the assistance of Enginseer Didactus.

Any loud noises—including opening the door, detonating explosives, or firing heavy weapons—made at the door are also certain to draw further investigation from the Daemon Engines and alert Warpsmith Arkturian to the activities. If the Warpsmith is focused upon his ritual, he must continue it, regardless of any outside actions. Any interruption is certain to draw the ire of the Ruinous Powers, a difficulty he cannot afford to face at this time. While he does have emergency measures in place, a simple loud noise is not enough to trigger those yet. If any portion of the unit remains outside, they must contend with the attention of the Daemon Engines that the noises drew in.

Notably, those who enter the enginarium need not be concerned about such actions at this time. The Warpsmith issued explicit orders to the mechanical horrors about entering his sanctum. Their standing orders are to not enter the enginarium, even in the pursuit of enemy soldiers. Instead, they are to permit the enemy to enter and not pursue. They are also not to fire any weapons into the enginarium. The Warpsmith considers the core of the station as an absolutely vital element. He cannot risk its fragile mechanical components suffering damage at the hands of his savage Daemon Engines. He did establish a contingency plan, but it is reserved for the direst circumstance.

## ENTERING THE SANCTUM

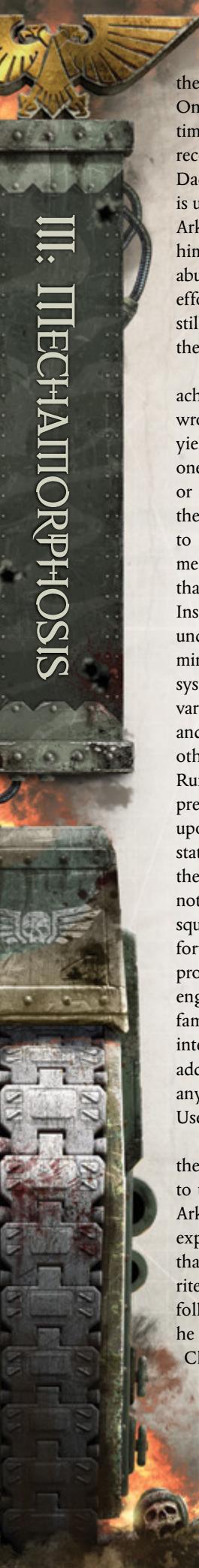
When the unit enters the enginarium, its appearance is entirely dictated by Warpsmith Arkturian's progress in his ritual. Characters that bypassed a trip to the docking arm, choosing instead to move directly towards the enginarium, could potentially have arrived even before the Chaos Space Marine had time to set all of his defences. Alternatively, characters that lagged more substantially could arrive as the

ritual nears its conclusion. In the event the characters failed to arrive before Warpsmith Arkturian completes his ritual, refer to **Transformed Star Fort** (see above).

## THE STAGES OF RITUAL

Characters that chose to assault the enginarium before conferring with regimental command could potentially reach the location even before the Chaos Space Marine fully established his defences. In this instance, Game Masters must substantially reduce the rings of defenders, including the Daemon Engines and the traps. Essentially, only a very few Daemon Engines are available, the traps and maze are incomplete, and the cultists have not moved into position. Without ample time to prepare his strategy and issue commands, even the army of available servitors are inadequate to the task of preparing the defences before the Guardsmen reach their destination. In this instance, Warpsmith Arkturian has not yet begun his ritual, so the enginarium looks just as it did while *Lycurgos* was fully under Severan Dominate authority. Enginseer Didactus (see page 131) still retains control of a significant portion of the enginarium, and has not yet fully succumbed to the Warpsmith's threats and violence. This presents the best possible opportunity for the Player Characters to overcome the forces of Chaos, so that the Imperium may once more recover control of the star fort.

If the Guardsmen reach the enginarium during the three to six hour time frame, then Warpsmith Arkturian is still coordinating the strategies for his servitors and cultists. All of the Daemon Engines have been created, but they are not necessarily functioning properly or in the correct locations. In this instance, the unit almost certainly avoided the encounter with the Heldrakes in the docking bay arm, for example. Game Masters likely had to reduce the number of cultist encounters substantially as well as



the severity and number of traps that the company faced. Once more, the enginarium is largely unchanged from the time the Severan Dominate controlled it. Enginseer Didactus recognises that change is coming rapidly—the number of Daemon Engines outside his door are a clear indicator—but he is uncertain how it may impact him and his work. Warpsmith Arkturian has certainly spoken with the Tech-Priest and left him thoroughly intimidated, but physical interrogations and abuse have not yet begun. In this case, with some concerted effort, the Player Characters and their unit could potentially still save the star fort, if they can manage to directly eliminate the Chaos Space Marine.

After his defences are in place, the Warpsmith must achieve the proper focus. Attempting the ritual with the wrong mind-set could doom the ritual to failure. It might yield contact with the completely wrong type of Daemon, one far too powerful for the Chaos Space Marine to control, or even one too weak to manage the full capabilities of the *Lycurgos*. Warpsmith Arkturian enters the enginarium to conduct these final preparations through a series of meditations and cleansing rituals. It is important to recognise that the Warpsmith's meditation is neither silent nor calming. Instead, he must focus his willpower, fury, and heretical understanding of machinery to achieve the proper frame of mind to bind such a powerful Daemon into the star fort's systems. Over the course of three hours, he must undertake a variety of heinous acts. These include rituals of self-sacrifice and self-immolation, but also the sacrifice and torment of other humans and machines before an altar dedicated to the Ruinous Powers. To those unfamiliar with his practices, the preparations make it seem as if the Warpsmith has embarked upon a carnival of bloodlust and destruction. In his focused state, he is virtually oblivious to any outside intrusions upon the enginarium. Observers who study the process can also note that his destruction is contained within a three metre square area, and never is directed towards any of the star fort's structural elements. Note that it is only during this process that Warpsmith Arkturian gains full control over the enginarium's systems. Prior to his meditative rite, characters familiar with the technology of the Adeptus Mechanicus can interface with any of the location's control panels without additional complication. After he begins these preparations, any efforts to use those systems suffer a -20 penalty to Tech-Use Tests, due to his influence.

Once the Warpsmith has completed his preparations for the ritual, he begins to formally beseech the entity necessary to transform the star fort into a Daemon Engine. Warpsmith Arkturian created this as a unique ritual, based upon his existing expertise in creating lesser Daemon Engines. He is confident that it should work properly, but it is not a well-established rite. Consequently, it requires all of his focus. Rather than following a discretely scripted series of steps and invocations, he must constantly adapt it to better fit the situation. The Chaos Space Marine recognises that the biggest challenge is to find an appropriate Warp entity. The Daemon must be potent enough to control the facility, but he must still be able to bend the Daemon to his will by constraining it to the physical structure of the star fort. In order to attain this goal, the Warpsmith

must offer appropriate sacrifices, so that he can draw the attention of the correct Daemonic beings. This begins with transforming some of the devices in the enginarium, so that he might open a portal to the Warp. Once constructed, this blasphemous barrier in the fabric of reality illuminates the entire room with a flickering light that can sunder the souls of any who dare to stare into it. The Warpsmith's ritual focuses upon sending machine spirits, sacred examples of archeotech, and even unfettered energy into the Warp. It is his belief that he can use these offerings to draw the correct being out of the Empyrean. However, as the process continues, the Chaos Space Marine must fend off Daemons that are incapable of fulfilling his needs. From the perspective of the uninitiated, those who dare to look at him in through the horrific light emanating from the Warp can see that he is in a constant physical and mental conflict as a key portion of his rite.

## PHYSICAL LAYOUT

The enginarium is a circular structure over five hundred metres in diameter. Only the outer ring areas are accessible, as the entire facility is constructed around the enormous hyperplasmatic energy conduction system that powers the entire star fort. Throughout the enginarium, the system is more than 300 metres in diameter. This leaves the a distance between the outer wall of the area and the inner wall created by the plasma core which is nearly 100 metres wide. Magnetically shielded viewports permit any who walk through the decks to see the plasma that burns unceasingly within the engine. These same windows shed a fiery blue-white light upon the entirety of the deck that complements the untold millions of flashing status lights on all of the enginarium's machinery. It constantly emits a roaring sound, which varies in pitch and tone, as the plasma is used to keep the star fort operational.

The plasma energy conduction system extends vertically for well over a kilometre, with its ends lost into distant sections of *Lycurgos*'s central core. Not all of it is directly accessible from the enginarium. Instead, this facility is designed to access the sections that are most likely to need regular maintenance. It is also capable of informing any Tech-Priest on duty of issues that might arise in the more distant systems.

The enginarium roughly occupies a 100 metre vertical section of the station. Approximately twenty metres of this are below the level where the unit entered the facility. The remainder extends upwards, continuing to surround the energy system. Numerous decks and catwalks form dozens of different levels to the facility. Each catwalk is one metre in width, but has no railing on either side. Normally, the adherents of the Machine Cult and the servitors who work within the enginarium have feet modified to clamp into the deck surfaces. Guardsmen who lack these modifications must take care to not fall from one deck to another, which could be far below. Any movement at a speed faster than a character's Agility Bonus requires a **Challenging (+0) Acrobatics Test**. Should they fail, the character must drop prone to the deck to avoid falling. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the character falls over the edge of an unstable deck, and suffers falling Damage when hitting the next deck below. Game Masters must use their own discretion in deciding just how far the character falls.

All of the decks in the area are built of slotted plastel. The same material is used to construct the various catwalks and stairs that occupy the region. All of the decks and catwalks are designed to be mobile structures, which can be easily moved aside to access the vast array of cables, conduits, and coolant pipes that fill so much of the structure. They lock into place through a combination of mechanical and gravitic links, permitting them to be arranged in a vast array of different methods. To the uninitiated, there is no apparent organisation system in place to these various systems. Rather, it seems that the decks are arrayed in a haphazard manner, with many physically isolated from others. Control panels are located near many of these decks, but others are near viewports or even simple access sockets. This apparent disorganisation is a combination of the different work patterns of Enginseer Didactus and Warpsmith Arkturian. The facility currently bears the hallmark of two different organisational patterns, further complicated by the unholy preparations that the Warpsmith recently completed.

The enginarium's system design requires the constant efforts of more than a dozen adepts of the Machine Cult working in conjunction with thousands of servitors. Sadly, *Lycurgos* has not had that degree of support since the time of its arrival in Warzone Epsilon. Enginseer Didactus struggled to keep up with the issues to the best of his abilities for the recent centuries. In spite of his best efforts, there is far more maintenance required than he could ever hope to complete. The recent efforts of the Warpsmith, in preparation for his ritual, have only compounded this issue. Tens of thousands of warning lights flash cautionary yellow and red to any who can comprehend their messages.

The combination of unstable platforms, obstructed lines of site, and uncomfortable lighting can certainly leave the characters seriously confused as to their objective. The only other living beings within the facility are Warpsmith Arkturian and Enginseer Didactus. Just finding these two individuals is a time-consuming process, considering the amount of physical space involved and the discomfiting physical conditions inherent in the facility. The Player Characters must devise some means for their unit to quietly scout out the facility, ideally without alerting the enemy to their presence. This requires a remarkable degree of coordination on the part of the commanders as well as a fierce loyalty from the soldiers carrying out those orders in the face of unknown dangers.

## FINDING THE TARGETS

Unless the unit has reached the enginarium at a time when Warpsmith Arkturian is dealing with responsibilities elsewhere, their first step must be to find the location of their foe. Intuitively, this should be easy. He is not actually making any effort to conceal his location and the ritual is anything but subtle. However, the facility is a place of ever-present motion from automated machines and servitors, cacophony from roaring furnaces and venting hydraulics, and searing flashes of plasma-flame and sparking cables. Further, most of the open deck areas are only wide enough for soldiers to proceed single file. Quickly finding the Chaos Space Marine's location requires the unit to split up and search for him throughout the many levels of the massive area.

## VEHICLES IN THE ENGINARIUM

As presented, the enginarium is an incredibly cramped area. This sense of claustrophobia adds to the overall horror of the scene. Without destroying large portions of the enginarium's surface, there is simply no good way to fit vehicles—even Sentinels—into this environment. For regiments that incorporate a significant number of vehicles, this is hardly a good approach. The characters would be entering the conflict unable to use their primary resource, and possibly even abandoning them outside of the entrance—leaving them in the company of the Daemon Engines in the outer corridor.

The best way to alleviate this issue is to adjust the overall set-up of the enginarium. Instead of a constant series of cramped areas, the facility must have some larger open areas and passages. These likely exist so that heavier equipment could be brought into the enginarium in the event of major repairs. Each of these open deck areas could be large enough to park four heavy tanks. The passages between the decks, however, are only broad enough for vehicles to travel single file. Anti-gravitic plates built into the flooring of these passages are strong enough to support any Imperial Guard vehicles in place, or even to raise and lower the separate flooring components to reach the other levels and catwalks of the enginarium.

In spite of this change, it is recommended that the Game Master leave the vast areas of cramped passages intact. If the unit hopes to quickly search through these spaces, they must dismount at least a portion of the company from their vehicles. This is intended to leave the Player Characters feeling vulnerable in the face of unknown dangers.

### Scanners

The most likely first approach is to draw an auspex or make use of a nearby vehicle's scanners. Either of these instruments would normally be capable of quickly discerning any signs of organic life within the area. However, the power flow of the massive plasma core and its magnetic shielding is intensely disruptive to any scanning devices. They simply are not capable of reliably searching the area. In fact, the devices cannot even pick up signs of life from nearby Guardsmen. If anyone chooses to verify that the devices are working properly, they resume function as soon as the characters exit the enginarium, though they remain incapable of scanning its interior, even from outside of the facility. Shielding within its walls—intended to protect the hyper-plasmatic energy conduction system—prevents the devices from penetrating into the facility.

### Clearing an Area

Some groups of players could decide that a swathe of destruction is the most efficient approach due to their time constraints. Following this tactic, they can clear a large enough area to improve their lines of sight as well as permitting the company to set up heavy weapons teams. Treat each wall panel as having 8 Armour Points; they are not designed to function as cover or to resist a serious assault. Surprisingly, such destruction is unlikely to have immediate effects upon the star fort. *Lycurgos*' systems are massively redundant, and many of the cables and conduits are simply associated with monitoring systems. When the star fort is brought back online, any damage would need to be repaired, but that is not a problem for the Guardsmen.

Destruction does, however, yield several potential complications. The first is the issue of electrical current that flows through the associated cables. If the characters are destroying the wiring and conduit panels with melee weapons, then they risk electrocution. Anyone who strikes at one is exposed to a burst of energy that inflicts 1d10+2 Energy Damage with the Shocking quality. Ranged weapons are a safer approach from this perspective.

An additional issue is that the destruction also unleashes a range of fluids and gases into the enginarium. Many of the smaller pipes divert the cooling fluid from the plasma system for further analysis. Others provide fluids to the various machine spirits that are integrated into the enginarium. When these pipes are destroyed, their contents vent into the area. At the Game Master's discretion, any pipe can be filled with liquids that are corrosive or volatile. Alternatively, they might simply spew forth a rapidly growing cloud of opaque vapour that further obscures all lines of sight. Liquids that spread out from the now severed pipe add a variety of complications. Corrosive materials could injure characters, vehicles, or even the deck plating. Volatile substances trigger fires when they ignite from weapons fire. Any fire would add additional smoke, further obscuring lines of sight, as well as making breathing difficult for anyone not wearing a respirator.

Note that few weapons are capable of penetrating the shielding

of the plasma core. Lasgun fire has no effect upon its thick shielding. However, a concentrated effort from heavier weapons can damage the core, causing it to spew high-energy plasma into the enginarium—and eventually the remainder of the star fort. An incident of this magnitude is certain to destroy *Lycurgos* and everything that dwells within it. This is hardly a fitting end to the adventure, so it only happens at Game Master discretion. If the Player Characters become extremely destructive and thoughtlessly fire heavy weapons or ordnance within the enginarium, then it is reasonable to penetrate the plasma shielding and unleash its fury upon the station. Otherwise, it is best to assume that the core maintains its structural integrity.

### The Enginseer

Finding Enginseer Didactus (see page 131) is never difficult, though interacting with him can be. Prior to the point where Warpsmith Arkturian begins formal preparations for his ritual, the Tech-Priest moves throughout the enginarium. At this point, he is firmly focused on continuing his basic tasks to maintain the star fort's power systems. The actions of the Warpsmith are anathema, but all attempts he has made to stop the Chaos Space Marine have been met with utter failure. Didactus has decided, in light of this, that his best course of action is to maintain the systems, as is his duty, in the hopes that an opportunity to take more direct action will present itself.





## DAEMON ENGINES IN THE ENGINARIUM

As vehicles can scarcely fit into the confines of the enginarium, it initially seems impossible to imagine how any of the Daemon Engines might fit. However, their physical makeup is very different from that of an Imperial tank or transport. The Defilers and Soul Grinders are capable of extending their legs so that they can easily step over the walls that divide the numerous cramped corridors of the facility. Some can even use their limbs to grasp the outer and inner walls of the space, enabling them to hastily climb to higher levels as necessary.

In addition to manoeuvrability concerns, there is another issue for the Daemon Engines. These Warp-cursed machines take deliberate care to never fire their battle cannons or mawcannons in any direction that might inflict serious damage upon the star fort's plasma systems. These massive weapons are potent enough that it is possible for them to inadvertently penetrate its shielding, and unleash a flow of plasma into the enginarium and beyond. To minimise the chances of this happening, the Warpsmith orders them to only fire those weapons when they are facing towards one of the enginarium's outer walls. The Daemon Engines consider this a key part of their orders, and follow it to the best of their abilities. For the Player Characters to recognise this issue, they must succeed at a **Difficult (-10) Battlefield Awareness Test**.

After the Warpsmith completes his defensive planning and organisation, he enters the enginarium and immediately overpowers the Tech-Priest. As part of the preparations to begin the ritual, Arkturian torments Didactus mercilessly. He asks him questions throughout the process, but the Chaos Space Marine is not focused upon gaining information. He simply needs to commit acts of merciless violence as a portion of his ritual preparations. The heavily modified Tech-Priest makes an ideal candidate, as his structured mind and body are anathema to the Warp entities that the ritual calls upon. If the Player Characters rescue him at this point, they have his sincere gratitude, as the servant of the Omnissiah firmly believed that both he and his precious enginarium were fated for utter annihilation at an altar of the Ruinous Powers. To interact with the Tech-Priest, the Guardsmen must first overcome Warpsmith Arkturian in physical conflict.

Just before he begins the ritual, the Warpsmith chains the badly injured Enginseer to a deck plate within his line of sight. By this point, the Tech-Priest is in agony and his spirit is broken. The Chaos Space Marine shattered the Enginseer's cybernetic limbs and severed his mechadendrites. He becomes functionally incapable of even attempting to interact with the physical world. Due to his current imprisonment, all he can do is watch helplessly as Warpsmith Arkturian undertakes the ritual. While he still hopes to stop Arkturian from destroying his life's work, he has almost completely given up hope. He longs for the release of death, and he hopes that it might come before a warp entity can consume *Lycurgos*. If the Player Characters attempt to assist the Tech-Priest at this point, he initially believes that their presence is an illusion. Only after they can convince him that they truly exist—requiring success on an **Challenging (+0) Charm Test**, or other relevant Skill Test—does he become willing to cooperate with them.

### The Warpsmith

If the Guardsmen reach the enginarium before the Warpsmith begins his ritual preparations, then he is not even present at the location. In this instance, they can work with the Enginseer to secure and defend the facility prior to his arrival. The Player Characters might choose to set traps, install defensive systems, or simply prepare a full defensive structure against the hordes of Daemon Engines that he is certain to bring against the facility if he becomes aware of their presence. This approach could lead to a very different scene, as the Warpsmith actively fights against the unit, instead of them trying to eliminate him and his ritual in progress.

If the unit arrives as he is undertaking his unusual meditative rites, they have the potential to directly confront him. This is the situation in which the Warpsmith is most vulnerable. Accompanied by Enginseer Didactus, the Chaos Space Marine stands upon a catwalk roughly fifteen metres above the entrance level. His goal is to attain the proper mind set to summon the Daemon that could possess *Lycurgos*. He is incredibly focused upon his efforts, but he is not incredibly oblivious to his surroundings. If the Guardsmen are attempting to be stealthy, the Warpsmith suffers a -20 to any Awareness Tests to discover them. Beyond that, he only directly ceases his preparations in order to stop them if he believes they pose a real threat to his ritual. Otherwise, he directs four Defilers and a Soul Grinder (see page 355 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) to deal with them. As the guardsmen attempt to dispatch these foes, the Warpsmith activates a Best Quality, vehicle-scale power field around himself and the area of the ritual. He then immediately begins the process of summoning a Daemon to possess the star fort.

## Machine Prayer of Auto-Annihilation

//Raise the Altar of Access//

*It is by the will of the Omnissiah that the plasma-fires burn  
It is by the plasma-fires that the station acquires operation  
It is by the station's operation that the Omnissiah shows his might*

//Uncover the rune of warning//

*That the rune has spoken its injunction, this is its purpose  
That the rune has been struck, this is its fate  
That the rune recedes, this is its sign*

//Behold the klaxons, for they intone the Litany of Override//

//Kneel before the Veil of Polarization//

*The supplicant shall entreat the Machine  
The Machine shall convene the spirits  
The spirits shall part the veil*

//Behold the klaxons, their litany becomes dirge//

//Rise and bear witness to the Shrine of Regulation//

*With a gesture, the shrine is awakened  
With a word, the shrine is disabled  
With a gesture and a word the station is consumed*

//Behold the klaxons, their dirge becomes silence//

//Lo, the fury of the Omnissiah is terrible//

Prior to undertaking his ritual, Warpsmith Arkturian activates the Best Quality, vehicle scale power field about himself and his area of focus. Then he begins to focus exclusively upon the task at hand. Within a few moments of beginning the ritual, he opens a portal to the Warp, through which he hopes to summon an appropriate Daemon. Any who directly look at the portal must immediately make a **Fear (3) Horrifying (-20)** Test. The portal remains open until three hours have passed, at which time the ritual is completed. As he undertakes the ritual, Warpsmith Arkturian becomes intently focused upon it, almost shutting out anything that happens beyond the boundaries of the power field. He suffers a -40 penalty to any Awareness Tests to notice actions outside, unless he is directly attacked. If he is attacked, he summons the Daemon Engines as noted above. Otherwise, he takes no direct actions against the Imperial Guardsmen. If they manage to slay Warpsmith Arkturian as he conducts the ritual, then the Warp portal remains open until someone closes it. This requires success on a **Very Hard (-30)** **Psyniscience Test**. Should they fail, the character must roll on the Perils of the Warp table (see page 228 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). If the portal is left open, entities from beyond its boundaries attempt to pass through it. Every Round roll 1d10. On a roll of ten a Bloodletter (see page 354 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook) passes through the portal. This continues until the portal is shut. At Game Master discretion, more powerful Daemons could begin to appear once a few Bloodletters have successfully passed through the portal.

## HALTING THE TRANSITION

The easiest way to stop the ritual is to slay Warpsmith Arkturian. However, many Player Characters could understandably fear that such an action might do little to stop the process. In fact, they are correct in that the Warp portal does remain open and could spell another kind of doom for the star fort if it is not closed soon. While some might suspect that his death could simply make the situation worse, this fear is largely unfounded.

If the Warp portal spirals out of control—or if the Guardsmen arrive too late to stop the ritual—then they must be prepared to take more extreme action. This most likely only occurs with the assistance of Enginseer Didactus. The badly wounded Tech-Priest is horrified at the atrocities that the Chaos Space Marine committed against his precious star fort. He seeks vengeance for those crimes, but he also seeks to permanently erase all trace of the heretic's actions. He offers one permanent solution—the **Machine Prayer of Auto-Annihilation** (see the facing page).

The Tech-Priest's vocal implant crackles; bursts of static emerge from it at the same time as electricity arcs from the Tech-Priests damaged cybernetics. Its volume and pitch oscillate uncontrollably. Finally, he gestures with his arm towards a nearby control panel, and speaks. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

*"The foul Arkturian has corrupted my beloved past the point of all hope. The only chance to stop him now is to destroy the Lycurgos star fort. You must act quickly, before the plasma systems are fully contaminated by the foul spirits of the Warp. In that drawer is a sacred scroll. It directs one to enter the codes necessary for the final sacred rite. The Machine Prayer of Auto-Annihilation is reserved for when all hope is lost. By executing it, the machine spirit that occupies the hyper-plasmatic energy conduction system is directed to shut down. Without its protection, the plasma can flow freely through the entire star fort, destroying the systems as it goes. We must execute this rite. If we hurry, perhaps some of your regiment can escape before we must activate the final stages."*

Enginseer Didactus answers any questions they might have before they can undertake the rite. He explains that once it is completed, the act causes an irreversible process to begin. Shutting down the thermomagnetic couplings deep within the plasma core requires a series of stages. Multiple redundant security systems must be overridden, a feat that requires time even for a sophisticated machine spirit to complete. The process is intended to take exactly thirty minutes from the time of activation until the final magnetic seals are released.

The Tech-Priest warns the Player Characters that Warpsmith Arkturian—if he yet lives—is almost certain to recognise that the process is begun. Similarly, if a spirit now possesses the star fort, then it is also very likely to want to stop the process. The plasma core's sacred unguents and protective rites are extremely resistant to Warp contamination, but even these can be overcome given time and effort. The unit must be prepared to protect the facility as the rite is undertaken. Only when it is fully completed can they begin their attempt to escape the star fort.

## UNDERTAKING THE RITE

With Enginseer Didactus' oversight, the Machine Prayer of Auto Annihilation is disturbingly easy to complete. Between the directions presented in the drawer—and on the player hand-out—and his close direction, the acting character simply needs to succeed at a **Simple (+40)** **Tech-Use Test** to complete the rite. Should they fail, the character may reattempt without penalty. Each attempt takes ten minutes to complete.

Initiating the rite, however, does trigger warning klaxons that are broadcast throughout the entirety of *Lycurgos*. Everyone, regardless of allegiance, is alerted to the fact that the star fort has irreversibly begun the process of auto-annihilation. All are recommended to travel to a minimum safe distance of 2000 kilometres within the next thirty minutes.

This provokes a variety of responses within the different factions. Imperial Guardsmen and Severan Dominate soldiers have a common reaction. They move towards the nearest flight decks and emergency life pods. Those in direct contact with their commanders, particularly regimental command, begin to evacuate in an orderly fashion. Soldiers who are out of contact take whatever means is most efficacious to preserve their own lives.

The Chaos devotees have a mixed reaction. A few



### III: MECHANOPHOBIA

attempt to denounce their recent change of allegiance, and rush blindly towards any available means to escape *Lycurgos*. Others commit acts of self-immolation, hoping to find a route to please their dark lords even in death. The remainder move to try to stop any Imperial Guard or secessionist forces from escaping. These present the largest obstacle, as they are content to establish holding actions near any escape craft. The maniacs recognise that if they are to die on the star fort, they could take at least as many guardsmen as possible with them.

The Daemon Engines—possibly including the star fort—have no interest in self-preservation. Their entire focus is now upon wanton destruction of any humans whose souls have not been pledged to the Ruinous Powers. They wilfully engage overwhelming odds and accept their own destruction if it means slaying their enemies in the process. A few of these blasphemous machines—at least two Forgefiends and four Defilers—remain near the enginarium. Their goal is to exact their vengeance upon those who committed the rite of Auto Annihilation. All others exact their fury upon any humans they can find.

If Warpsmith Arkturian somehow still lives, then he enters a psychotic state as a reaction to seeing his plan for dominance utterly shattered. He can do little but laugh maniacally at everything. He makes no further effort to resist the Imperial Guardsmen, even if it means succumbing to capture. If they attempt to kill him at this point—he does seem helpless—the Chaos Space Marine attempts to flee, instructing the bulkheads and support structures of the star fort to give him passage and block the passage of the Guardsmen. If he is bound, this may not be an adequate escape plan. However, he is simply too incoherent and delusional to effectively engage his opponents in combat at this point.

## NOTABLE CHARACTERS

The following NPCs play important roles as the characters enter the enginarium and attempt to stop the Warpsmith's plan.

### ENGINSEER DIDACTUS

For centuries, the Tech-Priest has worked slavishly to maintain the systems that power *Lycurgos*. He is fiercely devoted to the star fort. He is not, however, a capable combatant. Direct conflict with the Warpsmith terrifies him. The torture he endures at the hands of the Chaos Space Marine quickly shattered his body. All that remains is his deep-seated feelings towards *Lycurgos*. More than anything, he wishes to save the star fort. If that proves impossible, then he wants to ensure that no one can be permitted to use it for purposes that would be blasphemous to the Omnissiah.

### WARPSMITH ARKTURIAN

Focused upon his dark ritual, the Chaos Space Marine believes that his victory over humanity is now assured. He is confident in his defences and in his own specialised understanding of Daemon Engines. It is his firm belief—even in the event that his ritual is halted—that he can become a major power within the Spinward Front. He is exhilarated as his moment of triumph beckons. This is the reason that he endured imprisonment by the Severan Dominate. No amount of evidence can persuade him that his plan might fail. Nor can anything dissuade him from undertaking the ritual that he has painstakingly prepared. He is utterly ruled by his madness and his devotion to the Ruinous Powers.





# ESCAPE

*"It is not your place to decide the price of your life. That is the privilege of your commanding officer, given him by the Emperor himself. Know, however, that the lives of the enemies you face are worth less than the ammunition you expend to slay them."*

—Commissar Horace Barrgraves

Many of the units that had moved to support the Player Characters' company during their advance were destroyed in the process. The ones who have survived have all fled, either at the directive of regimental command or on their own initiative. Consequently, when the company begins its trek back towards the docking area—or any other location—they must do so without that support. This scene presents several different options for escape, considering a few of the possible different scenarios.

The most dramatic option is if the Guardsmen have already begun a process that can only end with the complete annihilation of *Lycurgos*. In this case, the soldiers have thirty minutes to flee the star fort. Simply reaching the enginarium from the docking arm required hours of travel. Reversing that entire trip in the allocated time is almost certainly impossible. This requires the unit to find an alternative means of escape if they hope to survive.

Alternatively, Warpsmith Arkturian might have triumphed. In this case, the Guardsmen might have accepted their failure, and simply seek to get out alive. Under this situation, the entire star fort is actively attempting to destroy them. If the company is to have any chance to survive, they must battle their way to a flight deck or bank of life pods. Only there can they launch clear of the star fort, before it's Daemonic essence can devour their souls. While the unit is not necessarily constrained by a fixed deadline, they must recognise that the Daemon is gaining an ever-increasing awareness of the star fort's capabilities. As time passes, it becomes more and more capable of destroying them.

The least dramatic, but certainly most favourable option is if the company somehow eliminated Warpsmith Arkturian before he could complete his unholy ritual. In this instance, the Player Characters simply need to remain within the enginarium, so that it can be stably secured by reinforcements. The Daemon Engines and cultists yet survive within the star fort. However, their leadership has been overcome. Without the Warpsmith's oversight, these blasphemers lose their overall focus. The Guardsmen are able to isolate and eliminate the threat gradually, now that they need not be as concerned about the time available to complete their assignment.

Key to this escape—under any of these circumstances—is that the vox network once more becomes functional. If Warpsmith Arkturian was defeated, it became operational once more when the Guardsmen overcame him. If *Lycurgos* became a Daemon Engine, then the systems which had been jamming the transmissions was destroyed in the process. The Guardsmen have no reason to believe that their transmissions are secure—and they almost certainly are not—but they can at least communicate with other

## FLYING THROUGH THE STAR FORT

If the unit developed a strong working relationship with Captain Horatio (see page 129), he might be willing to bring a small flight of transport craft to their aid. As an accomplished pilot, he can potentially bring the craft even through the passages of the star fort, though this is hardly a trivial manner. The notion is explored more fully in **Fleeing the Daemon** (see page 115). However, it remains a possibility for this section as well. If the Player Characters attempt this approach, refer to that section for more information.

Imperial organisations.

This section presents several different approaches for escaping the star fort. The strategy that the Guardsmen pursue is almost certainly based upon the outcome of the prior scene. If the station is set to explode in minutes, then this section might be a frantic dash, where the unit's lives depend upon carefully succeeding at every action. If the Guardsmen successfully overcame the Warpsmith with little long-term fallout, then this section could be a brief lead-in to the adventure's conclusion. In this instance, the unit simply needs to coordinate with regimental command so that Imperial forces can work together to eliminate the remaining taint of Chaos within the star fort. The subsections that follow address each of these different possibilities, though most groups are only likely to need one of them.

The Game Master must consider the possibility that his group could devise a strategy that is not consistent with any of the ones presented in this section. When this occurs, he must consider the information presented here as a framework to adjust the appropriate difficulties based upon their selected approach. Other successful strategies are certainly possible, but they are unlikely to be significantly easier to complete than the ones described in this section.

## THE FRANTIC DASH

With thirty minutes to escape, the Guardsmen cannot afford to waste any time, trying to flee from the enginarium to any possible means of escape. The facility is located at the very centre portion of the star fort's central core. Initially, they are as far from *Lycurgos*'s exterior surface as it is possible to be. A direct route could be traversed in the available time, but with the Warpsmith's modifications to the star fort, no such routes remain. Further, there are dozens of Daemon Engines and thousands of crazed Chaos cultists in the space in between. Initially, the opposition could make the situation seem utterly hopeless, leaving the Guardsmen certain that there remains no possibility for survival.

Some groups may have shown sufficient foresight to at least discuss the situation with Engineer Didactus prior to executing the Machine Prayer of Auto Annihilation. While the Tech-Priest has little concern for his own life at this stage, he can at least understand why the company could be concerned for their own survival. He can offer them two potential solutions, though he is less than

confident that either is still functional. The first possibility is a teleportarium integrated into the enginarium. It is located within the facility at its very lowest level. Throughout the centuries that Enginseer Didactus has dwelt upon *Lycurgos*, it has never been used or even tested. It has remained upon his itinerary of projects throughout that time; sadly, he can offer no further advice concerning its use. He is willing to help them try to test it and execute any necessary repairs.

If they investigate the teleportarium, they discover a mix of good and bad news. The platform is large enough to accommodate all of the surviving Guardsmen in a single trip, though not their vehicles, and it appears to be in working order. Unfortunately, the techno-savants responsible for the operation of the teleportarium have perished in the recent chaos. Such a device is ancient beyond understanding and without having been indoctrinated into the specific rites of activation for the venerable machine, even a learned Tech-Priest would be hard pressed to make sense of its workings.

A Player Character must succeed at a **Very Hard (-30)** **Forbidden Lore (Archeotech)** or a **Hellish (-60)** **Tech-Use Test** to activate the teleportarium. If Enginseer Didactus is present he provides the Player Character making the Test with a +20 bonus to the Test as he provides his insights and personally intercedes with the machine spirits with whom he is so familiar. Making this test requires fifteen minutes of time. Should they succeed, the device activates and teleports the unit to a location of their choice anywhere within *Lycurgos*. If the Player Character achieves three or more Degrees of Success on the Test, they are confident that the teleportarium could be used to either reach the surface of Warzone Epsilon or directly to a teleportarium aboard one of the Imperial Navy vessels elsewhere in the system. Should the Player Character fail this Test, they have spent fifteen minutes, but are unable to activate the teleportarium. A second attempt can be made, but the Player Character suffers a -10 penalty to the Test.

Enginseer Didactus does offer one alternative solution to the teleportarium. This is a secondary maintenance shaft, which the unit might be able to use, though he is uncertain about its overall viability. The shaft extends along the length of the plasma core, through the ventral section of the star fort. It terminates at the lowest projection of the star fort's ventral surface. Didactus does not believe that there are any life pods near that location, but it could be possible to coordinate with an attack craft launched from another location. In principle, a docking tube could be extended from a nearby airlock, permitting the unit to escape. He is uncertain if the tube survived the Warpsmith's modifications to the star fort. He also recognises that coordinating a vessel to rescue them at this time certainly poses a significant complication when more than a regiment of soldiers are attempting to simultaneously flee *Lycurgos*.

When the unit investigates the maintenance shaft, they can quickly recognise that it remains intact. The Warpsmith was reluctant to damage the plasma core, so he directed his servitors to avoid it and the star fort's components that were closest to it. The shaft extends for nearly a kilometre vertically through the star fort, terminating at its lowermost ventral point. There are two significant issues, however, in fitting a company

of soldiers through the shaft in the available time. The first is that the maintenance shaft has a single very lengthy ladder—the soldiers must descend the entire distance climbing single file. There are maglev coils implanted in the shaft's walls, designed to complement cybernetic systems implanted in a Tech-Priest's body. These are of little use to an unenhanced Guardsman.

For a single soldier to rapidly descend this distance using the ladder requires more than the thirty minutes available. The only way for the entire company to safely descend the shaft in time is to have them all rappel down, using more than a full kilometre's worth of climbing line. Coordinating this many soldiers to undertake such a descent is extraordinarily difficult, as many soldiers must be dropping through the shaft simultaneously. If even a single soldier pauses at any point, a serious collision could occur, not only injuring the soldiers involved, but also potentially fatally delaying the escape. In order for the company to rappel down the shaft without significant incident, a character must succeed at a **Hard (-20)** **Command Test**. Should they fail, ten percent of the remaining company is lost due to injuries incurred during the escape per Degree of Failure. Should they succeed, the company completes their descent with ten minutes remaining prior to the detonation. Every additional Degree of Success decreases the total time required by one minute.

Even after the unit has reached the bottom of the shaft, the challenges have not been completely resolved. The company must still board a craft and escape the star fort before its plasma systems detonate. Hopefully, the characters have already coordinated with such a vessel, as it does take ten minutes for a craft to reach the nearest airlock, even if travelling from one of the flight decks aboard *Lycurgos*. Persuading a pilot to make this run requires a **Challenging (+0)** **Command Test**. If the Player Characters have already established a working relationship with one or more Imperial Navy pilots, the difficulty can be modified based upon that relationship. Should they succeed, a transport shuttle awaits them when they reach the airlock. Boarding it and escaping still requires a few minutes, based simply upon the number in the company. However, enough time should be available to permit their escape. Should they fail, the vessel waits at the wrong airlock. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the pilot never arrives.

Units that ignore both of these possibilities are unlikely to successfully escape the star fort before its detonation. Just the challenge of rushing through the trapped maze requires more than their available time to complete. Desperate characters might attempt to escape via a Collapsing Tunnel trap (see page 102). Even that strategy has its limitations. The trap does not launch them far enough from the star fort to completely escape the blast radius of the plasma core explosion. It also leaves them largely unprotected in the cold depths of space, with no means of propulsion.

## FLEEING THE DAEMON

If *Lycurgos* is transformed into a Daemon Engine, the characters can still have a chance to escape its clutches. This is hardly a trivial manner, as the facility is focused on annihilating all life within it. However, the entity requires some time to fully come to grips with an understanding of its new form. During this time, the unit need only battle against the Daemon's automatic responses, rather than battling a facility that makes a concerted effort to destroy them.

Unlike the circumstance where the plasma core is set to explode, the time in this situation is more lenient. Game Masters must use their own discretion to decide just how much time the Daemon requires mastering its new form. This is certain to at least take several hours, and could reasonably require several days. After all, there are no known instances of such a possession ever having occurred previously. The Warpsmith is almost certain to have made a few miscalculations in preparing the rite. It is reasonable to assume that this could provide the star fort's inhabitants with enough time to make an escape before the Daemon could completely annihilate them.

However, the journey through the facility should not be easy, by any stretch of the imagination. One possible approach is for the unit to simply travel through the corridors, trying to find or create a course that could reunite them with other surviving members of the regiment. The route is certain to change constantly, as the Warp continues to corrupt the star fort's interior. Making sense of this new route requires success on a **Hard (-20) Navigate (Surface)** Test. Failure simply directs the unit in circles. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the company suffers an encounter with a significant group of Daemon Engines, due to a wrong turn. As they travel, some passages simply vanish without explanation. Others transform into organic structures, which clench and relax, as if they were intestines. The clenching force need not affect the entire corridor; instead soldiers and vehicles would need to quickly react to avoid the collapsing tunnels. Resolve this with **Difficult (-10) Acrobatics** Tests. Those who fail would suffer  $1d10+4$  Impact Damage.

An alternative approach to overcoming the corrupted star fort could be a direct use of force. Characters equipped with a range of heavy weapons or explosives might simply attempt to destroy walls, proceeding along the most direct course towards a particular landmark. While this is certainly workable, it is also a means to draw the ire of the Daemon that possessed *Lycurgos*. After the unit blasts through three walls, the walls begin to grow back into place quickly, such that each wall only remains broken for  $1d10+2$  combat Rounds. If they continue to blast through the walls, the star fort begins to aggressively use its systems against them. This begins with reconstructing areas so that the unit is isolated in a region with no functional hatches. If the company continues to provoke its ire, it eventually attempts to simply vent them to the star fort's exterior. In this instance, the unit could safely traverse its surface without further complication, though coordinating an escape route still presents its own challenges.

If the Guardsmen established a positive working relationship with Captain Horatio (see page 129) they might be able to ask him for assistance at this time. As the star fort transformed, it underwent a variety of structural



rearrangements to its overall physical configuration. In the process, many sections have opened up into much larger areas—likely places that the Daemon Engine's organic components are intended to eventually fill. Some of these are even large enough that an Imperial attack craft could manoeuvre through those spaces. While this requires an exceptionally talented—and foolishly brave—pilot, it is a dangerous but feasible escape route.

In order for the characters to use this strategy, they must first persuade Captain Horatio to undertake the risk. That requires a successful **Difficult (-10) Opposed Charm Test**. Appealing to past debts or to his ego could provide bonuses to the attempt, at the Game Master's discretion. If they succeed, they must then coordinate a mutually agreeable location for the pick-up. This requires success on a **Hard (-20) Navigate Surface Test** to designate a location that both parties can safely reach, even as the star fort continues the process of reconfiguration. Should they fail, bulkheads must be destroyed, requiring the use of explosives and potentially drawing the star fort's ire as previously described. With three or more Degrees of Failure, the location is incorrectly chosen, and Captain Horatio and his ship are destroyed as he tries to find them. With success, they can find a mutually agreeable location. In short order, the unit is able to escape the star fort through the captain's piloting expertise. In the interests of drama, the flight out should be suitably terrifying with Daemon Engines observed en route, and organic looking portals opening and closing along the way.

## CONSOLIDATING CONTROL

Success breeds the most straightforward of all possible outcomes. If the unit captured the general and overcame the Warpsmith before he could complete his ritual, then there are no surviving enemy leaders aboard *Lycurgos*. At this point, the star fort simply needs to be cleansed of the disorganised threats that remain. Once that task is completed, the Imperial Navy can formally take control of the star fort. After it has been fully repaired, it can become the cornerstone to the Imperial presence within this region of the Spinward Front.

The largest challenge at hand remains the matter of maintaining operational security as the surviving opponents are eliminated. Because of this, the Player Characters' company is unlikely to see relief any time soon. They are currently located far from secure territory, and they are currently protecting one of the star fort's most vulnerable assets. The enginarium and its plasma system must be defended at all costs. Desperate foes could easily cause critical damage to *Lycurgos* if they were to enter the facility and randomly discharge powerful weapons or explosives. Consequently, there can be no rest for the unit until the remaining portions of the regiment complete the task of expanding the regiment's holdings. Only when a secure network is established from the docking arm to the enginarium can they be relieved of duty.

Even without the Warpsmith's leadership, the surviving Daemon Engines and corrupted servitors remain a substantial threat. If these forces are permitted to continue their previously assigned tasks, then they are likely to eventually completely destroy the star fort. Ceaselessly obeying their last known directive, the servitors have continued to mindlessly disassemble large portions of the *Lycurgos*, so that they can be used to build frameworks for Daemon Engines that Warpsmith Arkturian can no longer complete. This disassembly is certain to eventually have serious repercussions for the star fort's structural integrity.

With the death of the Warpsmith and the failure of his rite, the Daemon Engines enter a state of mindless slaughter. They begin to stalk the star fort's hallways, killing every living mortal that they can find. Without coordination, this is less effective than it might be if the separate engines coordinated their efforts. However, it does still pose a significant threat to the Player Characters. As they still reside within the enginarium, there are a significant number of Daemon Engines located in the surrounding corridor. Many of these have sensed the death of their master and recognise that the ban on entry to the enginarium is no longer active. Consequently, these mechanical horrors begin to descend upon that location. At the Game Master's discretion, they might no longer be compelled to avoid targeting units that stand in front of the outer walls of the plasma core. Consequently, a missed shot could have serious repercussions for that system's integrity.

Human resistance forces continue to pose a significant threat to the star fort. This includes both those who pledged their allegiance to the Ruinous Powers and those who remain loyal to the Severan Dominate.

The temporary alliance between the soldiers

under General Constantine only complicates matters. Now, the alliance is no longer necessary. Many of these soldiers are anxious to resume hostilities. Others—including the general—have simply accepted that the battle for *Lycurgos* is over and they have lost. These hostiles have begun to take guerrilla actions against the Imperial Guard. There are far too few of them to have any chance of long-term success, but their numbers and actions have hampered the Imperial Guard efforts to eliminate the taint of Chaos and proclaim the star fort a secure environment. Compared to the threat posed by the Daemon Engines and servitors, this is an annoyance. However, it has already cost the regiment several hundred lives, and continues to do so until the secessionists are all captured or killed.

A unit made up of either Severan Dominate soldiers or Chaos cultists can—at the Game Master's discretion—attempt to relieve the Player Characters and their company of duty. It is the goal of these traitors to seize control of the enginarium, so that they can destroy the star fort. Their ploy is elaborate, and makes use of uniforms stolen from fallen Guardsmen. Defeating the charade can best be accomplished through their failure to recognise the regiment's passcodes and traditions, or if the Player Characters simply realise that they do not know any of the soldiers in their regiment's uniforms. In either instance, of course, a combat at the entrance to the enginarium ensues. The characters, who are likely running low on ammunition and supplies by this point, must fight a difficult battle against a truly desperate opponent.

## WRAP UP

By this point, the Player Characters have secured the star fort from enemy forces, destroyed it in dramatic fashion, or died in the attempt. Any of these outcomes concludes the adventure. By no stretch of the imagination does this conclude the war for control of Warzone Epsilon, nor does it begin to address the fallout for the Spinward Front as a whole. In fact, it is unlikely to even affect the Guardsmen as far as their current deployment goes. In all likelihood, they need to spend additional time within the system resolving the consequences of their success and failure. At this point, however, it is appropriate to assign rewards based upon the units overall success throughout the adventure, prior to considering the longer-term ramifications and future scenarios.

If the characters were successful in stopping the Warpsmith's plans to capture the star fort, then Regimental Command must be impressed with their capabilities. Whether they seek promotion or not, the Player Characters must be considered for additional responsibilities within the regiment. This could leave them in a situation where they have command of an entire company on a regular basis. Alternatively, they might even be forced to take advisory positions reporting directly to Regimental Command. All of this is contingent upon an extensive series of debriefings involving the regiment's commanding officer as well as its ranking Commissar. It is vital that the Guardsmen acted not only in the best interests of the Imperium, but that they also acted in a manner consistent with regimental and Imperial Guard standards.



Imperial high command for the Spinward Front could be impressed with the regiment's competency as a whole. In fact, if the mission could only be considered a complete success, then it is very likely that the regiment would be redeployed into an even more dangerous battlefield. After all, units with their competency must be placed into situations where their expertise can best serve the Emperor.

## EXPERIENCE AWARDS

For surviving **Chapter III: Mechamorphosis**, each character receives an award of 1,000 xp. All characters that survived all three chapters of **No Surrender** receive an additional bonus reward of 1,500 xp. At their discretion, Game Masters can choose to provide this award to the characters of players who participated in all three acts, even if the characters present in the latter portion of the adventure were not the same ones present at the beginning. This award is the bare minimum for having participated in the brutal battles that decided the fate of *Lycurgos*. Additional experience rewards are tiered based upon the Degree of Success that the characters had in the various challenges faced throughout the scene.

Successfully delivering General Constantine to regimental command earns each character a bonus of 400 xp. If the characters were able to persuade the command officers to actually work with the general rather than simply interrogating and eliminating him, they receive an additional bonus of 100 xp. Conversely, delivering only the general's body reduces this bonus to 200 xp. Shortly

after delivering the general, the unit was debriefed about cooperating with the enemy. If they were able to avoid any punishment for their actions, the unit receives an additional bonus of 50 xp.

During their travels to the enginarium, the unit faced a number of different challenges. If they successfully overcame these obstacles rather than avoiding them or falling prey to them, the characters can earn additional bonus xp. Note that the characters should only earn these bonuses if they played a direct role in the success. If they simply stood back while other members of the company successfully acted, then the Player Characters do not deserve these bonuses. Defeating the Heldrakes that threatened the docking arm is worth an additional 100 xp bonus. If they were defeated before they could breach the hull armour, this is increased to 200 xp. Defeating the Warpsmith's cultist blockade is worth an additional 250 xp, though this bonus does not apply if the unit somehow bypassed the enemy's super-heavy tanks without destroying them. As they travelled through the maze surrounding the Warpsmith's sanctum, the unit needed to avoid or disarm a range of different traps. Every trap that they successfully deactivated is worth an additional 100 xp bonus, though if any soldiers died or vehicles were destroyed in the process the award is forfeited.

Within the enginarium, the Guardsmen faced Warpsmith Arkturian. If they were able to stop him from completing his unholy ritual, they receive an additional 500 xp bonus. This is a flat award, regardless of the means by which they stopped the ritual. Killing or capturing the

## III: MECHAMORPHOSIS

## FOLLOWING ADVENTURES

Depending upon the outcome to the battle for *Lycurgos*, the next stages in the war for the system could vary substantially. Game Masters could choose to explore some of these possibilities, or they could decide that the best option would be to reassign the regiment to a completely different system. The former could offer a better narrative connection for the Player Characters, permitting them to see how their success directly impacts the progress of the war for the Spinward Front. The latter, however, could be more in keeping with the functional nature of the Imperial Guard, where regiments are continually thrust into new environments, with little opportunity to fully appreciate the larger scope of the war effort. This section offers suggestions for Game Masters considering different possibilities within Warzone Epsilon.

If *Lycurgos* has become a Daemon Engine, the Imperial Guard can have little direct impact upon it. At this point, defeating the horrific entity becomes a challenge that requires the intercession of the Imperial Navy. However, there is one potential strategy that could be useful—provided the regiment acts quickly. If General Constantine yet lives, the Player Characters could be pressed to escort him to the surface of Helena II. There, they could coordinate ground-based defence lasers with the orbiting firepower of the Imperial Navy. A concerted push from the different factions could possibly generate enough firepower to significantly damage—or potentially even destroy—the inconceivably massive Daemon Engine. Of course, this situation would also present an ideal opportunity for the general to escape captivity. To succeed in their mission, the Guardsmen must coordinate effectively with the Imperial Navy officers.

If *Lycurgos* has been destroyed—or captured—the next clear Imperial objective in the system is to conquer Warzone Epsilon. Prior to their mission against the star fort, *Lycurgos* and General Constantine presented the two most significant obstacles. If both of these have been eliminated or captured, then seizing control of the agri-world is a much simpler task. However, that is not an indication that the battles are easy. Even with the star fort under their control, Imperial high command is loath to bombard the planet's surface. The citizens of Helena II are also extremely reluctant to surrender their loyalty to Duke Severus. These battles should be hard fought, and involve a great deal of trench warfare, as the secessionists are extraordinarily reluctant to surrender any of the ground that their ancestors originally cultivated. The best possible strategy is for the Guardsmen to use a combination of physical and psychological warfare, in the hopes that they can persuade the world's natives to surrender. Only if they succeed in this approach can the world be taken intact, so that the Imperium may once more exploit its agricultural bounty.

In the event that *Lycurgos* survived and General Constantine somehow escaped, the regiment may be forced to remain upon the star fort, so that they can defend it against enemy attack. Long before this Imperial wave arrived, the general put forth a call for Severan Dominate reinforcements. While these had not arrived prior to the start of the conflict, it is certainly possible for a significant force to arrive at some point after the battle has already been decided. If the Imperial Navy decreased its presence in the system, a squadron of Severan Dominate spacecraft could present a significant threat to the star fort. The danger could be even greater if repairs have not yet been completed upon *Lycurgos*. In this scenario, the regiment would suddenly have to defend the badly damaged star fort from a well-equipped contingent of Severan Dominate soldiers, intent on regaining control.

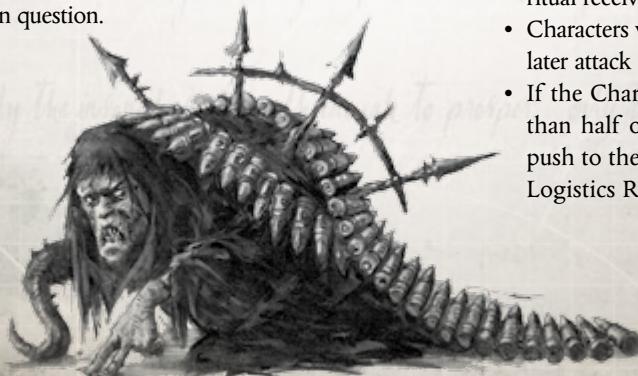
Warpsmith adds an additional 200 xp bonus.

At the Game Master's discretion, he can reduce these rewards if the characters suffered substantial losses to their company during the course of any of these encounters. This should not, however, exceed the bonus xp available. At his discretion, the Game Master can also issue bonus awards for exceptional role play throughout the chapter, but these should not exceed 1,000 xp in total. Game Masters are encouraged to offer additional bonus xp to characters or groups that implemented particularly novel strategies to overcoming the challenges that they faced, though this should not exceed fifty percent of the bonus available for the encounter in question.

## LOGISTICS AWARDS

The battle for *Lycurgos* was hard fought, with serious losses suffered by both sides. If the characters played a critical role in its success, then their reputation spreads throughout the regiment. Their commanders come to recognise that they just might be competent, and that their requests for additional wargear just might have some reasonable tactical basis. As a consequence, their Logistics rating can be increased as follows:

- Characters who successfully stopped Warpsmith Arkturian's ritual receive a +5 bonus to their Logistics Rating.
- Characters who successfully defended the enginarium from later attack receive a +2 bonus to their Logistics Rating.
- If the Characters were able to preserve the lives of more than half of the members of their company during the push to the enginarium, they receive a +3 bonus to their Logistics Rating.



# APPENDIX: NPCS AND ADVERSARIES

*"I hate fighting on a star vessel. I can never shake the feeling that I'm in the guts of some huge metal creature."*

—Corporal Janhuss

This Appendix details the Non-Player Characters whom the Guardsmen encounter and interact with during the course of **No Surrender**. Throughout the events of the adventure, players encounter numerous NPCs, from the skilful Void Shrikes to the deluded servants of the Ruinous Powers. Most NPCs play only a minor role in the adventure, such as the hundreds of soldiers in the Player Characters' company and the Vostroyan Void Shrikes assisting them, or the masses of Severan Dominate troops who oppose them. Of course, in **ONLY WAR**, many of these NPCs are only "on camera" for a short time before meeting an honourable—or ignoble—death. There is no need to determine Characteristics and personalities individually for each of these minor NPCs, though it's always helpful to have a list of names to hand in case the players decide to strike up an unexpected conversation (or interrogation). Other NPCs, such as Lieutenant Sava Nikishin of the Void Shrikes, play a large, even crucial, part in the adventure's events. As such, these important NPCs receive individual profiles. If the GM were in need of a game profile for another Vostroyan lieutenant, he would simply use the Void Shrikes Lieutenant profile on page 127. Of course, the GM should feel free to add additional Skills, Talents, gear, or other details as the needs of the game dictate.

The first section of the **Appendix** details general NPCs, the second covers named NPCs—those who are important to the plot of the adventure—and the last explores the dread forces of Chaos at work aboard *Lycurgos*. Strength Bonus and Talents have already been factored into weapon Damage for all profiles. As always, NPCs are considered to be capable of using any weapons listed in their profile, regardless of Talents.

The Imperial Guardsman profile on page 371 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook can be used to represent Guardsmen from the Player Characters' regiment. See **Personalising NPCs** for advice on tailoring NPCs to the Player Characters' regiment.

## PERSONALISING NPCs

**ONLY WAR**'s rules for regiment creation allow for an almost limitless variety amongst Imperial Guard regiments (see page 40 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook). The possibilities for equipment and methods of warfare are such that many Imperial Guard regiments are all but unrecognisable as belonging to the same military complex. Because of this diversity, **No Surrender** makes certain assumptions about the Player Characters' regiment, but also leaves "blanks" for the GM to fill in. Not only is this a necessity due to the variety of possibilities for Player Character regiments, but a great opportunity for GMs to personalise the game for their players. GMs are encouraged to modify events and encounters involving the Player Characters' regiment so that they fit the background previously established by the players and GM. Because Guardsmen from different regiments can be extremely different in outlook, name, and ability, it is left to individual GMs to develop the personalities of NPCs amongst the Player Characters' company.

All of these factors make it impossible to provide any but the most perfunctory detail regarding NPCs in the players' company, as any such information would need to be replaced by the majority of GMs. It is left to individual GMs to detail the appearance, equipment, personality, and name of each important NPC in the Player Characters' regiment. **Table 3-21: Demeanours** and the list of Commanding Officer personalities on pages 108 and 63, respectively, of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook can be useful sources of inspiration when detailing these NPCs. They can also make valuable resources for a GM when developing NPCs for adventures of his own devising.



# RANK AND FILE

*"Sir, what does this blinking red light mean?"*

—Guardsman Horshetz, while examining his void suit

In the action to retake *Lycurgos*, massed infantry plays a major role, just as it would in a planet-bound mission. Indeed, the large chambers and hangar bays of the station allow for very similar engagements, at least superficially. During the course of the adventure, the Player Characters can expect to fight alongside hundreds of their fellow Guardsmen, both of their own regiment and of the Vostroyan 1054th, in the battle against the masses of Severan Dominate traitors.

## SEVERAN DOMINATE

The Severan Dominate has only a minuscule number of soldiers at its command in comparison to the innumerable forces of the Imperial Guard, a number that is comparable to a Departmento Munitorum rounding error. Yet the Imperium faces countless threats and, combined with the realities of logistical needs, this ensures that only a fraction of those Guardsmen within the Calixis Sector are actively embroiled in the battle against the secessionists. Though the rebels lack the resources of the Imperial Guard, their shorter supply lines and familiarity with the environs ensure that the ranks of Severan Dominate troops are a threat to the men and women of the Imperial Guard.

Severan Dominate forces echo the Imperial Guard in their organisation. A typical squad consists of nine soldiers led by a sergeant. One soldier may carry a special weapon, most likely a flamer or grenade launcher. More technologically sophisticated weapons such as plasma guns and meltaguns are not unheard of, but the Severan Dominate's access to these rare weapons is substantially limited. In addition, two soldiers can work together to operate a heavy weapon, most commonly a heavy flamer, missile launcher, or autocannon.



### SEVERAN DOMINATE SOLDIER

Severan Dominate soldiers are drawn from across the worlds under Duke Severus's leadership. Had events transpired differently, these very individuals might be serving in the Imperial Guard rather than opposing it. For many of these soldiers, fighting against the forces of the Imperium is an uncomfortable prospect at best. They do not view themselves as traitors or enemies of the Emperor, but as victims of the unjust policies of the Adeptus Terra—that is, if they hold any view whatsoever of the wider issues at play. For many Severan Dominate soldiers, they are simply following orders and protecting their families back home. Of course, the same could be said of many Guardsmen.

Severan Dominate soldiers are generally equipped in a similar manner to the Imperial Guard. In fact, much of their equipment was supplied by the Departmento Munitorum prior to the secession of the worlds which now swear allegiance to the Severan Dominate. However, the lack of Departmento Munitorum oversight and resources ensures a broader range of equipment than is seen even amongst the diverse regiments of the Imperial Guard. Many Severan Dominate regiments simply utilise the equipment of their home world's standing armed forces, which they are able to keep maintained and supplied due to their close proximity and short supply lines. Consequently, various patterns of autoguns, shotguns, and other stub weapons are as common as lasguns amongst the forces of the Severan Dominate.

Severan Dominate Soldier (Troop)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
36	34	35	35	37	28	34	26	33

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 10

**Armour:** Flak armour (4 All)

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Spinward Front) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag), Survival (Per).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Rapid Reload, Street Fighting.

**Weapons:** M36 lasgun (Basic; 100m; S/3/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Reliable) or autogun (Basic; 100m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full) or shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 3 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

**Gear:** Severan Dominate uniform, basic toolkit, rebreather, 2 reloads for primary weapon, *Severan Soldier's Guide to Battle*, home world memento, standard regimental kit.

## SEVERAN DOMINATE SERGEANT

Sergeants of the Severan Dominate military are usually enlisted, just as those under their command. In most cases, a sergeant and his squad served together within a planetary defence force before being drafted to the Severan Dominate cause. In this way, they are not unlike most Imperial Guard sergeants. Also like their counterparts in the Imperial Guard, sergeants of the secessionist forces often have only a vague understanding of why they are fighting a given battle, knowing only that they are following orders. In some cases, they do not even fully comprehend the nature of the war or the true severity of the Duke's actions. Others, though, are fully dedicated to the secessionist cause. Depending on the regiment's home world, a sergeant might be a veteran of countless battles against xenos marauders or cannibalistic mutants. For others, their assignment to *Lycurgos* is their first taste of actual battle. Having no more experience than the rest of their squad, such individuals are ill-prepared for the brutal close-quarters fighting to control the star fort.

Severan Dominate Sergeant (Elite)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
37	36	35	35	37	30	35	30	39

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Flak armour (4 All)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int) +10, Stealth (Ag), Survival (Per).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Street Fighter, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Autopistol (Pistol; 30m; S/-/6; 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full) or laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable) or shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 3 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

**Gear:** Severan Dominate uniform, basic toolkit, rebreather, 3 reloads for primary weapon, *Severan Soldier's Guide to Battle*, homeworld memento, standard regimental kit.

## SEVERAN DOMINATE LIEUTENANT

The majority of those who have risen to leadership positions within the armies of the Severan Dominate hold a deep commitment to the secessionist cause, yet also a firm devotion to the Emperor and belief in His divinity. Though this seems an impossible contradiction in the minds of any loyal Imperial citizen, the Duke has spent many decades laying the groundwork for his rebellion. Ducal Legates and others continuously spread the Severan Dominate's propaganda, painting the Imperium and its forces as the true traitors. Positions of responsibility within the armies of the Severan Dominate are reserved for those committed to the cause, those who believe that Duke Severus the Thirteenth is the rightful representative of the Emperor's will.

As befits their status, lieutenants of the Severan Dominate have access to superior arms and armour. Those with the right connections or who are held in particularly high esteem by the Duke and his circle of advisors covet deadly bolt pistols and several lieutenants have earned the coveted Golden Laurel through acts of valour or in recognition of their tactical acumen.

These officers also have some degree of understanding of the star fort's importance to the war effort. As such, they are willing to use every tool and strategy at their disposal to ensure it does not fall into the hands of the Imperium. Of course, not all Severan Dominate officers are willing to lay down their lives or commit their troops to wholesale slaughter for the sake of Duke Severus' ideals. For some, the recognition of the true scope of the Imperium and its armies is enough to plead surrender.

Severan Dominate Lieutenant (Elite)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
38	40	35	35	35	35	37	39	40

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Flak armour (All 4)

**Wounds:** 16

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Severan Dominate Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS) +10, Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int) +10, Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Street Fighting, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), 3 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

**Gear:** Severan Dominate uniform, 3 reloads for bolt pistol, rebreather, basic toolkit, home world memento, *Severan Soldier's Guide to Battle*.

## SEVERAN DOMINATE SHOCK TROOPERS

Military resources are stretched thin for the Severan Dominate. Nevertheless, certain soldiers who display a high level of ability earn recognition. These veteran soldiers are equipped with the finest weapons and armour within the Severan Dominate's possession and grouped into squads of shock troopers. Most Severan Dominate soldiers are relatively green, especially by the standards of a typical Imperial Guard regiment. Consequently, shock troopers are quite rare. The Severan Dominate leadership does not waste these elite troops' talents, and deploys them only under circumstances where other soldiers are insufficient. The loss of each shock trooper is a serious blow to the Severan Dominate's limited resources, and the decision to risk their lives and equipment is not made lightly. Shock troopers are highly dedicated to the Duke's cause, and willing to give their lives in the protection of

the Severan Dominate. Though typically assigned to special operations missions and lightning raids, shock troopers are sometimes given the duty of protecting an important officer or other official of the Severan Dominate, where their experience and unflinching loyalty can mean all the difference.

Severan Dominate Shock Trooper (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	40	36	38	38	30	36	31	32	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 12

**Armour:** Storm trooper

**Total TB:** 3

carapace armour (6 All)  
**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, Severan Dominate, Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Double Team, Nerves of Steel, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Takedown, Unshakeable Faith.

**Weapons:** Hot-shot lasgun (Basic; 60m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 7; Clip 30; Reload 2 Full), autopistol with man-stopper bullets (Pistol; 30m; S/-/6; 1d10+2 I; Pen 3; Clip 18; Reload Full), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 3 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Blast [3]), 2 krak grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10+4 X; Pen 6; Clip 1; Concussive [0]).

**Gear:** Severan Dominate uniform, micro-bead, rebreather, photo-visor, 3 clips of man-stopper bullets, *Severan Soldier's Guide to Battle*.



## IMPERIAL GUARD AND ALLIES

Countless numbers of Imperial Guardsmen defend the Imperium from every conceivable threat. Whether responding to an Inquisitor's summons or holding the line until the Adeptus Astartes can arrive, the Imperial Guard often forms the first and primary defence against aliens, heretics, and worse. Each Imperial Guard regiment is unique, reflecting the culture of its home world. These differences are often subtle or cosmetic, and the following profiles can represent Guardsmen from most regiments, including that of the Player Characters. Particularly in this latter case, GMs might wish to modify the NPCs' gear, Characteristics, or Skills and Talents to better reflect the particular regiment.

### THE PLAYER CHARACTERS' COMPANY

Throughout the events of **No Surrender**, the Player Characters are supported by a host of additional Guardsmen from their platoon. While the bulk of the Guardsmen can be consigned to the background, the field leaders deserve closer attention. Whether they go by "exalted sergeant," "battle-chief," or one of myriad other titles, these squad and company leaders rightfully expect to be included in any discussions and decisions regarding the actions of the company. The profiles below represent "typical" Imperial Guard officers, but can and should be modified to reflect the Player Characters' regiment. The Imperial Guard Sergeant and Lieutenant profiles presented here assume a Line Infantry regiment, the most common type amongst the countless numbers of Imperial Guard regiments. At the very least, GMs should swap the gear listed below for equipment appropriate to the Player Character's regiment where applicable. If the regiment is built using a different doctrine, GMs can modify the officers' Characteristics, Skills, and Talents appropriately. Most importantly, however, the GM should portray any sergeants or lieutenants present in a manner corresponding to the culture of the regiment. For many groups, the game experience can be enhanced by further individualising key NPCs amongst the Player Characters' company through personality traits, quirks, distinguishing features and, of course, names. See **Personalising NPCs** on page 119 for more on this subject.

For Guardsmen below the rank of sergeant, use the Imperial Guardsman profile on page 371 of the **ONLY WAR** Core Rulebook.

### IMPERIAL GUARD SERGEANT

Sergeants lead squads of Imperial Guardsmen, which consist of nine additional troopers in most regiments. Sergeants are often veterans of multiple battles, with the experience and courage to lead their squad into battle. In the case of most regiments, sergeants are noncommissioned officers, unlike those higher up the chain of command. The fact that they joined the Imperial Guard under the same conditions as their subordinates, and possibly earned their position through success on the battlefield, can help sergeants to gain the respect and loyalty of their squads.

While their equipment is mostly identical to that of their squad, squad leaders often carry a laspistol and chainsword into battle. Many regiments encourage this, for the sight of a roaring chainsword gesturing onward can inspire men to fight on where mere words might fail.

Imperial Guard Sergeant (Elite)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
37	37	35	35	32	30	35	30	35

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 12

**Armour:** Guard flak armour (4 All)

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 4 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

**Gear:** Imperial Guard uniform, 4 clips for laspistol, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*, standard regimental kit.

## IMPERIAL GUARD LIEUTENANT

Though known by myriad titles amongst the diverse regiments of the Imperial Guard, officers placed in command of a company are most commonly called lieutenants. While lieutenants in many regiments earn their rank through display of leadership abilities and tactical acumen, others, particularly in regiments from feral worlds, are rated foremost on their strength and skill of arms. Yet still others receive their position purely by dint of noble birth. Lieutenants are usually accompanied by a command squad of four troopers. These soldiers are often selected from amongst the company's veterans and specialists, and might include medics, weapon specialists, and Sanctioned Psykers. It is traditional among many regiments for the company standard to be borne by a member of the lieutenant's squad. A promotion is seen as something of a mixed blessing in many regiments, for in addition to the burden of command which lieutenants must shoulder, Commissars often choose to accompany the command squad.

Imperial Guard Lieutenant (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	42	35	35	32	35	38	38	40	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Guard flak armour (4 All)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Takedown, Two-weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 4 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

**Gear:** Imperial Guard uniform, 4 clips for bolt pistol, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*, standard regimental kit.

**Wounds:** 16

**Total TB:** 3

## NAVAL ARMSMAN

By ancient decree, the Imperial Guard does not possess its own void ships, or even aircraft. The Imperial Navy provides all air support and interplanetary transportation for the Imperial Guard. Conversely, the Navy does not possess the materiel or soldiers for ground assaults. Though every captain hopes against such an event, Navy vessels must be able to defend themselves against boarders. Thus, all ships carry a contingent of Naval Armsmen to defend the vessel in times of need (although all crew are expected to do their part). The training and equipment borne by armsmen is specifically suited to shipboard combat, and they lack heavy, or even long-ranged, weapons. The more common duty of an armsman is to police the thousands of crew aboard a vessel, doing everything from stopping fist fights in the galley to busting up illegal black markets amongst the lower-deck hands.

Though few man-portable weapons could hope to damage the hull of a void ship, even a stray lasgun blast can damage important, if not necessarily vital, ship's systems. Consequently, Naval Armsmen favour weapons with low armour penetration, but that are effective against living targets at short range, where most on-board combats occur. Unsurprisingly, shotguns are the most common armament for Naval Armsmen. The intimidation factor is an added bonus, and many a fledgling low-deck riot has been stopped in its tracks by the sound of dozens of combat shotguns chambering shells simultaneously.

Naval Armsman (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	37	35	35	35	28	35	30	25	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Light carapace armour (5 All)

**Wounds:** 10

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium, Imperial Navy, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Parry (WS).

**Talents:** Disarm, Double Team, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Takedown.

**Weapons:** Combat shotgun (Basic; 30; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full; Scatter) or shock maul (Melee; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Shocking) and boarding shield (Melee; 1d10+1 I; Pen 0; Defensive†).

**Gear:** Uniform, 4 clips for shotgun, rebreather.

†A boarding shield provides an additional 3 AP to the user's Arm and Body locations.



## TECH-PRIEST ENGINSEER

Standing apart from the common soldiery, Tech-Priest Engineers are emissaries of the Cult Mechanicus, tasked with ensuring that the Imperium's war machines are shown the proper respect and remain in working order. Though most regiments include numerous Tech-Priests to see to the care of vehicles and gear, not all have the proper training and skill to accompany the Guardsmen into battle. Engineers often stand out from other Tech-Priests due to the heavier armour and weaponry they sport. As priests of the Machine God, Engineers have access to powerful and advanced equipment in order to fulfil their duty. The mighty Omnissian Axe is a universally recognizable symbol of the Engineers, as it combines destructive power with technical utility, making it perfectly suited for their role as battlefield caretakers. These holy warriors take their duty seriously, and stand ready to slay the enemies of the Omnissiah or lay down their own lives in defence of the mechanical charges in their care.

Tech-Priest Engineer (Elite)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	35	45	45	27	45	35	40	10

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Wounds:** 14

**Armour:** Light carapace (5 All)

**Total TB:** 4

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (War) (Int), Common Lore (Tech) (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus) (Int), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes, Techna-lingua) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Tech-Use (Int) +20.

**Talents:** Combat Formation, Ferric Summons, Lumenen Shock, Mechadendrite Use (Utility, Weapon), Orthoproxy, Technical Knock, Total Recall.

**Traits:** Mechanicus Implants.

**Cybernetics:** Manipulator Mechadendrite, Utility Mechadendrite, Ferric Lure Implants, Lumenen Capacitors, 1d5+1 additional cybernetic limbs or implants.

**Weapons:** Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), Omnisian Axe (Melee; 1d10+8 E; Pen 6; Power Field, Unbalanced).

**Gear:** Tech-Priest robes, 4 reloads for laspistol, micro-bead, sacred unguents, dataslate, combi-tool.

## 1054TH VOSTROYAN VOID SHRIKES

The 1054th Vostroyan Void Shrikes are similar in overall appearance to other Firstborn regiments, but certain unique aspects of their gear identify the regiment's unusual specialisation. A typical Void Shrikes squad consists of one sergeant and nine troopers, one of whom carries a meltagun. Two additional troopers sometimes form a heavy weapons team with a single heavy weapon, most commonly a missile launcher. However, the inclusion of a heavy weapon is less common than for many regiments, as the enclosed spaces and safety concerns of void-craft combat outweigh the benefits much of the time. Many Void Shrikes officers prefer for their squads to stay mobile, relying on lighter special weapons for added firepower.

### VOID SHRIKES TROOPER

The troopers of the 1054th Vostroyan Void Shrikes are perfectly suited for the mission to retake *Lycurgos*, but they are as unprepared as any Imperial Guardsman to deal with the horror of Chaos and the unnatural Daemon Engines brought into being by Warpsmith Arkturian. Nevertheless, the Void Shrikes' familiarity with unusual gravity and void-station conditions gives them a decided advantage in the battle for *Lycurgos*. Like all Vostroyan regiments, the Void Shrikes are well-equipped thanks to their home world's manufacturing capabilities and ties to the Adeptus Mechanicus. This alliance with the Tech-Priesthood is reflected in the red uniforms worn by most Vostroyan regiments.

Void Shrikes Trooper (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	35	35	41	35	25	31	28	25	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 10

**Armour:** Void-hardened

**Total TB:** 4

Guard flak armour (4 All)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

**Talents:** Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload.

**Weapons:** M36 lasgun (Basic; 100m; S/-/-; 1d10+3 E; Pen 0; Clip 60; Reload Full; Reliable) or meltagun (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; Pen 12; Clip 5; Reload Full; Melta), knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]), 2 photon flash grenades (9m; S/-/-; Blast [10]), 2 smoke grenades (9m; S/-/-; Smoke [6]).

**Gear:** Vostroyan Firstborn uniform, rebreather, micro-bead, 6 charge packs, 1kg demolition charge, Good Craftsmanship void suit, drop harness, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*.

**Void Specialist:** Void Shrikes do not treat zero-gravity environments as Difficult Terrain for determining movement. Additionally, the Agility Test to stay on-target when making a Charge or Run Action is Difficult (-10).



## VOID SHRIKES SERGEANT

The sergeants of the Vostroyan 1054th are by-and-large competent and resourceful leaders, having put their specialised skills to the test on numerous assignments. Like many officers throughout the Imperial Guard, Void Shrikes sergeants tend to favour the combination of a chainsword and lascannon. This pairing is particularly well-suited for the sorts of engagements in which the Void Shrikes usually find themselves, where fights are decided at close-quarters. As with their comrades throughout the regiment, most sergeants of the Void Shrikes do not shy away from unconventional tactics. Under ideal circumstance, such decisions are usually made at a higher level. However, in boarding actions and similar missions, it is likely, even necessary, that squads become split off from the main bulk of the fighting. The thick plasteel bulkheads of Imperial ships or the unknown alloys of strange xenos facilities can interfere with vox communications, forcing the leaders of each squad to make important on-the-spot decisions as the mission parameters change.

Void Shrikes Sergeant (Elite)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
37	37	35	41	35	27	31	33	32

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Void-hardened  
Guard flak armour (4 All)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium, Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Lascannon (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 photon flash grenades (9m; S/-/-; Blast [10]), 2 smoke grenades (9m; S/-/-; Smoke [6]).

**Gear:** Vostroyan Firstborn uniform, rebreather, micro-bead, 6 charge packs, 1kg demolition charge, Good Craftsmanship void suit, drop harness, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*.

**Void Specialist:** Void Shrikes do not treat zero-gravity environments as Difficult Terrain for determining movement. Additionally, the Agility Test to stay on-target when making a Charge or Run Action is Difficult (-10).

## VOID SHRIKES LIEUTENANT

The missions which the Void Shrikes must undertake are dangerous, even by the standards of the Imperial Guard. To command such operations requires training, experience, and a degree of lateral thinking not widely encouraged by the Departmento Munitorum. However, in an environment where gravity and atmosphere could vanish at any moment, it is not always possible to apply accepted stratagems and tactics. There are differences of opinion and preference amongst the Void Shrikes officers, exacerbated by the many years which individual companies spend separated from the rest of the regiment. While many Void Shrikes lieutenants prefer to be on the front lines, some see it as an unnecessary risk, preferring to command from a nearby vessel whenever possible. Lieutenants of this sort frequently find themselves in conflict with Navy officers who would prefer not to put their vessels in harm's way for the convenience of a lower-ranking Imperial Guard officer.

Void Shrikes Lieutenant (Elite)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
40	40	35	41	35	31	36	38	40

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 16  
**Armour:** Void-hardened  
Guard flak armour (4 All)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium, Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 photon flash grenades (9m; S/-/-; Blast [10]), 2 smoke grenades (9m; S/-/-; Smoke [6]).

**Gear:** Vostroyan Firstborn officer's uniform, rebreather, micro-bead, 4 bolt pistol clips, 1kg demolition charge, Good Craftsmanship void suit, drop harness, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*.

**Void Specialist:** Void Shrikes do not treat zero-gravity environments as Difficult Terrain for determining movement. Additionally, the Agility Test to stay on-target when making a Charge or Run Action is Difficult (-10).



## VOID SHRIKES VETERAN

Experienced Guardsmen of the 1054th Vostroyan consider themselves something of an elite amongst an elite. Veterans of numerous boarding actions, ship-to-ship combats, and zero-gravity battles, the Void Shrikes veterans are as suited for void warfare as any Imperial Navy force. As with veterans of many regiments, those of the Void Shrikes tend to acquire and utilise non-standard equipment, some of it scavenged from the field of battle. Shotguns are a favourite due to their utility aboard voidcraft, as are a variety of low-velocity stub weapons.



Void Shrikes Veteran (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	37	35	41	35	26	31	28	25	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 11

**Armour:** Void-hardened

**Total TB:** 4

**Guard flak armour (4 All)**  
**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium, Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), lascannon (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), 2 photon flash grenades (9m; S/-/-; Blast [10]), 2 smoke grenades (9m; S/-/-; Smoke [6]).

**Gear:** Vostroyan Firstborn uniform, rebreather, micro-bead, 6 shotgun reloads, 1kg demolition charge, Good Craftsmanship void suit, drop harness, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*.

**Void Specialist:** Void Shrikes do not treat zero-gravity environments as Difficult Terrain for determining movement. Additionally, the Agility Test to stay on-target when making a Charge or Run Action is Difficult (-10).

# DRAMATIS PERSONAE

*"Though it may be in the hands of traitors, we must not forget that this star fort is the rightful property of the Imperium. Its machine spirits long for a return to the Imperial fold; we need but offer assistance."*

—Company Commander Grigory Kulikov

**D**uring the events of **NO SURRENDER**, the Player Characters interact with potentially hundreds or more NPCs, from their squad-mates to the masses of Severan Dominate troops arrayed against them. While most of these NPCs can be treated as generic in nature for gameplay purposes, there are a number of NPCs who are central to the plot and the events of the adventure. These NPCs might prove staunch allies, rivals, or deadly foes, depending on the events of the adventure and the Player Characters' own actions and choices.

Many of the NPCs in this section possess the Touched by the Fates Trait—after all, they are important enough to be included here. GMs should not feel the need to keep an NPC alive just because they have Fate Points left, but rather allow the NPC to burn Fate Points if necessary to survive until their part has been played. Another key thing to remember about NPCs with Touched by the Fates is that they can spend Fate Points in the same ways the Player Characters can. Thus, even an NPC destined to die as part of the plot can spend Fate Points to remove Damage suffered or re-roll attacks or Evasion Tests, making for a more dramatic and exciting encounter. Used with care, Fate Points can enhance and support the dramatic action of the game, by ensuring dangerous foes survive to strike back, or that steadfast allies meet their end when the time is right.

As he is more monster than man, Warpsmith Arkturian is included under **Servants of Chaos** on page 136.



## IMPERIAL GUARD AND IMPERIAL NAVY

The Imperial Guard is the Imperium's largest fighting force. While the Imperial Guard fights for the Imperium on the surfaces of a hundred thousand worlds, the Imperial Navy is responsible for delivering them to those warzones. The Imperial Navy is indispensable to the Imperial war effort, for battles in the void can decide the fate of a star system before a single boot touches the dirt of its worlds.

### CAPTAIN MORDECAI HORATIO

Captain Horatio is a highly decorated flight commander whose exceptional record is surpassed only by his hubris. Though his confidence is understandable, Captain Horatio's attitude can sometimes ruffle the feathers of other officers, particularly those not accustomed to dealing with hot-shot fighter pilots. Having been born aboard a Navy vessel, Mordecai has in fact never set foot on a planet's surface, and he both pities and despairs those who spend their lives dirt-side. In truth, Mordecai only truly feels at home in the cockpit of his Lightning fighter.

Though he much prefers to do his fighting from behind the controls of a fighter craft, Horatio trains regularly to ensure that his marksmanship skills remain up to his own high standards. He trusts in his skill as a pilot, but should he ever be shot down or caught unprepared in a boarding action, he aims to do whatever damage he can with his sidearm.

Mordecai Horatio (Elite)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	45	38	35	45	35	41	42	39

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Armour:** Flak jacket and flight helmet (2 Head, 3 Body, 3 Arms)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Imperium, Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigation (Stellar), Operate (Aeronautica) (Ag) +20, Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Hotshot Pilot, Lightning Reflexes, Mighty Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reaction.

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (1).

**Weapons:** Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+4 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0).

**Gear:** Void-sealed flight suit, 4 reloads for pistol, rebreather.

**Wounds:** 13  
**Total TB:** 3

## COMPANY COMMANDER

### GRIGORY KULIKOV

As a veteran of numerous void-bound campaigns, Grigory Kulikov was an obvious choice to command the Void Shrikes forces in War Zone Epsilon. Standing barely over 1.6 metres, Kulikov is not a tall man, and some of the officers under his command quite tower over him during strategy meetings, which he prefers to hold standing. The moustachioed company commander's presence looms large, though, and his booming voice easily commands the attention of a room. Company commander Kulikov is well respected by the men under his command, and his subordinate officers recognize the value of his experience. When dealing with commanders of other regiments, the company commander is gracious and respectful, but well aware of his area of expertise. On matters of void warfare, he stands firm in his opposition to strategies offered by inexperienced or ignorant voices.

Kulikov's heavy flak cloak is further bolstered by the suit of ceramite plate armour beneath, offering an additional degree of protection without the hindrance to mobility that heavier Storm trooper carapace armour imposes. Kulikov's signature weapon is his inferno pistol, gifted by the Adeptus Mechanicus in recognition of the Void Shrikes' assistance in reclaiming the Explorator vessel *Conductor Primus* from xenos invaders. Able to carve through a plasteel bulkhead in a single blast, Kulikov has used the weapon to great effect in subsequent missions. The company commander believes his place is alongside his men, giving him plenty of opportunities to wield his weapons in the thick of combat.

Grigory Kulikov (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
41	45	35	41	35	37	38	45	47	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Void-hardened light carapace armour (5 All)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS) +10, Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int) +10, Tech-Use (Int). **Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Hatred (Mutants), Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Sharpshooter, Sidearm, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (2).

**Wounds:** 19

**Total TB:** 4

**Weapons:** Inferno pistol (Pistol; 10m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; Pen 12; Clip 3; Reload Full; Melta), Best Craftsmanship chainsword (Melee; 1d10+6 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 photon flash grenades (9m; S/-/-; Blast [10]), 2 smoke grenades (9m; S/-/-; Smoke [6]).

**Gear:** Refractor field, Vostroyan Firstborn officer's uniform, rebreather, micro-bead, 3 inferno pistol reloads, 1kg demolition charge, Good Craftsmanship void suit, drop harness, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*.

**Void Specialist:** Void Shrikes do not treat zero-gravity environments as Difficult Terrain for determining movement. Additionally, the Agility Test to stay on-target when making a Charge or Run Action is Difficult (-10).

### ENSIGN VIOLETTA JORGENS

Violetta Jorgens is a dedicated, by-the-book officer, whose youthful idealism means that she lacks the pragmatic edge possessed by more experienced officers. Her extensive readings of the *Tactica Imperialis* leave little room for unconventional responses, but have prepared her well for many situations. Coming from a long line of Navy officers, Jorgens' position is a great source of pride for her, and she makes a conscious effort to always display the bearing and confidence proper for an officer of the Imperial Navy. Jorgens is always dedicated to the success of a mission, although her pride can prove a liability in certain situations. As with many Navy officers, Jorgens displays a sense of rivalry with her counterparts in the Imperial Guard. Her commitment to the mission, however, ensures that this exists only as a motivator, and does not interfere with her duties or those of others.

Violetta Jorgens (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
37	38	38	35	33	37	38	40	39	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Flak jacket (3 Body, Arms)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, Imperial Guard, Imperial Navy, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Intimidate (S), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Navigation (Stellar), Operate (Aeronautica, Voidship) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis).

**Talents:** Hip Shooting, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Naval pistol (Pistol; 20m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 6; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0).

**Gear:** Officer's uniform, 4 reloads for pistol, rebreather.

## ENGINSEER DIDACTUS

The venerable Tech-Priest has held the responsibility for maintaining *Lycurgos* for centuries. Certainly, he was there long before the Severan Dominate took control of the star fort, and even the Enginseer himself likely does not know how long, at least not without taking the time to access the relevant data. Didactus has little flesh remaining, and that which does is wizened and paper-thin. Most of the Enginseer's organs and limbs have been replaced with durable cybernetics that have extended his life far beyond the span of his natural body. *Lycurgos* is Didactus's life, and he would die to defend it. Once the Warpsmith has begun the irreversible corruption of the star fort, Didactus realises that it is beyond saving, that the only option is to consign its machine spirits to return to the Omnissiah through the Machine Prayer of Auto Annihilation. As he is the only one who understands the rite, Didactus holds the fate of *Lycurgos* in his mechaendrites. Enginseer Didactus understands that the Guardsmen wish to flee the dying star fort once the rite is enacted, but he himself makes no effort to do so. He would prefer to enter oblivion along with his beloved star fort. If the Guardsmen have shown the proper respect for the star fort and its machine spirits, Didactus is likely willing to spend his own life in order to buy them the time they need to flee the ravening Daemon Engines that surround the Enginarium.

Enginseer Didactus (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
30	30	35	41	25	51	31	45	20	

**Movement:** 2/4/6/12

**Wounds:** 16

**Total TB:** 4

**Armour:** None

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (War) (Int), Common Lore (Tech) (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Archeotech) (Int) +10, Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes, Techna-lingua) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Tech-Use (Int) +30.

**Talents:** Binary Chatter, Ferric Summons, Lumen Shock, Mechaendrite Use (Utility), Orthoproxy, Technical Knock, Total Recall.

**Traits:** Mechanicus Implants, Touched by the Fates (1).

**Cybernetics:** Manipulator Mechaendrite, Utility Mechaendrite, Ferric Lure Implants, Lumen Capacitors, Bionic Legs, Bionic Right Arm, Bionic Eyes.

**Weapons:** Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable).

**Gear:** Tech-Priest robes, 2 reloads for laspistol, micro-bead, sacred unguents, several dataslates, combi-tool.



## LIEUTENANT SAVA NIKISHIN

A very capable and experienced officer, Lieutenant Nikishin favours the unconventional tactics for which the Void Shrikes are known. He draws from his familiarity with the *Tactica Imperialis* in order to predict enemy actions, and as a basis for his own decisions. However, he generally views the dictates of the *Tactica Imperialis* as a starting point, and tries to preserve the core of its teachings while utilising the unique abilities of the Void Shrikes. Nikishin views the men under his command both as individuals and as a valuable resource, and he avoids any strategy that embraces excessive casualties. His strategies generally involve ensuring battlefield conditions that play to the Void Shrikes' strengths and avoid a straight-up fire fight, which he sees as a waste of the Void Shrikes' abilities.

Sava Nikishin (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
40	42	35	41	35	39	36	40	42	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Void-hardened  
Guard flak armour (4 All)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperial Creed, Imperial Guard, Imperium, Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (*Tactica Imperialis*) (Int), Tech-Use (Int).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Hatred (Mutants), Iron Jaw, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (2).

**Weapons:** Plasma pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/–; 1d10+6 E; Pen 6; Clip 10; Reload 3 Full; Maximal, Overheat), Good Craftsmanship chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 photon flash grenades (9m; S/–/–; Blast [10]), 2 smoke grenades (9m; S/–/–; Smoke [6]).

**Gear:** Vostroyan Firstborn officer's uniform, rebreather, micro-bead, 4 bolt pistol clips, 1kg demolition charge, Good Craftsmanship void suit, drop harness, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*.

**Void Specialist:** Void Shrikes do not treat zero-gravity environments as Difficult Terrain for determining movement. Additionally, the Agility Test to stay on-target when making a Charge or Run Action is Difficult (–10).

## SUPPLY OFFICER ADELINE GASPAR

Supply Officer Gaspar is a dedicated soldier, if not always optimistic in outlook. Years of bureaucratic hindrance and ungrateful Guardsmen have soured her general demeanour, though she remains proud to serve the Imperium. Unlike some supply officers, Gaspar really does make the effort to ensure soldiers have the gear they need, whenever possible. However, she views it as each Guardsman's responsibility to be capable of operating any gear they are assigned, and she provides limited assistance to soldiers unable to utilise their kit correctly, nor does she hide the disdain she feels in such situations.

Adeline Gaspar (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
30	34	35	35	35	34	38	33	37	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Guard flak armour (4 All)

**Wounds:** 11

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Commerce (Int), Common Lore (Imperium, Spinward Front, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Imperial Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (*Tactica Imperialis*) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Takedown.

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (1).

**Weapons:** Laspistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/–; 1d10+2 E; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full; Reliable), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 4 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/–/–; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload –; Blast [3]).

**Gear:** Imperial Guard uniform, 4 clips for laspistol, *Imperial Infantryman's Uplifting Primer*, standard regimental kit, numerous requisition forms and supply logs.



## SEVERAN DOMINATE

In the course of **NO SURRENDER**, the Player Characters come face-to-face with the leaders of the Severan Dominate forces aboard *Lycurgos*. Once the true threat of the Archenemy of Mankind becomes apparent, the Guardsmen must make a temporary truce with these traitors if they hope to stop the Warpsmith's foul plans.

### LIEUTENANT RODERICK KRAIG

As is the case for many officers of the Severan Dominate, Roderick Kraig found himself reassigned from his homeworld when it embraced the secessionist cause. And, like many others, he has since followed orders dutifully, regardless of his personal misgivings. Despite internal turmoil over his conflicted loyalties to the Severan Dominate and the Imperium, Kraig holds to his own personal principles. He sees himself as holding ultimate responsibility for the lives of those under his command. While this means keeping them alive when possible, Kraig also views himself as entitled to sacrifice their lives when necessary.

Roderick Kraig (Elite)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
38	42	38	41	41	38	38	36	39	

**Movement:** 4/8/12/24

**Armour:** Flak armour (4 All)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, Severan Dominate, War) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Severan Dominate Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS), Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int), Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Deadeye Shot, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Takedown, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Weapons:** Naval pistol (Pistol; 20m; S/3/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 6; Reload Full; Tearing), chainsword (Melee; 1d10+5 R; Pen 2; Balanced, Tearing), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

**Gear:** Severan Dominate officer's uniform, 4 clips for naval pistol, micro-bead, rebreather, *Severan Soldier's Guide to Battle*.

### GENERAL FREDERIQUE CONSTANTINE

As a noble of the hive world of Asterion, Frederique Constantine was born for greatness. Asterion is one of the most developed worlds of the Periphery, and the noble families of the world view themselves as the most civilised personages in the region. Coming from such a distinguished background, Constantine was no stranger to the court of Duke Severus the Thirteenth, and, indeed, the two men could almost be considered friends. Being the first son of his own house, Frederique was appointed a traditional officer's position in the Army of the Asterion Protectorate, in which he excelled. Thus, Frederique unknowingly earned for himself a position of authority in the armies of the Severan Dominate long before the Duke revealed his treachery.

General Constantine views the forces under his command as a machine, consisting of numerous interdependent components that must work in harmony if the whole is to operate at its full efficiency. Despite this philosophical outlook, Constantine does recognize the men and women under his command as individuals. He despises needless loss of life, and not only because it means a loss of resources. In fact, it is Constantine's concern for the people of Asterion and the other worlds of the Periphery that is his driving motivation. Yet, as the conflict drags on and he sees the ruthlessness with which the Imperium feeds its armies into the meat grinder of war, Constantine's belief in the Duke's creed has grown.

The general strikes an imposing figure in his gleaming armour and fur-lined cloak, which is identifiable as one of the felid beasts that once stalked the equatorial jungles of his home world. These creatures have been extinct for centuries, and to wear such a pelt is a sign of wealth and power.

Frederique Constantine (Master)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
41	43	35	42	35	51	42	45	47	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Light carapace with carapace cuirass (5 Head, 6 Body, 5 Arms, 5 Legs)

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Command (Fel) +10, Common Lore (Imperium, Severan Dominate, Spinward Front, War) (Int) +10, Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic, Severan Dominate Codes) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Parry (WS) +10, Scholastic Lore (Tactica Imperialis) (Int) +10, Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Die Hard, Lightning Attack, Nerves of Steel, Rapid Reload, Sidearm, Swift Attack, True Grit, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged).

**Traits:** Touched by the Fates (3).

**Weapons:** Plasma pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+6 E; Pen 6; Clip 10; Reload 3 Full; Maximal, Overheat), power sword (Melee; 1d10+8 E; Pen 5; Balanced, Power Field), combat knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0), 2 frag grenades (Thrown; 9m; S/-/-; 2d10 X; Pen 0; Clip 1; Reload -; Blast [3]).

**Gear:** Refractor field, embellished Severan Dominate officer's uniform with fur-lined flak cloak, 3 reloads for plasma pistol, micro-bead, rebreather.

# IMPERIAL AND SEVERAN DOMINATE VEHICLES

*"Fighting on a star fort isn't really that different from fighting on land. But don't try telling that to the earthshaker crew."*

—Sergeant Kollern, Mortressan 42nd

Tanks are synonymous with the fighting forces of the Imperial Guard. Contrary to what some might assume, tanks and other vehicles are just as important to the battle aboard *Lycurgos* as any ground war. The star fort includes many massive corridors and chambers that readily accommodate even super-heavy battle tanks. Though many of the tactics which tank commanders employ during traditional city-fighting missions are applicable to the battle aboard *Lycurgos*, it does involve unique concerns. Combat vehicles sport powerful weaponry, which can damage important technological systems, and in some cases potentially breach the hull. Additionally, the massive amounts of smoke resulting from extensive vehicle combat can overwhelm ventilation systems and life sustainers, to the misfortune of the surrounding infantry. A discharge of a Hellhound's inferno cannon can even scorch the lungs of infantry hundreds of metres away and past bulkheads due to the vagaries of ventilation.

## DEVIL DOG

This rare variant of the Hellhound flame tank boasts a powerful melta cannon, an immensely destructive weapon capable of turning a battle tank to slag or breaching the mightiest fortress walls with a single shot. On board *Lycurgos*, a Devil Dog can easily blast its way through bulkheads and interior walls, granting a powerful advantage within the confines of the star fort. However, employing a Devil Dog is dangerous, too; a misplaced blast from the melta cannon could knock out power or life support to an area, or worse.

**Type:** Tracked Vehicle

**Tactical Speed:** 18m

**Cruising Speed:** 70kph

**Manoeuvrability:** +10

**Structural Integrity:** 30

**Size:** Massive

**Armour:** Front 30, Sides 28, Rear 18



**Vehicle Traits:** Enclosed, Enhanced Motive Systems, Reinforced Armour, Tracked Vehicle.

**Crew:** 1 Commander (main gun), 1 Driver, 1 Gunner (Hull weapon).

**Carrying Capacity:** None.

**Weapons:** Turret-mounted melta cannon (75m; S/-/-; 2d10+18 E; Pen 12; Clip 20; Reload 2 Full; Blast [6], Melta), hull-mounted multi-melta (Front facing; 60m; S/-/-; 2d10+16 E; Pen 12; Clip 12; Reload Full; Blast [1], Melta) or heavy flamer (Front facing; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+5 E; Pen 4; Clip 20; Reload 2 Full; Flame, Spray). A Devil Dog can also feature a pintle-mounted heavy stubber (100m; -/-/8; 1d10+4 I; Pen 3; Clip 80; Reload 2 Full) or storm bolter (90m; S/2/4; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 60; Reload Full; Storm, Tearing).

**Tactical Speed:** 10m

**Manoeuvrability:** +10

**Size:** Enormous

**Armour:** Front 25, Sides 15, Rear 15

**Vehicle Traits:** Enhanced Motive Systems, Open-Topped, Walker.

**Crew:** 1 Driver

**Carrying Capacity:** None

**Weapons:** Servo-lifter (Melee; 2d10+16 I; Pen 4; Unwieldy).

**Special Rules:** The servo-lifter arm is not intended as a weapon, and all attacks made with it suffer a -10 penalty. The driver of a Sentinel Powerlifter may attempt to Grapple an opponent using the servo-lifter arm. If he succeeds, the target does not immediately suffer any Damage. However, if he does not escape before the Sentinel Powerlifter's next turn, he counts as a Helpless Target and is automatically hit by the servo-lifter arm for double Damage. For purposes of Opposed Tests for Grappling, treat the Sentinel Powerlifter as having a Strength of 70 and the Unnatural Strength (4) Trait.

## STORMLORD

A rare super-heavy tank, the Stormlord is notable for its unique weapons configuration as well as its transport ability. Though only bold or extremely unwise commanders are willing to risk a legendary super-heavy tank in a frontal charge, there are few more reliable ways to deliver an entire medium-size platoon to its destination. Safe behind the tank's thick armour, passengers can also access a firing platform from which they can man the two mounted heavy stubbers or fire their own weapons, providing a formidable defence from any enemy infantry attempting to assault the Stormlord. Meanwhile, the Stormlord's Vulcan mega-bolter lays down a withering hail of fire, mowing down even the most heavily armoured infantry with contemptuous ease and shredding light vehicles in the barrage of extra-large-calibre mass-reactive shells.

A vehicle of such sophistication and rarity is not a common sight amongst the Severan Dominate forces. However, amongst the many advantages gained by possession of star fort *Lycurgos* is the manufacturing capacity for these god-like tanks. The process is time consuming, labour-intensive, and requires an inordinate amount of resources, therefore limiting the number of tanks the Severan Dominate can produce. Nonetheless, that they have produced even a single Stormlord is cause for grave concern, and that there might be further of these super-heavies already en route to the warzones of the Spinward Front is a serious concern for the Imperium. Depriving the Severan Dominate of the capability to construct further Stormlords is one more reason that the Imperial Guard must deny them the star fort. Conversely, the addition of another facility capable of creating these impressive tanks is yet another reason the Imperium must reclaim the star fort intact.

**Type:** Tracked Vehicle

**Cruising Speed:** 30kph

**Structural Integrity:** 120

**Armour:** Front 45, Sides 38, Rear 30

**Vehicle Traits:** Command and Control, Damage Control, Enclosed, Ponderous, Reinforced Armour, Super-Heavy, Tracked Vehicle.

**Crew:** 1 Commander (Raised superstructure), 1 Driver, 5 Gunners (Vulcan mega-bolter/hull heavy bolter/both sponsons).

**Carrying Capacity:** 40

**Weapons:** Hull-mounted Vulcan mega-bolter (Front facing; 500m;  $-/-/20$ ; 3d10+5 X; Pen 6; Clip 3,000; Storm, Tearing), Hull-mounted twin-linked heavy bolters (Front facing; 150m;  $-/-/6$ ; 1d10+8 X; Pen 5; Clip 200; Reload Full; Tearing, Twin-Linked), 2 turret-mounted lascannons (300m; S/ $-/-$ ; 5d10+10 E; Pen 10; Clip 80; Reload 2 Full; Proven [3]), left and right sponson-mounted twin-linked heavy flamers (Front/Side facing; 30m; S/ $-/-$ ; 1d10+5 E; Pen 4; Clip 80; Reload 2 Full; Flame, Spray, Twin-Linked), left and right passenger-fired heavy stubbers (Side facing; 100m;  $-/-/8$ ; 1d10+4 I; Pen 3; Clip 200; Reload 2 Full). A Stormlord can also feature a pintle-mounted heavy stubber (100m;  $-/-/8$ ; 1d10+4 I; Pen 3; Clip 80; Reload 2 Full) or storm bolter (90m; S/2/4; 1d10+5 X; Pen 4; Clip 60; Reload Full; Storm, Tearing).

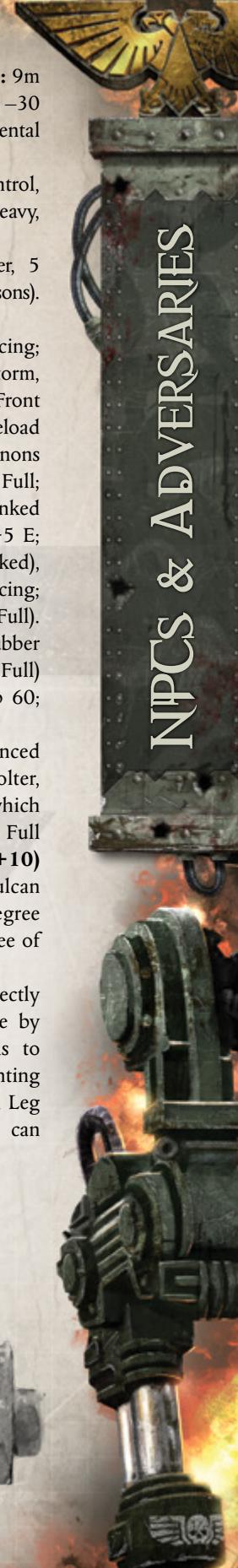
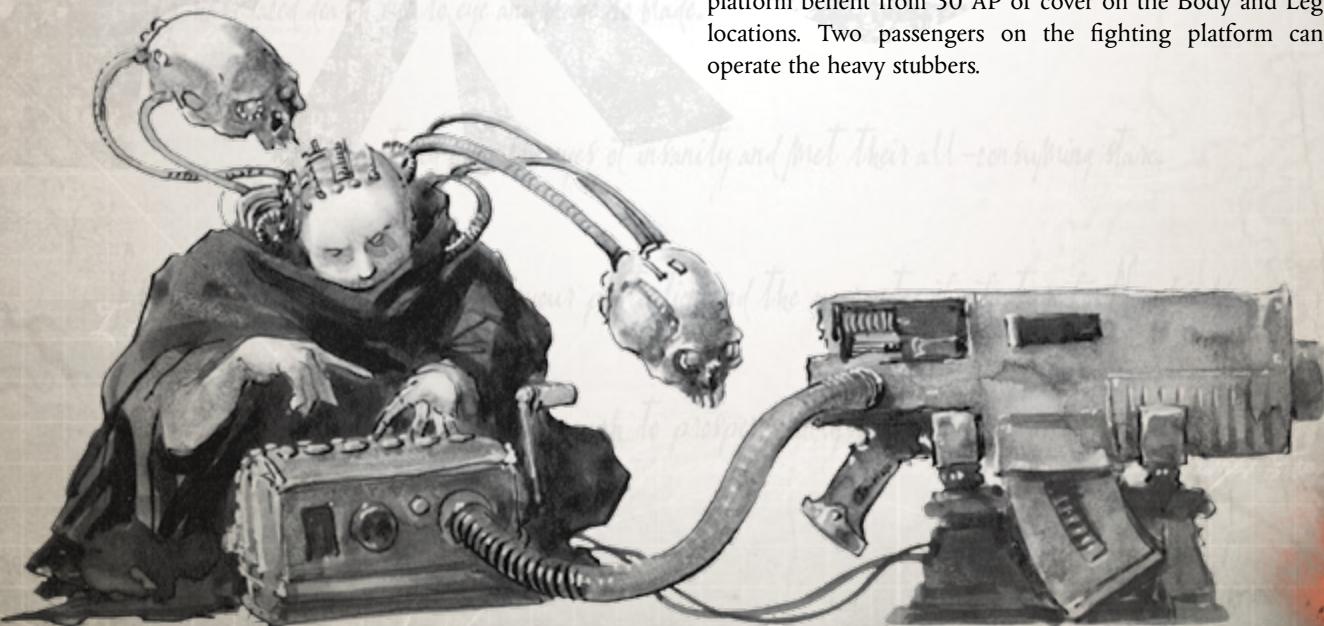
**More Power!**: By diverting power from its advanced engines, the Stormlord can overtax its Vulcan mega-bolter, temporarily increasing its rate of fire. During a Turn which the Stormlord does not move, the driver may expend a Full Action to redirect power, requiring an **Ordinary (+10)** Tech-Use Test. If he succeeds, for one Round the Vulcan mega-bolter inflicts an additional two hits for every Degree of Success (so, including its Storm Quality every Degree of Success inflicts a total of four hits).

**Fighting Platform:** The fighting platform located directly above the Stormlord's troop bay is directly accessible by passengers, with room for up to twenty individuals to effectively fire without obstruction. Soldiers on the fighting platform benefit from 30 AP of cover on the Body and Leg locations. Two passengers on the fighting platform can operate the heavy stubbers.

**Tactical Speed:** 9m

**Manoeuvrability:** -30

**Size:** Monumental



# SERVANTS OF CHAOS

*"The Machine-God is dead. Long live the Machine-God."*

—Warpsmith Arkturian, via station-wide vox broadcast

**S**laves to Darkness all, the servants of the Chaos Gods are the ultimate traitors, aligning themselves with the Archenemy of Mankind. Supporting the mortal disciples of Chaos are the Daemons of the Warp themselves, embodiments of the gods' will. At the command of the foul Warpsmith Arkturian, Daemons are bound within the metal hulls of artificial beasts, and reborn as awesomely powerful Daemon Engines.

## WARPSMITH ARKTURIAN

A Chaos Space Marine of the Praetors of Ruin warband, Warpsmith Arkturian is a master of the dark arts of technomancy and daemongineering. An affront to everything the Adeptus Mechanicus holds sacred, the Warpsmith holds no reverence for the machine spirits which he employs. Like a Chaos warlord who forces his servants to submit under the lash, Arkturian tortures and twists the souls of weapons, vehicles, and any other machine at his mercy to his desired ends. No device is sacred, no machine beyond his contempt. Like many Warpsmiths, Arkturian's greatest work is his never-ending pursuit of the unholy union of flesh, machine, and Daemon. Each Daemon Engine is a unique perversion of science and sorcery.

The Warpsmith's twisted genius lies far beyond mere sanity, and his thought-processes, both synthetic and biological, are driven by the un-logic of Chaos. His hatred for the Imperium that created him lies behind many of his actions; after all, his creations are exclusively designed for war. However, he sometimes acts based on pure curiosity, for he is not hampered by the restrictions of the Cult Mechanicus.

Arkturian is a deadly foe. He is as powerful and as skilful in battle as any Chaos Space Marine, but his gene-engineered implants have been further enhanced by cybernetics. Infused with the power of the Warp, it is impossible to tell where his flesh ends and the machine begins, if any such distinction can be meaningfully said to exist at all. The Warpsmith's mechatendrils grant great utility in his dark feats of construction, but are also specifically designed with battle in mind. With them, he can easily combat numerous foes simultaneously. Like all Space Marines, war is in Arkturian's blood. Nonetheless, he is almost always content to stand aside and watch as his creations butcher his foes.

Warpsmith Arkturian (Master)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
55	65	55	65	51	70	55	65	45

**Movement:** 6/12/18/36

**Wounds:** 55

**Armour:** Power armour and Machine Trait (11 Head, 13 Body, 11 Arms, 11 Legs)

**Total TB:** 11

**Skills:** Athletics (S) +20, Awareness (Per) +10, Command (Fel) +20, Common Lore (Tech) (Int) +30, Common Lore (Imperium, War) (Int) +20, Deceive (Fel), Dodge (Ag) +20, Forbidden Lore (Adeptus Mechanicus, Daemonology, Traitor Legions, the Warp) (Int) +20, Forbidden Lore (Archeotech, Heresy, Mutants) (Int) +10, Interrogation (WP) +20, Intimidate (S) +20, Linguistics (Low Gothic, High Gothic, Techna-lingua, Unholy Tongue) (Int), Operate (Aeronautica, Ground) (Ag) +10, Parry (WS) +10, Scholastic Lore (Legend, Occult, Tactica Imperialis) (Int) +20, Scrutiny (Per), Stealth (Ag), Tech-Use (Int) +30.

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Bulging Biceps, Cold Hearted, Combat Master, Die Hard, Disturbing Voice, Fearless, Hatred (Adeptus Mechanicus, Loyalist Space Marines), Heightened Senses (Hearing, Sight, Smell, Taste, Touch), Iron Discipline, Killing Strike, Lightning Attack, Master Enginseer, Never Die, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee, Ranged), Swift Attack, True Grit, Weapon-Tech.

**Traits:** Dark Sight, Fear (3), Machine (3), Multiple Arms (6), Size (Hulking), Touched by the Fates (3), Unnatural Strength (5), Unnatural Toughness (5).

**Weapons:** Legion power axe (Melee; 1d10+18 E; Pen 7; Power Field, Unbalanced), Legion bolt pistol (Pistol; 30m; S/2/-; 1d10+9 X; Pen 4; Clip 8; Reload Full; Tearing), mechatendril blades and claws (Melee; 1d10+8 R; Pen 3; Flexible, Tearing), mechatendril meltagun (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 2d10+13 E; Pen 12; Clip -; Reload -; Melta), mechatendril flamer (Basic; 20m; S/-/-; 1d10+9 E; Pen 4; Clip -; Reload -; Flame, Spray).

**Gear:** 2 bolt pistol reloads, corrupted combi-tools, profane tech-talisman.

**Mechatendrils:** Mechatendrils are a hideous counterpart to the mechatendrites used by Tech-Priests of the Adeptus Mechanicus. Warpsmith Arkturian's mechatendrils duplicate the effects of Utility and Manipulator Mechatendrites. Additionally, they incorporate both a meltagun and flamer. Arkturian can fire either of these weapons as normal and may use a Reaction to make a Standard Attack with either. Each mechatendril weapon can be fired only once per Round. These weapons draw their power and ammunition from the infernal energies of the Warpsmith's own machine-flesh, and thus do not run out of ammo. Arkturian's mechatendrils are so thoroughly grafted to him that they are in effect extensions of his own body; though the exact number of waving, serpentine tendrils is difficult to pinpoint and seems to change periodically, they grant him the Multiple Arms (6) Trait for game purposes (included above).

## CHAOS CULTIST

Thousands upon thousands of workers and other civilian personnel served aboard *Lycurgos*, performing manual tasks, harvesting the star fort's agri-domes, and performing innumerable functions to keep the star fort operating and the Severan Dominate soldiers equipped and fed. Just as the soldiers have, many of these civilians have fallen to the twisted creed of Warpsmith Arkturian. Their minds shattered and souls shackled, these converts, both willing and unwilling, now serve the forces of Chaos. Far worse than any secessionist cause, these individuals have forsaken the human race and declared their allegiance to the Archenemy of Mankind.

What these cultists lack in military training, they make up for in devotion and savagery. In a comparably short span of time, these men have been utterly consumed by the ravages of Chaos. Physical mutations are visible on many, and even those whose flesh has not succumb are so broken in mind that they mutilate and scar their own flesh with profane symbols of their newfound allegiance. Clothes are tattered and slick with blood and offal, and their makeshift armour is emblazoned with foul sigils and adorned with grisly talismans. The cultists carry whatever weapons they can steal or scavenge. Perhaps in imitation of their master, Warpsmith Arkturian, many cultists have cobbled together makeshift weapons from stray tech and machine parts, such as flails made from lengths of metal cables ending with cogs or other heavy weights.

Chaos Cultist (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
25	25	32	33	32	25	31	26	20	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Wounds:** 10

**Total TB:** 3

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Common Lore (Imperium) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Linguistics (Low Gothic) (Int), Operate (Ground) (Ag), Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Hatred (Imperial Guard).

**Weapons:** Autogun (Basic; 100m; S/3/10; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Clip 30; Reload Full) or shotgun (Basic; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+4 I; Pen 0; Clip 8; Reload 2 Full; Scatter) or autopistol (Pistol; 30m; S/-/6; 1d10+2 I; Pen 0; Clip 18; Reload Full), makeshift flail (Melee; 1d10+3 I; Pen 0; Flexible, Inaccurate, Unwieldy) or knife (Melee; 1d5+3 R; Pen 0).

**Gear:** Tattered clothing, profane trinkets, rebreather, 2 reloads for weapon.





## MURDER SERVITOR

The lobotomised cyborgs known as servitors fulfil innumerable functions within the Imperium, and often outnumber sentient humans amongst the domains of the Adeptus Mechanicus. While most servitors are slow and methodical in whatever routine task they exist to perform, the aptly named murder servitors are a breed apart. Their circuit-laced brains inlaid with numerous kill-routines and slaughter-protocols, murder servitors are literal killing machines—all the viciousness of the human brain combined with the ruthless efficiency and durability of cold steel.

Murder servitors are almost exclusively utilised aboard spacecraft and orbital stations for a number of reasons. Boarding actions and similar battles are often decided in brutal melee combat. As deadly as these battles are when Imperial forces clash with traitors, ordinary humans are simply no match in these situations for many xenos. Orks, Genestealers, Eldar Corsairs, and other aliens are a major concern in many areas of space. Armsmen, no matter how well-equipped and trained, can little hope to stand against such horrors within



narrow confines. Murder servitors are brutally efficient against pirates or mutineers, whereas gun servitors sport heavy weaponry ill-suited to space combat. Murder servitors could be very effective in other environments, from death world jungles to teeming hive cities. However, as massive as Imperial starships are, they are still contained environments. Murder servitors have been known to devolve or malfunction, locking into a kill-imperative and ignoring further commands to cease. If not contained, such deviant servitors could even escape and go on to cause further slaughter amongst the population.

Murder Servitor (Troop)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
40	15	55	45	37	15	39	35	05	

**Movement:** 3/6/9/18

**Armour:** Machine (4 All).

**Skills:** Athletics (S), Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag), Stealth (Ag).

**Talents:** Ambidextrous, Swift Attack, Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee).

**Traits:** Dark Vision, Machine (4), Sturdy, Unnatural Strength (2).

**Weapons:** Vicious blades (Melee; 1d10+7 R; Pen 2).

**Gear:** Internal micro-bead.

## DAEMON ENGINES

Amongst the many terrifying forces of Chaos, the lines between living and unliving, mortal and immortal, flesh and steel, are often blurred. This paradox is writ large in the Daemon Engines, impossible fusions of metal and Warp-spawned Daemon flesh. Birthed from hellish Daemon world forges, Daemon Engines are the signature example of the twisted genius and ritual technomancy of the Warpsmiths. Combining the durability of plasteel and adamantium with the ferocity and otherworldly power of a Daemon, Daemon Engines are amongst the most horrific foes a Guardsman could ever face. The presence of a single one of these nigh-indestructible war machines can completely dominate a battlefield, tearing or blasting men asunder as its steely flesh re-knits wounds from even the fiercest anti-tank weapons.

Daemon Engines are seen all too often in the forces of Chaos Space Marines; of course, knowledge of these unholy behemoths is carefully controlled by the Imperium, as is all information regarding the Archenemy of Mankind and its forces. Daemon Engines are usually constructed in unthinkable hell-forges located within the Eye of Terror. However, Daemon Engines are, in a way, not so restricted in their manners of construction as are ordinary vehicles. Warpsmith Arkturian is a master of adapting the materials at hand. With the aid of numerous servitors and cultists sworn to his cause, he has constructed the armoured shells for his Daemon Engines from components stripped from vehicles and even from the star fort itself. In blasphemous rituals, the Warpsmith has then drawn forth Daemons of the Warp, binding the spirits within the physical bodies he has prepared, giving birth to horrific Daemon Engines. Because of the manner of their construction, no two Daemon Engines are identical. Even when constructed from similar components, the Daemon held within gradually transforms the metal more and more, so that the machine's appearance reflects the aspects of the entity bound within.

Daemon Engines are unlike anything else Guardsmen might face on the battlefield. These abominations cannot truly be considered vehicles, but nor are they proper creatures of the Warp. Of all their bizarre characteristics, perhaps most strange is that Daemon Engines grow and change over time, a trait which they share neither with vehicles nor Daemons. Daemon Engines grow and mature, like living biological creatures. Yet they are not alive; their maturation is driven not by biological processes but by the warping power of Chaos. Whereas living creatures must consume nutrition to grow, Daemon Engines feed on the terror and death they inflict. It is the act of slaughter and battle that fuels a Daemon Engine's growth.

As their physical forms twist and evolve, Daemon Engines come to bear little resemblance to the materials from which they were originally constructed. Simultaneously, they both grow to resemble other Daemon Engines of the same strain and to exhibit uniquely identifying characteristics. Perhaps the most notable change as Daemon Engines mature, other than a great increase in size, is the transformations that their weapons undergo. Weapon barrels increase in diameter, additional muzzles sprout forth from raw flesh, and the forges in the beasts' burning cores begin to produce more refined, deadly

### NEW VEHICLE TRAIT: DAEMON ENGINE

Daemon Engines are horrifying and unnatural unions of machine and Daemon, steel and Warp-spawned flesh, with steel cables that throb like veins and pistons housed in grotesque muscle. Daemon Engines are incredibly difficult to damage, and their plasteel and adamantine hulls rapidly heal, sealing wounds with ectoplasmic scabs.

A vehicle with the Daemon Engine trait is protected by a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 30 that never Overloads, but is bypassed by weapons or attacks with the Sanctified or Force Qualities, and by Psychic Powers that deal Damage directly. Additionally, each Round, the Daemon Engine recovers 1d5 Structural Integrity or removes 1 point of Critical Damage.

ammunition, of a larger calibre or impossible Warp-made alloy. Perhaps most disturbing of all is the thought that these mechanical monsters may never stop growing, so long as they continue to survive the conflicts for which they were forged.

### HELDRAKE

Nightmarish visions that blend technology, flesh, and Man's most primordial fears, Heldrakes are a terrifying fusion of aircraft and Daemon. These monsters sail through the skies on blade-studded wings, trailing black plumes of toxic exhaust. Their limbs end in vicious bladed claws, but these are as nothing compared to the fearsome weaponry that juts from a Heldrake's maw. Chaos is nothing if not unpredictable, but the armaments favoured by most Warpsmiths are either a multibarrelled high-power Hades cannon, or the soul-searing baleflamer, which ignites Heldrakes' foes with their own burning Daemonic hatred.

While the other Daemon Engines under Arkturian's command were assembled from a wide variety of components, each Heldrake began its hideous existence as a fighter craft. Usually, the birth of a Heldrake is a gradual process, as a Chaos fighter and its pilot spend ever more time exposed to the Warp. Aboard *Lycurgos*, the Warpsmith has invoked dread rituals to hasten the dark evolution of these winged machine-beasts. As throughout the secessionist forces, a number of fighter pilots fell under the Chaos Space Marine's sway. These deluded fools willingly embraced the unholy union with their craft. In other cases, unwilling pilots were chained in their cockpits, screaming in vain as fleshy tendrils sprouted from the former fighter to envelop them.

Heldrakes are cunning predators, using their mobility to its fullest. Against powerful and resilient foes, Heldrakes utilise rapid hit-and-run strikes, wearing them down before moving in for the kill. Against massed infantry, Heldrakes derive a murderous pleasure from inflicting the greatest casualties they can in a short time, incinerating entire platoons in a single fiery breath, or mowing ranks down in a strafing run. If any foes manage to survive, Heldrakes swoop in to tear them to bloody chunks with its vicious plasteel and bone talons.



Heldrake (Vehicle)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
37	35	65 <sup>12</sup>	--	45	20	40	45	01	

Type: Special

Cruising Speed: 200kph

Structural Integrity: 30

Armour: Front 35, Side 30, Rear 18

Vehicle Traits: Daemon Engine, Daemonic Possession, Enhanced Motive Systems.

Crew: Daemonic Essence and Bound Pilot.

Carrying Capacity: None.

Weapons: Baleflamer (50m; S/-/-; 2d10+15 E; Pen 8; Clip -; Reload -; Flame, Soul Blaze†, Spray, Warp Weapon) or Hades autocannon (200m; --/-/10; 3d10+10 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Proven [2]), claws (Melee; 2d10+12 R; Pen 3; Razor Sharp).

Tactical Speed: 25m

Manoeuvrability: +10

Size: Massive

**Winged:** A Heldrake follows the rules for a vehicle with the Skimmer Vehicle Trait, but moves as if it possesses the Flyer Trait with a value equal to its Cruising Speed, rather than as a creature with the Hover Trait. Like a Walker, a Heldrake cannot take the Ram action, but can Charge.

**†Soul Blaze:** A target set alight by a baleflamer's Flame Quality reduces the Damage he suffers for being on fire in subsequent Rounds by his Willpower Bonus instead of his Toughness Bonus (this Damage is not reduced by Armour, as usual). Additionally, he suffers a -10 penalty to the Willpower Test to act normally.

Newly-created Heldrake (Vehicle)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
30	30	50 <sup>10</sup>	--	35	10	35	35	01	

Type: Special

Tactical Speed: 20m

Cruising Speed: 160kph

Manoeuvrability: +20

Structural Integrity: 30

Size: Enormous

Armour: Front 25, Side 22, Rear 14

Vehicle Traits: Daemon Engine, Daemonic Possession, Enhanced Motive Systems.

Crew: Daemonic Essence.

Carrying Capacity: None.

Weapons: Lesser baleflamer (30m; S/-/-; 1d10+12 E; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Flame, Soul Blaze†, Spray, Warp Weapon) or reaper autocannon (300m; S/4/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Reliable, Twin-Linked), claws (Melee; 2d10+10 R; Pen 2; Razor Sharp).

## Special Rules

A Heldrake possesses the Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) and Ambidextrous Talents, and the Brutal Charge (5), Fear (3), and Unnatural Strength (6) Traits.

**Daemonforge:** Once per Round, as a Free Action, the Heldrake can unleash the fury of its Warp-powered engine. Until the beginning of its next turn, it adds +1d10 Damage to its ranged weapons and doubles the value of its Unnatural Strength Trait. Each time the Heldrake uses this ability, it suffers 1d5-1 Damage, not reduced by Armour. Finally, the Heldrake gains the Extremely Volatile Vehicle Trait until the beginning of its next turn.





## Special Rules

A newly-created Heldrake possesses the Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) and Ambidextrous Talents, and the Brutal Charge (3), Fear (3) and Unnatural Strength (5) Traits.

**Winged:** A newly-created Heldrake follows the rules for a vehicle with the Skimmer Vehicle Trait, but moves as if it possesses the Flyer Trait with a value equal to its Cruising Speed, rather than as a creature with the Hover Trait. Like a Walker, a newly-created Heldrake cannot take the Ram action, but can Charge.

**+Soul Blaze:** A target set alight by a lesser baleflamer's Flame Quality reduces the Damage he suffers for being on fire in subsequent Rounds by his Willpower Bonus instead of his Toughness Bonus (this Damage is not reduced by Armour, as usual). Additionally, he suffers a -10 penalty to the Willpower Test to act normally.

## DEFILER

It is a sign of dire times that the war machine known as a Defiler has been seen on several battlefields across the Calixis Sector. Scuttling behemoths of total war, Defilers are feared as much for their devastating armament as for their incredible resilience. Covered in thick armour-plating, these six-legged engines are capable of withstanding blows from all but the most impressive Imperial weapons as they stalk forward, raining ordnance of their own all the while. Powered by the essence of only the most vile, warmongering Daemons, Defilers' thirst for destruction is unmatched. With shells from their battle cannons, they obliterate their foes; with roaring fire from their autocannons, they rend those who would stand against them; with their massive claws, they crush those who draw too near. Few weapons of war can match a Defiler in its sheer versatility of violence.

Defiler (Vehicle)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	25	75	--	35	10	40	40	01

**Type:** Walker  
**Cruising Speed:** 15kph  
**Structural Integrity:** 50

**Armour:** Front: 30, Side 28, Rear 18  
**Vehicle Traits:** Daemon Possession, Enclosed, Walker.  
**Crew:** Daemonic Essence.  
**Carry Capacity:** None.

**Weapons:** Crushing Claw (2d10+10 R; Pen 8; Tearing, Unwieldy), reaper autocannon (Front Facing; 300m; S/3/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Twin-linked), havoc launcher (Front Facing; 100m; S/2/-; 2d10 X; Pen 2; Clip 8; Blast [4],

Concussive [0]), defiler battle cannon (Front Facing; 750m; S/-; 3d10+10 X; Pen 8; Clip 40, Blast [10], Concussive [3]).

## Special Rules

While adjacent to an enemy, a Defiler may make attacks with its ranged weapons in addition to its melee weapons, though it cannot target adjacent creatures with ranged attacks. Additionally, the Defiler has the Swift Attack and Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) Talents, as well as the Unnatural Strength (7) Trait.

Newly-created Defiler (Vehicle)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
20	25	65	--	30	10	35	35	01

**Type:** Walker

**Tactical Speed:** 8m

**Cruising Speed:** 12kph

**Manoeuvrability:** +0

**Structural Integrity:** 30

**Size:** Enormous

**Armour:** Front 25, Sides 20, Rear 15

**Vehicle Traits:** Daemon Engine, Daemonic Possession, Walker.

**Crew:** Daemonic Essence.

**Carrying Capacity:** None.

**Weapons:** Three crushing claws (Melee; 2d10+12 R; Pen 8; Tearing, Unwieldy); power scourge (Melee; 1d10+12 E; Pen 5; Flexible, Power Field, Unbalanced), hull-mounted Defiler autocannon (Front facing; 200m; S/3/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Reliable) or heavy flamer (Front facing; 30m; S/-/-; 1d10+5 E; Pen 4; Clip -; Reload -; Flame, Spray).

## Special Rules

A newly-created Defiler can make attacks with its ranged weapons in addition to its melee weapons while engaged with an enemy, though it cannot target adjacent creatures with ranged attacks. Additionally, it has the Ambidextrous, Swift Attack and Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) Talents, as well as the Unnatural Strength (6) and Multiple Arms (4) Traits.



## FORGEFIEND

While Maulerfiends seek to rend their foes apart with claw and fang, Forgefiends express their hatred from afar. This does not mean they are any less driven by furious rage, however, as any who have witnessed a Forgefiend unleashing ceaseless salvos of shells can attest. These massive beasts rear up on four powerful hind limbs, held aloft by a combination of Daemonic muscle and hell-forged pistons. As they advance, their powerful techno-Daemonic frames hold their aim steady to unleash torrents of fire, mortals bursting apart under the merciless onslaught. Whether by rapid firing rotary gun clusters or burning plasma, Forgefiends inflict horrendous damage at range. Though their brother Maulerfiends enjoy the satisfaction of ripping their enemies apart in their bonesteel claws, they cannot rival the Forgefiends for the sheer scale of destruction they can unleash in such a short time. The only hope when facing a Forgefiend is to stay out of its weapons' effective range. And to pray.

That Warpsmith Arkturian is able to forge the fearsome ectoplasma cannons from available weapons speaks to his mastery of his dark craft. The glowing blasts projected from these weapons are as intensely hot and volatile as any plasma weapon, yet they are further enhanced by boiling ectoplasm straight from the Forgefiend's hellish gut. These plasma bolts destroy souls as readily as they incinerate flesh and melt armour.

Forgefiend (Vehicle)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
30	40	12 65	--	35	15	40	45	01	

**Type:** Walker

**Tactical Speed:** 12m

**Cruising Speed:** 50kph

**Manoeuvrability:** +0

**Structural Integrity:** 40

**Size:** Massive

**Armour:** 35, Side 30, Rear 18

**Vehicle Traits:** Daemon Engine, Daemonic Possession, Enhanced Motive Systems, Walker.

**Crew:** Daemonic Essence.

**Carrying Capacity:** None.

**Weapons:** Two Hades autocannons (Front/Side facing; 200m; -/-10; 3d8+10 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Proven [2]), or two ectoplasma cannons (Front/Side facing; 80m; S/-/-; 3d10+8 E; Pen 8; Clip -; Reload -; Blast [4]. Maximal, Overheat, Warp Weapon), claws and fangs (Melee; 1d10+12 R; Pen 3; Tearing, Natural Weapons). Some Forgefiends have an additional ectoplasma cannon housed in their maw.



## Special Rules

Forgefiends possess the Ambidextrous, Hatred (All), Swift Attack, and Two-Weapon Wielder (Ranged) Talents, and the Natural Weapons, Fear (3), and Unnatural Strength (6) Traits.

**Daemonforge:** Once per Round, as a Free Action, a Forgefiend may unleash the full fury of the Warp-powered engine at its heart. Until the beginning of its next turn, it adds an additional 1d10 Damage to its ranged weapons and increases the value of their Blast Trait by 1. Each time the Forgefiend uses this ability, it suffers 1d5-1 Damage, not reduced by Armour. Finally, the Forgefiend gains the Extremely Volatile Vehicle Trait for until the beginning of its next turn.

Newly-created Forgefiend (Vehicle)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	30	55 <sup>10</sup>	--	45	10	35	45	01

**Type:** Walker

**Cruising Speed:** 40km

**Structural Integrity:** 28

**Armour:** Front 26, Side 26, Rear 15

**Vehicle Traits:** Daemon Engine, Daemonic Possession, Enhanced Motive Systems, Walker.

**Crew:** Daemonic Essence.

**Carrying Capacity:** None.

**Weapons:** Two reaper autocannons (Front/Side facing; 300m; S/4/-; 3d10+8 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Reliable, Twin-Linked) or two assault cannons (Front/Side facing; 150m; -/-/10; 2d10+10 I; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Tearing) or two ectoplasma guns (Front/Side facing; 35m; S/3/-; 1d10+9 E; Pen 6; Clip -; Reload -; Maximal, Overheat, Warp Weapon), claws and fangs (Melee; 1d10+12 R; Pen 3, Tearing, Natural Weapons).

## Special Rules

Newly-created Forgefiends possess the Ambidextrous, Hatred (All), Swift Attack, and Two-Weapon Wielder (Ranged) Talents, and the Natural Weapons, Fear (3), and Unnatural Strength (5) Traits.

## MAULERFIEND

Like an unstoppable force, these behemoths of Daemonic flesh and adamantium rush headlong toward the enemy, tearing, rending, and utterly destroying any infantry or vehicles unfortunate enough to fall in their path. Maulerfiends are covered in heavy armour plating, trailing bundles of steel cable and wire, but moving with a disturbingly organic gait. Of course, Maulerfiends are not living beasts, regardless of any similarities, but Daemons of the Warp bound in mechanistic form, and this becomes clear should one maintain one's sanity long enough to look closer. The vapour exhaled from a Maulerfiend's flared nostrils is not steam, but exhaust from the burning Daemonforge at its heart. Knots of glistening muscle surround blackened pistons, and amongst the trailing cables and wires are fleshy tubes and slick viscera. Like all Daemon Engines, Maulerfiends eternally rage against their imprisonment, desiring only to vent their bottomless hatred against mortals. Moving with incredible speed, Maulerfiends quickly descend upon the ranks of their foes, ripping men apart with great claws, steaming blood dripping from their segmented metal tongues. Yet it is not blood and meat which sustain a Maulerfiend, but fear and death. Some say that the souls of a Maulerfiend's victims fuel the unholy machine, and that the noxious smoke that bellows forth from its fleshmetal chimneys is the scorched remnants of mortal spirits, incinerated in the hellish engine at the beast's heart.

Maulerfiend (Vehicle)								
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
35	30	65 <sup>12</sup>	--	40	15	35	45	01

**Type:** Walker

**Cruising Speed:** 80kph

**Structural Integrity:** 40

**Armour:** Front 32, Side 32, Rear 20

**Vehicle Traits:** Daemon Engine, Daemonic Possession, Enhanced Motive Systems, Walker.

**Crew:** Daemonic Essence.

**Carrying Capacity:** None.

**Weapons:** Clawed forelimbs and fanged maw (Melee; 2d10+12 R; Pen 5; Razor Sharp, Tearing, Natural Weapons), magma cutters (Melee; 2d10+14 E; Pen 24; Unwieldy) or lasher tendrils (Melee; 1d10+12 I; Pen 0; Flexible, Snare [3]).

## Special Rules

Maulerfiends possess the Ambidextrous, Frenzy, Hatred (All), Swift Attack, and Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) Talents, and the Natural Weapons, Fear (3), and Unnatural Strength (6) Traits. Maulerfiends have only two proper forelimbs, but due to their magma cutters or lasher tendrils benefit from the Multiple Arms (4) Trait.

**Overwhelming:** A Maulerfiend may attack a Grappled opponent with its magma cutters as a Reaction.

**Daemonforge:** Once per Round, as a Free Action, a Maulerfiend may unleash the full fury of the Warp-

powered engine at its heart. Until the beginning of its next Turn, the Maulerfiend doubles the value of its Unnatural Strength Trait and causes Righteous Fury whenever any Damage die results in a natural 9 or 10.. Each time the Maulerfiend uses this ability, it suffers 1d5–1 Damage, not reduced by Armour. Finally, the Maulerfiend gains the Extremely Volatile Vehicle Trait until the beginning of its next Turn.

Newly-created Maulerfiend (Vehicle)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
30	25	55 <sup>10</sup>	--	45	10	35	45	01	

**Type:** Walker

**Cruising Speed:** 60kph

**Structural Integrity:** 28

**Armour:** Front 26, Side 26, Rear 15

**Vehicle Traits:** Daemon Engine, Daemonic Possession, Enhanced Motive Systems, Walker.

**Crew:** Daemonic Essence.

**Carrying Capacity:** None.

**Weapons:** Clawed forelimbs and fanged maw (Melee; 2d10+10 R; Pen 4; Razor Sharp, Tearing, Natural Weapons).

**Tactical Speed:** 12m

**Manoeuvrability:** +10

**Size:** Enormous

### Special Rules

Newly-created Maulerfiends possess the Ambidextrous, Frenzy, Hatred (All), Swift Attack, and Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) Talents, and the Natural Weapons, Fear (2), and Unnatural Strength (5) Traits.

### SOUL GRINDER

While the smiths of the hell-forges throughout the Immaterium blend mechanical art with arcane science and Daemon-fleshcraft to create horrific engines of war powered by Warp-fire and fuelled by blood, few have ever dared to meld Daemon and machine into a single cohesive whole so completely as did the mad creator of the first Soul Grinder.

The utter wrongness of its existence is enough to drive mad those who would stand before them. Six mechanical legs, bent outward from the central body like those of a hell-spawned spider, hold aloft the towering torso of a rampaging Daemon, malevolent and terrible. Where other war engines of Chaos are machines given Daemonic life, the Soul Grinder is truly a Daemon given material form through machinery and artifice. One Daemonic claw terminates in a cluster of vicious cannons, the other combines Daemonic sinew and vice-like pistons. From deep within its muscled belly, the Warp-beast can vomit forth great blasts of consuming, mutating Warp-fire.

Soul Grinder (Vehicle)									
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel	
35	15	75 <sup>14</sup>	--	35	10	40	40	01	

**Type:** Walker

**Tactical Speed:** 15m

**Cruising Speed:** 25kph

**Manoeuvrability:** N/A

**Structural Integrity:** 50

**Size:** Enormous

**Armour:** Front 35, Side 32, Rear 22

**Vehicle Traits:** Daemonic Possession, Enclosed, Reinforced Armour, Walker.

**Crew:** Daemonic Essence.

**Carry Capacity:** None.

**Weapons:** Crushing Claws (2) (Melee; 2d10+10 R; Pen 8; Tearing, Unwieldy), harvester (Front Facing; 75m; --/-/15; 1d10+6 I; Pen 4; Clip --; Reload --; Storm), mawcannon (Front Facing; 20m; S/-/-; 2d10+10 E; Pen 6; Clip --; Reload --; Corrosive, Spray).

### Special Rules

Soul Grinders have the Fear (3) Trait. Additionally, Soul Grinders have the Lightning Attack and Two-Weapon Wielder (Melee) Talent as well as the Unnatural Strength (7) Trait.

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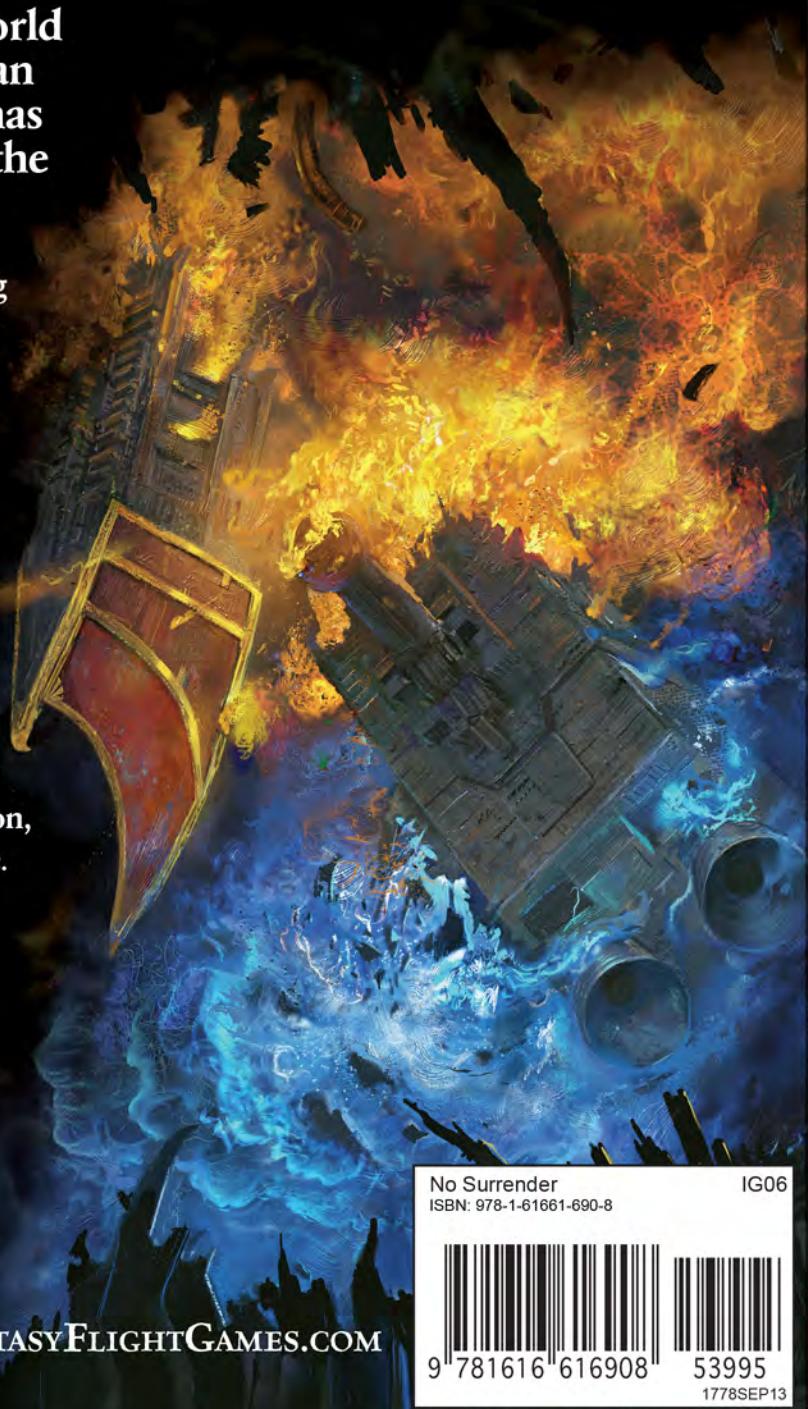
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